

To starlight, will he see the rose is red?

A bondsman shivering at a Jesuit's foot—  
 "Væ! meâ culpâ!"—is not like to stand

A freedman at a despot's and dispute  
 His titles by the balance in his hand,

Weighing them "suo jure." Tend the root  
 If careful of the branches, and expand

The inner souls of men before you strive  
 For civic heroes.

But the teacher, where?

From all these crowded faces, all alive,  
 Eyes, of their own lids flashing themselves bare,

And brows that with a mobile life contrive  
 A deeper shadow,—may we in no wise dare

To put a finger out and touch a man,  
 And cry "this is the leader?" What, all these!

Broad heads, black eyes,—yet not a soul that ran  
 From God down with a message? all, to please

The donna waving measures with her fan,  
 And not the judgment-angel on his knees

(The trumpet just an inch off from his lips),  
 Who when he breathes next, will put out the sun?

Yet mankind's self were foundered in eclipse,  
 If lacking doers, with great works to be done;

And lo, the startled earth already dips  
 Back into light; a better day's begun;

And soon this leader, teacher, will stand plain,  
 And build the golden pipes and synthesise

This people-organ for a holy strain.  
 We hold this hope, and still in all these eyes,

Go sounding for the deep look which shall drain  
 Suffused thought into channelled enterprise.

Where is the teacher? What now may he do,  
 Who shall do greatly? Doth he gird his waist  
 With a monk's rope, like Luther? or pursue

The goat, like Tell? or dry his nets in haste,  
 Like Masaniello when the sky was blue?  
 Keep house, like other peasants, with inlaced  
 Bare brawny arms about a favourite child,  
 And meditative looks beyond the door  
 (But not to mark the kidling's teeth have filed  
 The green shoots of his vine which last year bore  
 Full twenty bunches), or, on triple-piled  
 Throne-velvets sit at ease to bless the poor,  
 Like other pontiffs, in the Poorest's name?  
 The old tiara keeps itself aslope  
 Upon his steady brows which, all the same,  
 Bend mildly to permit the people's hope?

Whatever hand shall grasp this oriflamme,  
 Whatever man (last peasant or first pope  
 Seeking to free his country) shall appear,  
 Teach, lead, strike fire into the masses, fill  
 These empty bladders with fine air, insphere  
 These wills into a unity of will,  
 And make of Italy a nation—dear  
 And blessed be that man! the Heavens shall kill  
 No leaf the earth lets grow for him, and Death  
 Shall cast him back upon the lap of Life  
 To live more surely, in a clarion-breath  
 Of hero-music. Brutus with the knife,  
 Rienzi with the fasces, throb beneath  
 Rome's stones,—and more who threw away joy's life  
 Like Pallas, that the beauty of their souls  
 Might ever shine untroubled and entire:  
 But if it can be true that he who rolls  
 The Church's thunders, will reserve her fire  
 For only light,—from eucharistic bowls  
 Will pour new life for nations that expire,  
 And rend the scarlet of his papal vest

To gird the weak loins of his countrymen,—  
 I hold that he surpasses all the rest  
 Of Romans, heroes, patriots ; and that when  
 He sat down on the throne, he dispossessed  
 The first graves of some glory. See again,  
 This country-saving is a glorious thing :  
 And if a common man achieved it ? well.  
 Say, a rich man did ? excellent. A king ?  
 That grows sublime. A priest ? improbable.  
 A pope ? Ah, there we stop, and cannot bring  
 Our faith up to the leap, with history's bell  
 So heavy round the neck of it—albeit  
 We fain would grant the possibility  
 For *thy* sake, Pio Nono !

Stretch thy feet

In that case—I will kiss them reverently  
 As any pilgrim to the papal seat :  
 And, such proved possible, thy throne to me  
 Shall seem as holy a place as Pellico's  
 Venetian dungeon, or as Spielberg's grate  
 At which the Lombard woman hung the rose  
 Of her sweet soul by its own dewy weight,  
 To feel the dungeon round her sunshine close,  
 And pining so, died early, yet too late  
 For what she suffered. Yea, I will not choose  
 Betwixt thy throne, Pope Pius, and the spot  
 Marked red for ever, spite of rains and dews,  
 Where Two fell riddled by the Austrian's shot,  
 The brothers Bandiera, who accuse,  
 With one same mother-voice and face (that what  
 They speak may be invincible) the sins  
 Of earth's tormentors before God the just,  
 Until the unconscious thunder-bolt begins  
 To loosen in His grasp.

And yet we must

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

Count what goes

To making up a pope, before he wear  
 That triple crown. We pass the world-wide throes  
 Which went to make the popedom,—the despair  
 Of free men, good men, wise men; the dread shows  
 Of women's faces, by the faggot's flash  
 Tossed out, to the minutest stir and throb  
 O' the white lips, the least tremble of a lash,  
 To glut the red stare of a licensed mob;  
 The short mad cries down oubliettes, and plash  
 So horribly far off; priests, trained to rob,  
 And kings that, like encouraged nightmares, sate  
 On nations' hearts most heavily distressed  
 With monstrous sights and apophthegms of fate—  
 We pass these things,—because "the times" are prest  
 With necessary charges of the weight  
 Of all this sin, and "Calvin, for the rest,  
 Made bold to burn Servetus. Ah, men err!"—  
 And so do *churches*! which is all we mean  
 To bring to proof in any register  
 Of theological fat kine and lean:  
 So drive them back into the pens! refer  
 Old sins (with pourpoint, "quotha" and "I ween")

Entirely to the old times, the old times ;  
 Nor ever ask why this preponderant  
 Infalible pure Church could set her chimes  
 Most loudly then, just then,—most jubilant,  
 Precisely then, when mankind stood in crimes  
 Full heart-deep, and Heaven's judgments were not scant.  
 Inquire still less, what signifies a church  
 Of perfect inspiration and pure laws  
 Who burns the first man with a brimstone-torch,  
 And grinds the second, bone by bone, because  
 The times, forsooth, are used to rack and scorch !  
 What *is* a holy Church unless she awes  
 The times down from their sins ? Did Christ select  
 Such amiable times, to come and teach  
 Love to, and mercy ? The whole world were wrecked  
 If every mere great man, who lives to reach  
 A little leaf of popular respect,  
 Attained not simply by some special breach  
 In the age's customs, by some precedence  
 In thought and act, which, having proved him higher  
 Than those he lived with, proved his competence  
 In helping them to wonder and aspire.

