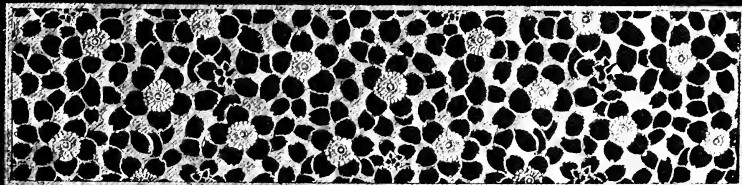


SILVER STORE

BARING GOULD





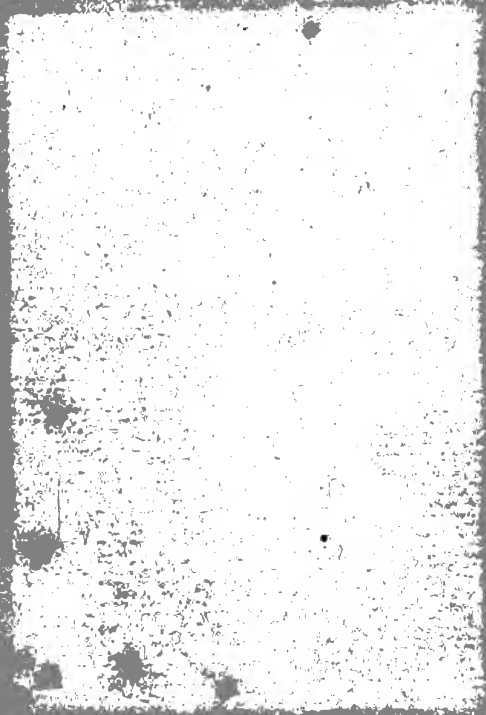
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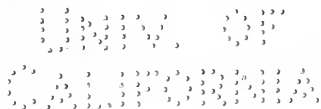
COLLECTED FROM

MEDLÆVAL CHRISTIAN AND
JEWISH MINES.

BY

S. BARING-GOULD, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF 'CURIOUS MYTHS OF THE MIDDLE AGES,'
ETC.



London :

W. SKEFFINGTON & SON, 163, PICCADILLY.

1882.

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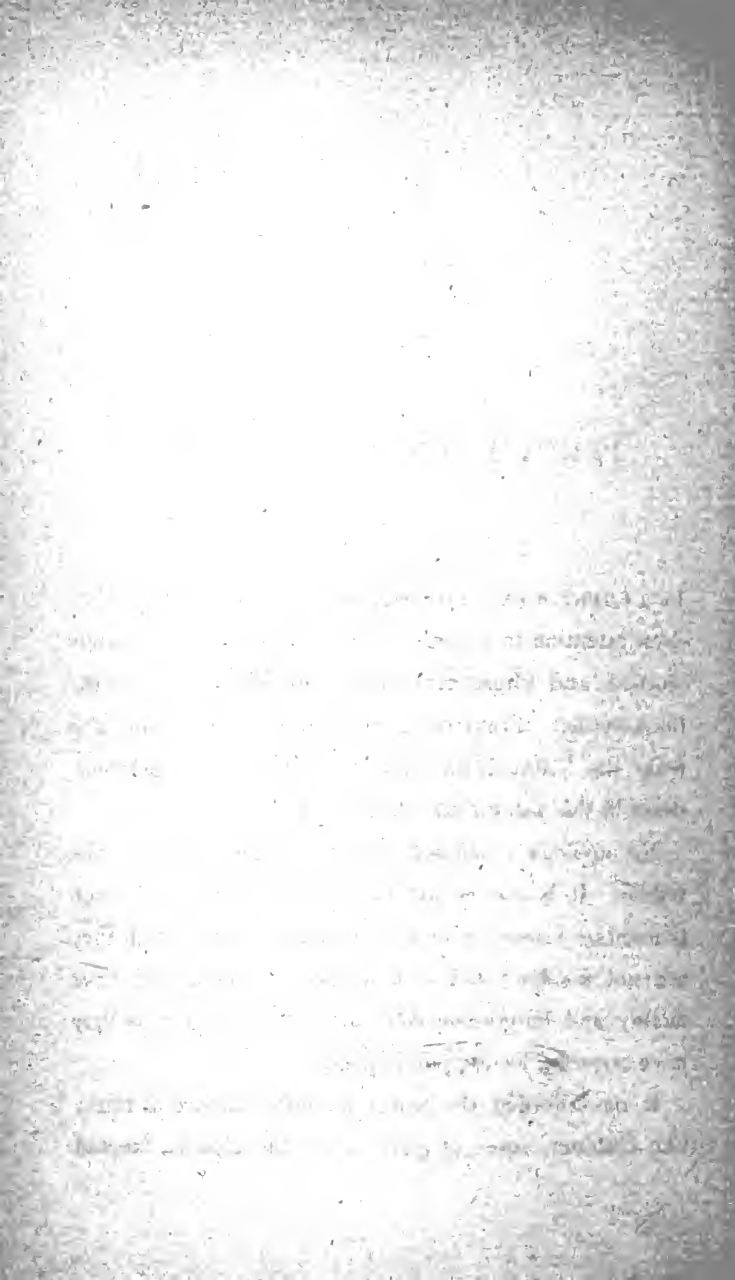
DEDICATED

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE DOWAGER VISCOUNTESS DOWNE.





PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

IN a former work, 'Post-Mediæval Preachers.' the author drew attention to a class of ancient writers who are rarely studied, and whose very names are known only to the book-hunter. From these and kindred sources, and also from the Talmud, the majority of the legends and anecdotes in this volume have been drawn.

No apology is offered for introducing them to the public. It is not in the power of many to toil through ponderous tomes, written in languages with which they are not familiar; and it is proper for those who have facility and leisure for this study, to employ what they have acquired for the public good.

It has afforded the writer no little pleasure to bring, like Goldner, roses of gold out of the gloomy, tangled

overgrowth of Mediæval fancy and superstition, in the hopes that the drudgery and routine of nineteenth century life may not have dulled the keenness of public perception of the beautiful and pure and true.

Although the sources whence some of these tales have been drawn are not strictly speaking Mediæval, yet the writers from whose volumes they have been immediately derived, did not invent the stories, but took them from earlier writers. In such cases as the originals have not been accessible to me, I have given the reference to the later compilation.

Some may object to the introduction of lighter pieces at the end of the book ; but the ' Silver Store ' would not have fairly represented the genial, laughter-loving, as well as moral and devout temper of the ages which invented these tales, had the element of grotesqueness been excluded. The droll and the lovely were strangely intermixed and wonderfully blended in the Mediæval mind, as is instanced in the architectural masterpieces of the middle ages, where the quaint gargoyle harmonizes with the angel and the flower.

Two or three of the humorous pieces at the end of the volume certainly hit the ladies rather hard. It must be

remembered by forbearing and forgiving woman, that the perpetrators of these stories were confirmed old bachelors.

Lest the writer should be supposed to sympathise with these ungenerous attacks, he has appended in the notes the originals on which the verses are based, which will clear him of the imputation of having invented these libels, and will afford the curious choice specimens of monkish Latin.

Let the fair sex remember also, that, where the writer has been free to express his own sentiments, as in Dr. Bonomi, he has not spared the lords of creation, and that compensation is offered in the former part of the volume. Surely Beruriah and Ruth will make amends for Mrs. Malone and the Judge's wife. A few of the pieces in the 'Silver Store' have already appeared in 'Fraser's Magazine,' and one in 'Temple Bar.'

DALTON, THIRSK

March 1, 1868.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

The author of these verses entirely disclaims to be a poet ; he has done nothing more than versify sundry legends and anecdotes that he has come across in his reading, in hopes that in this form they may give pleasure to those who are not exacting in their demands. They were written and published fourteen years ago, and have gone out of print. A few additional pieces have been added, but none of more recent origin, as none have been written more recently. The sources from which these tales have been drawn are inaccessible to most readers, and this serves as the author's apology for their introduction.

LEW TRENCHARD, DEVON,

March, 1882.

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THE
CANTON
The Silver Store.

THE DEVIL'S CONFESSION.

CÆSARIUS HEISTERBACHENSIS,

De Miraculis et Visionibus sui Temporis, lib. iii. c. 26. A.D. 1230.

THROUGH the tall minster windows of Cologne
The flaming saffron of the evening shone ;
A golden dove, suspended in the choir,
It turned into a bird of living fire,
 Floating above the sacramental shrine.
It was the evening of that Maundy night,
When, in the ghastly glimmering moonlight,
The Saviour prostrate fell in sweat of blood,
And by His side an awe-struck angel stood,
 Wiping the pain-drops from the face divine.
In the confessionals, from hour to hour,
Sat the priests, wielding the absolving power,

And penitents were thronging all the fane,
Seeking release from the long gnawing pain
Of conscience poisoned by the tooth of sin.
And many a sob broke out upon the still
Dim air, and sent an answering thrill
Through unlocked hearts ; and, praying on their knees,
They bent, and waited their turn of release
From horrors haunting the waste soul within.

A little space apart, with restless eyes,
Upon his face a blank look of surprise,
And on his brow a shadow of great dread—
Not kneeling, not erect, with out-thrust head—
Stood a mute stranger in a nook of gloom,
Where lay a prelate with a seven-clasped book,
And, in one hand, a floreate pastoral crook,
Sculptured in alabaster on his tomb.
The stranger's dress was carved with antique slash,
Around his waist was knotted a red sash,
And in his bonnet danced a scarlet plume.
He was a fallen spirit. Now he saw,
With a wild flutter of hope, hate, and awe,
Souls that were blackened with guilt's deepest stain
Pass to their shriving, and come forth again

Assoiled and white ; then caught a distant ring
Of angels chanting, 'To the Lamb be praise
Who from the Book of Death doth sins erase
With His own blood ! O ecstasy untold !
When brought the lost sheep back into the fold,
And found the coin marked with the image of the King.'

He thought, 'If these from chains are sent forth free,
Can there, O can there be a chance for me ?
That I, who long from Heaven have outcast been,
I who the joys of Paradise have seen,
Flowing from union with a holy God ;
That I, who tasted have the woes of Hell,
Since before Michael's flashing lance I fell
And all the passages of gloom have trod,
Where burns the fire of an undying Hate,
Burning to strangle, scorch, and suffocate,
And Envy's worm feeds ever ; where,
Horror of all, is unrelieved Despair ;
That I, like these, may also go forth shriven,
Once more become a denizen of Heaven !'

When the last foot was gone, and all the aisle
Was silent, he stepped forth with leer of guile,

And, gliding down to a confessional, brushed
In by a priest in meditation hushed,

And said :

‘To thee will I uncloset my sin
Of lawless thought, and word, and evil deed,
That I, of all the consequences freed,

When the bright doors are open, may pass in.”

Then said the priest, ‘Begin, in God's trine Name.’

‘I have a hitch of speech, and cannot frame

The words in German.’

‘Then in thine own tongue.’

The Devil muttered, with a sort of scoff :

‘Nomine Dagon, Beelzebub, Ashtaroth.

My sins, O father ! are of deepest dye,

They bar me out from tranquil courts on high,

Where endless anthems to my God are sung.’

Then from his lips was his confession hissed ;

It was of crimes a long appalling list.

But scarce had he advanced a little way

Ere the confessor ordered, angry : ‘Stay !

Thou art not kneeling, son, that I can see.’

‘Father, there's something crooked in my knee.

‘Go on then,’ said the priest, in lower tone.

‘I've sinned exceedingly, through fault my own,

Have wakened up in peaceful families strife,
Have urged the husband on to hate the wife,
 And the child bade against its parents rise.
The thief I prompted to his villany ;
The adult'rous flame was kindled hot by me ;
 I turned the glances of malignant eyes ;
As sower, sowed in families mistrust ;
And Friendship cankered I with envy's rust ;
The murderer I prompted to his deed,
I roused the insatiable money-greed—
Men's eyes I dazzled with the blink of gold,
And taught that Heaven could be bought and sold ;
 And faith I staggered, planting weeds of doubt.
The sland'rous lie by me was deftly wrought ;
Pure minds I sullied with polluting thought,
 Working like leaven.'

 Here fiercely he laughed out,
A hideous burst of wild discordant laughter
Shaking the wall, and quivering in each rafter,
 And flung in echoes all along the roof.
The old confessor starting, terrified,
Said : ' In the sacred name of Him who died,
Profane one ! outrage not the holy rite !'
' Pardon me, father, pray ; my breast I smite.

I have convulsions, but at thy reproof
The fit is past. And now let me proceed.'
Then he unfolded many a godless deed,
And muttered on an hour, and was not done,
So the confessor stopped him, saying, 'Son,
Thou couldst not crowd these many actions in
A hundred years of unremitted sin.'

'A hundred times ten hundred, rather say,
Labouring at crime, unflagging, night and day,
Through all the ages since the hour I fell.'
Shuddered the priest and made the holy sign,
'In the Name of God, and of His Son divine,
Who art thou? answer.'

'A spirit lost of hell.

The priest leapt up with an affrighted cry:
'Angels of Jesus, stand me succouring by.'
Then he relapsed, and laid aside his dread:
'Why hast thou sought this sacrament?' he said
'Wherefore these horrors to my ear reveal?'
'I saw thee vested with a wondrous might,
To make the sons of darkness heirs of light,
Blackest of souls become as drifted snow;
And, to the sentence of the priest below
The Judge of all things setteth to His seal.

Then thought I : Oh ! if shattered were my chain,
I might the gates of Paradise regain.
Say, is there any gleam of hope for me ?'

'I know the mercy of the Crucified
Is very lofty, deep, exceeding wide ;
Then if thy sorrow only be sincere,
In the Lord's name, I bid thee have no fear ;
The blood of Christ will reach as far as thee.'

'Father, why question thou my strong desire
To fly the abysses of eternal fire,
And from keen misery obtain release,
And refuge in the home of endless peace ?
There comes a thrill on me, as now I grope,
With feeble glimmer for a thread of hope.'

'Son, ere I utter the absolving word,
Of thy contrition I must be assured ;
Therefore on thee a penance I impose.'

'Give me ten thousand of acutest woes,
And from my purpose, mark you, if I swerve,
Bid me be bound upon a flaming wheel,
Set with the sharpest blades of tempered steel,

Bid it revolve in fire at whirlwind speed,
Parch me, and lacerate, and make me bleed
And suffer with the finest mortal nerve.
Turn into flaming drops my coursing tears,
Bid me thus writhe through fifty thousand years,
And I will hug the woe and not repine.'

'Son,' said the pastor, 'no such test be thine.
As thou didst fall through thy unbounded pride,
Bow to the figure of the Crucified

But once, and utter with a broken sigh,—
"I am not worthy to look up to heaven ;
Oh, be free pardon to the rebel given."

'What?' said the Devil, with an angry cry,
'Bow to a God so lost to sense of shame,
As to take human nature and man's name !
Bow to a God who could himself demean
To suck the breast, and sweep the kitchen clean,
And saw up chips for Joseph ? One who died
Upon a gallows with a mangled side !

Ha ! when another twist of Fortune's wheel
Would have sent me up, and cast Him below !
Ha ! To the Son of Mary shall I bow ?'

And with a curse, he turned upon his heel.

THE BUILDING OF S. SOPHIA. (1)

JUSTINIAN, Emperor and Augustus, bent
 Upon Byzantium's embellishment,
 Whilst musing, sudden started up, and cried :
 'There is no worthy minster edified
 Under the Ruler of earth, sea and skies,
 The One eternal, and the only wise.
 Great Solomon a temple built of old
 To the Omnipotent, at cost untold.
 Great was his power, but mine must his surpass
 As ruddy gold excels the yellow brass.
 I too a costly church will dedicate,
 To preach God's Majesty and tell my state.'

Then called the Emperor an artist skilled,
 With sense of beauty and proportions filled,
 And said, 'In Wisdom's name I bid thee build.

Built of the best, best ways, and make no spare,
The cost entire my privy purse shall bear.
Solomon took gifts of gold, and wood, and stone,
But I, Justinian, build the Church alone.
Then go, ye heralds ! forth to square and street,
With trumpet blare, and everywhere repeat,
That a great minster shall erected be
By our august, pacific Majesty ;
And bid none reckon in the work to share,
For we ourselves the entire expense will bear.'
And as Justinian lay that night awake,
Weary, and waiting for white day to break,
The thought rose up, ' Now when this flesh is dead,
My soul, by its attendant spirit led,
Shall hear the angel at the great gate call,
What ho ! Justinian comes, magnificent,
Who to the Eternal Wisdom Uncreate,
A church did build, endow, and consecrate,
The like of which by man was never trod :
Then rise, Justinian ! to the realm of God.

