

The Princess

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THE PRINCESS

A MEDLEY

BY

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WITH NOTES BY

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Trans. A.M. 17 June 28

THE PRINCESS

A MEDLEY

PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighboring borough with their Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son,—the son
A Walter too,—with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

"*The Princess.*" Since this poem was first published, in 1847, it has undergone various changes, the last of them having been made in the fifth edition, which appeared in 1853.

A Medley. Justly so called because of the combination of sportiveness and seriousness in the poem, as well as the bringing together of scenes and incidents characteristic of widely separated centuries.

1 *Sir Walter Vivian.* It is believed that Edmund Henry Lushington—to whom, in the second edition, the poem is dedicated, and who was a warm friend and great admirer of the poet—was the original of Sir Walter Vivian.

2 *Lawns:* open glades in the woods; grassy fields. Not the grass-plots which in America are known by the name.

5 *Institute:* a society organized for the education as well as the entertainment of the working-people of the town. A festival given for the Maidstone Mechanics' Institute in Mr. Lushington's park is here described.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house, 10
 Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
 Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
 Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
 Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,
 Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;
 And on the tables every clime and age
 Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
 Claymore and snow-shoe, toys in lava, fans
 Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
 Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere, 20
 The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
 From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,
 Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
 His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

- 11 *Greek, set with busts.* That is, Greek in the style of its architecture, with busts here and there around the walls.
- 12 *Their names.* That is, their scientific names.
- 14 *Abbey-ruin.* In many private parks in England the ruins of ancient abbeys are still preserved.
- 15 *Ammonites:* spiral-shaped fossil shells. *The first bones of Time:* fossils of every sort.
- 16 *Every clime and age.* That is, curios ancient and modern, from various countries.
- 17 *Celts:* implements of prehistoric times, made of stone or metal and resembling an ax or a chisel. *Calumets:* Indian peace-pipes.
- 18 *Claymore:* a large two-handed, double-edged sword formerly used by the Scottish Highlanders.
- 20 *Laborious orient ivory, etc.:* a series of ivory balls—one within the other and sometimes beautifully carved—ingeniously fashioned by oriental artisans. This line has been cited by more than one critic as an example of Tennyson's faculty for choosing words which by their very sound suggest the character of that which they describe.
- 21 *Crease* (also spelled *creese* and *kris*): a sort of dagger or sword having a serpentine blade.

And "this," he said, "was Hugh's at Agincourt;
 And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:
 A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
 With all about him,"—which he brought, and I
 Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights
 Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings 30
 Who laid about them at their wills and died;
 And mixt with these a lady, one that arm'd
 Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,
 Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

"O miracle of women," said the book,
 "O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
 By this wild king to force her to his wish,
 Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,
 But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost—
 Her stature more than mortal in the burst 40
 Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—
 Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
 And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
 She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,
 And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,
 And some were push'd with lances from the rock,
 And part were drown'd within the whirling brook:
 O miracle of noble womanhood!"

25 *Agincourt*: a village in France near which, in 1415, the English under Henry V defeated the French forces.

26 *Ascalon*: a city about forty miles from Jerusalem in the vicinity of which several battles between the Crusaders and the Saracens took place.

31 *Laid about them at their wills*. That is, fought whom it pleased them to fight.

35 *Miracle of women*: wonder among women.

36 *Strait-besieged*: closely besieged.

45 *Whelm'd*: overwhelmed (of which it is not, however, an abbreviation).

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle ;
 And, I all rapt in this, " Come out," he said, 59
 " To the Abbey : there is Aunt Elizabeth
 And sister Lilia with the rest." We went
 (I kept the book and had my finger in it)
 Down thro' the park : strange was the sight to me ;
 For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown
 With happy faces and with holiday.
 There moved the multitude, a thousand heads :
 The patient leaders of their Institute
 Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of stone
 And drew, from butts of water on the slope, 60
 The fountain of the moment, playing, now
 A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
 Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
 Danced like a wisp : and somewhat lower down
 A man with knobs and wires and vials fired
 A cannon ; Echo answer'd in her sleep
 From hollow fields : and here were telescopes
 For azure views ; and there a group of girls
 In circle waited, whom the electric shock
 Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter : round the lake 70
 A little clock-work steamer paddling plied
 And shook the lilies : perch'd about the knolls

59 *Taught them with facts.* That is, entertained them with practical demonstrations, such as the experiments in hydraulics, electricity, and the like, referred to in the following lines.

63 *Steep-up:* perpendicular. A compound used by Shakespeare and again by Tennyson in "Queen Mary."

64 *Wisp:* Will-o'-the-wisp.

65, 66 *A man with knobs,* etc. That is, he fired a cannon by means of electricity.

68 *Azure views:* views of the sky.

70 *Dislink'd.* In many compounds Tennyson uses *dis* for the more common *un*.

A dozen angry models jetted steam :
 A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon
 Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves
 And dropt a fairy parachute and past :
 And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph
 They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
 Between the mimic stations ; so that sport
 Went hand in hand with science ; elsewhere 80
 Pure sport : a herd of boys with clamor bowl'd
 And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd about
 Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men and maids
 Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light
 And shadow, while the twangling violin
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead
 The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
 Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time ;
 And long we gazed, but satiated at length 90
 Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,
 Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
 Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave
 The park, the crowd, the house ; but all within

76 *Past*. Frequently used by Tennyson instead of *passed*.

80 *Otherwhere*: elsewhere.

82 *Stump'd the wicket*: played cricket.

85 *Twangling*: twanging.

86 *Soldier-laddie*: a Scotch song.

87 *Ambrosial*: divinely fragrant.

88 *Made noise with bees and breeze*. Another instance of that faculty of the poet's mentioned in connection with l. 20.

89 *Smacking*: characteristic.

90 *Satiated*. Accent on the first syllable, the second *a* obscure.

92 *Lighter than a fire*. Gothic architecture makes for lightness of effect.

93 *Of*: made by. *Gave*: showed; revealed.

The sward was trim as any garden lawn:
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
 From neighbor seats; and there was Ralph himself,
 A broken statue propt against the wall,
 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
 Half child, half woman as she was, had wound
 A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
 And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
 That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
 Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a feast
 Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,
 And there we join'd them: then the maiden Aunt
 Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd
 An universal culture for the crowd,
 And all things great; but we, unworthier, told
 Of college: he had climb'd across the spikes
 And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
 And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs; and one
 Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
 But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
 And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
 Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

100

110

98 *Neighbor seats*: neighboring country-seats. *Ralph*: the old Sir Ralph referred to in l. 26.

102 *Stony helm*: the helmet of the stone statue.

109 *An universal*. Should be *a universal*.

111, 112 *He had clim'b across the spikes, and he, etc.*: this one [of the narrators] had scaled the walls about the college [after the gates were closed for the night]; and that one, etc.

113 *He had breathed the Proctor's dogs*: another had led the assistants of the proctor—the officer of the college whose work it is to maintain discipline—a chase in pursuit of them. These assistants the students call the proctor's bull-dogs.

115 *Honeying*: growing sweet.

116 *Master*: the head of the college.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw
 The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought
 My book to mind: and opening this I read 120
 Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
 With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her
 That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
 And much I praised her nobleness, and "Where,"
 Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay
 Beside him) "lives there such a woman now?"

Quick answer'd Lilia, "There are thousands now
 Such women, but convention beats them down:
 It is but bringing up; no more than that:
 You men have done it: how I hate you all! 130
 Ah, were I something great! I wish I were
 Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
 That love to keep us children! O I wish
 That I were some great princess, I would build
 Far off from men a college like a man's,
 And I would teach them all that men are taught;
 We are twice as quick!" And here she shook aside
 The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling, "Pretty were the sight
 If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt 140
 With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
 And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.

119 *Lady-clad*: adorned like a lady, with the scarf wound about his helmet and the silken covering thrown over his shoulders.

128 *Convention*: conventionality.

138 *Play'd the patron with*: caressed in a patronizing way.

139 *Were*: would be.

141, 142 *Prudes for proctors*, etc. Notice Tennyson's fondness for alliteration as shown throughout the poem.

I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
 But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
 Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,
 If there were many Lilies in the brood,
 However deep you might embower the nest,
 Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward

She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:
 "That's your light way; but I would make it death ¹⁵⁰
 For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd;
 A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
 And sweet as English air could make her, she:
 But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,
 And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"
 And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,
 All else was well, for she-society.
 They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd
 At wine, in clubs, or art, of politics; 160
 They lost their weeks; they vex't the souls of deans;
 They rode; they betted; made a hundred friends,
 And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
 But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,
 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,
 Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,

143 *Rusty gowns*: the black gowns worn by university students.

144 *Emperor-moths*: large, handsome moths closely related to the silk-worm moth.

156 *Ogress*: an imaginary monster supposed to devour human beings.

161 *Lost their weeks*: lost, because of absence for a certain number of days, the credit for one of the nine terms of actual residence required of the recipient of the bachelor's degree.

“ We doubt not that. O yes, you miss’d us much.
I’ll stake my ruby ring upon it you did.”

She held it out ; and as a parrot turns
Up thro’ gilt wires a crafty loving eye, 170
And takes a lady’s finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,
So he with Lilia’s. Daintily she shriek’d
And wrung it. “ Doubt my word again ! ” he said.
“ Come, listen ! here is proof that you were miss’d :
We seven stay’d at Christmas up to read ;
And there we took one tutor as to read :
The hard-grain’d Muses of the cube and square
Were out of season : never man, I think,
So molder’d in a sinecure as he : 180
For while our cloisters echo’d frosty feet,
And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you all
In wassail ; often, like as many girls—
Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—
As many little trifling Liliās—play’d
Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
And *what’s my thought* and *when* and *where* and *how*,
And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
As here at Christmas.”

She remember’d that : 190
A pleasant game, she thought : she liked it more

176 *Read*: study.

178 *Muses of the cube and square*: mathematics.

181 *Cloisters*: covered walks around the inner courts of monastic and collegiate buildings.

184 *Wassail*: the drinking of healths.

185 *Sick for the hollies and the yews*. That is, longing to be at home for the Christmas holidays, which are typified by the holly and the yew.

Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
 But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,
 She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain

Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips;
 And Walter nodded at me: "*He* began,
 The rest would follow, each in turn; and so
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind? what kind?
 Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
 Time by the fire in winter."

200

"Kill him now,

The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,"
 Said Lilia; "Why not now?" the maiden Aunt.
 "Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?
 A tale for summer as befits the time,
 And something it should be to suit the place,
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
 Grave, solemn!"

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
 To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd
 And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
 An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
 Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt
 (A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face
 With color) turn'd to me with "As you will;

210

192 *Magic music*: a game in which something is hidden and the one seeking it is guided by music, that grows louder as he approaches the spot where the article is concealed and softer as he moves away from it.

199 *Chimeras*: odd fancies. *Crotchets*: whims. *Solecisms*: extravagances.

208 *Warp'd*: twisted.

Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

"Take Lilia, then, for heroine," clamor'd he,
"And make her some great Princess, six feet high,
Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
The Prince to win her!"

"Then follow me, the Prince,"²²⁰

I answer'd, "each be hero in his turn!
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—
Heroic seems our Princess as required—
But something made to suit with time and place,
A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments
For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all—
This *were* a medley! we should have him back 230
Who told the 'Winter's Tale' to do it for us.
No matter: we will say whatever comes.
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a song
To give us breathing-space."

So I began,
And the rest follow'd; and the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the songs.

229 *Had burnt them*: would have had them burned [as witches].

230 *Were*: would be.

231 *Winter's Tale*: a comedy by Shakespeare.

I

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
 Of temper amorous, as the first of May,
 With lengths of yellow ringlet like a girl,
 For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.
 Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt
 Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,
 Dying, that none of all our blood should know
 The shadow from the substance, and that one
 Should come to fight with shadows and to fall: 10
 For so, my mother said, the story ran.
 And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
 An old and strange affection of the house.
 Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:
 On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
 And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
 I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,

4 *For on my cradle shone the Northern star.* That is, he was a native of a northern country.

7 *Cast no shadow.* He who cast no shadow was known to have sold his soul to Satan. For an interesting story of such a man the student should read *The Wonderful History of Peter Schlemihl, the Man Who Lost His Shadow*, by Adelbert von Chamisso, a noted German lyric poet. The tale, dealing with the misery resulting to Schlemihl from his having sold his shadow, is a true classic. It has been translated by Dr. Frederic Henry Hedge.

14 *Weird seizures.* Lines 5-21 and all the other references to these seizures were added in the fifth edition of the poem. It is a question whether their addition was an improvement or not. Dawson considers them injurious to the unity of the work, declaring that "they confuse the simple conception of his [the Prince's] character and graft on to his personality the foreign and somewhat derogatory idea of catalepsy." Other critics feel them to be necessary to emphasize the poetic temperament of the Prince and excuse his apparent weakness.

And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
 Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
 And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd "catalepsy." 20
 My mother pitying made a thousand prayers ;
 My mother was as mild as any saint,
 Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,
 So gracious was her tact and tenderness :
 But my good father thought a king a king ;
 He cared not for the affection of the house ;
 He held his scepter like a pendant's wand
 To lash offense, and with long arms and hands
 Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
 For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been, 30
 While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
 To one, a neighboring Princess : she to me
 Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
 At eight years old ; and still from time to time
 Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
 And of her brethren, youths of puissance ;
 And still I wore her picture by my heart,
 And one dark tress ; and all around them both
 Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their
 queen.

19 *Court-Galen*: court-physician. Galen, a noted Greek physician and scientist, lived in the second century A. D.

23 *Half-canonized*: regarded as almost a saint.

27 *Pendant's wand*: schoolmaster's rod.

33 *Proxy-wedded with a bootless calf*. In mediæval times marriage by proxy was not rare. The bridegroom who was unable to be present at the ceremony was represented by a proxy, who went through the form of marriage in his place. Sometimes as a part of the ceremony the proxy bared his leg to the knee.

36 *Puissance*: power, strength.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed, 40
 My father sent ambassadors with furs
 And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back
 A present, a great labor of the loom;
 And therewithal an answer vague as wind:
 Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;
 He said there was a compact; that was true:
 But then she had a will; was he to blame?
 And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
 Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood 50
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:
 The first, a gentleman of broken means
 (His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
 Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
 And almost my half-self, for still we moved
 Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face
 Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,
 Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,
 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent 60
 The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
 From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware
 That he would send a hundred thousand men,

44 *Therewithal*: therewith, at the same time.

49 *Would not wed*. The Princess contended that at the age of eight years she was too young to consent to the marriage and therefore was not bound by the contract.

50 *Presence-room*: audience chamber.

60 *Snow'd it down*. That is, tearing the letter into small bits, threw them down so that they fell like flakes of snow.

And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd
 The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,
 Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke: "My father, let me go.
 It cannot be but some gross error lies
 In this report, this answer of a king,
 Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable; 70
 Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
 Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,
 May rue the bargain made." And Florian said:
 "I have a sister at the foreign court,
 Who moves about the Princess; she, you know,
 Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:
 He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
 The lady of three castles in that land:
 Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean."
 And Cyril whisper'd: "Take me with you too. 80
 Then laughing, "What, if these weird seizures come
 Upon you in those lands, and no one near
 To point you out the shadow from the truth!
 Take me: I'll serve you better in a strait;
 I grate on rusty hinges here": but "No!"
 Roar'd the rough king, "you shall not; we ourself
 Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
 In iron gauntlets: break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and past
 Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town; 90
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out;

65 *Cook'd his spleen*: nursed his wrath. In olden times the spleen was considered the seat of anger.

84 *Strait*: difficult situation; emergency.

Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed
 In the green gleam of dewy-tassel'd trees :
 What were those fancies? wherefore break her troth?
 Proud look'd the lips : but while I meditated
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,
 And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
 Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice
 Went with it, " Follow, follow, thou shalt win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month 100
 Became her golden shield, I stole from court
 With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
 Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread
 To hear my father's clamor at our backs
 With Ho! from some bay-window shake the night ;
 But all was quiet : from the bastion'd walls
 Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,
 And flying reach'd the frontier : then we crost
 To a livelier land ; and so by tilth and grange,
 And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness, 110
 We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers,
 And in the imperial palace found the king.

93 *Dewy-tassel'd*: hung with catkins as in the hazel-wood [HALLAM TENNYSON].

96 *Rush'd upon*: blew toward.

100 *Silver sickle*: new moon.

101 *Golden shield*: full moon.

106 *Bastion'd walls*: walls having ramparts at the top.

107 *Like threaded spiders*. That is, as spiders suddenly drop straight while spinning out their webs.

109 *Livelier land*. They were going toward the south and consequently the verdure showed more life. *Tilth*: cultivated land. *Grange*: farmhouse.

110 *Blowing bosks of wilderness*: uncultivated thickets blooming with flowers [DAWSON].

111 *Mother-city*: capital; metropolis.

His name was Gama ; crack'd and small his voice,
 But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind
 On glassy water drove his cheek in lines ;
 A little dry old man, without a star,
 Not like a king : three days he feasted us,
 And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
 And my betroth'd. " You do us, Prince," he said,
 Airing a snowy hand and signet gem, 120
 " All honor. We remember love ourself
 In our sweet youth : there did a compact pass
 Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—
 I think the year in which our olives fail'd.
 I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,
 With my full heart : but there were widows here,
 Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ;
 They fed her theories, in and out of place
 Maintaining that with equal husbandry 130
 The woman were an equal to the man.
 They harp'd on this ; with this our banquets rang ;
 Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk ;
 Nothing but this ; my very ears were hot
 To hear them : knowledge, so my daughter held,
 Was all in all : they had but been, she thought,
 As children ; they must lose the child, assume

116 *Without a star*: wearing no orders or military decorations.

120 *Signet-gem*: a seal ring in which the seal is cut on a precious stone.

121 *Ourselves*. In this reading we follow Rolfe, who argues that in the last edition the poet everywhere else changed the form to *ourselves* and therefore must have intended to do so here, though even in the edition of 1884 *ourselves* is given.

129 *Husbandry*: here, training.

135 *They*. That is, women in general.

136 *They must lose the child*. That is, they must cease to act and think like children and become serious, purposeful women. Cf. l. 133, Prologue.

The woman : then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
 But all she is and does is awful ; odes
 About this losing of the child ; and rhymes 140
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
 Beyond all reason : these the women sang ;
 And they that know such things—I sought but peace ;
 No critic I—would call them masterpieces :
 They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a boon,
 A certain summer-palace which I have
 Hard by your father's frontier : I said no,
 Yet being an easy man, gave it : and there,
 All wild to found an University
 For maidens, on the spur she fled ; and more 150
 We know not,—only this : they see no men,
 Not even her brother Arac, nor the twins
 Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her
 As on a kind of paragon ; and I
 (Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed
 Dispute betwixt myself and mine : but since
 (And I confess with right) you think me bound
 In some sort, I can give you letters to her ;
 And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
 Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king ; 160

And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur
 With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
 Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
 But chafing me on fire to find my bride)

149 *An.* Should be *a*.

150 *On the spur*: post-haste.

155 *Pardon me saying.* *For* is understood.

163 *Frets*: irritations.

Went forth again with both my friends. We rode
 Many a long league back to the North. At last
 From hills, that look'd across a land of hope,
 We dropt with evening on a rustic town
 Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
 Close at the boundary of the liberties; 170
 There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host
 To council, plied him with his richest wines,
 And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared
 As blank as death in marble: then exclaim'd
 Averting it was clear against all rules
 For any man to go: but as his brain
 Began to mellow, "If the king," he said,
 "Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?
 The king would bear him out"; and at the last— 180
 The summer of the vine in all his veins—
 "No doubt that we might make it worth his while.
 She once had past that way; he heard her speak:
 She scared him; life! he never saw the like;
 She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave:
 And he, he revered his liege-lady there;
 He always made a point to post with mares;
 His daughter and his housemaid were the boys:
 The land, he understood, for miles about

167 *A land of hope.* Remember that it was spring-time.

170 *Liberties:* the outlying grounds of the university.

172 *Plied him with:* pressed upon him.

174 *Sibilation:* hissing sound. Here, whistle of astonishment.

175 *As blank as death in marble:* with as fixed and expressionless a gaze as that of a death-mask.

178 *Began to mellow:* began to yield to the influence of the wine.

181 *The summer of the vine:* the warmth of the wine.

188 *Boys:* postilions and stable-boys.

Was till'd by women; all the swine were sows,
And all the dogs"—

190

But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,
Remembering how we three presented Maid,
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's court.
We sent mine host to purchase female gear;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laughter, help
To lace us up, till each in maiden plumes
We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

200

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight, when the college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley: then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars;
And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow: further on we gain'd
A little street half garden and half house,
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling

210

192 *Clothed in act*: put into execution.

193 *Presented*: represented.

194 *High tide of feast*: festival time.

198 *A sight to shake the midriff of despair with laughter*. That is, one that would have made Despair herself laugh heartily. *Help*. The old past tense of *help*.

201 *To guerdon*: to be a recompense for; to reward.

202 *Liberties*. Cf. l. 170.

On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
 Of fountains spouted up and showering down
 In meshes of the jasmine and the rose ;
 And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
 Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
 By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and Earth ²²⁰
 With constellation and with continent,
 Above an entry: riding in, we call'd ;
 A plump-arm'd ostleress and a stable wench
 Came running at the call, and help'd us down.
 Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,
 Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave
 Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
 In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,
 And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche," she said,
 "And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest, ²³⁰
 Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers are we,"
 One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote
 In such a hand as when a field of corn
 Bows all its ears before the roaring East:

"Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
 Your Highness would enroll them with your own,
 As Lady Psyche's pupils."

219 *Pallas*: the Greek name for Minerva, the goddess of wisdom.

220 *Blazon'd like Heaven and Earth*. That is, on one was depicted the heavens and on the other the terrestrial globe.

226 *Gave*: opened out upon. Cf. l. 93 of Prologue.

229 *Tutors*. At the English universities each student is under a tutor, who advises him concerning his choice of studies and supervises his work.

233, 234 *In such a hand*, etc. An apt description of the delicate, slanting handwriting of women of Tennyson's day.

This I seal'd :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
 And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
 And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes.
 I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;
 And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
 To float about a glimmering night, and watch
 A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight swell
 On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

240

II

As thro' the land at eve we went,
 And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
 We fell out, my wife and I,
 O we fell out I know not why,
 And kiss'd again with tears.
 And blessings on the falling out
 That all the more endears,
 When we fall out with those we love
 And kiss again with tears!
 For when we came where lies the child
 We lost in other years,
 There above the little grave,
 O there above the little grave,
 We kiss'd again with tears.

239 *Uranian Venus*: the heavenly Aphrodite, daughter of Uranus, who typifies spiritual love in contrast to common, earthly love.

240 *Raised the blinding bandage*. Cupid—in Roman mythology the blind god of love—is sometimes shown blindfolded.

244 *Muffled moonlight*: moonlight shining through vaporous clouds.

Song. The songs separating the seven parts of the poem are supposed to be sung by the women of the party as suggested in l. 233-235 of the Prologue. They did not appear in the first two editions, though the poet had included them in his original scheme of the work. Notice that in all of them the theme is love—love for husband, wife, lover, child. In the recurrence of this theme the poet suggests to us again and again the inevitable failure of any scheme of life which ignores or suppresses feelings that are natural and right.

AT break of day the College Portress came:
 She brought us Academic silks, in hue
 The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
 And zoned with gold; and now when these were on,
 And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,
 She curtseying her obeisance, let us know
 The Princess Ida waited. Out we paced,
 I first, and following thro' the porch that sang
 All round with laurel, issued in a court
 Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths 10
 Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
 Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.
 The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,
 Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst;
 And here and there on lattice edges lay
 Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
 And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
 With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne,
 All beauty compass'd in a female form, 20
 The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
 Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
 Than our man's earth; such eyes were in her head,
 And so much grace and power, breathing down

2 *Academic silks*: silk gowns worn by students.

4 *Zoned with gold*: having golden girdles.

8, 9 *Sang all around with laurel*: was filled with the music of the rustling laurel branches that surrounded it.

10 *Compact*: made. *Boss'd*: carved in relief.

13 *The Muses*: in classical mythology, nine goddesses who presided over song, poetry, and the arts and sciences. *The Graces*: three beautiful sister goddesses—Euphrosyne, Aglaia and Thalia by name—who were regarded as the inspirers of the qualities which give attractiveness to wisdom, love, and social intercourse.

From over her arch'd brows, with every turn
 Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,
 And to her feet. She rose her height, and said :

“ We give you welcome : not without redound
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
 The first-fruits of the stranger : aftertime, 30
 And that full voice which circles round the grave,
 Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
 What ! are the ladies of your land so tall ?”
 “ We of the court,” said Cyril. “ From the court,”
 She answer'd, “ then ye know the Prince ?” and he :
 “ The climax of his age ! as tho' there were
 One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
 He worships your ideal.” She replied :
 “ We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
 This barren verbiage, current among men, 40
 Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
 Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
 As arguing love of knowledge and of power ;
 Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,
 We dream not of him : when we set our hand
 To this great work, we purposed with ourself
 Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
 Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling

28 *Redound*: return, requital.

30 *The stranger*: those without King Gama's realm. *Aftertime*: hereafter; or, perhaps, posterity.

31 *That full voice*: fame.

35 *Then ye know the Prince?* With all her superiority, the Princess is not entirely lacking in womanly curiosity.

40 *Barren verbiage*: unprofitable, empty wordiness.

44 *The child*. See l. 136, Part I.

45 *We dream not of him*. However, she is not averse to hearing something concerning him.

The tricks which make us toys of men, that so,
 Some future time, if so indeed you will, 50
 You may with those self-styled our lords ally
 Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale."

At those high words, we, conscious of ourselves,
 Perused the matting; then an officer
 Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:
 Not for three years to correspond with home;
 Not for three years to cross the liberties;
 Not for three years to speak with any men;
 And many more, which hastily subscribed,
 We enter'd on the boards: and "Now," she cried, 60
 "Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall!
 Our statues!—not of those that men desire,
 Sleek Odaliskes, or oracles of mode,
 Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she
 That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
 The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
 The Carian Artemisia strong in war,

53 *Conscious of ourselves.* That is, embarrassed by the consciousness of the deception they were practicing.

55 *Statutes:* rules of the university.

60 *Enter'd on the boards:* entered as students.

63 *Odaliskes:* female slaves in the harem of the Sultan of Turkey.
Mode: fashion.

65 *She that taught the Sabine:* the wood-nymph Egeria, who by her wise counsels assisted Numa Pompilius (a Sabine by birth) to frame wise laws for Rome, whose second king he was.

66 *The foundress of the Babylonian wall:* Semiramis, a legendary Assyrian queen who was once believed to have built many great cities, Babylon among them.

67 *The Carian Artemisia:* the Carian queen who accompanied Xerxes in his expedition against Greece. At the battle of Salamis she distinguished herself, showing wonderful courage.

The Rhodope that built the pyramid,
 Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
 That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows 70
 Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
 Convention, since to look on noble forms
 Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
 That which is higher. O lift your natures up ;
 Embrace our aims ; work out your freedom. Girls,
 Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd !
 Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
 The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
 And slander, die. Better not be at all
 Than not be noble. Leave us ; you may go : 80
 To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
 The fresh arrivals of the week before ;
 For they press in from all the provinces,
 And fill the hive."

She spoke, and bowing waved
 Dismissal : back again we crost the court

- 68 *The Rhodope*. Rhodopis, here referred to, was a beautiful Thracian who was taken to Egypt as a slave. She was given her freedom and before her death amassed a fortune, but she did not build a pyramid. Perhaps the poet meant to intimate by this mistake made by the Princess that accuracy is not a feminine trait.
- 69 *Clelia*: a Roman maiden who, having been given to Porsena as a hostage, escaped on horseback, swimming her steed across the River Tiber. She was captured and sent back to Porsena, who gave her her liberty as a reward for her bravery. *Cornelia*: a Roman matron, daughter of Scipio Africanus and mother of the Gracchi. She was noted for her wisdom as well as for her virtues. *The Palmyrene*: Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, who led her people against the Romans under Aurelian, and who was defeated and taken as a captive to Rome.
- 71 *Agrippina*: a noted Roman matron; granddaughter of the Emperor Augustus and wife of his general, Germanicus. Like Cornelia, she is remembered for her strength of character.
- 72 *Convention*. See l. 128, Prologue.
- 73 *The sensuous organism*: the senses.
- 80 *Us*. The Princess uses the plural of royalty.

To Lady Psyche's : as we enter'd in,
 There sat along the forms, like morning doves
 That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
 A patient range of pupils ; she herself
 Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
 A quick brunette, well-molded, falcon-eyed,
 And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
 Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
 In shining draperies, headed like a star,
 Her maiden babe, a double April old,
 Aglaïa slept. We sat : the Lady glanced :
 Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame
 That whisper'd "Asses' ears " among the sedge,
 " My sister." " Comely, too, by all that's fair."
 Said Cyril. " O hush, hush !" and she began.

90

100

87 *Forms*: benches.

90 *A desk of satin-wood.* In his *Study of the Princess* Mr. Dawson says: " Very properly . . . the path of knowledge, thorny to the tyrannous male, is made comfortable there [i. e. in the university of the Princess]. The ladies drink in science 'Leaning deep in broidered down,' as is befitting. Everything matches in that university. No common pine—the professional desk is of satin-wood."

91 *Quick*: animated, lively.

93 *A child.* Mr. Dawson calls Psyche's child the heroine of the poem. He says: " Ridiculous in the lecture-room, the babe, in the poem, as in the songs, is made the central point upon which the plot turns; for the unconscious child is the concrete embodiment of Nature herself, clearing away all merely intellectual theories by her silent influence . . . Whenever the plot thickens the babe appears . . . O fatal babe! more fatal to the hopes of women than the doomful horse to the proud towers of Ilion; for through thee the walls of pride are breached and all the conquering affections flock in." Follow the child through the story and see how true is the critic's estimate of the part it plays.

94 *Headed like a star*: with shining golden hair.

97, 98 *The dame, etc.* Tennyson follows Chaucer in making it the wife of Midas and not his barber who revealed the secret of his having asses' ears.

“ This world was once a fluid haze of light,
 Till toward the center set the starry tides,
 And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
 The planets: then the monster, then the man;
 Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,
 Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate;
 As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
 Among the lowest.”

Thereupon she took
 A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past;
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon
 As emblematic of a nobler age;
 Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
 Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
 How far from just; till warming with her theme
 She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique
 And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet

110

- 101-104 *This world was once*, etc. This is the nebular hypothesis, formulated by the French astronomer LaPlace at about the beginning of the nineteenth century.
- 105 *Woaded*: stained with the juice of the woad plant. It is said that the ancient Britons painted their bodies with this juice.
- 107 *As yet*: such as yet.
- 109 *The ungracious past*: that is ungracious in its treatment of women.
- 112 *Appraised*: praised. By the *Lycian custom* children took the family name of the mother instead of that of the father, and traced their descent in the female line.
- 113 *Lay at wine*. Among the Etruscans the women attended the banquets with the men. At these, as at all meals, those present reclined on couches. *Lar* [*or Lars*] and *Lucumo*: Etruscan titles of honor.
- 117 *Fulminated*: thundere *Laws Salique*: laws forbidding inheritance to pass through a female line. The Salic law in France excluded women from the throne.
- 118 *Little-footed China*. So called by her because of the Chinese practice of binding the feet of girls and women. *Mahomet* is said to have declared that women were without souls.

