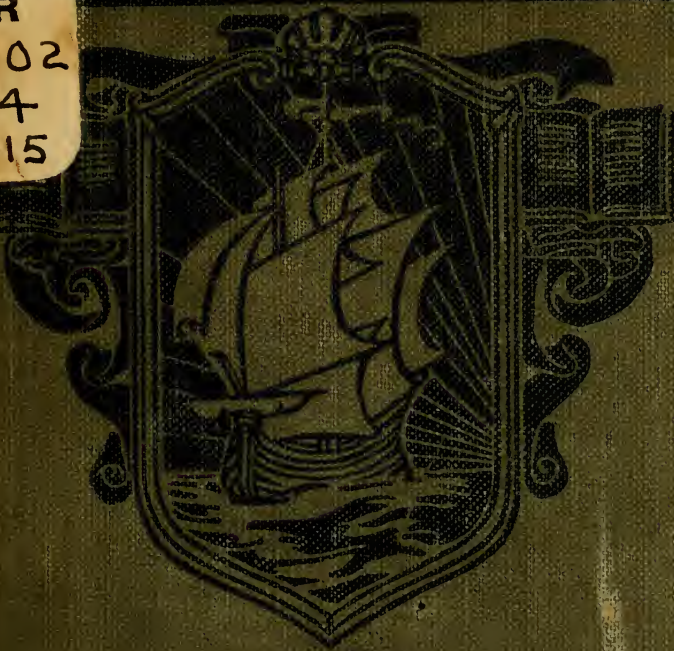


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SELECT POEMS  
OF  
ROBERT BROWNING

LONGMANS' ENGLISH CLASSICS



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# LONGMANS' ENGLISH CLASSICS

EDITED BY

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PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND ENGLISH COMPOSITION IN COLUMBIA  
UNIVERSITY

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ROBERT BROWNING

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SELECT POEMS





Longmans' English Classics

# SELECT POEMS

OF

# ROBERT BROWNING

||

EDITED

WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTION

BY

PERCIVAL CHUBB

FORMERLY DIRECTOR OF ENGLISH, ETHICAL CULTURE SCHOOLS,  
NEW YORK CITY



LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
FOURTH AVENUE AND 30TH STREET, NEW YORK  
PRAIRIE AVENUE & 25TH STREET, CHICAGO

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First printed, December, 1905  
Reprinted August, 1909  
Reprinted with additions, June, 1915

\$0.<sup>95</sup>

OCT 21 1915

© Cl. A 416024

no. 1.

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. BROWNING'S POETRY

THE editor undertakes this task of his with a double ambition: first, with the hope that this little collection may introduce "to many a youth and many a maid" a few poems that hold an honored place in the hearts of those who love noble verse, and, secondly, that this taste may be appetizing enough to lead them farther into that world of varied humanity which is peopled by one of the most fertile and subtle creators of human character and personality.

Although Tennyson and Browning are commonly coupled in popular references as the two primates of English poetry in the Victorian epoch, Browning still remains—all the ladies' Browning Clubs notwithstanding—little more than a name to the general reading public. This ignorance and neglect are reflected in our schools. While the little child of the primary grades knows Tennyson's "Brook" and other simple lays; while "The Charge of the Light Brigade," "The Revenge," and half a dozen other ballads and lyrics find their way into the Elementary Readers and Anthologies; while the high school student has for years had to labor over "The Princess," and is now required to know "The Idylls of the King,"—Browning's name is but scantily represented in the texts by "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" and "How they Brought the Good News." At last a tardy

justice is being meted out to him by offering the college-bound student an inducement to read a short dozen of his representative poems. We who find in Browning an inspiring poet and a great master of insight into the problems of human life to whom we may turn for help, welcome this concession, and will try to make the most of it.

Let me be frank with my readers and say that there are some plausible reasons for this neglect of Browning. His manner has been against him: it is frequently unconventional and abrupt; it takes for granted an unusually alert intelligence. His matter, too, is more than commonly difficult: it implies a vivid interest in human character, in many types of the human soul, and in the conduct of men and women placed in perplexing circumstances, — on spiritual trial, in short. In this, he suggests a quite common experience in social intercourse: our meeting with some one who is, as we say, "a trifle difficult to get on with," — brusque, reticent, or what not, — who yet, as we discover later, hides a heart of gold or a mind of piercing clearness behind his idiosyncrasy. Browning's unwonted ways may be easily made light of; and it is the purpose of this "Introduction" to him to play the part of a tactful host in smoothing out little surface difficulties that handicap an honored and distinguished guest.

For instance, in the very first selection given here, the poet seems to take his reader familiarly by the arm, and unceremoniously to open up on him: "You know, we French stormed Ratisbon." "Indeed, sir, I don't know," says the surprised auditor; "and pray, sir, who are 'we French'?" This is Browning's little habit of monologing. He is dramatically assuming the rôle of some old cuirassier of Napoleon's guard, and asks you

to imagine his addressing other scarred veterans who are comparing notes over many a glorious victory. The reader of Browning must at the outset get accustomed to this monologing habit and all that it takes for granted — little unexpected interpolations and asides on the part of the speaker; the sort of interruptions we get in Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," when we are suddenly recalled to the lank, lean-fingered mariner with his glittering eye, and the spellbound wedding-guest whom he has transfixed by it. The notes to the poems try to make this imaginative task easy.

Browning, in short, exacts of his readers an active dramatic imagination. He asks of us, by the peculiar form of his poems, to visualize and realize the scene, the speaker, his gestures, his broken and elliptical speech, and so on. It is those who lack this imaginative capacity (a very important and precious endowment), who find Browning hard reading. The best advice, for those who would speedily overcome any difficulties on this account, is, first to read each new poem carefully, in order to seize the salient features of the dramatic situation which it presupposes; then to read it a second time aloud, identifying oneself dramatically with the person who speaks.

For example, — to take a small point in one of the pieces cited, "My Last Duchess," — we gather from the first reading that the Duke and his guest, having left the company below, have been discussing a marriage contract on the floor above. Their discussion is ended; they are passing on their way to rejoin the company, when the guest's eye falls on the striking portrait of a beautiful woman. The Duke's vanity is flattered; that was *his* wife, painted by a great painter whom *he* had the wit and resources to employ; and so he proposes a halt, "Will't please you sit and look at her." So they

sit; and the silent reader of the poem must visualize the scene, and in imagination will sit down with the pair. We look and listen, absorbed in the story and the picture. Then (in l. 47) the attention is brought back from these to the two sitting talkers: "Will't please you rise?" They rise. "We'll meet the company below then." They proceed to the great stairway, talking the while. The visitor prepares to take his leave at the head of the stairs: "Nay, we'll go together down, sir. But, before we descend," he seems to imply, as he points a finger, "just notice that Neptune, in the alcove over there." This is a fairly palpable instance of the kind of imaginative demand which Browning continually makes upon his readers. We must be ready to exercise this dramatizing faculty. Perhaps I am laboring the point; but the elaboration may serve to help out in other cases, — in "Tray," for instance, with its unusual opening.

So, then, the main recommendation I would make to the beginner, to enable him to overcome the chief difficulty of Browning's form, is to realize the dramatic suppositions of Browning's monologs. Dramatically conceived, the poems — so many of them — must be dramatically approached and interpreted.

Passing now to related difficulties in the subject-matter, the key is still the word "dramatic." Browning has been aptly called the poet of situations, of crises in human lives. Many of his poems assume a moment of choice, a dramatic turning-point, in some one's life. Now it is the opportunity of love between the young singer and the sculptor in "Youth and Art." Now it is the patriot on his way to the scaffold to be tried as to his faith, despite failure, in his vision of the past; his faith in the populace which has turned upon him whom it had lauded a short year ago, and in the trustworthi-



ness of a God which could bring to naught his heroic effort after human improvement. And now it is the sportsman Donald, on trial when his humanity is put to the test by his "sportsmanlike" prompting to kill. Yes, Browning's dominating interest is the behavior of the human soul in moments of stress, when sore beset by temptation, when it is difficult to be brave. He conceives of us all as being, at some crucial moment, when our action will determine our whole future, tasked to fight the great fight of our lives. It is a supreme moment of trial, when we are to prove ourselves either heroes or cowards, either men and women of faith and fortitude or lost creatures of fear and despair. No, we must not use these words; "lost" is not in Browning's vocabulary. "We fall to rise." Our defeats may be turned to splendid spiritual victories, if we but conduct ourselves worthily in our adversity, and resolve to continue the fight and to profit by the lesson. Equally, our victories may turn to inglorious spiritual defeats, if they relax our energies, or breed over-confidence or pride or selfishness. The hero of heroes is the battered and bowed victim of his own cowardice or meanness, who, having had a moment for the truth to flash out upon him, gathers and reknits his energies for further battle. This is a high and exacting moral athleticism: who shall be equal to it? Browning's answer is: "You may be, must be. Ultimately there is no escape; the universe exists to discipline men's souls to that result of spiritual renewal."

This is an evangel for youth. Do you not, you young man or woman who begin to understand, feel the invigorating appeal and challenge of this message? At no time in life does this old-time gospel with its ultimate question—What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world

and lose his own soul?—meet with such a ready response as it does in youth, the springtime of generous enthusiasm and idealism. At no time in the world's history has it been so important that this question should echo and reecho through the soul of youth, to keep it loyal, as it is now, when so rich and tempting a world lies stretched at the feet of every enterprising and ambitious youth. Hence the hope which the present editor indulges that an increasing number of high school and college students may be brought into the tonic atmosphere of Browning's stalwart and unfaltering faith, his rapturous recognition of the joy of deep living and heroic attainment, of true, noble love, of unbeaten endeavor and unquenchable aspiration.

It is only a few of the simpler poems that can be given here, with some suggestion of what there is in the unquarried remainder. These longer and more complex studies of temperament and situation present the most varied types of manhood and womanhood in numerous nationalities, the good and the evil, the great and the lowly, the healthy and the diseased. Browning's optimism is so confident\* that he does not hesitate to grapple with the greatly erring, the criminal and the sinning, by way of revealing the soul of goodness in things evil, and the subtle, devious ways by which everything is either in process of conversion into ultimate good, or hints the promise of fair weather after foul. To convey an idea of the scope of his work, the following rough classification may be made. We have a group of great dramas,—“Luria,” “A Blot on the Scutcheon” (recently staged in New York), “Colombe's Birthday” (frequently presented), etc.; shorter pieces like “In a

\*See *Song from Pippa Passes*, and note thereon, pp. 50 and 85.

Balcony" and "A Soul's Tragedy"; the vast structure of the "Ring and the Book," in which Browning presents a crime seen from several distinctive points of view; a group of poems dealing with the arts (chiefly painting) and great artists, "Andrea del Sarto," "Fra Lippo Lippi," "Old Pictures in Florence"; another group dealing in profound ways with music, "Abt Vogler," "A Toccata of Galuppi's," etc.; a larger group, with deeds of heroism, — well represented in this volume; a much larger one with love in innumerable aspects and forms of manifestation (Browning's master-theme); and a rich feast of poems which may be called religious, "Christmas Eve" and "Easter Day," "Caliban upon Setebos," "Rabbi ben Ezra," "Saul," "Cleon" — these last two dealing with a subject very near to the poet's heart, the problem of personal immortality.

Only one more cautioning word must be said to those who would advance from the small enclosure of this volume of selections into the more spacious field: don't expect the ordinary kind of dramatic excitement. It is the caution one would administer to those who should expect the ordinary type of play in a presentation of one of Browning's dramas. These dramas have been pronounced failures by theater-goers — although some have been acceptably performed. Expect to find, we caution, the drama of deliberation rather than of action. Browning's supreme interest is less in the outward acts than in the drama within the mind. It is the inner struggle, the storm of thought and emotion which drives the soul now this way and now that, to which he attaches central importance. The long soliloquy and debate of the troubled mind, the dialog of the two selves at strife in us, the pathetic and tragic plea of the angelic with the demonic powers in us — that it is which it is the aim of

his art to lay bare and interpret. In his attempt to do this we shall find either the strength or the weakness of Browning, according to the intensity of our interest in what we must call the psychology of the human soul.

In emphasizing this supreme concern of Browning's with human character, and in preparing the young reader to pass on from the simple studies here given to the subtle analyses of all sorts and conditions of men and women in the longer poems, we must not neglect Browning's more general accomplishments as a poet. Although his gaze is bent chiefly upon the inward world, he has a keen eye for the outward, and for the sensuous beauties of nature. Consider the sensitiveness to human beauty shown in such poems as "A Face," and the feeling for nature in "Home Thoughts from Abroad," or "De Gustibus." Several other instances tempt citation; this autumn scene, "Among the Rocks," for instance:

Oh, good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth,  
 This autumn morning! How he sets his bones  
 To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out knees and feet  
 For the ripple to run over in its mirth;  
 Listening the while, where on the heap of stones  
 The white breast of the sea-lark twitters sweet.

Or this little seascape, with its lilting charm:

The gray sea and the long black land;  
 And the yellow half-moon large and low;  
 And the startled little waves that leap  
 In fiery ringlets from their sleep,  
 As I gain the cove with pushing prow,  
 And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;  
 Three fields to cross till a farm appears.

Or this quiet evening scene:

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles  
 Miles and miles  
 On the solitary pastures where our sheep  
 Half-asleep  
 Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop  
 As they crop.

. . . . .  
 Now, — the single little turret that remains  
 On the plains,  
 By the caper overrooted, by the gourd  
 Overscored,  
 While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks  
 Through the chinks,  
 Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time  
 Sprang sublime.

Nor must we fail to note the pure lyric quality of the songs, like that from "Pippa Passes," "Wanting is — What?" and "Pisgah Sights." Then, like every passionate poet, Browning in his narrative verse will frequently pass over into a lyric vein. What can be more beautiful than this passage in his early poem, "Paracelsus," from which we cite a few lines?

Then all is still: earth is a wintry clod:  
 But spring-wind, like a dancing psaltress, passes  
 Over its breast to waken it. . . .  
 Above birds fly in merry flocks, the lark  
 Soars up and up, shivering for very joy:  
 Afar the ocean sleeps: white fishing-gulls  
 Flit where the strand is purple with its tribe  
 Of nesting limpets: savage creatures seek  
 Their loves in wood and plain — and God renews  
 His ancient rapture.

Of some of the striking features of Browning's poetic art much might be said. In spite of too much of harsh and halting colloquialism, and of a tendency towards the grotesque, and a love of surprise, his versification (and

his blank verse in particular) has a quality of rhythm which is all its own, and may be profitably compared with Tennyson's — in, say, the "Idylls of the King." But even more noticeable than his blank verse is Browning's rimed verse. He has extraordinary facility in riming; double and triple rimes abound. For an example you may look into one of the most fascinating of his poems, "The Flight of the Duchess," — a deliberate attempt at the grotesque. What jocularly in rime is this!

Blessed was he whose back ached with the jerkin  
 His sire was wont to do forest-work in;  
 Blesseder he who nobly sunk "Ohs"  
 And "Ahs" while he tugged on his grandsire's trunk-hose.

Which should lead us on to say something concerning Browning's humor — a very pervasive quality in his poems, jetting out upon us in most unexpected ways. We have been able to give only one familiar example, the "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister." Many others may be found; indeed, it is the poet's underlying sense of humor which makes possible such a masterpiece of ironic portraiture as "The Bishop Orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church," of which Ruskin says, paying a tribute to Browning's profound insight into the Renaissance, that he knows no other piece of modern English "in which there is so much told of the Renaissance spirit — its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury, and of good Latin."

Finally, much might be said of the definitely autobiographical parts of Browning's work, and more especially of the traces to be found in it of the marriage which links his name with that of the great woman-poet whose heart was as passionate and whose mind was almost as brilliant as his own. In his "One Word More," given

here, we have the most striking of his addresses to his wife; but her influence, her presence in his life, even after his bereavement, is felt in many a poem: it gives a quality to his love-poems which finds a parallel only in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's unapproached "Sonnets from the Portuguese." But of this we shall say more in the short biographical section which follows.

## II. BROWNING'S LIFE AND PERSONALITY

WE feel Browning's stalwart, buoyant personality everywhere in his work. It is commonly remarked that, be the dramatic figure what it may, man or woman, ancient or modern, the voice that speaks through it is the voice of Robert Browning. There is much truth in this; most of his personages have a Browning manner and bearing. But this must not mislead us to the conclusion that his "fifty men and women," and more, have no distinct and individual qualities of their own,—his Fra Lippo Lippi, and Andrea del Sarto, for example. Nevertheless, the various "dramatis personæ" are so conceived and handled that they illuminate Browning's own fundamental conclusions about life. In a large sense he is a preaching poet; a rimer of "morality plays."

Thus it may be said that his life is in his work. True of him more than of most poets are the following words from a letter which the present writer received from Browning's distinguished contemporary, William Morris: "For my part I think any biography of men engaged in art and literature is absolutely worthless: their works are their biography." This was Browning's general feeling, too, as some of his poems declare. The few facts that call for record here are these:

Robert Browning was born May 7, 1812, in Camberwell,

London, a suburb in the locality made famous by Ruskin, who lived at Herne Hill nearby, of which he has left a fascinating description in his "Præterita." His father was a great lover of books, and the boy caught the passion. He went to school; then at fourteen studied under tutors; and at eighteen was matriculated at London University, where he spent two years. This schooling and formal studying was the least part of his education. He had developed in a wholesome, all-round fashion: knew Latin and French well, and was becoming proficient in Greek too. He had loved nature; had roamed woods and fields; had kept pet animals of various kinds, being always a lover of animals (as the poems here show), and had made collections of one sort and another. He had studied music and art to some purpose — in fact, wavered as to whether these arts or that of poetry should claim his life-devotion. He learned also to ride, dance, box, and fence. Also he browsed and meditated much; and we have a striking word-picture of him lying for hours on the grass and looking out from a high spot near his home upon the great city whose swarming humanity lent it its chief interest for him.

He began early to versify, and received encouragement from his proud parents. But it was not until his genius caught fire from contact with another poet who made a profound impression upon him, that he produced anything really individual. He accidentally picked up from a bookstall a copy of Shelley. He had never heard the name, but soon found out the main facts about the dead poet; and his mother bought him a set of Shelley. The result was his first notable poem, "Pauline" (January, 1833). A little later followed "Paracelsus," which brought him some recognition from people of note — among them the actor Macready, for whom he proceeded



to write a play, "Strafford," which was produced at Covent Garden theater by that actor and Miss Helen Faucit. The most difficult of his poems followed, "Sordello," while writing which he made his first visit to Italy, the country which he has spoken of as his "University." He then wrote his other dramas one after another (see Chronological Table, p. xxvi), and many of his famous short poems, which he published in the very unusual form of thin paper-covered volumes, called "Bells and Pomegranates," now among the book-collector's great treasures.