Now day and night the workmen build ; apacé
The church arises, full of form and grace ;

The walls upstart, the porch and portals wide
Are traced, the marble benches down each side,
The sweeping apse, the basement of the piers,
The white hewn stone is laid in level tiers.
Upshoot the columns, then the arches turn,
The roof with gilded scales begins to burn.
Next, white as mountain snow, the mighty dome
Hangs like a moon above the second Rome.
Within, mosaic seraphs spread their wings.
And cherubs circle round the King of Kings,
On whirling wheels, besprent with myriad eyes ;
And golden, with gold hair, against blue skies,
Their names beside them, twelve Apostles stand,
Six on the left, and six on the right hand.
And from an aureole of jewelled rays,
The Saviour's countenance doth calmly gaze.
Fixed is the silver altar, raised the screen,
A golden network prinked red, blue, and green,
With icons studded, hung with lamps of fire ;
And ruby curtained round the sacred choir.
Then, on a slab above the western door,
Through which, next day, the multitude shall pour,
That all may see and read, the sculptors grave :—
' This House to God, Justinian Emperor gave.'

And now, with trumpet blast and booming gong
Betwixt long lines of an expectant throng,
The imperial procession sweeps along.
The saffron flags and crimson banners flare
Against the sweet blue sky above the square.
In front, the walls of Hagia Sophia glow,
A frost of jewels set in banks of snow.

Begemmed, and purple wreathed, the sacred sign
Labarum moves, the cross of Constantine.
Then back the people start on either side,
As ripples past a molten silver tide
Of Asian troops in polished mail ; next pass
Byzantine guards a wave of Corinth brass.
And then, with thunder tramp, the Varanger bands
Of champions gathered from grey northern lands,
Above whom Odin's raven flaps its wing ;
And, in their midst, in a gold-harnessed ring
Of chosen heroes, on a cream-white steed
In gilded trappings, of pure Arab breed,
To dedicate his church doth Cæsar ride
In all his splendour, majesty, and pride.
With fuming frankincense and flickering lights,
The vested choir come forth as he alights.

Now shrill the silver clarions loud and long,
And clash the cymbals, bellows hoarse the gong,
A wild barbaric crash. Then on the ear
Surges the solemn chanting, full and clear :
'Lift up your heads ye gates, and open swing,
Ye everlasting doors before the King !'
Back start the silver valves—in sweeps the train,
Next throng the multitude the sacred fane.

Justinian enters, halts a little space,
With haughty exultation on his face,
And, at a glance, the stately church surveys.
Then reads above the portal of the nave—
'This House to God, Euphrasia widow gave.'
'What ho !' he thunders, with a burst of ire,
As to his face flashes a scarlet fire ;
'Where is the sculptor ? Silence, all you choir !
Where is the sculptor ?'

Fails the choral song,
A hush falls instant on the mighty throng.
'Bring forth the sculptor who yon sentence wrought ;
His merry jest he'll find full dearly bought.'

Then fell before him, trembling, full of dread,
The graver. 'Cæsar, God-preserved !' he said,

‘ I carved not that ! exchanged has been the name
From that I chiselled. I am not to blame.
This is a miracle,—no mortal hand
Could banish one and make another stand,
And on the marble leave nor scar nor trace,
Where was the name deep cut, it did efface.
Beside the letters, Sire ! the stone is whole.’
‘ Ha !’ scoffed the Emperor, ‘ now by my soul,
I deemed the age of marvels passed away !’
Forth stepped the Patriarch with, ‘ Sire, I pray,
Hearken ! I saw him carve, nor I alone,
Thy name and title which have fled the stone ;
And I believe the finger was Divine
Which set another name and cancelled thine—
The finger that, which wrote upon the wall
Belshazzar’s doom, in Babel’s sculptured hall ;
The finger that, which cut in years before,
On Sinai’s top, on tables twain, the Law.’

Justinian’s brow grew dark with wrath and fear :
‘ Who is Euphrasia, widow, I would hear,
This lady who my orders sets at naught,
And robs me of the recompense I sought.
Who is Euphrasia ?’

But none spake a word.

‘What! of this wealthy lady have none heard?’

Again upon the concourse silence fell,

For none could answer make, and tidings tell.

‘What! no man know! Go some the city round,

And ask if such be in Byzantium found.’

Then said a priest, and faltered: ‘Of that name

Is one, but old and very poor, and lame,

Who has a cottage close upon the quay;

But she, most surely, Sire, it cannot be.’

‘Let her be brought.’ Then some the widow seek

And lead the aged woman, tottering, weak,

With tattered dress, and thin white straying hair,

Bending upon a stick, and with feet bare.

‘Euphrasia,’ said the monarch sternly, ‘speak!

Wherefore didst thou my strict commandment break

And give, against my orders, to this pile?’

The widow answered simply, with faint smile,

‘Sire! it was nothing, for I only threw

A little straw before the beasts which drew

The marble from the ships, before I knew

Thou wouldst be angry. Sire ! I had been ill
Three weary months, and on my window-sill
A little linnet perched, and sang each day
So sweet, it cheered me as in bed I lay,
And filled my heart with love to Him who sent
The linnet to me ; then, with full intent
To render thanks, when God did health restore,
I from my mattress pulled a little straw
And cast it to the oxen that did draw
The marble burdens—I did nothing more.'

'Look !' said the Cæsar, 'read above that door !
Small though thy gift, it was the gift of love,
And is accepted of our King above ;
And mine rejected as the gift of pride
By Him who humble lived and humble died.
Widow, God grant hereafter, when we meet,
I may attain a footstool at thy feet !'

THE CURSING HOUR.

A TALMUDIC LEGEND.

CONVULSED, with frequent moan,
 Jehoshua hid alone,
 And wept and shuddered in the gloom,
 Concealed in a secluded room.
 And bitterly he cried,
 "Would God that I had died
 A little infant on the breast
 Of my sweet mother, now at rest."
 About his knee
 Passionately
 He knit his hands, and rocking, said,
 "Tranquillity is with the dead."
 Then wailed, "The anguish and the tears,
 The gibes, the insults, borne for years,
 The bruised spirit, and the pain

Of wounded pride.”
Then frantically, once again,
“ Would I had died !
Ill-used and spurned of Christian feet,
And spat upon in every street,
And made to grovel in the dust ;
Away from seats of justice thrust.
To-day as I stole out,
A frenzied rabble rout
Assailed the helpless, aged Jew ;
And here I cower, crushed through and through
The marrow of my soul.
The insults they did roll
On me !—And, placid, all the while
That I was hunted through the town,
Tortured and faint,—with beaming smile
The yellow sun looked down.
Oh, sun ! oh, sun !
That once did lighten on the plain
Of Mamre, whereon 'midst the slain
Stood Abraham, the victory won !
Oh, burnished ball that hung
O'er Miriam as she sung
With tinkling timbrel in her hand

The song of triumph, on the strand
 Strewn with the Gentile foe !
 That in the sky did'st glow,
And fight for Joshua ! That shone
On the refulgent ivory throne
 Of Solomon !
 Oh, sun ! oh, sun !
Accursed globe of fire ! I hate
The sun that could, and would not sate
 My vengeance on the throng,
Whilst I was writhing in my wrong,
 And I a Jew !
 From out the blue
It looked, and saw, and smiled ;
An Eastern I, the sun's own child !
But I have heard the Mischna say
That at the cockcrow, ere the day
Shall bud, if son of Abram call
On God to curse, that curse will fall.
And I shall watch through hours of gloom,
 Gathered upon my bed,
Awaiting hungrily the hour of doom,
 On every Gentile head,
To bid a blight descend, to impetrate

A lingering death on all who hate
The forlorn Jew."

And thus the wrathful Hebrew sate
With knitted fingers, scowling, late,
Whilst fell the dew.

And slowly slid the watches by,
The violet of the evening sky
Had deepened into indigo.

The mist was like a sheet of snow
Upon the pastures lying low.

The corncrake in the herbage wet,
The sighs that in the thorn-hedge fret,
The nightingale, the river's rush,
Alone disturb the solemn hush.

The constellations in their rank
Arose or stood, or wheeled or sank,

And Venus, like a tear,
A tear of light from heaven's eye,
Went trickling down the western sky.

For call of chanticleer
Jehoshua waited on his bed
And mumbled woes, with drooping head.
The moon arose, a sickle bright,
And flashed the river into light,

And sent a silver gleam
To where the Hebrew crouched, and wrote
A "Salem, peace!" where'er it smote.
Jehoshua from his mattress sprung,
Together both the shutters flung
 To check the stainless beam.
 Then moaning shrunk away,
 "O come, do not delay,
Thou slow approaching moment, come,
Wherein to recompense the sum
Of Gentile trespass with so dire
A curse that it shall gnaw like fire
Their very marrow—deafening ears,
And blinding eyes with scalding tears,
And vitals wringing with sharp pain,
Poisoning each muscle, nerve, and vein."
His fevered, bitter tongue rehearsed
These imprecations, to allay the thirst
Of his resentment ; whilst the night,
Type of all troubles, drew towards light.
 And as the cockcrow hour,
 Fraught with such deadly power,
Approached, a cooler air awoke
And o'er the earth its breezes broke,

And fanned the face of Nature fair,
Bringing refreshment everywhere.
Then on Jehoshua's temples fell
A languor irrepressible.
And, as a slender vap'rous thread,
That plays about a mountain's head,
Now gathers strength, and slowly glides
Its hazy reefs adown the sides,
And torrent, crag, and gully hides ;
So soft and slow about the brain,
Where all was virulence and pain,
 A soothing slumber slid,
 And gently hid
With its grey curtain every thought,
And purposes reduced to naught.

Aloft, above a ragged nest
Where stands the solemn stork at rest,
And crowns the roof of russet tile,
Again appears the golden smile ;
 The night is done,
 Returns the sun.
Then 'twixt the shutters shot a ray
Brilliant and warm, where sleeping lay,

Jehoshua, with breathing calm,
And placid brow, and either palm
Upon the other, and his cheek
Thereon reposed. Then suddenly he woke

And started up and spoke :—

“The hour, the opportunity
To curse, are passed from me.

Fled is my wrath.”

Then looking forth,

Descried the freshened earth, the dew
That wet the herbs, the brighter hue

Upon the flowers,

The sparkling showers

Of diamond drops from off the trees
That scattered in the morning breeze.

“Throughout the night, ay ! at the time

When curses fall—from the sublime

The Eternal, blessings shed. The door

Of heaven opens to outpour

Good gifts on earth, not to inhale

Our prayers of hate, and make avail

The vengeful curse. From Paradise

At cockcrow flies a seraph ; from his eyes

The morning flashes, from his wings

He drops of living water flings,
His rainbow pinions waft
The renovating draught,
All odorous from celestial fields,
That health and hope and vigour yields.

What ! should I stay
Him on his way,
And steep his plumes in gall,
Pollute the airs that fall
From his seraphic wings, and bid
His eyes with lightnings flash !”

Then slid
The humbled Hebrew to his knee,
His face ashamed he hid ;
And said, “ Jehovah, praise to Thee,
For sending slumber to restrain
Me from my purpose vain.”

ROBIN REDBREAST'S CORN.

In a quiet sheltered valley
Underneath a furzy hill,
Where their light from rocky ledges
Silver threads of water spill,

Patient Benedictine brothers
Thatch their cot with russet fern,
Singing 'Ave, Maris Stella!'
To the flowing of the burn.

They have come from southern regions
To the wastes of Finisterre,
Without scrip, or purse, or weapon,
Trusting in the might of prayer.

In a pleasant sunward hollow
Of the barren purple fell,
They have built a rustic chapel,
Hung a little tinkling bell.

There, alone in Christ believing,
Wait the brothers God's good time,
When shall spread the Gospel tidings,
Like a flood, from clime to clime.

Yonder is a Druid circle,
Where the priests dance on the dew,
Singing of Ceridwen's kettle,
And the ploughing of old Hu.

Now the brothers cut the heather,
Stack the turf for winter fire,
Wall about with lichened moorstones
The enclosure of their byre.

Next they drain a weedy marish,
Praying in the midst of toil,
And with plough of rude construction
Draw slight furrows through the soil.

Then seek wheat.—It was forgotten ;
All their labour seems in vain ;
The barbarian Kelts about them
Little knew of golden grain.

Said the Prior : ' God will help us
In this hour of bitter loss.'
Then, one spied a Robin Redbreast
Sitting on a wayside cross.

Doubtless came the bird in answer
To the words the Prior did speak,
For a heavy wheat-ear dangled
From the Robin's polished beak.

Then the brothers, as he dropped it,
Picked it up and careful sowed,
And abundantly in autumn
Reaped the harvest where they strewed.

Do you mark the waving glory
O'er the Breton hill-slopes flung?
All that wealth from Robin Redbreast's
Little ear of wheat has sprung.

Do you mark the many churches
Scattered o'er that pleasant land ?
All results are of the preaching
Of that Benedictine band.

Therefore, Christian, small beginnings
Pass not by with lip of scorn ;
God may prosper them, as prospered
Robin Redbreast's ear of corn.

THE RABBI JOACHIM. (1)

[*Talmud Berachoth*, ix. fol. 60.]

THE RABBI JOACHIM, no little sore
 At heart to see fair Bethlehem no more,
 Went forth with staff in hand, and drooping head,
 And locked his door.

The Rabbi Joachim, whate'er befell,
 Said: 'Man as God is not; he cannot tell
 What is the best for him; but what God doth,
 He doeth well.'

He had grown old with Miriam, and none
 Had seen them strive together. She was gone.
 The Rabbi smote his breast: 'God doeth well
 What He hath done.'

There was to Joachim a little child :
It died. The Rabbi looked to heaven and smiled.
'What my God doth, He doeth well,' he said,—
Reconciled.

Then there was famine, and the Rabbi fed
The starving poor with all his substance. Dead
Were all his kin. 'Why should I save?'
The old man said.

And now he parted from his home, to fare,
Far off, with nothing his, save clothes to wear,
A faithful dog, a little lamp of oil,
A book of prayer.

He journeyed till the setting of the light,
And then he sought a shelter for the night,
For tempest clouds rolled up from off the sea,
With vulture flight.

Unto a farm hard by he went, to pray
A lodging ; but they asked him : 'Can you pay ?'
'I have no single drachma.' They, scoffing, cried
'Away, away !'

Then, as they slammed the door, he turned his gaze
Upon the last, in rain expiring, rays,
And said, 'What God doth, He doeth well, I know,
Though dark His ways.'

He was constrained to creep beneath some trees,
Through which went whistling the awaking breeze.
He lit his lamp, and set his book of prayer
Upon his knees.

And from the book and flame the Rabbi drew
Some comfort, though the chill wind pierced through
His scanty clothing. Suddenly a gust
The lamp outblew.

The Rabbi sighed, and shuddering drew a fold
Over his bosom to keep out the cold :
'What God hath done is well, His reasons though
To us untold.'

And presently he heard a crash, a spring,
A howl that made the hollow forest ring.
A tiger seized his trusty dog ; and Joachim
Shrank shuddering.

The Rabbi Joachim a deep sigh heaved :
‘ Of every comfort here I am bereaved ;
Yet God doth well what He hath done, in Whom
I have believed.’

When the dawn lightened, the old man arose,
With the wet dripping from his sodden clothes,
And his teeth chattering, and his heart oppressed
With many woes.

He tottering went towards the farm again,
Thinking, ‘ They now will pity my great pain.’
When lo ! he found it empty, robbed, and all
Its inmates slain.

‘ Now,’ said the Rabbi gravely, ‘ I can tell
How the Lord wrought in each thing that befell,
And know I surely that whate’er God doth,
He doeth well.’

‘ Had I last night found here a home and bed,
I had this morn been lying with these dead.
The lamp-light, or the dog’s bark, would the murderers
To me have led.

‘ Our eyes are holden, and we cannot scan
The workings out of God’s mysterious plan ;
But all He doth is well, though unperceived
His thoughts by man.’

THE EMPTY SOCKET.

[Talmud Tamàd, p. 32 a.]

