The image shows the front cover of a book. The cover is a deep, textured red. It features a decorative border made of gold-tooled lines. The border consists of an outer rectangular frame and an inner rectangular frame, with ornate, carved-style corner pieces connecting them. In the center of the inner frame, the name "R. BROWNING" is printed in a gold, serif typeface. The "R" is large and stylized, with a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the left. The rest of the name "BROWNING" is in a smaller, all-caps serif font.

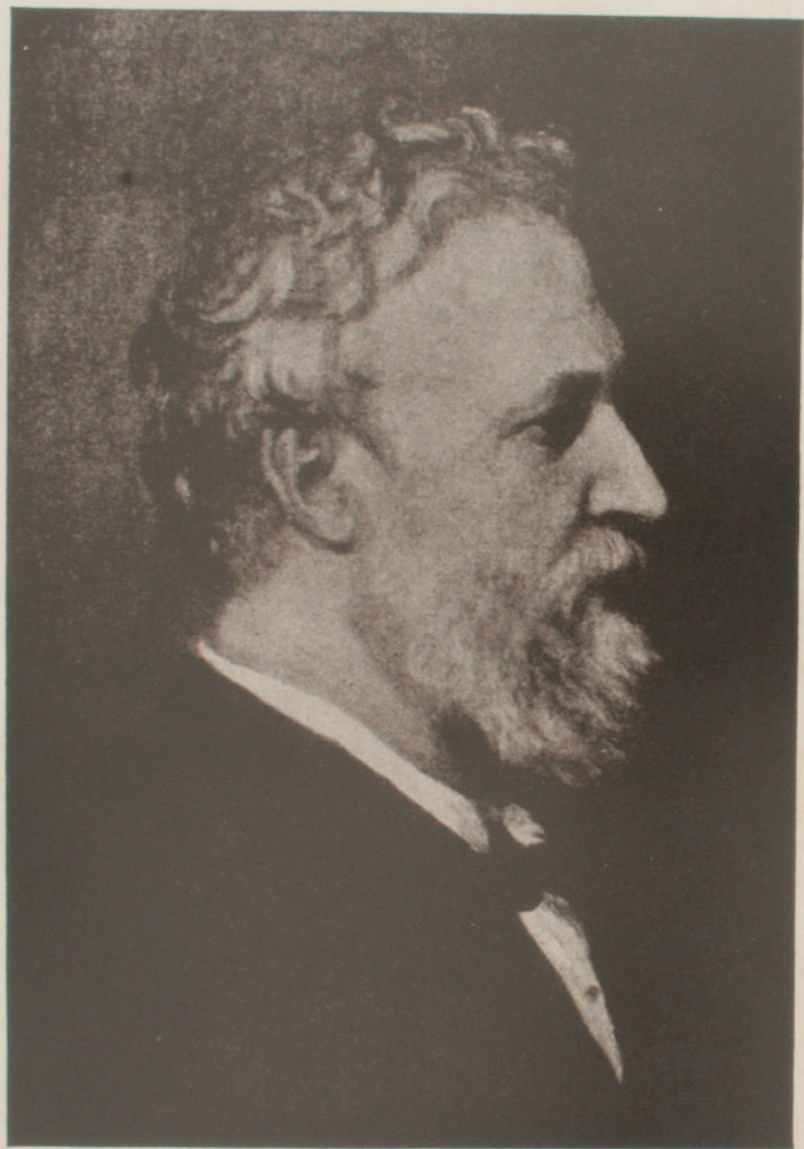
R. BROWNING



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THE POETICAL WORKS OF
ROBERT BROWNING

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ROBERT BROWNING.

1875.

From the portrait by George Frederick Watts, R.A.

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ROBERT BROWNING.

1873.

From the portrait by George Frederick Watts, R.A.

The Centenary Edition.

POETICAL WORKS

OF

ROBERT BROWNING

With Introductory Note by
CHARLES W. FORWARD.

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamt though right were worsted, wrong would triumph.
Held we fell to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.



LONDON :

PEACOCK, MANSFIELD & CO. LTD.,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE

ROBERT BROWNING.

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

Although Robert Browning was born a century ago, and most of his best work has been before the public for at least forty or fifty years, there is still an idea prevalent amongst a comparatively large class of people, that his poetry is difficult of comprehension.

Cheaper editions of his writings have tempted a gradually widening circle to dip into their pages, and the Browning Society—founded in 1881 by the late Dr. Furnivall and Miss Hickey—has helped to focus interest on Browning as a poet, though the mere suggestion that a writer should require a "Society" to assist in the elucidation of his meaning, is of itself, rather alarming and calculated to make him "caviare to the general."

Yet Robert Browning was certainly one of the greatest of English poets, and devoted his life to the Muse. He was, too, of a type the reverse of the recluse, and lived in the world sufficiently to be able to portray in forceful, rugged lines the entire range of human feelings. His lines convey the storm and stress of passion in a way that is seldom found in the measured and dignified verses of his contemporary Tennyson.

Phrase after phrase, sentence after sentence, is hurled out with dramatic effect, the result, in some instances, resembling a rough, strong crayon sketch of a master hand, rather than a closely finished and carefully worked up picture.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that those whose appreciation of poetry depends in a measure upon the pleasing jingle of the rhyme, or the simplicity of the

theme, should find themselves on unaccustomed ground when, for the first time, they open a volume of Robert Browning. This is the more likely to be the case if, as naturally happens, the early part of the volume is the first to be attacked. For, it must be at once admitted that lucidity cannot be claimed for all Browning's poems, and amongst the earliest is the rather long poem, *Sordello*, certainly one of the most obscure.

Tennyson playfully remarked of this poem that he could only understand two lines, the first (p. 125) and the last (p. 217), and they were both untrue. More time was given to the composition of *Sordello* than to any other of his works, and perhaps, as Mr. Leslie Stephen suggests, Browning had grown so familiar with the story of the Mantuan Troubadour who became drawn into the perplexing vortex of politics, that he omitted to make allowances for the reader's difficulties. Apart from the defects of this poem from the casual reader's point of view, it contains many fine descriptive lines and vigorously expressed thoughts, but it can scarcely be doubted that it did a good deal to prejudice Browning in the public mind, and seemed to justify the charge of obscurity as applied to his writings.

Possibly, there is another reason why the casual reader of poetry who takes up a volume of Browning does not find his interest easily roused or long sustained. Many poets have been men of culture, and have selected their subjects from the classics, but it is a fact that their general popularity has rested to a large extent upon works of comparatively minor importance dealing with simple subjects that appealed at once to a wide circle of readers.

For instance, Tennyson is known to thousands as the writer of *The May Queen*, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, and *Come into the Garden, Maud*, though it is doubtful if one out of a hundred to whom these poems are familiar, have read *Ulysses*, *The Ancient Sage* or *Tiresias*. Browning's poetry has not lent itself easily to recitation or song, and even *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, and *How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix* are much less known than Wordsworth's *We are Seven* or Longfellow's *Village Blacksmith*.

Browning has selected the subjects for his poems from a variety of sources, but many of them demand a rather wide knowledge on the part of the reader. For instance, how many have any acquaintance with, or much interest in the history of *Paracelsus*, *Sordello*, *King Victor and King Charles*, or, *The Return of the Druses*? How many, except travellers in Italy or students of art, have heard of *Asolo*, or *Fano*, or *Fra Lippo Lippi*, or *Andrea del Sarto*, or *Pacchiarotto*, not to speak of a hundred other references to Italian places or people which the untravelled would scarce appreciate?

The lover of poetry who has missed the delights of reading Browning owing to a misconception as to his lucidity, must possess himself of a volume of the poems and study them at leisure. Let him begin with a few of the shorter ones, *e.g.*, *Nay, but you who do not love her* (p. 282), *Up at a Villa—Down in the City* (p. 286), *Home Thoughts from Abroad* (p. 294), *A Pretty Woman* (p. 311), *Women and Roses* (p. 314), *The Last Ride Together* (p. 429), *Rabbi Ben Ezra* (p. 614), *Apparent Failure* (p. 662), and many similar poems which he will find in the sections—Dramatic Lyrics, Dramatic Romances, Men and Women, and Dramatis Personæ.

Robert Browning was born at Camberwell on May 7th, 1812, his father, who held a position in the Bank of England, being a man of literary and artistic tastes, and his mother, a lady of German extraction. Robert was sent to school in the neighbourhood, and received little other teaching, save two years under a French tutor, and a series of Greek lectures at London University.

He never appears to have distinguished himself at school, being more remarked for his love of birds and beasts than his attainments as a scholar. He had, however, composed verses almost before he could write, and a small volume of poems was issued under the title of *Incondita*, when he was twelve years of age. His father's library was a fountain of inspiration to him, and afforded him many opportunities of making himself acquainted with general literature. Amongst other works that appealed to him were the Elizabethan dramatists and the writings of Voltaire. Byron probably influenced his early ideas of style, and an acquaintance with the poems

of Shelley and Keats followed. Of these last two, Shelley made a deep impression upon him, and it was to the author of *Queen Mab* that he referred in *Pauline* :—

“Sun-treader—Life and Light be thine for ever ; etc.”
(p. 3).

The home-life of the poet appears to have been a particularly happy one, and he lived with his parents until his marriage in 1846. Two years earlier than this, Miss Barrett's poem *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* was issued, and a reference it contained resulted in an introduction to Robert Browning. Miss Barrett was a confirmed invalid, never leaving her house, and rarely her room. She was devoted to her father, who appears to have been an altogether unreasonable person, objecting on apparently selfish grounds to the idea of his daughter leaving him. A climax was reached when medical opinion favoured Miss Barrett's making a journey to Italy as the sole chance of restoring her health. Browning had been quite willing to ask her father's consent to their marriage, but his refusal being a fore-gone conclusion, they decided on a secret marriage, which took place on September 12th, 1846, after which they departed for Italy. The soft Italian climate exercised a beneficial influence, and Mrs. Browning's health underwent a change for the better. For the greater portion of their married life the Brownings resided in Italy, but after Mrs. Browning's death, in 1861, Browning returned to London, where he made many personal friendships, and, to a limited extent, took part in social life. Latterly, however, he returned to Italy, and spent several autumns at Venice, though he never re-visited Florence after his wife's death there. He died in Venice after a short illness on December 12th, 1889, and was buried in Westminster Abbey on the 31st.

From the very first, the genius of Browning was recognised, and even his early poem *Pauline*, impressed John Stuart Mill, and D. G. Rossetti. John Forster and Macready were struck with the dramatic qualities of *Paracelsus*, and the latter suggested that Browning should write a play, the result being, that *Strafford* was produced at Covent Garden in 1837. Subsequent dramas were

is a truly remarkable one, and, of itself, a high testimony to the poet's dramatic power, the application of which may however be noticed in others of his poems. Referring to this poem Mr. Birrell remarks that it is "a huge novel in twenty thousand lines—told after the method not of Scott, but of Balzac; it tears the hearts out of a dozen characters; it tells the same story from ten different points of view. It is loaded with detail of every kind and description; you are let off nothing. As with the schoolboy's life, if he is to enjoy it at all, he must fling himself into it, and care intensely about everything—so the reader of *The Ring and the Book*, must be interested in everybody, and everything, down to the fact that the eldest daughter of the Counsel for the prosecution of Guido is eight years old on the very day he is writing his speech, and that he is going to have fried liver and parsley for his supper."

Throughout Browning's writings the dramatic element is almost always predominant. He appears to have set himself the task of sifting out from human action what was really noble without reference to ultimate results. With him the means was not subservient to the end. He admired strength of character for its own sake, no less than the actual object to be achieved. The idea that the influence of a man's actions in developing and shaping his character has an importance of its own, apart from the successful working out of his aims is well expressed in *Rabbi Ben Ezra* (p. 614), and *A Grammarian's Funeral* (p. 447).

Browning's poetry possesses the passionate feeling of Byron's without its pessimism, and the vigour of Walt Whitman without its tone of defiance. It is impossible, however, to classify Browning as belonging to any particular school—he is *sui generis*. His most important works deal with those eternal themes, as full of interest to-day, as when the Book of Job was written—the tragedy and comedy of human life. This constitutes the lasting quality of his poetry, for however the conditions of human existence may vary, human nature remains the same throughout the centuries.

C.W.F.

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PAULINE :

A FRAGMENT OF A CONFESSION

Plus ne suis ce que j'ai été,
Et ne le sçaurois jamais être.—MAROT.

Non dubito, quin titulus libri nostri raritate sua quamplurimos alliciat ad legendum : inter quos nonnulli obliquæ opinionis, mente languidi, multi etiam maligni, et in ingenium nostrum ingrati accedent, qui temeraria sua ignorantia, vix conspecto titulo clamabunt : Nos vetita docere, hæresium semina jacere : piis auribus offendiculo, præclaris ingeniis scandalo esse : . . . adeo conscientia suæ consulentes, ut nec Apollo, nec Musæ omnes, neque Angelus de cælo me ab illorum execratione vindicare queant : quibus et ego nunc consulo, ne scripta nostra legant, nec intelligant, nec meminerint : nam noxia sunt, venenosa sunt : Acherontis ostium est in hoc libro, lapides loquitur, caveant, ne cerebrum illis excutiat. Vos autem, qui æqua mente ad legendum venitis, si tantam prudentiæ discretionem adhibueritis, quantam in melle legendo apes, jam securi legite. Puto namque vos et utilitatis haud parum et voluptatis plurimum accepturos. Quod si qua repperitis, quæ vobis non placeant, mittite illa, nec utimini. NAM ET EGO VOBIS ILLA NON PROBO, SED NARRO. Cætera tamen propterea non respuite Ideo, si quid liberius dictum sit, ignorete adolescentiæ nostræ, qui minor quam adolescens hoc opus composui.—*Hen. Corn. Agrippa, De Occult. Philosoph. in Prefat.*

London, January, 1833.

V. A. XX.

| | |
|---|--|
| PAULINE, mine own, bend o'er me— thy soft breast | Yet till I have unlocked them it were vain |
| Shall pant to mine—bend o'er me— thy sweet eyes, | To hope to sing ; some woe would light on me ; |
| And loosened hair and breathing lips, and arms | Nature would point at one whose quivering lip |
| Drawing me to thee—these build up a screen | Was bathed in her enchantments, whose brow burned |
| To shut me in with thee, and from all fear ; | Beneath the crown to which her secrets knelt, |
| So that I might unlock the sleepless brood | Who learned the spell which can call up the dead, |
| Of fancies from my soul, their lurking place, | And then departed smiling like a fiend Who has deceived God,—if such one should seek |
| Nor doubt that each would pass, ne'er to return | Again her altars and stand robed and crowned |
| To one so watched, so loved and so secured. | Amid the faithful : sad confession first, Remorse and pardon and old claims renewed, |
| But what can guard thee but thy naked love ? | Ere I can be—as I shall be no more. |
| Ah dearest, whoso sucks a poisoned wound | |
| Envenoms his own veins ! Thou art so good, | I had been spared this shame if I had sat |
| So calm—if thou should'st wear a brow less light | By thee for ever from the first, in place Of my wild dreams of beauty and of good, |
| For some wild thought which, but for me, were kept | Or with them, as an earnest of their truth : |
| From out thy soul as from a sacred star ! | |

No thought nor hope having been shut
 from thee,
 No vague wish unexplained, no wander-
 ing aim
 Sent back to bind on fancy's wings and
 seek
 Some strange fair world where it might
 be a law ;
 But doubting nothing, had been led by
 thee,
 Thro' youth, and saved, as one at
 length awakened
 Who has slept through a peril. Ah
 vain, vain !
 Thou lovest me ; the past is in its
 grave
 Tho' its ghost haunts us ; still this
 much is ours,
 To cast away restraint, lest a worse
 thing
 Wait for us in the darkness. Thou
 lovest me ;
 And thou art to receive not love but
 faith,
 For which thou wilt be mine, and smile
 and take
 All shapes and shames, and veil with-
 out a fear
 That form which music follows like a
 slave :
 And I look to thee and I trust in thee,
 As in a Northern night one looks away
 Unto the East for morn and spring and
 joy.
 Thou seest then my aimless, hopeless
 state,
 And, resting on some few old feelings
 won
 Back by thy beauty, wouldst that I
 essay
 The task which was to me what now
 thou art :
 And why should I conceal one weak-
 ness more ?
 Thou wilt remember one warm morn
 when winter
 Crept aged from the earth, and spring's
 first breath
 Blew soft from the moist hills ; the
 black-thorn boughs,
 So dark in the bare wood, when glisten-
 ing
 In the sunshine were white with coming
 buds,
 Like the bright side of a sorrow, and
 the banks

Had violets opening from sleep like
 eyes.
 I walked with thee who knew not a
 deep shame
 Lurked beneath smiles and careless
 words which sought
 To hide it till they wandered and were
 mute,
 As we stood listening on a sunny
 mound
 To the wind murmuring in the damp
 copse,
 Like heavy breathings of some hidden
 thing
 Betrayed by sleep ; until the feeling
 rushed
 That I was low indeed, yet not so low
 As to endure the calmness of thine eyes ;
 And so I told thee all, while the cool
 breast
 I leaned on altered not its quiet beating,
 And long ere words like a hurt bird's
 complaint
 Bade me look up and be what I had
 been,
 I felt despair could never live by thee :
 Thou wilt remember. Thou art not
 more dear
 Than song was once to me ; and I ne'er
 sung
 But as one entering bright halls where
 all
 Will rise and shout for him : sure I
 must own
 That I am fallen, having chosen gifts
 Distinct from theirs—that I am sad
 and fain
 Would give up all to be but where I
 was,
 Not high as I had been if faithful found,
 But low and weak yet full of hope, and
 sure
 Of goodness as of life—that I would
 lose
 All this gay mastery of mind, to sit
 Once more with them, trusting in truth
 and love,
 And with an aim—not being what I am.
 Oh Pauline, I am ruined who believed
 That though my soul had floated from
 its sphere
 Of wild dominion into the dim orb
 Of self—that it was strong and free as
 ever !
 It has conformed itself to that dim orb,
 Reflecting all its shades and shapes,
 and now

Must stay where it alone can be adored.
 I have felt this in dreams—in dreams
 in which
 I seemed the fate from which I fled; I
 felt
 A strange delight in causing my decay;
 I was a fiend in darkness chained for
 ever
 Within some ocean-cave; and ages
 rolled,
 Till through the cleft rock, like a moon-
 beam, came
 A white swan to remain with me; and
 ages
 Rolled, yet I tired not of my first joy
 In gazing on the peace of its pure
 wings:
 And then I said "It is most fair to me,
 "Yet its soft wings must sure have
 suffered change
 "From the thick darkness, sure its
 eyes are dim,
 "Its silver pinions must be cramped
 and numbed
 "With sleeping ages here; it cannot
 leave me,
 "For it would seem, in light beside its
 kind,
 "Withered, tho' here to me most
 beautiful."
 And then I was a young witch whose
 blue eyes,
 As she stood naked by the river springs,
 Drew down a god; I watched his radiant
 form
 Growing less radiant and it gladdened
 me;
 Till one morn, as he sat in the sunshine
 Upon my knees, singing to me of
 heaven,
 He turned to look at me, ere I could
 lose
 The grin with which I viewed his
 perishing:
 And he shrieked and departed and sat
 long
 By his deserted throne, but sunk at
 last
 Murmuring, as I kissed his lips and
 curled
 Around him, "I am still a god—to
 thee."
 Still I can lay my soul bare in its fall,
 For all the wandering and all the weak-
 ness
 Will be a saddest comment on the song:
 And if, that done, I can be young again,

I will give up all gained, as willingly
 As one gives up a charm which shuts
 him out
 From hope or part or care in human
 kind.
 As life wanes, all its cares and strife
 and toil
 Seem strangely valueless, while the
 old trees
 Which grew by our youth's home, the
 waving mass
 Of climbing plants heavy with bloom
 and dew,
 The morning swallows with their songs
 like words,
 All these seem clear and only worth
 our thoughts:
 So, aught connected with my early life,
 My rude songs or my wild imaginings,
 How I look on them—most distinct
 amid
 The fever and the stir of after years!
 I ne'er had ventured e'en to hope for
 this;
 Had not the glow I felt at His award,
 Assured me all was not extinct within:
 His whom all honour, whose renown
 springs up
 Like sunlight which will visit all the
 world,
 So that e'en they who sneered at him
 at first,
 Come out to it, as some dark spider
 crawls
 From his foul nets which some lit torch
 invades,
 Yet spinning still new films for his
 retreat.
 Thou didst smile, poet, but can we
 forgive?
 Sun-treader, life and light be thine for
 ever!
 Thou art gone from us; years go by
 and spring
 Gladdens and the young earth is
 beautiful
 Yet thy songs come not, other bards
 arise,
 But none like thee: they stand, thy
 majesties,
 Like mighty works which tell some
 spirit there
 Hath sat regardless of neglect and
 scorn,
 Till, its long task completed, it hath
 risen

And left us, never to return, and all
 Rush in to peer and praise when all in
 vain.
 The air seems bright with thy past
 presence yet,
 But thou art still for me as thou hast
 been
 When I have stood with thee as on a
 throne
 With all thy dim creations gathered
 round
 Like mountains, and I felt of mould
 like them,
 And creatures of my own were mixed
 with them,
 Like things half-lived, catching and
 giving life.
 But thou art still for me, who have
 adored
 Tho' single, panting but to hear thy
 name
 Which I believed a spell to me alone,
 Scarce deeming thou wast as a star to
 men!
 As one should worship long a sacred
 spring
 Scarce worth a moth's flitting, which
 long grasses cross,
 And one small tree embowers droop-
 ingly,
 Joying to see some wandering insect
 won
 To live in its few rushes, or some locust
 To pasture on its boughs, or some wild
 bird
 Stoop for its freshness from the track-
 less air:
 And then should find it but the foun-
 tain-head,
 Long lost, of some great river washing
 towns
 And towers, and seeing old woods
 which will live
 But by its banks untrod of human foot,
 Which, when the great sun sinks, lie
 quivering
 In light as some thing lieth half of life
 Before God's foot, waiting a wondrous
 change;
 Then girt with rocks which seek to turn
 or stay
 Its course in vain, for it does ever
 spread
 Like a sea's arm as it goes rolling on,
 Being the pulse of some great country
 —so [world!
 Wast thou to me, and art thou to the

And I, perchance, half feel a strange
 regret,
 That I am not what I have been to thee:
 Like a girl one has loved long silently
 In her first loveliness in some retreat,
 When, first emerged, all gaze and glow
 to view
 Her fresh eyes and soft hair and lips
 which bleed
 Like a mountain berry: doubtless it is
 sweet
 To see her thus adored, but there have
 been
 Moments when all the world was in his
 praise,
 Sweeter than all the pride of after hours.
 Yet, sun-treader, all hail! From my
 heart's heart
 I bid thee hail! E'en in my wildest
 dreams,
 I am proud to feel I would have thrown
 up all
 The wreaths of fame which seemed
 o'erhanging me,
 To have seen thee for a moment as thou
 art.
 And if thou livest, if thou lovest, spirit!
 Remember me who set this final seal
 To wandering thought—that one so
 pure as thou
 Could never die. Remember me who
 flung
 All honour from my soul yet paused and
 said,
 "There is one spark of love remaining
 yet,
 "For I have nought in common with
 him, shapes
 "Which followed him avoid me, and
 foul forms
 "Seek me, which ne'er could fasten on
 his mind;
 "And though I feel how low I am to
 him,
 "Yet I aim not even to catch a tone
 "Of all the harmonies which he called
 up;
 "So, one gleam still remains, although
 the last."
 Remember me who praise thee e'en
 with tears,
 For never more shall I walk calm with
 thee;
 Thy sweet imaginings are as an air,
 A melody some wondrous singer sings,
 Which, though it haunt men oft in the
 still eve,

They dream not to essay ; yet it no
 less
 But more is honoured. I was thine in
 shame,
 And now when all thy proud renown is
 out,
 I am a watcher whose eyes have grown
 dim
 With looking for some star which
 breaks on him
 Altered and worn and weak and full of
 tears.

 Autumn has come like spring returned
 to us,
 Won from her girlishness ; like one
 returned
 A friend that was a lover nor forgets
 The first warm love, but full of sober
 thoughts
 Of fading years ; whose soft mouth
 quivers yet
 With the old smile but yet so changed
 and still !
 And here am I the scoffer, who have
 probed
 Life's vanity, won by a word again
 Into my own life—for one little word
 Of this sweet friend who lives in loving
 me,
 Lives strangely on my thoughts and
 looks and words, [thing
 As fathoms down some nameless ocean
 Its silent course of quietness and joy.
 O dearest, if indeed I tell the past,
 Mayst thou forget it as a sad sick
 dream !
 Or if it linger—my lost soul too soon
 Sinks to itself and whispers, we shall be
 But closer linked, two creatures whom
 the earth
 Bears singly, with strange feelings un-
 revealed
 But to each other ; or two lonely things
 Created by some power whose reign is
 done,
 Having no part in God or his bright
 world.
 I am to sing whilst ebbing day dies soft,
 As a lean scholar dies worn o'er his
 book,
 And in the heaven stars steal out one
 by one
 As hunted men steal to their mountain
 watch.
 I must not think, lest this new impulse
 die

In which I trust ; I have no confidence :
 So, I will sing on fast as fancies come ;
 Rudely, the verse being as the mood it
 paints.

I strip my mind bare, whose first
 elements
 I shall unveil—not as they struggled
 forth
 In infancy, nor as they now exist,
 That I am grown above them and can
 rule—
 But in that middle stage when they
 were full
 Yet ere I had disposed them to my will ;
 And then I shall show how these ele-
 ments
 Produced my present state, and what it
 is.

I am made up of an intensest life,
 Of a most clear idea of consciousness
 Of self, distinct from all its qualities,
 From all affections, passions, feelings,
 powers ;
 And thus far it exists, if tracked in all :
 But linked, in me, to self-supremacy,
 Existing as a centre to all things,
 Most potent to create and rule and call
 Upon all things to minister to it ;
 And to a principle of restlessness
 Which would be all, have, see, know,
 taste, feel, all—
 This is myself ; and I should thus have
 been
 Though gifted lower than the meanest
 soul.

And of my powers, one springs up to
 save
 From utter death a soul with such
 desire
 Confined to clay—which is the only one
 Which marks me—an imagination
 which
 Has been an angel to me, coming not
 In fitful visions but beside me ever
 And never failing me ; so, though my
 mind
 Forgets not, not a shred of life forgets,
 Yet I can take a secret pride in calling
 The dark past up to quell it regally.

A mind like this must dissipate itself.
 But I have always had one lode-star ;
 now,
 As I look back, I see that I have wasted

Or progressed as I looked towards that
star—

A need, a trust, a yearning after God :
A feeling I have analysed but late,
But it existed, and was reconciled
With a neglect of all I deemed his laws,
Which yet, when seen in others, I
abhorred.

I felt as one beloved, and so shut in
From fear : and thence I date my trust
in signs

And omens, for I saw God everywhere ;
And I can only lay it to the fruit
Of a sad after-time that I could doubt
Even his being—having always felt
His presence, never acting from myself,
Still trusting in a hand that leads me
through

All danger ; and this feeling still has
fought

Against my weakest reason and resolve.

And I can love nothing—and this dull
truth

Has come the last : but sense supplies
a love

Encircling me and mingling with my
life.

These make myself : for I have sought
in vain

To trace how they were formed by cir-
cumstance,

For I still find them turning my wild
youth

Where they alone displayed themselves,
converting

All objects to their use : now see their
course.

They came to me in my first dawn of
life

Which passed alone with wisest ancient
books

All halo-girt with fancies of my own ;
And I myself went with the tale—a god
Wandering after beauty, or a giant
Standing vast in the sunset—an old
hunter

Talking with gods, or a high-crested
chief,

Sailing with troops of friends to Tene-
dos.

I tell you, nought has ever been so clear
As the place, the time, the fashion of
those lives :

I had not seen a work of lofty art,

Nor woman's beauty nor sweet nature's
face,

Yet, I say, never morn broke clear as
those

On the dim clustered isles in the blue
sea,

The deep groves and white temples and
wet caves :

And nothing ever will surprise me now—
Who stood beside the naked Swift-
footed,

Who bound my forehead with Proser-
pine's hair.

And strange it is that I who could so
dream

Should e'er have stooped to aim at
aught beneath—

Aught low, or painful ; but I never
doubted,

So, as I grew, I rudely shaped my life
To my immediate wants ; yet strong
beneath

Was a vague sense of powers folded
up—

A sense that though those shadowy
times were past

Their spirit dwelt in me, and I should
rule.

Then came a pause, and long restraint
chained down

My soul till it was changed. I lost
myself,

And were it not that I so loathe that
time,

I could recall how first I learned to turn
My mind against itself ; and the effects

In deeds for which remorse were vain
as for

The wanderings of delirious dream ;
yet thence

Came cunning, envy, falsehood, which
so long

Have spotted me : at length I was
restored.

Yet long the influence remained ; and
nought

But the still life I led, apart from all,
Which left my soul to seek its old de-
lights,

Could e'er have brought me thus far
back to peace.

As peace returned, I sought out some
pursuit ;

And song rose, no new impulse but the
one

With which all others best could be combined.

My life has not been that of those whose heaven

Was lampless save where poesy shone out;

But as a clime where glittering mountain-tops

And glancing sea and forests steeped in light

Give back reflected the far-flashing sun;

For music (which is earnest of a heaven, Seeing we know emotions strange by it,

Not else to be revealed,) is as a voice, A low voice calling fancy, as a friend,

To the green woods in the gay summer time:

And she fills all the way with dancing shapes

Which have made painters pale, and they go on

While stars look at them and winds call to them

As they leave life's path for the twilight world

Where the dead gather. This was not at first,

For I scarce knew what I would do. I had

No wish to paint, no yearning; but I sang.

And first I sang as I in dream have seen

Music wait on a lyrist for some thought, Yet singing to herself until it came.

I turned to those old times and scenes where all

That's beautiful had birth for me, and made

Rude verses on them all; and then I paused—

I had done nothing, so I sought to know

What mind had yet achieved. No fear was mine

As I gazed on the works of mighty bards,

In the first joy at finding my own thoughts

Recorded and my powers exemplified, And feeling their aspirings were my own.

And then I first explored passion and mind;

And I began afresh; I rather sought To rival what I wondered at, than form

Creations of my own; so, much was light

Lent back by others, yet much was my own.

I paused again, a change was coming on, I was no more a boy, the past was

breaking

Before the coming and like fever worked.

I first thought on myself, and here my powers

Burst out: I dreamed not of restraint but gazed

On all things: schemes and systems went and came,

And I was proud (being vainest of the weak).

In wandering o'er them to seek out some one

To be my own, as one should wander o'er

The white way for a star.

And my choice fell

Not so much on a system as a man— On one, whom praise of mine would not

offend,

Who was as calm as beauty, being such Unto mankind as thou to me, Pauline,

Believing in them and devoting all His soul's strength to their winning

back to peace;

Who sent forth hopes and longings for their sake,

Clothed in all passion's melodies, which first

Caught me and set me, as to a sweet task,

To gather every breathing of his songs: And woven with them there were words

which seemed

A key to a new world, the muttering Of angels of some thing unguessed by

man.

How my heart beat as I went on and found

Much there, I felt my own mind had conceived,

But there living and burning! Soon the whole

Of his conceptions dawned on me; their praise

Is in the tongues of men, men's brows are high

When his name means a triumph and a pride,

So, my weak hands may well forbear to
 dim
 What then seemed my bright fate: I
 threw myself
 To meet it, I was vowed to liberty,
 Men were to be as gods and earth as
 heaven,
 And I—ah, what a life was mine to be!
 My whole soul rose to meet it. Now,
 Pauline,
 I shall go mad, if I recall that time!

Oh let me look back e'er I leave for
 ever
 The time which was an hour that one
 waits
 For a fair girl that comes a withered
 hag!
 And I was lonely, far from woods and
 fields,
 And amid dullest sights, who should be
 loose
 As a stag; yet I was full of joy, who
 lived
 With Plato and who had the key to life;
 And I had dimly shaped my first
 attempt,
 And many a thought did I build up on
 thought,
 As the wild bee hangs cell to cell; in
 vain,
 For I must still go on, my mind rests
 not.

'Twas in my plan to look on real life
 Which was all new to me; my theories
 Were firm, so I left them, to look upon
 Men and their cares and hopes and fears
 and joys;
 And as I pondered on them all I sought
 How best life's end might be attained
 —an end
 Comprising every joy. I deeply mused.

And suddenly without heart-wreck I
 awoke
 As from a dream: I said " 'Twas beau-
 tiful
 "Yet but a dream, and so adieu to it!"
 As some world-wanderer sees in a far
 meadow
 Strange towers and walled gardens
 thick with trees,
 Where singing goes on and delicious
 mirth,
 And laughing fairy creatures peeping
 over,

And on the morrow when he comes to
 live
 For ever by those springs and trees
 fruit-flushed
 And fairy bowers, all his search is vain.
 First went my hopes of perfecting man-
 kind,
 And faith in them, then freedom in
 itself
 And virtue in itself, and then my
 motives, ends
 And powers and loves, and human love
 went last.
 I felt this no decay, because new powers
 Rose as old feelings left—wit, mockery
 And happiness; for I had oft been sad,
 Mistrusting my resolves, but now I cast
 Hope joyously away: I laughed and
 said
 "No more of this!" I must not think:
 at length
 I looked again to see how all went on.

My powers were greater: as some
 temple seemed
 My soul, where nought is changed and
 incense rolls
 Around the altar, only God is gone
 And some dark spirit sitteth in his seat.
 So, I passed through the temple and to
 me
 Knelt troops of shadows, and they
 cried "Hail, king!"
 "We serve thee now and thou shalt
 serve no more!"
 "Call on us, prove us, let us worship
 thee!"
 And I said "Are ye strong? Let
 fancy bear me
 "Far from the past!" And I was
 borne away,
 As Arab birds float sleeping in the wind,
 O'er deserts, towers and forests, I bring
 calm;
 And I said "I have nursed up energies,
 "They will prey on me." And a band
 knelt low
 And cried "Lord, we are here and we
 will make
 "A way for thee in thine appointed
 life!"
 "O look on us!" And I said "Ye
 will worship
 "Me; but my heart must worship too."
 They shouted
 "Thyself, thou art our king!" So, I
 stood there

Smiling
 And buoyant and rejoicing was the
 spirit
 With which I looked out how to end my
 days ;
 I felt once more myself, my powers
 were mine ;
 I found that youth or health so lifted
 me
 That, spite of all life's vanity, no grief
 Came nigh me, I must ever be light-
 hearted ;
 And that this feeling was the only veil
 Betwixt me and despair : so, if age
 came,
 I should be as a wreck linked to a soul
 Yet fluttering, or mind-broken and
 aware
 Of my decay. So a long summer morn
 Found me ; and e'er noon came, I had
 resolved
 No age should come on me ere youth's
 hope went, [morn
 For I would wear myself out, like that
 Which wasted not a sunbeam ; every
 joy
 I would make mine, and die. And
 thus I sought
 To chain my spirit down which I had
 fed
 With thoughts of fame : I said " The
 troubled life
 " Of genius, seen so bright when work-
 ing forth
 " Some trusted end, seems sad when all
 in vain—
 " Most sad when men have parted with
 all joy
 " For their wild fancy's sake, which
 waited first
 " As an obedient spirit when delight
 " Came not with her alone ; but alters
 soon,
 " Comes darkened, seldom, hastening
 to depart,
 " Leaving a heavy darkness and warm
 tears.
 " But I shall never lose her ; she will
 live
 " Brighter for such seclusion. I but
 catch
 " A hue, a glance of what I sing, so,
 pain
 " Is linked with pleasure, for I ne'er
 may tell
 " The radiant sights which dazzle me ;
 but now

" They shall be all my own ; and let
 them fade
 " Untold—others shall rise as fair, as
 fast !
 " And when all's done, the few dim
 gleams transferred,"—
 (For a new thought sprung up that it
 were well
 To leave all shadowy hope, and weave
 such lays
 As would encircle me with praise and
 love,
 So, I should not die utterly, I should
 bring
 One branch from the gold forest, like
 the knight
 Of old tales, witnessing I had been
 there)—
 " And when all's done, how vain seems
 e'en success
 " And all the influence poets have o'er
 men !
 " 'Tis a fine thing that one weak as
 myself
 " Should sit in his lone room, knowing
 the words
 " He utters in his solitude shall move
 " Men like a swift wind—that tho' he
 be forgotten,
 " Fair eyes shall glisten when his
 beauteous dreams
 " Of love come true in happier frames
 than his.
 " Ay, the still night brought thoughts
 like these, but morn
 " Came and the mockery again laughed
 out
 " At hollow praises, and smiles almost
 sneers ;
 " And my soul's idol seemed to whisper
 me
 " To dwell with him and his unhonoured
 name :
 " And I well knew my spirit, that would
 be
 " First in the struggle, and again would
 make
 " All bow to it, and I should sink again.
 " And then know that this curse will
 come on us,
 " To see our idols perish ; we may
 wither,
 " Nor marvel, we are clay but our low
 fate
 " Should not extend to them, whom
 trustingly

" We sent before into time's yawning
 gulf
 " To face whate'er might lurk in dark-
 ness there.
 " To see the painters' glory pass, and
 feel
 " Sweet music move us not as once, or,
 worst,
 " To see decaying wits ere the frail
 body
 " Decays! Nought makes me trust
 in love so really,
 " As the delight of the contented low-
 ness
 " With which I gaze on souls I'd keep
 for ever
 " In beauty; I'd be sad to equal them;
 " I'd feed their fame e'en from my
 heart's blest blood,
 " Withering unseen that they might
 flourish still."

Pauline, my sweet friend, thou dost not
 forget
 How this mood swayed me when thou
 first wast mine,
 When I had set myself to live this life,
 Defying all opinion. Ere thou camest
 I was most happy, sweet, for old
 delights
 Had come like birds again; music, my
 life,
 I nourished more than ever, and old
 lore [king
 Loved for itself and all it shows—the
 Treading the purple calmly to his death,
 While round him, like the clouds of eve,
 all dusk,
 The giant shades of fate, silently flit-
 ting,
 Pile the dim outline of the coming
 doom;
 And him sitting alone in blood while
 friends
 Are hunting far in the sunshine; and
 the boy
 With his white breast and brow and
 clustering curls
 Streaked with his mother's blood, and
 striving hard
 To tell his story ere his reason goes.
 And when I loved thee as I've loved so
 oft,
 Thou lovedst me, and I wondered and
 looked in
 My heart to find some feeling like such
 love,

Believing I was still what I had been;
 And soon I found all faith had gone
 from me,
 And the late glow of life, changing like
 clouds,
 'Twas not the morn-blush widening
 into day,
 But evening coloured by the dying sun
 While darkness is quick hastening. I
 will tell
 My state as though 'twere none of mine
 —despair
 Cannot come near me—thus it is with
 me.
 Souls alter not, and mine must pro-
 gress still;
 And this I knew not when I flung away
 My youth's chief aims. I ne'er sup-
 posed the loss
 Of what few I retained, for no resource
 Awaits me: now behold the change of
 all.
 I cannot chain my soul, it will not rest
 In its clay prison, this most narrow
 sphere:
 It has strange powers and feelings and
 desires,
 Which I cannot account for nor ex-
 plain,
 But which I stifle not, being bound to
 trust
 All feelings equally, to hear all sides
 Yet I cannot indulge them, and they
 live,
 Referring to some state or life unknown.

 My selfishness is satiated not,
 It wears me like a flame; my hunger
 for
 All pleasure, howsoe'er minute, is pain;
 I envy—how I envy him whose mind
 Turns with its energies to some one end,
 To elevate a sect or a pursuit
 However mean! So, my still baffled
 hopes
 Seek out abstractions; I would have
 but one
 Delight on earth, so it were wholly mine,
 One rapture all my soul could fill: and
 this
 Wild feeling places me in dream afar
 In some wild country where the eye can
 see
 No end to the far hills and dales be-
 strewn
 With shining towers and dwellings: I
 grow mad

Well-nigh, to know not one abode but
holds
Some pleasure, for my soul could grasp
them all
But must remain with this vile form. I
look
With hope to age at last, which quench-
ing much,
May let me concentrate the sparks it
spares.

This restlessness of passion meets in me
A craving after knowledge: the sole
proof
Of a commanding will is in that power
Repressed; for I beheld it in its dawn,
That sleepless harpy with its budding
wings,
And I considered whether I should
yield
All hopes and fears, to live alone with
it,
Finding a recompense in its wild eyes;
And when I found that I should perish
so,
I bade its wild eyes close from me for
ever,
And I am left alone with my delights;
So, it lies in me a chained thing, still
ready
To serve me if I loose its slightest bond:
I cannot but be proud of my bright
slave.

And thus I know this earth is not my
sphere,
For I cannot so narrow me but that
I still exceed it: in their elements
My love would pass my reason; but
since here
Love must receive its objects from this
earth
While reason will be chainless, the few
truths
Caught from its wanderings have
sufficed to quell
All love below; then what must be
that love
Which, with the object it demands,
would quell
Reason tho' it soared with the seraphim?
No, what I feel may pass all human
love
Yet fall far short of what my love
should be.
And yet I seem more warped in this
than aught,

For here myself stands out more hide-
ously:
I can forget myself in friendship, fame,
Of liberty, or love of mighty souls;
But I begin to know what thing hate is—
To sicken and to quiver and grow white—
And I myself have furnished its first prey
All my sad weaknesses, this wavering
will,
This selfishness, this still decaying
frame . . .
But I must never grieve while I can
pass
Far from such thoughts—as now,
Andromeda!
And she is with me: years roll, I shall
change,
But change can touch her not—so
beautiful
With her dark eyes, earnest and still,
and hair
Lifted and spread by the salt-sweeping
breeze,
And one red beam, all the storm leaves
in heaven,
Resting upon her eyes and face and
hair
As she awaits the snake on the wet
beach
By the dark rock and the white wave
just breaking
At her feet; quite naked and alone; a
thing
You doubt not, nor fear for, secure that
God
Will come in thunder from the stars to
save her.
Let it pass! I will call another change.
I will be gifted with a wondrous soul,
Yet sunk by error to men's sympathy,
And in the wane of life, yet only so
As to call up their fears; and there shall
come
A time requiring youth's best energies;
And straight I fling age, sorrow, sick-
ness off,
And I rise triumphing over my decay.
And thus it is that I supply the chasm
'Twixt what I am and all that I would
be:
But then to know nothing, to hope for
nothing,
To seize on life's dull joys from a
strange fear
Lest, losing them, all's lost and nought
remains!

There's some vile juggle with my
reason here ;
I feel I but explain to my own loss
These impulses ; they live no less the
same.
Liberty ! what though I despair ? my
blood
Rose not at a slave's name prouder
than now,
And sympathy, obscured by sophistries !
Why have not I sought refuge in my-
self,
But for the woes I saw and could not
stay ?
And love ! do I not love thee, my
Pauline ?
I cherish prejudice, lest I be left
Utterly loveless—witness this belief
In poets, though sad change has come
there too ;
No more I leave myself to follow them—
Unconsciously I measure me by them—
Let me forget it : and I cherish most
My love of England—how her name, a
word
Of hers in a strange tongue makes my
heart beat !
Pauline, I could do any thing—not
now—
All's fever—but when calm shall come
again,
I am prepared : I have made life my
own.
I would not be content with all the
change
One frame should feel, but I have gone
in thought
Thro' all conjuncture, I have lived all
life
When it is most alive, where strangest
fate
New shapes it past surmise—the tales
of men
Bit by some curse or in the grasps of
doom
Half-visible and still increasing round,
Or crowning their wide being's general
aim.
These are wild fancies, but I feel, sweet
friend,
As one breathing his weakness to the
ear
Of pitying angel—dear as a winter
flower,
A slight flower growing alone, and
offering

Its frail cup of three leaves to the cold
sun.
Yet joyous and confiding like the
triumph
Of a child : and why am I not worthy
thee ?
I can live all the life of plants, and gaze
Drowsily on the bees that flit and play,
Or bare my breast for sunbeams which
will kill,
Or open in the night of sounds, to look
For the dim stars ; I can mount with
the bird
Leaping airily his pyramid of leaves
And twisted boughs of some tall moun-
tain tree,
Or rise cheerfully springing to the
heavens ;
Or like a fish breathe in the morning air
In the misty sun-warm water ; or with
flowers
And trees can smile in light at the sink-
ing sun
Just as the storm comes, as a girl would
look
On a departing lover—most serene.
Pauline, come with me, see how I could
build
A home for us, out of the world, in
thought !
I am inspired : come with me, Pauline !
Night, and one single ridge of narrow
path
Between the sullen river and the woods
Waving and muttering, for the moon-
less night
Has shaped them into images of life,
Like the upraising of the giant-ghosts,
Looking on earth to know how their
sons fare :
Thou art so close by me, the roughest
swell
Of wind in the tree-tops hides not the
panting
Of thy soft breasts. No, we will pass
to morning—
Morning, the rocks and valleys and old
woods.
How the sun brightens in the mist, and
here,
Half in the air, like creatures of the
place,
Trusting the element, living on high
boughs
That swing in the wind—look at the
golden spray

Flung from the foam-sheet of the
 cataract
 Amid the broken rocks! Shall we
 stay here
 With the wild hawks? No, ere the hot
 noon come,
 Dive we down—safe! See this our
 new retreat
 Walled in with a sloped mound of
 matted shrubs,
 Dark, tangled, old and green, still
 sloping down
 To a small pool whose waters lie asleep
 Amid the trailing boughs turned water-
 plants:
 And tall trees over-arch to keep us in,
 Breaking the sunbeams into emerald
 shafts,
 And in the dreamy water one small
 group
 Of two or three strange trees are got
 together
 Wondering at all around, as strange
 beasts herd
 Together far from their own land: all
 wildness,
 No turf nor moss, for boughs and plants
 pave all,
 And tongues of bank go shelving in the
 waters,
 Where the pale-throated snake reclines
 his head,
 And old grey stones lie making eddies
 there,
 The wild mice cross them dry-shod:
 deeper in!
 Shut thy soft eyes—now look—still
 deeper in!
 This is the very heart of the woods all
 round
 Mountain-like heaped above us; yet
 even here
 One pond of water gleams; far off the
 river
 Sweeps like a sea, barred out from
 land; but one—
 One thin clear sheet has over-leaped
 and wound
 Into this silent depth, which gained, it
 lies
 Still, as but let by sufferance; the trees
 bend
 O'er it as wild men watch a sleeping girl,
 And through their roots long creeping
 plants stretch out
 Their twined hair, steeped and spark-
 ling; farther on,
 Tall rushes and thick flag-knots have
 combined
 To narrow it; so, at length, a silver
 thread,
 It winds, all noiselessly through the
 deep wood
 Till thro' a cleft way, thro' the moss
 and stone,
 It joins its parent-river with a shout.
 Up for the glowing day, leave the old
 woods!
 See, they part, like a ruined arch: the
 sky!
 Nothing but sky appears, so close the
 roots
 And grass of the hill-top level with
 the air—
 Blue sunny air, where a great cloud
 floats laden
 With light, like a dead whale that white
 birds pick,
 Floating away in the sun in some north
 sea.
 Air, air, fresh life-blood, thin and
 searching air,
 The clear, dear breath of God that
 loveth us,
 Where small birds reel and winds take
 their delight!
 Water is beautiful, but not like air:
 See, where the solid azure waters lie
 Made as of thickened air, and down
 below,
 The fern-ranks like a forest spread
 themselves
 As though each pore could feel the
 element;
 Where the quick glancing serpent winds
 his way,
 Float with me there, Pauline!—but not
 like air.
 Down the hill! Stop—a clump of
 trees, see, set
 On a heap of rocks, which look o'er the
 far plains,
 And envious climbing shrubs would
 mount to rest
 And peer from their spread boughs;
 there they wave, looking
 At the muleteers who whistle as they
 go
 To the merry chime of their morning
 bells, and all
 The little smoking cots and fields and
 banks
 And copses bright in the sun. My
 spirit wanders:

Hedge-rows for me—still, living hedge-rows where
 The bushes close and clasp above and keep
 Thought in—I am concentrated—I feel ;
 But my soul saddens when it looks beyond :
 I cannot be immortal nor taste all.
 O God, where does this tend—these struggling aims ?¹
 What would I have ? What is this "sleep" which seems
 To bound all ? can there be a "waking" point
 Of crowning life ? The soul would never rule ;
 It would be first in all things, it would have
 Its utmost pleasure filled, but, that complete,
 Commanding, for commanding, sickens it.
 The last point I can trace is, rest, beneath
 Some better essence than itself, in weakness ;

¹ Je crains bien que mon pauvre ami ne soit pas toujours parfaitement compris dans ce qui reste à lire de cet étrange fragment, mais il est moins propre que tout autre à éclaircir ce qui de sa nature ne peut jamais être que songe et confusion. D'ailleurs je ne sais trop si en cherchant à mieux co-ordonner certaines parties l'on ne courrait pas le risque de nuire au seul mérite auquel une production si singulière peut prétendre, celui de donner une idée assez précise du genre qu'elle n'a fait qu'ébaucher. Ce début sans prétention, ce renouement des passions qui va d'abord en accroissant et puis s'apaise par degrés, ces élans de l'âme, ce retour soudain sur soi-même, et pardessus tout, la tourmente d'esprit tout particulière de mon ami, rendent les changemens presque impossibles. Les raisons qu'il fait valoir ailleurs, et d'autres encore plus puissantes, ont fait trouver grâce à mes yeux pour cet écrit qu'autrement je lui eusse conseillé de jeter au feu. Je n'en crois pas moins au grand principe de toute composition —à ce principe de Shakespeare, de Raphaële, de Beethoven, où il suit que la concentration des idées est d'ue bien plus à leur conception qu'à leur mise en execution : j'ai tout lieu de craindre que la première de ces qualités ne soit encore étrangère à mon ami, et je doute fort qu'un redoublement de travail lui fasse acquérir la seconde. Le mieux serait de brûler ceci ; mais que faire ?

Je crois que dans ce qui suit il fait allusion à un certain examen qu'il fit autrefois de l'âme ou plutôt de son âme, pour découvrir la suite des objets auxquels il lui serait possible d'attendre, et dont chacun une fois obtenu devait former une espèce de plateau d'où l'on pouvait apercevoir d'autres buts, d'autres projets, d'autres jouissances qui, à leur tour, devaient être surmontés. Il en résultait que l'oubli et le sommeil devaient tout terminer. Cette idée, que je ne saisis pas parfaitement, lui est peut-être aussi inintelligible qu'à moi.

PAULINE.

This is "myself," not what I think should be :
 And what is that I hunger for but God ?
 My God, my God, let me for once look on thee
 As though nought else existed, we alone !
 And as creation crumbles, my soul's spark
 Expands till I can say,—Even from myself
 I need thee and I feel thee and I love thee :
 I do not plead my rapture in thy works
 For love of thee, nor that I feel as one
 Who cannot die : but there is that in me
 Which turns to thee, which loves or which should love.
 Why have I girt myself with this hell-dress ?
 Why have I laboured to put out my life ?
 Is it not in my nature to adore,
 And e'en for all my reason do I not
 Feel him, and thank him, and pray to him—now ?
 Can I forego the trust that he loves me ?
 Do I not feel a love which only ONE. . .
 O thou pale form, so dimly seen, deep-eyed !
 I have denied thee calmly—do I not
 Pant when I read of thy consummate deeds,
 And burn to see thy calm pure truths out-flash
 The brightest gleams of earth's philosophy ?
 Do I not shake to hear aught question thee ?
 If I am erring save me, madden me,
 Take from me powers and pleasures, let me die
 Ages, so I see thee ! I am knit round
 As with a charm by sin and lust and pride,
 Yet though my wandering dreams have seen all shapes
 Of strange delight, oft have I stood by thee—
 Have I been keeping lonely watch with thee
 In the damp night by weeping Olivet,
 Or leaning on thy bosom, proudly less,
 Or dying with thee on the lonely cross,
 Or witnessing thy bursting from the tomb !

A mortal, sin's familiar friend, doth
 here
 Avow that he will give all earth's re-
 ward,
 But to believe and humbly teach the
 faith,
 In suffering and poverty and shame,
 Only believing he is not unloved.
 And now, my Pauline, I am thine for
 ever!
 I feel the spirit which has buoyed me up
 Deserting me, and old shades gathering
 on;
 Yet while its last light waits, I would
 say much,
 And chiefly, I am glad that I have said
 That love which I have ever felt for
 thee
 But seldom told; our hearts so beat
 together
 That 'speech is mockery; but when
 dark hours come,
 And I feel sad, and thou, sweet, deem'st
 it strange
 A sorrow moves me, thou canst not
 remove,
 Look on this lay I dedicate to thee,
 Which through thee I began, and which
 I end,
 Collecting the last gleams to strive to
 tell
 That I am thine, and more than ever
 now
 That I am sinking fast: yet though I
 sink,
 No less I feel that thou hast brought me
 bliss
 And that I still may hope to win it
 back.
 Thou knowest, dear friend, I could not
 think all calm,
 For wild dreams followed me and bore
 me off,
 And all was indistinct; ere one was
 caught
 Another glanced; so, dazzled by my
 wealth,
 Knowing not which to leave nor which
 to choose,
 For all my thoughts so floated, nought
 was fixed.
 And then thou saidst a perfect bard
 was one
 Who shadowed out the stages of all life,
 And so thou badst me tell this my first
 stage.

'Tis done, and even now I feel all dim
 the shift
 Of thought; these are my last thoughts;
 I discern
 Faintly immortal life and truth and
 good.
 And why thou must be mine is, that
 e'en now
 In the dim hush of night, that I have
 done,
 With fears and sad forebodings, I look
 through
 And say,—E'en at the last I have her
 still,
 With her delicious eyes as clear as
 heaven
 When rain in a quick shower has beat
 down mist,
 And clouds float white in the sun like
 broods of swans.
 How the blood lies upon her cheek, all
 spread
 As thinned by kisses! only in her lips
 It wells and pulses like a living thing,
 And her neck looks like marble misted
 o'er
 With love-breath,—a dear thing to kiss
 and love,
 Standing beneath me, looking out to
 me,
 As I might kill her and be loved for it.
 Love me—love me, Pauline, love
 nought but me,
 Leave me not! All these words are
 wild and weak,
 Believe them not, Pauline! I stooped
 so low
 But to behold thee purer by my side,
 To show thou art my breath, my life, a
 last
 Resource, an extreme want: never be-
 lieve
 Aught better could so look to thee;
 nor seek
 Again the world of good thoughts left
 for me!
 There were bright troops of undis-
 covered suns,
 Each equal in their radiant course;
 there were
 Clusters of far fair isles which ocean
 kept
 For his own joy, and his waves broke
 on them
 Without a choice; and there was a dim
 crowd

Of visions, each a part of the dim whole :
 And one star 'ef: his peers and came
 with peace
 Upon a storm, and all eyes pined for
 him ;
 And one isle harboured a sea-beaten
 ship,
 And the crew wandered in its bowers
 and plucked
 Its fruits and gave up all their hopes
 for home ;
 And one dream came to a pale poet's
 sleep,
 And he said, " I am singled out by God,
 " No sin must touch me." I am very
 weak
 But what I would express is,—Leave
 me not,
 Still sit by me with beating breast and
 hair
 Loosened, be watching earnest by my
 side,
 Turning my books or kissing me when I
 Look up—like summer wind ! Be still
 to me
 A key to music's mystery when mind
 fails,
 A reason, a solution and a clue !
 You see I have thrown off my pre-
 scribed rules :
 I hope in myself—and hope and pant
 and love.
 You'll find me better, know me more
 than when
 You loved me as I was. Smile not ! I
 have
 Much yet to gladden you, to dawn on
 you.
 No more of the past ! I'll look within
 no more.
 I have too trusted to my own wild
 wants,
 Too trusted to myself, to intuition—
 Draining the wine alone in the still
 night,
 And seeing how, as gathering films
 arose,
 As by an inspiration life seemed bare
 And grinning in its vanity, and ends
 Hard to be dreamed of, stared at me as
 fixed,
 And others suddenly became all foul
 As a fair witch turned an old hag at
 night.
 No more of this ! We will go hand in
 hand,
 I will go with thee, even as a child,

Looking no farther than thy sweet com-
 mands,
 And thou hast chosen where this life
 shall be :
 The land which gave me thee shall be
 our home,
 Where nature lies all wild amid her
 lakes
 And snow-swathed mountains and vast
 pines all girt
 With ropes of snow—where nature lies
 all bare,
 Suffering none to view her but a race
 Most stunted and deformed, like the
 mute dwarfs
 Which wait upon a naked Indian
 queen.
 And there (the time being when the
 heavens are thick
 With storms) I'll sit with thee while
 thou dost sing
 Thy native songs, gay as a desert bird
 Who crieth as he flies for perfect joy,
 Or telling me old stories of dead knights ;
 Or I will read old lays to thee—how
 she,
 The fair pale sister, went to her chill
 grave
 With power to love and to be loved and
 live :
 Or we will go together, like twin gods
 Of the infernal world, with scented
 lamp
 Over the dead, to call and to awake,
 Over the unshaped images which lie
 Within my mind's cave : only leaving
 all,
 That tells of the past doubts. So,
 when spring comes,
 And sunshine comes again like an old
 smile,
 And the fresh waters and awakened
 birds
 And budding woods await us, I shall be
 Prepared, and we will go and think
 again,
 And all old loves shall come to us, but
 changed
 As some sweet thought which harsh
 words veiled before ;
 Feeling God loves us, and that all that
 errs
 Is a strange dream which death will
 dissipate.
 And then when I am firm, we'll seek
 again
 My own land, and again I will approach

My old designs, and calmly look on all
The works of my past weakness, as one
views
Some scene where danger met him long
before.
Ah that such pleasant life should be
but dreamed!

But whate'er come of it, and though it
fade,
And though ere the cold morning all be
gone,
As it will be;—tho' music wait for me,
And fair eyes and bright wine laughing
like sin [saved,
Which steals back softly on a soul half
And I be first to deny all, and despise
This verse, and these intents which
seem so fair,— [pride,
Still this is all my own, this moment's
No less I make an end in perfect joy.
E'en in my brightest time, a lurking
fear
Possessed me: I well knew my weak
resolves, [sleep
I felt the witchery that makes mind
Over its treasure, as one half afraid
To make his riches definite: but now
These feelings shall not utterly be lost,
I shall not know again that nameless
care
Lest, leaving all undone in youth, some
new [late:
And undreamed end reveal itself too
For this song shall remain to tell for
ever [change,
That when I lost all hope of such a
Suddenly beauty rose on me again.

No less I make an end in perfect joy,
For I, having thus again been visited,
Shall doubt not many another bliss
awaits,
And, though this weak soul sink and
darkness come,
Some little word shall light it up again,
And I shall see all clearer and love
better, [thought
I shall again go o'er the tracts of
As one who has a right, and I shall live
With poets, calmer, purer still each
time, [again,
And beauteous shapes will come to me
And unknown secrets will be trusted me
Which were not mine when wavering
but now
I shall be priest and lover as of old.

Sun-treader, I believe in God and
truth
And love; and as one just escaped
from death [to feel
Would bind himself in bands of friends
He lives indeed, so, I would lean on
thee! [gloom
Thou must be ever with me, most in
When such shall come, but chiefly when
I die, [dark
For I seem, dying, as one going in the
To fight a giant: and live thou for ever,
And be to all what thou hast been to
me!
All in whom this wakes pleasant
thoughts of me, [doubt
Know my last state is happy, free from
Or touch of fear. Love me and wish
me well!

RICHMOND, October 22, 1832.

SONNET

Eyes, calm beside thee, (Lady, couldst
thou know!)
May turn away thick with fast-
gathering tears:
I glance not where all gaze: thrilling
and low
Their passionate praises reach thee
—my cheek wears
Alone no wonder when thou passest
by;
Thy tremulous lids bent and suffused
reply
To the irrepressible homage which
doth glow

On every lip but mine: if in thine
ears
Their accents linger—and thou dost
recall
Me as I stood, still, guarded, very
pale,
Beside each votarist whose lightest
brow
Wore worship like an aureole, "O'er
them all
"My beauty," thou wilt murmur,
"did prevail
"Save that one only:"—Lady, couldst
thou know!

PARACELSUS

INSCRIBED TO

AMÉDÉE DE RIPERT-MONCLAR

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND

R. B.

London, March 15, 1835.

PERSONS

AUREOLUS PARACELSUS, a student.

FESTUS and MICHAL, his friends.

APRILE, an Italian poet.

I.—PARACELSUS ASPIRES

SCENE, Würzburg; a garden in the
environs. 1512.

FESTUS, PARACELSUS, MICHAL.

Par. Come close to me, dear friends;
still closer; thus!Close to the heart which, though long
time roll byEre it again beat quicker, pressed to
yours,As now it beats—perchance a long,
long time—At least henceforth your memories
shall makeQuiet and fragrant as befits their home.
Nor shall my memory want a home in
yours—Alas, that it requires too well such free
Forgiving love as shall embalm it there!
For if you would remember me aright,
As I was born to be, you must forget
All fitful strange and moody wayward-
nessWhich e'er confused my better spirit,
to dwellOnly on moments such as these, dear
friends!—My heart no truer, but my words and
waysMore true to it: as Michal, some months
hence,Will say, "this autumn was a pleasant
time,"For some few sunny days; and over-
lookIts bleak wind, hankering after pining
leaves.Autumn would fain be sunny; I would
lookLiker my nature's truth: and both are
frail,And both beloved, for all our frailty.
Mich. Aureole!*Par.* Drop by drop! she is weeping
like a child!Not so! I am content—more than
content;Nay, autumn wins you best by this its
muteAppeal to sympathy for its decay:
Look up, sweet Michal, nor esteem the
lessYour stained and drooping vines their
grapes bow down,Nor blame those creaking trees bent
with their fruit,That apple-tree with a rare after-birth
Of peeping blooms sprinkled its wealth
among!Then for the winds—what wind that
ever ravedShall vex that ash which overlooks you
both,

So proud it wears its berries ? Ah, at length,
 The old smile meet for her, the lady of this
 Sequestered nest !—this kingdom, limited
 Alone by one old populous green wall
 Tenanted by the ever-busy flies,
 Grey crickets and shy lizards and quick spiders, [moss—
 Each family of the silver-threaded
 Which, look through near, this way, and it appears
 A stubble-field or a cane-brake, a marsh
 Of bulrush whitening in the sun : laugh now !
 Fancy the crickets, each one in his house,
 Looking out, wondering at the world—or best,
 Yon painted snail with his gay shell of dew,
 Travelling to see the glossy balls high up
 Hung by the caterpillar like gold lamps—
Mich. In truth we have lived carelessly and well.
Par. And shall, my perfect pair !—each, trust me, born
 For the other ; nay, your very hair, when mixed,
 Is of one hue. For where save in this nook
 Shall you two walk, when I am far away,
 And wish me prosperous fortune ? Stay ; that plant [softly,
 Shall never wave its tangles lightly and
 As a queen's languid and imperial arm
 Which scatters crowns among her lovers, but you
 Shall be reminded to predict to me
 Some great success ! Ah see, the sun sinks broad
 Behind Saint Saviour's : wholly gone, at last !
Fest. Now, Aureole, stay those wandering eyes awhile !
 You are ours to-night at least ; and while you spoke
 Of Michal and her tears, I thought that none
 Could willing leave what he so seemed to love :
 But that last look destroys my dream—that look

As if, where'er you gazed, there stood a star !
 How far was Würzburg with its church and spire
 And garden-walls and all things they contain,
 From that look's far alighting ?
Par. I but spoke
 And looked alike from simple joy to see
 The beings I love best, shut in so well
 From all rude chances like to be my lot,
 That, when afar, my weary spirit,—disposed
 To lose awhile its care in soothing thoughts
 Of them, their pleasant features, looks and words,—
 Needs never hesitate, nor apprehend
 Encroaching trouble may have reached them too,
 Nor have recourse to fancy's busy aid
 And fashion even a wish in their behalf,
 Beyond what they possess already here ;
 But, unobstructed, may at once forget
 Itself in them, assured how well they fare.
 Besides, this Festus knows he holds me one
 Whom quiet and its charms arrest in vain,
 One scarce aware of all the joys I quit,
 Too filled with airy hopes to make account
 Of soft delights his own heart garners up :
 Whereas behold how much our sense of all
 That's beauteous proves alike ! When Festus learns
 That every common pleasure of the world
 Affects me as himself ; that I have just
 As varied appetite for joy derived
 From common things ; a stake in life, in short,
 Like his ; a stake which rash pursuit of aims
 That life affords not, would as soon destroy ;—
 He may convince himself that, this in view,
 I shall act well advised. And last, because,
 Though heaven and earth and all things were at stake,
 Sweet Michal must not weep, our parting eve.

