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II

DEMOCRATIC SONNETS
BY WILLIAM MICHAEL
ROSSETTI VOL. II.

LONDON: ALSTON RIVERS, LTD.

BOOKS 67, HOLBORN CIRCUS

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DEMOCRATIC SONNETS



**DEMOCRATIC SONNETS
BY WILLIAM MICHAEL
ROSSETTI**

**LONDON : ALSTON RIVERS LTD.
BROOKE ST. HOLBORN BARS
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**BRADBURY, AGNEW, & CO. LD., PRINTERS,
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ITALY

THE BROTHERS BANDIERA, 1844

Brothers in race and arms and glorious faith,
Attilius and Emilius, antique names
Re-born, you Italy urged with all her shames ;
Ye broke your bond of Austrian sea-rule. Scathe
Of limb or life ye coveted, and Death
Smiled to you with the thorn-crown. Not the flames
Round Joan of Arc, nor Christians' circus-games
With tigers, pale the lambent lights which bathe
Your blood-smear'd brows. Frantic the patriot dares ;
Not vainly frantic, up the eternal stairs
Martyrs ascend, ascend, and with them ye.
Cosenza saw you and those other seven,
Sons of her birth-throes, die for Italy :
Nine names inscribed in rolls of earth or heaven.

MANIN, 1849

He stood for Venice, and he faced it out,
Manin for Venice desolate and sublime.
He seized the hint of the tumultuous time,
And her lagoons made answer with a shout.
And Austrian legions, turned to sudden rout,
Have shown their rear, and now the jubilant chime
From Mark's colossal belfry o'er the slime
And ooze of islets clangs, and sea-folk doubt
If their saint's lion does not also roar
His response. Soon beleaguered Venice stands
A siege of famishing months, and alien hands
Pluck her dimmed sea-crown, once the world's amaze.
Struggling the last in Italy, no more
She sees Manin, but still secretes his praise.

GABRIELE ROSSETTI, 1854-1870

My father, when thy latest breath was drawn,
And stark mortality alone remained,
The retrospect of seventy years was stained
With hope deluded, valiant effort gone
To nothingness, and Tyranny's hungry yawn
Glutted with patriots' lives. The cause ungained
Of Italy flickered dim : yearning and pained,
Her broken voice despaired almost of dawn.
And then, my father, five quick-lapsing years
Revolved, and freedom shimmered to her eyes,
The chain dropped link by link, and unity
Now girds her round. Is this thing known to thee ?
Known or unknown, the fruitless enterprise
Beaconed thy life, and last the fruit appears.

1870

FELICE ORSINI, 1858-1859

Orsini dared the crime. Crouched in the dust,
The dust which centuries of empire left,
Italy terrified his eyes—bereft
Of glory and majesty, the slave of lust
And indolence, the sport of laws unjust,
The unhoodwinked tool of priests, the secular theft
Of alien tyrannies whose sabres cleft
Her panoply to fragments. As the crust
Of a volcano splits with instant flame,
So fired the Roman's thought. The immediate fiend
Of Italy he divined on France's throne.
The uprooting hand sowed seed ; be it fear or shame,
Napoleon, arming, hushed the Lombard moan.
Happy Orsini, wreathed and guillotined !

KING BOMBA, 1859

King Bomba—Did the opprobrious ruffian live ?
Was it an ugly dream which of him told
The ignoble history ? True, we had learned of old
The Bourbon stock was privileged to give
Its basest kings to Naples. Through the sieve
Of abject Fate a Ferdinand was rolled,
And then a Francis—each of them more bold
For murder after perjury's sedative
Had been drunk up with lickerish promptitude.
And now the second Ferdinand, more vile
Than sire and grandsire both, befouls the land
For years, and on it leaves a nauseous brand—
The Jesuit's shuffling and the assassin's smile.
And last the living corpse makes loathliest food.

THE RED SHIRT, 1860-1867

Red like the dripping hands of Italy
Bathed sacred in the drops her martyred sons
Have shed through all this century which runs
Crimsoned in streaks to meet eternity :
Red as the venomed blood of Tyranny
Dyes and re-dyes the dagger's steel-blue thirst :
Red like the conclaved cardinals accurst
By whom the Holy Ghost to papacy
Raised their Ninth Pius, whose nine ravening lives
Cat-like forecast the octogenarian gloom :
Red like Orsini's trunk-dissevered face,
Which still his antique-tempered soul survives :
Oh red the shirt on which a redder trace
Of blood attests the patriot or his doom.