FOR ages on the High Priest's bosom lay
 The twelve-stoned Choschen, worn each solemn day,
 With ephod, zone, and mitre, dazzling bright
 With beryl, ruby red, and chrysolite,
 With violet amethyst, and emerald green,
 Carbuncle glowing with a vinous sheen,
 And jasper, topaz yellow, sardius black,
 Agate and onyx. Of the twelve did lack
 A sapphire, from its setting gone ;
 And yet, of all the priceless jewels there,
 There was not one in value might compare
 With that poor socket void of stone.
 When from captivity the people came
 To blessed Salem, wrecked by sword and flame,
 Upon Moriah's mount again arose
 Jehovah's temple, once more to enclose

The dedicated ornaments of old,
The ark, the seven-branched candlestick of gold,
The pontiff's vesture, and the shewbread table
Restored to God from idol feasts in Babel.

And as the aged Levites scrutinize
The vast accumulated sacred store
Of which the temple was despoiled of yore,
With throbbing bosoms and o'erflowing eyes,
They find that nothing lacketh, all is sound,
Vesture and vessels for each rite abound,
Save that a sapphire of the rarest size
Has vanished from the socket, set
In the refulgent carcanet.

Then through the land a trusty Elder wends;
And seeks a sapphire meet to grace
The breast of him who, sole of mortals, bends
Within the high and holiest place.
But vain his quest has proved. Without a stone
The Elder draweth nigh to Ascalon.

Dama Ben Nethina, a merchant, sate
Counting his jewels by the Eastern gate.
A Gentile he, and yet a man who trod,

Walking in twilight, in the track of God.
The Elder him saluted, and declared
His object, saying, "I have come prepared,
If I can find a sapphire to suffice,
With liberality to pay the price.
Hast thou perchance the jewel that I need?"
Then answered Dama, "Sir, I have indeed
A sapphire of a lustre and a hue
And size unrivalled the whole kingdom through."

Then Dama bid the elder rest a pace
Whilst he produced the jewel from the place
Where it was hidden safely.

Up the stair

The Gentile merchant lightly tripped to where
With closed shutters, in a darkened nook
His aged father lay, with palsy strook,
On cushions prostrate, from whose weary head
For night and day refreshing sleep had fled,
 And 'neath his pillow lay concealed
 The casket, double-locked and sealed.
Then Dama gliding softly through the room,
With eyes untutored to the sudden gloom,
Said gently, "Father, I have found at last

A purchaser—" then ceased, for sleeping fast
The sufferer lay the wearied temples pressed
The pillow in a placid lulling rest.
And Dama stood and watched his sire awhile,
With every feature brightened with a smile.
"The Jew must wait," he said; "I dare not take
The casket now, and risk his doze to break."
Then down the staircase glided.

"Gentle sir!

We must our traffic for a while defer,
I cannot bargain now."

The Israelite

Astonished answered, "Let me have a sight
Of this same sapphire."

"No, sir! not to-night."

"But I must ere to-morrow speed away.

A new moon waketh, ere the trumpets bray,
To tell its rising—I must start. I pray
Declare the value set upon the stone."

"For half a talent yield I it alone.

The price is high but just."—Upon him broke
The Hebrew, as he plucked his sleeve and spoke,
"Well, if in size and colour it beseem
The Choschen Mishpat, I shall hardly deem

The price excessive. Let my eyes
A moment rest upon the prize."
"To-morrow," Dama urged. Then in distress,
"To-night," the Elder answered, "I must press
To Salem, where we dedicate anew
The renovated fane to God the True,
The Wise, the Only. I require
For that solemnity but one sapphire,
And thou the stone possessest. Let me carry
The purchased gem away. I may not tarry."
The merchant pondered : "Shall I find again
A customer like this? And I would fain
Convert the stone to money."

So he went
Above once more, and o'er his father bent.
The sleeper lay with whitened locks outspread
Upon the bolster, one hand out of bed,
Thin and transparent ; on his cheek a balm,
And healthful blush ; his purple pulse was calm,
And gently heaved the breast in even sighs
Of sweet relief from long-borne agonies.
Like fevered earth that all the day hath lain
In sweltering heat, when night relieves her pain,
Entranced lies, with cool descending dew

Each vital fibre drenching through and through,
Inhales renewal after wasting fires,
And in sweet turn regenerate scent expires.
Then down again to where the elder stood
The merchant hurried, saying, "If I could
The sapphire I would sell;" and turning, hid
The tears suspended on his fluttering lid.
The Elder thinking that he sought a bid
Still higher, urged, "I have by me a store
Of silver. Dama, for the stone take more.
I offer now of silver talents twain,
If given the stone at once. Your hope is vain
If by delay you reckon to enhance
The price; for passed this day, passed too the chance."
"Two silver talents bid," did Dama muse;
"Twere madness such an offer to refuse.
Where else could I obtain so rare an offer?
I must, I will, this time remove the coffer."

But as he stood beside the old man's bed,
And saw upon his haggard cheek the glow,
And marked the wrinkles fading from the brow,
He had not courage to disturb his head.
For sweet to one all weary is the sleep

That o'er the jaded limbs doth slowly creep !
One instant Dama thrust his hand beneath
The pillow. Instantly the sleeper's breath
Came broken, and a painful flutter flew
Over his features. Cautiously withdrew
The son his hand, and sought the expectant Jew.
"It cannot be," he said. "You bid in vain :
For once, for all, the gem must mine remain."

And when in after time the reason known
Why Gentile Dama had withheld the stone,
Said Joshua, the priest, "No jewel rare
In all this breastplate is there to compare
With yonder socket of its jewel bare,
And ever may it empty stand, to be
Memorial meet of filial piety !"

THE TRIBUTE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

[Acta Sanct., Jan. T. II. p. 26—8.]

SAID Gondecar of Burgundy, “ My vassals, bring
The homage that is due to me, as to a king,
Let each present, as well, the tithe of corn and wine,
The tithe of all the produce, mine by right divine.”

In the mountains lived a prelate,
Bishop James of Tarantaise,
Teaching to the Alpine shepherds
Good to live and God to praise.

Poor was he, in sheepskin habit,
With a pastoral staff of birch,
For a palace a log chalet,
And a larch wood for a church.

Said a messenger, " Sir Bishop,
You must wend your way to town,
Gondecar demands his tribute,
Go not empty-handed down.

Tithe of vineyard, tithe of olive,
Tithe of flax, and tithe of corn,
Tithe of all the land produces,
Be by priest and peasant borne."

Said the Bishop, " I have nothing,
Grape or olive, corn or flax ;
See ! this Alpine region snowy,
Such productions wholly lacks."

" Speed thee natheless, holy Bishop,
But beware of empty hand,
Go to Gondecar, and bear him
Of the produce of the land."

Down the mountain sped the bishop ;
On before his ass did go,
Laden with a pair of panniers
Brimming o'er with Alpine snow.

Came S. James before the monarch,
Bowed, and did him homage meet,
Oped his panniers, poured his offering
Down before the royal feet.

Started Gondemar in fury,
Overset his regal chair :
“Vassals! traitors! ho! this snow-drift,
Sweep it from the purple stair.”

Calmly spake the gentle prelate,
Seeing with prophetic eyes,
“That which thou, O king, despisest,
Snow that on the mountain lies,

“Shall be deemed a dearest treasure
In the ages yet unfurled,
White, unsullied, sunlit, sleeping,—
To the toilers in the world.

“Best of medicine, cool refreshment
To fagged heart and brain, I trow,
White, unsullied, sunlit, sleeping
Sweeps and spires of Alpine snow.”

TURN AGAIN ! (2)

[*Talmud Jerusalem, Haggada ii. Halacha i*]

ELISHA BEN ABUJA, deeply skilled
 In mysteries of science, and a Rabbi filled
 With wisdom high and with great power of speech,
 And able mightily to expound and teach,
 Fell into doubt about the Holy Law,
 And, from the childlike faith he had before,
 From doubting little went to doubting more.
 Then broke the bonds, and cast the cords aside
 That bound him in the covenant to abide,
 And changed his name, and lived a Gentile life.

Then to the Rabbi, weeping came his wife,
 And said, 'When on my youth still hung the dew,
 Elisha Ben Abuja well I knew ;

But Gentile Acher cannot be the same,
Without the fathers' creed, with foreign name,
I must depart from him to whence I came.'

Then drew his father nigh, with silvery head
Bent low, and bending lower feebly said,
'I had a son of Levi's sacred line ;
Elisha was he hight, but none of mine
Is he hight Acher. Woe! I had a son ;
But these grey hairs bow to the grave, with none
To close my eyes for me, when I am gone.'

And next his mother, with a bitter cry,
Rent out her hair, and strewed it to the sky,
Wailing : 'As these thin locks from me have sprung,
And now are torn away, and from me flung,
So is my child. He to these eyes was light
In sweet old times, now I see only night.'

His pupil Meir alone to him remained,
He by the master's learning was restrained
From leaving ; for he said : 'He teacheth well,

His equal is not found in Israel ;
I eat the nut and cast aside the shell.'
And thus for five long years did Meir his seat
Retain, to listen at his teacher's feet ;
And all this while, the Holy Law of God
Was as a lantern to the way he trod.

It came to pass one Sabbath day, they went
Together forth, on mutual converse bent.
The apostate Acher on a horse did ride,
With his disciple treading at his side.
And thus they fared, till Acher turned his head,
And, glancing at his pupil, gravely said,
'I reckon, from the pacing of thy feet,
That thou hast reached the limit that is meet
To journey on the Sabbath. So refrain
From going further with me. Turn again.'

Then halted Meir, and looking in the face
Of his old master, said : 'Do thou retrace
The journey thou hast trod. Why shouldst thou roam
An exile from thy Faith, from thy True Home?
A Rabbi thou, and thou a reprobate !
Turn thee, Elisha ben Abuja ! Turn again !'

'I cannot,' answered, with a spasm of pain
The apostate Acher. 'It is all too late.
As I was riding by the prostrate wall
Of Salem, in the moonlight, I heard call
A doleful voice, that to my people cried,
"Return to God, ye sinners ; but abide
Thou, Acher, in thy sin. Thou knewest well
The way to Me, and witting, from Me fell."
Hearing that voice, I knew that I was lost,
And, in uncertainty no longer tossed,
Have burst through all restraints unto the last ;
And Hope is dead, my son—dead like the past.

Then cried the pupil, with distilling tear,
'O listen but one moment, master dear !
Here is a school, come with me through the door,
And hear the boys repeat the sacred lore
That they have learn'd ; perchance, some word may be
Levelled with hopeful promise, ev'n at thee.'
Then Acher from his saddle leapt, awhile
Stood at the school door, with a mournful smile
Upon his lips. But Meir, he entered in,
And elder boys addressing, said, 'Begin,
Recite the lessons ye this day have learned,

Each in your order, and in order cease.'
 Then to the tallest of the scholars turned,
 Who spake, 'Thus saith my God, There is no peace
 Unto the wicked.*'

So the shadow fell
 Deeper upon the apostate's soul. 'Ah! well,
 Thou second scholar,' said Meir, with his rod
 Pointing. He answered, 'Master, thus saith God,
 Why dost thou preach my laws, and wherefore take
 My statutes in thy mouth, my law to break,
 And cast my words behind thee? †

Then a moan
 Escaped him standing on the threshold stone,
 And Meir who heard it, with a faltering hand
 Marked out a third. Then answered him the boy:
 'False tongue that speakest lies, God shall destroy
 Thee from thy dwelling! from the living land
 Shall root thee out! ‡

A loud and bitter cry
 Burst from the apostate, and with haggard eye,
 And staggering feet, he turned him feebly round
 To leave, and caught the doorpost,—to the ground

* Is. lvii. 21.

† Ps. l. 16.

‡ Ps. lii. 5, 6.

Else had he fallen. Then a little child
Came bounding up—the youngest boy—and smiled
And said: ‘I know my lesson, master; let me run
Forth to the butterflies, the flowers, the sun!’
And so to Acher, in a chanted strain,
Repeated timidly, with bated breath:
‘He bringeth to destruction. Then He saith,
Children of men, I bid you—TURN AGAIN!’ *

Lo! when these words sank down on Acher’s ears
Forth from his heart leaped up a rush of tears,
And stretching forth his hands, as he did yearn
For something, with a glitter on his cheek,
Sobbing, and struggling in distress to speak,
Gasped forth at last—‘I will, I will return!’

Then unto him went Meir, and whispered low:
‘Elisha ben Abuja, do not go;
“Tarry this night, and it shall be at morn,
That He who is thy kinsman shall for thee
Accomplish what thou wilt and set thee free,
As the Lord liveth! Lie thee down till dawn.”’ †

* Ps. xc. 3.

† Ruth iii. 13.

And so Elisha with his hands outspread
Towards the ruined temple, fell. Into the sun—
His task accomplished—had the scholar run,
Leaving Elisha on the threshold dead.

POPE BONIFACE VIII. (3)

POPE BONIFACE with folded arms was pacing in the court,
With furrowed brows and knitted lips, and treadings quick
and short ;

He scarcely gave attention to the droning of the talk
Of prelate, prince, and cardinal accompanying his walk.
They told of bitter rivalry in politics and wealth
Between the faction Ghibelline and faction of the Guelf ;
How there was discord gathering, how enmity was rife,
How one side egged the other on to overt acts of strife ;
How bitter words of mockery were bandied to and fro,
And each was burning with desire to smite the mortal
blow,

And night and day incessantly, there sped some precious
life,
Sent forth, before God summoned it, by hired assassin's
knife ;

How from the sacred judgment-hall had justice taken
flight,
For there was judgment only given by party, not by
right.

A Cardinal Archbishop spoke: 'Pray Heaven from our
land
Will root the trait'rous Ghibelline with all his murd'rous
band,
And all his perjured judges too, and all his ill-won pelf !'
'Out on thee!' roared a nobleman; 'the traitor is the
Guelf.

The Guelf is ever spattering with blood the Italian soil,
Is robbing honest peasants of the object of their toil,
Is violating sacred fanes, is ruining all trade,—
Save that of the stiletto, mind ! and that is rarely paid.'
'Now silence!' cried the cardinal, with fiercely kindled
eye ;
'Back in thy throat, fell Ghibelline ! I hurl that damnèd
lie.'
'A lie ! Ha, ha ! Your excellence, who hatch the lies
yourself !
If men would find rare liars, they must search the ranks
of Guelf.'

‘Now mark!’ the ecclesiastic raged, ‘the day will come,
and must,

When Guelf shall break the Ghibelline, and stamp him to
the dust,

And beat his pride to powder!’

‘So! well done, Sir Priest. *His* pride!
Hurrah for Guelf humility!’ the scoffing noble cried.

‘I scorn you,’ said the Cardinal, ‘a base and beggar
crew.’

‘Please God,’ the noble answered him, ‘the Guelf shall
have his due.’

‘I to that supplication say my Amen gladly too!’

Then sudden stooped Pope Boniface, and without speak-
ing, thrust

His hands along the pavement, and scrabbled up the
dust.

Then rising, turned on noble and archbishop hot with ire,
His grey eye flashing lightning flakes, and launched these
words of fire :

‘Fond partisans, so mad with rage, I pray you, tell me
whence

The Guelf and Ghibelline arose, and, when they journey
hence,

To what must they return—I ask, both Ghibelline and
Guelf?

See, Ghibelline, this handful, and thou other, see thyself.
'Tis hence you sprung, to this return, when all this strife
is past.'

And in their faces, Boniface the dusty handfuls cast.

GOLDNER.

FROM out the hushed green forest
Came Goldner in a dream,
He stood a little space,
The sun upon his face
Did gleam.

His hair, like spun gold shining,
His dress as silver white,
He moved, the branches parting,
Into the full sunlight.
A fowler saw him coming
Towards his outspread net,
His feet the dewdrops scattering
And wet.

‘ Ah, ha ! The lad shall be
A servant unto me ! ’
The fowler thought ;
The string he drew,
The net upflew—
Goldner was caught.

A year and a day served Goldner,
And then his master bade,
‘ Go, lad ! and bring some token
That thou hast learned the trade.’
Went Goldner to the forest,
The sun was on his hair.
He sang, and, on the green sward
Laid the snare.

A finch with wings of silver,
And feathers burning gold,
The lad brought, saying, ‘ Master,
Behold ! ’

‘ Out, wizard ! ’ shrieked the fowler ;
‘ Such bird I will not see.
Away with thy enchantments
From me ! ’

Went Goldner to the forest,
And wandered day and night ;
The third morn from the shadows
He walked into the light.
A gardener saw him coming,
And pass the garden gate,
Among the sunflowers standing.
The man thought, quite elate,
‘The lad shall servant be
To me.’
The wicket snapped :
Goldner was trapped.

