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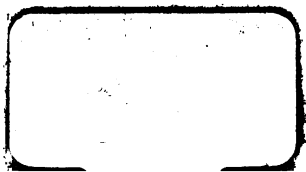
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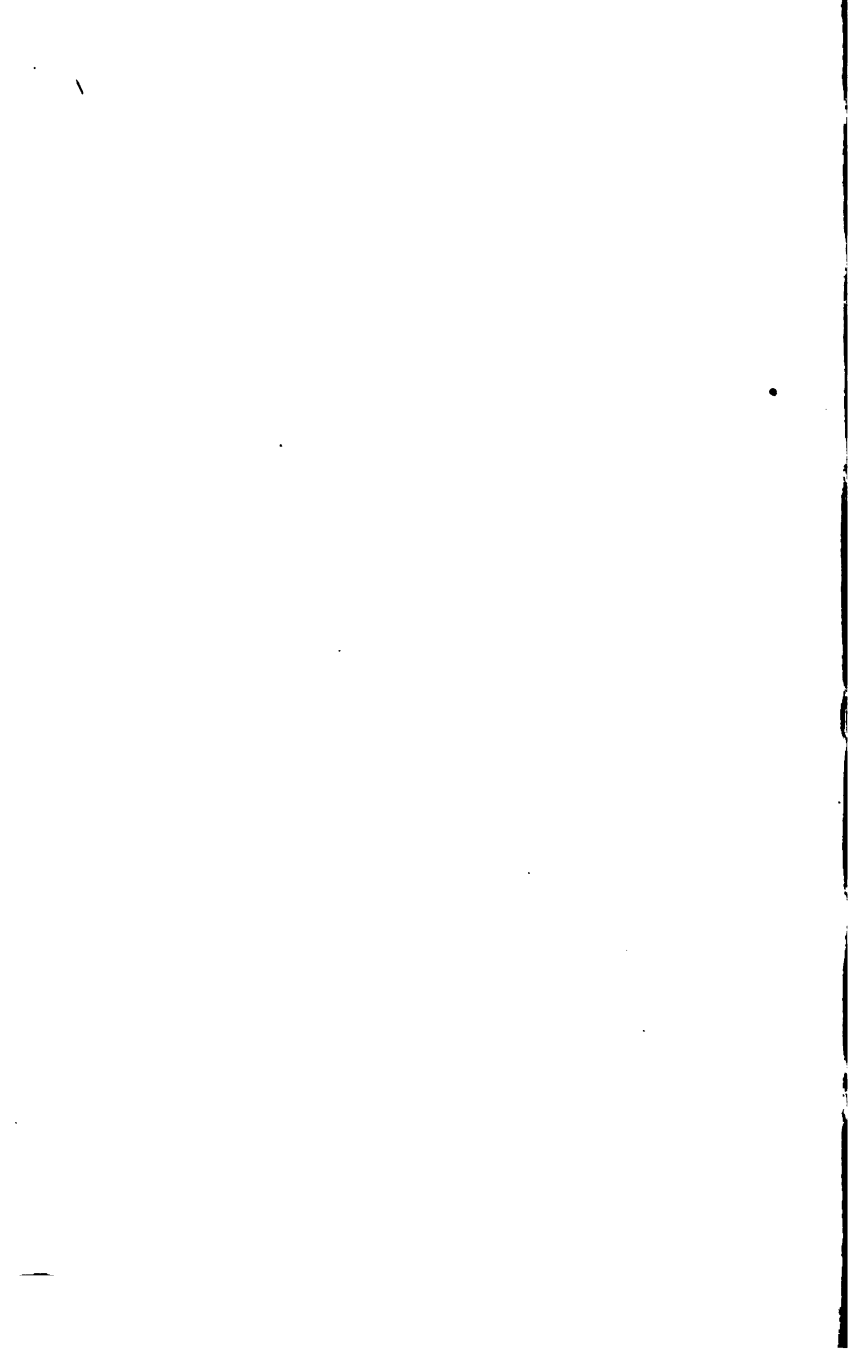
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Martin  
Martin  
AN







R#

# A LEGACY.

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VOL. II

Martin, John

11

Always used to the  
bustle and stir of school as I was it is a  
real affliction to me to be condemned to sit in  
a little room - all day long from 10 till 10 -  
sometimes or nearly with a very ineffectual reading  
- constant indigestion, and nothing to see through  
the window except a cart rattling past now  
and then. But patience = patience.

Edm Martin - Great Eastern  
January 7<sup>th</sup> - 1876  
Essex



# A LEGACY.

BEING THE

LIFE AND REMAINS OF JOHN MARTIN,

SCHOOLMASTER AND POET.

*Yonge*

WRITTEN AND EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

*Craig, Thomas D.*

"Life is real, life is earnest,  
And the grave is not its goal."

LONGFELLOW.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

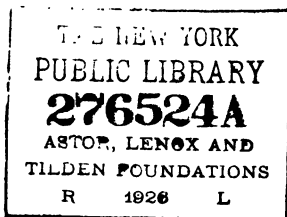
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## A L E G A C Y.

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1875. *June 8.*—In a hundred years we shall all be dust. All over—the sunshine and rain of our smiles and tears. Our successors will peer into this record of a lovely June day—some other June day—with curiosity; every little scrap of paper which has escaped destruction will be eagerly perused—will be read as a solemn message from a far-off, mysterious world. They will inquire of each other, and ask of old, worm-eaten books, what our nineteenth century habits and costumes were; what we thought and said and did. Some of them will, perchance, wish that they could have lived in the wonderful time of romance, as they will consider it—this dull, miserable time, as we often call it. As a corpse, when embalmed, has an extrinsic, purely material

worth imparted to it, and becomes honoured with a place in some vast museum to the awe of thousands, so this monotonous time, whose life our descendants can never see, will present a vivid and interesting picture to their minds—ourselves the figures, whether happy or wretched, wise or foolish, in the foreground or in the back.

It behoves us, then, as we are making history and biography every hour for those who live after us to read and profit by, to fill up this period with as useful, if not noble, acts as we can. To blot out bad old laws, to introduce good ones, to place on higher platforms those classes that we call lower, so making our grandchildren to revere the nineteenth century, solely because we lived and suffered and died in it.

*June 9.*—What can the blackbird next door be singing about all day long? Just as I am putting these words down come the monotonous, sad, yet sweet notes of the poor prisoner; for I suppose he regards his cage as a prison. Does he mean to express joy? I know not. Very

likely, at different times, he means to give vent to feelings of both. Perhaps the plaintive notes, "long drawn out" sometimes, may come while the pathetic mood is upon him. But what is he singing *about*? There he is again! Eating, drinking, and other material wants take up so much of our time, have so much labour bestowed upon procuring them, that we seldom abstract ourselves from bread-and-cheese surroundings, and allow ourselves to gaze mentally, as strangers, at our individual selves, at the human race generally, and at the swarm of dumb (to us) creatures which tenant the earth. When we do, at rare intervals, put ourselves in the position of spectators, what curious thoughts crowd our minds! How we long to know something more about nightingale, cat, frog, rat, and spider—how we ponder the question whether they can think—what they think about—whether they can convey by speech their thoughts to each other—what the effect of those communications are! Yet all in vain are our speculations. Though we live so very near

them; though we cage them, pet them, watch them never so comfortably, tenderly, and minutely; they might as well be silent clods of earth for all the information we or our forefathers have ever been able to get from them.

*July 11.*—"Study not so much originality as Nature," says good Mrs. C. But how hard to take her advice! Without that subtle element of genius, all studyings of Nature end in weariness, all pictures of Nature become mere photographs. We lose in minuteness and fidelity of detail by choosing to have the painter's representation instead of the photographer's, but we gain in colour, in life, in poetry, in splendour. Yet Nature must be behind the efforts of the last as of the first, else it is nothing but colour. The truth is, that to stick to Nature leads us in the predicament of Wordsworth; to depart from Nature subjects to the string of dictionary words thrown haphazard together by such a man as Browning, our course must be a mean.

*July 15.*—Although I have put down the date, I have really nothing to write about.

“Happy is the land that has not a history,” I have read ; but I should not say, from experience, happy is the man who has nothing to write about. The truth is, I am intolerably dull and solitary in this place. In London there was every day something fresh to see. There was also, best of all, the contact with sharp wits, the intellectual conversation, the news-room, the lecture, the faces of acquaintances, if not friends ; all these I am deprived of here. I am afraid that in spite of my love of natural objects, I am a thorough Londoner. It is to me almost an entombment to live here. The same thing day after day, month after month, year after year. Of course, with friends, one can put up with anything, live anywhere and anyhow ; but wanting these, what can the poor heart do ? I think sometimes, when I see the tired working man crawl home, of the welcome he receives from the dear ones at home, of the bright fire, the cheerful tea, the inspiriting conversation which are his, and I almost envy him ; but I take, as is my disposition, the next moment, the view

which is most likely to be correct, the dirty house, the ill-tempered wife, the squalling children, and I congratulate myself that I am all alone.

For, when I mentioned friends just now, I said that with them we could endure anything, and I had in my mind the best of all earthly friends; but when this one that we have selected to live with us till death is not to our taste—becomes positively nauseous to us, is alien to us in temper, manners, thoughts, aspirations, and conduct, what state can be worse? What worse? It is a living death. So, after all, I have managed to get over a page.

*July 18.*—The day has been very lovely. For some weeks past we have had scarcely anything but gloom and rain, but to-day changed all into sunshine. I have just returned from a walk in the meadows strewn with the new-mown hay, and what a delicious sensation one experiences after having been caged in by unfavourable weather! It is a palingenesia to



stretch one's limbs, to inhale Nature's odours, to listen to the birds.

The common sun, the air, the skies,

are indeed "opening Paradise."

I took with me Wordsworth, and read some of the verses to the accompaniment of a musical brook, or rather river—the Chelmer. Wordsworth is a riddle. It is one of my schemes to study, and critically examine, his poems; but the task is hard, and may never be undertaken. Opinions are always various as to the relative or individual merits of writers who have managed to attain a fame-basis, but in these days, especially, estimates seem to come into conflict more and *more*. There are two or three who seem, of our poets, so firmly established in the hearts of men as to suffer no lessening of their fame, even at the hands of splendid and piercing critics; but the majority tremble on their pedestals. Pope, who can prevent his being dragged from the lofty height which he still

occupies in the minds of a few? Southey, who mentions him? Scott, will his poems survive except as curiosities of literature? Campbell, Rogers, Montgomery, who will be bold enough to predict any life for them in the countless years of posterity?

Here, with the date of "July 26th" comes another paper or essay, "Rough Notes on my School Kingdom," evidently drawn from life, most vivid and natural. Accounts have reached me from outside sources, universally agreeing as to Martin's enormous influence over his boys, very "bucolic" boys, drawn out of an essentially agricultural population, which, in spite of the poetic fictions about Damon and Thyrsis, is rarely equal to a manufacturing population in either quickness or capacity of brain. Possibly, even his little East London roughs, I will not say ruffians, tried Martin less than the dense-brained,

one-idea'd farmer lads of Great Easton, with whom, or their parents, it was evidently so difficult for him to establish the slightest *rapport*. And from the grade of society above these, where perhaps he might have found some sympathy, the worldly position of the poor schoolmaster completely shut him out; for the division between class and class is more sharply drawn in the country than in town. That "School Kingdom," which he governed so well, and where he is to this day regretted bitterly by both scholars and parents, must have been his only world, and have included all the interests he could find, except his books.

ROUGH NOTES IN MY SCHOOL KINGDOM.

I am in the mood to say, "bother Wordsworth and the whole pack of writers, whether of prose or verse?" I am in want of a holiday, and, till I get it, "man will not delight me nor women

either," to slightly vary Hamlet's words. For the past nine weeks it has been one monotonous round of work, eat, drink, sleep, and read—nothing but newspapers. No sight of friends, no pleasant books, no conversation, no walks, no anything! I gaze wearily ahead, and can see little prospect of a holiday, for four weeks at the very least, the weather being at the present against the chances of an early harvest. Every day there is the kingdom of the school to manage, to teach, to govern; and to do these things effectually requires all the best powers one possesses. I don't think any writer has portrayed, at any rate in prose, the school kingdom, and, in my opinion, only a genius could do justice to the theme. Let me just note one or two things.

My kingdom numbers seventy subjects, all males. The land which we occupy is contracted in area, and really insufficient for the maintenance of the population; but, thanks to foreign supplies of food, we manage to exist, though soured somewhat in temper by the continual

treading upon each others' toes, and by the elbowing which we are forced to resort to. The population is semi-barbaric ; we are just crawling into the light of civilisation, and that is all. My royal predecessor held the sceptre (the cane, I mean) of power for about three years, but relinquished it, as I believe, on account of the paltry civil list, which his subjects could barely afford. *His* predecessor was not of royal blood, but was taken from the ranks of the people, and exercised merely a chieftain's rule over the barbaric hordes which peopled the country. After a turbulent rule of twenty-five years, he submitted to the rule of the great black monarch, in 1870, and lies buried in the churchyard opposite, with this beautiful inscription engraved upon his tombstone :—

A boys' schoolmaster of no great fame,  
Yet loved to teach them his Saviour's name ;  
And though his body is beneath the dust,  
His spirit is in heaven, we trust.

I entered upon, or rather ascended, the throne of this realm just over a year ago. The popula-

tion was then about fifty. That it has risen to seventy, shows that there is vitality in the people, however uncivilised they may be. This state of Nature shows itself, as in larger kingdoms, by a disposition to make forays on the corn, fruit, and nuts of other people; by a tendency to sleep, to lounging, to listlessness, all characteristic of inferior tribes, when anything not in the shape of food is brought under notice. They are given also to the extremely savage plan of having "an eye for an eye," or a blow for a blow, and consider that such conduct is "quite the thing." Sometimes I say, "Why did you begin fighting with Tom?" or, "Bill," as the case may be. The answer is almost sure to come out: "He hot (hurt) I, and then I hot he." In short, not to mention long, dirty nails, which might bring them near to the Chinese, only that we might really injure the latter by reckoning my population as of the same class; they present, in their speech, behaviour, appearance, and habits, or would present, if any stranger of distinction visited our territory, a

spectacle of barbarism, just whitewashed, with the three "R.'s," very thinly laid on in some places, and kept in fairly decent ways, mainly by the strong right arm of authority.

I am obliged to be not only the king of this great nation, but Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Archbishop, Judge, and Executioner. We do not have any capital punishment, else the latter office would be very unpleasant for me; but all other methods we have more or less used. Banishment is very rarely resorted to, and then only in the case of some powerful noble who threatens to subvert the monarchy. I might correctly say that I stand ready to banish, for hitherto my De Montford, or Warwick, has not presented himself. Imprisonment, which in some countries extends to life, rarely is ordered by me for more than two hours—generally an hour makes a great impression, when preceded by a few strokes laid on rather severely. In fact, "I am monarch of all I survey," as absolute as the Czar, and almost as inflexible as Nicholas himself was; for,

as those who know boys will readily agree, the rule must be, however tempered with kindness, strict, impartial—nay, stern—in order to manage those who are allowed to do at home almost as they like. My kingdom is divided into three provinces or classes, over which, when I am not superintending personally, I appoint prefects or governors. These governors are, as a rule, totally inadequate to their work. Like the governors of more ambitious provinces, they regard the office assigned them as mere opportunities for idling, and displaying power more or less arbitrary. Nay, some have even accepted bribes, in the shape of buttons or marbles, from criminals anxious to avoid being sent up to me. It is creditable to some that, instead of taking the bribe, they have, as soon as the state of the roads would permit, made a journey expressly to inform me that their integrity had been assailed, the result being huge punishment to the assailer. The bulwark of my power is formed by the nobles—in other words, the first class. They constitute a barrier against the



tide of democracy represented by the other two classes. Although permitting no legislative or judicial power to them, yet I, as the kings of greater countries do, allow them a little more freedom than the others. I constitute them also the guardians, out of doors, of their inferiors. They see that no excesses are indulged in ; they offer their warnings and advice ; at any rate, I have given them full power to do so.

On the whole, they conduct themselves as the members of such an aristocratic body generally do. Except when a dispute arises, followed by a fight, or when they forget, in the matter of corn, &c., aforesaid, the distinction between other people's property and their own, I have very little to complain of them. They certainly strive to uphold the laws better, and do their work in a quieter way, than the lower classes.

The different types of character presented to one's notice in this kingdom are not numerous ; or, at any rate, I may say that there is small chance of analysing the natures of my subjects individually. Like most country boys, they are

alike in being dull, heavy, and awkward. Still I notice exceptions.

There is a merry black-eyed boy in the first class, whom I always mentally call "the humorist." Considering the general inability of boys to perceive a joke, it is refreshing to hear his—ha, ha!—when anything very funny is said by me or others. Of course, this laugh of appreciation is no breach of discipline. It only takes place when something extravagantly funny has been said, and really we do get some ridiculous answers and expressions sometimes. On other occasions the humorist can be as serious as a judge. In addition to the words of the boys, which often irresistibly suggest jokes more or less good, some absurd notes from parents find their way to me very often. To-day, a boy who had been absent without leave brought a note from his mother, in which she, after stating the cause of his absence, said—"I hope you wont *punch* him, as I was forced to send him." I have taken no pains to give the bad spelling in the other words, but have underlined a word which she meant to

put down as "punish." What a ludicrous idea arises in the mind! Fancy my *punching* the boy! There is another boy in the same class—a farmer's son—who is a regular mud-lark. It is his greatest delight to be always tumbling on the ground—muddy or dusty, all one to him. He luxuriates in a fall. Last winter his joy was, not to get to the bottom of the slide, but to accomplish as many safe tumbles as he could.

4 He never hurts himself; but then he is only a little fellow, eight or nine years old, and more nimble than the majority of his fellows.

Next him is a tall, heavy lad—also a farmer's son—whose behaviour is very good, but who is an awful dunce. His voice is like that of a little girl, and he constantly seems to be in a girlish state of blushing bashfulness. Perhaps some of this is due to his elevation above his schoolfellows—being, although not thirteen, tall enough for a boy of fifteen; and this stature may make him conscious of his inferiority to boys much smaller and younger—the boy before mentioned being above him in the school.

Then, nearly at the bottom of the class, is a fellow who is incessantly winking. All day long his face is being twitched in a most annoying manner; giving him the appearance of a monkey—his small black eyes helping this impression. In vain I appeal to him to cease the hideous writhings which his features undergo. He stops, or a moment or two, and then—lo! his face is nervously at its old tricks again, making the eyes wink as rapidly as possible. In London the boys would never cease noticing such a curious fellow, and would be always laughing at him, but here they take little notice of anything not in the shape of bread and cheese. It is only right to add that this boy is in every sense fairly behaved, and tries to do his work in a proper way.

There is only one more who seems to have a distinct individuality, and that is a pestiferous urchin of six years. He has an immense mass of red hair—the thatch to a freckled face, pierced with cunning eyes. He has endeavoured to bribe, on more than one occasion, my functionaries; he will lose no opportunity of playing

when nobody is apparently looking ; he is always on the grin, always being sent up for punishment. On an average, not less than three times a day does he put in an appearance before my desk—my throne, I mean—and his howls can be heard at all these times, only lasting till he gets to his seat again. His shirt is generally trying to scramble through his trousers, and his boots are large enough to fit me comfortably. I believe he is a born humorist. There is nearly always a twinkle in his eye, and the slightest smile on my part at anything sends an expanding grin over his features. He is, however, a much less mischievous boy than he was a year ago.

With all their faults—and who can expect very good qualities from children, many of whose parents are careless, ignorant, and vicious?—my subjects are more tractable and easier to be pleased than London boys. Some of them are even good boys as far as behaviour in school goes, and try to do their work creditably. The work of managing, single-handed, in summer months, and with no social intercourse in the

evening to give relief, grows—after the lapse of nine or ten weeks—very monotonous, and, in a manner, tiring. I started this paper with no premeditation, just putting down in ink my longing for a holiday, but I have suffered it to grow into a few notes on my school boys.

*July 25.*—To-day is really Sunday. I am writing with the glorious sunshine streaming over the book, dazzling my eyes, and sending thrills of thankfulness and joy through my veins. Above there are a few white clouds, thin and scattered—the rest of the sky is of a deep blue. A continuance of sunny days would greatly benefit the corn, and no doubt rapidly ripen it after the deluge of the past fortnight.

*July 27.*—I have before this often wished for—

A lodge in some vast wilderness,

when subject to much noise and bustle in London; but really this wilderness in which I am now located, though not vast, is, for any society it affords, as silent and monotonous as any desert. Opposite me as I write is the

churchyard, with no special characteristics of quaint epitaphs, or graves of distinguished persons. In the midst is the church—a dilapidated, barn-like building, with a wooden tower and a rickety turret—which the parishioners expect will topple down some day. There is a Norman arch on the north side, bricked up. In the interior is a gallery at the west end, in which the children sit with their teachers. Above our heads the arms of the Maynard family, whose estate embraces this and several parishes adjoining. Below us, on each side of the church, horse boxes, in which the labourers nap on Sundays without risk of being perceived by the minister.

A few doors to the right of my house stands the village inn; lower down, the post-office (a very primitive affair); still further down, at the bottom of the hill, is the river Chelmer. In the centre of the village stands the pump. On my left the girls' schoolroom; further on, in the same direction, a farmhouse, called the "Hall;" and opposite the pump an individual who farms

a few acres of land, and is, besides, undertaker, carpenter, and proprietor of a horse and cart which is let out on hire. In these few words I have mentioned everything of importance in the village.

Three miles away is the ancient town of Dunmow, and that is really the distance between me and semi-civilisation; for Dunmow is a railway town. In the other direction—viz., north—there is no town or village at all for four miles, and that, when reached, is a ruined place named Thaxted—prior to 1832 a municipal borough. It is doleful to see its decayed condition; the air of listlessness which pervades the inhabitants. It has no trade at all, is at least six miles from the nearest station, and has many of its houses actually falling to pieces; yet there is in it one of the finest churches in the county, with a tall, magnificent spire, which can be seen from this village.

We all go on in a humdrum manner. I say “we,” for I begin to reckon myself as almost a native. When people in London begin to go



out for a walk, or comfortably take their seats for the concert or the lecture, we are yawning and preparing to go to bed. Early to bed is a very good thing if one is obliged to rise early, or is in a mood to work hard when he does rise ; but to me, who am not subject to the first, nor disposed to do the second, going to bed so early is irksome. Very often I can't get to sleep for two or three hours. Why go to bed ? may be asked. Merely to dispel the ennui which must steal upon one who has no books, no companions, a good deal of time, and a head that will not stand too much brooding or studying at once. Oh ! for a holiday, I often say—but patience, patience, patience. The weather has been very fine since Saturday. Let's hope it will quickly bring on the harvest.

*Aug. 1.*—We are having most beautiful weather at last, and the corn rapidly ripens. Yesterday, had a long walk from Dunmow home, by way of Stebbing, and was delighted to see the promising appearance of the crops, maugre the deluge of the month just gone by. Sad reflections will

arise though in the mind, when we perceive Nature's blessings gradually growing for us, getting fuller, riper, ruddier; bearing aloft blossoms and flowers of dazzling hue and exquisite beauty; while we—if we examine ourselves—are like weeds, yea, poisonous plants, growing to no good, shrinking at the slightest suggestion that the harvest of our lives is at hand. It is no joy to be assured that we are growing and growing, having all the best things of life—air, sunshine, rain, and good soil—and yet are benefiting neither ourselves nor our neighbours, and are far more profitless than a few ears of corn. What *can* we do? The prayer must come from many hearts, seared with passion, cold with doubt, dry with worldliness, throbbing with intermingled sorrows and sins, as it comes too often with little result from mine—Miserere Domini!—Miserere Domini! If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, I may not abide Thee.

*Aug. 3.*—It is in some respects a misfortune for me, perhaps, that I grew up to manhood

powerfully influenced by the stoical, proud portion of Emerson's teaching. Although convinced that in it there is much for the mind and little for the heart; assured that the hopes, the comforts, it puts forward are worthless reeds, I still experience something of the old glamour which enthralled me for at least ten years; I still revere the Concord teaching—I still have for him a filial affection, though convinced that the Divinity of the Blessed One, and His sacrifice, afford our only hope.

What I was going to say is this: Emerson has had this hold upon me, that I have tried to cultivate a philosophical temper in the midst of adversity, and a calm disposition in this "pushing age." This latter has made me look coldly on two or three good "openings" which have been presented to me. I now almost regret that I have been swayed by Emerson to such an extent. I regret, because I find myself with no position in life, no home comforts, no friends, and no money—things which, if I had worked my cards properly (as the expression runs), would have

been mine before this, or, at any rate, by this time.

*Aug. 5.*—The view from my window as I am writing is gloomy enough. The trees are swaying in a sharp, cold wind; above, all is of a leaden colour; rain drops down at intervals. Eight o'clock (evening) is just striking, and, as night descends gradually to wrap everything in darkness, a denser gloom steals over my mind. This sounds like would-be poetry, but, God knows, I am in no mood to write poetry, unless it be that which I want, not the mood, but the power of words to express—sickening weariness and despair. I am weary of myself and of everything around me, and despair of ever doing anything in this world or of gaining happiness in the next. The past has not one hour of real happiness, nor do I dare look forward to any bliss in the future. The fact is, I am growing older and no better. I am never satisfied with myself, spiritually or mentally. At this age, after all I have endured, domestic comfort, independence, the honour and admiration of my

fellows, ought to be mine ; instead of which, I eat and drink—nothing more—nothing more. Almost ruined ambition on the one hand, and a selfish, worldly, indolent nature on the other—the grave ever before my eyes—Miserere Domine !

I have given this piteous outburst just as it stands. The man was human—like all the rest of us—and not an angel. In his cruel humility he paints himself in the very blackest colours, since of that “selfish, worldly, indolent nature” to which he confesses, I can find no trace in any description given by those that knew him. Most likely the slowly-creeping disease and death were producing in him that morbid, mental condition only too common among such sufferers. I present him here exactly as he presents himself—no better and no worse. Some may blame, but all must surely compassionate him.

*Aug. 6.*—A great magician has just gone. He always used his magic powers for the furtherance of good ; and although he was an old man (seventy-one), the world would willingly have kept him in the flesh. As for dying, or being dead, that is out of the question.

Dead he is not, but departed ; for the artist never dies ;

and an artist in its highest sense was Hans Christian Andersen. His short fables, or fairy tales, are delicious. There was, through every one of them, the subtle web-spell of their creator. Words can hardly do justice to the tender, imaginative way in which old shoes, leaden soldiers, and other inanimate things are made, by genius the most exquisite, to speak, act, and convey lessons, sometimes homely, sometimes sublime, but always beautiful and true. There is delight in the magician's pages for the child, and profound lessons to be learnt by the wise man. The great merit of these tales is that there is always wrapping them an Oriental glamour—always inlaying them a pecu-

liar richness of expression which beggars the efforts of many who are styled poets. Some of the more serious fables are sad to tears, in the gloomy, though truthful, view of life and its course which they present.

How fine, how true, is the story of the man who lost his shadow. What delicate satire lurks in the story of the men who pretended to be clever women. What a noble lesson is afforded by the "Ugly Duckling!" I have not any of Andersen's productions by me at present, but I can recall with pleasure the outline of some of his most beautiful tales. His "True Story of My Life" is worth reading.

I have slipped once more into a sort of diary style; Mrs. C. is partly the occasion. Nature she insists upon, and, with some modification, she is right. To write from the heart is the beginning and the end of all authorship; it is, in fact, genius—that quality so much talked about, so seldom understood. Labour, labour, labour—goad the jaded brain—string splendid words together, and be scrupulous about grammar.

The result is a mosaic that anybody can do, given time and a dictionary. Act as the traveller who has lost his way (to borrow Emerson's thought), throw the reins on the mind's steed, the projecting, impulsive power of the intellect, and those latent forces behind every man's inertia, or dumbness, will assert themselves, though not always, perhaps, in the safest or proper path.

The most homely things around us await their epic. Cowper has dignified the sofa with only a touch; and thousands of things—living, and devoid of organic life—mutely, appealingly await the poet who is capable of petrifying them into—prosy, perhaps, at the time—but certainly everlasting song.

This earning of fame, if the all-sufficient mind be there, sometimes wants little apprenticeship, or study, or waiting, on the part of him who aspires to utter from his own heart, to draw from his own inward or outward experiences, the feelings and experience of all men. Without that mind be present, active, and susceptible



to the influence of the heart in almost every expression, your work may be clever, not natural—a photograph of everything around you—and yet have nothing of Nature in the sense in which we understand it; for a painting and a photograph are both the work of art, but the latter is art only; the former is vivified by the creative, the poetic mind, tinged with the deepest feelings of the heart.

*Aug. 13.*—"I paint for eternity," said a painter of old. In the same spirit I may say that I write, if not for eternity, yet to posterity. I will be at all events a unit in the numbers of mankind. I will endeavour, if life be given me, to record my hopes, my experiences, my thoughts, which, poor though they be, and barren of stirring incident, stand a chance of being read by somebody in the next century, or—who knows?—in the century a thousand years from this.

Let it not be thought that I consider these words deserving of fame—'t isn't likely—no such foolish thought has entered my brain. What I

mean is that this book, and other books which may yet be written, will probably not be destroyed; but will be read by some person as a message from a buried generation. To that person I write; before him I place my opinions; in his ear I whisper my hopes and fears. This is a stirring time, full of life and activity, great plans, great realisations; but it will vanish away as suddenly, as scenes in a panorama or a dream. Hey, Presto! it is gone—its only record graves, old tombstones, printed books which portray it feebly, and books like these which should, if they do not, mirror it clearly and largely. I hold it as a gift, second only to genius, the power to look ahead; the mind's eye which already sees the grand time gone, and which hopes to place in this book some token of its influence upon the mind of one who is proud, and yet sad, that his life was cast in it.

If I cannot, as I once hoped to do, carve my name upon the annals of this century; if advancing years do not bring in their train noble thoughts, rich experiences, and the power fully,

yet simply, to express what I think and feel; yet in a diary I have means to reach the ears of a limited number of the men of the future. I can, at all events, vindicate myself from the charge of never having striven to burst the bonds of Fate (or rather the bonds of irresolution, indolence, and indifference, which make up what we call Fate). Indeed, as time progresses, and if only will be there, keeping the future strictly in mind, I may note in my books things, events, persons, and experiences, which may give not only curiosity, but instruction and interest to future times. The keen, subtle, inquiring mind, and the feeling heart, are required for this task, and perhaps they may be forthcoming before long. This book and others may stand a much better chance in their manuscript state, than if it, or they, were printed a thousand times over.

*Aug. 16.*—On every side the corn is falling. This morning I took an early ramble across the fields, and was glad to perceive indications of an approaching holiday in the sheaves which dotted

the landscape. My holiday does not commence until the gleaning begins. The country looks lovely—very lovely; and although the year has attained its full strength and beauty, and will soon begin to age, no symptoms of decay are there yet. When, in a month's time, I return to this place, I shall see the fields all bare, alas! and patiently awaiting their evening of snow—for, to my mind, after September is out, pleasure and sunshine fade, and vegetation seems to await in chill suspense the icy winter.

*Aug. 19.*—I shall soon be left to the contemplation of bare walls and empty forms and desks; that is, if I stay—which I sha'n't. My boys have gone to the gleaning, nearly all of them. There are this morning only twenty-seven of them here, and if I await their coming to-morrow, probably I shall see twenty only. I shall not. Please God, to-morrow morning I shall leave this dull scene for three weeks or a month.

