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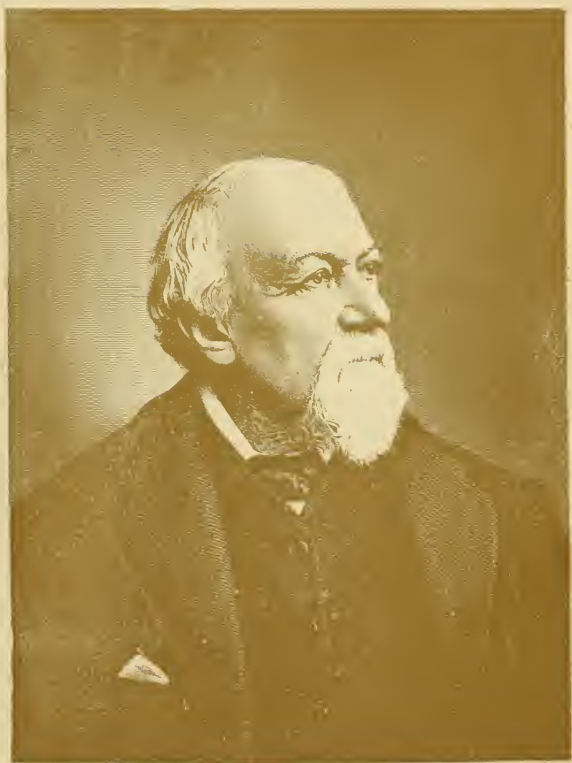
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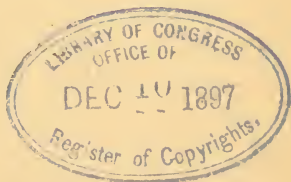
From Robert Browning's
"THE RING AND
THE BOOK."



Compiled by
E. D. Van Der Lieth
Of the Leisure Hour Club,
Carson, Nevada.



Carson,
Dunn and Lemmon,
1897.



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BY E. D. VAN DER LIETH.

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To My Mother
This Little Booklet
Is Lovingly Dedicated.

I have here only made a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the thread that ties them.

—Montaigne.



Browning is Browning, and we can take him or leave him. If we leave him we leave much, and if we take him, a life-time cannot exhaust the marvelous mine.

He belongs to the world's great teachers and inspirers. He stands by Carlyle and Emerson, in protest against the low and unworthy in life and thought.

Guido, Caponsacchi and the Pope stand as clearly before us as Iago, Prospero, or Lear, while Pompilia has hardly a mate even in Shakespeare.

—Murdock.



The Ring and the Book.



BOOK I.

The Ring and the Book.

But human promise, oh, how short of shine!
How topple down the piles of hope we rear!

—Line 295.

He had trod many lands, known many deeds,
Probed many hearts, beginning with his own,
And now was far in readiness for God.

—Line 303.

Well, now; there's nothing in nor out o' the world
Good except truth.

—Line 698.

Feeling as we are wont
For truth, and stopping midway short of truth,
And resting on a lie. —Line 742.

The frost is over and gone, the south wind laughs,
And, to the very tiles of each red roof
A-smoke i' the sunshine, Rome lies gold and glad.
—Line 905.

What the superior social section thinks.
—Line 927.

Smoke comes first;
Once let smoke rise untroubled, we descry
Clearlier what tongues of flame may spire and spit
To eye and ear, each with appropriate tinge
According to its food, or pure or foul.
—Line 943.

It is so hard for shrewdness to admit
Folly means no harm when she calls black white!
—Line 967,

For the world's the world,
And, what it errs in, Judges rectify.
—Line 971.

Vows can't change nature, priests are only men.
—Line 1057.

Alh, the gift of eloquence!
Language that goes, goes, easy as a glove,
O'er good and evil, smoothens both to one.

—Line 1179.

All a man hath that will he give for life.

—Line 1274.

Learn and love
Each facet-flash of the revolving year!
Red, green and blue that whirl into a white,
The variance now, the eventual unity,
Which make the miracle.

—Line 1360.

Action now shrouds, nor shows the informing thought;
Man, like a glass ball with a spark a-top,
Out of the magic fire that lurks inside,
Shows one tint at a time to take the eye;
Which, let a finger touch the silent sleep,
Shifted a hair's-breadth shoots you dark for bright,
Suffuses bright with dark, and baffles so
Your sentence absolute for shine or shade.

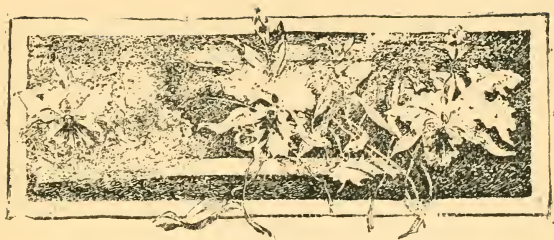
—Line 1366.

