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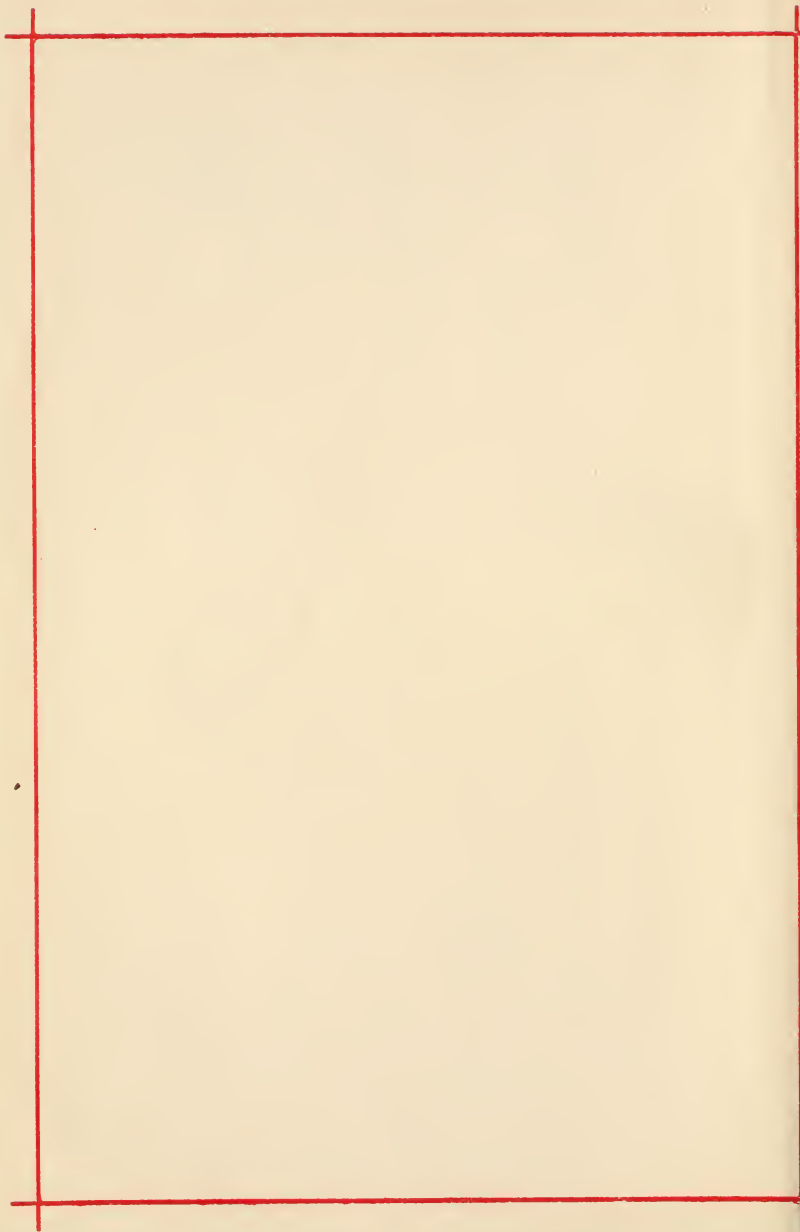




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*Robert Browning.*

SELECTIONS

FROM

THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

ROBERT BROWNING

5 1525 10

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NEW YORK:  
R. WORTHINGTON, 770 BROADWAY.  
1884.

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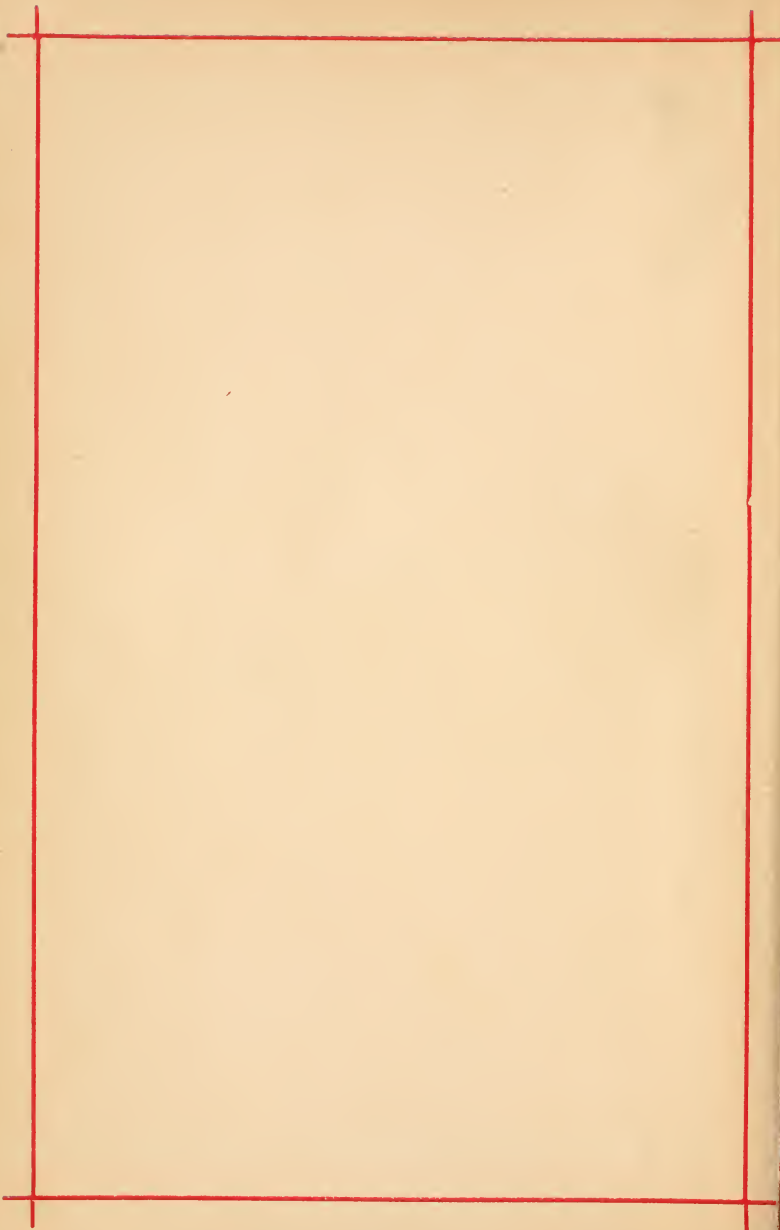
DEDICATED TO

Alfred Tennyson

IN POETRY—ILLUSTRIOUS AND CONSUMMATE

IN FRIENDSHIP—NOBLE AND SINCERE

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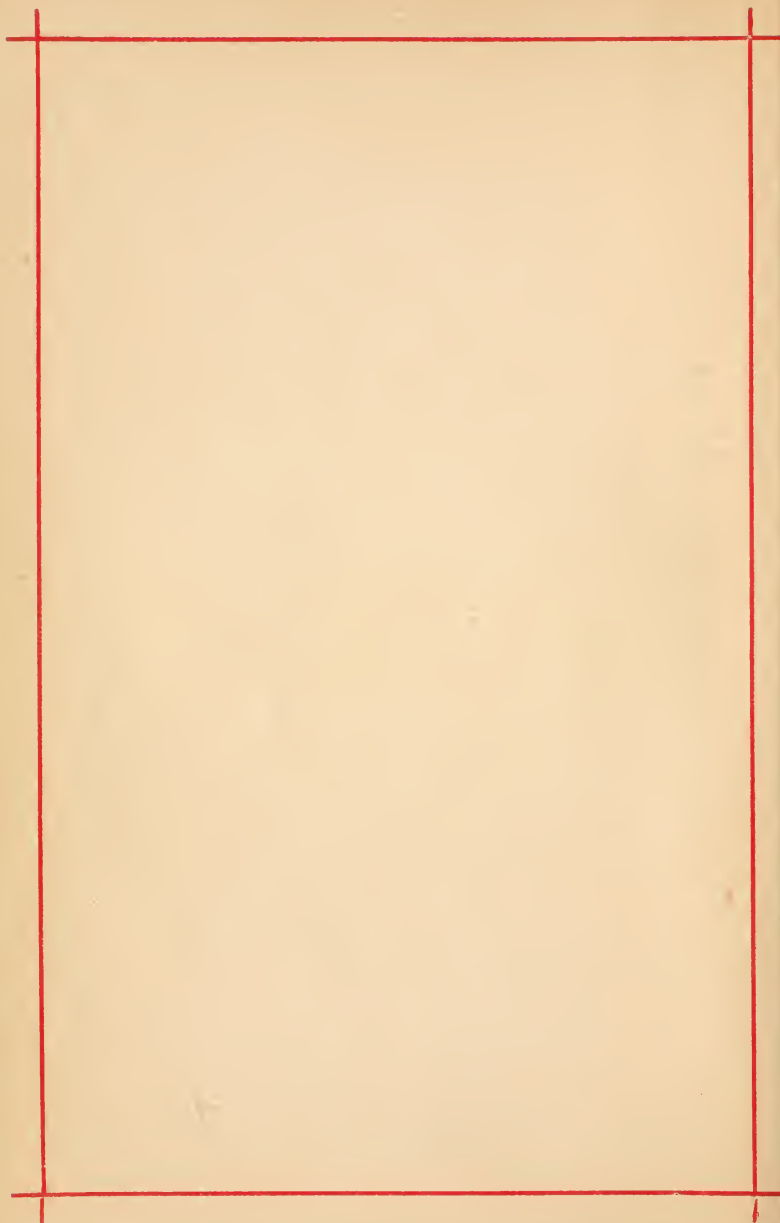


*In the present selection from my poetry, there is an attempt to escape from the embarrassment of appearing to pronounce upon what myself may consider the best of it. I adopt another principle; and by simply stringing together certain pieces on the thread of an imaginary personality, I present them in succession, rather as the natural development of a particular experience than because I account them the most noteworthy portion of my work. Such an attempt was made in the volume of selections from the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett-Browning: to which—in outward uniformity, at least—my own would venture to become a companion.*

*A few years ago, had such an opportunity presented itself, I might have been tempted to say a word in reply to the objections my poetry was used to encounter. Time has kindly co-operated with my disinclination to write the poetry and the criticism besides. The readers I am at last privileged to expect, meet me fully half-way; and if, from the fitting stand-point, they must still “censure me in their wisdom,” they have previously “awakened their senses that they may the better judge.” Nor do I apprehend any more charges of being wilfully obscure, unconscientiously careless, or perversely harsh. Having hitherto done my utmost in the art to which my life is a devotion, I cannot engage to increase the effort; but I conceive that there may be helpful light, as well as reassuring warmth, in the attention and sympathy I gratefully acknowledge.*

*R. B.*

LONDON, May 14, 1872.





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SELECTIONS FROM ROBERT BROWNING.

---

MY STAR.

ALL that I know  
Of a certain star  
Is, it can throw  
    (Like the angled spar)  
Now a dart of red,  
    Now a dart of blue ;  
Till my friends have said  
    They would fain see, too,  
My star that dartles the red and the blue !  
Then it stops like a bird ; like a flower, hangs furl'd :  
    They must solace themselves with the Saturn above  
    it.  
What matter to me if their star is a world ?  
    Mine has opened its soul to me ; therefore I love it.

---

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  
 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  
 Burthen of honey-colored buds, to kiss  
 And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this.  
 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  
 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),  
 All heaven, meanwhile, condensed into one eye  
 Which fears to lose the wonder, should it wink.

---

## 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  
 " 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)

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  
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  
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, 't was all one ! My favor at her breast,  
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,  
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  
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  
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  
 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  
 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,  
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me !

---

SONG FROM "PIPPA PASSES."

I.

GIVE her but a least excuse to love me !  
 When—where—  
 How—can this arm establish her above me,  
 If fortune fixed her as my lady there,  
 There already, to eternally reprove me ?  
 ("Hist !" —said Kate the queen ;  
 But "Oh," cried the maiden, binding her tresses,  
 "'Tis only a page that carols unseen,  
 Crumbling your hounds their messes !")

II.

Is she wronged ?—To the rescue of her honor,  
 My heart !  
 Is she poor ?—What costs it to become a donor ?  
 Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.



But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her !  
 ("Nay, list!"—bade Kate the queen ;  
 And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,  
 "'Tis only a page that carols unseen,  
 Fitting your hawks their jesses!")

---

 CRISTINA.

## I.

SHE should never have looked at me if she meant I  
 should not love her !  
 There are plenty . . . men, you call such, I suppose . . .  
 she may discover  
 All her soul to, if she pleases, and yet leave much as  
 she found them :  
 But I 'm not so, and she knew it when she fixed me,  
 glancing round them.

## II.

What? To fix me thus meant nothing? But I can't  
 tell (there 's my weakness)  
 What her look said!—no vile cant, sure, about "need  
 to strew the bleakness  
 Of some lone shore with its pearl-seed, that the sea  
 feels"—no "strange yearning  
 That such souls have, most to lavish where there 's  
 chance of least returning."

## III.

Oh we 're sunk enough here, God knows! but not  
 quite so sunk that moments,  
 Sure tho' seldom, are denied us, when the spirit's  
 true endowments

Stand out plainly from its false ones, and apprise it  
if pursuing  
Or the right way or the wrong way, to its triumph  
or undoing.

## IV.

There are flashes struck from midnights, there are  
fire-flames noondays kindle,  
Whereby piled-up honors perish, whereby swollen  
ambitions dwindle,  
While just this or that poor impulse, which for once  
had play unstified,  
Seems the sole work of a life-time that away the rest  
have trifled.

## V.

Doubt you if, in some such moment, as she fixed me,  
she felt clearly,  
Ages past the soul existed, here an age 't is resting  
merely,  
And hence fleets again for ages : while the true end,  
sole and single,  
It stops here for is, this love way, with some other  
soul to mingle ?

## VI.

Else it loses what it lived for, and eternally must lose  
it ;  
Better ends may be in prospect, deeper blisses (if  
you choose it),  
But this life's end and this love-bliss have been lost  
here. Doubt you whether  
This she felt as, looking at me, mine and her souls  
rushed together ?

## VII.

Oh, observe ! Of course, next moment, the world's  
 honors, in derision,  
 Trampled out the light for ever. Never fear but  
 there 's provision  
 Of the devil's to quench knowledge, lest we walk the  
 earth in rapture !  
 —Making those who catch God's secret, just so much  
 more prize their capture !

## VIII.

Such am I : the secret 's mine now ! She has lost  
 me, I have gained her ;  
 Her soul 's mine : and thus, grown perfect, I shall  
 pass my life's remainder.  
 Life will just hold out the proving both our powers,  
 alone and blended :  
 And then, come next life quickly ! This world's  
 use will have been ended.

---

 COUNT GISMOND

## AIX IN PROVENCE.

## I.

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  
 My honor, 't was with all his strength.

## II.

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,  
While being dressed in queen's array  
To give our tourney prize away.

## III.

I thought they loved me, did me grace  
To please themselves; 't was all their deed.  
God makes, or fair or foul, our face;  
If showing mine so caused to bleed  
My cousins' hearts, they should have dropped  
A word, and straight the play had stopped.

## IV.

They, too, so beauteous! Each a queen  
By virtue of her brow and breast;  
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!

## V.

But no: they let me laugh, and sing  
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—

## VI.

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,  
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft dun)—

## VII.

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  
Of much was, they forgot no crowd  
Makes up for parents in their shroud!

## VIII.

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

## IX.

See! Gismond 's at the gate, in talk  
With his two boys: I can proceed.  
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!"

## X.

"Bring torches! Wind the penance-sheet  
 "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!"

## XI.

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.

## XII.

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  
 Himself to Satan: who would spend  
 A minute's mistrust on the end?

## XIII.

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

## XIV.

This glads me most, that I enjoyed  
The heart o' the joy, with my content  
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.

## XV.

Did I not watch him while he let  
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.

## XVI.

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,  
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

## XVII.

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 !  
Say, hast thou lied ? " And, " I have lied  
To God and her," he said, and died.

## XVIII.

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

## XIX.

Over my head his arm he flung  
Against the world ; and scarce I felt  
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.

## XX.

So 'mid the shouting multitude  
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 !

## XXI.

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



## EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS.

A PICTURE BY FREDERICK LEIGHTON, R.A.

BUT give them me, the mouth, the eyes, the brow !  
 Let them once more absorb me ! One look now  
 Will lap me round forever, not to pass  
 Out of its light, though darkness lie beyond :  
 Hold me but safe again within the bond  
 Of one immortal look ! All woe that was,  
 Forgotten, and all terror that may be,  
 Defied,—no past is mine, no future : look at me !

---

 THE GLOVE.
(PETER RONSARD *loquitur.*)

"HEIGHO," yawned one day King Francis,  
 "Distance all value enhances !  
 When a man 's busy, why, leisure  
 Strikes him as wonderful pleasure :  
 'Faith, and at leisure once is he ?  
 Straightway he wants to be busy.  
 Here we 've got peace ; and aghast I 'm  
 Caught thinking war the true pastime.  
 Is there a reason in metre ?  
 Give us your speech, master Peter !"  
 I who, if mortal dare say so,  
 Ne'er am at loss with my Naso,  
 "Sire," I replied, "joys prove cloudlets :

Men are the merest Ixions"—  
 Here the King whistled aloud, "Let 's  
 . . . Heigho . . . go look at our lions!"  
 Such are the sorrowful chances  
 If you talk fine to King Francis.

And so, to the courtyard proceeding,  
 Our company, Francis was leading,  
 Increased by new followers tenfold  
 Before he arrived at the penfold ;  
 Lords, ladies, like clouds which bedizen  
 At sunset the western horizon.  
 And Sir de Lorge pressed 'mid the foremost  
 With the dame he professed to adore most—  
 Oh, what a face ! One by fits eyed  
 Her, and the horrible pitside ;  
 For the penfold surrounded a hollow  
 Which led where the eye scarce dared follow,  
 And shelved to the chamber secluded  
 Where Bluebeard, the great lion, brooded.  
 The King hailed his keeper, an Arab  
 As glossy and black as a scarab,  
 And bade him make sport and at once stir  
 Up and out of his den the old monster.  
 They opened a hole in the wire-work  
 Across it, and dropped there a firework,  
 And fled : one's heart's beating redoubled ;  
 A pause, while the pit's mouth was troubled,  
 The blackness and silence so utter,  
 By the firework's slow sparkling and sputter ;  
 Then earth in a sudden contortion  
 Gave out to our gaze her abortion.  
 Such a brute ! Were I friend Clement Marot  
 (Whose experience of nature 's but narrow,

And whose faculties move in no small mist  
When he versifies David the Psalmist)

I should study that brute to describe you

*Illum Juda Leonem de Tribu.*

One's whole blood grew curdling and creepy

To see the black mane, vast and heapy,

The tail in the air stiff and straining,

The wide eyes, nor waxing nor waning,

As over the barrier which bounded

His platform, and us who surrounded

The barrier, they reached and they rested

On space that might stand him in best stead :

For who knew, he thought, what the amazement,

The eruption of clatter and blaze meant,

And if, in this minute of wonder,

No outlet, 'mid lightning and thunder,

Lay broad, and, his shackles all shivered,

The lion at last was delivered ?

Ay, that was the open sky o'erhead !

And you saw by the flash on his forehead,

By the hope in those eyes wide and steady,

He was leagues in the desert already,

Driving the flocks up the mountain,

Or catlike couched hard by the fountain

To waylay the date-gathering negress :

So guarded he entrance or egress.

"How he stands!" quoth the King : "we may well  
swear,

(No novice, we 've won our spurs elsewhere

And so can afford the confession,)

We exercise wholesome discretion

In keeping aloof from his threshold ;

Once hold you, those jaws want no fresh hold,

Their first would too pleasantly purloin

The visitor's brisket or surloin :  
 But who 's he would prove so fool-hardy ?  
 Not the best man of Marignan, pardie !"

The sentence no sooner was uttered,  
 Than over the rails a glove fluttered,  
 Fell close to the lion, and rested :  
 The dame 't was who flung it and jested  
 With life so, De Lorge had been wooing  
 For months past ; he sat there pursuing  
 His suit, weighing out with nonchalance  
 Fine speeches like gold from a balance.

Sound the trumpet, no true knight 's a tARRIER !  
 De Lorge made one leap at the barrier,  
 Walked straight to the glove,—while the lion  
 Ne'er moved, kept his far-reaching eye on  
 The palm-tree-edged desert-spring's sapphire,  
 And the musky oiled skin of the Kaffir,—  
 Picked it up, and as calmly retreated,  
 Leaped back where the lady was seated,  
 And full in the face of its owner  
 Flung the glove.

“Your heart's queen, you dethrone her ?  
 So should I !”—cried the King—“'t was mere  
 vanity,  
 Not love, set that task to humanity !”  
 Lords and ladies alike turned with loathing  
 From such a proved wolf in sheep's clothing.

Not so, I ; for I caught an expression  
 In her brow's undisturbed self-possession  
 Amid the Court's scoffing and merriment,—

As if from no pleasing experiment  
 She rose, yet of pain not much heedful  
 So long as the process was needful,—  
 As if she had tried, in a crucible,  
 To what “speeches like gold” were reducible,  
 And, finding the finest prove copper,  
 Felt smoke in her face was but proper ;  
 To know what she had *not* to trust to,  
 Was worth all the ashes and dust too.  
 She went out 'mid hooting and laughter ;  
 Clement Marot stayed ; I followed after,  
 And asked, as a grace, what it all meant ?  
 If she wished not the rash deed's recallment ?  
 “For I”—so I spoke—“am a poet :  
 Human nature,—behooves that I know it !”

She told me, “Too long had I heard  
 Of the deed proved alone by the word :  
 For my love—what De Lorge would not dare !  
 With my scorn—what De Lorge could compare !  
 And the endless descriptions of death  
 He would brave when my lip formed a breath,  
 I must reckon as braved, or, of course,  
 Doubt his word—and moreover, perforce,  
 For such gifts as no lady could spurn,  
 Must offer my love in return.  
 When I looked on your lion, it brought  
 All the dangers at once to my thought,  
 Encountered by all sorts of men,  
 Before he was lodged in his den,—  
 From the poor slave whose club or bare hands  
 Dug the trap, set the snare on the sands,  
 With no King and no Court to applaud,  
 By no shame, should he shrink, overawed,

Yet to capture the creature made shift,  
That his rude boys might laugh at the gift,  
—To the page who last leaped o'er the fence  
Of the pit, on no greater pretence  
Than to get back the bonnet he dropped,  
Lest his pay for a week should be stopped.  
So, wiser I judged it to make  
One trial what 'death for my sake'  
Really meant, while the power was yet mine,  
Than to wait until time should define  
Such a phrase not so simply as I,  
Who took it to mean just 'to die.'  
The blow a glove gives is but weak :  
Does the mark yet discolor my cheek ?  
But when the heart suffers a blow,  
Will the pain pass so soon, do you know ?”

I looked, as away she was sweeping,  
And saw a youth eagerly keeping  
As close as he dared to the doorway.  
No doubt that a noble should more weigh  
His life than befits a plebeian ;  
And yet, had our brute been Nemean—  
(I judge by a certain calm fervor  
The youth stepped with, forward to serve her)  
—He'd have scarce thought you did him the worst  
turn  
If you whispered “Friend, what you'd get, first  
earn !”  
And when, shortly after, she carried  
Her shame from the Court, and they married,  
To that marriage some happiness, maugre  
The voice of the Court, I dared augur.

For De Lorge, he made women with men vie,  
 Those in wonder and praise, these in envy ;  
 And, in short, stood so plain a head taller  
 That he woe'd and won . . . how do you call her ?  
 The beauty, that rose in the sequel  
 To the King's love, who loved her a week well.  
 And 't was noticed he never would honor  
 De Lorge (who looked daggers upon her)  
 With the easy commission of stretching  
 His legs in the service, and fetching  
 His wife, from her chamber, those straying  
 Sad gloves she was always mislaying,  
 While the King took the closet to chat in,—  
 But of course this adventure came pat in.  
 And never the king told the story,  
 How bringing a glove brought such glory,  
 But the wife smiled—"His nerves are grown firmer :  
 Mine he brings now and utters no murmur."

*Venienti occurrere morbo !*

With which moral I drop my theorbo.

---

S O N G .

I.

NAV but you, who do not love her,  
 Is she not pure gold, my mistress ?  
 Holds earth aught—speak truth—above her ?  
 Aught like this tress, see, and this tress,  
 And this last fairest tress of all,  
 So fair, see, ere I let it fall ?

## II.

Because, you spend your lives in praising ;  
 To praise, you search the wide world over ;  
 Then why not witness, calmly gazing,  
 If earth holds aught—speak truth—above her ?  
 Above this tress, and this, I touch  
 But cannot praise, I love so much !

---

 A SERENADE AT THE VILLA.

## I.

THAT was I, you heard last night,  
 When there rose no moon at all,  
 Nor, to pierce the strained and tight  
 Tent of heaven, a planet small :  
 Life was dead, and so was light.

## II.

Not a twinkle from the fly,  
 Not a glimmer from the worm.  
 When the crickets stopped their cry,  
 When the owls forbore a term,  
 You heard music ; that was I.

## III.

Earth turned in her sleep with pain,  
 Sultrily suspired for proof :  
 In at heaven and out again,  
 Lightning !—where it broke the roof,  
 Bloodlike, some few drops of rain.



IV.

What they could my words expressed,  
O my love, my all, my one !  
Singing helped the verses best,  
And when singing's best was done,  
To my lute I left the rest.

V.

So wore night ; the East was gray,  
White the broad-faced hemlock-flowers ;  
There would be another day ;  
Ere its first of heavy hours  
Found me, I had passed away.

VI.

What became of all the hopes,  
Words and song and lute as well ?  
Say, this struck you—"When life gropes  
Feebly from the path where fell  
Light last on the evening slopes,

VII.

"One friend in that path shall be,  
To secure my step from wrong ;  
One to count night day for me,  
Patient through the watches long,  
Serving most with none to see."

VIII.

Never say—as something bodes—  
"So, the worst has yet a worse !  
When life halts 'neath double loads,  
Better the task-master's curse  
Than such music on the roads !

## IX.

“When no moon succeeds the sun,  
Nor can pierce the midnight’s tent,  
Any star, the smallest one,  
While some drops, where lightning rent,  
Show the final storm begun—

## X.

“When the fire-fly hides its spot,  
When the garden-voices fail  
In the darkness thick and hot,—  
Shall another voice avail,  
That shape be where these are not ?

## XI.

“Has some plague a longer lease,  
Proffering its help uncouth ?  
Can’t one even die in peace ?  
As one shuts one’s eyes on youth,  
Is that face the last one sees ?”

## XII.

Oh how dark your villa was,  
Windows fast and obdurate !  
How the garden grudged me grass  
Where I stood—the iron gate  
Ground its teeth to let me pass !

YOUTH AND ART.

I.

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.

II.

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

III.

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

IV.

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

V.

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.

## VI.

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.

## VII.

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

## VIII.

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

## IX.

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

## X.

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 ?

## XI.

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

## XII.

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

## XIII.

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

## XIV.

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

## XV.

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.

## XVI.

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

## XVII.

And nobody calls you a dunce,  
 And people suppose me clever :  
 This could but have happened once,  
 And we missed it, lost it for ever.

## THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS.

## I.

YOU'RE my friend:  
I was the man the Duke spoke to;  
I helped the Duchess to cast off his yoke, too;  
So, here's the tale from beginning to end,  
My friend!

## II.

Ours is a great wild country:  
If you climb to our castle's top,  
I don't see where your eye can stop;  
For when you've passed the corn-field country,  
Where vineyards leave off, flocks are packed,  
And sheep-range leads to cattle-tract,  
And cattle-track to open-chase,  
And open-chase to the very base  
O' the mountain where, at a funeral pacc,  
Round about, solemn and slow,  
One by one, row after row,  
Up and up the pine-trees go,  
So, like black priests up, and so  
Down the other side again  
To another greater, wilder country,  
That's one vast red drear burnt-up plain,  
Branched through and through with many a vein  
Whence iron's dug, and copper's dealt;  
Look right, look left, look straight before,—  
Beneath they mine, above they smelt,  
Copper-ore and iron-ore,

And forge and furnace mould and melt,  
And so on, more and ever more,  
Till at the last, for a bounding belt,  
Comes the salt sand hoar of the great sea-shore,  
—And the whole is our Duke's country.

## III.

I was born the day this present Duke was—  
(And O, says the song, ere I was old!)  
In the castle where the other Duke was—  
(When I was happy and young, not old!)  
I in the kennel, he in the bower :  
We are of like age to an hour.  
My father was huntsman in that day ;  
Who has not heard my father say  
That, when a boar was brought to bay,  
Three times, four times out of five,  
With his huntspear he 'd contrive  
To get the killing-place transfixed,  
And pin him true, both eyes betwixt?  
And that 's why the old Duke would rather  
He lost a salt-pit than my father,  
And loved to have him ever in call ;  
That 's why my father stood in the hall  
When the old Duke brought his infant out  
To show the people, and while they passed  
The wondrous bantling round about,  
Was first to start at the outside blast  
As the Kaiser's courier blew his horn,  
Just a month after the babe was born.  
"And," quoth the Kaiser's courier, "since  
The Duke has got an heir, our Prince  
Needs the Duke's self at his side :"  
The Duke looked down and seemed to wince,

But he thought of wars o'er the world wide,  
Castles a-fire, men on their march,  
The toppling tower, the crashing arch ;  
And up he looked, and awhile he eyed  
The row of crests and shields and banners  
Of all achievements after all manners,  
And "ay," said the Duke with a surly pride.  
The more was his comfort when he died  
At next year's end, in a velvet suit,  
With a gilt glove on his hand, his foot  
In a silken shoe for a leather boot,  
Petticoated like a herald,  
In a chamber next to an ante-room,  
Where he breathed the breath of page and groom,  
What he called stink, and they, perfume :  
—They should have set him on red Berold  
Mad with pride, like fire to manage !  
They should have got his cheek fresh tannage  
Such a day as to-day in the merry sunshine !  
Had they stuck on his fist a rough-foot merlin !  
(Hark, the wind's on the heath at its game !  
Oh for a noble falcon-lanner  
To flap each broad wing like a banner,  
And turn in the wind, and dance like flame !)  
Had they broached a cask of white beer from Berlin !  
—Or if you incline to prescribe mere wine  
Put to his lips when they saw him pine,  
A cup of our own Moldavia fine,  
Cotnar for instance, green as May sorrel  
And ropy with sweet,—we shall not quarrel.

## IV.

So, at home, the sick tall yellow Duchess  
Was left with the infant in her clutches,



She being the daughter of God knows who :  
And now was the time to revisit her tribe.  
Abroad and afar they went, the two,  
And let our people rail and gibe  
At the empty hall and extinguished fire,  
As loud as we liked, but ever in vain,  
Till after long years we had our desire,  
And back came the Duke and his mother again.

## v.

And he came back the pertest little ape  
That ever affronted human shape ;  
Full of his travel, struck at himself.  
You 'd say, he despised our bluff old ways ?  
—Not he ! For in Paris they told the elf  
That our rough North land was the land of Lays,  
The one good thing left in evil days ;  
Since the Mid-Age was the Heroic Time,  
And only in wild nooks like ours  
Could you taste of it yet as in its prime,  
And see true castles with proper towers,  
Young-hearted women, old-minded men,  
And manners now as manners were then.  
So, all that the old Dukes had been, without knowing  
it,  
This Duke would fain know he was, without being it ;  
'T was not for the joy's self, but the joy of his showing  
it,  
Nor for the pride's self, but the pride of our seeing it,  
He revived all usages thoroughly worn-out,  
The souls of them fumed-forth, the hearts of them  
torn-out :  
And chief in the chase his neck he perilled,  
On a lathy horse, all legs and length,

With blood for bone, all speed, no strength ;  
—They should have set him on Red Berold  
With the red eye slow consuming in fire,  
And the thin stiff ear like an abbey spire !

## VI.

Well, such as he was, he must marry, we heard :  
And out of a convent, at the word,  
Came the lady, in time of spring.  
—Oh, old thoughts they cling, they cling !  
That day, I know, with a dozen oaths  
I clad myself in thick hunting-clothes  
Fit for the chase of urox or buffle  
In winter-time when you need to muffle.  
But the Duke had a mind we should cut a figure,  
And so we saw the lady arrive :  
My friend, I have seen a white crane bigger !  
She was the smallest lady alive,  
Made in a piece of nature's madness,  
Too small, almost, for the life and gladness  
That over-filled her, as some hive  
Out of the bears' reach on the high trees  
Is crowded with its safe merry bees :  
In truth, she was not hard to please !  
Up she looked, down she looked, round at the mead,  
Straight at the castle, that's best indeed  
To look at from outside the walls :  
As for us, styled the "serfs and thralls,"  
She as much thanked me as if she had said it,  
(With her eyes, do you understand ?)  
Because I patted her horse while I led it ;  
And Max, who rode on her other hand,  
Said, no bird flew past but she inquired  
What its true name was, nor ever seemed tired—

If that was an eagle she saw hover,  
And the green and gray bird on the field was the  
plover.

When suddenly appeared the Duke :  
And as down she sprung, the small foot pointed  
On to my hand,—as with a rebuke,  
And as if his backbone were not jointed,  
The Duke stepped rather aside than forward,  
And welcomed her with his grandest smile ;  
And, mind you, his mother all the while  
Chilled in the rear, like a wind to Nor'ward ;  
And up, like a weary yawn, with its pullies  
Went, in a shriek, the rusty portcullis ;  
And, like a glad sky the north-wind sullies,  
The lady's face stopped its play,  
As if her first hair had grown gray ;  
For such things must begin some one day.

## VII.

In a day or two she was well again ;  
As who should say, " You labor in vain !  
This is all a jest against God, who meant  
I should ever be, as I am, content  
And glad in his sight ; therefore, glad I will be."  
So, smiling as at first went she.

## VIII.

She was active, stirring, all fire—  
Could not rest, could not tire—  
To a stone she might have given life !  
(I myself loved once, in my day)  
—For a shepherd's, miner's, huntsman's wife,  
(I had a wife, I know what I say)  
Never in all the world such an one !

And here was plenty to be done,  
And she that could do it, great or small,  
She was to do nothing at all.  
There was already this man in his post,  
This in his station, and that in his office,  
And the Duke's plan admitted a wife, at most,  
To meet his eye, with the other trophies,  
Now outside the hall, now in it,  
To sit thus, stand thus, see and be seen,  
At the proper place in the proper minute,  
And die away the life between.  
And it was amusing enough, each infraction  
Of rule—(but for after-sadness that came)  
To hear the consummate self-satisfaction  
With which the young Duke and the old dame  
Would let her advise, and criticise,  
And, being a fool, instruct the wise,  
And, child-like, parcel out praise or blame :  
They bore it all in complacent guise,  
As though an artificer, after contriving  
A wheel-work image as if it were living,  
Should find with delight it could motion to strike  
him !  
So found the Duke, and his mother like him :  
The lady hardly got a rebuff—  
That had not been contemptuous enough,  
With his cursed smirk, as he nodded applause,  
And kept off the old mother-cat's claws.