But it did *not* “please God” that this

poor fellow, to whom the world and its pleasures—small enough they had ever been for him! were growing smaller day by day—should get the holiday he planned. Possibly he planned it unwisely ;—we often blame Providence for miscarriages of fate for which we should only blame ourselves ; and perhaps he tried to carry it out with equal unwisdom, for a sickly and worn-out man ; but anyhow, the record is sufficiently pathetic. Read it—ye who start with full pockets on Alpine rambles or Continental tours, grumbling all the way at the least failure or *contretemps* which diminished the “pleasure” which, earned or unearned, you think you have a right to expect, and remember in your next holiday that of the poor Essex schoolmaster.

*Sept. 10.*—Three weeks ago to-day I started for the Peak of Derbyshire, intending mostly to walk. On the first day, however, found such

an oppression at my chest, that I could scarcely crawl along. This oppressive weight continued, and seemed to get worse, necessitating railway travelling to Derby. Here no chance of alleviation, without rest, appearing possible, I made up my mind to abandon my tour, and did so on the fifth day from leaving Easton, returning from Derby to London by rail. Thus the holiday to which I looked forward for months, as being likely to afford me healthy exercise, excitement, and extended acquaintance with English scenery, was, from its commencement to its premature end, a species of torture. Ah, well, "man proposes," &c. Spent a fortnight in London (ten days of which I was unwell), and returned to this place Sept. 7.

*1st day.*—Elsenham to Cambridge by rail. Cambridge to Huntingdon on foot.

*2nd day.*—Huntingdon to Thrapston by rail. Thrapston to Market Harborough by rail, *vid* Kettering.

*3rd day.*—Market Harborough to Leicester on foot.

*4th day.*—Three-quarters of the day in Leicester. Leicester to Derby, *vid* Loughborough, by rail.

*5th day.*—Derby to London by rail.

*Sept. 29.*—I shiver as I walk to my work. There is a constant threnody kept up amid the branches of the trees; a wailing, monotonous sound, which tells that summer is gone, that autumn is fast fading away, and that wintry days are at hand. We get twenty, or thirty, or sixty of these mournful times, according to the number of years we manage to dodge death; but they always present themselves *as* mournful times. If beauty is visible, how sad is that beauty; if there be calmness, it is in reality tired decay, death resting a moment from its work. A moment! Nay! Here comes a shower of withered leaves; we tread upon what were the green messengers of beauty, sunshine, and summer splendour, only a few months ago. Through the bare branches and boughs presses down upon us a cold, sullen sky. Well, well, we shall see the leaves come afresh if we live;

if we do not, God grant the resurrection morning may find us fit for its fragrance and beauty and everlasting freshness. God grant it !

Our hopes, which hang upon life's tree, do they not resemble leaves ? They get blown from us by despair, that biting wind, keener than any Nor'-easter, and are trodden under our feet. Yes, we walk humbly every day over schemes and wishes which once were all in all to us. Some, some ?—hundreds of these old hopes we have entirely forgotten. Now and then it happens that the realisation comes when its parent hope has long been detached like a rotten leaf from us. Thus, may we not imagine our blessings, or rather those we once regarded as blessings, coming back to us with fury-like faces. We wail and lament our ill-luck when the very thing is at hand, though late, for which we prayed and implored with such earnestness in days of old. Beware of asking for blessings which time may change into curses ! The only thing which does not undergo this change, does not undergo this rusting process, is the prayer



that we may be purified from all grossness, and be made fit for heaven.

THOUGHT SENTENCES.

*Sept. 30.*—To believe in the healing virtue of sorrow—life's medicine—is to have the only sweetening of the potion which God, the physician, allows.

'Tis wise not to be too precise in pointing out the exact source of our knowledge, or the manner and time of its acquisition ; for when the house is finished we take the scaffolding away.

Joubert says : " Age, neighbour of Eternity, is a kind of priesthood." Yes, too often of Mammon.

When we earnestly pray for clean hearts and heavenly minds, our prayers answer our prayers.

*Nov. 5.*—The composition of a play, which for the past fortnight has engaged me, must be an apology for the non-appearance of anything in this book. Indeed, what have I to write of? I rise in the morning at 7.30, descend to breakfast at eight ; reading with it takes up three-quarters

of an hour. I reach the school at nine, thence till 12.30 work, or rather breadwork; dinner at 12.45; breadwork (let me coin this word) till 5.30, reading generally the newspaper; then comes tea. I then at six return to my room for the night. Three hours are devoted to reading newspapers, novels, essays, history, biography—anything that comes in my way. Some evenings I take a turn at composition when the whim seizes me, or do a little French, or sketch plans for schoolwork, or write my letters, or post up my private accounts, if I may dignify them by that name.

On Saturdays I walk into Dunmow, unless prevented by illness or very rainy weather; have a glass of ale and a chat with the landlord of the inn I patronise; afterwards look in at the Literary Institute, scan the papers, select a readable book, return home, read or write till bedtime. Thus it will be seen that there is no society for me. I am thrown in upon myself entirely, and have no experiences to boast of save inward ones, and they cannot always be

gauged or thrown upon paper so as to be understood.

The most silent life has its growth, its alternations of hope and despair, of joy and sadness; but the boundaries cannot always be perceived—they glide insensibly into each other like the hues of the rainbow. I note in my individual experience several moods to which I am subject; in me, I think, these moods have their bounds more clearly defined than in most people around me. I pass from gloom very quickly to sunny thoughts, and find most of my states of mind pure evil or pure good. Sometimes I have what I may call the complacent mood. I see nothing but good in everything around me, and of course in myself often a sorrowful mood comes, when a graveyard aspect seems imprinted upon the face of all natural things. A defiant mood sometimes makes me rigid when I think I am being depreciated, and then I am most arrogant in mind and behaviour. I appear somewhat of a bully then. This is often succeeded by a gentle mood, which makes me perhaps appear childish.

There are also the mood mirthful and the mood studious—the mood Mammon-loving and the mood sensual. Now and then comes the solemn mood, which tells me that all these contradictions of character exhibit my weakness, my proneness to sin, my instability—yea, my evil-doing—as merely parts of a nature that is low and worthless and heaven-forgetting in common with that of all men; that I, as well as they, must tone down all these diversities by God's help; must blend them, depressing some and elevating others, together into one harmonious whole—a character.

*Nov. 22.*—I have finished Act I. of my play, or rather my attempt at a play, and have nothing to write about. The absolute stagnation of a country village is here seen in perfection.

In the great world there are no events occurring of any great importance. The Prince of Wales is in India astonishing, and being astonished, by the natives. Turkey seems in a depressed condition, financially and politically. In Spain, the Carlists and Alphonsists are emulating the

Kilkenny cats. In our own country all conversation is absorbed by the inundation topic. Rain, rain, rain—nothing but rain. The Thames rose higher than it has ever been known to rise before ; great damage has been done, and, as a consequence, a subscription has been opened at the Mansion House. Everything everywhere seems dull, ominously dull. We really want something to rouse us out of this apathetic, listless condition, some event which will stimulate our yet unknown poets, give a healthier, breezier tone to society, and afford outlets for superfluous energy and talent. Here, in this land, we are treading upon one another's heels. It is as much as an energetic man even can do to buy mere necessities.

*Nov. 27.*—The eve of another birthday. Every year I seem to grow more worldly. I feel like a miser, from whose fingers are slipping a rich treasure. And truly, time is a treasure, gliding away from our grasp, "never continuing in one stay." To be sentimental is to be ridiculous ; yet who can help feeling solemn at the thought

that the time which our imagination filled with so much splendour, so much happiness and love, is not passing away, but is already gone, only leaving us sad memories. I must record it that I value a good dinner, or a few pounds, more than I did ten years ago. Then I had generous enthusiasm; then I cared not a scrap whether I offended or whether I didn't, so that I spoke out the feelings which then swayed me; now I have little enthusiasm for anything, and possess no opinions worth speaking about. I suppose every man must arrive at the stage when this idea becomes prominent, that time is slipping past, that honour is but a shadow, that eating and drinking are tangible good things; in short, that "a bird in the hand," &c.

! Various thoughts are dimly irradiating my mind at this moment. Up to the present I am at a loss what to say. I am sitting by a capital fire; the night is very cold, I have just had tea, and "Pendennis," by Thackeray, awaits me. It has been a practice of mine these last three or four years to note the recurrence of my birthday;

therefore, mechanically, I have seized the pen, and have scribbled the foregoing lines without any effort of the mind.

I endeavour to keep my entire past in the full light of the memory. Every act of importance stands legibly written on that tablet which is the law of the intellect. The past twenty years, with their public and private history, I see at a glance,—that is, their salient features; a little scrutiny is requisite to see the minor events, but of that I am capable. The bread riots during the Russian War of 1854-6, I distinctly call to mind. Down the street in which we lived at that time, there used to come two or three times a day a rather disreputable mob crying out for bread. At these times the word would be passed on in advance, "The mob's coming!" and it was wonderful to see the quick way in which the shutters of the shops would go up. What a fuss Tom Sayers created in 1860 after his fight with Heenan. At that time prize-fighting had a temporary blaze of splendour; pugilistic encounters were of daily occurrence; but soon

the damaging blow was given by the law, backed by public opinion. The great fire at London Bridge I saw from the Custom House ; this was, I think, in '61. In '63, the Prince of Wales was married. The procession of the Princess through London was very grand, but I did not see it. I fully intended to go, but was besought not to do so on account of the anticipated crowd. I was treated to the play on the preceding night, and my parole was given that I would not attempt to see the pageant. As I had had a holiday and half-a-crown given me in honour of the occasion, I walked abroad, but in a contrary direction. The next Tuesday, however, was the marriage-day. I started early in the morning, walked up Oxford Street, and saw all the preparations for the illumination. Thence into Hyde Park, down Piccadilly, the Haymarket, and into the Strand, where I began to see the lighting-up. I may say that I was luckier than thousands, for that night the crush and multitude were immense ; several people were trodden under foot on Ludgate Hill. I got out of the crowd early.



From '61 to '65, the grand subject of conversation and discussion was the gigantic Civil War. From the first, owing to the influence of the *Morning Star*, which came in my way daily, I sided with the North. I began an essay on the slave power, and wrote a dozen sentences or more in denunciation of slavery, and in the praise of those who sought its abolition. Those with whom I associated were zealous for the South, and very often we nearly came to blows as a result of argument. In 1866 I did battle for Austria, against whom were Prussia and Italy. Prior to that, in 1864, I denounced Prussia and Austria for their attack on Denmark. In '68 I rejoiced at Isabella's downfall. In 1870 I hardly cared three straws whether Germany or Prussia won the victory in France.

In '66, '67, and '68, the Reform agitation was in full swing. I made a point of attending meetings and witnessing demonstrations. What a noisy fuss there was about nothing at all! Mr. Beales I heard several times. I took a wild delight in the demolition of the Hyde Park rail-

ings in 1866 ; and later in the same year walked to Knightsbridge and back in order to see " Marshal " Potter's army of trades-unionists. It is needless to say that I was not interested in the upshot of these agitations. I was not present at the Riots. I did not help to swell the procession of 40,000 " Reformers," but I exulted in the life, the stir, the excitement, which the contention about Reform caused. It was a relief from the dull monotony of every-day life.

*Nov. 28.*—Enough of gossip. In a little while I shall have entered upon my twenty-ninth year. A solemn strain played to day in church runs in my mind ; upon that strain my thoughts of the past and of the future seem to float. My heart last night, dry as the desert itself, now seems to have springing up within it a tremulous pool, limpid and sweet, of passionate regrets, of tearful memories, of wailing for the dead ; sorrowful, yet tender past, and of poor, weak resolutions for the future. Heaven help me ! I am like the goblin in Andersen's story, who loved the student and poetry, but could not give up the huckster

who used to give him jam. The body in me wars against the spirit, making me ready to cry out with St. Paul, "O wretched man that I am!"

I may echo Emerson's words, and say—"A wonderful time I have lived in." Successfully within the past sixteen years, various men of genius have been installed as objects of reverence and imitation, and have passed into the cooler chamber of the mind, have been petrified, as it were, by the intellect, or have lost altogether their importance in my eyes. Emerson, just now mentioned, threw a glamour over my thoughts, and ideas, and feelings, for several years, and made the things around me endurable by the philosophical poetry of his teaching. Longfellow too was raised to a high pedestal. Wordsworth became my oracle during '71-3. Poe I was enraptured with. Hawthorne was extolled to the skies. Dante was in '73-4, my companion. All these are now tenants of my memory, and enjoy my affection and reverence. Others that I have not named have ceased to be regarded with either of the latter feelings.

Thus we love, and thus we hate or view coldly, or merely with friendly eyes. Well, it is life. If we could but shake off, upon our entering a fresh mile of life's road, a portion of the weight of sin and sorrow which encumbers us, with what light hearts should we step out from the milestone. Alas! we cannot. Every year sees us stooping more and more. Every birthday beholds the good angel, even with all our struggles and prayers, even with all these I say, blushing at our evil thoughts, wondering at our earth-born, inherent, perverse, natural, unnatural (what word can describe it?) perversity.

It is time to leave off scribbling. May I attain to higher levels before my next birthday comes! by the grace of God, without which I seem to have no more strength than the weakest child.

*Dec. 7.*—The only news, excepting that of a note, or rather a couple of notes, to Mrs. C., and a letter to R. H. with an answer thereto after a twelvemonth's silence, is that we are regularly snowed up. A fall of snow like one of those old-fashioned heavy falls we read about in

Christmas books has taken place rather several falls have come. The fact of a bunion on my toe, coupled with that of my having to make the first tracks in the virgin snow of mornings, makes me regard the feathery flakes with anything but pleasure. What is that to the clerk of the weather? Nothing! So hobble on, shuffle on, and long for a change.

*Dec 11.*—R. H. paid me a visit last night and returned to London this evening, being the first occasion we have seen each other since July, 1873, at Richmond. He came from Ireland to London a week ago, and returns to Ireland on the 30th inst. I think one of the greatest pleasures in this disappointing life of ours is to meet one with whom we have passed pleasant hours and days in bygone times, but from whom we are separated by long distance and by opposite pursuits. These moments are almost without alloy. The firm grasp of the hands, the long affectionate look into each other's faces to note any changes that have occurred, the preparation of good things for the guest-friend, the inquiries

about Tom or Bill—all these incidents and things are remembered, half regretfully, half delightfully, long after the visitor has gone far away to resume his old occupations, and to mix with his new found—though never so much loved friends—perhaps never to see us again, or to see us when we have all grown old and half indifferent to the heroes of our romantic boyhood. Oh, dear! It does not do to have our friends always with us, but it is hard not to see them more than once or twice in half a dozen years.

*Jan. 10, 1876.*—Now to post up.

*19th to 24th Dec.*—Unwell—invalided—doctor.

*27th Dec.*—To London. Met at station by R. H.—T. T. to Ben—to Wright's—to Nelly's—evening altogether—slept at R. H.'s. 28th day with R. H. entirely—West-end—slept at Ben's. 29th morning with Tom—to R. H.'s—dinner—tea at Nelly's—evening with R. H.—T. T.—Wright, and George—slept at T. T.'s.—morning with T. T.—to Nelly's—adieu to R. H. return to Easton.

*Jan. 10.*—MS. of the play “*Placidio*,” and a note to Mrs. Craik.

*Jan. 24.*—This day week, 17th, received a letter from Mrs. C., together with the return of “*Placidio*.”

This is all he says of what must have been a sore blow to such a passionately ambitious nature. On “*Placidio*” he had evidently built all his hopes. These few lines, in which the careless nervous handwriting, so different from his usual firm and bold caligraphy, is the only indication of how keenly he felt, are to me very sad to look upon. And yet that “*Placidio*” (which will be given hereafter) should have found readers, or even the preliminary chance—a publisher, was a probability so remote that I cannot feel I was justified in giving more encouragement than the warm, hopeful praise which I know I did give, urging him still to pause, and to begin his

literary career with something more popular. Of that grim Shadow which had so long been closely following him, whose icy breath he must have felt coming nearer and nearer every day, I was in total ignorance. Whatever his pain and disappointment, the brave fellow neither protested or complained. His journal, after a pause, goes on as follows :—

*Feb. 14.*—Nothing to write about. The keeping of this book is a tedious job ; it is neither one thing nor the other. I don't want to make a diary of it, yet it must degenerate into that. A record of events personal I cannot make it, for my life is thoroughly uneventful. It must either be a note book, par excellence, or become a mere record of morbid feelings, the worst kind of diary keeping. But then I intended it for original composition. When I finish this book, I must, all being well, have a book for rough notes, and a book for finished prose exercises or essays.

Most miserably plagued this winter with bunions and chilblains.



*Feb. 18.*—The end of another working week. Outside the wind howls, though what care I! Thank the heavens there is a good fire and a good bed, but is there much satisfaction to be derived from their possession? Not over much. The bread most nicely buttered tastes somewhat chaffy on the reflection that many a man and woman is toiling, perhaps even now, along the country road homeless and foodless; or, pent in some nauseous, air-poisoned den, is slowly perishing for lack of the commonest, commonest, commonest! heavens! the rarest, the hardest-to-be-got food. The more one experiences of life, the harder one finds it to reconcile, or to attempt the explanation of, the why, the wherefore, of these two opposite things—the *ought to be* and the *is*—the ideal and the real.

After all, in spite of the tall talk about freedom of will, we are almost absolutely the prisoners of circumstances—to outward view—to inward perception. I am chained, you are chained, we all are chained. Chained, pent up—not merely as regards our bodies, for that is an

absolute necessity of our earthly being (we can't be prince and peasant at the same time) but as regards our dispositions, our spirits, our thoughts, our conduct, and aspirations for the future. I often think when I hear solemn denunciations of worldliness addressed to rude, hard-working, hard-faring men, that the shots are being aimed, if not too high, at any rate almost too cruelly. Who can get at the mind of the agricultural labourer? To all outward appearance, as far as he is known, he has scarcely an idea beyond this life—has no desire for, no hope of the next, though perhaps he may have a dim faith—very dim I should say—that there is to be a hereafter. He gets 12*s.* a week; out of this he has to pay 1*s.* 6*d.* for rent. There is then the magnificent sum of 10*s.* 6*d.* weekly to keep himself, his wife, and half a dozen children. Taking the most favourable estimate, not giving figures an opportunity to lie, there are thousands, tens of thousands of men in this country who entirely support themselves and large families on 16*s.* a week. Here is a stubborn fact to start with.

Into this condition, be it remembered, they were through no will of their own, born. Out of this state they have never had a chance to emerge. There has been no mainspring within them to enable them to conquer adverse circumstances (they cannot help that) there have come no possibilities of advancement in social prosperity from outside (the world is not to blame); whose then is the fault? Man, it is true, does not subsist on bread alone, but food constitutes a considerable factor in any question relating to life. The brute creature has little, or nothing, to do but to grub; men, therefore, who have to devote nearly all their energies to the gaining or earning of food-money, must necessarily become somewhat brutal. Although then, at first glimpse one might say that as long as a man has enough to keep body and soul together, he should abandon all thoughts of fine food or of riches, and give himself to contemplation, to learning, to acts and thoughts of goodness; a little afterthought will clearly show that he who works like a brute, and as persistently as a brute,

for purely animal wants, must, unless cheered by the society of the good and the intellectual, sink to the level of the brute, and forget and ignore the fact of God and heaven altogether.

But, as a consequence of this daily, yearly, lifelong grubbing—bordered constantly by starvation—the wolf always howling at the door, scarcely any heavenly-minded men, and no intellectual ones, are to be found amongst this class. They nestle among those higher classes which are not under the urgent necessity of working every day in the year for bare life—nothing more—and hence have opportunities of reflecting upon God's providence, upon His power, upon His great designs, of observing His wonderful creatures and ways, that the other unfortunates have not. But cannot they, the lucky ones, pour out their treasures to the mental view of the toilers? A caste, as rigid in England as in India, forbids the blending in sympathy in outward acts of classes ever so little dissevered by birth, by wealth, by education. We cannot help it. I cannot help it. Indeed, how is it to be helped?

but there is the truth. The labourers and their families have no ideal before them, associate with nobody better in education or goodness than themselves, have few pleasures, and those more like pains—no rational pleasure for leisure half hours when they come, nothing but a good-day or a lecture from anybody above them, no goal but the workhouse and the grave. What is to prevent their getting, or aiming to get as much sensual gratification out of this life as possible? Will a sermon heard now and then make them abandon a substantial pleasure for remote and doubtful joys (for do not the preachers paint heaven as a place where there is nothing but dressing in white and singing?) Can they at all understand why in this world some should ride and some should walk barefoot? Will it tend to make them holier men to tell them that by-and-bye they shall have all the good things as a set-off against the bad things of this life? Does it not imply that one rich man, however good, has any right to, or stands a chance of eternal happiness? Are not these considerations fraught

with much fear, much gloom, much doubt? But it is now time to go to bed.

*Feb. 21.*—Letter from B. with sad news of S.

This brief line, recording another most piteous domestic tragedy—his life was all tragedy—I am bound to let pass without comment or explanation.

*March 3.*—How the days glide away! In human life we seem to be just like straws or feathers borne irresistibly along a rapid foaming river, and thrown, powerless to help ourselves, into the great gulf, Eternity's ocean, for no better figure than that of a silent, mighty, mysterious ocean can characterise the hereafter. In part we see, but in very small part. It only seems a few days since the new year commenced, and already we have let glide two months. 'Twas not merely a necessitous, but a poetical idea which measured Time's duration, and lapse by sand in a glass. So imperceptibly, yet so quickly, so unobtrusively and softly, yet so perseveringly slip our moments, days, and years away.

We have no grasp upon them. Tinged with our goodness or our badness, there they slip and run—golden as the poets describe them truly to be, yet mere grains of sand to us—portions of ourselves—our blood corroded into minute particles—fleeting angels ascending with momentary records—leaves of fate on which sad and noble omens are inscribed.

It has been noticed by thinking men that just as our bodily growth is unperceived except at long intervals and after due comparison, so our mental progress is thus quiet and slow. Yet as we are quite conscious of bodily and mental growth, as we constantly recognise an intellectual advance after long periods of time, an insight into, an appreciation of the preciousness of moments is afforded us. Slowly, laboriously, is the brain built up, fact of one moment underlying thought of another; experience and suffering of many dreary hours giving eventually the poem, the oration, the great novel; or walking in more modest, yet not less useful, channels; the influence, the advice upon and to inferior,

that is, less thoughtful, people; those who consider that their duty is simply to watch the hour-glass, not to work by it; who light the lamp in order to be dazzled by its brilliancy, not to profit by its beams in the pursuit of their proper business.

*March 5.*—Some early primroses have been gathered for me, and now adorn my mantel-shelf. Sweet emblems of the Resurrection! George Herbert greets the early flowers as the direct messengers of God, and institutes a comparison between the winter of Nature and the moral death or stagnation of the heart's best feelings—linking also the revivification of physical beauty and freshness with the re-welling up in the desert, or the thorn-choked heart, of hopes, of holy thoughts, of earnest aspirations.

For the last two months of the year, as I know from experience, fit and proper are funereal chants of low, wailing, inexpressibly sad solemnity. Part of the gloom enshrouded that portion of the year is due to the short, gloomy days; part to the sombre time of Advent; part, in my case, to



the fact that misfortunes have mostly come to me at that period. One of those old Gregorian chants has, at such a time, and indiscribable influence upon one.

Many of these chants are weirdly pathetic; there is a richness of colour saturating them, which at first thought would appear suggestive of equally warm emotions; but though the ensemble is dazzlingly rich, there is an under coating of hard, rigid colours, a simplicity in design, a suggestions of woes unutterable, as greatly to remind us of some of the pictures of the Italian school. It is a luxury—for we are told that there is a luxury in grief—to listen to one of these melancholy chants. On its waves of sound float intermingled suggestions of joyful pain, of painful joy. One seems to be dissolved from bodily fetters and to be gliding along that majestic river. At such a moment nothing in life seems worth the having, whatever we think becomes tinged with a mournful hue. Ambition, love, wealth, friendship, comfort—all these things we would willingly surrender all

ideas of having or pursuing—till—till—the music ceases, and the spell is withdrawn. Some echoes of the spiritual voice, for without doubt there is something heavenly in music, haunt us; but these are like voices of the night. We think as little of them as we do of dreams, which, all absorbing at the time of their occurrence, flit like bats from the great calm eye of day.

*March 8.*—What is there to write about? Little, unless it be that the wind is howling like an unquiet spirit round the house—that I have been reading this evening one of Trollope's novels ("Can you Forgive Her?"); that I have also just finished spelling out two pages of "*Les Jumeaux de l'Hôtel Corneille*;" and that I have seized the pen thinking to write down something, but have really nothing to say.

There is something indescribably touching in this picture, self-painted, with a sad simplicity in which is some of the egoism created by a life of total solitude, but certainly no vanity—of the young school-

master—young yet so old in the experience of suffering—working away, after his bread-winning work was done, at those intellectual studies which could never bear fruit in this world. How carefully he employs every hour of those sad days of his, which he must have known and felt were running away so fast! How pathetically he tries to build for himself a little memorial of the unfulfilled life, of which absolutely nothing was known outside. In going over these pages, it has been to me a kind of satisfaction to think that I am doing exactly what John Martin would have wished done—not only to keep alive his own memory, but to give consolation to many another sick and silent soul who may have thought the same thoughts, wrestled through the same struggles; perhaps also died, with sealed lips, uncomplaining, and gone to the Eternal Love,

to find there everything that which on earth was never found.

*March 11.*—There are those who would bid us not to think so much about the past or the present, as of the future. In their estimation, or according to their teaching, the future is the vast volume of which we are merely reading the title page—the stupendous mansion, whose ante-chamber we and our forefathers expectantly fill—*the life, the happiness of which only the faintest exhalations have ever come to humanity.* I do not allude to those who speak and write thus of the spiritual world, but to those who have a purely material, earthly state of things in their thoughts. Look not back on the past is their cry—eat, drink, work, sleep, and be happy in the thought, be religious in the conviction that, at some distant period, to be counted by thousands of years, men—your posterity—shall live in brotherly love, that the lion shall lie down with the lamb. I have not had access to the works of those who insist upon

this negation of the present and the past—these hints that the present is scarcely worth grieving or exulting over have come to me in a random way; but I am not far from the truth in saying that something like a new religion has been based on this tenet—that we are to live in the life of posterity.

I am very willing to go down to the grave with a certain joy that hereafter millions will breathe the air above me joyfully, and perhaps smell portions of my body transformed by Nature's alchemy into flowers; but tens of millions will sigh, and wail, and weep, and despair, as I have done. It will be perhaps a source of faint pleasure that great men will teach and charm the world in the future; but equal, at all events, must be the pain to think that Dante, Shakspeare, Milton, have crumbled into dust—more than equal in poignancy must be the belief that no greater men are likely to arise in any age, unless the conditions of life be sensibly altered. Where is the comfort to be derived? If I feel pleasure, surely the pain will pre-

dominate. No—ingenious seekers after light from glowworms, while the clear moon fills earth and heaven with its rays—no! there is no comfort to be derived by me from your teaching.

Of course this edifice is one of those that are partly built on the ruins of the old. Rather it is like one of those shabby frail dwellings which prop themselves against the awful columns of the Parthenon. Its idea of love to man is akin to the Christian idea. It leaves out the idea of love to God. Having left Him, and a spiritual hereafter, out of its teaching, it would have us go down to our graves in peace and joy, feeling quite sure that at some indefinite epoch our great great grandchildren will have perfected civilization, and that a golden age of love, and happiness, and knowledge, will have set in. We are to rejoice in this expectation, and no other comfort is afforded. I believe I have indicated one or two, at any rate, of the doctrines, or new propositions advanced by those who teach Comte's religion of Humanity.

*March 19.*—There is the inward pressure

which I have several times alluded to, making me seize the pen, but I don't know as I am writing these words what the next sentence will be about. I have come to it, however, and partly written it, in the same way that Lope de Vega composed his sonnet upon writing a sonnet, but must go on to a few more sentences as I have begun.

This desire to say something is somewhat of a mournful one. It is the cry of pain from a wounded heart—the upward striving of a wingless bird—the yearning look into the dim future of the dying man—the wish to have from the mouldering grave a voice in the direction of the destiny of man—a warm place in the fire-side of their hearts. The wish is very great, perhaps presumptuous, in appearance, but I doubt not that it has substantial foundation in latent, and perhaps never-to-be developed powers. One last thing is required for high enthralling genius before it can be published—that is adequate expression—that granted, the world would be astonished at the fecundity and rich-

ness of thought which the obscure, the most prosy-looking have. The power of properly expressing one's ideas, one's every shade and tint of thought, one's rainbowed imaginations—is the highest triumph, but not the only one, of genius; it is the paint, the richness of colour, the soft, yet firm, hand, the drapery, the indescribable glamour—but it is not the canvas, it is not the subject; they, with the sentiment, the figures, the suggestive grouping, are the work of native poetry, in short, what we call talent—high talent is amateur genius, wanting often the flood of words only, in order to express its better nature—to display its highest powers.

*March 22.*—I shall be very glad when the winter is over. It has been a long and severe one. The first fall of snow took place at the very beginning of December, and was an extensive one; and only this morning, on going out, I had to walk over a light carpet of snow, which the sunbeams, later in the day, dissipated. Thus nearly four months have elapsed since the first and the last fall—if I am not too premature



in writing about the last—we may have two or three more yet.

It would not be a bad plan to write a series of papers, humorous, pathetic, cynical, chatty—a blending of these four styles—purporting to be by an invalid, whose only permitted recreation was derived from observing and reflecting upon the passers-by. The “*Voyage autour de ma Chambre*” of De Maistre, suggests this idea. Thus the first paper might be upon the visit of the doctor, his cautions, suggestions. Other papers might follow on—the policeman, the blind beggar, the conjuror, the costermonger, the drunkard, a funeral, a fight. An intermediate visit from the doctor, flowers in the window, a person reading in the street, with reflections upon genius. Lost opportunities of doing good, suggested by the passing of an appealing face. Books, as friends, consolers, teachers, medicine. A last visit, &c., &c. There should be a delightful confusion and uncertainty in these papers—perpetually flying off at a tangent from the subject named, and perpetually returning. In addition to the four styles men

tioned, much abstruse knowledge put in in a very light and easy way. I think I could carry the idea out. The policeman should come on after the fight (between boys). The fight should take place as a freshener after a rhapsody on genius or the like. In the intermediate visit from the doctor there should be a humorous incident respecting the non-taking of his medicine; its being thrown, phial and all, in a moment of anger, into the coalscuttle. Efforts of the doctor to put coal on the fire—torture consequently of the patient. Doctor, fussy, literary, dogmatical.

*March 28.*—The story of the French Revolution is always interesting, it is so intensely dramatic. From the moment when the States-General assembled, to the ending of the Reign of Terror, the stage is always thronged with characters vehement, eloquent, courageous, blood-thirsty, impious, detestable, and heroic. There is a succession of stirring scenes. Always we hear the sound of the tocsin, the cries of the sanguinary monsters of the faubourgs, the

thunder of the cannon, the groans of excruciating anguish; perpetually we see the hideous faces, the loathsome forms, Gorgons of the French monarchy. One set of orators, revolutionary at first, become, in the onward march or sweep, to anarchy, the aristocrats of a later period. Nothing is stable—society rushes to dissolution. Mirabeau dies only in time to save himself from being executed. Danton himself at last is thought to possess a little of the milk of human kindness. Robespierre at last is engulfed. Not antiquity, nor the middle ages, nor modern times, can furnish five such years of exalted hopes, of dawning despair, of such defiance to the laws, of such irresponsible and atrocious tyranny.