Fest. True : and the eve is deepening, and we sit
 As little anxious to begin our talk
 As though to-morrow I could hint of it
 As we paced arm-in-arm the cheerful town
 At sun-dawn ; or could whisper it by fits
 (Trithemius busied with his class the while)
 In that dim chamber where the noon-streaks peer
 Half-frightened by the awful tomes around ;
 Or in some grassy lane unbosom all
 From even-blush to midnight : but, to-morrow !
 Have I full leave to tell my inmost mind ?
 We have been brothers, and henceforth the world
 Will rise between us :—all my freest mind ?
 'Tis the last night, dear Aureole !
Par. Oh, say on !
 Devise some test of love, some arduous feat
 To be performed for you : say on ! If night
 Be spent the while, the better ! Recall how oft
 My wondrous plans and dreams and hopes and fears
 Have—never wearied you, oh no !—as I
 Recall, and never vividly as now,
 Your true affection, born when Einsiedeln
 And its green hills were all the world to us ;
 And still increasing to this night which ends
 My further stay at Würzburg. Oh, one day
 You shall be very proud ! Say on, dear friends !
Fest. In truth ? 'Tis for my proper peace, indeed,
 Rather than yours ; for vain all projects seem
 To stay your course : I said my latest hope
 Is fading even now. A story tells
 Of some far embassy dispatched to win
 The favour of an eastern king, and how
 The gifts they offered proved but dazzling dust

Shed from the ore-beds native to his clime.
 Just so, the value of repose and love,
 I meant should tempt you, better far than I
 You seem to comprehend ; and yet desist
 No whit from projects where repose nor love
 Have part
Par. Once more ? Alas ! As I foretold.
Fest. A solitary briar the bank puts forth
 To save our swan's nest floating out to sea.
Par. Dear Festus, hear me. What is it you wish ?
 That I should lay aside my heart's pursuit,
 Abandon the sole ends for which I live,
 Reject God's great commission, and so die !
 You bid me listen for your true love's sake :
 Yet how has grown that love ? Even in a long
 And patient cherishing of the selfsame spirit
 It now would quell ; as though a mother hoped
 To stay the lusty manhood of the child
 Once weak upon her knees. I was not born
 Informed and fearless from the first, but shrank
 From aught which marked me out apart from men :
 I would have lived their life, and died their death,
 Lost in their ranks, eluding destiny :
 But you first guided me through doubt and fear,
 Taught me to know mankind and know myself ;
 And now that I am strong and full of hope,
 That, from my soul, I can reject all aims
 Save those your earnest words made plain to me,
 Now that I touch the brink of my design,
 When I would have a triumph in their eyes,
 A glad cheer in their voices—Michal weeps,

And Festus ponders gravely !

Fest. When you deign
To hear my purpose . . .

Par. Hear it ? I can say
Beforehand all this evening's confer-
ence !

'Tis this way, Michal, that he uses :
first,

Or he declares, or I, the leading points
Of our best scheme of life, what is man's
end

And what God's will : no two faiths
e'er agreed

As his with mine. Next, each of us
allows

Faith should be acted on as best we
may ;

Accordingly, I venture to submit
My plan, in lack of better, for pursuing
The path which God's will seems to
authorize :

Well, he discerns much good in it,
avows

This motive worthy, that hope plausible,
A danger here to be avoided, there

An oversight to be repaired : in fine
Our two minds go together—all the
good

Approved by him, I gladly recognize,
All he counts bad, I thankfully discard,

And nought forbids my looking up at
last

For some stray comfort in his cautious
brow,

When, lo ! I learn that, spite of all,
there lurks

Some innate and inexplicable germ
Of failure in my scheme ; so that at
last

It all amounts to this—the sovereign
proof

That we devote ourselves to God, is
In living just as though no God there
were ;

A life which, prompted by the sad and
blind

Folly of man, Festus abhors the most ;
But which these tenets sanctify at
once,

Though to less subtle wits it seems the
same,

Consider it how they may.

Mich. Is it so, Festus ?
He speaks so calmly and kindly : is it
so ?

Par. Reject those glorious visions of
God's love

And man's design ; laugh loud that
God should send

Vast longings to direct us ; say how
soon

Power satiates these, or lust, or gold ; I
know

The world's cry well, and how to an-
swer it.

But this ambiguous warfare . . .
Fest. Wearies so

That you will grant no last leave to
your friend

To urge it ?—for his sake, not yours ?
I wish

To send my soul in good hopes after you ;
Never to sorrow that uncertain words

Erringly apprehended, a new creed
Ill understood, begot rash trust in you,

Had share in your undoing.
Par. Choose your side,

Hold or renounce : but meanwhile
blame me not

Because I dare to act on your own
views,

Nor shrink when they point onward,
nor espy

A peril where they most ensure success.
Fest. Prove that to me—but that !

Prove you abide
Within their warrant, nor presumptu-
ous boast

God's labour laid on you ; prove, all
you covet

A mortal may expect ; and, most of
all,

Prove the strange course you now
affect, will lead

To its attainment—and I bid you
speed,

Nay, count the minutes till you ven-
ture forth !

You smile ; but I had gathered from
slow thought—

Much musing on the fortunes of my
friend—

Matter I deemed could not be urged in
vain ;

But it all leaves me at my need : in
shreds

And fragments I must venture what
remains.

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

Fest. Stay, Michal : Aureole, I
speak guardedly

And gravely, knowing well, whate'er
your error,

This is no ill-considered choice of yours,
 No sudden fancy of an ardent boy.
 Not from your own confiding words
 alone
 Am I aware your passionate heart long
 since
 Gave birth to, nourished and at length
 matures
 This scheme. I will not speak of
 Einsiedeln,
 Where I was born your elder by some
 years
 Only to watch you fully from the first :
 In all beside, our mutual tasks were
 fixed
 Even then—'t was mine to have you
 in my view
 As you had your own soul and those
 intents
 Which filled it when, to crown your
 dearest wish,
 With a tumultuous heart, you left with
 me
 Our childhood's home to join the
 favoured few
 Whom, here, Trithemius condescends
 to teach
 A portion of his lore : and not one
 youth
 Of those so favoured, whom you now
 despise,
 Came earnest as you came, resolved,
 like you,
 To grasp all, and retain all, and deserve
 By patient toil a wide renown like his.
 Now, this new ardour which supplants
 the old,
 I watched, too ; 't was significant and
 strange, [length
 In one matched to his soul's content at
 With rivals in the search for wisdom's
 prize,
 To see the sudden pause, the total
 change ;
 From contest, the transition to repose—
 From pressing onward as his fellows
 pressed,
 To a blank idleness, yet most unlike
 The dull stagnation of a soul, content,
 Once foiled, to leave betimes a thrive-
 less quest.
 That careless bearing, free from all
 pretence
 Even of contempt for what it ceased to
 seek—
 Smiling humility, praising much, yet
 waiving

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

My ready answer to the will of God
Who summons me to be his organ. All
Whose innate strength supports them
shall succeed

No better than the sages.

Fest. Such the aim, then,
God sets before you ; and 't is doubtless
need

That he appoint no less the way of
praise

Than the desire to praise ; for, though
I hold

With you, the setting forth such praise
to be

The natural end and service of a man,
And hold such praise is best attained
when man

Attains the general welfare of his kind—
Yet this, the end, is not the instru-
ment.

Presume not to serve God apart from
such

Appointed channel as he wills shall
gather

Imperfect tributes, for that sole obedi-
ence

Valued perchance. He seeks not that
his altars

Blaze, careless how, so that they do but
blaze.

Suppose this, then ; that God selected
you

To know (heed well your answers, for
my faith

Shall meet implicitly what they affirm)
I cannot think you dare annex to such

Selection aught beyond a steadfast will,
An intense hope ; nor let your gifts
create

Scorn or neglect of ordinary means
Conducive to success, make destiny

Dispense with man's endeavour. Now,
dare you search

Your inmost heart, and candidly avow
Whether you have not rather wild
desire

For this distinction than security
Of its existence ? whether you discern

The path to the fulfilment of your
purpose

Clear as that purpose—and again, that
purpose

Clear as your yearning to be singled
out

For its pursuer. Dare you answer
this ?

Par. [after a pause.] No. I have

nought to fear ! Who will may
know

The secret'st workings of my soul.
What though

It be so ?—if indeed the strong desire
Eclipse the aim in me ?—if splendour
break

Upon the outset of my path alone,
And duskest shade succeed ? What
fairer seal

Shall I require to my authentic mission
Then this fierce energy ?—this instinct
striving

Because its nature is to strive ?—
enticed

By the security of no broad course,
Without success forever in its eyes !
How know I else such glorious fate my
own,

But in the restless irresistible force
That works within me ? Is it for
human will

To institute such impulses ?—still less,
To disregard their promptings ! What
should I

Do, kept among you all ; your loves,
your cares,

Your life—all to be mine ? Be sure
that God

Ne'er dooms to waste the strength he
deigns impart !

Ask the gier-eagle why she stoops at
once

Into the vast and unexplored abyss,
What full-grown power informs her
from the first,

Why she not marvels, strenuously beat-
ing

The silent boundless regions of the sky !
Be sure they sleep not whom God needs !
Nor fear

Their holding light his charge, when
every hour

That finds that charge delayed, is a
new death.

This for the faith in which I trust ; and
hence

I can abjure so well the idle arts
These pedants strive to learn and
teach ; Black Arts,

Great Works, the Secret and Sublime,
forsooth—

Let others prize : too intimate a tie
Connects me with our God ! A sullen
fiend

To do my bidding, fallen and hateful
sprites

To help me—what are these, at best,
 beside
 God helping, God directing everywhere,
 So that the earth shall yield her secrets
 up,
 And every object there be charged to
 strike,
 Teach, gratify her master God appoints?
 And I am young, my Festus, happy and
 free!
 I can devote myself; I have a life
 To give; I, singled out for this, the
 One!
 Think, think; the wide East, where
 all Wisdom sprung;
 The bright South, where she dwelt;
 the hopeful North,
 All are passed o'er—it lights on me!
 'Tis time
 New hopes should animate the world,
 new light
 Should dawn from new revealings to a
 race
 Weighed down so long, forgotten so
 long; thus shall
 The heaven reserved for us at last re-
 ceive
 Creatures whom no unwonted splen-
 dours blind,
 But ardent to confront the unclouded
 blaze
 Whose beams not seldom blessed their
 pilgrimage,
 Not seldom glorified their life below.
Fest. My words have their old fate
 and make faint stand
 Against your glowing periods. Call
 this, truth—
 Why not pursue it in a fast retreat,
 Some one of Learning's many palaces,
 After approved example?—seeking
 there
 Calm converse with the great dead,
 soul to soul,
 Who laid up treasure with the like
 intent
 —So lift yourself into their airy place,
 And fill out full their unfulfilled careers,
 Unravelling the knots their baffled skill
 Pronounced inextricable, true!—but
 left
 Far less confused. A fresh eye, a fresh
 hand,
 Might do much at their vigour's waning-
 point;
 Succeeding with new-breathed new-
 hearted force,

As at old games the runner snatched
 the torch
 From runner still: this way success
 might be.
 But you have coupled with your enter-
 prise,
 An arbitrary self-repugnant scheme
 Of seeking it in strange and untried
 paths.
 What books are in the desert? Writes
 the sea
 The secret of her yearning in vast
 caves
 Where yours will fall the first of human
 feet?
 His wisdom sat there and recorded
 aught
 You press to read? Why turn aside
 from her
 To visit, where her vesture never
 glanced,
 Now—solitudes consigned to barren-
 ness
 By God's decree, which who shall dare
 impugn?
 Now—ruins where she paused but
 would not stay,
 Old ravaged cities that, renouncing her,
 She called an endless curse on, so it
 came:
 Or worst of all, now—men you visit,
 men,
 Ignobler troops who never heard her
 voice
 Or hate it, men without one gift from
 Rome
 Or Athens,—these shall Aureole's
 teachers be!
 Rejecting past example, practice, pre-
 cept,
 Aidless 'mid these he thinks to stand
 alone:
 Thick like a glory round the Stagirite
 Your rivals throng, the sages: here
 stand you!
 Whatever you may protest, knowledge
 is not
 Paramount in your love; or for her
 sake
 You would collect all help from every
 source—
 Rival, assistant, friend, foe, all would
 merge
 In the broad class of those who showed
 her haunts,
 And those who showed them not.
Par. What shall I say?

Festus, from childhood I have been
 possessed
 By a fire—by a true fire, or faint or
 fierce,
 As from without some master, so it
 seemed,
 Repressed or urged its current: this
 but ill
 Expresses what I would convey: but
 rather
 I will believe an angel ruled me thus,
 Than that my soul's own workings, own
 high nature,
 So became manifest. I knew not then
 What whispered in the evening, and
 spoke out
 At midnight. If some mortal, born
 too soon,
 Were laid away in some great trance—
 the ages
 Coming and going all the while—till
 dawned
 His true time's advent; and could then
 record
 The words they spoke who kept watch
 by his bed,—
 Then I might tell more of the breath so
 light
 Upon my eyelids, and the fingers light
 Among my hair. Youth is confused;
 yet never
 So dull was I but, when that spirit
 passed,
 I turned to him, scarce consciously, as
 turns
 A water-snake when fairies cross his
 sleep.
 And having this within me and about
 me
 While Einsiedeln, its mountains, lakes
 and woods [mine
 Confined me—what oppressive joy was
 When life grew plain, and I first viewed
 the thronged,
 The everlasting concourse of mankind!
 Believe that ere I joined them, ere I
 knew
 The purpose of the pageant, or the
 place
 Consigned me in its ranks—while, just
 awake,
 Wonder was freshest and delight most
 pure—
 'Twas then that least supportable
 appeared
 A station with the brightest of the
 crowd,

A portion with the proudest of them all.
 And from the tumult in my breast, this
 only
 Could I collect, that I must thence-
 forth die
 Or elevate myself far, far above
 The gorgeous spectacle. I seemed to
 long
 At once to trample on, yet save man-
 kind,
 To make some unexampled sacrifice
 In their behalf, to wring some won-
 drous good
 From heaven or earth for them, to perish,
 winning
 Eternal weal in the act: as who should
 dare
 Pluck out the angry thunder from its
 cloud,
 That, all its gathered flame discharged
 on him,
 No storm might threaten summer's
 azure sleep:
 Yet never to be mixed with men so
 much
 As to have part even in my own work,
 share
 In my own largess. Once the feat
 achieved, [praise,
 I would withdraw from their officious
 Would gently put aside their profuse
 thanks.
 Like some knight traversing a wilder-
 ness,
 Who, on his way, may chance to free a
 tribe
 Of desert-people from their dragon-
 foe;
 When all the swarthy race press round
 to kiss
 His feet, and choose him for their king,
 and yield
 Their poor tents, pitched among the
 sand-hills, for
 His realm: and he points, smiling, to
 his scarf
 Heavy with riveled gold, his burgonet
 Gay set with twinkling stones—and to
 the East,
 Where these must be displayed!
Fest. Good: let us hear
 No more about your nature, "which
 first shrank
 "From all that marked you out apart
 from men!"
Par. I touch on that; these words
 but analyse

The first mad impulse : 'twas as brief
 as fond,
 For as I gazed again upon the show,
 I soon distinguished here and there a
 shape
 Palm-wreathed and radiant, forehead
 and full eye.
 Well pleased was I their state should
 thus at once
 Interpret my own thoughts :—" Be-
 hold the clue
 " To all," I rashly said, " and what I
 pine
 " To do, these have accomplished : we
 are peers.
 " They know, and therefore rule : I,
 too, will know ! "
 You were beside me, Festus, as you
 say ;
 You saw me plunge in their pursuits
 whom fame
 Is lavish to attest the lords of mind,
 Not pausing to make sure the prize in
 view
 Would satiate my cravings when ob-
 tained,
 But since they strove I strove. Then
 came a slow
 And strangling failure. We aspired
 alike,
 Yet not the meanest plodder,
 Tritheim counts
 A marvel, but was all-sufficient, strong,
 Or staggered only at his own vast wits ;
 While I was restless, nothing satisfied,
 Distrustful, most perplexed. I would
 slur over
 That struggle ; suffice it, that I loathed
 myself
 As weak compared with them, yet felt
 somehow [shape
 A mighty power was brooding, taking
 Within me ; and this lasted till one
 night
 When, as I sat revolving it and more,
 A still voice from without said—
 " Seest thou not,
 " Desponding child, whence spring
 defeat and loss ?
 " Even from thy strength. Consider :
 hast thou gazed
 " Presumptuously on wisdom's coun-
 tenance,
 " No veil between ; and can thy falter-
 ing hands,
 " Unguided by the brain the sight
 absorbs,
 " Pursue their task as earnest blinkers
 do
 " Whom radiance ne'er distracted ?
 Live their life
 " If thou wouldst share their fortune,
 choose their eyes
 " Unfed by splendour. Let each task
 present
 " Its petty good to thee. Waste not
 thy gifts
 " In profitless waiting for the gods'
 descent,
 " But have some idol of thine own to
 dress
 " With their array. Know, not for
 knowing's sake,
 " But to become a star to men for ever ;
 " Know, for the gain it gets, the praise
 it brings,
 " The wonder it inspires, the love it
 breeds :
 " Look one step onward, and secure
 that step ! "
 And I smiled as one never smiles but
 once,
 Then first discovering my own aim's
 extent,
 Which sought to comprehend the works
 of God,
 And God himself, and all God's inter-
 course
 With the human mind ; I understood,
 no less,
 My fellows' studies, whose true worth I
 saw,
 But smiled not, well aware who stood
 by me.
 And softer came the voice—" There is
 a way :
 " 'Tis hard for flesh to tread therein,
 imbued
 " With frailty—hopeless, if indulgence
 first
 " Have ripened inborn germs of sin to
 strength :
 " Wilt thou adventure for my sake and
 man's,
 " Apart from all reward ? " And last
 it breathed—
 " Be happy, my good soldier ; I am by
 thee,
 " Be sure, even to the end ! "—I an-
 swered not,
 Knowing him. As he spoke, I was
 endued
 With comprehension and a steadfast
 will ;

And when he ceased, my brow was
sealed his own.

If there took place no special change
in me,

How comes it all things wore a different
hue

Thenceforward?—pregnant with vast
consequence,

Teeming with grand result, loaded with
fate?

So that when, quailing at the mighty
range

Of secret truths which yearn for birth, I
haste

To contemplate undazzled some one
truth,

Its bearings and effects alone—at once
What was a speck expands into a star,

Asking a life to pass exploring thus,
Till I near craze. I go to prove my

soul!

I see my way as birds their trackless
way.

I shall arrive! what time, what circuit
first,

I ask not: but unless God send his
hail

Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling
snow,

In some time, his good time, I shall
arrive:

He guides me and the bird. In his
good time!

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

Fest. Just thus you help me ever.
This would hold

Were it the trackless air, and not a
path

Inviting you, distinct with footprints
yet

Of many a mighty marcher gone that
way.

You may have purer views than theirs,
perhaps,

But they were famous in their day—
the proofs

Remain. At least accept the light
they lend.

Par. Their light! the sum of all is
briefly this;

They laboured and grew famous, and
the fruits

Are best seen in a dark and groaning
earth

Given over to a blind and endless strife
With evils, what of all their lore abates?

No; I reject and spurn them utterly
And all they teach. Shall I sit still
beside

Their dry wells, with a white lip and
filmed eye,

While in the distance heaven is blue
above

Mountains where sleep the unsunned
tarns?

Fest. And yet
As strong delusions have prevailed ere
now.

Men have set out as gallantly to seek
Their ruin. I have heard of such:

yourself

Avow all hitherto have failed and fallen.

Mich. Nay, Festus, when but as the
pilgrims faint

Through the drear way, do you expect
to see

Their city dawn amid the clouds afar?

Par. Ay, sounds it not like some old
well-known tale?

For me, I estimate their works and
them

So rightly, that at times I almost dream
I too have spent a life the sages' way,

And tread once more familiar paths.
Perchance

I perished in an arrogant self-reliance
Ages ago; and in that act, a prayer

For one more chance went up so earnest,
so

Instinct with better light let in by
death,

That life was blotted out—not so com-
pletely

But scattered wrecks enough of it re-
main, [seems

Dim memories, as now, when once more
The goal in sight again. All which

indeed,
Is foolish, and only means—the flesh I
wear,

The earth I tread, are not more clear to
me

Than my belief, explained to you or no.

Fest. And who am I, to challenge and
dispute

That clear belief? I will divest all
fear.

Mich. Then Aureole is God's com-
missary! he shall

Be great and grand—and all for us!

Par. No, sweet!
Not great and grand. If I can serve
mankind

'Tis well ; but there our intercourse
must end :
I never will be served by those I serve.
Fest. Look well to this ; here is a
plague-spot, here,
Disguise it how you may ! 'Tis true,
you utter
This scorn while by our side and loving
us ;
'Tis but a spot as yet : but it will break
Into a hideous blotch if overlooked.
How can that course be safe which
from the first
Produces carelessness to human love ?
It seems you have abjured the helps
which men
Who overpass their kind, as you would
do,
Have humbly sought ; I dare not
thoroughly probe
This matter, lest I learn too much. Let
be
That popular praise would little
instigate
Your efforts, nor particular approval
Reward you ; put reward aside ; alone
You shall go forth upon your arduous
task,
None shall assist you, none partake
your toil,
None share your triumph : still you
must retain
Some one to cast your glory on, to share
Your rapture with. Were I elect like
you, [raise
I would encircle me with love, and
A rampart of my fellows ; it should
seem
Impossible for me to fail, so watched
By gentle friends who made my cause
their own.
They should ward off fate's envy—the
great gift,
Extravagant when claimed by me alone,
Being so a gift to them as well as me.
If danger daunted me or ease seduced,
How calmly their sad eyes should gaze
reproach !
Mich. O Aureole, can I sing when
all alone,
Without first calling, in my fancy, both
To listen by my side—even I ! And
you ?
Do you not feel this ? Say that you
feel this !
Par. I feel 't is pleasant that my
aims, at length

Allowed their weight, should be sup-
posed to need
A further strengthening in these goodly
helps !
My course allures for its own sake, its
sole
Intrinsic worth ; and ne'er shall boat
of mine
Adventure forth for gold and apes at
once.
Your sages say, " if human, therefore
weak : "
If weak, more need to give myself
entire
To my pursuit ; and by its side, all
else . . .
No matter ! I deny myself but little
In waiving all assistance save its own.
Would there were some real sacrifice to
make !
Your friends the sages threw their joys
away,
While I must be content with keeping
mine.
Fest. But do not cut yourself from
human weal !
You cannot thrive—a man that dares
affect
To spend his life in service to his kind
For no reward of theirs, unbound to
them
By any tie ; nor do so, Aureole ! No—
There are strange punishments for
such. Give up
(Although no visible good flow thence)
some part
Of the glory to another ; hiding thus,
Even from yourself, that all is for your-
self.
Say, say almost to God—" I have done
all
" For her, not for myself ! "
Par. And who but lately
Was to rejoice in my success like you ?
Whom should I love but both of you ?
Fest. I know not :
But know this, you, that 't is no will of
mine
You should abjure the lofty claims you
make ;
And this the cause—I can no longer
seek
To overlook the truth, that there
would be
A monstrous spectacle upon the earth,
Beneath the pleasant sun, among the
trees :

—A being knowing not what love is.
 Hear me!
 You are endowed with faculties which
 bear
 Annexed to them as 't were a dispensa-
 tion
 To summon meaner spirits to do their
 will
 And gather round them at their need;
 inspiring
 Such with a love themselves can never
 feel,
 Passionless 'mid their passionate
 votaries.
 I know not if you joy in this or no,
 Or ever dream that common men can
 live
 On objects you prize lightly, but which
 make
 Their heart's sole treasure: the affec-
 tions seem
 Beauteous at most to you, which we
 must taste
 Or die: and this strange quality
 accords,
 I know not how, with you, sits well
 upon
 That luminous brow, though in another
 it scowls
 An eating brand, a shame I dare not
 judge you.
 The rules of right and wrong thus set
 aside,
 There's no alternative—I own you one
 Of higher order, under other laws
 Than bind us; therefore, curb not one
 bold glance!
 'Tis best aspire. Once mingled with
 us all . . .
Mich. Stay with us, Aureole! cast
 those hopes away,
 And stay with us! An angel warns
 me, too,
 Man should be humble; you are very
 proud:
 And Go!, dethroned, has doleful plagues
 for such!
 —Warns me to have in dread no quick
 repulse,
 No slow defeat, but a complete success:
 You will find all you seek, and perish
 so!
Par. [after a pause.] Are these the
 barren firstfruits of my quest?
 Is love like this the natural lot of all?
 How many years of pain might one
 such hour

O'erbalance? Dearest Michal, dearest
 Festus,
 What shall I say, if not that I desire
 To justify your love; and will, dear
 friends,
 In swerving nothing from my first
 resolves.
 See, the great moon! and ere the
 mottled owls
 Were wide awake, I was to go. It
 seems
 You acquiesce at last in all save this—
 If I am like to compass what I seek
 By the untried career I choose; and
 then,
 If that career, making but small account
 Of much of life's delight, will yet retain
 Sufficient to sustain my soul: for thus
 I understand these fond fears just
 expressed.
 And first; the lore you praise and I
 neglect,
 The labours and the precepts of old
 time,
 I have not lightly disesteemed. But,
 friends, [rise
 Truth is within ourselves; it takes no
 From outward things, whate'er you
 may believe.
 There is an inmost centre in us all,
 Where truth abides in fulness; and
 around,
 Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it
 in,
 This perfect, clear perception—which
 is truth.
 A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
 Blinds it, and makes all error; and, to
 KNOW,
 Rather consists in opening out a way
 Whence the imprisoned splendour may
 escape,
 Than in effecting entry for a light
 Supposed to be without. Watch
 narrowly
 The demonstration of a truth, its birth,
 And you trace back the effluence to its
 spring
 And source within us; where broods
 radiance vast,
 To be elicited ray by ray, as chance
 Shall favour: chance—for hitherto,
 your sage
 Even as he knows not how those beams
 are born,
 As little knows he what unlocks their
 fount.

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

To cope with seraphs, but at least the
 rest
 Shall cope with us. Make no more
 giants, God,
 But elevate the race at once ! We ask
 To put forth just our strength, our
 human strength,
 All starting fairly, all equipped alike,
 Gifted alike, all eagle-eyed, true-
 hearted—
 See if we cannot beat thine angels yet !
 Such is my task. I go to gather this
 The sacred knowledge, here and there
 dispersed
 About the world, long lost or never
 found.
 And why should I be sad or lorn of
 hope ?
 Why ever make man's good distinct
 from God's,
 Or, finding they are one, why dare
 mistrust ?
 Who shall succeed if not one pledged
 like me ?
 Mine is no mad attempt to build a
 world
 Apart from his, like those who set
 themselves [bore,
 To find the nature of the spirit they
 And, taught betimes that all their gor-
 geous dreams
 Were only born to vanish in this life,
 Refused to fit them to its narrow
 sphere,
 But chose to figure forth another world
 And other frames meet for their vast
 desires,—
 And all a dream ! Thus was life
 scorned ; but life
 Shall yet be crowned : twine amaranth !
 I am priest !
 And all for yielding with a lively spirit
 A poor existence, parting with a youth
 Like those who squander every energy
 Convertible to good, on painted toys,
 Breath-bubbles, gilded dust ! And
 though I spurn
 All adventitious aims, from empty
 praise
 To love's award, yet whoso deems such
 helps
 Important, and concerns himself for me,
 May know even these will follow with
 the rest—
 As in the steady rolling Mayne, asleep
 Yonder, is mixed its mass of schistous
 ore.

My own affections, laid to rest awhile,
Will waken purified, subdued alone
By all I have achieved. Till then—till
then . . .

Ah, the time-wiling loitering of a page
Through bower and over lawn, till eve
shall bring

The stately lady's presence whom he
loves—

The broken sleep of the fisher whose
rough coat

Enwraps the queenly pearl—these are
faint types!

See, see they look on me: I triumph
now!

But one thing, Festus, Michal! I have
told

All I shall e'er disclose to mortal: say—
Do you believe I shall accomplish this?

Fest. I do believe!

Mich. I ever did believe!

Par. Those words shall never fade
from out my brain!

This earnest of the end shall never fade!
Are there not, Festus, are there not,
dear Michal,

Two points in the adventure of the
diver,

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

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

Festus, I plunge!

Fest. We wait you when you rise!

II.—PARACELsus ATTAINS

SCENE, *Constantinople; the House of a
Greek conjurer.* 1521.

PARACELsus.

Over the waters in the vaporous West
The sun goes down as in a sphere of
gold

Behind the arm of the city, which be-
tween,

With all that length of domes and
minarets,

Athwart the splendour, black and
crooked runs

Like a Turk verse along a scimitar.

There lie, sullen memorial, and no more
Possess my aching sight! 'T is done
at last.

Strange—and the juggles of a sallow
cheat

Have won me to this act! 'T is as yon
cloud

Should voyage unwrecked o'er many a
mountain-top

And break upon a molehill. I have
dared

Come to a pause with knowledge;
scan for once

The heights already reached, without
regard

To the extent above; fairly compute
All I have clearly gained; for once
excluding

A brilliant future to supply and perfect
All half-gains and conjectures and crude
hopes:

And all because a fortune-teller wills
His credulous seekers should inscribe
thus much,

Their previous life's attainment, in his
roll,

Before his promised secret, as he vaunts,
Make up the sum: and here, amid the
scrawled

Uncouth recordings of the dupes of this
Old arch-genethliac, lie my life's
results!

A few blurred characters suffice to note
A stranger wandered long through
many lands

And reaped the fruit he coveted in a
few

Discoveries, as appended here and
there,

The fragmentary produce of much toil,
In a dim heap, fact and surmise to-
gether

Confusedly massed as when acquired;
he was

Intent on gain to come too much to
stay

And scrutinize the little gained: the
whole

Slit in the blank space 'twixt an idiot's
gibber

And a mad lover's ditty—there it lies.

And yet those blottings chronicle a
life—

A whole life, and my life! Nothing to
do,

No problem for the fancy, but a life
Spent and decided, wasted past retrieve
Or worthy beyond peer. Stay, what
does this

Remembrancer set down concerning
"life?"

"Time fleets, youth fades, life is an
empty dream."

" It is the echo of time ; and he whose heart
 " Beat first beneath a human heart, whose speech
 " Was copied from a human tongue, can never
 " Recall when he was living yet knew not this.
 " Nevertheless long seasons pass o'er him
 " Till some one hour's experience shows what nothing,
 " It seemed, could clearer show ; and ever after,
 " An altered brow and eye and gait and speech
 " Attest that now he knows the adage true
 " ' Time fleets, youth fades, life is an empty dream.' "

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

Now ! I can go no farther ; well or ill,
 'Tis done. I must desist and take my chance.

I cannot keep on the stretch ; 't is no back-shrinking—

For let but some assurance beam, some close

To my toil grow visible, and I proceed
 At any price, though closing it, I die.
 Else, here I pause. The old Greek's prophecy

Is like to turn out true : " I shall not quit

" His chamber till I know what I desire ! "

Was it the light wind sang it o'er the sea ?

An end, a rest ! strange how the notion, once

Encountered, gathers strength by moments ! Rest !

Where has it kept so long ? this throbbing brow

To cease, this beating heart to cease, all cruel

And gnawing thoughts to cease ! To dare let down

Mystrung, so high-strung brain, to dare unnerve

My harassed o'ertasked frame, to know my place,

My portion, my reward, even my failure,

Assigned, made sure forever ! To lose myself

Among the common creatures of the world,

To draw some gain from having been a man,

Neither to hope nor fear, to live at length !

Even in failure, rest ! But rest in truth

And power and recompense . . . I hoped that once !

What, sunk insensibly so deep ? Has all

Been undergone for this ? This the request

My labour qualified me to present
 With no fear of refusal ? Had I gone

Slightly through my task, and so judged fit

To moderate my hopes ; nay, were it now

My sole concern to exculpate myself,
 End things or mend them,—why, I could not choose

A humbler mood to wait for the event !
 No, no, there needs not this ; no, after all,

At worst I have performed my share of the task ;

The rest is God's concern ; mine, merely this,

To know that I have obstinately held
 By my own work. The mortal whose

brave foot

Has trod, unscathed, the temple-court so far

That he descries at length the shrine of shrines,

Must let no sneering of the demons' eyes,

Whom he could pass unquailing, fasten

Upon him, fairly past their power ; no, no—

He must not stagger, faint, fall down at last,

Having a charm to baffle them ; behold,

He bares his front : a mortal ventures thus

Serene amid the echoes, beams and glooms !

If he be priest henceforth, if he wake up

The god of the place to ban and blast
him there,
Both well ! What 's failure or success
to me ?
I have subdued my life to the one pur-
pose
Where to I ordained it ; there alone I
spy,
No doubt, that way I may be satisfied.
Yes, well have I subdued my life !
beyond
The obligation of my strictest vow,
The contemplation of my wildest bond,
Which gave my nature freely up, in
truth,
But in its actual state, consenting fully
All passionate impulses its soil was
formed
To rear, should wither ; but foreseeing
not
The tract, doomed to perpetual barren-
ness,
Would seem one day, remembered as it
was,
Beside the parched sand-waste which
now it is,
Already strewn with faint blooms,
viewless then.
I ne'er engaged to root up loves so frail
I felt them not ; yet now, 't is very
plain
Some soft spots had their birth in me
at first,
If not love, say, like love : there was a
time
When yet this wolfish hunger after
knowledge
Set not remorselessly love's claims
aside.
This heart was human once, or why
recall
Einsiedeln, now, and Würzburg which
the Mayne
Forsakes her course to fold as with an
arm ?
And Festus—my poor Festus, with his
praise
And counsel and grave fears—where is
he now
With the sweet maiden, long ago his
bride ?
I surely loved them—that last night, at
least,
When we . . . gone ! gone ! the better.
I am saved
The sad review of an ambitious youth

Choked by vile lusts, unnoticed in their
birth,
But let grow up and wind around a will
Till action was destroyed. No, I have
gone
Purging my path successively of aught
Wearing the distant likeness of such
lusts.
I have made life consist of one idea :
Ere that was master, up till that was
born,
I bear a memory of a pleasant life
Whose small events I treasure ; till one
morn
I ran o'er the seven little grassy fields,
Startling the flocks of nameless birds,
to tell [joy,
Poor Festus, leaping all the while for
To leave all trouble for my future plans,
Since I had just determined to become
The greatest and most glorious man on
earth.
And since that morn all life has been
forgotten ;
All is one day, one only step between
The outset and the end : one tyrant all-
Absorbing aim fills up the interspace,
One vast unbroken chain of thought,
kept up
Through a career apparently adverse
To its existence : life, death, light and
shadow,
The shows of the world, were bare
receptacles
Or indices of truth to be wrung thence,
Not ministers of sorrow or delight :
A wondrous natural robe in which she
went. [me
For some one truth would dimly beacon
From mountains rough with pines, and
flit and wink
O'er dazzling wastes of frozen snow,
and tremble
Into assured light in some branching
mine
Where ripens, swathed in fire, the
liquid gold—
And all the beauty, all the wonder fell
On either side the truth, as its mere
robe ;
I see the robe now—then I saw the form.
So far, then, I have voyaged with
success,
So much is good, then, in this working
sea
Which parts me from that happy strip
of land :

But o'er that happy strip a sun shone,
 toc !
 And fainter gleams it as the waves grow
 rough,
 And still more faint as the sea widens ;
 last
 I sicken on a dead gulf streaked with
 light
 From its own putrefying depths alone.
 Then, God was pledged to take me by
 the hand ;
 Now, any miserable juggle can bid
 My pride depart. All is alike at length :
 God may take pleasure in confounding
 pride
 By hiding secrets with the scorned and
 base—
 I am here, in short : so little have I
 paused
 Throughout ! I never glanced behind
 to know
 If I had kept my primal light from wane,
 And thus insensibly am—what I am !
 Oh, bitter ; very bitter !
 And more bitter,
 To fear a deeper curse, an inner ruin,
 Plague beneath plague, the last turning
 the first
 To light beside its darkness. Let me
 weep
 My youth and its brave hopes, all dead
 and gone,
 In tears which burn ! Would I were
 sure to win
 Some startling secret in their stead, a
 tincture
 Of force to flush old age with youth, or
 breed
 Gold, or imprison moonbeams till they
 change
 To opal shafts !—only that, hurling it
 Indignant back, I might convince my-
 self
 My aims remained supreme and pure
 as ever !
 Even now, why not desire, for man-
 kind's sake,
 That if I fail, some fault may be the
 cause,
 That, though I sink, another may suc-
 ceed ?
 O God, the despicable heart of us !
 Shut out this hideous mockery from
 my heart !

'T was politic in you, Aureole, to reject

Single rewards, and ask them in the
 lump ;
 At all events, once launched, to hold
 straight on :
 For now 't is all or nothing. Mighty
 profit
 Your gains will bring if they stop short
 of such
 Full consummation ! As a man, you
 had
 A certain share of strength ; and that
 is gone
 Already in the getting these you boast.
 Do not they seem to laugh, as who
 should say—
 " Great master, we are here indeed,
 dragged forth
 " To light ; this hast thou done : be
 glad ! Now, seek
 " The strength to use which thou hast
 spent in getting ! "
 And yet 't is much, surely 't is very
 much,
 Thus to have emptied youth of all its
 gifts,
 To feed a fire meant to hold out till
 morn
 Arrived with inexhaustible light ; and
 lo,
 I have heaped up my last, and day
 dawns not !
 And I am left with grey hair, faded
 hands,
 And furrowed brow. Ha, have I, after
 all,
 Mistaken the wild nursling of my
 breast ?
 Knowledge it seemed, and power, and
 recompense !
 Was she who glided through my room
 of nights,
 Who laid my head on her soft knees and
 smoothed
 The damp locks,—whose sly soothing
 just began
 When my sick spirit craved repose
 awhile—
 God ! was I fighting sleep off for death's
 sake ?
 God ! Thou art mind ! Unto the
 master-mind
 Mind should be precious. Spare my
 mind alone !
 All else I will endure ; if, as I stand
 Here, with my gains, thy thund'ring
 smite me down,

I bow me ; 't is thy will, thy righteous will ;
 I o'erpass life's restrictions, and I die ;
 And if no trace of my career remain
 Save a thin corpse at pleasure of the wind
 In these bright chambers level with the air,
 See thou to it ! But if my spirit fail,
 My once proud spirit forsake me at the last,
 Hast thou done well by me ? So do not thou !
 Crush not my mind, dear God, though I be crushed !
 Hold me before the frequency of thy seraphs
 And say—" I crushed him, lest he should disturb
 " My law. Men must not know their strength : behold,
 " Weak and alone, how he had raised himself ! "
 But if delusions trouble me, and thou,
 Not seldom felt with rapture in thy help
 Throughout my toils and wanderings, dost intend
 To work man's welfare through my weak endeavour,
 To crown my mortal forehead with a beam
 From thine own blinding crown, to smile, and guide
 This puny hand and let the work so wrought
 Be styled my work,—hear me ! I covet not
 An influx of new power, an angel's soul :
 It were no marvel then—but I have reached
 Thus far, a man ; let me conclude, a man !
 Give but one hour of my first energy,
 Of that invincible faith, but only one !
 That I may cover with an eagle-glance
 The truths I have, and spy some certain way
 To mould them, and completing them, possess !
 Yet God is good : I started sure of that,
 And why dispute it now ? I'll not believe
 But some undoubted warning long ere this
 Had reached me : a fire-labrum was not deemed

Too much for the old founder of these walls.
 Then, if my life has not been natural,
 It has been monstrous : yet, till late, my course
 So ardently engrossed me, that delight,
 A pausing and reflecting joy, 't is plain,
 Could find no place in it. True, I am worn ;
 But who clothes summer, who is life itself ?
 God, that created all things, can renew !
 And then, though after-life to please me now
 Must have no likeness to the past, what hinders
 Reward from springing out of toil, as changed
 As bursts the flower from earth and root and stalk ?
 What use were punishment, unless some sin
 Be first detected ? let me know that first !
 No man could ever offend as I have done . . .
 [*A voice from within.*]
 I hear a voice, perchance I heard
 Long ago, but all too low,
 So that scarce a care it stirred
 If the voice were real or no :
 I heard it in my youth when first
 The waters of my life outburst :
 But, now their stream ebbs faint, I hear
 That voice, still low but fatal-clear—
 As if all poets, God ever meant
 Should save the world, and therefore lent
 Great gifts to, but who, proud, refused
 To do his work, or lightly used
 Those gifts, or failed through weak endeavour,
 So, mourn cast off by him for ever,—
 As if these leaned in airy ring
 To take me ; this the song they sing.
 " Lost lost ! yet come,
 With our wan troop make thy home.
 Come, come ! for we
 Will not breathe, so much as breathe
 Reproach to thee,
 Knowing what thou sink'st beneath.
 So sank we in those old years,
 We who bid thee, come ! thou last
 Who, living yet, hast life o'erpast,

And altogether we, thy peers,
Will pardon ask for thee, the last
Whose trial is done, whose lot is cast
With those who watch but work no
more,

Who gaze on life but live no more.
Yet we trusted thou shouldst speak
The message which our lips, too weak,
Refused to utter,—shouldst redeem
Our fault: such trust, and all a
dream!

Yet we chose thee a birthplace
Where the richness ran to flowers;
Couldst not sing one song for grace?
Not make one blossom man's and
ours?

Must one more recreant to his race
Die with unexerted powers,
And join us, leaving as he found
The world, he was to loosen, bound?
Anguish! ever and for ever;
Still beginning, ending never!
Yet, lost and last one, come!

How couldst understand, alas,
What our pale ghosts strove to say,
As their shades did glance and pass
Before thee, night and day?
Thou wast blind as we were dumb:
Once more, therefore, come, O come!
How shall we clothe, how arm the
spirit

Shall next thy post of life inherit—
How guard him from thy speedy
ruin?

Tell us of thy sad undoing
Here, where we sit, ever pursuing
Our weary task, ever renewing
Sharp sorrow, far from God who
gave

Our powers, and man they could not
save!"

APRILE enters.

Ha, ha! our king that wouldst be, here
at last?

Art thou the poet who shall save the
world?

Thy hand to mine! Stay, fix thine eyes
on mine!

Thou wouldst be king? Still fix thine
eyes on mine!

Par. Ha, ha! why crouchest not?

Am I not king?

So torture is not wholly unavailing!
Have my fierce spasms compelled thee
from thy lair?

Art thou the sage I only seemed to be,

Myself of after-time, my very self
With sight a little clearer, strength
more firm,

Who robes him in my robe and grasps
my crown

For just a fault, a weakness, a neglect?
I scarcely trusted God with the surmise
That such might come, and thou didst
hear the while!

Apr. Thine eyes are lustreless to
mine; my hair

Is soft, nay silken soft: to talk with
thee

Flushes my cheek, and thou art ashy-
pale.

Truly, thou hast laboured, hast with-
stood her lips,

The siren's! Yes, 't is like thou hast
attained!

Tell me, dear master, wherefore now
thou comest?

I thought thy solemn songs would have
their heed [earth

In after-time; that I should hear the
Exult in thee, and echo with thy praise,
While I was laid forgotten in my grave.

Par. Ah fiend, I know thee, I am
not thy dupe!

Thou art ordained to follow in my track,
Reaping my sowing, as I scorned to
reap

The harvest sown by sages passed away.
Thou art the sober searcher, cautious
striver,

As if, except through me, thou hadst
searched or striven!

Ay, tell the world! Degrade me, after
all,

To an aspirant after fame, not truth—
To all but envy of thy fate, be sure!

Apr. Nay, sing them to me; I shall
envy not:

Thou shalt be king! Sing thou, and I
will sit

Beside, and call deep silence for thy
songs,

And worship thee, as I had ne'er been
meant

To fill thy throne: but none shall ever
know!

Sing to me; for already thy wild eyes
Unlock my heart-strings, as some

crystal-shaft
Reveals by some chance blaze its

parent fount
After long time: so thou reveal'st my

soul.

All will flash forth at last, with thee to hear!

Par. (His secret! I shall get his secret—fool!)

I am he that aspired to KNOW: and thou?

Apr. I would LOVE infinitely, and be loved!

Par. Poor slave! I am thy king indeed.

Apr. Thou deem'st

That—born a spirit, dowered even as thou,

Born for thy fate—because I could not curb

My yearnings to possess at once the full enjoyment, but neglected all the means

Of realizing even the frailest joy,

Gathering no fragments to appease my want,

Yet nursing up that want till thus I die—

Thou deem'st I cannot trace thy safe, sure march

O'er perils that o'erwhelm me, triumphing,

Neglecting nought below for aught above,

Despising nothing and ensuring all—

Nor that I could (my time to come again)

Lead thus my spirit securely as thine own.

Listen, and thou shalt see I know thee well.

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

O ye who armed me at such cost, How shall I look on all of ye

With your gifts even yet on me?

Par. (Ah, 't is some moonstruck creature after all!

Such fond fools as are like to haunt this den:

They spread contagion, doubtless: yet he seemed

To echo one foreboding of my heart

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

With eve's last sunbeam staying on his hair

Which turns to it as if they were akin:

And those clear smiling eyes of saddest blue

Nearly set free, so far they rise above

The painful fruitless striving of the brow

And enforced knowledge of the lips, firm-set

In slow despondency's eternal sigh!

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

I charge thee, by thy fealty, be calm! Tell me what thou wouldst be, and what I am.

Apr. I would love infinitely, and be loved.

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

The forms of earth. No ancient hunter lifted

Up to the gods by his renown, no nymph

Supposed the sweet soul of a woodland tree

Or sapphirine spirit of a twilight star,

Should be too hard for me; no shepherd-king

Regal for his white locks; no youth who stands

Silent and very calm amid the throng,

His right hand ever hid beneath his robe

Until the tyrant pass; no lawgiver,

No swan-soft woman rubbed with lucid oils

Given by a god for love of her—too hard!

Every passion sprung from man, conceived by man,

Would I express and clothe it in its right form,

Or blend with others struggling in one form,

Or show repressed by an ungainly form.

Oh, if you marvelled at some mighty spirit

With a fit frame to execute its will—

Even unconsciously to work its will—

You should be moved no less beside some strong,

Rare spirit, fettered to a stubborn body,

Endeavouring to subdue it and inform it

With its own splendour! All this I would do:

And I would say, this done, "His sprites created,

"God grants to each a sphere to be its world,

"Appointed with the various objects needed

"To satisfy its own peculiar want;

"So, I create a world for these my shapes

" Fit to sustain their beauty and their strength ! "
 And, at the word, I would contrive and paint
 Woods, valleys, rocks and plains,
 dells, sands and wastes,
 Lakes which, when morn breaks on
 their quivering bed,
 Blaze like a wyvern flying round the
 sun,
 And ocean-isles so small, the dog-fish
 tracking
 A dead whale, who should find them,
 would swim thrice
 Around them, and fare onward—all to
 ho'd
 The offspring of my brain. Nor these
 alone :
 Bronze labyrinth, palace, pyramid and
 crypt,
 Baths, galleries, courts, temples and
 terraces,
 Marts, theatres and wharfs—all filled
 with men,
 Men everywhere! And this performed
 in turn,
 When those who looked on, pined to
 hear the hopes
 And fears and hates and loves which
 moved the crowd,
 I would throw down the pencil as the
 chisel,
 And I would speak ; no thought which
 ever stirred
 A human breast should be untold ; all
 passions,
 All soft emotions, from the turbulent
 stir
 Within a heart fed with desires like
 mine,
 To the last comfort shutting the tired
 lids
 Of him who sleeps the sultry noon away
 Beneath the tent-tree by the wayside
 well :
 And this in language as the need should
 be,
 Now poured at once forth in a burning
 flow,
 Now piled up in a grand array of words.
 This done, to perfect and consummate
 all,
 Even as a luminous haze links star to
 star,
 I would supply all chasms with music,
 breathing
 Mysterious motions of the soul, no way

To be defined save in strange melodies.
 Last, having thus revealed all I could
 love,

Having received all love bestowed on it,
 I would die : preserving so throughout
 my course

God full on me, as I was full on men :
 He would approve my prayer, " I have
 gone through

" The loveliness of life ; create for me
 " If not for men, or take me to thyself,
 " Eternal, infinite love ! "

If thou hast ne'er
 Conceived this mighty aim, this full
 desire,

Thou hast not passed my trial, and
 thou art

No king of mine.

Par. Ah me !

Apr. But thou art here !

Thou didst not gaze like me upon that
 end

Till thine own powers for compassing
 the bliss

Were blind with glory ; nor grow mad
 to grasp

At once the prize long patient toil
 should claim,

Nor spurn all granted short of that.
 And I [listen !

Would do as thou, a second time : nay,
 Knowing ourselves, our world, our task
 so great,

Our time so brief, 't is clear if we refuse
 The means so limited, the tools so rude
 To execute our purpose, life will fleet,
 And we shall fade, and leave our task
 undone.

We will be wise in time : what though
 our work

Be fashioned in despite of their ill-
 service,

Be crippled every way ? 'T were little
 praise

Did full resources wait on our goodwill
 At every turn. Let all be as it is.

Some say the earth is even so contrived
 That tree and flower, a vesture gay,
 conceal

A bare and skeleton framework. Had
 we means

Answering to our mind ! But now I
 seem

Wrecked on a savage isle : how rear
 thereon

My palace ? B anching palms the
 props shall be,

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

" Gathered these magic herbs, berry and bud,
 " In haste, not pausing to reject the weeds,
 " But happy plucking them at any price.
 " To me, who have seen them bloom in their own soil,
 " They are scarce lovely : plait and wear them, you !
 " And guess, from what they are, the springs that fed them,
 " The stars that sparkled o'er them, night by night,
 " The snakes that travelled far to sip their dew !"
 Thus for my higher loves ; and thus even weakness
 Would win me honour. But not these alone
 Should claim my care ; for common life, its wants
 And ways, would I set forth in beautiful hues :
 The lowest hind should not possess a hope,
 A fear, but I'd be by him, saying better
 Than he his own heart's language. I would live
 For ever in the thoughts I thus explored,
 As a discoverer's memory is attached
 To all he finds ; they should be mine henceforth,
 Imbued with me, though free to all before :
 For clay, once cast into my soul's rich mine,
 Should come up crusted o'er with gems.
 Nor this
 Would need a meaner spirit, than the first ; [clothed
 Nay, 't would be but the selfsame spirit,
 In humbler guise, but still the selfsame spirit :
 As one spring wind unbinds the mountain snow
 And comforts violets in their hermitage.
 But, master, poet, who hast done all this,
 How didst thou 'scape the ruin overwhelming me ?
 Didst thou, when nerving thee to this attempt,
 Ne'er range thy mind's extent, as some wide hall,
 Dazzled by shapes that filled its length with light,

Shapes clustered there to rule thee, not
 obey,
 That will not wait thy summons, will
 not rise
 Singly, nor when thy practised eye and
 hand
 Can well transfer their loveliness, but
 crowd
 By thee for ever, bright to thy despair?
 Didst thou ne'er gaze on each by turns,
 and ne'er
 Resolve to single out one, though thou
 rest
 Should vanish, and to give that one,
 entire
 In beauty, to the world; forgetting, so,
 Its peers, whose number baffles mortal
 power?
 And, this determined, wast thou ne'er
 seduced
 By memories and regrets and pas-
 sionate love,
 To glance once more farewell? and did
 their eyes
 Fasten thee, brighter and more bright,
 until
 Thou couldst but stagger back unto
 their feet,
 And laugh that man's applause or
 welfare ever
 Could tempt thee to forsake them?
 Or when years
 Had passed and still their love pos-
 sessed thee wholly,
 When from without some murmur
 startled thee
 Or darkling mortals famished for one
 ray
 Of thy so-hoarded luxury of light,
 Didst thou ne'er strive even yet to
 break those spells
 And prove thou couldst recover and
 fulfil
 Thy early mission, long ago renounced,
 And to that end, select some shape once
 more?
 And did not mist-like influences, thick
 films,
 Faint memories of the rest that charmed
 so long
 Thine eyes, float fast, confuse thee,
 bear thee off,
 As whirling snow-drifts blind a man
 who treads
 A mountain ridge, with guiding spear,
 through storm?
 Say, though I fell, I had excuse to fall;

Say, I was tempted sorely: say but
 this,
 Dear lord, Aprile's lord!
Par. Clasp me not thus,
 Aprile! That the truth should reach
 me thus!
 We are weak dust. Nay, clasp not or I
 faint!
Apr. My king! and envious thoughts
 could outrage thee?
 Lo, I forget my ruin, and rejoice
 In thy success, as thou! Let our
 God's praise
 Go bravely through the world at last!
 What care
 Through me or thee? I feel thy breath.
 Why, tears?
 Tears in the darkness, and from thee to
 me?
Par. Love me henceforth, Aprile,
 while I learn
 To love; and, merciful God, forgive us
 both!
 We wake at length from weary dreams;
 but both
 Have slept in fairy-land: though dark
 and drear
 Appears the world before us, we no less
 Wake with our wrists and ankles
 jewelled still.
 I too have sought to know as thou to
 LOVE—
 Excluding love as thou refusedst know-
 ledge.
 Still thou hast beauty and I, power.
 We wake:
 What penance canst devise for both
 of us?
Apr. I hear thee faintly. The thick
 darkness! Even
 Thine eyes are hid. 'Tis as I knew: I
 speak,
 And now I die. But I have seen thy
 face!
 O poet, think of me, and sing of me!
 But to have seen thee and to die so
 soon!
Par. Die not, Aprile! We must
 never part.
 Are we not halves of one dissevered
 world,
 Whom this strange chance unites once
 more? Part? never!
 Till thou the lover, know; and I, the
 knower,
 Love—until both are saved. Aprile,
 hear!

We will accept our gains, and use them
—now!

God, he will die upon my breast!
Aprile!

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

Hush! hush!

Ha! go you ever girt about

With phantoms, powers? I have
created such,

But these seem real as I.

Par. Whom can you see
Through the accursed darkness?

Apr. Stay; I know,
I know them: who should know them
well as I?

White brows, lit up with glory; poets
all!

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

Apr. Yes; I see now. God is the
perfect poet,

Who in his person acts his own crea-
tions.

Had you but told me this at first!
Hush! hush!

Par. Live! for my sake, because of
my great sin,

To help my brain, oppressed by these
wild words

And their deep import. Live! 't is not
too late.

I have a quiet home for us, and friend
Michal shall smile on you. Hear you?

Lean thus,
And breathe my breath. I shall not
lose one word

Of all your speech, one little word.
Aprile!

Apr. No, no. Crown me? I am
not one of you!

'T is he, the king, you seek. I am not
one.

Par. Thy spirit, at least, Aprile!
Let me love!

I have attained, and now I may depart.

III.—PARACELUS

SCENE, Basil; a chamber in the house of
Paracelsus. 1526.

PARACELUS, FESTUS.

Par. Heap logs and let the blaze
laugh out!

Fest. True, true!

'T is very fit all, time and chance and
change

Have wrought since last we sat thus,
face to face

And soul to soul—all cares, far-looking
fears,

Vague apprehensions, all vain fancies
bred

By your long absence, should be cast
away,

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

Par. Oh, omit not aught
Which witnesses your own and Michal's
own

Affection: spare not that! Only for-
get

The honours and the glories and what
not,

It pleases you to tell profusely out.

Fest. Nay, even your honours, in a
sense, I waive:

The wondrous Paracelsus, life's dis-
penser,

Fate's commissary, idol of the schools
And courts, shall be no more than

Aureole still,
Still Aureole and my friend as when we
parted

Some twenty years ago, and I re-
strained

As best I could the promptings of my
spirit

Which secretly advanced you, from the
first,

To the pre-eminent rank which, since,
your own

Adventurous ardour, nobly triumphing,
Has won for you.

Par. Yes, yes. And Michal's face
Still wears that quiet and peculiar light

Like the dim circlet floating round a
pearl?

Fest. Just so.

Par. And yet her calm sweet
countenance,

Though saintly, was not sad; for she
would sing

Alone. Does she still sing alone, bird-
like,

Not dreaming you are near? Her
carols dropt

In flakes through that old leafy bower
built under

The sunny wall at Würzburg, from her
lattice

Among the trees above, while I, unseen,

Sat conning some rare scroll from
 Tritheim's shelves,
 Much wondering notes so simple could
 divert
 My mind from study. Those were
 happy days.

Respect all such as sing when all alone !

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

Par. Ah, those children quite
 Unsettled the pure picture in my mind :
 A girl, she was so perfect, so distinct.
 No change, no change ! Not but this
 added grace

May blend and harmonize with its
 compeers,
 And Michal may become her mother-
 hood ;

But 't is a change, and I detest all
 change,
 And most a change in aught I loved
 long since.

So, Michal—you have said she thinks
 of me ?

Fest. O very proud will Michal be of
 you !

Imagine how we sat, long winter-
 nights,

Scheming and wondering, shaping your
 presumed

Adventure, or devising its reward ;
 Shutting out fear with all the strength
 of hope.

For it was strange how, even when
 most secure

In our domestic peace, a certain dim
 And flitting shade could sadden all ; it
 seemed

A restlessness of heart, a silent yearn-
 ing,

A sense of something wanting, incom-
 plete—

Not to be put in words, perhaps avoided
 By mute consent—but, said or unsaid,
 felt

To point to one so loved and so long
 lost.

And then the hopes rose and shut out
 the fears—

How you would laugh should I recount
 them now !

I still predicted your return at last
 With gifts beyond the greatest of them
 all,

All Tritheim's wondrous troop ; did
 one of which

Attain renown by any chance, I smiled,
 As well aware of who would prove his
 peer.

Michal was sure some woman, long ere
 this,

As beautiful as you were sage, had
 loved . . .

Par. Far-seeing, truly, to discern so
 much

In the fantastic projects and day-
 dreams

Of a raw restless boy !

Fest. Oh, no : the sunrise
 Well warranted our faith in this full
 noon !

Can I forget the anxious voice which
 said

"Festus, have thoughts like these e'er
 shaped themselves

"In other brains than mine ? have their
 possessors

"Existed in like circumstance ? were
 they weak

"As I, or ever constant from the first,
 "Despising youth's allurements and
 rejecting

"As spider-films the shackles I endure ?
 "Is there hope for me ?"—and I

answered gravely

As an acknowledged elder, calmer,
 wiser,

More gifted mortal. O you must re-
 member,

For all your glorious . . .

Par. Glorious ? ay, this hair,
 These hands—nay, touch them, they
 are mine ! Recall

With all the said recallings, times when
 thus

To lay them by your own ne'er turned
 you pale

As now. Most glorious, are they not ?
Fest. Why—why—

Something must be subtracted from
 success

So wide, no doubt. He would be
 scrupulous, truly,

Who should object such drawbacks
 Still, still, Aureole,

You are changed, very changed
 'T were losing nothing

To look well to it : you must not be
 stolen

From the enjoyment of your well-won
 meed.

Par. My friend ! you seek my plea-
 sure, past a doubt :

You will best gain your point, by talking, not
Of me, but of yourself.
Fest. Have I not said
All touching Michal and my children?
Sure
You know, by this, full well how
Aennchen looks
Gravely, while one disparts her thick
brown hair;
And Aureole's glee when some stray
gannet builds
Amid the birch-trees by the lake. Small
hope
Have I that he will honour (the wild
imp)
His namesake. Sigh not! 't is too
much to ask
That all we love should reach the same
proud fate.
But you are very kind to humour me
By showing interest in my quiet life;
You, who of old could never tame your-
self
To tranquil pleasures, must at heart
despise . . .
Par. Festus, strange secrets are let
out by death
Who blabs so oft the follies of this
world:
And I am death's familiar, as you know.
I helped a man to die, some few weeks
since,
Warped even from his go-cart to one
end—
The living on princes' smiles, reflected
from
A mighty herd of favourites. No mean
trick
He left untried, and truly well-nigh
wormed
All traces of God's finger out of him:
Then died, grown old. And just an
hour before,
Having lain long with blank and soul-
less eyes,
He sat up suddenly, and with natural
voice
Said that in spite of thick air and closed
doors
God told him it was June; and he knew
well,
Without such telling, harebells grew in
June; [take
And all that kings could ever give or
Would not be precious as those blooms
to him.

Just so, allowing I am passing sage,
It seems to me much worthier argu-
ment
Why pansies,¹ eyes that laugh, bear
beauty's prize
From violets, eyes that dream—(your
Michal's choice)—
Than all fools find to wonder at in me
Or in my fortunes. And be very sure
I say this from no prurient restlessness,
No self-complacency, itching to turn,
Vary and view its pleasure from all
points,
And, in this instance, willing other men
Should be at pains, demonstrate to
itself
The realness of the very joy it tastes.
What should delight me like the news
of friends
Whose memories were a solace to me
oft,
As mountain-baths to wild fowls in
their flight?
Ofter than you had wasted thought
on me
Had you been wise, and rightly valued
bliss.
But there's no taming nor repressing
hearts:
God knows I need such!—So, you
heard me speak?
Fest. Speak? when?
Par. When but this morning at
my class?
There was noise and crowd enough. I
saw you not.
Surely you know I am engaged to fill
The chair here?—that 't is part of my
proud fate
To lecture to as many thick-skulled
youths
As please, each day, to throng the
theatre,
To my great reputation, and no small
Danger of Basil's benches long unused
To crack beneath such honour?
Fest. I was there;
I mingled with the throng: shall I
avow
Small care was mine to listen?—too
intent
On gathering from the murmurs of the
crowd
A full corroboration of my hopes!

¹ Citrinula (flammula) herba Paracelso multum
familiaris.—DORN.

What can I learn about your powers ?
but they

Know, care for nought beyond your
actual state,

Your actual value ; yet they worship
you,

Those various natures whom you sway
as one !

But ere I go, be sure I shall attend . . .

Par. Stop, o' God's name : the
thing 's by no means yet

Past remedy ! Shall I read this morn-
ing's labour

—At least in substance ? Nought so
worth the gaining

As an apt scholar ! Thus then, with
all due

Precision and emphasis—you, beside,
are clearly

Guiltless of understanding more, a whit,
The subject than your stool—allowed
to be

A notable advantage.

Fest. Surely, Aureole,
You laugh at me !

Par. I laugh ? Ha, ha ! thank
heaven,

I charge you, if 't be so ! for I forget
Much, and what laughter should be
like. No less,

However, I forego that luxury
Since it alarms the friend who brings it
back.

True, laughter like my own must echo
strangely

To thinking men ; a smile were better
far ;

So, make me smile ! If the exulting
look

You wore but now be smiling, 't is so
long

Since I have smiled ! Alas, such smiles
are born

Alone of hearts like yours, or herds-
men's souls

Of ancient time, whose eyes, calm as
their flocks, [heaven,

Saw in the stars mere garnishry of
And in the earth a stage for altars only.

Never change, Festus : I say, never
change !

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

Par. When last we parted, Festus,
you declared,

—Or Michal, yes, her soft lips whispered
words

I have preserved. She told me she
believed

I should succeed (meaning, that in the
search

I then engaged in, I should meet suc-
cess)

And yet be wretched : now, she augured
false.

Fest. Thank heaven ! but you spoke
strangely : could I venture

To think bare apprehension lest your
friend,

Dazzled by your resplendent course,
might find

Henceforth less sweetness in his own,
could move

Such earnest mood in you ? Fear not,
dear friend,

That I shall leave you inwardly
repining

Your lot was not my own !

Par. And this for ever !
For ever ! gull who may, they will be
gulled !

