

Some Scraps of Verse
⌘ ⌘ and Prose by ⌘ ⌘
Dante Gabriel Rossetti



— BY —

WILLIAM M. ROSSETTI

2nd COPY,
1898.



COPYRIGHT, 1898,
BY WILLIAM M. ROSSETTI

2 cups rec'd
Nov. 17. 98

PRINTED BY THE E. SCOTT COMPANY, NEW YORK

62630 Oct. 25-97

SOME SCRAPS OF VERSE AND PROSE BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

In 1886 I edited and brought out *The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, both verse and prose, original and translated. Into those two volumes I put the works which my brother had published during his lifetime, and also a moderate number of other writings which he had not published, but which I esteemed suitable for appearing in such a form. Some other things of his, remaining in my possession, were advisedly excluded.

As much diversity of opinion exists on questions of this kind, it may be as well to explain my position in the matter.

My own personal opinion is as follows: If a writer has attained a certain standard of merit and reputation—and I hold that my brother *had* attained that standard—all that he wrote, good, bad, and indifferent, should sooner or later be published; omitting only such productions as from their subject or treatment (apart from the direct question of literary merits or demerits) may be unsuited for the public eye. The good things should be published because they are good; the bad or indifferent because they are interesting or curious as coming from an eminent man. They are documents subserving the man's biography, and may from that point of view be as important to reflect upon as even his best performances. A sensible editor would of course give some adequate intimation as to what he considers indifferent or bad, so as to safeguard from misconstruction both his author and himself. In the case of Shelley, for instance, it appears to me that, in a complete or scholarly edition, the public ought to be made aware that the poet who eventually wrote *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Witch of*

Atlas did also at an earlier date indite such unmitigated drivel as the verses in *St. Irvyne*, and was at that date, though no longer a child, incapable of writing anything better. This latter literary and biographic fact is only a shade less worthy of note than the former, and from the former its importance is derived.

In this general view my brother was, I think, not far from agreeing with myself: in the case of such poets as Coleridge, Shelley, or Keats, he would—for the purposes of any edition affecting to be complete—have put in everything he could lay his hands upon, although he would always have preferred, for his own reading, a compendium of the masterpieces. But, as regards himself individually, personal sensitiveness gave him a different bias. He detested the very idea that some of his boyish crudities (such as *Sir Hugh the Heron*, for which ingenuous persons are willing to give some ten times the price of his *Collected Works*) should ever be brought forward. I therefore, in compiling the *Collected Works*, excluded all such crudities; and to this day I would not publish, even in a casual and scattered form, those writings of his which I believe he would have considered essentially poor or bad.

But there are some other things, of minor importance or completeness—sometimes intentionally jocular—which appear to me considerably removed from being bad or poor, and which he himself would probably have thought admissible for eventual printing, though not for publication during his lifetime, or as a portion of his solid literary life-work. The pieces which I have here put together are of this kind. They all belong to the days of his youth—the latest of them to 1853 or thereabouts, when he completed his twenty-fifth year. I think that every one of them has its value, whether on the ground of intrinsic merit, or as illustrating some phase of his mental development and practice. I have grouped them together as best I can, and added a few remarks by way of elucidation.

LONDON, *July*, 1898.

WILLIAM M. ROSSETTI.

MATER PULCHRÆ DELECTIONIS.

AVE.

At some time in 1847 Dante Rossetti wrote the former of these poems, being the first form of the composition which, under the title *Ave*, was published in the volume *Poems* of 1870. The number of lines in this first form is 63. Afterwards my brother enlarged the poem to 146 lines, giving it the title *Ave*, and the motto "Ego mater pulchræ delectionis et timoris et agnitionis, et sancti spes." In this second form I find the poem signed "H.H.H.," which is the same signature that he gave to the ballad of *Sister Helen* when that was first published, towards 1854, in *The Dusseldorf Artists' Annual*, edited for England by Mary Howitt. I apprehend that he must have offered to publish this *Ave* also in the same annual; the copy of it which I possess is not in his own handwriting, but (I think) in that of Miss Barbara Leigh Smith (Mrs. Bodichon), who was very intimate with the Howitt family. In the *Poems* of 1870 the composition is reduced from 146 to 112 lines; and, what between omissions and alterations, seventy of the lines forming the *Ave* which I now present to the reader passed under revision. Without at all calling in question the wisdom of the course which my brother pursued in modifying the poem into the form that it bears in his volume, I think that both the versions which I now print have their individual attraction and interest, and a fair claim to be preserved.