My words are guiltless of the bigot's sense.  
 My soul has fire to mingle with the fire  
 Of all these souls, within or out of doors  
 Of Rome's church or another. I believe  
 In one Priest, and one temple with its floors  
 Of shining jasper gloom'd at morn and eve  
 By countless knees of earnest auditors,  
 And crystal walls too lucid to perceive,  
 That none may take the measure of the place  
 And say, "So far the porphyry, then, the flint—  
 To this mark mercy goes, and there ends grace,"  
 Though still the permeable crystals hint

At some white starry distance, bathed in space.  
 I feel how nature's ice-crusts keep the dint  
 Of undersprings of silent Deity.  
 I hold the articulated gospels which  
 Show Christ among us crucified on tree.  
 I love all who love truth, if poor or rich  
 In what they have won of truth possessively.  
 No altars and no hands defiled with pitch  
 Shall scare me off, but I will pray and eat  
 With all these—taking leave to choose my ewers—  
 And say at last, "Your visible churches cheat  
 Their inward types; and, if a church assures  
 Of standing without failure and defeat,  
 The same both fails and lies."

To leave which lures

Of wider subject through past years,—behold,  
 We come back from the popedom to the pope,  
 To ponder what he *must* be, ere we are bold  
 For what he *may* be, with our heavy hope  
 To trust upon his soul. So, fold by fold,  
 Explore this mummy in the priestly cope,  
 Transmitted through the darks of time, to catch  
 The man within the wrappage, and discern  
 How he, an honest man, upon the watch  
 Full fifty years for what a man may learn,  
 Contrived to get just there; with what a snatch  
 Of old-world oboli he had to earn  
 The passage through; with what a drowsy sop,  
 To drench the busy barkings of his brain;  
 What ghosts of pale tradition, wreathed with hope  
 'Gainst wakeful thought, he had to entertain  
 For heavenly visions; and consent to stop  
 The clock at noon, and let the hour remain  
 (Without vain windings-up) inviolate  
 Against all chimings from the belfry. Lo,

From every given pope you must abate,  
 Albeit you love him, some things—good, you know—  
 Which every given heretic you hate,  
 Assumes for his, as being plainly so.

A pope must hold by popes a little,—yes,  
 By councils, from Nicæa up to Trent,—  
 By hierocratic empire, more or less  
 Irresponsible to men,—he must resent  
 Each man's particular conscience, and repress  
 Inquiry, meditation, argument,

As tyrants faction. Also, he must not  
 Love truth too dangerously, but prefer  
 "The interests of the Church" (because a blot  
 Is better than a rent, in miniver)—

Submit to see the people swallow hot  
 Husk-porridge, which his chartered churchmen stir  
 Quoting the only true God's epigraph,

"Feed my lambs, Peter!"—must consent to sit  
 Attesting with his pastoral ring and staff  
 To such a picture of our Lady, hit

Off well by artist-angels (though not half  
 As fair as Giotto would have painted it)—

To such a vial, where a dead man's blood  
 Runs yearly warm beneath a churchman's finger,—

To such a holy house of stone and wood,  
 Whereof a cloud of angels was the bringer

From Bethlehem to Loreto. Were it good  
 For any pope on earth to be a flinger

Of stones against these high-niched counterfeits?  
 Apostates only are iconoclasts.

He dares not say, while this false thing abets  
 That true thing, "this is false." He keeps his fasts  
 And prayers, as prayer and fast were silver frets  
 To change a note upon a string that lasts,  
 And make a lie a virtue. Now, if he

Did more than this, higher hoped, and braver dared,  
 I think he were a pope in jeopardy,  
 Or no pope rather, for his truth had barred  
 The vaulting of his life,—and certainly,  
 If he do only this, mankind's regard  
 Moves on from him at once, to seek some new  
 Teacher and leader. He is good and great  
 According to the deeds a pope can do ;  
 Most liberal, save those bonds ; affectionate,  
 As princes may be, and, as priests are, true ;  
 But only the ninth Pius after eight,  
 When all's praised most. At best and hopefullest,  
 He's pope—we want a man ! his heart beats warm,  
 But, like the prince enchanted to the waist,  
 He sits in stone and hardens by a charm  
 Into the marble of his throne high-placed.  
 Mild benediction waves his saintly arm—  
 So, good ! but what we want 's a perfect man,  
 Complete and all alive : half travertine  
 Half suits our need, and ill subserves our plan.  
 Feet, knees, nerves, sinews, energies divine  
 Were never yet too much for men who ran  
 In such hard ways as must be this of thine,  
 Deliverer whom we seek, whoe'er thou art,  
 Pope, prince, or peasant ! If, indeed, the first,  
 The noblest, therefore ! since the heroic heart  
 Within thee must be great enough to burst  
 Those trammels buckling to the baser part  
 Thy saintly peers in Rome, who crossed and cursed  
 With the same finger.

Come, appear, be found,  
 If pope or peasant, come ! we hear the cock,  
 The courtier of the mountains when first crowned  
 With golden dawn ; and orient glories flock



To meet the sun upon the highest ground.  
 Take voice and work ! we wait to hear thee knock  
 At some one of our Florentine nine gates,  
 On each of which was imaged a sublime  
 Face of a Tuscan genius, which, for hate's  
 And love's sake, both, our Florence in her prime  
 Turned boldly on all comers to her states,  
 As heroes turned their shields in antique time  
 Emblazoned with honourable acts. And though  
 The gates are blank now of such images,  
 And Petrarch looks no more from Nicolo  
 Toward dear Arezzo, 'twixt the acacia-trees,  
 Nor Dante, from gate Gallo—still we know,  
 Despite the razing of the blazonries,  
 Remains the consecration of the shield :  
 The dead heroic faces will start out  
 On all these gates, if foes should take the field,  
 And blend sublimely, at the earliest shout,  
 With living heroes who will scorn to yield  
 A hair's-breadth even, when, gazing round about,  
 They find in what a glorious company  
 They fight the foes of Florence. Who will grudge  
 His one poor life, when that great man we see  
 Has given five hundred years, the world being judge,  
 To help the glory of his Italy ?  
 Who, born the fair side of the Alps, will budge,  
 When Dante stays, when Ariosto stays,  
 When Petrarch stays for ever ? Ye bring swords,  
 My Tuscans ? Ay, if wanted in this haze,  
 Bring swords : but first bring souls !—bring thoughts  
 and words,  
 Unrusted by a tear of yesterday's  
 Yet awful by its wrong,—and cut these cords,  
 And mow this green lush falseness to the roots,  
 And shut the mouth of hell below the swathe !

And, if ye can bring songs too, let the lute's  
 Recoverable music softly bathe  
 Some poet's hand, that, through all bursts and bruits  
 Of popular passion, all unripe and rathe  
 Convictions of the popular intellect,  
 Ye may not lack a finger up the air,  
 Annunciative, reproving, pure, erect,  
 To show which way your first Ideal bare  
 The whiteness of its wings when (sorely pecked  
 By falcons on your wrists) it unaware  
 Arose up overhead and out of sight.