## IX.

So, the little lady grew silent and thin,  
Paling and ever paling,  
As the way is with a hid chagrin ;  
And the Duke perceived that she was ailing,

And said in his heart, "'T is done to spite me,  
But I shall find in my power to right me!"  
Don't swear, friend! The old one, many a year,  
Is in hell, and the Duke's self . . . you shall hear.

## x.

Well, early in autumn, at first winter-warning,  
When the stag had to break with his foot, of a morn-  
ing,  
A drinking-hole out of the fresh tender ice,  
That covered the pond till the sun, in a trice,  
Loosening it, let out a ripple of gold,  
And another and another, and faster and faster,  
Till, dimpling to blindness, the wide water rolled—  
Then it so chanced that the Duke our master  
Asked himself what were the pleasures in season,  
And found, since the calendar bade him be hearty,  
He should do the Middle Age no treason  
In resolving on a hunting-party.  
Always provided, old books showed the way of it!  
What meant old poets by their strictures?  
And when old poets had said their say of it,  
How taught old painters in their pictures?  
We must revert to the proper channels,  
Workings in tapestry, paintings on panels,  
And gather up woodcraft's authentic traditions:  
Here was food for our various ambitions,  
As on each case, exactly stated—  
To encourage your dog, now, the properest chirrup,  
Or best prayer to St. Hubert on mounting your stir-  
rup—  
We of the household took thought and debated.  
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 ;  
 What signified hats if they had no rims on,  
 Each slouching before and behind like the scallop,  
 And able to serve at sea for a shallop,  
 Loaded with lacquer and looped with crimson ?  
 So that the deer now, to make a short rhyme on 't,  
 What with our Venerers, Prickers and Verderers,  
 Might hope for real hunters at length and not mur-  
     derers,  
 And oh the Duke's tailor, he had a hot time on 't !

## XI.

Now you must know that when the first dizziness  
 Of flap-hats and buff-coats and jack-boots subsided,  
 The Duke put this question, "The Duke's part pro-  
     vided,  
 Had not the Duchess some share in the business ?"  
 For out of the mouth of two or three witnesses  
 Did he establish all fit-or-unfitnesses :  
 And, after much laying of heads together,  
 Somebody's cap got a notable feather  
 By the announcement with proper unction  
 That he had discovered the lady's function ;  
 Since ancient authors gave this tenet,  
 "When horns wind a mort and the deer is at siege,  
 Let the dame of the castle prick forth on her jennet,  
 And with water to wash the hands of her liege  
 In a clean ewer with a fair toweling,  
 Let her preside at the disemboweling."  
 Now, my friend, if you had so little religion  
 As to catch a hawk, some falcon-lanner,  
 And thrust her broad wings like a banner

Into a coop for a vulgar pigeon ;  
And if day by day and week by week  
You cut her claws, and sealed her eyes,  
And clipped her wings, and tied her beak,  
Would it cause you any great surprise  
If, when you decided to give her an airing,  
You found she needed a little preparing?  
—I say, should you be such a curmudgeon,  
If she clung to the perch, as to take it in dudgeon?  
Yet when the Duke to his lady signified,  
Just a day before, as he judged most dignified,  
In what a pleasure she was to participate,—  
And, instead of leaping wide in flashes,  
Her eyes just lifted their long lashes,  
As if pressed by fatigue even he could not dissipate,  
And duly acknowledged the Duke's forethought,  
But spoke of her health, if her health were worth  
aught,  
Of the weight by day and the watch by night,  
And much wrong now that used to be right,  
So, thanking him, declined the hunting,—  
Was conduct ever more affronting?  
With all the ceremony settled—  
With the towel ready, and the sewer  
Polishing up his oldest ewer,  
And the jennet pitched upon, a pieballed,  
Black-barred, cream-coated and pink eye-balled,—  
No wonder if the Duke was nettled!  
And when she persisted nevertheless,—  
Well, I suppose here's the time to confess  
That there ran half round our lady's chamber  
A balcony none of the hardest to clamber ;  
And that Jacynth the tire-woman, ready in waiting,  
Stayed in call outside, what need of relating?

And since Jacynth was like a June rose, why, a fervent

Adorer of Jacynth of course was your servant ;  
And if she had the habit to peep through the casement,

How could I keep at any vast distance ?

And so, as I say, on the lady's persistence,  
The Duke, dumb stricken with amazement,  
Stood for a while in a sultry smother,

And then, with a smile that partook of the awful,  
Turned her over to his yellow mother

To learn what was decorous and lawful ;

And the mother smelt blood with a cat-like instinct,

As her cheek quick whitened thro' all its quince-tinct.

Oh, but the lady heard the whole truth at once !

What meant she ?—Who was she ?—Her duty and station.

The wisdom of age and the folly of youth, at once,  
Its decent regard and its fitting relation—

In brief, my friend, set all the devils in hell free

And turn them out to carouse in a belfry

And treat the priests to a fifty-part canon,

And then you may guess how that tongue of hers  
ran on !

Well, somehow or other it ended at last,

And, licking her whiskers, out she passed ;

And after her,—making (he hoped) a face

Like Emperor Nero or Sultan Saladin,

Stalked the Duke's self with the austere grace

Of ancient hero or modern paladin,

From door to staircase—oh such a solemn

Unbending of the vertebral column !



## XII.

However, at sunrise our company mustered ;  
And here was the huntsman bidding unkennel,  
And there 'neath his bonnet the pricker blustered,  
With feather dank as a bough of wet fennel ;  
For the court-yard walls were filled with fog  
You might cut as an axe chops a log—  
Like so much wool for color and bulkiness ;  
And out rode the Duke in a perfect sulkiness,  
Since, before breakfast, a man feels but queasily,  
And a sinking at the lower abdomen  
Begins the day with indifferent omen.  
And lo, as he looked around uneasily,  
The sun ploughed the fog up and drove it asunder,  
This way and that, from the valley under ;  
And, looking through the court-yard arch,  
Down in the valley, what should meet him  
But a troop of Gypsies on their march ?  
No doubt with the annual gifts to greet him.

## XIII.

Now, in your land, Gypsies reach you, only  
After reaching all lands beside ;  
North they go, South they go, trooping or lonely,  
And still, as they travel far and wide,  
Catch they and keep now a trace here, a trace there,  
That puts you in mind of a place here, a place there.  
But with us, I believe they rise out of the ground,  
And nowhere else, I take it, are found  
With the earth-tint yet so freshly embrowned ;  
Born, no doubt, like insects which breed on  
The very fruit they are meant to feed on.  
For the earth—not a use to which they don't turn it,

The ore that grows in the mountain's womb,  
Or the sand in the pits like a honeycomb,  
They sift and soften it, bake it and burn it—  
Whether they weld you, for instance, a snaffle  
With side-bars never a brute can baffle ;  
Or a lock that 's a puzzle of wards within wards ;  
Or, if your colt's fore foot inclines to curve inwards,  
Horseshoes they hammer which turn on a swivel  
And won't allow the hoof to shrivel.  
Then they cast bells like the shell of the winkle  
That keep a stout heart in the ram with their tinkle ;  
But the sand—they pinch and pound it like otters ;  
Commend me to Gypsy glass-makers and potters !  
Glasses they 'll blow you, crystal-clear,  
Where just a faint cloud of rose shall appear,  
As if in pure water you dropped and let die  
A bruised black-blooded mulberry ;  
And that other sort, their crowning pride,  
With long white threads distinct inside,  
Like the lake-flower's fibrous roots which dangle  
Loose such a length and never tangle,  
Where the bold sword-lily cuts the clear waters,  
And the cup-lily couches with all the white daughters :

Such are the works they put their hand to,  
The uses they turn and twist iron and sand to.  
And these made the troop, which our Duke saw sally  
Toward his castle from out of the valley,  
Men and women, like new-hatched spiders,  
Come out with the morning to greet our riders.  
And up they wound till they reached the ditch,  
Whereat all stopped save one, a witch  
That I knew, as she hobbled from the group,  
By her gait directly and her stoop,

I, whom Jacynth was used to importune  
To let that same witch tell us our fortune.  
The oldest Gypsy then above ground ;  
And, sure as the autumn season came round,  
She paid us a visit for profit or pastime,  
And every time, as she swore, for the last time.  
And presently she was seen to sidle  
Up to the Duke till she touched his bridle,  
So that the horse of a sudden reared up  
As under its nose the old witch peered up  
With her worn-out eyes, or rather eye-holes,  
Of no use now but to gather brine,  
And began a kind of level whine  
Such as they used to sing to their viols  
When their ditties they go grinding  
Up and down with nobody minding :  
And then, as of old, at the end of the humming  
Her usual presents were forthcoming  
—A dog-whistle blowing the fiercest of trebles,  
(Just a sea-shore stone holding a dozen fine pebbles,)  
Or a porcelain mouth-piece to screw on a pipe-end,—  
And so she awaited her annual stipend.  
But this time, the Duke would scarcely vouchsafe  
A word in reply ; and in vain she felt  
With twitching fingers at her belt  
For the purse of sleek pine-marten pelt,  
Ready to put what he gave in her pouch safe,—  
Till, either to quicken his apprehension,  
Or possibly with an after-intention,  
She was come, she said, to pay her duty  
To the new Duchess, the youthful beauty.  
No sooner had she named his lady,  
Than a shine lit up the face so shady,  
And its smirk returned with a novel meaning—

For it struck him, the babe just wanted weaning ;  
If one gave her a taste of what life was and sorrow,  
She, foolish to-day, would be wiser to-morrow ;  
And who so fit a teacher of trouble  
As this sordid crone bent well-nigh double ?  
So, glancing at her wolf-skin vesture,  
(If such it was, for they grow so hirsute  
That their own fleece serves for natural fur-suit)  
He was contrasting, 't was plain from his gesture,  
The life of the lady so flower-like and delicate  
With the loathsome squalor of this helicat.  
I, in brief, was the man the Duke beckoned  
From out of the throng, and while I drew near  
He told the crone—as I since have reckoned  
By the way he bent and spoke into her ear  
With circumspection and mystery—  
The main of the lady's history,  
Her frowardness and ingratitude ;  
And for all the crone's submissive attitude  
I could see round her mouth the loose plaits tightening,  
And her brow with assenting intelligence brightening,  
As though she engaged with hearty goodwill  
Whatever he now might enjoin to fulfil,  
And promised the lady a thorough frightening.  
And so, just giving her a glimpse  
Of a purse, with the air of a man who imps  
The wing of the hawk that shall fetch the hernshaw,  
He bade me take the Gypsy mother  
And set her telling some story or other  
Of hill or dale, oak-wood or fernshaw,  
To wile away a weary hour  
For the lady left alone in her bower,  
Whose mind and body craved exertion  
And yet shrank from all better diversion.

## XIV.

Then clapping heel to his horse, the mere curveter,  
Out rode the Duke, and after his hollo  
Horses and hounds swept, huntsman and servitor,  
And back I turned and bade the crone follow.  
And what makes me confident what's to be told you  
Had all along been of this crone's devising,  
Is, that, on looking round sharply, behold you,  
There was a novelty quick as surprising :  
For first, she had shot up a full head in stature,  
And her step kept pace with mine nor faltered,  
As if age had foregone its usurpature,  
And the ignoble mien was wholly altered,  
And the face looked quite of another nature,  
And the change reached too, whatever the change  
meant,  
Her shaggy wolf-skin cloak's arrangement :  
For where its tatters hung loose like sedges,  
Gold coins were glittering on the edges,  
Like the band-roll strung with tomans  
Which proves the veil a Persian woman's :  
And under her brow, like a snail's horns newly  
Come out as after the rain he paces,  
Two unmistakable eye-points duly  
Live and aware looked out of their places.  
So, we went and found Jacynth at the entry  
Of the lady's chamber standing sentry ;  
I told the command and produced my companion,  
And Jacynth rejoiced to admit any one,  
For since last night, by the same token,  
Not a single word had the lady spoken :  
They went in both to the presence together,  
While I in the balcony watched the weather.

## XV.

And now, what took place at the very first of all,  
I cannot tell, as I never could learn it :  
Jacynth constantly wished a curse to fall  
On that little head of hers and burn it  
If she knew how she came to drop so soundly  
Asleep of a sudden, and there continue  
The whole time, sleeping as profoundly  
As one of the boars my father would pin you  
'Twixt the eyes where life holds garrison,  
—Jacynth forgive me the comparison,  
But where I begin my own narration  
Is a little after I took my station  
To breathe the fresh air from the balcony,  
And, having in those days a falcon eye,  
To follow the hunt thro' the open country,  
From where the bushes thinlier crested  
The hillocks, to a plain where 's not one tree.  
When, in a moment, my ear was arrested  
By—was it singing, or was it saying,  
Or a strange musical instrument playing  
In the chamber ?—and to be certain  
I pushed the lattice, pulled the curtain,  
And there lay Jacynth asleep,  
Yet as if a watch she tried to keep,  
In a rosy sleep along the floor  
With her head against the door ;  
While in the midst, on the seat of state,  
Was a queen—the Gypsy woman late,  
With head and face downbent  
On the lady's head and face intent :  
For, coiled at her feet like a child at ease,  
The lady sat between her knees,

And o'er them the lady's clasped hands met,  
And on those hands her chin was set,  
And her upturned face met the face of the crone  
Wherein the eyes had grown and grown  
As if she could double and quadruple  
At pleasure the play of either pupil  
—Very like, by her hands' slow fanning,  
As up and down like a gor-crow's flappers  
They moved to measure, or bell clappers.  
I said, "Is it blessing, is it banning,  
Do they applaud you or burlesque you—  
Those hands and fingers with no flesh on?"  
But, just as I thought to spring in to the rescue,  
At once I was stopped by the lady's expression:  
For it was life her eyes were drinking  
From the crone's wide pair above unwinking,  
—Life's pure fire, received without shrinking,  
Into the heart and breast whose heaving  
Told you no single drop they were leaving,  
—Life, that filling her, passed redundant  
Into her very hair, back swerving  
Over each shoulder, loose and abundant,  
As her head thrown back showed the white throat  
curving;  
And the very tresses shared in the pleasure,  
Moving to the mystic measure,  
Bounding as the bosom bounded.  
I stopped short, more and more confounded,  
As still her cheeks burned and eyes glistened,  
As she listened and she listened:  
When all at once a hand detained me,  
The selfsame contagion gained me,  
And I kept time to the wondrous chime,  
Making out words and prose and rhyme,

Till it seemed that the music furled  
Its wings like a task fulfilled, and dropped  
From under the words it first had propped,  
And left them midway in the world,  
Word took word as hand takes hand,  
I could hear at last, and understand,  
And when I held the unbroken thread,  
The Gypsy said :—

“And so at last we find my tribe.  
And so I set thee in the midst,  
And to one and all of them describe  
What thou saidst and what thou didst,  
Our long and terrible journey through,  
And all thou art ready to say and do  
In the trials that remain :  
I trace them the vein and the other vein  
That meet on thy brow and part again,  
Making our rapid mystic mark ;  
And I bid my people prove and probe  
Each eye's profound and glorious globe  
Till they detect the kindred spark  
In those depths so dear and dark,  
Like the spots that snap and burst and flee,  
Circling over the midnight sea.  
And on that round young cheek of thine  
I make them recognize the tinge,  
As when of the costly scarlet wine  
They drip so much as will impinge  
And spread in a thinnest scale afloat  
One thick gold drop from the olive's coat  
Over a silver plate whose sheen  
Still thro' the mixture shall be seen.  
For so I prove thee, to one and all,



Fit, when my people ope their breast,  
To see the sign, and hear the call,  
And take the vow, and stand the test  
Which adds one more child to the rest—  
When the breast is bare and the arms are wide,  
And the world is left outside.  
For there is probation to decree,  
And many and long must the trials be  
Thou shalt victoriously endure,  
If that brow is true and those eyes are sure ;  
Like a jewel-finder's fierce assay  
Of the prize he dug from its mountain tomb,—  
Let once the vindicating ray  
Leap out amid the anxious gloom,  
And steel and fire have done their part,  
And the prize falls on its finder's heart ;  
So, trial after trial past,  
Wilt thou fall at the very last  
Breathless, half in trance  
With the thrill of the great deliverance,  
Into our arms for evermore ;  
And thou shalt know, those arms once curled  
About thee, what we knew before,  
How love is the only good in the world.  
Henceforth be loved as heart can love,  
Or brain devise, or hand approve !  
Stand up, look below,  
It is our life at thy feet we throw  
To step with into light and joy ;  
Not a power of life but we employ  
To satisfy thy nature's want ;  
Art thou the tree that props the plant,  
Or the climbing plant that seeks the tree—  
Canst thou help us, must we help thee ?

If any two creatures grew into one,  
They would do more than the world has done ;  
Though each apart were never so weak,  
Ye vainly through the world should seek  
For the knowledge and the might  
Which in such union grew their right :  
So, to approach at least that end,  
And blend,—as much as may be, blend  
Thee with us or us with thee,—  
As climbing plant or propping tree,  
Shall some one deck thee over and down,  
Up and about, with blossoms and leaves ?  
Fix his heart's fruit for thy garland crown,  
Cling with his soul as the gourd-vine cleaves,  
Die on thy boughs and disappear  
While not a leaf of thine is sere ?  
Or is the other fate in store,  
And art thou fitted to adore,  
To give thy wondrous self away,  
And take a stronger nature's sway ?  
I foresee and could foretell  
Thy future portion, sure and well :  
But those passionate eyes speak true, speak true,  
Let them say what thou shalt do !  
Only be sure thy daily life,  
In its peace or in its strife,  
Never shall be unobserved ;  
We pursue thy whole career,  
And hope for it, or doubt, or fear,—  
Lo, hast thou kept thy path or swerved,  
We are beside thee in all thy ways,  
With our blame, with our praise,  
Our shame to feel, our pride to show,  
Glad, angry—but indifferent, no !

Whether it be thy lot to go,  
For the good of us all, where the haters meet  
In the crowded city's horrible street ;  
Or thou step alone through the morass  
Where never sound yet was  
Save the dry quick clap of the stork's bill,  
For the air is still, and the water still,  
When the blue breast of the dipping coot  
Dives under, and all is mute.  
So at the last shall come old age,  
Decrepit as befits that stage ;  
How else wouldst thou retire apart  
With the hoarded memories of thy heart  
And gather all to the very least  
Of the fragments of life's earlier feast,  
Let fall through eagerness to find  
The crowning dainties yet behind ?  
Ponder on the entire past  
Laid together thus at last,  
When the twilight helps to fuse  
The first fresh with the faded hues,  
And the outline of the whole,  
As round eve's shades their framework roll,  
Grandly fronts for once thy soul.  
And then as, 'mid the dark, a gleam  
Of yet another morning breaks,  
And like the hand which ends a dream,  
Death, with the might of his sunbeam,  
Touches the flesh and the soul awakes,  
Then——”

Ay, then indeed something would happen !  
But what ? For here her voice changed like a bird's ;  
There grew more of the music and less of the words ;

Had Jacynth only been by me to clap pen  
To paper and put you down every syllable  
With those clever clerkly fingers,  
All I've forgotten as well as what lingers  
In this old brain of mine that's but ill able  
To give you even this poor version  
Of the speech I spoil, as it were, with stammering !  
—More fault of those who had the hammering  
Of prosody into me and syntax,  
And did it, not with hobnails but tintacks !  
But to return from this excursion,—  
Just, do you mark, when the song was sweetest,  
The peace most deep and the charm completest,  
There came, shall I say, a snap—  
And the charm vanished !  
And my sense returned, so strangely banished,  
And, starting as from a nap,  
I knew the crone was bewitching my lady,  
With Jacynth asleep ; and but one spring made I  
Down from the casement, round to the portal,  
Another minute and I had entered,—  
When the door opened, and more than mortal  
Stood, with a face where to my mind centred  
All beauties I ever saw or shall see,  
The Duchess : I stopped as if struck by palsy.  
She was so different, happy and beautiful,  
I felt at once that all was best,  
And that I had nothing to do, for the rest,  
But wait her commands, obey and be dutiful.  
Not that, in fact, there was any commanding ;  
I saw the glory of her eye,  
And the brow's height and the breast's expanding,  
And I was hers to live or to die.  
As for finding what she wanted,

You know God Almighty granted  
Such little signs should serve wild creatures  
To tell one another all their desires,  
So that each knows what his friend requires,  
And does its bidding without teachers.  
I preceded her ; the crone  
Followed silent and alone ;  
I spoke to her, but she merely jabbered  
In the old style ; both her eyes had slunk  
Back to their pits ; her stature shrunk ;  
In short, the soul in its body sunk  
Like a blade sent home to its scabbard.  
We descended, I preceding ;  
Crossed the court with nobody heeding ;  
All the world was at the chase,  
The court-yard like a desert place,  
The stable emptied of its small fry ;  
I saddled myself the very palfrey  
I remember patting while it carried her,  
The day she arrived and the Duke married her.  
And, do you know, though it's easy deceiving  
One's self in such matters, I can't help believing  
The lady had not forgotten it either,  
And knew the poor devil so much beneath her  
Would have been only too glad, for her service,  
To dance on hot ploughshares like a Turk dervise,  
But, unable to pay proper duty where owing it,  
Was reduced to that pitiful method of showing it.  
For though, the moment I began setting  
His saddle on my own nag of Berold's begetting,  
(Not that I meant to be obtrusive)  
She stopped me, while his rug was shifting,  
By a single rapid finger's lifting,  
And, with a gesture kind but conclusive,

And a little shake of the head, refused me,—  
 I say, although she never used me,  
 Yet when she was mounted, the Gypsy behind her  
 And I ventured to remind her,  
 I suppose with a voice of less steadiness  
 Than usual, for my feeling exceeded me,  
 —Something to the effect that I was in readiness  
 Whenever God should please she needed me,—  
 Then, do you know, her face looked down on me  
 With a look that placed a crown on me,  
 And she felt in her bosom,—mark, her bosom—  
 And, as a flower-tree drops its blossom,  
 Dropped me . . . ah, had it been a purse  
 Of silver, my friend, or gold that's worse,  
 Why, you see, as soon as I found myself  
 So understood,—that a true heart so may gain  
 Such a reward,—I should have gone home again,  
 Kissed Jacynth, and soberly drowned myself!  
 It was a little plait of hair  
 Such as friends in a convent make  
 To wear, each for the other's sake,—  
 This, see, which at my breast I wear,  
 Ever did (rather to Jacynth's grudgment),  
 And ever shall, till the Day of Judgment.  
 And then,—and then,—to cut short,—this is idle,  
 These are feelings it is not good to foster,—  
 I pushed the gate wide, she shook the bridle,  
 And the palfrey bounded,—and so we lost her.

## XVI.

When the liquor's out why clink the cannikin?  
 I did think to describe you the panic in  
 The redoubtable breast of our master the mannikin,  
 And what was the pitch of his mother's yellowness,

How she turned as a shark to snap the spare-rib  
Clean off, sailors say, from a pearl-diving Carib,  
When she heard, what she called the flight of the  
feloness

—But it seems such child's play,  
What they said and did with the lady away!  
And to dance on, when we've lost the music,  
Always made me—and no doubt makes you—sick.  
Nay, to my mind, the world's face looked so stern  
As that sweet form disappeared through the postern,  
She that kept it in constant good humor,  
It ought to have stopped; there seemed nothing to  
do more.

But the world thought otherwise and went on,  
And my head's one that its spite was spent on:  
Thirty years are fled since that morning,  
And with them all my head's adorning.  
Nor did the old Duchess die outright,  
As you expect, of suppressed spite,  
The natural end of every adder  
Not suffered to empty its poison-bladder:  
But she and her son agreed, I take it,  
That no one should touch on the story to wake it,  
For the wound in the Duke's pride rankled fiery;  
So, they made no search and small inquiry:  
And when fresh Gypsies have paid us a visit, I've  
Noticed the couple were never inquisitive,  
But told them they're folks the Duke do n't want here,  
And bade them make haste and cross the frontier.  
Brief, the Duchess was gone and the Duke was glad  
of it,  
And the old one was in the young one's stead,  
And took, in her place, the household's head,  
And a blessed time the household had of it!

And were I not, as a man may say, cautious  
 How I trench, more than needs, on the nauseous,  
 I could favor you with sundry touches  
 Of the paint-smutches with which the Duchess  
 Heightened the mellowness of her cheek's yellowness  
 (To get on faster) until at last her  
 Cheek grew to be one master-plaster  
 Of mucus and fucus from mere use of ceruse :  
 In short, she grew from scalp to udder  
 Just the object to make you shudder.

## XVII.

You 're my friend --  
 What a thing friendship is, world without end !  
 How it gives the heart and soul a stir-up  
 As if somebody broached you a glorious runlet,  
 And poured out, all lovelily, sparkingly, sunlit,  
 Our green Moldavia, the streaky syrup,  
 Cotnar as old as the time of the Druids—  
 Friendship may match with that monarch of fluids ;  
 Each supple a dry brain, fills you its ins-and-outs,  
 Gives your life's hour-glass a shake when the thin sand  
     doubts  
 Whether to run on or stop short, and guarantees  
 Age is not all made of stark sloth and arrant ease.  
 I have seen my little lady once more,  
 Jacynth, the Gypsy, Berold, and the rest of it,  
 For to me spoke the Duke, as I told you before ;  
 I always wanted to make a clean breast of it :  
 And now it is made—why, my heart's blood, that went  
     trickle,  
 Trickle, but anon, in such muddy driblets,  
 Is pumped up brisk now, through the main ventricle,  
 And genially floats me about the giblets.



I'll tell you what I intend to do :  
I must see this fellow his sad life through—  
He is our Duke, after all,  
And I, as he says, but a serf and thrall.  
My father was born here, and I inherit  
His fame, a chain he bound his son with ;  
Could I pay in a lump I should prefer it,  
But there's no mine to blow up and get done with :  
So, I must stay till the end of the chapter.  
For, as to our middle-age-manners-adapter,  
Be it a thing to be glad on or sorry on,  
Some day or other, his head in a morion  
And breast in a hauberk, his heels he'll kick up,  
Slain by an onslaught fierce of hiccup.  
And then, when red doth the sword of our Duke rust,  
And its leathern sheath lie o'ergrown with a blue crust,  
Then I shall scrape together my earnings ;  
For, you see, in the churchyard Jacynth reposes,  
And our children all went the way of the roses :  
It's a long lane that knows no turnings.  
One needs but little tackle to travel in ;  
So, just one stout cloak shall I indue :  
And for a staff, what beats the javelin  
With which his boars my father pinned you ?  
And then, for a purpose you shall hear presently,  
Taking some Cotnar, a tight plump skinful,  
I shall go journeying, who but I, pleasantly !  
Sorrow is vain and despondency sinful.  
What's a man's age ? He must hurry more, that's all ;  
Cram in a day, what his youth took a year to hold :  
When we mind labor, then only, we're too old—  
What age had Methusalem when he begat Saul ?  
And at last, as its haven some buffeted ship sees,  
(Come all the way from the north-parts with sperm oil)

I hope to get safely out of the turmoil  
And arrive one day at the land of the Gypsies,  
And find my lady, or hear the last news of her  
From some old thief and son of Lucifer,  
His forehead chapleted green with wreathy hop,  
Sunburned all over like an Æthiop.  
And when my Cotnar begins to operate  
And the tongue of the rogue to run at a proper rate,  
And our wine-skin, tight once, shows each flaccid dent,  
I shall drop in with—as if by accident—  
“You never knew then, how it all ended,  
What fortune good or bad attended  
The little lady your Queen befriended?”  
—And when that’s told me, what’s remaining?  
This world’s too hard for my explaining.  
The same wise judge of matters equine  
Who still preferred some slim four-year-old  
To the big-boned stock of mighty Berold,  
And, for strong Cotnar, drank French weak wine,  
He also must be such a lady’s scorner!  
Smooth Jacob still robs homely Esau:  
Now up, now down, the world’s one see-saw.  
—So, I shall find out some snug corner  
Under a hedge, like Orson the wood-knight,  
Turn myself round and bid the world good night;  
And sleep a sound sleep till the trumpet’s blowing  
Wakes me (unless priests cheat us laymen)  
To a world where will be no further throwing  
Pearls before swine that can’t value them. Amen!

SONG FROM "PIPPA PASSES."

THE year's at the spring,  
And day's at the morn ;  
Morning's at seven ;  
The hill-side's dew-pearled ;  
The lark's on the wing ;  
The snail's on the thorn ;  
God's in His heaven—  
All's right with the world.

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"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS  
FROM GHENT TO AIX."

[16—.]

I.

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 un-  
drew ;  
"Speed !" echoed the wall to us galloping through ;  
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,  
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

II.

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,  
 Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,  
 Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

## III.

'T was 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 ;  
 At Düffeld, 't was 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!"

## IV.

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

## V.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent  
     back  
 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.

## VI.

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,  
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

VII.

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 ;  
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,  
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight !

VIII.

"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  
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.

IX.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,  
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,  
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.

## X.

And all I remember is, friends flocking round  
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.

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## SONG FROM "PARACELSUS."

## I.

HEAP cassia, sandal-buds and stripes  
Of labdanum, and aloe-balls,  
Smear'd with dull nard an Indian wipes  
From out her hair : such balsam falls  
Down sea-side mountain pedestals,  
From tree-tops where tired winds are fain,  
Spent with the vast and howling main,  
To treasure half their island gain.

## II.

And strew faint sweetness from some old  
Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud  
Which breaks to dust when once unrolled ;  
Or shredded perfume, like a cloud  
From closet long to quiet vowed,  
With moth'd and dropping arras hung,  
Mouldering her lute and books among,  
As when a queen, long dead, was young.

THROUGH THE METIDJA TO ABD-EL-  
KADER.

1842.

I.

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,  
He, in whom our Tribes confide,  
Is descried, ways untried  
As I ride, as I ride.

II.

As I ride, as I ride  
To our Chief and his Allied,  
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 ?

III.

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

## IV.

As I ride, as I ride,  
 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—  
 How has vied stride with stride  
 As I ride, as I ride !

## v.

As I ride, as I ride,  
 Could I loose what Fate has tied,  
 Ere I pride, she should hide  
 (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 !

---

 INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP.

## I.

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,  
 Legs wide, arms locked behind,  
 As if to balance the prone brow  
 Oppressive with its mind.



## II.

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans  
That soar, to earth may fall,  
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  
Until he reached the mound.

## III.

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

## IV.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace  
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,  
Perched him !" The chief's eye flashed ; his plans  
Soared up again like fire.

## V.

The chief's eye flashed ; but presently  
Softened itself, as sheathes  
A film the mother-eagle's eye

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.

---

THE LOST LEADER.

I.

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  
 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,  
 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,  
 He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves !

II.

We shall march prospering,—not thro' 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 ;  
 Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,  
   One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,  
 One more devil's-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 !  
   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 gal-  
   lantly,  
   Menace our heart ere we master his own ;  
 Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,  
   Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne !

---

IN A GONDOLA.

*He sings.*

I SEND my heart up to thee, all my heart  
   In this my singing.  
 For the stars help me, and the sea bears part ;  
   The very night is clinging  
 Closer to Venice' streets to leave one space  
   Above me, whence thy face  
 May light my joyous heart to thee its dwelling-place.

*She speaks.*

Say after me, and try to say  
 My very words, as if each word  
 Came from you of your own accord,  
 In your own voice, in your own way :  
 “ This woman's heart and soul and brain

Are mine as much as this gold chain  
 She bids me wear ; which " (say again)  
 " I choose to make by cherishing  
 A precious thing, or choose to fling  
 Over the boat-side, ring by ring."  
 And yet once more say . . . no word more !  
 Since words are only words. Give o'er !

Unless you call me, all the same,  
 Familiarly by my pet name,  
 Which if the Three should hear you call,  
 And me reply to, would proclaim  
 At once our secret to them all.  
 Ask of me, too, command me, blame—  
 Do, break down the partition-wall  
 'Twixt us, the daylight world beholds  
 Curtained in dusk and splendid folds !  
 What 's left but—all of me to take ?  
 I am the Three's : prevent them, slake  
 Your thirst ! 'Tis said, the Arab sage,  
 In practising with gems, can loose  
 Their subtle spirit in his cruce  
 And leave but ashes : so, sweet mage,  
 Leave them my ashes when thy use  
 Sucks out my soul, thy heritage !

*He sings.*

I.

Past we glide, and past, and past !  
 What 's that poor Agnese doing  
 Where they make the shutters fast ?  
 Gray Zanobi's just a-wooing  
 To his couch the purchased bride :  
 Past we glide !

## II.

Past we glide, and past, and past !

Why 's the Pucci Palace flaring  
Like a beacon to the blast ?

Guests by hundreds, not one caring  
If the dear host's neck were wried :  
Past we glide !

*She sings.*

## I.

The moth's kiss, first !

Kiss me as if you made believe  
You were not sure, this eve,  
How my face, your flower, had pursed  
Its petals up ; so, here and there  
You brush it, till I grow aware  
Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.

## II.

The bee's kiss, now !

Kiss me as if you entered gay  
My heart at some noonday,  
A bud that dares not disallow  
The claim, so all is rendered up,  
And passively its shattered cup  
Over your head to sleep I bow.

*He sings.*

## I.

What are we two ?

I am a Jew,  
And carry thee, farther than friends can pursue,  
To a feast of our tribe ;

Where they need thee to bribe  
 The devil that blasts them unless he imbibe  
 Thy . . . Scatter the vision for ever ! And now,  
 As of old, I am I, thou art thou !

## 11.

Say again, what we are ?  
 The sprite of a star,  
 I lure thee above where the destinies bar  
 My plumes their full play  
 Till a ruddier ray  
 Than my pale one announce there is withering away  
 Some . . . Scatter the vision for ever ! And now,  
 As of old, I am I, thou art thou !

*He muses.*

Oh, which were best, to roam or rest ?  
 The land's lap or the water's breast ?  
 To sleep on yellow millet-sheaves,  
 Or swim in lucid shadows, just  
 Eluding water-lily leaves,  
 An inch from Death's black fingers, thrust  
 To lock you, whom release he must ;  
 Which life were best on Summer eves ?

*He speaks, musing.*

Lie back ; could thought of mine improve you ?  
 From this shoulder let there spring  
 A wing ; from this, another wing ;  
 Wings, not legs and feet, shall move you !  
 Snow-white must they spring, to blend  
 With your flesh, but I intend  
 They shall deepen to the end,  
 Broader, into burning gold,

Till both wings crescent-wise enfold  
 Your perfect self, from 'neath your feet  
 To o'er your head, where, lo, they meet  
 As if a million sword-blades hurled  
 Defiance from you to the world!

Rescue me thou, the only real!  
 And scare away this mad ideal  
 That came, nor motions to depart!  
 Thanks! Now, stay ever as thou art!