There is another early poem by Dante Rossetti which has not been published, and perhaps never will be; but in this connection I may as well mention it—and I could easily name some few more, were there any occasion for so doing. The heading of the poem in question—twenty-one stanzas of sextet metre—is *Sacred to the Memory of Algonon R. G. Stanhope, Natus est 1838, obiit 1847*. This was written in September 1847, a date later than that of *The Blessed Damozel*. It is perhaps the only poem which my

brother ever wrote "to order." Our family-friend Cavalier Mortara knew something of this Stanhope family, to the Rossettis not known at all; and he solicited my brother to write some verses in commemoration of a beautiful and promising boy, lately deceased. The poem is by no means amiss in its way, but is decidedly inferior to some other work of the same period; and my brother, when he had to consider the question of publishing, never deigned a thought to this particular performance.

In *Mater Pulchræ Delectionis* the reader may observe the passage beginning—

"Mind'st thou not, when the twilight gone
Left darkness in the house of John,"

and may remember that these lines are closely related to one of Rossetti's best sacred subjects, a water-colour entitled *The House of John*. He may also observe the line—

"Like to a thought of Raphaël,"

indicating on the writer's part a great delight and sympathy in that painter's work. The same thing appears in another poem of a nearly similar date; and this I quote with a view to showing that Dante Rossetti, when soon afterwards he dubbed himself a "Præraphaelite," was not animated by a mere obtuse indifference to the lofty claims of the founder of the Roman School. I possess a fragment in an early form of my brother's poem *The Portrait*—four stanzas. There is also a complete copy, twelve stanzas, but differing greatly from the twelve which form the published poem. It is called *On Mary's Portrait, which I painted six years ago*, and its date may be 1847, or at latest 1848. Of course Dante Rossetti never did paint any such portrait, and could not paint at all six years prior to 1848, nor was there any Mary to be painted. In the four-stanza version, one of the stanzas is practically the same as in the printed form of the poem: the other three are wholly dif-

ferent. The last of them (gracious in its way, though juvenile) runs thus:—

So along some grass-bank in Heaven,
Mary the Virgin, going by,
Seeth her servant Raphael
Laid in warm silence happily ;
Being but a little lovelier
Since he hath reached the eternal year.
She smiles ; and he, as tho' she spoke,
Feels thanked, and from his lifted toque
His curls fall as he bends to her.

MATER PULCHRE DELECTIONIS.

Mother of the fair delight,
From the azure standing white
And looking golden in the light ;—
With the shadow of the Heaven roof
Upon thy hands lifted aloof,
And a mystic quiet in thine eyes
Born of the hush of Paradise,
Seated beside the ancient Three,
Thyself a woman-Trinity—
Being the dear daughter of God,
Mother of Christ from stall to rood,
And wife unto the Holy Ghost ;—
Oh, when our need is uttermost,
And the sorrow we have seemeth to last,—
Though the future falls not to the past
In the race that the Great Cycle runs,
Bethink thee of that olden once
Wherein to such as death may strike
Thou wert a sister, sisterlike.
Yea, even thou, who reignest now
Where the angels are that bow,—
Thou, hardly to be looked upon
By saints whose steps tread thro' the Sun,—
Thou the most greenly jubilant
Of the leaves of the Threefold Plant,—
Headstone of this humanity,
Groundstone of the great Mystery,
Fashioned like us, yet more than we.

I think that at the furthest top
 My love just sees thee standing up
 Where the light of the Throne is bright;
 Unto the left, unto the right,
 The cherubim, order'd and join'd,
 Slope inward to a golden point,
 And from between the seraphim
 The glory cometh like a hymn:
 All is aquiet,—nothing stirs;
 The peace of nineteen hundred years
 Is within thee and without thee;
 And the Godshine falls about thee:
 And thy face looks from thy veil
 Sweetly and solemnly and well,
 Like to a thought of Raphael.

Oh, if that look can stoop so far,
 Let it reach down from star to star
 And try to see us where we are;
 For the griefs we weep came like swift death,
 But the slow comfort loitereth.
 Sometimes it even seems to us
 That we are overbold when thus
 We cry and hope we shall be heard;—
 Being much less than a short word,—
 Mere shadow that abideth not,—
 Dusty nothing, soon forgot.
 O Lady Mary, be not loth
 To listen—thou whom the stars clothe!
 Bend thine ear, and pour back thine hair,
 And let our voice come to thee there
 Where, seeing, thou mayest not be seen:
 Help us a little, Mary Queen!
 Into the shadow thrust thy face,
 Bowing thee from the glory-place,
 Saint Mary the Virgin, full of grace!

