

THE NEW ROME

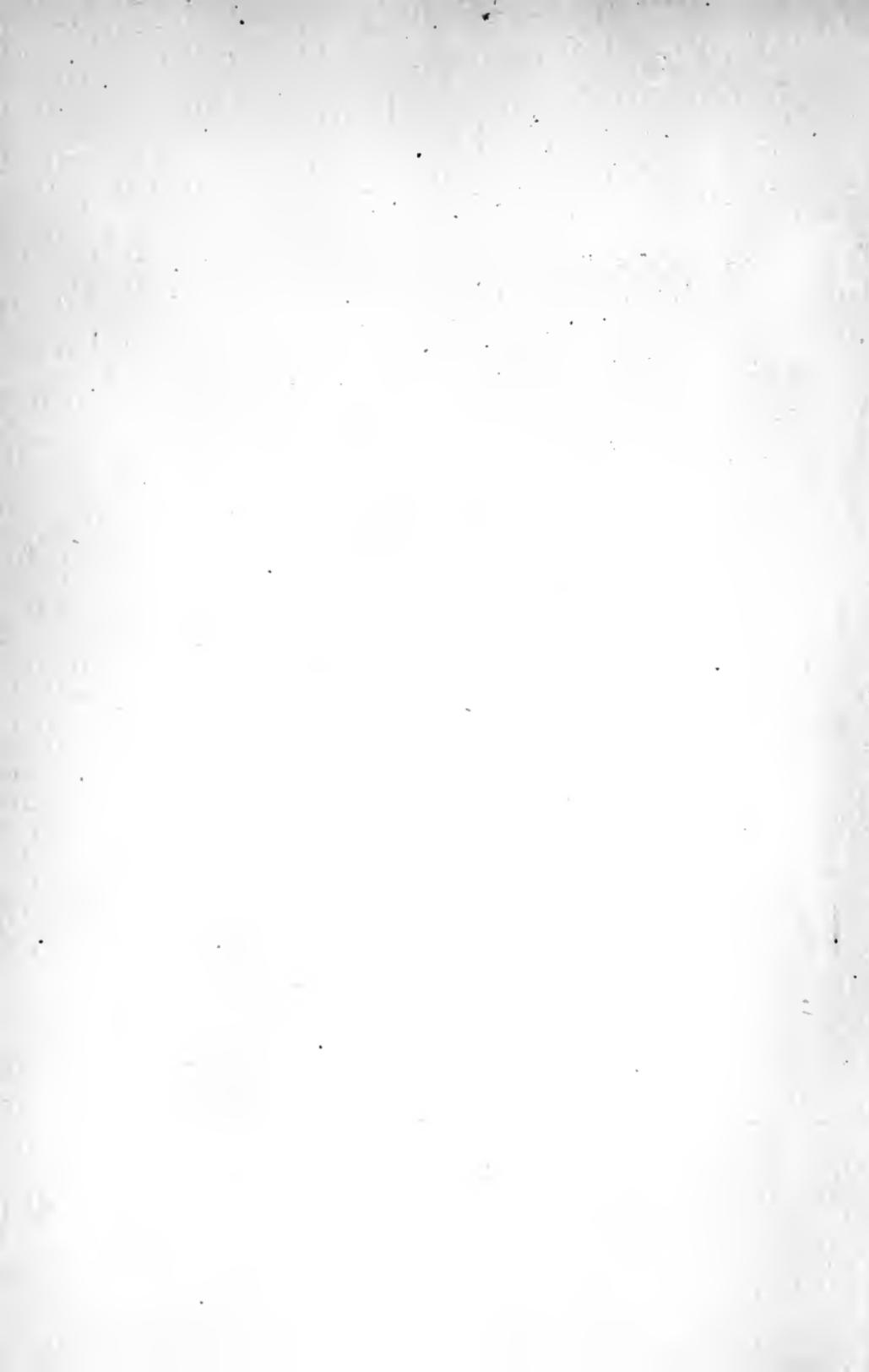
Poems and Ballads of our Empire

By ROBERT BUCHANAN



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THE NEW ROME.



Robert Buchanan.

~~Boris~~

THE NEW ROME:

POEMS AND BALLADS
OF OUR EMPIRE.

BY

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

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PROEM:
TO DAVID IN HEAVEN
[THIRTY YEARS AFTER].

“Quem Di diligunt, adolescens moritur!”



Proem.

TO DAVID IN HEAVEN.

THIRTY YEARS AFTER.*

Lo ! the pale Moon roaming
Thro' the autumn gloaming,
Walking yonder Heavens alone, as many a year ago !
Lo ! the dark streets under,
Hush'd their voice of thunder,
Silenced their mighty streams of life, and still'd their wails of woe !
Lo ! Night's benediction
Shed on all things sleeping,—
The round still Moon above,—beneath, the River silently creeping !

Do I dream, or waken ? . . .
On mine eyelids shaken
Falls the silver dew that shuts so many weary eyes ;
Sleeping not, I wander
'Neath the Moon, and ponder,
A dream that wanders in a dream, a soul that sings and sighs—
Sorrow clingeth to me,—
Time hath overcome me,—
Sorrow and Time pursue in vain the friend who was taken from
me !

* David Gray. See the Prologue to the author's *Undertones*.

PROEM.

Pale with dead ambition
 Comes his Apparition !
 Light of life, 'my boyhood's friend, so beautiful and fair !—
 Here in the night he lingers,
 Creeps close, with clay-cold fingers
 Touches my feverish aching brow, and softly smooths my
 hair :
 My heart breaks within me,
 My tears fall, and I name him—
 The soul alive with love and light, till the darkness overcame him.

In the City that slew him
 My spirit hungereth to him,
 Fain would clasp him close, but lo ! he fadeth and is gone !
 Lone and weary-hearted
 I think of days departed,
 The shining hope, the golden lure, that led our footsteps on !
 That led me even hither
 To Night and isolation,
 That crowns me with the weary crown of a sunless aspiration !

Is it gone for ever,
 The bright young endeavour,
 Hope that sang among the stars, and Joy that drank the day ?
 Has the deeply cherish'd
 Aspiration perish'd,
 And is the Dream we dream'd of old for ever fled away ?
 By the strife scarce ended,
 By the battle bravèd,
 Whisper a magic word to-night, from the grave where I left you,
 David !

Help me,—I am failing !
 So sad, so unavailing,
 Seem these weary waiting years, to your long years of rest !
 Yours the sweeter sorrow,—
 To strive not night or morrow,
 But tranquilly to sleep and dream, as on your mother's
 breast !
 Winter stealeth on me,
 The snow-time cometh nigh me,—
 Aye me ! the Spring, when I was young, and sang, and my friend
 was by me !

When we trod together
 Yonder land of heather,
 Poets gladden'd in the world, divinely dower'd and born—
 Now, the few remaining,
 Sad souls westward waning,
 Walk sighing and look backward to the darken'd gates of
 Morn !
 Dead Gods sadly beckon,
 Godlike Poets follow,—
 The hooting of the owl is heard in the Temples of Apollo !

What, then, shall awaken
 Souls of men forsaken
 By the Poets, by the Gods, by Hope and Faith and Song ?
 Teach me, ere I wander
 Through the shadows yonder,
 One word of comfort and of joy, to make my spirit strong !
 Ah, your voice is silent,
 Like those greater voices,—
 Gone is the glory of the Dawn, and the music that rejoices !

PROEM.

All I sang and sought for,
 Agonised, and fought for,
 In my hand is faery gold, these wan and withered leaves
 Wherefore still importune
 Fame or fickle Fortune?
 Ah, wherefore chase the Naked Shape that beckons and
 deceives?
 All I plead and pray for
 Is one glimpse of Maytime,—
 The light of Morning on the fields of the flower-time and the play-
 time !

How should Fame avail me,
 If you and God should fail me,
 Light of life, my boyhood's friend, who left me long ago?
 Empty now, full measure,
 O Fortune, all thy treasure—
 'Tis but a heap of withered flowers, and never a seed to sow !
 All I plead and pray for,
 Be it night-time or day-time,
 Is one red bud of living bloom from the rose-trees of the May-time !

Here, alone and weary,
 I hear man's *miserere*
 Sound from Temples where the Gods stand frozen into stone;
 Loud the world complaineth,
 But never a Bard remaineth
 To stand upon the mountain tops and trumpet mortals on !
 'Tis over, all is over !
 The world lies bereaven
 Of Time's young dream, of Love's bright lure, of the Hierarchies of
 Heaven !

Love me, David, love me !
 From thy place above me
 Send me strength to stand erect, in Life's great Hippodrome !
 The mob shrieks "*Ad leones !*"
 And on the Imperial throne is
 Christ with the crown of Antichrist, lord of another Rome :
 His legions shriek around him,
 His creatures deify him,
 But naked in the ring I wait, while the harlot Fame sits by him.

"*Loosen the wild beasts !*" Hither
 Springs Hate, and Falsehood with her,
 Fateful, cruel, leonine, they crouch and gaze at me !
 How shall arms avail me
 When all the horde assail me,
 And foulest, spotted like a snake, the leopard, Calumny !
 Alone in the arena,
 Strewn with dead and dying,
 I look into their eyes and wait, while the horde is multiplying !

Love me, David, love me !
 Stay and bend above me !
 Light of life, my boyhood's friend, there's still no love like
 thine !
 See ! I raise in token
 This sword blood-red and broken,
 And point at yonder scarlet thing, the Fame we deemed
 divine :
 The imperial Harlot rises,
 Her cold dead eyes look thro' me,
 With shrill clear voice she crieth "On !" and pointeth the wild
 beasts to me !

'Tis over !—all the splendid
 Dream of joy hath ended !
 Fame is Death, and Death is Fame,—and Death is victor
 here !

Once, in days departed,
 Dying happy-hearted
 I could have borne the martyr's doom,—but now I shrink in
 fear.

No Heaven opens o'er me,
 I hear no heavenly voices !
 Gone is the faith which fights or falls, when the heart of youth
 rejoices !

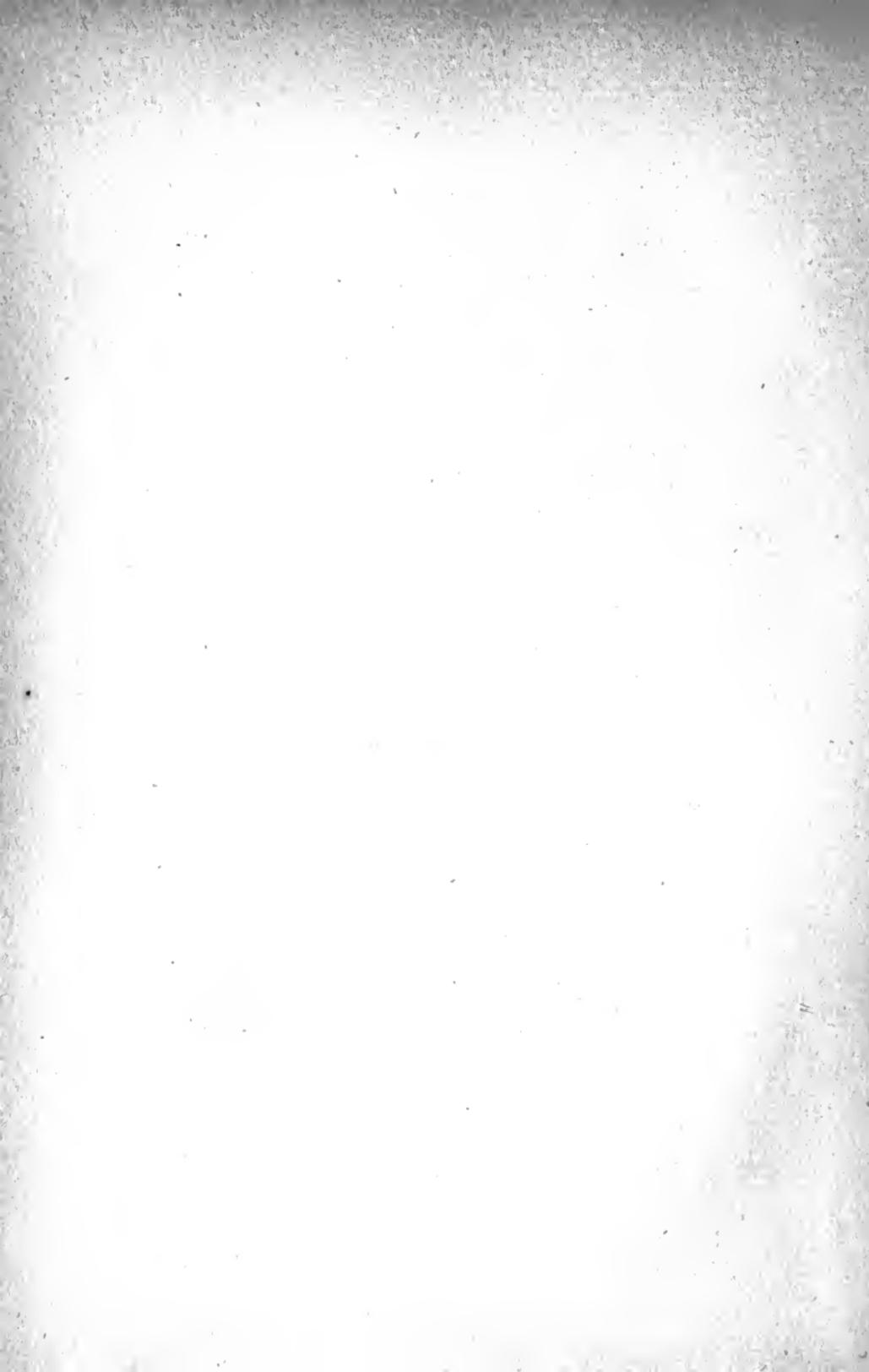
This we learn, who linger
 Beneath Time's wither'd finger,—
 In a little while we cease, and all our dream is o'er ;
 Youth's fair morning vision
 Of God and life Elysian
 Is but a foolish fantasy, a childish dream, no more ;
 This the wise have taught us
 Every weary morrow :
 That all the Glory and the Dream are the rainbows of our Sorrow !—

Better cease as *you* did !
 Star-eyed, divinely-mooded,
 Hoping, dreaming, passioning, fronting the fiery East !
 Better die in gladness,
 Than watch in utter sadness
 The lights of Heaven put slowly out, like candles at a feast !
 You emerge victorious,
 We remain bereaven :
 Better to die than live the heirs of an empty Earth and Heaven !

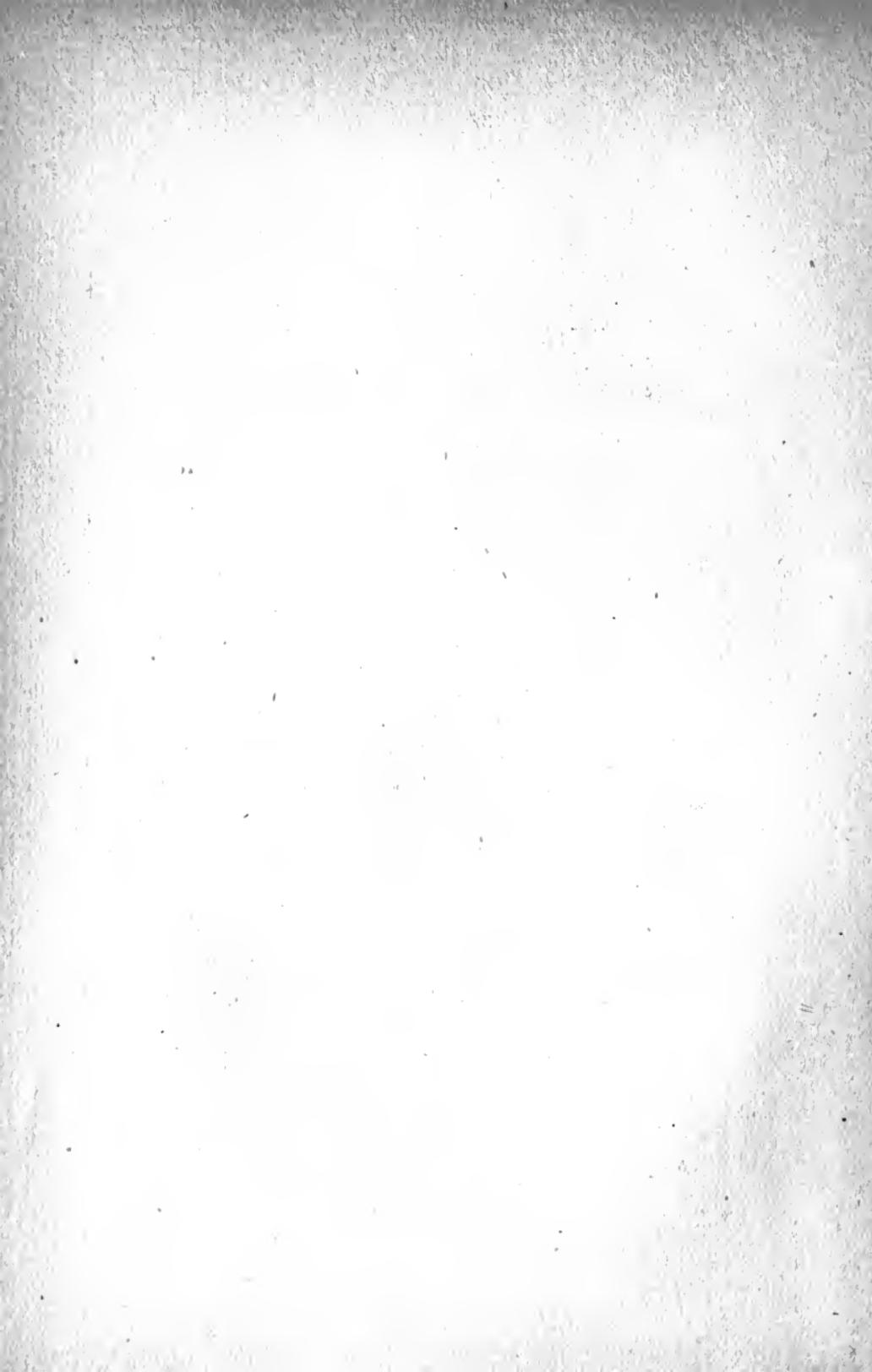
Stay ! and whisper to me
 Comfort to renew me—
 Say the broken Gods survive, say the dead Bards live yet !
 Tell me the Immortals,
 Past the grave's dark portals,
 Remember all the melodies that we on earth forget !
 That, gathering grace together,
 Gods and Poets wander
 In shining raiment, side by side, thro' a Land of Light up yonder !

Say, the upward-springing
 Heirs of noble singing
 Fill the starry thrones and keep their heritage supreme—
 Swiftly sunward flying
 Byron still is crying,
 Wordsworth along the calm blue aisles walks in his gentle
 dream !
 Shakespeare, grave and gracious,
 Reads some scroll of wonder ;
 Keats watches Homer's blind blue eyes, while the gods sweep past
 in thunder ! . . .

Ah, the dream, the fancy !
 No power, no necromancy,
 Peoples Heaven's thrones again or stirs the poet-throng !
 Nought can bring unto me
 You who loved and knew me,
 The boy's belief, the morning-red, the May-time and the
 Song—
 Faintly up above me
 Winter bells ring warning—
 Aye me ! the Spring, when we were young, at the golden gates of
 Morning !



THE NEW ROME:
A DIALOGUE.



THE NEW ROME.

(*Kensington Gardens. Late evening.*)

THE POET.

(*Declaiming from a manuscript.*)

“ ‘THE time is out of joint. O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right !’
Yet forth I’ll venture, leaping in the lists,
To join the knightly band of Satirists !
For since the hour——”

A VOICE.

Proceed ! I’m listening !
Prithee, remember I am always near
When Bards who ought to soar to Heaven and sing
Elect to crawl upon the ground and sneer !

THE POET.

Satan again !

THE NEW-COMER.

I see you recognise me !
The real and only Devil, whose cause dejected
You champion’d ’gainst a world that vilifies me,*
And so for Hell’s black laurel were selected !

* See “The Devil’s Case,” *passim*.

Yea, Satan! Not the gruesome Deil invented
 Up north by Kings and ministers demented,
 Not the Arch-Knave in bonnet and cock's feather
 Who scaled the Brocken peaks in windy weather,
 Far less that fop of fashionable flummery
 Beloved by Miss Corelli and Montgomery;—
 Nay, the true ÆON, friend of things created,
 Whom 'tis your glory to have vindicated!

THE POET.

What brings you hither?

THE ÆON.

Partly to remind you
 Of sundry noble themes well worth your while,
 My son, to sing of,—but alas, I find you,
 Putting this joyful Jubilee behind you,
 A-swing on Twickenham's too easy Style!
 'Ware satire, friend! and most of all, I pray you,
 Shun jogtrot jingles of the pinchbeck Masters!

THE POET.

And if my Muse refuses to obey you?

THE ÆON.

Be damn'd with Austin and the poetasters!
 But come, your subject?

THE POET.

ROME !—the new-created
 And dominant realm which now makes jubilation !
 This Empire, which is Rome rejuvenated !

THE ÆON.

Continue, if you please, your declamation !

THE POET.

“ Yet since the hour when in the throat of Wrong
 The Roman thrust his blunt-edged sword of song,
 Since as a tigress suckling cubs unclean
 The Imperial City fed its fiefs with sin,
 Full circle round the Wheel of Time hath rolled,
 And lo ! another Rome, like Rome of old,
 Heir of the ages, gathering hour by hour
 The aftermath of human pride and power,
 Pitiless as its prototype of yore,
 Sweeps on with conquering sails from shore to shore !
 As Rome was then, when all the gods were dead,
 When Faith was gone, and even Hope had fled,
 Yet when the Roman still in every land
 Knelt and upraised to Heaven a blood-red hand,
 So is our England *now!*—yea, here as there,
 Temples still rise and millions kneel in prayer—
 Pale gods of Peace are carelessly adored,
 While priests and augurs consecrate the Sword !
 ‘ Honour the gods ! ’ the people cry, who know
 Those gods were dead and buried long ago ;—
 Atheists in thought and orthodox in deed
 Men throng the forum and uphold the Creed,

THE NEW ROME.

For Fashion still preserves what Truth hath slain,
 Still simulacra of the gods remain,
 And still 'tis decent, 'spite the scoffer's sneer,
 To keep the word of promise to the ear
 And break it—to the Soul !”

THE ÆON.

Bravo ! a strain
 Which makes the little hunchback squeak again !
 Proceed !

THE POET.

You're laughing !

THE ÆON.

As you say !

THE POET.

Doth not the parallel strike home ?
 Is not the Empire of to-day
 Another and a lewder Rome ?
 Is not this Realm, whose flag unfurl'd
 Flies now where'er the surges roar,
 Even as that wonder of the world
 Sung by your Juvenal of yore !

THE ÆON.

My Juvenal ?

THE POET.

At least you'll grant
'Tis such a Bard the people want—
Fearless, free-spoken, sane, and strong,
To smite with stern and savage song
This monstrous Age of shams and lies?

THE ÆON.

Nay, on my soul! I recognise
The justice of your parallel,
As high as Heaven, as deep as Hell ;
But not by hate and not by scorn,
Not by the arts of bards outworn,
I work! I conquer and confute
By Love and Pity absolute!
And he who earns my praise must find
The Light beyond these clouds of Fate,—
By love, not hate, for Humankind,
Must he enfranchise and unbind
The slaves whom God leaves desolate!

THE POET.

Amen!

THE ÆON.

For in his throat he lies,
Who, taught by tyrants, sees in me
The Evil Spirit that denies,—
Nay, by my Christ's poor blinded eyes,
My task is to affirm and free!

THE POET.

Your Christ?

THE ÆON.

Yea, mine! I claim as kin
 All noble souls, however blind,
 Who freely stake their lives to win
 Respite of sorrow for mankind!
 'Tis true He failed, like all who fancy
 That tears can stay God's chariot-wheels,
 And seek with childish necromancy
 The Force which neither spares nor feels.
 Peace to His dream! He loved men well,
 Despite that superstitious leaven,—
 He help'd to calm the unrest of Hell,
 Although He failed to climb to Heaven!
 Like Him I place beneath my ban,
 With sycophant and knave and priest,
 Those bitter fools who find in Man
 Only the instincts of the Beast!
 For now (as you yourself have sung)*
 In faith in Man lies Man's last chance!
 Only the over-old or over-young
 Look on Humanity askance!
 But to your parallel again—
 How do you prove and make it plain?

THE POET.

Look back across the rolling years,
 Through Time's dark mist of blood and tears,

* See *infra*, "The Last Faith."

Across the graves of those who died
Despite their Saviour crucified,
And mark the imperial City rise
The cynosure of all men's eyes !
Domitian rules ! Though men still see
The crimson light on Calvary,
From east to west, in every land,
 The Roman banners are unfurled,
And the strong Roman's blood-red brand
 Reapeth the harvests of the world.
Shrieks of the slain beyond the foam
Gladden the crowds who rest at home—
The gilded throng at Cæsar's heels,
The runners by his chariot-wheels,
The Priests and Augurs who intone
Praise of the gods around his throne.
A thousand starve, a few are fed,
 Legions of robbers rack the poor,
The rich man steals the widow's bread,
 And Lazarus dies at Dives' door ;
The Lawyer and the Priest adjust
The claims of Luxury and Lust
To seize the earth and hold the soil,
 To store the grain they never reap,—
Under their heels the white slaves toil,
 While children wail and women weep !—
The gods are dead, but in their name
Humanity is sold to shame,
While (then as now!) the tinsel'd Priest
Sitteth with robbers at the feast,
Blesses the laden blood-stain'd board,
Weaves garlands round the butcher's sword,

And poureth freely (now as then)
The sacramental blood of Men!

THE ÆON.

Ah me!

THE POET.

Pursue the parallel :
Hear the New Woman rant and rage,
Unsex'd, unshamed, she fits full well
The humours of a godless age,—
Too proud to suckle fools at home,
From every woman's function free,
Lo (now as then!) she leads in Rome
The dance of Death and Vanity!
In manly guise she strives with men
In the Arena (now as then!)
Or by some painted Player's side
Sits lissome-limb'd and wanton-eyed,
Forgetting for a Mummer's nod
Her sex, her children, and her God!

THE ÆON.

Stop there! my poet must not flout at Woman!
"Das Ewigweibliche" is still my care!
Thro' her, so long the White Slave of the Human,
I mean to baulk the blundering Force up there!
The reign of Fools and Dandies, Prigs and Clerics,
Is o'er, with all its creeds of fiddle-faddle—
And lo, she leaves her vapours and hysterics,
And on the merry Wheel she rides astraddle!

Unsex'd? Enfranchised, rather! Slave no longer,
 Each hour she groweth saner, fairer, stronger,
 Full-soul'd in health, redeem'd from superstition,
 Yet mightier for her functions of fruition!

THE POET.

To breed and suckle fools and madmen? These
 Alone can live in the accurst time coming!
 Lo!—all the gods men hail'd on bended knees
 Are fallen and dead, and o'er the seven seas
 Only the little banjo-bards are strumming!
 O Age of Wind and windy reputations,
 Of Windmill-newspapers that grind no grain!—
 Where once the Poet sang to listening nations
 The leader-writer pipes his servile strain,
 Praises the gods he knows are dead and cold,
 Hails the great Jingo-Christ's triumphal car,
 Nay, in that false Christ's name, grown over-bold,
 Shrieks havoc, and lets loose the dogs of War!

THE ÆON.

Nay, pass the peddling knaves whose hands have hurled
 Trash by the ton upon a foolish world,
 Who print in brutal type the gigman's creed
 For the great mass of rogues who run and read!
 Come to the Seers and Singers, on whose page
 We read the glory of thy Mother-Age—
 Off hat to those, the mighty men, whose names
 The Empire honours and the world acclaim!

THE POET.

Find them!

THE NEW ROME.

THE ÆON.

I' faith, I leave that task to you—
Whom do you honour? Surely one or two?

THE POET.

Not those at least whom Rumour's brazen throat
Trumpets as worthy of the crown and bays—
Dress-suited sages, gentlemen of note,
Sure of the newsmen's nod, the gigman's praise.
I turn from them, the sycophantic horde
Who tune their scannel throats to praise the Lord,
And seek the heights whereon the Wise Men stand . . .
Lo!—the Philosopher!—with cheek on hand
And sad eyes fix'd on God's deserted Throne,
He cries, "Rejoice, since nothing can be known!
I show, beyond my ever-lengthening track
Of synthesis, the eternal—*Cul de Sac!*"
Lo, then, the Poet!—happy, and at home
In all the arts and crafts of learned Rome,
He sees the bloody pageant of despair,
All Nature moaning 'neath its load of care,
Takes off his hat, and with a bow polite
Chirps, "God is in his Heaven! The world's all right!"
Add unto these the Sage who in the school
Of Timon madden'd and became God's Fool,
And all the would-be Titans of the time
Who pant in cumbrous prose or rant in rhyme,—
Where shall one find, to slake his soul's desire,
The piteous mood or cloud-compelling fire?

THE ÆON.

More satire, eh?—I' faith, if you'd your will
The Gods of this our Rome would fare but ill—

You ask too much, my friend! . . . But hark, that cry!
 The hosts of *Tommy Atkins* passing by!
 The Flag that for a thousand years has braved
 The battle and the breeze is floating there!
 What Shakespeare glorified and Nelson saved
 Is worth, I think, some little praise and prayer!
 Even I, the Devil, at that note
 Seem the lump rising in my throat!
 'Tis something, after all, you must agree,
 To mark the old Flag float from sea to sea!

THE POET.

Amen!—God bless the Flag, and God bless those
 Who bled that it might wave aloft this day,
 The nameless fameless martyrs, who repose
 Unwept, unmourn'd, on shores afar away!—
 Honour to those who died for this our Rome,
 Honour to those who, while we crow at home,
 Preserve our freedom for a beggar's pay!
 "Let loose the dogs of War!" the gigman cries,
 Feasting on gold while *Tommy* starves and dies;
 "Glory to England and to us its brave!"
 He shouts, while hirelings dig the soldier's grave!
 O shame! O mockery! for a little gold
 The freedom which we vaunt is bought and sold,—
 And when a foeman smites us in the face,
 "A blow!" we cry; "prepare the battle-field!"
 Then bribe a starving wretch to take our place
 And draw the ancestral sword we fear to wield!

THE ÆON.

You're out of temper with the times

And overstate your accusation,—
'Tis not her follies or her crimes
That keep this England still a Nation !
The gigman's lust, the bagman's greed,
The counter-jumper's peddling creed,
Are foam and froth of the great wave
Of Freedom rolling proudly on—
This England's heart of hearts is brave
And duteous as in ages gone !
The mercenary, who fulfils
The bloody deed another wills,
No alien is,—within his veins the bold
And fearless blood of a great race is flowing—
The flower of Valour, though 'tis bought and sold,
At least is homebred and of English growing !
Enough of Rome ! My Poet's gentle eyes
Are blinded with the City's garish day—
Sleep in the Moonlight for a time ! you'll rise
Renew'd and strong, and Care will wing away.
Yonder among the hills of thyme and heather
I'm holding Jubilee myself full soon ;
The Spirits of the Age will feast together
And there'll be merry doings 'neath the moon.
Join us ! you'll find the mountain air more pleasant
Than this foul City gas you breathe at present ;
Since to your soul these voices sound abhorrent,
Exchange them for the voices of the Torrent ;
With dewy starlight freshen up your fancy,
Dip once again in Nature's lonely fountains,
And when you've drunk your fill of necromancy,
Flash back to Rome your message from the Moun-
tains !

SONGS OF EMPIRE.

“ Monstro, quod ipse tibi possis dare: semita certe
Tranquillæ per virtutem patet unica vitæ.
Nullum numen habes, si sit prudentia: nos te,
Nos facimus, Fortuna, Deam, cæloque locamus!”

JUV., Sat. x.

CARMEN DEIFIC.

I.

AWAKE, awake, ye Nations, now the Lord of Hosts goes by!
Sing ye his praise, O happy souls, who smile beneath the
sky!

Join in the song, O martyr'd ones, where'er ye droop and
die!

The Lord goes marching on!

'Mid tramp and clangour of the winds, and clash of clouds
that meet,

He passeth on his way and treads the Lost beneath his feet;
His legions are the wing'd Storms that follow fast and fleet
Their Master marching on!

From battle-field to battle-field He wends in royal array,
Dead worlds are strewn like wither'd leaves on his triumphal
way,

The new Suns blossom at his touch, the old spent Suns
grow grey;

Their Lord goes marching on!

His eyes are blind with their own Light, He knows not
where he goes,

The Day before, the Night behind, with all its wails and
woes,

And evermore on foul and fair His glory overflows

As He goes marching on!

He is the Sea without a bound, for ever strong and free,
 Lord of the worlds that break like waves, and every wave is
 He,
 He is the foam that flies and falls, and yet He is the Sea
 For ever rolling on !

He could not if He would turn back and listen to thy prayer,
 He could not if He would dispel the clouds of thy despair,—
 Impotent in omnipotence He wends He knows not where,
 For ever marching on !

He hath no time to pause a space and look upon thy Dead,
 How should He heed the living dust He crushes 'neath his
 tread ?
 Blind, deaf, and dumb, He heareth not when prayer or curse
 is said,
 But still goes marching on !

Awake, awake, ye Nations, now the Lord of Hosts goes by !
 Sing ye His praise, O happy ones, who round his chariot
 fly,
 Join in the song, if so ye list, ye Lost who droop and die,—
 The Lord goes marching on !

II.

Out of the dust beneath His tread,
 Ashes and dust beneath His train,
 Dust and earth of the living-dead,
 Rises this ant-heap of Rome again !

Tower and turret and palace-dome,
Mart and temple, arise once more . . .
Where is the glory that once was Rome?
Where are the laurels its Cæsars wore?

Quickens the dust to a human cry,
Ashes and dust take shape and form,
Once again as the Lord goes by
Ashes are living and dust is warm,
Crowds to our insect cities come,
Legions of ants increase their store . . .
Where is the glory that once was Rome?
Where are the laurels its Cæsars wore?

Empire fair as any of old,
Proud it stands in the rosy light!
For crumbs of bread and morsels of gold
Its people struggle from morn to night,—
Seize their plunder and carry it home,
Slay each other like folks of yore,—
So they slew in that other Rome
Plucking the laurels the Cæsars wore!

A little while and a little life—
A little life and an endless rest—
An endless rest to the fever'd strife
Of atoms heedlessly ban'd or blest!
Others have made this clod their home,
Lived and vanish'd through Death's dark door . . .
Where is the glory that once was Rome?
Where are the laurels the Cæsars wore?

III.

“ How long, my love,” she whisper’d,
“ How long shall it be,—
The light upon the mountain-tops,
The sunlight on the sea ?
For ever and for ever,
Or only for a day ? ”
He drew her gently to him
And kiss’d her tears away—
“ Perchance, dear love, for ever,
Perchance for a day ! ”

“ How long, my love,” she whisper’d,
“ How long shall it be,—
The joy that thrills across the earth
And mingles you and me ?
For ever and for ever,
Too sweet to pass away ? ”
He sigh’d, “ If not for ever,
At least for a day !
So heart to heart, my darling,
If only for a day ! ”

IV.

Stand up, Ephemeron !
This hour at least is thine, though it must fly !
So waste it not by gazing at the sky
With eyes so woe-begone !

Thou shalt be dust anon,
Who now art rapture and a living thing !
Grasping what gifts the winged moments bring,
Rejoice, Ephemeron !

Increase, Ephemeron !
Thou hast a time to quicken in delight,
And after thee shall others no less bright
Follow, when thou art gone !

Be proud and buckle on
Thy pigmy armour and thine insect mail !
Strive with thy kind, and, though a thousand fail,
Emerge, Ephemeron !

V.

If I were a God like you, and you were a man like me,
If from a throne omnipotent I ruled all things that be,
Tidings of light and love I'd send as far as thought could fly,
And one great hymn of happiness should sound from sky to
sky,—
And on your brow my gentle hand should shed the saving
dew,
If you were a man like me, and I were a God like you !

If I were a God like you, and you were a man like me,
And in the dark you prayed and wept and I could hear and
see,

The sorrow of your broken heart would darken all my day,
 And never peace or pride were mine, till it was smiled
 away,—

I'd clear my Heaven above your head till all was bright and
 blue,
 If you were a man like me, and I were a God like you !

If I were a God like you, and you were a man like me,
 Small need for those my might had made to bend the sup-
 pliant knee ;

I'd light no lamp in yonder Heaven to fade and disappear,
 I'd break no promise to the Soul, yet keep it to the ear !
 High as my heart I'd lift my child till all his dreams came
 true,
 If you were a man like me, and I were a God like you !

VI.

A voice was heard in the night, and it haunts the night for
 ever,
 And these are the words of the Voice that God shall silence
 never :

“How often, God of the Glad, and God of the Lost, shall I
 name Thee,
 Cursing Thee under breath, too weak to stay Thee or shame
 Thee !

“Blundering blindly on, with blood and tears for thy token,
 Thou tramplest down the Weak, yea the Strong by Thee are
 broken !

“Yet still thy praise is heard, the perishing pray unto
Thee,—

And lo ! I woke in the night, and smiled, for methought I
knew Thee !

“I watch’d thy sacrifice flame up, and I did not falter,
Though the lamb and the little child were offered up on the
Altar !

“I praised thy Day and thy Night, thy manifold works and
wonders,
Thy purpose gladden’d my soul, O God of a million
blunders !

“From failure on to failure I saw thy Light progressing,
I felt the lash of thy Law, yet knelt to entreat thy blessing.

“Thou hast not spared thy dearest, thy best beloved thou
art slaying,
Thine ears are shut to the prayers of thy Saints, yet lo, I am
praying !

“I fear Thee, God of the Night, for thy Silence hath over-
come me,
I hear the wails of the souls thy Night hath taken from me.

“Darkness shrouds thy feet, and darkness thy Face is
veiling—
Shepherd, ’tis dark all round, and Thou comest not to our
wailing !”

This Voice was heard in the Night, and the Lord shall still
it never,
For those are the words of the Voice that cries in the Night
for ever !

THE IMAGE IN THE FORUM.

NOT Baal, but Christus-Jingo ! Heir
Of him who once was crucified !
The red stigmata still are there,
The crimson spear-wounds in the side ;
But raised aloft as God and Lord,
He holds the Money-bag and Sword.

See, underneath the Crown of Thorn,
The eye-balls fierce, the features grim !
And merrily from night to morn
We chaunt his praise and worship him,
Great Christus-Jingo, at whose feet
Christian and Jew and Atheist meet !

A wondrous god ! most fit for those
Who cheat on 'Change, then creep to prayer ;
Blood on his heavenly altar flows,
Hell's burning incense fills the air,
And Death attests in street and lane
The hideous glory of his reign.

O gentle Jew, from age to age
Walking the waves thou could'st not tame,
This god hath ta'en thy heritage,
And stolen thy sweet and stainless Name !
To him we crawl and bend the knee,
Naming thy Name, but scorning Thee !

THE AUGURS.

DARKEN the Temple from the light,
Shut out the sun and sky,—
In Darkness deep as Death and Night,
Lead forth the Lamb to die !

We hold the golden knife aloft, and lo ! we prophesy.

Augurs and priests in crimson stoled,

We ring the Altar round :

Above us, gaunt and grey and cold,

The Man-god hangs, thorn-crown'd,—

Ragged and wretched waits the crowd, watching, without
a sound.

With blood their hunger we appease

(Else all our task were vain);

Trembling they watch on bended knees

The Man-god's sculptured pain ;

Then wait in wonder while we search the entrails of the
Slain !

THE JEW PASSES.

WITH slow monotonous tread,
A Phantom hoary and grey,
While Heaven was shining overhead,
He wandered on his way ;

And still his thin feet bled,
And his eyes were dim with tears—
“ Surely at last,” he said,
“ My Father in Heaven hears ?

“ Surely now at last
My Cross is a blossoming tree,—
Evil and sorrow are past,
My Throne is ready for me ? ”

Worn and wan and white,
He gazed to Heaven and smiled,
And the restless wind of the night
Slept, like a sleeping child.

Slowly along the dark
Unseen by men crept He,
But the Earth lay silently down to mark
In the soft still arms of the Sea !

He came to a City great,
 Silent under the sky,
And the watchmen at the gate
 Beheld him not go by.

Passing the empty mart,
 Creeping from shade to shade,
He found at last in the City's heart
 A Temple that men had made.

Dark at the Temple door
 The ragged and outcast lay,
And Lazarus wail'd once more,
 Weary and gaunt and grey.

And an altar-light burn'd there,
 And a litany sounded thence—
“ Rejoice ! rejoice ! for all gods that were
 Are banish'd and vanish'd hence !

“ And the only god we know
 Is the ghost of our own despair ;
Gaze in the glass, and lo !
 Is he not mirror'd there ?

“ Strong as when Time began,
 Creature of dust and breath,
God our Lord, the Spirit of Man,
 Crown'd with the crown of Death ! ”

THE JEW PASSES.

And lo, from earth and sea,
And the skies now overcast,
A voice wail'd, "Woe is me!
Death is the first and last!"

He went with silent feet
Thro' loathsome alley and den;
He heard around him from every street
The moan of the Magdalen.

"How long, O Lord, how long,"
He heard the lone voice cry,
"Shall they who wrought the wrong,
While we lie lost, go by?"

"Reach down thy hand," it moaned,
"To help the lost, and me,—
Rabbi, the Woman still is stoned,
The Man still wanders free!"

Still and unseen crept He
Into the prison-square,
And he saw the Upas Tree
Of Man's Invention there . . .

High as the Cross it stood,
Cross-wise its shadows fell,
And the sap of the tree was tears and blood,
And its roots sank deep as Hell.

“ Rabbi ! ” again that cry
Came from a lonely place—
And she who waited to die
Had a Woman’s form and face.

“ Reach down thy hand, ” she moaned,
“ To help the lost, and me,—
Rabbi, the Woman still is stoned,
The Man still wanders free !

“ The lie, the blight, and the ban,
That doom me, men have cast—
By Man I fell, and my Judge, a man,
Threw the first stone, and last.

“ Master, master ! ” she said,
“ Hither, come hither to me ! ”
He left his blessing upon her head,
His curse on the Upas Tree !

And all his soul was stirred,
His tears like red blood ran,
While the light of the woful Word
Flamed on the City of Man !

And the heavens grew black as night,
And the voice cried : “ Wander on ! ”
And the cold Moon’s arms clung wild and white
Round a World all woe-begone !

THE JEW PASSES.

He walked upon the Sea,
And the lamb-like waves lay still,
And he came to Calvary
And the Crosses high on the hill.

Beneath his Cross he stood,
Between the thief and the thief ;
And lo, the Cross dript blood, dript blood,
And never put forth a leaf !

With slow monotonous tread
He passed from sea to sea.
"So long, so long !" he said,
"And still no sleep for me !

A SONG OF JUBILEE.

I.

HO, heirs of Saxon Alfred
And Cœur de Lion bold !
Mix'd breed of churls and belted earls
Who worshipp'd God of old ;
Who harried East and harried West
And gather'd land and gold,
While from the lips of white-wing'd ships
Our battle-thunder rolled !
With a hey ! and a ho !
And a British three times three !
At the will of the Lord of the Cross and Sword
We swept from sea to sea !

II.

And lo, our mighty Empire
Rises like ROME of yore
Another Rome, that feasts at home
And hugs its golden store ;
Another and a mightier Rome !
That, growing more and more,
Now reaches from Saint Paul's great dome
To far Tasmania's shore !

A SONG OF JUBILEE.

With a hey ! and a ho !
 And a British three times three !
 True strain and seed of the Ocean-breed,
 We keep this Jubilee !

III.

Liegemen of Bess the Virgin,
 Heirs of the harlot Nell !
 Our once bright blood hath mix'd with mud
 More oft than song need tell ;
 But through each hour of pride and power,
 When free we fought and fell,
 What gave us might to face the Fight
 Was—faith in Heaven and Hell !
 With a hey ! and a ho !
 And a British three times three !
 Though the faith hath fled and our Lord lies dead,
 We keep this Jubilee !

IV.

Stay ! By the Soul of Milton !
 By Cromwell's battle-cry !
 The voice of the Lord of the Cross and Sword
 Still rings beneath our sky !
 Our faith lives still in the stubborn Will
 No Priest or Pope could buy—
 Ours is the creed of the doughty Deed,
 The strength to do and die !

With a hey ! and a ho !
And a British three times three !
Still sword in hand 'neath the Cross we stand
And keep this Jubilee !

V.

Lady and Queen and Mother !
Our long sea-race is run !
Let Love and Peace bless and increase
What Cross and Sword have won !
The nameless guilt, the red blood spilt,
The deeds in darkness done,
All these are past, and our souls at last
Stand shriven in the sun.
With a hey ! and a ho !
And a British three times three !
We Men of the Deep sheathe swords, and keep
Thy bloodless Jubilee !

VI.

Queen of the many races
That round thy footstool cling,
Take heed lest Cain o'erthrow again
His brother's offering !
Beyond the waves crawl butchering knaves,
Now crouching for the spring,
While stolen gold stains, as of old,
The gift thy legions bring !

With a hey! and a ho!
And a British three times three!
There are robbers still who are fain to spill
Blood, on thy Jubilee!

VII.

Ghosts of sad Queens departed
Watch thee from far away:
Not theirs the bliss and calm of this
Thy peaceful triumph-day!
A faith more fearless and serene,
A creed less swift to slay,
Are thine, if thou hast found, O QUEEN,
A gentler God for stay!
With a hey! and a ho!
And a British three times three!
We thy might proclaim in that One God's Name
On this thy Jubilee.