They will not look nor think ; 't is no-
thing new

In them : but surely he is not of them !
My Festus, do you know, I reckoned,
you—

Though all beside were sand-blind—
you, my friend,

Would look at me, once close, with
piercing eye

Untroubled by the false glare that
confounds

A weaker vision ; would remain serene,
Though singular amid a gaping throng.

I feared you, or I had come, sure, long
ere this,

To Einsiedeln. Well, error has no end,
And Rhasis is a sage, and Basil boasts
A tribe of wits, and I am wise and blest
Past all dispute ! 'T is vain to fret at
it.

I have vowed long ago my worshippers
Shall owe to their own deep sagacity
All further information, good or bad.

Small risk indeed my reputation runs,
Unless perchance the glance now
searching me

Be fixed much longer ; for it seems to
spell

Dimly the characters a simpler man
Might read distinct enough. Old
eastern books

Say, the fallen prince of morning some
short space

Remained unchanged in semblance ;
 nay, his brow
 Was hued with triumph : every spirit
 then
 Praising, *his* heart on flame the while :
 —a tale !
 Well, Festus, what discover you, I
 pray ?
Fest. Some foul deed sullies then a
 life which else
 Were raised supreme ?
Par. Good : I do well, most
 well !
 Why strive to make men hear, feel, fret
 themselves
 With what 't is past their power to
 comprehend ?
 I should not strive now : only, having
 nursed
 The faint surmise that one yet walked
 the earth,
 One, at least, not the utter fool of show,
 Not absolutely formed to be the dupe
 Of shallow plausibilities alone ;
 One who, in youth found wise enough
 to choose
 The happiness his riper years approve,
 Was yet so anxious for another's sake,
 That, ere his friend could rush upon a
 mad
 And ruinous course, the converse of
 his own, [him
 His gentle spirit essayed, prejudged for
 The perilous path, foresaw its destiny,
 And warned the weak one in such
 tender words,
 Such accents—his whole heart in every
 tone—
 That oft their memory comforted that
 friend
 When it by right should have increased
 despair :
 —Having believed, I say, that this one
 man
 Could never lose the light thus from
 the first
 His portion—how should I refuse to
 grieve
 At even my gain if it disturb our old
 Relation, if it make me out more wise ?
 Therefore, once more reminding him
 how well
 He prophesied, I note the single flaw
 That spoils his prophet's title. In plain
 words,
 You were deceived, and thus were you
 deceived—

I have not been successful, and yet am
 Most miserable ; 't is said at last ; nor
 you
 Give credit, lest you force me to con-
 cede
 That common sense yet lives upon the
 world !
Fest. You surely do not mean to
 banter me ?
Par. You know, or—if you have
 been wise enough
 To cleanse your memory of such matters
 —knew,
 As far as words of mine could make it
 clear,
 That 't was my purpose to find joy or
 grief
 Solely in the fulfilment of my plan
 Or plot or whatsoe'er it was ; rejoicing
 Alone as it proceeded prosperously,
 Sorrowing then only when mischance
 retarded
 Its progress. That was in those
 Würzburg days !
 Not to pro'ong a theme I thoroughly
 hate,
 I have pursued this plan with all my
 strength ;
 And having failed therein most signally,
 Cannot object to ruin utter and drear
 As all-excelling would have been the
 prize
 Had fortune favoured me. I scarce
 have right
 To vex your frank good spirit late so
 glad
 In my supposed prosperity, I know,
 And, were I lucky in a glut of friends,
 Would well agree to let your error live,
 Nay, strengthen it with fables of suc-
 cess.
 But mine is no condition to refuse
 The transient solace of so rare a god-
 send,
 My solitary luxury, my one friend :
 Accordingly I venture to put off
 The wearisome test of falsehood galling
 me,
 Secure when he is by. I lay me bare,
 Prone at his mercy—but he is my
 friend !
 Not that he needs retain his aspect
 grave ;
 That answers not my purpose ; for 't is
 like,
 Some sunny morning—Basil being
 drained

Of its wise population, every corner
 Of the amphitheatre crammed with
 learned clerks,
 Here Ecolampadius, looking worlds of
 wit,
 Here Castellanus, as profound as he,
 Munsterus here, Frobenius there, all
 squeezed
 And staring,—that the zany of the
 show,
 Even Paracelsus, shall put off before
 them
 His trappings with a grace but seldom
 judged
 Expedient in such cases:—the grim
 smile
 That will go round! Is it not there-
 fore best
 To venture a rehearsal like the present
 In a small way? Where are the signs
 I seek,
 The first-fruits and fair sample of the
 scorn
 Due to all quacks? Why, this will
 never do!
Fest. These are foul vapours,
 Aureole; nought beside!
 The effect of watching, study, wear-
 i-ness.
 Were there a spark of truth in the con-
 fusion
 Of these wild words, you would not
 outrage thus
 Your youth's companion. I shall
 ne'er regard
 These wanderings, bred of faintness
 and much study.
 'T is not thus you would trust a trouble
 to me,
 To Michal's friend.
Par. I have said it, dearest
 Festus!
 For the manner, 't is ungracious pro-
 bably; [one day,
 You may have it told in broken sobs,
 And scalding tears, ere long: but I
 thought best
 To keep that off as long as possible.
 Do you wonder still?
Fest. No; it must oft fall out
 That one whose labour perfects any
 work,
 Shall rise from it with eye so worn that
 he
 Of all men least can measure the extent
 Of what he has accomplished. He
 alone

Who, nothing tasked, is nothing weary
 too,
 May clearly scan the little he effects:
 But we, the bystanders, untouched by
 toil,
 Estimate each aright.
Par. This worthy Festus
 Is one of them, at last! 'T is so with
 all!
 First, they set down all progress as a
 dream;
 And next, when he whose quick dis-
 comfiture
 Was counted on, accomplishes some
 few
 And doubtful steps in his career,—be-
 hold,
 They look for every inch of ground to
 vanish
 Beneath his tread, so sure they spy
 success!
Fest. Few doubtful steps? when
 death retires before
 Your presence—when the noblest of
 mankind,
 Broken in body or subdued in soul,
 May through your skill renew their
 vigour, raise
 The shattered frame to pristine stateli-
 ness?
 When men in racking pain may pur-
 chase dreams
 Of what delights them most, swooning
 at once
 Into a sea of bliss or rapt along
 As in a flying sphere of turbulent light?
 When we may look to you as one
 ordained
 To free the flesh from fell disease, as
 frees
 Our Luther's burning tongue the
 fettered soul?
 When . . .
Par. When and where, the devil,
 did you get
 This notable news?
Fest. Even from the common
 voice;
 From those whose envy, daring not
 dispute
 The wonders it decries, attributes them
 To magic and such folly.
Par. Folly? Why not
 To magic, pray? You find a comfort
 doubtless
 In holding, God ne'er troubles him
 about

Us or our doings: once we were
 judged worth
 The devil's tempting . . . I offend:
 forgive me,
 And rest content. Your prophecy on
 the whole
 Was fair enough as prophesyings go;
 At fault a little in detail, but quite
 Precise enough in the main; and
 hereupon
 I pay due homage: you guessed long
 ago
 (The prophet!) I should fail—and I
 have failed.
Fest. You mean to tell me, then, the
 hopes which fed
 Your youth have not been realized as
 yet?
 Some obstacle has barred them
 hitherto?
 Or that their innate . . .
Par. As I said but now,
 You have a very decent prophet's fame,
 So you but shun details here. Little
 matter
 Whether those hopes were mad,—the
 aims they sought,
 Safe and secure from all ambitious
 fools;
 Or whether my weak wits are overcome
 By what a better spirit would scorn: I
 fail.
 And now methinks 't were best to
 change a theme
 I am a sad fool to have stumbled on.
 I say confusedly what comes upper-
 most;
 But there are times when patience
 proves at fault,
 As now: this morning's strange en-
 counter—you
 Beside me once again! you, whom I
 guessed
 Alive, since hitherto (with Luther's
 leave)
 No friend have I among the saints at
 peace,
 To judge by any good their prayers
 effect:
 I knew you would have helped me—
 why not he,
 My strange competitor in enterprise,
 Bound for the same end by another
 path,
 Arrived, or ill or well, before the time
 At our disastrous journey's doubtful
 close?

How goes it with Aprile? Ah, they
 miss
 Your lone sad sunny idleness of heaven,
 Our martyrs for the world's sake;
 heaven shuts fast:
 The poor mad poet is howling by this
 time!
 Since you are my sole friend then, here
 or there,
 I could not quite repress the varied
 feelings
 This meeting wakens; they have had
 their vent,
 And now forget them. Do the rear-
 mice still
 Hang like a fret-work on the gate (or
 what
 In my time was a gate) fronting the
 road
 From Einsiedeln to Lachen?
Fest. Trifle not:
 Answer me, for my sake alone! You
 smiled
 Just now, when I supposed some deed,
 unworthy
 Yourself, might blot the else so bright
 result;
 Yet if your motives have continued
 pure,
 Your will unfaltering, and in spite of
 this,
 You have experienced a defeat, why
 then
 I say not you would cheerfully with-
 draw
 From contest—mortal hearts are not
 so fashioned—
 But surely you would ne'ertheless with-
 draw.
 You sought not fame nor gain nor even
 love,
 No end distinct from knowledge,—I
 repeat
 Your very words: once satisfied that
 knowledge
 Is a mere dream, you would announce
 as much,
 Yourself the first. But how is the
 event?
 You are defeated—and I find you here!
Par. As though "here" did not
 signify defeat!
 I spoke not of my little labours here
 But of the break-down of my general
 aims:
 For you, aware of their extent and
 scope,

To look on these sage lecturings, approved
 By beardless boys, and bearded dotards worse,
 As a fit consummation of such aims,
 Is worthy notice. A professorship
 At Basil ! Since you see so much in it,
 And think my life was reasonably drained
 Of life's delights to render me a match
 For duties arduous as such post demands,—
 Be it far from me to deny my power
 To fill the petty circle lotted out
 Of infinite space, or justify the host
 Of honours thence accruing. So, take notice,
 This jewel dangling from my neck preserves
 The features of a prince, my skill restored
 To plague his people some few years to come ;
 And all through a pure whim. He had eased the earth
 For me, but that the droll despair which seized
 The vermin of his household, tickled me.
 I came to see. Here, drivelled the physician,
 Whose most infallible nostrum was at fault ;
 There quaked the astrologer, whose horoscope
 Had promised him interminable years ;
 Here a monk fumbled at the sick man's mouth
 With some undoubted relic—a sudary
 Of the Virgin ; while another piebald knave
 Of the same brotherhood (he loved them ever)
 Was actively preparing 'neath his nose
 Such a suffumigation as, once fired,
 Had stunk the patient dead ere he could groan.
 I cursed the doctor and upset the brother,
 Brushed past the conjurer, vowed that the first gust
 Of stench from the ingredients just alight
 Would raise a cross-grained devil in my sword,
 Not easily laid : and ere an hour the prince

Slept as he never slept since prince he was.
 A day—and I was posting for my life,
 Placarded through the town as one whose spite
 Had near availed to stop the blessed effects
 Of the doctor's nostrum which, well seconded
 By the sudary, and most by the costly smoke—
 Not leaving out the strenuous prayers sent up
 Hard by in the abbey—raised the prince to life ;
 To the great reputation of the seer
 Who, confident, expected all along
 The glad event—the doctor's recompense—
 Much largess from his highness to the monks—
 And the vast solace of his loving people,
 Whose general satisfaction to increase,
 The prince was pleased no longer to defer
 The burning of some dozen heretics
 Remanded till God's mercy should be shown
 Touching his sickness : last of all were joined
 Ample directions to all loyal folk
 To swell the complement by seizing me
 Who—doubtless some rank sorcerer—endeavoured
 To thwart these pious offices, obstruct
 The prince's cure, and frustrate heaven by help
 Of certain devils dwelling in his sword.
 By luck, the prince in his first fit of thanks
 Had forced this bauble on me as an earnest
 Of further favours. This one case may serve
 To give sufficient taste of many such.
 So, let them pass. Those shelves support a pile
 Of patents, licences, diplomas, titles
 From Germany, France, Spain, and Italy ;
 They authorize some honour ; ne'ertheless,
 I set more store by this Erasmus sent ;
 He trusts me ; our Frobenius is his friend,
 And him " I raised " (nay, read it)
 " from the dead."

I weary you, I see. I merely sought
To show, there's no great wonder after
all

That, while I fill the class-room and
attract

A crowd to Basil, I get leave to stay;
And therefore need not scruple to
accept

The utmost they can offer, if I please:
For 't is but right the world should be
prepared

To treat with favour e'en fantastic
wants

Of one like me, used up in serving her.
Just as the mortal, whom the gods in
part

Devoured, received in place of his lost
limb

Some virtue or other—cured disease, I
think;

You mind the fables we have read to-
gether.

Fest. You do not think I compre-
hend a word.

The time was, Aureole, you were apt
enough

To clothe the airiest thoughts in speci-
ous breath;

But surely you must feel how vague and
strange

These speeches sound.

Par. Well, then: you know my
hopes;

I am assured, at length, those hopes
were vain;

That truth is just as far from me as
ever; [sorrow]

That I have thrown my life away; that
On that account is idle, and further
effort

To mend and patch what's marred
beyond repairing,

As useless: and all this was taught
your friend

By the convincing good old-fashioned
method

Of force—by sheer compulsion. Is
that plain?

Fest. Dear Aureole, can it be my
fears were just?

God wills not . . .

Par. Now, 't is this I most
admire—

The constant talk men of your stamp
keep up

Of God's will, as they style it; one
would swear

Man had but merely to uplift his eye,
And see the will in question charac-
tered

On the heaven's vault. 'T is hardly
wise to moot

Such topics: doubts are many and
faith is weak.

I know as much of any will of God
As knows some dumb and tortured
brute what Man,

His stern lord, wills from the perplex-
ing blows

That plague him every way; but there,
of course,

Where least he suffers, longest he
remains—

My case; and for such reasons I plod
on,

Subdued but not convinced. I know
as little

Why I deserve to fail, as why I hoped
Better things in my youth. I simply
know

I am no master here, but trained and
beaten

Into the path I tread; and here I stay,
Until some further intimation reach
me, [prefer]

Like an obedient drudge. Though I
To view the whole thing as a task im-
posed

Which, whether dull or pleasant, must
be done—

Yet, I deny not, there is made provision
Of joys which tastes less jaded might
affect;

Nay, some which please me too, for all
my pride—

Pleasures that once were pains: the
iron ring

Festering about a slave's neck grows at
length

Into the flesh it eats. I hate no longer
A host of petty vile delights, undreamed
of

Or spurned before; such now supply
the place

Of my dead aims: as in the autumn
woods

Where tall trees used to flourish, from
their roots

Springs up a fungous brood sickly and
pale,

Chill mushrooms coloured like a corpse's
cheek.

Fest. If I interpret well your words,
I own

It troubles me but that little your aims,
Vast in their dawning and most likely
grown

Extravagantly since, have baffled you.
Perchance I am glad; you merit
greater praise;

Because they are too glorious to be
gained,

You do not blindly cling to them and
die;

You fell, but have not sullenly refused
To rise, because an angel worsted you
In wrestling, though the world holds
not your peer;

And though too harsh and sudden is
the change

To yield content as yet, still you
pursue

The ungracious path as though 't were
rosy strewn.

'T is well; and your reward, or soon or
late,

Will come from him whom no man
serves in vain.

Par. Ah, very fine! For my part, I
conceive

The very pausing from all further toil,
Which you find heinous, would become
a seal

To the sincerity of all my deeds.

To be consistent I should die at once;
I calculated on no after-life;

Yet (how crept in, how fostered, I know
not)

Here am I with as passionate regret
For youth and health and love so
vainly lavished,

As if their preservation had been first
And foremost in my thoughts; and
this strange fact

Humbled me wondrously, and had due
force

In rendering me the less averse to
follow

A certain counsel, a mysterious warn-
ing—

You will not understand—but 't was a
man

With aims not mine and yet pursued
like mine,

With the same fervour and no more
success,

Perishing in my sight; who summoned
me

As I would shun the ghastly fate I saw,
To serve my race at once; to wait no
longer

That God should interfere in my behalf,
But to distrust myself, put pride away,
And give my gains, imperfect as they
were,

To men. I have not leisure to explain
How, since, a singular series of events
Has raised me to the station you be-
hold,

Wherein I seem to turn to most account
The mere wreck of the past,—perhaps
receive

Some feeble glimmering token that
God views

And may approve my penance: there-
fore here

You find me, doing most good or least
harm.

And if folks wonder much and profit
little

'T is not my fault; only, I shall rejoice
When my part in the farce is shuffled
through,

And the curtain falls: I must hold out
till then.

Fest. Till when, dear Aureole?

Par. Till I'm fairly thrust
From my proud eminence. Fortune is
fickle

And even professors fall: should that
arrive,

I see no sin in ceding to my bent.

You little fancy what rude shocks
appraise us

We sin; God's intimations rather fail
In clearness than in energy: 't were
well

Did they but indicate the course to take
Like that to be forsaken. I would fain

Be spared a further sample. Here I
stand,

And here I stay, be sure, till forced to
flit.

Fest. Be you but firm on that head;
long ere then

All I expect will come to pass, I trust:
The cloud that wraps you will have
disappeared.

Meantime, I see small chance of such
event:

They praise you here as one whose lore,
already

Divulged, eclipses all the past can show,
But whose achievements, marvellous as
they be,

Are faint anticipations of a glory
About to be revealed. When Basil's
crowds

Dismiss their teacher, I shall be content
That he depart.

Par. This favour at their hands
I look for earlier than your view of
things

Would warrant. Of the crowd you
saw to-day,

Remove the full half sheer amazement
draws.

Mere novelty, nought else; and next,
the tribe

Whose innate blockish dulness just
perceives

That unless miracles (as seem my
works)

Be wrought in their behalf, their chance
is slight

To puzzle the devil; next, the numer-
ous set

Who bitterly hate established schools,
and help

The teacher that oppugns them, till he
once

Have planted his own doctrine, when
the teacher

May reckon on their rancour in his
turn;

Take, too, the sprinkling of sagacious
knaves

Whose cunning runs not counter to the
vogue

But seeks, by flattery and crafty
nursing,

To force my system to a premature
Short-lived development. Why swell
the list?

Each has his end to serve, and his best
way

Of serving it: remove all these, re-
mains

A scantling, a poor dozen at the best,
Worthy to look for sympathy and
service,

And likely to draw profit from my
pains.

Fest. 'Tis no encouraging picture:
still these few

Redeem their fellows. Once the germ
implanted,

Its growth, if slow, is sure.

Par. God grant it so!

I would make some amends: but if I
fail,

The luckless rogues have this excuse to
urge,

That much is in my method and my
manner,

My uncouth habits, my impatient
spirit,

Which hinders of reception and result
My doctrine: much to say, small skill
to speak!

These old aims suffered not a looking-
off

Though for an instant; therefore,
only when

I thus renounced them and resolved
to reap

Some present fruit—to teach mankind
some truth

So dearly purchased—only then I
found

Such teaching was an art requiring
cares

And qualities peculiar to itself;
That to possess was one thing—to dis-
play

Another. With renown first in my
thoughts,

Or popular praise, I had soon dis-
covered it:

One grows but little apt to learn these
things.

Fest. If it be so, which nowise I be-
lieve,

There needs no waiting fuller dispensa-
tion

To leave a labour of so little use.

Why not throw up the irksome charge
at once?

Par. A task, a task!

But wherefore hide the whole
Extent of degradation, once engaged
In the confessing vein? Despite of all
My fine talk of obedience and repug-
nance,

Docility and what not, 't is yet to learn
If when the task shall really be per-
formed,

My inclination free to choose once more,
I shall do aught but slightly modify
The nature of the hated task I quit.

In plain words, I am spoiled: my life
still tends

As first it tended; I am broken and
trained

To my old habits: they are part of me.
I know, and none so well, my darling
ends

Are proved impossible: no less, no less.
Even now what humours me, fond fool,
as when

Their faint ghosts sit with me and flatter
me

And send me back content to my dull
round ?
How can I change this soul ?—this
apparatus
Constructed solely for their purposes,
So well adapted to their every want,
To search out and discover, prove and
perfect ;
This intricate machine whose most
minute
And meanest motions have their charm
to me
Though to none else—an aptitude I
seize,
An object I perceive, a use, a meaning,
A property, a fitness, I explain
And I alone :—how can I change my
soul ?
And this wronged body, worthless save
when tasked
Under that soul's dominion—used to
care
For its bright master's cares and quite
subdue
Its proper cravings—not to ail nor pine
So he but prosper—whither drag this
poor
Tried patient body ? God ! how I
essayed
To live like that mad poet, for a while,
To love alone ; and how I felt too
warped
And twisted and deformed ! What
should I do,
Even tho' released from drudgery, but
return
Faint, as you see, and halting, blind
and sore,
To my old life and die as I began !
I cannot feed on beauty for the sake
Of beauty only, nor can drink in balm
From lovely objects for their loveliness ;
My nature cannot lose her first imprint ;
I still must hoard and heap and class all
truths
With one ulterior purpose : I must
know !
Would God translate me to his throne,
believe
That I should only listen to his word
To further my own aim ! For other
men,
Beauty is prodigally strewn around,
And I were happy could I quench as
they
This mad and thriveless longing, and
content me

With beauty for itself alone : alas,
I have addressed a frock of heavy mail
Yet may not join the troop of sacred
knights ;
And now the forest-creatures fly from
me,
The grass-banks cool, the sunbeams
warm no more.
Best follow, dreaming that ere night
arrive,
I shall o'ertake the company and ride
Glittering as they !
Fest. I think I apprehend
What you would say : if you, in truth,
design
To enter once more on the life thus left,
Seek not to hide that all this conscious-
ness
Of failure is assumed !
Par. My friend, my friend,
I tell, you listen ; I explain, perhaps
You understand : there our communion
ends.
Have you learnt nothing from to-day's
discourse ?
When we would thoroughly know the
sick man's state
We feel awhile the fluttering pulse,
press soft [eye,
The hot brow, look upon the languid
And thence divine the rest. Must I
lay bare
My heart, hideous and beating, or tear
up
My vitals for your gaze, ere you will
deem
Enough made known ? You ! who
are you, forsooth ?
That is the crowning operation claimed
By the arch-demonstrator—heaven the
hall,
And earth the audience. Let Aprile
and you
Secure good places : 't will be worth the
while.
Fest. Are you mad, Aureole ? What
can I have said
To call for this ? I judged from your
own words.
Par. Oh, doubtless ! A sick wretch
describes the ape
That mocks him from the bed-foot, and
all gravely
You thither turn at once : or he re-
counts
The perilous journey he has late per-
formed,

And you are puzzled much how that
could be!

You find me here, half stupid and half
mad;

It makes no part of my delight to search
Into these matters, much less undergo
Another's scrutiny; but so it chances
That I am led to trust my state to you:
And the event is, you combine, contrast
And ponder on my foolish words as
though

They thoroughly conveyed all hidden
here—

Here, loathsome with despair and hate
and rage!

Is there no fear, no shrinking and no
shame?

Will you guess nothing? will you spare
me nothing?

Must I go deeper? Ay or no?

Fest. Dear friend . . .

Par. True: I am brutal—'t is a part
of it;

The plague's sign—you are not a lazar-
haunter,

How should you know? Well then,
you think it strange

I should profess to have failed utterly,
And yet propose an ultimate return
To courses void of hope: and this, be-
cause

[how
You know not what temptation is, nor
'T is like to ply men in the sickliest part.

You are to understand that we who
make

Sport for the gods, are hunted to the
end:

There is not one sharp volley shot at us,
Which 'scaped with life, though hurt,
we slacken pace

And gather by the wayside herbs and
roots

To staunch our wounds, secure from
further harm:

We are assailed to life's extremest
verge.

It will be well indeed if I return,
A harmless busy fool, to my old ways!

I would forget hints of another fate,
Significant enough, which silent hours
Have lately scared me with.

Fest.

Par. After all, Festus, you say well:

I am

A man yet: I need never humble me.

I would have been—something, I know
not what;

But though I cannot soar, I do not
crawl.

There are worse portions than this one
of mine.

You say well!

Fest. Ah!

Par. And deeper degradation!

If the mean stimulants of vulgar praise,
If vanity should become the chosen
food

Of a sunk mind, should stifle even the
wish

To find its early aspirations true,
Should teach it to breathe falsehood
like life-breath—

An atmosphere of craft and trick and
lies;

Should make it proud to emulate, sur-
pass

[woke
Base natures in the practices which
Its most indignant loathing once . . .
No, no!

Utter damnation is reserved for hell!

I had immortal feelings; such shall
never

Be wholly quenched: no, no!

My friend, you wear
A melancholy face, and certain 't is

There's little cheer in all this dismal
work.

But was it my desire to set abroad
Such memories and forebodings? I
foresaw

Where they would drive. 'T were
better we discuss

News from Lucerne or Zurich; ask and
tell

Of Egypt's flaring sky or Spain's cork-
groves.

Fest. I have thought: trust me,
this mood will pass away!

I know you and the lofty spirit you
bear,

And easily ravel out a clue to all.

These are the trials meet for such as
you,

Nor must you hope exemption: to be
mortal

Is to be plied with trials manifold.

Look round! The obstacles which
kept the rest

From your ambition, have been
spurned by you;

Their fears, their doubts, the chains
that bind them all,

Were flax before your resolute soul,
which nought

Avails to awe save these delusions bred
From its own strength, its selfsame
strength disguised,

Mocking itself. Be brave, dear Aureole !
Since

The rabbit has his shade to frighten
him,

The fawn a rustling bough, mortals
their cares,

And higher natures yet would slight
and laugh

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

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

I know you.

Par. And I know you, dearest
Festus ! [how

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

Fest. You hold
That admiration blinds ?

Par. Ay and alas !

Fest. Nought blinds you less than
admiration, friend !

Whether it be that all love renders wise
In its degree ; from love which blends
with love—

Heart answering heart—to love which
spends itself

In silent mad idolatry of some
Pre-eminent mortal, some great soul of
souls,

Which ne'er will know how well it is
adored.

I say, such love is never blind ; but
rather

Alive to every the minutest spot
Which mars its object, and which hate

(supposed
So vigilant and searching) dreams not
of.

Love broods on such : what then ?
When first perceived,

Is there no sweet strife to forget, to
change,

To overflush those blemishes with all
The glow of general goodness they dis-
turb ?

—To make those very defects an end-
less source

Of new affection grown from hopes and
fears ?

And, when all fails, is there no gallant
stand

Made even for much proved weak ? no
shrinking-back

Lest, since all love assimilates the soul
To what it loves, it should at length
become

Almost a rival of its idol ? Trust me,
If there be fiends who seek to work our
hurt,

To ruin and drag down earth's mightiest
spirits

Even at God's foot, 't will be from such
as love,

Their zeal will gather most to serve
their cause ;

And least from those who hate, who
most essay

By contumely and scorn to blot the
light

Which forces entrance even to their
hearts :

For thence will our defender tear the
veil

And show within each heart, as in a
shrine,

The giant image of perfection, grown
In hate's despite, whose calumnies were
spawned

In the untroubled presence of its eyes.
True admiration blinds not ; nor am I

So blind. I call your sin exceptional ;
It springs from one whose life has
passed the bounds

Prescribed to life. Compound that
fault with God !

I speak of men ; to common men like
me

The weakness you reveal endears you
more,

Like the far traces of decay in suns.
I bid you have good cheer !

Par. *Præclare ! Optime !*
Think of a quiet mountain-cloistered
priest

Instructing Paracelsus ! yet 't is so.
Come, I will show you where my merit
lies.

'T is in the advance of individual minds
That the slow crowd should ground
their expectation

Eventually to follow ; as the sea
Waits ages in its bed 'till some one
wave

Out of the multitudinous mass, extends
The empire of the whole, some feet
perhaps,

Over the strip of sand which could
confine

Its fellows so long time : thenceforth
the rest,

Even to the meanest, hurry in at once,
And so much is clear gained. I shall
be glad

If all my labours, failing of aught else,
Suffice to make such inroad and pro-
cure

A wider range for thought: nay, they
do this;

For, whatsoe'er my notions of true
knowledge

And a legitimate success, may be,
I am not blind to my undoubted rank
When classed with others: I precede
my age:

And whoso wills is very free to mount
These labours as a platform whence his
own

May have a prosperous outset. But,
alas!

My followers—they are noisy as you
heard;

But, for intelligence, the best of them
So clumsily wield the weapons I supply
And they extol, that I begin to doubt
Whether their own rude clubs and
pebble-stones

Would not do better service than my
arms

Thus vilely swayed—if error will not
fall

Sooner before the old awkward batter-
ings

Than my more subtle warfare, not half
learned.

Fest. I would supply that art, then,
or withhold

New arms until you teach their
mystery.

Par. Content you, 't is my wish; I
have recourse

To the simplest training. Day by day
I seek

To wake the mood, the spirit which
alone

Can make those arms of any use to men.
Of course they are for swaggering forth

at once
Graced with Ulysses' bow, Achilles' shield—

Flash on us, all in armour, thou
Achilles!

Make our hearts dance to thy resound-
ing step!

A proper sight to scare the crows
away!

Fest. Pity you choose not, then,
some other method

Of coming at your point. The mar-
vellous art

At length established in the world bids
fair

To remedy all hindrances like these:
Trust to Frobenius' press the precious
lore

Obscured by uncouth manner, or unfit
For raw beginners; let his types
secure

A deathless monument to after-time;
Meanwhile wait confidently and enjoy
The ultimate effect: sooner or later
You shall be all-revealed.

Par. The old dull question
In a new form; no more. Thus: I
possess

Two sorts of knowledge; one,—vast,
shadowy,

Hints of the unbounded aim I once
pursued:

The other consists of many secrets,
caught

While bent on nobler prize,—perhaps a
few

Prime principles which may conduct to
much:

These last I offer to my followers here.
Now, bid me chronicle the first of these,
My ancient study, and in effect you bid
Revert to the wild courses just abjured:
I must go find them scattered through
the world.

Then, for the principles, they are so
simple

(Being chiefly of the overturning sort),
That one time is as proper to propound
them

As any other—to-morrow at my class,
Or half a century hence embalmed in
print.

For if mankind intend to learn at all,
They must begin by giving faith to
them

And acting on them; and I do not see
But that my lectures serve indifferent
well:

No doubt these dogmas fall not to the
earth,

For all their novelty and rugged setting.
I think my class will not forget the day

I let them know the gods of Israel,
Aëtius, Oribasius, Galen, Rhasis,

Serapion, Avicenna, Averröes,
Were blocks!

Fest. And that reminds me, I
heard something

About your waywardness : you burned
their books,

It seems, instead of answering those
sages.

Par. And who said that ?

Fest. Some I met yesternight
With Ecolampadius. As you know,
the purpose

Of this short stay at Basil was to learn
His pleasure touching certain missives
sent

For our Zuinglius and himself. 'T was
he

Apprised me that the famous teacher
here

Was my old friend.

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

Fest. From Zurich with advices for
the ear

Of Luther, now at Wittemburg—(you
know,

I make no doubt, the differences of late
With Carolostadius)—and returning
sought

Basil and . . .

Par. I remember. Here's a
case, now,

Will teach you why I answer not, but
burn

The books you mention : pray, does
Luther dream

His arguments convince by their own
force

The crowds that own his doctrine ?
No, indeed :

His plain denial of established points
Ages had sanctified and men supposed
Could never be oppugned while earth
was under

And heaven above them—points which
chance or time

Affected not—did more than the array
Of argument which followed. Boldly
deny !

There is much breath-stopping, hair-
stiffening

Awile ; then, amazed glances, mute
awaiting

The thunderbolt which does not come :
and next,

Reproachful wonder and inquiry :
those

Who else had never stirred, are able
now

To find rest for themselves, perhaps

To outstrip him who set the whole at
work,

—As never will my wise class its in-
structor.

And you saw Luther ?

Fest. 'T is a wondrous soul !

Par. True : the so-heavy chain
which galled mankind

Is shattered, and the noblest of us all
Must bow to the deliverer—nay, the
worker

Of our own project—we who long be-
fore

Had burst our trammels but forgot the
crowd,

We should have taught, still groaned
beneath the load :

This he has done and nobly. Speed
that may !

Whatever be my chance or my mis-
chance,

What benefits mankind must glad me
too :

And men seem made, though not as I
believed,

For something better than the times
produce.

Witness these gangs of peasants your
new lights

From Suabia have possessed, whom
Münzer leads,

And whom the duke, the landgrave
and the elector

Will calm in blood ! Well, well ; 't is
not my world !

Fest. Hark !

Par. 'T is the melancholy wind
astir [grey :

Within the trees ; the embers too are
Morn must be near.

Fest. Best ope the casement :
see,

The night, late strewn with clouds and
flying stars,

Is blank and motionless : how peaceful
sleep

The tree-tops altogether ! Like an asp,
The wind slips whispering from bough
to bough.

Par. Ay ; you would gaze on a wind-
shaken tree

By the hour, nor count time lost.

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

Par. Gone, gone,
Those pleasant times ! Does not the
moaning wind

Seem to bewail that we have gained
such gains

And bartered sleep for them ?

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

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

A make-shift, a mere foil, how fair
soever,

To some fine life to come ? Man
must be fed

With angels' food, forsooth ; and some
few traces

Of a diviner nature which look out
Through his corporeal baseness, war-
rant him

In a supreme contempt of all provision
For his inferior tastes—some straggling
marks

Which constitute his essence, just as
truly

As here and there a gem would con-
stitute

The rock, their barren bed, one dia-
mond.

But were it so—were man all mind—he
gains

A station little enviable. From God
Down to the lowest spirit ministrant,
Intelligence exists which casts our mind
Into immeasurable shade. No, no :
Love, hope, fear, faith—these make
humanity ;

These are its sign and note and char-
acter,

And these I have lost !—gone, shut
from me for ever,

Like a dead friend safe from unkindness
more !

See, morn at length. The heavy dark-
ness seems

Diluted ; grey and clear without the
stars ;

The shrubs bestir and rouse them-
selves, as if

Some snake, that weighed them down
all night, let go

His hold ; and from the East, fuller and
fuller

Day, like a mighty river, flowing in ;
But clouded, wintry, desolate and cold.

Yet see how that broad prickly star-
shaped plant,

Half-down in the crevice, spreads its
woolly leaves [dew.]

All thick and glistening with diamond

And you depart for Einsiedeln this day,
And we have spent all night in talk like
this !

If you would have me better for your
love,

Revert no more to these sad themes.
Fest. One favour,

And I have done. I leave you, deeply
moved ;

Unwilling to have fared so well, the
while

My friend has changed so sorely. If
this mood

Shall pass away, if light once more arise
Where all is darkness now, if you see fit

To hope and trust again, and strive
again,

You will remember—not our love
alone—

But that my faith in God's desire that
man

Should trust on his support, (as I must
think

You trusted) is obscured and dim
through you ;

For you are thus, and this is no reward.
Will you not call me to your side, dear
Aureole ?

IV.—PARACELSUS ASPIRES

SCENE, Colmar, in Alsatia ; an Inn.

1528.

PARACELSUS, FESTUS.

Par. [To JOHANNES OPORINUS, his
secretary.] *Sic itur ad astra !* Dear
Von Visenburg

Is scandalized, and poor Torinus
paralysed,

And every honest soul that Basil holds
Aghast ; and yet we live, as one may
say,

Just as though Liechtenfels had never
set

So true a value on his sorry carcass,
And learned Pütter had not frowned us
dumb.

We live ; and shall as surely start to-
morrow

For Nuremberg, as we drink speedy
scathe

To Basil in this mantling wine, suffused
A delicate blush, no fainter tinge is
born

I' the shut heart of a bud. Pledge me,
good John—

"Basil; a hot plague ravage it, and
Pütter
"Oppose the plague!" Even so?
Do you too share
Their panic, the reptiles? Ha, ha;
faint through these.
Desist for these! They manage
matters so
At Basil, 't is like: but others may find
means
To bring the stoutest braggart of the
tribe
Once more to crouch in silence—means
to breed
A stupid wonder in each fool again,
Now big with admiration at the skill
Which stript a vain pretender of his
plumes;
And, that done,—means to brand each
slavish brow
So deeply, surely, ineffaceably,
That henceforth flattery shall not
pucker it
Out of the furrow; there that stamp
shall stay
To show the next they fawn on, what
they are,
This Basil with its magnates,—fill my
cup,—
Whom I curse soul and limb. And
now dispatch,
Dispatch, my trusty John; and what
remains [trip
To do, whate'er arrangements for our
Are yet to be completed, see you hasten
This night; we'll weather the storm at
least: to-morrow
For Nuremberg! Now leave us;
this grave clerk
Has divers weighty matters for my ear:
[OPORINUS goes out.
And spare my lungs. At last, my
gallant Festus,
I am rid of this arch-knave that dogs
my heels
As a gaunt crow a gasping sheep; at
last
May give a loose to my delight. How
kind,
How very kind, my first best only
friend!
Why, this looks like fidelity. Embrace
me!
Not a hair silvered yet? Right! you
shall live
Till I am worth your love; you shall be
proud,

And I—but let time show. Did you
not wonder?
I sent to you because our compact
weighed
Upon my conscience—(you recall the
night
At Basil, which the gods confound!)
—because
Once more I aspire. I call you to my
side;
You come. You thought my message
strange?
Fest. So strange
That I must hope, indeed, your mes-
senger
Has mingled his own fancies with the
words
Purporting to be yours.
Par. He said no more,
'T is probable, than the precious folks I
leave [day,
Said fiftyfold more roughly. Well-a-
'T is true! poor Paracelsus is exposed
At last; a most egregious quack he
proves:
And those he overreached must spit
their hate
On one who, utterly beneath con-
tempt,
Could yet deceive their topping wits.
You heard
Bare truth; and at my bidding you
come here
To speed me on my enterprise, as once
Your lavish wishes sped me, my own
friend!
Fest. What is your purpose, Aureole?
Par. Oh, for purpose,
There is no lack of precedents in a case
Like mine; at least, if not precisely
mine,
The case of men cast off by those they
sought
To benefit.
Fest. They really cast you off?
I only heard a vague tale of some priest,
Cured by your skill, who wrangled at
your claim,
Knowing his life's worth best; and
how the judge
The matter was referred to, saw no
cause
To interfere, nor you to hide your full
Contempt of him; nor he, again, to
smother
His wrath thereat, which raised so
fierce a flame

That Basil soon was made no place for you.

Par. The affair of Liechtenfels? the shallowest fable,

The last and silliest outrage—mere pretence!

I knew it, I foretold it from the first, How soon the stupid wonder you mistook

For genuine loyalty—a cheering promise

Of better things to come—would pall and pass;

And every word comes true. Saul is among

The prophets! Just as long as I was pleased

To play off the mere antics of my art, Fantastic gambols leading to no end, I got huge praise: but one can ne'er keep down

Our foolish nature's weakness. There they flocked,

Poor devils, jostling, swearing and perspiring,

Till the walls rang again; and all for me!

I had a kindness for them, which was right;

But then I stopped not till I tacked to that

A trust in them and a respect—a sort Of sympathy for them; I must needs begin

To teach them, not amaze them, "to impart

"The spirit which should instigate the search

"Of truth," just what you bade me! I spoke out.

Forthwith a mighty squadron, in disgust,

Filed off—"the sifted chaff of the sack," I said,

Redoubling my endeavours to secure The rest. When lo! one man had tarried so long

Only to ascertain if I supported This tenet of his, or that; another loved

To hear impartially before he judged, And having heard, now judged; this bland disciple

Passed for my dupe, but all along, it seems,

Spied error where his neighbours marvelled most;

That fiery doctor who had hailed me friend,

Did it because my by-paths, once proved wrong

And beacons properly, would commend again

The good old ways our sires jogged safely o'er,

Though not their squeamish sons; the other worthy

Discovered divers verses of St. John, Which, read successively, refreshed the soul,

But, muttered backwards, cured the gout, the stone,

The colic and what not. *Quid multa?* The end

Was a clear class-room, and a quiet leer From grave folk, and a sour reproachful glance

From these in chief who, cap in hand, installed

The new professor scarce a year before; And a vast flourish about patient merit

Obscured awhile by flashy tricks, but sure

Sooner or later to emerge in splendour— Of which the example was some luckless wight

Whom my arrival had discomfited, But now, it seems, the general voice

recalled To fill my chair and so efface the stain Basil had long incurred. I sought no better,

Only a quiet dismissal from my post, And from my heart I wish them better suited

And better served. Good-night to Basil, then!

But fast as I proposed to rid the tribe Of my obnoxious back, I could not spare them

The pleasure of a parting kick. *Fest.* You smile.

Despise them as they merit! *Par.* If I smile,

'T is with as very contempt as ever turned

Flesh into stone. This courteous recompense,

This grateful . . . Festus, were your nature fit

To be defiled, your eyes the eyes to ache At gangrene-blotches, eating poison-blains,

The ulcerous barked scurf of leprosy

Which finds—a man, and leaves—a
hideous thing
That cannot but be mended by hell fire,
—I would lay bare to you the human
heart
Which God cursed long ago, and devils
make since
Their pet nest and their never-tiring
home.
O, sages have discovered we are born
For various ends—to love, to know :
has ever
One stumbled, in his search, on any
signs
Of a nature in us formed to hate ? To
hate ?
If that be our true object which evokes
Our powers in fullest strength, be sure
't is hate !
Yet men have doubted if the best and
bravest [alone.
Of spirits can nourish him with hate
I had not the monopoly of fools,
It seems, at Basil.
Fest. But your plans, your plans !
I have yet to learn your purpose,
Aureole !
Par. Whether to sink beneath such
ponderous shame,
To shrink up like a crushed snail,
undergo
In silence and desist from further toil
And so subside into a monument
Of one their censure blasted ? or to bow
Cheerfully as submissively, to lower
My old pretensions even as Basil
dictates,
To drop into the rank her wits assign
me
And live as they prescribe, and make
that use
Of my poor knowledge which their rules
allow,
Proud to be patted now and then, and
careful
To practise the true posture for re-
ceiving
The amplest benefit from their hoofs'
appliance
When they shall condescend to tutor
me ?
Then, one may feel resentment like a
flame
Within, and deck false systems in
truth's garb,
And tangle and entwine mankind with
error,

And give them darkness for a dower
and falsehood
For a possession, ages : or one may
mope
Into a shade through thinking, or else
drowse
Into a dreamless sleep and so die off.
But I,—now Festus shall divine !—
but I
Am merely setting out once more,
embracing
My earliest aims again ! What thinks
he now ?
Fest. Your aims ? the aims ?—to
Know ? and where is found
The early trust . . .
Par. Nay, not so fast ; I say,
The aims—not the old means. You
know they made me
A laughing-stock ; I was a fool ; you
know
The when and the how : hardly those
means again !
Not but they had their beauty ; who
should know [dreams
Their passing beauty, if not I ? Still,
They were, so let them vanish, yet in
beauty,
If that may be. Stay : thus they pass
in song !
[*He sings.*
Heap cassia, sandal-buds and stripes
Of labdanum, and aloe-balls,
Smeared with dull nard an Indian
wipes
From out her hair : such balsam
falls
Down sea-side mountain pedestals,
From tree-tops where tired winds are
fain,
Spent with the vast and howling
main,
To treasure half their island-gain.
And strew faint sweetness from some
old
Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud
Which breaks to dust when once
unrolled ;
Or shredded perfume, like a cloud
From closet long to quiet vowed,
With moth and dropping arras
hung,
Mouldering her lute and books
among,
As when a queen, long dead, was
young.

Mine, every word ! And on such pile shall die
 My lovely fancies, with fair perished things,
 Themselves fair and forgotten ; yes, forgotten,
 Or why abjure them ? So, I made this rhyme
 That fitting dignity might be preserved ;
 No little proud was I ; though the list of drugs [verse
 Smacks of my old vocation, and the Halts like the best of Luther's psalms.
Fest. But, Aureole,
 Talk not thus wildly and madly. I am here—
 Did you know all ! I have travelled far, indeed,
 To learn your wishes. Be yourself again !
 For in this mood I recognize you less
 Than in the horrible despondency I witnessed last. You may account this, joy ;
 But rather let me gaze on that despair
 Than hear these incoherent words and see
 This flushed cheek and intensely-sparkling eye.
Par. Why, man, I was light-hearted in my prime,
 I am light-hearted now ; what would you have ?
 Aprile was a poet, I make songs—
 'Tis the very augury of success I want !
 Why should I not be joyous now as then ?
Fest. Joyous ! and how ? and what remains for joy ?
 You have declared the ends (which I am sick
 Of naming) are impracticable.
Par. Ay,
 Pursued as I pursued them—the arch-fool !
 Listen : my plan will please you not, 't is like,
 But you are little versed in the world's ways.
 This is my plan—(first drinking its good luck) —
 I will accept all helps ; all I despised
 So rashly at the outset, equally
 With early impulses, late years have quenched :
 I have tried each way singly : now for both !

All helps ! no one sort shall exclude the rest.
 I seek to know and to enjoy at once,
 Not one without the other as before.
 Suppose my labour should seem God's own cause
 Once more, as first I dreamed,—it sha'l not baulk me
 Of the meanest earthliest sensuallest delight
 That may be snatched ; for every joy is gain,
 And gain is gain, however small. My soul
 Can die then, nor be taunted—" what was gained ? "
 Nor, on the other hand, should pleasure follow
 As though I had not spurned her hitherto,
 Shall she o'ercloud my spirit's rapt communion
 With the tumultuous past, the teeming future,
 Glorious with visions of a full success.
Fest. Success !
Par. And wherefore not ? Why not prefer
 Results obtained in my best state of being,
 To those derived alone from seasons dark
 As the thoughts they bred ? When I was best, my youth
 Unwasted, seemed success not surest too ?
 It is the nature of darkness to obscure.
 I am a wanderer : I remember well
 One journey, how I feared the track was missed,
 So long the city I desired to reach
 Lay hid ; when suddenly its spires afar
 Flashed through the circling clouds ; you may conceive
 My transport. Soon the vapours closed again,
 But I had seen the city, and one such glance
 No darkness could obscure : nor shall the present—
 A few dull hours, a passing shame or two,
 Destroy the vivid memories of the past.
 I will fight the battle out ; a little spent
 Perhaps, but still an able combatant.
 You look at my grey hair and furrowed brow ?

But I can turn even weakness to
account:

Of many tricks I know, 't is not the
least

To push the ruins of my frame, whereon
The fire of vigour trembles scarce alive,
Into a heap, and send the flame aloft.
What should I do with age? So,
sickness lends

An aid; it being, I fear, the source of
all

We boast of: mind is nothing but dis-
ease,

And natural health is ignorance.

Fest. I see
But one good symptom in this notable
scheme.

I feared your sudden journey had in
view

To wreak immediate vengeance on your
foes;

'T is not so: I am glad.

Par. And if I please
To spit on them, to trample them, what
then?

'T is sorry warfare truly, but the fools
Provoke it. I would spare their self-
conceit,

But if they must provoke me, cannot
suffer

Forbearance on my part, if I may keep
No quality in the shade, must needs
put forth

Power to match power, my strength
against their strength,

And teach them their own game with
their own arms—

Why, be it so and let them take their
chance!

I am above them like a god, there's no
Hiding the fact: what idle scruples,
then,

Were those that ever bade me soften it,
Communicate it gently to the world,
Instead of proving my supremacy,
Taking my natural station o'er their
head,

Then owning all the glory was a man's!
—And in my elevation man's would be.
But live and learn, though life's short,
learning, hard!

And therefore, though the wreck of my
past self,

I fear, dear Pütter, that your lecture-
room

Must wait awhile for its best ornament,
The penitent empiric, who set up

For somebody, but soon was taught his
place;

Now, but too happy to be let confess
His error, snuff the candles, and illus-
trate

(Fiat experientia corpore vili)

Your medicine's soundness in his per-
son. Wait,

Good Pütter!

Fest. He who sneers thus, is a god!

Par. Ay, ay, laugh at me! I am
very glad

You are not gulled by all this swagger-
ing; you

Can see the root of the matter!—how I
strive

To put a good face on the overthrow
I have experienced, and to bury and
hide

My degradation in its length and
breadth;

How the mean motives I would make
you think

Just mingle as is due with nobler aims,
The appetites I modestly allow

May influence me as being mortal still—
Do goad me, drive me on, and fast
supplant

My youth's desires. You are no stupid
dupe:

You find me out! Yes, I had sent for
you

To palm these childish lies upon you,
Festus!

Laugh—you shall laugh at me!

Fest. The past, then, Aureole,
Proves nothing? Is our interchange
of love

Yet to begin? Have I to swear I mean
No flattery in this speech or that?

For you,

Whate'er you say, there is no degrada-
tion;

These low thoughts are no inmates of
your mind,

Or wherefore this disorder? You
are vexed

As much by the intrusion of base views,
Familiar to your adversaries, as they
Were troubled should your qualities
alight

Amid their murky souls: not other-
wise,

A stray wolf which the winter forces
down

From our bleak hills, suffices to affright
A village in the vales—while foresters

Sleep calm, though all night long the
famished troops

Snuff round and scratch against their
crazy huts.

These evil thoughts are monsters, and
will flee.

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

Fest. Nay, further; the delights you
fain would think

The superseders of your nobler aims,
Though ordinary and harmless stimu-
lants,

Will ne'er content you. . . .

Par. Hush! I once despised them.
But that soon passes. We are high at
first

In our demand, nor will abate a jot
Of toil's strict value; but time passes
o'er,

And humbler spirits accept what we
refuse:

In short, when some such comfort is
doled out

As these delights, we cannot long retain
Bitter contempt which urges us at first

To hurl it back, but hug it to our breast
And thankfully retire. This life of
mine

Must be lived out and a grave thor-
oughly earned:

I am just fit for that and nought beside.
I told you once, I cannot now enjoy,

Unless I deem my knowledge gains
through joy;

Nor can I know, but straight warm
tears reveal

My need of linking also joy to know-
ledge:

So, on I drive, enjoying all I can,
And knowing all I can. I speak, of
course,

Confusedly; this will better explain—
feel here!

Quick beating, is it not?—a fire of the
heart

To work off some way, this as well as
any.

So, Festus sees me fairly launched;
his calm

Compassionate look might have dis-
turbed me once,

But now, far from rejecting, I invite
What bids me press the closer, lay
myself

Open before him, and be soothed with
pity;

I hope, if he command hope, and believe
As he directs me—satiating myself
With his enduring love. And Festus
quits me

To give place to some credulous dis-
ciple

Who holds that God is wise, but Para-
celsus

Has his peculiar merits: I suck in
That homage, chuckle o'er that admir-
ation,

And then dismiss the fool; for night is
come.

And I betake myself to study again,
Till patient searchings after hidden lore

Half wring some bright truth from its
prison; my frame

Trembles, my forehead's veins swell
out, my hair

Tingles for triumph. Slow and sure
the morn

Shall break on my pent room and
dwindling lamp

And furnace dead, and scattered earths
and ores;

When, with a failing heart and throb-
bing brow,

I must review my captured truth, sum
up

Its value, trace what ends to what
begins,

Its present power with its eventual
bearings,

Latent affinities, the views it opens,
And its full length in perfecting my
scheme.

I view it sternly circumscribed, cast
down

From the high place my fond hopes
yielded it,

Proved worthless—which, in getting,
yet had cost

Another wrench to this fast-falling
frame.

Then, quick, the cup to quaff, that
chances sorrow!

I lapse back into youth, and take again
My fluttering pulse for evidence that
God

Means good to me, will make my cause
his own.

See! I have cast off this remorseless
care

Which clogged a spirit born to soar so
free,

And my dim chamber has become a
tent,

Festus is sitting by me, and his
Michal . . .

Why do you start? I say, she listen-
ing here,

(For yonder—Würzburg through the
orchard-bough!)

Motions as though such ardent words
should find

No echo in a maiden's quiet soul,
But her pure bosom heaves, her eyes
fill fast

With tears, her sweet lips tremble all
the while!

Ha, ha!

Fest. It seems, then, you expect to
reap

No unreal joy from this your present
course,

But rather . . .

Par. Death! To die! I owe
that much

To what, at least, I was. I should be
sad

To live contented after such a fall,
To thrive and fatten after such reverse!

The whole plan is a makeshift, but will
last

My time.

Fest. And you have never mused
and said,

"I had a noble purpose, and the
strength

"To compass it; but I have stopped
half-way,

"And wrongly given the firstfruits of
my toil

"To objects little worthy of the gift.

"Why linger round them still? why
clench my fault?

"Why seek for consolation in defeat,

"In vain endeavours to derive a beauty

"From ugliness? why seek to make
the most

"Of what no power can change, nor
strive instead [past

"With mighty effort to redeem the
"And, gathering up the treasures thus
cast down,

"To hold a steadfast course till I arrive

"At their fit destination and my own?

You have never pondered thus?

Par. Have I, you ask?

Often at midnight, when most fancies
come,

Would some such airy project visit me:
But ever at the end . . . or will you
hear

The same thing in a tale, a parable?
You and I, wandering over the world
wide,

Chance to set foot upon a desert coast,
Just as we cry, "No human voice be-
fore

"Broke the inveterate silence of these
rocks!"

—Their querulous echo startles us; we
turn:

What ravaged structure still looks
o'er the sea?

Some characters remain, too! While
we read,

The sharp salt wind, impatient for the
last

Of even this record, wistfully comes
and goes,

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

[*He sings.*

Over the sea our galleys went,
With cleaving prows in order brave,
To a speeding wind and a bounding
wave,

A gallant armament:

Each bark built out of a forest-tree,
Left leafy and rough as first it
grew,

And nailed all over the gaping sides,
Within and without, with black bull-
hides,

Seethed in fat and suppld in flame,
To bear the playful billows' game:

So, each good ship was rude to see,
Rude and bare to the outward view,

But each upbore a stately tent
Where cedar pales in scented rows
Kept out the flakes of the dancing
brine,

And an awning drooped the mast be-
low,

In fold on fold of the purple fine,
That neither noontide nor starshine
Nor moonlight cold which maketh
mad,

Might pierce the regal tenement.
When the sun dawned, oh, gay and
glad

We set the sail and plied the oar;
But when the night-wind blew like
breath,

For joy of one day's voyage more,
We sang together on the wide sea,
Like men at peace on a peaceful
shore;

Each sail was loosed to the wind so free,
 Each helm made sure by the twilight star,
 And in a sleep as calm as death,
 We, the voyagers from afar,
 Lay stretched along, each weary crew

In a circle round its wondrous tent
 Whence gleamed soft light and curled rich scent,
 And with light and perfume, music too :

So the stars wheeled round, and the darkness past,
 And at morn we started beside the mast,
 And still each ship was sailing fast.

Now, one morn, land appeared—a speck

Dim trembling betwixt sea and sky :
 "Avoid it," cried our pilot, "check
 "The shout, restrain the eager eye !"

But the heaving sea was black behind
 For many a night and many a day,
 And land, though but a rock, drew nigh ;

So, we broke the cedar pales away,
 Let the purple awning flap in the wind,

And a statue bright was on every deck !

We shouted, every man of us,
 And steered right into the harbour thus,

With pomp and pæan glorious.

A hundred shapes of lucid stone !

All day we built its shrine for each,
 A shrine of rock for every one,
 Nor paused till in the westering sun

We sat together on the beach
 To sing because our task was done.

When lo ! what shouts and merry songs !

What laughter all the distance stirs !

A loaded raft with happy throngs
 Of festive islanders !

"Our isles are just at hand," they cried,

"Like cloudlets faint in even sleeping ;

"Our temple-gates are opened wide,
 "Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping

"For these majestic forms"—they cried.

Oh, then we awoke with sudden start
 From our deep dream, and knew,
 too late,

How bare the rock, how desolate,
 Which had received our precious freight :

Yet we called out—"Depart !

"Our gifts, once given, must here abide.

"Our work is done ; we have no heart

"To mar our work,"—we cried.

Fest. In truth ?

Par. Nay, wait : all this in tracings faint

On rugged stones strewn here and there,
 but piled

In order once : then follows—mark what follows !

"The sad rhyme of the men who proudly clung

"To their first fault, and withered in their pride."

Fest. Come back then, Aureole ; as you fear God, come !

This is foul sin ; come back ! Renounce the past,

Forswear the future ; look for joy no more

But wait death's summons amid holy sights,

And trust me for the event—peace, if not joy.

Return with me to Einsiedeln, dear Aureole !

Par. No way, no way ! it would not turn to good.

A spotless child sleeps on the flowering moss—

[man,
 'Tis well for him ; but when a sinful
 Envyng such slumber, may desire to put

His guilt away, shall he return at once
 To rest by lying there ? Our sires knew well

(Spite of the grave discoveries of their sons)

The fitting course for such ; dark cells,
 dim lamps,

A stone floor one may writhe on like a worm :

No mossy pillow blue with violets !

Fest. I see no symptom of these absolute

And tyrannous passions. You are calmer now.

This verse-making can purge you well enough

Without the terrible penance you describe.

You love me still : the lusts you fear, will never

Outrage your friend. To Einsiedeln, once more !

Say but the word !

Par. No, no ; those lusts forbid : They crouch, I know, cowering with half-shut eye

Beside you ; 't is their nature. Thrust yourself

Between them and their prey ; let some fool style me

Or king or quack, it matters not, and try

Your wisdom, urge them to forego their treat !

No, no ; learn better and look deeper, Festus !

If you knew how a devil sneers within While you are talking now of this, now that,

As though we differed scarcely save in trifles !

Fest. Do we so differ ? True, change must proceed,

Whether for good or ill ; keep from me, which !

Do not confide all secrets : I was born To hope, and you . . .

Par. To trust : you know the fruits !

Fest. Listen : I do believe, what you call trust

Was self-delusion at the best : for, see !

So long as God would kindly pioneer A path for you, and screen you from the world,

Procure you full exemption from man's lot,

Man's common hopes and fears, on the mere pretext

Of your engagement in his service—yield you

A limitless licence, make you God, in fact,

And turn your slave—you were content to say

Most courtly praises ! What is it, at last,

But selfishness without example ? None

Could trace God's will so plain as you, while yours

Remained implied in it ; but now you fail,

And we, who prate about that will, are fools !

In short, God's service is established here

As he determines fit, and not your way, And this you cannot brook. Such discontent

Is weak. Renounce all creatureship at once !

Affirm an absolute right to have and use

Your energies ; as though the rivers should say—

" We rush to the ocean ; what have we to do

" With feeding streamlets, lingering in the vales,

" Sleeping in lazy pools ? " Set up that plea,

That will be bold at least !

Par. 'T is like enough. The serviceable spirits are those, no doubt,

The East produces : lo, the master nods, And they raise terraces and garden-grounds

In one night's space ; and, this done, straight begin

Another century's sleep, to the great praise

Of him that framed them wise and beautiful,

Till a lamp's rubbing, or some chance akin,

Wake them again. I am of different mould.

I would have soothed my lord, and slaved for him,

And done him service past my narrow bond,

And thus I get rewarded for my pains !

Beside, 't is vain to talk of forwarding God's glory otherwise ; this is alone

The sphere of its increase, as far as men Increase it ; why, then, look beyond this sphere ?

We are his glory ; and if we be glorious, Is not the thing achieved ?

Fest. Shall one like me Judge hearts like yours ? Though

years have changed you much, And you have left your first love, and retain

Its empty shade to veil your crooked ways,
 Yet I still hold that you have honoured God.
 And who shall call your course without reward?
 For, wherefore this repining at defeat
 Had triumph ne'er injured you to high hopes?
 I urge you to forsake the life you curse,
 And what success attends me?—
 simply talk
 Of passion, weakness and remorse; in short,
 Anything but the naked truth—you choose
 This so-despised career, and cheaply hold
 My happiness, or rather other men's.
 Once more, return!
Par. And quickly. Oporinus
 Has pilfered half my secrets by this time:
 And we depart by daybreak. I am weary,
 I know not how; not even the wine-cup soothes
 My brain to-night . . .
 Do you not thoroughly despise me, Festus?
 No flattery! One like you needs not be told
 We live and breathe deceiving and deceived.
 Do you not scorn me from your heart of hearts,
 Me and my cant, each petty subterfuge,
 My rhymes and all this frothy shower of words,
 My glozing self-deceit, my outward crust
 Of lies which wrap, as tetter, morphew, furfair
 Wrap the sound flesh?—so, see you flatter not! least
 Even God flatters: but my friend, at Is true. I would depart, secure henceforth
 Against all further insult, hate and wrong
 From puny foes; my one friend's scorn shall brand me:
 No fear of sinking deeper!
Fest. No, dear Aureole!
 No, no; I came to counsel faithfully.
 There are old rules, made long ere we were born,

By which I judge you. I, so fallible,
 So infinitely low beside your mighty Majestic spirit!—even I can see
 You own some higher law than ours which call
 Sin, what is no sin—weakness, what is strength.
 But I have only these, such as they are,
 To guide me; and I blame you where they bid,
 Only so long as blaming promises
 To win peace for your soul: the more, that sorrow
 Has fallen on me of late, and they have helped me
 So that I faint not under my distress.
 But wherefore should I scruple to avow
 In spite of all, as brother judging brother,
 Your fate to me is most inexplicable?
 And should you perish without recompense
 And satisfaction yet—too hastily
 I have relied on love: you may have sinned,
 But you have loved. As a mere human matter— [men
 As I would have God deal with fragile
 In the end—I say that you will triumph yet!
Par. Have you felt sorrow, Festus?
 —'t is because
 You love me. Sorrow, and sweet Michal yours!
 Well thought on: never let her know this last
 Dull winding-up of all: these miscreants dared
 Insult me—me she loved:—so, grieve her not!
Fest. Your ill success can little grieve her now.
Par. Michal is dead! pray Christ we do not craze!
Fest. Aureole, dear Aureole, look not on me thus!
 Fool, fool! this is the heart grown sorrow-proof—
 I cannot bear those eyes.
Par. Nay, really dead?
Fest. 'T is scarce a month.
Par. Stone dead!—then you have laid her
 Among the flowers ere this. Now, do you know,
 I can reveal a secret which shall comfort

Even you. I have no julep, as men think,
To cheat the grave; but a far better secret.

Know, then, you did not ill to trust your love

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

For I believe we do not wholly die.

Fest. Aureole!

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

For what I say: I think the soul can never

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

Very unfit to put so strange a thought In an intelligible dress of words;

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

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

—Aureole, you have believed this all along?

Par. And Michal sleeps among the roots and dews,

While I am moved at Basil, and full of schemes

For Nuremberg, and hoping and despairing,

As though it mattered how the farce plays out,

So it be quickly played. Away, away! Have your will, rabble! while we fight

the prize, Troop you in safety to the snug back-seats

And leave a clear arena for the brave About to perish for your sport!—Behold!

V.—PARACELSUS ATTAINS

SCENE, Salzburg; a cell in the Hospital of St. Sebastian. 1541.

FESTUS, PARACELSUS.

Fest. No change! The weary night is well-nigh spent,

The lamp burns low, and through the casement-bars

Grey morning glimmers feebly: yet no change!

Another night, and still no sigh has stirred

That fallen discoloured mouth, no pang relit

Those fixed eyes, quenched by the decaying body,

Like torch-flame choked in dust. While all beside

Was breaking, to the last they held out bright,

As a stronghold where life intrenched itself;

But they are dead now—very blind and dead:

He will drowse into death without a groan.

My Aureole—my forgotten, ruined Aureole!

The days are gone, are gone! How grand thou wast!

And now not one of those who struck thee down—

Poor glorious spirit—concerns him even to stay

And satisfy himself his little hand Could turn God's image to a livid thing.

Another night, and yet no change! 'T is much

That I should sit by him, and bathe his brow,

And chafe his hands; 't is much: but he will sure [to me

Know me, and look on me, and speak Once more—but only once! His

hollow cheek Looked all night long as though a

creeping laugh At his own state were just about to

break From the dying man: my brain swam,

my throat swelled, And yet I could not turn away. In

truth, They told me how, when first brought

here, he seemed Resolved to live, to lose no faculty;

Thus striving to keep up his shattered strength,

Until they bore him to this stifling cell: When straight his features fell, an hour

made white The flushed face, and relaxed the

quivering limb, Only the eye remained intense awhile

As though it recognized the tomb-like place,

And then he lay as here he lies. Ay, here!

