



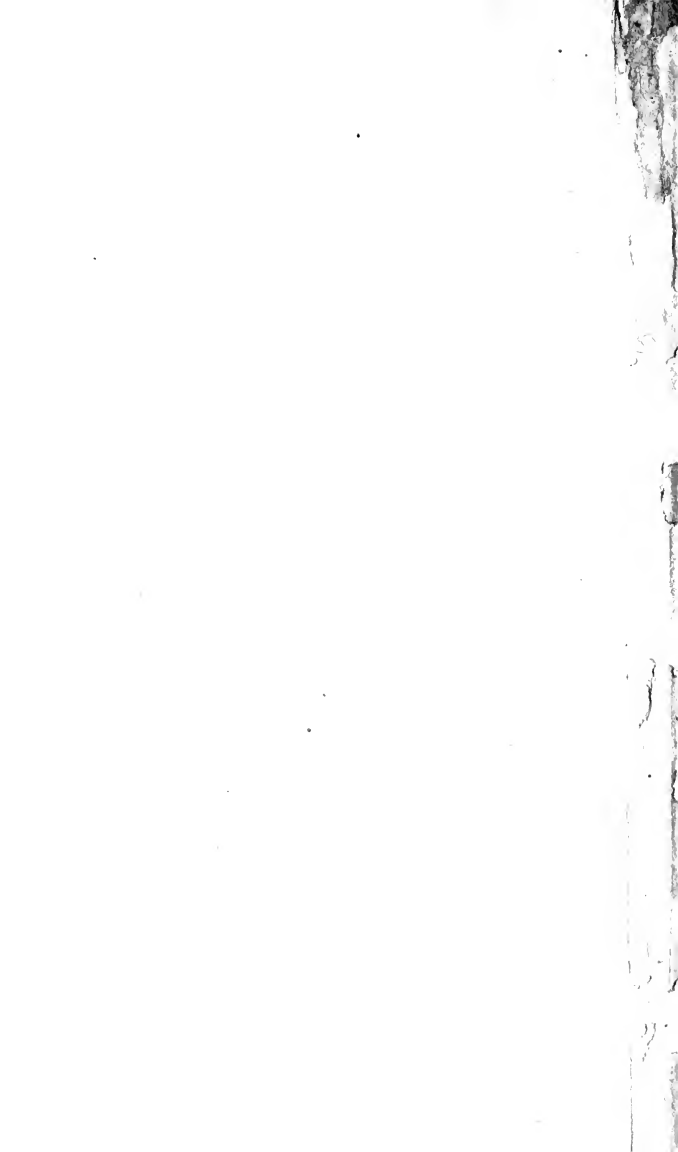
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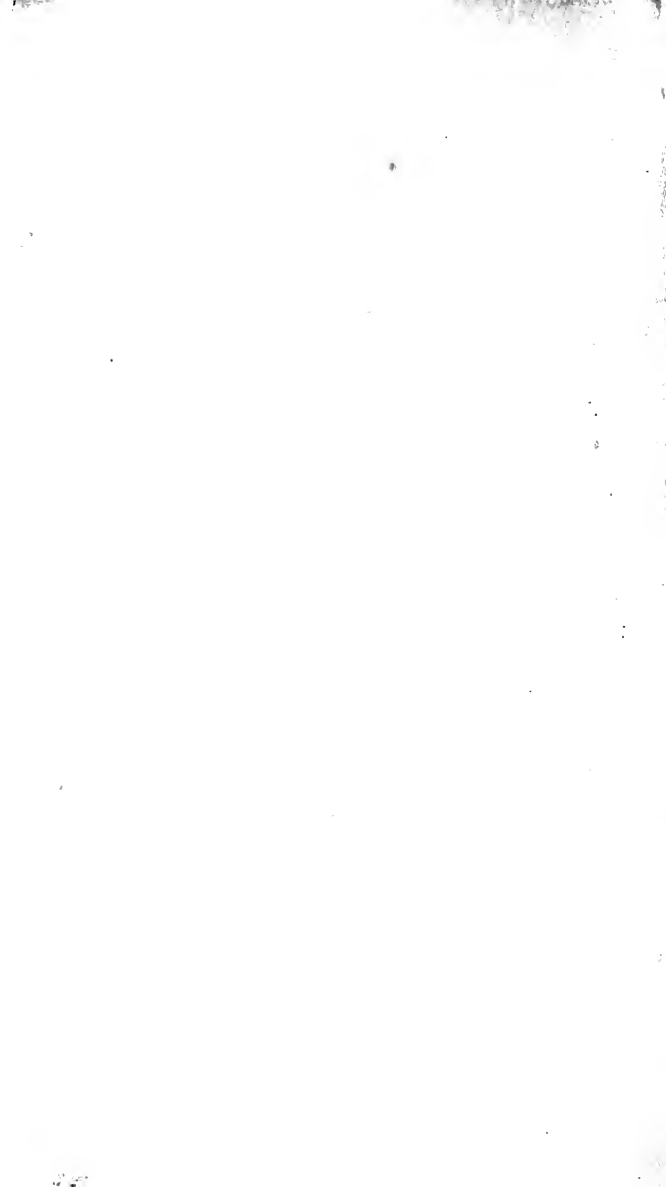
The late Maurice Hutton, M.A.L.D.D.
Principal of University College

1901-1928





POEMS.







Yours very truly,
Robert Browning.

~~B8058.1~~

POEMS

BY

ROBERT BROWNING.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION.

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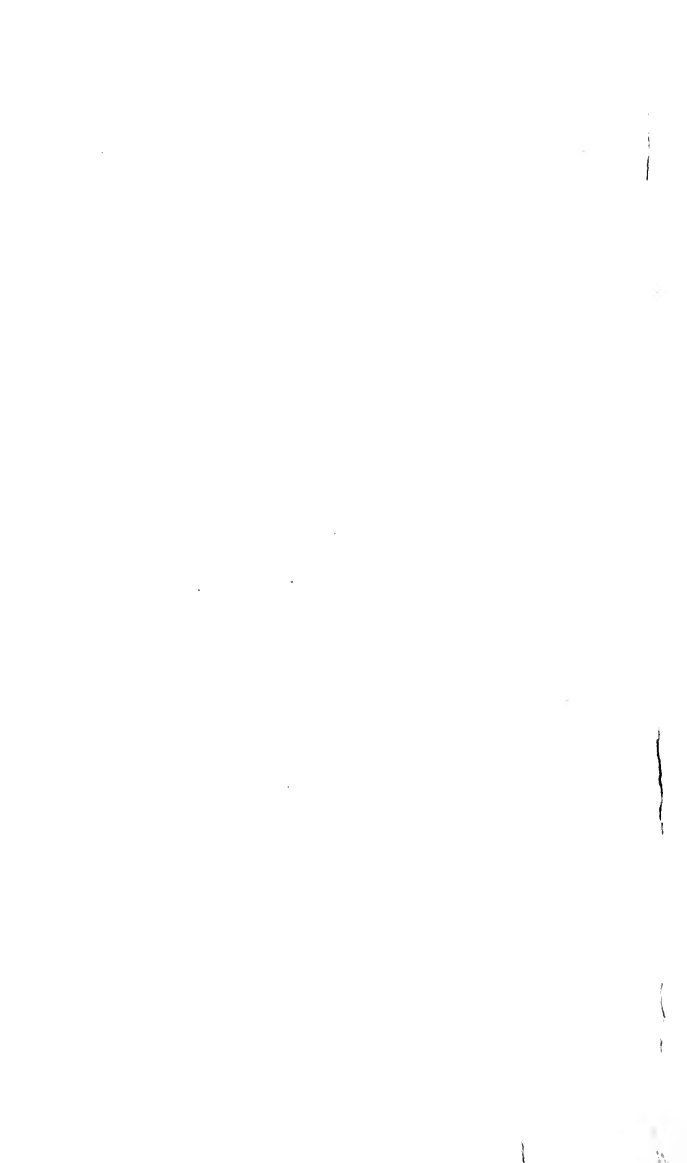
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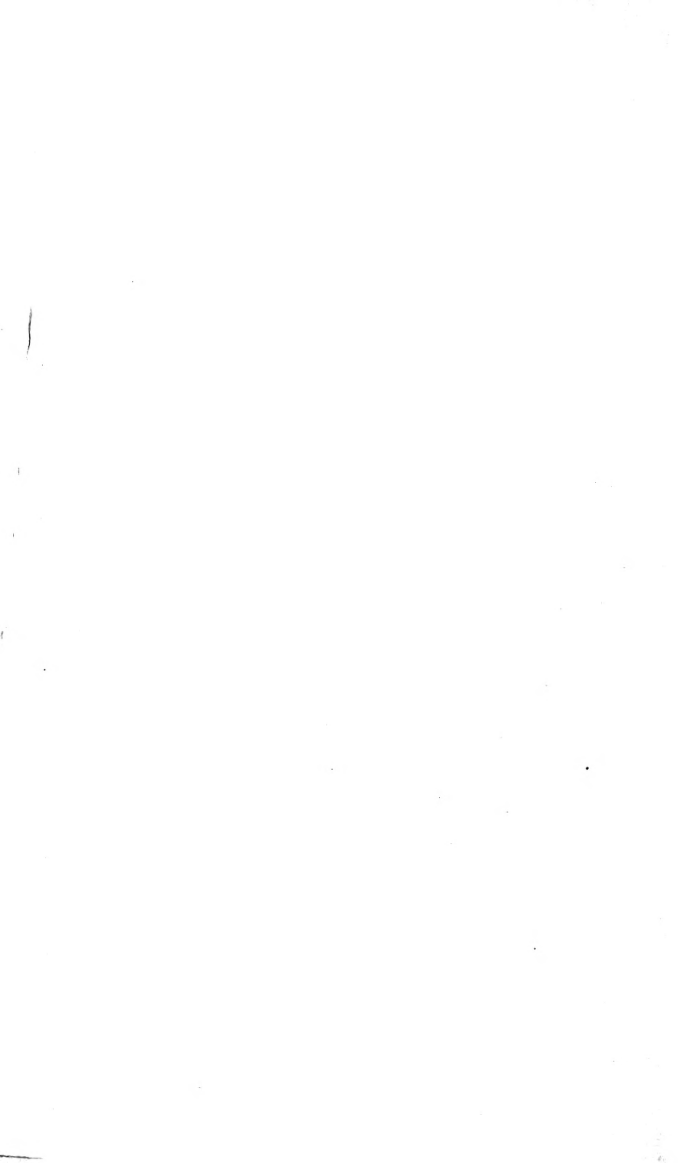
MANY of these pieces were out of print, the rest had been withdrawn from circulation, when the corrected edition, now submitted to the reader, was prepared. The various Poems and Dramas have received the author's most careful revision.

DECEMBER, 1848.



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PARACELSUS.

PERSONS.

AUREOLUS PARACELSUS.

FESTUS & } his friends.
MICHAL, }

APRILE, an Italian Poet.

I.—PARACELSUS ASPIRES.

SCENE.—*Würzburg—a garden in the environs.* 1512.

FESTUS, PARACELSUS, MICHAL.

Par. Come close to me, dear friends ; still closer ; thus !
Close to the heart which, though long time roll by
Ere it again beat quicker, pressed to yours,
As now it beats—perchance a long, long time—
At least henceforth your memories shall make
Quiet and fragrant as befits their home.
Nor shall my memory want a home in yours—
Alas, that it requires too well such free

As if, where'er you gazed, there stood a star!
 How far was Würzburg, with its church and spire,
 And garden-walls, and all things they contain,
 From that look's far alighting?

Par.

I but spoke

And looked alike from simple joy, to see
 The beings I love best, shut in so well
 From all rude chances like to be my lot,
 That, when afar, my weary spirit,—disposed
 To lose awhile its care in soothing thoughts
 Of them, their pleasant features, looks, and words,—
 Need never hesitate, nor apprehend
 Encroaching trouble may have reached them too,
 Nor have recourse to Fancy's busy aid
 To fashion even a wish in their behalf
 Beyond what they possess already here;
 But, unobstructed, may at once forget
 Itself in them, assured how well they are.
 Beside, this Festus knows, he thinks me one
 Whom quiet and its charms attract in vain,
 One scarce aware of all the joys I quit,
 Too fill'd with airy hopes to make account
 Of soft delights which free hearts garner up:
 Whereas, behold how much our sense of all
 That's beauteous proves alike! When Festus learns
 That every common pleasure of the world
 Affects me as himself; that I have just
 As varied appetites for joy derived
 From common things; a stake in life, in short,

Like his ; a stake which rash pursuit of aims
 That life affords not, would as soon destroy ;—
 He may convince himself, that, this in view,
 I shall act well advised : and last, because,
 Though heaven and earth, and all things, were at stake.
 Sweet Michal must not weep, our parting eve !

Fest. True : and the eve is deepening, and we sit
 As little anxious to begin our talk
 As though to-morrow I could open it
 As we paced arm in arm the cheerful town
 At sun-dawn ; and continue it by fits
 (Old Tritheim busied with his class the while)
 In that dim chamber where the noon-streaks peer
 Half frightened by the awful tomes around ;
 And here at home unbosom all the rest
 From even-blush to midnight : but, to-morrow ! . . .
 Have I full leave to tell my inmost mind ?
 We two were brothers, and henceforth the world
 Will rise between us :—all my freest mind ?
 'Tis the last night, dear Aureole !

Par. Oh, say on !
 Devise some test of love—some arduous feat
 To be performed for you—say on ! If night
 Be spent the while, the better ! Recall how oft
 My wondrous plans, and dreams, and hopes, and fears,
 Have—never wearied you . . . oh, no ! . . . as I
 Recall, and never vividly as now,
 Your true affection, born when Einsiedeln
 And its green hills were all the world to us,

And still increasing to this night, which ends
 My further stay at Würzburg . . . Oh, one day
 You shall be very proud! Say on, dear friends!

Fest. In truth? 'Tis for my proper peace, indeed,
 Rather than yours; for vain all projects seem
 To stay your course: I said my latest hope
 Is fading even now. A story tells
 Of some far embassy despatched to buy
 The favour of an eastern king, and how
 The gifts they offered proved but dazzling dust
 Shed from the ore-beds native to his clime:
 Just so, the value of repose and love,
 I meant should tempt you, better far than I
 You seem to comprehend—and yet desist
 No whit from projects where repose nor love
 Have part.

Par. Once more? Alas! as I forbode!

Fest. A solitary briar the bank puts forth
 To save our swan's nest floating out to sea.

Par. Dear Festus, hear me. What is it you wish?
 That I should lay aside my heart's pursuit,
 Abandon the sole ends for which I live,
 Reject God's great commission—and so die!
 You bid me listen for your true love's sake:
 Yet how has grown that love? Even in a long
 And patient cherishing of the selfsame spirit
 It now would quell; as though a mother hoped
 To stay the lusty manhood of the child
 Once weak upon her knees. I was not born

An oversight to be repaired : at last
 Our two minds go together—all the good
 Approved by him, I gladly recognize ;
 All he counts bad, I thankfully discard ;
 And nought forbids my looking up at last
 For some stray comfort in his cautious brow—
 When, lo ! I learn that, spite of all, there lurks
 Some innate and inexplicable germ
 Of failure in my schemes ; so that at last
 It all amounts to this—the sovereign proof
 That we devote ourselves to God, is seen
 In living just as though there were no God :
 A life which, prompted by the sad and blind
 Lusts of the world, Festus abhors the most—
 But which these tenets sanctify at once ;
 Though to less subtle wits it seems the same,
 Consider it how they may.

Mich.

Is it so, Festus ?

He speaks so calmly and kindly—is it so ?

Par. Reject those glorious visions of God's love
 And man's design ; laugh loud that God should send
 Vast longings to direct us ; say how soon
 Power satiates these, or lust, or gold ; I know
 The world's cry well, and how to answer it !
 But this ambiguous warfare . . .

Fest.

. . . Wearies so

That you will grant no last leave to your friend
 To urge it ?—for his sake, not yours ? I wish
 To send my soul in good hopes after you ;

Never to sorrow that uncertain words,
Erringly apprehended—a new creed,
Ill understood—begot rash trust in you,
And shared in your undoing.

Par. Choose your side :
Hold or renounce : but meanwhile blame me not
Because I dare to act on your own views,
Nor shrink when they point onward, nor espy
A peril where they most ensure success.

Fest. Prove that to me—but that ! Prove you abide
Within their warrant, nor presumptuous boast
God's labour laid on you ; prove, all you covet
A mortal may expect ; and, most of all,
Prove the strange course you now affect, will lead
To its attainment—and I bid you speed,
Nay, count the minutes till you venture forth !
You smile ; but I had gathered from slow thought—
Much musing on the fortunes of my friend—
Matter I deemed could not be urged in vain :
But it all leaves me at my need : in shreds
And fragments I must venture what remains.

Mich. Ask at once, Festus, wherefore he should
scorn . . .

Fest. Stay, Michal : Aureole, I speak guardedly
And gravely, knowing well, whate'er your error,
This is no ill-considered choice of yours—
No sudden fancy of an ardent boy.
Not from your own confiding words alone
Am I aware your passionate heart long since

Gave birth to, nourished, and at length matures
This scheme.' I will not speak of Einsiedeln,
Where I was born your elder by some years
Only to watch you fully from the first :
In all beside, our mutual tasks were fixed
Even then—'twas mine to have you in my view
As you had your own soul and those intents
Which filled it when, to crown your dearest wish,
With a tumultuous heart, you left with me
Our childhood's home to join the favoured few
Whom, here at Würzburg, Tritheim deigns to teach
A portion of his lore : and not the best
Of those so favoured, whom you now despise,
Came earnest as you came ; resolved, like you,
To grasp all, and retain all, and deserve
By patient toil a wide renown like his.
And this new ardour which supplants the old,
I watched, too ; 'twas significant and strange,
In one matched to his soul's content at length
With rivals in the search for Wisdom's prize,
To see the sudden pause, the total change ;
From contest, the transition to repose—
From pressing onward as his fellows pressed,
To a blank idleness ; yet most unlike
The dull stagnation of a soul, content,
Once foiled, to leave betimes a thriveless quest.
That careless bearing, free from all pretence
Even of contempt for what it ceased to seek—
Smiling humility, praising much, yet waiving

What it professed to praise—though not so well
Maintained but that rare outbreaks, fierce as brief,
Revealed the hidden scorn, as quickly curbed—
That ostentatious show of past defeat,
That ready acquiescence in contempt,
I deemed no other than the letting go
His shivered sword, of one about to spring
Upon his foe's throat ; but it was not thus :
Not that way looked your brooding purpose then.
For after-signs disclosed, what you confirmed,
That you prepared to task to the uttermost
Your strength, in furtherance of a certain aim,
Which—while it bore the name your rivals gave
Their own most puny efforts—was so vast
In scope that it included their best flights,
Combined them, and desired to gain one prize
In place of many,—the secret of the world,
Of man, and man's true purpose, path, and fate :
—That you, not nursing as a mere vague dream
This purpose, with the sages of the Past,
Have struck upon a way to this, if all
You trust be true, which following, heart and soul,
You, if a man may, dare aspire to know :
And that this aim shall differ from a host
Of aims alike in character and kind,
Mostly in this,—to seek its own reward
In itself only, not an alien end
To blend therewith ; no hope, nor fear, nor joy,
Nor woe, to elsewhere move you, but this pure

Devotion to sustain you or betray :
Thus you aspire.

Par. You shall not state it thus :
I should not differ from the dreamy crew
You speak of. I profess no other share
In the selection of my lot, than this,
A ready answer to the will of God
Who summons me to be his organ : all
Whose innate strength supports them shall succeed
No better than your sages.

Fest. Such the aim, then,
God sets before you ; and 'tis doubtless need
That he appoint no less the way of praise
Than the desire to praise ; for, though I hold
With you, the setting forth such praise to be
The natural end and service of a man,
And think such praise is best attained when man
Attains the general welfare of his kind—
Yet, this, the end, is not the instrument.
Presume not to serve God apart from such
Appointed channel as He wills shall gather
Imperfect tributes—for that sole obedience
Valued, perchance. He seeks not that his altars
Blaze—careless how, so that they do but blaze.
Suppose this, then ; that God selected you
To know (heed well your answers, for my faith
Shall meet implicitly what they affirm)
I cannot think you dare annex to such
Selection aught beyond a steadfast will,

An intense hope, nor let your gifts create
 Scorn or neglect of ordinary means
 Conducive to success—make destiny
 Dispense with man's endeavour. Now, dare you search
 Your inmost heart, and candidly avow
 Whether you have not rather wild desire
 For this distinction, than security
 Of its existence; whether you discern
 The path to the fulfilment of your purpose
 Clear as that purpose—and again, that purpose
 Clear as your yearning to be singled out
 For its pursuer. Dare you answer this?

Par. (After a pause.) No, I have nought to fear! Who
 will may know

The secret'st workings of my soul. What though
 It be so?—if indeed the strong desire
 Eclipse the aim in me?—if splendour break
 Upon the outset of my path alone,
 And duskest shade succeed? What fairer seal
 Shall I require to my authentic mission
 Than this fierce energy?—this instinct striving
 Because its nature is to strive?—enticed
 By the security of no broad course,
 With no success forever in its eyes!
 How know I else such glorious fate my own,
 But in the restless irresistible force
 That works within me? Is it for human will
 To institute such impulses?—still less,
 To disregard their promptings? What should I

Do, kept among you all ; your loves, your cares,
Your life—all to be mine? Be sure that God
Ne'er dooms to waste the strength he deigns impart !
Ask the gier-eagle why she stoops at once
Into the vast and unexplored abyss,
What full-grown power informs her from the first,
Why she not marvels, strenuously beating
The silent boundless regions of the sky !
Be sure they sleep not whom God needs ! Nor fear
Their holding light his charge, when every hour
That finds that charge delayed, is a new death.
This for the faith in which I trust ; and hence
I can abjure so well the idle arts
These pedants strive to learn and teach ; Black Arts,
Great Works, the Secret and Sublime, forsooth—
Let others prize : too intimate a tie
Connects me with our God ! A sullen fiend
To do my bidding, fallen and hateful sprites
To help me—what are these, at best, beside
God helping, God directing everywhere,
So that the earth shall yield her secrets up,
And every object shall be charged to strike,
Teach, gratify, her master God appoints ?
And I am young, my Festus, happy and free !
I can devote myself ; I have a life
To give ; I, singled out for this, the One !
'Think, think ; the wide east, where old Wisdom sprung ;
The bright south, where she dwelt ; the hopeful north,
All are passed o'er—it lights on me ! 'Tis time

New hopes should animate the world, new light
 Should dawn from new revealings to a race
 Weighed down so long, forgotten so long ; so shall
 The heaven reserved for us, at last receive
 Creatures whom no unwonted splendours blind,
 But ardent to confront the unclouded blaze
 Whose beams not seldom blessed their pilgrimage,
 Not seldom glorified their life below.

Fest. My words have their old fate and make faint stand
 Against your glowing periods. Call this, truth—
 Why not pursue it in a fast retreat,
 Some one of Learning's many palaces,
 After approved example ; seeking there
 Calm converse with the great dead, soul to soul,
 Who laid up treasure with the like intent ?
 —So lift yourself into their airy place,
 And fill out full their unfulfilled careers,
 Unravelling the knots their baffled skill
 Pronounced inextricable, true !—but left
 Far less confused ? A fresh eye, a fresh hand,
 Might do much at their vigour's waning-point ;
 Succeeding with new-breathed and earnest force,
 As at old games a runner snatched the torch
 From runner still : this way success might be.
 But you have coupled with your enterprise,
 An arbitrary self-repugnant scheme
 Of seeking it in strange and untried paths.
 What books are in the desert ? writes the sea
 The secret of her yearning in vast caves

Where yours will fall the first of human feet ?
 Has Wisdom sate there and recorded aught
 You press to read ? Why turn aside from her
 To visit, where her vesture never glanced,
 Now—solitudes consigned to barrenness
 By God's decree, which who shall dare impugn ?
 Now—ruins where she paused but would not stay,
 Old ravaged cities that, renouncing her,
 She called an endless curse on, so it came—
 Or, worst of all, now—men you visit, men,
 Ignoblest troops that never heard her voice,
 Or hate it, men without one gift from Rome
 Or Athens,—these shall Aureole's teachers be !
 Rejecting past example, practice, precept,
 Aidless 'mid these he thinks to stand alone :
 Thick like a glory round the Stagyrite
 Your rivals throng, the sages : here stand you !
 Whate'er you may protest, knowledge is not
 Paramount in your love ; or for her sake
 You would collect all help from every source—
 Rival or helper, friend, foe, all would merge
 In the broad class of those who showed her haunts,
 And those who showed them not.

Par.

What shall I say ?

Festus, from childhood I have been possessed
 By a fire—by a true fire, or faint or fierce,
 As from without some master, so it seemed,
 Repressed or urged its current : this but ill
 Expresses what I would convey—but rather

I will believe an angel ruled me thus,
Than that my soul's own workings, own high nature,
So became manifest. I knew not then
What whispered in the evening, and spoke out
At midnight. If some mortal, born too soon,
Were laid away in some great trance—the ages
Coming and going all the while—till dawned
His true time's advent, and could then record
The words they spoke who kept watch by his bed,—
Then I might tell more of the breath so light
Upon my eyelids, and the fingers warm
Among my hair. Youth is confused; yet never
So dull was I but, when that spirit passed,
I turned to him, scarce consciously, as turns
A water-snake when fairies cross his sleep.
And having this within me and about me
While Einsiedeln, its mountains, lakes, and woods
Confined me—what oppressive joy was mine
When life grew plain, and I first viewed the thronged,
The ever-moving concourse of mankind!
Believe that ere I joined them—ere I knew
The purpose of the pageant, or the place
Consigned to me within its ranks—while yet
Wonder was freshest and delight most pure—
'Twas then that least supportable appeared
A station with the brightest of the crowd,
A portion with the proudest of them all!
And from the tumult in my breast, this only
Could I collect—that I must thenceforth die,

Or elevate myself far, far above
 The gorgeous spectacle. I seemed to long
 At once to trample on, yet save mankind—
 To make some unexampled sacrifice
 In their behalf—to wring some wondrous good
 From heaven or earth for them—to perish, winning
 Eternal weal in the act : as who should dare
 Pluck out the angry thunder from its cloud,
 That, all its gathered flame discharged on him,
 No storm might threaten summer's azure sleep :
 Yet never to be mixed with men so much
 As to have part even in my own work—share
 In my own largess. Once the feat achieved,
 I would withdraw from their officious praise,
 Would gently put aside their profuse thanks :
 Like some knight traversing a wilderness,
 Who, on his way, may chance to free a tribe
 Of desert-people from their dragon-foe ;
 When all the swarthy race press round to kiss
 His feet, and choose him for their king, and yield
 Their poor tents, pitched among the sand-hills, for
 His realm ; and he points, smiling, to his scarf,
 Heavy with riveled gold, his burgonet,
 Gay set with twinkling stones—and to the east,
 Where these must be displayed !

Fest.

Good : let us hear

No more about your nature, “ which first shrank
 “ From all that marked you out apart from men ! ”

Par. I touch on that ; these words but analyse

That first mad impulse—'twas as brief as fond ;
For as I gazed again upon the show,
I soon distinguished here and there a shape
Palm-wreathed and radiant, forehead and full eye.
Well pleased was I their state should thus at once
Interpret my own thoughts :—“ Behold the clue
“ To all,” I rashly said, “ and what I pine
“ To do, these have accomplished : we are peers !
“ They know, and therefore rule : I, too, will know ! ”
You were beside me, Festus, as you say ;
You saw me plunge in their pursuits whom Fame
Is lavish to attest the lords of mind ;
Not pausing to make sure the prize in view
Would satiate my cravings when obtained—
But since they strove I strove. Then came a slow
And strangling failure. We aspired alike,
Yet not the meanest plodder Tritheim schools
But faced me, all-sufficient, all-content,
Or staggered only at his own strong wits ;
While I was restless, nothing satisfied,
Distrustful, most perplexed. I would slur over
That struggle ; suffice it, that I loathed myself
As weak compared with them, yet felt somehow
A mighty power was brooding, taking shape
Within me : and this lasted till one night
When, as I sate revolving it and more,
A still voice from without said—“ See'st thou not,
“ Desponding child, whence came defeat and loss ?
“ Even from thy strength. Consider : hast thou gazed

“ Presumptuously on Wisdom’s countenance,
“ No veil between ; and can thy hands which falter
“ Unguided by thy brain the mighty sight
“ Continues to absorb, pursue their task
“ On earth like these around thee—what their sense
“ Which radiance ne’er distracted, clear describes ?
“ If thou wouldst share their fortune, choose their life,
“ Unfed by splendour. Let each task present
“ Its petty good to thee. Waste not thy gifts
“ In profitless waiting for the gods’ descent,
“ But have some idol of thine own to dress
“ With their array. Know, not for knowing’s sake,
“ But to become a star to men for ever.
“ Know, for the gain it gets, the praise it brings,
“ The wonder it inspires, the love it breeds.
“ Look one step onward, and secure that step.”
And I smiled as one never smiles but once ;
Then first discovering my own aim’s extent,
Which sought to comprehend the works of God,
And God himself, and all God’s intercourse
With the human mind ; I understood, no less,
My fellow’s studies, whose true worth I saw,
But smiled not, well aware who stood by me.
And softer came the voice—“ There is a way—
“ ’Tis hard for flesh to tread therein, imbued
“ With frailty—hopeless, if indulgence first
“ Have ripened inborn germs of sin to strength :
“ Wilt thou adventure for my sake and man’s,
“ Apart from all reward ? ” And last it breathed—

" Be happy, my good soldier ; I am by thee,
 " Be sure, even to the end ! "—I answered not,
 Knowing Him. As He spoke, I was endued
 With comprehension and a steadfast will ;
 And when He ceased, my brow was sealed His own.
 If there took place no special change in me,
 How comes it all things wore a different hue
 Thenceforward ?—pregnant with vast consequence—
 Teeming with grand results—loaded with fate ;
 So that when quailing at the mighty range
 Of secret truths which yearn for birth, I haste
 To contemplate undazzled some one truth,
 Its bearings and effects alone—at once
 What was a speck expands into a star,
 Asking a life to pass exploring thus,
 Till I near craze. I go to prove my soul !
 I see my way as birds their trackless way—
 I shall arrive ! what time, what circuit first,
 I ask not : but unless God send his hail
 Or blinding fire-balls, sleet, or stifling snow,
 In some time—his good time—I shall arrive :
 He guides me and the bird. In his good time !

Mich. Vex him no further, Festus ; it is so !

Fest. Just thus you help me ever. This would hold
 Were it the trackless air, and not a path
 Inviting you, distinct with footprints yet
 Of many a mighty spirit gone that way.
 You may have purer views than theirs, perhaps,
 But they were famous in their day—the proofs
 Remain. At least accept the light they lend.

Par. Their light! the sum of all is briefly this :
 They laboured, and grew famous ; and the fruits
 Are best seen in a dark and groaning earth,
 Given over to a blind and endless strife
 With evils, which of all your Gods abates ?
 No ; I reject and spurn them utterly,
 And all they teach. Shall I still sit beside
 Their dry wells, with a white lip and filmed eye,
 While in the distance heaven is blue above
 Mountains where sleep the unsunned tarns ?

Fest.

And yet

As strong delusions have prevailed ere now :
 Men have set out as gallantly to seek
 Their ruin ; I have heard of such—yourself
 Avow all hitherto have failed and fallen.

Mich. Nay, Festus, when ^{say'st} but as the pilgrims faint
 Through the drear way, do you expect to see
 Their city dawn afar amid the clouds ?

Par. Ay, sounds it not like some old well-known tale ?
 For me, I estimate their works and them
 So rightly, that at times I almost dream
 I too have spent a life the sages' way,
 And tread once more familiar paths. Perchance
 I perished in an arrogant self-reliance
 An age ago ; and in that act, a prayer
 For one more chance went up so earnest, so
 Instinct with better light let in by Death,
 That life was blotted out—not so completely
 But scattered wrecks enough of it remain,

Dim memories ; as now, when seems once more
 The goal in sight again : all which, indeed,
 Is foolish, and only means—the flesh I wear,
 The earth I tread, are not more clear to me
 Than my belief, explained to you or no.

Fest. And who am I to challenge and dispute
 That clear belief ? I put away all fear.

Mich. Then Aureole is God's commissary ! he shall
 Be great and grand—and all for us !

Par. No, sweet !
 Not great and grand If I can serve mankind
 'Tis well—but there our intercourse must end :
 I never will be served by those I serve.

Fest. Look well to this ; here is a plague-spot, here,
 Disguise it how you may ! 'Tis true, you utter
 This scorn while by our side and loving us ;
 'Tis but a spot as yet ; but it will break
 Into a hideous blotch if overlooked.
 How can that course be safe which from the first
 Produces carelessness to human love ?

It seems you have abjured the helps which men
 Who overpass their kind, as you would do,
 Have humbly sought—I dare not thoroughly probe
 This matter, lest I learn too much : let be,
 That popular praise would little instigate
 Your efforts, nor particular approval
 Reward you ; put reward aside ; alone
 You shall go forth upon your arduous task,
 None shall assist you, none partake your toil,

None share your triumph—still you must retain
 Some one to cast your glory on, to share
 Your rapture with. Were I elect like you,
 I would encircle me with love, and raise
 A rampart of my fellows ; it should seem
 Impossible for me to fail, so watched
 By gentle friends who made my cause their own ;
 They should ward off Fate's envy—the great gift,
 Extravagant when claimed by me alone,
 Being so a gift to them as well as me.
 If danger daunted me or ease seduced,
 How calmly their sad eyes should gaze reproach !

Mich. O Aureole, can I sing when all alone,
 Without first calling, in my fancy, both
 To listen by my side—even I ! And you ?
 Do you not feel this ?—say that you feel this !

Par. I feel 'tis pleasant that my aims, at length
 Allowed their weight, should be supposed to need
 A further strengthening in these goodly helps !
 My course allures for its own sake—its sole
 Intrinsic worth ; and ne'er shall boat of mine
 Adventure forth for gold and apes at once.
 Your sages say, " if human, therefore weak : "
 If weak, more need to give myself entire
 To my pursuit ; and by its side, all else . . .
 No matter ! I deny myself but little
 In waiving all assistance save its own—
 Would there were some real sacrifice to make !
 Your friends the sages threw their joys away,
 While I must be content with keeping mine.

Fest. But do not cut yourself from human weal ?
 You cannot thrive—a man that dares affect
 To spend his life in service to his kind,
 For no reward of theirs, nor bound to them
 By any tie ; nor do so, Aureole ! No—
 There are strange punishments for such. Give up
 (Although no visible good flow thence) some part
 Of the glory to another ; hiding thus,
 Even from yourself, that all is for yourself.
 Say, say almost to God—“ I have done all
 “ For her—not for myself ! ”

Par. And who, but lately,
 Was to rejoice in my success like you ?
 Whom should I love but both of you ?

Fest. I know not :
 But know this, you, that 'tis no wish of mine
 You should abjure the lofty claims you make ;
 Although I can no longer seek, indeed,
 To overlook the truth, that there will be
 A monstrous spectacle upon the earth,
 Beneath the pleasant sun, among the trees :
 —A being knowing not what love is. Hear me !
 You are endowed with faculties which bear
 Annexed to them as 'twere a dispensation
 To summon meaner spirits to do their will,
 And gather round them at their need ; inspiring
 Such with a love themselves can never feel—
 Passionless 'mid their passionate votaries.
 I know not if you joy in this or no,

Or ever dream that common men can live
 On objects you prize lightly, but which make
 Their heart's sole treasure : the affections seem
 Beauteous at most to you, which we must taste
 Or die : and this strange quality accords,
 I know not how, with you ; sits well upon
 That luminous brow, though in another it scowls
 An eating brand—a shame. I dare not judge you :
 The rules of right and wrong thus set aside,
 There's no alternative—I own you one
 Of higher order, under other laws
 Than bind us ; therefore, curb not one bold glance !
 'Tis best aspire. Once mingled with us all

Mich. Stay with us, Aureole ! cast those hopes away,
 And stay with us ! An angel warns me, too,
 Man should be humble ; you are very proud :
 And God, dethroned, has doleful plagues for such !
 He warns me not to dread a quick repulse,
 Nor slow defeat, but a complete success !
 You will find all you seek, and perish so !

Par. (*After a pause.*) Are these the barren first fruits
 of my life ?
 Is love like this the natural lot of all ?
 How many years of pain might one such hour
 O'erbalance ? Dearest Michal, dearest Festus,
 What shall I say, if not that I desire
 To merit this your love ; and will, dear friends,
 In swerving nothing from my first resolves.
 See, the great moon ! and 'ere the mottled owls

Were wide awake, I was to go. It seems
You acquiesce at last in all save this—
If I am like to compass what I seek
By the untried career I chuse; and then,
If that career, making but small account
Of much of life's delight, will yet retain
Sufficient to sustain my soul—for thus
I understand these fond fears just expressed.
And first; the lore you praise and I neglect,
The labours and the precepts of old time,
I have not slightly disesteemed. But, friends,
Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe:
There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness; and around
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception—which is truth;
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Blinds it, and makes all error: and, "*to know*"
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without. Watch narrowly
The demonstration of a truth, its birth,
And you trace back the effluence to its spring
And source within us, where broods radiance vast,
To be elicited ray by ray, as chance
Shall favour: chance—for hitherto, your sage
Even as he knows not how those beams are born,

As little knows he what unlocks their fount ;
And men have oft grown old among their books
To die, case-hardened in their ignorance,
Whose careless youth had promised what long years
Of unremitted labour ne'er performed :
While, contrary, it has chanced some idle day,
That autumn loiterers just as fancy-free
As the midges in the sun, have oft given vent
To truth—produced mysteriously as cape
Of cloud grown out of the invisible air.
Hence, may not truth be lodged alike in all,
The lowest as the highest ? some slight film
The interposing bar which binds it up,
And makes the idiot, just as makes the sage
Some film removed, the happy outlet whence
Truth issues proudly ? See this soul of ours !
How it strives weakly in the child, is loosed
In manhood, clogged by sickness, back compelled
By age and waste, set free at last by death :
Why is it, flesh enthalls it or enthrones ?
What is this flesh we have to penetrate ?
Oh, not alone when life flows still do truth
And power emerge, but also when strange chance
Ruffles its current ; in unused conjuncture,
When sickness breaks the body—hunger, watching,
Excess, or languor—oftenest death's approach—
Peril, deep joy, or woe. One man shall crawl
Through life, surrounded with all stirring things,
Unmoved—and he goes mad ; and from the wreck

Of what he was, by his wild talk alone,
You first collect how great a spirit he hid.
Therefore, set free the soul alike in all,
Discovering the true laws by which the flesh
Bars in the spirit! We may not be doomed
To cope with seraphs, but at least the rest
Shall cope with us. Make no more giants, God!
But elevate the race at once! We ask
To put forth just our strength, our human strength,
All starting fairly, all equipped alike,
Gifted alike, all eagle-eyed, true-hearted—
See if we cannot beat thy angels yet!
Such is my task. I go to gather this
The sacred knowledge, here and there dispersed
About the world, long lost or never found.
And why should I be sad, or lorn of hope?
~~Why ever make man's good distinct from God's?~~
Or, finding they are one, why dare mistrust?
Who shall succeed if not one pledged like me?
Mine is no mad attempt to build a world
Apart from His, like those who set themselves
To find the nature of the spirit they bore,
And, taught betimes that all their gorgeous dreams
Were only born to vanish in this life,
Refused to fit them to this narrow sphere,
But chose to figure forth another world
And other frames meet for their vast desires,—
Still, all a dream! Thus was life scorned; but life
Shall yet be crowned: twine amaranth! I am priest!

And all for yielding with a lively spirit
 A poor existence—parting with a youth
 Like theirs who squander every energy
 Convertible to good, on painted toys,
 Breath-bubbles, gilded dust! And though I spurn
 All adventitious aims, from empty praise
 To love's award, yet whoso deems such helps
 Important, and concerns himself for me,
 May know even these will follow with the rest—
 As in the steady rolling Mayne, asleep
 Yonder, is mixed its mass of schistous ore.
 My own affections, laid to rest awhile,
 Will waken purified, subdued alone
 By all I have achieved; till then—till then . . .
 Ah! the time-wiling loitering of a page
 Through bower and over lawn, till eve shall bring
 The stately lady's presence whom he loves—
 The broken sleep of the fisher whose rough coat
 Enwraps the queenly pearl—these are faint types!
 See how they look on me—I triumph now!
 But one thing, Festus, Michal!—I have told
 All I shall e'er disclose to mortal: say—
 Do you believe I shall accomplish this?

Fest. I do believe!

Mich. I ever did believe!

Par. Those words shall never fade from out my brain!
 This earnest of the end shall never fade!
 Are there not, Festus, are there not, dear Michal,
 Two points in the adventure of the diver:

One—when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge ?

One—when, a prince, he rises with his pearl ?

Festus, I plunge !

Fest.

I wait you when you rise !

II.—PARACELSUS ATTAINS.

SCENE.—*Constantinople.*—“*The House of the Greek-conjuror.*”
1521.

PARACELSUS.

Over the waters in the vapourous west
The sun goes down as in a sphere of gold,
Behind the outstretched city, which between,
With all that length of domes and minarets,
Athwart the splendour, black and crooked runs
Like a Turk verse along a scimeter.
There lie, thou saddest writing, and awhile
Relieve my aching sight. 'Tis done at last !
Strange—and the juggles of a sallow cheat
Could win me to this act ! 'Tis as yon cloud
Should voyage unwreck'd o'er many a mountain-top
And break upon a molehill. I have dared
Come to a pause with knowledge ; scan for once
The heights already reach'd, without regard
To the extent above ; fairly compute
What I have clearly gained ; for once excluding
My future which should finish and fulfil

All half-gains, and conjectures, and mere hopes—
 And this, because a fortune-teller bids
 His credulous enquirers write thus much,
 Their previous life's attainment, in his book,
 Before his promised secret, as he vaunts,
 Make that life perfect : here, accordingly,
 'Mid the uncouth recordings of such dupes,
 —Scrawled in like fashion, lie my life's results !

These few blurred characters suffice to note
 A stranger wandered long through many lands,
 And reaped the fruit he coveted in a few
 Discoveries, as appended here and there,
 The fragmentary produce of much toil,
 In a dim heap, fact and surmise together
 Confusedly massed, as when acquired ; himself
 Too bent on gaining more to calmly stay
 And scrutinize the little which he gained :
 Slipt in the blank space 'twixt an idiot's gibber
 And a mad lover's ditty—lies the whole !

And yet those blottings chronicle a life—
 A whole life,—mine ! No thought to turn to act,
 No problem for the fancy, but a life
 Spent and decided, wasted past recall,
 Or worthy beyond peer. Stay, turn the page
 And take its chance,—thus : what, concerning “life”
 Does this remembrancer set down ?—“ We say
 “ ‘ Time fleets, youth fades, life is an empty dream.’ ”

" 'Tis the mere echo of time ; and he whose heart
 " Beat first beneath a human heart, whose speech
 " Was copied from a human tongue, can never
 " Recall when he was living yet knew not this.
 " Nevertheless long seasons come and go,
 " Till some one hour's experience shows what nought,
 " He deemed, could clearer show ; and ever after
 " An altered brow, and eye, and gait, and speech
 " Attest that now he knows the adage true
 " ' Time fleets, youth fades, life is an empty dream. ' "

Ay, my brave chronicler, and this same time
 As well as any : let my hour speak now !

Now ! I can go no farther ; well or ill—
 'Tis done. I must desist and take my chance ;
 I cannot keep on the stretch ; 'tis no back-shrinking—
 For let the least assurance dawn, some end
 To my toil seem possible, and I proceed
 At any price, by any sacrifice :
 Else, here I pause : the old Greek's prophecy
 Is like to turn out true—" I shall not quit
 " His chamber till I know what I desire ! "

Was it the light wind sung it, o'er the sea ?

An end, a rest ! strange how the notion, once
 Admitted, gains strength every moment ! Rest !
 Where kept that thought so long ? this throbbing brow
 To cease—this beating heart to cease—its crowd

Of gnawing thoughts to cease!—To dare let down
 My strung, so high-strung brain—to dare unnerve
 My harassed o'ertasked frame—to know my place,
 —My portion, my reward, my failure even,
 Assigned, made sure for ever!—To lose myself
 Among the common creatures of the world—
 To draw some gain from having been a man—
 Neither to hope nor fear—to live at length!
 Oh, were it but in failure, to have rest!
 What, sunk insensibly so deep? Has all
 Been undergone for this? Was this the prayer
 My labour qualified me to present
 With no fear of refusal? Had I gone
 Carelessly through my task, and so judged fit
 To moderate my hopes; nay, were it now
 My sole concern to exculpate myself,
 And lessen punishment,—I could not chuse
 An humbler mood to wait for the decree!
 No, no, there needs not this; no, after all,
 At worst I have performed my share of the task:
 The rest is God's concern—mine, merely this,
 To know that I have obstinately held
 By my own work. The mortal whose brave foot
 Has trod, unscathed, the temple-courts so far
 That he descries at length the shrine of shrines,
 Must let no sneering of the demons' eyes,
 Whose wrath he met unquailing, follow sly
 And fasten on him, fairly past their power,
 If where he stands he dares but stay; no, no—

He must not stagger, faint and fall at last,
 —Knowing a charm to baffle them ; behold,
 He bares his front—a mortal ventures thus
 Serene amid the echoes, beams, and glooms !
 If he be priest henceforth, or if he wake
 The god of the place to ban and blast him there,—
 Both well ! What 's failure or success to me ?
 I have subdued my life to the one end
 Ordained life ; there alone I cannot doubt,
 That only way I may be satisfied.
 Yes, well have I subdued my life ! beyond
 The obligation of my strictest vows,
 The contemplation of my wildest bond,
 Which gave, in truth, my nature freely up,
 In what it should be, more than what it was—
 Consenting that whatever passions slept,
 Whatever impulses lay unmatured,
 Should wither in the germ,—but scarce foreseeing
 That the soil, doomed thus to perpetual waste,
 Would seem one day, remembered in its youth
 Beside the parched sand-tract which now it is,
 Already strewn with faint blooms, viewless then.
 I ne'er engaged to root up loves so frail
 I felt them not ; yet now, 'tis very plain
 Some soft spots had their birth in me at first—
 If not love, say, like love : there was a time
 When yet this wolfish hunger after knowledge
 Set not remorselessly love's claims aside ;
 This heart was human once, or why recall

Einsiedeln, now, and Würzburg, which the Mayne
Forsakes her course to fold as with an arm ?

And Festus—my poor Festus, with his praise,
And counsel, and grave fears—where is he now?
Or the sweet maiden, long ago his bride?
I surely loved them—that last night, at least,
When we . . . gone ! gone ! the better : I am saved
The sad review of an ambitious youth,
Choked by vile lusts, unnoticed in their birth,
But let grow up and wind around a will
Till action was destroyed. No, I have gone
Purging my path successively of aught
Wearing the distant likeness of such lusts.
I have made life consist of one idea :
Ere that was master—up till that was born—
I bear a memory of a pleasant life
Whose small events I treasure ; till one morn
I ran o'er the seven little grassy fields,
Startling the flocks of nameless birds, to tell
Poor Festus, leaping all the while for joy,
To leave all trouble for futurity,
Since I had just determined to become
The greatest and most glorious man on earth.
And since that morn all life has been forgot ;
All is one day—one only step between
The outset and the end : one tyrant aim,
Absorbing all, fills up the interval—
One vast unbroken chain of thought, kept up

Through a career or friendly or opposed
To its existence : life, death, light and shade
The shows of the world, were bare receptacles
Or indices of truth to be wrung thence,
Not instruments of sorrow or delight :
For some one truth would dimly beacon me
From mountains rough with pines, and flit and wink
O'er dazzling wastes of frozen snow, and tremble
Into assured light in some branching mine,
Where ripens, swathed in fire, the liquid gold—
And all the beauty, all the wonder fell
On either side the truth, as its mere robe ;
Men saw the robe—I saw the august form.
So far, then, I have voyaged with success,
So much is good, then, in this working sea
Which parts me from that happy strip of land—
But o'er that happy strip a sun shone, too !
And fainter gleams it as the waves grow rough,
And still more faint as the sea widens ; last
I sicken on a dead gulph, streaked with light
From its own putrifying depths alone !
Then—God was pledged to take me by the hand ;
Now—any miserable juggler bends
My pride to him. All seems alike at length :
Who knows which are the wise and which the fools ?
God may take pleasure in confounding pride
By hiding secrets with the scorned and base—
He who stoops lowest may find most—in short,
I am here ; and all seems natural ; I start not :

And never having glanced behind to know
 If I had kept my primal light from wane,
 Am thus insensibly grown—what I am !

Oh, bitter ; very bitter !

And more bitter,

To fear a deeper curse, an inner ruin—
 Plague beneath plague—the last turning the first
 To light beside its darkness. Better weep
 My youth and its brave hopes, all dead and gone,
 In tears which burn ! Would I were sure to win
 Some startling secret in their stead !—a tincture
 Of force to flush old age with youth, or breed
 Gold, or imprison moonbeams till they change
 To opal shafts !—only that, hurling it
 Indignant back, I might convince myself
 My aims remained as ever supreme and pure !
 Even now, why not desire, for mankind's sake,
 That if I fail, some fault may be the cause,—
 That, though I sink, another may succeed ?
 O God, the despicable heart of us !
 Shut out this hideous mockery from my heart !

'Twas politic in you, Aureole, to reject
 Single rewards, and ask them in the lump ;
 At all events, once launched, to hold straight on :
 For now 'tis all or nothing. Mighty profit
 Your gains will bring if they stop short of such
 Full consummation ! As a man, you had

A certain share of strength, and that is gone
 Already in the getting these you boast.
 Do not they seem to laugh, as who should say—
 “ Great master, we are here indeed ; dragged forth
 “ To light : this hast thou done ; be glad ! now, seek
 “ The strength to use which thou hast spent in getting ! ”

And yet 'tis surely much, 'tis very much,
 Thus to have emptied youth of all its gifts,
 To feed a fire meant to hold out till morn
 Arrive with inexhaustible light ; and lo,
 I have heaped up my last, and day dawns not !
 While I am left with grey hair, faded hands,
 And furrowed brow. Ha, have I, after all,
 Mistaken the wild nursling of my breast ?
 Knowledge it seemed, and Power, and Recompense !
 Was she who glided through my room of nights,—
 Who laid my head on her soft knees, and smoothed
 The damp locks,—whose sly soothings just began
 When my sick spirit craved repose awhile—
 God ! was I fighting Sleep off for Death's sake ?
 God ! Thou art Mind ! Unto the Master-Mind
 Mind should be precious. Spare my mind alone !
 All else I will endure : if, as I stand
 Here, with my gains, thy thunder smite me down,
 I bow me ; 'tis thy will, thy righteous will ;
 I o'erpass life's restrictions, and I die :
 And if no trace of my career remain,
 Save a thin corpse at pleasure of the wind

In these bright chambers, level with the air,
See thou to it ! But if my spirit fail,
My once proud spirit forsake me at the last,
Hast thou done well by me ? So do not thou !
Crush not my mind, dear God, though I be crushed !
Hold me before the frequency of thy seraphs,
And say—"I crushed him, lest he should disturb
" My law. Men must not know their strength : behold,
" Weak and alone, how near he raised himself ! "

But if delusions trouble me—and Thou,
Not seldom felt with rapture in thy help
Throughout my toil and wanderings, dost intend
To work man's welfare through my weak endeavour—
To crown my mortal forehead with a beam
From thine own blinding crown—to smile, and guide
This puny hand, and let the work so framed
Be styled my work,—hear me ! I covet not
An influx of new power, an angel's soul :
It were no marvel then—but I have reached
Thus far, a man ; let me conclude, a man !
Give but one hour of my first energy,
Of that invincible faith—one only hour !
That I may cover with an eagle-glance
The truths I have, and spy some certain way
To mould them, and completing them, possess !

Yet God is good : I started sure of that,
And why dispute it now ? I'll not believe

But some undoubted warning long ere this
Had reached me : stars would write his will in heaven,
As once when a labarum was not deemed
Too much for the old founder of these walls.
Then, if my life has not been natural,
It has been monstrous : yet, till late, my course
So ardently engrossed me, that delight,
A pausing and reflecting joy, 'tis plain,
Though such were meant to follow as its fruit,
Could find no place in it. True, I am worn ;
But who clothes summer, who is Life itself ?
God, that created all things, can renew !
And then, though after-life to please me now
Must have no likeness to the past, what hinders
Reward from springing out of toil, as changed
As bursts the flower from earth, and root, and stalk ?
What use were punishment, unless some sin
Be first detected ? let me know that first !

(Aprile, from within)

I hear a voice, perchance I heard
Long ago, but all too low,
So that scarce a thought was stirred
If really spoke the voice or no :
I heard it in my youth, when first
The waters of my life outburst :
But now their stream ebbs faint, I hear
The voice, still low, but fatal-clear—
As if all Poets, that God meant

Should save the world, and therefore lent
 Great gifts to, but who, proud, refused
 To do his work, or lightly used
 Those gifts, or failed through weak endeavour,
 And mourn, cast off by him forever,—
 As if these leaned in airy ring
 To call me ; this the song they sing.