Meanwhile, let all the far ends of the world  
 Breathe back the deep breath of their old delight,  
 To swell the Italian banner just unfurled.  
 Help, lands of Europe ! for, if Austria fight,  
 The drums will bar your slumber. Had ye curled  
 The laurel for your thousand artists' brows,  
 If these Italian hands had planted none ?  
 Can any sit down idle in the house  
 Nor hear appeals from Buonarroti's stone  
 And Raffael's canvas, rousing and to rouse ?  
 Where's Poussin's master ? Gallic Avignon  
 Bred Laura, and Vaucluse's fount has stirred  
 The heart of France too strongly, as it lets  
 Its little stream out (like a wizard's bird  
 Which bounds upon its emerald wing and wets  
 The rocks on each side), that she should not gird  
 Her loins with Charlemagne's sword when foes beset  
 The country of her Petrarch. Spain may well  
 Be minded how from Italy she caught,  
 To mingle with her tinkling Moorish bell,  
 A fuller cadence and a subtler thought.  
 And even the New World, the receptacle  
 Of freemen, may send glad men, as it ought,

To greet Vespucci Amerigo's door.  
 While England claims, by trump of poetry,  
 Verona, Venice, the Ravenna-shore,  
 And dearer holds John Milton's Fiesole  
 Than Langland's Malvern with the stars in flower.

And Vallombrosa, we two went to see  
 Last June, beloved companion,—where sublime  
 The mountains live in holy families,  
 And the slow pinewoods ever climb and climb  
 Half up their breasts, just stagger as they seize  
 Some gray crag, drop back with it many a time,  
 And straggle blindly down the precipice.  
 The Vallombrosan brooks were strewn as thick  
 That June-day, knee-deep with dead beechen leaves  
 As Milton saw them ere his heart grew sick  
 And his eyes blind. I think the monks and beeves  
 Are all the same too: scarce have they changed the  
 wick  
 On good St. Gualbert's altar which receives  
 The convent's pilgrims; and the pool in front  
 (Wherein the hill-stream trout are cast, to wait  
 The beatific vision and the grunt  
 Used at refectory) keeps its weedy state,  
 To baffle saintly abbots who would count  
 The fish across their breviary nor 'bate  
 The measure of their steps. O waterfalls  
 And forests! sound and silence! mountains bare  
 That leap up peak by peak and catch the palls  
 Of purple and silver mist to rend and share  
 With one another, at electric calls  
 Of life in the sunbeams,—till we cannot dare  
 Fix your shapes, count your number! we must think  
 Your beauty and your glory helped to fill  
 The cup of Milton's soul so to the brink,

He never more was thirsty when God's will  
 Had shattered to his sense the last chain-link  
 By which he had drawn from Nature's visible  
 The fresh well-water. Satisfied by this,  
 He sang of Adam's paradise and smiled,  
 Remembering Vallombrosa. Therefore is  
 The place divine to English man and child,  
 And pilgrims leave their souls here in a kiss.

For Italy's the whole earth's treasury, piled  
 With reveries of gentle ladies, flung  
 Aside, like ravelled silk, from life's worn stuff;  
 With coins of scholars' fancy, which, being rung  
 On work-day counter, still sound silver-proof;  
 In short, with all the dreams of dreamers young,  
 Before their heads have time for slipping off  
 Hope's pillow to the ground. How oft, indeed,  
 We've sent our souls out from the rigid north,  
 On bare white feet which would not print nor  
 bleed,  
 To climb the Alpine passes and look forth,  
 Where booming low the Lombard rivers lead  
 To gardens, vineyards, all a dream is worth,—  
 Sight, thou and I, Love, have seen afterward  
 From Tuscan Bellosguardo, wide awake,<sup>1</sup>  
 When, standing on the actual blessed sward  
 Where Galileo stood at nights to take  
 The vision of the stars, we have found it hard,  
 Gazing upon the earth and heaven, to make  
 A choice of beauty.

Therefore let us all  
 Refreshed in England or in other land,  
 By visions, with their fountain-rise and fall,

<sup>1</sup> Galileo's villa, close to Florence, is built on an eminence called Bellosguardo.

Of this earth's darling,—we, who understand  
 A little how the Tuscan musical  
 Vowels do round themselves as if they planned  
 Eternities of separate sweetness,—we,  
 Who loved Sorrento vines in picture-book,  
 Or ere in wine-cup we pledged faith or glee,—  
 Who loved Rome's wolf with demi-gods at suck,  
 Or ere we loved truth's own divinity,—  
 Who loved, in brief, the classic hill and brook,  
 And Ovid's dreaming tales and Petrarch's song,  
 Or ere we loved Love's self even,—let us give  
 The blessing of our souls (and wish them strong  
 To bear it to the height where prayers arrive,  
 When faithful spirits pray against a wrong)  
 To this great cause of southern men who strive  
 In God's name for man's rights, and shall not fail !

Behold, they shall not fail. The shouts ascend  
 Above the shrieks, in Naples, and prevail.  
 Rows of shot corpses, waiting for the end  
 Of burial, seem to smile up straight and pale  
 Into the azure air and apprehend  
 That final gun-flash from Palermo's coast  
 Which lightens their apocalypse of death.  
 So let them die ! The world shows nothing lost ;  
 Therefore, not blood. Above or underneath,  
 What matter, brothers, if ye keep your post  
 On duty's side ? As sword returns to sheath,  
 So dust to grave, but souls find place in Heaven.  
 Heroic daring is the true success,  
 The eucharistic bread requires no leaven ;  
 And though your ends were hopeless, we should bless  
 Your cause as holy. Strive—and, having striven,  
 Take, for God's recompense, that righteousness !

## PART II.

I WROTE a meditation and a dream,  
 Hearing a little child sing in the street :  
 I leant upon his music as a theme,  
 Till it gave way beneath my heart's full beat  
 Which tried at an exultant prophecy  
 But dropped before the measure was complete—  
 Alas, for songs and hearts! O Tuscany,  
 O, Dante's Florence, is the type too plain?  
 Didst thou, too, only sing of liberty  
 As little children take up a high strain  
 With unintentioned voices, and break off  
 To sleep upon their mothers' knees again?  
 Couldst thou not watch one hour? then, sleep enough—  
 That sleep many hasten manhood and sustain  
 The faint pale spirit with some muscular stuff.

But we, who cannot slumber as thou dost,  
 We thinkers, who have thought for thee and failed,  
 We hoppers, who have hoped for thee and lost,  
 We poets, wandered round by dreams,<sup>1</sup> who hailed  
 From this Atrides' roof (with lintel-post  
 Which still drips blood—the worse part hath prevailed)  
 The fire-voice of the beacons to declare  
 Troy taken, sorrow ended,—cozened through  
 A crimson sunset in a misty air,  
 What now remains for such as we, to do?  
 God's judgments, peradventure, will He bare  
 To the roots of thunder, if we kneel and sue?

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

<sup>1</sup> See the opening passage of the *Agamemnon* of *Æschylus*.

Flash back the triumph of the Lombard north,—  
 Saw fifty banners, freighted with the signs  
 And exultations of the awakened earth,  
 Float on above the multitude in lines,  
 Straight to the Pitti. So, the vision went,  
 And so, between those populous rough hands  
 Raised in the sun, Duke Leopold outleant,  
 And took the patriot's oath which henceforth stands  
 Among the oaths of perjurers, eminent  
 To catch the lightnings ripened for these lands.