AVE.

Ego Mater pulchræ delectionis et timoris et agnitionis, et sancti spes.

Mother of the Fair Delight,—
 A handmaid perfect in His sight

Who made thy blessing infinite,
For generations of the earth
Have called thee Blessed from thenceforth—
Now sitting with the Ancient Three,
Thyself a woman-Trinity;
Being the daughter of Great God,
Mother of Christ from stall to rood,

And wife unto the Holy Ghost:—
Oh, when our need is uttermost
And the long sorrow seems to last,
Then, though no future falls to past
In the still course thy cycle runs,
Bethink thee of that olden once
Wherein to such as Death may strike
Thou wert a sister, sisterlike:
Yea, even thou, who reignest now
Where angels veil their eyes and bow,—
Thou scarcely to be looked upon
By saints whose footsteps tread the sun,—
Headstone of this humanity,
Groundstone of the great Mystery,
Fashioned like us, yet more than we.

Mind'st thou not (when June's heavy breath
Warmed the long days in Nazareth)
That eve thou wentest forth to give
Thy flowers some drink, that they might live
One faint night more among the sands?
Far off the trees were as dark wands
Against the fervid sky, wherefrom
It seemed at length the heat must come
Bodily down in fire: the sea,
Behind, reached on eternally,
Like an old music soothing sleep.
Then gloried thy deep eyes, and deep
Within thine heart the song waxt loud.
It was to thee as though the cloud
Which shuts the inner shrine from view
Were molten, and that God burned through.
Until a folding sense like prayer,

Which is, as God is, everywhere,
Gathered about thee; and a voice
Spake to thee without any noise,
Being of the Silence: 'Hail,' it said,
'Thou that are highly favored;
The Lord is with thee, here and now,
Blessed among all women thou.'

Ah! knew'st thou of the end, when first
That Babe was on thy bosom nurst?—
Or when He tottered round thy knee
Did thy great sorrow dawn on thee?—
And through His boyhood, year by year
Eating with thee the Passover,
Didst thou discern confusedly
That holier sacrament when He,
The bitter cup about to quaff,
Should break the bread and eat thereof?
Or came not yet the knowledge, even,
Till on some night forecast in Heaven,
Over thy threshold through the mirk
He passed upon His Father's work?
Or still was God's high secret kept?
Nay but I think the whisper crept
Like growth through childhood, and those sports
'Mid angels in the Temple-courts
Awed thee with meanings unfulfilled;
And that in girlhood something stilled
Thy senses like the birth of light,
When thou hast trimmed thy lamp at night,
Or washed thy garments in the stream;
For to thy bed had come the dream
That He was thine and thou wert His
Who feeds among the field-lilies.
Oh solemn shadow of the end
In that wise spirit long contained!
Oh awful end! and those unsaid
Long years when It was finished!

Mind'st thou not (when the twilight gone
Left darkness in the house of John)

Between the naked window-bars
That spacious vigil of the stars?
For thou, a watcher even as they,
Wouldst rise from where throughout the day
Thou wroughtest raiment for His poor;
And, finding the fixt terms endure
Of day and night, which never brought
Sounds of His coming chariot,
Wouldst lift through cloud-waste unexplored
Those eyes which said, 'How long, O Lord?'
Then that disciple whom He loved,
Well heeding, haply would be moved
To ask thy blessing in His name;
And thy thought and his thought, the same
Though silent, then would clasp ye round
To weep together,—tears long bound,
Soft tears of patience, dumb and slow.
Yet, 'Surely I come quickly,'—so
He said, from life and death gone home.
Amen : Even so, Lord Jesus, come !

But oh what human tongue can speak
That day when Michael came to break
From the tired spirit, like a veil,
Its covenant with Gabriel,
Endured at length unto the end?
What human thought can apprehend
That mystery of motherhood
When thy Beloved at length renewed
The sweet communion severed,—
His left hand underneath thine head
And His right hand embracing thee?—
For henceforth thine abode must be,
Beyond all mortal pains and plaints,
The full assembly of the Saints.