CAVOUR, 1861

The statesman holds his place in patriotism.
Not his to launch the fireship all ablaze,
The great idea which clothes with light and slays ;
Not his to plunge and perish in the abysm,
An immolated Curtius ; cataclysm
Of horrent glorious war spends not his days
In labours which his country's pæan of praise
Alone requites. But he must joint the schism
Twixt end and means, hope always, strive amain,
Weld the red-roaring mass to tempered steel,
Accommodate, retard, force onward, lure.—
Kneel to Mazzini and Garibaldi, kneel,
And bless them, Italy : then rise, and strain
In mother's arms thy statesman son Cavour.

DANTE'S SIXTH CENTENARY, 1865

Six hundred years ago—six hundred years,
Drop in his ocean of eternity—
Was born our Dante, son of Florence free,
Son of the world, and son of heaven which hears
His chaunt that rolls amid the rolling spheres,
And makes archangels hearken distantly
Amid their praises of the One in Three :
And men are listening meanwhile, thrilled with tears.
Dante, this world is now thy pilgrimage,
And the supernal Righteousness thy home,
And Florence is once more thy mother now,
Not stepdame. Thine from age to iterant age,
And from that she-wolf's lair unto the Rome
Where Christ is Roman, palm and laurel-bough.

VICTOR EMANUEL, 1867

Man of his word, and king. Scarce credible
The combination. If it here is true
In part, yet partly we must blot it through,
And call him Victor, not Emanuel.
Savoy and Nice dissevered fit not well
Such words, and Aspromonte stains a hue
Of Judas' blood mixed with the purest dew
Of Garibaldi's, and Mentana's hell
Of musket-fire has grimed them blacker yet.
Put not thy trust in princes, Italy.
Thou whom thy Rome has stamped Republican,
And whom thy Florence so re-stamped, and he
Thy son Mazzini : pay no undue debt
To Cæsar, but to Freedom and to Man.

ROME AND ITALY, 1870

More than millennial has the cycle rolled,
And now once more at last the Roman name
And the Italian only mean the same.
Now have the tocsin and the deathbell tolled
One clang together for the new and old ;
And to the tocsin flocks with eyes aflame
The nation, and the deathbell knells the shame
Of popedom's sway into its graveyard cold.
Brutus, Camillus, and Aurelius, stand
Awfully shadowed on the Capitol ;
And in his house Rienzi seems alive ;
And Garibaldi feels upon his hand
Mazzini's ghostly hand-grasp ; and round all
Men's nobler tears with noble triumph strive.

MAZZINI, 1870

Mazzini, greatest, purest of our time,
The future truth's proscribed interpreter ;
Exiled, yet fibre of inmost chords which stir
The heart of Italy to beat its chime ;
In dereliction and in want, sublime ;
The pilgrim Magus bearing nard and myrrh
To Freedom's manger-cradle ; Triumvir
Of Rome ; for Italy's sake unscared by crime.
In Europe's sick-room thou from year to year
Wast always burning on—the single light
Never extinguished, never flickering.
To thee, and not to statesman nor to king,
Thine Italy's first debt is due, who here
Stands One, in history's and in hell's despite.

GARIBALDI, 1871

The Hero of the World. America
Has seen him charging in the battle's stress ;
And Rome has seen him in her bitterness,
That brief eternal glory of her sway
Triumviral ; and Como's mountain-way
Acclaims his swoop ere Austria yet may guess
His talon's fury ; Sicily no less
And Naples see and worship. When his day
Is almost done, and while Mentana's scar
Still rankles deep, he fights for prostrate France—
In Rome his Judas double-dyed, in Nice
His very birthright's prey-bird. Utterance
Here falters : Men, who hail his light afar,
Name "Garibaldi," and then hold their peace.

GERMANY

HEINE, 1856

The most delicious master of the lash,
Most intricate in choice simplicity,
Sweetest in love-lilt, and in irony
Consummate, as the opposed perceptions clash,
And leave a tingling silence ; born to abash
The priest and acolyte, and half to free
The ponderous German mind with augury
Of coming storm and sunshine when the crash
Of lightning-hearted France shall penetrate
The air which kinglets and professors breathe :
Heine, the clarion of all brains which seethe
With bright revolt and swift iconoclasm ;
Unvanquished martyr of his eight years' spasm ;
French German Jew, immortal reprobate.