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird
And all a wonder with a wild desire,—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,

Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,—
Yet humun at the red-ripe of the heart—
When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their blue,
And bared them of the glory—to 'drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—
This is the same voice; can thy soul know change?
Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help!
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—
That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendour once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile;
—Never conclude, but raising hand and head
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
Their utmost up and on,—so blessing back
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud,
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall!

—Line 1391.

(Invocation to his wife,
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING,
in the spirit world.)



The Ring and the Book.



BOOK II.

Half-Rome.

Quoth Solomon, one black eye does it all.

—Line 428.

That bubble, they were bent on blowing big,
He had blown already till he burst his cheeks,
And hence found soapsuds bitter to the tongue.

—Line 454.

Cold glories served up with stale fame for sauce.

—Line 676.

And so the matter stands, even to this hour,
Banded as balls are in a tennis-court,
And so might stand, unless some heart broke first,
Till doomsday.

—Line 755.

Why, once a dwelling's threshold marked and crossed
In rubric by the enemy on his rounds
As eligible, as fit place of prey,
Baffle him henceforth, keep him out who can!
Stop up the door at first hint of hoof,
Presently at the window taps a horn,
And Satan's by your fireside, never fear!

—Line 766.

Laugh him free
O' the regular jealous-fit that's incident
To all old husbands that wed brisk young wives,
And he'll go docile all his days.

—Line 827.

The Canon? We caress him, he's the world's,
A man of such acceptance.

—Line 836.

From the pressure of this spring
Began the chime and interchange of bells,
Ever one whisper, and one whisper more,
And just one whisper for the silvery last,
Till all at once a-row the bronze-throats burst
Into a larum both significant
And sinister.

—Line 847.

But facts are facts and flinch not; stubborn things.

—Line 1049.

Let law shine forth and show, as God in heaven,
Vice prostrate, virtue pedestalled at last,

The triumph of truth!

—Line 1085.

A wife that flies her husband's house, does wrong.

—Line 1094.

Innocence often looks like guiltiness.

—Line 1108.

Beauty in distress,
Beauty whose tale is the town-talk beside,
Never lacks friendship's arm about her neck.

—Line 1333.

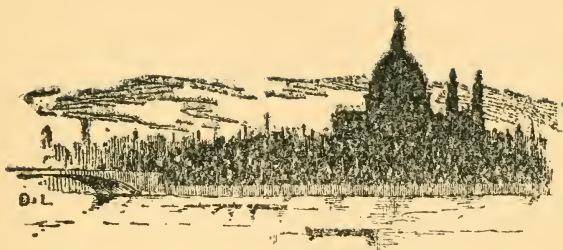
Some angel must have whispered "One more chance!"
—Line 1404.

Since I am but man, I dare not do
God's work until assured I see with God.
—Line 1412.

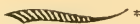
The burnt child dreads the fire
Although that fire feed on some taper-wick
Which never left the altar nor singed a fly.
—Line 1425.

Had a harmless man tripped you by chance,
How would you wait him, stand or step aside,
When next you heard he rolled your way?
—Line 1428.





The Ring and the Book.



BOOK III.

The Other Half-Rome.

She got one glimpse of quiet and the cool blue,
To show her for a moment such things were.

—Line 16.

When a probationary soul that moved
From nobleness to nobleness, as she,
Over the rough way of the world, succumbs,
Bloodies its last thorn with unflinching foot,
The angels love to do their work betimes,
Staunch some wounds here nor leave so much for God.

—Line 20.

Crime will not fail to flare up from men's hearts
While hearts are men's and so born criminal.

—Line 99.

'Tis in a child, man and wife grow complete;
One flesh; God says so.

—Line 153.

Prosperity rolled river-like and stopped,
Making their mill go; but when wheel wore out,
The wave would find a space and sweep on free
And, half-a-mile off, grind some neighbour's corn.

—Line 165.

For he was slipping into years apace,
And years make men restless—they needs must spy
Some certainty, some sort of end assured,
Some sparkle, tho' from topmost beacon-tip,
That warrants life a harbour through the haze.

—Line 284.

Trust's politic, suspicion does the harm,
There is but one way to brow-beat this world,
Dumb-founder doubt, and repay scorn in kind,—
To go on trusting, namely, till faith move
Mountains.

—Line 484.

Truth being truth,
Tell it and shame the devil!

—Line 611

What did I say of one in a quag?—
Should catch a hand from heaven and spring thereby
Out of the mud, on ten toes stand once more.

—Line 619.

Night brings discretion. —Line 1029.

In the great right of an excessive wrong.
—Line 1055.

Autumn claps

Her hands, cries "Winter's coming, will be here,
Off with you ere the white teeth overtake!"
—Line 1122.

Something like a huge white wave o' the sea
Broke o'er my brain and buried me in sleep
Blessedly, till it ebbed and left me loose.
—Line 1147.