“ Lost, lost ! yet come,
 With our wan troop make thy home :
 Come, come ! for we
 Will not breathe, so much as breathe
 Reproach to thee !
 Knowing what thou sink'st beneath :
 So we sank in those old years,
 We who bid thee, come ! thou last
 Who, a living man, hast life o'erpast,
 And all together we, thy peers,
 Will pardon ask for thee, the last
 Whose trial is done, whose lot is cast
 With those who watch, but work no more—
 Who gaze on life, but live no more :
 And yet we trusted thou shouldst speak
 God's message which our lips, too weak,
 Refused to utter,—shouldst redeem
 Our fault : such trust, and all, a dream !
 So we chose thee a bright birth-place
 Where the richness ran to flowers—
 Couldst not sing one song for grace ?

Nor make one blossom man's and ours ?
 Must one more recreant to his race
 Die with unexerted powers,
 And join us, leaving as he found
 The world, he was to loosen, bound ?
 Anguish ! ever and for ever ;
 Still beginning, ending never !
 Yet, lost and last one, come !
 How couldst understand, alas,
 What our pale ghosts strove to say,
 As their shades did glance and pass
 Before thee, night and day ?
 Thou wert blind, as we were dumb :
 Once more, therefore, come, O come !
 How shall we better arm the spirit
 Who next shall thy post of life inherit—
 How guard him from thy ruin ?
 Tell us of thy sad undoing
 Here, where we sit, ever pursuing
 Our weary task, ever renewing
 Sharp sorrow, far from God who gave
 Our powers, and man they could not save !”

APRILE enters.

A spirit better armed, succeeding me ?
 Ha, ha ! our king that wouldst be, here at last ?
 Art thou the Poet who shall save the world ?
 Thy hand to mine. Stay, fix thine eyes on mine.
 Thou wouldst be king ? Still fix thine eyes on mine !

Par. Ha, ha ! why crouchest not ? Am I not king ?
 So torture is not wholly unavailing !
 Have my fierce spasms compelled thee from thy lair ?
 Art thou the Sage I only seemed to be,
 Myself of after-time, my very self
 With sight a little clearer, strength more firm,
 Who robs me of my prize and takes my place
 For just a fault, a weakness, a neglect ?
 I scarcely trusted God with the surmise
 That such might come, and thou didst hear the while !

Apr. Thine eyes are lustreless to mine ; my hair
 Is soft, nay silken soft : to talk with thee
 Flushes my cheek, and thou art ashy-pale,
 True, thou hast laboured, hast withstood her lips,
 The siren's ! Yes, 'tis like thou hast attained !
 Tell me, dear master, wherefore now thou comest ?
 I thought thy solemn songs would have their meed
 In after-time ; that I should hear the earth
 Exult in thee, and echo with thy praise,
 While I was laid forgotten in my grave.

Par. Not so ! I know thee, I am not thy dupe !
 Thou art ordained to follow in my track,
 Even as thou sayest, succeeding to my place,
 Reaping my sowing—as I scorned to reap
 The harvest sown by sages passed away.
 Thou art the sober searcher, cautious striver,
 As if, except through me, thou had'st searched or striven !
 Ay, tell the world ! Degrade me, after all,
 To an aspirant after fame, not truth—
 To all but envy of thy fate, be sure !

Apr. Nay, sing them to me ; I shall envy not :
 Thou shalt be king ! Sing thou, and I will stand
 Beside, and call deep silence for thy songs,
 And worship thee, as I had ne'er been meant
 To fill thy throne—but none shall ever know !
 Sing to me : for already thy wild eyes
 Unlock my heart-springs, as some crystal-shaft
 Reveals by some chance blaze its parent fount
 After long time—so thou reveal'st my soul !
 All will flash forth at last, with thee to hear !

Par. (His secret ! my successor's secret—fool !)
 I am he that aspired to KNOW—and thou ?

Apr. I would LOVE infinitely, and be loved !

Par. Poor slave ! I am thy king indeed.

Apr. Thou deem'st

That—born a spirit, dowered even as thou,
 Born for thy fate—because I could not curb
 My yearnings to possess at once the full
 Enjoyment ; yet neglected all the means
 Of realising even the frailest joy ;
 Gathering no fragments to appease my want,
 Yet nursing up that want till thus I die—
 Thou deem'st I cannot trace thy safe, sure march,
 O'er perils that o'erwhelm me, triumphing,
 Neglecting nought below for aught above,
 Despising nothing and ensuring all—
 Nor that I could (my time to come again)
 Lead thus my spirit securely as thine own :
 Listen, and thou shalt see I know thee well.

I would love infinitely . . . Ah, lost! lost!

O ye who armed me at such cost,

Your faces shall I bear to see

With your gifts even yet on me?—

Par. (Ah, 'tis some moonstruck creature after all!

Such fond fools as are like to haunt this den:

They spread contagion, doubtless: yet he seemed

To echo one foreboding of my heart

So truly, that . . . no matter! How he stands

With eve's last sunbeam staying on his hair

Which turns to it, as if they were akin:

And those clear smiling eyes of saddest blue

Nearly set free, so far they rise above

The painful fruitless striving of that brow

And enforced knowledge of those lips, firm-set

In slow despondency's eternal sigh!

Has he, too, missed life's end, and learned the cause?)

Be calm, I charge thee, by thy fealty!

Tell me what thou wouldst be, and what I am.

Apr. I would love infinitely, and be loved.

First: I would carve in stone, or cast in brass,

The forms of earth. No ancient hunter, raised

Up to the gods by his renown; no nymph

Supposed the sweet soul of a woodland tree,

Or sapphirine spirit of a twilight star,

Should be too hard for me; no shepherd-king,

Regal with his white locks; no youth who stands

Silent and very calm amid the throng,

His right hand ever hid beneath his robe

Until the tyrant pass ; no law-giver ;
No swan-soft woman, rubbed with lucid oils,
Given by a god for love of her—too hard !
Each passion sprung from man, conceived by man,
Would I express and clothe it in its right form,
Or blend with others struggling in one form,
Or show repressed by an ungainly form.
For, if you marvelled at some mighty spirit
With a fit frame to execute his will—
Ay, even unconsciously to work his will—
You should be moved no less beside some strong,
Rare spirit, fettered to a stubborn body,
Endeavouring to subdue it, and inform it
With its own splendour ! All this I would do,
And I would say, this done, “ God’s sprites being made,
“ He grants to each a sphere to be its world,
“ Appointed with the various objects needed
“ To satisfy its spiritual desires ;
“ So, I create a world for these my shapes
“ Fit to sustain their beauty and their strength ! ”
And, at the word, I would contrive and paint
Woods, valleys, rocks, and plains, dells, sands, and wastes,
Lakes which, when morn breaks on their quivering bed,
Blaze like a wyvern flying round the sun ;
And ocean-isles so small, the dog-fish tracking
A dead whale, who should find them, would swim thrice
Around them, and fare onward—all to hold
The offspring of my brain. Nor these alone—
Bronze labyrinths, palace, pyramid, and crypt,

Baths, galleries, courts, temples, and terraces,
Marts, theatres, and wharfs—all filled with men!
Men everywhere! And this performed, in turn,
When those who looked on, pined to hear the hopes,
And fears, and hates, and loves which moved the crowd,—
I would throw down the pencil as the chisel,
And I would speak: no thought which ever stirred
A human breast should be untold; no passions,
No soft emotions, from the turbulent stir
Within a heart fed with desires like mine—
To the last comfort, shutting the tired lids
Of him who sleeps the sultry noon away
Beneath the tent-tree by the way-side well:
And this in language as the need should be,
Now poured at once forth in a burning flow,
Now piled up in a grand array of words.
This done, to perfect and consummate all,
Even as a luminous haze links star to star,
I would supply all chasms with music, breathing
Mysterious notions of the 'soul, no way
To be defined save in strange melodies.
Last, having thus revealed all I could love,
And having received all love bestowed on it,
I would die: so preserving through my course
God full on me, as I was full on men:
And He would grant my prayer—"I have gone through
" All loveliness of life; make more for me,
" If not for men—or take me to thyself,
" Eternal, infinite Love!"

If thou hast ne'er
 Conceived this mighty aim, this full desire,
 Thou hast not passed my trial, and thou art
 No king of mine.

Par. Ah me!

Apr. But thou art here!
 Thou didst not gaze like me upon that end
 Till thine own powers for compassing the bliss
 Were blind with glory; nor grow mad to grasp
 At once the prize long patient toil should claim;
 Nor spurn all granted short of that. And I
 Would do as thou, a second time: nay, listen—
 Knowing ourselves, our world, our task so great,
 Our time so brief,—'tis clear if we refuse
 The means so limited, the tools so rude
 To execute our purpose, life will fleet,
 And we shall fade, and leave our task undone.
 Rather, grow wise in time: what though our work
 Be fashioned in despite of their ill-service,
 Be crippled every way? 'Twere little praise
 Did full resources wait on our good will
 At every turn. Let all be as it is.
 Some say the earth is even so contrived
 That tree, and flower, a vesture gay, conceal
 A bare and skeleton framework: had we means
 That answered to our mind! But now I seem
 Wrecked on a savage isle: how rear thereon
 My palace? Branching palms the props shall be,
 Fruit glossy mingling; gems are for the east;

Who heeds them? I can waive them. Serpent's scales,
Birds' feathers, downy furs, and fishes' skins
Must help me; and a little here and there
Is all I can aspire to: still my art
Shall show its birth was in a gentler clime.
" Had I green jars of malachite, this way
" I'd range them: where those sea-shells glisten above,
" Cressets should hang, by right: this way we set
" The purple carpets, as these mats are laid,
" Woven of mere fern and rush and blossoming flag."
Or if, by fortune, some completer grace
Be spared to me, some fragment, some slight sample
Of my own land's completer workmanship,
Some trifle little heeded there, but here
The place's one perfection—with what joy
Would I enshrine the relic—cheerfully
Foregoing all the marvels out of reach!
Could I retain one strain of all the psalm
Of the angels—one word of the fiat of God—
To let my followers know what such things are!
I would adventure nobly for their sakes:
When nights were still, and still, the moaning sea,
And far away I could descry the land
Whence I departed, whither I return,
I would dispart the waves, and stand once more
At home, and load my bark, and hasten back,
And fling my gains before them, rich or poor—
" Friends," I would say, " I went far, far for them,
" Past the high rocks the haunt of doves, the mounds

" Of red earth from whose sides strange trees grow out,
 " Past tracts of milk-white minute blinding sand,
 " Till, by a mighty moon, I tremblingly
 " Gathered these magic herbs, berry and bud,
 " In haste—not pausing to reject the weeds,
 " But happy plucking them at any price.
 " To me, who have seen them bloom in their own soil,
 " They are scarce lovely : plait and wear them, you !
 " And guess, from what they are, the springs that fed—
 " The stars that sparkled o'er them, night by night,
 " The snakes that travelled far to sip their dew ! ”
 Thus for my higher loves ; and thus even weakness
 Would win me honour. But not these alone
 Should claim my care ; for common life, its wants
 And ways, would I set forth in beauteous hues :
 The lowest hind should not possess a hope,
 A fear, but I 'd be by him, saying better
 Than he his own heart's language. I would live
 For ever in the thoughts I thus explored,
 As a discoverer's memory is attached ✓
 To all he finds : they should be mine henceforth,
 Imbued with me, though free to all before ;
 For clay, once cast into my soul's rich mine
 Should come up crusted o'er with gems : nor this
 Would need a meaner spirit, than the first :
 Nay, 'twould be but the selfsame spirit, clothed
 In humbler guise, but still the selfsame spirit—
 As one spring wind unbinds the mountain snow,
 And comforts violets in their hermitage.

But, master, poet, who hast done all this,
How didst thou 'scape the ruin I have met ?
Didst thou, when nerving thee to this attempt,
Ne'er range thy mind's extent, as some wide hall,
Dazzled by shapes that filled its length with light,
Shapes clustered there to rule thee, not obey—
That will not wait thy summons, will not rise
Singly, nor when thy practised eye and hand
Can well transfer their loveliness, but crowd
By thee for ever, bright to thy despair ?
Didst thou ne'er gaze on each by turns, and ne'er
Resolve to single out *one*, though the rest
Should vanish, and to give that one, entire
In beauty, to the world ; forgetting, so,
Its peers, whose number baffles mortal power ?
And, this determined, wert thou ne'er seduced
By memories, and regrets, and passionate love,
To glance once more farewell ? and did their eyes
Fasten thee, brighter and more bright, until
Thou couldst but stagger back unto their feet,
And laugh that man's applause or welfare once
Could tempt thee to forsake them ? Or when years
Had passed, and still their love possessed thee wholly ;
When from without some murmur startled thee
Of darkling mortals, famished for one ray
Of thy so-hoarded luxury of light,
Didst thou ne'er strive even yet to break those spells,
And prove thou couldst recover and fulfil
Thy early mission, long ago renounced,

And, to that end, select some shape once more ?
 And did not mist-like influences, thick films,
 Faint memories of the rest, that charmed so long
 Thine eyes, float fast, confuse thee, bear thee off,
 As whirling snow-drifts blind a man who treads
 A mountain ridge, with guiding spear, through storm ?
 Say, though I fell, I had excuse to fall ;
 Say, I was tempted sorely : say but this,
 Dear lord, Aprile's lord !

Par. Clasp me not thus,
 Aprile ! . . . That the truth should reach me thus !
 We are weak dust. Nay, clasp not, or I faint !

Apr. My king ! and envious thoughts could outrage thee !
 Lo, I forget my ruin, and rejoice
 In thy success, as thou ! Let our God's praise
 Go bravely through the world at last ! What care
 Through me or thee ? I feel thy breath . . . why, tears ?
 Tears in the darkness—and from thee to me ?

Par. Love me henceforth, Aprile, while I learn
 To love ; and, merciful God, forgive us both !
 We wake at length from weary dreams ; but both
 Have slept in fairy-land : though dark and drear
 Appears the world before us, we no less
 Wake with our wrists and ancles jewelled still.
 I, too, have sought to know as thou to love—
 Excluding love as thou refusedst knowledge.
 Still thou hast beauty and I, power. We wake :
 What penance canst devise for both of us ?

Apr. I hear thee faintly . . . the thick darkness ! Even

Thine eyes are hid. 'Tis as I knew : I speak,
 And now I die. But I have seen thy face !
 O, poet, think of me, and sing of me !
 But to have seen thee, and to die so soon !

Par. Die not, Aprile : we must never part.
 Are we not halves of one dissevered world,
 Whom this strange chance unites once more ? Part ?
 never !

Till thou, the lover, know ; and I, the knower,
 Love—until both are saved. Aprile, hear !
 We will accept our gains, and use them—now !
 God, he will die upon my breast ! Aprile !

Apr. To speak but once, and die ! yet by his side.
 Hush ! hush !

Ha ! go you ever girt about
 With phantoms, powers ? I have created such,
 But these seem real as I !

Par. Whom can you see
 Through the accursed darkness ?

Apr. Stay ; I know,
 I know them : who should know them well as I ?—
 White brows, lit up with glory ; poets all !

Par. Let him but live, and I have my reward !

Apr. Yes ; I see now—God is the PERFECT POET,
 Who in creation acts his own conceptions.
 Shall man refuse to be aught less than God ?
 Man's weakness is his glory—for the strength
 Which raises him to heaven and near God's self,
 Came spite of it : God's strength his glory is,

For thence came with our weakness sympathy
Which brought God down to earth, a man like us.
Had you but told me this at first! . . . Hush! hush!

Par. Live! for my sake, because of my great sin,
To help my brain, oppressed by these wild words
And their deep import. Live! 'tis not too late:
I have a quiet home for us, and friends.
Michal shall smile on you . . . Hear you? Lean thus,
And breathe my breath: I shall not lose one word
Of all your speech—no little word, Aprile!

Apr. No, no . . . Crown me? I am not one of you!
'Tis he, the king, you seek. I am not one . . .

Par. Give me thy spirit, at least! Let me love, too!

I have attained, and now I may depart.

III.—PARACELSUS.

SCENE—*A chamber in the house of Paracelsus at Basil. 1526.*

PARACELSUS, FESTUS.

Par. Heap logs, and let the blaze laugh out!

Fest. True, true!

'Tis very fit that all, time, chance, and change
Have wrought since last we sate thus, face to face,
And soul to soul—all cares, far-looking fears,
Vague apprehensions, all vain fancies bred
By your long absence, should be cast away,

Forgotten in this glad unhop'd renewal
Of our affections.

Par. Oh, omit not aught
Which witnesses your own and Michal's love !
I bade you not spare that ! Forget alone
The honours and the glories, and the rest,
You seem'd disposed to tell profusely out.

Fest. Nay, even your honours, in a sense, I waive :
The wondrous Paracelsus—Life's dispenser,
Fate's commissary, idol of the schools,
And Courts, shall be no more than Aureole still—
Still Aureole and my friend, as when we parted
Some twenty years ago, and I restrained
As I best could the promptings of my spirit,
Which secretly advanced you, from the first,
To the pre-eminent rank which, since, your own
Adventurous ardour, nobly triumphing,
Has won for you.

Par. Yes, yes ; and Michal's face
Still wears that quiet and peculiar light,
Like the dim circlet floating round a pearl ?

Fest. Just so.

Par. And yet her calm sweet countenance,
Though saintly, was not sad ; for she would sing
Alone . . . Does she still sing alone, bird-like,
Not dreaming you are near ? Her carols dropt
In flakes through that old leafy bower built under
The sunny wall at Würzburg, from her lattice
Among the trees above, while I, unseen,

Sate conning some rare scroll from Tritheim's shelves,
 Much wondering notes so simple could divert
 My mind from study. Those were happy days !
 Respect all such as sing when all alone.

Fest. Scarcely alone—her children, you may guess,
 Are wild beside her . . .

Par. Ah, those children quite
 Unsettle the pure picture in my mind :
 A girl—she was so perfect, so distinct . . .
 No change, no change ! Not but this added grace
 May blend and harmonize with its compeers,
 And Michal may become her motherhood ;
 But 'tis a change—and I detest all change,
 And most a change in aught I loved long since !
 So, Michal . . . you have said she thinks of me ?

Fest. O very proud will Michal be of you !
 Imagine how we sate, long winter-nights,
 Scheming and wondering—shaping your presumed
 Adventures, or devising their reward ;
 Shutting out fear with all the strength of hope.
 Though it was strange how, even when most secure
 In our domestic peace, a certain dim
 And flitting shade could sadden all ; it seemed
 A restlessness of heart, a silent yearning,
 A sense of something wanting, incomplete—
 Not to be put in words, perhaps avoided
 By mute consent—but, said or unsaid, felt
 To point to one so loved and so long lost.
 And then the hopes rose and shut out the fears—

How you would laugh should I recount them now!
 I still predicted your return at last,
 With gifts beyond the greatest vaunt of all,
 All Tritheim's wondrous troop; did one of which
 Attain renown by any chance, I smiled—
 As well aware of who would prove his peer.
 Michal was sure some woman, long ere this,
 As beautiful as you were sage, had loved . . .

Par. Far-seeing, truly, to discern so much
 In the fantastic projects and day-dreams
 Of a raw, restless boy!

Fest. Say, one whose sunrise
 Well warranted our faith in this full noon!
 Can I forget the anxious voice which said,
 "Festus, have thoughts like these e'er shaped themselves
 "In other brains than mine—have their possessors
 "Existed in like circumstance—were they weak
 "As I—or ever constant from the first,
 "Despising youth's allurements, and rejecting
 "As spider-films the shackles I endure?
 "Is there hope for me?"—and I answered grave
 As an acknowledged elder, calmer, wiser,
 More gifted mortal. O you must remember,
 For all your glorious . . .

Par. Glorious? ay, this hair,
 These hands—nay, touch them, they are mine! Recall
 With all the said recallings, times when thus
 To lay them by your own ne'er turned you pale,
 As now. Most glorious, are they not?

Fest.

Why . . . why . . .

Something must be subtracted from success
 So wide, no doubt. He would be scrupulous, truly,
 Who should object such drawbacks. Still, still, Aureole,
 You are changed—very changed! 'Twere losing nothing
 To look well to it: you must not be stolen
 From the enjoyment of your well-won meed.

Par. My friend! you seek my pleasure, past a doubt:
 By talking, not of me, but of yourself,
 You will best gain your point.

Fest.

Have I not said

All touching Michal and my children? Sure
 You know, by this, full well how Aennchen looks
 Gravely, while one disparts her thick brown hair;
 And Aureole's glee when some stray gannet builds
 Amid the birch-trees by the lake. Small hope
 Have I that he will honour, the wild imp,
 His namesake! Sigh not! 'tis too much to ask
 That all we love should reach the same proud fate.
 But you are very kind to humour me
 By showing interest in my quiet life;
 You, who of old could never tame yourself
 To tranquil pleasures, must at heart despise . . .

Par. Festus, strange secrets are let out by Death,
 Who blabs so oft the follies of this world:
 And I am Death's familiar, as you know.
 I helped a man to die, some few weeks since,
 Warped even from his go-cart to one end—
 The living on princes' smiles, reflected from

A mighty herd of favourites. No mean trick
 He left untried; and truly well nigh wormed
 All traces of God's finger out of him.
 Then died, grown old; and just an hour before—
 Having lain long with blank and soulless eyes—
 He sate up suddenly, and with natural voice
 Said, that in spite of thick air and closed doors
 God told him it was June; and he knew well,
 Without such telling, hare-bells grew in June;
 And all that kings could ever give or take
 Would not be precious as those blooms to him.
 Just so, allowing I am passing wise,
 It seems to me much worthier argument
 Why pansies,* eyes that laugh, bear beauty's prize
 From violets, eyes that dream—(your Michal's choice)—
 Than all fools find to wonder at in me,
 Or in my fortunes: and be very sure
 I say this from no prurient restlessness—
 No self-complacency—itching to turn,
 Vary, and view its pleasure from all points,
 And, in this matter, willing other men
 Should argue and demonstrate to itself
 The realness of the very joy it tastes.
 What joy is better than the news of friends
 Whose memories were a solace to me oft,
 As mountain-baths to wild fowls in their flight?
 Yes, oft'er than you wasted thought on me

* *Citrinula* (*flammula*) herba Paracelso multùm familiaris. DORN.

If you were sage, and rightly valued bliss !
 But there's no taming nor repressing hearts :
 God knows I need such !—So you heard me speak ?

Fest. Speak ? when ?

Par. When but this morning at my class ?
 There was noise and crowd enough. I saw you not.
 Surely you know I am engaged to fill
 The chair here ?—that 'tis part of my proud fate
 To lecture to as many thick-sculled youths
 As please, each day, to throng the theatre,
 To my great reputation, and no small
 Danger of Basil's benches, long unused
 To crack beneath such honour ?

Fest. I was there ;
 I mingled with the throng : shall I avow
 I had small care to listen ?—too intent
 On gathering from the murmurs of the crowd
 A full corroboration of my hopes !
 What can I learn about your powers ? but they
 Know, care for nought beyond your actual state—
 Your actual value ; and yet worship you !
 Those various natures whom you sway as one !
 But ere I go, be sure I shall attend . . .

Par. Stop, o' God's name: the thing's by no means yet
 Past remedy ! Shall I read this morning's work
 —At least in substance ? Nought so worth the gaining
 As an apt scholar ! Thus then, with all due
 Precision and emphasis—(you, besides, are clearly
 Guiltless of understanding a whit more

The subject than your stool—allowed to be
A notable advantage) . . .

Fest. Surely, Aureole,
You laugh at me!

Par. I laugh? Ha, ha! thank heaven,
I charge you, if't be so! for I forget
Much—and what laughter should be like! No less,
However, I forego that luxury,
Since it alarms the friend who brings it back.
True, laughter like my own must echo strange
To thinking men; a smile were better far—
So make me smile! If the exulting look
You wore but now be smiling, 'tis so long
Since I have smiled! Alas, such smiles are born
Alone of hearts like yours, or shepherds old
Of ancient time, whose eyes, calm as their flocks,
Saw in the stars mere garnishry of heaven,
In earth a stage for altars, nothing more.
Never change, Festus: I say, never change!

Fest. My God, if he be wretched after all!

Par. When last we parted, Festus, you declared,
—Or did your Michal's soft lips whisper words
I have preserved? She told me she believed
I should succeed (meaning, that in the search
I then engaged in, I should meet success),
And yet be wretched: now, she augured false.

Fest. Thank heaven! but you spoke strangely! could
I venture
To think bare apprehension lest your friend,

Dazzled by your resplendent course, might find
 Henceforth less sweetness in his own, awakes
 Such earnest mood in you? Fear not, dear friend,
 That I shall leave you, inwardly repining
 Your lot was not my own!

Par.

And this, for ever!

For ever! gull who may, they will be blind!
 They will not look nor think—'tis nothing new
 In them; but surely he is not of them!
 My Festus, do you know, I reckoned, you—
 Though all beside were sand-blind—you, my friend,
 Would look at me, once close, with piercing eye,
 Untroubled by the false glare that confounds
 A weaker vision; would remain serene,
 Though singular, amid a gaping throng.
 I feared you, or had come, sure, long ere this,
 To Einsiedeln. Well, error has no end,
 And Rhasis is a sage, and Basil boasts
 A tribe of wits, and I am wise and blest
 Past all dispute! 'Tis vain to fret at it.
 I have vowed long since that my worshippers
 Shall owe to their own deep sagacity
 All further information, good or bad:
 And little risk my reputation runs,
 Unless perchance the glance now searching me
 Be fixed much longer—for it seems to spell,
 Dimly, the characters a simpler man
 Might read distinct enough. Old eastern books
 Say, the fallen prince of morning some short space

Remained unchanged in feature—nay, his brow
 Seemed hued with triumph : every spirit then
 Praising ; *his* heart on flame the while :—a tale !
 Well, Festus, what discover you, I pray ?

Fest. Some foul deed sullies then a life which else
 Were raised supreme ?

Par. Good : I do well—most well !
 Why strive to make men hear, feel, fret themselves
 With what 'tis past their power to comprehend ?
 I would not strive now : only, having nursed
 The faint surmise that one yet walked the earth,
 One, at least, not the utter fool of show,
 Not absolutely formed to be the dupe
 Of shallow plausibilities alone ;
 One who, in youth found wise enough to choose
 The happiness his riper years approve,
 Was yet so anxious for another's sake,
 That, ere his friend could rush upon a course
 Mad, ruinous, the converse of his own,
 His gentler spirit essayed, prejudged for him
 The perilous path, foresaw its destiny,
 And warned the weak one in such tender words,
 Such accents—his whole heart in every tone—
 That oft their memory comforted that friend
 When rather it should have increased despair :
 —Having believed, I say, that this one man
 Could never lose the wisdom from the first
 His portion—how should I refuse to grieve
 At even my gain if it attest his loss,

At triumph which so signally disturbs
Our old relation, proving me more wise?
Therefore, once more reminding him how well
He prophesied, I note the single flaw
That spoils his prophet's title: in plain words
You were deceived, and thus were you deceived—
I have not been successful, and yet am
Most wretched; there—'tis said at last; but give
No credit, lest you force me to concede
That common sense yet lives upon the earth.

Fest. You surely do not mean to banter me?

Par. You know, or (if you have been wise enough
To cleanse your memory of such matters) knew,
As far as words of mine could make it clear,
That 'twas my purpose to find joy or grief
Solely in the fulfilment of my plan,
Or plot, or whatso'er it was; rejoicing
Alone as it proceeded prosperously,
Sorrowing alone when any chance retarded
Its progress. That was in those Würzburg days!
Not to prolong a theme I thoroughly hate,
I have pursued this plan with all my strength;
And having failed therein most signally,
Cannot object to ruin, utter and drear
As all-excelling would have been the prize
Had fortune favoured me. I scarce do right
To vex your frank good spirit, late rejoiced
By my supposed prosperity, I know,
And, were I lucky in a glut of friends,

Would well agree to let your error live,
 Nay, strengthen it with fables of success:
 But mine is no condition to refuse
 The transient solace of so rare a chance,
 My solitary luxury, my Festus—
 Accordingly I venture to put off
 The wearisome vest of falsehood galling me,
 Secure when he is by. I lay me bare,
 Prone at his mercy—but he is my friend!
 Not that he needs retain his aspect grave;
 That answers not my purpose; for 'tis like,
 Some sunny morning—Basil being drained
 Of its wise population, every corner
 Of the amphitheatre crammed with learned clerks,
 Here Œcolampadius, looking worlds of wit,
 Here Castellanus, as profound as he,
 Munsterus here, Frobenius there,—all squeezed,
 And staring, and expectant,—then, I say,
 'Tis like that the poor zany of the show,
 Your friend, will choose to put his trappings off
 Before them, bid adieu to cap and bells
 And motley with a grace but seldom judged
 Expedient in such cases:—the grim smile
 That will go round! Is it not therefore best
 To venture a rehearsal like the present
 In a small way? Where are the signs I seek,
 The first-fruits and fair sample of the scorn
 Due to all quacks? Why, this will never do!
Fest. These are foul vapours, Aureole; nought beside!

The effect of watching, study, weariness.
 Were there a spark of truth in the confusion
 Of these wild words, you would not outrage thus
 Your youth's companion. I shall ne'er regard
 These wanderings, bred of faintness and much study.
 You would not trust a trouble thus to me,
 To Michal's friend.

Par. I have said it, dearest Festus!
 The manner is ungracious, probably;
 More may be told in broken sobs, one day,
 And scalding tears, ere long: but I thought best
 To keep that off as long as possible.
 Do you wonder still?

Fest. No; it must oft fall out
 That one whose labour perfects any work,
 Shall rise from it with eye so worn, that he
 Of all men least can measure the extent
 Of what he has accomplished. He alone,
 Who, nothing tasked, is nothing weary too,
 Can clearly scan the little he effects:
 But we, the bystanders, untouched by toil,
 Estimate each aright.

Par. This worthy Festus
 Is one of them, at last! 'Tis so with all!
 First, they set down all progress as a dream.
 And next, when he, whose quick discomfiture
 Was counted on, accomplishes some few
 And doubtful steps in his career,—behold,

They look for every inch of ground to vanish
Beneath his tread, so sure they judge success !

Fest. Few doubtful steps? when death retires before
Your presence—when the noblest of mankind,
Broken in body, or subdued in mind,
May through your skill renew their vigour, raise
The shattered frame to pristine stateliness?
When men in racking pain may purchase dreams
Of what delights them most—swooning at once
Into a sea of bliss, or rapt along
As in a flying sphere of turbulent light?
When we may look to you as one ordained
To free the flesh from fell disease, as frees
Our Luther's burning tongue the fettered soul?
When . . .

Par. Rather, when and where, friend, did you get
This notable news?

Fest. Even from the common voice ;
From those whose envy, daring not dispute
The wonders it decries, attributes them
To magic and such folly.

Par. Folly? Why not
To magic, pray? You find a comfort doubtless
In holding, God ne'er troubles him about
Us or our doings: once we were judged worth
The devil's tempting . . . I offend: forgive me,
And rest content. Your prophecy on the whole
Was fair enough as prophesyings go ;
At fault a little in detail, but quite

Precise enough in the main ; accordingly
 I pay due homage : you guessed long ago
 (The prophet !) I should fail—and I have failed.

Fest. You mean to tell me, then, the hopes which fed
 Your youth have not been realised as yet ?
 Some obstacle has barred them hitherto ?
 Or that their innate . . .

Par. As I said but now,
 You have a very decent prophet's fame,
 So you but shun details here. Little matters
 Whether those hopes were mad,—the aims they sought,
 Safe and secure from all ambitious fools ;
 Or whether my weak wits are overcome
 By what a better spirit would scorn : I fail.
 And now methinks 'twere best to change a theme,
 I am a sad fool to have stumbled on.
 I say confusedly what comes uppermost ;
 But there are times when patience proves at fault,
 As now : this morning's strange encounter—you
 Beside me once again ! you, whom I guessed
 Alive, since hitherto (with Luther's leave)
 No friend have I among the saints at rest,
 To judge by any good their prayers effect—
 I knew you would have helped me !—So would He,
 My strange competitor in enterprise,
 Bound for the same end by another path,
 Arrived, or ill or well, before the time,
 At our disastrous journey's doubtful close—
 How goes it with Aprile ? Ah, your heaven

Receives not into its beatitudes
 Mere martyrs for the world's sake ; heaven shuts fast :
 The poor mad poet is howling by this time !
 Since you are my sole friend then, here or there,
 I could not quite repress the varied feelings
 This meeting wakens ; they have had their vent,
 And now forget them. Do the rear-mice still
 Hang like a fret-work on the gate (or what
 In my time was a gate) fronting the road
 From Einsiedeln to Lachen ?

Fest.

Trifle not !

Answer me—for my sake alone. You smiled
 Just now, when I supposed some deed, unworthy
 Yourself might blot the else so bright result ;
 Yet if your motives have continued pure,
 Your earnest will unfaltering, if you still
 Remain unchanged, and if, in spite of this,
 You have experienced a defeat that proves
 Your aims for ever unattainable—
 I say not, you would cheerfully resign
 The contest—mortal hearts are not so fashioned—
 But sure you would resign it, ne'ertheless.
 You sought not fame, nor gain, nor even love ;
 No end distinct from knowledge,—I repeat
 Your very words : once satisfied that knowledge
 Is a mere dream, you would announce as much,
 Yourself the first. But how is the event ?
 You are defeated—and I find you here !

Par. As though “ here ” did not signify defeat !

I spoke not of my little labours here—
But of the break-down of my general aims :
That you, aware of their extent and scope,
Should look on these sage lecturings, approved
By beardless boys, and bearded dotards,—these
As a fit consummation of such aims,
Is worthy notice! A professorship
At Basil! Since you see so much in it,
And think my life was reasonably drained
Of life's delights to render me a match
For duties arduous as such post demands,—
Far be it from me to deny my power
To fill the petty circle lotted out
From infinite space, or justify the host
Of honours thence accruing: so, take notice,
This jewel dangling from my neck preserves
The features of a prince, my skill restored
To plague his people some few years to come :
And all through a pure whim. He had eased the earth
For me, but that the droll despair which seized
The vermin of his household, tickled me.
I came to see: here, drivelled the physician,
Whose most infallible nostrum was at fault ;
There quaked the astrologer, whose horoscope
Had promised him interminable years ;
Here a monk fumbled at the sick man's mouth
With some undoubted relic—a sudary
Of the Virgin ; while some other dozen knaves
Of the same brotherhood (he loved them ever)

Were actively preparing 'neath his nose
Such a suffumigation as, once fired,
Had stunk the patient dead ere he could groan.
I cursed the doctor, and upset the brother ;
Brushed past the conjurer ; vowed that the first gust
Of stench from the ingredients just alight
Would raise a cross-grained devil in my sword,
Not easily laid ; and ere an hour, the prince
Slept as he never slept since prince he was.
A day—and I was posting for my life,
Placarded through the town as one whose spite
Had near availed to stop the blessed effects
Of the doctor's nostrum, which, well seconded
By the sudary, and most by the costly smoke—
Not leaving out the strenuous prayers sent up
Hard by, in the abbey—raised the prince to life ;
To the great reputation of the seer,
Who, confident, expected all along
The glad event—the doctor's recompense—
Much largess from his highness to the monks—
And the vast solace of his loving people,
Whose general satisfaction to increase,
The prince was pleased no longer to defer
The burning of some dozen heretics,
Remanded 'till God's mercy should be shown
Touching his sickness, as a prudent pledge
To make it surer : last of all were joined
Ample directions to all loyal folk
To swell the complement, by seizing me

Who—doubtless some rank sorcerer—had endeavoured
 To thwart these pious offices, obstruct
 The prince's cure, and frustrate Heaven, by help
 Of certain devils dwelling in his sword.
 By luck, the prince in his first fit of thanks
 Had forced this bauble on me as an earnest
 Of further favours. This one case may serve
 To give sufficient taste of many such,
 So let them pass : those shelves support a pile
 Of patents, licenses, diplomas, titles,
 From Germany, France, Spain, and Italy :
 They authorise some honour : ne'ertheless,
 I set more store by this Erasmus sent ;
 He trusts me ; our Frobenius is his friend,
 And him " I raised " (nay, read it) " from the dead " . . .
 I weary you, I see ; I merely sought
 To show, there 's no great wonder after all
 That while I fill the class-room, and attract
 A crowd to Basil, I get leave to stay ;
 And therefore need not scruple to accept
 The utmost they can offer—if I please :
 For 'tis but right the world should be prepared
 To treat with favour e'en fantastic wants
 Of one like me, used up in serving her.
 Just as the mortal, whom the Gods in part
 Devoured, received in place of his lost limb
 Some virtue or other—cured disease, I think ;
 You mind the fables we have read together.

Fest. You do not think I comprehend a word :

The time was, Aureole, you were apt enough
 To clothe the airiest thoughts in specious breath ;
 But surely you must feel how vague and strange
 These speeches sound.

Par. Well, then : you know my hopes ;
 I am assured, at length, those hopes were vain ;
 That truth is just as far from me as ever ;
 That I have thrown my life away ; that sorrow
 On that account is vain, and further effort
 To mend and patch what 's marred beyond repairing,
 As useless : and all this was taught to me
 By the convincing, good old-fashioned method
 Of force—by sheer compulsion. Is that plain ?

Fest. Dear Aureole ! you confess my fears were just ?
 God wills not . . .

Par. Now, 'tis this I most admire—
 The constant talk men of your stamp keep up
 Of God's will, as they style it ; one would swear
 Man had but merely to uplift his eye,
 To see the will in question charactered
 On the heaven's vault. 'Tis hardly wise to moot
 Such topics : doubts are many and faith is weak.
 I know as much of any will of God's,
 As knows some dumb and tortured brute what Man,
 His stern lord, wills from the perplexing blows
 That plague him every way, and there, of course,
 Where least he suffers, longest he remains—
 My case ; and for such reasons I plod on,
 Subdued, but not convinced. I know as little

Why I deserve to fail, as why I hoped
Better things in my youth. I simply know
I am no master here, but trained and beaten
Into the path I tread ; and here I stay,
Until some further intimation reach me,
Like an obedient drudge : though I prefer
To view the whole thing as a task imposed,
Which, whether dull or pleasant, must be done—
Yet, I deny not, there is made provision
Of joys which tastes less jaded might affect ;
Nay, some which please me too, for all my pride—
Pleasures that once were pains : the iron ring
Festering about a slave's neck grows at length
Part of the flesh it eats. I hate no more
A host of petty, vile delights, undreamed of
Or spurned, before ; such now supply the place
Of my dead aims : as in the autumn woods
Where tall trees used to flourish, from their roots
Springs up a fungous brood, sickly and pale,
Chill mushrooms, coloured like a corpse's cheek.

Fest. If I interpret well what words I seize,
It troubles me but little that your aims,
Vast in their dawning, and most likely grown
Extravagantly since, have baffled you.
Perchance I am glad ; you merit greater praise ;
Because they are too glorious to be gained,
You do not blindly cling to them and die ;
You fell, but have not sullenly refused
To rise, because an angel worsted you

In wrestling, though the world holds not your peer
 And though too harsh and sudden is the change
 To yield content as yet—still, you pursue
 The ungracious path as though 'twere rosy-strewn.
 'Tis well : and your reward, or soon or late,
 Will come from Him whom no man serves in vain.

Par. Ah, very fine ! For my part, I conceive
 The very pausing from all further toil,
 Which you find heinous, would be as a seal
 To the sincerity of all my deeds.
 To be consistent I should die at once ;
 I calculated on no after-life ;
 Yet (how crept in, how fostered, I know not)
 Here am I with as passionate regret
 For youth, and health, and love so vainly lost,
 As if their preservation had been first
 And foremost in my thoughts ; and this strange fact
 Humbled me wondrously, and had due force
 In rendering me the more disposed to follow
 A certain counsel, a mysterious warning—
 You will not understand—but 'twas a man
 With aims not mine, but yet pursued like mine,
 With the same fervor and no more success,
 Who perished in my sight ; but summoned me
 As I would shun the ghastly fate I saw,
 To serve my race at once ; to wait no longer
 'Till God should interfere in my behalf,
 And let the next world's knowledge dawn on this ;
 But to distrust myself, put pride away,

And give my gains, imperfect as they were,
 To men. I have not leisure to explain
 How since, a strange succession of events
 Has raised me to the station you behold,
 Wherein I seem to turn to most account
 The mere wreck of the past,—perhaps receive
 Some feeble glimmering token that God views
 And may approve my penance: therefore here
 You find me—doing most good or least harm:
 And if folks wonder much and profit little
 'Tis not my fault; only, I shall rejoice
 When my part in the farce is shuffled through,
 And the curtain falls; I must hold out 'till then.

Fest. Till when, dear Aureole?

Par. "Till I 'm fairly thrust

From my proud eminence. Fortune is fickle
 And even professors fall: should that arrive,
 I see no sin in ceding to my bent.
 You little fancy what rude shocks apprise us
 We sin: God's intimations rather fail
 In clearness than in energy: 'twere well
 Did they but indicate the course to take
 Like that to be forsaken. I would fain
 Be spared a further sample! Here I stand,
 And here I stay, be sure, till forced to flit.

Fest. Remain but firm on that head; long ere then
 All I expect will come to pass, I trust:
 The cloud that wraps you will have disappeared.
 Meantime, I see small chance of such event:

They praise you here as one whose lore, divulged
 Already, eclipses all the past can show,
 But whose achievements, marvellous as they be,
 Are faint anticipations of a glory
 About to be revealed. When Basil's crowds
 Dismiss their teacher, I shall be content
 That he depart.

Par. This favour at their hands
 I look for earlier than your view of things
 Would warrant. Of the crowd you saw to-day
 Remove the full half sheer amazement draws,
 The novelty, nought else ; and next, the tribe
 Whose innate blockish dullness just perceives
 That unless miracles (as seem my works)
 Be wrought in their behalf, their chance is slight
 To puzzle the devil ; next, the numerous set
 Who bitterly hate established schools, so help
 The teacher that oppugns them, and o'erthrows,
 'Till having planted his own doctrine, he
 May reckon on their rancour in his turn ;
 Take, too, the sprinkling of sagacious knaves
 Whose cunning runs not counter to the vogue,
 But seeks, by flattery and nursing craft,
 To force my system to a premature
 Short-lived development . . . Why swell the list ?
 Each has his end to serve, and his best way
 Of serving it : remove all these, remains
 A scantling—a poor dozen at the best—
 That really come to learn for learning's sake ;

Worthy to look for sympathy and service,
And likely to draw profit from my pains.

Fest. 'Tis no encouraging picture : still these few
Redeem their fellows. Once implant the germ,
Its growth, if slow, is sure.

Par. God grant it so !
I would make some amends : but if I fail,
The luckless rogues have this excuse to urge,
That much is in my method and my manner,
My uncouth habits, my impatient spirit,
Which hinders of reception and result
My doctrine : much to say, small skill to speak !
Those old aims suffered not a looking-off,
Though for an instant ; therefore, only when
I thus renounced them and resolved to reap
Some present fruit—to teach mankind some truth
So dearly purchased—only then I found
Such teaching was an art requiring cares
And qualities peculiar to itself ;
That to possess was one thing—to display,
Another. Had renown been in my thoughts,
Or popular praise, I had soon discovered it !
One grows but little apt to learn these things.

Fest. If it be so, which nowise I believe,
There needs no waiting fuller dispensation
To leave a labour to so little use :
Why not throw up the irksome charge at once ?

Par. A task, a task ! . . .

But wherefore hide from you

The whole extent of degradation, once
Engaged in the confession? Spite of all
My fine talk of obedience, and repugnance,
Docility, and what not, 'tis yet to learn
If when the old task really is performed,
And my will free once more, to choose a new,
I shall do aught but slightly modify
The nature of the hated one I quit.
In plain words, I am spoiled: my life still tends
As first it tended. I am broken and trained
To my old habits; they are part of me.
I know, and none so well, my darling ends
Are proved impossible: no less, no less,
Even now what humours me, fond fool, as when
Their faint ghosts sit with me, and flatter me,
And send me back content to my dull round?
How can I change this soul?—this apparatus
Constructed solely for their purposes
So well adapted to their every want,
To search out and discover, prove and perfect;
This intricate machine, whose most minute,
Least obvious motions have their charm to me
Though to none else—an aptitude I seize,
An object I perceive, a use, a meaning,
A property, a fitness, I explain,
And I alone:—how can I change my soul?
And this wronged body, worthless save when tasked
Under that soul's dominion—used to care
For its bright master's cares, and quite subdue

Its proper cravings—not to ail, nor pine,
So the soul prosper—whither drag this poor,
Tried, patient body? God! how I essayed,
To live like that mad poet, for a while,
To catch Aprile's spirit, as I hoped,
And love alone! and how I felt too warped
And twisted and deformed! What should I do,
Even tho' released from drudgery, but return
Faint, as you see, and halting, blind and sore,
To my old life—and die as I begun!
I cannot feed on beauty, for the sake
Of beauty only; nor can drink in balm
From lovely objects for their loveliness;
My nature cannot lose her first intent;
I still must hoard, and heap, and class all truths
With one ulterior purpose: I must know!
Would God translate me to his throne, believe
That I should only listen to his words
To further my own aims! For other men,
Beauty is prodigally strewn around,
And I were happy could I quench as they
This mad and thriveless longing, be content
With beauty for itself alone: alas!
I have addressed a frock of heavy mail,
Yet may not join the troop of sacred knights;
And now the forest-creatures fly from me,
The grass-banks cool, the sunbeams warm no more!
Best follow, dreaming that ere night arrives

I shall o'ertake the company, and ride
Glittering as they !

Fest. I think I apprehend
What you would say : if you, in truth, design
To enter once more on the life thus left,
Seek not to hide that all this consciousness
Of failure is assumed.

Par. My friend, my friend,
I speak, you listen ; I explain, perhaps
You understand : there our communion ends.
Have you learnt nothing from to-day's discourse ?
When we would thoroughly know the sick man's state
We feel awhile the fluttering pulse, press soft
The hot brow, look upon the languid eye,
And thence divine the rest. Must I lay bare
My heart, hideous and beating, or tear up
My vitals for your gaze, ere you will deem
Enough made known ? You ! who are you, forsooth ?
That is the crowning operation claimed
By the arch-demonstrator—heaven the hall,
And earth the audience. Let Aprile and you
Secure good places—'twill be worth your while.

Fest. Are you mad, Aureole ? What can I have said
To call for this ? I judged from your own words.

Par. Oh, true ! A fevered wretch describes the ape
That mocks him from the bed-foot, and you turn
All gravely thither at once : or he recounts
The perilous journey he has late performed,
And you are puzzled much how that could be !

You find me here, half stupid and half mad :
 It makes no part of my delight to search
 Into these things, much less to undergo
 Another's scrutiny ; but so it chances
 That I am led to trust my state to you :
 And the event is, you combine, contrast,
 And ponder on my foolish words, as though
 They thoroughly conveyed all hidden here—
 Here, loathsome with despair, and hate, and rage !
 Is there no fear, no shrinking, or no shame ?
 Will you guess nothing ? will you spare me nothing ?
 Must I go deeper ? Aye or no ?

Fest.

Dear friend . . .

Par. True : I am brutal—'tis a part of it ;
 The plague's sign—you are not a lazar-haunter,
 How should you know ? Well then, you think it strange
 I should profess to have failed utterly,
 And yet propose an ultimate return
 To courses void of hope : and this, because
 You know not what temptation is, nor how
 'Tis like to ply men in the sickliest part.
 You are to understand, that we who make
 Sport for the gods, are hunted to the end :
 There is not one sharp volley shot at us,
 Which if we manage to escape with life,
 Though touched and hurt, we straight may slacken pace
 And gather by the way-side herbs and roots
 To staunch our wounds, secure from further harm—
 No ; we are chased to life's extremest verge.

It will be well indeed if I return,
 A harmless busy fool, to my old ways !
 I would forget hints of another fate,
 Significant enough, which silent hours
 Have lately scared me with.

Fest. Another ! and what ?

Par. After all, Festus, you say well : I stand
 A man yet—I need never humble me.
 I would have been—something, I know not what ;
 But though I cannot soar, I do not crawl :
 There are worse portions than this one of mine ;
 You say well !

Fest. Ah ! . . .

Par. And deeper degradation !
 If the mean stimulants of vulgar praise,
 And vanity, should become the chosen food
 Of a sunk mind ; should stifle even the wish
 To find its early aspirations true ;
 Should teach it to breathe falsehood like life-breath—
 An atmosphere of craft, and trick, and lies ;
 Should make it proud to emulate or surpass
 Base natures in the practices which woke
 Its most indignant loathing once . . . No, no !
 Utter damnation is reserved for Hell !
 I had immortal feelings—such shall never
 Be wholly quenched—no, no !

My friend, you wear
 A melancholy face, and truth to speak,
 There 's little cheer in all this dismal work ;

But 'twas not my desire to set abroad
 Such memories and forebodings. I foresaw
 Where they would drive; 'twere better you detailed
 News of Lucerne or Zurich; or I described
 Great Egypt's flaring sky, or Spain's cork-groves.

Fest. I have thought now: yes, this mood will pass
 away.

I know you, and the lofty spirit you bear,
 And easily ravel out a clue to all.

These are the trials meet for such as you,
 Nor must you hope exemption: to be mortal
 Is to be plied with trials manifold.

Look round! The obstacles which kept the rest
 Of men from your ambition, you have spurned;
 Their fears, their doubts, the chains that bind them best.

Were flax before your resolute soul, which nought
 Avails to awe, save these delusions, bred

From its own strength, its selfsame strength, disguised—
 Mocking itself. Be brave, dear Aureole! Since

The rabbit has his shade to frighten him,
 The fawn his rustling bough, mortals their cares,
 And higher natures yet their power to laugh

At these entangling fantasies, as you
 At trammels of a weaker intellect.

Measure your mind's height by the shade it casts!

I know you.

Par. And I know you, dearest Festus!

And how you love unworthily; and how
 All admiration renders blind.

And least from those who hate, who most essay
 By contumely and scorn to blot the light
 Which will have entrance even to their hearts ;
 For thence will our Defender tear the veil
 And show within each heart, as in a shrine,
 The giant image of Perfection, grown
 In hate's despite, whose calumnies were spawned
 In the untroubled presence of its eyes !
 True admiration blinds not ; nor am I
 So blind : I call your sin exceptional ;
 It springs from one whose life has passed the bounds
 Prescribed to life. Compound that fault with God !
 I speak of men ; to common men like me
 The weakness you confess endears you more—
 Like the far traces of decay in suns :
 I bid you have good cheer !

Par.

Praclarè ! Optimè !

Think of a quiet mountain-cloister'd priest
 Instructing Paracelsus ! yet, 'tis so.
 Come, I will show you where my merit lies.
 'Tis in the advance of individual minds
 That the slow crowd should ground their expectation
 Eventually to follow—as the sea
 Waits ages in its bed, 'till some one wave
 Out of the multitude aspires, extends
 The empire of the whole, some feet perhaps,
 Over the strip of sand which could confine
 Its fellows so long time : thenceforth the rest,
 Even to the meanest, hurry in at once,

And so much is clear gained. I shall be glad
If all my labours, failing of aught else,
Suffice to make such inroad, and procure
A wider range for thought: nay, they do this;
For, whatsoe'er my notions of true knowledge
And a legitimate success, may be,
I am not blind to my undoubted rank
When classed with others: I precede my age:
And whoso wills, is very free to mount
These labours as a platform, whence their own
May have a prosperous outset: but, alas!
My followers—they are noisy as you heard,
But for intelligence—the best of them
So clumsily wield the weapons I supply
And they extol, that I begin to doubt
Whether their own rude clubs and pebble-stones
Would not do better service than my arms
Thus vilely swayed—if error will not fall
Sooner before the old awkward batterings
Than my more subtle warfare, not half learned.

Fest. I would supply that art, then, and withhold
Its arms until you have taught their mystery.

Par. Content you, 'tis my wish; I have recourse
To the simplest training. Day by day I seek
To wake the mood, the spirit which alone
Can make those arms of any use to men.
Of course, they are for swaggering forth at once
Graced with Ulysses' club, Achilles' shield—
Flash on us, all in armour, thou Achilles!

Make our hearts dance to thy resounding step !
 A proper sight to scare the crows away !

Fest. Pity you choose not, then, some other method
 Of coming at your point. The marvellous art
 At length established in the world bids fair
 To remedy all hindrances like these :
 Trust to Frobenius' press the precious lore
 Obscured by uncouth manner, or unfit
 For raw beginners ; let his types secure
 A deathless monument to after-times ;
 Meanwhile wait confidently and enjoy
 The ultimate effect : sooner or later,
 You shall be all-revealed.

Par. The old dull question
 In a new form ; no more. Thus : I possess
 Two sorts of knowledge ; one,—vast, shadowy,
 Hints of the unbounded aim I once pursued :
 The other consists of many secrets, learned
 While bent on nobler prize,—perhaps a few
 First principles which may conduct to much :
 These last I offer to my followers here.
 Now bid me chronicle the first of these,
 My ancient study, and in effect you bid me
 Revert to the wild courses just abjured :
 I must go find them scattered through the world.
 Then, for the principles, they are so simple
 (Being chiefly of the overturning sort),
 That one time is as proper to propound them
 As any other—to-morrow at my class,

Or half a century hence embalmed in print :
 For if mankind intend to learn at all,
 They must begin by giving faith to them,
 And acting on them ; and I do not see
 But that my lectures serve indifferent well :
 No doubt these dogmas fall not to the earth,
 For all their novelty and rugged setting.
 I think my class will not forget the day
 I let them know the gods of Israel,
 Aëtius, Oribasius, Galen, Rhasis,
 Serapion, Avicenna, Averröes,—
 Were blocks !