Here is earth's noblest, nobly garlanded—

Her bravest champion with his well-won prize—

Her best achievement, her sublime
 amends
 For countless generations fleeting fast
 And followed by no trace;—the
 creature-god
 She instances when angels would dis-
 pute
 The title of her brood to rank with
 them.
 Angels, this is our angel! Those
 bright forms
 We clothe with purple, crown and call
 to thrones,
 Are human, but not his; those are but
 men
 Whom other men press round and kneel
 before;
 Those palaces are dwelt in by mankind;
 Higher provision is for him you seek
 Amid our pomps and glories: see it
 here!
 Behold earth's paragon! Now, raise
 thee, clay!
 God! Thou art love! I build my
 faith on that!
 Even as I watch beside thy tortured
 child
 Unconscious whose hot tears fall fast
 by him,
 So doth thy right hand guide us through
 the world
 Wherein we stumble. God! what shall
 we say?
 How has he sinned? How else should
 he have done?
 Surely he sought thy praise—thy praise,
 for all
 He might be busied by the task so much
 As half forget awhile its proper end.
 Dost thou well, Lord? Thou canst
 not but prefer
 That I should range myself upon his
 side—
 How could he stop at every step to set
 Thy glory forth? Hadst thou but
 granted him
 Success, thy honour would have
 crowned success,
 A halo round a star. Or, say he erred,—
 Save him, dear God; it will be like
 thee: bathe him
 In light and life! Thou art not made
 like us;
 We should be wroth in such a case;
 but thou
 Forgiest—so, forgive these passionate
 thoughts

Which come unsought and will not
 pass away!
 I know thee, who hast kept my path,
 and made
 Light for me in the darkness, tempering
 sorrow
 So that it reached me like a solemn joy;
 It were too strange that I should doubt
 thy love.
 But what am I? Thou madest him
 and knowest
 How he was fashioned. I could never
 err
 That way: the quiet place beside thy
 feet,
 Reserved for me, was ever in my
 thoughts:
 But he—thou shouldst have favoured
 him as well!
 Ah! he wakens! Aureole, I am here!
 't is Festus!
 I cast away all wishes save one wish—
 Let him but know me, only speak to
 me!
 He mutters; louder and louder; any
 other
 Than I, with brain less laden, could
 collect
 What he pours forth. Dear Aureole,
 do but look!
 Is it talking or singing, this he utters
 fast?
 Misery, that he should fix me with his
 eye,
 Quick talking to some other all the
 while!
 If he would husband this wild vehe-
 mence
 Which frustrates its intent!—I heard,
 I know
 I heard my name amid those rapid
 words.
 Oh, he will know me yet! Could I
 divert
 This current, lead it somehow gently
 back
 Into the channels of the past!—His eye
 Brighter than ever! It must re-
 cognize me!
 I am Erasmus: I am here to pray
 That Paracelsus use his skill for me.
 The schools of Paris and of Padua send
 These questions for your learning to
 resolve.
 We are your students, noble master:
 leave

This wretched cell, what business have you here ?

Our class awaits you ; come to us once more !

(O agony ! the utmost I can do

Touches him not ; how else arrest his ear ?)

I am commissioned . . . I shall craze like him.

Better be mute and see what God shall send.

Par. Stay, stay with me !

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

Festus, you know, you must know !

Par. Festus ! Where 's Aprile, then ? Has he not chanted softly

The melodies I heard all night ? I could not

Get to him for a cold hand on my breast, But I made out his music well enough, O well enough ! If they have filled him full

With magical music, as they freight a star

With light, and have remitted all his sin, They will forgive me too, I too shall know !

Fest. Festus, your Festus !

Par. Ask him if Aprile Knows as he Loves—if I shall Love and Know ?

I try ; but that cold hand, like lead—so cold !

Fest. My hand, see !

Par. Ah, the curse, Aprile, Aprile ! We get so near—so very, very near ! 'T is an old tale : Jove strikes the Titans down

Not when they set about their mountain-piling

But when another rock would crown the work.

And Phaeton—doubtless his first radiant plunge

Astonished mortals, though the gods were calm,

And Jove prepared his thunder : all old tales !

Fest. And what are these to you ?

Par. Ay, fiends must laugh So cruelly, so well ; most like I never Could tread a single pleasure underfoot, But they were grinning by my side, were chuckling

To see me toil and drop away by flakes ! Hell-spawn ! I am glad, most glad, that thus I fail !

Your cunning has o'ershot its aim. One year,

One month, perhaps, and I had served your turn !

You should have curbed your spite awhile. But now,

Who will believe 't was you that held me back ?

Listen : there 's shame and hissing and contempt,

And none but laughs who names me, none but spits

Measureless scorn upon me, me alone, The quack, the cheat, the liar,—all on me !

And thus your famous plan to sink mankind

In silence and despair, by teaching them

One of their race had probed the inmost truth,

Had done all man could do, yet failed no less—

Your wise plan proves abortive. Men despair ?

Ha, ha ! why, they are hooting the empiric,

The ignorant and incapable fool who rushed

Madly upon a work beyond his wits ; Nor doubt they but the simplest of themselves

Could bring the matter to triumphant issue,

So, pick and choose among them all, accursed !

Try now, persuade some other to slave for you,

To ruin body and soul to work your No, no ; I am the first and last, I think.

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

Par. What have I done ? Fiends dare ask that ? or you,

Brave men ? Oh, you can chime in boldly, backed

By the others ! What had you to do, sage peers ?

Here stand my rivals ; Latin, Arab, Jew,

Greek, join dead hands against me : all I ask

Is, that the world enrol my name with theirs,

And even this poor privilege, it seems,
They range themselves, prepared to
disallow.

Only observe : why, fiends may learn
from them !

How they talk calmly of my throes, my
fierce

Aspirings, terrible watchings, each one
claiming

Its price of blood and brain ; how they
dissect

And sneeringly disparage the few truths
Got at a life's cost ; they too hanging
the while

About my neck, their lies misleading
me

And their dead names browbeating me !
Grey crew,

Yet steeped in fresh malevolence from
hell,

Is there a reason for your hate ? My
truths

Have shaken a little the palm about
each prince ?

Just think, Aprile, all these leering
dotards

Were bent on nothing less than to be
crowned

As we ! That yellow blear-eyed wretch
in chief

To whom the rest cringe low with
feigned respect,

Galen of Pergamos and hell—nay
speak

The tale, old man ! We met there face
to face :

I said the crown should fall from thee.
Once more

We meet as in that ghastly vestibule :
Look to my brow ! Have I redeemed

my pledge ?
Fest. Peace, peace ; ah, see !

Par. Oh, emptiness of fame !
Oh Persic Zoroaster, lord of stars !

—Who said these old renowns, dead
long ago,

Could make me overlook the living
world

To gaze through gloom at where they
stood, indeed,

But stand no longer ? What a warm
light life

After the shade ! In truth, my deli-
cate witch,

My serpent-queen, you did but well to
hide

The juggles I had else detected. Fire

May well run harmless o'er a breast
like yours !

The cave was not so darkened by the
smoke

But that your white limbs dazzled me :
oh, white,

And panting as they twinkled, wildly
dancing !

I cared not for your passionate gestures
then,

But now I have forgotten the charm of
charms,

The foolish knowledge which I came to
seek,

While I remember that quaint dance ;
and thus

I am come back, not for those mum-
meries,

But to love you, and to kiss your little
feet

Soft as an ermine's winter coat !
Fest. A light

Will struggle through these thronging
words at last,

As in the angry and tumultuous West
A soft star trembles through the drifting

clouds.
These are the strivings of a spirit which

hates
So sad a vault should coop it, and calls

up
The past to stand between it and its

fate.
Were he at Einsiedeln—or Michal here !

Par. Cruel ! I seek her now—I
kneel—I shriek—

I clasp her vesture—but she fades, still
fades ; [gone !

And she is gone ; sweet human love is
'T is only when they spring to heaven

that angels
Reveal themselves to you ; they sit all

day
Beside you, and lie down at night by

you
Who care not for their presence, muse

or sleep,
And all at once they leave you and you

know them !
We are so fooled, so cheated ! Why,

even now
I am not too secure against foul play ;

The shadows deepen and the walls
contract :

No doubt some treachery is going on.
'T is very dusk. Where are we put,

Aprile ?

Have they left us in the lurch? This
murky loathsome
Death-trap, this slaughter-house, is not
the hall
In the golden city! Keep by me,
Aprile!
There is a hand groping amid the black-
ness
To catch us. Have the spider-fingers
got you,
Poet? Hold on me for your life! If
once
They pull you!—Hold!
'T is but a dream—no more!
I have you still; the sun comes out
again;
Let us be happy: all will yet go well!
Let us confer: is it not like, Aprile,
That spite of trouble, this ordeal passed,
The value of my labours ascertained,
Just as some stream foams long among
the rocks
But after glideth glassy to the sea,
So, full content shall henceforth be my
lot?
What think you, poet? Louder!
Your clear voice
Vibrates too like a harp-string. Do
you ask
How could I still remain on earth,
should God
Grant me the great approval which I
seek?
I, you, and God can comprehend each
other,
But men would murmur, and with
cause enough;
For when they saw me, stainless of all
sin,
Preserved and sanctified by inward
light,
They would complain that comfort,
shut from them,
I drank thus unespied; that they live
on,
Nor taste the quiet of a constant joy,
For ache and care and doubt and wear-
iness,
While I am calm; help being vouch-
safed to me,
And hid from them.—'T were best con-
sider that!
You reason well, Aprile; but at least
Let we know this, and die! Is this too
much?
I will learn this, if God so please, and
die!

If thou shalt please, dear God, if thou
shalt please!
We are so weak, we know our motives
least
In their confused beginning. If at first
I sought . . . but wherefore bare my
heart to thee?
I know thy mercy; and already
thoughts
Flock fast about my soul to comfort it,
And intimate I cannot wholly fail,
For love and praise would clasp me
willingly
Could I resolve to seek them. Thou
art good,
And I should be content. Yet—yet
first show
I have done wrong in daring! Rather
give
The supernatural consciousness of
strength
Which fed my youth! Only one hour
of that
With thee to help—O what should bar
me then!
Lost, lost! Thus things are ordered
here! God's creatures,
And yet he takes no pride in us!
—none, none!
Truly there needs another life to come!
If this be all—(I must tell Festus that)
And other life await us not—for one,
I say 't is a poor cheat, a stupid bungle,
A wretched failure. I, for one, protest
Against it, and I hurl it back with scorn.
Well, onward though alone! Small
time remains,
And much to do: I must have fruit,
must reap
Some profit from my toils. I doubt
my body
Will hardly serve me through; while I
have laboured
It has decayed; and now that I de-
mand
Its best assistance, it will crumble fast:
A sad thought, a sad fate! How very
full
Of wormwood 't is, that just at altar-
service,
The rapt hymn rising with the rolling
smoke,
When glory dawns and all is at the best,
The sacred fire may flicker and grow
faint

And die for want of a wood-piler's help!
Thus fades the flagging body, and the
soul

Is pulled down in the overthrow. Well,
well—

Let men catch every word, let them
lose nought

Of what I say; something may yet be
done.

They are ruins! Trust me who am
one of you!

All ruins, glorious once, but lonely now.
It makes my heart sick to behold you
crouch [dim,

Beside your desolate fane: the arches
The crumbling columns grand against
the moon,

Could I but rear them up once more—
but that

May never be, so leave them! Trust
me, friends,

Why should you linger here when I have
built

A far resplendent temple, all your own?

Trust me, they are but ruins! See,
Aprile,

Men will not heed! Yet were I not
prepared

With better refuge for them, tongue of
mine

Should ne'er reveal how blank their
dwelling is:

I would sit down in silence with the rest.

Ha, what? you spit at me, you grin and
shriek

Contempt into my ear—my ear which
drank

God's accents once? you curse me?
Why men, men,

I am not formed for it! Those hideous
eyes

Will be before me sleeping, waking,
praying,

They will not let me even die. Spare,
spare me,

Sinning or no, forget that, only spare
me

The horrible scorn! You thought I
could support it,

But now you see what silly fragile
creature

Cowers thus. I am not good nor bad
enough,

Not Christ nor Cain, yet even Cain was
saved

From hate like this. Let me but
totter back!

Perhaps I shall elude those jeers which
creep

Into my very brain, and shut these
scorched

Eyelids and keep those mocking faces
out.

Listen, Aprile! I am very calm:
Be not deceived, there is no passion
here

Where the blood leaps like an im-
prisoned thing:

I am calm: I will exterminate the race!
Enough of that: 't is said and it shall
be.

And now be merry: safe and sound
am I

Who broke through their best ranks
to get at you.

And such a havoc, such a rout, Aprile!
Fest. Have you no thought, no
memory for me,

Aureole? I am so wretched—my pure
Michal

Is gone, and you alone are left me now,
And even you forget me. Take my
hand—

Lean on me thus. Do you not know
me, Aureole?

Par. Festus, my own friend, you are
come at last?

As you say, 't is an awful enterprise;
But you believe I shall go through with
it:

'T is like you, and I thank you. Thank
him for me,

Dear Michal! See how bright St.
Saviour's spire

Flames in the sunset; all its figures
quaint

Gay in the glancing light: you might
conceive them

A troop of yellow-vested white-haired
Jews

Bound for their own land where re-
demption dawns.

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

Par. Ha—stay! true, I forget—all
is done since,

And he is come to judge me. How he
speaks,

How calm, how well! yes, it is true, all
true;

All quackery; all deceit; myself can
laugh

The first at it, if you desire : but still
 You know the obstacles which taught
 me tricks
 So foreign to my nature—envy and
 hate,
 Blind opposition, brutal prejudice,
 Bald ignorance—what wonder if I sunk
 To humour men the way they most
 approved ?
 My cheats were never palmed on such
 as you,
 Dear Festus ! I will kneel if you re-
 quire me,
 Impart the meagre knowledge I possess,
 Explain its bounded nature, and avow
 My insufficiency—whate'er you will :
 I give the fight up : let there be an end,
 A privacy, an obscure nook for me.
 I want to be forgotten even by God.
 But if that cannot be, dear Festus, lay
 me,
 When I shall die, within some narrow
 grave,
 Not by itself—for that would be too
 proud—
 But where such graves are thickest ;
 let it look
 Nowise distinguished from the hillocks
 round,
 So that the peasant at his brother's
 bed not ;
 May tread upon my own and know it
 And we shall all be equal at the last,
 Or classed according to life's natural
 ranks,
 Fathers, sons, brothers, friends—not
 rich, nor wise,
 Nor gifted : lay me thus, then say,
 " He lived
 " Too much advanced before his
 brother men ;
 " They kept him still in front : 'twas
 for their good
 " But yet a dangerous station. It
 were strange
 " That he should tell God he had never
 ranked
 " With men : so, here at least he is a
 man."
Fest. That God shall take thee to his
 breast, dear spirit,
 Unto his breast, be sure ! and here on
 earth
 Shall splendour sit upon thy name for
 ever.
 Sun ! all the heaven is glad for thee :
 what care

If lower mountains light their snowy
 phares
 At thine effulgence, yet acknowledge
 not
 The source of day ? Their theft shall
 be their bale :
 For after-ages shall retrack thy beams,
 And put aside the crowd of busy ones
 And worship thee alone—the master-
 mind,
 The thinker, the explorer, the creator !
 Then, who should sneer at the con-
 vulsive throes
 With which thy deeds were born, would
 scorn as well
 The winding-sheet of subterraneous fire
 Which, pent and writhing, sends no less
 at last
 Huge islands up amid the simmering
 sea.
 Behold thy might in me ! thou hast
 infused
 Thy soul in mine ; and I am grand as
 thou,
 Seeing I comprehend thee—I so simple,
 Thou so august. I recognize thee first ;
 I saw thee rise, I watched thee early
 and late,
 And though no glance reveal thou dost
 accept
 My homage—thus no less I proffer it,
 And bid thee enter gloriously thy rest.
Par. Festus !
Fest. I am for noble Aureole, God !
 I am upon his side, come weal or woe.
 His portion shall be mine. He has
 done well.
 I would have sinned, had I been strong
 enough,
 As he has sinned. Reward him or I
 waive
 Reward ! If thou canst find no place
 for him,
 He shall be king elsewhere, and I will
 be
 His slave for ever. There are two of us.
Par. Dear Festus !
Fest. Here, dear Aureole ! ever by
 you !
Par. Nay, speak on, or I dream again.
 Speak on !
 Some story, anything—only your voice.
 I shall dream else. Speak on ! ay,
 leaning so !
Fest. Thus the Mayne glideth
 Where my Love abideth.
 Sleep's no softer : it proceeds

On through lawns, on through
meads,
On and on, whate'er befall,
Meandering and musical,
Though the niggard pasturage
Bears not on its shaven ledge
Aught but weeds and waving
grasses

To view the river as it passes,
Save here and there a scanty patch
Of primroses too faint to catch
A weary bee.

Par. More, more ; say on !

Fest. And scarce it pushes
Its gentle way through strangling
rushes,

Where the glossy kingfisher
Flutters when noon-heats are near,
Glad the shelving banks to shun,
Red and steaming in the sun,
Where the shrew-mouse with pale
throat

Burrows, and the speckled stoat ;
Where the quick sandpipers flit
In and out the marl and grit
That seems to breed them, brown
as they :

Nought disturbs its quiet way,
Save some lazy stork that springs,
Trailing it with legs and wings,
Whom the shy fox from the hill
Rouses, creep he ne'er so still.

Par. My heart ! they loose my heart,
those simple words ;

Its darkness passes, which nought else
could touch :

Like some dark snake that force may
not expel,

Which glideth out to music sweet and
low.

What were you doing when your voice
broke through

A chaos of ugly images ? You, indeed !
Are you alone here ?

Fest. All alone : you know me ?
This cell ?

Par. An unexceptionable vault :
Good brick and stone : the bats kept
out, the rats

Kept in : a snug nook : how should I
mistake it ?

Fest. But wherefore am I here ?

Par. Ah, well remembered !
Why, for a purpose—for a purpose,
Festus !

'T is like me : here I trifle while time
fleets,

And this occasion, lost, will ne'er return.
You are here to be instructed. I will
tell

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

I fear to leave half out. All is con-
fused

No doubt ; but doubtless you will learn
in time.

He would not else have brought you
here : no doubt.

I shall see clearer soon.

Fest. Tell me but this—
You are not in despair ?

Par. I ? and for what ?
Fest. Alas, alas ! he knows not, as I
feared !

Par. What is it you would ask me
with that earnest

Dear searching face ?

Fest. How feel you, Aureole ?

Par. Well :
Well. 'T is a strange thing : I am
dying, Festus,

And now that fast the storm of life
subsides,

I first perceive how great the whirl has
been.

I was calm then, who am so dizzy now—
Calm in the thick of the tempest, but
no less

A partner of its motion and mixed up
With its career. The hurricane is
spent,

And the good boat speeds through the
brightening weather ;

But is it earth or sea that heaves below ?
The gulf rolls like a meadow-swell, o'er-
strewn

With ravaged boughs and remnants of
the shore ;

And now some islet, loosened from the
land,

Swims past with all its trees, sailing to
ocean ;

And now the air is full of uptorn canes,
Light strippings from the fan-trees,
tamarisks

Unrooted, with their birds still clinging
to them,

All high in the wind. Even so my
varied life

Drifts by me ; I am young, old, happy,
sad,

Hoping, desponding, acting, taking rest,
And all at once : that is, those past
conditions

Float back at once on me. If I select
Some special epoch from the crowd, 't is
but

To will, and straight the rest dissolve
away,

And only that particular state is
present

With all its long-forgotten circumstance
Distinct and vivid as at first—myself
A careless looker-on and nothing more,
Indifferent and amused but nothing
more.

And this is death: I understand it all.
New being waits me; new perceptions
must

Be born in me before I plunge therein;
Which last is Death's affair; and while
I speak,

Minute by minute he is filling me
With power; and while my foot is on
the threshold [yet,

Of boundless life—the doors unopened
All preparations not complete within—
I turn new knowledge upon old events,
And the effect is . . . but I must not
tell;

It is not lawful. Your own turn will
come

One day. Wait, Festus! You will
die like me.

Fest. 'T is of that past life that I burn
to hear.

Par. You wonder it engages me just
now?

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

Where'er I look is fire, where'er I listen
Music, and where I tend bliss evermore.
Yet how can I refrain? 'T is a refined
Delight to view those chances,—one
last view.

I am so near the perils I escape,
That I must play with them and turn
them over,

To feel how fully they are past and
gone.

Still, it is like, some further cause exists
For this peculiar mood—some hidden
purpose;

Did I not tell you something of it,
Festus?

I had it fast, but it has somehow slipt
Away from me; it will return anon.

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

Complete with its old tones: that little
laugh

Concluding every phrase, with up-
turned eye,

As though one stooped above his head
to whom

He looked for confirmation and ap-
proval,

Where was it gone so long, so well pre-
served? [speaks,

Then, the fore-finger pointing as he
Like one who traces in an open book
The matter he declares; 't is many a
year

Since I remarked it last; and this in
him,

But now a ghastly wreck!)
And can it be

Dear Aureole, you have then found out
at last

That worldly things are utter vanity?
That man is made for weakness, and
should wait

In patient ignorance till God
appoint. . .

Par. Ha, the purpose, the true pur-
pose: that is it!

How could I fail to apprehend! You
here,

I thus! But no more trifling: I see
I know all: my last mission shall be
done

If strength suffice. No trifling! Stay;
this posture

Hardly befits one thus about to speak:
I will arise.

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

Par. No help; no help;
Not even your hand. So! there, I
stand once more!

Speak from a couch? I never lectured
thus.

My gown—the scarlet lined with fur;
now put

The chain about my neck; my signet-
ring

Is still upon my hand, I think—even
so;

Last, my good sword; ah, trusty
Azoth, leapest

Beneath thy master's grasp for the last
time?

This couch shall be my throne: I bid
these walls

Be consecrate, this wretched cell be-
come

A shrine, for here God speaks to men
through me.

Now, Festus, I am ready to begin.

Fest. I am dumb with wonder.

Par. Listen, therefore, Festus !
There will be time enough, but none to spare.

I must content myself with telling only
The most important points. You
doubtless feel

That I am happy, Festus ; very happy.
Fest. 'T is no delusion which uplifts
him thus !

Then you are pardoned, Aureole, all
your sin ?

Par. Ay, pardoned : yet why pardoned ?

Fest. 'T is God's praise

That man is bound to seek, and you . . .

Par. Have lived !

We have to live alone to set forth well
God's praise. 'T is true, I sinned much,
as I thought,

And in effect need mercy, for I strove
To do that very thing ; but, do your
best

Or worst, praise rises, and will rise for
ever.

Pardon from him, because of praise
denied—

Who calls me to himself to exalt him-
self ?

He might laugh as I laugh !

Fest. But all comes

To the same thing. 'T is fruitless for
mankind

To fret themselves with what concerns
them not ;

They are no use that way : they should
lie down

Content as God has made them, nor go
mad

In thriveless cares to better what is ill.

Par. No, no ; mistake me not ; let
me not work

More harm than I have worked ! This
is my case :

If I go joyous back to God, yet bring
No offering, if I render up my soul

Without the fruits it was ordained to
bear,

If I appear the better to love God
For sin, as one who has no claim on
him,—

Be not deceived ! It may be surely
thus

With me, while higher prizes still await
The mortal persevering to the end.

Beside I am not all so valueless :

I have been something, though too soon
I left

Following the instincts of that happy
time.

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

What time was happy ? All I hope to
know

That answer will decide. What happy
time ?

Par. When but the time I vowed
myself to man ?

Fest. Great God, thy judgments are
inscrutable !

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

I, Paracelsus : it was mine by right.
Doubtless a searching and impetuous
soul

Might learn from its own motions that
some task

Like this awaited it about the world ;
Might seek somewhere in this blank life
of ours

For fit delights to stay its longings vast ;
And, grappling Nature, so prevail on
her

To fill the creature full she dared this
frame

Hungry for joy ; and, bravely tyrannous,
[more,

Grow in demand, still craving more and
And make each joy conceded prove a
pledge

Of other joy to follow—bating nought
Of its desires, still seizing fresh pretence

To turn the knowledge and the rapture
wring

As an extreme, last boon, from destiny,
Into occasion for new covetings,

New strifes, new triumphs :—doubtless
a strong soul,

Alone, unaided might attain to this,
So glorious is our nature, so august

Man's inborn uninstructed impulses,
His naked spirit so majestic !

But this was born in me ; I was made
so ;

Thus much time saved : the feverish
appetites,

The tumult of unproved desire, the
unaimed

Uncertain yearnings, aspirations blind,
Distrust, mistake, and all that ends in
tears

Were saved me ; thus I entered on my
course.

You may be sure I was not all exempt
From human trouble; just so much
of doubt

As bade me plant a surer foot upon
The sun-road, kept my eye unruined
'mid

The fierce and flashing splendour, set
my heart

Trembling so much as warned me I
stood there

On sufferance—not to idly gaze, but
cast

Light on a darkling race; save for that
doubt,

I stood at first where all aspire at last
To stand: the secret of the world was
mine.

I knew, I felt, (perception unexpressed,
Uncomprehended by our narrow
thought,

But somehow felt and known in every
shift

And change in the spirit,—nay, in every
pore

Of the body, even.)—what God is,
what we are,

What life is—how God tastes an infinite
joy

In infinite ways—one everlasting bliss,
From whom all being emanates, all
power

Proceeds; in whom is life for evermore,
Yet whom existence in its lowest form
Includes; where dwells enjoyment
there is he:

With still a flying point of bliss remote,
A happiness in store afar, a sphere
Of distant glory in full view; thus
climbs

Pleasure its heights for ever and for
ever.

The centre-fire heaves underneath the
earth,

And the earth changes like a human
face;

The molten ore bursts up among the
rocks,

Winds into the stone's heart, out-
branches bright

In hidden mines, spots barren river-
beds,

Crumbles into fine sand where sun-
beams bask—

God joys therein. The wroth sea's
waves are edged

With foam, white as the bitten lip of
hate,

When, in the solitary waste, strange
groups

Of young volcanoes come up, cyclops-
like,

Staring together with their eyes on
flame—

God tastes a pleasure in their uncouth
pride.

Then all is still; earth is a wintry clod:
But spring-wind, like a dancing

psaltress, passes
Over its breast to waken it, rare ver-
dure

Buds tenderly upon rough banks, be-
tween

The withered tree-roots and the cracks
of frost,

Like a smile striving with a wrinkled
face;

The grass grows bright, the boughs
are swoln with blooms

Like chrysalids impatient for the air,
The shining dorrs are busy, beetles run

Along the furrows, ants make their
ado;

Above, birds fly in merry flocks, the
lark

Soars up and up, shivering for very joy;
Afar the ocean sleeps; white fishing-

gulls

Flit where the strand is purple with its
tribe [seek

Of nested limpets; savage creatures
Their loves in wood and plain—and

God renews

His ancient rapture. Thus he dwells
in all,

From life's minute beginnings, up at
last

To man—the consummation of this
scheme

Of being, the completion of this sphere
Of life: whose attributes had here and

there

Been scattered o'er the visible world
before,

Asking to be combined, dim fragments
meant

To be united in some wondrous whole.
Imperfect qualities throughout creation

Suggesting some one creature yet to
make,

Some point where all those scattered
rays should meet

Convergent in the faculties of man.
Power—neither put forth blindly, nor
controlled

Calmly by perfect knowledge ; to be
 used
 At risk, inspired or checked by hope
 and fear :
 Knowledge—not intuition, but the
 slow
 Uncertain fruit of an enhancing toil,
 Strengthened by love : love—not
 serenely pure,
 But strong from weakness, like a
 chance-sown plant
 Which, cast on stubborn soil, puts
 forth changed buds
 And softer stains, unknown in happier
 climes ;
 Love which endures and doubts and is
 oppressed
 And cherished, suffering much and
 much sustained,
 And blind, oft-failing, yet believing
 love,
 A half-enlightened, often-chequered
 trust :—
 Hints and previsions of which faculties,
 Are strewn confusedly everywhere
 about
 The inferior natures, and all lead up
 higher,
 All shape out dimly the superior race,
 The heir of hopes too fair to turn out
 false,
 And man appears at last. So far the
 seal
 Is put on life ; one stage of being com-
 plete,
 One scheme wound up : and from the
 grand result
 A supplementary reflux of light,
 Illustrates all the inferior grades, ex-
 plains,
 Each back step in the circle. Not
 alone
 For their possessor dawn those qualities,
 But the new glory mixes with the
 heaven
 And earth ; man, once descried, im-
 prints for ever
 His presence on all lifeless things : the
 winds
 Are henceforth voices, wailing or a
 shout,
 A querulous mutter or a quick gay
 laugh,
 Never a senseless gust now man is born.
 The herded pines commune and have
 deep thoughts,
 A secret they assemble to discuss

When the sun drops behind their trunks
 which glare
 Like grates of hell : the peerless cup
 afloat
 Of the lake-lily is an urn, some nymph
 Swims bearing high above her head :
 no bird
 Whistles unseen, but through the gaps
 above
 That let light in upon the gloomy
 woods,
 A shape peeps from the breezy forest-
 top,
 Arch with small puckered mouth and
 mocking eye.
 The morn has enterprise, deep quiet
 droops
 With evening, triumph takes the sun-
 set hour,
 Voluptuous transport ripens with the
 corn
 Beneath a warm moon like a happy
 face :
 —And this to fill us with regard for
 man.
 With apprehension of his passing worth,
 Desire to work his proper nature out,
 And ascertain his rank and final place,
 For these things tend still upward, pro-
 gress is
 The law of life, man is not Man as yet.
 Nor shall I deem his object served, his
 end
 Attained, his genuine strength put
 fairly forth,
 While only here and there a star dispels
 The darkness, here and there a tower-
 ing mind
 O'erlooks its prostrate fellows : when
 the host
 Is out at once to the despair of night,
 When all mankind alike is perfected,
 Equal in full-blown powers—then, not
 till then,
 I say, begins man's general infancy.
 For wherefore make account of feverish
 starts
 Of restless members of a dormant whole,
 Impatient nerves which quiver while
 the body
 Slumbers as in a grave ? Oh long ago
 The brow was twitched, the tremulous
 lids astir,
 The peaceful mouth disturbed ; half-
 uttered speech
 Ruffled the lip, and then the teeth were
 set,

The breath drawn sharp, the strong
 right-hand clenched stronger,
 As it would pluck a lion by the jaw ;
 The glorious creature laughed out even
 in sleep !
 But when full roused, each giant-limb
 awake,
 Each sinew strung, the great heart
 pulsing fast,
 He shall start up and stand on his own
 earth, [begin,
 Then shall his long triumphant march
 Thence shall his being date,—thus
 wholly roused,
 What he achieves shall be set down
 to him.
 When all the race is perfected alike
 As man, that is ; all tended to man-
 kind,
 And, man produced, all has its end
 thus far :
 But in completed man begins anew
 A tendency to God. Prognostics told
 Man's near approach ; so in man's self
 arise
 August anticipations, symbols, types
 Of a dim splendour ever on before
 In that eternal circle life pursues.
 For men begin to pass their nature's
 bound,
 And find new hopes and cares which
 fast supplant
 Their proper joys and griefs ; they grow
 too great
 For narrow creeds of right and wrong,
 which fade
 Before the unmeasured thirst for good :
 while peace
 Rises within them ever more and more.
 Such men are even now upon the earth,
 Serene amid the half-formed creatures
 round
 Who should be saved by them and
 joined with them.
 Such was my task, and I was born to
 it—
 Free, as I said but now, from much that
 chains
 Spirits, high-dowered but limited and
 vexed
 By a divided and delusive aim,
 A shadow mocking a reality
 Whose truth avails not wholly to dis-
 perse
 The flitting mimic called up by itself,
 And so remains perplexed and nigh
 put out

By its fantastic fellow's wavering
 gleam.
 I, from the first, was never cheated
 thus ;
 I never fashioned out a fancied good
 Distinct from man's ; a service to be
 done,
 A glory to be ministered unto,
 With powers put forth at man's ex-
 pense, withdrawn
 From labouring in his behalf ; a
 strength
 Denied that might avail him. I cared
 not
 Lest his success ran counter to success
 Elsewhere : for God is glorified in man,
 And to man's glory vowed I soul and
 limb.
 Yet, constituted thus, and thus
 endowed,
 I failed : I gazed on power till I grew
 blind.
 Power ; I could not take my eyes from
 that :
 That only, I thought, should be pre-
 served, increased
 At any risk, displayed, struck out at
 once—
 The sign and note and character of man.
 I saw no use in the past : only a scene
 Of degradation, ugliness and tears,
 The record of disgraces best forgotten,
 A sullen page in human chronicles
 Fit to erase. I saw no cause why man
 Should not stand all-sufficient even
 now,
 Or why his annals should be forced to
 tell
 That once the tide of light, about to
 break
 Upon the world, was sealed within its
 spring :
 I would have had one day, one mo-
 ment's space,
 Change man's condition, push each
 slumbering claim
 Of mastery o'er the elemental world
 At once to full maturity, then roll
 Oblivion o'er the tools, and hide from
 man
 What night had ushered morn. Not
 so, dear child
 Of after-days, wilt thou reject the past
 Big with deep warnings of the proper
 tenure
 By which thou hast the earth : the
 present for thee

Shall have distinct and trembling
 beauty, seen
 Beside that past's own shade when, in
 relief,
 Its brightness shall stand out : nor on
 thee yet
 Shall burst the future, as successive
 zones
 Of several wonder open on some spirit
 Flying secure and glad from heaven to
 heaven :
 But thou shalt painfully attain to joy,
 While hope and fear and love shall
 keep thee man !
 All this was hid from me : as one by
 one
 My dreams grew dim, my wide aims
 circumscribed,
 As actual good within my reach de-
 creased,
 While obstacles sprung up this way and
 that
 To keep me from effecting half the sum,
 Small as it proved ; as objects, mean
 within [least,
 The primal aggregate, seemed, even the
 itself a match for my concentrated
 strength—
 What wonder if I saw no way to shun
 Despair ? The power I sought for
 man, seemed God's.
 In this conjuncture, as I prayed to die,
 A strange adventure made me know,
 one sin
 Had spotted my career from its uprise ;
 I saw Aprile—my Aprile there !
 And as the poor melodious wretch dis-
 burthened
 His heart, and moaned his weakness
 in my ear,
 I learned my own deep error ; love's
 undoing
 Taught me the worth of love in man's
 estate,
 And what proportion love should hold
 with power
 In his right constitution ; love pre-
 ceding
 Power, and with much power, always
 much more love ;
 Love still too straitened in his present
 means,
 And earnest for new power to set it free.
 I learned this, and supposed the whole
 was learned :
 And thus, when men received with
 stupid wonder

My first revealings, would have wor-
 shipped me,
 And I despised and loathed their
 proffered praise—
 When, with awakened eyes, they took
 revenge
 For past credulity in casting shame
 On my real knowledge, and I hated
 them—
 It was not strange I saw no good in man,
 To overbalance all the wear and waste
 Of faculties, displayed in vain, but born
 To prosper in some better sphere : and
 why ?
 In my own heart love had not been
 made wise
 To trace love's faint beginnings in man-
 kind,
 To know even hate is but a mask of
 love's,
 To see a good in evil, and a hope
 In ill-success ; to sympathize, be
 proud
 Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings,
 dim
 Struggles for truth, their poorest
 fallacies,
 Their prejudice and fears and cares and
 doubts ;
 All with a touch of nobleness, despite
 Their error, upward tending all though
 weak,
 Like plants in mines which never saw
 the sun,
 But dream of him, and guess where he
 may be,
 And do their best to climb and get to
 him.
 All this I knew not, and I failed. Let
 men
 Regard me, and the poet dead long ago
 Who loved too rashly ; and shape forth
 a third
 And better-tempered spirit, warned by
 both :
 As from the over-radiant star too mad
 To drink the life-springs, beamless
 thence itself—
 And the dark orb which borders the
 abyss,
 Ingulfed in icy night,—might have its
 course
 A temperate and equidistant world.
 Meanwhile, I have done well, though
 not all well.
 As yet men cannot do without con-
 tempt ;

'Tis for their good, and therefore fit
 awhile
 That they reject the weak, and scorn
 the false,
 Rather than praise the strong and true,
 in me : [stoop
 But after, they will know me. If I
 Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
 It is but for a time ; I press God's
 lamp,
 Close to my breast ; its splendour,
 soon or late,

Will pierce the gloom : I shall emerge
 one day.
 You understand me ? I have said
 enough ?
Fest. Now die, dear Aureole !
Par. Festus, let my hand—
 This hand, lie in your own, my own
 true friend !
Aprile! Hand in hand with you,
Aprile!

Fest. And this was Paracelsus !

NOTE

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

"PARACELSUS (Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus ab Hohenheim) was born in 1493 at Einsiedeln,⁽¹⁾ a little town in the canton of Schwitz, some leagues distant from Zurich. His father, who exercised the profession of medicine at Villach in Carinthia, was nearly related to George Bombast de Hohenheim, who became afterward Grand Prior of the Order of Malta : consequently Paracelsus could not spring from the dregs of the people, as Thomas Erastus, his sworn enemy, pretends.* It appears that his elementary education was much neglected, and that he spent part of his youth in pursuing the life common to the traveling *literati* of the age ; that is to say, in wandering from country to country, predicting the future by astrology and cheiro-mancy, evoking apparitions, and practis-

ing the different operations of magic and alchemy, in which he had been initiated whether by his father or by various ecclesiastics, among the number of whom he particularizes the Abbot Tritheim,⁽²⁾ and many German bishops.

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

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

"The period of his return to Germany is unknown : it is only certain that, at about the age of thirty-three, many astonishing cures which he wrought on eminent personages procured him such a celebrity, that he was called in 1526, on the recommendation of Ecolampadius,⁽⁴⁾

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

to fill a chair of physic and surgery at the University of Basil. There Paracelsus began by burning publicly in the amphitheatre the works of Avicenna and Galen, assuring his auditors that the latches of his shoes were more instructed than those of two physicians; that all Universities, all writers put together, were less gifted than the hairs of his beard and of the crown of his head; and that, in a word, he was to be regarded as the legitimate monarch of medicine. "You shall follow me," cried he, "you, Avicenna, Galen, Rhasis, Montagnana, Mesues, you, gentlemen of Paris, Montpellier, Germany, Cologne, Vienna,* and whomsoever the Rhine and Danube nourish; you who inhabit the isles of the sea; you, likewise, Dalmatians, Athenians; thou, Arab; thou, Greek; thou, Jew; all shall follow me, and the monarchy shall be mine."†

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

"At length, fearful of being punished for a serious outrage on a magistrate,⁽⁶⁾

he fled from Basil towards the end of the year 1527, and took refuge in Alsatia, whither he caused Oporinus to follow with his chemical apparatus.

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

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

(2) Then Bishop of Spanheim, and residing at Würzburg in Franconia; a town situated in a grassy fertile country, whence its name, Herbigopolis. He was much visited there by learned men, as may be seen by his 'Epistolæ Familiæres,' Hag. 1536: among others, by his staunch friend Cornelius Agrippa, to whom he dates thence, in 1510, a letter in answer to the dedicatory epistle prefixed to the treatise *De Occult. Philosoph.*, which last contains the following ominous allusion to Agrippa's sojourn: "Quum nuper tecum, R. P. in cœnobio tuo apud Herbigopolim aliquamdiu conversatus, multa de chymicis, multa de magicis, multa de cabalisticis, cæterisque quæ adhuc in occulto delitescunt, arcanis scientiis atque artibus una contulissemus," etc.

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

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

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

(3) "Inexplebilis illa aviditas naturæ perscrutandi secreta et reconditarum supellectile scientiarum animum locupletandi, uno eodemque loco diu persistere non patiebatur, sed Mercurii instar, omnes terras, nationes et urbes perlustrandi igniculos supposebat, ut cum viris naturæ scrutatoribus, chymicis præsertim, ore tenus conferret, et quæ diuturnis laboribus nocturnisque vigiliis invenerant una vel altera communicatione obtineret." (Bitiskius in Præfat.) "Patris auxilio primum, deinde propria industria doctissimos viros in Germania, Italia, Gallia, Hispania, aliisque Europæ regionibus, nactus est præceptores; quorum liberali doctrina, et potissimum propria inquisitione ut qui esset ingenio acutissimo ac fere divino, tantum profecit, ut multi testati sint, in universa philosophia, tam ardua, tam arcana et abdita eruisse mortalium neminem." (Melch. Adam. in Vit. Germ. Medic.) "Paracelsus qui in intima naturæ viscera sic penitus introierit, metallorum stirpiumque vires et facultates tam incredibili ingenii acumine exploraverit ac perviderit, ad morbos omnes vel desperatos et opinione hominum insana-biles percurandum; ut cum Theophrasto nata primum medicina perfectaque videtur." (Petri Rami Orat. de Basilea.) His passion for wandering is best described in his own words: "Ecce amatorem adolescentem difficillimi itineris haud piget, ut venustam saltem puellam vel fœminam aspiciat: quanto minus nobilissimarum artium amore laboris accejus libet tædii pigebit?" etc. ('Defensiones Septem adversus æmulos suos,' 1573. Def. 4ta. 'De peregrinationibus et exilio.')

(4) The reader may remember that it was in conjunction with Æcolampadius, then Divinity Professor at Basil, that Zuinglius published in 1528 an answer to Luther's Confession of Faith; and that both proceeded in company to the subsequent conference with Luther and Melancthon at Marburg. Their letters fill a large volume.—'D. D. Johannis Æcolampadii et Huldrici Zuinglii Epistolarum lib. quatuor.' Bas. 1536. It must be also observed that Zuinglius began to preach in 1516, and at Zurich in 1519, and that in 1525 the Mass was abolished in the cantons. The tenets of Æcolampadius were supposed to be more evangelical than those up to that period maintained by the glorious German, and our brave Bishop Fisher attacked them as the fouler heresy:—"About this time arose out of Luther's school one Æcolampadius, like a mighty and fierce giant; who, as his master had gone beyond the Church, went beyond his master (or else it had been impossible he

could have been reputed the better scholar), who denied the real presence; him, this worthy champion (the Bishop) sets upon, and with five books (like so many smooth stones taken out of the river that doth always run with living water) slays the Philistine; which five books were written in the year of our Lord 1526, at which time he had governed the See of Rochester 20 years." (Life of Bishop Fisher. 1655.) Now, there is no doubt of the Protestantism of Paracelsus, Erasmus, Agrippa, etc., but the nonconformity of Paracelsus was always scandalous. L. Crasso ('Elogj d'Huomini Letterati,' Ven. 1666) informs us that his books were excommunicated by the Church. Quensledt (de Patr. Doct.) affirms "nec tantum novæ medicinæ, verum etiam novæ theologiæ autor est." Delrio, in his Disquisit. Magicar., classes him among those "partim atheos, partim hæreticos" (lib. 1. cap. 3). "Omnino tamen multa theologica in ejusdem scriptis plane atheismum olent, ac duriuscule sonant in auribus vere Christiani." (D. Gabrielis Claudi Schediasma de Tinct. Univ. Norimb. 1736.) I shall only add one more authority:—"Oporinus dicit se (Paracelsum) aliquando Lutherum et Papam, non minus quam nunc Galenum et Hippocratem redacturum in ordinem minabatur, neque enim eorum qui hactenus in scripturam sacram scripsissent, sive veteres, sive recentiores, quenquam scripturæ nucleum recte eruisse, sed circa corticem et quasi membranam tantum hæreret." (Th. Erastus, Disputat. de Med. Nova.) These and similar notions had their due effect on Oporinus, who, says Zuingerus, in his 'Theatrum,' "longum vale dixit ei (Paracelso) ne ob præceptoris, alioqui amicissimi, horrendas blasphemias ipse quoque aliquando pœnas Deo Opt. Max. lueret."

(5) His defenders allow the drunkenness. Take a sample of their excuses: "Gentis hoc, non viri vitium est, a Taciti seculo ad nostrum usque non interrupto filo devolutum, sinceritati forte Germanæ cœvum, et nescio an aliquo consanguinitatis vinculo junctum." (Bitiskius.) The other charges were chiefly trumped up by Oporinus: "Domine, quod Oporinus amanuensis ejus sæpe narravit, nunquam nisi potus ad explicanda sua accessit, atque in medio conclavi ad columnam τετυφωμένον adstans, apprehenso manibus capulo ensis, cujus κοίλαμα hospitium præbuit ut aiunt spiritui familiari, imaginationes aut concepta sua protulit:—alii illud quod in capulo habuit, ab ipso Azoth appellatum medicinam fuisse præstantissimam aut lapidem Philosophicum putant." (Melch.

Adam.) This famous sword was no laughing-matter in those days, and it is now a material feature in the popular idea of Paracelsus. I recollect a couple of allusions to it in our own literature, at the moment.

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

'Volpone,' Act ii. Scene 2.

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

'Hudibras,' Part ii. Cant. 3.

This Azoth was simply "*laudanum suum*." But in his time he was commonly believed to possess the double tincture—the power of curing diseases and transmuting metals. Oporinus often witnessed, as he declares, both these effects, as did also Franciscus, the servant of Paracelsus, who describes, in a letter to Neander, a successful projection at which he was present, and the results of which, good golden ingots, were confided to his keeping. For the other quality, let the following notice vouch among many others:—"Degebat Theophrastus Norimbergæ pro-citus a medentibus illius urbis, et vanilo-quus deceptorque proclamatus, qui, ut laboranti famæ subveniat, viros quosdam auctoritatis summæ in Republica illa adit, et infamæ amoliendæ, artique suæ asserendæ, specimen ejus pollicetur editurum, nullo stipendio vel accepto pretio, horum faciles præbentium aures jussu elephantiacos aliquot, a communione hominum cæterorum segregatos, et in valetudinarium detrusos, alieno arbitrio eliguntur, quos virtute singulari remedium suorum Theophras-tus a fœda Græcorum lepra mundat, pristinaque sanitati restituit; conservat illustre harum curationum urbs in archivis suis testimonium." (Bitiskius.)* It is to be remarked that Oporinus afterwards repented of his treachery: "Sed resipuit tandem, et quem vivum convitiis insectatus fuerat defunctum veneratione prose-quutus, infames famæ præceptoris morsus in remorsus conscientiæ conversi pœni-tentia, heu nimis tarda, vulnera clausere exanimi quæ spiranti infixierant." For these "bites" of Oporinus, see Disputat.

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

Erasti, and Andreae Jocisci 'Oratio de vit. ob. Opori;' for the "remorse," Mic. Toxita in pref. Testamenti, and Conringius (otherwise an enemy of Paracelsus), who says it was contained in a letter from Oporinus to Doctor Vegerus.†

Whatever the moderns may think of these marvellous attributes, the title of Paracelsus to be considered the father of modern chemistry, is indisputable. Gerardus Vossius, 'De Philos* et Philosophis,' thus prefaces the ninth section of cap. 9, 'De Chymia'—"Nobilem hanc medicinæ partem, diu sepultam avorum ætate quasi ab orco revocavit Th. Paracelsus." I suppose many hints lie scattered in his neglected books, which clever appropriators have since developed with applause. Thus, it appears from his treatise 'De Phlebotomia,' and elsewhere, that he had discovered the circulation of the blood and the sanguification of the heart; as did after him Realdo Colombo, and still more perfectly Andrea Cesalpino of Arezzo, as Bayle and Bartoli observe. Even Lavater quotes a passage from his work 'De Natura Rerum,' on practical Physiognomy, in which the definitions and axioms are precise enough: he adds, "though an astrological enthusiast, a man of prodigious genius." See Holcroft's Translation, vol. iii. p. 179—"The Eyes." While on the subject of the writings of Paracelsus, I may explain a passage in the third part of the Poem. He was, as I have said, unwilling to publish his works, but in effect did publish a vast number. Valentius (in Præfat. in Paramyr.) declares "quod ad librorum Paracelsi copiam attinet, audio, a Germanis prope trecentos recenseri." "O fecunditas ingenii!" adds he, appositely. Many of these were, however, spurious; and Fred. Bitiskius gives his good edition (3 vols. fol. Gen. 1658) "rejectis suppositis solo ipsius nomine superbiebantibus quorum ingens circumfertur numerus." The rest were "charissimum et pretiosissimum authoris pignus, extorsum potius ab illo quam obtentum." "Jam minime eo volente atque jubente hæc ipsius scripta in lucem prodire videntur; quippe quæ muro inclusa ipso absente servi cujusdam indicio, furto surrepta atque sublata sunt," says Valentius. These have been the study of a host of commentators, among whose labours are most notable, Petri Severini, 'Idea Medicinæ Philosophiæ, Bas. 1571;'

† For a good defence of Paracelsus I refer the reader to Olaus Borrichius' treatise—"Hermetis etc. Sapia vincta," 1674. Or, if he is no more learned than myself in such matters, I mention simply that Paracelsus introduced the use of mercury and laudanum.

Mic. Toxetis, 'Onomastica. Arg. 1574'; Dornel, 'Dict. Parac. Franc. 1584'; and 'Pi Philos.* Compendium cum scholiis auctore Leone Suavio. Paris.' (This last, a good book.)

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

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

STRAFFORD :

A TRAGEDY

DEDICATED, IN ALL AFFECTIONATE ADMIRATION,

TO

WILLIAM C. MACREADY

London, April 23, 1837.

PERSONS

CHARLES I.
Earl of HOLLAND.
Lord SAVILE.
Sir HENRY VANE.
WENTWORTH, Viscount WENTWORTH,
Earl of STRAFFORD.
JOHN PYM.
JOHN HAMPDEN.
The younger VANE.

DENZIL HOLLIS.
BENJAMIN RUDYARD.
NATHANIEL FIENNES.
Earl of LOUDON.
MAXWELL, Usher of the Black Rod.
BALFOUR, Constable of the Tower.
A Puritan.
Queen HENRIETTA.
LUCY PERCY, the Countess of Carlisle.

Presbyterians, Scots Commissioners, Adherents of Strafford, Secretaries, Officers of the Court, etc. Two of Strafford's children.

ACT I

SCENE I.—*A House near Whitehall.*—

HAMPDEN, HOLLIS, the younger VANE, RUDYARD, FIENNES and many of the Presbyterian Party; LOUDON and other Scots Commissioners.

Vane. I say, if he be here—

Rud. (And he is here!)—

Hol. For England's sake let every man be still

Nor speak of him, so much as say his name,

Till Pym rejoin us! Rudyard! Henry Vane!

One rash conclusion may decide our course

And with it England's fate—think—England's fate!

Hampden, for England's sake they should be still!

Anne. You say so, Hollis? Well, I must be still.

It is indeed too bitter that one man, Any one man's mere presence should suspend

England's combined endeavour: little need

To name him!

Rud. For you are his brother, Hollis!

Hamp. Shame on you, Rudyard! time to tell him that,

When he forgets the Mother of us all.

Rud. Do I forget her?

Hamp. You talk idle hate Against her foe: is that so strange a thing?

Is hating Wentworth all the help she needs?

A Puritan. The Philistine strode, cursing as he went:

But David—five smooth pebbles from
the brook
Within his scrip . . .
Rud. Be you as still as David !
Fien. Here 's Rudyard not ashamed
to wag a tongue
Stiff with ten years' disuse of Parlia-
ments ;
Why, when the last sat, Wentworth
sat with us !
Rud. Let 's hope for news of them
now he returns—
He that was safe in Ireland, as we
thought !
—But I'll abide Pym's coming.
Vane. Now, by Heaven
They may be cool who can, silent who
will—
Some have a gift that way ! Went-
worth is here,
Here, and the King 's safe closeted with
him
Ere this. And when I think on all
that 's past
Since that man left us, how his single
arm
Rolled the advancing good of England
back
And set the woeful past up in its place,
Exalting Dagon where the Ark should
be,—
How that man has made firm the fickle
King
(Hampden, I will speak out !)—in aught
he feared
To venture on before ; taught tyranny
Her dismal trade, the use of all her tools,
To ply the scourge yet screw the gag so
close
That strangled agony bleeds mute to
death—
How he turns Ireland to a private stage
For training infant villainies, new ways
Of wringing treasure out of tears and
blood,
Unheard oppressions nourished in the
dark
To try how much man's nature can
endure
—If he dies under it, what harm ? if
not,
Why, one more trick is added to the
rest
Worth a king's knowing, and what Ire-
land bears
England may learn to bear :—how all
this while

That man has set himself to one dear
task,
The bringing Charles to relish more and
more
Power, power without law, power and
blood too
—Can I be still ?
Hamp. For that you should be
still.
Vane. Oh, Hampden, then and now !
The year he left us,
The People in full Parliament could
wrest
The Bill of Rights from the reluctant
King ;
And now, he'll find in an obscure small
room
A stealthy gathering of great-hearted
men
That take up England's cause : Eng-
land is here !
Hamp. And who despairs of Eng-
land ?
Rud. That do I,
If Wentworth comes to rule her. I am
sick
To think her wretched masters, Hamil-
ton,
The muckworm Cottington, the maniac
Laud
May yet be longed-for back again. I
say,
I do despair.
Vane. And, Rudyard, I'll say
this—
Which all true men say after me, not
loud
But solemnly and as you'd say a
prayer !
This King, who treads our England
underfoot,
Has just so much . . . it may be fear
or craft,
As bids him pause at each fresh
outrage ; friends,
He needs some sterner hand to grasp
his own,
Some voice to ask, " Why shrink ?
Am I not by ? "
Now, one whom England loved for
serving her,
Found in his heart to say, " I know
where best
" The iron heel shall bruise her, for she
leans
" Upon me when you trample." Wit-
ness, you !

- So Wentworth heartened Charles, so
England fell.
But inasmuch as life is hard to take
From England . . .
Many Voices. Go on, Vane! 'T is
well said, Vane!
Vane.—Who has not so forgotten
Runnymede!—
Voices. 'T is well and bravely spoken,
Vane! Go on!
Vane.—There are some little signs
of late she knows
The ground no place for her. She
glances round,
Wentworth has dropped the hand, is
gone his way
On other service: what if she arise?
No! the King beckons, and beside him
stands
The same bad man once more, with the
same smile
And the same gesture. Now shall
England crouch,
Or catch at us and rise?
Voices. The Renegade!
Haman! Ahithophel!
Hamp. Gentlemen of the North,
It was not thus the night your claims
were urged,
And we pronounced the League and
Covenant,
The cause of Scotland, England's cause
as well:
Vane there, sat motionless the whole
night through.
Vane. Hampden!
Fien. Stay, Vane!
Lou. Be just and patient, Vane!
Vane. Mind how you counsel pati-
ence, Loudon! you
Have still a Parliament, and this your
League
To back it; you are free in Scotland
still:
While we are brothers, hope's for Eng-
land yet.
But know you wherefore Wentworth
comes? to quench
This last of hopes? that he brings war
with him?
Know you the man's self? what he
dares?
Lou. We know,
All know—'t is nothing new.
Vane. And what's new, then,
In calling for his life? Why, Pym
himself—
- You must have heard—ere Wentworth
dropped our cause
He would see Pym first; there were
many more
Strong on the people's side and friends
of his,
Eliot that's dead, Rudyard and
Hampden here,
But for these Wentworth cared not;
only, Pym
He would see—Pym and he were
sworn, 't is said,
To live and die together; so, they met
At Greenwich. Wentworth, you are
sure, was long,
Specious enough, the devil's argument
Lost nothing on his lips; he'd have
Pym own
A patriot could not play a purer part
Than follow in his track; they two
combined
Might put down England. Well, Pym
heard him out;
One glance—you know Pym's eye—
one word was all:
"You leave us, Wentworth! while
your head is on,
"I'll not leave you."
Hamp. Has he left Wentworth,
then?
Has England lost him? Will you let
him speak,
Or put your crude surmises in his
mouth?
Away with this! Will you have Pym
or Vane?
Voices. Wait Pym's arrival! Pym
shall speak.
Hamp. Meanwhile
Let Loudon read the Parliament's
report
From Edinburgh: our last hope, as
Vane says,
Is in the stand it makes. Loudon!
Vane. No, no!
Silent I can be: not indifferent!
Hamp. Then each keep silence, pray-
ing God to spare
His anger, cast not England quite away
In this her visitation!
A Puritan. Seven years long
The Midianite drove Israel into dens
And caves. Till God sent forth a
mighty man,
Pym enters.
Even Gideon!

Pym. Wentworth's come: nor sickness, care,
The ravaged body nor the ruined soul,
More than the winds and waves that beat his ship,
Could keep him from the King. He has not reached
Whitehall: they've hurried up a Council there
To lose no time and find him work enough.
Where's Loudon? your Scots Parliament . . .

Lou. Holds firm:
We were about to read reports.

Pym. The King
Has just dissolved your Parliament.

Lou. and other Scots. Great God!
An oath-breaker! Stand by us, England, then!

Pym. The King's too sanguine;
doubtless Wentworth's here;
But still some little form might be kept up.

Hamp. Now speak, Vane! Rudyard, you had much to say!

Hol. The rumour's false, then . . .

Pym. Ay, the Court gives out
His own concerns have brought him back: I know

'T is the King calls him: Wentworth supersedes

The tribe of Cottingtons and Hamiltons
Whose part is played; there's talk enough, by this,—

Merciful talk, the King thinks: time is now

To turn the record's last and bloody leaf

That, chronicling a nation's great despair,

Tells they were long rebellious, and their lord

Indulgent, till, all kind expedients tried,

He drew the sword on them and reigned in peace.

Laud's laying his religion on the Scots
Was the last gentle entry: the new page

Shall run, the King thinks, "Wentworth thrust it down

"At the sword's point."
A Puritan. I'll do your bidding,

Pym.
England's and God's—one blow!

Pym. A goodly thing—

We all say, friends, it is a goodly thing
To right that England. Heaven grows dark above:

Let's snatch one moment ere the thunder fall,

To say how well the English spirit comes out

Beneath it! All have done their best, indeed,

From lion Eliot, that grand Englishman,

To the least here: and who, the least one here,

When she is saved (for her redemption dawns

Dimly, most dimly, but it dawns—it dawns)

Who'd give at any price his hope away
Of being named along with the Great Men?

We would not—no, we would not give that up!

Hamp. And one name shall be dearer than all names.

When children, yet unborn, are taught that name

After their fathers',—taught what matchless man . . .

Pym. Saved England? What if Wentworth's should be still

That name?

Rud. and others. We have just said it,
Pym! His death

Saves her! We said it—there's no way beside!

I'll do God's bidding, *Pym!* They struck down Joab

And purged the land.

Vane. No villanous striking-down!

Rud. No, a calm vengeance: let the whole land rise

And shout for it. No Feltons!
Pym. Rudyard, no!

England rejects all Feltons; most of all

Since Wentworth . . . Hampden, say the trust again

Of England in her servants—but I'll think

You know me, all of you. Then, I believe,

Spite of the past, Wentworth rejoins you, friends!

Vane and others. Wentworth?
Apostate! Judas! Double-dyed

A traitor! Is it Pym, indeed . . .

Pym. . . . Who says
 Va e never knew that Wentworth,
 loved that man,
 Was used to stroll with him, arm locked
 in arm,
 Along the streets to see the people pass
 And read in every island-countenance
 Fresh argument for God against the
 King,—

Never sat down, say, in the very house
 Where Eliot's brow grew broad with
 noble thoughts,
 (You've joined us, Hampden—Hollis,
 you as well.)
 And then left talking over Gracchus'
 death . . .

Vane. To frame, we know it well,
 the choicest clause
 In the Petition of Rights: he framed
 such clause
 One month before he took at the King's
 hand
 His Northern Presidency, which that
 Bill
 Denounced.

Pym. Too true! Never more,
 never more
 Walked we together! Most alone I
 went.

I have had friends—all here are fast
 my friends—
 But I sha'l never quite forget that
 friend.

And yet it could not but be real in him!
 You, Vane,—you Rudyard, have no
 right to trust
 To Wentworth: but can no one hope
 with me?

Hampden, will Wentworth dare shed
 English blood
 Like water?

Hamp. Ireland is Aceldama.

Pym. Will he turn Scotland to a
 hunting-ground
 To please the King, now that he knows
 the King?

The People or the King? and that King,
 Charles!

Hamp. Pym, all here know you:
 you'll not set your heart
 On any baseless dream. But say one
 deed

Of Wentworth's, since he left us . . .

[*Shouting without.*

Vane. There! he comes,
 And they shout for him! Wentworth's
 at Whitehall,

The King embracing him, now, as we
 speak,
 And he, to be his match in courtesies,
 Taking the whole war's risk upon him-
 self,
 Now, while you tell us here how changed
 he is!

Hear you?

Pym. And yet if 't is a dream, no
 more,

That Wentworth chose their side, and
 brought the King
 To love it as though Laud had loved it
 first,

And the Queen after;—that he led
 their cause

Calm to success, and kept it spotless
 through,

So that our very eyes could look upon
 The travail of our souls and close con-
 tent

That violence, which something mars
 even rights

Which sanction it, had taken off no
 grace

From its serene regard. Only a dream!
Hamp. We meet here to accomplish
 certain good

By obvious means, and keep tradition
 up

Of free assemblages, else obsolete,
 In this poor chamber: nor without
 effect

Has friend met friend to counsel and
 confirm,

As, listening to the beats of England's
 heart,

We spoke its wants to Scotland's
 prompt reply

By these her delegates. Remains
 alone

That word grow deed, as with God's
 help it shall—

But with the devil's hindrance, who
 doubts too?

Looked we or no that tyranny should
 turn

Her engines of oppression to their use?
 Whereof, suppose the worst be Went-
 worth here—

Shall we break off the tactics which
 succeed

In drawing out our formidablest foe,
 Let bickering and disunion take their
 place?

Or count his presence as our conquest's
 proof,

And keep the old arms at their steady play?

Proceed to England's work! Fiennes, read the list!

Fiennes. Ship-money is refused or fiercely paid

In every county, save the northern parts

Where Wentworth's influence . . .
[*Shouting.*]

Vane. I, in England's name,
Declare her work, this way, at end!
Till now,

Up to this moment, peaceful strife was best.

We English had free leave to think;
till now,

We had a shadow of a Parliament
In Scotland. But all's changed: they
change the first,

They try brute-force for law, they, first
of all . . .

Voices. Good! Talk enough! The
old true hearts with Vane!

Vane. Till we crush Wentworth for
her, there's no act

Serves England!

Voices. Vane for England!
Pym. Pym should be

Something to England. I seek Went-
worth, friends.

SCENE II.—*Whitehall.*

Lady CARLISLE and WENTWORTH.

Went. And the King?

Lady Car. Wentworth, lean on
me! Sit then!

I'll tell you all; this horrible fatigue
Will kill you.

Went. No; or—Lucy, just your
arm;

I'll not sit till I've cleared this up with
him:

After that, rest. The King?

Lady Car. Confides in you.

Went. Why? or, why now?—They
have kind throats, the knaves!

Shout for me—they!

Lady Car. You come so strangely
soon:

Yet we took measures to keep off the
crowd—

Did they shout for you?

Went. Wherefore should they not?

Does the King take such measures for
himself?

Deside, there's such a dearth of mal-
contents,

You say!

Lady Car. I said but few dare carp
at you.

Went. At me? at us, I hope! The
King and I!

He's surely not disposed to let me bear
The fame away from him of these late
deeds

In Ireland? I am yet his instrument
Be it for well or ill? He trusts me,
too!

Lady Car. The King, dear Went-
worth, purposes, I said,
To grant you, in the face of all the
Court . . .

Went. All the Court! Evermore
the Court about us!

Savile and Holland, Hamilton and Vane
About us,—then the King will grant
me—what?

That he for once put these aside and
say—

"Tell me your whole mind, Went-
worth!"

Lady Car. You professed
You would be calm.

Went. Lucy, and I am calm!
How else shall I do all I come to do,
Broken, as you may see, body and
mind,

How shall I serve the King? Time
wastes meanwhile,

You have not told me half. His foot-
step! No.

Quick, then, before I meet him,—I am
calm—

Why does the King distrust me?

Lady Car. He does not
Distrust you.

Went. Lucy, you can help me;
you [word!]

Have even seemed to care for me: one
Is it the Queen?