A year and a day served Goldner,
And then his master bade,
‘Fetch me a stock for grafting
From out the forest glade.
Went Goldner to the greenwood,
And brought a brier,
Whereon, like fire,
Flamed a rose of gold.
‘Master, behold !’

‘Out, wizard!’ shrieked the gardener,
‘Such rose I will not see;
Away with thy enchantments
From me!’

Went Goldner to the forest,
And wandered day and night,
The third morn from the shadows
He walked into the light.
Before him lay an ocean
Wimpling, translucent green,
Over the waters lay
A bright, quivering way
Of sunsheen.

And gallant ships passed sailing,
With painted pennants trailing,
And white sails flew
Over the blue,
Blue deep.
Along the sandy shore
Foam-wreaths, with muffled roar,
Did creep.

Into a boat, unheeding.

Walked Goldner, with his eyes
Fixed in a sort of rapture
On the skies.

The fisher cast the mooring,
The boat stood out to sea ;
'Now,' said the man, 'be servant
To me !'

He flung the hook till evening,
And then he Goldner bade :
'Try, lad, if thou art handy
At the trade.'

Then cast the hook young Goldner,
Down through the sea it flew.
He pulled, a weight was on it,
A jewelled crown updrew.
'All hail!' the fisher shouted,
'For he our king should be
Who the diadem should bring up
From purple deeps of sea.'
From every ship there echoed
The cry, 'God save the king !'
Church bells began to tinkle,
And happy folks to sing.

And cannons puffed and thundered,
And banners fluttered high,
And rockets started, powdering
With fire the evening sky.

Upon the prow stood Goldner,
The crown upon his hair
Dripping with salt sea-water,
His golden locks in the air
Flowing.

The west was all ablaze,
Upon the sun, his gaze
Rested silent and in amaze,
And his face glowing.

THE LITTLE SCHOLAR. (4)

[CÆSARIUS HEISTERBACHENSIS, lib. ii. c. 10.]

THERE went a little scholar
 With slow and lagging feet
 Towards the great church portal
 That opened on the street.

Without, the sun was shining ;
 Within, the air was dim ;
 He caught a waft of incense,
 A dying note of hymn.

He drew the crimson curtain,
 And cast a look inside,
 To where the sunbeam lightened
 The form of Him who died,
 Between Saint John and Mary
 On roodloft crucified.

The curtain fell behind him,
He stood a little while,
Then signed him with the water,
And rambled down the aisle,

Behind a great brown pillar
The scholar took his stand,
And trifled with the ribbon
Of the satchel in his hand.

His little breast was beating,
His blue eyes brimming o'er ;
Like April rains, his tears
Fell spangling on the floor.

An aged priest was passing ;
He noticed him, and said,
'Why, little one, this weeping,
This heavy hanging head ?'

'My father, O my father !
I've sinned,' said the child ;
'And have no rest of conscience
Till I am reconciled

'Then list to my confession'—
He louted on his knee—
'The weight of my transgression
Weighs heavily on me.'

But then a burst of weeping
And sobs his utterance broke,
The priest could not distinguish
A single word he spoke.

In vain were all his efforts,
For wildly tossed his breast,
He could not still the tumult,
With hands upon it pressed.

Then said the pastor gently,
'You have a little slate ;
Write on it the confession
You are powerless to relate.'

The child his satchel opened,
And strove his sins to note,
But still the tear-drops dribbled
As busily he wrote.

Now when the tale was finished,
He held it to the priest
With sigh, as from the burden
He felt himself released.

The old man raised the tablet
To read what there was set,
But could not, for the writing
Was blotted with the wet.

Then turned the aged confessor
Towards the kneeling boy,
With countenance all shining
In rapture of pure joy.

‘Depart in peace, forgiven,
Away with doubting fears!
Thy sins have all been cancelled
By the torrent of thy tears.’

THORKELL-MANI.

[‘Thorkell-Máni, the President, son of Thorstein, was a heathen, living a good life as far as his light went. In his death-sickness, he had himself brought out into the sunshine, and committed himself into the hands of the God who made the sun. He had also lived a clean life, better than many a Christian who knew better.’—*Landnáma Bok*, i. c. 9.]

I AM dying, O my children ! come around my bed,
 My feet are cold as ashes, heavy is my head ;
 You see me powerless lying—I, who was of old
 The scourge of evil-doers, Thorkell stout and bold.
 I cannot mount my war-horse, now I cannot wield
 My great blue sword there hanging rusting by my shield.
 Sons, look at these white fingers, quivering and weak,
 Without the power a slender sammet thread to break.
 My sons ! I have been asking whither I shall go,
 When this old body withers. Sons ! I do not know.
 There is a tale of Odin, sitting in Valhall,
 Who to a banquet summons those in strife who fall,

To drink and to be drunken, then to rise and fight,
To wound and to be wounded, be smitten and to smite.
But when a man is drawing to the close of life,
He yearns for something other than eternal strife ;
And it is slender comfort, when he craveth peace,
To hear of war and bloodshed that shall never cease.
But He the sun who fashioned in the skies above,
And who the moon suspended, surely must be Love.
Now therefore, O my children, do this thing I ask,
Transport me through the doorway in the sun to bask.
Upon that bright globe gliding through the deep blue sky,
Gazing—thus, and only thus, in comfort can I die.
For chambered here in darkness, on my doubts I brood,
But in the mellow sunlight I feel that God is good.
A God to mortals tender, the very Fount of light—
Not Odin, whose whole glory is to booze and fight.
What prospect opens to me, when gathered to the dust ?
I feel I the Creator of the sun may trust.
He lays that lamp of beauty in a western bed,
And every morn it liveth, rising from the dead.
And if the sun, a creature, can arouse the grain,
That like a corpse entombed long time in earth hath lain,
Then, surely, the Creator—wherefore be afraid ?—
Will care for man, the noblest creature He hath made.

Away with Thorr and Odin. To Him who made the sun
I yield the life He gave me, which now seemeth done.
Then through the doorway bear me, lads, that I may die
With sunlight falling round me, my face towards the sky.

A PARABLE.

A YOUTH caught up an aged pilgrim on the way
Of life, and to him said : ' My father, tell me, pray,
Where Paradise may lie, that I may thither speed.'
The old man halted, and thus answered him : ' Indeed,
The road I know full well, my son : look on before—
Yonder is Paradise, and yonder is the door.'
Thereat, off sped the youth, with bounding step to fly
Towards the Portal,

But loud after him did cry
The old man. ' Not so ; Paradise must entered be
On crutches, and with gouty feet, as done by me.'

BLIND AUSTIN. (5)

IN a lonely hut, a shepherd
Lived to God with tranquil mind,
Cherished by an only daughter,
And the aged man was blind.

Five and twenty years had vanished
Since God shut the shepherd's eyes,
Since he saw the waving meadows,
And the ever-changing skies.

Never had his eyes, unclouded,
Looked upon the simple child,
That in tender growing beauty
On the old man beamed and smiled.

But with open heart, undarkened,
Gently would poor Austin say,
'God, who pleased to give me vision,
At His pleasure took away.'

Hour by hour he tarried, kneeling,
With dark orbs upon the sky,
Wrapped in silent contemplation,
Praying, praising inwardly.

When the evening shadows gathered,
And the weary world was calm,
At his casement lingered Austin,
Singing low his vesper psalm.

Said the maiden, one day, 'Father !
I have heard, on yonder hill
Is a chapel for poor pilgrims,
Where is healed each mortal ill.

There the deaf recover hearing,
There the lame foot leapeth light,
There the feeble gather vigour,
There the blind regain their sight.'

Hearing this, the old man trembled :

‘ Oh, that sight were given me !
That the glory of creation
Once again these eyes might see.

‘ See the yellow sun of summer,
And the moon and stars of night,
See the ruddy firelight flicker,
See again all gladdening light.

‘ See the hawthorn in the hedges,
And the daisy at my feet,
See the scarlet poppies winking
In the waving amber wheat.

‘ See my little crumbling cottage,
And the misty smoke upcurl ;
See *thee*, whom I clasp and cling to—
Thee, my own dear little girl !’

Through the weary night he wakened,
Tossing fevered on his bed,
Sighing ‘ Oh, were light of heaven
On these darkened eyeballs shed !’

Forth he sped at early morning ;
To that shrine his way to grope,
Heeding not the toilsome journey,
In the eagerness of hope.

Lo ! he kneels in Mary's chapel,
Weary, wayworn, faint, footsore,
With his tremulous arms expanded,
Praying on the sacred floor,

' Holy Saviour, only succour !
Ope my eyes that I may see !
Gentle Mary, Virgin Mother !
In compassion pray for me !'

Then—a sudden cry of rapture,
And a glad ecstatic thrill—
Flowed the light whence long excluded,
Seeming all his frame to fill.

Now he saw the rustic altar,
With its flowers and candles six,
And the ruby star which glimmered
Wavering above the pyx.

Now beheld the little maiden,
Kneeling in a golden beam,
Tranced in wondering devotion,
Like an angel in a dream.

Now beheld the throng of pilgrims
Gathered in Our Lady's shrine,
Now beheld the sun of summer
Through the western window shine.

Saw a glimmer through the doorway
Of a vap'rous azure plain,
Saw the swallows, in the sunlight,
Skimming low before the rain.

Saw a bush of flowering elder,
And dog-daisies in its shade,
Tufted meadow-sweet entangled
In a blushing wild-rose braid.

Saw a distant sheet of water
Flashing like a fallen sun ;
Saw the winking of the ripples
Where the mountain torrents run.

Saw the peaceful arch of heaven,
 With a cloudlet on the blue.
Like a white bird winging homeward
 With its feathers drenched in dew.

Then old Austin sought to gather
 All his thoughts for fervent praise ;
But, alas ! their chains are shattered,
 Every thought in freedom strays.

Austin sought his heart to quicken
 For the solemn act of prayer ;
But from earth's absorbing beauties
 Not a moment can it spare ;
And attention is distracted,
 Straying here and straying there.

Cried the shepherd, ' O my Saviour !—
 With a sudden grief oppressed—
' Be Thy will, not mine, accomplished ;
 Give me what Thou deemest best.'

Then once more the clouds descended,
 And the eyes again waxed dark ;
All the splendour of the sunlight
 Faded to a dying spark.

But the closèd heart expanded,
Like the flower that blooms at night,
Whilst, as Philomel, the spirit
Chanted to the waning light.

‘Shut my eyes,’ the old man whispered ;
‘Close to earth’s distracting sight,
Till the spirit breaks its fetters,
Speeding heavenward its flight.
Then to open in the glory
Of Thine uncreated light !’

LANCELOT.

SWIFT and dark set in the night,
Yet, in the north, a pallid light,
As a glimmering thread of white,
 Lay, blotted with black trees.
Lancelot at the church door stood,
Holding with his hands to the wood,
Muffling his features in his hood,
 Aghast, and with quaking knees.

Wherefore aghast, he could not tell.
Then rang out the compline bell,
But it sounded like a knell
 In that evening hot and still.
A bat came wheeling by,
Dashing out of the dark sky.
And diving in presently.
 Far off on a low hill,

Sudden, flashed out a spark ;
A dog began to bark ;
The light vanished, and all was dark,
 Save that shimmer in the north.
A wild-fowl flight o'erhead,
Northward whistling sped,
By wondrous instinct led,
 Whilst Lancelot looked forth.

Up leaped a silvery ray,
Like the dawning of new day,
To the northward far away,
 And tremulously danced.
Then another beam arose,
In fitful throbs and throes,
Of the colour of the rose,
 As Lancelot gazed entranced.

A mighty shining bow,
Of deep carnation glow,
O'er the vault began to grow,
 And fall to flakes of fire ;

Then drop, a glittering rain,
Or gathering again
In patches of red stain,
 Waste away, and then expire.

Now swept a fog of blight
Betwixt Lancelot and the light,
Obscuring for awhile all sight
 In a glowing furnace blast ;—
Whereat the shadowy trees
Writhed as in agonies,
Or shivered, till the breeze
 And the cloud were past.

On Lancelot's ear a tread
Sounded, heavy, measured,
And Lancelot would have fled,
 But was paralysed with fear.
Like a memory, deemed slain,
Of past guilt, which throbs again
In pulses of dull pain,
 Came the tread upon his ear.

Now, stalking past the door,
Lancelot a figure saw
He had never seen before,
 Like a vision of the dead.
And as it nearer drew,
He marked the yellow hue
Of the face, and locks which blew
 'Tangled around the head.
In a flapping orange vest,
It strode.—It was the Pest.
It smote Lancelot on the breast,
 And Lancelot's spirit fled.

THE SWALLOWS OF CITEAUX. (6)

[CÆSARIUS HEISTERBACHENSIS, lib. x. c. 58.]

UNDER eaves, against the towers,
All the spring, their muddy bowers
 Swallows build about Citeaux.
Round the chapter house and hall,
From the dawn to evenfall,
 They are fluttering to and fro

On their never-flagging wing.
With the psalms the brethren sing
 Blends their loud incessant cry ;
In and out the plastered nest,
Never taking thought of rest,
 Chattering these swallows fly.

They distract the monk who reads,
Him as well who tells his beads,
 Him who writes his chronicle :
In the cloister old and grey
They are jubilant and gay,
 In the very church as well.

On the dormitory beds,
In refectory o'er the heads—
 At the windows rich with paint,
Ever dashing,—in and out
With the maddest, noisiest rout,
 As would surely vex a saint.

To the abbot then complain,
Pious monks:—‘ Shall these remain
 To disturb us at our prayers ?
Bid us nests and eggs destroy,
Then the birds will not annoy
 Any more our deafened ears.’

Quoth the abbot, smiling—‘ Say,
Have not we, too, homes of clay,
 Quite as fragile, not more fair ?
Brothers, and shall we resolve
Their tabernacles to dissolve,
 Asking God our own to spare ?’

Not another word of blame,
But they turned away in shame.
 So the little birds had peace,
And the parapets among
Built and laid, and hatched their young,
 Making wonderful increase.

When declined the autumn sun,
When the yellow harvest done,
 Sat the swallows in a row
On the ridging of the roof,
Patiently, as in behoof
 Of a licence ere they’d go.

Forth from out the western door
Came the abbot ; him before
 Went a brother with his crook,
And a boy a bell who rung
And a silver censer swung,
 Whilst another bore the book.

Then the abbot raised his hand,
Looking to the swallow band,
 Saying, ' Ite, missa est !
Christian birds, depart in peace,
As your cares of summer cease,
 Swallows, enter on your rest.

' Now the winter snow must fall,
Wrapping earth as with a pall,
 And the stormy winds arise ;
Go to distant lands where glow
Deathless suns, where falls not snow
 From the ever azure skies.

‘Go ! dear heralds of the road,
To the dim unknown abode
 In the verdant Blessed Isles,
Whither we shall speed some day,
Leaving crumbling homes of clay
 For the land where summer smiles :

‘Go in peace ! your hours have run ;
Go, the day of work is done ;
 Go in peace, my sons !’ he said,
Then the swallows spread the wing,
Making all the welkin ring
 With their cry, and southward sped.

POOR ROBIN. (7)

[MEFFRET, *Hortulus Reginæ*. Norimb. 1487.]

ROBIN the cobbler, blithe and gay,
 Fiddled at night time, cobbled at day ;
 Busily worked till the curfew rang,
 Then caught up his bow, and fiddled and sang
 Robin lived under a marble stair
 That led to a terrace broad and fair
 Adorned with exotics bright and rare,
 Where, every evening, taking the air,
 A nobleman walked with brow depressed,
 And within his bosom a sea of unrest ;
 Trembling now at the frown of the king,
 Lest titles and honours should spread their wing ;
 Now at the fate of a suit at court,
 Then at some insult to be out-fought ;
 But oh ! for the cares unreckoned that rolled
 From that plentiful source,—the lust of gold.

The nobleman watched the declining sun,
Day with its business and cares was done ;
And now, for the vigorous sons of toil,
To the wearied spirits came glad recoil.
But for such as the nobleman came no rest,
As the sun went down in the scarlet west ;
For rest is none from ambition's strain,
None for the heart where pride holds reign,
None for the breast filled with greed and gain.
Then sudden he heard the tremulous string
Robin's sweet carol accompanying ;
Unreckoned the hours that glided by,
As Robin sat twittering cheerily,
With the moon going up in the darkling sky.