THE MERCENARIES.

I.

TOMMIE ATKINS.

SHRIEKING and swinging legs, astride
On his native fence, the Cockney cried :
“ Fee faw fum ! beware of me !
I am the Lord of Land and Sea ! ”

Out on the fields, where day and night
The weary warriors strove in fight,
They paused a space to gaze upon
The moat-surrounded fence,—his throne !

And while they heard that war-cry float
From the smug Cockney’s raucous throat,
“ Come off the fence,” they cried, “ and share
The brunt of battle, if you dare ! ”

Yet still they heard him shriek and brag
Waving a little schoolboy’s Flag,
And angry at his martial mien
They tried to hoot him from the scene !

“ Ho ho ! ” he said, “ if that’s your plan,
I’ll teach you I’m an Englishman !—
Here, Tommie Atkins,—take your fee,—
Go fight these knaves who flout at me ! ”

THE MERCENARIES.

Poor Tommie Atkins waiting stood,
And heard his master's cry for blood,
Then held out hand to take his pay,
And drew his sword, and sprang away !

All day the bloody strife was wrought,
The Cockney shriek'd, while Tommie fought.
Night came, the foe were driven away,—
But Tommie Atkins dying lay.

“Tommie, what cheer?” the Cockney said ;
Poor Tommie raised his bleeding head,—
“You've lick'd them, sir !” poor Tommie cried,
And slowly droop'd his head, and died !

Still on his fence the Cockney swings,
Loud in the air the war-cry rings,
And still, in answer to his cries,
Poor Tommie Atkins bleeds and dies.

THE MERCENARIES.

II.

NELSON'S DAY.

HERE'S to the health of Nelson! Hurrah and three times
three!

Glory to him who gave us back our birthright of the Sea!
He gave us back the wide wide Sea, and bade us rule the
wave,

And how did we pay him back, dear boys, for that great
gift he gave?

Just as his life was ebbing ('Twas in Trafalgar's bay)
He craved one little thing from us for whom he fell that day;
For in that hour of glorious death his last thoughts landward
ran,
Since, alas and alas, my Christian friends, he wasn't a moral
man!

"Take care of Lady Hamilton!" the dying hero cried,—
'Twas all he asked from Englishmen for whom he fought
and died;

"Now I have bought you with my blood the Sea and all
thereon,
Take care of her I love," he said, "when I am dead and
gone!"

His health, the health of Nelson! health to the good, the
brave!

But still we're moral men, dear boys, with moral souls to
save . . .

We suffered her he loved to starve, to fill a pauper's grave,—
That's how we paid him back, dear boys, for the great gift
he gave!

Honour to Nelson's memory! his health with three times
three!

If we are freemen 'twas *his* gift—he gave us back the Sea,—
Crow, west to east! but while we shout his name from wave
to wave,

Think how we paid our Hero back for the great gift he gave!

SONG OF THE SLAIN.

THIS is the Song of the Weak
Trode 'neath the heel of the Strong !
This is the Song of the hearts that break
And bleed as we ride along,—
From sea to sea we singing sweep, but this is the slain man's
Song !

Southward, a shriek of pain,
As the martyred races fall !
The wild man's land and his herds we gain,
With the gold that's best of all,—
Because the leaves of the tree are black 'tis meet that they
should fall !

Eastward, another cry,
Wrung from the black and red !
But merrily our hosts go by,
Trampling the quick and dead,—
'Tis meet that the heathen tribes should starve, and the
Christian dogs be fed.

Westward, close at the door,
A cry for bread and light !
But lo, we hug our golden store
And feast from morn to night :—
Our brother Esau must perish too, altho' his skin be white !

In the name of the Jingo-Christ
We raise our savage song,
In gold the martyr's blood is priced
Wherever we march along,
How should we heed our brother's cry,—he is weak and we
are strong !

We have sow'd, and lo ! we reap,
We are strong, and lo ! we slay ;
We are lords of Earth and Deep,
And this is our triumph-day,—
The broken wave and the broken heart are spent, and vanish
away !

Ever the Weak must fall
Under the strength of the Strong !
And God (they say), who is Lord of all,
Smiles as we sweep along ;
Yet tho' we are strong and our song is loud, this is the slain
man's Song !

THE CHARTER'D COMPANIE.

I.

THE Devil's* will is the Devil's still, wherever the Devil
 may be,—
 He used to delight in the thick of the fight, whether on land
 or sea ;
 'Twas difficult then for mortal men to know what side he
 took,
 When the wrath of the Lord from heaven was poured and
 the whole creation shook ;
 Yet for many a day the Devil's way was ever mighty and
 grand,
 'Mid the swift sword's flash and the cannon's crash he boldly
 took his stand :
 Such perilous work he has learn'd to shirk, and quiet at
 home sits he,
 Having turn'd himself for the love of pelf to a Charter'd
 Companie !

II.

“ Ho ! better far than the work of War, and the storm and
 stress of strife,
 Is to rest at home, while others roam,” he murmurs to Sin,
 his wife !

* Not the great Æon, whom I have vindicated,
 Call'd falsely Devil by the blind and base,
 But Belial, a creature execrated
 Except in Church and in the Market-place.—R. B.

“Tho’ the fiends my sons make Gatling guns, they’re
Christians to the core,
And they love the range of the Stock Exchange far better
than battle-roar.
They are spared, in truth, much strife uncouth and trouble
by field and flood,
Since the work of Hell is done so well by creatures of flesh
and blood ;
And I think on the whole,” says the grim old Soul, “’tis
better for you and me
That I’ve turned myself, ere laid on the shelf, to a Charter’d
Companie !

III.

“The thin red line was doubtless fine as it crept across the
plain,
While the thick fire ran from the black Redan and broke it
again and again,
But the hearts of men throb’d bravely then, and their souls
could do and dare,
’Mid the thick of the fight, in my despite, God found out
Heroes there !
The Flag of England waved on high, and the thin red line
crept on,
And I felt, as it flashed along to die, my occupation
gone !
O’er a brave man’s soul I had no control in those old days,”
said he,
“So I’ve turned myself, ere laid on the shelf, to a Charter’d
Companie !

IV.

“The Flag of England still doth blow and flings the sunlight
back,
But the line that creepeth now below is changed to a line of
black !
Wherever the Flag of England blows, down go all other
flags,
Wherever the line of black print goes, the British Bulldog
brags !
The Newspaper, my dear, is best to further such work as
mine,—
My blessing rest, north, south, east, west, on the thin black
penny-a-line !
For my work is done 'neath moon or sun, by men and not
by me,
Now I've changed myself, in the reign of the Guelph, to a
Charter'd Companie !

V.

“Of Church and of State let others prate, let martyr'd
thousands moan,—
I'm responsible, I beg to state, to my shareholders alone !
The Flag of England may rot and fall, both Church and
State may end,
Whate'er befall, I laugh at it all, if I pay a dividend !
But O my dear, it is very clear, that the thing is working
well—
When they hunt the black man down like deer, we devils
rejoice in Hell !

'Tis loot, loot, loot, as they slaughter and shoot out yonder
 across the sea,
 Now I've turned myself, like a gamesome elf, to a Charter'd
 Companie !

VI.

"Just study, my dear, the record here, of the mighty deeds
 they've done—
 Hundreds, *en masse*, mowed down like grass, to an English
 loss of *one* !
 Then loot, loot, loot, as they slaughter and shoot, to the
 shrieks of the naked foe,
 While murder and greed on the fallen feed, right up my
 stock must go !
 And the best of the lark, you'll be pleased to mark, is the
 counter-jumper's cry,
 As he clutches his shares and mumbles his prayers to the
 Jingo-God on high !
 With Bible and Gun the work is done both here and across
 the sea,
 Now I've turned myself, in the reign of the Guelph, to a
 Charter'd Companie !"

VII.

The Devil's will is the Devil's still, though wrought in a
 Christian land,
 He chuckles low and laughs his fill, with the latest news in
 hand ;
 Nor God nor man can mar his plan so long as the markets
 thrive,
 Tho' the Flag be stained and the Creed profaned, he keepeth
 the game alive !

“The Flag of England may rot and fall, both Church and
State may end,

Whatever befall, I laugh at it all, if I pay a dividend !

Right glad I dwell where I make my Hell, in the white
man’s heart,” cries he,

“Now I’ve turned myself, for the love of pelf, to a Charter’d
Companie !”

THE BALLAD OF KIPLINGSON.

THERE came a knock at the Heavenly Gate, where the good
St. Peter sat,—

“Hi, open the door, you fellah there, to a British rat-tat-tat!”

The Saint sat up in his chair, rubb'd eyes, and prick'd his
holy ears,

“Who's there?” he muttered, “a single man, or a regiment
of Grenadiers?”

“A single man,” the voice replied, “but one of prodigious
size,

Who claims by Jingo, his patron Saint, the entry to
Paradise!”

The good St. Peter open'd the Gate, but blocking the entry
scan'd

The spectacled ghost of a little man, with an infant's flag in
his hand.

“Your name? Before I let you pass, say who and what you
were!

Describe your life on the earth, and prove your claim to a
place in *there!*”

“Wot! haven't you heard of Kiplingson? whose name and
fame have spread

As far as the Flag of England waves, and the Tory prints
are read?

“ I was raised in the lap of Jingo, sir, till I grew to the height
of man,
And a wonderful Literary Gent, I emerged upon Hindostan !

“ I sounded the praise of the Empire, sir, I pitch'd out
piping hot
The new old stories of British bounce (see Lever and
Michael Scott);

“ And rapid as light my glory spread, till thro' Cockaigne it
flew,
And I grew the joy of the Cockney cliques, and the pet of
the Jingo Jew !

“ For the Lord my God was a Cockney Gawd, whose voice
was a savage yell,
A fust-rate Gawd who dropt, d'ye see, the 'h' in Heaven
and Hell !

“ O I was clever beyond compare, and not like most young
muffs,
Tho' I died last night, at an early age, of a plethora of puffs.

“ O lollipops are toothsome things, and sweet is the log-
roll'd jam,
But the last big puff of the Log-rollers has choked me, and
here I am !

“ But I was a real Phenomenon,” continued Kiplingson,
“ The only genius ever born who was Tory at twenty-one !”

“Alas, and alas,” the good Saint said, a tear in his eye
serene,

“A Tory at twenty-one! Good God! At fifty what *would*
you have been?

“There’s not a spirit now here in Heaven who wouldn’t at
twenty-one

Have tried to upset the very Throne, and reform both Sire
and Son!

“The saddest sight that my eyes have seen, down yonder on
earth or here,

Is a brat that talks like a weary man, or a youth with a
cynic’s leer.

“Try lower down, young man,” he cried, and began to close
the Gate—

“Hi, here, old fellah,” said Kiplingson, “by Jingo! just
you wait—

“I’ve heaps of Criticisms here, to show my claims are true,
That I’m ’cute in almost everything, and have probed
Creation through!”

“And what have you *found*?” the Saint inquired, a frown
on his face benign—

“The Flag of England!” cried Kiplingson, “and the thin
black penny-a-line!

“Wherever the Flag of England waves, down go all other
flags;

Wherever the thin black line is spread, the Bulldog bites
and brags!

“And I warn you now, if you close that Gate, the moment
it is done,
I’ll summon an army of Cockney Gents, with a great big
Gatling gun !

“O Gawd, beware of the Jingo’s wrath ! the Journals of
Earth are mine !
Across the plains of the earth still creeps the thin black
penny-a-line !

“For wherever the Flag of England waves”—but here, we
grieve to state,
His voice was drown’d in a thunder-crash, for the Saint
bang’d-to the Gate !

TO OLIVE SCHREINER.

PANSIES, for thoughts ; and Rue, for gentle grief ;
Roses,—for gladness given in large increase :
Add now to these one soft grey silvern leaf,
OLIVE,—for Peace !

O life that put'st our noisier lives to shame,
Sign that the Bow shall shine, the Deluge cease !
Steadfast and true and holy like thy name :
OLIVE,—for Peace !

THE DREAMER OF DREAMS.

I.

"WE are men in a world of men, not gods!" the Strong
Man cried ;

"Yea men, but more than men," the Dreamer of Dreams
replied ;

"'Tis not the mighty Arm (the Lion and Bear have that),
'Tis not the Ear and the Eye (for those hath the Ounce
and the Cat),

'Tis not the form of a Man upstanding erect and free,
For this hath the forest Ape, yea the face of a Man hath he ;

'Tis not by these alone, ye compass'd the mighty things,
Hew'd the log to a ship, till the ship swept out on wings,
Ye are men in a world of men, lord of the seas and streams,
But ye dreamed ye were more than men when ye heark'd to
the Dreamers of Dreams !

And the Dream begat the Deed, and grew with the growth
of the years,

So ye were the Builders of Earth, but *we* were the Pioneers !

II.

"By the Arm and the Ear and the Eye, and the upright
Form divine

(Thus the Dreamer of Dreams), thou hast conquered the
world—'tis thine ;

Wherefore rejoice, O Man, in the wonders thy might hath
wrought,

But woe to thy pride the day thou forgettest the Dream we
brought ;

The Dream that made thee a Man (the beast was as swift
in the fray),

The Dream that found thee a Soul, and lit thee along on thy
way,

The Dream that guided thine Arm, and taught thee with
sight and with sound,

The Dream that held thee erect when the beast was prone
on the ground !

A man in a world of men, and strong as a man beseems,
Thou art indeed, but thy strength was drawn from the
Dreamers of Dreams !

Wert thou no more than a man, the Fox and the Ape were
thy peers,

We dream'd thou wast more than a man, when we led thee,
thy Pioneers !

III.

“And now thy triumph hath come, the sceptre is set in thy
hand,

See (said the Dreamer of Dreams) that thy spirit doth
understand :

Not by the lust of the Ape, or the courage and strength of
the Beast,

Thou risest to rule thy Realm, and sit at the head of the
Feast—

We dream'd there was love in thy heart, the love that no
beast doth gain,

We held thee just in our Dream, and therefore fitter to reign,
And though there was blood on thy sword, and lust of blood
in thy breast,

We taught thee (still in our Dream) that Pity and Prayer
were best :

Pity for all thy kind, and most for the undertrod,
Prayer to the Power unseen which stiffen'd thy soul 'gainst
God,
Then out of the Dream the Deed, which grew with the grow-
ing years
And made thee Master of Earth, but *we* were thy Pioneers!"

IV.

"We are men in a world of men, not gods," the Strong
Man cried ;
"Then woe to thy race and thee," the Dreamer of Dreams
replied ;
"The Tiger can fight and feed, the Serpent can hear and
see,
The Ape can increase his kind, the Beaver can build, like thee.
Have I led thee on to find thee of all things last and least,
A Man who is only a Man, and therefore less than a beast ?
Who bareth a red right arm, and crieth 'Lo, I am strong !'
Who shouts to an empty sky a savage triumphal song,
Who apes the cry of the woods, who crawls like a snake and
lies,
Who loves not, neither is loved, but crawleth a space and
dies,—
Ah, woe indeed to the Dream that guided thee all these
years,
And woe to the Dreamers of Dreams who ran as thy
Pioneers !"

BE PITIFUL.

THOU canst not right the ancient wrong,
 Or mend the broken thread ;
 Thou canst not raise with spell or song
 The countless martyrs dead,—
 Yet one kind thought may sometimes bless
 Lives which the dark gods ban ;
 Wherefore, since they are pitiless,
 Be pitiful, O MAN !

Raised on the rock of endless woe,
 Thy throne is built, O King !
 Yet from that rock some dews may flow
 To show the hidden spring ;—
 Lord in thy place of life and death
 Complete the cruel plan,
 But, gazing down on things of breath,
 Be pitiful, O MAN !

Be pitiful ! be pitiful !
 More grace in Pity lies
 Than in the gladdest flowers they cull
 In Passion's Paradise !
 Thron'd on the earth even as a god,
 All creatures gently scan—
 Thy sceptre then like Aaron's rod
 Shall bud and bloom, O MAN !

Be pitiful to every thing
That creeps around thy throne,
Yea, with thy love as with a wing
Shelter the lost and lone ;—
Tho' from the cradle to the tomb
Thy reign is but a span,
Still, in despite of Death and Doom,
Be pitiful, O MAN !

So shall thy soul arise in strength
Above the coward's dread,
So shall thy love avenge at length
The blood the gods have shed,
So shalt thou scorn the cruel Law
That is since Time began,
And, held by Heaven and Hell in awe,
Shame all the gods, O MAN !

MAN OF THE RED RIGHT HAND.

MAN with the Red Right Hand knelt in the night and
prayed :

“Pity and spare, O God, the mortal whom thou hast made!
Strengthen the house he builds, adorn his glad roof-tree,
Blessing the bloody spoil he gathers on earth and sea!
The bird and the beast are blind, and they do not under-
stand,
But lo ! thy servant kneels !” said Man with the Red Right
Hand.

God went by in the Storm, and answered never a word.
But the birds of the air shriek'd loud, and the beasts of the
mountain heard,
And the dark sad flocks of the Sea and the Sea-lambs gentle-
eyed
Wail'd from their oozy folds, and the mild Sea-kine replied,
And the pity of God fell down like darkness on sea and
land,
But froze to ice in the heart of Man with the Red Right
Hand.

Then up he rose from his knee and brandish'd the crimson
knife,
Saying : “I thank thee, God, for making me Lord of Life !
The beasts and the birds are mine, and the flesh and blood
of the same,
Baptised in the blood of these, I gladden and praise thy
name !

Laden with spoils of life thy servant shall smiling stand !”
And out on the Deep he hied, this Man with the Red Right
Hand.

Afar on the lonely isles the cry of the slaughtered herds
Rose on the morning air, to the scream of the flying birds,
And the birds fell down and bled with pitiful human cries,
And the butcher'd Lambs of the Sea lookt up with pleading
eyes,
And the blood of bird and beast was red on sea and land,
And drunk with the joy of Death was Man with the Red
Right Hand.

And the fur of the slain sea-lamb was a cloak for his bride
to wear,
And the broken wing of the bird was set in his leman's hair,
And the flesh of the ox and lamb were food for his brood to
eat,
And the skin of the mild sea-kine was shoon on his
daughter's feet !
And the cry of the slaughtered things was loud over sea and
land
As he knelt once more and prayed, upraising his Red Right
Hand.

“ Pity me, Master and Lord ! spare me and pass me by,
Grant me Eternal Life, though the beast and the bird must
die !
Behold I worship thy Law, and gladden in all thy ways,
The bird and the beast are dumb, but behold I sing thy
praise,

The bird and the beast are blind, and they do not understand,
But lo, I see and know!" said Man with the Red Right Hand.

God went by in the Storm and answered never a word.
But deep in the soul of Man the cry of a God was heard :
"Askest thou pity, *thou*, who ne'er drew pitying breath?
Askest thou fulness of life, whose life is built upon death?
Even as thou metest to these, thy kin of the sea and land,
Shall it be meted to *thee*, O Man of the Red Right Hand!

"When thou namest bird and beast, and blessest them passing by,
When thy pleasure is built no more on the pain of things that die,
When thy bride no longer wears the spoil of thy butcher's knife,
Perchance thy prayer may reach the ears of the Lord of Life ;
Meantime be slain with the things thou slayest on sea and land,—
Yea, pass in thy place like those, O Man with the Red Right Hand!"

SONG OF THE FUR-SEAL.*

WHO cometh out of the sea
Wrapt in his winding-sheet?

He who hung on the Tree
With blood on his hands and feet,—

On the frozen isles He leaps, and lo, the sea-lambs round
him bleat!

The cry of the flocks o' the Sea
Rings in the ears of the Man!

Gentle and mild is He,
Tho' worn and weak and wan;

The mild-eyed seals look up in joy, his pitiful face to scan.

They gather round him there,
He blesses them one and all,—

On their eyes and tangled hair
His tears of blessing fall;—

But he starteth up and he listeneth, for he hears the hunter's
call!

Moaning in fear he flies
Leading the wild sea-herds,

O'er him, under the skies,
Follow the startled birds,—

"Father, look down!" he moans aloud, and the Heavens
fling back his words!

* See, *passim*, the descriptions of Dr. Gordon Stables, R.N., Captain Borchgrevink, Professor Jukes, and others, of the devilries which accompany the slaughter of the Fur-Seal.

SONG OF THE FUR-SEAL.

The hunter's feet are swift,
The feet of the Christ are slow,
Nearer they come who lift
Red hands for the butcher's blow,—
Aye me, the bleeding lambs of the Sea, who struggle and
wail in woe !

Blind with the lust of death
Are the red hunter's eyes,
Around him blood like breath
Streams to the silent skies,—
Slain again 'mong the slain sea-lambs the white Christ
moans and dies !

“ Even as the least of these,
Butcher'd again, I fall ! ”
O gentle lambs of the Sea,
Who leapt to hear him call,
Bleeding there in your midst he lies, who gladden'd and
blest you all !

And the hunter striding by,
Blind, with no heart to feel,
Laughs at the anguish'd cry,
And crushes under his heel
The head of the Christ that looketh up with the eyes of a
slaughter'd seal !

GOD EVOLVING.

TURN from that mirage of a God on high
Holding the sceptre of a creed outworn,
And hearken to the faint half-human cry
Of Nature quickening with the God unborn !

The God unborn, the God that is to be,
The God that has not been since Time began,—
Hark,—that low sound of Nature's agony
Echoed thro' life and the hard heart of Man !

Fed with the blood and tears of living things,
Nourish'd and strengthen'd by Creation's woes,
The God unborn, that shall be King of Kings,
Sown in the darkness, thro' the darkness grows.

Alas, the long slow travail and the pain
Of her who bears Him in her mighty womb !
How long ere he shall live and breathe and reign,
While yonder Phantom fades to give him room ?

Where'er great pity is and piteousness,
Where'er great Love and Love's strange sorrow stay
Where'er men cease to curse, but bend to bless,
Frail brethren fashion'd like themselves of clay ;

Where'er the lamb and lion side by side
Lie down in peace, where'er on land or sea
Infinite Love and Mercy heavenly eyed
Emerge, there stirs the God that is to be !

His light is round the slaughter'd bird and beast
As round the forehead of Man crucified,—
All things that live, the greatest and the least,
Await the coming of this Lord and Guide ;

And every gentle deed by mortals done,
Yea every holy thought and loving breath,
Lighten poor Nature's travail with this Son
Who shall be Lord and God of Life and Death !

No God behind us in the empty Vast,
No God enthroned on yonder heights above,
But God emerging, and evolved at last
Out of the inmost heart of human Love !

Wound Love, thou woundest, too, this God unborn !
Of Love and Love's compassion is he bred !
His strength the grace that holds no thing in scorn,
His very blood the tears by Pity shed !

And every cruel thought or deed on earth,
Yea even blood-sacrifice on bended knee,
Lengthens the travail and delays the birth
Of this our God, the God that is to be !

“PATRIOTISM.”

“Throughout all this period of Titanic struggle, *patriotism* was the most potent factor in the contest, and ultimately decided the issue. Animated by patriotism, which gave to her armies a superhuman strength, France was able to confound all the efforts of her enemies. Then, ignoring in all other nations a love of independence and freedom as strenuous as her own, she at last created and evoked in them this all-powerful sentiment, and was in the end driven back to her frontiers by an exhibition of the same spirit as that which had enabled her to defend them. . . . The fact is, that a vague attachment to the whole human race is a poor substitute for the performance of the duties of a citizen; and professions of universal philanthropy afford no excuse for neglecting *the interests of one's own country.*”
—JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, in Glasgow.

I.

JUDAS to Caiaphas,
The Elders, and the Priests :
“ I, heir of him who sold the Man
Whose voice disturb'd your feasts,
My thirty pieces duly gain'd,
The Cross and Sword upraise,
And claim, for triumph thus attained,
The Patriot's palm and bays !

II.

“ Who is the Patriot ? He
Who, swift and keen to slay,
Spieth the helpless quarry out
For home-bred birds of prey ;
Who heeds not hearts that ache and break,
But peers from sea to sea,
And ever, for his Country's sake,
Points Christ to Calvary !

III.

"The black Christs and the white,
Lo, how they shriek and die,
While the great conquering Flag floats on
And merry hosts go by!
I price in our imperial Mart
Their land, their gold, their lives—
Ho, Priests, who heeds the broken heart,
So that the Market thrives?"

IV.

"Who is the Patriot? He
Who strideth, sword in hand,
To reap the fields he never sowed,
For his own Fatherland!
Who, sweeping human rights aside,
Sets up the cross-shaped Tree,
And while the Christ is crucified,
Bids all the Thieves go free!"

V.

"This for a sign I speak—
Heed it and understand—
Who loves his neighbour as himself
Loves, too, his neighbour's land!
His neighbour's land, his wives, his gold,
All the good thief may seize,
And he's a Patriot twentyfold
Who garners all of these!"

VI.

"All, for his Country's sake,
His God, his Lord, his Home,
Ev'n so the Roman stalk'd abroad
And claimed the world for Rome !
Ev'n so the patriot Nations still
In emulation toil,
Confront each other, shrieking shrill,
And hungering for the spoil !

VII.

"Remember how the Patriot's fire
Swept Europe west to east,
While on its trail devouring ran
The many-headed Beast ;
Till dawn'd at last the glorious morn
When all the Earth was priced
By Patriotism's latest born,
The Imperial Antichrist !

VIII.

"Hark ! still the Patriot's cry
Yonder in France is heard—
She slew her Kings, she found for men
The blood-compelling Word :
Arm'd to the teeth still croucheth she,
Waketh, and sleepeth not—
'Allons, enfants de la Patrie—
To cut our neighbour's throat !'

"PATRIOTISM."

IX.

"Lo, how the same grand dream
 Of God and Fatherland
 Fills the brave Teuton's warrior-soul
 And arms his mailèd hand ;
 Beast-like for battle he prepares,
 Bow'd down with helm and glaive,—
 How proudly he, the Patriot, wears
 The livery of the Slave !"

X.

Judas to Caiaphas,
 The Elders, and the Priests :
 "I, heir of him who sold the Man
 Whose voice disturb'd your feasts,
 Bid ye, my brethren of the Blood,
 March on from sea to sea,
 Nor heed, 'mid Conquest's roaring flood,
 The cries from Calvary !

XI.

"Patriots ye were and are,
 Yours is the Patriot's crown ;
 The Patriot is the strong man, he
 Who strikes the weak man down !
 Onward, with Cross and Sword, still race,
 With all the world for prey,—
 / price, in this your market-place,
 The robes of Him ye slay !"

THE GRAND OLD MAN.

(*Westminster, March 1898.*)

I.

NOW the long volume of his life,
As all in turn must be,
Is closed, and placed remote from strife
In Death's black library,

Eternal honour to the name
Kept clean from youth to age,
With scarce a blot of sin or shame
Upon the splendid page!

The Grand Old Man! how few have writ
A scroll so clean and clear!—
Pilgrims shall come and ponder it
For many and many a year;

And ever as their eyes are cast
Upon it shall descry,
Yea, from the front page till the last,
The name of the Most High!

For in an age where strong men doubt
This strong man doubted nought,
But mail'd in faith, passed in and out
The wind-blown flames of Thought;

And ever from his lips there came
The words of happy prayer,
With which he, child-like, sought to shame
The pessimist's despair.

Ah, well, he was, when all is said,
A gracious soul and kind—
I do not weep that he is dead,
I weep that he was blind !

Blind with the Light that sears the sight
With sheer excess of Day,—
So true, so eager for the Right,
And yet—so oft astray !

A mighty leader and a guide,
He led men long and well,
First in the van, tho' blown aside
By breaths from Heaven or Hell !

Out of his very weakness strong,
His very blindness brave,
Serene and calm he march'd along
To no inglorious grave.

And round him now the ribald throng
That mock'd his march is dumb,
And honouring what they fear'd so long
The rival factions come,—

Nay, priests of every creed attest
Him King of Humankind,
Blessèd 'mong men, but blessedest
Because his eyes were blind !

II.

Battle and Storm? God screen'd his form
From all Life's fiercest airs ;
His battle was of words, his storm
Was one to lay with prayers !

As true as steel, as pure as snow,
He lived his gentle life,
Too shielded in his place to know
The stress of human strife,—

The woe, the anguish, the despair,
Of mortals tempest-toss'd ;
In his soul's sails the wind blew fair
Even when he struggled most !

Easy it seems for such a man
To keep his soul's page white—
God never bow'd him with his ban
Or mar'd him with his blight !

His gentle hand ne'er lifted up
The load of human pain,
His lips not even touch'd the cup
The broken-hearted drain ;

He thirsted not, nor lack'd for food,
Nor stricken earthward grieved,
But, sure that God was kind and good,
He gladden'd and believed !

His rose-crown'd cup ran o'er the brim
With wine, not tear-drops sad—
His God was very good to him,
And kept him blind and glad !

III.

Peace, he was pure,—let that suffice !
And brave in word and deed,—
Why envy, in these caves of ice,
The sunshine of his creed ?

The wind we feel so chill blows fresh
On him, and such as he,—
Tho' God who fashioneth the flesh
Sendeth the Leprosy !

Blest was his child-like faith and prayer,
If not afar, yet here,—
How dark and dull seems our despair
Beside a faith so clear !

He walked the broad and easy way
And died and lived a child,—
Yea, even on his stormiest day
Folded his hands and smiled,

Believing all things, doubting not
That all was surely well,—
Upon his soul one only blot,
The death-stain of Parnell !

Cleanse that one blot away, his fame
Was star-like 'mongst his kind,—
Yet even that from goodness came,
Because God kept him blind !

“*THE UNION.*”

“THE UNION.”

THE speech our English freemen spoke
 Still fills the plains afar,
 Where branches of our English oak
 Wave 'neath the Western star ;
 “Be free !” men cried in Shakespeare's tongue,
 When smiting for the slave—
 Thus Hampden's cry for freedom rung
 As far as Lincoln's grave !

Back rings that cry from far away
 To fill the Motherland,
 Where 'neath the Union Jack this day
 Both false and true men stand—
 Hark to the foes of all things free,
 Who, arm'd in hate, intone :
 “The Union ! let our war-cry be
 That word, and that alone !”

“The Union ! Kiss the dead Christ's face
 While brandishing the Sword,
 Foster the scorn of race for race,
 Exult, and praise the Lord !
 Carry the rule of pride and hate
 O'er earth, from pole to pole !
 The Union ! leave men desolate
 But keep the Empire whole !”

“The Union? Yes, in God’s name, still
The Union!” we reply—
“The Union of a Nation’s will
Against each timbrel’d lie!
The Union beautiful and good
Of lands by Love made one!
One heart, one cause, one brotherhood,
One Empire ’neath the sun!

“That Union which hath been so long
Our boast from sea to sea,—
Justice, redressing human wrong,
Love, keeping all men free;
Not *that* which starves one hapless land
While others smile full-fed,
Not that, which from another’s hand
Would snatch the daily bread!

“Union in strength of Love, not Hate!
Union in Peace, not Strife!
Union to keep inviolate
The sacraments of Life!
Union is one great common aim,
Triumphant late or soon,
To share the freedom we proclaim
With all who beg the boon!

“*Not* Union based on braggart’s boasts
Or on the robber’s creed,
Not Union thrust by arméd hosts
On lives that would be freed!

"THE UNION."

Not Union fed by hate and wrath
Where'er the weak make moan,—
No, Union on the heavenward path
Where Justice hath her throne !

" Justice to all, and first to those
Who speak our common speech—
Help to our brethren great or small,
Free thought, free laws, for each ;
Who chains his brother to his side
Seeketh his help in vain,
And Might is impotent to guide
The souls that Love may gain.

" This is the Union which is still
Our strength from sea to sea—
Freedom, whose mandates we fulfil
By leaving all men free !
To sheath the sword, to help man's lot,
To break each cruel chain . . .
The Union? Yes, by God !—but not
A pact 'tween Christ and Cain !"

“PEACE, NOT A SWORD.”

The Arbitration Treaty, January 1897.

I.

PEACE, not a Sword ! She claims to-day
The crown by Freedom wrought,—
Victorious Peace, with power to sway
Free Life, free Speech, free Thought !
The Lord who gave the blind Seer sight
Hath led us up and on,
And, lo ! our Milton's dream of Light
Fulfill'd, at Washington !

II.

In this great hour of righteous pride,
Be hush'd, ye Voices vain,
Which still invite the Crucified
To join the feasts of Cain ;
Not by the hypocrite's despair
Shall Love's last gift be priced,
Nay ! Cain is Cain, although he wear
The livery of the Christ !

III.

Now, while ye greet your Jingo-god,
Hounds of the mart and street,
We close the bloody winepress, trod
By fratricidal feet !

"PEACE, NOT A SWORD."

The strife which savage priests have sung
 A thousand years shall cease,
 For Glory's banner shall be hung
 In the great Halls of Peace.

IV.

Despair not, Men, though Time should bring
 But part of all ye crave :—
 Did not the cry of Hampden ring
 As far as Lincoln's grave ?
 The voice which saith, "No brother's hand
 May shed a brother's blood,"
 Shall grow till men in every land
 Are one vast Brotherhood !

V.

Lo, now the seed by martyrs sown
 Springs up, a goodly tree,
 Let every Despot on his throne
 Take heed, from sea to sea !
 For he who still invokes the Sword
 Shall by that same Sword fall,
 While he whom Wisdom's Voice and Word
 Redeem, must conquer all !

VI.

Ring out, glad bells ! now Night hath fled,
 The rose of Dawn shall bloom !
 The Light that halo'd Whitman's head
 Shines back on Shelley's tomb !

Under the bloodless Flag we stand
Which martyr-bards unfurl'd,
Heart link'd to heart, hand join'd to hand,
The Freedmen of the World !

12th January 1897.

HARK NOW, WHAT FRETFUL VOICES.

HARK now, what fretful voices
 Sound shrill from shore to shore!—
 The home-bred curs of England
 Barking at England's door,—
 The weak wolf-hearted creatures
 Who gather multiform
 And out of quiet waters
 Would fain shriek up the Storm!

Hark, how the half-breed answers
 With strident harsh refrain,
 Echoed by Windmill-Journals
 That whirl yet grind no grain—
 Out o'er the peaceful waters
 The hideous notes are hurl'd,
 While poets of the banjo
 Defy the listening world!

Not thus in days departed
 Did England's triumphs come—
 The Hero then was silent,
 The Martyr then was dumb!
 Amid the roll of tempests
 You heard no rowdy's song—
 The Makers of our England
 Were still as they were strong!

Not thus the sons of England
Grew strong and great and free,
Bridling the white sea-horses
That sweep from sea to sea,—
With stern lips set in silence
They paused and bent the knee,
And prayed the God of Silence
To give them victory !

The mighty hand of England
Should be too strong to raise
The trumpet of the Braggart
That sounds her own self-praise!
Her glory (still she gains it
From sleepless year to year)
Is wrought through deeds of Heroes,
Not shrieks of Chanticleer !

Out there upon the waters
Heroes are living still,—
From land to land they wander
With firm and fearless will ;
They plough the stormy billow,
But vaunt not what they do,—
The Mariners of England
Are calm as they are true !

Yonder our legions gather
Beneath the battle-flag,
They march to Death in silence
And let the coward brag ;

To urge their spirits onward
They need no savage song,—
The Warriors of England
Are still as they are strong !

And still, erect and fearless,
Unarm'd, or sword in hand,
Wherever Honour beckons
Our silent Heroes stand :
They scorn the shrieking remnant
Who gather multiform
And, safe from every danger,
Would fain shriek up the Storm !

THE IRISHMAN TO CROMWELL.

I.

CROMWELL, what soul denies thy claim
To honour in the Saxon's sight?
Thy spirit, like a stormy flame,
Still gleams through centuries of Night,
While Freedom's weeping eyes are bent
On deeds that are thy monument!

II.

Thanks to thy ruthless sword and thee
Thy cruel creed is living yet,
And Christians still from sea to sea
Owe thee and thine a deathless debt;
With thee to light them through the land,
Famine and Faith walk'd hand in hand.

III.

Think not we scorn thee,—thou wast strong!
Think not we wrong thee,—thou wast great!
Thou sharest with the kingly throng
The aftermath of human Hate:
Among the thrones thy lightnings rent
Should surely be thy monument?

IV.

Hot gosseller of bloody War,
 Thy Cross became a slaughtering sword ;
 Thy Biblic thunders roll'd afar
 The message of thy King and Lord,—
 The wondering Nations heard thy cry—
 “Worship my God of Wrath, or die !”

V.

Before thee, Tyrant, tyrants fell,
 By thee, O King, a King was slain,—
 Honest as Cain and true as Hell,
 Scornor of mercy, thou didst reign ;
 With blood and tears thou didst cement
 This Union, thy monument !

VI.

Thy Throne was on a million graves,
 O Christian monarch of the free ;
 The curse of sixty thousand slaves,
 Torn from their homes and chain'd by thee,
 From the plantations of the west
 Arose, thy might to manifest !

VII.

Even thus on History's bloodiest page
 Thy name is written, King of men,—
 And evermore from age to age
 Thy seed of bigots springs again ;
 What needst thou further to content
 Thy ghost, by way of monument ?

VIII.

The bigot's strength and faith was thine,
The bigot's creed that hates the sun,—
And yet in Freedom's name divine
Thy bloody victories were won :
'Mong Monarchs keep thy place of pride,
With Charles's Spectre at thy side !

IX.

Ask not the love our souls deny,
But take our homage if thou wilt,—
Thy gospel was a living lie,
Our blood was on thine altars spilt,—
Scourge by the God of Slaughter sent,
Be DROGHEDA thy monument !

THE WEARING OF THE GREEN.

(NEW STYLE.)

“O WHAT’S the news from England?” the grey old Mother
said,

“And what’s the news about my sons, and are they quick or
dead?

I’ve waited on for many a year and prayed beside the sea,
Remembering how they drew the sword and swore to set me
free!”

“O Mother, sure thy sons survive, tho’ better they had died,
They palter with the faith they learn’d before they left thy
side;

Among the camp fires of thy foes the Fratricides are seen,
They hang upon the Tyrant’s nod, and blush to wear the
Green!”

“My eyes are dim with weeping,” the grey old Mother said,

“The chains are still upon my hands, the sackcloth on my
head;

I blest my sons before they went and deem’d them leal and
true,

And eagerly with leaping hearts across the seas they flew.”

“O Mother, what was sown in pride thy sons now reap in
scorn,

They help’d the pandars and the priests to slay thine
Eldest-born,

Then for his raiment casting lots they reached out hands
obscene,
Dishonouring the noble dead who best had loved the
Green !”

“ Green be his grave in England, who loved me long and
well,
May never freemen welcome back the butchers of Parnell !
I deem them sons of mine no more, I brand them sons of
Cain,
Who slew their brother over there, the bigot’s smile to gain !”
“ O Mother, sure not all thy sons are false and base like
those,
Not all have traded truth and faith to win the English rose ;
Among thy children over there are some whose hands are
clean,
And these shall yet unbind thy chains, and glorify the
Green !”

“ O what’s the news from England ?” the grey old Mother
cried,
“ Now he is slain, my Eldest-born, who stands as chief and
guide ?
What souls are false, what souls are true, of all that bear my
name,
What son of mine shall lift me up and save me out of
shame ?”
“ O Mother, sure they follow now the feeblest of thy clan,
A peddler with a woman’s heart, and not an Irish *man* !
And in his train the turncoat and the sycophant are seen,
And day by day dishonour comes to those who wear the
Green !”

“ And over there in England, the Saxon who had sworn
To break thy bonds and set thee free has laughed thy woes
to scorn ;

For in the City's Square they raise a likeness hewn in stone
To honour him who broke thy heart and left thee here alone !
Mother, remember Drogheda, and all thy woes of old,
And curse the butcher Cromwell's name a thousand thousand
fold !

Trust not the slaves that honour him who thy worst scourge
has been,

But turn again from friends so false to those who wear the
Green !

“ We are the sons who love thee, O Erin, Mother dear !
We've borne thy Cross and blest thy name from weary year
to year !

We've shamed the fratricidal crew who take thy name in vain,
We've fought for Ireland foot by foot although our Chief lay
slain ;

There's hope for thee and Freedom yet, so long as we are
true,

Our birthright still remains to us although our ranks are
few,—

Please God we'll save our country yet, and keep its record
clean,

And preach from Cork to Donegal the wearing of the
Green !”

VICTORY.

OLD Flag, that floatest fair and proud
Where'er our swift fleets fly,
Do they who shriek thy praise aloud
Honour thee more than I,—
Who yield to none beneath the sun
In love for thine and thee,
Altho' I raise no song of praise
Or hymn of victory?

Not love thee, dear old Flag? not bless
This England, sea and shore?
O England, if I loved thee less
My song might praise thee more,—
I'd have thee strong to right the wrong,
And wise as thou art free;
For thee I'd claim a stainless fame,
A bloodless victory!

Conquer'd thou hast! from west to east
Thy fleets float on in pride,—
Thy glory, England, hath not ceased
Since Nelson bled and died;
Peace to the brave, who to thee gave
This Empire of the Sea,—
Yet, would thy son from God had won
A mightier victory!

VICTORY.

The trumpets of thy rule are blown
Where'er thy hosts go by ;
Blent with their sound I hear the moan
Of martyr'd men who die ;
Crush'd 'neath their tread lie quick and dead,
And far away I see
The white Christ rise with weeping eyes
To mourn thy victory !

Nay, is it victory at all
The blood-red wreath to gain ?
The hosts who curse thee as they fall
But prove thy glory vain ;
Thy legions strong still march along
And reap the world for thee,
But nobler is the Sower's song
Than their best victory !

Not through thy legions arm'd to slay
Hast thou survived and reigned,—
Through men who threw the sword away
Thy glory hath been gained ;
Strong, stubborn-kneed, they stood and freed
The slave from sea to sea,
And Wilberforce's bloodless deed
Was England's victory !

The men whose hands have raised thy throne,
And guard it evermore,
Are such as lit the Eddystone
And built the Skerryvore !

By blood unstain'd their hands maintain'd
This Empire of the Sea,—
The white wreath won by Stephenson
Crown'd Nelson's victory !

To such as these, O Motherland,
Let thy red hosts give room—
To those who wrought with patient hand
The engine and the loom ;
Thy gifts increase through acts of Peace,
Not deeds men weep to see,
And Shakespeare's page from age to age
Is thy best victory !

Not love the dear old Flag ? not bless
Our England, sea and shore ?
O England, those who love thee less
May stoop to praise thee more.
To keep thy fame from taint of shame
I pray on bended knee,
But where the braggart mouths thy name
I hail no victory !

Thy place is yonder on the Deep
That blows thy fleets abroad,
Thy strength is in the men who keep
Their bloodless pact with God ;
They love thee best who will not rest
Until, from sea to sea,
Justice and Love, by all men blest,
Complete thy victory !

VOX POPULI.

I.

How long, O God, how long shall we,
The chosen of Thy race,
Wail in the night for Light to see
The glory of Thy Face?
How long shall Death usurp Thy throne,
While clouds of sorrow gather?
Hearken, O God! thy children moan
In darkness for their Father!

II.

How long shall this foul Upas-tree,
Hung with the butcher'd dead,
Cast on Thy Cross of Calvary
Its shadow dark and dread?
As high as Heaven its branches rise
While those black fruits swing under,
And yet no Hand from yonder skies
Tears the black boughs asunder!

III.

How long into our lives shall eat
The leprosy of Lust,
While all things pure and fair and sweet
Turn into strumous dust?

Crush'd 'neath the Leper's conquering feet
Crouches the white Slave, Woman,
While silently from street to street
Glide hucksters of the Human !

IV.

Under Thy Cross the Throne still stands,
A Woman sits thereon ;
Beneath her cling with feeble hands
Her brethren, woe-begone ;
No help, no succour from on high,
To bless their souls bereaven . . .
My God ! they drag them thence to die,
While Thou art dumb in Heaven !

V.

The Atheist and the Priest, O Lord,
Unite to forge our chains !
Under Thy Cross, arm'd with Thy Sword,
Judge Ananias reigns !
Thy Priests stand by and make no sign,
Thy Church lies mute and broken,
And that *they* know no Light Divine
Thy Gallows stands for token !

VI.

Reach out Thy Hand, snatch back Thy Sword !
God of the quick and dead !
Crush down these Upas-trees, O Lord,
To dust beneath thy tread !

Each leaf of life that trembles there,
 Withering broken-hearted,
 Attests, despite a Nation's prayer,
 Thy glory hath departed !

VII.

How long shall Man's dark law abide
 And Thine be closely seal'd,
 How long shall Truth and Mercy hide
 - Forgotten, unreveal'd ?
 See, o'er this Flood whereon we move
 Burns War's red Bow of Slaughter !
 And still no sign of Thy White Dove
 Upon the crimson water !

VIII.

Come from the darkness of the Deep,
 Open the Heavens up there,
 We charge thee, by these tears we weep,
 And by these chains we bear !
 Death rules Thine earth despite our cries,
 Heaven's Throne, too, is assailéd,—
 While from his stricken children's eyes
 The Father's Face is veiléd . . .

How long, O Lord, how long ?

VOX DEI.

I.

COWARDS and Slaves, who ne'er will learn
Your own deep strength and might,
Who shut those eyes which should discern
The Truth, the Right, the Light !
God helps not Man, who might control
Ev'n God to his endeavour !—
The Titan with a Pigmy's Soul
Remains a Pigmy ever !

II.

