

ROBERT BROWNING





194

65

cc

LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA  
SAN DIEGO

SELECTIONS  
FROM  
THE POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
ROBERT BROWNING

*TWO VOLUMES IN ONE*

New Edition

NEW YORK  
MACMILLAN & CO.  
1886



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

PR  
4-12  
M26  
1486  
XX

SELECTIONS

FROM

ROBERT BROWNING'S

POETICAL WORKS





DEDICATED TO

**Alfred Tennyson**

IN POETRY—ILLUSTRIOUS AND CONSUMMATE

IN FRIENDSHIP—NOBLE AND SINCERE



*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 re-assuring warmth, in the attention and sympathy I gratefully acknowledge.*

R. B.

LONDON, May 14, 1872.



# CONTENTS.



	PAGE
MY STAR . . . . .	I
A FACE . . . . .	I
MY LAST DUCHESS . . . . .	2
SONG FROM "PIPPA PASSES" . . . . .	4
CRISTINA . . . . .	4
COUNT GISMOND <i>Prof. J. J. Hayes</i> . . . . .	7
EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS . . . . .	12
THE GLOVE . . . . .	12
SONG . . . . .	18
A SERENADE AT THE VILLA . . . . .	18
YOUTH AND ART . . . . .	21
THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS . . . . .	24
SONG FROM "PIPPA PASSES" . . . . .	51
"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX" . . . . .	51
SONG FROM "PARACELUS" . . . . .	53
THROUGH THE METIDJA TO ABD-EL-KADER . . . . .	54
INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP . . . . .	56
THE LOST LEADER . . . . .	57
IN A GONDOLA . . . . .	58
A LOVERS' QUARREL . . . . .	66
EARTH'S IMMORTALITIES . . . . .	72
THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER . . . . .	72
MESMERISM . . . . .	76

	PAGE
BY THE FIRESIDE . . . . .	81
ANY WIFE TO ANY HUSBAND . . . . .	91
IN A YEAR . . . . .	96
SONG FROM "JAMES LEE" . . . . .	99
A WOMAN'S LAST WORD . . . . .	99
MEETING AT NIGHT . . . . .	101
PARTING AT MORNING . . . . .	102
WOMEN AND ROSES . . . . .	102
MISCONCEPTIONS . . . . .	104
A PRETTY WOMAN . . . . .	104
A LIGHT WOMAN . . . . .	107
LOVE IN A LIFE . . . . .	110
LIFE IN A LOVE . . . . .	110
THE LABORATORY . . . . .	111
GOLD HAIR . . . . .	113
THE STATUE AND THE BUST . . . . .	119
LOVE AMONG THE RUINS . . . . .	128
TIME'S REVENGES . . . . .	131
WARING . . . . .	133
HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD . . . . .	141
THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND . . . . .	141
THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY . . . . .	146
UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY . . . . .	154
PICTOR IGNOTUS . . . . .	158
FRA LIPPO LIPPI . . . . .	160
ANDREA DEL SARTO . . . . .	171
THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH . . . . .	179
A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S . . . . .	183
HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY . . . . .	186
PROTUS . . . . .	189
MASTER HUGUES OF SAXE-GOTHA . . . . .	191
ABT VOGLER . . . . .	197
TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA . . . . .	202

CONTENTS.

xi .

	PAGE
" DE GUSTIBUS—"	205
THE GUARDIAN ANGEL	206
EVELYN HOPE	208
MEMORABILIA	211
APPARENT FAILURE	211
PROSPICE	214
" CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME "	215
A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL	222
CLEON	227
INSTANS TYRANNUS	237
AN EPISTLE	239
CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS	249
SAUL	257
RABBI BEN EZRA	277
EPILOGUE	284





*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 furled :  
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-coloured 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 what'er  
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.  
Sir, 't was all one ! My favour 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,  
 “’T is only a page that carols unseen,  
 “Crumbling your hounds their messes !”)

## II

Is she wronged?—To the rescue of her honour,  
 My heart !  
 Is she poor?—What costs it to become a donour ?  
 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,  
 “’T is 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 honours 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  
 honours, 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 honour, '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, 't was 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 honour’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 there. 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 armourer 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 for ever, 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 sirloin :  
 "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 recalcitrant ?  
 " For I "—so I spoke—" am a poet :  
 " Human nature—behoves 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 discolour 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 fervour  
 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 wooed 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 honour  
 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.



SONG.

I

NAY 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 for 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 eye 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-parés*,  
 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-track,  
 And cattle-track to open-chase,  
 And open-chase to the very base  
 O' the mountain where, at a funeral pace,  
 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 depised 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 grey 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 grey ;  
 For such things must begin some one day.

## VII

In a day or two she was well again ;  
 As who should say, " You labour 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 morning  
 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 stirrup—  
 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 ;  
 Blessedder 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 murderers,  
 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 provided,

“ 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 friends, 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 colour 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 Gipsies on their march,  
No doubt with the annual gifts to greet him.

## XIII

Now, in your land, Gipsies 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 forefoot 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 Gipsy 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 Gipsy 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 use 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-martin 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 imp  
The wing of the hawk that shall fetch the hernshaw,  
He bade me take the Gipsy 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, she said, 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 Gipsy 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 like 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 furl'd  
 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 Gipsy 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 recognise 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,  
“ Yet through the world should we vainly seek  
“ For the sum of 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 I 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 lone 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 dripping 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 the poorest 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 piece 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

Oneself 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 Gipsy 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, 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 humour,  
 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 Gipsies have paid us a visit, I 've  
 Noticed the couple were never inquisitive,  
 But told them they 're folks the Duke don'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 favour 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 supples 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 Gipsy, 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 labour, then, 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 Gipsies,  
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.



"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 undrew ;  
 "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.



## 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-KADR.*

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 pried, 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, honoured 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 gallantly,  
 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 ?  
 Grey 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 !

## II

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 shallows, 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 stilet 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.*

## I

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 !

## II

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,  
 'T is 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 dŕy 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.  
 Just 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 ingle, 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 arms 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?  
 In 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 grey 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 endeavour ;  
 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 labour, 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 fleshly 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 grey  
 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-described.  
 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 for ever 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, forever 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 grey—

## 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 calotypist'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 ardour 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 beseemeth 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-needled 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-coloured 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-grey 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 grey 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 does 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 grey 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 grey eyes,  
That hair so dark and dear, how worth  
That a man should strive and agonise,  
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 fireside now  
 Back again, as you mutely sit  
 Musing by firelight, 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 dishonoured 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 thy 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 colour 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 grey 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

*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  
He 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 explore,  
 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 chace 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 the old hope goes to ground  
Than a new one, straight to the self-same mark,  
I shape me—  
Ever  
Removed !

*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 earring, 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 colour '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 morose ;  
 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 colour 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 awhile,  
 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 armour-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 cæca*, 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 humour 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 a sleep, 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, whate’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 favour 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<sup>4</sup>  
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-checked

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 enlase,  
 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 coloured 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-coloured eve  
 Smiles to leave

To their folding, all our many tinkling fleece  
 In such peace,  
 And the slopes and rills in undistinguished grey  
 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 favour in his sight  
 That he slaughters you with savage looks  
 Because you don'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-humoured 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 Saint Paul's is striking two.  
 And I think I rather . . . woe is me !  
 —Yes, rather would see him than not see  
 If lifting a hand could 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 seafearing,  
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, blurrs 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 colour, 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 endeavour  
 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 humours 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, towards 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 sink,  
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 favour 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 !  
 Someone 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 harboured :  
 “ 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,  
 All 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—ought  
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.



### 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 am 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 net-  
worked 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, wherever  
could thrust  
Some burnt sprig of bold hardy rock-flower its yellow  
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 grey 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 breath-  
    less 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, supping  
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 colour 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 medlars 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.

O 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 recognised 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-grey 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-coloured, transparent, with circlets of pale seagreen  
    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 pro-  
    found  
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 excludes  
Your eye from the life to be lived in the blue solitudes.  
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,—halfway

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 grey 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 watching  
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-morrow'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 getting by  
heart.  
Not a pillar nor post but is dizen'd 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 glorious  
to hold  
All the fiddlers and fifers and drummers and trumpeters  
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 gunpowder  
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, Scirocco 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 window  
 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 something  
to take the eye !  
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry ;  
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who  
hurries by ;  
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the  
sun gets high ;  
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 grey 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 thrid 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 rattles  
 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 beneath.  
At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play,  
    piping hot !  
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves  
    were shot.  
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of  
    rebukes,  
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 pleasure in  
 life !



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 license 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 !  
 O 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, 't is 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 harbours 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 cut 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, "'T is 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 vapour 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 up praising,—why not stop with him ?  
 " Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head  
 " With wonder at lines, colours, 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 afterwards.

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, yon 've seen the world  
 —The beauty and the wonder and the power,  
 The shapes of things, their colours, 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, Got 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 cast o' 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 grey 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 't 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 greyness 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 fetter: 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 'tis 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 agonise 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-grey,  
 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,  
 Pouring 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.  
For me, 't is safer, 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 grey :  
 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 hear

Are left me, work 's my ware, and what 's it worth?  
 I 'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit  
 The grey 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 yours 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 laboured 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.



*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 eyer 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, EUCEPSEBAP 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!  
 Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,  
 But in a row: and, going, turn your backs  
 —Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,  
 And leave me in my church, the church for peace  
 That I may watch at leisure if he leers—  
 Old Gandolf at me, from his onion-stone,  
 As still he envied me, so fair she was!



*A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S.*

## I

OH Galuppi, Baldassarò, this is very sad to find !  
I can hardly misconceive you ; it would prove me deaf  
and blind ;  
But although I take your meaning, 't is with such a heavy  
mind !

## II

Here you come with your old music, and here 's all the  
good it brings.  
What, they lived once thus at Venice where the merchants  
were the kings,  
Where St. Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the  
sea with rings ?

## III

Ay, because the sea 's the street there ; and 't is arched  
by . . . what you call  
. . . Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where they kept  
the carnival :  
I was never out of England — it 's as if I saw it all.

## IV

Did young people take their pleasure when the sea was  
warm in May ?  
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to mid  
day,  
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 diminished,  
sigh on sigh,  
Told them something? Those suspensions, those solu-  
tions—"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 become  
 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 ferrel 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 cognisance 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 neighbour'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 bed-room 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 coloured 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 favourites 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 hē 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 laboured 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 rumoured 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,  
Baulks one of holding the base.

## IV

See, our huge house 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 labour ?  
 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 þænâ*  
 (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 ineffable  
 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 excellent  
 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 pinnacled 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 splendours burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt  
 with mine,  
 Not a point nor peak but found, but fixed its wandering  
 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 Pro-  
 toplast,  
 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 proceeds  
 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 enrolled :—

## 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 comfort  
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 musicians  
 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'er-crusted,  
 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 Vacluse 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 baulked !

## 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,  
 O 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 counsel 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 desried,  
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.

## VI

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 estray.

## 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 ; grey 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 colloped 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 afterwards—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 honour—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 check,  
 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 splash? 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, coloured 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 recognise 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,  
Couched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight,  
While, to the left, a tall scalped mountain . . . Dunce,  
Dotard, a-dozing 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 ?  
Till 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 furl'd ?  
     " 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 *Hot'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 ciose in like effects :  
     Loftily lying,  
 Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,  
     Living and dying.

## 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,—

Did'st 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 Pæcile, 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 recognise,  
 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 analysed 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 labour 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 labour 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 varicoloured 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 reciprocity,  
 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 grey  
 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 humour 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 labour 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 !



## 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 vapour 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 vapour 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 labour 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 rumours 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-grey back ;  
 Take five and drop them . . . but who knows his  
     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, exorcisation, 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 vintage, as it were,  
 (First come, first served) that nothing subsequent  
 Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls  
 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 perforce)  
 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 perplex 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 neighbour 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 fe'l  
 (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  
 Multifform, manifold and menacing :  
 Then a wind rose behind me. So we met  
 In this old sleepy town at unawares,  
 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 Himself could not 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 rattle 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, thus 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 nought 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 grapes.  
'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 sea-beast, 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 armour? 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-top,  
 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 favours 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 labour 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 threat, 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, 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, held 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, get 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 apple 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,  
 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!]

—◆—  
 SAUL.

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 withered  
 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 nought 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  
 Nought 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 vigour ! 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 bulrushes  
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 glorious  
reward ?  
“ Didst thou kiss 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.  
“ And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working  
whence grew  
“ Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the spirit  
strained true :

- “ And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood of  
wonder and hope,  
“ Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the  
eye’s scope,—  
“ Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch ; a people is  
thine :  
“ And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one head )  
combine !  
“ On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage )  
(like the throe  
“ That, a-work in the rock, helps its labour and lets the  
gold go)  
“ High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame )  
crowning them,—all  
“ Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—King )  
Saul !”

## X

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,—heart, hand, harp  
and voice,  
Each lifting Saul’s name out of sorrow, each bidding  
rejoice  
Saul’s fame in the light it was made for—as when, dare  
I say,  
The Lord’s army, in rapture of service, strains through  
its array,  
And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—“ Saul !” cried I,  
and stopped,  
And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul,  
who hung propped  
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,





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 : beyond,  
 on what fields,  
 Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten  
 the eye,  
 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,



- “ Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the  
palm-wine shall staunch
- “ Every wound of man’s spirit in winter. I pour thee  
such wine.
- “ Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for ! the spirit be  
thine !
- “ By the spirit, when age shall o’ercome thee, thou still  
shalt enjoy
- “ More indeed, than at first when, unconscious, the life of  
a boy.
- “ Crush that life, and behold its wine running ! Each  
deed thou hast done
- “ Dies, revives, goes to work in the world ; until e’en as  
the sun
- “ Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him,  
though tempests efface,
- “ Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must  
everywhere trace
- “ The results of his past summer-prime,—so, each ray of  
thy will,
- “ Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall  
thrill
- “ Thy whole people, the countless, with ardour, till they  
too give forth
- “ A like cheer to their sons : who in turn, fill the South  
and the North
- “ With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse  
in the past !
- “ But the license of age has its limit ; thou diest at  
last.
- “ As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her  
height,
- “ So with man—so his power and his beauty for ever  
take flight.
- “ No ! Again a long draught of my soul-wine ! Look  
forth o’er the years !

- “ Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual ; begin  
with the seer’s !
- “ Is Saul dead ? In the depth of the vale make his tomb  
—bid arise
- “ A grey mountain of marble heaped four-square, till,  
built to the skies,
- “ Let it mark where the great First King slumbers :  
whose name would ye know ?
- “ Up above see the rock’s naked face, where the record  
shall go
- “ In great characters cut by the scribe,—Such was Saul,  
so he did ;
- “ With the sages directing the work, by the populace  
chid,—
- “ For not half, they ’ll affirm, is comprised there ! Which  
fault to amend,
- “ In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon  
they shall spend
- “ (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 has granted thy help to  
essay,





All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a  
flower.

Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized  
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—returned  
him again

“ His creation’s approval or censure : I spoke as I saw,

“ Reported, as 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 greatest  
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 surpass 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—knowing  
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 topmost, ineffablest, uttermost  
crown—

“ And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor  
down

“ One spot for the creature to stand in ! It is by no  
breath,

“ Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue  
with death !

“ As thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved

“ Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being be-  
loved !

“ He who did most, shall bear most ; the strongest shall  
stand the most weak.

“ ’T is the weakness in strength, that I cry for ! my flesh,  
that I seek

“ In the Godhead ! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it  
shall be

“ A Face like my face that receives thee ; a Man like to  
me,

“ Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever : a Hand like  
this hand

“ Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee ! See the  
Christ stand !”

## XIX

I know not too well how I found my way home in the  
night.

There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to  
right,

Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the  
aware :

I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as strugglingly  
there,

As a runner beset by the populace famished for news —  
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell  
loosed with her crews ;

And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled  
and shot



## RABBI BEN EZRA.

## I

GROW old along with me ! *etc.*  
 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, tran-  
 scends 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 ?

Yang Dec. 29<sup>th</sup> 1891

## 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 hath 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 armour 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 grey :  
 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 call'st 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 colours 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 !



## 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 endeavour,  
 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 evanish 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!



SELECTIONS  
FROM  
ROBERT BROWNING'S  
POETICAL WORKS



# CONTENTS.



	PAGE
A WALL . . . . .	1
APPARITIONS . . . . .	2
NATURAL MAGIC . . . . .	2
MAGICAL NATURE . . . . .	3
GARDEN FANCIES, I. . . . .	4
GARDEN FANCIES, II. . . . .	6
IN THREE DAYS . . . . .	8
THE LOST MISTRESS . . . . .	10
ONE WAY OF LOVE . . . . .	11
RUDEL TO THE LADY OF TRIPOLI . . . . .	11
NUMPHOLEPTOS . . . . .	13
APPEARANCES . . . . .	17
THE WORST OF IT . . . . .	18
TOO LATE . . . . .	22
BIFURCATION . . . . .	27
A LIKENESS . . . . .	28
MAY AND DEATH . . . . .	30
A FORGIVENESS . . . . .	31
CENCIAJA . . . . .	43
PORPHYRIA'S LOVER . . . . .	52
FILIPPO BALDINUCCI ON THE PRIVILEGE OF BURIAL . . . . .	55
SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER . . . . .	71
THE HERETIC'S TRAGEDY . . . . .	74
HOLY-CROSS DAY . . . . .	78
AMPHIBIAN . . . . .	83

*Dec 29/16*

	PAGE
ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER . . . . .	86
JAMES LEE'S WIFE . . . . .	90
RESPECTABILITY . . . . .	105
DÎS ALITER VISUM. . . . .	106
CONFESSIONS . . . . .	112
THE HOUSEHOLDER . . . . .	114
TRAY . . . . .	115
CAVALIER TUNES, I. . . . .	117
CAVALIER TUNES, II. . . . .	118
CAVALIER TUNES, III. . . . .	118
BEFORE . . . . .	119
AFTER . . . . .	121
— HERVÉ RIEL . . . . .	122
— IN A BALCONY . . . . .	127
OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE . . . . .	155
BISHOP BLOUGRAM'S APOLOGY . . . . .	166
MR. SLUDGE "THE MEDIUM" . . . . .	195
THE BOY AND THE ANGEL . . . . .	240
A DEATH IN THE DESERT . . . . .	243
FEARS AND SCRUPLES . . . . .	263
ARTEMIS PROLOGIZES . . . . .	265
PHEIDIPPIDES . . . . .	268
THE PATRIOT . . . . .	275
POPULARITY . . . . .	276
PISGAH-SIGHTS. 1. . . . .	279
PISGAH-SIGHTS. 2. . . . .	280
PISGAH-SIGHTS. 3. . . . .	281
AT THE "MERMAID" . . . . .	282
HOUSE . . . . .	288
SHOP . . . . .	289
A TALE . . . . .	293

*A WALL.*

I

O THE old wall here ! How I could pass  
Life in a long Midsummer day,  
My feet confined to a plot of grass,  
My eyes from a wall not once away !

II

And lush and lithe do the creepers clothe  
Yon wall I watch, with a wealth of green :  
Its bald red bricks draped, nothing loth,  
In lappets of tangle they laugh between.

III

Now, what is it makes pulsate the robe ?  
Why tremble the sprays ? What life o'erbrims  
The body,—the house, no eye can probe,—  
Divined as, beneath a robe, the limbs ?

IV

And there again ! But my heart may guess  
Who tripped behind ; and she sang perhaps :  
So, the old wall throbbed, and its life's excess  
Died out and away in the leafy wraps.

V

Wall upon wall are between us : life  
And song should away from heart to heart !  
I—prison-bird, with a ruddy strife  
At breast, and a lip whence storm-notes start—

*A WALL.*

## VI

Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing  
 That 's spirit : though cloistered fast, soar free ;  
 Account as wood, brick, stone, this ring  
 Of the rueful neighbours, and—forth to thee !

*APPARITIONS.*

## I

SUCH a starved bank of moss  
 Till, that May-morn,  
 Blue ran the flash across :  
 Violets were born !

## II

Sky—what a scowl of cloud  
 Till, near and far,  
 Ray on ray split the shroud :  
 Splendid, a star !

## III

World—how it walled about  
 Life with disgrace  
 Till God's own smile came out :  
 That was thy face !

*NATURAL MAGIC.*

## I

ALL I can say is—I saw it !  
 The room was as bare as your hand.  
 I locked in the swarth little lady,—I swear,  
 From the head to the foot of her—well, quite as bare !

“No Nautch shall cheat me,” said I, “taking my stand  
 “At this bolt which I draw!” And this bolt—I with-  
 draw it,  
 And there laughs the lady, not bare, but embowered  
 With—who knows what verdure, o’erfruited, o’erflowered?  
 Impossible! Only—I saw it!

## II

All I can sing is—I feel it!  
 This life was as blank as that room;  
 I let you pass in here. Precaution, indeed?  
 Walls, ceiling and floor,—not a chance for a weed!  
 Wide opens the entrance: where’s cold now, where’s  
 gloom?  
 No May to sow seed here, no June to reveal  
 Behold you enshrined in these blooms of your bringing,  
 These fruits of your bearing—nay, birds of your winging!  
 A fairy-tale! Only—I feel it!



## MAGICAL NATURE.

## I

FLOWER—I never fancied, jewel—I profess you!  
 Bright I see and soft I feel the outside of a flower.  
 Save but glow inside and—jewel, I should guess you,  
 Dim to sight and rough to touch: the glory is the dower.

## II

You, forsooth, a flower? Nay, my love, a jewel—  
 Jewel at no mercy of a moment in your prime!  
 Time may fray the flower-face: kind be time or cruel,  
 Jewel, from each facet, flash your laugh at time!

## GARDEN FANCIES.

## I. THE FLOWER'S NAME.

## I

HERE'S the garden she walked across,  
 Arm in my arm, such a short while since :  
 Hark, now I push its wicket, the moss  
 Hinders the hinges and makes them wince !  
 She must have reached this shrub ere she turned,  
 As back with that murmur the wicket swung ;  
 For she laid the poor snail, my chance foot spurned,  
 To feed and forget it the leaves among.

## II

Down this side of the gravel-walk  
 She went while her robe's edge brushed the box :  
 And here she paused in her gracious talk  
 To point me a moth on the milk-white phlox.  
 Roses, ranged in valiant row,  
 I will never think that she passed you by !  
 She loves you noble roses, I know ;  
 But yonder, see, where the rock-plants lie !

## III

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,  
 Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its claim ;  
 Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,  
 Its soft meandering Spanish name.  
 What a name ! Was it love or praise ?  
 Speech half-asleep or song half-awake ?  
 I must learn Spanish, one of these days,  
 Only for that slow sweet name's sake.



## IV

Roses,—if I live and do well,  
I may bring her, one of these days,  
To fix you fast with as fine a spell,  
Fit you each with his Spanish phrase.  
But do not detain me now ; for she lingers  
There, like sunshine over the ground,  
And ever I see her soft white fingers  
Searching after the bud she found.

## V

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you grow not,  
Stay as you are and be loved for ever !  
Bud, if I kiss you 't is that you blow not,  
Mind, the shut pink mouth opens never !  
For while it pouts, her fingers wrestle,  
Twinkling the audacious leaves between,  
Till round they turn and down they nestle ;  
Is not the dear mark still to be seen ?

## VI

Where I find her not, beauties vanish ;  
Whither I follow her, beauties flee ;  
Is there no method to tell her in Spanish  
June 's twice June since she breathed it with me?  
Come, bud, show me the least of her traces,  
Treasure my lady's lightest footfall !  
—Ah, you may flout and turn up your faces—  
Roses, you are not so fair after all !

---

## II. SIBRANDUS SCHAFNABURGENSIS

## I

Plague take all your pedants, say I !  
 He who wrote what I hold in my hand,  
 Centuries back was so good as to die,  
 Leaving this rubbish to cumber the land ;  
 This, that was a book in its time,  
 Printed on paper and bound in leather,  
 Last month in the white of a matin-prime  
 Just when the birds sang all together.

## II

Into the garden I brought it to read,  
 And under the arbute and laurustine  
 Read it, so help me grace in my need,  
 From title-page to closing line.  
 Chapter on chapter did I count,  
 As a curious traveller counts Stonehenge ;  
 Added up the mortal amount,  
 And then proceeded to my revenge.

## III

Yonder 's a plum-tree with a crevice  
 An owl would build in, were he but sage ;  
 For a lap of moss, like a fine pont-levis  
 In a castle of the middle age,  
 Joins to a lip of gum, pure amber ;  
 When he 'd be private, there might he spend  
 Hours alone in his lady's chamber :  
 Into this crevice I dropped our friend.

## IV

Splash, went he, as under he ducked,  
 —At the bottom, I knew, rain-drippings stagnate ;

Next, a handful of blossoms I plucked  
 To bury him with, my bookshelf's magnate ;  
 Then I went in-doors, brought out a loaf,  
 Half a cheese, and a bottle of Chablis ;  
 Lay on the grass and forgot the oaf  
 Over a jolly chapter of Rabelais.

## V

Now, this morning, betwixt the moss  
 And gum that locked our friend in limbo,  
 A spider had spun his web across,  
 And sat in the midst with arms akimbo :  
 So, I took pity, for learning's sake,  
 And, *de profundis, accentibus lætis,*  
*Cantate!* quoth I, as I got a rake ;  
 And up I fished his delectable treatise.

## VI

Here you have it, dry in the sun,  
 With all the binding all of a blister,  
 And great blue spots where the ink has run,  
 And reddish streaks that wink and glister  
 O'er the page so beautifully yellow :  
 Oh, well have the droppings played their tricks !  
 Did he guess how toadstools grow, this fellow ?  
 Here 's one stuck in his chapter six !

## VII

How did he like it when the live creatures  
 Tickled and toused and browsed him all over,  
 And worm, slug, eft, with serious features,  
 Came in, each one, for his right of trover ?  
 —When the water-beetle with great blind deaf face  
 Made of her eggs the stately deposit,  
 And the newt borrowed just so much of the preface  
 As tiled in the top of his black wife's closet ?

## VIII

All that life and fun and romping,  
 All that frisking and twisting and coupling,  
 While slowly our poor friend's leaves were swamping  
 And clasps were cracking and covers suppling !  
 As if you had carried sour John Knox  
 To the play-house at Paris, Vienna or Munich,  
 Fastened him into a front-row box,  
 And danced off the ballet with trousers and tunic.

## IX

Come, old martyr ! What, torment enough is it ?  
 Back to my room shall you take your sweet self.  
 Good-bye, mother-beetle ; husband-est, *sufficit* !  
 See the snug niche I have made on my shelf !  
 A.'s book shall prop you up, B.'s shall cover you,  
 Here's C. to be grave with, or D. to be gay,  
 And with E. on each side, and F. right over you,  
 Dry-rot at ease till the Judgment-day !



## IN THREE DAYS.

## I

So, I shall see her in three days  
 And just one night, but nights are short,  
 Then two long hours, and that is morn.  
 See how I come, unchanged, unworn !  
 Feel, where my life broke off from thine  
 How fresh the splinters keep and fine,—  
 Only a touch and we combine !

## II

Too long, this time of year, the days !  
 But nights, at least the nights are short.

As night shows where her one moon is,  
 A hand's-breadth of pure light and bliss,  
 So life's night gives my lady birth  
 And my eyes hold her ! What is worth  
 The rest of heaven, the rest of earth ?

## III

O loaded curls, release your store  
 Of warmth and scent, as once before  
 The tingling hair did, lights and darks  
 Outbreaking into fairy sparks,  
 When under curl and curl I pried  
 After the warmth and scent inside,  
 Thro' lights and darks how manifold—  
 The dark inspired, the light controlled,  
 As early Art embrowns the gold !

## IV

What great fear, should one say, " Three days,  
 " That change the world, might change as well  
 " Your fortune ; and if joy delays,  
 " Be happy that no worse befell !"  
 What small fear, if another says,  
 " Three days and one short night beside  
 " May throw no shadow on your ways ;  
 " But years must teem with change untried,  
 " With chance not easily defied,  
 " With an end somewhere undescried."  
 No fear !—or, if a fear be born  
 This minute, fear dies out in scorn.  
 Fear ? I shall see her in three days  
 And one night, now the nights are short,  
 Then just two hours, and that is morn !



## THE LOST MISTRESS.

## I

ALL 's over, then : does truth sound bitter  
As one at first believes?  
Hark, 't is the sparrows' good-night twitter  
About your cottage eaves !

## II

And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly,  
I noticed that, to-day ;  
One day more bursts them open fully :  
You know the red turns grey.

## III

To-morrow we meet the same then, dearest ?  
May I take your hand in mine ?  
Mere friends are we,—well, friends the merest  
Keep much that I resign.

## IV

Each glance of the eye so bright and black,  
Though I keep with heart's endeavour,—  
Your voice, when you wish the snowdrops back,  
Though it stay in my soul for ever,—

## V

Yet I will but say what mere friends say,  
Or only a thought stronger ;  
I will hold your hand but as long as all may,  
Or so very little longer !



ONE WAY OF LOVE.

I

ALL June I bound the rose in sheaves.  
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves  
And strew them where Pauline may pass.  
She will not turn aside? Alas!  
Let them lie. Suppose they die?  
The chance was they might take her eye.

II

How many a month I strove to suit  
These stubborn fingers to the lute!  
To-day I venture all I know.  
She will not hear my music? So!  
Break the string; fold music's wing:  
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing!

III

My whole life long I learned to love.  
This hour my utmost art I prove  
And speak my passion—heaven or hell?  
She will not give me heaven? 'T is well!  
Lose who may—I still can say,  
Those who win heaven, blest are they!



*RUDEL TO THE LADY OF TRIPOLI.*

I

I KNOW a Mount, the gracious Sun perceives  
First, when he visits, last, too, when he leaves  
The world; and, vainly favoured, it repays  
The day-long glory of his steadfast gaze

By no change of its large calm front of snow.  
 And, underneath the Mount, a Flower I know,  
 He cannot have perceived, that changes ever  
 At his approach ; and, in the lost endeavour  
 To live his life, has parted, one by one,  
 With all a flower's true graces, for the grace  
 Of being but a foolish mimic sun,  
 With ray-like florets round a disk-like face.  
 Men nobly call by many a name the Mount  
 As over many a land of theirs its large  
 Calm front of snow like a triumphal targe  
 Is reared, and still with old names, fresh names vie,  
 Each to its proper praise and own account :  
 Men call the Flower, the Sunflower, sportively.

## II

Oh, Angel of the East, one, one gold look  
 Across the waters to this twilight nook,  
 —The far sad waters, Angel, to this nook !

## III

Dear Pilgrim, art thou for the East indeed ?  
 Go !—saying ever as thou dost proceed,  
 That I, French Rudel, choose for my device  
 A sunflower outspread like a sacrifice  
 Before its idol. See ! These inexpert  
 And hurried fingers could not fail to hurt  
 The woven picture ; 't is a woman's skill  
 Indeed ; but nothing baffled me, so, ill  
 Or well, the work is finished. Say, men feed  
 On songs I sing, and therefore bask the bees  
 On my flower's breast as on a platform broad :  
 But, as the flower's concern is not for these  
 But solely for the sun, so men applaud  
 In vain this Rudel, he not looking here  
 But to the East—the East ! Go, say this, Pilgrim dear !



## NUMPHOLEPTOS.

STILL you stand, still you listen, still you smile !  
Still melts your moonbeam through me, white awhile,  
Softening, sweetening, till sweet and soft  
Increase so round this heart of mine, that oft  
I could believe your moonbeam-smile has past  
The pallid limit and, transformed at last,  
Lies, sunlight and salvation—warms the soul  
It sweetens, softens ! Would you pass that goal,  
Gain love's birth at the limit's happier verge,  
And, where an iridescence lurks, but urge  
The hesitating pallor on to prime  
Of dawn !—true blood-streaked, sun-warmth, action-time,  
By heart-pulse ripened to a ruddy glow  
Of gold above my clay—I scarce should know  
From gold's self, thus suffused ! For gold means love.  
What means the sad slow silver smile above  
My clay but pity, pardon?—at the best,  
But acquiescence that I take my rest,  
Contented to be clay, while in your heaven  
The sun reserves love for the Spirit-Seven  
Companioning God's throne they lamp before,  
—Leaves earth a mute waste only wandered o'er  
By that pale soft sweet dispassioned moon  
Which smiles me slow forgiveness ! Such, the boon  
I beg ? Nay, dear, submit to this—just this  
Supreme endeavour ! As my lips now kiss  
Your feet, my arms convulse your shrouding robe,  
My eyes acquainted with the dust, dare probe  
Your eyes above for—what, if born, would blind  
Mine with redundant bliss, as flash may find  
The inert nerve, sting awake the palsied limb,  
Bid with life's ecstasy sense overbrim

And such back death in the resurging joy—  
So grant me—love, whole, sole, without alloy !

Vainly ! The promise withers ! I employ  
Lips, arms, eyes, pray the prayer which finds the word,  
Make the appeal which must be felt, not heard,  
And none the more is changed your calm regard :  
Rather, its sweet and soft grow harsh and hard—  
Forbearance, then repulsion, then disdain.  
Avert the rest ! I rise, see !—make, again  
Once more, the old departure for some track  
Untried yet through a world which brings me back  
Ever thus fruitlessly to find your feet,  
To fix your eyes, to pray the soft and sweet  
Which smile there—take from his new pilgrimage  
Your outcast, once your inmate, and assuage  
With love—not placid pardon now—his thirst  
For a mere drop from out the ocean erst  
He drank at ! Well, the quest shall be renewed.  
Fear nothing ! Though I linger, unembued  
With any drop, my lips thus close. I go !  
So did I leave you, I have found you so,  
And doubtlessly, if fated to return,  
So shall my pleading persevere and earn  
Pardon—not love—in that same smile, I learn,  
And lose the meaning of, to learn once more,  
Vainly !

What fairy track do I explore ?  
What magic hall return to, like the gem  
Centuply-angled o'er a diadem ?  
You dwell there, hearted ; from your midmost home  
Rays forth—through that fantastic world I roam  
Ever—from centre to circumference,  
Shaft upon coloured shaft : this crimsons thence,  
That purples out its precinct through the waste.  
Surely I had your sanction when I faced,

Fared forth upon that untried yellow ray  
Whence I retrack my steps? They end to-day  
Where they began, before your feet, beneath  
Your eyes, your smile : the blade is shut in sheath,  
Fire quenched in flint ; irradiation, late  
Triumphant through the distance, finds its fate,  
Merged in your blank pure soul, alike the source  
And tomb of that prismatic glow : divorce  
Absolute, all-conclusive ! Forth I fared,  
Treading the lambent flamelet : little cared  
If now its flickering took the topaz tint,  
If now my dull-caked path gave sulphury hint  
Of subterranean rage—no stay nor stint  
To yellow, since you sanctioned that I bathe,  
Burnish me, soul and body, swim and swathe  
In yellow licence. Here I reek suffused  
With crocus, saffron, orange, as I used  
With scarlet, purple, every dye o' the bow  
Born of the storm-cloud. As before, you show  
Scarce recognition, no approval, some  
Mistrust, more wonder at a man become  
Monstrous in garb, nay—flesh disguised as well,  
Through his adventure. Whatsoe'er befell,  
I followed, wheresoe'er it wound, that vein  
You authorised should leave your whiteness, stain  
Earth's sombre stretch beyond your midmost place  
Of vantage,—trode that tinct whereof the trace  
On garb and flesh repel you ! Yes, I plead  
Your own permission—your command, indeed,  
That who would worthily retain the love  
Must share the knowledge shrined those eyes above,  
Go boldly on adventure, break through bounds  
O' the quintessential whiteness that surrounds  
Your feet, obtain experience of each tinge  
That bickers forth to broaden out, impinge  
Plainer his foot its pathway all distinct

From every other. Ah, the wonder, linked  
 With fear, as exploration manifests  
 What agency it was first tipped the crests  
 Of unnamed wildflower, soon protruding grew  
 Portentous 'mid the sands, as when his hue  
 Betrays him and the burrowing snake gleams through ;  
 Till, last . . . but why parade more shame and pain ?  
 Are not the proofs upon me ? Here again  
 I pass into your presence, I receive  
 Your smile of pity, pardon, and I leave . . .  
 No, not this last of times I leave you, mute,  
 Submitted to my penance, so my foot  
 May yet again adventure, tread, from source  
 To issue, one more ray of rays which course  
 Each other, at your bidding, from the sphere  
 Silver and sweet, their birthplace, down that drear  
 Dark of the world,—you promise shall return  
 Your pilgrim jewelled as with drops o' the urn  
 The rainbow paints from, and no smatch at all  
 Of ghastliness at edge of some cloud-pall  
 Heaven cowers before, as earth awaits the fall  
 O' the bolt and flash of doom. Who trusts your word  
 Tries the adventure : and returns—absurd  
 As frightful—in that sulphur-steeped disguise  
 Mocking the priestly cloth-of-gold, sole prize  
 The arch-heretic was wont to bear away  
 Until he reached the burning. No, I say :  
 No fresh adventure ! No more seeking love  
 At end of toil, and finding, calm above  
 My passion, the old statuesque regard,  
 The sad petrific smile !

O you—less hard  
 And hateful than mistaken and obtuse  
 Unreason of a she-intelligence !  
 You very woman with the pert pretence

To match the male achievement ! Like enough !  
 Ay, you were easy victors, did the rough  
 Straightway efface itself to smooth, the gruff  
 Grind down and grow a whisper,—did man's truth  
 Subdue, for sake of chivalry and ruth,  
 Its rapier-edge to suit the bulrush-spear  
 Womanly falsehood fights with ! O that ear  
 All fact pricks rudely, that thrice-superfine  
 Feminity of sense, with right divine  
 To waive all process, take result stain-free  
 From out the very muck wherein . . .

Ah me !

The true slave's querulous outbreak ! All the rest  
 Be resignation ! Forth at your behest  
 I fare. Who knows but this—the crimson-quest—  
 May deepen to a sunrise, not decay  
 To that cold sad sweet smile ?—which I obey.



### APPEARANCES.

#### I

AND so you found that poor room dull,  
 Dark, hardly to your taste, my Dear ?  
 Its features seemed unbeautiful :  
 But this I know—'t was there, not here,  
 You plighted troth to me, the word  
 Which—ask that poor room how it heard !

#### II

And this rich room obtains your praise  
 Unqualified,—so bright, so fair,  
 So all whereat perfection stays ?  
 Ay, but remember—here, not there,  
 The other word was spoken ! Ask  
 This rich room how you dropped the mask !

## THE WORST OF IT.

## I

WOULD it were I had been false, not you !  
 I that am nothing, not you that are all :  
 I, never the worse for a touch or two  
 On my speckled hide ; not you, the pride  
 Of the day, my swan, that a first fleck's fall  
 On her wonder of white must unswan, undo !

## II

I had dipped in life's struggle and, out again,  
 Bore specks of it here, there, easy to see,  
 When I found my swan and the cure was plain ;  
 The dull turned bright as I caught your white  
 On my bosom : you saved me—saved in vain  
 If you ruined yourself, and all through me !

## III

Yes, all through the speckled beast I am,  
 Who taught you to stoop ; you gave me yourself,  
 And bound your soul by the vows which damn :  
 Since on better thought you break, as you ought,  
 Vows—words, no angel set down, some elf  
 Mistook,—for an oath, an epigram !

## IV

Yes, might I judge you, here were my heart,  
 And a hundred its like, to treat as you pleased !  
 I choose to be yours, for my proper part,  
 Yours, leave me or take, or mar or make ;  
 If I acquiesce, why should you be teased  
 With the conscience-prick and the memory-smart ?

## V

But what will God say? Oh, my Sweet,  
 Think, and be sorry you did this thing!  
 Though earth were unworthy to feel your feet,  
 There's a heaven above may deserve your love:  
 Should you forfeit heaven for a snapt gold ring  
 And a promise broke, were it just or meet?

## VI

And I to have tempted you I, who tried  
 Your soul, no doubt, till it sank! Unwise,  
 I loved and was lowly, loved and aspired,  
 Loved, grieving or glad, till I made you mad  
 And you meant to have hated and despised—  
 Whereas, you deceived me nor inquired!

## VII

She, ruined? How? No heaven for her?  
 Crowns to give, and none for the brow  
 That looked like marble and smelt like myrrh?  
 Shall the robe be worn, and the palm-branch borne,  
 And she go graceless, she graced now  
 Beyond all saints, as themselves aver?

## VIII

Hardly! That must be understood!  
 The earth is your place of penance, then;  
 And what will it prove? I desire your good,  
 But, plot as I may, I can find no way  
 How a blow should fall, such as falls on men,  
 Nor prove too much for your womanhood.

## IX

It will come, I suspect, at the end of life,  
 When you walk alone, and review the past;  
 And I, who so long shall have done with strife,

And journeyed my stage and earned my wage  
 And retired as was right,—I am called at last  
 When the devil stabs you, to lend the knife.

## X

He stabs for the minute of trivial wrong,  
 Nor the other hours are able to save,  
 The happy, that lasted my whole life long :  
 For a promise broke, not for first words spoke,  
 The true, the only, that turn my grave  
 To a blaze of joy and a crash of song.

## XI

Witness beforehand ! Off I trip  
 On a safe path gay through the flowers you flung :  
 My very name made great by your lip,  
 And my heart a-glow with the good I know  
 Of a perfect year when we both were young,  
 And I tasted the angels' fellowship.

## XII

And witness, moreover . . . Ah, but wait  
 I spy the loop whence an arrow shoots !  
 It may be for yourself, when you meditate,  
 That you grieve—for slain ruth, murdered truth :  
 "Though falsehood escape in the end, what boots ?  
 "How truth would have triumphed !"—you sigh too  
 late.

## XIII

Ay, who would have triumphed like you, I say !  
 Well, it is lost now ; well, you must bear,  
 Abide and grow fit for a better day.  
 You should hardly grudge, could I be your judge !  
 But hush ! For you, can be no despair :  
 There 's amends : 't is a secret : hope and pray !



## XIV

For I was true at least—oh, true enough !  
 And, Dear, truth is not as good as it seems !  
 Commend me to conscience ! Idle stuff !  
 Much help is in mine, as I mope and pine,  
 And skulk through day, and scowl in my dreams  
 At my swan's obtaining the crow's rebuff.

## XV

Men tell me of truth now—" False !" I cry :  
 Of beauty—" A mask, friend ! Look beneath !"  
 We take our own method, the devil and I,  
 With pleasant and fair and wise and rare :  
 And the best we wish to what lives, is—death ;  
 Which even in wishing, perhaps we lie !

## XVI

Far better commit a fault and have done—  
 As you, Dear !—for ever ; and choose the pure,  
 And look where the healing waters run,  
 And strive and strain to be good again,  
 And a place in the other world ensure,  
 All glass and gold, with God for its sun.

## XVII

Misery ! What shall I say or do ?  
 I cannot advise, or, at least, persuade.  
 Most like, you are glad you deceived me—rue  
 No whit of the wrong : you endured too long,  
 Have done no evil and want no aid,  
 Will live the old life out and chance the new.

## XVIII

And your sentence is written all the same,  
 And I can do nothing,—pray, perhaps :  
 But somehow the world pursues its game,—

If I pray, if I curse,—for better or worse :  
 And my faith is torn to a thousand scraps,  
 And my heart feels ice while my words breathe flame.

## XIX

Dear, I look from my hiding-place.  
 Are you still so fair ? Have you still the eyes ?  
 Be happy ! Add but the other grace,  
 Be good ! Why want what the angels vaunt ?  
 I knew you once : but in Paradise,  
 If we meet, I will pass nor turn my face.



## TOO LATE.

## I

HERE was I with my arm and heart  
 And brain, all yours for a word, a want  
 Put into a look—just a look, your part,—  
 While mine, to repay it . . . vainest vaunt,  
 Were the woman, that 's dead, alive to hear,  
 Had her lover, that 's lost, love's proof to show !  
 But I cannot show it ; you cannot speak  
 From the churchyard neither, miles removed,  
 Though I feel by a pulse within my cheek,  
 Which stabs and stops, that the woman I loved  
 Needs help in her grave and finds none near,  
 Wants warmth from the heart which sends it—so !

## II

Did I speak once angrily, all the drear days  
 You lived, you woman I loved so well,  
 Who married the other ? Blame or praise,  
 Where was the use then ? Time would tell,  
 And the end declare what man for you,  
 What woman for me was the choice of God.

But, Edith dead ! no doubting more !  
 I used to sit and look at my life  
 As it rippled and ran till, right before,  
 A great stone stopped it : oh, the strife  
 Of waves at the stone some devil threw  
 In my life's midcurrent, thwarting God

## III

But either I thought, " They may churn and chide  
 " Awhile,—my waves which came for their joy  
 " And found this horrible stone full-tide :  
 " Yet I see just a thread escape, deploy  
 " Through the evening-country, silent and safe,  
 " And it suffers no more till it finds the sea."  
 Or else I would think, " Perhaps some night  
 " When new things happen, a meteor-ball  
 " May slip through the sky in a line of light,  
 " And earth breathe hard, and landmarks fall,  
 " And my waves no longer champ nor chafe,  
 " Since a stone will have rolled from its place : let  
 be !"

## IV

But, dead ! All 's done with : wait who may,  
 Watch and wear and wonder who will.  
 Oh, my whole life that ends to-day !  
 Oh, my soul's sentence, sounding still,  
 " The woman is dead, that was none of his ;  
 " And the man, that was none of hers, may go !"  
 There 's only the past left : worry that !  
 Wreak, like a bull, on the empty coat,  
 Rage, its late wearer is laughing at !  
 Tear the collar to rags, having missed his throat ;  
 Strike stupidly on—" This, this and this,  
 " Where I would that a bosom received the blow !"

## V

I ought to have done more : once my speech,  
 And once your answer, and there, the end,  
 And Edith was henceforth out of reach !  
 Why, men do more to deserve a friend,  
 Be rid of a foe, get rich, grow wise,  
 Nor, folding their arms, stare fate in the face.  
 Why, better even have burst like a thief  
 And borne you away to a rock for us two,  
 In a moment's horror, bright, bloody and brief,  
 Then changed to myself again—" I slew  
 " Myself in that moment ; a ruffian lies  
 " Somewhere : your slave, see, born in his place ! "

## VI

What did the other do ? You be judge !  
 Look at us, Edith ! Here are we both !  
 Give him his six whole years : I grudge  
 None of the life with you, nay, I loathe  
 Myself that I grudged his start in advance  
 Of me who could overtake and pass.  
 But, as if he loved you ! No, not he,  
 Nor anyone else in the world, 't is plain :  
 Who ever heard that another, free  
 As I, young, prosperous, sound and sane,  
 Poured life out, proffered it—" Half a glance  
 " Of those eyes of yours and I drop the glass ! "

## VII

Handsome, were you ? 'T is more than they held,  
 More than they said ; I was 'ware and watched :  
 I was the 'scapegrace, this rat belled  
 The cat, this fool got his whiskers scratched :  
 The others ? No head that was turned, no heart  
 Broken, my lady, assure yourself !  
 Each soon made his mind up ; so and so  
 Married a dancer, such and such

Stole his friend's wife, stagnated slow,  
 Or maundered, unable to do as much,  
 And muttered of peace where he had no part :  
 While, hid in the closet, laid on the shelf,—

## VIII

On the whole, you were let alone, I think !  
 So, you looked to the other, who acquiesced ;  
 My rival, the proud man,—prize your pink  
 Of poets ! A poet he was ! I 've guessed :  
 He rhymed you his rubbish nobody read,  
 Loved you and doved you—did not I laugh !  
 There was a prize ! But we both were tried.  
 Oh, heart of mine, marked broad with her mark,  
*Tekel*, found wanting, set aside,  
 Scorned ! See, I bleed these tears in the dark  
 Till comfort come and the last be bled :  
 He ? He is tagging your epitaph.

## IX

If it would only come over again !  
 —Time to be patient with me, and probe  
 This heart till you punctured the proper vein,  
 Just to learn what blood is : twitch the robe  
 From that blank lay-figure your fancy draped,  
 Prick the leathern heart till the—verses spirt !  
 And late it was easy ; late, you walked  
 Where a friend might meet you ; Edith's name  
 Arose to one's lip if one laughed or talked ;  
 If I heard good news, you heard the same ;  
 When I woke, I knew that your breath escaped ;  
 I could bide my time, keep alive, alert.

## X

And alive I shall keep and long, you will see !  
 I knew a man, was kicked like a dog  
 From gutter to cesspool ; what cared he  
 So long as he picked from the filth his prog ?

He saw youth, beauty and genius die,  
 And jollily lived to his hundredth year.  
 But I will live otherwise : none of such life !  
 At once I begin as I mean to end.  
 Go on with the world, get gold in its strife,  
 Give your spouse the slip and betray your friend !  
 There are two who decline, a woman and I,  
 And enjoy our death in the darkness here.

## XI

I liked that way you had with your curls  
 Wound to a ball in a net behind :  
 Your cheek was chaste as a quaker-girl's  
 And your mouth—there was never, to my mind,  
 Such a funny mouth, for it would not shut ;  
 And the dented chin too—what a chin !  
 There were certain ways when you spoke, some words  
 That you know you never could pronounce :  
 You were thin, however ; like a bird's  
 Your hand seemed—some would say, the pounce  
 Of a scaly-footed hawk—all but !  
 The world was right when it called you thin.