With much contempt, and came to chivalry ;
 When some respect, however slight, was paid 120
 To woman, superstition all awry :
 However, then commenced the dawn : a beam
 Had slanted forward, falling in a land
 Of promise ; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
 Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared
 To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
 None lordlier than themselves but that which made
 Woman and man. She had founded ; they must build.
 Here might they learn whatever men were taught : 130
 Let them not fear : some said their heads were less :
 Some men's were small ; not they the least of men ;
 For often fineness compensated size :
 Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew
 With using ; thence the man's, if more was more ;
 He took advantage of his strength to be
 First in the field : some ages had been lost ;
 But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
 Was longer ; and albeit their glorious names
 Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth 140
 The highest is the measure of the man,
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
 But Homer, Plato, Verulam ; even so
 With woman : and in arts of government

121 *Superstition all awry*: in spite of superstition.

125-129 *To her who had*, etc. That is, to the Princess.

143 *Glebe*: soil, ground.

144 *Homer*: an epic poet of Greece who flourished about 1000 B. C.
Plato: a Greek philosopher (429-347 B. C.). *Verulam*: Sir Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam, an English philosopher and statesman (1561-1626).

Elizabeth and others; arts of war
 The peasant Joan and others; arts of grace
 Sappho and others vied with any man:
 And, last not least, she who had left her place,
 And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow ¹⁵⁰
 To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
 Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy
 Dilating on the future: "everywhere
 Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
 Two in the tangled business of the world,
 Two in the liberal offices of life,
 Two plummetts dropt for one to sound the abyss
 Of science and the secrets of the mind; ¹⁶⁰
 Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more;
 And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
 Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
 Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."

146 *Elizabeth*: Queen of England from 1533 to 1603.

147 *The peasant Joan*: Joan of Arc, a French peasant girl (born in 1412) who believed that she had been directly and repeatedly commanded by God to espouse the cause of the Orleanist party and the Dauphin of France (afterward Charles VII) against the Burgundians, who had sworn allegiance to Henry V of England. Having persuaded the Dauphin to give her a command in the army, she assumed male attire and led her troops to victory a number of times, thus making it possible for him to be crowned king at Rheims in 1429. Finally captured by the Burgundians, she was sold by them to the English, who burned her at the stake as a sorceress in 1431

148 *Sappho*: a famous poetess of Greece who flourished about 600 B. C. Her work is noted for its beauty and feeling.

149-153 *She who had*, etc. She again refers to the Princess.

151 *Lapt*: enfolded.

156-160 *Two heads*, etc. That is, a time will come when man and woman will work side by side as equals.

She ended here, and beckon'd us: the rest
 Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she
 Began to address us, and was moving on
 In gratulation, till as when a boat
 Tacks and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried, 170
 "My brother!" "Well, my sister." "Oh," she said,
 "What do you here? and in this dress? and these?
 Why, who are these? a wolf within the fold!
 A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me!
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!"
 "No plot, no plot," he answer'd. "Wretched boy,
 How saw you not the inscription on the gate,
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?"
 "And if I had," he answer'd, "who could think
 The softer Adams of your Academe, 180
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such
 As chanted on the blanching bones of men?"
 "But you will find it otherwise," she said.
 "You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools! my vow
 Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,
 That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,
 The Princess!" "Well then, Psyche, take my life
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange

166 *Parted*: departed.

177 *The inscription on the gate*. See l. 209, Part I.

180 *Academe*: academy.

181 *Sirens*: sea nymphs who had the power of charming by their song all who heard them, so that the sailors who passed the island on which they lived were irresistibly impelled to cast themselves into the sea in their desire to see the singers. *Siren* has come to be a term applied to any especially attractive woman, and what Florian means is that, though the charms of the women of the university, give them great power, they surely would not take pleasure in the destruction of men as the real Sirens did.

188 *Grange*: here, granary.

For warning; bury me beside the gate,
 And cut this epitaph above my bones :
Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of womankind."
 "Let me die too," said Cyril, "having seen
 And heard the Lady Psyche."

190

I struck in :

"Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth;
 Receive it; and in me behold the Prince
 Your countryman, affianced years ago
 To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,
 And thus (what other way was left?) I came."

"O Sir, O Prince, I have no country, none;
 If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was
 Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.

200

Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not breathe
 Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
 Who am not mine, say, live: the thunderbolt
 Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it falls."

"Yet pause," I said: "for that inscription there,
 I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
 Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
 To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,
 If more and acted on, what follows? war;
 Your own work marr'd: for this your Academe,
 Whichever side be victor, in the halloo
 Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
 With all fair theories only made to gild

210

195 *So mask'd.* That is, dressed up as he is in women's clothes.

205 *Not mine:* not my own mistress.

207 *For:* as for.

209 *Clapper:* a contrivance for making a noise to scare away the birds.
Garth: garden.

A stormless summer." "Let the Princess judge
Of that," she said: "farewell, Sir—and to you.
I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I rejoin'd,
"The fifth in line from that old Florian, 220
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
(The gaunt old baron with his beetle brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he bestrode my grandsire, when he fell,
And all else fled? we point to it, and we say,
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
But branches current yet in kindred veins."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian added; "she
With whom I sang about the morning hills, 230
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,
And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
You were that Psyche, but what are you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for whom
I would be that forever which I seem,
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet, 240
And glean your scatter'd sapience."

222, 223 *Beetle-brow Sun-shaded.* There has been much discussion of this passage. Some critics take it to mean that his eyes were shaded from the sun by his shaggy eyebrows; others that his forehead was tanned by exposure to the sun.

224 *Bestrode:* stood over to protect.

227 *But branches current yet, etc.:* but flows to this day in the veins of his descendants.

Then once more,

“Are you that Lady Psyche,” I began,
 “That on her bridal morn before she past
 From all her old companions, when the king
 Kiss’d her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties
 Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;
 That were there any of our people there
 In want or peril, there was one to hear
 And help them? look! for such are these and I.”

“Are you that Psyche,” Florian ask’d, “to whom, 250
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
 Came flying while you sat beside the well?
 The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
 And sobb’d, and you sobb’d with it, and the blood
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
 That was fawn’s blood, not brother’s, yet you wept.
 O by the bright head of my little niece.

You were that Psyche, and what are you now?”

“You are that Psyche,” Cyril said again, 260
 “The mother of the sweetest little maid
 That ever crow’d for kisses.”

“Out upon it!”

She answer’d, “peace! and why should I not play
 The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
 Him you call great: he for the common weal,
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,

255 *Kirtle*: an outer petticoat.

263 *The Spartan Mother* believed it to be her duty to sacrifice natural feeling for the public good.

264 *Lucius Junius Brutus*, when Roman consul (about 500 B. C.), put to death his two sons because they had taken part in a conspiracy to restore the Tarquins to power.

As I might slay this child, if good need were,
 Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom
 The secular emancipation turns
 Of half this world, be swerved from right to save 270
 A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
 O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear
 My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet—
 Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise
 You perish) as you came, to slip away
 To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,
 These women were too barbarous, would not learn;
 They fled, who might have shamed us: promise, all."

What could we else, we promised each; and she, 280
 Like some wild creature newly-caged, commenced
 A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
 By Florian; holding out her lily arms
 Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:
 "I knew you at the first; tho' you have grown
 You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and glad
 To see you, Florian. I give thee to death,
 My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
 My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
 Our mother, is she well?"

With that she kiss'd 290
 His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
 About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up
 From out a common vein of memory
 Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,
 And far allusion, till the gracious dews

274 *Fleckless*: literally, without spot or blemish; here blameless.

295 *Gracious dews*: tears.

Began to glisten and to fall: and while
 They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,
 "I brought a message here from Lady Blanche."
 Back started she, and turning round we saw
 The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,
 Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
 A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
 That clad her like an April daffodilly
 (Her mother's color), with her lips apart,
 And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
 As bottom agates seen to wave and float
 In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

300

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
 Then Lady Psyche, "Ah—Melissa—you!
 You heard us?" and Melissa, "O pardon me!
 I heard, I could not help it, did not wish;
 But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,
 Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
 To give three gallant gentlemen to death."
 "I trust you," said the other, "for we two
 Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine;
 But yet your mother's jealous temperament—
 Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove
 The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear

310

304 *Her mother's color* was yellow, while Psyche's was lilac.

305 *Fair: clear. Bottom agates: agates lying at the bottom of the sea.*

316 *Elm and vine.* That is, as close as the elm tree and the vine that clings to it.

319 *Danaïd of a leaky vase:* one unable to keep a secret. The Danaïds were the fifty daughters of King Danaus, all but one of whom, in obedience to their father's command, killed their husbands. The murderesses were punished in Hades for this crime, being condemned forever to try to fill leaky vessels with water.

This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
 My honor, these their lives." "Ah, fear me not,"
 Replied Melissa; "no—I would not tell,
 No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
 No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things
 That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."
 "Be it so," the other, "that we still may lead
 The new light up, and culminate in peace,
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."
 Said Cyril, "Madam, he the wisest man
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls 330
 Of Lebanonian cedar; nor should you
 (Tho', Madam, *you* should answer, *we* would ask)
 Less welcome find among us, if you came
 Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
 Myself for something more." He said not what,
 But "Thanks," she answer'd, "go: we have been too
 long
 Together: keep your hoods about the face;
 They do so that affect abstraction here.
 Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold
 Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well." 340

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,
 And held her round the knees against his waist,
 And blew the swollen cheek of a trumpeter,
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child

323 *Aspasia*: a Greek woman of the fifth century B. C., famous for her intellectual strength.

324 *Not to answer*: not if so doing would enable me to answer

325 *Sheba*: the Queen of Sheba, a province of Arabia, who paid King Solomon a visit in order to profit by his wisdom.

327 *Culminate*: attain the end for which we are striving.

Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd ;
And thus our conference closed.

And then we strolled

For half the day thro' stately theaters
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard
The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
The circle rounded under female hands 350
With flawless demonstration : follow'd then
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thunderous epic lilted out
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
Sparkle forever : then we dipt in all
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame, the rock, 360
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and known ;
Till like three horses that have broken fence,
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke :
" Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we."
" They hunt old trails," said Cyril, " very well ;
But when did woman ever yet invent ?"
" Ungracious !" answer'd Florian ; " have you learnt 370
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad ?"

353 *Lilted out*: declaimed musically. *Lilt* carries with it the idea of singing.

360 *Something of the frame*: a little physiology.

372 *Trash*. That is, Cyril's complimentary speeches to Psyche.

"O trash," he said, "but with a kernel in it!
 Should I not call her wise who made me wise?
 And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash
 Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
 And every Muse tumbled a science in.
 A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,
 And round these halls a thousand baby loves
 Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts, 380
 Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O
 With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,
 The head of all the golden-shafted firm,
 The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;
 He cleft me thro' the stomacher; and now
 What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
 The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
 I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
 No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
 Flatter myself that always everywhere 390
 I know the substance when I see it. Well,
 Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she
 The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
 Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?
 For dear are those three castles to my wants,
 And dear is sister Psyche to my heart

376 *Brainpan*: skull.

378 *Fallow*: uncultivated. Frequently used thus figuratively.

382 *The bigger boy*: the more mature Cupid [as contrasted with the "baby loves"].

384 *Psyche*: in classical mythology, a beautiful maiden who was beloved by Cupid.

385 *Stomacher*: an ornamental covering for the breast; part of a woman's dress.

388 *Malison*: curse.

392 *Castles*. See l. 77, 78, Part I.

And two dear things are one of double worth ;
 And much I might have said, but that my zone
 Unmann'd me : then the Doctors ! O to hear
 The Doctors ! O to watch the thirsty plants 400
 Imbibing ! once or twice I thought to roar,
 To break my chain, to shake my mane : but thou
 Modulate me, soul of mincing mimicry !
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat ;
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
 Star-sisters answering under crescent brows ;
 Abate the stride which speaks of man, and loose
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
 Where they like swallows coming out of time
 Will wonder why they came : but hark the bell 410
 For dinner, let us go !"

And in we stream'd

Among the columns, pacing staid and still
 By twos and threes, till all from end to end
 With beauties every shade of brown and fair
 In colors gayer than the morning mist,
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.
 How might a man not wander from his wits
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own
 Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,
 The second-sight of some Astræan age, 420
 Sat compass'd with professors : they, the while,
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro :
 A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms

398 *Zone*: girdle. That is, his woman's dress.

420 *Astræan age*. Legend tells us that when the gods ceased to live among men Astræa, the goddess of justice, was the last to depart. When the golden age comes she will return to earth.

423 *Inmost*: intelligible only to the learned.

Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone
 Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
 With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
 In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace
 Concluded, and we sought the gardens: there
 One walk'd reciting by herself, and one 430
 In this hand held a volume as to read,
 And smoothed a petted peacock down with that:
 Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
 Or under arches of the marble bridge
 Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some hid and sought
 In the orange thickets: others tost a ball
 Above the fountain-jets, and back again
 With laughter: others lay about the lawns,
 Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May
 Was passing: what was learning unto them? 440
 They wish'd to marry; they could rule a house;
 Men hated learned women: but we three
 Sat muffled like the Fates; and often came
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
 Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
 That harm'd not: then day droopt; the chapel bells
 Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt with those
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,
 Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
 While the great organ almost burst his pipes, 450
 Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court

435 *Hid and sought*: played hide-and-peek.

443 *The Fates*: three goddesses—Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos—who were supposed to determine the course of human life. Their office was to spin the thread of human destiny, and they were armed with shears with which they cut it off when they pleased.

A long melodious thunder to the sound
 Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
 The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
 A blessing on her labors for the world.

III

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
 Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea!
 Over the rolling waters go,
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me;
 While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon;
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon;
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,
 Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon:
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

MORN in the white wake of the morning star
 Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
 We rose, and each by other drest with care
 Descended to the court that lay three parts
 In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd
 Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and watch'd
 Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble, approach'd

Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes 10
 The circled Iris of a night of tears ;
 "And fly," she cried, " O fly, while yet you may !
 My mother knows " : and when I ask'd her " how,"
 " My fault," she wept, " my fault ! and yet not mine ;
 Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me !
 My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
 She says the Princess should have been the Head,
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms ;
 And so it was agreed when first they came ; 20
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
 And she the left, or not or seldom used ;
 Hers more than half the students, all the love.
 And so last night she fell to canvass you :
Her countrywomen ! she did not envy her.
 ' Who ever saw such wild barbarians ?
 Girls?—more like men ! ' and at these words the snake,
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast ;
 And O, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye 30
 To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd :
 ' O marvelously modest maiden, you !
 Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had been men
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus
 For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I am shamed
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse

9 *Wan*: paleness.

11 *Iris*: here, dark rings under the eyes.

24 *Fell to canvass*: came to examine or scrutinize.

34 *In rubric*: in red. That is, like certain words in old books, which were put in red to make them more conspicuous. The mother is referring, of course, to the girl's blushes.

What looks so little graceful: 'men' (for still
 My mother went revolving on the word)
 'And so they are,—very like men indeed—
 And with that woman closeted for hours!' 40
 Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
 'Why—these—*are*—men': I shudder'd: 'and you
 know it.'

'O ask me nothing,' I said: 'And she knows too,
 And she conceals it.' So my mother clutch'd
 The truth at once, but with no word from me;
 And now thus early risen she goes to inform
 The Princess: Lady Psyche will be crush'd;
 But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly:
 But heal me with your pardon ere you go."

"What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?" 50
 Said Cyril: "Pale one, blush again; than wear
 Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
 Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven,"
 He added, "lest some classic Angel speak
 In scorn of us, 'They mounted, Ganymedes,
 To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.'
 But I will melt this marble into wax
 To yield us farther furlough": and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
 He scarce would prosper. "Tell us," Florian ask'd, 60

37 *What looks, etc.* She refers to her blushes.

55 *Ganymedes.* Ganymede, the most beautiful of mortal men, according to Greek mythology, was taken up to Olympus, to serve as cup-bearer at the feasts of the Gods.

