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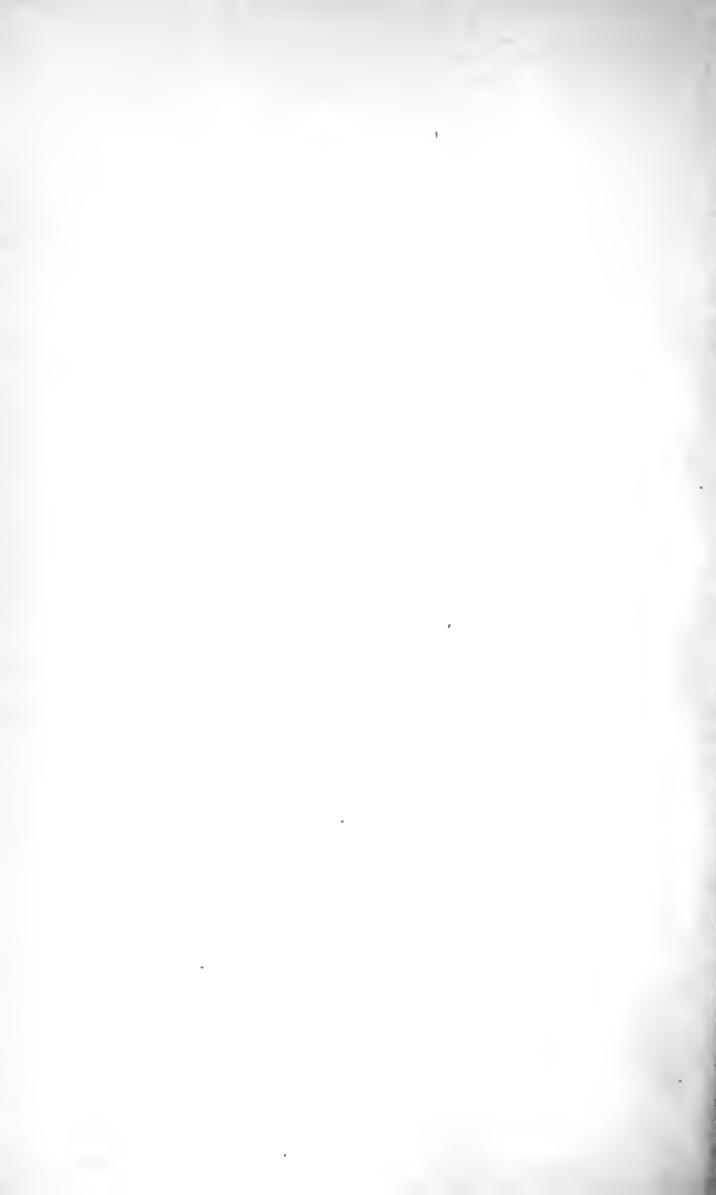
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# P O E M S

OF

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.





THE  
P O E M S

OF

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Complete in Three Volumes.

CORRECTED BY THE LAST LONDON EDITION WITH AN INTRODUCTORY  
ESSAY BY H. T. TUCKERMAN.

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VOLUME II.

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# A DRAMA OF EXILE.







## A DRAMA OF EXILE.

SCENE—*The outer side of the gate of Eden shut fast with cloud, from the depth of which revolves the sword of fire self-moved. ADAM and EVE are seen in the distance, flying along the glare.*

LUCIFER, *alone.*

REJOICE in the clefts of Gehenna,

My exiled, my host!

Earth has exiles as hopeless as when a

Heaven's empire was lost.

Through the seams of her shaken foundations,

Smoke up in great joy!

With the smoke of your fierce exultations

Deform and destroy!

Smoke up with your lurid revenges,

And darken the face

Of the white heavens, and taunt them with changes

From glory and grace.

We, in falling, while destiny strangles,

Pull down with us all.

Let them look to the rest of their angels!

Who's safe from a fall?

HE saves not. Where's Adam? Can pardon

Requicken that sod?

Unkinged is the King of the Garden,

The image of God.

Other exiles are cast out of Eden,—

More curse has been hurled.

Come up, O my locusts, and feed in

The green of the world.

Come up! we have conquered by evil.

Good reigns not alone.

*I prevail now, and, angel or devil,  
Inherit a throne.*

[*In sudden apparition a watch of innumerable angels, rank above rank, slopes up from around the gate to the zenith. The angel GABRIEL descends.*]

*Lucifer.* Hail Gabriel, the keeper of the gate!  
Now that the fruit is plucked, prince Gabriel,  
I hold that Eden is impregnable  
Under thy keeping.

*Gabriel.* Angel of the sin,  
Such as thou standest,—pale in the drear light  
Which rounds the rebel's work with Maker's wrath,—  
Thou shalt be an idea to all souls;  
A monumental melancholy gloom  
Seen down all ages; whence to mark despair  
And measure out the distances from good!  
Go from us straightway.

*Lucifer.* Wherefore?

*Gabriel.* Lucifer,  
Thy last step in this place trod sorrow up.  
Recoil before that sorrow, if not this sword.

*Lucifer.* Angels are in the world—wherefore not I?  
Exiles are in the world—wherefore not I?  
The cursed are in the world—wherefore not I?

*Gabriel.* Depart.

*Lucifer.* And where's the logic of 'depart'?  
Our lady Eve had half been satisfied  
To obey her Maker, if I had not learnt  
To fix my postulate better. Dost thou dream  
Of guarding some monopoly in heaven  
Instead of earth? Why I can dream with thee  
To the length of thy wings.

*Gabriel.* I do not dream.  
This is not Heaven, even in a dream, nor earth.

As earth was once,—first breathed among the stars,  
Articulate glory from the mouth divine,  
To which the myriad spheres thrilled audibly  
Touched like a lute-string,—and the sons of God  
Said AMEN, singing it. I know that this  
Is earth not new created but new cursed—  
This, Eden's gate not opened but built up  
With a final cloud of sunset. Do I dream?  
Alas, not so! this is the Eden lost  
By Lucifer the serpent! this the sword  
(This sword alive with justice and with fire!)  
That smote upon the forehead, Lucifer  
The angel! Wherefore, angel, go . . . depart—  
Enough is sinned and suffered.

*Lucifer.*

By no means.

Here's a brave earth to sin and suffer on!  
It holds fast still—it cracks not under curse;  
It holds like mine immortal. Presently  
We'll sow it thick enough with graves as green  
Or greener, certes, than its knowledge-tree—  
We'll have the cypress for the tree of life,  
More eminent for shadow—for the rest  
We'll build it dark with towns and pyramids,  
And temples, if it please you:—we'll have feasts  
And funerals also, merrymakes and wars,  
Till blood and wine shall mix and run along  
Right o'er the edges. And, good Gabriel,  
(Ye like that word in Heaven!) I too have strength—  
Strength to behold Him and not worship Him;  
Strength to fall from Him and not cry on Him;  
Strength to be in the universe and yet  
Neither God nor his servant. The red sign  
Burnt on my forehead, which you taunt me with,  
Is God's sign that it bows not unto God;

The potter's mark upon his work, to show  
It rings well to the striker. I and the earth  
Can bear more curse.

*Gabriel.* O miserable earth,  
O ruined angel!

*Lucifer.* Well! and if it be,  
I chose this ruin: I elected it  
Of my will, not of service. What I do,  
I do volitent, not obedient,  
And overtop thy crown with my despair.  
My sorrow crowns me. Get thee back to Heaven;  
And leave me to the earth, which is mine own  
In virtue of her ruin, as I hers  
In virtue of my revolt! turn those from both  
That bright, impassive, passive angelhood;  
And spare to read us backward any more  
Of the spent hallelujahs.

*Gabriel.* Spirit of scorn!  
I might say, of unreason! I might say,  
That who despairs, acts; that who acts, connives  
With God's relations set in time and space;  
That who elects, assumes a something good  
Which God made possible; that who lives, obeys  
The law of a Life-maker...

*Lucifer.* Let it pass!  
No more, thou Gabriel! What if I stand up  
And strike my brow against the crystalline  
Roofing the creatures,—shall I say for that,  
My stature is too high for me to stand,—  
Henceforward I must sit? Sit *thou*.

*Gabriel.* I kneel.

*Lucifer.* A heavenly answer. Get thee to thy  
Heaven,  
And leave my earth to me.

*Gabriel.* Through Heaven and earth  
 God's will moves freely ; and I follow it,  
 As colour follows light. He overflows  
 The firmamental walls with deity,  
 Therefore with love ; His lightnings go abroad,  
 His pity may do so ; His angels must,  
 Whene'er He gives them charges.

*Lucifer.* Verily,  
 I and my demons—who are spirits of scorn—  
 Might hold this charge of standing with a sword  
 'Twixt man and his inheritance, as well  
 As the benignant angel of you all.

*Gabriel.* Thou speakest in the shadow of thy  
 change.  
 If thou hadst gazed upon the face of God  
 This morning for a moment, thou hadst known  
 That only pity can fitly chastise.  
 While hate avenges.

*Lucifer.* As it is, I know  
 Something of pity. When I reeled in Heaven,  
 And my sword grew too heavy for my grasp,  
 Stabbing through matter, which it could not pierce  
 So much as the first shell of,—toward the throne ;  
 When I fell back, down,—staring up as I fell,—  
 The lightnings holding open my scathed lids,  
 And that thought of the infinite of God  
 Hurl'd after to precipitate descent ;  
 When countless angel faces still and stern  
 Pressed out upon me from the level heavens,  
 Adown the abysmal spaces : and I fell  
 Trampled down by your stillness, and struck blind  
 By the sight within your eyes ;—'twas then I knew  
 How ye could pity, my kind angelhood !

*Gabriel.* Alas, discrowned one, by the truth in me

Which God keeps in me, I would give away  
 All,—save that truth and His love keeping it,—  
 To lead thee home again into the light,  
 And hear thy voice chant with the morning stars;  
 When their rays tremble round them with much song  
 Sung in more gladness!

*Lucifer.* Sing, my morning star!  
 Last beautiful—last heavenly—that I loved!  
 If I could drench thy golden locks with tears,  
 What were it to this angel?

*Gabriel.* What love is!  
 And now I have named God.

*Lucifer.* Yet Gabriel,  
 By the lie in me which I keep myself,  
 Thou'rt a false swearer. Were it otherwise,  
 What dost thou here, vouchsafing tender thoughts  
 To that earth-angel or earth-demon—which,  
 Thou and I have not solved the problem yet  
 Enough to argue,—that fallen Adam there,—  
 That red-clay and a breath! who must, forsooth,  
 Live in a new apocalypse of sense,  
 With beauty and music waving in his trees  
 And running in his rivers, to make glad  
 His soul made perfect; is it not for hope,  
 A hope within thee deeper than thy truth,  
 Of finally conducting him and his  
 To fill the vacant thrones of me and mine,  
 Which affront heaven with their vacuity?

*Gabriel.* Angel, there are no vacant thrones in  
 Heaven  
 To suit thy empty words. Glory and life  
 Fulfil their own depletions: and if God  
 Sighed you far from Him, His next breath drew in  
 A compensative splendour up the vast,



Flushing the starry arteries !

*Lucifer.*

With a change !

So, let the vacant thrones and gardens too  
Fill as may please you !—and be pitiful,  
As ye translate that word, to the dethroned  
And exiled, man or angel. The fact stands,  
That I, the rebel, the cast out and down,  
Am here, and will not go ; while there, along  
The light to which ye flash the desert out,  
Flies your adopted Adam ! your red clay  
In two kinds, both being flawed. Why, what is this ?  
Whose work is this ? Whose hand was in the work ?  
Against whose hand ? In this last strife, methinks,  
I am not a fallen angel !

*Gabriel.*

Dost thou know

Aught of those exiles ?

*Lucifer.*

Ay : I know they have fled

Silent all day along the wilderness :  
I know they wear, for burden on their backs,  
The thought of a shut gate of Paradise,  
And faces of the marshalled cherubim  
Shining against, not for them ! and I know  
They dare not look in one another's face,  
As if each were a cherub !

*Gabriel.*

Dost thou know

Aught of their future ?

*Lucifer.*

Only as much as this :

That evil will increase and multiply  
Without a benediction.

*Gabriel.*

Nothing more ?

*Lucifer.* Why so the angels taunt ! What should  
be more ?

*Gabriel.* God is more.

*Lucifer.* Proving what ?

*Gabriel.* That he is God,

And capable of saving. *Lucifer,*  
I charge thee by the solitude He kept  
Ere he created,—leave the earth to God !

*Lucifer.* My foot is on the earth, firm as my sin !

*Gabriel.* I charge thee by the memory of Heaven  
Ere any sin was done,—leave earth to God !

*Lucifer.* My sin is on the earth, to reign thereon.

*Gabriel.* I charge thee by the choral song we sang  
When up against the white shore of our feet,  
The depths of the creation swelled and brake,—  
And the new worlds, the beaded foam and flower  
Of all that coil, roared outward into space  
On thunder-edges,—leave the earth to God.

*Lucifer.* My woe is on the earth, to curse thereby.

*Gabriel.* I charge thee by that mournful morning  
star

Which trembles . . . . .

*Lucifer.* Enough spoken. As the pine  
In norland forest, drops its weight of snows  
By a night's growth, so, growing toward my ends,  
I drop thy counsels. Farewell, Gabriel !  
Watch out thy service ; I achieve my will.  
And peradventure in the after years,  
When thoughtful men shall bend their spacious brows  
Upon the storm and strife seen everywhere

To ruffle their smooth manhood and break up  
With lurid lights of intermittent hope  
Their human fear and wrong,—they may discern  
The heart of a lost angel in the earth.

## CHORUS OF EDEN SPIRITS,

*(Chanting from Paradise, while Adam and Eve fly across the  
sword-glare.)*

Harken, oh harken ! let your souls behind you  
Turn, gently moved !  
Our voices feel along the Dread to find you,  
O lost, beloved !  
Through the thick-shielded and strong-marshalled  
angels,  
They press and pierce :  
Our requiems follow fast on our evangels,—  
Voice throbs in verse !  
We are but orphaned Spirits left in Eden,  
A time ago—  
God gave us golden cups ; and we were bidden  
To feed you so !  
But now our right hand hath no cup remaining,  
No work to do ;  
The mystic hydromel is spilt, and staining  
The whole earth through ;  
Most ineradicable stains, for showing  
(Not interfused !)  
That brighter colours were the world's foregoing,  
Than shall be used.  
Harken, oh harken ! ye shall harken surely  
For years and years,

The noise beside you, dripping coldly, purely,  
Of spirits' tears!

The yearning to a beautiful denied you,  
Shall strain your powers:

Ideal sweetnesses shall over-glide you,  
Resumed from ours!

In all your music, our pathetic minor  
Your ears shall cross;

And all good gifts shall mind you of diviner,  
With sense of loss!

We shall be near you in your poet-languors  
And wild extremes;

What time ye vex the desert with vain angers,  
Or mock with dreams.

And when upon you, weary after roaming,  
Death's seal is put,

By the foregone ye shall discern the coming,  
Through eyelids shut.

*Spirits of the trees.*

Hark! the Eden trees are stirring,  
Slow and solemn in your hearing!  
Oak and linden, palm and fir,  
Tamarisk and juniper,  
Each still throbbing in vibration  
Since that crowning of creation,  
When the God breath spake abroad,  
*Let us make man like to God!*  
And the pine stood quivering  
As the awful word went by;

Like a vibrant music-string  
Stretched from mountain-peak to sky !  
And the platan did expand  
Slow and gradual, branch and head ;  
And the cedar's strong black shade  
Fluttered brokenly and grand !  
Grove and wood were swept aslant  
In emotion jubilant.

*Voice of the same, but softer.*

Which divine impulsion cleaves  
In dim movements to the leaves  
Dropt and lifted, dropt and lifted  
In the sunlight greenly sifted,—  
In the sunlight and the moonlight  
Greenly sifted through the trees.  
Ever wave the Eden trees  
In the nightlight and the noonlight,  
With a ruffling of green branches  
Shaded off to resonances ;  
Never stirred by rain or breeze !

Fare ye well, farewell !

The sylvan sounds, no longer audible,

Expire at Eden's door !

Each footstep of your treading

Treads out some murmur which ye heard before :

Farewell ! the trees of Eden

Ye shall hear nevermore.

*River-Spirits.*

Hark ! the flow of the four rivers—

Hark the flow !

How the silence round you shivers,

While our voices through it go,  
Cold and clear.

*A softer voice.*

Think a little, while ye hear,  
Of the banks  
Where the willows and the deer  
Crowd in intermingled ranks,  
As if all would drink at once  
Where the living water runs !  
Of the fishes' golden edges  
Flashing in and out the sedges :  
Of the swans on silver thrones,  
Floating down the winding streams  
With impassive eyes turned shoreward,  
And a chant of undertones,—  
And the lotos leaning forward  
To help them into dreams.

Fare ye well, farewell !  
The river-sounds, no longer audible,  
Expire at Eden's door !  
Each footstep of your treading  
Treads out some murmur which ye heard before :  
Farewell ! the streams of Eden,  
Ye shall hear nevermore.

*Bird-Spirit.*

I am the nearest nightingale  
That singeth in Eden after you ;  
And I am singing loud and true,  
And sweet,—I do not fail !  
I sit upon a cypress bough,  
Close to the gate ; and I fling my song

Over the gate and through the mail  
Of the warden angels marshalled strong,—

Over the gate and after you !  
And the warden angels let it pass,  
Because the poor brown bird, alas !

Sings in the garden sweet and true.  
And I build my song of high pure notes,  
Note over note, height over height,  
Till I strike the arch of the Infinite ;

And I bridge abysmal agonies  
With strong, clear calms of harmonies,—  
And something abides, and something floats,  
In the song which I sing after you :

Fare ye well, farewell !  
The creature-sounds, no longer audible,  
Expire at Eden's door !  
Each footstep of your treading  
Treads out some cadence which ye heard before :  
Farewell ! the birds of Eden  
Ye shall hear nevermore.

*Flower-Spirits.*

We linger, we linger,  
The last of the throng !  
Like the tones of a singer  
Who loves his own song  
We are spirit-aromas  
Of blossom and bloom ;  
We call your thoughts home as  
Ye breathe our perfume ;  
To the amaranth's splendor  
Afire on the slopes ;

To the lily-bells tender,  
And grey heliotropes !  
To the poppy-plains keeping  
Such dream-breath and blee  
That the angels there stepping  
Grew whiter to see !  
To the nook, set with moly,  
Ye jested one day in,  
Till your smile waxed too holy  
And left your lips praying !  
To the rose in the bower-place,  
That dripped o'er you sleeping ;  
To the asphodel flower place,  
Ye walked ankle deep in !  
We pluck at your raiment,  
We stroke down your hair,  
We faint in our lament  
And pine into air.  
Fare ye well, farewell !  
The Eden scents, no longer sensible,  
Expire at Eden's door !  
Each footstep of your treading  
Treads out some fragrance which ye knew before :  
Farewell ! the flowers of Eden,  
Ye shall smell nevermore.

*There is silence. ADAM and EVE fly on, and never look back. Only a colossal shadow, as of the dark ANGEL passing quickly, is cast upon the sword-glare.*



SCENE.—*The extremity of the Sword-glare.*

*Adam.* Pausing a moment on this outer edge,  
Where the supernal sword-glare cuts in light  
The dark exterior desert,—hast thou strength,  
Beloved, to look behind us to the gate?

*Eve.* Have I not strength to look up to thy face.

*Adam* We need be strong : yon spectacle of cloud  
Which seals the gate up to the final doom,  
Is God's seal manifest. There seem to lie  
A hundred thunders in it, dark and dead ;  
The unmolten lightnings vein it motionless ;  
And, outward from its depth, the self-moved sword  
Swings slow its awful gnomon of red fire  
From side to side,—in pendulous horror slow,  
Across the stagnant, ghastly glare thrown flat  
On the intermediate ground from that to this.  
The angelic hosts, the archangelic pomps,  
Thrones, dominations, principedoms, rank on rank,  
Rising sublimely to the feet of God,  
On either side and overhead the gate,  
Show like a glittering and sustained smoke  
Drawn to an apex. That their faces shine  
Betwixt the solemn claspings of their wings  
Clasped high to a silver point above their heads,—  
We only guess from hence, and not discern.

*Eve.* Though we were near enough to see them  
shine,

The shadow on thy face were awfuller,

To me, at least,—to me—than all their light.

*Adam.* What is this, Eve? thou droppest heavily  
In a heap earthward; and thy body heaves  
Under the golden floodings of thy hair!

*Eve.* O Adam, Adam! by that name of Eve—  
Thine Eve, thy life—which suits me little now,  
Seeing that I now confess myself thy death  
And thine undoer, as the snake was mine,—  
I do adjure thee, put me straight away,  
Together with my name. Sweet, punish me!  
O Love, be just! and, ere we pass beyond  
The light cast outward by the fiery sword,  
Into the dark which earth must be to us,  
Bruise my head with thy foot,—as the curse said  
My seed shall the first tempter's: strike with curse,  
As God struck in the garden! and as HE,  
Being satisfied with justice and with wrath,  
Did roll His thunder gentler at the close,—  
Thou, peradventure, may'st at last recoil  
To some soft need of mercy. Strike, my lord!  
I, also, after tempting, writhe on the ground;  
And I would feed on ashes from thy hand,  
As suits me, O my tempted.

*Adam.* My beloved,  
Mine Eve and life—I have no other name  
For thee or for the sun than what ye are,  
My utter life and light! If we have fallen,  
It is that we have sinned,—we: God is just;  
And since his curse doth comprehend us both,  
It must be that His balance holds the weights  
Of first and last sin on a level. What!

Shall I who had not virtue to stand straight  
Among the hills of Eden, here assume  
To mend the justice of the perfect God,  
By piling up a curse upon His curse,  
Against thee—thee—

*Eve.* For so, perchance, thy God  
Might take thee into grace for scorning me ;  
Thy wrath against the sinner giving proof  
Of inward abrogation of the sin !  
And so, the blessed angels might come down  
And walk with thee as erst,—I think they would,—  
Because I was not near to make them sad,  
Or soil the rustling of their innocence.

*Adam.* They know me. I am deepest in the guilt  
If last in the transgression.

*Eve.* THOU !

*Adam.* If God  
Who gave the right and joyaunce of the world  
Both unto thee and me,—gave thee to me,  
The best gift last ; the last sin was the worst,  
Which sinned against more complement of gifts  
And grace of giving. God ! I render back  
Strong benediction and perpetual praise  
From mortal feeble lips, (as incense-smoke,  
Out of a little censer, may fill heaven,)  
That Thou, in striking my benumbed hands  
And forcing them to drop all other boons  
Of beauty and dominion and delight,—  
Hast left this well-beloved Eve—this life  
Within life—this best gift between their palms,  
In gracious compensation !

*Eve* Is it thy voice ?  
Or some saluting angel's—calling home  
My feet into the garden ?

*Adam.* O my God !  
I, standing here between the glory and dark,—  
The glory of thy wrath projected forth  
From Eden's wall ; the dark of our distress  
Which settles a step off in that drear world—  
Lift up to Thee the hands from whence hath fallen  
Only creation's sceptre,—thanking Thee  
That rather Thou hast cast me out with *her*  
Than left me lorn of her in Paradise ;  
With angel looks and angel songs around  
To show the absence of her eyes and voice,  
And make society full desertness,  
Without her use in comfort !

*Eve.* Where is loss ?  
Am I in Eden ? can another speak  
Mine own love's tongue ?

*Adam.* Because with *her*, I stand  
Upright, as far as can be in this fall,  
And look away from heaven which doth accuse,  
And look away from earth which doth convict,  
Into her face ; and crown my discrowned brow  
Out of her love ; and put the thought of her  
Around me, for an Eden full of birds ;  
And lift her body up—thus—to my heart ;  
And with my lips upon her lips,—thus, thus,—  
Do quicken and sublimiate my mortal breath  
Which cannot climb against the grave's steep sides  
But overtops this grief !

*Eve.* I am renewed :

My eyes grow with the light which is in thine ;  
The silence of my heart is full of sound.  
Hold me up—so ! Because I comprehend  
This human love, I shall not be afraid  
Of any human death ; and yet because  
I know this strength of love, I seem to know  
Death's strength by that same sign. Kiss on my lips,  
To shut the door close on my rising soul,—  
Lest it pass outwards in astonishment  
And leave thee lonely.

*Adam.* Yet thou liest, Eve,  
Bent heavily on thyself across mine arm,  
Thy face flat to the sky.

*Eve.* Ay ! and the tears  
Running as it might seem, my life from me ;  
They run so fast and warm. Let me lie so,  
And weep so,—as if in a dream or prayer,  
Unfastening, clasp by clasp, the hard, tight thought  
Which clipped my heart and showed me evermore  
Loathed of thy justice as I loathe the snake,  
And as the pure ones loathe our sin. To-day,  
All day, beloved, as we fled across  
This desolating radiance cast by swords  
Not suns, my lips prayed soundless to myself,  
Striking against each other—O Lord God !  
( 'Twas so I prayed ) I ask Thee by my sin,  
And by thy curse, and by thy blameless heavens,  
Make dreadful haste to hide me from thy face  
And from the face of my beloved here,  
For whom I am no helpmete, quick away  
Into the new dark mystery of death !

I will lie still there ; I will make no plaint ;  
I will not sigh, nor sob, nor speak a word,  
Nor struggle to come back beneath the sun  
Where peradventure I might sin anew  
Against thy mercy and his pleasure. Death,  
Oh, death, whate'er it be, is good enough  
For such as I am.—While for Adam here  
No voice shall say again, in heaven or earth,  
*It is not good for him to be alone.*

*Adam.* And was it good for such a prayer to pass.  
My unkind Eve, betwixt our mutual lives ?  
If I am exiled, must I be bereaved ?

*Eve.* 'Twas an ill prayer : it shall be prayed no  
more ;  
And God did use it like a foolishness,  
Giving no answer. Now my heart has grown  
Too high and strong for such a foolish prayer :  
Love makes it strong : and since I was the first  
In the transgression, with a steady foot  
I will be first to tread from this sword-glare  
Into the outer darkness of the waste,—  
And thus I do it.

*Adam.* Thus I follow thee,  
As crewhile in the sin.—What sounds ! what sounds !  
I feel a music which comes straight from Heaven,  
As tender as a watering dew.

*Eve.* I think  
That angels—not those guarding Paradise,—  
But the love-angels who came erst to us,  
And when we said ' God,' fainted unawares  
Back from our mortal presence unto God,

(As if He drew them inward in a breath)  
His name being heard of them,—I think that they  
With sliding voices lean from heavenly towers,  
Invisible but gracious. Hark—how soft !

## CHORUS OF INVISIBLE ANGELS.

*(Faint and tender.)*

Mortal man and woman,  
Go upon your travel !  
Heaven assist the Human  
Smoothly to unravel  
All that web of pain  
Wherein ye are holden.  
Do ye know our voices  
Chanting down the golden ?  
Do ye guess our choice is,  
Being un beholden,  
To be harkened by you, yet again ?  
This pure door of opal,  
God hath shut between us ;  
Us, his shining people,  
You who once have seen us,  
And are blinded new !  
Yet across the doorway,  
Past the silence reaching,  
Farewells evermore may,  
Blessing in the teaching,  
Glide from us to you.

*First semichorus.*

Think how erst your Eden,  
Day on day succeeding,

With our presence glowed.  
We came as if the Heavens were bowed  
To a milder music rare !  
Ye saw us in our solemn treading,  
Treading down the steps of cloud ;  
While our wings outspreading  
Double calms of whiteness,  
Dropped superfluous brightness  
Down from stair to stair

*Second semichorus.*

Oft, abrupt though tender,  
While ye gazed on space,  
We flashed our angel-splendor  
In either human face !  
With mystic lilies in our hands,  
From the atmospheric bands  
Breaking with a sudden grace,  
We took you unaware !  
While our feet struck glories  
Outward, smooth and fair,  
Which we stood on floorwise,  
Platformed in mid air.

*First Semichorus.*

Or oft, when Heaven-descended,  
Stood we in your wondering sight  
In a mute apocalypse !  
With dumb vibrations on our lips  
From hosannas ended ;  
And grand half-vanishings  
Of the empyreal things



Within our eyes belated !  
Till the heavenly Infinite  
Falling off from the Created.  
Left our inward contemplation  
Opened into ministration.

*Chorus.*

Then upon our axle turning  
Of great joy to sympathy,  
We sang out the morning  
Broadening up the sky.  
Or we drew  
Our music through  
The noontide's hush and heat and shine,  
Informed with our intense Divine—  
Interrupted vital notes  
Palpitating hither, thither,  
Burning out into the æther.  
Sensible like fiery motes.  
Or, whenever twilight drifted  
Through the cedar masses.  
The globed sun we lifted.  
Trailing purple, trailing gold  
Out between the passes  
Of the mountains manifold.  
To anthems slowly sung !  
While he, aweary, half in swoon,  
For joy to hear our climbing tune  
Transpierced the stars' concentric rings,—  
The burden of his glory hung  
In broken lights upon our wings.

*[The Chant dies away confusedly, and LUCIFER appears]*

*Lucifer.* Now may all fruits be pleasant to thy lips  
Beautiful Eve ! The times have somewhat changed—  
Since thou and I had talk beneath a tree ;  
Albeit ye are not gods yet.

*Eve.* Adam ! hold  
My right hand strongly. It is Lucifer—  
And we have love to lose.

*Adam.* P' the name of God,  
Go apart from us, O thou Lucifer !  
And leave us to the desert thou hast made  
Out of thy treason. Bring no serpent-slime  
Athwart this path kept holy to our tears,  
Or we may curse thee with their bitterness.

*Lucifer.* Curse freely ! curses thicken. Why, this  
Eve  
Who thought me once part worthy of her ear  
And somewhat wiser than the other beasts,—  
Drawing together her large globes of eyes,  
The light of which is throbbing in and out  
Their steadfast continuity of gaze,—  
Knots her fair eyebrows in so hard a knot,  
And, down from her white heights of womanhood,  
Looks on me so amazed,—I scarce should fear  
To wager such an apple as she plucked,  
Against one riper from the tree of life,  
That she could curse too—as a woman may—  
Smooth in the vowels.

*Eve.* So—speak wickedly !  
I like it best so. Let thy words be wounds,—  
For, so, I shall not fear thy power to hurt :  
Trench on the forms of good by open ill—

For, so, I shall wax strong and grand with scorn ;  
Scorning myself for ever trusting thee  
As far as thinking, ere a snake ate dust,  
He could speak wisdom.

*Lucifer.* Our new gods, it seems  
Deal more in thunders than in courtesies :  
And, sooth, mine own Olympus, which anon  
I shall build up to loud-voiced imagery  
From all the wandering visions of the world,  
May show worse railing than our lady Eve  
Pours o'er the rounding of her argent arm.  
But why should this be ? Adam pardoned Eve.

*Adam.* Adam loved Eve. Jehovah pardon both !

*Eve.* Adam forgave Eve—because loving Eve.

*Lucifer.* So, well. Yet Adam was undone of Eve,  
As both were by the snake. Therefore forgive,  
In like wise, fellow-temptress, the poor snake—  
Who stung there, not so poorly ! *[Aside.*

*Eve.* Hold thy wrath,  
Beloved Adam ! let me answer him ;  
For this time he speaks truth, which we should hear,  
And asks for mercy, which I most should grant,  
In like wise, as he tells us—in like wise !  
And therefore I thee pardon, Lucifer,  
As freely as the streams of Eden flowed  
When we were happy by them. So, depart ;  
Leave us to walk the remnant of our time  
Out mildly in the desert. Do not seek  
To harm us any more or scoff at us  
Or ere the dust be laid upon our face  
To find there the communion of the dust

And issue of the dust.—Go.

*Adam.* At once, go.

*Lucifer.* Forgive ! and go ! Ye images of clay,  
Shrunk somewhat in the mould,—what jest is this ?  
What words are these to use ? By what a thought  
Conceive ye of me ? Yesterday—a snake !  
To-day, what ?

*Adam.* A strong spirit.

*Eve.* A sad spirit.

*Adam.* Perhaps a fallen angel.—Who shall say ?

*Lucifer.* Who told thee, Adam ?

*Adam.* *Thou !* The prodigy  
Of thy vast brows and melancholy eyes  
Which comprehend the heights of some great fall.  
I think that thou hast one day worn a crown  
Under the eyes of God.

*Lucifer.* And why of God ?

*Adam.* It were no crown else ! Verily, I think  
Thou'rt fallen far. I had not yesterday  
Said it so surely ; but I know to-day  
Grief by grief, sin by sin.

*Lucifer.* A crown by a crown.

*Adam.* Ay, mock me ! now I know more than I  
knew.

Now I know thou art fallen below hope  
Of final re-ascend.

*Lucifer.* Because ?

*Adam.* Because

A spirit who expected to see God  
Though at the last point of a million years,  
Could dare no mockery of a ruined man

Such as this Adam.

*Lucifer.*                      Who is high and bold—  
Be it said passing!—of a good red clay  
Discovered on some top of Lebanon,  
Or haply of Aornus, beyond sweep  
Of the black eagle's wing! A furlong lower  
Had made a meeker king for Eden. Soh!  
Is it not possible, by sin and grief  
(To give the things your names) that spirits should rise  
Instead of falling?

*Adam.*                      Most impossible.  
The Highest being the Holy and the Glad,  
Whoever rises must approach delight  
And sanctity in the act.

*Lucifer.*                      Ha, my clay-king!  
Thou wilt not rule by wisdom very long  
The after generations. Earth, methinks,  
Will disinherit thy philosophy  
For a new doctrine suited to thine heirs;  
And class these present dogmas with the rest  
Of the old-world traditions—Eden fruits  
And Saurian fossils.

*Eve.*                      Speak no more with him,  
Beloved! it is not good to speak with him.  
Go from us, Lucifer, and speak no more:  
We have no pardon which thou dost not scorn,  
Nor any bliss, thou seest, for coveting,  
Nor innocence for staining. Being bereft,  
We would be alone.—Go.

*Lucifer.*                      Ah! ye talk the same,  
All of you—spirits and clay—go, and depart!

In Heaven they said so ; and at Eden's gate,—  
 And here, reiterant, in the wilderness !  
 None saith, Stay with me, for thy face is fair !  
 None saith, Stay with me, for thy voice is sweet !  
 And yet I was not fashioned out of clay.  
 Look on me, woman ! Am I beautiful ?

*Eve.* Thou hast a glorious darkness.

*Lucifer.* Nothing more ?

*Eve.* I think no more.

*Lucifer.* False Heart—thou thinkest more !

Thou canst not choose but think, as I praise God,  
 Unwillingly but fully, that I stand  
 Most absolute in beauty. As yourselves  
 Were fashioned very good at best, so *we*  
 Sprang very beauteous from the creant Word  
 Which thrilled behind us—God Himself being moved  
 When that august work of a perfect shape,  
 His dignities of sovran angel-hood  
 Swept out into the universe,—divine  
 With thunderous movements, earnest looks of *gods*,  
 And silver-solemn clash of cymbal wings.  
 Whereof was I in motion and in form,  
 A part not poorest. And yet,—yet, perhaps,  
 This beauty which I speak of, is not here,  
 As God's voice is not here ; nor even my crown—  
 I do not know. What is this thought or thing  
 Which I call beauty ? is it thought or thing ?  
 Is it a thought accepted for a thing ?  
 Or both ? or neither ?—a pretext ?—a word ?  
 Its meaning flutters in me like a flame  
 Under my own breath : my perceptions reel

For evermore around it, and fall off,  
As if it too were holy.

*Eve.*

Which it is.

*Adam.* The essence of all beauty I call love.  
The attribute, the evidence, and end,  
The consummation to the inward sense,  
Of beauty apprehended from without,  
I still call love. As form, when colorless,  
Is nothing to the eye; that pine tree there,  
Without its black and green, being all a blank;  
So, without love, is beauty undiscerned  
In man or angel. Angel! rather ask  
What love is in thee, what love moves to thee,  
And what collateral love moves on with thee;  
Then shalt thou know if thou art beautiful.

*Lucifer.* Love! what is love? I lose it. Beauty  
and love!

I darken to the image. Beauty—Love!

*[He fades away, while a low music sounds.]*

*Adam.* Thou art pale, Eve.

*Eve.*

The precipice of ill

Down this colossal nature, dizzies me—  
And, hark! the starry harmony remote  
Seems measuring the heights from whence he fell.

*Adam.* Think that we have not fallen so. By the  
hope

And aspiration, by the love and faith,  
We do exceed the stature of this angel.

*Eve.* Happier we are than he is, by the death!

*Adam.* Or rather, by the life of the Lord God!  
How dim the angel grows, as if that blast

Of music swept him back into the dark.

*[The music is stronger, gathering itself into uncertain articulation*

*Eve.* It throbs in on us like a plaintive heart,  
Pressing, with slow pulsations, vibrative  
Its gradual sweetness through the yielding air,  
To such expression as the stars may use,  
Most starry-sweet and strange! With every note  
That grows more loud, the angel grows more dim,  
Receding in proportion to approach,  
Until he stand afar,—a shade.

*Adam.*

Now, words.

SONG OF THE MORNING STAR TO LUCIFER.

*He fades utterly away and vanishes, as it proceeds.*

Mine orb'd image sinks

Back from thee, back from thee,

As thou art fallen, methinks,

Back from me, back from me.

O my light-bearer,

Could another fairer

Lack to thee, lack to thee?

Ah, ah, Heosphoros!

I loved thee with the fiery love of stars

Who love by burning, and by loving move,

Too near the throned Jehovah not to love.

Ah, ah, Heosphoros!

Their brows flash fast on me from gliding cars,

Pale-passioned for my loss.

Ah, ah, Heosphoros!

Mine orb'd heats drop cold

Down from thee, down from thee,



As fell thy grace of old  
Down from me, down from me.  
O my light-bearer,  
Is another fairer  
Won to thee, won to thee?  
Ah, ah, Heosphoros,  
Great love preceded loss,  
Known to thee, known to thee.  
Ah, ah!

Thou, breathing thy communicable grace  
Of life into my light,  
Mine astral faces, from thine angel face,  
Hast inly fed,  
And flooded me with radiance overmuch  
From thy pure height.  
Ah, ah!

Thou, with calm, floating pinions both ways spread,  
Erect, irradiated,  
Didst sting my wheel of glory  
On, on before thee  
Along the Godlight by a quickening touch!  
Ha, ha!

Around, around the firmamental ocean  
I swam expanding with delirious fire!  
Around, around, around, in blind desire  
To be drawn upward to the Infinite—  
Ha, ha!

Until, the motion flinging out the motion  
To a keen whirl of passion and avidity.  
To a blind whirl of languor and delight,

I wound in girant orbits smooth and white  
 With that intense rapidity !  
 Around, around,  
 I wound and interwound,  
 While all the cyclic heavens about me spun !  
 Stars, planets, suns, and moons dilated broad,  
 Then flashed together into a single sun,  
 And wound, and wound in one ;  
 And as they wound I wound,—around, around,  
 In a great fire I almost took for God !  
 Ha, ha, Heosphoros !

Thine angel glory sinks  
 Down from me, down from me—  
 My beauty falls, methinks,  
 Down from thee, down from thee !  
 O my light-bearer,  
 O my path-preparer,  
 Gone from me, gone from me !  
 Ah, ah, Heosphoros !

I cannot kindle underneath the brow  
 Of this new angel here, who is not Thou :  
 All things are altered since that time ago,—  
 And if I shine at eve, I shall not know—  
 I am strange—I am slow !  
 Ah, ah, Heosphoros !

Henceforward, human eyes of lovers be  
 The only sweetest sight that I shall see,  
 With tears between the looks raised up to me.  
 Ah, ah !

When, having wept all night, at break of day

Above the folded hills they shall survey  
My light, a little trembling, in the grey.

Ah, ah!

And gazing on me, such shall comprehend,  
Through all my piteous pomp at morn or even  
And melancholy leaning out of Heaven,  
That love, their own divine, may change or end,  
That love may close in loss!  
Ah, ah, Heosphoros!

SCENE—*Farther on. A wild open country seen vaguely in the approaching night.*

*Adam.* How doth the wide and melancholy earth  
Gather her hills around us, grey and ghast,  
And stare with blank significance of loss  
Right in our faces! Is the wind up?

*Eve.*

Nay.

*Adam.* And yet the cedars and the junipers  
Rock slowly through the mist, without a sound;  
And shapes which have no certainty of shape  
Drift dusky in and out between the pines,  
And loom along the edges of the hills,  
And lie flat, curdling in the open ground—  
Shadows without a body, which contract  
And lengthen as we gaze on them.

*Eve.*

O Life

Which is not man's nor angel's! What is this?

*Adam.* No cause for fear. The circle of God's life  
Contains all life beside.

*Eve*

I think the earth

Is crazed with curse, and wanders from the sense

Of those first laws affixed to form and space  
Or ever she knew sin !

*Adam.*

We will not fear :

We were brave sinning.

*Eve.*

Yea, I plucked the fruit

With eyes upturned to Heaven and seeing there

Our god-thrones, as the tempter said—not God.

My heart, which beat then, sinks. The sun hath sunk  
Out of sight with our Eden.

*Adam.*

Night is near.

*Eve.* And God's curse, nearest. Let us travel back  
And stand within the sword-glare till we die ;

Believing it is better to meet death

Than suffer desolation.

*Adam.*

Nay, beloved !

We must not pluck death from the Maker's hand,

As erst we plucked the apple : we must wait

Until He gives death as He gave us life ;

Nor murmur faintly o'er the primal gift,

Because we spoilt its sweetness with our sin.

*Eve.* Ah, ah ! Dost thou discern what I behold ?

*Adam.* I see all. How the spirits in thine eyes

From their dilated orbits bound before

To meet the spectral Dread !

*Eve.*

I am afraid—

Ah, ah ! The twilight bristles wild with shapes

Of intermittent motion, aspect vague

And mystic bearings, which o'ercreep the earth,

Keeping slow time with horrors in the blood.

How near they reach . . . and far ! how gray they  
move—

Treading upon the darkness without feet,  
And fluttering on the darkness without wings !  
Some run like dogs, with noses to the ground ;  
Some keep one path, like sheep ; some rock like trees  
Some glide like a fallen leaf ; and some flow on  
Copious as rivers.

*Adam.*           Some spring up like fire—  
And some coil . . .

*Eve.*           Ah, ah ! Dost thou pause to say  
Like what ?—coil like the serpent when he fell  
From all the emerald splendor of his height  
And writhed,—and could not climb against the curse,  
Not a ring's length. I am afraid—afraid—  
I think it is God's will to make me afraid ,  
Permitting THESE to haunt us in the place  
Of His beloved angels—gone from us  
Because we are not pure. Dear Pity of God,  
That didst permit the angels to go home  
And live no more with us who are not pure ;  
Save *us* too from a loathly company—  
Almost as loathly in our eyes, perhaps,  
As *we* are in the purest ! Pity us—  
Us too ! nor shut us in the dark, away  
From verity and from stability,  
Or what we name such through the precedence  
Of earth's adjusted uses,—leave us not  
To doubt betwixt our senses and our souls,  
Which are the more distraught and full of pain  
And weak of apprehension.

*Adam.*           Courage, sweet !  
The mystic shapes ebb back from us, and drop

With slow concentric movement, each on each,—  
 Expressing wider spaces, and collapsed  
 In lines more definite for imagery  
 And clearer for relation ; till the throng  
 Of shapeless spectra merge into a few  
 Distinguishable phantasms vague and grand,  
 Which sweep out and around us vastly,  
 And hold us in a circle and a calm.

*Eve.* Strange phantasms of pale shadow ! there are  
 twelve.

Thou who didst name all lives, hast names for these ?

*Adam.* Methinks this is the zodiac of the earth,  
 Which rounds us with its visionary dread,  
 Responding with twelve shadowy signs of earth,  
 In fantasmic apposition and approach,  
 To those celestial, constellated twelve  
 Which palpitate adown the silent nights  
 Under the pressure of the hand of God  
 Stretched wide in benediction. At this hour,  
 Not a star pricketh the flat gloom of heaven !  
 But, girdling close our nether wilderness,  
 The zodiac-figures of the earth loom slow,—  
 Drawn out, as suiteth with the place and time,  
 In twelve colossal shades instead of stars,  
 Through which the ecliptic line of mystery  
 Strikes bleakly with an unrelenting scope,  
 Foreshowing life and death.

*Eve.* By dream or sense,  
 Do we see this ?

*Adam.* Our spirits have climbed high  
 By reason of the passion of our grief,

And from the top of sense, looked over sense,  
To the significance and heart of things  
Rather than things themselves.

*Eve.* And the dim twelve . . .

*Adam.* Are dim exponents of the creature-life  
As earth contains it. Gaze on them, beloved !  
By stricter apprehension of the sight,  
Suggestions of the creatures shall assuage  
Thy terror of the shadows ;—what is known  
Subduing the unknown and taming it  
From all prodigious dread. That phantasm, there,  
Presents a lion,—albeit twenty times  
As large as any lion—with a roar  
Set soundless in his vibratory jaws,  
And a strange horror stirring in his mane !  
And, there, a pendulous shadow seems to weigh—  
Good against ill, perchance ; and there, a crab  
Puts coldly out its gradual shadow-claws,  
Like a slow blot that spreads,—till all the ground,  
Crawled over by it, seems to crawl itself ;  
A bull stands horned here with gibbous glooms ;  
And a ram likewise ; and a scorpion writhes  
Its tail in ghastly slime and stings the dark !  
This way a goat leaps with wild blank of beard ;  
And here fantastic fishes duskly float,  
Using the calm for waters, while their fins  
Throb out slow rhythms along the shallow air !  
While images more human——

*Eve.* How he stands,

That phantasm of a man—who is not *thou* !  
Two phantasms of two men .





O bleak sound !

O shadow of sound, O phantasm of thin sound !  
 How it comes, wheeling as the pale moth wheels,  
 Wheeling and wheeling in continuous wail,  
 Around the cyclic zodiac ; and gains force,  
 And gathers, settling coldly like a moth,  
 On the wan faces of these images  
 We see before us ; whereby modified  
 It draws a straight line of articulate song  
 From out that spiral faintness of lament—  
 And, by one voice, expresses many griefs.

*First Spirit.*

I am the spirit of the harmless earth ;  
 God spake me softly out among the stars,  
 As softly as a blessing of much worth,  
 And then, His smile did follow unawares,  
 That all things fashioned so for use and duty  
 Might shine anointed with His chrism of beauty—

Yet I wail !

I drave on with the worlds exultingly,  
 Obliquely down the Godlight's gradual fall—  
 Individual aspect and complexity  
 Of gyratory orb and interval  
 Lost in the fluent motion of delight  
 Toward the high ends of Being beyond sight—

Yet I wail !

*Second Spirit.*

I am the Spirit of the harmless beasts,  
 Of flying things, and creeping things, and swimming ;  
 Of all the lives, erst set at silent feasts,  
 That found the love-kiss on the goblet brimming,

And tasted, in each drop within the measure  
The sweetest pleasure of their Lord's good pleasure—

Yet I wail !

What a full hum of life around His lips,  
Bore witness to the fulness of creation !  
How all the grand words were full-laden ships ;  
Each sailing onward from enunciation,  
To separate existence,—and each bearing  
The creature's power of joying, hoping, fearing !

Yet I wail !

*Eve.* They wail, beloved ! they speak of glory and  
God,

And they wail—wail. That burden of the song  
Drops from it like its fruit, and heavily falls  
Into the lap of silence !

*Adam.* Hark, again !

*First Spirit*

I was so beautiful, so beautiful,  
My joy stood up within me bold to add  
A word to God's, and when His work was full,  
To 'very good,' responded 'very glad !'  
Filtered through roses, did the light enclose me ;  
And bunches of the grape swam blue across me—  
Yet I wail !

*Second Spirit.*

I bounded with my panthers ! I rejoiced  
In my young tumbling lions rolled together !  
My stag—the river at his fetlocks—poised,  
Then dipped his antlers through the golden weather  
In the same ripple which the alligator  
Left in his joyous troubling of the water—

Yet I wail !

*First Spirit.*

O my deep waters, cataract and flood,  
What wordless triumph did your voices render !  
O mountain-summits, where the angels stood  
And shook from head and wing thick dews of  
splendor ;  
How with a holy quiet, did your Earthy  
Accept that Heavenly—knowing ye were worthy !  
Yet I wail !

*Second Spirit.*

O my wild wood dogs, with your listening eyes !  
My horses—my ground eagles, for swift fleeing !  
My birds, with viewless wings of harmonies,  
My calm cold fishes of a silver being,  
How happy were ye, living and possessing,  
O fair half-souls capacious of full blessing.  
Yet I wail !

*First Spirit.*

I wail, I wail ! Now hear my charge to-day,  
Thou man, thou woman, marked as the misdoers  
By God's sword at your backs ! I lent my clay  
To make your bodies, which had grown more flowers :  
And now, in change for what I lent, ye give me  
The thorn to vex, the tempest-fire to cleave me—  
And I wail !

*Second Spirit.*

I wail, I wail ! Behold ye that I fasten  
My sorrow's fang upon your souls dishonored ?  
Accursed transgressors ! down the steep ye hasten,—

Your crown's weight on the world, to drag it downward

Unto your ruin. Lo! my lions, scenting  
The blood of wars, roar hoarse and unrelenting—  
And I wail!

*First Spirit.*

I wail, I wail! Do you hear that I wail?

I had no part in your transgression—none!  
My roses on the bough did bud not pale—

My rivers did not loiter in the sun.  
I was obedient. Wherefore in my centre  
Do I thrill at this curse of death and winter!—  
And I wail!

*Second Spirit.*

I wail, I wail! I wail in the assault

Of undeserved perdition, sorely wounded!  
My nightingales sang sweet without a fault,  
My gentle leopards innocently bounded;  
We were obedient—what is this convulses  
Our blameless life with pangs and fever pulses?  
And I wail!

*Eve.* I choose God's thunder and His angels' swords  
To die by, Adam, rather than such words.  
Let us pass out and flee.

*Adam.* We cannot flee.  
This zodiac of the creatures' cruelty  
Curled round us, like a river cold and drear,  
And shuts us in, constraining us to hear.

*First Spirit.*

I feel your steps, O wandering sinners, strike  
A sense of death to me, and undug graves!

The heart of earth, once calm, is trembling like  
The ragged foam along the ocean-waves :  
The restless earthquakes rock against each other ;  
The elements moan 'round me— ' Mother, mother '—  
And I wail !

*Second Spirit.*

Your melancholy looks do pierce me through ;  
Corruption swathes the paleness of your beauty.  
Why have ye done this thing ? What did we do  
That we should fall from bliss as ye from duty ?  
Wild shriek the hawks, in waiting for their jesses,  
Fierce howl the wolves along the wildernesses—  
And I wail !

*Adam.* To thee, the Spirit of the harmless earth—  
To thee, the Spirit of earth's harmless lives—  
Inferior creatures but still innocent—  
Be salutation from a guilty mouth  
Yet worthy of some audience and respect  
From you who are not guilty. If we have sinned,  
God hath rebuked us, who is over us,  
To give rebuke or death ; and if ye wail  
Because of any suffering from our sin,  
Ye who are under and not over us,  
Be satisfied with God, if not with us,  
And pass out from our presence in such peace  
As we have left you, to enjoy revenge  
Such as the Heavens have made you. Verily,  
There must be strife between us, large as sin.

*Eve.* No strife, mine Adam ! Let us not stand high  
Upon the wrong we did to reach disdain,  
Who rather should be humbler evermore

Since self-made sadder. Adam ! shall I speak—  
 I who spake once to such a bitter end—  
 Shall I speak humbly now, who once was proud ?  
 I, schooled by sin to more humility  
 Than thou hast, O mine Adam, O my king—  
 My king, if not the world's ?

*Adam.* Speak as thou wilt.

*Eve.* Thus then—my hand in thine—

... Sweet, dreadful Spirits !

I pray you humbly in the name of God ;  
 Not to say of these tears, which are impure—  
 Grant me such pardoning grace as can go forth  
 From clean volitions toward a spotted will,  
 From the wronged to the wronger ; this and no more ;  
 I do not ask more. I am 'ware, indeed,  
 That absolute pardon is impossible  
 From you to me, by reason of my sin,—  
 And that I cannot evermore, as once,  
 With worthy acceptance of pure joy,  
 Behold the trances of the holy hills  
 Beneath the leaning stars ; or watch the vales  
 Dew-pallid with their morning ecstacy ;  
 Or hear the winds make pastoral peace between  
 Two grassy uplands,—and the river-wells  
 Work out their bubbling mysteries under ground—  
 And all the birds sing, till for joy of song,  
 They lift their trembling wings as if to heave  
 The too-much weight of music from their heart  
 And float it up the æther ! I am 'ware  
 That these things I can no more apprehend  
 With a pure organ into a full delight ;

The sense of beauty and of melody  
Being no more aided in me by the sense  
Of personal adjustment to those heights  
Of what I see well-formed or hear well-tuned,  
But rather coupled darkly and made ashamed  
By my percipieney of sin and fall  
In melancholy of humiliant thoughts.  
But, oh ! fair, dreadful Spirits—albeit this  
Your accusation must confront my soul,  
And your pathetic utterance and full gaze  
Must evermore subdue me ; be content—  
Conquer me gently—as if pitying me,  
Not to say loving ! let my tears fall thick  
As watering dews of Eden, unreploached ;  
And when your tongues reprove me, make me smooth,  
Not ruffled—smooth and still with your reproof,  
And peradventure better while more sad.  
For look to it sweet Spirits—look well to it—  
It will not be amiss in you who kept  
The law of your own righteousness, and keep  
The right of your own griefs to mourn themselves,—  
To pity me twice fallen,—from that, and this,  
From joy of place, and also right of wail,  
' I wail ' being not for me—only ' I sin.'  
Look to it, O sweet Spirits !—

For was I not,

At that last sunset seen in Paradise,  
When all the westering clouds flashed out in throngs  
Of sudden angel-faces, face by face,  
All hushed and solemn, as a thought of God  
Held them suspended,—was I not, that hour,

The lady of the world, princess of life,  
Mistress of feast and favor? Could I touch  
A rose with my white hand, but it became  
Redder at once? Could I walk leisurely  
Along our swarded garden, but the grass  
Track'd me with greenness? Could I stand aside  
A moment underneath a cornel-tree,  
But all the leaves did tremble as alive  
With songs of fifty birds who were made glad  
Because I stood there? Could I turn to look  
With these twain eyes of mine, now weeping fast,  
Now good for only weeping—upon man,  
Angel, or beast, or bird, but each rejoiced  
Because I looked on him? Alas, alas!  
And is not this much wo, to cry 'alas!'  
Speaking of joy? And is not this more shame,  
To have made the wo myself, from all that joy?  
To have stretched my hand, and plucked it from the  
tree,



Beneath your trampling feet, God's gift to us,  
Of sovrantry by reason and freewill ;  
Sinning against the province of the Soul  
To rule the soulless. Reverence her estate :  
And pass out from her presence with no words.