Why swear at all, thou false Duke Leopold?  
 What need to swear? What need to boast thy blood  
 Unspoilt of Austria, and thy heart unsold  
 Away from Florence? It was understood  
 God made thee not too vigorous or too bold;  
 And men had patience with thy quiet mood,  
 And women, pity, as they saw thee pace  
 Their festive streets with premature gray hairs.  
 We turned the mild dejection of thy face  
 To princely meanings, took thy wrinkling cares  
 For ruffling hopes, and called thee weak, not base.  
 Nay, better light the torches for more prayers  
 And smoke the pale Madonnas at the shrine,  
 Being still "our poor Grand-duke, our good Grand-  
 duke,  
 Who cannot help the Austrian in his line,"—  
 Than write an oath upon a nation's book  
 For men to spit at with scorn's blurring brine!  
 Who dares forgive what none can overlook?

— For me, I do repent me in this dust  
 Of towns and temples which makes Italy,—  
 I sigh amid the sighs which breathe a gust  
 Of dying century to century

Around us on the uneven crater-crust  
Of these old worlds,—I bow my soul and knee.

Absolve me, patriots, of my woman's fault  
That ever I believed the man was true!

These sceptred strangers shun the common salt,  
And, therefore, when the general board's in view

And they stand up to carve for blind and halt,  
The wise suspect the viands which ensue.

I much repent that, in this time and place  
Where many corpse-lights of experience burn

From Cæsar's and Lorenzo's festering race,  
To enlighten groping reasoners, I could learn

No better counsel for a simple case  
Than to put faith in princes, in my turn.

Had all the death-piles of the ancient years  
Flared up in vain before me? knew I not

What stench arises from some purple gears?  
And how the sceptres witness whence they got

Their briar-wood, crackling through the atmosphere's  
Foul smoke, by princely perjuries, kept hot?

Forgive me, ghosts of patriots,—Brutus, thou,  
Who trailest downhill into life again

Thy blood-weighed cloak, to indict me with thy  
slow

Reproachful eyes!—for being taught in vain

That, while the illegitimate Cæsars show  
Of meaner stature than the first full strain

(Confessed incompetent to conquer Gaul),  
They swoon as feebly and cross Rubicons

As rashly as any Julius of them all!

Forgive, that I forgot the mind which runs

Through absolute races, too unsceptical!

I saw the man among his little sons,

His lips were warm with kisses while he swore;

And I, because I am a woman, I,





“How grown men raged at Austria’s wickedness,  
And smoked.”



Who felt my own child's coming life before  
 The prescience of my soul, and held faith high,—  
 I could not bear to think, whoever bore,  
 That lips, so warmed, could shape so cold a lie.

From Casa Guidi windows I looked out,  
 Again looked, and beheld a different sight.  
 The Duke had fled before the people's shout  
 "Long live the Duke!" A people, to speak right,  
 Must speak as soft as courtiers, lest a doubt  
 Should curdle brows of gracious sovereigns, white.  
 Moreover that same dangerous shouting meant  
 Some gratitude for future favours, which  
 Were only promised, the Constituent  
 Implied, the whole being subject to the hitch  
 In "motu proprios," very incident  
 To all these Czars, from Paul to Paulovitch.  
 Whereat the people rose up in the dust  
 Of the ruler's flying feet, and shouted still  
 And loudly; only, this time, as was just,  
 Not "Live the Duke," who had fled for good or ill,  
 But "Live the People," who remained and must,  
 The unrenounced and unrenounceable.

Long live the people! How they lived! and boiled  
 And bubbled in the cauldron of the street:  
 How the young blustered, nor the old recoiled,  
 And what a thunderous stir of tongues and feet  
 Trod flat the palpitating bells and foiled  
 The joy-guns of their echo, shattering it!  
 How down they pulled the Duke's arms everywhere!  
 How up they set new café-signs, to show  
 Where patriots might sip ices in pure air—  
 (The fresh paint smelling somewhat)! To and fro  
 How marched the civic guard, and stopped to stare

B. P.—II. L

When boys broke windows in a civic glow !  
 How rebel songs were sung to loyal tunes,  
 And bishops cursed in ecclesiastic metres :  
 How all the Circoli grew large as moons,  
 And all the speakers, moonstruck,—thankful greeters  
 Of prospects which struck poor the ducal boons,  
 A mere free Press, and Chambers !—frank repeaters  
 Of great Guerazzi's praises—" There's a man,  
 The father of the land, who, truly great,  
 Takes off that national disgrace and ban,  
 The farthing tax upon our Florence-gate,  
 And saves Italia as he only can !"  
 How all the nobles fled, and would not wait,  
 Because they were most noble,—which being so,  
 How liberals vowed to burn their palaces,  
 Because free Tuscans were not free to go !  
 How grown men raged at Austria's wickedness,  
 And smoked,—while fifty striplings in a row  
 Marched straight to Piedmont for the wrong's redress !  
 You say we failed in duty, we who wore  
 Black velvet like Italian democrats,  
 Who slashed our sleeves like patriots, nor forswore  
 The true republic in the form of hats ?  
 We chased the archbishop from the Duomo-door,  
 We chalked the walls with bloody caveats  
 Against all tyrants. If we did not fight  
 Exactly, we fired muskets up the air  
 To show that victory was ours of right.  
 We met, had free discussion everywhere  
 (Except perhaps i' the Chambers) day and night.  
 We proved the poor should be employed, . . . that's  
 fair,—  
 And yet the rich not worked for anywise,—  
 Pay certified, yet payers abrogated,—  
 Full work secured, yet liabilities

To over-work excluded,—not one bated  
 Of all our holidays, that still, at twice  
 Or thrice a week, are moderately rated.

We proved that Austria was dislodged, or would  
 Or should be, and that Tuscany in arms

Should, would dislodge her, ending the old feud;  
 And yet, to leave our piazzas, shops, and farms,  
 For the simple sake of fighting, was not good—

We proved that also. “Did we carry charms  
 Against being killed ourselves, that we should rush  
 On killing others? what, desert herewith

Our wives and mothers?—was that duty? tush!”  
 At which we shook the sword within the sheath

Like heroes—only louder; and the flush  
 Ran up the cheek to meet the future wreath.

Nay, what we proved, we shouted—how we shouted  
 (Especially the boys did), boldly planting

That tree of liberty, whose fruit is doubted,  
 Because the roots are not of nature's granting!

A tree of good and evil: none, without it,  
 Grow gods; alas and, with it, men are wanting!

O holy knowledge, holy liberty,  
 O holy rights of nations! If I speak  
 These bitter things against the jugglery  
 Of days that in your names proved blind and weak,  
 It is that tears are bitter. When we see  
 The brown skulls grin at death in churchyards bleak,  
 We do not cry, “This Yorick is too light,”  
 For death grows deathlier with that mouth he makes.