Lady Car. No, not the Queen: the
party

That poisons the Queen's ear, Savile
and Holland.

Went. I know, I know: old Vane,
too, he's one too?

Go on—and he's made Secretary. Well?

Or leave them out and go straight to
the charge;

The charge!
Lady Car. Oh, there's no charge, no
precise charge;

Only they sneer, make light of—one
may say,

Nibble at what you do.

Went. I know! but Lucy,
I reckoned on you from the first!—Go
on!

—Was sure could I once see this
gentle friend

When I arrived, she'd throw an hour
away

To help her . . . what am I?

Lady Car. You thought of me,
Dear Wentworth?

Went. But go on! The party
here!

Lady Car. They do not think your
Irish Government

Of that surpassing value . . .

Went. The one thing
Of value! The one service that the
crown

May count on! All that keeps these
very Vanes

In power, to vex me—not that they do
Only it might vex some to hear that
service

Decried, the sole support that's left the
King!

Lady Car. So the Archbishop says.
Went. Ah? well, perhaps

The only hand held up in my defence
May be old Laud's! These Hollands
then, these Saviles

Nibble? They nibble?—that's the
very word!

Lady Car. Your profit in the Cus-
toms, Bristol says,

Exceeds the due proportion: while the
tax . . .

Went. Enough! 't is too unworthy,
—I am not

So patient as I thought! What's
Pym about?

Lady Car. Pym?

Went. Pym and the People.

Lady Car. Oh, the Faction!
Extinct—of no account: there'll never
be

Another Parliament.

Went. Tell Savile that!
You may know—(ay, you do—the
creatures here

Never forget!) that in my earliest life
I was not . . . much that I am now!

The King

May take my word on points concern-
ing Pym

Before Lord Savil's, Lucy, or if not,
I bid them ruin their wise selves, not
me,

These Vanes and Hollands! I'll not be
their tool

Who might be Pym's friend yet.

But there's the King!

Where is he?

Lady Car. Just apprised that you
arrive.

Went. And why not here to meet
me? I was told

He sent for me, nay, longed for me.

Lady Car. Because,—

He is now . . . I think a Council's
sitting now

About this Scots affair.

Went. A Council sits?

They have not taken a decided course
Without me in the matter?

Lady Car. I should say . . .

Went. The war? They cannot have
agreed to that?

Not the Scots war?—without con-
sulting me—

Me, that am here to show how rash it is,
How easy to dispense with?—Ah, you
too

Against me! well,—the King may take
his time.

—Forget it, Lucy! Cares make
peevish: mine

Weigh me (but 't is a secret) to my
grave.

Lady Car. For life or death I am
your own, dear friend! [*Goes out.*]

Went. Heartless! but all are heart-
less here. Go now,

Forsake the People!—I did not forsake
The People: they shall know it—
when the King

Will trust me!—who trusts all beside
at once,

While I have not spoke Vane and Savile
fair,

And am not trusted: have but saved
the throne:

Have not picked up the Queen's glove
prettily,

And am not trusted. But he'll see
me now.

Weston is dead: the Queen's half
English now—

More English: one decisive word will
brush

These insects from . . . the step I
know so well!

The King! But now, to tell him . . .
 no—to ask
 What 's in me he distrusts:—or, best
 begin
 By proving that this frightful Scots
 affair
 Is just what I foretold. So much to
 say,
 And the flesh fails, now, and the time is
 come,
 And one false step no way to be re-
 paired!
 You were avenged, Pym, could you
 look on me.

PYM enters.

Went. I little thought of you just
 then.
Pym. No? I
 Think always of you, Wentworth.
Went. The old voice!
 I wait the King, sir.
Pym. True—you look so pale!
 A Council sits within; when that
 breaks up
 He 'll see you.
Went. Sir, I thank you.
Pym. Oh, thank Laud!
 You know when Laud once gets on
 Church affairs
 The case is desperate: he'll not be long
 To-day: he only means to prove, to-
 day,
 We English all are mad to have a hand
 In butchering the Scots for serving
 God
 After their fathers' fashion: only that!
Went. Sir, keep your jests for those
 who relish them!
 (Does he enjoy their confidence?)
 'T is kind
 To tell me what the Council does.
Pym. You grudge
 That I should know it had resolved on
 war
 Before you came? no need: you shall
 have all
 The credit, trust me!
Went. Have the Council dared—
 They have not dared . . . that is—I
 know you not.
 Farewell, sir: times are changed.
Pym. —Since we two met
 At Greenwich? Yes: poor patriots
 though we be,
 You cut a figure, makes some slight
 return

For your exploits in Ireland! Changed
 indeed,
 Could our friend Eliot look from out
 his grave!
 Ah Wentworth, one thing for ac-
 quaintance' sake,
 Just to decide a question; have you,
 now,
 Felt your old self since you forsook us?
Went. Sir!
Pym. Spare me the gesture! you
 misapprehend!
 Think not I mean the advantage is
 with me.
 I was about to say that, for my part,
 I never quite held up my head since
 then—
 Was quite myself since then: for first,
 you see
 I lost all credit after that event
 With those who recollect how sure I
 was
 Wentworth would outdo Eliot on our
 side. [here,
 Forgive me: Savile, old Vane, Holland
 Eschew plain-speaking: 't is a trick I
 keep.
Went. How, when, where, Savile,
 Vane and Holland speak,
 Painly or otherwise, would have my
 scorn,
 All of my scorn, sir . . .
Pym. Did not my poor
 thoughts
 Claim somewhat?
Went. Keep your thoughts! I
 believe the King
 Mistrusts me for their prattle, all these
 Vanes
 And Saviles! make your mind up, o'
 God's love,
 That I am discontented with the King!
Pym. Why, you may be: I should
 be, that I know,
 Were I like you.
Went. Like me?
Pym. I care not much
 For titles: our friend Eliot died no
 lord,
 Hampden's no lord, and Savile is a
 lord;
 But you care, since you sold your soul
 for one.
 I can't think, therefore, your soul's
 purchaser
 Did well to laugh you to such utter
 scorn

When you twice prayed so humbly for
its price,
The thirty silver pieces . . I should
say,

The Earldom you expected, still expect,

And may. Your letters were the
movingest!

Console yourself: I've borne him
prayers just now

From Scotland not to be oppressed by
Laud,

Words moving in their way: he'll pay,
be sure,

As much attention as to those you sent.
Went. False, sir! Who showed

them you? Suppose it so,
The King did very well . . nay, I was
glad

When it was shown me: I refused, the
first!

John Pym, you were my friend—for-
bear me once!

Pym. Oh Wentworth, ancient
brother of my soul,

That all should come to this!
Went. Leave me!

Pym. My friend,
Why should I leave you?

Went. To tell Rudyard this,
And Hampden this!

Pym. Whose faces once were
bright

At my approach, now sad with doubt
and fear,

Because I hope in you—yes, Went-
worth, you [you

Who never mean to ruin England—
Who shake off, with God's help, an

obscene dream
In this Ezekiel chamber, where it crept

Upon you first, and wake, yourself,
your true

And proper self, our Leader, England's
Chief,

And Hampden's friend!

This is the proudest day!
Come, Wentworth! Do not even see
the King!

The rough old room will seem itself
again!

We'll both go in together: you've not
seen

Hampden so long: come: and there's
Fiennes: you'll have

To know young Vane. This is the
proudest day!

(*The KING enters.* WENTWORTH
lets fall PYM's hand.)

Cha. Arrived, my lord?—This gen-
tleman, we know,

Was your old friend.
The Scots shall be informed

What we determine for their happiness.
[PYM goes out.]

You have made haste, my lord.
Went. Sir, I am come . . .

Cha. To see an old familiar—nay, 't is
well;

Aid us with his experience: this Scots
League

And Covenant spreads too far, and we
have proofs

That they intrigue with France: the
Faction too,

Whereof your friend there is the head
and front,

Abets them,—as he boasted, very like.
Went. Sir, trust me! but for this

once, trust me, sir!
Cha. What can you mean?

Went. That you should trust me,
sir!

Oh—not for my sake! but 't is sad, so
sad

That for distrusting me, you suffer—
you

Whom I would die to serve: sir, do you
think

That I would die to serve you?
Cha. But rise, Wentworth!

Went. What shall convince you?
What does Savile do

To prove him . . . Ah, one can't tear
out one's heart

And show it, how sincere a thing it is!
Cha. Have I not trusted you?

Went. Say aught but that!
There is my comfort, mark you: all

will be
So different when you trust me—as you
shall!

It has not been your fault,—I was
away,

Mistook, maligned, how was the King
to know?

I am here, now—he means to trust me,
now—

All will go on so well!
Cha. Be sure I do—

I've heard that I should trust you: as
you came,

Your friend, the Countess, told me . . .
Went. No,—hear nothing—

Be told nothing about me!—you're not told

Your right hand serves you, or your children love you!

Cha. You love me, Wentworth: rise!

Went. I can speak now.

I have no right to hide the truth. 'Tis I

Can save you: only I. Sir, what must be?

Cha. Since Laud's assured (the minutes are within)

—Loath as I am to spill my subjects' blood . . .

Went. That is, he'll have a war: what's done is done!

Cha. They have intrigued with France; that's clear to Laud.

Went. Has Laud suggested any way to meet

The war's expense?

Cha. He'd not decide so far Until you joined us.

Went. Most considerate! He's certain they intrigue with France, these Scots?

The People would be with us.

Cha. Pym should know.

Went. The People for us—were the People for us!

Sir, a great thought comes to reward your trust:

Summon a Parliament! in Ireland first, Then, here.

Cha. In truth?

Went. That saves us! that puts off

The war, gives time to right their grievances—

To talk with Pym. I know the Faction, as

Laud styles it, tutors Scotland: all their plans

Suppose no Parliament: in calling one You take them by surprise. Produce

the proofs

Of Scotland's treason; then bid England help:

Even Pym will not refuse.

Cha. You would begin With Ireland?

Went. Take no care for that: that's sure

To prosper.

Cha. You shall rule me. You were best

Return at once: but take this ere you go!

Now, do I trust you? You're an Earl: my Friend

Of Friends: yes, while . . . You hear me not!

Went. Say it all over again—but once again:

The first was for the music—once again!

Cha. Strafford, my friend, there may have been reports,

Vain rumours, Henceforth touching Strafford is

To touch the apple of my sight: why gaze

So earnestly?

Went. I am grown young again, And foolish. What was it we spoke of?

Cha. Ireland, The Parliament,—

Went. I may go when I will? —Now?

Cha. Are you tired so soon of us?

Went. My king? But you will not so utterly abhor

A parliament? I'd serve you any way.

Cha. You said just now this was the only way.

Went. Sir, I will serve you!

Cha. Strafford, spare yourself— You are so sick, they tell me,

Went. 'T is my soul That's well and prospers now.

This Parliament— We'll summon it, the English one—I'll

care

For everything. You shall not need them much.

Cha. If they prove restive . . .

Went. I shall be with you.

Cha. Ere they assemble?

Went. I will come, or else Deposit this infirm humanity

I' the dust. My whole heart stays with you, my King!

[As WENTWORTH goes out, the QUEEN enters.

Cha. That man must love me.

Queen. Is it over then? Why, he looks yellower than ever!

Well, At least we shall not hear eternally Of service—services: he's paid at least.

Cha. Not done with: he engages to surpass

All yet performed in Ireland.

Queen. I had thought

Nothing beyond was ever to be done.
The war, Charles—will he raise supplies
enough?

Cha. We've hit on an expedient;
he . . . that is,
I have advised . . . we have decided
on

The calling—in Ireland—of a Parlia-
ment.

Queen. O truly! You agree to
that? Is that

The first fruit of his counsel? But I
guessed

As much.

Cha. This is too idle, Henriette!
I should know best. He will strain
every nerve,

And once a precedent established . . .

Queen. Notice
How sure he is of a long term of
favour!

He'll see the next, and the next after
that;

No end to Parliaments!

Cha. Well, it is done.
He talks it smoothly, doubtless. If,
indeed,

The Commons here . . .

Queen. Here! you will summon
them

Here? Would I were in France again
to see

A King!

Cha. But, Henriette . . .

Queen. Oh, the Scots see clear!
Why should they bear your rule?

Cha. But listen, sweet!

Queen. Let Wentworth listen—you
confide in him!

Cha. I do not, love,—I do not so
confide!

The Parliament shall never trouble
us

. . . Nay, hear me! I have schemes,
such schemes: we'll buy

The leaders off: without that, Went-
worth's counsel

Had ne'er prevailed on me. Perhaps I
call it

To have excuse for breaking it for
ever,

And whose will then the blame be?
See you not?

Come, dearest!—look the little fairy,
now,

That cannot reach my shoulder!
Dearest, come!

ACT II

SCENE I.—(As in Act I. Scene I.)

The same Party enters.

Rud. Twelve subsidies!

Vane. O Rudyard, do not laugh
At least!

Rud. True: Strafford called the
Parliament—

'Tis he should laugh!

A Puritan. Out of the serpent's
root

Comes forth a cockatrice.

Fien. —A stinging one,
If that's the Parliament: twelve
subsidies!

A stinging one! but, brother, where's
your word

For Strafford's other nest-egg, the
Scots war?

The Puritan. His fruit shall be a
fiery flying serpent.

Fien. Shall be? It chips the shell,
man; peeps abroad.

Twelve subsidies!—Why, how now,
Vane?

Rud. Peace, Fiennes!

Fien. Ah?—But he was not more a
dupe than I,

Or you, or any here, the day that Pym
Returned with the good news. Look
up, friend Vane!

We all believed that Strafford meant
us well

In summoning the Parliament.

HAMPDEN enters.

Vane. Now, Hampden,
Clear me! I would have leave to sleep
again:

I'd look the People in the face again:
Clear me from having, from the first,
hoped, dreamed

Better of Strafford!

Hamp. You may grow one day
A steadfast light to England, Henry
Vane!

Rud. Meantime, by flashes I make
shift to see

Strafford revived our Parliaments;
before,

War was but talked of; there's an
army, now:

Still, we've a Parliament! Poor Ire-
land bears

Another wrench (she dies the hardest
death)—

Why, speak of it in Parliament ! and lo,
'T is spoken, so console yourselves !

Fien.

The jest !

We clamoured, I suppose, thus long,
to win

The privilege of laying on our backs
A sorer burden than the King dares lay !

Rud. Mark now : we meet at length,
complaints pour in

From every county, all the land cries
out

On loans and levies, curses ship-money,
Calls vengeance on the Star-chamber ;
we lend

An ear. " Ay, lend them all the ears
you have ! "

Puts in the King ; " my subjects, as
you find,

" Are fretful, and conceive great things
of you.

" Just listen to them, friends ; you'll
sanction me

" The measures they most wince at,
make them yours,

" Instead of mine, I know : and, to
begin,

" They say my levies pinch them,—
raise me straight

" Twelve subsidies ! "

Fien. All England cannot fur-
nish

Twelve subsidies !

Hol. But Strafford, just returned
From Ireland—what has he to do with
that ?

How could he speak his mind ? He
left before

The Parliament assembled. Pym, who
knows

Strafford . . .

Rud. Would I were sure we know
ourselves !

What is for good, what, bad—who
friend, who foe !

Hol. Do you count Parliaments no
gain ?

Rud. A gain ?

While the King's creatures overbalance
us ?

—There's going on, beside, among our-
selves

A quiet, slow, but most effectual course
Of buying over, sapping, leavening

The lump till all is leaven. Glanville's
gone.

'I'll put a case ; had not the Court de-
clared

That no sum short of just twelve
subsidies

Will be accepted by the King—our
House,

I say, would have consented to that
offer

To let us buy off ship-money !

Hol. Most like,
If, say, six subsidies will buy it off,
The House . . .

Rud. Will grant them ! Hampden,
do you hear ?

Congratulate with me ! the King's the
king,

And gains his point at last—our own
assent

To that detested tax ! All's over, then !
There's no more taking refuge in this
room,

Protesting, " Let the King do what he
will,

" We, England, are no party to our
shame :

" Our day will come ! " Congratulate
with me !

Pym enters.

Vane. Pym, Strafford called this
Parliament, you say,

But we'll not have our Parliaments like
those

In Ireland, Pym !

Rud. Let him stand forth, your
friend !

One doubtful act hides far too many
sin ;

It can be stretched no more, and, to my
mind,

Begins to drop from those it covered.

Other Voices. Good !
Let him avow himself ! No fitter time !
We wait thus long for you.

Rud. Perhaps, too long !
Since nothing but the madness of the
Court,

In thus unmasking its designs at once,
Has saved us from betraying England.

Stay—
This Parliament is Strafford's : let us
vote

Our list of grievances too black by far
To suffer talk of subsidies : or best,

That ships money's disposed of long ago
By England : any vote that's broad
enough :

And then let Strafford, for the love of it,
Support his Parliament !

Vane. And vote as well
No war to be with Scotland! Hear
you, Pym?
We'll vote, no war! No part nor lot in
it
For England!

Many Voices. Vote, no war! Stop
the new levies!
No Bishops' war! At once! When
next we meet!

Pym. Much more when next we
meet! Friends, which of you
Since first the course of Strafford was
in doubt, [me?

Has fallen the most away in soul from
Vane. I sat apart, even now, under
God's eye,

Pondering the words that should de-
nounce you, Pym,

In presence of us all, as one at league
With England's enemy.

Pym. You are a good
And gallant spirit, Henry. Take my
hand

And say you pardon me for all the pain
Till now! Strafford is wholly ours.

Many Voices. Sure? sure?

Pym. Most sure: for Charles dis-
solves the Parliament

While I speak here.
—And I must speak, friends,
now!

Strafford is ours. The King detects
the change,

Casts Strafford off for ever, and resumes
His ancient path: no Parliament for
us,

No Strafford for the King!

Come, all of you,
To bid the King farewell, predict
success

To his Scots expedition, and receive
Strafford, our comrade now. The
next will be

Indeed a Parliament!

Vane. Forgive me, Pym!

Voices. This looks like truth: Straff-
ord can have, indeed,
No choice.

Pym. Friends, follow me! He's
with the King.

Come, Hampden, and come, Rudyard,
and come, Vane!

This is no sullen day for England, sirs!
Strafford shall tell you!

Voices. To Whitehall then!
Come!

SCENE II.—*Whitehall.*

CHARLES and STRAFFORD.

Cha. Strafford!

Straf. Is it a dream? my papers,
here—

Thus, as I left them, all the plans you
found

So happy—(look! the track you pressed
my hand

For pointing out)—and in this very
room,

Over these very plans, you tell me, sir,
With the same face, too—tell me just
one thing

That ruins them! How's this? What
may this mean?

Sir, who has done this?

Cha. Strafford, who but I?
You bade me put the rest away:

indeed

You are alone.

Straf. Alone, and like to be!
No fear, when some unworthy scheme
grows ripe,

Of those, who hatched it, leaving me to
loose

The mischief on the world! Laud
hatches war,

Falls to his prayers, and leaves the rest
to me,

And I'm alone.

Cha. At least, you knew as much
When first you undertook the war.

Straf. My liege,
Was this the way? I said, since Laud
would lap

A little blood, 't were best to hurry
over

The loathsome business, not to be
whole months

At slaughter—one blow, only one, then,
peace,

Save for the dreams. I said, to please
you both

I'd lead an Irish army to the West,
While in the South an English . . .

but you look

As though you had not told me fifty
times

'T was a brave plan! My army is all
raised,

I am prepared to join it . . .

Cha. Hear me, Strafford!

Straf. . . . When, for some little
thing, my whole design

Is set aside—(where is the wretched paper?)
 I am to lead—(ay, here it is)—to lead
 The English army: why? Northumberland
 That I appointed, chooses to be sick—
 Is frightened: and, meanwhile, who answers for
 The Irish Parliament? or army, either?
 Is this my plan?
Cha. So disrespectful, sir?
Straf. My liege, do not believe it!
 I am yours,
 Yours ever: 't is too late to think about:
 To the death, yours. Elsewhere, this untoward step
 Shall pass for mine; the world shall think it mine. [here,
 But, here! But, here! I am so seldom
 Seldom with you, my King! I, soon to rush
 Alone upon a giant in the dark!
Cha. My Strafford!
Straf. [examines papers awhile.]
 "Seize the passes of the Tyne!"
 But, sir, you see—see all I say is true?
 My plan was sure to prosper, so, no cause
 To ask the Parliament for help; whereas
 We need them frightfully.
Cha. Need the Parliament?
Straf. Now, for God's sake, sir, not one error more!
 We can afford no error; we draw, now,
 Upon our last resource: the Parliament
 Must help us!
Cha. I've undone you, Strafford!
Straf. Nay—
 Nay—why despond, sir, 't is not come to that!
 I have not hurt you? Sir, what have I said
 To hurt you? I unsay it! Don't despond!
 Sir, do you turn from me?
Cha. My friend of friends!
Straf. We'll make a shift. Leave me the Parliament!
 Help they us ne'er so little and I'll make
 Sufficient out of it. We'll speak them fair.
 They're sitting, that's one great thing; that half gives

Their sanction to us; that's much: don't despond!
 Why, let them keep their money, at the worst!
 The reputation of the People's help
 Is all we want: we'll make shift yet!
Cha. Good Strafford!
Straf. But meantime, let the sum be ne'er so small
 They offer, we'll accept it: any sum—
 For the look of it: the least grant tells the Scots
 The Parliament is ours—their staunch ally
 Turned ours: that told, there's half the blow to strike!
 What will the grant be? What does Glanville think?
Cha. Alas!
Straf. My liege?
Cha. Strafford!
Straf. But answer me!
 Have they . . . O surely not refused us half?
 Half the twelve subsidies? We never looked
 For all of them. How many do they give?
Cha. You have not heard . . .
Straf. (What has he done?)—
 Heard what?
 But speak at once, sir, this grows terrible!
 [The King continuing silent.
 You have dissolved them!—I'll not leave this man.
Cha. 'T was old Vane's ill-judged vehemence.
Straf. Old Vane?
Cha. He told them, just about to vote the half,
 That nothing short of all twelve subsidies
 Would serve our turn, or be accepted.
Straf. Vane!
 Vane! Who, sir, promised me that very Vane . . .
 O God, to have it gone, quite gone from me,
 The one last hope—I that despair, my hope—
 That I should reach his heart one day, and cure
 All bitterness one day, be proud again
 And young again, care for the sunshine too,
 And never think of Eliot any more,~

God, and to toil for this, go far for this,
Get nearer, and still nearer, reach this
heart

And find Vane there !

*[Suddenly taking up a paper, and
continuing with a forced calmness.*

Northumberland is sick :

Well, then, I take the army : Wilmot
leads

The horse, and he, with Conway, must
secure

The passes of the Tyne : Ormond
supplies

My place in Ireland. Here, we'll try
the City :

If they refuse a loan—debase the coin
And seize the bullion ! we've no other
choice.

Herbert . . .

And this while I am here ! with
you !

And there are hosts such, hosts like
Vane ! I go,

And, I once gone, they'll close around
you, sir,

When the least pique, pettiest mistrust,
is sure

To ruin me—and you along with me !
Do you see that ? And you along with
me !

—Sir, you'll not ever listen to these
men,

And I away, fighting your battle ? Sir,
If they—if She—charge me, no matter
how—

Say you, " At any time when he returns
" His head is mine ! " Don't stop me
there ! You know

My head is yours, but never stop me
there !

Cha. Too shameful, Strafford ! You
advised the war,

And . . .

Straf. I ! I ! that was never spoken
with

Till it was entered on ! That loathe
the war !

That say it is the maddest, wicked-
est . . .

Do you know, sir, I think, within my
heart,

That you would say I did advise the
war ;

And if, through your own weakness,
or what 's worse,

These Scots, with God to help them,
drive me back,

You will not step between the raging
People

And me, to say . . .

I knew it ! from the first

I knew it ! Never was so cold a heart !

Remember that I said it—that I never

Believed you for a moment !

—And, you loved me ?

You thought your perfidy profoundly
hid

Because I could not share the whisper-
ings

With Vane, with Savile ? What, the
face was masked ?

I had the heart to see, sir ! Face of
flesh,

But heart of stone—of smooth, cold
frightful stone !

Ay, call them ! Shall I call for you ?
The Scots

Goaded to madness ? Or the English
—Pym—

Shall I call Pym, your subject ? Oh,
you think

I'll leave them in the dark about it all ?

They shall not know you ? Hampden,
Pym shall not ?

PYM, HAMPDEN, VANE, *etc.*, enter.

[Dropping on his knee.] Thus favoured
with your gracious countenance

What shall a rebel League avail against

Your servant, utterly and ever yours ?

So, gentlemen, the King's not even left

The privilege of bidding me farewell
Who haste to save the People—that

you style
Your People—from the mercies of the
Scots

And France their friend ?

[To CHARLES.] Pym's grave eyes
are fixed

Upon you, sir !

Your pleasure, gentlemen ?

Hamp. The King dissolved us—'t is
the King we seek

And not Lord Strafford.

Straf. —Strafford, guilty too

Of counselling the measure. *[To*
CHARLES] (Hush . . . you know—

You have forgotten—sir, I counselled
it)

A heinous matter, truly ! But the
King course

Will yet see cause to thank me for a
Which now, perchance . . . (Sir, tell

them so !)—he blames.

Well, choose some fitter time to make
your charge :

I shall be with the Scots, you under-
stand ?

Then yelp at me !

Meanwhile, your Majesty
Binds me, by this fresh token of your
trust . . .

*[Under the pretence of an earnest
farewell, STRAFFORD conducts
CHARLES to the door, in such a
manner as to hide his agitation
from the rest : as the King dis-
appears, they turn as by one im-
pulse to PYM, who has not changed
his original posture of surprise.]*

Hamp. Leave we this arrogant strong
wicked man !

Vane and others. Hence, Pym !
Come out of this unworthy place

To our old room again ! He 's gone.

*[STRAFFORD, just about to follow
the King, looks back.]*

Pym. Not gone !

[To STRAFFORD.] Keep tryst ! the old
appointment 's made anew :

Forget not we shall meet again !

Straf. So be it !

And if an army follows me ?

Vane. His friends

Will entertain your army !

Pym. I'll not say

You have misreckoned, Strafford :
time shows.

Perish

Body and spirit ! Fool to feign a doubt,
Pretend the scrupulous and nice reserve
Of one whose prowess shall achieve the
feat !

What share have I in it ? Do I affect
To see no dismal sign above your head
When God suspends his ruinous thun-
der there ?

Strafford is doomed. Touch him no
one of you !

[PYM, HAMPDEN, etc., go out.]

Straf. Pym, we shall meet again !

Lady CARLISLE enters.

You here, child ?

Lady Car. Hush—

I know it all : hush, Strafford !

Straf. Ah ? you know ?

Well, I shall make a sorry soldier,
Lucy !

All knights begin their enterprise, we
read,

Under the best of auspices ; 't is morn,
The Lady girds his sword upon the
Youth

(He's always very young)—the trum-
pets sound,

Cups pledge him, and, why, the King
blesses him—

You need not turn a page of the ro-
mance

To learn the Dreadful Giant's fate.
Indeed,

We've the fair Lady here ; but she
apart,—

A poor man, rarely having handled
lance,

And rather old, weary, and far from
sure

His Squires are not the Giant's friends.
All 's one :

Let us go forth !

Lady Car. Go forth ?

Straf. What matters it ?

We shall die gloriously—as the book
says.

Lady Car. To Scotland ? not to Scot-
land ?

Straf. Am I sick

Like your good brother, brave North-
umberland ?

Beside, these walls seem falling on me.

Lady Car. Strafford,

The wind that saps these walls can
undermine

Your camp in Scotland, too. Whence
creeps the wind ?

Have you no eyes except for Pym ?
Look here !

A breed of silken creatures lurk and
thrive

In your contempt. You'll vanquish
Pym ? Old Vane

Can vanquish you. And Vane you
think to fly ?

Rush on the Scots ! Do nobly !
Vane's slight sneer

Shall test success, adjust the praise,
suggest

The faint result : Vane's sneer shall
reach you there.

—You do not listen !

Straf. Oh,—I give that up !

There's fate in it : I give all here quite
up.

Care not what old Vane does or Holland
does

Against me ! 'T is so idle to withstand !
In no case tell me what they do !

Lady Car. But, Strafford . . .
Straf. I want a little strife, beside;
 real strife;
 This petty, palace-warfare does me
 harm:
 I shall feel better, fairly out of it.
Lady Car. Why do you smile?
Straf. I got to fear them, child!
 I could have torn his throat at first,
 old Vane's,
 As he leered at me on his stealthy way
 To the Queen's closet. Lord, one loses
 heart!
 I often found it in my heart to say
 "Do not traduce me to her!"
Lady Car. But the King . . .
Straf. The King stood there, 't is not
 so long ago,
 —There; and the whisper, Lucy, "Be
 my friend
 "Of friends!"—My King! I would
 have . . .
Lady Car. . . . Died for him?
Straf. Sworn him true, Lucy: I can
 die for him.
Lady Car. But go not, Strafford!
 But you must renounce
 This project on the Scots! Die,
 wherefore die?
 Charles never loved you.
Straf. And he never will.
 He's not of those who care the more for
 men
 That they're unfortunate.
Lady Car. Then wherefore die
 For such a master?
Straf. You that told me first
 How good he was—when I must leave
 true friends
 To find a truer friend!—that drew me
 here
 From Ireland,—“I had but to show
 myself
 “And Charles would spurn Vane,
 Savile and the rest”—
 You, child, to ask me this?
Lady Car. (If he have set
 His heart abidingly on Charles!)
 Then, friend,
 I shall not see you any more.
Straf. Yes, Lucy.
 There's one man here I have to meet.
Lady Car. (The King!
 What way to save him from the King?
 My soul—
 That lent from its own store the
 charmed disguise

That clothes the King—he shall behold
 my soul!)
 Strafford,—I shall speak best if you'll
 not gaze
 Upon me: I had never thought, indeed,
 To speak, but you would perish too, so
 sure:
 Could you but know what 't is to bear,
 my friend,
 One image stamped within you, turn-
 ing blank
 The else imperial brilliance of your
 mind,—
 A weakness, but most precious,—like a
 flaw
 I' the diamond, which should shape
 forth some sweet face
 Yet to create, and meanwhile treasured
 there
 Lest nature lose her gracious thought
 for ever!
Straf. When could it be? No!
 Yet . . . was it the day
 We waited in the anteroom, till
 Holland
 Should leave the presence-chamber?
Lady Car. What?
Straf. —That I
 Described to you my love for Charles?
Lady Car. (Ah, no—
 One must not lure him from a love like
 that!
 Oh, let him love the King and die!
 'T is past.
 I shall not serve him worse for that
 one brief
 And passionate hope, silent for ever
 now!)
 And you are really bound for Scotland
 then?
 I wish you well: you must be very
 sure
 Of the King's faith, for Pym and all his
 crew
 Will not be idle—setting Vane aside!
Straf. If Pym is busy,—you may
 write of Pym.
Lady Car. What need, since there's
 your King to take your part?
 He may endure Vane's counsel; but
 for Pym—
 Think you he'll suffer Pym to . . .
Straf. Child, your hair
 Is glossier than the Queen's!
Lady Car. Is that to ask
 A curl of me?
Straf. Scotland—the weary way!

Lady Car. Stay, let me fasten it.

—A rival's, Strafford?

Straf. [*showing the George.*] He hung it there: twine yours around it, child!

Lady Car. No—no—another time—I trifle so!

And there's a masque on foot. Farewell. The Court

Is dull; do something to enliven us In Scotland: we expect it at your hands.

Straf. I shall not fail in Scotland.

Lady Car. Prosper—if

You'll think of me sometimes!

Straf. How think of him

And not of you? of you, the lingering streak

(A golden one) in my good fortune's eve.

Lady Car. Strafford . . . Well, when the eve has its last streak The night has its first star.

[*She goes out.*]

Straf. That voice of hers—

You'd think she had a heart sometimes!

His voice

Is soft too.

Only God can save him now.

Be Thou about his bed, about his path!

His path! Where's England's path?

Diverging wide,

And not to join again the track my foot

Must follow—whither? All that forlorn way

Among the tombs! Far—far—till . . .

What, they do

Then join again, these paths? For,

huge in the dusk,

There's—Pym to face!

Why then, I have a foe

To close with, and a fight to fight at last

Worthy my soul! What, do they

beard the King,

And shall the King want Strafford at his need?

Am I not here?

Not in the market-place,

Pressed on by the rough artisans, so proud

To catch a glance from Wentworth!

They lie down

Hungry yet smile "Why, it must end

some day:

"Is he not watching for our sake?"

Not there!

But in Whitehall, the whited sepulchre,

The . . .

Curse nothing to-night! Only one name

They'll curse in all those streets to-night. Whose fault?

Did I make kings? set up, the first, a man

To represent the multitude, receive All love in right of them—supplant them so,

Until you love the man and not the king—

The man with the mild voice and mournful eyes

Which send me forth.

—To breast the bloody sea

That sweeps before me: with one star for guide.

Night has its first, supreme, forsaken star.

ACT III

SCENE I.—*Opposite Westminster Hall.*

SIR HENRY VANE, LORD SAVILE, LORD HOLLAND, and others of the Court.

Sir. H. Vane. The Commons thrust you out?

Savile. And what kept you

From sharing their civility?

Sir H. Vane. Kept me?

Fresh news from Scotland, sir! worse than the last,

If that may be. All 's up with Strafford there:

Nothing to bar the mad Scots marching hither

Next Lord's-day morning. That detained me, sir!

Well now, before they thrust you out,—go on,—

Their Speaker—did the fellow Lenthall say

All we set down for him?

Hol. Not a word missed.

Ere he began, we entered, Savile, I

And Bristol and some more, with hope to breed

A wholesome awe in the new Parliament.

But such a gang of graceless ruffians, Vane,

As glared at us!

Vane. So many?

Savile. Not a bench

Without its complement of burly knaves;

Your hopeful son among them : Hampden leant

Upon his shoulder—think of that !

Vane. I'd think
On Lenthal's speech, if I could get at it.
Urged he, I ask, how grateful they
should prove

For this unlooked-for summons from
the King ?

Hol. Just as we drilled him.

Vane. That the Scots will march
On London ?

Hol. All, and made so much of it,
A dozen subsidies at least seemed sure
To follow, when . . .

Vane. Well ?

Hol. 'Tis a strange thing now !
I've a vague memory of a sort of sound,
A voice, a kind of vast unnatural voice—
Pym, sir, was speaking ! Savile, help
me out :

What was it all ?

Sav. Something about " a
matter "—

No,—" work for England."

Hol. " England's great revenge "
He talked of.

Sav. How should I get used to
Pym
More than yourselves ?

Hol. However that be,
'Twas something with which we had
nought to do,

For we were " strangers " and 'twas
" England's work "—

(All this while looking us straight in the
face)

In other words, our presence might be
spared.

So, in the twinkling of an eye, before
I settled to my mind what ugly brute
Was likest Pym just then, they yelled
us out, [we.

Locked the doors after us, and here are
Vane. Eliot's old method . . .

Sav. Prithee, Vane, a truce
To Eliot and his times, and the great
Duke,

And how to manage Parliaments !
'Twas you

Advised the Queen to summon this :
why, Strafford

(To do him justice) would not hear of it.
Vane. Say rather, you have done
the best of turns

To Strafford : he's at York, we all know
why.

I would you had not set the Scots on
Strafford

Till Strafford put down Pym for us, my
lord !

Sav. Was it I altered Strafford's
plans ? did I . . .

A Messenger enters.

Mes. The Queen, my lords—she
sends me : follow me

At once ; 'tis very urgent ! she requires
Your counsel : something perilous and
strange

Occasions her command.

Sav. We follow, friend !

Now, Vane ;—your Parliament will
plague us all !

Vane. No Strafford here beside !

Sav. If you dare hint

I had a hand in his betrayal, sir . . .

Hol. Nay, find a fitter time for
quarrels—Pym

Will overmatch the best of you ; and,
think,

The Queen !

Vane. Come on, then : under-
stand, I loathe

Strafford as much as any—but his use !
To keep off Pym, to screen a friend or
two,

I would we had reserved him yet awhile.

SCENE II.—Whitehall.

The QUEEN and Lady CARLISLE.

Queen. It cannot be.

Lady Car. It is so.

Queen. Why, the House
Have hardly met.

Lady Car. They met for that.

Queen. No, no !

Meet to impeach Lord Strafford ? 'Tis
a jest.

Lady Car. A bitter one.

Queen. Consider ! 'Tis the House
We summoned so reluctantly, which
nothing

But the disastrous issue of the war
Persuaded us to summon. They'll
wreak all

Their spite on us, no doubt ; but the
old way

Is to begin by talk of grievances :

They have their grievances to busy
them.

Lady Car. Pym has begun his speech.

Queen. Where's Vane ?—That is,

Pym will impeach Lord Strafford if he leaves

His Presidency ; he's at York, we know, Since the Scots beat him : why should he leave York ?

Lady Car. Because the King sent for him.

Queen. Ah—but if

The King did send for him, he let him know

We had been forced to call a Parliament—

A step which Strafford, now I come to think,

Was vehement against.

Lady Car. The policy Escaped him, of first striking Parliaments

To earth, then setting them upon their feet

And giving them a sword : but this is idle.

Did the King send for Strafford ? He will come.

Queen. And what am I to do ?

Lady Car. What do ? Fail, madam !

Be ruined for his sake ! what matters how,

So it but stand on record that you made

An effort, only one ?

Queen. The King away At Theobald's !

Lady Car. Send for him at once : he must

Dissolve the House.

Queen. Wait till Vane finds the truth

Of the report : then . .

Lady Car. —It will matter little

What the King does. Strafford that lends his arm

And breaks his heart for you !

Sir H. Vane enters.

Vane. The Commons, madam, Are sitting with closed doors. A huge

debate,

No lack of noise ; but nothing, I should

guess,

Concerning Strafford : Pym has certainly

Not spoken yet.

Queen. [To *Lady CARLISLE*]. You hear ?

Lady Car. I do not hear

That the King's sent for !

Sir H. Vane. Savile will be able To tell you more.

HOLLAND enters.

Queen. The last news, Holland ?

Hol. Pym Is raging like a fire. The whole House

means To follow him together to Whitehall

And force the King to give up Strafford ?

Queen. Strafford ?

Hol. If they content themselves with Strafford ! Laud

Is talked of, Cottington and Windesbank too,

Pym has not left out one of them—I would

You heard Pym raging !

Queen. Vane, go find the King ! Tell the King, Vane, the People follow

Pym To brave us at Whitehall !

SAVILE enters.

Savile. Not to Whitehall— 'Tis to the Lords they go: they seek

redress

On Strafford from his peers—the legal way,

They call it.

Queen. (Wait, Vane !)

Sav. But the adage gives Long life to threatened men. Strafford

can save Himself so readily : at York, remember,

In his own county, what has he to fear ? The Commons only mean to frighten

him From leaving York. Surely, he will

not come.

Queen. Lucy, he will not come !

Lady Car. Once more, the King

Hast sent for Strafford. He will come.

Vane. Oh doubtless !

And bring destruction with him ; that's his way.

What but his coming spoilt all Conway's plan ?

The King must take his counsel, choose his friends,

Be wholly ruled by him ! What's the result ?

The North that was to rise, Ireland to help,—

What came of it ? In my poor mind, a fright

Is no prodigious punishment.

Lady Car. A fright ?
Pym will fail worse than Strafford if he thinks

To frighten him. [*To the QUEEN.*] You will not save him then ?

Sav. When something like a charge is made, the King

Will best know how to save him : and 't is clear,

While Strafford suffers nothing by the matter,

The King may reap advantage : this in question,

No dining you with ship-money complaints !

Queen. [*To Lady CARLISLE.*] If we dissolve them, who will pay the army ?

Protect us from the insolent Scots ?
Lady Car. In truth,

I know not, madam. Strafford's fate concerns

Me little : you desired to learn what course

Would save him : I obey you.

Vane. Notice, too,
There can't be fairer ground for taking full

Revenge—(Strafford's revengeful)—than he'll have

Against his old friend Pym.

Queen. Why, he shall claim Vengeance on Pym !

Vane. And Strafford, who is he
To 'scape unscathed amid the accidents
That harass all beside ? I, for my part,
Should look for something of discomfiture

Had the King trusted me so thoroughly
And been so paid for it.

Hol. He'll keep at York :
All will blow over : he'll return no worse,

Humbled a little, thankful for a place
Under as good a man. Oh, we'll dispense

With seeing Strafford for a month or two !

STRAFFORD enters.

Queen. You here !

Straf. The King sends for me, madam.

Queen. Sir,
The King . . .

Straf. An urgent matter that imports the King.

[*To Lady CARLISLE.*] Why, Lucy, what's in agitation now,

That all this muttering and shrugging, see,

Begins at me ? They do not speak !
Lady Car. 'T is welcome !

For we are proud of you—happy and proud

To have you with us, Strafford ! You were staunch

At Durham : you did well there ! Had you not

Been stayed, you might have . . . we said, even now,

Our hope's in you !

Sir H. Vane. [*To Lady CARLISLE.*] The Queen would speak with you.

Straf. Will one of you, his servants here, vouchsafe

To signify my presence to the King ?
Sav. An urgent matter ?

Straf. None that touches you, Lord Savile ! Say, it were some treacherous

Sly pitiful intriguing with the Scots—You would go free, at least ! (They half divine

My purpose !) Madam, shall I see the King ?

The service I would render, much concerns

His welfare.

Queen. But his Majesty, my lord, May not be here, may . . .

Straf. Its importance, then, Must plead excuse for this withdrawal, madam,

And for the grief it gives Lord Savile here.

Queen. [*Who has been conversing with VANE and HOLLAND.*] The King will see you, sir !

[*To Lady CARLISLE.*] Mark me : Pym's worst

Is done by now : he has impeached the Earl,

Or found the Earl too strong for him, by now.

Let us not seem instructed ! We should work

No good to Strafford, but deform ourselves

With shame in the world's eye. (*To STRAFFORD.*) His Majesty

Has much to say with you.

Straf. Time fleeting, too!
 [To Lady CARLISLE.] No means of
 getting them away? And she—
 What does she whisper? Does she
 know my purpose?
 What does she think of it? Get them
 away!

Queen. [To Lady CARLISLE.] He
 comes to baffle Pym—he thinks
 the danger

Far off: tell him no word of it! a time
 For help will come; we'll not be want-
 ing then.

Keep him in play, Lucy—you, self-
 possessed

And calm! [To STRAFFORD.] To spare
 your lordship some delay

I will myself acquaint the King. [To
 Lady CARLISLE.] Beware!

[The QUEEN, VANE, HOLLAND and
 SAVILE go out.]

Straf. She knows it?

Lady Car. Tell me, Strafford!

Straf. Afterward!
 This moment's the great moment of all
 time.

She knows my purpose?

Lady Car. Thoroughly: just now
 She bade me hide it from you.

Straf. Quick, dear child,
 The whole o' the scheme?

Lady Car. (Ah, he would learn if
 they

Connive at Pym's procedure! Could
 they but

Have once apprised the King! But
 there's no time

For falsehood, now.) Strafford, the
 whole is known.

Straf. Known and approved.

Lady Car. Hardly discounten-
 anced.

Straf. And the King—say, the King
 consents as well?

Lady Car. The King's not yet in-
 formed, but will not dare
 To interpose.

Straf. What need to wait him,
 then?

He'll sanction it! I stayed, child, tell
 him, long!

It vexed me to the soul—this waiting
 here.

You know him, there's no counting on
 the King.

Tell him I waited long!

Lady Car. (What can he mean?

Rejoice at the King's hollowness?)

Straf. I knew
 They would be glad of it,—all over
 once.

I knew they would be glad: but he'd
 contrive,

The Queen and he, to mar, by helping
 it,

An angel's making.

Lady Car. (Is he mad?) Dear
 Strafford,

You were not wont to look so happy.
Straf. Sweet,

I tried obedience thoroughly. I took
 The King's wild plan: of course, ere I
 could reach

My army, Conway ruined it. I drew
 The wrecks together, raised all heaven
 and earth,

And would have fought the Scots: the
 King at once

Made truce with them. Then, Lucy,
 then, dear child,

God put it in my mind to love, serve,
 d'e

For Charles, but never to obey him
 more!

While he endured their insolence at
 Ripon

I fell on them at Durham. But you'll
 tell

The King I waited? All the anteroom
 Is filled with my adherents.

Lady Car. Strafford—Strafford,
 What daring act is this you hint?

Straf. No, no!
 'Tis here, not daring if you knew! all
 here!

[Drawing papers from his breast.]
 Full proof, see, ample proof—does the
 Queen know

I have such damning proof? Bedford
 and Essex,

Broke, Warwick, Savile (did you notice
 Savile?)

The simper that I spoilt?) Saye,
 Mandeville—

Sold to the Scots, body and soul, by
 Pym!

Lady Car. Great Heaven!

Straf. From Savile and his lords,
 to Pym

And his losels, crushed!—Pym shall
 not ward the blow

Nor Savile creep aside from it! The
 Crew

And the Cabal—I crush them!

Lady Car. And you go—
Strafford,—and now you go?—

Straf. —About no work
In the background, I promise you! I
go

Straight to the House of Lords to claim
these knaves.

Mainwaring!

Lady Car. Stay—stay, Strafford!

Straf. She'll return,
The Queen—some little project of her
own!

No time to lose: the King takes fright
perhaps.

Lady Car. Pym's strong, remember!

Straf. Very strong, as fits
The Faction's head—with no offence to
Hampden,

Vane, Rudyard and my loving Hollis:
one

And all they lodge within the Tower to-
night

In just equality. Bryan! Mainwaring!
[*Many of his Adherents enter.*

The Peers debate just now (a lucky
chance)

On the Scots war; my visit's oppor-
tune.

When all is over, Bryan, you proceed
To Ireland: these dispatches, mark
me, Bryan,

Are for the Deputy, and these for
Ormond:

We want the army here—my army,
raised

At such a cost, that should have done
such good,

And was inactive all the time! no
matter,

We'll find a use for it. Willis . . . or,
no—you!

You, friend, make haste to York: bear
this, at once . . .

Or,—better stay for form's sake, see
yourself

The news you carry. You remain with
me

To execute the Parliament's command,
Mainwaring! Help to seize the lesser
knaves,

Take care there's no escaping at back-
doors:

I'll not have one escape, mind me—not
one!

I mean revengeful, Lucy? Did you
know

What these men dare!

Lady Car. It is so much they dare!

Straf. I proved that long ago; my
turn is now

Keep sharp watch, Goring, on the
citizens!

Observe who harbours any of the brood
That scramble off: be sure they smart
for it!

Our coffers are but lean.

And you, child, too,
Shall have your task; deliver this to
Laud.

Laud will not be the slowest in my
praise:

"Thorough" he'll cry!—Foolish, to
be so glad!

This life is gay and glowing, after all:
'Tis worth while, Lucy, having foes like
mine

Just for the bliss of crushing them.
To-day

Is worth the living for.

Lady Car. That reddening brow!
You seem . . .

Straf. Well—do I not? I would
be well—

I could not but be well on such a day!
And, this day ended, 't is of slight im-
port [the soul]

How long the ravaged frame subjects
In Strafford.

Lady Car. Noble Strafford!

Straf. No farewell!
I'll see you anon, to-morrow—the first
thing.

—If She should come to stay me!

Lady Car. Go—'t is nothing—
Only my heart that swells: it has been
thus

Ere now: go, Strafford!

Straf. To-night, then, let it be.
I must see Him: you, the next after
Him.

I'll tell you how Pym looked. Follow
me, friends!

You, gentlemen, shall see, a sight this
hour

To talk of all your lives. Close after
me!

"My friend of friends!"

[*STRAFFORD and the rest go out.*

Lady Car. The King—ever the
King!

No thought of one beside, whose little
word

Unveils the King to him—one word
from me,

Which yet I do not breathe !

Ah, have I spared
Strafford a pang, and shall I seek re-
ward

Beyond that memory ? Surely too,
some way

He is the better for my love. No, no—
He would not look so joyous—I'll be-
lieve

His very eye would never sparkle thus,
Had I not prayed for him this long,
long while.

SCENE III.—*The Antechamber of the
House of Lords.*

*Many of the Presbyterian Party. The
Adherents of STRAFFORD, etc.*

A Group of Presbyterians.—1. I tell
you he struck Maxwell : Maxwell
sought

To stay the Earl : he struck him and
passed on.

2. Fear as you may, keep a good
countenance

Before these rufflers.

3. Strafford here the first,
With the great army at his back !

4. No doubt.
I would Pym had made haste : that's
Bryan, hush—

The gallant pointing.

Strafford's Followers.—1. Mark these
worthies, now !

2. A goodly gathering ! " Where
the carcass is

" There shall the eagles "—what's the
rest ?

3. For eagles
Say crows.

A Presbyterian. Stand back, sirs !

One of Strafford's Followers. Are we
in Geneva ?

A Presbyterian. No, nor in Ireland ;
we have leave to breathe.

One of Strafford's Followers. Truly ?
Behold how privileged we be

That serve " King Pym ! " There's
Some one at Whitehall

Who skulks obscure ; but Pym
struts . . .

The Presbyterian. Nearer.

A Follower of Strafford. Higher.
We look to see him. [*To his Com-*

panions.] I'm to have St. John
In charge ; was he among the knaves
just now

That followed Pym within there ?

Another. The gaunt man
Talking with Rudyard. Did the Earl
expect

Pym at his heels so fast ? I like it not.

MAXWELL enters.

Another. Why, man, they rush into
the net ! Here's Maxwell—

Ha, Maxwell ? How the brethren
flock around

The fellow ! Do you feel the Earl's
hand yet

Upon your shoulder, Maxwell ?

Max. Gentlemen,
Stand back ! a great thing passes here.

A Follower of Strafford. [*To another.*]
The Earl

Is at his work ! [*To M.*] Say, Max-
well, what great thing !

Speak out ! [*To a Presbyterian.*]
Friend, I've a kindness for you !

Friend,
I've seen you with St. John : O stock-
ishness !

Wear such a ruff, and never call to
mind

St. John's head in a charger ? How,
the plague,

Not laugh ?

Another. Say, Maxwell, what great
thing !

Another. Nay, wait :
The jest will be to wait.

First. And who's to bear
These demure hypocrites ? You'd
swear they came . . .

Came . . . just as we come !

[*A Puritan enters hastily and with-
out observing STRAFFORD'S
Followers.*

The Puritan. How goes on the
work ?

Has Pym . . .

A Follower of Strafford. The secret's
out at last. Aha,

The carrion's scented ! Welcome,
crow the first !

Gorge merrily, you with the blinking
eye !

" King Pym " has fallen !

The Puritan. Pym ?

A Strafford.

A Presbyterian.

Only Pym ?
Many of Strafford's Followers. No,
brother, not Pym only ; Vane as
well,

Rudyard as well, Hampden, St. John
as well!

A Presbyterian. My mind misgives :
can it be true ?

Another. Lost ! Lost !

A Strafford. Say we true, Maxwell ?

The Puritan. Pride before
destruction,

A haughty spirit goeth before a fall.

Many of Strafford's Followers. Ah
now ! The very thing ! A word in
season !

A golden apple in a silver picture,

To greet Pym as he passes !

*[The doors at the back begin to open,
noise and light issuing.]*

Max. Stand back, all !

Many of the Presbyterians. I hold
with Pym ! And I !

Strafford's Followers. Now for the
text !

He comes ! Quick !

The Puritan. How hath the
oppressor ceased !

The Lord hath broken the staff of the
wicked !

The sceptre of the rulers, he who smote

The people in wrath with a continual
stroke,

That ruled the nations in his anger—he
is persecuted and none hindereth !

*[The doors open, and STRAFFORD
issues in the greatest disorder,
and amid cries from within of
"Void the House."]*

Straf. Impeach me ! Pym ! I never
struck, I think,

The felon on that calm insulting mouth

When it proclaimed—Pym's mouth
proclaimed me . . . God !

Was it a word, only a word that held

The outrageous blood back on my heart
—which beats !

Which beats ! Some one word—

"Traitor," did he say,

Bending that eye, brimful of bitter fire,
Upon me ?

Max. In the Commons' name,
their servant

Demands Lord Strafford's sword.

Straf. What did you say ?

Max. The Commons bid me ask your
lordship's sword.

Straf. Let us go forth : follow me,
gentlemen !

Draw your swords too : cut any down
that bar us.

On the King's service ! Maxwell, clear
the way !

*[The PRESBYTERIANS prepare to
dispute his passage.]*

Straf. I stay : the King himself
shall see me here.

Your tablets, fellow !

[To MAINWARING.] Give that to the
King !

Yes, Maxwell, for the next half-hour,
let be !

Nay, you shall take my sword !

*[MAXWELL advances to take it.
Or, no—not that !]*

Their blood, perhaps, may wipe out all
thus far,

All up to that—not that ! Why,
friend, you see,

When the King lays your head beneath
my foot

It will not pay for that. Go, all of you !

Max. I dare, my lord, to disobey :
none stir !

Straf. This gentle Maxwell !—Do
not touch him, Bryan !

[To the Presbyterians.] Whichever cur
of you will carry this

Escapes his fellows' fate. None saves
his life ?

None ?

*[Cries from within of "STRAFFORD."
Slingsby, I've loved you at least :
make haste !]*

Stab me ! I have not time to tell you
why.

You then, my Bryan ! Mainwaring,
you then !

Is it because I spoke so hastily

At Allerton ? The King had vexed me.

[To the Presbyterians.] You !

—Not even you ? If I live over this,

The King is sure to have your heads,
you know !

But what if I can't live this minute
through ?

Pym, who is there with his pursuing
smile !

*[Louder cries of "STRAFFORD."
The King ! I troubled him, stood in
the way]*

Of his negotiations, was the one
Great obstacle to peace, the Enemy

Of Scotland : and he sent for me, from
York,

My safety guaranteed—having pre-
pared

A Parliament—I see ! And at White-
hall

The Queen was whispering with Vane
—I see

The trap! [*Tearing off the George.*]

I tread a gewgaw underfoot,
And cast a memory from me. One
stroke, now!

[*His own Adherents disarm him.*]

Renewed cries of "STRAFFORD."
England! I see thy arm in this and
yield.

Pray you now—Pym awaits me—pray
you now!

[*STRAFFORD reaches the doors:
they open wide. HAMPDEN and
a crowd discovered, and, at the
bar, PYM standing apart. As
STRAFFORD kneels, the scene shuts.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I.—Whitehall.

The KING, the QUEEN, HOLLIS, Lady
CARLISLE. (VANE, HOLLAND, SAVILE,
in the background.)

Lady Car. Answer them, Hollis, for
his sake! One word!

Cha. [*To HOLLIS.*] You stand, silent
and cold, as though I were

Deceiving you—my friend, my play-
fellow

Of other times. What wonder after
all?

Just so, I dreamed my People loved me.

Hol. Sir,
It is yourself that you deceive, not me,
You'll quit me comforted, your mind
made up

That, since you've talked thus much
and grieved thus much,

All you can do for Strafford has been
done.

Queen. If you kill Strafford—(come,
we grant you leave,

Suppose)—

Hol. I may withdraw, sir?

Lady Car. Hear them out!

'Tis the last chance for Strafford!

Hear them out!

Hol. "If we kill Strafford"—on the
eighteenth day

Of Strafford's trial—"We!"

Cha. Pym, my good Hollis—

Pym, I should say!

Hol. Ah, true—sir, pardon me!

You witness our proceedings every day;

But the screened gallery, I might have
guessed,

Admits of such a partial glimpse at us,
Pym takes up all the room, shuts out
the view.

Still, on my honour, sir, the rest of the
place

Is not unoccupied. The Commons sit
—That's England; Ireland sends, and

Scotland too,

Their representatives; the Peers that
judge

Are easily distinguished; one remarks
The People here and there: but the
close curtain

Must hide so much!

Queen. Acquaint your insolent
crew.

This day the curtain shall be dashed
aside!

It served a purpose.

Hol. Think! This very day?
Ere Strafford rises to defend himself?

Cha. I will defend him, sir!—san-
ction the past

This day: it ever was my purpose.

Rage
At me, not Strafford!

Lady Car. Nobly!—will he not
Do nobly?

Hol. Sir, you will do honestly;
And, for that deed, I too would be a
king.

Cha. Only, to do this now!—"deaf"
(in your style)

"To subjects' prayers,"—I must op-
pose them now.

It seems their will the trial should pro-
ceed,—

So palpably their will!

Hol. You peril much,
But it were no bright moment save
for that.

Strafford, your prime support, the sole
roof-tree

That props this quaking House of
Privilege,

(Floods come, winds beat, and see—
the treacherous sand!)

Doubtless, if the mere putting forth
an arm

Could save him, you'd save Strafford.

Cha. And they mean
Consummate calmly this great wrong!

No hope?

This ineffaceable wrong! No pity
then?

Hol. No plague in store for perfidy?

—Farewell!

You called me, sir—[*To Lady CARLISLE*]
you, lady, bade me come

To save the Earl: I came, thank God
for it,

To learn how far such perfidy can go!

You, sir, concert with me on saving
him

Who have just ruined Strafford!

Cha. I?—and how?

Hol. Eighteen days long he throws,
one after one,

Pym's charges back: a blind moth-
eaten law!

—He'll break from it at last: and
whom to thank?

The mouse that gnawed the lion's net
for him

Got a good friend,—but he, the other
mouse,

That looked on while the lion freed
himself—

Fared he so well, does any fable say?

Cha. What can you mean?

Hol. Pym never could have
proved

Strafford's design of bringing up the
toops

To force this kingdom to obedience:
Vane— [it.]

Your servant, not our friend, has proved
Cha. Vane?

Hol. This day. Did Vane deliver
up or no

Those notes which, furnished by his
son to Pym,

Seal Strafford's fate?

Cha. Sir, as I live, I know
Nothing that Vane has done! What

treason next?

I wash my hands of it. Vane, speak
the truth!

Ask Vane himself!

Hol. I will not speak to Vane,
Who speak to Pym and Hampden every

day.

Queen. Speak to Vane's master then!
What gain to him

Were Strafford's death?

Hol. Ha? Strafford cannot turn
As you, sir, sit there—bid you forth,

demand

If every hateful act were not set down
In his commission?—whether you

contrived

Or no, that all the violence should seem
His work, the gentle ways—your own,

—his part,

To counteract the King's kind im-
pulses—

While . . . but you know what he
could say! And then

He might produce,—mark, sir!—a
certain charge

To set the King's express command
aside,

If need were, and be blameless. He
might add . . .

Cha. Enough!

Hol. —Who bade him break the
Parliament,

Find some pretext for setting up sword-
law!

Queen. Retire!

Cha. Once more, whatever Vane
dared to,

I know not: he is rash, a fool—I know
Nothing of Vane!

Hol. Well—I believe you. Sir,
Believe me, in return, that . . .

[*Turning to Lady CARLISLE.*] Gentle
lady,

The few words I would say, the stones
might hear

Sooner than these,—I rather speak to
you,

You, with the heart! The question,
trust me, takes

Another shape, to-day: not, if the King
Or England shall succumb,—but, who

shall pay

The forfeit, Strafford or his master. Sir,
You loved me once: think on my

warning now!

[*Goes out.*]

Cha. On you and on your warning
both!—Carlisle!

That paper!

Queen. But consider!

Cha. Give it me!

There, signed—will that content you?
Do not speak!

You have betrayed me, Vane! See!
any day,

According to the tenor of that paper,
He bids your brother bring the army up.

Strafford shall head it and take full
revenge.

Seek Strafford! Let him have the
same, before

He rises to defend himself!

Queen. In truth?

That your shrewd Hollis should have
worked a change

Like this! You, late reluctant . . .

Cha. Say, Carlisle,
Your brother Percy brings the army up,
Falls on the Parliament—(I'll think
of you,
My Hollis!) say, we plotted long—'t is
mine,
The scheme is mine, remember! Say,
I cursed
Vane's folly in your hearing! If the
Earl [lie
Does rise to do us shame, the fault shall
With you, Carlisle!
Lady Car. Nay, fear not me!
but still
That's a bright moment, sir, you
throw away.
Tear down the veil and save him!
Queen. Go, Carlisle!
Lady Car. (I shall see Strafford—
speak to him: my heart
Must never beat so, then! And if I
tell
The truth? What's gained by false-
hood? There they stand
Whose trade it is, whose life it is! How
vain
To gild such rottenness! Strafford
shall know,
Thoroughly know them!)
Queen. Trust to me! [To CAR-
LISLE.] Carlisle,
You seem inclined, alone of all the
Court,
To serve poor Strafford: this bold
plan of yours
Merits much praise, and yet . . .
Lady Car. Time presses, madam.
Queen. Yet—may it not be some-
thing premature?
Strafford defends himself to-day—re-
serves
Some wondrous effort, one may well
suppose!
Lady Car. Ay, Hollis hints as much.
Cha. Why linger then?
Haste with the scheme—my scheme: I
shall be there
To watch his look. Tell him I watch
his look!
Queen. Stay, we'll precede you!
Lady Car. At your pleasure.
Cha. Say—
Say, Vane is hardly ever at Whitehall!
I shall be there, remember!
Lady Car. Doubt me not.
Cha. On our return, Carlisle, we wait
you here!

B.P.

Lady Car. I'll bring his answer.
Sir, I follow you.
(Prove the King faithless, and I take
away
All Strafford cares to live for: let it
be—
'Tis the King's scheme!
My Strafford, I can save,
Nay, I have saved you, yet am scarce
content,
Because my poor name will not cross
your mind.
Strafford, how much I am unworthy
you!)

SCENE II.—*A passage adjoining West-
minster Hall.*

*Many groups of Spectators of the Trial.
Officers of the Court, etc.*

1st Spec. More crowd than ever!
Not know Hampden, man?
That's he, by Pym, Pym that is speak-
ing now.

No, truly, if you look so high you'll see
Little enough of either!

2nd Spec. Stay: Pym's arm
Points like a prophet's rod.

3rd Spec. Ay, ay, we've heard
Some pretty speaking: yet the Earl
escapes.

4th Spec. I fear it: just a foolish
word or two

About his children—and we see, for-
sooth,
Not England's foe in Strafford, but the
man

Who, sick, half-blind . . .

2nd Spec. What's that Pym's
saying now

Which makes the curtains flutter?
look! A hand

Clutches them. Ah! The King's
hand!

5th Spec. I had thought
Pym was not near so tall. What said
he, friend?

2nd Spec. "Nor is this way a novel
way of blood,"

And the Earl turns as if to . . . look!
look!

Many Spectators. There!
What ails him? no—he rallies, see—
goes on

And Strafford smiles. Strange!

An Officer. Hasehrig!

Many Spectators. Friend? Friend?

The Officer. Lost, utterly lost : just when we looked for Pym
To make a stand against the ill effects
Of the Earl's speech ! Is Haselrig without ?

Pym's message is to him.

3rd Spec. Now, said I true ?
Will the Earl leave them yet at fault or no ?

1st Spec. Never believe it, man !
These notes of Vane's
Ruin the Earl.

5th Spec. A brave end : not a whit
Less firm, less Pym all over. Then,
the trial

Is closed. No—Strafford means to
speak again ?

An Officer. Stand back, there !

5th Spec. Why, the Earl is coming
hither !

Before the court breaks up ! His
brother, look,—

You'd say he'd deprecated some fierce
act

In Strafford's mind just now.

An Officer. Stand back, I say !

2nd Spec. Who's the veiled woman
that he talks with ?

Many Spectators. Hush—

The Earl ! the Earl !

[*Enter STRAFFORD, SLINGSBY, and
other Secretaries, HOLLIS, Lady
CARLISLE, MAXWELL, BALFOUR,
etc. STRAFFORD converses with
Lady CARLISLE.*]

Hol. So near the end ! Be
patient—
Return !

Straf. [*To his Secretaries.*] Here—
anywhere—or, 't is freshest here !
To spend one's April here, the blossom-
month :

Set it down here !

[*They arrange a table, papers, etc.*
So, Pym can quail, can cower
Because I glance at him, yet more's
to do ?

What's to be answered, Slingsby ?
Let us end !

[*To Lady CARLISLE.*] Child, I refuse
his offer ; whatsoe'er
It be ! Too late ! Tell me no word of
him !