56 *Vulcans.* Vulcan, the god of fire, having offended Jupiter, was cast out of Olympus.

59 *Shook her doubtful curls.* That is, doubtfully shook her curly head.

“How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.”

“O long ago,” she said, “betwixt these two
 Division smolders hidden; ’t is my mother,
 Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
 Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:
 I never knew my father, but she says
 (God help her!) she was wedded to a fool;
 And still she rail’d against the state of things.
 She had the care of Lady Ida’s youth,
 And from the Queen’s decease she brought her up. 70
 But when your sister came she won the heart
 Of Ida: they were still together, grew
 (For so they said themselves) inosculated;
 Consonant chords that shiver to one note;
 One mind in all things: yet my mother still
 Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,
 And angled with them for her pupil’s love:
 She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:
 But I must go; I dare not tarry,” and light,
 As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled. 80

Then murmured Florian, gazing after her:
 “An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
 If I could love, why this were she: how pretty
 Her blushing was, and how she blush’d again,
 As if to close with Cyril’s random wish!
 Not like your Princess cramm’d with erring pride,
 Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow.”

“The crane,” I said, “may chatter of the crane,
 The dove may murmur of the dove, but I

73 *Inosculated*: united intimately.

74 *Consonant*: harmonizing. *Shiver*: vibrate.

An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
 My princess, O my princess! true she errs,
 But in her own grand way; being herself
 Three times more noble than three score of men,
 She sees herself in every woman else,
 And so she wears her error like a crown
 To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,
 Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
 The nectar; but—ah, she—whene'er she moves
 The Samian Herè rises, and she speaks
 A Memnon smitten with the morning sun."

90

100

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd
 The terrace ranged along the northern front,
 And leaning there on those balusters, high
 Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
 That blown about the foliage underneath,
 And sated with the innumerable rose,
 Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
 Cyril, and yawning "O hard task," he cried:
 "No fighting shadows here! I forced a way

90 *Clang* is here used transitively. *Sphere*: upper air.

96 *For her, and her*: as for Psyche and Melissa.

97 *Hebes*. In Grecian mythology Hebe was the goddess who personified youth, and whose office it was to fill the cups of the gods with nectar.

99 *Samian Here*. Here or Hera was the wife of Zeus, chief of the Greek gods. The island of Samos was a favorite resort of hers.

100 *Memnon*: a colossal statue near Thebes, which was believed by the Greeks to be that of Memnon, a hero of the Trojan War. When the first rays of the sun fell on it in the morning, this statue emitted a peculiar twanging noise, which caused it to be celebrated as having vocal powers.

103 *Balusters*. Accent on second syllable.

104 *Champaign*: open country.

106 *Sated with the innumerable rose*: laden with the scent of the innumerable roses in the gardens below.

Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd. 110
 Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
 A league of street in summer solstice down,
 Then hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
 I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her there
 At point to move, and settled in her eyes
 The green malignant light of coming storm.
 Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,
 As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I pray'd
 Concealment: she demanded who we were,
 And why we came? I fabled nothing fair, 120
 But, your example pilot, told her all.
 Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.
 But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
 She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.
 I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,
 And our three lives. True—we had limed ourselves
 With open eyes, and we must take the chance.
 But such extremes, I told her, well might harm
 The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,' she said,
 'So puddled as it is with favoritism.' 130
 I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall
 Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:
 Her answer was, 'Leave me to deal with that.'
 I spoke of war to come and many deaths,

111 *Prime*: primeval.

115 *At point to move*: on the point of moving. [i. e., of taking steps to punish Psyche by revealing the deception practiced upon the Princess].

120 *Fabled nothing fair*: invented no deceptive stories.

121 *Your example pilot*: following your example.

122 *Up went the hush'd amaze*, etc. That is, she raised her hands and cast up her eyes in amazement, saying nothing.

126 *Limed ourselves*: walked into a trap. In olden times birds were trapped by means of a sticky substance called bird-lime, which was spread on branches upon which they were likely to alight.

And she replied, her duty was to speak,
 And duty duty, clear of consequences.
 I grew discouraged, Sir ; but since I knew
 No rock so hard but that a little wave
 May beat admission in a thousand years,
 I recommenced : ‘ Decide not ere you pause. 140
 I find you here but in the second place,
 Some say the third—the authentic foundress you.
 I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :
 Wink at our advent ; help my prince to gain
 His rightful bride, and here I promise you
 Some palace in our land, where you shall reign
 The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
 And your great name flow on with broadening time
 For ever.’ Well, she balanced this a little,
 And told me she would answer us to-day, 150
 Meantime be mute : thus much, nor more I gain’d.”

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
 “ That afternoon the Princess rode to take
 The dip of certain strata to the North.
 Would we go with her ? we should find the land
 Worth seeing ; and the river made a fall
 Out yonder ” : then she pointed on to where
 A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
 Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro’ all 160
 Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
 Then summon’d to the porch we went. She stood

144 *Wink at*: pretend ignorance of; connive at.

154 *The dip*: the angle of inclination of layers, or strata, of earth or rock. Students of geology are taught to ascertain such angles.

159 *Platans*: plane trees.

Among her maidens, higher by the head,
 Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
 Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd
 And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near;
 I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
 Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
 The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
 Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy, 170
 Her college and her maidens empty masks,
 And I myself the shadow of a dream,
 For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
 My heart beat thick with passion and with awe;
 Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
 Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes
 That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
 My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
 Went forth in long retinue following up
 The river as it narrow'd to the hills. 180

I rode beside her and to me she said:
 "O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
 Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;
 Unwillingly we spake." "No—not to her."
 I answer'd, "but to one of whom we spake
 Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you say."
 "Again?" she cried, "are you ambassadors
 From him to me? we give you, being strange,
 A license: speak, and let the topic die."

I stammer'd that I knew him—could have wish'd—¹⁹⁰
 "Our king expects—was there no precontract?
 There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem

All he prefigured, and he could not see
 The bird of passage flying south but long'd
 To follow: surely, if your Highness keep
 Your purport, you will shock him even to death,
 Or baser courses, children of despair."

"Poor boy," she said, "can he not read—no books?
 Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals in that
 Which men delight in, martial exercise? 200
 To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
 Methinks he seems no better than a girl;
 As girls were once, as we ourself have been:
 We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with them:
 We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
 Being other—since we learnt our meaning here,
 To lift the woman's fallen divinity
 Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile,
 "And as to precontracts, we move, my friend, 210
 At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,
 O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
 She kept her state, and left the drunken king
 To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms."

"Alas, your Highness breathes full East," I said,
 "On that which leans to you! I know the Prince,
 I prize his truth: and then how vast a work

212 *Vashti*: the queen of King Ahasueras, who commanded her to appear before his court, that all might see her great beauty. She refused and was deposed, Esther being made queen in her place.

214 *Shushan*: the ancient capital of Persia.

215 *Breathes full East*: shows the same proud spirit shown by the eastern queen.

To assail this gray pre-eminence of man!
 You grant me license; might I use it? think;
 Ere half be done perchance your life may fail; 220
 Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
 And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
 May only make that footprint upon sand
 Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
 Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,
 With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss
 Meanwhile what every woman counts her due,
 Love, children, happiness?"

And she exclaim'd,

"Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild! 230
 What! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,
 Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?
 You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd to thus:
 Yet will we say for children, would they grew
 Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them well:
 But children die; and let me tell you, girl,
 Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die;
 They with the sun and moon renew their light
 For ever, blessing those that look on them.
 Children—that men may pluck them from our hearts, 240
 Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—
 O—children—there is nothing upon earth
 More miserable than she that has a son
 And sees him err: nor would we work for fame;
 Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,
 Who learns the one *POU STO* whence after-hands

218 *Gray*: ancient.

246 *The one pou sto*. The Princess has in mind the saying of Archimedes, a noted Greek mathematician: "Give me *where I may stand* [a place to stand on] and I will move the world."

May move the world, tho' she herself effect
 But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been, 250
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
 Of giants living each a thousand years,
 That we might see our own work out, and watch
 The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
 If that strange poet-princess with her grand
 Imaginations might at all be won.
 And she broke out interpreting my thoughts :

"No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you;
 We are used to that: for women, up till this 260
 Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
 In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
 How much their welfare is a passion to us.
 If we could give them surer, quicker proof—
 O if our end were less achievable
 By slow approaches than by single act
 Of immolation, any phase of death,
 We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,

261 *Taboo*: the setting apart either as sacred or as forbidden [according to a custom of the Polynesians and other races of the South Pacific.]

262 *Gynæceum*: that part of a Greek dwelling occupied by the women.

269 *Spring against the pikes*. At the battle of Sempach (1386), in which fourteen hundred Swiss routed four thousand Austrians, the Swiss patriot Arnold von Winkelried rushed up to the enemy's line, and grasping as many spears as possible in his arms, forced them into his own breast, thus making a break through which his comrades could pass.

Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it.
To compass our dear sisters' liberties."

270

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear ;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breath of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
"As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be." "Dare we dream of that," I ask'd, ²⁸⁰
"Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,
That practice betters?" "How," she cried, "you love
The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:
For there are schools for all." "And yet," I said,
"Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic." "Nay, we thought of that," ²⁹⁰
She answer'd, "but it pleased us not: in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape

270 *The fiery gulf.* About 360 B. C. a great crack in the ground appeared in the Roman Forum. It was declared by the sooth-sayers that only the sacrifice of a life would cause it to close. Thereupon Marcus Curtius rode his horse into the abyss, which immediately closed up.

277 *Some vast bulk:* some prehistoric monster.

280-282 *Dare we dream,* etc. That is, dare we consider the Creator an ordinary workman, whose skill increases with practice?

285 *Diotima:* a priestess of Mantinea, noted for her wisdom and as having instructed the Greek philosopher Socrates, who was condemned to die by drinking poison.

288 *Schools:* courses of study in a university.

290 *One anatomic.* See l. 360, Part II.

Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,
 And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
 Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,
 Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
 Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty, 300
 Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
 For many weary moons before we came,
 This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
 Would tend upon you. To your question now,
 Which touches on the workman and his work.
 Let there be light and there was light: 't is so:
 For was, and is, and will be, are but is;
 And all creation is one act at once,
 The birth of light: but we that are not all,
 As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that, 310
 And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make
 One act a phantom of succession: thus
 Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time;
 But in the shadow will we work and mold
 The woman to the fuller day."

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,
 Full of all beauty. "O how sweet," I said
 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask), 320

293 *Carve the living hound*: practice vivisection.

294 *Cram him*, etc. That is, inoculate him with disease germs.

296 *Microcosm*: a little world; hence, a man. Applied here to the human body.

298 *Encarnalize*: brutalize.

299 *Hangs*: awaits decision.

"To linger here with one that loved us!" "Yea,"
 She answer'd, "or with fair philosophies
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
 Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw
 The soft white vapor streak the crowned towers
 Built to the Sun": then, turning to her maids,
 "Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;
 Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought 330
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here she stood,
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
 The woman-conqueror; woman-conquer'd there
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,
 And all the men mourn'd at his side; but we
 Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril kept
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
 With mine affianced. Many a little hand
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel set 340
 In the dark crag: and then we turn'd, we wound
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
 Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the sun
 Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
 The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

324 *Elysian lawns*: lawns of Elysium.

327 *Built to the sun*: rising toward the sky.

331 *Fair Corinna's triumph*. Corinna was a lyric poetess of Greece who flourished about 500 B. C. She was famous for her beauty and also for her five victories over Pindar, the celebrated Theban poet, with whom she competed in certain poetical contests.

343 *Hammering*. They were collecting mineralogical specimens.

IV

The splendor falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story;
 The long light shakes across the lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or river;
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
 And grow for ever and for ever.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

“THERE sinks the nebulous star we call the sun,
 If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,”
 Said Ida; “let us down and rest”; and we
 Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
 By every coppice-feather’d chasm and cleft,
 Dropt thro’ the ambrosial gloom to where below
 No bigger than a glowworm shone the tent
 Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean’d on me,

Song. Scar: steep, rocky height.

2 *That hypothesis:* the nebular hypothesis of LaPlace. See l. 101-104, Part II.

5 *Coppice-feather’d:* lightly fringed with foliage.

6 *Ambrosial gloom.* Cf. l. 87, Prologue.

8 *The inner:* within.

Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,
 And blissful palpitations in the blood 10
 Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
 Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
 There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank
 Our elbows; on a tripod in the midst
 A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, "Let some one sing to us; lightlier move
 The minutes fledged with music": and a maid,
 Of those beside her, smote her harp and sang. 20

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
 In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,
 Sad as the last which reddens over one
 That sinks with all we love below the verge;
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more. 30

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
 The earliest pipe of half-waken'd birds
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

12 *Planted level feet*: reached level ground.

12, 13 *Dipt Beneath the satin dome*, etc.: entered the tent.

14 *Broider'd down*. That is, soft cushions covered with embroidery.

17 *Gold*. That is, possibly, golden wine, but more probably vessels of gold.

“ Dear as remember’d kisses after death,
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign’d
 On lips that are for others; deep as love,
 Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
 O Death in Life, the days that are no more.”

40

She ended with such passion that the tear
 She sang of shook and fell, an erring pearl
 Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain
 Answer’d the Princess, “ If indeed there haunt
 About the molder’d lodges of the past
 So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
 Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool
 And so pace by: but thine are fancies hatch’d
 In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
 Wiser to weep a true occasion lost
 But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,
 While down the streams that float us each and all
 To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,
 Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
 Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their time
 Toward that great year of equal might and rights,
 Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
 Found golden: let the past be past: let be
 Their cancel’d Babels: tho’ the rough kex break
 The starr’d mosaic, and the beard-blown goat

50

60

- 45 *Moldered lodges*: old dwellings thought of figuratively as the insufficient shelter of old thoughts.
- 47 *Cram our ears with wool*. The Princess probably has in mind the story of how Ulysses, before passing the island of the Sirens, put wax into the ears of his sailors, so that they might not hear the fatal song. (See note for l. 181, Part II.)
- 59 *Babels*. See first part of note for l. 466, Part IV. *Kex*: hemlock. here, wild growth of any sort.
- 60, 61 *The beard-blown goat*, etc. Tennyson, in a letter to Dawson, explains that this “involves a sense of the wind blowing the beard on the height of the ruined pillar.”

Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-tree split
 Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear
 A trumpet in the distance pealing news
 Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns
 Above the unrisen morrow": then to me,
 "Know you no song of your own land," she said,
 "Not such as moans about the retrospect,
 But deals with the other distance and the hues
 Of promise; not a death's-head at the wine?"

Then I remember'd one myself had made, 70
 What time I watch'd the swallow winging south
 From mine own land, part made long since, and part
 Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far
 As I could ape their treble did I sing.

"O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying south,
 Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
 And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

"O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
 That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
 And dark and true and tender is the North. 80

"O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
 And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

"O were I thou that she might take me in,
 And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
 Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

64 *Burns*: casts its glow.

67 *The retrospect*: the past.

68 *The other distance*: the future.

69 *Death's-head*. The Egyptians used to have at their banquets the wooden image of a corpse, to remind them that death was inevitable.

"Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
 Delaying as the tender ash delays
 To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?"

"O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown; 90
 Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
 But in the North long since my nest is made.

"O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
 And brief the sun of summer in the North,
 And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

"O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
 Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
 And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee."

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time, 100
 Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien lips,
 And knew not what they meant; for still my voice
 Rang false: but smiling, "Not for thee," she said,
 "O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan.
 Shall burst her veil; marsh-divers, rather, maid,
 Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake
 Grate her harsh kindred in the grass: and this

100-102 *Ithacensian suitors*: the hundred suitors of Penelope, wife of Ulysses, whom the hero found in possession of his palace upon his return to Ithaca after an absence of twenty years. They did not recognize him, for he was disguised as a beggar, but while they laughed scornfully at him, it was as though they laughed "with other men's jaws," for they themselves did not understand their mirth; and at the same time they were filled with forebodings.