Fest. And that reminds me, I heard something
 About your waywardness : you burned their books,
 It seems, instead of answering those sages.

Par. And who said that ?

Fest. Some I met yesternight
 With Æcolampadius. As you know, the purpose
 Of this short stay at Basil was to learn
 His pleasure touching certain missives sent
 For our Zuinglius and himself. 'Twas he
 Apprized me that the famous teacher here
 Was my old friend.

Par. Ah, I forgot : you went . . .

Fest. From Zurich with advices for the ear
 Of Luther, now at Wittemburg—(you know,
 I make no doubt, the differences of late
 With Carolostadius)—and returning sought
 Basil and . . .

Par. I remember. Here 's a case, now,
 Will teach you why I answer not, but burn
 The books you mention: pray, does Luther dream
 His arguments convince by their own force
 The crowds that own his doctrine? No, indeed:
 His plain denial of established points
 Ages had sanctified and men supposed
 Could never be oppugned while earth was under
 And heaven above them—points which chance, or time
 Affected not—did more than the array
 Of argument which followed. Boldly deny!
 There is much breath-stopping, hair-stiffening
 Awhile; then, amazed glances, mute awaiting
 The thunderbolt which does not come; and next,
 Reproachful wonder and inquiry: those
 Who else had never stirred, are able now
 To find the rest out for themselves—perhaps
 To outstrip him who set the whole at work,
 —As never will my wise class its instructor.
 And you saw Luther?

Fest. 'Tis a wondrous soul!

Par. True: the so-heavy chain which galled mankind
 Is shattered, and the noblest of us all
 Must bow to the deliverer—nay, the worker
 Of our own projects—we who long before
 Had burst its trammels, but forgot the crowd,
 We should have taught, still groaned beneath the load:
 This he has done and nobly. Speed that may!
 Whatever be my chance or my despair,

What benefits mankind must glad me too :
 And men seem made, though not as I believed,
 For something better than the times produce :
 Witness these gangs of peasants your new lights
 From Suabia have possessed, whom Munzer leads,
 And whom the duke, the landgrave, and the elector
 Will calm in blood ! Well, well—'tis not my world !

Fest. Hark !

Par. 'Tis the melancholy wind astir
 Within the trees ; the embers too are grey,
 Morn must be near.

Fest. Best ope the casement : see,
 The night, late strewn with clouds and flying stars,
 Is blank and motionless : how peaceful sleep
 The tree-tops all together ! Like an asp,
 The wind slips whispering from bough to bough.

Par. Ay ; you would gaze on a wind-shaken tree
 By the hour, nor count time lost.

Fest. So you shall gaze :
 Those happy times will come again . . .

Par. Gone ! gone !
 Those pleasant times ! Does not the moaning wind
 Seem to bewail that we have gained such gains
 And bartered sleep for them ?

Fest. It is our trust
 That there is yet another world to mend
 All error and mischance.

Par. Another world !
 And why this world, this common world, to be

A make-shift, a mere foil, how fair soever,
To some fine life to come? Man must be fed
With angel's food, forsooth; and some few traces
Of a diviner nature which look out
Through his corporeal baseness, warrant him
In a supreme contempt for all provision
For his inferior tastes—some straggling marks
Which constitute his essence, just as truly
As here and there a gem would constitute
The rock, their barren bed, a diamond.
But were it so—were man all mind—he gains
A station little enviable. From God
Down to the lowest spirit ministrant,
Intelligence exists which casts our mind
Into immeasurable shade. No, no:
Love, hope, fear, faith—these make humanity;
These are its sign, and note, and character;
And these I have lost!—gone, shut from me for ever,
Like a dead friend, safe from unkindness more!
See morn at length. The heavy darkness seems
Diluted; grey and clear without the stars;
The shrubs bestir and rouse themselves, as if
Some snake, that weighed them down all night, let go
His hold; and from the east, fuller and fuller
Day, like a mighty river, is flowing in;
But clouded, wintry, desolate, and cold:
Yet see how that broad, prickly, star-shaped plant,
Half down in the crevice, spreads its woolly leaves,
All thick and glistening with diamond dew.

And you depart for Einsiedeln this day :
 And we have spent all night in talk like this !
 If you would have me better for your love,
 Revert no more to these sad themes.

Fest. One favour,
 And I have done. I leave you, deeply moved ;
 Unwilling to have fared so well, the while
 My friend has changed so sorely : if this mood
 Shall pass away—if light once more arise
 Where all is darkness now—if you see fit
 To hope, and trust again, and strive again ;
 You will remember—not our love alone—
 But that my faith in God's desire for man
 To trust on his support, (as I must think
 You trusted,) is obscured and dim through you ;
 For you are thus, and this is no reward.
 Will you not call me to your side, dear friend ?

IV.—PARACELSUS ASPIRES

SCENE.—*A House at Colmar, in Alsatia.* 1528.

PARACELSUS, FESTUS.

Par. (To *John Oporinus, his secretary.*) *Sic itur ad astra!* Dear Von Visenburg
 Is scandalised, and poor Torinus paralysed,
 And every honest soul that Basil holds
 Aghast ; and yet we live, as one may say,
 Just as though Liechtenfels had never set

So true a value on his sorry carcass,
And learned Pütter had not frowned us dumb.
We live; and shall as surely start to-morrow
For Nuremburg, as we drink speedy scathe
To Basil in this mantling wine, suffused
With a delicate blush—no fainter tinge is born
I' th' shut heart of a bud: pledge me, good John—
“ Basil; a hot plague ravage it, with Pütter
“ To stop the plague!” Even so? Do you too share
Their panic—the reptiles? Ha, ha; faint through *them*,
Desist for *them*!—while means enough exist
To bow the stoutest braggart of the tribe
Once more in crouching silence—means to breed
A stupid wonder in each fool again,
Now big with admiration at the skill
Which stript a vain pretender of his plumes;
And, that done, means to brand each slavish brow
So deeply, surely, ineffaceably,
That thenceforth flattery shall not pucker it
Out of the furrow of that hideous stamp
Which shows the next they fawn on, what they are,
This Basil with its magnates one and all,
Whom I curse soul and limb. And now dispatch,
Dispatch, my trusty John; and what remains
To do, whate'er arrangements for our trip
Are yet to be completed, see you hasten
This night; we'll weather the storm at least: to-morrow
For Nuremburg! Now leave us; this grave clerk
Has divers weighty matters for my ear, (*Oporinus goes out*)

And spare my lungs. At last, my gallant Festus,
 I am rid of this arch-knave that follows me
 As a gaunt crow a gasping sheep; at last
 May give a loose to my delight. How kind,
 How very kind, my first, best, only friend!
 Why this looks like fidelity. Embrace me:
 Not a hair silvered yet! Right: you shall live
 Till I am worth your love; you shall be proud,
 And I—but let time show. Did you not wonder?
 I sent to you because our compact weighed
 Upon my conscience—(you recal the night
 At Basil, which the gods confound)—because
 Once more I aspire! I call you to my side;
 You come. You thought my message strange?

Fest.

So strange

That I must hope, indeed, your messenger
 Has mingled his own fancies with the words
 Purporting to be yours.

Par.

He said no more,
 'Tis probable, than the precious folks I leave
 Said fifty-fold more roughly. Well-a-day,
 'Tis true; poor Paracelsus is exposed
 At last; a most egregious quack he proves,
 And those he overreached must spit their hate
 On one who, utterly beneath contempt,
 Could yet deceive their topping wits. You heard
 Bare truth; and at my bidding you come here
 To speed me on my enterprise, as once
 Your lavish wishes sped me, my own friend?

Fest. What is your purpose, Aureole?

Par. Oh, for purpose,

There is no lack of precedents in a case
Like mine; at least, if not precisely mine,
The case of men cast off by those they sought
To benefit . . .

Fest. They really cast you off?

I only heard a vague tale of some priest,
Cured by your skill, who wrangled at your claim,
Knowing his life's worth best; and how the judge
The matter was referred to, saw no cause
To interfere, nor you to hide your full
Contempt of him; nor he, again, to smother
His wrath thereat, which raised so fierce a flame
That Basil soon was made no place for you.

Par. The affair of Liechtenfels? the shallowest cause.
The last and silliest outrage—mere pretence!
I knew it, I foretold it from the first,
How soon the stupid wonder you mistook
For genuine loyalty—a cheering promise
Of better things to come—would pall and pass;
And every word comes true. Saul is among
The prophets! Just so long as I was pleased
To play off the mere marvels of my art—
Fantastic gambols leading to no end—
I got huge praise; but one can ne'er keep down
Our foolish nature's weakness: there they flocked,
Poor devils, jostling, swearing, and perspiring,
Till the walls rang again; and all for me!

I had a kindness for them, which was right ;
But then I stopped not till I tacked to that
A trust in them and a respect—a sort
Of sympathy for them : I must needs begin
To teach them, not amaze them ; “ to impart
“ The spirit which should instigate the search
“ Of truth : ” just what you bade me ! I spoke out.
Forthwith a mighty squadron, in disgust,
Filed off—“ the sifted chaff of the sack,” I said,
Redoubling my endeavours to secure
The rest ; when lo ! one man had stayed thus long
Only to ascertain if I supported
This tenet of his, or that ; another loved
To hear impartially before he judged,
And having heard, now judged ; this bland disciple
Passed for my dupe, but all along, it seems,
Spied error where his neighbours marvelled most :
That fiery doctor who had hailed me friend,
Did it because my bye-paths, once proved wrong
And beaconed properly, would commend again
The good old ways our sires jogged safely o’er,
Though not their squeamish sons ; the other worthy
Discovered divers verses of St. John,
Which, read successively, refreshed the soul,
But, muttered backwards, cured the gout, the stone,
The cholic, and what not :—*quid multa ?* The end
Was a clear class-room, with a quiet leer
From grave folk, and a sour reproachful glance
From those in chief, who, cap in hand, installed

The new professor scarce a year before ;
 And a vast flourish about patient merit
 Obscured awhile by flashy tricks, but sure
 Sooner or later to emerge in splendour—
 Of which the example was some luckless wight
 Whom my arrival had discomfited,
 But now, it seems, the general voice recalled
 To fill my chair, and so efface the stain
 Basil had long incurred. I sought no better—
 Nought but a quiet dismissal from my post ;
 While from my heart I wished them better suited,
 And better served. Good night to Basil, then !
 But fast as I proposed to rid the tribe
 Of my obnoxious back, I could not spare them
 The pleasure of a parting kick.

Fest.

You smile :

Despise them as they merit !

Par.

If I smile,

'Tis with as very contempt as ever turned
 Flesh into stone : this courteous recompense !
 This grateful . . . Festus, were your nature fit
 To be defiled, your eyes the eyes to ache
 At gangrened blotches, eating poisonous blains,
 The ulcered barky scurf of leprosy
 Which finds—a man, and leaves—a hideous thing
 That cannot but be mended by hell fire,
 —I say that, could you see as I could show,
 I would lay bare to you these human hearts
 Which God cursed long ago, and devils make since

Their pet nest and their never-tiring home.
 O, sages have discovered we are born
 For various ends—to love, to know: has ever
 One stumbled, in his search, on any signs
 Of a nature in him formed to hate? To hate?
 If that be our true object which evokes
 Our powers in fullest strength, be sure 'tis hate!

Fest. But I have yet to learn your purpose, Aureole!

Par. What purpose were the fittest now for me?
 Decide! To sink beneath such ponderous shame—
 To shrink up like a crushed snail—undergo
 In silence and desist from further toil,
 And so subside into a monument
 Of one their censure blasted; or to bow
 Cheerfully as submissively—to lower
 My old pretensions even as Basil dictates—
 To drop into the rank her wits assign me,
 And live as they prescribe, and make that use
 Of my poor knowledge which their rules allow—
 Proud to be patted now and then, and careful
 To practise the true posture for receiving
 The amplest benefit from their hoofs' appliance,
 When they shall condescend to tutor me.
 Then one may feel resentment like a flame,
 Prompting to deck false systems in Truth's garb,
 And tangle and entwine mankind with error,
 And give them darkness for a dower, and falsehood
 For a possession: or one may mope away
 Into a shade through thinking; or else drowse

Into a dreamless sleep, and so die off :
 But I, but I—now Festus shall divine !
 —Am merely setting out in life once more,
 Embracing my old aims ! What thinks he now ?

Fest. Your aims ? the aims ?—to know ? and where
 is found

The early trust . . .

Par. Nay, not so fast ; I say,
 The aims—not the old means. You know what made me
 A laughing-stock ; I was a fool ; you know
 The when and the how : hardly those means again !
 Not but they had their beauty—who should know
 Their passing beauty, if not I ? But still
 They were dreams, so let them vanish : yet in beauty,
 If that may be. Stay—thus they pass in song !

(*He sings.*)

Heap cassia, sandal-buds, and stripes
 Of labdanum, and aloe-balls
 Smear'd with dull nard an Indian wipes
 From out her hair : (such balsam falls
 Down sea-side mountain pedestals,
 From summits where tired winds are fain,
 Spent with the vast and howling main,
 To treasure half their island-gain.)

And strew faint sweetness from some old
 Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud,
 Which breaks to dust when once unrolled ;

And shred dim perfume, like a cloud
 From chamber long to quiet vowed,
 With moth'd and dropping arras hung,
 Mouldering the lute and books among
 Of queen, long dead, who lived there young.

Mine, every word!—and on such pile shall die
 My lovely fancies, with fair perished things,
 Themselves fair and forgotten; yes, forgotten,
 Or why abjure them? So I made this rhyme
 That fitting dignity might be preserved:
 No little proud was I; though the list of drugs
 Smacks of my old vocation, and the verse
 Halts like the best of Luther's psalms!

Fest.

But, Aureole,

Talk not thus wildly and madly. I am here—
 Did you know all, indeed! I have travelled far
 To learn your wishes. Be yourself again!
 For in this mood I recognize you less
 Than in the horrible despondency
 I witnessed last. You may account this, joy;
 But rather let me gaze on that despair
 Than hear these incoherent words, and see
 This flushed cheek and intensely-sparkling eye!

Par. Why, man, I was light-hearted in my prime,
 I am light-hearted now; what would you have?
 Aprile was a poet, I make songs—
 'Tis the very augury of success I want!
 Why should I not be joyous now as then?

Fest. Joyous! and how? and what remains for joy?
You have declared the ends (which I am sick
Of naming) are impracticable.

Par. Aye,
Pursued as I pursued them—the arch-fool!
Listen: my plan will please you not, 'tis like;
But you are little versed in the world's ways.
This is my plan—(first drinking its good luck)—
I will accept all helps; all I despised
So rashly at the outset, equally
With early impulses, late years have quenched:
I have tried each way singly—now for both!
All helps—no one sort shall exclude the rest.
I seek to KNOW and to ENJOY at once,
Not one without the other as before.
Suppose my labour should seem God's own cause
Once more, as first I dreamed, it shall not balk me
Of the meanest, earthliest, sensualest delight
That may be snatched; for every joy is gain,
And why spurn gain, however small? My soul
Can die then, nor be taunted "what was gained?"
Nor, on the other hand, if pleasure meets me
As though I had not spurned her hitherto,
Shall she o'ercloud my spirit's rapt communion
With the tumultuous past, the teeming future,
Glorious with visions of a full success!

Fest. Success!

Par. And wherefore not? Why not prefer
Results obtained in my best state of being,

To those derived alone from seasons dark
 As the thoughts they bred? When I was best—my youth
 Unwasted—seemed success not surest too?
 It is the nature of darkness to obscure.
 I am a wanderer: I remember well
 One journey, how I feared the track was missed,
 So long the city I desired to reach
 Lay hid; when suddenly its spires afar
 Flashed through the circling clouds; conceive my joy!
 'Too soon the vapours closed o'er it again,
 But I had seen the city, and one such glance
 No darkness could obscure: nor shall the present
 A few dull hours, a passing shame or two,
 Destroy the vivid memories of the past.
 I will fight the battle out!—a little tired,
 Perhaps—but still an able combatant.
 You look at my grey hair and furrowed brow?
 But I can turn even weakness to account:
 Of many tricks I know, 'tis not the least
 To push the ruins of my frame, whereon
 The fire of vigour trembles scarce alive,
 Into a heap, and send the flame aloft!
 What should I do with age? so sickness lends
 An aid; it being, I fear, the source of all
 We boast of: mind is nothing but disease,
 And natural health is ignorance.

Fest.

I see

But one good symptom in this notable plan:
 I feared your sudden journey had in view

(*Fiat experientia corpore vili*)

Your medicine's soundness in his person. Wait,
Good Pütter!

Fest. He who sneers thus, is a God!

Par. Ay, ay, laugh at me! I am very glad
You are not gulled by all this swaggering; you
Can see the root of the matter!—how I strive
To put a good face on the overthrow
I have experienced, and to bury and hide
My degradation in its length and breadth;
How the mean motives I would make you think
Just mingle as is due with nobler aims,
The appetites I modestly allow
May influence me—as I am mortal still—
Do goad me, drive me on, and fast supplant
My youth's desires: you are no stupid dupe;
You find me out! Yes, I had sent for you
To palm these childish lies upon you, Festus!
Laugh—you shall laugh at me!

Fest. The past, then, Aureole,
Proves nothing? Is our interchange of love
Yet to begin? Have I to swear I mean
No flattery in this speech or that? For you,
Whate'er you say, there is no degradation,
These low thoughts are no inmates of your mind;
Or wherefore this disorder? You are vexed
As much by the intrusion of base views,
Familiar to your adversaries, as they
Were troubled should your qualities alight

Amid their murky souls : not otherwise,
 A stray wolf which the winter forces down
 From our bleak hills, suffices to affright
 A village in the vales—while foresters
 Sleep calm though all night long the famished troops
 Snuff round and scratch against their crazy huts :
 These evil thoughts are monsters, and will flee.

Par. May you be happy, Festus, my own friend !

Fest. Nay, further ; the delights you fain would think
 The superseders of your nobler aims,
 Though ordinary and harmless stimulants,
 Will ne'er content you . . .

Par. Hush ! I once despised them,
 But that soon passes : we are high at first
 In our demands, nor will abate a jot
 Of toil's strict value ; but time passes o'er,
 And humbler spirits accept what we refuse ;
 In short, when some such comfort is doled out
 As these delights, we cannot long retain
 The bitter contempt which urges us at first
 To hurl it back, but hug it to our breast
 And thankfully retire. This life of mine
 Must be lived out, and a grave thoroughly earned :
 I am just fit for that and nought beside.
 I told you once, I cannot now Enjoy,
 Unless I deem my knowledge gains through joy ;
 Nor can I Know, but straight warm tears reveal
 My need of linking also joy to knowledge :
 So on I drive—enjoying all I can,

And knowing all I can. I speak, of course,
Confusedly ; this will better explain—feel here !
Quick beating, is it not?—a fire of the heart
To work off someway, this as well as any !
So, Festus sees me fairly launched ; his calm
Compassionate look might have disturbed me once,
But now, far from rejecting, I invite
What bids me press the closer, lay myself
Open before him, and be soothed with pity ;
And hope, if he command hope ; and believe
As he directs me—satiating myself
With his enduring love : and Festus quits me
To give place to some credulous disciple
Who holds that God is wise, but Paracelsus
Has his peculiar merits. I suck in
That homage, chuckle o'er that admiration,
And then dismiss the fool ; for night is come,
And I betake myself to study again,
Till patient searchings after hidden lore
Half wring some bright truth from its prison ; my frame
Trembles, my forehead's veins swell out, my hair
Tingles for triumph ! Slow and sure the morn
Shall break on my pent room, and dwindling lamp,
And furnace dead, and scattered earths and ores,
When, with a failing heart and throbbing brow,
I must review my captured truth, sum up
Its value, trace what ends to what begins,
Its present power with its eventual bearings,
Latent affinities, the views it opens,

And its full length in perfecting my scheme ;
 I view it sternly circumscribed, cast down
 From the high place my fond hopes yielded it,
 Proved worthless—which, in getting, yet had cost
 Another wrench to this fast-falling frame ;
 Then, quick, the cup to quaff, that chases sorrow !
 I lapse back into youth, and take again
 Mere hopes of bliss for proofs that bliss will be,
 —My fluttering pulse, for evidence that God
 Means good to me, will make my cause his own ;
 See ! I have cast off this remorseless care
 Which clogged a spirit born to soar so free,
 And my dim chamber has become a tent,
 Festus is sitting by me, and his Michal . . .
 Why do you start ? I say, she listening here,
 (For yonder 's Würzburg through the orchard-boughs)
 Motions as though such ardent words should find
 No echo in a maiden's quiet soul,
 But her pure bosom heaves, her eyes fill fast
 With tears, her sweet lips tremble all the while !
 Ha, ha !

Fest. It seems, then, you expect to reap
 No unreal joy from this your present course,
 But rather . . .

Par. Death ! To die ! I owe that much
 To what, at least, I was. I should be sad
 To live contented after such a fall—
 To thrive and fatten after such reverse !
 The whole plan is a makeshift, but will last
 My time.

Fest. And you have never mused and said,
 “ I had a noble purpose, and full strength
 “ To compass it ; but I have stopped half-way,
 “ And wrongly give the first fruits of my toil
 “ To objects little worthy of the gift :
 “ Why linger round them still ? why clench my fault ?
 “ Why seek for consolation in defeat—
 “ In vain endeavours to derive a beauty
 “ From ugliness ? why seek to make the most
 “ Of what no power can change, nor strive instead
 “ With mighty effort to redeem the past,
 “ And, gathering up the treasures thus cast down,
 “ To hold a steadfast course ’till I arrive
 “ At their fit destination, and my own ? ”
 You have never pondered thus ?

Par. Have I, you ask ?
 Often at midnight, when most fancies come,
 Would some such airy project visit me :
 But ever at the end . . . or will you hear
 The same thing in a tale, a parable ?
 It cannot prove more tedious ; listen then !
 You and I, wandering over the world wide,
 Chance to set foot upon a desert coast :
 Just as we cry, “ No human voice before
 Broke the inveterate silence of these rocks ! ”
 —Their querulous echo startles us ; we turn :
 What ravaged structure still looks o’er the sea ?
 Some characters remain, too ! While we read,
 The sharp, salt wind, impatient for the last
 Of even this record, wistfully comes and goes,

Or sings what we recover, mocking it.
This is the record ; and my voice, the wind's.

(He sings.)

Over the sea our galleys went,
With cleaving prows in order brave,
To a speeding wind and a bounding wave—
A gallant armament :
Each bark built out of a forest-tree,
Left leafy and rough as first it grew,
And nailed all over the gaping sides,
Within and without, with black-bull hides,
Seethed in fat and supplied in flame,
To bear the playful billows' game ;
So each good ship was rude to see,
Rude and bare to the outward view,
But each upbore a stately tent ;
Where cedar-pales in scented row
Kept out the flakes of the dancing brine :
And an awning drooped the mast below,
In fold on fold of the purple fine,
That neither noon-tide, nor star-shine,
Nor moonlight cold which maketh mad,
Might pierce the regal tenement.
When the sun dawned, oh, gay and glad
We set the sail and plied the oar ;
But when the night-wind blew like breath,
For joy of one day's voyage more,
We sang together on the wide sea,

Like men at peace on a peaceful shore ;
Each sail was loosed to the wind so free,
Each helm made sure by the twilight star,
And in a sleep as calm as death,
We, the strangers from afar,
Lay stretched along, each weary crew
In a circle round its wondrous tent,
Whence gleamed soft light and curled rich scent,
And with light and perfume, music too :
So the stars wheeled round, and the darkness past,
And at morn we started beside the mast,
And still each ship was sailing fast !

One morn, the land appeared !—a speck
Dim trembling betwixt sea and sky—
Avoid it, cried our pilot, check
The shout, restrain the longing eye !
But the heaving sea was black behind
For many a night and many a day,
And land, though but a rock, drew nigh ;
So we broke the cedar pales away,
Let the purple awning flap in the wind,
And a statue bright was on every deck !
We shouted, every man of us,
And steered right into the harbour thus,
With pomp and pœan glorious.

An hundred shapes of lucid stone !
All day we built a shrine for each—

A shrine of rock for every one—
 Nor paused we till in the westering sun
 We sate together on the beach
 To sing, because our task was done ;
 When lo ! what shouts and merry songs !
 What laughter all the distance stirs !
 What raft comes loaded with its throngs
 Of gentle islanders ?
 “ The isles are just at hand,” they cried ;
 “ Like cloudlets faint at even sleeping,
 “ Our temple-gates are opened wide,
 “ Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping
 “ For the lucid shapes you bring ”—they cried.
 Oh, then we awoke with sudden start
 From our deep dream ; we knew, too late,
 How bare the rock, how desolate,
 To which we had flung our precious freight :
 Yet we called out—“ Depart !
 “ Our gifts, once given, must here abide :
 “ Our work is done ; we have no heart
 “ To mar our work, though vain”—we cried.

Fest. In truth ?

Par. Nay, wait : all this in tracings faint
 May still be read on that deserted rock,
 On rugged stones, strewn here and there, but piled
 In order once ; then follows—mark what follows—
 “ The sad rhyme of the men who proudly clung
 “ To their first fault, and withered in their pride ! ”

Fest. Come back, then, Aureole; as you fear God, come!
 This is foul sin; come back: renounce the past,
 Forswear the future; look for joy no more,
 But wait death's summons amid holy sights,
 And trust me for the event—peace, if not joy!
 Return with me to Einsiedeln, dear Aureole.

Par. No way, no way: it would not turn to good.
 A spotless child sleeps on the flowering moss—
 'Tis well for him; but when a sinful man,
 Envyng such slumber, may desire to put
 His guilt away, shall he return at once
 To rest by lying there? Our sires knew well
 (Spite of the grave discoveries of their sons)
 The fitting course for such; dark cells, dim lamps,
 A stone floor one may writhe on like a worm;
 No mossy pillow, blue with violets!

Fest. I see no symptom of these absolute
 And tyrannous passions. You are calmer now.
 This verse-making can purge you well enough,
 Without the terrible penance you describe.
 You love me still: the lusts you fear, will never
 Outrage your friend. To Einsiedeln, once more!
 Say but the word!

Par. No, no; those lusts forbid:
 They crouch, I know, cowering with half-shut eye
 Beside you; 'tis their nature. Thrust yourself
 Between them and their prey; let some fool style me
 Or king or quack, it matters not, and try
 Your wisdom then, at urging their retreat!

No, no ; learn better and look deeper, Festus !
 If you knew how a devil sneers within me
 While you are talking now of this, now that,
 As though we differed scarcely save in trifles !

Fest. Do we so differ ? True, change must proceed,
 Whether for good or ill ; keep from me, which !
 God made you and knows what you may become—
 Do not confide all secrets : I was born
 To hope, and you . . .

Par. To trust : you know the fruits !

Fest. Listen : I do believe, what you call trust
 Was self-reliance at the best : for, see !
 So long as God would kindly pioneer
 A path for you, and screen you from the world,
 Procure you full exemption from man's lot,
 Man's common hopes and fears, on the mere pretext
 Of your engagement in his service—yield you
 A limitless license, make you God, in fact,
 And turn your slave—you were content to say
 Most courtly praises ! What is it, at last,
 But selfishness without example ? None
 Could trace God's will so plain as you, while yours
 Remained implied in it ; but now you fail,
 And we, who prate about that will, are fools !
 In short, God's service is established here
 As He determines fit, and not your way,
 And this you cannot brook ! Such discontent
 Is weak. Renounce all creatureship at once !
 Affirm an absolute right to have and use

Your energies ; as though the rivers should say—
 “ We rush to the ocean ; what have we to do
 “ With feeding streamlets, lingering in the marshes,
 “ Sleeping in lazy pools ? ” Set up that plea,
 That will be bold at least !

Par. Perhaps, perhaps !

Your only serviceable spirits are those
 The east produces :—lo, the master nods,
 And they raise terraces, spread garden-grounds
 In one night's space ; and, this done, straight begin
 Another century's sleep, to the great praise
 Of him that framed them wise and beautiful,
 Till a lamp's rubbing, or some chance akin,
 Wake them again. I am of different mould.
 I would have soothed my lord, and slaved for him,
 And done him service past my narrow bond,
 And thus I get rewarded for my pains !
 Beside, 'tis vain to talk of forwarding
 God's glory otherwise ; this is alone
 The sphere of its increase, as far as men
 Increase it ; why, then, look beyond this sphere ?
 We are His glory ; and if we be glorious,
 Is not the thing achieved ?

Fest. Shall one like me

Judge hearts like yours ? Though years have changed
 you much,

And you have left your first love, and retain
 Its empty shade to veil your crooked ways,
 Yet I still hold that you have honoured God ;

Fest. No, dear Aureole !
 No, no ; I came to counsel faithfully :
 There are old rules, made long ere we were born,
 By which I judge you. I, so fallible,
 So infinitely low beside your spirit
 Mighty, majestic !—even I can see
 You own some higher law than ours which call
 Sin, what is no sin—weakness, what is strength ;
 But I have only these, such as they are,
 To guide me ; and I blame you where they blame,
 Only so long as blaming promises
 To win peace for your soul ; the more, that sorrow
 Has fallen on me of late, and they have helped me
 So that I faint not under my distress.
 But wherefore should I scruple to avow
 In spite of all, as brother judging brother,
 Your fate to me is most inexplicable :
 And should you perish without recompense
 And satisfaction yet—too hastily
 I have relied on love : you may have sinned,
 But you have loved. As a mere human matter—
 As I would have God deal with fragile men
 In the end—I say that you will triumph yet !

Par. Have you felt sorrow, Festus ?—'tis because
 You love me. Sorrow, and sweet Michal yours !
 Well thought on ; never let her know this last
 Dull winding-up of all : these miscreants dared
 Insult me—me she loved ; so grieve her not.

Fest. Your ill success can little grieve her now.

Par. Michal is dead! pray Christ we do not craze!

Fest. Aureole, dear Aureole, look not on me thus!

Fool, fool! this is the heart grown sorrow-proof—

I cannot bear those eyes.

Par. Nay, really dead?

Fest. 'Tis scarce a month . . .

Par. Stone dead!—then you have laid her

Among the flowers ere this. Now, do you know,

I can reveal a secret which shall comfort

Even you. I have no julep, as men think,

To cheat the grave; but a far better secret.

Know then, you did not ill to trust your love

To the cold earth: I have thought much of it:

For I believe we do not wholly die.

Fest. Aureole . . .

Par. Nay, do not laugh; there is a reason

For what I say: I think the soul can never

Taste death. I am, just now, as you may see,

Very unfit to put so strange a thought

In an intelligible dress of words;

But take it as my trust, she is not dead.

Fest. But not on this account alone? you surely,

—Aureole, you have believed this all along?

Par. And Michal sleeps among the roots and dews,

While I am moved at Basil, and full of schemes

For Nuremberg, and hoping and despairing,

As though it mattered how the farce plays out,

So it be quickly played. Away, away!

Have your will, rabble! while we fight the prize,

Troop you in safety to the snug back-seats,
 And leave a clear arena for the brave
 About to perish for your sport!—Behold!

V.—PARACELSUS ATTAINS.

SCENE.—*A cell in the Hospital of St. Sebastian, at Salzburg. 1541.*

FESTUS, PARACELSUS.

Fest. No change! The weary night is well nigh spent,
 The lamp burns low, and through the casement-bars
 Grey morning glimmers feebly—yet no change!
 Another night, and still no sigh has stirred
 That fallen discoloured mouth, no pang relit
 Those fixed eyes, quenched by the decaying body,
 Like torch-flame choked in dust: while all beside
 Was breaking, to the last they held out bright,
 As a strong-hold where life intrenched itself;
 But they are dead now—very blind and dead.
 He will drowse into death without a groan!

My Aureole—my forgotten, ruined Aureole!
 The days are gone, are gone! How grand thou wert:
 And now not one of those who struck thee down—
 Poor, glorious spirit—concerns him even to stay
 And satisfy himself his little hand
 Could turn God's image to a livid thing.

Another night, and yet no change ! 'Tis much
 That I should sit by him, and bathe his brow,
 And chafe his hands—'tis much ; but he will sure
 Know me, and look on me, and speak to me
 Once more—but only once ! His hollow cheek
 Looked all night long as though a creeping laugh
 At his own state were just about to break
 From the dying man : my brain swam, my throat swelled,
 And yet I could not turn away. In truth,
 They told me how, when first brought here, he seemed
 Resolved to live—to lose no faculty ;
 Thus striving to keep up his shattered strength,
 Until they bore him to this stifling cell :
 When straight his features fell—an hour made white
 The flushed face and relaxed the quivering limb ;
 Only the eye remained intense awhile,
 As though it recognised the tomb-like place ;
 And then he lay as here he lies.

Ay, here !

Here is earth's noblest, nobly garlanded—
 Her bravest champion, with his well-won meed—
 Her best achievement, her sublime amends
 For countless generations, fleeting fast
 And followed by no trace ;—the creature-god
 She instances when angels would dispute
 The title of her brood to rank with them—
 Angels, this is our angel !—those bright forms
 We clothe with purple, crown and call to thrones,
 Are human, but not his : those are but men

Whom other men press round and kneel before—
Those palaces are dwelt in by mankind ;
Higher provision is for him you seek
Amid our pomps and glories : see it here !
Behold earth's paragon ! Now, raise thee, clay !

God ! Thou art Love ! I build my faith on that !
Even as I watch beside thy tortured child,
Unconscious whose hot tears fall fast by him,
So doth thy right hand guide us through the world
Wherein we stumble. God ! what shall we say ?
How has he sinned ? How else should he have done ?
Surely he sought thy praise—thy praise, for all
He might be busied by the task so much
As to forget awhile its proper end.
Dost thou well, Lord ? Thou canst not but prefer
That I should range myself upon his side—
How could he stop at every step to set
Thy glory forth ? Hadst Thou but granted him
Success, thy honour would have crowned success,
A halo round a star. Or, say he erred,—
Save him, dear God ; it will be like thee : bathe him
In light and life ! Thou art not made like us ;
We should be wroth in such a case ; but Thou
Forgivest—so, forgive these passionate thoughts,
Which come unsought, and will not pass away !
I know thee, who hast kept my path, and made
Light for me in the darkness—tempering sorrow,
So that it reached me like a solemn joy ;

It were too strange that I should doubt thy love :
 But what am I ? Thou madest him, and knowest
 How he was fashioned. I could never err
 That way : the quiet place beside thy feet,
 Reserved for me, was ever in my thoughts ;
 But he—Thou shouldst have favoured him as well !

Ah ! he wakes ! Aureole, I am here—'tis Festus !
 I cast away all wishes save one wish—
 Let him but know me—only speak to me !
 He mutters—louder and louder ; any other
 Than I, with brain less laden, could collect
 What he pours forth. Dear Aureole, do but look !
 Is it talking or singing this he utters fast ?
 Misery, that he should fix me with his eye—
 Quick talking to some other all the while !
 If he would husband this wild vehemence,
 Which frustrates its intent !—I heard, I know
 I heard my name amid those rapid words :
 O he will know me yet ! Could I divert
 This current—lead it somehow gently back
 Into the channels of the past !—His eye,
 Brighter than ever ! It must recognise !

Let me speak to him in another's name.
 I am Erasmus : I am here to pray
 That Paracelsus use his skill for me.
 The schools of Paris and of Padua send
 These questions for your learning to resolve.

We are your students, noble master : leave
 This wretched cell ; what business have you here ?
 Our class awaits you ; come to us once more.
 (O agony ! the utmost I can do
 Touches him not ; how else arrest his ear ?)
 I am commissioned . . . I shall craze like him—
 Better be mute, and see what God shall send.

Par. Stay, stay with me !

Fest. I will ; I am come here
 To stay with you—Festus, you loved of old ;
 Festus, you know, you must know !

Par. Festus ! Where 's
 Aprile, then ? Has he not chaunted softly
 The melodies I heard all night ? I could not
 Get to him for a cold hand on my breast,
 But I made out his music well enough,
 O, well enough ! If they have filled him full
 With magical music, as they freight a star
 With light, and have remitted all his sin,
 They will forgive me too, I too shall know !

Fest. Festus, your Festus !

Par. Ask him if Aprile
 Knows as he Loves—if I shall Love and Know ?
 I try ; but that cold hand, like lead—so cold !

Fest. My hand, see !

Par. Ah, the curse, Aprile, Aprile !
 We get so near—so very, very near !
 'Tis an old tale : Jove strikes the Titans down
 Not when they set about their mountain-piling,

But when another rock would crown their work !
And Phaeton—doubtless his first radiant plunge
Astonished mortals ; though the gods were calm,
And Jove prepared his thunder : all old tales !

Fest. And what are these to you ?

Par. Ay, fiends must laugh

So cruelly, so well ; most like I never
Could tread a single pleasure under foot,
But they were grinning by my side, were chuckling
To see me toil, and drop away by flakes !
Hell-spawn ! I am glad, most glad, that thus I fail !
You that hate men and all who wish their good—
Your cunning has o'ershot its aim. One year,
One month, perhaps, and I had served your turn !
You should have curbed your spite awhile. But now,
Who will believe 'twas you that held me back ?
Listen : there 's shame, and hissing, and contempt,
And none but laughs who names me—none but spits
Measureless scorn upon me—me alone,
The quack, the cheat, the liar,—all on me !
And thus your famous plan to sink mankind
In silence and despair, by teaching them
One of their race had probed the inmost truth,
Had done all man could do, yet failed no less—
Your wise plan proves abortive. Men despair ?
Ha, ha ! why they are hooting the empiric,
The ignorant and incapable fool who rushed
Madly upon a work beyond his wits ;
Nor doubt they but the simplest of themselves

Could bring the matter to triumphant issue !
 So pick and choose among them all, Accursed !
 Try now, persuade some other to slave for you,
 To ruin body and soul to work your ends :
 No, no ; I am the first and last, I think !

Fest. Dear friend ; who are accursed ? who has done . . .

Par. What have I done ? Fiends dare ask that ? or you,
 Brave men ? Oh, you can chime in boldly, backed
 By the others ! What had you to do, sage peers ?
 Here stand my rivals, truly—Arab, Jew,
 Greek, join dead hands against me : all I ask
 Is, that the world enrol my name with theirs,
 And even this poor privilege, it seems,
 They range themselves, prepared to disallow !
 Only observe : why fiends may learn from them !
 How they talk calmly of my throes—my fierce
 Aspirings, terrible watchings—each one claiming
 Its price of blood and brain ; how they dissect
 And sneeringly disparage the few truths
 Got at a life's cost ; they too hanging the while
 About my neck, their lies misleading me,
 And their dead names brow-beating me ! Grey crew,
 Yet steeped in fresh malevolence from hell,
 Is there a reason for your hate ? My truths
 Have shaken a little the palm about each head ?
 Just think, Aprile, all these leering dotards
 Were bent on nothing less than being crowned
 As we ! That yellow blear-eyed wretch in chief,
 To whom the rest cringe low with feigned respect—

Galen, of Pergamos and hell ; nay speak
 The tale, old man ! We met there face to face :
 I said the crown should fall from thee : once more
 We meet as in that ghastly vestibule :
 Look to my brow ! Have I redeemed my pledge ?

Fest. Peace, peace ; ah, see !

Par. Oh, emptiness of fame !

Oh Persic Zoroaster, lord of stars !
 —Who said these old renowns, dead long ago,
 Could make me overlook the living world
 To gaze through gloom at where they stood, indeed,
 But stand no longer ? What a warm light life
 After the shade ! In truth, my delicate witch,
 My serpent-queen, you did but well to hide
 The juggles I had else detected. Fire
 May well run harmless o'er a breast like yours !
 The cave was not so darkened by the smoke
 But that your white limbs dazzled me : Oh, white,
 And panting as they twinkled, wildly dancing !
 I cared not for your passionate gestures then,
 But now I have forgotten the charm of charms,
 The foolish knowledge which I came to seek,
 While I remember that quaint dance ; and thus
 I am come back, not for those mummeries,
 But to love you, and to kiss your little feet,
 Soft as an ermine's winter coat !

Fest.

A sense

Will struggle through these thronging words at last,
 As in the angry and tumultuous west

A soft star trembles through the drifting clouds.
 These are the strivings of a spirit which hates
 So sad a vault should coop it, and calls up
 The past to stand between it and its fate :
 Were he at Einsiedeln—or Michal here !

Par. Cruel ! I seek her now—I kneel—I shriek—
 I clasp her vesture—but she fades, still fades ;
 And she is gone ; sweet human love is gone !
 'Tis only when they spring to heaven that angels
 Reveal themselves to you ; they sit all day
 Beside you, and lie down at night by you,
 Who care not for their presence—muse or sleep—
 And all at once they leave you and you know them !
 We are so fooled, so cheated ! Why, even now
 I am not too secure against foul play :
 The shadows deepen, and the walls contract—
 No doubt some treachery is going on !
 'Tis very dusk. Where are we put, Aprile ?
 Have they left us in the lurch ? This murky, loathsome
 Death-trap—this slaughter-house—is not the hall
 In the golden city ! Keep by me, Aprile !
 There is a hand groping amid the blackness
 To catch us. Have the spider-fingers got you,
 Poet ? Hold on me for your life ; if once
 They pull you !—Hold !

'Tis but a dream—no more.

I have you still—the sun comes out again ;
 Let us be happy—all will yet go well !
 Let us confer : is it not like, Aprile,

That spite of trouble, this ordeal passed,
The value of my labours ascertained,
Just as some stream foams long among the rocks
But after glideth glassy to the sea,
So, full content shall henceforth be my lot?
What think you, poet? Louder! Your clear voice
Vibrates too like a harp-string. Do you ask
How could I still remain on earth, should God
Grant me the great approval which I seek?
I, you, and God can comprehend each other,
But men would murmur, and with cause enough;
For when they saw me, stainless of all sin,
Preserved and sanctified by inward light,
They would complain that comfort, shut from them,
I drank thus unespied; that they live on,
Nor taste the quiet of a constant joy,
For ache, and care, and doubt, and weariness,
While I am calm; help being vouchsafed to me,
And hid from them!—"Twere best consider that!
You reason well, Aprile; but at least
Let me know this, and die! Is this too much?
I will learn this, if God so please, and die!

If thou shalt please, dear God, if thou shalt please!
We are so weak, we know our motives least
In their confused beginning: if at first
I sought . . . But wherefore bare my heart to thee?
I know thy mercy; and already thoughts
Flock fast about my soul to comfort it,

And intimate I cannot wholly fail,
For love and praise would clasp me willingly
Could I resolve to seek them : Thou art good,
And I should be content ; yet—yet first show
I have done wrong in daring ! Rather give
The supernatural consciousness of strength
That fed my youth—one only hour of that
With thee to help—O what should bar me then !

Lost, lost ! Thus things are ordered here ! God's creatures,
And yet he takes no pride in us !—none, none !
Truly there needs another life to come !
If this be all—(I must tell Festus that)
And other life await us not—for one,
I say 'tis a poor cheat, a stupid bungle,
A wretched failure. I, for one, protest
Against it—and I hurl it back with scorn !

Well, onward though alone : small time remains,
And much to do : I must have fruit, must reap
Some profit from my toils. I doubt my body
Will hardly serve me through : while I have laboured
It has decayed ; and now that I demand
Its best assistance, it will crumble fast :
A sad thought—a sad fate ! How very full
Of wormwood 'tis, that just at altar-service,
The rapt hymn rising with the rolling smoke,
When glory dawns, and all is at the best—
The sacred fire may flicker, and grow faint,

And die, for want of a wood-piler's help !
 Thus fades the flagging body, and the soul
 Is pulled down in the overthrow : well, well—
 Let men catch every word—let them lose nought
 Of what I say ; something may yet be done.

They are ruins ! Trust me who am one of you !
 All ruins—glorious once, but lonely now.
 It makes my heart sick to behold you crouch
 Beside your desolate fane ; the arches dim,
 The crumbling columns grand against the moon :
 Could I but rear them up once more—but that
 May never be, so leave them ! Trust me, friends,
 Why should you linger here when I have built
 A far resplendent temple, all your own ?
 Trust me, they are but ruins ! See, Aprile,
 Men will not heed ! Yet were I not prepared
 With better refuge for them, tongue of mine
 Should ne'er reveal how blank their dwelling is ;
 I would sit down in silence with the rest.

Ha, what ? you spit at me, you grin and shriek
 Contempt into my ear—my ear which drank
 God's accents once ? you curse me ? Why men, men,
 I am not formed for it ! Those hideous eyes
 Follow me sleeping, waking, praying God,
 And will not let me even die : spare, spare me,
 Sinning or no, forget that, only spare me
 That horrible scorn ; you thought I could support it,

But now you see what silly fragile creature
 Cowers thus. I am not good nor bad enough,
 Not Christ, nor Cain, yet even Cain was saved
 From hate like this : let me but totter back,
 Perhaps I shall elude those jeers which creep
 Into my very brain, and shut these scorched
 Eyelids, and keep those mocking faces out.

Listen, Aprile ! I am very calm :
 Be not deceived, there is no passion here,
 Where the blood leaps like an imprisoned thing.
 I am calm : I will exterminate the race !
 Enough of that : 'tis said and it shall be.
 And now be merry—safe and sound am I,
 Who broke through their best ranks to get at you ;
 And such a havoc, such a rout, Aprile !

Fest. Have you no thought, no memory for me,
 Aureole ? I am so wretched—my pure Michal
 Is gone, and you alone are left to me,
 And even you forget me : take my hand—
 Lean on me, thus. Do you not know me, Aureole ?

Par. Festus, my own friend, you are come at last ?
 As you say, 'tis an awful enterprise—
 But you believe I shall go through with it :
 'Tis like you, and I thank you ; thank him for me,
 Dear Michal ! See how bright St. Saviour's spire
 Flames in the sunset ; all its figures quaint
 Gay in the glancing light : you might conceive them
 A troop of yellow-vested, white-haired Jews,
 Bound for their own land where redemption dawns !

Fest. Not that blest time—not our youth's time, dear
God!

Par. Ha—stay! true, I forget—all is done since!
And he is come to judge me: how he speaks,
How calm, how well! yes, it is true, all true;
All quackery; all deceit! myself can laugh
The first at it, if you desire: but still
You know the obstacles which taught me tricks
So foreign to my nature—envy, and hate—
Blind opposition—brutal prejudice—
Bald ignorance—what wonder if I sunk
To humour men the way they most approved?
My cheats were never palmed on such as you,
Dear Festus! I will kneel if you require me,
Impart the meagre knowledge I possess,
Explain its bounded nature, and avow
My insufficiency—whate'er you will:
I give the fight up! let there be an end,
A privacy, an obscure nook for me.
I want to be forgotten even by God!
But if that cannot be, dear Festus, lay me,
When I shall die, within some narrow grave,
Not by itself—for that would be too proud—
But where such graves are thickest; let it look
Nowise distinguished from the hillocks round,
So that the peasant at his brother's bed
May tread upon my own and know it not;
And we shall all be equal at the last,
Or classed according to life's natural ranks,

Fathers, sons, brothers, friends—not rich, nor wise,
Nor gifted : lay me thus, then say “ He lived
“ Too much advanced before his brother men :
“ They kept him still in front ; ’twas for their good,
“ But yet a dangerous station. It were strange
“ That he should tell God he had never ranked
“ With men : so, here at least he is a man ! ”

Fest. That God shall take thee to his breast, dear Spirit,
Unto his breast, be sure ! and here on earth
Shall splendour sit upon thy name for ever !
Sun ! all the heaven is glad for thee : what care
If lower mountains light their snowy phares
At thine effulgence, yet acknowledge not
The source of day ? Men look up to the sun :
For after-ages shall retrack thy beams,
And put aside the crowd of busy ones,
And worship thee alone—the master-mind,
The thinker, the explorer, the creator !
Then, who should sneer at the convulsive throes
With which thy deeds were born, would scorn as well
The winding sheet of subterraneous fire
Which, pent and writhing, sends no less at last
Huge islands up amid the simmering sea !
Behold thy might in me ! thou hast infused
Thy soul in mine ; and I am grand as thou,
Seeing I comprehend thee—I so simple,
Thou so august ! I recognise thee first ;
I saw thee rise, I watched thee early and late,
And though no glance reveal thou dost accept

My homage—thus no less I proffer it,
And bid thee enter gloriously thy rest !

Par. Festus !

Fest. I am for noble Aureole, God !
I am upon his side, come weal or woe !
His portion shall be mine ! He has done well !
I would have sinned, had I been strong enough,
As he has sinned ! Reward him or I waive
Reward ! If thou canst find no place for him,
He shall be king elsewhere, and I will be
His slave for ever ! There are two of us !

Par. Dear Festus !

Fest. Here, dear Aureole ! ever by you !

Par. Nay, speak on, or I dream again. Speak on !
Some story, any thing—only your voice.
I shall dream else. Speak on ! ay, leaning so !

Fest. Softly the Mayne river glideth
Close by where my love abideth ;
Sleep's no softer : it proceeds
On through lawns, on through meads,
On and on, whate'er befall,
Meandering and musical,
Though the niggard pasture's edge
Bears not on its shaven ledge
Aught but weeds and waving grasses
To view the river as it passes,
Save here and there a scanty patch
Of primroses, too faint to catch
A weary bee . . .

Fest. But wherefore am I here ?

Par. Ah ! well remembered :

Why, for a purpose—for a purpose, Festus !

'Tis like me : here I trifle while time fleets,

And this occasion, lost, will ne'er return !

You are here to be instructed. I will tell

God's message ; but I have so much to say,

I fear to leave half out : all is confused

No doubt ; but doubtless you will learn in time.

He would not else have brought you here : no doubt

I shall see clearer soon.

Fest. Tell me but this—

You are not in despair ?

Par. I ? and for what ?

Fest. Alas, alas ! he knows not, as I feared !

Par. What is it you would ask me with that earnest,
Dear, searching face ?

Fest. How feel you, Aureole ?

Par. Well !

Well : 'tis a strange thing. I am dying, Festus,

And now that fast the storm of life subsides,

I first perceive how great the whirl has been :

I was calm then, who am so dizzy now—

Calm in the thick of the tempest, but no less

A partner of its motion, and mixed up

With its career. The hurricane is spent,

And the good boat speeds through the brightening weather ;

But is it earth or sea that heaves below ?

For the gulf rolls like a meadow, overstrewn

With ravaged boughs and remnants of the shore ;
And now some islet, loosened from the land,
Swims past with all its trees, sailing to ocean ;
And now the air is full of up-torn canes,
Light strippings from the fan-trees, tamarisks
Unrooted, with their birds still clinging to them,
All high in the wind. Even so my varied life
Drifts by me. I am young, old, happy, sad,
Hoping, desponding, acting, taking rest,
And all at once : that is, those past conditions
Float back at once on me. If I select
Some special epoch from the crowd, 'tis but
To will, and straight the rest dissolve away,
And only that particular state is present,
With all its long-forgotten circumstance,
Distinct and vivid as at first—myself
A careless looker-on, and nothing more !
Indifferent and amused, but nothing more !
And this is death : I understand it all.
New being waits me ; new perceptions must
Be born in me before I plunge therein ;
Which last is Death's affair ; and while I speak,
Minute by minute he is filling me
With power ; and while my foot is on the threshold
Of boundless life—the doors unopened yet,
All preparations not complete within—
I turn new knowledge upon old events,
And the effect is . . . But I must not tell ;
It is not lawful. Your own turn will come
One day. Wait, Festus ! You will die like me !

Fest. 'Tis of that past life that I burn to hear!

Par. You wonder it engages me just now?

In truth, I wonder too. What's life to me?

Where'er I look is fire, where'er I listen

Music, and where I tend bliss evermore.

Yet how can I refrain? 'Tis a refined

Delight to view those chances,—one last view.

I am so near the perils I escape,

That I must play with them and turn them over,

To feel how fully they are past and gone.

Still it is like some further cause exists

For this peculiar mood—some hidden purpose;

Did I not tell you something of it, Festus?

I had it fast, but it has somehow slipt

Away from me; it will return anon.

Fest. (Indeed his cheek seems young again, his voice

Complete with its old tones: that little laugh

Concluding every phrase, with up-turned eye,

As though one stooped above his head, to whom

He looked for confirmation and applause,—

Where was it gone so long, being kept so well?

Then, the fore-finger pointing as he speaks,

Like one who traces in an open book

The matter he declares; 'tis many a year

Since I remarked it last: and this in him,

But now a ghastly wreck!)

And can it be,

Dear Aureole, you have then found out at last

That worldly things are utter vanity?

That man is made for weakness, and should wait
In patient ignorance till God appoint . . .

Par. Ha, the purpose ; the true purpose : that is it !
How could I fail to apprehend ! You here,
I thus ! But no more trifling ; I see all,
I know all : my last mission shall be done
If strength suffice. No trifling ! Stay ; this posture
Hardly befits one thus about to speak :
I will arise.

Fest. Nay, Aureole, are you wild ?
You cannot leave your couch.