'T is something, Hollis, I assure you
that—

To stand, sick as you are, some eighteen
days

Fighting for life and fame against a
pack

Of very curs, that lie through thick and
thin,

Eat flesh and bread by wholesale, and
can't say

" Strafford " if it would take my life !

Lady Car. Be moved !

Glance at the paper !

Straf. Already at my heels !

Pym's faulting bloodhounds scent the
track again.

Peace, child ! Now, Slingsby !

[*Messengers from LANE, and other
of STRAFFORD's Counsel within
the Hall are coming and going
during the Scene.*]

Straf. [*setting himself to write and
dictate.*] I shall beat you, Hollis !

Do you know that ? In spite of St.
John's tricks,

In spite of Pym—your Pym who shrank
from me !

Eliot would have contrived it other-
wise.

[*To a Messenger.*] In truth ? This slip,
tell Lane, contains as much

As I can call to mind about the matter.
Eliot would have disdained . . .

[*Calling after the Messenger.*] And
Radcliffe, say,

The only person who could answer Pym,
Is safe in prison, just for that.

Well, well !

It had not been recorded in that case,
I baffled you.

[*To Lady CARLISLE.*] Nay, child, why
look so grieved ?

All's gained without the King ! You
saw Pym quail ?

What shall I do when they acquit me,
think you,

But tranquilly resume my task as
though

Nothing had intervened since I pro-
posed

To call that traitor to account ! Such
tricks,

Trust me, shall not be played a second
time,

Not even against Laud, with his grey
hair—

Your good work, Hollis ! Peace ! To
make amends,

You, Lucy, shall be here when I im-
peach

Pym and his fellows.

Hol. Wherefore not protest
Against our whole proceeding, long
ago?
Why feel indignant now? Why stand
this while
Enduring patiently?
Straf. Child, I'll tell you—
You, and not Pym—you, the slight
graceful girl
Tall for a flowering lily, and not Hollis—
Why I stood patient! I was fool
enough
To see the will of England in Pym's
will;
To fear, myself had wronged her, and
to wait
Her judgment: when, behold, in place
of it . . .
[*To a Messenger who whispers.*] Tell
Lane to answer no such question!
Law,— [try
I grapple with their law! I'm here to
My actions by their standard, not my
own!
Their law allowed that levy: what's
the rest
To Pym, or Lane, any but God and me?
Lady Car. The King's so weak!
Secure this chance! 'Twas Vane,
Never forget, who furnished Pym the
notes . . .
Straf. Fit,—very fit, those precious
notes of Vane,
To close the Trial worthily! I feared
Some spice of nobleness might linger
yet
And spoil the character of all the past.
Vane eased me . . . and I will go back
and say
As much—to Pym, to England! Fol-
low me!
I have a word to say! There, my
defence
Is done!
Stay! why be proud? Why
care to own
My gladness, my surprise?—Nay, not
surprise!
Wherefore insist upon the little pride
Of doing all myself, and sparing him
The pain? Child, say the triumph is
my King's!
When Pym grew pale, and trembled,
and sank down,
One image was before me: could I fail?
Child, care not for the past, so indis-
tinct,

Obscure—there's nothing to forgive in
it
'Tis so forgotten! From this day be-
gins
A new life, founded on a new belief
In Charles.
Hol. In Charles? Rather, believe
in Pym!
And here he comes in proof! Appeal
to Pym!
Say how unfair . . .
Straf. To Pym? I would
say nothing!
I would not look upon Pym's face again.
Lady Car. Stay, let me have to think
I pressed your hand!
[*STRAFFORD and his friends go out.*
Enter HAMPDEN and VANE.
Vane. O Hampden, save the great
misguided man!
Plead Strafford's cause with Pym! I
have remarked
He moved no muscle when we all de-
claimed
Against him: you had but to breathe
—he turned
Those kind calm eyes upon you.
[*Enter PYM, the Solicitor-General*
ST. JOHN, the Managers of the
Trial, FIENNES, RUDYARD, etc.
Rud. Horrible!
Till now all hearts were with you: I
withdraw
For one. Too horrible! But we
mistake
Your purpose, Pym: you cannot snatch
away
The last spar from the drowning man.
Fien. He talks
With St. John of it—see, how quietly!
[*To other PRESBYTERIANS.*] You'll
join us? Strafford may deserve
the worst:
But this new course is monstrous.
Vane, take heart!
This Bill of his Attainder shall not
have
One true man's hand to it.
Vane. Consider, Pym!
Confront your Bill, your own Bill:
what is it?
You cannot catch the Earl on any
charge,—
No man will say the law has hold of
him

On any charge; and therefore you resolve

To take the general sense on his desert,
As though no law existed, and we met
To found one. You refer to Parliament

To speak its thought upon the abortive mass

Of half-borne out assertions, dubious hints

Hereafter to be cleared, distortions—
ay,

And wild inventions. Every man is saved

The task of fixing any single charge
On Strafford: he has but to see in him
The enemy of England.

Pym. A right scruple!
I have heard some called England's enemy

With less consideration.

Vane. Pity me!
Indeed you make me think I was your friend!

I who have murdered Strafford, how remove

That memory from me?

Pym. I absolve you, Vane.
Take you no care for aught that you have done!

Vane. John Hampden, not this Bill!
Reject this Bill!

He staggers through the ordeal: let him go, [for us!

Strew no fresh fire before him! Plead
When Strafford spoke, your eyes were thick with tears!

Hamp. England speaks louder: who are we, to play

The generous pardoner at her expense,
Magnanimously waive advantages,
And, if he conquer us, applaud his skill?

Vane. He was your friend.

Pym. I have heard that before.

Fien. And England trusts you.

Hamp. Shame be his, who turns
The opportunity of serving her
She trusts him with, to his own mean account—

Who would look nobly frank at her expense!

Fien. I never thought it could have come to this.

Pym. But I have made myself familiar, Fiennes,

With this one thought—have walked,
and sat, and slept,

This thought before me. I have done such things,

Being the chosen man that should destroy

The traitor. You have taken up this thought

To play with, for a gentle stimulant,
To give a dignity to idler life

By the dim prospect of emprise to come,
But ever with the softening, sure belief,
That all would end some strange way right at last.

Fien. Had we made out some weightier charge!

Pym. You say
That these are petty charges: can we come

To the real charge at all? There he is safe

In tyranny's stronghold. Apostasy
Is not a crime, treachery not a crime:

The cheek burns, the blood tingles,
when you speak

The words, but where's the power to take revenge

Upon them? We must make occasion serve,—

The oversight shall pay for the main sin
That mocks us.

Rud. But this unexampled course,
This Bill! [away

Pym. By this, we roll the clouds
Of precedent and custom, and at once
Bid the great beacon-light God sets in all,

The conscience of each bosom, shine upon

The guilt of Strafford: each man lay his hand

Upon his breast, and judge!

Vane. I only see
Strafford, nor pass his corpse for all beyond!

Rud. and others. Forgive him! He would join us, now he finds

What the King counts reward! The pardon, too,

Should be your own. Yourself should bear to Strafford

The pardon of the Commons.
Pym. Meet him? Strafford?

Have we to meet once more, then? Be it so!

And yet—the prophecy seemed half fulfilled

When, at the Trial, as he gazed, my youth,

Our friendship, divers thoughts came
back at once
And left me, for a time . . . 'T is very
sad !

To-morrow we discuss the points of law
With Lane—to-morrow ?

Vane. Not before to-morrow—
So, time enough ! I knew you would
relent !

Pym. The next day, Haselrig, you
introduce

The Bill of his Attainder. Pray for me !

SCENE III.—*Whitehall.*

The KING.

Cha. My loyal servant ! To defend
himself

Thus irresistibly,—withholding aught
That seemed to implicate us !

We have done
Less gallantly by Strafford. Well, the
future

Must recompense the past.

She tarries long.
I understand you, Strafford, now !

The scheme—
Carlisle's mad scheme—he'll sanction it,
I fear,

For love of me. 'T was too precipitate :
Before the army's fairly on its march,
He'll be at large : no matter.

Well, Carlisle ?

Enter PYM.

Pym. Fear me not, sir :—my mis-
sion is to save,
This time.

Cha. To break thus on me !
Unannounced !

Pym. It is of Strafford I would speak.
Cha. No more
Of Strafford ! I have heard too much
from you.

Pym. I spoke, sir, for the People ;
will you hear

A word upon my own account ?

Cha. Of Strafford ?
(So turns the tide already ? Have we
tamed

The insolent brawler ?—Strafford's
eloquence

Is swift in its effect.) Lord Strafford,
sir,

Has spoken for himself.

Pym. Sufficiently.
I would apprise you of the novel course

The People take : the Trial fails.

Cha. Yes, yes :
We are aware, sir : for your part in it
Means shall be found to thank you.

Pym. Pray you, read
This schedule ! I would learn from
your own mouth

—(It is a matter much concerning me)—
Whether, if two Estates of us concede
The death of Strafford, on the grounds
set forth

Within that parchment, you, sir, can
resolve

To grant your own consent to it. That
Bill

Is framed by me. If you determine,
sir,

That England's manifested will should
guide

Your judgment, ere another week such
will

Shall manifest itself. If not,—I cast
Aside the measure.

Cha. You can hinder, then,
The introduction of this Bill ?

Pym. I can.

Cha. He is my friend, sir : I have
wronged him : mark you,

Had I not wronged him, this might be.
You think

Because you hate the Earl . . . (turn
not away,

We know you hate him)—no one else
could love

Strafford : but he has saved me, some
affirm.

Think of his pride ! And, do you
know one strange,

One frightful thing ? We all have
used the man

As though a drudge of ours, with not a
source

Of happy thoughts except in us ; and
yet

Strafford has wife and children, house-
hold cares,

Just as if we had never been. Ah sir,
You are moved, even you, a solitary

man

Weld to your cause—to England if you
will !

Pym. Yes—think, my soul—to Eng-
land ! Draw not back !

Cha. Prevent that Bill, sir ! All
your course seems fair

Till now. Why, in the end, 't is I
should sign

The warrant for his death! You have said much

I ponder on; I never meant, indeed, Strafford should serve me any more.

I take

The Commons' counsel; but this Bill is yours—

Nor worthy of its leader: care not, sir, for that, however! I will quite forget you named it to me. You are satisfied?

Pym. Listen to me, sir! Eliot laid his hand,

Wasted and white upon my forehead once;

Wentworth—he's gone now!—has talked on, whole nights,

And I beside him; Hampden loves me: sir,

How can I breathe and not wish England well,

And her King well?

Cha. I thank you, sir, who leave That King his servant. Thanks, sir!

Pym. Let me speak! —Who may not speak again; whose spirit yearns

For a cool night after this weary day: —Who would not have my soul turn sicker yet

In a new task, more fatal, more august, More full of England's utter weal or woe. I thought, sir, could I find myself with you,

After this trial, alone, as man to man— I might say something, warn you, pray you, save—

Mark me, King Charles, save—you! But God must do it. Yet I warn you, sir—

(With Strafford's faded eyes yet full on me)

As you would have no deeper question moved

—"How long the Many must endure the One,"

Assure me, sir, if England give assent To Strafford's death, you will not interfere!

Or—

Cha. God forsakes me. I am in a net [say!]

And cannot move. Let all be as you

Enter Lady CARLISLE.

Lady Car. He loves you—looking beautiful with joy

Because you sent me! he would spare you all

The pain! he never dreamed you would forsake

Your servant in the evil day—nay, see Your scheme returned! That generous heart of his!

He needs it not—or, needing it, disdains

A course that might endanger you—you, sir,

Whom Strafford from his inmost soul . . .

[*Seeing PYM.*] Well met!

No fear for Strafford! All that's true and brave

On your own side shall help us: we are now

Stronger than ever.

Ha—what, sir, is this?

All is not well! What parchment have you there?

Pym. Sir, much is saved us both.

Lady Car. This Bill! Your lip Whitens—you could not read one line to me

Your voice would falter so!

Pym. No recreant yet!

The great word went from England to my soul,

And I arose. The end is very near.

Lady Car. I am to save him! All have shrunk beside;

'T is only I am left. Heaven will make strong

The hand now as the heart. Then let both die!

ACT V

SCENE I.—*Whitehall.*

HOLLIS, Lady CARLISLE.

Hol. Tell the King then! Come in with me!

Lady Car. Not so!

He must not hear till it succeeds.

Hol. Succeed?

No dream was half so vain—you'd rescue Strafford

And outwit Pym! I cannot tell you . . . lady,

The block pursues me, and the hideous show.

To-day . . . is it to-day? And all the while

He's sure of the King's pardon. Think, I have

To tell this man he is to die. The King
May rend his hair, for me! I'll not
see Strafford!

Lady Car. Only, if I succeed, re-
member—Charles

Has saved him! He would hardly
value life

Unless his gift. My staunch friends
wait. Go in—

You must go in to Charles!

Hol. And all beside
Left Strafford long ago. The King has
signed

The warrant for his death: the Queen
was sick

Of the eternal subject. For the Court,—
The Trial was amusing in its way,
Only too much of it: the Earl with-
drew

In time. But you, fragile, alone, so
young,

Amid rude mercenaries—you devise
A plan to save him! Even though it
fails,

What shall reward you?

Lady Car. I may go, you think,
To France with him? And you re-
ward me, friend,

Who lived with Strafford even from
his youth

Before he set his heart on state-affairs
And they bent down that noble brow
of his.

I have learned somewhat of his latter
life,

And all the future I shall know: but,
Hollis,

I ought to make his youth my own as
well.

Tell me,—when he is saved!

Hol. My gentle friend,
He should know all and love you, but
'tis vain!

Lady Car. Love? no—too late now!
Let him love the King!

'Tis the King's scheme! I have your
word, remember!

We'll keep the old delusion up. But,
quick!

Quick! Each of us has work to do,
beside!

Go to the King! I hope—Hollis—I
hope!

Say nothing of my scheme! Hush,
while we speak

Think where he is! Now for my gallant
friends!

Hol. Where he is? Calling wildly
upon Charles,
Guessing his fate, pacing the prison-
floor.

Let the King tell him! I'll not look
on Strafford.

SCENE II.—*The Tower.*

STRAFFORD *sitting with his Children.*
They sing.

*O bell' andare
Per barca in mare,
Verso la sera
Di Primavera!*

William. The boat's in the broad
moonlight all this while—

*Verso la sera
Di Primavera!*

And the boat shoots from underneath
the moon

Into the shadowy distance; only still
You hear the dipping oar—

Verso la sera,

And faint, and fainter, and then all's
quite gone,

Music and light and all, like a lost star.

Anne. But you should sleep, father:

you were to sleep.

Straf. I do sleep, Anne; or if not—
you must know

There's such a thing as . . .

Wil. You're too tired to sleep?

Straf. It will come by-and-by and
all day long,

In that old quiet house I told you of:

We sleep safe there.

Anne. Why not in Ireland?

Straf. No!

Too many dreams!—That song's for
Venice, William:

You know how Venice looks upon the
map—

Isles that the mainland hardly can let
go?

Wil. You've been to Venice, father?

Straf. I was young, then.

Wil. A city with no King; that's
why I like

Even a song that comes from Venice.

Straf. William!

Wil. Oh, I know why! Anne, do
you love the King?

But I'll see Venice for myself one day.

Straf. See many lands, boy—Eng-
land last of all,—

That way you'll love her best.

Wil. Why do men say

You sought to ruin her, then?

Straf. Ah,—they say that.

Wil. Why?

Straf. I suppose they must have words to say,

As you to sing.

Anne. But they make songs beside:

Last night I heard one, in the street beneath,

That called you . . . Oh, the names!

Wil. Don't mind her, father!

They soon left off when I cried out to them.

Straf. We shall so soon be out of it, my boy!

'T is not worth while: who heeds a foolish song?

Wil. Why, not the King.

Straf. Well: it has been the fate Of better; and yet,—wherefore not feel sure

That time, who in the twilight comes to mend

All the fantastic day's caprice, consign To the low ground once more the ignoble Term,

And raise the Genius on his orb again,—

That time will do me right?

Anne. (Shall we sing, William?

He does not look thus when we sing.)

Straf. For Ireland,

Something is done: too little, but

enough

To show what might have been.

Wil. (I have no heart

To sing now! Anne, how very sad he

looks!

Oh, I so hate the King for all he says!)

Straf. Forsook them! What, the

common songs will run

That I forsook the People? Nothing

more?

Ay, fame, the busy scribe, will pause,

no doubt,

Turning a deaf ear to her thousand

slaves

Noisy to be enrolled,—will register

The curious glosses, subtle notices,

Ingenious clearings-up one fain would

see

Beside that plain inscription of The

Name—

The Patriot Pym, or the Apostate

Strafford!

[*The Children resume their song timidly, but break off.*

Enter HOLLIS and an Attendant.

Straf. No,—Hollis? in good time!

—Who is he?

Hol. One

That must be present.

Straf. Ah—I understand.

They will not let me see poor Laud alone.

How politic! They'd use me by degrees

To solitude: and just as you came in

I was solicitous what life to lead

When Strafford's "not so much as

Constable

"In the King's service." Is there any

means

To keep one's self awake? What

would you do

After this bustle, Hollis, in my place?

Hol. Strafford!

Straf. Observe, not but that Pym

and you

Will find me news enough—news I shall

hear

Under a quince-tree by a fish-pond side

At Wentworth. Garrard must be re-

engaged [now—

My newsman. Or, a better project

What if when all's consummated, and

the Saints

Reign, and the Senate's work goes

swimmingly,—

What if I venture up, some day, un-

seen,

To saunter through the Town, notice

how Pym,

Your Tribune, likes Whitehall, drop

quietly

Into a tavern, hear a point discussed,

As, whether Strafford's name were John

or James—

And be myself appealed to—I, who

shall

Myself have near forgotten!

Hol. I would speak . . .

Straf. Then you shall speak,—not

now. I want just now,

To hear the sound of my own tongue.

This place

Is full of ghosts.

Hol. Nay, you must hear me,

Strafford!

Straf. Oh, readily! Only one rare

thing more,—

The minister! Who will advise the King,
 Turn his Sejanus, Richelieu and what not,
 And yet have health—children, for aught I know—
 My patient pair of traitors! Ah,—but, William—
 Does not his cheek grow thin?
Wil. 'Tis you look thin, Father!
Straf. A scamper o'er the breezy wolds
 Sets all to-rights.
Hol. You cannot sure forget A prison-roof is o'er you, Strafford?
Straf. No,
 Why, no. I would not touch on that, the first.
 I left you that. Well, Hollis? Say at once,
 The King can find no time to set me free!
 A mask at Theobald's?
Hol. Hold: no such affair Detains him.
Straf. True: what needs so great a matter?
 The Queen's lip may be sore. Well: when he pleases,—
 Only, I want the air: it vexes flesh To be pent up so long.
Hol. The King—I bear His message, Strafford: pray you, let me speak!
Straf. Go, William! Anne, try o'er your song again!
[The Children retire.]
 They shall be loyal, friend, at all events.
 I know your message: you have nothing new
 To tell me: from the first I guessed as much.
 I know, instead of coming here himself, Leading me forth in public by the hand,
 The King prefers to leave the door ajar
 As though I were escaping—bids me trudge
 While the mob gapes upon some show prepared [once]
 On the other side of the river! Give at His order of release! I've heard, as well
 Of certain poor manœuvres to avoid The granting pardon at his proper risk;
 First, he must prattle somewhat to the Lords,

Must talk a trifle with the Commons first,
 Be grieved I should abuse his confidence,
 And far from blaming them, and . . .
 Where's the order?
Hol. Spare me!
Straf. Why, he'd not have me steal away?
 With an old doublet and a steeple hat
 Like Prynne's? Be smuggled into France, perhaps?
 Hollis, 'tis for my children! 'Twas for them
 I first consented to stand day by day
 And give your Puritans the best of words,
 Be patient, speak when called upon, observe
 Their rules, and not return them prompt their lie!
 What's in that boy of mine that he should prove
 Son to a prison-breaker? I shall stay
 And he'll stay with me. Charles should know as much,
 He too has children!
[Turning to HOLLIS'S companion.] Sir, you feel for me!
 No need to hide that face! Though it have looked
 Upon me from the judgment-seat . . .
 I know
 Strangely, that somewhere it has looked on me . . .
 Your coming has my pardon, nay, my thanks.
 For there is one who comes not.
Hol. Whom forgive, As one to die!
Straf. True, all die, and all need Forgiveness: I forgive him from my soul.
Hol. 'Tis a world's wonder: Strafford, you must die!
Straf. Sir, if your errand is to set me free
 This heartless jest mars much. Ha! Tears in truth?
 We'll end this! See this paper, warm—feel—warm
 With lying next my heart! Whose hand is there?
 Whose promise? Read, and loud for God to hear!
 "Strafford shall take no hurt"—read it, I say!

"In person, honour, nor estate"—

Hol. The King . . .

Straf. I could unking him by a breath! You sit

Where Loudon sat, who came to prophesy

The certain end, and offer me Pym's grace

If I'd renounce the King: and I stood firm

On the King's faith. The King who lives . . .

Hol. To sign

The warrant for your death.

Straf. "Put not your trust

"In princes, neither in the sons of men,
"In whom is no salvation!"

Hol. Trust in God!

The scaffold is prepared: they wait for you:

He has consented. Cast the earth behind!

Cha. You would not see me, Strafford, at your foot!

It was wrong from me! Only curse me not!

Hol. [To STRAFFORD.] As you hope grace and pardon in your need,
Be merciful to this most wretched man!
[Voices from within.]

Verso la sera

Di Primavera.

Straf. You'll be good to those children, sir? I know

You'll not believe her, even should the Queen

Think they take after one they rarely [saw.
I had intended that my son should live
A stranger to these matters: but you are

So utterly deprived of friends! He too
Must serve you—will you not be good to him?

Or, stay, sir, do not promise—do not swear!

You, Hollis—do the best you can for me!

I've not a soul to trust to: Wandesford's dead,

And you've got Radcliffe safe, Laud's turn comes next:

I've found small time of late for my affairs,

But I trust any of you, Pym himself—
No one could hurt them: there's an infant, too—

These tedious cares! Your Majesty could spare them!

Nay—pardon me, my King! I had forgotten

Your education, trials, much temptation,

Some weakness: there escaped a peevish word—

'Tis gone: I bless you at the last. You know

All's between you and me: what has the world

To do with it? Farewell!

Cha. [at the door.] Balfour! Balfour!

Enter BALFOUR.

The Parliament!—go to them: I grant all

Demands. Their sittings shall be permanent:

Tell them to keep their money if they will:

I'll come to them for every coat I wear
And every crust I eat: only I choose

To pardon Strafford. As the Queen shall choose!

—You never heard the People howl for blood,

Beside!

Bal. Your Majesty may hear them now:

The walls can hardly keep their murmurs out:

Please you retire!

Cha. Take all the troops, Balfour!

Bal. There are some hundred thousand of the crowd.

Cha. Come with me, Strafford! You'll not fear, at least!

Straf. Balfour, say nothing to the world of this!

I charge you, as a dying man, forget
You gazed upon this agony of one . . .

Of one . . . or if . . . why you may say, Balfour,

The King was sorry: 't is no shame in him:

Yes, you may say he even wept, Balfour,

And that I walked the lighter to the block

Because of it. I shall walk lightly, sir! Earth fades, heaven breaks on me: I shall stand next

Before God's throne: the moment's close at hand

When man the first, last time, has leave
to lay
His whole life bare before its maker,
leave

To clear up the long error of a life
And choose one happiness for evermore.
With all mortality about me, Charles,
The sudden wreck, the dregs of violent
death—

What if, despite the opening angel-
song,

There penetrate one prayer for you?
Be saved

Through me! Bear witness, no one
could prevent

My death! Lead on! ere he awake—
best, now!

All must be ready: did you say,
Balfour,

The crowd began to murmur? They'll
be kept

Too late for sermon at St. Antholin's!
Now! but tread softly—children are
at play

In the next room. Precede! I follow—

*Enter Lady CARLISLE, with many
Attendants.*

Lady Car. Me!
Follow me, Strafford, and be saved!

The King?
[*To the KING.*] Well—as you ordered,
they are ranged without,

The convoy . . . [seeing the KING's state.]

[*To STRAFFORD.*] You know all, then!
Why, I thought

It looked best that the King should
save you, Charles

Alone; 'tis a shame that you should
owe me aught.

Or no, not shame! Strafford you'll
not feel shame

At being saved by me?

Hol. All true! Oh Strafford,
She saves you! all her deed! this lady's
deed!

And is the boat in readiness? You,
friend,

Are Billingsley, no doubt! Speak to
her, Strafford! [voice!]

See how she trembles, waiting for your
The world's to learn its bravest story
yet!

Lady Car. Talk afterward! Long
nights in France enough,

To sit beneath the vines and talk of
home.

Straf. You love me, child? Ah!
Strafford can be loved

As well as Vane! I could escape, then?
Lady Car. Haste!

Advance the torches, Bryan!
Straf. I will die.

They call me proud: but England had
no right,

When she encountered me—her strength
to mine—

To find the chosen foe a craven. Girl,
I fought her to the utterance, I fell,

I am hers now, and I will die. Beside,
The lookers on! Eliot is all about

This place, with his most uncomplaining
brow.

Lady Car. Strafford!
Straf. I think if you could know
how much

I love you, you would be repaid, my
friend!

Lady Car. Then, for my sake!
Straf. Even for your sweet sake,
I stay.

Hol. For their sake!
Straf. To bequeath a stain?

Leave me! Girl, humour me and let
me die.

Lady Car. Bid him escape—wake,
King! Bid him escape!

Straf. True, I will go! Die, and
forsake the King?

I'll draw not back from the last service.

Lady Car. Strafford!
Straf. And, after all, what is
disgrace to me?

Let us come, child! That it should
end this way

Lead then! but I feel strangely: it was
not

To end this way.

Lady Car. Lean—lean on me!
Straf. My King!

Oh, had he trusted me—his friend of
friends!

Lady Car. I can support him, Hollis!
Straf. Not this way!

This gate—I dreamed of it, this very
gate.

Lady Car. It opens on the river: our
good boat

Is moored below, our friends are there.
Straf. The same:

Only with something ominous and
dark,

Fatal, inevitable.
Lady Car. Strafford! Strafford!

Straf. Not by this gate! I feel what will be there!

I dreamed of it, I tell you: touch it not!

Lady Car. To save the King,—
Strafford, to save the King!

[*As STRAFFORD opens the door, Pym is discovered with HAMPDEN, VANE, etc. STRAFFORD falls back: Pym follows slowly and confronts him.*

Pym. Have I done well? Speak, England! Whose sole sake

I still have laboured for, with disregard
To my own heart,—for whom my youth was made

Barren, my manhood waste, to offer up
Her sacrifice—this friend, this Wentworth here—

Who walked in youth with me, loved me, it may be,

And whom, for his forsaking England's cause,

I hunted by all means (trusting that she
Would sanctify all means) even to the block

Which waits for him. And saying this, I feel

No bitterer pang than first I felt, the hour

I swore that Wentworth might leave us, but I

Would never leave him: I do leave him now.

I render up my charge (be witness, God!)
To England who imposed it. I have done

Her bidding—poorly, wrongly,—it may be,

With ill effects—for I am weak, a man:
Still, I have done my best, my human best,

Not faltering for a moment. It is done.
And this said, if I say . . . yes, I will say

I never loved but one man—David not
More Jonathan! Even thus, I love him now:

And look for my chief portion in that world

Where great hearts led astray are turned again,

(Soon it may be, and, certes, will be soon:

My mission over, I shall not live long.)
Ay, here I know I talk—I dare and must,

Of England, and her great reward, as all

I look for there; but in my inmost heart,

Believe, I think of stealing quite away
To walk once more with Wentworth—
my youth's friend

Purged from all error, gloriously renewed,

And Eliot shall not blame us. Then indeed . . .

This is no meeting, Wentworth! Tears increase

Too hot. A thin mist—is it blood?—enwraps

The face I loved once. Then, the meeting be!

Straf. I have loved England too; we'll meet then, Pym;

As well die now! Youth is the only time

To think and to decide on a great course:

Manhood with action follows; but 'tis dreary,

To have to alter our whole life in age—
The time past, the strength gone! As well die now.

When we meet, Pym, I'd be set right—not now!

Best die. Then if there's any fault, it too

Dies, smothered up. Poor grey old little Laud

May dream his dream out, of a perfect Church,

In some blind corner. And there's no one left.

I trust the King now wholly to you, Pym!

And yet, I know not: I shall not be there:

Friends fail—if he have any. And he's weak,

And loves the Queen, and . . . Oh, my fate is nothing—

Nothing! But not that awful head—not that!

Pym. If England shall declare such will to me . . .

Straf. Pym, you help England! I, that am to die,

What I must see! 'tis here—all here! My God,

Let me but gasp out, in one word of fire,
How thou wilt plague him, satiating hell!

What? England that you help, be-
come through you
A green and putrefying charnel, left
Our children . . . some of us have
children, Pym—
Some who, without that, still must ever
wear
A darkened brow, an over-serious look,
And never properly be young! No
word?
What if I curse you? Send a strong
curse forth
Clothed from my heart, lapped round
with horror till
She's fit with her white face to walk the
world
Scaring kind natures from your cause
and you—
Then to sit down with you at the
board-head,
The gathering for prayer . . . O speak,
but speak!
. . . Creep up and quietly follow each
one home,

You, you, you, be a nestling care for
each
To sleep with,—hardly moaning in his
dreams,
She gnaws so quietly,—till, lo he starts,
Gets off with half a heart eaten away!
Oh shall you 'scape with less if she's
my child? [Him?
You will not say a word—to me—to
Pym. If England shall declare such
will to me . . .
Straf. No, not for England now, not
for Heaven now,—
See, Pym, for my sake, mine who kneel
to you!
There, I will thank you for the death,
my friend!
This is the meeting: let me love you
well!
Pym. England,—I am thine own!
Dost thou exact
That service? I obey thee to the end.
Straf. O God, I shall die first—I
shall die first!

SORDELLO

1840

TO J. MILSAND, OF DIJON

Dear Friend,—Let the next poem be introduced by your name, therefore remembered along with one of the deepest of my affections, and so repay all trouble it ever cost me. I wrote it twenty-five years ago for only a few, counting even in these on somewhat more care about its subject than they really had. My own faults of expression were many; but with care for a man or book such would be surmounted, and without it what avails the faultlessness of either? I blame nobody, least of all myself, who did my best then and since; for I lately gave time and pains to turn my work into what the many might,—instead of what the few must,—like: but after all, I imagined another thing at first, and therefore leave as I find it. The historical decoration was purposely of no more importance than a background requires; and my stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul: little else is worth study. I, at least, always thought so—you, with many known and unknown to me, think so—others may one day think so; and whether my attempt remain for them or not, I trust, though away and past it, to continue ever yours,

R. B.

London, June 9, 1863.

BOOK THE FIRST

Who will, may hear Sordello's story
told:
His story? Who believes me shall
behold
The man, pursue his fortunes to the
end,

Like me: for as the friendless-people's
friend
Spied from his hill-top once, despite the
din
And dust of multitudes, Pentapolin
Named o' the Naked Arm, I single out
Sordello, compassed murkily about
With ravage of six long sad hundred
years.

Only believe me. Ye believe ?
 Appears
 Verona . . . Never, I should warn you
 first,
 Of my own choice had this, if not the
 worst
 Yet not the best expedient, served to
 tell
 A story I could body forth so well
 By making speak, myself kept out of
 view,
 The very man as he was wont to do,
 And leaving you to say the rest for him.
 Since, though I might be proud to see
 the dim
 Abysmal past divide its hateful surge,
 Letting of all men this one man emerge
 Because it pleased me, yet, that mo-
 ment past,
 I should delight in watching first to
 last
 His progress as you watch it, not a whit
 More in the secret than yourselves who
 sit
 Fresh-chapleted to listen. But it seems
 Your setters-forth of unexampled
 themes,
 Makers of quite new men, producing
 them,
 Would best chalk broadly on each ves-
 ture's hem,
 The wearer's quality ; or take their
 stand,
 Motley on back and pointing-pole in
 hand,
 Beside him. So, for once I face ye,
 friends,
 Summoned together from the world's
 four ends,
 Dropped down from heaven or cast up
 from hell,
 To hear the story I propose to tell.
 Confess now, poets know the dragnet's
 trick,
 Catching the dead, if fate denies the
 quick,
 And shaming her ; 't is not for fate to
 choose
 Silence or song because she can refuse
 Real eyes to glisten more, real hearts to
 ache
 Less oft, real brows turn smoother for
 our sake :
 I have experienced something of her
 spite ;
 But there 's a realm wherein she has no
 right

And I have many lovers. Say, but few
 Friends fate accords me ? Here they
 are : now view
 The host I muster ! Many a lighted
 face
 Foul with no vestige of the grave's dis-
 grace ;
 What else should tempt them back to
 taste our air
 Except to see how their successors fare ?
 My audience ! and they sit, each
 ghostly man
 Striving to look as living as he can,
 Brother by breathing brother ; thou
 art set,
 Clear-witted critic, by . . . but I'll not
 fret
 A wondrous soul of them, nor move
 death's spleen
 Who loves not to unlock them. Friends !
 I mean
 The living in good earnest—ye elect
 Chiefly for love—suppose not I reject
 Judicious praise, who contrary shall
 peep,
 Some fit occasion, forth, for fear ye
 sleep,
 To glean your bland approvals. Then,
 appear,
 Verona ! stay—thou, spirit, come not
 near
 Now—not this time desert thy cloudy
 place
 To scare me, thus employed, with that
 pure face !
 I need not fear this audience, I make
 free
 With them, but then this is no place
 for thee !
 The thunder-phrase of the Athenian,
 grown
 Up out of memories of Marathon,
 Would echo like his own sword's grid-
 ing screech
 Braying a Persian shield,—the silver
 speech
 Of Sidney's self, the starry paladin,
 Turn intense as a trumpet sounding in
 The knights to tilt,—wert thou to hear !
 What heart
 Have I to play my puppets, bear my
 part
 Before these worthies ?
 Lo, the past is hurled
 In twain : up-thrust, out-staggering on
 the world,
 Sub^siding into shape, a darkness rears

Its outline, kindles at the core, appears
Verona. 'T is six hundred years and
more
Since an event. The Second Friedrich
wore
The purple, and the Third Honorius
filled
The holy chair. That autumn eve was
stilled:
A last remains of sunset dimly burned
O'er the far forests, like a torch-flame
turned
By the wind back upon its bearer's
hand
In one long flare of crimson; as a
brand,
The woods beneath lay black. A
single eye
From all Verona cared for the soft sky.
But, gathering in its ancient market-
place,
Talked group with restless group; and
not a face
But wrath made livid, for among them
were
Death's staunch purveyors, such as
have in care
To feast him. Fear had long since
taken root
In every breast, and now these crushed
its fruit,
The ripe hate, like a wine: to note the
way
It worked while each grew drunk!
Men grave and grey
Stood, with shut eyelids, rocking to and
fro,
Letting the silent luxury trickle slow
About the hollows where a heart should
be;
But the young gulped with a delirious
glee
Some foretaste of their first debauch in
blood
At the fierce news: for, be it under-
stood,
Envoys apprised Verona that her prince
Count Richard of Saint Boniface, joined
since
A year with Azzo, Este's Lord, to
thrust
Taurello Salinguerra, prime in trust
With Ecelin Romano, from his seat
Ferrara,—over zealous in the feat
And stumbling on a peril unaware,
Was captive, trammelled in his proper
snare,

They phrase it, taken by his own in-
trigue.
Immediate succour from the Lombard
League
Of fifteen cities that affect the Pope,
For Azzo, therefore, and his fellow-
hope
Of the Guef cause, a glory overcast!
Men's faces, late agape, are now aghast.
"Prone is the purple pavis; Este
makes
"Mirth for the devil when he under-
takes
"To play the Ecelin; as if it cost
"Merely your pushing-by to gain a
post
"Like his! The patron tells ye, once
for all,
"There be sound reasons that prefer-
ment fall
"On our beloved" . . .
"Duke o' the Rood, why not?"
Shouted an Estian, "grudge ye such a
lot?"
"The hill-cat boasts some cunning of
her own,
"Some stealthy trick to better beasts
unknown,
"That quick with prey enough her
hunger blunts,
"And feeds her fat while gaunt the lion
hunts."
"Taurello," quoth an envoy, "as in
wane
"Dwelt at Ferrara. Like an osprey
fain
"To fly but forced the earth his couch
to make
"Far inland, till his friend the tempest
wake,
"Waits he the Kaiser's coming; and as
yet
"That fast friend sleeps, and he too
sleeps: but let
"Only the billow freshen, and he snuffs
"The aroused hurricane ere it enroughs
"The sea it means to cross because of
him.
"Sinketh the breeze? His hope-sick
eye grows dim;
"Creep closer on the creature! Every
day
"Strengthens the Pontiff; Ecelin,
they say,
"Dozes now at Oliero, with dry lips
"Telling upon his perished finger-tips
"How many ancestors are to depos:

- " Ere he be Satan's Viceroy when the doze
 " Deposits him in hell. So, Guelfs rebuilt
 " Their houses; not a drop of blood was spilt
 " When Cino Bocchimpane chanced to meet
 " Buccio Virtù—God's wafer, and the street
 " Is narrow! Tutti Santi, think, a-swarm
 " With Ghibellins, and yet he took no harm!
 " This could not last. Off Salinguerra went
 " To Padua, Podestà, 'with pure intent,'
 " Said he, 'my presence, judged the single bar
 " 'To permanent tranquillity, may jar
 " 'No longer'—so! his back is fairly turned?
 " The pair of goodly palaces are burned,
 " The gardens ravaged, and our Guelfs laugh, drunk
 " A week with joy. The next, their laughter sunk
 " In sobs of blood, for they found, some strange way,
 " Old Salinguerra back again—I say,
 " Old Salinguerra in the town once more
 " Uprooting, overturning, flame before,
 " Blood fetlock-high beneath him. Azzo fled;
 " Who 'scaped the carnage followed; then the dead
 " Were pushed aside from Salinguerra's throne,
 " He ruled once more Ferrara, all alone.
 " Till Azzo, stunned awhile, revived, would pounce
 " Coupled with Boniface, like lynx and ounce,
 " On the gorged bird. The burghers ground their teeth
 " To see troop after troop encamp beneath
 " I' the standing corn thick o'er the scanty patch
 " It took so many patient months to snatch
 " Out of the marsh; while just within their walls
 " Men fed on men. At length Taur-ello calls
 " A parley: 'let the Count wind up the war!'
 " Richard, light-hearted as a plunging star,
 " Agrees to enter for the kindest ends
 " Ferrara, flanked with fifty chosen friends,
 " No horse-boy more, for fear your timid sort
 " Should fly Ferrara at the bare report.
 " Quietly through the town they rode, jog-jog;
 " 'Ten, twenty, thirty,—curse the catalogue
 " 'Of burnt Guelf houses! Strange, Taurello shows
 " 'Not the least sign of life'—whereat arose
 " A general growl: 'How? With his victors by?
 " 'I and my Veronese? My troops and I?
 " 'Receive us, was your word?' So jogged they on,
 " Nor laughed their host too openly: once gone
 " Into the trap!—"
- Six hundred years ago!
 Such the time's aspect and peculiar woe
 (Yourselves may spell it yet in chronicles,
 Albeit the worm, our busy brother, drills
 His sprawling path through letters anciently
 Made fine and large to suit some abbot's eye)
 When the new Hohenstauffen dropped the mask,
 Flung John of Brienne's favour from his casque,
 Forswore crusading, had no mind to leave
 Saint Peter's proxy leisure to retrieve
 Losses to Otho and to Barbaross,
 Or make the Alps less easy to recross;
 And, thus confirming Pope Honorius' fear,
 Was excommunicate that very year.
 " The triple-bearded Teuton come to life!
 Groaned the Great League; and, arming for the strife,
 Wide Lombardy, on tiptoe to begin,
 Took up, as it was Guelf or Ghibellin,

Its cry; what cry?

"The Emperor to come!"

His crowd of feudatories, all and some,
That leapt down with a crash of swords,
spears, shields,

One fighter on his fellow, to our fields,
Scattered anon, took station here and
there,

And carried it, till now, with little
care—

Cannot but cry for him; how else rebut
Us longer? Cliffs, an earthquake
suffered jut

In the mid-sea, each domineering crest,
Nothing save such another throe can
wrest

From out (conceive) a certain choke-
weed grown

Since o'er the waters, twine and tangle
thrown

Too thick, too fast accumulating round,
Too sure to over-riot and confound

Ere long each brilliant islet with itself
Unless a second shock save shoal and
shelf,

Whirling the sea-drift wide: alas, the
bruised

And sullen wreck! Sunlight to be dis-
fused

For that! Sunlight, 'neath which, a
scum at first,

The million fibres of our chokeweed
nurst

Dispread themselves, mantling the
troubled main,

And, shattered by those rocks, took
hold again,

So kindly blazed it—that same blaze
to brood

O'er every cluster of the multitude
Still hazarding new clasps, ties, fila-
ments,

An emulous exchange of pulses, vents
Of nature into nature; till some growth
Unfancied yet, exuberantly clothe

A surface solid now, continuous, one:

"The Pope, for us the People, who be-
gun

"The People, carries on the People
thus,

"To keep that Kaiser off and dwell
with us!"

See you?

Or say, Two Principles that live
Each fitly by its Representative.

"Hill-cat"—who called him so?—the
gracefullest

Adventurer, the ambiguous stranger-
guest

Of Lombardy (sleek but that ruffling
fur,

Those talons to their sheath!) whose
velvet purr

Soothes jealous neighbours when a
Saxon scout

—Arpo or Yoland, is it?—one without
A country or a name, presumes to couch

Beside their noblest; until men avouch
That, of all Houses in the Trevisan,

Conrad describes no fitter, rear or van,
Than Ecelo! They laughed as they
enrolled

That name at Milan on the page of gold,
Godego's lord,—Ramon, Marostica,

Cartiglion, Bassano, Loria,
And every sheep-cote on the Suabian's
fief!

No laughter when his son, "the Lom-
bard Chief"

[bent
Forsooth, as Barbarossa's path was
To Italy along the Vale of Trent,

Welcomed him at Roncaglia! Sad-
ness now—

The hamlets nested on the Tyrol's brow,
The Asolan and Euganean hills,

The Rhetian and the Julian, sadness
fills

Them all, for Ecelin vouchsafes to stay
Among and care about them; day by
day

Choosing this pinnacle, the other spot,
A castle building to defend a cot,

A cot built for a castle to defend,
Nothing but castles, castles, nor an end

To boasts how mountain ridge may join
with ridge

By sunken gallery and soaring bridge.
He takes, in brief, a figure that beseems

The grisliest nightmare of the Church's
dreams,

—A Signory firm-rooted, unestranged
From its old interests, and nowise
changed

By its new neighbourhood: perchance
the vaunt

Of Otho, "my own Este shall supplant
"Your Este," come to pass. The sire
led in

A son as cruel; and this Ecelin
Had sons, in turn, and daughters sly
and tall

And curling and compliant; but for all
Romano (so they styled him) throve,
that neck

Of his so pinched and white, that hungry cheek
 Proved 't was some fiend, not him, the man's-flesh went
 To feed : whereas Romano's instrument,
 Famous Taurello Salinguerra, sole
 I' the world, a tree whose boughs were
 slipt the bole
 Successively, why should not he shed
 blood
 To further a design ? Men understood
 Living was pleasant to him as he wore
 His careless surcoat, glanced some mis-
 sive o'er,
 Propped on his truncheon in the public
 way,
 While his lord lifted writhen hands to
 pray,
 Lost at Oliero's convent.

Hill-cats, face

Our Azzo, our Guelf-Lion ! Why dis-
 grace
 A worthiness conspicuous near and far
 (Atii at Rome while free and consular,
 Este at Padua who repulsed the Hun)
 By trumpeting the Church's princely
 son ?
 —Styled Patron of Rovigo's Polesine,
 Ancona's march, Ferrara's . . . ask, in
 fine,
 Our chronicles, commenced when some
 old monk
 Found it intolerable to be sunk
 (Vexed to the quick by his revolting
 cell)
 Quite out of summer while alive and
 well :
 Ended when by his mat the Prior stood,
 ' Mid busy promptings of the brother-
 hood,
 Striving to coax from his decrepit
 brains
 The reason Father Porphyry took pains
 To blot those ten lines out which used
 to stand
 First on their charter drawn by Hilde-
 brand.
 The same night wears. Verona's
 rule of yore
 Was vested in a certain Twenty-four ;
 And while within his palace these de-
 bate
 Concerning Richard and Ferrara's fate,
 Glide we by clapping doors, with sud-
 den glare
 Of cressets vented on the dark, nor care

For aught that 's seen or heard until we
 shut
 The smother in, the lights, all noises but
 The carroch's booming : safe at last !
 Why strange
 Such a recess should lurk behind a
 range
 Of banquet-rooms ? Your finger—
 thus—you push
 A spring, and the wall opens, would
 you rush
 Upon the banqueters, select your prey,
 Waiting (the slaughter-weapons in the
 way
 Strewing this very bench) with sharp-
 ened ear
 A preconcerted signal to appear ;
 Or if you simply crouch with beating
 heart, [part
 Bearing in some voluptuous pageant
 To startle them. Nor mutes nor mas-
 quers now ;
 Nor any . . . does that one man sleep
 whose brow
 The dying lamp-flame sinks and rises
 o'er ?
 What woman stood beside him ? not
 the more
 Is he unfastened from the earnest eyes
 Because that arras fell between ! Her
 wise
 And lulling words are yet about the
 room,
 Her presence wholly poured upon the
 gloom
 Down even to her vesture's creeping
 stir.
 And so reclines he, saturate with her,
 Until an outcry from the square be-
 neath
 Pierces the charm : he springs up, glad
 to breathe,
 Above the cunning element, and shakes
 The stupor off as (look you) morning
 breaks
 On the gay dress, and, near concealed
 by it,
 The lean frame like a half-burnt taper,
 lit
 Erst at some marriage-feast, then laid
 away
 Till the Armenian bridegroom's dying
 day,
 In his wool wedding-robe.
 For he—for he,
 Gate-vein of this hearts' blood of Lom-
 bardy,

(If I should falter now)—for he is thine!
Sordello, thy forerunner, Florentine!
A herald-star I know thou didst absorb
Relentless into the consummate orb
That scared it from its right to roll
along

A sempiternal path with dance and song
Fulfilling its allotted period,
Serenest of the progeny of God—
Who yet resigns it not! His darling
stoops

With no quenched lights, desponds with
no blank troops

Of disenfranchised brilliancies, for, blent
Utterly with thee, its shy element
Like thine upburneth prosperous and
clear,

Still, what if I approach the august
sphere

Named now with only one name, dis-
entwine

That under-current soft and argentine
From its fierce mate in the majestic
mass

Leavened as the sea whose fire was mixt
with glass

In John's transcendent vision,—launch
once more

That lustre? Dante, pacer of the
shore

Where gluttled hell disgorgeth filthiest
gloom,

Unbitten by its whirring sulphur-
spume—

Or whence the grieved and obscure
waters slope

Into a darkness quieted by hope;
Plucker of amaranths grown beneath
God's eye

In gracious twilights where his chosen
lie,

I would do this! If I should falter
now!

In Mantua territory half is slough,
Half pine-tree forest; maples, scarlet-
oaks

Breed o'er the river-beds; even Mincio
chokes

With sand the summer through: but
't is morass

In winter up to Mantua walls. There
was,

Some thirty years before this evening's
coil,

One spot reclaimed from the surround-
ing spoil,

Goito; just a castle built amid

A few low mountains; firs and larches
hid

Their main defiles, and rings of vine-
yard bound

The rest. Some captured creature in a
pound,

Whose artless wonder quite precludes
distress,

Secure beside in its own loveliness,
So peered with airy head, below, above,

The castle at its toils, the lapwings love
To glean among at grape-time. Pass
within.

A maze of corridors contrived for sin,
Dusk winding-stairs, dim galleries got
past,

You gain the inmost chambers, gain at
last

A maple-panelled room: that haze
which seems

Floating about the panel, if there gleams
A sunbeam over it, will turn to gold

And in light-graven characters unfold
The Arab's wisdom everywhere; what
shade

Marred them a moment, those slim pil-
lars made,

Cut like a company of palms to prop
The roof, each kissing top entwined
with top,

Leaning together; in the carver's mind
Some knot of bacchanals, flushed cheek
combined

With straining forehead, shoulders
purpled, hair

Diffused between, who in a goat-skin
bear

A vintage; graceful sister-palms! But
quick

To the main wonder, now. A vault,
see; thick

Black shade about the ceiling, though
fine slits

Across the buttress suffer light by fits
Upon a marvel in the midst. Nay,
stoop—

A dullish grey-streaked cumbrous font,
a group

Round it,—each side of it, where'er one
sees,—

Upholds it; shrinking Caryatides
Of just-tinged marble like Eve's liled
flesh

Beneath her maker's finger when the
fresh

First pulse of life shot brightening the
snow.

The font's edge burthens every shoulder, so
 They muse upon the ground, eyelids half closed ;
 Some, with meek arms behind their backs disposed,
 Some, crossed above their bosoms, some, to veil
 Their eyes, some, propping chin and cheek so pale,
 Some, hanging slack an utter helpless length
 Dead as a buried vestal whose whole strength
 Goes when the grate above shuts heavily. [see,
 So dwell these noiseless girls, patient to
 Like priestesses because of sin impure
 Penanced for ever, who resigned endure,
 Having that once drunk sweetness to the dregs.
 And every eve, Sordello's visit begs
 Pardon for them : constant as eve he came
 To sit beside each in her turn, the same
 As one of them, a certain space : and awe
 Made a great indistinctness till he saw
 Sunset slant cheerful through the buttress-chinks,
 Gold seven times globed ; surely our maiden shrinks
 And a smile stirs her as if one faint grain
 Her load were lightened, one shade less the stain
 Obscured her forehead, yet one more bead slipt
 From off the rosary whereby the crypt
 Keeps count of the contritions of its charge ?
 Then with a step more light, a heart more large,
 He may depart, leave her and every one
 To linger out the penance in mute stone.
 Ah, but Sordello ? 'T is the tale I mean
 To tell you.

In this castle may be seen,
 On the hill tops, or underneath the vines,
 Or eastward by the mound of firs and pines
 That shuts out Mantua, still in loneliness,

A slender boy in a loose page's dress,
 Sordello : do but look on him awhile
 Watching ('t is autumn) with an earnest smile
 The noisy flock of thievish birds at work
 Among the yellowing vineyards ; see him lurk
 ('T is winter with its sullenest of storms)
 Beside that arras-length of brodered forms,
 On tiptoe, lifting in both hands a light
 Which makes yon warrior's visage fluter bright
 —Ecelo, dismal father of the brood,
 And Ecelin, close to the girl he wooed,
 Auria, and their Child, with all his wives
 From Agnes to the Tuscan that survives,
 Lady of the castle, Adelaide. His face
 —Look, now he turns away ! Yourselves shall trace
 (The delicate nostril swerving wide and fine,
 A sharp and restless lip, so well combine
 With that calm brow) a soul fit to receive
 Delight at every sense ; you can believe
 Sordello foremost in the regal class
 Nature has broadly severed from her mass [frames
 Of men, and framed for pleasure, as she
 Some happy lands, that have luxurious names,
 For loose fertility ; a footfall there
 Suffices to upturn to the warm air
 Half-germinating spices ; mere decay
 Produces richer life ; and day by day
 New pollen on the lily-petal grows,
 And still more labyrinthine buds the rose.
 You recognize at once the finer dress
 Of flesh that amply lets in loveliness
 At eye and ear, while round the rest is furled
 (As though she would not trust them with her world)
 A veil that shows a sky not near so blue,
 And lets but half the sun look fervid through.
 How can such love ?—like souls on each full-fraught
 Discovery brooding, blind at first to aught

Beyond its beauty, till exceeding love
 Becomes an aching weight; and, to
 remove
 A curse that haunts such natures—to
 preclude
 Their finding out themselves can work
 no good
 To what they love nor make it very
 blest
 By their endeavour,—they are fain in-
 vest
 The lifeless thing with life from their
 own soul,
 Availing it to purpose, to control,
 To dwell distinct and have peculiar joy
 And separate interests that may em-
 ploy
 That beauty fitly, for its proper sake.
 Nor rest they here; fresh births of
 beauty wake
 Fresh homage, every grade of love is
 past,
 With every mode of loveliness: then
 cast
 Inferior idols off their borrowed crown
 Before a coming glory. Up and down
 Runs arrowy fire, while earthly forms
 combine
 To throb the secret forth; a touch
 divine— [rod;
 And the scaled eyeball owns the mystic
 Visibly through his garden walketh
 God.
 So fare they. Now revert. One
 character
 Denotes them through the progress and
 the stir,—
 A need to blend with each eternal
 charm,
 Bury themselves, the whole heart wide
 and warm,—
 In something not themselves; they
 would belong
 To what they worship—stronger and
 more strong
 Thus prodigally fed—which gathers
 shape
 And feature, soon imprisons past escape
 The votary framed to love and to sub-
 mit
 Nor ask, as passionate he kneels to it,
 Whence grew the idol's empery. So
 runs
 A legend; light had birth ere moons
 and suns,
 Flowing through space a river and
 alone,

Till chaos burst and blank the spheres
 were strown
 Hither and thither, foundering and
 blind:
 When into each of them rushed light—
 to find
 Itself no place, foiled of its radiant
 chance.
 Let such forego their just inheritance!
 For there 's a class that eagerly looks,
 too,
 On beauty, but, unlike the gentler crew,
 Proclaims each new revelation born a
 twin
 With a distinctest consciousness with-
 in
 Referring still the quality, now first
 Revealed, to their own soul—its instinct
 nursed
 In silence, now remembered better,
 shown
 More thoroughly, but not the less their
 own;
 A dream come true; the special exer-
 cise
 Of any special function that implies
 The being fair, or good, or wise, or
 strong,
 Dormant within their nature all along—
 Whose fault? So homage, other souls
 direct
 Without, turns inward. "How should
 this deject
 "Thee, soul?" they murmur; "where-
 fore strength be quelled
 "Because, its trivial accidents with-
 held,
 "Organs are missed that clog the
 world, inert,
 "Wanting a will, to quicken and exert,
 "Like thine—existence cannot satiate,
 "Cannot surprise? Laugh thou at
 envious fate,
 "Who, from earth's simplest com-
 bination stamp
 "With individuality—uncrampt
 "By living its faint elemental life,
 "Dost soar to heaven's complex es-
 sence, rife
 "With grandeurs, unaffronted to the
 last,
 "Equal to being all!"
 In truth? Thou hast
 Life, then—wilt challenge life for us:
 our race
 Is vindicated so, obtains its place
 In thy ascent, the first of us; whom we

May follow, to the meanest, finally,
With our more bounded wills ?

Ah, but to find
A certain mood enervate such a mind,
Counsel it slumber in the solitude
Thus reached nor, stooping, task for
mankind's good

Its nature just as life and time accord
" — Too narrow an arena to reward
" Emprize—the world's occasion
worthless since

" Not absolutely fitted to evince
" Its mastery ! " Or if yet worse be-
fall,

And a desire possess it to put all
That nature forth, forcing our strait-
ened sphere

Contain it,—to display completely here
The mastery another life should learn,
Thrusting in time eternity's concern,—
So that Sordello . . .

Fool, who spied the mark
Of leprosy upon him, violet-dark
Already as he loiters ? Born just now,
With the new century, beside the glow
And efflorescence out of barbarism ;
Witness a Greek or two from the abysm
That stray through Florence-town with
studious air,

Calming the chisel of that Pisan pair :
If Nicolo should carve a Christus yet !
While at Siena is Guidone set,
Forehead on hand ; a painful birth
must be

Matured ere Saint Eufemia's sacristy
Or transept gather fruits of one great
gaze

At the moon : look you ! The same
orange haze,—

The same blue stripe round that—and,
i' the midst,

Thy spectral whiteness, Mother-maid,
who didst

Pursue the dizzy painter !

Woe, then, worth
Any officious babble letting forth
The leprosy confirmed and ruinous
To spirit lodged in a contracted house !
Go back to the beginning, rather ;
blend

It gently with Sordello's life ; the end
Is piteous, you may see, but much be-
tween

Pleasant enough. Meantime, some pyx
to screen

The full-grown pest, some lid to shut
upon

The goblin ! So they found at Baby-
lon,

(Colleagues, mad Lucius and sage An-
tonine)

Sacking the city, by Apollo's shrine,
In rummaging among the rarities,
A certain coffer ; he who made the
prize

Opened it greedily ; and out there
curled

Just such another plague, for half the
world

Was stung. Crawl in then, hag, and
couch asquat,

Keeping that blotchy bosom thick in
spot

Until your time is ripe ! The coffer-lid
Is fastened, and the coffer safely hid
Under the Loxian's choicest gifts of
gold.

Who will may hear Sordello's story
told,

And how he never could remember
when

He dwelt not at Goito. Calmly, then,
About this secret lodge of Adelaide's
Glided his youth away ; beyond the
glades

On the fir-forest border, and the rim
Of the low range of mountain, was for
him

No other world : but this appeared his
own

To wander through at pleasure and
alone.

The castle too seemed empty ; far and
wide

Might he disport ; only the northern
side

Lay under a mysterious interdict—
Slight, just enough remembered to re-
strict

His roaming to the corridors, the vault
Where those font-bearers expiate their
fault,

The maple-chamber, and the little
nooks

And nests, and breezy parapet that
looks

Over the woods to Mantua : there he
strolled.

Some foreign women-servants, very old,
Tended and crept about him—all his
clue

To the world's business and embroiled
ado

Distant a dozen hill-tops at the most.