104 *Bulbul*. "The Persian name of the nightingale, whose love for the rose is a favorite theme with Saadi [a Persian poet of the thirteenth century] and his brother poets. *Gulistan* is Persian of rose-garden, and Saadi takes it as the title of his book of poems."—ROLFE.

105, 106 *Marsh-divers* . . . or the *meadow-crake*. Both of these birds have a very harsh note.

A mere love-poem! O for such, my friend,
 We hold them slight; they mind us of the time
 When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,¹¹⁰
 That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
 And dress the victim to the offering up,
 And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,
 And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
 Poor soul! I had a maid of honor once;
 She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,
 A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
 I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.
 So they blaspheme the muse! But great is song
 Used to great ends: ourself have often tried¹²⁰
 Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd
 The passion of the prophetess; for song
 Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
 Of spirit, than to junketing and love.
 Love is it? Would this same mock-love, and this
 Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
 Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
 To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered
 Whole in ourselves and owed to none. Enough!¹³⁰
 But now to leaven play with profit, you,
 Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,
 That gives the manners of your countrywomen?"

110 *Made bricks in Egypt.* That is, were still in slavery, like the Hebrews in Egypt.

117 *Canzonets:* short, light songs.

121 *Valkyrian hymns:* songs such as the Valkyrs might have composed. The Valkyrs were warrior-maidens who assisted Odin, the Norse All-father and god of war, one of their duties being to carry to Valhalla the heroes slain in battle.

126 *Mock-Hymen.* In classical mythology Hymen was the god of marriage.

129 *Sphered:* centered.

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with eyes
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.

Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had wrought,
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences 140

Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook;
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;

"Forbear," the Princess cried; "Forbear, Sir," I;
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love,
I smote him on the breast; he started up;

There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;
Melissa clamor'd, "Flee the death"; "To horse!"
Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and fled, as flies

A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk, 150
When some one batters at the dovecote doors,
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood

With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,
In the pavilion: there like parting hopes
I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoof,

And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clang'd on the bridge; and then another shriek,
"The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head!"

For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd
In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom: 160
There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch
Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,

137 *With whom, etc.*: who was affected by the wine he had drunk.

160 *From glow to gloom*: from the light of the tent into the darkness outside.

162 *Rapt to the horrible fall*: hurried toward the falls in the river.

No more ; but woman-vested as I was
 Plunged ; and the flood drew ; yet I caught her ; then
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
 The weight of all the hopes of half the world,
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
 Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd
 To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught, ¹⁷⁰
 And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd
 In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew
 My burthen from mine arms ; they cried, " She lives " :
 They bore her back into the tent : but I,
 So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
 Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
 Nor found my friends ; but push'd alone on foot
 (For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
 Across the woods, and less from Indian craft ¹⁸⁰
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
 The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
 Of open-work in which the hunter rued
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
 Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

183 *Caryatids*: female figures in stone serving as supports.

184 *Valves*: folding gates.

185, 186 *In which the hunter, etc.* On the gates Actæon was depicted, undergoing the change from man to stag which was the punishment meted out to him by the goddess Diana for having chanced upon her when she was bathing.

A little space was left between the horns,
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain, 190
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
 Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step

Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
 Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,
 Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this were she,"
 But it was Florian. "Hist, O hist!" he said,
 "They seek us; out so late is out of rules. 200
 Moreover, 'Seize the strangers' is the cry.
 How came you here?" I told him: "I," said he,
 "Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
 To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.
 Arriving all confused among the rest
 With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath
 The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
 Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each
 Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of all, 210
 Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.

194 *The Bear*: the constellation Ursa Major.

195 *His seven slow suns*: the seven stars of the Dipper.

200 *Out of rules*. In the English universities the students are required to be inside the gates by a certain hour at night.

203 *A moral leper*: one who because of his baseness is shunned by all as though he were a leper.

207 *Judith*: a Jewish heroine who, when her native town was being besieged by the hosts of Nebuchadnezzar, made her way to the hostile camp and into the tent of Holofernes, the Assyrian general, beheaded him, and carried his head away with her, by the sight of it to inspire her people to more determined resistance to the enemy.

She, question'd if she knew us men, at first
 Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:
 And then, demanded if her mother knew,
 Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:
 From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,
 Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
 For Psyche, but she was not there; she call'd
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face; 220
 And I slipt out: but whither will you now?
 And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled:
 What, if together? that were not so well.
 Would rather we had never come! I dread
 His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more than I
 That struck him: this is proper to the clown,
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,
 To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
 That which he says he loves: for Cyril, howe'er 230
 He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song
 Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips
 Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold
 These flashes on the surface are not he.
 He has a solid base of temperament;
 But as the water-lily starts and slides
 Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
 Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."

212 *Us men*: us to be men.

217 *Either guilt*: the guilt of both.

227 *Clown*: boorish fellow.

228 *Smock'd or furr'd and purpled*: wearing the dress of a peasant
 or the rich robes of nobles.

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk near
 Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, "Names": 240
 He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I began
 To thrud the musky-circled mazes, wind
 And double in and out the boles, and race
 By all the fountains: fleet I was of foot:
 Before me shower'd the rose in flakes; behind
 I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear
 Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
 And secret laughter tickled all my soul.
 At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
 That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne, 250
 And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess where she sat
 High in the hall: above her droop'd a lamp,
 And made the single jewel on her brow
 Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,
 Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side
 Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black hair
 Damp from the river; and close behind her stood
 Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
 Huge women blowzed with health, and wind, and
 rain, 260

239 *Tamarisk*: a shrub or tree having minute scalelike leaves, native to Southern Europe and Asia.

242 *Thrud the . . . mazes*. That is, thread the narrow, winding paths with their borders of fragrant flowers.

250 *Mnemosyne*: the goddess of memory.

252 *Haled*: conducted by force.

255 *Mystic fire*: the phenomenon popularly known as "St. Elmo's fire," taking its name from the patron saint of sailors; a flamelike electrical discharge sometimes seen on dark, stormy nights at some prominent point on a ship.

259 *Daughters of the plow*: peasant women.

260 *Blowzed*: coarse and ruddy-faced.

And labor. Each was like a Druid rock ;
 Or like a spire of land that stands apart
 Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove
 An advent to the throne : and therebeside,
 Halk-naked as if caught at once from bed
 And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
 The lily-shining child ; and on the left,
 Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,
 Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs, 270
 Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche erect
 Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

“ It was not thus, O Princess, in old days :
 You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips :
 I led you then to all the Castalies ;
 I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;
 I loved you like this kneeler, and you me
 Your second mother : those were gracious times.
 Then came your new friend : you began to change—
 I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to cool ; 280
 Till taken with her seeming openness
 You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,
 To me you froze : this was my meed for all.

261 *Druid rock.* Like those at Stonehenge and other places, supposed to have been placed in position by the Druids, or ancient Celtic priests.

263 *Wail'd about with mews:* surrounded by screaming sea mews.

264 *Clove:* cleaved.

272 *Affluent:* fluent.

275 *Castalies:* sources of inspiration. Castalia was a celebrated spring on Mount Parnassus, above the city of Delphi. Its waters, collected in a square stone basin, were sacred to the Muses and Apollo.

277 *This kneeler:* Melissa.

Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
 And partly that I hoped to win you back,
 And partly conscious of my own deserts,
 And partly that you were my civil head,
 And chiefly you were born for something great,
 In which I might your fellow-worker be,
 When time should serve; and thus a noble scheme 290
 Grew up from seed we two long since had sown;
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
 Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
 We took this palace; but even from the first
 You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.
 What student came but that you planed her path
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
 A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
 I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
 But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean; 300
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:
 Then came these wolves: *they* knew her: *they* endured,
 Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
 To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
 And me none told: not less to an eye like mine,
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,
 Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
 Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd
 To meet a cold 'We thank you, we shall hear of it
 From Lady Psyche': you had gone to her, 310
 She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us

292 *Jonah's gourd* sprang up in a night and withered at once.

296 *Planed*: smoothed.

310 *Had gone*: would have gone.

311 *She told*: she would have told.

In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
 Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
 Were all miscounted as malignant haste
 To push my rival out of place and power.
 But public use required she should be known ;
 And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
 I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well, 320
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done ;
 And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
 I came to tell you ; found that you had gone,
 Ridden to the hills, she likewise : now, I thought,
 That surely she will speak ; if not, then I :
 Did she ? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
 According to the coarseness of their kind,
 For thus I hear ; and known at last (my work)
 And full of cowardice and guilty shame—
 I grant in her some sense of shame—she flies ; 330
 And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
 I, that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
 And talent, I—you know it—I will not boast :
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men will say
 We did not know the real light, but chased
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread."

She ceased : the Princess answer'd coldly, " Good : 340
 Your oath is broken : we dismiss you : go.

314 *Grain*: strong, sound wood. *Touchwood*: decayed wood or dried
 fungi used for tinder.

For this lost lamb " (she pointed to the child),
 " Our mind is changed ; we take it to ourself."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
 And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
 " The plan was mine. I built the nest," she said,
 " To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and stoop'd to updrag
 Melissa : she, half on her mother propt,
 Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast
 A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer, 350
 Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
 A Niobeän daughter, one arm out,
 Appealing to the bolts of Heaven ; and while
 We gazed upon her came a little stir
 About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
 Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
 A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
 Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd
 Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
 Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head 360
 Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
 Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
 Regarding, while she read, till over brow
 And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
 As of some fire against a stormy cloud,

347 *The cuckoo* lays its eggs in the nests of other birds, that the latter may do the hatching and care for the young birds.

352 *A Niobeän daughter*. That is, like one of the doomed daughters of Niobe, the daughter of Tantalus. The mother was so proud of her seven beautiful daughters and a like number of handsome sons that she exasperated Apollo and Diana, who killed them all, striking them down, one by one, with arrows shot from behind a cloud which hid the wrathful god and goddess. Grief over the loss of her children turned Niobe into stone.

357 *Woman-post*. That is, a woman who brought news.

When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick
 Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens ;
 For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,
 Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
 Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard 370
 In the dead hush the papers that she held
 Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet
 Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;
 The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire ; she crush'd
 The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
 As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
 She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
 " Read," and I read—two letters—one her sire's :

" Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way
 We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt, ³⁸⁰
 We, conscious of what temper you are built,
 Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
 Into his father's hand, who has this night,
 You lying close upon his territory,
 Slipt round and in the dark invested you,
 And here he keeps me hostage for his son."

The second was my father's running thus :
 " You have our son : touch not a hair of his head :
 Render him up unscathed : give him your hand :
 Cleave to your contract : tho' indeed we hear 390
 You hold the woman is the better man ;
 A rampant heresy, such as if it spread

366 *The wild peasant.* Between 1830 and 1840 troubles between English landlords and their tenants led to the destruction by the latter of much valuable property belonging to the former. The burning of hayricks was a common offence at this time. *Rights: avenges.*

Would make all women kick against their lords
 Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve
 That we this night should pluck your palace down;
 And we will do it, unless you send us back
 Our son, on the instant, whole."

So far I read;
 And then stood up and spoke impetuously:

"O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
 But led by golden wishes, and a hope 400
 The child of regal compact, did I break
 Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex
 But venerator, zealous it should be
 All that it might be: hear me, for I bear,
 Tho' man, yet human, whatso'er your wrongs,
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life
 Less mine than yours: my nurse would tell me of you;
 I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
 Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd to me
 From all high places, lived in all fair lights, 410
 Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south
 And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
 The leader wild-swan in among the stars
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm light
 The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,
 Because I would have reach'd you, had you been
 Sphered up with Cassiopeia, or the enthroned

395 *Pluck . . . down.* A Shakespearcan expression. Cf. 1. 91, Part I.

393 *Kick against:* revolt from.

415 *Glowworm:* phosphorescent.

418 *Cassiopeia:* an Ethiopian queen who after her death was placed in the heavens as a constellation.

Persephone in Hades, now at length,
 Those winters of abeyance all worn out, 420
 A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
 Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
 On you, their center: let me say but this,
 That many a famous man and woman, town
 And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
 The dwarfs of presage: tho' when known, there grew
 Another kind of beauty in detail
 Made them worth knowing; but in you I found 430
 My boyish dream involved and dazzled down
 And master'd, while that after-beauty makes
 Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
 Within me, that except you slay me here,
 According to your bitter statute-book,
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say
 The seal does music; who desire you more
 Than growing boys their manhood; dying lips,
 With many thousand matters left to do,
 The breath of life; O more than poor men wealth,
 Than sick men health—yours, yours, not mine—but
 half 440

419 *Persephone*, the daughter of Ceres, was seen by Pluto just after he had been struck by one of Cupid's darts. Filled with love for the beautiful maiden, he carried her away by force and made her his queen. The Prince means that he would have made his way to the Princess wherever she might have been—among the stars or in the nether world.

420 *Those winters of abeyance*. That is, all the years during which the betrothal had been held in abeyance.

422 *Frequency*: gathering; assemblage.

426 *Landskip*: landscape. The old form of the word, always used by Tennyson.

427 *Dwarfs of presage*: far from coming up to expectation.

430 *Involved*: included, contained.

436 *The seal* is said to be attracted by certain musical sounds.

Without you ; with you, whole ; and of those halves
 You worthiest ; and howe'er you block and bar
 Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms
 To follow up the worthiest till he die :
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized
 Behold your father's letter."

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd
 Unopen'd at her feet : a tide of fierce 450
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,
 As waits a river level with the dam
 Ready to burst and flood the world with foam :
 And so she would have spoken, but there rose
 A hubbub in the court of half the maids
 Gather'd together : from the illumined hall.
 Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
 And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro 460
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
 Some crying there was an army in the land,
 And some that men were in the very walls,
 And some they cared not ; till a clamor grew
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-built.

466 *Babel*: the name of a tower that the descendants of Noah began to build, the top of which was to reach to heaven, but which was never finished because Jehovah confounded the speech of the builders so that they could not understand one another, and scattered them over the face of the earth. The name of the tower, *Babel* (from the Hebrew *balbel*, "to confound") has come to be applied to any scene of noise and confusion.

And worse-confounded: high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so 470
To the open window moved, remaining there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and
call'd
Across the tumult, and the tumult fell.

“What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks: *I* dare
All these male thunderbolts: what is it ye fear?
Peace! there are those to avenge us and they come: 480
If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die: yet I blame you not so much for fear;
Six thousand years of fear have made you that
From which I would redeem you: but for those
That stir this hubbub—you and you—I know
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow morn
We hold a great convention: then shall they 490
That love their voices more than duty, learn
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,

473 *Crimson-rolling eye*: the revolving prisms in a lighthouse.

484 *Protomartyr*: first martyr.

Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,
 Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad." 500

She, ending, waved her hands; thereat the crowd
 Muttering, dissolved: then with a smile, that look'd
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said:

"You have done well and like a gentleman,
 And like a prince: you have our thanks for all:
 And you look well too in your woman's dress:
 Well have you done and like a gentleman.
 You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks: 510
 Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood—
 Then men had said—but now—What hinders me
 To take such bloody vengeance on you both?—
 Yet since our father—Wasps in our good hive,
 You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
 Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—
 O would I had his scepter for one hour!
 You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us—
 I wed with thee! I bound by precontract 520
 Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the gold

495 *Turnspits*: in olden days servants whose duty it was to turn the spit or metal rod on which meat was placed before the fire for roasting; menials.

504 *Azure gloom*: blue or purplish shadows [often to be seen in a valley just before sunset].

That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,
 And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,
 Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us :
 I trample on your offers and on you :
 Begone : we will not look upon you more.
 Here, push them out at gates."

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
 Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd
 Their motion : twice I sought to plead my cause, 530
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
 The weight of destiny : so from her face
 They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the court,
 And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound
 Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
 The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came
 On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt :
 I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts ;
 The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard, 540
 The jest and earnest working side by side,
 The cataract and the tumult and the kings
 Were shadows ; and the long fantastic night
 With all its doings had and had not been,
 And all things were and were not.