Par. No help ; no help ;
Not even your hand. So ! there, I stand once more !
Speak from a couch ? I never lectured thus.
My gown—the scarlet, lined with fur ; now put
The chain about my neck ; my signet-ring
Is still upon my hand, I think—even so ;
Last, my good sword ; ha, trusty Azoth, leapest
Beneath thy master's grasp for the last time ?
This couch shall be my throne : I bid these walls
Be consecrate ; this wretched cell become
A shrine ; for here God speaks to men through me !
Now, Festus, I am ready to begin.

Fest. I am dumb with wonder.

Par. Listen, therefore, Festus !
There will be time enough, but none to spare.
I must content myself with telling only
The most important points. You doubtless feel
That I am happy, Festus ; very happy.

Fest. 'Tis no delusion which uplifts him thus !
Then you are pardoned, Aureole, all your sin ?

Par. Ay, pardoned ! yet why pardoned ?

Fest. 'Tis God's praise
That man is bound to seek, and you . . .

Par. Have lived !
We have to live alone to set forth well
God's praise. 'Tis true, I sinned much, as I thought,
And in effect need mercy, for I strove
To do that very thing ; but, do your best
Or worst, praise rises, and will rise for ever.
Pardon from Him, because of praise denied—
Who calls me to Himself to exalt Himself ?
He might laugh as I laugh !

Fest. Then all comes
To the same thing. 'Tis fruitless for mankind
To fret themselves with what concerns them not ;
They are no use that way : they should lie down
Content as God has made them, nor go mad
In thriveless cares to better what is ill.

Par. No, no ; mistake me not ; let me not work
More harm than I have done ! This is my case :
If I go joyous back to God, yet bring
No offering, if I render up my soul
Without the fruits it was ordained to bear,
If I appear the better to love God
For sin, as one who has no claim on him,—
Be not deceived : it may be surely thus
With me, while higher prizes still await

The mortal persevering to the end.

For I too have been something, though too soon

I left the instincts of that happy time !

Fest. What happy time? For God's sake, for man's sake,

What time was happy? All I hope to know

That answer will decide. What happy time ?

Par. When, but the time I vowed my help to man ?

Fest. Great God, thy judgments are inscrutable !

Par. Yes, it was in me ; I was born for it—

I, Paracelsus : it was mine by right.

Doubtless a searching and impetuous soul

Might learn from its own motions that some task

Like this awaited it about the world ;

Might seek somewhere in this blank life of ours

For fit delights to stay its longings vast ;

And, grappling Nature, so prevail on her

To fill the creature full she dared to frame

Hungry for joy ; and, bravely tyrannous,

Grow in demand, still craving more and more,

And make each joy conceded prove a pledge

Of other joy to follow—bating nought

Of its desires, still seizing fresh pretence

To turn the knowledge and the rapture wrung

As an extreme, last boon, from Destiny,

Into occasion for new covetings,

New strifes, new triumphs :—doubtless a strong soul

Alone, unaided might attain to this,

So glorious is our nature, so august

Man's inborn uninstructed impulses,

His naked spirit so majestic!
 But this was born in me ; I was made so ;
 Thus much time saved : the feverish appetites,
The tumult of unproved desire, the unaimed
Uncertain yearnings, aspirations blind,
Distrust, mistake, and all that ends in tears
Were saved me ; thus I entered on my course !
 You may be sure I was not all exempt
 From human trouble ; just so much of doubt
 As bade me plant a surer foot upon
 The sun-road—kept my eye unruined mid
 The fierce and flashing splendour—set my heart
 Trembling so much as warned me I stood there
 On sufferance—not to idly gaze, but cast
 Light on a darkling race ; save for that doubt,
I stood at first where all aspire at last
To stand ; the secret of the world was mine.
I knew, I felt, (perception unexpressed,
Uncomprehended by our narrow thought,
But somehow felt and known in every shift
And change in the spirit,—nay, in every pore
Of the body, even,)—what God is, what we are,
What life is—how God tastes an infinite joy
In infinite ways—one everlasting bliss,
From whom all being emanates, all power
Proceeds ; in whom is life for evermore,
Yet whom existence in its lowest form
Includes ; where dwells enjoyment there is He !
 With still a flying point of bliss remote,

A happiness in store afar, a sphere
Of distant glory in full view ; thus climbs
Pleasure its heights for ever and for ever !
The centre-fire heaves underneath the earth,
And the earth changes like a human face ;
The molten ore bursts up among the rocks,
Winds into the stone's heart, outbranches bright
In hidden mines, spots barren river-beds,
Crumbles into fine sand where sunbeams bask—
God joys therein ! The wroth sea's waves are edged
With foam, white as the bitten lip of Hate,
When, in the solitary waste, strange groups
Of young volcanos come up, cyclops-like,
Staring together with their eyes on flame ;—
God tastes a pleasure in their uncouth pride !
Then all is still : earth is a wintry clod ;
But spring-wind, like a dancing psaltress, passes
Over its breast to waken it ; rare verdure
Buds tenderly upon rough banks, between
The withered tree-roots and the cracks of frost,
Like a smile striving with a wrinkled face ;
The grass grows bright, the boughs are swoln with blooms,
Like chrysalids impatient for the air ;
The shining dorrs are busy ; beetles run
Along the furrows, ants make their ado ;
Above, birds fly in merry flocks—the lark
Soars up and up, shivering for very joy ;
Afar the ocean sleeps ; white fishing-gulls
Flit where the strand is purple with its tribe

Of nested limpets ; savage creatures seek
 Their loves in wood and plain ; and God renews
 His ancient rapture ! Thus He dwells in all,
From life's minute beginnings, up at last
To man—the consummation of this scheme
Of being, the completion of this sphere
Of life : whose attributes had here and there
 Been scattered o'er the visible world before,
 Asking to be combined—dim fragments meant
To be united in some wondrous whole—
Imperfect qualities throughout creation,
Suggesting some one creature yet to make—
Some point where all those scattered rays should meet
Convergent in the faculties of man.
Power ; neither put forth blindly, nor controlled
Calmly by perfect knowledge ; to be used
At risk, inspired or checked by hope and fear :
Knowledge ; not intuition, but the slow
Uncertain fruit of an enhancing toil,
Strengthened by love : love ; not serenely pure,
But strong from weakness, like a chance-sown plant
Which, cast on stubborn soil, puts forth changed buds,
And softer stains, unknown in happier climes ;
Love which endures, and doubts, and is oppressed,
And cherished, suffering much, and much sustained.
A blind, oft-failing, yet believing love,
A half-enlightened, often-chequered trust :—
 Hints and previsions of which faculties,
 Are strewn confusedly everywhere about

The inferior natures ; and all lead up higher,
 All shape out dimly the superior race,
 The heir of hopes too fair to turn out false,
 And Man appears at last : so far the seal
 Is put on life ; one stage of being complete,
 One scheme wound up ; and from the grand result
 A supplementary reflux of light,
 Illustrates all the inferior grades, explains
 Each back step in the circle. Not alone
 For their possessor dawn those qualities,
 But the new glory mixes with the heaven
 And earth : Man, once descried, imprints for ever
 His presence on all lifeless things ; the winds
 Are henceforth voices, in a wail or shout,
 A querulous mutter, or a quick gay laugh—
 Never a senseless gust now man is born !
 The herded pines commune, and have deep thoughts,
 A secret they assemble to discuss,
 When the sun drops behind their trunks which glare
 Like grates of hell : the peerless cup afloat
 Of the lake-lily is an urn, some nymph
 Swims bearing high above her head ; no bird
 Whistles unseen, but through the gaps above
 That let light in upon the gloomy woods,
 A shape peeps from the breezy forest-top,
 Arch with small puckered mouth and mocking eye :
 The morn has enterprise,—deep quiet droops
 With evening ; triumph takes the sun-set hour,
 Voluptuous transport ripens with the corn
 Beneath a warm moon like a happy face :

—And this to fill us with regard for man,
 With apprehension of his passing worth,
 Desire to work his proper nature out,
 And ascertain his rank and final place ;

(For these things tend still upward—progress is

The law of life—man's self is not yet Man !

Nor shall I deem his object served, his end
 Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,
 While only here and there a star dispels

The darkness, here and there a towering mind
 O'erlooks its prostrate fellows : when the host

Is out at once to the despair of night,

When all mankind alike is perfected,

Equal in full-blown powers—then, not till then,

I say, begins man's general infancy !

For wherefore make account of feverish starts
 Of restless members of a dormant whole—

Impatient nerves which quiver while the body
 Slumbers as in a grave ? O, long ago

The brow was twitched, the tremulous lids astir,

The peaceful mouth disturbed ; half-uttered speech

Ruffled the lip, and then the teeth were set,

The breath drawn sharp, the strong right-hand clenched
 stronger,

As it would pluck a lion by the jaw ;

The glorious creature laughed out even in sleep !

But when full roused, each giant-limb awake,

Each sinew strung, the great heart pulsing fast,

He shall start up, and stand on his own earth,

And so begin his long triumphant march,
 And date his being thence,—thus wholly roused,
 What he achieves shall be set down to him !
 When all the race is perfected alike
 As Man, that is : all tended to mankind,
 And, man produced, all has its end thus far ;
 But in completed man begins anew
 A tendency to God. Prognostics told
 Man's near approach ; so in man's self arise
 August anticipations, symbols, types
 Of a dim splendour ever on before,
 In that eternal circle run by life :
 For men begin to pass their nature's bound,
 And find new hopes and cares which fast supplant
 Their proper joys and griefs ; and outgrow all
 The narrow creeds of right and wrong, which fade
 Before the unmeasured thirst for good ; while peace
 Rises within them ever more and more.
 Such men are even now upon the earth,
 Serene amid the half-formed creatures round,
 Who should be saved by them and joined with them.
 Such was my task, and I was born to it—
 Free, as I said but now, from much that chains
 Spirits, high-dowered, but limited and vexed
 By a divided and delusive aim,
 A shadow mocking a reality
 Whose truth avails not wholly to disperse
 The flitting mimic called up by itself,
 And so remains perplexed and nigh put out
 By its fantastic fellow's wavering gleam.

Oblivion o'er the tools, and hide from man
What night had ushered morn. Not so, dear child
Of after-days, wilt thou reject the Past,
Big with deep warnings of the proper tenure
By which thou hast the earth : the Present for thee
Shall have distinct and trembling beauty, seen
Beside that Past's own shade, whence, in relief,
Its brightness shall stand out : nor on thee yet
Shall burst the Future, as successive zones
Of several wonder open on some spirit
Flying secure and glad from heaven to heaven ;
But thou shalt painfully attain to joy,
While hope, and fear, and love, shall keep thee man !
All this was hid from me : as one by one
My dreams grew dim, my wide aims circumscribed,
As actual good within my reach decreased,
While obstacles sprung up this way and that,
To keep me from effecting half the sum,
Small as it proved ; as objects, mean within
The primal aggregate, seemed, even the least,
Itself a match for my concentrated strength—
What wonder if I saw no way to shun
Despair ? The power I sought for man, seemed God's !
In this conjuncture, as I prayed to die,
A strange adventure made me know, One Sin
Had spotted my career from its uprise ;
I saw Aprile—my Aprile there !
And as the poor melodious wretch disburthened
His heart, and moaned his weakness in my ear,

I learned my own deep error ; love's undoing
Taught me the worth of love in man's estate,
And what proportion love should hold with power
In his right constitution ; love preceding
Power, and with much power, always much more love ;
Love still too straitened in its present means,
And earnest for new power to set it free.
 I learned this, and supposed the whole was learned :
 And thus, when men received with stupid wonder
 My first revealings, would have worshipped me,
 And I despised and loathed their proffered praise—
 When, with awakened eyes, they took revenge
 For past credulity in casting shame
 On my real knowledge, and I hated them—
 It was not strange I saw no good in man,
 To overbalance all the wear and waste
 Of faculties, displayed in vain, but born
 To prosper in some better sphere : and why ?
 In my own heart love had not been made wise
 To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
To know even hate is but a mask of love's,
To see a good in evil, and a hope
In ill-success ; to sympathize, be proud
Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudice, and fears, and cares, and doubts ;
Which all touch upon nobleness, despite
Their error, all tend upwardly though weak,
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,

But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
 And do their best to climb and get to him.
 All this I knew not, and I failed. Let men
 Regard me, and the poet dead long ago
 Who once loved rashly ; and shape forth a third,
 And better tempered spirit, warned by both :
 As from the over-radiant star too mad
 To drink the light-springs, beamless thence itself—
 And the dark orb which borders the abyss,
 Ingulfed in icy night,—might have its course
 A temperate and equidistant world.
 Meanwhile, I have done well, though not all well.
 As yet men cannot do without contempt—
 'Tis for their good, and therefore fit awhile
 That they reject the weak, and scorn the false,
 Rather than praise the strong and true, in me.
 But after, they will know me ! If I stoop
 Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
 It is but for a time ; I press God's lamp
 Close to my breast—its splendour, soon or late,
 Will pierce the gloom : I shall emerge one day !
 You understand me ? I have said enough ?

Fest. Now die, dear Aureole !

Par. Fustus, let my hand—
 This hand, lie in your own—my own true friend !
 Aprile ! Hand in hand with you, Aprile !

Fest. And this was Paracelsus !

NOTE.

THE liberties I have taken with my subject are very trifling; and the reader may slip the foregoing scenes between the leaves of any memoir of Paracelsus he pleases, by way of commentary. To prove this, I subjoin a popular account, translated from the "*Biographie Universelle, Paris, 1822*," which I select, not as the best, certainly, but as being at hand, and sufficiently concise for my purpose. I also append a few notes, in order to correct those parts which do not bear out my own view of the character of Paracelsus; and have incorporated with them a notice or two, illustrative of the poem itself.

"PARACELSUS (*Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus ab Hohenheim*) was born in 1493 at Einsiedeln, ⁽¹⁾ a little town in the canton of Schwitz, some leagues distant from Zurich. His father, who exercised the profession of medicine at Villach, in Carinthia, was nearly related to George Bombast de Hohenheim, who became afterward Grand Prior of the Order of Malta; consequently Paracelsus could not spring from the dregs of the people, as Thomas Erastus, his sworn enemy, pretends.* It appears that

* I shall disguise M. Renaudin's next sentence a little. "Hic (Erastus sc.) Paracelsum trimum à milite quodam, alii à sue exectum ferunt: constat imberbem illum fuisse." A standing High-Dutch joke in those days at the expense of a number of learned men, as may be seen by referring to such rubbish as Melander's *Jocoseria*, &c., &c. In the prints from his portrait by Tintoretto, painted a year before his death, Paracelsus is *barbatulus*, at all events. But Erastus was never without a good reason for his faith—e. g. "Helvetium fuisse (Paracelsum) vix credo, vix enim ea regio tale monstrum ediderit."—*De Med. Novd.*

his elementary education was much neglected, and that he spent part of his youth in pursuing the life common to the travelling *literati* of the age ; that is to say, in wandering from country to country, predicting the future by astrology and cheiromancy, evoking apparitions, and practising the different operations of magic and alchemy, in which he had been initiated whether by his father or by various ecclesiastics, among the number of whom he particularizes the Abbot Tritheim,⁽²⁾ and many German bishops.

“As Paracelsus displays everywhere an ignorance of the rudiments of the most ordinary knowledge, it is not probable that he ever studied seriously in the schools : he contented himself with visiting the Universities of Germany, France, and Italy ; and in spite of his boasting himself to have been the ornament of those institutions, there is no proof of his having legally acquired the title of Doctor, which he assumes. It is only known that he applied himself long, under the direction of the wealthy Sigismund Fugger, of Schwatz, to the discovery of the *Magnum Opus*.

“Paracelsus travelled among the mountains of Bohemia, in the East, and in Sweden, in order to inspect the labours of the miners, to be initiated in the mysteries of the oriental adepts, and to observe the secrets of nature and the famous mountain of loadstone.⁽³⁾ He professes also to have visited Spain, Portugal, Prussia, Poland, and Transsylvania ; everywhere communicating freely, not merely with the physicians, but the old women, charlatans, and conjurers, of these several lands. It is even believed that he extended his journeyings as far as Egypt and Tartary, and that he accompanied the son of the Khan of the Tartars to Constantinople, for the purpose of obtaining the secret of the tincture of Trismegistus, from a Greek who inhabited that capital.

“The period of his return to Germany is unknown : it is only certain that, at about the age of thirty-three, many astonishing cures which he wrought on eminent personages procured him such a celebrity, that he was called in 1526, on the recommendation of *Æcolampadius*,⁽⁴⁾ to fill a chair of physic and surgery at the University of Basil. There Paracelsus began by burning publicly in the amphitheatre the works of Avicenna and Galen, assuring his

auditors that the latches of his shoes were more instructed than those two physicians; that all Universities, all writers put together, were less gifted than the hairs of his beard and of the crown of his head; and that, in a word, he was to be regarded as the legitimate monarch of medicine. 'You shall follow me,' cried he, 'you, Avicenna, Galen, Rhasis, Montagnana, Mesues, you, Gentlemen of Paris, Montpellier, Germany, Cologne, Vienna,* and whomsoever the Rhine and the Danube nourish; you who inhabit the isles of the sea; you, likewise, Dalmatians, Athenians; thou, Arab; thou, Greek; thou, Jew; all shall follow me, and the monarchy shall be mine.'†

"But at Basil it was speedily perceived that the new Professor was no better than an egregious quack. Scarcely a year elapsed before his lectures had fairly driven away an audience incapable of comprehending their emphatic jargon. That which above all contributed to sully his reputation was the debauched life he led. According to the testimony of Oporinus, who lived two years in his intimacy, Paracelsus scarcely ever ascended the lecture-desk unless half drunk, and only dictated to his secretaries when in a state of intoxication: if summoned to attend the sick, he rarely proceeded thither without previously drenching himself with wine. He was accustomed to retire to bed without changing his clothes; sometimes he spent the night in pot-houses with the peasants, and in the morning knew no longer what he was about; and, nevertheless, up to the age of twenty-five his only drink had been water.(⁵)

* Erastus, who relates this, here oddly remarks, "mirum quod non et Garamantos, Indos et Anglos adjunxit." Not so wonderful neither, if we believe what another adversary "had heard somewhere,"—that all Paracelsus' system came of his pillaging "Anglum quendam, Rogerium Bacchonem."

† See his works *passim*. I must give one specimen:—Somebody had been styling him "Luther alter;" "and why not?" (he asks, as he well might) "Luther is abundantly learned, therefore you hate him and me; but we are at least a match for you.—Nam et contra vos et vestros universos principes Avicennam, Galenum, Aristotelem, &c. me satis superque munitum esse novi. Et vertex iste meus calvus ac depillis multò plura et sublimiora novit quam vester vel Avicenna vel universæ academiæ. Prodite, et signum date, qui viri sitis, quid roboris habeatis? quid autem sitis? Doctores et magistri, pediculos pectentes et fricantes podicem."—*Frag. Med.*

“ At length, fearful of being punished for a serious outrage on a magistrate,⁽⁶⁾ he fled from Basil towards the end of the year '27, and took refuge in Alsatia, whither he caused Oporinus to follow with his chymical apparatus.

“ He then entered once more upon the career of ambulatory theosophist.* Accordingly we find him at Colmar in 1528; at Nuremburg in 1529; at St. Gall in 1531; at Pfeffers in 1535; and at Augsburg in 1536: he next made some stay in Moravia, where he still further compromised his reputation by the loss of many distinguished patients, which compelled him to betake himself to Vienna; from thence he passed into Hungary; and in 1538 was at Villach, where he dedicated his ‘Chronicle’ to the States of Carinthia, in gratitude for the many kindnesses with which they had honoured his father. Finally, from Mindelheim, which he visited in 1540, Paracelsus proceeded to Salzburg, where he died in the Hospital of St. Stephen (*Sebastian*, is meant), Sept. 24, 1541.”—(Here follows a criticism on his writings, which I omit.)

(1) *Paracelsus* would seem to be a fantastic version of *Von Hohenheim*; Einsiedeln is the Latin Eremus, whence Paracelsus is sometimes called, as in the correspondence of Erasmus, Eremita: Bombast, his proper name, originally acquired from the characteristic phraseology of his lectures, that unlucky signification which it has ever since retained.

(2) Then Bishop of Spanheim, and residing at Würzburg in Franconia; a town situated in a grassy fertile country, whence its name, Herbiopolis. He was much visited there by learned men, as may be seen by his *Epistolæ Familiæres. Hag. 1536*. Among others, by his staunch friend Cornelius Agrippa, to whom he dates

* “ So migratory a life could afford Paracelsus but little leisure for application to books, and accordingly he informs us that for the space of ten years he never opened a single volume, and that his whole medical library was not composed of six sheets: in effect, the inventory drawn up after his death states that the only books which he left were the Bible, the New Testament, the Commentaries of St. Jerome on the Gospels, a printed volume on Medicine, and seven manuscripts.”

thence, in 1510, a letter in answer to the dedicatory epistle prefixed to the treatise *de Occult. Philosoph.*, which last contains the following ominous allusion to Agrippa's sojourn: "Quum nuper tecum, R. P. in cœnobio tuo apud Herbipolim aliquamdiu conversatus, multa de chymicis, multa de magicis, multa de cabalisticis, cæterisque quæ adhuc in occulto delitescunt, arcanis scientiis atque artibus unâ contulissemus," &c. &c.

(3) "Inexplebilis illa aviditas naturæ perscrutandi secreta et reconditarum supellectile scientiarum animum locupletandi, uno eodemque loco, diu persistere non patiebatur, sed mercurii instar, omnes terras, nationes et urbes perlustrandi igniculos supposebat et cum viris naturæ scrutatoribus, chymicis præsertim, ore tenuis conferret, et quæ diuturnis laboribus nocturnisque vigiliis inveniunt unâ vel alterâ communicatione obtineret."—*Bitiskius in Præfat.* "Patris auxilio primùm, deinde propriâ industriâ doctissimos viros in Germaniâ, Italiâ, Galliâ, Hispaniâ, aliisque Europæ regionibus, nactus est præceptores; quorum liberali doctrinâ, et potissimùm propriâ inquisitione ut qui esset ingenio acutissimo ac fere divino, tantùm profecit, ut multi testati sint, in universâ philosophiâ, tam ardua, tam arcana et abdita eruisse mortalium neminem."—*Melch. Adam. in Vit. Germ. Medic.* "Paracelsus qui in intima naturæ viscera sic penitùs introierit, metallorum stirpiumque vires et facultates tam incredibili ingenii acumine exploraverit ac perviderit; ad morbos omnes vel desperatos et opinione hominum insanabiles percurandum; ut cum Theophrasto nata primùm medicina perfecta que videtur."—*Petri Rami Orat. de Basilea.* His passion for wandering is best described in his own words: "Ecce amatorem adolescentem difficillimi itineris haud piget, ut venustam saltem puellam vel feminam aspiciat: quanto minus nobilissimarum artium amore laboris ac cujuslibet tædii pigebit?" &c.—*Defensiones Septem adversus Æmulos suos.* 1573. *Def. 4ta.* "De peregrinationibus et exilio."

(4) The reader may remember that it was in conjunction with Œcolampadius, then Divinity-Professor at Basil, that Zuinglius

published, in 1528, an answer to Luther's Confession of Faith; and that both proceeded in company to the subsequent conference with Luther and Melancthon at Marburg. Their letters fill a large volume.—*D. D. Johannis Œcolampadii et Huldrici Zuinglii Epistolarum lib. quatuor. Bas.* 1536. It must be also observed, that Zuinglius began to preach in 1516, and at Zurich in 1519, and that in 1525 the mass was abolished in the cantons. The tenets of Œcolampadius were supposed to be more evangelical than those up to that period maintained by the glorious German, and our brave Bishop Fisher attacked them as the fouler heresy:—“About this time arose out of Luther's school one Œcolampadius, like a mighty and fierce giant; who, as his master had gone beyond the Church, went beyond his master (or else it had been impossible he could have been reputed the better scholar) who denied the real presence: him, this worthy champion (the Bishop) sets upon, and with five books (like so many smooth stones taken out of the river that doth always run with living water) slays the Philistine; which five books were written in the year of our Lord 1526, at which time he had governed the See of Rochester 20 years.”—*Life of Bp. Fisher.* 1655. Now, there is no doubt of the Protestantism of Paracelsus, Erasmus, Agrippa, &c. but the nonconformity of Paracelsus was always scandalous. L. Crasso (*Elogj d' Huomini Letterati. Ven.* 1666) informs us that his books were excommunicated by the Church. Quensledt (*de Patr. Doct.*) affirms “nec tantùm novæ medicinæ, verum etiam novæ theologiæ autor est.” Delrio, in his *Disquisit. Magicar.* classes him among those “partim atheos, partim hæreticos” (*lib. 1. cap. 3.*) “Omnino tamen multa theologica in ejusdem scriptis planè atheismum olent, ac duriusculè sonant in auribus vere Christiani.”—*D. Gabrielis Clauderi Schediasma de Tinct. Univ. Norimb.* 1736. I shall only add one more authority—“Oporinus dicit se (Paracelsum) aliquando Lutherum et Papan, non minùs quam nunc Galenum et Hippocratem redacturum in ordinem minabatur, neque enim eorum qui hactenus in scripturam sacram scripsissent, sive veteres, sive recentiores, quenquam scripturæ nucleum rectè eruisse, sed circa corticem et quasi membranam tantùm hærerè.”

—*Th. Erastus. Disputat. de Med. Nová.* These and similar notions had their due effect on Oporinus, who, says Zuingerus, in his *Theatrum*, “longum vale dixit ei (Paracelso) ne ob præceptoris, alioqui amicissimi, horrendas blasphemias ipse quoque aliquando pœnas Deo. Opt. Max. lueret.”

(5) His defenders allow the drunkenness. Take a sample of their excuses: “Gentis hoc, non viri vitium est, a Taciti seculo ad nostrum usque non interrupto filo devolutum, sinceritati forte Germanæ cœvum, et nescio an aliquo consanguinitatis vinculo junctum.”—*Bitiskius.* The other charges were chiefly trumped up by Oporinus: “Domi, quod Oporinus amanuensis ejus sæpè narravit, nunquam nisi potus ad explicanda sua accessit, atque in medio conclavi ad columnam τετυφωμένος adsistens, apprehenso manibus capulo ensis, cujus κοίλωμα hospitium præbuit ut aiunt spiritui familiari, imaginationes aut concepta sua protulit:—alii illud quod in capulo habuit, ab ipso Azoth appellatum Medicinam fuisse præstantissimam aut lapidem Philosophicum putant.”—*Melch. Adam.* This famous sword was no laughing matter in those days, and is now a material feature in the popular idea of Paracelsus. I recollect a couple of allusions to it in our own literature, at the moment.

Ne had been known the Danish Gonswart,
Or Paracelsus with his long sword.

Volpone. Act ii. sc. 2.

Bumbastus kept a Devil's bird
Shut in the pummel of his sword,
That taught him all the cunning pranks,
Of past and future mountebanks.

Hudibras. Part ii. Cant 3.

This Azoth was simply “*laudanum suum.*” But in his time he was commonly believed to possess the double tincture—the power of curing diseases, and transmuting metals. Oporinus often witnessed, as he declares, both these effects, as did also Franciscus, the servant of Paracelsus, who describes, in a letter to Neander, a successful projection at which he was present, and the results of which, good golden ingots, were confided to his keeping. For the

other quality, let the following notice vouch among many others :—
 “Degebat Theophrastus Norimbergæ prociscus à Medentibus illius urbis, et vaniloquus deceptorque proclamatus, qui, ut laboranti famæ subveniat, viros quosdam autoritatis summæ in Reipublicâ illâ adit, et infamiæ amoliendæ, artique suæ asserendæ, specimen ejus pollicetur editurum, nullo stipendio vel accepto pretio, horum faciles præbentium aures jussu elephantiacos aliquot, à communione hominum cæterorum segregatos, et in valetudinarium detrusos, alieno arbitrio eliguntur, quos virtute singulari remedium suorum Theophrastus à fœdâ Græcorum leprâ mundat, pristinæque sanitati restituit; conservat illustre harum curationum urbs in archivis suis testimonium.”—*Bitiskius*.* It is to be remarked that Oporinus afterward repented of his treachery: “Sed resipuit tandem, et quem vivum convitiis insectatus fuerat defunctum veneratione prosequutus, infames famæ præceptoris morsus in remorsus conscientiæ conversi pœnitentiâ, heu nimis tardâ vulnera clausêre exanimi quæ spiranti inflixerant.” For these “bites” of Oporinus, see “*Disputat. Erasti*,” and Andreas Jociscus “*Oratio de vit. et ob. Opori.* ;” for the “remorse,” Mic. Toxita in *præf. Testamenti*, and Conringius (otherwise an enemy of Paracelsus), who says it was contained in a letter from Oporinus to Doctor Vegeus.†

Whatever the moderns may think of these marvellous attributes, the title of Paracelsus to be considered the father of modern chemistry, is indisputable. Gerardus Vossius “*De Philosâ. et Philosum. sectis*,” thus prefaces the ninth section of *Cap. 9*, “*De Chymiâ*”—“Nobilem hanc medicinæ partem, diu sepultam avorum

* The premature death of Paracelsus casts no manner of doubt on the fact of his having possessed the Elixir Vitæ: the alchemists have abundant reasons to adduce, from which I select the following, as explanatory of a property of the Tincture not calculated on by its votaries: “Objectionem illam, quod Paracelsus non fuerit longævus, nonnulli quoque solvunt per rationes physicas: vitæ nimirum abbreviationem fortasse talibus accidere posse, ob Tincturam frequentiore ac largiore dosi sumtam, dum a summe efficaci et penetrabili hujus virtute calor innatus quasi suffocatur.”—*Gabrielis Clauderi Schediasma*.

† For a good defence of Paracelsus I refer the reader to Olaus Borrichius’ treatise—“*Hermetis &c. sapientia vindicata*. 1674.” Or, if he is no more learned than myself in such matters, I had better mention simply that Paracelsus introduced the use of Mercury and Laudanum.

ætate quasi ab orco revocavit Th. Paracelsus." I suppose many hints lie scattered in his neglected books, which clever appropriators have since developed with applause. Thus, it appears from his treatise "*De Phlebotomiâ*," and elsewhere, that he had discovered the circulation of the blood and the sanguification of the heart; as did after him Realdo Colombo, and still more perfectly Andrea Cesalpino of Arezzo, as Bayle and Bartoli observe. Even Lavater quotes a passage from his work, "*De naturâ Rerum*," on practical Physiognomy, in which the definitions and axioms are precise enough: he adds, "though an astrological enthusiast, a man of prodigious genius." See Holerost's Translation, vol. iii. p. 179—"*The Eyes*." While on the subject of the writings of Paracelsus, I may explain a passage in the third part of the Poem. He was, as I have said, unwilling to publish his works, but in effect did publish a vast number. Valentius (*in Præfat. in Paramyr.*) declares "quod ad librorum Paracelsi copiam attinet, audio à Germanis prope trecentos recenseri." "O fœcunditas ingenii!" adds he, appositely. Many of these were, however, spurious; and Fred. Bitiskius gives his good edition (3 vols. fol. Gen. 1658) "rejectis suppositas solo ipsius nomine superbientibus quorum ingens circumfertur numerus." The rest were "charissimum et pretiosissimum authoris pignus, extorsum potiùs ab illo quàm obtentum." "Jam minime eo volente atque jubente hæc ipsius scripta in lucem prodiisse videntur; quippe quæ muro inclusa ipso absente servi cujusdem indicio, furto surrepta atque sublata sunt," says Valentius. These have been the study of a host of commentators, among whose labours are most notable, Petri Severini, *Idea Medicinæ Philosophiæ*. Bas. 1571; Mic. Toxetis, *Onomastica*. Arg. 1574; Dornei, *Dict. Parac. Franc.* 1584; and Pi. *Philosæ. Compendium cum scholiis auctore Leone Suavio*. Paris. (This last, a good book.)

(6) A disgraceful affair. Ono Liechtenfels, a canon, having been rescued *in extremis* by the "*laudanum*" of Paracelsus, refused the stipulated fee, and was supported in his meanness by the authorities, whose interference Paracelsus would not brook. His

own liberality was allowed by his bitterest foes, who found a ready solution of his indifference to profit, in the aforesaid sword-handle and its guest. His freedom from the besetting sin of a profession he abhorred—(as he curiously says somewhere, “*Quis quæso deinceps honorem deferat professione tali, quæ à tam facinorosis nebulonibus obitur et administratur?*”)—is recorded in his epitaph, which affirms—“*Bona sua in pauperes distribuenda collocandaque erogavit,*” *honoravit, or ordinavit*—for accounts differ.

PIPPA PASSES.

A Drama.

I DEDICATE

MY BEST INTENTIONS, IN THIS POEM, MOST ADMIRINGLY TO THE
AUTHOR OF "ION,"—

MOST AFFECTIONATELY TO

MR. SERJEANT TALFOURD.

R. B.

PIPPA PASSES.



NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE TREVISAN.—*A large, mean, airy chamber. A girl, PIPPA, from the silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY!

Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last ;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and supprest it lay—
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away ;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be supprest,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the
world.

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
A mite of my twelve-hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes or glances,

(Be they grants thou art bound to, or gifts above measure)
 One of thy choices, or one of thy chances,
 (Be they tasks God imposed thee, or freaks at thy
 pleasure)

—My Day, if I squander such labour or leisure,
 Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flowing,
 Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good—
 Thy fitful sunshine-minutes, coming, going,
 In which, earth turns from work in gamesome mood—
 All shall be mine! But thou must treat me not
 As the prosperous are treated, those who live
 At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,
 In readiness to take what thou wilt give,
 And free to let alone what thou refusest;
 For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest
 Me, who am only Pippa—old-year's sorrow,
 Cast off last night, will come again to-morrow—
 Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow
 Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's sorrow.
 All other men and women that this earth
 Belongs to, who all days alike possess,
 Make general plenty cure particular dearth,
 Get more joy, one way, if another, less:
 Thou art my single day, God lends to leaven
 What were all earth else, with a feel of heaven;
 Sole light that helps me through the year, thy sun's!
 Try, now! Take Asolo's Four Happiest Ones—

And let thy morning rain on that superb
Great haughty Ottima; can rain disturb
Her Sebald's homage? All the while thy rain
Beats fiercest on her shrub-house window-pane,
He will but press the closer, breathe more warm
Against her cheek; how should she mind the storm?
And, morning past, if mid-day shed a gloom
O'er Jules and Phene,—what care bride and groom
Save for their dear selves? 'Tis their marriage-day;
And while they leave church, and go home their way
Hand clasping hand,—within each breast would be
Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite of thee!
Then, for another trial, obscure thy eve
With mist,—will Luigi and his mother grieve—
The Lady and her child, unmatched, forsooth,
She in her age, as Luigi in his youth,
For true content? The cheerful town, warm, close,
And safe, the sooner that thou art morose
Receives them! And yet once again, outbreak
In storm at night on Monsignor, they make
Such stir about,—whom they expect from Rome
To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,
And say here masses proper to release
A soul from pain,—what storm dares hurt his peace?
Calm would he pray, with his own thoughts to ward
Thy thunder off, nor want the angels' guard!
But Pippa—just one such mischance would spoil
Her day that lightens the next twelvemonth's toil
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!

And here I let time slip for nought !
 Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam—caught
 With a single splash from my ewer !
 You that would mock the best pursuer,
 Was my basin over-deep ?
 One splash of water ruins you asleep,
 And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits
 Wheeling and counterwheeling,
 Reeling, broken beyond healing—
 Now grow together on the ceiling !
 That will task your wits !
 Whoever quenched fire first, hoped to see
 Morsel after morsel flee
 As merrily, as giddily . . .
 Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on,
 Where settles by degrees the radiant cripple ?
 Oh, is it surely blown, my martagon ?
 New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes' nipple,
 Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk bird's poll !
 Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple
 Of ocean, bud there,—fairies watch unroll
 Such turban-flowers ; I say, such lamps disperse
 Thick red flame through that dusk green universe !
 I am queen of thee, floweret ;
 And each fleshy blossom
 Preserve I not—(safer
 Than leaves that embower it,
 Or shells that embosom)
 —From weevil and chafer ?

Laugh through my pane, then ; solicit the bee ;
 Gibe him, be sure ; and, in midst of thy glee,
 Love thy queen, worship me !

—Worship whom else ? For am I not, this day,
 Whate'er I please ? What shall I please to-day ?
 My morning, noon, eve, night—how spend my day ?
 To-morrow I must be Pippa who winds silk,
 The whole year round, to earn just bread and milk :
 But, this one day, I have leave to go,
 And play out my fancy's fullest games ;
 I may fancy all day—and it shall be so—
 That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the names
 Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo !

See ! Up the Hill-side yonder, through the morning,
 Some one shall love me, as the world calls love :
 I am no less than Ottima, take warning !
 The gardens, and the great stone house above,
 And other house for shrubs, all glass in front,
 Are mine ; where Sebald steals, as he is wont,
 To court me, while old Luca yet reposes ;
 And therefore, till the shrub-house door uncloses,
 I . . . what, now ?—give abundant cause for prate
 About me—Ottima, I mean—of late,
 Too bold, too confident she 'll still face down
 The spitefullest of talkers in our town—
 How we talk in the little town below !

But love, love, love—there 's better love, I know !
 This foolish love was only day's first offer ;
 I choose my next love to defy the scoffer :
 For do not our Bride and Bridegroom sally
 Out of Possagno church at noon ?
 Their house looks over Orcana valley—
 Why should I not be the bride as soon
 As Ottima ? For I saw, beside,
 Arrive last night that little bride—
 Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash
 Of the pale, snow-pure cheek and black bright tresses,
 Blacker than all except the black eyelash ;
 I wonder she contrives those lids no dresses !
 —So strict was she, the veil
 Should cover close her pale
 Pure cheeks—a bride to look at and scarce touch,
 Scarce touch, remember, Jules !—for are not such
 Used to be tended, flower-like, every feature,
 As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature ?
 A soft and easy life these ladies lead !
 Whiteness in us were wonderful indeed—
 Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,
 Keep that foot its lady primness,
 Let those ancles never swerve
 From their exquisite reserve,
 Yet have to trip along the streets like me,
 All but naked to the knee !
 How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss
 So startling as her real first infant kiss ?
 Oh, no—not envy, this !

—Not envy, sure!—for if you gave me
Leave to take or to refuse,
In earnest, do you think I'd choose
That sort of new love to enslave me?
Mine should have lapped me round from the beginning;
As little fear of losing it as winning!
Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their wives,
And only parents' love can last our lives:
At eve the son and mother, gentle pair,
Commune inside our Turret; what prevents
My being Luigi? while that mossy lair
Of lizards through the winter-time, is stirred
With each to each imparting sweet intents
For this new-year, as brooding bird to bird—
(For I observe of late, the evening walk
Of Luigi and his mother, always ends
Inside our ruined turret, where they talk,
Calmer than lovers, yet more kind than friends)
Let me be cared about, kept out of harm,
And schemed for, safe in love as with a charm;
Let me be Luigi! . . . If I only knew
What was my mother's face—my father, too!

Nay, if you come to that, best love of all
Is God's; then why not have God's love befall
Myself as, in the Palace by the Dome,
Monsignor?—who to-night will bless the home
Of his dead brother; and God will bless in turn
That heart which beats, those eyes which mildly burn

With love for all men : I, to-night at least,
Would be that holy and beloved priest !

Now wait !—even I already seem to share
In God's love : what does New-year's hymn declare ?
What other meaning do these verses bear ?

*All service ranks the same with God :
If now, as formerly He trod
Paradise, His presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we ; there is no last nor first.*

*Say not " a small event ! " Why " small ? "
Costs it more pain than this, ye call
A " great event," should come to pass,
Than that ? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in, or exceed !*

And more of it, and more of it !—oh, yes—
I will pass by, and see their happiness,
And envy none—being just as great, no doubt,
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they !
A pretty thing to care about
So mightily, this single holiday !
But let the sun shine ! Wherefore repine ?
—With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,

Down the grass-path grey with dew,
 Under the pine-wood, blind with boughs,
 Where the swallow never flew
 As yet, nor cicale dared carouse—
 Dared carouse ! [*She enters the street.*]

I.—MORNING. *Up the Hill-side, inside the Shrub-house.* LUCA'S
 Wife, OTTIMA, and her Paramour, the German SEBALD.

*Seb. (sings.) Let the watching lids wink !
 Day's a-blaze with eyes, think—
 Deep into the night, drink !*

Otti. Night ? Such may be your Rhine-land nights,
 perhaps ;

But this blood-red beam through the shutter's chink,
 —We call such light, the morning's : let us see !
 Mind how you grope your way, though ! How these tall
 Naked geraniums straggle ! Push the lattice—
 Behind that frame !—Nay, do I bid you ?—Sebald,
 It shakes the dust down on me ! Why, of course
 The slide-bolt catches.—Well, are you content,
 Or must I find you something else to spoil ?
 Kiss and be friends, my Sebald ! Is it full morning ?
 Oh, don't speak then !

Seb. Ay, thus it used to be !
 Ever your house was, I remember, shut
 Till mid-day—I observed that, as I strolled
 On mornings thro' the vale here : country girls
 Were noisy, washing garments in the brook—
 Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the hills—

But no, your house was mute, would ope no eye—
 And wisely—you were plotting one thing there,
 Nature, another outside: I looked up—
 Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,
 Silent as death, blind in a flood of light;
 Oh, I remember!—and the peasants laughed
 And said, “The old man sleeps with the young wife!”
 This house was his, this chair, this window—his!

Otti. Ah, the clear morning! I can see St. Mark's:
 That black streak is the belfry. Stop: Vicenza
 Should lie . . . There's Padua, plain enough, that blue!
 Look o'er my shoulder—follow my finger—

Seb.

Morning?

It seems to me a night with a sun added:
 Where's dew? where's freshness? That bruised plant,
 I bruised

In getting thro' the lattice yestereve,
 Droops as it did. See, here's my elbow's mark
 In the dust on the sill.

Otti.

Oh shut the lattice, pray!

Seb. Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood here,
 Foul as the morn may be—

There, shut the world out!

How do you feel now, *Ottima*? There—curse
 The world, and all outside! Let us throw off
 This mask: how do you bear yourself? Let's out
 With all of it!

Otti.

Best never speak of it.

Seb. Best speak again and yet again of it,

Till words cease to be more than words. "His blood,"
 For instance—let those two words mean "His blood"
 And nothing more. Notice—I'll say them now,
 "His blood."

Otti. Assuredly if I repented
 The deed—

Seb. Repent? who should repent, or why?
 What puts that in your head? Did I once say
 That I repented?

Otti. No—I said the deed—

Seb. "The deed," and "the event"—just now it was
 "Our passion's fruit"—the devil take such cant!
 Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,
 I am his cut-throat, you are—

Otti. Here is the wine—

I brought it when we left the house above—
 And glasses too—wine of both sorts. Black? white, then?

Seb. But am not I his cut-throat? What are you?

Otti. There, trudges on his business from the Duomo
 Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
 And bare feet—always in one place at church,
 Close under the stone wall by the south entry;
 I used to take him for a brown cold piece
 Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose
 To let me pass—at first, I say, I used—
 Now—so has that dumb figure fastened on me—
 I rather should account the plastered wall
 A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.
 This, Sebald?

Seb. No—the white wine—the white wine!
Well, Ottima, I promised no new year
Should rise on us the ancient shameful way,
Nor does it rise: pour on! To your black eyes!
Do you remember last damned New Year's day?

Otti. You brought those foreign prints. We looked
at them

Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme
To get him from the fire. Nothing but saying
His own set wants the proof-mark, roused him up
To hunt them out.

Seb. 'Faith, he is not alive
To fondle you before my face!

Otti. Do you
Fondle me, then! who means to take your life
For that, my Sebald?

Seb. Hark you, Ottima,
One thing's to guard against. We'll not make much
One of the other—that is, not make more
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,
Than yesterday—as if, sweet, I supposed
Proof upon proof was needed now, now first,
To show I love you—yes, still love you—love you
In spite of Luca and what's come to him
—Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,
White sneering old reproachful face and all!
We'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if
We still could lose each other—were not tied
By this—conceive you?

Otti. Love—

Seb. Not tied so sure—

Because tho' I was wrought upon—have struck

His insolence back into him—am I

So surely yours?—therefore, forever yours?

Otti. Love, to be wise, (one counsel pays another)

Should we have—months ago—when first we loved,

For instance that May morning we two stole

Under the green ascent of sycamores—

If we had come upon a thing like that

Suddenly—

Seb. “A thing” . . there again—“a thing!”

Otti. Then, Venus' body, had we come upon

My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse

Within there, at his couch-foot, covered close—

Would you have pored upon it? Why persist

In poring now upon it? For 'tis here—

As much as there in the deserted house—

You cannot rid your eyes of it: for me,

Now he is dead I hate him worse—I hate—

Dare you stay here? I would go back and hold

His two dead hands, and say, I hate you worse

Luca, than—

Seb. Off, off; take your hands off mine!

'Tis the hot evening—off! oh, morning, is it?

Otti. There's one thing must be done—you know
what thing.

Come in and help to carry. We may sleep

Anywhere in the whole wide house to-night.

Seb. What would come, think you, if we let him lie
Just as he is? Let him lie there until
The angels take him: he is turned by this
Off from his face, beside, as you will see.

Otti. This dusty pane might serve for looking-glass.
Three, four—four grey hairs! Is it so you said
A plait of hair should wave across my neck?
No—this way!

Seb. Ottima, I would give your neck,
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts of yours,
That this were undone! Killing?—Kill the world
So Luca lives again!—Ay, lives to sputter
His fulsome dotage on you—yes, and feign
Surprise that I returned at eve to sup,
When all the morning I was loitering here—
Bid me dispatch my business and begone.
I would—

Otti. See!

Seb. No, I'll finish! Do you think
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?
All we have talked of is, at bottom, fine
To suffer—there's a recompense in guilt;
One must be venturous and fortunate—
What is one young for, else? In age we'll sigh
O'er the wild, reckless, wicked days flown over;
Still we have lived! The vice was in its place.
But to have eaten Luca's bread, have worn
His clothes, have felt his money swell my purse—
Do lovers in romances sin that way?

Why, I was starving when I used to call
 And teach you music—starving while you plucked me
 These flowers to smell!

Otti. My poor lost friend!

Seb. He gave me

Life—nothing less: what if he did reproach
 My perfidy, and threaten, and do more—
 Had he no right? What was to wonder at?
 He sate by us at table quietly—
 Why must you lean across till our cheeks touch'd?
 Could he do less than make pretence to strike me?
 'Tis not for the crime's sake—I'd commit ten crimes
 Greater, to have this crime wiped out—undone!
 And you—O, how feel you? feel you for me?

Otti. Well, then—I love you better now than ever—
 And best (look at me while I speak to you)—
 Best for the crime—nor do I grieve, in truth,
 This mask, this simulated ignorance,
 This affectation of simplicity,
 Falls off our crime; this naked crime of ours
 May not, now, be looked over—look it down, then!
 Great? let it be great—but the joys it brought,
 Pay they or no its price? Come—they or it!
 Speak not! The past, would you give up the past
 Such as it is, pleasure and crime together?
 Give up that noon I owned my love for you—
 The garden's silence—even the single bee
 Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopt,
 And, where he hid, you only could surmise

By some campanula's chalice set a-swing
As he clung there—" Yes, I love you ! "

Seb. And I drew
Back ; put far back your face with both my hands
Lest you should grow too full of me—your face
So seemed athirst for my whole soul and body !

Otti. And when I ventured to receive you here,
Made you steal hither in the mornings—

Seb. When
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house here,
'Till the red fire on its glazed windows spread
To a yellow haze ?

Otti. Ah—my sign was, the sun
Inflamed the sere side of yon chestnut-tree
Nipt by the first frost.

Seb. You would always laugh
At my wet boots—I had to stride thro' grass
Over my ancles.

Otti. Then our crowning night—

Seb. The July night ?

Otti. The day of it too, Sebald !
When the heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with heat,
Its black-blue canopy seemed let descend
Close on us both, to weigh down each to each,
And smother up all life except our life.
So lay we till the storm came.

Seb. How it came !

Otti. Buried in woods we lay, you recollect ;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead ;

And ever and anon some bright white shaft
 Burnt thro' the pine-tree roof—here burnt and there,
 As if God's messenger thro' the close wood screen
 Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
 Feeling for guilty thee and me : then broke
 The thunder like a whole sea overhead—

Seb. Yes!

Otti. —While I stretched myself upon you, hands
 To hands, my mouth to your hot mouth, and shook
 All my locks loose, and covered you with them—
 You, Sebald, the same you—

Seb. Slower, Ottima—

Otti. And as we lay—

Seb. Less vehemently! Love me—

Forgive me—take not words—mere words—to heart—
 Your breath is worse than wine! Breathe slow, speak
 slow—

Do not lean on me—

Otti. Sebald, as we lay,

Rising and falling only with our pants,
 Who said, “ Let death come now—'tis right to die!
 Right to be punished—nought completes such bliss
 But woe!” Who said that?

Seb. How did we ever rise?

Was't that we slept? Why did it end?

Otti.

I felt you,

Fresh tapering to a point the ruffled ends
 Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips—
 (My hair is fallen now—knot it again!)

Seb. I kiss you now, dear Ottima, now, and now!
This way? Will you forgive me—be once more
My great queen?

Otti. Bind it thrice about my brow;
Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent in sin. Say that!

Seb. I crown you
My great white queen, my spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent—

(From without is heard the voice of PIPPA, singing—

*The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled:
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!*

(PIPPA passes.)

Seb. God's in his heaven! Do you hear that? Who
spoke?
You, you spoke!

Otti. Oh—that little ragged girl!
She must have rested on the step—we give them
But this one holiday the whole year round.
Did you ever see our silk-mills—their inside?
There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.

She stoops to pick my double heartsease . . . Sh !

She does not hear—you call out louder !

Seb. Leave me !

Go, get your clothes on—dress those shoulders !

Otti. Sebald ?

Seb. Wipe off that paint. I hate you !

Otti. Miserable !

Seb. My God ! and she is emptied of it now !

Outright now !—how miraculously gone

All of the grace—had she not strange grace once ?

Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,

No purpose holds the features up together,

Only the cloven brow and puckered chin

Stay in their places—and the very hair,

That seemed to have a sort of life in it,

Drops, a dead web !

Otti. Speak to me—speak not of me !

Seb. —That round great full-orbed face, where not
an angle

Broke the delicious indolence—all broken !

Otti. To me—not of me !—ungrateful, perjured cheat—

A coward, too—but ingrate's worse than all !

Beggar—my slave—a fawning, cringing lie !

Leave me !—betray me !—I can see your drift—

A lie that walks, and eats, and drinks !

Seb. My God !

Those morbid, olive, faultless shoulder-blades—

I should have known there was no blood beneath !

Otti. You hate me, then ? You hate me then ?

Seb.

To think

She would succeed in her absurd attempt,
 And fascinate by sinning ; and show herself
 Superior—Guilt from its excess, superior
 To Innocence. That little peasant's voice
 Has righted all again. Though I be lost,
 I know which is the better, never fear,
 Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,
 Nature, or trick—I see what I have done,
 Entirely now ! Oh, I am proud to feel
 Such torments—let the world take credit thence—
 I, having done my deed, pay too its price !
 I hate, hate—curse you ! God's in his heaven !

Otti.

—Me !

Me ! no, no, Sebald—not yourself—kill me !
 Mine is the whole crime—do but kill me—then
 Yourself—then—presently—first hear me speak—
 I always meant to kill myself—wait, you !
 Lean on my breast—not as a breast ; don't love me
 The more because you lean on me, my own
 Heart's Sebald ! There—there—both deaths presently !

Seb. My brain is drowned now—quite drowned : all I
 feel

Is . . . is at swift-recurring intervals,
 A hurrying-down within me, as of waters
 Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit—
 There they go—whirls from a black, fiery sea !

Otti. Not to me, God—to him be merciful !

Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from the Hill-side to Orcana. Foreign Students of Painting and Sculpture, from Venice, assembled opposite the House of JULES, a young French Statuary.

1st Student. Attention! my own post is beneath this window, but the pomegranate clump yonder will hide three or four of you with a little squeezing, and Schramm and his pipe must lie flat in the balcony. Four, five—who's a defaulter? We want everybody, for Jules must not be suffered to hurt his bride when the jest's found out.

2d Stud. All here! Only our poet's away—never having much meant to be present, moonstrike him! The airs of that fellow, that Giovacchino! He was in violent love with himself, and had a fair prospect of thriving in his suit, so unmolested was it,—when suddenly a woman falls in love with him, too; and out of pure jealousy he takes himself off to Trieste, immortal poem and all—whereto is this prophetic epitaph appended already, as Bluphocks assures me—“*Here a mammoth-poem lies,—Fouled to death by butterflies.*” His own fault, the simpleton! Instead of cramp couplets, each like a knife in your entrails, he should write, says Bluphocks, both classically and intelligibly.—*Æsculāpius, an Epic. Catalogue of the drugs: Hebe's plaister—One strip Cools your lip. Phæbus' emulsion—*

One bottle Clears your throttle. Mercury's bolus—One box Cures . . .

3d Stud. Subside, my fine fellow! If the marriage was over by ten o'clock, Jules will certainly be here in a minute with his bride.