*Still he muses.*

I.

What if the Three should catch at last  
 Thy serenader? While there's cast  
 Paul's cloak about my head, and fast  
 Gian pinions me, Himself has past  
 His stylet through my back; I reel;  
 And . . . is it thou I feel?

II.

They trail me, these three godless knaves,  
 Past every church that saints and saves,  
 Nor stop till, where the cold sea raves  
 By Lido's wet accursed graves,  
 They scoop mine, roll me to its brink,  
 And . . . on thy breast I sink!

*She replies, musing.*

Dip your arm o'er the boat-side, elbow-deep,  
 As I do: thus: were death so unlike sleep,  
 Caught this way? Death's to fear from flame or  
 steel,  
 Or poison doubtless; but from water—feel!

Go find the bottom! Would you stay me? There!  
Now pluck a great blade of that ribbon-grass  
To plait in where the foolish jewel was,  
I flung away: since you have praised my hair,  
'Tis proper to be choice in what I wear.

*He speaks.*

Row home? must we row home? Too surely  
Know I where its front's demurely  
Over the Guidecca piled;  
Window just with window mating,  
Door on door exactly waiting,  
All's the set face of a child:  
But behind it, where's a trace  
Of the staidness and reserve,  
And formal lines without a curve,  
In the same child's playing-face?  
No two windows look one way  
O'er the small sea-water thread  
Below them. Ah, the autumn day  
I, passing, saw you overhead!  
First, out a cloud of curtain blew,  
Then a sweet cry, and last came you—  
To catch your lory that must needs  
Escape just then, of all times then,  
To peck a tall plant's fleecy seeds  
And make me happiest of men.  
I scarce could breathe to see you reach  
So far back o'er the balcony,  
To catch him ere he climbed too high  
Above you in the Smyrna peach,  
That quick the round smooth cord of gold,  
This coiled hair on your head, unrolled,  
Fell down you like a gorgeous snake



The Roman girls were wont, of old,  
When Rome there was, for coolness' sake  
To let lie curling o'er their bosoms.  
Dear lory, may his beak retain  
Ever its delicate rose stain,  
As if the wounded lotus-blossoms  
Had marked their thief to know again!

Stay longer yet, for others' sake  
Than mine! What should your chamber do?  
—With all its rarities that ache  
In silence while day lasts, but wake  
At night-time and their life renew,  
Suspended just to pleasure you  
Who brought against their will together  
These objects, and, while day lasts, weave  
Around them such a magic tether  
That dumb they look: your harp, believe,  
With all the sensitive tight strings  
Which dare not speak, now to itself  
Breathes slumberously, as if some elf  
Went in and out the chords, his wings  
Make murmur, wheresoe'er they graze,  
As an angel may, between the maze  
Of midnight palace-pillars, on  
And on, to sow God's plagues, have gone  
Through guilty glorious Babylon.  
And while such murmurs flow, the nymph  
Bends o'er the harp-top from her shell  
As the dry limpet for the lymph  
Come with a tune he knows so well.  
And how your statues' hearts must swell!  
And how your pictures must descend  
To see each other, friend with friend!

Oh, could you take them by surprise,  
 You 'd find Schidone's eager Duke  
 Doing the quaintest courtesies  
 To that prim saint by Haste-thee-Luke!  
 And, deeper into her rock den,  
 Bold Castelfranco's Magdalen  
 You 'd find retreated from the ken  
 Of that robed counsel-keeping Ser—  
 As if the Tizian thinks of her,  
 And is not, rather, gravely bent  
 On seeing for himself what toys  
 Are these, his progeny invent,  
 What litter now the board employs  
 Whereon he signed a document  
 That got him murdered! Each enjoys  
 Its night so well, you cannot break  
 The sport up: so, indeed must make  
 More stay with me, for others' sake.

*She speaks.*

I.

To-morrow, if a harp-string, say,  
 Is used to tie the jasmine back  
 That overflows my room with sweets,  
 Contrive your Zorzi somehow meets  
 My Zanze! If the ribbon's black,  
 The Three are watching: keep away!

II.

Your gondola—let Zorzi wreathe  
 A mesh of water-weeds about  
 Its prow, as if he unaware  
 Had struck some quay or bridge-foot stair!  
 That I may throw a paper out  
 As you and he go underneath.

There 's Zanze's vigilant taper ; safe are we.  
 Only one minute more to-night with me ?  
 Resume your past self of a month ago !  
 Be you the bashful gallant, I will be  
 The lady with the colder breast than snow.  
 Now bow you, as becomes, nor touch my hand  
 More than I touch yours when I step to land,  
 And say, " All thanks, Siora !"—

Heart to heart

And lips to lips ! Yet once more, ere we part,  
 Clasp me and make me thine, as mine thou art !

*He is surprised, and stabbed.*

It was ordained to be so, sweet !—and best  
 Comes now, beneath thine eyes, upon thy breast.  
 Still kiss me ! Care not for the cowards ! Care  
 Only to put aside thy beauteous hair  
 My blood will hurt ! The Three, I do not scorn,  
 To death, because they never lived : but I  
 Have lived indeed, and so—(yet one more kiss)—can  
 die !

---

## A LOVERS' QUARREL.

### I.

OH, what a dawn of day !  
 How the March sun feels like May !  
     All is blue again  
     After last night's rain,  
 And the South dries the hawthorn-spray.  
     Only, my Love 's away !  
 I'd as lief that the blue were gray.

## II.

Runnels, which rillels swell,  
 Must be dancing down the dell,  
     With a foaming head  
     On the beryl bed  
 Paven smooth as a hermit's cell :  
     Each with a tale to tell,  
 Could my love but attend as well.

## III.

Dearest, three months ago !  
 When we lived blocked-up with snow,—  
     When the wind would edge  
     In and in his wedge,  
 In, as far as the point could go—  
     Not to our angle, though,  
 Where we loved each the other so !

## IV.

Laughs with so little cause !  
 We devised games out of straws.  
     We would try and trace  
     One another's face  
 In the ash, as an artist draws ;  
     Free on each other's flaws,  
 How we chattered like two church daws !

## V.

What 's in the " Times " ?—a scold  
 At the Emperor deep and cold ;  
     He has taken a bride  
     To his gruesome side,  
 That 's as fair as himself is bold :  
     There they sit ermine-stoled,  
 And she powders her hair with gold.

## VI.

Fancy the Pampas' sheen !  
Miles and miles of gold and green  
    Where the sunflowers blow  
    In a solid glow,  
And to break now and then the screen—  
    Black neck and eyeballs keen,  
Up a wild horse leaps between !

## VII.

Try, will our table turn ?  
Lay your hands there light, and yearn  
    Till the yearning slips  
    Thro' the finger-tips  
In a fire which a few discern,  
    And a very few feel burn,  
And the rest, they may live and learn !

## VIII.

Then we would up and pace,  
For a change, about the place,  
    Each with arm o'er neck :  
    'T is our quarter-deck,  
We are seamen in woeful case.  
    Help in the ocean-space !  
Or, if no help, we 'll embrace.

## IX.

See, how she looks now, dressed  
In a sledging-cap and vest !  
    'T is a huge fur cloak—  
    Like a reindeer's roke  
Falls the lappet along the breast :  
    Sleeves for her arts to rest,  
Or to hang, as my Love likes best.

## X.

Teach me to flirt a fan  
As the Spanish ladies can,  
Or I tint your lip  
With a burnt stick's tip  
And you turn into such a man !  
Just the two spots that span  
Half the bill of the young male swan.

## XI.

Dearest, three months ago  
When the mesmerizer Snow  
With his hand's first sweep  
Put the earth to sleep  
'T was a time when the heart could show  
All—how was earth to know,  
'Neath the mute hand's to-and-fro ?

## XII.

Dearest, three months ago  
When we loved each other so,  
Lived and loved the same  
Till an evening came  
When a shaft from the devil's bow  
Pierced to our ingle-glow,  
And the friends were friend and foe !

## XIII.

Not from the heart beneath—  
'T was a bubble born of breath,  
Neither sneer nor vaunt,  
Nor reproach nor taunt.  
See a word, how it severeth !  
Oh, power of life and death  
In the tongue, as the Preacher saith !

XIV.

Woman, and will you cast  
For a word, quite off at last  
    Me, your own, your You,—  
    Since, as truth is true,  
I was You all the happy past—  
    Me do you leave aghast  
With the memories We amassed ?

XV.

Love, if you knew the light  
That your soul casts in my sight,  
    How I look to you  
    For the pure and true,  
And the beauteous and the right,—  
    Bear with a moment's spite  
When a mere mote threatens the white !

XVI.

What of a hasty word ?  
Is the fleshly heart not stirred  
    By a worm's pin-prick  
    Where its roots are quick ?  
See the eye, by a fly's-foot blurred—  
    Ear, when a straw is heard  
Scratch the brain's coat of curd !

XVII.

Foul be the world or fair  
More or less, how can I care ?  
    'T is the world the same  
    For my praise or blame,  
And endurance is easy there.  
    Wrong in the one thing rare—  
Oh, it is hard to bear !

## XVIII.

Here 's the spring back or close,  
 When the almond-blossom blows ;  
     We shall have the word  
     In a minor third  
 There is none but the cuckoo knows :  
     Heaps of the guelder-rose !  
 I must bear with it, I suppose.

## XIX.

Could but November come,  
 Were the noisy birds struck dumb  
     At the warning slash  
     Of his driver's-lash—  
 I would laugh like the valiant Thumb  
     Facing the castle glum  
 And the giant's fee-faw-fum !

## XX.

Then, were the world well stripped  
 Of the gear wherein equipped  
     We can stand apart,  
     Heart dispense with heart  
 In the sun, with the flowers unnipped,—  
     Oh, the world's hangings ripped,  
 We were both in a bare-walled crypt !

## XXI.

Each in the crypt would cry  
 " But one freezes here ! and why ?  
     When a heart, as chill,  
     At my own would thrill  
 Back to life, and its fires out-fly ?  
     Heart, shall we live or die ?  
 The rest . . . settle by and by ! "



## XXII.

So, she 'd efface the score,  
And forgive me as before.  
    It is twelve o'clock :  
    I shall hear her knock  
In the worst of a storm's uproar :  
    I shall pull her through the door,  
I shall have her for evermore !

---

## EARTH'S IMMORTALITIES.

## FAME.

SEE, as the prettiest graves will do in time,  
Our poet's wants the freshness of its prime ;  
Spite of the sexton's browsing horse, the sods  
Have struggled through its binding osier rods ;  
Headstone and half-sunk footstone lean awry,  
Wanting the brick-work promised by-and-by ;  
How the minute gray lichens, plate o'er plate,  
Have softened down the crisp-cut name and date !

## LOVE.

So, the year 's done with !  
    (*Love me for ever !*)  
All March begun with,  
    April's endeavor ;  
May-wreaths that bound me  
    June needs must sever ;  
Now snows fall round me,  
    Quenching June's fever—  
    (*Love me for ever !*)

## THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER.

## I.

I SAID—Then, dearest, since 't is so,  
 Since now at length my fate I know,  
 Since nothing all my love avails,  
 Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,  
     Since this was written and needs must be—  
 My whole heart rises up to bless  
 Your name in pride and thankfulness!  
 Take back the hope you gave,—I claim  
 Only a memory of the same,  
 —And this beside, if you will not blame,  
     Your leave for one more last ride with me.

## II.

My mistress bent that brow of hers ;  
 Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs  
 When pity would be softening through,  
 Fixed me a breathing-while or two  
     With life or death in the balance : right !  
 The blood replenished me again ;  
 My last thought was at least not vain :  
 I and my mistress, side by side  
 Shall be together, breathe and ride,  
 So, one day more am I deified.  
     Who knows but the world may end to-night ?

## III.

Hush ! if you saw some western cloud  
 All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed

By many benedictions—sun's  
And moon's and evening-star's at once—  
    And so, you, looking and loving best,  
Conscious grew, your passion drew  
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,  
Down on you, near and yet more near,  
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—  
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear  
    Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

IV.

Then we began to ride. My soul  
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll  
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.  
Past hopes already lay behind.

    What need to strive with a life awry?  
Had I said that, had I done this,  
So might I gain, so might I miss.  
Might she have loved me? just as well  
She might have hated, who can tell!  
Where had I been now if the worst befell?  
    And here we are riding, she and I.

V.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?  
Why, all men strive and who succeeds?  
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,  
Saw other regions, cities new,  
    As the world rushed by on either side.  
I thought,—All labor, yet no less  
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.  
Look at the end of work, contrast  
The petty done, the undone vast,  
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!  
    I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

## VI.

What hand and brain went ever paired ?  
What heart alike conceived and dared ?  
What act proved all its thought had been ?  
What will but felt the fleshy screen ?

We ride and I see her bosom heave.  
There's many a crown for who can reach.  
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each !  
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,  
A soldier's doing ! what atones ?  
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.  
My riding is better, by their leave.

## VII.

What does it all mean, poet ? Well,  
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell  
What we felt only ; you expressed  
You hold things beautiful the best,  
And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.  
'T is something, nay 't is much : but then,  
Have you yourself what 's best for men ?  
Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—  
Nearer one whit your own sublime  
Than we who have never turned a rhyme ?  
Sing, riding's a joy ! For me, I ride.

## VIII.

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave  
A score of years to Art, her slave,  
And that's your Venus, whence we turn  
To yonder girl that fords the burn !  
You acquiesce, and shall I repine ?

What, man of music, you grown gray  
With notes and nothing else to say,  
Is this your sole praise from a friend,  
“Greatly his opera’s strains intend,  
But in music we know how fashions end!”  
I gave my youth ; but we ride, in fine.

IX.

Who knows what’s fit for us? Had fate  
Proposed bliss here should sublimate  
My being—had I signed the bond—  
Still one must lead some life beyond,  
Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.  
This foot once planted on the goal,  
This glory-garland round my soul,  
Could I descry such? Try and test!  
I sink back shuddering from the quest.  
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?  
Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

X.

And yet—she has not spoke so long!  
What if heaven be that, fair and strong  
At life’s best, with our eyes upturned  
Whither life’s flower is first discerned,  
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?  
What if we still ride on, we two,  
With life forever old yet new,  
Changed not in kind but in degree,  
The instant made eternity,—  
And heaven just prove that I and she  
Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

## MESMERISM.

## I.

ALL I believed is true!  
I am able yet  
All I want, to get  
By a method as strange as new :  
Dare I trust the same to you ?

## II.

If at night, when doors are shut,  
And the wood-worm picks,  
And the death-watch ticks,  
And the bar has a flag of smut,  
And a cat 's in the water-butt—

## III.

And the socket floats and flares,  
And the house-beams groan,  
And a foot unknown  
Is surmised on the garret-stairs,  
And the locks slip unawares—

## IV.

And the spider, to serve his ends,  
By a sudden thread,  
Arms and legs outspread,  
On the table's midst descends,  
Comes to find, God knows what friends!—

## V.

If since eve drew in, I say,  
I have sat and brought  
(So to speak) my thought  
To bear on the woman away,  
Till I felt my hair turn gray—

## VI.

Till I seemed to have and hold,  
In the vacancy  
'Twixt the wall and me  
From the hair-plait's chestnut-gold  
To the foot in its muslin fold—

## VII.

Have and hold, then and there,  
Her, from head to foot,  
Breathing and mute,  
Passive and yet aware,  
In the grasp of my steady stare—

## VIII.

Hold and have, there and then,  
All her body and soul  
That completes my whole,  
All that women add to men,  
In the clutch of my steady ken—

## IX.

Having and holding, till  
I imprint her fast  
On the void at last  
As the sun does whom he will  
By the calotyper's skill—

## X.

Then,—if my heart's strength serve,  
And through all and each  
Of the veils I reach  
To her soul and never swerve,  
Knitting an iron nerve—

## XI.

Command her soul to advance  
And inform the shape  
Which has made escape  
And before my countenance  
Answers me glance for glance—

## XII.

I, still with a gesture fit  
Of my hands that best  
Do my soul's behest,  
Pointing the power from it,  
While myself do steadfast sit—

## XIII.

Steadfast and still the same  
On my object bent,  
While the hands give vent  
To my ardor and my aim  
And break into very flame—

## XIV.

Then I reach, I must believe,  
Not her soul in vain,  
For to me again  
It reaches, and past retrieve  
Is wound in the toils I weave ;



## XV.

And must follow as I require,  
As befits a thrall,  
Bringing flesh and all,  
Essence and earth-attire,  
To the source of the tractile fire :

## XVI.

Till the house called hers, not mine,  
With a growing weight  
Seems to suffocate  
If she break not its leaden line  
And escape from its close confine.

## XVII.

Out of doors into the night !  
On to the maze  
Of the wild wood-ways,  
Not turning to left nor right  
From the pathway, blind with sight—

## XVIII.

Making thro' rain and wind  
O'er the broken shrubs,  
'Twixt the stems and stubs,  
With a still, composed, strong mind,  
Not a care for the world behind—

## XIX.

Swifter and still more swift,  
As the crowding peace  
Doth to joy increase  
In the wide blind eyes uplift  
Thro' the darkness and the drift !

## XX.

While I—to the shape, I too  
    Feel my soul dilate :  
    Nor a whit abate,  
And relax not a gesture due,  
As I see my belief come true.

## XXI.

For, there! have I drawn or no  
    Life to that lip?  
    Do my fingers dip  
In a flame which again they throw  
On the cheek that breaks a-glow?

## XXII.

Ha! was the hair so first?  
    What, unfileted,  
    Made alive, and spread  
Through the void with a rich outburst,  
Chestnut gold-interspersed?

## XXIII.

Like the doors of a casket-shrine,  
    See, on either side,  
    Her two arms divide  
Till the heart betwixt makes sign,  
“Take me, for I am thine!”

## XXIV.

“Now—now”—the door is heard!  
    Hark, the stairs! and near—  
    Nearer—and here—  
“Now!” and, at call the third,  
She enters without a word.

XXV.

On doth she march and on  
To the fancied shape ;  
It is, past escape,  
Herself, now : the dream is done  
And the shadow and she are one.

XXVI.

First, I will pray. Do Thou  
That ownest the soul,  
Yet wilt grant control  
To another, nor disallow  
For a time, restrain me now !

XXVII.

I admonish me while I may,  
Not to squander guilt,  
Since require Thou wilt  
At my hand its price one day !  
What the price is, who can say ?

---

BY THE FIRESIDE.

I.

How well I know what I mean to do  
When the long dark autumn evenings come ;  
And where, my soul, is thy pleasant hue ?  
With the music of all thy voices, dumb  
In life's November too !

## II.

I shall be found by the fire, suppose,  
O'er a great wise book, as bescemeth age ;  
While the shutters flap as the cross-wind blows,  
And I turn the page, and I turn the page,  
Not verse now, only prose !

## III.

Till the young ones whisper, finger on lip,  
"There he is at it, deep in Greek :  
Now then, or never, out we slip  
To cut from the hazels by the creek  
A mainmast for our ship !"

## IV.

I shall be at it indeed, my friends !  
Greek puts already on either side  
Such a branch-work forth as soon extends  
To a vista opening far and wide,  
And I pass out where it ends.

## V.

The outside frame, like your hazel-trees—  
But the inside-archway widens fast,  
And a rarer sort succeeds to these,  
And we slope to Italy at last  
And youth, by green degrees.

## VI.

I follow wherever I am led,  
Knowing so well the leader's hand :  
Oh woman-country, wooed not wed,  
Loved all the more by earth's male-lands,  
Laid to their hearts instead !

VII.

Look at the ruined chapel again  
Half-way up in the Alpine gorge !  
Is that a tower, I point you plain,  
Or is it a mill, or an iron forge  
Breaks solitude in vain ?

VIII.

A turn, and we stand in the heart of things ;  
The woods are round us, heaped and dim ;  
From slab to slab how it slips and springs,  
The thread of water single and slim,  
Through the ravage some torrent brings !

IX.

Does it feed the little lake below ?  
That speck of white just on its marge  
Is Pella ; see, in the evening-glow,  
How sharp the silver spear-heads charge  
When Alp meets heaven in snow !

X.

On our other side is the straight-up rock ;  
And a path is kept 'twixt the gorge and it  
By boulder-stones where lichens mock  
The marks on a moth, and small ferns fit  
Their teeth to the polished block.

XI.

Oh the sense of the yellow mountain-flowers,  
And thorny balls, each three in one,  
The chestnuts throw on our path in showers !  
For the drop of the woodland fruit 's begun,  
These early November hours,

## XII.

That crimson the creeper's leaf across  
Like a splash of blood, intense, abrupt,  
O'er a shield else gold from rim to boss,  
And lay it for show on the fairy-cupped  
Elf-needed mat of moss,

## XIII.

By the rose-flesh mushrooms, undivulged  
Last evening—nay, in to-day's first dew  
Yon sudden coral nipple bulged,  
Where a freaked fawn-colored flaky crew  
Of toad-stools peep indulged.

## XIV.

And yonder, at foot of the fronting ridge  
That takes the turn to a range beyond,  
Is the chapel reached by the one-arched bridge,  
Where the water is stopped in a stagnant pond  
Danced over by the midge.

## XV.

The chapel and bridge are of stone alike,  
Blackish-gray and mostly wet ;  
Cut hemp-stalks steep in the narrow dyke.  
See here again, how the lichens fret  
And the roots of the ivy strike !

## XVI.

Poor little place, where its one priest comes  
On a festa-day, if he comes at all,  
To the dozen folk from their scattered homes,  
Gathered within that precinct small  
By the dozen ways one roams—

## XVII.

To drop from the charcoal-burners' huts,  
Or climb from the hemp-dresser's low shed,  
Leave the grange where the woodman stores his nuts,  
Or the wattled cote where the fowlers spread  
Their gear on the rock's bare juts.

## XVIII.

It has some pretension too, this front,  
With its bit of fresco half-moon-wise  
Set over the porch, Art's early wont :  
'T is John in the Desert, I surmise,  
But has borne the weather's brunt—

## XIX.

Not from the fault of the builder, though,  
For a pent-house properly projects  
Where three carved beams make a certain show,  
Dating—good thought of our architect's—  
'Five, six, nine, he lets you know.

## XX.

And all day long a bird sings there,  
And a stray sheep drinks at the pond at times ;  
The place is silent and aware ;  
It has had its scenes, its joys and crimes,  
But that is its own affair.

## XXI.

My perfect wife, my Leonor,  
Oh heart, my own, oh eyes, mine too,  
Whom else could I dare look backward for,  
With whom beside should I dare pursue  
The path gray heads abhor?

## XXII.

For it leads to a crag's sheer edge with them ;  
Youth, flowery all the way, there stops—  
Not they ; age threatens and they contemn,  
Till they reach the gulf wherein youth drops,  
One inch from our life's safe hem !

## XXIII.

With me, youth led . . . I will speak now,  
No longer watch you as you sit  
Reading by fire-light, that great brow  
And the spirit-small hand propping it,  
Mutely, my heart knows how—

## XXIV.

When, if I think but deep enough,  
You are wont to answer, prompt as rhyme ;  
And you, too, find without rebuff  
Response your soul seeks many a time,  
Piercing its fine flesh-stuff.

## XXV.

My own, confirm me ! If I tread  
This path back, is it not in pride  
To think how little I dreamed it led  
To an age so blest that, by its side,  
Youth seems the waste instead ?

## XXVI.

My own, see where the years conduct !  
At first, 't was something our two souls  
Should mix as mists do ; each is sucked  
In each now : on, the new stream rolls,  
Whatever rocks obstruct.



XXVII.

Think, when our one soul understands  
The great Word which makes all things new,  
When earth breaks up and heaven expands,  
How will the change strike me and you  
In the house not made with hands?

XXVIII.

Oh I must feel your brain prompt mine,  
Your heart anticipate my heart,  
You must be just before, in fine,  
See and make me see, for your part,  
New depths of the divine!

XXIX.

But who could have expected this  
When we two drew together first  
Just for the obvious human bliss,  
To satisfy life's daily thirst  
With a thing men seldom miss?

XXX.

Come back with me to the first of all,  
Let us lean and love it over again,  
Let us now forget and now recall,  
Break the rosary in a pearly rain,  
And gather what we let fall!

XXXI.

What did I say?—that a small bird sings  
All day long, save when a brown pair  
Of hawks from the wood float with wide wings  
Strained to a bell: 'gainst noon-day glare  
You count the streaks and rings.

## XXXII.

But at afternoon or almost eve  
'T is better ; then the silence grows  
To that degree, you half believe  
It must get rid of what it knows,  
Its bosom docs so heave.

## XXXIII.

Hither we walked then, side by side,  
Arm in arm and cheek to cheek,  
And still I questioned or replied,  
While my heart, convulsed to really speak,  
Lay choking in its pride.

## XXXIV.

Silent the crumbling bridge we cross,  
And pity and praise the chapel sweet,  
And care about the fresco's loss,  
And wish for our souls a like retreat,  
And wonder at the moss.

## XXXV.

Stoop and kneel on the settle under,  
Look through the window's grated square :  
Nothing to see ! For fear of plunder,  
The cross is down and the altar bare,  
As if thieves don't fear thunder.

## XXXVI.

We stoop and look in through the grate,  
See the little porch and rustic door,  
Read duly the dead builder's date ;  
Then cross the bridge that we crossed before,  
Take the path again—but wait !

XXXVII.

Oh moment one and infinite !  
The water slips o'er stock and stone ;  
The West is tender, hardly bright :  
How gray at once is the evening grown—  
One star, its chrysolite !

XXXVIII.

We two stood there with never a third,  
But each by each, as each knew well :  
The sights we saw and the sounds we heard,  
The lights and the shades made up a spell  
Till the trouble grew and stirred.

XXXIX.

Oh, the little more, and how much it is !  
And the little less, and what worlds away !  
How a sound shall quicken content to bliss,  
Or a breath suspend the blood's best play,  
And life be a proof of this !

XL.

Had she willed it, still had stood the screen  
So slight, so sure, 'twixt my love and her :  
I could fix her face with a guard between,  
And find her soul as when friends confer,  
Friends—lovers that might have been.

XLI.

For my heart had a touch of the woodland time,  
Wanting to sleep now over its best.  
Shake the whole tree in the summer-prime,  
But bring to the last leaf no such test !  
“ Hold the last fast ! ” runs the rhyme.

## XLII.

For a chance to make your little much,  
To gain a lover and lose a friend,  
Venture the tree and a myriad such,  
When nothing you mar but the year can mend :  
But a last leaf—fear to touch !

## XLIII.

Yet should it unfasten itself and fall  
Eddying down till it find your face  
At some slight wind—best chance of all !  
Be your heart henceforth its dwelling-place  
You trembled to forestall !

## XLIV.

Worth how well, those dark gray eyes,  
That hair so dark and dear, how worth  
That a man should strive and agonize,  
And taste a veriest hell on earth  
For the hope of such a prize !

## XLV.

You might have turned and tried a man,  
Set him a space to weary and wear,  
And prove which suited more your plan,  
His best of hope or his worst despair,  
Yet end as he began.

## XLVI.

But you spared me this, like the heart you are,  
And filled my empty heart at a word.  
If two lives join, there is oft a scar,  
They are one and one, with a shadowy third ;  
One near one is too far.

XLVII.

A moment after, and hands unseen  
Were hanging the night around us fast ;  
But we knew that a bar was broken between  
Life and life : we were mixed at last  
In spite of the mortal screen.

XLVIII.

The forests had done it ; there they stood ;  
We caught for a moment the powers at play :  
They had mingled us so, for once and good,  
Their work was done—we might go or stay,  
They relapsed to their ancient mood.

XLIX.

How the world is made for each of us !  
How all we perceive and know in it  
Tends to some moment's product thus,  
When a soul declares itself—to wit,  
By its fruit, the thing it does !

L.

Be hate that fruit or love that fruit,  
It forwards the general deed of man,  
And each of the Many helps to recruit  
The life of the race by a general plan ;  
Each living his own, to boot.

LI.

I am named and known by that moment's feat ;  
There took my station and degree ;  
So grew my own small life complete,  
As nature obtained her best of me—  
One born to love you, sweet !

## LII.

And to watch you sink by the fire-side now  
 Back again, as you mutely sit  
 Musing by fire-light, that great brow  
 And the spirit-small hand propping it,  
 Yonder, my heart knows how !

## LIII.

So, earth has gained by one man the more,  
 And the gain of earth must be heaven's gain too ;  
 And the whole is well worth thinking o'er  
 When autumn comes : which I mean to do  
 One day, as I said before.

---

 ANY WIFE TO ANY HUSBAND.

## I.

My love, this is the bitterest, that thou—  
 Who art all truth, and who dost love me now  
 As thine eyes say, as thy voice breaks to say—  
 Shouldst love so truly, and couldst love me still  
 A whole long life through, had but love its will,  
 Would death, that leads me from thee, brook  
 delay.

## II.

I have but to be by thee, and thy hand  
 Will never let mine go, nor heart withstand  
 The beating of my heart to reach its place.  
 When shall I look for thee and feel thee gone ?  
 When cry for the old comfort and find none ?  
 Never, I know ! Thy soul is in thy face.

## III.

Oh, I should fade—'t is willed so ! Might I save,  
Gladly I would, whatever beauty gave  
Joy to thy sense, for that was precious too.  
It is not to be granted. But the soul  
Whence the love comes, all ravage leaves that whole ;  
Vainly the flesh fades ; soul makes all things new.

## IV.

It would not be because my eye grew dim  
Thou couldst not find the love there, thanks to Him  
Who never is dishonored in the spark  
He gave us from his fire of fires, and bade  
Remember whence it sprang, nor be afraid  
While that burns on, though all the rest grow dark.

## V.

So, how thou wouldst be perfect, white and clean  
Outside as inside, soul and soul's demesne  
Alike, this body given to show it by !  
Oh, three-parts through the worst of life's abyss,  
What plaudits from the next world after this,  
Couldst thou repeat a stroke and gain the sky !

## VI.

And is it not the bitterer to think  
That, disengage our hands and thou wilt sink  
Although thy love was love in very deed ?  
I know that nature ! Pass a festive day,  
Thou dost not throw its relic-flower away  
Nor bid its music's loitering echo speed.

## VII.

Thou let'st the stranger's glove lie where it fell ;  
If old things remain old things all is well,  
    For thou art grateful as becomes man best :  
And hadst thou only heard me play one tune,  
Or viewed me from a window, not so soon  
    With thee would such things fade as with the rest.

## VIII.

I seem to see ! We meet and part ; 't is brief ;  
The book I opened keeps a folded leaf,  
    The very chair I sat on, breaks the rank ;  
That is a portrait of me on the wall—  
Three lines, my face comes at so slight a call :  
    And for all this, one little hour to thank !

## IX.

But now, because the hour through years was fixed,  
Because our inmost beings met and mixed,  
    Because thou once hast loved me—wilt thou dare  
Say to thy soul and Who may list beside,  
"Therefore she is immortally my bride ;  
    Chance cannot change my love, nor time impair.

## X.

"So, what if in the dusk of life that's left,  
I, a tired traveller of my sun bereft,  
    Look from my path when, mimicking the same,  
The fire-fly glimpses past me, come and gone ?  
—Where was it till the sunset ? where anon  
    It will be at the sunrise ! What's to blame ?"



XI.

Is it so helpful to thee? Canst thou take  
 The mimic up, nor, for the true thing's sake,  
 Put gently by such efforts at a beam?  
 Is the remainder of the way so long,  
 Thou need'st the little solace, thou the strong?  
 Watch out thy watch, let weak ones doze and  
 dream!

XII.

—Ah, but the fresher faces! “Is it true,”  
 Thou'lt ask, “some eyes are beautiful and new?  
 Some hair,—how can one choose but grasp such  
 wealth?  
 And if a man would press his lips to lips  
 Fresh as the wilding hedge-rose-cup there slips  
 The dew-drop out of, must it be by stealth?”

XIII.

“It cannot change the love still kept for Her,  
 More than if such a picture I prefer  
 Passing a day with, to a room's bare side:  
 The painted form takes nothing she possessed,  
 Yet, while the Titian's Venus lies at rest,  
 A man looks. Once more, what is there to chide?”

XIV.

So must I see, from where I sit and watch,  
 My own self sell myself, my hand attach  
 Its warrant to the very thefts from me—  
 Thy singleness of soul that made me proud,  
 Thy purity of heart I loved aloud,  
 Thy man's-truth I was bold to bid God see!

## XV.

Love so, then, if thou wilt ! Give all thou canst  
Away to the new faces—disentranced,  
    (Say it and think it) obdurate no more,  
Re-issue looks and words from the old mint,  
Pass them afresh, no matter whose the print  
    Image and superscription once they bore !

## XVI.

Re-coin thyself and give it them to spend,—  
It all comes to the same thing at the end,  
    Since mine thou wast, mine art, and mine shalt be,  
Faithful or faithless : sealing up the sum  
Or lavish of my treasure, thou must come  
    Back to the heart's place here I keep for thee !

## XVII.

Only, why should it be with stain at all ?  
Why must I, 'twixt the leaves of coronal,  
    Put any kiss of pardon on thy brow ?  
Why need the other women know so much,  
And talk together, "Such the look and such  
    The smile he used to love with, then as 'now !"

## XVIII.

Might I die last and show thee ! Should I find  
Such hardships in the few years left behind,  
    If free to take and light my lamp, and go  
Into my tomb, and shut the door and sit,  
Seeing thy face on those four sides of it  
    The better that they are so blank, I know !

## XIX.

Why, time was what I wanted, to turn o'er  
Within my mind each look, get more and more  
By heart each word, too much to learn at first ;  
And join thee all the fitter for the pause  
'Neath the low door-way's lintel. That were cause  
For lingering, though thou calledst, if I durst !

## XX.

And yet thou art the nobler of us two :  
What dare I dream of, that thou canst not do,  
Outstripping my ten small steps with one stride ?  
I'll say then, here's a trial and a task ;  
Is it to bear ?—if easy, I'll not ask :  
Though love fail, I can trust on in thy pride.

## XXI.

Pride ?—when those eyes forestall the life behind  
The death I have to go through !—when I find,  
Now that I want thy help most, all of thee !  
What did I fear ? Thy love shall hold me fast  
Until the little minute's sleep is past  
And I wake saved.—And yet it will not be !

## IN A YEAR.

## I.

NEVER any more,  
While I live,  
Need I hope to see his face  
As before.  
Once his love grown chill,  
Mine may strive :  
Bitterly we re-embrace,  
Single still.

## II.

Was it something said,  
Something done,  
Vexed him? was it touch of hand,  
Turn of head?  
Strange! that very way  
Love begun :  
I as little understand  
Love's decay.

## III.

When I sewed or drew,  
I recall  
How he looked as if I sung,  
—Sweetly too.  
If I spoke a word,  
First of all  
Up his cheek the color sprung,  
Then he heard.

## IV.

Sitting by my side,  
At my feet,  
So he breathed but air I breathed,  
Satisfied!  
I, too, at love's brim  
Touched the sweet :  
I would die if death bequeathed  
Sweet to him.