## XII

But I turn my back on the world : I take  
 Your hand, and kneel, and lay to my lips.  
 Bid me live, Edith ! Let me slake  
 Thirst at your presence ! Fear no slips !  
 'Tis your slave shall pay, while his soul endures,  
 Full due, love's whole debt, *summum jus*.  
 My queen shall have high observance, planned  
 Courtship made perfect, no least line  
 Crossed without warrant. There you stand,  
 Warm too, and white too : would this wine  
 Had washed all over that body of yours,  
 Ere I drank it, and you down with it, thus !

## BIFURCATION.

WE were two lovers ; let me lie by her,  
 My tomb beside her tomb. On hers inscribe—  
 “ I loved him ; but my reason bade prefer  
 “ Duty to love, reject the tempter’s bribe  
 “ Of rose and lily when each path diverged,  
 “ And either I must pace to life’s far end  
 “ As love should lead me, or, as duty urged,  
 “ Plod the worn causeway arm in arm with friend.  
 “ So, truth turned falsehood : ‘ How I loathe a flower,  
 “ ‘ How prize the pavement ! ’ still caressed his ear—  
 “ The deafish friend’s—through life’s day, hour by hour,  
 “ As he laughed (coughing) ‘ Ay, it would appear ! ’  
 “ But deep within my heart of hearts there hid  
 “ Ever the confidence, amends for all,  
 “ That heaven repairs what wrong earth’s journey did,  
 “ When love from life-long exile comes at call.  
 “ Duty and love, one Broadway, were the best—  
 “ Who doubts? But one or other was to choose.  
 “ I chose the darkling half, and wait the rest  
 “ In that new world where light and darkness fuse.”

Inscribe on mine—“ I loved her : love’s track lay  
 “ O’er sand and pebble, as all travellers know.  
 “ Duty led through a smiling country, gay  
 “ With greensward where the rose and lily blow.  
 “ ‘ Our roads are diverse : farewell, love ! ’ said she :  
 “ ‘ ’T is duty I abide by : homely sward  
 “ ‘ And not the rock-rough picturesque for me !  
 “ ‘ Above, where both roads join, I wait reward.  
 “ ‘ Be you as constant to the path whereon  
 “ ‘ I leave you planted ! ’ But man needs must move,  
 “ Keep moving—whither, when the star is gone  
 “ Whereby he steps secure nor strays from love?

"No stone but I was tripped by, stumbling-block  
 "But brought me to confusion. Where I fell,  
 "There I lay flat, if moss disguised the rock :  
 "Thence, if flint pierced, I rose and cried 'All's well !  
 "'Duty be mine to tread in that high sphere  
 "'Where love from duty ne'er disparts, I trust,  
 "'And two halves make that whole, whereof—since  
     here  
 "'One must suffice a man—why, this one must !'"

Inscribe each tomb thus : then, some sage acquaint  
 The simple—which holds sinner, which holds saint !



### A LIKENESS.

SOME people hang portraits up  
 In a room where they dine or sup :  
 And the wife clinks tea-things under,  
 And her cousin, he stirs his cup,  
 Asks, "Who was the lady, I wonder ?"  
 "'T is a daub John bought at a sale,"  
 Quoth the wife,—looks black as thunder.  
 "What a shade beneath her nose !  
 "Snuff-taking, I suppose,—"  
 Adds the cousin, while John's corns ail.  
  
 Or else, there 's no wife in the case,  
 But the portrait 's queen of the place,  
 Alone 'mid the other spoils  
 Of youth,—masks, gloves and foils,  
 And pipe-sticks, rose, cherry-tree, jasmine,  
 And the long whip, the tandem-lasher,  
 And the cast from a fist, ("not, alas ! mine,  
 "But my master's, the Tipton Slasher")  
 And the cards where pistol-balls mark ace,  
 And a satin shoe used for cigar-case,



And the chamois-horns ("shot in the Chablais")  
 And prints—Rarey drumming on Cruiser,  
 And Sayers, our champion, the bruiser,  
 And the little edition of Rabelais :  
 Where a friend, with both hands in his pockets  
 May saunter up close to examine it,  
 And remark a good deal of Jane Lamb in it,  
 "But the eyes are half out of their sockets ;  
 "That hair's not so bad, where the gloss is,  
 "But they've made the girl's nose a proboscis :  
 "Jane Lamb, that we danced with at Vichy !  
 "What, is not she Jane ? Then, who is she ?"

All that I own is a print,  
 An etching, a mezzotint ;  
 'T is a study, a fancy, a fiction,  
 Yet a fact (take my conviction)  
 Because it has more than a hint  
 Of a certain face, I never  
 Saw elsewhere touch or trace of  
 In women I've seen the face of :  
 Just an etching, and, so far, clever.

I keep my prints an imbroglio,  
 Fifty in one portfolio.  
 When somebody tries my claret,  
 We turn round chairs to the fire,  
 Chirp over days in a garret,  
 Chuckle o'er increase of salary,  
 Taste the good fruits of our leisure,  
 Talk about pencil and lyre,  
 And the National Portrait Gallery :  
 Then I exhibit my treasure.  
 After we've turned over twenty,  
 And the debt of wonder my crony owes  
 Is paid to my Marc Antonios,  
 He stops me—" *Festina. lentè !*

“What ’s that sweet thing there, the etching?”  
 How my waistcoat-strings want stretching,  
 How my cheeks grow red as tomatos,  
 How my heart leaps ! But hearts, after leaps, ache.

“By the by, you must take, for a keepsake,  
 “That other, you praised, of Volpato’s.”  
 The fool ! would he try a flight further and say—  
 He never saw, never before to-day,  
 What was able to take his breath away,  
 A face to lose youth for, to occupy age  
 With the dream of, meet death with,—why, I’ll not  
     engage  
 But that, half in a rapture and half in a rage,  
 I should toss him the thing’s self—“’T is only a  
     duplicate,  
 “A thing of no value ! Take it, I supplicate !”



### MAY AND DEATH.

#### I

I WISH that when you died last May,  
 Charles, there had died along with you  
 Three parts of spring’s delightful things ;  
 Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too.

#### II

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps !  
 There must be many a pair of friends  
 Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm  
 Moon-births and the long evening-ends.

#### III

So, for their sake, be May still May !  
 Let their new time, as mine of old,  
 Do all it did for me : I bid  
 Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.

## IV

Only, one little sight, one plant,  
 Woods have in May, that starts up green  
 Save a sole streak which, so to speak,  
 Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves between,—

## V

That, they might spare ; a certain wood  
 Might miss the plant ; their loss were small :  
 But I,—whene'er the leaf grows there,  
 Its drop comes from my heart, that 's all.



## A FORGIVENESS.

I AM indeed the personage you know.  
 As for my wife,—what happened long ago—  
 You have a right to question me, as I  
 Am bound to answer.

    (“ Son, a fit reply ! ”)

The monk half spoke, half ground through his clenched  
 teeth,  
 At the confession-grate I knelt beneath.)

Thus then all happened, Father ! Power and place  
 I had as still I have. I ran life's race,  
 With the whole world to see, as only strains  
 His strength some athlete whose prodigious gains  
 Of good appal him : happy to excess,—  
 Work freely done should balance happiness  
 Fully enjoyed ; and, since beneath my roof  
 Housed she who made home heaven, in heaven's behoof  
 I went forth every day, and all day long  
 Worked for the world. Look, how the labourer's song  
 Cheers him ! Thus sang my soul, at each sharp thro' of  
 Of labouring flesh and blood—“ She loves me so ! ”

One day, perhaps such song so knit the nerve  
 That work grew play and vanished. "I deserve  
 "Haply my heaven an hour before the time!"  
 I laughed, as silverly the clockhouse-chime  
 Surprised me passing through the postern-gate  
 —Not the main entry where the menials wait  
 And wonder why the world's affairs allow  
 The master sudden leisure. That was how  
 I took the private garden-way for once.

Forth from the alcove, I saw start, ensconce  
 Himself behind the porphyry vase, a man.

My fancies in the natural order ran :

"A spy,—perhaps a foe in ambushade,—  
 "A thief,—more like, a sweetheart of some maid  
 "Who pitched on the alcove for tryst perhaps."

"Stand there!" I bid.

Whereat my man but wraps

His face the closelier with uplifted arm  
 Whereon the cloak lies, strikes in blind alarm  
 This and that pedestal as,—stretch and stoop,—  
 Now in, now out of sight, he thrids the group  
 Of statues, marble god and goddess ranged  
 Each side the pathway, till the gate's exchanged  
 For safety : one step thence, the street, you know !

Thus far I followed with my gaze. Then, slow,  
 Near on admiringly, I breathed again,  
 And—back to that last fancy of the train—  
 "A danger risked for hope of just a word  
 "With—which of all my nest may be the bird  
 "This poacher covets for her plumage, pray?  
 "Carmen? Juana? Carmen seems too gay  
 "For such adventure, while Juana's grave  
 "—Would scorn the folly. I applaud the knave !

“ He had the eye, could single from my brood  
 “ His proper fledgeling !”

As I turned, there stood  
 In face of me, my wife stone-still stone-white.  
 Whether one bound had brought her,—at first sight  
 Of what she judged the encounter, sure to be  
 Next moment, of the venturous man and me,—  
 Brought her to clutch and keep me from my prey :  
 Whether impelled because her death no day  
 Could come so absolutely opportune  
 As now at joy’s height, like a year in June  
 Stayed at the fall of its first ripened rose ;  
 Or whether hungry for my hate—who knows ?—  
 Eager to end an irksome lie, and taste  
 Our tingling true relation, hate embraced  
 By hate one naked moment :—anyhow  
 There stone-still stone-white stood my wife, but now  
 The woman who made heaven within my house.  
 Ay, she who faced me was my very spouse  
 As well as love—you are to recollect !

“ Stay !” she said. “ Keep at least one soul unspicked  
 “ With crime, that’s spotless hitherto—your own !  
 “ Kill me who court the blessing, who alone  
 “ Was, am and shall be guilty, first to last !  
 “ The man lay helpless in the toils I cast  
 “ About him, helpless as the statue there  
 “ Against that strangling bell-flower’s bondage : tear  
 “ Away and tread to dust the parasite,  
 “ But do the passive marble no despite !  
 “ I love him as I hate you. Kill me ! Strike  
 “ At one blow both infinitudes alike  
 “ Out of existence—hate and love ! Whence love ?  
 “ That’s safe inside my heart, nor will remove  
 “ For any searching of your steel, I think.  
 “ Whence hate ? The secret lay on lip, at brink

“ Of speech, in one fierce tremble to escape,  
 “ At every form wherein your love took shape,  
 “ At each new provocation of your kiss,  
 “ Kill me ! ”

We went in.

Next day after this,  
 I felt as if the speech might come. I spoke—  
 Easily, after all.

“ The lifted cloak  
 “ Was screen sufficient : I concern myself  
 “ Hardly with laying hands on who for pelf—  
 “ Whate'er the ignoble kind—may prowl and brave  
 “ Cuffing and kicking proper to a knave  
 “ Detected by my household's vigilance.  
 “ Enough of such ! As for my love-romance—  
 “ I, like our good Hidalgo, rub my eyes  
 “ And wake and wonder how the film could rise  
 “ Which changed for me a barber's basin straight  
 “ Into—Mambrino's helm ? I hesitate  
 “ Nowise to say—God's sacramental cup !  
 “ Why should I blame the brass which, burnished up,  
 “ Will blaze, to all but me, as good as gold ?  
 “ To me—a warning I was overbold  
 “ In judging metals. The Hidalgo waked  
 “ Only to die, if I remember,—staked  
 “ His life upon the basin's worth, and lost :  
 “ While I confess torpidity at most  
 “ In here and there a limb ; but, lame and halt,  
 “ Still should I work on, still repair my fault  
 “ Ere I took rest in death,—no fear at all !  
 “ Now, work—no word before the curtain fall ! ”

The “curtain” ? That of death on life, I meant :  
 My “word” permissible in death's event,

Would be—truth, soul to soul ; for, otherwise,  
 Day by day, three years long, there had to rise  
 And, night by night, to fall upon our stage—  
 Ours, doomed to public play by heritage—  
 Another curtain, when the world, perforce  
 Our critical assembly, in due course  
 Came and went, witnessing, gave praise or blame  
 To art-mimetic. It had spoiled the game  
 If, suffered to set foot behind our scene,  
 The world had witnessed how stage-king and queen,  
 Gallant and lady, but a minute since  
 Enarming each the other, would evince  
 No sign of recognition as they took  
 His way and her way to whatever nook  
 Waited them in the darkness either side  
 Of that bright stage where lately groom and bride  
 Had fired the audience to a frenzy-fit  
 Of sympathetic rapture—every whit  
 Earned as the curtain fell on her and me,  
 —Actors. Three whole years, nothing was to see  
 But calm and concord : where a speech was due  
 There came the speech ; when smiles were wanted too  
 Smiles were as ready. In a place like mine,  
 Where foreign and domestic cares combine,  
 There's audience every day and all day long ;  
 But finally the last of the whole throng  
 Who linger lets one see his back. For her—  
 Why, liberty and liking : I aver,  
 Liking and liberty ! For me—I breathed,  
 Let my face rest from every wrinkle wreathed  
 Smile-like about the mouth, unlearned my task  
 Of personation till next day bade mask,  
 And quietly betook me from that world  
 To the real world, not pageant : there unfurled  
 In work, its wings, my soul, the fretted power.  
 Three years I worked, each minute of each hour

Not claimed by acting :—work I may dispense  
 With talk about, since work in evidence,  
 Perhaps in history ; who knows or cares ?

After three years, this way, all unawares,  
 Our acting ended. She and I, at close  
 Of a loud night-feast, led, between two rows  
 Of bending male and female loyalty,  
 Our lord the king down staircase, while, held high  
 At arm's length did the twisted tapers' flare  
 Herald his passage from our palace where  
 Such visiting left glory evermore.  
 Again the ascent in public, till at door  
 As we two stood by the saloon—now blank  
 And disencumbered of its guests—there sank  
 A whisper in my ear, so low and yet  
 So unmistakable !

“ I half forget

“ The chamber you repair to, and I want  
 “ Occasion for one short word—if you grant  
 “ That grace—within a certain room you called  
 “ Our ‘ *Study*,’ for you wrote there while I scrawled  
 “ Some paper full of faces for my sport.  
 “ That room I can remember. Just one short  
 “ Word with you there, for the remembrance’ sake ! ”

“ Follow me thither ! ” I replied.

We break

The gloom a little, as with guiding lamp  
 I lead the way, leave warmth and cheer, by damp  
 Blind disused serpentine ways afar  
 From where the habitable chambers are,—  
 Ascend, descend stairs tunneled through the stone,—  
 Always in silence,—till I reach the lone  
 Chamber sepulchred for my very own



Out of the palace-quarry. When a boy,  
 Here was my fortress, stronghold from annoy  
 Proof-positive of ownership ; in youth  
 I garnered up my gleanings here—uncouth  
 But precious relics of vain hopes, vain fears ;  
 Finally, this became in after years  
 My closet of entrenchment to withstand  
 Invasion of the foe on every hand—  
 The multifarious herd in bower and hall,  
 State-room,—rooms whatsoe'er the style, which call  
 On masters to be mindful that, before  
 Men, they must look like men and something more.  
 Here,—when our lord the king's bestowment ceased  
 To deck me on the day that, golden-fleeced,  
 I touched ambition's height,—'t was here, released  
 From glory (always symbolled by a chain !)  
 No sooner was I privileged to gain  
 My secret domicile than glad I flung  
 That last toy on the table—gazed where hung  
 On hook my father's gift, the arquebuss—  
 And asked myself " Shall I envisage thus  
 " The new prize and the old prize, when I reach  
 " Another year's experience?—own that each  
 " Equaled advantage—sportsman's—statesman's tool?  
 " That brought me down on eagle, this—a fool !"

Into which room on entry, I set down  
 The lamp, and turning saw whose rustled gown  
 Had told me my wife followed, pace for pace.  
 Each of us looked the other in the face.  
 She spoke. " Since I could die now . . ."

(To explain

Why that first struck me, know—not once again  
 Since the adventure at the porphyry's edge  
 Three years before, which sundered like a wedge

Her soul from mine,—though daily, smile to smile,  
 We stood before the public,—all the while  
 Not once had I distinguished, in that face  
 I paid observance to, the faintest trace  
 Of feature more than requisite for eyes  
 To do their duty by and recognize :  
 So did I force mine to obey my will  
 And pry no further. There exists such skill,—  
 Those know who need it. What physician shrinks  
 From needful contact with a corpse? He drinks  
 No plague so long as thirst for knowledge,—not  
 An idler impulse,—prompts inquiry. What,  
 And will you disbelieve in power to bid  
 Our spirit back to bounds, as though we chid  
 A child from scrutiny that's just and right  
 In manhood? Sense, not soul, accomplished sight,  
 Reported daily she it was—not how  
 Nor why a change had come to cheek and brow.)

“ Since I could die now of the truth concealed,  
 “ Yet dare not, must not die,—so seems revealed  
 “ The Virgin's mind to me,—for death means peace,  
 “ Wherein no lawful part have I, whose lease  
 “ Of life and punishment the truth avowed  
 “ May haply lengthen,—let me push the shroud  
 “ Away, that steals to muffle ere is just  
 “ My penance-fire in snow! I dare—I must  
 “ Live, by avowal of the truth—this truth—  
 “ I loved you! Thanks for the fresh serpent's tooth  
 “ That, by a prompt new pang more exquisite  
 “ Than all preceding torture, proves me right!  
 “ I loved you yet I lost you! May I go  
 “ Burn to the ashes, now my shame you know?”

I think there never was such—how express?—  
 Horror coquetting with voluptuousness,

As in those arms of Eastern workmanship—  
Yataghan, kandjar, things that rend and rip,  
Gash rough, slash smooth, help hate so many ways,  
Yet ever keep a beauty that betrays  
Love still at work with the artificer  
Throughout his quaint devising. Why prefer,  
Except for love's sake, that a blade should writhe  
And bicker like a flame?—now play the scythe  
As if some broad neck tempted,—now contract  
And needle off into a fineness lacked  
For just that puncture which the heart demands?  
Then, such adornment! Wherefore need our hands  
Enclose not ivory alone, nor gold  
Roughened for use, but jewels? Nay, behold!  
Fancy my favorite—which I seem to grasp  
While I describe the luxury. No asp  
Is diapered more delicate round throat  
Than this below the handle! These denote  
—These mazy lines meandering, to end  
Only in flesh they open—what intend  
They else but water-purlings—pale contrast  
With the life-crimson where they blend at last?  
And mark the handle's dim pellucid green,  
Carved, the hard jadestone, as you pinch a bean,  
Into a sort of parrot-bird! He pecks  
A grape-bunch; his two eyes are ruby-specks  
Pure from the mine: seen this way,—glassy blank,  
But turn them,—lo the inmost fire, that shrank  
From sparkling, sends a red dart right to aim!  
Why did I choose such toys? Perhaps the game  
Of peaceful men is warlike, just as men  
War-wearied get amusement from that pen  
And paper we grow sick of—statesfolk tired  
Of merely (when such measures are required)  
Dealing out doom to people by three words,  
A signature and seal: we play with swords

Suggestive of quick process. That is how  
 I came to like the toys described you now,  
 Store of which glittered on the walls and strewed  
 The table, even, while my wife pursued  
 Her purpose to its ending. "Now you know  
 "This shame, my three years' torture, let me go,—  
 "Burn to the very ashes! You—I lost,  
 "Yet you—I loved!"

The thing I pity most  
 In men is—action prompted by surprise  
 Of anger: men? nay, bulls—whose onset lies  
 At instance of the firework and the goad!  
 Once the foe prostrate,—trampling once bestowed,—  
 Prompt follows placability, regret,  
 Atonement. Trust me, blood-warmth never yet  
 Betokened strong will! As no leap of pulse  
 Pricked me, that first time, so did none convulse  
 My veins at this occasion for resolve.  
 Had that devolved which did not then devolve  
 Upon me, I had done—what now to do  
 Was quietly apparent.

"Tell me who  
 "The man was, crouching by the porphyry vase!"

"No, never! All was folly in his case,  
 "All guilt in mine. I tempted, he complied."

"And yet you loved me?"

"Loved you. Double-dyed  
 "In folly and in guilt, I thought you gave  
 "Your heart and soul away from me to slave  
 "At statecraft. Since my right in you seemed lost,  
 "I stung myself to teach you, to your cost,  
 "What you rejected could be prized beyond  
 "Life, heaven, by the first fool I threw a fond  
 "Look on, a fatal word to."

“ And you still  
 “ Love me? Do I conjecture well or ill?”

“ Conjecture—well or ill! I had three years  
 “ To spend in learning you.”

“ We both are peers  
 “ In knowledge, therefore : since three years are spent  
 “ Ere thus much of yourself *I* learn—who went  
 “ Back to the house, that day, and brought my mind  
 “ To bear upon your action : uncombined  
 “ Motive from motive, till the dross, deprived  
 “ Of every purer particle, survived  
 “ At last in native simple hideousness,  
 “ Utter contemptibility, nor less  
 “ Nor more. Contemptibility—exempt  
 “ How could I, from its proper due—contempt?  
 “ I have too much despised you to divert  
 “ My life from its set course by help or hurt  
 “ Of your all-despicable life—perturb  
 “ The calm I work in, by—men’s mouths to curb,  
 “ Which at such news were clamorous enough—  
 “ Men’s eyes to shut before my broidered stuff  
 “ With the huge hole there, my emblazoned wall  
 “ Blank where a scutcheon hung,—by, worse than all,  
 “ Each day’s procession, my paraded life  
 “ Robbed and impoverished through the wanting wife  
 “ —Now that my life (which means—my work) was grown  
 “ Riches indeed! Once, just this worth alone  
 “ Seemed work to have, that profit gained thereby  
 “ Of good and praise would—how rewardingly!—  
 “ Fall at your feet,—a crown I hoped to cast  
 “ Before your love, my love should crown at last.  
 “ No love remaining to cast crown before,  
 “ My love stopped work now : but contempt the more  
 “ Impelled me task as ever head and hand,  
 “ Because the very fiends weave ropes of sand

"Rather than taste pure hell in idleness.  
 "Therefore I kept my memory down by stress  
 "Of daily work I had no mind to stay  
 "For the world's wonder at the wife away.  
 "Oh, it was easy all of it, believe,  
 "For I despised you! But your words retrieve  
 "Importantly the past. No hate assumed  
 "The mask of love at any time! There gloomed  
 "A moment when love took hate's semblance, urged  
 "By causes you declare; but love's self purged  
 "Away a fancied wrong I did both loves  
 "—Yours and my own; by no hate's help, it proves  
 "Purgation was attempted. Then, you rise  
 "High by how many a grade! I did despise—  
 "I do but hate you. Let hate's punishment  
 "Replace contempt's! First step to which ascent—  
 "Write down your own words I re-utter you!  
 "'*I loved my husband and I hated—who*  
 "'*He was, I took up as my first chance, mere*  
 "'*Mud-ball to fling and make love foul with!*' Here  
 "Lies paper!"

"Would my blood for ink suffice!"

"It may: this minion from a land of spice,  
 "Silk, feather—every bird of jewelled breast—  
 "This poignard's beauty, ne'er so lightly prest  
 "Above your heart there." . .

"Thus?"

"It flows, I see.

"Dip there the point and write!"

"Dictate to me!"

"Nay, I remember."

And she wrote the words.

I read them. Then—"Since love, in you, affords

"License for hate, in me, to quench (I say)  
 "Contempt—why, hate itself has passed away  
 "In vengeance—foreign to contempt. Depart  
 "Peacefully to that death which Eastern art  
 "Imbued this weapon with, if tales be true!  
 "Love will succeed to hate. I pardon you—  
 "Dead in our chamber!"

True as truth the tale.

She died ere morning; then, I saw how pale  
 Her cheek was ere it wore day's paint-disguise,  
 And what a hollow darkened 'neath her eyes,  
 Now that I used my own. She sleeps, as erst  
 Beloved, in this your church: ay, yours!

Immersed

In thought so deeply, Father? Sad, perhaps?  
 For whose sake, hers or mine or his who wraps  
 —Still plain I seem to see!—about his head  
 The idle cloak,—about his heart (instead  
 Of cuirass) some fond hope he may elude  
 My vengeance in the cloister's solitude?  
 Hardly, I think! As little helped his brow  
 The cloak then, Father—as your grate helps now!

— • • —  
*CENCIAJA.*

*Ogni cencio vuol entrare in bucato.*—Italian Proverb.

MAY I print, Shelley, how it came to pass  
 That when your Beatrice seemed—by lapse  
 Of many a long month since her sentence fell—  
 Assured of pardon for the parricide,—  
 By intercession of staunch friends, or say,  
 By certain pricks of conscience in the Pope  
 Conniver at Francesco Cenci's guilt,—

Suddenly all things changed and Clement grew  
 "Stern," as you state, "nor to be moved nor bent,  
 "But said these three words coldly '*She must die;*'  
 "Subjoining '*Pardon? Paolo Santa Croce*  
 "'Murdered his mother also yestereve,  
 "'*And he is fled: she shall not flee, at least!*'"  
 —So, to the letter, sentence was fulfilled?  
 Shelley, may I condense verbosity  
 That lies before me, into some few words  
 Of English, and illustrate your superb  
 Achievement by a rescued anecdote,  
 No great things, only new and true beside?  
 As if some mere familiar of a house  
 Should venture to accost the group at gaze  
 Before its Titian, famed the wide world through,  
 And supplement such pictured masterpiece  
 By whisper "Searching in the archives here,  
 "I found the reason of the Lady's fate,  
 "And how by accident it came to pass  
 "She wears the halo and displays the palm:  
 "Who, haply, else had never suffered—no,  
 "Nor graced our gallery, by consequence."  
 Who loved the work would like the little news:  
 Who lauds your poem lends an ear to me  
 Relating how the penalty was paid  
 By one Marchese dell' Oriolo, called  
 Onofrio Santa Croce otherwise,  
 For his complicity in matricide  
 With Paolo his own brother,—he whose crime  
 And flight induced "those three words—*She must die.*"  
 Thus I unroll you then the manuscript.

"God's justice"—(of the multiplicity  
 Of such communications extant still,  
 Recording, each, injustice done by God  
 In person of his Vicar-upon-earth,



Scarce one but leads off to the self-same tune)—  
 “ God’s justice, tardy though it prove perchance,  
 “ Rests never on the track until it reach  
 “ Delinquency. In proof I cite the case  
 “ Of Paolo Santa Croce.”

Many times  
 The youngster,—having been importunate  
 That Marchesine Costanza, who remained  
 His widowed mother, should supplant the heir  
 Her elder son, and substitute himself  
 In sole possession of her faculty,—  
 And meeting just as often with rebuff,—  
 Blinded by so exorbitant a lust  
 Of gold, the youngster straightway tasked his wits,  
 Casting about to kill the lady—thus.

He first, to cover his iniquity,  
 Writes to Onofrio Santa Croce, then  
 Authoritative lord, acquainting him  
 Their mother was contamination—wrought  
 Like hell-fire in the beauty of their House  
 By dissoluteness and abandonment  
 Of soul and body to impure delight.  
 Moreover, since she suffered from disease,  
 Those symptoms which her death made manifest  
 Hydroptic, he affirmed were fruits of sin  
 About to bring confusion and disgrace  
 Upon the ancient lineage and high fame  
 O’ the family, when published. Duty-bound,  
 He asked his brother—what a son should do ?

Which when Marchese dell’ Oriolo heard  
 By letter, being absent at his land  
 Oriolo, he made answer, this, no more :  
 “ It must behove a son,—things haply so,—  
 “ To act as honour prompts a cavalier

“ And son, perform his duty to all three,  
 “ Mother and brothers ”—here advice broke off.

By which advice informed and fortified  
 As he professed himself—as bound by birth  
 To hear God's voice in primogeniture—  
 Paolo, who kept his mother company  
 In her domain Subiaco, straightway dared  
 His whole enormity of enterprise  
 And, falling on her, stabbed the lady dead ;  
 Whose death demonstrated her innocence,  
 And happened,—by the way,—since Jesus Christ  
 Died to save man, just sixteen hundred years.  
 Costanza was of aspect beautiful  
 Exceedingly, and seemed, although in age  
 Sixty about, to far surpass her peers  
 The coëtaneous dames, in youth and grace.

Done the misdeed, its author takes to flight,  
 Foiling thereby the justice of the world :  
 Not God's however,—God, be sure, knows well  
 The way to clutch a culprit. Witness here !  
 The present sinner, when he least expects,  
 Snug-cornered somewhere i' the Basilicate,  
 Stumbles upon his death by violence.  
 A man of blood assaults the man of blood  
 And slays him somehow. This was afterward :  
 Enough, he promptly met with his deserts,  
 And, ending thus, permits we end with him,  
 And push forthwith to this important point—  
 His matricide fell out, of all the days,  
 Precisely when the law-procedure closed  
 Respecting Count Francesco Cenci's death  
 Chargeable on his daughter, sons and wife.  
 “ Thus patricide was matched with matricide,”  
 A poet not inelegantly rhymed :

Nay, fratricide—those Princes Massimi!—  
 Which so disturbed the spirit of the Pope  
 That all the likelihood Rome entertained  
 Of Beatrice's pardon vanished straight,  
 And she endured the piteous death.

Now see

The sequel—what effect commandment had  
 For strict inquiry into this last case,  
 When Cardinal Aldobrandini (great  
 His efficacy—nephew to the Pope !)  
 Was bidden crush—ay, though his very hand  
 Got soiled i' the act—crime spawning everywhere !  
 Because, when all endeavour had been used  
 To catch the aforesaid Paolo, all in vain—  
 “ Make perquisition ” quoth our Eminence,  
 “ Throughout his now deserted domicile !  
 “ Ransack the palace, roof and floor, to find  
 “ If haply any scrap of writing, hid  
 “ In nook or corner, may convict—who knows ?—  
 “ Brother Onofrio of intelligence  
 “ With brother Paolo, as in brotherhood  
 “ Is but too likely : crime spawns everywhere !”

And, every cranny searched accordingly,  
 There comes to light—O lynx-eyed Cardinal !—  
 Onofrio's unconsidered writing-scrap,  
 The letter in reply to Paolo's prayer,  
 The word of counsel that—things proving so,  
 Paolo should act the proper knightly part,  
 And do as was incumbent on a son,  
 A brother—and a man of birth, be sure !

Whereat immediately the officers  
 Proceeded to arrest Onofrio—found  
 At football, child's play, unaware of harm,

Safe with his friends, the Orsini, at their seat  
 Monte Giordano ; as he left the house  
 He came upon the watch in wait for him  
 Set by the Barigel,—was caught and caged.

News of which capture being, that same hour,  
 Conveyed to Rome, forthwith our Eminence  
 Commands Taverna, Governor and Judge,  
 To have the process in especial care,  
 Be, first to last, not only president  
 In person, but inquisitor as well,  
 Nor trust the bye-work to a substitute :  
 Bids him not, squeamish, keep the bench, but scrub  
 The floor of Justice, so to speak,—go try  
 It is best in prison with the criminal ;  
 Promising, as reward for bye-work done  
 Fairly on all-fours, that, success obtained  
 And crime avowed, or such connivency  
 With crime as should procure a decent death—  
 Himself will humbly beg—which means, procure—  
 The Hat and Purple from his relative  
 The Pope, and so repay a diligence  
 Which, meritorious in the Cenci-case,  
 Mounts plainly here to Purple and the Hat !

Whereupon did my lord the Governor  
 So masterfully exercise the task  
 Enjoined him, that he, day by day, and week  
 By week, and month by month, from first to last  
 Deserved the prize : now, punctual at his place,  
 Played Judge, and now, assiduous at his post,  
 Inquisitor—pressed cushion and scoured plank,  
 Early and late. Noon's fervor and night's chill,  
 Nought moved whom morn would, purpling, make  
     amends !  
 So that observers laughed as, many a day,

He left home, in July when day is flame,  
 Posted to Tordinona-prison, plunged  
 Into the vault where daylong night is ice,  
 There passed his eight hours on a stretch, content,  
 Examining Onofrio : all the stress  
 Of all examination steadily  
 Converging into one pin-point,—he pushed  
 Tentative now of head and now of heart.  
 As when the nuthatch taps and tries the nut  
 This side and that side till the kernel sounds,—  
 So did he press the sole and single point  
 —What was the very meaning of the phrase  
 “*Do what beseems an honored cavalier?*”

Which one persistent question-torture,—plied  
 Day by day, week by week, and month by month,  
 Morn, noon and night,—fatigued away a mind  
 Grown imbecile by darkness, solitude,  
 And one vivacious memory gnawing there  
 As when a corpse is confined with a snake :  
 —Fatigued Onofrio into what might seem  
 Admission that perchance his judgment groped  
 So blindly, feeling for an issue—aught  
 With semblance of an issue from the toils  
 Cast of a sudden round feet late so free,—  
 He possibly might have envisaged, scarce  
 Recoiled from—even were the issue death  
 —Even her death whose life was death and worse !  
 Always provided that the charge of crime,  
 Each jot and tittle of the charge were true.  
 In such a sense, belike, he might advise  
 His brother to expurgate crime with . . . well,  
 With blood, if blood must follow on “*the course*  
 “*Taken as might beseem a cavalier.*”

Whereupon process ended, and report  
 Was made without a minute of delay

To Clement, who, because of those two crimes  
 O' the Massimi and Cenci flagrant late,  
 Must needs impatiently desire result.

Result obtained, he bade the Governor  
 Summon the Congregation and despatch.  
 Summons made, sentence passed accordingly  
 —Death by beheading. When his death-decree  
 Was intimated to Onofrio, all  
 Man could do—that did he to save himself.  
 'T was much, the having gained for his defence  
 The Advocate o' the Poor, with natural help  
 Of many noble friendly persons fain  
 To disengage a man of family,  
 So young too, from his grim entanglement.  
 But Cardinal Aldobrandini ruled  
 There must be no diversion of the law.  
 Justice is justice, and the magistrate  
 Bears not the sword in vain. Who sins must die.

So, the Marchese had his head cut off  
 In Place Saint Angelo beside the Bridge,  
 With Rome to see, a concourse infinite ;  
 Where, magnanimity demonstrating  
 Adequate to his birth and breed,—poor boy !—  
 He made the people the accustomed speech,  
 Exhorted them to true faith, honest works,  
 And special good behaviour as regards  
 A parent of no matter what the sex,  
 Bidding each son take warning from himself.  
 Truly, it was considered in the boy  
 Stark staring lunacy, no less, to snap,  
 So plain a bait, be hooked and hauled a-shore  
 By such an angler as the Cardinal !  
 Why make confession of his privity  
 To Paolo's enterprise ? Mere sealing lips—  
 Or, better, saying “When I counselled him

“*To do as might beseem a cavalier,*  
 “What could I mean but ‘*Hide our parent’s shame*  
 “*As Christian ought, by aid of Holy Church!*  
 “*Bury it in a convent—ay, beneath*  
 “*Enough dotation to prevent its ghost*  
 “*From troubling earth!’*” Mere saying thus,—’t is  
 plain,

Not only were his life the recompense,  
 But he had manifestly proved himself  
 True Christian, and in lieu of punishment  
 Been praised of all men!—So the populace.

Anyhow, when the Pope made promise good  
 (That of Aldobrandini, near and dear)  
 And gave Taverna, who had toiled so much,  
 A Cardinal’s equipment, some such word  
 As this from mouth to ear went saucily :  
 “Taverna’s cap is dyed in what he drew  
 “From Santa Croce’s veins!” So joked the world.

I add : Onofrio left one child behind,  
 A daughter named Valeria, dowered with grace  
 Abundantly of soul and body, doomed  
 To life the shorter for her father’s fate.  
 By death of her, the Marquisate returned  
 To that Orsini House from whence it came :  
 Oriolo having passed as donative  
 To Santa Croce from their ancestors.

And no word more? By all means! Would you know  
 The authoritative answer, when folks urged  
 “What made Aldobrandini, hound-like staunch,  
 “Hunt out of life a harmless simpleton?”  
 The answer was—“Hatred implacable,  
 “By reason they were rivals in their love.”  
 The Cardinal’s desire was to a dame  
 Whose favour was Onofrio’s. Pricked with pride,  
 The simpleton must ostentatiously

Display a ring, the Cardinal's love-gift,  
 Given to Onofrio as the lady's gage ;  
 Which ring on finger, as he put forth hand  
 To draw a tapestry, the Cardinal  
 Saw and knew, gift and owner, old and young ;  
 Whereon a fury entered him—the fire  
 He quenched with what could quench fire only—blood.  
 Nay, more : “ there want not who affirm to boot,  
 “ The unwise boy, a certain festal eve,  
 “ Feigned ignorance of who the wight might be  
 “ That pressed too closely on him with a crowd.  
 “ He struck the Cardinal a blow : and then,  
 “ To put a face upon the incident,  
 “ Dared next day, smug as ever, go pay court  
 “ I' the Cardinal's antechamber. Mark and mend,  
 “ Ye youth, by this example how may greed  
 “ Vainglorious operate in worldly souls !”

So ends the chronicler, beginning with  
 “ God's justice, tardy though it prove perchance,  
 “ Rests never-till it reach delinquency.”  
 Ay, or how otherwise had come to pass  
 That Victor rules, this present year, in Rome ?



*PORPHYRIA'S LOVER.*

I

THE rain set early in to-night,  
 The sullen wind was soon awake,  
 It tore the elm-tops down for spite,  
 And did its worst to vex the lake,  
 I listened with heart fit to break.

II

When glided in Porphyria ; straight  
 She shut the cold out and the storm,  
 And kneeled and made the cheerless grate



Blaze up, and all the cottage warm ;  
Which done, she rose, and from her form

## III

Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,  
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied  
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,  
And, last, she sat down by my side  
And called me. When no voice replied,

## IV

She put my arm about her waist,  
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,  
And all her yellow hair displaced,  
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,  
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,—

## V

Murmuring how she loved me—she  
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,  
To set its struggling passion free  
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,  
And give herself to me for ever.

## VI

But passion sometimes would prevail,  
Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain  
A sudden thought of one so pale  
For love of her, and all in vain :  
So, she was come through wind and rain.

## VII

Be sure I looked up at her eyes  
Happy and proud ; at last I knew  
Porphyria worshipped me ; surprise  
Made my heart swell, and still it grew  
While I debated what to do.

## VIII

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,  
 Perfectly pure and good : I found  
 A thing to do, and all her hair  
 In one long yellow string I wound  
 Three times her little throat around,

## IX

And strangled her. No pain felt she ;  
 I am quite sure she felt no pain.  
 As a shut bud that holds a bee,  
 I warily oped her lids : again  
 Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.

## X

And I untightened next the tress  
 About her neck ; her check once more  
 Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss :  
 I propped her head up as before.  
 Only, this time my shoulder bore

## XI

Her head, which droops upon it still :  
 The smiling rosy little head,  
 So glad it has its utmost will,  
 That all it scorned at once is fled,  
 And I, its love, am gained instead !

## XII

Porphyria's love : she guessed not how  
 Her darling one wish would be heard.  
 And thus we sit together now.  
 And all night long we have not stirred,  
 And yet God has not said a word !



*FILIPPO BALDINUCCI ON THE PRIVILEGE  
OF BURIAL.*

*A Reminiscence of A.D. 1676.*

I

No, boy, we must not (so began  
My Uncle—he 's with God long since—  
A-petting me, the good old man !)  
We must not (and he seemed to wince,  
And lose that laugh whereto had grown  
His chuckle at my piece of news,  
How cleverly I aimed my stone)  
I fear we must not pelt the Jews !

II

When I was young, indeed,—ah, faith  
Was young and strong in Florence too !  
We Christians never dreamed of scathe  
Because we cursed or kicked the crew.  
But now—well, well ! The olive-crops  
Weighed double then, and Arno's pranks  
Would always spare religious shops  
Whenever he o'erflowed his banks !

III

I 'll tell you (and his eye regained  
Its twinkle) tell you something choice !  
Something may help you keep unstained  
Your honest zeal to stop the voice  
Of unbelief with stone-throw—spite  
Of laws, which modern fools enact,  
That we must suffer Jews in sight  
Go wholly unmolested ! Fact !

## IV

There was, then, in my youth, and yet  
 Is, hard by San Frediano, just  
 Below the Blessed Olivet,  
 A wayside ground wherein they thrust  
 Their dead,—these Jews,—the more our shame!  
 Except that, so they will but die,  
 We may perchance incur no blame  
 In giving hogs a hoist to stye.

## V

There, anyhow, Jews stow away  
 Their dead; and,—such their insolence,—  
 Slink at odd times to sing and pray  
 As Christians do—all make-pretence!—  
 Which wickedness they perpetrate  
 Because they think no Christians see.  
 They reckoned here, at any rate,  
 Without their host: ha, ha, he, he!

## VI

For, what should join their plot of ground  
 But a good Farmer's Christian field?  
 The Jews had hedged their corner round  
 With bramble-bush to keep concealed  
 Their doings: for the public road  
 Ran betwixt this their ground and that  
 The Farmer's, where he ploughed and sowed  
 Grew corn for barn and grapes for vat.

## VII

So, properly to guard his store  
 And gall the unbelievers too,  
 He builds a shrine and, what is more,  
 Procures a painter whom I knew,

One Buti (he 's with God) to paint  
 A holy picture there—no less  
 Than Virgin Mary free from taint  
 Borne to the sky by angels : yes !

## VIII

Which shrine he fixed,—who says him nay?—  
 A-facing with its picture-side  
 Not as you 'd think, the public way,  
 But just where sought these hounds to hide  
 Their carrion from that very truth  
 Of Mary's triumph : not a hound  
 Could act his mummeries uncouth  
 But Mary shamed the pack all round !

## IX

Now, if it was amusing, judge !  
 —To see the company arrive,  
 Each Jew intent to end his trudge  
 And take his pleasure (though alive)  
 With all his Jewish kith and kin  
 Below ground, have his venom out,  
 Sharpen his wits for next day's sin,  
 Curse Christians, and so home, no doubt !

## X

Whereas, each phyz upturned beholds  
 Mary, I warrant, soaring brave !  
 And in a trice, beneath the folds  
 Of filthy garb which gowns each knave,  
 Down drops it—there to hide grimace,  
 Contortion of the mouth and nose  
 At finding Mary in the place  
 They 'd keep for Pilate, I suppose !

## XI

At last, they will not brook—not they !—  
 Longer such outrage on their tribe :  
 So, in some hole and corner, lay  
 Their heads together—how to bribe  
 The meritorious Farmer's self  
 To straight undo his work, restore  
 Their chance to meet, and muse on pelf—  
 Pretending sorrow, as before !

## XII

Forthwith, a posse, if you please,  
 Of Rabbi This and Rabbi That  
 Almost go down upon their knees  
 To get him lay the picture flat.  
 The spokesman, eighty years of age,  
 Grey as a badger, with a goat's  
 —Not only beard but bleat, 'gins wage  
 War with our Mary. Thus he dotes :—

## XIII

“ Friends, grant a grace ! How Hebrews toil  
 “ Through life in Florence—why relate  
 “ To those who lay the burden, spoil  
 “ Our paths of peace ? We bear our fate.  
 “ But when with life the long toil ends,  
 “ Why must you—the expression craves  
 “ Pardon, but truth compels me, friends !—  
 “ Why must you plague us in our graves ?

## XIV

“ Thoughtlessly plague, I would believe !  
 “ For how can you—the lords of ease  
 “ By nurture, birthright—e'en conceive  
 “ Our luxury to lie with trees

- “ And turf,—the cricket and the bird  
“ Left for our last companionship :  
“ No harsh deed, no unkindly word,  
“ No frowning brow nor scornful lip !

## XV

- “ Death’s luxury, we now rehearse  
“ While, living, through your streets we fare  
“ And take your hatred : nothing worse  
“ Have we, once dead and safe, to bear !  
“ So we refresh our souls, fulfil  
“ Our works, our daily tasks ; and thus  
“ Gather you grain—earth’s harvest—still  
“ The wheat for you, the straw for us.

## XVI

- “ ‘ What flouting in a face, what harm,  
“ ‘ In just a lady borne from bier  
“ ‘ By boys’ heads, wings for leg and arm ? ’  
“ You question. Friends, the harm is here—  
“ That just when our last sigh is heaved,  
“ And we would fain thank God and you  
“ For labour done and peace achieved,  
“ Back comes the Past in full review !

## XVII

- “ At sight of just that simple flag,  
“ Starts the foe-feeling serpent-like  
“ From slumber. Leave it lulled, nor drag—  
“ Though fangless—forth, what needs must strike  
“ When stricken sore, though stroke be vain  
“ Against the mailed oppressor ! Give  
“ Play to our fancy that we gain  
“ Life’s rights when once we cease to live !

## XVIII

" Thus much to courtesy, to kind,  
 " To conscience ! Now to Florence folk !  
 " There 's core beneath this apple-rind,  
 " Beneath this white-of-egg there 's yolk !  
 " Beneath this prayer to courtesy,  
 " Kind, conscience—there 's a sum to pouch !  
 " How many ducats down will buy  
 " Our shame's removal, sirs ? Avouch !

## XIX

" Removal, not destruction, sirs !  
 " Just turn your picture ! Let it front  
 " The public path ! Or memory errs,  
 " Or that same public path is wont  
 " To witness many a chance befall  
 " Of lust, theft, bloodshed—sins enough,  
 " Wherein our Hebrew part is small.  
 " Convert yourselves !"—he cut up rough.

## XX

Look you, how soon a service paid  
 Religion yields the servant fruit !  
 A prompt reply our Farmer made  
 So following : " Sirs, to grant your suit  
 " Involves much danger ! How ? Transpose  
 " Our Lady ? Stop the chastisement,  
 " All for your good, herself bestows ?  
 " What wonder if I grudge consent ?

## XXI

" —Yet grant it : since, what cash I take  
 " Is so much saved from wicked use.  
 " We know you ! And, for Mary's sake,  
 " A hundred ducats shall induce



“ Concession to your prayer. One day  
 “ Suffices : Master Buti’s brush  
 “ Turns Mary round the other way,  
 “ And deluges your side with slush.

## XXII

“ Down with the ducats therefore !” Dump,  
 Dump, dump it falls, each counted piece,  
 Hard gold. Then out of door they stump,  
 These dogs, each brisk as with new lease  
 Of life, I warrant,—glad he ’ll die  
 Henceforward just as he may choose,  
 Be buried and in clover lie !  
 Well said Esaias—“ stiff-necked Jews !”

## XXIII

Off posts without a minute’s loss  
 Our Farmer, once the cash in poke,  
 And summons Buti—ere its gloss  
 Have time to fade from off the joke—  
 To chop and change his work, undo  
 The done side, make the side, now blank,  
 Recipient of our Lady—who,  
 Displaced thus, had these dogs to thank !

## XXIV

Now, you ’re no boy I need instruct  
 In technicalities of Art !  
 My nephew’s childhood sure has sucked  
 Along with mother’s-milk some part  
 Of painter’s-practice –learned, at least,  
 How expeditiously is plied  
 A work in fresco—never ceased  
 When once begun—a day, each side.

## XXV

So, Buti—he 's with God—begins :  
 First covers up the shrine all round  
 With hoarding ; then, as like as twins,  
 Paints, t' other side the burial-ground,  
 New Mary, every point the same ;  
 Next, sluices over, as agreed,  
 The old ; and last—but, spoil the game  
 By telling you ? Not I, indeed !

## XXVI

Well, ere the week was half at end,  
 Out came the object of this zeal,  
 This fine alacrity to spend  
 Hard money for mere dead men's weal !  
 How think you ? That old spokesman Jew  
 Was High Priest, and he had a wife  
 As old, and she was dying too,  
 And wished to end in peace her life !

## XXVII

And he must humour dying whims,  
 And soothe her with the idle hope  
 They 'd say their prayers and sing their hymns  
 As if her husband were the Pope !  
 And she did die—believing just  
 This privilege was purchased ! Dead  
 In comfort through her foolish trust !  
 “ Stiff-necked ones,” well Esaias said !

## XXVIII

So, Sabbath morning, out of gate  
 And on to way, what sees our arch  
 Good Farmer ? Why, they hoist their freight—  
 The corpse—on shoulder, and so, march !

“ Now for it, Buti ! ” In the nick  
 Of time 't is pully-hauly, hence  
 With hoarding ! O'er the wayside quick  
 There 's Mary plain in evidence !

## XXIX

And here 's the convoy halting : right !  
 O they are bent on howling psalms  
 And growling prayers, when opposite !  
 And yet they glance, for all their qualms,  
 Approve that promptitude of his,  
 The Farmer's—duly at his post  
 To take due thanks from every phyz,  
 Sour smirk—nay, surly smile almost !

## XXX

Then earthward drops each brow again ;  
 The solemn task 's resumed ; they reach  
 Their holy field—the unholy train :  
 Enter its precinct, all and each,  
 Wrapt somehow in their godless rites ;  
 Till, rites at end, up-waking, lo  
 They lift their faces ! What delights  
 The mourners as they turn to go ?

## XXXI

Ha, ha, he, he ! On just the side  
 They drew their purse-strings to make quit  
 Of Mary,—Christ the Crucified  
 Fronted them now—these biters bit !  
 Never was such a hiss and snort,  
 Such screwing nose and shooting lip !  
 Their purchase—honey in report—  
 Proved gall and verjuice at first sip !