So with my mocking: bitter things I write  
 Because my soul is bitter for your sakes,

O freedom! O my Florence!

Men who might  
 Do greatly in a universe that breaks

And burns, must ever *know* before they do.  
 Courage and patience are but sacrifice ;  
 And sacrifice is offered for and to  
 Something conceived of. Each man pays a price  
 For what himself counts precious, whether true  
 Or false the appreciation it implies.

But here,—no knowledge, no conception, nought !  
 Desire was absent, that provides great deeds

From out the greatness of prevenient thought :  
 And action, action, like a flame that needs

A steady breath and fuel, being caught  
 Up, like a burning reed from other reeds,

Flashed in the empty and uncertain air,  
 Then wavered, then went out. Behold, who blames

A crooked course, when not a goal is there  
 To round the fervid striving of the games ?

An ignorance of means may minister  
 To greatness, but an ignorance of aims

Makes it impossible to be great at all.

So, with our Tuscans ! Let none dare to say,

“ Here virtue never can be national ;

Here fortitude can never cut a way

Between the Austrian muskets, out of thrall :

I tell you rather that, whoever may

Discern true ends here, shall grow pure enough

To love them, brave enough to strive for them,

And strong to reach them though the roads be rough :

That having learnt—by no mere apophthegm—

Not just the draping of a graceful stuff

About a statue, broidered at the hem,—

Not just the trilling on an opera-stage

Of “ *libertà* ” to bravos—(a fair word,

Yet too allied to inarticulate rage

And breathless sobs, for singing, though the chord

Were deeper than they struck it) but the gauge

Of civil wants sustained and wrongs abhorred,  
 The serious sacred meaning and full use  
 Of freedom for a nation,—then, indeed,  
 Our Tuscans, underneath the bloody dews  
 Of some new morning, rising up agreed  
 And bold, will want no Saxon souls or thews  
 To sweep their piazzas clear of Austria's breed.

Alas, alas ! it was not so this time.  
 Conviction was not, courage failed, and truth  
 Was something to be doubted of. The mime  
 Changed masks, because a mime. The tide as smooth  
 In running in as out, no sense of crime  
 Because no sense of virtue,—sudden ruth  
 Seized on the people : they would have again  
 Their good Grand-duke and leave Guerazzi, though  
 He took that tax from Florence. “ Much in vain  
 He takes it from the market-carts, we trow,  
 While urgent that no market-men remain,  
 But all march off and leave the spade and plough,  
 To die among the Lombards. Was it thus  
 The dear paternal Duke did? Live the Duke ! ”  
 At which the joy-bells multitudinous,  
 Swept by an opposite wind, as loudly shook.  
 Call back the mild archbishop to his house,  
 To bless the people with his frightened look,—  
 He shall not yet be hanged, you comprehend !  
 Seize on Guerazzi ; guard him in full view,  
 Or else we stab him in the back, to end !  
 Rub out those chalked devices, set up new  
 The Duke's arms, doff your Phrygian caps, and mend  
 The pavement of the piazzas broke into  
 By barren poles of freedom : smooth the way  
 For the ducal carriage, lest his highness sigh  
 “ Here trees of liberty grew yesterday ! ”

"Long live the Duke!"—how roared the cannonry,  
 How rocked the bell-towers, and through thickening  
 spray  
 Of nosegays, wreaths, and kerchiefs tossed on high,  
 How marched the civic guard, the people still  
 Being good at shouts, especially the boys!  
 Alas, poor people, of an unfledged will  
 Most fitly expressed by such a callow voice!  
 Alas, still poorer Duke, incapable  
 Of being worthy even of so much noise!

You think he came back instantly, with thanks  
 And tears in his faint eyes, and hands extended  
 To stretch the franchise through their utmost ranks?  
 That having, like a father, apprehended,  
 He came to pardon fatherly those pranks  
 Played out and now in filial service ended?—  
 That some love-token, like a prince, he threw  
 To meet the people's love-call, in return?  
 Well, how he came I will relate to you;  
 And if your hearts should burn, why, hearts *must* burn,  
 To make the ashes which things old and new  
 Shall be washed clean in—as this Duke will learn.

From Casa Guidi windows gazing, then,  
 I saw and witness how the Duke came back.  
 The regular tramp of horse and tread of men  
 Did smite the silence like an anvil black  
 And sparkless. With her wide eyes at full strain,  
 Our Tuscan nurse exclaimed, "Alack, alack,  
 Signora! these shall be the Austrians." "Nay,  
 Be still," I answered, "do not wake the child!"  
 —For so, my two-months' baby sleeping lay  
 In milky dreams upon the bed and smiled,  
 And I thought, "he shall sleep on, while he may,



Through the world's baseness : not being yet defiled,  
 Why should he be disturbed by what is done ? ”  
 Then, gazing, I beheld the long-drawn street  
 Live out, from end to end, full in the sun,  
 With Austria's thousand ; sword and bayonet,  
 Horse, foot, artillery,—cannons rolling on  
 Like blind slow storm-clouds gestant with the heat  
 Of undeveloped lightnings, each bestrode  
 By a single man, dust-white from head to heel,  
 Indifferent as the dreadful thing he rode,  
 Like a sculptured Fate serene and terrible.  
 As some smooth river which has overflowed,  
 Will slow and silent down its current wheel  
 A loosened forest, all the pines erect,  
 So swept, in mute significance of storm,  
 The marshalled thousands ; not an eye deflect  
 To left or right, to catch a novel form  
 Of Florence city adorned by architect  
 And carver, or of Beauties live and warm  
 Scared at the casements,—all, straightforward eyes  
 And faces, held as steadfast as their swords,  
 And cognisant of acts, not imageries.  
 The key, O Tuscans, too well fits the wards !  
 Ye asked for mimes,—these bring you tragedies :  
 For purple,—these shall wear it as your lords.  
 Ye played like children,—die like innocents.  
 Ye mimicked lightnings with a torch,—the crack  
 Of the actual bolt, your pastime circumvents.  
 Ye called up ghosts, believing they were slack  
 To follow any voice from Gilboa's tents, . . .  
 Here's Samuel !—and, so, Grand-dukes come back !

And yet, they are no prophets though they come :  
 That awful mantle, they are drawing close,  
 Shall be searched, one day, by the shafts of Doom

Through double folds now hoodwinking the brows.

Resuscitated monarchs disentomb

Grave-reptiles with them, in their new life-throes.

Let such beware. Behold, the people waits,

Like God : as He, in His serene of might,

So they, in their endurance of long straits.

Ye stamp no nation out, though day and night

Ye tread them with that absolute heel which grates

And grinds them flat from all attempted height.

You kill worms sooner with a garden-spade

Than you kill peoples : peoples will not die ;

The tail curls stronger when you lop the head :

They writhe at every wound and multiply

And shudder into a heap of life that's made

Thus vital from God's own vitality.