Earth was made hell to me who did no harm;
I only could emerge one way from hell
By catching at the one hand held me, so
I caught at it and thereby stepped to heaven;
If that be wrong, do with me what you will!
—Line 1344

If as a man, then much more as a priest
I hold me bound to help weak innocence.
—Line 1351.

Blame I can bear though not blameworthiness.
—Line 1355.

So is he rid of his domestic plague;
What better thing could happen to a man?

—Line 1407.

So pays the devil his liegeman, brass for gold.

—Line 1463.

Plied influential folk, pressed to the ear
Of the efficacious purple.

—Line 1470.

When the she-dove breeds, strange yearnings come
For the unknown shelter by undreamed-of shores,
And there is born a blood-pulse in her heart
To fight if needs be, though with flap of wing,
For the wool-flock or the fur-tuft, though a hawk
Contest the prize,—wherefore she knows not yet.

—Line 1533.

Wipe out the past, all done all left undone,
Swell the good present to best evermore.

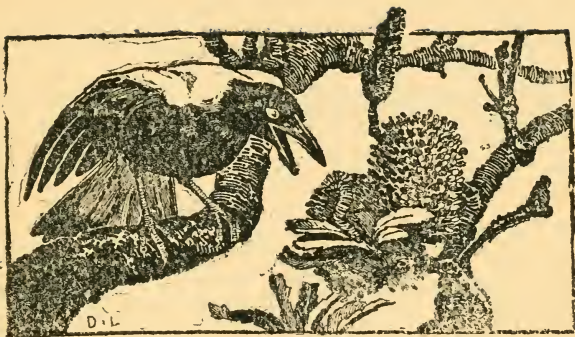
—Line 1567.

One,
Struck the year's clock whereof the hours are days,
And off was rung o' the little wheels the chime
"Good will on earth and peace to man."

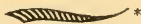
—Line 1589.

Stealthy guests
Have secret watchwords, private entrances.

—Line 1611.



The Ring and the Book.



BOOK IV.

Tertium Quid.

Law's a machine from which, to please the mob,
Truth the divinity must needs descend
And clear things at the play's fifth act—aha!
—Line 15.

Oh, make us happy and you make us good!

—Line 302.

Mothers, wives and maids,
These be the tools wherewith priests manage men.

—Line 503.

Unprofitable noise
Angers at all times; but when those who plague,
Do it from inside your own house and home,
Gnats which yourself have closed the curtain round,
Noise goes too near the brain and makes you mad.

—Line 558.

You can't do some things with impunity.

—Line 680.

A wound i' the flesh no doubt wants prompt redress;
It smarts a little to-day, well in a week,
Forgotten in a month; * * * * *
But a wound to the soul? That rankles worse and worse.

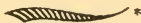
—Line 1529.

Hell broke loose on a butterfly.
A dragon born of rose-dew and the moon.

—Line 1601.



The Ring and the Book.



BOOK V.

Count Guido Franceschini.

Penury makes wit premature. —Line 167.

Get honour, and keep honour free from flaw,
Aim at still higher honour. —Line 446.

Admit that honour is a privilege,
The question follows, privilege worth what?
Why, worth the market-price,—now up, now down,
Just so with this as with all other ware.
—Line 460.

Mud

Needs must pair off with mud, and filth with filth.

—Line 761.

Is this, we live on, heaven and the final state,
Or earth which means probation to the end?

—Line 1414.

Why claim escape from man's predestined lot
Of being beaten and baffled?—God's decree,
In which I, bowing bruised head, acquiesce.

—Line 1416.

I listened to some song in the ear, some snatch
Of a legend, relic of religion, stray
Fragment of record very strong and old
Of the first conscience, the anterior right,
The God's-gift to mankind, impulse to quench
The antagonistic spark of hell and tread
Satan and all his malice into dust,
Declare to the world the one law, right is right.

—Line 1571.

Lies breed lies.

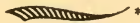
—Line 1698.

God shall not lose a life
May do him further service.

—Line 1746.



The Ring and the Book.



BOOK VI.

Giuseppe Caponsacchi.

Then,
You were wrong, you see; that's well to see, though late;
That's all we may expect of man, this side
The grave; his good is—knowing he is bad;
Thus will it be with us when the books ope
And we stand at the bar on judgment day.

—Line 141.

For you and the others like you sure to come,
Fresh work is sure to follow,—wickedness
That wants withstanding. —Line 161.

Saints, to do us good,
Must be in heaven, I seem to understand;
We never find them saints before, at least.
—Line 175.

The snow-white soul that angels fear to take
Untenderly. —Line 195.

This it is to have to do
With honest hearts; they easily may err,
But in the main they wish well to the truth.
—Line 208.

Somehow, no one ever plucked
A rag, even, from the body of the Lord,
To wear and mock with, but, despite himself, ✓
He looked the greater and was the better.
—Line 211.

Add not a brick, but, where you see a chink,
Stick in a sprig of ivy or root of rose
Shall make amends and beautify the pile.
—Line 297.