Suddenly into his life of free and varied enjoyment came the great change that followed upon his meeting a fellow-poet of whom he had heard something, Elizabeth Barrett — then a fragile, couch-ridden invalid. They loved, and Browning proposed marriage. Although a physician held out hopes that removal to Italy might restore the invalid to health, Mr. Barrett objected to his daughter's marrying. The affianced pair took the matter into their own hands. They were quietly married, without her father's knowledge, September 12, 1846. Then they met by agreement and went to Paris and thence to Italy, where they lived — for the most part at Florence, in the famous old palace of Casa Guidi — during the fifteen years of their married life, journeying occasionally to England and Paris. Two sons were born to them, one of whom died. Husband and wife worked at their craft very independently, and the story of their life and labors and friendships in Florence is an engaging chapter in our literary history. Of the intercourse of these two great lovers and poets the great memorial is their correspondence, published a few years ago — with not a little protest against this laying bare of such sacred intimacies — by their surviving son, Robert Barrett Browning.

Mrs. Browning died in 1861. Browning then left Italy for England and made his home in London. By this time his long-neglected work began to make its way with the public. There was an increasing demand for his books, and for volumes of selections from them. Honors came to him from the Universities. Then he began in 1868 the publication of his longest work, "The Ring and the Book," completed in six volumes. Thereafter he continued to produce one work after another until his output was prodigious. All this while he was more and more of a favorite in cultivated circles, and was seen much at social gatherings and functions — a most genial, lovable man, who shared in the life about him with the zest and the unaffected simplicity that won him a host of friends.

It was in 1882, while negotiating for the purchase of a villa at Asolo, that he was taken ill, and died at his son's home in Venice on December 12, 1889. His countrymen insisted upon his being brought home to rest in his native country, and he was buried in Westminster Abbey on the last day of the year. Italy did not fail to honor him also: on the wall of the Rezzonico Palace where he died she has placed a memorial tablet upon which appear the lines from "De Gustibus":

Open my heart and you will see  
Graved inside of it, "Italy."

The best generalized impression of the poet's vigorous personality is that contained in the following lines by his great and admiring contemporary, Walter Savage Landor, whose name and fame are so clearly associated with his younger friend's beloved Italy:

Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale  
No man has walked along our roads with step  
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue  
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes  
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze  
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on  
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where  
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.



## SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

THE poetry is the thing! If you do not like that — and like it greatly — do not touch it. You are not obliged to, for Browning is an elective in the groups of readings for college entrance. Take him up for the joy of the thing, so to speak; because you believe, as the writer has expressed himself in the foregoing Introduction, that he will make blood, — brain and heart, — heroism and love and aspiration, — a deeper insight into human nature, for boys and girls in the susceptible adolescent period.

If you have chosen this edition of the Selections, it is presumably because you agree with the editor's general point of view and method of approach. The main article of his belief is that Browning must be dramatically apprehended and rendered. Some other poets demand oral interpretation because of the music of their verse; Browning, because of the dramatic and colloquial form of his. This dramatic rendering may be and must be done without the staginess and the vocal ceremony that touches the risibles of our youth. There are no recipes for the good taste and the sense of proportion which are needed here in conjunction with the deep, sincere feeling of genuine poetic appreciation. The teacher must be an artist, that's all. Nothing further need be said by way of help than what is said with reference to specific poems in the Introduction and the Notes.

It will pay the teacher to be sure, as soon as a poem has

been read, that the imagination of the pupils has been quickened: that scene, situation, persons, stand out for the visualizing faculty with appropriate distinctness.

The philosophy of those poems that have an obvious philosophy must, of course, be brought home concretely or dramatically — that is, in terms of personality. The word becomes flesh, takes on the hue and color of life. It must live, not as an abstraction, but incorporate in the individuality which the poet creates.

It is necessary, of course, that the teacher should be thoroughly familiar with most of Browning's work; so that other poems and passages may be drawn upon to throw light upon those here given.

The editor has chosen, instead of grouping together the few poems given in the college entrance list, to place them in a setting that will help both to develop their wider relations to Browning's work as a whole, and to keep in the back-ground the fact that the reading of Browning subserves college entrance purposes. There is method in the grouping, although here and there considerations other than those of likeness of literary species have led to a departure from strict classification. The Notes seek to indicate the nature of the special relationships. The teacher will, of course, use his own judgment as to the order of attack according to his own general habits and the quality of his class. He will also find it expedient, doubtless, now to ignore, now to dissent from, and now to amplify the Notes.

It is advised that the large Browning literature be sparingly used. Let not the encyclopedias, handbooks, and guides be generally or indiscriminately used. Sharp's *Life* (Great Writers Series) is a good and indispensable general guide and contains a full bibliography. Mrs. Orr will do for the students, in outlining a poem, what the

teacher may wish them to do for themselves; and the same may be said of other primers and handbooks. All, however, may find occasional use, for particular purposes. Special essays, like Dowden's Comparison of Tennyson and Browning (in his "Studies in Literature"), the teacher, with the aid of the bibliography, will consult as occasion demands. Cooke, Corson, Hutton, Nettleship, Stedman, Symons, are the most important names in the bibliography. The editions are numerous: the one-volume "Cambridge" edition (Houghton, Mifflin) very convenient; the "Camberwell" edition (Crowell), the most fully annotated.

## NOTE

THE poems specified in the College Entrance Requirements are: "Cavalier Tunes," "The Lost Leader," "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," "Home-Thoughts, from Abroad," "Home-Thoughts, from the Sea," "Incident of the French Camp," "Hervé Riel," "Pheidippides," "My Last Duchess," "Up at a Villa—Down in the City," "The Italian in England," "The Patriot," "De Gustibus—," "The Pied Piper," "Instans Tyrannus." But, as suggested above, these poems, while they may receive special attention, should have their setting in at least as many more poems as have been included in this volume.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

BROWNING.	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.
1812. Born in London. (Camberwell.)	Elizabeth Barrett, Darwin, and Tennyson, born in 1809; Thackeray, 1811; Dickens, 1812. In 1812 Wordsworth was 40; Scott, 41; Coleridge, 42; Lamb, 45; Byron, 24; Shelley, 20; Keats and Coleridge, 17.
	1813. Shelley's <i>Queen Mab</i> . Southey, laureate.
	1814. Scott's <i>Waverley</i> .
	1816. Bryant's <i>Thanatopsis</i> . Byron's <i>Childe Harold</i> .
	1818. Irving's <i>Sketch-Book</i> .
	1819. Ruskin born.
	1820. George Eliot, Spencer, Tyndall born. Keats, important poems.
	1821. Cooper's <i>Spy</i> . Keats died.
	1822. Irving's <i>Bracebridge Hall</i> . Arnold born. Shelley died.
	1824. Byron died.
	1825. Carlyle's <i>Life of Schiller</i> .
1826. (Mrs. Browning's first writings — <i>Essay on Mind</i> , etc.)	
1829. Attends University College, then first opened.	
1832. <i>Pauline</i> written, published 1833.	1830. Tennyson's <i>Poems, chiefly Lyrical</i> .
	1831. Poe's <i>Raven</i> . Whittier's <i>Legends of New England</i> .
	1832. Goethe and Scott died.



BROWNING.	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.
1833. Travels to Russia and first visits Italy. (Mrs. Browning's translation of <i>Prometheus Bound</i> .)	1833. Carlyle's <i>Sartor Resartus</i> . Tennyson's Poems.
1835. <i>Paracelsus</i> .	1836. Dickens's <i>Boz</i> and <i>Pickwick</i> .
1837. <i>Strafford</i> acted.	1837. Victoria queen.
1838. Again visits Italy. (Mrs. Browning's <i>Seraphim and Other Poems</i> .)	1839. Longfellow's <i>Hyperion</i> .
1840. <i>Sordello</i> .	1841. Dumas's <i>Monte Cristo</i> and Longfellow's <i>Voices of the Night</i> .
1841. <i>Pippa Passes</i> .	1842. Macaulay's <i>Lays of Ancient Rome</i> .
1842. <i>King Victor and King Charles. Dramatic Lyrics</i> .	1843. Wordsworth, laureate. Dickens's <i>Christmas Carol</i> . Ruskin's <i>Modern Painters</i> (vol. i).
1843. <i>Return of the Druses. A Blot on the 'Scutcheon. Colombe's Birthday</i> .	1844. Thackeray's <i>Barry Lyndon</i> .
1844. (Mrs. Browning's <i>Poems</i> .)	1845. Hawthorne's <i>Mosses from an Old Manse</i> .
1845. <i>Dramatic Romances and Lyrics</i> .	1846. Dickens's <i>Dombey and Son</i> .
1846. <i>Luria. A Soul's Tragedy</i> . (These published in eight numbers of <i>Bells and Pomegranates</i> .) Married to Elizabeth Barrett.	1847. Tennyson's <i>Princess</i> .
1847. Settles in Florence at Casa Guidi.	1848. Thackeray's <i>Vanity Fair</i> . (Revolution abroad.)
1849. His mother dies. A son born — Robert Wiedemann Browning.	1849. Emerson's <i>Representative Men</i> .
1850. <i>Christmas Eve and Easter Day</i> . (Mrs. Browning's <i>Sonnets from the Portuguese</i> .)	1850. Wordsworth died. Tennyson, laureate.
1851. (Mrs. Browning's <i>Casa Guidi Windows</i> .)	1851. Hawthorne's <i>House of the Seven Gables</i> .
1855. <i>Men and Women</i> .	1855. Matthew Arnold's <i>Poems</i> . Longfellow's <i>Hiawatha</i> .
1856. (Mrs. Browning's <i>Aurora Leigh</i> .)	1856. Motley's <i>Dutch Republic</i> . Emerson's <i>English Traits</i> .

BROWNING.	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.
1860. (Mrs. Browning's <i>Poems before Congress</i> .)	1860. George Eliot's <i>Mill on the Floss</i> . Holmes's <i>Professor at the Breakfast Table</i> .
1861. Mrs. Browning dies. Browning leaves Italy and settles in London.	1861. George Eliot's <i>Silas Marner</i> .
1862. (Mrs. Browning's <i>Last Poems</i> .)	1862. Ruskin's <i>Unto this Last</i> .
1863. Complete Edition of his works.	1863. George Eliot's <i>Romola</i> .
1864. <i>Dramatis Personae</i> .	1864. Tennyson's <i>Enoch Arden</i> .
1866. His father dies.	1866. George Eliot's <i>Felix Holt</i> .
1867. Honorary M.A. of Oxford.	1867. Longfellow's translation of Dante's <i>Divine Comedy</i> .
1868. <i>The Ring and the Book</i> .	1868. Morris's <i>Earthly Paradise</i> .
1871. <i>Balaustion's Adventure</i> . <i>Prince Hohenstiel-Schwarzgau</i> .	1871. Darwin's <i>Descent of Man</i> . Meredith's <i>Harry Richmond</i> . Swinburne's <i>Songs before Sunrise</i> .
1872. <i>Fifine at the Fair</i> .	1872. Hardy's <i>Under the Greenwood Tree</i> .
1873. <i>Red Cotton Nightcap Country</i> .	1873. Mill's <i>Autobiography</i> .
1875. <i>Aristophanes' Apology</i> . <i>The Inn Album</i> .	1875. Tennyson's <i>Queen Mary</i> . Arnold's <i>God and the Bible</i> .
1876. <i>Pacchiarotto</i> .	1876. Morris's <i>Sigurd the Volung</i> .
1877. <i>Agamemnon of Aeschylus</i> .	1877. Tennyson's <i>Harold</i> .
1878. <i>La Saisiaz</i> . <i>The Two Poets of Croisic</i> .	1878. Morley's <i>Diderot and the Encyclopedists</i> .
1879-80. <i>Dramatic Idylls</i> .	1879. Henry James's <i>Daisy Miller</i> .
1883. <i>Jocoseria</i> .	1883. <i>Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson</i> . Stevenson's <i>Treasure Island</i> .
1884. <i>Ferishtah's Fancies</i> .	1884. Tennyson's <i>Becket</i> .
1887. <i>Parleyings with Certain People</i> .	1887. Stevenson's <i>Underwoods</i> .
1889. <i>Asolando</i> . Dies at Venice. Buried in Westminster Abbey.	1889. Tennyson's <i>Demeter and other Poems</i> .

SELECT POEMS

OF

ROBERT BROWNING

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:  
A mile or so away,  
On a little mound, Napoleon  
Stood on our storming-day;  
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how, 5  
Legs wide, arms locked behind,  
As if to balance the prone brow  
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans  
That soar, to earth may fall, 10  
Let once my army-leader Lannes  
Waver at yonder wall," —  
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew  
A rider, bound on bound  
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew 15  
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,  
And held himself erect  
By just his horse's mane, a boy:  
You hardly could suspect — 20

(So tight he kept his lips compressed,  
 Scarce any blood came through)  
 You looked twice ere you saw his breast  
 Was all but shot in two.

“Well,” cried he, “Emperor, by God’s grace      25  
 We’ve got you Ratisbon!  
 The Marshal’s in the market-place,  
 And you’ll be there anon  
 To see your flag-bird flap his vans  
 Where I, to heart’s desire,      30  
 Perched him!” The chief’s eye flashed; his plans  
 Soared up again like fire.

The chief’s eye flashed; but presently  
 Softened itself, as sheathes  
 A film the mother-eagle’s eye      35  
 When her bruised eaglet breathes;  
 “You’re wounded!” “Nay,” the soldier’s pride  
 Touched to the quick, he said:  
 “I’m killed, Sire!” And his chief beside,  
 Smiling the boy fell dead.      40

“HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS  
 FROM GHENT TO AIX”

[16—]

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;  
 I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;  
 “Good speed!” cried the watch, as the gate-bolts  
 undrew;  
 “Speed!” echoed the wall to us galloping through;  
 Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,      5  
 And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace  
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our  
place;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,  
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right, 10  
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,  
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near  
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;  
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see; 15  
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;  
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-  
chime,  
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,  
And against him the cattle stood black every one, 20  
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,  
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,  
With resolute shoulders, each butting a way  
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent  
back 25  
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;  
And one eye's black intelligence, — ever that glance  
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!  
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon  
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on. 30

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!  
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,

We'll remember at Aix" — for one heard the quick  
 wheeze  
 Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering  
 knees,  
 And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank, 35  
 As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,  
 Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;  
 The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,  
 'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like  
 chaff; 40  
 Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,  
 And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!" — and all in a moment his  
 roan  
 Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;  
 And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight 45  
 Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,  
 With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,  
 And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,  
 Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all, 50  
 Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,  
 Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;  
 Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad  
 or good,  
 Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is — friends flocking round 55  
 As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;  
 And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,

As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,  
 Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)  
 Was no more than his due who brought good news from  
 Ghent. 60

THROUGH THE METIDJA TO ABD-EL-KADR

As I ride, as I ride,  
 With a full heart for my guide,  
 So its tide rocks my side,  
 As I ride, as I ride,  
 That, as I were double-eyed, 5  
 He, in whom our Tribes confide,  
 Is descried, ways untried,  
 As I ride, as I ride.

As I ride, as I ride  
 To our Chief and his Allied, 10  
 Who dares chide my heart's pride  
 As I ride, as I ride?  
 Or are witnesses denied —  
 Through the desert waste and wide  
 Do I glide unespied  
 As I ride, as I ride? 15

As I ride, as I ride,  
 When an inner voice has cried,  
 The sands slide, nor abide  
 (As I ride, as I ride) 20  
 O'er each visioned homicide  
 That came vaunting (has he lied?)  
 To reside — where he died,  
 As I ride, as I ride.

As I ride, as I ride, 25  
 Ne'er has spur my swift horse plied,  
 Yet his hide, streaked and pied,  
 As I ride, as I ride,  
 Shows where sweat has sprung and dried,  
 — Zebra-footed, ostrich-thighed — 30  
 How has vied stride with stride  
 As I ride, as I ride!

As I ride, as I ride,  
 Could I loose what Fate has tied,  
 Ere I pried, she should hide 35  
 (As I ride, as I ride)  
 All that's meant me — satisfied  
 When the Prophet and the Bride  
 Stop veins I'd have subside  
 As I ride, as I ride! 40

### MULÉYKEH

If a stranger passed the tent of Hóseyn, he cried "A  
 churl's!"  
 Or haply "God help the man who has neither salt nor  
 bread!"  
 — "Nay," would a friend exclaim, "he needs nor pity  
 nor scorn  
 More than who spends small thought on the shore-sand,  
 picking pearls,  
 Holds but in light esteem the seed-sort, bears instead 5  
 On his breast a moon-like prize, some orb which of night  
 makes morn.

"What if no flocks and herds enrich the son of Sinán?  
 They went when his tribe was mulct, ten thousand camels  
 the due,



Blood-value paid perforce for a murder done of old.  
 'God gave them, let them go! But never since time  
     began, 10  
 Muléykeh, peerless mare, owned master the match of you,  
 And you are my prize, my Pearl: I laugh at men's land  
     and gold!'

"So in the pride of his soul laughs Hóseyn — and right,  
     I say.

Do the ten steeds run a race of glory? Outstripping all,  
 Ever Muléykeh stands first steed at the victor's staff. 15  
 Who started, the owner's hope, gets shamed and named,  
     that day.

'Silence,' or, last but one, is 'The Cuffed,' as we use to call  
 Whom the paddock's lord thrusts forth. Right, Hóseyn,  
     I say, to laugh!"

"Boasts he Muléykeh the Pearl?" the stranger replies:  
     "Be sure

On him I waste nor scorn nor pity, but lavish both 20  
 On Duhl the son of Sheybán, who withers away in heart  
 For envy of Hóseyn's luck. Such sickness admits no  
     cure.

A certain poet has sung, and sealed the same with an  
     oath,

'For the vulgar — flocks and herds! The Pearl is a  
     prize apart.'"

Lo, Duhl the son of Sheybán comes riding to Hóseyn's  
     tent, 25

And he casts his saddle down, and enters and "Peace!"  
     bids he.

"You are poor, I know the cause: my plenty shall mend  
     the wrong.

'Tis said of your Pearl — the price of a hundred camels  
 spent  
 In her purchase were scarce ill paid: such prudence is far  
 from me  
 Who proffer a thousand. Speak! Long parley may last  
 too long." 30

Said Hóseyn, " You feed young beasts a many, of famous  
 breed,  
 Slit-eared, unblemished, fat, true offspring of Múzennem:  
 There stumbles no weak-eyed she in the line as it climbs  
 the hill.  
 But I love Mulýkeh's face: her forefront whitens indeed  
 Like a yellowish wave's cream-crest. Your camels —  
 go gaze on them! 35  
 Her fetlock is foam-splashed too. Myself am the richer  
 still."

A year goes by: lo, back to the tent again rides Duhl.  
 " You are open-hearted, ay — moist-handed, a very prince.  
 Why should I speak of sale? Be the mare your simple  
 gift!  
 My son is pined to death for her beauty: my wife prompts  
 ' Fool, 40  
 Beg for his sake the Pearl! Be God the rewarder, since  
 God pays debts seven for one: who squanders on Him  
 shows thrift.'"