'Now this is strange,' the nobleman said,
'That a poor man labouring for his bread,
With a crust to eat, and a strawstrewn bed,
Should be so jubilant, free from sorrow,
Without a care or thought of the morrow.
The secret of having light heart, if found,
Cheap would I count at a thousand pound.

When Robin was out at a job one day,
The nobleman hid a gold bag in the hay

Of the cobbler's pillow, and hastened away.
That night, as its wont, the curfew rang,
But Robin the cobbler nor fiddled nor sang,
For in turning his pillow his glad eyes fell
On the purse with a wonder unspeakable.

Now silent and musing he sat till late,
His heart oppressed with a leaden weight,
His mind revolving where to conceal
The treasure, where none might find and steal.
Cautiously locking and bolting the door,
He buried the purse underneath the floor,
Then over it strewed his litter of straw.
Little he slept, waking often in fear,
Imagining burglars drawing near,
Slumbers unbroken seemed fled for e'er.

Night after night the nobleman strode
The terrace above poor Robin's abode ;
But hushed was the voice of the cobbler now,
And laid aside were the fiddle and bow.

Then the nobleman stood before Robin's stall,
And said, 'By accident I let fall
A purse of gold, through a chink in the wall,

Into thy cell, to thy straw it rolled ;
Now have I come to reclaim my gold.'
Then the poor cobbler upraised the board,
Extracted the purse and the prize restored.
And scarce had the nobleman turned away,
Ere he heard the fiddler begin to play,
And he had not reached his terrace again
Ere the voice was chirping a jocund strain.

THE OLIVE TREE.

SAID an ancient hermit, bending
Half in prayer upon his knee,
'Oil I need for midnight watching,
I desire an olive tree.'

Then he took a tender sapling,
Planted it before his cave,
Spread his trembling hands above it,
As his benison he gave.

But he thought, The rain it needeth,
That the root may drink and swell :
'God ! I pray Thee send thy showers !
So a gentle shower fell.

‘ Lord ! I ask for beams of summer,
Cherishing this little child.’
Then the dripping clouds divided,
And the sun looked down and smiled.

‘ Send it frost to brace its tissues,
O my God !’ the hermit cried.
Then the plant was bright and hoary,
But at evensong it died.

Went the hermit to a brother
Sitting in his rocky cell :
‘ Thou an olive-tree possessest ;
How is this, my brother, tell ?

‘ I have planted one, and prayed,
Now for sunshine, now for rain ;
God hath granted each petition,
Yet my olive-tree hath slain !’

Said the other, ‘ I intrusted
To its God my little tree ;
He who made knew what it needed
Better than a man like me.

'Laid I on Him no condition,
Fixed no ways and means ; so I
Wonder not my olive thriveth,
Whilst thy olive tree did die,'

BISHOP BENNO AND THE FROGS.

At the closing of the day
Bishop Benno took his way,
 With his book beneath his arm,
Through the meadows for a stroll,
The disturbance of his soul
 To reduce again to calm.

Walking by a marish bank,
Where the yellow iris lank
 Shot its bluish, bending sheath,
Whilst upon the surface, light
Floated chalices of white,
 Anchored to the slime beneath.

Where about the margin grew
Clusters of celestial blue,
 And the bog-bean speckled pink,
And the mare-tails with their spines
Stood and shook in shadowy lines
 Wavering along the brink.

Clearly from the minster tower
Tolling at the twilight hour,
 Salutation spoke the bell.*
Then the Bishop slowly took,
And unclasped his Office book,
 To recite a Canticle.

Walking in the meadow grass,
By the water still as glass,
 He could lift his voice and pray ;
Reading in his Breviary,
Repeating Benedicite
 As he wended on his way.

* The Angelus rings at noon and sunset.

Perched on broken bulrush shaft,
Crouched on lily's leafy raft,
 Sitting in a row on logs,
Squatted on each muddy ledge,
Sentinelled along the edge
 Of the water, were the frogs ;

With their voices very shrill,
In a loud prolonging thrill,
 Half a chirrup, half a cry ;
Every little gullet shakes,
As its clamour from it breaks,
 Deafening the passer-by.

Bishop Benno halting, stood,
Looking at them in a mood
 Discontented ; he could find,
Saying the Three Children's Song,
As he paced the bank along,
 No tranquillity of mind.

‘ O ye frogs ! when Bishops praise
God, ye should amend your ways,
And be quiet for a while.’
Thus he spake, and at the word
They were silent, naught was heard.
He continued, with a smile :

‘ All ye green things on the earth,
Bless the Lord who gave you birth,
And for ever magnify.
All ye fountains that are poured
From your sources, praise the Lord,
And for ever magnify.

‘ All ye seas and floods that roll,
Praise the Lord, from pole to pole,
And for ever magnify.
All ye teeming things that dwell
In the waters, praise as well,
And for ever magnify.’

Sudden Benno stopped. A flame
Started to his brow, in shame,
As he did within debate.
'What! doth the Creator love
Praises from the things that move,
And from things inanimate?

'Fie upon me! Am I sure
My intent is half as pure,
Praises as acceptable,
As the strain, though loud and harsh,
Of these dwellers in the marsh?
What am I, that I can tell?'

Turning to the swamp, he cried:
'Sitters by the water-side,
Do not ye your hymns forego.
I release you from the ban,
Praise the God of Frog and Man—
Cantate fratres Domino.'

THE UNIVERSAL MOTHER.

[*Pirke Rabbi Elieser*, II.]

When by the hand of God man was created,
 He took the dust of earth from every quarter—
 From east to west, and from the north and south—
 That wheresoever man might wander forth,
 He should be still at home ; and, when a-dying,
 On some far distant western shore, and seeking
 A shelter in the bosom of the Mother,
 The earth might not refuse to clasp him, saying,
 ‘ My offspring art thou not, O roving Eastern.’

Wherever now the foot of Man shall bear him,
 Wherever by the final call o’ertaken,
 He is no stranger reckoned, nor an outcast,
 But hears exclaim the Universal Mother,
 ‘ Come, child of mine, and slumber in my bosom.’

THE LOAN.

[*Midrash Jalkut*, iii. p. 165.]

THE Rabbi Meir,
A black cap on his white hair,
And him before
A scroll of Talmudic lore,
Sat in the school and taught.
Many a wingèd thought
Flew from his lips, and brought
Fire and enlightenment
Unto the scholars bent
Diligently at their writing.
And all the while he was inditing,
His soul was near to God
Above the dull earth that he trod.
And as the lark doth sing

High up and quivering
In the blue, on heavenward wing,
But ever its breast
Keepeth above its nest,
And singing it doth not roam
Beyond hearing of its home,
So the Rabbi, however high he soared
 In his teaching, or praying, sung
Close to the ear of his LORD,
 Yet ever above his home, his wife and young.

Slowly there stole the gloom
Of evening into the room,
Then he arose and shut the book,
And casting about a look,
Said, with a wave
Of the hand: 'God gave
The light, and hath taken away.
With the Lord begun,
With the Lord run,
With the Lord done,
Is the day.'
Then his way
Homeward cheerfully he took.

In the little house, sedate,
For her husband did await
Beruriah. And for her lord
She had laid the supper on the board.
And a lamp was lighted up,
By the which he might sup.
He kissed her upon the brow,
And spake to her gently : ‘ How
Are the lads to-day ?
Tell me, Beruriah, pray.’
There glittered on her cheek
Two jewels, ere she could speak
And answer, ‘ They are well.
Sit you and eat your supper, whilst I tell
What to me befell ;
And assure me in what way
You think it had been best
That I had acted.’ Thus addressed,
He sat him at his meal,
And began to eat : ‘ Reveal
Thy case,’ he said. ‘ Yet tell me, I pray,
First—where are my boys to-day ?’
Then suddenly she said,
With an averted head :

‘ Many years are flown
Since one a very precious loan
Entrusted to my care, until he came
That treasure to reclaim.’

The Rabbi spoke : ‘ Of old
Tobit confided his gold
To Raguel
At Ecbatane. Well,
What further?—But say,
Where are my lads, I pray?’

‘ For many years that store
I jealously watched o’er.
Do you think, my lord, that loan
In fourteen years would become my own !’
Then with a glance of blame,
He answered, as he shook his head : ‘ For shame,
Wife of my bosom ! It were not thine
Should forty years upon thee shine,
And the owner not return
To demand it. Beruriah, learn
Not to covet.’

Then he paused, and said,
Moving the lamp : ‘ Thine eyes are red,

Beruriah : wherefore ?'

But she broke
In on his question, and thus spoke :

'To-day there came

To the door the same

One who had lent the treasure,

And he said, "It is my pleasure

To have the loan restor'd."

What do you think, my lord ?

Should I have withheld it, Meir ?'

At his wife with astonished stare

Looked the Rabbi. 'O my wife !

Light of my eyes, and glory of my life !

Why ask this question ?'

Then he said,

As his eyes wandered towards the bed :

'Why is the sheet,

Usually smooth and neat,

Lifted into many a fold and pleat ?'

But she asked : 'Should I repine

At surrendering what was not mine

To him who claimed it ?'

'It was a trust,

Wife of my bosom ! What dost thou ask ?—Repine

DOCTOR FAUSTUS.

GREAT DOCTOR FAUSTUS to the Fiend had sold
His soul and body for large store of gold.
And now, a wonderment and longing came
To see the place in everlasting flame
That he should occupy, when was unfurled
Upon his gaze the doleful unseen world,
Where he must linger out, without repeal,
An endless waste of being, 'neath the seal
Of righteous doom.

A mighty spell he wrought,
And to his side the evil angel brought,
And then commanded him : ' I bid thee bear
Me on thy pinions through the murky air,
Unto the region whither thou art cast,
And show me where, when this brief life is past
I shall be tortured.'

Then said Satan ; ‘ Seat
Thyself upon my back, and let thy feet
Depend on either side. Be not afraid,
Thy time is not yet come.’

Faustus obeyed.

The Evil One upsprang from earth, and flew
Whither I know not ; but there fell a shade
That gradually blotted out the blue
Of heaven, and all grew ghastly, blear, and dark ;
The sun diminished to a flickering spark,
And then expired in smoke, and there was none
Of light remained, when they had lost the sun.
A long while traversed they the awful gloom,
That stagnant lay, in which did nothing loom
Upon the Doctor’s eyes, nor sound whate’er
Vibrations make upon the turgid air,
Except the stridings of the angel’s wing,
And mutter of the air’s low quiverings.
Incontinent, the Doctor Faustus broke
The silence, with a sudden word that woke
No answering echo, had no ring, but fell
Apart in joints at every syllable,
And dropped into oblivion in their wake ;
Nor did the evil angel answer make.

Then, for a second, with a batlike shriek
Of parted air, and slowly labouring creak
Of beating pinions, in the dark went by
A spirit from the abyss, to mortal eye
Unseen.

How long the time in passing through
The murky darkness, Faustus never knew ;
For, in that gloom, there was no change to tell
Of time that pass'd—but unendurable
Whether a second or a century,
For there eternity had ceased to be
Articulate. Upon the doctor's breast
The darkness weighed, and with the weight oppress'd
The horror of that life-divested air
Seemed to be utter palpable despair.

At once the veil was riven overhead,
And through the abyss a beam of light was shed,
That travelled down, a solid silver flake
That on no object fell, or lit to break,
Save Faustus, who looked up with eager start,
And saw above the blackened heavens part,
And for one instant, only one, disclose
The Paradise where happy souls repose—

Sudden saw the Heavenly City
Built of bright and burnished gold,
Lying in transcendent beauty,
Stored with treasures all untold.

In the midst of that fair city
Christ was throned upon His seat,
Whilst the angels swung their censers
In a ring about his feet.

From that throne a river issued,
Clear as crystal, passing bright,
Traversing the Holy City
Like a sudden beam of light.

Where it watered leafy Eden,
Rolling over silver sands,
Sat the angels softly chiming
On the harps between their hands.

There he saw the meadows dewy
Spread with lilies wondrous fair ;
Thousand, thousand were the colours
Of the waving flowers there.

There were forests ever blooming
As our orchards here in May ;
There were gardens never fading,
Which eternally are gay.

There he saw the red carnation,
Rose and honeysuckle twine,
There along the river edges
Saw the golden jonquil shine ;

There the water-lilies lying,
Open on the sea of glass,
There the yellow crocus glimmer
Like a flame amidst the grass.

Caught a fragment of the music,
Loud as thunder, of the song
Of the Seraph, and the Elder,
And the great redeemèd throng.

Again on earth as Doctor Faustus stood,
With wrinkled brow, in an abstracted mood,
To him came Wagner, eager, and on fire
With questions many, curious to enquire

What had been seen below. 'Master,' he said,
'Describe to me, I pray, the sort of bed
On which thou wilt be stretched when life is o'er :
What place in Hell is there for thee in store?'

Then Faustus answered, thickly speaking : 'Oh !
I cannot tell, my friend ; I do not know.
I may have seen it, but I little wot,
Whether I did behold the place or not.'
Then, as his bosom with convulsion tossed,
He said : 'Remembered only what is lost ;
Seen for one second the celestial shore,
Wagner ! I can remember nothing more—
That I recall ; all else is quite forgot.'

THE WIFE'S TREASURE.

[*Midrash Jalkut*, cap. 17.]

AT Sidon lived a husband with his wife
For ten long years, leading a tranquil life,
With but a single grief—they had no child.
And, to his barren lot unreconciled,
The man upon it brooded. Then he bent
His steps to Rabbi Simeon, with intent
To be divorced ; and to the woman's tears
He steeled his heart, and said : ' Ten happy years
In peacefulness with thee, true heart, I spent ;
Stanch wast thou ever, nor a word to smart
Escaped thy lips. And now, before we part,
I will accord the treasure thou dost find
In thy old home best suited to thy mind.
Take it ; whate'er it be, it shall be thine,
To solace thee when thou no more art mine.'

Then said the Rabbi Simeon : ' O ye pair !
Before ye separate, a feast prepare,
And pledge each other in the ruddy wine ;
Then the feast ended, woman, unto thine
Own father's house do thou repair.'
That very night the supper board was spread,
According to the law ; one seated at the head,
The other at the bottom. To the brim
The woman filled the bowl and passed it him.
And then he pledged her, and she filled again,
And he the goblet to his wife did drain
Once more, with many wishes good and fair.
But she the generous liquor did not spare,
Until he fell into a drunken sleep,
With head upon the table, heavy and deep.
And thus concluded the farewell carouse.
So then, she took him up with gentle care
Upon her shoulders, and her husband bare,
Nodding and drowsing, to her father's house,
And laid him on the bed.

At peep of day

He started up and said : ' Woman ! I pray,
Tell me where am I ?'

She to him replied :

' You promised me that nought should be denied
To me of what I valued. I could find,
In all thy house, thee only to my mind,
And I have borne thee hither ; now I trow
That thou art mine ; I will not let thee go.
When I was thine, thou wouldst be quit of me ;
Now thou art mine, and I will treasure thee !'

THE ARMS OF MAYENCE.

ALL the bells of Mainz were rung,
 A Processional was sung
 By the clergy in the street,
 Going to invest in pall*
 Their Archbishop, and install,
 In the great cathedral seat.

There was gathered dense a throng
 All the narrow way along,
 Full of happy wonderment
 As the acolytes upthrew
 Fragrant wreaths of misty blue,
 And the banners past them went.

* The pall of white wool is the badge of an Archbishop.

Willigis the wheelwright's son,
Chosen for the vacant throne,
 In episcopal array,
Followed 'neath an awning spread,
Borne by deacons, o'er his head,
 And with flaunting feathers gay.

Whilst proceeding, he could trace
Mockery on every face
 That was turned to Willigis,
And there fell upon his ear
Many a cruel jibe and jeer,
 And occasionally a hiss.

Then a laugh among the crowd,
Low at first, but waxing loud.
 Slightly turning on his heels,
He beheld, on hands and feet,
Urchins running down the street,
 Nimbly, as revolving wheels.

All the way on either side
Bishop Willigis descried,
 On each shoring, plank and balk,
To the people's great delight,
By some jester,—cartwheels white
 Rudely drawn in common chalk.

Though they watch him, none discern
Colour in his cheek to burn,
 Or a sparkle in his eye.
With his hands upon his breast,
And his humble head depress'd,
 Calmly Willigis went by.

As he pondered in his stall
At the minster, on the wall
 He perceived, upon a crank,
Hung a shield, whereon should be
The Archbishop's blazonry,
 But the surface was left blank.

