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.
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 in no wise dare
To put 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 synthesise
This people-organ for a holy 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 sit 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?

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 lets 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!

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 unconscious thunder-bolt begins
To loosen in His grasp.

And yet we must
Beware, and mark the natural kiths and kins
Of circumstance and office, and distrust
The rich man reasoning in a poor man's hut,
The poet who neglects pure truth to prove
Statistic fact, the child who leaves a rut
For a smoother road, the priest who vows his glove
Exhales no grace, the prince who walks afoot,
The woman who has sworn she will not love,
And this Ninth Pius in Seventh Gregory's chair,
With Andrea Doria's forehead!

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 a 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 scorch!
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 precedence
In thought and act, which, having proved him higher
Than those he lived with, proved his competence
In helping them to wonder and aspire.

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."
To leave which lures
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 hope
'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.

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
Emblazoned 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 even, 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? Ay, if wanted in this haze,
Bring swords: but first bring souls!—bring thoughts and words,
Unrusted 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.

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 Buonarroti'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 Langland's Malvern with the stars in flower.

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 gray 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 beeves
Are all the same too: scarce have they 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.

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 Tuscan Bellosguardo, wide awake,[1]
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,

[1] 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 planned
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!

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!

Part II.

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?
Couldst thou not watch one hour? then, sleep enough—
  That sleep many hasten manhood and sustain
The faint pale spirit with some muscular stuff.

  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,[1] 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?

  From Casa Guidi windows I looked forth,
And saw ten thousand eyes of Florentines

[1] See the opening passage of the Agamemnon of Æschylus.

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.

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;
And men had patience with thy quiet mood,
And women, pity, as they saw thee pace
Their festive streets with premature gray 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?

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 these 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.
I much 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 atmosphere'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,

"How grown men raged at Austria's wickedness,
And smoked."

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.

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.

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 down they pulled the Duke's arms everywhere!
How up they set 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 Florence-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 forswore
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 simple 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!

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!
Men who might
Do greatly in a universe that breaks

And burns, must ever *know* before they do.
Courage and patience are but sacrifice;
And 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 a 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—
Not 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 dews
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.

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.
Call back 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 thickening 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!

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.

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 thousand; 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!

  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 peoples, 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.
Meanwhile, 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
Constrainèd 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?

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, less stirs 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 architrave ;
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 this faint heart of my womanhood,
Such things are better than a Peace that sits
Beside a 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!

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 too 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.

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 crosiers 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, agonising 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.

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 dispossest.
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 an
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 twinèd 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 they 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 takes his due.

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 at 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 annunciate to the world's applause.

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 pair 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: [1]
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 steamship moves your wonder?
You should behold it crushing down the brine
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 Springway."—
"Nor you these carven woods, where birds in bowers
With twisting snakes and climbing cupids, play."

O Magi of the east and of the west,
Your incense, gold and myrrh are excellent!—

[1] Philostratus relates of Apollonius how he objected to the musical instrument Linus the Rhodian, that it could not enrich or beautify. The history of music our day would satisfy the philosopher on one point at least.

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!
In the name of Italy,
Meantime, her patriot Dead have benison.
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 majestic 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 seaweeds 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.
He well 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.

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."

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?—Yes, 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.

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 my 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 spring 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?)
But *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.

Such cheer I gather from thy smiling, Sweet!
The self-same cherub-faces which emboss
The Vail, lean inward to the Mercy seat.

POEMS BEFORE CONGRESS.

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 fine
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?
Is it 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 grave-stone 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 deadest 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 bayonetted 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 restrainèd 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, Macmahon, 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 to 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 runs 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 diplomates 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
Missuiting 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 honour
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 a-foot 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 everywhere,
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 honour
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 touch 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 overflowing
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 suppose,
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 civilise 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 restless 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 lightnings 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 overcast
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 dispossessed.
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 suffer, 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
In 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.

I.

YOU'LL take back your Grand Duke?
I made the treaty upon it.
Just venture a quiet rebuke;
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.

II.

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 colours at sight of the Three.[1]
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?

[1] 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 it 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.

ὡς βασιλει, ὡς θεῳ, ὡς νεκρῳ.—GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

I.

THE Pope on Christmas Day
  Sits in St. Peter's chair;
But the peoples 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 nought 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 fore-knowledge: 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! agrope 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 civilisation perfected
Is fully developed Christianity.
"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
Succour 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 Michel 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 for ever!

XV.

Givers of coat and cloak too,—never
Grudging that purple of yours at the best,—
By your heroic will and endeavour
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 splendours
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 neighbour 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 patriotisms must follow.
—National voices, distinct yet dependent,
Ensphering each other, as swallow does swallow,
With circles still widening and ever ascendant,
In multiform 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 honour.