*Eve.* O dearest Heart, have patience with my  
heart,

O Spirits, have patience, 'stead of reverence,  
And let me speak ; for, not being innocent,  
It little doth become me to be proud ;  
And I am prescient by the very hope  
And promise set upon me, that henceforth  
Only my gentleness shall make me great,  
My humbleness exalt me. Awful Spirits,  
Be witness that I stand in your reproof  
But one sun's length off from my happiness—  
Happy, as I have said, to look around—  
Clear to look up!—And now ! I need not speak—  
Ye see me what I am ; ye scorn me so,  
Because ye see me what I have made myself  
From God's best making ! Alas,—peace forgone,  
Love wronged,—and virtue forfeit, and tears wept  
Upon all, vainly ! Alas, me ! alas,  
Who have undone myself from all that best,  
Fairest and sweetest, to this wretchedest,  
Saddest and most defiled—cast out, east down—  
What word metes absolute loss ? let absolute loss  
Suffice you for revenge. For *I*, who lived  
Beneath the wings of angels yesterday,  
Wander to-day beneath the roofless world !  
*I*, reigning the earth's empress yesterday.

Put off from me, to-day, your hate with prayers !  
*I*, yesterday, who answered the Lord God,  
 Composed and glad as singing-birds the sun,  
 Might shriek now from our dismal desert, ' God,'  
 And hear Him make reply, ' What is thy need,  
 Thou whom I cursed to-day ? '

*Adam*

*Eve !*

*Eve.*

*I*, at last,

Who yesterday was helpmate and delight  
 Unto mine Adam, am to-day the grief  
 And curse-mete for him ! And, so, pity us,  
 Ye gentle Spirits, and pardon him and me,  
 And let some tender peace, made of our pain,  
 Grow up betwixt us, as a tree might grow  
 With boughs on both sides. In the shade of which,  
 When presently ye shall behold us dead,—  
 For the poor sake of our humility,  
 Breathe out your pardon on our breathless lips,  
 And drop your twilight dews against our brows ;  
 And stroking with mild airs our harmless hands  
 Left empty of all fruit, perceive your love  
 Distilling through your pity over us,  
 And suffer it, self-reconciled, to pass.

*LUCIFER rises in the circle.*

*Lucifer.* Who talks here of a complement of grief ?  
 Of expiation wrought by loss and fall ?  
 Of hate subduable to pity ? *Eve ?*  
 Take counsel from thy counsellor the snake,  
 And boast no more in grief, nor hope from pain,  
 My docile *Eve !* I teach you to despond,  
 Who taught you disobedience. Look around ;—

Earth-spirits and phantasms hear you talk unmoved,  
As if ye were red clay again and talked !  
What are your words to them ? your griefs to them ?  
Your deaths, indeed, to them ? Did the hand pause  
For *their* sake, in the plucking of the fruit,  
That they should pause for *you*, in hating you ?  
Or will your grief or death, as did your sin,  
Bring change upon their final doom ? Behold,  
Your grief is but your sin in the rebound,  
And cannot expiate for it.

*Adam.* That is true.

*Lucifer.* Ay, it is true. The clay-king testifies  
To the snake's counsel,—hear him !—very true.

*Earth Spirits.* I wail, I wail !

*Lucifer.* And certes, *that* is true.

Ye wail, ye all wail. Peradventure I  
 Could wail among you. O thou universe,  
 That holdest sin and wo,—more room for wail !

*Distant starry voice.* Ah, ah, Heosphoros! Heosphoros!

*Adam.* Mark Lucifer. He changes awfully.

*Eve.* It seems as if he looked from grief to God  
And could not see Him;—wretched Lucifer!

*Adam.* How he stands—yet an angel!

*Earth Spirits.* We all wail !

*Lucifer,* (after a pause.) Dost thou remember,  
Adam, when the curse

Took us in Eden? On a mountain-peak  
Half-sheathed in primal woods and glittering  
In spasms of awful sunshine at that hour  
A lion couched,—part raised upon his paws.



And deal in pathos of antithesis  
 Of what ye *were* forsooth, and what ye are ;—  
 I scorn you like an angel ! Yet, one cry  
 I, too, would drive up like a column erect,  
 Marble to marble, from my heart to Heaven,  
 A monument of anguish to transpierce  
 And overtop your vapory complaints  
 Expressed from feeble woes !

*Earth Spirits.*

I wail, I wail !

*Lucifer.* For, O ye heavens, ye are my witnesses,  
 That *I*, struck out from nature in a blot,  
 The outcast and the mildew of things good,  
 The leper of angels, the excepted dust  
 Under the common rain of daily gifts,—  
 I the snake, I the tempter, I the cursed,—  
 To whom the highest and the lowest alike  
 Say, Go from us—we have no need of thee,—  
 Was made by God like others. Good and fair,  
 He did create me !—ask Him, if not fair ;  
 Ask, if I caught not fair and silverly  
 His blessing for chief angels on my head  
 Until it grew there, a crown crystallized !  
 Ask, if He never called me by my name,  
*Lucifer*—kindly said as ‘ Gabriel ’—  
*Lucifer*—soft as ‘ Michael ’ While serene  
 I, standing in the glory of the lamps,  
 Answered ‘ my father,’ innocent of shame  
 And of the sense of thunder. Ha ! ye think,  
 White angels in your niches,—I repent,  
 And would tread down my own offences back  
 To service at the footstool ! *That’s* read wrong :

I cry as the beast did, that I may cry—  
Expansive, not appealing ! Fallen so deep  
Against the sides of this prodigious pit,  
I cry—cry—dashing out the hands of wail  
On each side, to meet anguish everywhere,  
And to attest it in the ecstasy  
And exaltation of a wo sustained  
Because provoked and chosen.

Pass along  
Your wilderness, vain mortals ! Puny griefs  
In transitory shapes, be henceforth dwarfed  
To your own conscience, by the dread extremes  
Of what I am and have been. If ye have fallen,  
It is a step's fall,—the whole ground beneath  
Strewn woolly soft with promise ; if ye have sinned,  
Your prayers tread high as angels ! if ye have grieved,  
Ye are too mortal to be pitiable,  
The power to die disproves the right to grieve.  
Go to ! ye call this ruin. I half-scorn  
The ill I did you ! Were ye wronged by me,  
Hated and tempted and undone of me,—  
Still, what's your hurt to mine of doing hurt,  
Of hating, tempting, and so ruining ?  
This sword's *hilt* is the sharpest, and cuts through  
The hand that wields it.

Go—I curse you all.  
Hate one another—feebly—as ye can ;  
I would not certes cut you short in hate—  
Far be it from me ! hate on as ye can !  
I breathe into your faces, spirits of earth,  
As wintry blast may breathe on wintry leaves

And lifting up their brownness, show beneath  
The branches very bare.—Beseech you, spirits, give  
To Eve, who beggarly entreats your love  
For her and Adam when they shall be dead,  
An answer rather fitting to the sin  
Than to the sorrow—as the Heavens, I trow,  
For justice' sake gave theirs.

I curse you both,

Adam and Eve ! Say grace as after meat,  
After my curses. May your tears fall hot  
On all the hissing scorns o' the creatures here,—  
And yet rejoice. Increase and multiply,  
Ye and your generations, in all plagues,  
Corruptions, melancholies, poverties,  
And hideous forms of life and fears of death ;  
The thought of death being alway eminent  
Immoveable and dreadful in your life,  
And deafly and dumbly insignificant  
Of any hope beyond,—as death itself,  
Whichever of you lieth dead the first,  
Shall seem to the survivor—yet rejoice !  
My curse catch at you strongly, body and soul,  
And HE find no redemption—nor the wing  
Of seraph move your way—and yet rejoice !  
Rejoice,—because ye have not set in you  
This hate which shall pursue you—this fire-hate  
Which glares without, because it burns within—  
Which kills from ashes—this potential hate,  
Wherein I, angel, in antagonism  
To God and his reflex beatitudes,  
Moan ever in the central universe

With the great wo of striving against Love—  
 And gasp for space amid the infinite—  
 And toss for rest amid the Desertness—  
 Self-orphaned by my will, and self-elect  
 To kingship of resistant agony  
 Toward the Good round me—hating good and love.  
 And willing to hate good and to hate love,  
 And willing to will on so evermore,  
 Scorning the Past, and damning the To come—  
 Go and rejoice ! I curse you !

LUCIFER *vanishes.*

*Earth Spirits.*

And we scorn you ! there's no pardon  
 Which can lean to you aright !  
 When your bodies take the guerdon  
 Of the death-curse in our sight,  
 Then the bee that hummeth lowest shall transcend you.  
 Then ye shall not move an eyelid  
 Though the stars look down your eyes ;  
 And the earth which ye defiled,  
 Shall expose you to the skies,—  
 ' Lo ! these kings of ours—who sought to comprehend  
 you.'

*First Spirit.*

And the elements shall boldly  
 All your dust to dust constrain ;  
 Unresistedly and coldly  
 I will smite you with my rain !  
 From the slowest of my frosts is no receding

*Second Spirit.*

And my little worm, appointed



To assume a royal part,  
 He shall reign, crowned and anointed,  
 O'er the noble human heart !  
 Give him counsel against losing of that Eden !

*Adam.* Do ye scorn us ? Back your scorn  
 Toward your faces gray and lorn,  
 As the wind drives back the rain,  
 Thus I drive with passion-strife ;  
 I who stand beneath God's sun,  
 Made like God, and, though undore,  
 Not unmade for love and life.  
 Lo ! ye utter threats in vain !  
 By my free will that chose sin,  
 By mine agony within  
 Round the passage of the fire ;  
 By the pinings which disclose  
 That my native soul is higher  
 Than what it chose,

We are yet too high, O spirits, for your disdain

*Eve.* Nay, beloved ! if these be low,  
 We confront them with no height ;  
 We have stooped down to their level  
 By infecting them with evil,  
 And their scorn that meets our blow  
 Scathes aright.

Amen. Let it be so.

*Earth Spirits.*

We shall triumph—triumph greatly  
 When ye lie beneath the sward !  
 There, our lily shall grow stately  
 Though ye answer not a word—

And her fragrance shall be scornful of your silence.  
While your throne ascending calmly,  
We, in heirdom of your soul,  
Flash the river, lift the palm tree,  
The dilated ocean roll  
By the thoughts that throbbed within you—round  
the islands.

Alp and torrent shall inherit  
Your significance of will :  
With the grandeur of your spirit  
Shall our broad savannahs fill—  
In our winds, your exultations shall be springing.  
Even your parlance which inveigles,  
By our rudeness shall be won ;  
Hearts poetic in our eagles  
Shall beat up against the sun,  
And strike downward in articulate clear singing.

Your bold speeches, our Behemoth  
With his thunderous jaw shall wield !  
Your high fancies shall our Mammoth  
Breathe sublimely up the shield  
Of St. Michael at God's throne, who waits to speed  
him !  
Till the heavens' smooth-grooved thunder  
Spinning back, shall leave them clear ;  
And the angels smiling wonder  
With dropt looks from sphere to sphere,  
Shall cry, ' Ho, ye heirs of Adam ! ye exceed him !'

*Adam.* Root out thine eyes, sweet, from the dreary  
ground.

Beloved, we may be overcome by God,  
But not by *these*.

*Eve.* By God, perhaps, in *these*.

*Adam.* I think, not so. Had God foredoomed  
despair,

He had not spoken hope. He may destroy  
Certes, but not deceive.

*Eve.* Behold this rose !

I plucked it in our bower of Paradise  
This morning as I went forth ; and my heart  
Hath beat against its petals all the day.  
I thought it would be always red and full  
As when I plucked it—*Is it ?*—ye may see !  
I cast it down to you that ye may see,  
All of you !—count the petals lost of it—  
And note the colors faded ! ye may see :  
And I am as it is, who yesterday  
Grew in the same place. O ye spirits of earth !  
I almost, from my miserable heart,  
Could here upbraid you for your cruel heart,  
Which will not let me, down the slope of death.  
Draw any of your pity after me,  
Or lie still in the quiet of your looks,  
As my flower, there, in mine.

[*A bleak wind, quickened with indistinct human voices, spins around the earth-zodiac ; and filling the circle with its presence, and then waiving off into the east, carries the rose away with it. EVE falls upon her face. ADAM stands erect.*

*Adam.* So, verily,

The last departs.

*Eve.* So Memory follows Hope,  
 And Life both. Love said to me, 'Do not die,'  
 And I replied, 'O Love, I will not die.  
 I exiled and I will not orphan Love.'  
 But now it is no choice of mine to die—  
 My heart throbs from me.

*Adam.* Call it straightway back.  
 Death's consummation crowns completed life,  
 Or comes too early. Hope being set on thee  
 For others; if for others then for thee,—  
 For thee and me.

[*The wind revolves from the east, and round again to the east, perfumed  
 by the Eden-rose, and full of voices which sweep out into articula-  
 tion as they pass.*]

Let thy soul shake its leaves  
 To feel the mystic wind—Hark!

*Eve.* I hear life.

*Infant voices passing in the wind.*

O we live, O we live—  
 And this life that we receive  
 Is a warm thing and a new,  
 Which we softly bud into  
 From the heart and from the brain,—  
 Something strange that overmuch is  
 Of the sound and of the sight,  
 Flowing round in trickling touches,  
 With a sorrow and delight,—  
 Yet is it all in vain?

Rock us softly,  
 Lest it be all in vain.

*Youthful voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—

And this life that we achieve  
 Is a loud thing and a bold,  
 Which with pulses manifold  
 Strikes the heart out full and fain—  
 Active doer, noble liver,  
 Strong to struggle, sure to conquer,  
 Though the vessel's prow will quiver  
 At the lifting of the anchor :  
 Yet do we strive in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,

Lest it be all in vain.

*Poet voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
 And this life that we conceive  
 Is a clear thing and a fair,  
 Which we set in crystal air  
 That its beauty may be plain :  
 With a breathing and a flooding  
 Of the heaven-life on the whole,  
 While we hear the forests budding  
 To the music of the soul—  
 Yet is it tuned in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,

Lest it be all in vain.

*Philosophic voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
 And this life that we perceive,  
 Is a great thing and a grave,  
 Which for others' use we have,

Duty-laden to remain.  
 We are helpers, fellow-creatures,  
 Of the right against the wrong,  
 We are earnest-hearted teachers  
 Of the truth which maketh strong—  
 Yet do we teach in vain?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,

Lest it be all in vain.

*Revel voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
 And this life that we reprove,  
 Is a low thing and a light,  
 Which is jested out of sight,  
 And made worthy of disdain!  
 Strike with bold electric laughter  
 The high tops of things divine—  
 Turn thy head, my brother, after,  
 Lest thy tears fall in my wine;—  
 For is all laughed in vain?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,

Lest it be all in vain.

*Eve.* I hear a sound of life—of life like ours—  
 Of laughter and of wailing,—of grave speech,  
 Of little plaintive voices innocent,  
 Of life in separate courses flowing out  
 Like our four rivers to some outward main.  
 I hear life—life!

*Adam.* And, so, thy cheeks have snatched  
 Scarlet to paleness; and thine eyes drink fast

Of glory from full cups ; and thy moist lips  
Seem trembling, both of them, with earnest doubts  
Whether to utter words or only smile.

*Eve.* Shall I be mother of the coming life ?

Hear the steep generations, how they fall  
Adown the visionary stairs of Time,  
Like supernatural thunders—far, yet near ;  
Sowing their fiery echoes through the hills.  
Am I a cloud to these—mother to these ?

*Earth Spirits.* And bringer of the curse upon all  
these.

*EVE sinks down again.*

*Poet voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
And this life that we conceive,  
Is a noble thing and high,  
Which we climb up loftily  
To view God without a stain :  
Till recoiling where the shade is,  
We retread our steps again,  
And descend the gloomy Hades  
To resume man's mortal pain.  
Shall it be climbed in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,

Lest it be all in vain.

*Love voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
And this life we would retrieve,  
Is a faithful thing apart,  
Which we love in, heart to heart,

Until one heart fitteth twain.  
 ' Wilt thou be one with me ?'  
 ' I will be one with thee !'  
 ' Ha, ha !—we love and live !'  
 Alas ! ye love and die !  
 Shriek—who shall reply ?  
 For is it not loved in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,

Though it be all in vain.

*Aged voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
 And this life we would survive,  
 Is a gloomy thing and brief,  
 Which consummated in grief,  
 Leaveth ashes for all gain.  
 Is it not *all* in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,

Though it be *all* in vain.

*Voices die away.*

*Earth Spirits.* And bringer of the curse upon all  
 these.

*Ere.* The voices of foreshown Humanity  
 Die off ;—so let me die.

*Adam.*

So let us die,

When God's will soundeth the right hour of death.

*Earth Spirits.* And bringer of the curse upon all  
 these.

*Ere.* O spirits ! by the gentleness ye use  
 In winds at night, and floating clouds at noon,



In gliding waters under lily leaves,  
 In chirp of crickets, and the settling hush  
 A bird makes in her nest with feet and wings,—  
 Fulfil your natures now !

*Earth Spirits.*

Agreed ; allowed !

We gather out our natures like a cloud,  
 And thus fulfil their lightnings ! Thus, and thus !

Hearken, O hearken to us !

*First Spirit.*

As the storm-wind blows bleakly from the norland,  
 As the snow-wind beats blindly on the moorland,  
 As the simoon drives hot across the desert,  
 As the thunder roars deep in the Unmeasured,  
 As the torrent tears the ocean-world to atoms,  
 As the whirlpool grinds it fathoms below fathoms,  
 Thus,—and thus !

*Second Spirit.*

As the yellow toad, that spits its poison chilly,  
 As the tiger, in the jungle crouching stilly,  
 As the wild boar, with ragged tusks of anger,  
 As the wolf-dog, with teeth of glittering clangour,  
 As the vultures that scream against the thunder,  
 As the owlets that sit and moan asunder,  
 Thus,—and thus !

*Eve.* Adam ! God !

*Adam.* Cruel, unrelenting Spirits !

By the power in me of the sovran soul  
 Whose thoughts keep pace yet with the angel's march,  
 I charge you into silence—trample you

Down to obedience.—I am king of you!

*Earth Spirits*

Ha, ha! thou art king!  
 With a sin for a crown,  
 And a soul undone:  
 Thou, the antagonized,  
 Tortured and agonized,  
 Held in the ring  
 Of the zodiac!  
 Now, king, beware!  
 We are many and strong  
 Whom thou standest among,—  
 And we press on the air,  
 And we stifle thee back,  
 And we multiply where  
 Thou wouldst trample us down  
 From rights of our own  
 To an utter wrong—

And, from under the feet of thy scorn,  
 O forlorn!

We shall spring up like corn,  
 And our stubble be strong.

*Adam.* God, there is power in Thee! I make  
 appeal  
 Unto thy kingship.

*Eve.* There is pity in THEE,  
 O sinned against, great God!—My seed, my seed,  
 There is hope set on THEE—I cry to thee,  
 Thou mystic seed that shalt be!—leave us not  
 In agony beyond what we can bear,  
 Fallen in debasement below thunder-mark

A mark for scorning—taunted and perplex  
 By all these creatures we ruled yesterday,  
 Whom thou, Lord, rulest alway. O my Seed,  
 Through the tempestuous years that rain so thick  
 Betwixt my ghostly vision and thy face,  
 Let me have token ! for my soul is bruised  
 Before the serpent's head is.

[*A vision of CHRIST appears in the midst of the zodiac, which pales before the heavenly light. The Earth Spirits grow grayer and fainter.*

CHRIST.

I AM HERE !

*Adam.* This is God !—Curse us not, God, any more

*Eve.* But gazing so—so—with omnific eyes,  
 Lift my soul upward till it touch thy feet !  
 Or lift it only,—not to seem too proud,—  
 To the low height of some good angel's feet—  
 For such to tread on when he walketh straight  
 And thy lips praise him.

CHRIST.

Spirits of the earth,

I meet you with rebuke for the reproach  
 And cruel and unmitigated blame  
 Ye cast upon your masters. True, they have sinned ;  
 And true their sin is reckoned into loss  
 For you the sinless. Yet, your innocence,  
 Which of you praises ? since God made your acts  
 Inherent in your lives, and bound your hands  
 With instincts and imperious sanctities  
 From self-defacement ? Which of you disdains  
 These sinners who in falling proved their height  
 Above you by their liberty to fall ?  
 And which of you complains of loss by them,

For whose delight and use ye have your life  
And honor in creation? Ponder it!  
This regent and sublime Humanity  
Though fallen, exceeds you! this shall film your sun,  
Shall hunt your lightning to its lair of cloud,  
Turn back your rivers, footpath all your seas,  
Lay flat your forests, master with a look  
Your lion at his fasting, and fetch down  
Your eagle flying. Nay, without this law  
Of mandom, ye would perish,—beast by beast  
Devouring; tree by tree, with strangling roots  
And trunks set tuskwise. Ye would gaze on God  
With imperceptive blankness up the stars,  
And mutter, ‘Why, God, hast thou made us thus?’  
And pining to a sallow idiocy  
Stagger up blindly against the ends of life;  
Then stagnate into rottenness and drop  
Heavily—poor, dead matter—piecemeal down  
The abysmal spaces—like a little stone  
Let fall to chaos. Therefore over you  
Receive man’s sceptre,—therefore be content  
To minister with voluntary grace  
And melancholy pardon, every rite  
And function in you, to the human hand.  
Be ye to man as angels are to God,  
Servants in pleasure, singers of delight,  
Suggesters to his soul of higher things  
Than any of your highest. So at last,  
He shall look round on you with lids too straight  
To hold the grateful tears, and thank you well;  
And bless you when he prays his secret prayers,

And praise you when he sings his open songs  
For the clear song-note he has learnt in you  
Of purifying sweetness ; and extend  
Across your head his golden fantasies  
Which glorify you into soul from sense !  
Go serve him for such price. That not in vain  
Nor yet ignobly ye shall serve, I place  
My word here for an oath, mine oath for act  
To be hereafter. In the name of which  
Perfect redemption and perpetual grace,  
I bless you through the hope and through the peace  
Which are mine,—to the Love, which is myself.

*Eve.* Speak on still, Christ. Albeit thou bless me  
not

In set words, I am blessed in hearkening thee—  
Speak, Christ.

CHRIST. Speak, Adam. Bless the woman, man—  
It is thine office.

*Adam.* Mother of the world,  
Take heart before this Presence. Lo ! my voice,  
Which, naming erst the creatures, did express,  
God breathing through my breath,—the attributes  
And instincts of each creature in its name ;  
Floats to the same afflatus,—floats and heaves  
Like a water-weed that opens to a wave,  
A full-leaved prophecy affecting thee,  
Out fairly and wide. Henceforward, rise, aspire  
To all the calms and magnanimities,  
The lofty uses and the noble ends,  
The sanctified devotion and full work,  
To which thou art elect for evermore,

First woman, wife, and mother.

*Eve.* And first in sin.

*Adam.* And also the sole bearer of the Seed  
Whereby sin dieth ! Raise 'the majesties  
Of thy disconsolate brows, O well-beloved,  
And front with level eyelids the To come,  
And all the dark o' the world. Rise, woman, rise  
To thy peculiar and best altitudes  
Of doing good and of enduring ill,  
Of comforting for ill, and teaching good,  
And reconciling all that ill and good  
Unto the patience of a constant hope,—  
Rise with thy daughters ! If sin came by thee,  
And by sin, death,—the ransom-righteousness,  
The heavenly life and compensative rest  
Shall come by means of thee. If wo by thee  
Had issue to the world, thou shalt go forth  
An angel of the wo thou didst achieve ;  
Found acceptable to the world instead  
Of others of that name, of whose bright steps  
Thy deed stripped bare the hills. Be satisfied ;  
Something thou hast to bear through womanhood—  
Peculiar suffering answering to the sin ;  
Some pang paid down for each new human life ;  
Some weariness in guarding such a life—  
Some coldness from the guarded ; some mistrust  
From those thou hast too well served ; from those  
beloved  
Too loyally some treason : feebleness  
Within thy heart, and cruelty without ;  
And pressures of an alien tyranny

With its dynastic reasons of larger bones  
And stronger sinews. But, go to ! thy love  
Shall chant itself its own beatitudes  
After its own life-working. A child's kiss  
Set on thy sighing lips, shall make thee glad :  
A poor man served by thee, shall make thee rich ;  
A sick man helped by thee, shall make thee strong ;  
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense  
Of service which thou renderest. Such a crown  
I set upon thy head,—Christ witnessing  
With looks of prompting love—to keep thee clear  
Of all reproach against the sin foregone,  
From all the generations which succeed.  
Thy hand which plucked the apple, I clasp close ;  
Thy lips which spake wrong counsel, I kiss close,  
I bless thee in the name of Paradise  
And by the memory of Edenic joys  
Forfeit and lost ;—by that last cypress tree  
Green at the gate, which thrilled as we came out ;  
And by the blessed nightingale which threw  
Its melancholy music after us ;—  
And by the flowers, whose spirits full of smells  
Did follow softly, plucking us behind  
Back to the gradual banks and vernal bowers  
And fourfold river-courses :—by all these,  
I bless thee to the contraries of these ;  
I bless thee to the desert and the thorns,  
To the elemental change and turbulence,  
And to the roar of the estranged beasts,  
And to the solemn dignities of grief,—  
To each one of these ends,—and to this END

Of Death and the hereafter !

*Eve.*

I accept

For me and for my daughters this high part  
Which lowly shall be counted. Noble work  
Shall hold me in the place of garden-rest ;  
And in the place of Eden's lost delight  
Worthy endurance of permitted pain ;  
While on my longest patience there shall wait  
Death's speechless angel, smiling in the east  
Whence cometh the cold wind. I bow myself  
Humbly henceforward on the ill I did,  
That humbleness may keep it in the shade.  
Shall it be so ? Shall *I* smile, saying so ?  
O seed ! O king ! O God, who *shalt* be seed, -  
What shall I say ? As Eden's fountains swelled  
Brightly betwixt their banks, so swells my soul  
Betwixt Thy love and power !

And, sweetest thoughts

Of foregone Eden ! now, for the first time  
Since God said 'Adam,' walking through the trees,  
I dare to pluck you as I plucked erewhile  
The lily or pink, the rose or heliotrope,  
So pluck I you—so largely—with both hands,  
And throw you forward on the outer earth  
Wherein we are cast out, to sweeten it.

*Adam.* As thou, Christ, to illumine it, holdest  
Heaven

Broadly above our heads.

[*The CHRIST is gradually transfigured during the following phrases of dialogue, into humanity and suffering.*

*Eve.*

O Saviour Christ,

Thou standest mute in glory, like the sun.



*Adam.* We worship in Thy silence, Saviour Christ.

*Eve.* Thy brows grow grander with a forecast wo,—  
Diviner, with the possible of Death!

We worship in thy sorrow, Saviour Christ.

*Adam.* How do thy clear, still eyes transpierce our  
souls,

As gazing *through* them toward the Father-throne  
In a pathological, full Deity,  
Serenely as the stars gaze through the air  
Straight on each other.

*Eve.* O pathetic Christ,

Thou standest mute in glory, like the moon.

CHRIST. Eternity stands alway fronting God ;  
A stern colossal image, with blind eyes  
And grand dim lips that murmur evermore  
God, God, God! While the rush of life and death,  
The roar of act and thought, of evil and good,  
The avalanches of the ruining worlds  
Tolling down space,—the new world's genesis  
Budding in fire,—the gradual humming growth  
Of the ancient atoms and first forms of earth,  
The slow procession of the swathing seas  
And firmamental waters,—and the noise  
Of the broad, fluent strata of pure airs,—  
All these flow onward in the intervals  
Of that reiterated sound of—God!  
Which word, innumerable angels straightway lift  
Wide on celestial altitudes of song  
And choral adoration, and then drop  
The burden softly, shutting the last notes  
In silver wings. Howbeit in the noon of time

Eternity shall wax as dumb as Death,  
 While a new voice beneath the spheres shall cry,  
 'God! Why hast thou forsaken me, my God?'  
 And not a voice in Heaven shall answer it.

*[The transfiguration is complete in sadness.]*

Adam. Thy speech is of the Heavenlies; yet, O  
 Christ,

Awfully human are thy voice and face!

Eve. My nature overcomes me from thine eyes.

CHRIST. In the set noon of time, shall one from  
 Heaven,

An angel fresh from looking upon God,  
 Descend before a woman, blessing her  
 With perfect benediction of pure love,  
 For all the world in all its elements;  
 For all the creatures of earth, air, and sea;  
 For all men in the body and in the soul,  
 Unto all ends of glory and sanctity.

Eve. O pale, pathetic Christ—I worship thee!  
 I thank thee for that woman!

CHRIST. Then, at last,  
 I, wrapping round me your humanity,  
 Which being sustained, shall neither break nor burn  
 Beneath the fire of Godhead, will tread earth,  
 And ransom you and it, and set strong peace  
 Betwixt you and its creatures. With my pangs  
 I will confront your sins: and since those sins  
 Have sunken to all nature's heart from yours,  
 The tears of my clean soul shall follow them  
 And set a holy passion to work clear

Absolute consecration. In my brow  
 Of kingly whiteness, shall be crowned anew  
 Your disrowned human nature. Look on me !  
 As I shall be uplifted on a cross  
 In darkness of eclipse and anguish dread,  
 So shall I lift up in my pierced hands,  
 Not into dark, but light—not unto death,  
 But life,—beyond the reach of guilt and grief,  
 The whole creation. Henceforth in my name  
 Take courage, O thou woman,—man, take hope .  
 Your grave shall be as smooth as Eden's sward,  
 Beneath the steps of your prospective thoughts ;  
 And one step past it, a new Eden-gate  
 Shall open on a hinge of harmony,  
 And let you through to mercy. Ye shall fall  
 No more, within that Eden, nor pass out  
 Any more from it. In which hope, move on,  
 First sinners and first mourners. Live and love,—  
 Doing both nobly, because lowly ;  
 Live and work, strongly,—because patiently !  
 And for the deed of death, trust it to God,  
 That it be well done, unrepented of.  
 And not to loss. And thence with constant prayers  
 Fasten your souls so high, that constantly  
 The smile of your heroic cheer may float  
 Above all floods of earthly agonies,  
 Purification being the joy of pain !

[*The vision of CHRIST vanishes. ADAM and EVE stand in an ecstasy.*

*The earth-zodiac pales away shade by shade, as the stars, star by star, shine out in the sky ; and the following chant from the two Earth Spirits (as they sweep back into the zodiac and disappear with it) accompanies the process of change.*

*Earth Spirits.*

By the mighty word thus spoken  
Both for living and for dying,  
We, our homage-oath once broken,  
Fasten back again in sighing ;  
And the creatures and the elements renew their cove-  
nanting.

Here, forgive us all our scorning ;  
Here, we promise milder duty ;  
And the evening and the morning  
Shall re-organize in beauty  
A sabbath day of sabbath joy, for universal chanting

And if, still, this melancholy  
May be strong to overcome us ;  
If this mortal and unholy  
We still fail to cast out from us,—  
And we turn upon you, unaware, your own dark in-  
fluences ;  
If ye tremble when surrounded  
By our forest pine and palm trees ;  
If we cannot cure the wounded  
With our gum-trees and our balm-trees,  
And if your souls all mournfully sit down among  
your senses,—  
Yet, O mortals, do not fear us,  
We are gentle in our languor ;  
And more good ye shall have near us  
Than any pain or anger ;  
And our God's refracted blessing in our blessing  
shall be given !

By the desert's endless vigil  
We will solemnize your passions ;  
By the wheel of the black eagle  
We will teach you exaltations,  
When he sails against the wind, to the white spot up  
in Heaven.

Ye shall find us tender nurses  
To your weariness of nature ;  
And our hands shall stroke the curse's  
Dreary furrows from the creature,  
Till your bodies shall lie smooth in death, and straight  
and slumberful :  
Then, a couch we will provide you  
Where no summer heat shall dazzle ;  
Strewing on you and beside you  
Thyme and rosemary and basil—  
And the yew-tree shall grow overhead to keep all  
safe and cool.

Till the Holy blood awaited  
Shall be chrism around us running,  
Whereby, newly-consecrated  
We shall leap up in God's sunning,  
To join the spheric company which purer worlds  
assemble ;  
While, renewed by new evangels,  
Soul-consummated, made glorious,  
Ye shall brighten past the angels—  
Ye shall kneel to Christ victorious ;

And the rays around His feet beneath your sobbing  
lips, shall tremble.

*[The phantastic vision has all passed; the earth-zodiac has broken like a belt, and dissolved from the desert. The Earth Spirits vanish; and the stars shine out above.]*

CHORUS OF INVISIBLE ANGELS.

*While ADAM and EVE advance into the desert, hand in hand.*

Hear our heavenly promise  
Through your mortal passion!  
Love ye shall have from us,  
In a pure relation!  
As a fish or bird  
Swims or flies, if moving,  
We unseen are heard  
To live on by loving.  
Far above the glances  
Of your eager eyes,  
Listen! we are loving!  
Listen, through man's ignorances—  
Listen, through God's mysteries—  
Listen down the heart of things,  
Ye shall hear our mystic wings  
Murmurous with loving!  
Through the opal door,  
Listen evermore  
How we live by loving!

*First semichorus.*

When your bodies therefore,  
Reach the grave their goal,  
Softly will we care for

Each enfranchised soul !  
Softly and unlothly  
Through the door of opal  
Toward the Heavenly people.  
Floated on a minor fine  
Into the full chant divine,  
We will draw you smoothly,—  
While the human in the minor  
Makes the harmony diviner :  
Listen to our loving !

*Second semichorus.*

There a sough of glory  
Shall breathe on you as you come,  
Ruffling round the doorway  
All the light of angeldom.  
From the empyrean centre  
Heavenly voices shall repeat—  
'Souls redeemed and pardoned, enter ;  
For the chrism on you is sweet.'  
And every angel in the place  
Lowlily shall bow his face,  
Folded fair on softened sounds,  
Because upon your hands and feet  
He images his Master's wounds :  
Listen to our loving !

*First semichorus.*

So, in the universe's  
Consummated undoing,  
Our seraphs of white mercies  
Shall hover round the ruin !

Their wings shall stream upon the flame  
As if incorporate of the same

In elemental fusion ;  
And calm their faces shall burn out  
With a pale and mastering thought,  
And a steadfast looking of desire  
From out between the clefts of fire,—  
While they cry, in the Holy's name.

To the final Restitution !

Listen to our loving !

*Second semichorus.*

So, when the day of God is  
To the thick graves accompted ;  
Awaking the dead bodies,  
The angel of the trumpet  
Shall split and shatter the earth  
To the roots of the grave  
Which never before were slackened  
And quicken the charnal birth  
With his blast so clear and brave ;  
Till the Dead shall start and stand erect  
And every face of the burial-place  
Shall the awful, single look reflect,  
Wherewith he them awakened.

Listen to our loving !

*First semichorus.*

But wild is the horse of Death !  
He will leap up wild at the clamor  
Above and beneath ;  
And where is his Tamer  
On that last day,



When he crieth, Ha, ha !  
 To the trumpet's blare,  
 And paweth the earth's Aeeldama ?  
 When he tosseth his head,  
 The drear-white steed,  
 And ghastrily champeth the last moon-ray,—  
 What angel there  
 Can lead him away,  
 That the living may rule for the Dead ?

*Second semichorus.*

Yet a TAMER shall be found !  
 One more bright than seraph crowned,  
 And more strong than cherub bold ;  
 Elder, too, than angel old,  
 By his gray eternities,  
 He shall master and surprise  
     The steed of Death.  
 For He is strong, and He is fain ;  
 He shall quell him with a breath,  
 And shall lead him where He will,  
 With a whisper in the ear,  
     Full of fear—  
 And a hand upon the mane,  
     Grand and still.

*First semichorus.*

Through the flats of Hades where the souls assemble  
 HE will guide the Death-steed calm between their  
     ranks ;  
 While, like beaten dogs, they a little moan and  
     tremble

To see the darkness curdle from the horse's glittering  
flanks.

Through the flats of Hades where the dreary shade  
is,

Up the steep of Heaven, will the Tamer guide the  
steed,—

Up the spheric circles—circle above circle,  
We who count the ages, shall count the tolling tread—  
Every hoof-fall striking a blinder, blanker sparkle  
From the stony orbs, which shall show as they were  
dead.

*Second semichorus.*

All the way the Death-steed with tolling hoofs shall  
travel,

Ashen gray the planets shall be motionless as stones;  
Loosely shall the systems eject their parts coeval,—  
Stagnant in the spaces shall float the pallid moons;  
Suns that touch their apogees, reeling from their  
level,

Shall run back on their axles, in wild, low, broken  
tunes.

*Chorus.*

Up against the arches of the crystal ceiling, [breath;  
From the horse's nostrils shall steam the blurting  
Up between the angels pale with silent feeling,  
Will the Tamer, calmly, lead the horse of death.

*Semichorus.*

Cleaving all that silence, cleaving all that glory,  
Will the Tamer lead him straightway to the Throne;  
'Look out, O Jehovah, to this I bring before Thee  
With a hand nail-piercèd,—I, who am thy Son.'

Then the Eye Divinest, from the Deepest, flaming,  
 On the mystic courser, shall look out in fire :  
 Blind the beast shall stagger where It overcame him,  
 Meek as lamb at pasture—bloodless in desire—  
 Down the beast shall shiver—slain amid the taming—  
 And, by Life essential, the phantasm Death expire.

*Chorus.*

Listen, man, through life and death,  
 Through the dust and through the breath,  
 Listen down the heart of things !  
 Ye shall hear our mystic wings  
 Murmurous with loving.

*A Voice from below.* Gabriel, thou Gabriel !

*A Voice from above.* What wouldst *thou* with me ?

*First Voice.* I heard thy voice sound in the angels'  
 song ;

And I would give thee question.

*Second Voice.* Question me.

*First Voice.* Why have I called thrice to my  
 Morning-star

And had no answer ? All the stars are out,  
 And answer in their places. Only in vain  
 I cast my voice against the outer rays  
 Of *my* star, shut in light behind the sun.  
 No more reply than from a breaking string,  
 Breaking when touched. Or is she *not* my star ?  
 Where *is* my star—my star ? Have ye cast down  
 Her glory like my glory ? Has she waxed  
 Mortal, like Adam ? Has she learnt to hate  
 Like any angel ?

*Second Voice.* She is sad for thee :

All things grow sadder to thee, one by one.

*Chorus.* Live, work on, O Earthy !

By the Actual's tension,

Speed the arrow worthy  
 Of a pure ascension.  
 From the low earth round you,  
 Reach the heights above you ;  
 From the stripes that wound you,  
 Seek the loves that love you !  
 God's divinest burneth plain  
 Through the crystal diaphane  
 Of our loves that love you.

*First Voice.* Gabriel, O Gabriel !

*Second Voice.* What wouldst thou with me ?

*First Voice.* Is it true, O thou Gabriel, that the  
 crown

Of sorrow which I claimed, another claims ?

That HE claims THAT too ?

*Second Voice.* Lost one, it is true.

*First Voice.* That HE will be an exile from His  
 Heaven,

To lead those exiles homeward ?

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* That HE will be an exile by His will,  
 As I by mine election !

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* That I shall stand sole exile finally,—  
 Made desolate for fruition ?

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* Gabriel !

*Second Voice.* I hearken.

*First Voice.* Is it true besides—

Aright true—that mine orient star will give

Her name of ' Bright and Morning-Star ' to Him,—

And take the fairness of His virtue back,  
To cover loss and sadness ?

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* UNtrue, UNtrue ! O Morning-star !  
O MINE !

Who sittest secret in a veil of light  
Far up the starry spaces, say,—*Untrue !*  
Speak but so loud as doth a wasted moon  
To 'Tyrrhene waters ! I am Lucifer—

[*A pause. Silence in the stars.*]

All things grow sadder to me, one by one.

*Angel chorus.*

Exiled Human creatures,  
Let your hope grow larger  
Larger grows the vision  
Of the new delight.  
From this chain of Nature's,  
God is the Discharger ;  
And the Actual's prison  
Opens to your sight.

*Semichorus.*

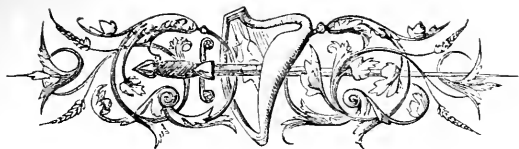
Calm the stars and golden,  
In a light exceeding :  
What their rays have measured,  
Let your feet fulfil !  
These are stars beholden  
By your eyes in Eden ;  
Yet, across the desert,  
See them shining still.

*Chorus.* Future joy and far light

Working such relations,  
Hear us singing gently  
*Exiled is not lost!*  
God, above the starlight,  
God, above the patience,  
Shall at last present ye  
Guerdons worth the cost.  
Patiently enduring,  
Painfully surrounded,  
Listen how we love you—  
Hope the uttermost—  
Waiting for that curing  
Which exalts the wounded,  
Hear us sing above you—  
EXILED, BUT NOT LOST :

[ *The stars shine on brightly, while ADAM and EVE pursue their way into the far wilderness. There is a sound through the silence, as of the falling tears of an angel.*





## THE ROMAUNT OF THE PAGE.

A KNIGHT of gallant deeds  
And a young page at his side  
From the holy war in Palestine  
Did slow and thoughtful ride,  
As each were a palmer, and told for beads  
The dews of the eventide.

‘ O young page,’ said the knight,  
‘ A noble page art thou !  
Thou fearest not to steep in blood  
The curls upon thy brow ;  
And once in the tent, and twice in the fight,  
Didst ward me a mortal blow—’

‘ O brave knight,’ said the page,  
‘ Or ere we hither came,  
We talked in tent, we talked in field  
Of the bloody battle-game :  
But here, below this greenwood bough,  
I cannot speak the same.

‘ Our troop is far behind,  
 The woodland calm is new ;  
 Our steeds, with slow grass-muffled hoofs,  
 Tread deep the shadows through ;  
 And in my mind, some blessing kind  
 Is dropping with the dew.

‘ The woodland calm is pure—  
 I cannot choose but have  
 A thought from these, o’ the beechen-trees  
 Which in our England wave ;  
 And of the little finches fine  
 Which sang there, while in Palestine  
 The warrior-hilt we drave.

‘ Methinks, a moment gone,  
 I heard my mother pray !  
 I heard, sir knight, the prayer for *me*  
 Wherein she passed away ;  
 And I know the Heavens are leaning down  
 To hear what I shall say.’

The page spake calm and high  
 As of no mean degree ;  
 Perhaps he felt in nature’s broad  
 Full heart, his own was free :  
 And the knight looked up to his lifted eye,  
 Then answered smilingly :—

‘ Sir Page, I pray your grace !  
 Certes, I meant not so



To cross your pastoral mood, sir page,  
 With the crook of the battle-bow ;  
 But a knight may speak of a lady's face,  
 I ween, in any mood or place,  
 If the grasses die or grow.

‘ And this, I meant to say,—  
 My lady's face shall shine  
 As ladies' faces use, to greet  
 My Page from Palestine :  
 Or, speak she fair, or prank she gay,  
 She is no lady of mine.

‘ And this I meant to fear,—  
 Her bower may suit thee ill !  
 For, sooth, in that same field and tent,  
 Thy *talk* was somewhat still ;  
 And fitter thy hand for my knightly spear,  
 Than thy tongue for my lady's will.’

Slowly and thankfully  
 The young page bowed his head :  
 His large eyes seemed to muse a smile,  
 Until he blushed instead ;  
 And no lady in her bower pardiè,  
 Could blush more sudden red—  
 ‘ Sir Knight,—thy lady's bower to me,  
 Is suited well,’ he said.

*Beati, beati, mortui !*  
 From the convent on the sea,

One mile off, or scarce as nigh,  
 Swells the dirge as clear and high  
 As if that, over brake and lea,  
 Bodily the wind did carry  
 The great altar of St. Mary,  
 And the fifty tapers burning o'er it,  
 And the lady Abbess dead before it,  
 And the chanting nuns whom yesterweek  
 Her voice did charge and bless—  
 Chanting steady, chanting meek,  
 Chanting with a solemn breath  
 Because that they are thinking less  
 Upon the Dead than upon death !  
*Beati, beati, mortui !*  
 Now the vision in the sound  
 Wheeleth on the wind around—  
 Now it sleepeth back, away—  
 The uplands will not let it stay  
 To dark the western sun.  
*Mortui !*—away at last,—  
 Or ere the page's blush is past !  
 And the knight heard all, and the page heard  
 none.

' A boon, thou noble knight,  
 If ever I served thee !  
 Though thou art a knight and I am a page,  
 Now grant a boon to me—  
 And tell me sooth, if dark or bright,  
 If little loved or loved aright,  
 Be the face of thy ladye.'

Gloomily looked the knight ;

‘ As a son thou hast served me :  
And would to none I had granted boon,  
Except to only thee !  
For haply then I should love aright,  
For then I should know if dark or bright  
Were the face of my ladye.

‘ Yet ill it suits my knightly tongue  
To grudge that granted boon :  
That heavy price from heart and life  
I paid in silence down :  
The hand that claimed it, cleared in fine  
My father’s fame : I swear by mine,  
That price was nobly won.

‘ Earl Walter was a brave old earl,—  
He was my father’s friend ;  
And while I rode the lists at court  
And little guessed the end,  
My noble father in his shroud,  
Against a slanderer lying loud,  
He rose up to defend.

‘ Oh, calm, below the marble gray  
My father’s dust was strown !  
Oh, meek, above the marble gray  
His image prayed alone !  
The slanderer lied—the wretch was brave,—  
For, looking up the minster-nave,

He saw my father's knightly glaive  
Was changed from steel to stone.

“ But Earl Walter's glaive was steel,  
With a brave old hand to wear it !  
And dashed the lie back in the mouth  
Which lied against the godly truth  
And against the knightly merit :  
The slanderer, 'neath the avenger's heel,  
Struck up the dagger in appeal  
From stealthy lie to brutal force—  
And out upon that traitor's corse  
Was yielded the true spirit .

‘ I would my hand had fought that fight  
And justified my father !  
I would my heart had caught that wound  
And slept beside him rather !  
I think it were a better thing  
Than murdered friend and marriage-ring  
Forced on my life together.

‘ Wail shook Earl Walter's house—  
His true wife shed no tear—  
She lay upon her bed as mute  
As the earl did on his bier :  
Till—‘ Ride, ride fast,’ she said at last,  
‘ And bring the avengèd's son anear !  
Ride fast—ride free, as a dart can flee :  
For white of blee with waiting for me  
Is the corse in the next chambère.’

‘ I came—I knelt beside her bed—

Her calm was worse than strife—

‘ My husband, for thy father dear,

Gave freely when thou wert not here

His own and eke my life.

A boon ! Of that sweet child we make

An orphan for thy father’s sake,

Make thou, for ours, a wife.’

‘ I said, ‘ My steed neighs in the court :

My bark rocks on the brine ;

And the warrior’s vow I am under now

To free the pilgrim’s shrine :

But fetch the ring and fetch the priest

And call that daughter of thine ;

And rule she wide from my castle on Nyde

While I am in Palestine.’

‘ In the dark chambère, if the bride was fair,

Ye wis, I could not see ;

But the steed thrice neighed, and the priest fast  
prayed

And wedded fast were we.

Her mother smiled upon her bed

As at its side we knelt to wed ;

And the bride rose from her knee

And kissed the smile of her mother dead,

Or ever she kissed me.

‘ My page, my page, what grieves thee so,

That the tears run down thy face ?’ —

‘Alas, alas! mine own sistèr  
 Was in thy lady’s case!  
 But *she* laid down the silks she wore  
 And followed him she wed before,  
 Disguised as his true servitor,  
 To the very battle-place.’

And wept the page, but laughed the knight,  
 A careless laugh laughed he :  
 ‘Well done it were for thy sistèr,  
 But not for my ladye !  
 My love, so please you, shall requite  
 No woman, whether dark or bright,  
 Unwomaned if she be.’

The page stopped weeping, and smiled cold—  
 ‘Your wisdom may declare  
 That womanhood is proved the best  
 By golden brooch and glossy vest  
 The mincing ladies wear :  
 Yet is it proved, and was of old,  
 Anear as well—I dare to hold—  
 By truth, or by despair.’

He smiled no more—he wept no more —  
 But passionate he spake,—  
 ‘Oh, womanly she prayed in tent,  
 When none beside did wake !  
 Oh, womanly she paled in fight,  
 For one belovèd’s sake !—  
 And her little hand defiled with blood,

Her tender tears of womanhood  
Most woman-pure did make !'

' Well done it were for thy sistèr  
Thou tellest well her tale !  
But for my lady, she shall pray  
I' the kirk of Nydesdale—  
Not dread for me but love for me  
Shall make my lady pale :  
No casque shall hide her woman's tear—  
It shall have room to trickle clear  
Behind her woman's veil. '

' But what if she mistook thy mind  
And followed thee to strife ;  
Then kneeling, did entreat thy love,  
As Paynims ask for life ? '

' I would forgive, and evermore  
Would love her as my servitor,  
But little as my wife.

' Look up—there is a small bright cloud  
Alone amid the skies !  
So high, so pure, and so apart,  
A woman's honor lies. '  
The page looked up—the cloud was sheen—  
A sadder cloud did rush, I ween,  
Betwixt it and his eyes :

Then dimly dropped his eyes away  
From welken unto hill—

Ha ! who rides there ?—the page is 'ware,  
 Though the cry at his heart is still !  
 And the page seeth all and the knight seeth none  
 Though banner and spear do flock the sun,  
 And the Saracens ride at will.

He speaketh calm, he speaketh low,—  
 ' Ride fast, my master, ride,  
 Or ere within the broadening dark  
 The narrow shadows hide ! '  
 ' Yea, fast, my page ; I will do so ;  
 And keep thou at my side.' "

' Now nay, now nay, ride on thy way,  
 Thy faithful page precede !  
 For I must loose on saddle-bow  
 My battle-casque that galls, I trow,  
 The shoulder of my steed ;  
 And I must pray, as I did vow,  
 For one in bitter need.

' Ere night I shall be near to thee,—  
 Now ride, my master, ride !  
 Ere night, as parted spirits cleave  
 To mortals too beloved to leave,  
 I shall be at thy side. '  
 The knight smiled free at the fantasy,  
 And adown the dell did ride.

Had the knight looked up to the page's face,  
 No smile the word had won !



Had the knight looked up to the page's face,  
 I ween he had never gone :  
 Had the knight looked back to the page's geste,  
 I ween he had turned anon :  
 For dread was the wo in the face so young ;  
 And wild was the silent geste that flung  
 Casque, sword to earth—as the boy down-sprung,  
 And stood—alone, alone.

He clenched his hands as if to hold  
 His soul's great agony—  
 ' Have I renounced my womanhood,  
 For wifehood unto *thee* ?  
 And is this the last, last look of thine  
 That ever I shall see ?  
 ' Yet God thee save, and mayst thou have  
 A lady to thy mind ;  
 More woman-proud and half as true  
 As one thou leav'st behind !  
 And God me take with HIM to dwell—  
 For HIM I cannot love too well,  
 As I have loved my kind. '

SHE looketh up, in earth's despair,  
 The hopeful Heavens to seek :  
 That little cloud still floateth there,  
 Whereof her Loved did speak.  
 How bright the little cloud appears !  
 Her eyelids fall upon the tears,  
 And the tears down either cheek.

The tramp of hoof, the flash of steel—

The Paynims round 'her coming!

The sound and sight have made her calm,—

False page, but truthful woman!

She stands amid them all unmoved:

The heart once broken by the loved

Is strong to meet the foeman.

‘Ho, Christian page! art keeping sheep,

From pouring wine cups, resting?’—

‘I keep my master’s noble name,

For warring, not for feasting:

And if that here Sir Hubert were,

My master brave, my master dear,

Ye would not stay to question.’

‘Where is thy master, scornful page,

That we may slay or bind him?’—

‘Now search the lea and search the wood,

And see if ye can find him!

Nathless, as hath been often tried,

Your Paynim heroes faster ride

Before him than behind him.’

‘Give smoother answers, lying page,

Or perish in the lying.’—

‘I trow that if the warrior brand

Beside my foot, were in my hand,

’Twere better at replying.’

They cursed her deep, they smote her low.

They cleft her golden ringlets through :  
 The Loving is the Dying.

She felt the seimitar gleam down,  
 And met it from beneath  
 With smile more bright in victory  
 Than any sword from sheath,—  
 Which flashed across her lip serene,  
 Most like the spirit-light between  
 The darks of life and death.

*Ingemisco, ingemisco!*

From the convent on the sea,  
 Now it sweepeth solemnly !  
 As over wood and over lea  
 Bodily the wind did carry  
 The great altar of St. Mary,  
 And the fifty tapers paling o'er it,  
 And the Lady Abbess stark before it,  
 And the weary nuns with hearts that faintly  
 Beat along their voices saintly—

*Ingemisco, ingemisco!*

Dirge for abbess laid in shroud,  
 Sweepeth o'er the shroudless Dead,  
 Page or lady, as we said,  
 With the dews upon her head,  
 All as sad if not as loud :

*Ingemisco, ingemisco!*

Is ever a lament begun  
 By any mourner under sun,  
 Which, ere it endeth, suits but *one* ?



## THE LAY OF THE BROWN ROSARY.

### PART FIRST

‘ ONORA, ONORA ’ —her mother is calling—  
She sits at the lattice and hears the dew falling  
Drop after drop from the sycamores laden  
With dew as with blossom, and calls home the  
maiden—

‘ Night cometh, Onora.’