Make for port,
Crowd sail, crack cordage. And your cargo be
A polished presence, a genteel manner, wit
At will, and tact at every pore of you!
—Line 369.

Amen's at the end of all. —Line 392.

I will live alone, one does so in a crowd,
And look into my heart a little. —Line 480.

One evening I was sitting in a muse,
* * * * * thinking how my life
Had shaken under me,—broke short indeed
And showed the gap 'twixt what is, what should be,—
And into what abysm the soul may slip,
Leaving aspirations here, achievements there,
Lacking omnipotence to connect extremes.
—Line 483.

'Twas a thief said the last kind word to Christ;
Christ took the kindness and forgave the theft.
—Line 869.

Life and death
Are means to an end, that passion uses both,
Indisputably mistress of the man
Whose form of worship is self-sacrifice.
—Line 996.

Duty is still wisdom; I have been wise.
—Line 1053.

Men,
You must know that a man gets drunk with truth
Stagnant inside him!
—Line 1162.

The first faint scratch
O' the stone will test its nature, teach its worth.
—Line 1168.

It is faith,
The feeling that there's God, He reigns and rules
Out of this low world.
—Line 1193.

All pain must be to work some good in the end.
—Line 1225.

Rocks split,—and the blow-ball does no more,
Quivers to feathery nothing at a touch;
And strength may have its drawback weakness scapes.
—Line 1246.

I want
No face nor voice that change and grow unkind.
—Line 1317.

Each human being needs must have done wrong!
—Line 1352.

There was no duty patent in the world
Like daring try be good and true myself,
Leaving the shows of things to the Lord of Show
And Prince o' the Power of the Air.

—Line 1818.

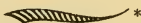
To have to do with nothing but the true,
The good, the eternal—and these, not alone
In the main current of the general life,
But small experiences of every day,
Concerns of the particular hearth and home;
To learn not not only by a comet's rush
But a rose's birth—not by the grandeur, God—
But the Comfort, Christ.

—Line 2089.





The Ring and the Book.



BOOK VII.

Pompilia.

Everyone says that husbands love their wives,
Guard them and guide them, give them happiness;
'Tis duty, law, pleasure, religion. —Line 152.

Downright love atones for everything!
—Line 174.

The law is stronger than a wicked man.
—Line 231.

God plants us where we grow.
It is not that because a bud is born
At a wild briar's end, full i' the wild beast's way,
We ought to pluck and put it out of reach
On the oak-tree top,—say "There the bud belongs!"
—Line 301.

Wrong, wrong and always wrong! how plainly wrong!
—Line 312.

For, wife and husband are one flesh, God says.
—Line 333.

One cannot judge
Of what has been the ill or well of life
The day that one is dying. —Line 344.

One cannot both have and not have, you know.
—Line 353.

Yes, everybody that leaves life sees all
Softened and bettered. —Line 355.

To me at least was never evening yet
But seemed far beautifuller than its day, ✓
For past is past. —Line 357.

May spilt milk be put back within the bowl—
The done thing, undone? —Line 502.

A priest is more a woman than a man.
—Line 549.

It is the good of dreams—so soon they go!
—Line 586.

Good lasts.
—Line 595

Search and find!
For your soul's sake, remember what is past,
The better to forgive it.
—Line 596.

Echoes die off, scarcely reverberate
For ever,—why should ill keep echoing ill.
And never let our ears have done with noise?
—Line 650.

All human plans and projects come to nought;
My life, and what I know of other lives,
Prove that.
—Line 902.

So we are made, such difference in minds,
Such difference too in eyes that see the minds!
—Line 918.

Have hope now, and one day expect content!
—Line 996.

Reflect that God, who makes the storm desist,
Can make an angry violent heart subside.
—Line 1101.

Done, another day!
How good to sleep and so get nearer death!
—Line 1220.

God the strong, God the beneficent,
God ever mindful in all strife and strait,
Who, for our own good, makes the need extreme,
Till at the last He puts forth might and saves.
—Line 1385.

Give tongue
The adequate protest; for a worm must turn
If it would have its wrong observed by God.
—Line 1591.

Prayers move God; threats, and nothing else, move men!
—Line 1624.

What o' the way to the end?—the end crowns all.
—Line 1648.

I have gained my gain, enjoyed
As well as suffered,—nay, got foretaste too
Of better life beginning where this ends.
—Line 1668.

A fortnight filled with bliss is long and much.

—Line 1682.

In His face
Is light, but in His shadow healing too.

—Line 1720.

The great life; see, a breath and it is gone!
So is detached, so left all by itself
The little life, the fact which means so much.

—Line 1746.

Who is it makes the soft gold hair turn black,
And sets the tongue, might lie so long at rest,
Trying to talk?

—Line 1757.

Let us leave God alone!
Why should I doubt He will explain in time
What I feel now, but fail to find the words?

—Line 1759.