## XXXII

Out they break, on they bustle, where,  
 A-top of wall, the Farmer waits  
 With Buti : never fun so rare !  
 The Farmer has the best : he rates  
 The rascal, as the old High Priest  
 Takes on himself to sermonize—  
 Nay, sneer “ We Jews supposed, at least,  
 “ Theft was a crime in Christian eyes ! ”

## XXXIII

“ Theft ? ” cries the Farmer, “ Eat your words !  
 “ Show me what constitutes a breach  
 “ Of faith in aught was said or heard !  
 “ I promised you in plainest speech  
 “ I ’d take the thing you count disgrace  
 “ And put it here—and here ’t is put !  
 “ Did you suppose I ’d leave the place  
 “ Blank therefore, just your rage to glut ?

## XXXIV

“ I guess you dared not stipulate  
 “ For such a damned impertinence !  
 “ So, quick, my greybeard, out of gate  
 “ And in at Ghetto ! Haste you hence !  
 “ As long as I have house and land,  
 “ To spite you irreligious chaps  
 “ Here shall the Crucifixion stand—  
 “ Unless you down with cash, perhaps ! ”

## XXXV

So snickered he and Buti both.  
 The Jews said nothing, interchanged  
 A glance or two, renewed their oath  
 To keep ears stopped and hearts estranged

From grace, for all our Church can do.  
 Then off they scuttle : sullen jog  
 Homewards, against our Church to brew  
 Fresh mischief in their synagogue.

## XXXVI

But next day—see what happened, boy !  
 See why I bid you have a care  
 How you pelt Jews ! The knaves employ  
 Such methods of revenge, forbear  
 No outrage on our faith, when free  
 To wreak their malice ! Here they took  
 So base a method—plague o' me  
 If I record it in my Book !

## XXXVII

For, next day, while the Farmer sat  
 Laughing with Buti, in his shop,  
 At their successful joke,—rat-tat,—  
 Door opens, and they 're like to drop  
 Down to the floor as in there stalks  
 A six-foot-high herculean-built  
 Young he-Jew with a beard that baulks  
 Description. “ Help ere blood be spilt !”

## XXXVIII

—Screamed Buti : for he recognized  
 Whom but the son, no less no more,  
 Of that High Priest his work surprised  
 So pleasantly the day before !  
 Son of the mother, then, whereof  
 The bier he lent a shoulder to,  
 And made the moans about, dared scoff  
 At sober Christian grief—the Jew !

## XXXIX

“Sirs, I salute you! Never rise!  
 “No apprehension!” (Buti, white  
 And trembling like a tub of size,  
 Had tried to smuggle out of sight  
 The picture’s self—the thing in oils,  
 You know, from which a fresco’s dashed  
 Which courage speeds while caution spoils)  
 “Stay and be praised sir, unabashed!”

## XL

“Praised,—ay, and paid too: for I come  
 “To buy that very work of yours.  
 “My poor abode, which boasts—well, some  
 “Few specimens of Art, secures  
 “Haply, a masterpiece indeed  
 “If I should find my humble means  
 “Suffice the outlay. So, proceed!  
 “Propose—ere prudence intervenes!”

## XLI

On Buti, cowering like a child,  
 These words descended from aloft,  
 In tones so ominously mild,  
 With smile terrifically soft  
 To that degree—could Buti dare  
 (Poor fellow) use his brains, think twice?  
 He asked, thus taken unaware,  
 No more than just the proper price!

## XLII

“Done!” cries the monster. “I disburse  
 “Forthwith your moderate demand.  
 “Count on my custom—if no worse  
 “Your future work be, understand,

“Than this I carry off! No aid!  
 “My arm, sir, lacks nor bone nor thews:  
 “The burden ’s easy, and we ’re made,  
 “Easy or hard, to bear—we Jews!”

## XLIII

Crossing himself at such escape,  
 Buti by turns the money eyes  
 And, timidly, the stalwart shape  
 Now moving doorwards; but, more wise,  
 The Farmer,—who, though dumb, this while  
 Had watched advantage—straight conceived  
 A reason for that tone and smile  
 So mild and soft! The Jew—believed!

## XLIV

Mary in triumph borne to deck  
 A Hebrew household! Pictured where  
 No one was used to bend the neck  
 In praise or bow the knee in prayer!  
 Borne to that domicile by whom?  
 The son of the High Priest! Through what?  
 An insult done his mother’s tomb!  
 Saul changed to Paul—the case came pat!

## XLV

“Stay, dog-Jew . . . gentle sir, that is!  
 “Resolve me! Can it be, she crowned—  
 “Mary, by miracle—Oh bliss!—  
 “My present to your burial-ground?  
 “Certain, a ray of light has burst  
 “Your veil of darkness! Had you else,  
 “Only for Mary’s sake, unpursed  
 “So much hard money? Tell—oh, tell ’s!”

## XLVI

Round—like a serpent that we took  
 For worm and trod on—turns his bulk  
 About the Jew. First dreadful look  
 Sends Buti in a trice to skulk  
 Out of sight somewhere, safe—alack !  
 But our good Farmer faith made bold :  
 And firm (with Florence at his back)  
 He stood, while gruff the gutturals rolled—

## XLVII

“ Ay, sir, a miracle was worked,  
 “ By quite another power, I trow,  
 “ Than ever yet in canvas lurked,  
 “ Or you would scarcely face me now !  
 “ A certain impulse did suggest  
 “ A certain grasp with this right-hand,  
 “ Which probably had put to rest  
 “ Our quarrel,—thus your throat once spanned !

## XLVIII

“ But I remembered me, subdued  
 “ That impulse, and you face me still !  
 “ And soon a philosophic mood  
 “ Succeeding (hear it, if you will !)  
 “ Has altogether changed my views  
 “ Concerning Art. Blind prejudice !  
 “ Well may you Christians tax us Jews  
 “ With scrupulosity too nice !

## XLIX

“ For, don't I see,—let 's issue join !—  
 “ Whenever I 'm allowed pollute  
 “ (I—and my little bag of coin)  
 “ Some Christian palace of repute,—



" Don 't I see stuck up everywhere  
 " Abundant proof that cultured taste  
 " Has Beauty for its only care,  
 " And upon Truth no thought to waste?

## L

" ' Jew, since it must be, take in pledge  
 " ' Of payment '—so a Cardinal  
 " Has sighed to me as if a wedge  
 " Entered his heart—' this best of all  
 " ' My treasures !' Leda, Ganymede  
 " Or Antiope : swan, eagle, ape,  
 " (Or what 's the beast of what 's the breed)  
 " And Jupiter in every shape !

## LI

" Whereat if I presume to ask  
 " ' But, Eminence, though Titian's whisk  
 " ' Of brush have well performed its task,  
 " ' How comes it these false godships frisk  
 " ' In presence of—what yonder frame  
 " ' Pretends to image? Surely, odd  
 " ' It seems, you let confront The Name  
 " ' Each beast the heathen called his god !

## LII

" Benignant smiles me pity straight  
 " The Cardinal. " 'T is Truth, we prize !  
 " ' Art 's the sole question in debate !  
 " ' These subjects are so many lies.  
 " ' We treat them with a proper scorn  
 " ' When we turn lies—called gods forsooth—  
 " ' To lies' fit use, now Christ is born.  
 " ' Drawing and colouring are Truth.

## LIII

“ Think you I honor lies so much  
 “ As scruple to parade the charms  
 “ Of Leda—Titian, every touch—  
 “ Because the thing within her arms  
 “ Means Jupiter who had the praise  
 “ And prayer of a benighted world?  
 “ Benighted I too, if, in days  
 “ Of light, I kept the canvas furled !’

## LIV

“ So ending, with some easy gibe.  
 “ What power has logic ! I, at once,  
 “ Acknowledged error in our tribe  
 “ So squeamish that, when friends ensconce  
 “ A pretty picture in its niche  
 “ To do us honor, deck our graves,  
 “ We fret and fume and have an itch  
 “ To strangle folk—ungrateful knaves !

## LV

“ No, sir ! Be sure that—what’s its style,  
 “ Your picture?—shall possess ungrudged  
 “ A place among my rank and file  
 “ Of Ledas and what not—be judged  
 “ Just as a picture !—and (because  
 “ I fear me much I scarce have bought  
 “ A Titian) Master Buti’s flaws  
 “ Found there, will have the laugh flaws ought !”

## LVI

So, with a scowl, it darkens door—  
 This bulk—no longer ! Buti makes  
 Prompt glad re-entry ; there’s a score  
 Of oaths, as the good Farmer wakes

From what must needs have been a trance,  
 Or he had struck (he swears) to ground  
 The bold bad mouth that dared advance  
 Such doctrine the reverse of sound !

## LVII.

Was magic here ? Most like ! For, since,  
 Somehow our city's faith grows still  
 More and more lukewarm, and our Prince  
 Or loses heart or wants the will  
 To check increase of cold. 'T is " Live  
 " And let live ! Languidly repress  
 " The Dissident ! In short,—contrive  
 " Christians must bear with Jews : no less ! "

## LVIII

The end seems, any Israelite  
 Wants any picture,—pishes, poohs,  
 Purchases, hangs it full in sight  
 In any chamber he may choose !  
 In Christ's crown, one more thorn we rue !  
 In Mary's bosom, one more sword !  
 No, boy, you must not pelt a Jew !  
 O Lord, how long ? How long, O Lord ?



## SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER.

## I

GR-R-R—there go, my heart's abhorrence !  
 Water your damned flower-pots, do !  
 If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,  
 God's blood, would not mine kill you !

What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?  
 Oh, that rose has prior claims—  
 Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?  
 Hell dry you up with its flames!

## II

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

## III

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,  
 Laid with care on our own shelf!  
 With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,  
 And a goblet for ourself,  
 Rinsed like something sacrificial  
 Ere't is fit to touch our chaps—  
 Marked with L. for our initial!  
 (He-he! There his lily snaps!)

## IV

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

V

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

VI

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

VII

There's a great text in Galatian§  
    Once you trip on it, entails  
Twenty-nine distinct damnations  
    One sure, if another fails :  
If I trip him just a-dying,  
    Sure of heaven as sure can be,  
Spin him round and send him flying  
    Off to hell, a Manichee?

VIII

Or, my scrofulous French novel  
    On grey paper with blunt type !  
Simply glance at it, you grovel  
    Hand and foot in Belial's gripe :

If I double down its pages  
 At the woeful sixteenth print,  
 When he gathers his greengages,  
 Ope a sieve and slip it in 't?

## IX

Or, there 's Satan!—one might venture  
 Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave  
 Such a flaw in the indenture  
 As he 'd miss till, past retrieve,  
 Blasted lay that rose-acacia  
 We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine . . .*  
 'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratiâ*  
*Ave, Virgo!* Gr-r-r—you swine!



## THE HERETIC'S TRAGEDY.

## A MIDDLE-AGE INTERLUDE.

ROSA MUNDI; SEU, FULCITE ME FLORIBUS. A CONCEIT OF MASTER  
 GYSBRECHT, CANON-REGULAR OF SAINT JODOCUS-BY-THE-BAR, YPRES  
 CITY. CANTUQUE, *Virgilius*. AND HATH OFTEN BEEN SUNG AT HOCK-  
 TIDE AND FESTIVALS. GAVISUS ERAM, *Fessides*.

(It would seem to be a glimpse from the burning of Jacques du Bourg  
 Molay, at Paris, A.D. 1314; as distorted by the refraction from Flemish  
 brain to brain during the course of a couple of centuries.)

## I

PREADMONISHETH THE ABBOT DEODAET.

THE Lord, we look to once for all,  
 Is the Lord we should look at, all at once:  
 He knows not to vary, saith St. Paul,  
 Nor the shadow of turning, for the nonce.  
 See him no other than as he is!  
 Give both the infinitudes their due—

Infinite mercy, but, I wis,  
 As infinite a justice too.  
[*Organ : plagal-cadence.*]  
 As infinite a justice too.

## II

## ONE SINGETH.

John, Master of the Temple of God,  
 Falling to sin the Unknown Sin,  
 What he bought of Emperor Aldabrod,  
 He sold it to Sultan Saladin :  
 Till, caught by Pope Clement, a-buzzing there,  
 Hornet-prince of the mad wasps' hive,  
 And clipt of his wings in Paris square,  
 They bring him now to be burned alive.  
[*And wanteth there grace of lute or clavicithern,*  
*ye shall say to confirm him who singeth—*  
 We bring John now to be burned alive.

## III

In the midst is a goodly gallows built ;  
 'Twixt fork and fork, a stake is stuck ;  
 But first they set divers tumbrils a-tilt,  
 Make a trench all round with the city muck ;  
 Inside they pile log upon log, good store ;  
 Faggots not few, blocks great and small,  
 Reach a man's mid-thigh, no less, no more,—  
 For they mean he should roast in the sight of all.

## CHORUS.

We mean he should roast in the sight of all.

## IV

Good sappy bavins that kindle forthwith ;  
 Billets that blaze substantial and slow ;

Pine-stump split deftly, dry as pith ;  
 Larch-heart that chars to a chalk-white glow :  
 Then up they hoist me John in a chafe,  
 Sling him fast like a hog to scorch,  
 Spit in his face, then leap back safe,  
 Sing " Laudes " and bid clap-to the torch,

CHORUS.

*Laus Deo*—who bids clap-to the torch.

V

John of the Temple, whose fame so bragged,  
 Is burning alive in Paris square !  
 How can he curse, if his mouth is gagged ?  
 Or wriggle his neck, with a collar there ?  
 Or heave his chest, while a band goes round ?  
 Or threat with his fist, since his arms are spliced ?  
 Or kick with his feet, now his legs are bound ?  
 —Thinks John, I will call upon Jesus Christ.

*[Here one crosseth himself.]*

VI

Jesus Christ—John had bought and sold,  
 Jesus Christ—John had eaten and drunk ;  
 To him, the Flesh meant silver and gold.  
*(Salvâ reverentiâ.)*  
 Now it was, " Saviour, bountiful lamb,  
 " I have roasted thee Turks, though men roast me !  
 " See thy servant, the plight wherein I am !  
 " Art thou a saviour ? Save thou me ! "

CHORUS.

'T is John the mocker cries, " Save thou me ! "

VII

Who maketh God's menace an idle word ?  
 — Saith, it no more means what it proclaims,



Than a damsel's threat to her wanton bird?—  
 For she too prattles of ugly names.  
 --Saith, he knoweth but one thing,—what he knows?  
 That God is good and the rest is breath;  
 Why else is the same styled Sharon's rose?  
 Once a rose, ever a rose, he saith.

## CHORUS.

O, John shall yet find a rose, he saith!

## VIII

Alack, there be roses and roses, John!  
 Some, honied of taste like your leman's tongue:  
 Some, bitter; for why? (roast gaily on!)  
 Their tree struck root in devil's dung.  
 When Paul once reasoned of righteousness  
 And of temperance and of judgment to come,  
 Good Felix trembled, he could no less:  
 John, snickering, crook'd his wicked thumb.

## CHORUS.

What cometh to John of the wicked thumb?

## IX

Ha ha, John plucketh now at his rose  
 To rid himself of a sorrow at heart!  
 Lo,—petal on petal, fierce rays unclose;  
 Anther on anther, sharp spikes outstart;  
 And with blood for dew, the bosom boils;  
 And a gust of sulphur is all its smell;  
 And lo, he is horribly in the toils  
 Of a coal-black giant flower of hell!

## CHORUS.

What maketh heaven, That maketh hell,

## X

So, as John called now, through the fire amain,  
 On the Name, he had cursed with, all his life—  
 To the Person, he bought and sold again—  
 For the Face, with his daily buffets rife—  
 Feature by feature It took its place :  
 And his voice, like a mad dog's choking bark,  
 At the steady whole of the Judge's face—  
 Died. Forth John's soul flared into the dark.

SUBJOINETH THE ABBOT DEODAET.

God help all poor souls lost in the dark !



HOLY-CROSS DAY.

ON WHICH THE JEWS WERE FORCED TO ATTEND AN  
 ANNUAL CHRISTIAN SERMON IN ROME.

[“ Now was come about Holy-Cross Day, and now must my lord preach his first sermon to the Jews : as it was of old cared for in the merciful bowels of the Church, that, so to speak, a crumb at least from her conspicuous table here in Rome, should be, though but once yearly, cast to the famishing dogs, under-trampled and bespitten-upon beneath the feet of the guests. And a moving sight in truth, this, of so many of the besotted blind restif and ready-to-perish Hebrews ! now maternally brought—nay, (for He saith, ‘ Compel them to come in ’) haled, as it were, by the head and hair, and against their obstinate hearts, to partake of the heavenly grace. What awakening, what striving with tears, what working of a yeasty conscience ! Nor was my lord wanting to himself on so apt an occasion ; witness the abundance of conversions which did incontinently reward him : though not to my lord be altogether the glory.”—*Diary by the Bishop's Secretary, 1600.*]

What the Jews really said, on thus being driven to church, was rather to this effect :—

## I

FEE, faw, fum ! bubble and squeak !  
 Blessedest Thursday 's the fat of the week.  
 Rumble and tumble, sleek and rough,

Stinking and savoury, smug and gruff,  
 Take the church-road, for the bell's due chime  
 Gives us the summons—'t is sermon-time !

## II

Boh, here 's Barnabas ! Job, that 's you ?  
 Up stumps Solomon—bustling too ?  
 Shame, man ! greedy beyond your years  
 To handsel the bishop's shaving-shears ?  
 Fair play 's a jewel ! Leave friends in the lurch ?  
 Stand on a line ere you start for the church !

## III

Higgledy piggedy, packed we lie,  
 Rats in a hamper, swine in a sty,  
 Wasps in a bottle, frogs in a sieve,  
 Worms in a carcase, fleas in a sleeve.  
 Hist ! square shoulders, settle your thumbs  
 And buzz for the bishop—here he comes.

## IV

Bow, wow, wow—a bone for the dog !  
 I liken his Grace to an acorned hog.  
 What, a boy at his side, with the bloom of a lass,  
 To help and handle my lord's hour-glass !  
 Didst ever behold so lithe a chine ?  
 His cheek hath laps like a fresh-singed swine.

## V

Aaron 's asleep—shove hip to haunch,  
 Or somebody deal him a dig in the paunch !  
 Look at the purse with the tassel and knob,  
 And the gown with the angel and thingumbob !  
 What 's he at, quotha ? reading his text !  
 Now you 've his curtsey—and what comes next ?

## VI

See to our converts—you doomed black dozen—  
 No stealing away—nor cog nor cozen !  
 You five, that were thieves, deserve it fairly ;  
 You seven, that were beggars, will live less sparely ;  
 You took your turn and dipped in the hat,  
 Got fortune—and fortune gets you ; mind that !

## VII

Give your first groan—compunction 's at work ;  
 And soft ! from a Jew you mount to a Turk.  
 Lo, Micah,—the selfsame beard on chin  
 He was four times already converted in !  
 Here 's a knife, clip quick—it 's a sign of grace—  
 Or he ruins us all with his hanging-face.

## VIII

Whom now is the bishop a-leering at ?  
 I know a point where his text falls pat.  
 I 'll tell him to-morrow, a word just now  
 Went to my heart and made me vow  
 To meddle no more with the worst of trades ;  
 Let somebody else pay his serenades !

## IX

Groan all together now, whee—hee—hee !  
 It 's a-work, it 's a-work, ah, woe is me !  
 It began, when a herd of us, picked and placed,  
 Were spurred through the Corso, stripped to the waist ;  
 Jew brutes, with sweat and blood well spent  
 To usher in worthily Christian Lent.

## X

It grew, when the hangman entered our bounds,  
 Yelled, pricked us out to his church like hounds :

It got to a pitch, when the hand indeed  
 Which gutted my purse, would throttle my creed :  
 And it overflows, when, to even the odd,  
 Men I helped to their sins, help me to their God.

## XI

But now, while the scapegoats leave our flock,  
 And the rest sit silent and count the clock,  
 Since forced to muse the appointed time  
 On these precious facts and truths sublime,—  
 Let us fitly employ it, under our breath,  
 In saying Ben Ezra's Song of Death.

## XII

For Rabbi Ben Ezra, the night he died,  
 Called sons and sons' sons to his side,  
 And spoke, " This world has been harsh and strange ;  
 " Something is wrong : there needeth a change.  
 " But what, or where ? at the last or first ?  
 " In one point only we sinned, at worst.

## XIII

" The Lord will have mercy on Jacob yet,  
 " And again in his border see Israel set.  
 " When Judah beholds Jerusalem,  
 " The stranger-seed shall be joined to them :  
 " To Jacob's House shall the Gentiles cleave,  
 " So the Prophet saith and his sons believe.

## XIV

" Ay, the children of the chosen race  
 " Shall carry and bring them to their place :  
 " In the land of the Lord shall lead the same,  
 " Bondsmen and handmaids. Who shall blame,  
 " When the slaves enslave, the oppressed ones o'er  
 " The oppressor triumph for evermore !

## XV

" God spoke, and gave us the word to keep :  
 " Bade never fold the hands nor sleep  
 " 'Mid a faithless world,—at watch and ward,  
 " Till Christ at the end relieve our guard.  
 " By his servant Moses the watch was set :  
 " Though near upon cock-crow, we keep it yet.

## XVI

" Thou ! if thou wast he, who at mid-watch came,  
 " By the starlight, naming a dubious name !  
 " And if, too heavy with sleep—too rash  
 " With fear—O thou, if that martyr-gash  
 " Fell on thee coming to take thine own,  
 " And we gave the Cross, when we owed the Throne—

## XVII

" Thou art the Judge. We are bruised thus.  
 " But, the Judgment over, join sides with us !  
 " Thine too is the cause ! and not more thine  
 " Than ours, is the work of these dogs and swine,  
 " Whose life laughs through and spits at their creed,  
 " Who maintain thee in word, and defy thee in deed !

## XVIII

" We withstood Christ then? Be mindful how  
 " At least we withstand Barabbas now !  
 " Was our outrage sore? But the worst we spared,  
 " To have called these—Christians, had we dared !  
 " Let defiance to them pay mistrust of thee,  
 " And Rome make amends for Calvary !

## XIX

" By the torture, prolonged from age to age,  
 " By the infamy, Israel's heritage,

“ By the Ghetto’s plague, by the garb’s disgrace,  
 “ By the badge of shame, by the felon’s place,  
 “ By the branding-tool, the bloody whip,  
 “ And the summons to Christian fellowship,—

## XX

“ We boast our proof that at least the Jew  
 “ Would wrest Christ’s name from the Devil’s crew.  
 “ Thy face took never so deep a shade  
 “ But we fought them in it, God our aid !  
 ‘ A trophy to bear, as we march, thy band  
 “ South, East, and on to the Pleasant Land !”

[*The late Pope abolished this bad business of the  
 Sermon.—R. B.*]



## AMPHIBIAN.

## I

THE fancy I had to-day,  
 Fancy which turned a fear !  
 I swam far out in the bay,  
 Since waves laughed warm and clear.

## II

I lay and looked at the sun,  
 The noon-sun looked at me :  
 Between us two, no one  
 Live creature, that I could see.

## III

Yes ! There came floating by  
 Me, who lay floating too,  
 Such a strange butterfly !  
 Creature as dear as new :

## IV

Because the membraned wings  
So wonderful, so wide,  
So sun-suffused, were things  
Like soul and nought beside.

## V

A handbreadth over head !  
All of the sea my own,  
It owned the sky instead ;  
Both of us were alone.

## VI

I never shall join its flight,  
For, nought buoys flesh in air.  
If it touch the sea—good night !  
Death sure and swift waits there.

## VII

Can the insect feel the better  
For watching the uncouth play  
Of limbs that slip the fetter,  
Pretend as they were not clay ?

## VIII

Undoubtedly I rejoice  
That the air comports so well  
With a creature which had the choice  
Of the land once. Who can tell ?

## IX

What if a certain soul  
Which early slipped its sheath,  
And has for its home the whole  
Of heaven, thus look beneath,



X

Thus watch one who, in the world,  
 Both lives and likes life's way,  
 Nor wishes the wings unfurled  
 That sleep in the worm, they say?

XI

But sometimes when the weather  
 Is blue, and warm waves tempt  
 To free oneself of tether,  
 And try a life exempt

XII

From worldly noise and dust,  
 In the sphere which overbrims  
 With passion and thought,—why, just  
 Unable to fly, one swims!

XIII

By passion and thought upborne,  
 One smiles to oneself—“ They fare  
 “ Scarce better, they need not scorn  
 “ Our sea, who live in the air !”

XIV

Emancipate through passion  
 And thought, with sea for sky,  
 We substitute, in a fashion,  
 For heaven—poetry :

XV

Which sea, to all intent,  
 Gives flesh such noon-disport  
 As a finer element  
 Affords the spirit-sort.

## XVI

Whatever they are, we seem :  
 Imagine the thing they know ;  
 All deeds they do, we dream ;  
 Can heaven be else but so ?

## XVII

And meantime, yonder streak  
 Meets the horizon's verge ;  
 That is the land, to seek  
 If we tire or dread the surge ;

## XVIII

Land the solid and safe—  
 To welcome again (confess !)  
 When, high and dry, we chafe  
 The body, and don the dress.

## XIX

Does she look, pity, wonder  
 At one who mimics flight,  
 Swims—heaven above, sea under  
 Yet always earth in sight ?

*ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER.*

## I

No, protesting dearest !  
 Hardly kisses even !  
 Don't we both know how it ends ?  
 How the greenest leaf turns serest ?  
 Bluest outbreak—blankest heaven ?  
 Lovers—friends ?

## II

You would build a mansion,  
 I would weave a bower  
 —Want the heart for enterprise.  
 Walls admit of no expansion :  
 Trellis-work may haply flower  
 Twice the size.

## III

What makes glad Life's Winter ?  
 New buds, old blooms after.  
 Sad the sighing " How suspect  
 Beams would ere mid-Autumn splinter,  
 " Roof-tree scarce support a rafter,  
 " Walls lie wrecked ? "

## IV

You are young, my princess !  
 I am hardly older :  
 Yet—I steal a glance behind !  
 Dare I tell you what convinces  
 Timid me that you, if bolder,  
 Bold—are blind ?

## V

Where we plan our dwelling  
 Grooms a graveyard surely !  
 Headstone, footstone moss may drape,—  
 Name, date, violets hide from spelling,—  
 But, though corpses rot obscurely,  
 Ghosts escape.

## VI

Ghosts ! O breathing Beauty,  
 Give my frank word pardon !  
 What if I—somehow, somewhere—

Pledged my soul to endless duty  
 Many a time and oft? Be hard on  
 Love—laid there?

## VII

Nay, blame grief that 's fickle,  
 Time that proves a traitor,  
 Chance, change, all that purpose warps,—  
 Death who spares to thrust the sickle,  
 Which laid Love low, through flowers which later  
 Shroud the corpse!

## VIII

And you, my winsome lady,  
 Whisper me with like frankness!  
 Lies nothing buried long ago?  
 Are you—which shimmer 'mid what 's shady  
 Where moss and violet run to rankness—  
 Tombs or no?

## IX

Who taxes you with murder?  
 My hands are clean—or nearly!  
 Love being mortal needs must pass.  
 Repentance? Nothing were absurder.  
 Enough: we felt Love's loss severely;  
 Though now—alas!

## X

Love's corpse lies quiet therefore,  
 Only Love's ghost plays truant,  
 And warns us have in wholesome awe  
 Durable mansionry; that 's wherefore  
 I weave but trellis work, pursuant  
 —Life, to law.

## XI

The solid, not the fragile,  
 Tempts rain and hail and thunder.  
 If bower stand firm at Autumn's close,  
 Beyond my hope,—why, boughs were agile ;  
 If bower fall flat, we scarce need wonder  
 Wreathing—rose !

## XII

So, truce to the protesting,  
 So, muffled be the kisses !  
 For, would we but avow the truth,  
 Sober is genuine joy. No jesting !  
 Ask else Penelope, Ulysses—  
 Old in youth !

## XIII

For why should ghosts feel augered ?  
 Let all their interference  
 Be faint march-music in the air !  
 “ Up ! Join the rear of us the vanguard !  
 “ Up, lovers, dead to all appearance,  
 “ Laggard pair ! ”

## XIV

The while you clasp me closer,  
 The while I press you deeper,  
 As safe we chuckle,—under breath,  
 Yet all the slyer, the jocosier,—  
 “ So, life can boast its day, like leap-year,  
 “ Stolen from death ! ”

## XV

Ah me—the sudden terror !  
 Hence quick—avaunt, avoid me,  
 You cheat, the ghostly flesh-disguised !

Nay, all the ghosts in one ! Strange error !  
 So, 't was Death's self that clipped and coyed me,  
 Loved—and lied !

## XVI

Ay, dead loves are the potent !  
 Like any cloud they used you,  
 Mere semblance you, but substance they !  
 Build we no mansion, weave we no tent !  
 Mere flesh—their spirit interfused you !  
 Hence, I say !

## XVII

All theirs, none yours the glamour !  
 Theirs each low word that won me,  
 Soft look that found me Love's, and left  
 What else but you—the tears and clamour  
 That 's all your very own ! Undone me—  
 Ghost bereft !

*JAMES LEE'S WIFE.*

## I

JAMES LEE'S WIFE SPEAKS AT THE WINDOW

## I

AH, Love, but a day,  
 And the world has changed !  
 The sun 's away,  
 And the bird estranged ;  
 The wind has dropped,  
 And the sky 's deranged :  
 Summer has stopped.

II

Look in my eyes !  
Wilt thou change too ?  
Should I fear surprise ?  
Shall I find aught new  
In the old and dear,  
In the good and true,  
With the changing year ?

III

Thou art a man,  
But I am thy love.  
For the lake, its swan ;  
For the dell, its dove ;  
And for thee—(oh, haste !)  
Me, to bend above,  
Me, to hold embraced.

---

II

BY THE FIRESIDE.

I

Is all our fire of shipwreck wood,  
Oak and pine ?  
Oh, for the ills half-understood,  
The dim dead woe  
Long ago  
Befallen this bitter coast of France !  
Well, poor sailors took their chance ;  
I take mine.

II

A ruddy shaft our fire must shoot  
O'er the sea ;

Do sailors eye the casement—mute  
 Drenched and stark,  
 From their bark—  
 And envy, gnash their teeth for hate  
 O' the warm safe house and happy freight  
 —Thee and me ?

## III

God help you, sailors, at your need !  
 Spare the curse !  
 For some ships, safe in port indeed,  
 Rot and rust,  
 Run to dust,  
 All through worms i' the wood, which crept,  
 Gnawed our hearts out while we slept :  
 That is worse.

## IV

Who lived here before us two ?  
 Old-world pairs.  
 Did a woman ever—would I knew !—  
 Watch the man  
 With whom began  
 Love's voyage full-sail,—(now, gnash your teeth !)  
 When planks start, open hell beneath  
 Unawares ?

## III

## IN THE DOORWAY.

## I

THE swallow has set her six young on the rail,  
 And looks sea-ward :  
 The water 's in stripes like a snake, olive-pale  
 To the leeward,—



On the weather-side, black, spotted white with the wind.  
" Good fortune departs, and disaster 's behind,"—  
Hark, the wind with its wants and its infinite wail !

## II

Our fig-tree, that leaned for the saltness, has furred  
Her five fingers,  
Each leaf like a hand opened wide to the world  
Where there lingers  
No glint of the gold, Summer sent for her sake :  
How the vines writhe in rows, each impaled on its stake !  
My heart shrivels up and my spirit shrinks curled.

## III

Yet here are we two ; we have love, house enough,  
With the field there,  
This house of four rooms, that field red and rough,  
Though it yield there,  
For the rabbit that robs, scarce a blade or a bent ;  
If a magpie alight now, it seems an event ;  
And they both will be gone at November's rebuff.

## IV

But why must cold spread ? but wherefore bring change  
To the spirit,  
God meant should mate his with an infinite range,  
And inherit  
His power to put life in the darkness and cold ?  
Oh, live and love worthily, bear and be bold !  
Whom Summer made friends of, let Winter estrange !

---

## IV

## ALONG THE BEACH.

## I

I WILL be quiet and talk with you,  
 And reason why you are wrong.  
 You wanted my love—is that much true?  
 And so I did love, so I do :  
 What has come of it all along?

## II

I took you—how could I otherwise?  
 For a world to me, and more ;  
 For all, love greatens and glorifies  
 Till God 's a-glow, to the loving eyes,  
 In what was mere earth before.

## III

Yes, earth—yes, mere ignoble earth !  
 Now do I mis-state, mistake ?  
 Do I wrong your weakness and call it worth ?  
 Expect all harvest, dread no dearth,  
 Seal my sense up for your sake ?

## IV

Oh, Love, Love, no, Love ! not so indeed !  
 You were just weak earth, I knew :  
 With much in you waste, with many a weed  
 And plenty of passions run to seed,  
 But a little good grain too.

## V

And such as you were, I took you for mine :  
 Did not you find me yours,  
 To watch the olive and wait the vine,

And wonder when rivers of oil and wine  
Would flow, as the Book assures?

VI

Well, and if none of these good things came,  
What did the failure prove?  
The man was my whole world, all the same,  
With his flowers to praise or his weeds to blame,  
And, either or both, to love.

VII

Yet this turns now to a fault—there! there!  
That I do love, watch too long,  
And wait too well, and weary and wear;  
And 't is all an old story, and my despair  
Fit subject for some new song:

VIII

“ How the light, light love, he has wings to fly  
“ At suspicion of a bond:  
“ My wisdom has bidden your pleasure good-bye,  
“ Which will turn up next in a laughing eye,  
“ And why should you look beyond?”

---

V

ON THE CLIFF.

I

I LEANED on the turf,  
I looked at a rock  
Left dry by the surf;  
For the turf, to call it grass were to mock:  
Dead to the roots, so deep was done  
The work of the summer sun.

## II

And the rock lay flat -  
As an anvil's face :  
No iron like that !  
Baked dry : of a weed, of a shell, no trace :  
Sunshine outside, but ice at the core,  
Death's altar by the lone shore.

## III

On the turf, sprang gay  
With his films of blue,  
No cricket, I 'll say,  
But a war-horse, barded and chanfroned too,  
The gift of a quixote-mage to his knight,  
Real fairy, with wings all right.

## IV

On the rock, they scorch  
Like-a drop of fire  
From a brandished torch,  
Fall two red fans of a butterfly :  
No turf, no rock,—in their ugly stead,  
See, wonderful blue and red !

## V

Is it not so  
With the minds of men ?  
The level and low,  
The burnt and bare, in themselves ; but then  
With such a blue and red grace, not theirs,  
Love settling unawares !

---

VI

READING A BOOK, UNDER THE CLIFF.

I

- “ STILL ailing, Wind? Wilt be appeased or no?  
 “ Which needs the other's office, thou or I?  
 “ Dost want to be disburthened of a woe,  
 “ And can, in truth, my voice untie  
 “ Its links, and let it go?

II

- “ Art thou a dumb wronged thing that would be righted,  
 “ Entrusting thus thy cause to me? Forbear!  
 “ No tongue can mend such pleadings; faith, requited  
 “ With falsehood,—love, at last aware  
 “ Of scorn,—hopes, early blighted,—

III

- “ We have them; but I know not any tone  
 “ So fit as thine to falter forth a sorrow:  
 “ Dost think men would go mad without a moan,  
 “ If they knew any way to borrow  
 “ A pathos like thy own?

IV

- “ Which sigh wouldst mock, of all the sighs? The one  
 “ So long escaping from lips starved and blue,  
 “ That lasts while on her pallet-bed the nun  
 “ Stretches her length; her foot comes through  
 “ The straw she shivers on;

V

- “ You had not thought she was so tall: and spent,  
 “ Her shrunk lids open, her lean fingers shut  
 “ Close, close, their sharp and livid nails indent  
 “ The clammy palm; then all is mute:  
 “ That way, the spirit went.

## VI

“ Or wouldst thou rather that I understand  
 “ Thy will to help me ?—like the dog I found  
 “ Once, pacing sad this solitary strand,  
 “ Who would not take my food, poor hound,  
 “ But whined and licked my hand.”

## VII

All this, and more, comes from some young man's pride  
 Of power to see,—in failure and mistake,  
 Relinquishment, disgrace, on every side,—  
 Merely examples for his sake,  
 Helps to his path untried :

## VIII

Instances he must—simply recognize ?  
 Oh, more than so !—must, with a learner's zeal,  
 Make doubly prominent, twice emphasize,  
 By added touches that reveal  
 The god in babe's disguise.

## IX

Oh, he knows what defeat means, and the rest !  
 Himself the undefeated that shall be :  
 Failure, disgrace, he flings them you to test,—  
 His triumph, in eternity  
 Too plainly manifest !

## X

Whence, judge if he learn forthwith what the wind  
 Means in its moaning—by the happy prompt  
 Instinctive way of youth, I mean ; for kind  
 Calm years, exacting their accomp  
 Of pain, mature the mind :

XI

And some midsummer morning, at the lull  
 Just about daybreak, as he looks across  
 A sparkling foreign country, wonderful  
 To the sea's edge for gloom and gloss,  
 Next minute must annul,—

XII

Then, when the wind begins among the vines,  
 So low, so low, what shall it say but this?  
 "Here is the change beginning, here the lines  
 "Circumscribe beauty, set to bliss  
 "The limit time assigns."

XIII

Nothing can be as it has been before ;  
 Better, so call it, only not the same.  
 To draw one beauty into our hearts' core  
 And keep it changeless ! such our claim ;  
 So answered,—Never more !

XIV

Simple? Why this is the old woe o' the world ;  
 Tune, to whose rise and fall we live and die.  
 Rise with it, then ! Rejoice that man is hurled  
 From change to change unceasingly,  
 His soul's wings never furled !

XV

That 's a new question ; still replies the fact,  
 Nothing endures : the wind moans, saying so ;  
 We moan in acquiescence : there 's life's pact,  
 Perhaps probation—do *I* know ?  
 God does : endure his act !

## XVI

Only, for man, how bitter not to grave  
 On his soul's hands' palms one fair good wise thing  
 Just as he grasped it ! For himself, death's wave ;  
 While time first washes—ah, the sting !—  
 O'er all he 'd sink to save.

---

## VII

## AMONG THE ROCKS.

## 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 !

---

## VIII

## BESIDE THE DRAWING-BOARD.

## I

“ As like as a Hand to another Hand ! ”  
 Whoever said that foolish thing,



Could not have studied to understand  
 The counsels of God in fashioning,  
 Out of the infinite love of his heart,  
 This Hand, whose beauty I praise, apart  
 From the world of wonder left to praise,  
 If I tried to learn the other ways  
 Of love, in its skill, or love, in its power.

“As like as a Hand to another Hand:”

Who said that, never took his stand,  
 Found and followed, like me, an hour,  
 The beauty in this,—how free, how fine  
 To fear, almost,—of the limit-line!  
 As I looked at this, and learned and drew,  
 Drew and learned, and looked again,  
 While fast the happy minutes flew,  
 Its beauty mounted into my brain,  
 And a fancy seized me; I was fain  
 To efface my work, begin anew,  
 Kiss what before I only drew;  
 Ay, laying the red chalk 'twixt my lips,  
 With soul to help if the mere lips failed,  
 I kissed all right where the drawing ailed,  
 Kissed fast the grace that somehow slips  
 Still from one's soulless finger-tips.

II

'T is a clay cast, the perfect thing,  
 From Hand live once, dead long ago:  
 Princess-like it wears the ring  
 To fancy's eye, by which we know  
 That here at length a master found  
 His match, a proud lone soul its mate,  
 As soaring genius sank to ground  
 And pencil could not emulate  
 The beauty in this,—how free, how fine  
 To fear almost!—of the limit-line.

Long ago the god, like me  
 The worm, learned, each in our degree :  
 Looked and loved, learned and drew,  
     Drew and learned and loved again,  
 While fast the happy minutes flew,  
     Till beauty mounted into his brain  
 And on the finger which outvied  
     His art he placed the ring that 's there,  
 Still by fancy's eye descried,  
     In token of a marriage rare :  
 For him on earth, his art's despair,  
 For him in heaven, his soul's fit bride.

## III

Little girl with the poor coarse hand  
     I turned from to a cold clay cast—  
 I have my lesson, understand  
     The worth of flesh and blood at last !  
 Nothing but beauty in a Hand ?  
     Because he could not change the hue,  
     Mend the lines and make them true  
 To this which met his soul's demand,—  
     Would Da Vinci turn from you ?  
 I hear him laugh my woes to scorn—  
 " The fool forsooth is all forlorn  
 " Because the beauty, she thinks best,  
 " Lived long ago or was never born,—  
 " Because no beauty bears the test  
 " In this rough peasant Hand ! Confessed  
 " ' Art is null and study void !'  
 " So sayest thou ? So said not I,  
 " Who threw the faulty pencil by,  
 " And years instead of hours employed,  
 " Learning the veritable use  
 " Of flesh and bone and nerve beneath  
 " Lines and hue of the outer sheath,

“ If haply I might reproduce  
“ Pure light unbroken by the prism—  
“ One motive of the mechanism  
“ Flesh and bone and nerve that make  
“ The poorest coarsest human hand  
“ An object worthy to be scanned  
“ A whole life long for their sole sake.  
“ Shall earth and the cramped moment-space  
“ Yield the heavenly crowning grace ?  
“ Now the parts and then the whole !  
“ Who art thou, with stunted soul  
“ And stunted body, thus to cry  
“ ‘ I love,—shall that be life’s strait dole ?  
“ ‘ I must live beloved or die !’  
“ This peasant hand that spins the wool  
“ And bakes the bread, why lives it on,  
“ Poor and coarse with beauty gone,—  
“ What use survives the beauty ? Fool !”

Go, little girl with the poor coarse hand !  
I have my lesson, shall understand.

---

IX

ON DECK.

I

THERE is nothing to remember in me,  
Nothing I ever said with a grace,  
Nothing I did that you care to see,  
Nothing I was that deserves a place  
In your mind, now I leave you, set you free.

II

Conceded ! In turn, concede to me,  
Such things have been as a mutual flame.

Your soul 's locked fast ; but, love for a key,  
 You might let it loose, till I grew the same  
 In your eyes, as in mine you stand : strange plea !

## III

For then, then, what would it matter to me  
 That I was the harsh, ill-favoured one ?  
 We both should be like as pea and pea ;  
 It was ever so since the world begun :  
 So, let me proceed with my reverie.

## IV

How strange it were if you had all me,  
 As I have all you in my heart and brain,  
 You, whose least word brought gloom or glee,  
 Who never lifted the hand in vain  
 Will hold mine yet, from over the sea !

## V

Strange, if a face, when you thought of me,  
 Rose like your own face present now,  
 With eyes as dear in their due degree,  
 Much such a mouth, and as bright a brow,  
 Till you saw yourself, while you cried " 'T is She !"

## VI

Well, you may, you must, set down to me  
 Love that was life, life that was love ;  
 A tenure of breath at your lips' decree,  
 A passion to stand as your thoughts approve,  
 A rapture to fall where your foot might be.

## VII

But did one touch of such love for me  
 Come in a word or a look of yours,

Whose words and looks will, circling, flee  
Round me and round while life endures,—  
Could I fancy “As I feel, thus feels He;”

## VIII

Why, fade you might to a thing like me,  
And your hair grow these coarse hanks of hair,  
Your skin, this bark of a gnarled tree,—  
You might turn myself!—should I know or care,  
When I should be dead of joy, James Lee?

*RESPECTABILITY.*

## I

DEAR, had the world in its caprice  
Deigned to proclaim “I know you both,  
“Have recognized your plighted troth,  
“Am sponsor for you: live in peace!”  
How many precious months and years  
Of youth had passed, that speed so fast,  
Before we found it out at last,  
The world, and what it fears?

## II

How much of priceless life were spent  
With men that every virtue decks,  
And women models of their sex,  
Society's true ornament,—  
Ere we dared wander, nights like this,  
Thro' wind and rain, and watch the Seine,  
And feel the Boulevart break again  
To warmth and light and bliss?

## III

I know ! the world proscribes not love ;  
 Allows my finger to caress  
 Your lips' contour and downiness,  
 Provided it supply a glove.  
 The world's good word !—the Institute !  
 Guizot receives Montalembert !  
 Eh? Down the court three lampions flare :  
 Put forward your best foot !



*D'ŒS ALITER VISUM; OR, LE BYRON  
 DE NOS JOURS.*

## I

STOP, let me have the truth of that !  
 Is that all true? I say, the day  
 Ten years ago when both of us  
 Met on a morning, friends—as thus  
 We meet this evening, friends or what?—

## II

Did you—because I took your arm  
 And sillily smiled, “A mass of brass  
 “That sea looks, blazing underneath !”  
 While up the cliff-road edged with heath,  
 We took the turns nor came to harm—

## III

Did you consider “Now makes twice  
 “That I have seen her, walked and talked  
 “With this poor pretty thoughtful thing,  
 “Whose worth I weigh : she tries to sing ;  
 “Draws, hopes in time the eye grows nice ;

## IV

- “ Reads verse and thinks she understands ;  
“ Loves all, at any rate, that ’s great, -  
“ Good, beautiful ; but much as we  
“ Down at the bath-house love the sea,  
“ Who breathe its salt and bruise its sands :

## V

- “ While . . do but follow the fishing-gull  
“ That flaps and floats from wave to cave !  
“ There ’s the sea-lover, fair my friend !  
“ What then ? Be patient, mark and mend !  
“ Had you the making of your skull ?”

## VI

And did you, when we faced the church  
With spire and sad slate roof, aloof  
From human fellowship so far,  
Where a few graveyard crosses are,  
And garlands for the swallows’ perch,—

## VII

- Did you determine, as we stepped  
O’er the lone stone fence, “ Let me get  
“ Her for myself, and what ’s the earth  
“ With all its art, verse, music, worth—  
“ Compared with love, found, gained, and kept ?

## VIII

- “ Schumann ’s our music-maker now ;  
“ Has his march-movement youth and mouth ?  
“ Ingres ’s the modern man that paints ;  
“ Which will lean on me, of his saints ?  
“ Heine for songs ; for kisses how ?”

## IX

And did you, when we entered, reached  
 The votive frigate, soft aloft  
 Riding on air this hundred years,  
 Safe-smiling at old hopes and fears.—  
 Did you draw profit while she preached?

## X

Resolving, “ Fools we wise men grow !  
 “ Yes, I could easily blurt out curt  
 “ Some question that might find reply  
 “ As prompt in her stopped lips, dropped eye  
 “ And rush of red to cheek and brow :

## XI

“ Thus were a match made, sure and fast,  
 “ ’Mid the blue weed-flowers round the mound  
 “ Where, issuing, we shall stand and stay  
 “ For one more look at baths and bay,  
 “ Sands, sea-gulls, and the old church last—

## XII

“ A match ’twixt me, bent, wigged and lamed,  
 “ Famous, however, for verse and worse,  
 “ Sure of the Fortieth spare Arm-chair  
 “ When gout and glory seat me there,  
 “ So, one whose love-freaks pass unblamed,—

## XIII

“ And this young beauty, round and sound  
 “ As a mountain-apple, youth and truth  
 “ With loves and doves, at all events  
 “ With money in the Three per Cents :  
 “ Whose choice of me would seem profound :—



## XIV

- “ She might take me as I take her.  
 “ Perfect the hour would pass, alas !  
 “ Climb high, love high, what matter ? Still,  
 “ Feet, feelings, must descend the hill :  
 “ An hour’s perfection can’t recur.

## XV

- “ Then follows Paris and full time  
 “ For both to reason : ‘ Thus with us  
 “ She ’ll sigh, ‘ Thus girls give body and sou’  
 “ ‘ At first word, think they gain the goal,  
 “ ‘ When ’t is the starting-place they climb !

## XVI

- “ ‘ My friend makes verse and gets renown ;  
 “ ‘ Have they all fifty years, his peers ?  
 “ ‘ He knows the world, firm, quiet and gay ;  
 “ ‘ Boys will become as much one day :  
 “ ‘ They ’re fools ; he cheats, with beard less brown.

## XVII

- “ ‘ For boys say, *Love me or I die !*  
 “ ‘ He did not say, *The truth is, youth*  
 “ ‘ *I want, who am old and know too much ;*  
 “ ‘ *I’d catch youth : lend me sight and touch !*  
 “ ‘ *Drop heart’s blood where life’s wheels grate dry !*’

## XVIII

- “ While I should make rejoinder”—(then  
 It was, no doubt, you ceased that least  
 Light pressure of my arm in yours)  
 “ ‘ I can conceive of cheaper cures  
 “ ‘ For a yawning-fit o’er books and men.

## XIX

“ ‘ What ? All I am, was, and might be,  
 “ ‘ All, books taught, art brought, life’s whole strife,  
 “ ‘ Painful results since precious, just  
 “ ‘ Were fitly exchanged, in wise disgust,  
 “ ‘ For two cheeks freshened by youth and sea ?

## XX

“ ‘ All for a nosegay !—what came first ;  
 “ ‘ With fields in flower, untried each side ;  
 “ ‘ I rally, need my books and men,  
 “ ‘ And find a nosegay : ’ drop it, then,  
 “ ‘ No match yet made for best or worst ! ”

## XXI

That ended me. You judged the porch  
 We left by, Norman ; took our look  
 At sea and sky ; wondered so few  
 Find out the place for air and view ;  
 Remarkd the sun began to scorch ;

## XXII

Descended, soon regained the baths,  
 And then, good-bye ! Years ten since then :  
 Ten years ! We meet : you tell me, now,  
 By a window-seat for that cliff-brow,  
 On carpet-stripes for those sand-paths.