The men to whom is chargeable the guilt of this terrible convulsion affected, or in some cases, really did believe in the inherent good of mankind, but what folly! what a babe-like condition to be in! If they had looked into their own hearts, proof would have been given that they, the exalters of human nature, were ambitious,

proud, vain, cruel. *They* signalled their accession to power by acts of spoliation and cruelty, yet they pretended to believe that the mob to whom they gave higher power than they claimed for themselves, would be sure to use that power moderately and justly. The consequence was that they overturned a monarchy, which had conceded all reasonable demands, and substituted for it the rule, the iron despotism, the variable, but always oppressive, never just, sway of a ragged, ignorant, brute-beast mob. They had the reputation (these promoters of the Revolution) of *wise* men or philosophers, they acted with the rancour of criminals let loose from punishment, with the besotted stupidity of inebriated fools. No words can stigmatise too strongly (for in every country, in this, the elements of revolution exist) the conduct of those who hurled humanity—its intellect, beauty, goodness, industry, refinement, and bravery, under the swine-like feet of those who resembled human creatures less than they resembled foxes, wolves, tigers, apes.

I give vent, rather strongly perhaps, my convictions upon this matter, because I know that in London thousands of men hold up to the respect of those with whom they converse the names of these revolutionary ruffians. One evening some three years ago, a man who had been railing against religion, at the mention of Rousseau, lifted his hat, and said—"The greatest man that the world has ever known!" We may acknowledge that the Revolution was partly the consequence of a system of selfishness and extravagance in the French rulers; we may concede that ultimately good has been the issue, but evil, if it proceeds by evil methods, is nevertheless evil, and must get no credit for the good that Providence eventually brings forth. Therefore let infamy, or at least let no praises be given to those who deluged France with blood, chiefly to gain a selfish personal ascendancy, to gratify passion, or to indulge private revenge.

I give all these passages from the journal, not merely to show with what a vivid

interest the solitary schoolmaster followed all that was passing in the outside world from which his lot so completely shut him out ; but also as an instance, necessarily rare, of how political and social questions are viewed from the usually speechless lower class ; viewed upwards, rather than downwards, so to speak. Had Martin had life and health to rise to a sphere, high enough to make his voice heard, it is easy to see how valuable would have been the opinions of such a man, who added to the experiences of the very lowest class, the education and power of expression, which, ordinarily, belong exclusively to the upper ranks. His entire absence of class prejudice, likewise, and his power of abstracting himself and his feelings from the topic which he discusses, and judging it with the calm impartiality which is only given by the wide experience of a cultivated mind, make all

he says, at any rate, worth reading, though others may have said and thought the same before him.

*April 1.*—While waiting for Vol. IV. of Alison's "History of Europe," let the fact that the first three months of the year are gone, and that at last there is a prospect of mild weather, be chronicled. Vol. IV. having just come, there is no need to hold the pen any longer, especially as I have nothing particular to say.

*April 6.*—Storms clear the air, war brings profound peace. I think I know that it is necessary to the production of any intellectual, masculine work, that the producer should be in the midst of a crowd, or subject to the influence of stirring or great events. I live in an age which is intensely prosaic in this sense—that the people who form it are rich, and think mainly of riches—are secure, and dream not of insecurity, are free and know not the heart-stirring troubles of imprisoned nature—are well fed, and are in consequence a *little* asinine, or

bovine, or a mixture of both these qualities. Oh ! dull, dull, dull ! where are the Englishmen who have put a girdle round the earth, have colonised so extensively, have conquered so persistently, have kept themselves from foreign hordes for 800 years ? Where are they ? I see them not. I perceive around me in the labouring classes, shiftlessness, indecision, unthrift, apathetic indolence. I see in the higher classes, pride of wealth, ignoble ideas, no wit, little ability, few—if any—of those qualities which have helped to make this nation.

We have not got over the winter yet. At any rate we experience just now thorough winter weather. To-day snow-flakes spectralise the air, and the atmosphere is intensely cold. I have been sitting by a good fire all the evening, yet my feet are quite cold. Well, Providence has not been unkind to us ; doubt not the piercing east and turbulent north wind, have their counterparts to our English nature—that they act as trumpets, and array against themselves, as enemies over pestilence, and stormy



spirits. Our English winds assailing from all quarters, are continual calls to arms. Those who can answer the call, brave the winds, and survive, may safely be entrusted with the country, may hope to throw into future time their own spirit and energy. Having thus philosophised, I will now get to bed in order to warm my feet. Philosophy must end thought thus ignobly.

*April 13.*—This morning, on getting up and pulling aside the curtain, was, not exactly surprised, but sorry to see the ground covered with a mass of snow, which only yielded to the noon-day sun. The landscape now, this evening, is most drear—the weather cold, snowy, and gloomy.

*April 19.*—Most miserable is the outlook to-day. A dull grey sky teeming with rain; water, water, everywhere. The few bundles of clothes I have met with on my way from school this afternoon seem to be hopelessly drowned and dejected. Who would venture abroad such a day as this, or rather, who would *not* venture

abroad—abroad to sunny skies and transparent air—abroad to Italy or Spain, out of damps and depressions.

No, no, discontented one; content yourself as well as you can without Italy—without the Eternal City. They are costly sights, that would take up a dozen such purses as yours. You have not even money enough to become one of Cook's tame animals, although they (Cook's) would take you, with a string of others, for half-a-dozen guineas. No, no; you are anchored or chained, or bound to a rood or two of earth; make the best of your position.

*April 26.*—If, before writing, we follow Sidney's advice, by looking into our hearts, let the results apparent in our expressed thoughts be bad or good—doubt not that they mirror faithfully the writer's heart—that is to say, in a roundabout manner, that humanity is a mixture of good and bad. Which predominates? It would be easy to echo the oft-repeated cries of the preachers. The good Book tells us that the heart is "desperately wicked." On every side

we behold hate, envy, impurity, falsehood, greed, ignorance, stupidity. We not merely behold them, we feel them ; we are ourselves nursers of these passions, all or any of them ; evil is acknowledged, is felt, is seen, occupies our thoughts, our conversations, influences our actions. If we were to look at human nature more closely, perhaps we might discover evil with huger and more extensive ramifications ; we should possibly find goodness veining the base ore of earthly corruption, often springing like a fountain from the depths of the heart.

Who is good ? Ah ! there is a puzzling question. It is a remarkable characteristic of the Bible that it does not screen human nature. All faults are openly displayed, not extenuated, not put for imitation, but as evidencing calmly the earthiness of our nature. The inspired writers form no impossible ideas of what man may become. They praise a man if he is honest, prayerful, obedient to God's will, hospitable, brave ; they don't seem to expect, they don't get those airy virtues, possible only for aerial beings,

which our modern preachers ask for and never get (not from themselves even), but stamp David, the murderer, the adulterer, as a good man—and doubtless they are right. The character of David is perfectly human and unheroic. A consideration of the fact that the Holy One did hold him up to reprobation is most precious to us. Men of freethinking tendencies have argued from this the false pernicious teaching of the Bible. They rather should have perceived a clear instance of the Divine Love, which makes allowance for all frailties, which weighs well every motive, which fans chaff from wheat, which asks as an essential from erring natures, hearts of recognition, which weeps with joy if it can perceive the salt of repentance in the basest soul.

*May 1.*—May-day, and a very cold one. “Denmark’s a prison,” said Hamlet, and not Denmark alone, but the whole world itself becomes narrow and constrictive when our thoughts feed on the stars above, or make eternity their subject. The mind makes its own prison walls. To be tied down to one place by

duty, or by the necessity of earning bare bread, is not far different from the lot of the man whom a tender country limits to a few square roods of earth. I am thus limited—a few roods more or less make no great difference; as regards the reality of the bondage, none at all.

I see now the same horizon, bounding the same fields as that which I have seen without intermission of a single day for the past four months. Wordsworth truly says that the prison unto which we doom ourselves is no prison; but then how few of us do doom ourselves to absolute solitude, to the same patch of earth, the same strip of sky? As regards choice, we are little better off than the *mauvais sujet* himself. We must confine ourselves to one spot, we must behold the same not too intellectual faces, must have the same harsh, or complaining, or tattling tongues day after day. Well, there is balm in Gilead. Communion with the mighty dead is always possible, is always refreshing. Heavens! if it were not so, could I live! Dreary this old world is. Little vivified by love—vapid,

insipid—but the shadows, nay, the realities of the past can be evoked, can be called up, and will respond readily to the summons.

*May 3.*—May is a poet's month. Open any book of poems if you will, and ten to one you will find references to the laughing May, the merry, the jocund, the blithesome maiden of the months. Does not Willis joyfully exclaim—

The Spring is here, the delicate-footed May,  
With its slight fingers full of flowers and leaves.

Bryant is inspired equally by this month of pleasant associations—

The May sun sheds an amber light  
On new-leav'd woods and lawns between.

The whole tribe of poets lose their senses over this month, which has come in bitterly cold, suggestive of January, and which, I believe, always comes in cold and continues so. No delusion like that of a poetic one. One thing I am certain of, and that is, a good fire is burning before me, and that for the past week I have been almost frozen in school. This speaks

clearly enough against the pleasantness of May. However, all in good time. We can afford to be humbugged a little by the bards, so great is our obligation<sup>a</sup> to them. Summer will burst on us at last, and give us the ripened fruits, the long halcyon days. We need them.

*May 9.*—Very fine weather just at present, but rather windy. The birds begin a concert early in the morning, and keep it up with vigour till late in the day. Bloom on the apple trees, flowers by the wayside, and in the fields apprise us that we are having, or are about to have, the best time of the year. When spring is gliding into summer, when there is a wealth o foliage, a constellation of flowers, a flood of melody, without any suggestions of decay or of sadness. Like an echo, like the voice of some spirit heralding this beauteous time, comes every now and then the cuckoo's monotonous, but not unmusical notes. This month brings up vividly the thought of life's May—life's time of hope-blossoms, of unpremeditated song, of beauteous words and deeds. It departs, it must depart.

Hot Summer will come—Autumn—at last Winter.  
The cycle of our lives is as the cycle of the year.  
In our case there is no second spring upon this  
earth. To us are very applicable the words, the  
entreaty of Herrick—

Gather the rosebuds while ye may.

Surely it behoves us—me, you, all—who think,  
who know, who hope, who trust, to make as much  
of these delightful moments as we can. Alas!  
there is no aftermath in life. The bloom once  
shed is shed for ever.

*May 12.*—To-night finishes the nineteenth  
week of uninterrupted work. Oh, for a change!  
This work of a teacher gets to be in these days  
most killing. The trial to the temper, the  
vigilance requisite to maintain authority and  
order, the sheer hard work—drudgery—of open-  
ing the minds of the pinchbrained rustics, the  
close atmosphere; all these conspire to make  
the work of teaching one of the hardest in the  
land. If health permitted, I would gladly work  
on the farm, emigrate, do anything rather than



be overworked in body and in spirit by this most honourable, most important, most interesting, yet most toilsome and harassing of pursuits. Why is it so toilsome? The answer must be that the teaching staff is insufficient. People clamour for the rudiments of education, yet will not pay enough to ensure these rudiments being properly taught. There are too many pupils allotted to every teacher. Whereas twenty or thirty would exercise the cleverest, most industrious teacher sufficiently, it is taken for granted by all those who know nothing of practical teaching, that forty, fifty, sixty, nay more, can be managed, disciplined, taught by him without the least difficulty—nay, most galling of all suppositions, it is assumed that the office of a schoolmaster is almost a sinecure.

Would to Heaven it were more so than it is! In my case it is not. For the past year (twelve months) I have been instructing an average of sixty boys daily, an average strictly. During that time I have not had the slightest assistance. No monitors have I. No one

coming to take a regular class; the whole superintendence, work, account-keeping, everything has devolved on me. There are four classes going on at one time. It is obvious that I cannot be quartered, or even halved, therefore the other classes have to be taken by the schoolboys, scarcely one of whom is fit for the task. I cannot blame those who hire me. It is the result of a general ignorance pervading all classes; they kill the teacher, retard the progress of the scholars, simply because they believe that a boy taking a class is as good as a man—by assuming that the teacher has simply to set the machinery in motion, when it will work itself; the fact being, that the teacher himself is the motive power, and the machinery, only unlike machinery, he very soon wears out. If he does not wear out, under the conditions I have pictured, it most assuredly must be said that the work of instruction lags, that the main-spring feels itself, in self-defence, obliged to go at a slower pace than the necessities of ignorant, knowledge-hating, or loving children require.

One finds somewhat of a consolation in the fact that we are strangers and pilgrims in a melancholy world. All paths, whether strewn with flowers or with thorns, have their ending in the churchyard. Let us work while there is an opportunity. The struggle for success, for friends, for fame, what is it but the desire at bottom of being better able to build up that life day by day in the future, which now we almost regard with disgust. I take comfort from my sorrow ; I draw music from this harsh, practical, daily English life which everywhere surrounds me ; I summon from the past shadows of old hopes, of old despairs, and I learn that the more one works the more one is free from temptation, from care, from fears. I hope I have not studied life's book in vain, though most of the pages have been hard. Let us put on a gay aspect, and march bravely on in the great battle of life ; but let us not forget that it will be no unhappy moment which summons us from pain, doubt, misery, sin, fears, wants, cravings for sympathy and love, the desire of *knowing*, to boundless

Time and space, let us hope, to *knowledge* fixed and complete.

*May 13.*—To-day (Saturday), not feeling very well, have remained indoors all day. The weather is that of May—sunny, but with rather keen winds; yet above all, as I now write, loom dark clouds, we shall soon have some rain. I have alternately read and dozed the time away. Began the day with my school papers over my breakfast, to both of which succeeded the *Standard* (Prince of Wales returned from India). Next came on a vol. of the *Cornhill Magazine* for 1861, containing the end of Trollope's "Family Parsonage." Then a few pages of "La Dot de Suzette." Dinner. More of the *Cornhill*, and a nap. A little writing and posting up of personal accounts have brought me up to 5.30, at which time this is being scribbled.

*May 15.*—"We are strangers and pilgrims in a melancholy world." These words of mine from the opposite page form a fitting com-

mentary on, and are illustrated by, the news that poor S. is dead (last Wednesday, 10th May), aged twenty-four years seven months.

This is the ending of a story so sad that it is best to leave it in the shadow of silence, as Martin himself leaves it (the only reference being a few pages back : "Letter from B., with sad news of S."). The absolute and noble reticence which the poor fellow maintains concerning his family affairs—which in truth must have been to him one long agony—is an example which I feel compelled to follow ; with regret, for the revelation would present him and his short life in a light more than pathetic—heroic. But I have promised, and it must be.

Every death brings closer to our view the fact

that *we* must die. Sad, inexpressibly dreary as is at times this fact, there is yet a somewhat selfish feeling of satisfaction pervading it. We must die—all die. From this doom neither knowledge nor ignorance, neither wealth nor poverty, neither virtue nor vice, can exempt us. Though we affect to stop short on the road of life, though we shut up ourselves in narrow domestic virtues, or abandon ourselves to licentiousness of thought and deed, we are striding, as if with seven-league boots, to the gate of death. I tremble often to think that as year after year slips away, I seem to be the same being, to have lived in the past solely for self—to have no idea beyond self in the present, to be merely planning for self in the future. Intellectual self it may be, and yet I cannot reconcile it with the teaching and example of the Just. There is something elevated in Goethe's idea of culture, but perhaps there may dawn upon our consciousness by-and-by a conviction that there may be a wealth of mind as dangerous as material wealth—that to spare no expense in filling

our minds with knowledge—to seek the orange of love, and to throw the despised remains away ; to use the passions, the hopes, the fears, the generousities, the crimes of those around us as tests of our corresponding vices or virtues, is to have, in scarcely a higher atmosphere, the spirit of the monopoliser, of the forestaller, of the miser. We may come, in short, to regard the man who grows wise in beholding the struggles of humanity, who educates himself with the penny that should be given to the needy, as no more than an intellectual millionaire. The devil himself is only a sort of Dives ; his feast, that of reason—his robe, imperial pride.

I moralise, yet am in danger of thinking too highly of culture, too little of those around me. I do not certainly purchase dozens of books, or go into society in order to add to my resources ; for, unhappily, or otherwise, I have not the means nor the opportunity. But this fault, or virtue, might in me easily be carried to excess, if circumstances permitted. It is, therefore, good that now and then the skeleton should

sternly frown upon me—that a voice like that of Robespierre should utter now and then in stern accents, “Thou shalt die!”

*May 19.*—To-night finishes the twentieth week of continuous work. There is nothing to chronicle beyond the fact that the weather is cold, though fine, owing to east winds that cut through one like a knife. The boys and I have been barking all the week; in fact, I have not had such a cold this year as I have at present. Nothing to write about. *Rusting* for want of contact with sharp wits, and from the barrenness pervading this place. No varied diet. The butcher's meat is simply atrocious, the bread chaffy, the vegetables, especially potatoes, rascally. No fruit, no fish, nobody to talk to, nowhere to walk to, nothing to see—*No anything*. Books alone keep me alive, and them I read out too fast. One must accept one's lot, but it goes against the grain. Eh? Yes—not only with this grumbler, but with the doctor who wants more practise, the clergyman who wants a better living, the earl who would like to be a duke, the



Queen who must possess the title of Empress. By the way, why should she not? Empress has an arbitrary sound—has it? It is just suited to India. We gained that vast peninsula by force. Let us have no humbug about the matter. There are some who would deprecate the idea that we are a conquering race, who would apologise for our annexations or conquests, who would extend the ballot-box and the schoolboards to the Hottentot equally with the artisan. I thank the heavens that I am not such a person. The question as to whether or not the Queen should assume the title of Empress has created a great deal of discussion, and a little bitterness; but it is very easy to get up an agitation against anything, or for, among some Englishmen. They run just like a bulldog against anything they don't happen fully to see. They are very like sleeping dogs—bulldogs always. If you pass them gently, you may do anything you like—tickle or rouse them in any way, and you have Cerberus up and barking and biting all at once. Let's pass on—to sleep—perchance to dream.

Well, bed is the best place, so I will say good-night to myself—my fire is nearly out and I have nothing to read—then to bed—maugre the dreams that Hamlet speaks of.

*May 20.*—We seem to have come into the world purposely to get married, beget children, and die. The people around us by their laudation of the married state, by their perpetual allusions to it, and by their ignoring the fact that a man or woman may now and then manage to exist uncoupled, would make one think so with a vengeance. A man's years, a woman's good looks, are measured with relation to the married state. Success in life means at the present day, the power of supporting a wife—the yoked man, unhappy though his coupling may be, is always contrasted favourably with the bachelor. One hears constantly that the woman halves a man's cares and doubles his joys; that though cares of course will come there is always balm in Gilead, always a sweetness in the cup. On the other hand, a lonely, wretched life is gleefully assigned to the unlucky or perverse fellow who has not

mated, generally besides, a death pitiful and unregretted.

It is, of course, well for the preservation of the species that these ideas have strong possession of the minds of men and women. The annoying thing is that with a calm assumption of superiority, nearly every one affects to believe that sooner or later you must yield to nature and to art (feminine) that you are presumed not to be a unit, but a fraction, too often a cipher, unless some Polly or Dorothy condescends to make your tea and look after your pocket-handkerchiefs.

I could not be a woman hater if I tried; but with regard to the fair sex, much of the glamour of youth and early manhood has passed away. There is a fascination, an attraction in women just as we affirm that there is an inherent nobility in man; but it only shows itself in the first named, as in the second, rarely. When this quality is patent to our senses, whether we call it beauty or goodness, we admire, adore, its possessor. Then only do we love; then only be-

comes it manly and expedient to clasp such virtues in our arms and make them part of ourselves for ever.

Such a union as this takes place perhaps once in a thousand times. All others are half brutal ties formed lustfully or for convenience. It cannot be otherwise, for women are as a rule far from being divinities. They have not the gross hell-fire sins and passions of men, as a rule, but they have often fully developed the Satanic sins of pride, deceit, envy, uncharitableness. I write from experience when I say that many a man curses his folly in marrying half a dozen days after the life-knot has been tied. I have known men whose homes were real infernos to them—who, work hard as they might, had nothing to look forward to every evening but an uncomfortable home, and a vapid, unlovely wife.

Unless a man and woman possess ideas in common, have something of a kindred hope, earthly and heavenly; unless the man be honest, industrious, sober—the woman, modest, good-tempered, clean in addition—how can a marriage

turn out otherwise than unhappy? The wonder is, not that so many divorces take place, that so many wives are beaten and killed, that so many husbands "absquatulate," but that the whole fabric of society is not uprooted—that monasteries and nunneries do not spring up like towns. Suppose that a man is not gifted with the small proportion of good mentioned above, and that the woman has only the two gifts which generally form the only dower of all beneath the rank of ladies—viz., a sharp tongue and a smooth face; what guarantee is there that before a month, nay, a week, is out, the husband and wife will not be at each other's throats? Will good looks last as long as a sharp tongue? Alas! the latter is as good, or as bad, at ninety as at thirty—in fact gets bitterer as wrinkles appear. In such a marriage, surely entered upon with heaven's curse, because with impure motives, the wife becomes very soon a cook installed for life—one who has the privilege of cooking your food atrociously, of finding fault incessantly, of running counter to your tastes at every oppor-

tunity. She is nauseously familiar with you, and knows your faults by heart; your virtues have never struck her. They are, as Emerson says of the manners of superior people—"like the light of stars which has not yet reached us." Then, with regard to sharing your sorrows. This has almost grown into a maxim, but is clearly a fallacy. Half the sorrows of life, what do they spring from? In civilized countries, nay, in all, from loss of material wealth. It is only once or twice, may-be, in life, that we are overwhelmed by the death of one whom we truly, passionately love. Our sorrows come from our failures to succeed in life—from misery, which is only lack of money; from loss of friends, which is only loss of wealth; from sickness, which springs from the heavy toil of sustaining the battle for money, which is the same as bread. When we do break down, when starvation stares us—wife, children, and all, in the face—where is the comfort? Your wife, in nine cases out of ten, puts the blame upon your shoulders—if not, she swoons, mopes, grows fainter and weaker, and

dies. What could she do? Could she get work? The market is full already. Is she willing to cheer you? perhaps yes—but the cheer you and the children want is good cheer, and that she is not able to procure. In few words—are you better conditioned in days of starvation by having six or seven mouths to fill instead of one? All the talk about comfort, and sharing one's sorrows, is clear cant when viewed in this light—taking this one trouble, which is *the* trouble or sorrow meant in nine cases out of ten, and asking oneself what would the woman do placed thus—remembering also that if the man had remained single, there would in all probability be no starvation for himself, with due care, most certainly no children to encounter starvation.

If all goes well materially with a couple, married life is at best, in too many cases, a compromise of hatreds, of disgusts. Out-doors, where the mask is worn ostentatiously, one sometimes sees a glance, or hears an expression which gives room for conjecture; often one is able even to

lift a corner of the veil, and behold the real state of the case with a lightning glimpse. The cupboard opens to the stranger now and then, and displays the fleshless bones. Bluebeard's chamber door has more than one key.

I knew a man and woman who appeared just to suit each other; the husband, industrious, sober; the wife, pretty, clean, intelligent. Yet, they wore their masks but carelessly. He affirmed to one I knew well, that his life was a hell upon earth by reason of his wife's causeless jealousy. She declared, knowing nothing of his complaint, that his temper made her life wretched. Yet, when I went to their house, everything seemed pleasant and calm.

It is absurd for me to mention one case, for I could speak of scores, and have the dim remembrance of hundreds. I have also not seemed to press as hardly upon the men as upon the women, but I must have my masculine bias to a certain extent. The poor women are no more to blame than the men—perhaps not so much. Often are they yoked with brute beasts



of men. Often have I seen them felled to the ground by drunken ruffians ; often have I seen the black bruise upon their eye, borne cheerfully for days, with scarcely a thought of resentment against the fellow who inflicted it.

*May 1.*—Then, again, looking to the number of human beings brought into the world with scarcely any provision for their maintenance made, seeing how our country villages and towns are swarming with children ignorant, vicious, diseased, uncared for, it is enough to make one look into the matter closely, and not to take it for granted that marriage is always a blessing, and that single life must necessarily be miserable.

The conclusion to be arrived at after considering purely material questions alone is this—that no man has any right to enter the married state unless he is assured of an income for, at any rate, two or three years fairly certain, which will keep him and his wife in comfort, and leave a margin. Furthermore, his life ought to be reasonably insured, and he ought to have a small

sum of money in the bank for contingencies. A man who cannot come up to this, especially one who is not particularly strong, ought not to enter into matrimony, however desirous he may be of possessing that domestic happiness, which has such a fine sound, but which it would puzzle many to define.

I know that to many, nay, to nearly everybody, these sentiments would savour of youth, of selfishness, of sordid motives, of a low estimate of the female sex. With regard to youth, we are always young on earth ; there is, besides, a perpetual revolution in our moods ; from the vices and virtues of old age we pass rapidly to those of childhood. He is no expert, as far as human nature is concerned, who does not see that it is principally the shell of humanity which changes. The tenant of the house is the old one, who may have learnt many new truths but perhaps has forgotten old ones. The school in which I have studied, perhaps imperfectly, a few of the ways of men, is a good one ; rather, I may say, that

I have graduated in three of the best schools open to one who has not travelled—London, misfortune, and books. From these I draw the following maxims, which, for the present, must end this protest against the implied idea that every one ought to marry :—

I. If a man can afford to keep a wife and children comfortably, also educate the latter and help them to start in life, and if he sees a woman whom he really loves, it is a good thing for that man to marry.

II. If a man has only the prospect of being able to do this at some future time, don't let him marry till that time arrives.

III. If a man principally wants a cook, a laundress, or a brusher of clothes, don't let him marry.

IV. If a man cannot aspire to the hand of one who is good, educated, and neat, don't let him choose some inferior divinity or inferiority just because he must have a companion.

V. It was not good for a man to be alone in

the wide world, neither is it now ; but, in my sense, St. Paul says it *is* good for man to be alone.

VI. "A man who has wife and children," says Lord Bacon, "has given hostages to fortune." A man with a wife does not, cannot feel disposed to study, to perfect himself in his profession. Ambition is gone. There is necessity's spur ; but how tired, how jaded is the poor steed. He no longer has the spirit for great deeds.

VII. With every fresh family comes an increase of that exclusive spirit, that proneness to consider the four or five individuals in your care as forming, as far as regards yourself, humanity. Hence, "charity begins at home ;" hence prejudices, ignorance, and indifferences—virtues that are akin to vices.

VIII. Children brought into the world, and allowed to grow up as sparrows, picking up their food where or how they can.

The great majority of men and women must

marry. There is such a thing as human nature, disguise or shirk the fact as we may. The greatest number must, in the present state of the world, have so few tastes or pleasures that it is necessary for them to enter into the state that they look upon as one of unalloyed pleasure. Who would grudge them this delight, bare and hard as their lives are. Not I, if proper precautions be taken to prevent the world being flooded with idiots, paupers, thieves. What I contend for is this—that there are many men and many women also in the world who can be happy apart from each other; that it is the duty of those who marry to do so soberly and looking ahead; that it is annoying and fallacious to suppose that a man is such a poor, aimless being as to be perfectly wretched without a wife; that high ambitions and achievements are nearly always nipped in the bud when single life ends.

Perhaps with me the grapes are sour. To a certain extent, yes. Two things principally hold

me from abandoning a bachelor life, nay, three—the want of means, as I have described, the absence of the ideal person, the certainty that the spirit which prompts me to plan and to, at the least, dream of executing intellectual work would, in all probability, disappear with the cares of housekeeping. I, with the master minds of every age accessible to me, with a rich, sorrowful experience, with the hope of inscribing my name in feeble characters upon the roll of English literature, surely I can plod my way, though perhaps not without a little sadness, yet cheerfully and hopefully. Under fine looks, the mind's eye perceives the parchment skin of age—sweet words suggest the idea of bitterness by-and-bye. Is this cynicism? I hope not.

Nevertheless I find, dated "1876" (the same year), this touching poem, which may or may not have been wholly one of imagination. The silence of death, in either case, covers all.

## FROM THE WINDOW.

She hastens past, she never speaks,  
But keenly views the golden sky,  
Two tiny roses stain her cheeks,  
Bud, blossom, quickly fade and die,  
Even while she passes by.

Her widely-opened eyes reflect  
The sunny, cloudless sky above,  
Now in its peaceful splendour decked :  
Theirs is the softness of the dove—  
Its pitying, gentle love.

Often, when dewy twilight steals  
With shadowy steps the landscape o'er,  
A rustling silken dress reveals  
That graceful form, which, as before,  
Will pause not at my door.

Yet when the goblin fire-flames chase  
The lengthening shadows everywhere,  
She sits with wifely, tender grace,  
Her eyes Love's glass, her breath Love's air,  
Within my easiest chair.

The tea-things make a merry sound—

Two cups ! This morn there was but one :  
I've leapt with one gigantic bound  
From grief to joy, from shade to sun,  
And now my life's begun !

Ah, soon delusion's glittering veil

Down falls, and shows the thorny way  
Of Life, in which, with torturing bale,  
Alone, my bleeding feet must stray  
For many and many a day.

I clasp my hands in prayer that she

May never know the inward smart,  
Love's thirstful, speechless agony,  
Which rends with ruthless force apart  
The tendrils of the heart.

May flowers, those waving censers, fling

Around her holy perfumes rare ;  
For her may years advancing bring  
No withered hopes, no loathsome care—  
No poisonous, stern despair.



But blithe and pure, as from the hand  
Of Love's great king she came, may she  
Enter the holy, radiant land,  
Happy with singing saints to be  
For all eternity.

*May 22.*—We have had a little rain this afternoon, and the birds seem to be out of their senses in consequence. They are like children, darting from one place to another, and all the while keeping up their chatting, or chirping, or singing. The bloom falls in bright flakes from the fruit trees. May is getting older and older. In this month one thinks of Macarthy's lines, always sad, always sweet, always suggestive of life's May—come and gone—of life's bloom shed.

*May 25.*—The weather for the past few days has been, and is at the present, very chilly. I shiver, and feel as if January were the month instead of the poets' May. I left off my great-coat at the beginning of the month, and have been miserable ever since. Nothing but shivering and coughing from morning till night. At

the present I am reading "The Vicar of Wakefield," which is almost new to me except by hearsay and through criticism, for it was certainly not later than the year 1860 that I read it, or skipped it I suppose. A simple, yet not uninteresting story it is, but we live in an age which is, *par excellence*, the age of the novel; and all our enthusiasm for the past is needed to get up a real interest, an absorbing interest for the tales of our forefathers; pathetic, life-like though they may be, after reading the novels of Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Mrs. Craik, Trollope, Marryat, Cooper, Hawthorne, Dumas, Hugo, and the score or more of novelists possessing more or less of real genius, belonging to this century. It is wonderful to think of the marvellous literary and artistic talent employed on these tales. What the age of Elizabeth was in relation to the drama, surely the Victorian age has been with regard to the novel—an epoch which will stand out vividly before the eyes of our genius-loving posterity.

*May 27.*—Dull clouds reach from sky to

earth, and every now and then the rain falls listlessly down; wind N.W., I think. A ride into Dunmow and back again with Mr. B. has relieved the monotony of the day a little. As for walking such a day as this it is out of the question, besides, I have a cold that will *not* be cast out in spite of nursing. Read this morning the newspaper and school paper. At Dunmow just glanced at the *Times*, *Saturday Review*, *Punch*, and *Fun*; this afternoon four pages of "La Dot de Suzette." Am just glancing through, not thoroughly reading, George Eliot's "Romola," also Trollope's "Small House at Allington"—the last is being really read.