Said Hóseyn, " God gives each man one life, like a lamp,  
 then gives  
 That lamp due measure of oil: lamp lighted — hold high,  
 wave wide  
 Its comfort for others to share! once quench it, what  
 help is left? 45

The oil of your lamp is your son: I shine while Muléykeh lives.

Would I beg your son to cheer my dark if Muléykeh died?  
It is life against life: what good avails to the life-bereft?"

Another year, and — hist! What craft is it Duhl designs?  
He alights not at the door of the tent as he did last  
time, 50

But, creeping behind, he gropes his stealthy way by the  
trench

Half-round till he finds the flap in the folding, for night  
combines

With the robber — and such is he: Duhl, covetous up to  
crime,

Must wring from Hósey'n's grasp the Pearl, by whatever  
the wrench.

"He was hunger-bitten, I heard: I tempted with half my  
store, 55

And a gibe was all my thanks. Is he generous like Spring  
dew?

Account the fault to me who chattered with such an one!  
He has killed, to feast chance comers, the creature he  
rode: nay, more —

For a couple of singing-girls his robe has he torn in two:  
I will beg! Yet I nowise gained by the tale of my wife  
and son. 60

"I swear by the Holy House, my head will I never wash  
Till I filch his Pearl away. Fair dealing I tried, then  
guile,

And now I resort to force. He said we must live or die:  
Let him die, then, — let me live! Be bold — but not  
too rash!

I have found me a peeping-place: breast, bury your  
 breathing while 65  
 I explore for myself! Now, breathe! He deceived me  
 not, the spy!

“As he said — there lies in peace Hóseyñ — how happy!  
 Beside  
 Stands tethered the Pearl: thrice winds her headstall  
 about his wrist:  
 ’Tis therefore he sleeps so sound — the moon through the  
 roof reveals.  
 And, loose on his left, stands too that other, known far  
 and wide, 70  
 Buhéyseh, her sister born: fleet is she yet ever missed  
 The winning tail’s fire-flash a-stream past the thunderous  
 heels.

“No less she stands saddled and bridled, this second, in  
 case some thief  
 Should enter and seize and fly with the first, as I mean  
 to do.  
 What then? The Pearl is the Pearl: once mount her we  
 both escape.” 75  
 Through the skirt-fold in glides Duhl, — so a serpent  
 disturbs no leaf  
 In a bush as he parts the twigs entwining a nest: clean  
 through,  
 He is noiselessly at his work: as he planned, he performs  
 the rape.

He has set the tent-door wide, has buckled the girth, has  
 clipped  
 The headstall away from the wrist he leaves thrice bound  
 as before, 80

He springs on the Pearl, is launched on the desert like  
bolt from bow.

Up starts our plundered man: from his breast though  
the heart be ripped,

Yet his mind has the mastery: behold, in a minute  
more,

He is out and off and away on Buhéyseh, whose worth  
we know!

And Hóseyñ — his blood turns flame, he has learned  
long since to ride, 85

And Buhéyseh does her part, — they gain — they are  
gaining fast

On the fugitive pair, and Duhl has Ed-Dárraj to cross  
and quit,

And to reach the ridge El-Sabán, — no safety till that be  
spied!

And Buhéyseh is, bound by bound, but a horse-length  
off at last,

For the Pearl has missed the tap of the heel, the touch  
of the bit. 90

She shortens her stride, she chafes at her rider the strange  
and queer:

Buhéyseh is mad with hope — beat sister she shall and  
must,

Though Duhl, of the hand and heel so clumsy, she has  
to thank.

She is near now, nose by tail — they are neck by croup  
— joy! fear!

What folly makes Hóseyñ shout “Dog Duhl, Damned  
son of the Dust, 95

Touch the right ear and press with your foot my Pearl’s  
left flank!”

And Duhl was wise at the word, and Muléykeh as prompt  
perceived

Who was urging redoubled pace, and to hear him was to  
obey,

And a leap indeed gave she, and vanished forevermore.  
And Hóseyn looked one long last look as who, all be-  
reaved, 100

Looks, fain to follow the dead so far as the living may:  
Then he turned Buhéyseh's neck slow homeward, weeping  
sore.

And, lo, in the sunrise, still sat Hóseyn upon the ground  
Weeping: and neighbors came, the tribesmen of Bénu-  
Asád

In the vale of green Er-Rass, and they questioned him  
of his grief; 105

And he told from first to last how, serpent-like, Duhl had  
wound

His way to the nest, and how Duhl rode like an ape, so  
bad!

And how Buhéyseh did wonders, yet Pearl remained  
with the thief.

And they jeered him, one and all: "Poor Hóseyn is  
crazed past hope!

How else had he wrought himself his ruin, in fortune's  
spite? 110

To have simply held the tongue were a task for boy or  
girl,

And here were Muléykeh again, the eyed like an antelope,  
The child of his heart by day, the wife of his breast by  
night!" —

"And the beaten in speed!" wept Hóseyn. "You never  
have loved my Pearl."

## TRAY

SING me a hero! Quench my thirst  
Of soul, ye bards!

Quoth Bard the first:

“Sir Olaf, the good knight, did don  
His helm and eke his habergeon” . . .  
Sir Olaf and his bard ——!

5

“That sin-scathed brow” (quoth Bard the second),  
“That eye wide ope as though Fate beckoned  
My hero to some steep, beneath  
Which precipice smiled tempting death” . . .  
You too without your host have reckoned!

10

“A beggar-child” (let’s hear this third!)  
“Sat on a quay’s edge: like a bird  
Sang to herself at careless play,  
And fell into the stream. ‘Dismay!  
Help, you the standers-by!’ None stirred.

15

“Bystanders reason, think of wives  
And children ere they risk their lives.  
Over the balustrade has bounced  
A mere instinctive dog, and pounced  
Plumb on the prize. ‘How well he dives!

20

“Up he comes with the child, see, tight  
In mouth, alive too, clutched from quite  
A depth of ten feet — twelve, I bet!  
Good dog! What, off again? There’s yet  
Another child to save? All right!

25

“ ‘ How strange we saw no other fall!  
 It’s instinct in the animal.  
 Good dog! But he’s a long while under:  
 If he got drowned I should not wonder —  
 Strong current, that against the wall! ” 30

“ ‘ Here he comes, holds in mouth this time  
 — What may the thing be? Well, that’s prime!  
 Now, did you ever? Reason reigns  
 In man alone, since all Tray’s pains  
 Have fished — the child’s doll from the slime!’ ” 35

“ And so, amid the laughter gay,  
 Trotted my hero off, — old Tray, —  
 Till somebody, prerogativéd  
 With reason, reasoned: ‘ Why he dived,  
 His brain would show us, I should say. ” 40

“ ‘ John, go and catch — or, if needs be,  
 Purchase — that animal for me!  
 By vivisection, at expense  
 Of half-an-hour and eighteenpence,  
 How brain secretes dog’s soul, we’ll see!’ ” 45

### DONALD

“ WILL you hear my story also,  
 — Huge Sport, brave adventure in plenty?”  
 The boys were a band from Oxford,  
 The oldest of whom was twenty.

The bothy we held carouse in 5  
 Was bright with fire and candle;  
 Tale followed tale like a merry-go-round  
 Whereof Sport turned the handle.



In our eyes and noses — turf-smoke:

In our ears a tune from the trivet, 10  
Whence “Boiling, boiling,” the kettle sang,  
“And ready for fresh Glenlivet.”

So, feat capped feat, with a vengeance:

Truths, though, — the lads were loyal:  
“Grouse, five-score brace to the bag! 15  
Deer, ten hours’ stalk of the Royal!”

Of boasting, not one bit, boys!

Only there seemed to settle  
Somehow above your curly heads,  
— Plain through the singing kettle, 20

Palpable through the cloud,

As each new-puffed Havana  
Rewarded the teller’s well-told tale, —  
This vaunt “To Sport — Hosanna!

“ Hunt, fish, shoot, 25

Would a man fulfil life’s duty!  
Not to the bodily frame alone  
Does Sport give strength and beauty,

“ But character gains in — courage?

Ay, sir, and much beside it! 30  
You don’t sport, more’s the pity;  
You soon would find, if you tried it,

“ Good sportsman means good fellow,

Sound-hearted he, to the centre;  
Your mealy-mouthed mild milksops 35  
— There’s where the rot can enter!

“There’s where the dirt will breed  
 The shabbiness Sport would banish!  
 Oh no, Sir, no! In your honored case  
 All such objections vanish. 40

“’Tis known how hard you studied:  
 A Double-First — what, the jigger!  
 Give me but half your Latin and Greek,  
 I’ll never again touch trigger!

“Still, tastes are tastes, allow me! 45  
 Allow, too, where there’s keenness  
 For Sport, there’s little likelihood  
 Of a man’s displaying meanness!”

So, put on my mettle, I interposed.  
 “Will you hear my story?” quoth I. 50  
 “Never mind how long since it happed,  
 I sat, as we sit, in a bothy;

“With as merry a band of mates, too,  
 Undergrads all on a level:  
 (One’s a Bishop, one’s gone to the Bench, 55  
 And one’s gone — well, to the Devil.)

“When, lo, a scratching and tapping!  
 In hobbled a ghastly visitor.  
 Listen to just what he told us himself  
 — No need of our playing inquisitor!” 60

---

Do you happen to know in Ross-shire  
 Mount Ben . . . but the name scarce matters:  
 Of the naked fact I am sure enough,  
 Though I clothe it in rags and tatters.

You may recognize Ben by description; 65  
    Behind him — a moor's immenseness:  
Up goes the middle mount of a range,  
    Fringed with its firs in denseness.

Rimming the edge, its fir-fringe, mind!  
    For an edge there is, though narrow; 70  
From end to end of the range, a strip  
    Of path runs straight as an arrow.

And the mountaineer who takes that path  
    Saves himself miles of journey  
He has to plod if he crosses the moor 75  
    Through heather, peat, and burnie.

But a mountaineer he needs must be,  
    For, look you, right in the middle  
Projects bluff Ben — with an end in *ich* —  
    Why planted there, is a riddle: 80

Since all Ben's brothers little and big  
    Keep rank, set shoulder to shoulder,  
And only this burliest out must bulge  
    Till it seems — to the beholder

From down in the gully,—as if Ben's breast, 85  
    To a sudden spike diminished,  
Would signify to the boldest foot  
    “ All further passage finished!”

Yet the mountaineer who sidles on  
    And on to the very bending, 90  
Discovers, if heart and brain be proof,  
    No necessary ending.

Foot up, foot down, to the turn abrupt  
 Having trod, he, there arriving,  
 Finds — what he took for a point was breadth, 95  
 A mercy of Nature's contriving.

So, he rounds what, when 'tis reached, proves straight,  
 From one side gains the other:  
 The wee path widens — resume the march,  
 And he foils you, Ben my brother! 100

But Donald — (that name, I hope, will do) —  
 I wrong him if I call "foiling"  
 The tramp of the callant, whistling the while  
 As blithe as our kettle's boiling.

He had dared the danger from boyhood up, 105  
 And now, — when perchance was waiting  
 A lass at the brig below, — 'twixt mount  
 And moor would he stand debating?

Moreover this Donald was twenty-five,  
 A glory of bone and muscle: 110  
 Did a fiend dispute the right of way,  
 Donald would try a tussle.

Lightsomely marched he out of the broad  
 On to the narrow and narrow;  
 A step more, rounding the angular rock, 115  
 Reached the front straight as an arrow.

He stepped it, safe on the ledge he stood,  
 When — whom found he full-facing?  
 What fellow in courage and wariness too,  
 Had scouted ignoble pacing, 120

And left low safety to timid mates,  
 And made for the dread dear danger,  
 And gained the height where — who could guess  
 He would meet with a rival ranger?

'Twas a gold-red stag that stood and stared, 125  
 Gigantic and magnificent,  
 By the wonder — ay, and the peril — struck  
 Intelligent and pacific:

For a red deer is no fallow deer  
 Grown cowardly through park-feeding; 130  
 He batters you like a thunderbolt  
 If you brave his haunts unheeding.

I doubt he could hardly perform *volte-face*  
 Had valor advised discretion:  
 You may walk on a rope, but to turn on a rope 135  
 No Blondin makes profession.

Yet Donald must turn, would pride permit,  
 Though pride ill brooks retiring:  
 Each eyed each — mute man, motionless beast —  
 Less fearing than admiring. 140

These are the moments when quite new sense,  
 To meet some need as novel,  
 Springs up in the brain: it inspired resource:  
 — “Nor advance nor retreat but — grovel!”

And slowly, surely, never a whit 145  
 Relaxing the steady tension  
 Of eye-stare which binds man to beast, —  
 By an inch and inch declension,

Sank Donald sidewise down and down:  
 Till flat, breast upwards, lying 150  
 At his six-foot length, no corpse more still,  
 — “If he cross me! The trick’s worth trying.”

Minutes were an eternity;  
 But a new sense was created  
 In the stag’s brain too; he resolves! Slow, sure, 155  
 With eye-stare unabated,

Feelingly he extends a foot  
 Which tastes the way ere it touches  
 Earth’s solid and just escapes man’s soft,  
 Nor hold of the same unclutches 160

Till its fellow foot, light as a feather whisk,  
 Lands itself no less finely:  
 So a mother removes a fly from the face  
 Of her babe asleep supinely.

And now ’tis the haunch and hind-foot’s turn 165  
 — That’s hard: can the beast quite raise it?  
 Yes, traversing half the prostrate length,  
 His hoof-tip does not graze it.

Just one more lift! But Donald, you see,  
 Was sportsman first, man after: 170  
 A fancy lightened his caution through,  
 — He wellnigh broke into laughter:

“It were nothing short of a miracle!  
 Unrivalled, unexampled —  
 All sporting feats with this feat matched 175  
 Were down and dead and trampled!”

The last of the legs as tenderly  
Follows the rest: or never  
Or now is the time! His knife in reach,  
And his right-hand loose — how clever! 180

For this can stab up the stomach's soft,  
While the left-hand grasps the pastern.  
A rise on the elbow, and — now's the time  
Or never: this turn's the last turn!

I shall dare to place myself by God 185  
Who scanned — for he does — each feature  
Of the face thrown up in appeal to him  
By the agonizing creature.

Nay, I hear plain words: "Thy gift brings this!"  
Up he sprang, back he staggered, 190  
Over he fell, and with him our friend  
— At following game no laggard.

Yet he was not dead when they picked next day  
From the gully's depth the wreck of him;  
His fall had been stayed by the stag beneath, 195  
Who cushioned and saved the neck of him.

But the rest of his body — why, doctors said,  
Whatever could break was broken;  
Legs, arms, ribs, all of him looked like a toast  
In a tumbler of port-wine soaken. 200

"That your life is left you, thank the stag!"  
Said they when — the slow cure ended —  
They opened the hospital-door, and thence  
— Strapped, spliced, main fractures mended,

And minor damage left wisely alone,— 205  
 Like an old shoe clouted and cobbled,  
 Out — what went in a Goliath wellnigh, —  
 Some half of a David hobbled.

“You must ask an alms from house to house:  
 Sell the stag’s head for a bracket, 210  
 With its grand twelve tines — I’d buy it myself —  
 And use the skin for a jacket!”

He was wiser, made both head and hide  
 His win-penny: hands and knees on,  
 Would manage to crawl — poor crab — by the roads 215  
 In the misty stalking-season.

And if he discovered a bothy like this,  
 Why, harvest was sure: folk listened.  
 He told his tale to the lovers of Sport:  
 Lips twitched, cheeks glowed, eyes glistened. 220

And when he had come to the close, and spread  
 His spoils for the gazers’ wonder,  
 With “Gentlemen, here’s the skull of the stag  
 I was over, thank God, not under!” —

The company broke out in applause; 225  
 “By Jingo, a lucky cripple!  
 Have a munch of grouse and a hunk of bread,  
 And a tug, besides, at our tipples!”

And “There’s my pay for your pluck!” cried This,  
 “And mine for your jolly story!” 230  
 Cried That, while T’other — but he was drunk —  
 Hiccapped “A trump, a Tory!”



I hope I gave twice as much as the rest;  
 For, as Homer would say, "within grate  
 Though teeth kept tongue," my whole soul growled, 235  
 "Rightly rewarded, — Ingrate!"

## HERVÉ RIEL

## I

ON the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-  
 two,  
 Did the English fight the French, — woe to France!  
 And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the  
 blue,  
 Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks  
 pursue,  
 Came crowding ship on ship to Saint Malo on the  
 Rance, 5  
 With the English fleet in view.

## II

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full  
 chase;  
 First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship,  
 Damfreville;  
 Close on him fled, great and small,  
 Twenty-two good ships in all; 10  
 And they signalled to the place  
 "Help the winners of a race!  
 Get us guidance, give us harbor, take us quick — or,  
 quicker still,  
 Here's the English can and will!"

## III

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on  
board; 15

“Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to  
pass?” laughed they:

“Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred  
and scored,

Shall the ‘Formidable’ here with her twelve and eighty  
guns

Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,  
Trust to enter where ’tis ticklish for a craft of twenty  
tons, 20

And with flow at full beside?

Now, ’tis slackest ebb of tide.

Reach the mooring? Rather say,  
While rock stands or water runs,  
Not a ship will leave the bay!” 25

## IV

Then was called a council straight.

Brief and bitter the debate:

“Here’s the English at our heels; would you have them  
take in tow

All that’s left us of the fleet, linked together stern and  
bow,

For a prize to Plymouth Sound? 30

Better run the ships aground!”

(Ended Damfreville his speech).

“Not a minute more to wait!

Let the Captains all and each

Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the  
beach! 35

France must undergo her fate.

## V

“Give the word!” But no such word  
 Was ever spoke or heard;  
 For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all  
 these  
 — A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate — first, second,  
 third? 40  
 No such man of mark, and meet  
 With his betters to compete!  
 But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for  
 the fleet,  
 A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

## VI

And “What mockery or malice have we here?” cries  
 Hervé Riel: 45  
 “Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools,  
 or rogues?  
 Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the sound-  
 ings, tell  
 On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell  
 ’Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river  
 disembogues?  
 Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying’s  
 for? 50  
 Morn and eve, night and day,  
 Have I piloted your bay,  
 Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.  
 Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse  
 than fifty Hogues!  
 Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me  
 there’s a way! 55  
 Only let me lead the line,

Have the biggest ship to steer,  
 Get this 'Formidable' clear,  
 Make the others follow mine,  
 And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know  
     well, 60  
 Right to Solidor past Grève,  
     And there lay them safe and sound;  
     And if one ship misbehave,  
     — Keel so much as grate the ground,  
 Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!" cries  
     Hervé Riel. 65

## VII

Not a minute more to wait.  
 "Steer us in, then, small and great!  
     Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried  
     its chief.  
 Captains, give the sailor place!  
     He is Admiral, in brief. 70  
 Still the north-wind, by God's grace!  
 See the noble fellow's face  
 As the big ship, with a bound,  
 Clears the entry like a hound,  
 Keeps the passage, as its inch of way were the wide sea's  
     profound! 75  
     See, safe through shoal and rock,  
     How they follow in a flock,  
 Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the  
     ground,  
     Not a spar that comes to grief!  
 The peril, see, is past, 80  
 All are harbored to the last,  
 And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor!" — sure as fate,  
 Up the English come — too late!