She looks down the garden-walk caverned with trees,  
To the limes at the end where the green arbor is—  
‘ Some sweet thought or other may keep were it  
found her,  
While forgot or unseen in the dreamlight around her  
Night cometh, Onora ! ’

She looks up the forest whose alleys shoot on  
Like the mute minster-aisles when the anthem is done,  
And the choristers sitting with faces aslant  
Feel the silence to consecrate more than the chant—  
‘ Onora, Onora ! ’

And forward she looketh across the brown heath—

‘ Onora, art coming ? ’—What is it she seeth ?

Nought, nought, but the gray border-stone that is wist

To dilate and assume a wild shape in the mist—

‘ My daughter ! ’—Then over

The casement she leaneth, and as she doth so,

She is ’ware of her little son playing below :

‘ Now where is Onora ? ’—He hung down his head

And spake not, then answering blushed scarlet-red,—

‘ At the tryst with her lover. ’

But his mother was wroth. In a sternness quoth she,

‘ As thou play’st at the ball, art thou playing with  
me ?

When we know that her lover to battle is gone,

And the saints know above that she loveth but one

And will ne’er wed another ? ’

Then the boy wept aloud. ’Twas a fair sight yet sad

To see the tears run down the sweet blooms he had :

He stamped with his foot, said— ‘ The saints know I  
lied

Because truth that is wicked is fittest to hide !

Must I utter it, mother ? ’

In his vehement childhood he hurried within,

And knelt at her feet as in prayer against sin ;

But a child at a prayer never sobbeth as he—

‘ Oh ! she sits with the nun of the brown rosarie,

At nights in the ruin !

' The old convent ruin the ivy rots off,  
 Where the owl hoots by day, and the toad is sun-  
     proof ;  
 Where no singing-birds build ; and the trees gaunt  
     and gray  
 As in stormy sea-coasts appear blasted one way—  
     But is *this* the wind's doing ?

' A nun in the east wall was buried alive,  
 Who mocked at the priest when he called her to  
     shrive,—  
 And shrieked such a curse as the stone took her breath,  
 The old abbess fell backward and swooned unto death  
     With an ave half-spoken.

' I tried once to pass it, myself and my hound,  
 Till, as fearing the lash, down he shivered to ground !  
 A brave hound, my mother ! a brave hound, ye wot !  
 And the wolf thought the same with his fangs at her  
     throat  
     In the pass of the Brocken.

' At dawn and at eve, mother, who sitteth there,  
 With the brown rosarie never used for a prayer ?  
 Stoop low, mother, low ! If we went there to see,  
 What an ugly great hole in that east wall must be  
     At dawn and at even !

' Who meet there, my mother, at dawn and at even ?  
 Who meet by that wall, never looking to heaven ?  
 O sweetest my sister, what doeth with *thee*,

The ghost of a nun with a brown rosarie,  
And a face turned from heaven?

‘ St. Agnes o’erwatcheth my dreams ; and erewhile  
I have felt through mine eyelids the warmth of her  
smile—

But last night, as a sadness like pity came o’er her,  
She whispered—‘ Say *two* prayers at dawn for Onora !  
The Tempted is sinning.’

Onora, Onora ! they heard her not coming—  
Not a step on the grass, not a voice through the  
gloaming :

But her mother looked up, and she stood on the floor  
Fair and still as the moonlight that came there before,  
And a smile just beginning :

It touches her lips—but it dares not arise  
To the height of the mystical sphere of her eyes :  
And the large musing eyes, neither joyous nor sorry  
Sing on like the angels in separate glory,  
Between clouds of amber.

For the hair droops in clouds amber-colored, till stirred  
Into gold by the gesture that comes with a word :  
While—O soft !—her speaking is so interwound  
Of the dim and the sweet, ’tis a twilight of sound  
And floats through the chamber.

‘ Since thou shrivest my brother, fair mother,’ said  
she,

‘ I count on thy priesthood for marrying of me :  
 And I know by the hills that the battle is done—  
 That my lover rides on—will be here with the sun,  
     ’Neath the eyes that behold thee ! ’

Her mother sat silent—too tender, I wis,  
 Of the smile her dead father smiled dying to kiss ;  
 But the boy started up pale with tears, passion-  
     wrought,—

‘ O wicked fair sister, the hills utter nought !  
     If he cometh, who told thee ? ’

‘ I know by the hills, ’ she resumed calm and clear,  
 ‘ By the beauty upon them, that HE is anear :  
 Did they ever look so since he bade me adieu ?  
 Oh, love in the waking, sweet brother, is true  
     As St. Agnes in sleeping. ’

Half-ashamed and half-softened the boy did not  
     speak,  
 And the blush met the lashes which fell on his cheek :  
 She bowed down to kiss him—Dear saints, did he see  
 Or feel on her bosom the BROWN ROSARIE—  
     That he shrank away weeping ?





## PART SECOND.

*A bed—ONORA sleeping. Angels, but not near.**First Angel.*

Must we stand so far, and she

So very fair?

*Second Angel.*

As bodies be.

*First Angel.*

And she so mild?

*Second Angel.*

As spirits when

They meeken, not to God, but men.

*First Angel.*

And she so young,—that I who bring  
 Good dreams for saintly children, might  
 Mistake that small soft face to-night,  
 And fetch her such a blessed thing,  
 That at her waking she would weep  
 For childhood lost anew in sleep:  
 How hath she sinned?

*Second Angel.*

In bartering love—

God's love—for man's:

*First Angel.*

We may reprove  
 The world for this! not only her:  
 Let me approach to breathe away  
 This dust o' the heart with holy air.

*Second Angel.*

Stand off! She sleeps, and did not pray.

*First Angel.*

Did none pray for her ?

*Second Angel.*

Ay, a child,—

Who never, praying, wept before :

While, in a mother undefiled

Prayer goeth on in sleep, as true

And pauseless as the pulses do

*First Angel.*

Then I approach.

*Second Angel.*

It is not WILLED.

*First Angel.*

One word : Is she redeemed ?

*Second Angel.*

No more !

THE PLACE IS FILLED.

[Angels vanish.

*Evil Spirit in a Nun's garb by the bed.*

Forbear that dream—forebear that dream ! too near to

Heaven it leaned.

*Onora in sleep.*

Nay, leave me this—but only this ! 'tis but a dream,  
sweet fiend !

*Evil Spirit.*

It is a *thought*.

*Onora in sleep.*

A sleeping thought—most innocent of good—  
It doth the Devil no harm, sweet fiend ! it cannot, if  
it would.

I say in it no holy hymn,—I do no holy work ;

I scarcely hear the sabbath-bell that chimeth from the  
kirk

*Evil Spirit.*

Forbear that dream—forbear that dream !

*Onora in sleep.*

Nay, let me *dream* at least :

That far-off bell, it may be took for viol at a feast—  
I only walk among the fields, beneath the autumn-sun,  
With my dead father, hand in hand, as I have often  
done.

*Evil Spirit.*

Forbear that dream—forbear that dream !

*Onora in sleep.*

Nay, sweet fiend, let me go—

I never more can walk with *him*, O nevermore but so :  
For they have tied my father's feet beneath the kirk-  
yard stone,

Oh, deep and straight ; oh, very straight ! they move  
at nights alone :

And then he calleth through my dreams, he calleth  
tenderly,

‘ Come forth, my daughter, my beloved, and walk the  
fields with me ! ’

*Evil Spirit.*

Forbear that dream, or else disprove its pureness by  
a sign.

*Onora in sleep.*

Speak on, thou shalt be satisfied ! my word shall an-  
swer thine.

I hear a bird which used to sing when I a child was  
praying ;

I see the poppies in the corn I used to sport away in.  
 What shall I do—tread down the dew, and pull the  
     blossoms blowing?

Or clap my wicked hands to fright the finches from  
     the rowen?

*Evil Spirit.*

Thou shalt do something harder still: Stand up where  
     thou dost stand

Among the fields of Dreamland with thy father hand  
     in hand,

And clear and slow, repeat the vow—declare its cause  
     and kind,

Which, not to break in sleep or wake, thou bearest on  
     thy mind.

*Onora in sleep.*

I bear a vow of sinful kind, a vow for mournful  
     cause:

I vowed it deep, I vowed it strong—the spirits laughed  
     applause:

The spirits trailed along the pines low laughter like  
     a breeze,

While, high atween their swinging tops, the stars ap-  
     peared to freeze.

*Evil Spirit.*

More calm and free,—speak out to me, why such a  
     vow was made.

*Onora in sleep.*

Because that God decreed my death, and I shrank  
     back afraid:

Have patience, O dead father mine! I did not fear  
     to die;—

I wish I were a young dead child, and had thy company !

I wish I lay beside thy feet, a buried three-year child,  
And wearing only a kiss of thine upon my lips that  
smiled !

The linden-tree that covers thee might so have shadowed twain—

For death itself I did not fear—'tis love that makes  
the pain.

Love feareth death. I was no child—I was betrothed  
that day ;

I wore a troth-kiss on my lips I could not give away.  
How could I bear to lie content and still beneath a  
stone,

And feel mine own Betrothed go by—alas ! no more  
mine own,—

Go leading by in wedding pomp some lovely lady  
brave,

With cheeks that blushed as red as rose, while mine  
were white in grave !

How could I bear to sit in Heaven, on e'er so high a  
throne,

And hear him say to her—to *her* ! that else he loveth  
none ?

Though e'er so high I sate above, though e'er so low  
he spake,

As clear as thunder I should hear the new oath he  
might take—

That *hers*, forsooth, are heavenly eyes,—ah, me !  
while very dim

Some heavenly eyes (indeed of Heaven') would  
darken down to *him*.

*Evil Spirit.*

Who told thee thou wast called to death?

*Onora in sleep.*

I sat all night beside thee—

The gray owl on the ruined wall shut both his eyes to  
hide thee ;

And ever he flapped his heavy wing all brokenly and  
weak,

And the long grass waved against the sky, around his  
gasping beak.

I sate beside thee all the night, while the moonlight  
lay forlorn

Strewn round us like a dead world's shroud, in ghastly  
fragments torn.

And through the night, and through the hush, and  
over the flapping wing,

We heard beside the Heavenly Gate the angels  
murmuring :—

We heard them say, ' Put day to day, and count the  
days to seven,

' And God will draw Onora up the golden stairs of  
Heaven :

' And yet the evil ones have leave that purpose to  
defer,

' For if she has no need of HIM, He has no need of  
*her* '—

*Evil Spirit.*

Speak out to me—speak bold and free.

*Onora in sleep.*

And then I heard thee say,—

‘I count upon my rosarie brown the hours thou hast  
to stay!

‘Yet God permits us evil ones to put by that decree,  
‘Since if thou hast no need of HIM, He has no need  
of thee—

‘And if thou wilt forego the sight of angels, verily  
‘Thy true love gazing on thy face, shall guess what  
angels be—

‘Nor bride shall pass, save thee’ . . . Alas!—my  
father’s hand’s acold—

The meadows seem. . . .

*Evil Spirit.*

Forbear the dream, or let the vow be told!

*Onora in sleep.*

I vowed upon thy rosarie brown, this string of antique  
beads,

By charnal lichens overgrown, and dank among the  
weeds—

This rosarie brown which is thine own,—lost soul of  
buried nun,

Who, lost by vow, wouldst render now all souls alike  
undone ;—

I vowed upon thy rosarie brown,—and, till such vow  
should break,

A pledge always of living days, ’twas hung around  
my neck —

I vowed to thee on rosarie, (Dead father, look not so !)

*I would not thank God in my weal, nor seek God in  
my wo.*

*Evil Spirit.*

And canst thou prove . . . .

*Onora in sleep.*

O love--my love ! I felt him near again !  
I saw his steed on mountain-head, I heard it on the  
plain !

Was this no weal for me to feel ?—is greater weal  
than this ?.

Yet when he came, I wept his name—and the angels  
heard but *his*.

*Evil Spirit.*

Well done, well done !

*Onora in sleep.*

Ay me ! the sun . . . the dreamlight 'gins to pine,—  
Ay me ! how dread can look the Dead !—Aroint thee.  
father mine !

She starteth from slumber, she sitteth upright,  
And her breath comes in sobs while she stares  
through the night :

There is nought. The great willow, her lattice  
before,

Large-drawn in the moon, lieth calm on the floor ;  
But her hands tremble fast as their pulses, and free  
From the death-clasp, close over—the BROWN ROSARIE.





## T H I R D P A R T .

'Tis a morn for a bridal ; the merry bride-bell  
Rings clear through the green-wood that skirts the  
                  chappelle ;

And the priest at the altar awaiteth the bride,  
And the sacristans slyly are jesting aside  
                  At the work shall be doing.

While down through the wood rides that fair company,  
The youths with the courtship, the maids with the  
                  glee,

Till the chapel-cross opens to sight, and at once  
All the maids sigh demurely, and think for the nonce,  
                  ' And so endeth a wooing !'

And the bride and the bridegroom are leading the  
                  way,

With his hand on her rein, and a word yet to say :  
Her dropt eyelids suggest the soft answers beneath,  
And the little quick smiles come and go with her  
                  breath,

When she sigheth or speaketh.

And the tender bride-mother breaks off unaware  
From an Ave, to think that her daughter is fair,  
Till in nearing the chapel, and glancing before,  
She seeth her little son stand at the door.

Is it play that he seeketh ?

Is it play? when his eyes wander innocent-wild,  
 And sublimed with a sadness unfitting a child!  
 He trembles not, weeps not—the passion is done,  
 And calmly he kneels in their midst, with the sun  
     On his head like a glory.

‘O fair-featured maids, ye are many!’ he cried,—  
 ‘But, in fairness and vileness, who matcheth the  
     bride?’

O brave-hearted youths, ye are many! but whom,  
 For the courage and wo, can ye match with the groom,  
     As ye see them before ye?’

Out spake the bride’s mother—‘The vileness is thine,  
 If thou shame thine own sister, a bride at the shrine!’  
 Out spake the bride’s lover—‘The vileness be mine,  
 If he shame mine own wife at the hearth or the shrine,  
     And the charge be unprovèd.

‘Bring the charge, prove the charge, brother! speak  
     it aloud—

Let thy father and hers, hear it deep in his shroud!’  
 —‘O father, thou seest—for dead eyes can see—  
 How she wears on her bosom *a brown rosarie*,  
     O my father belovèd!’

Then outlaughed the bridegroom, and outlaughed  
     withal

Both maidens and youths, by the old chapel-wall—  
 ‘So she weareth no love-gift, kind brother,’ quoth  
     he,

' She may wear an she listeth, a brown rosarie,  
Like a pure-hearted lady ! '

Then swept through the chapel the long bridal train :  
Though he spake to the bride she replied not again :  
On, as one in a dream, pale and stately she went  
Where the altar-lights burn o'er the great sacrament,  
Faint with daylight, but steady.

But her brother had passed in between them and her,  
And calmly knelt down on the high-altar stair—  
Of an infantine aspect so stern to the view,  
That the priest could not smile on the child's eyes of blue  
As he would for another.

He knelt like a child marble-sculptured and white,  
That seems kneeling to pray on the tomb of a knight,  
With a look taken up to each iris of stone  
From the greatness and death where he kneeleth, but  
none  
From the face of a mother.

' In your chapel, O priest, ye have wedded and  
shriven  
Fair wives for the hearth, and fair sinners for Heaven !  
But this fairest my sister, ye think now to wed,  
Bid her kneel where she standeth, and shrive her  
instead—  
O shrive her and wed not ! '

In tears, the bride's mother,— ' Sir priest, unto thee  
Would he lie, as he lied to this fair company ! '

In wrath, the bride's lover,— 'The lie shall be clear!  
 Speak it out, boy! the saints in their niches shall  
 hear—

Be the charge proved or said not!'

Then serene in his childhood he lifted his face,  
 And his voice sounded holy and fit for the place—  
 'Look down from your niches, ye still saints, and see  
 How she wears on her bosom a *brown rosarie*!  
 Is it used for the praying?'

The youths looked aside—to laugh there were a sin—  
 And the maidens' lips trembled with smiles shut  
 within:

Quoth the priest— 'Thou art wild, pretty boy!  
 Blessed she  
 Who prefers at her bridal a brown rosarie  
 To a worldly arraying!'

The bridegroom spake low and led onward the bride,  
 And before the high altar they stood side by side:  
 The rite-book is opened, the rite is begun—  
 They have knelt down together to rise up as one—  
 Who laughed by the altar?

The maidens looked forward, the youths looked  
 around,  
 The bridegroom's eye flashed from his prayer at the  
 sound;  
 And each saw the bride, as if no bride she were,

Gazing cold at the priest without gesture of prayer,  
As he read from the psalter.

The priest never knew that she did so, but still  
He felt a power on him too strong for his will ;  
And whenever the Great Name was there to be read,  
His voice sank to silence—THAT could not be said,  
Or the air could not hold it.

‘ I have sinned, ’ quoth he, ‘ I have sinned, I wot ’—  
And the tears ran adown his old cheeks at the thought ;  
They dropped fast on the book ; but he read on the  
same,  
And aye was the silence where should be the NAME,  
As the choristers told it.

The rite-book is closed, and the rite being done,  
They who knelt down together, arise up as one :  
Fair riseth the bride—Oh, a fair bride is she,—  
But, for all (think the maidens) that brown rosarie,  
No saint at her praying !

What aileth the bridegroom ? He glares blank and  
wide—

Then suddenly turning, he kisseth the bride—  
His lip stung her with cold : she glanced upwardly  
mute :

‘ Mine own wife, ’ he said, and fell stark at her foot  
In the word he was saying.

They have lifted him up,—but his head sinks away,  
And his face showeth bleak in the sunshine and gray.

Leave him now where he lieth—for oh, nevermore  
Will he kneel at an altar or stand on a floor !

Let his bride gaze upon him !

Long and still was her gaze, while they chafed him  
there,

And breathed in the mouth whose last life had kissed  
her :

But when they stood up—only *they* ! with a start  
The shriek from her soul struck her pale lips apart—  
She has lived, and forgone him !

And low on his body she droppeth adown—  
' Didst call me thine own wife, beloved—thine own ?  
Then take thine own with thee ! thy coldness is warm  
To the world's cold without thee ! Come, keep me  
from harm  
In a calm of thy teaching ! '

She looked in his face earnest long, as in sooth  
There were hope of an answer,—and then kissed his  
mouth ;  
And with head on his bosom, wept, wept bitterly,—  
' Now, O God, take pity—take pity on me !—  
God, hear my beseeching ! '

She was 'ware of a shadow that crossed where she lay ;  
She was 'ware of a presence that wither'd the day—  
Wild she sprang to her feet,— ' I surrender to *thee*  
The broken vow's pledge,—the accursed rosarie,—  
I am ready for dying ! '

She dashed it in scorn to the marble-paved ground,  
 Where it fell mute as snow ; and a weird music-sound  
 Crept up, like a chill, up the aisles long and dim,—  
 As the fiends tried to mock at the choristers' hymn  
 And moaned in the trying.

## FOURTH PART.

ONORA looketh listlessly adown the garden walk :  
 ' I am weary, O my mother, of thy tender talk !  
 I am weary of the trees a-waving to and fro—  
 Of the steadfast skies above, the running brooks  
     below ;  
 All things are the same but I ;—only I am dreary ;  
 And, mother, of my dreariness behold me very weary

' Mother, brother, pull the flowers I planted in the  
     spring,  
 And smiled to think I should smile more upon their  
     gathering.

The bees will find out other flowers—oh, pull them,  
     dearest mine,  
 And carry them and carry me before St. Agnes'  
     shrine. '

—Whereat they pulled the summer flowers she planted  
     in the spring,  
 And her and them all mournfully to Agnes' shrine  
     did bring.

She looked up to the pictured saint and gently shook  
her head—

‘ The picture is too calm for *me*—too calm for *me*, ’  
she said :

‘ The little flowers we brought with us, before it we  
may lay,

For those are used to look at heaven,—but *I* must  
turn away—

Because no sinner under sun can dare or bear to gaze  
On God’s or angel’s holiness, except in Jesu’s face. ’

She spoke with passion after pause— ‘ And were it  
wisely done,

If we who cannot gaze above, should walk the earth  
alone ?

If we whose virtue is so weak, should have a will so  
strong,

And stand blind on the rocks, to choose the right path  
from the wrong ?

To choose perhaps a love-lit hearth, instead of love  
and Heaven,—

A single rose, for a rose-tree, which beareth seven  
times seven ?

A rose that droppeth from the hand, that fadeth in the  
breast,

Until, in grieving for the worst, we learn what is the  
best ! ’

Then breaking into tears,— ‘ Dear God, ’ she cried,  
‘ and must we see

All blissful things depart from *us*, or ere we go to  
THIEF ?



We cannot guess thee in the wood, or hear thee in  
the wind?

Our cedars must fall round us, ere we see the light  
behind?

Ay sooth, we feel too strong in weal, to need thee on  
that road;

But wo being come, the soul is dumb that crieth not  
on 'God.' '

Her mother could not speak for tears; she ever mused  
thus—

' *The bees will find out other flowers,—but what is  
left for us?* '

But her young brother stayed his sobs and knelt  
beside her knee,

—'Thou sweetest sister in the world, hast never a  
word for me? '

She passed her hand across his face, she pressed it on  
his cheek,

So tenderly, so tenderly—she needed not to speak.

The wreath which lay on shrine that day, at vespers  
bloomed no more—

The woman fair who placed it there, had died an  
hour before.

Both perished mute, for lack of root, earth's nourish-  
ment to reach;

O reader breathe (the ballad saith) some sweetness  
out of each!



## LADY GERALDINE'S COURTSHIP.

A ROMANCE OF THE AGE

*A poet writes to his friend. Place—A room in Wycombe Hall.*

*Time - Late in the evening.*

DEAR my friend and fellow-student, I would lean my  
spirit o'er you ;  
Down the purple of this chamber, tears should scarcely  
run at will :  
I am humbled who was humble ! Friend,—I bow my  
head before you !  
You should lead me to my peasants !—but their faces  
are too still.

There's a lady—an earl's daughter ; she is proud and  
she is noble ;  
And she treads the crimson carpet, and she breathes  
the perfumed air ;  
And a kingly blood sends glances up her princely eye  
to trouble,  
And the shadow of a monarch's crown is softened in  
her hair.

She has halls among the woodlands, she has castles  
 by the breakers,  
 She has farms and she has manors, she can threaten  
 and command,  
 And the palpitating engines snort in steam across her  
 acres,  
 As they mark upon the blasted heaven the measure  
 of her land.

There are none of England's daughters who can show  
 a prouder presence ;  
 Upon princely suitors praying, she has looked in her  
 disdain :  
 She was sprung of English nobles, I was born of  
 English peasants ;  
 What was *I* that I should love her—save for com-  
 petence to pain !

I was only a poor poet, made for singing at her case-  
 ment,  
 As the finches or the thrushes, while she thought of  
 other things.  
 Oh, she walked so high above me, she appeared to  
 my abasement,  
 In her lovely silken murmur, like an angel clad in  
 wings !

Many vassals bow before her as her carriage sweeps  
 their door-ways ;  
 She has blest their little children,—as a priest or  
 queen were she.

Far too tender or too cruel far, her smile upon the  
poor was,  
For I thought it was the same smile which she used  
to smile on me.

She has voters in the commons, she has lovers in  
the palace—  
And of all the fair court-ladies, few have jewels half  
as fine :  
Oft the prince has named her beauty, 'twixt the  
red wine and the chalice :  
Oh, and what was *I* to love her? my Beloved, my  
Geraldine !

Yet I could not choose but love her—I was born to  
poet uses—  
To love all things set above me, all of good and all  
of fair :  
Nymphs of mountain, not of valley, we are wont to  
call the Muses—  
And in nympholeptic climbing, poets pass from mount  
to star.

And because I was a poet, and because the people  
praised me,  
With their critical deduction for the modern writer's  
fault ;  
I could sit at rich men's tables,—though the courtesies  
that raised me,  
Still suggested clear between us the pale spectrum  
of the salt.

And they praised me in her presence :— ‘ Will your  
book appear this summer ? ’

Then returning to each other— ‘ Yes, our plans are  
for the moors ; ’

Then with whisper dropped behind me— ‘ There he  
is ! the latest comer !

Oh, she only likes his verses ! what is over, she  
endures.

‘ Quite low born ! self-educated ! somewhat gifted  
though by nature,—

And we make a point of asking him,—of being very  
kind ;

You may speak, he does not hear you ; and besides,  
he writes no satire,—

All these serpents kept by charmers, leave their na-  
tural sting behind.’

I grew scornfuller, grew colder, as I stood up there  
among them,

Till as frost intense will burn you, the cold scorning  
scorched my brow ;

When a sudden silver speaking, gravely cadenced,  
overrung them,

And a sudden silken stirring touched my inner nature  
through.

I looked upward and beheld her ! With a calm and  
regnant spirit,

Slowly round she swept her eyelids, and said clear  
before them all—

' Have you such superfluous honour, sir, that able to  
to confer it

You will come down, Mr. Bertram, as my guest to  
Wycombe Hall ? '

Here she paused,—she had been paler at the first  
word of her speaking ;

But because a silence followed it, blushed somewhat, as  
for shame ;

Then, as scorning her own feeling, resumed calmly—

' I am seeking

More distinction than these gentlemen think worthy  
of my claim.

" Ne'ertheless, you see, I seek it—not because I am  
a woman, '

(Here her smile sprang like a fountain, and, so, over-  
flowed her mouth)

' But because my woods in Sussex have some purple  
shades at gloaming

Which are worthy of a king in state, or poet in his  
youth.

" I invite you, Mr. Bertram, to no scene for worldly  
speeches—

Sir, I scarce should dare—but only where God asked  
the thrushes first—

And if *you* will sing beside them, in the covert of my  
beeches,

I will thank you for the woodlands, . . . for the human  
world at worst."

Then she smiled around right childly, then she gazed  
around right queenly ;  
And I bowed—I could not answer ! Alternated light  
and gloom—  
While as one who quells the lions, with a steady eye  
serenely,  
She, with level fronting eyelids, passed cut stately  
from the room.

Oh, the blessed woods of Sussex, I can hear them still  
around me,  
With their leafy tide of greenery still rippling up the  
wind !  
Oh, the cursed woods of Sussex ! where the hunter's  
arrow found me,  
When a fair face and a tender voice had made me  
mad and blind !

In that ancient hall of Wycombe, thronged the nume-  
rous guests invited,  
And the lovely London ladies trod the floors with  
gliding feet ;  
And their voices low with fashion, not with feeling,  
softly freighted  
All the air about the windows, with elastic laughter  
sweet.

For at eve, the open windows flung their light out on  
the terrace,  
Which the floating orbs of curtains did with gradual  
shadow sweep;  
While the swans upon the river, fed at morning by the  
heiress,  
Trembled downward through their snowy wings at  
music in their sleep.

And there evermore was music, both of instrument and  
singing;  
Till the finches of the shrubberies grew restless in  
the dark;  
But the cedars stood up motionless, each in a moon-  
light ring,  
And the deer, half in the glimmer, strewed the hollows  
of the park.

And though sometimes she would bind me with her  
silver-corded speeches,  
To commix my words and laughter with the converse  
and the jest,  
Oft I sat apart, and gazing on the river through the  
beeches,  
Heard, as pure the swans swam down it, her pure  
voice o'erfloat the rest.

In the morning, horn of huntsman, hoof of steed, and  
laugh of rider,  
Spread out cheery from the court-yard till we lost  
them in the hills;



While herself and other ladies, and her suitors left  
    beside her,  
Went a-wandering up the gardens through the laurels  
    and abeles.

Thus, her foot upon the new-mown grass—bareheaded  
    —with the flowing  
Of the virginal white vesture gathered closely to her  
    throat ;  
With the golden ringlets in her neck just quickened  
    by her going,  
And appearing to breathe sun for air, and doubting if  
    to float,—

With a branch of dewy maple, which her right hand  
    held above her,  
And which trembled a green shadow in betwixt her  
    and the skies,  
As she turned her face in going, thus, she drew me  
    on to love her,  
And to worship the divineness of the smile hid in her  
    eyes.

For her eyes alone smile constantly : her lips have  
    serious sweetness,  
And her front is calm—the dimple rarely ripples  
    on the cheek :  
But her deep blue eyes smile constantly,—as if they  
    in discreetness  
Kept the secret of a happy dream she did not care  
    to speak.

Thus she drew me the first morning, out across into  
the garden :

And I walked among her noble friends and could not  
keep behind ;

Spake she unto all and unto me— ‘ Behold, I am the  
warden

Of the song birds in these lindens, which are cages to  
their mind.

‘ But within this swarded circle, into which the  
lime-walk brings us—

Whence the beeches rounded greenly, stand away in  
reverent fear ;

I will let no music enter, saving what the fountain  
sings us,

Which the lilies round the basin may seem pure  
enough to hear.

‘ The live air that waves the lilies waves this slender  
jet of water

Like a holy thought sent feebly up from soul of fast-  
ing saint !

Whereby lies a marble Silence, sleeping ! (Lough the  
sculptor wrought her,)

So asleep she is forgetting to say *Hush!*—a fancy  
quaint !

‘ Mark how heavy white her eyelids ! not a dream  
between them lingers !

And the left hand's index droppeth from the lips upon  
the cheek :

And the right hand,—with the symbol rose held slack  
within the fingers,—  
Has fallen backward in the basin—yet this Silence  
will not speak !

‘That the essential meaning growing may exceed  
the special symbol,  
Is the thought as I conceive it : it applies more high  
and low.  
Our true noblemen will often through right noble-  
ness grow humble,  
And assert an inward honor by denying outward  
show.’

‘Nay, your Silence,’ said I, ‘truly holds her symbol  
rose but slackly,  
Yet *she holds it*—or would scarcely be a Silence to  
our ken !  
And your nobles wear their ermine on the outside, or  
walk blackly  
In the presence of the social law as most ignoble  
men.

‘Let the poets dream such dreaming ! Madam, in  
these British islands,  
'Tis the substance that wanes ever, 'tis the symbol  
that exceeds ;  
Soon we shall have nought but symbol ! and for  
statues like this Silence.  
Shall accept the rose's image—in another case, the  
weed's.’

‘Not so quickly!’ she retorted,—‘I confess where’er  
you go, you  
Find for things, names—shows for actions, and pure  
gold for honor clear;  
But when all is run to symbol in the Social, I will  
throw you  
The world’s book which now reads drily, and sit down  
with Silence here.’

Half in playfulness she spoke, I thought, and half in  
indignation;  
Friends who listened laughed her words off while her  
lovers deemed her fair.  
A fair woman—flushed with feeling, in her noble-  
lighted station  
Near the statue’s white reposing—and both bathed in  
sunny air!

With the trees round, not so distant but you heard  
their vernal murmur,  
And beheld in light and shadow the leaves in and  
outward move;  
And the little fountain leaping toward the sun-heart  
to be warmer,  
And recoiling in a tremble from the too much  
light above.

’Tis a picture for remembrance! and thus, morning  
after morning,  
Did I follow as she drew me by the spirit to her  
feet—

Why, her greyhound followed also ! dogs—we both  
were dogs for scorning—  
To be sent back when she pleased it and her path  
lay through the wheat.

And thus, morning after morning, spite of vows and  
spite of sorrow,  
Did I follow at her drawing, while the week-days  
passed along ;  
Just to feed the swans this noontide, or to see the  
fawns to-morrow,  
Or to teach the hill-side echo some sweet Tuscan in  
a song.

Ay, for sometimes on the hill-side, while we sat down  
in the gowans,  
With the forest green behind us, and its shadow cast  
before ;  
And the river running under ; and across it from the  
rowans  
A brown partridge whirring near us, till we felt the  
air it bore—

There, obedient to her praying, did I read aloud the  
poems  
Made by Tuscan flutes, or instruments more various  
of our own ;  
Read the pastoral parts of Spenser—or the subtle  
interflowings  
Found in Petrarch's sonnets—here's the book—the  
leaf is folded down !—

Or at times a modern volume,—Wordsworth's solemn-  
thoughted idyl,  
Howitt's ballad-verse, or Tennyson's enchanted re-  
verie,—  
Or from Browning some 'Pomegranate,' which, if  
cut deep down the middle,  
Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined  
humanity.

Or at times I read there, hoarsely, some new poem  
of my making—  
Poets ever fail in reading their own verses to  
their worth,—  
For the echo in you breaks upon the words which  
you are speaking,  
And the chariot-wheels jar in the gate through which  
you drive them forth.

After, when we were grown tired of books, the silence  
round us flinging  
A slow arm of sweet compression, felt with beatings  
at the breast,  
She would break out, on a sudden, in a gush of wood-  
land singing,  
Like a child's emotion in a god—a naiad tired of  
rest.

Oh, to see or hear her singing! scarce I know which  
is divinest—  
For her looks sing too—she modulates her gestures  
on the tune;

And her mouth stirs with the song, like song; and  
when the notes are finest,  
'Tis the eyes that shoot out vocal light and seem to  
swell them on.

Then we talked—oh, how we talked! her voice, so  
cadenced in the talking,  
Made another singing--of the soul! a music without  
bars—  
While the leafy sounds of woodlands, humming round  
where we were walking,  
Brought interposition worthy-sweet,—as skies about  
the stars.

And she spake such good thoughts natural, as if she  
always thought them—  
And had sympathies so rapid, open, free as bird on  
branch  
Just as ready to fly east as west, whichever way be-  
sought them,  
In the birchen wood a chirrup, or a cock-crow in the  
grange.

In her utmost lightness there is truth—and often she  
speaks lightly,  
Has a grace in being gay, which even mournful souls  
approve,  
For the root of some grave earnest thought is under-  
struck so rightly,  
As to justify the foliage and the waving flowers  
above.

And she talked on—*we* talked, rather! upon all things  
—substance—shadow—

Of the sheep that browsed the grasses—of the reapers  
in the corn—

Of the little children from the schools, seen winding  
through the meadow—

Of the poor rich world beyond them, still kept poorer  
by its scorn.

So of men, and so, of letters—books are men of higher  
stature,

And the only men that speak aloud for future times  
to hear:

So, of mankind in the abstract, which grows slowly  
into nature,

Yet will lift the cry of 'progress,' as it trod from  
sphere to sphere.

And her custom was to praise me when I said,—  
'The Age culls simples,

With a broad clown's back turned broadly to the  
glory of the stars—

We are gods by our own reck'ning,—and may well  
shut up the temples,

And wield on, amid the incense-steam, the thunder  
of our cars.

'For we throw out acclamations of self-thanking,  
self-admiring,

With, at every mile run faster,—'O the wondrous  
wondrous age,'



Little thinking if we work our SOULS as nobly as our  
iron,  
Or if angels will commend us at the goal of pil-  
grimage.

“ Why, what is this patient entrance into nature’s  
deep resources,  
But the child’s most gradual learning to walk upright  
without bane ?  
When we drive out, from the cloud of steam, majes-  
tical white horses,  
Are we greater than the first men who led black ones  
by the mane ?

‘ If we trod the deeps of ocean, if we struck the stars in  
rising,  
If we wrapped the globe intensely with one hot elec-  
tric breath,  
’Twere but power within our *tether*—no new spirit-  
power comprising  
And in life we were not greater men, nor bolder men  
in death. ’

She was patient with my talking ; and I loved her—  
loved her certes,  
As I loved all Heavenly objects, with uplifted eyes  
and hands !  
As I loved pure inspirations—loved the graces, loved  
the virtues,  
In a Love content with writing his own name on  
desert sands.

Or at least I thought so purely!—thought no idiot  
    Hope was raising  
Any crown to crown Love's silence—silent Love that  
    sat alone—  
Out, alas! the stag is like me—he, that tries to go on  
    grazing  
With the great deep gun-wound in his neck, then  
    reels with sudden moan.

It was thus I reeled! I told you that her hand had  
    many suitors—  
But she smiles them down imperially, as Venus  
    did the waves—  
And with such a gracious coldness, that they can-  
    not press their futures  
On the present of her courtesy, which yieldingly  
    enslaves.

And this morning, as I sat alone within the inner  
    chamber  
With the great saloon beyond it, lost in pleasant  
    thought serene—  
For I had been reading Camoëns—that poem you  
    remember,  
Which his lady's eyes are praised in, as the sweetest  
    ever seen.

And the book lay open, and my thought flew from it,  
    taking from it  
A vibration and impulsion to an end beyond its  
    own,

As the branch of a green osier, when a child would  
overcome it,  
Springs up freely from his clasping and goes swinging  
in the sun.

As I mused I heard a murmur,—it grew deep as it  
grew longer—  
Speakers using earnest language— ‘ Lady Geraldine,  
you *would!* ’  
And I heard a voice that pleaded ever on, in accents  
stronger  
As a sense of reason gave it power to make its rhetoric good.

Well I knew that voice—it was an earl’s, of soul that  
matched his station—  
Soul completed into lordship—might and right read  
on his brow :  
Very finely courteous—far too proud to doubt his  
domination  
Of the common people,—he atones for grandeur by  
a bow.

High straight forehead, nose of eagle, cold blue eyes,  
of less expression  
Than resistance, coldly casting off the looks of other  
men,  
As steel, arrows,—unelastic lips, which seem to taste  
possession,  
And be cautious lest the common air should injure or  
distrain.

For the rest, accomplished, upright,—ay, and standing  
by his order  
With a bearing not ungraceful; fond of art and  
letters too;  
Just a good man made a proud man,—as the sandy  
rocks that border  
A wild coast, by circumstances, in a regnant ebb and  
flow.

Thus, I knew that voice—I heard it—and I could not  
help the hearkening:  
In the room I stood up blindly, and my burning heart  
within  
Seemed to seethe and fuse my senses, till they ran on  
all sides darkening,  
And scorched, weighed, like melted metal round my  
feet that stood therein.

And that voice, I heard it pleading, for love's sake—  
for wealth, position,  
For the sake of liberal uses, and great actions to be  
done—  
And she interrupted gently, 'Nay, my lord, the old  
tradition  
Of your Normans, by some worthier hand than mine  
is, should be won.'

'Ah, that white hand,' he said quickly,—and in his  
he either drew it  
Or attempted—for with gravity and instance she  
replied—

‘Nay, indeed, my lord, this talk is vain, and we had  
best eschew it,  
And pass on, like friends, to other points less easy to  
decide.’

What he said again, I know not. It is likely that his  
trouble

Worked his pride up to the surface, for she answered  
in slow scorn—

‘And your lordship judges rightly. Whom I marry,  
shall be noble,

Ay, and wealthy. I shall never blush to think how  
he was born.’

There, I maddened! her words stung me! Life swept  
through me into fever,

And my soul sprang up astonished; sprang, full-  
statured in an hour:

Know you what it is when anguish, with apocalyptic  
NEVER,

To a Pythian height dilates you,—and despair sub-  
limes to power?

From my brain, the soul-wings budded!—waved a  
flame about my body,

Whence conventions coiled to ashes: I felt self-drawn  
out, as man,

From amalgamate false natures; and I saw the skies  
grow ruddy

With the deepening feet of angels, and I knew what  
spirits can.

I was mad—inspired—say either ! anguish worketh  
inspiration !

Was a man, or beast—perhaps so ; for the tiger roars,  
when speared ;

And I walked on, step by step, along the level of my  
passion—

Oh my soul ! and passed the doorway to her face, and  
never feared.

*He* had left her,—peradventure, when my footstep  
proved my coming—

But for *her*—she half arose, then sat—grew scarlet  
and grew pale :

Oh, she trembled !—'tis so always with a worldly man  
or woman

In the presence of true spirits—what else *can* they do  
but quail ?

Oh, she fluttered like a tame bird, in among its forest-  
brothers

Far too strong for it ! then drooping, bowed her face  
upon her hands—

And I spake out wildly, fiercely, brutal truths of her  
and others !

*I*, she planted in the desert, swathed her, windlike,  
with my sands.

I plucked up her social fictions, bloody-rooted though  
leaf-verdant,

Trod them down with words of shaming,—all the pur-  
ple and the gold,

All the 'landed stakes' and lordships—all that  
spirits pure and ardent  
Are cast out of love and honor because chancing  
not to hold.

For myself I do not argue,' said I, 'though I love  
you, madam ;  
But for better souls that nearer to the height of  
yours have trod.  
And this age shows, to my thinking, still more  
infidels to Adam,  
Than directly, by profession, simple infidels to  
God.

'Yet, O God,' I said, 'O grave,' I said, 'O mother's  
heart and bosom,  
With whom first and last are equal, saint and corpse  
and little child !  
We are fools to your deductions, in these figments  
of heart-closing !  
We are traitors to your causes, in these sympathies  
defiled !

'Learn more reverence, madam, not for rank or  
wealth—*that* needs no learning ;  
*That* comes quickly—quick as sin does, ay, and cul-  
minates to sin ;  
But for Adam's seed, MAN ! Trust me, 'tis a clay  
above your scorning,  
With God's image stamped upon it, and God's  
kindling breath within.

‘ What right have you, madam, gazing in your  
palace mirror daily,  
Getting so by heart your beauty which all others  
must adore,  
While you draw the golden ringlets down your fingers,  
to vow gayly  
You will wed no man that’s only good to God,—and  
nothing more ?

‘ Why, what right have you, made fair by that same  
God—the sweetest woman  
Of all women He has fashioned—with your lovely  
spirit-face,  
Which would seem too near to vanish if its smile  
were not so human,  
And your voice of holy sweetness, turning common  
words to grace,

‘ What right *can* you have, God’s other works to  
scorn, despise, revile them  
In the gross, as mere men, broadly—not as *noble*  
men, forsooth,—  
As mere Parias of the outer world, forbidden to as-  
soil them  
In the hope of living, dying, near that sweetness  
of your mouth ?

‘ Have you any answer, madam ? If my spirit  
were less earthly,  
If its instrument were gifted with a better silver  
string,



I would kneel down where I stand, and say— Behold  
me! I am worthy  
Of thy loving, for I love thee! I am worthy as a  
king.

‘ As it is—your ermined pride, I swear, shall feel this  
stain upon her—  
That *I*, poor, weak, tost with passion, scorned by me  
and you again,  
Love you, Madam—dare to love you—to my grief and  
your dishonor—  
To my endless desolation, and your impotent dis-  
dain!’

More mad words like these—more madness! friend,  
I need not write them fuller;  
And I hear my hot soul dropping on the lines in  
showers of tears—  
Oh, a woman! friend, a woman! Why, a beast had  
scarce been duller  
Than roar bestial loud complaints against the shining  
of the spheres.

But at last there came a pause. I stood all vibrating  
with thunder  
Which my soul had used. The silence drew her face  
up like a call.  
Could you guess what word she uttered? She looked  
up, as if in wonder,  
With tears beaded on her lashes, and said ‘ Bertram!’  
it was all.

If she had cursed me—and she might have—or if  
even, with queenly bearing  
Which at need is used by women, she had risen up  
and said,  
‘Sir, you are my guest, and therefore I have given  
you a full hearing—  
Now, beseech you, choose a name exacting somewhat  
less instead’—

I had borne it!—but that ‘Bertram’—why it lies  
there on the paper  
A mere word, without her accent,—and you cannot  
judge the weight  
Of the calm which crushed my passion! I seemed  
drowning in a vapor,—  
And her gentleness destroyed me whom her scorn  
made desolate.

So, struck backward and exhausted by that inward  
flow of passion  
Which had rushed on, sparing nothing, into forms of  
abstract truth,  
With a logic agonizing through unseemly demon-  
stration,  
And with youth’s own anguish turning grimly gray  
the hairs of youth,—

By the sense accursed and instant, that if even I  
spake wisely  
I spake basely—using truth,—if what I spake indeed  
was true—

To avenge wrong on a woman—*her*, who sat there  
weighing nicely  
A full manhood's worth, found guilty of such deeds  
as I could do!—

With such wrong and wo exhausted—what I suffered  
and occasioned,—  
As a wild horse through a city runs with lightning  
in his eyes,  
And then dashing at a church's cold and passive wall,  
impassioned,  
Strikes the death into his burning brain, and blindly  
drops and dies—

So I fell, struck down before her! Do you blame me  
friend, for weakness?  
'Twas my strength of passion slew me!—fell before  
her like a stone;  
Fast the dreadful world rolled from me, on its roaring  
wheels of blackness!  
When the light came I was lying in this chamber—  
and alone.

Oh, of course, she charged her lacqueys to bear out  
the sickly burden,  
And to cast it from her scornful sight—but not *beyond*  
the gate—  
She is too kind to be cruel, and too haughty not to  
pardon  
Such a man as I—'t were something to be level to  
her hate.

But for *me*—you now are conscious why, my friend, I  
write this letter,  
How my life is read all backward, and the charm of  
life undone !  
I shall leave her house at dawn—I would to-night, if  
I were better—  
And I charge my soul to hold my body strengthened  
for the sun.

When the sun has dyed the oriel, I depart with no  
last gazes,  
No weak moanings—one word only left in writing  
for her hands,  
Out of reach of all derision, and some unavailing  
praises,  
To make front against this anguish in the far and  
foreign lands.

Blame me not. I would not squander life in grief—I  
am abstemious :  
I but nurse my spirit's falcon, that its wing may soar  
again :  
There's no room for tears of weakness in the blind  
eyes of a Phemius :  
Into work the poet kneads them,—and he does not  
die *till then*.



## CONCLUSION.

Bertram finished the last pages, while along the silence  
ever

Still in hot and heavy splashes, fell the tears on every  
leaf :

Having ended, he leans backward in his chair, with  
lips that quiver

From the deep unspoken, ay, and deep unwritten  
thoughts of grief.

Soh! how still the lady standeth ! 'tis a dream—a  
dream of mercies !

'Twixt the purple lattice-curtains, how she standeth  
still and pale !

'Tis a vision, sure, of mercies, sent to soften his self-  
curses—

Sent to sweep a patient quiet o'er the tossing of his  
wail.

'Eyes,' he said, 'now throbbing through me! are  
ye eyes that did undo me ?

Shining eyes, like antique jewels set in Parian statue-  
stone !

Underneath that calm white forehead, are ye ever  
burning torrid

O'er the desolate sand-desert of my heart and life  
undone ?”

With a murmurous stir uncertain, in the air, the  
purple curtain  
Swellleth in and swelleth out around her motionless  
pale brows ;  
While the gliding of the river sends a rippling noise  
for ever  
Through the open casement whitened by the moon-  
light's slant repose.

Said he— ' Vision of a lady ! stand there silent, stand  
there steady !  
Now I see it plainly, plainly ; now I cannot hope or  
doubt—  
There, the brows of mild repression—there, the lips  
of silent passion,  
Curved like an archer's bow to send the bitter arrows  
out.'

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept  
smiling,  
And approached him slowly, slowly, in a gliding mea-  
sured pace ;  
With her two white hands extended, as if praying one  
offended,  
And a look of supplication, gazing earnest in his  
face.

Said he— ' Wake me by no gesture,—sound of breath,  
or stir of vesture ;  
Let the blessed apparition melt not yet to its di-  
vine !

No approaching—hush ! no breathing ! or my heart  
must swoon to death in  
That too utter life thou bringest—O thou dream of  
Geraldine ! ’

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept  
smiling—

But the tears ran over lightly from her eyes, and  
tenderly ;

‘ Dost thou, Bertram, truly love me ? Is no woman  
far above me

Found more worthy of thy poet-heart than such a  
one as I ? ’

Said he— ‘ I would dream so ever, like the flowing of  
that river,

Flowing ever in a shadow greenly onward to the  
sea ;

So, thou vision of all sweetness—princely to a full  
completeness,—

Would my heart and life flow onward—deathward—  
through this dream of THEE ! ’

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept  
smiling,

While the silver tears ran faster down the blushing  
of her cheeks ;

Then with both her hands enfolding both of his, she  
softly told him,

‘ Bertram, if I say I love thee, . . . ’t is the vision  
only speaks. ’

Softened, quickened to adore her, on his knee he fell  
before her—

And she whispered low in triumph— ' It shall be as I  
have sworn !

Very rich he is in virtues,—very noble—noble,  
certes ;

And I shall not blush in knowing that men call him  
lowly born ! '







## A VISION OF POETS.

O Sacred Essence, lighting me this hour,  
How may I lightly stile thy great power ?

*Echo.* Power.

Power! but of whence? under the greenwood spraye?  
Or liv'st in Heaven? saye.

*Echo.* in Heavens aye.

In Heavens aye! tell, may I it obtayne  
By alms, by fasting, prayer,—by paine ?

*Echo.* By paine.

Show me the paine, it shall be undergone:  
I to mine end will still go on.

*Echo.* Go on.

BRITANNIA'S PASTORALS.

A POET could not sleep aright,  
For his soul kept up too much light  
Under his eyelids for the night :

And thus he rose disquieted  
With sweet rhymes ringing through his head,  
And in the forest wandered ;

Where, sloping up the darkest glades,  
The moon had drawn long colonnades,  
Upon whose floor the verdure fades

To a faint silver : pavement fair,  
The antique wood-nymphs scarce would dare  
To footprint o'er, had such been there,

And rather sit by breathlessly,  
With tears in their large eyes to see  
The consecrated sight. But **HE**

The poet—who with spirit-kiss  
Familiar, had long claimed for his  
Whatever earthly beauty is,

Who also in his spirit bore  
A Beauty passing the earth's store,  
Walked calmly onward evermore.

His aimless thoughts in metre went,  
Like a babe's hand without intent  
Drawn down a seven-stringed instrument

Nor jarred it with his humour as,  
With a faint stirring of the grass,  
An apparition fair did pass.

He might have feared another time,  
But all things fair and strange did chime  
With his thoughts then—as rhyme to rhyme.

An angel had not startled him,  
Alighted from Heaven's burning rim  
To breathe from glory in the Dim—

Much less a lady riding slow  
Upon a palfrey white as snow,  
And smooth as a snow-cloud could go.

Full upon his she turned her face,—  
What, ho, sir poet! dost thou pace  
Our woods at night, in ghostly chase

‘Of some fair Dryad of old tales,  
Who chants between the nightingales,  
And over sleep by song prevails?’

She smiled; but he could see arise  
Her soul from far adown her eyes,  
Prepared as if for sacrifice.

She looked a queen who seemeth gay  
From royal grace alone: ‘Now, nay,’  
He answered,—‘slumber passed away,

Compelled by instincts in my head  
That I should see to-night instead  
Of a fair nymph, some fairer Dread.’

She looked up quickly to the sky  
And spake:—‘The moon’s regality  
Will hear no praise! she is as I.

‘She is in heaven, and I on earth  
This is my kingdom—I come forth  
To crown all poets to their worth.’

He brake in with a voice that mourned—  
‘To their worth, lady! They are scorned  
By men they sing for, till inurned.

‘To their worth! Beauty in the mind  
Leaves the hearth cold; and love-refined  
Ambitions make the world unkind.

‘The boor who ploughs the daisy down,  
The chief whose mortgage of renown  
Fixed upon graves, has bought a crown—

‘ Both these are happier, more approved  
Than poets !—Why should I be moved  
In saying both are more beloved ? ’

‘ The south can judge not of the north ;’  
She resumed calmly— ‘ I come forth  
To crown all poets to their worth.

‘ Yea, verily, and to anoint them all  
With blessed oils which surely shall  
Smell sweeter as the ages fall.’

‘ As sweet,’ the poet said, and rung  
A low sad laugh, ‘ as flowers are, sprung  
Out of their graves when they die young.

‘ As sweet as window eglantinè—  
Some bough of which, as they decline,  
The hired nurse gathers at their sign.

‘ As sweet, in short, as perfumed shroud  
Which the gay Roman maidens sewed  
For English Keats, singing aloud.’

The lady answered, ‘ Yea, as sweet !  
The things thou namest being complete  
In fragrance as I measure it. ’

‘ Since sweet the death-clothes and the knell  
Of him who having lived, dies well,—  
And holy sweet the asphodel

‘ Stirred softly by that foot of his,  
When he treads brave on all that is,  
Into the world of souls, from this !

‘ Since sweet the tears, dropped at the door  
Of tearless Death,—and even before :  
Sweet, consecrated evermore !

‘ What ! dost thou judge it a strange thing,  
That poets, crowned for vanquishing,  
Should bear some dust from out the ring ?

‘ Come on with me, come on with me ;  
And learn in coming ! Let me free  
Thy spirit into verity.’

She ceased : her palfrey’s paces sent  
No separate noises as she went,  
’Twas a bee’s hum—a little spent.

And while the poet seemed to tread  
Along the drowsy noise so made,  
The forest heaved up overhead

Its billowy foliage through the air,  
And the calm stars did, far and spare  
O’er-swim the masses everywhere :

Save when the overtopping pines  
Did bar their tremulous light with lines  
All fixed and black. Now the moon shines

A broader glory . You may see  
The trees grow rarer presently.  
The air blows up more fresh and free :

Until they come from dark to light,  
And from the forest to the sight  
Of the large Heaven-heart, bare with night,—

A fiery throb in every star,  
Those burning arteries that are  
The conduits of God's life afar.

A wild brown moorland underneath,  
And four pools breaking up the heath  
With white low gleamings, blank as death.

Beside the first pool, near the wood,  
A dead tree in set horror stood,  
Peeled and disjointed, stark as rood ;

Since thunder stricken, years ago,  
Fixed in the spectral strain and throe  
Wherewith it struggled from the blow :

A monumental tree . . . alone,  
That will not bend in storms, nor groan,  
But break off sudden like a stone.

Its lifeless shadow lies oblique  
Upon the pool,—where, javelin-like,  
The star-rays quiver while they strike.

' Drink, ' said the lady, very still—  
' Be holy and cold. ' He did her will,  
And drank the starry water chill.

The next pool they came near unto,  
Was bare of trees : there, only grew  
Straight flags and lilies just a few,

Which sullen on the water sat  
And leant their faces on the flat,  
As weary of the starlight-state.

'Drink,' said the lady, grave and slow,  
'*World's use* behoveth thee to know.'  
He drank the bitter wave below.

The third pool, girt with thorny bushes,  
And flaunting weeds, and reeds and rushes  
That winds sang through in mournful gushes,

Was whitely smeared in many a round  
By a slow slime: the starlight swound  
Over the ghastly light it found.

'Drink,' said the lady, sad and slow—  
'*World's love* behoveth thee to know.'  
He looked to her, commanding so.