ALSACE, 1871

The wheel is come full circle. From the day
When, monarch-highwayman great Louis seized
On Strasburg, and so rounded off well pleased
Alsatian conquest in his kingliest way,
Till now that staggering France has gasped her yea
To Germany and Bismarck, unappeased
With conquest if their foeman be not eased
Of provinces and milliards, while the clay
Which once was legioned men is trodden down
In hasty graves—from that day until this
German Alsace was French, who now once more
Is German. Shall another day outpour
Her heart-blood's crimson-streaming witnesses
For French Republic or for German crown ?

AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY

METTERNICH, 1848

Abhorred of Europe, moveless Metternich,
The despot's prop, the people's adversary :
Oh name of nameless stench to Italy,
Name in Galicia to turn patriots sick,
While scythe-armed serfs stagger in blood : the thick
Of trouble has been passed, the continent, see,
Strangles in the garotte of tryanny,—
When lo thy Vienna hoists thee with a kick,
A kick which vibrates worldwide. Vanish hence,
Abominable, nor find for penitence
A throb or blush ; wear still the impassive mask,
Diplomatise, and rot from off the earth.
Rotten thine empire and thy lifelong task,
And Europe's tocsin rings terrific birth.

HUNGARY AND EUROPE, 1849

How long, O Lord ? The voice is sounding still :
Not only heard beneath the altar-stone,
Not heard of John Evangelist alone
In Patmos. It doth cry aloud and will
Between the earth's end and earth's end until
The day of the great reckoning—bone for bone,
And blood for righteous blood, and groan for groan :
Then shall it cease on the air with a sudden thrill :
Not slowly growing fainter if the rod
Strikes here or there amid the evil throng,
Or one oppressor's hand is stayed and numbs ;
Not till the vengeance that is coming comes.
For shall all hear the voice excepting God,
Or God not listen, hearing ?—Lord, how long ?

HAYNAU, 1849-1850

**He bared the backs of women, and he whipped
Their naked flesh : women, Hungarians born,
Whose crime was thrilling with their country torn
By dual beak of Austria's eagle. Stripped,
Bleeding, half-conscious, they withdrew, belipped
With hideous jibe and bestialism of scorn.
Remember, Hungary, their faces worn
With tears and outrage. Therefore is he gripped
By men's and women's curses unextinct :
Therefore his deeds of prowess died, this one
Surviving : therefore London labourers,
While two names, Haynau and Hyæna, run
Together for the unreverend old man linked,
Pound his gaunt body like a mangy cur's.**

RUSSIA

CZAR NICHOLAS, 1855

The drill-master of Europe. He surveys
The millioned world, and sees their staggerings
Under their princely burdens, and the springs
Of thought half choked with refuse ; and his days
Are given to cumbering up the tortuous ways,
And stamping, with the brute behest of kings
And soldiery's heel; each tongue of flame which brings
Nearer the roar of freedom's crimson blaze.
An iron-nerved colossus, he bestrides
Poland and Caucasus and Hungary,
And shadows Europe with his clanking strength.
Trampled, the Turk writhes upward 'gainst his knee ;
And, ere the on-gathering occidental tides
Of war recede, Death measures out his length.

THE RUSSIAN SERFS FREED, 1861

Honour his puissant gracious thought who freed
The serfs of Russia's awful stretch of land ;
Twenty-three millions of the human sand
Of steppe, wold, forest, which had served the greed
Of lords to flaunt with, and which seemed indeed
Made to be dragged at chariot-wheel, or fanned
By war's typhoon abroad : honour the hand
That sowed with autocratic sweep the seed
Of free men and free women—glorious growth.
Upon their squalid pallets myriads lay
Slaves of the soil that night : but, when the day
Over their continental area shone,
The age-long-cankering collar quitted loth
The loathing necks, and serfdom's curse was gone.

U of M

POLAND, 1863

Plague-spot of Europe, Poland ! Till the curse
Of triple-throated bandit-tyranny
Be expiated irreversibly
On those who inherit from the murderers
Of a whole nation's right, and till the hearse
Be laden by a people once more free
With that oppression's dead putridity,
And Poland's air again be pure to nurse
Her natural chainless brood of valiant men—
Till this thing be achieved, the plague from here
Shall not be swept. Year may succeed to year
In treacherous quiet ; then again the pest
Breaks forth to slay its myriads—one in ten
A despot's tool, and patriot souls the rest.