## VIII

So, the storm subsides to calm:  
 They see the green trees wave 85  
 On the heights o'erlooking Grève.  
 Hearts that bled are stanch'd with balm.  
 "Just our rapture to enhance,  
 Let the English rake the bay,  
 Gnash their teeth and glare askance 90  
 As they cannonade away!  
 'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!"  
 How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance!  
 Out burst all with one accord,  
 "This is Paradise for Hell! 95  
 Let France, let France's King  
 Thank the man that did the thing!"  
 What a shout, and all one word,  
 "Hervé Riel!"  
 As he stepped in front once more, 100  
 Not a symptom of surprise  
 In the frank blue Breton eyes,  
 Just the same man as before.

## IX

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,  
 I must speak out at the end, 105  
 Though I find the speaking hard.  
 Praise is deeper than the lips:  
 You have saved the King his ships,  
 You must name your own reward.  
 'Faith, our sun was near eclipse! 110  
 Demand whate'er you will,  
 France remains your debtor still.  
 Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not  
 Damfreville."

## X

Then a beam of fun outbroke  
 On the bearded mouth that spoke, 115  
 As the honest heart laughed through  
 Those frank eyes of Breton blue:  
 "Since I needs must say my say,  
 Since on board the duty's done,  
 And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but  
 a run? — 120  
 Since 'tis ask and have, I may —  
 Since the others go ashore —  
 Come! A good whole holiday!  
 Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle  
 Aurore!"  
 That he asked and that he got, — nothing more. 125

## XI

Name and deed alike are lost:  
 Not a pillar nor a post  
 In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;  
 Not a head in white and black  
 On a single fishing-smack, 130  
 In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack  
 All that France saved from the fight whence England  
 bore the bell.  
 Go to Paris: rank on rank  
 Search the heroes flung pell-mell  
 On the Louvre, face and flank! 135  
 You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé  
 Riel.  
 So, for better and for worse,  
 Hervé Riel, accept my verse!

In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more  
 Save the squadron, honor France, love thy wife the Belle  
 Aurore! 140

## PHEIDIPPIDES

*Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν*

FIRST I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock!  
 Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes, honor to all!  
 Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal in  
 praise  
 — Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the ægis and  
 spear!  
 Also, ye of the bow and the buskin, praised be your  
 peer, 5  
 Now, henceforth and forever, — O latest to whom I  
 upraise  
 Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave pasture  
 and flock!  
 Present to help, potent to save, Pan — patron I call!

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I return!  
 See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no spectre that  
 speaks! 10  
 Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens  
 and you,  
 “Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid!  
 Persia has come, we are here, where is She?” Your  
 command I obeyed,  
 Ran and raced: like stubble, some field which a fire runs  
 through,  
 Was the space between city and city: two days, two  
 nights did I burn 15  
 Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but for "Persia  
has come!

Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water and earth;  
Razed to the ground is Eretria — but Athens, shall  
Athens sink,

Drop into dust and die — the flower of Hellas utterly  
die, 20

Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid,  
the stander-by?

Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch  
o'er destruction's brink?

How, — when? No care for my limbs! — there's light-  
ning in all and some —

Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth!"

O my Athens — Sparta love thee? Did Sparta re-  
spond? 25

Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,  
Malice, — each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified  
hate!

Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses.  
I stood

Quivering, — the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an  
inch from dry wood:

"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they de-  
bate? 30

Thunder, thou Zeus! Athene, are Spartans a quarry  
beyond

Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them  
'Ye must'!"

No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their answer at last!  
"Has Persia come, — does Athens ask aid, — may Sparta  
befriend?"



Nowise precipitate judgment — too weighty the issue at  
stake! 35

Count we no time lost time which lags through respect  
to the gods!

Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever the  
odds

In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable  
to take

Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to  
it fast:

Athens must wait, patient as we — who judgment  
suspend." 40

Athens, — except for that sparkle, — thy name, I had  
mouldered to ash!

That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and away  
was I back,

— Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false  
and the vile!

Yet "O gods of my land!" I cried, as each hillock and  
plain,

Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them  
again, 45

"Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid  
you erewhile?

Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation! Too  
rash

Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

"Oak and olive and bay,—I bid you cease to enwreathe  
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's  
foot, 50

You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn  
a slave!

Rather I hail thee, Parnes, — trust to thy wild waste tract!

Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter if slacked

My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave  
No deity deigns to drape with verdure? at least I can  
breathe, 55

Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!"

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;  
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar  
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.  
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure  
across: 60

"Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the fosse?

Athens to aid? Though the dive were through Erebos,  
thus I obey —

Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise! No  
bridge

Better!" — when — ha! what was it I came on, of  
wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he — majestic Pan! 65  
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head; moss cushioned his  
hoof:

All the great god was good in the eyes grave-kindly —  
the curl

Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe,  
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I  
saw.

"Halt, Pheidippides!" — halt I did, my brain of a  
whirl: 70

“Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?” he gracious  
began:

“How is it, — Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?

“Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast!  
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more  
helpful of old?

Ay, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan, trust  
me! 75

Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have  
faith

In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, ‘The  
Goat-God saith:

When Persia — so much as strews not the soil — is cast  
in the sea,

Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most  
and least,

Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the  
free and the bold!’ 80

“Say Pan saith: ‘Let this, foreshowing the place, be the  
pledge!’”

(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear  
— Fennel — I grasped it a-tremble with dew — whatever  
it bode)

“While, as for thee” . . . But enough! He was gone.  
If I ran hitherto —

Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but  
flew. 85

Parnes to Athens — earth no more, the air was my  
road:

Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the  
razor’s edge!

Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon rare!

Then spoke Miltiades. "And thee, best runner of Greece,  
Whose limbs did duty indeed, — what gift is promised  
thyself? 90

Tell it us straightway, — Athens the mother demands of  
her son!"

Rosily blushed the youth: he paused: but, lifting at length  
His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the  
rest of his strength

Into the utterance — "Pan spoke thus: 'For what thou  
hast done

Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee  
release 95

From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in  
pelf!'

"I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my  
mind!

Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel  
may grow, —

Pound — Pan helping us — Persia to dust, and, under  
the deep,

Whelm her away forever; and then, — no Athens to  
save, — 100

Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave, —  
Hie to my house and home: and, when my children shall  
creep

Close to my knees, — recount how the God was awful  
yet kind,

Promised their sire reward to the full — rewarding him  
— so!"

---

Unforseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon  
day: 105

So, when Persia was dust, all cried "To Akropolis!"

Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!  
 ‘Athens is saved, thank Pan,’ go shout!” He flung  
 down his shield,

Ran like fire once more: and the space ’twixt the Fennel-  
 field

And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs  
 through, 110

Till in he broke: “Rejoice, we conquer!” Like wine  
 through clay,

Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died — the bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of  
 salute

Is still “Rejoice!” — his word which brought rejoicing  
 indeed.

So is Pheidippides happy forever, — the noble strong  
 man 115

Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom  
 a god loved so well;

He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was  
 suffered to tell

Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he  
 began,

So to end gloriously — once to shout, thereafter be mute:

“Athens is saved!” — Pheidippides dies in the shout for  
 his meed. 120

## ECHETLOS

HERE is a story, shall stir you! Stand up, Greeks dead  
 and gone,

Who breasted, beat Barbarians, stemmed Persia rolling on,  
 Did the deed and saved the world, for the day was  
 Marathon!

No man but did his manliest, kept rank and fought  
 away  
 In his tribe and file: up, back, out, down — was the  
 spear-arm play: 5  
 Like a wind-whipt branchy wood, all spear-arms a-swing  
 that day!

But one man kept no rank, and his sole arm plied no  
 spear,  
 As a flashing came and went, and a form i' the van, the  
 rear,  
 Brightened the battle up, for he blazed now there, now  
 here.

Nor helmed nor shielded, he! but, a goat-skin all his  
 wear, 10  
 Like a tiller of the soil, with a clown's limbs broad and  
 bare,  
 Went he ploughing on and on: he pushed with a plough-  
 man's share.

Did the weak mid-line give way, as tunnies on whom the  
 shark  
 Precipitates his bulk? Did the right-wing halt when,  
 stark  
 On his heap of slain lay stretched Kallimachos Pole-  
 march? 15

Did the steady phalanx falter? To the rescue, at the  
 need,  
 The clown was ploughing Persia, clearing Greek earth of  
 weed,  
 As he routed through the Sakian and rooted up the Mede.

But the deed done, battle won, — nowhere to be de-  
scried

On the meadow, by the stream, at the marsh, — look far  
and wide 20

From the foot of the mountain, no, to the last blood-  
plashed sea-side, —

Not anywhere on view blazed the large limbs thonged  
and brown,

Shearing and clearing still with the share before which  
— down

To the dust went Persia's pomp, as he ploughed for  
Greece, that clown!

How spake the Oracle? "Care for no name at all! 25  
Say but just this: 'We praise one helpful whom we call  
The Holder of the Ploughshare.' The great deed ne'er  
grows small."

Not the great name! Sing — woe for the great name  
Miltiadés

And its end at Paros isle! Woe for Themistokles  
— Satrap in Sardis court! Name not the clown like  
these! 30

## THE PATRIOT

### AN OLD STORY

It was roses, roses, all the way,

With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:

The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,

The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,

A year ago on this very day.

The air broke into a mist with bells,  
 The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.  
 Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels —  
 But give me your sun from yonder skies!"  
 They had answered, "And afterward, what else?" 10

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun  
 To give it my loving friends to keep!  
 Naught man could do, have I left undone:  
 And you see my harvest, what I reap  
 This very day, now a year is run. 15

There's nobody on the house-tops now —  
 Just a palsied few at the windows set;  
 For the best of the sight is, all allow,  
 At the Shambles' Gate — or, better yet,  
 By the very scaffold's foot, I trow. 20

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,  
 A rope cuts both my wrists behind;  
 And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,  
 For they fling, whoever has a mind,  
 Stones at me for my year's misdeeds. 25

Thus I entered, and thus I go!  
 In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.  
 "Paid by the world, what dost thou owe  
 Me?" — God might question; now instead,  
 'Tis God shall repay: I am safer so. 30



## COUNT GISMOND

## AIX IN PROVENCE

CHRIST GOD who savest man, save most  
 Of men Count Gismond who saved me!  
 Count Gauthier, when he chose his post,  
 Chose time and place and company  
 To suit it; when he struck at length 5  
 My honor, 'twas with all his strength.

And doubtlessly ere he could draw  
 All points to one, he must have schemed!  
 That miserable morning saw  
 Few half so happy as I seemed, 10  
 While being dressed in queen's array  
 To give our tourney prize away.

I thought they loved me, did me grace  
 To please themselves; 'twas all their deed;  
 God makes, or fair or foul, our face; 15  
 If showing mine so caused to bleed  
 My cousins' hearts, they should have dropped  
 A word, and straight the play had stopped.

They, too, so beauteous! Each a queen  
 By virtue of her brow and breast; 20  
 Not needing to be crowned, I mean,  
 As I do. E'en when I was dressed,  
 Had either of them spoke, instead  
 Of glancing sideways with still head!

But no: they let me laugh, and sing 25  
 My birthday song quite through, adjust  
 The last rose in my garland, fling  
 A last look on the mirror, trust

My arms to each an arm of theirs,  
And so descend the castle-stairs — 30

And come out on the morning-troop  
Of merry friends who kissed my cheek,  
And called me queen, and made me stoop  
Under the canopy — (a streak  
That pierced it, of the outside sun, 35  
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft dun) —

And they could let me take my state  
And foolish throne amid applause  
Of all come there to celebrate  
My queen's-day — Oh I think the cause 40  
Of much was, they forgot no crowd  
Makes up for parents in their shroud!

Howe'er that be, all eyes were bent  
Upon me, when my cousins cast  
Theirs down; 't was time I should present 45  
The victor's crown, but . . . there, 'twill last  
No long time . . . the old mist again  
Blinds me as then it did. How vain!

See! Gismond's at the gate, in talk  
With his two boys: I can proceed. 50  
Well, at that moment, who should stalk  
Forth boldly — to my face, indeed —  
But Gauthier, and he thundered, "Stay!"  
And all stayed. "Bring no crowns, I say!

"Bring torches! Wind the penance-sheet 55  
About her! Let her shun the chaste,  
Or lay herself before their feet!  
Shall she whose body I embraced

A night long, queen it in the day?  
For honor's sake no crowns, I say!" 60

I? What I answered? As I live,  
I never fancied such a thing  
As answer possible to give.

What says the body when they spring  
Some monstrous torture-engine's whole  
Strength on it? No more says the soul. 65

Till out strode Gismond; then I knew  
That I was saved. I never met  
His face before, but, at first view,  
I felt quite sure that God had set 70  
Himself to Satan; who would spend  
A minute's mistrust on the end?

He strode to Gauthier, in his throat  
Gave him the lie, then struck his mouth  
With one back-handed blow that wrote 75  
In blood men's verdict there. North, South,  
East, West, I looked. The lie was dead,  
And damned, and truth stood up instead.

This glads me most, that I enjoyed  
The heart of the joy, with my content 80  
In watching Gismond unalloyed  
By any doubt of the event:  
God took that on him — I was bid  
Watch Gismond for my part: I did.

Did I not watch him while he let 85  
His armorer just brace his greaves,  
Rivet his hauberk, on the fret  
The while! His foot . . . my memory leaves

No least stamp out, nor how anon  
He pulled his ringing gauntlets on. 90

And e'en before the trumpet's sound  
Was finished, prone lay the false knight,  
Prone as his lie, upon the ground:  
Gismond flew at him, used no sleight  
O' the sword, but open-breasted drove, 95  
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

Which done, he dragged him to my feet  
And said, "Here die, but end thy breath  
In full confession, lest thou fleet  
From my first, to God's second death! 100  
Say, hast thou lied?" And, "I have lied  
To God and her," he said, and died.

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked  
— What safe my heart holds, though no word  
Could I repeat now, if I tasked 105  
My powers forever, to a third  
Dear even as you are. Pass the rest  
Until I sank upon his breast.

Over my head his arm he flung  
Against the world; and scarce I felt 110  
His sword (that dripped by me and swung)  
A little shifted in its belt:  
For he began to say the while  
How South our home lay many a mile.

So 'mid the shouting multitude 115  
We two walked forth to never more  
Return. My cousins have pursued  
Their life, untroubled as before

I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling-place  
 God lighten! May his soul find grace! 120

Our elder boy has got the clear  
 Great brow; though when his brother's black  
 Full eye shows scorn, it . . . Gismond here?  
 And have you brought my tercel back?  
 I just was telling Adela 125  
 How many birds it struck since May.

## THE TWINS

“Give” and “It-shall-be-given-unto-you”

GRAND rough old Martin Luther  
 Bloomed fables — flowers on furze,  
 The better the uncouter:  
 Do roses stick like burrs?

A beggar asked an alms 5  
 One day at an abbey-door,  
 Said Luther, but, seized with qualms,  
 The Abbot replied, “We're poor!

“Poor, who had plenty once,  
 When gifts fell thick as rain: 10  
 But they give us naught, for the nonce,  
 And how should we give again?”

Then the beggar, “See your sins!  
 Of old, unless I err,  
 Ye had brothers for inmates, twins, 15  
 Date and Dabitur.

“While Date was in good case  
 Dabitur flourished too:  
 For Dabitur’s lenten face  
 No wonder if Date rue. 20

“Would ye retrieve the one?  
 Try and make plump the other!  
 When Date’s penance is done,  
 Dabitur helps his brother.

“Only, beware relapse!” 25  
 The Abbot hung his head.  
 This beggar might be perhaps  
 An angel, Luther said.

### THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

MORNING, evening, noon and night,  
 “Praise God!” sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,  
 Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he labored, long and well; 5  
 O’er his work the boy’s curls fell.

But ever, at each period,  
 He stopped and sang, “Praise God!”

Then back again his curls he threw,  
 And cheerful turned to work anew. 10

Said Blaise, the listening monk, “Well done;  
 I doubt not thou art heard, my son:

“As well as if thy voice to-day  
Were praising God, the Pope’s great way.

“This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome  
Praises God from Peter’s dome.” 15

Said Theocrite, “Would God that I  
Might praise him that great way, and die!”

Night passed, day shone,  
And Theocrite was gone. 20

With God a day endures always;  
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, “Nor day nor night  
Now brings the voice of my delight.”

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow’s birth,  
Spread his wings and sank to earth; 25

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,  
Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon and night,  
Praised God in place of Theocrite. 30

And from a boy, to youth he grew:  
The man put off the stripling’s hue:

The man matured and fell away  
Into the season of decay:

And ever o’er the trade he bent,  
And ever lived on earth content. 35

(He did God's will; to him, all one  
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, "A praise is in mine ear;  
There is no doubt in it, no fear: 40

"So sing old worlds, and so  
New worlds that from my footstool go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways:  
I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell 45  
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day: he flew to Rome,  
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by  
The great outer gallery, 50

With his holy vestments dight,  
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite:

And all his past career  
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade, 55  
Till on his life the sickness weighed;

And in his cell, when death drew near,  
An angel in a dream brought cheer:

And rising from the sickness drear,  
He grew a priest, and now stood here. 60



To the East with praise he turned,  
And on his sight the angel burned.

“I bore thee from thy craftsman’s cell,  
And set thee here; I did not well.

“Vainly I left my angel-sphere; 65  
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

“Thy voice’s praise seemed weak; dropped —  
Creation’s chorus stopped!

“Go back and praise again 70  
The early way, while I remain.

“With that weak voice of our disdain,  
Take up creation’s pausing strain.

“Back to the cell and poor employ:  
Resume the craftsman and the boy!”

Theocrite grew old at home; 75  
A new Pope dwelt in Peter’s dome.

One vanished as the other died:  
They sought God side by side.

## MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

THAT’S my last Duchess painted on the wall,  
Looking as if she were alive. I call  
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf’s hands  
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.