Is't Faith perchance, or Love, or Hope,
Now lets me see thee standing up
Where the light of the Throne is bright?
Unto the left, unto the right,
The cherubim, ordered and joined,

Float inward to a golden point,
 And from between the seraphim
 The glory cometh like a hymn.
 All is aquiet, nothing stirs ;
 The peace of nineteen hundred years
 Is within thee and without thee,
 And the Godshine falls about thee.

Of if that look can stoop so far,
 It shall reach down from star to star
 And try to see us where we are ;
 For this our grief came swift as death,
 But the slow comfort loitereth.
 Sometimes it even seems to us
 That we are overbold when thus
 We cry and hope we shall be heard ;
 Being surely less than a short word,—
 Mere shadow that abideth not,—

A dusty nothing, soon forgot.
 Yet, Lady Mary, be not loth
 To listen, thou whom the stars clothe !
 Bend thine ear, and pour back thine hair,
 And let our voice come to thee there
 Where, seeing, thou mayst not be seen ;
 Help us a little, Mary Queen !
 Into the shadow lean thy face,
 Bowing thee from the secret place,
 Saint Mary Virgin, full of grace !

SACRAMENT HYMN.

This is the early poem (written, I take it, towards 1849 of which Rossetti spoke thus in a published letter to William Allingham, November 22nd, 1860:—"I never meant, I believe, to print the hymn."

On a fair Sabbath day, when His banquet is spread,
 It is pleasant to feast with my Lord :
 His stewards stand robed at the foot and the head
 Of the soul filling, life-giving board.

All the guests here had burthens ; but by the King's grant
 We left them behind when we came ;
 The burthen of wealth and the burthen of want,
 And even the burthen of shame.

And oh, when we take them again at the gate,
 Though still we must bear them awhile,
 Much smaller they'll seem in the lane that grows strait,
 And much lighter to lift at the stile.

For that which is in us is life to the heart,
 Is dew to the soles of the feet,
 Fresh strength to the lions, giving ease from their smart,
 Warmth in frost, and a breeze in the heat.

No feast where the belly alone hath its fill,—
 He gives me his body and blood ;
 The Blood and the Body (I'll think of it still)
 Of my Lord, which is Christ, which is God.

SHAKESPEAR AND BLAKE.

I find a scrappy writing by my brother which may be deemed interesting at any rate from its subject-matter. It is jotted down on the back of a short poem dated 1849: I therefore assume it to belong to the same year. It must certainly be his own composition, as there are some cancellings and changes in it. One may infer that Rossetti contemplated at this time erecting, when opportunity might allow, some slight monumental record of Blake.

SHAKESPEAR.

Probably there is no character in which is so much of Shakespear himself as in Hamlet, except in Falstaff.

Dear friend, if there be any bond
 Which friendship wins not much beyond—
 So old and fond, since thought began—
 It may be that whose subtle span
 Binds Shakespear to an English man.

BLAKE.

To the memory of William Blake, a Painter and Poet whose greatness may be named even here since it was equalled by his goodness, this tablet is now erected, ——— years after his death, at the age of sixty-eight, on August 12th, 1827, in poverty and neglect, by one who honours his life and works.

EPIGRAPH.

All beauty to portray,
 Therein his duty lay,
 And still through toilsome strife
 Duty to him was life—
 Most thankful still that duty
 Lay in the paths of beauty.

TRIP IN FRANCE AND BELGIUM—VERSES.

Here are six sonnets and a snatch of blank verse written by my brother during his little trip with Holman Hunt in the autumn of 1849; various other things which he wrote during the same trip have already been published. The following are characteristic, and to a great extent good. The opprobrious terms applied to Correggio and Rubens are of course exaggerated to the extent of silliness. They pertain to my brother's exoteric attitude as a "P.R.B." That he did not at that date sympathise with those phases of art which Correggio and Rubens exemplify, and in a sense disliked their pictures, is a fact; but he even then knew perfectly well that both these masters are among the great executants; and only in his inner circle would he, for purposes of defiance and of burlesque, and inspired by certain utterances of Blake, have pretended not to know as much. The opening of the sonnet *At the Station of the Versailles Railway* is of course an undisguised imitation from Tennyson's *Godiva*.

ON A HANDFUL OF FRENCH MONEY.