'Tis hard to shrivel back a day of God's

Once fixed for judgment ; 'tis as hard to change

The peoples, when they rise beneath their loads

And heave them from their backs with violent wrench

To crush the oppressor : for that judgment-rod's

The measure of this popular revenge.

Meanwhile, from Casa Guidi windows, we

Beheld the armament of Austria flow

Into the drowning heart of Tuscany :

And yet none wept, none cursed, or, if 'twas so,

They wept and cursed in silence. Silently

Our noisy Tuscans watched the invading foe ;

They had learnt silence. Pressed against the wall,

And grouped upon the church-steps opposite,

A few pale men and women stared at all.

God knows what they were feeling, with their white

Constrained faces, they, so prodigal

Of cry and gesture when the world goes right,

Or wrong indeed. But here was depth of wrong,

And here, still water ; they were silent here ;

And through that sentient silence, struck along  
 That measured tramp from which it stood out clear,  
 Distinct the sound and silence, like a gong  
 At midnight, each by the other awfuller,—  
 While every soldier in his cap displayed  
 A leaf of olive. Dusty, bitter thing!  
 Was such plucked at Novara, is it said?

A cry is up in England, which doth ring  
 The hollow world through, that for ends of trade  
 And virtue and God's better worshipping,  
 We henceforth should exalt the name of Peace  
 And leave those rusty wars that eat the soul,—  
 Besides their clippings at our golden fleece.  
 I, too, have loved peace, and from bole to bole  
 Of immemorial undeciduous trees  
 Would write, as lovers use upon a scroll,  
 The holy name of Peace and set it high  
 Where none could pluck it down. On trees, I say,—  
 Not upon gibbets!—With the greenery  
 Of dewy branches and the flowery May,  
 Sweet mediation betwixt earth and sky  
 Providing, for the shepherd's holiday.  
 Not upon gibbets! though the vulture leaves  
 The bones to quiet, which he first picked bare.  
 Not upon dungeons! though the wretch who grieves  
 And groans within, less stirs the outer air  
 Than any little field-mouse stirs the sheaves.  
 Not upon chain-bolts! though the slave's despair  
 Has dulled his helpless miserable brain  
 And left him blank beneath the freeman's whip  
 To sing and laugh out idiocies of pain.  
 Nor yet on starving homes! where many a lip  
 Has sobbed itself asleep through curses vain.  
 I love no peace which is not fellowship

And which includes not mercy. I would have  
 Rather the raking of the guns across  
 The world, and shrieks against Heaven's architrave ;  
 Rather the struggle in the slippery fosse  
 Of dying men and horses, and the wave  
 Blood-bubbling. . . . Enough said!—by Christ's own  
 cross,

And by this faint heart of my womanhood,  
 Such things are better than a Peace that sits  
 Beside a hearth in self-commended mood,  
 And takes no thought how wind and rain by fits  
 Are howling out of doors against the good  
 Of the poor wanderer. What ! your peace admits  
 Of outside anguish while it keeps at home ?  
 I loathe to take its name upon my tongue.

'Tis nowise peace ; 'tis treason, stiff with doom,—  
 'Tis gagged despair and inarticulate wrong,  
 Annihilated Poland, stifled Rome,  
 Dazed Naples, Hungary fainting 'neath the thong,  
 And Austria wearing a smooth olive-leaf  
 On her brute forehead, while her hoofs outpress  
 The life from these Italian souls, in brief.  
 O Lord of Peace, who art Lord of Righteousness,  
 Constrain the anguished worlds from sin and grief,  
 Pierce them with conscience, purge them with redress  
 And give us peace which is no counterfeit !

But wherefore should we look out any more  
 From Casa Guidi windows ? Shut them straight,  
 And let us sit down by the folded door,  
 And veil our saddened faces and, so, wait  
 What next the judgment-heavens make ready for.  
 I have grown too weary of these windows. Sights  
 Come thick enough and clear enough in thought,  
 Without the sunshine ; souls have inner lights.

And since the Grand-duke has come back and brought  
 This army of the North which thus requites  
 His filial South, we leave him to be taught.

His South, too, has learnt something certainly,  
 Whereof the practice will bring profit soon ;

And peradventure other eyes may see,  
 From Casa Guidi windows, what is done  
 Or undone. Whatsoever deeds they be,  
 Pope Pius will be glorified in none.

Record that gain, Mazzini !—it shall top  
 Some heights of sorrow. Peter's rock, so named,  
 Shall lure no vessel any more to drop  
 Among the breakers. Peter's chair is shamed  
 Like any vulgar throne the nations lop  
 To pieces for their firewood unreclaimed,—

And, when it burns too, we shall see as well  
 In Italy as elsewhere. Let it burn.

The cross, accounted still adorable,  
 Is Christ's cross only !—if the thief's would earn  
 Some stealthy genuflexions, we rebel ;  
 And here the impenitent thief's has had its turn,  
 As God knows ; and the people on their knees  
 Scoff and toss back the crosiers stretched like yokes  
 To press their heads down lower by degrees.

So Italy, by means of these last strokes,  
 Escapes the danger which preceded these,  
 Of leaving captured hands in cloven oaks,—  
 Of leaving very souls within the buckle  
 Whence bodies struggled outward,—of supposing  
 That freemen may like bondsmen kneel and truckle  
 And then stand up as usual, without losing  
 An inch of stature.

Those whom she-wolves suckle  
 Will bite as wolves do in the grapple-closing

Of adverse interests. This at last is known  
 (Thank Pius for the lesson); that albeit  
 Among the popedom's hundred heads of stone  
 Which blink down on you from the roof's retreat  
 In Siena's tiger-striped cathedral, Joan  
 And Borgia 'mid their fellows you may greet,  
 A harlot and a devil,—you will see  
 Not a man, still less angel, grandly set  
 With open soul to render man more free.  
 The fishers are still thinking of the net,  
 And, if not thinking of the hook too, we  
 Are counted somewhat deeply in their debt;  
 But that's a rare case—so, by hook and crook  
 They take the advantage, agonising Christ  
 By rustier nails than those of Cedron's brook,  
 I' the people's body very cheaply priced,—  
 And quote high priesthood out of Holy book,  
 While buying death-fields with the sacrificed.

Priests, priests,—there's no such name!—God's own,  
 except  
 Ye take most vainly. Through heaven's lifted gate  
 The priestly ephod in sole glory swept  
 When Christ ascended, entered in, and sate  
 (With victor face sublimely overwept)  
 At Deity's right hand, to mediate  
 He alone, He for ever. On His breast  
 The Urim and the Thummim, fed with fire  
 From the full Godhead, flicker with the unrest  
 Of human pitiful heartbeats. Come up higher,  
 All Christians! Levi's tribe is dispossessed.  
 That solitary alb ye shall admire,  
 But not cast lots for. The last chrism, poured right,  
 Was on that Head, and poured for burial  
 And not for domination in men's sight.