Will't please you sit and look at her? I said 5  
 "Frà Pandolf" by design; for never read  
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,  
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,  
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by  
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I) 10  
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,  
 How such a glance came there; so, not the first  
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not  
 Her husband's presence only called that spot  
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps 15  
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps  
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint  
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint  
 Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff  
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough 20  
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had  
 A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,  
 Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er  
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.  
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast, 25  
 The dropping of the daylight in the West,  
 The bough of cherries some officious fool  
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule  
 She rode with round the terrace — all and each  
 Would draw from her alike the approving speech, 30  
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! but thanked  
 Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked  
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name  
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame  
 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill 35  
 In speech — (which I have not) — to make your will  
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this  
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,

Or there exceed the mark" — and if she let  
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40  
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,  
 — E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose  
 Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,  
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without  
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands; 45  
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands  
 As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet  
 The company below, then. I repeat,  
 The Count your master's known munificence  
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence 50  
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;  
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed  
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go  
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,  
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, 55  
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

## A FACE

IF one could have that little head of hers  
 Painted upon a background of pale gold,  
 Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!  
 No shade encroaching on the matchless mould  
 Of those two lips, which should be opening soft 5  
 In the pure profile; not as when she laughs,  
 For that spoils all: but rather as if aloft  
 Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its staff's  
 Burden of honey-colored buds to kiss  
 And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this. 10  
 Then her lithe neck, three fingers might surround,  
 How it should waver on the pale gold ground

Up to the fruit-shaped, perfect chin it lifts!  
 I know, Correggio loves to mass, in rifts  
 Of heaven, his angel faces, orb on orb 15  
 Breaking its outline, burning shades absorb:  
 But these are only massed there, I should think,  
 Waiting to see some wonder momentarily  
 Grow out, stand full, fade slow against the sky  
 (That's the pale ground you'd see this sweet face by), 20  
 All heaven, meanwhile, condensed into one eye  
 Which fears to lose the wonder, should it wink.

### SONG FROM PIPPA PASSES

THE year's at the spring  
 And day's at the morn;  
 Morning's at seven;  
 The hillside's dew-pearl'd;  
 The lark's on the wing; 5  
 The snail's on the thorn:  
 God's in his heaven —  
 All's right with the world!

### CAVALIER TUNES

#### I. MARCHING ALONG

KENTISH Sir Byng stood for his King,  
 Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing:  
 And, pressing a troop unable to stoop  
 And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,  
 Marched them along, fifty-score strong, 5  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles  
 To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles!

Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,  
 Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup 10  
 Till you're —

CHORUS. — Marching along, fifty-score strong,  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell.  
 Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well! 15  
 England, good cheer! Rupert is near!  
 Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,  
 CHO. — Marching along, fifty-score strong,  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song?

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls 20  
 To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!  
 Hold by the right, you double your might;  
 So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,  
 CHO. — March we along, fifty-score strong,  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song! 25

## II. GIVE A ROUSE

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?  
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?  
 Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,  
 King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since? 5  
 Who raised me the house that sank once?  
 Who helped me to gold I spent since?  
 Who found me in wine you drank once?

CHO. — King Charles, and who'll do him right now?  
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now? 10  
 Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,  
 King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else,  
 By the old fool's side that begot him?  
 For whom did he cheer and laugh else, 15  
 While Noll's damned troopers shot him?

CHO. — King Charles, and who'll do him right now?  
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?  
 Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,  
 King Charles! 20

### III. BOOT AND SADDLE

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!  
 Rescue my castle before the hot day  
 Brightens to blue its silvery gray.

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say; 5  
 Many's the friend there, will listen and pray  
 "God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay —

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,  
 Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array: 10  
 Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude, that, honest and gay,  
 Laughs when you talk of surrendering: "Nay!  
 I've better counsellors; what counsel they? 15

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

## HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

OH, to be in England  
 Now that April's there;  
 And whoever wakes in England  
 Sees, some morning, unaware,  
 That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf 5  
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,  
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough  
 In England — now!

And after April, when May follows,  
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows! 10  
 Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge  
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover  
 Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge —  
 That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,  
 Lest you should think he never could recapture 15  
 The first fine careless rapture!  
 And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,  
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew  
 The buttercups, the little children's dower  
 — Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower! 20

## HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

NOBLY, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the Northwest died  
 away;  
 Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz  
 Bay;  
 Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;  
 In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar  
 grand and gray;

“Here and here did England help me: how can I help  
 England?” — say, 5  
 Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and  
 pray,  
 While Jove’s planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

“DE GUSTIBUS —”

YOUR ghost will walk, you lover of trees,  
 (If our loves remain)  
 In an English lane,  
 By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.  
 Hark, those two in the hazel coppice — 5  
 A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,  
 Making love, say, —  
 The happier they!  
 Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,  
 And let them pass, as they will too soon, 10  
 With the beanflowers’ boon,  
 And the blackbird’s tune,  
 And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world  
 Is a castle, precipice-encurled, 15  
 In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.  
 Or look for me, old fellow of mine,  
 (If I get my head from out the mouth  
 O’ the grave, and loose my spirit’s bands,  
 And come again to the land of lands) — 20  
 In a sea-side house to the farther South,  
 Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,  
 And one sharp tree — ’tis a cypress — stands  
 By the many hundred years red-rusted,  
 Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o’ercrusted, 25



My sentinel to guard the sands  
 To the water's edge. For, what expands  
 Before the house, but the great opaque  
 Blue breadth of sea without a break?  
 While, in the house, forever crumbles 30  
 Some fragment of the frescoed walls,  
 From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.  
 A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles  
 Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,  
 And says there's news to-day — the king 35  
 Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,  
 Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling:  
 — She hopes they have not caught the felons.  
 Italy, my Italy!  
 Queen Mary's saying serves for me — 40  
     (When fortune's malice  
     Lost her, Calais)  
 Open my heart and you will see  
 Graved inside of it, "Italy."  
 Such lovers old are I and she: 45  
 So it always was, so shall ever be!

UP AT A VILLA — DOWN IN THE CITY<sup>1</sup>

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON OF QUALITY.)

I

HAD I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,  
 The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-  
 square;  
 Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window  
 there!

<sup>1</sup> See note on page 113

## II

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!  
 There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast; 5  
 While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than  
 a beast.

## III

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull  
 Just on a mountain edge as bare as the creature's skull,  
 Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!  
 — I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's  
 turned wool. 10

## IV

But the city, oh the city — the square with the houses!  
 Why!  
 They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something  
 to take the eye!  
 Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;  
 You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who  
 hurries by;  
 Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the  
 sun gets high; 15  
 And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted  
 properly.

## V

What of a villa? Though winter be over in March by  
 rights,  
 'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well  
 off the heights:  
 You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen  
 steam and wheeze,  
 And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray  
 olive-trees. 20

## VI

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at  
once;

In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.  
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three  
fingers well,

The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red  
bell

Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick  
and sell. 25

## VII

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout  
and splash!

In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foam-  
bows flash

On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and  
paddle and pash

Round the lady atop in her conch — fifty gazers do not  
abash,

Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist  
in a sort of sash. 30

## VIII

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you  
linger,

Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted  
forefinger.

Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and  
mingle,

Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-  
tingle.

Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is  
shrill, 35

And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.

Enough of the seasons, — I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

## IX

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin:

No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in: You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin. 40

By and by there's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth

Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath. At the post-office such a scene-picture — the new play, piping hot!

And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.

Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes, 45

And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's!

Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so

Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, St. Jerome, and Cicero,

“And moreover” (the sonnet goes rhyming), “the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,

Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached.” 50

Noon strikes, — here sweeps the procession! our Lady borne smiling and smart,

With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart!

*Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;  
No keeping one's haunches still: it's the greatest pleasure  
in life.

## X

But bless you, it's dear — it's dear! fowls, wine, at double  
the rate. 55

They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays  
passing the gate

It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not  
the city!

Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still — ah, the pity,  
the pity!

Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with  
cowls and sandals,

And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the  
yellow candles; 60

One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross  
with handles,

And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better  
prevention of scandals:

*Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.  
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in  
life!

## MEMORABILIA

АH, did you once see Shelley plain,  
And did he stop and speak to you,  
And did you speak to him again?  
How strange it seems and new!

But you were living before that, 5  
And also you are living after;  
And the memory I started at —  
My starting moves your laughter!

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own  
 And a certain use in the world no doubt, 10  
 Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone  
 'Mid the blank miles round about:

For there I picked up on the heather,  
 And there I put inside my breast  
 A moulted feather, an eagle-feather! 15  
 Well, I forget the rest.

### THE LOST LEADER

JUST for a handful of silver he left us,  
 Just for a riband to stick in his coat —  
 Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,  
 Lost all the others she lets us devote;  
 They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver; 5  
 So much was theirs who so little allowed:  
 How all our copper had gone for his service!  
 Rags — were they purple, his heart had been proud!  
 We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,  
 Lived in his mild and magnificent eye, 10  
 Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,  
 Made him our pattern to live and to die!  
 Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,  
 Burns, Shelley, were with us, — they watch from their  
 graves!  
 He alone breaks from the van and the freemen, 15  
 — He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

We shall march prospering, — not through his presence;  
 Songs may inspirit us, — not from his lyre;  
 Deeds will be done, — while he boasts his quiescence,  
 Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire: 20

Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,  
 One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,  
 One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,  
 One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!  
 Life's night begins: let him never come back to us! 25  
 There would be doubt, hesitation and pain;  
 Forced praise on our part — the glimmer of twilight,  
 Never glad confident morning again!  
 Best fight on well, for we taught him — strike gallantly,  
 Menace our heart ere we master his own; 30  
 Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,  
 Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

## LIFE IN A LOVE

ESCAPE me?  
 Never —  
 Beloved!  
 While I am I, and you are you,  
 So long as the world contains us both, 5  
 Me the loving and you the loth,  
 While the one eludes, must the other pursue.  
 My life is a fault at last, I fear:  
 It seems too much like a fate, indeed!  
 Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed. 10  
 But what if I fail of my purpose here?  
 It is but to keep the nerves at strain,  
 To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,  
 And baffled, get up and begin again, —  
 So the chase takes up one's life, that's all. 15  
 While, look but once from your farthest bound  
 At me so deep in the dust and dark,  
 No sooner the old hope goes to ground

Than a new one, straight to the selfsame mark,  
 I shape me — 20  
 Ever  
 Removed!

## YOUTH AND ART

It once might have been, once only:  
 We lodged in a street together,  
 You, a sparrow on the housetop lonely,  
 I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

Your trade was with sticks and clay, 5  
 You thumbed, thrust, patted and polished,  
 Then laughed "They will see some day  
 Smith made, and Gibson demolished."

My business was song, song, song;  
 I chirped, cheeped, trilled and twittered; 10  
 "Kate Brown's on the boards ere long,  
 And Grisi's existence embittered!

I earned no more by a warble  
 Than you by a sketch in plaster;  
 You wanted a piece of marble, 15  
 I needed a music-master.

We studied hard in our styles,  
 Chipped each at a crust like Hindoos,  
 For air, looked out on the tiles,  
 For fun, watched each other's windows. 20

You lounged, like a boy of the South,  
 Cap and blouse — nay, a bit of beard too;  
 Or you got it, rubbing your mouth  
 With fingers the clay adhered to.



And I — soon managed to find 25  
 Weak points in the flower-fence facing,  
 Was forced to put up a blind  
 And be safe in my corset-lacing.

No harm! It was not my fault  
 If you never turned your eye's tail up 30  
 As I shook upon E *in alt.*,  
 Or ran the chromatic scale up:

For spring bade the sparrows pair,  
 And the boys and girls gave guesses,  
 And stalls in our street looked rare 35  
 With bulrush and watercresses.

Why did not you pinch a flower  
 In a pellet of clay and fling it?  
 Why did not I put a power  
 Of thanks in a look, or sing it? 40

I did look, sharp as a lynx,  
 (And yet the memory rankles,)  
 When models arrived, some minx  
 Tripped up-stairs, she and her ankles.

But I think I gave you as good! 45  
 "That foreign fellow, — who can know  
 How she pays, in a playful mood,  
 For his tuning her that piano?"

Could you say so, and never say,  
 "Suppose we join hands and fortunes, 50  
 And I fetch her from over the way,  
 Her, piano, and long tunes and short tunes"?

No, no: you would not be rash,  
 Nor I rasher and something over:  
 You've to settle yet Gibson's hash, 55  
 And Grisi yet lives in clover.

But you meet the Prince at the Board,  
 I'm queen myself at *bals-paré*,  
 I've married a rich old lord,  
 And you're dubbed knight and an R. A. 60

Each life unfulfilled, you see;  
 It hangs still, patchy and scrappy:  
 We have not sighed deep, laughed free,  
 Starved, feasted, despaired, — been happy;

And nobody calls you a dunce, 65  
 And people suppose me clever:  
 This could but have happened once,  
 And we misséd it, lost it forever.

### EVELYN HOPE

BEAUTIFUL Evelyn Hope is dead!  
 Sit and watch by her side an hour.  
 That is her book-shelf, this her bed;  
 She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,  
 Beginning to die too, in the glass; 5  
 Little has yet been changed, I think:  
 The shutters are shut, no light may pass  
 Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

Sixteen years old when she died!  
 Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name; 10  
 It was not her time to love; beside,  
 Her life had many a hope and aim,

Duties enough and little cares,  
 And now was quiet, now astir,  
 Till God's hand beckoned unawares, — 15  
 And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?  
 What, your soul was pure and true,  
 The good stars met in your horoscope,  
 Made you of spirit, fire and dew — 20  
 And, just because I was thrice as old  
 And our paths in the world diverged so wide,  
 Each was naught to each, must I be told?  
 We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above 25  
 Is great to grant, as mighty to make,  
 And creates the love to reward the love:  
 I claim you still, for my own love's sake!  
 Delayed it may be for more lives yet,  
 Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few: 30  
 Much is to learn, much to forget  
 Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come, — at last it will,  
 When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)  
 In the lower earth, in the years long still, 35  
 That body and soul so pure and gay?  
 Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,  
 And your mouth of your own geranium's red —  
 And what you would do with me, in fine,  
 In the new life come in the old one's stead. 40

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,  
 Given up myself so many times,  
 Gained me the gains of various men,  
 Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;

Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope, 45  
 Either I missed or itself missed me:  
 And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!  
 What is the issue? let us see!

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!  
 My heart seemed full as it could hold; 50  
 There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,  
 And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.  
 So, hush, — I will give you this leaf to keep:  
 See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!  
 There, that is our secret: go to sleep! 55  
 You will wake, and remember, and understand.

### SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER

GR-R-R — there go, my heart's abhorrence!  
 Water your damned flower-pots, do!  
 If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,  
 God's blood, would not mine kill you!  
 What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming? 5  
 Oh, that rose has prior claims —  
 Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?  
 Hell dry you up with its flames!

At the meal we sit together:  
*Salve tibi!* I must hear 10  
 Wise talk of the kind of weather,  
 Sort of season, time of year:  
*Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely*  
*Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:*  
 What's the Latin name for "parsley"? 15  
 What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,  
 Laid with care on our own shelf!  
 With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,  
 And a goblet for ourself, 20  
 Rinsed like something sacrificial  
 Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps —  
 Marked with L for our initial!  
 (He-he! There his lily snaps!)

*Saint*, forsooth! While brown Dolores 25  
 Squats outside the Convent bank  
 With Sanchicha, telling stories,  
 Steeping tresses in the tank,  
 Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs,  
 — Can't I see his dead eye glow, 30  
 Bright as 't were a Barbary corsair's?  
 (That is, if he'd let it show!)

When he finishes refection,  
 Knife and fork he never lays  
 Cross-wise, to my recollection, 35  
 As do I, in Jesu's praise.  
 I the Trinity illustrate,  
 Drinking watered orange-pulp —  
 In three sips the Arian frustrate;  
 While he drains his at one gulp. 40

Oh, those melons! If he's able  
 We're to have a feast! so nice!  
 One goes to the Abbot's table,  
 All of us get each a slice.  
 How go on your flowers? None double? 45  
 Not one fruit-sort can you spy?  
 Strange! — And I, too, at such trouble  
 Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

- There's a great text in Galatians,  
 Once you trip on it, entails 50  
 Twenty-nine distinct damnations,  
 One sure, if another fails:  
 If I trip him just a-dying,  
 Sure of heaven as sure can be,  
 Spin him round and send him flying 55  
 Off to hell, a Manichee?
- Or, my scrofulous French novel  
 On gray paper with blunt type!  
 Simply glance at it, you grovel  
 Hand and foot in Belial's gripe: 60  
 If I double down its pages  
 At the woeful sixteenth print,  
 When he gathers his greengages,  
 Ope a sieve and slip it in't?
- Or, there's Satan! — one might venture 65  
 Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave  
 Such a flaw in the indenture  
 As he'd miss till, past retrieve,  
 Blasted lay that rose-acacia  
 We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine . . .* 70  
 'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratiâ,*  
*Ave, Virgo!* Gr-r-r — you swine!

### A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,  
 Singing together.  
 Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes  
 Each in its tether

- Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain, 5  
 Cared-for till cock-crow:  
 Look out if yonder be not day again  
 Rimming the rock-row!  
 That's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,  
 Rarer, intenser, 10  
 Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,  
 Chafes in the censor.  
 Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;  
 Seek we sepulture  
 On a tall mountain, citted to the top, 15  
 Crowded with culture!  
 All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;  
 Clouds overcome it;  
 No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's  
 Circling its summit. 20  
 Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights;  
 Wait ye the warning?  
 Our low life was the level's and the night's;  
 He's for the morning.  
 Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head, 25  
 'Ware the beholders!  
 This is our master, famous, calm and dead,  
 Borne on our shoulders.
- Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,  
 Safe from the weather! 30  
 He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,  
 Singing together,  
 He was a man born with thy face and throat,  
 Lyric Apollo!  
 Long he lived nameless: how should Spring take note 35  
 Winter would follow?

Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!  
     Cramped and diminished,  
 Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon!  
     My dance is finished"? 40  
 No, that's the world's way: (keep the mountain-side,  
     Make for the city!)  
 He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride  
     Over men's pity;  
 Left play for work, and grappled with the world 45  
     Bent on escaping:  
 "What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou keepest furled?  
     Show me their shaping,  
 Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage, —  
     Give!" — So, he gowned him, 50  
 Straight got by heart that book to its last page:  
     Learned, we found him.  
 Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,  
     Accents uncertain:  
 "Time to taste life," another would have said, 55  
     "Up with the curtain!"  
 This man said rather, "Actual life comes next?  
     Patience a moment!  
 Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,  
     Still there's the comment. 60  
 Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,  
     Painful or easy!  
 Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,  
     Ay, nor feel queasy."  
 Oh, such a life as he resolved to live, 65  
     When he had learned it,  
 When he had gathered all books had to give!  
     Sooner, he spurned it.  
 Imagine the whole, then execute the parts —  
     Fancy the fabric 70



Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,  
Ere mortar dab brick!