So long as those who might be free
Crouch down and hug their chains,
In vain is their appeal to Me
Or any God that reigns ;
So long as mortal men despair,
Self-martyr'd, self-polluted,
Those Upas-trees shall cloud the air
With branches human-fruited !

III.

So long as freemen yield the Thief
Their birthright of the soil,
And let my earth remain in fief
To Knaves who will not toil ;

So long as Knaves by Slaves are sent
 To rule my fair creation,
 Wail on, ye Mortals, and lament
 Your own self-immolation !

IV.

Awake ! arise ! upraise your eyes,
 Ye Titans of mankind,—
 One touch would break the chain of Lies
 Which ye yourselves have twined !
 'Tis you alone who are the Strong,
 Not ev'n your God is stronger !—
 Long as ye *will*, be Slaves,—so long !
 But not one heart's-beat longer !

V.

I made you free, I gave you might
 To lose or conquer all ;
 I help no coward in the fight,
 But calmly watch him fall !
 So long as ye forget your dower,
 By your own wills bereaven,
 Wail on, in impotence of power,
 But hope no help from Heaven ! . . .
So long, O Men, so long !

OLD ROME.

OLD ROME, whose thunderbolts were hurl'd
 So long across a wondering world,
 Whose legions swarmed from east to west,
 Whose eagles kept the storms at bay,
 Now Time hath lull'd thy heart to rest,
 Where is thy pride, O Rome, to-day? . . .
 Thy heart is still, Old Rome, thy pride hath passed away !

Mount Atlas rises as of yore ;
 All round upon the Afric shore
 The vast and solitary stones
 Of thine imperial Cities stand—
 The mighty Monster's bleaching bones
 Half-buried in the desert sand ! . . .
 Where are thy conquering eyes, O Rome, thy red right
 hand ?

The sleepless Eagle's eyes at last
 Are closed, its sunward flight hath pass'd !
 But lo, afar across the sea
 This new imperial Rome doth rise,
 As strong, as fearless, and as free,
 It feels the sun and fronts the skies . . .
 Thine ears are dust, Old Rome, and cannot hear its cries !

Dust ! and *we* too, who now adjust
Our pomp and pride, shall be as dust !
And this, our Empire, too, shall share
 The same inevitable doom,—
Thy death, old Rome, and thy despair,
 With all the weary world for tomb ;—
The new race comes, the old and worn-out race gives room !

With bread and pageants we appease
The home-bred mob, while o'er the seas,
Snatching the spoil of many lands,
 Conquering we sweep with sword and fire,
Nay, building up with bloody hands
 The glory of our heart's desire,—
Raising (like thee, old Rome !) our own proud funeral pyre !

Thy pride hath pass'd, and ours shall pass !
Over our graves shall grow the grass,
Within the cities we upraise
 Jackal and wolf shall make their home,
A younger brow shall bear the bays,
 A fairer fleet shall face the foam,—
When this our Rome is dust and laid with thine, Old Rome !

THE LAST BIVOUAC.

AT hush of night, when all things seem
To sleep, I waken and look forth,
And lo ! I hear, or else I dream,
The tramp of Legions o'er the earth !
And in the dark
Hush'd heavens I mark
Sentinel lights that flash o'erhead
From lonely bivouacs of the Dead !

Then, while the spectral Hosts sweep by,
Unseen yet heard in the under gloom,
I see against the dim blue sky
A Skeleton in cloak and plume ;
Beneath him crowd,
Like cloud on cloud,
Sleeping on that great plain of dread,
Dark countless legions of the Dead.

No sound disturbs those camps so chill,
No banner waves, no clarions ring,—
Imperial Death sits cloak'd and still
With eyes turned earthward, listening
To that great throng
Which sweeps along
With battle cry and thunder tread,
To join the bivouacs of the Dead !

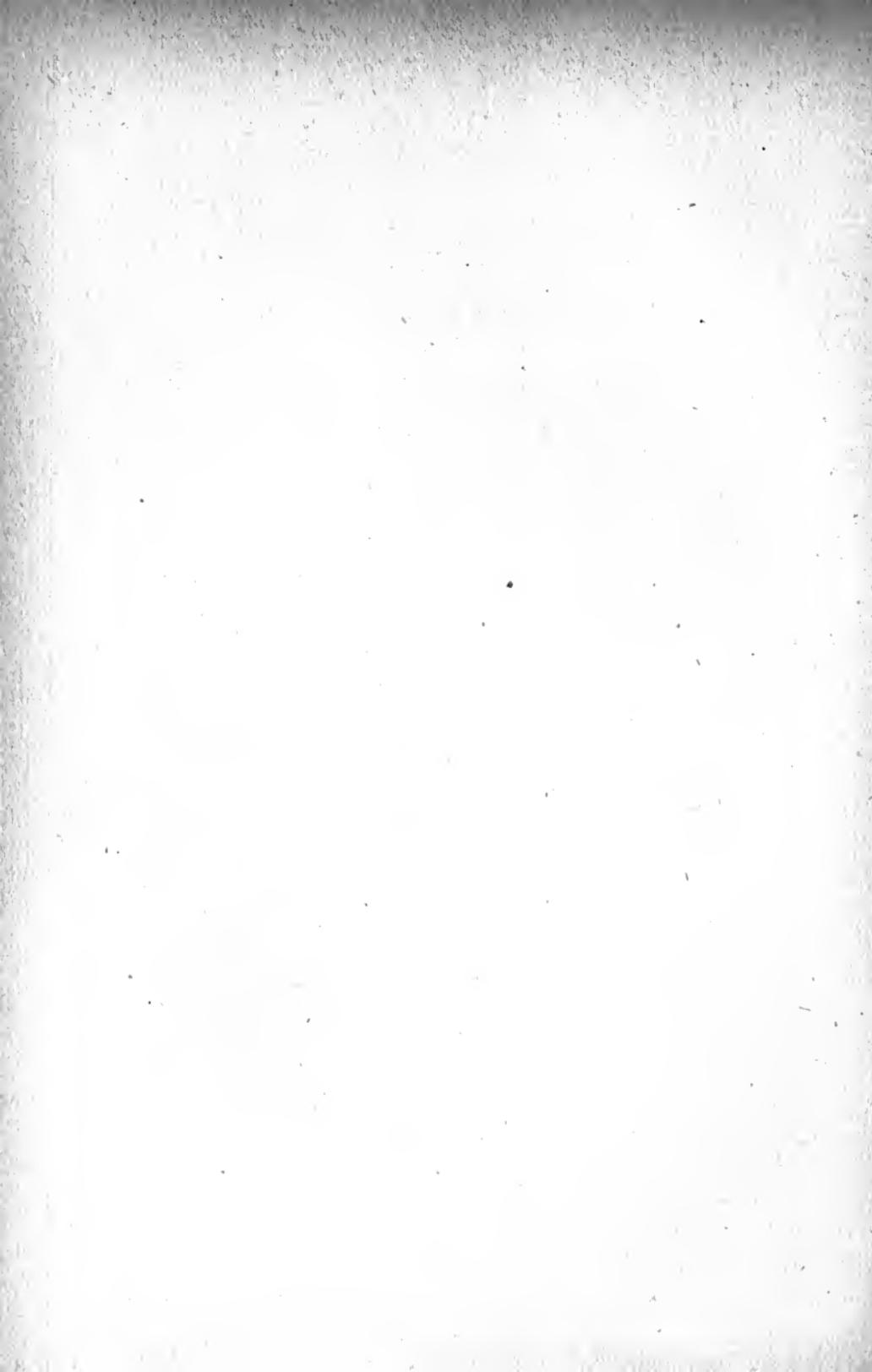
THE LAST BIVOUAC.

Sentinel-stars their vigil keep !
The hooded Spectre sitteth dumb,
While still to join the Hosts asleep
The Legions of the Living come :
 'Neath Heaven's blue arch
 They march and march,
Ever more silent as they tread
More near the bivouacs of the Dead.

But when they reach those bivouacs chill
Their cries are hush'd, their heads are bow'd,
And with their comrades, slumbering still,
Silent they blend, like cloud with cloud :
 Light answers light
 Across the night,—
While quietly they seek their bed
Among the watch-fires of the Dead !

And night by night the Leader's form
Looms black 'gainst heavens cold and dim,
While evermore in silence swarm
The human Hosts to rest with him ;
 Hush'd grow their cries,
 Clos'd their eyes,
Silent, until some trumpet dread
Shall wake the Legions of the Dead !

THRO' THE GREAT CITY.



THE FAIRY QUEEN.

ON the silent Bridge, at dead of night,
 I met the Fairy Queen,—
 I knew her well by the elfin light
 In the depths of her woful e'en.

Tho' the robe she wore was ragged and rent
 And her form was bent and old,
 Her hair in the gleam o' the gas was sprent
 With glimmers of fairy gold.

“What makest thou here in the streets of Rome?”
 And softly answer'd she :
 “Hungry and cold on the streets I come,
 Keeping my Jubilee !

“The crown I wore in the days of old
 I have pawn'd in the Mart,” she said,
 “And I sell my kiss for a piece of gold
 To buy my little ones bread !

“They drove me out from my happy home
 Under the greenwood tree,
 And now I serve in the streets o' Rome
 The Lords of the Bread !” said she.

I lookt in her face and methought I dreamed—
She looked so weary and worn !
So like a painted woman she seem'd
Who in Fairyland was born !

“Thy sisters and brethren, where are they?”
“They are Slaves of the Mart,” she said,
“For a crust or a blow, be it night or day,
They serve the Lords of the Bread !

“And it's O for the gladness that once we knew,
For the Dance and the Dream,” said she,
“For the soft moonlight and the morning dew,
And the glamour of Faërie !”

Weary and worn through the shadows grey
The weariful creature fled,
And I clench'd my hands as she vanish'd away,
And curst the Lords of the Bread !

THE LORDS OF THE BREAD.

I.

“LORDS of the Bread and the Land,
Cruel and empty of heart,
Low at your footstool we stand,
We who are Slaves of the Mart !
Ye have conquer'd the Earth and the Sea ;
In glory of purple and gold
Your Empire rolls onward, but we
Stand bleeding and bare as of old ;
Ye have stolen the soil of our birth,
With the flesh of our bones ye are fed,—
Who made ye the Masters of Earth?—
Answer, ye Lords of the Bread !”

II.

And the Lords of the Bread replied :
“Hush, ye vain voices, be still !
With the God of the Strong for our guide
We have triumph'd and fatten'd our fill ;
And lo ! in our pride we upbuild
These Cities that look on the foam,
And the waves of the waters are stilled
And rock 'neath the grain-ships of Rome ;
And from City to City march forth
Our legions with conquering tread :
Ye made us the Masters of Earth
And the fulness thereof, and the Bread !”

III.

Then answer'd the Slaves of the Mart :
 "Even so ! ye are great, ye are strong !
 But wherefore, O cruel of heart,
 Deny us our birthright so long !
 We launch'd ye these ships on the waves,
 We plough'd both the Earth and the Deep,
 And all that we ask for, your Slaves,
 Is tithe of the treasure ye keep.
 Ye have stolen the soil of our birth,
 Your beasts with our harvests are fed,—
 We made ye the Masters of Earth,
 And left ye the Lords of the Bread !"

IV.

The Lords of the Bread spoke again :
 "Lo, this is the Law,—so take heed,—
 Who gains shall inherit his gain,
 Yea, he and his uttermost seed !
 With the Sword of the Strong in our hand
 We keep what was stolen of yore,
 For lo, we inherit the Land,
 And ye can inherit no more—
 Behold we rejoice and make mirth,
 Though the mouth of the fool gapes unfed,
 For we are the Masters of Earth,
 And the fulness thereof, and the Bread !"

V.

Then answer'd the Slaves of the Mart :
 "O traitors, O wolves in the fold,
 The blood ye have wrung from the heart
 Ye coin into drachmas of gold ;

And the gold buys our sisters and wives,
And our children are sold for the same,
While ye stand on the wreck of our lives
Rejoicing, and trumpet your fame !
Accurst be this Land of our birth
And woe to this Empire," they said,
"If ye, the proud Masters of Earth,
Deny us our birthright of Bread !"

LAST NIGHT.

LAST NIGHT.

LAST night, as in the streets of stone
I paced in silence and alone,
A pale thin youth with locks of flame
Came to me, murmuring my name.

His face was white, his eyes were wild,
He looked into my face and smiled,
He named my name, then softly said,
"I am thine other self, long dead!"

And as he spake I felt his breath
Was chilly with the dews of Death,
But suddenly he sang, and lo!
'Twas an old song I used to know.

Ah, God! the music tore apart
The clammy cerements of my heart,
And suddenly I seemed to be
Wild, young, and wonderful as he!

And when he ceased, he laugh'd and cried,
"Tho' all have perished, I abide,"
Yet looking in his face I knew
'Twas glittering with churchyard dew!

I reach'd out hands and would have pressed
The gentle vision to my breast,
But from my touch, before I wist,
He sprang and vanished into mist !

“Come back, come back !” I cried in pain,
But ah, he would not come again !
Tearful, in silence and alone,
I paced along the streets of stone.

THE SPHINX

(On the Thames Embankment, London).

I.

A LITTLE gloved hand on my arm, a tall slight form beside
me,

After the supper at Rule's, on a balmy night in June,
Whither in all the world should God or the Devil guide me
But down to face the Sphinx, in the light of the summer
moon!

Not on the desert sands, with lions roaring around her
Seeking their timid prey in pools of the bright moonrise,
But here, by the glimmering Thames, in silence of dreams
profounder,

Crouches the Shape of Stone, wingëd, with wondrous
eyes!

Puffing my cigarette, I look on her marble features,
Dead, stone dead, and looming pale in the starry light,
While, fitting silently round, creep desolate human creatures,
Carrion-seeking women, woful waifs of the night,—
Fading swiftly away as the slow policeman comes nearer,
Stolid, silent, and tall, with measured ominous tread. . . .
Hush! he is gone like a ghost! the light falls brighter and
clearer

On the wingëd Shape of the Beast, on the ringleted
Woman's Head,

On the dead dumb eyes still gazing, not on the City before
them,

Not on the moonlit streets, but on something far away,—
Heedless of Earth around, of the patient Heavens o'er
them,

Heedless of Life and Time, dead to the Night and the
Day!

II.

Clari, my sweet, you shiver? Nay, but the night is
chilly! . . .

Fear not the fabled Sphinx, but look in her rayless eyes,—
Tiptoe, clinging unto me, frail and white as a lily,

You face the Sphinx at last, with a maidenly mute surmise!
Older than Night and Day, older than Death, she remaineth!
Still, tho' New Rome is astir! Calm, tho' the Tempest
complaineth!

Ancient of days she was crouching like this ere Christ was
created!

Watching the things that are fled, seeing the things that are
fated;

Speechless, impotent, wise; pitiless, silent, and certain;
Seeing some Shape that is stirring yonder beyond Night's
curtain;

Conscious, perchance, of the Sea of Eternity, blindly
breaking

Over this Rock of a World, on to the space without
spheres. . . .

We, too, look, but discern not!—yet ever, sleeping or waking,
Fear the Sight she is *seeing*, shrink from the Silence she
hears!

III.

Charm of the mystic Moonlight! Now, as the moonrays
 unfold you,

You seem some lissome Queen, upgazing with a smile!
 With tiger-skin on your shoulders and fillet of dusky gold,
 you

Witch the night with your mirth, on the banks of the
 yellow Nile!

With arm'd troops behind, this gloaming of golden weather,
 You lift your jewel'd hand, and lo, the trumpets play. . . .

Ah, but the magic fades, and again, in bonnet and feather,
 You laugh, and merrily whisper, "Leave her, and come
 away!"

IV.

Nay, let me front the Sphinx for only another minute,
 Now when the City sleeps, and the River is mother-o'-
 pearl'd:

Then hey for the hansom home, two lovers nestling within
 it,

The joy of Night, and to-morrow, the rush of the waking
 World!

V.

Secret no mortal hath guessed, she seëth and knoweth for-
 ever!

Light no mortal hath seen, streams on her eyeballs of
 stone!

Under her talon'd feet runs like a desolate river

Life, and over her head Time like a trumpet is blown!
 Silent,—and *we* shall be silent;—lonely,—and *we* shall be
 lonely,

Knowing what she hath known, seeing what she can see;—

Dead,—and *we* shall be dead!—for our life and our love are
only

A dream in the Dream she dreameth, a drop in that
infinite Sea!

Even as Nineveh faded, even as Babylon perish'd,
So shall this City depart, with all it hath shelter'd and
cherish'd!

Stone shall be cast upon stone,—grave upon grave shall be
lying,—

There, where the Magdalen wails, jackal and wolf shall be
crying;

Yet shall the River of Life wander and wander and wander,
Yet shall the Trumpet of Time sound from the Sungates up
yonder,

Yet shall the fabled Sphinx brood on the mystic To-morrow,
While newer Cities arise, on the dust that is scatter'd in
sorrow!

VI.

Dearest, 'tis long, so long, since out of the lonely abysses
Crawl'd this fabled Sphinx, and moved among things of
breath,

Seeing the Sight Man sees not, feeling the Light Man
misses,

Turn'd to eternal stone, and brooded in dreamful
Death—

Cities have followed cities, nations have followed nations,
Thick as the sands have vanish'd the tribes and the genera-
tions,

God hath fallen on god, like statues of marble broken,
Zeus hath gone like a cloud, Jehovah hath left no token,—

And hush ! who yonder is stealing, old and hoary and
 saintly,
 Holding in his thin hand a lamp that is flickering faintly?—
 Ghostwise on through the night, still loving tho' wholly
 despairing,
 Creeps the gentlest of all, to the grave of his kindred
 repairing !

VII.

Well ! if the last word said, so long as our ears can hearken,
 Be this last word of Love (dear hand, how it creeps in
 mine !)

Well, if the last God seen, ere the thrones of Eternity darken,
 Be the supremest and best, most human and most Divine?
 Is it not sweet to go, if He who is also going
 Beckons and bids us follow, ev'n to the empty grave?
 Better to rest beside Him, be done with seeing and knowing
 Than walk in a World bereft of the Spirits who heal and
 save !

Ah, but in sad procession fast at his back they follow—
 Buddha, Balder, Menù, Prometheus, Phœbus Apollo :
 Shades, that follow a Shade ; Gods, that obey a Supremer ;
 Spirits of Healing and Light, lords of the poet and dreamer,
 Leaving behind them only a world by despair overshadowed,
 Only these eyes of the Sphinx, to mock us till *we* too have
 faded !

VIII.

Nay, then, by yonder blue Vault, with its million eyes gazing
 hither,
 Open and watching the world roll blindly no mortal knows
 whither,

Nay, by those eyes more divine than any of stone, ever
 filling
 With drops of infinite Life, from the great heart of Nature
 distilling,
 God and the gods shall abide, wherever our souls seek a
 token,
 Speech of the Gods shall be heard, the silence of Death
 shall be broken,
 And Man shall distinguish a sign, a voice in the midnight,
 a tremor
 From every pulse of the Heavens, to answer the heart of the
 Dreamer !
 Faces of gods and men shall throng the blue casements
 above him !
 Heaven shall be peopled with throngs of Spirits that watch
 him and love him !
 Out of the furthest Abyss voices shall call, while upspringing
 Man shall arise to his height, reaching hands up the dark-
 ness and singing,—
 Clouds of the Void shall part, with lights that throng brighter
 and faster,
 While blind as the grave the Sphinx lies low, 'neath the feet
 of her Master !

IX.

Close thine eyes, old Sphinx ! we heed thy stare not a
 feather !
 Sleep in the summer moon, near the River mother-o'-
 pearl'd !
 And now for the hansom home, two lovers nestling together,
 The joy of Night, and to-morrow, the rush of the waking
 World !

"THESE VOICES."

THESE voices! Hark, Buchanan! All about thee,
 In the nighttime, in the daytime, they are crying!
 Within thee they are sounding, yet without thee,
 Ever growing on thy sense, and ever dying!

Sounds of weeping, sounds of jubilation and singing,
 Sobs of terror and of pain, and sighs of sorrow;
 And their echoes thro' thine inmost Soul are ringing,
 While thy Soul looks forth in wonder night and morrow.

Nay, but listen! . . . 'Tis the children's cry of gladness!
 Nay, but look! They smile with rosy faces hither!
 . . . But alas! the little shapes that sit in sadness,
 And the little broken lives that droop and wither!

Hear the strong man in the dark for pity crying,
 Hear the foul man's word of hate as he goes by thee;
 Hear the shriek of trampled women, vainly flying
 From the phantoms that appal thee and defy thee!

Ah, the Voices! and the Faces!—all the pity
 And the wonder, in this vision of the Human,
 All the lightness and the darkness of the City,
 All the beauty and the shame of man and woman!

All the foul things God would seem to put his ban on,
All the fair things that would seem to have his blessing—
Without thee yet within thee, O Buchanan,
They are thronging, with a riddle for thy guessing !

Canst thou answer? Hath the living Soul within thee
Any token, any beauteous explanation?
Is it silent? Then eternal Night shall win thee,
And these Souls but knell thy Soul's annihilation !

Shall these Voices die to one Voice,—thine upbraiding
Of the power which brings and takes thee out of being?
Shall these Faces fade to one—thine own face, fading
Back to darkness, in the very act of *seeing*?

Ah, the Voices ! and the Faces !—wild and wan, on
They are rushing, to destroy or to renew thee !
Like a foam-flake shalt thou vanish, O Buchanan,
If but one of these is lost that cry unto thee !

THE CRY FOR LIFE.

"Da spatium vitæ, multos da, Jupiter, annos!"
—JUV., *Sat.* x.

THIS was my Dream. Methought I stood
Amid a crying multitude
Who in this Rome awoke by night,
And saw about them, shining white
'Gainst the great heaven's soot-black pall,
An Angel with a Sword. (Ye all,
O brethren fashion'd out of clay,
Have dreamed this Dream by night and day !)

Loud (in my Dream) that host was crying
For Life eternal and undying,
And thus to still them as they cried,
The pale Protagonist replied :

" Silence, and listen for a space,
Ye waifs and strays of human race,
While I, God's herald from above,
Whom ye name Death, and He names Love,
Holding aloft the fatal knife
Which cuts the crimson thread of life,
Rehearse, to still your acclamation,
The Master's last Determination ! "

VOICES.

Speak on, oh scourge of Humankind,
But veil thine eyes, that strike us blind !

THE ANGEL.

He who hath made you, frail or fair,
Happy and innocent, or base,
Hath given ear unto your prayer
And pondered o'er it, in His place.
And, firstly, He admits at once
(What may be proved to any dunce)
That when He breath'd abroad His word
To make Humanity, He erred !
For know, to even Him is given
Power to recant and to revise,
And placing pigmies 'neath His Heaven
To wail and curse and criticise,
Was (by the sun and planets seven !)
A hasty business and unwise !
Yet ye, who by His dispensation
Procreate also in your prime,
Find irresponsible creation
Pleasant to pass away the time !
Results, however (and by these
God judges both Himself and men),
Have proved that doing what we please
May lead to trouble now and then !
This He perceives, and finding all
His plans to make men *worth* the saving,
End only in a caterwaul
Of sin and strife and misbehaving,

THE CRY FOR LIFE.

He thinks (whilst still apologising
 For that first blunder most surprising)
 That if He, in some moment weak
 Of pity, granted what you seek,
 It might perchance be just another
 Blunder, no better than the other ?

VOICES.

Let us live on ! Eternal Life
 We crave, though 'twere eternal strife ;
 Let us live on, O thou most High !
 For oh, 'tis terrible to die !

THE ANGEL.

Oh, miserable things of clay !
 Do ye *deserve* to live ?

VOICES.

Ah, nay !
 Not our desert, but our desire,
 Is the sole claim whereon we dwell—
 Lord, give us life, though in the fire
 Which burns for ever down in Hell !

THE ANGEL.

Alas ! ye know (for men most wise
 Have opened up your close-shut eyes)
 Hell is a phantasy invented
 By pious gentlemen at prayer,
 Where all their foes may be tormented
 Whilst they themselves play harps elsewhere

Should ye live on, your lives must be
 Condition'd through Eternity
 By the same feelings, grave or gay,
 That animate your frames to-day.
 Wherefore the Lord, loath to refuse
 Your prayer, and fain to end the strife,
 Bids me make question how ye use
 The opportunities of life?
 If, being men, your aspiration
 Is worthy endless prolongation?
 Or whether (as our friend the Devil
 Argues) your plans, pursuits, and pains,
 Are so absurdly low of level,
 So little worthy things with brains,
 That 'twould be better, past a doubt,
 To let each little lamp go out?
 Speak then, all ye that look for ruth,
 What *is* the life ye fain would seize?
 Let God Almighty learn the truth,
 And don't speak all together, please!

*(Whereupon is heard a great clamour, after the subsiding
 of which individual voices make themselves faintly heard.)*

FIRST VOICE.

I've lounged about barracks, I've danced and I've flirted,
 I bolted from Simla with Kitty Magee,
 And much as her fair reputation was dirtied
 By the cruel Divorce Court and *nisi* decree,
 I stuck to the lady and married her after,
 Returned to inherit dad's acres and pounds,
 Then treated the County (that cut us) with laughter,
 Till the Prince espied Kitty, when riding to hounds!

After that all was smooth, and we entered Society,
 The clergyman called, and the County knelt down,
 And now life is full of eternal variety,
 'Tween the fun in the shire, and the season in town !

ANOTHER VOICE.

With roguish face and pretty foot,
 Pink silken stocking, high heel'd boot,
 And robes of Redfern's best,
 I sup at two, and rise at ten,
 Love all the white shirt-fronted men,
 But the gay Guardsman best.
 Sing tra la la and rub a dub,
 I frisk at the Corinthian club
 With swells and ladies gay.
 I think this pleasant life and free
 Is just the life that ought to be
 For ever and a day !

ANOTHER VOICE.

For ever, for ever ! I love the sweet rustle
 Of crisp new bank-notes, and the jingle of guineas—
 In the street, upon 'Change, 'mid the murmur and bustle,
 I pluck all the greenhorns, and wheedle the ninnies—
 Cent. per cent. is my motto ! I blow the bright bubbles
 Which float for a while and then burst with no warning,
 And then take my holiday, tramping the stubbles,
 But get the *Financial Review* every morning.
 I've a brougham and buggy, a wife and a family,
 A dovecot at Fulham, a soiled dove within it,—
 When I dream of a coffin, my skin perspires clammy,
 And I don't want to think these enjoyments are finite !

ANOTHER VOICE.

I've plumb'd the great abyss of Mind
And find no solid bottom there.
Blind Force, blind Law are all I find,
And dark progression God knows where !
I've made a system most complete
Of true philosophy, wherein
I shew all creeds are obsolete
That seek some heavenly goal to win.
And yet, Life's pleasant !—there's the rub
With other fogies at the club,
The *Times* at breakfast, and the knocks
I give to notions orthodox
In the Reviews ! Tho' old and grey,
And somewhat troubled with the gout,
I really think I'd like to stay
And see my theories worked out !

ANOTHER VOICE.

Even as my hand the pistol clutches,
As the cold steel my forehead touches,
I pause in act to fire, and crave
Another chance beyond the grave !
More life ! more chances ! here I first
Drew breath, and knew the gambler's thirst,
Lost every stake I had to play,
And yet I know there *is* a way
Had I but time ! For pity's sake,
Another life ! wherein to stake
My soul, in passionate despair,
And win or lose it, then and there !

THE CRY FOR LIFE.

VOICES.

Yea, let us live ! Eternal life
 We crave, tho' 'twere eternal strife !
 Let us live on, O thou most High,
 For oh, 'tis terrible to die !

A VOICE.

The light that never was on sea or land
 Fires and inspires me as I grip the pen,—
 That Novel of the Age, which I have planned,
 Must stagger and amaze my fellow-men.
 I crave for Fame ! but most I want to beat
 That idiot Smith who boasts his tenth edition !
Ars longa, vita brevis. Life is sweet,
 But far too scanty for the writer's mission—
 And Smith is famous, while I pine neglected !
 Almighty God, who makest reputations,
 Grant life, that Smith may hide his head dejected,
 While I am shining 'mongst thy constellations !

ANOTHER VOICE.

'Mong quiet woodland ways, remote
 From Demos of the clamouring throat
 And all rude sight and sound,
 I build my gentle House of Art
 Wherein my soul may sit apart
 Secure and lily crown'd ;
 While foolish martyrs feed the fire
 And angry factions rage,
 I twang the solitary lyre
 And scan the poet's page.

The village maidens clean and trim
 Weave me green chaplets while I hymn
 God's glory and the King's ;
 But o'er my grave and calm repose
 The gracious Muse of Rugby throws
 The shadow of her wings.
 Deep is my faith in Nature's plan,
 Mysterious and divine,
 To waken in the mind of man
 The peace which gladdens mine.
 Wherefore I crave eternal life,
 Remote from care, remote from strife,
 And innocent of wrong,
 That, loved and honour'd in the land,
 I still may cut with cunning hand
 My diamonds of song !

ANOTHER VOICE.

Thou hast set this crown of Empire on my head,
 Thou hast given me glory full and overflowing !
 The hungry people tremble at my tread,
 The widowed nations fear my trumpet's blowing.
 Leash'd in my grip, I hold the bloodhound War,
 But o'er my crown the Cross of Christ is looming,
 For in thy name, O God, whence all things are,
 I wield the sword, cross-shapen, life-consuming !

ANOTHER VOICE.

To talk and talk ! To spout for hours
 And have it printed all *verbatim*,
 While pressmen, wondering at my powers,
 Follow my prosings *seriatim* !

THE CRY FOR LIFE.

Abuse or praise, 'tis all the same
 To make the politician's game,
 While o'er the long-ear'd listening nation
 Shoots the loose rocket, Reputation !
 The listening House, the long debate,
 The watching eyes, the Speaker's nod,
 Shall these depart? Forbid it, Fate !
 Make me immortal, like a God !

These voices, and a thousand more,
 Like sad waves surging on the shore,
 Rose, broke and fell, while others came
 To fill the midnight with acclaim,
 Till, wearied out, the Angel dread
 Rais'd his right hand, and frowning said :
 "Enough, enough," and vanish'd.
 Whereon again uprose the strife
 Of those wild waves of human life,
 But in a little space once more
 His form flashed out against the sky ;
 His hand was raised to hush the roar
 Of restless waters rolling by,
 And thus he spake, with lustrous gaze
 Fixed in large scorn on those who heard,
 Delivering to the World's amaze
 The Master's final Doom and Word !

"Will it startle you much and be very distressing,
 If I say that the Lord, who is kindly tho' strong,
 Thinks that, tho' one or two might deserve such a blessing,
 Mankind on the whole are too mean to prolong ?

He harks to your pleading, He knows your petitions,

But sees with a sigh what you *are*, and must be,

And having made men of all sorts and conditions,

He thinks he must trust them to Nature, and Me.

Ipsè dicit: the life you possess must content you,

You'd waste for all Time what you waste for a day . . .

Yet He leaves just a Doubt in your minds, to prevent you

From letting the Devil have all his own way!

"SISTERS OF MIDNIGHT."

(A NEW BALLAD TO AN OLD BURTHEN.)

"ONE more unfortunate weary of breath"
 (Sisters of Midnight, so runneth the ditty),
 "Rashly importunate, gone to her death,"
 Lost in the gulf of the desolate City.
 Let the flood cover her, while we walk over her,
 Lit by the lamps of the Bridges forlorn—
 Sisters of Midnight, pale waifs of Humanity,
 Laugh at the world, all the foulness and vanity,
 Hunting your prey from the night till the morn !

Poisonous paint on us, under the gas,
 Smiling like spectres, we gather bereaven ;
 Leprosy's taint on us, ghost-like we pass,
 Watch'd by the eyes of yon pitiless Heaven !
 Let the stars stare at us ! God, too, may glare at us
 Out of the Void where He hideth so well . . .
 Sisters of Midnight, He damn'd us in making us,
 Cast us like carrion to men, then forsaking us,
 Smiles from His throne on these markets of Hell !

Laugh ! Those who turn from us, too, have their price !
There, for the proud, other harlots are dressing,
They too may learn from us man's old device—
 Food for his lust, with some sham of a blessing !
 Sons of old Adam there buy the fine madam there,

Bid with a coronet,—yea, or a crown !
 Sisters, who'd envy the glory which graces them ?
 They, too, are sold to the lust which embraces them,
 Ev'n in the Church, with the Christ looking down !

Pure in their scorn of us, happy and fair,
 Let them go by us, contented and smiling—
 Foulness that's born of us, they, too, must share,
 Long as they welcome what *we* are defiling.
They, who might turn to us, comfort us, yearn to us,
 They who still smile on the Man and his sin,
 Shut their proud portals of silver and gold on us !
 Sisters of Midnight, tho' shame comes tenfold on us,
 It comes twentyfold on those women within !

Leprosy's taint on them falls (let it fall !),
 What *we* have poisoned, they clasp night and morrow !
 Angel or saint on them vainly shall call !
 Downward they drift to our level of sorrow !
 Laugh ! The trade's flourishing, thanks to our nourishing !
 Pale droop the babes, while the mother's heart bleeds !
 Sisters of Midnight, God's good,—He avenges us !
 E'en as to dust and to foulness Man changes us,
 Back goes the sin to his innocent seed !

“One more unfortunate, weary of breath,”—
 Plunge ! down she drops, leaving sorrow behind her.
 “Rashly importunate, gone to her death !”
 Spare her your pity, O fool, when ye find her !

"SISTERS OF MIDNIGHT."

Stretch her out merrily, murmuring, "Verily,
Luck, spite of all, falls at last to her share!"
Life has rejected her, let the gulf swallow her!
Sisters of Midnight, make ready to follow her
Down the deep waters of Death and Despair!

THE LOST WOMEN.

THESE are the Lost, waifs which from wave to wave
Drift lone, while yonder on the yellow strand
The laughing Children run from cave to cave
And happy Lovers wander hand in hand.

The sun shines yonder on the green hillside,
The bright spire points to Heaven through leafy trees,
The Maiden wears the glory of a Bride,
The bright babe crows on the young Mother's knees.

O happy Brides ! O happy Mothers ! born
To inherit all the light that life can give,
Hear ye these voices out of depths forlorn ?
Know ye these Lost, who die that you may live ?

A MORNING INVOCATION.

(ON LONDON BRIDGE.)

SHADES of the clouds and the peaks! voices of rivers and
fountains!

Glimpses of purple crags and torrents that murmur and
leap!

Sounds and sights surrounding the Shepherd who stands on
the mountains

Lonely 'mong vapours of Dawn, dim like a vision in sleep.
Dim he looms, and gigantic! Feels the chill breath of the
Morning

Creep thro' the whitening mists, blowing them silently past,
Watches them come and depart, till out of the East with no
warning

Flashes a roseate beam, and smites them asunder at last!
When lo! tho' clouds roll above and the sun is with shadows
enfolden,

The flocks are spilt on the hills, the torrents shoot to the
fall,

The eyes of the blue meres open, the moors grow purple and
golden,

The mists melt over the heights, and the great Day glad-
deneth all!

SHEPHERD OF SONG stand I here! and lo, the Night 'neath
me and o'er me!

Lone in the City I loom, and watch for the dawn of the Day!

Shades as of clouds and of peaks, rising like phantoms
before me,

Darken around me to-night as they darken'd afar away.

Dawn—and the shadows are stirr'd! Light—and the clouds
break asunder!

The River of Life again rolls by with a sound as of thunder!

Spires of the City gleam, houses loom large in the grey light,

Yonder a flag is flung out, yonder a casement shines clear,

And lo! ST. PAUL'S, like a crag, rounded and dewy with
daylight,

Shines in the sun, while below it masts thick as reeds on
a mere

Rise from the dark-flowing Thames!

Light of Humanity, filling

The eyes and the ears with thy glory, this mystical dawning
of Day!

Touch the dark sources of prayer that stir in my bosom,
distilling

Dews from the darkness of sense, till the darkness melteth
away!

Come with the motion of clouds, with the murmur of winds
come unto me,

Open the glimpses divine, while Night like an owl taketh
wing;—

Shepherd of Song, stand I here! Strengthen, inspire, and
renew me

To look on the pageant and live, to hear the world wake,
and to sing!

TO JUVENAL.

*“Prima fere vota et cunctos notissima templis
Divitiæ, crescant ut opes, ut maxima toto
Nostra sit arca foro.”*

—JUV., *Sat.* x. 23, 24.

THY satire neither old nor stale is,
 Tho' many an age hath passed away,—
 Decimus Junius Juvenalis,
 Thou should'st be living here to-day !
 The God men still with prayer importune
 In every Christian temple stands,—
 To Plutus and his harlot Fortune
 We kneel with largess-seeking hands !

Tho' eighteen centuries have departed
 This world of ours is just the same
 As when, O Censor single-hearted,
 You lookt on Life's Circensian game !
 Here is the City, as you drew it
 In those forgotten days of old !
 The mob of Remus, as you knew it
 When the slain Christ was scarcely cold !

And Fame still tells the same old story
 Of idols whom the mob adore,—
 A little reign, a little glory,
 And lo, Sejanus topples o'er !

The statue made of mighty metal
 Melts in the furnace, and alas!
 Mere basin, frying-pan, and kettle
 Are fashioned from the head of brass! *

All power, all pride, are only trouble,
 Honour and glory cease to shine,
 Wisdom's a wig, and Fame a bubble,
 But Gold is evermore divine,—
 Minted tenfold it never ceases
 To gladden mortal days and nights,
 Surviving all the world's caprices
 And buying all the world's delights!

No wonder, therefore, that we pray for it,
 Ev'n as ye Romans prayed of old,—
 Waving all other gods away for it,
 Selling our very souls for Gold;—
 The one glad thing that never stale is,
 The one thing sure when all is told,
 Is what you cursed, my Juvenalis,
 When the slain Christ was scarcely cold!

* “. . . *Deinde ex facie toto urbe secunda
 Fiunt urceoli, pelves, sartago, patellæ!*”

—JUV., Sat. x.

LYDIA AT THE SAVOY.

O MY little Roman lady, with the fearless Roman air,
Freezing up the strange beholder with thy calm imperial
stare,
Passing onward to thy carriage from the supper-table bright,
While the other lissome ladies feast so merrily by night !

With a gleam of chilly jewels and a rustling silken train
Sweeping onward from the revel, full of delicate disdain,
Proud and virginal and chilly to thy pointed finger-tips,
Despite the splash of crimson on thy soft and scornful lips !

But, my little Roman lady, how the gentle gods transform
Thy beauty in the chamber where the lights are dim and
warm,
When thy sheath of silken splendour slips from nakedness
divine,
And a laughing little lady holds her rosy mouth to mine !

O my little Roman lady ! still remain as thou hast been,
For the garish world a vestal, but for me the Cyprian Queen !
Proud and virginal and chilly, till the Paphian charm is
said,
And the Cupids and the Graces gather laughing round thy
bed !

LESBIA.

(TO CATULLUS.)

*“Lesbia, illa Lesbia, quem Catullus unam
Plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes!”—CAT.*

HUNDREDS of years ago
Your Lesbia lived and died
Yonder in Rome ; yet lo !
Here she is at my side,
Merry and wanton-eyed !

Dead, yet ever re-born !
Lost, yet ever found !
Still with the roses of Morn
And poppies of Midnight crown'd,—
Laughing, with zone unbound !

Still, my Catullus, here
Her Paphian rites are done !
Ever from year to year
She gladdeneth in the sun,
The wanton eternal one !

Out of the ripe warm earth,
After the death-cold snow,
Bringing the old glad mirth
The rose and the rose-girl blow—
As in Rome so long ago !

LESBIA.

More than my eyes I love her,
Just as you loved her there,—
The same skies shine above her,
And the same bright golden hair
Flows on her shoulders bare !

Light from her eyes I borrow,
Clasp, kiss her, and adore ;—
Under the earth to-morrow
She'll sleep as she slept before—
Then waken and love once more.

Tho' under the earth like thee
.I slumber still as stone,
Roses will blossom, and she,
The rose-girl, stand full-blown,—
Laughing, with loosen'd zone !

BICYCLE SONG.

(FOR WOMEN.)

I.

CHANGED in a trice you find me,
Man, my Master of yore !
Vainly you seek to bind me,
For I'm your Slave no more.
Fast as you fly behind me,
I now fly on before !

II.

Out from my prison breaking,
Wherein so long I lay,
Into my lungs I'm taking
Draughts of the glad new Day—
Out ! where the world is waking !
Presto ! up and away !

III.

Praise to the Luck which sent me
This magical Wheel I ride,
For now I know God meant me
To match Man, side by side !
Wings the good Lord hath lent me,
And oh, the world is wide !

BICYCLE SONG.

IV.

Scornful of all disaster,
On to the goal I flee !
My wheel grows faster and faster,
My soul more strong and free !
Pedal your best, good Master,
If you'd keep pace with me !

V.

Bees may hum in the clover,
Sheep in the fold may cry,
My long siesta is over,—
Onward at last I fly—
He who would be my lover
Must now be swift as I !

VI.

All that I missed he misses
Who lags behind distressed,—
Sweet were the old-time blisses
But Freedom and Life are best—
Still, there's a time for kisses,
When now and then we rest !

VII.

And now I heed not a feather
The chains I used to feel—
Soon in the golden weather,
Edenward back we'll steal !
Adam and Eve together !
Throned on the Double Wheel !

THE SHOWER.

I.

SUDDENLY, as the busy crowd
Surges and roars along the street,
Over the housetops broods the cloud,
And down the first loose raindrops beat !
While black umbrellas here and there
Flutter up in the troubled air,
With pitter-patter of many feet
Into shelter the throngs retreat ;
In a moment the rush and roar
Are still'd, and the Shower begins to pour,
The eager Shower, with its twofold sound—
The splash close by, and the murmur all round !

II.

Splash, splash ! while the murmurous sound
Gathers and deepens all around !
And on the streets with leaden strokes
Strikes the Rain, till the pavement smokes
And where the great drops splash and pelt
Quicksilver-rings are made and melt !
While under the archways, at open doors,
The wet folk gather, down it pours,—

The eager Shower, with its twofold sound,—
The splash close by, and the murmur around !

III.

And now . . . how quiet all things look !
Still as a picture in a book !
And lo ! the crowding people seem
Spell-bound, like figures in a Dream !
Silently they shelter and stare
On the rain-lash'd street, thro' the misty air :—
Trembling the little sempstress stands,
Holding her bandbox in her hands,
Lifting her skirt and peeping down
At her thin wet shoes with a shrug and a frown ;
The fop his silk umbrella grips,
Holding it from him while it drips ;
The city man with impatient glance
Looks at the clouded sky askance,
Mutters, and quietly unfolds
The evening newspaper he holds ;
The loafer leaneth against the wall,
Straw in his mouth, with a grin for all ;
The urchin, reaching out his foot,
Into the puddle dips his boot,
Or cap in hand thrusts out his bare
Head, that the drops may pelt his hair !
'Buses and cabs crawl slowly by,
Glistering moistly under the sky ;
A mist steams up from the slippery ground,
While louder and louder grows the sound—
The splash close by, and the murmur around !

IV.

Then, all of a sudden, the air grows bright !
The moist black pools flash back the light,
The sun shines cheerily over all,
And lo, the Shower has ceased to fall !
The spell is broken, and now once more
The crowd flows onward with busy roar !

SERAPHINA SNOWE.

I.

Her Portrait.

THE medium, Seraphina Snowe,
Hath come to town with her Spirit-show :
A lady whom many a humbug think,
Raised in the land of the bobolink ;
Has bothered philosophers many a day
In the land of notions over the way ;
And over to England cometh she,
Blown like a feather across the sea.

A little lady with very white teeth,
White high forehead, and underneath
Eyes of strange forget-me-not blue
Wash'd more pale by a dreamy dew ;
Lips rose-red and ever apart,
Full of the pants of a passionate heart ;
Yellow and silken is her hair,
With a gleam of blood-red here and there ;
As light, as bright, as a gleaming dove,
Is the little lady the Spirits love !
Hold her hand up to the light !
How transparent, how waxen white,
Save where the pink blood glimmers through !
Observe the slight little body, too !

A mingling, all tinted well,
 Of "Ariel" and "Little Nell,"
 With a spice of "Puck!"

With the wise men round her,
 And the savants dying to confound her,
 She seems like some bright beautiful bird
 Singing to snakes,—who think song absurd;
 Or a wave, that breaks and sparkles and dances,
 While the dark rocks scowl, until each rock glances
 With the dew it scatters; or best, some hold,
 One of those spiders whose threads of gold
 Cross the woodland pathway, and (though so thin)
 The light and the dew and the glory win,—
 While close at hand, with watchful wits,
 The lithe and luminous lady sits,
 Her body all beauty, her home all gay,
 And her two eyes waiting for common prey!

II.

Séance.

Poor little spider, so soft, so white!
 What! doth she think in a web so slight
 To catch enormous insects like *these*,
 Or the critical wasps, or the busy bees? . . .
 Buzz! . . . in the silent *séance* you mark
 The wise blue-bottles hovering dark:
 Doctor That and Professor This,
 Each one finding the thing amiss,
 Seeking to learn the trick of the show.

Poor little Seraphina Snowe !

Hush ! . . . How brightly she doth brood
 In the midst of us all, with the gentle blood
 All flown to her heart, and her face all hoar.
 Darken the room a little more !
 Is that the wind on the pane, or the rain ? . . .
 Something is stirring in my brain. . . .
 What is *that* ? . . .