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
From my own land's sins: for little feet
Of children bleeding along the street:

"For parked-up honours 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 honour 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 favour 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.

LAST POEMS.

LITTLE MATTIE.

I.

DEAD! Thirteen a month ago!
  Short and narrow her life's walk;
Lover's love she could not know
  Even by a dream or talk:
Too young to be glad of youth,
  Missing honour, labour, rest,
And the warmth of a babe's mouth
  At the blossom of her breast.
Must you pity her for this
And for all the loss it is,
You, her mother, with wet face,
Having had all in your case?

II.

Just so young but yesternight,
  Now she is as old as death.
Meek, obedient in your sight,
  Gentle to a beck or breath
Only on last Monday! Yours,
  Answering you like silver bells
Lightly touched! An hour matures:
  You can teach her nothing else.
She has seen the mystery hid
Under Egypt's pyramid:
By those eyelids pale and close
Now she knows what Rhamses knows.

III.

Cross her quiet hands, and smooth
  Down her patient locks of silk,

Cold and passive as in truth
You your fingers in spilt milk
Drew along a marble floor ;
But her lips you cannot wring
Into saying a word more,
"Yes," or "No," or such a thing :
Though you call and beg and wreak
Half your soul out in a shriek,
She will lie there in default
And most innocent revolt.

IV.

Ay, and if she spoke, may be
She would answer like the Son,
"What is now 'twixt thee and me?"
Dreadful answer! better none.
Yours on Monday, God's to-day!
Yours, your child, your blood, your heart,
Called . . . you called her, did you say,
"Little Mattie" for your part?
Now already it sounds strange,
And you wonder, in this change,
What He calls His angel-creature,
Higher up than you can reach her.

V.

'Twas a green and easy world
As she took it ; room to play,
(Though one's hair might get uncurled
At the far end of the day).
What she suffered she shook off
In the sunshine ; what she sinned
She could pray on high enough
To keep safe above the wind

If reproved by God or you,
'Twas to better her, she knew;
And if crossed, she gathered still
'Twas to cross out something ill.

VI.

You, you had the right, you thought
To survey her with sweet scorn,
Poor gay child, who had not caught
Yet the octave-stretch forlorn
Of your larger wisdom! Nay,
Now your places are changed so,
In that same superior way
She regards you dull and low
As you did herself exempt
From life's sorrows. Grand contempt
Of the spirits risen awhile,
Who look back with such a smile!

VII.

There's the sting of't. That, I think,
Hurts the most a thousandfold!
To feel sudden, at a wink,
Some dear child we used to scold,
Praise, love both ways, kiss and tease,
Teach and tumble as our own,
All its curls about our knees,
Rise up suddenly full-grown.
Who could wonder such a sight
Made a woman mad outright?
Show me Michael with the sword
Rather than such angels, Lord!

A FALSE STEP.

I.

Sweet, thou hast trod on a heart.
Pass; there's a world full of men;
And women as fair as thou art
Must do such things now and then.

II.

Thou only hast stepped unaware,—
Malice, not one can impute;
And why should a heart have been there
In the way of a fair woman's foot?

III.

It was not a stone that could trip,
Nor was it a thorn that could rend:
Put up thy proud underlip!
'Twas merely the heart of a friend.

IV.

And yet peradventure one day
Thou, sitting alone at the glass,
Remarking the bloom gone away,
Where the smile in its dimplement was,

V.

And seeking around thee in vain
From hundreds who flattered before
Such a word as, "Oh, not in the main
Do I hold thee less precious, but more!" . . .

VI.

Thou'lt sigh, very like, on thy part,
"Of all I have known or can know,
I wish I had only that Heart
I trod upon ages ago!"

VOID IN LAW.

I.

SLEEP, little babe, on my knee,
Sleep, for the midnight is chill,
And the moon has died out in the tree,
And the great human world goeth ill.
Sleep, for the wicked agree:
Sleep, let them do as they will.
Sleep.

II.

Sleep, thou hast drawn from my breast
The last drop of milk that was good;
And now, in a dream, suck the rest,
Lest the real should trouble thy blood.
Suck, little lips dispossessed,
As we kiss in the air whom we would.
Sleep.

III.

O lips of thy father! the same,
So like! Very deeply they swore
When he gave me his ring and his name,
To take back, I imagined, no more!

And now is all changed like a game,
Though the old cards are used as of yore?
Sleep.

IV.