1863

AMERICA

JOHN BROWN, 1859-1863

When centuries shall call this nineteenth old,
And many a great one of our little day
Shall lie as recordless as common clay
Which he returns to, and our vaunted bold
And wise shall count for nothing—from the cold
Dank past this name will dart a quenchless ray,
And children's babbling tongues will learn to say,
"John Brown the martyr of black men bought and sold."
Room 'mid the saints and martyrs! Hang him high,
Virginians, where your sons of Cavaliers
See the scourge sopped and hear the negress groan.
Room 'mid the Union's armies thundering on:
Room where the worshipped ignominy appears—
This gibbet near a cross on Calvary.

THE SLAVES FREED, 1865

Black skin and darkened mind ; sinews and thews
Born to be worked and sold and worked again ;
Limbs conscious of the long ancestral chain ;
Souls which must pay their covenanted dues
To Christ's evangel through the Scribes' abuse ;
Their yellowing daughters outraged ; as the brain
Expands, youth tongue-tied ; in the legal train
Of the slave-hunter bloodhounds running loose.
Pulpit and law-court lash the negro down.
Then lightens war, and cannon-thunders boom,
Reverberating hope : next, liberty,
By Lincoln signed, has signed disruption's doom.
Emancipation last : hosannas drown
Delirious sobs, and blackest flesh is free.

LINCOLN, 1865

Now that the world is poorer by thy death,
Lincoln, we count thy virtues one by one,
And sum thee up the homelier Washington :—
Clemency, modesty, and simple faith,
Laborious patience constant as the breath
Of daily life ; the Union's cause, undone
By hands unfilial, by thy hand, her son,
Upheld, reknit, and conquering through the scathe
Of four years' Titan war unparalleled
By him who blood-red earned St. Helena.
The unslaved half worship that deep-furrowed brow
And face uncouth—sad, jesting, placid now
After Booth's bullet ; and America
Groans, and through Europe's jibe a wail is knelled.

THE GENEVA AWARD, 1872

Too long the sword has weighed the balance down
Of justice, and too long the clarion-cry
Has hurled its tens of thousands madd'ningly
To wallow in each other's blood, and crown
The crimson brows and unrelenting frown
Of one or other god of battles : high
He rears his cruel head and hand, and nigh
About him smoke of ordnance or of town
Aflame reeks incense. Englishmen on this
And that side of Atlantic, unto you
A less inequitable god ordains
More grateful worship and august strains
Of anthem. Peace to Righteousness the kiss
Re-seals, and through the old order gleams the new.