- (Here's the town-gate reached: there's the market-place  
Gaping before us.)
- Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace 75  
(Hearten our chorus!)
- That before living he'd learn how to live —  
No end to learning:  
Earn the means first — God surely will contrive  
Use for our earning. 80
- Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes:  
Live now or never!"
- He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!  
Man has Forever."
- Back to his book then: deeper drooped his head: 85  
*Calculus* racked him:  
Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:  
*Tussis* attacked him.
- "Now, master, take a little rest!" — not he!  
(Caution redoubled, 90
- Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)  
Not a whit troubled,  
Back to his studies, fresher than at first,  
Fierce as a dragon
- He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst) 95  
Sucked at the flagon.
- Oh, if we draw a circle premature,  
Heedless of far gain,  
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure  
Bad is our bargain! 100
- Was it not great? did not he throw on God,  
(He loves the burthen) —

- God's task to make the heavenly period  
Perfect the earthen?
- Did not he magnify the mind, show clear 105  
Just what it all meant?
- He would not discount life, as fools do here,  
Paid by instalment.
- He ventured neck or nothing — heaven's success  
Found, or earth's failure: 110
- “Wilt thou trust death or not?” He answered “Yes!  
Hence with life's pale lure!”
- That low man seeks a little thing to do, .  
Sees it and does it:
- This high man, with a great thing to pursue, 115  
Dies ere he knows it.
- That low man goes on adding one to one,  
His hundred's soon hit:
- This high man, aiming at a million,  
Misses an unit. 120
- That, has the world here — should he need the next,  
Let the world mind him!
- This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed  
Seeking shall find him.
- So, with the throttling hands of death at strife, 125  
Ground he at grammar;
- Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife:  
While he could stammer
- He settled *Hoti's* business — let it be! —  
Properly based *Oun* — 130
- Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,  
Dead from the waist down.

Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place:  
Hail to your purlieus.

All ye highfliers of the feathered race, 135  
 Swallows and curlews!  
 Here's the top-peak; the multitude below  
 Live, for they can, there:  
 This man decided not to Live but Know —  
 Bury this man there? 140  
 Here — here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds  
 form,  
 Lightnings are loosened,  
 Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm;  
 Peace let the dew send!  
 Lofty designs must close in like effects: 145  
 Loftily lying,  
 Leave him — still loftier than the world suspects,  
 Living and dying.

## ONE WORD MORE

TO E. B. B.

*London, September, 1855*

## I

THERE they are, my fifty men and women  
 Naming me the fifty poems finished!  
 Take them, Love, the book and me together:  
 Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

## II

Rafael made a century of sonnets, 5  
 Made and wrote them in a certain volume  
 Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil  
 Else he only used to draw Madonnas:  
 These, the world might view — but one, the volume.  
 Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you. 10

Did she live and love it all her lifetime?  
 Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,  
 Die, and let it drop beside her pillow  
 Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,  
 Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving — 15  
 Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,  
 Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

## III

You and I would rather read that volume,  
 (Taken to his beating bosom by it)  
 Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael, 20  
 Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas —  
 Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,  
 Her, that visits Florence in a vision,  
 Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre —  
 Seen by us and all the world in circle. 25

## IV

You and I will never read that volume.  
 Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple  
 Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.  
 Guido Reni dying, all Bologna  
 Cried, and the world cried too, "Ours, the treasure!" 30  
 Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

## V

Dante once prepared to paint an angel:  
 Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice."  
 While he mused and traced it and retraced it,  
 (Peradventure with a pen corroded 35  
 Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,  
 When, his left-hand i' the hair o' the wicked,  
 Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,

Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,  
 Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle, 40  
 Let the wretch go festering through Florence) —  
 Dante, who loved well because he hated,  
 Hated wickedness that hinders loving,  
 Dante standing, studying his angel, —  
 In there broke the folk of his Inferno. 45  
 Says he — "Certain people of importance"  
 (Such he gave his daily dreadful line to)  
 "Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet."  
 Says the poet — "Then I stopped my painting."

## VI

You and I would rather see that angel, 50  
 Painted by the tenderness of Dante,  
 Would we not? — than read a fresh Inferno.

## VII

You and I will never see that picture.  
 While he mused on love and Beatrice,  
 While he softened o'er his outlined angel, 55  
 In they broke, those "people of importance:"  
 We and Bice bear the loss forever.

## VIII

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?  
 This: no artist lives and loves, that longs not  
 Once, and only once, and for one only, 60  
 (Ah, the prize!) to find his love a language  
 Fit and fair and simple and sufficient —  
 Using nature that's an art to others,  
 Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.  
 Ay, of all the artists living, loving, 65

None but would forego his proper dowry, —  
 Does he paint? he fain would write a poem, —  
 Does he write? he fain would paint a picture,  
 Put to proof art alien to the artist's,  
 Once, and only once, and for one only, 70  
 So to be the man and leave the artist,  
 Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

## IX

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!  
 He who smites the rock and spreads the water,  
 Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him, 75  
 Even he, the minute makes immortal,  
 Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute,  
 Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.  
 While he smites, how can he but remember,  
 So he smote before, in such a peril, 80  
 When they stood and mocked — "Shall smiting help us?"  
 When they drank and sneered — "A stroke is easy!"  
 When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,  
 Throwing him for thanks — "But drought was pleasant."  
 Thus old memories mar the actual triumph; 85  
 Thus the doing savors of disrelish;  
 Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;  
 O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,  
 Carelessness or consciousness — the gesture.  
 For he bears an ancient wrong about him, 90  
 Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,  
 Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude —  
 "How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save us?"  
 Guesses what is like to prove the sequel —  
 "Egypt's flesh-pots — nay, the drought was better." 95

## X

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant!  
 Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,  
 Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.  
 Never dares the man put off the prophet.

## XI

Did he love one face from out the thousands, 100  
 (Were she Jethro's daughter, white and wifely,  
 Were she but the Æthiopian bondslave,)  
 He would envy yon dumb patient camel,  
 Keeping a reserve of scanty water  
 Meant to save his own life in the desert; 105  
 Ready in the desert to deliver  
 (Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)  
 Hoard and life together for his mistress.

## XII

I shall never, in the years remaining, 110  
 Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,  
 Make you music that should all-express me;  
 So it seems: I stand on my attainment.  
 This of verse alone, one life allows me;  
 Verse and nothing else have I to give you.  
 Other heights in other lives, God willing: 115  
 All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

## XIII

Yet a semblance of resource avails us —  
 Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.  
 Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,  
 Lines I write the first time and the last time. 120

He who works in fresco steals a hair-brush,  
 Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,  
 Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,  
 Makes a strange art of an art familiar,  
 Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets. 125  
 He who blows through bronze may breathe through silver,  
 Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.  
 He who writes, may write for once as I do.

## XIV

Love, you saw me gather men and women,  
 Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy: 130  
 Enter each and all, and use their service;  
 Speak from every mouth, — the speech, a poem.  
 Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,  
 Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving:  
 I am mine and yours — the rest be all men's; 135  
 Karshish, Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty.  
 Let me speak this once in my true person,  
 Not as Lippo, Roland, or Andrea,  
 Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence:  
 Pray you, look on these my men and women, 140  
 Take and keep my fifty poems finished;  
 Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!  
 Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

## XV

Not but that you know me! Lo, the moon's self!  
 Here in London, yonder late in Florence, 145  
 Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured.  
 Curving on a sky imbrued with color,  
 Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,  
 Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.



Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato, 150  
 Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,  
 Perfect till the nightingales applauded.  
 Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,  
 Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,  
 Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver, 155  
 Goes dispiritedly, glad to finish.

## XVI

What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy?  
 Nay: for if that moon could love a mortal,  
 Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),  
 All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos), 160  
 She would turn a new side to her mortal,  
 Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman —  
 Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,  
 Blind to Galileo on his turret,  
 Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats — him, even! 165  
 Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal —  
 When she turns round, comes again in heaven,  
 Opens out anew for worse or better!  
 Proves she like some portent of an iceberg  
 Swimming full upon the ship it founders, 170  
 Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals?  
 Proves she as the paved work of a sapphire  
 Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?  
 Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu  
 Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest, 175  
 Stand upon the paved work of a sapphire.  
 Like the bodied heaven in his clearness  
 Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved work,  
 When they ate and drank and saw God also!

## XVII

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall  
 know. 180

Only this is sure — the sight were other;  
 Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,  
 Dying now impoverished here in London.  
 God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures  
 Boasts two soul-sides: one to face the world with; 185  
 One to show a woman when he loves her!

## XVIII

This I say of me, but think of you, Love!  
 This to you — yourself my moon of poets!  
 Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder;  
 Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you! 190  
 There, in turn I stand with them and praise you —  
 Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.  
 But the best is when I glide from out them,  
 Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,  
 Come out on the other side, the novel 195  
 Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,  
 Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

## XIX

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas;  
 Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,  
 Wrote one song — and in my brain I sing it; 200  
 Drew one angel — borne, see, on my bosom!

R. B.

## PROSPICE

FEAR death? — to feel the fog in my throat,  
     The mist in my face,  
 When the snows begin, and the blasts denote  
     I am nearing the place,  
 The power of the night, the press of the storm,                   5  
     The post of the foe;  
 Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,  
     Yet the strong man must go:  
 For the journey is done and the summit attained,  
     And the barriers fall,   10  
 Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,  
     The reward of it all.  
 I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,  
     The best and the last!  
 I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and for-  
     bore,   15  
     And bade me creep past.  
 No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers  
     The heroes of old,  
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears  
     Of pain, darkness, and cold.                                   20  
 For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,  
     The black minute's at end,  
 And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,  
     Shall dwindle, shall blend,  
 Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,   25  
     Then a light, then thy breast.  
 O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,  
     And with God be the rest!

## EPILOGUE TO ASOLANDO

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,  
 When you set your fancies free,  
 Will they pass to where — by death, fools think, im-  
 prisoned —  
 Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,  
 — Pity me? 5

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!  
 What had I on earth to do  
 With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?  
 Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel  
 — Being — who? 10

One who never turned his back but marched breast  
 forward,  
 Never doubted clouds would break,  
 Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would  
 triumph,  
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
 Sleep to wake. 15

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time  
 Greet the unseen with a cheer!  
 Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,  
 "Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed, — fight on, fare ever  
 There as here!" 20

## THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

THAT second time they hunted me  
 From hill to plain, from shore to sea,  
 And Austria, hounding far and wide  
 Her blood-hounds through the country-side,  
 Breathed hot and instant on my trace,— 5  
 I made six days a hiding-place  
 Of that dry green old aqueduct  
 Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked  
 The fire-flies from the roof above,  
 Bright creeping through the moss they love: 10  
 —How long it seems since Charles was lost!  
 Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed  
 The country in my very sight;  
 And when that peril ceased at night,  
 The sky broke out in red dismay 15  
 With signal fires; well, there I lay  
 Close covered o'er in my recess,  
 Up to the neck in ferns and cress,  
 Thinking on Metternich our friend,  
 And Charles's miserable end, 20  
 And much beside, two days; the third,  
 Hunger o'ercame me when I heard  
 The peasants from the village go  
 To work among the maize; you know,  
 With us in Lombardy, they bring 25  
 Provisions packed on mules, a string  
 With little bells that cheer their task,  
 And casks, and boughs on every cask  
 To keep the sun's heat from the wine;  
 These I let pass in jingling line, 30  
 And, close on them, dear noisy crew,

The peasants from the village, too;  
 For at the very rear would troop  
 Their wives and sisters in a group  
 To help, I knew. When these had passed, 35  
 I threw my glove to strike the last,  
 Taking the chance: she did not start,  
 Much less cry out, but stooped apart,  
 One instant rapidly glanced round,  
 And saw me beckon from the ground; 40  
 A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;  
 She picked my glove up while she stripped  
 A branch off, then rejoined the rest  
 With that; my glove lay in her breast.  
 Then I drew breath: they disappeared: 45  
 It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone  
 Exactly where my glove was thrown.  
 Meanwhile came many thoughts; on me  
 Rested the hopes of Italy; 50  
 I had devised a certain tale  
 Which, when 't was told her, could not fail  
 Persuade a peasant of its truth;  
 I meant to call a freak of youth  
 This hiding, and give hopes of pay, 55  
 And no temptation to betray.  
 But when I saw that woman's face,  
 Its calm simplicity of grace,  
 Our Italy's own attitude  
 In which she walked thus far, and stood, 60  
 Planting each naked foot so firm,  
 To crush the snake and spare the worm—  
 At first sight of her eyes, I said,  
 "I am that man upon whose head

They fix the price, because I hate 65  
 The Austrians over us: the State  
 Will give you gold—oh, gold so much!—  
 If you betray me to their clutch,  
 And be your death, for aught I know,  
 If once they find you saved their foe. 70  
 Now, you must bring me food and drink,  
 And also paper, pen and ink,  
 And carry safe what shall I write  
 To Padua, which you'll reach at night  
 Before the duomo shuts; go in, 75  
 And wait till Tenebræ begin;  
 Walk to the third confessional,  
 Between the pillar and the wall,  
 And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*  
 Say it a second time, then cease; 80  
 And if the voice inside returns,  
*From Christ and Freedom; what concerns*  
*The cause of Peace?*—for answer, slip  
 My letter where you placed your lip;  
 Then come back happy we have done 85  
 Our mother service—I, the son,  
 As you the daughter of our land! ”

Three mornings more, she took her stand  
 In the same place, with the same eyes:  
 I was no surer of sunrise 90  
 Than of her coming. We conferred  
 Of her own prospects, and I heard  
 She had a lover—stout and tall,  
 She said—then let her eyelids fall,  
 “ He could do much ”—as if some doubt 95  
 Entered her heart,—then, passing out,  
 “ She could not speak for others, who

Had other thoughts; herself she knew:”  
 And so she brought me drink and food.  
 After four days, the scouts pursued 100  
 Another path; at last arrived  
 The help my Paduan friends contrived  
 To furnish me: she brought the news.  
 For the first time I could not choose  
 But kiss her hand, and lay my own 105  
 Upon her head—“ This faith was shown  
 To Italy, our mother; she  
 Uses my hand and blesses thee.”  
 She followed down to the sea-shore;  
 I left and never saw her more. 110

How very long since I have thought  
 Concerning—much less wished for—aught  
 Beside the good of Italy,  
 For which I live and mean to die!  
 I never was in love; and since 115  
 Charles proved false, what shall now convince  
 My inmost heart I have a friend?  
 However, if I pleased to spend  
 Real wishes on myself—say, three—  
 I know at least what one should be. 120  
 I would grasp Metternich until  
 I felt his red wet throat distil  
 In blood through these two hands. And next  
 —Nor much for that am I perplexed—  
 Charles, perjured traitor, for his part, 125  
 Should die slow of a broken heart  
 Under his new employers. Last  
 —Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast  
 Do I grow old and out of strength.  
 If I resolved to seek at length 130



My father's house again, how scared  
 They all would look, and unprepared!  
 My brothers live in Austria's pay  
 —Disowned me long ago, men say;  
 And all my early mates who used 135  
 To praise me so—perhaps induced  
 More than one early step of mine—  
 Are turning wise: while some opine  
 "Freedom grows license," some suspect  
 "Haste breeds delay," and recollect 140  
 They always said, such premature  
 Beginnings never could endure!  
 So, with a sullen "All's for best,"  
 The land seems settling to its rest.  
 I think then, I should wish to stand 145  
 This evening in that dear, lost land,  
 Over the sea the thousand miles,  
 And know if yet that woman smiles  
 With the calm smile; some little farm  
 She lives in there, no doubt: what harm 150  
 If I sat on the door-side bench,  
 And, while her spindle made a trench  
 Fantastically in the dust,  
 Inquired of all her fortunes—just  
 Her children's ages and their names, 155  
 And what may be the husband's aims  
 For each of them. I'd talk this out,  
 And sit there, for an hour about,  
 Then kiss her hand once more, and lay  
 Mine on her head, and go my way. 160

So much for idle wishing—how  
 It steals the time! To business now.

## INSTANS TYRANNUS

## I

OF the million or two, more or less,  
 I rule and possess,  
 One man, for some cause undefined,  
 Was least to my mind.

## II

I struck him, he grovelled of course— 5  
 For, what was his force?  
 I pinned him to earth with my weight  
 And persistence of hate:  
 And he lay, would not moan would not curse,  
 As his lot might be worse. 10

## III

“ Were the object less mean, would he stand  
 At the swing of my hand!  
 For obscurity helps him and blots  
 The hole where he squats.”  
 So, I set my five wits on the stretch 15  
 To inveigle the wretch.  
 All in vain! Gold and jewels I threw,  
 Still he couched there perdue;  
 I tempted his blood and his flesh,  
 Hid in roses my mesh, 20  
 Choicest cates and the flagon’s best spilth:  
 Still he kept to his filth.

## IV

Had he kith now or kin, were access  
 To his heart, did I press:  
 Just a son or a mother to seize! 25  
 No such booty as these.  
 Were it simply a friend to pursue  
 'Mid my million or two,  
 Who could pay me in person or pelf  
 What he owes me himself! 30  
 No: I could not but smile through my chafe:  
 For the fellow lay safe  
 As his mates do, the midge and the nit,  
 —Through minuteness, to wit.

## V

Then a humor more great took its place 35  
 At the thought of his face,  
 The droop, the low cares of the mouth,  
 The trouble uncouth  
 'Twixt the brows, ail that air one is fain  
 To put out of its pain. 40  
 And, "no!" I admonished myself,  
 "Is one mocked by an elf,  
 Is one baffled by toad or by rat?  
 The gravamen's in that!  
 How the lion, who crouches to suit 45  
 His back to my foot,  
 Would admire that I stand in debate!  
 But the small turns the great  
 If it vexes you,—that is the thing!  
 Toad or rat vex the king? 50  
 Though I waste half my realm to unearth  
 Toad or rat, 'tis well worth!"

## VI

So, I soberly laid my last plan  
 To extinguish the man.  
 Round his creep-hole, with never a break, 55  
 Ran my fires for his sake;  
 Over-head, did my thunder combine  
 With my underground mine:  
 Till I looked from my labor content  
 To enjoy the event. 60

## VII

When sudden . . . how think ye, the end?  
 Did I say " without friend " ?  
 Say rather, from marge to blue marge  
 The whole sky grew his targe  
 With the sun's self for visible boss, 65  
 While an Arm ran across  
 Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast  
 Where the wretch was safe prest!  
 Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,  
 The man sprang to his feet, 70  
 Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!  
 —So, *I* was afraid!

## THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

## A CHILD'S STORY

(Written for, and inscribed to, *W. M. the Younger*)

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,  
 By famous Hanover city;  
 The river Weser, deep and wide,  
 Washes its wall on the southern side;  
 A pleasanter spot you never spied; 5

But, when begins my ditty,  
 Almost five hundred years ago,  
 To see the townsfolk suffer so  
 From vermin, was a pity.