## V.

"Speak, I love thee best!"  
He exclaimed :  
"Let thy love my own foretell!"  
I confessed :  
"Clasp my heart on thine  
Now unblamed,  
Since upon thy soul as well  
Hangeth mine!"

## VI.

Was it wrong to own,  
Being truth ?  
Why should all the giving prove  
His alone ?  
I had wealth and ease,  
Beauty, youth :  
Since my lover gave me love,  
I gave these.

## VII.

That was all I meant,  
—To be just,  
And the passion I had raised,  
To content.

Since he chose to change  
 Gold for dust,  
 If I gave him what he praised  
 Was it strange ?

## VIII.

Would he loved me yet,  
 On and on,  
 While I found some way undreamed  
 —Paid my debt !  
 Gave more life and more,  
 Till all gone,  
 He should smile "She never seemed  
 Mine before.

## IX.

"What, she felt the while,  
 Must I think ?  
 Love 's so different with us men !"  
 He should smile :  
 "Dying for my sake—  
 White and pink !  
 Can't we touch these bubbles then  
 But they break ?"

## X.

Dear, the pang is brief,  
 Do thy part,  
 Have thy pleasure ! How perplexed  
 Grows belief !  
 Well, this cold clay clod  
 Was man's heart :  
 Crumble it, and what comes next ?  
 Is it God ?

SONG FROM "JAMES LEE."

I.

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.

II.

That is the doctrine, simple, ancient, true ;  
Such is life's trial, as old earth smiles and knows.  
If you loved only what were worth your love,  
Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you.  
Make the low nature better by your throes!  
Give earth yourself, go up for gain above!

---

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD.

I.

LET'S contend no more, Love,  
Strive nor weep :  
All be as before, Love,  
—Only sleep!

II.

What so wild as words are?  
I and thou  
In debate, as birds are,  
Hawk on bough!

## III.

See the creature stalking  
While we speak !  
Hush and hide the talking,  
Cheek on cheek.

## IV.

What so false as truth is,  
False to thee ?  
Where the serpent's tooth is,  
Shun the tree—

## V.

Where the apple reddens,  
Never pry—  
Lest we lose our Edens,  
Eve and I.

## VI.

Be a god and hold me  
With a charm !  
Be a man and fold me  
With thine arm !

## VII.

Teach me, only teach, Love !  
As I ought  
I will speak thy speech, Love,  
Think thy thought—

## VIII.

Meet, if thou require it,  
Both demands,  
Laying flesh and spirit  
In thy hands.



IX.

That shall be to-morrow,  
Not to-night :  
I must bury sorrow  
Out of sight :

X.

—Must a little weep, Love,  
(Foolish me !)  
And so fall asleep, Love,  
Loved by thee.

---

MEETING AT NIGHT.

I.

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.

II.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach ;  
Three fields to cross till a farm appears ;  
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch  
And blue spurt of a lighted match,  
And a voice less loud, through joys and fears,  
Than the two hearts beating each to each !

## PARTING AT MORNING.

ROUND the cape of a sudden came the sea,  
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim :  
And straight was a path of gold for him,  
And the need of a world of men for me.

---

## WOMEN AND ROSES.

## I.

I DREAM of a red-rose tree.  
And which of its roses three  
Is the dearest rose to me ?

## II.

Round and round, like a dance of snow  
In a dazzling drift, as its guardians, go  
Floating the women faded for ages,  
Sculptured in stone, on the poet's pages.  
Then follow women fresh and gay,  
Living and loving and loved to-day.  
Last, in the rear, flee the multitude of maidens,  
Beauties yet unborn. And all, to one cadence,  
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

## III.

Dear rose, thy term is reached,  
Thy leaf hangs loose and bleached :  
Bees pass it unimpeached.

## IV.

Stay then, stoop, since I cannot climb,  
You, great shapes of the antique time,  
How shall I fix you, fire you, freeze you,  
Break my heart at your feet to please you ?  
Oh, to possess and be possessed !  
Hearts that beat 'neath each pallid breast !  
Once but of love, the poesy, the passion,  
Drink but once and die !—In vain, the same fashion,  
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

## V.

Dear rose, thy joy 's undimmed ;  
Thy cup is ruby-rimmed,  
Thy cup's heart nectar-brimmed.

## VI.

Deep, as drops from a statue's plinth  
The bee sucked in by the hyacinth,  
So will I bury me while burning,  
Quench like him at a plunge my yearning,  
Eyes in your eyes, lips on your lips !  
Fold me fast where the cincture slips,  
Prison all my soul in eternities of pleasure,  
Girdle me for once ! But no—the old measure,  
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

## VII.

Dear rose without a thorn,  
Thy bud 's the babe unborn :  
First streak of a new morn.

## VIII.

Wings, lend wings for the cold, the clear !  
 What is far conquers what is near.  
 Roses will bloom nor want beholders,  
 Sprung from the dust where our flesh moulders.  
 What shall arrive with the cycle's change ?  
 A novel grace and a beauty strange.  
 I will make an Eve, be the Artist that began her,  
 Shaped her to his mind !—Alas ! in like manner  
 They circle their rose on my rose tree.

---

 MISCONCEPTIONS.

## I.

THIS is a spray the bird clung to,  
 Making it blossom with pleasure,  
 Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,  
 Fit for her nest and her treasure.  
 Oh, what a hope beyond measure  
 Was the poor spray's, which the flying feet hung to,—  
 So to be singled out, built in, and sung to !

## II.

THIS is a heart the queen leant on,  
 Thrilled in a minute erratic,  
 Ere the true bosom she bent on,  
 Meet for love's regal dalmatic.  
 Oh, what a fancy ecstatic  
 Was the poor heart's, ere the wanderer went on,—  
 Love to be saved for it, proffered to, spent on !

A PRETTY WOMAN.

I.

THAT fawn-skin-dappled hair of hers,  
And the blue eye  
Dear and dewy,  
And that infantine fresh air of hers !

II.

To think men cannot take you, Sweet,  
And enfold you,  
Ay, and hold you,  
And so keep you what they make you, Sweet !

III.

You like us for a glance, you know—  
For a word's sake  
Or a sword's sake :  
All's the same, whate'er the chance, you know.

IV.

And in turn we make you ours, we say—  
You and youth too,  
Eyes and mouth too,  
All the face composed of flowers, we say.

V.

All's our own, to make the most of, Sweet—  
Sing and say for,  
Watch and pray for,  
Keep a secret or go boast of, Sweet !

## VI.

But for loving, why, you would not, Sweet,  
Though we prayed you,  
Paid you, brayed you  
In a mortar—for you could not, Sweet !

## VII.

So, we leave the sweet face fondly there :  
Be its beauty  
Its sole duty !  
Let all hope of grace beyond, lie there !

## VIII.

And while the face lies quiet there,  
Who shall wonder  
That I ponder  
A conclusion ? I will try it there.

## IX.

As,—why must one, for the love foregone,  
Scout mere liking ?  
Thunder-striking  
Earth,—the heaven, we looked above for, gone !

## X.

Why, with beauty, needs there money be,  
Love with liking ?  
Crush the fly-king  
In his gauze, because no honey-bee ?

## XI.

May not liking be so simple-sweet,  
If love grew there  
'T would undo there  
All that breaks the cheek to dimples sweet ?

XII.

Is the creature too imperfect, say ?  
    Would you mend it  
    And so end it ?  
Since not all addition perfects aye !

XIII.

Or is it of its kind, perhaps,  
    Just perfection—  
    Whence, rejection  
Of a grace not to its mind, perhaps ?

XIV.

Shall we burn up, tread that face at once  
    Into tinder,  
    And so hinder  
Sparks from kindling all the place at once ?

XV.

Or else kiss away one's soul on her ?  
    Your love-fancies !  
    —A sick man sees  
Truer, when his hot eyes roll on her !

XVI.

Thus the craftsman thinks to grace the rose,—  
    Plucks a mould-flower  
    For his gold flower,  
Uses fine things that efface the rose :

XVII.

Rosy rubies make its cup more rose,  
    Precious metals  
    Ape the petals,—  
Last, some old king locks it up, morose !

## XVIII.

Then how grace a rose? I know a way!  
Leave it, rather.  
Must you gather?  
Smell, kiss, wear it—at last, throw away!

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## A LIGHT WOMAN.

## I.

So far as our story approaches the end,  
Which do you pity the most of us three?—  
My friend, or the mistress of my friend  
With her wanton eyes, or me?

## II.

My friend was already too good to lose,  
And seemed in the way of improvement yet,  
When she crossed his path with her hunting-noose  
And over him drew her net.

## III.

When I saw him tangled in her toils,  
A shame, said I, if she adds just him  
To her nine-and-ninety other spoils,  
The hundredth for a whim!

## IV.

And before my friend be wholly hers,  
How easy to prove to him, I said,  
An eagle's the game her pride prefers,  
Though she snaps at a wren instead!



V.

So, I gave her eyes my own eyes to take,  
My hand sought hers as in earnest need,  
And round she turned for my noble sake,  
And gave me herself indeed.

VI.

The eagle am I, with my fame in the world,  
The wren is he, with his maiden face.  
—You look away and your lip is curled?  
Patience, a moment's space!

VII.

For see, my friend goes shaking and white;  
He eyes me as the basilisk:  
I have turned, it appears, his day to night,  
Eclipsing his sun's disk.

VIII.

And I did it, he thinks, as a very thief:  
“Though I love her—that, he comprehends—  
One should master one's passions, (love, in chief)  
And be loyal to one's friends!”

IX.

And she,—she lies in my hand as tame  
As a pear late basking over a wall;  
Just a touch to try, and off it came;  
'T is mine,—can I let it fall?

## X.

With no mind to eat it, that 's the worst !  
Were it thrown in the road, would the case assist ?  
'T was quenching a dozen blue-flies' thirst  
When I gave its stalk a twist.

## XI.

And I,—what I seem to my friend, you see ;  
What I soon shall seem to his love, you guess :  
What I seem to myself, do you ask of me ?  
No hero, I confess.

## XII.

'T is an awkward thing to play with souls,  
And matter enough to save one's own :  
Yet think of my friend, and the burning coals  
We played with for bits of stone !

## XIII.

One likes to show the truth for the truth ;  
That the woman was light is very true :  
But suppose she says,—Never mind that youth !  
What wrong have I done to you ?

## XIV.

Well, any how, here the story stays,  
So far at least as I understand ;  
And, Robert Browning, you writer of plays,  
Here 's a subject made to your hand !

## LOVE IN A LIFE.

## I.

Room after room,  
I hunt the house through  
We inhabit together.  
Heart, fear nothing, for, heart, thou shalt find her—  
Next time, herself!—not the trouble behind her  
Left in the curtain, the couch's perfume!  
As she brushed it, the cornice-wreath blossomed  
    anew;  
Yon looking-glass gleamed at the wave of her feather.

## II.

Yet the day wears,  
And door succeeds door;  
I try the fresh fortune—  
Range the wide house from the wing to the centre.  
Still the same chance! she goes out as I enter.  
Spend my whole day in the quest,—who cares?  
But 't is twilight, you see,—with such suites to ex-  
    plore,  
Such closets to search, such alcoves to importune!

## LIFE IN A LOVE.

ESCAPE me?  
Never—  
Beloved!  
While I am I, and you are you,  
So long as the world contains us both,  
    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.  
 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.  
 While, look but once from your farthest bound  
     At me so deep in the dust and dark,  
 No sooner thè old hope goes to ground  
     Than a new one, straight to the self-same mark,  
 I shape me—  
 Ever  
 Removed !

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## THE LABORATORY.

### ANCIEN RÉGIME.

#### I.

Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,  
 May gaze thro' these faint smokes curling whitely,  
 As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's smithy—  
 Which is the poison to poison her, prithee ?

#### II.

He is with her, and they know that I know  
 Where they are, what they do : they believe my tears  
     flow  
 While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear  
 Empty church, to pray God in, for them !—I am here.

## III.

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,  
Pound at thy powder,—I am not in haste !  
Better sit thus and observe thy strange things,  
Than go where men wait me, and dance at the  
King's.

## IV.

That in the mortar—you call it a gum ?  
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come !  
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,  
Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison too ?

## V.

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,  
What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures !  
To carry pure death in an ear-ring, a casket,  
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree basket !

## VI.

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge to give  
And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to live !  
But to light a pastile, and Elise with her head  
And her breast and her arms and her hands, should  
drop dead !

## VII.

Quick—is it finished ? The color 's too grim !  
Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim ?  
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir,  
And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer !

## VIII.

What a drop! She's not little, no minion like me!  
That 's why she ensnared him: this never will free  
The soul from those masculine eyes,—say, "No!"  
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

## IX.

For only last night, as they whispered, I brought  
My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought  
Could I keep them one-half minute fixed, she would  
fall  
Shrivelled; she fell not; yet this does it all!

## X.

Not that I bid you spare her the pain;  
Let death be felt and the proof remain:  
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace—  
He is sure to remember her dying face!

## XI.

Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not mo-  
rose;  
It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:  
The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee!  
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?

## XII.

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,  
You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!  
But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings  
Ere I know it—next moment I dance at the King's!

GOLD HAIR :

A STORY OF PORNIC.

I.

OH, the beautiful girl, too white,  
Who lived at Pornic down by the sea,  
Just where the sea and the Loire unite !  
And a boasted name in Brittany  
She bore, which I will not write.

II.

Too white, for the flower of life is red ;  
Her flesh was the soft seraphic screen  
Of a soul that is meant (her parents said)  
To just see earth, and hardly be seen,  
And blossom in heaven instead.

III.

Yet earth saw one thing, one how fair !  
One grace that grew to its full on earth :  
Smiles might be sparse on her cheek so spare.  
And her waist want half a girdle's girth,  
But she had her great gold hair.

IV.

Hair, such a wonder of flix and floss,  
Freshness and fragrance—floods of it, too !  
Gold, did I say ? Nay, gold's mere dross :  
Here, Life smiled, "Think what I meant to do !"  
And Love sighed, "Fancy my loss !"

## V.

So, when she died, it was scarce more strange  
Than that, when some delicate evening dies,  
And you follow its spent sun's pallid range,  
There's a shoot of color startles the skies  
With sudden, violent change,—

## VI.

That, while the breath was nearly to seek,  
As they put the little cross to her lips,  
She changed ; a spot came out on her cheek,  
A spark from her eye in mid-eclipse,  
And she broke forth, " I must speak ! "

## VII.

" Not my hair ! " made the girl her moan—  
All the rest is gone or to go ;  
But the last, last grace, my all, my own,  
Let it stay in the grave, that the ghosts may know !  
Leave my poor gold hair alone ! "

## VIII.

The passion thus vented, dead lay she :  
Her parents sobbed their worst on that,  
All friends joined in, nor observed degree :  
For indeed the hair was to wonder at,  
As it spread—not flowing free,

## IX.

But curled around her brow, like a crown,  
And coiled beside her cheeks, like a cap,  
And calmed about her neck—ay, down  
To her breast, pressed flat, without a gap  
I' the gold, it reached her gown.



## X.

All kissed that face, like a silver wedge  
'Mid the yellow wealth, nor disturbed its hair :  
E'en the priest allowed death's privilege,  
As he planted the crucifix with care  
On her breast, 'twixt edge and edge.

## XI.

And thus was she buried, inviolate  
Of body and soul, in the very space  
By the altar ; keeping saintly state  
In Pornic church, for her pride of race,  
Pure life and piteous fate.

## XII.

And in after-time would your fresh tear fall,  
Though your mouth might twitch with a dubious  
smile,  
As they told you of gold both robe and pall,  
How she prayed them leave it alone a while,  
So it never was touched at all.

## XIII.

Years flew ; this legend grew at last  
The life of the lady ; all she had done,  
All been, in the memories fading fast  
Of lover and friend, was summed in one  
Sentence survivors passed :

## XIV.

To wit, she was meant for heaven, not earth ;  
Had turned an angel before the time :  
Yet, since she was mortal, in such dearth  
Of frailty, all you could count a crime  
Was—she knew her gold hair's worth.

## XV.

At little pleasant Pornic church,  
 It chanced, the pavement wanted repair,  
 Was taken to pieces : left in the lurch,  
 A certain sacred space lay bare,  
 And the boys began research.

## XVI.

'T was the space where our sires would lay a saint,  
 A benefactor,—a bishop, suppose,  
 A baron with armor-adornments quaint,  
 Dame with chased ring and jewelled rose,  
 Things sanctity saves from taint ;

## XVII.

So we come to find them in after-days  
 When the corpse is presumed to have done with  
 gauds  
 Of use to the living, in many ways :  
 For the boys get pelf, and the town applauds,  
 And the church deserves the praise.

## XVIII.

They grubbed with a will : and at length—*O cor  
 Humanum, pectora caeca*, and the rest !—  
 They found—no gaud they were prying for,  
 No ring, no rose, but—who would have guessed ?—  
 A double Louis-d'or !

## XIX.

Here was a case for the priest : he heard,  
 Marked, inwardly digested, laid  
 Finger on nose, smiled, “ A little bird  
 Chirps in my ear : ” then, “ Bring a spade,  
 Dig deeper ! ”—he gave the word.

## XX.

And lo, when they came to the coffin-lid,  
 Or rotten planks which composed it once,  
 Why, there lay the girl's skull wedged amid  
 A mint of money, it served for the nonce  
 To hold in its hair-heaps hid !

## XXI.

Hid there ? Why ? Could the girl be wont  
 (She the stainless soul) to treasure up  
 Money, earth's trash and heaven's affront ?  
 Had a spider found out the communion-cup,  
 Was a toad in the christening-font ?

## XXII.

Truth is truth : too true it was.  
 Gold ! She hoarded and hugged it first,  
 Longed for it, leaned o'er it, loved it—alas—  
 Till the humor grew to a head and burst,  
 And she cried, at the final pass,—

## XXIII.

“ Talk not of God, my heart is stone !  
 Nor lover nor friend—be gold for both !  
 Gold I lack ; and, my all, my own,  
 It shall hide in my hair. I scarce die loth  
 If they let my hair alone ! ”

## XXIV.

Louis-d'ors, some six times five,  
 And duly double, every piece.  
 Now, do you see ? With the priest to shrive,  
 With parents preventing her soul's release  
 By kisses that kept alive,—

## XXV.

With heaven's gold gates about to ope,  
 With friends' praise, gold-like, lingering still,  
 An instinct had bidden the girl's hand grope  
 For gold, the true sort—"Gold in heaven, if you  
     will ;  
 But I keep earth's too, I hope."

## XXVI.

Enough ! The priest took the grave's grim yield :  
 The parents, they eyed that price of sin  
 As if *thirty pieces* lay revealed  
 On the place *to bury strangers in*,  
 The hideous Potter's Field.

## XXVII.

But the priest bethought him : " ' Milk that's spilt '  
 —You know the adage ! Watch and pray !  
 Saints tumble to earth with so slight a tilt !  
 It would build a new altar ; that, we may ! "  
 And the altar therewith was built.

## XXVIII.

Why I deliver this horrible verse ?  
 As the text of a sermon, which now I preach.  
 Evil or good may be better or worse  
 In the human heart, but the mixture of each  
 Is a marvel and a curse.

## XXIX.

The candid incline to surmise of late  
 That the Christian faith may be false, I find ;  
 For our Essays-and-Reviews' debate  
 Begins to tell on the public mind,  
 And Colenso's words have weight :

XXX.

I still, to suppose it true, for my part,  
See reasons and reasons ; this, to begin :  
'T is the faith that launched point-blank her dart  
At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin,  
The Corruption of Man's Heart.

---

THE STATUE AND THE BUST.

THERE 's a palace in Florence, the world knows well,  
And a statue watches it from the square,  
And this story of both do our townsmen tell.

Ages ago, a lady there,  
At the farthest window facing the East  
Asked, "Who rides by with the royal air?"

The bridesmaids' prattle around her ceased ;  
She leaned forth, one on either hand ;  
They saw how the blush of the bride increased—

They felt by its beats her heart expand—  
As one at each ear and both in a breath  
Whispered, "The Great Duke Ferdinand."

That self-same instant, underneath,  
The Duke rode past in his idle way,  
Empty and fine like a swordless sheath.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,  
Till he threw his head back—"Who is she?"  
—"A bride the Riccardi brings home to-day."

Hair in heaps lay heavily  
Over a pale brow spirit-pure—  
Carved like the heart of the coal-black tree,

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure—  
And vainly sought to dissemble her eyes  
Of the blackest black our eyes endure.

And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise  
Filled the fine empty sheath of a man,—  
The Duke grew straightway brave and wise.

He looked at her, as a lover can ;  
She looked at him, as one who awakes :  
The past was asleep, and her life began.

Now, love so ordered for both their sakes,  
A feast was held, that self-same night,  
In the pile which the mighty shadow makes.

(For Via Larga is three parts light,  
But the palace overshadows one,  
Because of a crime which may God requite !

To Florence and God the wrong was done,  
Through the first republic's murder there  
By Cosimo and his cursed son).

The Duke (with the statue's face in the square)  
Turned, in the midst of his multitude,  
At the bright approach of the bridal pair.

Face to face the lovers stood  
A single minute and no more,  
While the bridegroom bent as a man subdued—

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor—  
For the Duke on the lady a kiss conferred,  
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a word?  
If a word did pass, which I do not think,  
Only one out of the thousand heard.

That was the bridegroom. At day's brink  
He and his bride were alone at last  
In a bed-chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,  
That the door she had passed was shut on her  
Till the final catafalk repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir,  
Through a certain window facing the East,  
She could watch like a convent's chronicler.

Since passing the door might lead to a feast,  
And a feast might lead to so much beside,  
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose too," said the bride—  
"Your window and its world suffice,"  
Replied the tongue, while the heart replied—

"If I spend the night with that devil twice,  
May his window serve as my loop of hell  
Whence a damned soul looks on paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well,  
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow  
Ere I count another ave-bell.

“’T is only the coat of a page to borrow,  
And tie my hair in a horse-boy’s trim,  
And I save my soul—but not to-morrow”—

(She checked herself and her eye grew dim)  
“My father tarries to bless my state :  
I must keep it one day more for him.

“Is one day more so long to wait ?  
Moreover the Duke rides past, I know ;  
We shall see each other, sure as fate.”

She turned on her side and slept. Just so !  
So we resolve on a thing, and sleep :  
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, “Dear or cheap  
As the cost of this cup of bliss may prove  
To body or soul, I will drain it deep.”

And on the morrow, bold with love,  
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on call,  
As his duty bade, by the Duke’s alcove)

And smiled “’T was a very funeral,  
Your lady will think, this feast of ours,—  
A shame to efface, what’er befall !

“What if we break from the Arno bowers,  
And try if Petraja, cool and green,  
Cure last night’s fault with this morning’s flowers ?”

The bridegroom, not a thought to be seen  
On his steady brow and quiet mouth,  
Said, “Too much favor for me so mean !



“ But, alas ! my lady leaves the South ;  
Each wind that comes from the Apennine  
Is a menace to her tender youth :

“ Nor a way exists, the wise opine,  
If she quits her palace twice this year,  
To avert the flower of life’s decline.”

Quoth the Duke, “ A sage and a kindly fear.  
Moreover Petraja is cold this spring :  
Be our feast to-night as usual here !”

And then to himself—“ Which night shall bring  
Thy bride to her lover’s embraces, fool—  
Or I am the fool, and thou art the king !

“ Yet my passion must wait a night, nor cool—  
For to-night the Envoy arrives from France  
Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my tool.

“ I need thee still and might miss perchance.  
To-day is not wholly lost, beside,  
With its hope of my lady’s countenance :

“ For I ride—what should I do but ride ?  
And, passing her palace, if I list,  
May glance at its window—well betide !”

So said, so done : nor the lady missed  
One ray that broke from the ardent brow,  
Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow,  
No morrow’s sun should’ arise and set  
And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,  
With still fresh cause to wait one day more  
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore,  
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,  
They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,  
But not in despite of heaven and earth :  
The rose would blow when the storm passed by.

Meantime they could profit, in winter's dearth,  
By store of fruits that supplant the rose :  
The world and its ways have a certain worth :

And to press a point while these oppose  
Were simply policy ; better wait :  
We lose no friends and we gain no foes.

Meantime, worse fates than a lover's fate,  
Who daily may ride and pass and look  
Where his lady watches behind the grate !

And she—she watched the square like a book  
Holding one picture and only one,  
Which daily to find she undertook :

When the picture was reached the book was done,  
And she turned from the picture at night to scheme  
Of tearing it out for herself next sun.

So weeks grew months, years ; gleam by gleam  
The glory dropped from their youth and love,  
And both perceived they had dreamed a dream ;

Which hovered as dreams do, still above :  
But who can take a dream for a truth ?  
Oh, hide our eyes from the next remove !

One day as the lady saw her youth  
Depart, and the silver thread that streaked  
Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so peaked,—  
And wondered who the woman was,  
Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass—  
“Summon here,” she suddenly said,  
“Before the rest of my old self pass,

“Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,  
Who fashions the clay no love will change,  
And fixes a beauty never to fade.

“Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange  
Arrest the remains of young and fair,  
And rivet them while the seasons range.

“Make me a face on the window there,  
Waiting as ever, mute the while,  
My love to pass below in the square !

“And let me think that it may beguile  
Dreary days which the dead must spend  
Down in their darkness under the aisle,

“To say, ‘What matters it at the end?  
I did no more while my heart was warm  
Than does that image, my pale-faced friend.’

“Where is the use of the lip’s red charm,  
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,  
And the blood that blues the inside arm—

“Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,  
The earthly gift to an end divine?  
A lady of clay is as good, I trow.”

But long ere Robbia’s cornice, fine  
With flowers and fruits which leaves enlace,  
Was set where now is the empty shrine—

(And, leaning out of a bright blue space,  
As a ghost might lean from a chink of sky,  
The passionate pale lady’s face—

Eyeing ever, with earnest eye  
And quick-turned neck at its breathless stretch,  
Some one who ever is passing by—)

The Duke had sighed like the simplest wretch  
In Florence, “Youth—my dream escapes!  
Will its record stay!” And he bade them fetch

Some subtle moulder of brazen shapes—  
“Can the soul, the will, die out of a man  
Ere his body finds the grave that gapes?

“John of Douay shall effect my plan,  
Set me on horseback here aloft,  
Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

“In the very square I have crossed so oft:  
That men may admire, when future suns  
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

“While the mouth and the brow stay brave in  
bronze—

Admire and say, ‘When he was alive  
How he would take his pleasure once!’

“And it shall go hard but I contrive  
To listen the while, and laugh in my tomb  
At idleness which aspires to strive.”



So! While these wait the trump of doom,  
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,  
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder  
What a gift life was, ages ago,  
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Only they see not God, I know,  
Nor all that chivalry of his,  
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of bliss—  
Since, the end of life being manifest,  
He had burned his way thro’ the world to this.

I hear you reproach, “But delay was best,  
For their end was a crime.”—Oh, a crime will do  
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and through,  
Sufficient to vindicate itself  
And prove its worth at a moment’s view!

Must a game be played for the sake of pelf?  
 Where a button goes, 't were an epigram  
 To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.

The true has no value beyond the sham:  
 As well the counter as coin, I submit,  
 When your table's a hat, and your prize, a dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every whit,  
 Venture as warily, use the same skill,  
 Do your best, whether winning or losing it,

If you choose to play!—is my principle.  
 Let a man contend to the uttermost  
 For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

The counter, our lovers staked, was lost  
 As surely as if it were lawful coin:  
 And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost

Is, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,  
 Though the end in sight was a vice, I say.  
 You of the virtue (we issue join)  
 How strive you? *De te, fabula!*

---

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS.

I.

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

Was the site once of a city great and gay,  
    (So they say)  
Of our country's very capital, its prince,  
    Ages since,  
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far  
    Peace or war.

## II.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,  
    As you see,  
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills  
    From the hills  
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run  
    Into one)  
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires  
    Up like fires  
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall  
    Bounding all,  
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,  
    Twelve abreast.

## III.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass  
    Never was!  
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads  
    And embeds  
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,  
    Stock or stone—  
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe  
    Long ago ;  
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame  
    Struck them tame ;  
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold  
    Bought and sold.

## IV.

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,  
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced  
    As they raced,  
And the monarch and his minions and his dames  
    Viewed the games.

## V.

And I know—while thus the quiet-colored eve  
    Smiles to leave  
To their folding, all our many tinkling fleece  
    In such peace,  
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray  
    Melt away—  
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair  
    Waits me there  
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul  
    For the goal,  
When the king looked, where she looks now, breath-  
    less, dumb  
Till I come.

## VI.

But he looked upon the city, every side,  
    Far and wide,  
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades  
    Colonnades,



All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then,  
 All the men !  
 When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,  
 Either hand  
 On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace  
 Of my face,  
 Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech  
 Each on each.

## VII.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth  
 South and North,  
 And they built their gods a brazen pillar high  
 As the sky,  
 Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—  
 Gold, of course.  
 Oh heart ! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns !  
 Earth's returns  
 For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin !  
 Shut them in,  
 With their triumphs and their glories and the rest !  
 Love is best.

---

 TIME'S REVENGES.

I 'VE a Friend, over the sea ;  
 I like him, but he loves me.  
 It all grew out of the books I write ;  
 They find such favor in his sight  
 That he slaughters you with savage looks  
 Because you do n't admire my books.  
 He does himself though,—and if some vein  
 Were to snap to-night in this heavy brain,

To-morrow month, if I lived to try,  
Round should I just turn quietly,  
Or out of the bedclothes stretch my hand  
Till I found him, come from his foreign land  
To be my nurse in this poor place,  
And make my broth and wash my face  
And light my fire, and all the while,  
Bear with his old good-humored smile  
That I told him "Better have kept away  
Than come and kill me, night and day,  
With, worse than fever throbs and shoots,  
The creaking of his clumsy boots."  
I am as sure that this he would do,  
As that St. Paul's is striking two.  
And I think I rather . . . woe is me !  
—Yes, rather should see him than not see,  
If lifting a hand would seat him there  
Before me in the empty chair  
To-night, when my head aches indeed,  
And I can neither think nor read  
Nor make these purple fingers hold  
The pen ; this garret 's freezing cold !

And I've a Lady—there he wakes  
The laughing fiend and prince of snakes  
Within me, at her name, to pray  
Fate send some creature in the way  
Of my love for her, to be down-torn,  
Upthrust and outward-borne,  
So I might prove myself that sea  
Of passion which I needs must be !  
Call my thoughts false and my fancies quaint  
And my style infirm and its figures faint,  
All the critics say, and more blame yet,

And not one angry word you get.  
But, please you, wonder I would put  
My cheek beneath that lady's foot  
Rather than trample under mine  
The laurels of the Florentine,  
And you shall see how the devil spends  
A fire God gave for other ends !  
I tell you, I stride up and down  
This garret, crowned with love's best crown,  
And feasted with love's perfect feast,  
To think I kill for her, at least,  
Body and soul and peace and fame,  
Alike youth's end and manhood's aim,  
—So is my spirit, as flesh with sin,  
Filled full, eaten out and in  
With the face of her, the eyes of her,  
The lips, the little chin, the stir  
Of shadow round her mouth ; and she  
—I 'll tell you,—calmly would decree  
That I should roast at a slow fire,  
If that would compass her desire  
And make her one whom they invite  
To the famous ball to-morrow night.

There may be heaven ; there must be hell ;  
Meantime, there is our earth here—well !

## WARING.

I.

I.

WHAT 's become of Waring  
 Since he gave us all the slip,  
 Chose land-travel or seafaring,  
 Boots and chest or staff and scrip,  
 Rather than pace up and down  
 Any longer London town ?

II.

Who 'd have guessed it from his lip  
 Or his brow's accustomed bearing,  
 On the night he thus took ship  
 Or started landward ?—little caring  
 For us, it seems, who supped together  
 (Friends of his too, I remember)  
 And walked home thro' the merry weather,  
 The snowiest in all December.  
 I left his arm that night myself  
 For what's-his-name's, the new prose-poet  
 Who wrote the book there on the shelf—  
 How, forsooth, was I to know it  
 If Waring meant to glide away  
 Like a ghost at break of day ?  
 Never looked he' half so gay !

III.

He was prouder than the devil :  
 How he must have cursed our revel !

Ay, and many other meetings,  
 Indoor visits, outdoor greetings  
 As up and down he paced this London,  
 With no work done, but great works undone,  
 Where scarce twenty knew his name.  
 Why not, then, have earlier spoken,  
 Written, bustled? Who 's to blame  
 If your silence kept unbroken?  
 " True, but there were sundry jottings,  
 Stray-leaves, fragments, blurs and blottings,  
 Certain first steps were achieved  
 Already which—(is that your meaning?)  
 Had well borne out whoe'er believed  
 In more to come!" But who goes gleaning  
 Hedge-side chance-blades, while full-sheaved  
 Stand cornfields by him? Pride, o'erweening  
 Pride alone, puts forth such claims  
 O'er the day's distinguished names.

## IV.

Meantime, how much I loved him,  
 I find out now I've lost him.  
 I who cared not if I moved him,  
 Who could so carelessly accost him,  
 Henceforth never shall get free  
 Of his ghostly company,  
 His eyes that just a little wink  
 As deep I go into the merit  
 Of this and that distinguished spirit—  
 His cheeks' raised color, soon to sink,  
 As long I dwell on some stupendous  
 And tremendous (Heaven defend us!)  
 Monstr'-inform'-ingens-horrend-ous  
 Demoniaco-seraphic

Penman's latest piece of graphic.  
 Nay, my very wrist grows warm  
 With his dragging weight of arm.  
 E'en so, swimmingly appears,  
 Through one's after-supper musings,  
 Some lost lady of old years  
 With her beauteous vain endeavor  
 And goodness unrepaid as ever ;  
 The face, accustomed to refusings,  
 We, puppies that we were . . . Oh never  
 Surely, nice of conscience, scrupled  
 Being aught like false, forsooth, to ?  
 Telling aught but honest truth to ?  
 What a sin, had we centupled  
 Its possessor's grace and sweetness !  
 No ! she heard in its completeness  
 Truth, for truth 's a weighty matter,  
 And, truth at issue, we can't flatter !  
 Well, 't is done with ; she 's exempt  
 From damning us thro' such a sally ;  
 And so she glides, as down a valley,  
 Taking up with her contempt,  
 Past our reach ; and in, the flowers  
 Shut her unregarded hours.

## v.

Oh, could I have him back once more,  
 This Waring, but one half-day more !  
 Back, with the quiet face of yore,  
 So hungry for acknowledgment  
 Like mine ! I 'd fool him to his bent.  
 Feed, should not he, to heart's content ?  
 I 'd say, "to only have conceived,  
 Planned your great works, apart from progress,

Surpasses little works achieved !”  
I'd lie so, I should be believed.  
I'd make such havoc of the claims  
Of the day's distinguished names  
To feast him with, as feasts an ogress  
Her feverish sharp-toothed gold-crowned child !  
Or as one feasts a creature rarely  
Captured here, unreconciled  
To capture ; and completely gives  
Its pettish humors license, barely  
Requiring that it lives.