No work begun shall ever pause for death!

—Line 1787.

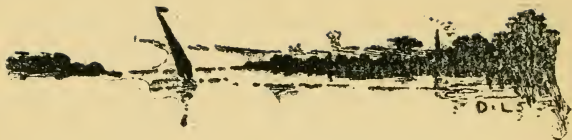
Marriage on earth seems such a counterfeit,
Mere imitation of the inimitable;
In heaven we have the real and true and sure.

—Line 1824.

So, let him wait God's instant men call years;
Meantime hold hard by truth and his great soul,
Do out the duty! —Line 1841.

Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of His light
For us i' the dark to rise by. —Line 1843.





The Ring and the Book.



BOOK VIII.

Dominus Hyacinthus DeArchangelis.

How vain are chambering and wantonness,
Revel and rout and pleasures that make mad!

—Line 49.

Commend me to home-joy, the family board,
Altar and hearth! These, with a brisk career,
A source of honest profit and good fame,
Just so much work as keeps the brain from rust,
Just so much play as lets the heart expand,
Honouring God and serving man,—I say,
These are reality, and all else,—fluff,
Nutshell and naught.

—Line 51.

Turn up the hour-glass, whence no sand-grain slips
But should have done its duty to the saint
O' the day. —Line 61.

How good God is! How falls plumb to point!
—Line 75.

The fact is, there's a blessing on the hearth,
A special providence for fatherhood! —Line 82.

This flower o' the field, no Solomon
Was ever clothed in glorious gold to match.
—Line 89.

Non nobis, Domine, sed tibi laus! —Line 94.

We don't card silk with comb that dresses wool.
—Line 324.

It should be always harder to convict,
In short, than to establish innocence.
—Line 456.

Honour is a gift of God to man
Precious beyond compare. —Line 459.

Man, confessed creation's master-stroke.
—Line 534.

Honour is man's supreme good. —Line 585.

Whosoever, at the proper worth,
Apprises worldly honour and repute,
Esteems it nobler to die honoured man
* * * * * than live centuries
Disgraced in the eye o' the world. —Line 669.

Civilization bows to decency. —Line 742.

'Tis manners,—mild
But yet imperative law,—which make the man.
—Line 743.

A good thing, done unhandsomely, turns ill.
—Line 809.

Enough
Is good as a feast. —Line 835.

Right, promptly done, is twice right; right delayed
Turns wrong. —Line 982.

“For, wound,” said he
“My body, and the smart soon mends and ends;
While, wound my soul where honour sits and rules,
Longer the sufferance, stronger grows the pain,
Being *ex incontinenti*, fresh as first.”
—Line 999.

All means are lawful to a lawful end. —Line 1322.

Oh thou, who vigilantly dost attend
To even the few, the ineffectual words
Which rise from this our low and mundane sphere
Up to thy region out of smoke and noise,
Seeking corroboration from thy nod
Who art all justice—which means mercy too,
In a low noisy smoky world like ours
Where Adam's sin made peccable his seed!

—Line 1436.

Whose last faint sands of life, the frittered gold,
Fall noiselessly, yet all too fast, o' the cone
And tapering heap of those collected years.

—Line 1445.

What we may do, we may with safety do,
And what means "safety" we ourselves must judge.

—Line 1483.

"Who helped him in the right can scarce be wrong."

—Line 1557.

Ambition's range
Is nowise tethered by domestic tie.

—Line 1776.

"Remove far from me vanity and lies.
"Feed me with food convenient for me." What
I' the world should a wise man require beyond?

—Line 1786.



The Ring and the Book.



BOOK IX.

Juris Doctor Johannes-Baptista Bottinius.

And what is beauty's sure concomitant,
Nay, intimate essential character,
But melting wiles, deliciouslest deceits,
The whole redoubted armoury of love?

—Line 229.

Tyranny wakes rebellion from its sleep.

—Line 411.

“With horns the bull, with teeth the lion fights;
“To woman,” quoth the lyrist quoted late,
“Nor teeth, nor horns, but beauty, Nature gave.”

—Line 427.

We praise each proof
That promise was not simply made to break,
Mere moonshine—structure meant to fade at dawn,
—Line 554.

Nothing mars
Work, else praiseworthy, like a bodily flaw
I' the worker. —Line 604.

A journey is an enterprise of cost! —Line 644.

The innocent sleep soundly. —Line 737.

Pity is so near to love, and love
So neighbourly to all unreasonableness!
—Line 754.

Man always ought to aim at good and truth.
—Line 780.

Each least lie breaks the law,—is sin, we hold.
—Line 785.

What prevents sin, itself is sinless, sure.
—Line 787.

Sin, which hinders sin of deeper dye,
Softens itself away by contrast so. —Line 788.

Now, what is greatest sin of womanhood?
That which unwomans it, abolishes
The nature of the woman,—impudence. —Line 793.

Man's best effort fails. —Line 844.