"Void in law," said the Courts. Something wrong
In the forms? Yet, "Till death part us two,
I, James, take thee, Jessie," was strong,
And ONE witness competent. True
Such a marriage was worth an old song,
Heard in Heaven though, as plain as the New.
Sleep.

V.

Sleep, little child, his and mine!
Her throat has the antelope curve,
And her cheek just the colour and line
Which fade not before him nor swerve:
Yet *she* has no child!—the divine
Seal of right upon loves that deserve.
Sleep.

VI.

My child! though the world take her part,
Saying, "She was the woman to choose,
He had eyes, was a man in his heart,"—
We twain the decision refuse:
We . . . weak as I am, as thou art, . . .
Cling on to him, never to loose.
Sleep.

VII.

He thinks that, when done with this place,
All's ended? he'll new-stamp the ore?

Yes, Cæsar's—but not in our case.
Let him learn we are waiting before
The grave's mouth, the heaven's gate, God's face,
With implacable love evermore.
Sleep.

VIII.

He's ours, though he kissed her but now
He's ours, though she kissed in reply:
He's ours, though himself disavow,
And God's universe favour the lie;
Ours to claim, ours to clasp, ours below,
Ours above, . . . if we live, if we die.
Sleep.

IX.

Ah baby, my baby, too rough
Is my lullaby? What have I said?
Sleep! When I've wept long enough
I shall learn to weep softly instead,
And piece with some alien stuff
My heart to lie smooth for thy head.
Sleep.

X.

Two souls met upon thee, my sweet;
Two loves led thee out to the sun:
Alas, pretty hands, pretty feet,
If the one who remains (only one)
Set her grief at thee, turned in a heat
To thine enemy,—were it well done?
Sleep.

XI.

May He of the manger stand near
And love thee! An infant He came
To His own who rejected Him here,
But the Magi brought gifts all the same.
I hurry the cross on my Dear!
My gifts are the griefs I declaim!
Sleep.

LORD WALTER'S WIFE.

I.

But why do you go?" said the lady, while both sate under the yew,
And her eyes were alive in their depth, as the kraken beneath the sea-blue.

II.

"Because I fear you," he answered;—"because you are far too fair,
And able to strangle my soul in a mesh of your gold-coloured hair."

III.

"Oh, that," she said, "is no reason! Such knots are quickly undone,
And too much beauty, I reckon, is nothing but too much sun."

IV.

"Yet farewell so," he answered;—"the sun-stroke's fatal at times.
I value your husband, Lord Walter, whose gallop rings still from the limes."

V.

"Oh, that," she said, "is no reason. You smell a rose through a fence :
If two should smell it, what matter? who grumbles, and where's the pretence?"

VI.

"But I," he replied, "have promised another, when love was free,
To love her alone, alone, who alone and afar loves me."

VII.

"Why, that," she said, "is no reason. Love's always free, I am told.
Will you vow to be safe from the headache on Tuesday, and think it will hold?"

VIII.

"But you," he replied, "have a daughter, a young little child, who was laid
In your lap to be pure ; so I leave you : the angels would make me afraid."

IX.

"Oh, that," she said, "is no reason. The angels keep out of the way ;
And Dora, the child, observes nothing, although you should please me and stay."

X.

At which he rose up in his anger,—"Why, now, you no longer are fair !
Why, now, you no longer are fatal, but ugly and hateful, I swear."

XI.

At which she laughed out in her scorn.—"These men!
Oh, these men overnice,
Who are shocked if a colour not virtuous, is frankly put
on by a vice."

XII.

Her eyes blazed upon him—"And *you*! You bring us
your vices so near
That we smell them! You think in our presence a thought
'twould defame us to hear!

XIII.

"What reason had you, and what right,—I appeal to your
soul from my life,—
To find me too fair as a woman? Why, sir, I am pure,
and a wife.

XIV.

"Is the day-star too fair up above you? It burns you not.
Dare you imply
I brushed you more close than the star does, when Walter
had set me as high?

XV.

"If a man finds a woman too fair, he means simply
adapted too much
To uses unlawful and fatal. The praise!—shall I thank
you for such?

XVI.

"Too fair?—not unless you misuse us! and surely if, once
in a while,
You attain to it, straightway you call us no longer too fair,
but too vile.

XVII.

"A moment,—I pray your attention!—I have a poor word in my head
I must utter, though womanly custom would set it down better unsaid.

XVIII.

"You grew, sir, pale to impertinence, once when I showed you a ring.
You kissed my fan when I dropped it. No matter!—I've broken the thing.

XIX.

"You did me the honour, perhaps, to be moved at my side now and then
In the senses—a vice, I have heard, which is common to beasts and some men.