. . . In the darkness of the room
 Her face grows up and fills the gloom
 Like a Lily of light. I feel her eyes,
 Tho' I cannot see them. My spirits rise
 And shiver—my heart ticks like a clock.
 O hush ! O hush ! was that a knock ?
 Half a tap and half a creak,
 Partly bubble and partly squeak,—
 One,—two,—three !
 The room seems rising,—and still I see
 The gleam of the face. Strange raptures rain
 Thro' my blood, and my bones, and my bursting
 brain !
 She draws me nearer to her place,
 I seem to be coming face to face ;
 She drinks my life,—her soft lips shoot
 Warmth to my spirit's uttermost root,
 Her glittering soul is in mine,—and hark !
 The sounds continue in the dark,—
 One,—two,—three !

Break the charm ! On the company
Comes a scream like a spirit's in pain !—
Something sweet dies out of my brain ;
And as lights are brought, great, yellow, and bright,
There the medium sits so white
Staring round with bewildered looks ;
And beneath her croucheth Doctor Snooks
With a grin on his lanthorn jaws ;—for he
Has gript her delicate lissom knee,
And holds the muscles as in a vice ;
And “ Lo ! ” he crieth, “ in a trice
I have stopped the raps ; 'tis a muscular trick,
And nothing more.” Then, rising quick,
He addeth, seizing his hat, “ Good day !
Madam, I wish you a wiser way
Of gulling the public ! ” Out they go,
Reproachful, melancholy, slow ;
But still like a bird at bay sits she,
Half in a swoon,—so silently
Watching them all as they flit by
With her pallid spectral eyes !

. . . And I

With eyes that burn and heart astir,
Would linger behind and speak to her ;
But she waves me hence with a little scream,
And out I follow in a dream,
A haunted man ; and when I meet
The chuckling Doctor in the street,
I pass him by with a bitter frown,
And my hot fist burns to knock him down !

III.

The Gospel According to Philosophy.

O eyes of pale forget-me-not blue,
 Wash'd more pale by a dreamy dew,
 O red red lips, O dainty tresses,
 O breast the breath of the world distresses !
 O little lady, do they divine
 That they have *fathom'd* thee and thine ?
 Fools ! Let them fathom fire,—and beat
 Light in a mortar ; ay, and heat
 Soul in a crucible ! Let them try
 To conquer the Light, and the Wind, and the Sky !
 Darkly the secret forces lurk,
 We know them least where most they work,
 And here they meet and mix in thee,
 For a strange and mystic entity,
 Making of thy pale soul in sooth
 A life half trickery and half truth.

Well? . . . O my philosophic friend,
 Does Nature herself ne'er condescend
 To cheats and shams, and freaks and tricks,
 Or doth she rather affect to mix
 Reason with revel ? Are you certain
 That *all* is honest behind the curtain
 Of lovely things you rejoice to meet ?
 Doth the Earth never sham, the Sky never cheat ?
 And do we question and rebel
 If the cheat is pleasant and plausible ?
 Do we growl at the Rainbow in the air,
 Or frown at the Mirage here and there ?

Nay, we take these things as they come, my friend,
 And let them into our being blend !
 Passive we yield to the Sun and the Light,
 To the scent of the flowers, to the sense and the
 sight,
 Taking all changes with souls serene . . .
 And so I take poor Seraphine !
 Beautiful mingling, tinted well,
 Of "Ariel" and "Little Nell,"
 With a spice of "Puck !"

True, as you aver,

I never was a philosopher !
 But I do not envy Doctor Snooks
 His scientific tools and books,
 And I cheerfully let the grim old boy
 Dissect the humbug that I enjoy.

Names,—more names? Let the lady be,—
 Fie upon your philosophy !
 And so the tricky little bird
 Is a "grass widow" (is that the word?)
 Or cast-off mistress, left to shame
 By a New York rowdy of evil fame.
 He thrash'd her, did he? Go on. What more?
 Finish your story, and o'er and o'er,
 Proving things beyond human guess,
 Blacken the little adventuress.

Now you have done, and I have heard,
 Patiently, every cruel word,

Listen to me,—or rather, no !
 Why should I argue with you so,
 O wise Philosophy? Frown and go !
 . . . I turn to Seraphina Snowe !

IV.

Mesmeric Flashes.

O eyes of pale forget-me-not blue,
 Wash'd more pale with a dreamy dew,
 What faces wicked, what haunts unclean,
 Have ye not in your wanderings seen !
 Poor little lady, so frail and wan,
 Bruised in the brutal embrace of Man !
 Thin white hands where the blood doth run,
 Like the light in a shell held up to the sun,
 How often have ye lifted been
 To ward away from hands obscene
 Not a wicked touch but a ruffian blow !
 God help thee, Seraphina Snowe !
 Found out, exposed, the jest of the day,
 With thy spectral eyes on the world, at bay !
 While the sense of the Sun and the Wind and the
 Light
 Surge thro' thee, and leave thee more wild and white,
 And a mystic touch is in thy hair,
 And a whisper of awe is everywhere,
 And thou almost fearest in thy sin
 The spirits thou half believest in !

Always imposing, little Elf,
 And most on thy delicate silken self !

Making the raps with thy cunning knee,
Smiling to hear them secretly,—
And all the while thy pulses beat,
Thou tremblest at thine own deceit,
Listening, yielding, till there comes
Out of thy veins, and out at thy thumbs,
A wave of emotion, a swift flame
Blanching thy spiritual frame
To more ivory whiteness, a wild dew
Washing the spectral eyes more blue—
The secret Soul with its blinding light
Confirming thee in thy lie's despite !

Would to God that thou and I
Might put our hands together and fly
To some far island lone and new
Where the sun is golden, the sea dark blue,
Where the scented palm and the coca-tree
Should make a bower for thee and me,
And all should be wild and bright and keen,
The flowers all colour, the leaves all sheen,
The air and the warm earth all aglow
With the life, the fever, the ebb and flow,
With the spirit-waves that, flowing free,
Foam up to a crest in Elves like thee !

There, like the spider silvern and soft
Spinning its thread of gold aloft,
Thou shouldst sit among the leaves and look
Out at me from a golden nook ;

And draw me nearer with those dim eyes,
And kindle thyself to pants and sighs,
And I would crouch and gaze at thee
Through life that would seem Eternity ;
While a wondrous spiritual light
Flash'd through and through me so wild and bright,
Till I faded away beneath thy hand,
Through thy Soul, to the Spirit Land !

MAETERLINCK.

(After a Matinée of "Pelléas and Melisande.")

WHY art thou dead, John Keats, not listening here
To this faint melody from Shadow-land? . . .
The world dissolves, the Elfin groves appear,
And naked in their midst young Love doth stand!

Naked and wan, and, like a rose leaf, thin,
With strange sad silver on his golden hair,
He creeps o'er shadowy dew-soak'd lawns, to win
Some fairy casement glimmering ghost-like there!

The lights sink low, while sitting with no sound,
Sunk in our shadowy stalls, we two recline,—
Frock-coated men and silk-clad ladies round,
And thou beside me, Demi-vierge divine!

The world dissolves, the garish streets are gone,
Fled is the City's strident harsh unrest—
Silent we watch the blind sad Love creep on
With wet weak wings and piteous wounded breast!

I cannot see thee, but my hand seeks thine,—
And following Love's faint feet we steal away,—
How shall I name thee, Demi-vierge divine,
Morgan le Faye, or Blanche la Desirée?

Ay me, the spell enwoven of woman's tears!
The sound of kisses and soft madrigals!
The forest path is haunted,—on our ears
The warm melodious rain of Dreamland falls!

And thin and pale and naked, side by side,
We follow naked Love through woodlands wan ;
By all the wondering eyes of Elfland spied,
We cling and kiss as ghostly lovers can !

How shall I count our kisses in the dark ?
How shall I count our feverish words and sighs ?
Birds in a rain-wash'd nest, we cling and mark
Love stealing sadly on with blind red eyes ! . . .

The music fades, the lights go up once more,
Silk dresses rustle, murmuring voices sound,
The spell of that lost Fairyland is o'er,
But dreaming still we rise and look around !

Then, following with the crowd that seeks the light,
Out to the garish street we pass again,
And lo, thy face is glad and warm and bright,
Redeem'd from Fairyland and all its pain !

“How quaint! how odd! why one would almost think
We'd spent a chilly hour in some old tomb!
No wonder people say that Maeterlinck
Is Shakespeare's wraith, all creepiness and gloom!”

Sighing I stand and watch thee drive away,
Smiling and nodding gaily as we part,—
Morgan le Faye, or Blanche la Desirée,
Changed to a modern maid without a heart !

PAN AT HAMPTON COURT.

*“ O who will worship the great god Pan
Out in the woods with me,
Now the chestnut spreadeth its seven-leaved fan
Over the hive of the bee?
Now the cushat cries and the fallow deer
Creep on the woodland way,
O who will hearken, and try to hear
The voice of the god to-day? ”*

One May morning as I woke
Thus the sweet Muse smiling spoke,
Resting pure and radiant-eyed
On the pillow at my side,—
Sweetest Muse that ever drew
Light from sunlight, earth, and dew,
Sweeter Muse and more divine
Than the faded spinsters Nine!
Up I sprang and cried aloud,
“ May-day morn, and not a cloud!
Out beyond the City dark
Spring awakes in Bushey Park;
There the royal chestnuts break
Into golden foam and make
Waxlike flowers like honeycomb,
Whither humming wild bees roam;

While upon the lakes, whereon
Tritons blow through trumps of stone,
The great water-lily weaves
Milk-white cups and oilèd leaves.
Phillis dear, at last 'tis May !
Take my hand and come away !”

Out of town by train we went,
Poor but merrily content,
Phillis in her new spring dress,
 Dainty bonnet lily-white,
Warm with youth and loveliness,
 Full of love and love's delight ;
I, the lonely outcast man,
Happy and Bohemian.
Soon, a dozen miles away,
 From the train we lightly leapt,
Saw the gardens glancing gay
 Where the royal fountains leapt,
Heard the muffled voices cry
In the deep green Maze hard by,
Heard the happy fiddler's din
From the gardens of the inn ;
Saw the 'prentice lads and lasses,
 Pale with dreary days of town,
Shuffling feet and jingling glasses,
While, like flies around molasses,
 Gipsies gathered dusky brown !
O the merry, merry May !
O the happy, golden day !
Pan was there, and Faunus too,
All the romping sylvan crew,

Nature's Mænads flocking mad
From the City dark and sad,
Finding once again the free
Sunshine and its jollity !
Phyllis smiled and leapt for joy,
I was gamesome as a boy ;
Gaily twang'd the fiddle-string,
Men and maids played kiss-in-ring,
Fountains leapt against the sun,
 Roses bloom'd and children played,
All the world was full of fun,
 Lovers cuddled in the shade !
What though God was proved to be
Paradox and fantasy ?
What though Christ had ceased to stir
From his lonely Sepulchre ?
" If the Trinity be dead,
 Pagan gods are still alive !
Fast they come to-day," I said,
 " Thick as bees from out a hive !
Pan is here, with all his train
 Flocking out of street and lane ;
Flora in a cotton gown
 Ties her garter stooping down ;
Town-bred Sylvan plump and fat
Weareth lilac in his hat ;
Faun and satyr laughing pass,
 Hither and thither Venus roams,
Gay Bacchantes on the grass
 Laughingly adjust their combs !—
Phyllis, all the world is gay
In the merry, merry May !

PAN AT HAMPTON COURT.

*"O who will worship the great god Pan
 At Hampton Court with me?"*
*She cried, and unto the Maze we ran
 Laughing so merrily.*
*"The sun is bright, and the music plays,
 And all is May," sang she:*
*And I caught my love in the heart of the Maze
 With kisses three times three.*

Down the chestnut colonnades
 Full of freckled light and shades,
 Soon we saw the dappled deer,
 Pricking hairy tail and ear,
 Stand like Fauns with still brown eyes
 Looking on us as we came.
 Faint behind us grew the cries,
 Merry music and acclaim,
 Till we found beneath a tree
 All the peace of Arcady.
 Lying there, where green boughs spread
 Curtains soft against the sky,
 While the stock-dove far o'erhead
 Pass'd with solitary cry,
 Now and then we look'd around
 Listening, till distinct and clear
 Came the cuckoo's call profound
 From some happy Dreamland near!
 Happy as a heart of gold
 Shook the sunshine everywhere,
 Throbbing pulses manifold
 Through the warmly panting air;
 On the leaves and o'er the grass

Living things were thronging bright,
 'Neath a sky as clear as glass
 Flashing rays of life and light.
 All things gladden'd 'neath the blue,
 While we kiss'd and gladden'd too.
 "Praised be golden Pan," I said,
 "All the duller gods are dead ;
 But the wood-god wakes to-day
 In the merry, merry May !"

" O who will worship the great god Pan ? "
I cried as I clasped you, dear ;
" Form of a Faun and soul of a Man,
He plays for the world to hear ;
Sweetly he pipeth beneath the skies,
For a brave old god is he ! "
O I kissed my love on the lips and eyes !
And O my love kissed me !

Slowly, softly, westward flew
 Day on wings of gold and blue ;
 As she faded out of sight
 Dark and balmy fell the Night.
 Silent 'neath the azure cope,
 Earth, a naked Ethiope,
 Reach'd black arms up through the air,
 Dragging down the branches bright
 Of the flowering Heavens, where
 Starry fruitage glimmer'd white !
 As he drew them gently near,
 Dewdrops dim and crystal clear
 Rain'd upon his face and eyes !

Listening, watching, we could hear

His deep breathing 'neath the skies ;—

Suddenly, far down the glade,

Startled from some place of shade,

Like an antelope the dim

Moon upsprang, and looked at him !

Panting, trembling, in the dark,

Paused to listen and to mark,

Then with shimmer dimly fair

On from shade to shade did spring,

Gain'd the fields of Heaven, and there

Wander'd, calmly pasturing !

“ O who will worship the great god Pan

Out in the woods with me ?

Maker and lover of woman and man,

Under the stars sings he ;

And Dian the huntress with all her train

Awakes to the wood-notes wild !”

O I kissed my love on the lips again,

And Dian looked down and smiled !

Hand in hand without a care

Following the Huntress fair,

Wheresoe'er we went we found

Silver footprints on the ground :

Grass and flowers kept the shine

Of the naked feet divine.

Now and then our eyes could see,

As we softly crept along

Through the dusky greenery,

Glimmers of the vestal throng—

Locks of gold and limbs of snow

Fading on as we came near,
 Faint soft cries and laughter low—
 Ceasing as we paused to hear !
 O the night more sweet than day !
 O the merry, merry May !
 O the rapture dark and deep
 Of the woodlands hush'd to sleep !
 O the old sweet human tune
 Pan is piping to the moon !
 "Though the systems wax and wane,
 Thou and I," he sings, "remain—
 Both by night and one by day
 With a world the old warm way !
 Foot it, foot it ! Where you tread
 Woods are greenly carpeted,
 Foot it round me as I sing,
 Nymphs and satyrs in a ring !

*"Gnarled and old sits the great god Pan—
 (Peep through the boughs, and see!)—
 He plays on his pipes Arcadian
 Under the dark oak-tree.
 But the boughs are dark round his sightless eyes—
 And Dian, where is she
 O follow, follow, and where she flies
 Follow her flight with me!"*

Slowly, dreamily, we crept
 From the silent sleeping park,
 Join'd the merry throng that swept
 Townward through the summer dark.

PAN AT HAMPTON COURT.

Shining round our path again,
 Dian flash'd before the train,
 In upon our comrades shone,
 Smiled and beckon'd, bounding on !
 Satyrs brown in corduroys
 Smoked their pipes and join'd in song ;
 Gamesome girls and merry boys
 Fondled as we swept along ;
 Here a flush'd Bacchante prest
 Heavy head and crumpled bonnet
 On her drowsy lover's breast,
 Sprawling drowsily upon it ;
 Flush'd from dancing sports of Pan
 Sat the little artizan,
 With his wife and children three,
 And the baby on his knee ;
 Here a little milliner,
 Smart in silk and shape-improver,
 All the happy Spring astir
 In her veins, sat by her lover ;
 Mounted somewhere on the train,
 Pan on the accordion played !
 Rough feet shuffled to the strain,
 Happy hearts the spell obeyed ;
 While fair Dian, looking in,
 Saw the throng and heard the din,
 Touch'd the young heads and the grey
 With the magic of the May !

*" O who will worship the great god Pan
 Where life runs wild and free ?*

*Form of a Faun and soul of a Man,
 He playeth eternallie.
 And Dian is out on the azure waste
 As bright as bright can be!"*
*O my arm embraced my love's small waist,
 And my love crept close to me!*

When we reached the streets of stone
 Dian there was bright before us,
 Wading naked and alone
 In the pools of Heaven o'er us!
 Fainter came the wood-god's sound
 As we crossed the Bridge, and there
 Saw the City splendour-crown'd
 Sleeping dark in silver air;
 Saw the river dark beneath
 Rippling dim to Dian's breath.
 Phillis nestling to my side
 Watch'd the sad street-walker pass
 Hollow-voiced and weary-eyed,
 Painted underneath the gas.
 Paler, sadder, looked the moon,
 Sadder grew the old sweet tune;
 Shapes of sorrow and despair
 Flitted ghostwise in the air,
 And among them, wan and slow,
 Stalked the spectral Shape of Woe—
 Piercèd hands and piercèd feet
 Passing on from street to street;
 Silently behind Him crept
 Foolish Magdalens who wept!

All the world at His footfall
 Darken'd, and the music ceased—
 Dark and sacrificial
 Loom'd the altars of the priest,
 All the magic died away
 And the music of the May!

*“ O who will worship the great god Pan
 Here in the streets with me!
 Sad and tearful and weary and wan
 Is the god who died on the Tree;
 But Pan is under and Dian above,
 Though the dead god cannot see,
 And the merry music of youth and love
 Returns eternallie ! ”*

Homeward went my love and I
 To our lodging near the sky ;
 There beside the snow-white bed
 Dian stood with radiant eyes !
 Smiled a moment ere she fled—
 Then, with halo round her head,
 Hung above us in the skies !
 By the casement open wide
 Long we watch'd her side by side ;
 While from the dark streets around
 Came again the sylvan sound—
 Pan was softly piping *there*
 As he pipes in field and grove,
 Conquering sorrow and despair
 With the strains of life and love !
 Phillis in her bedgown white

Kissed me, standing in the moon ;
Louder, sweeter, through the night
Rang the olden antique tune ;
Gently on my knee I drew her
Smiling as I heard her say,
All her warm life kindling through her,
"Dearest, what a happy day !"
"'Tis a happy world," I said ;
"Pan still pipes, though Christ is dead !"

THE LAST CHRISTIANS.

I.

"STORM IN THE NIGHT."

STORM in the Night, Buchanan ! a Voice in the night still
crying,
"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where he
is lying !"

Thou, too, singer of songs and dreamer of dreams, art
weeping
For the Form that lay in the tomb, the Face so peacefully
sleeping ;

And now he hath gone indeed, and his worshippers roam
bereaven,
Thou, by the Magdalen's side, art standing and looking at
Heaven !

Woe unto thee, Buchanan ! and woe to thy generation !
The harp of the heart he strung, the Soul he set in vibration,

Are lost since he is lost, the beautiful Elder Brother ;
For the harp of the heart was his, the song could gladden
no other !

'Twas something,—nay, 'twas much!—to know, though his
life was over,
That the fair, bright Form was there, with the wool-white
shroud for a cover!

He did not speak or stir, he did not hark to our weeping,
But his grave grew wide as the World, and the stars smiled
down on his sleeping.

He made no speech, no sign, for Death has disrobed and
discrown'd him,—
But the scent of spikenard and myrrh was sweet in the air
around him!

So we kept our Brother, tho' dead! The Lily Flower of
Creation!
And to touch his dear dead hands was joy in our desolation.

But *now*, the Tomb is void, and the rain beats over the
portal:
Thieves like wolves in the night have stolen the dead
Immortal!

So peacefully he slept, the Lily Flower of Creation,
That we said to ourselves, "He dreams! and his Dream is
the World's salvation!"

But now by the Tomb we stand, despairing and heavy-
hearted;
The stars look silently down, but the Light of the World
hath departed.

And yet, should he be risen? Should he have waken'd, to
wander
Out 'mid the winds of the night, out 'mid the Tempest
yonder,

Holding his Lamp wind-blown, while the rain-cloud darkens
and gathers,
Feeling his way thro' the gloom, naming our names, and our
Father's?

Nay, for the World would know the face of the fair New
Comer,
The graves would open wide, like buds at the breath of the
summer,—

The graves would open, the Dead within them quicken and
blossom,
And over the World would rain the flowers that had grown
in his bosom!

Nay, then, he hath fled, not risen! in vain we seek and
implore him!
Deeper than Death he hath fall'n, and the waves of the
World roll o'er him!

Storm in the night, Buchanan! A Voice in the night still
crying,
“They have taken away our Lord! and we know not where
he is lying!”

THE LAST CHRISTIANS.

II.

THE BALLAD OF THE MAGDALEN.

I SAW on the Bridge of Sorrow, when all the City slept,
The shape of a woful Woman, who look'd at Heaven, and
wept.

Loose o'er her naked shoulders trembled her night-black
hair ;
Her robe was ragged and rent, and her feet were bleeding
and bare.

And, lo ! in her hands she carried a vessel with spices sweet,
And she cried, " Where art thou, Master ? I come to anoint
thy feet."

Then I touch'd her on the shoulder : " What thing art
thou ? " I said ;
And she stood and gazed upon me with eyes like the eyes of
the dead.

But I saw the painted colour flash on her cheeks and lips,
While she stood and felt in the vessel with tremulous finger-
tips.

And she answer'd never a word, but stood in the lonely light,
With the evil of earth upon her, and the darkness of Death
and Night.

And I knew her then by her beauty, her sin and the sign
of her shame,
And touch'd her again more gently, and sadly named her
name.

She heard, and she did not answer ; but her tears began
to fall,
And again, "Where art thou, Master?" I heard her thin
voice call.

And she would have straightway left me, but I held her
fast and said,
While the chill wind moan'd around us, and the stars wept
overhead,

"O Mary, where is thy Master? Where does he hide
his face?
The world awaits his coming, but knows not the time or
the place.

"O Mary, lead me to him—He loved thee deep and true ;
Since thou hast risen to find him, he must be risen too."

Then the painted lips made answer, while the dead eyes
gazed on me :
"I have sought him all through the Cities, and yonder in
Galilee.

"I have sought him and not found him, I have search'd in
every land,
Though the door of the Tomb was open, and the shroud lay
shrunken in the sand.

“Long through the years I waited, there in the shade of
the Tomb,
Then I rose and went to meet him, out in the World’s
great gloom.

“And I took pollution with me, wherever my footsteps
came ;
Yes, I shook my sin on the Cities, my sin and the sign of
my shame.

“Yet I knew if I could find him, and kneel and anoint his
feet,
That his gentle hands would bless me, and our eyes at last
would meet.

“And my sin would fall and leave me, and peace would fill
my breast,
And there, in the Tomb he rose from, I could lie me down
and rest.”

Tall in the moonlit City, pale as some statue of stone,
With the evil of earth upon her, she stood and she made
her moan.

And away on the lonely bridges, and under the gaslight
gleam,
The pale street-walker heard her, a voice like a voice in a
dream.

For, lo! in her hands she carried a vessel with spices
sweet,
And she cried, “Where art thou, Master? I come to anoint
thy feet.”

Then my living force fell from me, and I stood and watch'd
her go
From shrine to shrine in the starlight, with feeble feet and
slow.

And the stars look'd down in sorrow, and the earth lay
black beneath,
And the sleeping City was cover'd with shadows of night
and death,

While I heard the faint voice wailing afar in the stony
street,
"Where art thou, Master, Master? I come to anoint thy
feet."

THE LAST CHRISTIANS.

III.

"HALLELUJAH JANE."

"He's a long way off, is Jesus—and we've *got* to make it loud!"

*Glory! Hallelujah! March along together!
 March along, march along, every kind of weather!
 Wet or dry, shower or shine, ready night and day,
 Travelling to Jesus, singing on the way!
 He is waiting for us, yonder in the sky,
 Stooping down his shining head to*

Hear

Our

CRY!

"'ALLELOOJAH! 'allelloojah! Round the corner of the street

They're a-coming and a-singing, with a sound of tramping feet.

Throw the windy open, Jenny—leat me 'ear the fife and drum—

Garn! the cold can't 'arm *me*, Jenny—ain't I book'd for Kingdom Come?

I've got the doctor's ticket for a third-class seat, ye know,
 And the Lord 'll blow his whistle, and the train begin to go. . . .

'Allelojah! How I love 'em!—and the music—and the rhyme—
 My 'eart's a-marchin' with 'em, and my feet is beatin' time!
 Lift me up, and let me see them—Lord, how bright they
 looks to-day!
 Ain't it 'eavenly? Men and women, boys and gels, they
 march away!
 Who's that wavin'? It's the Captain, bless his 'art! He
 sees me plain—
 It was 'im as 'ad me chris'en'd, call'd me "Allelojah Jane!"
 And the minute I was chris'en'd, somethink lep' in my
 inside,
 And I saw, fur off and shining, Golden Gates as open'd
 wide,
 And I 'eard the Angels 'oller, and I answered loud and
 clear,
 And the blessèd larfing Jesus cried, 'You've got to march
 up 'ere!'
 And I march'd and lep' and shouted till my throat was sick
 and sore,
 Down I tumbled with diptheery, and I couldn't march no
 more!"

*Glory! Hallelujah! Sound the fife and drum!
 Brother, won't you join us, bound for Kingdom Come?
 Wear our regimentals, spick and span and gay,
 And be always ready to listen and obey?
 Form in marching order, stepping right along,
 While above the angels smile and*

Join

Our

Song?

“Are they gone? Well, lay me down, Jenny—for p'raps
this very day

The Lord 'll read the roll-call, so there ain't much time to
stay.

But afore I leave yer, Jenny, for the trip as all must take,
Jest you 'ear me bless the music that fust blew my soul
awake. . . .

I was born in dirt and darkness—I was blind and dumb
with sin—

For the typhus 'ad took father, and my mother's-milk was
gin,

And at sixteen I was walkin' like the other gels ye meet,

And I kep' a little sister by my earnin's on the street.

Well, they say 'twas orful sinful, but 'twas all I'd got to do,

For I 'ad to get my livin', and to keep my sister too ;

And poor Bess, yer see, was sickly—for she'd never been the
same

Since she got a kick from father on the back, wot made
her lame ;—

As for mother, she was berried too, thank God ! One winter
night

Been run over by a Pickford, when mad drunk, and serve
her right !

So we two was left together, and poor Bess, 'twas 'ard for 'er,
For her legs was thin as matches, and she couldn't scursly
stir ;

But so pretty ! with her thin face, and her silken yellor 'air,
And so 'andy with her needle, in her invalidy chair.

And when at night I left her to walk out in street and lane,
Tho' I come 'ome empty-'anded, she'd a kiss for sister Jane.

But 'twas 'ard, and allays 'arder, just to keep ourselves at all,
Me so precious black and ugly, Bess so 'flicted and so small,

For tho' only one year younger, she'd 'a past for twelve or less ;

But, Lor bless ye, she was clever, and could read and spell, could Bess !

(She'd learnt it at the 'ospital from some kind nuss, yer see.)

When I brought 'er 'ome a paper she could read the noos to me,

All the p'lice noos and the murders, and the other rum things there,

And for 'ours I'd sit and listen, by her invalidy chair !

Well, one night as I was climbin' up the stair, tir'd out and sad,

For the luck had been ag'in me, and 'twas pourin' down like mad,

I 'eard her voice a-screaming ! and from floor to floor I ran,

Till I reach'd our room and sor 'er, and beside her was a man,

An ugly Spanish sailor as was lodgin' in the place,

And the beast was 'olding Bessie and a-kissing of her face,

And she cried and scream'd and struggled, a-tryin' to get free,

And the beast he 'eard me comin' and turned round 'is face to me,

And I sor it black and ugly with the drink and worse beside,

And I screech'd, ' Let go my sister ! ' while she 'id her face and cried.

Then the man look'd black as thunder, and he swore he'd 'ave my life

If I stay'd there, and his fingers began feelin' for his knife,

But I lep' and seized a poker as was lying by the grate,

And I struck 'im on the forrid (bet your life he got it straight—

For I felt as strong as twenty!), and he guv an angry groan,
Drew the knife, and lep' to stab me, then roll'd over like a
stone!

And the landlord and the lodgers came a-rushin' up the
stair,

While I knelt by Bess, who'd fainted in her invalidy chair!

Well, Jenny, no one blamed me!—and the p'lice said 'Serve
him right!'—

I never saw his face ag'in arter that drefful night;

But ever arter that poor Bess seem'd dull and full of care,

And she droop'd and droop'd and 'sicken'd in her invalidy
chair.

Some trouble of the 'art, they said (that shock was her death-
blow!)

And I watched her late and early, and I knew as she must
go;

And the doctor gave her physic, and she'd all as she could
eat,

And I bought her many a relish, when I'd luck upon the
street;

But one mornin', close on Easter, when I waken'd in our
bed,

I turn'd and see her lyin' with her arms out, stiff and dead!

And I cried a bit and kiss'd her, then got out o' bed and
drest,

Wash'd her face, put on clean linen, placed her 'ands upon
her breast,

And she look'd . . . she look'd . . . so pretty!

God was good! I'd luck just then—

I scraped the money somehow, till I'd nigh on one pound
ten,

And I bought poor Bess a coffin, and a grave where she
could lie—

She got no workus berryin'—thank God for *that*, sez I!
And the neighbours sor me foller, all a-gatherin' in a crowd,
And I never felt as lonesome, but I never felt so proud!

Arter that, I sort o' drifted 'ere and there about the town,
Like a smut blown from a chimbly, and a long time comin'
down!

And I took to drink like mother, and the drink it made me
mad,

So, between the streets and prison, well, my luck was orful
bad!

I was 'onest, tho', and never robb'd a man, or thief'd (not me!)
Tho' they quodded me for fightin' and bad langwidge, don't
yer see?

And at last, somehow or other, how it come about ain't clear,
I was took to the Lock 'Ospital, and kep' there nigh a year.

And I felt—well, now, I'll tell yer—like a bit of orange peel,
All muddy and all rotten, wot you squash beneath your 'eel!
Well, the doctors 'eal'd and cured me, but one mornin', when
they said

I might go to a reformat'ry, sez I, 'No, strike me dead!'

And I felt a kind o' loathin' for them all, and thought of Bess
Lyn' peaceful there at Stepney in her clean white fun'ral
dress.

And I left the Lock next mornin'—I was wild, ye see, to go—
And 'twas Christmas, when I trampled back to Stepney thro'
the snow—

And I met a chap who treated me and made me blazin' tight,
And I lost my 'ed and waken'd in the streets at dead o'
night,

And the snow was fallin', fallin', and 'twas thick upon the
ground,

And I'd got no place to go to, and my 'ed was whirlin'
round,

When I see a lamp afore me, and a door stood open wide,
And I took it for a publick, till they sang a psalm inside,
And I sez, 'It's them Salvationists!' and turned to go away,
When one comes out, their Captain, and calls out for me to
stay ;

And he touch'd me on the shoulder, and he sez, 'Wot's up,
my lass?'

And I sez, '*I ain't teetotal!*' and I larf'd, and tried to pass,
But he look'd me in the face, he did, and sez, 'Wot brings
ye 'ere?'

Speak out, if you're in trouble, and we'll 'elp ye, never
fear!'

And I sez, '*I ain't* in trouble!' but he looks me in the eyes,
And he answers sharp and sudden, 'Don't you tell me any
lies—

The Lord Jesus 'ates a liar!' and at that I shut my fist,
I'd 'a struck 'im if 'ed let me, but he ketch'd me by the
wrist,

And he whisper'd, oh, so gentle, 'You're our sister, lass,'
he said,

'And to-night I think our sister 'as no place to lay her 'ed!
Come in—your friends are waitin'—they've been waitin'
many a day—

And at last you've come, my sister, and I think you've come
to stay!'"

Glory! Hallelujah! Fighting for the Lord!

Sinners kneel before us, fearing fire and sword!

*Never you take service with the Devil's crew—
Here you'll get promotion, if you're straight and true !
Jesus is Field-Marshal ! Jesus, Heaven's King,
Points us forward, forward, while we*

March

And

Sing !

“ Still a-playin' in the distance ! 'Alleloojah ! Fife and drum !
'Ere's my blessin' on the music, now I'm bound for Kingdom
Come !

Well, that night ?—They guv me shelter, and a shakedown
nice and clean,

And no one ax'd no questions—who I was, or wot I'd been—
But next mornin' when I wakened, with a 'ed that split in
two,

In there comes a nice old lady, and sez smilin', 'How d'ye
do ?'

And I nods and answers sulky, for 'she's come to preach,'
thinks I,

But we gets in conwersation, and at last, the Lord knows
why,

I tells her about Bessie,—and I see her eyes grew dim,
And outside, while I was talkin', sounds the loud Salvation
'ymn.

'Well,' sez she, 'she's gone to glory, and she's up among the
Blest,

For it's poor gels like your sister as Lord Jesus likes the
best !'

And from that she got me talkin' of *myself*, and when she
'eard

All my story as I've told yer, up she got without a word,

And she kiss'd me on the forrid ! then she sez, 'All that's gone past !

And there's lots of life before you, now you've come to us at last !'

Then I larf'd—' I ain't Salvationist, and never mean to be ; Tho' a-prayin' and a-singin' may suit *you*, it won't suit *me* !'

But she sez, 'You just 'ave patience, for the thing wot's wrong with *you*

Is just this—you're downright wretched, all for want of work to do !

One so pretty should be 'appy as a bird upon a tree'

(*Me* pretty ! and *me* 'appy !) 'for the Lord, my dear,' sez she,

' Likes nice cheerful folks about Him, and can't bear to see them sad,

For He's fond of fun and music and of everythink that's glad !'

" Well, she got me work, and told me folks must labour every one,

And I said I'd be teetotal (just to please her, and for fun !)

But I allays hated working, and my 'eart felt dull and low, And thinks I, 'The publick's better, and religion ain't no go,' For somethink black and 'eavy seem'd a-workin' in my breast, And I used to go 'ysteric, and I never felt at rest. . . .

But one mornin', when the Army was a-gatherin', I stood by, And they 'ollered, 'Glory, glory, to our Father in the sky !' And I thought the tune was jolly, and I sang out loud and gay,

And the minute I begun it, 'arf my trouble pass'd away, And the louder as I sung it, that great lump I felt inside Grew a-lighter and a-lighter, while I lep' and sung and cried !

And when the song was over, up the Captain comes to me,
And he sez, 'That voice of yourn, Jane, is as good as any
three!

Why, you're like a op'ry singer!' he sez, larfin'. . . 'Never
mind,'

He sez (for I look'd sulky, and his 'art was allays kind!)
'Never mind—there's many among us of such singin' would
be proud—

He's a long way off, is Jesus, so we've *got* to make it
loud!"

Then they march'd, and *I* went marchin', for I seem'd gone
mad that day,

And my 'art inside was dancin' every footstep of the way.
Yes, and that there singin' *saved* me! for the louder as I
sung,

Why, the more my load was lighten'd, and it seem'd as how
I sprung

From the ground right up to Jesus, and I 'eard Him 'oller
clear,

'Keep a-marchin' and a-singin', for you've got to get up
'ere!'"

*Glory! Hallelujah! March along together!
March along, march along, every kind of weather!
Wet or dry, shower or shine, ready night and day,
Travelling to Jesus, singing on the way!
He is waiting for us, yonder in the sky,
Stooping down His shining head, to*

Hear

Our

Cry!

"Coming back? Ah, yes, I 'ear them, louder, louder, as
 they come ;
 Lord, if I might only jine them, march ag'in to fife and
 drum !
 . . . I feels faint. . . . A drop o' water !—There, I'm better,
 but my 'ed
 Is a-swimmin' to the music. . . . Now it's stop't. . . . Wot's
 that ye said ?
They're a-standing 'neath the windy? Lift me up, and let
 me see,
 For the sight of them as saved me is like life and breath to
me!
 No, I can't!—all's black afore me—and my singin's a'most
 done. . . .
 Now, it's lighter! I can see them! all a-standin' in the
 sun !
 Look, look, it's the Lord Jesus! He's a-formin' them in
 line,
 His white 'orse is golden-bridled, and 'is eyes—see, how they
 shine !
 'E's a-speakin'! *Read the Roll-Call!* They're a-throngin'
 one and all,
 With their things in marchin' order, they're a-answ'rin' to
 the call.
My turn will soon be comin', for the march must soon
 begin. . . .
'Alleloojah Jane! That's *me*, sir! *Ready?* Ready, sir!
Fall in!"

L'ENVOI TO THE PRECEDING POEM.

NOUGHT is so base that Nature cannot turn
 Its dross to shining gold,
No lamb so lost that it may never learn
 The footpath to the fold,

Be sure this trampled clay beneath our feet
 Hath life as fair as ours,
Be sure this smell of foulness is as sweet
 As scent of fresh young flowers.

All is a mystery and a change,—a strife
 Of evil powers with good :
Sin is the leaven wherewith the bread of life
 Is fashion'd for our food.

God works with instruments as foul as these,
 Sifts Souls from dregs of sense,
Death is his shadow—Sorrow and Disease
 Are both his hand-maidens !

Out of the tangled woof of Day and Night
 His web of Life is spun :
Dust in the beam is just as surely Light
 As yonder shining Sun !

THE LAST CHRISTIANS.

IV.

"ANNIE;" OR, THE WAIF'S JUBILEE.

"The magistrate asked her what she had to say for herself. 'Only this, sir,' she replied, '*I was a gentleman's daughter once.*'"—POLICE REPORT.

"*Annie! Annie!*"

Hark, it is father's call!

See, he is coming! Run

To meet him, little one,

In the golden evenfall.

Yonder down the lane

His voice calls clear:

"*Annie!*" *he cries again—*

Run down and meet him, dear!

The long day's toil is done,

The hour of rest has come—

Haste to him, little one—

Ride on his shoulder home!

. . . What voice is it she hears across the storm,
 The haggard Waif who stands with dripping form
 Shivering beneath the lamps of the dark street?
 With slant moist beams upon the Rain's black walls
 The dreary gaslight falls,
 And all around the wings o' the Tempest beat!
 O hark! O hark!
 The voice calls clear i' the dark—

She hears—she moans—and moaning wanders on ;
 A mist before her eyes,
 A stone in her heart, she flies
 Into the rainy darkness, and is gone !

*What a Night! strong and blind
 Down the street swoops the Wind,
 Falls breathless, then moans!
 While again and again
 Like a spirit in pain,
 On the black slippery stones
 Sobs the Rain! . . .*

*“Annie! Annie!”
 Hark, it is Father’s call!
 See, he is coming! Run
 To meet him, little one,
 In the golden evenfall!*

. . . Out from the darkness she hath crept once more,
 That strange voice ringing hollow over all ;
 Close to the theatre’s great lighted door,
 Where smiling ladies, while the raindrops pour,
 Wait for their carriages, and linkmen bawl.
 She pauses watching, while they laugh and pass
 Tripping across the pavement ’neath the gas,
 Then rattling home. Home? Ah, what home hath *she*,
 Who once was bright and glad as any there?
 Fifty years old, this is her Jubilee !
 And round her Life is like an angry Sea
 Breaking to ululations of despair !

. . . Who hath not seen her, on dark nights of rain,
Or when the Moon is chill on the chill street,
Creeping from shade to shade in grief and pain,
Showing her painted cheeks for man's disdain
And wrapt in woe as in a winding sheet?
Sin hath so stain'd it none may recognise
The face that once was innocent and fair,
And hollow rings are round the hungry eyes,
And shocks of grey replace the golden hair ;
And all her chance is, when the drink makes blind
The foulest and the meanest of mankind,
To hide her stains and force a hideous mirth,
And gain her body's food the old foul way—
Ah, loathsome dead sea fruit that eats like earth,
Her mouth is foul with it both night and day!
So that corruption and the stench of Death
Consume her body and pollute her breath,
And all the world she looks upon appears
A dismal charnel-house of lust and tears !
Sick of the horror that corrupts the flesh,
Tangled in vice as in a spider's mesh,
Scenting the lazar-house, in soul's despair,
She sees the gin shop's bloodshot eyeballs glare,
And creepeth in, the feverish drug to drain
That blots the sense and blinds the aching brain ;
And then with feeble form and faltering feet
Again she steals into the midnight street,
Seeks for her prey, and wofully takes flight
To join her spectral sisters of the Night !

*What a Night ! fierce and blind
Down the street swoops the Wind !*

THE LAST CHRISTIANS.

*How it moans ! how it groans !
 While again and again
 Like a spirit in pain,
 On the black slippery stones
 Sobs the Rain !
 See ! like ghosts to and fro
 Living forms swiftly pass,
 With their shadows below
 In the gleam of the gas ;
 And the swells, wrapt up warm,
 With their weeds blazing bright,
 Hurry home thro' the Storm . . .
 It's a Hell of a Night !*

Hell? She is *in* it, and these shapes she sees,
 While crawling on, are hateful and accurst !
 Light laughter of light lips, mad images
 Of dainty creatures delicately nurst,
 Cries of the revel, blackness, and the gleam
 Of ghastly lights, are blended in her dream
 Of Hell that lives and is, the Hell she knows,
 With all its mockery of human woes !
 Darkly, as in a glass, she seeth plain
 The vision of dead days that live again :
 The house, beyond these streets, where she was born ;
 The father's face in death ; the hungry home ;
 The fight for bread ; the hungry and forlorn
 Cry for a help and guide that would not come ;
 The glimmer of glad halls, the forms therein
 Beck'ning and laughing till she joined their mirth ;
 Then, pleasures sultry with the sense of sin,
 And those foul dead sea fruits that taste of earth ;

Then, blackness of disease and utter shame,
 And all Hell's infamies without a name !
 Then, all the bloom of sense and spirit fled,
 The slow descent to midnight gulfs of dread
 Like *this* she sees !—Then, in a wretched room
 Deep 'mid the City's sunless heart of gloom,
 Another life awakening 'neath her heart,
 A sickly babe with crying lips apart
 Moaning for food !—and into Hell she creeps
 Once more to feed it, haunting the black street,—
 Yea, in the garret where her infant sleeps
 Hell's hideous rites are done, that it may eat !
 Then, Death once more ! The sickly life at rest ;
 The child's light coffin that a child might bear ;
 The mother's hunger tearing at her breast,
 And only Drink to drown the soul's despair.
 She sees it all, on this her Jubilee,
 While the Night moans, and the sick Hell-lights
 gleam. . . .

O God ! O Motherhood ! Can these things be,
 And men still say that Hell is but a dream ?

“Annie ! Annie !”
What voice is this that cries,
Amid the lights of Hell,
Where these live shadows dwell
Under the rain-rent skies ? . . .
What a night ! All one hears
Is the torrent of tears
On a World plung'd in pain ;
All one sees is the swarm

*Of dim waifs in the Storm,
Flitting hither and thither,
(O God, who knows whither?)
Like ghosts, thro' the Rain!*

. . . *Annie!* . . .

She hears the voice, ev'n while she crawls
'Neath the black arches on the riverside,
Then moaning low upon her face she falls . . .
Annie! . . . She stirs, and listens as it calls,
With eyes that open wide.

Lost there to Man, dead to the Storm and Strife,
She lies and keeps her Jubilee till morn,
O'er her, a heap of rags, the waves of Life
Wash weary and forlorn . . .

Is all, then, done? Nay, from the depths of Night
That voice still cries, and dimly gleams a Light . . .

"*Annie!*"—She listens—Thro' the Tempest wild
One cometh softly—she can *see* him come!—
"*Father! I'm Annie! I'm your little child!*"
And father lifts her up, to bear her Home!

L'ENVOI TO THE PRECEDING POEM.

I.

COURAGE, and face the strife of Humankind
In patience, O my brother :
We come from the eternal Night to find,
And not to lose, each other !

Think'st thou thy God hath toil'd thro' endless Time
With ceaseless strong endeavour,
To fashion these and thee from ooze and slime,
Then blot his work for ever ?

Age after age hath roll'd in billowy strife
On the eternal Ocean,
Bearing us hither to these sands of Life
With sure and steadfast motion.

Dead? Nought that lives can die. We live, and see !
So hush thy foolish grieving :
This Universe was made that thou might'st be
Incarnate, self-perceiving.

Still thine own Soul, if thou would'st still the strife
Of phantoms round thee flying ;
Remember that the paradox of Life
Is Death, the Life undying.

II.

How? *Thou* be saved, and one of these be lost?
The least of these be spent, and thou soar free?
Nay! for these things are *thou*—these tempest-tost
Waves of the darkness are but forms of thee.

Shall these be cast away? Then rest thou sure
No hopes abide for thee if none for these.
Would'st thou be heal'd? Then hast thou these to cure;
Thine is their shame, their foulness, their disease.

By these, thy shadows, shalt thou rise or fall;
Thro' these and thee, God reigns, or rests down-trod;
Let Him but lose but one, He loses all,
And losing all, He too is lost, ev'n God.

These shapes are only images of thee,
Nay, very God is thou and all things thine:
Thou art the Eye with which Eternity
Surveys itself, and knows itself Divine!

THE TRUE SONG OF FAIRYLAND.

I.

THE bugle is blowing from elfin dells
With a hark and a hey halloo !
The dark clouds part as the music swells,
And the Heaven where eternal summer dwells
Shines bonnie and bright and blue ! . . .