2d Stud. Good!—Only, so should the poet's muse have been universally acceptable, says Bluphocks, *et canibus nostris . . .* and Delia not better known to our literary dogs than the boy—Giovacchino!

1st Stud. To the point, now. Where's Gottlieb, the new-comer? Oh,—listen, Gottlieb, to what has called down this piece of friendly vengeance on Jules, of which we now assemble to witness the winding-up. We are all agreed, all in a tale, observe, when Jules shall burst out on us in a fury by and bye: I am spokesman—the verses that are to undeceive Jules bear my name of Lutwyche—but each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone-squarer, who came singly from Paris to Munich, and thence with a crowd of us to Venice and Possagno here, but proceeds in a day or two alone again—oh, alone, indubitably!—to Rome and Florence. He, forsooth, take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalised, heartless bunglers!—So he was heard to call us all: now, is Schramm brutalised, I should like to know? Am I heartless?

Gott. Why, somewhat heartless; for, suppose Jules a coxcomb as much as you choose, still, for this mere coxcombry, you will have brushed off—what do folks style it?—the bloom of his life. Is it too late to alter?

These love-letters, now, you call his . . . I can't laugh at them.

4th Stud. Because you never read the sham letters of our inditing which drew forth these.

Gott. His discovery of the truth will be frightful.

4th Stud. That's the joke. But you should have joined us at the beginning: there's no doubt he loves the girl—loves a model he might hire by the hour!

Gott. See here! "He has been accustomed," he writes, "to have Canova's women about him, in stone, and the world's women beside him, in flesh; these being as much below, as those, above—his soul's aspiration: but now he is to have the real." . . . There you laugh again! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth.

1st Stud. Schramm! (Take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody)—will Jules lose the bloom of his youth?

Schramm. Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world: look at a blossom—it drops presently, having done its service and lasted its time; but fruits succeed, and where would be the blossom's place could it continue? As well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body, because its earliest favourite, whatever it may have first loved to look on, is dead and done with—as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object, whatever happened first to satisfy it, is superseded in due course. Keep but ever looking, whether with the body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on! Has a man done wondering at women?—There follow men, dead and alive, to wonder

at. Has he done wondering at men?—There's God to wonder at: and the faculty of wonder may be, at the same time, old and tired enough with respect to its first object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently, so far as concerns its novel one. Thus . . .

1st Stud. Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again! There, you see! Well, this—Jules . . . a wretched fribble—oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno, the other day! Canova's gallery—you know: there he marches first resolutely past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye: all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla*—cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement—“In your new place, beauty? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich—I see you!” Next he posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose into—I say, into—the group; by which gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint—and that, likewise, has he mastered at length! Good bye, therefore, to poor Canova—whose gallery no longer need detain his successor Jules, the predestinated novel thinker in marble!

5th Stud. Tell him about the women—go on to the women!

1st Stud. Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other (he said)

than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least: he would wait, and love only at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-fanciulla*. Now I happened to hear of a young Greek—real Greek—girl at Malamocco; a true Islander, do you see, with Alciphron's "hair like sea-moss"—Schramm knows!—white and quiet as an apparition, and fourteen years old at farthest,—a daughter of Natalia, so she swears—that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. We selected this girl for the heroine of our jest. So, first, Jules received a scented letter—somebody had seen his Tydeus at the academy, and my picture was nothing to it—a profound admirer bade him persevere—would make herself known to him ere long—(Paolina, my little friend of the *Fenice*, transcribes divinely). And in due time, the mysterious correspondent gave certain hints of her peculiar charms—the pale cheeks, the black hair—whatever, in short, had struck us in our Malamocco model: we retained her name, too—Phene, which is by interpretation, sea-eagle. Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his monitress: and fancy us over these letters, two, three times a day, to receive and dispatch! I concocted the main of it: relations were in the way—secrecy must be observed—in fine, would he wed her on trust, and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united? St—st—Here they come!

6th Stud. Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly! speak within yourselves!

5th Stud. Look at the bridegroom! Half his hair in storm, and half in calm,—patted down over the left temple,—like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it! and the same old blouse that he murders the marble in!

2d Stud. Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy!—rich, that your face may the better set it off!

6th Stud. And the bride! Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale!

Gott. She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

1st Stud. Oh, Natalia's concern, that is! We settle with Natalia.

6th Stud. She does not speak—has evidently let out no word. The only thing is, will she equally remember the rest of her lesson, and repeat correctly all those verses which are to break the secret to Jules?

Gott. How he gazes on her! Pity—pity!

1st Stud. They go in—now, silence! You three,—not nearer the window, mind, than that pomegranate—just where the little girl, who a few minutes ago passed us singing, is seated!

II.—*Noon. Over Orcana. The House of JULES, who crosses its threshold with PHENE—she is silent, on which JULES begins—*

Do not die, Phene—I am yours now—you
 Are mine now—let fate reach me how she likes,
 If you 'll not die—so, never die! Sit here—
 My work-room's single seat: I over-lean
 This length of hair and lustrous front—they turn
 Like an entire flower upward—eyes—lips—last
 Your chin—no, last your throat turns—'tis their scent
 Pulls down my face upon you! Nay, look ever
 This one way till I change, grow you—I could
 Change into you, beloved!

You by me,

And I by you—this is your hand in mine—
 And side by side we sit: all's true. Thank God!
 I have spoken—speak, you!

—O, my life to come!

My Tydeus must be carved, that's there in clay;
 Yet how be carved, with you about the chamber?
 Where must I place you? When I think that once
 This room-full of rough block-work seemed my heaven
 Without you! Shall I ever work again—
 Get fairly into my old ways again—
 Bid each conception stand while, trait by trait,
 My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?

Will my mere fancies live near you, my truth—
 The live truth—passing and repassing me—
 Sitting beside me ?

Now speak !

Only, first,
 See, all your letters ! Was 't not well contrived ?
 Their hiding-place is Psyche's robe ; she keeps
 Your letters next her skin : which drops out foremost ?
 Ah,—this that swam down like a first moonbeam
 Into my world !

Again those eyes complete
 Their melancholy survey, sweet and slow,
 Of all my room holds ; to return and rest
 On me, with pity, yet some wonder too—
 As if God bade some spirit plague a world,
 And this were the one moment of surprise
 And sorrow while she took her station, pausing
 O'er what she sees, finds good, and must destroy !
 What gaze you at ? Those ? Books, I told you of ;
 Let your first word to me rejoice them, too :
 This minion, a Coluthus, writ in red
 Bistre and azure by Bessarion's scribe—
 Read this line . . . no, shame—Homer's be the Greek
 First breathed me from the lips of my Greek girl !
 My Odyssey in coarse black vivid type
 With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page,
 To mark great places with due gratitude ;
 " *He said, and on Antinous directed*
 " *A bitter shaft* " . . . a flower blots out the rest !

Again upon your search? My statues, then!
 —Ah, do not mind that—better that will look
 When cast in bronze—an Almaign Kaiser, that,
 Swart-green and gold, with truncheon based on hip.
 This, rather, turn to! What, unrecognised?
 I thought you would have seen that here you sit
 As I imagined you,—Hippolyta,
 Naked upon her bright Numidian horse!
 Recall you this, then? “Carve in bold relief”—
 So you commanded—“carve, against I come,
 “A Greek, in Athens, as our fashion was,
 “Feasting, bay-filleted and thunder-free,
 “Who rises ’neath the lifted myrtle-branch:
 “‘*Praise those who slew Hipparchus,*’ cry the guests,
 “‘*While o’er thy head the singer’s myrtle waves*
 “‘*As erst above our champions’: stand up, all!*’ ”
 See, I have laboured to express your thought!
 Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms,
 (Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,
 Only consenting at the branches’ end
 They strain toward) serves for frame to a sole face—
 The Praiser’s—in the centre—who with eyes
 Sightless, so bend they back to light inside
 His brain where visionary forms throng up,
 Sings, minding not that palpitating arch
 Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip of wine
 From the drenched leaves o’erhead, nor crowns cast off,
 Violet and parsley crowns to trample on—
 Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts approve,

Devoutly their unconquerable hymn !
But you must say a " well " to that—say, " well ! "
Because you gaze—am I fantastic, sweet ?
Gaze like my very life's-stuff, marble—marbly
Even to the silence ! why before I found
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself
To see, throughout all nature, varied stuff
For better nature's birth by means of art :
With me, each substance tended to one form
Of beauty—to the human Archetype—
On every side occurred suggestive germs
Of that—the tree, the flower—or take the fruit,—
Some rosy shape, continuing the peach,
Curved beewise o'er its bough ; as rosy limbs,
Depending, nestled in the leaves—and just
From a cleft rose-peach the whole Dryad sprang !
But of the stuffs one can be master of,
How I divined their capabilities !
From the soft-rinded smoothening facile chalk
That yields your outline to the air's embrace,
Half-softened by a halo's pearly gloom ;
Down to the crisp imperious steel, so sure
To cut its one confided thought clean out
Of all the world : but marble !—'neath my tools
More pliable than jelly—as it were
Some clear primordial creature dug from depths
In the Earth's heart, where itself breeds itself,
And whence all baser substance may be worked ;
Refine it off to air, you may—condense it

Down to the diamond ;—is not metal there,
 When o'er the sudden specks my chisel trips ?
 —Not flesh—as flake off flake I scale, approach,
 Lay bare those blueish veins of blood asleep ?
 Lurks flame in no strange windings where, surprised
 By the swift implement sent home at once,
 Flushes and glowings radiate and hover
 About its track ?—

Phene ? what—why is this ?
 That whitening cheek, those still-dilating eyes !
 Ah, you will die—I knew that you would die !

PHENE begins, on his having long remained silent.

Now the end 's coming—to be sure, it must
 Have ended sometime ! Tush—why need I speak
 Their foolish speech ? I cannot bring to mind
 One half of it, besides ; and do not care
 For old Natalia now, nor any of them.
 Oh, you—what are you ?—if I do not try
 To say the words Natalia made me learn,
 To please your friends,—it is to keep myself
 Where your voice lifted me, by letting it
 Proceed—but can it ? Even you, perhaps,
 Cannot take up, now you have once let fall,
 The music's life, and me along with that—
 No, or you would ! We'll stay, then, as we are
 —Above the world.

You creature with the eyes !
 If I could look for ever up to them,
 As now you let me,—I believe, all sin,

All memory of wrong done or suffering borne,
 Would drop down, low and lower, to the earth
 Whence all that 's low comes, and there touch and stay
 —Never to overtake the rest of me,
 All that, unspotted, reaches up to you,
 Drawn by those eyes! What rises is myself,
 Not so the shame and suffering; but they sink,
 Are left, I rise above them—Keep me so
 Above the world!

But you sink, for your eyes
 Are altering—altered! Stay—"I love you, love you" . . .
 I could prevent it if I understood
 More of your words to me—was 't in the tone
 Or the words, your power?

Or stay—I will repeat
 Their speech, if that contents you! Only, change
 No more, and I shall find it presently
 —Far back here, in the brain yourself filled up.
 Natalia threatened me that harm would follow
 Unless I spoke their lesson to the end,
 But harm to me, I thought she meant, not you.
 Your friends,—Natalia said they were your friends
 And meant you well,—because, I doubted it,
 Observing (what was very strange to see)
 On every face, so different in all else,
 The same smile girls like us are used to bear,
 But never men, men cannot stoop so low;
 Yet your friends, speaking of you, used that smile,
 That hateful smirk of boundless self-conceit

Which seems to take possession of this world
 And make of God their tame confederate,
 Purveyor to their appetites . . . you know !
 But no—Natalia said they were your friends,
 And they assented while they smiled the more,
 And all came round me,—that thin Englishman
 With light, lank hair seemed leader of the rest ;
 He held a paper—“What we want,” said he,
 Ending some explanation to his friends—
 “Is something slow, involved and mystical,
 “To hold Jules long in doubt, yet take his taste
 “And lure him on, so that, at innermost
 “Where he seeks sweetness’ soul, he may find—this !
 “—As in the apple’s core, the noisome fly :
 “For insects on the rind are seen at once,
 “And brushed aside as soon, but this is found
 “Only when on the lips or loathing tongue.”
 And so he read what I have got by heart—
 I’ll speak it,—“Do not die, love ! I am yours” . . .
 Stop—is not that, or like that, part of words
 Yourself began by speaking ? Strange to lose
 What cost much pains to learn ! Is this more right ?

*I am a painter who cannot paint ;
 In my life, a devil rather than saint,
 In my brain, as poor a creature too—
 No end to all I cannot do !
 Yet do one thing at least I can—
 Love a man, or hate a man
 Supremely : thus my love began.*

*Through the Valley of Love I went,
 In its lovingest spot to abide,
 And just on the verge where I pitched my tent,
 I found Hate dwelling beside.
 (Let the Bridegroom ask what the painter meant,
 Of his Bride, of the peerless Bride !)
 And further, I traversed Hate's grove,
 In its hatefullest nook to dwell ;
 But lo, where I flung myself prone, couched Love.
 Where the deepest shadow fell.
 (The meaning—those black bride's-eyes above,
 Not the painter's lip should tell !)*

“ And here,” said he, “ Jules probably will ask,
 “ You have black eyes, love,—you are, sure enough,
 “ My peerless bride,—so do you tell, indeed,
 “ What needs some explanation—what means this ? ”

—And I am to go on, without a word—

*So I grew wiser in Love and Hate,
 From simple, that I was of late.
 For once, when I loved, I would enlace
 Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form and face
 Of her I loved, in one embrace—
 As if by mere love I could love immensely !
 And when I hated, I would plunge
 My sword, and wipe with the first lunge
 My foe's whole life out, like a sponge—
 As if by mere hate I could hate intensely !
 But now I am wiser, know better the fashion*

*How passion seeks ail from its opposite passion,
 And if I see cause to love more, or hate more
 Than ever man loved, ever hated, before—
 And seek in the Valley of Love,
 The spot, or the spot in Hate's Grove,
 Where my soul may the sureliest reach
 The essence, nought less, of each,
 The Hate of all Hates, or the Love
 Of all Loves, in its Valley or Grove,—
 I find them the very warders
 Each of the other's borders.
 I love most, when Love is disguised
 In Hate; and when Hate is surprized
 In Love, then I hate most: ask
 How Love smiles through Hate's iron casque,
 Hate grins through Love's rose-braided mask,—
 And how, having hated thee,
 I sought long and painfully
 To wound thee, and not prick
 The skin, but pierce to the quick—
 Ask this, my Jules, and be answered straight
 By thy bride—how the painter Lutwyche can hate!*

JULES interposes.

Lutwyche—who else? But all of them, no doubt,
 Hated me: they at Venice—presently
 Their turn, however! You I shall not meet:
 If I dreamed, saying this would wake me!

Keep

What 's here, this gold—we cannot meet again,
 Consider—and the money was but meant
 For two years' travel, which is over now,
 All chance, or hope, or care, or need of it !
 This—and what comes from selling these, my casts
 And books, and medals, except . . . let them go
 Together, so the produce keeps you safe,
 Out of Natalia's clutches !—If by chance
 (For all 's chance here) I should survive the gang
 At Venice, root out all fifteen of them,
 We might meet somewhere, since the world is wide—

(From without is heard the voice of PIPPA, singing—

Give her but a least excuse to love me !

When—where—

How—can this arm establish her above me,

If fortune fixed her as my lady there,

There already, to eternally reprove me ?

(“ Hist ”—said Kate the queen ;

But “ Oh—” cried the maiden, binding her tresses,

“ 'Tis only a page that carols unseen

“ Crumbling your hounds their messes !”)

*Is she wronged ?—To the rescue of her honour,
 My heart !*

Is she poor ?—What costs it to be styled a donour ?

Merely an earth 's to cleave, a sea 's to part !

But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her !

(“ Nay, list,”—bade Kate the queen ;

And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,

“ ’Tis only a page that carols unseen

“ *Fitting your hawks their jesses!*”)

(PIPPA *passes.*)

JULES *resumes.*

What name was that the little girl sang forth?
 Kate? The Cornaro, doubtless, who renounced
 The crown of Cyprus to be lady here
 At Asolo, where still the peasants keep
 Her memory; and songs tell how many a page
 Pined for the grace of one so far above
 His power of doing good to, as a queen—
 “ She never could be wronged, be poor,” he sighed,
 “ For him to help her!”

Yes, a bitter thing

To see our lady above all need of us;
 Yet so we look ere we will love; not I,
 But the world looks so. If whoever loves
 Must be, in some sort, god or worshipper,
 The blessing or the blest one, queen or page,
 Why should we always choose the page’s part?
 Here is a woman with utter need of me,—
 I find myself queen here, it seems!

How strange!

Look at the woman here with the new soul,
 Like my own Psyche’s,—fresh upon her lips
 Alit, the visionary butterfly,
 Waiting my word to enter and make bright,
 Or flutter off and leave all blank as first.
 This body had no soul before, but slept

Or stirred, was beauteous or ungainly, free
 From taint or foul with stain, as outward things
 Fastened their image on its passiveness :
 Now, it will wake, feel, live—or die again !
 Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff
 Be art—and, further, to evoke a soul
 From form, be nothing ? This new soul is mine !

Now, to kill Lutwyche, what would that do ?—save
 A wretched dauber, men will hoot to death
 Without me, from their laughter !—Oh, to hear
 God's voice plain as I heard it first, before
 They broke in with that laughter ! I heard them
 Henceforth, not God !

To Ancona—Greece—some isle !

I wanted silence only—there is clay
 Every where. One may do whate'er one likes
 In Art—the only thing is, to make sure
 That one does like it—which takes pains to know.

Scatter all this, my Phene—this mad dream !
 Who—what is Lutwyche—what Natalia's friends,
 What the whole world except our love—my own,
 Own Phene ? But I told you, did I not,
 Ere night we travel for your land—some isle
 With the sea's silence on it ? Stand aside—
 I do but break these paltry models up
 To begin art afresh. Shall I meet Lutwyche,
 And save him from my statue's meeting him ?
 Some unsuspected isle in the far seas !

Like a god going thro' his world there stands
 One mountain for a moment in the dusk,
 Whole brotherhoods of cedars on its brow—
 And you are ever by me while I gaze
 —Are in my arms as now—as now—as now!
 Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
 Some unsuspected isle in far off seas!

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from Orcana to the Turret.
 Two or three of the Austrian Police loitering with BLUPHOCKS,
 an English vagabond, just in view of the Turret.*

*Bluphocks.** So, that is your Pippa, the little girl who passed us singing? Well, your Bishop's Intendant's money shall be honestly earned:—now, don't make me that sour face because I bring the Bishop's name into the business—we know he can have nothing to do with such horrors—we know that he is a saint and all that a Bishop should be, who is a great man besides. *Oh! were but every worm a maggot, Every fly a grig, Every bough a christmas faggot, Every tune a jig!* In fact, I have abjured all religions; but the last I inclined to, was the Armenian—for I have travelled, do you see, and at Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper (so styled because there's a sort of bleak hungry sun there,) you might remark over a venerable house-porch, a certain Chaldee inscription; and brief as

* "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

it is, a mere glance at it used absolutely to change the mood of every bearded passenger. In they turned, one and all; the young and lightsome, with no irreverent pause, the aged and decrepit, with a sensible alacrity,—’twas the Grand Rabbi’s abode, in short. Struck with curiosity, I lost no time in learning Şyriac—(these are vowels, you dogs,—follow my stick’s end in the mud—*Celarent, Darii, Ferio!*) and one morning presented myself spelling-book in hand, a, b, c,—I picked it out letter by letter, and what was the purport of this miraculous posy? Some cherished legend of the past you’ll say—“*How Moses hocus-pocust Egypt’s land with fly and locust,*”—or, “*How to Jonah sounded harshish, Get thee up and go to Tarshish,*”—or, “*How the angel meeting Balaam, Straight his ass returned a salaam;*”—in no wise! “*Shackabrach—Boach—somebody or other—Isaach, Re-cei-ver, Pur-cha-ser and Ex-chan-ger of—Stolen goods!*” So talk to me of the religion of a bishop! I have renounced all bishops save Bishop Beveridge—mean to live so—and die—*As some Greek dog-sage, dead and merry, Hellward bound in Charon’s wherry—With food for both worlds, under and upper, Lupine-seed and Hecate’s supper, and never an obolus . . .* (Though thanks to you, or this Intendant thro’ you, or this Bishop thro’ his Intendant—I possess a burning pocket-full of *zwanzigers*) . . . *To pay the Stygian ferry!*

1st Pol. There is the girl, then; go and deserve them the moment you have pointed out to us Signor Luigi and his mother. (*To the rest*) I have been noticing a

house yonder, this long while—not a shutter unclosed since morning!

2d Pol. Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the silk-mills here: he dozes by the hour—wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again, after having bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts: never molest such a household, they mean well.

Blup. Only, cannot you tell me something of this little Pippa, I must have to do with?—one could make something of that name. Pippa—that is, short for Felippa—rhyming to—*Panurge consults Hertrippa—Believ'st thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

2d Pol. Put into rhyme that your head and a ripe musk-melon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger!* Leave this fooling, and look out—the afternoon's over or nearly so.

3d Pol. Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does our principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? There? what's there beside a simple signature? (That English fool's busy watching.)

2d Pol. Flourish all round—"put all possible obstacles in his way;" oblong dot at the end—"Detain him till further advices reach you;" scratch at bottom—"send him back on pretence of some informality in the above;" ink-spirt on right-hand side, (which is the case here)—"Arrest him at once," why and wherefore, I don't concern myself, but my instructions amount to this: if

Signor Luigi leaves home to-night for Vienna, well and good—the passport deposed with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and he means well; but let him stay over to-night—there has been the pretence we suspect—the accounts of his corresponding and holding intelligence with the Carbonari are correct—we arrest him at once—to-morrow comes Venice—and presently, Spielberg. Bluphocks makes the signal sure enough! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

III.—*Evening. Inside the Turret. LUIGI and his Mother entering.*

Mother. If there blew wind, you 'd hear a long sigh,
easing

The utmost heaviness of music's heart.

Luigi. Here in the archway?

Mother.

Oh no, no—in farther,

Where the echo is made—on the ridge.

Luigi.

Here surely, then.

How plain the tap of my heel as I leaped up!

Hark—" *Lucius Junius!* " The very ghost of a voice,
Whose body is caught and kept by . . . what are those?
Mere withered wall-flowers, waving overhead?
They seem an elvish group with thin bleached hair
Who lean out of their topmost fortress—looking
And listening, mountain men, to what we say,
Hands under chin of each grave earthy face:

Up and show faces all of you!—" *All of you!* "
That's the king's dwarf with the scarlet comb; now
hark—

Come down and meet your fate! Hark—" *Meet your
fate!* "

Mother. Let him not meet it, my Luigi—do not
Go to his City! putting crime aside,
Half of these ills of Italy are feigned—
Your Pellicos and writers for effect,
Write for effect.

Luigi. Hush! say A. writes, and B.

Mother. These A's and B's write for effect, I say.
Then, evil is in its nature loud, while good
Is silent—you hear each petty injury—
None of his daily virtues; he is old,
Quiet, and kind, and densely stupid—why
Do A. and B. not kill him themselves?

Luigi. They teach
Others to kill him—me—and, if I fail,
Others to succeed; now, if A. tried and failed
I could not teach that: mine's the lesser task.
Mother, they visit night by night . . .

Mother. —You, Luigi?
Ah, will you let me tell you what you are?

Luigi. Why not? Oh, the one thing you fear to hint,
You may assure yourself I say and say
Ever to myself; at times—nay, even as now
We sit, I think my mind is touched—suspect
All is not sound: but is not knowing that,

What constitutes one sane or otherwise ?
 I know I am thus—so all is right again !
 I laugh at myself as through the town I walk,
 And see men merry as if no Italy
 Were suffering ; then I ponder—“ I am rich,
 “ Young, healthy ; why should this fact trouble me,
 “ More than it troubles these ? ” But it does trouble me !
 No—trouble’s a bad word—for as I walk
 There’s springing and melody and giddiness,
 And old quaint turns and passages of my youth—
 Dreams long forgotten, little in themselves—
 Return to me—whatever may amuse me,
 And earth seems in a truce with me, and heaven
 Accords with me, all things suspend their strife,
 The very cicadas laugh “ There goes he, and there !
 “ Feast him, the time is short—he is on his way
 “ For the world’s sake—feast him this once, our friend ! ”
 And in return for all this, I can trip
 Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps : I go
 This evening, mother !

Mother.

But mistrust yourself—

Mistrust the judgment you pronounce on him.

Luigi. Oh, there I feel—am sure that I am right !

Mother. Mistrust your judgment, then, of the mere
means

Of this wild enterprise : say you are right,—
 How should one in your state e’er bring to pass
 What would require a cool head, a cold heart,
 And a calm hand ? You never will escape.

Luigi. Escape—to even wish that, would spoil all!
 The dying is best part of it. Too much
 Have I enjoyed these fifteen years of mine,
 To leave myself excuse for longer life—
 Was not life pressed down, running o'er with joy,
 That I might finish with it ere my fellows
 Who, sparelier feasted, make a longer stay?
 I was put at the board-head, helped to all
 At first; I rise up happy and content.
 God must be glad one loves his world so much—
 I can give news of earth to all the dead
 Who ask me:—last year's sunsets, and great stars
 That had a right to come first and see ebb
 The crimson wave that drifts the sun away—
 Those crescent moons with notched and burning rims
 That strengthened into sharp fire, and there stood,
 Impatient of the azure—and that day
 In March, a double rainbow stopped the storm—
 May's warm, slow, yellow moonlit summer nights—
 Gone are they, but I have them in my soul!

Mother. (He will not go!)

Luigi. You smile at me! 'Tis true.—
 Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghastliness,
 Environ my devotedness as quaintly
 As round about some antique altar wreath
 The rose festoons, goats' horns, and oxen's skulls.

Mother. See now: you reach the city—you must cross
 His threshold—how?

Luigi. Oh, that's if we conspired!

Then would come pains in plenty, as you guess—
But guess not how the qualities required
For such an office—qualities I have—
Would little stead me otherwise employed,
Yet prove of rarest merit here—here only.
Every one knows for what his excellence
Will serve, but no one ever will consider
For what his worst defect might serve; and yet
Have you not seen me range our coppice yonder
In search of a distorted ash?—it happens
The wry spoilt branch 's a natural perfect bow!
Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-precautioned man
Arriving at the palace on my errand!
No, no—I have a handsome dress packed up—
White satin here, to set off my black hair—
In I shall march—for you may watch your life out
Behind thick walls—make friends there to betray you;
More than one man spoils everything. March straight—
Only, no clumsy knife to fumble for—
Take the great gate, and walk (not saunter) on
Thro' guards and guards—I have rehearsed it all
Inside the Turret here a hundred times—
Don't ask the way of whom you meet, observe,
But where they cluster thickest is the door
Of doors; they'll let you pass—they'll never blab
Each to the other, he knows not the favourite,
Whence he is bound and what 's his business now—
Walk in—straight up to him—you have no knife—
Be prompt, how should he scream? Then, out with you!

Italy, Italy, my Italy!

You're free, you're free! Oh mother, I could dream
They got about me—Andrea from his exile,
Pier from his dungeon, Gualtier from his grave!

Mother. Well, you shall go. Yet seems this patriotism
The easiest virtue for a selfish man
To acquire! He loves himself—and next, the world—
If he must love beyond,—but nought between:
As a short-sighted man sees nought midway
His body and the sun above. But you
Are my adored Luigi—ever obedient
To my least wish, and running o'er with love—
I could not call you cruel or unkind!
Once more, your ground for killing him!—then go!

Luigi. Now do you ask me, or make sport of me?
How first the Austrians got these provinces—
(If that is all, I'll satisfy you soon)
. . . Never by conquest but by cunning, for
That treaty whereby . . .

Mother. Well?

Luigi. (Sure he's arrived,
The tell-tale cuckoo—spring's his confidant,
And he lets out her April purposes!)
Or . . . better go at once to modern times—
He has . . . they have . . . in fact, I understand
But can't re-state the matter; that's my boast;
Others could reason it out to you, and prove
Things they have made me feel.

Mother. Why go to-night?

Morn 's for adventure. Jupiter is now
A morning star. I cannot hear you, Luigi!

Luigi. "I am the bright and morning-star," God saith—
And, "to such an one I give the morning-star!"
The gift of the morning-star—have I God's gift
Of the morning-star?

Mother. Chiara will love to see
That Jupiter an evening-star next June.

Luigi. True, mother. Well for those who live through
June!

Great noontides, thunder storms, all glaring pomps
Which triumph at the heels of sovereign June
Leading his glorious revel thro' our world.
Yes, Chiara will be here—

Mother. In June—remember,
Yourself appointed that month for her coming—

Luigi. Was that low noise the echo?

Mother. The night-wind.
She must be grown—with her blue eyes upturned
As if life were one long and sweet surprise:
In June she comes.

Luigi. We were to see together
The Titian at Treviso—there, again!

(From without is heard the voice of PIPPA, singing—

*A king lived long ago,
In the morning of the world,
When earth was nigher heaven than now:
And the king's locks curled
Disparting o'er a forehead full*

*As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn
 Of some sacrificial bull—
 Only calm as a babe new-born :
 For he was got to a sleepy mood,
 So safe from all decrepitude,
 From age with its bane, so sure gone by,
 (The Gods so loved him while he dreamed,)
 That, having lived thus long, there seemed
 No need the king should ever die.*

Luigi. No need that sort of king should ever die!

*[From without.] Among the rocks his city was :
 Before his palace, in the sun,
 He sate to see his people pass,
 And judge them every one
 From its threshold of smooth stone.
 They haled him many a valley-thief
 Caught in the sheep-pens—robber-chief,
 Swarthy and shameless—beggar-cheat—
 Spy-prowler—or rough pirate found
 On the sea-sand left aground ;
 And sometimes clung about his feet,
 With bleeding lip and burning cheek,
 A woman, bitterest wrong to speak
 Of one with sullen thickset brows :
 And sometimes from the prison-house
 The angry priests a pale wretch brought,
 Who through some chink had pushed and pressed,
 On knees and elbows, belly and breast,
 Worm-like into the temple,—caught*

*At last there by the very God,
 Who ever in the darkness strode
 Backward and forward, keeping watch
 O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch!
 And these, all and every one,
 The king judged, sitting in the sun.*

Luigi. That king should still judge sitting in the sun!

*[From without.] His councillors, on left and right,
 Looked anxious up,—but no surprise
 Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes,
 Where the very blue had turned to white.
 'Tis said, a Python scared one day
 The breathless city, till he came,
 With forky tongue and eyes on flame,
 Where the old king sate to judge alway;
 But when he saw the sweepy hair,
 Girt with a crown of berries rare
 Which the God will hardly give to wear
 To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare
 In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch lights,
 At his wondrous forest rites,—
 Beholding this, he did not dare,
 Approach that threshold in the sun,
 Assault the old king smiling there.
 Such grace had kings when the world begun!*

(PIPPA passes.)

Luigi. And such grace have they, now that the world ends!
 The Python in the city, on the throne,

And brave men, God would crown for slaying him,
 Lurk in bye-corners lest they fall his prey.
 Are crowns yet to be won, in this late trial,
 Which weakness makes me hesitate to reach?
 'Tis God's voice calls, how could I stay? Farewell!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from the Turret to the Bishop's brother's House, close to the Duomo S. Maria. Poor Girls sitting on the steps.

1st Girl. There goes a swallow to Venice—the stout sea-farer!

Seeing those birds fly, makes one wish for wings.
 Let us all wish; you, wish first!

2d Girl. I? This sunset

To finish.

3d Girl. That old . . . somebody I know,
 Greyer and older than my grandfather,
 To give me the same treat he gave last week—
 Feeding me on his knee with fig-peckers,
 Lampreys, and red Breganze-wine, and mumbling
 The while some folly about how well I fare,
 To be let eat my supper quietly—
 Since had he not himself been late this morning
 Detained at—never mind where,—had he not . . .
 “Eh, baggage, had I not!”—

2d Girl. How she can lie!

3d Girl. Look there—by the nails—

2d Girl. What makes your fingers red ?

3d Girl. Dipping them into wine to write bad words with,
On the bright table—how he laughed !

1st Girl. My turn :
Spring 's come and summer 's coming : I would wear
A long loose gown—down to the feet and hands—
With plaits here, close about the throat, all day :
And all night lie, the cool long nights, in bed—
And have new milk to drink—apples to eat,
Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats . . ah, I should say,
This is away in the fields—miles !

3d Girl. Say at once
You 'd be at home—she 'd always be at home !
Now comes the story of the farm among
The cherry orchards, and how April snowed
White blossoms on her as she ran : why, fool,
They 've rubbed out the chalk-mark of how tall you were,
Twisted your starling's neck, broken his cage,
Made a dunghill of your garden—

1st Girl. They, destroy
My garden since I left them ? well—perhaps !
I would have done so—so I hope they have !
A fig-tree curled out of our cottage wall—
They called it mine, I have forgotten why,
It must have been there long ere I was born ;
Cric—cric—I think I hear the wasps o'erhead
Pricking the papers strung to flutter there
And keep off birds in fruit-time—coarse long papers,
And the wasps eat them, prick them through and through.

3d Girl. How her mouth twitches ! Where was I ?—
before

She broke in with her wishes and long gowns
And wasps—would I be such a fool !—Oh, here !
This is my way—I answer every one
Who asks me why I make so much of him—
(If you say, you love him—straight “ he ’ll not be gulled ”)
“ He that seduced me when I was a girl
Thus high—had eyes like yours, or hair like yours,
Brown, red, white,”—as the case may be—that pleases !
(See how that beetle burnishes in the path—
There sparkles he along the dust ! and, there—
Your journey to that maize-tuft ’s spoilt at least !)

1st Girl. When I was young, they said if you killed one
Of those sunshiny beetles, that his friend
Up there, would shine no more that day nor next.

2d Girl. When you were young ? Nor are you young,
that ’s true !

How your plump arms, that were, have dropped away !
Why, I can span them ! Cecco beats you still ?
No matter, so you keep your curious hair.
I wish they ’d find a way to dye our hair
Your colour—any lighter tint, indeed,
Than black—the men say they are sick of black,
Black eyes, black hair !

4th Girl. Sick of yours, like enough !

Do you pretend you ever tasted lampreys
And ortolans ? Giovita, of the palace,
Engaged (but there ’s no trusting him) to slice me

Polenta with a knife that has cut up
An ortolan.

2d Girl. Why, there! is not that, Pippa
We are to talk to, under the window,—quick,—
Where the lights are?

1st Girl. No—or she would sing;
—For the Intendant said . .

3d Girl. Oh, you sing first—
Then, if she listens and comes close . . I'll tell you,
Sing that song the young English noble made,
Who took you for the purest of the pure,
And meant to leave the world for you—what fun!

2d Girl. [*Sings.*]

You'll love me yet!—and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing:
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartfull now—some seed
At least is sure to strike
And yield—what you'll not pluck indeed,
Not love, but, may be, like!

You'll look at least on love's remains,
A grave's one violet:
Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.
What's death?—You'll love me yet!

3d Girl. [*To PIPPA who approaches.*] Oh, you may
come closer—we shall not eat you! Why, you seem the
very person that the great rich handsome Englishman has
fallen so violently in love with! I'll tell you all about it.

IV.—*Night. The Palace by the Duomo.* MONSIGNOR,
dismissing his Attendants.

Mon. Thanks, friends, many thanks. I chiefly desire life now, that I may recompense every one of you. Most I know something of already. What, a repast prepared? *Benedicto benedicatur* . . . ugh . . . ugh! Where was I? Oh, as you were remarking, Ugo, the weather is mild, very unlike winter-weather,—but I am a Sicilian, you know, and shiver in your Julys here: To be sure, when 'twas full summer at Messina, as we priests used to cross in procession the great square on Assumption Day, you might see our thickest yellow tapers twist suddenly in two, each like a falling star, or sink down on themselves in a gore of wax. But go, my friends, but go! [*To the Intendant*] Not you, Ugo! [*The others leave the apartment*] I have long wanted to converse with you, Ugo!

Inten. Uguccio—

Mon. . . . 'guccio Stefani, man! of Ascoli, Fermo, and Fossombruno;—what I do need instructing about, are these accounts of your administration of my poor brother's affairs. Ugh! I shall never get through a third part of your accounts: take some of these dainties before we attempt it, however: are you bashful to that degree? For me, a crust and water suffice.

Inten. Do you choose this especial night to question me?

Mon. This night, Ugo. You have managed my late brother's affairs since the death of our elder brother—fourteen years and a month, all but three days. On the 3rd of December, I find him . . .

Inten. If you have so intimate an acquaintance with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back—they will hardly bear looking into, so far back.

Mon. Ay, ay, ugh, ugh,—nothing but disappointments here below! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this 3rd of December. Talk of disappointments! There was a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign sculptor, I did my utmost to advance, that the church might be a gainer by us both: he was going on hopefully enough, and of a sudden he notifies to me some marvellous change that has happened in his notions of art; here's his letter,—“He never had a clearly conceived Ideal within his brain till to-day. Yet since his hand could manage a chisel, he has practised expressing other men's Ideals—and, in the very perfection he has attained to, he foresees an ultimate failure—his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit: there is but one method of escape—confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will turn painter instead of sculptor, and paint, not carve, its characteristics,”—strike out, I dare say, a school like Correggio: how think you, Ugo?

Inten. Is Correggio a painter?

Mon. Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, why foolish? He may—probably will, fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way by a poet, now, or a musician, (spirits who have conceived and perfected an Ideal through some other channel) transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional roads by pure ignorance of them; eh, Ugo? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo!

Inten. Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours: first, you select the group of which I formed one,—next you thin it gradually,—always retaining me with your smile,—and so do you proceed till you have fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls: and now then? Let this farce, this chatter end now—what is it you want with me?

Mon. Ugo . . .

Inten. From the instant you arrived, I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers—why your brother should have given me this villa, that *podere*,—and your nod at the end meant,—what?

Mon. Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here: if once you set me coughing, Ugo!—

Inten. I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess: now ask me what for! what service I did him—ask me!

Mon. I had better not—I should rip up old disgraces—let out my poor brother's weaknesses. By the way, Maffeo of Forli, (which, I forgot to observe, is your true

name) was the interdict ever taken off you, for robbing that church at Cesena ?

Inten. No, nor needs be—for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him . . .

Mon. Ah, he employed you in that business, did he ? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this villa and that *podere*, for fear the world should find out my relations were of so indifferent a stamp ! Maffeo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under Heaven : my own father . . . rest his soul !—I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may rest : my dear two dead brothers were,—what you know tolerably well ; I, the youngest, might have rivalled them in vice, if not in wealth, but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source ; or if from this, by contrast only,—for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however ; so far as my brother's ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stop the consequences of his crime ; and not one *soldo* shall escape me. Maffeo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick up and commit murders with ; what opportunities the virtuous forego, the villanous seize. Because, to pleasure myself, apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw,—am I therefore to let you, the off-scouring of the earth, seduce the poor and

ignorant, by appropriating a pomp these will be sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let villas and *poderes* go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other murderers and thieves? No . . . if my cough would but allow me to speak!

Inten. What am I to expect? you are going to punish me?

Mon.—Must punish you, Maffeo. I cannot afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or two of life to do it in! How should I dare to say . . .

Inten. “Forgive us our trespasses”—

Mon. My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud, perhaps: shall I proceed, as it were, a-pardoning?—I?—who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuousest efforts will keep myself out of mortal sin, much less, keep others out. No—I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

Inten. And suppose the villas are not your brother's to give, nor yours to take? Oh, you are hasty enough just now!

Mon. 1, 2—N^o. 3!—ay, can you read the substance of a letter, N^o. 3, I have received from Rome? It is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in

infancy by you, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late brother—that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment, but the taking all pains, as guardian of that infant's heritage for the Church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in sealing up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice. Why, man, do I not know the old story? The heir between the succeeding heir, and that heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes, and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come, now!

Inten. So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face, or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put himself in the employer's power so thoroughly—the child is always ready to produce—as you say—howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

Mon. Liar!

Inten. Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly to-night at least, though the gallows await me to-morrow; for what a life did I lead! Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance, every time I pay his annuity (which happens commonly thrice

a year). If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop—you!

Mon. I see thro' the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once; all shall be sifted, however—seven times sifted.

Inten. And how my absurd riches encumbered me! I dared not lay claim to above half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify Heaven, and die!

Sir, you are no brutal, dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death—let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you—the girl—here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak—know nothing of her or me! I see her every day—saw her this morning: of course there is to be no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off every three years, and I can entice her thither—have, indeed, begun operations already. There's a certain lusty, blue-eyed, florid-complexioned, English knave I and the Police employ occasionally.—You assent, I perceive—no, that's not it—assent I do not say—but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give me time to cross the Alps? 'Tis but a little black-eyed, pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her! 'Tis as well settled once and for ever: some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my handsome scoundrel, off for

somebody ; and once Pippa entangled !—you conceive ?
Through her singing ? Is it a bargain ?

(From without is heard the voice of PIPPA, singing—

Over-head the tree-tops meet—

Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet—

There was nought above me, and nought below,

My childhood had not learned to know !

For, what are the voices of birds

—Ay, and of beasts,—but words—our words,

Only so much more sweet ?

The knowledge of that with my life begun !

But I had so near made out the sun,

And counted your stars, the Seven and One,

Like the fingers of my hand :

Nay, I could all but understand

Wherefore through heaven the white moon ranges ;

And just when out of her soft fifty changes

No unfamiliar face might overlook me—

Suddenly God took me !

(PIPPA passes.)

Mon. [*Springing up.*] My people—one and all—
all—within there ! Gag this villain—tie him hand and
foot ! He dares—I know not half he dares—but
remove him—quick ! *Miserere mei, Domine !* quick,
I say !

PIPPA'S Chamber again. She enters it.

The bee with his comb,

The mouse at her dray,

The grub in its tomb,
 Wile winter away ;
 But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm, I pray,
 How fare they ?
 Ha, ha, best thanks for your counsel, my Zanze—
 “ Feast upon lampreys, quaff the Breganze ”—
 The summer of life 's so easy to spend,
 And care for to-morrow so soon put away !
 But winter hastens at summer's end,
 And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,
 How fare they ?
 No bidding me then to . . . what did she say ?
 “ Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small feet shoes
 “ More like . . . (what said she ?)—and less like canoes—”
 How pert that girl was !—would I be those pert
 Impudent staring women ! it had done me,
 However, surely no such mighty hurt
 To learn his name who passed that jest upon me :
 No foreigner, that I can recollect,
 Came, as she says, a month since, to inspect
 Our silk-mills—none with blue eyes and thick rings
 Of English-coloured hair, at all events.
 Well—if old Luca keeps his good intents,
 We shall do better : see what next year brings !
 I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear
 More destitute than you, perhaps, next year !
 Bluph. . . something ! I had caught the uncouth name
 But for Monsignor's people's sudden clatter
 Above us—bound to spoil such idle chatter

As ours ; it were, indeed, a serious matter
If silly talk like ours should put to shame
The pious man, the man devoid of blame,
The . . . ah, but—ah, but, all the same,
No mere mortal has a right
To carry that exalted air ;
Best people are not angels quite—
While—not the worst of people's doings scare
The devils ; so there 's that proud look to spare !
Which is mere counsel to myself, mind ! for
I have just been the holy Monsignor !
And I was you too, Luigi's gentle mother,
And you too, Luigi !—how that Luigi started
Out of the Turret—doubtlessly departed
On some good errand or another,
For he past just now in a traveller's trim,
And the sullen company that prowled
About his path, I noticed, scowled
As if they had lost a prey in him.
And I was Jules the sculptor's bride,
And I was Ottima beside,
And now what am I ?—tired of fooling !
Day for folly, night for schooling !
New year's day is over and spent,
Ill or well, I must be content !
Even my lily's asleep, I vow :
Wake up—here 's a friend I 've pluckt you !
See—call this flower a heart's-ease now !
And something rare, let me instruct you,

Is this—with petals triply swollen,
 Three times spotted, thrice the pollen,
 While the leaves and parts that witness
 The old proportions and their fitness
 Here remain, unchanged unmoved now—
 So call this pampered thing improved now !
 Suppose there 's a king of the flowers
 And a girl-show held in his bowers—
 " Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,"
 Says he, " Zanze from the Brenta,
 I have made her gorge polenta
 Till both cheeks are near as bouncing
 As her . . . name there 's no pronouncing !
 See this heightened colour too—
 For she swilled Breganze wine
 Till her nose turned deep carmine—
 'Twas but white when wild she grew !
 And only by this Zanze's eyes
 Of which we could not change the size,
 The magnitude of what 's achieved
 Otherwise, may be perceived ! "

Oh what a drear, dark close to my poor day !
 How could that red sun drop in that black cloud !
 Ah, Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,
 Dispensed with, never more to be allowed,
 Day's turn is over—now arrives the night's—
 Oh, Lark, be day's apostle
 To mavis, merle and throstle,

Bid them their betters jostle
 From day and its delights !
 But at night, brother Howlet, far over the woods,
 Toll the world to thy chantry—
 Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods
 Full complines with galantry—
 Then, owls and bats, cowls and twats,
 Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,
 Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry !

[After she has begun to undress herself.]

Now, one thing I should like really to know :
 How near I ever might approach all these
 I only fancied being, this long day—
 —Approach, I mean, so as to touch them—so
 As to . . . in some way . . . move them—if you please,
 Do good or evil to them some slight way.
 For instance, if I wind
 Silk to-morrow, my silk may bind

[Sitting on the bedside.]

And broider Ottima's cloak's hem—
 Ah, me, and my important part with them,
 This morning's hymn half promised when I rose !
 True in some sense or other, I suppose,
 Though I passed by them all, and felt no sign.

[As she lies down.]

God bless me ! I can pray no more to-night.
 No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right.
*All service is the same with God—
 With God, whose puppets, best and worst,
 Are we : there is no last nor first.—*

[She sleeps.]

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES.

A Tragedy.

So far as I know, this Tragedy is the first artistical consequence of what Voltaire termed "a terrible event without consequences;" and although it professes to be historical, I have taken more pains to arrive at the history than most readers would thank me for particularising: since acquainted, as I will hope them to be, with the chief circumstances of Victor's remarkable European career—nor quite ignorant of the sad and surprising facts I am about to reproduce (tolerable accounts of which are to be found, for instance, in Abbé Roman's *Récit*, or even the fifth of Lord Orrery's Letters from Italy)—I cannot expect them to be versed, nor desirous of becoming so, in all the details of the memoirs, correspondence, and relations of the time. From these only may be obtained a knowledge of the fiery and audacious temper, unscrupulous selfishness, profound dissimulation, and singular fertility in resources, of Victor—the extreme and painful sensibility, prolonged immaturity of powers, earnest good purpose and vacillating will, of Charles—the noble and right woman's-manliness of his wife—and the ill-considered rascality and subsequent better-advised rectitude of D'Ormea. When I say, therefore, that I cannot but believe my statement (combining as it does what appears correct in Voltaire and plausible in Condorcet) more true to person and thing than any it has hitherto been my fortune to meet with, no doubt my word will be taken, and my evidence spared as readily.

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES.

PERSONS.

VICTOR AMADEUS, First King of Sardinia.

CHARLES EMMANUEL, his Son, Prince of Piedmont.

POLYXENA, Wife of Charles.

D'ORMEA, Minister.

SCENE—The Council Chamber of Rivoli Palace, near Turin, communicating with a Hall at the back, an Apartment to the left and another to the right of the stage.

TIME, 1730-1.

FIRST YEAR 1730.—KING VICTOR.

PART I.

CHARLES, POLYXENA.

Cha. You think so? Well, I do not.

Pol.

My beloved,

All must clear up—we shall be happy yet :

This cannot last for ever . . oh, may change

To-day, or any day !

Cha.

—May change? Ah yes—

May change !

Pol. Endure it, then.

Cha. No doubt, a life
Like this drags on, now better and now worse ;
My father may . . . may take to loving me ;
And he may take, too, D'Ormea closer yet
To counsel him ;—may even cast off her
—That bad Sebastian ; but he also may
. . . Or, no, Polyxena, my only friend,
He may not force you from me ?

Pol. Now, force me
From you !—me, close by you as if there gloomed
No D'Ormeas, no Sebastians on our path—
At Rivoli or Turin, still at hand,
Arch-counsellor, prime confidant . . . force me !

Cha. Because I felt as sure, as I feel sure
We clasp hands now, of being happy once.
Young was I, quite neglected, nor concerned
By the world's business that engrossed so much
My father and my brother : if I peered
From out my privacy,—amid the crash
And blaze of nations, domineered those two ;
'Twas war, peace—France our foe, now—England,
friend—
In love with Spain—at feud with Austria !—Well—
I wondered—laughed a moment's laugh for pride
In the chivalrous couple—then let drop
My curtain—" I am out of it," I said—
When . . .

Pol. You have told me, Charles.

Cha.

Polyxena—

When suddenly,—a warm March day, just that!
 Just so much sunshine as the cottager's child
 Basks in delighted, while the cottager
 Takes off his bonnet, as he ceases work,
 To catch the more of it—and it must fall
 Heavily on my brother . . . had you seen
 Philip—the lion-featured!—not like me!

Pol. I know—*Cha.*

And Philip's mouth yet fast to mine,
 His dead cheek on my cheek, his arm still round
 My neck,—they bade me rise, “for I was heir
 To the Duke,” they said, “the right hand of the Duke;”
 Till then he was my father, not the Duke!
 So . . . let me finish . . . the whole intricate
 World's-business their dead boy was born to, I
 Must conquer,—ay, the brilliant thing he was,
 I, of a sudden, must be: my faults, my follies,
 —All bitter truths were told me, all at once
 To end the sooner. What I simply styled
 Their overlooking me, had been contempt:
 How should the Duke employ himself, forsooth,
 With such an one while lordly Philip rode
 By him their Turin through? But he was punished,
 And must put up with—me! 'Twas sad enough
 To learn my future portion and submit—
 And then the wear and worry, blame on blame!
 —For, spring-sounds in my ears, spring-smells about,
 How could I but grow dizzy in their pent

Dim palace-rooms at first? My mother's look
As they discussed my insignificance—

(She and my father, and I sitting by,)—

I bore:—I knew how brave a son they missed:

Philip had gaily passed state-papers o'er,

While Charles was spelling at them painfully!

But Victor was my father spite of that.

“Duke Victor's entire life has been,” I said,

“Innumerable efforts to one end;

“And, on the point now of that end's success,

“Our Ducal turning to a Kingly crown,

“Where's time to be reminded 'tis his child

“He spurns?” And so I suffered . . yet scarce suffered,

Since I had you at length!

Pol.

—To serve in place

Of monarch, minister and mistress, Charles.

Cha. But, once that crown obtained, then was't not like
Our lot would alter?—“When he rests, takes breath,

“Glances around, and sees who's left to love—

“Now that my mother's dead, sees I am left—

“Is it not like he'll love me at the last?”

Well: Savoy turns Sardinia—the Duke's King!

Could I—precisely then—could you expect

His harshness to redouble? These few months

Have been . . . have been . . . Polyxena, do you

And God conduct me, or I lose myself!

What would he have? What is't they want with me?

Him with this mistress and this minister,

—You see me and you hear him; judge us both!

Pronounce what I should do, Polyxena!

Pol. Endure, endure, beloved ! Say you not
That he 's your Father ? All 's so incident
To novel sway ! Beside, our life must change :
Or you 'll acquire his kingcraft, or he 'll find
Harshness a sorry way of teaching it.
I bear this—not that there 's so much to bear—

Cha. You bear it ? don't I know that you, tho' bound
To silence for my sake, are perishing
Piecemeal beside me ? and how otherwise ?
—When every creep-hole from the hideous Court
Is stopt ; the Minister to dog me, here—
The Mistress posted to entrap you, there !
And thus shall we grow old in such a life—
Not careless,—never estranged,—but old : to alter
Our life, there is so much to alter !

Pol. Come—
Is it agreed that we forego complaints
Even at Turin, yet complain we here
At Rivoli ? 'Twere wiser you announced
Our presence to the King. What 's now a-foot,
I wonder ?—Not that any more 's to dread
Than every day's embarrassment—but guess,
For me, why train so fast succeeded train
On the high-road, each gayer still than each ;
I noticed your Archbishop's pursuivant,
The sable cloak and silver cross ; such pomp
Bodes . . what now, Charles ? Can you conceive ?

Cha.

Not I.

Pol. A matter of some moment—

Cha. There's our life!
 Which of the group of loiterers that stared
 From the lime-avenue, divines that I—
 About to figure presently, he thinks,
 In face of all assembled—am the one
 Who knows precisely least about it?

Pol. Tush!
 D'Ormea's contrivance!

Cha. Ay—how otherwise
 Should the young Prince serve for the old King's foil?
 —So that the simplest courtier may remark,
 'Twere idle raising parties for a Prince
 Content to linger D'Ormea's laughing-stock!
 Something, 'tis like, about that weary business
*[Pointing to papers he has laid down, and which POLYXENA
 examines.]*

—Not that I comprehend three words, of course,
 After all last night's study.

Pol. The faint heart!
 Why, as we rode and you rehearsed just now
 Its substance . . . (that's the folded speech I mean,
 Concerning the Reduction of the Fiefs . . .)
 —What would you have?—I fancied while you spoke,
 Some tones were just your father's.