XX.

"Love's a virtue for heroes!—as white as the snow on high hills,
And immortal as every great soul is that struggles, endures, and fulfils.

XXI.

"I love my Walter profoundly,—you, Maude, though you faltered a week,
For the sake of . . . what was it? an eyebrow? or, less still, a mole on a cheek?

XXII.

"And since, when all's said, you're too noble to stoop to the frivolous cant
About crimes irresistible, virtues that swindle, betray and supplant,

XXIII.

"I determined to prove to yourself that, whate'er you might dream or avow
By illusion, you wanted precisely no more of me than you have now.

XXIV.

"There! Look me full in the face!—in the face. Understand, if you can,
That the eyes of such women as I am, are clean as the palm of a man.

XXV.

"Drop his hand, you insult him. Avoid us for fear we should cost you a scar—
You take us for harlots, I tell you, and not for the women we are.

XXVI.

"You wronged me: but then I considered . . . there's Walter! And so at the end,
I vowed that he should not be mulcted, by me, in the hand of a friend.

XXVII.

"Have I hurt you indeed? We are quits then. Nay, friend of my Walter, be mine!
Come Dora, my darling, my angel, and help me to ask him to dine."

BIANCA AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES.

I.

THE cypress stood up like a church
  That night we felt our love would hold,
And saintly moonlight seemed to search
  And wash the whole world clean as gold;
The olives crystallised the vales'
  Broad slopes until the hills grew strong:
The fireflies and the nightingales
  Throbbed each to either, flame and song.
The nightingales, the nightingales.

II.

Upon the angle of its shade
  The cypress stood, self-balanced high;
Half up, half down, as double-made,
  Along the ground, against the sky.
And *we*, too! from such soul-height went
  Such leaps of blood, so blindly driven,
We scarce knew if our nature meant
  Most passionate earth or intense heaven.
The nightingales, the nightingales.

III.

We paled with love, we shook with love,
  We kissed so close we could not vow;
Till Giulio whispered, "Sweet, above
  God's Ever guaranties this Now."
And through his words the nightingales
  Drove straight and full their long clear call,

Like arrows through heroic mails,
And love was awful in it all.
The nightingales, the nightingales.

IV.

O cold white moonlight of the north,
Refresh these pulses, quench this hell!
O coverture of death drawn forth
Across this garden-chamber . . . well!
But what have nightingales to do
In gloomy England, called the free . . .
(Yes, free to die in! . . .) when we two
Are sundered, singing still to me?
And still they sing, the nightingales.

V.

I think I hear him, how he cried
"My own soul's life" between their notes.
Each man has but one soul supplied,
And that's immortal. Though his throat's
On fire with passion now, to *her*
He can't say what to me he said!
And yet he moves her, they aver.
The nightingales sing through my head,
The nightingales, the nightingales.

VI.

He says to *her* what moves her most.
He would not name his soul within
Her hearing,—rather pays her cost
With praises to her lips and chin.
Man has but one soul, 'tis ordained,
And each soul but one love, I add;

Yet souls are damned and love 's profaned.
These nightingales will sing me mad!
The nightingales, the nightingales.

VII.

I marvel how the birds can sing.
There's little difference, in their view,
Betwixt our Tuscan trees that spring
As vital flames into the blue,
And dull round blots of foliage meant
Like saturated sponges here
To suck the fogs up. As content
Is he too in this land, 'tis clear.
And still they sing, the nightingales.

VIII.

My native Florence! dear, forgone!
I see across the Alpine ridge
How the last feast-day of Saint John
Shot rockets from Carraia bridge.
The luminous city, tall with fire,
Trod deep down in that river of ours,
While many a boat with lamp and choir
Skimmed birdlike over glittering towers.
I will not hear these nightingales.

IX.

I seem to float, *we* seem to float
Down Arno's stream in festive guise;
A boat strikes flame into our boat,
And up that lady seems to rise
As then she rose. The shock had flashed
A vision on us! What a head,

What leaping eyeballs!—beauty dashed
To splendour by a sudden dread.
And still they sing, the nightingales.

X.

Too bold to sin, too weak to die;
Such women are so. As for me,
I would we had drowned there, he and I,
That moment, loving perfectly.
He had not caught her with her loosed
Gold ringlets . . . rarer in the south . . .
Nor heard the "Grazie tanto" bruised
To sweetness by her English mouth.
And still they sing, the nightingales.

XI.