## XXIII

Now I may speak : you fool, for all  
 Your lore ! WHO made things plain in vain ?  
 What was the sea for ? What, the grey  
 Sad church, that solitary day,  
 Crosses and graves and swallows’ call ?

## XXIV

Was there nought better than to enjoy ?  
No feat which, done, would make time break  
And let us pent-up creatures through  
Into eternity, our due ?  
No forcing earth teach heaven's employ ?

## XXV

No wise beginning, here and now,  
What cannot grow complete (earth's feat)  
And heaven must finish, there and then ?  
No tasting earth's true food for men,  
Its sweet in sad, its sad in sweet ?

## XXVI

No grasping at love, gaining a share  
O' the sole spark from God's life at strife  
With death, so, sure of range above  
The limits here ? For us and love,  
Failure ; but, when God fails, despair.

## XXVII

This you call wisdom ? Thus you add  
Good unto good again, in vain ?  
You loved, with body worn and weak ;  
I loved, with faculties to seek :  
Were both loves worthless since ill-clad ?

## XXVIII

Let the mere star-fish in his vault  
Crawl in a wash of weed, indeed,  
Rose-jacynth to the finger-tips :  
He, whole in body and soul, outstrips  
Man, found with either in default.

## XXIX

But what 's whole, can increase no more,  
 Is dwarfed and dies, since here 's its sphere.  
 The devil laughed at you in his sleeve !  
 You knew not ? That I well believe ;  
 Or you had saved two souls : nay, four.

## XXX

For Stephanie sprained last night her wrist,  
 Ankle or something. " Pooh," cry you ?  
 At any rate she danced, all say,  
 Vilely ; her vogue has had its day.  
 Here comes my husband from his whist.

*CONFESSIONS.*

## I

WHAT is he buzzing in my ears ?  
 " Now that I come to die,  
 " Do I view the world as a vale of tears ?"  
 Ah, reverend sir, not I !

## II

What I viewed there once, what I view again  
 Where the physic bottles stand  
 On the table's edge,—is a suburb lane,  
 With a wall to my bedside hand.

## III

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,  
 From a house you could descry  
 O'er the garden-wall : is the curtain blue  
 Or green to a healthy eye ?

IV

To mine, it serves for the old June weather  
 Blue above lane and wall ;  
 And that farthest bottle labelled " Ether "  
 Is the house o'er-topping all.

V

At a terrace, somewhat near the stopper,  
 There watched for me, one June,  
 A girl : I know, sir, it 's improper,  
 My poor mind 's out of tune.

VI

Only, there was a way . . . you crept  
 Close by the side, to dodge  
 Eyes in the house, two eyes except :  
 They styled their house " The Lodge."

VII

What right had a lounge up their lane ?  
 But, by creeping very close,  
 With the good wall's help,—their eyes might strain  
 And stretch themselves to Oes,

VIII

Yet never catch her and me together,  
 As she left the attic, there,  
 By the rim of the bottle labelled " Ether,"  
 And stole from stair to stair,

IX

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Aias,  
 We loved, sir—used to meet :  
 How sad and bad and mad it was—  
 But then, how it was sweet !

## THE HOUSEHOLDER.

## I

SAVAGE I was sitting in my house, late, lone :  
 Dreary, weary with the long day's work :  
 Head of me, heart of me, stupid as a stone :  
 Tongue-tied now, now blaspheming like a Turk ;  
 When, in a moment, just a knock, call, cry,  
 Half a pang and all a rapture, there again were we !—  
 “ What, and is it really you again ? ” quoth I :  
 “ I again, what else did you expect ? ” quoth She.

## II

“ Never mind, hie away from this old house—  
 “ Every crumbling brick embrowned with sin and  
 shame !  
 “ Quick, in its corners ere certain shapes arouse !  
 “ Let them—every devil of the night—lay claim,  
 “ Make and mend, or rap and rend, for me ! Goodbye ;  
 “ God be their guard from disturbance at their glee,  
 “ Till, crash, comes down the carcass in a heap ! ” quoth I :  
 “ Nay, but there 's a decency required ! ” quoth She.

## III

“ Ah, but If you knew how time has dragged, days,  
 nights !  
 “ All the neighbour-talk with man and maid—such  
 men !  
 “ All the fuss and trouble of street-sounds, window-sights :  
 “ All the worry of flapping door and echoing roof : and  
 then,  
 “ All the fancies . . . Who were they had leave, dared  
 try  
 “ Darker arts that almost struck despair in me ?

“ If you knew but how I dwelt down here ! ” quoth I :  
 “ And was I so better off up there ? ” quoth She.

## IV

“ Help and get it over ! *Re-united to his wife*  
 “ (How draw up the paper lets the parish-people know ?)  
 “ *Lies M. or N., departed from this life,*  
 “ *Day the this or that, month and year the so and so,*  
 “ What i’ the way of final flourish ? Prose; verse ? Try !  
 “ *Affliction sore, long time he bore,* or, what is it to be ?  
 “ *Till God did please to grant him ease.* Do end ! ” quoth I :  
 “ I end with—Love is all and Death is nought ! ” quoth  
 She.



## TRAY.

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

Quoth Bard the first :

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

" " John, go and catch—or, if needs be,  
 " " Purchase that animal for me !  
 " " By vivisection, at expense  
 " " Of half-an-hour and eighteen pence,  
 " " How brain secretes dog's soul, we 'll see !"



## CAVALIER TUNES.

## I

## MARCHING ALONG.

## I

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

## II

God for King Charles ! Pym and such carles  
 To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles !  
 Cavaliers, up ! Lips from the cup,  
 Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup  
 Till you 're—

*(Chorus) Marching along, fifty-score strong,  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.*

## III

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell  
 Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well !  
 England, good cheer ! Rupert is near !  
 Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here

*(Chorus) Marching along, fifty-score strong,  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song?*

## IV

Then, God for King Charles ! Pym and his snarls  
 To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles !  
 Hold by the right, you double your might ;  
 So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,

*(Chorus) March we along, fifty-score strong,  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!*

## II

## GIVE A ROUSE.

## I

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

## II

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

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

## III

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

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

## III

## BOOT AND SADDLE.

## I

BOOT, saddle, to horse, and away !  
 Rescue my castle before the hot day  
 Brightens to blue from its silvery grey,

*(Chorus) Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !*

## II

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you d say ;  
 Many 's the friend there, will listen and pray  
 " God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—  
 (*Chorus*) "*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

## III

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,  
 Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array :  
 Who laughs, " Good fellows ere this, by my fay,  
 (*Chorus*) "*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

## IV

Who? My wife Gertrude ; that, honest and gay,  
 Laughs when you talk of surrendering, " Nay !  
 " I 've better counsellors ; what counsel they ?  
 (*Chorus*) "*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"



## BEFORE.

## I

LET them fight it out, friend ! things have gone too far.  
 God must judge the couple : leave them as they are  
 —Whichever one 's the guiltless, to his glory,  
 And whichever one the guilt 's with, to my story !

## II

Why, you would not bid men, sunk in such a slough,  
 Strike no arm out further, stick and stink as now,  
 Leaving right and wrong to settle the embroilment,  
 Heaven with snaky hell, in torfure and entailment ?

## III

Who 's the culprit of them ? How must he conceive  
 God—the queen he caps to, laughing in his sleeve,

‘T is but decent to profess oneself beneath her :  
 “ Still, one must not be too much in earnest, either ! ”

## IV

Better sin the whole sin, sure that God observes ;  
 Then go live his life out ! Life will try his nerves,  
 When the sky, which noticed all, makes no disclosure,  
 And the earth keeps up her terrible composure.

## V

Let him pace at pleasure, past the walls of rose,  
 Pluck their fruits when grape-trees graze him as he goes !  
 For he ’gins to guess the purpose of the garden,  
 With the sly mute thing, beside there, for a warden.

## VI

What ’s the leopard-dog-thing, constant at his side,  
 A leer and lie in every eye of its obsequious hide ?  
 When will come an end to all the mock obeisance,  
 And the price appear that pays for the misfeasance ?

## VII

So much for the culprit. Who ’s the martyred man ?  
 Let him bear one stroke more, for be sure he can !  
 He that strove thus evil’s lump with good to leaven,  
 Let him give his blood at last and get his heaven !

## VIII

All or nothing, stake it ! Trusts he God or no ?  
 Thus far and no farther ? farther ? be it so !  
 Now, enough of your chicane of prudent pauses,  
 Sage provisos, sub-intents and saving-clauses !

## IX

Ah, “ forgive ” you bid him ? While God’s champion lives,  
 Wrong shall be resisted : dead, why, he forgives.

But you must not end my friend ere you begin him ;  
 Evil stands not crowned on earth, while breath is in him.

## X

Once more—Will the wronger, at this last of all,  
 Dare to say, “I did wrong,” rising in his fall?  
 No?—Let go, then! Both the fighters to their places!  
 While I count three, step you back as many paces!



## AFTER.

TAKE the cloak from his face, and at first  
 Let the corpse do its worst!

How he lies in his rights of a man!  
 Death has done all death can:  
 And, absorbed in the new life he leads,  
 He recks not, he heeds  
 Nor his wrong nor my vengeance; both strike  
 On his senses alike,  
 And are lost in the solemn and strange  
 Surprise of the change.

Ha, what avails death to erase  
 His offence, my disgrace?  
 I would we were boys as of old  
 In the field, by the fold:  
 His outrage, God's patience, man's scorn  
 Were so easily borne!

I stand here now, he lies in his place:  
 Cover the face!



## HERVÉ RIEL.

## I

ON the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,

Did the English fight the French,—woe to France !  
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter thro' the blue,  
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks  
pursue,

Came crowding ship on ship to St. Malo on the Rance,  
With the English fleet in view.

## II

'T was the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full  
chase ;

First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship,  
Damfreville ;

Close on him fled, great and small,

Twenty-two good ships in all ;

And they signalled to the place

“ Help the winners of a race !

“ Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us quick—or,  
quicker still,

“ Here 's the English can and will !”

## III

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

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

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

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

“ Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow  
way,

“ Trust to enter where ’t is ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,

“ And with flow at full beside ?

“ Now, ’t is slackest ebb of tide.

“ Reach the mooring ? Rather say,

“ While rock stands or water runs,

“ Not a ship will leave the bay ! ”

## IV

Then was called a council straight.

Brief and bitter the debate :

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

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

“ For a prize to Plymouth Sound ?

“ Better run the ships aground ! ”

(Ended Damfreville his speech).

Not a minute more to wait !

“ Let the Captains all and each

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

“ France must undergo her fate.

## V

“ Give the word ! ” But no such word

Was ever spoke or heard ;

For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these

—A Captain ? A Lieutenant ? A Mate—first, second, third ?

No such man of mark, and meet

With his betters to compete !

But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the fleet,

A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

## VI

And, "What mockery or malice have we here?" cries  
Hervé Riel :

"Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards,  
fools, or rogues?"

"Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the  
soundings, tell

"On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell  
"Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river  
disembogues?"

"Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the  
lying 's for?"

"Morn and eve, night and day,

"Have I piloted your bay,

"Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.

"Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse  
than fifty Hogues!"

"Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe  
me there 's a way!"

"Only let me lead the line,

"Have the biggest ship to steer,

"Get this '*Formidable*' clear,

"Make the others follow mine,

"And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know  
well,

"Right to Solidor past Grève,

"And there lay them safe and sound ;

"And if one ship misbehave,

"—Keel so much as grate the ground,

"Why, I 've nothing but my life,—here 's my head!"  
cries Hervé Riel.

## VII

Not a minute more to wait.

"Steer us in, then, small and great !



“ Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron !”  
cried its chief.

Captains, give the sailor place !

He is Admiral, in brief.

Still the north-wind, by God's grace !

See the noble fellow's face

As the big ship, with a bound,

Clears the entry like a hound,

Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's  
profound !

See, safe thro' shoal and rock,

How they follow in a flock,

Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the  
ground,

Not a spar that comes to grief !

The peril, see, is past,

All are harboured to the last,

And just as Hervé Riel hollas “ Anchor !”—sure as fate

Up the English come, too late !

## VIII

So, the storm subsides to calm :

They see the green trees wave

On the heights o'erlooking Grève.

Hearts that bled are stanchèd with balm.

“ Just our rapture to enhance,

“ Let the English rake the bay,

“ Gnash their teeth and glare askance

“ As they cannonade away !

“ Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance !”

How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's counte-  
nance !

Out burst all with one accord,

“ This is Paradise for Hell !

“ Let France, let France's King

“ Thank the man that did the thing !”

What a shout, and all one word,  
 "Hervé Riel!"  
 As he stepped in front once more,  
 Not a symptom of surprise  
 In the frank blue Breton eyes,  
 Just the same man as before.

## IX

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

## X

Then a beam of fun outbroke  
 On the bearded mouth that spoke,  
 As the honest heart laughed through  
 Those frank eyes of Breton blue :  
 "Since I needs must say my say,  
 "Since on board the duty 's done,  
 "And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it  
 but a run?—  
 "Since 't is ask and have, I may—  
 "Since the others go ashore—  
 "Come ! A good whole holiday !  
 "Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle  
 Aurore !"  
 That he asked and that he got,—nothing more

## XI

Name and deed alike are lost :

Not a pillar nor a post

In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell ;

Not a head in white and black

On a single fishing smack,

In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack

All that France saved from the fight whence England  
bore the bell.

Go to Paris : rank on rank

Search the heroes flung pell-mell

On the Louvre, face and flank !

You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé  
Riel.

So, for better and for worse,

Hervé Riel, accept my verse !

In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more

Save the squadron, honour France, love thy wife the  
Belle Aurore !



## IN A BALCONY.

CONSTANCE *and* NORBERT.

*Nor.* Now !

*Con.* Not now !

*Nor.* Give me them again, those hands—

Put them upon my forehead, how it throbs !

Press them before my eyes, the fire comes through !

You cruelest, you dearest in the world,

Let me ! The Queen must grant whate'er I ask—

How can I gain you and not ask the Queen ?

There she stays waiting for me, here stand you ;

Some time or other this was to be asked ;

Now is the one time—what I ask, I gain :  
Let me ask now, Love !

*Con.* Do, and ruin us !

*Nor.* Let it be now, Love ! All my soul breaks forth.  
How I do love you ! Give my love its way !  
A man can have but one life and one death,  
One heaven, one hell. Let me fulfil my fate—  
Grant me my heaven now ! Let me know you mine,  
Prove you mine, write my name upon your brow,  
Hold you and have you, and then die away,  
If God please, with completion in my soul

*Con.* I am not yours then? How content this man !  
I am not his—who change into himself,  
Have passed into his heart and beat its beats,  
Who give my hands to him, my eyes, my hair,  
Give all that was of me away to him—  
So well, that now, my spirit turned his own,  
Takes part with him against the woman here,  
Bids him not stumble at so mere a straw  
As caring that the world be cognisant  
How he loves her and how she worships him.  
You have this woman, not as yet that world.  
Go on, I bid, nor stop to care for me  
By saving what I cease to care about,  
The courtly name and pride of circumstance—  
The name you 'll pick up and be cumbered with  
Just for the poor parade's sake, nothing more ;  
Just that the world may slip from under you—  
Just that the world may cry " So much for him—  
" The man predestined to the heap of crowns :  
" There goes his chance of winning one, at least !"

*Nor.* The world !

*Con.* You love it ! Love me quite as well,  
And see if I shall pray for this in vain !  
Why must you ponder what it knows or thinks ?

*Nor.* You pray for—what, in vain ?

*Con.* Oh my heart's heart,  
 How I do love you, Norbert ! That is right :  
 But listen, or I take my hands away !  
 You say, "let it be now : " you would go now  
 And tell the Queen, perhaps six steps from us,  
 You love me—so you do, thank God !

*Nor.* Thank God !

*Con.* Yes, Norbert,—but you fain would tell your love,  
 And, what succeeds the telling, ask of her  
 My hand. Now take this rose and look at it,  
 Listening to me. You are the minister,  
 The Queen's first favourite, nor without a cause.  
 To-night completes your wonderful year's-work  
 (This palace-feast is held to celebrate)  
 Made memorable by her life's success,  
 The junction of two crowns, on her sole head,  
 Her house had only dreamed of anciently :  
 That this mere dream is grown a stable truth,  
 To-night's feast makes authentic. Whose the praise ?  
 Whose genius, patience, energy, achieved  
 What turned the many heads and broke the hearts ?  
 You are the fate, your minute 's in the heaven.  
 Next comes the Queen's turn. " Name your own reward !"  
 With leave to clench the past, chain the to-come,  
 Put out an arm and touch and take the sun  
 And fix it ever full-faced on your earth,  
 Possess yourself supremely of her life,—  
 You choose the single thing she will not grant ;  
 Nay, very declaration of which choice  
 Will turn the scale and neutralise your work :  
 At best she will forgive you, if she can.  
 You think I 'll let you choose—her cousin's hand ?

*Nor.* Wait. First, do you retain your old belief  
 The Queen is generous,—nay, is just ?

*Con.* There, there !  
 So men make women love them, while they know



Landscape and sea-piece, down to flowers and fruit—  
 And who shall question that she knows them all,  
 In better semblance than the things outside?  
 Yet bring into the silent gallery  
 Some live thing to contrast in breath and blood,  
 Some lion, with the painted lion there—  
 You think she 'll understand composedly?  
 —Say, “that 's his fellow in the hunting-piece  
 “Yonder, I 've turned to praise a hundred times?”  
 Not so. Her knowledge of our actual earth,  
 Its hopes and fears, concerns and sympathies,  
 Must be too far, too mediate, too unreal.  
 The real exists for us outside, not her:  
 How should it, with that life in these four walls,  
 That father and that mother, first to last  
 No father and no mother—friends, a heap,  
 Lovers, no lack—a husband in due time,  
 And every one of them alike a lie!  
 Things painted by a Rubens out of nought  
 Into what kindness, friendship, love should be;  
 All better, all more grandiose than life,  
 Only no life; mere cloth and surface-paint,  
 You feel, while you admire. How should she feel?  
 Yet now that she has stood thus fifty years  
 The sole spectator in that gallery,  
 You think to bring this warm real struggling love  
 In to her of a sudden, and suppose  
 She 'll keep her state untroubled? Here 's the truth:  
 She 'll apprehend truth's value at a glance,  
 Prefer it to the pictured loyalty?  
 You only have to say “So men are made,  
 “For this they act; the thing has many names,  
 “But this the right one: and now, Queen, be just!”  
 Your life slips back; you lose her at the word:  
 You do not even for amends gain me.  
 He will not understand! oh, Norbert, Norbert,

Do you not understand ?

*Nor.*                               The Queen 's the Queen,  
I am myself—no picture, but alive  
In every nerve and every muscle, here  
At the palace-window o'er the people's street,  
As she in the gallery where the pictures glow :  
The good of life is precious to us both.  
She cannot love ; what do I want with rule ?  
When first I saw your face a year ago  
I knew my life's good, my soul heard one voice—  
“ The woman yonder, there 's no use of life  
“ But just to obtain her ! heap earth's woes in one  
“ And bear them—make a pile of all earth's joys  
“ And spurn them, as they help or help not this ;  
“ Only, obtain her ! ”—how was it to be ?  
I found you were the cousin of the Queen ;  
I must then serve the Queen to get to you.  
No other way. Suppose there had been one,  
And I, by saying prayers to some white star  
With promise of my body and my soul,  
Might gain you,—should I pray the star or no ?  
Instead, there was the Queen to serve ! I served,  
Helped, did what other servants failed to do.  
Neither she sought nor I declared my end.  
Her good is hers, my recompense be mine,  
I therefore name you as that recompense.  
She dreamed that such a thing could never be ?  
Let her wake now. She thinks there was more cause  
In love of power, high fame, pure loyalty ?  
Perhaps she fancies men wear out their lives  
Chasing such shades. Then, I 've a fancy too ;  
I worked because I want you with my soul :  
I therefore ask your hand. Let it be now !

*Con.* Had I not loved you from the very first,  
Were I not yours, could we not steal out thus  
So wickedly, so wildly, and so well,



You might become impatient. What 's conceived  
 Of us without here, by the folks within?  
 Where are you now? immersed in cares of state—  
 Where am I now?—intent on festal robes—  
 We two, embracing under death's spread hand!  
 What was this thought for, what that scruple of yours  
 Which broke the council up?—to bring about  
 One minute's meeting in the corridor!  
 And then the sudden sleights, strange secrecies,  
 Complots inscrutable, deep telegraphs,  
 Long-planned chance-meetings, hazards of a look,  
 "Does she know? does she not know? saved or lost?"  
 A year of this compression's ecstasy  
 All goes for nothing! you would give this up  
 For the old way, the open way, the world's,  
 His way who beats, and his who sells his wife!  
 What tempts you?—their notorious happiness,  
 That you are ashamed of ours? The best you 'll gain  
 Will be—the Queen grants all that you require,  
 Concedes the cousin, rids herself of you  
 And me at once, and gives us ample leave  
 To live like our five hundred happy friends.  
 The world will show us with officious hand  
 Our chamber-entry and stand sentinel,  
 Where we so oft have stolen across its traps!  
 Get the world's warrant, ring the falcon's feet,  
 And make it duty to be bold and swift,  
 Which long ago was nature. Have it so!  
 Hawk never hawked by rights till flung from fist?  
 Oh, the man's thought; no woman's such a fool.

*Nor.* Yes, the man's thought and my thought, which  
 is more—

One made to love you, let the world take note!  
 Have I done worthy work? be love's the praise,  
 Though hampered by restrictions, barred against  
 By set forms, blinded by forced secrecies!

Set free my love, and see what love can do  
 Shown in my life—what work will spring from that !  
 The world is used to have its business done  
 On other grounds, find great effects produced  
 For power's sake, fame's sake, motives in men's mouth.  
 So, good : but let my low ground shame their high !  
 Truth is the strong thing. Let man's life be true !  
 And love 's the truth of mine. Time prove the rest !  
 I choose to wear you stamped all over me,  
 Your name upon my forehead and my breast,  
 You, from the sword's blade to the ribbon's edge,  
 That men may see, all over, you in me—  
 That pale loves may die out of their pretence  
 In face of mine, shames thrown on love fall off.  
 Permit this, Constance ! Love has been so long  
 Subdued in me, eating me through and through,  
 That now 't is all of me and must have way.  
 Think of my work, that chaos of intrigues,  
 Those hopes and fears, surprises and delays,  
 That long endeavour, earnest, patient, slow,  
 Trembling at last to its assured result—  
 Then think of this revulsion ! I resume  
 Life after death, (it is no less than life,  
 After such long unlovely labouring days)  
 And liberate to beauty life's great need  
 O' the beautiful, which, while it prompted work,  
 Suppressed itself erewhile. This eve 's the time,  
 This eve intense with yon first trembling star  
 We seem to pant and reach ; scarce aught between  
 The earth that rises and the heaven that bends ;  
 All nature self-abandoned, every tree  
 Flung as it will, pursuing its own thoughts  
 And fixed so, every flower and every weed,  
 No pride, no shame, no victory, no defeat ;  
 All under God, each measured by itself  
 These statues round us stand abrupt, distinct,

The strong in strength, the weak in weakness fixed,  
 The Muse for ever wedded to her lyre,  
 The Nymph to her fawn, the Silence to her rose :  
 See God's approval on his universe !  
 Let us do so—aspire to live as these  
 In harmony with truth, ourselves being true !  
 Take the first way, and let the second come !  
 My first is to possess myself of you ;  
 The music sets the march-step—forward, then !  
 And there 's the Queen, I go to claim you of,  
 The world to witness, wonder and applaud.  
 Our flower of life breaks open. No delay !

*Con.* And so shall we be ruined, both of us.  
 Norbert, I know her to the skin and bone :  
 You do not know her, were not born to it,  
 To feel what she can see or cannot see.  
 Love, she is generous,—ay, despite your smile,  
 Generous as you are : for, in that thin frame  
 Pain-twisted, punctured through and through with cares,  
 There lived a lavish soul until it starved  
 Debarred all healthy food. Look to the soul—  
 Pity that, stoop to that, ere you begin  
 (The true man's-way) on justice and your rights,  
 Exactions and acquittance of the past !  
 Begin so—see what justice she will deal !  
 We women hate a debt as men a gift.  
 Suppose her some poor keeper of a school  
 Whose business is to sit thro' summer months  
 And dole out children leave to go and play,  
 Herself superior to such lightness—she  
 In the arm-chair's state and pædagogic pomp,  
 To the life, the laughter, sun and youth outside :  
 We wonder such a face looks black on us ?  
 I do not bid you wake her tenderness,  
 (That were vain truly—none is left to wake)  
 But, let her think her justice is engaged

To take the shape of tenderness, and mark  
 If she'll not coldly pay its warmest debt !  
 Does she love me, I ask you ? not a whit :  
 Yet, thinking that her justice was engaged  
 To help a kinswoman, she took me up—  
 Did more on that bare ground than other loves  
 Would do on greater argument. For me,  
 I have no equivalent of such cold kind  
 To pay her with, but love alone to give  
 If I give anything. I give her love :—  
 I feel I ought to help her, and I will.  
 So, for her sake, as yours, I tell you twice  
 That women hate a debt as men a gift.  
 If I were you, I could obtain this grace—  
 Could lay the whole I did to love's account  
 Nor yet be very false as courtiers go—  
 Declaring her success my recompense ;  
 It would be so, in fact : what were it else ?  
 And then, once, loose her generosity,—  
 Oh, how I see it ! Oh, were I but you  
 To turn it, let it seem to move itself,  
 And make it offer what I really take,  
 Accepting just, in the poor cousin's hand,  
 Her value as the next thing to the Queen's—  
 Since none love Queens directly, none dare that,  
 And a thing's shadow or a name's mere echo  
 Suffices those who miss the name and thing !  
 You pick up just a ribbon she has worn,  
 To keep in proof how near her breath you came.  
 Say, I'm so near I seem a piece of her—  
 Ask for me that way—(oh, you understand)  
 You'd find the same gift yielded with a grace,  
 Which, if you make the least show to extort . . .  
 —You'll see ! and when you have ruined both of us,  
 Dissertate on the Queen's ingratitude !

*Nor.* Then, if I turn it that way, you consent ?

'T is not my way ; I have more hope in truth :  
Still, if you won't have truth—why, this indeed,  
Were scarcely false, as I 'd express the sense.  
Will you remain here ?

*Con.* O best heart of mine,  
How I have loved you ! then, you take my way ?  
Are mine as you have been her minister,  
Work out my thought, give it effect for me,  
Paint plain my poor conceit and make it serve ?  
I owe that withered woman everything—  
Life, fortune, you, remember ! Take my part—  
Help me to pay her ! Stand upon your rights ?  
You, with my rose, my hands, my heart on you ?  
Your rights are mine—you have no rights but mine.

*Nor.* Remain here. How you know me !

*Con.* Ah, but still——

[*He breaks from her : she remains. Dance-  
music from within.*]

*Enter the QUEEN.*

*Queen.* Constance ? She is here as he said. Speak  
quick !

Is it so ? Is it true or false ? One word ?

- *Con.* True.

*Queen.* Mercifullest Mother, thanks to thee !

*Con.* Madam ?

*Queen.* I love you, Constance, from my soul.  
Now say once more, with any words you will,  
'T is true, all true, as true as that I speak.

*Con.* Why should you doubt it ?

*Queen.* Ah, why doubt ? why doubt ?  
Dear, make me see it ! Do you see it so ?  
None see themselves ; another sees them best.  
You say " why doubt it ? "—you see him and me.  
It is because the Mother has such grace

That if we had but faith—wherein we fail—  
 Whate'er we yearn for would be granted us ;  
 Howbeit we let our whims prescribe despair,  
 Our very fancies thwart and cramp our will,  
 And so, accepting life, abjure ourselves.  
 Constance, I had abjured the hope of love  
 And being loved, as truly as yon palm  
 The hope of seeing Egypt from that plot.

*Con.* Heaven !

*Queen.* But it was so, Constance, it was so !  
 Men say—or do men say it ? fancies say—  
 “ Stop here, your life is set, you are grown old.  
 “ Too late—no love for you, too late for love—  
 “ Leave love to girls. Be queen : let Constance love ! ”  
 One takes the hint—half meets it like a child,  
 Ashamed at any feelings that oppose.  
 “ Oh love, true, never think of love again !  
 “ I am a queen : I rule, not love, indeed.”  
 So it goes on ; so a face grows like this,  
 Hair like this hair, poor arms as lean as these,  
 Till,—nay, it does not end so, I thank God !

*Con.* I cannot understand—

*Queen.* The happier you !  
 Constance, I know not how it is with men :  
 For women (I am a woman now like you)  
 There is no good of life but love—but love !  
 What else looks good, is some shade flung from love ;  
 Love gilds it, gives it worth. Be warned by me,  
 Never you cheat yourself one instant ! Love,  
 Give love, ask only love, and leave the rest !  
 O Constance, how I love you !

*Con.* I love you.

*Queen.* I do believe that all is come through you.  
 I took you to my heart to keep it warm  
 When the last chance of love seemed dead in me ;  
 I thought your fresh youth warmed my withered heart.

Oh, I am very old now, am I not?

Not so! it is true and it shall be true!

*Con.* Tell it me: let me judge if true or false.

*Queen.* Ah, but I fear you! you will look at me  
And say, "she's old, she's grown unlovely quite  
"Who ne'er was beauteous: men want beauty still."

Well, so I feared—the curse! so I felt sure.

*Con.* Be calm. And now you feel not sure, you say?

*Queen.* Constance, he came,—the coming was not  
strange—

Do not I stand and see men come and go?

I turned a half-look from my pedestal

Where I grow marble—"one young man the more!

"He will love some one; that is nought to me:

"What would he with my marble stateliness?"

Yet this seemed somewhat worse than heretofore;

The man more gracious, youthful, like a god,

And I still older, with less flesh to change—

We two those dear extremes that long to touch.

It seemed still harder when he first began

Absorbed to labour at the state-affairs

The old way for the old end—interest.

Oh, to live with a thousand beating hearts

Around you, swift eyes, serviceable hands,

Professing they've no care but for your cause,

Thought but to help you, love but for yourself,

And you the marble statue all the time

They praise and point at as preferred to life,

Yet leave for the first breathing woman's cheek,

First dancer's, gipsy's or street baladine's!

Why, how I have ground my teeth to hear men's speech

Stifled for fear it should alarm my ear,

Their gait subdued lest step should startle me,

Their eyes declined, such queendom to respect,

Their hands alert, such treasure to preserve,

While not a man of them broke rank and spoke,

Or wrote me a vulgar letter all of love,  
 Or caught my hand and pressed it like a hand !  
 There have been moments, if the sentinei  
 Lowering his halbert to salute the queen,  
 Had flung it brutally and clasped my knees,  
 I would have stooped and kissed him with my soul.

*Con.* Who could have comprehended ?

*Queen.* Ay, who—who ?

Why, no one, Constance, but this one who did.  
 Nor they, not you, not I. Even now perhaps  
 It comes too late—would you but tell the truth.

*Con.* I wait to tell it.

*Queen.* Well, you see, he came,  
 Outfaced the others, did a work this year  
 Exceeds in value all was ever done,  
 You know—it is not I who say it—all  
 Say it. And so (a second pang and worse)  
 I grew aware not only of what he did,  
 But why so wondrously. Oh, never work  
 Like his was done for work's ignoble sake—  
 It must have finer aims to lure it on !  
 I felt, I saw, he loved—loved somebody.  
 And Constance, my dear Constance, do you know,  
 I did believe this while 't was you he loved.

*Con.* Me, madam ?

*Queen.* It did seem to me, your face  
 Met him where'er he looked : and whom but you  
 Was such a man to love ? It seemed to me,  
 You saw he loved you, and approved the love,  
 And so you both were in intelligence.  
 You could not loiter in the garden, step  
 Into this balcony, but I straight was stung  
 And forced to understand. It seemed so true,  
 So right, so beautiful, so like you both,  
 That all this work should have been done by him  
 Not for the vulgar hope of recompense,



But that at last—suppose, some night like this—  
 Borne on to claim his due reward of me,  
 He might say, “Give her hand and pay me so.”  
 And I (O Constance, you shall love me now!)  
 I thought, surmounting all the bitterness,  
 —“And he shall have it. I will make her blest,  
 “My flower of youth, my wornan’s self that was,  
 “My happiest woman’s self that might have been!  
 “These two shall have their joy and leave me here.”  
 Yes—yes!

*Con.* Thanks!

*Queen.* And the word was on my lips  
 When he burst in upon me. I looked to hear  
 A mere calm statement of his just desire  
 For payment of his labour. When—O heaven,  
 How can I tell you? cloud was on my eyes  
 And thunder in my ears at that first word  
 Which told ’t was love of me, of me, did all—  
 He loved me—from the first step to the last,  
 Loved me!

*Con.* You did not hear . . . you thought he spoke  
 Of love? what if you should mistake?

*Queen.* No, no—  
 No mistake! Ha, there shall be no mistake!  
 He had not dared to hint the love he felt—  
 You were my reflex—(how I understood!)  
 He said you were the ribbon I had worn,  
 He kissed my hand, he looked into my eyes,  
 And love, love was the end of every phrase.  
 Love is begun; this much is come to pass:  
 The rest is easy. Constance, I am yours!  
 I will learn, I will place my life on you,  
 But teach me how to keep what I have won!  
 Am I so old? This hair was early grey;  
 But joy ere now has brought hair brown again  
 And joy will bring the cheek’s red back, I feel.



But I'll pour floods of love and hide myself.  
 How I will love him ! Cannot men love love ?  
 Who was a queen and loved a poet once  
 Humpbacked, a dwarf ? ah, women can do that !  
 Well, but men too ; at least, they tell you so.  
 They love so many women in their youth,  
 And even in age they all love whom they please ;  
 And yet the best of them confide to friends  
 That 't is not beauty makes the lasting love—  
 They spend a day with such and tire the next :  
 They like soul,—well then, they like phantasy,  
 Novelty even. Let us confess the truth,  
 Horrible though it be, that prejudice,  
 Prescription . . . curses ! they will love a queen  
 They will, they do : and will not, does not—he ?

*Con.* How can he ? You are wedded ; 't is a name  
 We know, but still a bond. Your rank remains,  
 His rank remains. How can he, nobly souled  
 As you believe and I incline to think,  
 Aspire to be your favourite, shame and all ?

*Queen.* Hear her ! There, there now—could she love  
 like me ?

What did I say of smooth-cheeked youth and grace ?  
 See all it does or could do ! so, youth loves !  
 Oh, tell him, Constance, you could never do  
 What I will—you, it was not born in ! I  
 Will drive these difficulties far and fast  
 As yonder mists curdling before the moon.  
 I'll use my light too, gloriously retrieve  
 My youth from its enforced calamity,  
 Dissolve that hateful marriage, and be his,  
 His own in the eyes alike of God and man.

*Con.* You will do—dare do . . . pause on what you  
 say !

*Queen.* Hear her ! I thank you, sweet, for that surprise.  
 You have the fair face : for the soul, see mine !

I have the strong soul : let me teach you, here.  
 I think I have borne enough and long enough,  
 And patiently enough, the world remarks,  
 To have my own way now, unblamed by all.  
 It does so happen (I rejoice for it)  
 This most unhopèd-for issue cuts the knot.  
 There 's not a better way of settling claims  
 Than this : God sends the accident express :  
 And were it for my subjects' good, no more,  
 'T were best thus ordered. I am thankful now,  
 Mute, passive, acquiescent. I receive,  
 And bless God simply, or should almost fear  
 To walk so smoothly to my ends at last.  
 Why, how I baffle obstacles, spurn fate !  
 How strong I am ! Could Norbert see me now !

*Con.* Let me consider ! It is all too strange.

*Queen.* You, Constance, learn of me ; do you, like me !  
 You are young, beautiful : my own, best girl,  
 You will have many lovers, and love one—  
 Light hair, not hair like Norbert's, to suit yours,  
 And taller than he is, for yourself are tall.  
 Love him, like me ! Give all away to him ;  
 Think never of yourself ; throw by your pride,  
 Hope, fear,—your own good as you saw it once,  
 And love him simply for his very self.  
 Remember, I (and what am I to you ?)  
 Would give up all for one, leave throne, lose life,  
 Do all but just unlove him ! He loves me.

*Con.* He shall.

*Queen.* You, step inside my inmost heart !  
 Give me your own heart : let us have one heart !  
 I 'll come to you for counsel ; "this he says,  
 "This he does ; what should this amount to, pray ?  
 "Beseech you, change it into current coin !  
 "Is that worth kisses ? Shall I please him there ?"  
 And then we 'll speak in turn of you—what else ?

Your love, according to your beauty's worth,  
 For you shall have some noble love, all gold :  
 Whom choose you? we will get him at your choice.  
 —Constance, I leave you. Just a minute since,  
 I felt as I must die or be alone  
 Breathing my soul into an ear like yours :  
 Now, I would face the world with my new life,  
 With my new crown. I 'll walk around the rooms,  
 And then come back and tell you how it feels.  
 How soon a smile of God can change the world !  
 How we are made for happiness—how work  
 Grows play, adversity a winning fight !  
 True I have lost so many years : what then?  
 Many remain : God has been very good.  
 You, stay here ! 'T is as different from dreams,  
 From the mind's cold calm estimate of bliss,  
 As these stone statues from the flesh and blood.  
 The comfort thou hast caused mankind, God's moon !

*[She goes out, leaving CONSTANCE. Dance-music  
 from within.]*

NORBERT enters.

*Nor.* Well? we have but one minute and one word !

*Con.* I am yours, Norbert !

*Nor.* Yes, mine.

*Con.* Not till now !

You were mine. Now I give myself to you.

*Nor.* Constance ?

*Con.* Your own ! I know the thriftier way

Of giving—haply, 't is the wiser way.

Meaning to give a treasure, I might dole

Coin after coin out (each, as that were all,

With a new largess still at each despair)

And force you keep in sight the deed, preserve

Exhaustless to the end my part and yours,

My giving and your taking ; both our joys

Dying together. Is it the wiser way?  
 I choose the simpler ; I give all at once.  
 Know what you have to trust to, trade upon !  
 Use it, abuse it,—anything but think  
 Hereafter, “ Had I known she loved me so,  
 “ And what my means, I might have thriven with it.”  
 This is your means. I give you all myself.

*Nor.* I take you and thank God.

*Con.* Look on through years !  
 We cannot kiss, a second day like this ;  
 Else were this earth, no earth.

*Nor.* With this day's heat  
 We shall go on through years of cold

*Con.* So, best !  
 —I try to see those years—I think I see.  
 You walk quick and new warmth comes ; you look back  
 And lay all to the first glow—not sit down  
 For ever brooding on a day like this  
 While seeing the embers whiten and love die.  
 Yes, love lives best in its effect ; and mine,  
 Full in its own life, yearns to live in yours.

*Nor.* Just so. I take and know you all at once.  
 Your soul is disengaged so easily,  
 Your face is there, I know you ; give me time,  
 Let me be proud and think you shall know me.  
 My soul is slower : in a life I roll  
 The minute out whereto you condense yours—  
 The whole slow circle round you I must move,  
 To be just you. I look to a long life  
 To decompose this minute, prove its worth.  
 'T is the sparks' long succession one by one  
 Shall show you, in the end, what fire was crammed  
 In that mere stone you struck : how could you know,  
 If it lay ever unproved in your sight,  
 As now my heart lies ? your own warmth would hide  
 Its coldness, were it cold.

*Con.* But how prove, how ?

*Nor.* Prove in my life, you ask ?

*Con.* Quick, Norbert—how ?

*Nor.* That 's easy told. I count life just a stuff  
To try the soul's strength on, educe the man.  
Who keeps one end in view makes all things serve.  
As with the body—he who hurls a lance  
Or heaps up stone on stone, shows strength alike,  
So I will seize and use all means to prove  
And show this soul of mine, you crown as yours,  
And justify us both.

*Con.* Could you write books,  
Paint pictures ! One sits down in poverty  
And writes or paints, with pity for the rich.

*Nor.* And loves one's painting, and one's writing, then,  
And not one's mistress ! All is best, believe,  
And we best as no other than we are.  
We live, and they experiment on life—  
Those poets, painters, all who stand aloof  
To overlook the farther. Let us be  
The thing they look at ! I might take your face  
And write of it and paint it—to what end ?  
For whom ? what pale dictatress in the air  
Feeds, smiling sadly, her fine ghost-like form  
With earth's real blood and breath, the beauteous life  
She makes despised for ever ? You are mine,  
Made for me, not for others in the world,  
Nor yet for that which I should call my art,  
The cold calm power to see how fair you look.  
I come to you ; I leave you not, to write  
Or paint. You are, I am : let Rubens there  
Paint us !

*Con.* So, best !

*Nor.* I understand your soul.  
You live, and rightly sympathize with life,  
With action, power, success. This way is straight ;

And time were short beside, to let me change  
The craft my childhood learnt : my craft shall serve.  
Men set me here to subjugate, enclose,  
Manure their barren lives, and force the fruit  
First for themselves, and afterward for me  
In the due tithe ; the task of some one man,  
Through ways of work appointed by themselves.  
I am not bid create—they see no star  
Transfiguring my brow to warrant that—  
But bind in one and carry out their wills.  
So I began : to-night sees how I end.  
What if it see, too, my first outbreak here  
Amid the warmth, surprise and sympathy,  
And instincts of the heart that teach the head ?  
What if the people have discerned at length  
The dawn of the next nature, the new man  
Whose will they venture in the place of theirs,  
And who, they trust, shall find them out new ways  
To heights as new which yet he only sees ?  
I felt it when you kissed me. See this Queen,  
This people—in our phrase, this mass of men—  
See how the mass lies passive to my hand  
And how my hand is plastic, and you by  
To make the muscles iron ! Oh, an end  
Shall crown this issue as this crowns the first !  
My will be on this people ! then, the strain,  
The grappling of the potter with his clay,  
The long uncertain struggle,—the success  
And consummation of the spirit-work,  
Some vase shaped to the curl of the god's lip,  
While rounded fair for lower men to see  
The Graces in a dance all recognize  
With turbulent applause and laughs of heart !  
So triumph ever shall renew itself ;  
Ever shall end in efforts higher yet,  
Ever begin . . .



*Con.* I ever helping ?

*Nor.* Thus !

[*As he embraces her, the QUEEN enters.*]

*Con.* Hist, madam ! So I have performed my part.

You see your gratitude's true decency,

Norbert ? A little slow in seeing it !

Begin, to end the sooner ! What 's a kiss ?

*Nor.* Constance ?

*Con.* Why, must I teach it you again

You want a witness to your dulness, sir ?

What was I saying these ten minutes long ?

Then I repeat—when some young handsome man

Like you has acted out a part like yours,

Is pleased to fall in love with one beyond,

So very far beyond him, as he says—

So hopelessly in love that but to speak

Would prove him mad,—he thinks judiciously,

And makes some insignificant good soul,

Like me, his friend, adviser, confidant,

And very stalking-horse to cover him

In following after what he dares not face—

When his end 's gained—(sir, do you understand ?)

When she, he dares not face, has loved him first,

—May I not say so, madam ?—tops his hope,

And overpasses so his wildest dream,

With glad consent of all, and most of her

The confidant who brought the same about—

Why, in the moment when such joy explodes,

I do hold that the merest gentleman

Will not start rudely from the stalking-horse,

Dismiss it with a "There, enough of you !"

Forget it, show his back unmannerly ;

But like a liberal heart will rather turn

And say, "A tingling time of hope was ours ;

"Betwixt the fears and falterings, we two lived

"A chanceful time in waiting for the prize :

“ The confidant, the Constance, served not ill,  
 “ And though I shall forget her in due time,  
 “ Her use being answered now, as reason bids,  
 “ Nay as herself bids from her heart of hearts,—  
 “ Still, she has rights, the first thanks go to her,  
 “ The first good praise goes to the prosperous tool,  
 “ And the first—which is the last—rewarding kiss.

*Nor.* Constance, it is a dream—ah, see, you smile !

*Con.* So, now his part being properly performed,  
 Madam, I turn to you and finish mine  
 As duly ; I do justice in my turn.  
 Yes, madam, he has loved you—long and well ;  
 He could not hope to tell you so—’t was I  
 Who served to prove your soul accessible,  
 I led his thoughts on, drew them to their place  
 When else they had wandered out into despair,  
 And kept love constant toward its natural aim.  
 Enough, my part is played ; you stoop half-way  
 And meet us royally and spare our fears :  
 ’T is like yourself. He thanks you, so do I.  
 Take him— with my full heart ! my work is praised  
 By what comes of it. Be you happy, both !  
 Yourself—the only one on earth who can—  
 Do all for him, much more than a mere heart  
 Which though warm is not useful in its warmth  
 As the silk vesture of a queen ! fold that  
 Around him gently, tenderly. For him—  
 For him,—he knows his own part !

*Nor.* Have you done ?

I take the jest at last. Should I speak now ?  
 Was yours the wager, Constance, foolish child,  
 Or did you but accept it ? Well—at least  
 You lose by it.

*Con.* Nay, madam, ’t is your turn !  
 Restrain him still from speech a little more,  
 And make him happier and more confident !

Pity him, madam, he is timid yet !  
 Mark, Norbert ! Do not shrink now ! Here I yield  
 My whole right in you to the Queen, observe !  
 With her go put in practice the great schemes  
 You teem with, follow the career else closed—  
 Be all you cannot be except by her !  
 Behold her !—Madam, say for pity's sake  
 Anything—frankly say you love him ! Else  
 He 'll not believe it : there 's more earnest in  
 His fear than you conceive : I know the man !

*Nor.* I know the woman somewhat, and confess  
 I thought she had jested better : she begins  
 To overcharge her part. I gravely wait  
 Your pleasure, madam : where is my reward ?

*Queen.* Norbert, this wild girl (whom I recognize  
 Scarce more than you do, in her fancy-fit,  
 Eccentric speech and variable mirth,  
 Not very wise perhaps and somewhat bold,  
 Yet suitable, the whole night's work being strange)  
 —She may be right : I may do well to speak  
 And make authentic what appears a dream  
 To even myself. For, what she says, is truth.  
 Yes, Norbert—what you spoke just now of love,  
 Devotion, stirred no novel sense in me,  
 But justified a warmth felt long before.  
 Yes, from the first—I loved you, I shall say :  
 Strange ! but I do grow stronger, now 't is said.  
 Your courage helps mine : you did well to speak  
 To-night, the night that crowns your twelvemonths'  
 toil :

But still I had not waited to discern  
 Your heart so long, believe me ! From the first  
 The source of so much zeal was almost plain,  
 In absence even of your own words just now  
 Which opened out the truth. 'T is very strange,  
 But takes a happy ending—in your love

Which mine meets : be it so ! as you choose me,  
So I choose you.

*Nor.* And worthily you choose.

I will not be unworthy your esteem,  
No, madam. I do love you ; I will meet  
Your nature, now I know it. This was well.  
I see,—you dare and you are justified :  
But none had ventured such experiment,  
Less versed than you in nobleness of heart,  
Less confident of finding such in me.  
I joy that thus you test me ere you grant  
The dearest richest beauteousest and best  
Of women to my arms : 't is like yourself.  
So—back again into my part's set words—  
Devotion to the uttermost is yours,  
But no, you cannot, madam, even you,  
Create in me the love our Constance does.  
Or—something truer to the tragic phrase—  
Not yon magnolia-bell superb with scent  
Invites a certain insect—that 's myself—  
But the small eye-flower nearer to the ground.  
I take this lady.

*Con.* Stay—not hers, the trap—  
Stay, Norbert—that mistake were worst of all !  
He is too cunning, madam ! It was I,  
I Norbert, who . . .

*Nor.* You, was it, Constance ? Then,  
But for the grace of this divinest hour  
Which gives me you, I might not pardon here !  
I am the Queen's ; she only knows my brain :  
She may experiment therefore on my heart  
And I instruct her too by the result.  
But you, Sweet, you who know me, who so long  
Have told my heart-beats over, held my life  
In those white hands of yours,—it is not well !

*Con.* Tush ! I have said it, did I not say it all ?  
The life, for her—the heart-beats, for her sake !

*Nor.* Enough! my cheek grows red, I think. Your test?

There 's not the meanest woman in the world,  
Not she I least could love in all the world,  
Whom, did she love me, did love prove itself,  
I dare insult as you insult me now.

Constance, I could say, if it must be said,  
"Take back the soul you offer, I keep mine!"  
But—"Take the soul still quivering on your hand,  
"The soul so offered, which I cannot use,  
"And, please you, give it to some playful friend,  
"For—what 's the trifle he requites me with?"

—I, tempt a woman, to amuse a man,  
That two may mock her heart if it succumb?  
No: fearing God and standing 'neath His heaven,  
I would not dare insult a woman so,  
Were she the meanest woman in the world,  
And he, I cared to please, ten emperors!

*Con.* Norbert!

*Nor.* I love once as I live but once.

What case is this to think or talk about?  
I love you. Would it mend the case at all  
Should such a step as this kill love in me?  
Your part were done: account to God for it!  
But mine—could murdered love get up again,  
And kneel to whom you please to designate,  
And make you mirth? It is too horrible.  
You did not know this, Constance? now you know  
That body and soul have each one life, but one;  
And here 's my love, here, living, at your feet.

*Con.* See the Queen! Norbert—this one more last word—

If thus you have taken jest for earnest—thus  
Loved me in earnest. . . .

*Nor.* Ah, no jest holds here!  
Where is the laughter in which jest breaks up,  
And what this horror that grows palpable?