Cha. Flattery!
Pol. I fancied so :—and here lurks, sure enough,
 My note upon the Spanish Claims! You've mastered
 The fief-speech thoroughly—this other, mind,
 Is an opinion you deliver,—stay,
 Best read it slowly over once to me;

Read—there's bare time; you read it firmly—loud
 —Rather loud—looking in his face,—don't sink
 Your eye once—ay, thus! “If Spain claims . . .” begin
 —Just as you look at me!

Cha. At you! Oh, truly,
 You have I seen, say, marshalling your troops—
 Dismissing councils—or, through doors ajar,
 Head sunk on hand, devoured by slow chagrins
 —Then radiant, for a crown had all at once
 Seemed possible again! I can behold
 Him, whose least whisper ties my spirit fast,
 In this sweet brow, nought could divert me from,
 Save objects like Sebastian's shameless lip,
 Or, worse, the clipt grey hair and dead white face,
 And dwindling eye as if it ached with guile,
 Which D'Ormea wears . . .

[*As he kisses her, enter from the KING's apartment D'ORMEA.*]

. . . I said he would divert
 My kisses from your brow!

D'O. [*Aside.*] Here! So King Victor
 Spoke truth for once; and who's ordained, but I,
 To make that memorable? Both in call,
 As he declared! Were't better gnash the teeth,
 Or laugh outright now?

Cha. [*to Pol.*] What's his visit for?

D'O. [*Aside.*] I question if they'll even speak to me.

Pol. [*to Cha.*] Face D'Ormea, he'll suppose you fear
 him, else.

[*Aloud.*] The Marquis bears the King's command, no doubt.

D'O. [*Aside.*] Precisely! — If I threatened him,
perhaps?

Well, this at least is punishment enough!

Men used to promise punishment would come.

Cha. Deliver the King's message, Marquis!

D'O [*Aside.*] Ah—

So anxious for his fate? [*Aloud.*] A word, my Prince,
Before you see your father—just one word
Of counsel!

Cha. Oh, your counsel certainly—
Polyxena, the Marquis counsels us!

Well, sir? Be brief, however!

D'O. What? you know
As much as I?—preceded me, most like,
In knowledge? So! ("Tis in his eye, beside—
His voice—he knows it and his heart's on flame
Already!) You surmise why you, myself,
Del Borgo, Spava, fifty nobles more,
Are summoned thus?

Cha. Is the Prince used to know,
At any time, the pleasure of the King,
Before his minister?—Polyxena,
Stay here till I conclude my task—I feel
Your presence—(smile not)—thro' the walls, and take
Fresh heart. The King's within that chamber?

D'O. [*Passing the table whercon a paper lies, exclaims, as he
glances at it,*] "Spain!"

Pol. [*Aside to Cha.*] Tarry awhile: what ails the
minister?

D'O. Madam, I do not often trouble you.
The Prince loathes, and you loathe me—let that pass ;
But since it touches him and you, not me,
Bid the Prince listen !

Pol. [to *CHA.*] Surely you will listen !
—Deceit?—Those fingers crumpling up his vest ?

Cha. Deceitful to the very fingers' ends !

D'O. [*who has approached them, overlooks the other paper*
CHARLES continues to hold]

My project for the Fiefs ! As I supposed !
Sir, I must give you light upon those measures
—For this is mine, and that I spied of Spain,
Mine too !

Cha. Release me ! Do you gloze on me
Who bear in the world's face (that is, the world
You've made for me at Turin) your contempt ?
—Your measures?—When was any hateful task
Not D'Ormea's imposition ? Leave my robe !
What post can I bestow, what grant concede ?
Or do you take me for the King ?

D'O. Not I !
Not yet for King,—not for, as yet, thank God,
One, who in . . shall I say a year—a month ?
Ay!—shall be wretcheder than e'er was slave
In his Sardinia,—Europe's spectacle,
And the world's bye-word ! What ? The Prince aggrieved
That I've excluded him our counsels ? Here

[*Touching the paper in CHARLES's hand.*]

Accept a method of extorting gold

Cha. Polyxena, you said
All would clear up—all does clear up to me!

D'O. Clears up? 'Tis no such thing to envy, then?
You see the King's state in its length and breadth?
You blame me, now, for keeping you aloof
From counsels and the fruit of counsels?—Wait
Till I've explained this morning's business!

Cha. [*Aside.*] No—

Stoop to my father, yes,—to D'Ormea, no;
—The King's son, not to the King's counsellor!
I will do something,—but at least retain
The credit of my deed! [*Aloud.*] Then, D'Ormea, this
You now expressly come to tell me?

D'O. This

To tell! You apprehend me?

Cha. Perfectly.

And further, D'Ormea, you have shown yourself,
For the first time these many weeks and months,
Disposed to do my bidding?

D'O. From the heart!

Cha. Acquaint my father, first, I wait his pleasure:
Next . . . or, I'll tell you at a fitter time.
Acquaint the King!

D'O. [*Aside.*] If I 'scape Victor yet!
First, to prevent this stroke at me—if not,—
Then, to avenge it! [*To CHA.*] Gracious sir, I go. [*Goes.*]

Cha. God, I forbore! Which more offends—that man
Or that man's master? Is it come to this?
Have they supposed (the sharpest insult yet)

I needed e'en his intervention? No!
 No—dull am I, conceded,—but so dull,
 Scarcely! Their step decides me.

Pol. How decides?

Cha. You would be free from D'Ormea's eye and hers?
 —Could fly the court with me and live content?
 So—this it is for which the knights assemble!
 The whispers and the closeting of late,
 The savageness and insolence of old,
 —For this!

Pol. What mean you?

Cha. How? you fail to catch
 Their clever plot? I missed it—but could you?
 These last two months of care to inculcate
 How dull I am,—with D'Ormea's present visit
 To prove that, being dull, I might be worse
 Were I a king—as wretched as now dull—
 You recognise in it no winding up
 Of a long plot?

Pol. Why should there be a plot?

Cha. The crown's secure now; I should shame the
 crown—

An old complaint; the point is, how to gain
 My place for one more fit in Victor's eyes,
 His mistress', the Sebastian's child.

Pol. In truth?

Cha. They dare not quite dethrone Sardinia's Prince:
 But they may descant on my dulness till
 They sting me into even praying them

For leave to hide my head, resign my state,
 And end the coil. Not see now? In a word,
 They'd have me tender them myself my rights
 As one incapable :—some cause for that,
 Since I delayed thus long to see their drift !
 I shall apprise the King he may resume
 My rights this moment.

Pol. Pause—I dare not think
 So ill of Victor.

Cha. Think no ill of him !

Pol. —Nor think him, then, so shallow as to suffer
 His purpose be divined thus easily.
 And yet—you are the last of a great line ;
 There's a great heritage at stake ; new days
 Seemed to await this newest of the realms
 Of Europe :—Charles, you must withstand this !

Cha. Ah—

You dare not then renounce the splendid court
 For one whom all the world despises? Speak !

Pol. My gentle husband, speak I will, and truth.
 Were this as you believe, and I once sure
 Your duty lay in so renouncing rule,
 I could . . . could? Oh, what happiness it were—
 To live, my Charles, and die alone with you !

Cha. I grieve I asked you. To the Presence, then !
 D'Ormea acquaints the King by this, no doubt,
 He fears I am too simple for mere hints,
 And that no less will serve than Victor's mouth
 Teaching me in full council what I am.
 —I have not breathed, I think, these many years !

Pol. Why—it may be!—if he desires to wed
That woman and legitimate her child—

Cha. You see as much? Oh, let his will have way!
You 'll not repent confiding in me, love?
There's many a brighter spot in Piedmont, far,
Than Rivoli. I'll seek him—or, suppose
You hear first how I mean to speak my mind?
—Loudly and firmly both, this time, be sure!
I yet may see your Rhine-land—who can tell?
Once away, ever then away! I breathe.

Pol. And I too breathe!

Cha. Come, my Polyxena!

KING VICTOR: PART II.

*Enter KING VICTOR, bearing the regalia on a cushion from his
apartment. He calls loudly.*

D'Ormea!—for patience fails me, treading thus
Among the trains that I have laid,—my knights,
Safe in the hall here—in that anteroom,
My son,—and D'Ormea, where? Of this, one touch—
[Laying down the crown.]

This fireball to these mute, black, cold trains—then!
Outbreak enough!

[Contemplating it.] To lose all, after all!
This—glancing o'er my house for ages—shaped,
Brave meteor, like the Crown of Cyprus now—
Jerusalem, Spain, England—every change
The braver,—and when I have clutched a prize

My ancestry died wan with watching for,
 To lose it!—by a slip—a fault—a trick
 Learnt to advantage once, and not unlearnt
 When past the use,—“just this once more” (I thought)
 “Use it with Spain and Austria happily,
 And then away with trick!”—An oversight
 I'd have repaired thrice over, any time
 These fifty years, must happen now! There's peace
 At length; and I, to make the most of peace,
 Ventured my project on our people here,
 As needing not their help—which Europe knows,
 And means, cold-blooded, to dispose herself
 (Apart from plausibilities of war)
 To crush the new-made King—who ne'er till now
 Feared her. As Duke, I lost each foot of earth
 And laughed at her: my name was left, my sword
 Left, all was left! But she can take, she knows,
 This crown, herself conceded . . .

That's to try,

Kind Europe! My career's not closed as yet!
 This boy was ever subject to my will—
 Timid and tame—the fitter! D'Ormea, too—
 What if the sovereign's also rid of thee
 His prime of parasites?—Yet I delay!
 D'Ormea! [*As D'Ormea enters, the King seats himself.*
 My son, the Prince—attends he?

D'O.

Sire,

He does attend. The crown prepared!—it seems
 That you persist in your resolve.

Vic. Who's come?
The chancellor and the chamberlain? My knights?

D'O. The whole Annunziata.—If, my liege,
Your fortunes had not tottered worse than now . . .

Vic. Del Borgo has drawn up the schedules? mine—
My son's too? Excellent! Only, beware
Of the least blunder, or we look but fools.
First, you read the Annulment of the Oaths;
Del Borgo follows . . . no, the Prince shall sign;
Then let Del Borgo read the Instrument—
On which, I enter.—

D'O. Sire, this may be truth;
You, sire, may do as you affect—may break
Your engine, me, to pieces: try at least
If not a spring remains worth saving! Take
My counsel as I've counselled many times!
What if the Spaniard and the Austrian threat?
There's England, Holland, Venice—which ally
Select you?

Vic. Aha! Come, my D'Ormea,—“truth”
Was on your lip a minute since. Allies?
I've broken faith with Venice, Holland, England.
—As who knows if not you?

D'O. But why with me
Break faith—with one ally, your best, break faith?

Vic. When first I stumbled on you, Marquis—('twas
At Mondovi—a little lawyer's clerk . . .)

D'O. . . . Therefore your soul's ally!—who brought
you through

Your quarrel with the Pope, at pains enough—
 Who've simply echoed you in these affairs—
 On whom you cannot, therefore, visit these
 Affairs' ill fortune—whom you'll trust to guide
 You safe (yes, on my soul) in these affairs!

Vic. I was about to notice, had you not
 Prevented me, that since that great town kept
 With its chicane my D'Ormea's satchel stuffed,
 And D'Ormea's self sufficiently recluse,
 He missed a sight,—my naval armament
 When I burnt Toulon. How the skiff exults
 Upon the galliot's wave!—rises its height,
 O'ertops it even; but the great wave bursts—
 And hell-deep in the horrible profound
 Buries itself the galliot:—shall the skiff
 Think to escape the sea's black trough in turn?
 Apply this: you have been my minister
 —Next me—above me, possibly;—sad post,
 Huge care, abundant lack of peace of mind;
 Who would desiderate the eminence?
 You gave your soul to get it—you'd yet give
 Your soul to keep it, as I mean you shall,
 My D'Ormea! What if the wave ebbed with me?
 Whereas it cants you to another's crest—
 I toss you to my son; ride out your ride!

D'O. Ah, you so much despise me then?

Vic.

You, D'Ormea?

Nowise: and I'll inform you why. A king
 Must in his time have many ministers,

And I've been rash enough to part with mine
 When I thought proper. Of the tribe, not one
 (. . . Or wait, did Pianezze? . . . ah, just the same !)
 Not one of them, ere his remonstrance reached
 The length of yours, but has assured me (commonly,
 Standing much as you stand,—or nearer, say,
 The door to make his exit on his speech)
 —I should repent of what I did : now, D'Ormea,
 (Be candid—you approach'd it when I bade you
 Prepare the schedules ! But you stopped in time)
 —You have not so assured me : how should I
 Despise you, then ?

Enter CHARLES.

Vic. [*changing his tone.*] Are you instructed ? Do
 My order, point by point ! About it, sir !

D'O. You so despise me ? [*Aside.*] One last stay
 remains—
 The boy's discretion there. [*to CHARLES.*]

For your sake, Prince,
 I pleaded—wholly in your interest—
 To save you from this fate !

Cha. [*Aside.*] Must I be told
 The Prince was supplicated for—by him ?

Vic. [*to D'O.*] Apprise Del Borgo, Spava, and the rest,
 Our son attends them ; then return.

D'O. One word.

Cha. [*Aside.*] A moment's pause and they would
 drive me hence,
 I do believe !

D'O. [*Aside.*] Let but the boy be firm!

Vic. You disobey?

Cha. [*to D'O.*] You do not disobey

Me, D'Ormea? Did you promise that or no?

D'O. Sir, I am yours—what would you? Yours
am I!

Cha. When I have said what I shall say, 'tis like
Your face will ne'er again disgust me. Go!
Through you, as through a breast of glass, I see.
And for your conduct, from my youth till now,
Take my contempt! You might have spared me much,
Secured me somewhat, nor so harmed yourself—
That's over now. Go—ne'er to come again!

D'O. As son, the father—father as, the son!
My wits! My wits! [*Goes.*]

Vic. [*Seated.*] And you, what meant you, pray,
By speaking thus to D'Ormea?

Cha. Let us not
Weary ourselves with D'Ormea! Those few words
Have half unsettled what I came to say.
His presence vexes to my very soul.

Vic. One called to manage kingdoms, Charles, needs
heart
To bear up under worse annoyances
Than D'Ormea seems—to me, at least.

Cha. [*Aside.*] Ah, good!
He keeps me to the point! Then be it so.

[*Aloud.*] Last night, Sire, brought me certain papers—
these—

To be reported on,—your way of late.

Is it last night's result that you demand?

Vic. For God's sake, what has night brought forth?

Pronounce

The . . what's your word?—result!

Cha. Sire, that had proved
Quite worthy of your sneers, no doubt:—a few
Lame thoughts, regard for you alone could wring,
Lame as they are, from brains, like mine, believe!
As 'tis, sire, I am spared both toil and sneer.
There are the papers.

Vic. Well, sir? I suppose
You hardly burned them. Now for your result!

Cha. I never should have done great things of course,
But . . oh, my father, had you loved me more . . .

Vic. Loved you? [*Aside.*] Has D'Ormea played me
false, I wonder?

[*Aloud.*] Why, Charles, a king's love is diffused—yourself
May overlook, perchance, your part in it.

Our monarchy is absolutest now

In Europe, or my trouble's thrown away:

I love, my mode, that subjects each and all

May have the power of loving, all and each,

Their mode: I doubt not, many have their sons

To trifle with, talk soft to, all day long—

I have that crown, this chair, and D'Ormea, Charles!

Cha. 'Tis well I am a subject then, not you.

Vic. [*Aside.*] D'Ormea has told him everything.

[*Aloud.*] Aha!

I apprehend you : when all 's said, you take
Your private station to be prized beyond
My own, for instance ?

Cha. —Do and ever did
So take it : 'tis the method you pursue
That grieves . . .

Vic. These words ! Let me express, my friend,
Your thought. You penetrate what I supposed
A secret. D'Ormea plies his trade betimes !
I purpose to resign my crown to you.

Cha. To me ?

Vic. Now—in that chamber.

Cha. You resign
The crown to me ?

Vic. And time enough, Charles, sure ?
Confess with me, at four-and-sixty years
A crown 's a load. I covet quiet once
Before I die, and summoned you for that.

Cha. 'Tis I will speak : you ever hated me,
I bore it,—have insulted me, borne too—
Now you insult yourself, and I remember
What I believed you, what you really are,
And cannot bear it. What ! My life has passed
Under your eye, tormented as you know,—
Your whole sagacities, one after one,
At leisure brought to play on me—to prove me
A fool, I thought, and I submitted ; now
You 'd prove . . . what would you prove me ?

Vic. This to me ?
I hardly know you !

Cha. Know me? Oh, indeed
 You do not! Wait till I complain next time
 Of my simplicity!—for here's a sage—
 Knows the world well—is not to be deceived—
 And his experience, and his Macchiavels,
 His D'Ormeas, teach him—what?—that I, this while,
 Have envied him his crown! He has not smiled,
 I warrant,—has not eaten, drunk, nor slept,
 For I was plotting with my Princess yonder!
 Who knows what we might do, or might not do?
 Go, now—be politic—astound the world!—
 That sentry in the antechamber . . . nay,
 The varlet who disposed this precious trap

[*Pointing to the crown.*]

That was to take me—ask them if they think
 Their own sons envy them their posts!—Know me!

Vic. But you know me, it seems; so learn in brief
 My pleasure. This assembly is convened . . .

Cha. Tell me, that woman put it in your head—
 You were not sole contriver of the scheme,
 My father!

Vic. Now observe me, sir! I jest
 Seldom—on these points, never. Here, I say,
 The Knights assemble to see me concede,
 And you accept, Sardinia's crown.

Cha. Farewell!
 'Twere vain to hope to change this—I can end it.
 Not that I cease from being yours, when sunk
 Into obscurity. I'll die for you,

But not annoy you with my presence—Sire,
Farewell! Farewell!

Enter D'ORMEA.

D'O. [*aside.*] Ha, sure he's changed again—
Means not to fall into the cunning trap—
Then, Victor, I shall yet escape you, Victor!

Vic. [*suddenly placing the crown upon the head of*
CHARLES.]

D'Ormea, your King!

[*To CHARLES.*] My son, obey me! Charles,
Your father, clearer-sighted than yourself,
Decides it must be so. 'Faith, this looks real!

My reasons after—reason upon reason

After—but now, obey me! Trust in me!

By this, you save Sardinia, you save me!

Why the boy swoons! [*To D'O.*] Come this side!

D'O. [*as CHARLES turns from him to VICTOR.*]

You persist?

Vic. Yes—I conceive the gesture's meaning. 'Faith,
He almost seems to hate you—how is that?

Be re-assured, my Charles! Is 't over now?

Then, Marquis, tell the new King what remains

To do! A moment's work. Del Borgo reads

The Act of Abdication out, you sign it,

Then I sign; after that, come back to me.

D'O. Sire, for the last time, pause!

Vic. Five minutes longer

I am your sovereign, Marquis. Hesitate—

And I'll so turn those minutes to account
That . . . Ay, you recollect me!

[*Aside.*] Could I bring

My foolish mind to undergo the reading
That Act of Abdication!

[*As CHARLES motions D'ORMEA to precede him.*

Thanks, dear Charles!

[*CHARLES and D'ORMEA retire.*

Vic. A novel feature in the boy,—indeed
Just what I feared he wanted most. Quite right,
This earnest tone—your truth, now, for effect!
It answers every purpose: with that look,
That voice,—I hear him: “I began no treaty,”
(He speaks to Spain,) “nor ever dreamed of this
“You show me; this I from my soul regret;
“But if my father signed it, bid not me
“Dishonour him—who gave me all, beside.”
And, “truth,” says Spain, “’twere harsh to visit that
“Upon the Prince.” Then come the nobles trooping:
“I grieve at these exactions—I had cut
“This hand off ere impose them; but shall I
“Undo my father’s deed?”—And they confer:
“Doubtless he was no party, after all;
“Give the Prince time!”—

Ay, give us time—but time!

Only, he must not, when the dark day comes,
Refer our friends to me and frustrate all.
We'll have no child's play, no desponding-fits,
No Charles at each cross turn entreating Victor
To take his crown again. Guard against that!

Enter D'ORMEA.

Long live King Charles!—

No—Charles's counsellor!

Well, is it over, Marquis? Did I jest?

D'O. "King Charles!" What then may you be?

Vic. Anything!

A country gentleman that's cured of bustle,
And beats a quick retreat toward Chambery
To hunt and hawk, and leave you noisy folk
To drive your trade without him. I'm Count Remont—
Count Tende—any little place's Count!

D'O. Then, Victor, Captain against Catinat,
At Staffarde, where the French beat you; and Duke
At Turin, where you beat the French; King, late,
Of Savoy, Piedmont, Montferrat, Sardinia,
—Now, "any little place's Count"—

Vic. Proceed!

D'O. Breaker of vows to God, who crowned you first;
Breaker of vows to Man, who kept you since;
Most profligate to me, who outraged God
And Man to serve you, and am made pay crimes
I was but privy to, by passing thus
To your imbecile son—who, well you know,
Must, (when the people here, and nations there,
Clamour for you, the main delinquent, slipt
From King to—Count of any little place)
—Surrender me, all left within his reach,—
I, sir, forgive you: for I see the end—

See you on your return (you will return)
To him you trust in for the moment . . .

Vic.

How?

Trust in him? (merely a prime-minister
This D'Ormea!) How trust in him?

D'O.

In his fear—

His love,—but pray discover for yourself
What you are weakest, trusting in!

Vic.

Aha,

My D'Ormea, not a shrewder scheme than this
In your repertory? You know old Victor—
Vain, choleric, inconstant, rash—(I've heard
Talkers who little thought the King so close)
Felicitous, now, were 't not, to provoke him
To clean forget, one minute afterward,
His solemn act—to call the nobles back
And pray them give again the very power
He has abjured!—for the dear sake of—what?
Vengeance on you! No, D'Ormea: such am I,
Count Tende or Count anything you please,
—Only, the same that did the things you say,
And, among other things you say not, used
Your finest fibre, meanest muscle,—you
I used, and now, since you will have it so,
Leave to your fate—mere lumber in the midst,
You and your works—Why, what on earth beside
Are you made for, you sort of ministers?

D'O. —Not left, though, to my fate! Your witless

son

Has more wit than to load himself with lumber :
He foils you that way, and I follow you.

Vic. Stay with my son—protect the weaker side !

D'O. Ay, be tossed to the people like a rag,
And flung by them to Spain and Austria—so
Abolishing the record of your part
In all this perfidy !

Vic. Prevent, beside,
My own return !

D'O. That 's half prevented now !
'Twill go hard but you 'll find a wondrous charm
In exile, to discredit me. The Alps—
Silk-mills to watch—vines asking vigilance—
Hounds open for the stag—your hawk 's a-wing—
Brave days that wait the Louis of the South,
Italy's Janus !

Vic. So, the lawyer's clerk
Won't tell me that I shall repent !

D'O. You give me
Full leave to ask if you repent ?

Vic. Whene'er,
Sufficient time 's elapsed for that, you judge !

[*Shouts inside, " KING CHARLES."*]

D'O. Do you repent ?

Vic. [*after a slight pause.*] . . . I've kept them wait-
ing? Yes !

Come in—complete the Abdication, sir! [*They go out.*]

Enter POLYXENA.

Pol. A shout? The sycophants are free of Charles !

Oh, is not this like Italy? No fruit
 Of his or my distempered fancy, this—
 But just an ordinary fact! Beside,
 Here they've set forms for such proceedings—Victor
 Imprisoned his own mother—he should know,
 If any, how a son's to be deprived
 Of a son's right. Our duty's palpable.
 Ne'er was my husband for the wily king
 And the unworthy subjects—be it so!
 Come you safe out of them, my Charles! Our life
 Grows not the broad and dazzling life, I dreamed
 Might prove your lot—for strength was shut in you
 None guessed but I—strength which, untrammelled once,
 Had little shamed your vaunted ancestry—
 Patience and self-devotion, fortitude,
 Simplicity and utter truthfulness
 —All which, they shout to lose!

So, now my work
 Begins—to save him from regret. Save Charles
 Regret?—the noble nature! He's not made
 Like the Italians: 'tis a German soul.

CHARLES enters crowned.

Oh, where's the King's heir? Gone:—the Crown-
 prince? Gone—
 Where's Savoy? Gone:—Sardinia? Gone!—But Charles
 Is left! And when my Rhine-land bowers arrive,
 If he looked almost handsome yester-twilight
 As his grey eyes seemed widening into black

Because I praised him, then how will he look ?
 Farewell, you stripped and whited mulberry-trees
 Bound each to each by lazy ropes of vine !
 Now I 'll teach you my language—I 'm not forced
 To speak Italian now, Charles ?

[*She sees the crown.*]

What is this ?

Answer me—who has done this ? Answer !

Cha.

He !

I am King now.

Pol.

Oh worst, worst, worst of all !

Tell me—what, Victor ? He has made you King ?

What 's he then ? What 's to follow this ? You, King ?

Cha. Have I done wrong ? Yes—for you were not by !

Pol. Tell me from first to last.

Cha.

Hush—a new world

Brightens before me ; he is moved away

—The dark form that eclipsed it, he subsides

Into a shape supporting me like you,

And I, alone, tend upward, more and more

Tend upward : I am grown Sardinia's King.

Pol. Now stop : was not this Victor, Duke of Savoy
 At ten years old ?

Cha.

He was.

Pol.

And the Duke spent

Since then, just four-and-fifty years in toil

To be—what ?

Cha.

King.

Pol.

Then why unking himself ?

Cha. Those years are cause enough.

Pol. The only cause ?

Cha. Some new perplexities.

Pol. Which you can solve,
Although he cannot ?

Cha. He assures me so.

Pol. And this he means shall last—how long ?

Cha. How long ?

Think you I fear the perils I confront ?

He 's praising me before the people's face—

My people !

Pol. Then he 's changed—grown kind, the King ?
(Where can the trap be ?)

Cha. Heart and soul I pledge !

My father, could I guard the Crown you gained,

Transmit as I received it,—all good else

Would I surrender !

Pol. Ah, it opens then

Before you—all you dreaded formerly ?

You are rejoiced to be a king, my Charles ?

Cha. So much to dare ? The better ;—much to dread ?

The better. I 'll adventure tho' alone.

Triumph or die, there 's Victor still to witness

Who dies or triumphs—either way, alone !

Pol. Once I had found my share in triumph, Charles,
Or death.

Cha. But you are I ! But you I call

To take, Heaven's proxy, vows I tendered Heaven

A moment since. I will deserve the crown !

Pol. You will. [*Aside.*] No doubt it were a glorious
thing

For any people, if a heart like his
Ruled over it. I would I saw the trap!

Enter VICTOR.

'Tis he must show me.

Vic. So the mask falls off
An old man's foolish love at last! Spare thanks—
I know you, and Polyxena I know.
Here's Charles—I am his guest now—does he bid me
Be seated? And my light-haired, blue-eyed child
Must not forget the old man far away
At Chambery, who dozes while she reigns.

Pol. Most grateful shall we now be, talking least
Of gratitude—indeed of anything
That hinders what yourself must have to say
To Charles.

Cha. Pray speak, Sire!

Vic. 'Faith, not much to say—
Only what shows itself, once in the point
Of sight. You are now the King: you'll comprehend
Much you may oft have wondered at—the shifts,
Dissimulation, wiliness I showed.
For what's our post? Here's Savoy and here's Pied-
mont,
Here's Montferrat—a breadth here, a space there—
To o'er-sweep all these, what's one weapon worth?
I often think of how they fought in Greece
(Or Rome, which was it? You're the scholar, Charles!)
You made a front-thrust? But if your shield, too,

Were not adroitly planted—some shrewd knave
 Reached you behind; and, him foiled, straight if thong
 And handle of that shield were not cast loose,
 And you enabled to outstrip the wind,
 Fresh foes assailed you, either side; 'scape these,
 And reach your place of refuge—e'en then, odds
 If the gate opened unless breath enough
 Was left in you to make its lord a speech.
 Oh, you will see!

Cha. No: straight on shall I go,
 Truth helping; win with it or die with it.

Vic. 'Faith, Charles, you're not made Europe's
 fighting-man!

Its barrier-guarder, if you please. You hold,
 Not take—consolidate, with envious French
 This side, with Austrians that, these territories
 I held—ay, and will hold . . . which *you* shall hold
 Despite the couple! But I've surely earned
 Exemption from these weary politics,
 —The privilege to prattle with my son
 And daughter here, tho' Europe waits the while.

Pol. Nay, Sire,—at Chambéry, away for ever,
 As soon you'll be, 'tis a farewell we bid you!
 Turn these few fleeting moments to account!
 'Tis just as though it were a death.

Vic. Indeed!

Pol. [*Aside.*] Is the trap there?

Cha. Ay, call this parting—death!
 The sacreder your memory becomes.

If I misrule Sardinia, how bring back
My father? No—that thought shall ever urge me.

Vic. I do not mean . . .

Pol. [*who watches VICTOR narrowly this while.*]

Your father does not mean

That you are ruling for your father's sake :
It is your people must concern you wholly
Instead of him. You meant this, Sire? (He drops
My hand !)

Cha. That People is now part of me.

Vic. About the People ! I took certain measures
Some short time since . . . Oh, I 'm aware you know
But little of my measures—these affect
The nobles—we've resumed some grants, imposed
A tax or two ; prepare yourself, in short,
For clamours on that score : mark me : you yield
No jot of what 's entrusted you !

Pol. No jot

You yield !

Cha. My father, when I took the oath,
Although my eye might stray in search of yours,
I heard it, understood it, promised God
What you require. Till from this eminence
He moves me, here I keep, nor shall concede
The meanest of my rights.

Vic. [*Aside.*] The boy 's a fool !

—Or rather, I 'm a fool : for, what 's wrong here ?
To-day the sweets of reigning—let to-morrow
Be ready with its bitters.

Enter D'ORMEA.

There 's beside
Somewhat to press upon your notice first.

Cha. Then why delay it for an instant, Sire ?
That Spanish claim, perchance ? And, now you speak,
—This morning, my opinion was mature—
Which, boy-like, I was bashful in producing
To one, I ne'er am like to fear, in future !
My thought is formed upon that Spanish claim.

Vic. (Betimes, indeed.) Not now, Charles. You
require

A host of papers on it—

D'O. [*coming forward.*] Here they are.
[*To CHA.*] I was the minister and much beside—
Of the late monarch : to say little, him
I served ; on you I have, to say e'en less,
No claim. This case contains those papers : with them
I tender you my office.

Vic. [*hastily.*] Keep him, Charles !
There 's reason for it—many reasons : you
Distrust him, nor are so far wrong there,—but
He 's mixed up in this matter—he 'll desire
To quit you, for occasions known to me :
Do not accept those reasons—have him stay !

Pol. [*Aside.*] His minister thrust on us !

Cha. [*to D'ORMEA.*] Sir, believe,
In justice to myself, you do not need
E'en this commending : whatsoe'er might be

My feelings toward you as a private man,
 They quit me in the vast and untried field
 Of action. Though I shall, myself, (as late
 In your own hearing I engaged to do)
 Preside o'er my Sardinia, yet your help
 Is necessary. Think the past forgotten,
 And serve me now!

D'O. I did not offer you
 My services—would I could serve you, Sire!
 As for the Spanish matter . . .

Vic. But despatch
 At least the dead, in my good daughter's phrase,
 Before the living! Help to house me safe
 Ere you and D'Ormea set the world a-gape!
 Here is a paper—will you overlook
 What I propose reserving for my needs?
 I get as far from you as possible.
 There's what I reckon my expenditure.

Cha. [*reading.*] A miserable fifty thousand crowns!

Vic. Oh, quite enough for country gentlemen!
 Beside the exchequer happens . . . but find out
 All that, yourself!

Cha. [*still reading.*] "Count Tende"—what means
 this?

Vic. Me: you were but an infant when I burst
 Through the defile of Tende upon France.
 Had only my allies kept true to me!
 No matter. Tende's, then, a name I take
 Just as . . .

D'O. —The Marchioness Sebastian takes
The name of Spigno.

Cha. How, sir ?

Vic. [to D'ORMEA.] Fool ! All that
Was for my own detailing. [To CHARLES.] That anon !

Cha. [to D'ORMEA.] Explain what you have said, sir !

D'O. I supposed
The marriage of the King to her I named,
Profoundly kept a secret these few weeks,
Was not to be one, now he 's Count.

Pol. [Aside.] With us
The minister—with him the mistress !

Cha. [to VICTOR.] No—
Tell me you have not taken her—that woman
To live with, past recall !

Vic. And where 's the crime . . .

Pol. [to CHARLES.] True, sir, this is a matter past
recall,
And past your cognizance. A day before,
And you had been compelled to note this—now
Why note it ? The King saved his House from shame :
What the Count does, is no concern of yours.

Cha. [after a pause.] The Spanish business, D'Ormea !

Vic. Why, my son,
I took some ill-advised . . . one's age, in fact,
Spoils everything : though I was over-reached,
A younger brain, we 'll trust, may extricate
Sardinia readily. To morrow, D'Ormea,
Inform the King !

D'O. [*without regarding VICTOR, and leisurely.*] Thus stands the case with Spain :

When first the Infant Carlos claimed his proper
Succession to the throne of Tuscany . . .

Vic. I tell you, that stands over ! Let that rest !
There is the policy !

Cha. [*to D'ORMEA.*] Thus much I know,
And more—too much : the remedy ?

D'O. Of course !

No glimpse of one—

Vic. No remedy at all !

It makes the remedy itself—time makes it.

D'O. [*to CHARLES.*] But if . . .

Vic. [*still more hastily.*] In fine, I shall take care of that—
And, with another project that I have . . .

D'O. [*turning on him.*] Oh, since Count Tende means
to take again

King Victor's crown !—

Pol. [*throwing herself at VICTOR'S feet.*] E'en now
retake it, Sire !

Oh, speak ! We are your subjects both, once more !

Say it—a word effects it ! You meant not,

Nor do mean now, to take it—but you must !

'Tis in you—in your nature—and the shame 's

Not half the shame 'twould grow to afterward !

Cha. Polyxena !

Pol. A word recalls the Knights—

Say it !—What 's promising and what 's the past ?

Say you are still King Victor !

D'O. Better say
The Count repents, in brief! [VICTOR rises.
Cha. With such a crime
I have not charged you, Sire!
Pol. Charles turns from me!

SECOND YEAR 1731.—KING CHARLES.

PART I.

Enter QUEEN POLYXENA and D'ORMEA—A pause.

Pol. And now, sir, what have you to say?

D'O. Count Tende . .

Pol. Affirm not I betrayed you; you resolve
On uttering this strange intelligence
—Nay, post yourself to find me ere I reach
The capital, because you know King Charles
Tarries a day or two at Evian baths
Behind me:—but take warning,—here and thus
[Seating herself in the royal seat.

I listen, if I listen—not your friend.

Explicitly the statement, if you still

Persist to urge it on me, must proceed:

I am not made for aught else.

D'O. Good! Count Tende . . .

Pol. I, who mistrust you, shall acquaint King Charles,
Who even more mistrusts you.

D'O. Does he so?

Pol. Why should he not ?

D'O. Ay, why not ? Motives, seek
You virtuous people, motives ! Say, I serve
God at the devil's bidding—will that do ?
I 'm proud : our People have been pacified
(Really I know not how)—

Pol. By truthfulness.

D'O. Exactly ; that shows I had nought to do
With pacifying them : our foreign perils
Also exceed my means to stay : but here
'Tis otherwise, and my pride 's piqued. Count Tende
Completes a full year's absence : would you, madam,
Have the old monarch back, his mistress back,
His measures back ? I pray you, act upon
My counsel, or they will be.

Pol. When ?

D'O. Let 's think.

Home-matters settled—Victor 's coming now ;
Let foreign matters settle—Victor 's here :
Unless I stop him ; as I will, this way.

Pol. [*reading the papers he presents.*] If this should
prove a plot 'twixt you and Victor ?
You seek annoyances to give him pretext
For what you say you fear !

D'O. Oh, possibly !
I go for nothing. Only show King Charles
That thus Count Tende purposes return,
And style me his inviter, if you please.

Pol. Half of your tale is true ; most like, the Count

Seeks to return : but why stay you with us ?
To aid in such emergencies.

D'O. Keep safe

Those papers : or, to serve me, leave no proof
I thus have counselled : when the Count returns,
And the King abdicates, 'twill stead me little
To have thus counselled.

Pol. The King abdicate !

D'O. He 's good, we knew long since—wise, we discover—

Firm, let us hope :—but I 'd have gone to work
With him away. Well !

[*CHARLES without.*] In the Council Chamber ?

D'O. All 's lost !

Pol. Oh, surely not King Charles ! He 's
changed—

That 's not this year's care-burthened voice and step :
'Tis last year's step—the Prince's voice !

D'O. I know !

Enter CHARLES—D'ORMEA retiring a little.

Cha. Now wish me joy, Polyxena ! Wish it me
The old way ! [*She embraces him.*]

There was too much cause for that !

But I have found myself again ! What 's news
At Turin ? Oh, if you but felt the load
I 'm free of—free ! I said this year would end
Or it, or me—but I am free, thank God !

Pol. How, Charles ?

Cha. You do not guess? The day I found
Sardinia's hideous coil, at home, abroad,
And how my father was involved in it,—
Of course, I vowed to rest or smile no more
Until I freed his name from obloquy.
We did the people right—'twas much to gain
That point, redress our nobles' grievance, too—
But that took place here, was no crying shame :
All must be done abroad,—if I abroad
Appeased the justly-angered Powers, destroyed
The scandal, took down Victor's name at last
From a bad eminence, I then might breathe
And rest ! No moment was to lose. Behold
The proud result—a Treaty, Austria, Spain
Agree to—

D'O. [*Aside.*] I shall merely stipulate
For an experienced headsman.

Cha. Not a soul
Is compromised : the blotted Past 's a blank :
Even D'Ormea will escape unquestioned. See !
It reached me from Vienna ; I remained
At Evian to despatch the Count his news ;
'Tis gone to Chambery a week ago—
And here am I : do I deserve to feel
Your warm white arms around me ?

D'O. [*coming forward.*] He knows that ?

Cha. What, in Heaven's name, means this ?

D'O. He knows that matters
Are settled at Vienna ? Not too late !

Plainly, unless you post this very hour
 Some man you trust (say, me) to Chambery,
 And take precautions I 'll acquaint you with,
 Your father will return here.

Cha. Is he crazed,
 This D'Ormea? Here? For what? As well return
 To take his crown!

D'O. He will return for that.

Cha. [to POLYXENA.] You have not listened to this
 man?

Pol. He spoke
 About your safety—and I listened.

[*He disengages himself from her arms.*]

Cha. [to D'ORMEA.] What
 Apprised you of the Count's intentions?

D'O. Me?
 His heart, Sire; you may not be used to read
 Such evidence, however; therefore read

[*Pointing to POLYXENA's papers.*]

My evidence.

Cha. [to POLYXENA.] Oh, worthy this of you!
 And of your speech I never have forgotten,
 Tho' I professed forgetfulness; which haunts me
 As if I did not know how false it was;
 Which made me toil unconsciously thus long
 That there might be no least occasion left
 For aught of its prediction coming true!
 And now, when there is left no least occasion
 To instigate my father to such crime;

When I might venture to forget (I hoped)
That speech and recognise Polyxena—
Oh, worthy, to revive, and tenfold worse,
That plague now! D'Ormea at your ear, his slanders
Still in your hand! Silent?

Pol. As the wronged are.

Cha. And, D'Ormea, pray, since when have you
presumed

To spy upon my father? (I conceive
What that wise paper shows, and easily.)
Since when?

D'O. The when, and where, and how, belong
To me. 'Tis sad work, but I deal in such.
You ofttimes serve yourself—I'd serve you here:
Use makes me not so squeamish. In a word,
Since the first hour he went to Chambery,
Of his seven servants, five have I suborned.

Cha. You hate my father?

D'O. Oh, just as you will!

[*Looking at POLYXENA.*]

A minute since, I loved him—hate him, now!
What matters?—If you'll ponder just one thing:
Has he that Treaty?—He is setting forward
Already. Are your guards here?

Cha. Well for you

They are not! [*To POL.*] Him I knew of old, but you—
To hear that pickthank, further his designs! [*To D'O.*]
Guards?—were they here, I'd bid them, for your trouble,
Arrest you.

D'O. Guards you shall not want. I lived

The servant of your choice, not of your need.
 You never greatly needed me till now
 That you discard me. This is my arrest.
 Again I tender you my charge—its duty
 Would bid me press you read those documents.

Here, Sire! [Offering his badge of office.]

Cha. [taking it.] The papers also! Do you think
 I dare not read them?

Pol. Read them, sir!

Cha. They prove,
 My father, still a month within the year
 Since he so solemnly consigned it me,
 Means to resume his crown? They shall prove that,
 Or my best dungeon . . .

D'O. Even say, Chambery!
 'Tis vacant, I surmise, by this.

Cha. You prove
 Your words or pay their forfeit, sir. Go there!
 Polyxena, one chance to rend the veil
 Thickening and blackening 'twixt us two! Do say,
 You'll see the falsehood of the charges proved!
 Do say, at least, you wish to see them proved
 False charges—my heart's love of other times!

Pol. Ah, Charles!

Cha. [to D'ORMEA.] Precede me, sir!

D'O. And I'm at length
 A martyr for the truth! No end, they say,
 Of miracles. My conscious innocence!

[As they go out, enter—by the middle door—at which he
 pauses—VICTOR.]

Vic. Sure I heard voices? No! Well, I do best
 To make at once for this, the heart o' the place.
 The old room! Nothing changed!—So near my seat,
 D'Ormea? [*Pushing away the stool which is by the*
 KING'S chair.

I want that meeting over first,
 I know not why. Tush, D'Ormea won't be slow
 To hearten me, the supple knave! That burst
 Of spite so eased him! He'll inform me . . .

What?

Why come I hither? All's in rough—let all
 Remain rough; there's full time to draw back—nay,
 There's nought to draw back from, as yet; whereas,
 If reason should be, to arrest a course
 Of error—reason good, to interpose
 And save, as I have saved so many times,
 Our House, admonish my son's giddy youth,
 Relieve him of a weight that proves too much—
 Now is the time,—or now, or never. 'Faith,
 This kind of step is pitiful—not due
 To Charles, this stealing back—hither, because
 He's from his Capital! Oh, Victor! Victor!
 But thus it is: the age of crafty men
 Is loathsome; youth contrives to carry off
 Dissimulation; we may intersperse
 Extenuating passages of strength,
 Ardour, vivacity, and wit—may turn
 E'en guile into a voluntary grace.—
 But one's old age, when graces drop away

And leave guile the pure staple of our lives—
Ah, loathsome !

Not so—or why pause I ? Turin
Is mine to have, were I so minded, for
The asking ; all the Army's mine—I've witnessed
Each private fight beneath me ; all the Court's
Mine too ; and, best of all, my D'Ormea's still
His D'Ormea ; no ! There's some grace clinging yet.
Had I decided on this step, ere midnight
I'd take the crown.

No ! Just this step to rise
Exhausts me ! Here am I arrived : the rest
Must be done for me. Would I could sit here
And let things right themselves, the masque unmasque
—Of the King, crownless, grey hairs and hot blood,—
The young King, crowned, but calm before his time,
They say,—the eager woman with her taunts,—
And the sad earnest wife who motions me
Away—ay, there she knelt to me ! E'en yet
I can return and sleep at Chambery
A dream out. Rather shake it off at Turin,
King Victor ! Is't to Turin—yes, or no ?
'Tis this relentless noonday-lighted chamber,
Lighted like life, but silent as the grave,
That disconcerts me ! There must be the change—
No silence last year : some one flung doors wide
(Those two great doors which scrutinise me now)
And out I went 'mid crowds of men—men talking,
Men watching if my lip fell or brow changed ;

Men saw me safe forth—put me on my road :
That makes the misery of this return !
Oh, had a battle done it ! Had I dropped
—Haling some battle, three entire days old,
Hither and thither by the forehead—dropped
In Spain, in Austria, best of all, in France—
Spurned on its horns or underneath its hooves,
When the spent monster goes upon its knees
To pad and pash the prostrate wretch—I, Victor,
Sole to have stood up against France—beat down
By inches, brayed to pieces finally
By some vast unimaginable charge,
A flying hell of horse and foot and guns
Over me, and all 's lost, for ever lost,
There 's no more Victor when the world wakes up !
Then silence, as of a raw battle-field,
Throughout the world. Then after (as whole days
After, you catch at intervals faint noise
Thro' the stiff crust of frozen blood)—there creeps
A rumour forth, so faint, no noise at all,
That a strange old man, with face outworn for wounds,
Is stumbling on from frontier town to town,
Begging a pittance that may help him find
His Turin out ; what scorn and laughter follow
The coin you fling into his cap : and last,
Some bright morn, how men crowd about the midst
Of the market-place, where takes the old king breath
Ere with his crutch he strike the palace-gate
Wide ope !

To Turin, yes or no—or no ?

Re-enter CHARLES with papers.

Cha. Just as I thought! A miserable falsehood
Of hirelings discontented with their pay
And longing for enfranchisement! A few
Testy expressions of old age that thinks
To keep alive its dignity o'er slaves
By means that suit their natures!

[*Tearing them.*] Thus they shake
My faith in Victor!

[*Turning, he discovers VICTOR.*

Vic. [*after a pause.*] Not at Evian, Charles?
What's this? Why do you run to close the doors?
No welcome for your father?

Cha. [*Aside.*] Not his voice!
What would I give for one imperious tone
Of the old sort! That's gone for ever.

Vic. Must
I ask once more . . .

Cha. No—I concede it, sir!
You are returned for . . . true, your health declines—
True, Chambery's a bleak unkindly spot;
You'd choose one fitter for your final lodge—
Veneria—or Moncaglièr—ay, that's close,
And I concede it.

Vic. I received advices
Of the conclusion of the Spanish matter
Dated from Evian baths . . .

Cha. And you forbore
To visit me at Evian, satisfied
The work I had to do would fully task

The little wit I have, and that your presence
Would only disconcert me—

Vic. Charles?

Cha. —Me—set

For ever in a foreign course to yours,
And . . .

Sir, this way of wile were good to catch,
But I have not the sleight of it. The truth!
Though I sink under it! What brings you here?

Vic. Not hope of this reception, certainly,
From one who'd scarce assume a stranger mode
Of speech, did I return to bring about
Some awfulest calamity!

Cha. —You mean,
Did you require your crown again! Oh yes,
I should speak otherwise! But turn not that
To jesting! Sir, the truth! Your health declines?
Is aught deficient in your equipage?
Wisely you seek myself to make complaint,
And foil the malice of the world which laughs
At petty discontents; but I shall care
That not a soul knows of this visit. Speak!

Vic. [*Aside.*] Here is the grateful, much-professing son
Who was to worship me, and for whose sake
I think to waive my plans of public good!
[*Aloud.*] Nay, Charles, if I did seek to take once more
My crown, were so disposed to plague myself—
What would be warrant for this bitterness?
I gave it—grant, I would resume it—well?

Cha. I should say simply—leaving out the why
And how—you made me swear to keep that crown :
And as you then intended . . .

Vic. Fool ! What way
Could I intend or not intend ? As man,
With a man's life, when I say " I intend,"
I can intend up to a certain point,
No further. I intended to preserve
The Crown of Savoy and Sardinia whole :
And if events arise demonstrating
The way I took to keep it, rather's like
To lose it . . .

Cha. Keep within your sphere and mine !
It is God's province we usurp on, else.
Here, blindfold thro' the maze of things we walk
By a slight thread of false, true, right and wrong ;
All else is rambling and presumption. I
Have sworn to keep this kingdom : there's my truth.

Vic. Truth, boy, is here—within my breast ; and in
Your recognition of it, truth is, too ;
And in the effect of all this tortuous dealing
With falsehood, used to carry out the truth,
—In its success, this falsehood turns, again,
Truth for the world ! But you are right : these themes
Are over-subtle. I should rather say
In such a case, frankly,—it fails, my scheme :
I hoped to see you bring about, yourself,
What I must bring about : I interpose
On your behalf—with my son's good in sight—

To hold what he is nearly letting go—
 Confirm his title—add a grace, perhaps—
 There's Sicily, for instance,—granted me
 And taken back, some years since—till I give
 That island with the rest, my work's half done.
 For his sake, therefore, as of those he rules . . .

Cha. Our sakes are one—and that, you could not say,
 Because my answer would present itself
 Forthwith ;—a year has wrought an age's change :
 This people's not the people now, you once
 Could benefit ; nor is my policy
 Your policy.

Vic. [*with an outburst.*] I know it ! You undo
 All I have done—my life of toil and care !
 I left you this the absolutest rule
 In Europe—do you think I will sit still
 And see you throw all power off to the people—
 See my Sardinia, that has stood apart,
 Join in the mad and democratic whirl,
 Whereto I see all Europe haste full-tide ?
 England casts off her kings—France mimics England—
 This realm I hoped was safe ! Yet here I talk,
 When I can save it, not by force alone,
 But bidding plagues, which follow sons like you,
 Fasten upon my disobedient . . .

[*Recollecting himself.*] Surely
 I could say this—if minded so—my son ?

Cha. You could not ! Bitterer curses than your curse
 Have I long since denounced upon myself

If I misused my power. In fear of these
I entered on those measures—will abide
By them : so, I should say, Count Tende . . .

Vic.

No !

But no ! But if, my Charles, your—more than old—
Half-foolish father urged these arguments,
And then confessed them futile, but said plainly
That he forgot his promise, found his strength
Fail him, had thought at savage Chambery
Too much of brilliant Turin, Rivoli here,
And Susa, and Veneria, and Superga—
Pined for the pleasant places he had built
When he was fortunate and young—

Cha.

My father !

Vic. Stay yet—and if he said he could not die
Deprived of baubles he had put aside,
He deemed, for ever—of the Crown that binds
Your brain up, whole, sound, and impregnable,
Creating kingliness—the Sceptre, too,
Whose mere wind, should you wave it, back would beat
Invaders—and the golden Ball which throbs
As if you grasped the palpitating heart
Indeed o' the realm, to mould as you may choose !
—If I must totter up and down the streets
My sires built, where myself have introduced
And fostered laws and letters, sciences,
The civil and the military arts—
Stay, Charles—I see you letting me pretend
To live my former self once more—King Victor,

The venturous yet politic—they style me
 Again, the Father of the Prince—friends wink
 Good-humouredly at the delusion you
 So sedulously guard from all rough truths
 That else would break upon the dotage!—You—
 Whom now I see preventing my old shame—
 I tell not, point by cruel point, my tale—
 For is 't not in your breast my brow is hid?
 Is not your hand extended? Say you not . . .

Enter D'ORMEA, leading in POLYXENA.

Pol. [*advancing and withdrawing* CHARLES—to
 VICTOR.]

In this conjuncture, even, he would say—
 (Tho' with a moistened eye and quivering lip)
 The suppliant is my father—I must save
 A great man from himself, nor see him fling
 His well-earned fame away: there must not follow
 Ruin so utter, a break-down of worth
 So absolute: no enemy shall learn,
 He thrust his child 'twixt danger and himself,
 And, when that child somehow stood danger out,
 Stole back with serpent wiles to ruin Charles
 —Body, that's much,—and soul, that's more—and
 realm,
 That's most of all! No enemy shall say . . .

D'O. Do you repent, sir?

Vic. [*resuming himself.*] D'Ormea? This is well!
 Worthily done, King Charles, craftily done!

Judiciously you post these, to o'erhear
 The little your importunate father thrusts
 Himself on you to say! Ay, they'll correct
 The amiable blind facility
 You showed in answering his peevish suit:
 What can he need to sue for? Bravely, D'Ormea,
 Have you fulfilled your office: but for you,
 The old Count might have drawn some few more livres
 To swell his income! Had you, Lady, missed
 The moment, a permission had been granted
 To build afresh my ruinous old pile—
 But you remembered properly the list
 Of wise precautions I took when I gave
 Nearly as much away—to reap the fruits
 I should have looked for!

Cha. Thanks, sir: degrade me,
 So you remain yourself. *Adieu!*

Vic. I'll not
 Forget it for the future, nor presume
 Next time to slight such potent mediators!
 Had I first moved them both to intercede,
 I might have had a chamber in Moncaglior
 —Who knows?

Cha. *Adieu!*

Vic. You bid me this adieu
 With the old spirit?

Cha. *Adieu!*

Vic. Charles—Charles—

Cha. *Adieu!*

[VICTOR goes.]

Cha. You were mistaken, Marquis, as you hear!
 'Twas for another purpose the Count came.
 The Count desires Moncaglièr. Give the order!

D'O. [*leisurely.*] Your minister has lost your confidence,
 Asserting late, for his own purposes,
 Count Tende would . . .

Cha. [*flinging his badge back.*] Be still our minister!
 And give a loose to your insulting joy—
 It irks me more thus stifled than expressed.
 Loose it!

D'O. There's none to loose, alas!—I see
 I never am to die a martyr!

Pol. Charles!

Cha. No praise, at least, Polyxena—no praise!

KING CHARLES : PART II.

Night.—D'ORMEA seated, folding papers he has been examining.