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
 Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy ;
 Not long : I shook it off ; for spite of doubts
 And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one

523 *Lord you*: call you lord.

529, 530 *Address'd their motion*: started toward us.

To whom the touch of all mischance but came
 As night to him that sitting on a hill
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
 Set into sunrise ; then we moved away.

550

INTERLUDE

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
 That beat to battle where he stands ;
 Thy face across his fancy comes,
 And gives the battle to his hands :
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,
 He sees his brood about thy knee ;
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-possess'd,
 She struck such warbling fury thro' the words ; 10
 And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime—
 Like one that wishes at a dance to change
 The music—clapt her hands and cried for war,
 Or some grand fight to kill and make an end :
 And he that next inherited the tale,
 Half turning to the broken statue, said,
 “ Sir Ralph has got your colors ; if I prove
 Your knight, and fight your battle, what for me ? ”
 It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb 20
 Lay by her like a model of her hand.
 She took it and she flung it. “ Fight,” she said,
 “ And make us all we would be, great and good.”

Interlude. From here on the poem takes on a more and more serious tone. Strength begins to develop in the character of the Prince, and the Princess is at length made to reveal the latent womanliness in her nature.

He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
 A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
 Arranged the favor, and assumed the Prince.

V

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,
 We stumbled on a stationary voice,
 And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the palace," I.
 "The second two: they wait," he said, "pass on;
 His Highness wakes": and one, that clash'd in arms,
 By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led
 Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent
 Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light

10

Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd to hear,
 As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
 A lisp of the innumerable leaf and dies,
 Each hissing in his neighbor's ear; and then
 A strangled titter, out of which there brake
 On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
 Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings
 Began to wag their baldness up and down,
 The fresh young captians flash'd their glittering teeth,

26 *Favor*: a term from the language of chivalry to designate the ribbon or other article worn by the knight in the tourney as sign of his lady's favor.

Part V.

- 2 *Stationary voice*. That is, the voice of the sentry.
 4 *The second two*. Cyril and Psyche had preceded them.
 13 *Innumerable*: innumerable.
 14 *Hissing*: whispering.

The huge bush-bearded barons heaved and blew, 20
 And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded squire.

At length my sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,
 Panted from weary sides, "King, you are free!
 We did but keep you surety for our son,
 If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou.
 That tends her bristled grunterns in the sludge";
 For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,
 More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
 And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel.
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm 30
 A whisper'd jest to some one near him, "Look,
 He has been among his shadows." "Satan take
 The old women and their shadows!"—thus the King
 Roar'd—"make yourself a man to fight with men.
 Go: Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink

From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice
 From what was left of faded woman-slough
 To sheathing splendors and the golden scale 40
 Of harness, issued in the sun, that now
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
 And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us,
 A little shy at first, but by and by

21 *Squire*: the attendant of a knight.

25 *Mawkin*: slattern.

26 *Sludge*: mud.

28 *From the sheath*: newly opened.

37 *Transient*: passing.

38 *Woman-slough*. That is, the women's garments in which they had
 been masquerading. *Slough* (pronounced: sluff): the cast-off
 skin of a snake.

40 *Harness*: armor.

We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given
 For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
 Had come on Psyche weeping: "then we fell
 Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
 But will not speak nor stir."

He show'd a tent 50

A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there
 Among piled arms and rough accouterments,
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,
 Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,
 And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,
 All her fair length upon the ground she lay;
 And at her head a follower of the camp,
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
 Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come," he whisper'd to
 her, 60

"Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not thus.
 What have you done but right? you could not slay
 Me, nor your prince: look up: be comforted:
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,
 When fallen in darker ways." And likewise I:
 "Be comforted: have I not lost her too,
 In whose least act abides the nameless charm
 That none has else for me?" She heard, she moved,
 She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she sat,
 And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth ⁷⁰
 As those that mourn half-shrouded over death

In deathless marble. "Her," she said, "my friend—
 Parted from her—betray'd her cause and mine—
 Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your faith?
 O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!"
 To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray
 Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child!"
 At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,
 My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!" 80
 For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
 And either she will die from want of care,
 Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
 The child is hers—for every little fault,
 The child is hers; and they will beat my girl
 Remembering her mother; O my flower!
 Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
 And she will pass me by in after-life
 With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.
 Ill mother that I was to leave her there, 90
 To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
 The horror of the shame among them all:
 But I will go and sit beside the doors,
 And make a wild petition night and day,
 Until they hate to hear me like a wind
 Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,
 My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child;
 And I will take her up and go my way,
 And satisfy my soul with kissing her: 100
 Ah! what might that man not deserve of me
 Who gave me back my child?" "Be comforted,"
 Said Cyril, "you shall have it"; but again

She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so,
Like tender things that being caught feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp, and inward raced the scouts
With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.
We left her by the woman, and without
Found the gray kings at parle: and "Look you,"
cried 119

My father, "that our compact be fulfill'd:
You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and man:
She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him:
But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;
She yields, or war."

Then Gama turn'd to me:
"We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
With our strange girl; and yet they say that still
You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large:
How say you, war or not?"

"Not war, if possible,
O king," I said, "lest from the abuse of war, 120
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
The smoldering homestead, and the household flower
Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—
A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
Three times a monster: now she lightens scorn
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this knot

110 *At parle*: in conference.

121 *Year*: harvest.

125 *Lightens*: flashes.

By gentleness than war. I want her love. 130
 What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd
 Your cities into shards with catapults?
 She would not love;—or brought her chain'd, a slave,
 The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord?
 Not ever would she love, but brooding turn
 The book of scorn, till all my flitting chance
 Were caught within the record of her wrongs
 And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire, than this
 I would the old God of war himself were dead,
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills, 140
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,
 Not to be molten out."

And roughly spake

My father, "Tut, you know them not, the girls.
 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think
 That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!
 Man is the hunter; woman is his game:
 The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
 We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;
 They love us for it, and we ride them down. 150
 Wheedling and siding with them! Out! for shame!
 Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
 As he that does the thing they dare not do,
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes
 With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in

132 *Shards*: pieces of brick and pottery. *Catapults*: engines of war, used before the invention of gunpowder, for throwing stones and other missiles.

142 *Mammoth*: an extinct hairy elephant of gigantic size, remains of which have been discovered in the northern parts of both hemispheres.

146 *Idiot legend*: the "ancient legend" referred to in l. 5, Part I.

Among the women, snares them by the score
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with death
 He reddens what he kisses: thus I won
 Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
 Worth winning; but this firebrand—gentleness 160
 To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
 Were wisdom to it."

"Yea, but, Sire," I cried,
 "Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No:
 What dares not Ida do that she should prize
 The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
 The yesternight, and storming in extremes
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death, 170
 No, not the soldier's; yet I hold her, king,
 True woman: but you clash them all in one,
 That have as many differences as we.
 The violet varies from the lily as far
 As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
 And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
 Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they need
 More breadth of culture: is not Ida right? 180
 They worth it? truer to the law within?"

162 *Cherry net.* In England the cherry trees are often protected from the birds by nets.

170 *Gagelike:* like a glove cast on the ground as a challenge to combat.

172 *Clash them all in one:* fail to discriminate between those who differ in their natures.

179 *Satyr* (pronounced: sā'ter): a fabled deity of the woods, part man and part goat.

Severer in the logic of a life?
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
 Of earth and heaven? and she of whom you speak,
 My mother, looks as whole as some serene
 Creation minted in the golden moods
 Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
 But pure as lines of green that streak the white
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
 Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
 But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,
 Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs
 As dues of Nature. To our point: not war;
 Lest I lose all."

190

"Nay, nay, you spake but sense,"
 Said Gama. "We remember love ourself
 In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
 You talk almost like Ida: *she* can talk;
 And there is something in it as you say:
 But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it.—
 He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
 I would he had our daughter: for the rest,
 Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,
 Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—
 We would do much to gratify your Prince—
 We pardon it; and for your ingress here
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
 You did but come as goblins in the night,

200

210

Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,
 Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:
 But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
 He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
 And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice
 As ours with Ida: something may be done—
 I know not what—and ours shall see us friends.
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will, ²²⁰
 Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan
 Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reach'd

White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old kings across the lawns
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring
 In every bole, a song on every spray
 Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love ²³⁰
 In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
 All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode;
 And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
 Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air
 On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than peace
 Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares
 And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
 With clamor: for among them rose a cry

227 *A thousand rings of Spring.* As a ring is added in every year
 of growth, these trees must have been one thousand years old.

229 *Valentines:* here, love-songs.

237 *The Prince:* Arac.

As if to greet the king; they made a halt ;
 The horses yell'd ; they clash'd their arms ; the drum ²⁴⁰
 Beat ; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife ;
 And in the blast and bray of the long horn
 And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
 The banner : anon to meet us lightly pranced
 Three captains out ; nor ever had I seen
 Such thews of men : the midmost and the highest
 Was Arac : all about his motion clung
 The shadow of his sister, as the beam
 Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance
 Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone, ²⁵⁰
 That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark ;
 And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
 And bickers into red and emerald, shone
 Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
 War-music, felt the blind wild-beast of force,
 Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
 Stir in me as to strike : then took the king
 His three broad sons ; with now a wandering hand
 And now a pointed finger, told them all : ²⁶⁰
 A common light of smiles at our disguise

246 *Such thews of men*: men so strong.

250 *The airy Giant's zone*: the three stars forming the belt of the constellation Orion. Orion, a giant and a mighty hunter, was killed by accident by the goddess Diana, and by her placed among the stars, where he now appears with his belt, sword, and club.

252 *Sirius*: Dog-Star—the brightest of the stars. It changes its hue when near the horizon.

253 *Bickers*: quivers.

254 *Morions*. A morion is a kind of open helmet, without visor or beaver.

Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
 Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,
 The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
 Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words :

“ Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he himself
 Your captive, yet my father wills not war :
 And, 'sdeath ! myself, what care I, war or no ?
 But then this question of your troth remains :
 And there's a downright honest meaning in her ; 270
 She flies too high, she flies too high ! and yet
 She ask'd but space and fair-play for her scheme ;
 She prest and prest it on me—I myself,
 What know I of these things ? but, life and soul !
 I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs ;
 I say she flies too high, 'sdeath ! what of that ?
 I take her for the flower of womankind,
 And so I often told her, right or wrong ;
 And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
 And, right or wrong, I care not : this is all, 280
 I stand upon her side : she made me swear it—
 'Sdeath !—and with solemn rites by candle-light—
 Swear by Saint something—I forget her name—
 Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men ;
She was a princess too ; and so I swore.
 Come, this is all ; she will not : waive your claim :
 If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
 Decides it, 'sdeath ! against my father's will.”

266 *'Sdeath*: God's death. An ancient oath.

283 *Saint something*. He means St. Catharine of Alexandria, who according to an old legend converted to Christianity fifty wise men whom the Emperor Maxentius sent to dispute with her.

287 *Foughten*: the old ending of the past participle, *en*, added to the modern participle, *fought*.

I lagg'd in answer, loth to render up
 My precontract, and loth by brainless war 290
 To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
 Till one of those two brothers, half aside
 And fingering at the hair about his lip,
 To prick us on to combat, "Like to like!
 The woman's garment hid the woman's heart."
 A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow!
 For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point
 Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
 "Decide it here: why not? we are three to three." 300

Then spake the third, "But three to three? no more?
 No more, and in our noble sister's cause?
 More, more, for honor! every captain waits
 Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
 More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
 May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow
 Of these or those, the question settled die."

"Yea," answer'd I, "for this wild wreath of air,
 This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
 Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if ye will. 310
 It needs must be for honor if at all:
 Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,
 And if we win, we fail; she would not keep
 Her compact." "'Sdeath! but we will send to her,"
 Said Arac, "worthy reasons why she should
 Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',
 And you shall have her answer by the word."

“Boys!” shriek’d the old king, but vainlier than a
hen

To her false daughters in the pool; for none
Regarded; neither seem’d there more to say: 320
Back rode we to my father’s camp, and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people’s life: three times he went:
The first, he blew and blew, but none appear’d:
He batter’d at the doors; none came: the next,
An awful voice within had warn’d him thence:
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough
Came sallying thro’ the gates, and caught his hair, 330
And so belabor’d him on rib and cheek
They made him wild: not less one glance he caught
Thro’ open doors of Ida station’d there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Tho’ compass’d by two armies and the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right and left
Suck’d from the dark heart of the long hills roll
The torrents, dash’d to the vale: and yet her will 340
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash’d
His iron palms together with a cry;

319 *False daughters*: ducklings hatched by her.

324 *Flush*: fill full. *Wells*: springs.

325 *Life*: life-blood.

Himself would tilt it out among the lads :
 But overborne by all his bearded lords
 With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce
 He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur ;
 And many a bold knight started up in heat,
 And sware to combat for my claim till death

350

All on this side the palace ran the field
 Flat to the garden-wall ; and likewise here,
 Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
 A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,
 And great bronze valves, emboss'd with Tomyris
 And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
 But now fast barr'd : so here upon the flat
 All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,
 And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
 With message and defiance, went and came ;
 Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
 But shaken here and there, and rolling words
 Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read :

360

“ O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,
 What heats of indignation when we heard
 Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet ;
 Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
 Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge ;

355 *Valves.* See l. 184. Part IV. *Tomyris*: a queen against whom Cyrus the Great led an expedition in 529 B. C., and who defeated him. Cyrus being killed in the battle, Tomyris sought out his body and taking the head, dipped it into a skin filled with blood, bidding the tyrant for once quench his thirst.

358 *Lists*: the enclosure within which the combat was to take place.

366 *Those that iron-cramp'd*, etc.: the Chinese.

368 *Gives her harsh groom . . . a scourge.* This used to be a custom in Russia.

Of living hearts that crack within the fire
 Where smolder their dead despots; and of those,—³⁷⁰
 Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling
 Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops
 The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
 Made for all noble motion: and I saw
 That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
 With smother men; the old leaven leaven'd all;
 Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
 No woman named: therefore I set my face
 Against all men, and lived but for mine own.
 Far off from men I built a fold for them; 380
 I stored it full of rich memorial;
 I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
 And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,
 And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys
 Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace,
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what
 Of insolence and love, some pretext held
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
 Seal'd not the bond—the striplings!—for their sport!—
 I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame these? 390
 Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd
 In honor—what! I would not aught of false—
 Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
 You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide
 What end soever: fail you will not. Still,
 Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;

369, 370 *Living hearts*, etc. In India it was once the custom to burn a widow with her dead husband's body.

381 *Rich memorial*: treasures of art—pictures, statues, etc.

382 *Institutes*: rules and regulations.

His mother lives : yet whatsoe'er you do,
 Fight and fight well ; strike and strike home. O dear
 Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you 400
 The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
 The sole men we shall prize in the after-time.
 Your very armor hallow'd, and your statues
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gadfly brush'd aside,
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,
 And mold a generation strong to move
 With claim on claim from right to right, till she
 Whose name is yoked with children's know herself ;
 And Knowledge in our own land make her free,
 And, ever following those two crown'd twins, 410
 Commerce and Conquest, shower the fiery grain
 Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs
 Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest :
 " See that there be no traitors in your camp :
 We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-plague of men !
 Almost our maids were better at their homes,
 Than thus man-girdled here : indeed I think
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child 420
 Of one unworthy mother ; which she left :
 She shall not have it back ; the child shall grow
 To prize the authentic mother of her mind.

404 *Gadfly*: the annoyance now being suffered.

405 *The time*: the present age.

412, 413 *Over all*, etc.: over all the regions that lie upon the encircling surface of the earth from pole to pole [*Wallace*].

417 *Our arms*: Lady Blanche and Lady Psyche, her chief assistants.
Egypt-plague. She likens the intruders to the plagues sent upon the Egyptians to make them release the Hebrews from bondage.