And first a simple sense of life engrossed
 Sordello in his drowsy Paradise ;
 The day's adventures for the day suffice—
 Its constant tribute of perceptions strange,
 With sleep and stir in healthy interchange,
 Suffice, and leave him for the next at ease
 Like the great palmer-worm that strips the trees,
 Eats the life out of every luscious plant,
 And, when September finds them sere or scant,
 Puts forth two wondrous winglets, alters quite,
 And hies him after unforeseen delight.
 So fed Sordello, not a shard disheathed ;
 As ever, round each new discovery, wreathed
 Luxuriantly the fancies infantine
 His admiration, bent on making fine
 Its novel friend at any risk, would fling
 In gay profusion forth : a ficklest king,
 Confessed those minions !—eager to dispense
 So much from his own stock of thought and sense
 As might enable each to stand alone
 And serve him for a fellow ; with his own,
 Joining the qualities that just before
 Had graced some older favourite.
 Thus they wore
 A fluctuating halo, yesterday
 Set flicker and to-morrow flched away—
 Those upland objects each of separate name,
 Each with an aspect never twice the same,
 Waxing and waning as the new-born host
 Of fancies, like a single night's hoar-frost,
 Gave to familiar things a face grotesque ;
 Only, preserving through the mad burlesque
 A grave regard. Conceive ! the orpine patch
 Blossoming earliest on the log-house-thatch
 The day those archers wound along the vines—
 Related to the Chief that left their lines

To climb with clinking step the northern stair
 Up to the solitary chambers where
 Sordello never came. Thus thrall reached thrall ;
 He o'er-festooning every interval,
 As the adventurous spider, making light
 Of distance, shoots her threads from depth to height,
 From barbican to battlement : so flung
 Fantasies forth and in their centre swung
 Our architect,—the breezy morning fresh [mesh
 Above, and merry,—all his waving
 Laughing with lucid dew-drops rain-bow-edged.
 This world of ours by tacit pact is pledged
 To laying such a spangled fabric low
 Whether by gradual brush or gallant blow.
 But its abundant will was baulked here : doubt
 Rose tardily in one so fenced about
 From most that nurtures judgment, care and pain :
 Judgment, that dull expedient we are fain,
 Less favoured, to adopt betimes and force
 Stead us, diverted from our natural course
 Of joys—contrive some yet amid the dearth,
 Vary and render them, it may be, worth
 Most we forego. Suppose Sordello hence
 Selfish enough, without a moral sense
 However feeble ; what informed the boy
 Others desired a portion in his joy ?
 Or say a ruthless chance broke woof and warp—
 A heron's nest beat down by March winds sharp,
 A fawn breathless beneath the precipice,
 A bird with unsoiled breast and filmless eyes
 Warm in the brake—could these undo the trance
 Lapping Sordello ? Not a circumstance

That makes for you, friend Naddo !
 Eat fern-seed
 And peer beside us and report indeed
 If (your word) "genius" dawned with
 throes and stings
 And the whole fiery catalogue, while
 springs
 Summers and winters quietly came and
 went.
 Time put at length that period to
 content,
 By right the world should have im-
 posed : bereft
 Of its good offices, Sordello, left
 To study his companions, managed rip
 Their fringe off, learn the true relation-
 ship,
 Core with its crust, their nature with his
 own :
 Amid his wild-wood sights he lived
 alone.
 As if the poppy felt with him ! Though
 he
 Partook the poppy's red effrontery
 Till Autumn spoiled their fleering quite
 with rain,
 And, turbanless, a coarse brown rat-
 tling crane
 Lay bare. That's gone : yet why re-
 nounce, for that,
 His disenchanting tributaries—flat
 Perhaps, but scarce so utterly forlorn,
 Their simple presence might not well
 be borne
 Whose parley was a transport once : re-
 call
 The poppy's gifts, it flaunts you, after
 all,
 A poppy :—why distrust the evidence
 Of each soon satisfied and healthy
 sense ?
 The new-born judgment answered,
 "little boots
 "Beholding other creatures' attributes
 "And having none !" or, say that it
 sufficed,
 "Yet, could one but possess, oneself,"
 (enticed
 Judgment) "some special office !"
 Nought beside
 Serves you ? "Well then, be some-
 how justified
 "For this ignoble wish to circumscribe
 "And concentrate, rather than swell,
 the tribe
 "Of actual pleasures : what, now,
 from without

"Effects it ?—proves, despite a lurk-
 ing doubt,
 "Mere sympathy sufficient, trouble
 spared ?
 "That, tasting joys by proxy thus, you
 fared
 "The better for them ?" Thus much
 craved his soul,
 Alas, from the beginning love is whole
 And true ; if sure of nought beside,
 most sure
 Of its own truth at least ; nor may en-
 dure
 A crowd to see its face, that cannot
 know
 How hot the pulses throb its heart be-
 low.
 While its own helplessness and utter
 want
 Of means to worthily be ministrant
 To what it worships, do but fan the
 more
 Its flame, exalt the idol far before
 Itself as it would have it ever be.
 Souls like Sordello, on the contrary,
 Coerced and put to shame, retaining
 will,
 Care little, take mysterious comfort
 still,
 But look forth tremblingly to ascertain
 If others judge their claims not urged
 in vain,
 And say for them their stifled thoughts
 aloud.
 So, they must ever live before a crowd :
 —"Vanity," Naddo tells you.
 Whence contrive
 A crowd, now ? From these women
 just alive,
 That archer-troop ? Forth glided—
 not alone
 Each painted warrior, every girl of
 stone,
 Nor Adelaide (bent double o'er a scroll,
 One maiden at her knees, that eve, his
 soul
 Shook as he stumbled through the
 arras'd glooms
 On them, for, 'mid quaint robes and
 weird perfumes,
 Started the meagre Tuscan up,—her
 eyes
 The maiden's, also, bluer with surprise)
 —But the entire out-world : whatever,
 scraps
 And snatches, song and story, dreams
 perhaps,

Conceited the world's offices, and he
 Had hitherto transferred to flower or
 tree,
 Nor counted a befitting heritage
 Each, of its own right, singly to engage
 Some man, no other,—such now dared
 to stand
 Alone. Strength, wisdom, grace on
 every hand
 Soon disengaged themselves, and he
 discerned
 A sort of human life: at least, was
 turned
 A stream of lifelike figures through his
 brain.
 Lord, liegeman, valvassor and suzerain,
 Ere he could choose, surrounded him;
 a stuff
 To work his pleasure on; there, sure
 enough:
 But as for gazing, what shall fix that
 gaze?
 Are they to simply testify the ways
 He who convoked them sends his soul
 along
 With the cloud's thunder or a dove's
 brood-song?
 —While they live each his life, boast
 each his own
 Peculiar dower of bliss, stand each
 alone
 In some one point where something
 dearest loved
 Is easiest gained—far worthier to be
 proved
 Than aught he envies in the forest-
 wights!
 No simple and self-evident delights,
 But mixed desires of unimagined range,
 Contrasts or combinations, new and
 strange,
 Irsome perhaps, yet plainly recog-
 nised [prized
 By this, the sudden company—loves
 By those who are to prize his own
 amount
 Of loves. Once care because such
 make account,
 Allow a foreign recognition stamp
 The current value, and his crowd shall
 vamp
 Him counterfeits enough; and so their
 print
 Be on the piece, 't is gold, attests the
 mint,
 And "good," pronounce they whom
 his new appeal

Is made to: if their casual print con-
 ceal—
 This arbitrary good of theirs o'ergloss
 What he have lived without, nor felt
 the loss—
 Qualities strange, ungainly, wearisome,
 —What matter? So must speech
 expand the dumb
 Part-sigh, part-smile with which Sor-
 dello, late
 No foolish woodland-sights could sati-
 ate,
 Betakes himself to study hungrily
 Just what the puppets his crude fan-
 tasy
 Supposes notablest, popes, kings,
 priests, knights,
 May please to promulgate for appetites;
 Accepting all their artificial joys
 Not as he views them, but as he em-
 ploys
 Each shape to estimate the other's
 stock
 Of attributes, that on a marshalled
 flock
 Of authorized enjoyments he may
 spend [blend
 Himself, be men, now, as he used to
 With tree and flower—nay more en-
 tirely, else
 'T were mockery: for instance, "how
 excels
 "My life that chieftain's?" (who ap-
 prised the youth
 Ecelin, here, becomes this month, in
 truth,
 Imperial Vicar?) "Turns he in his
 tent
 "Remissly? Be it so—my head is
 bent
 "Deliciously amid my girls to sleep.
 "What if he stalks the Trentine-pass?
 Yon steep
 "I climbed an hour ago with little toil:
 "We are alike there. But can I, too,
 foil
 "The Gueff's paid stabber, carelessly
 afford
 "Saint Mark's a spectacle, the sleight
 o' the sword
 "Baffling the treason in a moment?"
 Here
 No rescue! Poppy he is none, but
 peer
 To Ecelin, assuredly: his hand,
 Fashioned no otherwise, should wield a
 brand

With Ecelin's success—try, now! He
soon
Was satisfied, returned as to the moon
From earth; left each abortive boy's-
attempt
For feats, from failure happily exempt,
In fancy at his beck. "One day I will
"Accomplish it! Are they not older
still
"—Not grown up men and women?
'T is beside
"Only a dream; and though I must
abide
"With dreams now, I may find a thor-
ough vent
"For all myself, acquire an instrument
"For acting what these people act;
my soul
"Hunting a body out may gain its
whole
"Desire some day!" How else ex-
press chagrin
And resignation, show the hope steal in
With which he let sink from an aching
wrist
The rough-hewn ash-bow? Straight,
a gold shaft hissed
Into the Syrian air, struck Malek down
Superbly! "Crosses to the breach!
God's Town
"Is gained him back!" Why bend
rough ash-bows more?
Thus lives he: if not careless as be-
fore,
Comforted: for one may anticipate,
Rehearse the future, be prepared when
fate
Shall have prepared in turn real men
whose names
Startle, real places of enormous fames,
Este abroad and Ecelin at home
To worship him,—Mantua, Verona,
Rome
To witness it. Who grudges time so
spent?
Rather test qualities to heart's
content—
Summon them, thrice selected, near and
far—
Compress the starriest into one star,
And grasp the whole at once!
The pageant thinned
Accordingly; from rank to rank, like
wind
His spirit passed to winnow and divide;
Back fell the simpler phantasms;
every side

The strong clave to the wise; with
either classed
The beauteous; so, till two or three
amassed
Mankind's beseeemingnesses, and re-
duced
Themselves eventually, graces loosed,
And lavished strengths, to heighten up
One Shape
Whose potency no creature should
escape.
Can it be Friedrich of the bowmen's
talk?
Surely that grape-juice, bubbling at the
stalk,
Is some grey scorching Saracenic wine
The Kaiser quaffs with the Miramol-
ine—
Those swarthy hazel-clusters, seamed
and chapped,
Or filberts russet-sheathed and velvet-
capped,
Are dates plucked from the bough John
Brienne sent,
To keep in mind his sluggish armament
Of Canaan:—Friedrich's, all the pomp
and fierce
Demeanour! But harsh sounds and
sights transpierce [dwells,
So rarely the serene cloud where he
Whose looks enjoin, whose lightest
words are spells
On the obdurate! That right arm in-
deed
Has thunder for its slave; but where's
the need
Of thunder if the stricken multitude
Hearkens, arrested in its angriest mood,
While songs go up exulting, then
dispread,
Dispart, disperse, lingering overhead
Like an escape of angels? 'T is the
tune,
Nor much unlike the words the women
croon
Smilingly, colourless and faint-designed
Each, as a worn-out queen's face some
remind
Of her extreme youth's love-tales.
" Eglamor
"Made that!" Half minstrel and half
emperor,
What but ill objects vexed him? Such
he slew.
The kinder sort were easy to subdue
By those ambrosial glances, dulcet
tones;

And these a gracious hand advanced to
 thrones
 Beneath him. Wherefore twist and
 torture this,
 Striving to name afresh the antique
 bliss,
 Instead of saying, neither less nor more,
 He had discovered, as our world before,
 Apollo? That shall be the name; nor
 bid
 Me rag by rag expose how patchwork
 hid
 The youth—what thefts of every clime
 and day
 Contributed to purfle the array
 He climbed with (June at deep) some
 close ravine
 'Mid clatter of its million pebbles sheen,
 Over which, singing soft, the runnel
 slipped
 Elate with rains: into whose streamlet
 dipped
 He foot, yet trod, you thought, with
 unwet sock—
 Though really on the stubs of living
 rock
 Ages ago it crenneled; vines for roof,
 Lindens for wall; before him, aye aloof,
 Flittered in the cool some azure damsel-
 fly,
 Born of the simmering quiet, there to
 die.
 Emerging whence, Apollo still, he spied
 Mighty descents of forest; multiplied
 Tuft on tuft, here, the frolic myrtle-
 trees,
 There gendered the grave maple stocks
 at ease.
 And, proud of its observer, straight the
 wood [stood
 Tried old surprises on him; black it
 A sudden barrier ('twas a cloud passed
 o'er)
 So dead and dense, the tiniest brute no
 more
 Must pass; yet presently (the cloud
 dispatched)
 Each clump, behold, was glistening
 detached
 A shrub, oak-boles shrunk into ilex-
 stems!
 Yet could not he denounce the strata-
 gems
 He saw thro', till, hours thence, aloft
 would hang
 White summer-lightnings; as it sank
 and sprang

To measure, that whole palpitating
 breast
 Of heaven, 't was Apollo, nature prest
 At eve to worship.
 Time stole: by degrees
 The Pythons perish off; his votaries
 Sink to respectful distance; songs
 redeem
 Their pains, but briefer; their dis-
 missals seem
 Emphatic; only girls are very slow
 To disappear—his Delians! Some
 that glow
 O' the instant, more with earlier loves
 to wrench
 Away, reserves to quell, disdains to
 quench;
 Alike in one material circumstance—
 All soon or late adore Apollo! Glance
 The bevy through, divine Apollo's
 choice,
 His Daphne! "We secure Count
 Richard's voice
 " In Este's counsels, good for Este's
 ends
 " As our Taurello," say his faded
 friends,
 " By granting him our Palma!"—the
 sole child,
 They mean, of Agnes Este who be-
 guiled
 Ecelin, years before this Adelaide
 Wedded and turned him wicked: " but
 the maid
 " Rejects his suit," those sleepy women
 boast.
 She, scorning all beside, deserves the
 most
 Sordello: so, conspicuous in his world
 Of dreams sat Palma. How the tresses
 curled [wound
 Into a sumptuous swell of gold and
 About her like a glory! even the
 ground
 Was bright as with spilt sunbeams;
 breathe not, breathe
 Not!—poised, see, one leg doubled
 underneath,
 Its small foot buried in the dimpling
 snow,
 Rests, but the other, listlessly below,
 O'er the couch-side swings feeling for
 cool air,
 The vein-streaks swollen a richer violet
 where
 The languid blood lies heavily; yet
 calm

On her slight prop, each flat and out-
spread palm,
As but suspended in the act to rise
By consciousness of beauty, whence
her eyes
Turn with so frank a triumph, for she
meets
Apollo's gaze in the pine glooms.

Time fleets :
That 's worst ! Because the pre-
appointed age

Approaches. Fate is tardy with the
stage

And crowd she promised. Lean he
grows and pale,

Though restlessly at rest. Hardly
avail

Fancies to soothe him. Time steals,
yet alone

He tarries here ! The earnest smile is
gone.

How long this might continue matters
not ;

—For ever, possibly ; since to the spot
None come : our lingering Taurello
quits

Mantua at last, and light our lady flits
Back to her place disburthened of a
care.

Strange—to be constant here if he is
there !

Is it distrust ? Oh, never ! for they
both

Goad Ecelin alike, Romano's growth
Is daily manifest, and Azzo's dumb
And Richard wavers : let but Fried-
rich come,

Find matter for the minstrelsy's report !
—Lured from the Isle and its young

Kaiser's court

To sing us a Messina morning up,
And, double rillet of a drinking cup,
Sparkle along to ease the land of
drouth,

Northward to Provence that, and thus
far south

The other. What a method to apprise
Neighbours of births, espousals, obse-
quies !

Which in their very tongue the Trouba-
dour

Records ; and his performance makes
a tour,

For Trouveres bear the miracle about,
Explain its cunning to the vulgar rout,
Until the Formidable House is famed
Over the country—as Taurello aimed,

Who introduced, although the rest
adopt,

The novelty. Such games, her ab-
sence stopped,

Begin afresh now Adelaide, recluse
No longer, in the light of day pursues
Her plans at Mantua : whence an acci-
dent

Which, breaking on Sordello's mixed
content,

Opened, like any flash that cures the
blind,

The veritable business of mankind.

BOOK THE SECOND

THE woods were long austere with
snow : at last

Pink leaflets budded on the beech, and
fast

Larches, scattered through pine-tree
solitudes,

Brightened, "as in the slumbrous
heart o' the woods

"Our buried year, a witch, grew young
again

"To placid incantations, and that stain
"About were from her cauldron, green
smoke blent

"With those black pines"—so Eglam-
or gave vent

To a chance fancy. Whence a just
rebuke

From his companion ; brother Naddo
shook

The solemnest of brows ; "Beware,"
he said,

"Of setting up conceits in nature's
stead !"

Forth wandered our Sordello. Nought
so sure

As that to-day's adventure will secure
Palma, the visioned lady—only pass

O'er yon damp mound and its ex-
hausted grass,

Under that brake where sundawn feeds
the stalks

Of withered fern with gold, into those
walks

Of pine and take her ! Buoyantly he
went.

Again his stooping forehead was be-
sprent

With dew-drops from the skirting ferns.
Then wide

Opened the great morass, shot every side
 With flashing water through and through; a-shine,
 Thick-steaming, all alive. Whose shape divine,
 Quivered i' the farthest rainbow-vapour, glanced
 Athwart the flying herons? He advanced,
 But warily; though Mincio leaped no more,
 Each foot-fall burst up in the marish-floor
 A diamond jet: and if he stopped to pick
 Rose-lichen, or molest the leeches quick,
 And circling blood-worms, minnow, newt or loach,
 A sudden pond would silently encroach
 This way and that. On Palma passed.
 The verge
 Of a new wood was gained. She will emerge
 Flushed, now, and panting,—crowds to see,—will own
 She loves him—Boniface to hear, to groan,
 To leave his suit! One screen of pine-trees still
 Opposes: but—thestartlingspectacle—
 Mantua, this time! Under the walls—a crowd
 Indeed, real men and women, gay and loud
 Round a pavilion. How he stood! In truth
 No prophecy had come to pass: his youth
 In its prime now—and where was homage poured
 Upon Sordello?—born to be adored,
 And suddenly discovered weak, scarce made
 To cope with any, cast into the shade
 By this and this. Yet something seemed to prick
 And tingle in his blood; a sleight—a trick—
 And much would be explained. It went for nought—
 The best of their endowments were ill bought
 With his identity: nay, the conceit,
 That this day's roving led to Palma's feet

Was not so vain—list! The word, “Palma!” Steal
 Aside, and die, Sordello; this is real,
 And this—abjure!
 What next? The curtains see
 Dividing! She is there; and presently
 He will be there—the proper You, at length—
 In your own cherished dress of grace and strength:
 Most like, the very Boniface!
 Not so.
 It was a showy man advanced; but though
 A glad cry welcomed him, then every sound
 Sank and the crowd disposed themselves around,
 —“This is not he,” Sordello felt; while, “Place
 “For the best Troubadour of Boniface!”
 Hollaed the Jongleurs,—“Eglamor, whose lay
 “Concludes his patron's Court of Love to-day!”
 Obsequious Naddo strung the master's lute
 With the new lute-string, “Elys,” named to suit
 The song: he stealthily at watch, the while,
 Biting his lip to keep down a great smile
 Of pride: then up he struck. Sordello's brain
 Swam; for he knew a sometime deed again;
 So, could supply each foolish gap and chasm
 The minstrel left in his enthusiasm,
 Mistaking its true version—was the tale
 Not of Apollo? Only, what avail
 Luring her down, that Elys an he pleased,
 If the man dared no further? Has he ceased?
 And, lo, the people's frank applause half done,
 Sordello was beside him, had begun
 (Spite of indignant twitchings from his friend
 The Trouvere) the true lay with the true end,
 Taking the other's names and time and place

For his. On flew the song, a giddy
 race,
 After the flying story; word made leap
 Out word, rhyme—rhyme; the lay
 could barely keep
 Pace with the action visibly rushing
 past:
 Both ended. Back fell Naddo more
 aghast
 Than some Egyptian from the harassed
 bull
 That wheeled abrupt and, bellowing,
 fronted full
 His plague, who spied a scarab 'neath
 the tongue,
 And found 't was Apis' flank his hasty
 prong
 Insulted. But the people—but the
 cries,
 The crowding round, and proffering the
 prize!
 —For he had gained some prize. He
 seemed to shrink
 Into a sleepy cloud, just at whose brink
 One sight withheld him. There sat
 Adelaide,
 Silent; but at her knees the very maid
 Of the North Chamber, her red lips as
 rich,
 The same pure fleecy hair; one weft
 of which,
 Golden and great, quite touched his
 cheek as o'er
 She leant, speaking some six words and
 no more.
 He answered something, anything;
 and she
 Unbound a scarf and laid it heavily
 Upon him, her neck's warmth and all.
 Again
 Moved the arrested magic; in his brain
 Noises grew, and a light that turned to
 glare,
 And greater glare, until the intense
 flare
 Engulfed him, shut the whole scene
 from his sense.
 And when he woke 't was many a fur-
 long thence,
 At home; the sun shining his ruddy
 wont;
 The customary birds'-chirp; but his
 front
 Was crowned—was crowned! Her
 scented scarf around
 His neck! Whose gorgeous vesture
 heaps the ground?

A prize? He turned, and peeringly
 on him
 Brooded the women-faces, kind and
 dim,
 Ready to talk.—“The Jongleurs in a
 troop
 “Had brought him back, Naddo and
 Squarcialupe
 “And Tagliafer; how strange! a
 childhood spent
 “In taking, well for him, so brave a
 bent!
 “Since Eglamor,” they heard, “was
 dead with spite,
 “And Palma chose him for her min-
 strel.”

Light

Sordello rose—to think, now; hitherto
 He had perceived. Sure, a discovery
 grew
 Out of it all! Best live from first to
 last
 The transport o'er again. A week he
 passed,
 Sucking the sweet out of each circum-
 stance,
 From the bard's outbreak to the luscious
 trance
 Bounding his own achievement.
 Strange! A man
 Recounted an adventure, but began
 Imperfectly; his own task was to fill
 The frame-work up, sing well what he
 sung ill,
 Supply the necessary points, set loose
 As many incidents of little use
 —More imbecile the other, not to see
 Their relative importance clear as he!
 But, for a special pleasure in the act
 Of singing—had he ever turned, in fact,
 From Elys, to sing Elys?—from each
 fit
 Of rapture to contrive a song of it?
 True, this snatch or the other seemed
 to wind
 Into a treasure, helped himself to find
 A beauty in himself; for, see, he
 soared
 By means of that mere snatch, to
 many a hoard
 Of fancies; as some falling cone bears
 soft
 The eye along the fir-tree spire, aloft
 To a dove's nest. Then, how divine
 the cause
 Such a performance might exact ap-
 plause

From men, if they had fancies too?
 Could fate
 Decree they found a beauty separate
 In the poor snatch itself?—"Take
 Elys, there,
 "—"Her head that's sharp and perfect
 like a pear,
 "—"So close and smooth are laid the
 few fine locks
 "—"Coloured like honey oozed from
 topmost rocks
 "—"Sun-blanced the livelong summer'
 —if they heard
 "Just those two rhymes, assented at
 my word,
 "And loved them as I love them who
 have run
 "These fingers through those pale
 locks, let the sun
 "Into the white cool skin—who first
 could clutch,
 "Then praise—I needs must be a god
 to such.
 "Or if some few, above themselves, and
 yet
 "Beneath me, like their Eglamor,
 have set
 "An impress on our gift? So, men
 believe
 "And worship what they know not,
 nor receive
 "Delight from. Have they fancies
 —slow, perchance,
 "Not at their beck, which indistinctly
 glance
 "Until, by song, each floating part be
 linked
 "To each, and all grow palpable, dis-
 tinct?"
 He pondered this.
 Meanwhile, sounds low and drear
 Stole on him, and a noise of footsteps,
 near
 And nearer, and the underwood was
 pushed
 Aside, the larches grazed, the dead
 leaves crushed
 At the approach of men. The wind
 seemed laid;
 Only, the trees shrunk slightly and a
 shade
 Came o'er the sky although 't was
 midday yet:
 You saw each half-shut downcast
 floweret
 Flutter—"a Roman bride, when they'd
 dispart

"Her unbound tresses with the Sabine
 dart,
 "Holding that famous rape in memory
 still,
 "Felt creep into her curls the iron chill,
 "And looked thus," Eglamor would
 say—indeed
 'T is Eglamor, no other, these precede
 Home hither in the woods. "T were
 surely sweet
 "Far from the scene of one's forlorn
 defeat
 "To sleep!" judged Naddo, who in
 person led
 Jongleurs and Trouveres, chanting at
 their head,
 A scanty company; for, sooth to say,
 Our beaten Troubadour had seen his
 day.
 Old worshippers were something
 shamed, old friends
 Nigh weary; still the death proposed
 amends.
 "Let us but get them safely through
 my song
 "And home again!" quoth Naddo.
 All along,
 This man (they rest the bier upon the
 sand)
 —This calm corpse with the loose
 flowers in his hand,
 Eglamor, lived Sordello's opposite.
 For him indeed was Naddo's notion
 right,
 And verse a temple-worship vague and
 vast,
 A ceremony that withdrew the last
 Opposing bolt, looped back the linger-
 ing veil
 Which hid the holy place: should one
 so frail
 Stand there without such effort? or
 repine
 That much was blank, uncertain at the
 shrine
 He knelt before, till, soothed by many
 a rite,
 The power responded, and some sound
 or sight
 Grew up, his own forever, to be fixed
 In rhyme, the beautiful, forever!—
 mixed
 With his own life, unloosed when he
 should please,
 Having it safe at hand, ready to ease
 All pain, remove all trouble; every
 time

He loosed that fancy from its bonds of
 rhyme,
 (Like Perseus when he loosed his naked
 love)
 Faltering ; so distinct and far above
 Himself, these fancies ! He, no genius
 rare,
 Transfiguring in fire or wave or air
 At will, but a poor gnome that, clois-
 tered up
 In some rock-chamber with his agate
 cup,
 His topaz rod, his seed-pearl, in these
 few
 And their arrangement finds enough to
 do
 For his best art. Then, how he loved
 that art !
 The calling marking him a man apart
 From men—one not to care, take coun-
 sel for
 Cold hearts, comfortless faces—(Egla-
 mor
 Was neediest of his tribe)—since verse,
 the gift,
 Was his, and men, the whole of them,
 must shift
 Without it, e'en content themselves
 with wealth
 And pomp and power, snatching a life
 by stealth.
 So, Eglamor was not without his pride !
 The sorriest bat which cowers through
 noontide
 While other birds are jocund, has one
 time
 When moon and stars are blinded, and
 the prime
 Of earth is his to claim, nor find a peer ;
 And Eglamor was noblest poet here—
 He knew that, 'mid the April woods,
 he cast
 Conceits upon in plenty as he passed,
 That Naddo might suppose him not to
 think
 Entirely on the coming triumph : wink
 At the one weakness ! 'T was a fervid
 child,
 That song of his ; no brother of the
 guild
 Had e'er conceived its like. The rest
 you know,
 The exaltation and the overthrow :
 Our poet lost his purpose, lost his rank,
 His life—to that it came. Yet envy
 sank
 Within him, as he heard Sordello out,

And, for the first time, shouted—tried
 to shout
 Like others, not from any zeal to show
 Pleasure that way : the common sort
 did so,
 And what was Eglamor ? who, bend-
 ing down
 The same, placed his beneath Sordello's
 crown,
 Printed a kiss on his successor's hand,
 Left one great tear on it, then joined his
 band
 —In time ; for some were watching at
 the door :
 Who knows what envy may effect ?
 " Give o'er,
 " Nor charm his lips, nor craze him ! "
 (here one spied
 And disengaged the withered crown)—
 " Beside
 " His crown ? How prompt and clear
 those verses rung
 " To answer yours ! nay, sing them ! "
 And he sung
 Them calmly. Home he went ; friends
 used to wait
 His coming, zealous to congratulate ;
 But, to a man, so quickly runs report,
 Could do no less than leave him, and
 escort
 His rival. That eve, then, bred many
 a thought :
 What must his future life be ? was he
 brought
 So low, who was so lofty this Spring
 morn ?
 At length he said, " Best sleep now with
 my scorn,
 " And by-to-morrow I devise some
 plain
 " Expedient ! " So, he slept, nor
 woke again.
 They found as much, those friends,
 when they returned
 O'erflowing with the marvels they had
 learned
 About Sordello's paradise, his roves
 Among the hills and valleys, plains and
 groves,
 Wherein, no doubt, this lay was roughly
 cast,
 Polished by slow degrees, completed
 last
 To Eglamor's discomfiture and death.
 Such form the chanters now, and,
 out of breath,
 They lay the beaten man in his abode,

Naddo reciting that same luckless ode,
 Doleful to hear. Sordello could ex-
 plore
 By means of it, however, one step more
 In joy; and, mastering the round at
 length,
 Learnt how to live in weakness as in
 strength,
 When from his covert forth he stood,
 addressed
 Eglamor, bade the tender ferns invest,
 Primæval pines o'ercanopy his couch,
 And, most of all, his fame—(shall I
 avouch
 Eglamor heard it, dead though he might
 look,
 And laughed as from his brow Sordello
 took
 The crown, and laid on the bard's
 breast, and said
 It was a crown, now, fit for poet's
 head?)
 —Continue. Nor the prayer quite
 fruitless fell.
 A plant they have, yielding a three-
 leaved bell
 Which whiten at the heart ere noon,
 and ails
 Till evening; evening gives it to her
 gales
 To clear away with such forgotten
 things
 As are an eyesore to the morn: this
 brings
 Him to their mind, and bears his very
 name.
 So much for Eglamor. My own
 month came;
 'T was a sunrise of blossoming and
 May.
 Beneath a flowering laurel thicket lay
 Sordello; each new sprinkle of white
 stars
 That smell fainter of wine than Massic
 jars
 Dug up at Baiæ, when the south wind
 shed
 The ripest, made him happier; filleted
 And robbed the same, only a lute beside
 Lay on the turf. Before him far and
 wide
 The country stretched: Goito slept be-
 hind
 —The castle and its covert, which con-
 fined
 Him with his hopes and fears; so fain
 of old

To leave the story of his birth untold.
 At intervals, 'spite the fantastic glow
 Of his Apollo-life, a certain low
 And wretched whisper, winding through
 the bliss,
 Admonished, no such fortune could be
 his,
 All was quite false and sure to fade
 one day:
 The closelier drew he round him his
 array
 Of brilliance to expel the truth. But
 when
 A reason for his difference from men
 Surprised him at the grave, he took no
 rest
 While aught of that old life, superbly
 dressed
 Down to its meanest incident, remained
 A mystery: alas, they soon explained
 Away Apollo! and the tale amounts
 To this: when at Vicenza both her
 counts
 Banished the Vivaresi kith and kin,
 Those Maltraversi hung on Ecelin,
 Reviled him as he followed; he for
 spite
 Must fire their quarter, though that
 self-same night
 Among the flames young Ecelin was
 born
 Of Adelaide, there too, and barely torn
 From the roused populace hard on the
 rear,
 By a poor archer when his chieftain's
 fear
 Grew high; into the thick Elcorte
 leapt,
 Saved her, and died; no creature left
 except
 His child to thank. And when the full
 escape
 Was known—how men impaled from
 chine to nape
 Unlucky Prata, all to pieces spurned
 Bishop Pistore's concubines, and
 burned
 Taurello's entire household, flesh and
 fell,
 Missing the sweeter prey—such courage
 well
 Might claim reward. The orphan,
 ever since,
 Sordello, had been nurtured by his
 prince
 Within a blind retreat where Adelaide—
 (For, once this notable discovery made,

The past at every point was understood)
 —Might harbour easily when times
 were rude,
 When Azzo schemed for Palma, to re-
 trieve
 That pledge of Agnes Este—loth to
 leave
 Mantua unguarded with a vigilant eye,
 Taurello biding there ambiguously—
 He who could have no motive now to
 moil
 For his own fortunes since their utter
 spoil—
 As it were worth while yet (went the
 report)
 To disengage himself from her. In
 short,
 Apollo vanished; a mean youth, just
 named
 His lady's minstrel, was to be pro-
 claimed
 —How shall I phrase it?—Monarch of
 the World!
 For, on the morning that array was
 furled
 Forever, and in place of one a slave
 To longings, wild indeed, but longings
 save
 In dreams as wild, suppressed—one
 daring not
 Assume the mastery such dreams allot,
 Until a magical equipment, strength,
 Grace, wisdom, decked him too,—he
 chose at length,
 Content with unproved wits and failing
 frame,
 In virtue of his simple will, to claim
 That mastery, no less—to do his best
 With means so limited, and let the rest
 Go by,—the seal was set: never again
 Sordello could in his own sight remain
 One of the many, one with hopes and
 cares
 And interests nowise distinct from
 theirs,
 Only peculiar in a thriveless store
 Of fancies, which were fancies and no
 more;
 Never again for him and for the crowd
 A common law was challenged and
 allowed
 If calmly reasoned of, howe'er denied
 By a mad impulse nothing justified
 Short of Apollo's presence. The di-
 vorce
 Is clear: why needs Sordello square his
 course

By any known example? Men no
 more
 Compete with him than tree and flower
 before;
 Himself, inactive, yet is greater far
 Than such as act, each stooping to his
 star,
 Acquiring thence his function; he has
 gained
 The same result with meaner mortals
 trained
 To strength or beauty, moulded to ex-
 press
 Each the idea that rules him; since no
 less
 He comprehends that function, but can
 still
 Embrace the others, take of might his
 fill
 With Richard as of grace with Palma,
 mix
 Their qualities, or for a moment fix
 On one; abiding free meantime, un-
 cramped
 By any partial organ, never stamped
 Strong, and to strength turning all
 energies—
 Wise, and restricted to becoming wise—
 That is, he loves not, nor possesses One
 Idea that, star-like over, lures him on
 To its exclusive purpose. "Fortun-
 ate!
 "This flesh of mine ne'er strove to
 emulate
 "A soul so various—took no casual
 mould
 "Of the first fancy and, contracted,
 cold,
 "Lay clogged forever thence, averse
 to change
 "As that: whereas it left her free to
 range,
 "Remains itself a blank, cast into
 shade,
 "Encumbers little, if it cannot aid.
 "So range, my soul!—who, by self-
 consciousness,
 "The last drop of all beauty dost ex-
 press—
 "The grace of seeing grace, a quintes-
 sence
 "For thee: but for the world, that can
 dispense
 "Wonder on men who, themselves,
 wonder—make
 "A shift to love at second-hand, and
 take

" Those for its idols who but idolize,
 " Themselves,—world that loves souls
 as strong or wise,
 " Who, themselves, love strength, wis-
 dom,—it shall bow
 " Surely in unexampled worship now,
 " Discerning me !"—

(Dear monarch, I beseech,
 Notice how lamentably wide a breach
 Is here : discovering this, discover too
 What our poor world has possibly to do
 With it ! As pigmy natures as you
 please—

So much the better for you ; take your
 ease ;

Look on, and laugh ; style yourself
 God alone ;

Strangle some day with a cross olive-
 stone :

All that is right enough : but why want
 us

To know that you yourself know thus
 and thus ?)

" The world shall bow to me conceiving
 all

" Man's life, who see its blisses, great
 and small,

" Afar—not tasting any ; no machine
 " To exercise my utmost will is mine :

" Be mine mere consciousness ! Let
 them perceive

" What I could do, a mastery believe,
 " Asserted and established to the
 throng

" By their selected evidence of song
 " Which now shall prove, whate'er
 they are, or seek

" To be, I am—who take no pains to
 speak,

" Change no old standards of perfec-
 tion, vex

" With no strange forms created to
 perplex,

" But will perform their bidding and
 no more,

" At their own satiating-point give o'er,
 " While each shall love in me the love
 that leads

" His soul to its perfection." Song, not
 deeds,

(For we get tired) was chosen. Fate
 would brook

Mankind no other organ ; he would
 look

For not another channel to dispense
 His own volition, and receive their
 sense

Of its existing ; but would be content,
 Obstructed else, with merely verse for
 vent.

Nor should, for instance, strength an
 outlet seek

And, striving, be admired ; nor grace
 bespeak

Wonder, displayed in gracious atti-
 tudes ;

Nor wisdom, poured forth, change un-
 seemly moods :

But he would give and take on song's
 one point.

Like some huge throbbing stone that,
 poised a-joint,

Sounds, to affect on its basaltic bed,
 Must sue in just one accent ; tempests
 shed

Thunder, and raves the landstorm :
 only let

That key by any little noise be set—
 The far benighted hunter's halloo pitch

On that, the hungry curlew chance to
 scritch

Or serpent hiss it, rustling through the
 rift,

However loud, however low—all lift
 The groaning monster, stricken to the
 heart.

Lo ye, the world's concernment, for
 its part,

And this, for his, will hardly interfere !
 Its businesses in blood and blaze this year

But wile the hour away—a pastime
 slight

Till he shall step upon the platform :
 right !

And, now thus much is settled, cast in
 rough,

Proved feasible, be counselled ! thought
 enough,—

Slumber, Sordello ! any day will serve :
 Were it a less digested plan ! how
 swerve

To-morrow ? Meanwhile eat these
 sun-dried grapes,

And watch the soaring hawk there !
 Life escapes

Merrily thus.

He thoroughly read o'er
 His truchman Naddo's missive six
 times more,

Praying him visit Mantua and supply
 A famished world.

The evening star was high
 When he reached Mantua, but his fame
 arrived

Before him: friends applauded, foes
 connived,
 And Naddo looked an angel, and the
 rest
 Angels, and all these angels would be
 blest
 Supremely by a song—the thrice-re-
 nowned
 Goito manufacture. Then he found
 (Casting about to satisfy the crowd)
 That happy vehicle, so late allowed,
 A sore annoyance; 't was the song's
 effect
 He cared for, scarce the song itself:
 reflect!
 In the past life, what might be singing's
 use?
 Just to delight his Delians, whose pro-
 fuse
 Praise, not the toilsome process which
 procured
 That praise, enticed Apollo: dreams
 abjured,
 No overleaping means for ends—take
 both
 For granted or take neither! I am loth
 To say the rhymes at last were Eglam-
 or's;
 But Naddo, chuckling, bade competi-
 tors
 Go pine; "the master certes meant
 to waste
 "No effort, cautiously had probed the
 taste
 "He'd please anon: true bard, in short,
 disturb
 "His title if they could; nor spur nor
 curb,
 "Fancy nor reason, wanting in him;
 whence?
 "The staple of his verses, common
 sense:
 "He built on man's broad nature—
 gift of gifts,
 "That power to build! The world
 contented shifts
 "With counterfeits enough, a dreary
 sort
 "Of warriors, statesmen, ere it can ex-
 tort
 "Its poet-soul—that 's, after all, a
 freak
 "(The having eyes to see and tongue
 to speak)
 "With our herd's stupid sterling hap-
 piness
 "So plainly incompatible that—yes—

"Yes—should a son of his improve the
 breed
 "And turn out poet, he were cursed
 indeed!"
 "Well, there's Goito and its woods
 anon,
 "If the worst happen; best go stoutly
 on
 "Now!" thought Sordello.
 Ay, and goes on yet!
 You pother with your glossaries to get
 A notion of the Troubadour's intent
 In rondel, tenzon, virlai or sirvent—
 Much as you study arras how to twirl
 His angelot, plaything of page and girl
 Once; but you surely reach, at last,—
 or, no!
 Never quite reach what struck the
 people so,
 As from the welter of their time he drew
 Its elements successively to view,
 Followed all actions backward on their
 course,
 And catching up, unmingled at the
 source,
 Such a strength, such a weakness,
 added then
 A touch or two, and turned them into
 men.
 Virtue took form, nor vice refused a
 shape;
 Here heaven opened, there was hell
 agape,
 As Saint this simpered past in sanctity,
 Sinner the other flared portentous by
 A greedy people. Then why stop, sur-
 prised
 At his success? The scheme was
 realized
 Too suddenly in one respect: a crowd
 Praising, eyes quick to see, and lips as
 loud
 To speak, delicious homage to receive,
 The woman's breath to feel upon his
 sleeve,
 Who said, "But Anafest—why asks
 he less
 "Than Lucio, in your verses? how
 confess,
 "It seemed too much but yestereve!"
 —the youth,
 Who bade him earnestly, "Avow the
 truth!"
 "You love Bianca, surely, from your
 song;
 "I knew I was unworthy!"—soft or
 strong,

In poured such tributes ere he had arranged
 Ethereal ways to take them, sorted, changed,
 Digested. Courted thus at unawares,
 In spite of his pretensions and his cares,
 He caught himself shamefully hankering
 After the obvious petty joys that spring
 From true life, fain relinquish pedestal
 And condescend with pleasures—one and all
 To be renounced, no doubt; for, thus
 to chain
 Himself to single joys and so refrain
 From tasting their quintessence, frustrates, sure,
 His prime design; each joy must he
 abjure
 Even for love of it.
 He laughed: what sage
 But perishes if from his magic page
 He look because, at the first line, a
 proof
 'T was heard salutes him from the
 cavern roof?
 "On! Give yourself, excluding aught
 beside,
 'To the day's task; compel your
 slave provide
 'Its utmost at the soonest; turn the
 leaf
 "Thoroughly conned. These lays of
 yours, in brief—
 "Can't men bear, now, something
 better?—fly
 "A pitch beyond this unreal pageantry
 "Of essences? the period sure has
 ceased
 "For such: present us with ourselves,
 at least,
 "Not portions of ourselves, mere loves
 and hates
 "Made flesh: wait not!"
 Awhile the poet waits
 However. The first trial was enough:
 He left imagining, to try the stuff
 That held the imagined thing, and, let it
 writhe
 Never so fiercely, scarce allowed a tithe
 To reach the light—his Language.
 How he sought
 The cause, conceived a cure, and slow
 re-wrought
 That Language,—welding words into
 the crude

Mass from the new speech round him
 till a rude
 Armour was hammered out, in time to
 be
 Approved beyond the Roman panoply
 Melted to make it,—boots not. This
 obtained
 With some ado, no obstacle remained
 To using it; accordingly he took
 An action with its actors, quite forsook
 Himself to live in each, returned anon
 With the result—a creature, and, by
 one
 And one, proceeded leisurely to equip
 Its limbs in harness of his workman-
 ship.
 "Accomplished! Listen, Mantuans!"
 Fond essay!
 Piece after piece that armour broke
 away,
 Because perceptions whole, like that he
 sought
 To clothe, reject so pure a work of
 thought
 As language: thought may take per-
 ception's place
 But hardly co-exist in any case,
 Being its mere presentment—of the
 whole
 By parts, the simultaneous and the sole
 By the successive and the many. Lacks
 The crowd perception? painfully it
 tacks
 Thought to thought, which Sordello,
 needing such,
 Has rent perception into: it's to
 clutch
 And reconstruct—his office to diffuse,
 Destroy: as hard, then, to obtain a
 Muse
 As to become Apollo. "For the rest,
 "E'en if some wondrous vehicle ex-
 pressed
 "The whole dream, what impertinence
 in me
 "So to express it, who myself can be
 "The dream! nor, on the other hand,
 are those
 "I sing to, over-likely to suppose
 "A higher than the highest I present
 "Now, which they praise already: be
 content
 "Both parties, rather—they with the
 old verse,
 "And I with the old praise—far go,
 fare worse!"
 A few adhering rivets loosed, upsprings

The angel, sparkles off his mail, and
rings
Whirled from each delicatest limb it
warps,
As might Apollo from the sudden
corpse
Of Hyacinth have cast his luckless
quoits.
He set to celebrating the exploits
Of Montfort o'er the Mountaineers.
Then came
The world's revenge: their pleasure,
now his aim
Merely,—what was it? "Not to play
the fool
"So much as learn our lesson in your
school!"
Replied the world. He found that,
every time
He gained applause by any ballad-
rhyme,
His auditory recognized no jot
As he intended, and, mistaking not
Him for his meanest hero, ne'er was
dunce
Sufficient to believe him—all, at once.
His will . . . conceive it caring for
his will!
—Mantuan, the main of them, admir-
ing still
How a mere singer, ugly, stunted, weak,
Had Montfort at completely (so to
speak)
His fingers' ends; while past the praise-
tide swept
To Montfort, either's share distinctly
kept:
The true meed for true merit!—his
abates
Into a sort he most repudiates,
And on them angrily he turns. Who
were [care
The Mantuan, after all, that he should
About their recognition, ay or no?
In spite of the convention months ago,
(Why blink the truth?) was not he
forced to help
This same ungrateful audience, every
whelp
Of Naddo's litter, make them pass for
peers
With the bright band of old Goito years,
As erst he toiled for flower or tree?
Why, there
Sat Palma! Adelaide's funereal hair
Ennobled the next corner. Ay, he
strewed

A fairy dust upon that multitude,
Although he feigned to take them by
themselves;
His giants dignified those puny elves,
Sublimed their faint applause. In
short, he found
Himself still footing a delusive round,
Remote as ever from the self-display
He meant to compass, hampered every
way
By what he hoped assistance. Where-
fore then
Continue, make believe to find in men
A use he found not?
Weeks, months, years went by;
And lo, Sordello vanished utterly,
Sundered in twain; each spectral part
at strife
With each; one jarred against another
life;
The Poet thwarting hopelessly the
Man
Who, fooled no longer, free in fancy ran
Here, there; let slip no opportunities
As pitiful, forsooth, beside the prize
To drop on him some no-time and ac-
quit
His constant faith (the Poet-half's to
wit—
That waiving any compromise between
No joy and all joy kept the hunger keen
Beyond most methods)—of incurring
scoff
From the Man-portion—not to be put
off
With self-reflectings by the Poet's
scheme,
Though ne'er so bright;—that saun-
tered forth in dream,
Dressed any how, nor waited mystic
frames,
Immeasurable gifts, astounding claims,
But just his sorry self—who yet might
be
Sorrier for aught he in reality
Achieved, so pinioned That the Poet-
part,
Fondling, in turn of fancy, verse; the
Art
Developing his soul a thousand ways—
Potent, by its assistance, to amaze
The multitude with majesties, convince
Each sort of nature, that same nature's
prince
Accosted it. Language, the makeshift,
grew
Into a bravest of expedients, too;

Apollo, seemed it now, perverse had
thrown
Quiver and bow away, the lyre alone
Sufficed. While, out of dream, his
day's work went
To tune a crazy tenzon or sirvent—
So hampered him the Man-part, thrust
to judge
Between the bard and the bard's audi-
ence, grudge
A minute's toil that missed its due
reward!
But the complete Sordello, Man and
Bard,
John's cloud-girt angel, this foot on
the land,
That on the sea, with, open in his hand,
A bitter-sweetling of a book—was gone.
Then, if internal struggles to be one
That frittered him incessantly piece-
meal,
Referred, ne'er so obliquely, to the real
Mantuan! intruding ever with some
call
To action while he pondered, once for
all,
Which looked the easier effort—to pur-
sue
This course, still leap o'er paltry joys,
yearn through
The present ill-appreciated stage
Of self revelation, and compel the age
Know him; or else, forswearing bard-
craft, wake
From out his lethargy and nobly shake
Off timid habits of denial, mix
With men, enjoy like men. Ere he
could fix
On aught, in rushed the Mantuans;
much they cared
For his perplexity! Thus unprepared,
The obvious if not only shelter lay
In deeds, the dull conventions of his
day
Prescribed the like of him: why not be
glad [bad,
'T is settled Palma's minstrel, good or
Submits to this and that established
rule?
Let Vidal change, or any other fool,
His murrey-coloured robe for filamot,
And crop his hair; too skin-deep, is it
not,
Such vigour? Then, a sorrow to the
heart,
His talk! Whatever topics they
might start

Had to be groped for in his conscious-
ness
Straight, and as straight delivered them
by guess.
Only obliged to ask himself, "What
was,"
A speedy answer followed; but, alas,
One of God's large ones, tardy to con-
dense
Itself into a period; answers whence
A tangle of conclusions must be stripped
At any risk ere, trim to pattern clipped,
They matched rare specimens the Man-
tuan flock
Regaled him with, each talker from his
stock
Of sorted-o'er opinions, every stage,
Juicy in youth or desiccate with age,
Fruits like the fig-tree's, rathe-ripe,
rotten-rich,
Sweet-sour, all tastes to take: a prac-
tice which
He too had not impossibly attained,
Once either of those fancy-flights re-
strained;
(For, at conjecture how might words
appear
To others, playing there what hap-
pened here,
And occupied abroad by what he
spurned
At home, 't was slipped, the occasion
he returned
To seize :) he'd strike that lyre adroit-
ly—speech,
Would but a twenty-cubit plectre
reach; [ment,
A clever hand, consummate instru-
Were both brought close; each excel-
lency went
For nothing, else. The question
Naddo asked,
Had just a lifetime moderately tasked
To answer, Naddo's fashion. More dis-
gust
And more: why move his soul, since
move it must
At minute's notice or as good it failed
To move at all? The end was, he
retailed
Some ready-made opinion, put to use
This quip, that maxim, ventured repro-
duce
Gestures and tones—at any folly
caught
Serving to finish with, nor too much
sought

If false or true 't was spoken; praise
and blame
Of what he said grew pretty well the
same
—Meantime awards to meantime acts:
his soul,
Unequal to the compassing a whole,
Saw, in a tenth part, less and less to
strive
About. And as for men in turn . . .
contrive
Who could to take eternal interest
In them, so hate the worst, so love the
best!
Though, in pursuance of his passive
plan,
He hailed, decried, the proper way.
As Man
So figured he; and how as Poet?
Verse
Came only not to a stand-still. The
worse,
That his poor piece of daily work to do
Was, not sink under any rivals; who
Loudly and long enough, without these
qualms,
Tuned, from Bocafoli's stark-naked
psalms, [with,
To Plara's sonnets spoilt by toying
"As knops that stud some almug to
the pith
"Prickèd for gum, wry thence, and
crinklèd worse
"Than pursèd eyelids of a river-horse
"Sunning himself o' the slime when
whirrs the breeze"—
Gad-fly, that is. He might compete
with these!
But—but—
"Observe a pompion-twine afloat;
"Pluck me one cup from off the castle-
moat!
"Along with cup you raise leaf, stalk
and root,
"The entire surface of the pool to boot.
"So could I pluck a cup, put in one
song
"A single sight, did not my hand, too
strong,
"Twitch in the least the root-strings
of the whole.
"How should externals satisfy my
soul?"
"Why that's precise the error Squar-
cialupe"
(Hazarded Naddo) "finds; 'the man
can't stoop

"To sing us out,' quoth he, 'a mere
romance;
"He'd fain do better than the best,
enhance
"The subjects' rarity, work problems
out
"Therewith: 'now, you're a bard, a
bard past doubt,
"And no philosopher; why introduce
"Crotchets like these? fine, surely, but
no use [strike,
"In poetry—which still must be, to
"Based upon common sense; there's
nothing like
"Appealing to our nature! what beside
"Was your first poetry? No tricks
were tried
"In that, no hollow thrills, affected
throes!
"The man,' said we, 'tells his own
joys and woes:
"We'll trust him.' Would you have
your songs endure?
"Build on the human heart!—why,
to be sure
"Yours is one sort of heart—but I
mean theirs,
"Ours, every one's, the healthy heart
one cares
"To build on! Central peace, mother
of strength,
"That's father of . . . nay, go your-
self that length,
"Ask those calm-hearted doers what
they do
"When they have got their calm! And
is it true,
"Fire rankles at the heart of every
globe?
"Perhaps. But these are matters one
may probe
"Too deeply for poetic purposes:
"Rather select a theory that . . . yes,
"Laugh! what does that prove?—
stations you midway
"And saves some little o'er-refining.
Nay,
"That's rank injustice done me! I
restrict
"The poet? Don't I hold the poet
picked
"Out of a host of warriors, statesmen
. . . did
"I tell you? Very like! As well you
hid
"That sense of power, you have!
True bards believe

"All able to achieve what they achieve—
 "That is, just nothing—in one point abide
 "Profounder simpletons than all beside.
 "Oh, ay! The knowledge that you are a bard
 "Must constitute your prime, nay sole, reward!"
 So prattled Naddo, busiest of the tribe
 Of genius-haunters—how shall I describe
 What grubs or nips or rubs or rips—
 your louse
 For love, your flea for hate, magnanimous,
 Malignant, Pappacoda, Tagliafer,
 Picking a sustenance from wear and tear
 By implements it sedulous employs
 To undertake, lay down, mete out, o'er-
 toise
 Sordello? Fifty creepers to elude
 At once! They settled staunchly;
 shame ensued:
 Behold the monarch of mankind succumb
 To the last fool who turned him round
 his thumb,
 As Naddo styled it! 'Twas not worth
 oppose
 The matter of a moment, gainsay those
 He aimed at getting rid of; better
 think
 Their thoughts and speak their speech,
 secure to slink
 Back expeditiously to his safe place,
 And chew the cud—what he and what
 his race [this
 Were really, each of them. Yet even
 Conformity was partial. He would
 miss
 Some point, brought into contact with
 them ere
 Assured in what small segment of the
 sphere
 Of his existence they attended him;
 Whence blunders, falsehoods rectify—
 a grim
 List—slur it over! How? If dreams
 were tried,
 His will swayed sicklily from side to
 side,
 Not merely neutralized his waking act
 But tended e'en in fancy to distract
 The intermediate will, the choice of
 means.

He lost the art of dreaming: Mantuan
 scenes
 Supplied a baron, say, he sang before,
 Handsomely reckless, full to running
 o'er
 Of gallantries; "abjure the soul, con-
 tent
 "With body, therefore!" Scarcely
 had he bent
 Himself in dream thus low, when mat-
 ter fast
 Cried out, he found, for spirit to con-
 trast
 And task it duly; by advances slight,
 The simple stuff becoming composite,
 Count Lori grew Apollo—best recall
 His fancy! Then would some rough
 peasant-Paul,
 Like those old Ecelin confers with,
 glance
 His gay apparel o'er; that countenance
 Gathered his shattered fancy into one,
 And, body clean abolished, soul alone
 Sufficed the grey Paulician: by and by,
 To balance the ethereality,
 Passions were needed; foiled he sunk
 again.
 Meanwhile the world rejoiced ('t is
 time explain)
 Because a sudden sickness set it free
 From Adelaide. Missing the mother-
 bee,
 Her mountain-hive Romano swarmed;
 at once
 A rustle-forth of daughters and of sons
 Blackened the valley. "I am sick too,
 old,
 "Half crazed I think; what good 's
 the Kaiser's gold
 "To such an one? God help me! for
 I catch [watch—
 "My children's gree ly sparkling eyes at
 "'He bears that double breastplate
 on,' they say,
 "'So many minutes less than yester-
 day!'
 "Beside, Monk Hilary is on his knees
 "Now, sworn to kneel and pray till
 God shall please
 "Exact a punishment for many things
 "You know, and some you never
 knew; which brings
 "To memory, Azzo's sister Beatrix
 "And Richard's Giglia are my Alber-
 ic's
 "And Ecelin's betrothed; the Count
 himself

"Must get my Palma: Ghibellin and Guef

"Mean to embrace each other." So began

Romano's missive to his fighting man
Taurello—on the Tuscan's death, away
With Friedrich sworn to sail from
Naples' bay

Next month for Syria. Never thunder-clap

Out of Vesuvius' throat, like this mishap

Startled him. "That accursed Vicenza! I

"Absent, and she selects this time to die!

"Ho, fellows, for Vicenza!" Half a score

Of horses ridden dead, he stood before
Romano in his reeking spurs: too late—

"Boniface urged me, Este could not wait,"

The chieftain stammered; "let me die in peace—

"Forget me! Was it I e'er craved increase

"Of rule? Do you and Friedrich plot your worst

"Against the Father: as you found me first

"So leave me now. Forgive me! Palma, sure,

"Is at Goito still. Retain that lure—

"Only be pacified!"

The country rung

With such a piece of news: on every tongue,

How Ecelin's great servant, congealed off,

Had done a long day's service, so, might doff

The green and yellow, and recover breath

At Mantua, whither,—since Retrude's death,

(The girlish slip of a Sicilian bride
From Otho's house, he carried to reside

At Mantua till the Ferrarese should pile
A structure worthy her imperial style,

The gardens raise, the statues there enshrine,

She never lived to see)—although his line

Was ancient in her archives and she took

A pride in him, that city, nor forsook

Her child when he forsook himself and spent

A prowess on Romano surely meant
For his own growth—whither he ne'er resorts

If wholly satisfied (to trust reports)
With Ecelin. So, forward in a trice
Were shows to greet him. "Take a friend's advice,"

Quoth Naddo to Sordello, "nor be rash
"Because your rivals (nothing can abash

"Some folks) demur that we pronounced you best

"To sound the great man's welcome; 't is a test,

"Remember! Strojavacca looks askint,

"The rough fat sloven; and there's plenty hint

"Your pinions have received of late a shock—

"Outsoar them, cobsman of the silver flock!

"Sing well!" A signal wonder, song's no whit

Facilitated.

Fast the minutes flit;

Another day, Sordello finds, will bring
The soldier, and he cannot choose but sing;

So, a last shift, quits Mantua—slow, alone:

Out of that aching brain, a very stone,
Song must be struck. What occupies that front?

Just how he was more awkward than his wont

The night before, when Naddo, who had seen

Taurello on his progress, praised the mien

For dignity no crosses could affect—
Such was a joy, and might not he detect

A satisfaction if established joys
Were proved imposture? Poetry annoys

Its utmost: wherefore fret? Verses may come

Or keep away! And thus he wandered, dumb

Till evening, when he paused, thoroughly spent,

On a blind hill-top: down the gorge he went,

Yielding himself up as to an embrace.

The moon came out ; like features of a face,
 A querulous fraternity of pines,
 Sad blackthorn clumps, leafless and grovelling vines
 Also came out, made gradually up
 The picture ; 't was Goito's mountain-cup
 And castle. He had dropped through one defile
 He never dared explore, the Chief ere-while
 Had vanished by. Back rushed the dream, enwrapped
 Him wholly. 'T was Apollo now they lapped,
 Those mountains, not a pettish minstrel meant
 To wear his soul away in discontent,
 Brooding on fortune's malice. Heart and brain
 Swelled ; he expanded to himself again,
 As some thin seedling spice-tree starved and frail,
 Pushing between cat's head and ibis' tail
 Crusted into the porphyry pavement smooth,
 —Suffered remain just as it sprung, to soothe
 The Soldan's pining daughter, never yet
 Well in her chilly green-glazed minaret,—
 When rooted up, the sunny day she died,
 And flung into the common court beside
 Its parent tree. Come home, Sor-dello ! Soon
 Was he low muttering, beneath the moon,
 Of sorrow saved, of quiet evermore,—
 Since from the purpose, he maintained before,
 Only resulted wailing and hot tears.
 Ah, the slim castle ! dwindled of late years,
 But more mysterious ; gone to ruin—trails
 Of vine through every loop-hole. Nought avails
 The night as, torch in hand, he must explore
 The maple chamber : did I say, its floor

Was made of intersecting cedar beams?
 Worn now with gaps so large, there blew cold streams
 Of air quite from the dungeon ; lay your ear
 Close and 't is like, one after one, you hear
 In the blind darkness water drop. The nests
 And nooks retain their long ranged vestiture-chests
 Empty and smelling of the iris root
 The Tuscan grated o'er them to recruit
 Her wasted wits. Palma was gone that day,
 Said the remaining women. Last, he lay
 Beside the Carian group reserved and still.
 The Body, the Machine for Acting Will,
 Had been at the commencement proved unfit ;
 That for Demonstrating, Reflecting it, Mankind—no fitter : was the Will Itself
 In fault ?
 His forehead pressed the moonlit shelf
 Beside the youngest marble maid awhile ;
 Then, raising it, he thought, with a long smile,
 " I shall be king again ! " as he withdrew
 The envied scarf ; into the font he threw
 His crown.
 Next day, no poet ! " Wherefore ? " asked
 Taurello, when the dance of Jongleurs, masked
 As devils, ended ; " don't a song come next ? "
 The master of the pageant looked perplexed
 Till Naddo's whisper came to his relief.
 " His Highness knew what poets were : in brief,
 " Had not the tetchy race prescriptive right
 " To peevishness, caprice ? or, call it spite,
 " One must receive their nature in its length
 " And breadth, expect the weakness with the strength ! "

—So phrasing, till, his stock of phrases
spent,
The easy-natured soldier smiled assent,
Settled his portly person, smoothed his
chin,
And nodded that the bull-bait might
begin.

BOOK THE THIRD

AND the font took them: let our
laurels lie!
Braid moonfern now with mystic trifoly
Because once more Goito gets, once
more,
Sordello to itself! A dream is o'er,
And the suspended life begins anew;
Quiet those throbbing temples, then,
subdue
That cheek's distortion! Nature's
strict embrace,
Putting aside the past, shall soon efface
Its print as well—factitious humours
grown
Over the true—loves, hatreds not his
own—
And turn him pure as some forgotten
vest
Woven of painted byssus, silkiest
Tufting the Tyrrhene whelk's pearl-
sheeted lip,
Left welter where a trireme let it slip
I' the sea, and vexed a satrap; so the
stain
O' the world forsakes Sordello, with its
pain,
Its pleasure: how the tinct loosening
escapes,
Cloud after cloud! Mantua's familiar
shapes
Die, fair and foul die, fading as they
flit,
Men, women, and the pathos and the
wit,
Wise speech and foolish, deeds to smile
or sigh
For, good, bad, seemly or ignoble, die.
The last face glances through the
eglantines,
The last voice murmurs 'twixt the blos-
somed vines
Of Men, of that machine supplied by
thought
To compass self-perception with, he
sought

By forcing half himself—an insane
pulse
Of a god's blood, on clay it could con-
vulse,
Never transmute—on human sights
and sounds,
To watch the other half with; irksome
bounds
It ebbs from to its source, a fountain
sealed
Forever. Better sure be unrevealed
Than part-revealed: Sordello well or ill
Is finished: then what further use of
Will,
Point in the prime idea not realized,
An oversight? inordinately prized,
No less, and pampered with enough of
each
Delight to prove the whole above its
reach.
"To need become all natures, yet re-
tain [main
"The law of my own nature—to re-
"Myself, yet yearn . . . as if that
chestnut, think,
"Should yearn for this first larch-
bloom crisp and pink,
"Or those pale fragrant tears where
zephyrs stanch
"March wounds along the fretted pine-
tree branch!
"Will and the means to show will, great
and small,
"Material, spiritual,—abjure them all
"Save any so distinct, they may be left
"To amuse, not tempt become! and,
thus bereft,
"Just as I first was fashioned would
I be!
"Nor, moon, is it Apollo now, but me
"Thou visitest to comfort and be-
friend!
"Swim thou into my heart, and there
an end,
"Since I possess thee!—nay, thus shut
mine eyes
"And know, quite know, by this
heart's fall and rise,
"When thou dost bury thee in clouds,
and when
"Out-standest: wherefore practise
upon men
"To make that plainer to myself?"
Slide here
Over a sweet and solitary year
Wasted; or simply notice change in
him—

How eyes, bright with exploring once,
grew dim
And satiate with receiving. Some distress
Was caused, too, by a sort of consciousness
Under the imbecility,—nought kept
That down; he slept, but was aware he
slept,
So, frustrated: as who brainsick made
pact
Erst with the overhanging cataract
To deafen him, yet still distinguished
slow
His own blood's measured clicking at
his brow.
To finish. One declining Autumn
day—
Few birds about the heaven chill and
grey,
No wind that cared trouble the tacit
woods—
He sauntered home complacently, their
moods
According, his and nature's. Every
spark
Of Mantua life was trodden out; so
dark
The embers, that the Troubadour, who
sung
Hundreds of songs, forgot, its trick his
tongue,
Its craft his brain, how either brought
to pass
Singing at all; that faculty might class
With any of Apollo's now. The year
Began to find its early promise sere
As well. Thus beauty vanishes; thus
stone
Outlingers flesh: nature's and his
youth gone,
They left the world to you, and wished
you joy.
When, stopping his benevolent em-
ploy,
A presage shuddered through the wel-
kin; harsh
The earth's remonstrance followed.
'T was the marsh
Gone of a sudden. Mincio, in its place,
Laughed, a broad water, in next morn-
ing's face,
And, where the mists broke up im-
mense and white
I' the steady wind, burned like a spilth
of light
Out of the crashing of a myriad stars.

And here was nature, bound by the
same bars
Of fate with him!
"No! youth once gone is gone:
"Deeds let escape are never to be done.
"Leaf-fall and grass-spring for the
year; for us—
"Oh forfeit I unalterably thus
"My chance? nor two lives wait me,
this to spend
"Learning save that? Nature has
time, may mend
"Mistake, she knows occasion will
recur;
"Landslip or seabreach, how affects it
her
"With her magnificent resources?—I
"Must perish once and perish utterly.
"Not any strollings now at even-close
"Down the field-path, Sordello! by
thorn-rows
"Alive with lamp-flies, swimming spots
of fire
"And dew, outlining the black cypress'
spire
"She waits you at, Elys, who heard
you first
"Woo her, the snow-month through,
but ere she durst
"Answer 't was April. Linden-flower-
time-long
"Her eyes were on the ground; 't is
July, strong
"Now; and because white dust-clouds
overwhelm [elm
"The woodside, here or by the village
"That holds the moon, she meets you,
somewhat pale,
"But letting you lift up her coarse flax
veil
"And whisper (the damp little hand in
yours)
"Of love, heart's love, your heart's
love that endures
"Till death. Tush! No mad mixing
with the rout
"Of haggard ribalds wandering about
"The hot torchlit wine-scented island-
house
"Where Friedrich holds his wickedest
carouse,
"Parading,—to the gay Palermitans,
"Soft Messinese, dusk Saracenic clans
"Nuocera holds,—those tall grave
dazzling Norse,
"High-cheeked, lank-haired, toothed
whiter than the morse,

- " Queen of the caves of jet stalactites,
 " He sent his barks to fetch through icy seas,
 " The blind night seas without a saving star,
 " And here in snowy birdskin robes they are,
 " Sordello!—here, mollitious alcoves gilt,
 " Superb as Byzant domes that devils built!
 " —Ah, Byzant, there again! no chance to go
 " Ever like august pleasant Dandolo,
 " Worshipping hearts about him for a wall,
 " Conducted, blind-eyes, hundred years and all,
 " Through vanquished Byzant where friends note for him
 " What pillar, marble massive, sardius slim,
 " 'T were fittest he transport to Venice' Square—
 " Flattered and promised life to touch them there
 " Soon, by those fervid sons of senators!
 " No more lifes, deaths, loves, hatreds, peaces, wars! [be,
 " Ah, fragments of a whole ordained to
 " Points in the life I waited! what are ye
 " But roundels of a ladder which appeared
 " Awhile the very platform it was reared
 " To lift me on?—that happiness I find
 " Proofs of my faith in, even in the blind
 " Instinct which bade forego you all unless
 " Ye led me past yourselves. Ay, happiness
 " Awaited me; the way life should be used
 " Was to acquire, and deeds like you conducted
 " To teach it by a self-revelment, deemed
 " The very use, so long! Whatever seemed
 " Progress to that, was pleasure; aught that stayed
 " My reaching it—no pleasure. I have laid
- " The ladder down; I climb not; still, aloft
 " The platform stretches! Blissess strong and soft,
 " I dared not entertain, elude me; yet
 " Never of what they promised could I get
 " A glimpse till now! The common sort, the crowd,
 " Exist, perceive; with Being are endowed,
 " However slight, distinct from what they See,
 " However bounded; Happiness must be,
 " To feed the first by gleanings from the last,
 " Attain its qualities, and slow or fast
 " Become what they behold; such peace-in-strife
 " By transmutation, is the Use of Life,
 " The Alien turning Native to the soul
 " Or body—which instructs me; I am whole
 " There and demand a Palma; had the world
 " Been from my soul to a like distance hurled,
 " 'T were Happiness to make it one with me:
 " Whereas I must, ere I begin to Be,
 " Include a world, in flesh, I comprehend
 " In spirit now; and this done, what's to blend
 " With? Nought is Alien in the world—my Will
 " Owns all already; yet can turn it still
 " Less Native, since my Means to correspond
 " With Will are so unworthy, 't was my bond
 " To tread the very joys that tantalize
 " Most now, into a grave, never to rise.
 " I die then! Will the rest agree to die?
 " Next Age or no? Shall its Sordello try
 " Clue after clue, and catch at last the clue
 " I miss?—that's underneath my finger too,
 " Twice, thrice a day, perhaps,—some yearning traced
 " Deeper, some petty consequence embraced

"Closer! Why fled I Mantua, then?
—complained
"So much my Will was fettered, yet
remained
"Content within a tether half the range
"I could assign it?—able to exchange
"My ignorance (I felt) for knowledge,
and [stand—
"Idle because I could thus under-
"Could e'en have penetrated to its core
"Our mortal mystery, and yet forbore,
"Preferred elaborating in the dark
"My casual stuff, by any wretched
spark
"Born of my predecessors, though one
stroke
"Of mine had brought the flame forth!
Mantua's yoke,
"My minstrel's-trade, was to behold
mankind,—
"My own concernment—just to bring
my mind
"Behold, just extricate, for my ac-
quist,
"Each object suffered stifle in the mist
"Which hazard, use and blindness
could impose
"In their relation to myself."

He rose.

The level wind carried above the firs
Clouds, the irrevocable travellers,
Onward.