Her brow was troubled, but her eye  
Struck clear to his soul. For all reply  
He drank the water suddenly,—

Then, with a deathly sickness, passed  
Beside the fourth pool and the last,  
Where weights of shadow were down-cast

From yew and alder, and rank trails  
Of nightshade clasping the trunk-scales,  
And flung across the intervals

From yew to yew. Who dares to stoop,  
Where those dank branches overdroop  
Into his heart the chill strikes up:

He hears a silent gliding coil—  
The snakes strain hard against the soil—  
His foot slips in their slimy oil:

And toads seem crawling on his hand,  
And clinging bats, but dimly scanned,  
Right in his face their wings expand.

A paleness took the poet's cheek ;  
' Must I drink *here* ? ' he seemed to seek  
The lady's will with utterance meek.

' Ay, ay,' she said, ' it so must be'  
(And this time she spake cheerfully)  
' Behoves thee know *World's cruelty*.'

He bowed his forehead till his mouth  
Curved in the wave, and drank unloth,  
As if from rivers of the south.

His lips sobbed through the water rank,  
His heart paused in him while he drank,  
His brain beat heart-like—rose and sank,

And he swooned backward to a dream,  
Wherein he lay 'twixt gloom and gleam  
With Death and Life at each extreme.

And spiritual thunders, born of soul  
Not cloud, did leap from mystic pole  
And o'er him roll and counter-roll,

Crushing their echoes reboant  
With their own wheels. Did Heaven so grant  
His spirit a sign of covenant ?

At last came silence. A slow kiss  
Did crown his forehead after this :  
His eyelids flew back for the bliss.



The lady stood beside his head,  
Smiling a thought, with hair dispréad.  
The moonshine seemed dishevelled

In her sleek tresses manifold ;  
Like Danae's in the rain of old,  
That dripped with melancholy gold.

But SHE was holy, pale, and high—  
As one who saw an ecstasy  
Beyond a foretold agony.

' Rise up ! ' said she, with voice where song  
Eddied through speech— ' rise up ! be strong :  
And learn how right avengeth wrong.'

The poet rose up on his feet :  
He stood before an altar set  
For sacrament, with vessels meet,

And mystic altarlights which shine  
As if their flames were crystalline  
Carved flames that would not shrink or pine.

The altar filled the central place  
Of a great church, and toward its face  
Long aisles did shoot and interlace.

And from it a continuous mist  
Of incense (round the edges kissed  
By a yellow light of amethyst)

Wound upward slowly and throbbingly,  
Cloud within cloud, right silverly,  
Cloud above cloud, victoriously,

Broke full against the arched roof,  
And, thence refracting, eddied off,  
And floated through the marble woof

Of many a fine-wrought architrave,  
Then, poising the white masses brave,  
Swept solemnly down aisle and nave.

And now in dark, and now in light,  
The countless columns, glimmering white,  
Seemed leading out to the Infinite.

Plunged half-way up the shaft they showed,  
In that pale shifting incense-cloud  
Which flowed them by, and overflowed,

Till mist and marble seemed to blend,  
And the whole temple, at the end,  
With its own incense to distend ;

The arches, like a giant's bow,  
To bend and slacken,—and below  
The niched saints to come and go.

Alone, amid the shifting scene,  
That central altar stood serene  
In its clear steadfast taper-sheen.

Then first, the poet was aware  
Of a chief angel standing there  
Before that altar, in the glare.

His eyes were dreadful, for you saw  
That *they* saw God—his lips and jaw,  
Grand-made and strong as Sinai's Law

They could enunciate and refrain  
From vibratory after-pain ;  
And his brow's height was sovereign—

On the vast background of his wings  
Arose his image, and he flings,  
From each plumed arc, pale glitterings

And fiery flakes (as beateth more  
Or less, the angel-heart ) before  
And round him, upon roof and floor,

Edging with fire the shifting fumes :  
While at his side, 't wixt lights and glooms,  
The phantasm of an organ booms.

Extending from which instrument  
And angel, right and left-way bent,  
The poet's sight grew sentient

Of a strange company around  
And toward the altar,—pale and bound  
With bay above the eyes profound.

Deathful their faces were ; and yet  
The power of life was in them set—  
Never forgot, nor to forget.

Sublime significance of mouth,  
Dilated nostril full of youth,  
And forehead royal with the truth.

These faces were not multiplied  
Beyond your count, but side by side  
Did front the altar, glorified :

Still as a vision, yet exprest  
Full as an action—look and geste  
Of buried saint in risen rest.

The poet knew them. Faint and dim  
His spirit seemed to sink in him,  
Then, like a dolphin, change and swim

The current—These were poets true  
Who died for Beauty, as martyrs do  
For truth—the ends being scarcely two,

God's prophets of the Beautiful  
These poets were—of iron rule,  
The ruggid cilix, serge of wool.

Here Homer, with the broad suspense  
Of thunderous brows, and lips intense  
Of garrulous god-innocence.

There, Shakspeare ! on whose forehead climb  
The crowns o' the world ! Oh, eyes sublime—  
With tears and laughters for all time !

Here, Æschylus,—the women swooned  
To see so awful when he frowned  
As the gods did,—he standeth crowned

Euripides, with close and mild  
Scholastic lips,—that could be wild,  
And laugh or sob out like a child

Even in the classes. Sophocles,  
With that king's look which down the trees,  
Followed the dark effigies

Of the lost Theban. Hesiod old,  
Who somewhat blind and deaf and cold,  
Cared most for gods and bulls. And bold

Electric Pindar, quick as fear,  
With race-dust on his cheeks, and clear  
Slant startled eyes that seem to hear

The chariot rounding the last goal,  
To hurtle past it in his soul :  
And Sappho, with that gloriolè

Of ebon hair on calmed brows—  
O poet-woman ! none foregoes  
The leap, attaining the repose !

Theocritus, with glittering locks  
Dropt sideways, as betwixt the rocks  
He watched the visionary flocks.

And Aristophanes : who took  
The world with mirth, and laughter-struck  
The hollow caves of Thought and woke

The infinite echoes hid in each.  
And Virgil : shade of Mantuan beech  
Did help the shade of bay to reach

And knit around his forehead high.  
For his gods wore less majesty  
Than his brown bees hummed deathlessly.

Lucretius—nobler than his mood :  
Who dropped his plummet down the broad  
Deep universe, and said ' No God,'

Finding no bottom : he denied  
Divinely the Divine, and died  
Chief poet on the Tiber-side

By grace of God ! his face is stern,  
As one compelled, in spite of scorn,  
To teach a truth he could not learn.

An Ossian, dimly seen or guessed :  
Once counted greater than the rest,  
When mountain-winds blew out his vest.

And Spenser drooped his dreaming head  
(With languid sleep-smile you had said  
From his own verse engendered)

On Ariosto's, till they ran  
Their curls in one :—The Italian  
Shot nimbler heat of bolder man

From his fine lids. And Dante stern  
And sweet, whose spirit was an urn  
For wine and milk poured out in turn.

Hard-souled Alfieri ; and fancy-willed  
Boiardo,—who with laughter filled  
The pauses of the jostled shield.

And Berni, with a hand stretched out  
To sleek that storm : And not without  
The wreath he died in, and the doubt

He died by, Tasso : bard and lover,  
Whose visions were too thin to cover  
The face of a false woman over.

And soft Racine,—and grave Corneille,  
The orator of rhymes, whose wail  
Scarce shook his purple. And Petrarch pale,

From whose brainlighted heart were thrown  
A thousand thoughts beneath the sun,  
Each lucid with the name of One.

And Camoens, with that look he had,  
Compelling India's Genius sad  
From the wave through the Lusiad,

With murmurs of the storm-cape ocean  
Indrawn in vibrative emotion  
Along the verse. And while devotion

In his wild eyes fantastic shone  
Under the tonsure blown upon  
By airs celestial,—Calderon :

And bold De Vega,—who breathed quick  
Verse after verse, till death's old trick  
Put pause to life and rhetoric.

And Goethe—with that reaching eye  
His soul reached out from, far and high,  
And fell from inner entity.

And Schiller, with heroic front  
Worthy of Plutarch's kiss upon 't—  
Too large for wreath of modern wont.

And Chaucer, with his infantine  
Familiar clasp of things divine—  
That mark upon his lip is wine.

Here Milton's eyes strike piercing-dim :  
The shapes of suns and stars did swim  
Like clouds from them, and granted him

God for sole vision ! Cowley, there,  
Whose active fancy debonaire  
Drew straws like amber—foul to fair.

Drayton and Browne,—with smiles they drew  
From outward Nature, still kept new  
From their own inward nature true.

And Marlowe, Webster, Fletcher, Ben—  
Whose fire-hearts sowed our furrows when  
The world was worthy of such men.

And Burns, with pungent passionings  
Set in his eyes. Deep lyric springs  
Are of the fire-mount's issuings.

And Shelley, in his white ideal,  
All statue blind ; and Keats, the real  
Adonis, with the hymeneal

Fresh vernal buds half sunk between  
His youthful curls, kissed straight and sheen  
In his Rome-grave, by Venus queen.

And poor, proud Byron,—sad as grave  
And salt as life : forlornly brave,  
And quivering with the dart he drave.

And visionary Coleridge, who  
Did sweep his thoughts as angels do  
Their wings, with cadence up the Blue.



These poets faced, and many more,  
The lighted altar looming o'er  
The clouds of incense dim and hoar :

And all their faces, in the lull  
Of natural things, looked wonderful  
With life and death and deathless rule :

All still as stone, and yet intense ;  
As if by spirit's vehemence  
That stone were carved, and not by sense.

But where the heart of each should beat,  
There seemed a wound instead of it,  
From whence the blood dropped to their feet,

Drop after drop—dropped heavily  
As century follows century  
Into the deep eternity.

Then said the lady,—and her word  
Came distant,—as wide waves were stirred  
Between her and the ear that heard :

' *World's use* is cold, *world's love* is vain,  
*World's cruelty* is bitter bane ;  
But pain is not the fruit of pain.

' Harken, O poet, whom I led  
From the dark wood ! Dismissing dread  
Now hear this angel in my stead :

‘His organ’s clavier strikes along  
These poets’ hearts, sonorous, strong,  
They gave him without count of wrong,—

‘A diapason whence to guide  
Up to God’s feet, from these who died,  
An anthem fully glorified :

‘Whereat God’s blessing . . . IBARAK (יברך)  
Breathes back this music—folds it back  
About the earth in vapoury rack,

‘And men walk in it, crying ‘Lo!  
‘The world is wider, and we know  
‘The very heavens look brighter so.

‘‘The stars move statelier round the edge  
‘Of the silver spheres, and give in pledge  
‘Their light for nobler privilege.

‘‘No little flower but joys or grieves,  
‘Full life is rustling in the sheaves;  
‘Full spirit sweeps the forest-leaves.’

‘So works this music on the earth:  
God so admits it, sends it forth,  
To add another worth to worth—

‘A new creation-bloom that rounds  
The old creation, and expounds  
His Beautiful in tuneful sounds.

'Now hearken!' Then the poet gazed  
Upon the angel glorious-faced,  
Whose hand, majestically raised,

Floated across the organ-keys,  
Like a pale moon o'er murmuring seas,  
With no touch but with influences.

Then rose and fell (with swell and swound  
Of shapeless noises wandering round  
A concord which at last they found)

Those mystic keys—the tones were mixed,  
Dim, faint; and thrilled and throbbed betwixt  
The incomplete and the unfixed:

And therein mighty minds were heard  
In mighty musings, inly stirred,  
And struggling outward for a word.

Until these surges, having run  
This way and that, gave out as one  
An Aphrodite of sweet tune,—

A Harmony that, finding vent,  
Upward in grand ascension went,  
Winged to a heavenly argument—

Up, upward! like a saint who strips  
The shroud back from his eyes and lips,  
And rises in apocalypse:

A Harmony sublime and plain,  
Which cleft (as flying swan, the rain,—  
Throwing the drops off with a strain

Of her white wing) those undertones  
Of pèrplext chords, and soared at once  
And struck out from the starry thrones

Their several silver octaves, as  
It passed to God : The music was  
Of divine stature—strong to pass :

And those who heard it, understood  
Something of life in spirit and blood--  
Something of Nature's fair and good.

And while it sounded, those great souls  
Did thrill as racers at the goals,  
And burn in all their aureoles.

But she, the lady, as vapor-bound,  
Stood calmly in the joy of sound,—  
Like nature with the showers around.

And when it ceased, the blood which fell,  
Again, alone grew audible,  
Tolling the silence as a bell.

The sovran angel lifted high  
His hand and spake out sovranly—  
' Tried poets, hearken and reply !

' Give me true answers. If we grant  
That not to suffer, is to want  
The conscience of the Jubilant,—

' If ignorance of anguish is  
But ignorance ; and mortals miss  
Far prospects, by a level bliss,—

- ' If as two colors must be viewed  
In a visible image, mortals should  
Need good and evil, to see good,—
- ' If to speak nobly, comprehends  
To feel profoundly—if the ends  
Of power and suffering, Nature blends,—
- ' If poets on the tripod must  
Writhe like the Pythian, to make just  
Their oracles, and merit trust,—
- ' If every vatic word that sweeps  
To change the world, must pale their lips,  
And leave their own souls in eclipse—
- ' If to search deep the universe  
Must pierce the searcher with the curse,—  
Because that bolt (in man's reverse,)
- ' Was shot to the heart o' the wood, and lies  
Wedged deepest in the best :—if eyes  
That look for visions and surprise
- ' From influent angels, must shut down  
Their lids first, upon sun and moon,  
The head asleep upon a stone,—
- ' If ONE who did redeem you back,  
By His own loss from final wrack,  
Did consecrate by touch and track
- ' Those temporal sorrows, till the taste  
Of brackish waters of the waste  
Is salt with tears He dropt too fast,—

‘ If all the crowns of earth must wound  
With prickings of the thorns He found,—  
If saddest sighs swell sweetest sound,—

‘ What say ye unto this ?—refuse  
This baptism in salt water ?—choose  
Calm breasts, mute lips, and labor loose ?

‘ Or, oh ye gifted givers ! ye  
Who give your liberal hearts to me,  
To make the world this harmony,

Are ye resigned that they be spent  
To such world’s help ?”—

The Spirits bent

Their awful brows and said— ‘ Content ! ’

Content ! it sounded like *Amen*,  
Said by a choir of mourning men—  
An affirmation full of pain

And patience :—ay, of glorying  
And adoration,—as a king  
Might seal an oath for governing.

Then said the angel—and his face  
Lightened abroad, until the place  
Grew larger for a moment’s space,—

The long aisles flashing out in light,  
And nave and transept, columns white  
And arches crossed, being clear to sight

As if the roof were off, and all  
Stood in the noon-sun,— ‘ Lo ! I call  
To other hearts as liberal.

‘ This pedal strikes out in the air :  
My instrument has room to bear  
Still fuller strains and perfecter.

‘ Herein is room, and shall be room  
While Time lasts, for new hearts to come  
Consummating while they consume.

‘ What living man will bring a gift  
Of his own heart, and help to lift  
The tune ?—The race is to the swift ! ’

So asked the angel. Straight the while,  
A company came up the aisle  
With measured step and sorted smile ;

Cleaving the incense-clouds that rise,  
With winking unaccustomed eyes,  
And love-locks smelling sweet of spice

One bore his head above the rest,  
As if the world were dispossessed—  
And one did pillow chin on breast,

Right languid—an as he should faint  
One shook his curls across his paint,  
And moralized on wordly taint.

One, slanting up his face, did wink  
The salt rheum to the eyelid’s brink,  
To think—O gods ! or—not to think !

Some trod out stealthily and slow,  
As if the sun would fall in snow  
If *they* walked to instead of fro.

And some with conscious ambling free,  
Did shake their bells right daintily  
On hand and foot, for harmony.

And some composing sudden sighs  
In attitudes of point-device,  
Rehearsed impromptu agonies.

And when this company drew near  
The spirits crowned, it might appear  
Submitted to a ghastly fear.

As a sane eye in master-passion  
Constrains a maniac to the fashion  
Of hideous maniac imitation

In the least geste—the dropping low  
O' the lid—the wrinkling of the brow,  
Exaggerate with mock and mow,—

So, mastered was that company  
By the crowned vision utterly,  
Swayed to a maniac mockery.

One dulled his eyeballs, as they ached  
With Homer's forehead—though he lacked  
An inch of any . And one racked

His lower lip with restless tooth,  
As Pindar's rushing words forsooth  
Were pent behind it. One, his smooth

Pink cheeks, did rumple passionate,  
\* I like Æschylus—and tried to prate  
On trolling tongue, of fate and fate :



One set her eyes like Sappho's—or  
Any light woman's ! one forbore  
Like Dante, or any man as poor

In mirth, to let a smile undo  
His hard shut lips. And one that drew  
Sour humors from his mother. blew

His sunken cheeks out to the size  
Of most unnatural jollities,  
Because Anacreon looked jest-wise.

So with the rest.—It was a sight  
A great world-laughter would requite,  
Or great world-wrath, with equal right.

Out came a speaker from that crowd,  
To speak for all—in sleek and proud  
Exordial periods, while he bowed

His knee before the angel— ' Thus,  
O angel who hast called for us,  
We bring thee service emulous,—

' Fit service from sufficient soul—  
Hand-service, to receive world's dole—  
Lip-service, in world's ear to roll

' Adjusted concords—soft enow  
To hear the wine cups passing, through,  
And not too grave to spoil the show.

' Thou, certes, when thou askest more,  
O sapient angel, leanest o'er  
The window-sill of metaphor.

‘To give our hearts up ! fie !—That rage  
Barbaric antedates the age :  
It is not done on any stage.

‘Because your scald or gleeman went  
With seven or nine-stringed instrument  
Upon his back—must ours be bent ?

‘We are not pilgrims, by your leave,  
No, nor yet martyrs ! if we grieve,  
It is to rhyme to . . . summer eve.

‘And if we labor, it shall be  
As suiteth best with our degree,  
In after-dinner reverie. ’

More yet that speaker would have said,  
Poising between his smiles fair fed,  
Each separate phrase till finished ;

But all the foreheads of those born  
And dead true poets flushed with scorn  
Betwixt the bay leaves round them worn—

Ay, jetted such brave fire, that they,  
The new-come, shrank and paled away,  
Like leaden ashes when the day

Strikes on the hearth ! A spirit-blast,  
A presence known by power, at last  
Took them up mutely—they had passed

And *he*, our pilgrim-poet, saw  
Only their places, in deep awe,—  
What time the angel’s smile did draw

His gazing upward. Smiling on,  
The angel in the angel shone,  
Revealing glory in benizon.

Till, ripened in the light which shut  
The poet in, his spirit mute  
Dropped sudden, as a perfect fruit.

He fell before the angel's feet,  
Saying— ' If what is true is sweet,  
In something I may compass it.

' For where my worthiness is poor,  
My will stands richly at the door,  
To pay short comings evermore.

' Accept me therefore—Not for price,  
And not for pride my sacrifice  
Is tendered ! for my soul is nice

And will beat down those dusty seeds  
Of bearded corn, if she succeeds  
In soaring while the covey feeds.

' I soar—I am drawn up like the lark  
To its white cloud : So high my mark,  
Albeit my wing is small and dark .

' I ask no wages—seek no fame :  
Sew me, for shroud round face and name  
God's banner of the oriflamme.

' I only would have leave to loose  
(In tears and blood, if so He choose)  
Mine inward music out to use.

‘I only would be spent—in pain  
And loss, perchance—but not in vain,  
Upon the sweetness of that strain.

‘Only project, beyond the bound  
Of mine own life, so lost and found,  
My voice, and live on in its sound.

‘Only embrace and be embraced  
By fiery ends,—whereby to waste,  
And light God’s future with my past.’

The angel’s smile grew more divine—  
The mortal speaking—ay, its shine  
Swelled fuller, like a choir-note fine,

Till the broad glory round his brow  
Did vibrate with the light below ;  
But what he said I do not know.

Nor know I if the man who prayed,  
Rose up accepted, unforbade,  
From the church-floor where he was laid,—

Nor if a listening life did run  
Through the king-poets, one by one  
Rejoicing in a worthy son.

My soul, which might have seen, grew blind  
By what it looked on : I can find  
No certain count of things behind.

I saw alone, dim, white and grand  
As in a dream, the angel’s hand  
Stretched forth in gesture of command

Straight through the haze—And so, as erst  
A strain more noble than the first  
Mused in the organ and outburst.

With giant march, from floor to roof  
Rose the full notes; now parted off  
In pauses massively aloof

Like measured thunders; now rejoined  
In concords of mysterious kind  
Which fused together sense and mind,

Now flashing sharp on sharp along  
Exultant in a mounting throng,—  
Now dying off to a low song

Fed upon minors,—wavelike sounds  
Re-eddying into silver rounds,  
Enlarging liberty with bounds.

And every rhythm that seemed to close,  
Survived in confluent underflows,  
Symphonious with the next that rose :

Thus the whole strain being multiplied  
And greatened,—with its glorified  
Wings shot abroad from side to side,—

Waved backward (as a wind might wave  
A Brochen mist, and with as brave  
Wild roaring) arch and architrave,

Aisle, transept, column, marble wall,—  
Then swelling outward, prodigal  
Of aspiration beyond thrall.

Soared,—and drew up with it the whole  
Of this said vision—as a soul  
Is raised by a thought : and as a scroll

Of bright devices is unrolled  
Still upward, with a gradual gold,—  
So rose the vision manifold,

Angel and organ, and the round  
Of spirits, solemnized and crowned,—  
While the freed clouds of incense wound

Ascending, following in their track  
And glimmering faintly, like the rack  
O' the moon in her own light cast back.

And as that solemn Dream withdrew,  
The lady's kiss did fall anew  
Cold on the poet's brow as dew.

And that same kiss which bound him first  
Beyond the senses, now reversed  
Its own law, and most subtly pierced

His spirit with the sense of things  
Sensual and present. Vanishings  
Of glory, with Æolian wings

Struck him and passed : the lady's face  
Did melt back in the chrysopras  
Of the orient morning sky that was

Yet clear of lark,—and there and so  
She melted, as a star might do,  
Still smiling as she melted—slow :

Smiling so slow, he seemed to see  
Her smile the last thing, gloriously,  
Beyond her—far as memory :

Then he looked round : he was alone—  
He lay before the breaking sun,  
As Jacob at the Bethel stone.

And thought's entangled skein being wound,  
He knew the moorland of his swoond,  
And the pale pools that seared the ground,—

The far wood-pines, like offing ships—  
The fourth pool's yew anear him drips—  
World's cruelty attaints his lips ;

And still he tastes it—bitter still—  
Through all that glorious possible  
He had the sight of present ill !

Yet rising calmly up and slowly,  
With such a cheer as scorneth folly,  
And mild delightsome melancholy,

He journeyed homeward through the wood,  
And prayed along the solitude,  
Betwixt the pines,— ‘ O God, my God ! ’

The golden morning's open flowings  
Did sway the trees to murmurous bowings,  
In metric chant of blessed poems.

And passing homeward through the wood,  
He prayed along the solitude,—  
‘ THOU, Poet-God, art great and good !

‘ And though we must have, and have had  
Right reason to be earthly sad,—  
THOU, Poet-God, art great and glad.’

## CONCLUSION.

Life treads on life, and heart on heart—  
We press too close in church and mart,  
To keep a dream or grave apart.

And I was ’ware of walking down  
That same green forest where had gone  
The poet-pilgrim. One by one

I traced his footsteps : From the east  
A red and tender radiance pressed  
Through the near trees, until I guessed

The sun behind shone full and round ;  
While up the leafiness profound  
A wind scarce old enough for sound

Stood ready to blow on me when  
I turned that way ; and now and then  
The birds sang and brake off again

To shake their pretty feathers dry  
Of the dew sliding droppingly  
From the leaf-edges, and apply

Back to their song. ’Twixt dew and bird  
So sweet a silence ministered,  
God seemed to use it for a word.

Yet morning souls did leap and run  
In all things, as the least had won  
A joyous insight of the sun.



And no one looking round the wood  
Could help confessing as he stood,  
*This Poet-God is glad and good.*

But hark ! a distant sound that grows !  
A heaving, sinking of the boughs—  
A rustling murmur, not of those !

A breezy noise, which is not breeze !  
And white-clad children by degrees  
Steal out in troops among the trees ;

Fair little children, morning-bright  
With faces grave, yet soft to sight,  
Expressive of restrained delight.

Some plucked the palm-boughs within reach,  
And others leapt up high to catch  
The upper boughs, and shake from each

A rain of dew, till, wetted so,  
The child who held the branch let go,  
And it swang backward with a flow

Of faster drippings. Then I knew  
The children laughed—but the laugh flew  
From its own chirrup, as might do

A frightened song-bird ; and a child  
Who seemed the chief, said very mild,  
' Hush ! keep this morning undefiled.'

His eyes rebuked them from calm spheres ;  
His soul upon his brow appears  
In waiting for more holy years.

I called the child to me, and said,  
'What are your palms for?'—'To be spread,'  
He answered, 'on a poet dead.

'The poet died last month; and now  
The world which had been somewhat slow  
In honoring his living brow,

'Commands the palms—'They must be strown  
On his new marble very soon,  
In a procession of the town.'

I sighed and said, 'Did he foresee  
Any such honor?' 'Verily  
I cannot tell you,' answered he.

'But this I know,—I fain would lay  
Mine own head down, another day,  
As *he* did,—with the fame away.

'A lily, a friend's hand had plucked,  
Lay by his death-bed, which he looked  
As deep down as a bee had sucked;

'Then, turning to the lattice, gazed  
O'er hill and river, and upraised  
His eyes illumined and amazed

'With the world's beauty, up to God,  
Re-offering on their iris broad,  
The images of things bestowed

'By the chief Poet,—'God!' he cried,  
'Be praised for anguish, which has tried;  
For beauty, which has satisfied:—

- ‘ For this world’s presence, half within  
And half without me—sound and scene—  
This sense of Being and Having been.
- ‘ I thank Thee that my soul hath room  
For Thy grand world ! Both guests may come—  
Beauty, to soul—Body, to tomb !
- ‘ I am content to be so weak.  
Put strength into the words I speak,  
And I am strong in what I seek.
- ‘ I am content to be so bare  
Before the archers ! everywhere  
My wounds being stroked by heavenly air.
- ‘ I laid my soul before Thy feet,  
That Images of fair and sweet  
Should walk to other men on it.
- ‘ I am content to feel the step  
Of each pure Image !—let those keep .  
To mandragore, who care to sleep.
- ‘ I am content to touch the brink  
Of the other goblet, and I think  
My bitter drink a wholesome drink.
- ‘ Because my portion was assigned  
Wholesome and bitter—Thou art kind  
And I am blessed to my mind.
- ‘ Gifted for giving, I receive  
The maythorn, and its scent outgive !  
I grieve not that I once did grieve.

‘ In my large joy of sight and touch  
Beyond what others count for such,  
I am content to suffer much.

‘ *I know*—is all the mourner saith,  
Knowledge by suffering entereth ;  
And life is perfected by Death ! ’

The child spake nobly. Strange to hear  
His infantine soft accents clear,  
Charged with high meanings, did appear,

And fair to see, his form and face,  
Winged out with whiteness and pure grace  
From the green darkness of the place.

Behind his head a palm-tree grew ;  
An orient beam which pierced it through  
Transversely on his forehead drew

The figure of a palm-branch brown  
Traced on its brightness up and down  
In fine fair lines,—a shadow-crown.

Guido might paint his angels so—  
A little angel, taught to go  
With holy words to saints below.

Such innocence of action yet  
Significance of object met  
In his whole bearing strong and sweet.

And all the children, the whole band,  
Did round in rosy reverence stand,  
Each with a palm-bough in his hand.

‘And so he died,’ I whispered ;— ‘Nay,  
Not so,’ the childish voice did say—  
‘That poet turned him, first, to pray

‘In silence ; and God heard the rest,  
’Twixt the sun’s footsteps down the west.  
Then he called one who loved him best,

‘Yea, he called softly through the room  
(His voice was weak yet tender)—‘Come,’  
He said, ‘come nearer ! Let the bloom

‘Of Life grow over, undenied,  
This bridge of Death, which is not wide—  
I shall be soon at the other side.

‘Come, kiss me !’ So the one in truth  
Who loved him best—in love, not ruth,  
Bowed down and kissed him mouth to mouth.

‘And, in that kiss of Love, was won  
Life’s manumission : All was done—  
The mouth that kissed last, kissed *alone*

‘But in the former, confluent kiss,  
The same was sealed, I think, by His,  
To words of truth and uprightness.’

The child’s voice trembled—his lips shook  
Like a rose leaning o’er a brook,  
Which vibrates though it is not struck.

‘And who,’ I asked, a little moved  
Yet curious-eyed, ‘was this that loved  
And kissed him last, as it behooved ?’

- ‘*I,*’ softly said the child ; and then,  
‘*I,*’ said he louder, once again.  
‘*His son*,—my rank is among men.
- ‘ And now that men exalt his name  
I come to gather palms with them,  
That holy Love may hallow Fame.
- ‘ He did not die alone ; nor should  
His memory live so, ’mid these rude  
World-praisers—a worse solitude.
- ‘ Me, a voice calleth to that tomb  
Where these are strewing branch and bloom,  
Saying, *come nearer !*—and I come.
- ‘ Glory to God ! ’ resumed he,  
And his eyes smiled for victory  
O’er their own tears which I could see  
Fallen on the palm, down cheek and chin
- ‘ That poet now hath entered in  
The place of rest which is not sin.
- ‘ And while he rests, his songs in troops  
Walk up and down our earthly slopes,  
Companioned by diviner Hopes.’
- ‘ But *thou,*’ I murmured,—to engage  
The child’s speech farther— ‘ hast an age  
Too tender for this orphanage.’
- ‘ Glory to God—to God ! ’ he saith—  
‘ KNOWLEDGE BY SUFFERING ENTERETH ;  
AND LIFE IS PERFECTED BY DEATH ! ’



## RHYME OF THE DUCHESS MAY.

To the belfry, one by one, went the ringers from the  
sun, *Toll slowly.*  
And the oldest ringer said, 'Ours is music for the  
Dead,  
When the rebecks are all done.'

Six abeles i' the churchyard grow on the northside in a  
row, *Toll slowly.*  
And the shadows of their tops rock across the little  
slopes  
Of the grassy graves below.

On the south side and the west, a small river runs in  
haste, *Toll slowly.*  
And between the river flowing and the fair green  
trees a growing  
Do the dead lie at their rest.

On the east I sate that day, up against a willow  
gray: *Toll slowly.*  
Through the rain of willow-branches, I could see the  
low hill-ranges,  
And the river on its way.

There I sate beneath the tree, and the bell tolled  
solemnly, *Toll slowly.*

While the trees, and river's voices flowed between the  
solemn noises,—

Yet death seemed more loud to me.

There, I read this ancient rhyme, while the bell did  
all the time *Toll slowly.*

And the solemn knell fell in with the tale of life and  
sin,

Like a rhythmic fate sublime.

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### THE RHYME.

Broad the forest stood (I read) on the hills of Linte-  
ged— *Toll slowly.*

And three hundred years had stood mute adown  
each hoary wood,

Like a full heart having prayed.

And the little birds sang east, and the little birds  
sang west, *Toll slowly.*

And but little thought was theirs, of the silent antique  
years,

In the building of their nest.

Down the sun dropt large and red, on the towers of  
Lintege, — *Toll slowly.*

Lance and spear upon the height, bristling strange  
in fiery light,

While the castle stood in shade.



There, the castle stood up black, with the red sun at  
its back,— *Toll slowly.*

Like a sullen smouldering pyre, with a top that flick-  
ers fire,

When the wind is on its track.

And five hundred archers tall did besiege the castle  
wall, *Toll slowly.*

And the castle, seethed in blood, fourteen days and  
nights had stood,

And to night was near its fall.

Yet thereunto, blind to doom, three months since, a  
bride did come,— *Toll slowly.*

One who proudly trod the floors, and softly whispered  
in the doors,

‘ May good angels bless our home.’

Oh, a bride of queenly eyes, with a front of con-  
stancies,— *Toll slowly.*

Oh, a bride of cordial mouth,—where the untired  
smile of youth

Did light outward its own sighs.

’Twas a Duke’s fair orphan-girl, and her uncle’s  
ward, the Earl *Toll slowly.*

Who betrothed her, twelve years old, for the sake of  
dowry gold,

To his son Lord Leigh, the churl.

But what time she had made good all her years of  
womanhood, *Toll slowly.*

Unto both those Lords of Leigh, spake she out right  
sovrantly,

‘ My will runneth as my blood.

‘ And while this same blood makes red this same right  
hand’s veins,’ she said,— *Toll slowly*.

‘ ’Tis my will as lady free, not to wed a Lord of  
Leigh,

But Sir Guy of Linteged.’

The old Earl he smiled smooth, then he sighed for  
wilful youth,— *Toll slowly*.

‘ Good my niece, that hand withal looketh somewhat  
soft and small,

For so large a will, in sooth.’

She, too, smiled by that same sign,—but her smile  
was cold and fine,— *Toll slowly*.

‘ Little hand clasps muckle gold ; or it were not  
worth the hold

Of thy son, good uncle mine ! ’

Then the young lord jerked his breath, and sware  
thickly in his teeth, *Toll slowly*.

‘ He would wed his own betrothed, an she loved him  
an she loathed,

Let the life come or the death.’

Up she rose with scornful eyes, as her father’s child  
might rise, *Toll slowly*.

‘ Thy hound’s blood, my lord of Leigh, stains thy  
knightly heel,’ quoth she,

‘ And he moans not where he lies

‘ But a woman’s will dies hard, in the hall or on the  
sward !— *Toll slowly.*

‘ By that grave, my lords, which made me orphaned  
girl and dowered lady,  
I deny you wife and ward. ’

Unto each she bowed her head, and swept past with  
lofty tread. *Toll slowly.*

Ere the midnight-bell had ceased, in the chapel had  
the priest  
Blessed her, bride of Linteged.

Fast and fain the bridal train along the night-storm  
rode amain : *Toll slowly.*

Hard the steeds of lord and serf struck their hoofs  
out on the turf,  
In the pauses of the rain.

Fast and fain the kinsmen’s train along the storm  
pursued amain— *Toll slowly.*

Steed on steed-track, dashing off—thickening, doub-  
ling hoof on hoof,  
In the pauses of the rain.

And the bridegroom led the flight on his red-roan  
steed of might, *Toll slowly.*

And the bride lay on his arm, still, as if she feared no  
harm,  
Smiling out into the night.

‘ Dost thou fear ? ’ he said at last ;— ‘ Nay ! ’ she  
answered him in haste,— *Toll slowly.*

‘ Not such death as we could find—only life with one  
behind—

Ride on fast as fear—ride fast ! ’

Up the mountain wheeled the steed—girth to ground,  
and fetlocks spread,— *Toll slowly.*

Headlong bounds, and rocking flanks,—down he staggered—down the banks,  
To the towers of Linteged.

High and low the serfs looked out, red the flambeaus  
tossed about,— *Toll slowly.*

In the courtyard rose the cry— ‘ Live the Duchess  
and Sir Guy ! ’

But she never heard them shout.

On the steed she dropt her cheek, kissed his mane  
and kissed his neck,— *Toll slowly.*

‘ I had happier died by thee, than lived on a Lady  
Leigh, ’

Were the first words she did speak.

But a three months’ joyaunce lay ’twixt that moment  
and to-day, *Toll slowly.*

When five hundred archers tall stand beside the castle wall,

To recapture Duchess May.

And the castle standeth black, with the red sun at its  
back,— *Toll slowly.*

And a fortnight’s siege is done—and, except the  
Duchess, none

Can misdoubt the coming wrack.

Then the captain, young Lord Leigh, with his eyes so  
gray of blee, *Toll slowly.*

And thin lips that scarcely sheath the cold white  
gnashing of his teeth,

Gnashed in smiling, absently,

Cried aloud—"So goes the day, bridegroom fair of  
Duchess May!— *Toll slowly.*

Look thy last upon that sun. If thou seest to-  
morrow's one,

'Twill be through a foot of clay.

' Ha, fair bride! Dost hear no sound, save that  
moaning of the hound?— *Toll slowly.*

Thou and I have parted troth,—yet I keep my ven-  
geance oath,

And the other may come round.

' Ha! thy will is brave to dare, and thy new love  
past compare,— *Toll slowly.*

Yet thine old love's falchion brave is as strong a  
thing to have,

As the will of lady fair.

' Peck on blindly, netted dove!—If a wife's name  
thee behove, *Toll slowly.*

Thou shalt wear the same to-morrow, ere the grave  
has hid the sorrow

Of thy last ill-mated love.

O'er his fixed and silent mouth, thou and I will call  
back troth, *Toll slowly.*

He shall altar be and priest,—and he will not cry  
at least

‘ I forbid you—I am loath !’

‘ I will wring thy fingers pale in the gauntlet of my  
mail, *Toll slowly.*

‘ Little hand and muckle gold ’ close shall lie within  
my hold,

As the sword did to prevail. ’

O the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang  
west, *Toll slowly.*

O, and laughed the Duchess May, and her soul did  
put away

All his boasting, for a jest.

In her chamber did she sit, laughing low to think of  
it,— *Toll slowly.*

‘ Tower is strong and will is free—thou canst boast,  
my lord of Leigh,

But thou boastest little wit. ’

In her tire-glass gazed she, and she blushed right  
womanly. *Toll slowly.*

She blushed half from her disdain—half, her beauty  
was so plain,

— ‘ Oath for oath, my lord of Leigh ! ’

Straight she called her maidens in— ‘ Since ye gave  
me blame herein, *Toll slowly*

That a bridal such as mine should lack gauds to  
make it fine,

Come and shrive me from that sin.

‘ It is three months gone to-day, since I gave mine  
hand away. *Toll slowly.*

Bring the gold and bring the gem, we will keep  
bride state in them,

While we keep the foe at bay.

‘ On your arms I loose my hair ;—comb it smooth  
and crown it fair, *Toll slowly.*

I would look in purple-pall from this lattice down  
the wall,

And throw scorn to one that’s there ! ’

O, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang  
west. *Toll slowly.*

On the tower the castle’s lord leant in silence on his  
sword,

With an anguish in his breast.

With a spirit-laden weight, did he lean down passion-  
ate. *Toll slowly.*

They have almost sapped the wall,—they will enter  
there withal,

With no knocking at the gate.

Then the sword he leant upon, shivered—snapped  
upon the stone,— *Toll slowly.*

‘ Sword, ’ he thought, with inward laugh, ‘ ill thou  
servest for a staff

When thy nobler use is done !

‘ Sword, thy nobler use is done !—tower is lost, and  
shame begun ;— *Toll slowly.*

If we met them in the breach, hilt to hilt or speech  
to speech,

We should die there, each for one.

‘ If we met them at the wall, we should singly, vainly  
fall,— *Toll slowly.*

But if *I* die here alone,—then I die, who am but  
one,

And die nobly for them all.

‘ Five true friends lie for my sake—in the moat and  
in the brake, — *Toll slowly.*

Thirteen warriors lie at rest, with a black wound in  
the breast,

And not one of these will wake.

‘ And no more of this shall be !—heart-blood weighs  
too heavily— *Toll slowly.*

And I could not sleep in grave, with the faithful and  
the brave

Heaped around and over me.

‘ Since young Clare a mother hath, and young Ralph a  
plighted faith,— *Toll slowly.*

Since my pale young sister’s cheeks blush like rose  
when Ronald speaks,

Albeit never a word she saith—

‘ These shall never die for me—life-blood falls too  
heavily : *Toll slowly.*

And if *I* die here apart,—o’er my dead and silent  
heart

They shall pass out safe and free.



‘ When the foe hath heard it said—‘ Death holds Guy  
of Linteged,’ — *Toll slowly.*

‘ That new corse new peace shall bring; and a blessed,  
blessed thing,  
Shall the stone be at its head.

‘ Then my friends shall pass out free, and shall bear  
my memory,— *Toll slowly.*

Then my foes shall sleek their pride, soothing fair  
my widowed bride  
Whose sole sin was love of me.

‘ With their words all smooth and sweet, they will front  
her and entreat: *Toll slowly.*

And their purple pall will spread underneath her  
fainting head  
While her tears drop over it.

‘ She will weep her woman’s tears, she will pray her  
woman’s prayers,— *Toll slowly.*

But her heart is young in pain, and her hopes will  
spring again  
By the suntime of her years.

‘ Ah, sweet May—ah, sweetest grief!—once I vowed  
thee my belief, *Toll slowly.*

That thy name expressed thy sweetness,—May of  
poets, in completeness!  
Now my May-day seemeth brief.’

All these silent thoughts did swim o’er his eyes grown  
strange and dim,— *Toll slowly.*

Till his true men in the place, wished they stood there  
 face to face  
 With the foe instead of him.

‘ One last oath, my friends that wear faithful hearts  
 to do and dare !— *Toll slowly.*  
 Tower must fall, and bride be lost !—swear me ser-  
 vice worth the cost, ’  
 —Bold they stood around to swear.

‘ Each man clasp my hand and swear, by the deed  
 we failed in there, *Toll slowly.*  
 Not for vengeance, not for right, will ye strike one  
 blow to-night ! ’  
 Pale they stood around—to swear.

‘ One last boon, young Ralph and Clare ! faithful  
 hearts to do and dare ! *Toll slowly.*  
 Bring that steed up from his stall, which she kissed  
 before you all,  
 Guide him up the turret-stair.

‘ Ye shall harness him aright, and lead upward to  
 this height ! *Toll slowly.*  
 Once in love and twice in war, hath he borne me  
 strong and far,  
 He shall bear me far to-night. ’

Then his men looked to and fro, when they heard  
 him speaking so. *Toll slowly.*  
 — ‘ ‘ Las ! the noble heart, ’ they thought,— ‘ he in  
 sooth is grief-distraught.  
 Would, we stood here with the foe ! ’

But a fire flashed from his eye, 'twixt their thought  
and their reply,— *Toll slowly.*

‘ Have ye so much time to waste ! We who ride here,  
must ride fast,  
As we wish our foes to fly. ’

They have fetched the steed with care, in the harness  
he did wear, *Toll slowly.*

Past the court and through the doors, across the  
rushes of the floors ;  
But they goad him up the stair.

Then from out her bower-chambère, did the Duchess  
May repair. *Toll slowly.*

‘ Tell me now what is your need,’ said the lady, ‘ of  
this steed,  
That ye goad him up the stair ? ’

Calm she stood ! unbodkined through, fell her dark  
hair to her shoe,— *Toll slowly.*

And the smile upon her face, ere she left the tiring-  
glass,  
Had not time enough to go.

‘ Get thee back, sweet Duchess May ! hope is gone  
like yesterday,— *Toll slowly.*

One half-hour completes the breach ; and thy lord  
grows wild of speech.

Get thee in, sweet lady, and pray

‘ In the east tower, high’st of all,—loud he cries for  
steed from stall. *Toll slowly.*

He would ride as far,' quoth he, 'as for love and  
victory,

Though he rides the castle-wall.'

' And we fetch the steed from stall, up where never  
a hoof did fall.— *Toll slowly.*

Wifely prayer meets deathly need! may the sweet  
Heavens hear thee plead,

If he rides the castle-wall. '

Low she dropt her head, and lower, till her hair coiled  
on the floor,— *Toll slowly.*

And tear after tear you heard fall distinct as any  
word

Which you might be listening for.

' Get thee in, thou soft ladie!—here is never a place  
for thee!— *Toll slowly.*

Braid thy hair and clasp thy gown, that thy beauty  
in its moan

May find grace with Leigh of Leigh. '

She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady  
face, . *Toll slowly.*

Like a statue thunderstruck, which, though quivering,  
seems to look

Right against the thunder-place.

And her foot trod in, with pride, her own tears i' the  
stone beside,— *Toll slowly.*

' Go to, faithful friends, go to!—Judge no more what  
ladies do,—

No, nor how their lords may ride! '

Then the good steed's rein she took, and his neck did  
kiss and stroke : *Toll slowly .*

Soft he neighed to answer her ; and then followed up  
the stair,

For the love of her sweet look.

Oh, and steeply, steeply wound up the narrow stair  
around,— *Toll slowly .*

Oh, and closely, closely speeding, step by step beside  
her treading,

Did he follow, meek as hound.

On the east tower, high'st of all,—there, where never  
a hoof did fall,— *Toll slowly .*

Out they swept, a vision steady,—noble steed and  
lovely lady,

Calm as if in bower or stall !

Down she knelt at her lord's knee, and she looked up  
silently,— *Toll slowly .*

And he kissed her twice and thrice, for that look  
within her eyes

Which he could not bear to see.

Quoth he, ' Get thee from this strife,—and the sweet  
saints bless thy life !— *Toll slowly .*

In this hour, I stand in need of my noble red-roan  
steed—

But no more of my noble wife.'

Quoth she, ' Meekly have I done all thy biddings  
under sun : *Toll slowly .*

But by all my womanhood,—which is proved so,  
     true and good,  
     I will never do this one.

‘ Now by womanhood’s degree, and by wifehood’s  
     verity, *Toll slowly.*  
 In this hour if thou hast need of thy noble red-roan  
     steed,  
     Thou hast also need of *me*.

‘ By this golden ring ye see on this lifted hand  
     pardiè, *Toll slowly.*  
 If this hour, on castle-wall, can be room for steed  
     from stall,  
     Shall be also room for *me*

‘ So the sweet saints with me be ’ (did she utter  
     solemnly,) *Toll slowly.*  
 ‘ If a man, this eventide, on this castle-wall will  
     ride,  
     He shall ride the same with *me*. ’

Oh, he sprang up in the selle, and he laughed out  
     bitter-well,— *Toll slowly.*

‘ Wouldst thou ride among the leaves, as we used on  
     other eves,  
     To hear chime a vesper bell ? ’

She clang closer to his knee— ‘ Ay, beneath the  
     cypress-tree !— *Toll slowly*

Mock me not ; for elsewhere than along the  
     green-wood fair,  
     Have I ridden fast with thee !

• Fast I rode with new-made vows, from my angry  
kinsman's house ! *Toll slowly .*

What ! and would you men should reckon that I  
dared more for love's sake  
As a bride than as a spouse ?

‘ What, and would you it should fall, as a proverb,  
before all, *Toll slowly .*

That a bride may keep your side while through  
castlegate you ride,  
Yet eschew the castle-wall ? ’

Ho ! the breach yawns into ruin, and roars up against  
her suing,— *Toll slowly .*

With the inarticulate din, and the dreadful falling in—  
Shrieks of doing and undoing !

Twice he wrung her hands in twain ; but the small  
hands closed again. *Toll slowly .*

Back he reined the steed—back, back ! but she  
trailed along his track  
With a frantic clasp and strain !

Evermore the foeman pour through the crash of win-  
dow and door,— *Toll slowly .*

And the shouts of Leigh and Leigh, and the shrieks  
of ‘ kill ! ’ and ‘ flee ! ’  
Strike up clear amid the roar.

Thrice he wrung her hands in twain,—but they  
closed and clung again,— *Toll slowly .*

Wild she clung, as one, withstood, clasps a Christ  
 upon the rood,  
 In a spasm of deathly pain.

She clung wild and she clung mute,—with her shud-  
 dering lips half-shut. *Toll slowly.*

Her head fallen as half in swoond,—hair and knee  
 swept on the ground,  
 She clung wild to stirrup and foot.

Back he reined his steed back-thrown on the slippery  
 coping-stone. *Toll slowly.*

Back the iron hoofs did grind on the battlement  
 behind,  
 Whence a hundred feet went down.

And his heel did press and goad on the quivering  
 flank bestrode, *Toll slowly.*

‘Friends and brothers, save my wife!—Pardon,  
 sweet, in change for life,—  
 But I ride alone to God.’

Straight as if the Holy name had upbreathed her  
 like a flame, *Toll slowly.*

She upsprang, she rose upright,—in his selle she sate  
 in sight;  
 By her love she overcame.

And her head was on his breast, where she smiled as  
 one at rest,— *Toll slowly.*

‘Ring,’ she cried, ‘O vesper-bell, in the beech-wood’s  
 old chapelle!  
 But the passing-bell rings best.’



They have caught out at the rein, which Sir Guy  
 threw loose—in vain, — *Toll slowly.*  
 For the horse in stark despair, with his front hoofs  
 poised in air,  
 On the last verge rears amain.

Now he hangs, he rocks between—and his nostrils  
 curdle in, — *Toll slowly.*  
 And he shivers head and hoof—and the flakes of  
 foam fall off;  
 And his face grows fierce and thin !

And a look of human woe from his staring eyes did  
 go, *Toll slowly.*  
 And a sharp cry uttered he, in a foretold agony  
 Of the headlong death below, —

And, 'Ring, ring,—thou passing-bell,' still she cried,  
 'i' the old chapelle !' — *Toll slowly.*  
 Then back-toppling, 'crashing back—a dead weight—  
 flunk out to wrack,  
 Horse and riders overfell !

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Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang  
 west, — *Toll slowly.*  
 And I read this ancient Rhyme, in the churchyard,  
 while the chime  
 Slowly tolled for one at rest

The abeles moved in the sun, and the river smooth  
 did run, *Toll slowly.*

And the ancient Rhyme rang strange, with its passion  
 and its change,

Here, where all done lay undone.

And beneath a willow tree, I a little grave did see,  
*Toll slowly.*

Where was graved,— HERE UNDEFILED, LIETH  
 MAUD, A THREE-YEAR CHILD,  
 EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY-THREE

Then, O Spirits—did I say—ye who rode so fast that  
 day,— *Toll slowly.*

Did star-wheels and angel-wings, with their holy win-  
 nowings,

Keep beside you all the way?

Though in passion ye would dash, with a blind and  
 heavy crash, *Toll slowly.*

Up against the thick-bossed shield of God's judgment  
 in the field,—

Though your heart and brain were rash,—

Now, your will is all unwilled—now your pulses are  
 all stilled,— *Toll slowly.*

Now, ye lie as meek and mild (whereso laid) as  
 Maud the child,

Whose small grave was lately filled.

Beating heart and burning brow, ye are very patient  
 now, *Toll slowly.*

And the children might be bold to pluck the king-  
cups from your mould

Fre a month had let them grow

And you let the goldfinch sing in the alder near in  
spring, *Toll slowly.*

Let her build her nest and sit all the three weeks out  
on it,

Murmuring not at anything.

In your patience ye are strong ; cold and heat ye take  
not wrong : *Toll slowly.*

When the trumpet of the angel blows eternity's evangel,

Time will seem to you not long.

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang  
west, *Toll slowly.*

And I said in underbreath,—all our life is mixed with  
death,

And who knoweth which is best ?

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang  
west, *Toll slowly.*

And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around  
our incompleteness,—

Round our restlessness, His rest.





## THE POET AND THE BIRD.

A FABLE.

SAID a people to a poet—‘ Go out from among us  
straightway !

While we are thinking earthly things, thou singest  
of divine.

There’s a little fair brown nightingale, who, sitting in  
the gateway,

Makes fitter music to our ear, than any song of  
thine ! ’

The poet went out weeping—the nightingale ceased  
chanting ;

“ Now, wherefore, O thou nightingale, is all thy  
sweetness done ? ’

‘ I cannot sing my earthly things, the heavenly poet  
wanting,

Whose highest harmony includes the lowest under  
sun.’

The poet went out weeping,—and died abroad, bereft  
there—

The bird flew to his grave and died amid a thou-  
sand wails !

And, when I last came by the place, I swear the music  
left there

Was only of the poet’s song, and not the night-  
ingale’s !



## THE LOST BOWER.

IN the pleasant orchard closes,  
'God bless all our gains,' say we ;  
But 'May God bless all our losses,'  
Better suits with our degree.

Listen gentle—ay, and simple ! Listen children on  
the knee !

Green the land is where my daily  
Steps in jocund childhood played—  
Dimpled close with hill and valley,  
Dappled very close with shade ;  
Summer-snow of apple blossoms running up from  
glade to glade.

There is one hill I see nearer,  
In my vision of the rest ;  
And a little wood seems clearer,  
As it climbeth from the west,  
Sideway from the tree-locked valley, to the airy up-  
land crest.

Small the wood is, green with hazels,  
And, completing the ascent,  
Where the wind blows and sun dazzles,  
Thrills in leafy tremblement ;  
Like a heart that, after climbing, beateth quickly  
through content.

Not a step the wood advances  
O'er the open hill-top's bound :

There, in green arrést, the branches  
 See their image on the ground:  
 You may walk beneath them smiling, glad with sight  
 and glad with sound.

For you hearken on your right hand,  
 How the birds do leap and call  
 In the greenwood, out of sight and  
 Out of reach and fear of all;  
 And the squirrels crack the filberts, through their  
 cheerful madrigal.

On your left, the sheep are cropping  
 The slant grass and daisies pale;  
 And five apple-trees stand dropping  
 Separate shadows toward the vale,  
 Over which, in choral silence, the hills look you their  
 ‘ All hail! ’

Far out, kindled by each other,  
 Shining hills on hills arise;  
 Close as brother leans to brother,  
 When they press beneath the eyes [dise.  
 Of some father praying blessings from the gifts of para-

While beyond, above them mounted,  
 And above their woods also,  
 Malvern hills, for mountains counted  
 Not unduly, loom a-row—  
 Keepers of Piers Plowman’s visions, through the sun-  
 shine and the snow.\*

\* The Malvern Hills of Worcestershire are the scene of Langlande’s visions, and thus present the earliest classic ground of English poetry.

Yet in childhood little prized I  
 That fair walk and far survey :  
 'Twas a straight walk, unadvised by  
 The least mischief worth a nay—  
 Up and down—as dull as grammar on the eve of  
 holiday .

But the wood, all close and clenching  
 Bough in bough and root in root,—  
 No more sky (for over-branching)  
 At your head than at your foot,—  
 Oh, the wood drew me within it, by a glamour past  
 dispute.

Few and broken paths showed through it,  
 Where the sheep had tried to run,—  
 Forced with snowy wool to strew it  
 Round the thickets, when anon  
 They with silly thorn-pricked noses, bleated back into  
 the sun.

But my childish heart beat stronger  
 Than those thickets dared to grow :  
*I* could pierce them ! *I* could longer  
 Travel on, methought, than so .  
 Sheep for sheep-paths ! braver children climb and  
 creep where they would go.