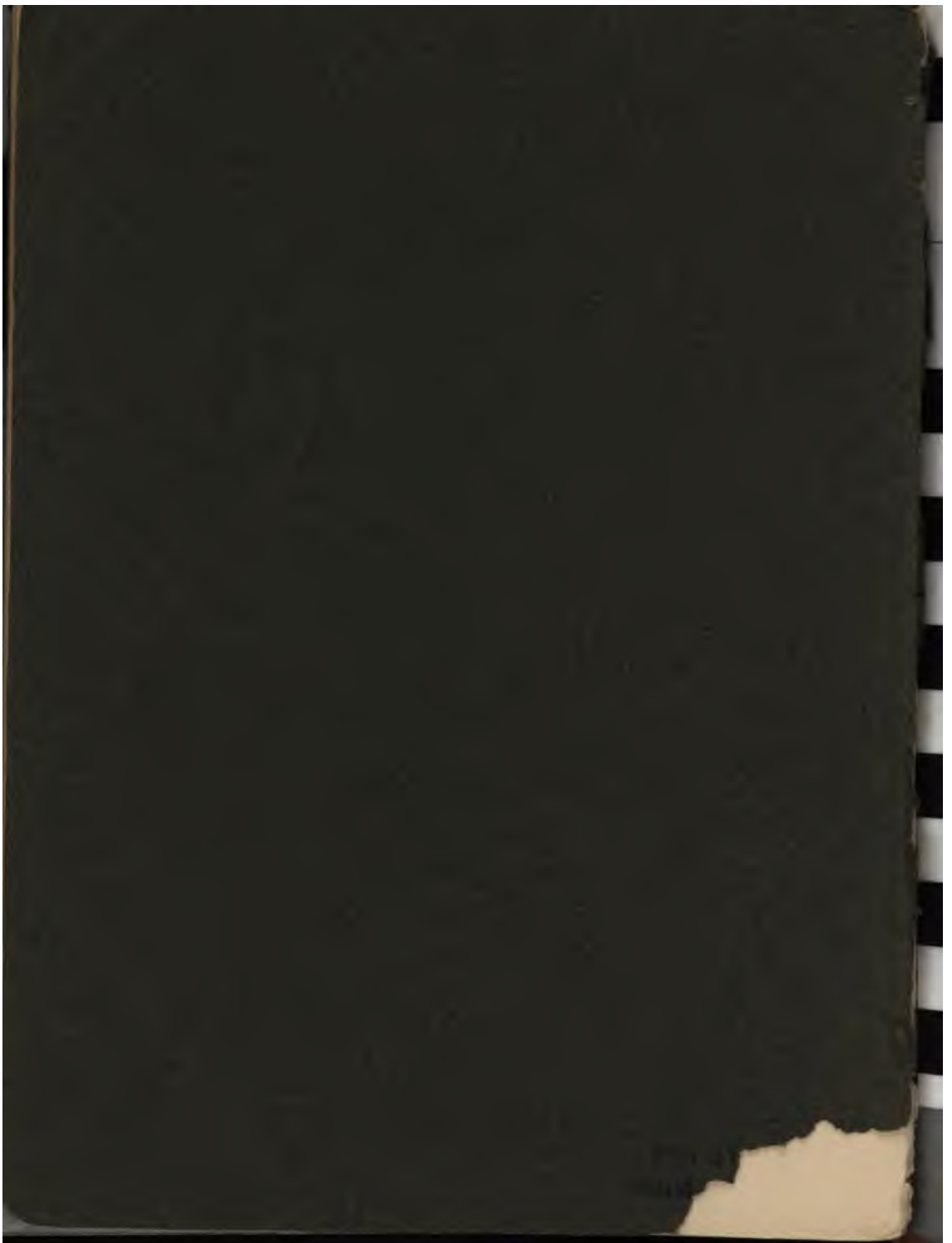
GENERAL

THE PAST

A purpose in the ages. Protoplasm
Grows polypus and fish and ichthyosaur ;
The molten fire-mass shrinks to cliff and scaur ;
Successive chasms leave Nature free from chasm ;
Vine-tendrils shall festoon the earthquake's spasm ;
Mammoth and mastodon and ape to more
And more of man progress ; and on the floor
Of earth vast rivers drain the swamp's marasm.
Last, History unveils her world of dreams.
Savages slaughter and gorge on savages ;
An Aryan here, a Mongol there, we see.
Egypt and Israel, India, Persia, Greece,
Italy, Spain, France, England, Germany,
America, scud fast in luring gleams.



**BRADBURY, AGNEW, & CO. LD., PRINTERS,
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DEMOCRATIC SONNETS

BY WILLIAM MICHAEL

ROSSETTI

VOL. I

LONDON: ALTON RIVERS LTD.

BRIDGE ST. HOLBORN, E.C. 4

1911

**DEMOCRATIC SONNETS
BY WILLIAM MICHAEL
ROSSETTI**

**LONDON: ALSTON RIVERS LTD.
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BRADBURY, AGNEW, & CO. LD., PRINTERS
LONDON AND TONBRIDGE

DEDICATION

(TO THE MEMORY OF DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI)

Brother, my brother, in the churchyard mould
Where canopied by fame thou liest asleep
In that inscrutable unuttered deep
Which Death has channelled from the years of old,
While day and night, procession multifold,
Finite in infinite, their vigil keep,
And men, ere yet the sickle reaps them, reap
Harvest of grain and their own deeds untold :
Gabriel, accept what verse may dedicate—
A brother's heart deep-dinted with the pang
Of one remembered mortal Easter-day.
Silent the lips which might have answered yea—
Lips out of which the laden spirit rang
Reverberant echoes—Love and Change and Fate.

All the Sonnets in these volumes are original in the sense that they have not hitherto appeared in book form, and only three have been published in periodicals.

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE great majority of these Sonnets were written in 1881 ; a very few perhaps in 1882 ; one, named " Hungary and Europe," in 1849. The last named has been published more than once already, and mostly under the title " Democracy Downtrodden," but the present title represents the true motive with which the Sonnet was composed.

It seems requisite to say this much, as the general title of " Democratic Sonnets " might induce a reader to suppose that the series relates to or includes topics of the present day—whereas in fact its purview closes with the remote year 1881 or 1882, and most of the subjects are still older than that.

I began this series with the intention of treating any subjects, of a democratic or progressive kind, proper to the period of my own life, which commenced in 1829. I contemplated writing 100 Sonnets, but did not complete the number. Several Sonnets, however, beyond those now published were composed, but I have excluded those which appear to me to be evident failures. When I discontinued adding to the series, I set the whole affair aside, but now at last it sees the light.