Madam—why grasp you thus the balcony?  
 Have I done ill? Have I not spoken truth?  
 How could I other? Was it not your test,  
 To try me, what my love for Constance meant?  
 Madam, your royal soul itself approves,  
 The first, that I should choose thus! so one takes  
 A beggar,—asks him, what would buy his child?  
 And then approves the expected laugh of scorn  
 Returned as something noble from the rags.  
 Speak, Constance, I'm the beggar! Ha, what 's this?  
 You two glare each at each like panthers now.  
 Constance, the world fades: only you stand there!  
 You did not, in to-night's wild whirl of things,  
 Sell me—your soul of souls, for any price?  
 No—no—'t is easy to believe in you!  
 Was it your love's mad trial to o'ertop  
 Mine by this vain self-sacrifice? well, still—  
 Though I should curse, I love you. I am love  
 And cannot change: love's self is at your feet!

[*The QUEEN goes out.*]

*Con.* Feel my heart; let it die against your own!

*Nor.* Against my own. Explain not; let this be!

This is life's height.

*Con.* Yours, yours, yours!

*Nor.* You and I—

Why care by what meanders we are here  
 I? the centre of the labyrinth? Men have died  
 Trying to find this place, which we have found.

*Con.* Found, found!

*Nor.* Sweet, never fear what she can do!

We are past harm now.

*Con.* On the breast of God.

I thought of men—as if you were a man.  
 Tempting him with a crown!

*Nor.* This must end here:

It is too perfect.

*Con.*                    There 's the music stopped.  
What measured heavy tread? It is one blaze  
About me and within me.

*Nor.*                    Oh, some death  
Will run its sudden finger round this spark  
And sever us from the rest!

*Con.*                    And so do well.  
Now the doors open.

*Nor.*                    'T is the guard comes.

*Con.*                    Kiss!



## OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE.

### I

THE morn when first it thunders in March,  
The eel in the pond gives a leap, they say.  
As I leaned and looked over the aloed arch  
Of the villa-gate, this warm March day,  
No flash snapped, no dumb thunder rolled  
In the valley beneath where, white and wide  
And washed by the morning water-gold,  
Florence lay out on the mountain-side.

### II

River and bridge and street and square  
Lay mine, as much at my beck and call,  
Through the live translucent bath of air,  
As the sights in a magic crystal ball.  
And of all I saw and of all I praised,  
The most to praise and the best to see  
Was the startling bell-tower Giotto raised:  
But why did it more than startle me?

## III

Giotto, how, with that soul of yours,  
 Could you play me false who loved you so?  
 Some slights if a certain heart endures  
 Yet it feels, I would have your fellows know!  
 I' faith, I perceive not why I should care  
 To break a silence that suits them best,  
 But the thing grows somewhat hard to bear  
 When I find a Giotto join the rest.

## IV

On the arch where olives overhead  
 Print the blue sky with twig and leaf,  
 (That sharp-curved leaf which they never shed)  
 'Twixt the aloes, I used to lean in chief,  
 And mark through the winter afternoons,  
 By a gift God grants me now and then,  
 In the mild decline of those suns like moons,  
 Who walked in Florence, besides her men.

## V

They might chirp and chaffer, come and go  
 For pleasure or profit, her men alive—  
 My business was hardly with them, I trow,  
 But with empty cells of the human hive;  
 —With the chapter-room, the cloister-porch,  
 The church's apsis, aisle or nave,  
 Its crypt, one fingers along with a torch,  
 Its face set full for the sun to shave.

## VI

Wherever a fresco peels and drops,  
 Wherever an outline weakens and wanes  
 Till the latest life in the painting stops,  
 Stands One whom each fainter pulse-tick pains :



One, wishful each scrap should clutch the brick,  
 Each tinge not wholly escape the plaster,  
 —A lion who dies of an ass's kick,  
 The wronged great soul of an ancient Master.

## VII

For oh, this world and the wrong it does !  
 They are safe in heaven with their backs to it,  
 The Michaels and Rafaels, you hum and buzz  
 Round the works of, you of the little wit !  
 Do their eyes contract to the earth's old scope,  
 Now that they see God face to face,  
 And have all attained to be poets, I hope?  
 'T is their holiday now, in any case.

## VIII

Much they reckon of your praise and you !  
 But the wronged great souls—can they be quit  
 Of a world where their work is all to do,  
 Where you style them, you of the little wit,  
 Old Master This and Early the Other,  
 Not dreaming that Old and New are fellows :  
 A younger succeeds to an elder brother,  
 Da Vincis derive in good time from Dellos.

## IX

And here where your praise might yield returns,  
 And a handsome word or two give help,  
 Here, after your kind, the mastiff grins  
 And the puppy pack of poodles yelp.  
 What, not a word for Stefano there,  
 Of brow once prominent and starry,  
 Called Nature's Ape and the world's despair  
 For his peerless painting? (see Vasari.)

## X

There stands the Master. Study, my friends,  
 What a man's work comes to ! So he plans it,  
 Performs it, perfects it, makes amends  
 For the toiling and moiling, and then, *sic transit!*  
 Happier the thrifty blind-folk labour,  
 With upturned eye while the hand is busy,  
 Not sidling a glance at the coin of their neighbour !  
 'T is looking downward makes one dizzy.

## XI

" If you knew their work you would deal your dole."  
 May I take upon me to instruct you ?  
 When Greek Art ran and reached the goal,  
 Thus much had the world to boast *in fructu*—  
 The Truth of Man, as by God first spoken,  
 Which the actual generations garble,  
 Was re-uttered, and Soul (which Limbs betoken)  
 And Limbs (Soul informs) made new in marble.

## XII

So, you saw yourself as you wished you were,  
 As you might have been, as you cannot be ;  
 Earth here, rebuked by Olympus there :  
 And grew content in your poor degree  
 With your little power, by those statues' godhead,  
 And your little scope, by their eyes' full sway,  
 And your little grace, by their grace embodied,  
 And your little date, by their forms that stay.

## XIII

You would fain be kinglier, say, than I am ?  
 Even so, you will not sit like Theseus.  
 You would prove a model ? The Son of Priam  
 Has yet the advantage in arms' and knees' use.

You're wroth—can you slay your snake like Apollo?  
 You're grieved—still Niobe's the grander!  
 You live—there's the Racers' frieze to follow:  
 You die—there's the dying Alexander.

XIV

So, testing your weakness by their strength,  
 Your meagre charms by their rounded beauty,  
 Measured by Art in your breadth and length,  
 You learned—to submit is a mortal's duty.  
 —When I say “you” 't is the common soul,  
 The collective, I mean: the race of Man  
 That receives life in parts to live in a whole  
 And grow here according to God's clear plan.

XV

Growth came when, looking your last on them all,  
 You turned your eyes inwardly one fine day  
 And cried with a start—What if we so small  
 Be greater and grander the while than they?  
 Are they perfect of lineament, perfect of stature?  
 In both, of such lower types are we  
 Precisely because of our wider nature;  
 For time, theirs—ours, for eternity.

XVI.

To-day's brief passion limits their range;  
 It seethes with the morrow for us and more.  
 They are perfect—how else? they shall never change:  
 We are faulty—why not? we have time in store.  
 The Artificer's hand is not arrested  
 With us; we are rough-hewn, no-wise polished.  
 They stand for our copy, and, once invested  
 With all they can teach, we shall see them abolished.

## XVII

'T is a life-long toil till our lump be leaven—  
 The better ! What 's come to perfection perishes.  
 Things learned on earth, we shall practise in heaven :  
 Works done less rapidly, Art most cherishes.  
 Thyself shalt afford the example, Giotto !  
 Thy one work, not to decrease or diminish,  
 Done at a stroke, was just (was it not ?) " O !"  
 Thy great Campanile is still to finish.

## XVIII

Is it true that we are now, and shall be hereafter,  
 But what and where depend on life's minute ?  
 Hails heavenly cheer or infernal laughter  
 Our first step out of the gulf or in it ?  
 Shall Man, such step within his endeavour,  
 Man's face, have no more play and action  
 Than joy which is crystallized for ever,  
 Or grief, an eternal petrification ?

## XIX

On which I conclude, that the early painters,  
 To cries of " Greek Art and what more wish you ?"—  
 Replied, " To become now self-acquainters,  
 " And paint man, man, whatever the issue !  
 " Make new hopes shine through the flesh they fray,  
 " New fears aggrandize the rags and tatters :  
 " To bring the invisible full into play,  
 " Let the visible go to the dogs—what matters ?"

## XX

Give these, I exhort you, their guerdon and glory  
 For daring so much, before they well did it.  
 The first of the new, in our race's story,  
 Beats the last of the old ; 't is no idle quiddit.

The worthies began a revolution,  
 Which if on earth you intend to acknowledge,  
 Why, honour them now ! (ends my allocution)  
 Nor confer your degree when the folks leave college.

XXI

There 's a fancy some lean to and others hate—  
 That, when this life is ended, begins  
 New work for the soul in another state,  
 Where it strives and gets weary, loses and wins :  
 Where the strong and the weak, this world's congeries,  
 Repeat in large what they practised in small,  
 Through life after life in unlimited series ;  
 Only the scale 's to be changed, that 's all.

XXII

Yet I hardly know. When a soul has seen  
 By the means of Evil that Good is best,  
 And, through earth and its noise, what is heaven's  
 serene,—  
 When our faith in the same has stood the test—  
 Why, the child grown man, you burn the rod,  
 The uses of labour are surely done ;  
 There remaineth a rest for the people of God :  
 And I have had troubles enough, for one.

XXIII

But at any rate I have loved the season  
 Of Art's spring-birth so dim and dewy :  
 My sculptor is Nicolo the Pisan,  
 My painter—who but Cimabue ?  
 Nor ever was man of them all indeed,  
 From these to Ghiberti and Ghirlandajo,  
 Could say that he missed my critic-meed.  
 So, now to my special grievance—heigh ho !

## XXIV

Their ghosts still stand, as I said before,  
 Watching each fresco flaked and rasped,  
 Blocked up, knocked out, or whitewashed o'er :  
 —No getting again what the Church has grasped !  
 The works on the wall must take their chance ;  
 “ Works never conceded to England's thick clime ! ”  
 (I hope they prefer their inheritance  
 Of a bucketful of Italian quick-lime.)

## XXV

When they go at length, with such a shaking  
 Of heads o'er the old delusion, sadly  
 Each master his way through the black streets taking,  
 Where many a lost work breathes though badly—  
 Why don't they bethink them of who has merited ?  
 Why not reveal, while their pictures dree  
 Such doom, how a captive might be out-ferreted ?  
 Why is it they never remember me ?

## XXVI

Not that I expect the great Bigordi,  
 Nor Sandro to hear me, chivalric, bellicose ;  
 Nor the wronged Lippino ; and not a word I  
 Say of a scrap of Frà Angelico's :  
 But are you too fine, Taddeo Gaddi,  
 To grant me a taste of your intonaco,  
 Some Jerome that seeks the heaven with a sad eye ?  
 Not a churlish saint, Lorenzo Monaco ?

## XXVII

Could not the ghost with the close red cap,  
 My Pollajolo, the twice a craftsman,  
 Save me a sample, give me the hap  
 Of a muscular Christ that shows the draughtsman ?

No Virgin by him the somewhat petty,  
 Of finical touch and tempera crumbly—  
 Could not Alesso Baldovinetti  
 Contribute so much, I ask him humbly?

XXXVIII

Margheritone of Arezzo,  
 With the grave-clothes garb and swaddling barret  
 (Why purse up mouth and beak in a pet so,  
 You bald old saturnine poll-clawed parrot?)  
 Not a poor glimmering Crucifixion,  
 Where in the foreground kneels the donor?  
 If such remain, as is my conviction,  
 The hoarding it does you but little honour.

XXIX

They pass; for them the panels may thrill,  
 The tempera grow alive and tinglish;  
 Their pictures are left to the mercies still  
 Of dealers and stealers, Jews and the English  
 Who, seeing mere money's worth in their prize,  
 Will sell it to somebody calm as Zeno  
 At naked High Art, and in ecstasies  
 Before some clay-cold vile Carlino!

XXX

No matter for these! But Giotto, you,  
 Have you allowed, as the town-tongues babble it—  
 Oh, never! it shall not be counted true—  
 That a certain precious little tablet  
 Which Buonarroti eyed like a lover,  
 Was buried so long in oblivion's womb  
 And, left for another than I to discover,  
 Turns up at last! and to whom?— to whom?

## XXXI

I, that have haunted the dim San Spirito,  
 (Or was it rather the Ognissanti?)  
 Patient on altar-step planting a weary toe!  
 Nay, I shall have it yet! *Detur amanti!*  
 My Koh-i-noor—or (if that 's a platitude)  
 Jewel of Giamschid, the Persian Sofi's eye;  
 So, in anticipative gratitude,  
 What if I take up my hope and prophesy?

## XXXII

When the hour grows ripe, and a certain dotard  
 Is pitched, no parcel that needs invoicing,  
 To the worst side of the Mont St. Gothard,  
 We shall begin by way of rejoicing;  
 None of that shooting the sky (blank cartridge),  
 Nor a civic guard, all plumes and lacquer,  
 Hunting Radetzky's soul like a partridge  
 Over Morello with squib and cracker.

## XXXIII

This time we 'll shoot better game and bag 'em hot  
 No mere display at the stone of Dante,  
 But a kind of sober Witanagemot  
 (Ex: "Casa Guidi," *quod videas ante*)  
 Shall ponder, once Freedom restored to Florence,  
 How Art may return that departed with her.  
 Go, hated house, go each trace of the Lorraine's,  
 And bring us the days of Orgagna hither

## XXXIV

How we shall prologuize, how we shall perorate,  
 Utter fit things upon art and history,  
 Feel truth at blood-heat and falsehood at zero rate,  
 Make of the want of the age no mystery;



Contrast the fructuous and sterile eras,  
 Show—monarchy ever its uncouth cub licks  
 Out of the bear's shape into Chimæra's,  
 While Pure Art's birth is still the republic's !

XXXV

Then one shall propose in a speech (eurt Tuscan,  
 Expurgate and sober, with scarcely an "*issimo*;) )  
 To end now our half-told tale of Cambuscan,  
 And turn the bell-tower's *alt* to *altissimo* :  
 And, fine as the beak of a young beccaccia,  
 The Campanile, the Duomo's fit ally,  
 Shall soar up in gold full fifty braccia,  
 Completing Florence, as Florence, Italy.

XXXVI

Shall I be alive that morning the scaffold  
 Is broken away, and the long-pent fire,  
 Like the golden hope of the world, un baffled  
 Springs from its sleep, and up goes the spire  
 While, " God and the People " plain for its motto,  
 Thence the new tricolour flaps at the sky ?  
 At least to foresee that glory of Giotto  
 And Florence together, the first am I !

NOTE.—The space left here tempts to a word on the line about Apollo the snake-slayer, which my friend Professor Colvin condemns, believing that the God of the Belvedere grasps no bow, but the Ægis, as described in the 15th Iliad. Surely the text represents that portentous object (θούριον, δεινὴν, ἀμφιδάσειαν, ἀριπρεπέ—μορμορέην) as " shaken violently " or " held immovably " by both hands, not a single one and that the left hand :

ἀλλὰ σύ γ' ἐν χεῖρεσσι λάβ' αἰγίδα θουσανόεσσαν  
 τὴν μάλ' ἐπισσεύων φοβέειν ἥρωϊς Ἀχαιοῦς,

and so on, τὴν αὖ' ὃ γ' ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχων—χερτίν ἐχ' ἀτρέμα κ. τ. λ. Moreover, while he shook it he " shouted enormously," σεῖσ', ἐπὶ δ' αὐτὸς αὔσε μάλα μέγας, which the statue does n. t. Presently when Teukros, on the other side, plies the bow, it is τόξον ἔχων ἐν χειρὶ παλίντονον. Besides, by the act of discharging an arrow, the right arm and hand are thrown back as we see: a quite gratuitous and theatrical display in the case supposed. The

conjecture of Flaxman that the statue was suggested by the bronze Apollon Alexikakos of Kalamis, mentioned by Pausanias, remains probable,— though the “hardness” which Cicero considers to distinguish the artist’s workmanship from that of Muron is not by any means apparent in our marble copy, if it be one. — Feb. 16, 1880.



### BISHOP BLOUGRAMS APOLOGY.

NO more wine? then we ’ll push back chairs and talk.  
 A final glass for me, though : cool, i’ faith !  
 We ought to have our Abbey back, you see.  
 It’s different, preaching in basilicas,  
 And doing duty in some masterpiece  
 Like this of brother Pugin’s, bless his heart !  
 I doubt if they ’re half baked, those chalk rosettes,  
 Ciphers and stucco-twiddlings everywhere ;  
 It’s just like breathing in a lime-kiln : eh ?  
 These hot long ceremonies of our Church  
 Cost us a little—oh, they pay the price,  
 You take me—amply pay it ! Now, we ’ll talk.

So, you despise me, Mr. Gigadibs.  
 No deprecation,—nay, I beg you, sir !  
 Beside’t is our engagement : don’t you know  
 I promised, if you’d watch a dinner out,  
 We’d see truth dawn together?—truth that peeps  
 Over the glass’s edge when dinner’s done,  
 And body gets its sop and holds its noise  
 And leaves soul free a little. Now’s the time :  
 ’T is break of day ! You do despise me then.  
 And if I say, “despise me,”—never fear !  
 I know you do not in a certain sense—  
 Not in my arm-chair, for example : here,  
 I well imagine you respect my place  
 (*Status, entourage*, worldly circumstance)  
 Quite to its value—very much indeed :

—Are up to the protesting eyes of you  
 In pride at being seated here for once—  
 You'll turn it to such capital account !  
 When somebody, through years and years to come,  
 Hints of the bishop,—names me—that 's enough :  
 “ Blougram? I knew him ”—(into it you slide)  
 “ Dined with him once, a Corpus Christi Day,  
 “ All alone, we two ; he 's a clever man :  
 “ And after dinner,—why, the wine you know,—  
 “ Oh, there was wine, and good !—what with the wine . . .  
 “ Faith, we began upon all sorts of talk !  
 “ He 's no bad fellow, Blougram ; he had seen  
 “ Something of mine he relished, some review.  
 “ He 's quite above their humbug in his heart,  
 “ Half-said as much, indeed—the thing 's his trade.  
 “ I warrant, Blougram 's sceptical at times :  
 “ How otherwise? I like him, I confess ! ”  
*Che che*, my dear sir, as we say at Rome,  
 Don't you protest now ! It 's fair give and take ;  
 You have had your turn and spoken your home-truths :  
 The hand 's mine now, and here you follow suit.

Thus much conceded, still the first fact stays—  
 You do despise me ; your ideal of life  
 Is not the bishop's : you would not be I.  
 You would like better to be Goethe, now,  
 Or Buonaparte, or, bless me, lower still,  
 Count D'Orsay,—so you did what you preferred,  
 Spoke as you thought, and, as you cannot help,  
 Believed or disbelieved, no matter what,  
 So long as on that point, whate'er it was,  
 You loosed your mind, were whole and sole yourself.  
 —That, my ideal never can include,  
 Upon that element of truth and worth  
 Never be based ! for say they make me Pope  
 (They can't—suppose it for our argument)

Why, there I'm at my tether's end, I've reached  
 My height, and not a height which pleases you :  
 An unbelieving Pope won't do, you say.  
 It's like those eerie stories nurses tell,  
 Of how some actor played Death on a stage,  
 With pasteboard crown, sham orb and tinsel'd dart,  
 And called himself the monarch of the world ;  
 Then, going in the tire-room afterward,  
 Because the play was done, to shift himself,  
 Got touched upon the sleeve familiarly,  
 The moment he had shut the closet door,  
 By Death himself. Thus God might touch a Pope  
 At unawares, ask what his baubles mean,  
 And whose part he presumed to play just now ?  
 Best be yourself, imperial, plain and true !

So, drawing comfortable breath again,  
 You weigh and find, whatever more or less  
 I boast of my ideal realized,  
 Is nothing in the balance when opposed  
 To your ideal, your grand simple life,  
 Of which you will not realize one jot.  
 I am much, you are nothing ; you would be all,  
 I would be merely much : you beat me there.

No, friend, you do not beat me : harken why !  
 The common problem, yours, mine, every one's,  
 Is—not to fancy what were fair in life  
 Provided it could be,—but, finding first  
 What may be, then find how to make it fair  
 Up to our means : a very different thing !  
 No abstract intellectual plan of life  
 Quite irrespective of life's plainest laws,  
 But one, a man, who is man and nothing more,  
 May lead within a world which (by your leave)  
 Is Rome or London, not Fool's-paradise.  
 Embellish Rome, idealize away,

Make paradise of London if you can,  
You 're welcome, nay, you 're wise.

A simile !

We mortals cross the ocean of this world  
Each in his average cabin of a life ;  
The best 's not big, the worst yields elbow-room.  
Now for our six months' voyage—how prepare ?  
You come on shipboard with a landsman's list  
Of things he calls convenient : so they are !  
An India screen is pretty furniture,  
A piano-forte is a fine resource,  
All Balzac's novels occupy one shelf,  
The new edition fifty volumes long ;  
And little Greek books, with the funny type  
They get up well at Leipsic, fill the next :  
Go on ! slabbed marble, what a bath it makes !  
And Parma's pride, the Jerome, let us add !  
'T were pleasant could Correggio's fleeting glow  
Hang full in face of one where'er one roams,  
Since he more than the others brings with him  
Italy's self,—the marvellous Modenese !—  
Yet was not on your list before, perhaps.  
—Alas, friend, here 's the agent . . . is 't the name ?  
The captain, or whoever 's master here—  
You see him screw his face up ; what 's his cry  
Ere you set foot on shipboard ? “ Six feet square ! ”  
If you won't understand what six feet mean,  
Compute and purchase stores accordingly—  
And if, in pique because he overhauls  
Your Jerome, piano and bath, you come on board  
Bare—why, you cut a figure at the first  
While sympathetic landsmen see you off ;  
Not afterward, when long ere half seas over,  
You peep up from your utterly naked boards  
Into some snug and well-appointed berth,

Like mine for instance (try the cooler jug—  
 Put back the other, but don't jog the ice!)  
 And mortified you mutter "Well and good ;  
 " He sits enjoying his sea-furniture ;  
 "'T is stout and proper, and there 's store of it :  
 " Though I 've the better notion, all agree,  
 " Of fitting rooms up. Hang the carpenter,  
 " Neat ship-shape fixings and contrivances—  
 " I would have brought my Jerome, frame and all !'  
 And meantime you bring nothing : never mind—  
 You 've proved your artist-nature : what you don't  
 You might bring, so despise me, as I say.

Now come, let 's backward to the starting-place.  
 See my way : we 're two college friends, suppose.  
 Prepare together for our voyage, then ;  
 Each note and check the other in his work,—  
 Here 's mine, a bishop's outfit ; criticize !  
 What 's wrong ? why won't you be a bishop too ?

Why first, you don't believe, you don't and can't,  
 (Not stately, that is, and fixedly  
 And absolutely and exclusively)  
 In any revelation called divine. .  
 No dogmas nail your faith ; and what remains  
 But say so, like the honest man you are ?  
 First, therefore, overhaul theology !  
 Nay, I too, not a fool, you please to think,  
 Must find believing every whit as hard :  
 And if I do not frankly say as much,  
 The ugly consequence is clear enough.

Now wait, my friend : well, I do not believe—  
 If you 'll accept no faith that is not fixed,  
 Absolute and exclusive, as you say.  
 You 're wrong—I mean to prove it in due time.  
 Meanwhile, I know where difficulties lie

I could not, cannot solve, nor ever shall,  
 So give up hope accordingly to solve—  
 (To you, and over the wine). Our dogmas then  
 With both of us, though in unlike degree,  
 Missing full credence—overboard with them !  
 I mean to meet you on your own premise :  
 Good, there go mine in company with yours !

And now what are we ? unbelievers both,  
 Calm and complete, determinately fixed  
 To-day, to-morrow and for ever, pray ?  
 You 'll guarantee me that ? Not so, I think !  
 In no wise ! all we 've gained is, that belief,  
 As unbelief before, shakes us by fits,  
 Confounds us like its predecessor. Where 's  
 The gain ? how can we guard our unbelief,  
 Make it bear fruit to us ?—the problem here.  
 Just when we are safest, there 's a sunset-touch,  
 A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,  
 A chorus-ending from Euripides,—  
 And that 's enough for fifty hopes and fears  
 As old and new at once as nature's self,  
 To rap and knock and enter in our soul,  
 Take hands and dance there, a fantastic ring,  
 Round the ancient idol, on his base again,—  
 The grand Perhaps ! We look on helplessly.  
 There the old misgivings, crooked questions are—  
 This good God,—what he could do, if he would,  
 Would, if he could—then must have done long since :  
 If so, when, where and how ? some way must be,—  
 Once feel about, and soon or late you hit  
 Some sense, in which it might be, after all.  
 Why not "The Way, the Truth, the Life ?"

—That way

Over the mountain, which who stands upon  
 Is apt to doubt if it be indeed a road ;

While if he views it from the waste itself,  
 Up goes the line there, plain from base to brow,  
 Not vague, mistakeable ! what 's a break or two  
 Seen from the unbroken desert either side ?  
 And then (to bring in fresh philosophy)  
 What if the breaks themselves should prove at last  
 The most consummate of contrivances  
 To train a man's eye, teach him what is faith ?  
 And so we stumble at truth's very test !  
 All we have gained then by our unbelief  
 Is a life of doubt diversified by faith,  
 For one of faith diversified by doubt :  
 We called the chess-board white,—we call it black.

“ Well,” you rejoin, “ the end 's no worse, at least ;  
 “ We 've reason for both colours on the board :  
 “ Why not confess then, where I drop the faith  
 “ And you the doubt, that I 'm as right as you ? ”

Because, friend, in the next place, this being so,  
 And both things even,—faith and unbelief  
 Left to a man's choice,—we 'll proceed a step,  
 Returning to our image, which I like.

A man's choice, yes—but a cabin passenger's—  
 The man made for the special life o' the world—  
 Do you forget him ? I remember though !  
 Consult our ship's conditions and you find  
 One and but one choice suitable to all ;  
 The choice, that you unluckily prefer,  
 Turning things topsy-turvy—they or it  
 Going to the ground. Belief or unbelief  
 Bears upon life, determines its whole course,  
 Begins at its beginning. See the world  
 Such as it is,—you made it not, nor I ;  
 I mean to take it as it is,—and you,  
 Not so you 'll take it,—though you get nought else.



I know the special kind of life I like,  
What suits the most my idiosyncrasy,  
Brings out the best of me and bears me fruit  
In power, peace, pleasantness and length of days.  
I find that positive belief does this  
For me, and unbelief, no whit of this.  
—For you, it does, however?—that, we 'll try !  
'T is clear, I cannot lead my life, at least,  
Induce the world to let me peaceably,  
Without declaring at the outset, “ Friends,  
“ I absolutely and peremptorily  
“ Believe ! ”—I say, faith is my waking life :  
One sleeps, indeed, and dreams at intervals,  
We know, but waking 's the main point with us  
And my provision 's for life's waking part.  
Accordingly, I use heart, head and hand  
All day, I build, scheme, study, and make friends ;  
And when night overtakes me, down I lie,  
Sleep, dream a little, and get done with it,  
The sooner the better, to begin afresh.  
What 's midnight's doubt before the dayspring's faith ?  
You, the philosopher, that disbelieve,  
That recognize the night, give dreams their weight—  
To be consistent you should keep your bed,  
Abstain from healthy acts that prove you man,  
For fear you drowse perhaps at unawares !  
And certainly at night you 'll sleep and dream,  
Live through the day and bustle as you please.  
And so you live to sleep as I to wake,  
To unbelieve as I to still believe ?  
Well, and the common sense o' the world calls you  
Bed-ridden,—and its good things come to me.  
Its estimation, which is half the fight,  
That 's the first-cabin comfort I secure :  
The next . . . but you perceive with half an eye !

Come, come, it 's best believing, if we may ;  
 You can't but own that !

Next, concede again,

If once we choose belief, on all accounts  
 We can't be too decisive in our faith,  
 Conclusive and exclusive in its terms,  
 To suit the world which gives us the good things.  
 In every man's career are certain points  
 Whereon he dares not be indifferent ;  
 The world detects him clearly, if he dare,  
 As baffled at the game, and losing life.  
 He may care little, or he may care much  
 For riches, honour, pleasure, work, repose,  
 Since various theories of life and life's  
 Success are extant which might easily  
 Comport with either estimate of these ;  
 And whoso chooses wealth or poverty,  
 Labour or quiet, is not judged a fool  
 Because his fellow would choose otherwise :  
 We let him choose upon his own account  
 So long as he 's consistent with his choice.  
 But certain points, left wholly to himself,  
 When once a man has arbitrated on,  
 We say he must succeed there or go hang.  
 Thus, he should wed the woman he loves most  
 Or needs most, whatsoe'er the love or need—  
 For he can't wed twice. Then, he must avouch,  
 Or follow, at the least, sufficiently,  
 The form of faith his conscience holds the best,  
 Whate'er the process of conviction was :  
 For nothing can compensate his mistake  
 On such a point, the man himself being judge :  
 He cannot wed twice, nor twice lose his soul.

Well now, there's one great form of Christian faith  
 I happened to be born in—which to teach

Was given me as I grew up, on all hands,  
As best and readiest means of living by ;  
The same on examination being proved  
The most pronounced moreover, fixed, precise  
And absolute form of faith in the whole world—  
Accordingly, most potent of all forms  
For working on the world. Observe, my friend !  
Such as you know me, I am free to say,  
In these hard latter days which hamper one,  
Myself—by no immoderate exercise  
Of intellect and learning, but the tact  
To let external forces work for me,  
—Bid the street's stones be bread and they are bread ;  
Bid Peter's creed, or rather, Hildebrand's,  
Exalt me o'er my fellows in the world  
And make my life an ease and joy and pride ;  
It does so,—which for me 's a great point gained,  
Who have a soul and body that exact  
A comfortable care in many ways.  
There 's power in me and will to dominate  
Which I must exercise, they hurt me else :  
In many ways I need mankind's respect,  
Obedience, and the love that 's born of fear :  
While at the same time, there's a taste I have,  
A toy of soul, a titillating thing,  
Refuses to digest these dainties crude.  
The naked life is gross till clothed upon :  
I must take what men offer, with a grace  
As though I would not, could I help it, take !  
An uniform I wear though over-rich—  
Something imposed on me, no choice of mine ;  
No fancy-dress worn for pure fancy's sake  
And despicable therefore ! now folks kneel  
And kiss my hand—of course the Church's hand.  
Thus I am made, thus life is best for me,  
And thus that it should be I have procured ;

And thus it could not be another way.  
I venture to imagine.

You'll reply,  
So far my choice, no doubt, is a success ;  
But were I made of better elements,  
With nobler instincts, purer tastes, like you,  
I hardly would account the thing success  
Though it did all for me I say.

But, friend,  
We speak of what is ; not of what might be,  
And how't were better if 't were otherwise.  
I am the man you see here plain enough :  
Grant I'm a beast, why, beasts must lead beasts' lives !  
Suppose I own at once to tail and claws ;  
The tailless man exceeds me : but being tailed  
I'll lash out lion fashion, and leave apes  
To dock their stump and dress their haunches up.  
My business is not to remake myself,  
But make the absolute best of what God made.  
Or—our first simile—though you prove me doomed  
To a viler berth still, to the steerage-hole,  
The sheep-pen or the pig-stye, I should strive  
To make what use of each were possible ;  
And, as this cabin gets upholstery,  
That hutch should rustle with sufficient straw.

But, friend, I don't acknowledge quite so fast  
I fail of all your manhood's lofty tastes  
Enumerated so complacently,  
On the mere ground that you forsooth can find  
In this particular life I choose to lead  
No fit provision for them. Can you not ?  
Say you, my fault is I address myself  
To grosser estimators than should judge ?  
And that's no way of holding up the soul,

Which, nobler, needs men's praise perhaps, yet knows  
 One wise man's verdict outweighs all the fools—  
 Would like the two, but, forced to choose, takes that.  
 I pine among my million imbeciles  
 (You think) aware some dozen men of sense  
 Eye me and know me, whether I believe  
 In the last winking Virgin, as I vow,  
 And am a fool, or disbelieve in her  
 And am a knave,—approve in neither case,  
 Withhold their voices though I look their way :  
 Like Verdi when, at his worst opera's end  
 (The thing they gave at Florence—what's its name?)  
 While the mad houseful's plaudits near out-bang  
 His orchestra of salt-box, tongs and bones,  
 He looks through all the roaring and the wreaths  
 Where sits Rossini patient in his stall.

Nay, friend, I meet you with an answer here—  
 That even your prime men who appraise their kind  
 Are men still, catch a wheel within a wheel,  
 See more in a truth than the truth's simple self,  
 Confuse themselves. You see lads walk the street  
 Sixty the minute ; what's to note in that ?  
 You see one lad o'erstride a chimney-stack ;  
 Him you must watch—he's sure to fall, yet stands !  
 Our interest 's on the dangerous edge of things.  
 The honest thief, the tender murderer,  
 The superstitious atheist, demirep  
 That loves and saves her soul in new French books—  
 We watch while these in equilibrium keep  
 The giddy line midway : one step aside,  
 They're classed and done with. I, then, keep the line  
 Before your sages,—just the men to shrink  
 From the gross weights, coarse scales and labels broad  
 You offer their refinement. Fool or knave ?  
 Why needs a bishop be a fool or knave

When there's a thousand diamond weights between?  
 So, I enlist them. Your picked twelve, you'll find,  
 Profess themselves indignant, scandalized  
 At thus being held unable to explain  
 How a superior man who disbelieves  
 May not believe as well : that's Schelling's way !  
 It's through my coming in the tail of time,  
 Nicking the minute with a happy tact.  
 Had I been born three hundred years ago  
 They'd say, "What's strange? Blougram of course  
 believes ;"

And, seventy years since, "disbelieves of course."  
 But now, "He may believe ; and yet, and yet  
 "How can he?" All eyes turn with interest.  
 Whereas, step off the line on either side—  
 You, for example, clever to a fault,  
 The rough and ready man who write apace,  
 Read somewhat seldomer, think perhaps even less—  
 You disbelieve ! Who wonders and who cares?  
 Lord So-and so—his coat bedropped with wax,  
 All Peter's chains about his waist, his back  
 Brave with the needlework of Noodledom—  
 Believes ! Again, who wonders and who cares ?  
 But I, the man of sense and learning too,  
 The able to think yet act, the this, the that,  
 I, to believe at this late time of day !  
 Enough ; you see, I need not fear contempt.

—Except it's yours ! Admire me as these may,  
 You don't. But whom at least do you admire ?  
 Present your own perfection, your ideal,  
 Your pattern man for a minute—oh, make haste !  
 Is it Napoleon you would have us grow ?  
 Concede the means ; allow his head and hand,  
 (A large concession, clever as you are)  
 Good ! In our common primal element

Of unbelief (we can't believe, you know—  
 We 're still at that admission, recollect !)  
 Where do you find—apart from, towering o'er  
 The secondary temporary aims  
 Which satisfy the gross taste you despise—  
 Where do you find his star?—his crazy trust—  
 God knows through what or in what? it 's alive  
 And shines and leads him, and that 's all we want.  
 Have we aught in our sober night shall point  
 Such ends as his were, and direct the means  
 Of working out our purpose straight as his,  
 Nor bring a moment's trouble on success  
 With after-care to justify the same?  
 —Be a Napoleon and yet disbelieve—  
 Why, the man 's mad, friend, take his light away !  
 What 's the vague good o' the world, for which you  
     dare  
 With comfort to yourself blow millions up?  
 We neither of us see it ! we do see  
 The blown-up millions—spatter of their brains  
 And writhing of their bowels, and so forth,  
 In that bewildering entanglement  
 Of horrible eventualities  
 Past calculation to the end of time !  
 Can I mistake for some clear word of God  
 (Which were my ample warrant for it all)  
 His puff of hazy instinct, idle talk,  
 "The State, that 's I," quack-nonsense about crowns,  
 And (when one beats the man to his last hold)  
 A vague idea of setting things to rights,  
 Policing people efficaciously,  
 More to their profit, most of all to his own ;  
 The whole to end that dimmest of ends  
 By an Austrian marriage, cant to us the Church,  
 And resurrection of the old *régime* ?  
 Would I, who hope to live a dozen years,

Fight Austerlitz for reasons such and such ?  
 No : for, concede me but the merest chance  
 Doubt may be wrong—there 's judgment, life to come !  
 With just that chance, I dare not. Doubt proves right ?  
 This present life is all ?—you offer me  
 Its dozen noisy years, without a chance  
 That wedding an arch-duchess, wearing lace,  
 And getting called by divers new-coined names,  
 Will drive off ugly thoughts and let me dine,  
 Sleep, read and chat in quiet as I like !  
 Therefore I will not.

Take another case,  
 Fit up the cabin yet another way.  
 What say you to the poet's ? shall we write  
 Hamlet, Othello—make the world our own,  
 Without a risk to run of either sort ?  
 I can't !—to put the strongest reason first.  
 “ But try,” you urge, “ the trying shall suffice ;  
 “ The aim, if reached or not, makes great the life :  
 “ Try to be Shakespeare, leave the rest to fate !”  
 Spare my self-knowledge—there 's no fooling me !  
 If I prefer remaining my poor self,  
 I say so not in self-dispraise but praise,  
 If I 'm a Shakespeare, let the well alone !  
 Why should I try to be what now I am ?  
 If I 'm no Shakespeare, as too probable,—  
 His power and consciousness and self-delight  
 And all we want in common, shall I find—  
 Trying for ever ? while on points of taste  
 Wherewith, to speak it humbly, he and I  
 Are dowered alike—I 'll ask you, I or he,  
 Which in our two lives realizes most ?  
 Much, he imagined : somewhat, I possess.  
 He had the imagination ; stick to that !  
 Let him say, “ In the face of my soul's works



“ Your world is worthless and I touch it not  
“ Lest I should wrong them ”—I ’ll withdraw my plea  
But does he say so ? look upon his life !  
Himself, who only can, gives judgment there.  
He leaves his towers and gorgeous palaces  
To build the trimmest house in Stratford town ;  
Saves money, spends it, owns the worth of things,  
Giulio Romano’s pictures, Dowland’s lute ;  
Enjoys a show, respects the puppets, too,  
And none more, had he seen its entry once,  
Than “ Pandulph, of fair Milan cardinal.”  
Why then should I who play that personage,  
The very Pandulph Shakespeare’s fancy made,  
Be told that had the poet chanced to start  
From where I stand now (some degree like mine  
Being just the goal he ran his race to reach)  
He would have run the whole race back, forsooth,  
And left being Pandulph, to begin write plays ?  
Ah, the earth’s best can be but the earth’s best !  
Did Shakespeare live, he could but sit at home  
And get himself in dreams the Vatican,  
Greek busts, Venetian paintings, Roman walls,  
And English books, none equal to his own,  
Which I read, bound in gold, (he never did).  
—Terni’s fall, Naples’ bay and Gothard’s top—  
Eh, friend ? I could not fancy one of these ;  
But, as I pour this claret, there they are :  
I ’ve gained them—crossed St. Gothard last July  
With ten mules to the carriage and a bed  
Slung inside ; is my hap the worse for that ?  
We want the same things, Shakespeare and myself,  
And what I want, I have : he, gifted more,  
Could fancy he too had it when he liked,  
But not so thoroughly that, if fate allowed,  
He would not have it also in my sense.  
We play one game ; I send the ball aloft

No less adroitly that of fifty strokes  
 Scarce five go o'er the wall so wide and high  
 Which sends them back to me : I wish and get.  
 He struck balls higher and with better skill,  
 But at a poor fence level with his head.  
 And hit—his Stratford house, a coat of arms,  
 Successful dealings in his grain and wool :  
 While I receive heaven's incense in my nose  
 And style myself the cousin of Queen Bess.  
 Ask him, if this life 's all, who wins the game ?

Believe—and our whole argument breaks up.  
 Enthusiasm 's the best thing, I repeat ;  
 Only, we can't command it ; fire and life  
 Are all, dead matter 's nothing, we agree :  
 And be it a mad dream or God's very breath,  
 The fact 's the same,—belief's fire, once in us,  
 Makes of all else mere stuff to show itself :  
 We penetrate our life with such a glow  
 As fire lends wood and iron—this turns steel,  
 That burns to ash—all 's one, fire proves its power  
 For good or ill, since men call flare success.  
 But paint a fire, it will not therefore burn.  
 Light one in me, I 'll find it food enough !  
 Why, to be Luther—that 's a life to lead,  
 Incomparably better than my own.  
 He comes, reclaims God's earth for God, he says.  
 Sets up God's rule again by simple means,  
 Re-opens a shut book, and all is done.  
 He flared out in the flaring of mankind ;  
 Such Luther's luck was : how shall such be mine ?  
 If he succeeded, nothing 's left to do :  
 And if he did not altogether—well,  
 Strauss is the next advance. All Strauss should be  
 I might be also. But to what result ?  
 He looks upon no future : Luther did.

What can I gain on the denying side ?  
 Ice makes no conflagration. State the facts,  
 Read the text right, emancipate the world—  
 The emancipated world enjoys itself  
 With scarce a thank-you : Blougram told it first  
 It could not owe a farthing,—not to him  
 More than Saint Paul ! 't would press its pay, you  
 think ?

Then add there 's still that plaguy hundredth chance  
 Strauss may be wrong. And so a risk is run—  
 For what gain ? not for Luther's, who secured  
 A real heaven in his heart throughout his life,  
 Supposing death a little altered things.

“ Ay, but since really you lack faith,” you cry,  
 “ You run the same risk really on all sides,  
 “ In cool indifference as bold unbelief.  
 “ As well be Strauss as swing 'twixt Paul and him.  
 “ It 's not worth having, such imperfect faith,  
 “ No more available to do faith's work  
 “ Than unbelief like mine. Whole faith, or none !”

Softly, my friend ! I must dispute that point.  
 Once own the use of faith, I 'll find you faith.  
 We 're back on Christian ground. You call for faith :  
 I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists.  
 The more of doubt, the stronger faith, I say,  
 If faith o'ercomes doubt. How I know it does ?  
 By life and man's free will, God gave for that !  
 To mould life as we choose it, shows our choice :  
 That 's our one act, the previous work 's His own.  
 You criticize the soil ? it reared this tree—  
 This broad life and whatever fruit it bears !  
 What matter though I doubt at every pore,  
 Head-doubts, heart-doubts, doubts at my fingers' ends,  
 Doubts in the trivial work of every day,  
 Doubts at the very bases of my soul

In the grand moments when she probes herself--  
 If finally I have a life to show,  
 The thing I did, brought out in evidence  
 Against the thing done to me underground  
 By hell and all its brood, for aught I know ?  
 I say, whence sprang this ? shows it faith or doubt ?  
 All 's doubt in me ; where 's break of faith in this ?  
 It is the idea, the feeling and the love,  
 God means mankind should strive for and show forth  
 Whatever be the process to that end,—  
 And not historic knowledge, logic sound,  
 And metaphysical acumen, sure !  
 “ What think ye of Christ,” friend ? when all 's done  
     and said,  
 Like you this Christianity or not ?  
 It may be false, but will you wish it true ?  
 Has it your vote to be so if it can ?  
 Trust you an instinct silenced long ago  
 That will break silence and enjoin you love  
 What mortified philosophy is hoarse,  
 And all in vain, with bidding you despise ?  
 If you desire faith—then you 've faith enough :  
 What else seeks God—nay, what else seek ourselves ?  
 You form a notion of me, we 'll suppose,  
 On hearsay ; it 's a favourable one :  
 “ But still,” (you add) “ there was no such good man,  
 “ Because of contradiction in the facts.  
 “ One proves, for instance, he was born in Rome,  
 “ This Blougram ; yet throughout the tales of him  
 “ I see he figures as an Englishman.”  
 Well, the two things are reconcilable.  
 But would I rather you discovered that,  
 Subjoining—“ Still, what matter though they be ?  
 “ Blougram concerns me nought, born here or there.”

Pure faith, indeed ? you know not what you ask !

Naked belief in God the Omnipotent,  
 Omniscient, Omnipresent, sears too much  
 The sense of conscious creatures to be borne.  
 It were the seeing Him, no flesh shall dare.  
 Some think, Creation 's meant to show Him forth :  
 I say it 's meant to hide Him all it can,  
 And that 's what all the blessed evil 's for.  
 Its use in Time is to environ us,  
 Our breath, our drop of dew, with shield enough  
 Against that sight till we can bear its stress.  
 Under a vertical sun, the exposed brain  
 And lidless eye and disemprisoned heart  
 Less certainly would wither up at once  
 Than mind, confronted with the truth of Him.  
 But time and earth case-harden us to live ;  
 The feeblest sense is trusted most ; the child  
 Feels God a moment, ichors o'er the place,  
 Plays on and grows to be a man like us.  
 With me, faith means perpetual unbelief  
 Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot  
 Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe.  
 Or, if that 's too ambitious,—here 's my box—  
 I need the excitation of a pinch  
 Threatening the torpor of the inside-nose  
 Nigh on the imminent sneeze that never comes.  
 " Leave it in peace ! " advise the simple folk :  
 Make it aware of peace by itching-fits,  
 Say I—let doubt occasion still more faith !

You 'll say, once all believed, man, woman, child,  
 In that dear middle-age these noodles praise.  
 How you 'd exult if I could put you back  
 Six hundred years, blot out cosmogony,  
 Geology, ethnology, what not,  
 (Greek endings, each the little passing-bell  
 That signifies some faith 's about to die)

And set you square with Genesis again !  
 When such a traveller told you his last news,  
 He saw the ark a-top of Ararat  
 But did not climb there since 't was getting dusk  
 And robber-bands infest the mountain's foot !  
 How should you feel, I ask, in such an age,  
 How act? As other people felt and did ;  
 With soul more blank than this decanter's knob,  
 Believe—and yet lie, kill, rob, fornicate  
 Full in belief's face, like the beast you 'd be !

No, when the fight begins within himself,  
 A man 's worth something. God stoops o'er his head,  
 Satan looks up between his feet—both tug—  
 He 's left, himself, i' the middle : the soul wakes  
 And grows. Prolong that battle through his life !  
 Never leave growing till the life to come !  
 Here we 've got callous to the Virgin's winks  
 That used to puzzle people wholesomely :  
 Men have outgrown the shame of being fools.  
 What are the laws of nature, not to bend  
 If the Church bid them?—brother Newman asks.  
 Up with the Immaculate Conception, then—  
 On to the rack with faith !—is my advice.  
 Will not that hurry us upon our knees,  
 Knocking our breasts, “ It can't be—yet it shall !  
 “ Who am I, the worm, to argue with my Pope ?  
 “ Low things confound the high things ! ” and so forth.  
 That 's better than acquitting God with grace,  
 As some folks do. He 's tried—no case is proved,  
 Philosophy is lenient—He may go !

You 'll say, the old system 's not so obsolete  
 But men believe still : ay, but who and where ?  
 King Bomba's lazzaroni foster yet  
 The sacred flame, so Antonelli writes ;  
 But even of these, what ragamuffin-saint

Believes God watches him continually,  
 As he believes in fire that it will burn,  
 Or rain that it will drench him? Break fire's law,  
 Sin against rain, although the penalty  
 Be just a singe or soaking? "No," he smiles;  
 "Those laws are laws that can enforce themselves."

The sum of all is—yes, my doubt is great,  
 My faith 's still greater, then my faith 's enough.  
 I have read much, thought much, experienced much,  
 Yet would die rather than avow my fear  
 The Naples' liquefaction may be false,  
 When set to happen by the palace-clock  
 According to the clouds or dinner-time.  
 I hear you recommend, I might at least  
 Eliminate, degrassify my faith  
 Since I adopt it; keeping what I must  
 And leaving what I can—such points as this.  
 I won't—that is, I can't throw one away.  
 Supposing there 's no truth in what I hold  
 About the need of trial<sup>1</sup> to man's faith,  
 Still, when you bid me purify the same,  
 To such a process I discern no end.  
 Clearing off one excrescence to see two,  
 There 's ever a next in size, now grown as big,  
 That meets the knife: I cut and cut again!  
 First cut the Liquefaction, what comes last  
 But Fichte's clever cut at God himself?  
 Experimentalize on sacred things!  
 I trust nor hand nor eye nor heart nor brain  
 To stop betimes: they all get drunk alike.  
 The first step, I am master not to take.

You 'd find the cutting-process to your taste  
 As much as leaving growths of lies unpruned,  
 Nor see more danger in it,—you retort.  
 Your taste 's worth mine; but my taste proves more wise

When we consider that the steadfast hold  
 On the extreme end of the chain of faith  
 Gives all the advantage, makes the difference  
 With the rough purblind mass we seek to rule :  
 We are their lords, or they are free of us,  
 Just as we tighten or relax our hold.  
 So, other matters equal, we 'll revert  
 To the first problem—which, if solved my way  
 And thrown into the balance, turns the scale—  
 How we may lead a comfortable life,  
 How suit our luggage to the cabin's size

Of course you are remarking all this time  
 How narrowly and grossly I view life,  
 Respect the creature-comforts, care to rule  
 The masses, and regard complacently  
 "The cabin," in our old phrase. Well, I do.  
 I act for, talk for, live for this world now,  
 As this world prizes action, life and talk :  
 No prejudice to what next world may prove,  
 Whose new laws and requirements, my best pledge  
 To observe then, is that I observe these now,  
 Shall do hereafter what I do meanwhile.  
 Let us concede (gratuitously though)  
 Next life relieves the soul of body, yields  
 Pure spiritual enjoyment : well, my friend,  
 Why lose this life i' the meantime, since its use  
 May be to make the next life more intense ?