A child I dwelt in the wild north-land,
In a City beside the Sea,—
The morning I slept on the yellow strand
I had summers seven and three !

Tired with playing on the sands so fair
I slept in the white moon's beam,
And the good folk found me sleeping there
And twined me away in a dream !

They wetted my lips with the honey-dew
And my lids with the euphrasie,
And I open'd my eyes beneath the blue
Still Heaven o' Faërie !

I saw the fields of the silvern grain
And the hills of the purple sheen,
And the King of Elfland with all his train
Rode o'er the uplands green ;

I learn'd the spell o' the Elfin land
And the songs the Pixies sing,—
The woven charm of the waving hand
That makes the magic Ring !

I heard what mortals cannot hear,
The dew-wash'd blue-bells tinkling clear
Under the starry skies,
And the Fay-folk throng'd on the grassy ground,
And the Kelpie swam in the burn, like a hound
With great sad human eyes. . . .

They bore me back from the Land of Light
To my sleeping place by the Sea,
But when I waken'd my face was bright
With a golden glamorie !

As I wander'd back on the ocean sand
I sang full loud and free,—
For the things I had seen in the Elfinland,
And the sweetness I could not understand,
Had turn'd to a melodie !

II.

Lonely I dwelt by the sad sea-shore
In a world of women and men,—
When I lookt on the Spirits of Light once more
I had summers seven and ten !

They gather'd at night around my bed,
All in the pale moon's beam,
"Sing of the Fairy World," they said,
"And the Dream within the Dream !

"Sing, for a World that is weary and grieves,
Of a World that is ever bright,
Of the Spirits that hide among flowers and leaves
And play in the starry Light !

"Sing, for the hearts that are sad and old,
Of the hearts that ever are young !"
And they set in my arms a harp of gold,
And I wander'd forth,—and I sung.

I sung my song by the cottage door
And up at the lordly hall,
And I wove the light of the magic lore
With the love that is birthright of rich and poor
And blesses great and small.

Then into the City I singing pass'd
And the walls closed round on me,
Till the Cloud of the World shut out at last
The Heaven o' Faërie !

III.

From lane to lane, from street to street,
I walked for weary years,
And a band of lead was around my feet
And my song was still'd with tears.

The smoke of the City above my head
 Shut out the starry sky,
 And the sounds around me were as the tread
 Of legions thundering by !

And I tried to sing, but no song would come
 From my frozen lips of clay,—
 By the living Waters I wandered dumb
 And watch'd them rolling away !

IV.

Full many a year my heart was sore
 And the World grew dark to me,—
 When I heard the music I loved once more
 I had summers a score and three !

There came a bird in the dead of night
 And sang and waken'd me,
 And I felt the beams of the Land of Light
 And open'd mine eyes to see !

The clouds of the City were cleft in twain,
 The gleam of the skies shone through,—
 And voices from Elfland cried again
 With a hark and a hey halloo !

The banners of Elfland waved on high,
 The streets were grassy green,
 Everywhere 'neath the starry sky
 The Fairy Folk were seen !

The pale Fay-King with his golden crown
Went by and beckon'd me,
And troops of children followed him down
To the sands of a crystal Sea ;—

And some were blind, and some were lame,
And all were ragged and poor,
And they flock'd and flock'd with glad acclaim,
As he passed, from every door !

And down to a silvern strand they hied
And bathed in the water clear,
And the King stood by them radiant-eyed,
While the Good Folk gather'd near.

Back they flocked to the City cold,
Between the dark and the light,
And a gentle Shepherd with crook of gold
Gather'd them into the dusky fold
Like lambs wash'd clean and white !

From the shining dove-cots overhead
Whose doors swung open wide,
The Fays of heaven took wing and fled
Like doves in the eventide ;

And the Fays of the woods came thronging in,
With the Fays of field and stream,
And they filled the City of shame and sin
With the sound of a summer dream !

Have you heard the croon of a cushat creep
 Through the boughs of a leafy dell?
 Like the cushat's call, from the boughs of Sleep
 (Deep ! deep ! deep ! deep !)
 The magic murmur fell !

And the little children lay content
 While the Fays their vigil kept,
 And honeysuckle and hawthorn scent
 Blew round them as they slept !

And ever the bugles of Elfland blew
 And the magic notes ran free,—
 The Heavens were open, the stars shone thro'
 With a golden glamorie !

v.

The bugle blows from the elfin dells
 With a hark and a hey halloo,
 And the magic song of the fields and fells
 Rings on beneath the blue !

Be it rain or wind, be it shine or snow,
 I echo that song to men,—
 The fairies are with me still, altho'
 I have winters five times ten !

The mist that floats before human eyes
 Hides the heaven o' Faërie,
 The cloud o' the sense around them lies,
 They are blind and cannot see ;

Yet the folk of Elfland are busy yet
In street and alley and lane,—
They dry the eyes that are weary and wet,
And they heal the heart's dull pain !

From door to door the Good Folk fly,
With liberal heart and hand,
And wherever the little children cry
Is the light o' the Fairy Land.

The little box of mignonette,
On the window-sill of the sick-room set,
Holds flowers the Fay-folk sow—
The thrush in his wicker cage, that swings
In the smoky lane, laughs loud and sings
A song the Good Folk know !

They are with us yet, they are busy yet,
They are here from night to morn,
And they remember tho' we forget
The land where the Light is born !

At dead of night with a soft footfall
Thro' the wards of the children's hospital
They flock with light and song,—
On the still white beds the moonlight lies,
And the pale sick children open their eyes
And see the shining throng.

VI.

The bugle blows from the elfin dells
With a hark and a hey halloo !
The Land where eternal summer dwells,
The Land of magical songs and spells,
Again shines bright and blue !

Be it sun or snow, be it rain or wind,
I echo that music here,
Tho' my heart beats faint and my eyes grow blind
And the wintertide is near.

I hear the sound of a funeral bell
Go thro' the World grown gray,—
I hear the wise men ringing the knell
Of a God that is dead, they say.

I hear the weeping, I hear the groans,
I see the mourners stir,
I watch the sextons who heap the stones
On the mouth of the Sepulchre !

But I only smile, for the Fays by night
Make the day's long labour vain,—
Legions from Elfland, laughing light,
Open the grave again !

When the gates o' the grave are openèd
And the lambs sleep in the fold,
The Fay-King arises, quick not dead,
And the gleam of the moonlight is round his head,
And his shroud is shining gold !

He stands and smiles on the folk asleep,
Yea, stoops and comforts them,
But the men and women that sleep not, creep
To touch his raiment hem !

And I hear his voice ring clear and mild
Over the earth and the sea,—
“Except thou be as a little Child,
Thou shalt not come to Me !”

And I see the faces of old old men
Grow foolish and glad and young,
And I hear the grandam crooning again
The songs the Fays have sung ;

And men and women forget their care
And cry like lambs in the night,
For the King of Elfland finds them there,
And the spirits of Elfland fill the air
With dreams from the Land of Light ;

And the graves are open, and shining crowds
Throng from the fields of Sleep,
And we see our loved ones in their shrouds,
That fall and leave them like breaking clouds,
And we clasp their hands and weep !

Yea, this is the work the Fay-folk do
In the name of their gentle King,—
Ah, well for men if they surelier knew
The message the Good Folk bring !

Alas for the life of ashes and sand,
Alas for the World grown gray,
If the gentle dream of the Fairy Land,
The Light in the lattice of Heaven, the Hand
That beckons, should fade away !

LATTER-DAY GOSPELS.

JUSTINIAN ;

OR, THE NEW CREED.

"THE world is weary of idolatries :
 Pan and Apollo and great Zeus are dead,
 And Jesus Christ hangs cold upon the Cross.
 Nay more, the light of Science newly born
 Hath scatter'd all the gods and God their guide,
 So that, for calm assurance of our souls,
 We mathematically demonstrate
 Infinite God as infinitely false
 To infinite impossibility.
 Henceforth a grievous shadow quits the earth,
 While Man, the fruitage and the flower of things,
 Walks fetterless and free." Thus much and more,
 With many hints of cell and protoplasm,
 And of the dusk beginnings of the brain,
 The mild Professor said.

Professor Day,

A little gentleman with soft gray eyes,
 Whose spectacles had faced the very Sphinx
 And read the cosmic riddle wrought therein.
 He, having lived to forty years of age,
 Had hate for nought but ambiguity ;
 Knew all that Science and the schools could teach,
 Lived for Truth only, and, had these been days
 Of any necessary martyrdom,
 Would cheerfully have given his life for Truth.
 Meantime, he served her cause. How wrathfully
 He rose his height, while angry pulpits wail'd,
 And from the platforms of the great Reviews

JUSTINIAN.

Demolish'd the theistic fallacy,
 Pluck'd the bright mantle from the verbal form
 And show'd the syllogistic skeleton !
 Dear gentle heart, he who could be so fierce
 In hating what he did not deem to be,
 Was full of love for all the things that are ;
 Wherefore God loved him for his unbelief
 And sent a ministering angel down. . . .

He often thought, "If I should have a child,
 If ever life should issue out of mine,
 I shall uprear it on the gracious food
 Of Knowledge only. Superstition haunts
 Our very cradles : in our nurses' hands
 Dangle the fetish and the crucifix
 That darken us for ever till we die.
 No child of mine, if I should have a child,
 Shall know the legend of the Lie Divine
 Or lisp the words of folly that profane
 The wish of wisdom. Prayer is cowardice :
 No child of mine shall pray. Worship is fear :
 My child shall never know the name of fear.
 But when its eyes are ready to behold,
 Its ears to hear, my child shall wander forth,
 Fearlessly leaning on its father's strength,
 Serene in innocence and mastery."

And so he wedded, hoping for a child,
 A tender toy to cut his creed upon,
 And wedded wisely : a virgin not too young,
 And not too proud, and not too beautiful,
 But gently reared, and of a learnèd race

Who held that over-learning suits but ill
The creed and need of women. To his side
She came not trembling, trusting in his strength,
And wise enough to dimly comprehend
Her gentle lord's superiority.
Two years they grew together, as two trees
Blending their branches ; then a child was born,
Which, flickering like a taper thro' the night,
Went out ere dawn ; but when the mother wept,
And reach'd her thin hands down the darkness, whither
The little life had fallen like a spark,
The pale Professor (though his eyes were dim)
Sat by the bedside presently, and proved—
As gently as a poor man praying to God—
That what had never known potential life,
In all its qualities and faculties,
Had never absolutely lived at all ;
Nay, 'twere as wise, perchance, he thought, to mourn
Some faint albuminous product of the Deep,
As weep for something which had ne'er achieved
The motions and the mysteries of Mind,
Which things are Life itself. The mother moaned ;
And creeping thence to his laboratory,
The wise man wiped away a foolish dew
That shamed the gloss of his philosophy.

But comfort came a little later on ;
Another crying life arose and bloom'd,
And faded not upon the mother's breast,
But drew its milk with feeble lips, and breath'd.
It was a boy, and when they brought him down,
And placed him in the pale Professor's arms,

He laugh'd and reach'd his little rosy hands
 To embrace his father ; and the wise man said,
 Holding the babe and blushing awkwardly,
 " How naturally mammals love their young !
 Thus, even thus, the archetypal Ape
 Dandled its rough first-born ! " Whereat the nurse
 Exclaim'd,—not comprehending, pious soul,—
 " Thank God for sending you so fine a boy ! "

And when the wise man thro' his spectacles
 Look'd lightnings of philosophy and scorn,
 She took the babe and murmur'd, kissing it,
 " Now God Almighty grant the pretty dear
 A long and merry life ! "

The wise man's cheek

Grew pallid, for already, ere he knew,
 It seem'd that Superstition's skinny hand
 Was clutching at his pearl of innocence.
 He fled into his study, and therein
 Added a fragment to a fierce review
 Upholding Haeckel, proving Tyndall tame,
 And rating Virchow and Agnosticism ;
 And having thus refreshed his learnèd soul,
 He sat by the bedside of his pale wife,
 Holding her hand in silence for an hour,
 Feeling a nameless fear upon his heart,
 Blent with a sense of blessing one less wise
 Might have mistaken for a sense of prayer.

Thenceforward, with a curious scrutiny,
 Such as he brought to bear on things minute
 Dredged from the fishpond or the river's bed,
 He watch'd the tiny life expand and grow,

Stretching sensorial tendrils softly forth,
Sucking its mother's milk with rosy lips,
As tiny creatures of albumen suck
Their nurture from the tidal ooze and foam.
Then with a span he measured the small head,
And watch'd the soft pink circle where the skin
Closed on the milk-white matter of the brain,
Hardening slowly into skull and bone ;
And all the while the little azure orbs
Look'd upward meaningless as flowers or stars
Full of a faint flame issuing from within.
Then thought he, " It is well ; a goodly child ;
A brain of weight above the average
And phrenologically excellent !
And yet how helpless in their dim beginnings
The higher mammals seem, this babe of mine
Nor less nor more ; a feeble crying thing,
Feeling with blind progressions like a plant
To the full sunshine of potential life.
Prick the grey cells, it dies, and has not lived ;
Deny it nurture, as of sun and rain,
And even as a leaf it withers up,
Without a sign that it hath ever been.
Yea, what we bring it, it absorbs, and turns
To highest use and issue ; as we train
Its tendrils, so it grows ; and if denied
Such nurture as the nobler species need,
Would surely, slowly, dwindle back to beast,
As is the wont of many human types
Stunted and starven in their infancy.
But this one, bone of mine and flesh of mine,
This will I watch, with ministering care,

Till it rewards my patience and becomes
Perfect in knowledge and in mastery,
The living apex and the crown of things."

A little later, when the mother rose,
And with the consecration of her pain
Clothed softly still, sat pallid by the fire,
She, after resting silent for a time
And casting many a hesitating glance,
Said softly, "Dear, have you reflected yet
How we shall christen him?" Stung by the word,
The wise man murmur'd, "Christen?—christen him?"
Then, flush'd with wrath, "The very word is rank
With superstition and idolatry—
Do not repeat it, as you love the child."
Whereat the mother, timorously firm,
Said, smiling, "But the child must have a name!
What shall we call him?" Puzzled for the time,
The wise man pursed his lips and shook his head,
And scrutinised the little rosy face
As if for inspiration and for help.
Then one by one they named the names of men,
From Adam down to Peter, Paul, and John,
And scorning these as over-scriptural,
They counted o'er the legion heathen names
But found them fraught with superstition too.
"Our infant," the Professor moralised,
"Heathen no more than Christian, shall receive
No gift from Heathendom or Christendom,
Not even that slightest of all shades, a name.
Could I invent?—but no, invented names
Ever sound barbarous—I will rack my books,

And find one fitting ; there is time to spare ;
 Take thought, and wait ! ” So many a quiet night
 They talk’d it o’er, and after hovering long
 O’er Thales (“ Evolution’s Morning Star,”
 The wise man styled him, while the mother’s ear
 Was shock’d at the mere sound of “ Thales Day ”),
 Rejecting Bruno and Galileo,
 They found the thing they sought upon their shelves,
 And pausing at the famous “ Institutes,”
 They chose the learned name—Justinian.

Not at the font with painted windows round,
 Not through the office of a priest in lawn
 Sprinkling with white hands the baptismal dew,
 The infant took his name ; but quietly
 One Sunday morn, in the laboratory,
 With casts and foetal forms around about,
 The wise man, kissing him upon the brow,
 Named him “ Justinian ” ; and the mother’s voice
 Echo’d “ Justinian ” ; and the naming him
 Would have been wholly joyful and complete,
 But for a jangling sound of bells that rang
 Suddenly from the churches round about,—
 Calling the folk of Christendom to prayer !

Pass o’er the seasons when with baby lips
 The infant drew its nurture from the breast,
 And when with tottering steps he first began
 To walk erect upon the ground and shape
 The first faint sounds to mimic human speech.
 Behold him, then, at five years old, a child
 Large-eyed, large-brow’d, and somewhat pale of cheek,

Clutching a thin forefinger as he ran
And prattled at the pale Professor's side.
Companions now they grew from day to day,
For while within his study 'mong his books
The wise man sat, the infant at his feet
Sat looking up ; or, on the table perch'd,
Blink'd like a pretty gnome ; and every morn
When for a hurried constitutional
The father trotted over Hampstead Heath,
The little one would toddle by his side,
Happy and garrulous, and looking up
With question after question.—Thus the child
Heard, at an age when other children feed
On nursery rhymes and tales of Fairyland,
The wondrous song of Science ; how at first
The nebulae cohered, how this round orb
Rose out of chaos, how it lay in space
Eyeless and dark until the sun's red hand
Touch'd it upon the heart and made it live,
And how the first faint protoplasmic forms,
Amœbæ, infusoria, stirr'd and moved
In troubled depths of some primeval ooze.
All this, and more, translated tenderly
Into soft words of just one syllable,
Justinian heard, not understanding yet,
But turning all the solemn cosmic fact
To pretty fancy such as children love.
What solemn truth, what sad solemnity,
May not an infant turn to poesy ?
Instead of Gorgon and Chimæra dire,
His fancy saw the monstrous mastodon ;
Instead of fairies of the moonlight wood,

Strange shapes that lurk in strata or disport
In some green waterdrop ; instead of myths,
He read the faery story of the World.

From childhood upward, till the end, he knew
No teacher save his father, and, indeed,
Since never teacher could be tenderer,
He did not miss the lore of love itself.
As patient as a woman, firm yet fond,
Hoarding his very heart up in the boy,
The father tended, taught him, watch'd him grow.
At eight years old Justinian lisp'd in Greek
And readily construed Lucretius ;—
He read the great stone Book whereon is writ
The riddle of the world from age to age ;
Knew the fair marvels of the Zodiac,
The stars and their processions ; had by heart
The elemental truths of chemistry . . .
And zealously, within a mental maze,
As dense as that which covered Rosamond,
His teacher guarded him against the creeds.
For gospel, he had knowledge, and for God,
His gentle human father ; and indeed
No child that lisps a heavenly Father's name
Could lisp it with a fonder fairer faith
Than fill'd him when he named his earthly one.

Now when the boy was scarcely ten years old,
Wise far beyond the wisdom of his years,
The mother, wasting of a long disease,
Died, leaving a great void within his heart
Only the father's larger love could fill.

The wise man sorrow'd little, having view'd
 His helpmate with a calm superior care,
 Approving her, but hoarded in his boy ;
 And thenceforth, sire and son were all in all
 To one another. Oft the pair were seen
 Seated in scientific lecture-halls,
 The wise man blinking thro' his spectacles,
 The boy, his little image, by his side,
 Like small by greater owl ; and evermore
 When, hastening home, they pass'd some shadowy
 Shrine

The father drew his treasure closer to him,
 Lest some dark Phantom from within the porch
 Should mar the crystal mirror of his soul.

The seasons sped ; at sixteen years of age
 Justinian was famous in the haunts
 Where wise men gather, and in deep debate
 Could hold his own among grey honour'd heads
 And pass with pedants for a prodigy.
 At seventeen, he wrote that bold review,
 Attributed for several weeks to Mill,
 Denuding Buckle and his theory
 Of History's four stages. How men smiled,
 When some one blabb'd and the strange truth was
 told,
 To find the grown man's pompous periods
 Dissected into folly by a boy !

Now for the first time on the father's heart
 There fell the shadow of a nameless fear

Lest all this building of a noble mind
Should fail and perilously come to nought.
For lo ! despite the glow of happy pride,
Justinian's cheek was pale, his gentle eyes
Deep sunken, and he stoop'd beneath the weight
Of too much wisdom ; oftentimes his face,
Tho' firm in faith and beautiful resolve,
Seem'd set in silent sorrow. At last, one night,
After a crowded meeting of the learn'd,
A great physician and his father's friend
Took him apart and whisper'd in his ear,—
“Take care, my dear professor, of your boy !—
I do not like that cough—he works too hard—
His life is very precious to us all—
Be sure to watch him well.”

From that day forth
The father's heart was burthen'd with a dread
He never phrased to any human ear.
Hungriily, with sick hunger of the soul,
He watched his treasure, sleepless ev'n by night,
Like some wan miser who for ever hears
The robber's foot upon the creaking stair
Coming to take his gold. He watch'd and watch'd,
Hiding his terror with a cheerless smile,
Each light or shade that softly chased itself
On the sweet boyish face. Was it a dream ?—
Or did Death pass, and with a finger-point
Leave one deep crimson spot on either cheek
As signal of decay ? No, no, not Death !
Not Death, but Life, now made the blue eyes gleam
So marvellously bright ; the small hands grow
Thin and blue vein'd, with pink blood glimmering thro'

Like light thro' alabaster ; the brave brow
 So marble-cold and clear !—Yet presently
 He led him to the great physician's house
 And asked for counsel. "Take him to the sea,"
 Said the physician ; "keep away all books ;
 Let brain and body rest for three months' space—
 Then, when we know what sun and sea can do
 To make him rosy, come to me again."

They went together to the sea, and there,
 Fann'd by the potent breath, the young man's cheek
 Grew brighter, and the father's heart took cheer.
 But one day, as they sat upon the beach,
 Watching the great smooth billows break themselves
 With solemn lapse upon the shell and sand,
 Justinian said, not loudly, in a voice
 As if communing softly with himself,
 "Father, if I should *die* !"

The very word
 Seem'd sad and terrible and fraught with fear.
 And starting at the sound, the wise man cried,
 "Die ? and so young !—that is a foolish thought !
 You cannot, will not, die !"

But with his eyes
 Fix'd on the ever-breaking line of foam,
 Justinian answer'd, "Soon or late, Death comes—
 A little earlier, or a little later,
 What matter ? In the end we falter back
 Into the nothingness from which we rose.
 Well have you taught me, father, that our life
 Is but the climbing and the falling wave.
 I do not fear to die. No foolish tale

Of priest or pope affrights me ; I have read
The secret of the world, and know indeed
That Death is Silence and an end of all."

"But you will live !"

"For what? To read again
A tale thrice told ; to hear a few more years
The same cold answer to my questionings ;
To be a little wiser possibly,
And being so, a little sadder? Nay!
I am weary of it all—I have lived my life !"

"Lived?" cried the wise man holding the thin hand,
"Lived? you, a stripling still, not yet a man—
You know not what you say. When you are well
(And 'twill be soon) you'll laugh at these sad moods
And gather up your force to face anew
For many a merry year the shocks of Time.
Have comfort!—I am sixty years of age,
And am not weary yet !"

The young man smiled
And press'd the gentle hand that held his own.
"Dear father, since we do not measure time
Merely by seasons past, 'tis I am old,
And *you* that are the boy! How cheerfully
You con the lesson you have learn'd by heart
So many a busy year. Why were we born?
To come into the sunlight and demand
Whence come we, whither go we, then to pass
Back into silence and to nothingness.
You say that life is long—alas! that life
Which ends at all, is far too brief for me.

Sixty years hence, if I could live till then,
 I should be no less bitter to depart,
 To pass into a silence and a sleep,
 Than this day, or to-morrow. Dearest father,
 My faith is firm as yours. I know full well
 There is no God or Gods, as mad folk dream,
 Beyond these echoes : that with man's last breath
 All individual being ends for ever,
 And with the chemic crystals of the brain
 Dries up that gas the preachers christen Soul.
 Were I to live an hundred years and ten,
 To realise old wives' and prophets' tales
 Of man's longevity, what could I learn
 Not taught already ? I could hear no more
 Than I have heard ;—than you have taught me, father,
 Almost with my first breath."

Then, in a voice
 Broken and thick with tears, the wise man cried,
 "I have taught you over-much !—My son, my son,
 Forgive me for my love and over-zeal !
 I have been too cruel, placing on your strength,
 Too slight to bear it, such a weight of work
 As pales the cheek and rusts the wholesome blood.
 But you shall rest ! throwing all books aside,
 We two will seek the breezes on the sea
 And on the mountains ! Then you will be strong,
 And casting off these sad distemper'd fears,
 Become a man indeed !"

From that day forth
 The silken thread of love, that ran unseen

Between the hearts of father and of son,
Tighten'd with many a pang of hope and dread
Now for the first the father realised
Parting was possible, and with sick suspense
He watch'd the shadow and the sunbeam fight
For victory on the pallid patient face.
When winter came they flitted to the south,
And there, amid a land of pine and vine,
Under a sapphire sky, Justinian seem'd
To gather strength and walk about renew'd.
Then ever in that fair land they heard the sound
Of soft church-bells, and ever in their walks
They came on rudely painted images
Of Jesus and Madonna, and beheld
At every step the shaven face of priests.
Among these signs of blind and ignorant faith
They walk'd like strangers in an alien clime,
Wondering and pitying, pitied in their turn
By all who saw them slowly pass along ;
The tall boy leaning on the father's arm,
The old man with a woman's tender care
Uplooking in his face, with sleepless eyes
Watching his pearl of pearls.

At last they came

Unto a place most peaceful and most fair,
Upon the margin of a crystal lake
Set in the hollow of Italian hills.
There an eternal summer seem'd to dwell,
In an eternal calm. On every side
The purple mountains rose, with filmy lights
And slender scarfs of white and melting mist,
While down below were happy orange groves

And gleaming emerald slopes, and crimson crags
Upon whose sides hung chalets white as snow
Just peeping from deep fringe of flower and fern.
And all, the crag and chalet, grove and wood,
With snow-white gleams of silent cataracts
For ever frozen in the act to fall,
Were imaged, to the tiniest flower or leaf,
In the cerulean mirror of the lake,—
Save when across the stillness crystalline
A gondola with purple shade crawl'd slowly
And blurr'd the picture with its silvern trail.

Here then they rested, in a cottage set
Upon the green edge of a promontory,
Where, sitting side by side, with images
Reflected in the azure sleeping lake,
They often heard the boatman's even-song
Come from the distance like a sound in sleep ;
And often faintly from the crags o'er head
Tinkled the chapel bell. But day by day
The young man felt the life-blood in his heart
Fail more and more, till oftentimes his life
Would seem as sad and faint and indistinct
As those soft sounds. Once, as they linger'd there,
A gentle Lutheran priest whose home was near
Came, hearing that the youth was sick to death,
And sought to give them comfort ; but the sire,
With something of a learnèd anger left,
Tho' gently, warn'd him from the sufferer's side.
Then coming to his son, " How far these priests
Scent sorrow !—they would make the merry world
A charnel-house to do their office in !

I sent the preacher packing ; he seemed vex'd
 To hear that you were growing strong and well
 And did not need his prayers ;" and with a smile
 Of sad entreaty, " Yes, you are growing strong !
 And you will soon be well !"

Divinely blue

The heavens were bending o'er the young man's head,
 Blue lay the peaceful lake, and in its breast
 Another heaven as divinely blue
 Throbb'd through its own soft sunlight rapturously.
 Propp'd in his chair Justinian gazed around.
 " Father," he said, " dear father, hold my hand—
 In all the world there is no comfort left
 Like feeling your kind touch. Now listen to me !
 I know I shall not leave this place alive—
 My time has almost come !"—

" No, no !"

" Dear father !

When the faint flame of life is flickering low,
 They say that even mindless beasts and birds
 Know that the end is near ; and lo, I know it,
 For all my sense grows dim. A little while,
 And I shall be a part of that soft sleep
 Upon the lake and on the purple hills
 And in the quiet grave where no shape stirs.
 But now it does not seem so hard to go,
 Since all life seems a dream within a dream
 And I myself the strangest dream of all.
 To those fair elements whence first I came—
 Water and earth and air—I shall return ;

And see ! how tranquil and how beautiful
They wait for me, the immortal ministers
Of Man and all that shares mortality !”

Then in a voice that seemed the very sound
Of his own rending heart, the father cried,
“ My son ! Justinian ! child of mine old age !
Sole comfort of my dark and dreary days !
You cannot go ! you cannot fade away !
No, no, you must not die ! How shall I live
Bereft of you ? Where shall my soul find rest,
When all I cherish, all the loving mind
That I have nurtured so, depart so soon ?
No, I will hold you—I will clasp you to me—
Nothing shall part us, nay, not Death itself ;
For if you die, my only boy, my pride,
I will die too !” Then, as he clasped his son,
And looked into the thin and tearful eyes,
And felt the slight frame tremble through and through
As if with chill of some cold blighting breath,
He suddenly raised up his face to heaven
And unaware, with a great gush of tears,
Moan'd, “ God ! God ! God !”

Startled at that strange cry,
Justinian murmur'd, “ Father !”—and the two
Clung close to one another tremulously
In pain too quick for speech ; but when the storm
Of sudden agony had passed away,
There came a pause—a long and tearful pause—
And each could feel the other's beating heart
And the quick coming of the other's breath.
Then presently their eyes met, and a light

Of some new wonder fill'd Justinian's eyes,
While softly, quietly, he said, " My father !
Since I was but a babe upon the breast,
And ever upward through the happy years,
Your eyes have been the source of all my seeing,
Your mind the living font of all my thoughts.
Tell me, dear father—now, before we part—
And tell me firmly, with no thought of fear,
Is it *for ever*? Have I read, indeed,
My lesson truly? Tell me, am I right?
For you have taught me truth is best of all—
Is this the utter end of all our love,
And shall we never meet and know each other
Again, as we have known each other here ? ”

Then sobbing like a child the old man cried,
“ Ask me not !—Pity me, and ask no more !
For lo, I seem as one whose house has fallen
About his feet in ruins, and who stands
Living, aghast, with ashes on his head,
Clouded with horror, half awaked from sleep.
I know there is no God—Nature herself,
More mighty and more terrible than God,
Hath taught me that—but till this piteous hour
I never craved for God or named his Name.
I asked not for him, craved no alms of Heaven,
Nor hunger'd for another better life
Than this we live ; all that I sought on earth
Was you, my child, my son. Stay with me here,
Let us remain a little more together—
And I shall be content.”

Then with a smile

Angelically sad, Justinian said :

“It is enough—torture your heart no more.
 Hold to our faith—be strong—for though I die
 Fairer than I shall live. Now, read to me
 That sweet preamble of Lucretius
 I always loved so much,—because it brought
 The very breath of fields and happy flocks,
 With that great animal content and joy
 Which fills the earth to which we all return.”

Then trembling, in a voice made thick with tears,
 The old man at the bidding of the boy
 Read the rich periods of the only bard
 Who faced with fearless front unconquerable
 That Shape so many see,—a Skeleton
 Standing amid the universal snow
 Of seeds atomic, pointing dimly down.

*“For of the mighty scheme of Heaven and Gods
 I now shall sing, unfolding to thy gaze
 The everlasting principles of things—
 Whence Nature forms, increases, and sustains
 All forms that are, and whither as they die
 She evermore dissolves each form again.
 These principles we in our human speech
 Call matter or the generative seeds,
 Bodies primordial whence all things that be
 Were marvellously fashioned from the first.”*¹

With eyes half closed, his face suffused with sunlight,
 The pale boy listen'd, while the verse flow'd on.

*“ This darkness, this deep shadow of the mind,
 Neither the sunrise nor the darts of day
 Have power to scatter; but it shall dissolve
 Before the light of reason and the face
 Of Nature’s self. First, for exordium,
 Lay thou to heart this first great principle—
 Nought e’er is form’d from nought by Power Divine! . . .
 But when we have studied deep and comprehend
 That Power Divine can ne’er make nought from nought,
 Then shall we know that which we seek to know—
 How everything is fashion’d first and last,
 And all things wrought without the help of God!”²*

So far he read, and paused ; and as he paused
 A change came o’er the face he gazed upon,
 As if a finger touch’d the brow and eyes.
 The father shriek’d and shudder’d, shrinking back
 In nameless awe, for in a moment’s space,
 Though all the air was sunny overhead,
 And all the lake was golden at their feet,
 The twain were cover’d with a shadow cast
 By some dark shape unseen.

“ Hold my hand, father,
 For I am dying ! ”

Then the white face flash’d
 To one wild look of passionate farewell,
 And silently, without another word,
 The last sad breath was drawn.

They bore him in—
 How and by whom the gentle deed was done
 The father knew not, being dazed and stunn’d,
 But follow’d moaning, while upon his bed

They placed him down ; and when that afternoon
 A pallid Sister from the convent came
 To do the last sad offices of death,
 The old man only watch'd her in a trance
 And made no sign ; but when, her kind task done,
 She touch'd him, saying in her own soft speech,
 " Signor, I trust he died in the full faith
 Of Christ our Lord !" he gave a laugh so strange,
 So terrible and yet so pitiful,
 She thought his wits were gone.

Fair as a star,

Justinian lay upon his bed of death,
 And seeing him so young and beautiful
 The Sister gathered lilies in the garden
 And strew'd them on his breast ; then reverently
 She bless'd him ; and the old man look'd at her,
 Trembling as in a trance ; but suddenly
 Uprising, in a hollow voice he cried,
 Pointing her to the door with quivering hands,
 " Begone ! profane him not ! from life to death
 I kept him safe from Superstition's touch !
 My boy ! you shall not take him from me now ! "

NOTE.

The following is the original text of the passages of Lucretius, translated in the text and printed in italics :—

- 1 " *Nam tibi de summa cœli ratione deûmque
 Disserere incipiam, et rerum primordia pandam ;
 Unde omnes natura creet res, auctet alatque ;
 Quove eadem rursus natura preempta resolvat ;*

Quæ nos materiem, et genitalia corpora rebus
 Reddenda in ratione vocare, et semina rerum
 Appellare suëmus, et hæc eadem usurpare
 Corpora prima, quod ex illis sunt omnia primis."

De Rer. Nat., Book i. 54-62.

² " Hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necesse est
 Non radii solis, neque lucida tela diei
 Discussant, sed naturæ species, ratioque :
 Principium hinc cujus nobis exordia sumet,
 Nullam rem e nihilo gigni divinitus unquam . . .
 Quas ob res, ubi viderimus nil posse creari
 De nihilo, tum, quod sequimur, jam rectius inde
 Perspicimus, et unde queat res quæque creari,
 Et quo quæque modo fiant opera sine divùm."

De Rer. Nat., Book i. 147-151, 155-159.

THE NEW BUDDHA.

(SCHOPENHAUER.)

IN Frankfort, at the crowded table-d'hôte,
Amid the steam of dishes and the sound
Of chattering voices, I beheld at last
The face I sought : a toothless lion's face,
Grey, livid, sprinkled o'er with dust of dream,
With two dim eyes that (as the lion's orbs
Gaze through and past the groups around the cage
Upon the sands of Afric far away)
Met mine and saw me not, but mark'd beyond
That melancholy desert of the Mind
Where in his lonely splendour he had reign'd.
But when he rose without a word, and stepped
Across the threshold out into the street,
I follow'd reverently, and touch'd his arm.
Frowning he turn'd. "Your pardon," I exclaimed,
Standing bareheaded in the summer sun—
"To the new Buddha, Arthur Schopenhauer,
I've come with letters from your sometime friend,
Hestmann of Hamburg. Bliss it were, indeed,
If for a space you suffered me to gaze
On the one fountain of philosophy
Still sparkling to refresh an arid world !"

He took the letters, glanced them grimly through,
Then his face brighten'd and he smiled well pleased ;

Then nodding, said : " You come in season, sir !
I lack an arm to lean on as I walk,
And now, if you are willing, yours will serve.
For, as you see, your Buddha (so men please
To style me ; and if zeal to make men wise,
To free them from their yoke of misery,
Constitute godship, I deserve the name !)
Your Buddha groweth old, is well-nigh spent,
And soon must pass away." " Nay," I replied,
" For many a summer and a winter more
Your living force must flow to gladden man ;
Philosophy is still too halt and blind
To spare you yet !" More brightly still his face
Flash'd answer to the flattery of my words.
" Right, right !" he murmur'd. " After all, they are wise
Who flout the Bible's three-score years and ten ;
A strong man's season is a hundred years,
Nor less nor more ; and I, though grey and bent,
May see another generation yet ! "

I had reach'd his heart at once, as courtiers gain
The hearts of kings. So, resting on mine arm,
Smiling and nodding gently as we went,
He passed with me along the sunny street ;
And on our way I spake with youthful warmth
Of that new gospel which the lonely man
Had offered all in vain for two-score years
To every passer-by in this dull world ;
And what himself had said a thousand times
I said with zeal—that in the sun there stood
Temples and towers, but only Memnon's *sang*,

And *his* was Memnon's to a listening world.
Still more complacent grew his deity,
Finding so passionate a worshipper !
And presently he questioned of myself,
My birthplace, and my business in the city.
English by name and accent, as he guessed ?
Was his name known in England ? he inquired,
With quick solicitous glance ; and when I said
His name was known and revered through the land,
His pale cheek flush'd with pleasure once again.

Then, as we passed along the populous streets,
With houses, shops, and marts on either side,
And folk as thick as bees that throng i' the hive,
He, finding I was apt, grew garrulous :
Told of his weary years of martyrdom,
Through which, neglected and despised, he framed
His creed of grand negation and despair ;
How, bitter at the baseness of the world,
Yet never faltering as his hand set down
In philosophic rhythm the weary sound
Made by the ocean of the Will which beats
For ever on these wrinkled sands of Time,
He had waited, till the pigmies wrought his crown ;
How every man-made god, or god-made man,
Had lied, until *he* spake the "Sesame"
Which opened the great cavern of the truth
To every soul that yearn'd to creep therein ;
And how, now all was said that thought could say,
He rested, while the nations one by one
Approved—Nirwâna !

As he spake, he paused
 Before a great cathedral whose tall spire
 Pointed a fiery finger up at Heaven.
 Then, smiling, "Still the pagan temples stand,
 And from the heart of each a bleeding god,
 Not Buddha or a greater, spins his web
 To entangle insects of Humanity.
 Henceforth the battle is between us twain,—
 I who have scaled the Heavens and found them bare,
 I who have cast the Heavenly Father down,
 And Christ that cries, 'He reigns!'"

He rose erect,
 Nostrils dilated, eyes grown fiercely bright,
 With possible conquest.

"'Tis the Christ or I,
 And face to face we stand before the age!
 All other of the intellectual gods,
 Save I alone, were frail or timorous,
 Mad or god-drunken; I alone have set
 My finger on the canker of the world,
 Saying 'Tis fatal—'Tis incurable—
 And I defy the Christ to find a cure!
 The Titans, headed by Prometheus
 (Whom we in Deutschland call Immanuel Kant),
 Marshal'd their hosts against the Olympian throne,
 And one by one before its shadowy seat
 Fell, mumbling 'God'; the tempests of the mind
 Enwraught and overpowered them, and they fell;
 Last of the race, their Epimetheus,
 Our moonstruck Hegel, gibbering like an ape,
 Follow'd the phantom God whom he denied
 Garrulously up and down! My turn was next.

I stood alone upon the eternal shore,
 And heard the thunder of the waves of Will
 Upmounting to destroy me, till I spake
 The mystic word 'Nirwâna,' and behold!
 They heard me and obeyed me, and were hush'd.
 A Spirit stood beside me, even Death,
 And in his clammy palm I placed my hand,
 And still together, masters of the hour,
 We stand triumphant, waiting the event!"

Again he took my arm and on we walk'd
 Towards Sachsenhausen. Passing o'er the bridge,
 'Mid crowds of pleasure-seeking citizens,
 We came among the parks and flowery ways
 And heard among the sunbeam-laden trees
 The fluttering and the singing of the birds.
 From neighbouring gardens came the fiddle's sound,
 The flute's soft whistle, and the eager shouts
 Of merry-making folk. Then, sitting down,
 Upon a bench o'erhung with whispering leaves,
 We watched the stream of festal men and maids
 That overflowed the roads and garden walks.
 Loud in the summer sunshine sang the birds,
 Answered by human voices, while the sage
 Looked sadly on, and mused:

"The stress of pain
 Dwells on the heartstrings of the feather'd choir,
 Who, prompted by the goad of fiery love
 (*Veneris ictus*, as Lucretius sings)
 Toil restlessly, build nests, uprear their young
 With eager palpitations, ever fearing
 The shadow of the cruel kestrel, Death,

Hovering above them. Sounds their summer cry
 So merry, say you? 'Tis the o'erburdened heart
 Spilling itself in waves of agony,
 Which only to the sense of babes can seem
 Sweet and ecstatic! Walk abroad; and mark
 The cony struggling in the fowmarts' fangs,
 The deer and hare that fly the sharp-tooth'd hound,
 The raven that with flap of murderous wing
 Hangs on the woolly forehead of the sheep
 And blinds its harmless eyes; nor these alone,
 But every flying, every creeping thing,
 Anguishes in the fierce blind fight for life!
 Sharp hunger gnaws the lion's entrails, tears
 The carrion-seeking vulture, films with cold
 The orbs of snake and dove. For these, for all,
 Remains but one dark Friend and Comforter,
 The husher of the weary waves of Will,
 Whom men name Peace or Death."

"A piteous creed!"

I answer'd. "Surely yonder thrush's song
 Is not all sadness? Hark how joyfully
 He, clinging to the laden apple-bough,
 Trills out his 'lover-lover! kiss-kiss sweet!
 And yonder youth and maiden listening
 Sit hand in hand as if in Paradise,
 And seeing heaven in each other's eyes,
 Forget for once that love can die or change
 Or youth's gay music turn to jangling bells
 Or funeral discord!"

On my Buddha's face
 A dark smile gather'd like a sulphurous flash
 Upon a lonely cloud, and died away.

“Behold,” he said, “the woman close at hand
Suckling her sickly babe ; poor soul, she smiles
To feel the famished lips that draw her milk
And drink her feeble life ! Call you that smile
The light of living joy ? To me it seems
Rapture of misery ineffable,
Such as the birds and beasts bear in their breasts
Starving to feed their young ! Then mark again
That other, like a ripe and rich-hued fruit
Pit-speck’d and rotten to the very core !
She flaunts her painted beauty in the sun
And hangs upon the arm of yonder Jew
Whose little eyes are shrivell’d in his head
With Nature’s light of lust. Priapus still
Is god o’ the garden ! Not a stone’s-throw hence,
Temples obscene as those Vesuvius once
Smother’d with fiery lava, still attest
The infamous worship ! Wheresoe’er we gaze,
On quiet field or busy haunts of men,
Among the creeping or the upright beasts,
Comes Nature, grinning like a procuress,
Bringing her innocent victims to assuage
The fire herself hath sown in the quick veins
Of all that live. Call you that quenchless fire
Peaceful or joyful ?—yet by that alone
We move and have our being !”

“Nay,” I cried,

“For surely there is Love which conquers it,
And Passion pallid as the passion-flower
Rooted in earth but showering up to heaven
Its wealth of stainless blooms !”

“Love conquers it,”

He answer'd with a weary inward smile,
" If e'er it conquers, by the privilege
Of some supreamer pain. The ascending scale,
From lower up to higher, only marks
The clearing of the flame until its light
Grows wholly sacrificial. Beasts and birds
Struggle and agonise to increase their kind,
Obeying blind pulsations which began
Deep in the burning breast of yonder Sun
Whose corporal beams we are ; creation ever
Obeys the blind vibrations which arose
Ere yet the timorous nebulæ cohered
To fashion fiery worlds ; but we who stand
Supreme, the apex and the crown of things,
Have gained supremacy of suffering
And sovereignty of limitless despair ! "

How merrily the festal music rose,
While men and women 'neath the linden-trees
Join'd in the dance, and happy children cried,
And birds with quick precipitous rapture shower'd
Their answer from the blossom-laden boughs !
Sunny as Eden seemed the earth that day ;
And yet, methought, I saw the sunlight shrink
And all creation darken suddenly,
As if from out the umbrage there had peer'd
The agate-eyes o' the Snake ! Then, as I gazed
Into the pallid dreamer's filmy orbs,
Methought the flesh and hair were shrivell'd up,
And in their places skin and scale appeared,
Till on his belly crawling serpent-wise

My Buddha slipt into the undergrass
And disappear'd. The fancy vanishing,
I heard his voice intoning at my side.

“Supremacy of sorrow gained at last,
Agony upon agony multiplied
And crystallised in knowledge, He, your Christ,
Rose and confronted Nature, as a dove
Might face eternal Deluge. ‘Comfort yet,’
He murmur’d, ‘while I set, upon the brows
Of all who suffer, this red crown of thorns,
And speak the promise of eternal life.’
Eternal Life! Eternal strife and sorrow!
Man’s privilege of misery ascending
Scale after scale, until at last it gains
An immortality of suffering!
What marvel if the tortured victim shrinks
From infinite possibilities of pain,
And casting down that crown, calling a curse
On Nature, dwindling down the scale which once
He eagerly ascended, gains the beast,
Holds hideous orgy, or like Niobe
Weeps—and is fix’d in stone! Helpless and frail,
Sharing the desolation he surveys,
Christ crawleth back into his sepulchre
And sleeps again. . . . Meantime, out of the womb
Of sorrow springs another Comforter,
Your Buddha, even I, the lonely man
Who walks the waves of Will as long ago
The Galilean seem’d to walk the sea.
‘Patience!’ I whisper; ‘take the gift I bring—

No crown of thorns, no promise of more life,
But this black poppy, pluck'd upon a grave !
The Ocean, though its waters wash as far
As the remotest sphere, as the last sun
Just crackling, shrivelling, like a leaf i' the fire,
The Ocean wide as Life, hath still—a shore !
On those dark sands each troublous wave is still'd,
Breaks, falls, and stirs no more, though other waves,
Pain following pain, identity that crowds
Fast on identity, shall still succeed.
Ye are weary—sleep ; ye are weeping—weep no more ;
As ye have come, depart ; as ye have risen
To the supremest crest of suffering,
Break, overflow, subside, and cease forever.'
Man hears. He feels, though all the rest be false,
One thing is certain—sleep : more precious far
Than any weary walkings in the sun.
Shall not the leafy world even as a flower
Be wither'd in its season ; or, grown cold,
Even like a snow-flake melting in the light,
Fade very silently, and pass away
As it had never been ? Shall Man, predoom'd,
Cling to his sinking straw of consciousness,
Fight with the choking waters in his throat,
And gasp aloud, ' More life, O God, more life !
More pain, O God ? ' . . . Nay, let him silently,
Bowing his head like some spent swimmer, sink
Without a sigh into the blest Abyss
Dark with the shipwreck of the nations, strewn
With bones of generations—lime of shells
That once were quick and lived. Even at this hour
He pauses, doubting, with the old fond cry,

Dreaming that some miraculous Hand may snatch
 His spirit from the waters ! Let him raise
 His vision upward, and with one last look,
 Ere all is o'er, behold 'Nirwâna' writ
 Across the cruel Heavens above his head
 In fiery letters, fading characters
 Of dying planets, faintly flickering suns,
 Foredoom'd like him to waste away and fade,
 Extinguish'd in the long eternal Night."