It may be feared that several allusions in the Sonnets

will not be very apparent to readers of the present day; this could only have been remedied by appending notes. The dates printed to the respective Sonnets are, if nothing more precise is apposite, the dates of the deaths of the persons commemorated.

WM. M. ROSSETTI.

December 1906.

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

THE CORN-LAWS, 1846

“To toil and breathe, to eat our daily bread”—
This is the burden of the people’s prayer.
Here stands the cradle, the grave opens there ;
Between them life prolongs its tedious thread.
An oligarch serenely nods his head :—
“To toil and breathe I yield you, but to eat
Is less your part than mine, who am replete :
As for your bread, a tax is on it laid
For your sake partly, not forgetting mine.”
Unsay it, England, that this crime should be !
The populace hungers, and the nation strives.
At last a generous hand insidiously
Cancels the law-made dearth, choke-full with lives.
Our Lazarus eats ; let Dives dine and whine.

IRISH FAMINE AND EMIGRATION, 1846-1860

A desolated nation— Nation? No.
A herd of human cattle herdsmanless.
Their food-root putrefies, and horrid stress
Of famine drives them fiercely to and fro.
Hundreds drop down and perish as they go,
Thousands slow-wasting die in loneliness,
And tens of thousands clamorously progress
To want's low depths, and lower than lowest of low.
England arouses, and her succours pour
Amain, but hundred-thousands now have died.
The remnant of the nation looks around.
New thousands on to millions quit the ground
They love and shudder at, and Atlantic's tide
Wafts Ireland's future to his western shore.

O'CONNELL, 1847

O'Connell, Irishman of Irishmen :—
Whether he revelled in chicane of law,
Or championed brother-Catholics to draw
The levelling-line over the furrows then
When alien rule preferred, of one to ten,
The one, and left the ten to usquebaugh
And civil rights annulled ; whether his paw
Of velvet soothed the cuticle, or his pen
Wrote or voice hurled the roaring sentences
Which made ears tingle and broadest shoulders cower :
O'Connell, lord of Ireland and her hearts ;
Patriot and trickster, steeped in all the arts
To fire his friends and floor his enemies ;
Man of his decade, sovereign of the hour.

WORDSWORTH, 1850

Poet of man's life unsophisticate,
Poet of Nature's kindling influences,
Poet of reverent awe, and dim degrees
Of type, in this external human state,
For gulfs of the unknown and uncreate—
Wordsworth, we greet thee in the mountain-breeze
And by the streamside and on flowering leas,
And bow before thee simple and deep and great.
The poet honoured, still the man remains.
Loving the humble-thoughted patient poor,
He vailed his head before Authority.
Stiffening himself, he'd stiffen still her reins ;
And, nerveless at the future's augury,
Serried the ranks already too secure.

MARY SHELLEY, 1851

Daughter of her who never quailing led
In the forlorn hope of the women's cause ;
Daughter of him who reasoned out the laws
Of Justice in the State's firm balance weighed ;
Heart-mate and wife of one who, burning red
With world-embracing love, for ever draws
Into his orbit the thrilled globe, and awes
With visioned poesy each highest head
Of song for aye ;—White Mary, with the voice
The sweetest ever heard, rejoin him now,
In the long thirtieth year of severance.
With drowning Harriet's and drowned Shelley's brow,
Thine own has passed the gate of deathly trance :
He dies not, neither diest thou, his choice.

U of M

WELLINGTON, 1852

Statue of Duty, rock-carved Wellington—
The conqueror first of bayonet-swept Assaye,
The conqueror of Vittoria's dreadful day,
The conqueror when the stakes were lost and won,
And Waterloo's supremest hour had gone
Into the past with that which flamed away
At Austerlitz, and years of awful sway
Imperial, European. On and on
Have Fate and War converged their thunderers,
These twain, and now the field has gained in height
With corpses, and Napoleon turns to flight.
For him six years of daily death roll slow :
Thee thirty-seven peace-guerdoned fame-clad years
Wreathe, England's strongest son here lying low.