Do you know, I have often had a dream  
 (Work it up in your next month's article)  
 Of man's poor spirit in its progress, still  
 Losing true life for ever and a day  
 Through ever trying to be and ever being—  
 In the evolution of successive spheres—  
*Before* its actual sphere and place of life,  
 Halfway into the next, which having reached,



It shoots with corresponding foolery  
 Halfway into the next still, on and off!  
 As when a traveller, bound from North to South,  
 Scouts fur in Russia; what 's its use in France?  
 In France spurns flannel; where 's its need in Spain?  
 In Spain drops cloth, too cumbrous for Algiers!  
 Linen goes next, and last the skin itself,  
 A superfluity at Timbuctoo.  
 When, through his journey, was the fool at ease?  
 I 'm at ease now, friend; worldly in this world,  
 I take and like its way of life; I think  
 My brothers, who administer the means,  
 Live better for my comfort—that 's good too;  
 And God, if He pronounce upon such life,  
 Approves my service, which is better still.  
 If He keep silence,—why, for you or me  
 Or that brute-beast pulled-up in to-day's "Times,"  
 What odds is 't, save to ourselves, what life we lead?

You meet me at this issue: you declare,—  
 All special-pleading done with, truth is truth,  
 And justifies itself by undreamed ways.  
 You don't fear but it 's better, if we doubt,  
 To say so, act up to our truth perceived  
 However feebly. Do then,—act away!  
 'T is there I 'm on the watch for you. How one acts  
 Is, both of us agree, our chief concern:  
 And how you 'll act is what I fain would see  
 If, like the candid person you appear,  
 You dare to make the most of your life's scheme  
 As I of mine, live up to its full law  
 Since there 's no higher law that counterchecks.  
 Put natural religion to the test  
 You 've just demolished the revealed with—quick,  
 Down to the root of all that checks your will,  
 All prohibition to lie, kill and thief

Or even to be an atheistic priest !  
 Suppose a pricking to incontinence—  
 Philosophers deduce you chastity  
 Or shame, from just the fact that at the first  
 Whoso embraced a woman in the field  
 Threw club down and forewent his brains beside,  
 So, stood a ready victim in the reach  
 Of any brother-savage, club in hand ;  
 Hence saw the use of going out of sight  
 In wood or cave to prosecute his loves :  
 I read this in a French book t' other day.  
 Does law so analysed coerce you much ?  
 Oh, men spin clouds of fuzz where matters end,  
 But you who reach where the first thread begins,  
 You'll soon cut that !—which means you can, but won't  
 Through certain instincts, blind, unreasoned-out,  
 You dare not set aside, you can't tell why,  
 But there they are, and so you let them rule.  
 Then, friend, you seem as much a slave as I,  
 A liar, conscious coward and hypocrite,  
 Without the good the slave expects to get,  
 In case he has a master after all !  
 You own your instincts ? why, what else do I,  
 Who want, am made for, and must have a God  
 Ere I can be aught, do aught ?—no mere name  
 Want, but the true thing with what proves its truth,  
 To wit, a relation from that thing to me,  
 Touching from head to foot—which touch I feel,  
 And with it take the rest, this life of ours !  
 I live my life here ; yours you dare not live.

—Not as I state it, who (you please subjoin)  
 Disfigure such a life and call it names,  
 While, to your mind, remains another way  
 For simple men : knowledge and power have rights,  
 But ignorance and weakness have rights too.

There needs no crucial effort to find truth  
If here or there or anywhere about :  
We ought to turn each side, try hard and see,  
And if we can't, be glad we 've earned at least  
The right, by one laborious proof the more,  
To graze in peace earth's pleasant pasturage.  
Men are not angels, neither are they brutes :  
Something we may see, all we cannot see.  
What need of lying? I say, I see all,  
And swear to each detail the most minute  
In what I think a Pan's face—you, mere cloud :  
I swear I hear him speak and see him wink,  
For fear, if once I drop the emphasis,  
Mankind may doubt there 's any cloud at all.  
You take the simple life—ready to see,  
Willing to see (for no cloud 's worth a face)—  
And leaving quiet what no strength can move,  
And which, who bids you move? who has the right?  
I bid you ; but you are God's sheep, not mine :  
“ *Pastor est tui Dominus.*” You find  
In this the pleasant pasture of our life  
Much you may eat without the least offence,  
Much you don't eat because your maw objects,  
Much you would eat but that your fellow-flock  
Open great eyes at you and even butt,  
And thereupon you like your mates so well  
You cannot please yourself, offending them ;  
Though when they seem exorbitantly sheep,  
You weigh your pleasure with their butts and bleats  
And strike the balance. Sometimes certain fears  
Restrain you, real checks since you find them so ;  
Sometimes you please yourself and nothing checks :  
And thus you graze through life with not one lie,  
And like it best.

But do you, in truth's name ?

If so, you beat—which means you are not I—  
 Who needs must make earth mine and feed my fill  
 Not simply unbutted at, unbickered with,  
 But motioned to the velvet of the sward  
 By those obsequious wethers' very selves.  
 Look at me, sir ; my age is double yours :  
 At yours, I knew beforehand, so enjoyed,  
 What now I should be—as, permit the word,  
 I pretty well imagine your whole range  
 And stretch of tether twenty years to come.  
 We have both minds and bodies much alike :  
 In truth's name, don't you want my bishopric,  
 My daily bread, my influence and my state ?  
 You 're young, I 'm old, you must be old one day ;  
 Will you find then, as I do hour by hour,  
 Women their lovers kneel to, who cut curls  
 From your fat lap-dog's ear to grace a brooch—  
 Dukes, who petition just to kiss your ring—  
 With much beside you know or may conceive ?  
 Suppose we die to-night : well, here am I,  
 Such were my gains, life bore this fruit to me,  
 While writing all the same my articles  
 On music, poetry, the fictile vase  
 Found at Albano, chess, Anacreon's Greek.  
 But you—the highest honour in your life,  
 The thing you 'll crown yourself with, all your days,  
 Is—dining here and drinking this last glass  
 I pour you out in sign of amity  
 Before we part for ever. Of your power  
 And social influence, worldly worth in short,  
 Judge what 's my estimation by the fact—  
 I do not condescend to enjoin, beseech,  
 Hint secrecy on one of all these words !  
 You 're shrewd and know that should you publish one  
 The world would brand the lie—my enemies first,  
 Who 'd sneer—“ the bishop 's an arch-hypocrite

" And knave perhaps, but not so frank a fool."
   
Whereas I should not dare for both my ears
   
Breathe one such syllable, smile one such smile,
   
Before the chaplain who reflects myself—
   
My shade 's so much more potent than your flesh.
   
What 's your reward, self-abnegating friend ?
   
Stood you confessed of those exceptional
   
And privileged great natures that dwarf mine—
   
A zealot with a mad ideal in reach,
   
A poet just about to print his ode,
   
A statesman with a scheme to stop this war,
   
An artist whose religion is his art—
   
I should have nothing to object : such men
   
Carry the fire, all things grow warm to them,
   
Their drugget 's worth my purple, they beat me.
   
But you,—you 're just as little those as I—
   
You, Gigadibs, who, thirty years of age,
   
Write stately for Blackwood's Magazine,
   
Believe you see two points in Hamlet's soul
   
Unseized by the Germans yet—which view you 'll
   
print—

Meantime the best you have to show being still
   
That lively lightsome article we took
   
Almost for the true Dickens,—what 's its name ?
   
" The Slum and Cellar, or Whitechapel life
   
" Limned after dark !" it made me laugh, I know,
   
And pleased a month, and brought you in ten pounds.
   
—Success I recognize and compliment,
   
And therefore give you, if you choose, three words
   
(The card and pencil-scratch is quite enough)
   
Which whether here, in Dublin or New York,
   
Will get you, prompt as at my eyebrow's wink,
   
Such terms as never you aspired to get
   
In all our own reviews and some not ours.
   
Go write your lively sketches ! be the first
   
" Blougram, or The Eccentric Confidence"—

Or better simply say, "The Outward-bound."  
 Why, men as soon would throw it in my teeth  
 As copy and quote the infamy chalked broad  
 About me on the church-door opposite.  
 You will not wait for that experience though,  
 I fancy, howsoever you decide,  
 To discontinue—not detesting, not  
 Defaming, but at least—despising me !

---

Over his wine so smiled and talked his hour  
 Sylvester Blougram, styled *in partibus*  
*Episcopus, nec non*—(the deuce knows what  
 It's changed to by our novel hierarchy)  
 With Gigadibs the literary man,  
 Who played with spoons, explored his plate's design,  
 And ranged the olive-stones about its edge,  
 While the great bishop rolled him out a mind  
 Long rumped, till creased consciousness lay smooth.

For Blougram, he believed, say, half he spoke.  
 The other portion, as he shaped it thus  
 For argumentary purposes,  
 He felt his foe was foolish to dispute.  
 Some arbitrary accidental thoughts  
 That crossed his mind, amusing because new,  
 He chose to represent as fixtures there,  
 Invariable convictions (such they seemed  
 Beside his interlocutor's loose cards  
 Flung daily down, and not the same way twice)  
 While certain hell-deep instincts, man's weak tongue  
 Is never bold to utter in their truth  
 Because styled hell-deep ('t is an old mistake  
 To place hell at the bottom of the earth)  
 He ignored these,—not having in readiness  
 Their nomenclature and philosophy

He said true things, but called them by wrong names.  
 "On the whole," he thought, "I justify myself  
 "On every point where cavillers like this  
 "Oppugn my life: he tries one kind of fence,  
 "I close, he 's worsted, that 's enough for him.  
 "He 's on the ground: if ground should break away  
 "I take my stand on, there 's a firmer yet  
 "Beneath it, both of us may sink and reach.  
 "His ground was over mine and broke the first:  
 "So, let him sit with me this many a year!"

He did not sit five minutes. Just a week  
 Sufficed his sudden healthy vehemence.  
 Something had struck him in the "Outward-bound"  
 Another way than Blougram's purpose was:  
 And having bought, not cabin-furniture  
 But settler's-implements (enough for three)  
 And started for Australia—there, I hope,  
 By this time he has tested his first plough,  
 And studied his last chapter of St. John.



*MR. SLUDGE, "THE MEDIUM."*

Now, don't, sir! Don't expose me! Just this once!  
 This was the first and only time, I'll swear,—  
 Look at me,—see, I kneel,—the only time,  
 I swear, I ever cheated,—yes, by the soul  
 Of Her who hears—(your sainted mother, sir!)  
 All, except this last accident, was truth—  
 This little kind of slip!—and even this,  
 It was your own wine, sir, the good champagne,  
 (I took it for Catawba, you're so kind)  
 Which put the folly in my head!

"Get up?"

You still inflict on me that terrible face?

You show no mercy?—Not for Her dear sake,  
 The sainted spirit's, whose soft breath even now  
 Blows on my cheek—(don't you feel something, sir?)  
 You 'll tell?

Go tell, then! Who the devil cares  
 What such a rowdy chooses to . . .

Aie—aie—aie!

Please, sir! your thumbs are through my windpipe, sir!  
 Ch—ch!

Well, sir, I hope you 've done it now!  
 Oh Lord! I little thought, sir, yesterday,  
 When your departed mother spoke those words  
 Of peace through me, and moved you, sir, so much,  
 You gave me—(very kind it was of you)  
 These shirt-studs—(better take them back again,  
 Please, sir)—yes, little did I think so soon  
 A trifle of trick, all through a glass too much  
 Of his own champagne, would change my best of friends  
 Into an angry gentleman!

Though, 't was wrong.  
 I don't contest the point; your anger 's just:  
 Whatever put such folly in my head,  
 I know 't was wicked of me. There 's a thick  
 Dusk undeveloped spirit (I 've observed)  
 Owes me a grudge—a negro's, I should say,  
 Or else an Irish emigrant's; yourself  
 Explained the case so well last Sunday, sir,  
 When we had summoned Franklin to clear up  
 A point about those shares i' the telegraph:  
 Ay, and he swore . . . or might it be Tom Paine? . . .  
 Thumping the table close by where I crouched,  
 He 'd do me soon a mischief: that 's come true!  
 Why, now your face clears! I was sure it would!  
 Then, this one time . . . don't take your hand away,  
 Through yours I surely kiss your mother's hand . . .



You 'll promise to forgive me?—or, at least,  
 Tell nobody of this? Consider, sir!  
 What harm can mercy do? Would but the shade  
 Of the venerable dead—one just vouchsafe  
 A rap or tip! What bit of paper 's here?  
 Suppose we take a pencil, let her write,  
 Make the least sign, she urges on her child  
 Forgiveness? There now! Eh? Oh! 'T was your  
     foot,  
 And not a natural creak, sir?

Answer, then!

Once, twice, thrice . . . see, I 'm waiting to say "thrice!"  
 All to no use? No sort of hope for me?  
 It 's all to post to Greeley's newspaper?

What? If I told you all about the tricks?  
 Upon my soul!—the whole truth, and nought else,  
 And how there 's been some falsehood—for your part,  
 Will you engage to pay my passage out,  
 And hold your tongue until I 'm safe on board?  
 England 's the place, not Boston—no offence!  
 I see what makes you hesitate: don't fear!  
 I mean to change my trade and cheat no more,  
 Yes, this time really it 's upon my soul!  
 Be my salvation!—under Heaven, of course.  
 I 'll tell some queer things. Sixty Vs must do.  
 A trifle, though, to start with! We 'll refer  
 The question to this table?

How you 're changed!

Then split the difference; thirty more, we 'll say.  
 Ay, but you leave my presents! Else I 'll swear  
 'T was all through those: you wanted yours again,  
 So, picked a quarrel with me, to get them back!  
 Tread on a worm, it turns, sir! If I turn,  
 Your fault! 'T is you 'll have forced me! Who 's obliged

To give up life yet try no self-defence?  
At all events, I 'll run the risk. Eh?

Done!

May I sit, sir? This dear old table, now!  
Please, sir, a parting egg-nogg and cigar!  
I 've been so happy with you! Nice stuffed chairs,  
And sympathetic sideboards; what an end  
To all the instructive evenings! (It 's alright.)  
Well, nothing lasts, as Bacon came and said.  
Here goes,—but keep your temper, or I 'll scream!

Fol-lol-the-rido-liddle-iddle-ol!

You see, sir, it 's your own fault more than mine;  
It 's all your fault, you curious gentlefolk!  
You 're prigs,—excuse me,—like to look so spry  
So clever, while you cling by half a claw  
To the perch whereon you puff yourselves at roost,  
Such piece of self-conceit as serves for perch  
Because you chose it, so it must be safe.  
Oh, otherwise you 're sharp enough! You spy  
Who slips, who slides, who holds by help of wing,  
Wanting real foothold,—who can't keep upright  
On the other perch, your neighbour chose, not you:  
There 's no outwitting you respecting him!  
For instance, men love money—that, you know—  
And what men do to gain it: well, suppose  
A poor lad, say a help's son in your house,  
Listening at keyholes, hears the company  
Talk grand of dollars, V-notes, and so forth,  
How hard they are to get, how good to hold,  
How much they buy,—if, suddenly, in pops he—  
"I 've got a V-note!"—what do you say to him?  
What 's your first word which follows your last kick?  
"Where did you steal it, rascal?" That 's because  
He finds you, fain would fool you, off your perch,  
Not on the special piece of nonsense, sir,

Elected your parade-ground : let him try  
 Lies to the end of the list,—“ He picked it up,  
 “ His cousin died and left it him by will,  
 “ The President flung it to him, riding by,  
 “ An actress trucked it for a curl of his hair,  
 “ He dreamed of luck and found his shoe enriched,  
 “ He dug up clay, and out of clay made gold ”—  
 How would you treat such possibilities ?  
 Would not you, prompt, investigate the case  
 With cow-hide ? “ Lies, lies, lies,” you ’d shout : and  
 why ?

Which of the stories might not prove mere truth ?  
 This last, perhaps, that clay was turned to coin !  
 Let ’s see, now, give him me to speak for him !  
 How many of your rare philosophers,  
 In plaguy books I ’ve had to dip into,  
 Believed gold could be made thus, saw it made  
 And made it ? Oh, with such philosophers  
 You ’re on your best behaviour ! While the lad—  
 With him, in a trice, you settle likelihoods,  
 Nor doubt a moment how he got his prize :  
 In his case, you hear, judge and execute,  
 All in a breath : so would most men of sense.

But let the same lad hear you talk as grand  
 At the same keyhole, you and company,  
 Of signs and wonders, the invisible world ;  
 How wisdom scouts our vulgar unbelief  
 More than our vulgarest credulity ;  
 How good men have desired to see a ghost,  
 What Johnson used to say, what Wesley did,  
 Mother Goose thought, and fiddle-diddle-dee :—  
 If he then break in with, “ Sir, I saw a ghost ! ”  
 Ah, the ways change ! He finds you perched and prim ;  
 It ’s a conceit of yours that ghosts may be :  
 There ’s no talk now of cow-hide. “ Tell it out !

" Don't fear us ! Take your time and recollect !  
 " Sit down first ; try a glass of wine, my boy !  
 " And, David, (is not that your Christian name ?)  
 " Of all things, should this happen twice—it may—  
 " Be sure, while fresh in mind, you let us know !"  
 Does the boy blunder, blurt out this, blab that,  
 Break down in the other, as beginners will ?  
 All 's candour, all 's considerateness—" No haste !  
 " Pause and collect yourself ! We understand !  
 " That 's the bad memory, or the natural shock,  
 " Or the unexplained *phenomena* !"

Egad,

The boy takes heart of grace ; finds, never fear,  
 The readiest way to ope your own heart wide,  
 Show—what I call your peacock-perch, pet post  
 To strut, and spread the tail, and squawk upon !  
 " Just as you thought, much as you might expect !  
 " There be more things in heaven and earth, Horatio," . .  
 And so on. Shall not David take the hint,  
 Grow bolder, stroke you down at quickened rate ?  
 If he ruffle a feather, it 's " Gently, patiently !  
 " Manifestations are so weak at first !  
 " Doubting, moreover, kills them, cuts all short,  
 " Cures with a vengeance !"

There, sir, that 's your style !

You and your boy—such pains bestowed on him,  
 Or any headpiece of the average worth,  
 To teach, say, Greek, would perfect him apace,  
 Make him a Person (" Porson ?" thank you, sir !)  
 Much more, proficient in the art of lies.  
 You never leave the lesson ! Fire alight,  
 Catch you permitting it to die ! You 've friends ;  
 There 's no withholding knowledge,—least from those  
 Apt to look elsewhere for their souls' supply :  
 Why should not you parade your lawful prize ?

Who finds a picture, digs a medal up,  
 Hits on a first edition,—he henceforth  
 Gives it his name, grows notable : how much more  
 Who ferrets out a "medium?" "David's yours,  
 "You highly-favoured man? Then, pity souls  
 "Less privileged! Allow us share your luck!"  
 So, David holds the circle, rules the roast,  
 Narrates the vision, peeps in the glass ball,  
 Sets-to the spirit-writing, hears the raps,  
 As the case may be.

Now mark! To be precise—

Though I say, "lies" all these, at this first stage,  
 'T is just for science' sake : I call such grubs  
 By the name of what they 'll turn to, dragonflies.  
 Strictly, it's what good people style untruth ;  
 But yet, so far, not quite the full-grown thing :  
 It's fancying, fable-making, nonsense-work—  
 What never meant to be so very bad—  
 The knack of story-telling, brightening up  
 Each dull old bit of fact that drops its shine.  
 One does see somewhat when one shuts one's eyes,  
 If only spots and streaks ; tables do tip  
 In the oddest way of themselves : and pens, good Lord,  
 Who knows if you drive them or they drive you ?  
 'T is but a foot in the water and out again ;  
 Not that duck-under which decides your dive.  
 Note this, for it's important : listen why.

I'll prove, you push on David till he dives  
 And ends the shivering. Here's your circle, now :  
 Two-thirds of them, with heads like you their host,  
 Turn up their eyes, and cry, as you expect,  
 "Lord, who'd have thought it!" But there's always one  
 Looks wise, compassionately smiles, submits  
 "Of your veracity no kind of doubt,  
 "But—do you feel so certain of that boy's ?

" Really, I wonder ! I confess myself  
 " More chary of my faith ! " That 's galling, sir !  
 What, he the investigator, he the sage,  
 When all 's done ? Then, you just have shut your eyes,  
 Opened your mouth, and gulped down David whole,  
 You ! Terrible were such catastrophe !  
 So, evidence is redoubled, doubled again,  
 And doubled besides ; once more, " He heard, we heard,  
 " You and they heard, your mother and your wife,  
 " Your children and the stranger in your gates :  
 " Did they or did they not ? " So much for him,  
 The black sheep, guest without the wedding-garb,  
 And doubting Thomas ! Now 's your turn to crow :  
 " He 's kind to think you such a fool : Sludge cheats ?  
 " Leave you alone to take precautions ! "

Straight

The rest join chorus. Thomas stands abashed,  
 Sips silent some such beverage as this,  
 Considers if it be harder, shutting eyes  
 And gulping David in good fellowship,  
 Than going elsewhere, getting, in exchange,  
 With no egg-nogg to lubricate the food,  
 Some just as tough a morsel. Over the way,  
 Holds Captain Sparks his court : is it better there ?  
 Have not you hunting-stories, scalping-scenes,  
 And Mexican War exploits to swallow plump  
 If you 'd be free o' the stove-side, rocking-chair,  
 And trio of affable daughters ?

Doubt succumbs !

Victory ! All your circle 's yours again !  
 Out of the clubbing of submissive wits,  
 David's performance rounds, each chink gets patched,  
 Every protrusion of a point 's filed fine,  
 All 's fit to set a-rolling round the world,  
 And then return to David finally,

Lies seven-feet thick about his first half-inch.  
Here 's a choice birth o' the supernatural,  
Poor David 's pledged to ! You 've employed no tool  
That laws exclaim at, save the devil's own,  
Yet screwed him into henceforth gulling you  
To the top o' your bent,—all out of one half-lie !

You hold, if there 's one half or a hundredth part  
Of a lie, that 's his fault,—his be the penalty !  
I dare say ! You 'd prove firmer in his place ?  
You 'd find the courage,—that first flurry over,  
That mild bit of romancing-work at end,—  
To interpose with " It gets serious, this ;  
" Must stop here. Sir, I saw no ghost at all.  
" Inform your friends I made . . well, fools of them,  
" And found you ready made. I 've lived in clover  
" These three weeks : take it out in kicks of me !"  
I doubt it. Ask your conscience ! Let me know,  
Twelve months hence, with how few embellishments  
You 've told almighty Boston of this passage  
Of arms between us, your first taste o' the foil  
From Sludge who could not fence, sir ! Sludge, your boy !  
I lied, sir,—there ! I got up from my gorge  
On offal in the gutter, and preferred  
Your canvass-backs : I took their carver's size,  
Measured his modicum of intelligence,  
Tickled him on the cockles of his heart  
With a raven feather, and next week found myself  
Sweet and clean, dining daintily, dized smart,  
Set on a stool buttressed by ladies' knees,  
Every soft smiler calling me her pet,  
Encouraging my story to uncoil  
And creep out from its hole, inch after inch,  
" How last night, I no sooner snug in bed,  
" Tucked up, just as they left me,—than came raps !

"While a light whisked" . . . "Shaped somewhat like a star?"

"Well, like some sort of stars, ma'am,"—"So we thought!

"And any voice? Not yet? Try hard, next time,

"If you can't hear a voice; we think you may;

"At least, the Pennsylvanian 'mediums' did."

Oh, next time comes the voice! "Just as we hoped!"

Are not the hoppers proud now, pleased, profuse

O' the natural acknowledgment?

Of course!

So, off we push, illy-oh-yo, trim the boat,

On we sweep with a cataract ahead,

We're midway to the Horse-shoe: stop, who can,

The dance of bubbles gay about our prow!

Experiences become worth waiting for,

Spirits now speak up, tell their inmost mind,

And compliment the "medium" properly,

Concern themselves about his Sunday coat,

See rings on his hand with pleasure. Ask yourself

How you'd receive a course of treats like these!

Why, take the quietest hack and stall him up,

Cran him with corn a month, then out with him

Among his mates on a bright April morn,

With the turf to tread; see if you find or no

A caper in him, if he bucks or bolts!

Much more a youth whose fancies sprout as rank

As toadstool-clump from melon-bed. 'T is soon,

"Sirrah, you spirit, come, go, fetch and carry,

"Read, write, rap, rub-a-dub, and hang yourself!"

I'm spared all further trouble; all's arranged;

Your circle does my business; I may rave

Like an epileptic dervish in the books,

Foam, fling myself flat, rend my clothes to shreds;

No matter: lovers, friends and countrymen

Will lay down spiritual laws, read wrong things right



By the rule o' reverse. If Francis Verulam  
 Styles himself Bacon, spells the name beside  
 With a *y* and a *k*, says he drew breath in York,  
 Gave up the ghost in Wales when Cromwell reigned,  
 (As, sir, we somewhat fear he was apt to say,  
 Before I found the useful book that knows)  
 Why, what harm 's done? The circle smiles apace,  
 "It was not Bacon, after all, do you see!  
 "We understand: the trick 's but natural:  
 "Such spirits' individuality  
 "Is hard to put in evidence: they incline  
 "To gibe and jeer, these undeveloped sorts.  
 "You see, their world 's much like a jail broke loose,  
 "While this of ours remains shut, bolted, barred,  
 "With a single window to it. Sludge, our friend,  
 "Serves as this window, whether thin or thick,  
 "Or stained or stainless; he 's the medium-pane  
 "Through which, to see us and be seen, they peep:  
 "They crowd each other, hustle for a chance,  
 "Tread on their neighbour's kibes, play tricks enough!  
 "Does Bacon, tired of waiting, swerve aside?  
 "Up in his place jumps Barnum—'I 'm your man,  
 "'I 'll answer you for Bacon!' Try once more!"

Or else it 's—"What 's a 'medium?'" He 's a means,  
 "Good, bad, indifferent, still the only means  
 "Spirits can speak by; he may misconceive,  
 "Stutter and stammer,—he 's their Sludge and drudge,  
 "Take him or leave him; they must hold their peace,  
 "Or else, put up with having knowledge strained  
 "To half-expression through his ignorance.  
 "Suppose, the spirit Beethoven wants to shed  
 "New music he 's brimful of; why, he turns  
 "The handle of this organ, grinds with Sludge,  
 "And what he poured in at the mouth o' the mill  
 "As a Thirty-third Sonata, (fancy now!)

" Comes from the hopper as brand-new Sludge, nought  
else,

" The Shakers' Hymn in G, with a natural F,

" Or the ' Stars and Stripes ' set to consecutive fourths."

Sir, where 's the scrape you did not help me through,  
You that are wise? And for the fools, the folk  
Who came to see,—the guests, (observe that word !)  
Pray do you find guests criticize your wine,  
Your furniture, your grammar, or your nose?  
Then, why your " medium?" What 's the difference?  
Prove your madeira red-ink and gamboge,—  
Your Sludge, a cheat—then somebody 's a goose  
For vaunting both as genuine. " Guests!" Don't fear!  
They 'll make a wry face, nor too much of that,  
And leave you in your glory.

" No, sometimes

" They doubt and say as much!" Ay, doubt they do!  
And what 's the consequence? " Of course they  
doubt"—

(You triumph) " that explains the hitch at once !

" Doubt posed our ' medium,' puddled his pure mind ;

" He gave them back their rubbish : pitch chaff in,

" Could flour come out o' the honest mill?" So, prompt

Applaud the faithful : cases flock in point,

" How, when a mocker willed a ' medium ' once

" Should name a spirit James whose name was George,

" ' James ' cried the ' medium '—'t was the test of truth !"

In short, a hit proves much, a miss proves more.

Does this convince? The better : does it fail?

Time for the double-shotted broadside, then—

The grand means, last resource. Look black and big !

" You style us idiots, therefore—why stop short?

" Accomplices in rascality : this we hear

" In our own house, from our invited guest

" Found brave enough to outrage a poor boy

" Exposed by our good faith ! Have you been heard ?  
 " Now, then, hear us ; one man 's not quite worth twelve.  
 " You see a cheat ? Here 's some twelve see an ass :  
 " Excuse me if I calculate : good day !"  
 Out slinks the sceptic, all the laughs explode,  
 Sludge waves his hat in triumph !

Or—he don't.

There 's something in real truth (explain who can !)  
 One casts a wistful eye at, like the horse  
 Who mopes beneath stuffed hay-racks and won't munch  
 Because he spies a corn-bag : hang that truth,  
 It spoils all dainties proffered in its place !  
 I 've felt at times when, cockered, cossetted  
 And coddled by the aforesaid company,  
 Bidden enjoy their bullying,—never fear,  
 But o'er their shoulders spit at the flying man,—  
 I 've felt a child ; only, a fractious child  
 That, dandled soft by nurse, aunt, grandmother,  
 Who keep him from the kennel, sun and wind,  
 Good fun and wholesome mud,—enjoined be sweet,  
 And comely and superior,—eyes askance  
 The ragged sons o' the gutter at their game,  
 Fain would be down with them i' the thick o' the filth,  
 Making dirt-pies, laughing free, speaking plain,  
 And calling granny the grey old cat she is.  
 I 've felt a spite, I say, at you, at them,  
 Huggings and humbug—gnashed my teeth to mark  
 A decent dog pass ! It 's too bad, I say,  
 Ruining a soul so !

But what 's "so," what 's fixed,  
 Where may one stop? Nowhere! The cheating 's  
 nursed  
 Out of the lying, softly and surely spun  
 To just your length, sir ! I 'd stop soon enough :  
 But you 're for progress. "All old, nothing new?"

" Only the usual talking through the mouth,  
 " Or writing by the hand? I own, I thought  
 " This would develop, grow demonstrable,  
 " Make doubt absurd, give figures we might see,  
 " Flowers we might touch. There 's no one doubts you,  
     Sludge !  
 " You dream the dreams, you see the spiritual sights,  
 " The speeches come in your head, beyond dispute.  
 " Still, for the sceptics' sake, to stop all mouths,  
 " We want some outward manifestation !—well,  
 " The Pennsylvanians gained such ; why not Sludge ?  
 " He may improve with time !"

Ay, that he may !

He sees his lot : there 's no avoiding fate.

'T is a trifle at first. " Eh, David? Did you hear ?

" You jogged the table, your foot caused the squeak,

" This time you 're . . . joking, are you not, my boy? "

" N-n-no !"—and I 'm done for, bought and sold hence-  
     forth.

The old good easy jog-trot way, the . . . eh?

The . . . not so very false, as falsehood goes,

The spinning out and drawing fine, you know,—

Really mere novel-writing of a sort,

Acting, or improvising, make believe,

Surely not downright cheaterly,—any how,

'T is done with and my lot cast ; Cheat 's my name :

The fatal dash of brandy in your tea

Has settled how you 'll have the souchong smack :

The caddy gives way to the dram-bottle.

Then, it 's so cruel easy ! Oh, those tricks

That can't be tricks, those feats by sleight of hand,

Clearly no common conjuror's !—no, indeed !

A conjuror? Choose me any craft i' the world

A man puts hand to ; and with six months' pains

I 'll play you twenty tricks miraculous

To people untaught the trade. Have you seen glass  
 blown,  
 Pipes pierced? Why, just this biscuit that I chip,  
 Did you ever watch a baker toss one flat  
 To the oven? Try and do it! Take my word,  
 Practise but half as much, while limbs are lithe  
 To turn, shove, tilt a table, crack your joints,  
 Manage your feet, dispose your hands aright,  
 Work wires that twitch the curtains, play the glove  
 At end o' your slipper,—then put out the lights  
 And . . . there, there, all you want you 'll get, I hope!  
 I found it slip, easy as an old shoe.

Now, lights on table again! I 've done my part,  
 You take my place while I give thanks and rest.  
 "Well, Judge Humgruffin, what 's your verdict, sir?"  
 "You, hardest head in the United States,—  
 "Did you detect a cheat here? Wait! Let 's see!  
 "Just an experiment first, for candour's sake!  
 "I 'll try and cheat you, Judge! The table tilts:  
 "Is it I that move it? Write! I 'll press your hand:  
 "Cry when I push, or guide your pencil, Judge!"  
 Sludge still triumphant! "That a rap, indeed?"  
 "That, the real writing? Very like a whale!  
 "Then, if, sir, you—a most distinguished man,  
 "And, were the Judge not here, I 'd say, . . . no matter!  
 "Well, sir, if you fail, you can't take us in,—  
 "There 's little fear that Sludge will!"

Won't he ma'am

But what if our distinguished host, like Sludge,  
 Bade God bear witness that he played no trick,  
 While you believed that what produced the raps  
 Was just a certain child who died, you know,  
 And whose last breath you thought your lips had felt?  
 Eh? That 's a capital point, ma'am: Sludge begins  
 At your entreaty with your dearest dead,

The little voice set lipping once again,  
 The tiny hand made feel for yours once more,  
 The poor lost image brought back, plain as dreams,  
 Which image, if a word had chanced recall,  
 The customary cloud would cross your eyes,  
 Your heart return the old tick, pay its pang !  
 A right mood for investigation, this !  
 One 's at one's ease with Saul and Jonathan,  
 Pompey and Cæsar : but one's own lost child . . .  
 I wonder, when you heard the first clod drop  
 From the spadeful at the grave, did you feel free  
 To investigate who twitched your funeral scarf  
 Or brushed your flounces ? Then, it came of course  
 You should be stunned and stupid ; then, (how else ?)  
 Your breath stopped with your blood, your brain struck  
 work.

But now, such causes fail of such effects,  
 All 's changed,—the little voice begins afresh,  
 Yet you, calm, consequent, can test and try,  
 And touch the truth. " Tests ? Didn't the creature tell  
 " Its nurse's name, and say it lived six years,  
 " And rode a rocking-horse ? Enough of tests !  
 " Sludge never could learn that ! "

He could not, eh ?

You compliment him. " Could not ? " Speak for yourself !  
 I 'd like to know the man I ever saw  
 Once,—never mind where, how, why, when,—once saw,  
 Of whom I do not keep some matter treasured  
 He 'd swear I " could not " know, sagacious soul !  
 What ? Do you live in this world's blow of blacks,  
 Palaver, gossipry, a single hour  
 Nor find one smut has settled on your nose,  
 Of a smut's worth, no more, no less ?—one fact  
 Out of the drift of facts, whereby you learn  
 What someone was, somewhere, somewhen, somewhy ?

You don't tell folk—"See what has stuck to me!  
 "Judge Humgruffin, our most distinguished man,  
 "Your uncle was a tailor, and your wife  
 "Thought to have married Miggs, missed him, hit you!"—  
 Do you, sir, though you see him twice a-week?  
 "No," you reply, "what use retailing it?  
 "Why should I?" But, you see, one day you *should*,  
 Because one day there 's much use,—when this fact  
 Brings you the Judge upon both gouty knees  
 Before the supernatural; proves that Sludge  
 Knows, as you say, a thing he "could not" know:  
 Will not Sludge thenceforth keep an outstretched face  
 The way the wind drives?

"Could not!" Look you now,  
 I'll tell you a story! There 's a whiskered chap,  
 A foreigner, that teaches music here  
 And gets his bread,—knowing no better way.  
 He says, the fellow who informed of him  
 And made him fly his country and fall West,  
 Was a hunchback cobbler, sat, stitched soles and sang,  
 In some outlandish place, the city Rome,  
 In a cellar by their Broadway, all day long;  
 Never asked questions, stopped to listen or look,  
 Nor lifted nose from lapstone; let the world  
 Roll round his three-legged stool, and news run in  
 The ears he hardly seemed to keep pricked up.  
 Well, that man went on Sundays, touched his pay  
 And took his praise from government, you see.  
 For something like two dollars every week,  
 He'd engage tell you some one little thing  
 Of some one man, which led to many more,  
 (Because one truth leads right to the world's end)  
 And make you that man's master—when he dined  
 And on what dish, where walked to keep his health  
 And to what street. His trade was, throwing thus

His sense out, like an anteater's long tongue,  
 Soft, innocent, warm, moist, impassible,  
 And when 't was crusted o'er with creatures—slick,  
 Their juice enriched his palate. "Could not Sludge!"  
 I'll go yet a step further, and maintain,  
 Once the imposture plunged its proper depth  
 I' the rotten of your natures, all of you,—  
 (If one 's not mad nor drunk, and hardly then)  
 It 's impossible to cheat—that 's, be found out!  
 Go tell your brotherhood this first slip of mine,  
 All to-day's tale, how you detected Sludge,  
 Behaved unpleasantly, till he was fain confess,  
 And so has come to grief! You 'll find, I think,  
 Why Sludge still snaps his fingers in your face.  
 There now, you 've told them: What 's their prompt  
 reply?

"Sir, did that youth confess he had cheated me,  
 "I'd disbelieve him. He may cheat at times;  
 "That 's in the 'medium'-nature, thus they 're made,  
 "Vain and vindictive, cowards, prone to scratch.  
 "And so all cats are; still a cat 's the beast  
 "You coax the strange electric sparks from out,  
 "By rubbing back its fur; not so a dog,  
 "Nor lion, nor lamb: 't is the cat's nature, sir!  
 "Why not the dog's? Ask God, who made them beasts!  
 "D'ye think the sound, the nicely-balanced man  
 "Like me"—(aside)—"like you yourself,"—(aloud)  
 "—He 's stuff to make a 'medium?' Bless your soul,  
 "'T is these hysteric, hybrid half-and-halves,  
 "Equivocal, worthless vermin yield the fire!  
 "We must take such as we find them, 'ware their tricks,  
 "Wanting their service. Sir, Sludge took in you—  
 "How, I can't say, not being there to watch:  
 "'He was tried, was tempted by your easiness,—  
 "'He did not take in me!"



Thank you for Sludge !

I'm to be grateful to such patrons, eh,  
When what you hear 's my best word ? 'T is a challenge :  
" Snap at all strangers, half-trained prairie-dog,  
" So you cower duly to your keeper's nod !  
" Cat, show what claws were made for, muffling them  
" Only to me ! Cheat others if you can,  
" Me, if you dare ! " And, my wise sir, I dared—  
Did cheat you first, made you cheat others next,  
And had the help o' your vaunted manliness  
To bully the incredulous. You used me ?  
Have not I used you, taken full revenge,  
Persuaded folk they knew not their own name,  
And straight they 'd own the error ! Who was the fool  
When, to an awe-struck wide-eyed open-mouthed  
Circle of sages, Sludge would introduce  
Milton composing baby-rhymes, and Locke  
Reasoning in gibberish, Homer writing Greek  
In noughts and crosses, Asaph setting psalms  
To crotchet and quaver ? I 've made a spirit squeak  
In sham voice for a minute, then outbroke  
Bold in my own, defying the imbeciles—  
Have copied some ghost's pothooks, half a page,  
Then ended with my own scrawl undisguised.  
" All right ! The ghost was merely using Sludge,  
" Suiting itself from his imperfect stock ! "  
Don't talk of gratitude to me ! For what ?  
For being treated as a showman's ape,  
Encouraged to be wicked and make sport,  
Fret or sulk, grin or whimper, any mood  
So long as the ape be in it and no man—  
Because a nut pays every mood alike.  
Curse your superior, superintending sort,  
Who, since you hate smoke, send up boys that climb  
To cure your chimney, bid a " medium " lie  
To sweep you truth down ! Curse your women too,

Your insolent wives and daughters, that fire up  
 Or faint away if a male hand squeeze theirs,  
 Yet, to encourage Sludge, may play with Sludge  
 As only a "medium," only the kind of thing  
 They must humour, fondle . . . oh, to misconceive  
 Were too preposterous ! But I' ve paid them out !  
 They 've had their wish—called for the naked truth,  
 And in she tripped, sat down and bade them stare :  
 They had to blush a little and forgive !  
 " The fact is, children talk so ; in next world  
 " All our conventions are reversed,—perhaps  
 " Made light of : something like old prints, my dear !  
 " The Judge has one, he brought from Italy,  
 " A metropolis in the background,—o'er a bridge,  
 " A team of trotting roadsters,—cheerful groups  
 " Of wayside travellers, peasants at their work,  
 " And, full in front, quite unconcerned, why not ?  
 " Three nymphs conversing with a cavalier,  
 " And never a rag among them : ' fine,' folk cry—  
 " And heavenly manners seem not much unlike !  
 " Let Sludge go on ; we 'll fancy it 's in print !"  
 If such as came for wool, sir, went home shorn,  
 Where is the wrong I did them ? 'T was their choice :  
 They tried the adventure, ran the risk, tossed up  
 And lost, as some one 's sure to do in games.  
 They fancied I was made to lose,—smoked glass  
 Useful to spy the sun through, spare their eyes :  
 And had I proved a red-hot iron plate  
 They thought to pierce, and, for their pains, grew blind,  
 Whose were the fault but theirs ? While, as things go,  
 Their loss amounts to gain, the more 's the shame !  
 They 've had their peep into the spirit-world,  
 And all this world may know it. They 've fed fat  
 Their self-conceit which else had starved : what chance  
 Save this, of cackling o'er a golden egg  
 And compassing distinction from the flock,

Friends of a feather? Well, they paid for it,  
 And not prodigiously; the price o' the play,  
 Not counting certain pleasant interludes,  
 Was scarce a vulgar play's worth. When you buy  
 The actor's talent, do you dare propose  
 For his soul beside? Whereas, my soul you buy!  
 Sludge acts Macbeth, obliged to be Macbeth,  
 Or you 'll not hear his first word! Just go through  
 That slight formality, swear himself 's the Thane,  
 And thenceforth he may strut and fret his hour,  
 Spout, spawl, or spin his target, no one cares!  
 Why hadn't I leave to play tricks, Sludge as Sludge?  
 Enough of it all! I've wiped out scores with you—  
 Vented your fustian, let myself be streaked  
 Like tom-fool with your ochre and carmine,  
 Worn patchwork your respectable fingers sewed  
 To metamorphose somebody,—yes, I've earned  
 My wages, swallowed down my bread of shame,  
 And shake the crumbs off—where but in your face?

As for religion—why, I served it, sir!  
 I'll stick to that! With my *phenomena*  
 I laid the atheist sprawling on his back,  
 Propped up Saint Paul, or, at least, Swedenborg!  
 In fact, it's just the proper way to baulk  
 These troublesome fellows: liars, one and all,  
 Are not these sceptics? Well, to baffle them,  
 No use in being squeamish; lie yourself!  
 Erect your buttress just as wide o' the line,  
 Your side, as they've built up the wall on theirs;  
 Where both meet, midway in a point, is truth,  
 High overhead: so, take your room, pile bricks,  
 Lie! Oh, there's titillation in all shame!  
 What snow may lose in white, it gains in rose!  
 Miss Stokes turns—Rahab,—nor a bad exchange!  
 Glory be on her, for the good she wrought,

Breeding belief anew, 'neath ribs of death,  
 Brow-beating now the unabashed before,  
 Ridding us of their whole life's gathered straws  
 By a live coal from the altar! Why, of old,  
 Great men spent years and years in writing books  
 To prove we 've souls, and hardly proved it then :  
 Miss Stokes with her live coal, for you and me !  
 Surely, to this good issue, all was fair—  
 Not only fondling Sludge, but, even suppose  
 He let escape some spice of knavery,—well,  
 In wisely being blind to it! Don't you praise  
 Nelson for setting spy-glass to blind eye  
 And saying . . what was it—that he could not see  
 The signal he was bothered with? Ay, indeed !

I 'll go beyond : there 's a real love of a lie,  
 Liars find ready-made for lies they make,  
 As hand for glove, or tongue for sugar-plum.  
 At best, 't is never pure and full belief ;  
 Those furthest in the quagmire,—don't suppose  
 They strayed there with no warning, got no chance  
 Of a filth-speck in their face, which they clenched teeth,  
 Bent brow against! Be sure they had their doubts,  
 And fears, and fairest challenges to try  
 The floor o' the seeming solid sand! But no!  
 Their faith was pledged, acquaintance were apprised,  
 All but the last step ventured, kerchiefs waved,  
 And Sludge called "pet:" 't was easier marching on  
 To the promised land; join those who, Thursday next,  
 Meant to meet Shakespeare: better follow Sludge—  
 Prudent, oh sure!—on the alert, how else?  
 But making for the mid-bog, all the same!  
 To hear your outcries, one would think I caught  
 Miss Stokes by the scuff o' the neck, and pitched her flat,  
 Foolish-face-foremost! Hear these simpletons,  
 That 's all I beg, before my work 's begun,

Before I've touched them with my finger-tip !  
 Thus they await me (do but listen, now !  
 It's reasoning, this is,—I can't imitate  
 The baby voice, though) " In so many tales  
 ' Must be some truth, truth though a pin-point big,  
 " Yet, some : a single man's deceived, perhaps—  
 " Hardly, a thousand : to suppose one cheat  
 " Can gull all these, were more miraculous far  
 " Than aught we should confess a miracle "—  
 And so on. Then the Judge sums up—(it's rare)  
 Bids you respect the authorities that leap  
 To the judgment-seat at once,—why, don't you note  
 The limpid nature, the unblemished life,  
 The spotless honour, indisputable sense  
 Of the first upstart with his story? What—  
 Outrage a boy on whom you ne'er till now  
 Set eyes, because he finds raps trouble him?

Fools, these are : ay, and how of their opposites  
 Who never did, at bottom of their hearts,  
 Believe for a moment?—Men emasculate,  
 Blank of belief, who played, as eunuchs use,  
 With superstition safely,—cold of blood,  
 Who saw what made for them i' the mystery,  
 Took their occasion, and supported Sludge  
 —As proselytes? No, thank you, far too shrewd !  
 —But promisers of fair play, encouragers  
 O' the claimant ; who in candour needs must hoist  
 Sludge up on Mars' Hill, get speech out of Sludge  
 To carry off, criticize, and cant about !  
 Didn't Athens treat Saint Paul so?—at any rate,  
 It's " a new thing," philosophy fumbles at.  
 Then there's the other picker out of pearl  
 From dung heaps,—ay, your literary man,  
 Who draws on his kid gloves to deal with Sludge  
 Daintily and discreetly,—shakes a dust

O' the doctrine, flavours thence, he well knows how,  
 The narrative or the novel,—half-believes,  
 All for the book's sake, and the public's stare,  
 And the cash that 's God's sole solid in this world !  
 Look at him ! Try to be too bold, too gross  
 For the master ! Not you ! He 's the man for muck ;  
 Shovel it forth, full-splash, he 'll smooth your brown  
 Into artistic richness, never fear !  
 Find him the crude stuff ; when you recognize  
 Your lie again, you 'll doff your hat to it,  
 Dressed out for company ! " For company,"  
 I say, since there 's the relish of success :  
 Let all pay due respect, call the lie truth,  
 Save the soft silent smirking gentleman  
 Who ushered in the stranger : you must sigh  
 " How melancholy, he, the only one  
 " Fails to perceive the bearing of the truth  
 " Himself gave birth to !"—There 's the triumph's smack !  
 That man would choose to see the whole world roll  
 I' the slime o' the slough, so he might touch the tip  
 Of his brush with what I call the best of browns—  
 Tint ghost-tales, spirit-stories, past the power  
 Of the outworn umber and bistre !

Yet I think

There 's a more hateful form of foolery—  
 The social sage's, Solomon of saloons  
 And philosophic diner-out, the fribble  
 Who wants a doctrine for a chopping-block  
 To try the edge of his faculty upon,  
 Prove how much common-sense he 'll hack and hew  
 I' the critical minute 'twixt the soup and fish !  
 These were my patrons : these and the like of them  
 Who, rising in my soul now, sicken it,—  
 These I have injured ! Gratitude to these ?  
 The gratitude, forsooth, of a prostitute

To the greenhorn and the bully—friends of hers,  
 From the wag that wants the queer fokes for his club,  
 To the snuff-box-decorator, honest man,  
 Who just was at his wits' end where to find  
 So genial a Pasiphae ! All and each  
 Pay, compliment, protect from the police,  
 And how she hates them for their pains, like me !  
 So much for my remorse at thanklessness  
 Toward a deserving public !

But, for God ?

Ay, that 's a question ! Well, sir, since you press—  
 (How you do tease the whole thing out of me !  
 I don't mean you, you know, when I say, " them :"  
 Hate you, indeed ! But that Miss Stokes, that Judge !  
 Enough, enough—with sugar : thank you, sir !)  
 Now for it, then ! Will you believe me, though ?  
 You 've heard what I confess ; I don't unsay  
 A single word : I cheated when I could,  
 Rapped with my toe-joints, set sham hands at work,  
 Wrote down names weak in sympathetic ink,  
 Rubbed odic lights with ends of phosphor-match,  
 And all the rest ; believe that ! believe this,  
 By the same token, though it seem to set  
 The crooked straight again, unsay the said,  
 Stick up what I 've thrown down ; I can't help that,  
 It 's truth ! I somehow vomit truth to-day.  
 This trade of mine—I don't know, can't be sure  
 But there was something in it, tricks and all !  
 Really, I want to light up my own mind.  
 They were tricks,—true, but what I mean to add  
 Is also true. First,—don't it strike you, sir ?  
 Go back to the beginning,—the first fact  
 We 're taught is, there 's a world beside this world,  
 With spirits, not mankind, for tenantry ;  
 That much within that world once sojourned here,

That all upon this world will visit there,  
 And therefore that we, bodily here below,  
 Must have exactly such an interest  
 In learning what may be the ways o' the world  
 Above us, as the disembodied folk  
 Have (by all analogic likelihood)  
 In watching how things go in the old world  
 With us, their sons, successors, and what not.  
 Oh, yes, with added powers probably,  
 Fit for the novel state,—old loves grown pure,  
 Old interests understood aright,—they watch !  
 Eyes to see, ears to hear, and hands to help,  
 Proportionate to advancement : they 're ahead,  
 That s all—do what we do, but noblier done—  
 Use plate, whereas we eat our meals off delf,  
 (To use a figure.)