Finished yesterday "The Vicar of Wakefield." Good Mr. Burchell is the presiding deity, the dispenser of justice in the pieces, and is well drawn. Jenkinson, the rascal, brings, or helps to bring about the final catastrophe in a very clever manner. The parson, though rather long-winded in his orations, stands vividly out; in fact, most of the characters do. It is a most interest-

ing tale—clear as crystal in language and sentiment, having simplicity, not without art, of the highest kind. The way in which misfortunes accumulate in unexpected ways upon the poor family is managed with much skill. The episode of the discovery of George in the prison, the restoration of Olivia, are strokes of that great talent which no lover of English literature will deny to Oliver Goldsmith.

8 P.M.—Perhaps I may one day look back upon this quiet life with regret—regret that it has all passed away like a dream. Who can tell? Often I persuade myself that life in the great city is alone worth the having; that this village life is akin to stagnation, to death; and yet now and then comes the thought that this may after all be the most happy, as it certainly is the most uneventful period of my existence. Unhappily, we are happy mostly by retrospection and anticipation; seldom do we extract pleasure from the immediate present, seldom perceive that around us, no matter where we may be placed, is hourly being enacted the

great tragi-comedy of human existence in which we are actors, of which each of us may easily become a spectator.

Alas ! that until our happiest time is gone for ever, we discern little difference between it and the most wretched hour that we have experienced. I suppose it is to be taken for granted that here on earth we cannot, must not, be wholly happy, spite of what philosophical optimists may say. Strangers and pilgrims, it is not to be supposed that of the halting hour of life we can make an eternity ; that to halt and to stay fixed in the one place are necessary conditions which we are impelled to observe. Well, well. Ever our thoughts must project themselves onward to the abode of thought ; ever we must understand that the grief which good and bad alike experience always and in every station of life is the ennui of the spirit, the burden of years, of misgivings, of remorse, under which we stumble on to the final city. The knowledge of earth will not content us ; friendship is incomplete, has no strength. Love is but a poor makeshift for the Divine Love,

which asks repentance and fully embraces the penitent. Riches are but the gorgeous flowers of the landscape, which we may behold but never gather; sensual pleasures a brute madness, which cripples our limbs, and gives us no strength to move, takes from us the desire of advancing.

*July 14.*—I have been ill from June 4th. On June 3rd went to London for my Whitsun holiday, having at the same time a cold. That cold developed into congestion of the left lung, and thence passed into pneumonia. Returned home on the 9th June, and have during all this period (five weeks to-day) been under the doctor's hands, at one time dangerously ill. Thank God, I am now better, though weakened, but hope to recommence my work next Monday (17th).

The weather is most summer-like. The eye is met on every side by vegetation, luxuriant and green. It seems, indeed, like a new life to me, to rise from the bed of sickness, and behold this glorious time. I might, but for the

mercy of God, be now under the ground, food for worms.

A feeling of thankfulness therefore animates me, in addition to the joy I experience at seeing the cold unfruitful days gone, and the time of haymaking, flowers, and fruits, set in.

*July 27.*—Thank Heaven, I have been permitted to renew my bread-work. Till I reach the end of life, I desire strongly to earn my bread independently and honourably. God gives me the power to do it in both ways still. I have found, what with the hot weather, and my weakness, some difficulty in going on with the duty, but I feel myself gaining in strength, and my spirits are in nowise depressed. Although I am solitary, I am not without society; that, namely, of the great spirits of the past, who, to me, almost exist. At all events they are nearer to me than my contemporaries, for my position takes from me, or, rather, prevents me from gaining the society, the conversation, the friendship, of the wise, the learned, and the good; and there is in me no inclination for any acquaint-

ance with, or friendship with the general run of men.

Sent a letter to Mrs. C., a few days ago, asking for leave to issue a modest volume of verse. Her answer is decisive: "Go on with courage. Send the result from time to time. When I see anything likely to suit a magazine, it shall be ventured. Never despair. So much has been done that the rest is sure to follow." I am therefore not to publish. This fiat must be accepted. "The rest is sure to follow." *Yes, if I live long enough.*

I gain every day, and lose nothing. But what avails all progress to a far-off goal, if a barrier is met with at the outset, which cannot be surmounted? Death is to me that impassable barrier. Good Mrs. C. doesn't perceive this. Her mind is masculine in its shrewdness and common sense, although she is a very woman at heart. I hint at the possibility, I mean the probability, of my life abruptly terminating at no distant date, but I daresay she treats that as sentiment—a morbid feeling. The result most likely will be



that, though I have written thousands of lines, some of them reaching to poetry, I shall never see any of them printed. She wants me to wait and wait till I have written something very far superior to what I have yet done. She won't allow what all would-be poets have had—a first venture. She mentions the magazines, but I don't care about them. Good poetry they very seldom contain. Verses, descriptive of society, of mawkish love, or of sentiments drowned in a mass of verbiage, form their chief approach to poetry. However, if I can overcome inertia, I shall try, but where's a subject?

I am reading the *Life*, by Boswell, of that sturdy Englishman and genius, Dr. Johnson. It does me good. I don't think I have read a work with such genuine pleasure and profit for years. I admire the uncouth, irritable, persevering scholar, who had to make his way unaided through the world. I admire the Churchman—staunch, but not bigoted. Good heart, great mind, spite of dogmatism and roughness.

*Aug.* 3.—Poor Padre (his father) died, aged sixty-five years. I might use the words of Burns, and say—

With such as he, where'er they be,  
May I be saved or damned;

But that I cannot perceive the possibility of endless punishment being assigned to one so meek, so unfortunate, so regardful, though in a rather superstitious way, of his obligations to, and dependance upon, the Almighty. May he rest in peace!

*Aug.* 10.—If this weary world were not illuminated now and then by acts of kindness and sympathy, how miserable we should be! On every side of us, death, sin, and misery are seen, a mantle that almost shuts out heaven appears to be thrown over the face of nature. Well for us that the hope, the belief, in an after-world is strong within us, and that good hearts bear their testimony in good deeds to the divine origin of our race. A succession of days of forebodings, of mental and bodily pain, of that

dryness of heart which is so devilish, so earthy, is followed now and then by holy thoughts, by a feeling that our hearts are softened, and ready to take any good impression that the Divine Spirit may desire to stamp upon them. God be thanked for these spiritual moments.

I gain strength but slowly. The weather is most beautiful, the corn is being cut down on every side, the landscape presents nothing but loveliness and radiance. My appetite is good, and, under such favourable conditions, I ought to progress faster than I do. But then five or six days in the week, I am shut in a close room with fifty or sixty boys, and feel no strength nor inclination to ramble about in the evening. Health is wanted to enjoy the beauties of Nature. One can't sit on a fence for several hours watching the landscape. One needs a certain amount of strength so as to wander from one sweet place to another, and strength I have not. Besides, a friend is needed, full of the poetic spirit; eager to perceive on everything around the "stamp of God," and such

a friend is wanting. However, we can't have everything.

*Aug. 19.*—For the past week, a severe cold, leagued with my weakness and the intense heat of the weather, has prostrated me bodily and mentally. I have crawled down to the school, have remained there all day, with no appetite for the mid-day food I have brought with me, and rendered half-suffocated with the children's breaths. Thank Heaven, the cessation from labour has come; for the next three weeks, at least, I shall be free from the grinding for daily bread. As I now write this, my cold, though broken, is still strong upon me; an oppression at the pit of the stomach, which has been my pest ever since my illness, remains, and shows no symptoms of a change. However, the kindly Providence may, in this interval of freedom from bread-work, strengthen me for the resumption of my daily task.

This was not to be. The two pages that follow are written in a feeble, utterly

changed hand-writing, which sufficiently shows how near the end was approaching. It was in the midst of this illness that he begged the curate, Mr. Blenkarne, to write to me; but I find no reference made to this or any other outside things. His physical sufferings must have been very great, too great for any thing beyond the mere endurance of them.

*Sept. 8.*—From Monday, the 21st August, up to within the last three or four days, has been for me a time of anguish unutterable. Took to my bed on the Tuesday, 22nd, and am now writing this in it. Have been in a state bordering on madness, and have escaped death by the skin of my teeth, as Job says. God's divine mercy has alone snatched me from the jaws of death, which I yearned and longed for in my suffering.

My profession I shall, if I get over this illness, have to renounce. A long period of rest and careful treatment is what I want. These

God may mercifully grant me. Above all may He put into me holy desires. May He help me to offer a contrite heart, broken with the thoughts of my unworthiness. May He forgive me all my offences and grant me eternal life, through Jesus Christ, the loving and the good, His Son and my Saviour.

*Sept. 21.*—Not yet permitted to breathe the outdoor air, though I am not confined to my bedroom. My progress is but slow, but it is sure. My appetite slowly improving, as also my strength, though I am very weak yet. My stomach is altogether deranged, and my nights are troublesome. Added to these discomforts, I am like a hermit all day long. I sit, and brood, and read, but I have nobody to bear me company. Mr. B. looks in now and then for a little while—the doctor only comes now twice a-week, and there is only another person who gives me a call. Always used to the bustle and stir of school as I was, it is a real affliction to me to be condemned to sit in a little room all day long, from ten till ten, sometimes, or

mostly with very insipid reading, constant indigestion, and nothing to see through the window, except a cart rattling past now and then. But patience—patience.

These are his last written words. Immediately after he must have left Great Easton for London, to visit his sister “Nelly” and her husband, *en route* for Dover, which he was fated never to reach. How I heard of his being ill, went to see him, and found him dead, has been already told. Of his last illness I have in vain tried to get particulars, the family having already “drifted away.” The nearest record attainable is a few words from his faithful friend Mr. Linklater, which I subjoin.

“You have asked me to tell you of poor John Martin’s last illness and death. I thought at the time how strange it was—

the awful contrast between the scenes I then witnessed—the streets, full of infamy and riot, which I had to pass in visiting him, and the religious quiet of that poor room, where, laid along on the floor, his brave young life was fighting with death. But with the incessant cares of the living and the dying upon me, I was unable at the time to write down facts or thoughts ; and in the whirl of life they have passed from me and are forgotten.

“ But John Martin himself we could never forget ; his life was too remarkable. It was a great shock when the messenger came to fetch me to his sister’s ; but even that did not prepare me for his condition. Terrible, and yet beautiful, it was to see the emaciated frame which enshrined that heroic spirit, for he was a real hero. As I write I seem to see him sitting up, wrapped in a blanket, his long thin neck—as long and



thin as St. Bernard's—(you will see it in the little sketch I made of him, the only portrait extant)—stretched out in eager watching for me, and his bright eye, as bright as ever, burning with the fire of intellect, for to the very last his mind was vigorous and clear, as if no decay of nature could affect the soul.

“I wish you had seen how patient he was in his great sufferings, how grateful for all the care and kindness he received, how thoughtful for others, how humbly penitent concerning himself and his own life—that life which to him seemed so faulty and misused, but to us and all who knew him most grand and noble. You did see his poor remains, the body from which the soul has fled, with the little pile of manuscript on a chair beside it—the Legacy which it had been such a consolation to him to leave to you. And that is all he

has left behind, except an influence which, wherever it extended, was too strong soon to pass away."

That it may not pass away, but may do something of the good which he so longed to do, and died without doing, has been my hope in thus arranging and writing this book.

As before said, Martin's poems, on which he set such store, are not by any means equal to his prose writings in the "Note Book." But I have chosen what seemed to me the best of them, which, with "Placidio" (his only complete work), follow here. I end this by what I conclude is the last poem he ever wrote—the final one in a new MS. book into which he had begun to copy what he evidently thought his best efforts, with a view to publication. It is entitled "A Sonnet," and seems to refer to some new-born babe—what child I know

not, as his sister's infant, born three weeks before his death, christened Johanna after him, and speedily following him to the other world, could not have been in existence at the date of the sonnet.

Meantime, as the last expression in verse of the spirit who knew not how near was its departure, to the little spirit unknown just entered into life, the sonnet makes a fit conclusion to this simple, true, and unexaggerated history.

Balm in a bitter atmosphere of sighs ;

Thou precious, fragile leaf on Adam's tree,

Through tears mine eyes are contemplating  
thee,—

Creature, whose greetings are low, piteous cries

To creatures in Life's house of misery ;

What canst thou utter of the starry skies,

Whence thy pure, trembling spirit had its rise ?

A river destined for a shoreless sea ?

Alas ! that knowledge may not ever be

Till golden gates unbar, and fill our eyes—  
Earthly no more—with gleams of Paradise ;

Where, journeying to its dazzling centre, we  
The Primal Cause, supreme, and good, and wise,  
With holy adoration e'er shall see.

As I write this last page,—being by chance away from home, but in a lovely and luxurious house, where the inner peace is greater even than the luxury,—what a cruel, almost ghastly, contrast do they seem to make—such plenteous homes, such happy lives!—to a life like this I am now recording! So that, for the time being, our faith in the “Supreme and Good and Wise” almost totters to its foundation. And yet, thus thinking, with exceeding bitter thoughts, I hear rising up at this moment, from the chamber organ in the hall below my room, the music of Mendelssohn's wonderful heavenly song, “O rest in the Lord!”—A strange, almost

startling coincidence ;—I take it as a sign.

So does he rest—he to whom was never given his “heart’s desire”—who in vain “committed his way unto the Lord”—whose whole existence was “fretted with evil-doers,” yet who did righteously and valiantly—ay, and pitifully and lovingly—among them all, to the bitter end. In this world he found no rest ; yet we must believe, if we believe anything, that now, in the fullest and divinest sense, John Martin “rests in the Lord.” Amen.



# PLACIDIO.

AN ORIGINAL PLAY.

IN THREE ACTS.

## NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

*Bagatine.* All I know about this coin is that it is mentioned as a Venetian coin, value one-third of a farthing, in Ben Jonson's "Volpone." I put it in here chiefly to suit the measure.

*Placidio.* I intended to represent Placidio as a Christian, manly—calm in the face of danger—resigned to the loss of worldly goods—kind, generous to the poor—not to the lazzaroni; to be a model of placidity, in fact, without becoming spiritless. I am afraid he has degenerated in my hands.

*Maldenzio* and *Ambrose* were meant to be two unmitigated ruffians. I have moderated them—mindful of the last attempt. I hope they are not too blackly coloured.



# PLACIDIO.

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## PERSONS REPRESENTED.

PLACIDIO . . . . .	<i>A Distressed Gentleman.</i>
AMBROSE . . . . .	<i>A Miser.</i>
CLEMENT . . . . .	<i>A Goldsmith—friend to Placidio.</i>
MALDENZIO . . . . .	<i>Son to Ambrose.</i>
CLAUDE . . . . .	<i>Servant to Placidio.</i>
CORSO . . . . .	} <i>Two Poor Men.</i>
DURANO . . . . .	
THREE MAGISTRATES.	
THREE OFFICERS.	
BRENDA . . . . .	<i>Wife to Placidio.</i>
ISOLA . . . . .	<i>Niece to Placidio.</i>

*Guards, Attendants, Populace, &c.*

SCENE: ALBENGA IN ITALY.

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## ACT I.—SCENE I.

*Ante-chamber in PLACIDIO'S House.*

*Enter PLACIDIO with CORSO and DURANO.*

*Durano.* Is't really so?

*Corso.* The noble Signor jests.

*Placidio.* Alas! my honest friends, I do not  
jest.

From that high pedestal on which my wealth  
Nor virtues nor abilities did place me  
Above the suff'ring brotherhood of men—  
Never in \*heartfelt sympathy, as ye  
Can witness for me—I must soon descend.  
Men work and live, and I can work and live.

*Durano.* Alas, alas !

*Corso.* Can this be true ?

*Placidio.* I am

Beggar'd in fortune, not in health or honour,  
The heavens be thank'd !

*Durano.* Oh, this is doleful news.

*Corso.* So ill I have not heard for many a  
day.

*Placidio.* 'Faith, you will see me in the market-  
place,

Asking an alms ere long ; till that time come,  
Let me distribute part of that which e'en  
Creditors most exacting cannot claim.

I have no right to hoard—what heav'n bestows  
Should be reflected, not absorbed—that makes

Of th' sun's rays white—this black.\* So every  
soul,

E'en as God's golden mercies strike it, seems  
Or good or bad ; so friends enjoy with me,  
If but for one short month, what I can spare ;  
Take this, and this (*gives them money*), for ye  
are honest men.

*Durano.* O, Heaven preserve you, sir !

*Corso.* The saints be bounteous to you, noble  
sir,

And thousandfold repay your kindness to us.

*Placidio.* No thanks ; I am repaid because I  
know

Ye are not bearers of rehearsed tales.

Hunger glares from your eyeballs ; send for  
soup

At midday for your children, and my cook

Shall pack a basket of good nourishing things

---

\* "What heaven bestows

Should be reflected, not absorb'd—that makes

O' th' sun's rays white—this black."

This may appear far-fetched ; the allusion is to the  
absorption of the sun's rays causing the surface into  
which they are absorbed to appear black.

For your sick wife, Durano. Go not hence  
Till ye have tried my meat and drink ; my  
servants

Will treat you as myself. You're shiv'ring,  
Corso !

Why, man, you've but a dozen worn-out threads  
Hanging 'twixt you and this inclement weather.

*Corso.* Observe it not, good sir ; I'm used to  
cold.

*Placidio.* Nay, nay, I have a cloak that's  
somewhat worn,

Superior far to this—wilt please you wear it ?

*Corso.* Aye, aye, and angels bless you for it,  
Signor !

In truth, 'tis somewhat cold to-day.

*Placidio.*

Stay here.

Anon I'll be with you. Pray seat yourselves.

[*Exit.*

*Corso.* What think you of the gen'rous  
Signor's news ?

*Durano.* Oh ! sad, sad, sad !

*Corso.* If he be ruined, then a hundred  
workers,

Suffring and mute, will scare the public gaze,  
Who now by careful toil and his assistance  
Life's heavy chain drag on. If this be true,  
A thousand poor will lose the gentle father  
Who daily gives them bread.

*Durano.*

In truth they will.

*Corso.* 'Tis that o'erreaching blear-ey'd villain,  
Ambrose.

I do regard him as the author of  
The troubles of the good Placidio.  
His breath's a plague—he has an evil eye.

*Durano.* An evil eye! The saints be tender  
to us!

*Corso.* Day after day I've seen him crawling  
into

This house with heaps of papers. He's the mischief,  
Depend you on't.

*Durano.* Yet he's of gentle birth.

*Corso.* Good birth, base blood.

*Durano.*

His son, Maldenzio,

He lodges at your house?

*Corso.*

Aye, aye, but ne'er

A ducat have I had since Peter's day.

*Durano.* What is his disposition ?

*Corso.*

To encroach

On others' slender store—with empty purse  
To act as though the town were all his own.  
A sponge, a cheating thief—will drink and fight.  
Make the whole street resound with hideous  
noise—

Dire day when I did entertain him first.

*Durano.* Rid yourself of him, then.

*Corso.*

He goes, and I

Am ruin'd ; if he stays, I am undone ;

In either case he is my plague.

*Durano (to Corso).*

Placidio !

*Re-enter PLACIDIO.*

*Placidio.* Corso, the cloak (*gives him cloak*) ;

no words—'twill keep you warm.

On with it, man, at once. And now descend—  
Claude will his guidance give—spare not the food ;  
Hunger and cold are friends. Good-bye, good-bye.

*Corso.* What shall I say for your great kindness, sir ?

*Placidio.* Nothing to me.

*Durano.* My grateful thanks are due——

*Placidio.* To that Almighty Father who hath  
made me

Almoner of His bounty—channel mean,  
Through which a stream of temporal blessings  
flows.

To Him raise thankful hearts ; assign to Him  
All earnest praise, for He alone suggests  
The impulse good, the holy deed. We lack,  
Leaning upon our reed-like earthly strength,  
The wish, will, power to do what best Him  
pleases.

O friends, if ye would serve me, pray for me !

I ask your prayers.

*Corso.* Most fervent shall they be,  
O noble sir !

*Placidio.* Remember me, if need arise.

*Durano.* The holy angels guard you, Signor !

[*Exeunt CORSO and DURANO.*]

*Placidio.* What now I told these honest  
hearts is true.

If help do not arrive from men or Heaven,

I must relinquish plenty, ease, and quiet ;  
Fare hard, lie hard, drink water, dress in rags ;  
Walk through the town with downcast eyes ;  
perceive

None of my old companions, guests or friends ;  
Be seen by none i' th' broad noonday ; consort  
With those who eat and live and sin, and go  
Wailing into the night of horrible dreams ;  
\*Cursings for blessings hear. Yet is't not sin  
To paint so drear a landscape of my future ?  
And to imagine that heav'n's golden sunshine  
Streaks not the gloomiest sky ? Oh, 'tis in-  
deed !

Besides, 'tis nought but folly to be merely  
Slaves to our servants ; fixed in abject bondage  
To certain hours for food, to certain dresses,

---

\* "Cursings for blessings hear."

The melancholy lines from *Macbeth* ran in my mind  
while penning the above, so let me put them here :

"That which should accompany old age—  
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,  
I must not look to have, but in their place  
Curses not loud but deep."



Purple and silken, to outstare our clocks,  
Waiting the coming of some tedious guest ;  
Our time, our houses not our own ; our manners  
Settl'd before our coming into th' world,  
By menials base. 'Twere worth a dozen fortunes,  
tunes,

Freedom from custom's fetters, but for this—  
That scores of needy people whom we help  
To th' endurance of life's load, must now  
(Saving the interposing kindly hand  
Of Providence inscrutable) succumb ;  
Sobbing, lie down in th' broad highway and rot,  
Spurn'd by men's hard and cruel feet. Supreme  
Father of all, O pardon my presumption !  
Let me not selfish be ; let me not ask  
For a continuance of Thy gifts to me ;  
But to the sick and poor whom we have  
tended,

Mov'd thereto by no power but love divine,  
Bounteous as ever be. Thy messengers  
Only we are, and Thou hast myriads more,  
Waiting Thy word to run on Mercy's errands  
To vile or good—to thankless souls and thankful.

If Thou dismiss me from my stewardship,  
Grant that my actions past may front the sun-  
beams

That come from Thee, O radiant Sun of Truth !

[*Exit.*

*Enter* CLAUDE, *ushering in* AMBROSE.

*Ambrose.* Where is your master ?

*Claude.* Signor, I could have sworn that he  
was here.

*Ambrose.* Do not protest. (*Aside*) Is't trick'ry ?  
Does he mean

To shun me ? Fellow, I must see Placidio—  
Must ! Hear you that ? Art deaf ?

*Claude.* I hear you, sir.

*Ambrose.* Summon him hither ; say a friend  
is waiting.

*Claude (aside).* Ugh ! 'tis an ugly, wither'd,  
gum-ey'd miser !

Friend ! An old wolf that's waiting for a  
lamb.

*Ambrose.* Not gone ! Away, thou villain !  
Patience, patience !

*Claude.* I will assure my master of your presence. [*Erit.*

*Ambrose.* A friend—yes, that will bring him.

He delights

To hear the beggars call him friend. Oh,  
height,

Oh, crown of folly! Fool—he's worse than  
fool!

E'en now two sturdy knaves did pass me  
smiling.

One had a cloak of slightly faded silk

Given him by Placidio. 'Twould have fetch'd

Ten ducats in the market-place ; in fact,

If all his kindness was not given to beggars,

He might have made the cloak a gift to me ;

I need one sorely. But I'll sting him yet.

Egyptian plagues the monks do drone about

Were never worse than those I'll send. I'll  
have

The utmost ducat ; his ancestral acres

I'll seize and portion 'mong a hundred servants,

Reaping a harvest of revenge and gold.

Hunger shall dog his footsteps everywhere.

\*Scorn's marginal finger with precision ever  
Shall point to his thin quiv'ring form. I'll  
strip

All cov'ring from him save foul rags—the banners

In Destitution's army—and expose him  
To icy wind and drenching rain. I hate him !  
Yes, let those words have air, for pent they'll  
choke me—

I hate him !

*Re-enter PLACIDIO.*

*Placidio.* Sir, you seem unwell. Be seated.

*Ambrose.* Signor Placidio, if your mem'ry  
serve you,

To-day a sum of money changes hands.

I have the parchment here. The full amount  
(Received by you from me at various times)

Attains the sum of just two hundred thousand——

*Placidio.* Alas, sir !

---

\* This and the next line drawn partly from Shakspeare (*Othello*) ; partly from Massinger.

*Ambrose.* Just two hundred thousand ducats.  
Then there's the int'rest which on sep'rate sums,  
Advanced at diff'rent times within the year,  
I have computed. Here's the estimate

[*Gives him paper.*]

To reach the total, seventy thousand ducats.  
Is all correct?

*Placidio.* O Heaven be good to me!

*Ambrose.* Now, Signor, I am ready to receive  
My money ; mark ! my money. I'll not beg,  
Though this is Beggar's Hall. I'll ask no  
cloaks,

Nor batten on your leakings and your crumbs.

My only business here is to receive

The sum of money mention'd, lent in days

When, as you said, Necessity did pinch you ;

Lent on condition that to-day I should

Have it return'd with interest, or if not,

The right was mine to squeeze from your  
estates

My debt's last coin, you bearing all the charges

Which might in that just process be incurr'd.

Now for my money, sir.

*Placidio.*

No days of grace !

Is not this sudden, Signor ?

*Ambrose.*

In th' agreement

Is mention made of grace ?

*Placidio.*

Perhaps 'tis not ;

Yet, knowing me so long—my late misfortunes,

The value of my large estates—my honour,

Which Fortune's breath, tho' foul, shall never  
stain—

I did suppose that for a week or two——

*Ambrose.*

O patience !

*Placidio.* Till I could make a last appeal for  
aid

To distant friends, you would display some mercy.

*Ambrose.* Is mercy in the bill ?*Placidio.*

Ah, no, but I——

*Ambrose.* You'd trick me !—never. Mercy to  
the winds !

Oh ! I did have some inkling of this when

I first arrived to-day. And this is honour !—

This virtue !—to make promises and break 'em.

New-fangl'd honesty is this, to squander

With jaunty air the gold of other people

On cut-throat thieves; and then to prate of  
mercy !

O patience, patience !

*Placidio.* Will you hearken to me ?

*Ambrose.* No, 'tis a monstrous plot !

*Placidio.* Pray do not shriek.

*Ambrose.* Not shriek ! I'll please myself. I  
am your master—

Lord of this mansion. I'll dismiss the servants ;

A beggar wants no slaves. Why, I am rich—

Not over rich—and I've no servants. You

Own not the shoes you wear, yet you must have

Your cooks, your man, your maids, your lackeys, all

Sucking the life-blood of my ducats. Cheat !

Robber ! I'll have you whipp'd through all the  
town !

Look to it. I——

*Placidio.* Will you have patience, sir ?

Nay, but I will be heard. Pray calm yourself.

Give me your hearing. If you'll not, these walls

Shall be the dull recipients of your threats.

'Tis true I have not scrap'd the sum you name,

But I have quite two-thirds.

*Ambrose.* You nam'd not this  
Before.

*Placidio.* Your violence did prevent me, sir.  
Malice will stir up Anger e'en to deeds  
That Anger's self would blush at. Listen to me.

*Ambrose.* I did not dream of this. He must  
have friends (*aside*).

*Placidio.* I am in hopes that by the disposition  
Of my estates I shall be barely able  
To settle all your claims ere long, and then——

*Ambrose.* What hope you, then?

*Placidio.* I shall have scarce a ducat.

*Ambrose* (*aside*). He underrates the value of  
his lands.

*Placidio.* And shall be forc'd to toil for daily  
food.

*Ambrose.* This comes, Placidio, of your thrift-  
less folly.

*Placidio.* But life is more than food, the Lord  
has said.

*Ambrose.* Your reckless giving has this ruin  
brought.

*Placidio.* Not reckless, Ambrose. I did but  
disburse



Treasures which Heav'n ne'er meant for me alone.  
Gold is not all in all.

*Ambrose.* To me it is—

My food and drink, my clothes, house, friends,  
and pleasure.

What's there to live for but to gather gold?

'Tis bright as sunshine, smooth as silk; and when

You let a thousand ducats gently glide

From purse to chest, what sweeter music is  
there?

*Placidio.* In loving words more dulcet music  
rings;

And in th' eternal realms of glory where

Love radiant sits upon his ivory throne,

Such rapt'rous strains in perfum'd ripples float

As drown the mem'ry of all earthly griefs.

Would I were there!

*Ambrose.* Your vision must be keen

To penetrate the ceiling and the clouds.

Come, let's to business.

*Placidio.* Aye, to business.

One minute, sir, and I will be with you, and

Your papers will peruse. [Exit.]

*Ambrose.*

I marvel much

Whence all this gold did spring. He must have  
friends.

Yet I was told that those to whom this mansion  
Open at all times was, had him denied

The smallest aid—had pass'd him in the streets ;  
Traduc'd his honour in the highest places.

Bah, I have heard myself their whisp'rings—  
surely

He has been parsimonious in his household,  
Else friends mysterious have their help afforded ;  
Perchance the fortune of his niece has swollen  
The sum prepared for me. I did expect,  
At highest computation, not one-tenth.

A wall confronts me. Shall I take the gold ?

Or make demur because 'tis but a part ?

His lands would pay me hugely, and would  
feed

My hatred ; but these ducats once refus'd  
Might ne'er be offered more. Strange things do  
happen.

I'll take the portion on the understanding  
That by this time to-morrow the remainder

Will wait my pleasure, else the lands are forfeit—

Not one day more I'll give.

*Re-enter PLACIDIO.*

*Placidio.*

Compute these bags.

Ten are there, each contains one thousand ducats.

This is a bill on Clement.

*Ambrose.*

Oh, the goldsmith !

(*Aside*) He is the fount of gold. I mark you, sir,

*Placidio.* For thirty thousand ducats, here are  
notes

Which I from time to time have placed aside

For the extinction of my debt ; they make

The balance of the sum I proffer you.

*Ambrose.* Clement the goldsmith !

*Placidio,*

He's my creditor

For that large bill, but he's a man will wait

The turn of Fortune's tide.

*Ambrose.*

*Placidio,* grace

You did entreat just now. I'll give you grace

Till noon to-morrow ; at that time expect me.

Have every ducat counted out ; no more.

Move Etna if you will, but I am fix'd ;  
No words, no sighs, no tears. I'll have my own.  
Only on this condition I renounce  
My instant right to seize this house, your lands,  
Your goods, your body even : nay, speak not,  
For stipulated 'twas that on this day  
( 'Tis in the bond), my money not forthcoming,  
You lost the title to your lands ; became  
A slave, a chattel ; yet relenting, I  
Grant mercy, grace—(*aside*) two words that  
cover weakness.

He takes the bait. I'll store these words for  
use—

(*Aloud*) Till next noonday this signature renew.

[*PLACIDIO signs.*

'Tis shaky, Signor, but 'tis legible.

Now let me cage afresh these tiny coins

That far surpass all birds in music sweet.

[*Counts money.*

*PLACIDIO comes forward.*

*Placidio.* 'Tis done, and we are beggars ; if  
to-night

He did present himself—another coin,  
Had it the power to stop his threats and curses,  
I scarce could find. Yet I am nearly free  
Of debt, foot-haunting and nerve-weak'ning  
spectre!

The sword, suspended by a single hair  
(To which mine eyes have been in voiceless  
terror

Fastened in midst of mirth and pleasant feasting),  
At length has fallen, and, the Heavens be prais'd,  
Has left me life and hope—but Brenda, she,  
My poor affectionate, I grieve for her.  
'Tis I who should have interpos'd my prudence,  
My love as barriers 'gainst keen boist'rous winds;  
Yet I have left her to the ruthless blasts.