These coins that jostle on my hand do own
No single image: each name here and date
Denoting in man's consciousness and state
New change. In some the face is clearly known,—
In others marred. The badge of that old throne
Of kings is on the obverse; or this sign
Which says, "I France am all—lo, I am mine!"
Or else the Eagle that dared soar alone.
Even as these coins, so are these lives and years
Mixed and bewildered; yet hath each of them
No less its part in what is come to be
For France. Empire, Republic, Monarchy,—
Each clamours or keeps silence in her name,
And lives within the pulse that now is hers.

AT THE STATION OF THE VERSAILLES RAILWAY.

I waited for the train unto Versailles.
I hung with *bonnes* and *gamins* on the bridge,
Watching the gravelled road where, ridge with ridge,
Under black arches gleam the iron rails
Clear in the darkness, till the darkness fails
And they press on to light again—again
To reach the dark. I waited for the train
Unto Versailles; I leaned over the bridge,
And wondered, cold and drowsy, why the knave
Claude is in worship; and why (sense apart)
Rubens preferred a mustard vehicle.
The wind veered short. I turned upon my heel
Saying, "Correggio was a toad"; then gave
Three dizzy yawns, and knew not of the Art.

IN THE TRAIN, AND AT VERSAILLES.

In a dull swiftness we are carried by
With bodies left at sway and shaking knees.
The wind has ceased, or is a feeble breeze
Warm in the sun. The leaves are not yet dry
From yesterday's dense rain. All, low and high,
A strong green country; but, among its trees,
Ruddy and thin with Autumn. After these

There is the city still before the sky.
 Versailles is reached. Pass we the galleries
 And seek the Gardens. A great silence here,
 Thro' the long planted alleys to the long
 Distance of water. More than tune or song,
 Silence shall grow to awe within thine eyes,
 Till thy thought swim with the blue turning sphere.

SIR PETER PAUL RUBENS (*Antwerp*).

"*Messieurs, le Dieu des peintres*": we felt odd:—
 'Twas Rubens, sculptured. A mean florid church
 Was the next thing we saw,—from vane to porch
His drivel. The museum: as we trod
 Its steps, his bust held us at bay. The clod
 Has slosh by miles along the wall within.
 ("I say, I somehow feel my gorge begin
 To rise")—His chair in a glass case, by God!
 To the Cathedral. Here too the vile snob
 Has fouled in every corner. ("Wherefore brave
 Our fate? Let's go.") There is a monument
 We pass. "Messieurs, you tread upon the grave
 Of the great Rubens" "Well, that's one good job!
 What time this evening is the train for Ghent?"

FROM ANTWERP TO GHENT.

We are upon the Scheldt. We know we move,
 Because there is a floating at our eyes,
 Whatso they seek; and because all the things
 Which on outset were distinct and large
 Are smaller and much weaker and quite grey,
 And at last gone from us. No motion else.
 We are upon the road. The thin swift moon
 Runs with the running clouds that are the sky,
 And with the running water runs—at whiles
 Weak 'neath the film and heavy growth of reeds.
 The country swims with motion. Time itself
 Is consciously beside us, and perceived.
 Our speed is such, the sparks our engine leaves
 Are burning after the whole train has passed.
 The darkness is a tumult. We tear on,

The roll behind us and the cry before,
Constantly, in a lull of intense speed
And thunder. Any other sound is known
Merely by sight. The shrubs, the trees your eye
Scans for their growth, are far along in haze.
The sky has lost its clouds, and lies away
Oppressively at calm; the moon has failed;
Our speed has set the wind against us. Now
Our engine's heat is fiercer and flings up
Great glares alongside. Wind and steam and speed
And clamor and the night. We are in Ghent.

ON LEAVING A CITY.

The city's steeple-towers remove away
Each singly; as each vain infatuate faith
Leaves God in heaven and passes. A mere breath
Each soon appears, so far. Yet that which lay
The first is now scarce further or more grey
Than is the last. Now all are wholly gone.
The sunless sky has not once had the sun
Since the first weak beginning of the day.
The air falls back as the wind finishes,
And the clouds stagnate; on the water's face
The current moves along but is not stirr'd.
There is no branch that thrills with any bird.
Lo, Winter must possess the earth a space,
And have his will upon the extreme seas.

ASHORE AT DOVER.

On landing, the first voice one hears is from
An English police-constable; a man
Respectful, conscious that at need he can
Enforce respect. Our custom-house at home
Strict too, but quiet. Not the foul-mouthed scum
Of passport mongers who in Paris still
Preserve the Reign of Terror; not the till
Where the King haggles, all through Belgium.
The country somehow seems in earnest here,
Grave and sufficient :—*England*, so to speak ;
No other word will make the thing as clear.