And the poets wander, said I,  
 Over places all as rude !  
 Bold Rinaldo's lovely lady  
 Sat to meet him in a wood— [tude  
 Rosalinda, like a fountain, laughed out pure with soli-

And if Chaucer had not travelled  
Through a forest by a well,  
He had never dreamt nor marvelled  
At those ladies fair and fell  
Who lived smiling without loving, in their island-  
citadel.

Thus I thought of the old singers,  
And took courage from their song,  
Till my little struggling fingers  
Tore asunder gyve and thong  
Of the brambles which entrapped me, and the barrier-  
branches strong.

On a day, such pastime keeping,  
With a fawn's heart debonaire,  
Under-crawling, overleaping  
Thorns that prick and boughs that bear,  
I stood suddenly astonished—I was gladdened unaware

From the place I stood in, floated  
Back the covert dim and close ;  
And the open ground was coated  
Carpet-smooth with grass and moss,  
And the blue-bell's purple presence signed it worthily  
across.

Here a linden-tree stood, brightening  
All adown its silver rind ;  
For as some trees draw the lightning,  
So this tree, unto my mind,  
Drew to earth the blessed sunshine from the sky  
where it was shrined



Tall the linden-tree, and near it  
An old hawthorn also grew ;  
And wood-ivy like a spirit  
Hovered dimly round the two,  
Shaping thence that Bower of beauty which I sing of  
thus to you.

'Twas a bower for garden fitter  
Than for any woodland wide.  
Though a fresh and dewy glitter  
Struck it through from side to side,  
Shaped and shaven was the freshness, as by garden-  
cunning plied.

Oh, a lady might have come there,  
Hooded fairly like her hawk,  
With a book or lute in summer,  
And a hope of sweeter talk,—  
Listening less to her own music, than for footsteps on  
the walk.

But that bower appeared a marvel  
In the wildness of the place !  
With such seeming art and travail,  
Finely fixed and fitted was [the base.  
Leaf to leaf, the dark-green ivy, to the summit from

And the ivy, veined and glossy,  
Was inwrought with eglantine ;  
And the wild hop fibred closely,  
And the large-leaved columbine,  
Arch of door and window mullion, did right sylvanly  
entwine.

Rose-trees either side the door were  
Growing lythe and growing tall ;  
Each one set a summer warder  
For the keeping of the hall,—  
With a red rose and a white rose, leaning, nodding  
at the wall.

As I entered—mosses hushing  
Stole all noises from my foot ;  
And a green elastic cushion,  
Clasped within the linden's root,  
Took me in a chair of silence, very rare and absolute

All the floor was paved with glory,  
Greenly, silently inlaid,  
Through quick motions made before me,  
With fair counterparts in shade  
Of the fair serrated ivy-leaves which slanted overhead

‘ Is such pavement in a palace ? ’  
So I questioned in my thought :  
The sun, shining through the chalice  
Of the red rose hung without,  
Threw within a red libation, like an answer to my  
doubt.

At the same time, on the linen  
Of my childish lap there fell  
Two white may-leaves, downward winning  
Through the ceiling's miracle,  
From a blossom, like an angel, out of sight yet bless-  
ing well.

Down to floor and up to ceiling,  
Quick I turned my childish face ;  
With an innocent appealing  
For the secret of the place,  
To the trees which surely knew it, in partaking of  
the grace.

Where's no foot of human creature,  
How could reach a human hand ?  
And if this be work of nature,  
Why has nature turned so bland, [derstand.  
Breaking off from other wild work ? It was hard to un-

Was she weary of rough-doing,  
Of the bramble and the thorn ?  
Did she pause in tender ruing,  
Here, of all her sylvan scorn ?  
Or, in mock of art's deceiving, was the sudden mild-  
ness worn ?

Or could this same bower (I fancied)  
Be the work of Dryad strong ;  
Who, surviving all that chanced  
In the world's old pagan wrong,  
Lay hid, feeding in the woodland on the last true  
poet's song ?

Or was this the house of fairies,  
Left, because of the rough ways,  
Unassoiled by Ave Marys  
Which the passing pilgrim prays,  
And beyond St. Catherine's chiming on the blessed  
Sabbath days ?

So, young muser, I sat listening  
To my Fancy's wildest word—  
On a sudden, through the glistening  
Leaves around a little stirred,  
Came a sound, a sense of music, which was rather  
felt than heard.

Softly, finely, it inwound me—  
From the world it shut me in,—  
Like a fountain falling round me,  
Which with silver waters thin  
Clips a little water Naiad sitting smilingly within.

Whence the music came, who knoweth?  
*I* know nothing. But indeed  
Pan or Faunus never bloweth  
So much sweetness from a reed,  
Which has sucked the milk of waters at the oldest  
riverhead

Never lark the sun can waken  
With such sweetness! when the lark,  
The high planets overtaking  
In the half evanished Dark,  
Cast his singing to their singing, like an arrow to the  
mark.

Never nightingale so singeth—  
Oh! she leans on thorny tree,  
And her poet-song she flingeth  
Over pain to victory!  
Yet she never sings such music,—or she sings it not  
to me.

Never blackbirds, never thrushes,  
Nor small finches sing as sweet,  
When the sun strikes through the bushes  
To their crimson clinging feet,  
And their pretty eyes look sideways to the summer  
    heavens complete.

If it *were* a bird, it seemed  
Most like Chaucer's, which, in sooth,  
He of green and azure dreamèd,  
While it sat in spirit-ruth  
On that bier of a crowned lady, singing nigh her silent  
    mouth.

If it *were* a bird!—ah, sceptic,  
Give me 'Yea' or give me 'Nay'—  
Though my soul were nympholeptic,  
As I heard that virēlay, [away.  
You may stoop your pride to pardon, for my sin is far

I rose up in exaltation  
And an inward trembling heat,  
And (it seemed) in geste of passion  
Dropped the music to my feet,  
Like a garment rustling downwards!—such a silence  
    followed it.

Heart and head beat through the quiet,  
Full and heavily, though slower;  
In the song, I think, and by it,  
Mystic Presences of power  
Had up-snatched me to the Timeless, then returned  
    me to the Hour.

In a child-abstraction lifted,  
Straightway from the bower I past ;  
Foot and soul being dimly drifted  
Through the greenwood, till, at last,  
In the hill-top's open sunshine, I all consciously was  
cast.

Face to face with the true mountains,  
I stood silently and still ;  
Drawing strength for fancy's dauntings,  
From the air about the hill,  
And from Nature's open mercies, and most debonair  
goodwill.

Oh ! the golden-hearted daisies  
Witnessed there, before my youth,  
To the truth of things with praises  
To the beauty of the truth :  
And I woke to Nature's real, laughing joyfully for both.

And I said within me, laughing,  
I have found a bower to-day,  
A green lusus—fashioned half in  
Chance, and half in Nature's play—  
And a little bird sings nigh it, I will nevermore  
missay.

Henceforth, *I* will be the fairy  
Of this bower, not built by one ;  
I will go there sad or merry,  
With each morning's benison :  
And the bird shall be my harper in the dream-hall I  
have won.

So I said. But the next morning,  
(—Child, look up into my face—  
'Ware, oh sceptic, of your scorning!  
This is truth in its pure grace;)

The next morning, all had vanished, or my wandering  
missed the place.

Bring an oath most sylvan holy,  
And upon it swear me true—  
By the wind-bells swinging slowly  
Their mute curfews in the dew—

By the advent of the snow-drop—by the rosemary  
and rue,—

I affirm by all or any,  
Let the cause be charm or chance,  
That my wandering searches many  
Missed the bower of my romance— [nance  
That I nevermore upon it, turned my mortal counte-

I affirm that, since I lost it,  
Never bower has seemed so fair—  
Never garden-creeper crossed it,  
With so deft and brave an air—  
Never bird sung in the summer, as I saw and heard  
them there.

Day by day, with new desire,  
Toward my wood I ran in faith—  
Under leaf and over briar—  
Through the thickets, out of breath—  
Like the prince who rescued Beauty from the sleep as  
long as death.

But his sword of mettle clashèd,  
And his arm smote strong, I ween ;  
And her dreaming spirit flashèd  
Through her body's fair white screen,  
And the light thereof might guide him up the cedar  
alleys green.

But for me, I saw no splendor—  
All my sword was my child-heart ;  
And the wood refused surrender  
Of that bower it held apart,  
Safe as Œdipus's grave-place, 'mid Colone's olives  
swart.

As Aladdin sought the basements  
His fair palace rose upon,  
And the four and twenty casements  
Which gave answers to the sun ; [down.  
So, in wilderment of gazing I looked up, and I looked

Years have vanished since as wholly  
As the little bower did then ;  
And you call it tender folly  
That such thoughts should come again ?  
Ah ! I cannot change this sighing for your smiling,  
brother-men !

For this loss it did prefigure  
Other loss of better good,  
When my soul, in spirit-vigor,  
And in ripened womanhood,  
Fell from visions of more beauty than an arbor in a  
wood.



I have lost—oh many a pleasure—  
Many a hope and many a power—  
Studious health and merry leisure—  
The first dew on the first flower !

But the first of all my losses was the losing of the  
bower.

I have lost the dream of Doing,  
And the other Dream of Done—  
The first spring in the pursuing,  
The first pride in the Begun,—  
First recoil from incompletion, in the face of what is  
won—

Exaltations in the far light,  
Where some cottage only is—  
Mild dejections in the starlight,  
Which the sadder-hearted miss ;  
And the child-cheek blushing scarlet, for the very  
shame of bliss .

I have lost the sound child-sleeping  
Which the thunder could not break ;  
Something too of the strong leaping  
Of the staglike heart awake,  
Which the pale is low for keeping in the road it ought  
to take.

Some respect to social fictions  
Hath been also lost by me ;  
And some generous genuflexions,  
Which my spirit offered free  
To the pleasant old conventions of our false Humanity

All my losses did I tell you,  
 Ye, perchance, would look away ;—  
 Ye would answer me, ‘ Farewell ! you  
 Make sad company to-day ;  
 And your tears are falling faster than the bitter words  
 you say.’

For God placed me like a dial  
 In the open ground, with power ;  
 And my heart had for its trial,  
 All the sun and all the shower ! [bower.  
 And I suffered many losses ; and my first was of the

Laugh you ? If that loss of mine be  
 Of no heavy seeming weight—  
 When the cone falls from the pine-tree,  
 The young children laugh thereat ;  
 Yet the wind that struck it, riseth, and the tempest  
 shall be great !

One who knew me in my childhood,  
 In the glamour and the game,  
 Looking on me long and mild, would  
 Never know me for the same .  
 Come, unchanging recollections, where those changes  
 overcame.

On this couch I weakly lie on,  
 While I count my memories,—  
 Through the fingers which, still sighing,  
 I press closely on mine eyes,—  
 Clear as once beneath the sunshine, I behold the  
 bower arise.

Springs the linden-tree as greenly,  
Stroked with light adown its rind—  
And the ivy-leaves serenely  
Each in either intertwined,  
And the rose-trees at the doorway, they have neither  
grown nor pined.

From those overblown faint roses,  
Not a leaf appeareth shed,  
And that little bud discloses  
Not a thorn's-breadth more of red,  
For the winters and the summers which have passed me  
overhead.

And that music overfloweth,  
Sudden sweet, the sylvan eaves;  
Thrush or nightingale—who knoweth?  
Fay or Faunus—who believes? [the leaves.  
But my heart still trembles in me, to the trembling of

Is the bower lost, then? Who sayeth  
That the bower indeed is lost?  
Hark! my spirit in it prayeth  
Through the sunshine and the frost,—  
And the prayer preserves it greenly, to the last and  
uttermost—

Till another open for me  
In God's Eden-land unknown,  
With an angel at the doorway,  
White with gazing at His Throne;  
And a saint's voice in the palm-trees, singing—'ALL  
IS LOST . . . and won!'



## A CHILD ASLEEP.

How he sleepeth ! having drunken  
Weary childhood's mandragore,  
From his pretty eyes have sunken  
Pleasures to make room for more—  
Sleeping near the withered nosegay which he pulled  
the day before.

Nosegays ! leave them for the waking.  
Throw them earthward where they grew :  
Dim are such beside the breaking  
Amaranths he looks unto—  
Folded eyes see brighter colors than the open ever do.

Heaven-flowers, rayed by shadows golden  
From the palms they sprang beneath  
Now perhaps divinely holden,  
Swing against him in a wreath—  
We may think so from the quickening of his bloom  
and of his breath.

Vision unto vision calleth,  
While the young child dreameth on :  
Fair, O dreamer, thee befalleth  
With the glory thou hast won !  
Darker wert thou in the garden, yestermorn by sum-  
mer sun.

We should see the spirits ringing  
Round thee,—were the clouds away  
'Tis the child-heart draws them, singing  
In the silent-seeming clay— [the way.  
Singing!—Stars that seem the mutest, go in music all

As the moths around a taper,  
As the bees around a rose,  
As the gnats around a vapor,  
So the spirits group and close  
Round about a holy childhood, as if drinking its  
repose.

Shapes of brightness overlean thee,  
With their diadems of youth  
On the ringlets which half screen thee  
While thou smilest, . . not in sooth  
*Thy* smile, . . but the overfair one, dropt from some  
ethereal mouth.

Haply it is angels' duty,  
During slumber, shade by shade  
To fine down this childish beauty  
To the thing it must be made,  
Ere the world shall bring it praises, or the tomb shall  
see it fade.

Softly, softly! make no noises!  
Now he lieth dead and dumb—  
Now he hears the angels' voices  
Folding silence in the room—  
Now he muses deep the meaning of the Heaven-words  
as they come.

Speak not ! he is consecrated—  
Breathe no breath across his eyes :  
Lifted up and separated  
On the hand of God he lies,  
In a sweetness beyond touching,—held in cloistral  
sanctities.

Could ye bless him—father—mother ?  
Bless the dimple in his cheek ?  
Dare ye look at one another,  
And the benediction speak ?  
Would ye not break out in weeping, and confess your-  
selves too weak ?

He is harmless—ye are sinful,  
Ye are troubled,—he, at ease :  
From his slumber, virtue winful  
Floweth outward with increase—  
Dare not bless him ! but be blessed by his peace—  
and go in peace





## THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

“Φεῖ, φεῖ, τι προσδεσθε μ’ ομματιν, τέκνα.”

ΜΕΔΕΑ.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,  
Ere the sorrow comes with years ?  
They are leaning their young heads against their  
mothers,

And *that* cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows :

The young birds are chirping in the nest ;

The young fawns are playing with the shadows ;

The young flowers are blowing toward the west—

But the young, young children, O my brothers,

They are weeping bitterly !

They are weeping in the playtime of the others,

In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,

Why their tears are falling so ?

The old man may weep for his to-morrow

Which is lost in Long Ago—

The old tree is leafless in the forest—

The old year is ending in the frost—

The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest—

The old hope is hardest to be lost :

But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
     Do you ask them why they stand  
 Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,  
     In our happy Fatherland ?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,  
     And their looks are sad to see,  
 For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses  
     Down the cheeks of infancy—  
 'Your old earth,' they say, 'is very dreary ;  
     Our young feet,' they say, 'are very weak !  
 Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—  
     Our grave-rest is very far to seek :  
 Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children,  
     For the outside earth is cold,  
 And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,  
     And the graves are for the old :

'True,' say the children, 'it may happen  
     That we die before our time :  
 Little Alice died last year—her grave is shapen  
     Like a snowball, in the rime.  
 We looked into the pit prepared to take her—  
     Was no room for any work in the close clay :  
 From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her.  
     Crying, 'Get up, little Alice ! it is day.'  
 If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,  
     With your ear down, little Alice never cries !  
 Could we see her face, be sure we should not know  
     her,  
     For the smile has time for growing in her eyes,



And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in  
The shroud by the kirk-chime!

It is good when it happens,' say the children,  
' That we die before our time ! '

Alas, alas, the children ! they are seeking  
Death in life, as best to have !

They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,  
With a cerement from the grave.

Go out, children, from the mine and from the city—  
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do—

Pluck you handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty—  
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through !

But they answer, ' Are your cowslips of the meadows  
Like our weeds anear the mine ?

Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,  
From your pleasures fair and fine !

' For oh,' say the children, ' we are weary,  
And we cannot run or leap—

If we cared for any meadows, it were merely  
To drop down in them and sleep.

Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—  
We fall upon our faces, trying to go ;

And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,  
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.

For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,  
Through the coal-dark underground—

Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron  
In the factories, round and round.

' For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—  
Their wind comes in our faces.—

Till our hearts turn,—our heads, with pulses burning,  
 And the walls turn in their places—  
 Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling—  
 Turns the long light that drops adown the wall—  
 Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—  
 All are turning, all the day, and we with all!  
 And all day the iron wheels are droning;  
 And sometimes we could pray,  
 ‘O ye wheels,’ (breaking out in a mad moaning,)  
 ‘Stop! be silent for to-day!’

Ay! be silent! Let them hear each other breathing  
 For a moment, mouth to mouth—  
 Let them touch each other’s hands, in a fresh wreathing  
 Of their tender human youth!  
 Let them feel that this cold metallic motion  
 Is not all the life God fashions or reveals—  
 Let them prove their living souls against the notion  
 That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!—  
 Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,  
 Grinding life down from its mark;  
 And the children’s souls, which God is calling sun-  
 ward,  
 Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,  
 To look up to Him and pray—  
 So the blessed One who blesseth all the others,  
 Will bless them another day.  
 They answer, ‘Who is God that He should hear us,  
 While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?’

When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us  
 Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word !  
 And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)  
     Strangers speaking at the door :  
 Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,  
     Hears our weeping any more ?  
 ‘ Two words, indeed, of praying we remember ;  
     And at midnight’s hour of harm,  
 ‘ Our Father,’ looking upward in the chamber,  
     We say softly for a charm.\*  
 We know no other words, except ‘ Our Father,’  
     And we think that, in some pause of angels’ song,  
 God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,  
     And hold both within His right hand which is strong.  
 ‘ Our Father !’ If He heard us, He would surely  
     (For they call him good and mild)  
 Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,  
     ‘ Come and rest with me, my child.’  
 ‘ But, no ! ’ say the children, weeping faster,  
     ‘ He is speechless as a stone ;  
 And they tell us, of His image is the master  
     Who commands us to work on.  
 ‘ Go to ! ’ say the children,— ‘ Up in Heaven,  
     Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find :  
 Do not mock us ; grief has made us unbelieving,—  
     We look up for God, but tears have made us blind.’

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\* A fact rendered pathetically historical by Mr. Horne’s Report of his commission. The name of the poet of “Orion” and “Cosmo de’ Medici” has, however, a change of associations, and comes in time to remind me (with other noble instances) that we have some noble poetic heat still in our literature,—though open to the reproach, on certain points, of being somewhat gelid in our humanity.

Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,  
     O my brothers, what ye preach?  
 For God's possible is taught by His world's loving—  
     And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you ;  
     They are weary ere they run ;  
 They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory  
     Which is brighter than the sun :  
 They know the grief of man, without his wisdom ;  
     They sink in man's despair, without its calm—  
 Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,  
     Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—  
 Are worn as if with age, yet unretrievingly  
     The harvest of its memories cannot reap,—  
 Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly :  
     Let them weep ! let them weep !  
 They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,  
     And their look is dread to see,  
 For they mind you of their angels in high places,  
     With eyes turned on Deity ;—  
 'How long,' they say, 'how long, O cruel nation,  
     Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's  
     heart,—  
 Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,  
     And tread onward to your throne amid the mart ?  
 Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,  
     And your purple shows your path ;  
 But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper  
     Than the strong man in his wrath !'



## CROWNED AND WEDDED.

WHEN last before her people's face her own fair face  
she bent,

Within the meek projection of that shade she was  
content

To erase the child-smile from her lips, which seemed  
as if it might

Be still kept holy from the world to childhood still in  
sight—

To erase it with a solemn vow,—a princely vow—to  
rule—

A priestly vow—to rule by grace of God the pitiful,

A very god-like vow—to rule in right and righteousness,

And with the law and for the land !—so God the vower  
bless !

The minster was alight that day, but not with fire, I  
ween,

And long-drawn glitterings swept adown that mighty  
aisled scene :

The priests stood stoled in their pomp, the sworded  
chiefs in theirs,

And so, the collared knights,—and so, the civil minis-  
ters,

And so, the waiting lords and dames—and little pages  
best

At holding trains—and legates so, from countries east  
and west—

So, alien princes, native peers, and high-born ladies  
bright,

Along whose brows the queen's new crowned, flashed  
coronets to light !

And so, the people at the gates, with priestly hands on  
high,

Which bring the first anointing to all legal majesty .

And so the DEAD—who lie in rows beneath the min-  
ster floor,

There, verily an awful state maintaining evermore—

The statesman whose clean palm will kiss no bribe  
whate'er it be—

The courtier, who, for no fair queen, will rise up to  
his knee—

The court-dame who, for no court-tire, will leave her  
shroud behind—

The laureate who no courtlier rhyme than 'dust to  
dust' can find—

The kings and queens who having made that vow and  
worn that crown,

Descended unto lower thrones and darker, deep adown !

*Dieu et mon droit*—what is't to them ?—what mean-  
ing can it have ?—

The King of kings, the right of death—God's judg-  
ment and the grave !

And when betwixt the quick and dead the young fair  
queen had vowed,

The living shouted ' May she live ! Victoria, live ! '  
aloud—

And as the loyal shouts went up, true spirits prayed  
between,

‘ The blessings happy monarchs have, be thine, O  
crowned queen ! ’

But now before her people’s face she bendeth hers anew,  
And calls them, while she vows, to be her witness  
thereunto.

She vowed to rule, and in that oath, her childhood  
put away—

She doth maintain her womanhood, in vowing love  
to-day.

O, lovely lady !—let her vow !—such lips become such  
vows,

And fairer goeth bridal wreath than crown with vernal  
brows !

O, lovely lady !—let her vow !—yea, let her vow to  
love !—

And though she be no less a queen—with purples hung  
above,

The pageant of a court behind, the royal kin around,  
And woven gold to catch her looks turned maidenly  
to ground,

Yet may the bride-veil hide from her a little of that state,  
While loving hopes, for retinues, about her sweetness  
wait :

SHE vows to love who vowed to rule—the chosen at  
her side

Let none say, God preserve the queen !—but rather,  
Bless the bride !

None blow the trump, none bend the knee, none vio-  
late the dream

Wherein no monarch but a wife, she to herself may  
seem :

Or, if ye say, Preserve the queen!—oh, breathe it  
inward low—

She is a *woman* and *beloved*!—and 'tis enough but so!  
'Tis enough, thou noble prince, who tak'st her by  
the hand,

And claimest for thy lady-love, our lady of the land!

And since, Prince Albert, men have called thy spirit  
high and rare,

And true to truth and brave for truth, as some at  
Augsburg were,—

We charge thee, by thy lofty thoughts, and by thy  
poet-mind,

Which not by glory and degree takes measure of man-  
kind,

Esteem that wedded hand less dear for sceptre than  
for ring,

And hold her uncrowned womanhood to be the royal  
thing:

And now, upon our queen's last vow, what blessings  
shall we pray?

None straitened to a shallow crown, will suit our lips  
to-day

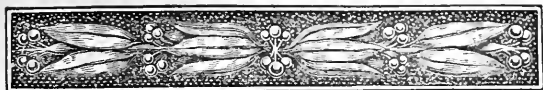
Behold, they must be free as love—they must be  
broad as free,

Even to the borders of heaven's light and earth's  
humanity.

Long live she!—send up loyal shouts—and true hearts  
pray between,—

'The blessings happy PEASANTS have, be thine, O  
crowned queen!'





## CROWNED AND BURIED.

NAPOLÉON !—years ago, and that great word  
Compáct of human breath in hate and dread  
And exultation, skied us overhead—  
An atmosphere whose lightning was the sword  
Scathing the cedars of the world,—drawn down  
In burnings, by the metal of a crown.

Napoleon ! Nations, while they cursed that name,  
Shook at their own curse ; and while others bore  
Its sound, as of a trumpet, on before,  
Brass-fronted legions justified its fame—  
And dying men, on trampled battle-sods,  
Near their last silence, uttered it for God's.

Napoleon ! Sages, with high foreheads drooped,  
Did use it for a problem ; children small  
Leapt up to greet it, as at manhood's call :  
Priests blessed it from their altars overstooped  
By meek-eyed Christs,—and widows with a moan  
Spake it, when questioned why they sat alone.

That name consumed the silence of the snows  
In Alpine keeping, holy and cloud-hid :  
The mimic eagles dared what Nature's did,  
And over-rushed her mountainous repose  
In search of eyries : and the Egyptian river  
Mingled the same word with its grand ' For ever.'

That name was shouted near the pyramidal  
 Nilotic tombs, whose mummied habitants,  
 Packed to humanity's significance,  
 Motioned it back with stillness: Shouts as idle  
 As hireling artists' work of myrrh and spice  
 Which swathed last glories round the Ptolemies.

The world's face changed to hear it. Kingly men  
 Came down in chidd n babes' bewilderment  
 From autoeratic places—each content  
 With sprinkled ashes for anointing:—then  
 The people laughed or wondered for the nonce,  
 To see one throne a composite of thrones

Napoleon! Even the torrid vastitude  
 Of India felt in throbbings of the air  
 That name which scattered by disastrous blare  
 All Europe's bound-lines,—drawn afresh in blood  
 Napoleon—from the Russias, west to Spain!  
 And Austria trembled—till we heard her chain.

And Germany was 'ware—and Italy  
 Oblivious of old fames—her laurel-locked,  
 High-ghosted Cæsars passing uninvoked,—  
 Did crumble her own ruins with her knee,  
 To serve a newer:—Ay! but Frenchmen cast  
 A future from them nobler than her past.

For, verily, though France augustly rose  
 With that raised NAME, and did assume by such  
 The purple of the world,—none gave so much

As she, in purchase—to speak plain, in loss—  
 Whose hands, to freedom stretched, dropped paralyzed  
 To wield a sword or fit an undersized

King's crown to a great man's head . And though along  
 Her Paris' streets, did float on frequent streams  
 Of triumph, pictured or emmarbled dreams,  
 Dreamt right by genius in a world gone wrong,—  
 No dream, of all so won, was fair to see  
 As the lost vision of her liberty.

Napoleon ! 'twas a high name lifted high !  
 It met at last God's thunder sent to clear  
 Our compassing and covering atmosphere,  
 And open a clear sight beyond the sky  
 Of supreme empire : this of earth's was done—  
 And kings crept out again to feel the sun.

The kings crept out—the peoples sat at home,  
 And finding the long-invoked peace  
 A pall embroidered with worn images  
 Of rights divine, too scant to cover doom  
 Such as they suffered,—cursed the corn that grew  
 Rankly, to bitter bread, on Waterloo .

A deep gloom centered in the deep repose—  
 The nations stood up mute to count their dead—  
 And *he* who owned the NAME which vibrated  
 Through silence,—trusting to his noblest foes  
 When earth was all too gray for chivalry—  
 Died of their mercies, 'mid the desert sea.

O wild St. Helen ! very still she kept him,  
With a green willow for all pyramid,—  
Which stirred a little if the low wind did,  
A little more, if pilgrims overwept him  
Disparting the lithe boughs to see the clay  
Which seemed to cover his for judgment-day.

Nay ! not so long !—France kept her old affection  
As deeply as the sepulchre the corse,  
Until dilated by such love's remorse  
To a new angel of the resurrection,  
She cried, ' Behold, thou England ! I would have  
The dead whereof thou wottest, from that grave.'

And England answered in the courtesy  
Which, ancient foes turned lovers, may befit,—  
' Take back thy dead ! and when thou buriest it,  
Throw in all former strifes 'twixt thee and me.'  
Amen, mine England ! 'tis a courteous claim—  
But ask a little room too . . . for thy shame !

Because it was not well, it was not well,  
Nor tuneful with thy lofty-chanted part  
Among the Oceanides,—that heart  
To bind and bare and vex with vulture fell.  
I would, my noble England, men might seek  
All crimson stains upon thy breast—not cheek !

I would that hostile fleets had scarred Torbay,  
Instead of the lone ship which waited moored  
Until thy princely purpose was assured.

Then left a *shadow*—not to pass away—  
Not for to-night's moon, nor to-morrow's sun!  
Green watching hills, ye witnessed what was done!

And since it *was* done,—in sepulchral dust  
We fain would pay back something of our debt  
To France, if not to honor, and forget  
How through much fear we falsified the trust  
Of a fallen foe and exile :—We return  
Orestes to Electra . . . in his urn .

A little urn—a little dust inside,  
Which once outbalanced the large earth, albeit  
To-day a four-years child might carry it  
Sleek-browed and smiling, ' Let the burden 'bide ! '  
Orestes to Electra !—O fair town  
Of Paris, how the wild tears will run down

And run back in the chariot-marks of Time,  
When all the people shall come forth to meet  
The passive victor, death-still in the street  
He rode through 'mid the shouting and bell-chime  
And martial music,—under eagles which  
Dyed their rapacious beaks at Austerlitz .

Napoleon ! he hath come again—borne home  
Upon the popular ebbing heart,—a sea  
Which gathers its own wrecks perpetually,  
Majestically moaning. Give him room !—  
Room for the dead in Paris ! welcome solemn  
And grave deep, 'neath the cannon-moulded column !\*

---

\* It was the first intention to bury him under the column.

There, weapon spent and warrior spent may rest  
From roar of fields : provided Jupiter  
Dare trust Saturnus to lie down so near  
His bolts !—And this he *may*. For, dispossessed  
Of any godship lies the godlike arm—  
The goat, Jove sucked, as likely to do harm .

And yet . . . Napoleon !—the recovered name  
Shakes the old casements of the world ! and we  
Look out upon the passing pageantry,  
Attesting that the Dead makes good his claim  
To a French grave,—another kingdom won,  
The last—of few spans—by Napoleon.

Blood fell like dew beneath his sunrise—sooth !  
But glittered dew-like in the covenanted  
Meridian light. He was a despot—granted !  
But the *avros* of his autocratic mouth  
Said yea i' the people's French : he magnified  
The image of the freedom he denied.

And if they asked for rights, he made reply,  
' Ye have my glory ! '—and so, drawing round them  
His ample purple, glorified and bound them  
In an embrace that seemed identity.  
He ruled them like a tyrant—true ! but none  
Were ruled like slaves ! Each felt Napoleon !

I do not praise this man : the man was flawed  
For Adam—much more, Christ !—his knee unbent—  
His hand unclean—his aspiration pent

Within a sword-sweep—pshaw!—but since he had  
*The genius to be loved*, why let him have  
The justice to be honored in his grave

I think this nation's tears poured thus together,  
Better than shouts: I think this funeral  
Grander than crownings, though a Pope bless all:  
I think this grave stronger than thrones: But whether  
The crowned Napoleon or the buried clay  
Be worthier, I discern not—Angels may.





## THE FOURFOLD ASPECT.

When ye stood up in the house  
With your little childish feet,  
And in touching Life's first shows,  
First the touch of Love did meet,—  
Love and Nearness seeming one,  
By the heart-light cast before,  
And, of all Beloveds, none  
Standing farther than the door—  
Not a name being dear to thought,  
With its owner beyond call,  
Nor a face, unless it brought  
Its own shadow to the wall,  
When the worst recorded change  
Was of apple dropt from bough,  
When love's sorrow seemed more strange  
Than love's treason can seem now,—  
Then, the Loving took you up  
Soft, upon their elder knees,—  
Telling why the statues droop  
Underneath the churchyard trees,  
And how *ye* must lie beneath them  
Through the winters long and deep,  
Till the last trump overbreathe them,  
And ye smile out of your sleep . . .  
Oh ye lifted up your head, and it seemed as if they said



A tale of fairy ships  
With a swan-wing for a sail !—  
Oh, ye kissed their loving lips  
For the merry, merry tale !—  
So carelessly ye thought upon the Dead

Soon ye read in solemn stories  
Of the men of long ago—  
Of the pale bewildering glories  
Shining farther than we know.

Of the heroes with the laurel,  
Of the poets with the bay,  
Of the two worlds' earnest quarrel  
For that beauteous Helena.

How Achilles at the portal  
Of the tent, heard footsteps nigh  
And his strong heart, half-immortal,  
Met the *keitai* with a cry,—  
How Ulysses left the sunlight  
For the pale eidola race  
Blank and passive through the dun light,  
Staring blindly on his face :

How that true wife said to Poetus,  
With calm smile and wounded heart,  
' Sweet, it hurts not !' —how Admetus  
Saw his blessed one depart .

How King Arthur proved his mission,  
And Sir Rowland wound his horn,  
And at Sangreal's moony vision  
Swords did bristle round like corn.

Oh ! ye lifted up your head, and it seemed the while  
ye read,

That this death, then, must be found  
A Valhalla for the crowned—  
The heroic who prevail.  
None, be sure can enter in  
Far below a paladin  
Of a noble, noble tale!—  
So awfully ye thought upon the Dead

Ay! but soon ye woke up shrieking,—  
As a child that wakes at night  
From a dream of sisters speaking  
In a garden's summer-light,—  
That wakes, starting up and bounding,  
In a lonely, lonely bed,  
With a wall of darkness round him,  
Stifling black about his head!—  
And the full sense of your mortal  
Rushed upon you deep and loud,  
And ye heard the thunder hurtle  
From the silence of the cloud—  
Funeral-torches at your gateway  
Threw a dreadful light within;  
All things changed! you rose up straightway  
And saluted Death and Sin.  
*Since*,—your outward man has rallied  
And your eye and voice grown bold—  
Yet the Sphinx of Life stands pallid,  
With her saddest secret told.  
Happy places have grown holy:  
If ye went where once ye went,  
Only tears would fall down slowly,  
As at solemn sacrament:

Merry books, once read for pastime,  
If ye dared to read again,  
Only memories of the last time  
Would swim darkly up the brain.  
Household *names*, which used to flutter  
Through your laughter unawares,—  
God's Divinest ye could utter  
With less trembling in your prayers !  
Ye have dropt adown your head, and it seems as if ye  
tread

On your own hearts in the path  
Ye are called to in His wrath,—  
And your prayers go up in wail !  
—' Dost Thou see, then, all our loss,  
O Thou agonized on cross ?  
Art thou reading all its tale ?  
So, mournfully ye think upon the Dead !

Pray, pray, *thou* who also weepest,  
And the drops will slacken so ;  
Weep, weep :—and the watch thou keepest,  
With a quicker count will go.  
Think :—the shadow on the dial  
For the nature most undone,  
Marks the passing of the trial,  
Proves the presence of the sun :  
Look, look up, in starry passion,  
To the throne above the spheres,—  
Learn : the spirit's gravitation  
Still must differ from the tear's.  
Hope : with all the strength thou usest  
In embracing thy despair :

Love : the earthly love thou lovest  
Shall return to thee more fair.  
Work : make clear the forest-tangles  
Of the wildest stranger-land :  
Trust : the blessed deathly angels  
Whisper, 'Sabbath hours at hand !'  
By the heart's wound when most gory  
By the longest agony,  
Smile !—Behold, in sudden glory  
The TRANSFIGURED smiles on *thee* !  
And ye lifted up your head, and it seemed as if He  
said,  
' My Beloved, is it so ?  
Have ye tasted of my wo ?  
Of my Heaven ye shall not fail !'—  
He stands brightly where the shade is,  
With the keys of Death and Hades,  
And there, ends the mournful tale :—  
So hopefully ye think upon the Dead.





## A FLOWER IN A LETTER.

My lonely chamber next the sea,  
Is full of many flowers set free  
By summer's earliest duty ;  
Dear friends upon the garden-walk  
Might stop amid their fondest talk,  
To pull the least in beauty.

A thousand flowers—each seeming one  
That learnt, by gazing on the sun,  
To counterfeit his shining—  
Within whose leaves the holy dew  
That falls from heaven, hath won anew  
A glory . . . in declining.

Red roses used to praises long,  
Contented with the poet's song,  
The nightingale's being over :  
And lilies white, prepared to touch  
The whitest thought, nor soil it much,  
Of dreamer turned to lover.

Deep violets you liken to  
The kindest eyes that look on you,  
Without a thought disloyal :  
And cactuses, a queen might don,  
If weary of a golden crown,  
And still appear as royal .

Pansies for ladies all,—I wis  
That none who wear such brooches, miss  
    A jewel in the mirror :  
And tulips, children love to stretch  
Their fingers down, to feel in each  
    Its beauty's secret nearer.

Love's language may be talked with these  
To work out choicest sentences,  
    No blossoms can be meeter,  
And, such being used in Eastern bowers,  
Young maids may wonder if the flowers  
    Or meanings be the sweeter.

And such being strewn before a bride,  
Her little foot may turn aside,  
    Their longer bloom decreeing ;  
Unless some voice's whispered sound  
Should make her gaze upon the ground  
    Too earnestly—for seeing.

And such being scattered on a grave,  
Whoever mourneth there may have  
    A type which seemeth worthy  
Of that fair body hid below  
Which bloomed on earth a time ago,  
    Then perished as the earthy.

And such being wreathed for worldly feast,  
Across the brimming cup some guest  
    Their rainbow colors viewing,

May feel them,—with a silent start,  
 The covenant, his childish heart  
 With nature made,—renewing.

No flowers our gardened England hath,  
 To match with these in bloom and breath,  
 Which from the world are hiding  
 In sunny Devon moist with rills,  
 A nunnery of cloistered hills,  
 The elements presiding.

By Loddon's stream the flowers are fair  
 That meet one gifted lady's care  
 With prodigal rewarding ;  
 For Beauty is too used to run  
 To Mitford's bower—to want the sun  
 To light her through the garden .

But, *here*, all summers are comprised—  
 The nightly frosts shrink exorcised  
 Before the priestly moonshine :  
 And every Wind with stoled feet,  
 In wandering down the alleys sweet,  
 Steps lightly on the sunshine :

And (having promised Harpocrate  
 Among the nodding roses, that  
 No harm shall touch his daughters)  
 Gives quite away the rushing sound,  
 He dares not use upon such ground,  
 To ever-trickling waters.

Yet, sun and wind ! what can ye do,  
 But make the leaves more brightly show  
     In posies newly gathered ?  
 I look away from all your best ;  
 To one poor flower unlike the rest,  
     A little flower half-withered.

I do not think it ever was  
 A pretty flower,—to make the grass  
     Look greener where it reddened :  
 And now it seems ashamed to be  
 Alone in all this company,  
     Of aspect shrunk and saddened .

A chamber-window was the spot  
 It grew in, from a garden-pot,  
     Among the city shadows :  
 If any, tending it, might seem  
 To smile, 't was only in a dream  
     Of nature in the meadows.

How coldly on its head did fall  
 The sunshine, from the city wall  
     In pale refraction driven !  
 How sadly plashed upon its leaves  
 The raindrops, losing in the eaves  
     The first sweet news of Heaven !

And those who planted, gathered it  
 In gamesome or in loving fit,  
     And sent it as a token



Of what their city pleasures be,—  
 For one, in Devon by the sea  
 And garden-blooms, to look on.

But SHE, for whom the jest was meant,  
 With a grave passion innocent  
 Receiving what was given,—  
 Oh ! if her face she *turned then*,  
 Let none say 't was to gaze again  
 Upon the flowers of Devon !

Because, whatever virtue dwells  
 In genial skies—warm oracles  
 For gardens brightly springing,—  
 The flower which grew beneath your eyes,  
 Beloved friends, to mine supplies  
 A beauty worthier singing !





## THE CRY OF THE HUMAN.

‘ THERE is no God,’ the foolish saith,  
But none, ‘ There is no sorrow ; ’  
And nature oft, the cry of faith,  
In bitter need will borrow :  
Eyes which the preacher could not school,  
By wayside graves are raised ;  
And lips say, ‘ God be pitiful,’  
Who ne’er said, ‘ God be praised.’  
Be pitiful, O God .

The tempest stretches from the steep  
The shadow of its coming ;  
The beasts grow tame, and near us creep,  
As help were in the human :  
Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and grind  
We spirits tremble under !—  
The hills have echoes ; but we find  
No answer for the thunder.  
Be pitiful, O God !

The battle hurtles on the plains—  
Earth feels new scythes upon her :  
We reap our brothers for the wains,  
And call the harvest . . honor,—

Draw face to face, front line to line,  
 One image all inherit,—  
 Then kill, curse on, by that same sign,  
 Clay, clay,—and spirit, spirit.  
 Be pitiful, O God !

The plague runs festering through the town,  
 And never a bell is tolling ;  
 And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,  
 Nod to the dead-cart's rolling.  
 The young child calleth for the cup—  
 The strong man brings it weeping ;  
 The mother from her babe looks up,  
 And shrieks away its sleeping.  
 Be pitiful, O God !

The plague of gold strikes far and near,  
 And deep and strong it enters :  
 This purple chimar which we wear,  
 Makes madder than the centaur's.  
 Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange ;  
 We cheer the pale gold-diggers—  
 Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,  
 And marked, like sheep, with figures.  
 Be pitiful, O God !

The curse of gold upon the land,  
 The lack of bread enforces—  
 The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,  
 Like more of Death's White Horses !

The rich preach 'rights' and future days,  
 And hear no angel scoffing :  
 The poor die mute—with starving gaze  
 On corn-ships in the offing.

Be pitiful, O God !

We meet together at the feast—  
 To private mirth betake us—  
 We stare down in the winecup, lest  
 Some vacant chair should shake us !  
 We name delight, and pledge it round—  
 ' It shall be ours to-morrow ! '  
 God's seraphs ! do your voices sound  
 As sad in naming sorrow ?

Be pitiful, O God !

We sit together, with the skies,  
 The steadfast skies, above us :  
 We look into each other's eyes,  
 ' And how long will you love us ? '  
 The eyes grow dim with prophecy,  
 The voices, low and breathless—  
 ' Till death us part ! '—O words, to be  
 Our *best* for love the deathless !

Be pitiful, dear God !

We tremble by the harmless bed  
 Of one loved and departed—  
 Our tears drop on the lips that said  
 Last night, ' Be stronger hearted ! '

O God,—to clasp those fingers close,  
 And yet to feel so lonely!—  
 To see a light upon such brows,  
 Which is the daylight only!  
 Be pitiful, O God!

The happy children come to us,  
 And look up in our faces:  
 They ask us—Was it thus, and thus,  
 When we were in their places?  
 We cannot speak:—we see anew  
 The hills we used to live in;  
 And feel our mother's smile press through  
 The kisses she is giving.  
 Be pitiful, O God!

We pray together at the kirk,  
 For mercy, mercy, solely—  
 Hands weary with the evil work,  
 We lift them to the Holy!  
 The corpse is calm below our knee—  
 Its spirit, bright before Thee—  
 Between them, worse than either, we—  
 Without the rest of glory!  
 Be pitiful, O God!

We leave the communing of men,  
 The murmur of the passions;  
 And live alone, to live again  
 With endless generations.

Are we so brave?—The sea and sky  
 In silence lift their mirrors;  
 And, glassed therein, our spirits high  
 Recoil from their own terrors.

Be pitiful, O God!

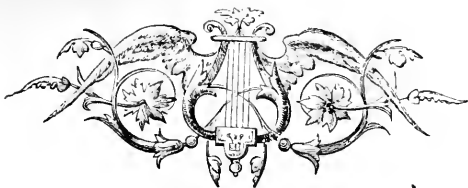
We sit on hills our childhood wist,  
 Woods, hamlets, streams, beholding:  
 The sun strikes through the farthest mist,  
 The city's spire to golden.  
 The city's golden spire it was,  
 When hope and health were strongest,  
 But now it is the churchyard grass,  
 We look upon the longest.

Be pitiful, O God!

And soon all vision waxeth dull—  
 Men whisper, 'He is dying:'  
 We cry no more, 'Be pitiful!'—  
 We have no strength for crying:  
 No strength, no need! Then, Soul of mine,  
 Look up and triumph rather—  
 Lo! in the depth of God's Divine,  
 The Son adjures the Father—

BE PITIFUL, O GOD!





## A LAY OF THE EARLY ROSE.

—— ‘discordance that can accord.’

ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

A ROSE once grew within  
A garden April-green,  
In her lonesness, in her lonesness,  
And the fairer for that oneness.

A white rose delicate,  
On a tall bough and straight !  
Early comer, early comer,  
Never waiting for the summer.

Her pretty gestes did win  
South winds to let her in,  
In her lonesness, in her lonesness,  
All the fairer for that oneness.

‘ For if I wait,’ said she,  
‘ Till times for roses be,—  
For the moss-rose and the musk-rose,  
Maiden-blush and royal-dusk rose,—

‘ What glory then for me  
 In such a company?—  
 Roses plenty, roses plenty,  
 And one nightingale for twenty? ’

‘ Nay, let me in,’ said she,  
 ‘ Before the rest are free,—  
 In my liveness, in my liveness,  
 All the fairer for that oneness.

‘ For I would lonely stand,  
 Uplifting my white hand,  
 On a mission, on a mission,  
 To declare the coming vision.

‘ Upon which lifted sign,  
 What worship will be mine?  
 What addressing, what caressing!  
 And what thank and praise and blessing!

‘ A windlike joy will rush  
 Through every tree and bush,  
 Bending softly in affection  
 And spontaneous benediction.

‘ Insects, that only may  
 Live in a sunbright ray,  
 To my whiteness, to my whiteness,  
 Shall be drawn, as to a brightness,—

‘ And every moth and bee,  
 Approach me reverently;  
 Wheeling o’er me, wheeling o’er me,  
 Coronals of motioned glory.



‘ Three larks shall leave a cloud ;  
 To my whiter beauty vowed—  
 Singing gladly all the moontide,  
 Never-waiting for the suntide.

‘ Ten nightingales shall flee  
 Their woods for love of me,  
 Singing sadly all the suntide,  
 Never waiting for the moontide.

‘ I ween the very skies  
 Will look down with surprise,  
 When low on earth they see me,  
 With my starry aspect dreamy !

‘ And earth will call her flowers  
 To hasten out of doors,  
 By their curtsies and sweet-smelling,  
 To give grace to my foretelling.’

So praying, did she win  
 South winds to let her in,  
 In her liveness, in her liveness,  
 And the fairer for that oneness.

But ah !—alas for her !  
 No thing did minister  
 To her praises, to her praises,  
 More than might unto a daisy’s.

No tree nor bush was seen  
 To boast a perfect green ;  
 Scarcely having, scarcely having  
 One leaf broad enough for waving.

The little flies did crawl  
 Along the southern wall,  
 Faintly shifting, faintly shifting  
 Wings scarce strong enough for lifting.

The lark, too high or low,  
 I ween, did miss her so ;  
 With his nest down in the gorses,  
 And his song in the star-courses .

The nightingale did please  
 To loiter beyond seas.  
 Guess him in the happy islands,  
 Learning music from the silence

Only the bee, forsooth,  
 Came in the place of both ;  
 Doing honor, doing honor,  
 To the honey-dews upon her.

The skies looked coldly down,  
 As on a royal crown ;  
 Then with drop for drop, at leisure,  
 They began to rain for pleasure.

Whereat the earth did seem  
 To waken from a dream,  
 Winter-frozen, winter-frozen,  
 Her unquiet eyes unclosing—

Said to the Rose— ‘ Ha, Snow !  
 And art thou fallen so ?  
 Thou, who wast enthroned stately  
 All along my mountains lately ?

‘Holla, thou world-wide snow!  
 And art thou wasted so?  
 With a little bough to catch thee,  
 And a little bee to watch thee!’

—Poor Rose to be misknown!  
 Would, she had ne’er been blown,  
 In her lonesness, in her lonesness,  
 All the sadder for that oneness!

Some word she tried to say—  
 Some *no* . . . ah, wellaway!  
 But the passion did o’ercome her,  
 And the fair frail leaves dropped from her—

Dropped from her, fair and mute,  
 Close to a poet’s foot,  
 Who beheld them, smiling slowly,  
 As at something sad yet holy:

Said, ‘Verily and thus  
 It chanceth too with *us*  
 Poets singing sweetest snatches,  
 While that deaf men keep the watches—

‘Vaunting to come before  
 Our own age evermore,  
 In a lonesness, in a lonesness,  
 And the nobler for that oneness!’

‘Holy in voice and heart,  
 To high ends, set apart!  
 All unmated, all unmated,  
 Just because so consecrated.

‘ But if alone we be,  
 Where is our empery ?  
 And if none can reach our stature,  
 Who can mete our lofty nature ?

‘ What bell will yield a tone,  
 Swung in the air alone ?  
 If no brazen clapper bringing,  
 Who can hear the chimed ringing ?

‘ What angel, but would seem  
 To sensual eyes, ghost-dim ?  
 And without assimilation,  
 Vain is inter-penetration .

‘ And thus, what can we do,  
 Poor rose and poet too,  
 Who both antedate our mission  
 In an unprepared season ?

‘ Drop leaf—be silent song—  
 Cold things we come among.  
 We must warm them, we must warm them,  
 Ere we ever hope to charm them.

‘ Howbeit ’ (here his face  
 Lightened around the place,—  
 So to mark the outward turning  
 Of his spirit’s inward burning)

‘ Something it is, to hold  
 In God’s worlds manifold,  
 First revealed to creature-duty,  
 Some new form of His mild Beauty !

‘ Whether that form respect  
 The sense or intellect,  
 Holy be in mood or meadow,  
 The Chief Beauty’s sign and shadow !

‘ Holy, in me and thee,  
 Rose fallen from the tree,—  
 Though the world stand dumb around us,  
 All unable to expound us.

‘ Though none us deign to bless,  
 Blessed are we, nathless :  
 Blessed still and consecrated,  
 In that, rose, we were created.

‘ Oh, shame to poet’s lays  
 Sung for the dole of praise,—  
 Hoarsely sung upon the highway  
 With that *obulum da mihi*.

‘ Shame, shame to poet’s soul,  
 Pining for such a dole,  
 When Heaven-chosen to inherit  
 The high throne of a chief spirit !

‘ Sit still upon your thrones,  
 O ye poetic ones !  
 And if, sooth, the world decry you,  
 Let it pass unchallenged by you !

‘ Ye to yourselves suffice,  
 Without its flatteries.  
 Self-contentedly approve you  
 Unto HIM who sits above you,—

‘ In prayers—that upward mount  
 Like to a fair-sunned fount  
 Which, in gushing back upon you,  
 Hath an upper music won you.

‘ In faith—that still perceives  
 No rose can shed her leaves,  
 Far less, poet fall from mission—  
 With an unfulfilled fruition !

‘ In hope—that apprehends  
 An end beyond these ends ;  
 And great uses rendered duly  
 By the meanest song sung truly !

‘ In thanks—for all the good,  
 By poets understood—  
 For the sound of seraphs moving  
 Down the hidden depths of loving,—

‘ For sights of things away,  
 Through fissures of the clay,  
 Promised things which *shall* be given  
 And sung over, up in Heaven,—

‘ For life, so lovely-vain,  
 For death which breaks the chain,—  
 For this sense of present sweetness,—  
 And this yearning to completeness ! ’





## THE LADY'S 'YES.'

'YES!' I answered you last night ;  
    'No!' this morning, Sir, I say.  
Colors seen by candle-light  
    Will not look the same by day.

When the viols played their best,  
    Lamps above, and laughs below—  
*Love me* sounded like a jest,  
    Fit for *Yes* or fit for *No*.

Call me false or call me free—  
    Vow, whatever light may shine,  
No man on your face shall see  
    Any grief for change on mine.

Yet the sin is on us both—  
    Time to dance is not to woo—  
Wooing light makes tickle troth—  
    Scorn of *me* recoils on *you* :

Learn to win a lady's faith  
    Nobly, as the thing is high ;  
Bravely, as for life and death—  
    With a loyal gravity.

Lead her from the festive boards,  
Point her to the starry skies,  
Guard her, by your truthful words,  
Pure from courtship's flatteries.

By your truth she shall be true—  
Ever true, as wives of yore —  
And her *Yes*, once said to you,  
SHALL be *Yes* for evermore.







## A PORTRAIT.

"One name is Elizabeth."—BEN JONSON.

I WILL paint her as I see her :  
Ten times have the lilies blown,  
Since she looked upon the sun.

And her face is lily-clear—  
Lily-shaped, and drooped in duty  
To the law of its own beauty.

Oval cheeks encolored faintly,  
Which a trail of golden hair  
Keeps from fading off to air :

And a forehead fair and saintly,  
Which two blue eyes undershine,  
Like meek prayers before a shrine.

Face and figure of a child,—  
Though too calm, you think, and tender,  
For the childhood you would lend her.

Yet child-simple, undefiled,  
Frank, obedient,—waiting still  
On the turnings of your will.

Moving light, as all young things—  
As young birds, or early wheat  
When the wind blows over it.

Only free from flutterings  
Of loud mirth that scorneth measure—  
Taking love for her chief pleasure:

Choosing pleasures (for the rest)  
Which come softly—just as *she*,  
When she nestles at your knee.

Quiet talk she liketh best,  
In a bower of gentle looks,—  
Watering flowers, or reading books.

And her voice, it murmurs lowly,  
As a silver stream may run,  
Which yet feels, you feel, the sun.

And her smile, it seems half holy,  
As if drawn from thoughts more far  
Than our common jestings are.

And if any poet knew her,  
He would sing of her with falls  
Used in lovely madrigals.

And if any painter drew her,  
He would paint her unaware  
With a halo round her hair.

And if reader read the poem,  
He would whisper— ‘ You have done a  
Consecrated little Una ! ’

And a dreamer (did you show him  
That same picture) would exclaim,  
‘ ’Tis my angel, with a name ! ’

And a stranger,—when he sees her  
In the street even—smileth stilly,  
Just as *you* would at a lily.

And all voices that address her,  
Softens, sleeken every word,  
As if speaking to a bird.

And all fancies yearn to cover  
The hard earth whereon she passes,  
With the thymy scented grasses.

And all hearts do pray, ‘ God love her ! ’—  
Ay, and always, in good sooth,  
We may all be sure He DOETH.





## L. E. L.'S LAST QUESTION.

‘Do you think of me as I think of you?’

FROM HER POEM WRITTEN DURING THE VOYAGE TO THE CAPE

‘Do you think of me as I think of you,  
My friends, my friends?’—She said it from the sea,  
The English minstrel in her minstrelsy;  
While, under brighter skies than erst she knew,  
Her heart grew dark,—and groped there, as the blind,  
To reach across the waves friends left behind—  
‘Do you think of me as I think of you?’