I took it for an hour in mine own bed
 This morning; there the tender orphan hands
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence
 The wrath I nursed against the world: farewell."

I ceased; he said, "Stubborn, but she may sit
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms,
 And breed up warriors! See now, tho' yourself 430
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
 That swallow common sense, the spindling king,
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
 When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,
 And topples down the scales; but this is fixt
 As are the roots of earth and base of all:
 Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
 Man for the sword and for the needle she;
 Man with the head and woman with the heart;
 Man to command and woman to obey; 440
 All else confusion. Look you! the gray mare
 Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills
 From tile to scullery, and her small goodman
 Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of hell
 Mix with his hearth: but you—she's yet a colt—
 Take, break her; strongly groom'd and straitly curb'd
 She might not rank with those detestable
 That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl
 Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.
 They say she's comely; there's the fairer chance: 450
 I like her none the less for rating at her!

441 *The gray mare.* According to an old saying, "The gray mare is the better horse." The old king has little love for strong-minded, independent women.

449 *Potherbs:* vegetables.

Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
 But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
 Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
 The bearing and the training of a child
 Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king :

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon ;
 I pored upon her letter which I held,
 And on the little clause, " take not his life " ;
 I mused on that wild morning in the woods, 460
 And on the " Follow, follow, thou shalt win " ;
 I thought on all the wrathful king had said,
 And how the strange betrothment was to end :
 Then I remember'd that burnt soocer's curse
 That one should fight with shadows and should fall ;
 And like a flash the weird affection came :
 King, camp, and college turn'd to hollow shows ;
 I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
 And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
 To dream myself the shadow of a dream ; 470
 And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
 The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
 We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
 Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
 At the barrier like a wild horn in a land
 Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
 The trumpet, and again ; at which the storm
 Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears
 And riders front to front, until they closed
 In conflict with the crash of shivering points. 480
 And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I dream'd

Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
 And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
 And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
 Part sat like rocks; part reel'd but kept their seats;
 Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew;
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down
 From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
 The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere 490
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,
 And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft, and shield—
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd
 With hammers; till I thought, can this be he
 From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,
 The mother makes us most—and in my dream
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
 And highest, among the statues, statuelike,
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael, 500
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
 A single band of gold about her hair,
 Like a Saint's glory up in heaven; but she
 No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—
 Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,
 Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drave
 Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,
 And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my dream

488 *Those two bulks*: the twin brothers of Arac and the Princess.

491 *Mellay*: *melée*; a confused fight.

500 *Miriam*: a Hebrew prophetess, sister of Moses and Aaron, who after the Children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea in safety sang a song of thanksgiving, to the accompaniment of timbrels played by herself and the rest of the Hebrew women. *Jael*: she who slew Sisera, leader of the Canaanite army, by driving a nail into his forehead while he slept.

All that I would. But that large-molded man,
 His visage all agrin as at a wake, 510
 Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back
 With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
 And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and
 splits,
 And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
 Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for everything
 Gave way before him: only Florian, he
 That loved me closer than his own right eye, 520
 Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
 With Psyche's color round his helmet, tough,
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
 And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my veins
 Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,
 Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced,
 I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth 530
 Flow'd from me; darkness closed me; and I fell.

VI

Home they brought her warrior dead;
 She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry:
 All her maidens, watching, said,
 "She must weep or she will die."

510 *Wake*: a festival which originally was held in commemoration of the dedication of a church lent which later degenerated into an all-night frolic.

Then they praised him, soft and low,
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,
 Truest friend and noblest foe;
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
 Lightly to the warrior stept,
 Took the face-cloth from the face;
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
 Set his child upon her knee—
 Like summer tempest came her tears—
 "Sweet my child, I live for thee."

My dream had never died or lived again.
 As in some mystic middle state I lay;
 Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:
 Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all.
 So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
 That all things grew more tragic and more strange;
 That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause
 For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
 "The Prince is slain." My father heard and ran ¹⁰
 In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
 And grovel'd on my body, and after him
 Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
 With Psyche's babe in arm; there on the roofs
 Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

16 *Great dame of Lapidoth*: Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth; a Hebrew prophetess, who by wise direction led the Hebrews to defeat an army of the Canaanites, and who, after the victory of her people, sang a wonderful song of triumph and thanksgiving.

“ Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: the seed,
 The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
 Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
 Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
 A thousand arms and rushes to the sun.

20

“ Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came,
 The leaves wet with women's tears; they heard
 A noise of songs they would not understand;
 They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
 And would have strown it, and are fallen themselves.

“ Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came,
 The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
 But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
 And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
 And boats and bridges for the use of men.

30

“ Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they struck;
 With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
 There dwelt an iron nature in the grain;
 The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
 Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

“ Our enemies have fallen, but this shall grow
 A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
 Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power; and roll'd
 With music in the growing breeze of Time,
 The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
 Shall move the stony bases of the world.

40

“ And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
 Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not
 To break them more in their behoof, whose arms

25 *Mark'd it with the red cross* as a sign that it was one selected to
 be felled.

41 *Fangs*: roots

Champion'd our cause and won it with a day
 Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
 When dames and heroines of the golden year
 Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
 To rain an April of ovation round 50
 Their statues, borne aloft, the three; but come,
 We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
 Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,
 Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these
 The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
 Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries
 Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
 Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led 60
 A hundred maids in train across the park.
 Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on they came,
 Their feet in flowers, her loveliest: by them went
 The enamor'd air sighing, and on their curls
 From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,
 And over them the tremulous isles of light
 Slided, they moving under shade; but Blanche
 At distance follow'd: so they came: anon
 Thro' open field into the lists they wound
 Timorously; and as the leader of the herd 70
 That holds a stately fretwork to the sun,
 And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,
 Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
 The lovely, lordly creature floated on

47 *Blanch'd*: marked with white; to be remembered.

48 *The golden year*: the golden age about to dawn.

49 *Spring*. That is, the blossoms of spring.

70 *A stately fretwork* of branching antlers.

To where her wounded brethren lay; there stay'd;
 Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—and prest
 Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,
 And happy warriors, and immortal names,
 And said, "You shall not lie in the tents but here,
 And nursed by those for whom you fought, and served
 With female hands and hospitality." 80

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,
 She past my way. Up started from my side
 The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
 Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,
 Cold e'en to her, she sigh'd; and when she saw
 The haggard father's face and reverend beard
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past 90
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:
 "He saved my life; my brother slew him for it."
 No more; at which the king in bitter scorn
 Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,
 And held them up: she saw them, and a day
 Rose from the distance on her memory,
 When the good queen, her mother, shore the tress
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche:

78 *Here.* Remember that the contest had taken place close to the palace of the Princess.

83 *The old lion:* the old king, father of the Prince. *Whelpless eye.* That is, the eyes of a father bereft of his only child.

88 *Of grisly twine:* looking like gray twine, matted and tangled as it was.

94 *The painting and the tress.* See l. 37, 38, Part I.

And then once more she look'd at my pale face :
 Till understanding all the foolish work 100
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
 Her iron will was broken in her mind ;
 Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;
 She bow'd, she set the child on the earth ; she laid
 A feeling finger on my brows, and presently
 " O Sire," she said, " he lives ; he is not dead :
 O let me have him with my brethren here
 In our own palace : we will tend on him
 Like one of these ; if so, by any means,
 To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make 110
 Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

She said : but at the happy word " he lives "
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.
 So those two foes above my fallen life,
 With brow to brow like night and evening mixt
 Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole
 A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
 Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
 Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the grass, 120
 Uncared for, spied its mother and began
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
 Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
 Brook'd not, but clamoring out " Mine—mine—not
 yours,
 It is not yours, but mine : give me the child !"
 Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :

118 *Brede*: embroidery.

124 *Brook'd*: endured.

126 *On tremble*: atremble.

So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,
 And turn'd each face her way: wan was her cheek
 With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
 Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye, 130
 And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half
 The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
 The laces toward her babe; but she nor cared
 Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,
 Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood
 Erect and silent, striking with her glance
 The mother, me, the child; but he that lay
 Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
 Trail'd himself up on one knee: then he drew
 Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd 140
 At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it seem'd,
 Or self-involved; but when she learnt his face,
 Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
 Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew
 Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said:

"O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness
 That with your long locks play the lion's mane!
 But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible
 And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks, 150
 We vanquish'd, you the victor of your will.
 What would you more? give her the child! remain
 Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
 Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:
 Win you the hearts of women; and beware
 Lest, where you seek the common love of these,

The common hate with the revolving wheel
 Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis
 Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire,
 And tread you out for ever: but howsoe'er 160
 Fixt in yourself, never in your own arms
 To hold your own, deny not hers to her,
 Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,
 Or own one port of sense not flint to prayer,
 Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill, 170
 Give *me* it; *I* will give it her."

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd
 Dry flame, she listening; after sank and sank
 And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
 Full on the child; she took it: "Pretty bud!
 Lily of the vale! half-open'd bell of the woods!
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
 Of traitorous friend and broken system made
 No purple in the distance, mystery,
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell! 180
 These men are hard upon us as of old,
 We two must part; and yet how fain was I
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think
 I might be something to thee, when I felt
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast

158 *Nemesis*: the goddess of retribution or vengeance.

166 *Port*: portal.

In the dead prime: but may thy mother prove
 As true to thee as false, false, false to me!
 And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it
 Gentle as freedom"—here she kiss'd it: then—
 "All good go with thee! take it, Sir," and so 190
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands
 Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang
 To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks;
 Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
 And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,
 And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,
 And hid her bosom with it; after that
 Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

"We two were friends: I go to mine own land
 For ever: find some other: as for me 200
 I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet speak to me,
 Say one soft word and let me part forgiven."

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
 Then Arac: "Ida—'sdeath! you blame the man;
 You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard
 Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!
 I am your warrior; I and mine have fought
 Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she weeps:
 'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground; 210
 And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
 And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

186 *Dead prime*: dark hours preceding the dawn.

202 *Part*: depart.

" I've heard that there is iron in the blood.
 And I believe it. Not one word? not one?
 Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,
 Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.
 She said you had a heart—I heard her say it—
 ' Our Ida has a heart '—just ere she died—
 ' But see that some one with authority
 Be near her still ' ; and I—I sought for one— 220
 All people said she had authority—
 The Lady Blanche : much profit ! Not one word ;
 No ! tho' your father sues : see how you stand
 Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maim'd,
 I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
 For your wild whim : and was it then for this,
 Was it for this we gave our palace up,
 Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,
 And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
 And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone, 230
 Ere you were born to vex us ? Is it kind ?
 Speak to her, I say : is this not she of whom,
 When first she came, all flush'd you said to me,
 Now had you got a friend of your own age,
 Now could you share your thought ; now should men
 see
 Two women faster welded in one love
 Than pairs of wedlock ? she you walk'd with, she
 You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the tower,
 Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
 And right ascension, Heaven knows what ; and now 240

224 *Stiff as Lot's wife.* Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt.

239 *Sine* : a term used in trigonometry. *Arc* : a portion of a curved line. *Spheroid* : a body nearly but not perfectly spherical.
Azimuth : an arc of the horizon.

240 *Right ascension* : an astronomical term.

A word, but one, one little kindly word,
 Not one to spare her : out upon you, flint !
 You love nor her, nor me, nor any ; nay,
 You shame your mother's judgment too. Not one?
 You will not ? well—no heart have you, or such
 As fancies like the vermin in a nut
 Have fretted all to dust and bitterness."
 So said the small king moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force
 By many a varying influence and so long. 250
 Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor wept :
 Her head a little bent ; and on her mouth
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
 In a still water : then brake out my sire,
 Lifting his grim head from my wounds : " O you,
 Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
 And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,
 Because he might have wish'd it—but we see
 The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,
 And think that you might mix his draught with
 death. 260

When your skies change again : the rougher hand
 Is safer : on to the tents : take up the Prince."
 He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to attend
 A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her broke
 A genial warmth and light once more, and shone
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.

" Come hither.

O Psyche," she cried out, " embrace me, come,
 Quick while I melt ; make reconciliation sure
 With one that cannot keep her mind an hour :

Come to the hollow heart they slander so! 270
 Kiss and be friends, like children being chid!
I seem no more: *I* want forgiveness too:
 I should have had to do with none but maids,
 That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,
 Dear traitor, too much loved, why?—why?—Yet see,
 Before these kings we embrace you yet once more
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
 And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O Sire,

Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,
 Like mine own brother. For my debt to him, 280
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it;
 Taunt me no more: yourself and yours shall have
 Free adit; we will scatter all our maids
 Till happier times each to her proper hearth:
 What use to keep them here—now? grant my prayer.
 Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king:
 Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
 Which kills me with myself, and drags me down
 From my fixt height to mob me up with all
 The soft and milky rabble of womankind, 290
 Poor weakling even as they are.”

Passionate tears

Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril said:
 “Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—ask for him
 Of your great Head—for he is wounded too—
 That you may tend upon him with the Prince.”
 “Ay, so,” said Ida with a bitter smile,
 “Our laws are broken; let him enter too.”

272 *I seem no more.* That is, no more than a chidden child.

283 *Adit:* access, entrance.

298 *She that sang,* etc. See l. 21, Part IV.

Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
 Petition'd too for him. "Ay, so," she said, 300
 "I stagger in the stream; I cannot keep
 My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:
 We break our laws with ease, but let it be."
 "Ay, so?" said Blanche: "Amazed am I to hear
 Your Highness; but your Highness breaks with ease
 The law your Highness did not make: 't was I.
 I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
 And block'd them out; but these men came to woo
 Your Highness—verily I think to win."

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye; 310
 But Ida, with a voice that, like a bell
 Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,
 Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn:

"Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all,
 Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
 Shall enter, if he will! Let our girls flit,
 Till the storm die! but had you stood by us,
 The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base
 Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too, 320
 But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.
 We brook no further insult, but are gone."

She turn'd; the very nape of her white neck
 Was rosed with indignation: but the Prince
 Her brother came; the king her father charm'd

319 *The Pharos*: a lighthouse on an island in the harbor of Alexandria; one of the seven wonders of the world.

Her wounded soul with words: nor did mine own
 Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare
 Straight to the doors: to them the doors gave way
 Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd 330
 The virgin marble under iron heels::
 And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there
 Rested: but great the crush was, and each base,
 To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd
 In silken fluctuation and the swarm
 Of female whisperers: at the further end
 Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats
 Close by her, like supporters on a shield,
 Bow-back'd with fear: but in the center stood 340
 The common men with rolling eyes; amazed
 They glared upon the women, and aghast
 The women stared at these, all silent, save
 When armor clash'd or jingled, while the day,
 Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
 A flying splendor out of brass and steel,
 That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,
 Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
 Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame;
 And now and then an echo started up,
 And shuddering fled from room to room, and died 350
 Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice

Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance:
 And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro'

338 *Supporters*: in heraldry, representations of living creatures accompanying an escutcheon, either holding it up or standing beside it.

352 *Ordinance*: directions; commands.

The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors
 To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due
 To languid limbs and sickness; left me in it;
 And others elsewhere they laid; and all
 That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
 And chariot, many a maiden passing home
 Till happier times; but some were left of those
 Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,
 From those two hosts that lay beside the wall,
 Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.

360

VII

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
 The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
 With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
 But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
 Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
 I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
 Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
 Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
 Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:
 I strove against the stream and all in vain:
 Let the great river take me to the main:
 No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
 Ask me no more.

So was their sanctuary violated,
 So their fair college turn'd to hospital;
 At first with all confusion: by and by

Sweet order lived again with other laws :
 A kindlier influence reign'd ; and everywhere
 Low voices with the ministering hand
 Hung round the sick : the maidens came, they talk'd,
 They sang, they read : till she not fair began
 To gather light, and she that was became
 Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro 10
 With books, with flowers, and with angel offices,
 Like creatures native unto gracious act,
 And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
 And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.
 Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke ; but oft
 Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
 On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
 Darkening her female field : void was her use,
 And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze 20
 O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
 Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
 Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
 And suck the blinding splendor from the sand,
 And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
 Expunge the world : so fared she gazing there ;
 So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank
 And waste it seem'd and vain ; till down she came,
 And found fair peace once more among the sick.