"Ah! habit," you exclaim, "and prejudice!"
 If so, so be it. One don't care to shriek,
 "Sir, this *shall be!*" But one believes it is.

October, 1849.

BOUTS-RIMÉS SONNETS.

I have had occasion erewhile to say that Dante Rossetti, towards 1848, was much in the habit of writing sonnets to *bouts-rimés*. He and I would sit together, I giving him the rhymes for fourteen lines, and he giving me other rhymes for another fourteen. The practice may have lasted from a late date in 1847 to an early date in 1849; hardly beyond these limits. I have found nine of his sonnets written in this way (also nine of my own), neatly copied out, and a few others as well. The series copied out was at one time much longer: the latest progressive number applicable to his set of sonnets thus preserved is 43. The one named *Another Love* took eight minutes in composing. I present a brace of sonnets just as specimens—not as literary achievements. A judicious reader will not expect to find much force of compacted thought in a *bouts-rimés* sonnet; in those by my brother he will perhaps discern, along with facility of touch, a certain stress of romantic impulse or suggestion, which is as much as I care to claim for them, though I think *The World's Doing* may be called a good thing.

ANOTHER LOVE.

Of her I thought who now is gone so far:
 And, the thought passing over, to fall thence
 Was like a fall from spirit into sense,
 Or from the heaven of heavens to sun and star.
 None other than Love's self ordained the bar
 'Twixt her and me; so that if, going hence,
 I met her, it would only seem a dense
 Film of the brain—just nought, as phantoms are.
 Now, when I passed your threshold, and came in,

And glanced where you were sitting, and did see
Your tresses in these braids, and your hands thus,—
I knew that other figure, grieved and thin,
That seemed there, yea that was there, could not be—
Though like God's wrath it stood dividing us.

THE WORLD'S DOING.

One scarce would think that we can be the same
Who used, in those first childish Junes to creep
With held breath through the underwood, and leap
Outside into the sun. Since this mine aim
Took me unto itself, the joy which came
Into my eyes at once sits hushed and deep.
Nor even the sorrow moans, but falls asleep
And has ill dreams. For you—your very name
Seems altered in mine ears, and cannot send
Heat through my heart, as in those days afar
Wherein we lived indeed with the real life.
Yet why should we feel shame, my dear sweet friend?
Are they most honoured who without a scar
Pace forth, all trim and fresh, from the splashed strife?

THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION OF 1848.

This sarcastic effusion would not have figured well in *The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*. Here, however, I think it may find a suitable place. It relates of course to the Chartist or pseudo-Chartist meetings which formed a transitory alarm to Londoners in the early months of 1848. Readers whose memories go back to that date will understand the references to Moses and Son, puny John (Russell), Cochrane, G. W. M. Reynolds and *Reynolds's Miscellany*, etc; for other readers they seem hardly worth explaining. It may be as well to say that my brother had no real grounded objection to the principles of "The People's Charter"—I dare say he never knew accurately what they were; but he disliked bluster and blusterers, noise-mongers and noise, and he has here indulged himself in a fling at them.

THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION OF 1848.

(No connection with over the way.)

"Some unprincipled persons endeavour to impose upon the public by such phrases as 'It's all one,' 'It's the same concern,' etc."

Moses & Son.

Ho ye that nothing have to lose ! ho rouse ye, one and all !
Come from the sinks of the New Cut, the purlieus of Vauxhall !
Did ye not hear the mighty sound boom by ye as it went—
The Seven Dials strike the hour of man's enfranchisement ?

Ho cock your eyes, my gallant pals, and swing your heavy
staves :

Remember—Kings and Queens being out, the great cards will
be Knaves.

And when the pack is ours—oh then at what a slapping pace
Shall the tens be trodden down to five, and the fives kicked
down to ace !

It was but yesterday the *Times* and *Post* and *Telegraph*
Told how from France King Louy-Phil. was shaken out like
chaff ;

To-morrow, boys, the *National*, the *Siccle*, and the *Débats*,
Shall have to tell the self same tale of "La Reine Victoria."

What ! shall our incomes we've not got be taxed by puny John ?
Shall the policeman keep Time back by bidding us move on ?
Shall we too follow in the steps of that poor sneak Cochrane ?
Shall it be said, "They came, they saw,—and bolted back
again" ?