It seemed not much to ask—As *I* of *you*?  
We all do ask the same. No eyelids cover  
Within the meekest eyes, that question over.  
And little in the world the Loving do  
But sit (among the rocks?) and listen for  
The echo of their own love evermore—  
‘Do you think of me as I think of you?’

Love-learned, she had sung of love and love,—  
And like a child that, sleeping with dropt head  
Upon the fairy-book he lately read,  
Whatever household noises round him move,  
Hears in his dream some elfin turbulence,—  
Even so, suggestive to her inward sense,  
All sounds of life assumed one tune of love.

And when the glory of her dream withdrew,  
 When knightly gestes and courtly pageantries  
 Were broken in her visionary eyes  
 By tears the solemn seas attested true,—  
 Forgetting that sweet lute beside her hand,  
 She asked not,—Do you praise me, O my land?—  
 But,—‘Think ye of me, friends, as I of you?’

Hers was the hand that played for many a year  
 Love’s silver phrase for England,—smooth and well!  
 Would God, her heart’s more inward oracle  
 In that lone moment, might confirm her dear!  
 For when her questioned friends in agony  
 Made passionate response—‘We think of *thee*,’  
 Her place was in the dust, too deep to hear.

Could she not wait to catch their answering breath?  
 Was she content—content—with ocean’s sound,  
 Which dashed its mocking infinite around  
 One thirsty for a little love?—beneath  
 Those stars content,—where last her song had gone,—  
*They* mute and cold in radiant life,—as soon  
 Their singer was to be, in darksome death?\*

Bring your vain answers—cry, ‘We think of *thee*!’  
 How think ye of her? warm in long ago  
 Delights?—or crowned with budding bays? Not so.  
 None smile and none are crowned where lieth she,  
 With all her visions unfulfilled save one—  
 Her childhood’s—of the palm-trees in the sun—  
 And lo! their shadow on her sepulchre!

---

\* Her lyric on the polar star came home with her latest papers

‘Do ye think of me as I think of you?’—

O friends,—O kindred,—O dear brotherhood  
Of all the world! what are we, that we should  
For covenants of long affection sue?

Why press so near each other when the touch  
Is barred by graves? Not much, and yet too much,  
Is this ‘Think of me as I think of you.’

But while on mortal lips I shape anew  
A sigh to mortal issues,——verily  
Above the unshaken stars that see us die,  
A vocal pathos rolls! and HE who drew  
All life from dust, and for all, tasted death,  
By death and life and love, appealing, saith,  
*Do you think of me as I think of you?*





## THE MOURNING MOTHER

(OF THE DEAD BLIND.)

Dost thou weep, mourning mother,  
For thy blind boy in the grave ?  
That no more with each other  
Sweet counsel ye can have ?—  
That *he*, left dark by nature,  
Can never more be led  
By thee, maternal creature,  
Along smooth paths instead ?  
That thou canst no more show him  
The sunshine, by the heat ;  
The river's silver flowing,  
By murmurs at his feet ?  
The foliage, by its coolness ;  
The roses, by their smell ;  
And all creation's fulness,  
By Love's invisible ?  
Weepst thou to behold not  
His meek blind eyes again,—  
Closed doorways which were folded,  
And prayed against in vain—  
And under which, sat smiling  
The child-mouth evermore,

25\*

As one who watcheth, wiling  
The time by, at a door ?  
And weepst thou to feel not  
His clinging hand on thine—  
Which now, at dream time, will not  
Its cold touch disentwine ?  
And weepst thou still oft,  
Oh, nevermore to mark  
His low soft words, made softer  
By speaking in the dark ?  
Weep on, thou mourning mother !  
But since to him when living,  
Thou wert both sun and moon,  
Look o'er his grave, surviving,  
From a high sphere alone !  
Sustain that exaltation—  
Expand that tender light ;  
And hold in mother-passion  
Thy Blessed in thy sight.  
See how he went out straightway  
From the dark world he knew,—  
No twilight in the gateway  
To mediate 'twixt the two,—  
Into the sudden glory,  
Out of the dark he trod,  
Departing from before thee  
At once to Light and God !—  
For the first face, beholding  
The Christ's in its divine,—  
For the first place, the golden  
And tideless hyaline :



With trees, at lasting summer,  
That rock to songful sound,  
While angels, the new-comer,  
Wrap a still smile around.  
Oh, in the blessed psalm now.  
His happy voice he tries,  
Spreading a thicker palm-bough,  
Than others, o'er his eyes.  
Yet still, in all the singing,  
Thinks haply of thy song  
Which, in his life's first springing,  
Sang to him all night long,  
And wishes it beside him,  
With kissing lips that cool  
And soft did overglide him,  
To make the sweetness full.  
Look up, O mourning mother ;  
Thy blind boy walks in light !  
Ye wait for one another,  
Before God's infinite !  
But *thou* art now the darkest,  
Thou mother left below,—  
*Thou*, the sole blind,—thou markest,  
Content that it be so ;—  
Until ye two have meeting  
Where Heaven's pearl-gate is,  
And *he* shall lead thy feet in  
As once thou leddest *his*.  
Wait on, thou mourning mother.



## ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST.

So the dreams depart,  
So the fading phantoms flee,  
And the sharp reality  
Now must act its part.

WESTWOOD'S 'BEADS FROM A ROSARY.'

LITTLE Ellie sits alone  
Mid the beeches of a meadow,  
By a stream-side on the grass;  
And the trees are showering down  
Doubles of their leaves in shadow,  
On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by ;  
And her feet she has been dipping  
In the shallow water's flow—  
Now she holds them nakedly  
In her hands, all sleek and dripping  
While she rocketh to and fro

Little Ellie sits alone,  
And the smile she softly uses,  
Fills the silence like a speech ;

While she thinks what shall be done,—  
And the sweetest pleasure chooses,  
For her future within reach.

Little Ellie in her smile  
Chooseth . . . ' I will have a lover,  
Riding on a steed of steeds !  
He shall love me without guile ;  
And to *him* I will discover  
That swan's nest among the reeds.

' And the steed shall be red-roan  
And the lover shall be noble,  
With an eye that takes the breath.  
And the lute he plays upon,  
Shall strike ladies into trouble,  
As his sword strikes men to death.

' And the steed it shall be shod  
All in silver, housed in azure,  
And the mane shall swim the wind :  
And the hoofs along the sod  
Shall flash onward and keep measure,  
Till the shepherds look behind

' But my lover will not prize  
All the glory that he rides in,  
When he gazes in my face.  
He will say, ' O Love, thine eyes  
Build the shrine my soul abides in ;  
And I kneel here for thy grace '

‘ Then, ay, then—he shall kneel low,  
With the red-roan steed anear him  
Which shall seem to understand—  
Till I answer, ‘ Rise and go !  
For the world must love and fear him  
Whom I gift with heart and hand. ’

‘ Then he will arise so pale,  
I shall feel my own lips tremble  
With a *yes* I must not say—  
Nathless maiden-brave, ‘ Farewell, ’  
I will utter and dissemble—  
‘ Light to-morrow with to-day.’

‘ Then he’ll ride among the hills,  
To the wide world past the river,  
There to put away all wrong :  
To make straight distorted wills,  
And to empty the broad quiver  
Which the wicked bear along.

‘ Three times shall a young foot-page  
Swim the stream and climb the mountain  
And kneel down beside my feet—  
‘ Lo ! my master sends this gage,  
Lady, for thy pity’s counting !  
What wilt thou exchange for it ? ’

‘ And the first time, I will send  
A white rosebud for a guerdon,—

And the second time, a glove :  
But the third time—I may bend  
From my pride, and answer—‘ Pardon—  
If he comes to take my love.’

‘ Then the young foot-page will run—  
Then my lover will ride faster,  
Till he kneeleth at my knee :  
‘ I am a duke’s eldest son !  
Thousand serfs do call me master,—  
But, O Love, I love but *thee* !’

‘ He will kiss me on the mouth  
Then ; and lead me as a lover,  
Through the crowds that praise his deeds :  
And, when soul-tied by one troth,  
Unto *him* I will discover  
That swan’s nest among the reeds.’

Little Ellie, with her smile  
Not yet ended, rose up gayly,  
Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe—  
And went homeward, round a mile,  
Just to see, as she did daily,  
What more eggs were with the *two*.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse  
Winding by the stream, light-hearted,  
Where the osier pathway leads—  
Past the boughs she stoops—and stops !  
Lo ! the wild swan had deserted—  
And a rat had gnawed the reeds.

Ellie went home sad and slow :  
If she found the lover ever,  
With his red-roan steed of steeds,  
Sooth I know not ! but I know  
She could never show him—never,  
That swan's nest among the reeds !





## CALLS ON THE HEART.

### I.

FREE Heart, that singest to-day,  
Like a bird on the first green spray ;  
Wilt thou go forth to the world,  
Where the hawk hath his wing unfurled  
To follow, perhaps, thy way ?  
Where the tamer, thine own will bind,  
And, to make thee sing, will blind,  
While the little hip grows for the free behind ?  
Heart, wilt thou go ?  
— ‘ No, no !  
Free hearts are better so. ’

### II.

The world, thou hast heard it told,  
Has counted its robber-gold,  
And the pieces stick to the hand.  
The world goes riding it fair and grand,  
While the truth is bought and sold !  
World-voice east, world-voices west,  
They call thee, Heart, from thine early rest,  
‘ Come hither, come hither and be our guest. ’  
Heart, wilt thou go ?  
— ‘ No, no !  
Good hearts are calmer so. ’

## III.

Who calleth thee, Heart? World's Strife,  
With a golden heft to his knife:  
World's Mirth, with a finger fine  
That draws on a board in wine  
Her blood-red plans of life:  
World's Gain, with a brow knit down:  
World's Fame, with a laurel crown,  
Which rustles most as the leaves turn brown—  
Heart, wilt thou go?  
—'No, no!  
Calm hearts are wiser so.'

## IV.

Hast heard that Proserpina  
(Once fooling) was snatched away,  
To partake the dark king's seat,—  
And that the tears ran fast on her feet  
To think how the sun shone yesterday?  
With her ankles sunken in asphodel  
She wept for the roses of earth, which fell  
From her lap when the wild car drave to hell.  
Heart, wilt thou go?  
—'No, no!  
Wise hearts are warmer so.'

## V.

And what is this place not seen,  
Where Hearts may hide serene?  
'Tis a fair still house well-kept,  
Which humble thoughts have swept,  
And holy prayers made clean.



There, I sit with Love in the sun,  
And we two never have done  
Singing sweeter songs than are guessed by *one*.  
Heart, wilt thou go?  
— ‘No, no!  
Warm hearts are fuller so.’

## VI.

O Heart, O Love,— I fear  
That Love may be kept too near.  
Hast heard, O Heart, that tale,  
How Love may be false and frail  
To a heart once holden dear?  
— ‘But this true Love of mine  
Clings fast as the clinging vine,  
And mingles pure as the grapes in wine.’  
Heart, wilt thou go?  
— ‘No, no!  
Full hearts beat higher so.’

## VII.

O Heart, O Love, beware!—  
Look up, and boast not there.  
For who has twirled at the pin?  
’Tis the world, between Death and Sin,—  
The world, and the world’s Despair!  
And Death has quickened his pace  
To the hearth, with a mocking face,  
Familiar as Love, in Love’s own place—  
Heart, wilt thou go?  
‘Still, no!  
High hearts must grieve even so.’

## VIII.

The house is waste to-day, —  
The leaf has dropt from the spray,  
The thorn, prickt through to the song :  
If summer doeth no wrong  
The winter will, they say.  
Sing, Heart ! what heart replies ?  
In vain we were calm and wise,  
If the tears unvisited stand on in our eyes.  
Heart, wilt thou go ?  
— ‘ Ah, no !  
Grieved hearts must break even so. ’

## IX.

Howbeit all is not lost :  
The warm noon ends in frost,  
And worldly tongues of promise,  
Like sheep-bells, die off from us  
On the desert hills cloud-crossed !  
Yet, through the silence, shall  
Pierce the death-angel’s call,  
And ‘ Come up hither, ’ recover all.  
Heart, wilt thou go ?  
— ‘ I go !  
Broken hearts triumph so. ’





## WISDOM UNAPPLIED.

### I.

If I were thou, O butterfly,  
And poised my purple wings to spy  
The sweetest flowers that live and die,

### II.

I would not waste my strength on those,  
As thou,—for summer hath a close,  
And pansies bloom not in the snows.

### III.

If I were thou, O working bee,  
And all that honey-gold I see  
Could delve from roses easily ;

### IV.

I would not hive it at man's door,  
As thou,—that heirdom of my store  
Should make him rich, and leave me poor.

## v.

If I were thou, O eagle proud,  
And screamed the thunder back aloud,  
And faced the lightning from the cloud ;

## vi.

I would not build my eyrie-throne,  
As thou,—upon a crumbling stone,  
Which the next storm may trample down.

## vii.

If I were thou, O gallant steed,  
With pawing hoof, and dancing head,  
And eye outrunning thine own speed ;

## viii.

I would not meeken to the rein,  
As thou,—nor smooth my nostril plain  
From the glad desert's snort and strain.

## ix.

If I were thou, red-breasted bird,  
With song at shut up window heard,  
Like Love's sweet Yes too long deferred ;

## x.

I would not overstay delight,  
As thou,—but take a swallow-flight,  
Till the new spring returned to sight.

## XI.

While yet I spake, a touch was laid  
Upon my brow, whose pride did fade  
As thus, methought, an angel said :

## XII.

“ If I were *thou* who sing'st this song,  
Most wise for others ; and most strong  
In seeing right while doing wrong ;

## XIII.

‘ I would not waste my cares, and choose,  
As *thou*,—to seek what thou must lose.  
Such gains as perish in the use.

## XIV.

‘ I would not work where none can win,  
As *thou*,—half way 'twixt grief and sin,  
But look above, and judge within.

## XV.

‘ I would not let my pulse beat high,  
As *thou*,—toward fame's regality,  
Nor yet in love's great jeopardy.

## XVI.

‘ I would not champ the hard cold bit,  
As *thou*,—of what the world thinks fit,  
But take God's freedom, using it.

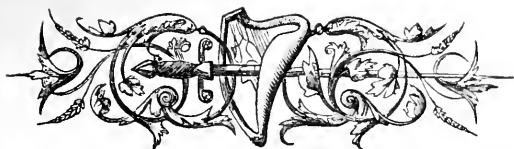
## XVII.

‘ I would not play earth’s winter out,  
As *thou* ; but gird my soul about,  
And live for life past death and doubt.

## XVIII.

‘ Then sing, O singer !—but allow  
Beast, fly, and bird, called foolish now,  
Are wise (for all thy scorn) as thou !’





## MEMORY AND HOPE.

### I.

#### BACK-LOOKING Memory

And prophet Hope both sprang from out the  
ground :

One, where the flashing of Cherubic sword

Fell sad, in Eden's ward ;

And one, from Eden earth, within the sound

Of the four rivers lapsing pleasantly,

What time the promise after curse was said—

‘ Thy seed shall bruise his head. ’

### II.

Poor Memory's brain is wild,

As moonstruck by that flaming atmosphere

When she was born. Her deep eyes shine and shone

With light that conquereth sun

And stars to wanner paleness year by year :

With odorous gums, she mixeth things defiled ;

She trampleth down earth's grasses green and sweet,

With her far-wandering feet.

## III.

She plucketh many flowers,  
Their beauty on her bosom's coldness killing;  
She teacheth every melancholy sound  
To winds and waters round;  
She droppeth tears with seed, where man is tilling  
The rugged soil in his exhausted hours;  
She smileth—ah me! in her smile doth go  
A mood of deeper woe!

## IV.

Hope tripped on out of sight  
Crowned with Eden wreath she saw not wither,  
And went a-nodding through the wilderness,  
With brow that shone no less  
Than sea-gull's wing, brought nearer by rough weather;  
Searching the treeless rock for fruits of light;  
Her fair quick feet being armed from stones and cold,  
By slippers of pure gold.

## V.

Memory did Hope much wrong  
And, while she dreamed, her slippers stole away;  
But still she wended on with mirth unheeding,  
Although her feet were bleeding;  
Till Memory tracked her on a certain day,  
And with most evil eyes did search her long  
And cruelly, whereat she sank to ground  
In a stark deadly swoond.



## VI.

And so my Hope were slain,  
Had it not been that thou wert standing near,  
Oh Thou, who saidest 'live' to creatures lying  
    In their own blood and dying!  
For Thou her forehead to thine heart didst rear  
And make its silent pulses sing again,—  
Pouring a new light o'er her darkened eyne,  
    With tender tears from Thine!

## VII.

Therefore my Hope arose  
From out her swoond and gazed upon Thy face,  
And, meeting there that soft subduing look  
    Which Peter's spirit shook,  
Sank downward in a rapture to embrace  
Thy piercèd hands and feet with kisses close,  
And prayed Thee to assist her evermore  
    To 'reach the things before.'

## VIII.

Then gavest Thou the smile  
Whence angel-wings thrill quick like summer  
    lightning,  
Vouchsafing rest beside Thee, where she never  
    From Love and Faith may sever;  
Whereat the Eden crown she saw not whitening  
A time ago, though whitening all the while,  
Reddened with life, to hear the Voice which talked  
    To Adam as he walked.



## HUMAN LIFE'S MISERY.

### I.

WE sow the glebe, we reap the corn,  
We build the house where we may rest;  
And then, at moments, suddenly,  
We look up to the great wide sky,  
Enquiring wherefore we were born . . .  
For earnest, or for jest?

### II.

The senses folding thick and dark  
About the stifled soul within,  
We guess diviner things beyond,  
And yearn to them with yearning fond;  
We strike out blindly to a mark  
Believed in, but not seen.

### III.

We vibrate to the pant and thrill  
Wherewith Eternity has curled  
In serpent-twine about God's seat!  
While, freshening upward to His feet,  
In gradual growth His full-leaved will  
Expands from world to world.

## IV.

And, in the tumult and excess  
Of act and passion under sun,  
We sometimes hear—oh, soft and far,  
As silver star did touch with star,  
The kiss of Peace and Righteousness  
Through all things that are done.

## V.

God keeps his holy mysteries  
Just on the outside of man's dream !  
In diapason slow, we think  
To hear their pinions rise and sink,  
While they float pure beneath His eyes,  
Like swans adown a stream.

## VI.

Abstractions, are they, from the forms  
Of His great beauty ?—exaltations  
From His great glory ?—strong previsions  
Of what we shall be ?—intuitions  
Of what we are—in calms and storms,  
Beyond our peace and passions ?

## VII.

Things nameless ! which, in passing so,  
Do stroke us with a subtle grace.  
We say, ' Who passes ? '—they are dumb :  
We cannot see them go or come :  
Their touches fall soft—cold—as snow  
Upon a blind man's face.  
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## VIII.

Yet, touching so, they draw above  
Our common thoughts to Heaven's unknown—  
Our daily joy and pain, advance  
To a divine significance,—  
Our human love—O mortal love,  
That light is not its own!

## IX.

And, sometimes, horror chills our blood  
To be so near such mystic Things;  
And we wrap round us, for defence,  
Our purple manners, moods of sense—  
As angels, from the face of God,  
Stand hidden in their wings.

## X.

And, sometimes, through Life's heavy swoond,  
We grope for them!—with strangled breath  
We stretch our hands abroad and try  
To reach them in our agony,—  
And widen, so, the broad life-wound,  
Which soon is large enough for death.





## A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD.

### I.

THEY say that God lives very high !  
But if you look above the pines  
You cannot see our God. And why ?

### II.

And if you dig down in the mines  
You never see Him in the gold,  
Though, from Him, all that's glory shines.

### III.

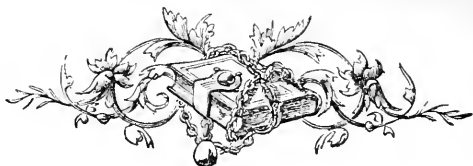
God is so good, He wears a fold  
Of heaven and earth across his face—  
Like secrets kept, for love, untold.

### IV.

But still I feel that His embrace  
Slides down by thrills, through all things made,  
Through sight and sound of every place :

### V.

As if my tender mother laid  
On my shut lids, her kisses' pressure,  
Half-waking me at night ; and said [guesser ?'  
' Who kissed you through the dark, dear



## THE LITTLE FRIEND.

WRITTEN IN THE BOOK WHICH SHE MADE AND SENT TO ME.

—το δ' ἤδη ἐξ οὐθαλμῶν ἀπηλυσθεν.

MARCUS ANTONINUS.

THE book thou givest, dear as such,  
Shall bear thy dearer name ;  
And many a word the leaves shall touch,  
For thee who form'dst the same !  
And on them, many a thought shall grow  
'Neath memory's rain and sun,  
Of thee, glad child, who dost not know  
That thought and pain are one !

Yes ! thoughts of thee, who satest oft,  
A while since, at my side—  
So wild to tame,—to move so soft,  
So very hard to chide :  
The childish vision at thine heart,  
The lesson on the knee ;  
The wandering looks which *would* depart  
Like gulls, across the sea !

The laughter, which no half-belief  
In wrath could all suppress ;  
The falling tears, which looked like grief,  
And were but gentleness :  
The fancies sent, for bliss, abroad,  
As Eden's were not done—  
Mistaking still the cherub's sword  
For shining of the sun !

The sportive speech with wisdom in't--  
The question strange and bold—  
The childish fingers in the print  
Of God's creative hold :  
The praying words in whispers said,  
The sin with sobs confest ;  
The leaning of the young meek head  
Upon the Saviour's breast !

The gentle consciousness of praise  
With hues that went and came ;  
The brighter blush, a word could raise,  
Were *that*—a father's name !  
The shadow on thy smile for each  
That on his face could fall !  
So quick hath love been, *thee* to teach,  
What soon it teacheth all.

Sit still as erst beside his feet !  
The future days are dim,--  
But those will seem to thee most sweet,  
Which keep thee nearest *him* !

Sit at his feet in quiet mirth,  
And let him see arise  
A clearer sun and greener earth  
Within thy loving eyes!—

Ah loving eyes! that used to lift  
Your childhood to my face—  
That leave a memory on the gift  
I look on in your place—  
May bright-eyed hosts your guardians be  
From all but thankful tears,—  
While, brightly as ye turned on *me*,  
Ye meet th' advancing years!







## INCLUSIONS.

### I.

OH, wilt thou have my hand, Dear, to lie along in  
thine?

As a little stone in a running stream, it seems to  
lie and pine!

Now drop the poor pale hand, Dear, . . unfit to  
plight with thine.

### II.

Oh, wilt thou have my cheek, Dear, drawn closer to  
thine own?

My cheek is white, my cheek is worn, by many a  
tear run down.

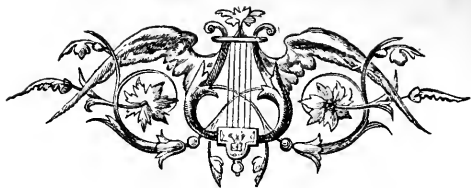
Now leave a little space, Dear, . . lest it should wet  
thine own.

### III.

Oh, must thou have my soul, Dear, commingled  
with thy soul?—

Red grows the cheek, and warm the hand, . . the  
part is in the whole! . .

Nor hands nor cheeks keep separate, when soul is  
joined to soul.



## INSUFFICIENCY.

### L.

THERE is no one beside thee, and no one above thee;  
Thou standest alone, as the nightingale sings!  
Yet my words that would praise thee are impo-  
tent things,  
For none can express thee though all should ap-  
prove thee!  
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can love thee.

### II.

SAY, what can I do for thee? . . . weary thee . . . grieve  
thee?  
Lean on thy shoulder . . . new burdens to add?  
Weep my tears over thee . . . making thee sad?  
Oh, hold me not—love me not! let me retrieve  
thee!  
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can leave thee.



## SONG OF THE ROSE.

ATTRIBUTED TO SAPPHO.

IF Zeus chose us a King of the flowers in his mirth,  
He would call to the rose, and would royally  
crown it;  
For the rose, ho, the rose! is the grace of the earth,  
Is the light of the plants that are growing upon it!  
For the rose, ho, the rose! is the eye of the flowers,  
Is the blush of the meadows that feel themselves  
fair,—  
Is the lightning of beauty, that strikes through the  
bowers  
On pale lovers that sit in the glow unaware.  
Ho, the rose breathes of love! ho, the rose lifts the  
cup  
To the red lips of Cypris invoked for a guest!  
Ho, the rose having curled its sweet leaves for the  
world  
Takes delight in the motion its petals keep up,  
As they laugh to the Wind as it laughs from the  
west.

*From Achilles Tatius*



## A DEAD ROSE.

### I.

O ROSE! who dares to name thee?  
No longer roseate now, nor soft, nor sweet;  
But pale, and hard, and dry, as stubble-wheat,—  
Kept seven years in a drawer—thy titles shame  
thee.

### II.

The breeze that used to blow thee  
Between the hedge-row thorns, and take away  
An odour up the lane to last all day,—  
If breathing now,—unsweetened would forego  
thee.

### III.

The sun that used to smite thee,  
And mix his glory in thy gorgeous urn,  
Till beam appeared to bloom, and flower to burn,—  
If shining now,—with not a hue would light thee.

## IV.

The dew that used to wet thee,  
And, white first, grow incarnadined, because  
It lay upon thee where the crimson was,—  
If dropping now,—would darken where it met thee.

## V.

The fly that lit upon thee,  
To stretch the tendrils of its tiny feet  
Along thy leaf's pure edges after heat,—  
If lighting now,—would coldly overrun thee.

## VI.

The bee that once did suck thee,  
And build thy perfumed ambers up his hive,  
And swoon in thee for joy, till scarce alive,—  
If passing now,—would blindly overlook thee.

## VII.

The heart doth recognise thee,  
Alone, alone! The heart doth smell thee sweet,  
Doth view thee fair, doth judge thee most complete—  
Perceiving all those changes that disguise thee.

## VIII.

Yes, and the heart doth owe thee  
More love, dead rose! than to such roses bold  
As Julia wears at dances, smiling cold!—  
Lie still upon this heart—which breaks below  
thee!



## A WOMAN'S SHORTCOMINGS.

### I.

SHE has laughed as softly as if she sighed !  
She has counted six and over,  
Of a purse well filled, and a heart well tried—  
Oh, each a worthy lover !  
They 'give her time ;' for her soul must slip  
Where the world has set the grooving :  
She will lie to none with her fair red lip—  
But love seeks truer loving.

### II.

She trembles her fan in a sweetness dumb,  
As her thoughts were beyond recalling ;  
With a glance for *one*, and a glance for *some*,  
From her eyelids rising and falling.  
—Speaks common words with a blushful air ;  
—Hears bold words, unreproving :  
But her silence says—what she never will swear—  
And love seeks better loving.

## III.

Go, lady ! lean to the night-guitar,  
 And drop a smile to the bringer ;  
 Then smile as sweetly, when he is far,  
 At the voice of an in-door singer !  
 Bask tenderly beneath tender eyes ;  
 Glance lightly, on their removing ;  
 And join new vows to old perjuries—  
 But dare not call it loving !

## IV.

Unless you can think, when the song is done,  
 No other is soft in the rhythm ;  
 Unless you can feel, when left by One,  
 That all men else go with him ;  
 Unless you can know, when unpraised by his breath,  
 That your beauty itself wants proving ;  
 Unless you can swear—' For life, for death ! '—  
 Oh, fear to call it loving !

## V.

Unless you can muse in a crowd all day,  
 On the absent face that fixed you ;  
 Unless you can love, as the angels may,  
 With the breadth of heaven betwixt you ;  
 Unless you can dream that his faith is fast,  
 Through behoving and unbehoving ;  
 Unless you can *die* when the dream is past—  
 Oh, never call it loving !



## A MAN'S REQUIREMENTS.

### I.

Love me, sweet, with all thou art,  
Feeling, thinking, seeing,—  
Love me in the lightest part,  
Love me in full being.

### II.

Love me with thine open youth  
In its frank surrender;  
With the vowing of thy mouth,  
With its silence tender.

### III.

Love me with thine azure eyes,  
Made for earnest granting !  
Taking colour from the skies,  
Can Heaven's truth be wanting ?



## IV.

Love me with their lids, that fall  
Snow-like at first meeting :  
Love me with thine heart, that all  
The neighbours then see beating.

## V.

Love me with thine hand stretched out  
Freely—open-minded :  
Love me with thy loitering foot,—  
Hearing one behind it.

## VI.

Love me with thy voice, that turns  
Sudden faint above me ;  
Love me with thy blush that burns  
When I murmur ' Love me ! '

## VII.

Love me with thy thinking soul—  
Break it to love-sighing ;  
Love me with thy thoughts that roll  
On through living—dying.

## VIII.

Love me in thy gorgeous airs,  
When the world has crowned thee !  
Love me, kneeling at thy prayers,  
With the angels round thee.

## IX.

Love me pure, as musers do,  
Up the woodlands shady :  
Love me gaily, fast, and true,  
As a winsome lady.

## X.

Through all hopes that keep us brave,  
Further off or nigher,  
Love me for the house and grave,—  
And for something higher.

## XI.

Thus, if thou wilt prove me, dear,  
Woman's love no fable,  
*I* will love *thee*—half-a-year —  
As a man is able.





## A YEAR'S SPINNING.

### I.

HE listened at the porch that day  
To hear the wheel go on, and on,  
And then it stopped—ran back away—  
While through the door he brought the sun:  
But now my spinning is all done.

### II.

He sate beside me, with an oath  
That love ne'er ended, once begun;  
I smiled—believing for us both,  
What was the truth for only one.  
And now my spinning is all done.

### III.

My mother cursed me that I heard  
A young man's wooing as I spun.  
Thanks, cruel mother, for that word,  
For I have, since, a harder known!  
And now my spinning is all done.

## IV.

I thought—O God!—my first-born's cry  
Both voices to my ear would drown:  
I listened in mine agony—  
It was the *silence* made me groan!  
And now my spinning is all done.

## V.

Bury me 'twixt my mother's grave,  
Who cursed me on ner death-bed lone,  
And my dead baby's—(God it save!)  
Who, not to bless me, would not moan.  
And now my spinning is all done.

## VI.

A stone upon my heart and head,  
But no name written on the stone!  
Sweet neighbours! whisper low instead,  
' This sinner was a loving one—  
And now her spinning is all done.'

## VII.

And let the door ajar remain,  
In case he should pass by anon;  
And leave the wheel out very plain,  
That HE, when passing in the sun,  
May *see* the spinning is all done.





## CHANGE UPON CHANGE.

### I.

FIVE months ago, the stream did flow,  
The lilies bloomed within the sedge;  
And we were lingering to and fro,—  
Where none will track thee in this snow,  
Along the stream, beside the hedge.  
Ah, sweet, be free to love and go!  
For if I do not hear thy foot,  
The frozen river is as mute,  
The flowers have dried down to the root;  
And why, since these be changed since May,  
Shouldst *thou* change less than *they*?

### II.

And slow, slow, as the winter snow,  
The tears have drifted to mine eyes;  
And my poor cheeks, five months ago,  
Set blushing at thy praises so,  
Put paleness on for a disguise.  
Ah, sweet, be free to praise and go!  
For if my face is turned to pale,  
It was thine oath that first did fail,—  
It was thy love proved false and frail!  
And why, since these be changed enow,  
Should *I* change less than *thou*?



## THAT DAY.

### I.

I STAND by the river where both of us stood,  
And there is but one shadow to darken the flood!  
And the path leading to it, where both used to pass,  
Has the step but of one, to take dew from the grass,—  
One forlorn since that day.

### II.

The flowers of the margin are many to see,  
None stoops at my bidding to pluck them for me;  
The bird in the alder sings loudly and long,  
My low sound of weeping disturbs not his song,  
As thy vow did that day!

### III.

I stand by the river—I think of the vow—  
Oh, calm as the place is, vow-breaker, be thou!  
I leave the flower growing—the bird, unproved;—  
Would I trouble *thee* rather than *them*, my beloved,  
And my lover that day?

## IV.

Go! be sure of my love—by that treason forgiven;  
Of my prayers—by the blessings they win thee  
from Heaven;  
Of my grief—(guess the length of the sword by the  
sheath's)  
By the silence of life, more pathetic than death's!  
Go,—be clear of that day!





## A REED.

### I.

I AM no trumpet, but a reed :  
No flattering breath shall from me lead  
    A silver sound, a hollow sound !  
I will not ring, for priest or king,  
One blast that in re-echoing  
    Would leave a bondsman faster bound.

### II.

I am no trumpet, but a reed,—  
A broken reed, the wind indeed  
    Left flat upon a dismal shore :  
Yet if a little maid, or child,  
Should sigh within it, earnest-mild,  
    This reed will answer evermore.

### III.

I am no trumpet, but a reed :  
Go, tell the fishers, as they spread  
    Their nets along the river's edge,  
I will not tear their nets at all,  
Nor pierce their hands—if they should fall :  
    Then let them leave me in the sedge.





# CASA GUIDI WINDOWS.





## ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Poem contains the impressions of the writer upon events in Tuscany of which she was a witness. "From a window," the critic may demur. She bows to the objection in the very title of her work. No continuous narrative, nor exposition of political philosophy, is attempted by her. It is a simple story of personal impressions, whose only value is in the intensity with which they were received, as proving her warm affection for a beautiful and unfortunate country; and the sincerity with which they are related, as indicating her own good faith and freedom from all partizanship.

Of the two parts of this Poem, the first was written nearly three years ago, while the second resumes the actual situation of 1851. The discrepancy between the two parts is a sufficient guarantee to the public of the truthfulness of the writer, who, though she certainly escaped the epidemic "falling sickness" of enthusiasm for Pio Nono, takes shame upon herself that she believed, like a woman, some royal oaths, and lost sight of the probable consequences of some obvious popular defects. If the discrepancy should be painful to the reader, let him understand that to the writer it has been more so. But such discrepancy we are called upon to accept at every hour by the conditions of our nature . . . the discrepancy between aspiration and performance, between faith and disillusion, between hope and fact.

"Oh trusted, broken prophecy,  
Oh richest fortune sourly crost,  
Born for the future, to the future lost!"

Nay, not lost to the future in this case. The future of Italy shall not be disinherited.

FLORENCE, 1851.





## CASA GUIDI WINDOWS.

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### PART I.

#### I.

I HEARD last night a little child go singing  
    'Neath Casa Guidi windows, by the church,  
“ *O bella libertà, O bella !*” stringing  
    The same words still on notes he went in search  
So high for, you concluded the upspringing  
    Of such a nimble bird to sky from perch  
Must leave the whole bush in a tremble green ;  
    And that the heart of Italy must beat,  
While such a voice had leave to rise serene  
    'Twixt church and palace of a Florence street !  
A little child, too, who not long had been  
    By mother's finger steadied on his feet ;  
And still *O bella libertà* he sang.

#### II.

Then I thought, musing, of the innumerable  
    Sweet songs which still for Italy outrang  
From older singers' lips, who sang not thus  
    Exultingly and purely, yet, with pang  
Sheathed into music, touched the heart of us

So finely that the pity scarcely pained !  
I thought how Filicaja led on others,  
Bewailers for their Italy enchained,  
And how they called her childless among mothers,  
Widow of empires, ay, and scarce refrained  
Cursing her beauty to her face, as brothers  
Might a shamed sister's—' Had she been less fair  
She were less wretched,'—how, evoking so  
From congregated wrong and heaped despair  
Of men and women writhing under blow,  
Harrowed and hideous in a filthy lair,  
Some personating Image, wherein woe  
Was wrapt in beauty from offending much,  
They called it Cybele, or Niobe,  
Or laid it corpse-like on a bier for such,  
Where all the world might drop for Italy  
Those cadenced tears which burn not where they  
touch,—  
' Juliet of nations, canst thou die as we ?  
And was the violet crown that crowned thy head  
So over large, though new buds made it rough,  
It slipped down and across thine eyelids dead,  
O sweet, fair Juliet ?' Of such songs enough ;  
Too many of such complaints ! Behold, instead,  
Void at Verona, Juliet's marble trough !\*  
As void as that is, are all images  
Men set between themselves and actual wrong,  
To catch the weight of pity, meet the stress  
Of conscience ;—since 'tis easier to gaze long  
On mournful masks, and sad effigies,  
Than on real, live, weak creatures crushed by strong.

\* They show at Verona an empty trough of stone as the tomb of Juliet.

## III.

For me who stand in Italy to-day  
 Where worthier poets stood and sang before,  
 I kiss their footsteps, yet their words gainsay.  
 I can but muse in hope upon this shore  
 Of golden Arno as it shoots away  
 Through Florence' heart beneath her bridges four!  
 Bent bridges, seeming to strain off like bows,  
 And tremble while the arrowy undertide  
 Shoots on and cleaves the marble as it goes,  
 And strikes up palace-walls on either side,  
 And froths the cornice out in glittering rows,  
 With doors and windows quaintly multiplied,  
 And terrace-sweeps, and gazers upon all,  
 By whom if flower or kerchief were thrown out  
 From any lattice there, the same would fall  
 Into the river underneath no doubt,  
 It runs so close and fast 'twixt wall and wall.  
 How beautiful! The mountains from without  
 In silence listen for the word said next,  
 What word will men say,—here where Giotto  
 His campanile, like an unperplexed [planted  
 Fine question Heaven-ward, touching the things  
 granted  
 A noble people who, being greatly vexed  
 In act, in aspiration keep undaunted!  
 What word will God say? Michel's Night and  
 Day  
 And Dawn and Twilight wait in marble scorn,\*

\* These famous statues recline in the Sagrestia Nuova, on the tombs of Giuliano de' Medici, third son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and Lorenzo of Urbino, his grandson. Strozzi's epigram on the Night, with Michel Angelo's rejoinder is well known.

Like dogs upon a dunghill, couched on clay  
From whence the Medicean stamp's outworn,  
The final putting off of all such sway  
By all such hands, and freeing of the unborn  
In Florence and the great world outside Florence  
Three hundred years his patient statues wait  
In that small chapel of the dim St. Lawrence!  
Day's eyes are breaking bold and passionate  
Over his shoulder, and will flash abhorrence  
On darkness and with level looks meet fate,  
When once loose from that marble film of theirs:  
The Night has wild dreams in her sleep; the Dawn  
Is haggard as the sleepless, Twilight wears  
A sort of horror: as the veil withdrawn  
'Twixt the artist's soul and works had left them  
heirs  
Of speechless thoughts which would not quail nor  
fawn,  
Of angers and contempts, of hope and love;  
For not without a meaning did he place  
Princely Urbino on the seat above  
With everlasting shadow on his face;  
While the slow dawns and twilights disapprove  
The ashes of his long-extinguished race,  
Which never more shall clog the feet of men.

## IV.

I do believe, divinest Angelo,  
That winter-hour, Via Larga, when  
They bade thee build a statue up in snow,\*  
And straight that marvel of thine art again

\* This mocking task was set by Pietro, the unworthy successor of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Dissolved beneath the sun's Italian glow,  
Thine eyes, dilated with the plastic passion,  
Thawing too, in drops of wounded manhood, since,  
To mock alike thine art and indignation,  
Laughed at the palace-window the new prince,—  
(‘Aha! this genius needs for exaltation,  
When all's said, and howe'er the proud may wince,  
A little marble from our princely mines!’)

I do believe that hour thou laughedst too,  
For the whole sad world and for thy Florentines  
After those few tears—which were only few!

That as, beneath the sun, the grand white lines  
Of thy snow-statue trembled and withdrew,—  
The head, erect as Jove's, being palsied first,  
The eyelids flattened, the full brow turned blank,—  
The right hand, raised but now as if it cursed,  
Dropt, a mere snowball, (till the people sank  
Their voices, though a louder laughter burst  
From the royal window, (thou couldst proudly  
thank

God and the prince for promise and presage,  
And laugh the laugh back, I think verily,  
Thine eyes being purged by tears of righteous  
rage

To read a wrong into a prophecy,  
And measure a true great man's heritage  
Against a mere great duke's posterity.

I think thy soul said then, ‘I do not need  
A principedom and its quarries after all;

For if I write, paint, carve a word, indeed,  
On book or board or dust, on floor or wall,

The same is kept of God who taketh heed  
That not a letter of the meaning fall

Or ere it touch and teach His world's deep heart,  
Outlasting, therefore, all your lordships, Sir!

So keep your stone, beseech you, for your part,  
To cover up your grave-place and refer

The proper titles! *I* live by my art!  
The thought I threw into this snow shall stir

This gazing people when their gaze is done;  
And the tradition of your act and mine,

When all the snow is melted in the sun,  
Shall gather up, for unborn men, a sign

Of what is the true principedom! ay, and none  
Shall laugh that day, except the drunk with wine.'

## v.

Amen, great Angelo! the day's at hand.  
If many laugh not on it, shall we weep?

Much more we must not, let us understand.  
Through rhymers sonneteering in their sleep,

And archaists mumbling dry bones up the land,  
And sketchers lauding ruined towns a-heap,—

Through all that drowsy hum of voices smooth,  
The hopeful bird mounts carolling from brake;

The hopeful child, with leaps to catch his growth,  
Sings open-eyed for liberty's sweet sake;

And I, a singer also, from my youth,  
Prefer to sing with these who are awake,

With birds, with babes, with men who will not  
fear

The baptism of the holy morning dew,

(And many of such wakers now are here,  
Complete in their anointed manhood, who

Will greatly dare and greatlier persevere,)  
Than join those old thin voices with my new.



And sigh for Italy with some safe sigh  
Cooped up in music 'twixt an oh and ah!—

Nay, hand in hand with that young child, will I  
Go singing rather, '*Bella libertà*,'

Than, with those poets, croon the dead or cry  
'*Se tu men bella fossi, Italia!*'

## VI.

'Less wretched if less fair.' Perhaps a truth  
Is so far plain in this—that Italy,

Long trammelled with the purple of her youth  
Against her age's ripe activity,

Sits still upon her tombs, without death's ruth,  
But also without life's brave energy.

'Now tell us what is Italy?' men ask:

And others answer, 'Virgil, Cicero,

Catullus, Cæsar.' What beside? to task  
The memory closer—'Why, Boccaccio,

Dante, Petrarca,'—and if still the flask  
Appears to yield its wine by drops too slow,—

Angelo, Raffael, Pergolese,'—all  
Whose strong hearts beat through stone, or charged  
again

The paints with fire of souls electrical,  
Or broke up heaven for music. What more then?

Why, then, no more. The chaplet's last beads  
fall

In naming the last saintship within ken,

And, after that, none prayeth in the land.

Alas, this Italy has too long swept

Heroic ashes up for hour-glass sand;

Of her own past, impassioned nympholept!

Consenting to be nailed here by the hand  
To the very bay-tree under which she stepped

A queen of old, and plucked a leafy branch.  
And, licensing the world too long indeed  
To use her broad phylacteries to staunch  
And stop her bloody lips, she takes no heed  
How one clear word would draw an avalanche  
Of living sons around her, to succeed  
The vanished generations. Can she count  
The oil-eaters, with large, live, mobile mouths  
Agape for maccaroni, in the amount  
Of consecrated heroes of her south's  
Bright rosary? The pitcher at the fount,  
The gift of gods, being broken, she much loathes  
To let the ground-leaves of the place confer  
A natural bowl. So henceforth she would seem  
No nation, but the poet's pensioner,  
With alms from every land of song and dream;  
While aye her pipers sadly pipe of her,  
Until their proper breaths, in that extreme  
Of sighing, split the reed on which they played!  
Of which, no more: but never say 'no more'  
To Italy's life! Her memories undismayed  
Still argue 'evermore'—her graves implore  
Her future to be strong and not afraid;  
Her very statues send their looks before!

## VII.

We do not serve the dead—the past is past!  
God lives, and lifts his glorious mornings up  
Before the eyes of men, awake at last,  
Who put away the meats they used to sup,  
And down upon the dust of earth outcast  
The dregs remaining of the ancient cup,  
Then turn to wakeful prayer and worthy act.  
The dead, upon their awful 'vantage ground,

The sun not in their faces,—shall abstract  
No more our strength: we will not be discrowned  
As guardians of their crowns; nor deign transact  
A barter of the present, for a sound  
Of good, so counted in the foregone days.  
O Dead, ye shall no longer cling to us  
With rigid hands of desiccating praise,  
And drag us backward by the garment thus,  
To stand and laud you in long-drawn virelays!  
We will not henceforth be oblivious  
Of our own lives, because ye lived before,  
Nor of our acts, because ye acted well.  
We thank you that ye first unlatched the door—  
But will not make it inaccessible  
By thankings on the threshold any more.  
We hurry onward to extinguish hell  
With our fresh souls, our younger hope, and  
God's  
Maturity of purpose. Soon shall we  
Die also! and, that then our periods  
Of life may round themselves to memory,  
As smoothly as on our graves the burial-sods,  
We now must look to it to excel as ye,  
And bear our age as far, unlimited  
By the last mind-mark! so, to be invoked  
By future generations, as their Dead.

## VIII.

'Tis true that when the dust of death has choked  
A great man's voice, the common words he said  
Turn oracles,—the common thoughts he yoked  
Like horses, draw like griffins!—this is true  
And acceptable. I, too, should desire,

When men make record, with the flowers they  
strew,  
Savonarola's soul went out in fire  
Upon our Grand-duke's piazza, and burned through  
A moment first, or ere he did expire,  
The veil betwixt the right and wrong, and showed  
How near God sate and judged the judges there,\*  
Upon the self-same pavement overstrewn,  
To cast my violets with as reverent care,  
And prove that all the winters which have snowed  
Cannot snow out the scent from stones and air,  
Of a sincere man's virtues. This was he,  
Savonarola, who, while Peter sank  
With his whole boat-load, called courageously  
'Wake Christ, wake Christ!'—who, having tried the  
tank  
Of old church-waters used for baptism  
Ere Luther came to spill them, swore they stank!  
Who also by a princely death-bed cried  
'Loose Florence, or God will not loose thy soul'  
Then fell back the Magnificent and died  
Beneath the star-look, shooting from the cowl,  
Which turned to wormwood bitterness the wide  
Deep sea of his ambitions. It were foul  
To grudge Savonarola and the rest  
Their violets! rather pay them quick and fresh!  
The emphasis of death makes manifest  
The eloquence of action in our flesh;  
And men who, living, were but dimly guessed,  
When once free from their life's entangled mesh,

\* Savonarola was burnt in martyrdom for his testimony against Papal corruptions as early as March, 1498: and, as late as our own day, it is a custom in Florence to strew violets on the pavement where he suffered, in grateful recognition of the anniversary

Show their full length in graves, or oft indeed  
Exaggerate their stature, in the flat,  
To noble admirations which exceed  
Most nobly, yet will calculate in that  
But accurately. We, who are the seed  
Of buried creatures, if we turned and spat  
Upon our antecedents, we were vile.  
Bring violets rather! If these had not walked  
Their furlong, could we hope to walk our mile?  
Therefore bring violets! Yet if we, self-baulked,  
Stand still a-strewing violets all the while,  
These moved in vain, of whom we have vainly talked.  
So rise up henceforth with a cheerful smile,  
And having strewn the violets, reap the corn,  
And, having reaped and garnered, bring the  
plough  
And draw new furrows 'neath the healthy morn,  
And plant the great Hereafter in this Now.

## IX.

Of old 'twas so. How step by step was worn  
As each man gained on each, securely!—how  
Each by his own strength sought his own ideal,  
The ultimate Perfection leaning bright  
From out the sun and stars, to bless the leal  
And earnest search of all for Fair and Right,  
Through doubtful forms, by earth accounted real!  
Because old Jubal blew into delight  
The souls of men, with clear-piped melodies,  
If youthful Asaph were content at most  
To draw from Jubal's grave, with listening eyes,  
Traditionary music's floating ghost  
Into the grass-grown silence? were it wise?  
And was't not wiser, Jubal's breath being lost,

That Miriam clashed her cymbals to surprise  
The sun between her white arms flung apart,  
With new, glad, golden sounds? that David's strings  
O'erflowed his hand with music from his heart?  
So harmony grows full from many springs,  
And happy accident turns holy art.

## X.

You enter, in your Florence wanderings,  
The church of St. Maria Novella. Pass  
The left stair, where at plague-time Macchiavel\*  
Saw one with set fair face as in a glass,  
Dressed out against the fear of death and hell,  
Rustling her silks in pauses of the mass,  
To keep the thought off how her husband fell,  
When she left home, stark dead across her feet—  
The stair leads up to what the Orgagnas save  
Of Dante's dæmons; you, in passing it,  
Ascend the right stair from the farther nave,  
To muse in a small chapel scarcely lit  
By Cimabue's Virgin. Bright and brave,  
That picture was accounted, mark, of old!  
A king stood bare before its sovran grace;†  
A reverent people shouted to behold  
The picture, not the king; and even the place  
Containing such a miracle, grew bold,  
Named the Glad Borgo from that beauteous face,  
Which thrilled the artist, after work, to think

\* See his description of the plague in Florence.

† Charles of Anjou, whom, in his passage through Florence, Cimabue allowed to see this picture while yet in his 'Bottega.' The populace followed the royal visitor, and in the universal delight and admiration, the quarter of the city in which the artist lived was called "Borgo Allegri." The picture was carried in a triumph to the church and deposited there.

His own ideal Mary-smile should stand  
So very near him!—he, within the brink  
Of all that glory, let in by his hand  
With too divine a rashness! Yet none shrink  
Who come to gaze here now—albeit 'twas planned  
Sublimely in the thought's simplicity.  
The Lady, throned in empyreal state,  
Minds only the young babe upon her knee;  
While sidelong angels bear the royal weight,  
Prostrated meekly, smiling tenderly  
Oblivion of their wings! the Child thereat  
Stretches its hand like God. If any should,  
Because of some stiff draperies and loose joints,  
Gaze scorn down from the heights of Raffaelhood,  
On Cimabue's picture,—Heaven anoints  
The head of no such critic, and his blood  
The poet's curse strikes full on, and appoints  
To ague and cold spasms for evermore.  
A noble picture! worthy of the shout  
Wherewith along the streets the people bore  
Its cherub faces, which the sun threw out  
Until they stooped and entered the church door!—  
Yet rightly was young Giotto talked about,  
Whom Cimabue found among the sheep,\*  
And knew, as gods know gods, and carried home  
To paint the things he had painted, with a deep  
And fuller insight, and so overcome  
His chapel-lady with a heavenlier sweep  
Of light. For thus we mount into the sum  
Of great things known or acted. I hold, too,

\* How Cimabue found Giotto, the shepherd-boy, sketching a ram of his flock upon a stone, is a pretty story told by Vasari,—who also relates how the elder artist Margheritone died "infastidito" of the successes of the new school.

That Cimabue smiled upon the lad,  
At the first stroke which passed what he could  
do,—  
Or else his Virgin's smile had never had  
Such sweetness in't. All great men who foreknew  
Their heirs in art, for art's sake have been glad,  
And bent their old white heads as if uncrowned,  
Fanatics of their pure ideals still  
Far more than of their triumphs, which were found  
With some less vehement struggle of the will.  
If old Margheritone trembled, swooned,  
And died despairing at the open sill  
Of other men's achievements, (who achieved,  
By loving art beyond the master!) he  
Was old Margheritone and conceived  
Never, at first youth and most ecstasy,  
A Virgin like that dream of one, which heaved  
The death-sigh from his heart. If wistfully  
Margheritone sickened at the smell  
Of Cimabue's laurel, let him go!—  
For Cimabue stood up very well  
In spite of Giotto's—and Angelico,  
The artist-saint, kept smiling in his cell  
The smile with which he welcomed the sweet slow  
Inbreak of angels, (whitening through the dim  
That he might paint them!) while the sudden sense  
Of Raffael's future was revealed to him  
By force of his own fair works' competence.  
The same blue waters where the dolphins swim  
Suggest the Tritons. Through the blue Immense  
Strike out all swimmers! cling not in the way  
Of one another, so to sink; but learn  
The strong man's impulse, catch the fresh'ning  
spray



He throws up in his motions, and discern  
By his clear, westering eye, the time of day.  
Thou, God, hast set us worthy gifts to earn,  
Besides thy heaven and Thee ! and when I say  
There's room here for the weakest man alive  
To live and die,—there's room too, I repeat,  
For all the strongest to live well, and strive  
Their own way, by their individual heat,—  
Like a new bee-swarm leaving the old hive,  
Despite the wax which tempts so violet-sweet.  
Then let the living live, the dead retain  
Their grave-cold flowers !—though honour's best  
supplied,  
By bringing actions, to prove their's not vain.

## XI.

Cold graves, we say ? it shall be testified  
That living men who burn in heart and brain,  
Without the dead, were colder. If we tried  
To sink the past beneath our feet, be sure  
The future would not stand. Precipitate  
This old roof from the shrine—and, insecure,  
The nesting swallows fly off, mate from mate.  
How scant the gardens, if the graves were fewer !  
The tall green poplars grew no longer straight,  
Whose tops not looked to Troy. Would any fight  
For Athens, and not swear by Marathon ?  
Who dared build temples, without tombs in sight ?  
Or live, without some dead man's benison ?  
Or seek truth, hope for good, and strive for right,  
If, looking up, he saw not in the sun  
Some angel of the martyrs all day long  
Standing and waiting ? your last rhythm will need

Your earliest key-note. Could I sing this song,  
If my dead masters had not taken heed  
To help the heavens and earth to make me strong,  
As the wind ever will find out some reed,  
And touch it to such issues as belong  
To such a frail thing? None may grudge the dead  
Libations from full cups. Unless we choose  
To look back to the hills behind us spread,  
The plains before us sadden and confuse;  
If orphaned, we are disinherited.

## XII.

I would but turn these lachrymals to use,  
And pour fresh oil in from the olive grove,  
To furnish them as new lamps. Shall I say  
What made my heart beat with exulting love,  
A few weeks back?