1852

LEIGH HUNT, 1859

The friend of Shelley. Thirty-seven years' space
Divides him from that day of dark July
When Spezia's widow watched with sateless eye
For the doomed bark which sinking left no trace ;
And still around his haggard youthlike face
And round his grey-grown hair's redundancy,
The sanction of that friendship leaves a high
And crownlike aureole and unuttered grace.
The friend of Shelley and the friend of Keats ;
The trenchant champion of our freemen's cause
In days when prisoning paid the championship ;
The poet-hearted saunterer whom one greets
In verse and comment, brisk of eye and lip :
Leigh Hunt, our brother in kindness' natural laws.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING, 1861

A silence falls upon the hearts of men,
And women's eyes thrill passionate with tears.
In Casa Guidi, Barrett Browning's years
Have ceased to flow ; and Love their denizen,
And High Intent and Genius, twinned again,
And Poesy who murmured in her ears
The secrets memorised by bards and seers,
And Fame who minted on those years his reign,
Quit the cold breast till now their tabernacle.
And mid the men's and women's grief a cry,
A cry of children, wails acutest throbs.
Proudly her England weeps ; her Italy
O'er soul-wrung stately features draws a veil ;
And very Womanhood, in blessing, sobs.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA, 1861-1865

Mourn, England.—“ Wherefore mourn ? Because my sons
Across the Atlantic wring each other’s throats,
And corpses reckon thick as simmering motes
In dusty sunbeams, and the roar of guns
Drowns the bride’s kiss, and o’er her nestled ones
The mother’s prattle where she sings and doats ?
Or because discord jars the triumph-notes
Which she, my child and cankered rival, duns
My tingling ears with ever ? ”—England, mourn—
Mourn for thyself if thou wilt not for these.
Thou stood’st erect, the champion of the slave :
And now thou floutest at the man who frees
The black and fettered limbs, while blessings rave,
Rave mid thy jeers, for slavery’s cause outworn.

LANDOR, 1864

Landor, of Latium's sons the most untamed,
Most ardent for the sound of Pallas' tongue,
Up learning's ladder coursing rung by rung
With lithe impulsion, and by men acclaimed
Scholar, and poet among their poets famed,—
Impetuous, dauntless : from his lips have sprung
Winged words of English Attic, while there clung
Around his heart and in his eye-flash flamed
Almost a savage instinct—chivalric,
And perilous alike to foe and friend.
When not aristocrat, republican ;
Gigantically less than full-grown man ;
Self-weaponed fighter, ancient in the thick
Of modern life, till the long-lingering end.

THE SUFFRAGE ENLARGED, 1867

Enlarge and yet enlarge the expansive bounds—
More Englishmen to rule, and ever more.
Set wide the creaking but unshutting door,
And clear the avenue which still resounds
Henceforth with franchised feet. The nation's grounds
Shall be indeed the nation's, and a roar
Of voices multitudinous shall pour
Into the statesman's dim recess who founds
A future on the present. Be it so :
More and more Englishmen to rule the state,
More and more Englishmen to rule themselves.
This man sways leagues of land where that man delves ;
Both citizens in England's fame elate,
Both wave-washed with their nation's ebb and flow.

FENIANS, 1867

An Irish patriot we have called a felon :
No matter ; there were always things and names.
Let's dub a thimblrig the king of games ;
Melon termed pumpkin still will taste of melon.
An Irish felon-patriot is a man
Who loves his country splotched with alien shames,
And dares a halter. And, if history blames
His frenzy, let us try the manlier plan
To win him back. With kindness ? Hardly that—
Bare justice : for Oppression's dastard heel
Stamped Ireland's brow, and made our name accurst.
Murder and confiscation set their seal
Of age-long outrage on her. Bell the cat ;
Strain not the intolerant sinews till they burst.

DICKENS, 1870

Friend of the friendless, curious-peering eye
Which, through the beggar's rags, the harlot's ban,
The reeking hide of the vulgarian,
Sees the quick heart of our humanity ;
Impatient reprobator of the lie
That flares and sputters in the seemly van
Of social order stablished, whereto man
And monkey jabber their responsive cry ;
Illuminator of the darkest slum
Of England and the world with humorous quip,
Which flashes, and wild laughter flashes too :
Dickens, swift Vanderdecken of such a crew
Of build outlandish as might man a ship
Where Laputa confronts our Christendom.

THE TRANSVAAL, 1881

Ghost of Spain's second Philip, scream applause,
Rattle a salvo with thy skeleton hands.
For thirty years thou warredst on their lands
And seas with Dutchmen, and the kites and daws
Fattened on slaughterous fields, and dug their claws
In gibbeted carcasses, and smouldering brands
Once human. Time's intolerable sands
Ran down at last, and the Republic's cause
Was stablished. England, her ally, was then
England. And now, thy opprobrious plagiarist,
First robbing Dutchmen of their camping-ground,
She pours her legions in, and with a mist
Of musketry she swathes resistance round,
Red from the shambles of death-daring men.