I have withdrawn from her the gifts of Fortune,  
Misfortune's nauseous cup to her I bring,  
And she, my sweet, will meekly drink and cast  
No looks reproachful on me. For the rest,  
Those suff'ring friends of mine excepted, whom  
God will provide another patron for,  
I have no care; my arm is worthless if  
It cannot carve a way to honest bread.

*Ambrose.* Signor Placidio.

*Placidio.* Find you all correct ?

*Ambrose.* 'Tis, to the bagatine.

*Placidio.* My servant will  
Assist you in the carriage of these bags.

*Ambrose.* Nay, nay ; no help.

*Placidio.* You will be sorely weighted.

*Ambrose.* Gold is no burden on its owner's  
back.

But mark, to-morrow ! I'll be punctual ; be you  
Ready for me.

*Placidio.* I will endeavour, Signor.

*Ambrose.* Endeavour fits the mouths of feeble  
men ;

The strong use sturdier words. Howbeit I

Care not a jot which is th' alternative.

Ducats are welcome ; land is welcome too ;

Be you prepar'd. [*Exit.*

*Placidio.* On which side succour lies  
I can perceive no sign. 'Tis sorrow's gall  
To forfeit my estates ; what help is there ?  
Alas, with straining eyes I see none ; dark  
As jet the future is upon this matter.

Where can I best retrench? Luxurious living  
Some time we have eschew'd ; we have dismiss'd  
A score of servants, yet what help? I cannot  
At moment's notice gather money enough  
To satisfy the claims of Ambrose. Time  
Is what I've ask'd to mend in my estates  
The ravages of servants whom I trusted  
Too long, too long ; but this he will not give  
me,

Else in a year I could discharge all claims.  
He seems to hate me. Why I know not, for  
I hardly dreamt of his existence till  
I found myself encumber'd. Let me think :  
Whom have I tested? Innocenzio, who  
Did taunt me with almsgiving ; he's unmask'd  
For ever to me. Also proud Bertroni,  
Who made no sign of recognition when  
I pass'd him yesterday. There's Pazzo too,  
Whom I esteem'd as noble as his house ;  
He must descend from Friendship's height ; his  
greeting  
Was icy cold ; he did anticipate  
My sad appeal by lamentations o'er

Losses unreal, unreal ; or Heaven forgive me !  
Well, I must not lose heart.

*Enter BRENDA.*

My darling, heap  
Reproaches on my head.

*Brenda.* Wherefore, Placidio ?

*Placidio.* To penury I drag you down ; dis-  
comforts

I strew along your future path of life ;  
Hunger I make attendant on your footsteps.  
Too fair you are and tender to be yok'd  
With me in Mis'ry's fetters.

*Brenda.* O my husband !

Let me implore you to have faith in me.  
You wound me by your self-reproaches, 'tis  
As if my flame of love were cooler grown,  
Or burnt less brightly in these sombre days.  
I am not chang'd ; you are my greatest treasure,  
Dearer to me than aught that gold can buy.  
The honour and nobility of soul  
Which help'd to centre all my love upon you,  
I still perceive in all their primal splendour.  
Darling, I have been sharer in your pleasures,



Put upon me a portion of your trouble,  
With light and willing spirit I will bear it.  
Trust to me, my Placidio.

*Placidio.*

Providence !

I thank thee for this noble creature's love.  
Sweet, you are gen'rous to me.

*Brenda.*

Nay, my love.

*Placidio.* Ambrose has just departed.

*Brenda.*

I beheld him.

*Placidio.* He gives but one day's respite.

*Brenda.*

Surely he

Must be a cruel man.

*Placidio.*

That time expir'd,

Unless a hundred thousand ducats wait

His coming, he'll have right by our agree-  
ment,

To seize this house, my lands, and whatsoe'er

Be wanting to make up the balance due ;

What disencumber'd floats above the wreck,

Will not be ours but Clement's.

*Brenda.*

Well, Placidio,

Now is the time to prove the value of

Those holy lessons we have conn'd together.

A power exists above us, full of mercy,  
Shower'd like sunshine through the gloomiest sky.

*Placidio.* They've not been learnt in vain.

*Brenda.* You mention'd Clement,  
Kind-hearted Clement. He's been absent lately.

*Placidio.* Progresses he in favour with Isola?

*Brenda.* She will not entertain his love pro-  
posals; he

But mentions what he has at heart, and pride,  
Anger, disdain, do make an ugly mask,  
Which hides her beauty while he's in the room;  
She looks most loathsome then; when he with-  
draws

The evil vizer fades beneath her smiles,  
And by the contrast she more lovely seems.

*Placidio.* Strange girl she is.

*Brenda.* Aye, full of contradictions;  
Proud, yet submissive to severe rebuke  
When conscious of her fault. She walks as if  
This house a palace were, and she a queen;  
Yet gossips with the servants. Jewels rare  
She loves to fasten in her splendid dresses  
Only when in the house—abroad she'll wear none.

*Placidio.* Yes, yes, she is a riddle ; but to  
slight

Good Clement—'tis more Sphinx-like—rich he is.

*Brenda.* Well-favour'd, young, accomplish'd,  
brave, and good.

*Placidio.* The prop of our declining house ; the  
sole

Friend we have found in our adversity.

These might possess no weight with her, but,  
surely,

The sight of so much loving true devotion  
Should passionate love inspire !

*Brenda.* She may relent ;  
May with clear vision see his manly virtues ;  
Feel in her heart Love's sunbeams.

*Placidio.* Time brings all.  
Our hopes, the buds of sorrowful years, will grow  
To flowers of texture rare and golden hue ;  
They'll float towards us on Life's circling stream ;  
Patience their air and sunshine. I must out,  
Dear wife, in search of help. I've not exhausted  
My list of friends ; I'll visit Filippo,  
Though I mistrust him. Grave Fabricius,

Surely, will help me ease this falling weight—  
Keep heart, my Brenda.

*Brenda.* Trust me, husband ! May  
The saints remove all obstacles, and speed  
Your errand. Heav'n be with you ! [*Exit.*

*Placidio.* O my darling !  
Thy love has made me strong. Misfortune's  
darts

Shall still retain their venom—praise the giver  
Of this most virtuous woman. What is Sorrow ?  
A phantom seen through childish tears. What  
loss

Could touch me like the loss of virtue ? She  
Is virtue incarnated. I can welcome,  
Cheer'd and sustain'd by her, all earthly ills.  
Now for more testing of these worldly friendships,  
Which have foundation on the grasp of hands,  
The eating of a score or two of dinners,  
Smiles all constrain'd, speech insincere and  
foolish—

Yes, let me test them ; 'tis as well to know  
Whom I may love as friend or shun as foe.

[*Exit.*

## SCENE II.—A Street.

*Enter CLEMENT.*

*Clement.* I wonder how the good Placidio fares ;  
Hardly, I fear, with Ambrose. Oh, 'tis sad  
That noble natures so depress'd should be ;  
Should hold so low a place in Fortune's favour  
As to be scorn'd by meanest of her thralls.  
Enough it were to sever the allegiance  
Which Heaven on us imposes, and to make  
Our spirits wildly free in their despair ;  
But for the knowledge that our thoughts and  
actions,  
Evil or good, become attendant angels :  
Stern fates, unswerving ministers of justice,  
Leading us imperceptibly but surely  
\*To glorious vindication or to torture.

---

\* "To glorious vindication," &c.

This and the four preceding lines form an amplification  
of the noble truth contained in the following lines—

"Our acts our angels are, or good or ill  
The fatal shadows that walk by us still."

"*The Honest Man's Fortune*" of Beaumont and Fletcher.

Joy is there for Placidio in this truth ;  
For he's a man whose calm integrity  
Is flower and crown and angel of all virtues ;  
This thought contents me. Now one glance at  
thee—

O most sweet pride ! bewitching arrogance !

*[Takes picture from his pocket.*

Thus will I serve thee (*kisses it*), aye, thy breath-  
ing self,

Not merely this dull shadow of thy features.  
Win thee I will ; in spite of thy rejection  
Of my pure fervent love. I'll ne'er resign thee  
To spendthrift, vicious, dull Maldenzio.  
A hero thou dost picture him ; thy fancy  
Has wrapp'd him in most gorgeous golden threads ;  
But he's poor stuff in spite of all. The devil  
Appears !—perchance to vindicate himself ;  
His majesty looks haggard ; dress and aspect  
Give token of wild revelry, prolong'd  
Till dawn did streak the sky with trembling gold.

*Enter MALDENZIO.*

*Maldenzio.* Well, Master Goldsmith !

*Clement.*                    Is't well?    Art sure?  
Look, look around you! Buy a mirror! Listen  
To wasplike words that buzzing fill the air.

*Maldenzio.* What mean you?

*Clement.*                    I did give you metal; make  
Coin to suit your fancy and your purse.

*Maldenzio.* This sounds like insolence.

*Clement.*                    Your ear is good.

*Maldenzio.* And merits chastisement.

*Clement.*                    Ah, if we all  
Received what we did merit, much I marvel  
How one of us has 'scap'd the gleaming axe.

*Maldenzio.* All plagues thy portion be!—I  
see thou'rt bitter.

The cause I guess. Placidio's beauteous niece  
Upon me streams the sunshine of her smiles,  
Bestows on thee chill frowns, d'ye mark?

*Clement.*                    Proceed.

*Maldenzio.* Thou hadst a pride inordinate to  
think

That she, descendant of a noble house,  
Aye, in its day most princely and most strong,  
Second to none e'en now in all Albenga,

Would from her lofty height of birth descend  
To mate with thee.

*Clement.*                    You have not finish'd yet.

*Maldenzio.* 'Tis good, you understand me—  
still be sour ;

Be liberal with your groans—they'll form my  
music ;

Still vent your spleen upon the empty air,  
Avert thine eyes in future from Isola ;  
She likes thee not—thou'rt odious to her. I,  
Besides, may this demand of thee, for mark,  
She's mine ! She loves me with entire devotion.  
I pierce you there ; this information will,  
I doubt not, sicken your aspiring boldness,  
And purge you of conceit. In future you'll  
Be meek and humble as befits your state.

*Clement.* You'll die an advocate, Maldenzio,  
yet.

I wear no prophet's mantle, yet will swear  
One day you'll need your utmost pleading  
powers.

Practise your art meanwhile—thus, " Noble  
signors,



I am a poor, but honest gentleman,  
Whose life has always blameless been and  
useful"—

Then roughly dash a dozen tears away.

*Maldenzio.* This is outrageous folly ! I'll be  
gone.

*Clement.* Stay, stay ; or bend your shoulders  
as if Fortune

Had weighted you beyond your straining  
strength,

And feebly smile, and speak in falt'ring accents,  
Or thrill the court with fiery eloquence ;

Deny the awful charge with solemn gestures,

That seem to fan the air like eagle's pinions—

Anger's keen lightnings streaming from your——

*Maldenzio.* Oh, I am mock'd ! [*Offers to go.*

*Clement.* Maldenzio, if you'll go

Let these words linger in your ear ; dost know

What galls one in thy news about Placidio's

Most tender lovely niece ?

*Maldenzio.*

I know it well.

*Clement.* That she has scorn'd my offers of  
affection ?

*Maldenzio.* What else? what else? thy dis-  
appointment makes

For me a sweeter comfort than her love.

*Clement.* No, virtuous, brave Maldenzio, thou'rt  
wrong.

I will reveal the source of my regret :

'Tis that so fair a lady should be dazzled

By such a glitt'ring worthless toy as thou.

*Maldenzio.* My malediction on thee! All  
diseases

Come thronging to thy body on the instant!

*Clement.* Oh, you are good at cursing.

*Maldenzio.*

I will thrust

This dagger in your knavish mouth; I'll  
tear

Your insolent red rag forth, and consign it  
To scorching fire!

*Clement:* 'Tis tragedy! You will  
An advocate and player be. O Nature!  
I did not dream that thou hadst hidden fire  
In watery clay like this.

*Maldenzio.*

Dog, cease your insults!

[*Offers to stab CLEMENT.*]

*Clement.* Return that plaything to its sheath.

Observe

I wear a dagger ; it has been used ; a goldsmith  
May be a man of honour and of courage.

I claim both titles. Do not doubt my claim ;  
I've made it good by fighting for my townsmen,

And can confirm it here. Put up your dagger,  
Or, by the heaven above, I'll trample on you ;  
Aye, in the public way, and leave a token

[*MALDENZIO sheathes the dagger.*

Traced by my dagger's point, in crimson letters,  
Of my goodwill upon your scowling face.

Me tempt not to this act retributive ;

Let once the floodgate of my anger open

I know not when 'twill close. Beware ! beware !

Vaunt not your conquest of that lady's heart,

Gain'd, if 'tis gain'd, by dark insidious means ;

Let not your wine-parched lips, whence execrations

Steam forth upon the putrid air thou breathest,

Utter her name—one word respecting her—

If thou dost value life.

*Maldenzio.*

Then I am threaten'd !

*Clement.* Silence ! Where is your reason to be  
wrathful ?

'Tis noble souls alone feel righteous anger !  
And you are base and earthy. Pah ! I shall  
Swoon if I longer breathe this air ; a thing  
You are to be despis'd, avoided, laugh'd at,  
scorn'd,

Hated by all who know your history.

*Maldenzio.* And must I tamely all endure ?—  
threats, taunts ?—

A horrible revenge shall follow this.

*Clement.* Now ponder well my words : make  
no more boasts

That you've been favour'd by Placidio's niece.  
Exult, if you have reason, silently ;  
My friends are numerous—be you sparing then  
Of haughty vauntings and of murd'rous threats.

[*Exit.*

*Maldenzio.* O hate ! I'll choke ! What shall I  
do ? Perdition !

I'll after him and stab in the back ;  
His carcass hew into a thousand pieces

And toss them to the birds. There's danger in't ;  
Let me be calm and cool. I'll make revenge  
My work, food, drink, and sleep ; I will employ  
The surest, keenest dagger in Albenga.

I stung the vile mechanic sorely with  
The mention of Isola. He's persuaded  
That I have gain'd her love. Well, let him think it,  
'Twill add an anguish to his death. In truth  
She's given me small encouragement, tho' I  
Have had my best adornment on, when access  
To her proud presence has been gain'd. Her  
guardians,

Simple Placidio and his wife, their guest  
In happier times did make me ; many a song  
Of love impassion'd sang I to Isola.

Sometimes her eyes would glisten, fill with tears ;  
The music was so sweet, she said. How gracious !  
How lovely seem'd she then ! One day I  
ventur'd

To speak of my affection for her ; dark  
Her face did grow and threat'ning ; higher grew  
Her stature ; hard and chilling were the accents  
In which she bade me cease my childish ravings.

Lately I have not seen her, but 'twould be  
The crown of my revenge if I could win her.  
She has a fortune—small—but very rich  
'Twould make me till old Ambrose poisons,  
hangs,  
Or drowns himself, and—wonder! here he comes.  
[Retires behind.]

*Enter AMBROSE.*

*Ambrose.* Ambrose exult, all things go well  
with thee ;  
More gold to add to thy rich store—prospect  
Of lands which at low estimate will yield  
A large and certain fortune—add to these,  
The glutting of the hate thou bear'st Placidio.  
Why, man, thou'rt Fortune's kinsman! Yes,  
to-morrow  
I'll leave him not a ragged cloak for cov'ring ;  
A mouse shall starve for any crumbs that I  
Will leave within the house ; the idle rogues,  
His servants all, shall starve, or beg, or steal ;  
Placidio, Brenda with them. Not a finger,  
Though Ruin's gulf beneath them yawn, will I  
Stretch forth to their deliv'rance—precious gold !

I must not thee display. Oh, pleasure rare  
I'll have to-night in th' counting! Saints  
preserve me!

*Maldenzio (coming forward).* Father, I startle  
you.

*Ambrose.* I flutter yet;  
Knows he the costly load I bear?

*Maldenzio.* Art well?

*Ambrose.* Aye, sturdy; full of health; wince,  
wince, shed tears;

Bemoan thy fortune; curse thy star malignant;  
Conjure up visions of all plagues! Thy fancy  
Wildly thou mayst indulge, for aught I care.

Yes, I have ta'en another lease of life,  
Since from thy presence I've been freed; thy  
tumults,

Thy drinking songs, thy gluttony and waste,  
Were poison to me.

*Maldenzio.* If it had stranger been,  
I now were master of his oaken chest.

(*Aside*) Most bravely deck'd, a blaze of  
jewels; purse.

Cramm'd e'en to bursting with all sorts of coins—

Crowns, ducats, bagatines. Oh, wretched life !  
That intercepts my view of so much splendour.  
What ! Shall I kill ? Oh, torture !

*Ambrose.* 'Tis thy anguish  
To know that I am healthful ; quit my path,  
For I have instant bus'ness, dost thou hear ?  
Obstruct me not.

*Maldenzio.* O worthy father, hear me !

*Ambrose.* Mischief is in't.

*Maldenzio.* I am sorely straitened ;  
My money spent, my credit gone ; starvation  
Will gnaw my heartstrings speedily, if help  
Come not from thee.

*Ambrose.* Away, away, then, thief !  
Die, rot, no help I'll give thee ; I have sworn it.  
This oath I'll keep. Hence, loathsome prodigal !  
Off to thy gambling and thy drinking. Beg  
A paltry ducat from thy vile companions ;  
Swill, steep thy muddy brains, then reel away  
To rags, to crusts, to straw, to dirt. I hate thee !  
For thou hast brought dishonour on me. Quit  
My sight, abhorred villain, ere I strike thee.  
Aside, aside ! [Exit.]



*Maldenzio.* 'Tis madness, or a dream  
Of hell and all its tortures ! Why, why, can  
This be Maldenzio ? Clement, then, my father,  
Spurn'd, threaten'd, treated like a foolish child—  
My dagger ! No, no, no ! The witnesses  
Are many. Oh, I dream, I dream, I dream !

[*Exit.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Room in PLACIDIO's House.**Enter PLACIDIO.*

*Placidio.* Ambrose will soon be here, and I  
must nerve  
Myself to bear unflinchingly his threats.  
I care not for chill poverty, but bitter,  
Most stinging, would the thought be that my  
honour  
Was stain'd by thriftless wasteful acts. He'll  
say  
I've been regardless of my creditors;  
Have spent, ignoring lawful claims upon me,  
Money in helping poor and aged persons  
Whom he persists in calling idle beggars.  
Unjustly he will charge me, for the Power,  
That views serenely all the storms of life  
From seat secure and high, will me acquit  
Of any act dishonest. Noble Clement  
Hither did hasten yesterday to learn

What was to be my fate at Ambrose' hands ;  
He comes again to cheer me. Strange  
That those on whom we've rais'd our highest  
hopes

Of sympathy and help, in days of sorrow  
Should like weak things of air collapse and  
bring us

To depths of poignant anguish. I have tried  
The remnant of my friends without success ;  
Either from lack of will or power they all  
Leave me to struggle with unpitying foes.  
Poor Brenda ! poor Isola ! Well, I must  
Not seem unduly anxious, but must carry  
Through all this weary day a cheerful presence,  
Why not a hopeful heart ? Oh, 'tis the devil !  
(Made by a superflux of food and drink,  
Pictures, luxurious wrappings, and soft couches,  
Sleek, pamper'd horses and gay chariots)  
That binds us down to earth with fleshly  
bands.

Oh, this it is that makes the unseen heaven  
To us insipid as th' invisible air.  
This devil that renews itself each day,

Growing with growth, and strength'ning with  
our strength,

Is that for whose destruction imminent,

I almost seem to sorrow, not to pray.

What can we lose? Not life—for poorest fuel

Sufficient is for that small subtle fire ;

Nor queenly honour, for in humblest heart,

As in a palace, she herself enthrones.

If it be void of evil, nor respect,

From those who walk the earth as hidden  
angels,

Let down on viewless wings from happy heaven :

For they have spiritual eyes that pierce all  
garments.

Let me no more be downcast, Providence—

Whate'er Thou orderest, let me own Thy wisdom,

Nor seek to question Thy supreme decree.

[*Exit.*

*Enter ISOLA.*

*Isola.* I know not what to think. My uncle

puts

A brave face on, and talks of Heaven's will ;

Says honest bread, however coarse, will nourish ;  
Declares that gold is dross. All this should  
mean

Sure ruin, abject beggary. Oh, I  
Do wish this day were over ! Ambrose comes  
This hour to claim his own ; how will it end ?  
Has he the power he vaunts, to seize this house,  
Casting us forth into the cheerless street  
Without a coin or garment ? O sweet saints,  
Expose us not to this calamity,  
So sudden, so severe. The goldsmith comes,  
He has been lib'ral to my uncle. Well,  
'Twill be investment safe, he thinks ; my eyes  
Are keen enough to pierce the gilded goodness.  
But I'll say little. Does he love me ? Yes !  
One whisper'd word from me (but I'll not give  
it !)

Would—— His o'erweening confidence repels  
me.

He's not so handsome as Maldenzio,  
Yet looks he noble. There's a kindly smile  
Ever within his eyes—brown eyes. His voice  
Is melody, but then his words are sweeter.

I do forget myself ; he's but an upstart—  
Nothing but gold to brag of. All my jewels  
Last eve I gave Placidio ; nothing's left  
Of all my beauteous treasures and my fortune  
But this small ivory cross. I'll dress myself ;  
Clement—O thoughtless girl !—will enter soon.  
What dress ? The purple one he most admires ;  
But I'll not wear what pleases him. The saints  
Above be guardians of our lives and fortunes !  
[*Exit.*

*Enter PLACIDIO and CLEMENT.*

*Placidio.* No, no, brave, noble heart, I'll hear  
no more.

'Twould be an act most infamous to drag thee  
Beneath the toppling fabric of my fortunes.  
It is intensity of grief that in  
Impending ruin two fair delicate creatures  
Should be with me involv'd. Oh, there's my  
sorrow !

Deeper that sorrow than if to a friend,  
Constant and full of sympathy as thou,  
Like trouble I should bring.

*Clement.*

O sir, my wealth

Chiefly consists in power to help the good.

We'll have no writing. Listen ! I am willing

To put my future in your hands. 'Twill not

Be given, but lent. Retrieve your land ; dismiss

The miser to his cobwebb'd den ; appoint

Trustworthy men to manage your affairs.

Accept this bill for ninety thousand ducats,

And make me humbly happy. Pray you take  
it.

No bond shall be between us.

*Placidio.*

O my friend,

It is an act unwise ; indeed, words fail me ;

But I—— Thy hand again. [*Takes his hand.**Clement.*

Most worthy Signor,

I do rejoice that I can serve you now.

Let Ambrose come ! You are prepared, thank  
Heaven !*Placidio.* Why, you have scarce a ducat more  
than this.*Clement.* A thousand honest ways there are of  
living ;

The air and sunshine are a common portion ;

Food, wine, costs little. Good Placidio, you  
Will see that I am treading in your footsteps.

*Placidio.* Thou wilt descend to wretchedness  
and want,

Despoil thyself of life's gay ornaments—  
Which not philosophy, nor pride heroic,  
Nor Christian calmness without pain surrenders—  
For me, for mine. Oh, never!

*Clement.*

A refusal

Will grieve me sorely. 'Tis no loss. I know  
Your honourable virtues; all your past  
Stands like an open book, in whose clear pages  
Nobility of mind and soul is written.  
When you have freed yourself of debt to others,  
Why, then I know you'll think of me. Indeed  
I am indebted to you largely for  
Success in my vocation. But for you  
My wealth were not so great. Your patronage,  
Praises, wise counsels, friendly greetings, have  
Dull lethargy expell'd, bright hopes awaken'd,  
High resolutions in my mind fix'd firmly.  
Suffer me, then, of these great obligations  
To now discharge a few.



*Placidio.* I did not know thee  
In my most palmy days, unselfish spirit !  
I can but offer thee a worthless friendship,  
Which by-and-by the meanest will despise.  
Too late thy virtues like rare flowers expanded,  
Too late for me to meet them with like virtues.

*Clement.* You praise above desert. O sir,  
accept  
This tribute to your virtues. 'Tis but little,  
But yet it is offer'd with a willing heart.  
Once more resume your wonted dignity ;  
Once more disperse your sunny smiles abroad,  
And gladden honest hearts that droop and pine  
In the chill atmosphere of your misfortunes.  
Do not reject this offer—think again.

*Placidio.* I have well thought. It cannot,  
must not be.  
'Tis late in life to brand myself as thief,  
Which I should be to use your wealth, believing,  
As I believe, that all I have will only  
Suffice to meet the claims of creditors.  
The margin must be small—thank Heaven for  
that !

Why have I found such friends? Small my  
deserts.

Isola yesterday her jewels gave ;  
Three days ago she forc'd me to accept  
Her little fortune. 'T 'as, alas ! all gone  
To swell the chests of Ambrose. Not a word,  
Clement, my friend. I will not rob thee quite.  
Pray Heav'n that from the ruin of my house  
I may emerge, though stripp'd of Fashion's  
gauds,  
With honour clear as crystal.

*Clement.*

That's assur'd.

Ambrose across the square is shuffling.

*Placidio.*

Wait,

And see what's destin'd for us.

*Clement.*

O sir, pardon

What seems presumptuous in my speech ; but in  
Your dealings with that man of stony heart  
Remember that a humble friend is near.

*Placidio.* Can I forget that thou art gen'rous  
to me,

Too free, aye, most unjust towards thyself?  
Here is my hand again ; my heart already

Has open'd to receive a noble tenant.  
I can but thank thee, and I must entreat  
That thou wilt cease to think of thy undoing.  
Our troubles pierce thee keenly. Oh, keep heart !  
Life's road most hilly seems at distance. Pain  
Weeps herself feebly into Pleasure's arms.  
The heavens are over all. Illusions are  
Our griefs as well as joys, if we will wait  
And view them calmly with keen Wisdom's eye.  
I will return to thee. Observe these pictures.  
And now for Ambrose. [*Exit.*

*Clement.*

O thou princely heart !

Thou hast the Roman dignity and courage ;  
The hostile earth assaults thy soul in vain.  
Thou seest unmov'd the eager race for wealth,  
Thy spiritual eyes transfixed by forms celestial,  
Fall not to sordid earth. (*Chanting heard.*) The  
saints forgive me !

Forgetful I, 'tis holy Thomas' day (*Goes to the  
window*),

Below the monks with chilly feet pass on,  
Attended by angelic choristers,  
A solemn strain pervades the frozen air,

The holy sign precedes. (*Comes forward.*) Life's  
a procession

Which wise men have the privilege to leave ;  
They have a seat by Contemplation's side ;  
Thence view the onward march triumphal, and  
The dang'rous rush, the panic, and the halt.  
Oh, what a scene of Oriental splendour !  
Oh, what a masquerade of crime and folly !  
To what can be compar'd this mighty army ?  
A mirror, and a rainbow, and an ocean,  
Wide-strewn with spars of many a gallant ship,  
Are separate things that it by turns resembles ;  
Reflecting foul deformity and beauty,  
Blending with skill the hues of joy and sadness,  
Flux and reflux—a ceaseless undulation—  
Tossing up fragments of dead hopes and fears.  
Kissing the air with dreamy pride, float on  
Ten thousand gorgeous banners, richly hu'd,  
Crimson and azure blue, and paly gold,  
Snow-white and purple, leafy green, emblazon'd  
With records of historic chivalry,  
And words that gild themselves on Memory's walls.  
Hark to the silver trumpets ! List the strains

Swimming upon the heavy od'rous air,  
Like drowsy bees that glide from flowers delicious.  
See Laughter hand-in-hand with Woe ! See Fear  
Treading upon the heels of martial Valour !  
Beggars most foul in aspect bend beneath  
The weight of that huge golden throne, inlaid  
With precious gems, with silks o'ercanopied,  
In which the proudly-smiling Monarch sits.  
O life, thou art a problem which the wisest,  
The best, the oldest, have no skill to solve !

*Re-enter ISOLA.*

*Isola.* I left my pictures here. I greet you, sir.

*Clement.* And I return the greeting, lady ; you  
Are well in health ?

*Isola.* I thank the saints and you,  
Signor, I am ; the mind alone is sick ;  
Anxious about the troubles of my kinsfolk,  
Which are indeed my troubles ; for I fall  
To poverty with them, or rise to plenty,  
As suits the humour of old Ambrose ; he  
Surely will not be stringent with my uncle ;  
He must, he will relent.

*Clement.*

I fear not, lady.

(*Aside*) How well that purple dress becomes  
her! He

The reputation long has borne of being  
A man insensible to pity. Gold  
Is all he cares for. Not the Power Supreme,  
Nor guardian angels, nor the pitying saints  
Weigh in his estimation as a feather  
Against a dozen ducats; he's been tested,  
Sued to, reproached, implored, by thousands, who  
Have gone to death with maledictions on him.

*Isola.* I've heard strange rumours of his greed  
and crimes.

I know of late his sternness to my uncle,  
But yet I thought the sight of our distress,  
The lustre of our name, my aunt's sweet temper,  
The unrepining calmness of Placidio,  
Might move him to withhold the rigid hand  
Of iron justice, and to act with mercy.  
Oh, if he will be stern, what hope for us?  
Where shall we shelter seek?—on what exist?  
How linger out a squalid starving life  
In grimy haunts of woe and pestilence?

*Clement.* Nay, not of friends;  
My love, my sympathy, my life, my wealth,  
Are all at the disposal of your kinsfolk;  
Believe me, gentle lady.

*Clement.* Dearest lady,  
I count it as a privilege that I  
Have been permitted by your noble uncle  
To sympathise, however feebly, with him ;

No thanks I merit. O Isola, pardon  
The tender boldness that my love gives birth to  
In letting fall the garments of cold courtesy ;  
Will you for ever be indifferent to me ?  
Will you not gild that marble haughtiness  
With sunny smiles of love ?

*Isola.*

Avoid the subject !

It well becomes you now to speak of love,  
But it is due to selfish calculation,  
This seeming sudden rapture, Master Goldsmith.  
Your thoughts are raised too high ; what would  
you have ?

I marvel much that you have not ere this  
Allied yourself with the imperial house ;  
Ambition is not wanting, and——

*Clement.*

You affect

To treat me as a menial. Nay, reply not ;  
You wrong yourself and me by such behaviour ;  
For saving your transcendent loveliness,  
The sterling goodness of your disposition,  
Which—I must give this medicine—you conceal  
Beneath proud looks or patronising smiles,  
You have no room for any exultation.



Your edifice of scornful pride is rais'd  
Upon a mould'ring heap of dead men's bones ;  
Your station is an unsubstantial thing,  
Dragged from the mists of a bewild'ring past,  
To awe the common folk. My honour springs—  
Thank Heaven !—from worthy deeds and aspira-  
tions.

Its music is the throbbing of my heart.

*Isola.* Your language is extreme, sir ! Your  
resentment

Bas'd on the consciousness of mean descent—  
Of that behaviour which is native to me,  
Prompts this disparagement of noble birth—  
We spoke the other day upon this theme.

*Clement.* I offer'd you an honest man's  
affection.

*Isola.* I did refuse the precious gift, you know.

*Clement.* In words which left me hope. Oh,  
strengthen it !

Arm'd with thy love, the giddy heights thou  
lovest,

Shall be attain'd by me—wealth, dignity,  
The willing homage of a hundred servants,

Shall all be thine. My energies are equal  
To all I promise, if thou'lt smile upon me.

*Isola.* I'll hear no more ! It is not love, but  
insult,

Elab'rate insult, which you offer ; well,  
'Tis safe, quite safe, sir, to reproach and threaten  
A feeble woman.

*Clement.* Threaten ! Nay, Isola,  
'Tis fervent love that makes me passionate.  
Love maddens me at times and clouds my  
reason.

I have been harsh—too harsh with thee ; forget  
My bitter words.