## II

Rats! 10  
 They fought the dogs and killed the cats,  
 And bit the babies in the cradles,  
 And ate the cheeses out of the vats,  
 And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,  
 Split open the kegs of salted sprats, 15  
 Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,  
 And even spoiled the women's chats  
 By drowning their speaking  
 With shrieking and squeaking  
 In fifty different sharps and flats. 20

## III

At last the people in a body  
 To the Town Hall came flocking:  
 " 'T is clear," cried they, " our Mayor's a noddy;  
 And as for our Corporation—shocking  
 To think we buy gowns lined with ermine 25  
 For dolts that can't or won't determine  
 What's best to rid us of our vermin!  
 You hope, because you're old and obese,  
 To find in the furry civic robe ease?  
 Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking 30  
 To find the remedy we're lacking,  
 Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing! "  
 At this the Mayor and Corporation  
 Quaked with a mighty consternation,

## IV

An hour they sat in council; 35  
 At length the Mayor broke silence:  
 " For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell,  
 I wish I were a mile hence!  
 It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—  
 I'm sure my poor head aches again, 40  
 I've scratched it so, and all in vain.  
 Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap! "  
 Just as he said this, what should hap  
 At the chamber-door but a gentle tap?  
 " Bless us," cried the Mayor, " what's that? " 45  
 (With the Corporation as he sat,  
 Looking little though wondrous fat;  
 Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister  
 Than a too-long-opened oyster,  
 Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous 50  
 For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)  
 " Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?  
 Anything like the sound of a rat  
 Makes my heart go pit-a-pat! "

## V

" Come in! "—the Mayor cried, looking bigger: 55  
 And in did come the strangest figure!  
 His queer long coat from heel to head  
 Was half of yellow and half of red,  
 And he himself was tall and thin,  
 With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin, 60  
 And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,  
 No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,  
 But lips where smiles went out and in;  
 There was no guessing his kith and kin:

And nobody could enough admire 65  
 The tall man and his quaint attire.  
 Quoth one: " It's as my great-grandsire,  
 Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,  
 Had walked this way from his painted tomb-stone! "

## VI

He advanced to the council-table: 70  
 And, " Please your honors," said he, " I'm able,  
 By means of a secret charm, to draw  
 All creatures living beneath the sun,  
 That creep or swim or fly or run,  
 After me so as you never saw! 75  
 And I chiefly use my charm  
 On creatures that do people harm,  
 The mole and toad and newt and viper;  
 And people call me the Pied Piper."  
 (And here they noticed round his neck 80  
 A scarf of red and yellow stripe,  
 To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;  
 And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;  
 And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying  
 As if impatient to be playing 85  
 Upon this pipe, as low it dangled  
 Over his vesture so old-fangled.)  
 " Yet," said he, " poor piper as I am,  
 In Tartary I freed the Cham,  
 Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats; 90  
 I eased in Asia the Nizam  
 Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats:  
 And as for what your brain bewilders,  
 If I can rid your town of rats  
 Will you give me a thousand guilders? " 95

“ One? fifty thousand! ”—was the exclamation  
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

## VII

Into the street the Piper stept,  
Smiling first a little smile,  
As if he knew what magic slept 100  
In his quiet pipe the while;  
Then, like a musical adept,  
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,  
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,  
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled; 105  
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,  
You heard as if an army muttered;  
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;  
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;  
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling. 110  
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,  
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,  
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,  
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,  
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers, 115  
Families by tens and dozens,  
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—  
Followed the Piper for their lives.  
From street to street he piped advancing,  
And step for step they followed dancing, 120  
Until they came to the river Weser,  
Wherein all plunged and perished!  
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,  
Swam across and lived to carry  
(As he, the manuscript he cherished) 125



To Rat-land home his commentary:  
 Which was, " At the first shrill notes of the pipe,  
 I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,  
 And putting apples, wondrous ripe,  
 Into a cider-press's gripe: 130  
 And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,  
 And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,  
 And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,  
 And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:  
 And it seemed as if a voice 135  
 (Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery  
 Is breathed) called out, ' Oh rats, rejoice!  
 The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!  
 So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,  
 Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon! ' 140  
 And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,  
 All ready staved, like a great sun shone  
 Glorious scarce an inch before me,  
 Just as methought it said, ' Come, bore me! '  
 —I found the Weser rolling o'er me." 145

## VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people  
 Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.  
 " Go," cried the Mayor, " and get long poles,  
 Poke out the nests and block up the holes!  
 Consult with carpenters and builders, 150  
 And leave in our town not even a trace  
 Of the rats! "—when suddenly, up the face  
 Of the Piper perked in the market-place,  
 With a, " First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

## IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue; 155  
 So did the Corporation too.  
 For council dinners made rare havoc  
 With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;  
 And half the money would replenish  
 Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish. 160  
 To pay this sum to a wandering fellow  
 With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!  
 "Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,  
 "Our business was done at the river's brink;  
 We saw with our eyes the vermin sink, 165  
 And what's dead can't come to life, I think.  
 So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink  
 From the duty of giving you something for drink,  
 And a matter of money to put in your poke;  
 But as for the guilders, what we spoke 170  
 Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.  
 Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.  
 A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

## X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,  
 "No trifling! I can't wait, beside! 175  
 I've promised to visit by dinner time  
 Bagdat, and accept the prime  
 Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,  
 For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,  
 Of a nest of scorpions no survivor: 180  
 With him I proved no bargain-driver,  
 With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!  
 And folks who put me in a passion  
 May find me pipe after another fashion."

## XI

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d' ye think I brook 185  
 Being worse treated than a Cook?  
 Insulted by a lazy ribald  
 With idle pipe and vesture piebald?  
 You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,  
 Blow your pipe there till you burst!" 190

## XII

Once more he stept into the street,  
 And to his lips again  
 Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;  
 And ere he blew three notes (such sweet  
 Soft notes as yet musician's cunning 195  
 Never gave the enraptured air)  
 There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling  
 Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling;  
 Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,  
 Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering, 200  
 And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,  
 Out came the children running.  
 All the little boys and girls,  
 With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,  
 And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls, 205  
 Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after  
 The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

## XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood  
 As if they were changed into blocks of wood,  
 Unable to move a step, or cry 210  
 To the children merrily skipping by,

—Could only follow with the eye  
 That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.  
 But how the Mayor was on the rack,  
 And the wretched Council's bosoms beat, 215  
 As the Piper turned from the High Street  
 To where the Weser rolled its waters  
 Right in the way of their sons and daughters!  
 However, he turned from South to West,  
 And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed, 220  
 And after him the children pressed;  
 Great was the joy in every breast.  
 " He never can cross that mighty top!  
 He's forced to let the piping drop,  
 And we shall see our children stop! " 225  
 When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,  
 A wondrous portal opened wide,  
 As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;  
 And the Piper advanced and the children followed,  
 And when all were in to the very last, 230  
 The door in the mountain-side shut fast.  
 Did I say, all? No! One was lame,  
 And could not dance the whole of the way;  
 And in after years, if you would blame  
 His sadness, he was used to say,— 235  
 " It's dull in our town since my playmates left!  
 I can't forget that I'm bereft  
 Of all the pleasant sights they see,  
 Which the Piper also promised me.  
 For he led us, he said, to a joyous land, 240  
 Joining the town and just at hand,  
 Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew  
 And flowers put forth a fairer hue,  
 And everything was strange and new;  
 The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here, 245

And their dogs outran our fallow deer,  
 And honey-bees had lost their stings,  
 And horses were born with eagles' wings:  
 And just as I became assured  
 My lame foot would be speedily cured, 250  
 The music stopped and I stood still,  
 And found myself outside the hill,  
 Left alone against my will,  
 To go now limping as before,  
 And never hear of that country more! " 255

## XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin!

There came into many a burgher's pate  
 A text which says that heaven's gate  
 Opes to the rich at as easy rate  
 As the needle's eye takes a camel in! 260  
 The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,  
 To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,  
 Wherever it was men's lot to find him,  
 Silver and gold to his heart's content,  
 If he'd only return the way he went, 265  
 And bring the children behind him.  
 But when they saw 't was a lost endeavor,  
 And Piper and dancers were gone forever,  
 They made a decree that lawyers never  
 Should think their records dated duly 270  
 If, after the day of the month and year,  
 These words did not as well appear,  
 " And so long after what happened here  
 On the Twenty-second of July,  
 Thirteen hundred and seventy-six: " 275  
 And the better in memory to fix

The place of the children's last retreat,  
 They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—  
 Where any one playing on pipe or tabor  
 Was sure for the future to lose his labor. 280

Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern  
 To shock with mirth a street so solemn;  
 But opposite the place of the cavern

They wrote the story on a column.  
 And on the great church-window painted 285  
 The same, to make the world acquainted  
 How their children were stolen away,  
 And there it stands to this very day.

And I must not omit to say  
 That in Transylvania there's a tribe 290

Of alien people who ascribe  
 The outlandish ways and dress  
 On which their neighbors lay such stress,  
 To their fathers and mothers having risen  
 Out of some subterraneous prison 295

Into which they were trepanned  
 Long time ago in a mighty band  
 Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,  
 But how or why, they don't understand.

## XV

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers 300  
 Of scores out with all men—especially pipers!  
 And, whether they pipe us free fróm rats or fróm mice,  
 If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise!

## NOTES

### INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

THIS poem serves to introduce the form into which Browning throws so many of his narratives, the dramatic monolog. The speaker and the scene must be vividly imagined. In this case we may suppose a little group of French veterans smoking their pipes over a glass of wine at an inn, and recalling incidents in their glorious campaigning with the Little General. The speaker is standing, and begins in familiar story-telling fashion, "You know we French stormed Ratisbon"; and, continuing, he insensibly assumes dramatically Napoleon's customary attitude, "legs wide, arms locked behind." The poem, then, is essentially one for free dramatic interpretation; it needs careful handling, especially in the fourth and fifth stanzas — the last desperate effort of the dying lad to deliver his message — and the transition to the quieter, slower, tenderer manner of the concluding stanza. It is a true story, save that the real hero was a man.

### HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS

AGAIN, essentially a poem for dramatic realization. The rhythm is the chief factor. The pauses of the opening stanza are important, until, as the more even swing of the lines intimates, the horses settle down to a steady gallop.

Note the changes in time and tone in the following stanzas. How does the meter compare with that of other poems describing rides? The poem is not based upon fact; but the geography is real enough, and we can easily imagine circumstances under which the saving of Aix became a matter of such desperate necessity, as, *e.g.*, that it had been determined to set the city on fire at a certain time rather than deliver it into the hands of the enemy. The case has been compared to that of Mitylene when it had revolted from ancient Athens. But this is, after all, a matter of quite secondary importance (say why). Browning gives us the leading clue when he tells us that the poem was written when he had been on a sea-voyage "long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse, 'York,' then in my stable at home."

## THROUGH THE METIDJA

THIS *tour de force* is given for its contrasting movement. The lilt of the riding rhythm differs, as the circumstances differ, from that of the preceding poem. Can you justify the difference? Note also how slight is the scenic allusion here. What emotion dominates the rider? The strange fancies of this fanatical Arab, as he rides across the lonely desert to his great chief, Abd-el-Kadr, are somewhat impalpable, but suggestive of one of those wild uprisings of the fierce Arab tribes against their modern French "civilizers." The main thing, however, is the impression of that swinging desert ride, and its passionately meditative rider.

## MULÉYKEH

THE rhythm is irregular and difficult; read aloud until you catch it. Note the rime scheme. The story is a touching expression of the Arab's love of his steed. (Tell it briefly in your own words.) How is Hósey'n's character delineated? The construction is difficult at times, as in ll. 4-6; be sure of the meaning. Some of the touches are very striking, *e.g.*, ll. 34-5. What others do you note?

## TRAY

ANOTHER poem showing Browning's interest in animals, and the side he took in the controversy about vivisection. He protested against what he called "an infamous practice," and took an active part in the movement against it. He had no sympathy with the man who, as he says elsewhere, would

"have no end of brutes  
Cut up alive to guess what suits  
My case, and saves my toe from shoots."

The story is true; a friend of the poet's saw this instance of what Browning believes to be animal "heroism" in Paris.

## DONALD

ANOTHER "true" animal story, told with the same motive as "Tray," but criticised as being unfair, because no true "sportsman" such as is spoken of in the first part of the poem would be guilty of such mean, unsportsmanlike conduct. What do you think? Do you approve of the story-teller's silence (l. 235)? Do you know the meaning of *bothy*, *trivet*, *Glenlivet double-first*, *heather*, *peat*, *burnie*, *Ben*, *fallow deer* (as distinguished from *red deer*), *volte-face*, *pastern*, *Goliath*? Which have local color? Characterize the meter; the stanza.



## HERVÉ RIEL

WE may think of this as in some respects a companion poem to Tennyson's ballad of the *Revenge* (note the correspondences and differences in form — stanza, rhythm, direct narration, etc. — and in substance). Browning graciously wrote this tribute to French heroism in order that he might contribute the hundred guineas which it brought him to the fund for the relief of the starving citizens of Paris after the siege (1871). The story is a true one, but it curiously remained for an Englishman to blazon the forgotten deed in verse. The poem was written at Le Croisic, a small fishing village at the mouth of the Loire, and the home of the brave Breton sailor who asked, as his reward for his valor, that he might have a whole day's holiday to go ashore to see his wife!

Be careful to pronounce the hero's name as French, not German; *v. e.*, *Ri-el*.

*The Rance* (5): the river which flows into the English channel at Saint-Malo, Brittany. *Twelve and eighty* (18): following the French, *quatre-vingt-douze*. *Tourville* (43): the French admiral. *Croisickese* (44): native of Le Croisic. *Malouins* (46): natives of St. Malo. *Greve* (49): sands round Mont Saint Michel. *Bay* (52): that of Saint-Michel. *Disembogues* (49): enters the sea. *Solidor* (53): old fort on mainland. *Rampired* (92): ramparted, fortified. *Louvre* (135): great picture-gallery and museum in Paris.

## PHEIDIPPIDES

BASED, with much skilful suggestiveness, on the story told by Herodotus (look it up in Rawlinson's translation), a mixture of fact and legend, of the Athenian runner who in forty-eight hours ran the one hundred and fifty miles between Athens and Sparta with a request for aid against the invading Persians. Note how the story is told: first by the hero himself (when, is explained by l. 9), who then leaves for Marathon ("Fennel-field": it is a sprig of fennel Pan presents, see l. 81); and then it is brought to a close in ll. 105–112, with an epilog explaining the Greek salutation born of Marathon Day, "Rejoice, we conquer" (given in Greek as sub-title). There is a spirit of Hellenic blitheness and grace in the poem, felt at once in the opening religious salutation. The character of Pheidippides — notably his patriotism and his modesty — is worthy of study.

The hexameter verse is rough: some lines are almost unscannable; others (*e.g.*, 64) charmingly smooth. The predominant foot is the dactyl, varied by the foot of two equal stresses — sometimes light, and at other times having the weight of the true spondee — thus (l. 2):

Gods of my | birth-place | de-mons and | he-roes | honor to | all.  
 or a uniformly dactyllic line like this (26):

Ev-e-ry | face of her | leered in a | furrow of | envy mis | trust.

Sometimes the line is not catalectic, as it is in the examples just given, thus (l. 21):

Die, with the | wide world | spitting at | Spar-ta the | stupid  
 the | stander by.

Sometimes an iambus takes the place of a dactyl or spondee (l. 53):

Treeless | herbless | lifeless | mountain! What | matter if |  
 slacked,

unless, indeed, a special value is given to the syllable "less" in the first three words. Note the cæsura after "mountain," and its incidence elsewhere. What about rime?

For the classical allusions consult Gayley's *Classic Myths in English Literature*. Be sure of the meaning of *dæmons* (2); *buskin* (5); *Archons* (9); *tettix* (9); *filleted* (47); *fosse* (61); *fane* (73); *guerdon* (88). *On the razor's edge* (87) means a critical situation; have we a corresponding idiom? *Parnes* (52 *et seq.*) seems to be a slip of Browning's; it is a mountain between Attica and Bœotia; whereas, according to Herodotus, it was on Mount Parthenium in Arcadia that the hero met the god.

Browning, who from his childhood, under his scholarly father's inspiration, kept his Greek studies agoing, returned to classic themes from time to time, and made some translations from the Greek dramatists. You will find them in his complete works. Try first his delightful *Balaustion's Adventure*, with its rendering of Euripides's *Alkestis*: His amusing account of his first steps in Greek is to be found in his poem, *Development*. His wife, too, loved and was learned in these old themes, and translated the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus.

#### ECHETLOS

IN the same meter; about Marathon, too. Note the abounding energy of the narrative, and the graphic quality of the descriptions. Don't misunderstand the meaning of *clown*. *Tunnies* are large fish found in the Mediterranean. *Polemarch*, the nominal commander-in-chief at Athens, the actual commander at Marathon being

Miltiades. Kallimachos had given his casting-vote at the council of war in favor of fighting. In the last stanza the poet's comment on the great words of the oracle—"The great deed ne'er grows small"—is, "Not the great name," alas!—as the careers of Miltiades and Themistocles sadly show. What cast these in eclipse?

#### THE PATRIOT

THIS is a more characteristically Browningsque study of a patriot—the close especially so. We return to the monolog; the speaker, his whereabouts and predicament (stanzas 4 and 5), must be clearly imaged. Note the method of the story: 1. a year ago (1-10); 2. the cause of the reaction (11-15); 3. now; 4. reflection. What is the victim's mood? Why does not he rail against the fickle populace? In what sense is this "An Old Story"?

#### COUNT GISMOND

BROWNING finds his heroes and heroines in all times, climes, and conditions. Here we have a story of the period of chivalry,—not an uncommon theme; but is it not old in an uncommon way? It is a monolog; does this restrict the speaker? What does she contrive to tell about herself? Is she vain? What is her character? To whom does she talk (ll. 105-7)? Note the beautifully chaste quality about the poem.

The poem is, of course, one for a girl to recite and interpret dramatically. At l. 46 Browning introduces one of those little incidents, indicative of some act of the speaker's, which may puzzle the beginner. What happens here? Where is the narrative taken up again? Note the transition in the closing stanza. What effect does the poet gain by it?

#### THE TWINS

A PARABLE told in Luther's *Table Talk*. Published in 1854 in a pamphlet sold at a bazaar for the benefit of a Refuge for Young Destitute Girls. Mrs. Browning contributed a poem, entitled *A Plea for the Ragged Schools of London*. How her woman's heart responded to the appeal of the suffering young may best be seen in her passionate *Cry of the Children*. The Latin students will explain the *Date* and *Dabitur*.

#### THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

THIS poem, with its simple story, yields some deeper meanings. It presents, says a commentator, "one of Mr. Browning's deepest convictions in a popular form": this conviction is embodied in

the idea — which it may not be easy to grasp — that the simple praise of the curly-haired lad, Theocrite, singing at his work, had a quality which the praise of the Pope, in his “great way” at Rome, and even that of the angel Gabriel, lacked: there was “no doubt in it, no fear” (40). When the boy leaves his work to become a priest, God misses his praise; so Gabriel takes his place. But it is not the same: “I miss my little human praise,” says God. So Gabriel hastens to Rome to enable Theocrite, who is now Pope, to return to his early cell to “resume the craftsman and the boy.” When the two, the lad and the new Pope now in his place, died, “they sought God side by side,” the human and the angelic, the lofty and the lowly.

The form of the poem is curious: it varies frequently, the tetrameter changing to trimeter in l. 8, and to dimeter in l. 19. Are these and other following changes expressive?