This at the last effects it: now, King Charles
 Or else King Victor—that's a balance: now
 For D'Ormea the arch-culprit, either turn
 O' the scale,—that's sure enough. A point to solve,
 My masters—moralists—whate'er's your style!
 When you discover why I push myself
 Into a pitfall you'd pass safely by,
 Impart to me among the rest! No matter.
 Prompt are the righteous ever with their rede

To us the wicked—lesson them this once!
 For safe among the wicked are you set,
 Old D'Ormea. We lament life's brevity,
 Yet quarter e'en the threescore years and ten,
 Nor stick to call the quarter roundly "life."
 D'Ormea was wicked, say, some twenty years;
 A tree so long was stunted; afterward,
 What if it grew, continued growing, till
 No fellow of the forest equalled it?
 'Twas a shrub then—a shrub it still must be:
 While forward saplings, at the outset checked,
 In virtue of that first sprout keep their style
 Amid the forest's green fraternity.
 Thus I shoot up—to surely get lopped down,
 And bound up for the burning. Now for it!

Enter CHARLES and POLYXENA with Attendants.

D'O. [*rises.*] Sire, in the due discharge of this my
 office—

This enforced summons of yourself from Turin,
 And the disclosure I am bound to make
 To night,—there must already be, I feel,
 So much that wounds . . .

Cha. Well, sir?

D'O. —That I, perchance,
 May utter, also, what, another time,
 Would irk much,—it may prove less irksome now.

Cha. What would you utter?

D'O. That I from my soul

Grieve at to-night's event: for you I grieve—
E'en grieve for . . .

Cha. Tush, another time for talk!

My kingdom is in imminent danger?

D'O. Let

The Count communicate with France—its King,
His grandson, will have Fleury's aid for this,
Though for no other war.

Cha. First for the levies:

What forces can I muster presently?

[D'ORMEA delivers papers which CHARLES inspects.]

Cha. Good—very good. Montorio . . . how is this?
—Equips me double the old complement
Of soldiers?

D'O. Since his land has been relieved
From double impost, this he manages:
But under the late monarch . . .

Cha. Peace. I know.

Count Spava has omitted mentioning
What proxy is to head these troops of his.

D'O. Count Spava means to head his troops himself.
Something's to fight for now; "whereas," says he,
"Under the Sovereign's father" . . .

Cha. It would seem

That all my people love me.

D'O. Yes.

[To POLYXENA while CHARLES continues to inspect the papers.]

A temper

Like Victor's may avail to keep a state;

He terrifies men and they fall not off;
 Good to restrain; best, if restraint were all:
 But, with the silent circle round him, ends
 Such sway. Our King's begins precisely there.
 For to suggest, impel, and set at work,
 Is quite another function. Men may slight,
 In time of peace, the King who brought them peace:
 In war,—his voice, his eyes, help more than fear.
 They love you, Sire!

Cha. [to Attendants.] Bring the Regalia forth.
 Quit the room. And now, Marquis, answer me—
 Why should the King of France invade my realm?

D'O. Why? Did I not acquaint your Majesty
 An hour ago?

Cha. I choose to hear again
 What then I heard.

D'O. Because, Sire, as I said,
 Your father is resolved to have the crown
 At any risk; and, as I judge, calls in
 These foreigners to aid him.

Cha. And your reason
 For saying this?

D'O. [*Aside.*] Ay, just his father's way!
 [To CH.] The Count wrote yesterday to your Forces' Chief,
 Rhebinder,—made demand of help—

Cha. To try
 Rhebinder—he's of alien blood: aught else?

D'O. Receiving a refusal,—some hours after,
 The Count called on Del Borgo to deliver

The Act of Abdication : he refusing,
Or hesitating, rather—

Cha. What ensued ?

D'O. At midnight, only two hours since, at Turin,
He rode in person to the citadel
With one attendant, to the Soccorso gate,
And bade the governor, San Remi, open—
Admit him,

Cha. For a purpose I divine,
These three were faithful, then ?

D'O. They told it me :
And I—

Cha. Most faithful—

D'O. Tell it you—with this,
Moreover, of my own : if, an hour hence,
You have not interposed, the Count will be
Upon his road to France for succour.

Cha. Good !
You do your duty, now, to me your monarch
Fully, I warrant ?—have, that is, your project
For saving both of us disgrace, past doubt ?

D'O. I have my counsel,—and the only one.
A month since, I besought you to employ
Restraints which had prevented many a pang :
But now the harsher course must be pursued.
These papers, made for the emergency,
Will pain you to subscribe : this is a list
Of those suspected merely—men to watch ;
This—of the few of the Count's very household,

You must, however reluctantly, arrest ;
 While here 's a method of remonstrance (sure
 Not stronger than the case demands) to take
 With the Count's self.

Cha. Deliver those three papers.

Pol. [*while CHARLES inspects them—to D'ORMEA.*]
 Your measures are not over-harsh, sir : France
 Will hardly be deterred from coming hither
 By these.

D'O. What good of my proposing measures
 Without a chance of their success ? E'en these,
 Hear what he 'll say at my presenting.

Cha. [*who has signed them.*] There !
 About the warrants ! You 've my signature.
 What turns you pale ? I do my duty by you
 In acting boldly thus on your advice.

D'O. [*reading them separately.*] Arrest the people I
 suspected merely ?

Cha. Did you suspect them ?

D'O. Doubtless : but—but—Sire,
 This Forquieri's governor of Turin ;
 And Rivarol and he have influence over
 Half of the capital.—Rabella, too ?
 Why, Sire—

Cha. Oh, leave the fear to me.

D'O. [*still reading.*] You bid me
 Incarcerate the people on this list ?
 Sire—

Cha. Why, you never bade arrest those men,

So close related to my father too,
On trifling grounds ?

D'O. Oh, as for that, St. George,
President of Chambery's senators,
Is hatching treason—but—

[*Still more troubled.*] Sire, Count Cumiane
Is brother to your father's wife ! What 's here ?
Arrest the wife herself ?

Cha. You seem to think it
A venial crime to plot against me. Well ?

D'O. [*who has read the last paper.*] Wherefore am I
thus ruined ? Why not take
My life at once ? This poor formality
Is, let me say, unworthy you ! Prevent it,
You, madam ! I have served you, am prepared
For all disgraces—only, let disgrace
Be plain, be proper—proper for the world
To pass its judgment on 'twixt you and me !
Take back your warrant—I will none of it.

Cha. Here is a man to talk of fickleness !
He stakes his life upon my father's falsehood ;
I bid him—

D'O. Not you ! Were he trebly false,
You do not bid me—

Cha. Is 't not written there ?
I thought so : give—I 'll set it right.

D'O. Is it there ?
Oh, yes—and plain—arrest him—now—drag here
Your father ! And were all six times as plain,
Do you suppose I 'd trust it ?

Cha. Just one word!
You bring him, taken in the act of flight,
Or else your life is forfeit.

D'O. Ay, to Turin
I bring him? And to morrow?

Cha. Here and now!
The whole thing is a lie—a hateful lie—
As I believed and as my father said.
I knew it from the first, but was compelled
To circumvent you; and the crafty D'Ormea,
That baffled Alberoni and tricked Coscia,
The miserable sower of such discord
'Twixt sire and son, is in the toils at last!
Oh, I see! you arrive—this plan of yours,
Weak as it is, torments sufficiently
A sick, old, peevish man—wings hasty speech
And ill-considered threats from him; that's noted;
Then out you ferret papers, his amusement
In lonely hours of lassitude—examine
The day-by-day report of your paid creatures—
And back you come—all was not ripe, you find,
And, as you hope, may keep from ripening yet—
But you were in bare time! Only, 'twere best
I never saw my father—these old men
Are potent in excuses—and, meantime,
D'Ormea's the man I cannot do without.

Pol. Charles—

Cha. Ah, no question! You're for D'Ormea too!
You'd have me eat and drink, and sleep, live, die
With this lie coil'd about me, choking me!

No, no—he 's caught ! [to D'ORMEA.] You venture life,
you say,

Upon my father's perfidy ; and I
Have, on the whole, no right to disregard
The chains of testimony you thus wind
About me ; though I do—do from my soul
Discredit them : still I must authorise
These measures—and I will. Perugia !

[Many Officers enter.]

Count—

You and Solar, with all the force you have,
Are at the Marquis' orders : what he bids,
Implicitly perform ! You are to bring
A traitor here ; the man that 's likest one
At present, fronts me ; you are at his beck
For a full hour ; he undertakes to show you
A fouler than himself,—but, failing that,
Return with him, and, as my father lives,
He dies this night ! The clemency you 've blamed
So oft, shall be revoked—rights exercised
That I 've abjured.

[To D'ORMEA.] Now, Sir, about the work !

To save your king and country ! Take the warrant !

D'O. [boldly to PERUGIA.] You hear the Sovereign's
mandate, Count Perugia ?

Obeys me ! As your diligence, expect
Reward ! All follow to Montcagliar !

Cha. [in great anguish.] D'Ormea ! [D'ORMEA goes.
He goes, lit up with that appalling smile !

[To POLYXENA after a pause.

At least you understand all this ?

Pol. These means
Of our defence—these measures of precaution?

Cha. It must be the best way. I should have else
Withered beneath his scorn.

Pol. What would you say?

Cha. Why, you don't think I mean to keep the crown,
Polyxena?

Pol. You then believe the story
In spite of all—That Victor's coming?

Cha. Believe it?

I know that he is coming—feel the strength
That has upheld me leave me at his coming!
'Twas mine, and now he takes his own again.
Some kinds of strength are well enough to have;
But who's to have that strength? Let my crown go!
I meant to keep it—but I cannot—cannot!
Only, he shall not taunt me—he, the first—
See if he would not be the first to taunt me
With having left his kingdom at a word—
With letting it be conquered without stroke—
With . . . no—no—'tis no worse than when he left it,
I've just to bid him take it, and, that over,
We'll fly away—fly—for I loathe this Turin,
This Rivoli, all titles loathe, and state.
We'd best go to your country—unless God
Send I die now!

Pol. Charles, hear me!

Cha. —And again
Shall you be my Polyxena—you'll take me

Out of this woe! Yes, do speak—and keep speaking!
 I would not let you speak just now, for fear
 You'd counsel me against him: but talk, now,
 As we two used to talk in blessed times:
 Bid me endure all his caprices; take me
 From this mad post above him!

Pol. I believe
 We are undone, but from a different cause.
 All your resources, down to the least guard,
 Are now at D'Ormea's beck. What if, this while,
 He acts in concert with your father? We
 Indeed were lost. This lonely Rivoli—
 Where find a better place for them?

Cha. [*pacing the room.*] And why
 Does Victor come? To undo all that's done!
 Restore the past—prevent the future! Seat
 His mistress in your seat, and place in mine
 . . . Oh, my own people, whom will you find there,
 To ask of, to consult with, to care for,
 To hold up with your hands? Whom? One that's false—
 False—from the head's crown to the foot's sole, false!
 The best is, that I knew it in my heart
 From the beginning, and expected this,
 And hated you, Polyxena, because
 You saw thro' him, though I too saw thro' him,
 Saw that he meant this while he crowned me, while
 He prayed for me,—nay, while he kissed my brow,
 I saw—

Pol. But if your measures take effect,
 And D'Ormea's true to you?

Envelop it in haze—nor shall we two
 Be happy any more ; 'twill be, I feel,
 Only in moments that the duty 's seen
 As palpably as now—the months, the years
 Of painful indistinctness are to come,
 While daily must we tread these palace rooms
 Pregnant with memories of the past : your eye
 May turn to mine and find no comfort there,
 Through fancies that beset me, as yourself,
 Of other courses, with far other issues,
 We might have taken this great night—such bear,
 As I will bear ! What matters happiness ?
 Duty ! There 's man's one moment—this is yours !

*[Putting the crown on his head, and the sceptre in his hand,
 she places him on his seat : a long pause and silence.]*

Enter D'ORMEA and VICTOR.

Vic. At last I speak ; but once—that once, to you !
 'Tis you I ask, not these your varletry,
 Who 's King of us ?

Cha. *[from his seat.]* Count Tende . .

Vic.

What your spies

Assert I ponder in my soul, I say—
 Here to your face, amid your guards ! I choose
 To take again the crown whose shadow I gave—
 For still its potency surrounds the weak
 White locks their felon hands have discomposed.
 Or, I 'll not ask who 's King, but simply, who
 Withholds the crown I claim ? Deliver it !

I have no friend in the wide world : nor France
Nor England cares for me : you see the sum
Of what I can avail. Deliver it !

Cha. Take it, my father !

And now say in turn,

Was it done well, my father—sure not well,
To try me thus ! I might have seen much cause
For keeping it—too easily seen cause !
But, from that moment, e'en more woefully
My life had pined away, than pine it will.
Already you have much to answer for.
My life to pine is nothing,—her sunk eyes
Were happy once ! No doubt, my people think
That I 'm their King still . . . but I cannot strive !
Take it !

Vic. [*one hand on the crown CHARLES offers, the
other on his neck.*] So few years give it quietly,
My son ! It will drop from me. See you not ?
A crown's unlike a sword to give away—
That, let a strong hand to a weak hand give !
But crowns should slip from palsied brows to heads
Young as this head—yet mine is weak enough,
E'en weaker than I knew. I seek for phrases
To vindicate my right. 'Tis of a piece !
All is alike gone by with me—who beat
Once D'Orleans in his lines—his very lines !
To have been Eugene's comrade, Louis' rival,
And now . . .

Cha. [*putting the crown on him, to the rest.*] The
King speaks, yet none kneels, I think !

Vic. I am then King ! As I became a King
 Despite the nations—kept myself a King—
 So I die King, with Kingship dying too
 Around me ! I have lasted Europe's time !
 What wants my story of completion ? Where
 Must needs the damning break show ! Who mistrusts
 My children here—tell they of any break
 'Twixt my day's sunrise and its fiery fall ?
 And who were by me when I died but they ?
 Who ?—D'Ormea there !

Cha. What means he ?

Vic. Ever there !

Charles—how to save your story ? Mine must go !
 Say—say that you refused the crown to me—
 Charles, yours shall be my story ! You immured
 Me, say, at Rivoli. A single year
 I spend without a sight of you, then die—
 That will serve every purpose—tell that tale
 The world !

Cha. Mistrust me ? Help !

Vic. Past help, past reach !

'Tis in the heart—you cannot reach the heart :
 This broke mine, that I did believe, you, Charles,
 Would have denied and so disgraced me.

Pol. Charles

Has never ceased to be your subject, Sire !
 He reigned at first through setting up yourself
 As pattern : if he e'er seemed harsh to you,
 'Twas from a too intense appreciation

Of your own character : he acted you—
 Ne'er for an instant did I think it real,
 Or look for any other than this end.
 I hold him worlds the worse on that account ;
 But so it was.

Cha. [to POLYX.] I love you, now, indeed !

[To VICTOR.] You never knew me !

Vic. Hardly till this moment,
 When I seem learning many other things,
 Because the time for using them is past.
 If 'twere to do again ! That 's idly wished.
 Truthfulness might prove policy as good
 As guile. Is this my daughter's forehead ? Yes—
 I've made it fitter now to be a Queen's
 Than formerly—I've ploughed the deep lines there
 Which keep too well a crown from slipping off !
 No matter. Guile has made me King again.
*Louis—'twas in King Victor's time—long since,
 When Louis reign'd—and, also, Victor reign'd—*
 How the world talks already of us two !
 God of eclipse and each discolour'd star,
 Why do I linger then ?

Ha ! Where lurks he ?

D'Ormea ! Come nearer to your King ! Now stand !

[Collecting his strength as D'ORMEA approaches.]

But you lied, D'Ormea ! I do not repent.

[Dies.]

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

a Play.

“ Ivy and violet, what do ye here,
“ With blossom and shoot in the warm spring-weather,
“ Hiding the arms of Monchenci and Vere?”

HANMER.

Dedication.



NO ONE LOVES AND HONOURS BARRY CORNWALL MORE THAN
ROBERT BROWNING DOES ;

WHO, HAVING NOTHING BETTER THAN THIS PLAY TO
GIVE HIM IN PROOF OF IT,

MUST SAY SO.

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

PERSONS.

COLOMBE OF RAVESTEIN, Duchess of Juliers and Cleves.

SABYNE } Her Attendants.
ADOLF }

GUIBERT }
GAUCELME } Courtiers.
MAUFROY }
CLUGNET }

VALENCE, Advocate of Cleves.

PRINCE BERTHOLD, Claimant of the Duchy.

MELCHIOR, his Confidant.

PLACE, *The Palace at Juliers.*

TIME, 16—.

ACT I.

Morning. SCENE.—*A corridor leading to the Audience-chamber.*

GAUCELME, CLUGNET, MAUFROY, and other Courtiers, round
GUIBERT, who is silently reading a paper: as he drops it at the
end—

Gui. That this should be her birthday; and the day
We all invested her, twelve months ago,
As the late Duke's true heiress and our liege;
And that this also must become the day . . .
Oh, miserable lady!

1st. Court. Ay, indeed ?

2nd. Court. Well, Guibert ?

3rd. Court. But your news, my friend, your news !
The sooner, friend, one learns Prince Berthold's pleasure,
The better for us all : how writes the Prince ?
Give me—I 'll read it for the common good—

Gui. In time, sir—but, till time comes, pardon me !
Our old Duke just disclosed his child's retreat,
Declared her true succession to his rule,
And died : this birthday was the day, last year,
We convoyed her from Castle Ravestein—
That sleeps out trustfully its extreme age
On the Meuse' quiet bank, where she lived queen
Over the water-buds,—to Juliers' Court
With joy and bustle : here again we stand ;
Sir Gaucelme's buckle's constant to his cap—
To-day's much such another sunny day !

Gau. Come, Guibert—this outgrows a jest, I think !
You 're hardly such a novice as to need
The lesson, you pretend.

Gui. What lesson, sir ?
That everybody, if he 'd thrive at court,
Should, first and last of all, look to himself ?
Why, no : and therefore, with your good example,
(—Ho, Master Adolf !)—to myself I 'll look.

Enter ADOLF.

Gui. The Prince's letter ; why, of all men else,
Comes it to me ?

Adolf. By virtue of your place,
 Sir Guibert! 'Twas the Prince's express charge,
 His envoy told us, that the missive there
 Should only reach our lady by the hand
 Of whosoever held your place.

Gui. Enough! [*ADOLF retires.*
 Then, gentles, who'll accept a certain poor
 Indifferently honourable place,
 My friends, I make no doubt, have gnashed their teeth
 At leisure minutes these half-dozen years,
 To find me never in the mood to quit?
 —Who asks may have it, with my blessing, and—
This to present our lady. Who'll accept?
 You,—you,—you? There it lies, and may, for me!

Mau. [*a youth, picking up the paper, reads aloud.*]
 "Prince Berthold, proved by titles following
 "Undoubted Lord of Juliers, comes this day
 "To claim his own, with licence from the Pope,
 "The Emperor, the Kings of Spain and France". . .

Gau. Sufficient "titles following," I judge!
 Don't read another! Well,—"to claim his own?"

Mau. "And take possession of the Duchy held
 "Since twelve months, to the true heir's prejudice,
 "By" . . . Colombe, Juliers' Mistress, so she thinks,
 And Ravestein's mere lady, as we find!
 Who wants the place and paper? Guibert's right!
 I hope to climb a little in the world,—
 I'd push my fortunes,—but, no more than he,
 Could tell her on this happy day of days,

That, save the nosegay in her hand, perhaps,
 There's nothing left to call her own! Sir Clugnet,
 You famish for promotion; what say you?

Clug. [*an old man.*] To give this letter were a sort, I
 take it,

Of service: services ask recompence:
 What kind of corner may be Ravestein?

Gui. The castle?—Oh, you'd share her fortunes?
 Good!

Three walls stand upright, full as good as four,
 With no such bad remainder of a roof.

Clug. Oh,—but the Town?

Gui. Five houses, fifteen huts;
 A church whereto was once a spire, 'tis judged;
 And half a dyke, except in time of thaw.

Clug. Still, there's some revenue?

Gui. Else Heaven forefend!
 You hang a beacon out, should fogs increase;
 So when the Autumn floats of pine-wood steer
 Safe 'mid the white confusion, thanks to you,
 Their grateful raftsmen fling a guilder in;
 —That's if he means to pass your way next time.

Clug. If not?

Gui. Hang guilders, then—he blesses you!

Clug. What man do you suppose me? Keep your paper!
 And let me say it shows no handsome spirit
 To dally with misfortune: keep your place!

Gau. Some one must tell her.

Gui. Some one may: you may!

Gau. Sir Guibert, 'tis no trifle turns me sick
 Of court-hypocrisy at years like mine,
 But this goes near it. Where's there news at all?
 Who'll have the face, for instance, to affirm
 He never heard, e'en while we crowned the girl,
 That Juliers' tenure was by Salic law;
 That one, confessed her father's cousin's child,
 And, she away, indisputable heir,
 Against our choice protesting and the Duke's,
 Claimed Juliers?—nor, as he preferred his claim,
 That first this, then another potentate,
 Inclined to its allowance?—I, or you,
 Or any one except the lady's self?
 Oh, it had been the direst cruelty
 To break the business to her! Things might change—
 At all events, we'd see next masque at end,
 Next mummerly over first: and so the edge
 Was taken off sharp tidings as they came,
 Till here's the Prince upon us, and there's she
 —Wreathing her hair, a song between her lips,
 With just the faintest notion possible
 That some such claimant earns a livelihood
 About the world, by feigning grievances
 Few pay the story of, but grudge its price,
 And fewer listen to, a second time.
 Your method proves a failure; now try mine—
 And, since this must be carried . . .

Gui. [*snatching the paper from him.*] By your leave
 Your zeal transports you! 'Twill not serve the Prince

So much as you expect, this course you 'd take ;
 If she leaves quietly her palace,—well :
 But if she died upon its threshold,—no :
 He 'd have the trouble of removing her !
 Come, gentles, we 're all—what the devil knows !
 You, Gaucelme, won't lose character, beside—
 You broke your father's heart superiorly
 To gather his succession—never blush !
 You 're from my province, and, be comforted,
 They tell of it with wonder to this day—
 You can afford to let your talent sleep !
 We 'll take the very worst supposed, as true—
 There, the old Duke knew, when he hid his child
 Among the river-flowers at Ravestein,
 With whom the right lay ! Call the Prince our Duke !
 There, she 's no Duchess, she 's no anything
 More than a young maid with the bluest eyes—
 And now, sirs, we 'll not break this young maid's heart
 Coolly as Gaucelme could and would ! No haste !
 His talent 's full-blown, ours but in the bud—
 We 'll not advance to his perfection yet—
 Will we, Sir Maufroy ? See, I 've ruined Maufroy
 For ever as a courtier !

Gau.

Here 's a coil—

And, count us, will you ? Count its residue,
 This boasted convoy, this day last year's crowd !
 A birthday, too—a gratulation-day !
 I 'm dumb : bid *that* keep silence !

Mau. and others.

Eh, Sir Guibert ?

He's right : that does say something : that's bare truth.
Ten—twelve, I make : a perilous dropping-off !

Gui. Pooh—is it audience-hour ? The vestibule
Swarms too, I wager, with the common sort
That want our privilege of entry here.

Gau. Adolf ! [*Re-enter ADOLF.*] Who's outside ?

Gui. Oh, your looks suffice !
Nobody waiting ?

Mau. [*looking through the door-folds.*] Scarce our
number !

Gui. 'Sdeath !

Nothing to beg for, to complain about ?

It can't be ! Ill news spreads, but not so fast
As thus to frighten all the world !

Gau. The world

Lives out of doors, sir—not with you and me
By presence-chamber porches, state-room stairs,
Wherever warmth's perpetual : outside's free
To every wind from every compass-point,
And who may get nipped needs be weather-wise.
The Prince comes and the lady's People go ;
The snow-goose settles down, the swallows flee—
Why should they wait for winter-time ? 'Tis instinct ;
Don't you feel somewhat chilly ?

Gui. That's their craft ?

And last year's crowd-ers-round and criers-forth,
That strewed the garlands, overarched the roads,
Lit up the bonfires, sang the loyal songs !
Well, 'tis my comfort, you could never call me

The People's Friend ! The People keep their word—
I keep my place : don't doubt I 'll entertain
The People when the Prince comes, and the People
Are talked of!—Then, their speeches—no one tongue
Found respite, not a pen had holiday
—For they wrote, too, as well as spoke, these knaves !
Now see : we tax and tithe them, pill and poll,
They wince and fret enough, but pay they must
—We manage that,—so pay with a good grace
They might as well, it costs so little more.
But when we 've done with taxes, meet folk next
Outside the toll-booth and the rating-place,
In public—there they have us if they will,
We 're at their mercy after that, you see—
For one tax not ten devils could extort ;
Over and above necessity, a grace ;
This prompt disbosoming of love, to wit—
Their vine-leaf-wrappage of our tribute-penny,
And crowning attestation, all works well—
Yet this precisely do they thrust on us !
These cappings quick, and-crook-and-cringings low,
Hand to the heart, and forehead to the knee,
With grin that shuts the eyes and opes the mouth—
So tender they their love ; and tender made,
Go home to curse you, the first doit you ask ;
As if their souls were any longer theirs !
As if they had not given ample warrant
To who should clap a collar on their neck,
Rings in their nose, a goad to either flank,

And take them for the brute they boast themselves!

—Stay—there's a bustle at the outer door—

And somebody entreating . . . that's my name!

Adolf,—I heard my name!

Adolf. 'Twas probably

The Suitor.

Gui. Oh, there is one?

Adolf. With a suit

He'd fain enforce in person.

Gui. The good heart

—And the great fool! Just ope the mid-door's fold—

Is that a lappet of his cloak, I see?

Adolf. If it bear plenteous signs of travel . . . ay,
The very cloak my comrades tore!

Gui. Why tore?

Adolf. He seeks the Duchess' presence in that trim:

Since daybreak, was he posted hereabouts

Lest he should miss the moment.

Gui. Where's he now?

Adolf. Gone for a minute possibly, not more.

They have ado enough to thrust him back.

Gui. Ay—but my name, I caught?

Adolf. Oh, sir—he said

—What was it?—You had known him formerly,

And, he believed, would help him did you guess

He waited now—you promised him as much—

The old plea!—'Faith, he's back,—renews the charge!

[*Speaking at the door.*] So long as the man parleys, peace
outside!

Nor be too ready with your halberts, there!

Gau. My horse bespattered, as he blocked the path,
A thin sour man not unlike somebody.

Adolf. He holds a paper in his breast, whereon
He glances when his cheeks flush and his brow
At each repulse—

Gau. I noticed he'd a brow.

Adolf. So glancing, he grows calmer, leans awhile
Over the balustrade, adjusts his dress,
And presently turns round, quiet again,
With some new pretext for admittance.—Back!
(*To GUIBERT.*)—Sir, he has seen you! Now cross hal-
berts! Ha—

Pascal is prostrate—there lies Fabian too—
No passage! Whither would the madman press?
Close the doors quick on me!

Gui. Too late—he's here.

Enter, hastily and with discomposed dress, VALENCE.

Val. Sir Guibert, will you help me?—Me, that come
Charged by your townsmen, all who starve at Cleves,
To represent their heights and depths of woe
Before our Duchess and obtain relief!
Such errands barricade such doors, it seems:
But not a common hindrance drives me back
On all the sad yet hopeful faces, lit
With hope for the first time, which sent me forth!
Cleves, speak for me! Cleves' men and women, speak—
Who followed me—your strongest—many a mile
That I might go the fresher from their ranks,
—Who sit—your weakest—by the city-gates,

To take me fuller of what news I bring
 As I return—for I must needs return!
 —Can I? 'Twere hard, no listener for their wrongs,
 To turn them back upon the old despair—
 Harder, Sir Guibert, than imploring thus—
 So I do—any way you please—implore!
 If you . . . but how should you remember Cleves?
 Yet they of Cleves remember you so well!
 —Ay, comment on each trait of you they keep,
 Your words and deeds caught up at second hand,—
 Proud, I believe, at bottom of their hearts,
 Of the very levity and recklessness
 Which only prove that you forget their wrongs.
 Cleves, the grand town, whose men and women starve,
 Is Cleves forgotten?—Then remember me!
 You promised me that you would help me once
 For other purpose: will you keep your word?

Gui. And who may you be, friend?

Val.

Valence of Cleves.

Gui. Valence of . . . not the Advocate of Cleves
 I owed my whole estate to, three years back?
 Ay, well may you keep silence! Why, my lords,
 You've heard, I'm sure, how, Pentecost three years,
 I was so nearly ousted of my land
 By some knaves' pretext,—(eh? when you refused me
 Your ugly daughter, Clugnet,)—and you've heard
 How I recovered it by miracle
 —(When I refused her)! Here's the very friend,
 —Valence of Cleves, all parties have to thank!

Nay, Valence, this procedure's vile in you—
 I'm no more grateful than a courtier should,
 But politic am I—I bear a brain,
 Can cast about a little, might require
 Your services a second time! I tried
 To tempt you with advancement here to court
 —“No!”—well, for curiosity at least
 To view our life here—“No!”—our Duchess, then,—
 —A pretty woman's worth some pains to see,
 Nor is she spoiled, I take it, if a crown
 Completes the forehead pale and tresses pure. . .

Val. Our city trusted me its miseries,
 And I am come.

Gui. So much for taste! But “come,”—
 So may you be, for anything I know,
 To beg the Pope's cross, or Sir Clugnet's daughter,
 And with an equal chance you get all three!
 If it was ever worth your while to come,
 Was not the proper way worth finding too?

Val. Straight to the palace-portal, sir, I came—

Gui. —And said?—

Val. —That I had brought the miseries
 Of a whole city to relieve.

Gui. —Which saying
 Won your admittance? You saw me, indeed,
 And here, no doubt, you stand: as certainly,
 My intervention, I shall not dispute,
 Procures you audience; which, if I procure,
 That paper's closely written—by Saint Paul,

Here flock the Wrongs, follow the Remedies,
Chapter and verse, One, Two, A, B, and C—
Perhaps you 'd enter, make a reverence,
And launch these "miseries" from first to last?

Val. How should they let me pause or turn aside?

Gau. [to VALENCE.] My worthy sir, one question:
you 've come straight
From Cleves, you tell us: heard you any talk
At Cleves about our lady?

Val. Much.

Gau. And what?

Val. Her wish was to redress all wrongs she knew.

Gau. That, you believed?

Val. You see me, sir!

Gau. —Nor stopped

Upon the road from Cleves to Juliers here,
For any—rumours you might find afloat?

Val. I had my townsmen's wrongs to busy me.

Gau. This is the Lady's birthday, do you know?
—Her day of pleasure?

Val. —I know that the Great,
For Pleasure born, should still be on the watch
To exclude Pleasure when a Duty offers:
Even as, the Lowly too, for Duty born,
May ever snatch a Pleasure if in reach:
Both will have plenty of their birthright, sir!

Gau. [Aside to GUIBERT.] Sir Guibert, here's your
man! No scruples now—
You'll never find his like! Time presses hard.

I've seen your drift and Adolf's too, this while,
 But you can't keep the hour of audience back
 Much longer, and at noon the Prince arrives.

[*Pointing to VALENCE.*] Entrust *him* with it—fool no
 chance away!

Gui. —Him?

Gau. —With the missive! What's the
 man to her?

Gui. No bad thought!—Yet, 'tis yours—who ever
 played

The tempting serpent—else, 'twere no bad thought!
 I should—and do—mistrust it for your sake,
 Or else . . .

Enter an Official who communicates with ADOLF.

Adolf. The Duchess will receive the Court!

Gui. Give us a moment, Adolf! Valence, friend,
 I'll help you: we of the service, you're to mark,
 Have special entry, while the herd . . . the folks
 Outside, get access through our help alone
 —Well, it is so, was so, and I suppose
 So ever will be—your natural lot is, therefore,
 To wait your turn and opportunity,
 And probably miss both. Now, I engage
 To set you, here and in a minute's space,
 Before the lady with full leave to plead
 Chapter and verse, and A, and B, and C,
 To heart's content.

Val.

I grieve that I must ask,

This being, yourself admit, the custom here,
To what the price of such a favour mounts ?

Gui. Just so! You're not without a courtier's tact!
Little at court, as your quick instinct prompts,
Do such as we without a recompence.

Val. Yours is ?—

Gui. A trifle: here's a document
'Tis some one's duty to present her Grace—
I say, not mine—these say, not theirs—such points
Have weight at court. Will you relieve us all
And take it?—Just say, “I am bidden lay
“This paper at the Duchess' feet.”

Val. No more?

I thank you, sir!

Adolf. Her Grace receives the Court!

Gui. [*Aside.*] Now, *sursum corda*, quoth the mass-
priest! Do—

Whoever's my kind saint, do let alone
These pushings to and fro, and pullings back;
Peaceably let me hang o' the devil's arm
The downward path, if you can't pluck me off
Completely! Let me live quite his, or yours!

[*The Courtiers begin to range themselves, and move towards
the door.*]

After me, Valence! So our famous Cleves
Lacks bread? Yet don't we gallants buy their lace?
And dear enough—it beggars me, I know,
To keep my very gloves fringed properly!
This, Valence, is our Great State Hall you cross:

Yon grey urn 's veritable marcasite,
 The Pope's gift ; and those salvers testify
 The Emperor. Presently you 'll set your foot
 . . . But you don't speak, friend Valence !

Val. I shall speak.

Gau. [*Aside to GUIBERT.*] Guibert—it were no such ungraceful thing

If you and I, at first, seemed horrorstruck
 With the bad news. Look here, what you shall do !
 Suppose you, first, clap hand to sword and cry
 “ Yield strangers our allegiance ? First I 'll perish
 “ Beside your Grace ” !—and so give me the cue
 To . . .

Gui. Clap your hand to note-book and jot down
 That to regale the Prince with ? I conceive !
 [*To VALENCE.*] Do, Valence, speak, or I shall half suspect
 You 're plotting to supplant us, me the first,
 I' the Lady's favour : is 't the grand harangue
 You mean to make, that thus engrosses you ?
 —Which of her virtues you 'll apostrophise ?
 Or is 't the fashion you aspire to start,
 Of that close-curved, not unbecoming hair ?
 —Or what else ponder you ?

Val. My townsmen's wrongs !

ACT II.

Noon. SCENE.—*The Presence-chamber.*

The DUCHESS and SABYNE.

The D. Announce that I am ready for the Court!

Sab. 'Tis scarcely audience-hour, I think—your Grace
May best consult your own relief, no doubt,
And shun the crowd; but few can have arrived . . .

The D. Let those not yet arrived, then, keep away!
'Twas *me*, this day, last year at Ravestein,
You hurried. It has been full time, beside,
This half-hour. Do you hesitate?

Sab. Forgive me!

The D. Stay, Sabyne; let me hasten to make sure
Of one true thanker: here with you begins
My audience, claim you first its privilege!
It is my birth's event they celebrate—
You need not wish me more such happy days,
But—ask some favour! Have you none to ask?
Has Adolf none, then? this was far from least
Of much I waited for impatiently,
Assure yourself! It seemed so natural
Your gift, beside this bunch of river-bells,
Should be the power and leave of doing good
To you, and greater pleasure to myself:
You ask my leave to-day to marry Adolf?
The rest is my concern.

Sab. Your Grace is ever
Our Lady of dear Ravestein,—but, for Adolf . . .

The D. “But”? You have not, sure, changed in your
regard

And purpose towards him?

Sab. We change!

The D. Well, then? Well?

Sab. How could we two be happy, and, most like,
Leave Juliers, when . . . when . . . but 'tis audience-time!

The D. “When, if you left me, I were left indeed”—
Would you subjoin that?—Bid the Court approach!
—Why should we play thus with each other, Sabyne?
Do I not know, if courtiers prove remiss,
If friends detain me, and get blame for it,
There is a cause? Of last year's fervid throng
Scarce one half comes now!

Sab. [*Aside.*] One half? No, alas!

The D. So can the mere suspicion of a cloud
Over my fortunes strike each loyal heart.
They've heard of this Prince Berthold; and, forsooth,
Each foolish arrogant pretence he makes,
May grow more foolish and more arrogant,
They please to apprehend! I thank their love!
Admit them!

Sab. [*Aside.*] How much has she really learned?

The D. Surely, whoever's absent, Tristan waits?
—Or at least Romuald, whom my father raised
From nothing—come, he's faithful to me, come!
(Sabyne, I should but be the prouder—yes,

And fitter to comport myself aright)
 Not Romuald? Xavier—what said he to that?
 For Xavier hates a parasite, I know!

[SABYNE goes out.]

The D. Well, sunshine 's everywhere, and summer too;
 Next year 'tis the old place again, perhaps—
 The water-breeze again, the birds again
 . . . It cannot be! It is too late to be!
 What part had I, or choice in all of it?
 Hither they brought me; I had not to think
 Nor care, concern myself with doing good
 Or ill, my task was just—to live,—to live,
 And, answering ends there was no need explain,
 To render Juliers happy—so they said.
 All could not have been falsehood! Some was love,
 And wonder and obedience—I did all
 They looked for! Why then cease to do it now?
 Yet this is to be calmly set aside,
 And—ere next birthday's dawn, for aught I know,
 Things change, a claimant may arrive, and I . . .
 It cannot nor it shall not be! His right?
 Well then, he has the right, and I have not,
 —But who bade all of you surround my life
 And close its growth up with your Ducal crown
 Which, plucked off rudely, leaves me perishing?
 I could have been like one of you,—loved, hoped,
 Feared, lived and died like one of you—but you
 Would take that life away and give me this,
 And I will keep this! I will face you—Come!

Enter the Courtiers and VALENCE.

The Courtiers. Many such happy mornings to your Grace!

The D. [*Aside, as they pay their devoir.*] The same words—the same faces,—the same love!

I have been over-fearful. These are few—
But these, at least, stand firmly—these are mine!

As many come as may, and if no more,
'Tis that these few suffice—they do suffice!

What succour may not next year bring me! Plainly
I feared too soon! [*to the Court.*] I thank you, sirs:
all thanks!

Val. [*Aside, as the DUCHESS passes from one group to another, conversing.*]

'Tis she—the vision this day last year brought,
When for a golden moment at our Cleves
She tarried in her progress hither. Cleves
Chose me to speak its welcome, and I spoke
—Not that she could have noted the recluse
—Ungainly, old before his time—who gazed—
. . . Well, Heaven's gifts are not wasted, and that gaze
Kept, and shall keep me to the end, her own!
She was above it—but so would not sink
My gaze to earth! The People caught it, hers—
Thenceforward, mine; but thus entirely mine,
Who shall affirm, had she not raised my soul
Ere she retired and left me—them?—She turns—
There's all her wondrous face at once! The ground

Reels and . . . [*suddenly occupying himself with his paper.*] These wrongs of theirs I have to plead!

The D. [*to the Court.*] Nay, compliment enough! And kindness' self

Should pause before it wish me more such years.

'Twas fortunate that thus, ere youth escaped,

I tasted life's pure pleasure—one such, pure,

Is worth a thousand, mixed—and youth's for pleasure:

Mine is received; let my age pay for it.

Gau. So, pay, and pleasure paid for, thinks your Grace,
Should never go together?

Gui. How, Sir Gaucelme?

Hurry one's feast down unenjoyingly

At the snatched breathing-intervals of work?

As good you saved it till the dull day's-end

When, stiff and sleepy, appetite is gone!

Eat first, then work upon the strength of it!

The D. True: you enable me to risk my Future,
By giving me a Past beyond recall.

I lived, a girl, one happy leisure year:

Let me endeavour to be the Duchess now!

And so,—what news, Sir Guibert, spoke you of?

[*As they advance a little, and GUIBERT speaks—*

—That gentleman?

Val. [*Aside.*] I feel her eyes on me!

Gui. [*to VALENCE.*] The Duchess, sir, inclines to hear
your suit!

Advance! He is from Cleves.

Val. [*coming forward.*] [*Aside.*] Their wrongs—their
wrong!

The D. And you, sir, are from Cleves? How fresh in
mind,

The hour or two I passed at queenly Cleves!
She entertained me bravely, but the best
Of her good pageant seemed its standers-by,
With insuppressive joy on every face!
What says my ancient, famous, happy Cleves?

Val. Take the truth, lady—you are made for truth!
So think my friends: nor do they less deserve
The having you to take it, you shall think,
When you know all—nay, when you only know
How, on that day you recollect at Cleves,
When the poor acquiescing multitude
Who thrust themselves with all their woes apart
Into unnoticed corners, that the few
Their means sufficed to muster trappings for,
Might fill the foreground, occupy your sight
With joyous faces fit to bear away
And boast of as a sample of all Cleves
—How, when to daylight these crept out once more,
Clutching, unconscious, each his empty rags
Whence the scant coin, which had not half bought bread,
That morn he shook forth, counted piece by piece,
And, well-advisedly, on perfumes spent them
To burn, or flowers to strew, before your path
—How, when the golden flood of music and bliss
Ebb'd, as their moon retreated, and again
Left the sharp black-point rocks of misery bare
—Then I, their friend, had only to suggest

“Saw she the horror as she saw the pomp!”—
 And as one man they cried “He speaks the truth—
 “Show her the horror! Take from our own mouths
 “Our wrongs and show them, she will see them too!”
 —This they cried, lady! I have brought the wrongs.

The D. Wrongs? Cleves has wrongs—apparent now
 and thus?

I thank you—in that paper?—Give it me!

Val. (There, Cleves!) In this! (What did I promise,
 Cleves?)

Our weavers, clothiers, spinners are reduced
 Since . . . Oh, I crave your pardon—I forget
 I buy the privilege of this approach,
 And promptly would discharge my debt. I lay
 This paper humbly at the Duchess' feet!

[*Presenting GUIBERT'S paper.*]

Gui. Stay—for the present . . .

The D. Stay, sir? I take aught
 That teaches me their wrongs with greater pride
 Than this your Ducal circlet. Thank you, sir!

[*The DUCHESS reads hastily; then, turning to the Courtiers—*
 What have I done to you? Your deed or mine
 Was it, this crowning me? I gave myself
 No more a title to your homage, no,
 Than church-flowers, born this season, wrote the words
 In the saint's-book that sanctified them first.
 For such a flower, you plucked me—well, you erred—
 Well, 'twas a weed—remove the eye-sore quick!
 But should you not remember it has lain

Steeped in the candles' glory, palely shrined,
 Nearer God's Mother than most earthly things?
 —That if 't be faded 'tis with prayer's sole breath—
 That the one day it boasted was God's day?
 Still, I do thank you—had you used respect
 Here might I dwindle to my last white leaf,
 Here lose life's latest freshness, which even yet
 May yield some wandering insect rest and food:
 So, fling me forth, and—all is best for all!
 [*After a pause.*] Prince Berthold, who art Juliers' Duke,
 it seems—

The King's choice, and the Emperor's, and the Pope's—
 Be mine, too! Take this people! Tell not me
 Of rescripts, precedents, authorities,
 —But take them, from a heart that yearns to give!
 Find out their love,—I could not; find their fear,—
 I would not; find their like,—I never shall,
 Among the flowers! [*Taking off her coronet.*]

Colombe of Ravestein

Thanks God she is no longer Duchess here!

Val. [*advancing to GUIBERT.*] Sir Guibert,—knight,
 they call you—this of mine
 Is the first step I ever set at court.
 You dared make me your instrument, I find;
 For that, so sure as you and I are men,
 We reckon to the utmost presently:
 But as you are a courtier and I none,
 Your knowledge may instruct me. I, already,
 Have too far outraged, by my ignorance

Of courtier-ways, this lady, to proceed
 A second step and risk addressing her
 —I am degraded—you, let me address !
 Out of her presence, all is plain enough
 What I shall do—but in her presence, too,
 Surely there 's something proper to be done !
 [*To the others.*] You, gentles, tell me if I guess aright—
 May I not strike this man to earth ?

The Courtiers. [*as GUIBERT springs forward, with-
 holding him.*] Let go !

—The Clothiers' spokesman, Guibert? Grace a churl?

The D. [*to VALENCE.*] Oh, be acquainted with your
 party, sir !

He 's of the oldest lineage Juliers boasts ;
 A lion crests him for a cognisance ;
 "Scorning to waver"—that 's his 'scutcheon's word ;
 His office with the new Duke—probably
 The same in honour as with me ; or more,
 By so much as this gallant turn deserves ;
 He 's now, I dare say, of a thousand times
 The rank and influence that remain with her
 Whose part you take ! So, lest for taking it
 You suffer . . .

Val. I may strike him then to earth ?

Gui. [*falling on his knee.*] Great and dear lady,
 pardon me ! Hear once !

Believe me and be merciful—be just !
 I could not bring myself to give that paper
 Without a keener pang than I dared meet

—And so felt Clugnet here, and Maufroy here
 —No one dared meet it. Protestation's cheap,—
 But, if to die for you did any good,

[*To GAUCELME.*] Would not I die, sir? Say your worst
 of me!

But it does no good, that's the mournful truth.
 And since the hint of a resistance, even,
 Would just precipitate, on you the first,
 A speedier ruin—I shall not deny,
 Saving myself indubitable pain,
 I thought to give you pleasure (who might say?)
 By showing that your only subject found
 To carry the sad notice, was the man
 Precisely ignorant of its contents;
 A nameless, mere provincial advocate;
 One whom 'twas like you never saw before,
 Never would see again. All has gone wrong;
 But I meant right, God knows, and you, I trust!

The D. A nameless advocate, this gentleman?—
 —(I pardon you, Sir Guibert!)

Gui. [*rising, to VALENCE.*]—Sir, and you?—

Val. —Rejoice that you are lightened of a load.
 Now, you have only me to reckon with!

The D. One I have never seen, much less obliged?—

Val. Dare I speak, lady?

The D. Dare you! Heard you not
 I rule no longer?

Val. Lady, if your rule
 Were based alone on such a ground as these

[*Pointing to the Courtiers.*]

Could furnish you,—abjure it ! They have hidden
A source of true dominion from your sight.

The D. You hear them—no such source is left . . .

Val. Hear Cleves !

Whose haggard craftsmen rose to starve this day,
Starve now, and will lie down at night to starve,
Sure of a like to-morrow—but as sure
Of a most unlike morrow-after-that,
Since end things must, end howsoe'er things may.
What curbs the brute-force instinct in its hour ?
What makes, instead of rising, all as one,
And teaching fingers, so expert to wield
Their tool, the broadsword's play or carbine's trick,
—What makes that there 's an easier help, they think,
For you, whose name so few of them can spell,
Whose face scarce one in every hundred saw,
You simply have to understand their wrongs,
And wrongs will vanish—so, still trades are plied,
And swords lie rusting, and myself stand here ?
There is a vision in the heart of each
Of justice, mercy, wisdom ; tenderness
To wrong and pain, and knowledge of its cure—
And these, embodied in a woman's form
That best transmits them, pure as first received,
From God above her, to mankind below.
Will you derive your rule from such a ground,
Or rather hold it by the suffrage, say,
Of this man—this—and this ?

The D. [*after a pause.*] You come from Cleves—
How many are at Cleves of such a mind ?

Val. [*from his paper.*] “ We, all the manufacturers of Cleves ”—

The D. Or stay, sir—lest I seem too covetous—
Are you my subject? such as you describe
Am I to you—though to no other man?

Val. [*from his paper.*]—“ Valence, ordained your Advocate at Cleves ”—

The D. [*replacing the coronet.*] Then I remain Cleves’
Duchess! Take you note,
While Cleves but yields one subject of this stamp,
I stand her lady till she waves me off!
For her sake, all the Prince claims I withhold;
Laugh at each menace; and, his power defying,
Return his missive with its due contempt!

[*Casting it away.*]

Gui. [*picking it up.*]—Which to the Prince I will
deliver, Lady,

[*Note it down, Gaucelme*]—with your message too!

The D. I think the office is a subject’s, sir!
—Either . . . how style you him?—my special guarder
The Marshal’s—for who knows but violence
May follow the delivery!—Or, perhaps,
My Chancellor’s—for law may be to urge
On its receipt!—Or, even my Chamberlain’s—
For I may violate established form!

[*To VALENCE.*] Sir,—for the half-hour till this service
ends,

Will you become all these to me?

Val. [*falling on his knee.*] My Liege!

The D. Give me !

[*The Courtiers present their badges of office.*

[*Putting them by.*]—Whatever was their virtue once,
They need new consecration ! [*raising VALENCE.*] Are
you mine ?

—I will be Duchess yet ! [*She retires.*

The Courtiers. Our Duchess yet !

A glorious lady ! Worthy love and dread !

I 'll stand by her,—and I, whate'er betide !

Gui. [*to VALENCE.*] Well done, well done, sir ! I care
not who knows,

You have done nobly, and I envy you—

Tho' I am but unfairly used, I think :

For when one gets a place like this I hold,

One gets too the remark that its mere wages,

The pay and the preferment, make our prize—

Talk about zeal and faith apart from these,

We're laughed at—much would zeal and faith subsist

Without these also ! Yet, let these be stopped,

Our wages discontinue,—then, indeed,

Our zeal and faith, we hear on every side,

Are not released—having been pledged away

I wonder with what zeal and faith in turn ?

Hard money purchased me my place ! No, no—

I'm right, sir—but your wrong is better still,

If I had time and skill to argue it.

Therefore, I say, I 'll serve you, how you please—

If you like,—fight you, as you seem to wish—

(The kinder of me that, in sober truth,

I never dreamed I did you any harm)—

Gau.—Or, kinder still, you 'll introduce, no doubt,
His merits to the Prince who 's just at hand,
And let no hint drop he 's made Chancellor,
And Chamberlain, and Heaven knows what beside !

Clug. [*to VALENCE.*] You stare, young sir, and threaten !

Let me say,

That at your age, when first I came to court,
I was not much above a gentleman ;
While now . . .

Val. —You are Head-Lackey ? With your office
I have not yet been graced, sir !

Other Courtiers to Clug. Let him talk !
Fidelity—disinterestedness—
Excuse so much ! Men claimed my worship ever
Who, stanch and steadfastly . . .

Enter ADOLF.

Adolf. The Prince arrives !

Courtiers. Ha ? How ?

Adolf. He leaves his guard a stage behind
At Aix, and enters almost by himself.

1st Court. The Prince ! This foolish business puts
all out !

2nd Court. Let Gaucelme speak first !

3rd Court. Better I began
About the state of Juliers—should one say
All 's prosperous and inviting him ?

4th Court. —Or rather
All 's prostrate and imploring him !

5th Court.

That 's best!

Where 's the Cleves' paper, by the way?

4th Court. [to VALENCE.]

Sir—sir—

If you 'll but give that paper—trust it me,

I 'll warrant . . .

5th Court. Softly, sir—the Marshal's duty!

Clug. Has not the Chamberlain a hearing first

By virtue of his patent?

Gau.

Patents?—Duties?

All that, my masters, must begin again!

One word composes the whole controversy—

We 're simply now—the Prince's!

The Others.

Ay—the Prince's!

Enter SABYNE.

Sab. Adolf! Bid . . . Oh, no time for ceremony!

Where 's whom our lady calls her only subject?

She needs him! Who is here the Duchess's?

Val. [starting from his reverie.] Most gratefully I follow
to her feet!

ACT III.

Afternoon. SCENE.—The Vestibule.

Enter PRINCE BERTHOLD and MELCHIOR.

Berth. A thriving little burgh this Juliers looks.

[Half-apart.] Keep Juliers, and as good you kept Cologne:
Better try Aix, though!—

Mel.

Please 't your Highness speak?

Berth. [*as before.*] Aix, Cologne, Frankfort,—
Milan ;—Rome !—

Mel. —The Grave.

—More weary seems your Highness, I remark,
Than sundry conquerors whose path I 've watched
Through fire and blood to any prize they gain.
I could well wish you, for your proper sake,
Had met some shade of opposition here
—Found a blunt seneschal refuse unlock,
Or a scared usher lead your steps astray.
You must not look for next achievement's palm
So easy: this will hurt your conquering !

Berth. My next? Ay—as you say, my next and next !
Well, I am tired, that's truth, and moody too,
This quiet entrance-morning ; listen why !
Our little burgh, now, Juliers—'tis indeed
One link, however insignificant,
Of the great chain by which I reach my hope—
—A link I must secure ; but otherwise,
You'd wonder I esteem'd it worth my grasp.
Just see what life is, with its shifts and turns !
It happens now—this very nook—to be
A place that once . . . but a short while since, neither—
When I lived an ambiguous hanger-on
Of foreign courts, and bore my claims about,
Discarded by one kinsman, and the other
A poor priest merely,—then, I say, this place
Shone my ambition's object ; to be Duke—
Seemed then what to be Emperor seems now.

My rights were far from being judged as plain
 In those days as of late, I promise you—
 And 'twas my day-dream, Lady Colombe here
 Might e'en compound the matter, pity me,
 Be struck, say, with my chivalry and grace
 (I was a boy!)—bestow her hand at length,
 And make me Duke, in her right if not mine.
 Here am I, Duke confessed, at Juliers now!
 Hearken: if ever I be Emperor,
 Remind me what I felt and said to-day!

Mel. All this consoles a bookish man like me!
 —And so will weariness cling to you! Wrong—
 Wrong! Had you sought the Lady's court yourself,—
 Faced the redoubtables composing it,
 Flattered this, threatened that man, bribed the other,—
 Pledaded, by writ and word and deed, your cause,—
 Conquered a footing inch by painful inch,—
 And, after long years' struggle, pounced at last
 On her for prize,—the right life had been lived,
 And justice done to divers faculties
 Shut in that brow: yourself were visible
 As you stood victor, then! whom now—(your pardon!)
 I am forced narrowly to search and see—
 So are you hid by helps—this Pope, your uncle—
 Your cousin, the other King! You are a Mind,—
 They, Body: too much of mere legs-and-arms
 Obstructs the mind so! Match these with their like—
 Match mind with mind!