*Isola.* I cannot, sir.

*Clement.* Forgive them !  
Know thou the thorniest one but seem'd to  
fence  
The blushing fragrance of my love ; forgiveness  
I ask if they have stung thee.

*Isola.* 'Tis no matter.

*Re-enter PLACIDIO.*

*Placidio.* A crisis in our history approaches.

(*To Isola.*) Fair niece, attend your aunt ;  
convey to her

My love, and say that I'll be with her soon.

She will anticipate the news I bring ;

[*Exit ISOLA.*

'Tis written in my features, is't not, Clement ?

*Clement.* I know that Ambrose is a churl ; his  
heart

A bag of paltry coins.

*Placidio.* He would not listen

To any compromise ; to any plans,

By which afresh my fortune I might build.

The law's machinery he will set in motion,

Todrag my wife and niece—poor tender darlings!—

From health and comfort to disease and misery.

I pray'd that he would gently use his power,

'Twas all in vain.

*Clement.* Alas, the sordid villain !

*Placidio.* Entreaties were of no avail. He  
laugh'd—

*Clement.* Laugh'd !

*Placidio.* Laugh'd—Heaven help me !—in my  
face and jeer'd ;

Cried that my downfall pleas'd him hugely ;  
boasted

That he could call me slave and debtor ; swore  
That overwhelming ruin was my portion ;  
Paced up and down the room with maniac  
gestures,

Threat'ning and cursing ; then departed, saying  
That he would seek the law's full aid at once.  
He must be mad.

*Clement.*                      Aye, mad with wickedness.

O Signor, why did you refuse my aid ?

*Placidio.* For this good reason: I am ignorant,  
As I at present stand, of my affairs ;  
They are, I fear, entangled hopelessly.  
I plac'd myself entirely in the hands .  
Of my late steward, who betray'd his trust  
And fled the city ; therefore all's uncertain.  
With care, I know my debts will be discharg'd,  
But have scant hope of any surplus wealth.  
Friends with their millions have been cold  
towards me,

Shall I be then so reckless as to take  
From thee thy all, merely to patch my fortune ?

No ; let me rather perish, gen'rous friend.  
What Heaven permits, let Ambrose do. I shall  
Bear calmly all. I wait the darkest hour,  
Then I shall be endued with giant strength ;  
My veins shall surge with vig'rous blood ; my face  
Shall front a thousand foes and shame them all.

*Clement.* This Heaven-sent courage I rejoice at,  
Signor,

Now I will take my leave.

*Placidio.* Why, wherefore haste you ?

*Clement.* I have some business calls me hence ;  
'tis pressing.

With your permission, I will come this evening,  
And scrutinise the memoranda which  
You keep of your affairs ; some glimpses of  
Your real condition may present themselves.

*Placidio.* 'Tis what I wish sincerely. Thanks,  
fail not.

*Clement.* I will not fail, sir. [Exeunt.

## SCENE II.

*Street near AMBROSE'S House.**Enter AMBROSE.*

*Ambrose.* Respite I gave him, yet he mur-  
mur'd, said,

*You have the law, not justice, on your side ;*

*Nor mercy. Fool ! A beggar argues thus.*

'Twas like a beggar to bemoan his fate,

Almsgiving to defend with heat, to carp

At others' prudence. Well, 'tis over now.

I'd give a ducat—no, a bagatine—

To see the faces of his ragged friends,

When like a thunderbolt the news drops down,

That no more soup will be expressly made

To scald their frozen palates ; no more bread

Be thrust into their yawning, hideous mouths,

Nor cloaks adorn their scarecrow carcasses.

Mirthful would be the sight and sound ! Oh, oh !

Dismal the turning up of hungry eyes.

What lamentations loud ! What groans and  
curses !

What blinding tears! In faith 'twould make me  
    laugh ;  
But laughing seems to pierce me keenly, like  
A dagger's thrust. Oh, oh !

*Enter CLEMENT.*

*Clement.* Signor, a word with you.

*Ambrose.* A word? Yes, yes, proceed.

*Clement.* Vouchsafe to me

A minute's converse.

*Ambrose.* Stop! A word, you said.

You rather should have said a flood of words ;  
A frothy torrent. Time is precious ; quickly  
Unfold the meaning of this interruption.  
What is the purport of your minute's converse?  
Be brief.

*Clement.* In simple words I do entreat  
That you will not deal harshly with Placidio ;  
But act as man should act with brother man.  
Not cov'ring Pity's dewy eyes with mask  
Torn from the face of Justice ; not exacting  
Placidio's last and smallest coin ; nor mov'd  
To the assertion of your lawful rights

By hate accursed ; but through gentle acts,  
In this most troublous time, some token giving,  
That in the great hereafter you believe.

*Ambrose.* Placidio sends you on this errand ?

*Clement.* No ;

He dreams not of it. One thing more, and I  
Await your final will. My ardent wish  
Is to befriend in this great trial the man  
Whom I am debtor to for spiritual things,  
But who is now for gold your suffering debtor.  
Pray you, good Signor, shift the burden. Cancel  
The bond you hold, and take my fortune, which  
Slightly exceeds the balance of the sum  
You did expect to-day. As for the parchment—  
Destroy it here at once ; I want it not.  
My aim is to avert entire disaster  
From an exalted house. Let me implore,  
Signor, your kind concurrence in this plan.

*Ambrose.* If thou wilt crawl, lick dust, a  
deluge weep,

Wring hands in agony of prayer, I'll not  
Afford thee such delight as thou demandest ;  
No, not for twenty fortunes !



*Clement.*

You refuse ?

*Ambrose.* Wilt hear me swear ?*Clement.*

Offend not Heaven with oaths

That are the impious seals of a decision

Most villainous and cruel. Have you heart

To work this monstrous wrong ?

*Ambrose.*

Away, away,

Thou rude officious knave!—thou prating meddler!

By all the saints I will remember this !

Look to thy safety well, thou busy fool !

Shall I assign my motives in this matter ?

Shall I lay bare my secret springs of action,

That thou mayest peer and pry ? To thee  
yield up

What I have gain'd with toil ? Never ! Begone !

Cross not my path again if thou wouldst not

Stir up revengeful hatred in my heart.

Think'st thou thy face of dull simplicity,

Thy protestations loud, thy tragic mien,

Have blinded or can blind my keen perception,

That thou dost wish to reap my golden harvest ?

So thou wouldst help Placidio ! Aye, to ruin.

*Clement.* By Heavens, you judge me wrongly

*Ambrose.*

Go! We work

In diff'rent circles, but our centre is  
Self—whether gilded with the name of love  
Or left expos'd as hate. Go, preach no more!

*Clement.* And is there no appeal?*Ambrose.*

You've heard my answer.

Talk to the winds; impede me not. O ruffian!

*Clement.* You shall not pass till I have spoken.*Ambrose.*

Villain!

*Clement.* Let us be friends; consider well  
my offer;

Do not be ruthless with this family.

Come, sir, let gentler feelings sway your breast;  
Make me your lifelong debtor.

*Ambrose.*

Oh, for power

To strike you dead, abhorr'd mechanic! You  
Shall be engulf'd by hate. This outrage shall  
Ne'er be erased from memory. Here's my  
answer

To all requests—no! no! I'll plague Placidio  
Tenfold for this.

*Clement.* High Heaven will not permit you.

It shall set shores to your great tide of hate,

Closely confine it, make it foul and stagnant,  
Raise from it pestilential vapours that  
Shall putrefy your soul ! There's woe before  
you !

Remorse with clanking chain shall make hell's  
music

In ghostly dreams ; for not this crime alone  
Asks justice from the skies, but many more.  
I tremble for you. To your prayers ! Repent  
Ere Death creep on and hurl you into misery.  
Now go and ponder all I've said.

*Ambrose.*

I hate you !

Look for the reckoning.

[*Exit.*

*Clement.*

Greed and malice sway

This mean old man ; he's bent on deadly mischief.

He rivals burning hell and all its fiends

In hate vindictive. Base in early youth ;

In manhood stain'd with great offences 'gainst

His Maker and his fellows—here's the end :

Old age most sordid and most despicable.

Into the dungeon darkness which invests

Death's awful gate, he brings, alas ! no lamp

Of hope, of memories pure, of lofty thought.

Who is to check him in his headlong course?  
Who has the power to pierce that heart of flint?  
Whose trumpet-voice shall rouse that guilty soul,  
And bid it rush to judgment?

*(Voice heard—Help, help, help!)*

It is the voice of Ambrose! Wherefore calls he?  
Why, what is this? A figure cloak'd and  
mask'd,

Holding a bloody dagger! O great Heavens!  
It cannot be; I dream! and yet these thoughts  
That fly like poison'd arrows through my mind,  
What is their mark? Placidio? Saints forbid  
Their fatal flight! Disperse these vile suspicions.  
Yet who is this that bears his semblance? 'Tis  
A cunning trick of hell! I will unmask it  
Though Gorgon terrors strike me dumb. Stay!  
stay!

*[Exit.*

*(Clement's voice)* Unmask! unmask! Wouldst  
murder me? Oh, oh!

*Enter MALDENZIO, disguised.*

This is the safer road. Detested goldsmith,  
Lie there and rot with Ambrose!

*Re-enter* CLEMENT, *wounded.*

*Clement.* Have I strength  
To make the effort

*[Tears the mask from MALDENZIO.]*

**Ah ! the saints be prais'd !**

**It is Maldenzio !    Curst assassin, hold !**

**I will pursue thee.**

*Maldenzio.*          Payment of my debt !

[Stabs CLEMENT.

Now for the interest! [*Stabs him again. Exit.*]

*Clement.* O unnatural villain !

[*Exit slowly.*]

SCENE III.

*Chamber in PLACIDIO's House.*

*Enter* ISOLA.

*Isola.* I have not look'd in mirror, yet I know  
My eyes are red with tears ; still all's not sadness.  
Forgive, sweet saints, the pleasant gratulations,  
Which my poor kinsfolk cannot share ; this woe,  
So stern to them has gladdening smiles for me.

How's this? Dear Clement! May I whisper of  
Your declaration to me? Yes, and I——  
But it shall yet a secret be. O love!  
Nestle, thou tiny trembling bird, within  
My heart's most secret chamber, and enchant  
me  
With tender, hopeful music.

*Enter BRENDA.*

*Brenda.* Why, Isola,  
You have been weeping.

*Isola.* Yes, dear aunt, but now  
You've brought the sunbeams with you, and I  
smile.

*Brenda.* Dearest, I need some warmth and  
light myself,  
If only 'twere to keep in countenance  
Your good and tender-hearted uncle; he  
Loses much more than you or I, and yet  
Behold his trust in Providence!

*Isola.* 'Tis great.

*Brenda.* Clement has not return'd?

*Isola.* I have not seen him.

*Brenda.* Oh, what a generous nature ! Save  
Placidio,

There is no man in all Albenga like him,  
So kind, so self-forgetful !

*Isola.* Men are rare.

*Brenda.* Ah, well, you may ere long regret  
the sneers

You've been so lib'ral with.

*Isola.* Now you are angry,  
Forgive and kiss me, aunt.

*Brenda.* I am not angry ;  
But I confess that often with disgust,  
Always with sorrow, I have watch'd some maidens  
Who, beauteous as they were to outward view,  
Were in this ugly, wicked, that they seem'd  
To laugh at love ; to spurn with scoffs the hearts  
Of men in heav'nly attributes above them.

*Isola.* Dear aunt, I am perverse, I know, but  
kiss me ;  
Perhaps I soon shall be transform'd.

*Brenda.* I cannot  
Resist your pleading eyes and these sweet lips.

[*Kisses ISOLA.*

*Enter* CLAUDE.

Well, Claude!

*Claude.* Some officers of justice wait,  
Desiring speech with you or my good master.

*Brenda.* What is their errand? Stay with me,  
Isola.

*Claude.* Shall I admit them, madam?

*Brenda.* Yes, at once.  
What can they want! [*Exit* CLAUDE.

*Enter* OFFICERS and ATTENDANTS.

*1st Officer.* We do desire, lady,  
To have a minute's converse with your husband,  
Signor Placidio.

*Brenda.* He is absent, Signor;  
Few moments have elaps'd since of the servants  
Anxious inquiries I did make about him;  
They had not seen him for an hour or two.

*2nd Officer.* Madam, we were assur'd of this  
at first.

*Isola.* Perchance he is at prayers.

*Brenda.* That cannot be,  
For as I pass'd just now along the passage



I paus'd before the chapel door and knock'd  
With no result; I knock'd again, but all  
Was silent as a tomb.

*Isola.*

Here is my uncle!

*Enter PLACIDIO.*

*Placidio (to the officers).* Pray you be seated;  
have you business with me?

*1st Officer.* Yes, Signor, most important.  
Know you this?

[*Shows a picture to PLACIDIO.*

*Placidio.* Aye, as I know myself. Why this  
belongs

To me! My mother—faint presentment of  
Thy face now petrified in endless beauty!

These are thy pure and budlike lips, sweet  
saint!

And these thy loving eyes; they seem to  
smile

Upon me, as in childhood's simple days.

This is a portrait I do greatly value;

Indeed, none else exists of my dear mother.

How came you by it?

*1st Officer.* I arrest you, Signor !  
Guard all the doors !

[ATTENDANTS *post themselves.*

*Brenda.* Ye heav'nly powers, defend us !

*Isola.* O cruel Ambrose !

*Placidio.* Has he then obtain'd  
So soon the law's assistance ?

*2nd Officer.* He is dead.

*Brenda.* Dead !

*Isola.* This is sudden !

*Placidio.* May his crimson soul  
Be sprinkled with the healing dews of mercy !  
Let not this evil which survives his death  
Be plac'd before the Judge's awful eye  
In that great day of trial.

*1st Officer.* Now, sir, we wait.

*Placidio.* Maldenzio follows in his father's foot-  
steps.

He will not let that shrunken form get cold,  
Before this great distress is brought upon  
Those whom he feign'd to love in bygone days.  
It is an act unfilial to pursue  
A father's path of hate to Torture's verge ;

Reckless that in some scene of fiery anguish  
That parent's shade may moan its earthly malice.  
It is unseemly haste.

*1st Officer.*                      Enough, enough, sir !  
Justice, not Ambrose' son, moves in this matter.  
Murder concerns us all.

*Placidio.*                      Murder !

*1st Officer.*                      You force  
The formal proclamation of my errand ;  
Yet you must know it well. I do arrest you  
For the assassination of old Ambrose.

*Placidio.*                      Oh !

*Isola.* Is Ambrose murder'd ?

*Brenda (to the Officers).*      You shall rue this  
outrage !

*1st Officer.* Madam, I pray you calm yourself.

*Placidio.*                      O Heaven !

*Brenda.* It is a vile conspiracy against  
My suffering husband ! He a foul assassin !—  
Whose life so pure and self-forgetful is  
That even worthy men with envy sicken,  
While he scales heights of goodness which with all  
Their pious deeds they never can attain.

Charge him with murder, who has been a haven  
For every shipwreck'd soul within the city !  
Why, sir, although his mind is most heroic,  
Tender his heart is as a little child's ;  
Yet you come hither eager to affix  
The brand of Cain upon that open forehead !  
For shame ! for shame ! Placidio, husband,  
speak !

Assure these men that you are innocent.

*Placidio.* This accusation almost makes me  
dumb.

Can it be true that Ambrose has been murder'd ?  
That I am look'd upon as his assassin ?

*1st Officer.* I charge you with the crime.

*Placidio.* But I am guiltless !

There must be some mistake.

*1st Officer.* The dying man  
Declar'd that you had stabb'd him in the back !  
Near him, upon the ground, we saw this portrait,  
Which you acknowledge as your own.

*Placidio.* Despite  
These things I did not see old Ambrose  
After he left the house.

*Brenda.* Oh, wretched day !

Trouble on ev'ry hand. First loss of wealth,  
Friends, comfort, station ; now this heavier woe.  
Kiss me, my husband ; thou art innocent.  
The holy saints themselves will next be charg'd  
With fiendish deeds. What wonder !—when 'tis  
joy

For myrmidons to blast good reputations ;  
To smirch the whiteness of a virtuous life,  
With fingers dipped in others' crimes ; to pass  
With vacant eye the thief, and shouting seize  
The honest man ! I lately thought that sorrow  
Had spent its bitter strength. Oh, fond delusion !

*1st Officer.* Madam, take leave.

*Brenda.* Nay, I'll bear company.

I will go with thee to thy gloomy dungeon ;  
If they condemn thee I will be condemned.

*Placidio.* Darling, be calm. Suspicion points  
to me

Persistently just now ; but Providence  
Shall soon direct it to its proper object—  
The hateful murd'rer of that poor old man.  
The consciousness of innocence is mine ;

Besides a firm conviction that from this  
Most threat'ning danger years of peace shall  
spring.

Exert your utmost courage ; be prepar'd  
Against the day of trial with evidence  
That shall repel this dreadful charge. Isola,  
Sustain and cheer your aunt. One last embrace.  
Now, sirs, conduct me hence.

*Isola.* We are abandon'd  
By Heav'n to Hell's devices !

*Brenda.* O my husband !  
Great Heavens ! they lead him from me ! He is  
gone ! [*Swoons.*

[*Exeunt* PLACIDIO, OFFICERS, and ATTENDANTS.]

*Curtain falls.*

## ACT III.

SCENE—*The Hall of Justice.**Enter BRENDA and ISOLA.*

*Isola.* Oh, what a stilly, awful place! Dear  
aunt,

Lean on me still more heavily. I'm not  
As fragile as a rose, but you are tender.  
Poor dear, you look as wan and tearful as  
A ghost that's come from th' other world with  
tidings  
Most horrible and strange.

*Brenda.*

My poor Placidio!

Thou liest in thy sombre prison breathing  
Most nauseous exhalations; on the ground  
Thy feeble limbs thou stretchest, vainly hoping  
That dove-like murm'ring sleep will light upon  
thee.

Thou hast scant sustenance and filthy drink;  
Thy hands when they a circuit make find naught  
But creeping noisome things and sickly slime!  
O Heaven!





Upon each scene that passes. Is there not  
In all this town some honest man to speak  
In the behalf of outraged innocence?

*Brenda.* None, none! We have no fee exor-  
bitant

To proffer. Six or seven advocates,  
You know, we have solicited in vain.

*Isola.* This is a selfish avaricious age ;  
Each one attempts to rise above his neighbour,  
Who can display most gold gets most respect ;  
All are infected with this yellow plague.  
The grand heroic virtues of the past,  
Alas ! have taken leave of us. We now  
See tinsel new and vulgar take precedence  
Of that which ancient is, or beautiful.  
Crime from her chariot steps and looks with  
scorn  
On humble virtue shiv'ring and forlorn.

*Enter GUARDS and ATTENDANTS.*

*Brenda.* The trial will soon begin.

*Isola.* Dear aunt, endeavour  
To bear yourself as calmly as you can

Through this dread ordeal for my uncle's sake.  
Do not unman him in the presence of  
These dull unfeeling men.

*Brenda.* The saints assist me !

*Isola.* He now approaches.

*Enter PLACIDIO, guarded.*

*Brenda.* Heavens ! how pale and haggard  
His features are ! His dress all disarrang'd !  
(*They pause*) Let me have speech with him ! O  
my Placidio !

Would I could take thy place and suffer for  
thee !

I should deserve to suffer more than thou,  
For Heaven above is not more free from taint.  
Dost still retain thy cheerful confidence ?  
I see thou dost, the holy saints be prais'd !

*Placidio.* Darling, let faith and hope sustain  
thy heart ;—

Thou look'st not well. Do not give way to grief ;  
Picture the joyous hour of my acquittal.  
Kiss me, Isola. Art thou well and hopeful ?

*Isola.* Yes, dearest uncle.

*Placidio.* Well, what sayest thou, Brenda?

*Brenda.* Thy innocence will save thee; but I  
sorrow

To see thy woeful face and dress; to know  
That thou art vilely treated by rude hands.

[GUARDS *force him away.*

Do not with roughness use him. I will not  
Further obstruct.

*Placidio.* Brenda, dearest wife,  
On high the Advocate and Judge exists!  
Do not forget; be brave.

[*He is led to the front of the tribunal.*

*Enter three* MAGISTRATES.

*Isola.* The magistrates!

[MAGISTRATES *seat themselves.*

*1st Mag.* Silence proclaim through all the  
court! Attendants

Will make exclusion of the curious.

Let the accused stand forth. Where is the son  
Of the dead Ambrose? Surely he does not  
Care aught about his father's doleful fate,  
Nor wish to bring to justice the assassin!

*1st Officer.* I am entrusted by him with a  
message

For your dread worships' ears to the effect  
That anguish has prostrated him, and made  
Such havoc with his feeble frame that scarcely  
A breath he draws with ease. He prays that  
you

Will in his absence nerve the arm of Justice,  
Letting it sternly fall in retribution  
Upon his father's murderer.

*2nd Mag.*

We will.

*3rd Mag.* Poor youth ! This has overwhelm'd  
him.

*1st Mag.*

We perforce

Must make commencement now (*to 1st OFFICER*)

You are prepar'd

With all your evidence ?

*1st Officer.*

Yes, noble Signor.

*Isola.* Where Clement is I marvel more and  
more ;

His advent would be like the letting in  
Of warm bright sunbeams to this dismal court.  
He would be worth a dozen advocates.

Can he be ill? (*Aside*) The holy saints watch  
o'er him!

*Brenda.* Doubtless he has abandon'd us.

*Isola.* Oh, never!

I know you wrong him by the thought.

*Brenda.* Hush! hush!

*1st Mag.* The awful business which has brought  
us here

Requires solemnity of heart and mien;  
Strict concentration of the thinking powers  
For its entire discharge. We therefore must  
Fix firmly in the vision of our minds  
The gloomy point where proofs of guilt converge,  
Then blast the guilty one; or note each fact  
Which tends to clear the accused. If doubts  
arise,

They must be nicely weigh'd with scales impartial.  
In every act we must ourselves acquit  
As honour'd friends, not slaves, of silent Justice.

*Isola.* This is a righteous judge!

*Brenda.* The other two,

Pazzo and Innocenzio, are no friends  
To your poor uncle; they are cruel men.

*1st Mag.* The case is briefly this. The dead  
man Ambrose

Four days ago, while walking near his house,  
Was cruelly stabb'd, and soon expir'd in anguish.  
Dying, he charg'd with this atrocious crime,  
A man of noble birth and stainless life ;  
For years esteem'd by all. What says he now  
To this most dread arraignment ? Speak,  
Placidio.

*Placidio.* The honour'd Signors will forgive  
me if

My speech be not so loud that all may hear.  
My voice just now is weak ; but from my heart  
Boldly shall come this true asseveration,  
That I know nothing of the death of Ambrose,  
Save what I've heard. I am entirely guiltless  
In thought and deed of his assassination.  
I mourn that in the blossom of his sins  
He has been hack'd into eternity  
From earthly stalk by secret ruffian hand.  
I touch'd him not ; I saw him not a moment  
After he left my house upon that day.

*2nd Mag.* Was he not there in anger ?

*Placidio.* Yes, he seemed  
Incens'd against me.

*3rd Mag.* He did hold a bond  
Which gave him lordship over your possessions ?

*Placidio.* Yes.

*1st Mag.* What period of the day did he  
depart ?

*Placidio.* Soon after noonday, noble Signor.

*1st Mag.* He  
Did then possess the bond ?

*Placidio.* Most certainly.

*1st Mag. (to 1st Officer.)* You search'd the  
body and the premises ?

*1st Officer.* We did, most noble sir.

*1st Mag.* Did you perceive  
The bond now mention'd ?

*1st Officer.* Not a trace of it.

*1st Mag.* Relate your story.

*1st Officer.* Noble worthy Signors !  
Four days ago I happen'd to be in  
A street adjoining Ambrose's house. I heard  
Suddenly cries for help ; they seem'd to issue  
From a small street at hand. I rush'd at once

To th' spot, and found a wounded man ; he lay  
Delug'd in blood upon the ground.

3rd Mag. You caught  
No glimpse of any one retreating ?

1st Officer. No.

1st Mag. Did he assign a reason for the  
attack ?

1st Officer. No, noble Signor. He had barely  
strength

Or breath to utter ere he died these words—

“ Placidio is my murderer !”

Placidio. Heaven forgive him !

1st Officer. On looking round I spied a  
miniature

Which I produce. (*Gives Magistrate a portrait.*)

2nd Mag. We knew the original.

3rd Mag. Proof piled on proof !

1st Mag. Continue your narration.

1st Officer. Ere this, attracted by the cries for  
help,

Some of my men appear'd upon the scene ;  
To them the murdered man I did entrust,  
Then with attendants and an officer



I went to Ambrose' silent gloomy house,  
Which in the city's name I promptly seiz'd.

*2nd Mag.* Judicious work.

*3rd Mag.* A deed of resolution.

*1st Officer.* I then proceeded to Placidio's  
mansion,

And on the threshold was inform'd that he  
Had not been seen for hours. I ask'd to see  
His wife, and this request was granted; she  
Said that his whereabouts was all unknown.

*Placidio.* Pardon me, worthy Signors, if I stop  
For one brief moment this narration. 'Twas,  
As you remember, good St. Thomas' Day;  
I in my chapel was at my devotions  
When this foul deed was done, nay, at the  
moment

When all these men trooped into my apartment  
I was engaged in prayer.

*1st Officer.* The lady said  
That but not a moment sooner she had knock'd  
Repeatedly and loudly at the door  
Of this small chapel, but received no answer,  
Nor heard the slightest sound.

*3rd Mag.*

'Tis very strange.

*1st Officer.* Almost at once Placidio enter'd; I  
Show'd him the portrait which he own'd as his,  
Saying he prized it highly; that there was  
Not such another in existence; asked  
How came I with it. Upon which I seized  
him.

*1st Mag.* Know you the time when Ambrose  
met his doom?

*1st Officer.* An hour after noon, most honour'd  
Signor.

*1st Mag.* When seized you th' accused?

*1st Officer.* An hour later.

*1st Mag.* Did you put questions with a view  
to find

Where he had spent the two preceding hours?

*1st Officer.* Yes, noble Signor.

*1st Mag.* How did he reply?

*1st Officer.* As now, he answer made that in  
the chapel

All intervening time had pass'd in prayer.

*1st Mag.* He knew not that his wife had just  
affirmed

That she had knock'd and paus'd outside the door  
Of the small chapel, but had nothing heard ?

*1st Officer.* He did not know.

*2nd Mag.* Why, this is most convincing !

[*To third Magistrate.*

*Placidio.* If I may speak——

*3rd Mag.* Just now you interrupted.

[*MAGISTRATES confer*

*Brenda (to Isola).* Do you observe the spleen  
of Innocenzio ?

Too late it shows itself in all its blackness.

Pity that in our days of splendour we  
Suffer'd ourselves to call him friend and guest ;  
Unconscious that a serpent we were warming,  
That by-and-by would turn and cruelly sting .

*1st Mag.* You shall have hearing in due time,  
Placidio,

At present, silence keep.

*2nd Mag.* How look'd the prisoner,  
When you denounced him as a murderer base ?

*1st Officer.* He spoke not for some moments .  
then denied

Feebly the accusation.

*1st Mag.*                      This is all  
That came within your scope ?

*1st Officer.*                      All, noble Signor.

*1st Mag. (to Placidio).* Is aught of error in  
this testimony ?

*Placidio.* I have no knowledge of what hap-  
pen'd ere

I saw this officer.

*1st Mag.*                      The picture you  
Claim without hesitation ?

*Placidio.*                      Yes, 'tis mine ;  
A relic much esteem'd.

*1st Mag. (to 1st Officer).* The officer  
Who did assist you—he has evidence ?

*1st Officer.* Yes, noble Signor.

*1st Mag.*                      Let him then advance.

*2ND OFFICER comes forward.*

What know you of this bus'ness ?

*2nd Officer.*                      Honour'd Signors !

Four days ago, on hearing cries unusual,  
I hurried to the place whence they proceeded ;  
In doing so I caught a glimpse of one  
Who seem'd in feverish haste. Ere I could raise  
My voice to bid him halt awhile, he vanished.

*2nd Mag.* Have you beheld him since?

*2nd Officer.* I now behold him!

*1st Mag.* Art sure?

*2nd Officer.* Aye, as I live and breathe!

*3rd Mag.* His name?

*2nd Officer.* Placidio!

*Brenda.* 'Tis a falsehood!

*Placidio.* Thou'rt mistaken.

*1st Mag.* This puts a serious aspect on the matter.

(*To 2nd Officer*) Hast thou thyself unburden'd fully? Speak!

Lurks there within thy vizor'd thoughts suspicions,

Certainties, whisperings, that we know not of?

*2nd Officer.* I have disclos'd the whole of what I know,

Saving that I have heard reports of threats

Us'd by the murder'd man to the accus'd

At noon upon the fatal day.

*1st Mag.* Those rumours,

Flying on wings of air through all the city,

Have pierc'd the ears of Justice. On these  
papers,

Signors, there nothing is of consequence.

(*To Officer*) You may retire. (*OFFICER retires.*)

The case seems fully ready  
For calm deliberation and for judgment ;  
But first, speak out, Placidio ; be prepar'd  
With your defence against this dark indictment.

*Placidio.* I shall against this fearful charge  
advance

The holy truth, naught else. I will not strive  
To plead with friends who sit in judgment on me,  
For overshadowed by unpitying Justice  
They do forgot that friendship. But I ask,  
What is the weight of evidence against me ?  
Dust that the breath of sense will blow away.  
There are a hundred men within the city  
Who at a distance might resemble me.  
As for the declaration made by Ambrose,  
He did mistake the assailant, or his malice  
Prompted what I must call a fiendish lie.  
Next for the portrait ; frankly 'tis a riddle ;  
How such a treasure as to me it is

Should have been found close to the scene of  
crime.

But there are thieves——

*2nd Mag.*            They do not value portraits,  
Unless there's gold about them ; this has none.

*Placidio.* Then how or when it left my house  
I know not.

*Brenda.* Heaven gives him strength.

*Isola.* How well he speaks !

*Brenda.* Oh, listen !

*Placidio.* Next I would ask you not to build  
suspicious

Upon the fact that for an hour or two  
My wife and servants saw me not. To prayer  
That hidden time was consecrate. I heard  
The knocking at my door, but did not heed it.

**2nd Mag.** We cannot this believe.

**3rd Mag.**            These words are strengthless.

*Placidio.* I earnestly commend them to your thoughts ;

For as I wish salvation they are true.

Signors, my life is known ; I am no stranger,  
Nor has my lot been lowly and obscure.

In the full blaze of public life I've lived,  
Gaining what reputation well you know.  
Boasting detracts from merit, yet I may  
Ask if from Honour's fount comes pois'nous  
Crime?

If Truth breeds Falsehood? If from humble  
efforts

To raise myself and my poor fellow-men  
To the pure level of the suffering Lord,  
Deeds such as this are likely to arise?

No, you will justly say; then quickly strike  
These fetters from my limbs; they weary me.

*1st Mag.* Do you protest your innocence?

*Placidio.*

Before

That Sov'reign Lord who knows the human  
heart—

Its darksome cells and secret winding ways;  
To whom the dreamiest thought is like a picture—  
I stand with trembling hope. He shall defend  
me.

For though He sees those evil thoughts and  
wishes

Lurking where heavenly sunbeams rarely come;



He also sees that I am innocent  
Of the atrocious crime with which ye charge  
me.

This is my sole defence.

*Brenda.* But I will speak !

*2nd Mag.* Nay, nay ; this must not be.

*1st Mag.* Can you support

With plain convincing proofs the affirmation  
Of innocency which your husband makes ?