As one who walks in gardens of the feast,
 When the last guests flit down the lamp-hung walks
 To music sadly ceasing on the air,
 And sees a dark arm pass from lamp to lamp,
 Quenching them one by one, so did I seem
 Harkening that voice of cheerless prophecy.
 I rose, walked on, he leaning on mine arm,
 I listening ; and where'er we went, methought
 Sorrow and sunlessness preceded us ;
 So that the people dancing 'neath the trees,
 The birds that fluted on the blossoming boughs,
 The music and the murmur, made more sharp
 My sense of desolation. Everywhere
 I saw the hovering ernes, Despair and Death,
 Watching their victim, Man.

A space we walked

In silence, then I murmur'd: "Can it be
 That Death and Death's Despair are paramount?
 That, even as suns and systems are consumed,
 The mind of man, which apprehends or dreams
 It apprehends them, shares their destiny?
 Is there not something deathless, which denies

The victory to Death?"

"Their Christ says 'yea,'"

Answer'd the Buddha; "and with that lure and lie
Hath led the world for eighteen hundred years.

The mind of Man is as the rest—a flash

Of sunfire, nothing more; a quality

Pertaining only to the perishable.

Thought is a struggle with the Unconscious; soon

The struggle ceases, and the Unconscious drinks

The thinker and the thought for evermore.

Blesséd is he who, having wildly watch'd

The beauteous mirage of a heavenly Home,

Knoweth 'tis mirage only, and sinks down

To slumber on the arid stretch of sand

Whereon his weary feet have trod so long :

The sun shall shine upon him, and the stars

Fulfil their ministrations; he shall hear

No more the wailings of the flocks and herds

Slain to assuage the appetite for life;

No thing that suffers and no thing that slays

Shall mar his peace with pain or sympathy;

Dust, he returns to dust; life, he resolves

To life unconscious, such as quickeneth

In even trees and stones; his dream is o'er

Forever; and he hath become a part

Of elemental dumb Eternity."

"If this be so, dear Master," I returned,

"What then remains for us who walk i' the sun?

For surely Love is curst, if Love must die

Like breath upon a mirror, like the dew

Clothing the Hûleh-lily; and alas!

Since Love goes, what abides of heavenly hope
To abate our weary heart-beats?" With a smile
He answered: "Fold thine arms upon thy breast
And face thy destiny Prometheus-like,
Not flattering even to its face the Power
That makes and shall unmake thee! Give the ear
To Jesus and his gaunt attendant gods,
Jove or Jehovah, and remain—a slave ;
Shut up thine ears, and give those gods the lie,
And stand erect in fearless sovereignty
Of limitless despair! Grand even in Death,
Yea, grand because of Death, the mind of Man
Can front the issue of the Inevitable,
Despising and appraising and defying
The anarchy and tyranny that spare
No shape that lives. Nature is pitiless ;
Then be thou pitiful. Cruel is the world ;
Then be thou kind, even to the creeping thing
That crawls and agonises in its place
As thou in thine. Fever and Pestilence
Make and keep open one long-festering wound ;
Anoint it with the balm of charity,
The oil of leechcraft. Thus, and thus alone,
Shalt thou in sheer defeat find victory,
And 'midst the very blast of that strong Voice
Which crieth 'Love is *not*,' shall thy last word
Attest Love's triumph, and thy soul remain
Immortal even in Death !"

In proud revolt

He paused, and pointed at the pallid heavens
As if arraigning Nature, while his hand
Trembled with palsy, and his eye was film'd,

And in his feeble frame the undaunted heart
Plunged, like a prison'd bird worn out and dying.
Then cunningly, to change the cheerless chord
He struck so strenuously, I spake again
Of his great labour, ever-increasing fame,
The homage of the world, and the long reach
Of honour, opening for his feet to tread;
And soon the Lion saw, not desert sands,
But gentle worshippers that led him on
With chains of flowers, tamely to crouch beside
The footstools of anointed crownèd kings.
Bright'ning he spake of labours yet to do,
Fair fields of fame unreapt, glad days and merry
Of taking gifts and yielding oracles !
So cheerfully, like one that loved his life,
He prattled on, beneath the blossoming boughs,
In answer to the carol of the birds,
The shouting of the children, the glad sound
Of festal fife and flute.

At evenfall

We parted, he to seek his lonely house,
I to the city hostel where I lodged ;
But as he faded from me in the street
Touch'd by the bright beams of the rising moon,
Surely I saw the Shadow men name Death
Creeping behind him. Turning with a sigh,
I left him in the graveyard of his creed.

NIETZSCHE.

JUPITER'S gutter-snipe ! A shrill-tongued thing
Running beside the blood-stain'd chariot wheels,
Crying "Hosannah to the pitiless King,
The ravening Strength that neither spares nor feels !"

A slave that glorified the yoke and goad,
Cast mud into the well of human tears,
Gibed at the Weak who perish on the road,
Slain by the Law which neither heeds nor hears !

"All hail to the Eternal Might and Right,
By which all life is sifted, slain, and shed !
Lord, make me hard like thee, that day and night
I may approve thy ways, however dread !"

So cried he, while, indifferent to his cries,
Nature's triumphal Car went grinding past,—
And lo, the dust was blown into his eyes,
And crush'd 'mid blood and mud, he sank at last.

Poor gutter-snipe ! Answer'd with his own prayer,
Back to primeval darkness he has gone ;—
Only one living soul can help him there,
The gentle human god he spat upon !

THE LAST FAITH.

LOSE the last faith of all, and die indeed—
Keep that, and thou may'st live ! When all the rest
Has faded like thy breath upon a mirror,
When all the thrones of all the gods have fallen,
When God himself remains not even a Name,
Gaze in the faces of thy fellow-men
For one last comfort. If those faces seem
Vacant and foul, if all Humanity
Assumes the blackness of thine own despair,
So that thou echoest the preacher's cry
That Man is base as any drunkard's dream,
Turn round into the darkness, veil thy face,
For thou art lost to all Eternity !

Now, when the Heavens are empty and no sign
Comes from the Eternal Silence, loudly still
The blind priest raves, and all the slaves of God
Shriek their approval. "Man," they cry, "is evil,
Yea, canker'd thro' and thro' with Sin's disease,
And cruelty, the aftermath of Sin ;
In the beginning God stretched out a Hand
To heal him, but he thrust the Hand away
And hid his evil face in dust of lust,
And so is lost for ever, save for grace
Of Him he hath offended !" Lie of lies !
Yet how the hordes of madmen echo it,
Not knowing that they curse themselves and God,

Cursing the only thing that Death and Time
Spare and preserve Divine. In this dark world
What moves my wonder most is, not that Man
Is so accurst and warp'd from heavenly love,
But that, despite the pitfalls round his feet,
He falls into so few,—despite the hate
And anarchy of Nature, echoed on
In his own heartbeats, he can love so much !
He stumbles, being blind ; he eateth dust,
Being fashion'd out of dust ; flesh, he pursues
The instincts of the flesh ; but evermore
He, struggling upward from the slough of shame,
Confronts the Power which made him miserable
And stands erect in love, a living Soul !

Doubt that, doubt all. I tell you I have walk'd
For many a weary year these wastes of woe,
And found beneath the shining of the sun
No creature wholly evil ; nay, I have seen
Ev'n in the very dregs and filth of Sin
A power, a patience, and a gentleness
That put ev'n gods to shame. 'Twas long my custom
To haunt the byeways of great Towns by night,
Seeking for Souls,—and chiefly for the Souls
Of outcast women. (Man may save himself ;
The world is not so leagued against mere Man,
But Woman is bound down a million-fold
By blinded generations, led alas !
By the Semitic Christ.) I have stood for hours
Watching the gin-shop's bloodshot eyeballs flash,
Or with an aching hunger following
The shadows on the window of the brothel,

In hope to catch some glimmering of a waif
Whose message was to *me*. God gave to me
This gift,—to know at once, to recognise
Instantly, in a face-flash, as it were,
The creature I can help. All night my foot
Has troubled the dead silence of the slums,
Oft broken by the drunken mother's shriek,
The dull sound of a blow, a body's fall ;
And when the cry of "murther" hath arisen,
My eyes have been the first to see, my hand
The first to raise, the bleeding mother's form,
The children's slaughter'd clay. My place has been
Under lone scaffolds in the dim grey dawn,
Watching Man's murderers lead forth to death
The poor sick wretch with haggard eyes and knees
That knock together ; and my wrath hath risen
In protestation deeper, if less loud,
Than the thief's laughter and the rowdy's oath
Beside me. I have wander'd like a ghost
Down shrouded walls of hideous Hospitals,
Following my quest from bloody bed to bed,
Each desecrated to man's cruelty
And feminine corruption. I have seen
Such sorrow, such destruction, such despair,
That in the atmosphere these things exhaled
Reason hath totter'd, lost its throne, and swoon'd ;
I know all sins woman or man can sin,
I know all viper-nests where such sins breed,
I mark the Tree of Evil, root and branch,
And from the darkest bough that grows thereon
My hands have pluckt some precious human fruit ;
My hands have gather'd flowers of heavenly light

And loveliness, that God, if God there be,
Will never leave to die !

Then, quit the depths,
And climb the heights, of life—what gracious flowers
Are growing gladly *there!* what deeds of grace
Attest the power and privilege of Love
To elude Heaven's cruelty and Life's caprice
And grow divine indeed !

Here rests my faith,
The last fond faith of all : not far away
In the void Heavens up yonder, not on creeds
Upbuided 'mid the ever-shifting sands,
Not in the Temples of God's sycophants,
But here, among our fellows, down as deep
As the last rung of Hell !—So once again
I say my wonder is, not at Man's sin,
But at his patience and beneficence !
How bravely, cheerfully, he bears the load
Nature hath left upon him ! With what courage
He strangles one by one the snakes surrounding
His cradle and his grave ! how brightly, gladly
He takes the little blessings as they come
And seeks with happy eyes the little Light !

Hate Man, and lo, thou hatest, lovest God ;
Keep faith in Man, and rest with God indeed.

And what if, after all, the God thou seekest
Were here, not yonder,—God in act to be,
To find and know Himself, for evermore ?

AD CARISSIMAM AMICAM.

Now that our mirth is o'er, now that our Dream is done,
Now that a Hand creeps out across the heavenly blue
Putting the lights of Heaven out sadly one by one,
What dream beneath the moon, what hope beneath the sun
Shall our poor souls pursue?

Startled amid the feast we look around, and lo!
The Word of Doom that flames along Life's palace walls—
The music dies away—the last musicians go—
(Bards with their golden harps, gods in their robes of snow)
And the dread Silence falls!

What is the word we read in wonder and despair?
ANARCHY! writ in flame for all our eyes to mark . . .
Rise,—put the wine-cup by,—fly out into the air!
Ah, but the sunless void, the empty space, are there,
And all the Heavens are dark!

Nay, courage! droop thy gaze from yonder fading spheres,
With thy soft azure orbs gaze in these eyes of mine—
There, deep within the soul, a dim sweet light appears,
The glimmer of a Dawn that sparkles out thro' tears,
Brightens, and seems divine!

Within us, not without, there gleams that lucent ray,
Flash'd from the Founts of Dawn, a glimmer of dewy light !
What tho' the gods are dead? what tho' the world grows
grey?

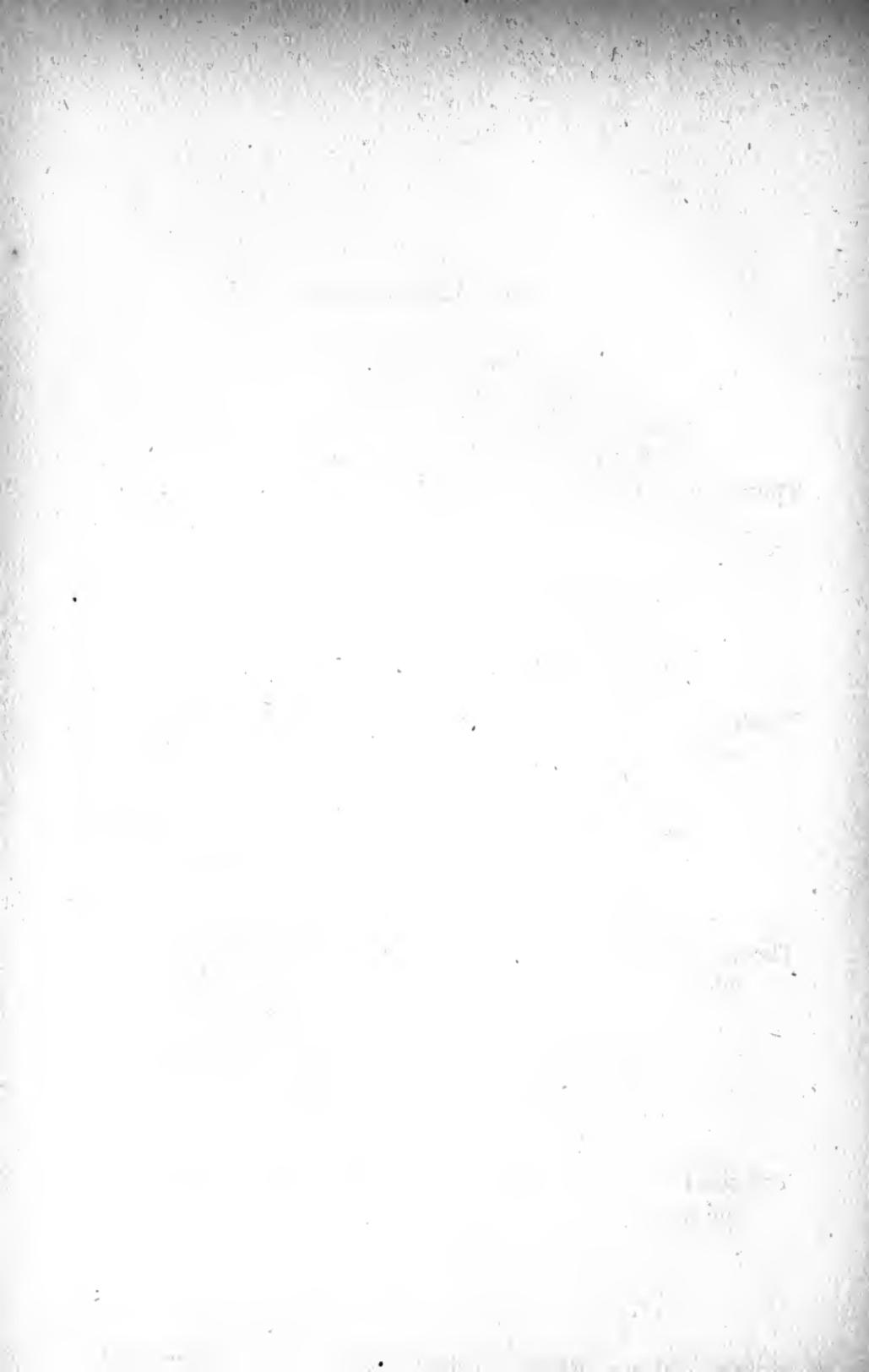
Still clearer grows the dawn of some diviner Day
Transcending Death and Night.

ANARCHY? . . . 'tis the word that startles and appals.
LOVE ! . . . 'tis the heavenly word that softly calls us hence !
Without, the red Word runs in fire on crumbling walls,
Yea, for the World is doom'd,—dark as a spent torch falls
This leaning tower o' the sense !

Chaos and Night remain,—Death and the darkness blend—
Yet comfort ! suns shall rise tho' many a sun hath set :
This is the dawn of Hope, now all save Hope doth end—
Rest thy dear hand in mine, kneel with me and attend—
All is not over yet !

Deep in thy faithful eyes how bright the promise gleams,
Answering the first faint beam of that new Dawn above—
“ Let there be LIGHT ! ” God said,—Light came in orient
beams ;
Again across the Void, faint as a voice in dreams,
God saith, “ Let there be LOVE ! ”

LAND AND SEA SONGS.



SPRING SONG AFTER SNOW.

THE swift is wheeling and gleaming,
 The brook is brown in its bed,
 Rain from the cloud is streaming,
 And the Bow bends overhead :

The charm of the Winter is broken ! the last of the spell is
 said !

Out of the East one morning
 Grey Winter came in sight,
 But his elves with never a warning
 Had been at work all night,

Tinkling at trees and windows, and hanging the world in
 white.

Up, with a foggy breathing,
 His nose all red with cold,
 Round him the vapours wreathing,
 O'er him the dark clouds rolled,

The greybeard came that morning, rheumy and blear'd and
 old !

The sharp wind blew behind him,
 The swift wind ran before,
 The thick snow tried to blind him,
 His feet were chilly and sore :

You could hear his wheezing and coughing, a hundred miles
 and more !

Slowly, with feet that linger'd

Up the hills and down,

Chilly-footed and finger'd,

He came to our good Town :

The fog was a robe around him, the frost had made him a crown.

Woful he seem'd and weary,

As he the steeple spied,

All look'd dull and dreary

Under it far and wide ;

But when to the pond he wander'd, the boys were making a slide !

Comforters warm and woollen,

Boots all thick and strong,

With not a feature sullen

There they cried in a throng :

And the robin sat on the pailing, watching and singing a song !

Then, seeing a sight so jolly,

Old Winter nodded his head,

And drew out a bunch of holly

With berries all ripe and red,

And he waved the holly for magic, while down the slide they sped !

And suddenly with no warning,

All at the pleasant sign,

The bells rang out in the morning,

And the sun began to shine,—

And the host at the inn door chuckled, and all the world looked fine !

. . . But now the earth is green again,
And the blue swift wheels in the air ;
Leaves on the hedges are seen again,
And the rain is rich and rare,
And all for another promise the Bow bends bright up there !

The Bow bends out of the heaven,
Out of the cloud o'erhead,
The hues in the Bow are seven,
From yellow to purple and red,—
Its foot on the churchyard resteth, bright on the graves of the
Dead !

The eel in the pond is quickening,
The grayling leaps in the stream,—
What if the clouds are thick'ning,
See how the meadows gleam !
The spell of the Winter is shaken, the world awakes from a
dream.

The fir puts out green fingers,
The pear-tree softly blows,
The rose in her dark bower lingers,
But her curtains will soon unclose,—
The lilac will shake her ringlets, over the blush of the rose !

The swift is wheeling and gleaming,
The woods are beginning to ring,
Rain from the clouds is streaming ;
There, where the Bow doth cling,
Summer is smiling afar off, over the shoulder of Spring !

ON THE SHORE.

THE swift winds run
Under the sun
And under the silver moon,—
They have taken away my little one—
May they bring him back to me soon !

Ye winds, I trow
I care not now
Though the sun hath tann'd him black,
He is still my little one tho' his brow
Be fierce as the wild sea-wrack ;

Tho' his eyes be cold
As the sea-caves old,
Tho' his beard be dank wi' foam,
Tho' he be waywarder twenty-fold,
Blow my little one home !

O loud laugh'd he,
As he went from me
To follow the Storms out there,—
My boy that I rock'd upon my knee
And nurst with a widow's prayer.

He would not stay,
And he sail'd away
To toss on the angry Sea,
And when he return'd after many a day
A tall grim man was he !

But evermore
When he came on shore,
Despite his wayward will,
The world grew bright and the angry roar
Of the sleepless Seas was still !

Again in my breast
Right glad and blest
The mother's milk was stirred,—
My heart grew glad as the Seas at rest
At a loving look or word.

Run, winds, run
Under the sun
And under the silver moon,—
Follow the ship of my little one,
And hasten it homeward soon !

There is nought for me
On the land or sea,
Or even in Heaven up there,
But the boy I rock'd upon my knee
And nurst with a widow's prayer !

Ye Winds, that be
As wayward as he,
As restless and fierce and bold,
Find him, and blow him again to me,
Now I am weary and old !

Be he far or near,
Let him shoreward steer,—
After him, swift winds, fly!
Come back together, that I may hear
Your voices mingle, and die !

THE MERMAID.

(WINDLASS SONG.)

I.

I'LL tell you, mates, how she came to sea !
(Heave at the windlass ! heave ho ! cheerily)
 She loved *me*, and I loved *she*,
 For she was the gel for a Sailor !
 She hailed from Wapping, her name was Sue,
 And she was the daughter of a tailor,—
 We parted at last, but without ado
 She bought both jacket and breeches blue,
 And aboard she came for to join our crew
 And live the life of a Sailor !

CHORUS.

*Heave at the windlass ! yeo heave ho !
 Up with the anchor ! away we go !
 The wind's off the shore, boys,—let it blow,—
 Hurrah for the life of a Sailor !*

YEO—HO !

II.

Our Captain he eyed her from stem to stern
(Heave at the windlass ! heave ho ! cheerily)
 But nought of her secret could he discern,
 For his savage jib couldn't quail her.

THE MERMAID.

But when she went for'ard among the rest
 Her heart began for to fail her,
 So she took me aside and the truth confess'd,
 With her face a-blushing on this 'ere breast,
 And I stared and stared, and says I, "I'm blest!
 My Sue turn'd into a Sailor!"

CHORUS.

*Heave at the windlass! yeo heave ho!
 Up with the anchor! away we go!
 The wind's at our back, boys,—let it blow,—
 Hurrah for the life of a Sailor!*

YEO—HO!

III.

Now we hadn't got far away from land
(Heave at the windlass, heave ho! cheerily)
 When a Mermaid rose with a glass in her hand,
 And our ship hove to for to hail her.
 Says she, "Each wessel that looks on me,
 Man-o'-war, merchantman, or whaler,
 Must sink right down to the bottom of the sea,
 Where the dog-fish flies and the sea-snakes flee,
 Unless a Wirgin on board there be
 To plead for the life of a Sailor!"

CHORUS.

*Heave at the windlass! yeo heave ho!
 Up with the anchor! away we go!
 The wind's at our back, boys,—let it blow,—
 Hurrah for the life of a Sailor!*

YEO—HO!

IV.

Then up jumped Sue with the breeches on !

(Heave at the windlass ! heave ho ! cheerily)

“ You nasty hussy ! ” says she, “ begone ! ”

And the Mermaid’s cheeks grew paler !

“ There’s a gel aboard and her name is Sue !

A Wirgin, the daughter of a tailor,

Who’s more than a match for the likes of *you !* ”

At this the Mermaid looked werry blue,

And then, with a splash of her tail, withdrew,

While Sue she embraced her Sailor !

CHORUS.

Heave at the windlass ! yeo heave ho !

Up with the anchor ! away we go !

The wind’s at our back, boys,—let it blow,—

Hurrah for the life of a Sailor !

YEO—HO !

THE TRAMP'S DITTY.

I.

OUT there in the greenwood beneath a green willow,
 Or under a haystack, my lodging shall be, O !
 The sky for a curtain, the earth for a pillow,
 The life of a Tramp is the life that suits *me*, O !
 Sing derry down derry,
 It's glad' and it's merry ! . . .
 Thro' the haze of the heat
 Cattle low, lambkins bleat,
 While (*tweet a tweet tweet !*)
 The birds whistle sweet,
 And I lie on my back, right contented and free, O !
 Sing derry down derry,
 The life is so merry !
 The life of a Tramp,
 Be it dry, be it damp,
 Is a life for a King, and the right life for *me*, O !

II.

Would I eat? there's a spread in the turnip-field ready !
 Would I drink? there's the cow standing under a tree, O !
 Would I change with a lord? I'm not *quite* such a neddy !
 No, wealth and fine raiment are fiddlededee, O !
 Sing derry down derry,
 This life is most merry !

When it rains, let it rain !
 In the wood or the lane,
 Snugly sheltered I lie
 Till the shower passes by,—
 With patter of pearls on the daisy-deckt lea, O !
 Then, derry down derry,
 The sun shines out merry,—
 And the heart of the Tramp,
 Be he rogue, be he scamp,
 Leaps and laughs in the light, like a wave of the Sea, O !

III.

And sometimes a-milking comes sun-freckled Molly,
 And after palaver sits down on my knee, O !
 And I envy no lordling his finely drest dolly,
 When kisses like those can be mine, with no fee, O !
 Thro' the haze of the heat
 Cattle low, lambkins bleat,
 And the birds sing so sweet
 While we kiss (*tweet a tweet !*),
 And the King and the Queen of the Meadows are we, O !
 Sing derry down derry,
 The life is so merry,—
 The life of a Tramp
 Beats the Court and the Camp,
 Be it day, be it night, 'tis the life that suits *me*, O !

THE CRY FROM THE MINE.

OUT of the sinister caverns of Night,
Out of the depths where the Hell-fires are glowing,
Cometh a cry, floating up to the Light,
Here, where glad mortals are reaping and sowing :
“Night ever over us, blackness to cover us,
Deeper we crawl than the graves of the Dead !
Sisters and brothers, whose fires burn so cheerily,
Fed by the coal that we work for so wearily,
Give us, in God’s name, our wages of Bread !

“Hell burning under us, gnome-like we dwell,
Store for your hearths ever scraping and scooping,
Stifling and thunderous vapours of Hell
Blacken our mouths, where we’re stooping and drooping ;
Terrors environ us, lest the fierce fire on us
Leap, as it leapt on our kin who are sped !
Children and wives wait our wages and cry for them ;
Eager to toil for them, ready to die for them,
Darkly we grope for our handful of Bread !

“Sooner or later Death cometh this way,—
Slain by his breathing our kindred are lying here !
Old ere our time, worn and weary and grey,
Bear we the burthen that’s dreary as dying, here !
Pain is our portion here, gruesome our fortune here,

Still we're content when our dear ones are fed—
Sisters and brothers, while blindly and wearily
Ever we toil that your fires may burn cheerily,
Give us, in God's name, our guerdon of Bread !”

Out of the sinister caverns of Night,
Out of the depths where these weary ones wander,
Cometh the cry, floating up to the Light,
Up to the sunshine that never shines yonder :
“Night ever over us, blackness to cover us,
Toil we for ever, less living than dead !—
Sisters and brothers, whose fires burn so cheerily,
Fed by the coal that we dig for so drearily,
See that we lack not our wages of Bread !”

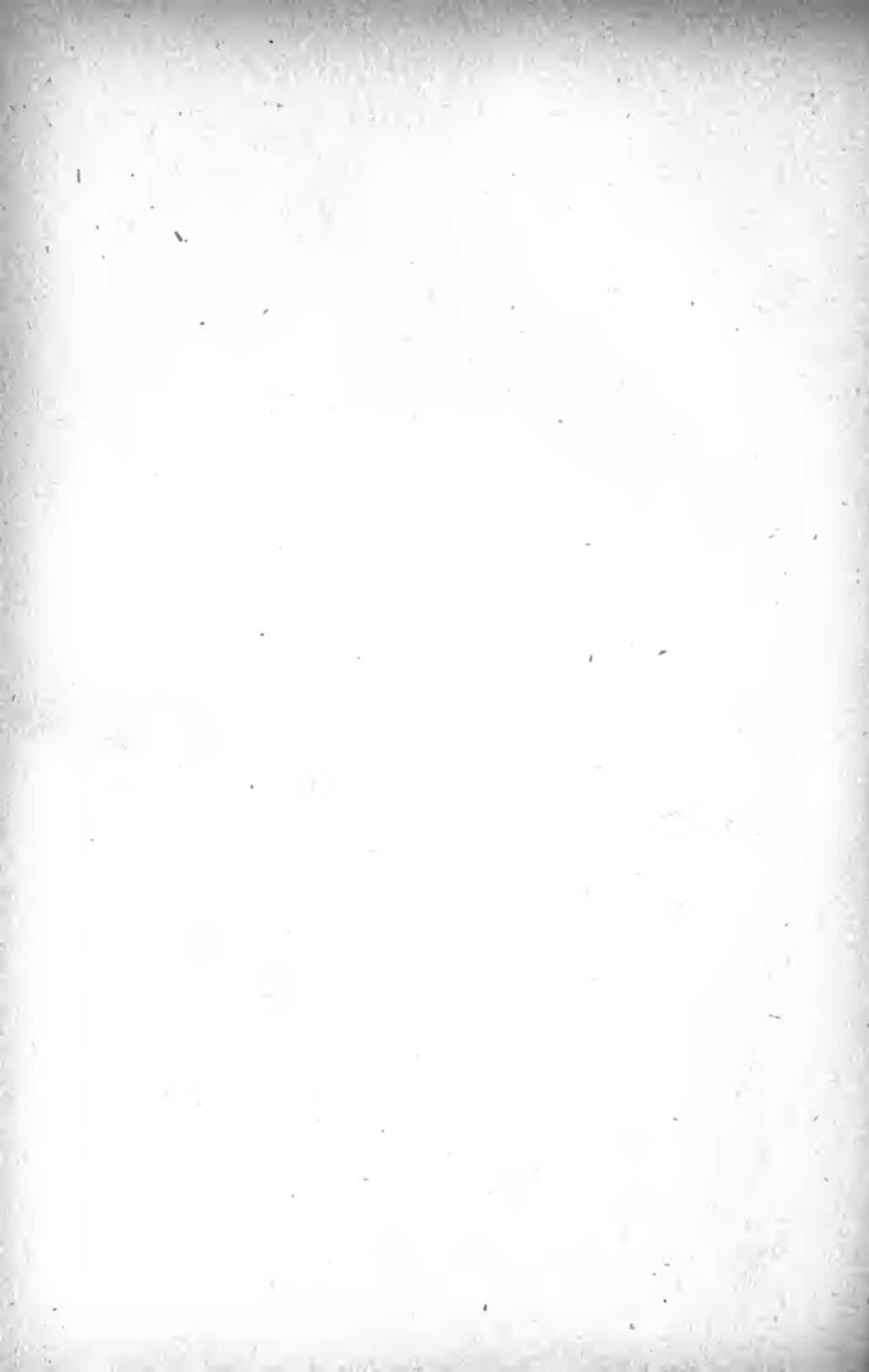
THE LEAD-MELTING.

'Twas clear, cold, starry, silver night,
And the Old Year was a-dying ;
Three pretty girls with melted lead
Sat gaily fortune-trying.
They dropt the lead in water clear,
With blushing palpitations,
And, as it hissed, with fearful hearts
They sought its revelations.

In the deep night, while all around
The snow is whitely falling ;
Each pretty girl looks down to find
Her future husband's calling.
The eldest sees a Castle bright,
Girt round by shrubland shady ;
And, blushing bright, she feels in thought
A lady rich already.

The second sees a silver Ship,
And bright and glad her face is ;
Oh, she will have a skipper bold,
Grown rich in foreign places !
The younger sees a glittering Crown,
And starts in consternation ;
For Molly is too meek to dream
Of reaching regal station !

And time went by : one maiden got
Her landsman, one her sailor—
The Lackey of a country count,
The Skipper of a whaler !
And Molly has her Crown, although
She unto few can show it—
Her crown is true-love fancy-wrought,
Her husband, a poor Poet !



IN THE LIBRARY.

TO A POET OF THE EMPIRE.

DEAR singing Brother, who so long
 Wore Galahad's white robe of Fame,
 And kept it stainless like thy name
 Thro' dreary days of doubting song ;

Who blest the seasons as they fell,
 Contented with the flowers they bring,
 Nor soar'd to Heaven on Milton's wing,
 Nor walked with Dante's ghost thro' Hell,

But rather chose to dream at ease
 With Keats 'mid ways thy gardener plan'd,
 Beside a mimic lake to stand
 And see, just glimpsing thro' the trees,

Thy marble statues brought from far,
 Dryad and Naiad white and still,
 And o'er the mead, above the hill,
 The twinkle of the Cyprian star ;

And on those plots of garden ground,
 Calm in thy sorrow and thy mirth,
 Leal to the Lords of Heaven and Earth,
 Thou dwelledst grave and laurel-crown'd ;

And peering down with curious eye,
Polish'd with gentle art and long
Thy faultless diamonds of song,
And let the windy world go by ;

And heeded not the long despair
Of souls that never see the sun,
But to thy Maker cried "Well done,"
Since English pastures seemed so fair ;

And from the hovel to the Throne
Beheld one perfect order'd plan ;
And praised the Christ as God and Man
That wars were made and trumpets blown ;

Yea, deem'd this later greater Rome
Supremely just and surely wise,
And shut thine ears against the cries
Of races slain beyond the foam

That this our Empire might increase
And this our Rome have silk and gold,—
Nor heard across the blood-stain'd fold
The Butcher-Shepherds crying, "Peace !"

Nor saw the thousand martyrs bowed
Beneath the chariots of the Strong,
But with thy wreaths of martial song
Didst grace the triumphs of the Proud !

Forgive, if to thy tomb I bring
No garland such as maidens twine,
But in the verse that Art made thine
Proffer a votive offering !

For tho' my soul was passion-rent,
I knew thee good and kind and great,
And prayed that no unkindly fate
Might ever mar thy mild content !

I loved thy pleach'd English lawn,
Thy gracious girls, thy pastoral lyre,
Nay, even thy Church and slender spire
Pointing at Heaven so far withdrawn !

And often have I prayed to be
As calm, as much at peace with God,—
Not moaning underneath His rod,
But smiling at His feet, with thee !

Wherefore accept these songs of mine,
For I, being lesson'd long in grief,
Believe despite my unbelief,
Although my faith is far from thine !

THE GNOME.

(A FANTASY.)

I.

AT Dusseldorf in the Bolkerstrass',
In seventeen hundred and ninety-nine,
A mystical meeting there came to pass,
All in the pale moonshine.

From every mountain and meadow-sward,
From every forest around the Town,
While the Mayor and the Corporation snored,
The Elves came trooping down !

And busily down in the silent street,
Under the windows, they flitted there,—
The Will-o'-the-Wisp and the Fay so fleet
And the Troll with his tangled hair ;

Yea, all the spirits, black, blue, and red,
Which Philosophy long had driven away—
From the white Undine with her starry head
To the Gnome and the Goblin grey.

And they cried, "Of dulness the world is sick,
And the realistic reign hath passed—
And the hour hath come (if we are but quick !)
To revenge our wrongs at last—

“For Man the mortal hath grown so wise,
To Heaven he thrusteth his bumptious brow—
He believes in nothing beneath the skies
But the ‘ich’ and the ‘nicht ich,’ *now!*”

“Too grave to laugh and too proud to play,
And full of a philosophic spleen,
He walks the world in his browsing way,
Like a jackass on a green.

“He deems us slain with the creeds long dead,
He stalks sole Master of earth and skies—
But we mean, ere many an hour hath fled,
To give him a slight surprise!”

And at Dusseldorf, as the moon sail'd by,
When the City slept and the streets were still,
The Elves at the trick they meant to try
Laughed out full loud and shrill.

II.

Children by millions has Deutschland born,
With brains to ponder and mouths to eat,
But the strangest child saw light next morn
In Dusseldorf, Bolker Street!

Dim was his brow with the moon-dew dim,
Large his eyes and of lustre clear,
And he kick'd his legs with a laughter grim
Smiling from ear to ear.

THE GNOME.

A cry like the cry of the Elves and Gnomes
Went up from the breast on which he lay,
And he pucker'd his eyes and he showed his gums
In the wonderful Elfin way.

But his hair was bright as the sweet moonlight,
And his breath was sweet as the breath of flowers,
And looking up, on a starry night,
He would lie and laugh for hours!

And the human mother who watched his rest
Did love the smile of his small weird face,
While he drank, with the white milk of her breast,
A loving and human grace.

But night by night in the mystic shine
The spirits of meadow and mountain came,
And moisten'd his lips with the Elfin wine
And whisper'd his Elfin name!

For the Elves and Gnomes had played their trick,
Despite the Philosophers grim and grey—
And a Gnome was growing, alive and quick,
With a body and legs of clay!

III.

He drank the seasons from year to year,
And at last he grew to the height of man ;
And at Hamburg, the City of girls and beer,
The goblin-sport began.

For up he leapt in the crowded street,
All crown'd with ivy, and leaves, and flowers,
And began a magical song, full sweet,
Of the wonderful Elfin bowers.

He sang of the pale Moon silvern shod,
The Stars and the Spirits that feed their flame ;
(But where others utter the praise of God
He smiled, and he skipt the Name).

Sweet as the singing of summer eves
He sang in the midst of the wondering folk,
And they saw the dew of the flowers and leaves
On his white lips as he spoke !

And he told of the beautiful woodland things
Who glimmer naked without a blush,
And he mimick'd the little birds with wings,
The lark, and the finch, and the thrush !

He told of the knight in the Pixy's cave
Who sits like marble and hears her croon ;
Of the Water-spirits beneath the wave
Who wail to the weary Moon.

Wan were the faces of those that heard ;
They sighed for the mystical Elfin time ;
And they stood in a dream, with their spirits stirred
To the thrill of that runic rhyme !

But ever, just as the spell was done,
He laughed as shrill as a bugle horn ;
And they rubbed their eyes in the garish sun
To the sound of the Goblin's scorn !

IV.

Then over the Earth the tidings went,
To the Kings above and the crowds below,
That a Gnome, a magical Gnome, was sent
To play his pranks below.

"All things that are holy in mortal sight,"
Quoth those that gathered his pranks to see,
"He turns, with a scrutiny mock-polite,
To a goblin glamourie !

"He dances his dance in the dark church-aisle,
He makes grimaces behind Earth's Kings,
He mocks, with a diabolical smile,
The highest and holiest things.

"He jeers alike at our gain and loss,
He turns our faith to a goblin joke ;
He perches himself on the wayside Cross
To grin at the kneeling folk !

"He cutteth off our Madonna's head
With golden hair and red lips beneath,
And he sets on the fair one's throat instead
A skull and grinning teeth !

“Full of flowers are his eager hands
As by Eve or Lilith he lies caressed,
But he laughs ! and they turn to ashes and sands,
As he rains them upon her breast !

“Nothing he spares 'neath the sad blue Heaven,
All he mocks and regards as vain ;
Nothing he spares—not his own love even,
Or his own despair and pain !”

v.

Then some one (surely the son of a goose !)
Cried, “Send the Philosophers after him !
'Tis an *ignis fatuus* broken loose,
Or a Goblin wicked and grim.

“For his sweetest sport is with sacred Kings,
Of their holy persons he makes a game ;
And he strips our Queens of their splendid things
And shows their naked shame !

“He tricks the world in a goblin revel,
He turns all substance to flowers and foam ;
Nothing he spares—not the very Devil,
Or even the Pope of Rome !”

The Philosophers came, those wondrous men !
They fronted the Gnome in his elfin glee,
And they proved to demonstration, then,
He wasn't, and couldn't be !

And they showed him how in equation clear
 The Being and Being-not exist,
 And they proved that the only Actual here
 In the *Werden* must consist.*

They prodded his ribs with their finger-points,
 Proving he was not a fact at all ;—
 And the Gnome laughed madly thro' all his joints
 And uttered his Elfin call.

Around them the Goblin glamour grew,
 They turned to Phantoms and gazed askance,
 And he sprinkled their brows with the moonlight dew
 And led them a Devil's dance !

They skipt along at his wicked beck,
 He left them, fool'd to their hearts' content—
 Each in his quagmire, up to the neck,
 Deep in the argument !

VI.

But the hand of the Human was on the Gnome,
 The lot he had chosen he must fulfil ;—
 So a cry went out, over land and foam,
 That the wonderful Gnome was ill.

Philosophers grey and Kings on their thrones
 Smiled and thought " He was long our pest ;
 Our plague is sick—on his wicked bones
 The blight and the murrain rest ! "

* See Hegel *passim*.

In Paris, the City of Sin and Light,
In Matignon Avenue No. 3,
Propt on his pillows he sat—a sight
Most pitiful to see !

For his cheeks were white as his own moonshine,
And his great head roll'd with a weary pain,
And his limbs were shrunk, while his wondrous eyne
Shone with a sad disdain.

A skeleton form, with a thin white hand,
He lay alone in the chamber dim ;
But he beckon'd and laugh'd—and all the land
Of Faëry flock'd to him !

Thro' his chamber window, when all was still,
When Mathilde was sound, and Cocotte was dumb,*
On the moonbeam pale, o'er the window sill,
Thronging he saw them come !

In the City of absinthe and unbelief,
The Encyclopædia's sceptic home,
Fairies and Trolls, with a gentle grief,
Surrounded the sickly Gnome.

But at break of day, when Mathilde awoke
And the parrot screamed, they had fled from there ;
While the sunrise red on the boulevard broke
The pale Gnome dozed in his chair.

* Mathilde was the name of Madame Heine ; Cocotte that of her pet parrot.

But his eyes looked up with a mystic light,
And his lips still laughed in the Elfin way,
And the dew of the Vision he saw all night
Was dim on his cheek all day !

VII.

In sad Montmartre there stands a tomb,
Where the wonderful Gnome is lain asleep ;
And there, in the moonlight and the gloom,
The Spirits of Elfland creep !

The lot of the Human was on his life ;
He knew the sorrow of human breath ;—
The bitter fret and the daily strife,
And the cruel human Death.

But the Spirit that loves all shining things,
The shapes of woodland and hill and stream,
The flowers, and the wonderful birds with wings,
And the Dream within the Dream,—

The gentle Spirit looked down and said,
“ He hath drunk the mortal passion and pain ;
Let the balm of a mortal Sleep be shed
On his weary heart and brain.”

And that is the reason he wakens not,
Tho' ever and ever, at pale Moonrise,
The spirits of Elfland haunt the spot
Where “ HEINRICH HEINE ” lies.

THE WHITE ROBE ;

OR, ZOLA IN A NUTSHELL.

I.

AT Paris, on the Champs Elysées,
 I sat and read *Pot-Bouille* through,
 Then felt like one whose lips are greasy
 After some sorry kitchen-stew ;
 Then, putting Zola in my pocket,
 I watched Napoleon's arc of fame—
 Its open arch, like Death's eye-socket,
 Flush'd with flame.

Beyond, the sun was sinking downward,
 And from the race-course, past the gate,
 Thousands were driving swiftly toward—
 Some merry, some disconsolate ;
 While on the footpath gay crowds lingered
 Watching the bright cortège flow by,
 Lucifer pointed, fiery-fingered,
 From the sky.

Herodias, by her lord attended,
 Faustine alone, in landau blue,
 La Gloria, with trappings splendid,
 And Plutus in her retinue ;
 In their hired carriage, Mai and Mimi,
 Light-coated lovers at their side ;
 Camille, consumption-mark'd and dreamy,
 Hollow-eyed.

Then, all the glorious wedded ladies !
 Prudish or bold, I saw them pass :
 How like the rest whose busiest trade is
 Done in the night beneath the gas !
 Leaders of folly or of fashion,
 With splendour robed, with roses crowned,
 With eyes of prurience or of passion
 Smiling round !

There, oiled and scented, white-waistcoated,
 The jolly bourgeois, coarse and fat,
 Lolloped by his lady purple-throated
 In velvet robes and feathered hat.
 I stay'd, with Zola in my pocket,
 And watched till they had come and gone,
 Napoleon's arc, like Death's eye-socket,
 Glaring on !

And all the foulness and obscenity
 Of dress and form, of face and look,
 Answer'd the sadness and uncleanness
 That I had gathered from the book.
 My inmost soul was sick with Zola.
 I thought of sins without a name,
 I loathed the world, and thought the whole a
 Sink of shame !

II.

Just as I rose, with sorrow laden,
 Eager to leave the shameless sight,
 I saw close by a little Maiden
 Bareheaded in the sunset-light.

In muslin robe of snowy whiteness,
And one white lily in her hair,
She paused, her pale cheek flush'd to brightness,
Smiling there !

Her mother, who had brought her thither,
An *ouvriouse* with travail bowed,
Stood waiting to wend homeward with her
Through the gay groups, the chattering crowd ;
Watched by that mother sad and tender,
On the glad picture gazed the child ;
Then, glancing at her own white splendour,
Proudly smiled.

Presently, with a sigh of gladness,
Turning, toward my seat she came,
So feeble and slow, I saw with sadness
She bore a crutch and she was lame ;
She came still nearer with her mother,
And leaning on her crutch she stood ;
One slender limb was sound, the other
Made of wood !

And on the sound foot, small and pretty,
One stocking white, one satin shoe !
My soul grew full of pain and pity,
My eyes were dim with tenderest dew ;
But ah ! her face was bright with pleasure,
Nor pained or peevish, sad or cross ;
Her heart too full that day to measure
All her loss.

THE WHITE ROBE.

'Twas her first day of Confirmation ;
And many a month before that day
The child, with eager expectation,
Had longed to wear that white array ;
Then, that glad morning, in the City
She had wakened long before the light,
And stolen from bed, to seek her pretty
Robe of white.