## VI.

Ichabod, Ichabod,  
The glory is departed !  
Travels Waring East away ?  
Who, of knowledge, by hearsay,  
Reports a man upstarted  
Somewhere as a god,  
Hordes grown European-hearted,  
Millions of the wild made tame  
On a sudden at his fame ?  
In Vishnu-land what Avatar ?  
Or who in Moscow, toward the Czar,  
With the demurest of footfalls  
Over the Kremlin's pavement bright  
With serpentine and syenite,  
Steps, with five other Generals  
That simultaneously take snuff,  
For each to have pretext enough  
And kerchiefwise unfold his sash  
Which, softness' self, is yet the stuff  
To hold fast where a steel chain snaps,  
And leave the grand white neck no gash ?

Waring in Moscow, to those rough  
Cold northern natures borne perhaps,  
Like the lambwhite maiden dear  
From the circle of mute kings  
Unable to repress the tear,  
Each as his sceptre down he flings,  
To Dian's fame at Taurica,  
Where now a captive priestess, she alway  
Mingles her tender grave Hellenic speech  
With theirs, tuned to the hailstone-beaten beach :  
As pours some pigeon, from the myrrhy lands  
Rapt by the whirlblast to fierce Scythian strands  
Where breed the swallows, her melodious cry  
Amid their barbarous twitter !  
In Russia ? Never ! Spain were fitter !  
Ay, most likely 't is in Spain  
That we and Waring meet again  
Now, while he turns down that cool narrow lane  
Into the blackness, out of grave Madrid  
All fire and shine, abrupt as when there 's slid  
Its stiff gold blazing pall  
From some black coffin-lid.  
Or, best of all,  
I love to think  
The leaving us was just a feint ;  
Back here to London did he slink,  
And now works on without a wink  
Of sleep, and we are on the brink  
Of something great in fresco-paint :  
Some garret's ceiling, walls and floor,  
Up and down and o'er and o'er  
He splashes, as none splashed before  
Since great Caldara Polidore.  
Or Music means this land of ours



Some favor yet, to pity won  
By Purcell from his Rosy Bowers,—  
“Give me my so-long promised son,  
Let Waring end what I begun!”  
Then down he creeps and out he steals,  
Only when the night conceals  
His face ; in Kent 't is cherry-time,  
Or hops are picking : or at prime  
Of March he wanders as, too happy,  
Years ago when he was young,  
Some mild eve when woods grew sappy  
And the early moths had sprung  
To life from many a trembling sheath  
Woven the warm boughs beneath ;  
While small birds said to themselves  
What should soon be actual song,  
And young gnats, by tens and twelves  
Made as if they were the throng  
That crowd around and carry aloft  
The sound they have nursed, so sweet and pure,  
Out of a myriad noises soft,  
Into a tone that can endure  
Amid the noise of a July noon  
When all God's creatures crave their boon,  
All at once, and all in tune,  
And get it, happy as Waring then,  
Having first within his ken  
What a man might do with men :  
And far too glad, in the even-glow,  
To mix with the world he meant to take  
Into his hand, he told you, so—  
And out of it his world to make,  
To contract and to expand  
As he shut or oped his hand.

Oh Waring, what 's to really be ?  
 A clear stage and a crowd to see !  
 Some Garrick, say, out shall not he  
 The heart of Hamlet's mystery pluck ?  
 Or, where most unclean beasts are rife,  
 Some Junius—am I right ?—shall tuck  
 His sleeve, and forth with flaying-knife !  
 Some Chatterton shall have the luck  
 Of calling Rowley into life !  
 Some one shall somehow run a muck  
 With this old world, for want of strife  
 Sound asleep. Contrive, contrive  
 To rouse us, Waring ! Who 's alive ?  
 Our men scarce seem in earnest now.  
 Distinguished names !—but 't is, somehow,  
 As if they played at being names  
 Still more distinguished, like the games  
 Of children. Turn our sport to earnest  
 With a visage of the sternest !  
 Bring the real times back, confessed  
 Still better than our very best !

## II.

## I.

"WHEN I last saw Waring . . ."  
 (How all turned to him who spoke !  
 You saw Waring ? Truth or joke ?  
 In land-travel or sea-faring ?)

## II.

"We were sailing by Triest  
 Where a day or two we harbored :  
 A sunset was in the West,

When, looking over the vessel's side,  
 One of our company espied  
 A sudden speck to larboard.  
 And as a sea-duck flies and swims  
 At once, so came the light craft up,  
 With its sole lateen sail that trims  
 And turns (the water round its rims  
 Dancing, as round a sinking cup)  
 And by us like a fish it curled,  
 And drew itself up close beside,  
 Its great sail on the instant furled,  
 And o'er its thwarts a shrill voice cried,  
 (A neck as bronzed as a Lascar's)  
 'Buy wine of us, you English Brig?  
 Or fruit, tobacco and cigars?  
 A pilot for you to Triest?  
 Without one, look you ne'er so big,  
 They'll never let you up the bay!  
 We natives should know best.'  
 I turned, and 'just those fellows' way,'  
 Our captain said, 'The 'long-shore thieves  
 Are laughing at us in their sleeves.'

## III.

"In truth, the boy leaned laughing back ;  
 And one, half-hidden by his side  
 Under the furled sail, soon I spied,  
 With great grass hat and kerchief black,  
 Who looked up with his kingly throat,  
 Said somewhat, while the other shook  
 His hair back from his eyes to look  
 Their longest at us ; then the boat,  
 I know not how, turned sharply round,  
 Laying her whole side on the sea

As a leaping fish does ; from the lee  
Into the weather, cut somehow  
Her sparkling path beneath our bow,  
And so went off, as with a bound,  
Into the rosy and golden half  
O' the sky, to overtake the sun  
And reach the shore, like the sea-calf  
Its singing cave ; yet I caught one  
Glance ere away the boat quite passed,  
And neither time nor toil could mar  
Those features : so I saw the last  
Of Waring !"—You ? Oh, never star  
Was lost here but it rose afar !  
Look East, where whole new thousands are !  
In Vishnu-land what Avatar ?

---

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD.

I.

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 brushwood sheaf  
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 white-throat builds, and all the swallows !  
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  
The first fine careless rapture !  
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,  
And will be gay when noontide wakes anew  
The buttercups, the little children's dower  
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower !

---

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 thro' the country-side  
Breathed hot and instant on my trace.—  
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 thro' the moss they love :  
—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  
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,  
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  
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,  
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,  
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 :  
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 :  
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 ;  
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,  
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,  
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  
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.  
Now, you must bring me food and drink,  
And also paper, pen and ink,  
And carry safe what I shall write  
To Padua, which you 'll reach at night  
Before the duomo shuts ; go in,  
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 ;  
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  
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 sun-rise  
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  
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  
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  
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.

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  
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.  
I would grasp Metternich until  
I felt his red wet throat distil



In blood thro' these two hands. And next,  
—Nor much for that am I perplexed—  
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,  
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  
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  
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  
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  
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  
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,  
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.

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

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## THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY.

### PIANO DI SORRENTO.

FORTÙ, Fortù, my beloved one, sit here by my side,  
 On my knees put up both little feet ! I was sure, if  
 I tried,  
 I could make you laugh spite of Scirocco. Now,  
 open your eyes,  
 Let me keep you amused, till he vanish in black  
 from the skies,  
 With telling my memories over, as you tell your  
 beads ;  
 All the Plain saw me gather, I garland—the flowers  
 or the weeds.

Time for rain ! for your long hot dry Autumn had  
 networked with brown  
 The white skin of each grape on the bunches, marked  
 like a quail's crown,  
 Those creatures you make such account of, whose  
 heads,—specked with white  
 Over brown like a great spider's back, as I told you  
 last night,—

Your mother bites off for her supper. Red-ripe as  
could be,  
Pomegranates were chapping and splitting in halves  
on the tree.  
And betwixt the loose walls of great flintstone, or in  
the thick dust  
On the path, or straight out of the rock-side, wher-  
ever could thrust  
Some burnt sprig of bold hardy rock-flower its yel-  
low face up,  
For the prize were great butterflies fighting, some  
five for one cup.  
So, I guessed, ere I got up this morning, what change  
was in store,  
By the quick rustle-down of the quail-nets which  
woke me before  
I could open my shutter, made fast with a bough and  
a stone,  
And look through the twisted dead vine-twigs, sole  
lattice that's known.  
Quick and sharp rang the rings down the net-poles,  
while, busy beneath,  
Your priest and his brother tugged at them, the rain  
in their teeth.  
And out upon all the flat house-roofs, where split figs  
lay drying,  
The girls took the frails under cover : nor use seemed  
in trying  
To get out the boats and go fishing, for, under the  
cliff,  
Fierce the black water frothed o'er the blind-rock.  
No seeing our skiff  
Arrive about noon from Amalfi !—our fisher  
arrive,

And pitch down his basket before us, all trembling  
alive,  
With pink and gray jellies, your sea-fruit ; you touch  
the strange lumps,  
And mouths gape there, eyes open, all manner of  
horns and of humps,  
Which only the fisher looks grave at, while round  
him like imps,  
Cling screaming the children as naked and brown as  
his shrimps ;  
Himself too as bare to the middle—you see round  
his neck  
The string and its brass coin suspended, that saves  
him from wreck.  
But to-day not a boat reached Salerno : so back, to a  
man,  
Came our friends, with whose help in the vineyards  
grape-harvest began.  
In the vat, halfway up in our house-side, like blood  
the juice spins,  
While your brother all bare-legged is dancing till  
breathless he grins  
Dead-beaten in effort on effort to keep the grapes  
under,  
Since still, when he seems all but master, in pours  
the fresh plunder  
From girls who keep coming and going with basket  
on shoulder,  
And eyes shut against the rain's driving ; your girls  
that are older,—  
For under the hedges of aloe, and where, on its  
bed  
Of the orchard's black mould, the love-apple lies pulpy  
and red,

All the young ones are kneeling and filling their laps  
with the snails  
Tempted out by this first rainy weather,—your best  
of regales,  
As to-night will be proved to my sorrow, when, sup-  
ping in state,  
We shall feast our grape-gleaners (two dozen, three  
over one plate)  
With lasagne so tempting to swallow in slippery ropes,  
And gourds fried in great purple slices, that color of  
popes.  
Meantime, see the grape bunch they've brought you :  
the rain-water slips  
O'er the heavy blue bloom on each globe which the  
wasp to your lips  
Still follows with fretful persistence. Nay, taste,  
while awake,  
This half of a curd-white smooth cheese-ball that  
peels, flake by flake,  
Like an onion, each smoother and whiter : next, sip  
this weak wine  
From the thin green glass flask, with its stopper, a leaf  
of the vine ;  
And end with the prickly pear's red flesh that leaves  
thro' its juice  
The stony black seeds on your pearl-teeth.

Scirocco is loose !

Hark, the quick, whistling pelt of the olives which,  
thick in one's track,  
Tempt the stranger to pick up and bite them, tho'  
not yet half black !  
How the old twisted olive trunks shudder, the med-  
lars let fall

Their hard fruit, and the brittle great fig-trees snap  
off, figs and all,  
For here comes the whole of the tempest ! no refuge,  
but creep  
Back again to my side and my shoulder, and listen or  
sleep.

Oh how will your country show next week, when  
all the vine-boughs  
Have been stripped of their foliage to pasture the  
mules and the cows ?  
Last eve, I rode over the mountains ; your brother,  
my guide,  
Soon left me, to feast on the myrtles that offered,  
each side,  
Their fruit-balls, black, glossy, and luscious,—or strip  
from the sorbs  
A treasure, or, rosy and wondrous, those hairy gold  
orbs !  
But my mule picked his sure sober path out, just  
stopping to neigh  
When he recognized down in the valley his mates on  
their way  
With the faggots and barrels of water. And soon we  
emerged  
From the plain where the woods could scarce follow ;  
and still, as we urged  
Our way, the woods wondered, and left us. Up, up  
still we trudged,  
Though the wild path grew wilder each instant, and  
place was e'en grudged  
'Mid the rock-chasms and piles of loose stones like  
the loose broken teeth

Of some monster which climbed there to die, from  
the ocean beneath—  
Place was grudged to the silver-gray fume-weed that  
clung to the path,  
And dark rosemary ever a-dying, that, 'spite the  
wind's wrath  
So loves the salt rock's face to seaward : and lentisks  
as staunch  
To the stone where they root and bear berries : and  
. . . what shows a branch  
Coral-colored, transparent, with circlets of pale sea-  
green leaves ;  
Over all trod my mule with the caution of gleaners  
o'er sheaves.  
Still, foot after foot like a lady, still, round after  
round,  
He climbed to the top of Calvano : and God's own  
profound  
Was above me, and round me the mountains, and  
under, the sea,  
And within me my heart to bear witness what was  
and shall be.  
Oh, heaven and the terrible crystal ! no rampart ex-  
cludes  
Your eye from the life to be lived in the blue soli-  
tudes.  
Oh, those mountains, their infinite movement ! still  
moving with you ;  
For, ever some new head and breast of them thrusts  
into view  
To observe the intruder ; you see it, if quickly you  
turn  
And, before they escape you, surprise them. They  
grudge you should learn

How the soft plains they look on, lean over and love  
(they pretend)  
—Cower beneath them, the black sea-pine crouches,  
the wild fruit-trees bend,  
E'en the myrtle-leaves curl, shrink and shut: all is  
silent and grave:  
'T is a sensual and timorous beauty,—how fair! but a  
slave.  
So, I turned to the sea; and there slumbered, as  
greenly as ever,  
Those isles of the siren, your Galli. No ages can sever  
The Three, nor enable their sister to join them,—half-  
way  
On the voyage, she looked at Ulysses—no farther to-  
day!  
Tho' the small one, just launched in the wave,  
watches breast-high and steady  
From under the rock her bold sister, swum halfway  
already.  
Fortù, shall we sail there together, and see, from the  
sides,  
Quite new rocks show their faces, new haunts where  
the siren abides?  
Shall we sail round and round them, close over the  
rocks, tho' unseen,  
That ruffle the gray glassy water to glorious green?  
Then scramble from splinter to splinter, reach land,  
and explore,  
On the largest, the strange square black turret with  
never a door,  
Just a loop to admit the quick lizards? Then, stand  
there and hear  
The birds' quiet singing, that tells us what life is, so  
clear?



—The secret they sang to Ulysses when, ages ago,  
He heard and he knew this life's secret, I hear and I  
know.

Ah, see ! The sun breaks o'er Calvano. He strikes  
the great gloom  
And flutters it o'er the mount's summit in airy gold  
fume.  
All is over. Look out, see, the gipsy, our tinker and  
smith,  
Has arrived, set up bellows and forge, and down-  
squatted forthwith  
To his hammering under the wall there ! One eye  
keeps aloof  
The urchins that itch to be putting his jews'-harp to  
proof,  
While the other, thro' locks of curled wire, is watch-  
ing how sleek  
Shines the hog, come to share in the windfall. Chew,  
abbot's own cheek !  
All is over. Wake up and come out now, and down  
let us go,  
And see the fine things got in order at church for  
the show  
Of the Sacrament, set forth this evening. To-mor-  
row 's the Feast  
Of the Rosary's Virgin, by no means of Virgins the  
least :  
As you 'll hear in the off-hand discourse which (all  
nature, no art)  
The Dominican brother, these three weeks, was get-  
ting by heart.  
Not a pillar nor post but is dizened with red and blue  
papers ;

All the roof waves with ribbons, each altar a-blaze  
 with long tapers.  
 But the great masterpiece is the scaffold rigged glo-  
 rious to hold  
 All the fiddlers and fifers and drummers and trumpet-  
 ers bold  
 Not afraid of Bellini nor Auber: who, when the  
 priest's hoarse,  
 Will strike us up something that's brisk for the  
 feast's second course.  
 And then will the flaxen-wigged Image be carried in  
 pomp  
 Thro' the plain, while, in gallant procession, the  
 priests mean to stomp.  
 All round the glad church lie old bottles with gun-  
 powder stopped,  
 Which will be, when the Image re-enters, religiously  
 popped.  
 And at night from the crest of Calvano great bonfires  
 will hang:  
 On the plain will the trumpets join chorus, and more  
 poppers bang.  
 At all events, come—to the garden, as far as the wall;  
 See me tap with a hoe on the plaster, till out there  
 shall fall  
 A scorpion with wide angry nippers!

—“Such trifles!” you say?

Fortù, in my England at home, men meet gravely  
 to-day  
 And debate, if abolishing Corn-laws be righteous  
 and wise!  
 —If 't were proper, Scirrocco should vanish in black  
 from the skies!

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY.

(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 win-  
dow there !

II.

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at  
least !  
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect  
feast ;  
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.

## IV.

But the city, oh the city—the square with the houses!  
Why?

They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there 's some-  
thing 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;

And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted  
properly.

## V.

What of a villa? Though winter be over in March  
by rights,

'T is 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.

## 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.

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.

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 thrud the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem  
a-tingle.  
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala  
is shrill,  
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 rat-  
tles in:  
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never  
a pin.

By and by there 's the travelling doctor gives pills,  
lets blood, draws teeth ;  
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market be-  
neath.

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,

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 St. Paul has reached,

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

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.

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 ;  
 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 pleas-  
 ure in life !

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 PICTOR IGNOTUS.

FLORENCE, 15—.

I COULD have painted pictures like that youth's  
 Ye praise so. How my soul springs up ! No bar  
 Stayed me—ah, thought which saddens while it  
 soothes !  
 —Never did fate forbid me, star by star,  
 To outburst on your night, with all my gift  
 Of fires from God : nor would my flesh have shrunk  
 From seconding my soul, with eyes uplift  
 And wide to heaven, or, straight like thunder, sunk  
 To the centre, of an instant ; or around  
 Turned calmly and inquisitive, to scan  
 The licence and the limit, space and bound,  
 Allowed to truth made visible in man.

And, like that youth ye praise so, all I saw,  
 Over the canvas could my hand have flung,  
 Each face obedient to its passion's law,  
 Each passion clear proclaimed without a tongue ;  
 Whether Hope rose at once in all the blood,  
 A-tiptoe for the blessing of embrace,  
 Or Rapture drooped the eyes, as when her brood  
 Pull down the nesting dove's heart to its place ;  
 Or Confidence lit swift the forehead up,  
 And locked the mouth fast, like a castle braved,—  
 O human faces, hath it spilt, my cup ?  
 What did ye give me that I have not saved ?  
 Nor will I say I have not dreamed (how well !)  
 Of going—I, in each new picture,—forth,  
 As, making new hearts beat and bosoms swell,  
 To Pope or Kaiser, East, West, South, or North,  
 Bound for the calmly satisfied great State,  
 Or glad aspiring little burgh, it went,  
 Flowers cast upon the car which bore the freight,  
 Through old streets named afresh from the event,  
 Till it reached home, where learned age should greet  
 My face, and youth, the star not yet distinct  
 Above his hair, lie learning at my feet !—  
 Oh, thus to live, I and my picture, linked  
 With love about, and praise, till life should end,  
 And then not go to heaven, but linger here,  
 Here on my earth, earth's every man my friend,  
 The thought grew frightful, 't was so wildly dear !  
 But a voice changed it. Glimpses of such sights  
 Have scared me, like the revels through a door  
 Of some strange house of idols at its rites !  
 This world seemed not the world it was, before :  
 Mixed with my loving trusting ones, there trooped  
 . . . Who summoned those cold faces that begun



To press on me and judge me? Though I stooped  
Shrinking, as from the soldiery a nun,  
They drew me forth, and spite of me . . . enough.  
These buy and sell our pictures, take and give,  
Count them for garniture and household-stuff,  
And where they live needs must our pictures live  
And see their faces, listen to their prate,  
Partakers of their daily pettiness,  
Discussed of,—“This I love, or this I hate,  
This likes me more, and this affects me less!”  
Wherefore I chose my portion. If at whiles  
My heart sinks, as monotonous I paint  
These endless cloisters and eternal aisles  
With the same series, Virgin, Babe, and Saint,  
With the same cold calm beautiful regard,—  
At least no merchant traffics in my heart;  
The sanctuary's gloom at least shall ward  
Vain tongues from where my pictures stand apart:  
Only prayer breaks the silence of the shrine  
While, blackening in the daily candle-smoke,  
They moulder on the damp wall's travertine,  
'Mid echoes the light footstep never woke.  
So, die my pictures! surely, gently die!  
Oh youth, men praise so,—holds their praise its  
worth?  
Blown harshly, keeps the trump its golden cry?  
Tastes sweet the water with such specks of earth?

## FRA LIPPO LIPPI.

I AM poor brother Lippo, by your leave  
 You need not clap your torches to my face.  
 Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see a monk!  
 What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,  
 And here you catch me at an alley's end  
 Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?  
 The Carmine's my cloister: hunt it up,  
 Do,—harry out, if you must show your zeal,  
 Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,  
 And nip each softling of a wee white mouse,  
*Weke, weke*, that's crept to keep him company!  
 Aha, you know your betters? Then, you'll take  
 Your hand away that's fiddling on my throat,  
 And please to know me likewise. Who am I?  
 Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend  
 Three streets off—he's a certain . . . how d'ye  
 call?  
 Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,  
 I' the house that caps the corner. Boh! You were  
 best!  
 Remember and tell me, the day you're hanged,  
 How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!  
 But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves  
 Pick up a manner, nor discredit you:  
 Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets  
 And count fair prize what comes into their net?  
 He's Judas to a tittle, that man is!  
 Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends.  
 Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs go

Drink out this quarter-florin to the health  
 Of the munificent House that harbors me  
 (And many more beside, lads! more beside!)  
 And all's come square again. I'd like his face—  
 His, elbowing on his comrade in the door  
 With the pike and lantern,—for the slave that holds  
 John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair  
 With one hand ("Look you, now," as who should say)  
 And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!  
 It's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,  
 A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!  
 Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.  
 What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,  
 You know them, and they take you? like enough!  
 I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—  
 'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.  
 Let's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.  
 Here's spring come, and the nights one makes up  
     bands

To roam the town and sing out carnival,  
 And I've been three weeks shut within my mew,  
 A-painting for the great man, saints and saints  
 And saints again. I could not paint all night—  
 Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air.  
 There came a hurry of feet and little feet,  
 A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whiffs of song,—  
*Flower o' the broom,*  
*Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!*  
*Flower o' the quince,*  
*I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?*  
*Flower o' the thyme*—and so on. Round they went.  
 Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter  
 Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight,—three  
     slim shapes,

And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir, flesh  
and blood,  
That 's all I 'm made of ! Into shreds it went,  
Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,  
All the bed-furniture—a dozen knots,  
There was a ladder ! Down I let myself,  
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and so dropped,  
And after them. I came up with the fun  
Hard by Saint Lawrence, hail fellow, well met,—  
*Flower o' the rose,*

*If I've been merry, what matter who knows ?*

And so, as I was stealing back again,  
To get to bed and have a bit of sleep  
Ere I rise up to-morrow and go work  
On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast  
With his great round stone to subdue the flesh,  
You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see !  
Though your eye twinkles still, you shake your head—  
Mine's shaved—a monk, you say—the sting 's in  
that !

If Master Cosimo announced himself,  
Mum 's the word naturally ; but a monk !  
Come, what am I a beast for ? tell us, now !  
I was a baby when my mother died  
And father died and left me in the street.  
I starved there, God knows how, a year or two  
On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and shucks,  
Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day,  
My stomach being empty as your hat,  
The wind doubled me up and down I went.  
Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one hand,  
(Its fellow was a stinger, as I knew)  
And so along the wall, over the bridge,  
By the straight cat to the convent. Six words there,

While I stood munching my first bread that month :  
 " So, boy, you 're minded," quoth the good fat father  
 Wiping his own mouth, 't was refection-time,—  
 " To quit this very miserable world ?  
 Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of  
 bread?" thought I ;

By no means ! Brief, they made a monk of me ;  
 I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,  
 Palace, farm, villa, shop and banking-house,  
 Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici  
 Have given their hearts to—all at eight years old.  
 Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,  
 'T was not for nothing—the good bellyful,  
 The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,  
 And day-long blessed idleness beside !  
 " Let 's see what the urchin 's fit for"—that came next.  
 Not overmuch their way, I must confess.  
 Such a to-do ! They tried me with their books :  
 Lord, they 'd have taught me Latin in pure waste !

*Flower o' the clove,*

*All the Latin I construe is, "Amo" I love !*

But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets  
 Eight years together as my fortune was,  
 Watching folk's faces to know who will fling  
 The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he desires,  
 And who will curse or kick him for his pains,—  
 Which gentleman processional and fine,  
 Holding a candle to the Sacrament,  
 Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch  
 The droppings of the wax to sell again,  
 Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped,—  
 How say I ?—nay, which dog bites, which lets drop  
 His bone from the heap of offal in the street,—  
 Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,

He learns the look of things, and none the less  
 For admonition from the hunger-pinch.  
 I had a store of such remarks, be sure,  
 Which, after I found leisure, turned to use :  
 I drew men's faces on my copy-books,  
 Scrawled them within the antiphony's marge,  
 Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,  
 Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's  
 And made a string of pictures of the world  
 Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,  
 On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks looked  
 black.

"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out, d' ye say ?  
 In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.  
 What if at last we get our man of parts,  
 We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese  
 And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine  
 And put the front on it that ought to be !"  
 And hereupon he bade me daub away.  
 Thank you ! my head being crammed, the walls a  
 blank

Never was such prompt disemburdening.  
 First every sort of monk, the black and white,  
 I drew them, fat and lean : then, folks at church,  
 From good old gossips waiting to confess  
 Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends,—  
 To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,  
 Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there  
 With the little children round him in a row  
 Of admiration, half for his beard, and half  
 For that white anger of his victim's son  
 Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,  
 Signing himself with the other because of Christ  
 (Whose sad face on the cross sees only this

After the passion of a thousand years)  
 Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head,  
 (Which the intense eyes looked through) came at eve  
 On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a loaf,  
 Her pair of ear-rings and a bunch of flowers  
 (The brute took growling), prayed, and so was gone.  
 I painted all, then cried, "'Tis ask and have ;  
 Choose, for more's ready !"—laid the ladder flat,  
 And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall.  
 The monks closed in a circle and praised loud  
 Till checked, taught what to see and not to see,  
 Being simple bodies,—“ That 's the very man !  
 Look at the boy who stoops to pat the dog !  
 That woman's like the Prior's niece who comes  
 To care about his asthma : it's the life ! ”  
 But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and funk'd ;  
 Their betters took their turn to see and say :  
 The Prior and the learned pulled a face  
 And stopped all that in no time. “ How ? what's here ?  
 Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all !  
 Faces, arms, legs and bodies like the true  
 As much as pea and pea ! it's devil's game !  
 Your business is not to catch men with show,  
 With homage to the perishable clay,  
 But lift them over it, ignore it all,  
 Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.  
 Your business is to paint the souls of men—  
 Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . no, it's not . .  
 It's vapor done up like a new-born babe—  
 (In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)  
 It's . . well, what matters talking, it's the soul !  
 Give us no more of body than shows soul !  
 Here 's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,  
 That sets us praising,—why not stop with him ?

Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head  
With wonder at lines, colors, and what not?  
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!  
Rub all out, try at it a second time!  
Oh, that white smallish female with the breasts,  
She's just my niece . . . Herodias, I would say,—  
Who went and danced, and got men's heads cut off!  
Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I ask?  
A fine way to paint soul, by painting body  
So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go further  
And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white  
When what you put for yellow's simply black,  
And any sort of meaning looks intense  
When all beside itself means and looks nought.  
Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,  
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,  
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,  
Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,  
The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint—is it so pretty  
You can't discover if it means hope, fear,  
Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?  
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,  
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,  
And then add soul and heighten them threefold?  
Or say there's beauty with no soul at all—  
(I never saw it—put the case the same—)  
If you get simple beauty and nought else,  
You get about the best thing God invents:  
That's somewhat: and you'll find the soul you have  
missed,  
Within yourself, when you return him thanks.  
"Rub all out!" Well, well, there's my life, in short,  
And so the thing has gone on ever since.  
I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken bounds:



You should not take a fellow eight years old  
 And make him swear to never kiss the girls.  
 I'm my own master, paint now as I please—  
 Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!  
 Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in front—  
 Those great rings serve more purposes than just  
 To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!  
 And yet the old schooling sticks, the old grave eyes  
 Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,  
 The heads shake still—"It's art's decline, my son!  
 You're not of the true painters, great and old;  
 Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find;  
 Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer:  
 Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third!"

*Flower o' the pine,*

*You keep your mistr . . . manners, and I'll stick to mine!*

I'm not the third, then: bless us, they must know!  
 Don't you think they're the likeliest to know,  
 They with their Latin? So, I swallow my rage,  
 Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint  
 To please them—sometimes do, and sometimes don't;  
 For, doing most, there's pretty sure to come  
 A turn, some warm eve finds me at my saints—  
 A laugh, a cry, the business of the world—

*(Flower o' the peach,*

*Death for us all, and his own life for each!)*

And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over,  
 The world and life's too big to pass for a dream,  
 And I do these wild things in sheer despite,  
 And play the fooleries you catch me at,  
 In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at grass  
 After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so,  
 Although the miller does not preach to him  
 The only good of grass is to make chaff.

What would men have ? Do they like grass or no—  
 May they or may n't they ? all I want 's the thing  
 Settled for ever one way. As it is,  
 You tell too many lies and hurt yourself :  
 You don't like what you only like too much,  
 You do like what, if given you at your word,  
 You find abundantly detestable.  
 For me, I think I speak as I was taught—  
 I always see the garden, and God there  
 A-making man's wife : and, my lesson learned,  
 The value and significance of flesh,  
 I can't unlearn ten minutes afterward.

You understand me : I'm a beast, I know.  
 But see, now—why, I see as certainly  
 As that the morning-star 's about to shine,  
 What will hap some day. We've a youngster here  
 Comes to our convent, studies what I do,  
 Slouches and stares and lets no atom drop :  
 His name is Guidi—he 'll not mind the monks—  
 They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them talk—  
 He picks my practice up—he 'll paint apace,  
 I hope so—though I never live so long,  
 I know what 's sure to follow. You be judge !  
 You speak no Latin more than I, belike ;  
 However, you 're my man, you 've seen the world  
 —The beauty and the wonder and the power,  
 The shapes of things, their colors, lights, and shades,  
 Changes, surprises,—and God made it all !  
 —For what ? Do you feel thankful, ay or no,  
 For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,  
 The mountain round it and the sky above,  
 Much more the figures of man, woman, child,  
 These are the frame to ? What 's it all about ?

To be passed over, despised ? or dwelt upon,  
 Wondered at ? oh, this last of course !—you say.  
 But why not do as well as say,—paint these  
 Just as they are, careless what comes of it ?  
 God's works—paint any one, and count it crime  
 To let a truth slip. Don't object, " His works  
 Are here already ; nature is complete :  
 Suppose you reproduce her—(which you can't)  
 There's no advantage ! you must beat her, then."  
 For, don't you mark ? we're made so that we love  
 First when we see them painted, things we have passed  
 Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see ;  
 And so they are better, painted—better to us,  
 Which is the same thing. Art was given for that ;  
 God uses us to help each other so,  
 Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now  
 Your cullion's hanging face ? A bit of chalk,  
 And trust me but you should, though ! How much  
 more

If I drew higher things with the same truth !  
 That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,  
 Interpret God to all of you ! Oh, oh,  
 It makes me mad to see what men shall do  
 And we in our graves ! This world's no blot for us  
 Nor blank ; it means intensely, and means good :  
 To find its meaning is my meat and drink.  
 " Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer !"  
 Strikes in the Prior : " when your meaning's plain  
 It does not say to folks—remember matins,  
 Or, mind you fast next Friday !" Why, for this  
 What need of art at all ? A skull and bones,  
 Two bits of stick nailed cross-wise, or, what's best,  
 A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.  
 I painted a St. Laurence six months since

At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style :  
 "How looks my painting, now the scaffold's down?"  
 I ask a brother : "Hugely," he returns—  
 "Already not one phiz of your three slaves  
 Who turn the Deacon off his toasted side,  
 But's scratched and prodded to our heart's content,  
 The pious people have so eased their own  
 With coming to say prayers there in a rage :  
 We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.  
 Expect another job this time next year,  
 For pity and religion grow i' the crowd—  
 Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang the fools!

—That is—you'll not mistake an idle word  
 Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot  
 Tasting the air this spicy night which turns  
 The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!  
 Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me, now  
 It's natural a poor monk out of bounds  
 Should have his apt word to excuse himself :  
 And hearken how I plot to make amends.  
 I have bethought me : I shall paint a piece  
 . . . There's for you! Give me six months, then  
 go, see  
 Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns'  
 They want a casto' my office. I shall paint  
 God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,  
 Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,  
 Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet  
 As puff on puff of grated orris-root  
 When ladies crowd to church at midsummer.  
 And then i' the front, of course a saint or two—  
 St. John, because he saves the Florentines,  
 St. Ambrose, who puts down in black and white

The convent's friends and gives them a long day,  
And Job, I must have him there past mistake,  
The man of Uz, (and Us without the z,  
Painters who need his patience.) Well, all these  
Secured at their devotion, up shall come  
Out of a corner when you least expect,  
As one by a dark stair into a great light,  
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I!—  
Mazed, motionless and moon-struck—I 'm the man!  
Back I shrink—what is this I see and hear?  
I, caught up with my monk's things by mistake,  
My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,  
I, in this presence, this pure company!  
Where 's a hole, where 's a corner for escape?  
Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing  
Forward, puts out a soft palm—"Not so fast!"  
—Addresses the celestial presence, "nay—  
He made you and devised you, after all,  
Though he 's none of you! Could Saint John there  
draw—

His camel-hair make up a painting brush?  
We come to brother Lippo for all that,  
*Iste perfecit opus!*" So, all smile—  
I shuffle sideways with my blushing face  
Under the cover of a hundred wings  
Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you 're gay  
And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,  
Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops  
The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off  
To some safe bench behind, not letting go  
The palm of her, the little lily thing  
That spoke the good word for me in the nick,  
Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say.  
And so all 's saved for me, and for the church

A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!  
 Your hand, sir, and good bye : no lights, no lights !  
 The street 's hushed, and I know my own way back,  
 Don't fear me ! There 's the gray beginning. Zooks !

---

ANDREA DEL SARTO.

(CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER.")