## XIII.

. . . . The day was such a day  
As Florence owes the sun. The sky above,  
Its weight upon the mountains seemed to lay,  
And palpitante in glory, like a dove  
Who has flown too fast, full-hearted!—take away  
The image! for the heart of man beat higher  
That day in Florence, flooding all her streets  
And piazzas with a tumult and desire.  
The people, with accumulated heats,  
And faces turned one way, as if one fire  
Both drew and flushed them, left their ancient beats  
And went up toward the palace-Pitti wall,  
To thank their Grand-duke, who, not quite of course  
Had graciously permitted, at their call,  
The citizens to use their civic force

To guard their civic homes. So, one and all,  
The Tuscan cities streamed up to the source  
Of this new good, at Florence; taking it  
As good so far, presageful of more good,—  
The first torch of Italian freedom, lit  
To toss in the next tiger's face who should  
Approach too near them in a greedy fit,—  
The first pulse of an even flow of blood,  
To prove the level of Italian veins  
Toward rights perceived and granted. How we  
gazed

From Casa Guidi windows, while, in trains  
Of orderly procession—banners raised,  
And intermittent bursts of martial strains  
Which died upon the shout, as if amazed  
By gladness beyond music—they passed on!  
The magistracy, with insignia, passed;  
And all the people shouted in the sun,  
And all the thousand windows which had cast  
A ripple of silks, in blue and scarlet, down,  
As if the houses overflowed at last,  
Seemed growing larger with fair heads and  
eyes.

The lawyers passed; and still arose the shout,  
And hands broke from the windows to surprise  
Those grave calm brows with bay-tree leaves thrown  
out.

The priesthood passed: the friars, with worldly-  
wise  
Keen sidelong glances from their beards about  
The street to see who shouted! many a monk  
Who takes a long rope in the waist, was there!  
Whereat the popular exultation drunk  
With indrawn 'vivas,' the whole sunny air,

While through the murmuring windows rose and  
sunk

A cloud of kerchiefed hands! 'the church makes  
fair

Her welcome in the new Pope's name.' Ensued  
The black sign of the 'martyrs!' name no name,  
But count the graves in silence. Next, were  
viewed

The artists; next, the trades; and after came

The people,—flag and sign, and rights as good,—  
And very loud the shout was for that same

Motto, 'Il popolo,' IL POPOLO,—

The word means dukedom, empire, majesty,

And kings in such an hour might read it so.

And next, with banners, each in his degree.

Deputed representatives a-row

Of every separate state of Tuscany :

Siena's she-wolf, bristling on the fold

Of the first flag, preceded Pisa's hare ;

And Massa's lion floated calm in gold,

Pienza's following with his silver stare ;

Arezzo's steed pranced clear from bridle-hold,—

And well might shout our Florence, greeting there

These, and more brethren ! Last, the world had  
sent

The various children of her teeming flanks—

Greeks, English, French—as if to a parliament  
Of lovers of her Italy in ranks,

Each bearing its land's symbols reverent ;

At which the stones seemed breaking into thanks

And rattling up the sky, such sounds in proof

Arose ! the very house-walls seemed to bend,

The very windows, up from door to roof,

Flashed out a rapture of bright heads, to mend

With passionate looks, the gesture's whirling off  
A hurricane of leaves ! Three hours did end

While all these passed ; and ever in the crowd,  
Rude men, unconscious of the tears that kept  
Their beards moist, shouted ; some few laughed  
aloud,

And none asked any why they laughed and wept :  
Friends kissed each other's cheeks, and foes long  
vowed

Did it more warmly ; two-months' babies leapt  
Right upward in their mother's arms, whose  
black

Wide, glittering eyes looked elsewhere ; lovers  
pressed

Each before either, neither glancing back ;  
And peasant maidens, smoothly 'tired and tressed,  
Forgot to finger on their throats the slack  
Great pearl-strings ; while old blind men would not  
rest,

But pattered with their staves and slid their shoes  
Along the stones, and smiled as if they saw.

O Heaven ! I think that day had noble use  
Among God's days. So near stood Right and Law,  
Both mutually forborne ! Law would not bruise,  
Nor Right deny ; and each in reverent awe  
Honoured the other. What if, ne'ertheless,

That good day's sun delivered to the vines

No charta, and the liberal Duke's excess  
Did scarce exceed a Guelf's or Ghibelline's

In any special actual righteousness  
Of what that day he granted ;\* still the signs

\* Since when the constitutional concessions have been complete in Tuscany, as all the world knows. The event breaks in upon the meditation, and is too fast for prophecy in these strange times.—E. B. B

Are good, and full of promise, we must say,  
When multitudes approach their kings with prayers  
And kings concede their people's right to pray,  
Both in one sunshine! Grievs are not despairs,  
So uttered; nor can royal claims dismay  
When men from humble homes and ducal chairs,  
Hate wrong together. It was well to view  
Those banners ruffled in a ruler's face,  
Inscribed, 'Live freedom, union, and all true  
Brave patriots who are aided by God's grace!'  
Nor was it ill, when Leopoldo drew  
His little children to the window-place  
He stood in at the Pitti, to suggest  
*They* too should govern as the people willed.  
What a cry rose then! some, who saw the best,  
Declared his eyes filled up and overfilled  
With good warm human tears which unrepresed  
Ran down. I like his face: the forehead's build  
Has no capacious genius, yet perhaps  
Sufficient comprehension,—mild and sad,  
And careful nobly,—not with care that wraps  
Self-loving hearts, to stifle and make mad,  
But careful with the care that shuns a lapse  
Of faith and duty,—studious not to add  
A burden in the gathering of a gain.  
And so, God save the Duke, I say with those  
Who that day shouted it, and while dukes reign,  
May all wear in the visible overflows  
Of spirit, such a look of careful pain!  
For God must love it better than repose.

## XIV.

And all the people who went up to let  
Their hearts out to that Duke, as has been told—

Where guess ye that the living people met,  
Kept tryst, formed ranks, chose leaders, first un-  
rolled

Their banners?

In the Loggia? where is set  
Cellini's godlike Perseus, bronze—or gold—  
(How name the metal, when the statue flings  
Its soul so in your eyes?) with brow and sword  
Superbly calm, as all opposing things  
Slain with the Gorgon, were no more abhorred  
Since ended?

No! the people sought no wings  
From Perseus in the Loggia, nor implored  
An inspiration in the place beside,  
From that dim bust of Brutus, jagged and grand,  
Where Buonarotti passionately tried  
From out the close-clenched marble to demand  
The head of Rome's sublimest homicide,  
Then dropt the quivering mallet from his hand,  
Despairing he could find no model stuff  
Of Brutus, in all Florence, where he found  
The gods and gladiators thick enough.

Not there! the people chose still holier ground!  
The people, who are simple, blind, and rough,  
Know their own angels, after looking round.  
What chose they then? where met they?

xv.

On the stone  
Call'd Dante's,—a plain flat stone, scarce dis-  
cerned  
From others in the pavement,—whereupon  
He used to bring his quiet chair out, turned  
To Brunelleschi's church, and pour alone

The lava of his spirit when it burned—  
It is not cold to-day. O passionate  
Poor Dante, who, a banished Florentine,  
Didst sit austere at banquets of the great,  
And muse upon this far-off stone of thine,  
And think how oft some passer used to wait  
A moment, in the golden day's decline,  
With 'Good night, dearest Dante!'—well, good  
night!

I muse now, Dante, and think, verily,  
Though chapelled in the byeway, out of sight,  
Ravenna's bones would thrill with ecstasy,  
Could'st know thy favourite stone's elected right  
As tryst-place for thy Tuscans to foresee  
Their earliest chartas from. Good night, good morn,  
Henceforward, Dante! now my soul is sure  
That thine is better comforted of scorn,  
And looks down earthward in completer cure,  
Than when, in Santa Croce church forlorn  
Of any corpse, the architect and hewer  
Did pile the empty marbles as thy tomb!\*

For now thou art no longer exiled, now  
Best honoured!—we salute thee who art come  
Back to the old stone with a softer brow  
Than Giotto drew upon the wall, for some  
Good lovers of our age to track and plough  
Their way to, through Time's ordures stratified,†  
And startle broad awake into the dull  
Bargello chamber. Now, thou'rt milder eyed,

\* The Florentines, to whom the Ravennese denied the body of Dante which was asked of them in a "late remorse of love," have given a cenotaph to their divine poet in this church. Something less than a grave!

† In allusion to Mr. Kirkup's well-known discovery of Giotto's fresco-portrait of Dante.



Now, Beatrix may leap up glad to cull  
Thy first smile, even in heaven and at her side,  
Like that which, nine years old, looked beautiful  
At May-game. What do I say? I only meant  
That tender Dante loved his Florence well,  
While Florence, now, to love him is content;  
And, mark ye, that the piercingest sweet smell  
Of love's dear incense by the living sent  
To find the dead, is not accessible  
To lazy livers! no narcotic,—not  
Swung in a censer to a sleepy tune,—  
But trod out in the morning air, by hot  
Quick spirits, who tread firm to ends foreshown,  
And use the name of greatness unforgot,  
To meditate what greatness may be done.

## XVI.

For Dante sits in heaven, and ye stand here,  
And more remains for doing, all must feel,  
Than trysting on his stone from year to year  
To shift processions, civic toe to heel,  
The town's thanks to the Pitti. Are ye freer  
For what was felt that day? A chariot wheel  
May spin fast, yet the chariot never roll.  
But if that day suggested something good,  
And bettered, with one purpose, soul by soul,—  
Better means freer. A land's brotherhood  
Is most puissant! Men, upon the whole,  
Are what they can be,—nations, what they would.

## XVII.

Will, therefore, to be strong, thou Italy!  
Will to be noble! Austrian Metternich

Can fix no yoke unless the neck agree ;  
And thine is like the lion's when the thick  
Dews shudder from it, and no man would be  
The stroker of his mane, much less would prick  
His nostril with a reed. When nations roar  
Like lions, who shall tame them, and defraud  
Of the due pasture by the river-shore ?  
Roar, therefore ! shake your dew-laps dry abroad.  
The amphitheatre with open door  
Leads back upon the benchers who applaud  
The last spear-thruster !

## XVIII.

Yet the Heavens forbid  
That we should call on passion to confront  
The brutal with the brutal, and, amid  
This ripening world, suggest a lion-hunt  
And lion-vengeance for the wrongs men did  
And do now, though the spears are getting blunt.  
We only call, because the sight and proof  
Of lion-strength hurts nothing ; and to show  
A lion-heart, and measure paw with hoof,  
Helps something, even, and will instruct a foe  
Well as the onslaught, how to stand aloof !  
Or else the world gets past the mere brute blow  
Given or taken. Children use the fist  
Until they are of age to use the brain :  
And so we needed Cæsars to assist  
Man's justice, and Napoleons to explain  
God's counsel, when a point was nearly missed,  
Until our generations should attain  
Christ's stature nearer. Not that we, alas !  
Attain already ; but a single inch  
Will raise to look down on the swordsman's pass.

As knightly Roland on the coward's flinch ;  
And, after chloroform and ether-gas,  
We find out slowly what the bee and finch  
Have ready found, through Nature's lamp in each,  
How to our races we may justify  
Our individual claims, and, as we reach  
Our own grapes, bend the top vines to supply  
The children's uses : how to fill a breach  
With olive branches ; how to quench a lie  
With truth, and smite a foe upon the cheek  
With Christ's most conquering kiss ! why, these  
are things  
Worth a great nation's finding, to prove weak  
The 'glorious arms' of military kings !  
And so with wide embrace, my England, seek  
To stifle the bad heat and flickerings  
Of this world's false and nearly expended fire !  
Draw palpitating arrows to the wood,  
And twangabroad thy high hopes, and thy higher  
Resolves, from that most virtuous altitude,  
Till nations shall unconsciously aspire  
By looking up to thee, and learn that good  
And glory are not different. Announce law  
By freedom ; exalt chivalry by peace ;  
Instruct how clear calm eyes can overawe,  
And how pure hands, stretched simply to release  
A bond-slave, will not need a sword to draw  
To be held dreadful. O my England, cease  
Thy purple with no alien agonies !  
No struggles toward encroachment, no vile war !  
Disband thy captains, change thy victories,  
Be henceforth prosperous as the angels are—  
Helping, not humbling.

## XIX.

Drums and battle cries  
Go out in music of the morning star—  
And soon we shall have thinkers in the place  
Of fighters ; each found able as a man  
To strike electric influence through a race,  
Unstayed by city-wall and barbican.  
The poet shall look grander in the face  
Than even of old, when he of Greece began  
To sing that ‘ Achillean wrath which slew  
So many heroes, ’—seeing he shall treat  
The deeds of souls heroic toward the true—  
The oracles of life—provisions sweet  
And awful, like divine swans gliding through  
White arms of Ledas, which will leave the heat  
Of their escaping godship to endue  
The human medium with a heavenly flush.

Meanwhile, in this same Italy we want  
Not popular passion, to arise and crush.  
But popular conscience, which may covenant  
For what it knows. Concede without a blush—  
To grant the ‘ civic guard ’ is not to grant  
The civic spirit, living and awake. .  
Those lappets on your shoulders, citizens,  
Your eyes strain after sideways till they ache,  
While still, in admirations and amens,  
The crowd comes up on festa-days, to take  
The great sight in—are not intelligence,  
Not courage even—alas, if not the sign  
Of something very noble, they are nought ;  
For every day ye dress your sallow kine  
With fringes down their cheeks, though unbesought  
They loll their heavy heads and drag the wine,

And bear the wooden yoke as they were taught  
The first day. What ye want is light—indeed  
Not sunlight—(ye may well look up surprised  
To those unfathomable heavens that feed  
Your purple hills!)—but God's light organised  
In some high soul, crowned capable to lead  
The conscious people,—conscious and advised,—  
For if we lift a people like mere clay,  
It falls the same. We want thee, O unfound  
And sovran teacher!—if thy beard be grey  
Or black, we bid thee rise up from the ground  
And speak the word God giveth thee to say,  
Inspiring into all this people round,  
Instead of passion, thought, which pioneers  
All generous passion, purifies from sin,  
And strikes the hour for. Rise up teacher!  
here's

A crowd to make a nation!—best begin  
By making each a man, till all be peers  
Of earth's true patriots and pure martyrs in  
Knowing and daring. Best unbar the doors  
Which Peter's heirs keep locked so overclose  
They only let the mice across the floors,  
While every churchman dangles as he goes  
The great key at his girdle, and abhors  
In Christ's name, meekly. Open wide the house—  
Concede the entrance with Christ's liberal mind,  
And set the tables with His wine and bread.  
What! commune in 'both kinds?' In every  
kind—  
Wine, wafer, love, hope, truth, unlimited,  
Nothing kept back. For when a man is blind  
To starlight, will he see the rose is red?  
A bondsman shivering at a Jesuit's foot—

‘ Væ ! meâ culpâ ! ’ is not like to stand  
 A freedman at a despot’s, and dispute  
 His titles by the balance in his hand,  
 Weighing them ‘ suo jure. ’ Tend the root,  
 If careful of the branches ; and expand  
 The inner souls of men before you strive  
 For civic heroes.

## xx.

But the teacher, where ?  
 From all these crowded faces, all alive,  
 Eyes, of their own lids flashing themselves bare,  
 And brows that with a mobile life contrive  
 A deeper shadow,—may we no wise dare  
 To point a finger out, and touch a man,  
 And cry ‘ this is the leader. ’ What, all these !—  
 Broad heads, black eyes,—yet not a soul that ran  
 From God down with a message ? All, to please  
 The donna waving measures with her fan,  
 And not the judgment-angel on his knees—  
 The trumpet just an inch off from his lips—  
 Who when he breathes next, will put out the sun ?  
 Yet mankind’s self were foundered in eclipse,  
 If lacking doers, with great works to be done,  
 And lo, the startled earth already dips  
 Back into light—a better day’s begun—  
 And soon this leader, teacher, will stand plain,  
 And build the golden pipes and synthesize  
 This people-organ for a holier strain.  
 We hold this hope, and still in all these eyes,  
 Go sounding for the deep look which shall drain  
 Suffused thought into channelled enterprise !  
 Where is the teacher ? What now may he do.  
 Who shall do greatly ? Doth he gird his waist

With a monk's rope, like Luther? or pursue  
 The goat, like Tell? or dry his nets in haste,  
 Like Masaniello when the sky was blue?  
 Keep house like other peasants, with inlaced  
 Bare, brawny arms about a favourite child,  
 And meditative looks beyond the door.

(But not to mark the kidling's teeth have filed  
 The green shoots of his vine which last year bore  
 Full twenty bunches;) or, on triple-piled  
 Throne-velvets sits at ease, to bless the poor,  
 Like other pontiffs, in the Poorest's name,  
 The old tiara keeps itself aslope

Upon his steady brows, which, all the same,  
 Bend mildly to permit the people's hope?

## XXI.

Whatever hand shall grasp this oriflamme,  
 Whatever man (last peasant or first Pope  
 Seeking to free his country!) shall appear,  
 Teach, lead, strike fire into the masses, fill  
 These empty bladders with fine air, insphere  
 These wills into a unity of will,

And make of Italy a nation—dear  
 And blessed be that man! the Heavens shall kill  
 No leaf the earth shall grow for him; and Death  
 Shall cast him back upon the lap of Life,  
 To live more surely, in a clarion-breath  
 Of hero-music! Brutus, with the knife,  
 Rienzi, with the fasces, throb beneath  
 Rome's stones; and more, who threw away joy's fife  
 Like Pallas, that the beauty of their souls  
 Might ever shine untroubled and entire!

But if it can be true that he who rolls  
 The Church's thunders will reserve her fire

For only light ; from eucharistic bowls  
Will pour new life for nations that expire,  
And rend the scarlet of his Papal vest  
To gird the weak loins of his countrymen—  
I hold that he surpasses all the rest  
Of Romans, heroes, patriots,—and that when  
He sat down on the throne, he dispossessed  
The first graves of some glory. See again,  
This country-saving is a glorious thing !  
And if a common man achieved it ? Well !  
Say, a rich man did ? Excellent ! A king ?  
That grows sublime ! A priest ? Improbable !  
A Pope ? Ah, there we stop and cannot bring  
Our faith up to the leap, with history's bell  
So heavy round the neck of it—albeit  
We fain would grant the possibility  
For *thy* sake, Pio Nono !

## XXII.

Stretch thy feet  
In that case—I will kiss them reverently  
As any pilgrim to the Papal seat !  
And, such proved possible, thy throne to me  
Shall seem as holy a place as Pellico's  
Venetian dungeon ; or as Spielberg's grate,  
At which the Lombard woman hung the rose  
Of her sweet soul, by its own dewy weight,  
To feel the dungeon round her sunshine close,  
And pining so, died early, yet too late  
For what she suffered ! Yea, I will not choose  
Betwixt thy throne, Pope Pius, and the spot  
Marked red for ever spite of rains and dews,  
Where two fell riddled by the Austrian's shot—  
The brothers Bandiera, who accuse.



With one same mother-voice and face, (that what  
 They speak may be invincible,) the sins  
 Of earth's tormentors before God, the just.  
 Until the unconseious thunder-bolt begins  
 To loosen in His grasp.

## XXIII.

And yet we must  
 Beware, and mark the natural kiths and kins  
 Of circumstance and office, and distrust  
 A rich man reasoning in a poor man's hut;  
 A poet who neglects pure truth to prove  
 Statistic fact; a child who leaves a rut  
 For a smoother road; the priest who vows his glove  
 Exhales no grace; the prince who walks a-foot;  
 The woman who has sworn she will not love;  
 And this Ninth Pius in Seventh Gregory's chair,  
 With Andrea Doria's forehead!

## XXIV.

Count what goes  
 To making up a pope, before he wear  
 That triple crown. We pass the world-wide throes  
 Which went to make the popedom,—the despair  
 Of free men, good men, wise men; the dread shows  
 Of women's faces, by the faggot's flash,  
 Tossed out, to the minutest stir and throb  
 O' the white lips, the least tremble of a lash,  
 To glut the red stare of the licensed mob!  
 The short mad cries down oubliettes, and plash  
 So horribly far off! priests, trained to rob,  
 And kings that, like encouraged nightmares, sate  
 On nations' hearts most heavily distressed  
 With monstrous sights and apophthegms of fate!—

We pass these things,—because ‘the times’ are  
    prest

With necessary charges of the weight  
Of all this sin, and ‘Calvin, for the rest,  
    Made bold to burn Servetus—Ah, men err!’—  
And, so do *churches!* which is all we mean

To bring to proof in any register  
Of theological fat kine and lean—

So drive them back into the pens! refer  
Old sins (with pourpoint, ‘quotha’ and ‘I ween,’)

Entirely to the old times, the old times;  
Nor ever ask why this preponderant,  
    Infallible, pure Church could set her chimes  
Most loudly then, just then,—most jubilant,  
    Precisely then—when mankind stood in crimes  
Full heart-deep, and Heaven’s judgments were not  
    scant.

Inquire still less, what signifies a church  
Of perfect inspiration and pure laws,  
    Who burns the first man with a brimstone-torch,  
And grinds the second, bone by bone, because  
    The times, forsooth, are used to rack and scoreh!  
What *is* a holy Church, unless she awes

The times down from their sins? Did Christ select  
Such amiable times, to come and teach

Love to, and mercy? The whole world were  
    wrecked,

If every mere great man, who lives to reach  
    A little leaf of popular respect,

Attained not simply by some special breach

In the age’s customs, by some preeedence  
In thought and act, which, having proved him higher

Than those he lived with, proved his competence  
In helping them to wonder and aspire.

## XXV.

My words are guiltless of the bigot's sense!  
My soul has fire to mingle with the fire  
Of all these souls, within or out of doors  
Of Rome's Church or another. I believe  
In one priest, and one temple, with its floors  
Of shining jasper gloom'd at morn and eve  
By countless knees of earnest auditors;  
And crystal walls, too lucid to perceive,  
That none may take the measure of the place  
And say, 'so far the porphyry; then, the flint—  
To this mark, mercy goes, and there, ends grace,'  
Though still the permeable crystals hint  
At some white starry distance, bathed in space!  
I feel how nature's ice-crusts keep the dint  
Of undersprings of silent Deity;  
I hold the articulated gospels, which  
Show Christ among us, crucified on tree;  
I love all who love truth, if poor or rich  
In what they have won of truth possessively!  
No altars and no hands defiled with pitch  
Shall scare me off, but I will pray and eat  
With all these—taking leave to choose my ewers  
And say at last, 'Your visible Churches cheat  
Their inward types; and if a Church assures  
Of standing without failure and defeat,  
The same both fails and lies!'

## XXVI.

To leave which hures  
Of wider subject through past years,—behold,  
We come back from the Popedom to the Pope,  
To ponder what he *must* be, ere we are bold

For what he *may* be, with our heavy hope  
To trust upon his soul. So, fold by fold,  
Explore this mummy in the priestly cope  
Transmitted through the darks of time, to catch  
The man within the wrappage, and discern  
How he, an honest man, upon the watch  
Full fifty years, for what a man may learn,  
Contrived to get just there; with what a snatch  
Of old world oboli he had to earn  
The passage through; with what a drowsy sop  
To drench the busy barkings of his brain;  
What ghosts of pale tradition, wreathed with hop  
'Gainst wakeful thought, he had to entertain  
For heavenly visions; and consent to stop  
The clock at noon, and let the hour remain  
(Without vain windings up) inviolate,  
Against all chimings from the belfry. Lo!  
From every given pope you must abate,  
Albeit you love him, some things—good, you  
know—

Which every given heretic you hate  
Assumes for his, as being plainly so.  
A pope must hold by popes a little,—yes,  
By councils,—from Nicæa up to Trent,—  
By hierocratic empire, more or less  
Irresponsible to men,—he must resent  
Each man's particular conscience, and repress  
Inquiry, meditation, argument,  
As tyrants faction. Also, he must not  
Love truth too dangerously, but prefer  
'The interests of the Church,' because a blot  
Is better than a rent in miniver,—  
Submit to see the people swallow hot  
Husk-porridge which his chartered churchmen stir

Quoting the only true God's epigraph,  
'Feed my lambs, Peter!'—must consent to sit  
Attesting with his pastoral ring and staff,  
To such a picture of our Lady, hit  
Off well by artist angels, though not half  
As fair as Giotto would have painted it ;  
To such a vial, where a dead man's blood  
Runs yearly warm beneath a churchman's finger ;  
To such a holy house of stone and wood,  
Whereof a cloud of angels was the bringer  
From Bethlehem to Loreto!—Were it good  
For any pope on earth to be a flinger  
Of stones against these high-niched counterfeits?  
Apostates only are iconoclasts.  
He dares not say, while this false thing abets  
That true thing, 'this is false!' he keeps his fasts  
And prayers, as prayer and fast were silver frets  
To change a note upon a string that lasts,  
And make a lie a virtue. Now, if he  
Did more than this,—higher hoped and braver  
dared,  
I think he were a pope in jeopardy,  
Or no pope rather! for his truth had barred  
The vaulting of his life. And certainly,  
If he do only this, mankind's regard  
Moves on from him at once, to seek some new  
Teacher and leader! He is good and great  
According to the deeds a pope can do ;  
Most liberal, save those bonds ; affectionate,  
As princes may be ; and, as priests are, true—  
But only the ninth Pius after eight,  
When all's praised most. At best and hopefullest,  
He's pope—we want a man! his heart beats warm,  
But, like the prince enchanted to the waist,

He sits in stone, and hardens by a charm

Into the marble of his throne high-placed!

Mild benediction, waves his saintly arm—

So good! but what we want's a perfect man,  
Complete and all alive: half travertine

Half suits our need, and ill subserves our plan.  
Feet, knees, nerves, sinews, energies divine

Were never yet too much for men who ran  
In such hard ways as must be this of thine,

Deliverer whom we seek, whoe'er thou art,  
Pope, prince, or peasant! If, indeed, the first,

The noblest, therefore! since the heroic heart  
Within thee must be great enough to burst

Those trammels buckling to the baser part  
Thy saintly peers in Rome, who crossed and cursed  
With the same finger.

XXVII.

Come, appear, be found,  
If pope or peasant, come! we hear the cock,  
The courtier of the mountains when first crowned  
With golden dawn; and orient glories flock  
To meet the sun upon the highest ground.

Take voice and work! we wait to hear thee knock

At some one of our Florentine nine gates,  
On each of which was imaged a sublime

Face of a Tuscan genius. which, for hate's  
And love's sake both, our Florence in her prime

Turned boldly on all comers to her states,  
As heroes turned their shields in antique time,

Blazoned with honourable acts. And though  
The gates are blank now of such images,

And Petrarch looks no more from Nicolo  
Toward dear Arezzo, 'twixt the acacia trees,

Nor Dante, from gate Gallo—still we know,  
Despite the razing of the blazonries,  
Remains the consecration of the shield,—  
The dead heroic faces will start out  
On all these gates, if foes should take the field,  
And blend sublimely, at the earliest shout,  
With living heroes who will scorn to yield  
A hair's-breadth ev'n, when, gazing round about,  
They find in what a glorious company  
They fight the foes of Florence! Who will grudge  
His one poor life, when that great man we see  
Has given five hundred years, the world being  
judge,  
To help the glory of his Italy?  
Who, born the fair side of the Alps, will budge,  
When Dante stays, when Ariosto stays,  
When Petrarch stays for ever? Ye bring swords,  
My Tuscans? Why, if wanted in this haze,  
Bring swords, but first bring souls!—bring thoughts  
and words  
Unruled by a tear of yesterday's,  
Yet awful by its wrong, and cut these cords  
And mow this green lush falseness to the roots,  
And shut the mouth of hell below the swathe!  
And if ye can bring songs too, let the lute's  
Recoverable music softly bathe  
Some poet's hand, that, through all bursts and  
bruits  
Of popular passion—all unripe and rathe  
Convictions of the popular intellect—  
Ye may not lack a finger up the air,  
Annunciative, reproving, pure, erect,  
To show which way your first Ideal bare  
The whiteness of its wings, when, sorely pecked

By falcons on your wrists, it unaware  
Arose up overhead, and out of sight.

## XXVIII.

Meanwhile, let all the far ends of the world  
Breathe back the deep breath of their old delight,  
To swell the Italian banner just unfurled.

Help, lands of Europe! for, if Austria fight,  
The drums will bar your slumber. Had ye curled  
The laurel for your thousand artists' brows,  
If these Italian hands had planted none?

Can any sit down idle in the house,  
Nor hear appeals from Buonarotti's stone  
And Raffael's canvas, rousing and to rouse?

Where's Poussin's master? Gallic Avignon  
Bred Laura, and Vaucluse's fount has stirred  
The heart of France too strongly,—as it lets  
Its little stream out, like a wizard's bird

Which bounds upon its emerald wing and wets  
The rocks on each side—that she should not gird  
Her loins with Charlemagne's sword when foes beset

The country of her Petrarch. Spain may well  
Be minded how from Italy she caught,

To mingle with her tinkling Moorish bell,  
A fuller cadence and a subtler thought;

And even the New World, the receptacle  
Of freemen, may send glad men, as it ought,

To greet Vespucci Amerigo's door;  
While England claims, by trump of poetry,

Verona, Venice, the Ravenna shore,  
And dearer holds John Milton's Fiesole

Than Langlande's Malvern with the stars in flower.



## XXIX.

And Vallombrosa, we two went to see

Last June, beloved companion,—where sublime  
The mountains live in holy families,

And the slow pinewoods ever climb and climb  
Half up their breasts ; just stagger as they seize

Some grey crag—drop back with it many a time,  
And straggle blindly down the precipice !

The Vallombrosan brooks were strewn as thick  
That June-day, knee-deep, with dead beechen leaves,

As Milton saw them ere his heart grew sick,  
And his eyes blind. I think the monks and bees  
Are all the same too : scarce they have changed  
the wick

On good St. Gualbert's altar, which receives

The convent's pilgrims ; and the pool in front  
Wherein the hill-stream trout are cast, to wait

The beatific vision and the grunt

Used at refectory, keeps its weedy state,

To baffle saintly abbots who would count  
The fish across their breviary, nor 'bate

The measure of their steps. O waterfalls

And forests ! sound and silence ! mountains bare,

That leap up peak by peak, and catch the palls  
Of purple and silver mist to rend and share

With one another, at electric calls

Of life in the sunbeams,—till we cannot dare

Fix your shapes, count your number ! we must  
think

Your beauty and your glory helped to fill

The cup of Milton's soul so to the brink,

He never more was thirsty when God's will

Had shattered to his sense the last chain-link

By which he had drawn from Nature's visible  
 The fresh well-water. Satisfied by this,  
 He sang of Adam's paradise and smiled,  
 Remembering Vallombrosa. Therefore is  
 The place divine to English man and child—  
 And pilgrims leave their souls here in a kiss.

## xxx.

For Italy's the whole earth's treasury, piled  
 With reveries of gentle ladies, flung  
 Aside, like ravelled silk, from life's worn stuff—  
 With coins of scholars' fancy, which, being rung  
 On work-day counter, still sound silver-proof—  
 In short, with all the dreams of dreamers young,  
 Before their heads have time for slipping off  
 Hope's pillow to the ground. How oft, indeed,  
 We've sent our souls out from the rigid north,  
 On bare white feet which would not print nor  
 bleed,  
 To climb the Alpine passes and look forth,  
 Where booming low the Lombard rivers lead  
 To gardens, vineyards, all a dream is worth,—  
 Sights, thou and I, Love, have seen afterward  
 From Tusean Bellosguardo, wide awake,\*  
 When, standing on the actual blessed sward  
 Where Galileo stood at nights to take  
 The vision of the stars, we have found it hard,  
 Gazing upon the earth and heaven, to make  
 A choice of beauty.

Therefore let us all  
 Refreshed in England or in other land,  
 By visions, with their fountain-rise and fall

\* Galileo's villa, close to Florence, is built on an eminence called Bellosguardo.

Of this earth's darling,—we, who understand  
A little how the Tuscan musical  
Vowels do round themselves as if they plann'd  
Eternities of separate sweetness,—we  
Who loved Sorrento vines in picture-book,  
Or ere in wine-cup we pledged faith or glee—  
Who loved Rome's wolf, with demi-gods at suck,  
Or ere we loved truth's own divinity,—  
Who loved, in brief, the classic hill and brook,  
And Ovid's dreaming tales, and Petrarch's song,  
Or ere we loved Love's self even!—let us give  
The blessing of our souls, and wish them strong  
To bear it to the height where prayers arrive,  
When faithful spirits pray against a wrong;  
To this great cause of southern men, who strive  
In God's name for man's rights, and shall not  
fail!

## XXXI.

Behold, they shall not fail. The shouts ascend  
Above the shrieks, in Naples, and prevail.  
Rows of shot corpses, waiting for the end  
Of burial, seem to smile up straight and pale  
Into the azure air, and apprehend  
That final gun-flash from Palermo's coast,  
Which lightens their apocalypse of death.  
So let them die! The world shows nothing  
lost;  
Therefore, not blood! Above or underneath,  
What matter, brothers, if ye keep your post  
On duty's side? As sword returns to sheath,  
So dust to grave, but souls find place in Heaven.  
Heroic daring is the true success,

The eucharistic bread requires no leaven;  
And though your ends were hopeless, we should bless  
Your cause as holy! Strive—and, having striven,  
Take, for God's recompense, that righteousness!

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## PART II

## I.

I WROTE a meditation and a dream,  
Hearing a little child sing in the street  
I leant upon his music as a theme,  
Till it gave way beneath my heart's full beat,  
Which tried at an exultant prophecy  
But dropped before the measure was complete—  
Alas, for songs and hearts! O Tuscany,  
O Dante's Florence, is the type too plain?  
Didst thou, too, only sing of liberty,  
As little children take up a high strain  
With unintentioned voices, and break off  
To sleep upon their mothers' knees again?  
Could'st thou not watch one hour? Then, sleep  
enough—  
That sleep may hasten manhood, and sustain  
The faint pale spirit with some muscular stuff.

## II.

But we, who cannot slumber as thou dost,  
We thinkers, who have thought for thee and failed,  
We hopers, who have hoped for thee and lost,

We poets, wandered round by dreams,\* who hailed  
From this Atrides' roof (with lintel-post  
Which still drips blood,—the worse part hath prevailed)

The fire-voice of the beacons, to declare  
Troy taken, sorrow ended,—cozened through  
A crimson sunset in a misty air,—  
What now remains for such as we, to do ?  
—God's judgments, peradventure, will He bare  
To the roots of thunder, if we kneel and sue ?

## III.

From Casa Guidi windows I looked forth,  
And saw ten thousand eyes of Florentines  
Flash back the triumph of the Lombard north,—  
Saw fifty banners, freighted with the signs  
And exultations of the awakened earth,  
Float on above the multitude in lines,  
Straight to the Pitti. So, the vision went.  
And so, between those populous rough hands  
Raised in the sun, Duke Leopold outleant,  
And took the patriot's oath, which henceforth stands  
Among the oaths of perjurers, eminent  
To catch the lightnings ripened for these lands.

## IV.

Why swear at all, thou false Duke Leopold ?  
What need to swear ? What need to boast thy  
blood  
Unspoilt of Austria, and thy heart unsold  
Away from Florence ? It was understood  
God made thee not too vigorous or too bold,

\* Referring to the well-known opening passage of the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus.

And men had patience with thy quiet mood,  
And women, pity, as they saw thee pace  
Their festive streets with premature grey hairs:  
We turned the mild dejection of thy face  
To princely meanings, took thy wrinkling cares  
For ruffling hopes, and called thee weak, not base.  
Nay, better light the torches for more prayers  
And smoke the pale Madonnas at the shrine,  
Being still 'our poor Grand-duke,' 'our good  
Grand-duke,'  
'Who cannot help the Austrian in his line,'  
Than write an oath upon a nation's book  
For men to spit at with scorn's blurring brine!  
Who dares forgive what none can overlook?

## v.

For me, I do repent me in this dust  
Of towns and temples, which makes Italy,—  
I sigh amid the sighs which breathe a gust  
Of dying century to century,  
Around us on the uneven crater-crust  
Of the old worlds,—I bow my soul and knee,  
Absolve me, patriots, of my woman's fault  
That ever I believed the man was true.  
These sceptred strangers shun the common salt  
And, therefore, when the general board's in view,  
And they stand up to carve for blind and halt,  
The wise suspect the viands which ensue.  
And I repent that in this time and place,  
Where many corpse-lights of experience burn  
From Cæsar's and Lorenzo's festering race,  
To enlighten groping reasoners, I could learn  
No better counsel for a simple case  
Than to put faith in princes, in my turn.

Had all the death-piles of the ancient years  
Flared up in vain before me? Knew I not  
What stench arises from some purple gears,—  
And how the sceptres witness whence they got  
Their briar-wood, crackling through the atmo-  
sphere's  
Foul smoke, by princely perjuries, kept hot?  
Forgive me, ghosts of patriots,—Brutus, thou,  
Who trailest downhill into life again  
Thy blood-weighed cloak, to indict me with thy  
slow  
Reproachful eyes!—for being taught in vain  
That while the illegitimate Cæsars show  
Of meaner stature than the first full strain,  
(Confessed incompetent to conquer Gaul)  
They swoon as feebly and cross Rubicons  
As rashly as any Julius of them all.  
Forgive, that I forgot the mind which runs  
Through absolute races, too unsceptical!  
I saw the man among his little sons,  
His lips were warm with kisses while he swore,—  
And I, because I am a woman, I,  
Who felt my own child's coming life before  
The prescience of my soul, and held faith high,  
I could not bear to think, whoever bore,  
That lips, so warmed, could shape so cold a lie.

## VI.

From Casa Guidi windows I looked out,  
Again looked, and beheld a different sight.  
The Duke had fled before the people's shout  
Long live the Duke! A people, to speak right,  
Must speak as soft as courtiers, lest a doubt  
Should curdle brows of gracious sovereigns, white.

Moreover that same dangerous shouting meant  
Some gratitude for future favours, which

Were only promised ;—the Constituent  
Implied ;—the whole being subject to the hitch

In *motu proprios*, very incident  
To all these Czars, from Paul to Paulovitch.

Whereat the people rose up in the dust  
Of the ruler's flying feet, and shouted still

And loudly, only, this time, as was just,  
Not 'Live the Duke,' who had fled, for good or ill

But 'Live the People,' who remained and must,  
The unrenounced and unrenounceable.

#### VII.

Long live the people! How they lived! and  
boiled

And bubbled in the cauldron of the street!

How the young blustered, nor the old recoiled,  
And what a thunderous stir of tongues and feet

Trod flat the palpitating bells, and foiled  
The joy-guns of their echo, shattering it!

How they pulled down the Duke's arms every-  
where!

How they set up new café-signs, to show

Where patriots might sip ices in pure air—  
(The fresh paint smelling somewhat.) To and fro

How marched the civic guard, and stopped to stare  
When boys broke windows in a civic glow.

How rebel songs were sung to loyal tunes,  
And bishops cursed in ecclesiastic metres!

How all the *Circoli* grew large as moons,  
And all the speakers, moonstruck! — thankful  
greeters

Of prospects which struck poor the ducal boons,



A mere free press, and chambers!—frank repeaters  
Of great Guerazzi's praises. . . . 'There's a man  
The father of the land!—who, truly great,  
Takes off that national disgrace and ban,  
The farthing tax upon our Florennee-gate,  
And saves Italia as he only can.'  
How all the nobles fled, and would not wait,  
Because they were most noble! which being so,  
How liberals vowed to burn their palaces,  
Because free Tuscans were not free to go.  
How grown men raged at Austria's wickedness,  
And smoked,—while fifty striplings in a row  
Marched straight to Piedmont for the wrong's  
redress!

You say we failed in duty, we who wore  
Black velvet like Italian democrats,  
Who slashed our sleeves like patriots, nor for-  
swore

The true republic in the form of hats?

We chased the archbishop from the duomo door—  
We chalked the walls with bloody caveats  
Against all tyrants. If we did not fight  
Exactly, we fired muskets up the air,  
To show that victory was ours of right.  
We met, had free discussion everywhere,  
Except, perhaps, i' the chambers, day and night:  
We proved the poor should be employed, . . . that's  
fair,—

And yet the rich not worked for anywise,—  
Pay certified, yet payers abrogated,  
Full work secured, yet liabilities  
To over-work excluded,—not one bated  
Of all our holidays, that still, at twice  
Or thrice a-week, are moderately rated.

We proved that Austria was dislodged, or would

Or should be, and that Tuscany in arms

Should, would, dislodge her, ending the old feud ;  
And yet, to leave our piazzas, shops, and farms,

For the bare sake of fighting, was not good.

We proved that also—‘ Did we carry charms

Against being killed ourselves, that we should rush  
On killing others ? What ! desert herewith

Our wives and mothers !—was that duty ? Tush !’  
At which we shook the sword within the sheath,

Like heroes—only louder ! and the flush  
Ran up the cheek to meet the future wreath.

Nay, what we proved, we shouted—how we  
shouted,

(Especially the boys did) boldly planting

That tree of liberty whose fruit is doubted  
Because the roots are not of nature’s granting—

A tree of good and evil !—none, without it,  
Grow gods !—alas, and, with it, men are wanting.

#### VIII.

O holy knowledge, holy liberty,

O holy rights of nations ! If I speak

These bitter things against the jugglery

Of days that in your names proved blind and weak,

It is that tears are bitter. When we see

The brown skulls grin at death in churchyards bleak.

We do not cry, ‘ This Yorick is too light,’

For death grows deathlier with that mouth he makes.

So with my mocking. Bitter things I write,

Because my soul is bitter for your sakes,

O freedom ! O my Florence !

## IX.

Men who might

Do greatly in a universe that breaks

And burns, must ever *know* before they do.

Courage and patience are but sacrifice ;

A sacrifice is offered for and to

Something conceived of. Each man pays a price

For what himself counts precious, whether true  
Or false the appreciation it implies.

But here,—no knowledge, no conception, nought !  
Desire was absent, that provides great deeds

From out the greatness of prevenient thought ;

And action, action, like a flame that needs

A steady breath and fuel, being caught

Up, like a burning reed from other reeds,

Flashed in the empty and uncertain air,

Then wavered, then went out. Behold, who blames

A crooked course, when not a goal is there,

To round the fervid striving of the games ?

An ignorance of means may minister

To greatness, but an ignorance of aims

Makes it impossible to be great at all.

So, with our Tuscans ! Let none dare to say,

Here virtue never can be national,

Here fortitude can never cut its way

Between the Austrian muskets, out of thrall.

I tell you rather, that whoever may

Discern true ends here, shall grow pure enough

To love them, brave enough to strive for them,

And strong to reach them, though the roads be  
rough :

That having learnt—by no mere apophthegm—

Nor just the draping of a graceful stuff

About a statue, broidered at the hem,—

Not just the trilling on an opera stage,  
Of 'libertà' to bravos—(a fair word,

Yet too allied to inarticulate rage  
And breathless sobs, for singing, though the chord  
Were deeper than they struck it!)—but the gauge  
Of civil wants sustained, and wrongs abhorred,—

The serious, sacred meaning and full use  
Of freedom for a nation,—then, indeed,

Our Tuscans, underneath the bloody dew  
Of some new morning, rising up agreed

And bold, will want no Saxon souls or thews,  
To sweep their piazzas clear of Austria's breed.

x.

Alas, alas! it was not so this time.

Conviction was not, courage failed, and truth

Was something to be doubted of. The mime  
Changed masks, because a mime; the tide as smooth

In running in as out; no sense of crime  
Because no sense of virtue. Sudden ruth

Seized on the people . . . they would have again  
Their good Grand-duke, and leave Guerazzi, though

He took that tax from Florence:— 'Much in  
vain

He takes it from the market-carts, we trow,

While urgent that no market-men remain,  
But all march off and leave the spade and plough.

To die among the Lombards. Was it thus  
The dear paternal Duke did? Live the Duke!'

At which the joy-bells multitudinous,  
Swept by an opposite wind, as loudly shook.

Recall the mild Archbishop to his house,  
To bless the people with his frightened look,

He shall not yet be hanged, you comprehend.  
Seize on Guerazzi; guard him in full view,  
Or else we stab him in the back, to end.  
Rub out those chalked devices! Set up new  
The Duke's arms; doff your Phrygian caps; and  
mend  
The pavement of the piazzas broke into  
By barren poles of freedom! Smooth the way  
For the ducal carriage, lest his highness sigh  
'Here trees of liberty grew yesterday.'  
Long live the Duke!—How roared the cannonry,  
How rocked the bell-towers, and through thick  
ening spray  
Of nosegays, wreaths, and kerchiefs tossed on high,  
How marched the civic guard, the people still  
Being good at shouts,—especially the boys.  
Alas, poor people, of an unfledged will  
Most fitly expressed by' such a callow voice!  
Alas, still poorer Duke, incapable  
Of being worthy even of so much noise!

## XI.

You think he came back instantly, with thanks  
And tears in his faint eyes, and hands extended  
To stretch the franchise through their utmost  
ranks?  
That having, like a father, apprehended,  
He came to pardon fatherly those pranks  
Played out, and now in filial service ended?—  
That some love token, like a prince, he threw,  
To meet the people's love-call, in return?  
Well, how he came I will relate to you;  
And if your hearts should burn, why, hearts *must* burn,  
To make the ashes which things old and new  
Shall be washed clean in—as this Duke will learn.

## XII.

From Casa Guidi windows, gazing, then,  
I saw and witness how the Duke came back.

The regular tramp of horse and tread of men  
Did smite the silence like an anvil black

And sparkless. With her wide eyes at full strain,  
Our Tuscan nurse exclaimed, 'Alack, alack,

Signora! these shall be the Austrians.' 'Nay,  
Be still,' I answered, 'do not wake the child!'

For so, my two-months' baby sleeping lay  
In milky dreams upon the bed and smiled;

And I thought 'he shall sleep on, while he may,  
Through the world's baseness. Not being yet defiled,

Why should he be disturbed by what is done?'  
Then, gazing, I beheld the long-drawn street

Live out, from end to end, full in the sun,  
With Austria's thousands. Sword and bayonet,

Horse, foot, artillery,—cannons rolling on,  
Like blind, slow storm-clouds gestant with the heat

Of undeveloped lightnings, each bestrode  
By a single man, dust-white from head to heel,

Indifferent as the dreadful thing he rode,  
Like a sculptured Fate serene and terrible!

As some smooth river which has overflowed,  
Will slow and silent down its current wheel

A loosened forest, all the pines erect,—  
So, swept, in mute significance of storm,

The marshalled thousands,—not an eye deflect  
To left or right, to catch a novel form

Of Florence city adorned by architect  
And carver, or of Beauties live and warm

Scared at the casements,—all, straightforward  
eyes

And faces, held as steadfast as their swords,  
And cognisant of acts, not imageries.  
The key, O Tuscans, too well fits the wards!  
Ye asked for mimes; these bring you tragedies—  
For purple; these shall wear it as your lords.  
Ye played like children: die like innocents!  
Ye mimicked lightnings with a torch: the crack  
Of the actual bolt, your pastime, circumvents.  
Ye called up ghosts, believing they were slack  
To follow any voice from Gilboa's tents, . . .  
Here's Samuel!—and, so, Grand-dukes come back

## XIII.

And yet, they are no prophets though they come.  
That awful mantle they are drawing close,  
Shall be searched, one day, by the shafts of  
Doom,  
Through double folds now hoodwinking the brows.  
Resuscitated monarchs disentomb  
Grave-reptiles with them, in their new life-throes:  
Let such beware. Behold, the people waits,  
Like God. As He, in his serene of might,  
So they, in their endurance of long straits.  
Ye stamp no nation out, though day and night  
Ye tread them with that absolute heel which  
grates  
And grinds them flat from all attempted height.  
You kill worms sooner with a garden-spade  
Than you kill peoples: peoples will not die;  
The tail curls stronger when you lop the head;  
They writhe at every wound and multiply,  
And shudder into a heap of life that's made  
Thus vital from God's own vitality.  
'Tis hard to shrivel back a day of God's

Once fixed for judgment: 'tis as hard to change  
The people's, when they rise beneath their loads  
And heave them from their backs with violent  
wrench,  
To crush the oppressor. For that judgment rod's  
The measure of this popular revenge.

## xiv.

Meantime, from Casa Guidi windows we  
Beheld the armament of Austria flow  
Into the drowning heart of Tuscany.  
And yet none wept, none cursed; or, if 'twas so,  
They wept and cursed in silence. Silently  
Our noisy Tuscans watched the invading foe;  
They had learnt silence. Pressed against the wall  
And grouped upon the church-steps opposite,  
A few pale men and women stared at all.  
God knows what they were feeling, with their white  
Constrained faces!—they, so prodigal  
Of cry and gesture when the world goes right,  
Or wrong indeed. But here, was depth of wrong,  
And here, still water: they were silent here:  
And through that sentient silence, struck along  
That measured tramp from which it stood out clear  
Distinct the sound and silence, like a gong  
At midnight, each by the other awfuller,  
While every soldier in his cap displayed  
A leaf of olive. Dusty, bitter thing!  
Was such plucked at Novara, is it said?

## xv.

A cry is up in England, which doth ring  
The hollow world through, that for ends of trade  
And virtue, and God's better worshipping,



We henceforth should exalt the name of Peace,  
And leave those rusty wars that eat the soul,—  
Besides their clippings at our golden fleece.  
I, too, have loved peace, and from bole to bole  
Of immemorial, undeciduous trees,  
Would write, as lovers use, upon a scroll  
The holy name of Peace, and set it high  
Where none could pluck it down. On trees, I  
say,—

Not upon gibbets!—With the greenery  
Of dewy branches and the flowery May,  
Sweet mediation betwixt earth and sky  
Providing, for the shepherd's holiday!

Not upon gibbets! though the vulture leaves  
The bones to quiet, which he first picked bare.

Not upon dungeons! though the wretch who  
grieves

And groans within, stirs less the outer air

Than any little field-mouse stirs the sheaves.

Not upon chain-bolts! though the slave's despair

Has dulled his helpless, miserable brain,

And left him blank beneath the freeman's whip,

To sing and laugh out idiocies of pain.

Nor yet on starving homes! where many a lip

Has sobbed itself asleep through curses vain!

I love no peace which is not fellowship,

And which includes not mercy. I would have

Rather, the raking of the guns across

The world, and shrieks against Heaven's archi-  
trave.

Rather, the struggle in the slippery fosse

Of dying men and horses, and the wave

Blood-bubbling. . . . Enough said!—By Christ's  
own cross,

And by the faint heart of my womanhood,  
Such things are better than a Peace which sits  
Beside the hearth in self-commended mood,  
And takes no thought how wind and rain by fits  
Are howling out of doors against the good  
Of the poor wanderer. What! your peace admits  
Of outside anguish while it keeps at home?  
I loathe to take its name upon my tongue—  
'Tis nowise peace. 'Tis treason, stiff with doom,—  
'Tis gagged despair, and inarticulate wrong,  
Annihilated Poland, stifled Rome,  
Dazed Naples, Hungary fainting 'neath the thong,  
And Austria wearing a smooth olive-leaf  
On her brute forehead, while her hoofs outpress  
The life from these Italian souls, in brief.  
O Lord of Peace, who art Lord of Righteousness,  
Constrain the anguished worlds from sin and grief,  
Pierce them with conscience, purge them with  
redress,  
And give us peace which is no counterfeit!

## XVI.

But wherefore should we look out any more  
From Casa Guidi windows? Shut them straight;  
And let us sit down by the folded door  
And veil our saddened faces, and so, wait  
What next the judgment-heavens make ready for.  
I have grown weary of these windows. Sights  
Come thick enough and clear enough in thought,  
Without the sunshine; souls have inner lights:  
And since the Grand-duke has come back and  
brought  
This army of the North which thus requites  
His filial South, we leave him to be taught.

His South, too, has learnt something certainly,  
Whereof the practice will bring profit soon ;  
And peradventure other eyes may see,  
From Casa Guidi windows, what is done  
Or undone. Whatsoever deeds they be,  
Pope Pius will be glorified in none.

## XVII.

Record that gain, Mazzini !—it shall top  
Some heights of sorrow. Peter's rock, so named,  
Shall lure no vessel any more to drop  
Among the breakers. Peter's chair is shamed  
Like any vulgar throne the nations lop  
To pieces for their firewood unreclaimed ;  
And, when it burns too, we shall see as well  
In Italy as elsewhere. Let it burn.  
The cross, accounted still adorable,  
Is Christ's cross only !—if the thief's would earn  
Some stealthy genuflexions, we rebel ;  
And here the impenitent thief's has had its turn,  
As God knows ; and the people on their knees  
Scoff and toss back the croziers, stretched like yokes  
To press their heads down lower by degrees.  
So Italy, by means of these last strokes,  
Escapes the danger which preceded these,  
Of leaving captured hands in cloven oaks . . .  
Of leaving very souls within the buckle  
Whence bodies struggled outward . . . of supposing  
That freemen may like bondsmen kneel and  
truckle,  
And then stand up as usual, without losing  
An inch of stature.  
Those whom she-wolves suckle  
Will bite as wolves do, in the grapple-closing

Of adverse interests: this, at last, is known,  
 (Thank Pius for the lesson) that albeit  
 Among the Popedom's hundred heads of stone  
 Which blink down on you from the roof's retreat  
 In Siena's tiger-striped cathedral,—Joan  
 And Borgia 'mid their fellows you may greet,  
 A harlot and a devil, you will see  
 Not a man, still less angel, grandly set  
 With open soul to render man more free.  
 The fishers are still thinking of the net,  
 And if not thinking of the hook too, we  
 Are counted somewhat deeply in their debt:  
 But that's a rare case—so, by hook and crook  
 They take the advantage, agonizing Christ  
 By rustier nails than those of Cedron's brook,  
 I' the people's body very cheaply priced;  
 And quote high priesthood out of Holy book,  
 While buying death-fields with the sacrificed.

## XVIII.

Priests, priests!—there's no such name,—God's  
 own, except  
 Ye take most vainly. Through Heaven's lifted gate  
 The priestly ephod in sole glory swept,  
 When Christ ascended, entered in, and sate  
 With victor face sublimely overwept,  
 At Deity's right hand, to mediate,  
 He alone; He for ever. On his breast  
 The Urim and the Thummim, fed with fire  
 From the full Godhead, flicker with the unrest  
 Of human, pitiful heartbeats. Come up higher,  
 All Christians! Levi's tribe is dispossessed!  
 That solitary alb ye shall admire,  
 But not cast lots for. The last chrism, poured right,

Was on that Head, and poured for burial  
And not for domination in men's sight.  
What are these churches? The old temple wall  
Doth overlook them juggling with the sleight  
Of surplice, candlestick, and altar-pall.  
East church and west church, ay, north church  
and south,  
Rome's church and England's—let them all repent,  
And make concordats 'twixt their soul and mouth,  
Succeed St. Paul by working at the tent,  
Become infallible guides by speaking truth,  
And excommunicate their pride that bent  
And cramped the souls of men.