And she had stood with many others—
Poor little lambs of the same fold
Watched fondly by their sad-eyed mothers,
'Neath the great Church's dome of gold ;
And while the holy light caressed them
And solemn music went and came,
The Bishop had approved and blessed them
In Christ's name !

While the pale mother sat beside me,
We talked together of the child,
Who, listening proudly, stood and eyed me
With soul astir and cheeks that smiled ;
Bright as a flower that blooms in Eden
Fed with sweet dews and heavenly air,
Was that poor lily of a Maiden
Pure and fair.

And as I looked in loving wonder
The whole world brighten'd to my view,
The dark sad sod was cleft asunder
To let the flowers of light slip through !

And lilies bright and roses blowing
Dazzled my sense, while on mine ear
Came sounds of winds and waters flowing
Crystal clear!

III.

Down to the glad green Bois I wandered,
The sun shone down on sward and tree;
Around me, as I walked and pondered,
The children shouted merrily;
The lake was sparkling full of gladness,
The song of birds trilled clear and gay,
I listened, and the cloud of sadness
Stole away.

Then out I took, with fingers shrinking,
My Zola, poisonous like the snake,
And held him where the light was blinking
O'er leaves of lilies on the lake.
"Zola, my prophet of obscenity,"
I murmured, "this at least is clear:
Who seeks may ever find uncleanness,
Even here.

"And yet God made the world, and in it
Caused buds of love and joy to bloom;
Voices of innocence each minute
Scatter the ravens of the tomb;
E'en from the dreariest dust of sorrow
Lilies of light may spring and shine,
And from the Heaven above them borrow
Hues divine.

"The glad deep music of Creation,
 Abiding still though men depart,
 Transcends the song of tribulation
 Raised in your lazar-house of Art.
 He who would hear it must, upleaping,
 Face the full suntide of his Time,
 Nor, on the muddy bottom creeping,
 Search the slime !

"One lily, wheresoever blowing,
 Can shame your sunless kitchen-weeds ;
 One flower of joy, though feebly growing,
 Still justifies diviner creeds.
 There *may* be Hell, with mischief laden,
 There still is Heaven (look up and try!).
 So that poor lily of a Maiden
 Proves—you lie !"

I held him sunward for a minute,
 Then loosening fingers set him free :
 The water splashed ; he vanished in it.
 Down to the muddy depths went he.
 The light flashed out, no longer feeble,
 The waters sparkled where he fell.
 "Zola," I said, "*enfant terrible*,
 Fare-thee-well !"

PARIS, *June* 1883.

CARLYLE.

“If God would only *do* something,’ I said.

‘He does *nothing*,’ answered Carlyle.”

—Froude’s *Life of Carlyle*.

I.

“GOD does nothing !” sigh’d the Seer,
 Sick of playing Prophet :
 To his eyes the sun-flames clear
 Seem’d the fumes of Tophet ;
 Off the King he tore his crown,
 Stript the Priest of clothing,
 Curst the world—then, with a frown,
 Murmur’d, “God does—*nothing* !”

II.

Bitter creed, and creedless cry
 Of the soul despairing—
 He who once on sea and sky
 Saw the Portent flaring,
 He who chose the thorny road,
 Paths of pleasure loathing,
 Crying loudly, “Great is God,
 Only *Man* is nothing !”

III.

Many a year the merry world
 Flash’d its lights before him,
 Freedom’s flag had been unfurl’d
 To the ether o’er him,

Kings had fallen, empires changed,
 Suns of science risen,
 Innocence had been avenged,
 Truth had burst her prison.

IV.

Having slain the serpent creeds,
 Knowledge, swift, Persean,
 On their grave had scatter'd seeds
 From the Empyréan ;
 Godlike shapes had come and gone,
 Naked Nations clothing,
 While the Prophet sat alone,
 Sighing "God does—*nothing!*"

V.

Nothing? Whence, then, came the Light,
 Flashed across each Nation,
 Working after years of night
 Love's glad liberation?
 Whose the Voice that from the grave
 Cried, "Hell's fires I smother"?
 Whose the Hand that freed the Slave?
 If not His, what other?

VI.

Nay, but who was busy too
 In the Seer's own dwelling,
 Planting flowers of heavenly blue
 In a soul rebelling?

Who was whispering, even then,
 Loving and not loathing,
 "Only he who hateth men
 Thinketh God does nothing!"

VII.

Strong and stubborn as the rock,
 Blindly sat the Prophet—
 Angels round his hearth might flock,
 Yet he reck'd not of it!
 Blind,—tho' one assumed the form
 Of a weary Woman,
 Shedding on his heart of stone
 Love divinely human!

VIII.

Wrapt around with stoic pride
 Blind he sat each morrow—
 Whose, then, was the Voice that cried,
 "Smite his soul with sorrow"?
 Whose, then, was the shadowy Power
 Which, to overcome him,
 Stooping as one plucks a flower,
 Took that other from him?

IX.

Not alone on wings of storm,
 Nor in tones of thunder,
 Speaks the Voice and stirs the Form,
 While we watch and wonder;

Still as falls the silent dew,
Sweet'ning, sanctifying,
He who stirs the suns can strew
Lilies on the dying !

X.

Darker grows the cloud, when we,
Blind and helpless creatures,
Face to face the Lord could see,
Scrutinise His features !
He who plans our loss or gain
Works beyond our guessing—
On the loneliest paths of pain
Grows his sweetest blessing !

XI.

Wouldst thou tear the clouds apart,
Seeking sign or token ?
Look for God within thy heart,
Tho' that heart be broken !
All without thee—tempest-blown
Darkness of creation—
Is a Dream that needs thine own
Life's interpretation !

XII.

Seekest thou the God of wrath,
In the Tempest calling ?
Or, a Phantom in thy path,
Slaying and appalling ?

Rather, when the light is low,
Crouching silent near it,
Seek Him, in the ebb and flow
Of thy breathing spirit !

XIII.

See, the weary Prophet's grave !
Calm and sweet it lieth,
Hush'd, tho' still the human wave,
Breaking blindly, crieth !
He who works thro' quick and dead,
Loving, never loathing,
Blest this grey-hair'd child, who said
Feebly, " God does—nothing ! "

MARK now, how close they are akin,
The worst man and the best,—
The soul that least is touch'd with sin,
And he that's sinfullest.

From Shakespeare to the dullest knave
That scans the poet's page,
A step,—and lo, the same black grave
Yawns both for fool and sage!

A little life, a little sleep,
A little hunger and thirst,
A little time to laugh and weep,
Unite the best and worst!

Hush then thy pomp and pride, O Man!
But humbly breathe and be,—
The Law that was when life began
Flows on thro' God and thee!

ATYS.

(TO CATULLUS.)

"Stimulatus ubi furente rabie, vagus animi."

—CAT. DE ATY, 4.

O CATULLUS, still among us strides the thing you celebrated,
 Flying yonder through the shadows where the modern
 mænads throng,—
 Sexless, sad, self-mutilated, that which God as Man created
 Wails in mad despair of manhood, beats the timbrel,
 shrills the song !

Ah the pity ! for the Muses round his cradle sang a pæan,
 Hover'd o'er him and around him where a happy child he
 ran,
 But he join'd the flocks Circean, drank the curséd wine
 Lethean,
 And now the gods deny to it the birthright of a man !

Ah, the pity !—oft there cometh from its lips that murmur
 madly
 A tone that still reminds us of the song that might have
 been !
 While the face that once shone gladly looms despitefully
 and sadly
 From the haunted Phrygian forest of the Goddess Epicene !

DOCTOR B.

(ON RE-READING A COLLECTION OF POEMS.)

CONFOUND your croakers and drug concoctors !

I've sent them packing at last, you see !

I'm in the hands of the best of doctors,

Dear cheery and chirpy Doctor B. !

None of your moping, methodistic,

Long-faced ravens who frighten a man !

No, ever with treatment optimistic

To *rouse* the sick, is the Doctor's plan !

In he comes to you, smiling brightly,

Feels your pulse for the mere form's sake,

Bustles about the sick-room lightly,

Gives you no beastly drugs to take,

But blithely clapping you on the shoulder,

"Better?" he cries, "Why, you're nearly well !"

And then you hear, with a heart grown bolder,

The last good story he has to tell !

And mind you, his learning is prodigious,

He has Latin and Greek at his finger ends,

And with all his knowledge he's still religious,

And counts no sceptic among his friends.

God's in his Heaven, and willy nilly
 All things come right in the end, he shows—
 The rouge on the ladies of Piccadilly
 Is God's, as much as the blush of the rose !

And as for the wail of the whole world's sorrow,
 Well, men may weep, but the thrushes sing !
 If you're sick to-day, there'll be jinks to-morrow,
 And life, on the whole, is a pleasant thing !

When out of spirits you're sadly lying,
 All dismal talk he puts bravely by :
 "God's in his Heaven," you hear him crying,—
 "All's right with Creation, from star to styel !"

Full of world's wisdom and life's variety,
 Always alive and alert is he,
 His patients move in the best society,
 And Duchesses swear by Doctor B. !

A bit too chirpy, to some folk's thinking ?
 Well, there *are* moods that he hardly suits !—
 Once, last summer, when I felt sinking,
 I fear'd his voice and the creak of his boots !

If he *has* a fault which there's no denying,
 'Tis proneness to argue and prove his case,—
 When under the Shadow a man is lying,
 Such boisterous comfort seems out of place ;

'Tis little solace, when one is going
 Into the long eternal Night,
To hear a voice, like a bugle blowing,
 Cry "Glory to God, for the world's all right!"

I long'd, I own, for a voice less cheery,
 A style less strident, a tone less free,—
For one who'd bend by my bedside dreary
 And hush his wisdom, and weep with me!

But bless your heart, when my health grew better,
 I gladden'd the old boy's face to see;
And still I consider myself the debtor
 Of dear old chirpy Doctor B.!

SOCRATES IN CAMDEN.

WITH A LOOK ROUND.

*(Written after first meeting the American poet,
Walt Whitman, at Camden, New Jersey.)*

A PILGRIM from beyond the seas,
Seeking some shrine where shrines are few,
I found the latter Socrates,
Greek to the core, yet Yankee too ;
Feeble, for he was growing old,
Yet fearless, self-contained, and bold,
Rough as a seaman who has driven
Long years before the winds of Heaven,
I found him, with the blue skies o'er him,
And figuratively, knelt before him !
Then gript the hand that long had lain
Tenderly in the palm of Death,
Saw the sweet eyes that still maintain
Calm star-like watch o'er things of breath,
And as the dear voice gave its greeting
My heart was troubled unaware
With love and awe that hush'd its beating
And pride that darken'd into prayer.

This man affirmed his disbelief
In all the gods, but Belial mainly :
Nature he loved, but Man in chief,
And what Man *is*, he uttered plainly!

Like Socrates, he mixed with men
 At the street corner, rough and ready,
 Christ-like he sought the Magdalen,
 Lifting his hat, as to a lady;
 No thing that breathes, however small,
 Found him unloving or rebelling;
 The shamble and the hospital
 Familiar were as his own dwelling;
 Then trumpet-like his voice proclaimed
 The naked Adam unashamed,
 The triumph of the Body, through
 The sun-like Soul that keeps it true,
 The triumph of the Soul, whereby
 The Body lives, and cannot die.
 The world was shocked, and Boston, screaming
 Cover'd her face, and cried "For shame!"
 Gross, hankering, mystically dreaming,
 The good grey Poet went and came;
 But when the dark hour loomed at last,
 And, lighted by the fiery levin,
 Man grappled man in conflict vast,
 While Christendom gazed on aghast,
 Through the great battlefield he past
 With finger pointing up to Heaven.
 Socrates? Nay, more like that Other
 Who walked upon the stormy Sea,
 He brought, while brother wounded brother,
 The anointing nard of charity!

But when the cruel strife was ended
 Uprose the Elders, mob-attended,
 Saying, "This Socrates, it seems,

Denies Olympus and blasphemes ;
 Offends, moreover, 'gainst the Schools
 Who teach great Belial's moral rules,
 Sins against Boston and the Law
 That keeps the coteries in awe,
 And altogether for his swagger
 Deserves the hemlock cup or dagger !”
 So said, so done ! The Pharisees
 Called up the guard and gave directions—
 The prison opened—Socrates
 Was left therein to his reflections !

A full score years have passed, and still
 The good grey Bard still loafs and lingers ;
 The social poison could not kill,
 Though stirred by literary fingers—
 He sipped it, smiled, and put it by,
 Despite the scandal and the cry ;
 But when, the Pharisees commanding,
 They rushed to end him with the sword,
 They saw, beside the poet standing,
 A radiant Angel of the Lord.

A hemlock cup? Yes, there it lies,
 Close to thy hand, old friend, this minute
 With gentle twinkle of the eyes
 You mark the muddy liquid in it :
 For the grave rulers of the City,
 Who sent it, you have only pity ;
 For those who mixed it, made it green
 With misconception, spite, and spleen,
 You feel no thrill of scornful fret,

But only kindness and regret.
 'Twas Emerson, some folk affirm,
 Who passed it round with shrug of shoulder—
 Good soul, he worshipped Time and Term,
 Instead of Pan, as he grew older!
 And Boston snubbed thee? Walt, true heart,
 Time ever brings about revenges—
 Just glance that way before we part
 And note the memorable changes.

There, in the "hub" of all creation,
 Where Margaret Fuller, ere she mated,
 Flirted with seers of reputation
 And all the "isms" cultivated,
 Where still brisk Holmes cuts learn'd capers
 With buckles on knee-breeches fine,
 The sweet man-milliners and drapers,
 Howells and James, put up their sign.
 And there the modern Misses find
 The wares most suited to their mind—
 French fashions, farthingales delightful,
 Frills white as snow for ladies' wear;
 Nothing old-fashioned, fast, or frightful,
 Is dealt in by this dainty pair!
 The stuff they sell to man or woman
 May in itself be poor or common,
 Coarsest of serge or veriest sacking,
 But they can trick it in a trice,
 So that no element is lacking
 To render it extremely nice.
 "Ladies!" they murmur, with a smile,
 "We pride ourselves upon our style!

Our cutter is a paragon
 Match'd only by our fitter-on ;
 Bring what material you like,
 We'll treat it in a way to strike,
 Turn your old satins, and embellish
 Last season's hats with feathers swellish ;
 In short, weave miracles of clothing
 By genius out of next to nothing,
 And charge the very lowest prices
 For all our daintiest devices.
 We know," they add, with smirk and bow,
 " Some of you like old-fashioned clothes—
 The Emersonian homespun (now
 Absurd as Whitman's or Thoreau's),
 Or even, still absurder, seek
 Poor Shakespeare's fashion quite antique,
 Fit only, with its stiff brocades,
 For vulgar frumps and country maids.
 Could Shakespeare, poor old fellow, please
 With such a cut as this—chemise?
 The woof he used was strongly woven,
 But surely, now, his taste was shocking?
 Compare our silk hose, much approven,
 With Dickens' clumsy worsted stocking!
 We please the dames and gain the daughters
 With neat inventions of our own,
 Replace George Eliot's learn'd garters
 With our suspenders silken-sewn ;
 While, in an annex to the shop,
 Our customers will find, quite handy,
 The toothsome bun and lollipop
 And superfine molasses candy ! "

The busy pair! How well they patter,
 Disposing of their slender matter!
 The girls adore, instead of loathing,
 These laureates of underclothing,
 Delight their soul's attire to model
 On the last style of mollycoddle,
 Eked out with sickly importations
 From France, that naughtiest of nations!
 Dapper they are, and neatly dressed,
 Insidious, tempting folks to buy goods,
 But mere man-milliners at best
 Vending the flimsiest of dry goods;
 Trash in their flimsy window setting,
 And tricking up to catch the eye
 Such clothes as spoil with the first wetting
 From the free rains of yonder sky!

Daintily passing by their shop,
 Sometimes, when it is cloudless weather,
 Aldrich, a literary fop,
 In trim tight boots of patent leather,
 Strolls to the quiet street, where he saw
 Sun-freckled Marjorie play at see-saw,
 And bending o'er her hammock, kisses
 That sweetest, shadowiest of misses!
 His languid gait, his dudish drawl,
 His fopdom, we forgive them all,
 For her dear sake of his creating.
 Fairer than girls of flesh and blood,
 Who, never loving, never mating,
 Swings in eternal Maidenhood!

Now I conjure thee, best of Bards,
Scatter thy wisdom Bostonwards !
Tell Howells, who with fingers taper
Measures the matron and the maid,
God never meant him for a draper—
Strip off his coat, give him a spade !
His muscles and his style may harden
If he digs hard in Adam's garden,
Or follows Dudley Warner flying
Where Adirondack eagles soar,
Or chums with some brown savage, lying
With Stoddard on a South-sea shore.
Tell James to burn his continental
Library of the Detrimental,
And climb a hill, or take a header
Into the briny, billowy seas,
Or find some strapping Muse and wed her,
Instead of simpering at teas !
How should the Titaness of nations,
Whose flag o'er half a world unfurls,
Sit listening to the sibilations
Of shopmen twittering to girls ?
She sees the blue skies bend above her,
She feels the throb of hearts that love her,
She hears the torrent and the thunder,
The clouds above, the waters under,
She knows her destiny is shaping
Beyond the dreams of Linendraping !
She craves a band of Bards with voices
To echo her when she rejoices,
To sing her sorrows and to capture
The Homeric music of her rapture !

SOCRATES IN CAMDEN.

She hears the good grey Poet only
 Sing, priestly-vestured, prophet-eyed,
 And on his spirit falls the lonely
 Light of her splendour and her pride. . . .

Poet divine, strong soul of fire,
 Alive with love and love's desire,
 Whose strength is as the Clouds, whose song
 Is as the Waters deep and strong,
 Whose spirit, like a flag unfurled,
 Proclaims the freedom of the World,
 What gifts of grace and joy have come
 Out of thy gentle martyrdom !
 A pilgrim from afar, I bring
 Homage from some who love thee well--
 Ah, may the feeble song I sing
 Make summer music in thy cell !
 The noblest head 'neath western skies,
 The tenderest heart, the clearest eyes,
 Are thine, my Socrates, whose fate
 Is beautifully desolate !
 As deep as Hell, as high as Heaven,
 Thy wisdom hath this lesson given :
 When all the gods that reign'd and reign
 Have fallen like leaves and left no sign,
 The god-like Man shall still remain
 To prove Humanity divine !

INDIAN ROCK, PHILADELPHIA, PA.,
March 1885.

WALT WHITMAN.

ONE handshake, Walt ! while we, thy little band
 Of lovers, take our last long look at thee—
 One handshake, and one kiss upon the hand
 Thou did'st outreach to bless Humanity !

The dear, kind hand is cold, the grave sweet eyes
 Are closed in slumber, as thou liest there.
 We shed no tears, but watch in sad surmise
 The face still smiling thro' the good grey hair !

No tears for *thee* ! Tears rather, tears of shame,
 For those who saw that face yet turn'd away ;
 Yet even *these*, too, didst thou love and claim
 As brethren, tho' they frown'd and would not stay.

And so, dear Walt, thine Elder Brother passed,
 Unknown, unblest, with open hand like thine—
 Till lo ! the open Sepulchre at last,
 The watching angels, and the Voice Divine !

God bless thee, Walt ! Even Death may never seize
 Thy gifts of goodness in no market priced—
 The wisdom and the charm of Socrates,
 Touch'd with some gentle glory of the Christ !

So long!—We seem to hear thy voice again,
 Tender and low, and yet so deep and strong !
 Yes, we will wait, in gladness not in pain,
 The coming of thy Prophecy. (*"So long!"*)

THE STORMY ONES.

WHAT bark is this by the breezes driven,
With scarce a rag of remaining sail?—
Under the gentle eyes of Heaven
It drifteth, crowded with faces pale.

Who's at the helm with his hair back-blowing,
(And very badly he seems to steer!)
Loosely his raven locks are flowing,—
The shade of BYRON, by all that's queer!

Close beside him a blushing bevy
Of women on tiger skins repose,—
Their cheeks are waxen, their eyes are heavy,
They wear loose trousers, and yawn and doze!

Daintily drest but sea-sick slightly,
Leans Chateaubriand over the rail,
Watch'd by an Indian maid politely,
A sort of Choctaw Madame de Stael.

There's Grillparzer, with scowl and swagger,
Kotzebue also, with paper and pen,
Werner, with poison'd bowl and dagger,
All the stormy women and men!

Atala, Charlotte, Medora, Haidee,
Mrs. Haller, may be descried,
Fair of feature, in morals shady,
Caressed and wheedled,—then kick'd aside !

Down below in the cabin, thickly
Gather the revellers, weak of will—
Alfred de Musset with smile so sickly,
Heine with laughter wild and shrill.

Women, too !—actress, cocotte, and gipsy,
Mimi Pinson, and all the rest,
Each bareheaded, with eyeballs tipsy,
Leaning there on a reveller's breast.

Poof! how close it is below here !
Best again to the deck repair—
At least a breath from Heaven may blow here,
But down in the cabin, one chokes for air !

Byron swears as he grasps the tiller,
Haidee sobs as she bites her bun,
And the little stowaway, Joaquin Miller,
Gapes at a symbol and cries "What fun !"

For up at the peak their flag is flying—
A white Death's head, with grinning teeth,—
"Eat, drink, and love, for the day is dying,"
Written in cypher underneath.

THE STORMY ONES.

“Vanity ! Vanity ! Love and Revel !”
 “Take a sip of absinthe, my dear !”
 “Religion’s a bore, but I like the Devil !”
 These are some of the words you hear ! . . .

Over the vessel so small and crowded,
 Walking the winds with solemn tread,
 Two Shapes are hanging, their faces shrouded,—
 They talk as they hearken overhead.

SPIRIT OF ROUSSEAU.

Why rocks this ship upon the main
 When all the waves repose ?

SPIRIT OF GOETHE.

The breeze is only in the brain,
 And so they *think* it blows !

SPIRIT OF ROUSSEAU.

But all is calm—’tis summer time—
 Soft sighs the silken swell !

SPIRIT OF GOETHE.

Still, you and I dream’d ere our prime
 Our Teacup Storms as well !

Still as glass is the ocean weather,
 All is quiet and still and warm,
 Yet see ! the Stormy Ones crowd together,
 Baring their foreheads to front the Storm !

“Thunder and lightning, we defy you!
Fate, we scorn thee!” loud they cry—
“Blow your loudest, O wind on high! You
Can only make us blaspheme and die!”

SPIRIT OF ROUSSEAU.

Methinks the song they sing is stale,
So oft it hath been sung!

SPIRIT OF GOETHE.

That very vessel thro' a gale
I steered, when I was young!

SPIRIT OF ROUSSEAU.

Why do they rave of tempests thus?
The weather's wondrous fair!

SPIRIT OF GOETHE.

Herr God! 'tis too ridiculous—
There's not a breath of air!

Spirits tremendous, you're right precisely!
The song of the Stormy is quite absurd—
There's just a breeze to sail with nicely,
The waves are gentle to boat and bird.

Yonder Liberty's Ark is floating,
And there's the Dove, with the branch in his
beak—
Even the Pope on the brine is boating,
Safe in his tub, in spite of the leak!

THE STORMY ONES.

Go by, O Stormy Ones, dreaming wildly
 You breast the waves with heroic mind—
On your brows may the breeze blow mildly,
 When you're sea-sick, may Fate be kind !

But O ye Women, black-eyed and blue-eyed
 Who listen still to the old stale song,
Ye victims of mock heroics ! true-eyed,
 Credulous, innocent, spite of wrong !

Yours is the sorrow, theirs the pleasure,—
 Yours are the tears, and theirs the laugh,—
The cowards sip the froth of the measure,
 But give *you* the poisonous dregs to quaff !

Lords of misrule and of melancholy,
 They share among you their devil's dole,
While on the decks of that Ship of Folly
 You faint and sicken, O Woman-Soul !

THE DISMAL THRONG.

THE Fairy Tale of Life is done,
The horns of Fairyland cease blowing,
The Gods have left us one by one,
And the last Poets, too, are going !
Ended is all the mirth and song,
Fled are the merry Music-makers ;
And what remains? The Dismal Throng
Of literary Undertakers !

Clad in deep black of funeral cut,
With faces of forlorn expression,
Their eyes half open, souls close shut,
They stalk along in pale procession ;
The latest seed of Schopenhauer,
Born of a Trull of Flaubert's choosing,
They cry, while on the ground they glower,
"There's nothing in the world amusing !"

There's Zola, grimy as his theme,
Nosing the sewers with cynic pleasure,
Sceptic of all that poets dream,
All hopes that simple mortals treasure ;
With sense most keen for odours strong,
He stirs the Drains and scents disaster,
Grim monarch of the Dismal Throng
Who bow their heads before "the Master."

THE DISMAL THRONG.

There's Miss Matilda in the south,
There's Valdes in Madrid and Seville,
There's mad Verlaine with gangrened mouth
Grinning at Rimbaud and the Devil.
From every nation of the earth,
Instead of smiling music-makers,
They come, the foes of Love and Mirth,
The Dismal Throng of Undertakers.

There's Tolstoi, towering in his place
O'er all the rest by head and shoulders;
No sunshine on that noble face
Which Nature meant to charm beholders!
Mad with his self-made martyr's shirt,
Obscene through hatred of obscenity,
He from a pulpit built of Dirt
Shrieks his Apocalypse of Cleanness!

There's Ibsen, puckering up his lips,
Squirring at Nature and Society,
Drawing with tingling finger-tips
The clothes off naked Impropriety!
So nice, so nasty, and so grim,
He hugs his gloomy bottled thunder;
To summon up one smile from *him*
Would be a miracle of wonder!

There's Maupassant, who takes his cue
From Dame Bovary's bourgeois troubles;

There's Bourget, dyed his own sick "blue,"
There's Loti, blowing blue soap-bubbles ;
There's Mendès (no Catullus, he !)
There's Richepin, sick with sensual passion.
The Dismal Throg ! So foul, so free,
Yet sombre all, as is the fashion.

"Turn down the lights ! put out the Sun !
Man is unclean and morals muddy,
The Fairy Tale of Life is done,
Disease and Dirt must be our study !
Tear open Nature's genial heart,
Let neither God nor gods escape us,
But spare, to give our subjects zest,
The basest god of all—Priapus !"

The Dismal Throg ! 'Tis thus they preach,
From Christiania to Cadiz,
Recruited as they talk and teach
By dingy lads and draggled ladies ;
Without a sunbeam or a song,
With no clear Heaven to hunger after ;
The Dismal Throg ! the Dismal Throg !
The foes of Life and Love and Laughter !

By Shakespeare's Soul ! if this goes on,
From every face of man and woman
The gift of gladness will be gone,
And laughter will be thought inhuman !

THE DISMAL THRONG.

The only beast who smiles is Man !
That marks him out from meaner creatures !
 Confound the Dismal Throng, who plan
 To take God's birth-mark from our features !

Manfreds who walk the hospitals,
 Laras and Giaours grown scientific,
 They wear the clothes and bear the palls
 Of Stormy Ones once thought terrific ;
 They play the same old funeral tune,
 And posture with the same dejection,
 But turn from howling at the moon
 To literary vivisection !

And while they loom before our view,
 Dark'ning the air that should be sunny,
 Here's Oscar, growing dismal too,
 Our Oscar, who was once so funny !
 Blue china ceases to delight
 The dear curl'd darling of society,
 Changed are his breeches, once so bright,
 For foreign breaches of propriety !

I grant there's many a sorry place
 On Earth, and much in need of mending,
 But all the world is not so base
 As sickly souls are now contending ;
 And I prefer my roses still
 To all the garlic in their garden—
 Let Hedda gabble as she will,
 I'll stay with Rosalind, in Arden !

O for one laugh of Rabelais,
To rout these moralising croakers !
(The cowls were mightier far than they,
Yet fled before that King of Jokers).
O for a slash of Fielding's pen
To bleed these pimps of Melancholy !
O for a Boz, born once again
To play the Dickens with such folly !

Yet stay ! why bid the dead arise ?
Why call them back from Charon's wherry ?
Come, Yankee Mark, with twinkling eyes,
Confuse these ghouls with something merry !
Come, Kipling, with thy soldiers three,
Thy barrack-ladies frail and fervent,
Forsake thy themes of butchery
And be the merry Muses' servant !

Come, Dickens' foster-son, Bret Harte !
(Before he died, he bless'd thy labours !)
Tom Hardy, blow the clouds apart
With sound of rustic fifes and tabors !
Dick Blackmore, full of homely joy,
Come from thy garden by the river,
And pelt with fruit and flowers, old boy,
These dreary bores who drone for ever !

By Heaven ! we want you one and all,
For Hypochondria is reigning—
The Mater Dolorosa's squall
Makes Nature hideous with complaining.

THE DISMAL THRONG.

Ah ! who will paint the Face that smiled
When Art was virginal and vernal—
The pure Madonna with her Child,
Pure as the light, and as eternal !

Pest on these dreary, dolent airs
Confound these funeral pomps and poses !
Is Life Dyspepsia's and Despair's,
And Love's complexion all *chlorosis* ?
A lie ! There's Health, and Mirth, and Song,
The World still laughs, and goes a-Maying--
The dismal droning doleful Throng
Are only smuts in sunshine playing !

Play up, ye horns of Fairyland !
Shine out, O Sun, and planets seven !
Beyond these clouds a beckoning Hand
Gleams from the lattices of Heaven !
The World's alive—still quick, not dead,
It needs no Undertaker's warning ;
So put the Dismal Throng to bed,
And wake once more to Light and Morning !

THE GIFT OF BURNS.

*Addressed to the Caledonian Club, Boston, U.S.A., on the
Anniversary of the Birth of the Poet.*

I.

THE speech our English Pilgrims spoke
Fills the great plains afar,
And branches of the British oak
Wave 'neath the Western star ;
"Be free !" men cried, in Shakespeare's tongue,
When striking for the Slave—
Thus Hampden's cry for Freedom rung
As far as Lincoln's grave !

II.

But where new oaks of England rise
The thistle freelier blows ;
Across the seas 'neath alien skies
Another Scotland grows ;
Here Independence, mountain Maid
Reaps her full birthright now,
And BURNS'S shade, in trews and plaid,
Still whistles at the plough !

III.

Scots, gather'd now in phalanx bright,
Here in this distant land,
To greet you all, this festal night,
I reach the loving hand ;
My soul is with you one and all,
Who pledge our Poet's fame,
And echoing your toast, I call
A blessing on his name !

IV.

The heritage he left behind
Has spread from sea to sea—
The liberal heart, the fearless mind,
The undaunted Soul and free ;
The radiant humour that redeem'd
A world of commonplace ;
The wit that like a sword-flash gleam'd
In Fashion's painted face ;

V.

The brotherhood whose smiles and tears,
Too deep for thought to scan,
Has made of all us Mountaineers
One world-compelling clan !
Hand join with hand ! Soul links with soul
Where'er we sit and sing,
Flashing, from utmost pole to pole,
Love's bright electric ring !

VI.

The songs he sang were sown as seeds
Deep in the furrow'd earth—
They blossom into dauntless deeds
And flowers of gentle mirth ;
They brighten every path we tread,
They conquer Time and place ;
While blue skies, opening overhead,
Reveal—the Singer's face !

VII.

God bless him ! Tho' he sin'd and fell,
His sins are all forgiven,
Since with his wit he conquer'd Hell,
And with his love show'd Heaven !
He was the noblest of us all,
Yet of us all a part,
For every Scot, howe'er so small,
Is high as BURNS'S heart !

VIII.

All honour'd be the night indeed
When he this life began—
The open-handed, stubborn-knee'd
Type of the mountain clan !
The shape erect that never knelt
To Kings of earth or air,
But at a maiden's touch would melt
And tremble into prayer !

IX.

His soul pursues us where we roam,
Beyond the furthest waves,
He sheds the light of Love and Home
Upon our loneliest graves !
Poor is the slave that honours not
The flag *he* first unfur'd—
Our Singer, who has made the Scot
The Freeman of the World !

THE ROBIN REDBREAST.

(FOR ROBERT BURNS'S BIRTHDAY, 25TH JANUARY.)

WHEN cold and frosted lies the plough
And never a flower upsprings,
How blithely on the wintry bough
The Robin sits and sings !

His bright black eye with restless ray
Glints at the snow-clad earth ;
Chill blow the winds, and yet his lay
Is bright with Love and Mirth ! . . .

E'en so, my Robin, didst *thou* come
Into our wintry clime,
And when the summer bards were dumb
Piped out thy perfect rhyme ;

Clouds parted, and the sun shone through !
Men welcomed, smiling bright,
The Friend of Man, the Minstrel true
Of Love, and Life, and Light !

Poor outcast Adam ceased to grieve,
And answer'd with a will :
'Twas Eden once again, and Eve
Was mother-naked still !

THE ROBIN REDBREAST.

And ever by the Cotter's door
Thy notes rang clear and free,
And Freedom fill'd the soul once more
That hearken'd unto thee !

The crimson stain was on thy breast,
The bleeding heart below,
But bravely thou did'st pipe thy best
Despite the whole world's woe !

Blest be that strain of Love and Mirth,
' So fearless and so fine ! . . .
What were this waste of wintry earth
Without such cheer as thine !

TO GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

No Slave at least art *thou*, on this dull Day
When slaves and knaves throng in Life's banquet-
hall! . . .

Who listens to thy scornful laugh must say
"Wormwood, tho' bitter, is medicinal!"

Because thou turnest from our Feast of Lies
Where prosperous priests with whores and warriors
feed,

Because thy Jester's mask hides loving eyes,
I name thee here, and bid thy work "God speed!"

THE SAD SHEPHERD.

(TO THOMAS HARDY.)

THY song is piteous now that once was glad,
The merry uplands hear thy voice no more—
Thro' frozen forest-ways, O Shepherd sad,
Thou wanderest, while wintry tempests roar;

And in thine arms—aye me!—thou claspest tight
A wounded Lamb that bleateth in the cold,
Warming it in thy breast, while thro' the night
Thou strugglest, fain to bear it to the fold!

Shepherd, God bless thy task, and keep thee strong
To help poor lambs that else might die astray! . . .
Thy midnight cry is holier than the song
The summer uplands heard at dawn of day!

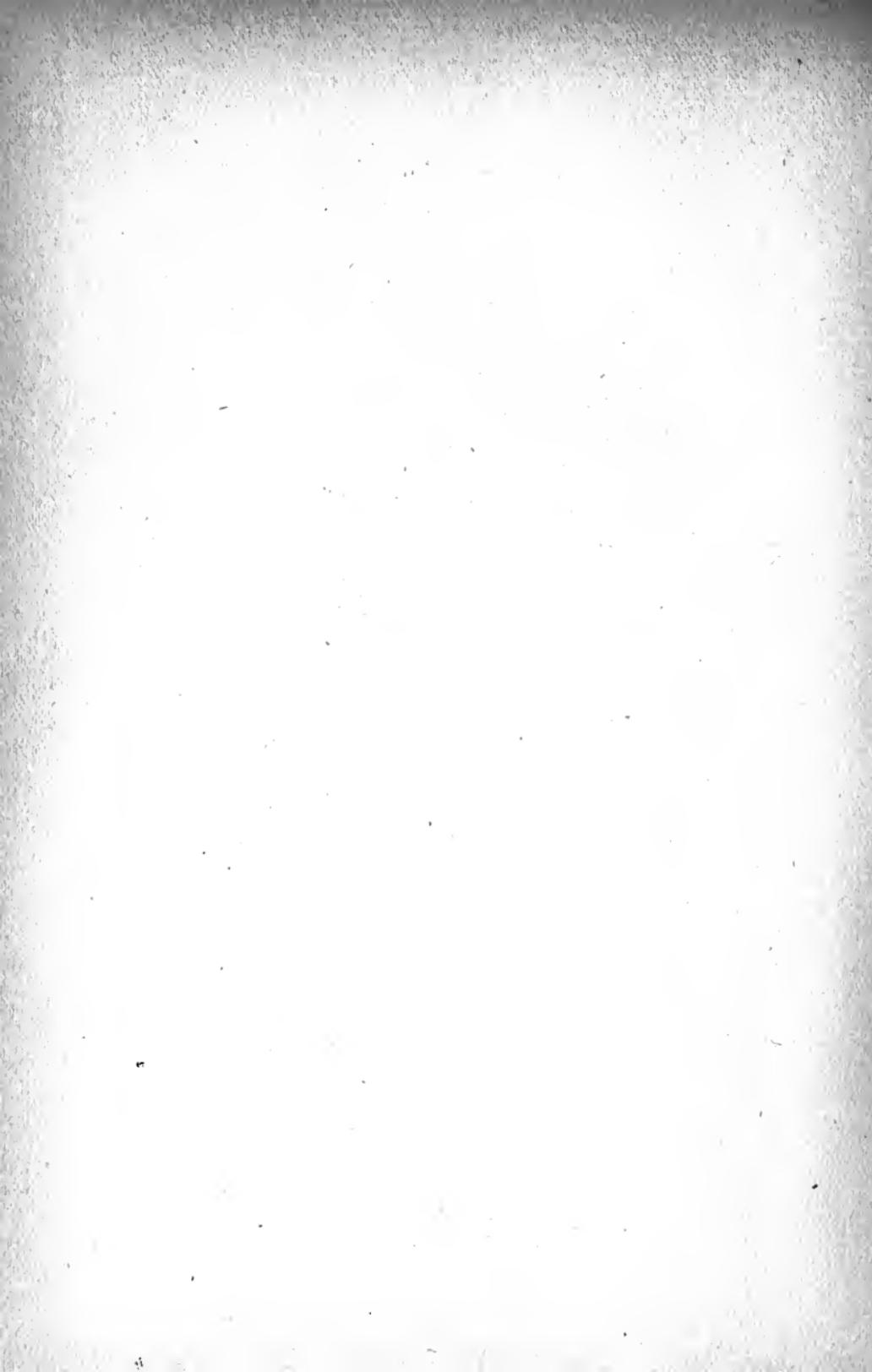
L'ENVOI IN THE LIBRARY.

AND if, O Brethren of the Bleeding Heart,
 Dreamers amid the Storm where Love gropes blind,
I have cried aloud for Joy to tear apart
 The cloud of Fate that broods o'er Humankind ;

If 'mid the darkness I have call'd, " Rejoice !
 God's in his Heaven—the skies are blue and fair !"
If for a moment's space my faltering voice
 Hath echoed here the infant's cry and prayer ;

'Tis that the pang of pity grew too great,
 Too absolute the quick sharp sense of pain,
And in my soul's despair, left desolate,
 I sought to be a little child again !

Not that I love your piteous labours less,
 But that I yearn for Life and Sunshine more,—
Hearing, 'mid Seas and Storms so pitiless,
 The happy children shouting on the shore !



CORUISKEN SONNETS.

[LOCH CORUISK, ISLE OF SKYE, N.B.]



CORUISKEN SONNETS.*

(Loch Coruisk, Isle of Skye, N.B.)

I.

AGAIN among the Mountains, and again
 That same old question on my faltering tongue !
 Purged if not purified by fires of pain,
 I seek the Solitudes I loved when young ;
 And lo, the prayers I prayed, the songs I sung,
 Echo like elfin music in my brain,
 While to these lonely regions of the Rain
 I come, a Pilgrim worn and serpent-stung.
 The bitter wormwood of the creeds hath pass'd
 To poison in my blood of dull despair,
 I have torn the mask from Death and stood aghast
 To find the Phantom's features foul not fair,—
 I have read the Riddle of the Gods at last
 With broken heart, and found no comfort there !

II.

Unchanged, CORUISK, thou liest !—Time hath made
 No mark on thee his empery to attest ;
 Winter and summer, light and solemn shade,
 Break not the eternal darkness of thy breast.
 Black Lake of Sorrow, stillest, wofullest
 Of all God's Waters,—countless storms have played

* See the author's *Book of Orm*.

O'er thee and round, since on thy shores I prayed
 And left thee here untroubled in thy rest . . .
 And o'er thee still the sunless Peaks arise
 Finding no mirror in thy depths below,
 And night by night Heaven with its million eyes
 Hath watch'd thy lava-pools of silent woe,—
 The same thou art, under the same sad Skies,
 As when God's Hand first stilled thee, long ago !

III.

Tho' Time which leaves thee whole hath rent and
 worn
 The soul of him who stood and worshipt here,
 The weary Waters and the Hills forlorn
 Remain the same from silent year to year ;—
 Despite the sad unrest afar and near,
 The cry of Torrents that for ever mourn,
 The march of Clouds by winds and lightnings torn,
 Here dwells no heritage of human fear !
 God keeps His scourge for slaves that pray and cling,
 For Clouds and Mists and mortals frail as they,—
 The Mountains heed Him not, the Waters fling
 His strong Hand back and wave His pride away :
 Serene and silent they confront the Thing
 Which chills the flesh and blood of men of clay !

IV.

Now hearken !—Led, methought, by God's own Hand,
 I wander'd in a world of gracious things,
 Heaven was above, all round was Fairyland,
 Music of singing brooks and crystal springs,—

Each flower that blossoms and each bird that sings
Promised the Paradise which Love had planned,
Spake of the spirits who at his command
Bare peace from star to star on happy wings.
I heard the Promise wheresoe'er I went,
I saw it rainbow'd yonder in the Sky,
Yea, even when the Heavens were lightning-rent,
I saw the radiant hosts go shining by,—
I look'd and listen'd, calm and well-content,
And little guess'd that Promise was a Lie !

V.

How could I doubt the lark and nightingale
Singing their chaunt of Joy and Love Divine?
How could I dream that golden Light could fail
Which lit the whole green world with bliss like mine?
Where'er I walked I saw the Promise shine
Soft as the dawn-star o'er a leafy dale,
And raising happy hands I cried, "All hail!
Father of All, since Life and Light are Thine!"
Nay, even when utter darkness wrapt me round
And bending low I saw pale Death creep near,
Methought I saw an Angel Heavenward-bound
Laden with flowers that bloom'd and faded here,
While far away I heard a happy sound
And saw the Mirage flash from sphere to sphere !

VI.

The Mirage ! ah, the Mirage ! O how fair
And wonderful it seem'd, flash'd overhead

From world to world ! Bright faces glimmer'd there,
 Hands beckon'd, and my grief was comforted !
 Wherefore, O God, I did not fear to tread
 That darkness, and to breathe that deadly air,
 For there was comfort yet in my despair,
 And since God lived, I was not wholly dead !
 Then came the crowning grief, the final fear
 That snapt my heart in twain, Unpitying One !
 The Hand was drawn away, the path grew drear,
 The Mirage faded, and the Dream was done ;
 And lo, the Heaven that once had seem'd so near
 Had fled, to shine no more in moon or sun !

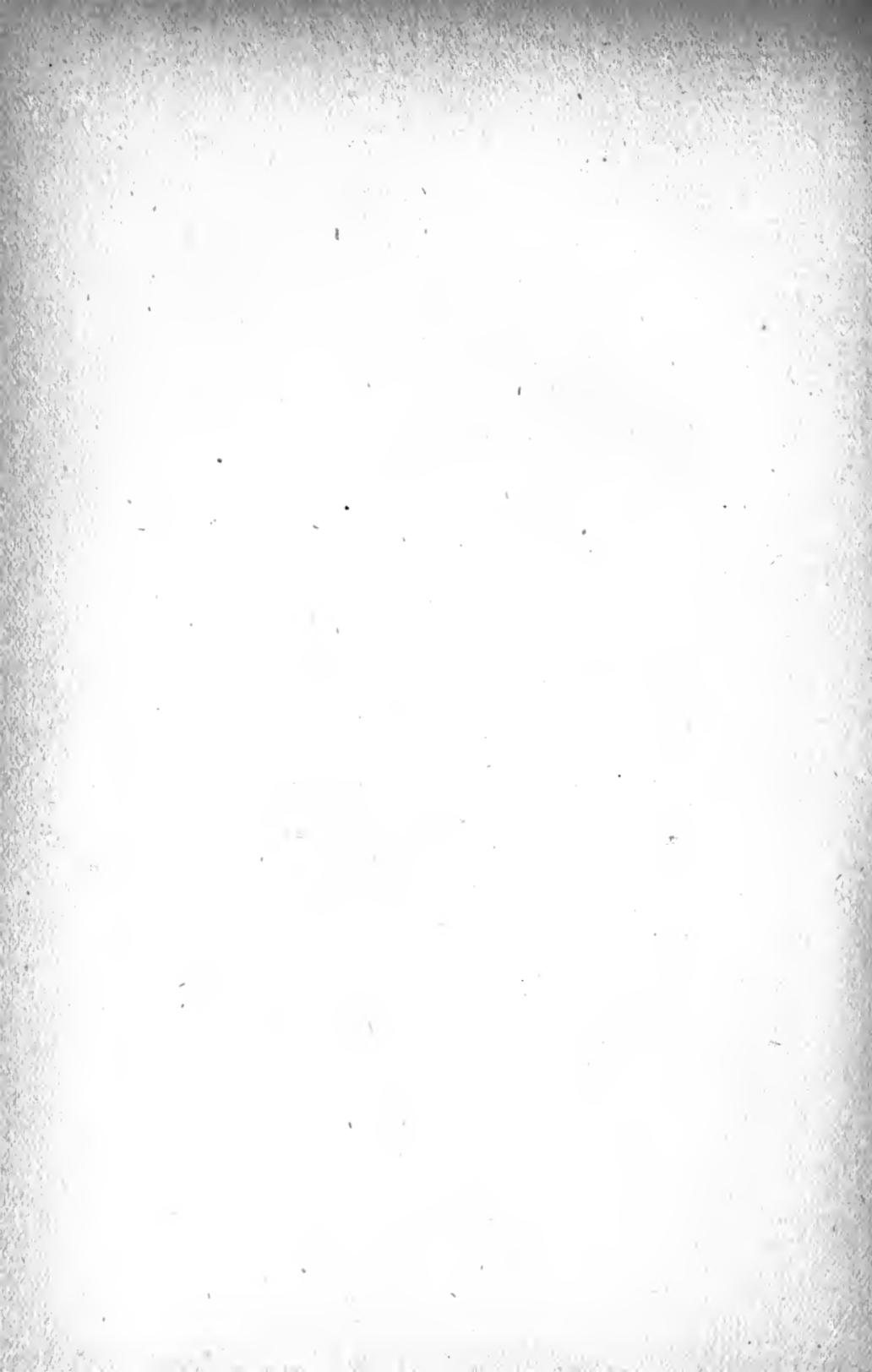
VII.