BUT do not let us quarrel any more,  
 No, my Lucrezia ! bear with me for once :  
 Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.  
 You turn your face, but does it bring your heart ?  
 I 'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,  
 Treat his own subject after his own way,  
 Fix his own time, accept too his own price,  
 And shut the money into this small hand  
 When next it takes mine. Will it ? tenderly ?  
 Oh, I 'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love !  
 I often am much wearier than you think,  
 This evening more than usual : and it seems  
 As if—forgive now—should you let me sit  
 Here by the window, with your hand in mine,  
 And look a half hour forth on Fiesole,  
 Both of one mind, as married people use,  
 Quietly, quietly the evening through,  
 I might get up to-morrow to my work  
 Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.  
 To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this !  
 Your soft hand is a woman of itself,  
 And mine, the man's bared breast she curls inside.  
 Don't count the time lost, neither ; you must serve  
 For each of the five pictures we require :

It saves a model. So! keep looking so—  
My serpentine beauty, rounds on rounds!  
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,  
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—  
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,  
Which everybody looks on and calls his,  
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,  
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.  
You smile? why, there 's my picture ready made,  
There 's what we painters call our harmony!  
A common grayness silvers everything,—  
All in a twilight, you and I alike  
—You, at the point of your first pride in me  
(That 's gone, you know)—but I, at every point;  
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down  
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.  
There 's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;  
That length of convent-wall across the way  
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;  
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,  
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.  
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape,  
As if I saw alike my work and self  
And all that I was born to be and do,  
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.  
How strange now, looks the life he makes us lead;  
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!  
I feel he laid the fether: let it lie!  
This chamber, for example—turn your head—  
All that 's behind us! You don't understand  
Nor care to understand about my art,  
But you can hear at least when people speak:  
And that cartoon, the second from the door  
—It is the thing, Love! so such things should be:

Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.  
I can do with my pencil what I know,  
What I see, what at bottom of my heart  
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—  
Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,  
I do not boast, perhaps : yourself are judge,  
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week ;  
And just as much they used to say in France.  
At any rate 't is easy, all of it !  
No sketches first, no studies, that 's long past :  
I do what many dream of, all their lives,  
—Dream ? strive to do, and agonize to do,  
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such  
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,  
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive  
To paint a little thing like that you smeared  
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—  
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,  
(I know his name, no matter)—so much less !  
Well, less is more, Lucrezia : I am judged.  
There burns a truer light of God in them,  
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,  
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt  
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.  
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I  
know,  
Reach many a time a heaven that 's shut to me,  
Enter and take their place there sure enough,  
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.  
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.  
The sudden blood of these men ! at a word—  
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.  
I, painting from myself and to myself,  
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame



Or their praise either. Somebody remarks  
 Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,  
 His hue mistaken ; what of that ? or else,  
 Rightly traced and well ordered ; what of that ?  
 Speak as they please, what does the mountain care ?  
 Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
 Or what's a heaven for ? (All is silver-gray,  
 Placid and perfect with my art : the worse !  
 I know both what I want and what might gain ;  
 And yet how profitless to know, to sigh  
 "Had I been two, another and myself,  
 Our head would have o'erlooked the world !" No  
 doubt.

Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth  
 The Urbinate who died five years ago.  
 ('T is copied, George Vasari sent it me.)  
 Well, I can fancy how he did it all,  
 Pôuring his soul, with kings and popes to see,  
 Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,  
 Above and through his art—for it gives way ;  
 That arm is wrongly put—and there again—  
 A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,  
 Its body, so to speak : its soul is right,  
 He means right—that, a child may understand.  
 Still, what an arm ! and I could alter it :  
 But all the play, the insight and the stretch—  
 Out of me, out of me ! And wherefore out ?  
 Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,  
 We might have risen to Rafael, I and you.  
 Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—  
 More than I merit, yes, by many times.  
 But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,  
 And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,  
 And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird

The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—  
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!  
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged  
"God and the glory! never care for gain.  
The present by the future, what is that?  
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!  
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"  
I might have done it for you. So it seems:  
Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.  
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;  
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?  
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?  
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;  
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:  
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—  
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,  
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.  
'T is safer for me, if the award be strict,  
That I am something underrated here,  
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.  
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,  
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.  
The best is when they pass and look aside;  
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.  
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,  
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!  
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,  
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,  
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—  
One finger in his beard or twisted curl  
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,  
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,  
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,  
I painting proudly with his breath on me,

All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,  
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls  
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—  
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,  
This in the background, waiting on my work,  
To crown the issue with a last reward!  
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?  
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—  
'T is done and past; 't was right, my instinct said;  
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray:  
And I 'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt  
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.  
How could it end in any other way?  
You called me and I came home to your heart.  
The triumph was, to have ended there; then, if  
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?  
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,  
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!  
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;  
The Roman's is the better when you pray,  
But still the other's Virgin was his wife—"  
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge  
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows  
My better fortune, I resolve to think.  
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,  
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,  
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .  
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts  
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,  
Too lifted up in heart because of it)  
"Friend, there 's a certain sorry little scrub  
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,  
Who, were he set to plan and execute  
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,

Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"  
To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.  
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,  
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!  
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!  
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,  
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?  
Do you forget already words like those?)  
If really there was such a chance so lost,—  
Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased  
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!  
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?  
If you would sit thus by me every night  
I should work better, do you comprehend?  
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.  
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;  
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,  
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.  
Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,  
Inside the melancholy little house  
We built to be so gay with. God is just.  
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights  
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,  
The walls become illumined, brick from brick  
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,  
That gold of his I did cement them with!  
Let us but love each other. Must you go?  
That Cousin here again? he waits outside?  
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?  
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?  
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?  
While hand and eye and something of a heart  
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?  
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit

The gray remainder of the evening out,  
 Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly  
 How I could paint, were I but back in France,  
 One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,  
 Not your's this time! I want you at my side  
 To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—  
 Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.  
 Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.  
 I take the subjects for his corridor,  
 Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,  
 And throw him in another thing or two  
 If he demurs; the whole should prove enough  
 To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,  
 What's better and what's all I care about,  
 Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!  
 Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,  
 The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.  
 I regret little, I would change still less.  
 Since there my past life lies, why alter it?  
 The very wrong to Francis!—it is true  
 I took his coin, was tempted and complied,  
 And built this house and sinned, and all is said.  
 My father and my mother died of want.  
 Well, had I riches of my own? you see  
 How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.  
 They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:  
 And I have labored somewhat in my time  
 And not been paid profusely. Some good son  
 Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!  
 No doubt there's something strikes a balance. Yes,  
 You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.  
 This must suffice me here. What would one have?

In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—  
 Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,  
 Meted on each side by the angel's reed,  
 For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me  
 To cover—the three first without a wife,  
 While I have mine! So—still they overcome  
 Because there 's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

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THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT  
 SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH.

ROME, 15—.

VANITY, saith the preacher, vanity!  
 Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?  
 Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not!  
 Well—

She, men would have to be your mother once,  
 Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!  
 What 's done is done, and she is dead beside,  
 Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,  
 And as she died so must we die ourselves,  
 And thence ye may perceive the world 's a dream.  
 Life, how and what is it? As here I lie  
 In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,  
 Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask  
 "Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.  
 Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;  
 And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought  
 With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:  
 —Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;

Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South  
 He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!  
 Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence  
 One sees the pulpit on the epistle-side,  
 And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,  
 And up into the aëry dome where live  
 The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk :  
 And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,  
 And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,  
 With those nine columns round me, two and two,  
 The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands :  
 Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe  
 As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.  
 —Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,  
 Put me where I may look at him ! True peach,  
 Rosy and flawless : how I earned the prize !  
 Draw close : that conflagration of my church  
 —What then? So much was saved if aught were  
 missed !

My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig  
 The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,  
 Drop water gently till the surface sink,  
 And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I! . . .  
 Bedded in store of rotten figleaves soft,  
 And corded up in a tight olive-frail,  
 Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,  
 Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,  
 Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .  
 Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,  
 That brave Frascati villa with its bath,  
 So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,  
 Like God the Father's globe on both his hands  
 Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,  
 For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst !

Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years :  
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he ?  
Did I say, basalt for my slab, sons ? Black—  
'T was ever antique-black I meant ! How else  
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath ?  
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,  
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance  
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,  
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,  
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan  
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,  
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know  
Ye mark me not ! What do they whisper thee,  
Child of my bowels, Anselm ? Ah, ye hope  
To revel down my villas while I gasp  
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine  
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at !  
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then !  
'T is jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve  
My bath must needs be left behind, alas !  
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,  
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—  
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray  
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,  
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs ?  
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,  
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,  
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—  
Tully, my masters ? Ulpian serves his need !  
And then how I shall lie through centuries,  
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,  
And see God made and eaten all day long,  
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste  
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke !



For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,  
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,  
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,  
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,  
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop  
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's work :  
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts  
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,  
About the life before I lived this life,  
And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,  
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,  
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,  
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,  
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,  
—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT, quoth our friend ?  
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best !  
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage. —  
All *lapis*, all, sons ! Else I give the Pope  
My villas ! Will ye ever eat my heart ?  
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,  
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,  
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,  
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase  
With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term,  
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx  
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,  
To comfort me on my entablature  
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask  
“ Do I live, am I dead ? ” There, leave me, there !  
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude  
To death : ye wish it—God, ye wish it ! Stone !—  
Gritstone, a-crumble ! Clammy squares which sweat  
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—  
And no more *lapis* to delight the world !



IV.

Did young people take their pleasure when the sea  
was warm in May ?  
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to  
midday,  
When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow,  
do you say ?

v.

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so  
red,—  
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-flower  
on its bed,  
O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man  
might base his head ?

VI.

Well, and it was graceful of them : they 'd break talk  
off and afford  
—She, to bite her mask's black velvet, he, to finger  
on his sword,  
While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at the  
clavichord ?

VII.

What ? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths dimin-  
ished, sigh on sigh,  
Told them something ? Those suspensions, those  
solutions—" Must we die ?"  
Those commiserating sevenths—" Life might last !  
we can but try !"

## VIII.

“Were you happy?”—“Yes.”—“And are you still  
as happy?”—“Yes. And you?”  
—“Then, more kisses!”—“Did *I* stop them, when a  
million seemed so few?”  
Hark, the dominant's persistence till it must be answered to!

## IX.

So, an octave struck the answer. Oh, they praised  
you, I dare say!  
“Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at  
grave and gay!  
I can always leave off talking when I hear a master  
play!”

## X.

Then they left you for their pleasure: till in due  
time, one by one,  
Some with lives that came to nothing, some with  
deeds as well undone,  
Death stepped tacitly, and took them where they  
never see the sun.

## XI.

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand  
nor swerve,  
While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's  
close reserve,  
In you come with your cold music till I creep thro'  
every nerve.

XII.

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a  
house was burned :  
“Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent  
what Venice earned.  
The soul, doubtless, is immortal—where a soul can  
be discerned.

XIII.

“Yours for instance : you know physics, something  
of geology,  
Mathematics are your pastime ; souls shall rise in  
their degree ;  
Butterflies may dread extinction,—you 'll not die, it  
cannot be !

XIV.

“As for Venice and her people, merely born to bloom  
and drop,  
Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly  
were the crop :  
What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had  
to stop?

XV.

“Dust and ashes !” So you creak it, and I want the  
heart to scold.  
Dear dead women, with such hair, too—what's be-  
come of all the gold  
Used to hang and brush their bosoms ? I feel chilly  
and grown old.

## HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY.

I ONLY knew one poet in my life :  
 And this, or something like it, was his way.

You saw go up and down Valladolid,  
 A man of mark, to know next time you saw.  
 His very serviceable suit of black  
 Was courtly once and conscientious still,  
 And many might have worn it, though none did :  
 The cloak, that somewhat shone and showed the  
     threads,  
 Had purpose, and the ruff, significance.  
 He walked, and tapped the pavement with his cane,  
 Scenting the world, looking it full in face :  
 An old dog, bald and blindish, at his heels.  
 They turned up, now, the alley by the church,  
 That leads no whither ; now, they breathed themselves  
 On the main promenade just at the wrong time.  
 You 'd come upon his scrutinizing hat,  
 Making a peaked shade blacker than itself  
 Against the single window spared some house  
 Intact yet with its mouldered Moorish work,—  
 Or else surprise the ferrule of his stick  
 Trying the mortar's temper 'tween the chinks  
 Of some new shop a-building, French and fine.  
 He stood and watched the cobbler at his trade,  
 The man who slices lemons into drink,  
 The coffee-roaster's brazier, and the boys  
 That volunteer to help him turn its winch.  
 He glanced o'er books on stalls with half an eye,

And fly-leaf ballads on the vendor's string,  
And broad-edge bold-print posters by the wall.  
He took such cognizance of men and things,  
If any beat a horse, you felt he saw ;  
If any cursed a woman, he took note ;  
Yet stared at nobody,—you stared at him,  
And found, less to your pleasure than surprise,  
He seemed to know you and expect as much.  
So, next time that a neighbor's tongue was loosed,  
It marked the shameful and notorious fact  
We had among us, not so much a spy,  
As a recording chief-inquisitor,  
The town's true master if the town but knew !  
We merely kept a governor for form,  
While this man walked about and took account  
Of all thought, said and acted, then went home,  
And wrote it fully to our Lord the King  
Who has an itch to know things, he knows why,  
And reads them in his bedroom of a night.  
Oh, you might smile ! there wanted not a touch,  
A tang of . . . well, it was not wholly ease,  
As back into your mind the man's look came.  
Stricken in years a little, such a brow  
His eyes had to live under !—clear as flint  
On either side o' the formidable nose  
Curved, cut and colored like an eagle's claw.  
Had he to do with A.'s surprising fate ?  
When altogether old B. disappeared  
And young C. got his mistress,—was 't our friend,  
His letter to the King, that did it all ?  
What paid the bloodless man for so much pains ?  
Our Lord the King has favorites manifold,  
And shifts his ministry some once a month ;  
Our city gets new governors at whiles,—

But never word or sign, that I could hear,  
 Notified, to this man about the streets,  
 The King's approval of those letters conned  
 The last thing duly at the dead of night.  
 Did the man love his office? Frowned our Lord,  
 Exhorting when none heard—"Beseech me not!  
 Too far above my people,—beneath me!  
 I set the watch,—how should the people know?  
 Forget them, keep me all the more in mind!"  
 Was some such understanding 'twixt the two?

I found no truth in one report at least—  
 That if you tracked him to his home, down lanes  
 Beyond the Jewry, and as clean to pace,  
 You found he ate his supper in a room  
 Blazing with lights, four Titians on the wall,  
 And twenty naked girls to change his plate!  
 Poor man, he lived another kind of life  
 In that new stuccoed third house by the bridge,  
 Fresh-painted, rather smart than otherwise!  
 The whole street might o'erlook him as he sat,  
 Leg crossing leg, one foot on the dog's back,  
 Playing a decent cribbage with his maid  
 (Jacynth, you're sure her name was) o'er the cheese  
 And fruit, three red halves of starved winter-pears,  
 Or treat of radishes in April. Nine,  
 Ten, struck the church clock, straight to bed went he

My father, like the man of sense he was,  
 Would point him out to me a dozen times;  
 "St—st," he'd whisper, "the Corregidor!"  
 I had been used to think that personage  
 Was one with lacquered breeches, lustrous belt,  
 And feathers like a forest in his hat,



Who blew a trumpet and proclaimed the news,  
 Announced the bull-fights, gave each church its turn,  
 And memorized the miracle in vogue !  
 He had a great observance from us boys ;  
 We were in error ; that was not the man.

I'd like now, yet had haply been afraid,  
 To have just looked, when this man came to die,  
 And seen who lined the clean gay garret sides,  
 And stood about the neat low truckle-bed,  
 With the heavenly manner of relieving guard.  
 Here had been, mark, the general-in-chief,  
 Thro' a whole campaign of the world's life and death,  
 Doing the King's work all the dim day long,  
 In his old coat and up to knees in mud,  
 Smoked like a herring, dining on a crust,—  
 And, now the day was won, relieved at once !  
 No further show or need of that old coat,  
 You are sure, for one thing ! Bless us, all the while  
 How sprucely we are dressed out, you and I !  
 A second, and the angels alter that.  
 Well, I could never write a verse,—could you ?  
 Let's to the Prado and make the most of time.

---

PROTUS.

AMONG these latter busts we count by scores,  
 Half-emperors and quarter-emperors,  
 Each with his bay-leaf fillet, loose-thonged vest,  
 Loric and low-browed Gorgon on the breast,—  
 One loves a baby face, with violets there,  
 Violets instead of laurel in the hair,  
 As those were all the little locks could bear.

Now read here. "Protus ends a period  
 Of empery beginning with a god ;  
 Born in the porphyry chamber at Byzant,  
 Queens by his cradle, proud and ministrant :  
 And if he quickened breath there, 't would like fire  
 Pantingly through the dim vast realm transpire.  
 A fame that he was missing, spread afar :  
 The world, from its four corners, rose in war,  
 Till he was borne out on a balcony  
 To pacify the world when it should see.  
 The captains ranged before him, one, his hand  
 Made baby points at, gained the chief command.  
 And day by day more beautiful he grew  
 In shape, all said, in feature and in hue,  
 While young Greek sculptors gazing on the child  
 Became, with old Greek sculpture, reconciled.  
 Already sages labored to condense  
 In easy tomes a life's experience :  
 And artists took grave counsel to impart  
 In one breath and one hand-sweep, all their art,  
 And make his graces prompt as blossoming  
 Of plentifully watered palms in spring :  
 Since well beseems it, whoso mounts the throne,  
 For beauty, knowledge, strength, should stand alone,  
 And mortals love the letters of his name."

—Stop! Have you turned two pages? Still the  
 same.

New reign, same date. The scribe goes on to say  
 How that same year, on such a month and day,  
 "John the Pannonian, groundedly believed  
 A blacksmith's bastard, whose hard hand reprieved  
 The Empire from its fate the year before,—  
 Came, had a mind to take the crown, and wore

The same for six years, (during which the Huns  
Kept off their fingers from us) till his sons  
Put something in his liquor"—and so forth.  
Then a new reign. Stay—"Take at its just worth"  
(Subjoins an annotator) "What I give  
As hearsay. Some think, John let Protus live  
And slip away. 'T is said, he reached man's age  
At some blind northern court ; made, first a page,  
Then tutor to the children ; last, of use  
About the hunting stables. I deduce  
He wrote the little tract 'On worming dogs,'  
Whereof the name in sundry catalogues  
Is extant yet. A Protus of the race  
Is rumored to have died a monk in Thrace,—  
And, if the same, he reached senility."

Here's John the Smith's rough-hammered head. Great  
eye,  
Gross jaw and griped lips do what granite can  
To give you the crown-grasper. What a man!

---

MASTER HUGUES OF SAXE-GOTHA.

I.

HIST, but a word, fair and soft !  
Forth and be judged, Master Hugues !  
Answer the question I've put you so oft :  
What do you mean by your mountainous fugues ?  
See, we're alone in the loft,—

## II.

I, the poor organist here,  
 Hugues, the composer of note,  
 Dead though, and done with, this many a year :  
 Let 's have a colloquy, something to quote,  
 Make the world prick up its ear !

## III.

See, the church empties apace :  
 Fast they extinguish the lights.  
 Hallo there, sacristan ! Five minutes' grace !  
 Here 's a crank pedal wants setting to rights,  
 Balks one of holding the base.

## IV.

See, our huge houses of the sounds,  
 Hushing its hundreds at once,  
 Bids the last loiterer back to his bounds !  
 —O you may challenge them, not a response  
 Get the church-saints on their rounds !

## V.

(Saints go their rounds, who shall doubt ?  
 —March, with the moon to admire,  
 Up nave, down chancel, turn transept about,  
 Supervise all betwixt pavement and spire,  
 Put rats and mice to the rout—

## VI.

Aloys and Jurien and Just—  
 Order things back to their place,  
 Have a sharp eye lest the candlesticks rust,  
 Rub the church-plate, darn the sacrament-lace,  
 Clear the desk-velvet of dust.)

## VII.

Here 's your book, younger folks shelve!  
Played I not off-hand and runningly,  
Just now, your masterpiece, hard number twelve?  
Here 's what should strike, could one handle it  
cunningly:  
Help the axe, give it a helve!

## VIII.

Page after page as I played,  
Every bar's rest, where one wipes  
Sweat from one's brow, I looked up and surveyed,  
O'er my three claviers, yon forest of pipes  
Whence you still peeped in the shade.

## IX.

Sure you were wishful to speak,  
You, with brow ruled like a score,  
Yes, and eyes buried in pits on each cheek,  
Like two great breves, as they wrote them of yore,  
Each side that bar, your straight beak!

## X.

Sure you said—" Good, the mere notes!  
Still, couldst thou take my intent,  
Know what procured me our Company's votes—  
A master were lauded and sciolists shent,  
Parted the sheep from the goats!"

## XI.

Well, then, speak up, never flinch!  
Quick, ere my candle's a snuff  
—Burnt, do you see? to its uttermost inch—  
I believe in you, but that 's not enough:  
Give my conviction a clinch!

## XII.

First you deliver your phrase  
 —Nothing propound, that I see,  
 Fit in itself for much blame or much praise—  
 Answered no less, where no answer needs be :  
 Off start the Two on their ways.

## XIII.

Straight must a Third interpose,  
 Volunteer needlessly help ;  
 In strikes a Fourth, a Fifth thrusts in his nose,  
 So the cry 's open, the kennel 's a-yelp,  
 Argument 's hot to the close.

## XIV.

One dissertates, he is candid ;  
 Two must discept,—has distinguished ;  
 Three helps the couple, if ever yet man did ;  
 Four protests ; Five makes a dart at the thing  
 wished :  
 Back to One, goes the case bandied.

## XV.

One says his say with a difference ;  
 More of expounding, explaining !  
 All now is wrangle, abuse and vociferance ;  
 Now there 's a truce, all 's subdued, self-restraining ;  
 Five, though, stands out all the stiffer hence.

## XVI.

One is incisive, corrosive ;  
 Two retorts, nettled, curt, crepitant ;  
 Three makes rejoinder, expansive, explosive ;  
 Four overbears them all, strident and strepitant :  
 Five . . . O Danaides, O Sieve !

XVII.

Now, they ply axes, and crowbars ;  
 Now, they prick pins at a tissue  
 Fine as a skein of the casuist Escobar's  
 Worked on the bone of a lie. To what issue ?  
 Where is our gain at the Two-bars ?

XVIII.

*Est fuga, volvitur rota.*

On we drift : where looms the dim port ?  
 One, Two, Three, Four, Five, contribute their quota ;  
 Something is gained, if one caught but the import—  
 Show it us Hugues of Saxe-Gotha !

XIX.

What with affirming, denying,  
 Holding, risposting, subjoining,  
 All's like . . . it's like . . . for an instance  
 I'm trying . . .  
 There! See our roof, its gilt moulding and groining  
 Under those spider-webs lying !

XX.

So your fugue broadens and thickens,  
 Greatens and deepens and lengthens,  
 Till we exclaim—" But where's music, the dickens ?  
 Blot ye the gold, while your spider-web strengthens  
 —Blacked to the stoutest of tickens ?"

XXI.

I for man's effort am zealous :  
 Prove me such censure unfounded !  
 Seems it surprising a lover grows jealous—  
 Hopes't was for something, his organ pipes sounded,  
 Tiring three boys at the bellows ?

## XXII.

Is it your moral of Life ?

Such a web, simple and subtle,  
Weave we on earth here in impotent strife,  
Backward and forward each throwing his shuttle,  
Death ending all with a knife ?

## XXIII.

Over our heads truth and nature—

Still our life's zigzags and dodges,  
Ins and outs, weaving a new legislature—  
God's gold just shining its last where that lodges,  
Palled beneath man's usurpature.

## XXIV.

So we o'ershroud stars and roses,

Cherub and trophy and garland ;  
Nothings grow something which quietly closes  
Heaven's earnest eye : not a glimpse of the far land  
Gets through our comments and glozes.

## XXV.

Ah but traditions, inventions,

(Say we and make up a visage)  
So many men with such various intentions,  
Down the past ages, must know more than this age !  
Leave we the web its dimensions !

## XXVI.

Who thinks Hugues wrote for the deaf,

Proved a mere mountain in labor ?  
Better submit ; try again ; what's the clef ?  
'Faith, 't is no trifle for pipe and for tabor—  
Four flats, the minor in F.



## XXVII.

Friend, your fugue taxes the finger :  
 Learning it once, who would lose it ?  
 Yet all the while a misgiving will linger,  
 Truth's golden o'er us although we refuse it—  
 Nature, thro' cobwebs we string her.

## XXVIII.

Hugues ! I advise *meâ pœnâ*  
 (Counterpoint glares like a Gorgon)  
 Bid One, Two, Three, Four, Five, clear the arena !  
 Say the word, straight I unstop the full-organ,  
 Blare out the *mode Palestrina*.

## XXIX.

While in the roof, if I'm right there,  
 . . . Lo you, the wick in the socket !  
 Hallo, you sacristan, show us a light there !  
 Down it dips, gone like a rocket.  
 What, you want, do you, to come unawares,  
 Sweeping the church up for first morning-prayers,  
 And find a poor devil has ended his cares  
 At the foot of your rotten-runged rat-riddled stairs ?  
 Do I carry the moon in my pocket ?

---

 ABT VOGLER.

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING UPON THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION.)

## I.

Would that the structure brave, the manifold music  
 I build,  
 Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their  
 work,

Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when  
     Solomon willed  
 Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that  
     lurk,  
 Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end and of aim,  
     Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-  
     deep removed,—  
 Should rush into sight at once as he named the inef-  
     fable Name,  
 And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the  
     princess he loved !

## II.

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building  
     of mine,  
 This which my keys in a crowd pressed and impor-  
     tuned to raise !  
 Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now  
     and now combine,  
 Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master  
     his praise !  
 And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge  
     down to hell,  
 Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of  
     things,  
 Then up again swim into sight, having based me my  
     palace well,  
 Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether  
     springs.

## III.

And another would mount and march, like the excel-  
     lent minion he was,  
 Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with  
     many a crest,

Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as  
glass,

Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the  
rest :

For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,  
When a great illumination surprises a festal  
night—

Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space  
to spire)

Up, the pinnaced glory reached, and the pride of  
my soul was in sight.

## IV.

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was certain, to  
match man's birth,

Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I ;  
And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort  
to reach the earth,

As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to  
scale the sky :

Novel splendors burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt  
with mine,

Not a point nor peak but found, but fixed its wan-  
dering star ;

Meteor-moons, balls of blaze : and they did not pale  
nor pine,

For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more  
near nor far.

## V.

Nay more ; for there wanted not who walked in the  
glare and glow,

Presences plain in the place ; or, fresh from the  
Protoplast,

Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind  
 should blow,  
 Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their  
 liking at last ;  
 Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through  
 the body and gone,  
 But were back once more to breathe in an old world  
 worth their new :  
 What never had been, was now ; what was, as it shall  
 be anon ;  
 And what is,—shall I say, matched both ? for I was  
 made perfect too.

## VI.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish  
 of my soul,  
 All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed  
 visibly forth,  
 All through music and me ! For think, had I painted  
 the whole,  
 Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so  
 wonder-worth.  
 Had I written the same, made verse—still effect pro-  
 ceeds from cause,  
 Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the  
 tale is told ;  
 It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,  
 Painter and poet are proud, in the artist-list en-  
 rolled :—

## VII.

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that  
 can,  
 Existent behind all laws : that made them, and, lo,  
 they are !

And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed  
to man,

That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth  
sound, but a star.

Consider it well : each tone of our scale in itself is  
nought ;

It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is  
said :

Give it to me to use ! I mix it with two in my thought,  
And, there ! Ye have heard and seen : consider  
and bow the head !

VIII.

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared ;  
Gone ! and the good tears start, the praises that  
come too slow ;

For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that he  
feared,

That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing was  
to go.

Never to be again ! But many more of the kind  
As good, nay, better perchance : is this your com-  
fort to me ?

To me, who must be saved because I cling with my  
mind

To the same, same self, same love, same God : ay,  
what was, shall be.

IX.

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable  
Name ?

Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with  
hands !

What, have fear of change from thee who art ever  
the same ?

Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy  
power expands ?

There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall  
live as before ;

The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying  
sound ;

What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much  
good more ;

On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven, a  
perfect round.

## x.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good,  
shall exist ;

Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good,  
nor power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the  
melodist,

When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth  
too hard,

The passion that left the ground to lose itself in  
the sky

Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard ;

Enough that he heard it once : we shall hear it  
by-and-by.

## xi.

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence

For the fulness of the days ? Have we withered  
or agonized ?

Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing  
might issue thence ?

Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony  
should be prized ?

Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,  
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal  
and woe :

But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear ;  
The rest may reason and welcome ; 't is we musi-  
cians know.

## XII.

Well, it is earth with me ; silence resumes her reign :

I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.  
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,  
Sliding by semitones, till I sink to the minor,—yes,  
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien  
ground,

Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into  
the deep ;

Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-  
place is found,

The C Major of this life : so, now I will try to  
sleep.

---

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA.

## I.

I WONDER do you feel to-day

As I have felt since, hand in hand,

We sat down on the grass, to stray

In spirit better through the land,

This morn of Rome and May ?

## II.

For me, I touched a thought, I know,  
Has tantalized me many times,  
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw  
Mocking across our path) for rhymes  
To catch at and let go.

## III.

Help me to hold it! First it left  
The yellowing fennel, run to seed  
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,  
Some old tomb's ruin: yonder weed  
Took up the floating weft,

## IV.

Where one small orange cup amassed  
Five beetles,—blind and green they grope  
Among the honey-meal: and last,  
Everywhere on the grassy slope,  
I traced it. Hold it fast!

## V.

The champaign with its endless fleece  
Of feathery grasses everywhere!  
Silence and passion, joy and peace,  
An everlasting wash of air—  
Rome's ghost since her decease.

## VI.

Such life here, through such lengths of hours,  
Such miracles performed in play,  
Such primal naked forms of flowers,  
Such letting nature have her way  
While heaven looks from its towers!



VII.

How say you? Let us, O my dove,  
Let us be unashamed of soul,  
As earth lies bare to heaven above!  
How is it under our control  
To love or not to love?

VIII.

I would that you were all to me,  
You that are just so much, no more.  
Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free!  
Where does the fault lie? What the core  
O' the wound, since wound must be?

IX.

I would I could adopt your will,  
See with your eyes, and set my heart  
Beating by yours, and drink my fill  
At your soul's springs,—your part, my part  
In life, for good and ill.

X.

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,  
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,  
Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck the rose  
And love it more than tongue can speak—  
Then the good minute goes.

XI.

Already how am I so far  
Out of that minute? Must I go  
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,  
Onward, whenever light winds blow,  
Fixed by no friendly star?

## XII.

Just when I seemed about to learn !  
 Where is the thread now ? Off again !  
 The old trick ! Only I discern—  
 Infinite passion, and the pain  
 Of finite hearts that yearn.

---

## "DE GUSTIBUS—"

## I.

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—  
 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,  
 With the beanflower's boon,  
 And the blackbird's tune,  
 And May, and June !

## II.

What I love best in all the world  
 Is a castle, precipice-encurled,  
 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)—  
 In a sea-side house to the farther South,

Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,  
 And one sharp tree—'t is a cypress—stands,  
 By the many hundred years red-rusted,  
 Rough, iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'ercrusted,  
 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, for ever crumbles  
 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  
 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—  
     (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 :  
 So it always was, so shall ever be !

---

 THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL.

A PICTURE AT FANO.

## I.

DEAR and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave  
 That child, when thou hast done with him, for me !  
 Let me sit all the day here, that when eve  
 Shall find performed thy special ministry,

And time come, for departure, thou, suspending  
 Thy flight, may'st see another child for tending,  
 Another still to quiet and retrieve.

## II.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,  
 From where thou standest now, to where I gaze.  
 —And suddenly my head is covered o'er  
 With those wings, white above the child who prays  
 Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding  
 Me, out of all the world ; for me, discarding  
 Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

## III.

I would not look up thither past thy head  
 Because the door opes, like that child, I know,  
 For I should have thy gracious face instead,  
 Thou bird of God ! And wilt thou bend me low  
 Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,  
 And lift them up to pray, and gently tether  
 Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread ?

## IV.

If this was ever granted, I would rest  
 My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands  
 Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,  
 Pressing the brain which too much thought expands,  
 Back to its proper size again, and smoothing  
 Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,  
 And all lay quiet, happy and suppressed.

## V.

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired !  
 I think how I should view the earth and skies  
 And sea, when once again my brow was bared

After thy healing, with such different eyes.  
 O world, as God has made it! All is beauty :  
 And knowing this is love, and love is duty,  
 What further may be sought for or declared ?

## VI.

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach  
 (Alfred, dear friend !)—that little child to pray,  
 Holding the little hands up, each to each  
 Pressed gently,—with his own head turned away  
 Over the earth where so much lay before him  
 Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,  
 And he was left at Fano by the beach.

## VII.

We were at Fano, and three times we went  
 To sit and see him in his chapel there,  
 And drink his beauty to our soul's content  
 —My angel with me too : and since I care  
 For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power  
 And glory comes this picture for a dower,  
 Fraught with a pathos so magnificent),

## VIII.

And since he did not work thus earnestly  
 At all times, and has else endured some wrong—  
 I took one thought his picture struck from me,  
 And spread it out, translating it to song.  
 My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend ?  
 How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end ?  
 This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

## EVELYN HOPE.

## I.

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 ;  
Little has yet been changed, I think :  
The shutters are shut, no light may pass  
Save two long rays thro' the hinge's chink.

## II.

Sixteen years old when she died !  
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name ;  
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,—  
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

## III.

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—  
And, just because I was thrice as old  
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,  
Each was nought to each, must I be told ?  
We were fellow mortals, nought beside ?

## IV.

No, indeed! for God above  
 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 :  
 Much is to learn, much to forget  
 Ere the time be come for taking you.

## V.

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,  
 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.

## VI.

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,  
 Either I missed or itself missed me :  
 And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!  
 What is the issue ? let us see !

## VII.

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while !  
 My heart seemed full as it could hold ;  
 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 !  
 You will wake, and remember, and understand.

---

 MEMORABILIA.

## I.

AH, 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 !

## II.

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

## III.

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

## IV.

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



## APPARENT FAILURE.

“We shall soon lose a celebrated building.”

*Paris Newspaper.*

## I.

No, for I'll save it! Seven years since,  
 I passed through Paris, stopped a day  
 To see the baptism of your Prince ;  
 Saw, made my bow, and went my way :  
 Walking the heat and headache off,  
 I took the Seine-side, you surmise,  
 Thought of the Congress, Gortschakoff,  
 Cavour's appeal and Buol's replies,  
 So sauntered till—what met my eyes ?

## II.

Only the Doric little Morgue !  
 The dead-house where you show your drowned :  
 Petrarch's Vaucluse makes proud the Sorgue,  
 Your Morgue has made the Seine renowned.  
 One pays one's debt in such a case ;  
 I plucked up heart and entered,—stalked,  
 Keeping a tolerable face  
 Compared with some whose cheeks were chalked :  
 Let them ! No Briton 's to be balked !

## III.

First came the silent gazers ; next,  
 A screen of glass, we're thankful for ;  
 Last, the sight's self, the sermon's text,  
 The three men who did most abhor  
 Their life in Paris yesterday,

So killed themselves : and now, enthroned  
 Each on his copper couch, they lay  
 Fronting me, waiting to be owned.  
 I thought, and think, their sin 's atoned.