*Brenda.* Signor, no proofs I have, no proofs I  
want ;

It is enough for me to know that sooner  
I would believe that you had done this deed,  
Than that my husband could descend to crime  
From heights of heavenly goodness. Proofs, you  
ask !

I have them safely treasur'd in my heart,  
Whence all the efforts of unworthy men  
Ne'er shall dislodge them, nor abate their  
strength.

They have substantial basis ; springing from  
The memory of a pure and generous life ;  
A thousand words and deeds of loving kindness

Falling around my path like God's bright sunshine—

These do convince me that my dearest husband  
Is undeserving of your dark suspicions.

[MAGISTRATES confer.]

*Enter CLAUDE.*

*Isola.* Good Claude, what tidings?

*Brenda.* Saw you Signor Clement?

*Claude.* Madam, his house seems tenantless:  
the neighbours

Say that for three days past they have not seen  
him!

His workmen knock in vain.

*Isola.* Oh, what has happen'd!

*Claude.* Some say, perchance on business he's  
departed,

Yet think it strange that he should leave no  
message

Behind for friends and those who trade with  
him.

*Brenda.* Affairs of trade no doubt have call'd  
him hence.

*Isola (aside).* Pray Heav'n he may return in  
strength and safety !

*1st Mag.* The task assign'd to us of stripping  
Guilt

Of its hell-woven wrappings is no light one ;

Yet ever as necessity arises

With willing heart and minds we must obey,

Maugre all other claims upon our labour.

The case before us now in some respects

Presents no puzzling features : First, we have

As undisputed fact, the awful murder ;

Then comes within our vision certainty

That no goodwill existed 'tween th' accus'd

Placidio and the murder'd man. We next

Arrive at facts which lead to stern conclusions :

First is the dying evidence, to be

Receiv'd by us as from th' invisible world

Whence Falsehood never breathes her noxious  
blasts ;

These words alone do constitute the scales.

Next come the sword of Justice, and her heart

(Steel'd against saint or devil's friend, sweet  
Pity),

I mean the finding of the portrait, and  
The recognition by our officer  
Of him who now confronts us ; then, besides,  
We have assurance full that the accus'd,  
Unseen of all his friends and servants was  
During the time that this foul deed was done.  
What can we argue from these sep'rate truths  
But this portentous drear conviction, namely,  
That he who stands before us charg'd with crime  
Merits his standing room. We therefore now  
Proclaim that after keen judicious thought  
We travel to this verdict—he is Guilty !

*Brenda.* Great Heav'ns !—it cannot be ! O ye  
are men

Not merely void of pity, but unjust !

*2nd Mag.* This interruption cannot be en-  
dur'd.

Madam, restrain your anger !

*Placidio.* Oh, reflect !

Ere you outrage Heaven's law ! I am not guilty.  
'Twill be an hourly dream of torture if  
You send a guiltless man to doom. Consider  
That after-proofs of innocency, pil'd

In monumental splendour ne'er can bring  
My erring soul to earth from Death's dark realm !

*1st Mag.* We are not reckless in this case,  
Placidio ;

The signs of guilt so openly appear,  
Wanting th' erasing hand of Explanation,  
That, but for justice, judgment might be spar'd.  
There is no need for parley. I do now  
In name, and with the sanction of my colleagues,  
Adjudge that you—— [*Noise heard without.*

*2nd Mag.* What interruption's this ?

*1st Mag.* Attendants, quell this most unseemly  
noise.

*3rd Mag.* Bring the offenders hither.

*Enter CORSO.*

*Corso.* I am one,

But gladly I offend.

*1st. Mag.* Thou insolent knave !

Dar'st thou to force these sacred portals ? Seize  
him ! [*To Attendants.*

*Corso.* Stay but a moment, worthy Signors !

Look

Upon this garment ! [*Holds up a cloak.*

*2nd Officer.*

'Tis the very one

Which wrapp'd the person of Placidio,

When I beheld him near the scene of crime.

*Corso.* Placidio gave it me six days ago ;

He could not then have worn it as thou say'st.

*Brenda.* O Heav'n be praised ! Light breaks  
upon this blackness.

*Placidio.* Aye, 'twas the last of all my cloaks  
save this

Which now I wear.

*2nd Officer.* But 't 'as a different colour.

*1st Mag.* We must defer the sentence.

*Corso.* Noble Signors !

Full satisfaction soon shall flood your minds,

If you will calmly wait. With breathless haste

I've hurried to this Court to bid you pause

Ere you condemn to death a guiltless man !

Others there are behind me who will solve

All that appears perplexing to your minds.

*2nd Mag.* This swerves from rule.

*1st Mag.* No help is there. We must

Afford him this one chance ; that gone, all's

gone.

*Brenda.* Oh, here's some hope at last !

*Isola.* Pray Heav'n 'tis real.

*Enter CLEMENT.*

*(To Brenda)* Look, look ! *(Aside)* Sweet saints  
accept my heartfelt thanks.

Do you behold him ?

*Brenda.* Clement !

*Isola.* He seems not

At flow of health.

*Clement.* I've hasten'd, honour'd Signors,  
To free this noble man from galling fetters.  
His substitute, the vilest malefactor  
That ever trod the streets of this fair city,  
Will in a moment front your awful gaze !

*Brenda.* O bounteous Father, thanks and praise  
shall rise

For this Thy sov'reign mercy !

*2nd Mag.* Who's the murd'rer ?

*Clement.* Hark !—they approach with him.

*Enter MALDENZIO, guarded by 3rd OFFICER  
and ATTENDANTS.*

*All.* Maldenzio !

*1st Mag. (to 3rd Officer).* You have arrested him ?

*3rd Officer.* Yes, noble Signor.

*Clement.* Behold the villain, whose base coward hand

Depriv'd old Ambrose of his life !

*2nd Mag.* You dream !

*Clement.* Then busiest life is sleep.

*Isola.* Oh, day of wonders !

*1st Mag. (to Clement).* We have postpon'd the sentence on Placidio

At the request of one who said that soon  
Full warrant for delay would be forthcoming.  
If now you charge Maldenzio with the crime,  
Speak out ; advance your facts.

*Clement.* Then, noble Signors,  
Prepare to hear an abstract brief of all  
That I have knowledge of concerning this  
Appalling tragedy. Four days ago  
Ambrose, the murdered man, then hugging life  
E'en as he hugg'd his gold, came to Placidio  
(I being in the mansion at the time),  
Holding a bond which gave him legal right



To seize that day Placidio's large estates,  
Unless the debt which it did represent  
The latter could discharge. The murdered man  
Finding his debtor had no means of paying,  
Would not grant respite, but in anger left,  
Doubtless intending instant violent measures.  
I soon departing, quickly follow'd Ambrose,  
Whom, when once overtaken, I entreated  
To show forbearance towards his ruin'd debtor.  
Signors, my prayer receiv'd no kindly answer,  
And he whom I implored went on his way.  
Scarcely three minutes pass'd, when awful cries  
Fill'd all the air. I look'd. Aghast I saw  
What seem'd to be Placidio—rush'd—was stabb'd  
By the same hand that laid poor Ambrose low.  
Thank Heav'n, I yet had strength to follow  
quickly  
Upon the murd'rer's track—unmask'd him—saw  
Maldenzio, who twice stabb'd me, and escap'd.

*1st Mag.* You yet seem faint and ill. Take  
breath. We have  
Been spar'd commission of a crime.

*Isola.*

Poor Clement!

*Brenda.* Courageous, trusty friend ! O dearest  
husband,

Thy safety now's assur'd.

*Clement.* My strength then fail'd me ;  
Brain whirl'd, heart sicken'd, eyes refus'd to see,  
A gen'ral feeling of collapse came o'er me.  
In this condition I was found by Corso,  
He who did signal my approach to-day.  
He took me to a friendly shelter where  
I lay for three days almost senseless, when  
My faculties return'd. I secretly  
Took steps to bring the parricide to justice.  
Till I regain my breath, pray question Corso,  
Also your officer, who risk'd his life  
In the arresting of Maldenzio.

*1st Mag.* What art thou, Corso ?

*Corso.* Once a soldier, Signor,  
Holding no mean position ; now I lie  
Under th' heel of Fortune.

*1st Mag.* Is there reason  
Why thou shouldst lie in th' mire ?

*Corso.* Yes, I am old,  
And age is little valu'd. Virtue lives

In aged wine, but not in aged blood ; yet I  
Could strike a blow with th' very best.

*1st Mag.*

Well, well ;

Say briefly what thou knowest of these things.

*Corso.* I found the goldsmith in the street ;  
convey'd him

To shelter—quiet, secure. Delirious words,  
Falling from Frenzy's height, hung on my ears.  
Spite of headshaking, they inspir'd me with  
Suspensions 'gainst Maldenzio, who lodg'd  
Till lately at my house. When quite collected  
Clement plac'd confidence in me—I found  
That my late lodger had purloin'd the cloak  
Which good Placidio gave me as a shield  
'Gainst stormy weather.

*1st Mag.*

Mists of doubt disperse,

Leaving the guilty one expos'd and bare  
To blinding radiance from Truth's searching sun-  
beams.

Surely the hand of Providence in this  
Plainly may be discern'd !

*Corso.*

Your officer,

If it so please you, will relate the rest.

*1st Mag. (to 3rd Officer).* Unfold to us what  
thou hast done and seen.

*3rd Officer.* The witness Corso, noble Signors,  
first

Directed my attention to Maldenzio ;  
Ask'd me to watch his movements secretly.  
This morning Signor Clement did consult me ;  
Laid bare his knowledge of the murder ; said  
That caution, courage were the requisites  
For seizing the suspected ; to prevent  
His sudden flight from justice. We discover'd  
That he had made an entrance stealthily  
Into his father's house. Six sturdy men  
I posted round the building. I and Corso,  
With Signor Clement, quietly enter'd—armed.  
We came upon Maldenzio, laden with  
Jewels and gold. A desp'rate fight ensued.  
But we secur'd him, not before he had  
Receiv'd a dang'rous wound. I found upon him  
'Mongst other things this document.

[*Gives parchment to Magistrates.*

*1st Mag.*

The bond !

*Isola.* O vile Maldenzio !

*Brenda.* Release my husband !

*2nd Mag. (to Maldenzio).* Villain, avow thy motives for this crime !

*3rd Mag.* The torture's meet for thee.

*1st Mag.* Speak out, Maldenzio.

*Maldenzio.* I want no further torture ; 'tis sufficient

To know that Clement lives in spite of all.

Would I had deeper struck !

*1st Mag.* Remorseless wretch !

Take him away at once ; we will appoint

Another day for sentence. Lead him hence,

He does offend our eyes.

[*Exit MALDENZIO, guarded.*]

(*To the attendants.*) Remove the fetters

From good Placidio's limbs. Signor, await

A joyous ending to this troublous scene.

[*MAGISTRATES confer together.*]

*Brenda.* Placidio ! [*Embraces him.*]

*Isola.* Dearest uncle !

*Clement.* Noble friend !

*Placidio.* Few words must serve ; I greet you  
all with joy.

My heart is full, and, pardon me, I cannot  
Find full expression for my feelings.

*Brenda.*

Happy

This moment is.

[*They converse apart.*

*Isola (to Clement).* Good Signor, you have  
made us  
Your everlasting debtors.

*Clement.*

Ah, sweet lady,

If I do merit aught, if aught be owing,  
One only brilliant gem I do esteem,  
The treasure of your house. If it be sin  
To covet, daily Heav'n I grieve in wishing  
That the most queenly, dainty, beauteous,  
virtuous,

Of all Italia's dames were mine. Forgive me !

*Isola.* 'Tis I must ask forgiveness, noble  
Clement,

For my perverse behaviour.

*Clement.*

Dear Isola !

[*They converse apart.*

*1st Mag. (to Placidio).* Signor Placidio, we  
much regret

The anguish and privation you've endur'd ;  
Crime's shadow cast upon you without cause.  
Accept my sympathy and high respect.  
We have th' undoubted criminal. You stand  
Stainless as ever in my eyes, nay, more,  
You rise in my esteem. A few days hence  
We hold a public court ; pray you attend.  
At that assembly solemnly and loudly  
Shall be proclaim'd your freedom from all guilt.  
No more at present, saving this—the town  
Inherits Ambrose's wealth. I therefore give,  
As some alleviation of your troubles,  
(*Gives bond*) 'This bond. 'Tis yours, destroy it,  
be releas'd  
From harassing cares.

*Placidio.* I thank you, noble Signor.

*1st Mag.* Dissolve the court ! Come, Signors,  
let's depart. [*Exeunt* MAGISTRATES.]

*PLACIDIO comes forward.*

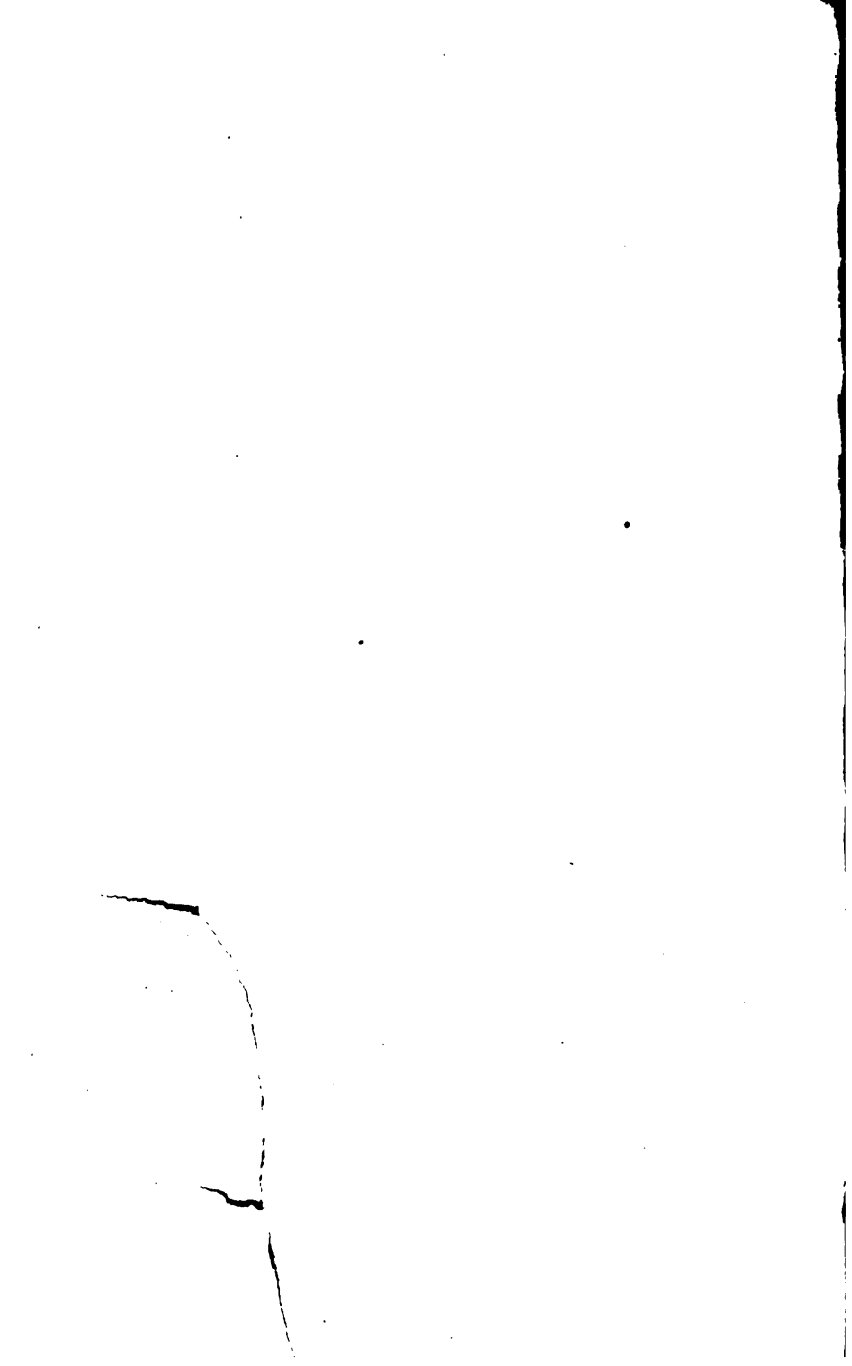
Did I accuse thee, gracious Providence,  
E'en in my faintest thought ? Oh, I repent.  
My heart shall be a holy fount of thanks

For Thy remembrance of me. This great trial  
Of hope, and faith, and patience ; this stern woe  
Was but a potion for my soul diseas'd  
Put to my lips by Thee, O great Physician !  
Yes, sorrow is the medicine of life ;  
Cleansing and strength'ning all those subtle  
parts  
Which are indeed most human, most divine.  
Come, dearest friends.

*Curtain falls.*



# POEMS.



# P O E M S.

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## TO AN IDEAL.

THE classic beauty of thy face,  
Those eyes that have the dew's of even  
With all the glow of noonday heaven,  
That rounded form of fairy grace :

Those lips that are like frozen flowers,  
Not op'ning to the sun's hot rays ;  
Thy royal tent of amber hair,  
Thy sweet and dainty, laughing ways—

Give me delight—because thou hast  
Enshrin'd a spirit free from guile,  
Which breathes kind words, and prompts  
pure thoughts,  
Dancing in every radiant smile.

## HAUNTED.

EACH day from green to yellow fades  
A leaf upon my brow, then dies;—  
Its place, a feeble frosty flower  
Time's pitying hand supplies.

Ne'er did I think that Youth and Hope,  
Who wove that vernal garland bright,  
Would glide, like phantoms through the mist  
Of Age's lonely night.

Avaunt, sweet thoughts ! for now my soul  
Distils the crime of other years ;  
Pouring it from my sunken eye  
In floods of burning tears.

Fair was my darling. Oh, so fair !  
Virtue in her a rival met ;  
Her cloudless eyes, her sweet low voice,  
I never can forget.

I know too late that she was pure  
As those around the heav'nly throne,  
Yet for a moment dark, I thought  
That she was not mine own.

One night, oppress'd with shadowy thoughts,  
    Slowly I left my business place,  
Dreaming the time away, till I  
    Did see my sweet one's face.

Her eyes sought mine with looks of love,  
    Our beauteous babe did crow and smile ;  
Satan accursed be !   Thou didst  
    My darkening heart beguile.

I felt her arms around my neck,  
    Her ripening flowers did stain my lips,  
Panting, her bird-like heart met mine—  
    Then all was dire eclipse.

For, quick as lightning's flash, a flood,  
    Foaming with green and yellow slime ;  
Twin hateful passions, did o'erwhelm  
    My soul in depths of crime.

I rais'd my hand, and struck her down,  
    Sighing she fell and wondering died—  
Daily I yearn'd for death, but God,  
    My judge, that gift denied.

He makes His heavy avenging hand  
Her soul which haunts me every day ;  
The air assumes her shape, as if  
'Twere sculptor's stone or clay.

She braids the sunbeams for her hair,  
Through Heaven's blue veil her white face  
peeps,  
She gently sighs in every wind,  
In tears of rain she weeps.

I wake in dreams of night, and through  
The misty anguish of mine eyes,  
That fragile form accurst by Fate  
I see before me rise.

She makes no sign, a perfume faint  
Floats from her garments and her hair,  
As from crushed flowers that only live  
In rainless, balmy air.

Her eyes seem cool as those small stars  
That nestle 'neath the wings of Night ;  
Her face now sinks beneath, now swims  
On waves of wat'ry light.

And such a frozen horror chills

My heart : faint, sick, and slow by turns,  
As makes me wonder why the lamp  
Of life still flick'ring burns.

1873-74.

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### TWILIGHT THOUGHTS.

THE embers of the fire !

Cast some fuel in,  
The greedy flames leap higher,  
Twilight dreams begin.

Red the flames are leaping,  
Glowing near and far :  
And their tongues are creeping  
'Tween each iron bar.

Up the chimney glancing  
With fantastic glare ;  
And with strong light dancing  
Madly everywhere.

Winds are blowing coldly  
Through the open door,  
And the moon shines boldly  
On the gloomy floor.

Wind comes round the corner,  
With a dismal groan ;  
Fasten out the mourner !  
I am left alone,

With my heartfelt anguish,  
With each weary sigh,  
With the flames that languish,  
Glitter, and then die.

With the grim remembrance  
Of my joyous prime,  
Bearing no resemblance  
To this hopeless time.

Ah ! the world is dreary,  
Dark, and full of strife,  
And my soul is weary  
Of this doleful life.



Friends, why have ye wandered  
From my path away ?  
Often have I pondered,  
Each and every day ;

But no answer gaining  
From my stricken heart,  
I must needs, constraining,  
Bid your shades depart.

Onward, hoping ever  
Your real forms to see  
In that land where never  
Friends shall parted be.

1867.

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SONNET.

Oh, that my place among the singers sweet  
In God's most holy temple I might take,  
Where all good music and all joys do meet ;  
Oh, that I now might all my sins forsake,  
Else I shall never see that cool retreat,  
Upon whose shores the eternal waves do beat,

Casting up precious driftwood from the small  
And fretful sea of time—I am a thrall  
To Satan, stern taskmaster ! I would fain  
Break all his bonds in sunder, but my strength  
Is unavailing—constant, bitter pain  
Therefore attends me. The good God at length  
May with one finger set me ever free  
From freezing doubt and selfish misery.

1870.

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### THRENODY.

*(From "The Dead Poet;" a Poetical Dialogue.)*

#### I.

SLOWLY, slowly,  
Let the foul and tainted air  
On his features fair,  
On his snow-white face,  
On his body holy,  
Fall, fall !  
This is all, all  
That survives of nobleness,  
Truth, and lamb-like gentleness,  
Genius, love, and grace.

## II.

Sweetly, sweetly,  
Lies he now in dread repose,  
Where are all his foes ?  
Helpless, quiet, and dead,  
Conquered all completely.  
Death, death,  
Takes the poor breath ;  
Gives us e'en a sad success ;  
Crushed is earthly bitterness,  
In our dying bed.

## III.

Weary, weary,  
Grew he of this toilsome life,  
Scarr'd and torn with strife ;  
Yet he proudly went  
On his journey drear.  
Brave, brave,  
As though the grave  
Was not yawning beneath his feet,  
Said he, 'tis a quiet retreat,  
And no punishment.

## IV.

Brightly, brightly,  
Comes a supernat'ral gleam,  
An inspiring beam  
From his spectral eyes,  
Dissipating lightly  
Drear, dread,  
Foreboding fear.  
Now more sweetly smells the air,  
Ah ! strange Death makes all things fair,  
Sadness makes us wise.

## V.

Sadly, sadly,  
We must leave thee, noble heart!  
Quick and dead must part.  
Could we die with thee,  
We would do so gladly.  
No, no !  
Vanity and woe  
We must witness ere the end  
Cometh as a tender friend ;  
Ere our spirits flee.

## VI.

Saintly, saintly  
Poet ! offspring of the skies !  
We with many sighs,  
Anguish-laden, deep—  
While the wind comes faintly,  
Slow, slow,  
Waving to and fro,  
Like a mourner half afraid  
Of arousing the poor shade—  
Leave thee to thy sleep !

## VII.

Pleading, pleading,  
Through our scalding, bitter tears,  
Distilled grief of years !  
That in Heaven above,  
Jesus interceding,  
Soon, soon  
Shall gain the boon,  
Shall open wide the portal,  
Gate of the life immortal,  
Gate of peace and love !

## TO FORTUNE.

BRING back the days of the past to me,

For I am weary

Of present times, and I long to free

My aching soul from the troublous sea

So dark and dreary—

That flows round me, and shuts out the light

Of the blissful sun ;

That turns my day into gloomy night

And conquers me first in life's rude fight

Ere the fray's begun.

Angel or devil ! I know not name

Either good or bad,

To reproach thee with—for thou canst claim

To be the god of slander and fame—

Driving all men mad.

Thou bearest down on thy breast so wide

Lazarus and Dives ;

And as thou glid'st with flattering tide,

Thou tellest them still the hour to bide

Which never arrives.

My weary and fainting steps thou'st led  
Through a fragrant clime  
Of fancies bright, which, alas ! have fled,  
And left me a poor and worn-out thread  
On the loom of time.

Yet go thine own way—I know not why  
I should dare to rave  
Against thy ways, since the hour draws nigh  
When I shall banish my cares and lie  
In the cold, dark grave.

But not for long—I shall rise again  
From the worthless sod.  
Oh ! may I be free from sin and pain,  
And gladness, and peace, and rest obtain  
In heaven with God !

## SONNETS.

THE lovely morning comes with dewy wings,  
Brushing away the dark'ning webs of Night :  
Upon a swaying branch the blackbird sings,  
The thirsty, op'ning buds drink nectarous light  
And yet the tender, sweet imaginings  
Which all suggest, give sorrow, not delight.  
A sadness weighs my spirit down—the air  
Inspiring cup of health ! is never fair—  
To me it brings no joy, no mental ease ;  
Though flow'rs swim in it, and o'erladen bees.  
It darts its light on dense, appalling gloom,  
The worldly mind, the fleshly heart—its  
strains  
Are flowers that strew the pathway to the  
tomb,  
Torn from ill-nourish'd soil of weak despairing  
brains !

1874.



## TO THE DIVINE MASTER.

Two thousand years have nearly gone since Thou  
Didst tread this Earth in deep humility ;  
Since Thou didst groan and die, while on Thy  
brow

The thorny crown was fixed in mockery.

Suffer Thou didst, and die, and all for me—  
For this accept my earnest offering now ;

My heart, all bleeding, torn, and stain'd with  
sin,

Panting like pris'ner to be ever free,

Wishing, though late, Thy cleansing love to  
win,

With many tears and sighs I proffer Thee !

“ Never too late,” I hear Thee say, “ while  
prayers

Out of a humble, contrite heart set free  
Godward ascend.” Oh, then, my sins and  
cares

Dissolve, good Lord, in mercy's crimson sea !

## FRAGMENTARY VERSES.

WHEN I behold the sapphire skies,  
From whose strange depths the stars look down,  
Ah ! with what tender pitying eyes,  
Upon this mighty town,

I think of those who, in despair,  
Acknowledge no superior mind ;  
Love not these lanterns of the air,  
Nor Him who broods behind.

When in that concave vast I see  
Strange lights that gleam awhile, and fade  
Into the vague and trembling sea  
That the pale moon has made,

I think of many a noble mind,  
O'erwhelmed by hate, and grief, and wrong ;  
In whose recesses heaven enshrined  
The tragic fire of song ;

Of hearts whose earliest cries arose  
From awful cavernous depths of pain—  
They, through this drear expanse of woes,  
No cooling streams shall gain.

High up amid the grey-clad even

What yearning ghosts have lost their way,  
Who now, with thoughts of hell and heaven,  
Do feebly grope for day !

Winter departs, and crown'd with flowers,  
Comes tearful, smiling, maiden Spring ;  
A chattering noise from leafy bowers,  
The words with music sing.

When Summer, like a blushing bride,  
Is kissed by Autumn old and wan,  
The ripen'd corn in golden pride  
Gives thought and food to man.

The trees are priests of solemn things ;  
Fields, waysides tell of power sublime,  
All nourish Thought, whose eagle wings  
Exhaust the strength of Time.

Yet all these toilers day by day  
No lessons draw from flower or clod ;  
Their purblind eyes perceive no way  
From Nature up to God.

Unlov'd by them, He grandly weaves  
In powerful looms all things that be—  
The beauteous world, the stars, like leaves  
That hang from heaven's wide tree.

\* \* \* \* \*

I wait for that enkindling hour,  
The crowning of my hopeful creed,  
When I may spring as bird to flower,  
From earnest thought to deed.

1874.

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### THE DEAD POET.

SCHOLAR.—CYNIC.—MERCANS.—CELIA.

SCENE—*A Parish Dead House.*

*Cynic (looking on a dead body).* Throw the  
instrument aside,  
Broken, valueless, and dead !  
'Tis not worth a loaf of bread.  
Where is now the lofty pride,  
And the small and aching head,  
From whose muddy depths there came  
Forth a host of idle songs,

Full of yearnings, hopes, and wrongs,  
As I've heard his lovers say,  
Journeying to Fame?  
All is rotten—broken,  
And no token  
Lives, except in dreamy pages,  
Speaking to demented ages.

I know not; it seems to me  
All as labour thrown away.  
Rhythmic insipidity,  
Growing weaker ev'ry day.  
Well; the world must have its tools,  
Lovers—Poets—Christians—Fools.  
Wise the man who ne'er can stumble,  
Leaves the world to love and grumble,  
And its prayers, and anthems mumble.

How I hate your scornful people,  
Book-learn'd, self-reliant, proud!  
This man looked like some vast steeple,  
Haloed with a golden cloud,  
Of a quaint church, whence come floating

Anthems, chants, and psalms denoting  
In their rhythmic, dreary motion  
What the world miscalls devotion,  
We appeared like mice that crawl  
Starvingly between each wall.

Ah ! he called me fool one day ;  
'Twas in jest, he said, but I  
Felt it keenly. " Never mind !  
I will see you by-and-by  
Cold, and lifeless, friendless." " Nay,  
I have always friends." How blind  
Then was he ? Fool ! How that name  
Rankles in my memory.

Oh ! that he himself could see  
In this vile abode of shame,  
Monstrous, sordid, cheerless gloom !  
Ever fighting 'gainst the sun ;  
In the wormy, earthy tomb.  
Pauper's grave ! here cometh one  
Who the race not meanly run,  
With him, yet his heart and mind  
Flings he to the idle wind,  
For he vainly tries to soar.

*Enter* SCHOLAR.

*Scholar.* Tears are filling both mine eyes,  
And my heart is sick and sore ;  
Oh ! this fearful, bleak surprise  
Overwhelms me. Nevermore  
Shall we tread the path of Life,  
Hand in hand together. Oh,  
Awful parting ! Bitter woe !  
I possess the pain and strife,  
Thou art happy, great and free.  
Friend, I pray thee, smile on me.  
Has it come to this ? Oh, speak !  
Tell me is it true ? is he  
Dead ?

*Cynic.* May I ask whom do you seek,  
That unhappy man so weak,  
Full of speculative dreams,  
Cloud-like castles—dazzling gleams  
Dissipating common sense ?

*Scholar.* From his heavenly brain did spring,  
With a great beneficence,  
Many a grand imagining.  
Speak no more ! what is't to you ?

He was my true friend. D'ye think  
There was e'en the slightest link  
That your dull thoughts could pursue  
To claim kindred with him? No!  
To your petty business go!

*Cynic.* You are rash and senseless too!

*Scholar.* Oh my self-denying friend!

Would that I could share thine end.  
Gracious God! look down and take  
Me away. I dare not raise  
My weak sinful hand to break  
The thread of my unhallow'd days;  
No, I dare not rashly flee  
Into the dread immensity,  
Of the strange world beyond the sun,  
To find myself undone.

*Enter CELIA.*

*Celia.* Dearest, sweetest, best of all!

Poet! Hero! Lover! Friend!

Can this be thy end?

Thou who with thy music blended  
Vigorous thought and precepts splendid,  
Sweet! some message send



To me ; help me or I fall,

Oh, my life !

[*She is led out.*

*Scholar.* Poor child ! her lot

Is hard, and women are but weak,

Woo'd and won—soon forgot,

Little able to bear the shocks

And tumult of life—the shriek

Of the wild remorseless waves

As they dash upon the rocks,

So many moaning graves.

Women, the sweetest and best,

Are havens of perfect rest ;

For the vessels whose cordage and masts

Are sever'd in twain

By the fierce and terrible blasts ;

But oh ! their grief and pain,

When the gallant ships go down

Into the briny deep,

Into the treach'rous deep,

Hurt by the ocean's frown

To sleep !