Then a painter in the aisle
Beck'ning to him with a smile,
 Bending low, he whisperèd :
' If a Bishop arms have none,
May he then select his own ?'
 ' Yes, he may,' was answerèd.

' Fetch thy brush and paint, my son !
When the installation done,
 Decorate for me that shield ;
That I ever bear in sight
My achievement—Cartwheel white
 Figured on a ruby field.

' Paint it over porch and door
Where my predecessor bore
 Haughty blazon. That, among
Those I meet of noble birth—
Princes, mighty of the earth—
 I forget not whence I sprung !'

If you visit aged Mayence,
Then, I pray you, give a glance
 At the blazon that it bears.
You will find that it has borne
The White Cartwheel it did scorn,
 Proudly for eight hundred years.

You will read in ancient book
How the grateful city took
 For its badge the wheelwright's sign,
In thanksgiving for his reign—
One of love, and peace, and gain—
 Brightest of the sacred line.

THE MASS FOR THE DEAD

A LEGEND OF MESSINA.

ALL day unflagging in his stall
Sat Hildebrand the priest, and heard
Confessions made, and over all
He uttered the absolving word.

But as the light of garish day
Passed with the setting sun away,
A heaviness and languor stole
All unperceived upon his soul.

Full oft at the confided sin
The tender-hearted priest had wept ;
Now wearied, as the dusk set in,
He leaned him back and slept.

Nor woke he to the vesper bell,
Nor heard the organ's solemn swell,
And only turned upon his seat
At tramp of the retreating feet.

Heard not the verger's closing call,
Nor chiming of the transept clock,
Heard not the doors together fall,
Nor noisy key turn'd in the lock.

And as the night hours glided by,
And Charles's Wain wheeled in the sky,
Priest Hildebrand slept heavily.

Now first a spark, and then a flame,
Like an uplighted beacon, came ;
And next a streak of silver light
That smote along the vaulted height,
As above the eastern deep
Slow the moon's white horn did peep.

Sudden pealed the watchman's blast
When the noon of night was past,

And the echoes clung awhile
To the ribbing of the aisle.
Still did the slumb'ring pastor rest
With grey head nodding on his breast.

And thus the night hours glided by,
As Charles's Wain wheeled in the sky,
And Hildebrand slept heavily.

The presses and misereres of oak
Warped and snapped ; each noisy stroke
Of the minster clock, though clear,
Unheeded fell upon the ear.
A sea-breeze rose, and idly strayed
Over the window glass, and played
Faint pipings where it found a rent,
Or sung about the battlement.

A click—a rush of whirring wheels,
The hammer of the old clock reels,
And strikes one stroke upon the gong,
With long-drawn after undersong.

Then, suddenly, the sleep-bands broke,
And Hildebrand the priest awoke,
And conscious instantly, he gave
One stride, and found him in the nave.
Then started, with a sense of awe,
As he the whole interior saw
With light illum'd, but wan and faint,
By which each shrine and sculptured saint,
Each marble shaft and fretted niche,
The moulded arch, the tracery rich,
The brazen eagle in the choir,
The bishop's throne with gilded spire,
Stood out as clear as on a day
When clouds obscure the solar ray.
The altar tapers were alight,
Chalice and paten glimmered bright,
The service book was opened wide,
Wafers and cruets were at one side,
And, on the rail, in meet array,
Alb, amice, stole and vestment lay.
And one knelt on the altar stair
As server, hushed, immersed in prayer
In convent garb, and with feet bare.

Now with a shrinking and surprise,
And scarcely crediting his eyes,
The priest discerned the whitened bone
Of feet, where skin and flesh were none.

With quivering knees, and throbbing blood,
And chattering teeth, the roused man stood ;
Whilst each vibration of the clock
Beat on his pulse with liveliest shock.

Up rose the monk—and his bones ground
As he arose—and turned him round,
And spread abroad his wasted hands.
As doth the celebrant who stands,
And makes the dread adorèd sign,
To close the mysteries divine.

Sudden a voice the silence broke,
With words articulate, and spoke
 From underneath the drooping cowl.
As clear as ring of sanctus bell,
Hildebrand heard each syllable :
 ‘Who mass will offer for my soul ?’

‘ I will ! ’ cried Hildebrand, and strode
Towards the altar of his God.

And so that night it came to pass
A priest intoned the holy mass,
In that cathedral, for one dead,
Whose soul unshriven suffered ;
And all the while he prayed, he felt
That a dead man behind him knelt.
But on the face he dared not look
Of him who served the holy book,
The cruets, and the sacred bread,
With serge cowl covering his head.

Now, when his office was complete,
He marked the monk upon his knees,
Who muttered, as winds sound in trees,
And, with dead hands, held fast his feet,
Who said :

‘ What years of bitter pain
My soul in Purgatory hath lain,
And panted for release in vain !
Beneath yon slab my body lies,
No loving fingers closed my eyes,

But, wrestling in death's agonies,
Alone I breathed my parting sighs.
Yonder was an unguarded well,*
Down which, by fatal chance, I fell ;
And where I was no mortal knew,
For no man thence the water drew ;
And through the town the rumour spread
That from my cloister I had fled.
Thus for my soul no mass was said,
Nor was my body buried.
And, as the well was used no more,
As time passed, it was covered o'er.
But nightly for two hundred years
Here have I cried aloud with tears,
And none have heard my wail till now,
Or answered to my prayer, but thou.
Priest Hildebrand ! God's blessing light
Upon thee for thy deed this night.
I would repay, but power have none—
Save this, that ere thy sands are run,
I will appear again.'

* Several foreign cathedrals have wells within the building. That in Strasburg has been only lately closed.

And as he spake, a pallid ray,
The harbinger of coming day,
 Smote through the eastern pane.
Then first, enabled by God's grace,
The priest looked on the dead man's face,
That turned towards the Crucified
As in a rapture, glorified.
And with great reverence, Hildebrand,
Extending o'er the monk his hand,
Traced upon the ashy brow
 And the uplifted head
The sacred sign which angels know
And devils fear. So, saying 'Peace!'
The monk responded, 'With release,'
 And vanishèd.

THE THREE CROWNS

[LABATA, *Thesaurus Moralis*. Colon. 1652.]

' When the morning breaketh,
 Summon me for Prime ;
 When the white light waketh,
 Boy ! the church-bell chime ;'

Said the Priest, and wended,
 Weary, to his bed ;
 Laid upon his pillow
 Low his heavy head.

Sideways set Orion,
 Louting on one knee,
 Holding up his cudgel,
 Dipping in the sea.

Slowly o'er the pine-tops
 Wheeled about the Bear ;
All night long the water
 Whispered on the weir.

As the eyelid fluttered
 Of arousing dawn,
O'er the jagged horizon
 Threads of light were drawn,

Peering twixt the fir-boles
 Plastered with the snow,
Wan and white, uncoloured,
 Eastward, lying low,

Harshly from the tower
 Clamoured forth the bell,
Making morning slumbers
 Chequered where it fell.

Then the Friar, waking,
 Turned upon his side :
'Keenly cold is biting,'
 Muttered he, and sighed.

‘There is scarce a glimmer
Through the frosted pane ;
Church is like a cellar ;
I will sleep again.’

Stood the little server,
In the morning raw,
Noting robin redbreasts
Hopping in the straw.

‘Had I but a riddle,
Stick, and crumbs of bread,
I could catch these robins !’
Eagerly he said.

But with sudden impulse
Turned and sought the choir,
Touched the altar tapers
With a flake of fire ;

Opened wide a Psalter,
And, in church alone,
Sang the Psalms of David
To their ancient tone.

Once again Orion
With a halting knee,
Brandishing his cudgel,
Dived into the sea.

And above the fir-tops
Wheeled again the Bear ;
Whilst the water fretted
Hoarsely o'er the weir.

Once again the jangle
Of the bell for Prime
Told, at dusk of morning,
Of awaking time.

By the mindful server
Rung as he was bid,
Once again the Friar
Raised his heavy lid :

' How the wind is wailing
On the window pane !
Sweet are second slumbers,
I must sleep again.'

But the little server,
Looking forth, descried
Pools of water frozen,
Offering a slide.

For a winter morning
Better no device
Than, with tingling pulses,
Whirling o'er the ice.

But, abruptly turning,
Hied he to the choir,
Touched the altar tapers
With a flake of fire ;

Oped the great Church Psalter
Standing up on toe,
Sang the Psalms of David
Solemnly and slow.

Once again Orion
Seaward with his flail
Set, and Ursa Major
Whisked about her tail.

But the tempest raging
Hid the stars from sight,
And the falling snow-flakes
Blotted out the light.

At the time for stirring
Woke the little lad,
Cuddled in his blankets,
Shuddering and sad.

‘Must I on this morning
Leave my bed so warm,
To struggle in the churchyard
Through the snow and storm?’

‘Father John, I’ll warrant,
Lapped in slumber lies ;
Twice has failed already :
Wherefore should I rise?’

Yet from bed he started,
And the Church bell rung,
Oped the Psalms of David,
And the office sung.

All that while, in vision
Lay the Priest : a door
Ope'd. He saw the Saviour
By the Heavenly Store

Whence He had extracted
That He now did hold
In His hand,—three jewelled,
Burnished crowns of gold.

' These for me, my Master !'
Cried the Priest with joy.
' No, my son !' He answered ;
' For the serving boy.

' Thrice has he been trièd,
' Thrice has he prevailed ;
Crowns become the victor,
Suit not him who failed.'

THE RABBI'S SON-IN-LAW.

[*Gittin*, 56. *Kethuboth*, 63. *Nedarim*, 49.]

I.

THE WEDDING OF AKIBA.

STOOD a damsel very early,
 In the sea-breeze thin and raw,
 By her father's barn, a-plucking
 From her lover's locks the straw.

She was daughter of a Rabbi,
 Calba Shebna, far and wide
 Known for wealth and lavish splendour,
 Noted for his boundless pride.

From her lattice often looking,
 She had watched her father's hind
 On a wild-thyme slope reclining,
 As his nimble fingers twined

With the asphodel, the lily,
 Whilst the sheep about him lay
Dozing in the glowing splendour
 Of the cloudless summer day ;

Or, beneath a fig tree halting,
 Leaning on his shepherd's staff,
Where the pleasant water bubbled,
 That his thirsty flock might quaff.

When beside her window sitting,
 Through the rattle of her loom,
Flowed a lay of limpid gladness,
 Wafted lightly through the room,

Telling how the shepherd Jacob
 Tended Laban's herds so long
For the love he bore to Rachel,
 As she listened to the song,

Were her cheeks as damask roses,
 And her eyelids dripped with tears,
At the thought of Jacob's waiting
 Through those weary fourteen years.

Once it fell at happy springtime,
When the mowers mowed the grass,
And the tossing hay made fragrant
Every zephyr that did pass—

That she went into the meadow ;
Akiba, the hind, was there
Blithely singing, with a sunbeam
Tangled in his amber hair—

That she offered him a beaker
Brimming o'er with Helbon wine ;
In it lay the sun reflected
With a ruby-crimson shine.

As the shepherd came towards her
Were his cheeks with labour flushed,
Were his eyes as azure tarnlets
Whence a stream of rapture gushed.
Mantling face and neck and bosom,
Scarlet to her forehead rushed.

Trembled all the ruddy liquor
When the flowing cup she set
In his fingers, stretched towards it ;
Then their hands and glances met.

Calba Shebna saw them standing,
And he read the looks that burned
In their faces ; and with fury
Sudden on his daughter turned,
And he spat at her with loathing
And with frenzy at her spurned.

Then he cast her from his household,
And he cast her from her home,
And he bid her, with her shepherd,
In her degradation roam.

And he sentenced her for ever
From his presence to depart
For he plucked her from his memory,
And erased her from his heart.

Spoke the shepherd very calmly,
‘Then I call on the Most High
God of Abram, Isaac, Jacob!
He will stand the orphan by;

‘And before His sacred Presence
Take I this sweet dove of thine,
Be thou witness, haughty Rabbi—
And I make her wife of mine.

‘For of thought or word unlawful
Have I kept my conscience clear :
It is thou, in thy blind passion,
Who bestow’st her on me here.

‘Child of thine she is. Her portion
I demand of thee. At least
Do thou deck the wedding chamber,
And prepare the marriage feast.’

Cried the father, raging madly,
‘As her portion take my scorn ;
For thy chamber, yonder outhouse ;
For thy feast, the husks of corn !’

II.

THE MORROW OF THE WEDDING.

As the morning star was waning,
By the fold where couched the flocks,
By the light, its power gaining,
Ruth unravelled
Straw flakes from the shepherd's locks.

On the meadows rime was lying,
In the valley, white and dead ;
High a wakeful lark was flying ;
Dew was dripping
From the thatching of the shed.

Peaks of Lebanon, outleaning,
Caught the sun, and were aglow,
Like a rank of seraphs meaning,
At a signal,
To unfurl their plumes of snow.

So the damsel plucked, restraining
With an effort from her eyes
Bitter showers of grief from raining,
And repressing,
Resolutely, swelling sighs.

Akiba his bride so peerless
Folded to his breast, and said,
'Hast thou courage? art thou fearless?'
Softly stroking
With his hand her raven head.

'Thou hast one without a penny,
One without a single friend,
One with kindred poor, if any:
Unto such one,
Canst thou still thy love extend?

'When I see the tear-drops oozing,
Do I count it as a sign
That the husband of thy choosing
Cannot please thee,
But for home thou wilt repine?'

Then her arms so white and slender
Weaved she quickly round his throat,
Lifting glances fervent, tender,
On his lips
She with hers the answer wrote.

Hung she thus with plaited finger,
And the tears began to roll :
' Let me on thy bosom linger,
Fondly breathing
Into thee my burning soul.

' Husband, here I'd rest for ever,
In a sweet untroubled calm ;
Naught from thee thy Ruth should sever,
Gathered closely
In thy firm protecting arm.

' Every kiss should add fresh fuel
To a blazing core of fire ;
But such love to thee were cruel ;
I were selfish
Yielding to my hot desire.

'Fare then forth, I bid thee, dearest,
And acquire thyself a name :
She enjoins,—to thee thy nearest ;
Till, and sowing,
Thou shalt reap a crop of fame.

'From the arms of her thou prizest,
Go to distant schools, and learn
What is taught, the best, the wisest :
That acquired,
Then to this true heart return.

'Husband ! if I loved thee little,
I would bid thee near me stay ;
But self-seeking love is brittle,
So I urge thee,
I adjure thee, fare away.'

Then her necklaces untwining,
And the bracelets from her arm
Plucked she off, and diamonds shining
From her fingers,
Laid she in the shepherd's palm.

‘Think, my love, when thy hope flaggeth,
When exhausted fails thy mind,
Think, when thy ambition laggeth,
Of the dear one
Who for thee remains behind.

‘Think, when whitely morning shimmers,
That her prayers for thee arise ;
Think, when evening twilight glimmers,
Turned to Zion,
She for thee entreats the skies.

‘Once again, heart’s dearest, kiss me,
Clasp me to thy loyal heart.
I shall need thee, thou wilt miss me ;
We are one
Ever, though long leagues apart.’

III.

THE RETURN.

Fourteen suns their course have sped :
Spinning for her daily bread,
 Still an exile from her home,
Struggled Ruth with want to cope,
Waiting God's own time, in hope,
 But the shepherd did not come.

At her window, with her rock,
She is sitting ; tufts of stock,
 In a pitcher, scent the air.
As the sun upon her shines,
Mark the many silver lines
 Traced among the raven hair.

On this day a Rabbi great
Seeks the city in high state,
 With the pupils by him led.
There are gathered in the street
Citizens their guest to greet,
 Calba Shebna at their head.

Ruth but little heeds the throng,
Murmuring a plaintive song,
 As the spindle briskly twirls.
She is dreaming of a lad
With a shepherd's crook, who had
 Eyes of blue and amber curls.

But there burst from her a sigh,
Starts the torrent to her eye,
 As her haughty father nears ;
Falls the spindle, and the line
Of the flax that she doth twine
 Twinkles with her threaded tears.

With a glance of hard disdain,
Cutting her with cruel pain,
 At his daughter Calba stares.
O'er her work she bows her face,
Praying God would of His grace
 Soothe the anguish that she bears.

When she lifts her head, a shout
From the eager mob without
 Tells her he of high renown
Is approaching in the street.
Sounds the tramping of the feet
 As he passes through the town.

Slowly, midst a concourse great
Of disciples who did wait
 On the lessons that he taught,
Passed the Rabbi, tall and fair,
With blue eyes and amber hair,
 And a forehead full of thought.