Berth. And where's your mind to match?

They show me legs-and-arms to cope withal !
I 'd subjugate this city—where 's its mind ?

[*The Courtiers enter slowly.*]

Mel. Got out of sight when you came troops and all !
And in its stead, here greets you flesh-and-blood—
A smug œconomy of both, this first !

[*As CLUGNET bows obsequiously.*]

Well done, gout, all considered !—I may go ?

Berth. Help me receive them !

Mel.

Oh, they just will say

What yesterday at Aix their fellows said,—
At Treves, the day before !—Sir Prince, my friend,
Why do you let your life slip thus ?—Mean time,
I have my little Juliers to achieve—
The understanding this tough Platonist,
Your holy uncle disinters, Amelius—
Lend me a company of horse and foot,
To help me through his tractate—gain my Duchy !

Berth. And Empire, after that is gained, will be— ?

Mel. To help me through your uncle's comment,
Prince !

[*Goes.*]

Berth. Ah? Well! he o'er-refines—the scholar's fault!
How do I let my life slip? Say, this life,
I lead now, differs from the common life
Of other men in mere degree, not kind,
Of joys and griefs,—still there is such degree—
Mere largeness in a life is something, sure,—
Enough to care about and struggle for,
In this world : for this world, the Size of things ;

The Sort of things, for that to come, no doubt!

A great is better than a little aim—

And when I wooed Priscilla's rosy mouth

And failed so, under that grey convent-wall,

Was I more happy than I should be now

[*By this time, the Courtiers are ranged before him.*

If failing of my Empire? Not a whit!

—Here comes the Mind, it once had tasked me sore

To baffle, but for my advantages!

All's best as 'tis—these scholars talk and talk!

[*Scats himself.*

The Courtiers. Welcome our Prince to Juliers!—to
his Heritage!

Our dutifullest service proffer we!

Clug. I, please your Highness, having exercised
The function of Grand Chamberlain at Court,
With much acceptance, as men testify . . .

Berth. I cannot greatly thank you, gentlemen!
The Pope declares my claim to the Duchy founded
On strictest justice; if you concede it, therefore,
I do not wonder—and the kings my friends
Protesting they will see such claim enforced,
You easily may offer to assist us.

But there's a slight discretionary power
To serve me in the matter, you've had long,
Though late you use it. This is well to say—
But could you not have said it months ago?

I'm not denied my own Duke's truncheon, true—
'Tis flung me—I stoop down, and from the ground

Pick it, with all you placid standers-by—
 And now I have it, gems and mire at once,
 Grace go with it to my soiled hands, you say!

Gui. (By Paul, the Advocate our doughty friend
 Cuts the best figure!)

Gau. If our ignorance
 May have offended, sure our loyalty . . .

Berth. Loyalty? Yours?—Oh—of yourselves you
 speak!

—I mean the Duchess all this time, I hope!
 And since I have been forced repeat my claims
 As if they never had been made before,
 As I began, so must I end, it seems.
 The formal answer to the grave demand—
 What says the lady?

Courtiers. [one to another.] *1st Court.* Marshal!
2nd Court. Orator!

Gui. A variation of our mistress' way!
 Wipe off his boots' dust, Clugnet?—that, he waits!

1st Court. Your place!

2nd Court. Just now it was your own!

Gui. The devil's!

Berth. [to GUIBERT.] Come forward, friend—you with
 the paper, there!

Is Juliers the first city I've obtained?
 By this time, I may boast proficiency
 In each decorum of the circumstance!
 Give it me as she gave it—the petition
 (Demand, you style it)—what's required, in brief?

What title's reservation, appanage's
Allowance?—I heard all at Treves, last week!

Gau. [to GUIBERT.] "Give it him as she gave it!"

Gui. And why not?

[To BERTHOLD.] The lady crushed your summons thus
together,

And bade me, with the very greatest scorn
So fair a frame could hold, inform you . . .

Courtiers. Stop—

Idiot!—

Gui. —Inform you she denied your claim,
Defied yourself! (I tread upon his heel,
The blustering Advocate!)

Berth. By heaven and earth!

Dare you jest, sir?

Gui. Did they at Treves, last week?

Berth. [starting up.] Why then, I look much bolder
than I knew,

And you prove better actors than I thought—

Since, as I live, I took you as you entered

For just so many dearest friends of mine,

Fled from the sinking to the rising power

—The sneaking'st crew, in short, I e'er despised!

Whereas, I am alone here for the moment—

With every soldier left behind at Aix!

Silence? That means the worst— I thought as much!

What follows next then?

Courtiers. Gracious Prince—he raves!

Gui. He asked the truth and why not get the truth?

Berth. Am I a prisoner? Speak, will somebody?
—But why stand paltering with imbeciles?

Let me see her, or . . .

Gui. Her, without her leave,
Shall no one see—she's Duchess yet!

Courtiers. [*Footsteps without, as they are disputing.*]

Good chance!

She's here—the Lady Colombe's self!

Berth. 'Tis well!

[*Aside.*] Array a handful thus against my world?
Not ill done, truly! Were not this a mind
To match one's mind with? Colombe!—Let us wait!
I failed so, under that grey convent-wall!
She comes!

Gui. The Duchess! Strangers, range yourselves!

[*As the DUCHESS enters in conversation with VALENCE,
BERTHOLD and the Courtiers fall back a little.*]

The D. Presagefully it beats, presagefully,
My heart—the right is Berthold's and not mine!

Val. Grant that he has the right, dare I mistrust
Your power to acquiesce so patiently
As you believe, in such a dream-like change
Of fortune—change abrupt, profound, complete?

The D. Ah, the first bitterness is over now!
Bitter I may have felt it to confront
The truth, and ascertain those natures' value
I had so counted on—that was a pang—
But I did bear it, and the worst is over:
Let the Prince take them!

Val. —And take Juliers too?
—Your People without crosses, wands, and chains—
Only with hearts?

The D. There I feel guilty, sir!
I cannot give up what I never had:
For these I ruled, not them—these stood between.
Shall I confess, sir? I have heard by stealth
Of Berthold from the first: more news and more;
Closer and closer swam the thunder-cloud,
But I was safely housed with these, I knew!
At times, when to the casement I would turn,
At a bird's passage or a flower-trail's play,
I caught the storm's red glimpses on its edge—
Yet I was sure some one of all these friends
Would interpose—I followed the bird's flight,
Or plucked the flower—some one would interpose!

Val. Not one thought on the People—and Cleves there!

The D. So, sadly conscious my real sway was missed,
Its shadow goes without so much regret:
Else could I not again thus calmly bid you,
Answer Prince Berthold!

Val. Then you acquiesce?

The D. Remember over whom it was I ruled!

Gui. [stepping forward.] Prince Berthold, yonder,
craves an audience, Lady!

The D. [to VALENCE.] I only have to turn, and I
shall face

Prince Berthold! Oh, my very heart is sick!
It is the daughter of a line of Dukes,

This scornful insolent adventurer
 Will bid depart from my dead father's halls!
 I shall not answer him—dispute with him—
 But, as he bids, depart! Prevent it, sir!
 Sir—but a mere day's respite! Urge for me
 —What I shall call to mind I should have urged
 When time's gone by—'twill all be mine, you urge!
 A day—an hour—that I myself may lay
 My rule down! 'Tis too sudden—must not be!
 The world's to hear of it! Once done—for ever!
 How will it read, sir? How be sung about?
 Prevent it!

Berth. [*approaching.*] Your frank indignation, Lady,
 Cannot escape me! Overbold I seem—
 But somewhat should be pardoned my surprise,
 At this reception,—this defiance, rather.
 And if, for their and your sakes, I rejoice
 Your virtues could inspire a trusty few
 To make such gallant stand in your behalf,
 I cannot but be sorry, for my own,
 Your friends should force me to retrace my steps,
 Since I no longer am permitted speak
 After the pleasant peaceful course prescribed
 No less by courtesy than relationship
 Which, if you once forgot, I still remember:
 But never must attack pass unrepelled.
 Suffer, that through you, I demand of these,
 Who controverts my claim to Juliers?

The D.

—Me,

You say, you do not speak to —

Berth. Of your subjects
I ask, then : whom do you accredit ? Where
Stand those should answer ?

Val. [*advancing.*] The Lady is alone !

Berth. Alone, and thus ? So weak and yet so bold ?

Val. I said she was alone—

Berth. —And weak, I said.

Val. When is man strong until he feels alone ?

It was some lonely strength at first, be sure,
Created organs, such as those you seek,
By which to give its varied purpose shape—
And, naming the selected ministrants,
Took sword, and shield, and sceptre,—each, a man !
That strength performed its work and passed its way :
You see our Lady : there, the old shapes stand !
—A Marshal, Chamberlain, and Chancellor—
“ Be helped their way, into their death put life
“ And find advantage ! ”—so you counsel us :
But let strength feel alone, seek help itself,—
And, as the inland-hatched sea-creature hunts
The sea's breast out,—as, littered 'mid the waves,
The desert-brute makes for the desert's joy,
So turns our lady to her true resource,
Passing o'er hollow fictions, worn-out types,
—So, I am first her instinct fastens on !
And prompt I say, so clear as heart can speak,
The People will not have you ; nor shall have !
It is not merely I shall go bring Cleves
And fight you to the last,—though that does much,

And men and children,—ay, and women too,
 Fighting for home, are rather to be feared
 Than mercenaries fighting for their pay—
 But, say you beat us, since such things have been,
 And, where this Juliers laughed, you set your foot
 Upon a streaming bloody splash—what then?
 Stand you the more our Lord that there you stand?
 Lord it o'er troops whose force you concentrate,
 A pillared flame whereto all ardours tend—
 Lord it 'mid priests whose schemes you amplify,
 A cloud of smoke 'neath which all shadows brood—
 But never, in this gentle spot of earth,
 Can you become our Colombe, our play-queen,
 For whom, to furnish lilies for her hair,
 We'd pour our veins forth to enrich the soil!
 —Our conqueror? Yes!—Our despot? Yes!—Our
 Duke?

Know yourself, know us!

Berth. [*who has been in thought.*] Know your lady, also!
 [*Very deferentially.*]—To whom I needs must exculpate
 myself

From having made a rash demand, at least.

Wherefore to you, sir, who appear to be

Her chief adviser, I submit my claims, [*Giving papers.*

But, this step taken, take no further step,

Until the Duchess shall pronounce their worth.

Here be our meeting-place; at night, its time:

Till when I humbly take the Lady's leave!

[*He withdraws. As the DUCHESS turns to VALENCE, the*

You

Courtiers interchange glances and come forward a little.

1st Court. So, this was their device !

2nd Court. No bad device !

3rd Court. You 'd say they love each other, Guibert's
friend

From Cleves, and she, the Duchess !

4th Court. —And moreover,

That all Prince Berthold comes for, is to help

Their loves !

5th Court. Pray, Guibert, what is next to do ?

Gui. [*advancing.*] I laid my office at the Duchess' foot—

Others. And I—and I—and I !

The D. I took them, sirs !

Gui. [*Apart to VALENCE.*] And now, sir, I am simple
knight again—

Guibert, of the great ancient house, as yet

That never bore affront : whate'er your birth,—

As things stand now, I recognise yourself

(If you 'll accept experience of some date)

As like to be the leading man o' the time,

Therefore as much above me now, as I

Seemed above you this morning Then, I offered

To fight you : will you be as generous

And now fight me ?

Val. Ask when my life is mine !

Gui. ('Tis hers now !)

Clug. [*Apart to VALENCE, as Guibert turns from him.*]

You, sir, have insulted me

Grossly,—will grant me, too, the selfsame favour

You 've granted him, just now, I make no question ?

Val. I promise you, as him, sir!

Clug. Do you so?

Handsomely said! I hold you to it, sir!

You'll get me reinstated in my office

As you will Guibert!

The D. I would be alone!

[*They begin to retire slowly: as VALENCE is about to follow—*

Alone, sir—only with my heart,—you stay!

Gau. You hear that? Ah, light breaks upon me!

Cleves—

It was at Cleves some man harangued us all—

With great effect,—so those who listened said,

My thoughts being busy elsewhere: was this he?

Guibert,—your strange, disinterested man!

Your uncorrupted, if uncourtly friend!

The modest worth you mean to patronise!

He cares about no Duchesses, not he—

His sole contest is with the wrongs of Cleves!

What, Guibert? What, it breaks on you at last?

Gui. Would this hall's floor were a mine's roof!—I'd

back

And in her very face . . .

Gau. Apply the match

That fired the train,—and where would you be, pray?

Gui. With him!

Gau. Stand, rather, safe outside with me!

The mine's charged—shall I furnish you the match

And place you properly?—To the ante-chamber!

Gui. Can you?

Gau. Try me!—Your friend's in fortune!

Gui. Quick—

To the ante-chamber!—He is pale with bliss!

Gau. No wonder! Mark her eyes!

Gui. To the ante-chamber!

[*The Courtiers retire.*]

The D. Sir, could you know all you have done for me
You were content! You spoke, and I am saved!

Val. Be not too sanguine, Lady! Ere you dream,
That transient flush of generosity
Fades off, perchance! The man, beside, is gone,—
Whom we might bend; but see the papers here—
Inalterably his requirement stays,
And cold hard words have we to deal with now.
In that large eye there seemed a latent pride,
To self-denial not incompetent,
But very like to hold itself dispensed
From such a grace—however, let us hope!
He is a noble spirit in noble form!
I wish he less had bent that brow to smile
As with the fancy how he could subject
Himself upon occasion to—himself!
From rudeness, violence, you rest secure;
But do not think your Duchy rescued yet!

The D. You,—who have opened a new world to me,
Will never take the faded language up
Of that I leave? My Duchy—keeping it,
Or losing it—is that my sole world now?

Val. Ill have I spoken if you thence despise

Juliers ; although the lowest, on true grounds,
 Be worth more than the highest rule, on false :
 Aspire to rule, on the true grounds !

The D.

Nay, hear—

False, I will never—rash, I would not be !
 This is indeed my Birthday—soul and body,
 Its hours have done on me the work of years.
 You hold the Requisition : ponder it !
 If I have right—my duty 's plain : if He—
 Say so—nor ever change a tone of voice !
 At night you meet the Prince—meet me at eve ;
 Till when, farewell ! This discomposes you ?
 Believe in your own nature, and its force
 Of renovating mine. I take my stand
 Only as under me the earth is firm—
 So, prove the first step stable, all will be !
 That first, I choose—[*laying her hand on his.*]—the next
 to take, choose you ! [She withdraws.]

Val. [after a pause.] What drew down this on me !

On me—dead once—

She thus bids live,—since all I hitherto
 Thought dead in me, youth's ardours and emprise,
 Burst into life before her, as she bids
 Who needs them !—Whither will this reach, where end ?
 Her hand's print burns on mine . . . Yet she 's above—
 So very far above me ! All 's too plain—
 I served her when the others sank away,
 And she rewards me as such souls reward—
 The changed voice, the suffusion of the cheek,

The eye's acceptance, the expressive hand—
—Reward, that's little, in her generous thought,
Though all to me . . .

I cannot so disclaim

Heaven's gift, nor call it other than it is!

She loves me!

[*Looking at the Prince's papers.*]—Which love, these,
perchance, forbid!

Can I decide against myself—pronounce

She is the Duchess and no mate for me?

—Cleves, help me! Teach me,—every haggard face,—

To sorrow and endure! I will do right

Whatever be the issue—help me, Cleves!

ACT IV.

Evening. SCENE.—*An Ante-chamber.*

Enter the Courtiers.

Mau. Now then, that we may speak—how spring this
mine?

Gau. Is Guibert ready for its match? He cools!

Not so friend Valence with the Duchess there!

“Stay, Valence—are not you my better self?”

And her cheek mantled—

Gui. Well, she loves him, sir—

And more,—since you will have it I grow cool,—

She's right: he's worth it.

Gau. For his deeds to-day?
Say so!

Gui. What should I say beside?

Gau. Not this—
For friendship's sake leave this for me to say—
That we're the dupes of an egregious cheat!
This plain, unpractised suitor, who found way
To the Duchess thro' the merest die's turn-up—
A year ago, had seen her and been seen,
Loved and been loved—

Gui. Impossible!

Gau. —Nor say,
How sly and exquisite a trick, moreover,
Was this which—taking not their stand on facts
Boldly, for that had been endurable,
But, worming in their way by craft, they choose
Resort to, rather,—and which you and we,
Sheep-like, assist them in the playing off!
The Duchess thus parades him as preferred,
Not on the honest ground of preference,
Seeing first, liking more, and there an end—
But as we all had started equally,
And at the close of a fair race he proved
The only valiant, sage, and loyal man.
And she, too, with the pretty fits and starts,—
The careless, winning, candid ignorance
Of what the Prince might challenge or forego—
She had a hero in reserve! What risk
Ran she? This deferential easy Prince

Who brings his claims for her to ratify
 —He's just her puppet for the nonce! You'll see,—
 Valence pronounces, as is equitable,
 Against him: off goes the confederate:
 As equitably, Valence takes her hand!

The Chancellor. You run too fast—her hand, no
 subject takes!

Do not our Archives hold her father's Will?
 That will provides against such accident,
 And gives next heir, Prince Berthold, the reversion
 Of Juliers, which she forfeits, wedding so.

Gau. I know that, well as you,—but does the Prince?
 Knows Berthold, think you, that this plan, he helps,
 For Valence's ennoblement,—would end,
 If crowned with the success which seems its due,
 In making him the very thing he plays,
 The actual Duke of Juliers? All agree
 That Colombe's title waived or set aside,
 He is next heir.

The Chan. Incontrovertibly!

Gau. Guibert, your match, now, to the train!

Gui. Enough!

I'm with you—selfishness is best again!
 I thought of turning honest—what a dream!
 Let's wake now!

Gau. Selfish, friend, you never were—
 'Twas but a series of revenges taken
 On your unselfishness for prospering ill.
 But now that you're grown wiser, what's our course?

Gui. —Wait, I suppose, till Valence weds our Lady,
And then, if we must needs revenge ourselves,
Apprise the Prince—

Gau. —The Prince, ere then dismissed
With thanks for playing his mock part so well?
Tell the Prince now, sir! Ay, this very night—
Ere he accepts his dole and goes his way,
Explain how such a marriage makes him Duke,
Then trust his gratitude for the surprise!

Gui. —Our Lady wedding Valence all the same
As if the penalty were undisclosed!
Good! If she loves, she'll not disown her love,
Throw Valence up—I wonder you see that!

Gau. The shame of it—the suddenness and shame!
Within her, the inclining heart—without,
A terrible array of witnesses—
With Valence by, to keep her to her word,
And Berthold's indignation or disgust—
We'll try it!—Not that we can venture much:
Her confidence we've lost for ever—Berthold's
Is all to gain!

Gui. To-night, then, venture we!
Yet—if lost confidence might be renewed?

Gau. Never in noble natures! With the base ones,—
Twist off the crab's claw, wait a smarting-while,
And something grows and grows and gets to be
A mimic of the lost joint, just so like
As keeps in mind it never, never will
Replace its predecessor! Crabs do that:
But lop the Lion's foot—and

Gui.

To the Prince!

Gau. [*Aside.*] And come what will to the lion's foot,
I pay you

My cat's-paw, as I long have yearned to pay!

[*Aloud.*] Footsteps . . . Himself! 'Tis Valence breaks
on us!

Exulting that their scheme succeeds!—We'll hence—
And perfect ours! Consult the Archives, first—
Then, fortified with knowledge, seek the Hall!

Clug. [*to GAUCELME as they retire.*] You have not
smiled so since your father died!

As they retire, enter VALENCE with papers.

Val. So must it be! I have examined these
With scarce a palpitating heart—so calm,
Keeping her image almost wholly off,
Setting upon myself determined watch,
Repelling to the uttermost his claims,
And the result is . . . all men would pronounce
And not I, only, the result to be—
Berthold is Heir; she has no shade of right
To the distinction which divided us,
But, suffered to rule first I know not why,
Her rule connived at by those Kings and Popes,
To serve some devil's-purpose,—now 'tis gained,
Whate'er it was, the rule expires as well.
—Valence, this rapture . . . selfish can it be?
Eject it from your heart, her home!—It stays!
Ah, the brave world that opens on us both!
. . . Do my poor townsmen so esteem it? Cleves,—

I need not your pale faces ! This, reward
 For service done to you ? Too horrible !
 I never served you—'twas myself I served !
 Nay—served not—rather saved from punishment
 Which, had I failed you then, would plague me now !
 My life continues yours, and your life, mine—
 But if, to take God's gift, I swerve no step—
 Cleves !—if I breathe no prayer for it—if she,

[*Footsteps without.*

Colombe, that comes now, freely gives herself—
 Will Cleves require, that, turning thus to her,
 I . . .

Enter PRINCE BERTHOLD.

—Pardon, sir—I did not look for you
 Till night, in the Hall ; nor have as yet declared
 My judgment to the Lady !

Berth. So I hoped.

Val. And yet I scarcely know why that should check
 The frank disclosure of it first to you—
 What her right seems, and what, in consequence,
 She will decide on—

Berth. That I need not ask.

Val. You need not : I have proved the Lady's mind—
 And, justice being to do, dare act for her.

Berth. Doubtless she has a very noble mind !

Val. Oh, never fear but she'll in each conjuncture
 Bear herself bravely ; she no whit depends
 On circumstance ; as she adorns a throne,
 She had adorned . .

Berth. . . . A cottage—in what book
Have I read that, of every queen that lived?
A throne? You have not been instructed, sure,
To forestall my request?

Val. 'Tis granted, sir—
My heart instructs me. I have scrutinized
Your claims . . .

Berth. Ah—claims, you mean, at first preferred!
I come, before the hour appointed me,
To pray you let those claims at present rest—
In favour of a new and stronger one.

Val. You shall not need a stronger: on the part
Of the lady, all you offer I accept,
Since one clear right suffices: yours is clear.
Propose!

Berth. I offer her my hand.

Val. Your hand?

Berth. A Duke's, yourself say; and, at no far time,
Something here whispers me—the Emperor's.
The Lady's mind is noble; which induced
This seizure of occasion ere my claims
Were—settled, let us amicably say!

Val. Your hand!

Berth. (He will fall down and kiss it next!)
Sir, this astonishment's too flattering—
Nor must you hold your mistress' worth so cheap!
Enhance it, rather,—urge that blood is blood—
The daughter of the Burgraves, Landgraves, Markgraves,
Remains their daughter; I shall scarce gainsay!

Elsewhere or here, the Lady needs must rule :
 Like the Imperial crown's great chrysoprase,
 They talk of—somewhat out of keeping there,
 And yet no jewel for a meaner cap !

Val. You wed the Duchess ?

Berth. Cry you mercy, friend !

Will the match influence many fortunes here ?

A natural solicitude enough !

Be certain, no bad chance it proves for you !

However high you take your present stand,

There 's prospect of a higher still remove—

For Juliers will not be my resting-place,

And, when I have to choose a substitute

To rule the little burgh, I 'll think of you.

You need not give your mates a character !

And yet I doubt your fitness to supplant

The grey smooth Chamberlain—he 'd hesitate

A doubt his lady could demean herself

So low as to accept me. Courage, sir !

I like your method better—feeling's play

Is franker much, and flatters me beside.

Val. I am to say, you love her ?

Berth. Say that too !

Love has no great concernment, thinks the world,

With a Duke's marriage—How go precedents

In Juliers' story—how use Juliers' Dukes ?

I see you have them here in goodly row ;

Yon must be Luitpold,—ay, a stalwart sire !)

—Say, I have been arrested suddenly

In my ambition's course, its rocky course,
 By this sweet flower—I fain would gather it
 And then proceed—so say and speedily—
 —(Nor stand there like Duke Luitpold's brazen self!)
 Enough, sir: you possess my mind, I think.
 This is my claim, the others being withdrawn,
 And to this, be it that, in the Hall to-night,
 Your Lady's answer comes; till when, farewell!

[*He retires.*]

Val. [*after a pause.*] The heavens and earth stay as
 they were—my heart
 Beats as it beat—the truth remains the truth!
 What falls away, then, if not faith in her?
 Was it my faith, that she could estimate
 Love's value,—and, such faith still guiding me,
 Dare I now test her?—or grew faith so strong
 Solely because no power of test was mine?

Enter the DUCHESS.

The D. My fate, sir! Ah, you turn away—all's over!
 But you are sorry for me—be not so!
 What I might have become, and never was,
 Regret with me; what I have merely been,
 Rejoice I am no longer; what I seem
 Beginning now, in my new state, to be,
 Hope that I am,—for, once my rights proved void,
 This heavy roof seems easy to exchange
 For the blue sky outside—my lot henceforth!

Val. And what a lot is Berthold's!

The D.

How of him ?

Val. He gathers earth's whole good into his arms,
 Standing, as man, now, stately, strong and wise—
 Marching to fortune, not surprised by her :
 One great aim, like a guiding-star, above—
 Which tasks strength, wisdom, stateliness, to lift
 His manhood to the height that takes the prize ;
 A prize not near—lest overlooking earth
 He rashly spring to seize it—nor remote,
 So that he rests upon his path content :
 But day by day, while shimmering grows shine,
 And the faint circlet prophesies the orb,
 He sees so much as, just evolving these,
 The stateliness, the wisdom and the strength,
 To due completion, will suffice this life,
 And lead him at his grandest to the grave.
 After this star, out of a night he springs ;
 A beggar's cradle for the throne of thrones
 He quits, so, mounting, feels each step he mounts,
 Nor, as from each to each exultingly
 He passes, overleaps one grade of joy.
 This, for his own good :—with the world, each gift
 Of God and man,—Reality, Tradition,
 Fancy and Fact—so well environ him,
 That as a mystic panoply they serve—
 Of force, untenanted, to awe mankind,
 And work his purpose out with half the world,
 While he, their master, dexterously slipt
 From such encumbrance, is meantime employed

With his own prowess on the other half.
 Thus shall he prosper, every day's success
 Adding, to what is He, a solid strength—
 An æry might to what encircles him,
 Till at the last, so life's routine lends help,
 That as the Emperor only breathes and moves,
 His shadow shall be watched, his step or stalk
 Become a comfort or a portent ; how
 He trails his ermine take significance,—
 Till even his power shall cease to be most power,
 And men shall dread his weakness more, nor dare
 Peril their earth its bravest, first and best,
 Its typified invincibility.

So shall he go on, greatening, till he ends
 The man of men, the spirit of all flesh,
 The fiery centre of an earthy world !

The D. Some such a fortune I had dreamed should rise
 Out of my own—that is, above my power
 Seemed other, greater potencies to stretch—

Val. For you ?

The D. It was not I moved there, I think :
 But one I could,—though constantly beside,
 And aye approaching,—still keep distant from,
 And so adore. 'Twas a man moved there !

Val. Who ?

The D. I felt the spirit, never saw the face !

Val. See it ! 'Tis Berthold's ! He enables you
 To realise your vision !

The D. Berthold ?

Val. Duke—

Emperor to be : he proffers you his hand.

The D. Generous and princely !

Val. He is all of this.

The D. Thanks, Berthold, for my father's sake—no
hand

Degrades me !

Val. You accept the proffered hand ?

The D. That he should love me !

Val. "Loved" I did not say !

Had that been—love might so incline the Prince
To the world's good, the world that's at his foot,—
I do not know, this moment, I should dare
Desire that you refused the world—and Cleves—
The sacrifice he asks !

The D. Not love me, sir ?

Val. He scarce affirmed it.

The D. May not deeds affirm ?

Val. What does he ? . . . Yes—yes—very much he
does !

All the shame saved, he thinks, and sorrow saved—
Immitigable sorrow, so he thinks,—
Sorrow that's deeper than we dream, perchance !

The D. Is not this love ?

Val. So very much he does !

For look, you can descend now gracefully—
All doubts are banished, that the world might have,
Or worst, the doubts yourself, in after-time,
May call up of your heart's sincereness now :

To such, reply, "I could have kept my rule—
 "Increased it to the utmost of my dreams—
 "Yet I abjured it!" This, he does for you:
 It is munificently much!

The D. Still "much!"

But why is it not love, sir? Answer me!

Val. Because not one of Berthold's words and looks
 Had gone with love's presentment of a flower
 To the beloved: because bold confidence,
 Open superiority, free pride—
 Love owns not, yet were all that Berthold owned:
 Because where reason, even, finds no flaw,
 Unerringly a lover's instinct may.

The D. You reason, then, and doubt?

Val. I love, and know.

The D. You love?—How strange! I never cast a
 thought

On that! Just see our selfishness—you seemed
 So much my own . . . I had no ground—and yet,
 I never dreamed another might divide
 My power with you, much less exceed it!

Val. Lady,

I am yours wholly!

The D. Oh, no, no, not mine!

'Tis not the same now, never more can be!
 —Your first love, doubtless! Well, what's gone from me?
 What have I lost in you?

Val. My heart replies—

No loss there! . . . So to Berthold back again!

This offer of his hand, he bids me make—
Its obvious magnitude is well to weigh!

The D. She's . . . yes, she must be very fair for you!

Val. I am a simple Advocate of Cleves.

The D. You! With the heart and brain that so helped
me,

I fancied them exclusively my own,
Yet find are subject to a stronger sway!

She must be . . . tell me, is she very fair?

Val. Most fair, beyond conception or belief!

The D. Black eyes?—no matter! Colombe, the world
leads

Its life without you, whom your friends professed

The only woman—see how true they spoke!

One lived this while, who never saw your face,

Nor heard your voice—unless . . . Is she from Cleves?

Val. Cleves knows her well!

The D.

Ah—just a fancy, now!

When you poured forth the wrongs of Cleves,—I said,
—Thought, that is, afterward . . .

Val.

You thought of me?

The D. Of what else? Only such great cause, I
thought,

For such effect—see what true love can do!

Cleves is his love!—I almost fear to ask

. . . Nor will not! This is idling—to our work!

Admit before the Prince, without reserve,

My claims misgrounded; then may follow better

. . . When you poured out Cleves' wrongs impetuously,
Was she in your mind?

Val. All done was done for her—
—To humble me!

The D. She will be proud at least!

Val. She?

The D. When you tell her!

Val. That will never be!

The D. How—are there sweeter things you hope to tell?

No, sir! You counselled me,—I counsel you
In the one point I—any woman—can!
Your worth, the first thing; let her own come next—
Say what you did through her, and she through you—
The praises of her beauty afterward!
Will you?

Val. I dare not!

The D. Dare not?

Val. She I love

Suspects not such a love in me.

The D. You jest!

Val. The lady is above me and away!

Not only the brave form, and the bright mind,
And the great heart, combine to press me low—
But all the world calls rank divides us.

The D. Rank?

Now grant me patience! Here's a man declares
Oracularly in another's case—
Sees the true value and the false, for them—
Nay, bids them see it, and they straight do see!
You called my court's love worthless—so it turned:

I threw away as dross my heap of wealth,
And here you stickle for a piece or two!

First—has she seen you?

Val. Yes!

The D. She loves you, then.

Val. One flash of hope burst—then succeeded night—
And all 's at darkest now. Impossible!

The D. We 'll try: you are—so to speak—my sub-
ject yet?

Val. As ever—to the death!

The D. Obey me, then!

Val. I must!

The D. Approach her, and . . . No! First of all
Get more assurance; “my instructress,” say,
“Was great, descended from a line of kings,
“And even fair”—(wait why I say this folly)—
“She said, of all men, none for eloquence,
“Courage, and (what cast even these to shade)
“The heart they sprung from,—none deserved like him
“Who saved her at her need—if she said this,
“What should not one I love, say?”

Val. Heaven—this hope—
Oh, lady, you are filling me with fire!

The D. Say this!—nor think I bid you cast aside
One touch of all that awe and reverence!
Nay—make her proud for once to heart's content
That all this wealth of heart and soul 's her own!
Think you are all of this,—and, thinking it,
. . . (Obey!)

Val. I cannot choose!

The D.

Then, kneel to her!

[*VALENCE sinks on his knee.*]

I dream!

Val. Have mercy! Yours, unto the death,—

I have obeyed. Despise, and let me die.

The D. Alas, sir, is it to be ever thus?

Even with you as with the world? I know

This morning's service was no vulgar deed

Whose motive, once it dares avow itself,

Explains all done and infinitely more,

So takes the shelter of a nobler cause.

Your service named its true source,—loyalty!

The rest's unsaid again. The Duchess bids you,

Rise, sir! The Prince's words were in debate.

Val. [*rising.*] Rise! Truth, as ever, Lady, comes
from you!

I should rise—I that spoke for Cleves, can speak

For Man—yet tremble now, that stood firm then!

I laughed—for 'twas past tears—that Cleves should starve

With all hearts beating loud the infamy,

And no tongue daring trust as much to air!

Yet here, where all hearts speak, shall I be mute?

Oh lady, for your own sake look on me!

On all I am, and have, and do—heart, brain,

Body and soul,—this Valence and his gifts!

I was proud once—I saw you—and they sank,

So that each magnified a thousand times

Were nothing to you—but such nothingness

Would a crown gild it, or a sceptre prop,
 A treasure speed, a laurel-wreath enhance?
 What is my own desert? But should your love
 Have . . . there 's no language helps here . . . singled me,—
 Then—Oh, that wild word “ then ! ”—be just to love,
 In generosity its attribute !
 Love, since you pleased to love ! All 's cleared—a stage
 For trial of the question kept so long
 For you—Is Love or Vanity the best ?
 You, solve it for the world's sake—you, speak first
 What all will shout one day—you, vindicate
 Our earth and be its angel ! All is said.
 Lady, I offer nothing—I am yours,
 But for the cause' sake, look on me and him
 And speak !

The D. I have received the Prince's message :
 Say, I prepare my answer !

Val. Take me, Cleves !

[*He withdraws.*]

The D. Mournful—that nothing's what it calls itself !
 Devotion, zeal, faith, loyalty—mere love !
 And, love in question, what may Berthold's be ?
 I did ill to mistrust the world so soon—
 Already was this Berthold at my side !
 The valley-level has its hawks, no doubt :
 May not the rock-top have its eagles, too ?
 Yet Valence . . . let me see his Rival then !

ACT V.

*Night. SCENE.—The Hall.**Enter BERTHOLD and MELCHIOR.**Mel.* And here you wait the matter's issue?*Berth.*

Here.

Mel. I don't regret I shut Amelius, then!But tell me, on this grand disclosure,—how
Behaved our spokesman with the forehead?*Berth.*

Oh,

Turned out no better than the foreheadless—
Was dazzled not so very soon—that's all!
For my part, this is scarce the hasty, showy,
Chivalrous measure you give me credit of!
Perhaps I had the fancy,—but 'tis gone—
—Let her commence the unfriended innocent,
And carry wrongs about from court to court?
No, truly! The least shake of Fortune's sand,
—My uncle-Pope chokes in a coughing-fit,
King Philip takes a fancy to blue eyes,—
And wondrously her claims would brighten up!
Forth comes a new gloss on the ancient law,
O'er-looked provisoes, past o'er premises,
Follow in plenty—No—'tis the safer step.
The hour beneath the convent-wall is lost—
Juliers and she, once mine, are ever mine.

Mel. Which is to say, you, losing heart already,
Elude the adventure !

Berth. Not so—or, if so—
Why not confess at once, that I advise
None of our kingly craft and guild just now
To lay, one moment, down their privilege
With the notion they can any time at pleasure
Retake it—that may turn out hazardous !
We seem, in Europe, pretty well at end
O' the night, with our great masque : those favoured few
Who keep the chamber's top, and honour's chance
Of the early evening, may retain their place
And figure as they list till out of breath.
But it is growing late ; and I observe
A dim grim kind of tipstaves at the doorway
Not only bar new-comers entering now,
But caution those who left, for any cause,
And would return, that morning draws too near ;
The ball must die off, shut itself up. We—
I think, may dance lights out and sunshine in,
And sleep off headache on our frippery—
But friend the other, who cunningly stole out,
And, after breathing the fresh air outside,
Means to re-enter with a new costume,
Will be advised go back to bed, I fear.
I stick to privilege, on second thoughts !

Mel. Yes—you evade the adventure !—And, beside,
Give yourself out for colder than you are.
—King Philip, only, notes the lady's eyes ?

Don't they come in for somewhat of the motive
With you too?

Berth. Yes—no: I am past that now!
Gone 'tis—I cannot shut my eyes to fact.
Of course, I might by forethought and contrivance
Reason myself into a rapture. Gone!
And something better's come instead, no doubt.

Mel. So be it! Yet, all the same, proceed my way,
Though to your end; so shall you prosper best.
The lady,—to be won for selfish ends,—
Will be won easier my unselfish . . . call it,
Romantic way.

Berth. Won easier?

Mel. Will not she?

Berth. There I profess humility without bound!
Ill cannot speed—not I—the Emperor!

Mel. And I should think the Emperor best waived,
From your description of her mood and way!
You could look, if it pleased you, into hearts;
But are too indolent and fond of watching
Your own—you know that, for you study it!

Berth. Had you but seen the orator her friend,
So bold and voluble an hour before,
Abashed to earth at aspect of the change!
Make her an Empress? Ah, that changed the case!
. . . Oh, I read hearts! And for my own behoof,
I court her with my true worth—see the event!
I learned my final lesson on that head
When years ago,—my first and last essay!

Before my uncle could obtain the ear
 Of his superior, help me from the dirt—
 Priscilla left me for a Brabant Duke
 Whose cheek was like the topaz on his thumb.
 I am past illusion on that score.

Mel. Here comes

The lady—

Berth. —And there you go! But do not! Give me
 Another chance to please you. Hear me plead!

Mel. You'll keep, then, to the lover, to the man?

Enter the DUCHESS—followed by ADOLF and SABYNE, and, after an interval, by the Courtiers.

Berth. Good auspice to our meeting!

The D. May it prove!

—And you, sir, will be Emperor one day?

Berth. (Ay—that's the point!) I may be Emperor.

The D. 'Tis not for my sake only, I am proud
 Of this you offer: I am prouder far
 That from the highest state should duly spring
 The highest, since most generous, of deeds.

Berth. (Generous—still that!) You underrate your-
 self.

You are, what I, to be complete, must have—
 Find now, and may not find, another time.
 While I career on all the world for stage,
 There needs at home my representative—

The D. —Such, rather, would some warrior-woman
 be—

One dowered with lands and gold, or rich in friends—
One like yourself!

Berth. Lady, I am myself,
And have all these: I want what's not myself,
Nor has all these. Why give one hand two swords?
Here's one already: be a friend's next gift
A silk glove, if you will—I have a sword!

The D. You love me, then?

Berth. Your lineage I revere—
Honour your virtue, in your truth believe,
Do homage to your intellect, and bow
Before your peerless beauty.

The D. But, for love—

Berth. A further love I do not understand.
Our best course is to say these hideous truths,
And see them, once said, grow endurable.
Like waters shuddering from their central bed,
Black with the midnight bowels of the earth,
That, once up-spouted by an earthquake's throes,
A portent and a terror—soon subside,
Freshen apace, take gold and rainbow hues
In sunshine, sleep in shadow,—and, at last,
Grow common to the earth as hills or trees—
Accepted by all things they came to scare.

The D. You cannot love, then?

Berth. —Charlemagne, perhaps!
Are you not over-curious in love-lore?

The D. I have become so, very recently.
It seems, then, I shall best deserve esteem,

Respect, and all your candour promises,
 By putting on a calculating mood—
 Asking the terms of my becoming yours ?

Berth. Let me not do myself injustice, neither !
 Because I will not condescend to fictions
 That promise what my soul can ne'er acquit.
 It does not follow that my guarded phrase
 May not include far more of what you seek,
 Than wide professions of less scrupulous men.
 You will be Empress, once for all—with me
 The Pope disputes supremacy—you stand
 And none gainsays, the Earth's first woman !

The D.

That—

Or simple Lady of Ravestein again ?

Berth. The matter 's not in my arbitrement !
 Now I have made my claims—which I regret—
 Cede one, cede all !

The D. This claim then, you enforce ?

Berth. The world looks on.

The D. And when must I decide ?

Berth. “When,” Lady ? Have I said thus much so
 promptly

For nothing ? Poured out, with such pains, at once
 What I might else have suffered to ooze forth
 Droplet by droplet in a life-time long,
 For aught less than as prompt an answer, too ?
 All 's fairly told now—who can teach you more ?

The D. I do not see him !

Berth. I shall ne'er deceive !

This offer had been made befittingly
 Would time allow the better setting forth
 The good of it, with what is not so good,
 Advantage, and disparagement as well—
 But as it is, the sum of both must serve.
 I am already weary of this place—
 My thoughts are next stage on to Rome. Decide!
 The Empire—or,—not even Juliers now!
 Hail to the Empress—farewell to the Duchess!

[*The Courtiers, who have been drawing nearer and nearer, interpose.*

Courtiers. . . . “Farewell,” Prince? when we break
 in at our risk—

Clug. (Almost upon Court-licence trespassing)—

Courtiers. —To point out how your claims are valid
 yet!

You know not, by the Duke her Father's will,
 The lady, if she weds beneath her rank,
 Forfeits her Duchy in the next heir's favour—
 So 'tis expressly stipulate. And if
 It can be shown 'tis her intent to wed
 A subject, then yourself, next heir, by right
 Succeed to Juliers.

Berth. What insanity? . . .

Gui. Sir, there's one Valence—the pale fiery man
 You saw and heard, this morning—thought, no doubt,
 Was of considerable standing here—
 I put it to your penetration, Prince,
 If aught save love, the truest love for her,

Him with his actions : can I choose but look ?
 I am not sure, love trulier shows itself
 Than in this man, you hate and would degrade,
 Yet, with your worst abatement, show me thus :
 Nor am I—(thus made look within myself,
 Ere I had dared,)—now that the look is dared—
 Sure that I do not love him !

Gui. Hear you, Prince ?

Berth. And what, sirs, please you, may this prattle
 mean ?

—Unless to prove with what alacrity
 You give your Lady's secrets to the world—
 —How much indebted, for discovering
 That quality, you make me, will be found
 When next a keeper for my own's to seek !

Courtiers. " Our Lady ? "

Berth. —She assuredly remains !

The D. Ah, Prince—and you too can be generous ?
 You could renounce your power, if this were so,
 And let me, as these phrase it, wed my love
 Yet keep my Duchy ? You perhaps exceed
 Him, even, in disinterestedness !

Berth. How, Lady, should all this affect my purpose ?
 Your will and choice are still as ever, free !
 Say, you have known a worthier than myself
 In mind and heart, of happier form and face ;
 Others must have their birthright ! I have gifts,
 To balance theirs, not blot them out of sight !
 Against a hundred other qualities,

I lay the prize I offer. I am nothing—
Wed you the Empire?

The D. And my heart away?

Berth. When have I made pretension to your
heart?

I give none. I shall keep your honour safe—
With mine I trust you, as the sculptor trusts
Yon marble woman with the marble rose,
Loose on her hand, she never will let fall,
In graceful, slight, silent security.
You will be proud of my world-wide career,
And I content in you the fair and good.
What were the use of planting a few seeds,
The thankless climate never would mature—
Affections all repelled by circumstance?
Enough: to these no credit I attach,—
To what you own, find nothing to object.
Write simply on my Requisition's face
What shall content my friends—that you admit,
As Colombe of Ravestein, the claims therein,
Or never need admit them, as my wife—
And either way, all's ended.

The D. Let all end!

Berth. The Requisition!

Courtiers. —Valence holds, of course!

Berth. Desire his presence! [ADOLF goes out.]

Courtiers. [to each other.] Out it all comes yet!

He'll have his word against the bargain still!

He's not the man to tamely acquiesce!

One passionate appeal—upbraiding even,
Might turn the tide again! Despair not yet!

[They retire a little.]

Berth. *[to MELCHIOR.]* The Empire has its old success,
my friend!

Mel. You've had your way: before the spokesman
comes,

Let me, but this once, work a problem out,
And ever more be dumb! The Empire wins?
To better purpose I have read my books!

Enter VALENCE.

Mel. *[to the Courtiers.]* Apart, my masters!

[To VALENCE.] Sir, one word with you!

I am a poor dependent of the Prince's—
Pitched on to speak, as of slight consequence:
You are no higher, I find—in other words,
We two, as probably the wisest here,
Need not hold diplomatic talk like fools:
Suppose I speak, divesting the plain fact
Of all their tortuous phrases, fit for them—
Do you reply so, and what trouble's saved!
The Prince, then—an embroiled strange heap of news
This moment reaches him—if true or false,
All dignity forbids he should enquire
In person, or by worthier deputy;
Yet somehow must enquire, lest slander come:
And so 'tis I am pitched on. You have heard
His offer to your Lady?

Val. Yes.

Mel. —Conceive

Her joy thereat?—

Val. I cannot.

Mel. No one can :

All draws to a conclusion, therefore.

Val. [*Aside.*] So!

No after-judgment—no first thought revised—
Her first and last decision!—me, she leaves—
Takes him—a simple heart is flung aside,
The ermine o'er a heartless breast embraced!
Oh Heaven, this mockery has been played too oft!
Once, to surprise the angels—twice, that fiends
Recording, might be proud they chose not so—
Thrice, many thousand times, to teach the world
All men should pause, misdoubt their strength, since men
Could have such chance yet fail so signally,
—But ever—ever—this farewell to heaven,
Welcome to earth—this taking death for life—
This spurning love and kneeling to the world—
Oh Heaven, it is too often and too old!

Mel. Well, on this point—what but an absurd rumour
Arises—these, its source—its subject, you!
Your faith and loyalty misconstruing,
They say, your service claims the lady's hand!
Of course, nor Prince nor Lady can respond—
Yet something must be said—for, were it true
You made such claim, the Prince would . . .

Val. Well, sir, would?

Mel.—Not only probably withdraw his suit,
 But, very like, the lady might be forced
 Accept your own.—Oh, there are reasons why!
 But you'll excuse at present all save this,—
 I think so. What we want is, your own witness,
 For, or against—her good, or yours: decide!

Val. [*Aside.*] Be it her good if she accounts it so!
 [*After a contest.*] For what am I but hers, to choose as
 she?

Who knows how far, beside, the light from her
 May reach, and dwell with, what she looks upon?

Mel. [*to the Prince.*] Now to him, you!

Berth. [*to VALENCE.*] My friend acquaints you, sir,
 The noise runs . . .

Val. . . Prince, how fortunate are you,
 Wedding her as you will, in spite of it,
 To show belief in love! Let her but love you,
 All else you disregard! What else can be?
 You know how love is incompatible
 With falsehood—purifies, assimilates
 All other passions to itself.

Mel. Ay, sir:

But softly! Where in the object we select,
 Such love is, perchance, wanting?

Val. Then, indeed,
 What is it you can take?

Mel. Nay—ask the world!
 Youth, beauty, virtue, an illustrious name,
 An influence o'er mankind!

Val. When man perceives . . .
—Ah, I can only speak as for myself!

The D. Speak for yourself!

Val. May I?—no, I have spoken,
And time's gone by!—Had I seen such an one—
As I loved her—weighing thoroughly that word—
So should my task be to evolve her love—
If for myself!—if for another—well!

Berth. Heroic truly! And your sole reward,—
The secret pride in yielding up your own?

Val. Who thought upon reward? And yet how much
Comes after—Oh what amplest recompence!
Is the knowledge of her, nought? the memory, nought?
—Lady, should such an one have looked on you,
Ne'er wrong yourself so far as quote the world,
And say, love can go unrequited here!
You will have blessed him to his whole life's end—
Low passions hindered, baser cares kept back,
All goodness cherished where you dwelt—and dwell.
What would he have? He holds you—you, both
form,
And mind, in his,—where self-love makes such room
For love of you, he would not serve you now
The vulgar way,—repulse your enemies,
Win you new realms, or best, in saving you
Die blissfully—that's past so long ago!
He wishes you no need, thought, care of him—
Your good, by any means, himself unseen,
Away, forgotten!—He gives that life's task up,

As it were . . . but this charge which I return—

[*Offers the Requisition, which she takes.*]

Wishing your good !

The D. [*having subscribed it.*] And opportunely, sir—
 Since at a birthday's close, like this of mine,
 Good wishes gentle deeds reciprocate.
 Most on a wedding day, as mine is too,
 Should gifts be thought of : yours comes first by right.
 Ask of me !

Berth. He shall have whate'er he asks,
 For your sake and his own !

Val. [*Aside.*] If I should ask—
 The withered bunch of flowers she wears—perhaps,
 One last touch of her hand, I never more
 Shall see !

[*After a pause, presenting his paper to the Prince.*]

Cleves' Prince, redress the wrongs of Cleves !

Berth. I will, sir !

The D. [*as VALENCE prepares to retire.*]—Nay, do
 out your duty, first !

You bore this paper : I have registered

My answer to it : read it and have done !

[*VALENCE reads it.*]

—I take him—give up Juliers and the world !

This is my Birth-day.

Mel. Berthold, my one hero
 Of the world she gives up, one friend worth my books,
 Sole man I think it pays the pains to watch,—
 Speak, for I know you through your Popes and Kings !

Berth. [*after a pause.*] Lady, well rewarded! Sir, as well deserved!

I could not imitate—I hardly envy—
 I do admire you! All is for the best!
 Too costly a flower were you, I see it now,
 To pluck and set upon my barren helm
 To wither—any garish plume will do!
 I'll not insult you and refuse your Duchy—
 You can so well afford to yield it me,
 And I were left, without it, sadly off!
 As it is—for me—if that will flatter you,
 A somewhat wearier life seems to remain
 Than I thought possible where . . . 'faith, their life
 Begins already—they're too occupied
 To listen—and few words content me best!
 [*Abruptly to the Courtiers.*] I am your Duke, though!
 Who obey me here?

The D. Adolf and Sabyne follow us—

Gui. [*starting from the Courtiers.*]—And I?
 Do I not follow them, if I mayn't you?
 Shall not I get some little duties up
 At Ravestein and emulate the rest?
 God save you, Gaucelme! 'Tis my Birth-day, too!

Berth. You happy handful that remain with me
 . . . That is, with Dietrich the black Barnabite
 I shall leave over you—will earn your wages,
 Or Dietrich has forgot to ply his trade!
 Meantime,—go copy me the precedents
 Of every installation, proper styles,

And pedigrees of all your Juliers' Dukes—
While I prepare to go on my old way,
And somewhat wearily, I must confess !

The D. [*with a light joyous laugh as she turns from them.*] Come, Valence, to our friends—God's earth - - -

Val. [*as she falls into his arms.*]—And thee !

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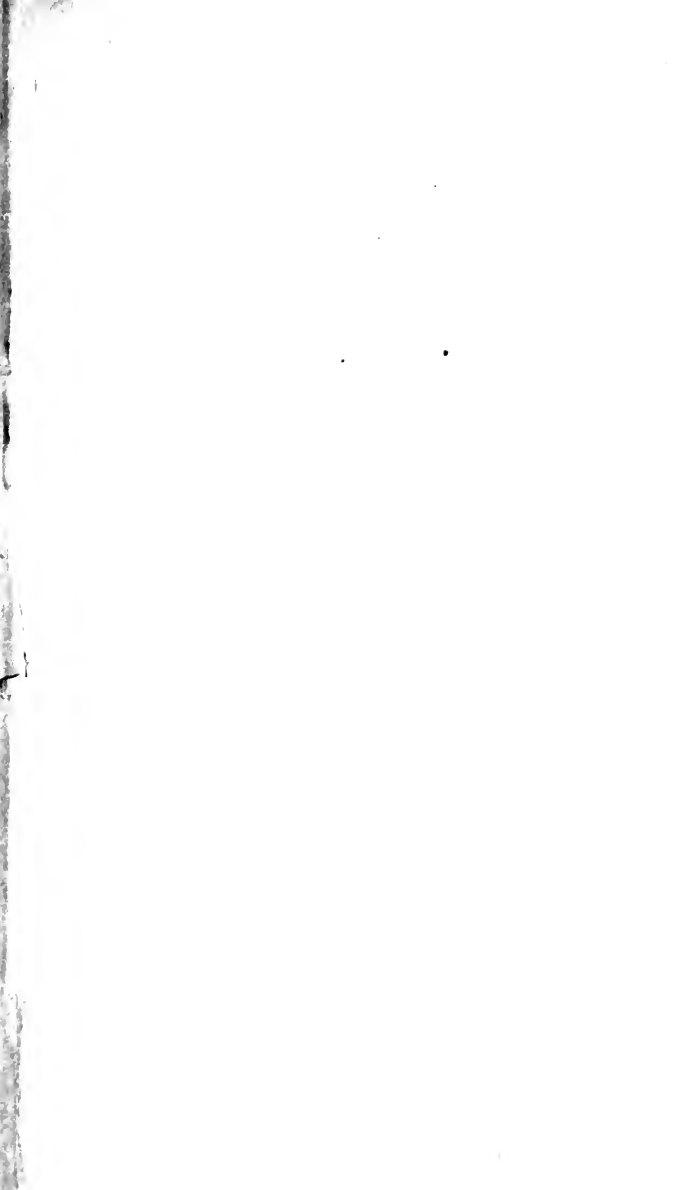
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