Concede that, and I ask  
 Next—what may be the mode of intercourse  
 Between us men here, and those once-men there?  
 First comes the Bible's speech ; then, history  
 With the supernatural element,—you know—  
 All that we sucked in with our mothers' milk,  
 Grew up with, got inside of us at last.  
 Till it 's found bone of bone and flesh of flesh.  
 See now, we start with the miraculous,  
 And know it used to be, at all events :  
 What 's the first step we take, and can't but take,  
 In arguing from the known to the obscure?  
 Why this : " What was before, may be to-day.  
 " Since Samuel's ghost appeared to Saul,—of course  
 " My brother's spirit may appear to me."  
 Go tell your teacher that ! What 's his reply?  
 What brings a shade of doubt for the first time  
 O'er his brow late so luminous with faith?  
 " Such things have been," says he, "and there 's no doubt



" Such things may be : but I advise mistrust  
 " Of eyes, ears, stomach,—more than all, of brain,  
 " Unless it be of your great-grandmother,  
 " Whenever they propose a ghost to you !"  
 The end is, there 's a composition struck ;  
 'T is settled, we 've some way of intercourse  
 Just as in Saul's time ; only, different :  
 How, when and where, precisely,—find it out !  
 I want to know, then, what 's so natural  
 As that a person born into this world  
 And seized on by such teaching, should begin  
 With firm expectancy and a frank look-out  
 For his own allotment, his especial share  
 I' the secret,—his particular ghost, in fine ?  
 I mean, a person born to look that way,  
 Since natures differ : take the painter-sort,  
 One man lives fifty years in ignorance  
 Whether grass be green or red,—" No kind of eye  
 " For colour," say you ; while another picks  
 And puts away even pebbles, when a child,  
 Because of bluish spots and pinky veins—  
 " Give him forthwith a paint-box !" Just the same  
 Was I born . . . " medium," you won't let me say,—  
 Well, seer of the supernatural  
 Everywhen, everyhow and everywhere,—  
 Will that do ?

I and all such boys of course  
 Started with the same stock of Bible-truth ;  
 Only,—what in the rest you style their sense,  
 Instinct, blind reasoning but imperative,  
 This, betimes, taught them the old world had one law  
 And ours another : " New world, new laws," cried they :  
 " None but old laws, seen everywhere at work,"  
 Cried I, and by their help explained my life  
 The Jews' way, still a working way to me.

Ghosts made the noises, fairies waved the lights,  
 Or Santaclaus slid down on New Year's Eve  
 And stuffed with cakes the stocking at my bed,  
 Changed the worn shoes, rubbed clean the fingered slate  
 O' the sum that came to grief the day before.

This could not last long : soon enough I found  
 Who had worked wonders thus, and to what end :  
 But did I find all easy, like my mates ?  
 Henceforth no supernatural any more ?  
 Not a whit : what projects the billiard-balls ?  
 " A cue," you answer : " Yes, a cue," said I ;  
 " But what hand, off the cushion, moved the cue ?  
 " What unseen agency, outside the world,  
 " Prompted its puppets to do this and that,  
 " Put cakes and shoes and slates into their mind,  
 " These mothers and aunts, nay even schoolmasters ?"  
 Thus high I sprang, and there have settled since.  
 Just so I reason, in sober earnest still,  
 About the greater god-sends, what you call  
 The serious gains and losses of my life.  
 What do I know or care about your world  
 Which either is or seems to be ? This snap  
 O' my fingers, sir ! My care is for myself ;  
 Myself am whole and sole reality  
 Inside a raree-show and a market-mob  
 Gathered about it : that 's the use of things.  
 'T is easy saying they serve vast purposes,  
 Advantage their grand selves : be it true or false,  
 Each thing may have two uses. What 's a star ?  
 A world, or a world's sun : doesn't it serve  
 As taper also, time-piece, weather-glass,  
 And almanac ? Are stars not set for signs  
 When we should shear our sheep, sow corn, prune trees ?  
 The Bible says so.

Well, I add one use

To all the acknowledged uses, and declare  
If I spy Charles's Wain at twelve to-night,  
It warns me, "Go, nor lose another day,  
"And have your hair cut, Sludge!" You laugh: and why?  
Were such a sign too hard for God to give?  
No: but Sludge seems too little for such grace:  
Thank you, sir! So you think, so does not Sludge!  
When you and good men gape at Providence,  
Go into history and bid us mark  
Not merely powder-plots prevented, crowns  
Kept on kings' heads by miracle enough,  
But private mercies—oh, you've told me, sir,  
Of such interpositions! How yourself  
Once, missing on a memorable day  
Your handkerchief—just setting out, you know,—  
You must return to fetch it, lost the train,  
And saved your precious self from what befell  
The thirty-three whom Providence forgot.  
You tell, and ask me what I think of this?  
Well, sir, I think then, since you needs must know,  
What matter had you and Boston city to boot  
Sailed skyward, like burnt onion-peelings? Much  
To you, no doubt: for me—undoubtedly  
The cutting of my hair concerns me more,  
Because, however sad the truth may seem,  
Sludge is of all-importance to himself.  
You set apart that day in every year  
For special thanksgiving, were a heathen else:  
Well, I who cannot boast the like escape,  
Suppose I said "I don't thank Providence  
"For my part, owing it no gratitude?"  
"Nay, but you owe as much"—you'd tutor me,  
"You, every man alive, for blessings gained  
"In every hour o' the day, could you but know!  
"I saw my crowning mercy: all have such,  
"Could they but see!" Well sir, why don't they see?

" Because they won't look,—or perhaps, they can't."  
 Then, sir, suppose I can, and will and do  
 Look, microscopically as is right,  
 Into each hour with its infinitude  
 Of influences at work to profit Sludge ?  
 For that 's the case : I 've sharpened up my sight  
 To spy a providence in the fire's going out,  
 The kettle's boiling, the dime's sticking fast  
 Despite the hole i' the pocket. Call such facts  
 Fancies, too petty a work for Providence,  
 And those same thanks which you exact from me,  
 Prove too prodigious payment ; thanks for what,  
 If nothing guards and guides us little men ?  
 No, no, sir ! You must put away your pride,  
 Resolved to let Sludge into partnership !  
 I live by signs and omens : look at the roof  
 Where the pigeons settle—" If the farther bird,  
 " The white, takes wing first, I 'll confess when thrashed ;  
 " Not, if the blue does"—so I said to myself  
 Last week, lest you should take me by surprise :  
 Off flapped the white,—and I 'm confessing, sir !  
 Perhaps 't is Providence's whim and way  
 With only me, i' the world : how can you tell ?  
 " Because unlikely !" Was it likelier, now,  
 That this our one out of all worlds beside,  
 The what-d'you-call-'em millions, should be just  
 Precisely chosen to make Adam for,  
 And the rest o' the tale ? Yet the tale 's true, you know :  
 Such undeserving clod was graced so once ;  
 Why not graced likewise undeserving Sludge ?  
 Are we merit-mongers, flaunt we filthy rags ?  
 All you can bring against my privilege  
 Is, that another way was taken with you,—  
 Which I don't question. It 's pure grace, my luck.  
 I 'm broken to the way of nods and winks,  
 And need no formal summoning. You 've a help ;

Holloa his name or whistle, clap your hands,  
 Stamp with your foot or pull the bell : all 's one,  
 He understands you want him, here he comes.  
 Just so, I come at the knocking : you, sir, wait  
 The tongue o' the bell, nor stir before you catch  
 Reason's clear tingle, nature's clapper brisk,  
 Or that traditional peal was wont to cheer  
 Your mother's face turned heavenward : short of these  
 There 's no authentic intimation, eh ?  
 Well, when you hear, you 'll answer them, start up  
 And stride into the presence, top of toe,  
 And there find Sludge beforehand, Sludge that sprung  
 At noise o' the knuckle on the partition-wall !  
 I think myself the more religious man.  
 Religion 's all or nothing ; it 's no mere smile  
 O' contentment, sigh of aspiration, sir—  
 No quality o' the finelier-tempered clay  
 Like its whiteness or its lightness ; rather, stuff  
 O' the very stuff, life of life, self of self.  
 I tell you, men won't notice ; when they do,  
 They 'll understand. I notice nothing else,  
 I 'm eyes, ears, mouth of me, one gaze and gape,  
 Nothing eludes me, everything 's a hint,  
 Handle and help. It 's all absurd, and yet  
 There 's something in it all, I know : how much ?  
 No answer ! What does that prove ? Man 's still mar,  
 Still meant for a poor blundering piece of work,  
 When all 's done ; but, if somewhat 's done, like this,  
 Or not done, is the case the same ? Suppose  
 I blunder in my guess at the true sense  
 O' the knuckle-summons, nine times out of ten,—  
 What if the tenth guess happen to be right ?  
 If the tenth shovel-load of powdered quartz  
 Yield me the nugget ? I gather, crush, sift all,  
 Pass o'er the failure, pounce on the success.  
 To give you a notion, now—(let who wins, laugh ! )

When first I see a man, what do I first?  
 Why, count the letters which make up his name,  
 And as their number chances, even or odd,  
 Arrive at my conclusion, trim my course :  
 Hiram H. Horsefall is your honoured name,  
 And have n't I found a patron, sir, in you?  
 "Shall I cheat this stranger?" I take apple-pips,  
 Stick one in either *canthus* of my eye,  
 And if the left drops first—(your left, sir, stuck)  
 I 'm warned, I let the trick alone this time.  
 You, sir, who smile, superior to such trash,  
 You judge of character by other rules :  
 Don't your rules sometimes fail you? Pray, what rule  
 Have you judged Sludge by hitherto?

Oh, be sure,

You, everybody blunders, just as I,  
 In simpler things than these by far! For see :  
 I knew two farmers,—one, a wiseacre  
 Who studied seasons, rummaged almanacs,  
 Quoted the dew-point, registered the frost  
 And then declared, for outcome of his pains,  
 Next summer must be dampish : 't was a drought.  
 His neighbour prophesied such drought would fall,  
 Saved hay and corn, made cent. per cent. thereby,  
 And proved a sage indeed : how came his lore?  
 Because one brindled heifer, late in March,  
 Stiffened her tail of evenings, and somehow  
 He got into his head that drought was meant!  
 I don't expect all men can do as much :  
 Such kissing goes by favour. You must take  
 A certain turn of mind for this,—a twist  
 I' the flesh, as well. Be lazily alive,  
 Open-mouthed, like my friend the anteater,  
 Letting all nature's loosely-guarded notes  
 Settle and, slick, be swallowed! Think yourself

The one i' the world, the one for whom the world  
 Was made, expect it tickling at your mouth !  
 Then will the swarm of busy buzzing flies,  
 Clouds of coincidence, break egg-shell, thrive,  
 Breed, multiply, and bring you food enough.

I can't pretend to mind your smiling, sir !  
 Oh, what you mean is this ! Such intimate way,  
 Close converse, frank exchange of offices,  
 Strict sympathy of the immeasurably great  
 With the infinitely small, betokened here  
 By a course of signs and omens, raps and sparks,—  
 How does it suit the dread traditional text  
 O' the "Great and Terrible Name?" Shall the Heaven  
     of Heavens  
 Stoop to such child's play ?

Please sir, go with me

A moment, and I 'll try to answer you.  
 The "*Magnum et terrible*" (is that right ?)  
 Well, folk began with this in the early day ;  
 And all the acts they recognized in proof  
 Were thunders, lightnings, earthquakes, whirlwinds, dealt  
 Indisputably on men whose death they caused.  
 There, and there only, folk saw Providence  
 At work,—and seeing it, 't was right enough  
 All heads should tremble, hands wring hands amain,  
 And knees knock hard together at the breath  
 O' the Name's first letter ; why, the Jews, I 'm told,  
 Won't write it down, no, to this very hour,  
 Nor speak aloud : you know best if 't be so.  
 Each ague-fit of fear at end, they crept  
 (Because somehow people once born must live)  
 Out of the sound, sight, swing and sway o' the Name,  
 Into a corner, the dark rest of the world  
 And safe space where as yet no fear had reached ;  
 'T was there they looked about them, breathed again,





Preachers and teachers try another tack,  
 Come near the truth this time : they put aside  
 Thunder and lightning : " That 's mistake," they cry,  
 " Thunderbolts fall for neither fright nor sport,  
 " But do appreciable good, like tides,  
 " Changes o' the wind, and other natural facts—  
 " ' Good ' meaning good to man, his body or soul.  
 " Mediate, immediate, all things minister  
 " To man,—that 's settled : be our future text  
 " ' We are His children ! ' " So, they now harangue  
 About the intention, the contrivance, all  
 That keeps up an incessant play of love,—  
 See the Bridgewater book.

Amen to it !

Well, sir, I put this question : I 'm a child ?  
 I lose no time, but take you at your word :  
 How shall I act a child's part properly ?  
 Your sainted mother, sir,—used you to live  
 With such a thought as this a-worrying you ?  
 " She has it in her power to throttle me,  
 " Or stab or poison : she may turn me out,  
 " Or lock me in,—nor stop at this to-day,  
 " But cut me off to-morrow from the estate  
 " I look for "—(long may you enjoy it, sir !)  
 " In brief, she may unchild the child I am."  
 You never had such crotchets ? Nor have I !  
 Who, frank confessing childship from the first,  
 Cannot both fear and take my ease at once,  
 So, don't fear,—know what might be, well enough.  
 But know too, child-like, that it will not be,  
 At least in my case, mine, the son and heir  
 O' the kingdom, as yourself proclaim my style.  
 But do you fancy I stop short at this ?  
 Wonder if suit and service, son and heir  
 Needs must expect, I dare pretend to find ?

If, looking for signs proper to such an one,  
 I straight perceive them irresistible?  
 Concede that homage is a son's plain right,  
 And, never mind the nods and raps and winks,  
 'T is the pure obvious supernatural  
 Steps forward, does its duty : why, of course !  
 I have presentiments : my dreams come true :  
 I fancy a friend stands whistling all in white  
 Blithe as a boblink, and he 's dead I learn.  
 I take dislike to a dog my favourite long,  
 And sell him ; he goes mad next week and snaps.  
 I guess that stranger will turn up to-day  
 I have not seen these three years ; there 's his knock.  
 I wager "sixty peaches on that tree !"—  
 That I pick up a dollar in my walk,  
 That your wife's brother's cousin's name was George—  
 And win on all points. Oh, you wince at this ?  
 You 'd fain distinguish between gift and gift,  
 Washington's oracle and Sludge's itch  
 O' the elbow when at whist he ought to trump ?  
 With Sludge it 's too absurd ? *Fine, draw the line  
 Somewhere, but, sir, your somewhere is not mine !*

Bless us, I 'm turning poet ! It 's time to end.  
 How you have drawn me out, sir ! All I ask  
 Is—am I heir or not heir ? If I 'm he,  
 Then, sir, remember, that same personage  
 (To judge by what we read i' the newspaper)  
 Requires, beside one nobleman in gold  
 To carry up and down his coronet,  
 Another servant, probably a duke,  
 To hold egg-nogg in readiness : why want  
 Attendance, sir, when helps in his father's house  
 Abound, I 'd like to know ?

Enough of talk !

My fault is that I tell too plain a truth.

Why, which of those who say they disbelieve,  
Your clever people, but has dreamed his dream,  
Caught his coincidence, stumbled on his fact  
He can't explain, (he 'll tell you smilingly)  
Which he 's too much of a philosopher  
To count as supernatural, indeed,  
So calls a puzzle and problem, proud of it?  
—Bidding you still be on your guard, you know,  
Because one fact don't make a system stand,  
Nor prove this an occasional escape  
Of spirit beneath the matter : that 's the way !  
Just so wild Indians picked up, piece by piece,  
The fact in California, the fine gold  
That underlay the gravel—hoarded these,  
But never made a system stand, nor dug !  
So wise men hold out in each hollowed palm  
A handful of experience, sparkling fact  
They can't explain ; and since their rest of life  
Is all explainable, what proof in this ?  
Whereas I take the fact, the grain of gold,  
And fling away the dirty rest of life,  
And add this grain to the grain found by each fool  
O' the million other such philosophers,—  
Till I see gold, all gold and only gold,  
Truth questionless though unexplainable,  
And the miraculous proved the commonplace !  
The other fools believed in mud, no doubt—  
Failed to know gold they saw : was that so strange ?  
Are all men born to play Bach's fiddle-fugues,  
" Time " with the foil in carte, jump their own height,  
Cut the mutton with the broadsword, skate a five,  
Make the red hazard with the cue, clip nails  
While swimming, in five minutes row a mile,  
Pull themselves three feet up with the left arm,  
Do sums of fifty figures in their head,—  
And so on, by the scores of instances?

The Sludge with luck, who sees the spiritual facts  
 His fellows strive and fail to see, may rank  
 With these, and share the advantage.

Ay, but share

The drawback ! Think it over by yourself ;  
 I have not heart, sir, and the fire 's gone grey.  
 Defect somewhere compensates for success,  
 Everyone knows that. Oh, we 're equals, sir !  
 The big-legged fellow has a little arm  
 And a less brain, though big legs win the race.  
 Do you suppose I 'scape the common lot ?  
 Say, I was born with flesh so sensitive,  
 Soul so alert, that, practice helping both,  
 I guess what 's going on outside the veil,  
 Just as a prisoned crane feels pairing-time  
 In the islands where his kind are, so must fall  
 To capering by himself some shiny night,  
 As if your back-yard were a plot of spice—  
 Thus am I 'ware o' the spirit-world : while you,  
 Blind as a beetle that way,—for amends,  
 Why, you can double fist and floor me, sir !  
 Ride that hot hardmouthed horrid horse of yours,  
 Laugh while it lightens, play with the great dog,  
 Speak your mind though it vex some friend to hear,  
 Never brag, never bluster, never blush,—  
 In short, you 've pluck, when I 'm a coward—there !  
 I know it, I can't help it,—folly or no,  
 I 'm paralyzed, my hand 's no more a hand,  
 Nor my head, a head, in danger : you can smile  
 And change the pipe in your cheek. Your gift 's not mine.  
 Would you swap for mine ? No ! but you 'd add my gift  
 To yours : I dare say ! I too sigh at times,  
 Wish I were stouter, could tell truth nor flinch,  
 Kept cool when threatened, did not mind so much  
 Being dressed gaily, making strangers stare,

Eating nice things ; when I 'd amuse myself,  
 I shut my eyes and fancy in my brain,  
 I 'm—now the President, now, Jenny Lind,  
 Now, Emerson, now, the Benicia Boy—  
 With all the civilized world a-wondering  
 And worshipping. I know it 's folly and worse ;  
 I feel such tricks sap, honeycomb the soul :  
 But I can't cure myself,—despond, despair,  
 And then, hey, presto, there 's a turn o' the wheel,  
 Under comes uppermost, fate makes full amends ;  
 Sludge knows and sees and hears a hundred things  
 You all are blind to,—I 've my taste of truth,  
 Likewise my touch of falsehood,—vice no doubt,  
 But you 've your vices also : I 'm content.

What, sir? You won't shake hands? "Because I cheat!  
 "You 've found me out in cheating!" That 's enough  
 To make an apostle swear! Why, when I cheat,  
*Mean to cheat, do cheat, and am caught in the act,*  
*Are you, or rather, am I sure o' the fact?*  
 (There 's verse again, but I 'm inspired somehow.)  
 Well then I 'm not sure! I may be, perhaps,  
 Free as a babe from cheating : how it began,  
 My gift,—no matter ; what 't is got to be  
 In the end now, that 's the question ; answer that!  
 Had I seen, perhaps, what hand was holding mine,  
 Leading me whither, I had died of fright,  
 So, I was made believe I led myself.  
 If I should lay a six-inch plank from roof  
 To roof, you would not cross the street, one step,  
 Even at your mother's summons : but, being shrewd,  
 If I paste paper on each side the plank  
 And swear 't is solid pavement, why, you 'll cross  
 Humming a tune the while, in ignorance  
 Beacon Street stretches a hundred feet below :  
 I walked thus, took the paper-cheat for stone.

Some impulse made me set a thing o' the move  
 Which, started once, ran really by itself ;  
 Beer flows thus, suck the siphon ; toss the kite,  
 It takes the wind and floats of its own force.  
 Don't let truth's lump rot stagnant for the lack  
 Of a timely helpful lie to leaven it !  
 Put a chalk-egg beneath the clucking hen,  
 She 'll lay a real one, laudably deceived,  
 Daily for weeks to come. I 've told my lie,  
 And seen truth follow, marvels none of mine ;  
 All was not cheating, sir, I 'm positive !  
 I don't know if I move your hand sometimes  
 When the spontaneous writing spreads so far,  
 If my knee lifts the table all that height,  
 Why the inkstand don't fall off the desk a-tilt,  
 Why the accordion plays a prettier waltz  
 Than I can pick out on the piano-forte,  
 Why I speak so much more than I intend,  
 Describe so many things I never saw.  
 I tell you, sir, in one sense, I believe  
 Nothing at all,—that everybody can,  
 Will, and does cheat : but in another sense  
 I 'm ready to believe my very self—  
 That every cheat 's inspired, and every lie  
 Quick with a germ of truth.

You ask perhaps

Why I should condescend to trick at all  
 If I know a way without it ? This is why !  
 There 's a strange secret sweet self-sacrifice  
 In any desecration of one's soul  
 To a worthy end,—is n't it Herodotus  
 (I wish I could read Latin !) who describes  
 The single gift o' the land's virginity,  
 Demanded in those old Egyptian rites,  
 (I 've but a hazy notion—help me, sir !)

For one purpose in the world, one day in a life,  
 One hour in a day—thereafter, purity,  
 And a veil thrown o'er the past for evermore !  
 Well now they understood a many things  
 Down by Nile city, or wherever it was !  
 I 've always vowed, after the minute's lie,  
 And the end's gain,—truth should be mine henceforth.  
 This goes to the root o' the matter, sir,—this plain  
 Plump fact : accept it and unlock with it  
 The wards of many a puzzle !

Or, finally,

Why should I set so fine a gloss on things ?  
 What need I care ? I cheat in self-defence,  
 And there 's my answer to a world of cheats !  
 Cheat ? To be sure, sir ! What 's the world worth else ?  
 Who takes it as he finds, and thanks his stars ?  
 Don't it want trimming, turning, furbishing up  
 And polishing over ? Your so-styled great men,  
 Do they accept one truth as truth is found,  
 Or try their skill at tinkering ? What 's your world ?  
 Here are you born, who are, I 'll say at once,  
 Of the luckiest whether as to head and heart,  
 Body and soul, or all that helps the same.  
 Well, now, look back : what faculty of yours  
 Came to its full, had ample justice done  
 By growing when rain fell, biding its time,  
 Solidifying growth when earth was dead,  
 Spiring up, broadening wide, in seasons due ?  
 Never ! You shot up and frost nipped you off,  
 Settled to sleep when sunshine bade you sprout ;  
 One faculty thwarted its fellow : at the end,  
 All you boast is, " I had proved a topping tree  
 " In other climes "—yet this was the right clime  
 Had you foreknown the seasons. Young, you 've force  
 Wasted like well-streams : old,—oh, then indeed,

Behold a labyrinth of hydraulic pipes  
 Through which you 'd play off wondrous waterwork ;  
 Only, no water 's left to feed their play.  
 Young,—you 've a hope, an aim, a love ; it 's tossed  
 And crossed and lost : you struggle on, some spark  
 Shut in your heart against the puffs around,  
 Through cold and pain ; these in due time subside :  
 Now then for age's triumph, the hoarded light  
 You mean to loose on the altered face of things,—  
 Up with it on the tripod ! It 's extinct.  
 Spend your life's remnant asking —which was best,  
 Light smothered up that never peeped forth once,  
 Or the cold cresset with full leave to shine ?  
 Well, accept this too,—seek the fruit of it  
 Not in enjoyment, proved a dream on earth,  
 But knowledge, useful for a second chance,  
 Another life,—you 've lost this world, you 've gained  
 Its knowledge for the next.—What knowledge, sir,  
 Except that you know nothing ? Nay, you doubt  
 Whether 't were better have been made man or brute,  
 If aught is true, if good and evil clash.  
 No foul, no fair, no inside, no outside,  
 There 's your world !

Give it me ! I slap it brisk  
 With harlequin's pasteboard sceptre : what 's it now ?  
 Changed like a rock-flat, rough with rusty weed,  
 At first wash-over o' the returning wave !  
 All the dry dead impracticable stuff  
 Starts into life and light again ; this world  
 Pervaded by the influx from the next.  
 I cheat, and what 's the happy consequence ?  
 You find full justice straightway dealt you out,  
 Each want supplied, each ignorance set at ease,  
 Each folly fooled. No life-long labour now  
 As the price of worse than nothing ! No mere film



Holding you chained in iron, as it seems,  
 Against the outstretch of your very arms  
 And legs y' the sunshine moralists forbid !  
 What would you have ? Just speak and,—three, you see !  
 Yon 're supplemented, made a whole at last :  
 Bacon advises, Shakespeare writes you songs,  
 And Mary Queen of Scots embraces you.  
 Thus it goes on, not quite like life perhaps,  
 But so near, that the very difference piques,  
 Shows that e'en better than this best will be—  
 This passing entertainment in a hut  
 Whose bare walls take your taste—since, one stage more,  
 And you arrive at the palace : all half real,  
 And you, to suit it, less than real beside,  
 In a dream, lethargic kind of death in life,  
 That helps the interchange of natures, flesh  
 Transfused by souls, and such souls ! Oh, 'tis choice !  
 And if at whiles the bubble, blown too thin,  
 Seem nigh on bursting,—if you nearly see  
 The real world through the false,—what *do* you see ?  
 Is the old so ruined ? You find you 're in a flock  
 O' the youthful, earnest, passionate—genius, beauty,  
 Rank and wealth also, if you care for these,  
 And all depose their natural rights, hail you,  
 (That 's me, sir) as their mate and yoke-fellow.  
 Participate in Sludgehood—nay, grow mine,  
 I veritably possess them—banish doubt,  
 And reticence and modesty alike !  
 Why, here 's the Golden Age, old Paradise  
 Or new Eutopia ! Here is life indeed,  
 The world well won now, yours for the first time !

And all this might be, may be, and with good help  
 Of a little lying shall be : so, Sludge lies !  
 Why he 's at worst your poet who sings how Greeks  
 That never were, in Troy which never was

Did this or the other impossible great thing !  
 He 's Lowell—it 's a world, you smile and say,  
 Of his own invention—wondrous Longfellow,  
 Surprising Hawthorne ! Sludge does more than they,  
 And acts the books they write : the more his praise !

But why mount up to poets ? Take plain prose—  
 Dealers in common sense, set these at work,  
 What can they do without their helpful lies ?  
 Each states the law and fact and face o' the thing  
 Just as he 'd have them, finds what he thinks fit,  
 Is blind to what missuits him, just records  
 What makes his case out, quite ignores the rest.  
 It 's a History of the World, the Lizard Age,  
 The Early Indians, the Old Country War,  
 Jerome Napoleon, whatsoever you please,  
 All as the author wants it. Such a scribe  
 You pay and praise for putting life in stones,  
 Fire into fog, making the past your world.  
 There 's plenty of " How did you contrive to grasp  
 " The thread which led you through this labyrinth ?  
 " How build such solid fabric out of air ?  
 " How on so slight foundation found this tale,  
 " Biography, narrative ? " or, in other words,  
 " How many lies did it require to make  
 " The portly truth you here present us with ? "  
 " Oh," quoth the penman, purring at your praise,  
 " 'T is fancy all ; no particle of fact :  
 " I was poor and threadbare when I wrote that book  
 " ' Bliss in the Golden City.' I, at Thebes ?  
 " We writers paint out of our heads, you see ! "  
 " --Ah, the more wonderful the gift in you,  
 " The more creativeness and godlike craft ! "  
 But I, do I present you with my piece,  
 It 's " What, Sludge ? When my sainted mother spoke  
 " The verses Lady Jane Grey last composed

"About the rosy bower in the seventh heaven  
 "Where she and Queen Elizabeth keep house,—  
 "You made the raps? 'T was your invention that?  
 "Cur, slave and devil!"—eight fingers and two thumbs  
 Stuck in my throat?

Well, if'the marks seem gone,  
 'T is because stiffish cock-tail, taken in time,  
 Is better for a bruise than arnica.  
 There, sir! I bear no malice: 't is n't in me.  
 I know I acted wrongly: still, I 've tried  
 What I could say in my excuse,—to show  
 The devil 's not all devil . . . I don't pretend,  
 An angel, much less such a gentleman  
 As you, sir! And I 've lost you, lost myself,  
 Lost all, l-l-l- . . . .

No—are you in earnest, sir?

O, yours, sir, is an angel's part! I know  
 What prejudice prompts, and what 's the common course  
 Men take to soothe their ruffled self-conceit:  
 Only you rise superior to it all!  
 No, sir, it don't hurt much; it 's speaking long  
 That makes me choke a little: the marks will go!  
 What? Twenty V-notes more, and outfit too,  
 And not a word to Greeley? One—one kiss  
 O' the hand that saves me? You 'll not let me speak,  
 I well know, and I 've lost the right, too true!  
 But I must say, sir, if She hears (she does)  
 Your sainted . . . Well, sir,—be it so! That 's, I think,  
 My bed-room candle. Good-night! Bl-l-less you, sir!

---

R-r-r, you brute-beast and blackguard! Cowardly  
 scamp!

I only wish I dared burn down the house  
 And spoil your sniggering! Oh, what, you 're the man?

You 're satisfied at last? You 've found out Sludge?  
 We 'll see that presently : my turn, sir, next !  
 I too can tell my story : brute,—do you hear?—  
 You throttled your sainted mother, that old hag,  
 In just such a fit of passion : no, it was . . .  
 To get this house of hers, and many a note  
 Like these . . . I 'll pocket them, however . . . five,  
 Ten, fifteen . . . ay, you gave her throat the twist,  
 Or else you poisoned her ! Confound the cuss !  
 Where was my head ? I ought to have prophesied  
 He 'll die in a year and join her : that 's the way.  
 I don't know where my head is : what had I done ?  
 How did it all go ? I said he poisoned her,  
 And hoped he 'd have grace given him to repent ;  
 Whereon he picked this quarrel, bullied me  
 And called me cheat : I thrashed him,—who could help ?  
 He howled for mercy, prayed me on his knees  
 To cut and run and save him from disgrace :  
 I do so, and once off, he slanders me.  
 An end of him ! Begin elsewhere anew !  
 Boston 's a hole, the herring-pond is wide,  
 V-notes are something, liberty still more.  
 Beside, is he the only fool in the world ?



### *THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.*

MORNING, evening, noon and night,  
 " Praise God ! " sang Theocrite.  
 Then to his poor trade he turned,  
 Whereby the daily meal was earned.  
 Hard he laboured, long and well ;  
 O'er his work the boy's curls fell.  
 But ever, at each period,  
 He stopped and sang, " Praise God !

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

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

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

" This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome  
" Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, " Would God that I  
" Might praise Him, that great way, and die !"

Night passed, day shone,  
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures always,  
A thousand years are but a day,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'T was Easter Day : he flew to Roime,  
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

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

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

And all his past career  
Came back upon him clear,

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

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

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

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

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

" Vainly I left my angel-sphere,  
" Vain was thy dream of many a year.

" Thy voice's praise seemed weak ; it dropped—  
" Creation's chorus stopped !

“ Go back and praise again  
 “ The early way, while I remain.  
 “ With that weak voice of our disdain,  
 “ Take up creation’s pausing strain.  
 “ Back to the cell and poor employ :  
 “ Resume the craftsman and the boy ! ”

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

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



### A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

[SUPPOSED of Pamphylax the Antiochene :  
 It is a parchment, of my rolls the fifth,  
 Hath three skins glued together, is all Greek,  
 And goeth from *Epsilon* down to *Mu* :  
 Lies second in the surnamed Chosen Chest,  
 Stained and conserved with juice of terebinth,  
 Covered with cloth of hair, and lettered *Xi*,  
 From Xanthus, my wife’s uncle, now at peace :  
*Mu* and *Epsilon* stand for my own name,  
 I may not write it, but I make a cross  
 To show I wait His coming, with the rest,  
 And leave off here : beginneth Pamphylax.]

I said, “ If one should wet his lips with wine,  
 “ And slip the broadest plantain-leaf we find,  
 “ Or else the lappet of a linen robe,  
 “ Into the water-vessel, lay it right,  
 “ And cool his forehead just above the eyes,  
 “ The while a brother, kneeling either side,  
 “ Should chafe each hand and try to make it warm,—  
 “ He is not so far gone but he might speak.”

This did not happen in the outer cave,  
Nor in the secret chamber of the rock,  
Where, sixty days since the decree was out,  
We had him, bedded on a camel-skin,  
And waited for his dying all the while ;  
But in the midmost grotto : since noon's light  
Reached there a little, and we would not lose  
The last of what might happen on his face.

I at the head, and Xanthus at the feet,  
With Valens and the Boy, had lifted him,  
And brought him from the chamber in the depths,  
And laid him in the light where we might see :  
For certain smiles began about his mouth,  
And his lips moved, presageful of the end.

Beyond, and half way up the mouth o' the cave,  
The Bactrian convert, having his desire,  
Kept watch, and made pretence to graze a goat  
That gave us milk, on rags of various herb,  
Plantain and quitch, the rocks' shade keeps alive :  
So that if any thief or soldier passed,  
(Because the persecution was aware)  
Yielding the goat up promptly with his life,  
Such man might pass on, joyful at a prize,  
Nor care to pry into the cool o' the cave.  
Outside was all noon and the burning blue.

“Here is wine,” answered Xanthus,—dropped a drop ;  
I stooped and placed the lap of cloth aright,  
Then chafed his right hand, and the Boy his left :  
But Valens had bethought him, and produced  
And broke a ball of nard, and made perfume.  
Only, he did—not so much wake, as—turn  
And smile a little, as a sleeper does  
If any dear one call him, touch his face—  
And smiles and loves, but will not be disturbed.



Then Xanthus said a prayer, but still he slept :  
 It is the Xanthus that escaped to Rome,  
 Was burned, and could not write the chronicle.

Then the Boy sprang up from his knees, and ran,  
 Stung by the splendour of a sudden thought,  
 And fetched the seventh plate of graven lead  
 Out of the secret chamber, found a place,  
 Pressing with finger on the deeper dints,  
 And spoke, as 't were his mouth proclaiming first  
 " I am the Resurrection and the Life."

Whereat he opened his eyes wide at once,  
 And sat up of himself, and looked at us ;  
 And thenceforth nobody pronounced a word :  
 Only, outside, the Bactrian cried his cry  
 Like the lone desert-bird that wears the ruff,  
 As signal we were safe, from time to time.

First he said, " If a friend declared to me,  
 " This my son Valens, this my other son,  
 " Were James and Peter,—nay, declared as well  
 " This lad was very John,—I could believe !  
 " —Could, for a moment, doubtlessly believe :  
 " So is myself withdrawn into my depths,  
 " The soul retreated from the perished brain  
 " Whence it was wont to feel and use the world  
 " Through these dull members, done with long ago.  
 " Yet I myself remain ; I feel myself :  
 " And there is nothing lost. Let be, awhile !"

[This is the doctrine he was wont to teach,  
 How divers persons witness in each man,  
 Three souls which make up one soul : first, to wit,  
 A soul of each and all the bodily parts,  
 Seated therein, which works, and is what Does,  
 And has the use of earth, and ends the man  
 Downward : but tending upward for advice,

Grows into, and again is grown into  
 By the next soul, which, seated in the brain,  
 Useth the first with its collected use,  
 And feeleth, thinketh, willeth,—is what Knows :  
 Which, duly tending upward in its turn,  
 Grows into, and again is grown into  
 By the last soul, that uses both the first,  
 Subsisting whether they assist or no,  
 And, constituting man's self, is what Is—  
 And leans upon the former, makes it play,  
 As that played off the first : and, tending up,  
 Holds, is upheld by, God, and ends the man  
 Upward in that dread point of intercourse,  
 Nor needs a place, for it returns to Him,  
 What Does, what Knows, what Is ; three souls, one  
 man.

I give the glossa of Theotypas.]

And then, “ A stick, once fire from end to end ;  
 “ Now, ashes save the tip that holds a spark !  
 “ Yet, blow the spark, it runs back, spreads itself  
 “ A little where the fire was : thus I urge  
 “ The soul that served me, till it task once more  
 “ What ashes of my brain have kept their shape,  
 “ And these make effort on the last o' the flesh,  
 “ Trying to taste again the truth of things—”  
 (He smiled)—“ their very superficial truth ;  
 “ As that ye are my sons, that it is long  
 “ Since James and Peter had release by death,  
 “ And I am only he, your brother John,  
 “ Who saw and heard, and could remember all.  
 “ Remember all ! It is not much to say.  
 “ What if the truth broke on me from above  
 “ As once and oft-times ? Such might hap again :  
 “ Doubtlessly He might stand in presence here,  
 “ With head wool-white, eyes, flame, and feet like brass,

“ The sword and the seven stars, as I have seen—  
“ I who now shudder only and surmise  
“ ‘ How did your brother bear that sight and live?’

“ If I live yet, it is for good, more love  
“ Through me to men : be nought but ashes here  
“ That keep awhile my semblance, who was John,—  
“ Still, when they scatter, there is left on earth  
“ No one alive who knew (consider this !)  
“ —Saw with his eyes and handled with his hands  
“ That which was from the first, the Word of Life.  
“ How will it be when none more saith, ‘ I saw?’

“ Such ever was love’s way : to rise, it stoops.  
“ Since I, whom Christ’s mouth taught, was bidden teach,  
“ I went, for many years, about the world,  
“ Saying ‘ It was so ; so I heard and saw.’  
“ Speaking as the case asked : and men believed.  
“ Afterward came the message to myself  
“ In Patmos isle ; I was not bidden teach,  
“ But simply listen, take a book and write,  
“ Nor set down other than the given word,  
“ With nothing left to my arbitrament  
“ To choose or change : I wrote, and men believed.  
“ Then, for my time grew brief, no message more,  
“ No call to write again, I found a way,  
“ And, reasoning from my knowledge, merely taught  
“ Men should, for love’s sake, in love’s strength, believe ;  
“ Or I would pen a letter to a friend  
“ And urge the same as friend, nor less nor more :  
“ Friends said I reasoned rightly, and believed.  
“ But at the last, why, I seemed left alive  
“ Like a sea-jelly weak on Patmos strand,  
“ To tell dry sea-beach gazers how I fared  
“ When there was mid-sea, and the mighty things ;  
“ Left to repeat, ‘ I saw, I heard, I knew,’  
“ And go all over the old ground again,

“ With Antichrist already in the world,  
“ And many Antichrists, who answered prompt  
“ ‘ Am I not Jasper as thyself art John ?  
“ ‘ Nay, young, whereas through age thou mayest forget :  
“ ‘ Wherefore, explain, or how shall we believe ? ’  
“ I never thought to call down fire on such,  
“ Or, as in wonderful and early days,  
“ Pick up the scorpion, tread the serpent dumb ;  
“ But patient stated much of the Lord’s life  
“ Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it work :  
“ Since much that at the first, in deed and word,  
“ Lay simply and sufficiently exposed,  
“ Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,  
“ Fed through such years, familiar with such light,  
“ Guarded and guided still to see and speak)  
“ Of new significance and fresh result ;  
“ What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars,  
“ And named them in the Gospel I have writ.  
“ For men said, ‘ It is getting long ago : ’  
“ ‘ Where is the promise of His coming ? ’—asked  
“ These young ones in their strength, as loth to wait,  
“ Of me who, when their sires were born, was old.  
“ I, for I loved them, answered, joyfully,  
“ Since I was there, and helpful in my age ;  
“ And, in the main, I think such men believed.  
“ Finally, thus endeavouring, I fell sick,  
“ Ye brought me here, and I supposed the end,  
“ And went to sleep with one thought that, at least,  
“ Though the whole earth should lie in wickedness,  
“ We had the truth, might leave the rest to God.  
“ Yet now I wake in such decrepitude  
“ As I had slidden down and fallen afar,  
“ Past even the presence of my former self,  
“ Grasping the while for stay at facts which snap,  
“ Till I am found away from my own world,  
“ Feeling for foot-hold through a blank profound,

“ Along with unborn people in strange lands,  
“ Who say—I hear said or conceive they say—  
“ ‘ Was John at all, and did he say he saw ?  
“ ‘ Assure us, ere we ask what he might see !’  
  
“ And how shall I assure them ? Can they share  
“ —They, who have flesh, a veil of youth and strength  
“ About each spirit, that needs must bide its time,  
“ Living and learning still as years assist  
“ Which wear the thickness thin, and let man see—  
“ With me who hardly am withheld at all,  
“ But shudderingly, scarce a shred between,  
“ Lie bare to the universal prick of light ?  
“ Is it for nothing we grow old and weak,  
“ We whom God loves ? When pain ends, gain ends too.  
“ To me, that story—ay, that Life and Death  
“ Of which I wrote ‘ it was ’—to me, it is ;  
“ —Is, here and now : I apprehend nought else.  
“ Is not God now i’ the world His power first made ?  
“ Is not His love at issue still with sin,  
“ Visibly when a wrong is done on earth ?  
“ Love, wrong, and pain, what see I else around ?  
“ Yea, and the Resurrection and Uprise  
“ To the right hand of the throne—what is it beside,  
“ When such truth, breaking bounds, o’erfloods my soul,  
“ And, as I saw the sin and death, even so  
“ See I the need yet transiency of both,  
“ The good and glory consummated thence ?  
“ I saw the Power ; I see the Love, once weak,  
“ Resume the Power : and in this word ‘ I see,’  
“ Lo, there is recognised the Spirit of both,  
“ That moving o’er the spirit of man, unblinds  
“ His eye and bids him look. These are, I see ;  
“ But ye, the children, His beloved ones too,  
“ Ye need,—as I should use an optic glass  
“ I wondered at erewhile, somewhere i’ the world,

" It had been given a crafty smith to make ;  
 " A tube, he turned on objects brought too close,  
 " Lying confusedly insubordinate  
 " For the unassisted eye to master once :  
 " Look through his tube, at distance now they lay,  
 " Become succinct, distinct, so small, so clear !  
 " Just thus, ye needs must apprehend what truth  
 " I see, reduced to plain historic fact,  
 " Diminished into clearness, proved a point  
 " And far away : ye would withdraw your sense  
 " From out eternity, strain it upon time,  
 " Then stand before that fact, that Life and Death  
 " Stay there at gaze, till it dispart, dispread,  
 " As though a star should open out, all sides,  
 " Grow the world on you, as it is my world.

" Our life, with all it yields of joy and woe,  
 " And hope and fear,—believe the aged friend,—  
 " Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,  
 " How love might be, hath been indeed, and is ;  
 " And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost  
 " Such prize despite the envy of the world,  
 " And, having gained truth, keep truth : that is all.  
 " But see the double way wherein we are led,  
 " How the soul learns diversely from the flesh !  
 " With flesh, that hath so little time to stay,  
 " And yields mere basement for the soul's emprise,  
 " Expect prompt teaching. Helpful was the light,  
 " And warmth was cherishing and food was choice  
 " To every's man's flesh, thousand years ago,  
 " As now to yours and mine ; the body sprang  
 " At once to the height, and stayed : but the soul,—no !  
 " Since sages who, this noontide, meditate  
 " In Rome or Athens, may descry some point  
 " Of the eternal power, hid yestereve :  
 " And, as thereby the power's whole mass extends,

“ So much extends the æther floating o’er  
“ The love that tops the might, the Christ in God.  
“ Then, as new lessons shall be learned in these  
“ Till earth’s work stop and useless time run out,  
“ So duly, daily, needs provision be  
“ For keeping the soul’s prowess possible,  
“ Building new barriers as the old decay,  
“ Saving us from evasion of life’s proof,  
“ Putting the question ever, ‘ Does God love,  
“ ‘ And will ye hold that truth against the world ? ’  
“ Ye know there needs no second proof with good  
“ Gained for our flesh from any earthly source :  
“ We might go freezing, ages,—give us fire,  
“ Thereafter we judge fire at its full worth,  
“ And guard it safe through every chance, ye know !  
“ That fable of Prometheus and his theft,  
“ How mortals gained Jove’s fiery flower, grows old  
“ (I have been used to hear the pagans own)  
“ And out of mind ; but fire, howe’er its birth,  
“ Here is it, precious to the sophist now  
“ Who laughs the myth of Æschylus to scorn,  
“ As precious to those satyrs of his play,  
“ Who touched it in gay wonder at the thing.  
“ While were it so with the soul,—this gift of truth  
“ Once grasped, were this our soul’s gain safe, and sure  
“ To prosper as the body’s gain is wont,—  
“ Why, man’s probation would conclude, his earth  
“ Crumble ; for he both reasons and decides,  
“ Weighs first, then chooses : will he give up fire  
“ For gold or purple once he knows its worth ?  
“ Could he give Christ up were His worth as plain ?  
“ Therefore, I say, to test man, the proofs shift,  
“ Nor may he grasp that fact like other fact,  
“ And straightway in his life acknowledge it,  
“ As, say, the indubitable bliss of fire.  
“ Sigh ye, ‘ It had been easier once than now ? ’

“ To give you answer I am left alive ;  
“ Look at me who was present from the first !  
“ Ye know what things I saw ; then came a test,  
“ My first, befitting me who so had seen :  
“ ‘ Forsake the Christ thou sawest transfigured, Him  
“ ‘ Who trod the sea and brought the dead to life ?  
“ ‘ What should wring this from thee ! ’—ye laugh and ask  
“ What wrung it ? Even a torchlight and a noise,  
“ The sudden Roman faces, violent hands,  
“ And fear of what the Jews might do ! Just that,  
“ And it is written, ‘ I forsook and fled ; ’  
“ There was my trial, and it ended thus.  
“ Ay, but my soul had gained its truth, could grow :  
“ Another year or two,—what little child,  
“ What tender woman that had seen no least  
“ Of all my sights, but barely heard them told,  
“ Who did not clasp the cross with a light laugh,  
“ Or wrap the burning robe round, thanking God ?  
“ Well, was truth safe for ever, then ? Not so,  
“ Already had begun the silent work  
“ Whereby truth, deadened of its absolute blaze,  
“ Might need love’s eye to pierce the o’erstretched doubt.  
“ Teachers were busy, whispering ‘ All is true  
“ ‘ As the aged ones report ; but youth can reach  
“ ‘ Where age gropes dimly, weak with stir and strain,  
“ ‘ And the full doctrine slumbers till to-day.’  
“ Thus, what the Roman’s lowered spear was found,  
“ A bar to me who touched and handled truth,  
“ Now proved the glozing of some new shrewd tongue,  
“ This Ebion, this Cerinthus or their mates,  
“ Till imminent was the outcry ‘ Save our Christ ! ’  
“ Whereon I stated much of the Lord’s life  
“ Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it work.  
“ Such work done, as it will be, what comes next ?  
“ What do I hear say, or conceive men say,  
“ ‘ Was John at all, and did he say he saw ?



“ ‘Assure us, ere we ask what he might see !’

“ Is this indeed a burthen for late days,  
“ And may I help to bear it with you all,  
“ Using my weakness which becomes your strength ?  
“ For if a babe were born inside this grot,  
“ Grew to a boy here, heard us praise the sun,  
“ Yet had but yon sole glimmer in light’s place,—  
“ One loving him and wishful he should learn,  
“ Would much rejoice himself was blinded first  
“ Month by month here, so made to understand  
“ How eyes, born darkling, apprehend amiss :  
“ I think I could explain to such a child  
“ There was more glow outside than gleams he caught,  
“ Ay, nor need urge ‘ I saw it, so believe !’  
“ It is a heavy burthen you shall bear  
“ In latter days, new lands, or old grown strange,  
“ Left without me, which must be very soon.  
“ What is the doubt, my brothers ? Quick with it !  
“ I see you stand conversing, each new face,  
“ Either in fields, of yellow summer eves,  
“ On islets yet unnamed amid the sea ;  
“ Or pace for shelter ’neath a portico  
“ Out of the crowd in some enormous town  
“ Where now the larks sing in a solitude ;  
“ Or muse upon blank heaps of stone and sand  
“ Idly conjectured to be Ephesus ;  
“ And no one asks his fellow any more  
“ ‘ Where is the promise of His coming ?’ but  
“ ‘ Was he revealed in any of His lives,  
“ ‘ As Power, as Love, as Influencing Soul ?’