She had not reached him at my heart
With her fine tongue, as snakes indeed
Kill flies; nor had I, for my part,
Yearned after, in my desperate need,
And followed him as he did her
To coasts left bitter by the tide,
Whose very nightingales, elsewhere
Delighting, torture and deride!
For still they sing, the nightingales.

XII.

A worthless woman; mere cold clay
As all false things are: but so fair,
She takes the breath of men away
Who gaze upon her unaware.
I would not play her larcenous tricks
To have her looks! She lied and stole,

And spat into my love's pure pyx
The rank saliva of her soul.
And still they sing, the nightingales.

XIII.

I would not for her white and pink,
Though such he likes—her grace of limb,
Though such he has praised—nor yet, I think,
For life itself, though spent with him,
Commit such sacrilege, affront
God's nature which is love, intrude
'Twixt two affianced souls, and hunt
Like spiders, in the altar's wood.
I cannot bear these nightingales.

XIV.

If she chose sin, some gentler guise
She might have sinned in, so it seems:
She might have pricked out both my eyes,
And I still seen him in my dreams!
—Or drugged me in my soup or wine,
Nor left me angry afterward:
To die here with his hand in mine
His breath upon me, were not hard.
(Our Lady hush these nightingales!)

XV.

But set a springe for *him*, "mio ben,"
My only good, my first last love!—
Though Christ knows well what sin is, when
He sees some things done they must move
Himself to wonder. Let her pass.
I think of her by night and day.

Must *I* too join her . . . out, alas ! . . .
With Giulio, in each word I say ?
And evermore the nightingales !

XVI.

Giulio, my Giulio !—sing they so,
And you be silent ? Do I speak,
And you not hear ? An arm you throw
Round some one, and I feel so weak ?
—Oh, owl-like birds ! They sing for spite,
They sing for hate, they sing for doom,
They'll sing through death who sing through night,
They'll sing and stun me in the tomb—
The nightingales, the nightingales !

MY KATE.

I.

She was not as pretty as women I know,
And yet all your best made of sunshine and snow
Drop to shade, melt to nought in the long-trodden ways,
While she's still remembered on warm and cold days—
My Kate.

II.

Her air had a meaning, her movements a grace ;
You turned from the fairest to gaze on her face :
And when you had once seen her forehead and mouth,
You saw as distinctly her soul and her truth—
My Kate.

III.

Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,
You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke:
When she did, so peculiar yet soft was the tone,
Though the loudest spoke also, you heard her alone—
My Kate.

IV.

I doubt if she said to you much that could act
As a thought or suggestion: she did not attract
In the sense of the brilliant or wise: I infer
'Twas her thinking of others, made you think of her—
My Kate.

V.

She never found fault with you, never implied
Your wrong by her right; and yet men at her side
Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town
The children were gladder that pulled at her gown—
My Kate.

VI.

None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall;
They knelt more to God than they used,—that was all:
If you praised her as charming, some asked what you meant,
But the charm of her presence was felt when she went—
My Kate.

VII.

The weak and the gentle, the ribald and rude,
She took as she found them, and did them all good;
It always was so with her—see what you have!
She has made the grass greener even here . . with her grave—
My Kate.

VIII.

My dear one!—when thou wast alive with the rest,
I held thee the sweetest and loved thee the best:
And now thou art dead, shall I not take thy part
As thy smiles used to do for thyself, my sweet Heart—
My Kate?

A SONG

FOR

THE RAGGED SCHOOLS OF LONDON.

WRITTEN IN ROME.

I.

I AM listening here in Rome.
"England 's strong," say many speakers,
"If she winks, the Czar must come,
Prow and topsail, to the breakers."

II.

"England 's rich in coal and oak,"
Adds a Roman, getting moody,
"If she shakes a travelling cloak,
Down our Appian roll the scudi."

III.

"England 's righteous," they rejoin,
"Who shall grudge her exaltations,
When her wealth of golden coin
Works the welfare of the nations?"

IV.

I am listening here in Rome.
Over Alps a voice is sweeping—
"England's cruel, save us some
Of these victims in her keeping!"

V.

As the cry beneath the wheel
Of an old triumphal Roman
Cleft the people's shouts like steel,
While the show was spoilt for no man.

VI.

Comes that voice. Let others shout,
Other poets praise my land here:
I am sadly sitting out,
Praying, "God forgive her grandeur."

VII.

Shall we boast of empire, where
Time with ruin sits commissioned?
In God's liberal blue air
Peter's dome itself looks wizened;

VIII.

And the mountains, in disdain,
Gather back their lights of opal
From the dumb, despondent plain,
Heaped with jawbones of a people.

IX.

Lordly English, think it o'er,
Cæsar's doing is all undone!