Why, even here,  
Priestcraft burns out; the twined linen blazes,  
Not, like asbestos, to grow white and clear,  
But all to perish!—while the fire-smell raises  
To life some swooning spirits who, last year,  
Lost breath and heart in these church-stifled places.  
Why, almost, through this Pius, we believed  
The priesthood could be an honest thing, he smiled  
So saintly while our corn was being sheaved  
For his own granaries. Showing now defiled  
His hireling hands, a better help's achieved  
Than if he blessed us shepherd-like and mild.  
False doctrine, strangled by its own amen,  
Dies in the throat of all this nation. Who  
Will speak a pope's name, as they rise again?  
What woman or what child will count him true?  
What dreamer praise him with the voice or pen?  
What man fight for him?—Pius has his due.

## XIX.

Record that gain, Mazzini!—Yes, but first  
Set down thy people's faults:—set down the want  
Of soul-conviction; set down aims dispersed,  
And incoherent means, and valour scant

Because of scanty faith, and schisms accursed  
That wrench these brother-hearts from covenant  
With freedom and each other. Set down this  
And this, and see to overcome it when

The seasons bring the fruits thou wilt not miss  
If wary. Let no cry of patriot men

Distract thee from the stern analysis  
Of masses who cry only: keep thy ken

Clear as thy soul is virtuous. Heroes' blood  
Splashed up against thy noble brow in Rome.—

Let such not blind thee to an interlude  
Which was not also holy, yet did come

'Twixt sacramental actions:—brotherhood,  
Despised even there,—and something of the doom

Of Remus, in the trenches. Listen now—  
Rossi died silent near where Cæsar died.

He did not say, 'My Brutus, is it thou?'  
But Italy unquestioned testified,

'I killed him!—I am Brutus.—I avow.'  
At which the whole world's laugh of scorn replied,  
'A poor maimed copy of Brutus!'

Too much like.

Indeed, to be so unlike. Too unskilled

At Philippi and the honest battle-pike,  
To be so skilful where a man is killed

Near Pompey's statue, and the daggers strike  
At unawares i' the throat. Was thus fulfilled  
An omen once of Michel Angelo,—

When Marcus Brutus he conceived complete,  
 And strove to hurl him out by blow on blow  
 Upon the marble, at Art's thunderheat,  
 Till haply some pre-shadow rising slow  
 Of what his Italy would fancy meet  
 To be called BRUTUS, straight his plastic hand  
 Fell back before his prophet soul, and left  
 A fragment . . . a maimed Brutus,—but more  
 grand  
 Than this, so named of Rome, was !

Let thy weft

Present one woof and warp, Mazzini !—stand  
 With no man hankering for a dagger's heft,—  
 No, not for Italy !—nor stand apart,  
 No, not for the republic !—from those pure  
 Brave men who hold the level of thy heart  
 In patriot truth, as lover and as doer,  
 Albeit they will not follow where thou art  
 As extreme theorist. Trust and distrust fewer ;  
 And so bind strong and keep unstained the cause  
 Which (God's sign granted,) war-trumps newly .  
 blown  
 Shall yet annuntiate to the world's applause.

## xx.

But now, the world is busy ; it has grown  
 A Fair-going world. Imperial England draws  
 The flowing ends of the earth, from Fez, Canton,  
 Delhi and Stockholm, Athens and Madrid,  
 The Russias and the vast Americas,  
 As if a queen drew in her robes amid  
 Her golden cincture,—isles, peninsulas,  
 Capes, continents, far inland countries hid  
 By jasper-sands and hills of chrysopras,  
 All trailing in their splendours through the door

Of the gorgeous Crystal Palace. Every nation,  
To every other nation strange of yore,  
Gives face to face the civic salutation,  
And holds up in a proud right hand before  
That congress, the best work which she can fashion  
By her best means—‘These corals, will you please  
To match against your oaks? They grow as fast  
Within my wilderness of purple seas.’—  
‘This diamond stared upon me as I passed  
(As a live god’s eye from a marble frieze)  
Along a dark of diamonds. Is it classed?’—  
‘I wove these stuffs so subtly that the gold  
Swims to the surface of the silk like cream,  
And curdles to fair patterns. Ye behold!’—  
‘These delicatest muslins rather seem  
Than be, you think? Nay, touch them and be  
bold,  
Though such veiled Chakhi’s face in Hafiz’ dream.’—  
‘These carpets—you walk slow on them like  
kings,  
Inaudible like spirits, while your foot  
Dips deep in velvet roses and such things.’—  
‘Even Apollonius might commend this flute.\*  
The music, winding through the stops, upsprings  
To make the player very rich. Compute.’—  
‘Here’s goblet-glass, to take in with your wine  
The very sun its grapes were ripened under.  
Drink light and juice together, and each fine.’—  
‘This model of a steam-ship moves your wonder?  
You should behold it crushing down the brine,

\* Philostratus relates of Apollonius that he objected to the musical instrument of Linus the Rhodian, its incompetence to enrich and beautify. The history of music in our day, would, upon the former point, sufficiently confute the philosopher.



Like a blind Jove who feels his way with thunder. '—

'Here's sculpture! Ah, *we* live too! Why not  
throw

Our life into our marbles! Art has place

For other artists after Angelo. '—

'I tried to paint out here a natural face—

For nature includes Raffael, as we know,

Not Raffael nature. Will it help my case? '—

'Methinks you will not match this steel of  
ours! '—

'Nor you this porcelain! One might dream the clay

Retained in it the larvæ of the flowers,

They bud so, round the cup, the old spring way. '—

'Nor you these carven woods, where birds in  
bowers

With twisting snakes and climbing cupids, play. '

# XXI.

O Magi of the east and of the west,

Your incense, gold, and myrrh are excellent.—

What gifts for Christ, then, bring ye with the rest?

Your hands have worked well. Is your courage  
spent

In handwork only? Have you nothing best,

Which generous souls may perfect and present,

And He shall thank the givers for? No light

Of teaching, liberal nations, for the poor,

Who sit in darkness when it is not night?

No cure for wicked children? Christ,—no cure!

No help for women sobbing out of sight

Because men made the laws? No brothel-lure

Burnt out by popular lightnings?—Hast thou  
found

No remedy, my England, for such woes?

No outlet, Austria, for the scourged and bound,  
No entrance for the exiled? No repose,  
Russia, for knouted Poles worked underground,  
And gentle ladies bleached among the snows?—  
No mercy for the slave, America?—  
No hope for Rome, free France, chivalric France?—  
Alas, great nations have great shames, I say.  
No pity, O world, no tender utterance  
Of benediction, and prayers stretched this way  
For poor Italia baffled by mischance?—  
O gracious nations, give some ear to me!  
You all go to your Fair, and I am one  
Who at the roadside of humanity  
Beseech your alms,—God's justice to be done.  
So, prosper!

## XXII.

In the name of Italy,  
Meantime, her patriot dead have benizon!  
They only have done well; and what they did  
Being perfect, it shall triumph. Let them slumber  
No king of Egypt in a pyramid  
Is safer from oblivion, though he number  
Full seventy cerements for a coverlid.  
These Dead be seeds of life, and shall encumber  
The sad heart of the land until it loose  
The clammy clods and let out the spring-growth  
In beatific green through every bruise.  
The tyrant should take heed to what he doth,  
Since every victim-carrion turns to use,  
And drives a chariot, like a god made wroth,  
Against each piled injustice. Ay, the least  
Dead for Italia, not in vain has died,  
Though many vainly, ere life's struggle ceased,

To mad dissimilar ends have swerved aside.

Each grave her nationality has pieced  
By its own noble breadth, and fortified,  
And pinned it deeper to the soil. Forlorn  
Of thanks, be, therefore, no one of these graves!

Not Hers,—who, at her husband's side, in scorn,  
Outfaced the whistling shot and hissing waves,

Until she felt her little babe unborn  
Recoil, within her, from the violent staves

And bloodhounds of the world: at which, her life  
Dropt inwards from her eyes and followed it

Beyond the hunters. Garibaldi's wife  
And child died so. And now, the sea-weeds fit

Her body like a proper shroud and coif,  
And murmurously the ebbing waters grit

The little pebbles while she lies interred  
In the sea-sand. Perhaps, ere dying thus,

She looked up in his face which never stirred  
From its clenched anguish, as to make excuse

For leaving him for his, if so she erred.  
Well he remembers that she could not choose.

A memorable grave! Another is  
At Genoa. There a king may fitly lie,

Who bursting that heroic heart of his  
At lost Novara, that he could not die,

Though thrice into the cannon's eyes for this  
He plunged his shuddering steed, and felt the sky  
Reel back between the fire-shocks;—stripped  
away

The ancestral ermine ere the smoke had cleared,

And naked to the soul, that none might say  
His kingship covered what was base and bleared

With treason, went out straight an exile, yea,  
An exiled patriot! Let him be revered.

## XXIII.

Yea, verily, Charles Albert has died well :  
And if he lived not all so, as one spoke,  
The sin pass softly with the passing bell.  
For he was shriven, I think, in cannon smoke,  
And taking off his crown, made visible  
A hero's forehead. Shaking Austria's yoke  
He shattered his own hand and heart. 'So best,'  
His last words were upon his lonely bed,  
'I do not end like popes and dukes at least—  
Thank God for it.' And now that he is dead,  
Admitting it is proved and manifest  
That he was worthy, with a discrowned head,  
To measure heights with patriots, let them stand  
Beside the man in his Oporto shroud,  
And each vouchsafe to take him by the hand,  
And kiss him on the cheek, and say aloud,  
'Thou, too, hast suffered for our native land!  
'My brother, thou art one of us. Be proud.'

## XXIV.

Still, graves, when Italy is talked upon !  
Still, still, the patriot's tomb, the stranger's hate.  
Still Niobe ! still fainting in the sun  
By whose most dazzling arrows violate  
Her beauteous offspring perished ! Has she won  
Nothing but garlands for the graves, from Fate ?  
Nothing but death-songs ?—Yet, be it understood,  
Life throbs in noble Piedmont ! while the feet  
Of Rome's clay image, dabbled soft in blood,  
Grow flat with dissolution, and, as meet,  
Will soon be shovelled off like other mud,  
To leave the passage free in church and street.

And I, who first took hope up in this song,  
Because a child was singing one . . . behold,  
The hope and omen were not, haply, wrong!  
Poets are soothsayers still, like those of old  
Who studied flights of doves,—and creatures  
young  
And tender, mighty meanings, may unfold.

## xxv.

The sun strikes, through the windows, up the  
floor:  
Stand out in it, my own young Florentine,  
Not two years old, and let me see thee more!  
It grows along thy amber curls, to shine  
Brighter than elsewhere. Now, look straight  
before,  
And fix thy brave blue English eyes on mine,  
And from thy soul, which fronts the future so,  
With unabashed and unabated gaze,  
Teach me to hope for, what the Angels know,  
When they smile clear as thou dost. Down God's  
ways,  
With just alighted feet between the snow  
And snowdrops, where a little lamb may graze,  
Thou hast no fear, my lamb, about the road,  
Albeit in our vain-glory we assume  
That, less than we have, thou hast learnt of God.  
Stand out, my blue-eyed prophet!—thou, to whom  
The earliest world-day light that ever flowed,  
Through Casa Guidi windows, chanced to come!  
Now shake the glittering nimbus of thy hair,  
And be God's witness—that the elemental  
New springs of life are gushing everywhere  
To cleanse the water courses, and prevent all

Concrete obstructions which infest the air!  
—That earth's alive, and gentle or ungentle  
Motions within her, signify but growth:  
The ground swells greenest o'er the labouring moles.  
Howe'er the uneasy world is vexed and wroth,  
Young children, lifted high on parent souls,  
Look round them with a smile upon the mouth,  
And take for music every bell that tolls.  
Who said we should be better if like these?  
And *we* sit murmuring for the future though  
Posterity is smiling on our knees,  
Convicting us of folly? Let us go—  
We will trust God. The blank interstices  
Men take for ruins, He will build into  
With pillared marbles rare, or knit across  
With generous arches, till the fane's complete.  
This world has no perdition, if some loss.

## XXVI.

Such cheer I gather from thy smiling, Sweet!  
The self same cherub faces which emboss  
The Vail, lean inward to the Mercy-seat.





NAPOLEON III. IN ITALY,  
ETC.









## PREFACE.

THESE poems were written under the pressure of the events they indicate, after a residence in Italy of so many years, that the present triumph of great principles is heightened to the writer's feelings by the disastrous issue of the last movement, witnessed from "Casa Guidi windows" in 1849. Yet, if the verses should appear to English readers too pungently rendered to admit of a patriotic respect to the English sense of things, I will not excuse myself on such grounds, nor on the ground of my attachment to the Italian people, and my admiration of their heroic constancy and union. What I have written has simply been written because I love truth and justice *quand même*, "more than Plato" and Plato's country, more than Dante and Dante's country, more even than Shakespeare and Shakespeare's country.

And if patriotism means the flattery of one's nation in every case, then the patriot, take it as you please, is merely a courtier, which I am not, though I have written "Napoleon III. in Italy." It is time to limit the significance of certain terms, or to enlarge the significance of certain things. Nationality is excellent in its place; and the instinct of self-love is the *root* of a man, which will develop into sacrificial virtues. But all the virtues are means and uses; and, if we hinder their tendency to growth and expansion, we both destroy them as virtues, and degrade them to that rankest species of corruption reserved for the most noble organizations. For instance, non-intervention in the affairs of neighboring states is a high political virtue; but non-intervention does not mean, passing by on the other side when your neighbor falls among thieves,—or Phariseeism would recover it from Christianity. Freedom itself is virtue, as well as privilege; but freedom of the seas does not mean piracy, nor freedom of the land, brigandage; nor freedom of the senate, freedom to cudgel a dissident member, nor freedom of the press, freedom

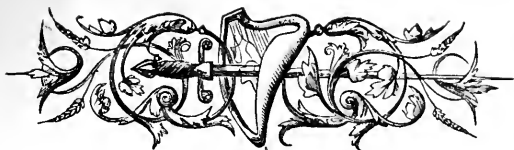
to calumniate and lie. So, if patriotism be a virtue indeed, it cannot mean an exclusive devotion to one's country's interest,—for that is only another form of devotion to personal interests, of family interests or provincial interests, all of which, if not driven past themselves, are vulgar and immoral objects. Let us put away the little Pedlingtonism unworthy of a great nation, and too prevalent among us. If the man who does not look beyond this natural life is of a somewhat narrow order, what must be the man who does not look beyond his own frontier or his own sea?

I confess that I dream of the day when an English statesman shall arise with a heart too large for England, having courage, in the face of his countrymen, to assert of some suggestive policy,—“This is good for your trade; this is necessary for your domination; but it will vex a people hard by; it will hurt a people farther off; it will profit nothing to the general humanity; therefore, away with it!—it is not for you or for me.” When a British minister dares to speak so, and when a British public applauds him speaking, then shall the nation be so glorious, that her praise, instead of exploding from within, from loud civic mouths, shall come to her from without, as all worthy praise must, from the alliances she has fostered, and from the populations she has saved.

And poets, who write of the events of that time, shall not need to justify themselves in prefaces, for ever so little jarring of the national sentiment imputable to their rhymes.

ROME, *February*, 1860.





## NAPOLEON III. IN ITALY.

### I.

EMPEROR, Emperor !  
From the centre to the shore,  
From the Seine back to the Rhine,  
Stood eight millions up and swore,  
By their manhood's right divine  
    So to elect and legislate,  
This man should renew the line  
Broken in a strain of fate  
And leagued kings at Waterloo,  
When the people's hands let go.  
    Emperor  
    Evermore.

### II.

With a universal shout  
They took the old regalia out  
From an open grave that day ;  
From a grave that would not close,  
Where the first Napoleon lay  
    Expectant, in repose,  
As still as Merlin, with his conquering face,  
Turned up in its unquenchable appeal  
To men and heroes of the advancing race,

Prepared to set the seal  
Of what has been on what shall be.  
Emperor  
Evermore.

## III.

The thinkers stood aside  
To let the nation act.  
Some hated the new-constituted fact  
Of empire, as pride treading on their pride.  
Some quailed, lest what was poisonous in the past  
Should graft itself in that Druidic bough  
On this green now.  
Some cursed, because at last  
The open heavens to which they had look'd in vain  
For many a golden fall of marvellous rain  
Were closed in brass; and some  
Wept on because a gone thing could not come;  
And some were silent, doubting all things for  
That popular conviction—evermore  
Emperor.

## IV.

That day I did not hate  
Nor doubt, nor quail, nor curse.  
I, reverencing the people, did not bate  
My reverence of their deed and oracle,  
Nor vainly prate  
Of better and of worse  
Against the great conclusion of their will.  
And yet, O voice and verse,  
Which God set in me to acclaim and sing  
Conviction, exaltation, aspiration,  
We gave no music to the patent thing,

Nor spared a holy rhythm to throb and swim  
 About the name of him  
 Translated to the sphere of domination  
 By democratic passion !  
 I was not used, at least,  
 Nor can be, now or then,  
 To stroke the ermine beast  
 On any kind of throne,  
 (Though builded by a nation for its own,)  
 And swell the surging choir for kings of men—  
 ‘ Emperor  
 Evermore.’

## v.

But now, Napoleon, now  
 That, leaving far behind the purple throng  
 Of vulgar monarchs, thou  
 Tread'st higher in thy deed  
 Than stair of throne can lead  
 To help in the hour of wrong  
 The broken hearts of nations to be strong,—  
 Now, lifted as thou art  
 To the level of pure song,  
 We stand to meet thee on these Alpine snows!  
 And while the palpitating peaks break out  
 Ecstatic from somnambular repose  
 With answers to the presence and the shout,  
 We, poets of the people, who take part  
 With elemental justice, natural right,  
 Join in our echoes also, nor refrain.  
 We meet thee, O Napoleon, at this height  
 At last, and find thee great enough to praise.  
 Receive the poet's chrism, which smells beyond  
 The priest's, and pass thy ways;—

An English poet warns thee to maintain  
God's word, not England's:—let His truth be true  
And all men liars ! with His truth respond  
To all men's lie. Exalt the sword and smite  
On that long anvil of the Apennine  
Where Austria forged the Italian chain in view  
Of seven consenting nations, sparks of fire  
Admonitory light,  
Till men's eyes wink before convictions new.  
Flash in God's justice to the world's amaze,  
Sublime Deliverer!—after many days  
Found worthy of the deed thou art come to do—  
Emperor  
Evermore.

## VI.

But Italy, my Italy,  
Can it last, this gleam?  
Can she live and be strong,  
Or is it another dream  
Like the rest we have dreamed so long?  
And shall it, must it be,  
That after the battle-cloud has broken  
She will die off again  
Like the rain,  
Or like a poet's song  
Sung of her, sad at the end  
Because her name is Italy—  
Die and count no friend?  
It is true—may it be spoken,  
That she who has lain so still,  
With a wound in her breast,  
And a flower in her hand,  
And a gravestone under her head,

While every nation at will  
 Beside her has dared to stand  
 And flout her with pity and scorn,  
 Saying, 'She is at rest,  
 She is fair, she is dead,  
 And, leaving room in her stead  
 To Us who are later born,  
 This is certainly best !'  
 Saying, 'Alas, she is fair,  
 Very fair, but dead,  
 And so we have room for the race.'  
 —Can it be true, be true,  
 That she lives anew ?  
 That she rises up at the shout of her sons,  
 At the trumpet of France,  
 And lives anew ?—is it true  
 That she has not moved in a trance,  
 As in Forty-eight ?  
 When her eyes were troubled with blood  
 Till she knew not friend from foe,  
 Till her hand was caught in a strait  
 Of her cerement and baffled so  
 From doing the deed she would ;  
 And her weak foot stumbled across  
 The grave of a king,  
 And down she dropt at heavy loss,  
 And we gloomily covered her face and said,  
 'We have dreamed the thing ;  
 She is not alive, but dead.'

## VII.

Now, shall we say  
 Our Italy lives indeed ?  
 And if it were not for the beat and bray

Of drum and trump of martial men,  
Should we feel the underground heave and strain,  
Where heroes left their dust as a seed  
    Sure to emerge one day?  
And if it were not for the rhythmic march  
Of France and Piedmont's double hosts,  
    Should we hear the ghosts  
Thrill through ruined aisle and arch,  
Throb along the frescoed wall,  
Whisper an oath by that divine  
They left in picture, book and stone  
That Italy is not dead at all?  
Ay, if it were not for the tears in our eyes  
These tears of a sudden passionate joy  
    Should we see her arise  
From the place where the wicked are overthrown,  
    Italy, Italy? loosed at length  
    From the tyrant's thrall,  
Pale and calm in her strength?  
Pale as the silver cross of Savoy  
When the hand that bears the flag is brave,  
And not a breath is stirring, save  
    What is blown  
Over the war-trump's lip of brass,  
Ere Garibaldi forces the pass!

## VIII.

Ay, it is so, even so.  
Ay, and it shall be so.  
Each broken stone that long ago  
She flung behind her as she went  
In discouragement and bewilderment  
Through the cairns of Time, and missed her way  
    Between to-day and yesterday,



Up springs a living man.  
 And each man stands with his face in the light  
 Of his own drawn sword,  
 Ready to do what a hero can.  
 Wall to sap, or river to ford,  
 Cannon to front, or foe to pursue,  
 Still ready to do, and sworn to be true,  
 As a man and a patriot can.  
 Piedmontese, Neapolitan,  
 Lombard, Tuscan, Romagnole,  
 Each man's body having a soul,—  
 Count how many they stand,  
 All of them sons of the land,  
 Every live man there  
 Allied to a dead man below,  
 And the dearest with blood to spare  
 To quicken a living hand  
 In case it should ever be slow.  
 Count how many they come  
 To the beat of Piedmont's drum,  
 With faces keener and grayer  
 Than swords of the Austrian slayer,  
 All set against the foe.  
 'Emperor  
 Evermore.'

IX.

Out of the dust where they ground them,  
 Out of the holes where they dogged them,  
 Out of the hulks where they wound them  
 In iron, tortured and flogged them;  
 Out of the streets where they chased them,  
 Taxed them and then bayoneted them,—

Out of the homes, where they spied on them,  
(Using their daughters and wives,)  
Out of the church where they fretted them,  
Rotted their souls and debased them,  
Trained them to answer with knives,  
Then cursed them all at their prayers!—  
Out of cold lands, not theirs,  
Where they exiled them, starved them, lied on them;  
Back they come like a wind, in vain  
Cramped up in the hills, that roars its road  
The stronger into the open plain;  
Or like a fire that burns the hotter  
And longer for the crust of cinder,  
Serving better the ends of the potter;  
Or like a restrained word of God,  
Fulfilling itself by what seems to hinder  
‘Emperor  
Evermore.’

## X.

Shout for France and Savoy!  
Shout for the helper and doer.  
Shout for the good sword's ring,  
Shout for the thought still truer.  
Shout for the spirits at large  
Who passed for the dead this spring,  
Whose living glory is sure.  
Shout for France and Savoy!  
Shout for the council and charge!  
Shout for the head of Cavour;  
And shout for the heart of a King  
That's great with a nation's joy.  
Shout for France and Savoy!

XI.

Take up the child, Mac Mahon, though  
Thy hand be red

From Magenta's dead,

And riding on, in front of the troop,

In the dust of the whirlwind of war  
Through the gate of the city of Milan, stoop  
And take up the child to thy saddle-bow,  
Nor fear the touch as soft as a flower

Of his smile as clear as a star !

Thou hast a right to the child, we say,  
Since the women are weeping for joy as those  
Who, by thy help and from this day,

Shall be happy mothers indeed.

They are raining flowers from terrace and roof:

Take up the flower in the child.

While the shout goes up of a nation freed

And heroically self-reconciled,

Till the snow on that peaked Alp aloof

Starts, as feeling God's finger anew,

And all those cold white marble fires

Of mounting saints on the Duomo-spires

Flicker against the Blue.

'Emperor

Evermore.'

XII.

Ay, it is He,

Who rides at the King's right hand !

Leave room for his horse and draw to the side,

Nor press too near in the ecstasy

Of a newly delivered impassioned land

He is moved, you see,

He who has done it all.

They call it a cold stern face;  
But this is Italy  
Who rises up to her place!—  
For this he fought in his youth,  
Of this he dreamed in the past;  
The lines of the resolute mouth  
Tremble a little at last.  
Cry, he has done it all!  
‘Emperor  
Evermore.’

## XIII.

It is not strange that he did it,  
Though the deed may seem to strain  
To the wonderful, unpermitted,  
For such as lead and reign.  
But he is strange, this man:  
The people’s instinct found him  
(A wind in the dark that ran  
Through a chink where was no door),  
And elected him and crowned him  
Emperor  
Evermore.

## XIV.

Autocrat! let them scoff,  
Who fail to comprehend  
That a ruler incarnate of  
The people, must transcend  
All common king-born kings.  
These subterranean springs  
A sudden outlet winning,  
Have special virtues to spend.  
The people’s blood through him.

Dilates from head to foot,  
 Creates him absolute,  
 And from this great beginning  
 Evokes a greater end  
 To justify and renew him—  
     Emperor  
     Evermore.

## xv.

What! did any maintain  
 That God or the people (think!)  
 Could make a marvel in vain?—  
 Out of the water-jar there,  
 Draw wine that none could drink?  
 Is this a man like the rest,  
 This miracle made unaware  
 By a rapture of popular air,  
 And caught to the place that was best?  
 You think he could barter and cheat  
 As vulgar diplomats use,  
 With the people's heart in his breast?  
 Prate a lie into shape  
 Lest truth should cumber the road;  
 Play at the fast and loose  
 Till the world is strangled with tape;  
 Maim the soul's complete  
 To fit the hole of a toad;  
 And filch the dogman's meat  
 To feed the offspring of God?

## xvi.

Nay, but he, this wonder,  
 He cannot palter nor prate,  
 Though many around him and under,

With intellects trained to the curve,  
Distrust him in spirit and nerve  
Because his meaning is straight.  
Measure him ere he depart  
With those who have governed and led ;  
Larger so much by the heart,  
Larger so much by the head.

Emperor  
Evermore.

## XVII.

He holds that, consenting or dissident,  
Nations must move with the time ;  
Assumes that crime with a precedent  
Doubles the guilt of the crime ;  
—Denies that a slaver's bond,  
Or a treaty signed by knaves,  
(*Quorum magna pars* and beyond  
Was one of an honest name)  
Gives an inexpugnable claim  
To abolishing men into slaves.

Emperor  
Evermore.

## XVIII.

He will not swagger nor boast  
Of his country's meeds, in a tone  
Missuited a great man most  
If such should speak of his own ;  
Nor will he act, on her side,  
From motives baser, indeed,  
Than a man of a noble pride  
Can avow for himself at need ;

Never, for lucre or laurels,  
 Or custom, though such should be rife,  
 Adapting the smaller morals  
 To measure the larger life.  
 He, though the merchants persuade,  
 And the soldiers are eager for strife,  
 Finds not his country in quarrels  
 Only to find her in trade,—  
 While still he accords her such honor  
 As never to flinch for her sake  
 Where men put service upon her,  
 Found heavy to undertake  
 And scarcely like to be paid:  
 Believing a nation may act  
 Unselfishly—shiver a lance  
 (As the least of her sons may, in fact)  
 And not for a cause of finance.  
 Emperor  
 Evermore.

## XIX.

Great is he,  
 Who uses his greatness for all.  
 His name shall stand perpetually  
 As a name to applaud and cherish,  
 Not only within the civic wall  
 For the loyal, but also without  
 For the generous and free.  
 Just is he,  
 Who is just for the popular due  
 As well as the private debt.  
 The praise of nations ready to perish  
 Fall on him,—crown him in view  
 Of tyrants caught in the net,

And statesmen dizzy with fear and doubt !  
And though, because they are many,  
    And he is merely one,  
And nations selfish and cruel  
Heap up the inquisitor's fuel  
To kill the body of high intents,  
And burn great deeds from their place,  
Till this, the greatest of any,  
May seem imperfectly done ;  
Courage, whoever circumvents !  
Courage, courage, whoever is base !  
The soul of a high intent, be it known,  
Can die no more than any soul  
Which God keeps by him under the throne ;  
And this, at whatever interim,  
Shall live, and be consummated  
Into the being of deeds made whole.  
Courage, courage ! happy is he,  
Of whom (himself among the dead  
And silent,) this word shall be said ;  
—That he might have had the world with him,  
But chose to side with suffering men,  
And had the world against him when  
He came to deliver Italy.

Emperor  
Evermore.







## THE DANCE.

### I.

You remember down at Florence our Cascine,  
Where the people on the feast-days walk and drive,  
And through the trees, long-drawn in many a green  
way,  
O'er-roofing hum and murmur like a hive,  
The river and the mountains look alive?

### II.

You remember the piazzone there, the stand-place  
Of carriages a-brim with Florence Beauties,  
Who lean and melt to music as the band plays,  
Or smile and chat with some one who afoot is,  
Or on horseback, in observance of male duties?

### III.

'Tis so pretty, in the afternoons of summer,  
So many gracious faces brought together!  
Call it rout, or call it concert, they have come here,  
In the floating of the fan and of the feather,  
To reciprocate with beauty the fine weather.

### IV.

While the flower-girls offer nosegays (because *they*  
too  
Go with other sweets) at every carriage-door;

Here, by shake of a white finger, signed away to  
Some next buyer, who sits buying score on score,  
Piling roses upon roses evermore.

## V.

And last season, when the French camp had its  
station  
In the meadow-ground, things quickened and  
grew gayer  
Through the mingling of the liberating nation  
With this people; groups of Frenchmen every-  
where,  
Strolling, gazing, judging lightly . . 'who was fair.'

## VI.

Then the noblest lady present took upon her  
To speak nobly from her carriage for the rest;  
'Pray these officers from France to do us honor  
By dancing with us straightway.'—The request  
Was gravely apprehended as addressed.

## VII.

And the men of France, bareheaded, bowing lowly,  
Led out each a proud signora to the space  
Which the startled crowd had rounded for them—  
slowly,  
Just a touch of still emotion in his face,  
Not presuming, through the symbol, on the grace.

## VIII.

There was silence in the people: some lips trembled,  
But none jested. Broke the music at a glance:  
And the daughters of our princes, thus assembled,

Stepped the measure with the gallant sons of  
France.

Hush! it might have been a Mass, and not a  
dance.

## IX.

And they danced there till the blue that overskied  
us

Swooned with passion, though the footing seemed  
sedate ;

And the mountains, heaving mighty hearts beside  
us,

Sighed a rapture in a shadow, to dilate,

And touched the holy stone where Dante sate.

## X.

Then the sons of France, bareheaded, lowly bowing,

Led the ladies back where kinsmen of the south

Stood, received them ;—till, with burst of overflow-  
ing

Feeling . . . husbands, brothers, Florence's male  
youth,

Turned, and kissed the martial strangers mouth to  
mouth.

## XI.

And a cry went up, a cry from all that people !

—You have heard a people cheering, you sup-  
pose,

For the Member, mayor . . with chorus from the  
steeple ?

This was different : scarce as loud perhaps, (who  
knows ?)

For we saw wet eyes around us ere the close.

## XII.

And we felt as if a nation, too long borne in  
By hard wrongers, comprehending in such attitude  
That God had spoken somewhere since the morning,  
That men were somehow brothers, by no platitude,  
Cried exultant in great wonder and free gratitude.





## A TALE OF VILLAFRANCA.

TOLD IN TUSCANY.

### I.

MY little son, my Florentine,  
Sit down beside my knee,  
And I will tell you why the sign  
Of joy which flushed our Italy,  
Has faded since but yesternight ;  
And why your Florence of delight  
Is mourning as you see.

### II.

A great man (who was crowned one day)  
Imagined a great Deed :  
He shaped it out of cloud and clay,  
He touched it finely till the seed  
Possessed the flower : from heart and brain  
He fed it with large thoughts humane,  
To help a people's need.

### III.

He brought it out into the sun—  
They blessed it to his face :  
' O great pure Deed, that hast undone  
So many bad and base !

O generous Deed, heroic Deed,  
 Come forth, be perfected, succeed,  
 Deliver by God's grace.'

## IV.

Then sovereigns, statesmen, north and south,  
 Rose up in wrath and fear,  
 And cried, protesting by one mouth,  
 'What monster have we here?  
 A great Deed at this hour of day?  
 A great just Deed—and not for pay?  
 Absurd,—or insincere.

## V.

'And if sincere, the heavier blow  
 In that case we shall bear,  
 For where's our blessed "status quo,"  
 Our holy treaties, where,—  
 Our rights to sell a race, or buy,  
 Protect and pillage, occupy,  
 And civilize despair?'

## VI.

Some muttered that the great Deed meant  
 A great pretext to sin;  
 And others, the pretext, so lent,  
 Was heinous (to begin).  
 Volcanic terms of 'great' and 'just?'  
 Admit such tongues of flame, the crust  
 Of time and law falls in.

## VII.

A great Deed in this world of ours?  
 Unheard of the pretence is:

It threatens plainly the great powers ;  
Is fatal in all senses.  
A just deed in the world ?—call out  
The rifles ! be not slack about  
The national defences.

## VIII.

And many murmured, ‘ From this source  
What red blood must be poured !’  
And some rejoined, ‘ ’Tis even worse ;  
What red tape is ignored !’  
All cursed the Doer for an evil  
Called here, enlarging on the Devil,—  
There, monkeying the Lord !

## IX.

Some said, it could not be explained,  
Some, could not be excused ;  
And others, ‘ Leave it unrestrained,  
Gehenna’s self is loosed.’  
And all cried, ‘ Crush it, maim it, gag it !  
Set dog-toothed lies to tear it ragged,  
Truncated and traduced !’

## X.

But HE stood sad before the sun,  
(The peoples felt their fate).  
‘ The world is many,—I am one ;  
My great Deed was too great.  
God’s fruit of justice ripens slow :  
Men’s souls are narrow ; let them grow.  
My brothers, we must wait.’

## XI.

The tale is ended, child of mine,  
Turned graver at my knee.  
They say your eyes, my Florentine,  
Are English: it may be:  
And yet I've marked as blue a pair  
Following the doves across the square  
At Venice by the sea.

## XII.

Ah, child! ah, child! I cannot say  
A word more. You conceive  
The reason now, why just to-day  
We see our Florence grieve.  
Ah child, look up into the sky!  
In this low world, where great Deeds die,  
What matter if we live?







## A COURT LADY.

### I.

HER hair was tawny with gold, her eyes with purple  
were dark,  
Her cheeks' pale opal burnt with a red and rest-  
less spark.

### II.

Never was lady of Milan nobler in name and in  
race;  
Never was lady of Italy fairer to see in the face.

### III.

Never was lady on earth more true as woman and  
wife,  
Larger in judgment and instinct, prouder in manners  
and life.

### IV.

She stood in the early morning, and said to her  
maidens, 'Bring  
That silken robe made ready to wear at the court  
of the king.

### V.

'Bring me the clasps of diamond, lucid, clear of the  
mote,  
Clasp me the large at the waist, and clasp me the  
small at the throat.

## VI.

‘Diamonds to fasten the hair, and diamonds to fasten the sleeves,  
Laces to drop from their rays, like a powder of snow from the eaves.’

## VII.

Gorgeous she entered the sunlight, which gathered her up in a flame,  
While, straight in her open carriage, she to the hospital came.

## VIII.

In she went at the door, and gazing from end to end,  
‘Many and low are the pallets, but each is the place of a friend.’

## IX.

Up she passed through the wards, and stood at a young man’s bed :  
Bloody the band on his brow, and livid the droop of his head.

## X.

‘Art thou a Lombard, my brother? Happy art thou,’ she cried,  
And smiled like Italy on him : he dreamed in her face and died.

## XI.

Pale with his passing soul, she went on still to a second :  
*He* was a grave hard man, whose years by dungeons were reckoned.

## XII.

Wounds in his body were sore, wounds in his life  
were sorer.

‘Art thou a Romagnole?’ Her eyes drove light-  
nings before her.

## XIII.

Austrian and priest had joined to double and tighten  
the cord

Able to bind thee, O strong one—free by the stroke  
of a sword.

## XIV.

‘Now be grave for the rest of us, using the life over-  
cast

To ripen our wine of the present, (too new,) in  
glooms of the past.’

## XV.

Down she stepped to a pallet where lay a face like a  
girl’s,

Young, and pathetic with dying—a deep black hole  
in the curls.

## XVI.

‘Art thou from Tuscany, brother? and seest thou,  
dreaming in pain,

Thy mother stand in the piazza, searching the list of  
the slain?’

## XVII.

Kind as a mother herself, she touched his cheeks  
with her hands:

‘Blessed is she who has borne thee, although she  
should weep as she stands.’

## XVIII.

On she passed to a Frenchman, his arm carried off  
by a ball :  
Kneeling, . . 'O more than my brother ! how shall  
I thank thee for all ?'

## XIX.

'Each of the heroes around us has fought for his  
land and line,  
But *thou* hast fought for a stranger, in hate of a  
wrong not thine.

## XX.

'Happy are all free peoples, too strong to be dis-  
possessed.  
But blessed are those among nations, who dare to  
be strong for the rest !'

## XXI.

Ever she passed on her way, and came to a couch  
where pined  
One with a face from Venetia, white with a hope  
out of mind.

## XXII.

Long she stood and gazed, and twice she tried at the  
name,  
But two great crystal tears were all that faltered and  
came.

## XXIII.

Only a tear for Venice ?—she turned as in passion  
and loss,  
And stooped to his forehead and kissed it, as if she  
were kissing the cross.

## XXIV.

Faint with that strain of heart she moved on then to  
another,  
Stern and strong in his death. ‘And dost thou suf-  
fer, my brother?’

## XXV.

Holding his hands in hers:—‘Out of the Piedmont  
lion  
Cometh the sweetness of freedom! sweetest to live  
or to die on.’

## XXVI.

Holding his cold rough hands—‘Well, oh well have  
ye done  
A noble, noble Piedmont, who would not be noble  
alone.’

## XXVII.

Back he fell while she spoke. She rose to her feet  
with a spring—  
‘That was a Piedmontese! and this is the Court of  
the King.’





## AN AUGUST VOICE.

"Una voce augusta."—

MONITORE TOSCANO.

—

YOU'LL take back your Grand Duke?

I made the treaty upon it.  
Just venture a quiet make,  
Dall' Ongaro write him a sonnet;  
Ricasoli gently explain  
Some need of the constitution:  
He'll swear to it over again,  
Providing an 'easy solution.'  
You'll call back the Grand Duke.

—

YOU'LL take back your Grand Duke?

I promised the Emperor Francis  
To argue the case by his book,  
And ask you to meet his advances.  
The Ducal cause, we know,  
(Whether you or he be the wronger)  
Has very strong points;—although  
Your bayonets, there, have stronger.  
You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## III.

You'll take back your Grand Duke ?  
He is not pure altogether.  
For instance, the oath which he took  
(In the Forty-eight rough weather)  
He'd ' nail your flag to his mast,'  
Then softly scuttled the boat you  
Hoped to escape in at last,  
And both by a ' Proprio motu.'  
You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## IV.

You'll take back your Grand Duke ?  
The scheme meets nothing to shock it  
In this smart letter, look,  
We found in Radetsky's pocket ;  
Where his Highness in sprightly style  
Of the flower of his Tuscans wrote,  
' These heads be the hottest in file ;  
Pray shoot them the quickest.' Quote,  
And call back the Grand Duke.

## V.

You'll take back your Grand Duke ?  
There *are* some things to object to.  
He cheated, betrayed, and forsook,  
Then called in the foe to protect you.  
He taxed you for wines and for meats  
Throughout that eight years' pastime  
Of Austria's drum in your streets—  
Of course you remember the last time  
You called back your Grand Duke.

## VI.

You'll take back the Grand Duke?  
It is not race he is poor in,  
Although he never could brook  
The patriot cousin at Turin.  
His love of kin you discern,  
By his hate of your flag and me—  
So decidedly apt to turn  
All colors at sight of the Three.\*  
You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## VII.

You'll take back your Grand Duke?  
'Twas weak that he fled from the Pitti.  
But consider how little he shook  
At thought of bombarding your city!  
And, balancing that with this,  
The Christian rule is plain for us;  
. . Or the Holy Father's Swiss  
Have shot his Perugians in vain for us.  
You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## VIII.

Pray take back your Grand Duke.  
—I, too, have suffered persuasion.  
All Europe, raven and rook,  
Screeched at me armed for your nation.  
Your cause in my heart struck spurs;  
I swept such warnings aside for you;  
My very child's eyes, and Hers,  
Grew like my brother's who died for you.  
You'll call back the Grand Duke!

\* The Italian tricolor: red, green, and white.



## IX.

You'll take back your Grand Duke?

My French fought nobly with reason—  
Left many a Lombardy nook

Red as with wine out of season.  
Little we grudged what was done there,

Paid freely your ransom of blood :  
Our heroes stark in the sun there,

We would not recall if we could.  
You'll call back the Grand Duke?

## X.

You'll take back your Grand Duke?

His son rode fast as he got off  
That day on the enemy's hook,  
When *I* had an epaulette shot off.

Though splashed (as I saw him afar, no,  
Near) by those ghastly rains,  
The mark, when you've washed him in Arno,

Will scarcely be larger than Cain's.

You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## XI.

You'll take back your Grand Duke?

'Twill be so simple, quite beautiful :  
The shepherd recovers his crook,  
. . If you should be sheep and dutiful.

I spoke a word worth chalking

On Milan's wall—but stay,  
Here's Poniatowsky talking,—

You'll listen to *him* to-day,  
And call back the Grand Duke.

## XII.

You'll take back your Grand Duke ?  
Observe, there's no one to force it,—  
Unless the Madonna, St. Luke  
Drew for you, choose to endorse it.  
I charge you by great St. Martino  
And prodigies quickened by wrong,  
Remember your dead on Ticino ;  
Be worthy, be constant, be strong.  
—Bah !—call back the Grand Duke !!





## CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

*ὥς βασιλεῖ, ὥς θεῷ, ὥς νεκρῷ.*

GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

### I.

THE Pope on Christmas day  
Sits in St. Peter's Chair ;  
But the people murmur, and say,  
‘ Our souls are sick and forlorn,  
And who will show us where  
Is the stable where Christ was born ?

### II.

The star is lost in the dark ?  
The manger is lost in the straw ;  
The Christ cries faintly . . hark ! . .  
Through bands that swaddle and strangle—  
But the Pope in the chair of awe  
Looks down the great quadrangle.

### III.

The magi kneel at his foot,  
Kings of the east and west,  
But instead of the angels, (mute  
Is the ‘ Peace on earth’ of their song,)

The peoples, perplexed and opprest,  
Are sighing, 'How long, how long?'

## IV.

And, instead of the kine, bewilder in  
Shadow of aisle and dome,  
The bear who tore up the children,  
The fox who burnt up the corn,  
And the wolf who suckled at Rome  
Brothers to slay and to scorn.

## V.

Cardinals left and right of him,  
Worshippers round and beneath,  
The silver trumpets at sight of him  
Thrill with a musical blast:  
But the people say through their teeth,  
'Trumpets? we wait for the Last!'

## VI.

He sits in the place of the Lord,  
And asks for the gifts of the time?  
Gold, for the haft of a sword,  
To win back Romagna averse,  
Incense, to sweeten a crime,  
And myrrh, to embitter a curse.

## VII.

Then a king of the west said, 'Good!—  
I bring thee the gifts of the time;  
Red, for the patriot's blood,  
Green, for the martyr's crown,  
White, for the dew and the rime,  
When the morning of God comes down.'

## VIII.

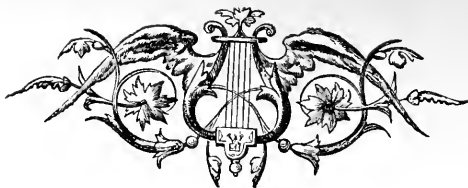
—O mystic tricolor bright!

The Pope's heart quailed like a man's.  
The cardinals froze at the sight,  
Bowing their tonsures hoary ;  
And the eyes in the peacock-fans  
Winked at the alien glory.

## IX.

But the peoples exclaimed in hope,  
' Now blessed be he who has brought  
These gifts of the time to the Pope,  
When our souls were sick and forlorn.  
—And *here* is the star we sought,  
To show us where Christ was born !'





## ITALY AND THE WORLD.

### I.

FLORENCE, Bologna, Parma, Modena,  
When you named them a year ago,  
So many graves reserved by God, in a  
Day of judgment, you seemed to know,  
To open and let out the resurrection.

### II.

And meantime (you made your reflection  
If you were English) was naught to be done  
But sorting sables, in predilection  
For all those martyrs dead and gone,  
Till the new earth and heaven made ready.

### III.

And if your politics were not heady,  
Violent, . . 'Good,' you added, 'good  
In all things! mourn on sure and steady.  
Churchyard thistles are wholesome food  
For our European wandering asses.

### IV.

'The date of the resurrection passes  
Human foreknowledge: men unborn

Will gain by it (even in the lower classes),  
But none of these. It is not the morn  
Because the cock of France is crowing.

## V.

'Cocks crow at midnight, seldom knowing  
Starlight from dawn-light: 'tis a mad  
Poor creature.' Here you paused and growing  
Scornful, . . . suddenly, let us add,  
The trumpet sounded, the graves were open.

## VI.

Life and life and life ! agropo in  
The dusk of death, warm hands, stretched out  
For swords, proved more life still to hope in,  
Beyond and behind. Arise with a shout,  
Nation of Italy, slain and buried !

## VII.

Hill to hill and turret to turret  
Flashing the tricolor—newly created  
Beautiful Italy, calm, unhurried,  
Rise heroic and renovated,  
Rise to the final restitution.

## VIII.

Rise ; prefigure the grand solution  
Of earth's municipal, insular schisms—  
Statesmen draping self-love's conclusion  
In cheap, vernacular patriotisms,  
Unable to give up Judæa for Jesus.

## IX.

Bring us the higher example ; release us  
Into the larger coming time :  
And into Christ's broad garment piece us  
Rags of virtue as poor as crime,  
National selfishness, civic vaunting.

## X.

No more Jew nor Greek then—taunting  
Nor taunted ; no more England nor France !  
But one confederate brotherhood planting  
One flag only, to mark the advance,  
Onward and upward, of all humanity.

## XI.

For fully developed Christianity  
Is civilization perfected.  
'Measure the frontier,' shall it be said,  
'Count the ships,' in national vanity ?  
—Count the nation's heart-beats sooner.

## XII.

For, though behind by a cannon or schooner,  
That nation still is predominant,  
Whose pulse beats quickest in zeal to oppugn or  
Succor another, in wrong or want,  
Passing the frontier in love and abhorrence.

## XIII.

Modena, Parma, Bologna, Florence,  
Open us out the wider way !



Dwarf in that chapel of old St. Lawrence  
Your Michael Angelo's giant Day,  
With the grandeur of this Day breaking o'er us !

## XIV.

Ye who restrained as an ancient chorus,  
Mute while the coryphæus spake,  
Hush your separate voices before us,  
Sink your separate lives for the sake  
Of one sole Italy's living forever !

## XV.

Givers of coat and cloak too,—never  
Grudging that purple of yours at the best,—  
By your heroic will and endeavor  
Each sublimely dispossessed,  
That all may inherit what each surrenders !

## XVI.

Earth shall bless you, O noble emenders  
On egotist nations ! Ye shall lead  
The plough of the world, and sow new splendors  
Into the furrow of things, for seed,—  
Ever the richer for what ye have given.

## XVII.

Lead us and teach us, till earth and heaven  
Grow larger around us and higher above.  
Our sacrament-bread has a bitter leaven ;  
We bait our traps with the name of love,  
Till hate itself has a kinder meaning.

## XVIII.

Oh, this world : this cheating and screening  
Of cheats ! this conscience for candle-wicks,  
Not beacon-fires ! this over-weening  
Of under-hand diplomatical tricks,  
Dared for the country while scorned for the counter !

## XIX.

Oh, this envy of those who mount here,  
And oh, this malice to make them trip  
Rather quenching the fire there, drying the fount  
here,  
To frozen body and thirsty lip,  
Than leave to a neighbor their ministration.

## XX.

I cry aloud in my poet-passion,  
Viewing my England o'er Alp and sea.  
I loved her more in her ancient fashion :  
She carries her rifles too thick for me,  
Who spares them so in the cause of a brother.

## XXI.

Suspicion, panic ? end this pother.  
The sword, kept sheathless at peace-time, rusts.  
None fears for himself while he feels for another :  
The brave man either fights or trusts,  
And wears no mail in his private chamber.

## XXII.

Beautiful Italy ! golden amber  
Warm with the kisses of lover and traitor !

Thou who hast drawn us on to remember,  
Draw us to hope now : let us be greater  
By this new future than that old story.

## XXIII.

Till truer glory replaces all glory,  
As the torch grows blind at the dawn of day ;  
And the nations, rising up, their sorry  
And foolish sins shall put away,  
As children their toys when the teacher enters.

## XXIV.

Till Love's one centre devour these centres  
Of many self-loves ; and the patriot's trick  
To better his land by egotist ventures,  
Defamed from a virtue, shall make men sick,  
As the scalp at the belt of some red hero.

## XXV.

For certain virtues have dropped to zero,  
Left by the sun on the mountain's dewy side ;  
Churchman's charities, tender as Nero,  
Indian suttee, heathen suicide,  
Service to rights divine, proved hollow :

## XXVI.

And Heptarchy patriotism must follow.  
—National voices, distinct yet dependent,  
Ensphering each other, as swallow does swallow,  
With circles still widening and ever ascendant,  
In multifarious life to united progression,—

## XXVII.

These shall remain. And when, in the session  
Of nations, the separate language is heard,  
Each shall aspire, in sublime indiscretion,  
To help with a thought or exalt with a word  
Less her own than her rival's honor.

## XXVIII.

Each Christian nation shall take upon her  
The law of the Christian man in vast :  
The crown of the getter shall fall to the donor,  
And last shall be first while first shall be last,  
And to love best shall still be, to reign unsurpassed.





## A CURSE FOR A NATION.

### PROLOGUE.

I HEARD an angel speak last night,  
And he said, 'Write !  
Write a Nation's curse for me,  
And send it over the Western Sea.'

I faltered, taking up the word :  
    ' Not so, my lord !  
If curses must be, choose another  
To send thy curse against my brother.

' For I am bound by gratitude,  
    By love and blood,  
To brothers of mine across the sea,  
Who stretch out kindly hands to me.'

' Therefore,' the voice said, ' shalt thou write  
    My curse to-night.  
From the summits of love a curse is driven,  
As lightning is from the tops of heaven.'

' Not so,' I answered. ' Evermore  
    My heart is sore  
For my own land's sins : for little feet  
Of children bleeding along the street :

‘For parked-up honors that gainsay  
The right of way :  
For almsgiving through a door that is  
Not open enough for two friends to kiss :

‘For love of freedom which abates  
Beyond the Straits :  
For patriot virtue starved to vice on  
Self-praise, self-interest, and suspicion :

‘For an oligarchic parliament,  
And bribes well-meant.  
What curse to another land assign,  
When heavy-souled for the sins of mine ?’

‘Therefore,’ the voice said, ‘ shalt thou write  
My curse to-night.  
Because thou hast strength to see and hate  
A foul thing done *within* thy gate.’

‘ Not so,’ I answered once again.  
‘ To curse, choose men.  
For I, a woman, have only known  
How the heart melts and the tears run down.’

‘ Therefore,’ the voice said, ‘ shalt thou write  
My curse to-night.  
Some women weep and curse, I say  
(And no one marvels,) night and day,

‘ And thou shalt take their part to-night,  
Weep and write.  
A curse from the depths of womanhood  
Is very salt, and bitter, and good.’

So thus I wrote, and mourned indeed,  
    What all may read.  
And thus, as was enjoined on me,  
I send it over the Western Sea.

## THE CURSE.

## I.

BECAUSE ye have broken your own chain  
    With the strain  
Of brave men climbing a Nation's height,  
Yet thence bear down with brand and thong  
On souls of others,—for this wrong  
    This is the curse. Write.

Because yourselves are standing straight  
    In the state  
Of Freedom's foremost acolyte,  
Yet keep calm footing all the time  
On writhing bond-slaves,—for this crime  
    This is the curse. Write.

Because ye prosper in God's name,  
    With a claim  
To honor in the old world's sight,  
Yet do the fiend's work perfectly  
In strangling martyrs,—for this lie  
    This is the curse. Write.

## II.

Ye shall watch while kings conspire  
Round the people's smouldering fire,  
And, warm for your part,

Shall never dare—O shame!  
To utter the thought into flame  
Which burns at your heart.  
This is the curse. Write.

Ye shall watch while nations strive  
With the bloodhounds, die or survive,  
Drop faint from their jaws,  
Or throttle them backward to death,  
And only under your breath  
Shall favor the cause.  
This is the curse. Write.

Ye shall watch while strong men draw  
The nets of feudal law  
To strangle the weak,  
And, counting the sin for a sin,  
Your soul shall be sadder within  
Than the word ye shall speak.  
This is the curse. Write.

When good men are praying erect  
That Christ may avenge his elect  
And deliver the earth,  
The prayer in your ears, said low,  
Shall sound like the tramp of a foe  
That's driving you forth.  
This is the curse. Write.

When wise men give you their praise,  
They shall pause in the heat of the phrase,  
As if carried too far.  
When ye boast your own charters kept true,



Ye shall blush ;—for the thing which ye do  
Derides what ye are.

This is the curse. Write.

When fools cast taunts at your gate,  
Your scorn ye shall somewhat abate  
As ye look o'er the wall,  
For your conscience, tradition, and name  
Explode with a deadlier blame  
Than the worst of them all.

This is the curse. Write.

Go, wherever ill deeds shall be done,  
Go, plant your flag in the sun  
Beside the ill-doers !  
And recoil from clenching the curse  
Of God's witnessing Universe  
With a curse of yours.

This is the curse. Write.









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