What *are* these churches? The old temple-wall  
 Doth overlook them juggling with the sleight  
 Of surplice, candlestick and altar-pall;  
 East church and west church, ay, north church an  
 south  
 Rome's church and England's,—let them all repent,  
 And make concordats 'twixt their soul and mouth,  
 Succeed St. Paul by working at the tent,  
 Become infallible guides by speaking truth,  
 And excommunicate their pride that bent  
 And cramped the souls of men.

Why, even here

Priestcraft burns out, the twinèd linen blazes;  
 Not, like asbestos, to grow white and clear,  
 But all to perish!—while the fire-smell raises  
 To life some swooning spirits who, last year,  
 Lost breath and heart in these church-stifled places.  
 Why, almost, through this Pius, we believed  
 The priesthood could be an honest thing, he smiled  
 So saintly while our corn was being sheaved  
 For his own granaries! Showing now defiled  
 His hireling hands, a better help's achieved  
 Than if they blessed us shepherd-like and mild.  
 False doctrine, strangled by its own amen,  
 Dies in the throat of all this nation. Who  
 Will speak a pope's name as they rise again?  
 What woman or what child will count him true?  
 What dreamer, praise him with the voice or pen?  
 What man, fight for him?—Pius takes his due.

Record that gain, Mazzini!—Yes, but first  
 Set down thy people's faults; set down the want  
 Of soul-conviction; set down aims dispersed,  
 And incoherent means, and valour scant  
 Because of scanty faith, and schisms accursed

That wrench these brother-hearts from covenant  
 With freedom and each other. Set down this,  
 And this, and see to overcome it when  
 The seasons bring the fruits thou wilt not miss  
 If wary. Let no cry of patriot men  
 Distract thee from the stern analysis  
 Of masses who cry only! keep thy ken  
 Clear as thy soul is virtuous. Heroes' blood  
 Splashed up against thy noble brow in Rome;  
 Let such not blind thee to an interlude  
 Which was not also holy, yet did come  
 'Twi't sacramental actions,—brotherhood  
 Despised even there, and something of the doom  
 Of Remus in the trenches. Listen now—  
 Rossi died silent near where Cæsar died.

HE did not say, "My Brutus, is it thou?"  
 But Italy unquestioned testified,  
 "I killed him! I am Brutus.—I avow."  
 At which the whole world's laugh of scorn replied,  
 "A poor maimed copy of Brutus!"

Too much like,

Indeed, to be so unlike! too unskilled  
 At Philippi and the honest battle-pike,  
 To be so skilful where a man is killed  
 Near Pompey's statue, and the daggers strike  
 At unawares i' the throat. Was thus fulfilled  
 An omen once of Michel Angelo?—  
 When Marcus Brutus he conceived complete,  
 And strove to hurl him out by blow on blow  
 Upon the marble, at Art's thunderheat,  
 Till haply (some pre-shadow rising slow  
 Of what his Italy would fancy meet  
 To be called BRUTUS) straight his plastic hand  
 Fell back before his prophet-soul, and left  
 A fragment, a maimed Brutus,—but more grand



Than this, so named at Rome, was !

Let thy weft

Present one woof and warp, Mazzini ! Stand  
 With no man hankering for a dagger's heft,  
 No, not for Italy !—nor stand apart,  
 No, not for the republic !—from those pure  
 Brave men who hold the level of thy heart  
 In patriot truth, as lover and as doer,  
 Albeit they will not follow where thou art  
 As extreme theorist. Trust and distrust fewer ;  
 And so bind strong and keep unstained the cause  
 Which (God's sign granted) war-trumps newly blown  
 Shall yet announce to the world's applause.

But now, the world is busy ; it has grown  
 A Fair-going world. Imperial England draws  
 The flowing ends of the earth from Fez, Canton,  
 Delhi and Stockholm, Athens and Madrid,  
 The Russias and the vast Americas,  
 As if a queen drew in her robes amid  
 Her golden cincture,—isles, peninsulas,  
 Capes, continents, far inland countries hid  
 By jasper-sands and hills of chrysoptas,  
 All trailing in their splendours through the door  
 Of the gorgeous Crystal Palace. Every nation,  
 To every other nation strange of yore,  
 Gives face to face the civic salutation,  
 And holds up in a proud right hand before  
 That congress the best work which she can fashion  
 By her best means. "These corals, will you please  
 To match against your oaks? They grow as fast  
 Within my wilderness of purple seas."—  
 "This diamond stared upon me as I passed  
 (As a live god's eye from a marble frieze)  
 Along a dark of diamonds. Is it classed?"—

"I wove these stuffs so subtly that the gold  
Swims to the surface of the silk like cream  
And curdles to pair patterns. Ye behold!"—  
"These delicatest muslins rather seem  
Than be, you think? Nay, touch them and be bold,  
Though such veiled Chakhi's face in Hafiz' dream."—

"These carpets—you walk slow on them like kings,  
Inaudible like spirits, while your foot  
Dips deep in velvet roses and such things."—  
"Even Apollonius might commend this flute: <sup>1</sup>  
The music, winding through the stops, upsprings  
To make the player very rich: compute!"

"Here's goblet-glass, to take in with your wine  
The very sun its grapes were ripened under:  
Drink light and juice together, and each fine."—

"This model of a steamship moves your wonder?  
You should behold it crushing down the brine  
Like a blind Jove who feels his way with thunder."—

"Here's sculpture! Ah, *we* live too! why not throw  
Our life into our marbles? Art has place  
For other artists after Angelo."—

"I tried to paint out here a natural face;  
For nature includes Raffael, as we know,  
Not Raffael nature. Will it help my case?"—

"Methinks you will not match this steel of ours!"—  
"Nor you this porcelain! One might dream the clay  
Retained in it the larvæ of the flowers,  
They bud so, round the cup, the old Springway."—

"Nor you these carven woods, where birds in bowers  
With twisting snakes and climbing cupids, play."

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

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

What gifts for Christ, then, bring ye with the rest?  
 Your hands have worked well : is your courage spent  
 In handwork only ? Have you nothing best,  
 Which generous souls may perfect and present,  
 And He shall thank the givers for ? no light  
 Of teaching, liberal nations, for the poor  
 Who sit in darkness when it is not night ?  
 No cure for wicked children ? Christ,—no cure !  
 No help for women sobbing out of sight  
 Because men made the laws ? no brothel lure  
 Burnt out by popular lightnings ? Hast thou found  
 No remedy, my England, for such woes ?  
 No outlet, Austria, for the scourged and bound,  
 No entrance for the exiled ? no repose,  
 Russia, for knouted Poles worked underground,  
 And gentle ladies bleached among the snows ?  
 No mercy for the slave, America ?  
 No hope for Rome, free France, chivalric France ?  
 Alas, great nations have great shames, I say.  
 No pity, O world, no tender utterance  
 Of benediction, and prayers stretched this way  
 For poor Italia, baffled by mischance ?  
 O gracious nations, give some ear to me !  
 You all go to your Fair, and I am one  
 Who at the roadside of humanity  
 Beseech your alms,—God's justice to be done.  
 So, prosper !