Could valour save a town, Troy still had stood.
—Line 846.

Superfluous sifting snow, nor helps nor harms;
'T is safe to censure levity in youth,
Tax womanhood with indiscretion, sure!
Since toys, permissible to-day, become
Follies to-morrow; prattle shocks in church.
—Line 1181.

That curt skirt which lets a maiden skip,
The matron changes for a trailing robe.
—Line 1186.

But let him not delay! Time fleets how fast,
And opportunity, the irrevocable,
Once flown will flout him! —Line 1237.

Little by little break a habit! —Line 1274.

Such power has second-nature, men call use,
That undelightful objects get to charm
Instead of chafe. —Line 1283.

Trifles serve
To make the minutes pass in winter-time.
—Line 1299.

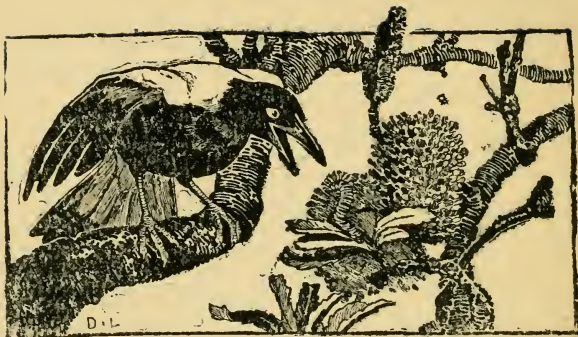
O' the sudden, as good gifts are wont befall.
—Line 1305.

O faith, where art thou flown from out the world?
—Line 1329.

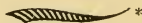
Art's long, though time is short. —Line 1459.

“Souls washed white
“But red once, still show pinkish to the eye!”
—Line 1499.

Abolishment is nothingness,
And nothingness has neither head nor tail,
End nor beginning! —Line 1501.



The Ring and the Book.



BOOK X.

The Pope (Innocent XII).

Since of the making books there is no end.

—Line 9.

Holy, just, true in thought and word and deed.

—Line 107.

“Fear ye not those whose power can kill the body
“And not the soul,” saith Christ. —Line 155.

Mankind is ignorant, a man am I;
Call ignorance my sorrow, not my sin!
—Line 258.

For I am aware it is the seed of act,
God holds appraising in His hollow palm,
Not act grown great thence on the world below,
Leafage and branchage, vulgar eyes admire.
—Line 272.

These filthy rags of speech, this coil
Of statement, comment, query and response,
Tatters all too contaminate for use,
Have no renewing; He, the Truth, is, too,
The Word. We men, in our degree, may know
There, simply, instantaneously, as here
After long time and amid many lies,
Whatever we dare think we know indeed
—That I am I, as He is He,—what else?
—Line 373.

Wise in its generation is the world. —Line 398.

Body and mind in balance, a sound frame,
A solid intellect; the wit to seek,
Wisdom to choose, and courage wherewithal
To deal in whatsoever circumstance
Should minister to man, make life succeed.
Oh, and much drawback! what were earth without?
—Line 403.

Is this our ultimate stage, or starting-place
To try man's foot, if it will creep or climb,
'Mid obstacles in seeming, points that prove
Advantage for who vaults from low to high
And makes the stumbling-block a stepping-stone?
—Line 409.

"Man is born nowise to content himself,
"But please God."
—Line 435.

All say good words
To who will hear, all do thereby bad deeds
To who must undergo; so thrive mankind!
—Line 518.

All is the lust for money; to get gold,—
Why, lie, rob, if it must be, murder! Make
Body and soul wring gold out, lured within
The clutch of hate by love, the trap's pretence!
—Line 543.

The fine
Felicity and flower of wickedness. —Line 590.

So a thorn
Comes to the aid of and completes the rose.
—Line 686.

Everywhere
I see in the world the intellect of man,
That sword, the energy his subtle spear,
The knowledge which defends him like a shield—
Everywhere. —Line 1013.

Thou, patient thus, couldst rise from law to law,
The old to the new, promoted at one cry
O' the trump of God to the new service, not
To longer bear, but henceforth fight, be found
Sublime in new impatience with the foe!
—Line 1056.

Endure man and obey God. —Line 1061.

But, brave,
Thou at first prompting of what I call God,
And fools call Nature, didst hear, comprehend,
Accept the obligation laid on thee,
Mother elect, to save the unborn child,
As brute and bird do, reptile and the fly,
Ay and, I nothing doubt, even tree, shrub, plant
And flower o' the field, all in a common pact
To worthily defend the trust of trusts,
Life from the Ever Living. —Line 1072.

The chivalry
That dares the right and disregards alike
The yea and nay o' the world. —Line 1114.

Why comes temptation but for man to meet
And master and make crouch beneath his foot,
And so be pedestaled in triumph? —Line 1185.