"Pushed thus into a drowsy copse,
"Arms twine about my neck, each eye-
lid drops
"Under a humid finger; while there
fleets,
"Outside the screen, a pageant time
repeats
"Never again! To be deposed, im-
mured
"Clandestinely—still petted, still as-
sured
"To govern were fatiguing work—the
Sight
"Fleeting meanwhile! 'T is noon-
tide: wreak ere night
"Somehow my will upon it, rather!
Slake
"This thirst somehow, the poorest im-
press take
"That serves! A blasted bud dis-
plays you, torn,
"Faint rudiments of the full flower un-
born;
"But who divines what glory coats
o'erclasp

"Of the bulb dormant in the mummy's
grasp
"Taurello sent?"
"Taurello? Palma sent
"Your Trouvere," (Naddo interposing
leant
Over the lost bard's shoulder)—"and,
believe,
"You cannot more reluctantly receive
"Than I pronounce her message: we
depart
"Together. What avail a poet's heart
"Verona's pomps and gauds? five
blades of grass
"Suffice him. News? Why, where
your marish was,
"On its mud-banks smoke fast rises
after smoke
"I' the valley, like a spout of hell new-
broke.
"Oh, the world's tidings! small your
thanks, I guess,
"For them. The father of our Patron-
ess,
"Has played Taurello an astounding
trick,
"Parts between Ecelin and Alberic
"His wealth and goes into a convent:
both
"Wed Guelfs: the Count and Palma
plighted troth [want
"A week since at Verona: and they
"You doubtless to contrive the mar-
riage-chant
"Ere Richard storms Ferrara." Then
was told
The tale from the beginning—how,
made bold
By Salinguerra's absence, Guelfs had
burned
And pillaged till he unawares returned
To take revenge: how Azzo and his
friend
Were doing their endeavour, how the
end
Of the siege was nigh, and how the
Count, released
From further care, would with his
marriage-feast
Inaugurate a new and better rule,
Absorbing thus Romano.
"Shall I school
"My master," added Naddo, "and
suggest
"How you may clothe in a poetic vest
"These doings, at Verona? Your
response

Their life. " How darest I let expand
 the force
 " Within me, till some out-soul, whose
 resource
 " It grew for, should direct it? Every
 law
 " Of life, its every fitness, every flaw,
 " Must One determine whose corporeal
 shape
 " Would be no other than the prime
 escape
 " And revelation to me of a Will
 " Orb-like o'ershrouded and inscrut-
 able
 " Above, save at the point which, I
 should know,
 " Shone that myself, my powers, might
 overflow
 " So far, so much; as now it signified
 " Which earthly shape it henceforth
 chose my guide,
 " Whose mortal lip selected to declare
 " Its oracles, what fleshly garb would
 wear
 " —The first of intimations, whom to
 love;
 " The next, how love him. Seemed
 that orb, above
 " The castle-covert and the mountain-
 close,
 " Slow in appearing,—if beneath it rose
 " Cravings, aversions,—did our green
 precinct [distinct
 " Take pride in me, at unawares
 " With this or that endowment,—how,
 repressed
 " At once, such jetting power shrunk to
 the rest!
 " Was I to have a chance touch spoil
 me, leave
 " My spirit thence unfitted to receive
 " The consummating spell?—that
 spell so near
 " Moreover! ' Waits he not the wak-
 ing year?
 " " His almond-blossoms must be
 honey-ripe
 " " By this; to welcome him, fresh
 runnels stripe
 " The thawed ravines; because of
 him, the wind
 " " Walks like a herald. I shall surely
 find
 " " Him now!
 " And chief, that earnest April morn
 " Of Richard's Love-court, was it time,
 so worn
 " And white my cheek, so idly my
 blood beat,
 " Sitting that morn beside the Lady's
 feet
 " And saying as she prompted; till
 outburst
 " One face from all the faces—not then
 first
 " I knew it; where in maple chamber
 glooms,
 " Crowned with what sanguine-heart
 pomegranate blooms
 " Advanced it ever? Men's acknow-
 ledgment
 " Sanctioned my own: 't was taken,
 Palma's bent,—
 " Sordello, accepted.
 " And the Tuscan dumb
 " Sat scheming, scheming. Ecelin
 would come
 " Gaunt, scared, ' Cesano baffles me,'
 he'd say:
 " ' Better I fought it out, my father's
 way!
 " ' Strange Ferrara in its drowning
 flats,
 " ' And you and your Taurello yonder
 —what's
 " ' Romano's business there?' An
 hour's concern
 " To cure the froward Chief!—induced
 return
 " Much heartened from those over-
 meaning eyes, [prise
 " Wound up to persevere,—his enter-
 " Marked out anew, its exigent of wit
 " Apportioned,—she at liberty to sit
 " And scheme against the next emer-
 gence, I—
 " To covet her Taurello-sprite, made fly
 " Or fold the wing—to con your horo-
 scope
 " For leave command those steely
 shafts shoot ope,
 " Or straight assuage their blinding
 eagerness
 " To blank smooth snow. What sem-
 blance of success
 " To any of my plans for making you
 " Mine and Romano's? Break the
 first wall through,
 " Tread o'er the ruins of the Chief, sup-
 plant
 " His sons beside, still, vainest were the
 vaunt:
 " There, Salinguerra would obstruct me
 sheer,

" And the insuperable Tuscan, here,
 " Stay me! But one wild eve that
 Lady died
 " In her lone chamber: only I beside:
 " Taurello far at Naples, and my sire
 " At Padua, Ecelin away in ire
 " With Alberic. She held me thus—a
 clutch
 " To make our spirits as our bodies
 touch—
 " And so began flinging the past up,
 heaps
 " Of uncouth treasure from their sun-
 less sleeps
 " Within her soul; deeds rose along
 with dreams,
 " Fragments of many miserable
 schemes,
 " Secrets, more secrets, then—no, not
 the last—
 " 'Mongst others, like a casual trick, o'
 the past,
 " How . . . ay, she told me, gathering
 up her face,
 " All left of it, into one arch-grimace
 " To die with . . .
 " Friend, 't is gone! but not the fear
 " Of that fell laughing, heard as now I
 hear.
 " Nor faltered voice, nor seemed her
 heart grow weak
 " When i' the midst abrupt she ceased
 to speak
 " —Dead, as to serve a purpose, mark!
 —for in
 " Rushed o' the very instant Ecelin
 " (How summoned, who divines?)—
 looking as if
 " He understood why Adelaide lay stiff
 " Already in my arms: for, ' Girl, how
 must
 " ' I manage Este in the matter thrust
 " ' Upon me, how unravel your bad
 coil?—
 " ' Since ' (he declared) ' 't is on your
 brow—a soil
 " ' Like hers, there! ' then in the same
 breath, ' he lacked
 " ' No counsel after all, had signed no
 pact
 " ' With devils, nor was treason here or
 there,
 " ' Goito or Vicenza, his affair:
 " ' He buried it in Adelaide's deep
 grave,
 " ' Would begin life afresh, now,—
 would not slave

" ' For any Friedrich's nor Taurello's
 sake!
 " ' What bootied him to meddle or to
 make
 " ' In Lombardy? ' And afterward I
 knew
 " The meaning of his promise to undo
 " All she had done—why marriages
 were made,
 " New friendships entered on, old fol-
 lowers paid
 " With curses for their pains,—new
 friends' amaze
 " At height, when, passing out by Gate
 St. Blaise,
 " He stopped short in Vicenza, bent his
 head
 " Over a friar's neck,—' had vowed,'
 he said,
 " ' Long since, nigh thirty years, be-
 cause his wife
 " ' And child were saved there, to be-
 stow his life
 " ' On God, his gettings on the Church.'
 " Exiled
 " Within Goito, still one dream be-
 guiled
 " My days and nights; 't was found,
 the orb I sought
 " To serve, those glimpses came of
 Fomalhaut,
 " No other: but how serve it?—
 authorize
 " You and Romano mingle destinies?
 " And straight Romano's angel stood
 beside
 " Me who had else been Boniface's
 bride,
 " For Salinguerra 't was, with neck low
 bent,
 " And voice lightened to music, (as he
 meant
 " To learn not teach me,) who withdrew
 the pall
 " From the dead past and straight
 revived it all,
 " Making me see how first Romano
 waxed,
 " Wherefore he waned now, why, if I
 relaxed
 " My grasp (even I!) would drop a
 thing effete,
 " Frayed by itself, unequal to complete
 " Its course, and counting every step
 astray
 " A gain so much. Romano every
 way

- " Stable, a Lombard House now—why start back
 " Into the very outset of its track ?
 " This patching principle which late allied
 " Our House with other Houses—what beside
 " Concerned the apparition, the first Knight
 " Who followed Conrad hither in such plight
 " His utmost wealth was summed in his one steed ?
 " For Ecelo, that prowler, was decreed
 " A task, in the beginning hazardous
 " To him as ever task can be to us ;
 " But did the weather-beaten thief despair
 " When first our crystal cincture of warm air,—
 " That binds the Trevisan,—as its spice-belt
 " (Crusaders say) the tract where Jesus dwelt,—
 " Furtive he pierced, and Este was to face—
 " Despaired Saponian strength of Lombard grace ?
 " Tried he at making surer aught made sure,
 " Maturing what already was mature ?
 " No ; his heart prompted Ecelo, ' Confront
 " ' Este, inspect yourself. What's nature ? Wont.
 " ' Discard three-parts your nature, and adopt
 " ' The rest as an advantage ! ' Old strength propped
 " The man who first grew Pòdestà among
 " The Vicentines, no less than, while there sprung
 " His palace up in Padua like a threat,
 " Their noblest spied a grace, unnoticed yet
 " In Conrad's crew. Thus far the object gained,
 " Romano was established—has remained—
 " For are you not Italian, truly peers
 " With Este ? ' Azzo ' better soothes our ears
 " Than ' Alberic ? ' or is this lion's-crine
 " From over-mounts' (this yellow hair of mine)
- " ' So weak a graft on Agnes Este's stock ? '
 " (Thus went he on with something of a mock)
 " ' Wherefore recoil, then, from the very fate
 " ' Conceded you, refuse to imitate
 " ' Your model farther ? Este long since left
 " ' Being mere Este : as a blade its left,
 " ' Este required the Pope to further him :
 " ' And you, the Kaiser—whom your father's whim
 " ' Foregoes or, better, never shall forego
 " ' If Palma dare pursue what Ecelo
 " ' Commenced, but Ecelin desists from : just
 " ' As Adelaide of Susa could intrust
 " ' Her donative,—her Piedmont given the Pope,
 " ' Her Alpine-pass for him to shut or ope
 " ' Twixt France and Italy,—to the superb
 " ' Matilda's perfecting,—so, lest aught curb
 " ' Our Adelaide's great counter-project for
 " ' Giving her Trentine to the Emperor
 " ' With passage here from Germany,—shall you
 " ' Take it,—my slender plodding talent, too !
 " —Urged me Taurello with his half-smile.
 " He
 " As Patron of the scattered family
 " Conveyed me to his Mantua, kept in built
 " Azzo's alliances and Richard's suit
 " Until, the Kaiser excommunicate,
 " ' Nothing remains,' Taurello said, ' but wait
 " ' Some rash procedure : Palma was the link,
 " ' As Agnes' child, between us, and they shrink
 " ' From losing Palma : judge if we advance,
 " ' Your father's method, your inheritance ! '
 " That day I was betrothed to Boniface
 " At Padua by Taurello's self, took place

- " The outrage of the Ferrarese : again,
 " That day I sought Verona with the
 train
 " Agreed for,—by Taurello's policy
 " Convicting Richard of the fault, since
 we
 " Were present to annul or to con-
 firm,—
 " Richard, whose patience had out-
 stayed its term,
 " Quitted Verona for the siege.
 " And now
 " What glory may engird Sordello's
 brow
 " Through this? A month since at
 Oliero slunk
 " All that was Ecelin into a monk ;
 " But how could Salinguerra so forget
 " His liege of thirty years as grudge
 even yet
 " One effort to recover him? He sent
 " Forthwith the tidings of this last event
 " To Ecelin—declared that he, despite
 " The recent folly, recognized his right
 " To order Salinguerra : ' Should he
 wring
 " ' Its uttermost advantage out, or
 fling
 " ' This chance away? Or were his
 sons now Head
 " ' Of the House? ' Through me
 Taurello's missive sped ;
 " My father's answer will by me return.
 " Behold! ' For him,' he writes, ' no
 more concern
 " ' With strife than, for his children,
 with fresh plots
 " ' Of Friedrich. Old engagements out
 he blots
 " ' For aye : Taurello shall no more
 subserve,
 " ' Nor Ecelin impose.' Lest this un-
 nerve [grip
 " Taurello at this juncture, slack his
 " Of Richard, suffer the occasion slip,—
 " I, in his sons' default (who, mating
 with
 " Este, forsake Romano as the frith
 " Its mainsea for the firmland, sea
 makes head
 " Against) I stand, Romano,—in their
 stead
 " Assume the station they desert, and
 give
 " Still, as the Kaiser's representative,
 " Taurello licence he demands. Mid-
 night—
- " Morning—by noon to-morrow, mak-
 ing light
 " Of the League's issue, we, in some gay
 weed
 " Like yours, disguised together, may
 precede
 " The arbitrators to Ferrara : reach
 " Him, let Taurello's noble accents
 teach
 " The rest! Then say if I have mis-
 conceived
 " Your destiny, too readily believed
 " The Kaiser's cause your own! "
 And Palma's fled.
 Though no affirmative disturbs the
 head,
 A dying lamp-flame sinks and rises o'er,
 Like the alighted planet Pollux wore,
 Until, morn breaking, he resolves to be
 Gate-vein of this heart's blood of Lom-
 bardy,
 Soul of this body—to wield this aggre-
 gate
 Of souls and bodies, and so conquer fate
 Though he should live—a centre of dis-
 gust
 Even—apart, core of the outward
 crust
 He vivifies, assimilates. For thus
 I bring Sordello to the rapturous
 Exclaim at the crowd's cry, because
 one round
 Of life was quite accomplished ; and
 he found [might,
 Not only that a soul, whate'er its
 Is insufficient to its own delight,
 Both in corporeal organs and in skill
 By means of such to body forth its
 Will—
 And, after, insufficient to apprise
 Men of that Will, oblige them recognize
 The Hid by the Revealed—but that,
 the last
 Nor lightest of the struggles overpast,
 His Will, bade abdicate, which would
 not void
 The throne, might sit there, suffer be
 enjoyed
 Mankind, a varied and divine array
 Incapable of homage, the first way,
 Nor fit to render incidentally
 Tribute connived at, taken by the by,
 In joys. If thus with warrant to
 rescind
 The ignominious exile of mankind—
 Whose proper service, ascertained in-
 tact

As yet, (to be by him themselves made
act,
Not watch Sordello acting each of them)
Was to secure—if the true diadem
Seemed imminent while our Sordello
drank
The wisdom of that golden Palma,—
thank
Verona's Lady in her citadel
Founded by Gaulish Brennus, legends
tell :
And truly when she left him, the sun
reared
A head like the first clamberer's that
peered
A-top the Capitol, his face on flame
With triumph, triumphing till Manlius
came,
Nor slight too much my rhymes—that
spring, disspread,
Dispart, disperse, lingering over head
Like an escape of angels ! Rather say,
My transcendental platan ! mounting
gay
(An archimage so courts a novice-
queen)
With tremulous silvered trunk, whence
branches sheen [soon
Laugh out, thick-foliaged next, a-shiver
With coloured buds, then glowing like
the moon
One mild flame,—last a pause, a
burst, and all
Her ivory limbs are smothered by a fall,
Bloom-flinders and fruit-sparkles and
leaf-dust,
Ending the weird work prosecuted just
For her amusement ; he decrepit,
stark,
Dozes ; her uncontrolled delight may
mark
Apart—
Yet not so, surely never so !
Only, as good my soul were suffered go
O'er the lagune : forth fare thee, put
aside—
Entrance thy synod, as a god may glide
Out of the world he fills, and leave it
mute
For myriad ages as we men compute,
Returning into it without a break
O' the consciousness ! They sleep, and
I awake
O'er the lagune, being at Venice.

Note,

In just such songs as Eglamor (say)
wrote

With heart and soul and strength, for
he believed
Himself achieving all to be achieved
By singer—in such songs you find alone
Completeness, judge the song and
singer one,
And either purpose answered, his in it
Or its in him : while from true works
(to wit
Sordello's dream-performances that
will
Be never more than dreamed) escapes
there still
Some proof, the singer's proper life
was 'neath
The life his song exhibits, this a sheath
To that ; a passion and a knowledge
far
Transcending these, majestic as they
are,
Smouldered ; his lay was but an epis-
ode
In the bard's life : which evidence you
owed
To some slight weariness, some looking-
off
Or start-away. The childish skit or
scoff
In " Charlemagne," (his poem, dreamed
divine
In every point except one silly line
About the restiff daughters)—what
may lurk
In that ? " My life commenced before
this work,"
(So I interpret the significance
Of the bard's start aside and look ask-
ance)
" My life continues after : on I fare
" With no more stopping, possibly, no
care
" To note the undercurrent, the why
and how,
" Where, when, of the deeper life, as
thus just now.
" But, silent, shall I cease to live ?
Alas
" For you ! who sigh, ' When shall it
come to pass
" ' We read that story ? How will he
compress
" ' The future gains, his life's true
business,
" ' Into the better lay which—that one
flout,
" ' Howe'er inopportune it be, lets
out—

Engrossing what should furnish all, by rights !
 For, these in evidence, you clearer claim
 A like garb for the rest,—grace all, the same
 As these my peasants. I ask youth and strength
 And health for each of you, not more—at length
 Grown wise, who asked at home that the whole race
 Might add the spirit's to the body's grace,
 And all be dizened out as chiefs and bards.
 But in this magic weather one discards
 Much old requirement. Venice seems a type
 Of Life,—'twixt blue and blue extends, a stripe,
 As Life, the somewhat, hangs 'twixt nought and nought :
 'T is Venice, and 't is Life—as good you sought
 To spare me the Piazza's slippery stone
 Or keep me to the unchoked canals alone,
 As hinder Life the evil with the good
 Which make up Living, rightly understood.
 Only, do finish something ! Peasants, queens,
 Take them, made happy by whatever means,
 Parade them for the common credit, vouch
 That a luckless residue, we send to crouch
 In corners out of sight, was just as framed
 For happiness, its portion might have claimed
 As well, and so, obtaining joy, had stalked
 Fastuous as any !—such my project, balked
 Already ; I hardly venture to adjust
 The first rags, when you find me. To mistrust
 Me !—nor unreasonably. You, no doubt,
 Have the true knack of tiring suitors out
 With those thin lips on tremble, lashless eyes
 Inveterately tear-shot—there, be wise,

Mistress of mine, there, there, as if I meant
 You insult !—shall your friend (not slave) be shent
 For speaking home ? Beside, care-bit erased
 Broken-up beauties ever took my taste
 Supremely ; and I love you more, far more
 Than her I looked should foot Life's temple-floor.
 Years ago, leagues at distance, when and where
 A whisper came, " Let others seek !—thy care
 " Is found, thy life's provision ; if thy race
 " Should be thy mistress, and into one face
 " The many faces crowd ? " Ah, had I, judge,
 Or no, your secret ? Rough apparel—grudge
 All ornaments save tag or tassel worn
 To hint we are not thoroughly forlorn—
 Slouch bonnet, unloop mantle, careless go
 Alone (that 's saddest, but it must be so)
 Through Venice, sing now and now glance aside,
 Aught desultory or undignified,—
 Then, ravishingest lady, will you pass
 Or not each formidable group, the mass
 Before the Basilic (that feast gone by,
 God's great day of the Corpus Domini)
 And, wistfully foregoing proper men,
 Come timid up to me for alms ? And then
 The luxury to hesitate, feign do
 Some unexampled grace !—when, whom but you
 Dare I bestow your own upon ? And hear
 Further before you say, it is to sneer
 I call you ravishing ; for I regret
 Little that she, whose early foot was set
 Forth as she'd plant it on a pedestal,
 Now, i' the silent city, seems to fall
 Toward me—no wreath, only a lip's unrest
 To quiet, surcharged eyelids to be pressed
 Dry of their tears upon my bosom.
 Strange
 Such sad chance should produce in thee
 such change,

My love ! Warped souls and bodies !
 yet God spoke
 Of right-hand, foot and eye—selects
 our yoke,
 Sordello, as your poetship may find !
 So, sleep upon my shoulder, child, nor
 mind
 Their foolish talk ; we'll manage rein-
 state
 Your old worth ; ask moreover, when
 they prate
 Of evil men past hope, " Don't each
 contrive,
 " Despite the evil you abuse, to live ?—
 " Keeping, each losel, through a maze
 of lies,
 " His own conceit of truth ? to which
 he hies
 " By obscure windings, tortuous, if
 you will,
 " But to himself not inaccessible ;
 " He sees truth, and his lies are for the
 crowd
 " Who cannot see ; some fancied right
 allowed
 " His vilest wrong, empowered the
 fellow clutch
 " One pleasure from a multitude of
 such
 " Denied him." Then assert, " All
 men appear
 " To think all better than themselves,
 by here
 " Trusting a crowd they wrong ; but
 really," say, they,
 " All men think all men stupider than
 " Since, save themselves, no other com-
 prehends
 " The complicated scheme to make
 amends
 " —Evil, the scheme by which, thro'
 Ignorance,
 " Good labours to exist." A slight ad-
 vance,—
 Merely to find the sickness you die
 through,
 And nought beside ! but if one can't
 eschew
 One's portion in the common lot, at
 least
 One can avoid an ignorance increased
 Tenfold by dealing out hint after hint
 How nought were like dispensing with-
 out stint
 The water of life—so easy to dispense
 Beside, when one has probed the
 centre whence

Commotion's born—could tell you of it
 all !
 " —Meantime, just meditate my madri-
 gal
 " O' the mugwort that conceals a dew-
 drop safe ! "
 What, dullard ? we and you in smo-
 thery chafe,
 Babes, baldheads, stumbled thus far
 into Zin
 The Horrid, getting neither out nor in,
 A hungry sun above us, sands that
 bung
 Our throats,—each dromedary lolls a
 tongue,
 Each camel churns a sick and frothy
 chap,
 And you, 'twixt tales of Potiphar's
 mishap,
 And sonnets on the earliest ass that
 spoke, [choke
 —Remark, you wonder any one needs
 With founts about ! Potsherd him,
 Gibeonites !
 While awkwardly enough your Moses
 smites
 The rock, though he forego his Pro-
 mised Land
 Thereby, have Satan claim his carcass,
 and
 Figure as Metaphysic Poet . . . ah,
 Mark ye the dim first ooings ? Meri-
 bah !
 Then, quaffing at the fount my courage
 gained,
 Recall—not that I prompt ye—who
 explained . . .
 " Presumptuous ! " interrupts one.
 You, not I
 'Tis, brother, marvel at and magnify
 Such office : " office," quotha ? can
 we get
 To the beginning of the office yet ?
 What do we here ? simply experiment
 Each on the other's power and its in-
 tent
 When elsewhere tasked,—if this of
 mine were trucked
 For yours to either's good,—we watch
 construct,
 In short, an engine : with a finished
 one,
 What it can do, is all,—nought, how 't
 is done.
 But this of ours yet in probation, dusk
 A kernel of strange wheelwork through
 its husk

Grows into shape by quarters and by halves ;
 Remark this tooth's spring, wonder what that valve's
 Fall bodes, presume each faculty's device,
 Make out each other more or less precise—
 The scope of the whole engine 's to be proved ;
 We die : which means to say, the whole 's removed,
 Dismounted wheel by wheel, this complex gin,—
 To be set up anew elsewhere, begin
 A task indeed, but with a clearer clime
 Than the murky lodgment of our building-time.
 And then, I grant you, it behoves forget
 How 't is done—all that must amuse us yet
 So long : and, while you turn upon your heel,
 Pray that I be not busy slitting steel
 Or shredding brass, camped on some virgin shore
 Under a cluster of fresh stars, before
 I name a tithe o' the wheels I trust to do !
 So occupied, then, are we : hitherto,
 At present, and a weary while to come,
 The office of ourselves,—nor blind nor dumb,
 And seeing somewhat of man's state,—has been,
 For the worst of us, to say they so have seen ;
 For the better, what it was they saw ; the best
 Impart the gift of seeing to the rest :
 " So that I glance," says such an one,
 " around,
 " And there 's no face but I can read profound
 " Disclosures in ; this stands for hope, that—fear,
 " And for a speech, a deed in proof, look here !
 " " Stoop, else the strings of blossom, where the nuts
 " " O'erarch, will blind thee ! Said I not ? She shut
 " " Both eyes this time, so close the hazels meet !
 " " Thus, prisoned in the Piombi, I repeat

" Events one rove occasioned, o'er and o'er,
 " " Putting 'twixt me and madness evermore
 " " Thy sweet shape, Zanze ! There fore stoop ! "
 " " That's truth ! "
 " (Adjudge you) ' the incarcerated youth
 " " Would say that ! "
 " Youth ? Plara the bard ? Set down
 " That Plara spent his youth in a grim town
 " Whose cramped ill-featured streets huddled about
 " The minster for protection, never out
 " Of its black belfry's shade and its bells' roar.
 " The brighter shone the suburb,—all the more
 " Ugly and absolute that shade's reproof
 " Of any chance escape of joy,—some roof,
 " Taller than they, allowed the rest detect,—
 " Before the sole permitted laugh (suspect
 " Who could, 't was meant for laughter, that ploughed cheek's
 " Repulsive gleam !) when the sun stopped both peaks
 " Of the cleft belfry like a fiery wedge,
 " Then sunk, a huge flame on its socket edge,
 " With leavings on the grey glass oriel-pane
 " Ghastly some minutes more. No fear of rain—
 " The minster minded that ! in heaps the dust
 " Lay everywhere. This town, the minster's trust,
 " Held Plara ; who, its denizen, bade hail
 " In twice twelve sonnets, Tempe's dewy vale."
 " " Exact the town, the minster and the street ! "
 " As all mirth triumphs, sadness means defeat :
 " Lust triumphs and is gay, Love 's triumphed o'er
 " And sad : but Lucio 's sad. I said before,

"Love 's sad, not Lucio; one who
loves may be
"As gay his love has leave to hope, as
he
"Downcast that lusts' desire escapes
the springe:
"T is of the mood itself I speak, what
tinge
"Determines it, else colourless,—or
mirth,
"Or melancholy, as from heaven or
earth."
" 'Ay, that's the variation's gist! '
Indeed?
"Thus far advanced in safety then,
proceed! [bold
"And having seen too what I saw, be
"And next encounter what I do behold
"(That's sure) but bid you take on
trust!"

Attack

The use and purpose of such sights?
Alack,
Not so unwisely does the crowd dis-
pense
On Salinguerras praise in preference
To the Sordellos: men of action, these!
Who, seeing just as little as you please,
Yet turn that little to account,—en-
gage
With, do not gaze at,—carry on, a
stage,
The work o' the world, not merely
make report
The work existed ere their day! In
short,
When at some future no-time a brave
band
Sees, using what it sees, then shake my
hand
In heaven, my brother! Meanwhile
where's the hurt
Of keeping the Makers-see on the alert,
At whose defection mortals stare aghast
As though heaven's bounteous win-
dows were slammed fast
Incontinent? Whereas all you, be-
neath,
Should scowl at, curse them, bruise
lips, break their teeth
Who ply the pullies, for neglecting you:
And therefore have I moulded, made
anew
A Man, and give him to be turned and
tried,
Be angry with or pleased at. On your
side,

Have ye times, places, actors of your
own?
Try them upon Sordello when full-
grown,
And then—ah then! If Hercules first
parched
His foot in Egypt only to be marche!
A sacrifice for Jove with pomp to suit,
What chance have I? The demigod
was mute
Till, at the altar, where time out of
mind
Such guests became oblations, chaplets
twined
His forehead long enough, and he be-
gan
Slaying the slayers, nor escaped a man.
Take not affront, my gentle audience!
whom
No Hercules shall make his hecatomb,
Believe, nor from his brows your chap-
let rend—
That's your kind suffrage, yours, my
patron-friend,
Whose great verse blares unintermit-
tent on
Like your own trumpeter at Mara-
thon,—
You who, Plataeas and Salamis being
scant,
Put up with Ætna for a stimulant—
And did well, I acknowledged, as he
loomed
Over the midland sea last month, pre-
sumed
Long, lay demolished in the blazing
West
At eve, while towards him tilting
cloudlets pressed
Like Persian ships at Salamis. Friend,
wear
A crest proud as desert while I declare
Had I a flawless ruby fit to wring
Tears of its colour from that painted
king
Who lost it, I would, for that smile
which went
To my heart, fling it in the sea, content,
Wearing your verse in place, an amulet
Sovereign against all passion, wear and
fret!
My English Eyebright, if you are not
glad
That, as I stopped my task awhile, the
sad
Dishevelled form, wherein I put man-
kind

To come at times and keep my pact in
mind,
Renewed me,—hear no crickets in the
hedge,
Nor let a glowworm spot the river's
edge
At home, and may the summer showers
gush
Without a warning from the missel
thrush!
So, to our business, now—the fate of
such
As find our common nature—overmuch
Despised because restricted and unfit
To bear the burthen they impose on it—
Cling when they would discard it;
craving strength
To leap from the allotted world, at
length
They do leap,—flounder on without a
term,
Each a god's germ, doomed to remain a
germ
In unexpanded infancy, unless . . .
But that's the story—dull enough,
confess!
There might be fitter subjects to allure;
Still, neither misconceive my portrait—
ure
Nor undervalue its adornments quaint:
What seems a fiend perchance may
prove a saint.
Ponder a story ancient pens transmit,
Then say if you condemn me or acquit.
John the Beloved, banished Antioch
For Patmos, bade collectively his flock
Farewell, but set apart the closing eve
To comfort those his exile most would
grieve,
He knew: a touching spectacle, that
house
In motion to receive him! Xanthus'
spouse
You missed, made panther's meat a
month since; but
Xanthus himself (his nephew 't was,
they shut
'Twixt boards and sawed asunder)
Polycarp,
Soft Charicle, next year no wheel could
warp
To swear by Cæsar's fortune, with the
rest
Were ranged; thro' whom the grey
disciple pressed,
Busily blessing right and left, just
stopped.

To pat one infant's curls, the hangman
cropped
Soon after, reached the portal. On its
hinge
The door turns and he enters: what
quick twinge
Ruins the smiling mouth, those wide
eyes fix
Whereon, why like some spectral
candlestick's
Branch the disciple's arms? Dead
swooned he, woke
Anon, heaved sigh, made shift to gasp,
heart-broke,
"Get thee behind me, Satan! Have I
toiled
"To no more purpose? Is the gospel
foiled
"Here too, and o'er my son's, my
Xanthus' hearth,
"Portrayed with sooty garb and fea-
tures swarth—
"Ah Xanthus, am I to thy roof be-
guiled
"To see the—the—the Devil domi-
ciled?"
Whereto sobbed Xanthus, "Father,
't is yourself
"Installed, a limning which our utmost
pelf
"Went to procure against to-morrow's
loss;
"And that's no twy-prong, but a
pastoral cross,
"You're painted with!"
His puckered brows unfold—
And you shall hear Sordello's story
told.

BOOK THE FOURTH

MEANTIME Ferrara lay in rueful case;
The lady-city, for whose sole embrace
Her pair of suitors struggled, felt their
arms
A brawny mischief to the fragile
charms
They tugged for—one discovering that
to twist
Her tresses twice or thrice about his
wrist
Secured a point of vantage—one, how
best
He'd parry that by planting in her
breast
His elbow spike—each party too intent

For noticing, howe'er the battle went,
 The conqueror would but have a corpse
 to kiss.
 "May Boniface be duly damned for
 this!"
 —Howled some old Ghibellin, as up he
 turned,
 From the wet heap of rubbish where
 they burned
 His house, a little skull with dazzling
 teeth:
 "A boon, sweet Christ—let Salin-
 guerra seethe
 "In hell for ever, Christ, and let myself
 "Be there to laugh at him!"—
 moaned some young Gueff
 Stumbling upon a shrivelled hand
 nailed fast
 To the charred lintel of the doorway,
 last
 His father stood within to bid him
 speed. [weed
 The thoroughfares were overrun with
 —Docks, quitchgrass, loathly mallows
 no man plants.
 The stranger, none of its inhabitants
 Crept out of doors to taste fresh air
 again,
 And ask the purpose of a splendid train
 Admitted on a morning; every town
 Of the East League was come by envoy
 down
 To treat for Richard's ransom: here
 you saw
 The Vicentine, here snowy oxen draw
 The Paduan carroch, its vermilion cross
 On its white field. A-tiptoe o'er the
 fosse
 Looked Legate Montelungo wistfully
 After the flock of steeples he might spy
 In Este's time, gone (doubts he) long
 ago
 To mend the ramparts: sure the lag-
 gards know
 The Pope's as good as here! They
 paced the streets
 More soberly. At last, "Taurello
 greets
 "The League," announced a pursuiv-
 ant,— "will match
 "Its courtesy, and labours to dispatch
 "At earliest Tito, Friedrich's Pretor,
 sent
 "On pressing matters from his post at
 Trent,
 "With Mainard Count of Tyrol,—
 simply waits

"Their going to receive the delegates."
 "Tito!" Our delegates exchanged a
 glance,
 And, keeping the main way, admired
 askance
 The lazy engines of outlandish birth,
 Couched like a king each on its bank of
 earth—
 Arbalist, manganel and catapult;
 While stationed by, as waiting a result,
 Lean silent gangs of mercenaries ceased
 Working to watch the strangers.
 "This, at least,
 "Were better spared; he scarce pre-
 sumes gainsay
 "The League's decision! Get our
 friend away
 "And profit for the future: how else
 teach
 "Fools 't is not safe to stray within
 claw's reach
 "Ere Salinguerra's final gasp be blown?
 "Those mere convulsive scratches find
 the bone.
 "Who bade him bloody the spent
 osprey's nare?"
 The carrochs halted in the public
 square.
 Pennons of every blazon once a-flaunt,
 Men prattled, freelier that the crested
 gaunt
 White ostrich with a horse-shoe in her
 beak
 "Was missing, and whoever chose
 might speak
 "Ecelin" boldly out: so,— "Ecelin
 "Needed his wife to swallow half the
 sin
 "And sickens by himself: the devil's
 whelp,
 "He styles his son, dwindles away, no
 help
 "From conserves, your fine triple-
 curded froth
 "Of virgin's blood, your Venice viper-
 broth—
 "Eh? Jubilate!"—"Peace! no lit-
 tle word
 "You utter here that's not distinctly
 heard
 "Up at Oliero: he was absent sick
 "When we besieged Bassano—who, i'
 the thick
 "O' the work, perceived the progress
 Azzo made,
 "Like Ecelin, through his witch Ade-
 laide?

" She managed it so well that, night by night,
 " At their bed-foot stood up a soldier-sprite,
 " First fresh, pale by and by without a wound,
 " And, when it came with eyes filmed as in swoond,
 " They knew the place was taken."—
 " Ominous
 " That Ghibellins should get what cautious
 " Old Redbeard sought from Azzo's sire to wrench
 " Vainly; Saint George contrived his town a trench
 " O' the marshes, an impermeable bar."
 " —Young Ecelin is meant the tutalar
 " Of Padua, rather; veins embrace upon
 " His hand like Brenta and Bacchiglion."
 What now?—" The founts! God's bread, touch not a plank!
 " A crawling hell of carrion—every tank
 " Choke full!—found out just now to Cino's cost—
 " The same who gave Taurello up for lost,
 " And, making no account of fortune's freaks,
 " Refused to budge from Padua then, but sneaks
 " Back now with Concorezzi—'faith! they drag
 " Their carroch to San Vitale, plant the flag
 " On his own palace, so adroitly razed
 " He knew it not; a sort of Guelf folk gazed
 " And laughed apart; Cino disliked their air—
 " Must pluck up spirit, show he does not care—
 " Seats himself on the tank's edge—will begin
 " To hum, *za, za, Cavalier Ecelin*—
 " A silence; he gets warmer, clinks to chime,
 " Now both feet plough the ground, deeper each time,
 " At last, *za, za* and up with a fierce kick
 " Comes his own mother's face caught by the thick
 " Grey hair about his spur!"

Which means, they lift
 The covering, Salinguerra made a shift
 To stretch upon the truth; as well avoid
 Further disclosures; leave them thus employed.
 Our dropping Autumn morning clears apace,
 And poor Ferrara puts a softened face
 On her misfortunes. Let us scale this tall
 Huge foursquare line of red brick garden-wall
 Bastioned within by trees of every sort
 On three sides, slender, spreading, long and short;
 Each grew as it contrived, the poplar ramped,
 The fig-tree reared itself,—but stark and cramped,
 Made fools of, like tamed lions: whence, on the edge,
 Running 'twixt trunk and trunk to smooth one ledge
 Of shade, were shrubs inserted, warp and woof,
 Which smothered up that variance. Scale the roof
 Of solid tops, and o'er the slope you slide
 Down to a grassy space level and wide,
 Here and there dotted with a tree, but trees
 Of rarer leaf, each foreigner at ease,
 Set by itself: and in the centre spreads, Borne upon three uneasy leopards' heads,
 A laver, broad and shallow, one bright spirt
 Of water bubbles in. The walls begirt
 With trees leave off on either hand; pursue
 Your path along a wondrous avenue
 Those walls abut on, heaped of gleamy stone,
 With aloes leering everywhere, grey-grown
 From many a Moorish summer: how they wind
 Out of the fissures! likelier to bind
 The building than those rusted cramps which drop
 Already in the eating sunshine. Stop,
 You fleeting shapes above there? Ah, the pride
 Or else despair of the whole country-side!

A range of statues, swarming o'er with
 wasps,
 God, goddess, woman, man, the Greek
 rough-rasps
 In crumbling Naples marble—meant to
 look
 Like those Messina marbles Constance
 took
 Delight in, or Taurello's self conveyed
 To Mantua for his mistress, Adelaide,
 A certain font with caryatides
 Since cloistered at Goito; only, these
 Are up and doing, not abashed, a troop
 Able to right themselves—who see you,
 stoop
 O' the instant after you their arms!
 Unplucked
 By this or that, you pass; for they con-
 duct
 To terrace raised on terrace, and, be-
 tween, [mien
 Creatures of brighter mould and braver
 Than any yet, the choicest of the Isle
 No doubt. Here, left a sullen breath-
 ing-while,
 Up-gathered on himself the Fighter
 stood
 For his last fight, and, wiping treacher-
 ous blood
 Out of the eyelids just held ope beneath
 Those shading fingers in their iron
 sheath,
 Steadied his strengths amid the buzz
 and stir
 Of the dusk hideous amphitheatre
 At the announcement of his over-match
 To wind the day's diversion up, dis-
 patch
 The pertinacious Gaul: while, limbs
 one heap,
 The Slave, no breath in her round
 mouth, watched leap
 Dart after dart forth, as her hero's car
 Clove dizzily the solid of the war
 —Let coil about his knees for pride in
 him,
 We reach the farthest terrace, and the
 grim
 San Pietro Palace stops us.
 Such the state
 Of Salinguerra's plan to emulate
 Sicilian marvels, that his girlish wife
 Retrude still might lead her ancient life
 In her new home: whereat enlarged so
 much
 Neighbours upon the novel princely
 touch

He took,—who here imprisons Boni-
 face,
 Here must the Envoys come to sue for
 grace;
 And here, emerging from the labyrinth
 Below, Sordello paused beside the
 plinth
 Of the door-pillar. He had really left
 Verona for the cornfields (a poor theft
 From the morass) where Este's camp
 was made;
 The Envoys' march, the Legate's caval-
 cade—
 All had been seen by him, but scarce as
 when,—
 Eager for cause to stand aloof from men
 At every point save the fantastic tie
 Acknowledged in his boyish sophistry,—
 He made account of such. A crowd,—
 he meant
 To task the whole of it; each part's in-
 tent
 Concerned him therefore: and, the
 more he pried,
 The less became Sordello satisfied
 With his own figure at the moment.
 Sought
 He respite from his task? Descried he
 aught
 Novel in the anticipated sight
 Of all these livers upon all delight?
 This phalanx, as of myriad points com-
 bined,
 Whereby he still had imaged the man-
 kind
 His youth was passed in dreams of
 rivalling, [thing
 His age—in plans to prove at least such
 Had been so dreamed,—which now he
 must impress
 With his own will, effect a happiness
 By theirs,—supply a body to his soul
 Thence, and become eventually whole
 With them as he had hoped to be with-
 out—
 Made these the mankind he once raved
 about?
 Because a few of them were notable,
 Should all be figured worthy note? As
 well
 Expect to find Taurello's triple line
 Of trees a single and prodigious pine.
 Real pines rose here and there; but,
 close among,
 Thrust into and mixed up with pines, a
 throng

Of shrubs, he saw,—a nameless common sort
 O'erpart in dreams, left out of the report
 And hurried into corners, or at best
 Admitted to be fancied like the rest.
 Reckon that morning's proper chiefs—
 how few !
 And yet the people grew, the people grew,
 Grew ever, as if the many there indeed,
 More left behind and most who should
 succeed,—
 Simply in virtue of their mouths and eyes,
 Petty enjoyments and huge miseries,—
 Mingled with, and made veritably great
 Those chiefs : he overlooked not Mainard's state
 Nor Concorezzi's station, but instead
 Of stopping there, each dwindled to be head
 Of infinite and absent Tyrolese
 Or Paduans ; startling all the more,
 that these
 Seemed passive and disposed of, uncared for,
 Yet doubtless on the whole (like Eglamor)
 Smiling ; for if a wealthy man decays
 And out of store of robes must wear, all days,
 One tattered suit, alike in sun and shade,
 'T is commonly some tarnished gay brocade
 Fit for a feast-night's flourish and no more :
 Nor otherwise poor Misery from her store
 Of looks is fain upgather, keep unfurled
 For common wear as she goes through the world,
 The faint remainder of some worn-out smile
 Meant for a feast-night's service merely. While
 Crowd upon crowd rose on Sordello thus,—
 (Crowds no way interfering to discuss,
 Much less dispute, life's joys with one employed
 In envying them,—or, if they aught enjoyed,
 Where lingered something indefinable
 In every look and tone, the mirth as well

As woe, that fixed at once his estimate
 Of the result, their good or bad estate)—
 Old memories returned with new effect :
 And the new body, ere he could suspect,
 Cohered, mankind and he were really fused,
 The new self seemed impatient to be used
 By him, but utterly another way
 Than that anticipated : strange to say,
 They were too much below him, more in thrall
 Than he, the adjunct than the principal.
 What booted scattered units ?—here a mind
 And there, which might repay his own to find,
 And stamp, and use ?—a few, howe'er august
 [dust ?
 If all the rest were grovelling in the No : first a mighty equilibrium, sure,
 Should he establish, privilege procure
 For all, the few had long possessed !
 He felt
 An error, an exceeding error melt—
 While he was occupied with Mantuan chants,
 Behoved him think of men, and take their wants,
 Such as he now distinguished every side,
 As his own want which might be satisfied,—
 And, after that, think of rare qualities
 Of his own soul demanding exercise.
 It followed naturally, through no claim
 On their part, which made virtue of the aim
 At serving them, on his,—that, past retrieve,
 He felt now in their toils, theirs—nor could leave
 Wonder how, in the eagerness to rule,
 Impress his will on mankind, he (the fool !)
 Had never even entertained the thought
 That this his last arrangement might be fraught
 With incidental good to them as well,
 And that mankind's delight would help to swell
 His own. So, if he sighed, as formerly
 Because the merry time of life must fleet,
 'T was deeper now,—for could the
 crowds repeat

Their poor experiences? His hand
that shook

Was twice to be deplored. "The Le-
gate, look!

"With eyes, like fresh-blown thrush-
eggs on a thread,

"Faint-blue and loosely floating in his
head,

"Large tongue, moist open mouth;
and this long while

"That owner of the idiotic smile

"Serves them!"

He fortunately saw in time
His fault however, and since the office
prime

Includes the secondary—best accept
Both offices; Taurello, its adept,
Could teach him the preparatory one,
And how to do what he had fancied
done

Long previously, ere take the greater
task.

How render first these people happy?
Ask

The people's friends: for there must be
one good,

One way to it—the Cause!—he under-
stood [jar

The meaning now of Palma; why the
Else, the ado, the trouble wide and far
Of Guefs and Ghibellins, the Lom-
bard's hope

And Rome's despair?—'twixt Em-
peror and Pope

The confused shifting sort of Eden
tale—

Still hardihood recurring, still to fail—
That foreign interloping fiend, this free
And native overbrooding deity—

Yet a dire fascination o'er the palms
The Kaiser ruined, troubling even the
calms

Of paradise—or, on the other hand,
The Pontiff, as the Kaisers understand,
One snake-like cursed of God to love the
ground,

Whose heavy length breaks in the noon
profound

Some saving tree—which needs the
Kaiser, dressed

As the dislodging angel of that pest,
Then—yet that pest bedropped, flat
head, full fold,

With coruscating dower of dyes. "Be-
hold

"The secret, so to speak, and master-
spring

"Of the contest!—which of the two
Powers shall bring

"Men good—perchance the most good
—ay, it may

"Be that!—the question, which best
knows the way."

And hereupon Count Mainard strut-
ted past

Out of San Pietro; never seemed the
last

Of archers, slingers: and our friend be-
gan

To recollect strange modes of serving
man

Arbalist, catapult, brake, mangel,
And more. "This way of theirs may,
—who can tell?"

"Need perfecting," said he: "let all
be solved

"At once! Taurello 't is, the task
devolved

"On late—confront Taurello!"

And at last
He did confront him. Scarcely an
hour past

When forth Sordello came, older by
years

Than at his entry. Unexampled fears
Oppressed him, and he staggered off,
blind, mute

And deaf, like some fresh-mutilated
brute,

Into Ferrara—not the empty town
That morning witnessed: he went up
and down

Streets whence the veil had been
stripped shred by shred,

So that, in place of huddling with their
dead

Indoors, to answer Salinguerra's ends,
Its folk made shift to crawl forth, sit
like friends

With any one. A woman gave him
choice [voice

Of her two daughters, the infantile
Or the dimpled knee, for half a chain,
his throat

Was clasped with; but an archer
knew the coat—

Its blue cross and eight lilies,—bade
beware

One dogging him in concert with the
pair

Though thrumming on the sleeve that
hid his knife.

Night set in early, autumn dews were
rife,

They kindled great fires while the
 Leaguers' mass
 Began at every carroch—he must pass
 Between the kneeling people. Presently
 The carroch of Verona caught his eye
 With purple trappings; silently he bent
 Over its fire, when voices violent
 Began, "Affirm not whom the youth
 was like
 "That, striking from the porch, I did
 not strike
 "Again: I too have chestnut hair;
 my kin
 "Hate Azzo and stand up for Ecelin.
 "Here, minstrel, drive bad thoughts
 away! Sing! Take
 "My glove for guerdon!" And for
 that man's sake
 He turned: "A song of Eglamor's!"
 —scarce named,
 When, "Our Sordello's rather!"—all
 exclaimed;
 "Is not Sordello famousest for
 rhyme?"
 He had been happy to deny, this time,—
 Profess as heretofore the aching head
 And failing heart—suspect that in his
 stead
 Some true Apollo had the charge of
 them,
 Was champion to reward or to condemn,
 So his intolerable risk might shift
 Or share itself; but Naddo's precious
 gift
 Of gifts, he owned, be certain! At the
 close— [rose
 "I made that," said he to a youth who
 As if to hear: 't was Palma through
 the band
 Conducted him in silence by her hand.
 Back now for Salinguerra. Tito of
 Trent
 Gave place to Palma and her friend;
 who went
 In turn at Montelungo's visit—one
 After the other were they come and
 gone,—
 These spokesmen for the Kaiser and
 the Pope,
 This incarnation of the People's hope,
 Sordello,—all the say of each was said
 And Salinguerra sat, himself instead
 Of these to talk with, lingered musing
 yet.

'T was a drear vast presence-chamber
 roughly set
 In order for the morning's use; full
 face,
 The Kaiser's ominous sign-mark had
 first place,
 The crowned grim twy-necked eagle,
 coarsely-blackened
 With ochre on the naked wall; nor
 lacked
 Romano's green and yellow either side;
 But the new token Tito brought had
 tried
 The Legate's patience—nay, if Palma
 knew
 What Salinguerra almost meant to do
 Until the sight of her restored his lip
 A certain half-smile, three months'
 chieftainship
 Had banished! Afterward, the Leg-
 ate found
 No change in him, nor asked what
 badge he wound
 And unwound carelessly. Now sat the
 Chief
 Silent as when our couple left, whose
 brief
 Encounter wrought so opportune effect
 In thoughts he summoned not, nor
 would reject.
 Though time 't was now if ever, to
 pause—fix
 On any sort of ending: wiles and tricks
 Exhausted, judge! his charge, the
 crazy town,
 Just managed to be hindered crashing
 down—
 His last sound troops ranged—care
 observed to post
 His best of the maimed soldiers inner-
 most— [how struck
 So much was plain enough, but some-
 Him not before. And now with this
 strange luck
 Of Tito's news, rewarding his address
 So well, what thought he of?—how the
 success
 With Friedrich's rescript there, would
 either hush
 Old Ecelin's scruples, bring the manly
 flush
 To his young son's white cheek, or, last,
 exempt
 Himself from telling what there was to
 tempt?
 No: that this minstrel was Romano's
 last

Servant—himself the first! Could he
contrast
The whole!—that minstrel's thirty
years just spent
In doing nought, their notablest event
This morning's journey hither, as I
told—
Who yet was lean, outworn and really
old,
A stammering awkward man that
scarce dared raise
His eye before the magisterial gaze—
And Salinguerra with his fears and
hopes
Of sixty years, his Emperors and Popes,
Cares and contrivances, yet, you would
say,
'T was a youth nonchalantly looked
away
Through the embrasure northward o'er
the sick
Expostulating trees—so agile, quick
And graceful turned the head on the
broad chest
Encased in pliant steel, his constant
vest,
Whence split the sun off in a spray of
fire
Across the room; and, loosened of its
tire
Of steel, that head let breathe the
comely brown
Large massive locks discoloured as if a
crown
Encircled them, so frayed the basnet
where
A sharp white line divided clean the
hair;
Glossy above, glossy below, it swept
Curling and fine about a brow thus
kept
Calm, laid coat upon coat, marble and
sound:
This was the mystic mark the Tuscan
found,
Mused of, turned over books about,
Square-faced,
No lion more; two vivid eyes, en-
chased
In hollows filled with many a shade and
streak
Settling from the bold nose and bearded
cheek.
Nor might the half-smile reach them
that deformed
A lip supremely perfect else—un-
warmed,

Unwidened, less or more; indifferent
Whether on trees or men his thoughts
were bent,
Thoughts rarely, after all, in trim and
train
As now a period was fulfilled again:
Of such, a series made his life, com-
pressed
In each, one story serving for the rest—
How his life-streams rolling arrived at
last
At the barrier, whence, were it once
overpast,
They would emerge, a river to the
end,—
Gathered themselves up, paused, bade
fate befriend,
Took the leap, hung a minute at the
height,
Then fell back to oblivion infinite:
Therefore he smiled. Beyond stretched
garden-grounds
Where late the adversary, breaking
bounds,
Had gained him an occasion, That
above,
That eagle, testified he could improve
Effectually. The Kaiser's symbol lay
Beside his rescript, a new badge by way
Of baldrick; while,—another thing
that marred
Alike emprise, achievement and re-
ward,—
Ecelin's missive was conspicuous too.
What past life did those flying
thoughts pursue?
As his, few names in Mantua half so old;
But at Ferrara, where his sires enrolled
It latterly, the Adelardi spared
No pains to rival them: both factions
shared
Ferrara, so that, counted out, 't would
yield
A product very like the city's shield,
Half black and white, or Ghibellin and
Guelf,
As after Salinguerra styled himself
And Este who, till Marchesalla died,
(Last of the Adelardi)—never tried
His fortune there: with Marchesalla's
child
Would pass,—could Blacks and Whites
be reconciled,
And young Taurello wed Linguetta,—
wealth
And sway to a sole grasp. Each treats
by stealth

Already : when the Guefts, the Raven-
 neſe
 Arrive, aſſault the Pietro quarter, ſeiſe
 Linguetta, and are gone ! Men's firſt
 diſmay
 Abated ſomewhat, hurries down, to lay
 The after indignation, Boniface,
 This Richard's father. "Learn the
 full diſgrace
 "Averted, ere you blame us Guefts,
 who rate
 "Your Salinguerra, your ſole poten-
 tate
 "That might have been, 'mongſt
 Eſte's valvaſſors—
 "Ay, Azzo's—who, not privy to, ab-
 hors
 "Our ſtep ; but we were zealous."
 Azzo's then
 To do with ! Straight a meeting of old
 men :
 "Old Salinguerra dead, his heir a boy,
 "What if we change our ruler and
 decoy
 "The Lombard Eagle of the azure
 ſphere,
 "With Italy to build in, fix him here,
 "Settle the city's troubles in a trice ?
 "For private wrong, let public good
 ſuffice !"
 In fine, young Salinguerra's ſtauncheſt
 friends
 Talked of the townſmen making him
 amends,
 Gave him a goſhawk, and affirmed
 there was [grass
 Rare ſport, one morning, over the green
 A mile or ſo. He ſauntered through
 the plain,
 Was reſtleſs, fell to thinking, turned
 again
 In time for Azzo's entry with the bride ;
 Count Boniface rode ſmirking at their
 ſide :
 "She brings him half Ferrara," whiſ-
 pers flew,
 "And all Ancona ! If the ſtripling
 knew !"
 Anon the ſtripling was in Sicily
 Where Heinrich ruled in right of Con-
 ſtance ; he
 Was gracious nor his gueſt incapable ;
 Each underſtood the other. So it fell,
 One Spring, when Azzo, thoroughly at
 eaſe,
 Had near forgotten by what precise
 degrees

He crept at firſt to ſuch a downy ſeat,
 The Count trudged over in a ſpecial
 heat
 To bid him of God's love diſlodge from
 each
 Of Salinguerra's palaces,—a breach
 Might yawn elſe, not ſo readily to ſhut,
 For who was juſt arrived at Mantua but
 The youngſter, ſword on thigh and tuft
 on chin,
 With tokens for Celano, Ecelin,
 Piſtore, and the like ! Next news,—
 no whit
 Do any of Ferrara's domes befit
 His wife of Heinrich's very blood : a
 band
 Of foreigners aſſemble, underſtand
 Garden-conſtructing, level and ſur-
 round,
 Build up and bury in. A laſt news
 crowned [birth,
 The conſternation : ſince his infant's
 He only waits they end his wondrous
 girth
 Of trees that link San Pietro with
 Tomà,
 To viſit Mantua. When the Poſteſtà
 Ecelin, at Vicenza, called his friend
 Taurello thither, what could be their
 end
 But to reſtore the Ghibellins' late Head,
 The Kaiſer helping ? He with moſt
 to dread
 From vengeance and reprisal, Azzo,
 there
 With Boniface beforehand, as aware
 Of plots in progress, gave alarm, ex-
 pelled
 Both plotters : but the Guefts in tri-
 umph yelled
 Too haſtily. The burning and the
 flight,
 And how Taurello, occupied that night
 With Ecelin, loſt wife and ſon, I told :
 —Not how he bore the blow, retained
 his hold,
 Got friends ſafe through, left enemies
 the worſt
 O' the fray, and hardly ſeemed to care
 at firſt—
 But afterward men heard not con-
 ſtantly
 Of Salinguerra's Houſe ſo ſure to be !
 Though Azzo ſimply gained by the
 event
 A ſhifting of his plagues—the firſt, con-
 tent

To fall behind the second and estrange
 So far his nature, suffer such a change
 That in Romano sought he wife and
 child
 And for Romano's sake seemed reconciled
 To losing individual life, which shrunk
 As the other prospered—mortised in his
 trunk ;
 Like a dwarf palm which wanton Arabs
 foil
 Of bearing its own proper wine and oil,
 By grafting into it the stranger-vine,
 Which sucks its heart out, sly and serpentine,
 Till forth one vine-palm feathers to the
 root,
 And red drops moisten the insipid fruit.
 Once Adelaide set on,—the subtle mate
 Of the weak soldier, urged to emulate
 The Church's valiant women deed for
 deed,
 And paragon her namesake, win the
 meed [bore
 Of the great Matilda,—soon they over-
 The rest of Lombardy,—not as before
 By an instinctive truculence, but
 patched
 The Kaiser's strategy until it matched
 The Pontiff's, sought old ends by novel
 means.
 "Only, why is it Salinguerra screens
 "Himself behind Romano?—him we
 bade
 "Enjoy our shine i' the front, not seek
 the shade!"
 —Asked Heinrich, somewhat of the
 tardiest
 To comprehend. Nor Philip acquiesced
 At once in the arrangement; reasoned,
 plied
 His friend with offers of another bride,
 A statelier function—fruitlessly: 'twas
 plain
 Taurello through some weakness must
 remain
 Obscure. And Otho, free to judge of
 both,
 —Ecelin the unready, harsh and loth,
 And this more plausible and facile wight
 With every point a-sparkle—chose the
 right,
 Admiring how his predecessors harped
 On the wrong man: "thus," quoth he,
 "wits are warped
 "By outsides!" Carelessly, mean-
 while, his life

Suffered its many turns of peace and
 strife
 In many lands—you hardly could sur-
 prise
 The man; who shamed Sordello (recog-
 nize!)
 In this as much beside, that, uncon-
 cerned
 What qualities were natural or earned,
 With no ideal of graces, as they came
 He took them, singularly well the
 same—
 Speaking the Greek's own language,
 just because
 Your Greek eludes you, leave the least
 to flaws
 In contracts with him; while, since
 Arab lore
 Holds the stars' secret—take one
 trouble more
 And master it! 'T is done, and now
 deter
 Who may the Tuscan, once Jove trined
 for her,
 From Friedrich's path!—Friedrich,
 whose pilgrimage
 The same man puts aside, whom he'll
 engage
 To leave next year John Brienne in the
 lurch,
 Come to Bassano, see Saint Francis'
 church
 And judge of Guido the Bolognian's
 piece
 Which, lend Taurello credit, rivals
 Greece—
 Angels, with aureoles like golden quoits
 Pitched home, applauding Ecelin's
 exploits.
 For elegance, he strung the angelet,
 Made rhymes thereto; for prowess,
 clove he not
 Tiso, last siege, from crest to crupper?
 Why
 Detail you thus a varied mastery
 But to show how Taurello, on the
 watch
 For men, to read their hearts and there-
 by catch
 Their capabilities and purposes,
 Displayed himself so far as displayed
 these:
 While our Sordello only cared to know
 About men as a means whereby he'd
 show
 Himself, and men had much or little
 worth

According as they kept in or drew forth
That self; the other's choicest instru-
ments

Surmised him shallow.

Meantime, malcontents
Dropped off, town after town grew
wiser. "How

"Change the world's face?" asked
people; "as 't is now

"It has been, will be ever: very fine

"Subjecting things profane to things
divine,

"In talk! This contumacy will
fatigue

"The vigilance of Este and the League!

"The Ghibellins gain on us!"—as it
happened.

Old Azzo and old Boniface, entrapped
By Ponte Alto, both in one month's
space

Slept at Verona: either left a brace
Of sons—but, three years after, either's
pair

Lost Guglielm and Aldobrand its heir:
Azzo remained and Richard—all the
stay

Of Este and Saint Boniface, at bay
As 't were. Then, either Ecelin grew
old

Or his brain altered—not of the proper
mould

For new appliances—his old palm-stock
Endured no influx of strange strengths.
He'd rock

As in a drunkenness, or chuckle low
As proud of the completeness of his woe,
Then weep real tears;—now make
some mad onslaught

On Este, heedless of the lesson taught
So painfully,—now cringe for peace, sue
peace

At price of past gain, bar of fresh in-
crease

To the fortunes of Romano. Up at last
Rose Este, down Romano sank as fast.
And men remarked these freaks of
peace and war

Happened while Salinguerra was afar:
Whence every friend besought him,
all in vain,

To use his old adherent's wits again.
Not he!—"who had advisers in his
sons,

"Could plot himself, nor needed any
one's

"Advice." 'T was Adelaide's remain-
ing staunch

Prevented his destruction root and
branch

Forthwith; but when she died, doom
fell, for gay

He made alliances, gave lands away
To whom it pleased accept them, and
withdrew

For ever from the world. Taurello, who
Was summoned to the convent, then
refused

A word at the wicket, patience thus
abused,

Promptly threw off alike his imbecile
Ally's yoke, and his own frank, foolish
smile,

Soon a few movements of the happier
sort

Changed matters, put himself in men's
report

As heretofore; he had to fight, beside,
And that became him ever. So, in
pride

And flushing of this kind of second
youth,

He dealt a good-will blow. Este in
truth

Lay prone—and men remembered,
somewhat late,

A laughing old outrageous stifled hate
He bore to Este—how it would out-
break

At times spite of disguise, like an earth-
quake

In sunny weather—as that noted day
When with his hundred friends he tried
to slay

Azzo before the Kaiser's face: and
how,

On Azzo's calm refusal to allow
A liegeman's challenge, straight he too
was calmed:

As if his hate could bear to lie em-
balméd,

Bricked up, the moody Pharaoh, and
survive

All intermediate crumbings, and arrive
At earth's catastrophe—'t was Este's
crash

Not Azzo's he demanded, so, no rash
Procedure! Este's true antagonist
Rose out of Ecelin: all voices whist,
All eyes were sharpened, wits pre-
dicted. He

'T was, leaned in the embrasure ab-
sently,

Amused with his own efforts, now, to
trace

- With his steel-sheathed forefinger Friedrich's face
 I' the dust: but as the trees waved
 sere, his smile
 Deepened, and words expressed its
 thought erewhile.
 "Ay, fairly housed at last, my old
 compeer?
 "That we should stick together, all the
 year
 'I kept Vicenza!—How old Boniface,
 "Old Azzo caught us in its market-
 place,
 "He by that pillar, I at this,—caught
 each
 "In mid swing, more than fury of his
 speech,
 "Egging the rabble on to disavow
 "Allegiance to their Marquis—Bac-
 chus, how
 "They boasted! Ecelin must turn
 their drudge,
 "Nor, if released, will Sa'nguerra
 grudge
 "Paying arrears of tribute due long
 since—
 "Bacchus! My man could promise
 then, nor wince,
 "The bones-and-muscles! Sound of
 wind and limb,
 "Spoke he the set excuse I framed for
 him: [mute,
 "And now he sits me, slaving and
 "Intent on chafing each starved purple
 foot
 "Benumbed past aching with the altar
 slab—
 "Will no vein throb there when some
 monk shall blab
 "Spitefully to the circle of bald scalps,
 "'Friedrich's affirmed to be our side
 the Alps'
 "—Eh, brother Lactance, brother
 Anaclet
 "Sworn to abjure the world, its fume
 and fret,
 "God's own now? Drop the dormi-
 tory bar,
 "Enfold the scanty grey serge scapular
 "Twice o'er the cowl to muffle mem-
 ories out!
 "So! But the midnight whisper
 turns a shout,
 "Eyes wink, mouths open, pulses cir-
 culate
 "In the stone walls: the past, the
 world you hate
- "Is with you, ambush, open field—or
 see
 "The surging flame—we fire Vicenza—
 glee!
 "Follow, let Pilio and Bernardo chafe!
 "Bring up the Mantuans—through
 San Biagio—safe!
 "Ah, the mad people waken? Ah,
 they writhe
 "And reach us? If they block the
 gate? No tithe
 "Can pass—keep back, you Bassan-
 ese! The edge,
 "Use the edge—shear, thrust, hew,
 melt down the wedge,
 "Let out the black of those black up-
 turned eyes!
 "Hell—are they sprinkling fire too?
 The blood fries
 "And hisses on your brass gloves as
 they tear
 "Those upturned faces choking with
 despair.
 "Brave! Slidder through the reeking
 gate! 'How now?
 "'You six had charge of her?' And
 then the vow
 "Comes, and the foam spirts, hair's
 plucked, till one shriek
 "(I hear it) and you fling—you cannot
 speak—
 "Your gold-flowered basnet to a man
 who haled
 "The Adelaide he dared scarce view
 unveiled
 "This morn, naked across the fire:
 how crown
 "The archer that exhausted lays you
 down
 "Your infant, smiling at the flame, and
 dies?
 "While one, while mine . . .
 "Bacchus! I think there lies
 "More than one corpse there" (and he
 paced the room)
 "—Another cinder somewhere; 't was
 my doom
 "Beside, my doom! If Adelaide is
 dead,
 "I live the same, this Azzo lives in-
 stead
 "Of that to me, and we pull, any how,
 "Este into a heap: the matter's now
 "At the true juncture slipping us so
 oft.
 "Ay, Heinrich died and Otho, please
 you, doffed