[*CELIA re-enters.*

As the light through window panes,

Old, discoloured, dimly falls,  
Casting patches, strange and weird,  
On the dark and mould'ring walls.  
Something of the life remains  
Surely, in that temple bright ;  
Has the Angel, so much feared,  
Death, absorbed his spirit quite?  
No ! a ray of sunshine darts  
O'er his features, and a smile  
Seems to warm our mournful hearts  
As in some Cathedral aisle,  
Streams through coloured panes the sun,  
In the midst of solemn prayer,  
Through the stilly, heavenly air,  
On the penitential floor ;  
And our cares seem almost done,  
And our scornful doubts are o'er.

See, the sunbeams seem to raise  
From his noble, placid head,  
Feeble locks of hair. Oh ! praise  
Be to God ! he is not dead !  
How they play upon his face,

Full of such a quiet grace ;  
Come and help me ! You are wrong ;  
He shall sing another song,  
Grander, sweeter, breathe one breath.  
Oh, my poet ! it is death.  
Oh, my teacher ! wise and great,  
I have come too late, too late !

*Cynic.* Not too late to act the fool ! [*Aside.*]

*Enter MERCANS.*

*Mercans.* Ah, he's dead ! I told him so.

I knew well, some years ago,  
He would die before his time.  
Why ? I have my own opinion ;  
I consider it a crime  
For a man instead of giving  
All his energies to living,  
Mounting on a treach'rous pinion  
On a voyage, cloudy, long,  
To an atmosphere of song,  
Leaving with an idle mind,  
Life's realities behind.

He mistrusted me, when I

Gave him friendly words. I said :  
"Do not place your hopes so high,  
Leave your rhyming, and your weaving  
Awkward words into a thread,  
Then your threads into a song ;  
You will in the end be grieving  
Over time misspent, mislaid."

I was altogether wrong.

He replied : "I'm not dismay'd  
At the evils you are painting,  
Shall I throw my dreams away,  
Dreams which soon may realise,  
Fame and Fortune ! Shall I fainting  
Starve and toil through blackest night,  
Watch the advent of the day,  
And disown my offspring bright,  
Journeying from the sunlit skies,  
Led by gentle Poesy, who  
Ever kind is, ever true,  
From the heaven's gateway, she  
Robed in music, silently  
Spite of Truth's alarming dearth,  
Takes her passage down to earth,

Bringing joy for me, and all  
Who have borne her blessed thrall.  
Shall I brave the anger loud  
Of the undiscerning crowd,  
Hardship, hunger, scorn, and cold,  
Evils that can ne'er be told,  
In the deepest misery  
Keep my head erect ; to die  
When my hour of triumph's nigh ?”

“ No, my friend—I thank you kindly.  
Give me work—I'll do my best ;  
I care not how I am drest,  
How I'm fed. I rush not blindly  
But collected into days  
That shall fully justify,  
In the world's contemptuous eye,  
All my drifting, aimless ways.  
Neither am I wildly prating,  
There are thousands who are waiting,  
To adorn my head with bays ;  
Give me humble occupation,  
If you will, but never think

That I can precipitate  
All my heart, and mind, and soul  
To attain your common goal.  
No ! a nobler aspiration,  
And a more refreshing drink,  
Wine, that sordid creatures hate,  
Gives a stimulus to fate ;  
No, I speak not in disdain,  
Ev'ry word gives shame and pain.  
Standing helpless on this brink,  
I must not in weakness shrink,  
From the silent, earnest truth,  
No ! by all my hopes of heaven ;  
By my sad and dreamful youth,  
As I hope to be forgiven,  
Give me work, but do not yet  
Strive to make my soul forget  
Things of beauty ! Time shall bring  
Wintry days, as well as Spring,  
When our spirits in disgust  
Mingle with the common dust."

So, thought I, this firm persuasion

Of a nobler destiny  
Will but give him great occasion  
To forget my work and me ;  
While he's reading works neglected,  
While he's writing, he can never  
Give to business his endeavour.  
Then the others are infected,  
Each becoming lazier, till  
Wealth and ease go down the hill,  
Workhouse breaks upon the view  
With its chronic discontent.  
Then too late : " I never meant  
To assist in starving you !"

So I sever'd the connection,  
Which existed 'tween us both,  
For I could not give protection  
To impertinence and sloth.  
" Go your way—pursue the dreaming  
Fancies that you love to hold,  
If you ever rise, by scheming  
It will be." " You need not scold,"  
Said he, in his scornful way,

So opinionated, clever :  
" I am going ;" and I never  
Saw his features from that day,  
'Till I, passing by the door,  
Of this parish refuge, for  
Homeless, worthless dead, did see,  
Groups of people eagerly  
Peering in, and one I knew,  
Gave me information true.  
'Tis a pity ! but if he—  
Bah ! I'm talking foolishly.  
Some erect their heads so high  
That they almost touch the sky.  
'Tis not of the slightest use  
Talking over things that ever  
Will resist our best endeavour.  
We cannot new life infuse ;  
Ideal—Poet—Poesy,  
Words of vast stupidity.  
I could never bring my mind  
In the least degree to bind  
Any of them to myself.



*Scholar.* No, your thoughts were all of pelf.

[*Aside.*

(*Aloud*) What! shall he who spurns the  
fettters

Of a slavish ignorance,  
Gives the people noble yearnings,  
Care for frown or scorn of debtors,  
With their jealous, dull heartburnings  
And their loud intolerance!  
Never! Here in peace and quiet,  
Folded arms and placid face,  
Noble e'en in this sad place  
Lies my poet! Nevermore,  
Shall the waves of Life and riot,  
Passion's fierce and angry storm,  
From Hell's lurid, ghastly shore,  
Break upon his yielding form.  
Grandly he fulfilled his duty,  
Till his trembling heart-strings burst,  
And one sigh to Heaven giving,  
He relinquished life and living;  
Petrified in endless beauty.

*Mercans.* Better had he died at first !

*Scholar.* Open not your lips so wide !

You can scoff and sneer and chide,  
Know you not the golden law  
Of forbearance ? Can you gaze  
Without pity, without love,  
Mingled with religious awe,  
On this wreck of hopeful days,  
On this shattered house, whose spirit  
Dwells I trust in land above,  
Will you idly, wrongly ferret  
Into ev'ry small detail  
Of his sad existence rending,  
Mocking ev'ry noble feeling,  
Every truthful, mournful wail  
Up to heav'n our sorrow sending  
For his loss—would you prevent  
Our long, last, and sad lament ?

*Mercans.* I care not—I speak my mind !

What I've said before to-day  
Say I now—I'm not inclined  
To go weeping—to go wailing,  
Nor to mourn his loss or pray.

A poor rhymester ! whose bewailing  
Or complaining ? Save a maiden  
With some dreary love-tale laden,  
Or a youth like you whose brain  
Does but little sense contain !

[*Exit with CYNIC.*

*Scholar.* Oh sweet Heaven ! bend on me,  
Bend on him, commiseration,  
Life is sad—so sad—and filled  
With such terrible temptation,  
That our spirits in despair,  
Love not life, nor worship thee,  
Daily breathing poisoned air,  
And we never rest till we  
Drown ourselves in misery.

I was poor, and he was poor,  
And our poverty we shared,  
From the world's bewild'ring noise,  
We our sorrows and our joys  
Patiently enjoyed and bore.  
From the Heavenly fountain we  
Drank the wine of poesy ;

Few delights had we, we read  
Books that other men disdained ;  
Oh ! what pleasure we have gained  
From them in the silent night,  
When for hours wanting bread,  
We by turns would sit and write.  
He saw visions—I saw none.  
He, his eager spirit hurled  
Into a mysterious world,  
And he trod that world alone.  
I could write what he had done ;  
I could rhyme—but he could place  
Into ev'ry word a grace,  
And a music, and a balm,  
Simple rhymes became a psalm.  
Painter ! for his scenes all stood  
Like material flesh and blood.  
Great musician ! for each word  
Was a wondrous singing bird.  
Poet ! ev'ry poem brought  
Robed in music noble thought ;  
All, all, all, combined in him  
Whose dear life, alas ! is dim.

I had hoped new strength to borrow  
From his patience under sorrow ;  
I had hoped from him to gain  
Secret balm for half my pain.  
From his loving heart a bliss ;  
From his vision sight divine,  
From each self-forgetting song,  
New-born hopes and vigour strong,  
And a wild inspiring kiss,  
Richer than the oldest wine,  
Aye, " a Palingenesis !"  
But the Angel zealously  
Smiled on him, and frowned on me :  
Had the Angel smiled on both,  
I had then been nothing loth,  
To have left this earthly air,  
For another, foul or fair.  
(*To CELIA*) Oh, bright maiden ! we cannot  
Alter or relieve his lot,  
On the dark and dismal road  
He has gone !

*Celia.*                      The sharpest goad,  
Friend, that stung me was to hear

Dull material-minded men  
Ere now, in this loathsome den  
(From which soon he shall be taken)  
Speaking words of cold disdain ;  
I know not where most I'm shaken,  
Where I most experience pain,  
At his anguish-laden loss,  
Ah me ! 'tis a weary cross  
I am left alone to bear  
Through a landscape parched and drear.

*Scholar.* All the bitter awful cries  
Daily speeding to the skies,  
All our sorrows, all our woes,  
All the innocent blood that flows  
Asking heaven, ever, ever  
For a vengeance hard but just,  
All the monstrous sins that sever  
Men from God, are e'en as dust  
When compared, in human eyes,  
With the monster Poverty !  
Are you poor ? then quickly die,  
Never seek to live or rise,  
Die and end your misery !

Are you poor? Then are you vile!  
Are you poor? then are you slime  
Flowing from the stream of Time  
Into Life's elysian isle!  
Blighting, poisoning all the good,  
Tainting all the sunny air,  
Blasting all the flowers fair;  
Scarcely fit for vile manure,  
To bring forth ungrateful food,  
You are rotten and impure!  
He is starved to death, and I,  
Shall in that drear manner die;  
Scarcely can I manage now,  
By my toil, and speech, and bow,  
Not to speak of meaner things,  
Keep myself alive. Thy wings,  
Poet—friend! thy words of fire,  
Shall they all with thee expire?  
Let thy mantle fall on me;  
Let thy spirit breathe divine  
Thoughts and feelings into mine,  
Dull and obtuse though I be!  
Let my love of truth and thee

Plead my cause! Oh, dead! dead! dead!

*Celia.* Gently lift his frozen head;

Oh, my life! I cannot stay

With thee, all the weary day;

Quietly place this handkerchief

Underneath—so he shall sleep

Much more sweetly. I can't weep

While my darling like a thief

In this dungeon lies!

*Scholar.* He is living in the skies.

Farewell! farewell! ere I go

Let me sing my song of woe,

Sing my song of misery,

Thy strange song of liberty,

What a mournful threnody!\*

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\* This "Threnody" is already printed, from the unfinished MS. book, in which John Martin had apparently written out for publication those of his poems which he considered the best.



## SONNETS.

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### HUMAN WEEDS.

ARE they all human ? what a swarming crowd,

Oh, God of mercy—I behold each day

Striving and fighting ! Not a single ray

Of light to pierce this dark and cheerless cloud

That wraps, as if by demons fell, the loud

Discordant noises in the public way.

Young girls and women, sturdy men and grey,

Gagged by the Devil ; stifled from pure speech,

To filth and vileness. Yet we daily teach

The younger children purity and truth.

Can we not by protracted efforts reach

The elders by the children ? Surely youth,

Say, babe simplicity, would work a cure,

In these our brethren, ignorant, impure ?

---

THEY are our brethren ! yea, they're surely mine,

For save that I have something in my breast

Which will not let me ever be at rest,

But shames me into goodness, the Divine  
Almighty God knows that I stand confest,  
A worthless leper ! These are flasks of wine,  
Too much fermented by the lurid sun  
Of primal, present sin ; their lives have run,  
Through weedy pathways into helplessness ;  
Hate, scornfulness, doubt, sickness and distress.

But something of their better lives remains,  
For mark, to save their children from the street  
They undergo privations, cares, and pains,  
Building themselves in heaven a quiet retreat !

18th Sept. 1870.

---

“ THY earnest views of life,” my neighbours say,  
“ Prevent thee gaining credit and renown.”

So runs the tale in this my little town,  
Made to myself, yet not by me, for day  
Scarce comes, but that I wish myself away.

Where ? I know not, the same alarming frown,  
Given to all who will not own the sway,

And bear the heavy-laden, worthless crown  
Of the hand-shaking world ; will follow me,

E'en to the end ; I'm sick at heart ! I see  
Nothing to share, no sympathy, but for  
The unassuming ones, whose hearts do crave,  
The never-ending quiet of heaven's shore,  
Whose lives, e'en now, are nearly in the grave.

18th Sept. 1870.

---

WALKS, dinners, meetings, can these satisfy  
The wiser mind ? Besides in these we see  
Nought in the shape of that deep sympathy  
Which soul from soul requires, to live—To die—  
These are the tedious watchwords that do fly  
From man to man with hopeless apathy.  
“What is to live ?” is ask'd, and all reply  
“We live to eat and work. Society,  
Songs, taverns, drinks, are each an ornament;  
Books, reading, intellectual thoughts prevent  
Their lovers from enjoying life.” So all  
Men separate ways pursue. So trifles sway  
Millions of people on this earthly ball,  
While Wisdom looks in vain for wiser day.

18th Sept. 1870.

## EVENING.

GREY, purple, golden, stain the ev'ning sky,  
Slow sinks the sun into a ruddy sea ;  
Thou orb of warmth and pow'r and mystery,  
Nurse of sweet nature, thou art ever nigh,  
Strewing thy blessings ! from thy domain high  
Thou dost behold our woeful misery—  
Our hopes, fears, passions—thou dost never leave  
Thy sick and dying children ; when our eve,  
Waiting for Night in calm and cool suspense,  
(Like some fond mother, who, sedate and still,  
Lets down her converse wise, and all her will  
To the low level of babe-innocence)  
Strengthens the feeble day ; thou dost prepare  
To bring thy comfort and delight to all  
Our distant brethren ; thy awak'ning care,  
Thy freedom to the miserable thrall,  
Thy never-failing spring of health and grace,  
Thy banishment of darkened misery,  
Vast hopes, suggestions, day-dreams, charity,  
To distant members of the human race,  
Pining, despairing, full of grief and care,  
In torrid, balmy, or in frozen air !

There are white bars through which will soon  
look out

Into a world of sinfulness and doubt

The tearful stars—When to her short-lived rest,

The day has slowly journeyed in the West,

The sad-eyed Twilight comes ; a royal maid,

Silent and slow, in cold blue dress array'd.

Perchance she kneels, and quietly prays, while down

O'er land and ocean, hamlet, vale, and town,

Small fragments of her earnest words descend.

She is my lover ; Contemplation's friend.

The air so pure and sad on which she kneels

Covers a chamber wherein God reveals

His inmost presence. From the lurid day

I enter slowly, and I cast away

All thoughts of sin, and now begins to gleam

The realisation of a happy dream.

Upon her feet that erst had covering none,

Rises the evening star ! Like love alone

Brilliant, its advent an entire surprise,

Like love it fades too quickly from our eyes ;

And now like diamonds in a robe of blue,

Stars after stars their upward way pursue,

Until the Twilight's drowned in watery light.  
Faint she expires ; and soon the giant Night,  
That all day long asleep on this side earth,  
Blinded by sunbeams lay, with freshened birth,  
Seizing a jet black mantle, full of wrath,  
Now throws it o'er the stars. Far to the north  
Where gleams the sailor's guide, the mantle flows,  
An inky sea ; shall it the stars inclose  
And hide their blessedness ? O radiant light !  
I hail with joy thy presence ! O delight  
Of wand'ers weary—pure and silver moon !  
Grant me, thy lover, this but trifling boon,  
Give the world light ! She with majestic mien  
Moves on her journey, patiently, serene ;  
Her light is music ! Night with hideous frown  
Attempts to drag her azure garments down,  
But she puts on her star-bespangled gown,  
And like a maiden half-afraid, yet strong  
In innocence, the attempted wrong  
Bravely repels, and through the dreamy haze,  
She shames the darkness with her earnest gaze.  
Shout for the queen of heaven ! Fading stars  
Do hide themselves behind the cloudy bars,

Scouts of the night ; I, rapt in wonder, stand,  
With face uplifted, by cool breezes fann'd,  
Until the silver glory fills mine eyes,  
With liquid from the wells of Paradise !

July, 1870.

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### ON LIBERTY.

THERE was a time when songs of liberty  
Were all my drink, my spirit's wholesome air,  
Nothing in life seemed half so good and fair  
As red cap—revolution—sympathy  
With men whose utmost merit was to dare,  
Dagger in hand, the tyrant in his lair,  
Filling the world with woe and misery  
By one ensanguined deed ! I would not give  
The whisper of a cheer—approve of, hold  
Myself in unison with men who live  
Treach'rous wolves within the lost sheepfold !  
Ruled I would be, if ever, by the bold  
Determined man of action and of mind,  
Albeit heartless, than by idle crews,  
Lawless and brutal, changeful as the wind,  
Whom naught but crimson plunder can amuse !  
19th Sept. 1870.

## DREAMS.

WHEN deep sleep settles on mine eyelids, and  
Strange murm'ring sounds fall on each heed-  
less ear,  
Resigned and free I roam the mystic land,  
Of shadowed dreams, with mingled hope and  
fear,  
And tread with aerial feet the golden strand,  
Where earth and tide and time all dis-  
appear.

For in my dreams the sad world bears no part,  
Nor yet doth Time his glass before me hold,  
No wicked slander sends its poisonous dart,  
But soft and pleasant fancies do enfold  
Me in their soft embrace, and to my heart  
Bring back the gladness of the days of old.

There cometh not to me day's woe and pain,  
Turning my brightest hopes to black despair,  
But to the measure of a joyous strain,  
My feet oblivious tread the dreamy air



Of that strange land where mind alone doth  
    reign,  
Leaving the body to its bed of care.

Sometimes I ask myself in sad affright,  
    Can this strange life be yet the stranger  
    dream

Of that dim shadow'd life which in the night  
    Doth bind my thoughts with golden chain  
    supreme,

Flashing on my enraptured, eager sight  
    A host of visions that of heaven seem ?

O golden dreams ! O visions rich and strange,  
    Gilding my gloomy life with sunny ray,  
Bringing to my sad heart a little change,  
    To tear me from the torments of the day,  
That would, but for thy power, me derange,  
    Keeping me in their narrow, toilsome way.

Still raise me in the night to that rich clime,  
    Still lead me through thy green and leafy  
    bowers

To golden temples, where the happy chime  
Of silver bells ring out the blissful hours,  
That are not measured by the hand of time,  
But laden all with happiness and flowers.

O hearts that suffer ! come and taste awhile,  
The blessed raptures of a bright surprise.  
Come ! leave the world, and revel in the smile,  
Of that strange god of dreams who steeps  
our eyes  
In drowsy sleep, and doth our cares beguile ;  
So that they leave us till the bright sunrise.

9th June 1867.

With this dream of "bright sunrise"—  
the sunrise which in no sense was ever to  
be for him, in this world, I end all that  
I have found worth printing of John  
Martin's poetry. It will be seen, as I said  
before, that his prose is, on the whole, far  
the best. There are fine lines, daring and  
beautiful images, here and there ; but very

little of it can be considered real poetry, sustained, polished, artistic work, on which a man might found a reputation. There is a rough originality about it at times, especially in "The Dead Poet" (which, read by the light of his own sad story, becomes very touching), and in those verses wherein he paints, from nature, the human Inferno at the East-end of London in which nearly his whole existence was passed. Still, his life was the poem, not his writing. If I have tried to save both, at least for a little while, from the depth of that Lethe-stream which is carrying us all so fast away, it has done, at any rate, no harm, possibly some little good.

I had intended placing a stone over his grave in Plaistow Cemetery ; but found he had been buried in a common grave with several others, and though the place could have been identified, it was so far off, so

entirely removed from the region of his life and work, that Mr. Linklater and myself agreed that any memorial of him had better be placed there, where all who knew him, and especially his "boys," could see it every Sunday. Accordingly, there will shortly be erected, in St. Peter's Church, London Docks, a white marble tablet, very simple, very plain, so that "he who runs may read;" the inscription upon which may fitly end this book—

JOHN MARTIN,

SCHOOLMASTER, POET, AND CHRISTIAN;

Born at Wapping, Nov. 26, 1846; ended there a most  
suffering, patient, and heroic life, and entered  
into eternal rest, Oct. 13, 1876,  
aged 29 years.

THE END.

# MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S

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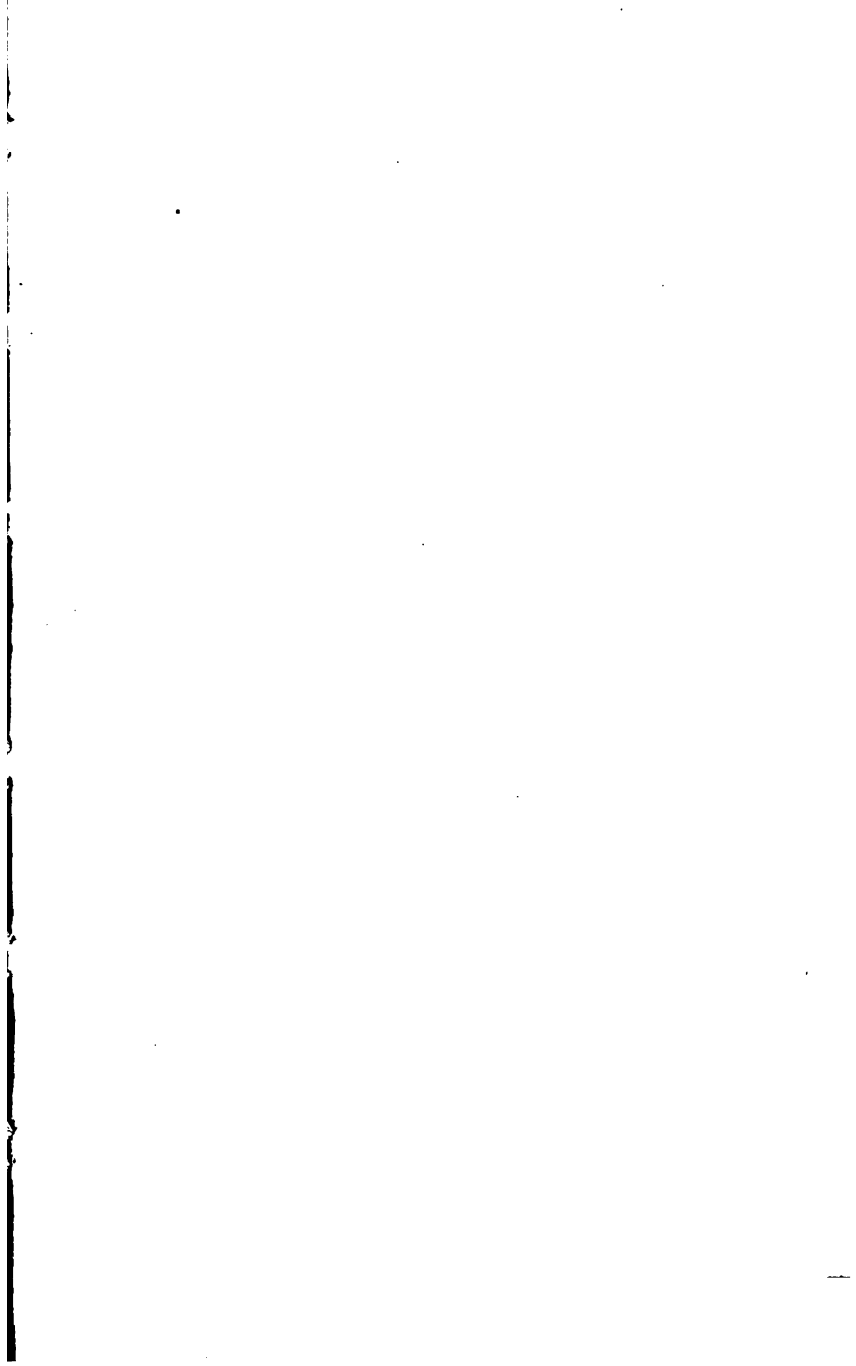
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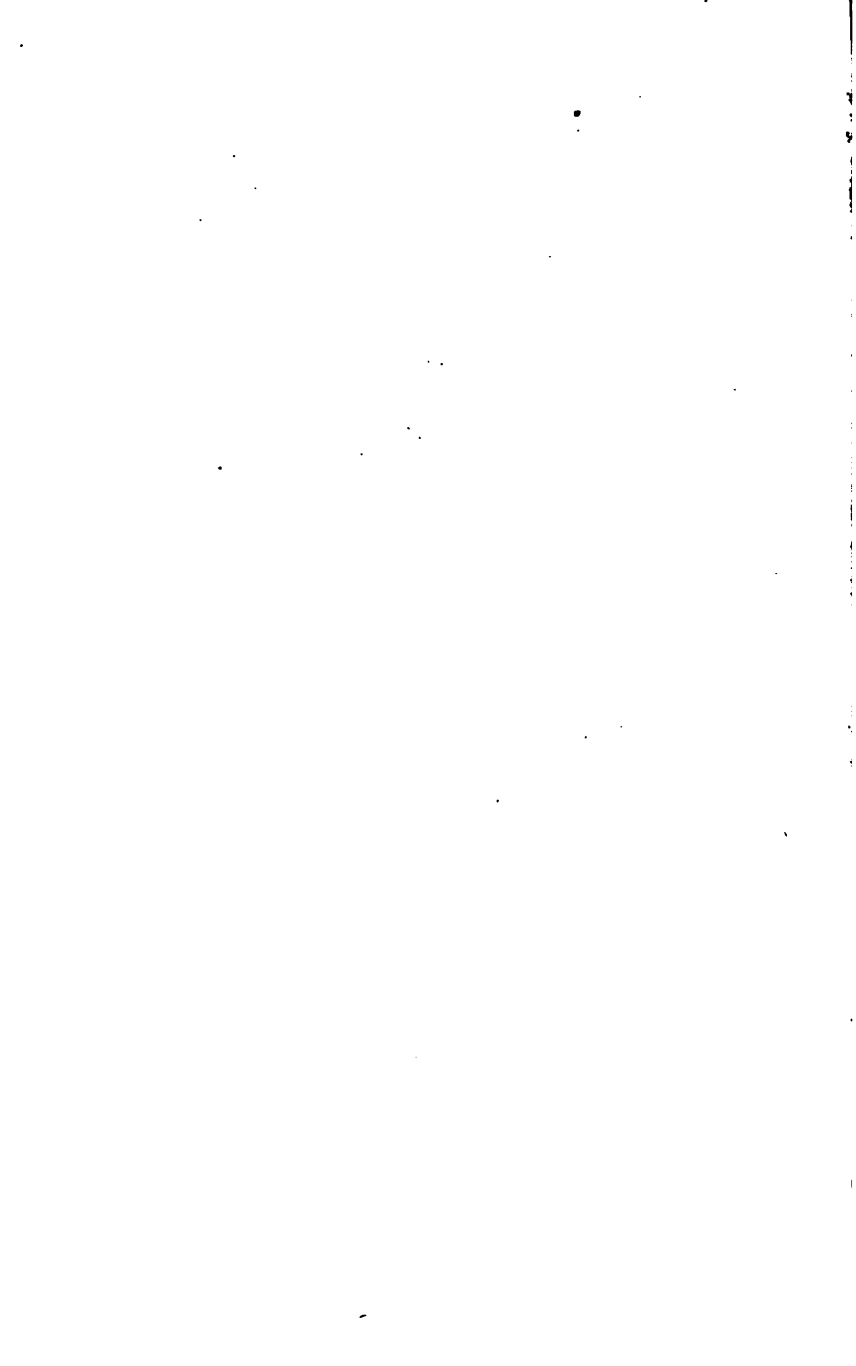
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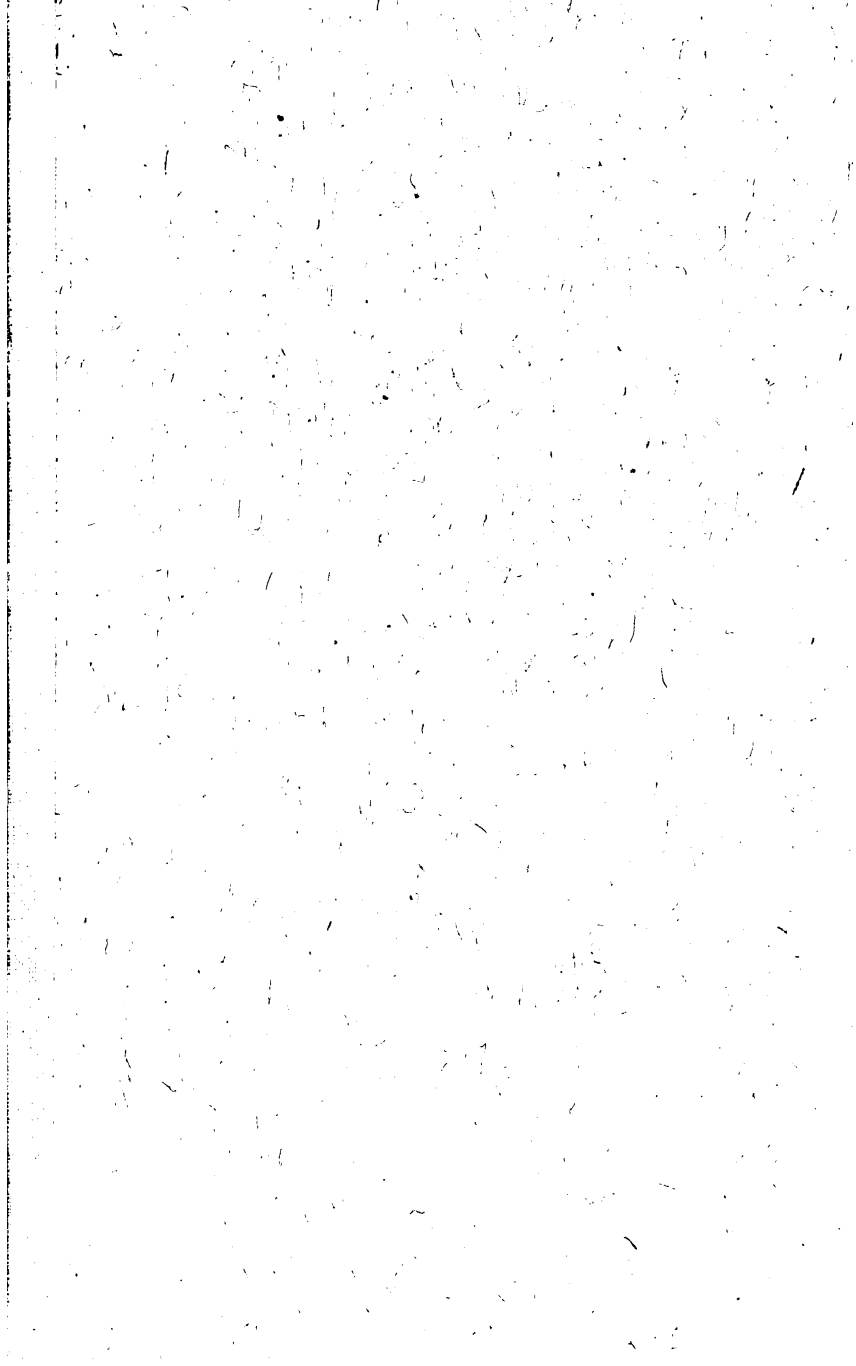
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