Be glad thou hast let light into the world
Through that irregular breach o' the boundary,—see
The same upon thy path and march assured,
Learning anew the use of soldiership,
Self-abnegation, freedom from all fear,
Loyalty to the life's end! —Line 1205.

Never again elude the choice of tints!
White shall not neutralize the black, nor good
Compensate bad in man, absolve him so;
Life's business being just the terrible choice.
—Line 1235.

Dark, difficult enough
The human sphere, yet eyes grow sharp by use,
I find the truth, dispart the shine from shade,
As a mere man may, with no special touch
O' the lynx-gift in each ordinary orb.
—Line 1241.

“Brighten each nook with thine intelligence!
“Play the good householder, ply man and maid
“With tasks prolonged into the midnight, test
“Their work and nowise stint of the due wage
“Each worthy worker.” —Line 1266.

“Leave pavement and mount roof,
“Look round thee for the light of the upper sky.”
—Line 1275.

Yet my poor spark had for its source, the sun;
Thither I sent the great looks which compel
Light from its fount; all that I do and am
Comes from the truth, or seen or else surmised,
Remembered or divined, as mere man may;
I know just so, nor otherwise. —Line 1285.

I am near the end; but still not at the end;
All to the very end is trial in life. —Line 1303.

Man's mind, what is it but a convex glass
Wherein are gathered all the scattered points
Picked out of the immensity of sky,
To re-unite there, be our heaven for earth,
Our known unknown, our God revealed to man?
—Line 1311.

There is, besides the works, a tale of Thee
In the world's mouth, which I find credible;
I love it with my heart; unsatisfied,
I try it with my reason, nor discept
From any point I probe and pronounce sound.

* * * * *

Beyond the tale, I reach into the dark,
Feel what I cannot see, and still faith stands.

—Line 1348.

I can believe this dread machinery
Of sin and sorrow, would confound me else,
Devised,—all pain, at most expenditure
Of pain by Who devised pain,—to evolve,
By new machinery in counterpart,
The moral qualities of man—how else?—
To make him love in turn and be beloved,
Creative and self-sacrificing too,
And thus eventually God-like.

—Line 1375.

This life is training and a passage. —Line 1411.

The moral sense grows but by exercise.

—Line 1415.

Life is probation and the earth no goal
But starting-point of man; compel him strive,
Which, means in man, as good as reach the goal.

—Line 1436.

The world's praise or blame runs rillet-wise
Off the broad back and brawny breast, we know!

—Line 1477.

Great ones could help yet help not; why should small?

—Line 1484.

Since all flesh is weak,
Bind weakness together, we get strength.

—Line 1492.

Well, is the thing we see, salvation? I
Put no such dreadful question to myself,
Within whose circle of experience burns
The central truth, Power, Wisdom, Goodness,—God;
I must outlive a thing ere know it dead;
When I outlive the faith there is a sun,
When I lie, ashes to the very soul,—
Someone, not I, must wail above the heap,
“He died in dark whence never morn arose.”

—Line 1630.

A cloud may soothe the eye made blind by blaze.

—Line 1646.

How can man love but what he yearns to help?
And that which men think weakness within strength,
But angels know for strength and stronger yet—
What were it else but the first things made new,
But repetition of the miracle,
The divine instance of self-sacrifice
That never ends and aye begins for man?

—Line 1652.

It is the outward product men appraise.

—Line 1674.

“ Each impulse to achieve the good and fair,
“ Each aspiration to the pure and true,
“ Being without a warrant or an aim,
“ Was just as sterile a felicity
“ As if the insect, born to spend his life
“ Soaring his circles, stopped them to describe
“ (Painfully motionless in the mid-air)
“ Some word of weighty counsel for man’s sake,
“ Some ‘ Know thyself ’ or ‘ Take the golden mean !’
“ —Forwent his happy dance and the glad ray,
“ Died half an hour the sooner and was dust.”

—Line 1690.

“ Five hundred years ere Paul spoke, Felix heard,—
“ How much of temperance and righteousness,
“ Judgment to come, did I find reason for,
“ Corroborate with my strong style that spared
“ No sin, nor swerved the more from branding brow
“ Because the sinner was called Zeus and God?
“ How nearly did I guess at that Paul knew?
“ How closely come, in what I represent
“ As duty, to his doctrine yet a blank?”

—Line 1718.

“Thus, bold

“Yet self-mistrusting, should man bear himself,
“Most assured on what now concerns him most—
“The law of his own life, the path he prints,—
“Which law is virtue and not a vice, I say,—
“And least inquisitive where search least skills,
“I’ the nature we best give the clouds to keep.”

—Line 1753.

“Faith points the politic, the thrifty way,
“Will make who plods it, in the end, returns
“Beyond mere fool’s-sport and improvidence.

—Line 1835.

“We fools dance thro’ the cornfield of this life,
“Pluck ears to left and right and swallow raw,
“—Nay, tread, at pleasure, a sheaf underfoot,
“To get the better at some poppy-flower,—
“Well aware we shall have so much less wheat
“In the eventual harvest; you meantime
“Waste not a spike,—the richlier will you reap!”