## IV.

Poor men, God made, and all for that!  
 The reverence struck me ; o'er each head  
 Religiously was hung its hat,  
 Each coat dripped by the owner's bed,  
 Sacred from touch : each had his berth,  
 His bounds, his proper place of rest,  
 Who last night tenanted on earth  
 Some arch, where twelve such slept abreast,—  
 Unless the plain asphalte seemed best.

## V.

How did it happen, my poor boy ?  
 You wanted to be Buonaparte  
 And have the Tuileries for toy,  
 And could not, so it broke your heart ?  
 You, old one by his side, I judge,  
 Were, red as blood, a socialist,  
 A leveller ! Does the Empire grudge  
 You've gained what no Republic missed ?  
 Be quiet, and unclench your fist !

## VI.

And this—why, he was red in vain,  
 Or black,—poor fellow that is blue !  
 What fancy was it, turned your brain ?  
 Oh, women were the prize for you !

Money gets women, cards and dice  
 Get money, and ill-luck gets just  
 The copper couch and one clear nice  
 Cool squirt of water o'er your bust,  
 The right thing to extinguish lust !

## VII.

It's wiser being good than bad ;  
 It's safer being meek than fierce :  
 It's fitter being sane than mad.  
 My own hope is, a sun will pierce  
 The thickest cloud earth ever stretched ;  
 That, after Last, returns the First,  
 Though a wide compass round be fetched ;  
 That what began best, can't end worst,  
 Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.

---

 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,  
 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,  
 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 forbore,  
 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.  
 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,  
 Then a light, then thy breast,  
 Oh thou soul of my soul ! I shall clasp thee again,  
 And with God be the rest !

---

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER  
 CAME."

(See Edgar's song in "LEAR.")

I.

My first thought was, he lied in every word,  
 That hoary cripple, with malicious eye  
 Askance to watch the working of his lie  
 On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford  
 Suppression of the glee, that pursed and scored  
 Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.

II.

What else should he be set for, with his staff ?  
 What, save to waylay with his lies, ensnare  
 All travellers who might find him posted there,  
 And ask the road ? I guessed what skull-like laugh  
 Would break, what crutch 'gin write my epitaph  
 For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

III.

If at his council I should turn aside  
    Into that ominous tract which, all agree,  
    Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly  
I did turn as he pointed : neither pride  
Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,  
    So much as gladness that some end might be.

IV.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,  
    What with my search drawn out thro' years, my  
    hope  
    Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope  
With that obstreperous joy success would bring,—  
I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring  
    My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

V.

As when a sick man very near to death  
    Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end  
    The tears and takes the farewell of each friend,  
And hears one bid the other go, draw breath,  
Freelier outside, ("since all is o'er," he saith,  
    " And the blow fallen no grieving can amend ; ")

VI.

While some discuss if near the other graves  
    Be room enough for this, and when a day  
    Suits best for carrying the corpse away,  
With care about the banners, scarves and staves :  
And still the man hears all, and only craves  
    He may not shame such tender love and stay.

## VII.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,  
 Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ  
 So many times among "The Band"—to wit,  
 The knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed  
 Their steps—that just to fail as they, seemed best,  
 And all the doubt was now—should I be fit?

## VIII.

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,  
 That hateful cripple, out of his highway  
 Into the path he pointed. All the day  
 Had been a dreary one at best, and dim  
 Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim  
 Red leer to see the plain catch its stray.

## IX.

For mark! no sooner was I fairly found  
 Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two,  
 Than, pausing to throw backward a last view  
 O'er the safe road, 't was gone; gray plain all round:  
 Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.  
 I might go on; nought else remained to do.

## X.

So, on I went. I think I never saw  
 Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve:  
 For flowers—as well expect a cedar grove!  
 But cockle, spurge, according to their law  
 Might propagate their kind, with none to awe,  
 You'd think; a burr had been a treasure trove.

XI.

No ! penury, inertness and grimace,  
In some strange sort, were the land's portion. " See  
Or shut your eyes," said Nature peevishly,  
" It nothing skills : I cannot help my case :  
'T is the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,  
Calcine its clods and set my prisoners free."

XII.

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk  
Above its mates, the head was chopped ; the bents  
Were jealous else. What made those holes and  
rents  
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves, bruised as to baulk  
All hope of greenness ? 't is a brute must walk  
Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.

XIII.

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair  
In leprosy ; thin dry blades pricked the mud  
Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.  
One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,  
Stood stupefied, however he came there :  
Thrust out past service from the devil's stud !

XIV.

Alive ? he might be dead for aught I know,  
With that red gaunt and coloped neck a-strain,  
And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane ;  
Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe ;  
I never saw a brute I hated so ;  
He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

## XV.

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.  
 As a man calls for wine before he fights,  
 I asked one draught of earlier, happier sights,  
 Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.  
 Think first, fight afterward—the soldier's art :  
 One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

## XVI.

Not it ! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face  
 Beneath its garniture of curly gold,  
 Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold  
 An arm in mine to fix me to the place,  
 That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace !  
 Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

## XVII.

Giles then, the soul of honor—there he stands  
 Frank as ten years ago when knighted first.  
 What honest man should dare (he said) he durst.  
 Good—but the scene shifts—faugh ! what hangman  
 hands  
 Pin to his breast a parchment ? His own bands  
 Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and curst !

## XVIII.

Better this present than a past like that ;  
 Back therefore to my darkening path again !  
 No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.  
 Will the night send a howlet or a bat ?  
 I asked : when something on the dismal flat  
 Came to arrest my thoughts and change their  
 train.



XIX.

A sudden little river crossed my path  
As unexpected as a serpent comes.  
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms ;  
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath  
For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see the wrath  
Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

XX.

So petty yet so spiteful! All along,  
Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it ;  
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit  
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng :  
The river which had done them all the wrong,  
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

XXI.

Which, while I forded,—good saints, how I feared  
To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,  
Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek  
For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard !  
—It may have been a water-rat I speared,  
But, ugh ! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

XXII.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.  
Now for a better country. Vain presage !  
Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage  
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank  
Soil to a plash ? Toads in a poisoned tank,  
Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—

## XXIII.

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.

What penned them there, with all the plain to  
choose ?

No foot-print leading to that horrid mews,  
None out of it. Mad brewage set to work  
Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk  
Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

## XXIV.

And more than that—a furlong on—why, there !

What bad use was that engine for, that wheel,  
Or brake, not wheel—that harrow fit to reel  
Men's bodies out like silk ? with all the air  
Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware,  
Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel.

## XXV.

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood,  
Next a marsh, it would seem, and now mere earth  
Desperate and done with ; (so a fool finds mirth,  
Makes a thing and then mars it, till his mood  
Changes and off he goes !) within a rood—  
Bog, clay, and rubble, sand and stark black dearth.

## XXVI.

Now blotches rankling, colored gay and grim,  
Now patches where some leanness of the soil's  
Broke into moss or substances like boils ;  
Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him  
Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim  
Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

XXVII.

And just as far as ever from the end :  
Nought in the distance but the evening, nought  
To point my footstep further ! At the thought,  
A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-friend,  
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned  
That brushed my cap—perchance the guide I  
sought.

XXVIII.

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew,  
'Spite of the dusk, the plain had given place  
All round to mountains—with such name to grace  
Mere ugly heights and heaps now stolen in view.  
How thus they had surprised me,—solve it, you !  
How to get from them was no clearer case.

XXIX.

Yet half I seemed to recognize some trick  
Of mischief happened to me, God knows when—  
In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then,  
Progress this way. When, in the very nick  
Of giving up, one time more, came a click  
As when a trap shuts—you're inside the den.

XXX.

Burningly it came on me all at once,  
This was the place ! those two hills on the right,  
Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight ;  
While to the left, a tall scalped mountain . . .  
Dunce,  
Dotard, a-doing at the very nonce,  
After a life spent training for the sight !

## XXXI.

What in the midst lay but the Tower itself?  
 The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart,  
 Built of brown stone, without a counterpart  
 In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf  
 Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf  
 He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

## XXXII.

Not see? because of night perhaps?—why, day  
 Came back again for that! before it left,  
 The dying sunset kindled through a cleft:  
 The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,  
 Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay,—  
 “Now stab and end the creature—to the heft!”

## XXXIII.

Not hear? when noise was everywhere! it tolled  
 Increasing like a bell. Names in my ears  
 Of all the lost adventurers my peers,—  
 How such a one was strong, and such was bold,  
 And such was fortunate, yet each of old  
 Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years.

## XXXIV.

There they stood, ranged along the hill-sides, met  
 To view the last of me, a living frame  
 For one more picture! in a sheet of flame  
 I saw them and I knew them all. And yet  
 Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,  
 And blew “*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came!*”

**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 in the bosom of the plain,  
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,  
Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,  
Chafes in the censer.  
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop ;  
Seek we sepulture  
On a tall mountain, citted to the top,  
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.  
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,  
'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 !  
 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  
     Winter would follow ?  
 Til lo, the little touch, and youth was gone !  
     Cramped and diminished,  
 Moaned he, " New measures, other feet anon !  
     My dance is finished ?"  
 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  
     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,  
 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,  
     " 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.

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,  
 When he had learned it,  
 When he had gathered all books had to give!  
 Sooner, he spurned it.  
 Image the whole, then execute the parts—  
 Fancy the fabric  
 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  
 (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.  
 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:  
*Calculus* racked him:  
 Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:  
*Tussis* attacked him.  
 "Now, master, take a little rest!"—not he!  
 (Caution redoubled!  
 Step two a-breast, 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)  
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!  
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  
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:  
“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,  
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.  
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,  
Ground he at grammar;



Still, thro' the rattle, parts of speech were rife :  
     While he could stammer  
 He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—  
     Properly based *Oun*—  
 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,  
     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 ?  
 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 :  
     Loftily lying,  
 Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,  
     Living and dying.

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 CLEON.

“As certain also of your own poets have said”—

CLEON the poet, (from the sprinkled isles,  
 Lily on lily, that o'erlace the sea,  
 And laugh their pride when the light wave lisp  
     “Greece”)—  
 To Protus in his Tyranny : much health !

They give thy letter to me, even now :  
 I read and seem as if I heard thee speak.  
 The master of thy galley still unlades  
 Gift after gift ; they block my court at last  
 And pile themselves along its portico  
 Royal with sunset, like a thought of thee ;  
 And one white she-slave, from the group dispersed  
 Of black and white slaves, (like the chequer-work  
 Pavement, at once my nation's work and gift  
 Now covered with this settle-down of doves)  
 One lyric woman, in her crocus vest  
 Woven of sea-wools, with her two white hands  
 Commends to me the strainer and the cup  
 Thy lip hath bettered ere it blesses mine.

Well-counselled, king, in thy munificence !  
 For so shall men remark, in such an act  
 Of love for him whose song gives life its joy,  
 Thy recognition of the use of life :  
 Nor call thy spirit barely adequate  
 To help on life in straight ways, broad enough  
 For vulgar souls, by ruling and the rest.  
 Thou, in the daily building of thy tower,—  
 Whether in fierce and sudden spasms of toil,  
 Or through dim lulls of unapparent growth,  
 Or when the general work, 'mid good acclaim,  
 Climbed with the eye to cheer the architect,—  
 Didst ne'er engage in work for mere work's sake :  
 Hadst ever in thy heart the luring hope  
 Of some eventual rest a-top of it,  
 Whence, all the tumult of the building hushed,  
 Thou first of men mightst look out to the East :  
 The vulgar saw thy tower, thou sawest the sun.  
 For this, I promise on thy festival

To pour libation, looking o'er the sea,  
Making this slave narrate thy fortunes, speak  
Thy great words, and describe thy royal face—  
Wishing thee wholly where Zeus lives the most,  
Within the eventual element of calm.

Thy letter's first requirement meets me here.  
It is as thou hast heard : in one short life  
I, Cleon, have effected all those things  
Thou wonderingly dost enumerate.  
That epos on thy hundred plates of gold  
Is mine, and also mine the little chant  
So sure to rise from every fishing-bark  
When, lights at prow, the seamen haul their net.  
The image of the sun-god on the phare,  
Men turn from the sun's self to see, is mine ;  
The Pœcile, o'er-storied its whole length,  
As thou didst hear, with painting, is mine too.  
I know the true proportions of a man  
And woman also, not observed before ;  
And I have written three books on the soul,  
Proving absurd all written hitherto,  
And putting us to ignorance again.  
For music,—why, I have combined the moods,  
Inventing one. In brief, all arts are mine ;  
Thus much the people know and recognize,  
Throughout our seventeen islands. Marvel not !  
We of these latter days, with greater mind  
Than our forerunners, since more composite,  
Look not so great, beside their simple way,  
To a judge who only sees one way at once,  
One mind-point and no other at a time,—  
Compares the small part of a man of us  
With some whole man of the heroic age,

Great in his way—not ours, nor meant for ours.  
 And ours is greater, had we skill to know :  
 For, what we call this life of men on earth,  
 This sequence of the soul's achievements here,  
 Being, as I find much reason to conceive,  
 Intended to be viewed eventually  
 As a great whole, not analyzed to parts,  
 But each part having reference to all,—  
 How shall a certain part, pronounced complete,  
 Endure effacement by another part ?  
 Was the thing done ?—then, what 's to do again ?  
 See, in the chequered pavement opposite,  
 Suppose the artist made a perfect rhomb,  
 And next a lozenge, then a trapezoid—  
 He did not overlay them, superimpose  
 The new upon the old and blot it out,  
 But laid them on a level in his work,  
 Making at last a picture ; there it lies.  
 So first the perfect separate forms were made,  
 The portions of mankind ; and after, so,  
 Occurred the combination of the same.  
 For where had been a progress, otherwise ?  
 Mankind, made up of all the single men,—  
 In such a synthesis the labor ends.  
 Now mark me ! those divine men of old time  
 Have reached, thou sayest well, each at one point  
 The outside verge that rounds our faculty ;  
 And where they reached, who can do more than  
     reach ?  
 It takes but little water just to touch  
 At some one point the inside of a sphere,  
 And, as we turn the sphere, touch all the rest  
 In due succession : but the finer air  
 Which not so palpably nor obviously,

Though no less universally, can touch  
The whole circumference of that emptied sphere,  
Fills it more fully than the water did ;  
Holds thrice the weight of water in itself  
Resolved into a subtler element.  
And yet the vulgar call the sphere first full  
Up to the visible height—and after, void ;  
Not knowing air's more hidden properties.  
And thus our soul, misknown, cries out to Zeus  
To vindicate his purpose in our life :  
Why stay we on the earth unless to grow ?  
Long since, I imaged, wrote the fiction out,  
That he or other god descended here  
And, once for all, showed simultaneously  
What, in its nature, never can be shown  
Piecemeal or in succession ; showed, I say,  
The worth both absolute and relative  
Of all his children from the birth of time,  
His instruments for all appointed work.  
I now go on to image,—might we hear  
The judgment which should give the due to each,  
Show where the labor lay and where the ease,  
And prove Zeus' self, the latent everywhere !  
This is a dream :—but no dream, let us hope,  
That years and days, the summers and the springs,  
Follow each other with unwaning powers.  
The grapes which dye thy wine, are richer far  
Through culture, than the wild wealth of the rock ;  
The suave plum than the savage-tasted drupe ;  
The pastured honey-bee drops choicer sweet ;  
The flowers turn double, and the leaves turn flowers ;  
That young and tender crescent moon, thy slave,  
Sleeping upon her robe as if on clouds,  
Refines upon the women of my youth.

What, and the soul alone deteriorates?  
 I have not chanted verse like Homer, no—  
 Nor swept string like Terpander, no—nor carved  
 And painted men like Phidias and his friend :  
 I am not great as they are, point by point.  
 But I have entered into sympathy  
 With these four, running these into one soul,  
 Who, separate, ignored each other's arts.  
 Say, is it nothing that I know them all ?  
 The wild flower was the larger ; I have dashed  
 Rose blood upon its petals, pricked its cup's  
 Honey with wine, and driven its seed to fruit,  
 And show a better flower if not so large :  
 I stand myself. Refer this to the gods  
 Whose gift alone it is ! which, shall I dare  
 (All pride apart) upon the absurd pretext  
 That such a gift by chance lay in my hand,  
 Discourse of lightly or depreciate ?  
 It might have fallen to another's hand : what then ?  
 I pass too surely : let at least truth stay !

And next, of what thou followest on to ask.  
 This being with me, as I declare, O king,  
 My works in all these varicolored kinds,  
 So done by me, accepted so by men—  
 Thou askest, if (my soul thus in men's hearts)  
 I must not be accounted to attain  
 The very crown and proper end of life ?  
 Inquiring thence how, now life closeth up,  
 I face death with success in my right hand :  
 Whether I fear death less than dost thyself  
 The fortunate of men ? " For " (writest thou)  
 " Thou leavest much behind, while I leave nought.  
 Thy life stays in the poems men shall sing,

The pictures men shall study ; while my life,  
 Complete and whole now in its power and joy,  
 Dies altogether with my brain and arm,  
 Is lost indeed ; since, what survives myself ?  
 The brazen statue to o'erlook my grave,  
 Set on the promontory which I named.  
 And that—some supple courtier of my heir  
 Shall use its robed and sceptred arm, perhaps  
 To fix the rope to, which best drags it down.  
 I go then : triumph thou, who dost not go !”

Nay, thou art worthy of hearing my whole mind.  
 Is this apparent, when thou turn'st to muse  
 Upon the scheme of earth and man in chief,  
 That admiration grows as knowledge grows ?  
 That imperfection means perfection hid,  
 Reserved in part, to grace the after-time ?  
 If, in the morning of philosophy,  
 Ere aught had been recorded, nay perceived,  
 Thou, with the light now in thee, couldst have looked  
 On all earth's tenantry, from worm to bird,  
 Ere man, her last, appeared upon the stage—  
 Thou wouldst have seen them perfect, and deduced  
 The perfectness of others yet unseen.  
 Conceding which,—had Zeus then questioned thee  
 “ Shall I go on a step, improve on this,  
 Do more for visible creatures than is done ? ”  
 Thou wouldst have answered, “ Ay, by making each  
 Grow conscious in himself—by that alone.  
 All 's perfect else : the shell sucks fast the rock,  
 The fish strikes through the sea, the snake both swims  
 And slides, forth range the beasts, the birds take flight,  
 Till life's mechanics can no further go—  
 And all this joy in natural life, is put,

Like fire from off thy finger, into each,  
 So exquisitely perfect is the same.  
 But 't is pure fire, and they mere matter are :  
 It has them, not they it ; and so I choose  
 For man, thy last premeditated work  
 (If I might add a glory to the scheme),  
 That a third thing should stand apart from both,  
 A quality arise within his soul,  
 Which intro-active, made to supervise  
 And feel the force it has, may view itself,  
 And so be happy." Man might live at first  
 The animal life : but is there nothing more ?  
 In due time, let him critically learn  
 How he lives ; and, the more he gets to know  
 Of his own life's adaptabilities,  
 The more joy-giving will his life become.  
 Thus man, who hath this quality, is best.

But thou, king, hadst more reasonably said :  
 " Let progress end at once,—man make no step  
 Beyond the natural man, the better beast,  
 Using his senses, not the sense of sense !"  
 In man there 's failure, only since he left  
 The lower and unconscious forms of life.  
 We called it an advance, the rendering plain  
 Man's spirit might grow conscious of man's life,  
 And, by new lore so added to the old,  
 Take each step higher over the brute's head.  
 This grew the only life, the pleasure-house,  
 Watch-tower and treasure-fortress of the soul,  
 Which whole surrounding flats of natural life  
 Seemed only fit to yield subsistence to ;  
 A tower that crowns a country. But alas,  
 The soul now climbs it just to perish there !



For thence we have discovered ('t is no dream—  
We know this, which we had not else perceived)  
That there's a world of capability  
For joy, spread round about us, meant for us,  
Inviting us; and still the soul craves all,  
And still the flesh replies, "Take no jot more  
Than ere thou clombst the tower to look abroad!  
Nay, so much less as that fatigue has brought  
Deduction to it." We struggle, fain to enlarge  
Our bounded physical recipiency,  
Increase our power, supply fresh oil to life,  
Repair the waste of age and sickness: no,  
It skills not! life's inadequate to joy,  
As the soul sees joy, tempting life to take.  
They praise a fountain in my garden here  
Wherein a Naiad sends the water-bow  
Thin from her tube; she smiles to see it rise.  
What if I told her, it is just a thread  
From that great river which the hills shut up,  
And mock her with my leave to take the same?  
The artificer has given her one small tube  
Past power to widen or exchange—what boots  
To know she might spout oceans if she could?  
She cannot lift beyond her first thin thread:  
And so a man can use but a man's joy  
While he sees God's. Is it for Zeus to boast,  
"See man, how happy I live, and despair—  
That I may be still happier—for thy use!"  
If this were so, we could not thank our lord,  
As hearts beat on to doing: 't is not so—  
Malice it is not. Is it carelessness?  
Still, no. If care—where is the sign? I ask,  
And get no answer, and agree in sum,  
O king, with thy profound discouragement,

Who seest the wider but to sigh the more.  
Most progress is most failure : thou sayest well.

The last point now. Thou dost except a case—  
Holding joy not impossible to one  
With artist-gifts—to such a man as I  
Who leave behind me living works indeed ;  
For, such a poem, such a painting lives.  
What ? dost thou verily trip upon a word,  
Confound the accurate view of what joy is  
(Caught somewhat clearer by my eyes than thine)  
With feeling joy ? confound the knowing how  
And showing how to live (my faculty)  
With actually living ?—Otherwise  
Where is the artist's vantage o'er the king ?  
Because in my great epos I display  
How divers men young, strong, fair, wise, can act—  
Is this as though I acted ? if I paint,  
Carve the young Phœbus, am I therefore young ?  
Methinks I 'm older that I bowed myself  
The many years of pain that taught me art !  
Indeed, to know is something, and to prove  
How all this beauty might be enjoyed, is more :  
But, knowing nought, to enjoy is something too.  
Yon rower, with the moulded muscles there,  
Lowering the sail, is nearer it than I.  
I can write love-odes : thy fair slave 's an ode.  
I get to sing of love, when grown too gray  
For being beloved : she turns to that young man,  
The muscles all a-ripple on his back.  
I know the joy of kingship : well, thou art king !

“ But,” sayest thou—(and I marvel, I repeat,  
To find thee tripping on a mere word) “ what

Thou writest, paintest, stays ; that does not die !  
Sappho survives, because we sing her songs,  
And Æschylus, because we read his plays !”  
Why, if they live still, let them come and take  
Thy slave in my despite, drink from thy cup,  
Speak in my place. Thou diest while I survive ?  
Say rather that my fate is deadlier still,  
In this, that every day my sense of joy  
Grows more acute, my soul (intensified  
By power and insight) more enlarged, more keen ;  
While every day my hair falls more and more,  
My hand shakes, and the heavy years increase—  
The horror quickening still from year to year,  
The consummation coming past escape,  
When I shall know most, and yet least enjoy—  
When all my works wherein I prove my worth,  
Being present still to mock me in men’s mouths,  
Alive still, in the phrase of such as thou,  
I, I the feeling, thinking, acting man,  
The man who loved his life so over-much,  
Shall sleep in my urn. It is so horrible,  
I dare at times imagine to my need  
Some future state revealed to us by Zeus,  
Unlimited in capability  
For joy, as this is in desire for joy,  
—To seek which, the joy-hunger forces us :  
That, stung by straitness of our life, made strait  
On purpose to make prized the life at large—  
Freed by the throbbing impulse we call death,  
We burst there as the worm into the fly,  
Who, while a worm still, wants his wings. But no !  
Zeus has not yet revealed it ; and alas,  
He must have done so, were it possible !

Live long and happy, and in that thought die,  
 Glad for what was ! Farewell. And for the rest,  
 I cannot tell thy messenger aright  
 Where to deliver what he bears of thine  
 To one called Paulus ; we have heard his fame  
 Indeed, if Christus be not one with him—  
 I know not, nor am troubled much to know.  
 Thou canst not think a mere barbarian Jew  
 As Paulus proves to be, one circumcised,  
 Hath access to a secret shut from us ?  
 Thou wrongest our philosophy, O king,  
 In stooping to inquire of such an one,  
 As if his answer could impose at all !  
 He writeth, doth he ? well, and he may write.  
 Oh, the Jew findeth scholars ! certain slaves  
 Who touched on this same isle, preached him and  
 Christ ;  
 And (as I gathered from a bystander)  
 Their doctrine could be held by no sane man.

---

 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—  
 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.

## 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  
 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,  
 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 !  
 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 !  
 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  
 At the thought of his face :  
 The droop, the low cares of the mouth,  
 The trouble uncouth

'Twixt the brows, all that air one is fain  
 To put out of its pain.  
 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  
 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?  
 Though I waste half my realm to unearth  
 Toad or rat, 't is well worth!"

## VI.

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

## 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,  
 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,  
 Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed !  
 —So, *I* was afraid !

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AN EPISTLE

CONTAINING THE STRANGE MEDICAL EXPERIENCE OF  
 KARSHISH, THE ARAB PHYSICIAN.

KARSHISH, the picker-up of learning's crumbs,  
 The not-incurious in God's handiwork  
 (This man's flesh he hath admirably made,  
 Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste,  
 To coop up and keep down on earth a space  
 That puff of vapor from his mouth, man's soul)  
 —To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,  
 Breeder in me of what poor skill I boast,  
 Like me inquisitive how pricks and cracks  
 Befall the flesh through too much stress and strain,  
 Whereby the wily vapor fain would slip  
 Back and rejoin its source before the term,—  
 And aptest in contrivance (under God)  
 To baffle it by deftly stopping such :—  
 The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at home  
 Sends greeting (health and knowledge, fame with  
 peace)  
 Three samples of true snake-stone—rarer still,  
 One of the other sort, the melon-shaped,  
 (But fitter, pounded fine, for charms than drugs)  
 And writeth now the twenty-second time.

My journeyings were brought to Jericho :  
 Thus I resume. Who studious in our art  
 Shall count a little labor unrepaid ?  
 I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and bone  
 On many a flinty furlong of this land.  
 Also, the country-side is all on fire  
 With rumors of a marching hitherward ;  
 Some say Vespasian cometh, some, his son.  
 A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear ;  
 Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow balls :  
 I cried and threw my staff and he was gone.  
 Twice have the robbers stripped and beaten me,  
 And once a town declared me for a spy ;  
 But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,  
 Since this poor covert where I pass the night,  
 This Bethany, lies scarce the distance thence  
 A man with plague-sores at the third degree  
 Runs till he drops down dead. Thou laughest here !  
 'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and safe,  
 To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip  
 And share with thee whatever Jewry yields.  
 A viscid choler is observable  
 In tertians, I was nearly bold to say ;  
 And falling-sickness hath a happier cure  
 Than our school wots of : there 's a spider here  
 Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,  
 Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-gray back ;  
 Take five and drop them . . . but who knowshis  
     mind,  
 The Syrian run-a-gate I trust this to ?  
 His service payeth me a sublimate  
 Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.  
 Best wait : I reach Jerusalem at morn,  
 There set in order my experiences,



Gather what most deserves, and give thee all—  
 Or I might add, Judæa's gum-tragacanth  
 Scales off in purer flakes, shines clearer-grained,  
 Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the porphyry,  
 In fine exceeds our produce. Scalp-disease  
 Confounds me, crossing so with leprosy :  
 Thou hadst admired one sort I gained at Zoar—  
 But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end.

Yet stay ! my Syrian blinketh gratefully,  
 Protesteth his devotion is my price—  
 Suppose I write what harms not, though he steal ?  
 I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush,  
 What set me off a-writing first of all.  
 An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang !  
 For, be it this town's barrenness—or else  
 The Man had something in the look of him—  
 His case has struck me far more than 't is worth.  
 So, pardon if—(lest presently I lose,  
 In the great press of novelty at hand,  
 The care and pains this somehow stole from me)  
 I bid thee take the thing while fresh in mind,  
 Almost in sight—for, wilt thou have the truth ?  
 The very man is gone from me but now,  
 Whose ailment is the subject of discourse.  
 Thus then, and let thy better wit help all !

'Tis but a case of mania : subinduced  
 By epilepsy, at the turning-point  
 Of trance prolonged unduly some three days  
 When, by the exhibition of some drug  
 Or spell, exorcization, stroke of art  
 Unknown to me, and which 't were well to know,  
 The evil thing, out-breaking, all at once,

Left the man whole and sound of body indeed,—  
But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates too wide,  
Making a clear house of it too suddenly,  
The first conceit that entered might inscribe  
Whatever it was minded on the wall  
So plainly at that vantage, as it were,  
(First come, first served) that nothing subsequent  
Attaineth to erase those fancy-scravls  
The just-returned and new-established soul  
Hath gotten now so thoroughly by heart  
That henceforth she will read or these or none.  
And first—the man's own firm conviction rests  
That he was dead (in fact they buried him)  
—That he was dead and then restored to life  
By a Nazarene physician of his tribe :  
—'Sayeth, the same bade "Rise," and he did rise.  
"Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt cry.  
Not so this figment !—not, that such a fume,  
Instead of giving way to time and health,  
Should eat itself into the life of life,  
As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones, and all !  
For see, how he takes up the after-life.  
The man—it is one Lazarus a Jew,  
Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,  
The body's habit wholly laudable,  
As much, indeed, beyond the common health  
As he were made and put aside to show.  
Think, could we penetrate by any drug  
And bathe the wearied soul and worried flesh,  
And bring it clear and fair, by three days' sleep !  
Whence has the man the balm that brightens all ?  
This grown man eyes the world now like a child.  
Some elders of his tribe, I should premise,  
Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,

To bear my inquisition. While they spoke,  
 Now sharply, now with sorrow,—told the case  
 He listened not except I spoke to him,  
 But folded his two hands and let them talk,  
 Watching the flies that buzzed: and yet no fool.  
 And that's a sample how his years must go.  
 Look if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,  
 Should find a treasure,—can he use the same  
 With straitened habitude and tastes starved small,  
 And take at once to his impoverished brain  
 The sudden element that changes things,  
 That sets the undreamed-of rapture at his hand,  
 And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned dust?  
 Is he not such an one as moves to mirth—  
 Warily parsimonious, when no need,  
 Wasteful as drunkenness at undue times?  
 All prudent counsel as to what befits  
 The golden mean, is lost on such an one:  
 The man's fantastic will is the man's law.  
 So here—we call the treasure knowledge, say,  
 Increased beyond the fleshly faculty—  
 Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,  
 Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven:  
 The man is witless of the size, the sum,  
 The value in proportion of all things,  
 Or whether it be little or be much.  
 Discourse to him of prodigious armaments  
 Assembled to besiege his city now,  
 And of the passing of a mule with gourds—  
 'T is one! Then take it on the other side,  
 Speak of some trifling fact,—he will gaze rapt  
 With stupor at its very littleness,  
 (Far as I see) as if in that indeed  
 He caught prodigious import, whole results;

And so will turn to us the bystanders  
In ever the same stupor (note this point)  
That we too see not with his opened eyes.  
Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play,  
Preposterously, at cross purposes.  
Should his child sicken unto death,—why, look  
For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness,  
Or pretermission of the daily craft !  
While a word, gesture, glance from that same child  
At play or in the school or laid asleep,  
Will startle him to an agony of fear,  
Exasperation, just as like. Demand  
The reason why—“ ’t is but a word,” object—  
“ A gesture ”—he regards thee as our lord  
Who lived there in the pyramid alone,  
Looked at us (dost thou mind ?) when, being young,  
We both would unadvisedly recite  
Some charm’s beginning, from that book of his,  
Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst  
All into stars, as suns grown old are wont.  
Thou and the child have each a veil alike  
Thrown o’er your heads, from under which ye both  
Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a match  
Over a mine of Greek fire, did ye know !  
He holds on firmly to some thread of life—  
(It is the life to lead perforcedly)  
Which runs across some vast distracting orb  
Of glory on either side that meagre thread,  
Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet—  
The spiritual life around the earthly life :  
The law of that is known to him as this,  
His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here.  
So is the man perplexed with impulses  
Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight on,

Proclaiming what is right and wrong across,  
And not along, this black thread through the blaze—  
“It should be” baulked by “here it cannot be.”  
And oft the man’s soul springs into his face  
As if he saw again and heard again  
His sage that bade him “Rise” and he did rise.  
Something, a word, a tick o’ the blood within  
Admonishes : then back he sinks at once  
To ashes, who was very fire before,  
In sedulous recurrence to his trade  
Whereby he earneth him the daily bread ;  
And studiously the humbler for that pride,  
Professedly the faultier that he knows  
God’s secret, while he holds the thread of life.  
Indeed the especial marking of the man  
Is prone submission to the heavenly will—  
Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.  
’Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last  
For that same death which must restore his being  
To equilibrium, body loosening soul  
Divorced even now by premature full growth :  
He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live  
So long as God please, and just how God please.  
He even seeketh not to please God more  
(Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.  
Hence, I perceive not he affects to preach  
The doctrine of his sect whate’er it be,  
Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do :  
How can he give his neighbor the real ground,  
His own conviction ? Ardent as he is—  
Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old  
“Be it as God please” reassureth him.  
I probed the sore as thy disciple should :  
“How, beast,” said I, “this stolid carelessness

Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march  
To stamp out like a little spark thy town,  
Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at once?"  
He merely looked with his large eyes on me.  
The man is apathetic, you deduce?  
Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,  
Able and weak, affects the very brutes  
And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—  
As a wise workman recognizes tools  
In a master's workshop, loving what they make.  
Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:  
Only impatient, let him do his best,  
At ignorance and carelessness and sin—  
An indignation which is promptly curbed:  
As when in certain travel I have feigned  
To be an ignoramus in our art  
According to some preconceived design,  
And happened to hear the land's practitioners,  
Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignorance,  
Prattle fantastically on disease,  
Its cause and cure—and I must hold my peace!

Thou wilt object—Why have I not ere this  
Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene  
Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the source,  
Conferring with the frankness that befits?  
Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech  
Perished in a tumult many years ago,  
Accused,—our learning's fate,—of wizardry,  
Rebellion, to the setting up a rule  
And creed prodigious as described to me.  
His death, which happened when the earthquake fell  
(Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss  
To occult learning in our lord the sage

Who lived there in the pyramid alone)  
 Was wrought by the mad people—that 's their wont !  
 On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,  
 To his tried virtue, for miraculous help—  
 How could he stop the earthquake ? That 's their  
 way !

The other imputations must be lies :  
 But take one, though I loathe to give it thee,  
 In mere respect for any good man's fame.  
 (And after all, our patient Lazarus  
 Is stark mad ; should we count on what he says ?  
 Perhaps not : though in writing to a leech  
 'T is well to keep back nothing of a case.)  
 This man so cured regards the curer, then,  
 As—God forgive me ! who but God himself,  
 Creator and sustainer of the world,  
 That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile !  
 —'Sayeth that such an one was born and lived,  
 Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own  
 house,  
 Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,  
 And yet was . . . what I said nor choose repeat,  
 And must have so avouched himself, in fact,  
 In hearing of this very Lazarus  
 Who saith—but why all this of what he saith ?  
 Why write of trivial matters, things of price  
 Calling at every moment for remark ?  
 I noticed on the margin of a pool  
 Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,  
 Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange !

Thy pardon for this long and tedious case,  
 Which, now that I review it, needs must seem  
 Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth !

Nor I myself discern in what is writ  
Good cause for the peculiar interest  
And awe indeed this man has touched me with.  
Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness  
Had wrought upon me first. I met him thus :  
I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken hills  
Like an old lion's cheek teeth. Out there came  
A moon made like a face with certain spots  
Multiform, manifold and menacing :  
Then a wind rose behind me. So we met  
In this old sleepy town at unaware,  
The man and I. I send thee what is writ.  
Regard it as a chance, a matter risked  
To this ambiguous Syrian : he may lose,  
Or steal, or give it thee with equal good.  
Jerusalem's repose shall make amends  
For time this letter wastes, thy time and mine ;  
Till when, once more thy pardon and farewell !

The very God ! think, Abib ; dost thou think ?  
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—  
So, through the thunder comes a human voice  
Saying, " O heart I made, a heart beats here !  
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself !  
Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine :  
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,  
And thou must love me who have died for thee !"  
The madman saith He said so : it is strange.



## CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS ;

OR, NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE ISLAND.

“Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself.”

[WILL sprawl, now that the heat of day is best,  
 Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,  
 With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin.  
 And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,  
 And feels about his spine small eft-things course,  
 Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh :  
 And while above his head a pompion-plant,  
 Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,  
 Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard,  
 And now a flower drops with a bee inside,  
 And now a fruit to snap at, catch and crunch,—  
 He looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams cross  
 And recross till they weave a spider-web,  
 (Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at times)  
 And talks to his own self, howe'er he please,  
 Touching that other, whom his dam called God.  
 Because to talk about Him, vexes—ha,  
 Could He but know ! and time to vex is now,  
 When talk is safer than in Winter-time.  
 Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep  
 In confidence he drudges at their task,  
 And it is good to cheat the pair, and gibe,  
 Letting the rank tongue blossom into speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos !

'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match,  
 But not the stars ; the stars came otherwise ;

Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that :  
Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,  
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease :  
He hated that He cannot change His cold,  
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish  
That longed to 'scape the rock-stream where she lived,  
And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine  
O' the lazy sea, her stream thrusts far amid,  
A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls of wave ;  
Only, she ever sickened, found repulse  
At the other kind of water, not her life,  
(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the sun)  
Flounced back from bliss she was not born to  
breathe,  
And in her old bounds buried her despair,  
Hating and loving warmth alike : so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,  
Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing.  
Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech ;  
Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,  
That floats and feeds ; a certain badger brown,  
He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge  
eye

By moonlight ; and the pie with the long tongue  
That pricks deep into oakwarts for a worm,  
And says a plain word when she finds her prize,  
But will not eat the ants ; the ants themselves  
That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks  
About their hole—He made all these and more,  
Made all we see, and us, in spite : how else ?  
He could not, Himself, make a second self

To be His mate : as well have made Himself :  
He would not make what he mislikes or slights,  
An eyesore to Him, or not worth His pains ;  
But did, in envy, listlessness or sport,  
Make what Himself would fain, in a manner, be—  
Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,  
Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,  
Things He admires and mocks too,—that is it.  
Because, so brave, so better though they be,  
It nothing skills if He begin to plague.  
Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into mash,  
Add honeycomb and pods, I have perceived,  
Which bite like finches when they bill and kiss,—  
Then, when froth rises bladdery, drink up all,  
Quick, quick, till maggots scamper through my brain ;  
Last, throw me on my back i' the seeded thyme,  
And wanton, wishing I were born a bird.  
Put case, unable to be what I wish,  
I yet could make a live bird out of clay :  
Would not I take clay, pinch my Caliban  
Able to fly?—for, there, see, he hath wings,  
And great comb like the hoopoe's to admire,  
And there, a sting to do his foes offence,  
There, and I will that he begin to live,  
Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns  
Of grigs high up that make the merry din,  
Saucy through their veined wings, and mind me not.  
In which feat, if his leg snapped, brittle clay,  
And he lay stupid-like,—why, I should laugh ;  
And if he, spying me, should fall to weep,  
Beseech me to be good, repair his wrong,  
Bid his poor leg smart less or grow again,—  
Well, as the chance were, this might take or else  
Not take my fancy : I might hear his cry,

And give the manikin three legs for one,  
 Or pluck the other off, leave him like an egg,  
 And lessoned he was mine and merely clay.  
 Were this no pleasure, lying in the thyme,  
 Drinking the mash, with brain become alive,  
 Making and marring clay at will? So He.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor wrong in Him  
 Nor kind, nor cruel: He is strong and Lord.  
 'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs  
 That march now from the mountain to the sea;  
 'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,  
 Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.  
 'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple spots  
 Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off;  
 'Say, This bruised fellow shall receive a worm,  
 And two worms he whose nippers end in red  
 As it likes me each time, I do: so He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i' the main,  
 Placable if His mind and ways were guessed,  
 But rougher than His handiwork, be sure!  
 Oh, He hath made things worthier than Himself,  
 And envieth that, so helped, such things do more  
 Than He who made them! What consoles but this?  
 That they, unless through Him, do naught at all,  
 And must submit: what other use in things?  
 'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-joint  
 That, blown through, gives exact the scream o' the jay  
 When from her wing you twitch the feathers blue:  
 Sound this, and little birds that hate the jay  
 Flock within stone's throw, glad their foe is hurt:  
 Put case such pipe could prattle and boast forsooth  
 "I catch the birds, I am the crafty thing,

I make the cry my maker cannot make  
With his great round mouth ; he must blow through  
mine!"

Would not I smash it with my foot? So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at ease?  
Aha, that is a question! Ask, for that,  
What knows,—the something over Setebos  
That made Him, or He, may be, found and fought,  
Worsted, drove off and did to nothing, perchance.  
There may be something quiet o'er His head,  
Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief,  
Since both derive from weakness in some way.  
I joy because the quails come ; would not joy  
Could I bring quails here when I have a mind :  
This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.  
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its couch,  
But never spends much thought nor care that way.  
It may look up, work up,—the worse for those  
It works on! 'Careth but for Setebos  
The many-handed as a cuttle-fish,  
Who, making Himself feared through what He does,  
Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot soar  
To what is quiet and hath happy life ;  
Next looks down here, and out of very spite  
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real,  
These good things to match those, as hips do grape  
'T is solace making baubles, ay, and sport.  
Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at his books  
Careless and lofty, lord now of the isle :  
Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves, arrow-shaped.  
Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious words ;  
Has peeled a wand and called it by a name ;  
Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's robe

The eyed skin of a supple ocelot ;  
 And hath an ounce sleeker than youngling mole,  
 A four-legged serpent he makes cower and couch,  
 Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind his eye,  
 And saith she is Miranda and my wife  
 'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill crane  
 He bids go wade for fish and straight disgorge ;  
 Also a seabeast, lumpish, which he snared,  
 Blinded the eyes of, and brought somewhat tame,  
 And split its toe-webs, and now pens the drudge  
 In a hole o' the rock, and calls him Caliban ;  
 A bitter heart that bides its time and bites.  
 'Plays thus at being Prosper in a way,  
 Taketh his mirth with make-believes : so He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all things  
 Which Setebos vexed only : 'holds not so.  
 Who made them weak, meant weakness He might vex.  
 Had He meant other, while His hand was in,  
 Why not make horny eyes no thorn could prick.  
 Or plate my scalp with bone against the snow,  
 Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and joint,  
 Like an orc's armor ? Ay,—so spoil His sport !  
 He is the One now : only He doth all.

'Saith, He may like, perchance, what profits Him.  
 Ay, himself loves what does him good ; but why ?  
 'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded beast  
 Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose,  
 But, had he eyes, would want no help, would hate  
 Or love, just as it liked him : He hath eyes.  
 Also it pleaseth Setebos to work,  
 Use all His hands, and exercise much craft,  
 By no means for the love of what is worked.

'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the world  
 When all goes right, in this safe summer-time,  
 And he wants little, hungers, aches not much,  
 Than trying what to do with wit and strength.  
 'Falls to make something : 'piled yon pile of turfs,  
 And squared and stuck there squares of soft white chalk,  
 And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a moon on each,  
 And set up endwise certain spikes of tree,  
 And crowned the whole with a sloth's skull a-tot,  
 Found dead i' the woods, too hard for one to kill.  
 No use at all i' the work, for work's sole sake ;  
 'Shall some day knock it down again : so He.

'Saith He is terrible : watch His feats in proof !  
 One hurricane will spoil six good months' hope.  
 He hath a spite against me, that I know,  
 Just as He favors Prosper, who knows why ?  
 So it is, all the same, as well I find.  
 'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced them firm  
 With stone and stake to stop she-tortoises  
 Crawling to lay their eggs here : well, one wave,  
 Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,  
 Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its large tongue,  
 And licked the whole labor flat : so much for spite.  
 'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder it lies)  
 Where, half an hour before, I slept i' the shade :  
 Often they scatter sparkles : there is force !  
 'Dug up a newt He may have envied once  
 And turned to stone, shut up inside a stone.  
 Please Him and hinder this ?—What Prosper does ?  
 Aha, if he would tell me how ! Not He !  
 There is the sport : discover how or die !  
 All need not die, for of the things o' the isle  
 Some flee afar, some dive, some run up trees ;

Those at His mercy,—why, they please Him most  
 When . . . when . . . well, never try the  
 same way twice !

Repeat what act has pleased, He may grow wroth.  
 You must not know His ways, and play Him off,  
 Sure of the issue. 'Doth the like himself :

'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fears  
 But steals the nut from underneath my thumb,  
 And when I threāt, bites stoutly in defence :

'Spareth an urchin that contrariwise,  
 Curls up into a ball, pretending death  
 For fright at my approach : the two ways please.  
 But what would move my choler more than this,  
 That either creature counted on its life

To-morrow and next day and all days to come,  
 Saying forsooth in the inmost of its heart,  
 " Because he did so yesterday with me,  
 And otherwise with such another brute,  
 So must he do henceforth and always."—Ay ?

'Would teach the reasoning couple what " must " means !  
 'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord ? So He.

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,  
 And we shall have to live in fear of Him  
 So long as He lives, keeps His strength : no change,  
 If He have done His best, make no new world  
 To please Him more, so leave off watching this,—  
 If He surprise not even the Quiet's self  
 Some strange day,—or, suppose, grow into it  
 As grubs grow butterflies : else, here are we,  
 And there is He, and nowhere help at all.

'Believeth with the life, the pain shall stop.  
 His dam held different, that after death



He both plagued enemies and feasted friends :  
 Idly ! He doth His worst in this our life,  
 Giving just respite lest we die through pain,  
 Saving last pain for worst,—with which, an end.  
 Meanwhile, the best way to escape His ire  
 Is, not to seem too happy. 'Sees, himself,  
 Yonder two flies, with purple films and pink,  
 Bask on the pompion-bell above : kills both.  
 'Sees two black painful beetles roll their ball  
 On head and tail as if to save their lives :  
 Moves them the stick away they strive to clear.

Even so, 'would have Him misconceive, suppose  
 This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,  
 And always, above all else, envies Him ;  
 Wherefore he mainly dances on dark nights,  
 Moans in the sun, gets under holes to laugh,  
 And never speaks his mind save housed as now :  
 Outside, 'groans, curses. If He caught me here,  
 O'erheard this speech, and asked "What chucklest  
 at?"

'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger off,  
 Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best,  
 Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,  
 Or push my tame beast for the orc to taste :  
 While myself lit a fire, and made a song  
 And sung it, "*What I hate, be consecrate  
 To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate  
 For Thee ; what see for envy in poor me ?*"  
 Hoping the while, since evils sometimes mend,  
 Warts rub away and sores are cured with slime,  
 That some strange day, will either the Quiet catch  
 And conquer Setebos, or likelier He  
 Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die.

[What, what? A curtain o'er the world at once!  
 Crickets stop hissing; not a bird—or, yes,  
 There scuds His raven that hath told Him all!  
 It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha! The wind  
 Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house o' the move,  
 And fast invading fires begin! White blaze—  
 A tree's head snaps — and there, there, there, there  
 there,

His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at Him!  
 Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!  
 'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper lip,  
 Will let those quails fly, will not eat this month  
 One little mess of whelks, so he may 'scape !]

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S A U L .

I.

SAID Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere  
 thou speak,  
 Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it, and  
 did kiss his cheek.  
 And he, "Since the King, O my friend, for thy coun-  
 tenance sent,  
 Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until from  
 his tent  
 Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth  
 yet,  
 Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water  
 be wet.  
 For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of  
 three days,  
 Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer  
 nor of praise,

To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their  
 strife,  
 And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back  
 upon life.

## II.

“Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God’s child  
 with his dew  
 On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living  
 and blue  
 Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no  
 wild heat  
 Were now raging to torture the desert!”

## III.

Then I, as was meet,  
 Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my  
 feet,  
 And ran o’er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was  
 unlooped;  
 I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I  
 stooped;  
 Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all with-  
 ered and gone,  
 That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my  
 way on  
 Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once  
 more I prayed,  
 And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not  
 afraid  
 But spoke, “Here is David, thy servant!” And no  
 voice replied.  
 At the first I saw naught but the blackness; but soon  
 I descried

A something more black than the blackness—the vast,  
the upright  
Main prop which sustains the pavilion : and slow into  
sight  
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.  
Then a sunbeam, that burst thro' the tent-roof, showed  
Saul.

## IV.

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms stretched  
out wide  
On the great cross-support in the centre, that goes to  
each side ;  
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as, caught  
in his pangs  
And waiting his change, the king serpent all heavily  
hangs,  
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come  
With the spring-time,—so agonized Saul, drear and  
stark, blind and dumb.

## V.

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we twine  
round its chords  
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide—  
those sunbeams like swords!  
And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as,  
one after one,  
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.  
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they  
have fed  
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the  
stream's bed ;

And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star  
 Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue and so far!

## VI.

—Then the tune, for which quails on the cornland  
 will each leave his mate  
 To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate  
 Till for boldness they fight one another: and then,  
 what has weight  
 To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house—  
 There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!  
 God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our fear,  
 To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

## VII.

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-song, when hand  
 Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship, and great hearts expand  
 And grow one in the sense of this world's life.—And then, the last song  
 When the dead man is praised on his journey—"Bear, bear him along  
 With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets! Are balm seeds not here  
 To console us? The land has none left such as he on the bier.

Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!"—And  
 then, the glad chaunt  
 Of the marriage,—first go the young maidens, next,  
 she whom we vaunt  
 As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling.—And then,  
 the great march  
 Wherein man runs to man to assist him and buttress  
 an arch  
 Naught can break ; who shall harm them, our friends?  
 —Then, the chorus intoned  
 As the levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned.  
 But I stopped here : for here in the darkness Saul  
 groaned.

## VIII.

And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and  
 listened apart ;  
 And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered : and  
 sparkles 'gan dart  
 From the jewels that woke in his turban at once with  
 a start  
 All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous  
 at heart.  
 So the head : but the body still moved not, still hung  
 there erect.  
 And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it un-  
 checked,  
 As I sang,—

## IX.

“ Oh, our manhood's prime vigor ! No  
 spirit feels waste,  
 Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew un-  
 braced.

Oh, the wild joys of living ! the leaping from rock up  
to rock,  
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the  
cool silver shock  
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of  
the bear,  
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his  
lair.  
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold  
dust divine,  
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full  
draught of wine,  
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bul-  
rushes tell  
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and  
well.  
How good is man's life, the mere living ! how fit to  
employ  
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in  
joy !  
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose  
sword thou didst guard  
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glo-  
rious reward ?  
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up  
as men sung  
The low song of the nearly departed, and hear her  
faint tongue  
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one  
more attest,  
I have lived, seen God's hand thro' a lifetime, and  
all was for best !'  
Then they sung thro' their tears in strong triumph,  
not much, but the rest.





By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was struck  
by his name.  
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes  
right to the aim,  
And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that  
held (he alone,  
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a  
broad bust of stone  
A year's snow bound about for a breastplate,—leaves  
grasp of the sheet ?  
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down  
to his feet,  
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet,  
your mountain of old,  
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages  
untold—  
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each fur-  
row and scar  
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest—all  
hail, there they are !  
—Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold  
the nest  
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the  
green on his crest  
For their food in the ardors of summer. One long  
shudder thrilled  
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was  
stilled  
At the King's self left standing before me, released  
and aware.  
What was gone, what remained ? All to traverse  
'twixt hope and despair.  
Death was past, life not come : so he waited. Awhile  
his right hand

Held the brow, helped the eyes, left too vacant, forth-  
 with to remand  
 To their place what new objects should enter : 't was  
 Saul as before.  
 I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor was  
 hurt any more  
 Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye watch from  
 the shore,  
 At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean—a sun's slow  
 decline  
 Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'erlap and  
 entwine  
 Base with base to knit strength more intensely : so,  
 arm folded arm  
 O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

## XI.

What spell or what charm,  
 (For, awhile there was trouble within me) what next  
 should I urge  
 To sustain him where song had restored him?—Song  
 filled to the verge  
 His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it  
 yields  
 Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty : be-  
 yond, on what fields,  
 Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten  
 the eye  
 And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the  
 cup they put by ?  
 He saith, " It is good ; " still he drinks not : he lets  
 me praise life,  
 Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

## XII.

Then fancies grew rife  
 Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round  
 me the sheep  
 Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled slow as  
 in sleep ;  
 And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that  
 might lie  
 'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt the  
 hill and the sky.  
 And I laughed—“ Since my days are ordained to be  
 passed with my flocks,  
 Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains  
 and the rocks,  
 Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the  
 show  
 Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly  
 shall know !  
 Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the  
 courage that gains,  
 And the prudence that keeps what men strive for.”  
 And now these old trains  
 Of vague thought came again ; I grew surer ; so, once  
 more the string  
 Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus—

## XIII.

“ Yea, my King,”  
 I began—“ thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts  
 that spring.  
 From the mere mortal life held in common by man  
 and by brute :  
 In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul  
 it bears fruit.





(See, in tablets 't is level before them) their praise, and  
record

With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,—the states-  
man's great word

Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The  
river's a-wave

With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when  
prophet-winds rave :

So the pen gives unborn generations their due and  
their part

In thy being ! Then, first of the mighty, thank God  
that thou art !”

## XIV.

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who  
didst grant me, that day,

And, before it, not seldom hast granted thy help to  
essay,

Carry on and complete an adventure,—my shield and  
my sword

In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy word  
was my word,—

Still be with me, who then at the summit of human  
endeavor

And scaling the highest, man's thought could, gazed  
hopeless as ever

On the new stretch of heaven above me—till, mighty  
to save,

Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance—God's  
throne from man's grave !

Let me tell out my tale to its ending—my voice to  
my heart

Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels last  
night I took part,

As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with  
 my sheep!  
 And still fear lest the terrible glory vanish like sleep,  
 For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron  
 upheaves  
 The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and  
 Kidron retrieves  
 Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

## xv.

I say then,—my song  
 While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and, ever  
 more strong,  
 Made a proffer of good to console him—he slowly  
 resumed  
 His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right  
 hand replumed  
 His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted  
 the swathes.  
 Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that his coun-  
 tenance bathes,  
 He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his  
 loins as of yore,  
 And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the clasp  
 set before.  
 He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—ere error had bent  
 The broad brow from the daily communion; and  
 still, though much spent  
 Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same,  
 God did choose,  
 To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never  
 quite lose.  
 So sank he along by the tent-prop, still, stayed by  
 the pile

Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned  
there awhile,  
And sat out my singing,—one arm round the tent-  
prop, to raise  
His bent head, and the other hung slack—till I  
touched on the praise  
I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man patient  
there ;  
And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first  
I was 'ware  
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast  
knees  
Which were thrust out on each side around me, like  
oak roots which please  
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to  
know  
If the best I could do had brought solace : he spoke  
not, but slow  
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with  
care  
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow :  
thro' my hair  
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my  
head, with kind power—  
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a  
flower.  
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scruti-  
nized mine—  
And oh, all my heart how it loved him ! but where  
was the sign ?  
I yearned—“ Could I help thee, my father, inventing  
a bliss,  
I would add, to that life of the past, both the future  
and this ;



I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages  
 hence,  
 As this moment,—had love but the warrant, love's  
 heart to dispense !”

## xvi.

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—no  
 song more ! outbroke—

## xvii.

“I have gone the whole round of creation : I saw and  
 I spoke ;  
 I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in  
 my brain  
 And pronounced on the rest of his handwork—re-  
 turned him again  
 His creation's approval or censure : I spoke as I saw.  
 I report, as a man may of God's work—all 's love, yet  
 all 's law.  
 Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each  
 faculty tasked  
 To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dew-  
 drop was asked.  
 Have I knowledge ? confounded it shrivels at Wisdom  
 laid bare.  
 Have I forethought ? how purblind, how blank, to the  
 Infinite Care !  
 Do I task any faculty highest, to image success ?  
 I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more and no  
 less,  
 In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is  
 seen God  
 In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and  
 the clod.

And thus looking within and around me, I ever  
renew

(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises  
it too)

The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-  
complete,

As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet.  
Yet with all this abounding experience, this deity  
known,

I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my  
own.

There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hood-  
wink,

I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh as I think),  
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I  
worst

E'en the Giver in one gift.—Behold, I could love if I  
durst!

But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may  
o'ertake

God's own speed in the one way of love: I abstain for  
love's sake.

—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when  
doors great and small,

Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch, should the  
hundredth appal?

In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the great-  
est of all?

Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate  
gift,

That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here  
the parts shift?

Here, the creature surpasses the creator,—the end, what  
began?

Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this  
   man,  
 And dare doubt he alone shall not help him, who yet  
   alone can ?  
 Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will,  
   much less power,  
 To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvellous  
   dower  
 Of the life he was gifted and filled with ? to make such  
   a soul,  
 Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering  
   the whole ?  
 And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears  
   attest)  
 These good things being given, to go on, and give  
   one more, the best ?  
 Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at  
   the height  
 This perfection,—succeed, with life's dayspring,  
   death's minute of night ?  
 Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul, the  
   mistake,  
 Saul, the failure, the ruin he seems now,—and bid  
   him awake  
 From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find  
   himself set  
 Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a new  
   harmony yet  
 To be run and continued, and ended—who knows ?—  
   or endure !  
 The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to  
   make sure ;  
 By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified  
   bliss,

And the next world's reward and repose, by the  
struggles in this.

## XVIII.

I believe it! 'T is thou, God, that givest, 't is I who  
receive :

In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to  
believe.

All's one gift : thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt  
to my prayer,

As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to  
the air.

From thy will, stream the worlds, life and nature, thy  
dread Sabaoth :

*I* will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why am I not  
loth

To look that, even that in the face too? Why is it I  
dare

Think but lightly of such impuissance? What stops  
my despair?

This ;—'t is not what man Does which exalts him, but  
what man Would do!

See the King—I would help him, but cannot, the  
wishes fall through.

Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor  
to enrich,

To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—know-  
ing which,

I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through  
me now!

Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou  
—so wilt thou!

So shall crown thee the topmast, ineffablest, utter-  
most crown—



And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled  
and shot  
Out in fire the strong paint of pent knowledge : but  
I fainted not,  
For the Hand still impelled me at once and sup-  
ported, suppressed  
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy  
behest,  
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank  
to rest.  
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from  
earth—  
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender  
birth ;  
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the  
hills ;  
In the shuddering forests' held breath ; in the sudden  
wind-thrills ;  
In the startled wild beasts that bore oft, each with  
eye sidling still  
Though averted with wonder and dread ; in the birds  
stiff and chill  
That rose heavily as I approached them, made stupid  
with awe :  
E'en the serpent that slid away silent—he felt the  
new law.  
The same stared in the white humid faces upturned  
by the flowers ;  
The same worked in the heart of the cedar and  
moved the vine-bowers :  
And the little brooks witnessing murmured, persist-  
ent and low,  
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—" E'en  
so, it is so!"

## RABBI BEN EZRA.

## I.

GROW old along with me !  
 The best is yet to be,  
 The last of life, for which the first was made :  
 Our times are in His hand  
 Who saith " A whole I planned,  
 Youth shows but half ; trust God : see all, nor be  
 afraid ! "

## II.

Not that, amassing flowers,  
 Youth sighed " Which rose make ours,  
 Which lily leave and then as best recall ! "  
 Not that, admiring stars,  
 It yearned " Nor Jove, nor Mars ;  
 Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends  
 them all ! "

## III.

Not for such hopes and fears  
 Annulling youth's brief years,  
 Do I remonstrate : folly wide the mark !  
 Rather I prize the doubt  
 Low kinds exist without,  
 Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

## IV.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,  
 Were man but formed to feed  
 On joy, to solely seek and find and feast :  
 Such feasting ended, then  
 As sure an end to men ;  
 Irks care the crop-full bird ? Frets doubt the maw-  
 crammed beast ?

## V.

Rejoice we are allied  
 To That which doth provide  
 And not partake, effect and not receive !  
 A spark disturbs our clod ;  
 Nearer we hold of God  
 Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

## VI.

Then, welcome each rebuff  
 That turns earth's smoothness rough,  
 Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go !  
 Be our joys three-parts pain !  
 Strive, and hold cheap the strain ;  
 Learn, nor account the pang ; dare, never grudge the  
 throe !

## VII.

For thence,—a paradox  
 Which comforts while it mocks,—  
 Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail :  
 What I aspired to be,  
 And was not, comforts me :  
 A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the  
 scale.

## VIII.

What is he but a brute  
 Whose flesh has soul to suit,  
 Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play ?  
 To man, propose this test—  
 Thy body at its best,  
 How far can that project thy soul on its lone way ?



## IX.

Yet gifts should prove their use :  
 I own the Past profuse  
 Of power each side, perfection every turn :  
 Eyes, ears took in their dole,  
 Brain treasured up the whole ;  
 Should not the heart beat once " How good to live  
 and learn ? "

## X.

Not once beat " Praise be Thine !  
 I see the whole design,  
 I, who saw power, see now love perfect too :  
 Perfect I call Thy plan :  
 Thanks that I was a man !  
 Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou shalt  
 do ! "

## XI.

For pleasant is this flesh ;  
 Our soul, in its rose-mesh  
 Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest :  
 Would we some prize might hold  
 To match those manifold  
 Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best !

## XII.

Let us not always say  
 " Spite of this flesh to-day  
 I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole ! "  
 As the bird wings and sings,  
 Let us cry " All good things  
 Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh  
 helps soul ! "

## XIII.

Therefore I summon age  
 To grant youth's heritage,  
 Life's struggle having so far reached its term :  
 Thence shall I pass, approved  
 A man, for aye removed  
 From the developed brute ; a God though in the germ.

## XIV.

And I shall thereupon  
 Take rest, ere I be gone  
 Once more on my adventure brave and new :  
 Fearless and unperplexed,  
 When I wage battle next,  
 What weapons to select, what armor to indue.

## XV.

Youth ended, I shall try  
 My gain or loss thereby ;  
 Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold :  
 And I shall weigh the same,  
 Give life its praise or blame :  
 Young, all lay in dispute ; I shall know, being old.

## XVI.

For, note when evening shuts,  
 A certain moment cuts,  
 The deed off, calls the glory from the gray :  
 A whisper from the west  
 Shoots—" Add this to the rest,  
 Take it and try its worth : here dies another day."

## XVII.

So, still within this life,  
 Though lifted o'er its strife,  
 Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,

“ This rage was right i' the main,  
That acquiescence vain :  
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past.”

## XVIII.

For more is not reserved  
To man, with soul just nerved  
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day :  
Here, work enough to watch  
The Master work, and catch  
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

## XIX.

As it was better, youth  
Should strive, through acts uncouth,  
Toward making, than repose on aught found made :  
So, better, age, exempt  
From strife, should know, than tempt  
Further. Thou waitedst age : wait death nor be afraid !

## XX.

Enough now, if the Right  
And Good and Infinite  
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,  
With knowledge absolute,  
Subject to no dispute  
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

## XXI.

Be there, for once and all,  
Severed great minds from small,  
Announced to each his station in the Past !  
Was I, the world arraigned,  
Were they, my soul disdained,  
Right ? Let age speak the truth and give us peace  
at last !

## XXII.

Now, who shall arbitrate?  
 Ten men love what I hate,  
 Shun what I follow, slight what I receive ;  
 Ten, who in ears and eyes  
 Match me : we all surmise,  
 They, this thing, and I, that : whom shall my soul  
 believe ?

## XXIII.

Not on the vulgar mass  
 Called "work," must sentence pass,  
 Things done, that took the eye and had the price ;  
 O'er which, from level stand,  
 The low world laid its hand,  
 Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice :

## XXIV.

But all, the world's coarse thumb  
 And finger failed to plumb,  
 So passed in making up the main account :  
 All instincts immature,  
 All purposes unsure,  
 That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's  
 amount :

## XXV.

Thoughts hardly to be packed  
 Into a narrow act,  
 Fancies that broke through language and escaped :  
 All I could never be,  
 All, men ignored in me,  
 This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher  
 shaped.

## XXVI.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,  
 That metaphor! and feel  
 Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—  
 Thou, to whom fools propound,  
 When the wine makes its round,  
 "Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize  
 to-day!"

## XXVII.

Fool! All that is, at all,  
 Lasts ever, past recall;  
 Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:  
 What entered into thee,  
*That* was, is, and shall be:  
 Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay-  
 endure.

## XXVIII.

He fixed thee mid this dance  
 Of plastic circumstance,  
 This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:  
 Machinery just meant  
 To give thy soul its bent,  
 Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

## XXIX.

What though the earlier grooves  
 Which ran the laughing loves  
 Around thy base, no longer pause and press?  
 What though, about thy rim,  
 Scull-things in order grim  
 Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

xxx.

Look not thou down but up !  
 To uses of a cup,  
 The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,  
 The new wine's foaming flow,  
 The Master's lips a-glow !  
 Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou  
 with earth's wheel ?

xxxI.

But I need, now as then,  
 Thee, God, who moulded men !  
 And since, not even while the whirl was worst,  
 Did I,—to the wheel of life  
 With shapes and colors rife,  
 Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst :

xxxII.

So, take and use Thy work,  
 Amend what flaws may lurk,  
 What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim !  
 My times be in Thy hand !  
 Perfect the cup as planned !  
 Let age approve of youth, and death complete the  
 same !

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 EPILOGUE.
FIRST SPEAKER, *as David.*

I.

ON the first of the Feast of Feasts,  
 The Dedication Day,  
 When the Levites joined the Priests,  
 At the Altar in robed array,  
 Gave signal to sound and say,—

## II.

When the thousands, rear and van,  
 Swarming with one accord,  
 Became as a single man,  
 (Look, gesture, thought and word)  
 In praising and thanking the Lord,—

## III.

When the singers lift up their voice,  
 And the trumpets made endeavor,  
 Sounding, "In God rejoice!"  
 Saying, "In Him rejoice  
 Whose mercy endureth for ever!"

## IV.

Then the Temple filled with a cloud,  
 Even the House of the Lord;  
 Porch bent and pillar bowed:  
 For the presence of the Lord,  
 In the glory of His cloud,  
 Had filled the House of the Lord.

SECOND SPEAKER, *as Renan.*

Gone now! All gone across the dark so far,  
 Sharpening fast, shuddering ever, shutting still,  
 Dwindling into the distance, dies that star  
 Which came, stood, opened once! We gazed our  
 fill  
 With upturned faces on as real a Face  
 That, stooping from grave music and mild fire,  
 Took in our homage, made a visible place  
 Through many a depth of glory, gyre on gyre,  
 For the dim human tribute. Was this true?  
 Could man indeed avail, mere praise of his,

To help by rapture God's own rapture too,  
Thrill with a heart's red tinge that pure pale bliss ?  
Why did it end ? Who failed to beat the breast,  
And shriek, and throw the arms protesting wide.  
When a first shadow showed the star addressed  
Itself to motion, and on either side  
The rims contracted as the rays retired ;  
The music, like a fountain's sickening pulse,  
Subsided on itself ; awhile transpired  
Some vestige of a Face no pangs convulse,  
No prayers retard ; then even this was gone,  
Lost in the night at last. We, lone and left  
Silent through centuries, ever and anon  
Venture to probe again the vault bereft  
Of all now save the lesser lights, a mist  
Of multitudinous points, yet suns, men say—  
And this leaps ruby, this lurks amethyst,  
But where may hide what came and loved our clay ?  
How shall the sage detect in yon expanse  
The star which chose to stoop and stay for us ?  
Unroll the records ! Hailed ye such advance  
Indeed, and did your hope vanish thus ?  
Watchers of twilight, is the worst averred ?  
We shall not look up, know ourselves are seen,  
Speak, and be sure that we again are heard,  
Acting or suffering, have the disk's serene  
Reflect our life, absorb an earthly flame,  
Nor doubt that, were mankind inert and numb,  
Its core had never crimsoned all the same,  
Nor, missing ours, its music fallen dumb ?  
Oh, dread succession to a dizzy post,  
Sad sway of sceptre whose mere touch appals,  
Ghastly dethronement, cursed by those the most  
On whose repugnant brow the crown next falls !



## THIRD SPEAKER.

## I.

Witless alike of will and way divine,  
How heaven's high with earth's low should intertwine!  
Friends, I have seen through your eyes: now use mine!

## II.

Take the least man of all mankind, as I ;  
Look at his head and heart, find how and why  
He differs from his fellows utterly :

## III.

Then, like me, watch when nature by degrees  
Grows alive round him, as in Arctic seas  
(They said of old) the instinctive water flees

## IV.

Toward some elected point of central rock,  
As though, for its sake only, roamed the flock  
Of waves about the waste : awhile they mock

## V.

With radiance caught for the occasion,—hues  
Of blackest hell now, now such reds and blues  
As only heaven could fitly interfuse,—

## VI.

The mimic monarch of the whirlpool, king  
O' the current for a minute : then they wring  
Up by the roots and oversweep the thing,

## VII.

And hasten off, to play again elsewhere  
The same part, choose another peak as bare,  
They find and flatter, feast and finish there.

## VIII.

When you see what I tell you,—nature dance  
About each man of us, retire, advance,  
As though the pageant's end were to enhance

## IX.

His worth, and—once the life, his product, gained—  
Roll away elsewhere, keep the strife sustained,  
And show thus real, a thing the North but feigned,—

## X.

When you acknowledge that one world could do  
All the diverse work, old yet ever new,  
Divide us, each from other, me from you,—

## XI.

Why, where's the need of Temple, when the walls  
O' the world are that? What use of swells and falls  
From Levites' choir, Priests' cries, and trumpet-calls?

## XII.

That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,  
Or decomposes but to recompose,  
Become my universe that feels and knows!







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