17 *Clomb*: climbed, which latter form the poet uses elsewhere.

18 *Leaguer*: camp.

19 *Void was her use*: her occupation was done away with.

23 *Verge*: horizon.

25 *Tarn*: a mountain lake or pool.

26 *Expunge*: obliterate; blot out.

27 *Her world*: her dreams for women.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by morn the lark ³⁰
 Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I
 Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:
 And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown the bowers
 Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven,
 Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
 Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay
 Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,
 Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand
 That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with her oft 40
 Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but left
 Her child among us, willing she should keep
 Court-favor: here and there the small bright head,
 A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
 Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man
 With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves
 To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw
 The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange that soon
 He rose up whole, and those fair charities 50
 Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd that hearts
 So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
 Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake
 To the same sweet air and tremble deeper down,
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd
 At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn
 That after that dark night among the fields

31 *Gyres*: circles.

50 *Charities*: her care of the wounded men.

56 *Obtain'd*: prevailed.

She needs must wed him for her own good name ;
 Not tho' he built upon the babe restored ; 60
 Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd
 To incense the Head once more ; till on a day
 When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
 Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she hung
 A moment, and she heard, at which her face
 A little flush'd, and she past on ; but each
 Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
 In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls
 Held carnival at will, and flying struck 70
 With showers of random sweet on maid and man,
 Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
 Nor did mine own now reconciled ; nor yet
 Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole ;
 Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :
 Then came a change ; for sometimes I would catch
 Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
 And fling it like a viper off, and shriek,
 " You are not Ida " ; clasp it once again, 80
 And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
 And call her sweet, as if in irony,
 And call her hard and cold, which seem'd a truth ;
 And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,
 And often she believed that I should die :
 Till out of long frustration of her care,
 And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,

60 *Built upon*: based his suit upon.

67, 68 *Involved in stillness*: implied by silence.

And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks
 Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or call'd
 On flying Time from all their silver tongues— 90
 And out of memories of her kindlier days,
 And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
 And at the happy lovers heart in heart—
 And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,
 And often feeling of the helpless hands,
 And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—
 From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears 100
 By some cold morning glacier; frail at first
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
 But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death
 For weakness: it was evening: silent light
 Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought
 Two grand designs; for on one side arose
 The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd
 At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cramm'd
 The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest 110

88 *Dead*: dead of night.

109 *The Oppian law*: a law passed in Rome when Hannibal was threatening the city in 215 B. C. It prohibited women from wearing rich garments and forbade their adorning themselves with more than a certain amount of jewelry. When war had ceased the women demanded the repeal of the law, but they were supported by only one of the two consuls. They then resorted to riotous demonstrations, in which they persisted till the repeal of the law in 195 B. C. *Titanic*: gigantic, super-human.

110 *Forum*: a marketplace or public place in Rome where cases were judicially tried and orations delivered to the people.

A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side
 Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,
 A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,
 With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,
 The fierce triumvirs; and before them paused
 Hortensia, pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:
 They did but look like hollow shows; nor more
 Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew 120
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
 And rounder seem'd: I moved; I sigh'd: a touch
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand:
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran
 Mine down my face, and with what life I had,
 And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly:

“If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,¹³⁰
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself;
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
 I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.”

111 *Cato*: a Roman statesman who was made consul in 195 B. C.
 He opposed the repeal of the law mentioned above.

112 *Hortensia*: a Roman matron who spoke so eloquently against a
 certain tax levied upon the women of Rome that it was removed.

113 *Axe and eagle*. The axe was the emblem of the civil and the eagle
 that of the military authority of Rome.

115 *Wolf's-milk*. An allusion to the tradition that Romulus and
 Remus, the mythical founders of Rome, were suckled by a wolf.

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,
 But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd; she paused;
 She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a cry; 140
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death;
 And I believed that in the living world
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
 Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
 Glowing all over noble shame; and all
 Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
 And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
 Than in her mold that other, when she came
 From barren deeps to conquer all with love,
 And down the streaming crystal dropt; and she 150
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
 Naked, a double light in air and wave,
 To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out
 For worship without end; nor end of mine,
 Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided forth,
 Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
 Fill'd thro' and thro' with love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me, held
 A volume of the Poets of her land:
 There to herself, all in low tones, she read: 160

"Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
 The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

148 *That other*: Aphrodite, the goddess of love, who was born of the sea-foam.

151 *Far-fleeted*: floated far.

“ Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

“ Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

“ Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me. 170

“ Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

I heard her turn the page; she found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read:

“ Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease 180
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine, 190
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,

167 *Danaë to the stars.* That is, open to their influence. Danaë, daughter of the King of Argos, was loved by Zeus, who, when the maiden's father shut her up in a dungeon, made his way into the prison in the form of a shower of gold.

189 *With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns.* “Morning walks on the mountains here . . . and Death is her companion because life has no home on those ‘Alpine summits cold,’ or must face Death in attempting to scale them.”—ROLFE.

191 *Firths of ice:* glaciers.

That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
 To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
 But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
 To find him in the valley; let the wild
 Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave
 The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
 Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
 That like a broken purpose waste in air:
 So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales 200
 Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
 Arise to thee; the children call, and I
 Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
 Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
 Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
 The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
 And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I lay
 Listening, then look'd. Pale was the perfect face:
 The bosom with long sighs labor'd; and meek 210
 Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes.
 And the voice trembled and the hand. She said
 Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
 In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
 That all her labor was but as a block
 Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,
 She still were loth to yield herself to one
 That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights
 Against the sons of men and barbarous laws.
 She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her 220
 That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power
 In knowledge: something wild within her breast,
 A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.

201 *Azure pillars of the hearth*: columns of smoke rising from the cottages.

216 *Were*: would be.

And she had nursed me there from week to week :
 Much had she learnt in little time. In part
 It was ill counsel had misled the girl
 To vex true hearts : yet was she but a girl—
 “ Ah fool, and made myself a queen of farce !
 When comes another such ? never, I think,
 Till the sun drop, dead, from the signs.”

Her voice ²³⁰

Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
 And her great heart thro' all the faultful past
 Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break ;
 Till notice of a change in the dark world
 Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,
 That early woke to feed her little ones,
 Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light :
 She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

“ Blame not thyself too much,” I said, “ nor blame
 Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws ; ²⁴⁰
 These were the rough ways of the world till now.
 Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
 The woman's cause is man's ; they rise or sink
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free :
 For she that out of Lethe scales with man
 The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
 His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
 Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—
 If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
 How shall men grow ? but work no more alone ! ²⁵⁰

230 *Signs.* That is, signs of the Zodiac.

234 *A change.* That is, the coming of the dawn.

245 *Lethe:* the river of oblivion, contact with the waters of which caused forgetfulness of one's previous existence.

Our place is much : as far as in us lies
 We two will serve them both in aiding her—
 Will clear away the parasitic forms
 That seem to keep her up but drag her down—
 Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
 Within her—let her make herself her own
 To give or keep, to live and learn and be
 All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
 For woman is not undevelop't man,
 But diverse: could we make her as the man, 260
 Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
 Not like to like, but like in difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;
 The man be more of woman, she of man ;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world :
 She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;
 Till at the last she set herself to man,
 Like perfect music unto noble words ; 270
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the to-be,
 Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
 Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other even as those who love.
 Then comes the statelier Eden back to men ;
 Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm ;
 Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
 May these things be!"

251 *Our place is much*: our position in life will help much.

255 *Burgeon*: to put forth buds.

261 *His*: Love's.

Sighing she spoke: " I fear 280
They will not."

" Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfills
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart, beating, with one full stroke,
Life."

And again sighing she spoke: " A dream 290
That once was mine! what woman taught you this? "

" Alone," I said, " from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime:
Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants, 300
No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy he

With such a mother! faith in womankind
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high ³¹⁰
 Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
 He shall not blind his soul with clay."

" But I,"

Said Ida, tremulously, " so all unlike—
 It seems you love to cheat yourself with words :
 This mother is your model. I have heard
 Of your strange doubts: they well might be; I seem
 A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince;
 You cannot love me."

" Nay, but thee," I said,

" From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw ³²⁰
 Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods
 That mask'd thee from men's reverence up, and forced
 Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood: now,
 Given back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,
 Indeed I love: the new day comes, the light
 Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
 Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are dead,
 My haunting sense of hollow shows: the change,
 This truthful change in thee has kill'd it. Dear,
 Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine, ³³⁰
 Like yonder morning on the blind half-world:
 Approach and fear not; breathe upon my brows;
 In that fine air I tremble, all the past
 Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
 Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come
 Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
 Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,
 I waste my heart in signs: let be. My bride,
 My wife, my life! O we will walk this world,

Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
 And so thro' those dark gates across the wild
 That no man knows. Indeed I love thee: come,
 Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
 Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me."

340

CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
 The random scheme as wildly as it rose.
 The words are mostly mine: for when we ceased
 There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
 "I wish she had not yielded!" then to me,
 "What if you drest it up poetically!"
 So pray'd the men, the women; I gave assent:
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven
 Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?
 The men required that I should give throughout 10
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
 With which we banter'd little Lilia first;
 The women—and perhaps they felt their power,
 For something in the ballads which they sang,
 Or in their silent influence as they sat,
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close—
 They hated banter, wish'd for something real,
 A gallant fight, a noble princess—why
 Not make her true-heroic—true-sublime? 20
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
 Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.

22 *Such a framework.* That is, with the strange mixture of incidents and ideas of which it was composed.

Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists ;
 And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,
 And yet to give the story as it rose,
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,
 And maybe neither pleased myself nor them

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
 In our dispute: the sequel of the tale 30
 Had touch'd her; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,
 She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt
 A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
 " You—tell us what we are "—who might have told,
 For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,
 But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed
 At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
 To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we climb'd
 The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw 40
 The happy valleys, half in light, and half
 Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace;
 Gray halls alone among their massive groves;
 Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower
 Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat;
 The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the seas;
 A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
 Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

" Look there, a garden!" said my college friend,
 The Tory member's elder son, " and there! " 50

49 *A garden.* He refers to the English country as a whole.

50 *And there.* Referring to France.

God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
 And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
 A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—
 Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
 Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
 Some patient force to change them when we will,
 Some civic manhood firm against the crowd—
 But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
 The king is scared, the soldier will not fight. 60
 The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek
 Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
 In mock heroics stranger than our own;
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;
 Too comic for the solemn things they are,
 Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
 As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas! 70
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "ourselves are full
 Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
 Are but the needful preludes of the truth:
 For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
 The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,
 This fine old world of ours is but a child
 Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
 To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides."

51 *The narrow sea*: the Straits of Dover.

58 *Yonder*: in France.

66 *A schoolboys' barring out*. That is, a schoolboys' barring out, in sport, of a master from his classroom.

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails. 80
 And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
 Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
 Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
 No little lily-handed baronet he,
 A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,
 A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
 A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
 A patron of some thirty charities,
 A pamphleteer on guano and on grain, 90
 A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
 Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
 Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
 That stood the nearest—now address'd to speech—
 Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed
 Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
 To follow: a shout rose again, and made
 The long line of the approaching rookery swerve
 From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer
 From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang
 Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout 100
 More joyful than the city-roar that hails
 Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs
 Give up their parks some dozen times a year
 To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,
 I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

83 *Head under head*: each one a head shorter than the one next him.

87 *Pine*: pineapples.

90 *Quarter-sessions*: criminal court held quarterly.

94 *Closed*: included.

97 *Rookery*: flock of rooks.

100 *Bourn*: boundary.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charm'd: we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man: the walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd, ¹¹⁰
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we went.

STUDY QUESTIONS

THE following questions and their application to "The Princess" are an attempt to solve the problem of providing work for the student who is making preparation of a lesson in literature. It is a method that has been in successful use in the writer's classes for a number of years, and it is believed that it has the following advantages over other methods which employ outlines or independent questions: It is more flexible, since it gives any teacher opportunity to vary the work easily by asking pupils to prepare the lesson only on such questions as may seem to be of more interest or value for the class in hand. The material provided is abundant for such variation of the work with different classes. Further, it has the effect of organizing the pupil's thinking on the subject, because it asks him to attack again and again the important problems of the classic he is studying. Each time he answers a certain question he is gathering material for a final generalization. This is the more important, because the teaching of literature is at all times in danger of becoming loose and inconclusive.

The method of use of the questions is briefly as follows: The thirty-one general questions are to be answered over and over again as they are applied to particular lines of the poem. For instance, the numbers 10-24: 13, 24 indicate that for lines ten to twenty-four the pupil will answer questions thirteen and twenty-four. The numbers preceding the colon are always the line numbers of the poem, those following the colon the numbers of the questions that are to be answered for those lines.

The long string of numbers which this method presents may look forbidding to the teacher who has not tried it, but, in spite of the appearance of coldness that they give, the work will be found very much alive. A method

that makes pupils think and establish right conclusions of their own in place of accepting the conclusions of others, will create interest ultimately, even though at first glance it may seem mechanical.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ON "THE PRINCESS" (Copyright, 1905, by Lewis Worthington Smith.)

1 What phase of the author's feeling for life or attitude toward it do you find here?

2 What suggestion of the author's understanding of the relation between man and woman do you find here?

3 What method of description does the author employ here?

4 Do you find here any lines of commonplace or any of imaginative or emotional heightening? Any lines worth remembering?

5 What is the connection in thought and feeling between the song and the part in which it is included? What in it is particularly effective?

6 What is the meaning here?

7 Read the notes and be prepared to comment on these lines.

8 What do you know of any of the characters here? Does character develop, or do you merely know more about the persons of the story? Is the showing of character consistent or not?

9 What do you find here of Tennyson's feeling for womanhood?

10 Is there anything incredible in the situation here? How made plausible?

11 How is character shown here?

12 What preparation here for the climax or catastrophe or for the development of the struggle of the contending forces?

13 What concrete picture does the author wish you to get here? For what purpose does he wish you to visualize this?

14 What expectation regarding the outcome does the author raise here, and why? Is there anything dramatic in the situation?

15 Explain historical or other allusions.

16 What is there striking in diction, felicitous or otherwise, here?

17 What metrical peculiarity, felicity or variation do you notice here? How justified or accounted for?

18 What mood is shown here, and how is it consistent with character?

19 Be able to give meanings of all words here.

20 How is this harmonious and in keeping with the atmosphere of the poem, or inharmonious and not in keeping?

21 How does this emphasize the general tone of the poem?

22 Comment on the figures here.

23 What is the nature of the sentiments appealed to here?

24 Do you notice anything in the tone-color deserving comment here?

25 What words in these lines are not of Anglo-Saxon origin? Of these, how many are derivatives of Latin words with which you are familiar?

26 What is the meter here, and how is it fitting?

27 What does Tennyson understand as the sphere of woman?

28 What is there in any way striking in the way in which this is said?

29 Make an outline of the story so far.

30 Do you find any separate episodes or digressions so far? If so, what part do they play in relation to the whole?

31 Has the story narrative movement and sweep or not? If not, what in the method of telling or in the things presented keeps it from having such sweep?

APPLICATION OF PRECEDING QUESTIONS

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FINAL REVIEW QUESTIONS.

How does the poem gain or lose by being told in the first person? Is the plot a good one for the development of the question? How so or how not? What as determining the outcome is the important incident? Are there any minor incidents that could be omitted? Why or why not? Is the final effect serious or burlesque? Why did Tennyson call the poem a medley? What is gained or lost by the manner of telling the story in the words of speakers talking idly? What new development of the question of woman's place in society does the poem present? What poetic qualities seem to you most noticeable in Tennyson? How significant is the poem in its ethical teaching? How have characters been chosen for the play of conflicting emotions? What is the relation of the setting of the story to the story itself?

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