—Line 1838.

Civilization is imperative.

—Line 2018.



The Ring and the Book.



BOOK XI.

Giudo.

Lucidity of soul unlocks the lips. —Line 159.

“A man requires a woman and a wife.”
There was my folly; I believed the saw. —Line 162.

Fools we are, how we learn things when too late!
—Line 167.

Christ’s maxim is—one soul outweighs the world.
—Line 359.

For, pleasure being the sole good in the world,
Anyone's pleasure turns to someone's pain.

—Line 529.

Who holds to faith whenever rain begins?

—Line 744.

“Get pleasure, 'scape pain,—give your preference

“To the immediate good, for time is brief,

“And death ends good and ill and everything!”

—Line 768.

“What's got is gained, what's gained soon is gained
twice.”

—Line 771.

“Live, enjoy?”

“Such life begins in death and ends in hell!”

—Line 807.

One must try each expedient to save life.

—Line 852.

A thousand gnats make up a serpent's sting,

And many sly soft stimulants to wrath

Compose a formidable wrong at last

That gets called easily by some one name

Not applicable to the single parts,

And so draws down a general revenge,

Excessive if you take crime, fault by fault.

—Line 890.

"Whine on, wail ever, 'tis the loser's right!"

—Line 1206.

Life, without absolute use
Of the actual sweet therein, is death, not life.

—Line 1487.

Why fell not things out so nor otherwise?
Ask that particular devil whose task it is
To trip the all-but-at-perfection,—slur
The line o' the painter just where paint leaves off
And life begins,—put ice into the ode
O' the poet while he cries "Next stanza—fire!"
Inscribes all human effort with one word,
Artistry's haunting curse, the Incomplete!

—Line 1554.

Every fool can swear
To hole in net that held and slipped the fish.

—Line 1563.

For unsuccess, explain it how you will,
Disqualifies you, makes you doubt yourself,
—Much more is found decisive by your friends.

—Line 1841.

Frown law its fiercest, there's a wink somewhere!

—Line 2003.

God takes his own part in each thing He made;
Made for a reason, He conserves His work,
Gives each its proper instinct of defence.

—Line 2301.

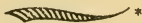
You never know what life means till you die;
Even throughout life, 'tis death that makes life live,
Gives it whatever the significance.—
Unmanned, remanned; I hold it probable—
With something changeless at the heart of me
To know me by, some nucleus that's myself.

—Line 2375.





The Ring and the Book.



BOOK XII.

The Book and the Ring.

The act, over and ended, falls and fades;
What was once seen, grows what is now described,
Then talked of, told about, a tinge the less
In every fresh transmission; till it melts,
Trickles in silent orange or wan grey
Across our memory, dies and leaves all dark,
And presently we find the stars again. —Line 13.

God, who seems acquiescent in the main
With those who add "So will he ever sleep"—
Flutters their foolishness from time to time,
Puts forth His right-hand recognizably;
Even as, to fools who deem He needs must right

Wrong on the instant, as if earth were heaven,
He wakes remonstrance—"Passive, Lord, how long?"
—Line 465.

What I call God's hand,—you, perhaps,—mere chance
Of the true instinct of an old good man
Who happens to hate darkness and love light.
—Line 592.

Who trusts
To human testimony for a fact
Gets this sole fact,—himself is proved a fool;
Man's speech being false, if but by consequence
That only strength is true; while man is weak,
And, since truth seems reserved for heaven not earth,
Plagued here by earth's prerogative of lies,
Should learn to love and long for what, one day,
Approved by life's probation, he may speak.
—Line 601.

Good ye account good; but God tries the heart.
—Line 618.

As this world seems, I dare not say I know
—Apart from Christ's assurance which decides—
Whether I have not failed to taste much joy.
For many a doubt will fain perturb my choice—
Many a dream of life spent otherwise—
How human love, in varied shapes, might work
As glory, or as rapture, or as grace;

How conversancy with the books that teach,
The arts that help,—how, to grow good and great,
Rather than simply good, and bring thereby
Goodness to breathe and live, nor, born i' the brain,
Die there,—how these and many another gift
Of life are precious though abjured by me.

—Line 622.

Fame,—that bubble which, world-wide
Each blows and bids his neighbour lend a breath,
That so he haply may behold thereon
One more enlarged distorted false fool's-face,
Until some glassy nothing grown as big
Send by a touch the imperishable to suds.

—Line 639.

Our human speech is naught,
Our human testimony false, our fame
And human estimation words and wind.

—Line 838.

It is the glory and good of Art,
That Art remains the one way possible
Of speaking truth, to mouths like mine at least.

—Line 842.

But Art,—wherein man nowise speaks to men,
Only to mankind,—Art may tell a truth
Obliquely, do the thing shall breed the thought,
Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate word.

—Line 858.







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