#### MY LAST DUCHESS

THIS tells a story in the most condensed form, many of the facts being indicated by implication and suggestion. It represents the monolog in its developed phase. Thus we gather at the outset that the speaker, a Duke of Ferrara, is primarily an art connoisseur; his “last Duchess” (how many may there have been?) is memorable as having furnished a marvelous subject for Frà Pandolf’s skill, and so he is now the proud possessor of a masterpiece. Then he meets the question always suggested to the beholder by the beauty of the pictured lady, — a beauty she was too lavish of. Her smiles were too easily and indiscriminately bestowed; she did not honor her lord exclusively enough. As proud as he was jealous, he would not stoop to chide or question; all this displeased him. So, after the brutal manner of so many of those great criminals of the Renaissance period, he gave his murderous command, and she was removed. He knows no shame: “there she stands as if alive” — one of art’s triumphs! The visitor is evidently an ambassador come to negotiate another marriage (49–51). A bargain has to be made by this cultivated ruffian, who now seeks another good match. As they descend to rejoin the company below after their negotiating, the polite and polished and heartless connoisseur points with pride to another possession, a masterly “Neptune” by the famous Claus of Innsbruck.

#### A FACE

IT is pleasant to turn now to this little attempt to do justice to a beautiful childlike face, as the poet imagines one of those old Tuscan painters might have painted it, upon a background of pale gold — something more beautiful than even Correggio’s art could compass.

The allusion will not have much meaning unless you can turn to a reproduction of one of Correggio's masterpieces.

#### SONG FROM PIPPA PASSES

THIS delicious snatch of rapturous song is a strain out of Browning's own happy heart. Nothing is more expressive of his assured and exultant faith that the world is sound at the core, and that life means well, than the concluding couplet, so often quoted. This epitomizes what is called—especially by those who cannot confront so buoyantly and joyously the too obvious and distressing sorrow and suffering of the world—Browning's optimism. George Eliot preferred to call herself a meliorist.

#### CAVALIER TUNES

VERY different from the pure, clear treble of little Pippa are the strong, burly tones of the great-hearted Cavaliers; but they echo a chiming mood of unconquerable confidence and courage—Browning's two conspicuous qualities. The singers are, of course, Royalists, who side with Charles I in the great Civil War; and these lusty, contemptuous country gentlemen, who rallied almost to a man to the King, mince no words over such "carles" as Pym, Hampden, Hazelrig, Fiennes, Vane, "Noll" (Oliver Cromwell), and the crop-headed Parliamentary leaders. How the choruses ring out!

#### HOME-THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

AFTER this pronouncedly English strain the transition is natural to one or two poems that reflect Browning's love of his native land. He lived much in Italy, which shared, as a poem we shall cite presently will show, his heart's devotion. No more beautifully colored piece of description is to be found in Browning. The *thrush* is, of course, the English bird of that name, whose song is more flute-like and more varied perhaps than that of our own delightful wood-thrush. *This gaudy melon-flower* (20) is one which he is gazing upon in Italy.

#### HOME-THOUGHTS FROM THE SEA

NOT England's beauty, but her prowess and the service of her great sons, are celebrated. At sea, off the southern coast of Spain, the poet gazes at once upon the scenes of five great naval victories. So, impressed by the thought of what England through her heroes has done for him, he asks, in a solemn religious mood, "How can I help England?"

## DE GUSTIBUS —

HERE the poet's double devotion to England and Italy is voiced. Here, in the first section, it is an English corn field (*i.e.*, wheat field) and an English blackbird, one of the most velvet-toned of English singers, which are referred to. The Italian landscape in the second section is most masterfully done; and the closing lines, oft-quoted, sing an unmistakable close. The title is the beginning of a Latin adage; complete it. How does it apply here?

## MEMORABILIA

MINGLED with Browning's tributes to his native country should go this tribute to her poet, to whom more than to any other he was indebted for the kindling of his own poetic fires, — Shelley. Elsewhere Browning has paid his homage to this "Sun-treader," as he called him. This is an unconventional little lyric — full of the sense of surprise and wonder at meeting one who had actually known Shelley; for it was crossing a certain gray space in life that the poet had picked up the eagle-feather that had winged Shelley's sunward flight, and had put it "inside his breast." That was the memory he "started at" — the sun-spot in his life. In the poem *Popularity* will be found his tribute to another poet, Keats, — Shelley's "Adonais," — whom also he early admired.

## THE LOST LEADER

HERE we may well introduce this poem, contrasting by its note of detraction with the foregoing, and commonly supposed to allude to another great English poet, — Wordsworth, — who, from being the enthusiastic prophet of liberty and progress in his youth, became sobered by the French Revolution and its wild excesses into a cautious Conservative, disposed to frown upon all reform. Browning, when asked about the rumor, replied: "I *did* in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerated personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model; one from which this or that particular feature may be selected and turned to account; had I intended more, — above all, such a boldness as portraying the entire man, I should not have talked about 'handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon.' These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet, whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was to my juvenile apprehension, and even mature consideration, an event to deplore . . . . So, though I dare not deny the original of my little poem, I altogether refuse to have it considered as the 'very effigies' of such a moral and intellectual superiority."

Note the confident tramp of the rhythm, carrying a young man's proud assurance of the might of his cause: "We shall march prospering"; "Deeds will be done." To be sure, Browning's own Liberalism was of a mild and respectable sort: his poetry nowhere reveals a vital social enthusiasm. He was the poet of the individual, not of causes and movements. For this social enthusiasm we turn rather to his wife, who in several short poems, and in her *Aurora Leigh*, sounded the note of an impassioned humanitarianism.

The measures have fine sonorous quality — "Lived in his mild and magnificent eye." What is the meter? Render and scan, e.g., ll. 11, 13, 14, 21, 31. Find the long vowel values.

#### LIFE IN A LOVE

THESE little lyrics will serve to carry us from the thought of the celebration of one great poet's fame by another to that mighty theme, by their handling of which most of the great poets are to be appraised. In what way, with what nobility and splendor, does the emotion of love live in him and his works? Perhaps this is a test question not only for the poet, but for all artists — for all men and women. Browning will assuredly stand the test. For him pure, passionate love is the sacred fire on the altar of life; and fortunate was he, in his marriage with another great poet-soul, to find the fulfilment of his own highest ideal. His poems treat of love in many aspects — foiled and defeated love as well as love triumphant over every obstacle; courageous love and cowardly love; base love and "lyric love, half-angel and half-bird." Here we have it sung as the dominating and endlessly pursued purpose of a life. Failure? —

"It is but to keep the nerves at strain  
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall  
And, baffled, get up and begin again."

#### YOUTH AND ART

THIS poem, on the contrary, tells the story of two who failed to see in love, when it first budded in their hearts, the lord and master of life. They dallied, were over-cautious; and looking back to those "Bohemian" days, the now great singer confesses to the equally famous sculptor that she missed the golden opportunity that might have brought joys of which she has never tasted, and that life seems unfulfilled, hangs patchy and scrappy.

## EVELYN HOPE

THIS poem is a general favorite. Read it through once to gain an outlook upon the scene—the elderly man seated in the darkened room beside the beautiful young girl, lying dead, whom he has loved unknown to her. He can wait for love to blossom in her soul. Here again we have Browning's large, forward-looking faith that all will come right, — if not in this chapter of our life, then in some one yet to come (l. 29); the faith naïvely expressed by the lover when he folds the leaf in the "sweet cold hand," so that on waking the young girl shall remember and understand.

Again the test of comprehension and appreciation must be the reading aloud, which should give us the hush of the room, the tenderly quiet, pausing, deeply moved manner of the speaker. Especially the pauses (sometimes occasioned by an omitted syllable) must be appropriate and adequate. The rhythm varies, and the scansion is not easy: be careful, for instance, with such lines as 9, 31, 54. Full value must be given to the long vowel effects, which will often yield us spondees in scanning.

## SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER

REFER the Latin difficulties to the Latin students. For the rest, imagine yourself to be a surly, sour, jealous old monk.

## A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

THIS poem carries us back to the period of the Renaissance, when men were consumed by an enthusiasm for the rediscovered art and literature of antiquity, and worked upon the recovered and corrupt texts of the great Greek and Latin authors with a zeal that was little short of heroic. Browning tries to rescue here, from the scorn usually poured out upon the pedants who waste a life upon the minutiae of grammar and philology, an old grammarian who brings to his scholarship a temper and philosophy that has its larger outlook and nobler meaning. It is a notable instance of the poet's effort to see beneath surface appearances to the obscure heart of human purpose and hope. There is something grandiose in the quiet confidence of the toiling scholar who, with all time for his inheritance, refuses to be hurried and perturbed in his laborious and thorough scholarship. Men find him at his books bald and hazy-eyed: "Time to taste life!" they urge. "Not so," he protests; "all is not yet learned from the text."

"Oh, such a life as he resolved to live  
 When he *had* learned it,  
 When he had gathered all books had to give!  
 Sooner, he spurned it."



The time would come; he trusted God for that. Meantime he will not be tempted by any smaller, hastier aim. And the poet comments:

“That low man seeks a little thing to do,  
Sees it and does it:  
This high man with a great thing to pursue,  
Dies ere he knows it.”

Does such a way of looking upon life and its tasks actually give a certain greatness to the personality? What is to be said for and against this high, impractical idealism? Browning exaggerates, doubtless. Does he make his point?

The poem has imaginative and poetic merit of a high order. Imagine well the scene: the little band of young scholars, who have caught their old master's spirit, carrying the body up the mountain-side to give it fitting burial on the heights, singing as they go the requiem of their revered leader. The requiem? No, the matin-song; that alone becomes him:

“Our low life was the level's and the night's,  
He's for the morning.”

To their young, idealizing hearts he is no spent, bent figure; rather one of those noble figures of whom we catch a glimpse in the pictures of the great painters of the period. Upon these youths, at any rate, it is the vision of the departed man in his prime that now returns:

“He was a man born with thy face and throat,  
Lyric Apollo!”

As they ascend, their meditations mingle with their songs; and the poet continually reminds us of that upward climb in the night to greet the dawn, by many a comment on the difficulties of the climb—

“(Caution redoubled,  
Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly)”

until at last the platform, the top-peak there among the sky-questing birds, is reached:

“Here, here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,  
Lightnings are loosened,  
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,  
Peace let the dew send!”

A few words are unusual, and must be looked up: *crofts*, *queasy*, *calculus* (the disease of that name, not the mathematical delight); *hoti*, *oun*, *de* — Greek particles; *soul-hydroptic* means a soul suf-

fering, as it were, from a disease that produces an insatiable thirst — the passion to know. Some of the phrases are condensed, *e.g.*, “rimming the rock-row” (8), meaning making a rim beyond the row of rocks which are seen against the sky.

#### ONE WORD MORE

THIS is the most intimate word that Browning has allowed us to overhear. It is a love-tribute offered to his wife *before* her death, as the allusion in the following poem came after it. It is the best response to the passionate outpourings of his wife’s heart in her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. After the introductory lines, the poet uses his allusion to the one unique expression of love which Rafael the painter found in a “century of sonnets,” and Dante the poet sought in the figure of an angel which he drew. How would these two lovers prize a sight of those privacies of soul! And how does he, unapt at painting, sculpture, and music, long as these great lovers did, “once and once only . . . to be the man and leave the artist.” (Stanzas ix–xi are difficult, and their clear understanding may be postponed.) But writer only as he is, he may once put his talent to a similarly unique purpose. All he has written — all his fifty men and women are hers, though “all men’s” too; but hers in a different way, as coming from him in a different way, is this dedication. “Let me speak this once in my true person.” “Poor the speech” — yet she knows him, as he knows her. How he knows her he indicates by the beautiful imagery of the moon — seen on one side only by the common eye, but by the rarer soul on the other side.

“God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures  
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,  
One to show a woman when he loves her!”

This, said of himself, he applies to her, his “moon of poets.” The world sees her and praises, but he:

“There in turn I stand with them and praise you —  
But the best is when I glide from out them,  
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,  
Come out on the other side, the novel  
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,  
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.”

#### PROSPICE

THIS “look forward,” under the very grip of death, is very intensely personal, charged with that spiritual athleticism, that hardy battling faith which we meet again and again in Browning.

"I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more, the best and the last!" Death shall yield its full revelations. Note the change beginning at l. 21; the beautiful *diminuendo* to the exquisite quiet rapture of the close. This is very intimately personal; the allusion is, of course, to his wife; one of the few expressions the poet has allowed himself of the love in his own life which was stronger than death.

#### EPILOGUE TO ASOLANDO

THE same mood is in this last word and testament of the man who was ever a fighter, and inspired others to fight the good fight in the interest of their own highest spiritual blessedness and development:

"One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward.  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better."

It was *à propos* of this third stanza that Browning, one evening just before his last and fatal illness, said to his daughter-in-law and sister, when reading the printer's proof-sheets to them: "It almost looks like bragging to say this, and as if I ought to cancel it; but it's the simple truth; and as it's true, it shall stand."

One naturally compares this valedictory (which closes the volume published in London on the very day on which Browning died) with Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*. There is a very characteristic difference between the two, in no particular more obviously shown than in Browning's last words of unconquerable resolve, his first and last evangel:

" 'Strive and thrive!' cry: 'Speed, — fight on, fare ever  
There as here!'"

#### UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY

YET another Italian poem! If you look up the volumes (or groups) of "Dramatic Lyrics" and "Dramatic Romances" in Browning's complete works, you will note evidences not only of the spell of Italy, but of wider international interests on the poet's part. Humanity in all its variety is his theme.

Thus, British insularity gets no support from him. He is the poet of internationalism. Italian Galuppi is the fellow, in his volumes, of German Abt Vogler and Master Hugues. When Tennyson glorified English naval heroism in his ballad of "The Revenge," Browning seemed to be saying to himself—"Well, other nations, too, have their heroes of the sea,—our old enemies, the French, for example. Here is this story of Hervé Riel, for a sample." You might call off, from the titles, the different nations represented in his works.

Browning has a pronounced habit of comparison and contrast. His "look on this picture and on this," is conspicuous in many pairs of poems. This poem is in itself a striking example of his method as applied to description. You might explain how he "composes" his picture; and distinguish his verbal way of dealing with his masses from the painter's way in his very different medium. Indeed, this is a good opportunity to seize the qualities of his descriptive work. What part do sight, hearing, movement, color, form, the clear image or the vague suggestion play in this and other poems? The employment of onomatopœia is very obvious in spots. Is it a conspicuous feature in Browning's works generally?

There are no allusions here which a second or third year high school student should find strange. The great men referred to belong to the literature of the world (with one exception), and not merely to that of Italy. The facts connected with "Pulcinello" are interesting and entertaining—worth while looking up.

But the main matter is to feel carried along by the vivid coloring and picture-evoking quality of the poem. Enjoy these, and other by-products of study may be added to enhance the pleasure, —never to discount or endanger it.

#### THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

BOTH this poem and a companion poem, "The Englishman in Italy," were written after Browning's visit to Italy in 1844. They were originally entitled "Italy in England" and "England in Italy." The dramatic incident in this poem does not reproduce any particular historic incident.

Does the poem carry its own sufficient meaning on its face to the general reader? Do you understand it without looking up the few facts of Italian history to which it alludes,—that is, what was Italy's relation to Austria,—who Metternich was,—who was the great Italian patriot who found refuge in England? Or is the chief incident everything, and the historic framework negligible? "*Tenebræ*:" certain services of the Roman Catholic Church,—which should at once be plain to any student of Latin. The word is worth looking up; but note especially why this particular service should be selected by the poet.

Is the title apt? Some writers have a genius for titles: how about Browning? Could you suggest an alternative title in this case?

#### INSTANS TYRANNUS

THIS is a difficult poem for young minds. If it does not come clear after two readings, let it go. Poems are not meant to be puzzles. The title of the poem should be deciphered by some

Latin student in the class. It is reminiscent of a phrase in the opening of one of the Odes of Horace (III-3):

Justum et tenacem proposti virum  
Non civium ardor prava jubentium  
Non vultus instantis tyranni.

Obviously it is, at least, a study of unreasoning, instinctive dislike and contempt: of what else? See if you can get at the poet's underlying motive. This belongs with other psychological studies of abnormal humanity (see Introduction, xii). Both the tyrant and his victim are unusual types; but does that detract from the striking climax? The humor of the piece has been called "boisterous, sardonic humor." (What, by the way, is the meaning of "sardonic"?) Try telling the story in its simplest terms,—just the action, as a third party might report it. Then try to tell it as "the wretch" might. Of course, the imagery of the closing stanza,—with the figure of the Arm,—must be appreciated. Such words as "perdue" and "spilth" are worth notation and explanation by some connoisseur of words in the class. There is nothing like dividing up the work of commenting upon the text among the members of the class according to their special interests,—philological, historical, and so on.

#### THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

As the eldest child of the great English actor, Macready, was confined to the house by illness, Browning wrote this *jeu d'esprit* to amuse the boy and to give him a subject for illustrative drawings. It was thrown into the volume of "Dramatic Lyrics" at the last moment, for the purpose of filling up the sheet.

It is to be hoped that the poem will be a delightful memory to every high school boy and girl,—a reminder of those days in one of the grades of the elementary school when the poem was read, reread, recited, and acted with keen enjoyment. There is only one other poem by Browning, familiar to young people, which can compete with it in popularity. Can you say which?

An editor asks himself, what can be added in the way of notes to accomplish the only purpose which justifies annotation, namely, the heightening of appreciation and enjoyment? Perhaps in this case some consideration of Browning's humor, both here and elsewhere, and the comedy-characters and incidents which are to be found in his works? Could you characterize what is distinctive of Browning's humor, as you might of the humor—let us say—of Mark Twain, or the gentler humor of Washington Irving? Compare, for instance, what may be characterized as the element of pure "fun and freak" in this poem with the quality of the humor

in the "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" and "Holy-Cross Day"; or with the less obvious humor of "Up at a Villa—Down in the City." Some American youths may see no "humor" at all in that; and like honest lads, they will say so. What part does Browning's grotesque rhyming play in producing his effects?

Another consideration which might help to set the poem in relief, and establish relations between it and other stories, is that which has to do with the musical magic of the Pied Piper. He is one of the musicians who illustrate the power of music, as does Orpheus, for example, or the charmers of wolves of which you may have heard in connection with Longfellow's allusion to the Loup-garou in "Evangeline" (line 280). There is a picture of a strange "charmer", piping to a herd of hungry beasts who follow him, by our great artist Lafarge.

Then there are other stories which tell of the opening and closing of a mountain-side, and the expectation that those who enter will some day emerge again. Some you surely know: can you recall them?

We shall refrain from explaining various geographical words. Don't assume that this is because we consider that the locality is of no importance. Some are allusions which "every schoolboy should know."

You will note that the poem is called a "child's story." Do you think it would greatly interest any high school student who should read it for the first time, and for whom it had no charm of recollection?

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