“ Quick, for time presses, tell the whole mind out,  
“ And let us ask and answer and be saved !  
“ My book speak on, because it cannot pass ;  
“ One listens quietly, nor scoffs but pleads

" ' Here is a tale of things done ages since ;  
 " ' What truth was ever told the second day ?  
 " ' Wonders, that would prove doctrine, go for nought.  
 " ' Remains the doctrine, love ; well, we must love,  
 " ' And what we love most, power and love in one,  
 " ' Let us acknowledge on the record here,  
 " ' Accepting these in Christ : must Christ then be ?  
 " ' Has He been ? Did not we ourselves make Him ?  
 " ' Our mind receives but what it holds, no more.  
 " ' First of the love, then ; we acknowledge Christ—  
 " ' A proof we comprehend His love, a proof  
 " ' We had such love already in ourselves,  
 " ' Knew first what else we should not recognize.  
 " ' 'T is mere projection from man's inmost mind,  
 " ' And, what he loves, thus falls reflected back,  
 " ' Becomes accounted somewhat out of him ;  
 " ' He throws it up in air, it drops down earth's,  
 " ' With shape, name, story added, man's old way.  
 " ' How prove you Christ came otherwise at least ?  
 " ' Next try the power : He made and rules the world :  
 " ' Certes there is a world once made, now ruled,  
 " ' Unless things have been ever as we see.  
 " ' Our sires declared a charioteer's yoked steeds  
 " ' Brought the sun up the east and down the west,  
 " ' Which only of itself now rises, sets,  
 " ' As if a hand impelled it and a will,—  
 " ' Thus they long thought, they who had will and hands :  
 " ' But the new question's whisper is distinct,  
 " ' Wherefore must all force needs be like ourselves ?  
 " ' We have the hands, the will ; what made and drives  
 " ' The sun is force, is law, is named, not known,  
 " ' While will and love we do know ; marks of these,  
 " ' Eye-witnesses attest, so books declare—  
 " ' As that, to punish or reward our race,  
 " ' The sun at undue times arose or set  
 " ' Or else stood still : what do not men affirm ?

“ ‘ But earth requires as urgently reward  
“ ‘ Or punishment to-day as years ago,  
“ ‘ And none expects the sun will interpose :  
“ ‘ Therefore it was mere passion and mistake,  
“ ‘ Or erring zeal for right, which changed the truth.  
“ ‘ Go back, far, farther, to the birth of things ;  
“ ‘ Ever the will, the intelligence, the love,  
“ ‘ Man’s !—which he gives, supposing he but finds,  
“ ‘ As late he gave head, body, hands and feet,  
“ ‘ To help these in what forms he called his gods.  
“ ‘ First, Jove’s brow, Juno’s eyes were swept away,  
“ ‘ But Jove’s wrath, Juno’s pride continued long !  
“ ‘ At last, will, power, and love discarded these,  
“ ‘ So law in turn discards power, love, and will.  
“ ‘ What proveth God is otherwise at least ?  
“ ‘ All else, projection from the mind of man !’

“ ‘ Nay, do not give me wine, for I am strong,  
“ ‘ But place my gospel where I put my hands.

“ ‘ I say that man was made to grow, not stop ;  
“ ‘ That help, he needed once, and needs no more,  
“ ‘ Having grown but an inch by, is withdrawn :  
“ ‘ For he hath new deeds, and new helps to these.  
“ ‘ This imports solely, man should mount on each  
“ ‘ New height in view ; the help whereby he mounts,  
“ ‘ The ladder-rung his foot has left, may fall,  
“ ‘ Since all things suffer change save God the Truth.  
“ ‘ Man apprehends Him newly at each stage  
“ ‘ Whereat earth’s ladder drops, its service done ;  
“ ‘ And nothing shall prove twice what once was proved.  
“ ‘ You stick a garden-plot with ordered twigs  
“ ‘ To show inside lie germs of herbs unborn,  
“ ‘ And check the careless step would spoil their birth ;  
“ ‘ But when herbs wave, the guardian twigs may go,  
“ ‘ Since should ye doubt of virtues, question kinds,  
“ ‘ It is no longer for old twigs ye look,

" Which proved once underneath lay store of seed,  
 " But to the herb's self, by what light ye boast,  
 " For what fruit's signs are. This book's fruit is plain,  
 " Nor miracles need prove it any more.  
 " Doth the fruit show? Then miracles bade 'ware  
 " At first of root and stem, saved both till now  
 " From trampling ox, rough boar and wanton goat.  
 " What? Was man made a wheelwork to wind up,  
 " And be discharged, and straight wound up anew?  
 " No!—grown, his growth lasts; taught, he ne'er forgets:  
 " May learn a thousand things, not twice the same.  
 " This might be pagan teaching: now hear mine.

" I say, that as the babe, you feed awhile,  
 " Becomes a boy and fit to feed himself,  
 " So, minds at first must be spoon-fed with truth:  
 " When they can eat, babe's nurture is withdrawn.  
 " I fed the babe whether it would or no:  
 " I bid the boy or feed himself or starve.  
 " I cried once, 'That ye may believe in Christ,  
 " 'Behold this blind man shall receive his sight!'  
 " I cry now, 'Urgest thou, *for I am shrewd*  
 " '*And smile at stories how John's word could cure—*  
 " '*Repeat that miracle and take my faith?*'  
 " I say, that miracle was duly wrought  
 " When, save for it, no faith was possible.  
 " Whether a change were wrought i' the shows o' the  
     world,  
 " Whether the change came from our minds which see  
 " Of shows o' the world so much as and no more  
 " Than God wills for His purpose,—(what do I  
 " See now, suppose you, there where you see rock  
 " Round us?)—I know not; such was the effect,  
 " So faith grew, making void more miracles  
 " Because too much: they would compel, not help.  
 " I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ

" Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee  
 " All questions in the earth and out of it,  
 " And has so far advanced thee to be wise.  
 " Wouldst thou unprove this to re-prove the proved ?  
 " In life's mere minute, with power to use that proof,  
 " Leave knowledge and revert to how it sprung ?  
 " Thou hast it ; use it and forthwith, or die !

" For I say, this is death and the sole death,  
 " When a man's loss comes to him from his gain,  
 " Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance,  
 " And lack of love from love made manifest ;  
 " A lamp's death when, replete with oil, it chokes ;  
 " A stomach's when, surcharged with food, it starves.  
 " With ignorance was surety of a cure,  
 " When man, appalled at nature, questioned first  
 " ' What if there lurk a might behind this might ?'  
 " He needed satisfaction God could give,  
 " And did give, as ye have the written word :  
 " But when he finds might still redouble might,  
 " Yet asks, ' Since all is might, what use of will ?'  
 " —Will, the one source of might,—he being man  
 " With a man's will and a man's might, to teach  
 " In little how the two combine in large,—  
 " That man has turned round on himself and stands :  
 " Which in the course of nature is, to die.

" And when man questioned, ' What if there be love  
 " ' Behind the will and might, as real as they ?'—  
 " He needed satisfaction God could give,  
 " And did give, as ye have the written word :  
 " But when, beholding that love everywhere,  
 " He reasons, ' Since such love is everywhere,  
 " ' And since ourselves can love and would be loved,  
 " ' We ourselves make the love, and Christ was not,'—  
 " How shall ye help this man who knows himself,

" That he must love and would be loved again,  
 " Yet, owning his own love that proveth Christ,  
 " Rejecteth Christ through very need of Him?  
 " The lamp o'erswims with oil, the stomach flags  
 " Loaded with nurture, and that man's soul dies.

" If he rejoin, ' But this was all the while  
 " ' A trick ; the fault was, first of all, in thee,  
 " ' Thy story of the places, names and dates,  
 " ' Where, when and how the ultimate truth had rise,  
 " ' —Thy prior truth, at last discovered none,  
 " ' Whence now the second suffers detriment.  
 " ' What good of giving knowledge if, because  
 " ' O' the manner of the gift, its profit fail ?  
 " ' And why refuse what modicum of help  
 " ' Had stopped the after-doubt, impossible  
 " ' I' the face of truth—truth absolute, uniform ?  
 " ' Why must I hit of this and miss of that,  
 " ' Distinguish just as I be weak or strong,  
 " ' And not ask of thee and have answer prompt,  
 " ' Was thiſ once, was it not once ?—then and now  
 " ' And evermore, plain truth from man to man.  
 " ' Is John's procedure just the heathen bard's ?  
 " ' Put question of his famous play again  
 " ' How for the ephemerals' sake, Jove's fire was filched,  
 " ' And carried in a cane and brought to earth :  
 " ' *The fact is in the fable*, cry the wise,  
 " ' *Mortals obtained the boon, so much is fact,*  
 " ' *Though fire be spirit and produced on earth.*  
 " ' As with the Titan's, so now with thy tale :  
 " ' Why breed in us perplexity, mistake,  
 " ' Nor tell the whole truth in the proper words ?

" I answer, Have ye yet to argue out  
 " The very primal thesis, plainest law,  
 " —Man is not God but hath God's end to serve,  
 " A master to obey, a course to take,

" Somewhat to cast off, somewhat to become?  
 " Grant this, then man must pass from old to new,  
 " From vain to real, from mistake to fact,  
 " From what once seemed good, to what now proves best :  
 " How could man have progression otherwise?  
 " Before the point was mooted 'What is God?'  
 " No savage man inquired 'What is myself?'  
 " Much less replied, 'First, last, and best of things.'  
 " Man takes that title now if he believes  
 " Might can exist with neither will nor love,  
 " In God's case—what he names now Nature's Law --  
 " While in himself he recognizes love  
 " No less than might and will: and rightly takes.  
 " Since if man prove the sole existent thing  
 " Where these combine, whatever their degree,  
 " However weak the might or will or love,  
 " So they be found there, put in evidence,—  
 " He is as surely higher in the scale  
 " Than any might with neither love nor will,  
 " As life, apparent in the poorest midge,  
 " (When the faint dust-speck flits, ye guess its wing)  
 " Is marvellous beyond dead Atlas' self—  
 " Given to the nobler midge for resting-place !  
 " Thus, man proves best and highest—God, in fine,  
 " And thus the victory leads but to defeat,  
 " The gain to loss, best rise to the worst fall,  
 " His life becomes impossible, which is death.

" But if, appealing thence, he cower, avouch  
 " He is mere man, and in humility  
 " Neither may know God nor mistake himself ;  
 " I point to the immediate consequence  
 " And say, by such confession straight he falls  
 " Into man's place, a thing nor God nor beast,  
 " Made to know that he can know and not more :  
 " Lower than God who knows all and can all,

“ Higher than beasts which know and can so far  
“ As each beast’s limit, perfect to an end,  
“ Nor conscious that they know, nor craving more ;  
“ While man knows partly but conceives beside,  
“ Creeps ever on from fancies to the fact,  
“ And in this striving, this converting air  
“ Into a solid he may grasp and use,  
“ Find progress, man’s distinctive mark alone,  
“ Not God’s, and not the beasts’ : God is, they are,  
“ Man partly is and wholly hopes to be.  
“ Such progress could no more attend his soul  
“ Were all it struggles after found at first  
“ And guesses changed to knowledge absolute,  
“ Than motion wait his body, were all else  
“ Than it the solid earth on every side,  
“ Where now through space he moves from rest to rest.  
“ Man, therefore, thus conditioned, must expect  
“ He could not, what he knows now, know at first ;  
“ What he considers that he knows to-day,  
“ Come but to-morrow, he will find misknown ;  
“ Getting increase of knowledge, since he learns  
“ Because he lives, which is to be a man,  
“ Set to instruct himself by his past self :  
“ First, like the brute, obliged by facts to learn,  
“ Next, as man may, obliged by his own mind,  
“ Bent, habit, nature, knowledge turned to law.  
“ God’s gift was just that man conceive of truth  
“ And yearn to gain it, catching at mistake,  
“ As midway help till he reach fact indeed.  
“ The statuary ere he mould a shape  
“ Boasts a like gift, the shape’s idea, and next  
“ The aspiration to produce the same ;  
“ So, taking clay, he calls his shape thereout,  
“ Cries ever, ‘ Now I have the thing I see : ’  
“ Yet all the while goes changing what was wrought,  
“ From falsehood like the truth, to truth itself.



" How were it had he cried ' I see no face,  
 " ' No breast, no feet i' the ineffectual clay ?'  
 " Rather commend him that he clapped his hands,  
 " And laughed ' It is my shape and lives again !'  
 " Enjoyed the falsehood, touched it on to truth,  
 " Until yourselves applaud the flesh indeed  
 " In what is still flesh-imitating clay.  
 " Right in you, right in him, such way be man's !  
 " God only makes the live shape at a jet.  
 " Will ye renounce this pact of creatureship ?  
 " The pattern on the Mount subsists no more,  
 " Seemed awhile, then returned to nothingness ;  
 " But copies, Moses strove to make thereby,  
 " Serve still and are replaced as time requires :  
 " By these, make newest vessels, reach the type !  
 " If ye demur, this judgment on your head,  
 " Never to reach the ultimate, angels' law,  
 " Indulging every instinct of the soul  
 " There where law, life, joy, impulse are one thing !  
 " Such is the burthen of the latest time.  
 " I have survived to hear it with my ears,  
 " Answer it with my lips : does this suffice ?  
 " For if there be a further woe than such,  
 " Wherein my brothers struggling need a hand,  
 " So long as any pulse is left in mine,  
 " May I be absent even longer yet,  
 " Plucking the blind ones back from the abyss,  
 " Though I should tarry a new hundred years !"

But he was dead : 't was about noon, the day  
 Somewhat declining : we five buried him  
 That eve, and then, dividing, went five ways,  
 And I, disguised, returned to Ephesus.

By this, the cave's mouth must be filled with sand.  
 Valens is lost, I know not of his trace ;

The Bactrian was but a wild childish man,  
 And could not write nor speak, but only loved :  
 So, lest the memory of this go quite,  
 Seeing that I to-morrow fight the beasts,  
 I tell the same to Phœbas, whom believe !  
 For many look again to find that face,  
 Beloved John's to whom I ministered,  
 Somewhere in life about the world ; they err :  
 Either mistaking what was darkly spoke  
 At ending of his book, as he relates,  
 Or misconceiving somewhat of this speech  
 Scattered from mouth to mouth, as I suppose.  
 Believe ye will not see him any more  
 About the world with his divine regard !  
 For all was as I say, and now the man  
 Lies as he lay once, breast to breast with God.

---

[Cerinthus read and mused ; one added this :

“ If Christ, as thou affirmest, be of men  
 “ Mere man, the first and best but nothing more,—  
 “ Account Him, for reward of what He was,  
 “ Now and for ever, wretchedest of all.  
 “ For see ; Himself conceived of life as love,  
 “ Conceived of love as what must enter in,  
 “ Fill up, make one with His each soul He loved :  
 “ Thus much for man's joy, all men's joy for Him.  
 “ Well, He is gone, thou sayest, to fit reward.  
 “ But by this time are many souls set free,  
 “ And very many still retained alive :  
 “ Nay, should His coming be delayed awhile,  
 “ Say, ten years longer (twelve years, some compute)  
 “ See if, for every finger of thy hands,  
 “ There be not found, that day the world shall end,  
 “ Hundreds of souls, each holding by Christ's word

" That He will grow incorporate with all,  
 " With me as Pamphylax, with him as John,  
 " Groom for each bride ! Can a mere man do this ?  
 " Yet Christ saith, this He lived and died to do.  
 " Call Christ, then, the illimitable God,  
 " Or lost ! "

• But 't was Cerinthus that is lost.]



### FEARS AND SCRUPLES.

#### I

HERE 's my case. Of old I used to love him,  
 This same unseen friend, before I knew :  
 Dreamed there was none like him, none above him,—  
 Waked to hope and trust my dream was true.

#### II

Loved I not his letters full of beauty ?  
 Not his actions famous far and wide ?  
 Absent, he would know I vowed him duty,  
 Present, he would find me at his side.

#### III

Pleasant fancy ! for I had but letters,  
 Only knew of actions by hearsay :  
 He himself was busied with my betters ;  
 What of that ? My turn must come some day.

#### IV

" Some day " proving—no day ! Here 's the puzzle.  
 Passed and passed my turn is. Why complain ?  
 He 's so busied ! If I could but muzzle  
 People's foolish mouths that give me pain !

## V

“Letters?” (hear them!) “You a judge of writing?  
 “Ask the experts! How they shake the head  
 “O’er these characters, your friend’s inditing—  
 “Call them forgery from A to Z!

## VI

“Actions? Where ’s your certain proof” (they bother)  
 “He, of all you find so great and good,  
 “He, he only, claims this, that, the other  
 “Action—claimed by men, a multitude?”

## VII

I can simply wish I might refute you,  
 Wish my friend would,—by a word, a wink,—  
 Bid me stop that foolish mouth,—you brute you!  
 He keeps absent,—why, I cannot think.

## VIII

Never mind! Though foolishness may flout me,  
 One thing ’s sure enough: ’t is neither frost,  
 No, nor fire, shall freeze or burn from out me  
 Thanks for truth—though falsehood, gained—though  
 lost.

## IX

All my days, I ’ll go the softlier, sadlier,  
 For that dream’s sake! How forget the thrill  
 Through and through me as I thought “The gladlier  
 “Lives my friend because I love him still!”

## X

Ah, but there ’s a menace someone utters!  
 “What and if your friend at home play tricks?  
 “Peep at hide-and-seek behind the shutters?  
 “Mean your eyes should pierce through solid bricks?”

## XI

“What and if he, frowning, wake you, dreamy?  
 “Lay on you the blame that bricks—conceal?”

“ Say ‘ *At least I saw who did not see me,  
 “ ‘ Does see now, and presently shall feel ?’* ”

## XII

“ Why, that makes your friend a monster ! ” say you :  
 “ Had his house no window ? At first nod,  
 “ Would you not have hailed him ? ” Hush, I pray you !  
 What if this friend happen to be—God ?



## ARTEMIS PROLOGIZES.

I AM a goddess of the ambrosial courts,  
 And save by Heré, Queen of Pride, surpassed  
 By none whose temples whiten this the world.  
 Through heaven I roll my lucid moon along ;  
 I shed in hell o'er my pale people peace ;  
 On earth I, caring for the creatures, guard  
 Each pregnant yellow wolf and fox-bitch sleek,  
 And every feathered mother's callow brood,  
 And all that love green haunts and loneliness.  
 Of men, the chaste adore me, hanging crowns  
 Of poppies red to blackness, bell and stem,  
 Upon my image at Athenai here ;  
 And this dead youth, Asclepios bends above,  
 Was dearest to me. He, my buskined step  
 To follow through the wild-wood leafy ways,  
 And chase the panting stag, or swift with darts  
 Stop the swift ounce, or lay the leopard low.  
 Neglected homage to another god :  
 Whence Aphrodite, by no midnight smoke  
 Of tapers lulled, in jealousy despatched  
 A noisome lust that, as the gadbee stings,  
 Possessed his stepdame Phaidra for himself  
 The son of Theseus her great absent spouse.  
 Hippolutos exclaiming in his rage

Against the fury of the Queen, she judged  
Life insupportable ; and, pricked at heart  
An Amazonian stranger's race should dare  
To scorn her, perished by the murderous cord :  
Yet, ere she perished, blasted in a scroll  
The fame of him her swerving made not swerve.  
And Theseus read, returning, and believed,  
And exiled, in the blindness of his wrath,  
The man without a crime who, last as first,  
Loyal, divulged not to his sire the truth.  
Now Theseus from Poseidon had obtained  
That of his wishes should be granted three,  
And one he imprecated straight—" Alive  
" May ne'er Hippolotos reach other lands !"  
Poseidon heard, ai ai ! And scarce the prince  
Had stepped into the fixed boots of the car  
That give the feet stay against the strength  
Of the Henetian horses, and around  
His body flung the rein, and urged their speed  
Along the rocks and shingles of the shore,  
When from the gaping wave a monster flung  
His obscene body in the coursers' path.  
These, mad with terror, as the sea-bull sprawled  
Wallowing about their feet, lost care of him  
That reared them ; and the master-chariot-pole  
Snapping beneath their plunges like a reed,  
Hippolotos, whose feet were trammelled fast,  
Was yet dragged forward by the circling rein  
Which either hand directed ; nor they quenched  
The frenzy of their flight before each trace,  
Wheel-spoke and splinter of the woeful car,  
Each boulder-stone, sharp stub and spiny shell,  
Huge fish-bone wrecked and wreathed amid the sands  
On that detested beach, was bright with blood  
And morsels of his flesh : then fell the steeds  
Head-foremost, crashing in their mooned fronts,

Shivering with sweat, each white eye horror-fixed.  
 His people, who had witnessed all afar,  
 Bore back the ruins of Hippolutos.  
 But when his sire, too swoln with pride, rejoiced  
 (Indomitable as a man foredoomed)  
 That vast Poseidon had fulfilled his prayer,  
 I, in a flood of glory visible,  
 Stood o'er my dying votary and, deed  
 By deed, revealed, as all took place, the truth.  
 Then Theseus lay the woefullest of men,  
 And worthily ; but ere the death-veils hid  
 His face, the murdered prince full pardon breathed  
 To his rash sire. Whereat Athenai wails.

So I, who ne'er forsake my votaries,  
 Lest in the cross-way none the honey-cake  
 Should tender, nor pour out the dog's hot life ;  
 Lest at my fane the priests disconsolate  
 Should dress my image with some faded poor  
 Few crowns, made favours of, nor dare object  
 Such slackness to my worshippers who turn  
 Elsewhere the trusting heart and loaded hand,  
 As they had climbed Olumpos to report  
 Of Artemis and nowhere found her throne—  
 I interposed : and, this eventful night,—  
 (While round the funeral pyre the populace  
 Stood with fierce light on their black robes which bound  
 Each sobbing head, while yet their hair they clipped  
 O'er the dead body of their withered prince,  
 And, in his palace, Theseus prostrated  
 On the cold hearth, his brow cold as the slab  
 'T was bruised on, groaned away the heavy grief—  
 As the pyre fell, and down the cross-logs crashed  
 Sending a crowd of sparkles through the night,  
 And the gay fire, elate with mastery,  
 Towered like a serpent o'er the clotted jars

Of wine, dissolving oils and frankincense,  
 And splendid gums like gold,)—my potency  
 Conveyed the perished man to my retreat  
 In the thrice-venerable forest here.  
 And this white-bearded sage who squeezes now  
 The berried plant, is Phoibos' son of fame,  
 Asclepios, whom my radiant brother taught  
 The doctrine of each herb and flower and root,  
 To know their secret'st virtue and express  
 The saving soul of all : who so has soothed  
 With lavers the torn brow and murdered cheeks,  
 Composed the hair and brought its gloss again,  
 And called the red bloom to the pale skin back,  
 And laid the strips and jagged ends of flesh  
 Even once more, and slacked the sinew's knot  
 Of every tortured limb—that now he lies  
 As if mere sleep possessed him underneath  
 These interwoven oaks and pines. Oh cheer,  
 Divine presenter of the healing rod,  
 Thy snake, with ardent throat and lulling eye,  
 Twines his lithe spires around ! I say, much cheer !  
 Proceed thou with thy wisest pharmacies !  
 And ye, white crowd of woodland sister-nymphs,  
 Ply as the sage directs, these buds and leaves  
 That strew the turf around the twain ! While I  
 Await, in fitting silence, the event.



*PHEIDIPPIDES.*

*χαίρετε, νικῶμεν.*

FIRST I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock !  
 Gods of my birthplace, demons and heroes, honor to all !  
 Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal in  
 praise



—Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the ægis and  
spear !

Also, ye of the bow and the buskin, praised be your peer,  
Now, henceforth and forever,—O latest to whom I upraise  
Hand and heart and voice ! For Athens, leave pasture  
and flock !

Present to help, potent to save, Pan—patron I call !

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I return !  
See, 't is myself here standing alive, no spectre that speaks !  
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens  
and you,

“Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid !  
“Persia has come, we are here, where is She ?” Your  
command I obeyed,

Ran and raced : like stubble, some field which a fire runs  
through,

Was the space between city and city : two days, two  
nights did I burn

Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

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

“Persia bids Athens proffer slaves’-tribute, water and  
earth ;

“Razed to the ground is Eretria—but Athens, shall  
Athens sink,

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

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

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

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

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

O my Athens—Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?  
 Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,  
 Malice,—each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified  
 hate!

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

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

“Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they  
 debate?”

“Thunder, thou Zeus! Athené, are Spartans a quarry  
 beyond

“Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them  
 ‘Ye must’!”

No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their answer at  
 last!

“Has Persia come,—does Athens ask aid,—may Sparta  
 befriend?”

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

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

“Ponder that precept of old, ‘No warfare, whatever the  
 odds

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

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

“Athens must wait, patient as we—who judgment  
 suspend.”

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

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

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

Yet “O Gods of my land !” I cried, as each hillock and  
plain,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“ My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to  
cave

“ No deity deigns to drape with verdure,—at least I can  
breathe,

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

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes’ ridge ;  
Gully and gap, I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a  
bar

Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the  
way

Right ! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure  
across :

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

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

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

“ Better ! ”—when—ah ! what was it I came on, of wonders that are ?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he—majestical Pan !

Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof ;

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

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

“ Halt Pheidippides ! ”—halt I did, my brain of a whirl :

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

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

“ Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast !

“ Wherefore ? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of old ?

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

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

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

“ ‘ When Persia—so much as strews not the soil—is flung under the sea,

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

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

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

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

“ So much guerdon to Athens, while ”--(out broke the good smile anew)

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

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

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

Pan for Athens, Pan for me ! myself have a guerdon rare !

Then spoke Miltiades. “ And thee, best runner of Greece,

“ Whose limbs did duty indeed,—what gift is promised thyself ?

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

Rosily blushed the youth : he paused : but, lifting at length

His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength

Into the utterance—“ Pan spoke thus : ‘ For what thou hast done

“ ‘ Count on a worthy reward ! Henceforth be allowed thee release

“ ‘ From the racer’s toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf ! ’

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

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

- “ Pound—Pan helping us—Persia to dust, and, under the  
 deep,  
 “ Whelm her away for ever ; and then,—no Athens to  
 save,—  
 “ Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the  
 brave,—  
 “ Hie to my house and home : and, when my children  
 shall creep  
 “ Close to my knees,—recount how the God was awful  
 yet kind,  
 “ Promised their sire reward to the full—rewarding him  
 —so !”
- 

Unforeseeing one ! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day :  
 So, when Persia was dust, all cried “ To Akropolis !  
 “ Run, Pheidippides, one race more ! the meed is thy due !  
 “ ‘ Athens is saved, thank Pan,’ go shout !” He flung  
 down his shield,  
 Ran like fire once more : and the space ’twixt the Fennel-  
 field  
 And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs  
 through,  
 Till in he broke : “ Rejoice, we conquer !” Like wine  
 through clay,  
 Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died—the bliss !  
 So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of  
 salute  
 Is still “ Rejoice !”—his word which brought rejoicing  
 indeed.  
 So is Pheidippides happy for ever,—the noble strong man  
 Who could race like a God, bear the face of a God,  
 whom a God loved so well  
 He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was  
 suffered to tell  
 Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began

So to end gloriously—once to shout, thereafter be mute :  
 “ Athens is saved ! ”—Pheidippides dies in the shout for  
 his meed.



*THE PATRIOT.*

AN OLD STORY.

I

IT was roses, roses, all the way,  
 With myrtle mixed in my path like mad :  
 The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,  
 The church-spires flamed, such flags they had  
 A year ago on this very day.

II

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

III

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

IV

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

## V

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

## VI

Thus I entered, and thus I go !  
 In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.  
 " Paid by the world, what dost thou owe  
 Me ?"—God might question ; now instead,  
 'T is God shall repay : I am safer so.



## POPULARITY.

## I

STAND still, true poet that you are !  
 I know you ; let me try and draw you.  
 Some night you 'll fail us : when afar  
 You rise, remember one man saw you,  
 Knew you, and named a star !

## II

My star, God's glow-worm ! Why extend  
 That loving hand of His which leads you,  
 Yet locks you safe from end to end  
 Of this dark world, unless He needs you,  
 Just saves your light to spend ?

## III

His clenched hand shall unclose at last,  
 I know, and let out all the beauty :  
 My poet holds the future fast,



Accepts the coming ages' duty,  
Their present for this past.

## IV

That day, the earth's feast-master's brow  
Shall clear, to God the chalice raising ;  
" Others give best at first, but Thou  
" Forever set'st our table praising,  
" Keep'st the good wine till now ! "

## V

Meantime, I 'll draw you as you stand,  
With few or none to watch and wonder :  
I 'll say—a fisher, on the sand  
By Tyre the old, with ocean-plunder,  
A netful, brought to land.

## VI

Who has not heard how Tyrian shells  
Enclosed the blue, that dye of dyes  
Whereof one drop worked miracles,  
And coloured like Astarte's eyes  
Raw silk the merchant sells ?

## VII

And each bystander of them all  
Could criticize, and quote tradition  
How depths of blue sublimed some pall  
—To get which, pricked a king's ambition ;  
Worth sceptre, crown and ball.

## VIII

Yet there's the dye, in that rough mesh,  
The sea has only just o'er-whispered !  
Live whelks, each lip's beard dripping fresh,  
As if they still the water's lisp heard  
Through foam the rock-weeds thresh.

## IX

Enough to furnish Solomon  
 Such hangings for his cedar house,  
 That, when gold-robed he took the throne  
 In that abyss of blue, the Spouse  
 Might swear his presence shone

## X

Most like the centre-spike of gold  
 Which burns deep in the blue-bell's womb  
 What time, with ardours manifold,  
 The bee goes singing to her groom,  
 Drunken and overbold.

## XI

Mere conchs ! not fit for warp or woof !  
 Till cunning come to pound and squeeze  
 And clarify,—refine to proof  
 The liquor filtered by degrees,  
 While the world stands aloof.

## XII

And there 's the extract, flasked and fine,  
 And priced and saleable at last !  
 And Hobbs, Nobbs, Stokes and Nokes combine  
 To paint the future from the past,  
 Put blue into their line.

## XIII

Hobbs hints blue,—straight he turtle eats :  
 Nobbs prints blue,—claret crowns his cup :  
 Nokes outdares Stokes in azure feats,—  
 Both gorge. Who fished the murex up ?  
 What porridge had John Keats ?



## PISGAH-SIGHTS. I.

## I

OVER the ball of it,  
 Peering and prying,  
 How I see all of it,  
 Life there, outlying !  
 Roughness and smoothness,  
 Shine and defilement,  
 Grace and uncouthness ;  
 One reconcilment.

## II

Orbed as appointed,  
 Sister with brother  
 Joins, ne'er disjointed  
 One from the other.  
 All's lend-and-borrow ;  
 Good, see, wants evil,  
 Joy demands sorrow,  
 Angel weds devil !

## III

" Which things must—*why* be ?"  
 Vain our endeavour !  
 So shall things aye be  
 As they were ever.  
 " Such things should *so* be !"  
 Sage our desistence !  
 Rough-smooth let globe be,  
 Mixed—man's existence !

## IV

Man—wise and foolish,  
 Lover and scorner.  
 Docile and mulish—  
 Keep each his corner !

Honey yet gall of it !  
 There 's the life lying,  
 And I see all of it,  
 Only, I 'm dying !



PISGAH-SIGHTS. 2.

I

COULD I but live again,  
 Twice my life over,  
 Would I once strive again ?  
 Would not I cover  
 Quietly all of it—  
 Greed and ambition—  
 So, from the pall of it,  
 Pass to fruition ?

II

“ Soft ! ” I 'd say, “ Soul mine !  
 “ Three-score and ten years,  
 “ Let the blind mole mine  
 “ Digging out deniers !  
 “ Let the dazed hawk soar,  
 “ Claim the sun's rights too !  
 “ Turf 't is thy walk 's o'er,  
 “ Foliage thy flight 's to.”

III

Only a learner,  
 Quick one or slow one,  
 Just a discerner,  
 I would teach no one.  
 I am earth's native :  
 No re-arranging it !  
 I be creative,  
 Chopping and changing it ?

## IV

March, men, my fellows !  
 Those who, above me,  
 (Distance so mellows)  
 Fancy you love me :  
 Those who, below me,  
 (Distance makes great so)  
 Free to forego me,  
 Fancy you hate so !

## V

Praising, reviling,  
 Worst head and best head,  
 Past me defiling,  
 Never arrested,  
 Wanters, abounders,  
 March, in gay mixture,  
 Men, my surrounders !  
 I am the fixture !

## VI

So shall I fear thee,  
 Mightiness yonder !  
 Mock-sun—more near thee,  
 What is to wonder ?  
 So shall I love thee,  
 Down in the dark,—lest  
 Glowworm I prove thee,  
 Star that now sparklest !



## PISGAH-SIGHTS. 3.

## I

GOOD, to forgive :  
 Best, to forget !  
 Living, we fret ;  
 Dying, we live.

Fretless and free,  
 Soul, clap thy pinion !  
 Earth have dominion,  
 Body, o'er thee !

## II

Wander at will,  
 Day after day,—  
 Wander away,  
 Wandering still—  
 Soul that canst soar !  
 Body may slumber :  
 Body shall cumber  
 Soul-flight no more.

## III

Waft of soul's wing !  
 What lies above ?  
 Sunshine and Love,  
 Skyblue and Spring !  
 Body hides—where ?  
 Ferns of all feather,  
 Mosses and heather,  
 Yours be the care !



AT THE "MERMAID."

The figure that thou here seest . . . Tut !  
 Was it for gentle Shakespeare put ?

B. JONSON. (*Adapted.*)

## I

I—"Next Poet?" No, my hearties,  
 I nor am nor fain would be !  
 Choose your chiefs and pick your parties,  
 Not one soul revolt to me !

I, forsooth, sow song-sedition ?  
 I, a schism in verse provoke ?  
 I, blown up by bard's ambition,  
 Burst—your bubble-king ? You joke.

## II

Come, be grave ! The sherris mantling  
 Still about each mouth, mayhap,  
 Breeds you insight—just a scantling—  
 Brings me truth out—just a scrap.  
 Look and tell me ! Written, spoken,  
 Here 's my life-long work : and where  
 —Where 's your warrant or my token  
 I 'm the dead king's son and heir ?

## III

Here 's my work : does work discover  
 What was rest from work—my life ?  
 Did I live man's hater, lover ?  
 Leave the world at peace, at strife ?  
 Call earth ugliness or beauty ?  
 See things there in large or small ?  
 Use to pay its Lord my duty ?  
 Use to own a lord at all ?

## IV

Blank of such a record, truly,  
 Here 's the work I hand, this scroll,  
 Yours to take or leave ; as duly,  
 Mine remains the unproffered soul.  
 So much, no whit more, my debtors—  
 How should one like me lay claim  
 To that largess elders, betters  
 Sell you cheap their souls for—fame ?

## V

Which of you did I enable  
 Once to slip inside my breast  
 There to catalogue and label  
 What I like least, what love best,  
 Hope and fear, believe and doubt of,  
 Seek and shun, respect—deride?  
 Who has right to make a rout of  
 Rarities he found inside?

## VI

Rarities or, as he 'd rather,  
 Rubbish such as stocks his own :  
 Need and greed (O strange) the Father  
 Fashioned not for him alone !  
 Whence—the comfort set a-strutting,  
 Whence—the outcry " Haste, behold !  
 " Bard's breast open wide, past shutting,  
 " Shows what brass we took for gold !"

## VII

Friends, I doubt not he 'd display you  
 Brass—myself call oreichalch,—  
 Furnish much amusement ; pray you  
 Therefore, be content I balk  
 Him and you, and bar my portal !  
 Here 's my work outside ; opine  
 What 's inside me mean and mortal !  
 Take your pleasure, leave me mine !

## VIII

Which is—not to buy your laurel  
 As last king did, nothing loth.  
 Tale adorned and pointed moral  
 Gained him praise and pity both.



Out rushed sighs and groans by dozens,  
 Forth by scores oaths, curses flew :  
 Proving you were cater-cousins,  
 Kith and kindred, king and you !

## IX

Whereas do I ne'er so little  
 (Thanks to sherris) leave ajar  
 Bosom's gate—no jot nor tittle  
 Grow we nearer than we are.  
 Sinning, sorrowing, despairing,  
 Body-ruined, spirit-wrecked,—  
 Should I give my woes an airing,—  
 Where 's one plague that claims respect ?

## X

Have you found your life distasteful ?  
 My life did and does smack sweet.  
 Was your youth of pleasure wasteful ?  
 Mine I saved and hold complete.  
 Do your joys with age diminish ?  
 When mine fail me, I 'll complain.  
 Must in death your daylight finish ?  
 My sun sets to rise again.

## XI

What, like you, he proved—your Pilgrim—  
 This our world a wilderness,  
 Earth still gray and heaven still grim,  
 Not a hand there his might press,  
 Not a heart his own might throb to,  
 Men all rogues and women—say,  
 Dolls which boys' heads duck and bob to,  
 Grown folk drop or throw away ?

## XII

My experience being other,  
 How should I contribute verse  
 Worthy of your king and brother?  
 Balaam-like I bless, not curse.  
 I find earth not gray but rosy,  
 Heaven not grim but fair of hue.  
 Do I stoop? I pluck a posy.  
 Do I stand and stare? All 's blue.

## XIII

Doubtless I am pushed and shoved by  
 Rogues and fools enough : the more  
 Good luck mine, I love, am loved by  
 Some few honest to the core.  
 Scan the near high, scout the far low !  
 " But the low come close : " what then ?  
 Simpletons? My match is Marlowe ;  
 Sciolists? My mate is Ben.

## XIV

Womankind—" the cat-like nature,  
 " False and fickle, vain and weak "—  
 Scarcely this sad nomenclature  
 Suits my tongue, if I must speak.  
 Does the sex invite, repulse so,  
 Tempt, betray, by fits and starts?  
 So becalm but to convulse so,  
 Decking heads and breaking hearts?

## XV

Well may you blaspheme at fortune !  
 I " threw Venus " (Ben, expound !)  
 Never did I need importune  
 Her, of all the Olympian round.

Blessings on my benefactress !  
 Cursings suit—for aught I know—  
 Those who twitched her by the back tress,  
 Tugged and thought to turn her—so !

## XVI

Therefore, since no leg to stand on  
 Thus I 'm left with,—joy or grief  
 Be the issue,—I abandon  
 Hope or care you name me Chief !  
 Chief and king and Lord's anointed,  
 I?—who never once have wished  
 Death before the day appointed :  
 Lived and liked, not poohed and pished !

## XVII

" Ah, but so I shall not enter,  
 " Scroll in hand, the common heart—  
 " Stopped at surface : since at centre  
 " Song should reach *Welt-schmerz*, world smart !"  
 " Enter in the heart ?" Its shelly  
 Cuirass guard mine, fore and aft !  
 Such song " enters in the belly  
 " And is cast out in the draught."

## XVIII

Back then to our sherris-brewage !  
 " Kingship" quotha ? I shall wait—  
 Waive the present time : some new age  
 But let fools anticipate !  
 Meanwhile greet me—" friend, good fellow  
 " Gentle Will," my merry men !  
 As for making Envy yellow  
 With " Next Poet"—(Manners, Ben !)

## HOUSE.

## I

SHALL I sonnet-sing you about myself?  
 Do I live in a house you would like to see?  
 Is it scant of gear, has it store of pelf?  
 "Unlock my heart with a sonnet-key?"

## II

Invite the world, as my betters have done?  
 "Take notice: this building remains on view,  
 "Its suites of reception every one,  
 "Its private apartment and bedroom too;

## III

"For a ticket, apply to the Publisher."  
 No: thanking the public, I must decline.  
 A peep through my window, if folks prefer;  
 But please you, no foot over threshold of mine!

## IV

I have mixed with a crowd and heard free talk  
 In a foreign land where an earthquake chanced,  
 And a house stood gaping, nought to balk  
 Man's eye wherever he gazed or glanced.

## V

The whole of the frontage shaven sheer,  
 The inside gaped: exposed to day,  
 Right and wrong and common and queer,  
 Bare, as the palm of your hand, it lay.

## VI

The owner? Oh, he had been crushed, no doubt!  
 "Odd tables and chairs for a man of wealth!  
 "What a parcel of musty old books about!  
 "He smoked,—no wonder he lost his health!

## VII

“ I doubt if he bathed before he dressed.

“ A brasier?—the pagan, he burned perfumes !

“ You see it is proved, what the neighbours guessed :

“ His wife and himself had separate rooms.”

## VIII

Friends, the goodman of the house at least

Kept house to himself till an earthquake came :

'T is the fall of its frontage permits you feast

On the inside arrangement you praise or blame.

## IX

Outside should suffice for evidence :

And whoso desires to penetrate

Deeper, must dive by the spirit-sense—

No optics like yours, at any rate !

## X

“ Hoity toity ! A street to explore,

“ Your house the exception ! ‘ *With this same key*

“ ‘ *Shakespeare unlocked his heart,*’ once more !”

Did Shakespeare ? If so, the less Shakespeare he !

—◆—

 SHOP.

## I

So, friend, your shop was all your house !

Its front, astonishing the street,

Invited view from man and mouse

To what diversity of treat

Behind its glass—the single sheet !

## II

What gimcracks, genuine Japanese :

Gape-jaw and goggle-eye, the frog ;

Dragons, owls, monkeys, beetles, geese ;  
 Some crush-nosed human-hearted dog :  
 Queer names, too, such a catalogue !

## III

I thought " And he who owns the wealth  
 " Which blocks the window's vastitude,  
 " —Ah, could I peep at him by stealth  
 " Behind his ware, pass shop, intrude  
 " On house itself, what scenes were viewed !

## IV

" If wide and showy thus the shop,  
 " What must the habitation prove ?  
 " The true house with no name a-top—  
 " The mansion, distant one remove,  
 " Once get him off his traffic groove !

## V

" Pictures he likes, or books perhaps ;  
 " And as for buying most and best,  
 " Commend me to these city chaps !  
 " Or else he 's social, takes his rest  
 " On Sundays, with a Lord for guest.

## VI

" Some suburb-palace, parked about  
 " And gated grandly, built last year :  
 " The four-mile walk to keep off gout ;  
 " Or big seat sold by bankrupt peer :  
 " But then he takes the rail, that 's clear.

## VII

" Or, stop ! I wager, taste selects  
 " Some out o' the way, some all-unknown  
 " Retreat : the neighbourhood suspects  
 " Little that he who rambles lone  
 " Makes Rothschild tremble on his throne !

## VIII

Nowise ! Nor Mayfair residence  
 Fit to receive and entertain,—  
 Nor Hampstead villa's kind defence  
 From noise and crowd, from dust and drain,—  
 Nor country-box was soul's domain !

## IX

Nowise ! At back of all that spread  
 Of merchandize, woe 's me, I find  
 A hole i' the wall where, heels by head,  
 The owner couched, his ware behind,  
 —In cupboard suited to his mind.

## X

For, why ? He saw no use of life  
 But, while he drove a roaring trade,  
 To chuckle " Customers are rife !"  
 To chafe " So much hard cash outlaid  
 " Yet zero in my profits made !

## XI

" This novelty costs pains, but—takes ?  
 " Cumbers my counter ! Stock no more !  
 " This article, no such great shakes,  
 " Fizzes like wild fire ? Underscore  
 " The cheap thing—thousands to the fore !"

## XII

'T was lodging best to live most nigh  
 (Cramp, coffinlike as crib might be)  
 Receipt of Custom ; ear and eye  
 Wanted no outworld : " Hear and see  
 " The bustle in the shop !" quoth he.

## XIII

My fancy of a merchant-prince  
 Was different. Through his wares we groped

Our darkling way to—not to mince  
 The matter—no black den where moped  
 The master if we interloped !

## XIV

Shop was shop only : household-stuff?  
 What did he want with comforts there ?  
 “ Walls, ceiling, floor, stay blank and rough,  
 “ So goods on sale show rich and rare !  
 “ *Sell and scud home,*” be shop’s affair !”

## XV

What might he deal in? Gems, suppose !  
 Since somehow business must be done  
 At cost of trouble,—see, he throws  
 You choice of jewels, everyone  
 Good, better, best, star, moon and sun !

## XVI

Which lies within your power of purse ?  
 This ruby that would tip aright  
 Solomon’s sceptre? Oh, your nurse  
 Wants simply coral, the delight,  
 Of teething baby,—stuff to bite !

## XVII

Howe’er your choice fell, straight you took  
 Your purchase, prompt your money rang  
 On counter,—scarce the man forsook  
 His study of the “ Times,” just swang  
 Till-ward his hand that stopped the clang,—

## XVIII

Then off made buyer with a prize,  
 Then seller to his “ Times ” returned,  
 And so did day wear, wear, till eyes  
 Brightened apace, for rest was earned :  
 He locked door long ere candle burned.



## XIX

And whither went he? Ask himself,  
 Not me! To change of scene, I think.  
 Once sold the ware and pursed the pelf,  
 Chaffer was scarce his meat and drink,  
 Nor all his music—money-chink.

## XX

Because a man has shop to mind  
 In time and place, since flesh must live,  
 Needs spirit lack all life behind,  
 All stray thoughts, fancies fugitive,  
 All loves except what trade can give?

## XXI

I want to know a butcher paints,  
 A baker rhymes for his pursuit,  
 Candlestick-maker much acquaints  
 His soul with song, or, haply mute,  
 Blows out his brains upon the flute!

## XXII

But—shop each day and all day long!  
 Friend, your good angel slept, your star  
 Suffered eclipse, fate did you wrong!  
 From where these sorts of treasures are,  
 There should our hearts be—Christ, how far!



## A TALE.

## I

WHAT a pretty tale you told me  
 Once upon a time  
 —Said you found me somewhere (scold me!)  
 Was it prose or was it rhyme,  
 Greek or Latin? Greek, you said,  
 While your shoulder propped my head.

## II

Anyhow there 's no forgetting  
 This much if no more,  
 That a poet (pray, no petting !)  
 Yes, a bard, sir, famed of yore,  
 Went where suchlike used to go,  
 Singing for a prize, you know.

## III

Well, he had to sing, nor merely  
 Sing but play the lyre ;  
 Playing was important clearly  
 Quite as singing : I desire,  
 Sir, you keep the fact in mind  
 For a purpose that 's behind.

## IV

There stood he, while deep attention  
 Held the judges round,  
 —Judges able, I should mention,  
 To detect the slightest sound  
 Sung or played amiss : such ears  
 Had old judges, it appears !

## V

None the less he sang out boldly,  
 Played in time and tune,  
 Till the judges, weighing coldly  
 Each note's worth, seemed, late or soon,  
 Sure to smile " In vain one tries  
 " Picking faults out : take the prize ! "

## VI

When, a mischief ! Were they seven  
 Strings the lyre possessed ?  
 Oh, and afterwards eleven,  
 Thank you ! Well, sir,—who had guessed

Such ill luck in store?—it happed  
One of those same seven strings snapped

## VII

All was lost, then ! No ! a cricket  
(What “cicada” ? Pooh !)  
—Some mad thing that left its thicket  
For mere love of music—flew  
With its little heart on fire,  
Lighted on the crippled lyre.

## VIII

So that when (Ah joy !) our singer  
For his truant string  
Feels with disconcerted finger,  
What does cricket else but fling  
Fiery heart forth, sound the note  
Wanted by the throbbing throat ?

## IX

Ay and, ever to the ending,  
Cricket chirps at need,  
Executes the hand’s intending,  
Promptly, perfectly,—indeed  
Saves the singer from defeat  
With her chirrup low and sweet.

## X

Till, at ending, all the judges  
Cry with one assent  
“ Take the prize —a prize who grudges  
“ Such a voice and instrument ?  
“ Why, we took your lyre for harp,  
“ So it shrilled us forth F sharp !”

## XI

Did the conqueror spurn the creature,  
Once its service done ?

That 's no such uncommon feature  
 In the case when Music's son  
 Finds his Lotte's power too spent  
 For aiding soul-development.

## XII

No! This other, on returning  
 Homeward, prize in hand,  
 Satisfied his bosom's yearning :  
 (Sir, I hope you understand !)  
 —Said " Some record there must be  
 " Of this cricket's help to me !"

## XIII

So, he made himself a statue :  
 Marble stood, life-size ;  
 On the lyre, he pointed at you,  
 Perched his partner in the prize ;  
 Never more apart you found  
 Her, he throned, from him, she crowned.

## XIV

That 's the tale : its application ?  
 Somebody I know  
 Hopes one day for reputation  
 Through his poetry that 's—Oh,  
 All so learned and so wise  
 And deserving of a prize !

## XV

If he gains one, will some ticket,  
 When his statue 's built,  
 Tell the gazer "'T was a cricket  
 " Helped my crippled lyre, whose lilt  
 " Sweet and low, when strength usurped  
 " Softness' place i' the scale, she chirped ?

## XVI

“ For as victory was nighest,  
 “ While I sang and played,—  
 “ With my lyre at lowest, highest,  
 “ Right alike,—one string that made  
 “ ‘ Love ’ sound soft was snapt in twain,  
 “ Never to be heard again,—

## XVII

“ Had not a kind cricket fluttered,  
 “ Perched upon the place  
 “ Vacant left, and duly uttered  
 “ ‘ Love, Love, Love,’ whene’er the bass  
 “ Asked the treble to atone  
 For its somewhat sombre drone.”

## XVIII

But you don’t know music ! Wherefore  
 Keep on casting pearls  
 To a—poet ? All I care for  
 Is—to tell him that a girl’s  
 “ Love ” comes aptly in when gruff  
 Grows his singing. (There, enough !)

PRINTED BY  
 SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE  
 LONDON

25652

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
University of California, San Diego

DATE DUE

MAR 10 1982

FEB 23 REC'D

FEB 28 1982

CI 39

UCSD Libr.

2.4-6





UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 274 991 9