Calba Shebna, his white head
Bending, with his hands outspread,
 Touching with his brow the ground
Said, 'Oh! highest in repute,
Rabbi! we in thee salute
 Lofty wisdom, lore profound.

‘ Out of Jamnia * hath report
Tidings of thy learning brought ;
Higher honour for our place
None than this, that thou shouldst deign
Us to visit. Oh, remain,
And our little city grace !

‘ We our servants, homes, and land,
Rabbi ! place at thy command,
Only,—here with us abide !’
‘ Hold ! disciples round me gather !
Thou hast promised, ancient father,’
Suddenly the stranger cried.

There was silence through the crowd :
Then he spoke, ’fore all aloud,
‘ Rabbi, hear me ! wilt thou take
Me as inmate of thy house,
Give thy daughter as my spouse ?
Calba Shebna, answer make !’

* Jamnia, at the time of the Maccabees, was a large and populous haven. After the destruction of Jerusalem, it became the seat of the Rabbinical Schools.

- ‘ Oh, how gladly !’ faintly spoke
Calba, as suspicion broke
 Dimly on his troubled brain.
- ‘ Hear him !’ then the stranger turned
Whither long his heart had yearned,
 Thither now his fingers strain.
- ‘ My disciples ! bend your glance
On my wife—in speechless trance,
 Leaning at yon open pane.
All I have, and all I know,
I to yonder woman owe,
 She gave all, that I might gain.
- ‘ Oh, true woman ! holy, pure,
Ready meekly to endure,
 In thy sweet, unselfish love ;
God-made woman ! man were vile
But for thee to reconcile
 Him to labour ; and to prove
Mainspring of all actions high,
Ready impulse to supply,
 And his sluggish nature move.

' God-made woman ! man may roam
Years from thee,—but thou art home,
 Whither with the olive leaf
Must his whitest longings wing,
And their purest treasures bring ;
 Solace thou to every grief.

' Let me pass ! in very truth,
Sighs my spirit after Ruth,
 Clear a passage to the door !
Back, sirs ! we must meet alone,
That true heart is mine,—mine own.
 See, her dear eyes trickle o'er.

' Let me pass to wipe those tears,
We have not met for fourteen years.
 If in all the mighty store
Of my learning garnerèd,
Aught is worthless——from my head
 Shall her fingers pluck the straw.'

THE MINER OF FALUN.

[AFTER TRINIUS.]

In an ancient shaft of Falun
Year by year a body lay,
God-preserved, as though a treasure,
Kept unto the waking day.

Not the turmoil nor the passions
Of the busy world o'erhead.
Sounds of war, or peace-rejoicings,
Could disturb the placid dead.

Once a youthful miner, whistling
Hew'd that chamber, now his tomb.
Crashed the rocky fragments on him,
Closed him in abysmal gloom.

Sixty years pass'd by, ere miners
 Toiling, hundred fathoms deep,
Broke upon the shaft where rested
 That poor miner in his sleep.

As the gold-grains lie untarnish'd
 In the dingy soil and sand,
Till they gleam and flicker, stainless,
 In the digger's sifting hand ;

As the gem in virgin brilliance
 Rests, till usher'd into day :
So uninjured, uncorrupted,
 Fresh and fair the body lay.

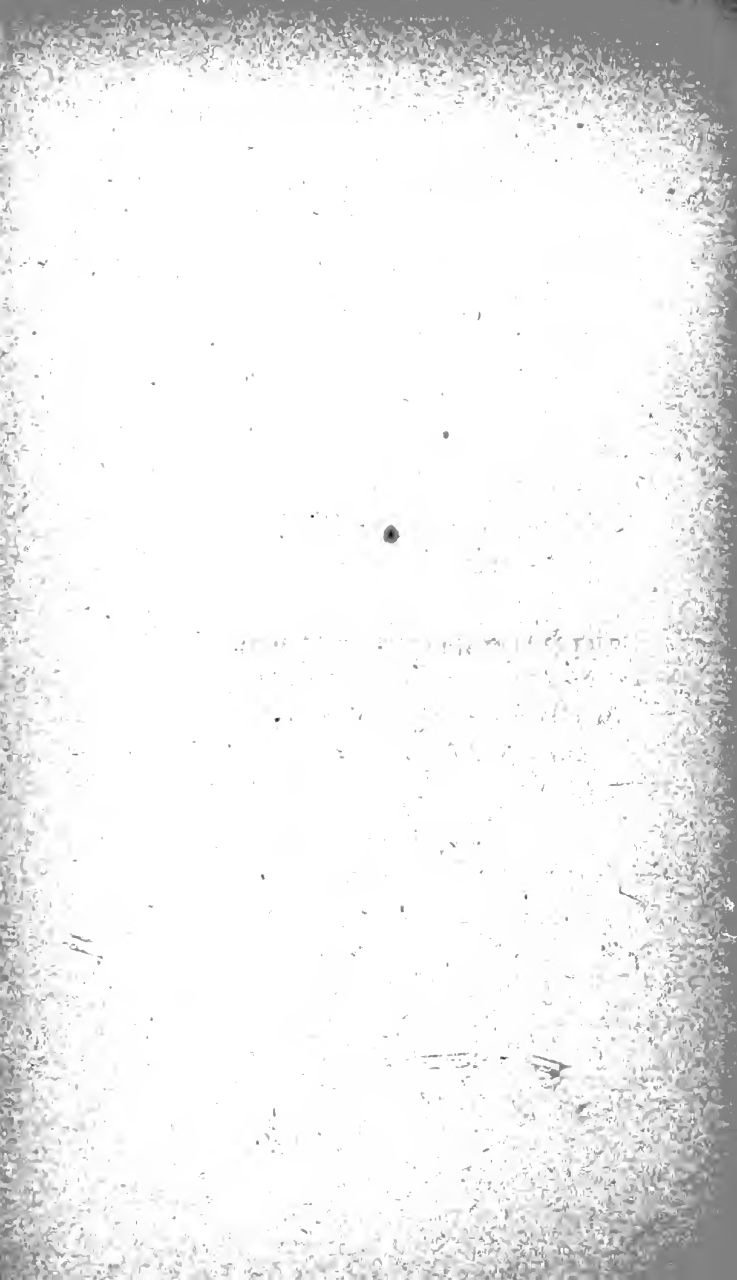
And the miners bore it upward,
 Laid it in the yellow sun.
Up, from out the neighbouring houses
 Fast the curious peasants run.

Who is he ? with eyes they question ;
 Who is he ? they ask aloud ;
Hush ! a wizen'd hag comes hobbling,
 Panting, through the wondering crowd.

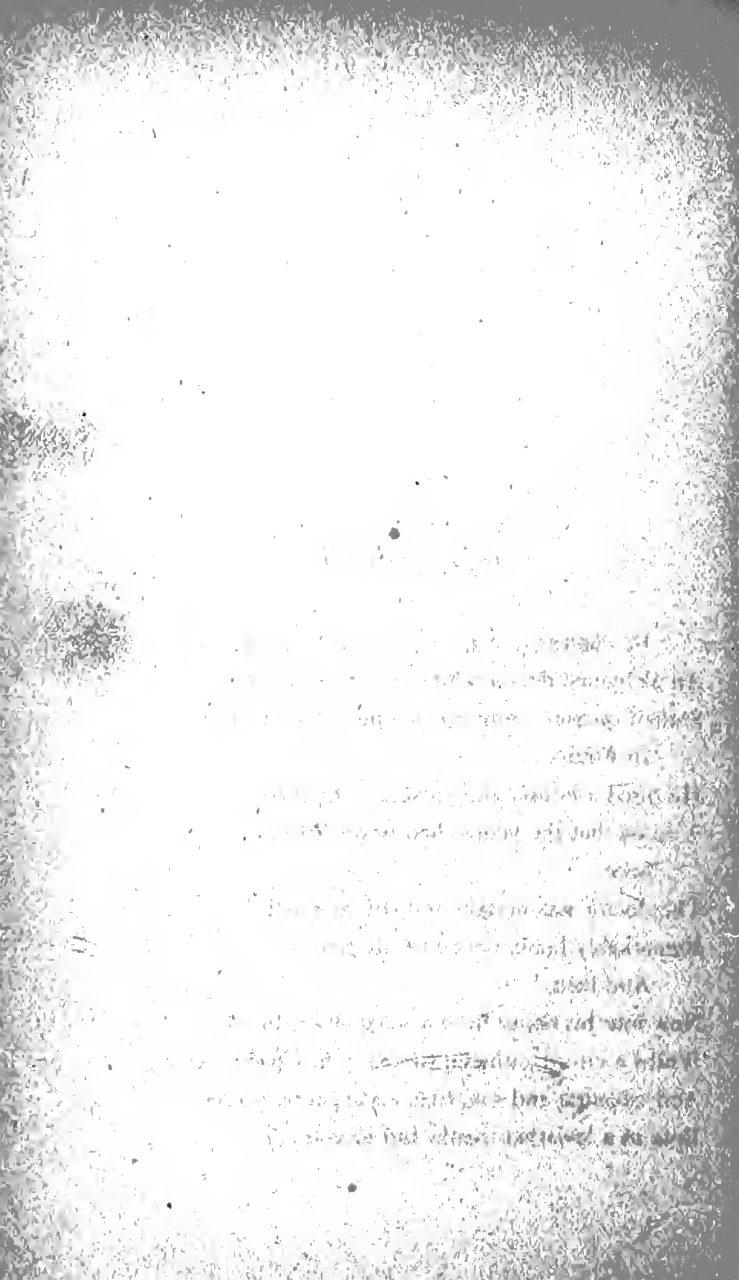
Oh ! the cry—half joy, half sorrow—
As she flings her at his side,
' John ! the sweetheart of my girlhood,
Here am I, am I, thy bride.

Time on thee has left no traces,
Death from wear has shielded thee ;
I am aged, worn, and wasted,
Oh ! what life has brought on me !'

Then his smooth unfurrow'd forehead
Kiss'd that ancient wither'd crone ;
And the death which had divided,
Now united them in one.



HUMOROUS POEMS.



DR. BONOMI.

By chance

An alchymist doctor whose fortunes were down,
Shifted quarters, and set up one day in a town
In France.

He hired a house, and affixed to the door
A name that the people had never before
Seen.

The doctor was upright and stiff as a wall,
Remarkably bony, uncommonly tall,
And lean.

Now into his house from a waggon was brought,
Whilst a crowd gathered staring, a monstrous retort ;
And sweating and swearing, a staggering porter
Bore in a leviathan pestle and mortar ;

Then hideous syringes, alchemical fixtures,
And great podgy bottles of all-coloured mixtures.

A flutter

Among the gazers, who deemed every drop
Explosive material to go off with a pop

And splutter.

Therefore the people kept back in the street
Ready to beat an immediate retreat,
Should the doctor a tendency show to be loading
The squirts, or the bottles give signs of exploding

By fizzing.

Some gazed in mute awe on his spectacles big,
Whilst others the cut of his comical wig

Were quizzing.

Unheeding, the doctor paced solemnly round,
In silence that whispered of wisdom profound,

And vast.

But when all his chattels were carried within

To the last,

The physician's grave features relaxed to a grin,
As he said, 'That will do ; I think now I have nearly all
For this little city, the needful material.'

Now round with the speed of a fire, the report
Of the squirts, the great bottles, the tubes, the retort,

Flew ;

And from every quarter the inquisitive pour,
Men, and of women, of course, a great store,
And the multitude fast round the alchymist's door
Grew.

Sudden, the crier emerged with a horn,
Calling, ' O yes, O yes, this blessed morn
Into our city, of doctors e'er born

The chief

Has come, Psalmanazar Bonōmi,
Physician extraordinary to the King of Dahomy.
A deeper read doctor no mortal can show me ;
He's doctor of medicine of famous Louvain ;
Salamanca boasts of him (Salamanca's in Spain) ;
And, to prove that his qualifications are thorough,
He passed at Montpellier, Bologne, Edinboro'.

In brief

This alchymist-doctor of learned Salamanca
(Expressive though vulgar the term) is a spanker.
Now vain the delusion of him who supposes
The doctor sets plasters, lets blood, or gives doses,
Applies leeches, pounds powders, rolls pills, spreads a
blister :

Far other, good people, the practice of Mister

Bonōmi.

Don't dream, if you're ill, for this doctor to send,
For certainly on you he will not attend.

Whatever your malady, be well assured,
You must not seek *him* if you want to be cured.
Should he, like a common hack doctor, go round—
He the elixir of life who has found

In Dahomy?

No ! he visits not prince, noble, burgher, nor peasant.

Why should he? A score

Of doctors and more

Are set up in this poky old city at present.

So those who have croup,

And those with the whoop,

And those who have cholera, liver complaint,

Rheumatics, lumbago, have bile, inflammation,

Influenza, or measles, have fits, or who faint,

Have fevers, convulsions, tic, gout, palpitation,

Don't

Let them by calling Doctor Bonomi bother.

He will not attend ; they must summon another ;

Nor strive to induce, by a quadrupled fee,

Or by flattery, to bring him to visit, for he

Won't.

But, when you have found all physicians to fail,
And every prescription has ceased to avail,
When the pulse beats no more, and the last sigh is sped,
When the last tear has trickled, the last word been said,

When

Rigid the muscles, when motionless lies
The patient, sans breath, and sans ears, and sans eyes,
Sans feeling, sans thinking, sans all things, in bed ;
In a word, when you know that the patient is dead,—

Then

Send for the illustrious Doctor Bonomi,
For then, in his own graphic words, “ All will know me

To be

The Only Physician who has any science,
The only Bonomi, with none in alliance,
Who sets all the doctors of France at defiance.”

So he

Urges all those of high rank or low station
By mortality robbed of a darling relation,

Father or mother,

Sister or brother,

Uncle or aunt, wife, husband, or lover,

And the same from the power of the grave would recover,

Let 'em

Apply to the doctor at their earliest leisure,
And, if not engaged, it will give him great pleasure
For the trifling fee of five francs each—no more—
The precious departed to life to restore,
And set 'em

In vigorous health once again in their places,
With their old dispositions, old habits, old faces.
So all who desire at a trumpery cost,
To recover a friend or relation that's lost,
Have only to come to the doctor, and he
Will their wishes attend at afore-mentioned fee.

N.B.

A reduction to families, children half-price
Under twelve, and not according to size.'

Well, the doctor he waited, the crier he cried,
Newspaper notices, placards, were tried,
But the crying and waiting proved wholly in vain ;
And days as they passed, made it daily more plain
That folks were not eager to bring back again

Those who had died ;

For—*no one applied.*

So after the doctor a fortnight had waited,
 And nobody came,
He issued a poster, the colour of flame,
 Whereon it was stated
 That greatly to blame
Were the people for thinking that he was deceiving 'em ;
And, therefore, before he determined on leaving 'em,
 He did intend
 At the week's end
To prove he had power to do what he said.
He would go to the churchyard and raise *all* the dead.

Now, scarce had the placard appeared in the street,
Ere there came to the door a loud clatter of feet,
 And one
Burst in on the doctor with colourless cheek,
And in his excitement scarce able to speak :
' Did you say you were going at the end of the week
To raise all the dead from the graves of the city ?'
He fell on his knees wailing ' Doctor, have pity !
 Do not arouse
 My slumbering spouse !
 Though fun

To a stranger such practices may be,
They're death and perdition, and worse, sir, to me.

If my wife,
Who is dead—rest her soul!—came to life,
 What should I do?
For scarce had I seen her in sepulchre laid
Ere I put in the banns, and was spliced to her maid.
 It never would do
 Wives to have two,
Especially when the first wife was a scold,
Corpulent, fussy, and ugly and old;
And after her death one's enjoying her gold
 With Kitty,
Who is dapper, and young, and good-natured, and pretty.'
 Then he pressed
A well-weighted purse on Bonomi, and said,
'Now, doctor, remember, in raising the dead,
 Let *her* rest.'

Now scarce had this gentleman taken his hat,
When there pealed on the door a loud rat-a-tat-tat.
Then in came another man, shaking and bowing,
With forehead perspiring, and cheeks all a-glowing,
 Who said, in an accent of trouble and fear,
Whilst with a blue handkerchief mopping his face,
'Why, doctor! good heaven! is it true what I hear,

That you're going to raise all the dead in the place ?

Why, bless me ! my uncle has lately deceased,

And left me his heir,

And, dear sir, I declare

That now, from pecuniary troubles released,

I'm only beginning life's pleasures to taste.