Not so ! albeit great men have been among us, and are
floor'd—

(Frost, Williams, Jones, and other ones who now reside
abroad)—

Among the master-spirits of the age there still are those
Who'll pick up fame—even though, when smelt, it makes men
hold the nose.

What ho there ! clear the way ! make room for him, the "fly"
and wise,

Who wrote in mystic grammar about London "Mysteries,"—

For him who takes a proud delight to wallow in our kennels,—
For Mr. A. B. C. D. E. F. G. M. W. Reynolds !

Come, hoist him up ! his pockets will afford convenient hold
To grab him by ; and, if inside there silver is or gold,
And should it be found sticking to our hands when they're
drawn out,—

Why, 'twere a chance not fair to say ill-natured things about.

Silence ! Hear, hear ! He says that we're the sovereign
people, we !

And now ? And now he states the fact that one and one make
three ?

Now he makes casual mention of a certain Miscellany !

He says that he's the editor ! He says it costs a penny !

O thou great Spirit of the World ! shall not the lofty things
He saith be borne unto all time for noble lessonings ?
Shall not our sons tell to their sons what we could do and dare
In this the great year Forty-eight and in Trafalgar Square ?

Swathed in foul wood, yon column stood 'mid London's
thousand marts ;

And at their wine Committeemen grinned as they drank
" The Arts " ;

But our good flint-stones have bowled down each poster-hidden
board,

And from their hoarded malice our strong hands have stript
the hoard.

Yon column is a prouder thing than Cæsar's triumph-arch !
It shall be called " The Column of the Glorious Days of March ! "
And stonemasons' apprentices shall grow rich men therewith,
By contract-chiselling the names of Jones and Brown and Smith.

Upon what point of London, say, shall our next vengeance
burst ?

Shall the Exchange, or Parliament, be immolated first ?

Which of the Squares shall we burn down ?—which of the
Palaces ?

(The speaker is nailed by a policeman.)

Oh please sir, don't ! It isn't me. It's him. Oh don't sir,
please !

PARODY ON "UNCLE NED."

I find in my sister Maria's handwriting a parody by Dante Rossetti in ridicule of Mrs. Stowe's (to my thinking) fine story of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The nigger song of *Uncle Ned*, which gives occasion to the parody, was also copied out by Maria: I retain it here for comparison, though I suppose it is still (as at that remote date) perfectly well known. There is likewise a pen-and-ink sketch: it is not exactly in the style generally associated with the name of Dante Rossetti, and I reproduce it. He professes to have tried to read *Uncle Tom*, and failed; this may be true, or may be a poetic fiction. I have no recollection of his having really been familiar with the story in any degree. *Uncle Tom* was known throughout the length and breadth of England as early as 1852, and I suppose the parody was written in 1852, or else 1853. Carlyle's *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question* (which amused my brother exceedingly, and in some sense convinced him) had been published in 1849, and was his main incitement towards any utterance about "niggers."

" Dere was an old nigger, and him name was Uncle Ned,
 And him died long long ago—
 Him hab no hair on de top of him head,
 In de place whar de wool ought to grow.

Den hang up de fiddle and de bow,
 And lay down de shovel and de hoe;
 For dere's no more work for poor old Ned—
 He am gone whar de good darky go.

" Him fingers was long as de cane in de brake,
 And him had no eyes for to see;
 And him hab no teeth for to eat a corn-cake,
 So him hab to let a corn-cake be.

Den hang up, etc.

" It was a cold morning when Uncle Ned died,
 And de tears down Massa's cheeks fell like rain;

For him know bery well, when him lay him in de ground,
Dat him nebber see him like again.

Den hang up, etc."

PARODY.

Dere was an old nigger, and him name was Uncle Tom,
And him tale was rather slow;
Me try to read the whole, but me only read some,
Because me found it no go.

Den hang up de author Mrs. Stowe,
And kick the volume wid your toe—
And dere's no more public for poor Uncle Tom,
He am gone whar the trunk-lining go.

Him tale dribbles on and on without a break,
Till you have no eyes for to see
When I reached Chapter 4 I had got a headache,
So I had to let Chapter 4 be.

Den hang up, etc.

De demand one fine morning for Uncle Tom died,
De tears down Mrs. Stowe's face ran like rain;
For she knew berry well, now dey'd laid him on de shelf,
Dat she'd neber get a publisher again

Den hang up, etc.

TALE, "DEUCED ODD."