FRANCE

NAPOLÉON RE-BURIED, 1841

Bear, bear him home with honour. From the rock
Where England's vampire sucked the captive's blood,
Along the South and North Atlantic flood
To his remotest Paris bear him. Lock
With clamps of steel into the porphyry block
The bones of the unparagoned lord of men,
And self-incredulous let History's pen
Write—"Here for aye lies he whose deeds made mock
Of all the ages spread o'er all the world,
Napoleon." Read it, France, and, Europe, read.
Think of a continent of slaughtered sons,
Thought chained, a discipline of pomps and guns.
Think also—This was Freedom's heir who hurled
Her down, yet reigned by Freedom's grace indeed.

LOUIS PHILIPPE, 1848

His doom is sealed. Denounced from land to land,
Denounced from Switzerland and Italy,
From Egypt and from Spain denounced is he :
Their record on his forehead sears a brand.
Prudence and Fortune wait on either hand,
But fronting waits Pusillanimity.
Like a snail's slow and slimy track you see
Along the lengthening reign his craft expand.
The cry at last of a stung nation roars
That this is not and never was their king :
Throne three days rearing, in three days unreamed.
Three words, *Upharsin Mene Tekel*, heard :
Three words, three days, obliterate everything ;
One night to flit from French to English shores.

THE REPUBLIC, 1848

Republic, field unlimited of man,
Equal, free-pasturing, and generous ;
Home of the homeless and calamitous ;
World-wide embrace unknowing of caste or clan.
The voice of France re-risen in the van
Of Freedom and of Europe blares thee thus :
“ Mother and offspring, be once more to us
The goal of effort and of strength the span.”
A rumour breathes from Greece and breathes from Rome,
Re-rumoured out of lips in France’s tomb
Dusty with death and red with Ninety-three.
“ Republic ! ” cry her street-boys and her hosts,
And, steeled from her beheaded Tyranny,
Danton and Robespierre, tremendous ghosts.

SOCIALISM, 1848

Behold the Polar lights of Socialism,
Not yet a dawnstreak but a flickering sky.
A rapture glimmers in the credulous eye
Of darkened Labour. From the shifting prism,
The green of hope plays on the murky abysm
At Fourier's mandate : this is passing by,
When Communist heart-red flashes, or a dye
Of gold attests some new Icarian schism.
The unsuffering thousands laugh or sneer or rage :
The suffering millions still look hard and yearn.
Sages, sneer not. Though these things now be dreams,
They are the dreams of some millennial age,
An age when love of man to man shall burn
A world-wide light, no more a glimpse of gleams.

LAMARTINE, 1848-1853

The Revolution's aureole, Lamartine :
Clear poet-lumour, orator august,
Oracular historian, in the dust
Of the great First Republic, and its scene
Of whirl and awe (with here a headless queen,
And there a headless Danton and St. Just),
Undaunted,—now another Bourbon must
At thine own fiat flee : lo, he has been,
And thou command'st the helm. Victorious
In virtue, thou dar'st mete with measuring-rule
Chaos, and wisdom wields the enormous rage.
Four months. Ingratitude thine only wage,
Thou'rt huddled out of sight, and ravenous
On thy Republic's corpse-flesh gloats the ghoul.

THE COUP D'ETAT, 1851-1870

That Second of December, date of doom :
Doom of the oath which once a perjurer swore ;
Doom of the young Republic, her who bore
To power her traitor while her friends made room,
And now all sun-bright hopes are whelmed in gloom ;
Doom of the hundreds stiffening in their gore
On dinted pavements while the cannons roar—
Next, of the thousands whom the black simoom
Of despotism has swept from out their towns,
From out their France, to scorch in fierce Cayenne,
Or dwindle into death ere prison-bars
Relent ; doom registered for Europe's crowns
To league with this accursèd man of men,
Whose own doom waits, fixed fateful like the stars.

EMILE OLLIVIER, 1869-1874

Light-hearted Ollivier, the spectacled owl,
Spectacular. He plays at liberty
Of thought and speech and constitution, he
Who hears, not distant, Insurrection howl
For prey, and in the charged horizon's scowl
He strikes an attitude. Prime-ministry
Requites our spokesman of the obsequious free,
Installed with Morny's spectre cheek by jowl.
An imminent thunder crashes. He erects
A lightning-rod which topples-down the house ;
Napoleon sprawls, and with him Ollivier.
Splayed, charred, his people writhe. He picks his way
To academic shelter, and deflects
His weasand, less an owl than owl-wrenched mouse.