Oh, doctor ! if you've not the heart of a stone,

Have pity, and leave my poor uncle alone.

I pray you accept of this trifle, and save

Me the terrible blow. Let *him* rest in his grave.'

Then in came another, with face of despair,

Who said palpitating, ' I pray you forbear !

My brothers are dead, I'm enjoying their share

Of the fortune my father amassed ; I don't care

To have to refund it, surrendering the pelf ;

It's a thousand times better to spend it oneself.

Beside

Providence knew, I am sure, what was best,

When, by measles, it took my dear brothers to rest.

They died

By heaven's decree ; and shall mortal perverse

Adventure, what Providence rules, to reverse ?

They are better by far,
I'm convinced, where they are
(Here, doctor, I pray you to finger this purse);
Earth was no home
For souls such as theirs, so the heavenly flame
Rose to the ether sublime whence it came.
O monster inhuman ! re-rivet again
Of spirit and matter the long-shatter'd chain !
Replace the poor bird in the cage whence it's flown !
Cast once more from his home the poor exile restored !
O'er the criminal pardoned, again lift the sword !
For my brothers' sake, doctor, give ear to my plain,
And let *them* alone.'

The next to appear was a lady, who said,
With pattering tears, and pendulous head,
' Alack,
For my master who lay for a long time in bed !
A terrible sufferer, whilst by his side
I tenderly waited and watched, till he died ;
And must he, with every fond fancy and whim,
Come back ?
For years I kept dancing attendance on him,

And only when I was released by his death,
The leisure obtained to look round, and take breath.

Now I enjoy,
Without any alloy,

My freedom and income, which he, ere he died,
In return for my nursing took care to provide.

O, doctor ! I'm tired of being a nurse :

So I pray you to take a few coins from this purse,
And save

My feelings, by letting *him* rest in his grave.'

The next to arrive was a gentleman eager,
With sharp-pointed nose, long, lanky, and meagre ;

Like a rat's

Was his face. He, the tallest of hats

With the smallest of brims in his fingers was holding,

Whilst the stiffest cravat his long neck was enfolding ;

His swallow-tails hung to the calf of his leg.

Now thus, in shrill tones, began he to beg,

Making a bow :

' How do you do, doctor ? how

Are you ? Dear doctor Bonomi ; I'm calling

To assure you I fear the event of a riot

In the city at the prospect, no little appalling,

Of our dead folk not being allowed to lie quiet.

I have come to you, doctor, in hopes to impress
Your mind with a sense of the prevailing distress
Which is caused among many good folk by the thought
Of the miracle which is about to be wrought.
But perhaps you will best understand, if I place
Before you an instance, a representative case.

My lady gave birth

Twice to twins ; in the earth

They are lying, very much to their benefit surely,
And to my satisfaction. They always were poorly ;

And, because of their ailing,

They never ceased wailing,

Till their happy release

Gave the family peace.

They are well where they are ; but I fear and suppose,
With the others these babies to revive you propose.

What moneys they'll cost me in victuals and clothes !

Why, to think, sir,' he added, with agonised groan,

' Of the cost of four little boys' breeches alone,

Which always give way at the seat and the knee ;

Which they are ever outgrowing ;

Which take buttons and sewing !

Alas ! but four boys would be ruin to me.

They would always be yelping for something to eat ;

They would cost me a fortune in bread, sir, and meat.

Then their education
Befitting their station !

I have children already, enough and to spare.
Already my wife has found grey in my hair.
At the prospect I'm ready to die of despair
Of having to provide
For four hungry, howling, nude creatures beside.
Therefore, good sir, if you wake those that sleep,
Clear of my babies I pray you to keep.
Here's a humble reminder, fifteen louis-d'or :
And, in raising the dead, pray, *my babies* pass o'er.'

Now was heard in the street of wheels a loud rumble ;
Then a sudden portentous loud rap at the door.

And next, up the stair,
With tumble
And grumble

Full into the room came bouncing the Mayor.

'Ahem !' said his worship. 'Sacré bleu ! mille diables !
Are you going to arouse from their graves all the rabble ?
Are you, sir, the man who will quicken the dead ?'

He stopped, out of breath, but still waggled his head,
Puffing and blowing.

'What ! Such an infringement of order, indeed !

Revolution and anarchy certain to breed.

Do you think I am going

To tolerate it for one moment? Odds bobbin !

To pay Peter, in verity, Paul 'twould be robbing ;

For I fear I should have to vacate my great chair,

If, among all the others, you roused the ex-Mayor.

So, out of the city I bid you be packing,

Or me, ventre gris ! sir, you will not find lacking

In putting in force the full weight of the law,

And sending you straight into justice's maw—

Into prison ; and mark you, if once you were in it,

You would not be able to slip out in a minute.

But I'm generous, doctor, and ready to offer

A compromise. Here are rouleaux in this coffer :

Take them. Your absence—I'm ready to buy it ;

Only, for mercy's sake, leave the dead quiet.

To the money you're welcome—accept, and be gone ;

But, whatever you do, leave the *ex-Mayor* alone.

Now pack

Up your traps ; it's a beautiful morning

For shifting your quarters. No slighting my warning !

Why,' added his worship, with iciest stare,

' I'm 'whelmed with amazement to think you should dare

To dream of unseating ME—me, sir, the Mayor !

Then back

With your bottles and drugs to the wilds of Dahomy,
There practice at ease, on fresh corpse or old mummy,

With nothing to fear,

But only not here.

So ! out of the town with you, Doctor Bonomi !'

LIGHTENING THE VESSEL. (8)

[JOHANNIS RAULINI *Itinerarium Paradisi*, A. D. 1482 : *De Matrimonio*,
Sermon vii.]

A TERRIBLE storm on the ocean lay,
And the waves ran mountains high ;
The lightning flashed and the thunder crashed,
As Erebus was the sky.

A vessel was running before the blast
With a rent and flapping sail,
She was hardly pressed and sore distressed
With the fury of the gale.

The Captain was standing upon the deck,
And wond'ring if hope were vain
After that night to behold the light
Awake in the east again.

On board the vessel were bales of silk,
And barrels of shining gold,
And pigs of lead were lying in bed
At the bottom of the hold.

But there was a risk of other sort
Than cargo, vessel, or life,
For the Captain had brought away from port
Madam Malone—his wife.

Mistress Malone in the cabin sat,
Sipping a cup of tea ;
Whilst Captain Malone was wet to the bone
In battling with the sea.

Mistress Malone had a nimble tongue,
That sharper and freer grew ;
And never a day but she nagged away,
For she was an awful shrew.

The boatswain, approaching the Captain, said
Touching his cap : ‘ We are lost,
Unless you agree that into the sea
The cargo shall be toss’d.

‘ I can lose my money and lose my time,
But life I cannot afford,
So out let us fling the heaviest thing
That we can find on board.’

The Captain he stood and bit his thumb
With a frowning brow awhile ;
At last he said, with a jerk of the head,
And the symptoms of a smile :—

‘ Heavy indeed are the bales of silk,
And heavier is the gold,
But heavier yet is the lead, I bet,
Lumbering in the hold.

‘ But there is a weight outweighs them all,
The heaviest I can find,
More ponderous than lead, it crushes my head
And oppresses my soul and mind ;

‘ Upon my spirit it ever lies,
In company, or alone.
Come boatswain, with me, and into the sea
We’ll topple old Madam Malone !’

THE SENTENCE ON THE THIEF. (10)

[*Itinerarium Paradisi: De Matrim.* Serm. xi.]

A NOTABLE thief of Rotterdam,
 The worry of all the city,
 Was taken at last, and made doubly fast
 In the prison, with scanty pity.

Excitement arose to boiling point,
 And folk would take no denial,
 But were all agreed, to have, indeed,
 In the market-place the trial.

The magistrates said, 'It may terror strike
 In the guilty, and embolden
 The innocent; so be content,
 It shall be publicly holden.'

The day arrived, and the mighty crowd
Their way to the market fought,
For the people all, both great and small,
Rejoiced that the thief was caught.

The judge was seated in scarlet cloak,
The officers quelled disorder ;
Lawyers were there, with preoccupied air,
And the clerk, and the recorder.

Witnesses came, were questioned and heard,
And the culprit felt with fear,
And a pallid face that his ugly case
Was made uncommonly clear.

And when the moment of the sentence came,
The judge to the people turned :
' Some have had life by this felon's knife
Taken, and some have had burned

' Their houses, and all have something lost,
Or suffered from him some way ;
So I direct that you shall elect
The penalty he shall pay.

‘ Death ! ’ they cried, ‘ is what we decide,’
Yelling in ecstasy;
But how carried out, the turbulent rout
In no way could agree.

Said one man, ‘ Let him suspended be
As a warning from the steeple ; ’
But another said, ‘ Let us cut off his head,
In the presence of the people.’

Said another, ‘ There is a sweeter sport,
The breaking upon the wheel.’

Said another man, ‘ There’s a better plan,
Dangle him by the heel.’

Said another : ‘ I’ve heard in good old times
That culprits were stewed in oil.’

Said one, ‘ He shall bake ; ’ and one, ‘ At the stake
He shall roast ; ’ said another, ‘ Boil.’

Then slowly arose from his seat the judge,
And said, ‘ If you can’t agree,
Then lend me your ear, and you shall hear
A suggestion made by me.

‘ What sort of pain would you give the man—
Continuous, or soon past ? ’

Then shouted all, both great and small,
‘ Long, long, sir, may it last ! ’

‘ Would you rack his body and heart and mind,
Or only rack him in part ? ’

They shouted all, both great and small :
‘ Body and mind and heart ! ’

‘ Would you make him pray for a quick release,
Or close his life with a blow ? ’

Should he greatly desire Purgat`ry fire,
As relief from present woe ? ’

They shouted all, both great and small :

‘ Protract a tormented life ! ’

Said the Judge, ‘ Very well : to the criminal
I here make over my wife. ’

NOTES.



NOTE (1), page 9.

I have allowed myself a little anachronism here. The true Waräger, or Varanger, band became a recognised body in the service of the Byzantine Emperors at a later period, but that the Norse and Icelandic warriors were in the service of the earlier Emperors is not unlikely, before they became a recognised corps. The legend is wide enough spread. See a German form in Simrock's *Märchen*, No. 22. Bechstein's *Märchen-buch*, p. 188.

NOTE (1), page 29.

In 'Talmud Berachoth' the Rabbi is called Akiba. In 'Taanith,' Tract III. 21, his name is Nahum.

NOTE (2), page 44.

'Talmud Jerusalem,' Haggada II. Halacha 1; 'Talmud Babylon,' Haggada II. fol. 15; 'Midrash Rabba,' Ruth iii. 13, and other places. I have taken some liberties with this tale. In its

original form it is as follows. Meir and the apostate entered the school. Then said Elisha to the nearest lad: 'Repeat your lesson.' The boy replied, in the words of Isaiah lvii. 21. Elisha asked the second, and he repeated Ps. l. 16; then he rushed from the school. But Meir went after him with the words, 'Thou leadest men to destruction; again thou sayest, Turn again, ye children of men.' (Ps. xc. 3.) Then Elisha burst into tears, and died. After his burial, an uneasy flame danced on his grave; but Rabbi Meir laid it by repeating over the tomb the words of Ruth iii. 13.

NOTE (3), page 51.

The Archbishop is said to have been Jacques de Voragine, author of the famous 'Legenda Aurea,' but with injustice. See the introduction to 'La Légende Dorée,' Paris, 1843.

NOTE (4), page 61.

Cæsarius Heisterbachensis, lib. ii. c. 10. I have, however, somewhat altered the story of gossiping Cæsarius. His tale is this: 'Parisiis erat juvenis quidem in studio, qui suggerente humani generis inimico, talia quædam peccata commiserat, quæ obstante erubescencia nulli hominum confiteri potuit. Tandem miserante Deo, in adolescente timor verecundiam vicit. Veniens ad Sanctum Victorem, priorem vocavit, et quia confitendi gratia venisset indicavit. Ille paratus ad tale officium, statim venit, in loco ad hoc deputato sedit, præmissaque exhortatione juvenem confiteri volentem expectavit. Tandem hora eadem pius Dominus cordi ejus contulit contritionem, ut quotiens confessionem inciperet, totiens singultibus intercepto vox deficeret, in oculis lacrimæ, suspiria in pectore, singultus erant in gutture. Hæc vidit Prior, dicebat scholari: Vade scribe peccata tua in schedula, et defer ad me. Placuit consilium juveni, abiit, scripsit, die altera rediit, et si confiteri posset iterum tentans, ut prius defecit. Et cum nil proficeret, schedulam Priori porrexit. Legit Prior et obstupuit, dixitque juveni: Non sufficio

tibi solus dare consilium. Vis ut ostendam Abbati? et licentiavit ei. Venit Prior ad Abbatem, et porrexit schedulam legendam, rem ei per ordinem exponens. Quid denique gestum sit, audiant peccatores et consolentur. Mox enim ut Abbas chartulam ad legendum aperuit, totam ejus continentiam deletam invenit. Impletumque est in eo, quod Dominus per Isaiam dicit: Delevi ut nubem iniquitatem tuam, et ut nebulam peccata tua.'

NOTE (5), page 69.

Paciuchelli, 'Lect. Morales in Jonam.' This is a curious book: three folio volumes of commentary on the four chapters of Jonah. It is a storehouse of anecdote, legend, and fable. The tale I have versified runs thus in the original (tom ii. p. 196): 'Legimus in vita Sancti Vedasti cæcum quendam, ubi sacra ossa in digniorem locum transferebantur, rogasse, ut reddito luminum usu sanctas episcopi reliquias intueri posset; vix preces effuderat, et quantocyus restitutos sibi oculos esse expertus est. Obstupuit, et secum hunc discursum efformavit: Sed quis scit, an luminum usus ad animæ meæ salutem expediat? Inconsiderata nimis fuit meo petitio, cum debitas conditiones non adhibuerim. Quid egit? ad preces rediit: Domine! per Sancti tui Vedasti merita supplex rogo, ut si ea res animæ meæ saluti minus conducatur, redeat infirmitas. Et ecce, eodem sane momento novâ caligine obducti sunt precantis oculi.'

NOTE (6), page 80.

Cæsarius Heisterbachensis, lib. x. c. 58. The story is told of storks by this author: 'Apud Cistercium, ubi caput est ordinis nostri, plurimæ nidificant cyconia. Quod ideo a fratribus religiosi permittitur, quia per illas non solum monasterium, sed omnia circuitu loca ab immundis vermibus mundantur. Hyeme appropinquante recedunt, et tempore certo redeunt. Die quadam cum acies suas ordinassent ad peregrinandum, ne hospitalitatis concessæ immemores esse viderentur, conventum qui eadem hora in

agro laborabat petentes, eumque crebrius grutillando circumvolantes, omnes in admirationem verterunt, ignorantibus quid peterent. Ad quos Prior: Puto quod licentiam petant recedendi. Elevansque manum benedixit eis. Mox mirum in modum cum multa alacritate simul avolantes, monachis exeuntibus in viam qui regularem benedictionem accipere sive expectare parvipendunt, magnam verecundiam incusserunt.'

NOTE (7), page 81.

The same story is in the *Speculum Exemplorum*, 1481. It must have come from a distant land, for there is a Chinese play founded upon it. See *Journal Asiatique*, series IV., vol. xvii. p. 315.

NOTE (8), page 170.

Johannis Raulini, '*Itinerarium Paradisi*,' Antw. 1612, p. 283: 'Cum quidam esset in navi onerata cum uxore sua litigiosa, et propter tempestatem necesse esset alleviare navem, et projicere merces in mari; cum projicerentur, rogavit ille ut etiam uxor sua projiceretur, asserens nihil esse tam onerosum sibi sicut uxor sua, et quod si eam haberent portare super humeros suos, sicut ipse, quod esset prior quæ in mari projiceretur.'

NOTE (10), page 173.

Itinerarium Parad. p. 309 'Accidit in civitate illa ut caperetur maleficus et latro pessimus, qui multos de civitate spoliaverat, et occiderat. Cumque cives quererentur, et judex a singulis consilium quæreret qualiter latro ille magis torqueri valeret, quibusdam dicentibus: Distrahatur caudis equorum, et suspendatur; aliis dicentibus: Igne cremetur: cæteris consulentibus ut vivus excoriaretur: cum perventum est ad alium qui malam habebat uxorem, respondit: Date illi uxorem meam; non video qualiter ipsum magis affligere valeatis.'