It will be perceived that this is a mere fragment, stopping short before the story gets fairly started. As such, I omitted it when I was compiling my brother's *Collected Works*, but I think well to insert it here. The tone of writing, proper to the supposed author, a "legitimate" actor, seems to be well sustained. I forget what the gist of the story was to have been: certainly the devil was to bear some part in it. The date of the fragment is dubious

to me; but I think it was later, rather than earlier, than *St. Agnes of Intercession*, written in 1849-50. I consider that my brother's incitement towards writing a story about an Actor and the Devil arose partly from his reading some years previously, in *Hood's Magazine*, a very affecting tale about the Devil acting his own part in some piece of *diablerie* such as *Der Freischütz*. We never knew who the author of that tale may have been.

DEUCED ODD; OR THE DEVIL'S IN IT.

I am sorely afraid that the extraordinary narration which I am about to relate will derive no accession of credit from my stating at the outset that I am a public actor,—one, in fact, whose very life is passed in the endeavour to identify himself with fictitious characters and situations, and whose most consummate triumph would be the bringing his audience to believe, if only for a single moment, that the events going forward under their eyes were of spontaneous occurrence. Indeed, I cannot but look upon this fact of my profession as calculated to be so seriously detrimental to a belief in circumstances which I know really to have occurred that I should have considered myself at liberty to suppress it, had it not been inextricably wound up with the very warp and woof of my story. It therefore only remains for me to accord on my own behalf that protest which conscious truth has a right to oppose to all prejudice, based on any grounds whatsoever. At the same time I would remind my reader that the very improbability of the matters I shall narrate ought by rights to be counted as a plea in my favour; since, being fully alive to the disadvantages under which I labour, I should, if inclined to deceive, have at least selected a story more adapted for purposes of deception, and could scarcely be supposed to rush with my eyes open upon the humiliating result of acting like a fool and being thought to act like a knave.

I am proud to say that my practice on the stage has been almost entirely confined to the legitimate drama, in which I have enjoyed a large share of the public favour, and now, towards the close of my career, may even consider myself celebrated. I have no wish to speak harshly of those who have

arisen in the course of my career, and who have endeavoured to introduce new theories connected with parts on which I had long before formed and pursued my own opinion, from which I may add that I have not, at any time in the fluctuations of public taste, seen occasion to deviate. I fear, indeed, that the days when the embodiment of tragedy on the stage was undesecrated by a study of the petty actualities of common life are passed for ever. I at least have to the last upheld my principles as an actor, and can afford to treat certain recent criticisms with silent contempt. The strange passage in my life which I am about to relate is commonly connected in my mind with the one occasion on which I was weak enough to step down from the pinnacles of High Art, and seem to bestow my sanction on the monstrosities of the modern drama. The mysterious and awful circumstance (for I can call it by no other name) to which I allude might, I think, not unjustly be regarded as a judgment upon me for this single concession to a perverted taste.

WORDS FOR POETRY.

A letter from my brother to myself has been printed, September 18th, 1849, saying that he had "been reading up all matters of old romaunts, to pitch upon stunning words for poetry." I have found some lists of words in his handwriting which seem to belong to this quest; many of them, however, appear hardly to be such words as would be found in old romaunts. In several instances he gives definitions, in others not. I recognize in these lists various words which appear *passim* in my brother's poems. Here are a few specimens of those which he noted down:—

"Bergamot, billowy, bond-service, cheveril, crapulous, dracunculus, euphrasy, fastous, fat-kidneyed, fat-witted, flesh-quake, flexile, foolhappy, frog-grass, frog-lettuce, gairish, gonfalon, gorbellish, gracile, granulous, grogram, hipwort, honeywort, intercalary, ironwort, jacent, jas-hawk, knee-tribute,

lass-lorn, lunary, lustral, macerate, madwort, plenipotence, acrook, anelace, aughtwhere, barm cloth, gipsire, gnerdonless, letter lore, pennoncel, primerole, recreandise, shrift father, soothfastness, shent, virelay, Mahometrie, cautelous, dern, eldrich, angelot, chanterie, cherishance, citole, cumber-world, creance, foreweeting, laureole, moonwort, novelries, trifulcate, untressed, cittern, somedeal, vernage-wine, eagle-heron, wood-wale, chevesaile, trenchpayne, umbrere, aeromancy, liverwort, alkanet, birthwort, crimosin, empusa, flexuous, franion, felwort, grisamber, jack-a lent, jobbernowl, musk-melon."

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 528 669 4

1