I charge thee now, O God, if God indeed
 Thou art, and not an evil empty Dream !
 Now when the Earth is strong and quick with seed,
 Redeem thy promise ! with thy life supreme
 Fill those dear eyes, till they uncloset and beam !
 Think how my heart hath bled and still doth bleed
 Beneath thy wrath, and listen while I plead
 In darkness,—send thy Light, a living stream,
 Into the grave where all I love lies low ! . . .
 Spring comes again, thy world awakeneth,
 May-time is near, the buds begin to blow,
 Over all Nature flows a living breath,—
 The Hills are loosen'd and the Waters flow,—
 Melt then, O God, those icicles of DEATH !

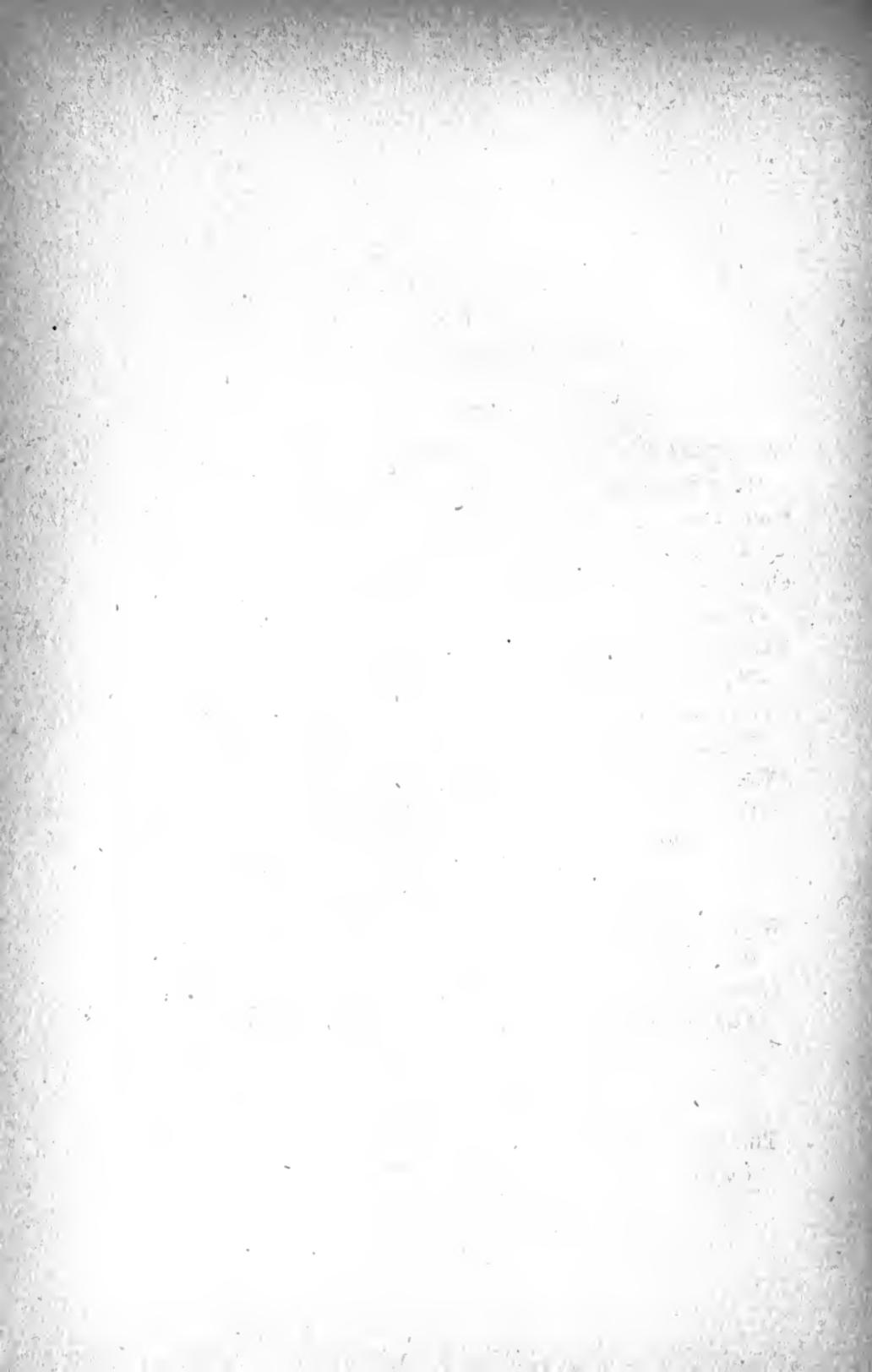
VIII.

Thou wilt *not* melt them ! Never in sun or rain
 The gentle heart shall stir, the dear eyes shine !

Silent Thou passest, pitiless, Divine,
Trailing behind Thy footsteps Life's long chain,
Which breaketh link by link with ceaseless pain,
Breaketh and faileth like this life of mine,
And yet is evermore renew'd again
To prove all Time's Eternity is Thine !
Wherefore my soul no more shall pray and cling
To Thee, O God, for succour or for stay ;—
The Mountains heed Thee not,—the Waters fling
Thy strong Hand back and wave Thy pride away :—
Serene and cold like those, I front the Thing
Which chills the flesh and blood of men of clay.



THE DEVIL'S SABBATH.



THE DEVIL'S SABBATH.

(Loch Coruisk, Island of Skye. Night.)

THE ÆON.

WELCOME, BUCHANAN! once again I greet you
 Here 'mong the Mountains as in London yonder!
 Right glad am I in mine own realm to meet you,
 Far from the haunts where priests and pedants wander.
 Once more I thank you for your vindication
 Of one so long malign'd in foolish fiction!
 Your book* shall long survive the execration
 Of critics, through your Master's benediction!
 You've reconstructed, much as fools have slighted you,
 The one true Jesus and the one true Devil.
 Wherefore, to prove our love, we've now invited you
 To join our new Walpurgis-Night, and revel!

THE POET.

What heights are those that rise so sadly o'er me?
 What waters sad are those beneath me sleeping?
 Dark as a dream the shadows part before me
 And show the snow-white gleam of torrents leaping!

THE ÆON.

This is the lonely Corry of the Water
 By which you walked and sung in days departed;

* *The Devil's Case: A Bank Holiday Interlude.*

And she who stands beside me is my daughter,
 Last of the maiden Muses merry-hearted ;
 The others left the land when Byron perish'd,
 But she, the fruit of sad amours and stealthy,
 Lived on, a sickly child, the deeplier cherish'd
 Because she never has been strong or healthy !

VOICES.

From rock to rock,
 Still faster and faster,
 Upward we flock
 At thy call, O Master !

THE POET.

What shapes are these ?

THE ÆON.

Singers and sages
 Of all degrees,
 Sexes, and ages !
 Poor devils, how blindly they grope about,
 Thinking they climb but never succeeding !
 As they wind like serpents in and out,
 Their mouths are panting, their lips are bleeding !

NEW MUSE.

Hillò ! hillò ! come hither to me !

VOICES.

We hear thy voice, but we cannot see
 Thy face, O Lady of Love and Light !

Upward, upward like sparks we flee,
Blown in the winds of the woful night !
Thine old wild tunes in our brains are ringing,
Tho' we are weary and spirit sore,
Singing, singing, and upward springing,
Whither we know not, ever more !

SHE SINGS.

Sing me a song of the Dove
And the Hawk that slew him !
From a golden Heaven above
Eyes like the eyes of thy love
Gazed downward to him !
Sing me the song of the Dove
And the Hawk that slew him !

VOICES.

Room for the Wisdom ! Stand aside !
Here he cometh goggle-eyed,
Solver of the great I AM,
Scorner of the Snake and Lamb,
Measurer of Space and Time,
Up the steep path see him climb,
Vacant heir of all the ages,
First of Fools and last of Sages.
See ! he stoops and from the ground
Lifteth something large and round,
Smiles, and nods, and looks profound,—
Hither, Master !
Faster, faster,
Show us now what thou hast found !

THE WISE MAN.

A trifle ! yet, even to one so ripe
 In knowledge as I, the one thing needed,—
 The missing skull of the Archetype
 Whence our father Adam the First proceeded !

THE MUSE.

Hillò ! Hillò ! come hither to me !

VOICES.

We hear thy voice, but we cannot see
 Thy face, O Lady of Love and Light !
 Upward, upward we struggle and flee,
 Blown in the winds of this woful night !

THE MUSE.

Sing me a song of a Tree
 And the fruit forbidden !
 Of a fool who sought to see
 What from God himself is hidden !
 Weary and sad stands he,
 By his children's children chidden,
 Under the Cross of the Tree
 Of the fruit forbidden !

THE POET.

What is yonder priestly train
 Struggling upward through wind and rain ?

THE ÆON.

Those are the priests of Priapus. Sadly
They worship the God of the Grove, not gladly
As in the frolicsome days departed
When men and women were innocent-hearted—
The phallic emblems you may espy
Looming crimson against the sky,
But now they are hung with weeds, instead
Of pure white lilies and roses red,
And none of the faithful dare to pay
Their duty to them in open day !

THE POET.

Pause here ! How peaceful and how still
Is this green glade on the moonlit hill,—
The tumult dies to a peaceful call
Like the hum of a distant waterfall !
Here is a porch of marble red that leads
Into a roofless Temple thick with weeds,
And yonder in the shadow I can see
The glimmer of some nude Divinity.
But who is this who lifts his lonely head
Far from the eddying throng that yonder groans ?
His face is calm and godlike, and his tread
Royal and proud, as if he walk'd on thrones ;
Gravely he stands and muses, listening
From time to time to those faint human cries !

THE ÆON.

Knowest thou not the last Apollo, King
Of the unpitying heart and eagle eyes ?

The place is calm, yet (cast thine eyes around)
 'Tis strewn with marble bones of Gods long sped,—
 Creatures obscene are crawling on the ground,
 And yonder Venus armless is, and dead !

THE POET.

Nay, something stirs 'mid yonder shadows ! See !
 She wrings her hands and moans, and looks at me !

THE ÆON.

Peace with thee, Gretchen ! . . . Hark, her piteous cry
 Rings through the grove and echoes to the sky !
 And lo, the mad tumultuous crowd
 Beneath us, answer, laughing loud !
 "By the pinching of my thumbs,
 Something wicked this way comes !"
 Hillò, hillò ! this way, this way !
 Shrieking stumbling things of clay,
 Nymphs and Satyrs of To-day !

THE POET.

Alas, why break a peace so calm and stately
 With clamour of the hogs from Circe's pen ?

THE ÆON.

The demigod's conceit annoys me greatly,
 And so I love to vex him now and then.
 Have no fear, they will not stay,
 Just one rush and they're away,

From the sty and from the street
Fast they flock and on they fleet.
See ! my kinsman, goat-foot Pan,
 And Silenos on his ass,
Catamites and harlots wan
 Follow shrieking through the grass,
Herodias and Magdalen
 Clashing cymbals head the throng,
Naked maids and maniac men
 Follow them with dance and song.
Bring the boon he once loved well,
 Rain it on his frozen heart ;
Break the spell with shouts from Hell,
 Grieve the godhead and depart !

A VOICE.

What ho, you things of dirt and dust,
 I come with news that must surprise you,—
But first lie down, my Lady of Lust,
Giggling nymph with the swelling bust,
 Let us dissect and anatomise you !

VOICES.

Whence do you come, and what is your name ?

VOICE.

My name's Peer Gynt, and I come from Thulé !

VOICES.

Return, old fellow, from whence you came,
 Or join our sports and be honoured duly.

VOICE.

I join your infamous pagan revel !
 I, the apostle of Truth and Sanity !—
 My task it is to expose the Devil
 And all his plottings against Humanity !
 Wherever the cloven foot has been
 I trace the proofs and the signs obscene ;
 Wherever your naked Venus stands
 I hold the mirror of Truth before her,—
 In vain she seizes with trembling hands
 A scarf or a shift and flings it o'er her !
 O Sin, my friends, is everywhere,
 In the song of the birds, in the light of the air,
 In the baby's prattle, the virgin's kiss,
 In the mother's love, in the lover's bliss,
 And Sin and Death since the world's creation
 Have led to eternal and deep damnation.
 Here are comrades three times three
 Who preach the gospel of Sin with me !
 We charge you now in the Name Divine
 To leave the pleasures ye think so fine,
 To quit these heights where the Devil prowls,
 And come to our Heaven of Ghosts and Ghouls.

THE ÆON.

By Hell and all its lights profane,
 'Tis good John Calvin risen again !—
 How busily the peddling knave
 Searches about for souls to save ;
 Yet Conscience, to a fine art turn'd,
 Loses the wisdom fools have learn'd,

And he who augur-like broods o'er
The beast's foul entrails evermore,
Or searches all his soul and skin
For specks of filth or spots of sin,
May busy be among his kind
But lacks his birthright and grows blind.
Nay, Life's full cup, howe'er so brittle,
Is better than a stinking skull!
Men mope too much and live too little,
And thus grow functionless and null.
Leave to green girls and criticasters
That hide-bound throng of Little Masters,
And let us hasten onward, flying
To yonder heights of snow-white flame,
Where throngs of spirits multiplying
Are loudly calling out my name.

ELFIN VOICES.

The bugle blows from the elfin dells
With a hark and a hey halloo,—
Fays of the Glens, of the Craggs and Fells,
Come hither and join our crew!

ECHOES.

We come, we come, from the crags and fells—
Hark! hark! halloo! halloo!

THE POET.

Stay, for I know you, Shapes divine
Who hover'd round me long ago,—

Stay, on this way-worn heart of mine
 Pour the glad peace it used to know !

THE ELFINS.

The bugle is blowing from height to height
 Under the skies o' blue,
 We fly, we fly thro' the shining night
 With a hark and a hey halloo !

ECHOES.

Halloo ! halloo ! halloo !

THE POET.

From crag to crag, from peak to peak,
 I follow swiftly where ye fly,—
 O stay, sweet Shapes, and on my cheek
 Breathe gently as in days gone by !
 Alas ! they hear but will not stay ;
 They come, they smile, and fade away !

THE ÆON.

Pause here,—where from the topmost height
 The torrent hangs its scarf of white,
 And while the phantom shapes slip by,
 Behold the Boy who cannot die,
 With face turn'd upward to the sky !

THE POET.

Aye me, I know him, and he seems
 Mine other brighter self long dead,—

Smiling he sits alone and dreams,
While the wild cataract leaps and gleams
From rock to rock above his head.

THE BOY.

Waterfall, waterfall,
Would that I were *you* !
To leap and leap, and call and call
All night through !
Pausing, pausing far up there,
Plunging downward thro' the air,
Ever resting, ever flowing,
Ever coming, ever going,
Calling, calling,
Falling, falling,
Where the heather bells are blowing,
Underneath the blue !
Morning tide and evenfall,
And all night thro',
You leap and leap, and call and call !
Would that I were *you* !
(He gazes into the pool.)

Fay of the Fall, I can see you there,
Dancing down in the pools below me,—
You leap and laugh like a lady fair,
Naked, white footed, with wild bright hair,
And cool spray-kisses you love to throw me.
I can see your face through its veil of foam,
When you pause a space in the bright moon-ray,
Combing your locks with a silver comb,
Then vanishing merrily away !

THE DEVIL'S SABBATH.

I think you are living, Fay of the Fall,
 Though you are great and I am small ;
 The clouds are living, the winds are living,
 The trees, the heather, the grass, are living,
 And I am living among them all !

(A pause. He speaks again.)

Who walks yonder over the height ?

(Hush ! hush ! 'Tis she ! 'tis she !)

I know you, Lady of the Light,

Holding high, with your hand so white,

Your silver lamp,—you search for me !

Silent I crouch in the shade of the hill,

And the voices around are hushed and still,

But my heart throbs loudly unaware,

For I hear you murmuring, “Is he there ?”

Yonder up in the sky you stand,

Naked and bright, with your maidens round you,
 And suddenly one of the shining band

Leaps down to touch me, and cries, “We've found
 you !”

Moon-Fay, Moon-Fay, Maid of the Night,

You turn my face up like a flower,

And the smile of the Lady of the Light

Falls on my cheeks like a silver shower !

Hold me close and clasp me round,

Moon-Fay, Moon-Fay, while I gaze !

Naked, beautiful, golden-crown'd,

Your Queen stands there with her troops of Fays.

She lifts her finger and past they fly,

Everywhere, everywhere under the sky,

To find the wonderful living things,

Those that fly, and those that creep,

To light the dark with their luminous wings,
 And to kiss the eyelids of folk asleep !
 Onward and round with a fairy sound
 One whirls in your arms, O Waterfall !
 The Moon is living, the Fays are living,
 The trees, the winds, and the grass are living,
 And I am living among them all !
(A pause. He closes his eyes.)
 The Waterfall is sleepy, like me !
 Its voice sounds faint and far away—
 Close my eyelids with kisses three,
 And pillow my head on your breast, dear Fay !

ELFIN VOICES.

The bugle blows from the Elfin dells
 With a hark and a hey halloo !
 Fays of the Glens, of the Craggs and Fells,
 Come hither and join our crew !
 This Boy was born where our sisters weep,
 'Mong weary women and men,—
 This night we gather around his sleep
 He has summers seven and ten—
 Sound asleep in the white moonbeam
 His head on his arm he lies,—
 Come with our flowers from the Land of Dream
 And rain them on his eyes !

A VOICE.

What will you give him ?

ANOTHER.

The gift of dreaming.

THE DEVIL'S SABBATH.

FIRST VOICE.

And you?

ANOTHER VOICE.

The gift of loving tears.

FIRST VOICE.

And you, bright Fays around him beaming?

VOICES.

The melody that the Silence hears!

FIRST VOICE.

And you, O Kelpie, with human eyes
Rolling there 'neath the Waterfall?

THE KELPIE.

Unrest and trouble and strife like mine,
And the aching heart that is under all!

FIRST VOICE.

And you, O Good Folk, thronging round
The King and Queen of the Elfin band?

VOICES.

Summer gladness and summer sound,
And all the pity of Fairyland!

THE POET.

Vision divine ! How soon it passed away !
While God abides, hard, cold, and unforgiving !

THE ÆON.

Time snows upon thee, and thy hair grows grey,
And yet that Golden Boyhood still is living !
Here 'mong the mountains still thy soul may see
The light of Fairyland that fadeth never,
And all those gifts the Elfin brought to thee
Abide and live within thy soul for ever !

A VOICE.

"Ὑπαγε, Σατανᾶ, ὀπίω μου !
Why cheat the fool and give his dreams persistence ?
Have we not proved that Spirits such as thou
Are visions like those Elves, without existence ?
The man is grey,—his race is almost run,—
Through Death's dark gate his feet full soon must
wander ;
Like lights on some sad feast-day, one by one
The stars have been put out in Heaven yonder.

THE ÆON.

What toad is this that croaks here in the shade ?
Out !—let us see thee,—old Abomination !

VOICE.

Thou pose as friend of Man ? Stick to thy trade
Of cheats and lying, filth and fornication.

Thou knowest men are mad such dreams to cherish,
 Since they are beasts, and like the beasts must perish !
 Teach them to live their lives and eat and revel,
 Tell them to snatch their pleasure ere it flies,—
 A retrospective sentimental Devil
 Is but a priest or parson in disguise.

THE ÆON.

Brekekekex ! koäx, koäx !
 Toads and frogs, they are croaking still !
 Round bald heads and slimy backs
 Huddle together under the hill.
 Ever thus since Time began
 They've crawled and spat on the path of Man,—
 Up to the heights where the moon shines clear !
 Leave the infernal croakers here !

VOICES.

If I desire to end my days at peace with all theologies,
 To win the penny-a-liner's praise, the Editor's apologies,
 Don't think I mean to cast aside the Christian's pure beati-
 tude,
 Or cease my vagrant steps to guide with Christian prayer
 and platitude.
 No, I'm a Christian out and out, and claim the kind appella-
 tive
 Because, however much I doubt, my doubts are simply
 Relative ;
 For this is law, and this I teach, tho' some may think it
 vanity,
 That whatsoever creed men preach, 'tis Essential Christianity !

In Miracles I don't believe, or in Man's Immortality—
The Lord was laughing in his sleeve, save when he taught
 Morality ;
He saw that flesh is only grass, and (tho' you grieve to learn
 it) he
Knew that the personal Soul must pass and never reach
 Eternity.
In short, the essence of his creed was gentle nebulosity
Compounded for a foolish breed who gaped at his verbosity ;
And this is law, and this I teach, tho' you may think it vanity,
That whatsoever creed men preach, 'tis Essential Christianity!

THE ÆON.

They're having a little spread of their own
 In a ruin'd Church with a crumbling steeple—
Priests and parsons, eclectic grown,
 Hob and nob with the scribbling people ;
Journalists, poets, and criticasters
 Join in the literary revel.
Salutation, my merry masters !
 Don't you know me? Your friend, the Devil !

VOICES.

Go away, for you don't exist !
 God and yourself have reached finality ;
All now left in a World of Mist
 Is the creed of sensuous Morality.

A VOICE.

I freely tipple Omar's wine with ladies scant of drapery ;
I think Mahomet's Heaven fine, tho' somewhat free and
 capery ;

I feel a great respect for Joss, altho' he's none too beautiful ;
 To fetishes, as to the Cross, I'm reverent and dutiful ;
 I creep beneath the Buddhist's cloak, I beat the tom-tom
 cheerily,
 And smile at other Christian folk who take their creed too
 drearily ;
 For this is law, and this I teach aloud to all giganity,
 That whatsoever creed men preach, 'tis Essential Christianity!

To all us literary gents the future life's fantastical,
 And both the Christian Testaments are only "wrote sar-
 castical" ;
 They're beautiful, we all know well, when viewed as things
 poetical,
 But all their talk of Heaven and Hell is merely theoretical.
 But we are Christian men indeed, who, striking pious atti-
 tudes,
 Raise on a minimum of creed a maximum of platitudes !
 For this is law, and this we teach, with grace and with
 urbanity,
 That whatsoever creed men preach, 'tis Essential Christianity!

THE ÆON.

Phantoms of men, that never knew
 The golden Boyhood and the Fable,
 Leave them to feast, as dogs may do,
 On fragments from the Churchman's table—
 Trimmers and tinkers, neither false nor true,
 Low foreheads, sensual mouths, and minds un-
 stable !
 Away, away ! the peaks up yonder
 Grow brighter yet while we are upward soaring ;

Between us and the moon wild spirits wander,
Their eyes on that divine white Light, adoring.

THE ELVES.

The bugles are blowing from height to height,
Under the heavens so blue ;
Hark, they are ringing from height to height
With a hark and a hey halloo !

ECHOES.

Halloo ! halloo ! halloo !

THE POET.

Where art thou, Master ?

THE ÆON (*far off*).

Here above thee !
Follow on through the shadows grey,
And if thy limbs are too slow to move thee,
Grasp the skirt of a passing Fay !

VOICES.

Fast through the night, from height to height,
In thy train, O Queen, we flee—
There is Mary Beaton, and Mary Seaton,
And Mary Carmichael, and me !

THE POET.

In a blood-red robe that parts to show
The wondrous bosom white as snow,

THE DEVIL'S SABBATH.

Around her neck a thin red line,
 A pale crown on her golden hair,
 She flitteth through the grey moonshine,
 For ever sweet, for ever fair.
 Haggard and fierce, with dripping sword,
 Beside her stalks her savage lord,
 And following her, the Maries share
 Her loveliness and her despair.
 O rose-red mouth, O sphinx-like eyes
 That witched the Boy and fired his blood,—
 Still on my soul, O Mary, lies
 Thy spell of woful womanhood !
 Deathless, a Queen, thou reignest still
 In Memory's desolate domain,
 And as we gaze, our pulses thrill
 To share thy passion and thy pain !

VOICES.

Fast through the night, from height to height,
 O Queen, we follow thee,—
 There is Mary Beaton, and Mary Seaton,
 And Mary Carmichael, and me !

THE POET.

Fairyland of Love and Sorrow,
 Thickly close your shadows round me !
 Once again your dreams I borrow,
 Love hath kiss'd me, clasp'd me, crown'd me !
 Out of every dell and hollow
 Bright shapes beckon, and I follow !

Forms of olden myth and fancy
Witch the night with necromancy ;
Elf and Lover, Gnome and Lady,
Kiss and clasp in woodlands shady ;
From the torrent Kelpies crying
Hail the Fays above them flying ;
Hither, thither, upward streaming
To the stars above them beaming,
To the heights by dream-shapes haunted,
Fly the Fairy Folk enchanted !

VOICES.

The bugle is blowing from height to height
Under the heavens of blue,—
We fly, we fly through the mists of night,
With a hark and a hey halloo !

ECHOES.

Halloo ! halloo ! halloo !

THE ÆON.

On the topmost peak I stand,
Come, ye Dreams and Shadows, come !
At the lifting of my hand
Kneel around me and be dumb !
O crowd of woful things,
Gods, and Demi-gods, and Fays,
Hush your hearts and fold your wings,
While the Emblem I upraise !

VOICES.

See ! see ! see !

POET.

Why gaze they downward, hungering from the peaks
 To some dim Shape that climbeth from below ?
 Why turn thine own eyes thither, while thy cheeks
 Seem wan with some new woe ?

VOICES.

See ! see ! see !

He cometh hither, the Jew,
 The Weariful One they slew
 'Tween thief and thief on the Tree !
 With hair as white as snow
 He climbeth from below,
 His feet and hands drip blood,—
 Alack ! he traileth on,
 Though old and woebegone,
 His heavy Cross of wood !

THE JEW.

How long, O God, how long !

THE POET.

O piteous cry,
 For ever heard while the swift years rush by !
 Vapour and mist enfold the feeble form,
 Beneath him as he goes the abysses loom,
 Answer'd by woful Spirits of the Storm
 Moaning he trails his Cross through gulfs of gloom.

VOICES.

Dry thy tears and raise thy head,
He is quick that once was dead !

THE POET.

Christ of the broken Heart, and is it *Thou*
Who standest 'mong thy brethren there on high ?
Erect and silver-hair'd, thou takest now
The gentle benediction of the Sky ;
Tumultuous, multitudinous, as the crests
Of storm-vex'd billows on a moonstruck sea,
The gods flock round and smite their naked breasts,
Calling aloud on *Thee !*
And towering o'er them, ring'd with Shapes divine,
Osiris, Zeus, Apollo, Vishnu, Brahm,
Forms of the Phallus, Virgins of the Shrine,
Thou standest starry-eyed, supreme and calm,
And on thy mirror'd head the waves of Light
Creep soft and silvern from a million spheres,
Sprinkling ablution from the baths of Night
And shining on thy face worn thin with tears.
Saviour of men, if thou hast spoken truth,
Blesser of men, if men by pain are blest,
Scorner of darkness, star of Love and ruth,
Grey time-worn Phantom of the world's unrest,
Now to the heights thou comest, and before thee
All gods that men have made are kneeling low,
Thy brother and sister stars in Heaven adore thee,
Lord of Eternal Woe !
And yet, O Father Christ, I seek not thee,
Though to thy spell I yearn and bend the knee ;

Thou hast no power my empty heart to fill,
 Thou hast no answer to my soul's despair,
 Thine eyes are holy but thy touch is chill,
 Heaven still is homeless though thou shinest there !

MATER SERAPHICA.

Son of my Soul ! light of my eyes !
 Still with my blessing on thy brow,
 Cast off thy burthen, and arise !

THE POET.

Holy of Holies, is it *thou* ?
 Thou livest, thou art not dead and cold !
 Thy touch is warm, as 'twas of old !
 And on thy face there shines anew
 The Love Divine from which I grew !
 O mother ! all Eternity
 Burns to one steadfast light in thee,
 And all the tears of all Creation
 Cease, to thy glad transfiguration !

SHE SPEAKS.

Lean thy head on my breast !

THE POET.

O the bliss, O the rest !
 It is worth all the pain
 To be with thee again !

SHE SPEAKS.

All thy sorrows are done,—
 I am with thee, my son !

EPODE.

This is the Song the glad stars sung when first the Dream
began,

This is the Dream the world first knew when God created
Man,

This is the Voice of Man and God, blent (even as mine and
thine !)

Where'er the soul of the Silence wakes to the Love which
is Divine !

How should the Dream depart and die, since the Life is but
its beam ?

How should the Music fade away, since the Music *is* the
Dream ?

How should the Heavens forget their faith, and the Earth
forget its prayer,

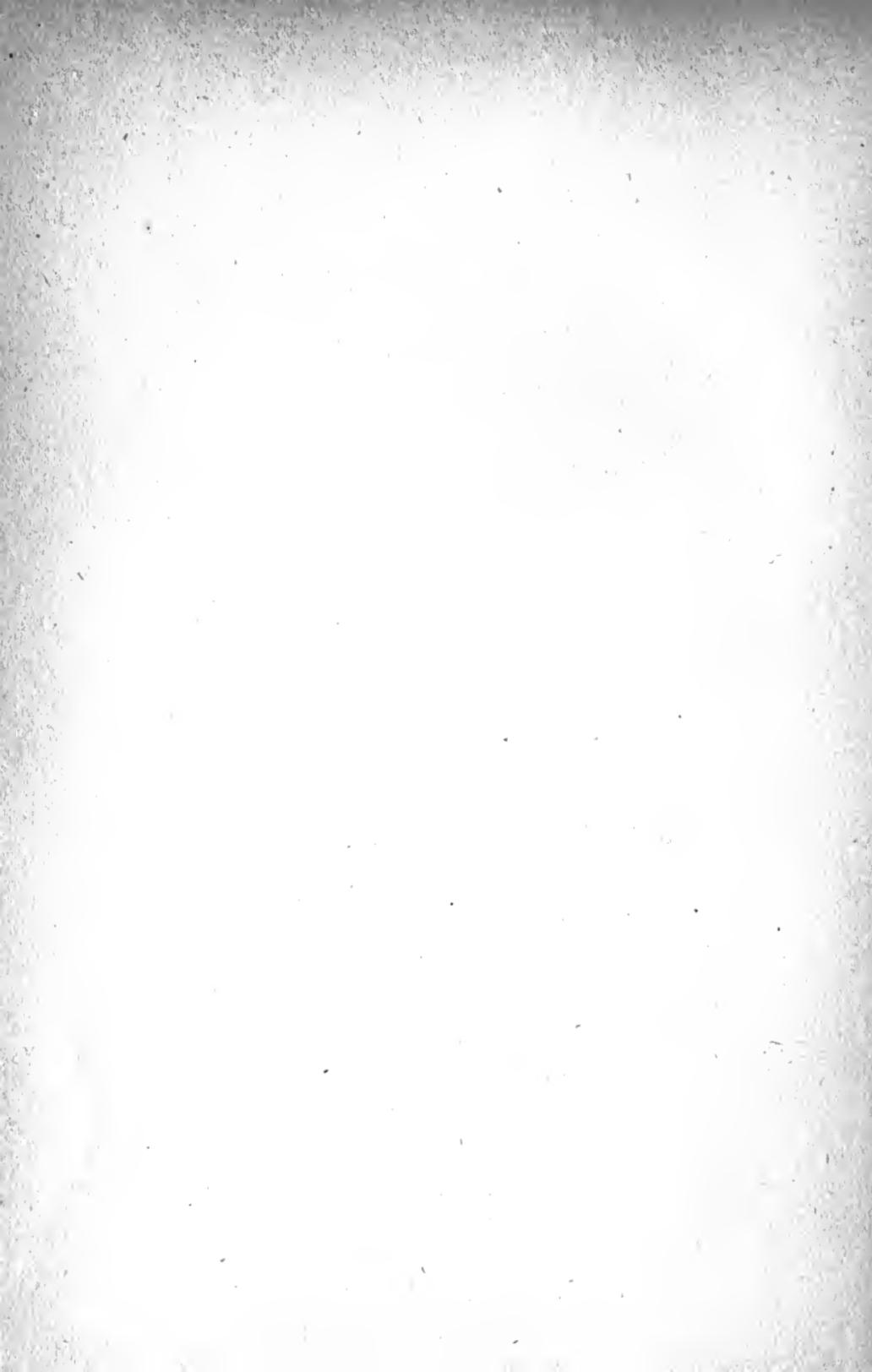
When the Heavens have plighted troth to Earth, and the
Love Divine is there ?

The Song we sing is the Starry Song that rings for an
endless Day,

The endless Day is the Light that dwells on the Love that
passeth away,

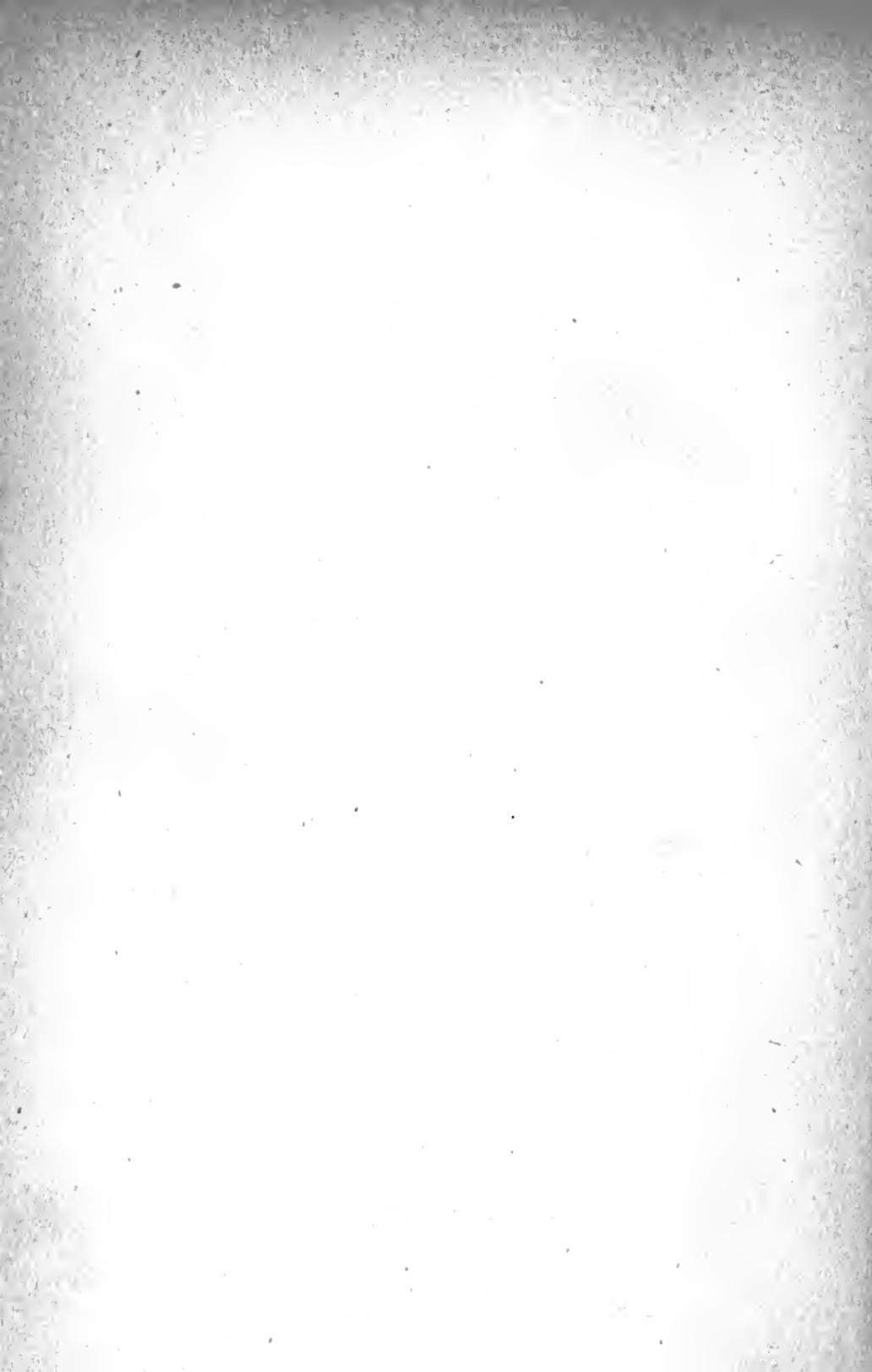
The Love that ever passeth away is the Love (like thine
and mine !)

That evermore abideth on in the heart of the Love Divine !



L'ENVOI.

“I END AS I BEGAN.”



L'ENVOI.

I END as I began,
 I think as first I thought ;
 Woe worth the world, if Man
 Only of dust is wrought,
 Only to dust must go
 After his life's brief span ;—
 I think so still, and so
 I end as I began.

When first I learnt to know
 The common strife of all,
 My boy's heart shared the woe
 Of those who fail and fall,
 For all the weak and poor
 My tears of pity ran,—
 And still they flow, ev'n more
 Than when my life began !

I revered from the first
 The Woman-Soul divine,
 (Mother, that faith was nurst
 On that brave breast of thine !)
 Pointing the heavenward way,
 The angel-guide of man,
 She seems to me to-day
 As when my faith began !

Revolter, sword in hand,
 Friend of the weak and worn,
 A boy, I took my stand
 Among the Knights forlorn ;
 Eager against the Strong
 To lead the martyr'd van,
 I strive 'gainst Lust and Wrong
 As when the fight began !

Never to bow and kneel
 To any brazen Lie,—
 To love the worst, to feel
 The least is ev'n as I,—
 To hold all fame unblest
 That helps no struggling man,—
 In this, as in the rest,
 I end as I began !

The creeds I've cast away
 Like husks of garner'd grain,
 And of them all this day
 Does never a creed remain ;
 Save *this*, blind faith that God
 Evolves thro' martyr'd Man :
 Thus, the long journey trod,
 I end as I began !

I dream'd when I began
 I was not born to die,
 And in my dreams I ran
 From shining sky to sky ;—

And still, now life grows cold
And I am grey and wan,
That infant's Dream I hold,
And end as I began !



PROSE NOTE.

THE resolution to fuse the various poems here printed into one homogeneous book, under one title, *The New Rome*, originated in a suggestion of Mr. Herbert Spencer, that the author should devote himself to a "satire on the times."

"There is an immensity of matter calling for strong denunciation and display of white hot anger," Mr. Spencer wrote, "and I think you are well capable of dealing with it. More especially I want some one who has the ability, with sufficient intensity of feeling, to denounce the miserable hypocrisy of our religious world, with its pretended observances of Christian principles, side by side with the abominations which it habitually assists and countenances. In our political life, too, there are multitudinous things which invite the severest castigation,—the morals of party strife, and the ways in which men are, with utter insincerity, sacrificing their convictions for the sake of political and social position."

Urged by this great authority, I did attempt (as may be gathered from the introductory Dialogue of this book) to write a Satire, but I soon found that I lacked the necessary equipment, and was drifting into mere imitation of defunct masters. Moreover, I was only pretending to be in a passion. In point of fact, I had no "hate" in me; I was too disheartened and sad, and too sorry for poor Humanity.

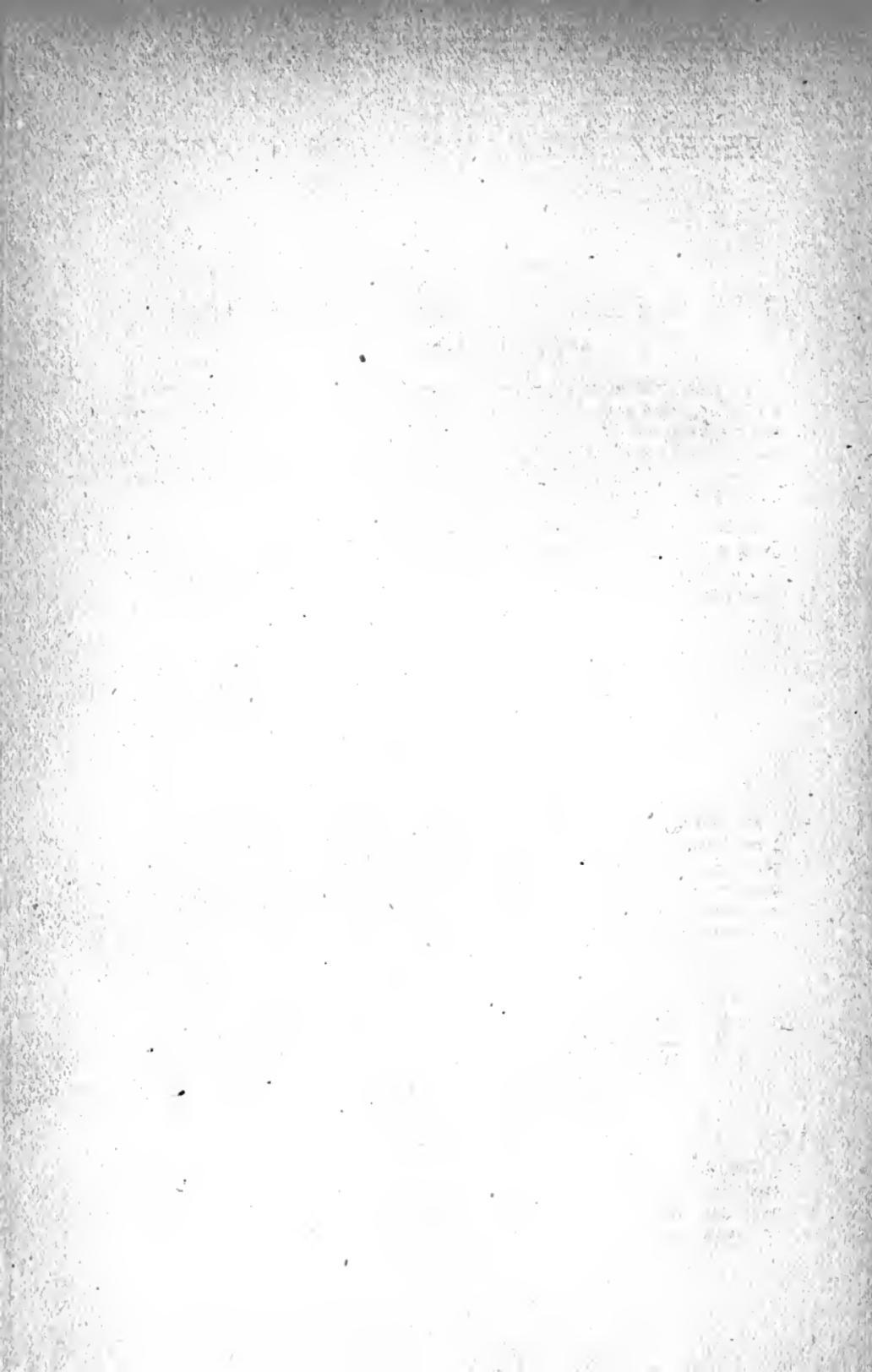
The longer I lived, too, the more clearly I saw the hopelessness of mere denunciation. Rating priests and politicians for their inadequacy was simply repeating one of the very few blunders made by the gentlest and most benign of philanthropists. It was cursing the Barren Fig Tree!

Then the Devil came to my assistance, the Æon, whom I had found to be the spirit of supreme Love and Pity, the Soul of carnal Light and Knowledge, struggling to dispel the cosmic darkness, and curst by all the priests of all the creeds for so doing. Inspired by him, I proceeded to complete my picture of *The New Rome* in the series of detached poems which I have now printed. I had been taught by sharp experience that such poems were not *wanted* by the public, that all modern Society expected from its poets was a little verbal music and a great deal of acquiescence and patriotic sentiment. The critic clamoured for moral mannerisms and "beautiful ideas." The middle classes wanted amiable platitudes, and the governing classes wanted to be let alone. For a verse-writer to be a thinker and a pioneer, in revolt against political and religious abominations, was regarded as an impertinence; his business was to twang the lyre or strum the banjo, leaving politics to the thieves and thinking to the philosophers. To tell the truth, or what seemed to me to be the truth, would please no one but my friend the Devil. Well, my diabolical instinct was too strong for me, and this book is another proof that I am past all ordinary salvation. If I must go to Hell for writing out my mature convictions, and for disregarding the Literary Licensing Authorities, why then (to quote John Mill) to Hell I will go. Better men and nobler poets have been

sent thither before me. They report, curiously enough, that Hell is now the only place where anybody believes in Heaven.

Some of the poems contained in this volume have already appeared in magazines and newspapers, *e.g.*, "Justinian" in the *Contemporary Review*, "The New Buddha" in the *North American Review*, the section called "The Last Christians" in the *Buchanan Ballads*, and several of the brief topical pieces in the *Star*. The bulk of the work, however, is now published for the first time. The title is self-explanatory, but the close parallel between our own period and that of the Roman Empire in the time of Juvenal will be best appreciated by those familiar with the works of the great Roman satirist.

R. B.



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