In the name of Italy,  
 Meantime, her patriot Dead have benison.  
 They only have done well ; and, what they did  
 Being perfect, it shall triumph. Let them slumber :  
 No king of Egypt in a pyramid  
 Is safer from oblivion, though he number  
 Full seventy cerements for a coverlid.  
 These Dead be seeds of life, and shall encumber

The sad heart of the land until it loose  
 The clammy clods and let out the Spring-growth  
 In beatific green through every bruise.  
 The tyrant should take heed to what he doth,  
 Since every victim-carrion turns to use,  
 And drives a chariot, like a god made wroth,  
 Against each piled injustice. Ay, the least,  
 Dead for Italia, not in vain has died ;  
 Though many vainly, ere life's struggle ceased,  
 To mad dissimilar ends have swerved aside ;  
 Each grave her nationality has pieced  
 By its own majestic breadth, and fortified  
 And pinned it deeper to the soil. Forlorn  
 Of thanks be, therefore, no one of these graves !  
 Not Hers,—who, at her husband's side, in scorn,  
 Outfaced the whistling shot and hissing waves,  
 Until she felt her little babe unborn  
 Recoil, within her, from the violent staves  
 And bloodhounds of the world,—at which, her life  
 Dropt inwards from her eyes and followed it  
 Beyond the hunters. Garibaldi's wife  
 And child died so. And now, the seaweeds fit  
 Her body, like a proper shroud and coiñ,  
 And murmurously the ebbing waters grit  
 The little pebbles while she lies interred  
 In the sea-sand. Perhaps, ere dying thus,  
 She looked up in his face (which never stirred  
 From its clenched anguish) as to make excuse  
 For leaving him for his, if so she erred.  
 He well remembers that she could not choose.  
 A memorable grave ! Another is  
 At Genoa. There, a king may fitly lie,  
 Who, bursting that heroic heart of his  
 At lost Novara, that he could not die,  
 (Though thrice into the cannon's eyes for this

He plunged his shuddering steed, and felt the sky  
 Reel back between the fire-shocks) stripped away  
 The ancestral ermine ere the smoke had cleared,  
 And, naked to the soul, that none might say  
 His kingship covered what was base and bleared  
 With treason, went out straight an exile, yea,  
 An exiled patriot. Let him be revered.

Yea, verily, Charles Albert has died well ;  
 And if he lived not all so, as one spoke,  
 The sin pass softly with the passing-bell :  
 For he was shriven, I think, in cannon-smoke,  
 And, taking off his crown, made visible  
 A hero's forehead. Shaking Austria's yoke  
 He shattered his own hand and heart " So best,"  
 His last words were upon his lonely bed,  
 " I do not end like popes and dukes at least—  
 Thank God for it." And now that he is dead  
 Admitting it is proved and manifest  
 That he was worthy, with a discrowned head,  
 To measure heights with patriots, let them stand  
 Beside the man in his Oporto shroud,  
 And each vouchsafe to take him by the hand,  
 And kiss him on the cheek, and say aloud,—  
 "Thou, too, hast suffered for our native land !  
 My brother, thou art one of us ! be proud."

Still, graves, when Italy is talked upon.  
 Still, still, the patriot's tomb, the stranger's hate.  
 Still Niobe ! still fainting in the sun,  
 By whose most dazzling arrows violate  
 Her beauteous offspring perished ! has she won  
 Nothing but garlands for the graves, from Fate ?  
 Nothing but death-songs ?—Yes, be it understood  
 Life throbs in noble Piedmont ! while the feet

Of Rome's clay image, dabbled soft in blood,  
 Grow flat with dissolution and, as meet,  
 Will soon be shovelled off like other mud,  
 To leave the passage free in church and street.  
 And I, who first took hope up in this song,  
 Because a child was singing one . . . behold,  
 The hope and omen were not, haply, wrong !  
 Poets are soothsayers still, like those of old  
 Who studied flights of doves ; and creatures young  
 And tender, mighty meanings, may unfold.

The sun strikes, through the windows, up the floor ;  
 Stand out in it, my own young Florentine,  
 Not two years old, and let me see thee more !  
 It grows along thy amber curls, to shine  
 Brighter than elsewhere. Now, look straight before,  
 And fix thy brave blue English eyes on mine,  
 And from my soul, which fronts the future so,  
 With unabashed and unabated gaze,  
 Teach me to hope for, what the angels know  
 When they smile clear as thou dost. Down God's ways  
 With just alighted feet, between the snow  
 And snowdrops, where a little lamb may graze,  
 Thou hast no fear, my lamb, about the road,  
 Albeit in our vain-glory we assume  
 That, less than we have, thou hast learnt of God.  
 Stand out, my blue-eyed prophet !—thou, to whom  
 The earliest world-day light that ever flowed,  
 Through Casa Guidi windows chanced to come !  
 Now shake the glittering nimbus of thy hair,  
 And be God's witness that the elemental  
 New spring of life are gushing everywhere  
 To cleanse the water-courses, and prevent all  
 Concrete obstructions which infest the air !  
 That earth's alive, and gentle or ungentle

Motions within her, signify but growth!—  
The ground swells greenest o'er the labouring moles.

Howe'er the uneasy world is vexed and wroth,  
Young children, lifted high on parent souls,  
Look round them with a smile upon the mouth,  
And take for music every bell that tolls  
(WHO said we should be better if like these?)  
But *we* sit murmuring for the future though  
Posterity is smiling on our knees,  
Convicting us of folly. Let us go—  
We will trust God. The blank interstices  
Men take for ruins, He will build into  
With pillared marbles rare, or knit across  
With generous arches, till the fane's complete.  
This world has no perdition, if some loss.

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





POEMS BEFORE CONGRESS.



NAPOLEON III. IN ITALY.

I.

EMPEROR, Emperor !  
 From the centre to the shore,  
 From the Seine back to the Rhine,  
 Stood eight millions up and swore  
 By their manhood's right divine  
     So to elect and legislate,  
 This man should renew the line  
 Broken in a strain of fate  
 And leagued kings at Waterloo,  
 When the people's hands let go.  
     Emperor  
     Evermore.

II.

With a universal shout  
 They took the old regalia out  
 From an open grave that day ;  
 From a grave that would not close,  
 Where the first Napoleon lay  
     Expectant, in repose,  
 As still as Merlin, with his conquering face  
 Turned up in its unquenchable appeal  
 To men and heroes of the advancing race,—  
     Prepared to set the seal  
 Of what has been on what shall be.  
     Emperor  
     Evermore.

III.

The thinkers stood aside  
 To let the nation act.

Some hated the new-constituted fact  
 Of empire, as pride treading on their pride.  
 Some quailed, lest what was poisonous in the past  
 Should graft itself in that Druidic bough  
     On this green now.

Some cursed, because at last  
 The open heavens to which they had look'd in vain  
 For many a golden fall of marvellous rain  
     Were closed in brass; and some  
 Wept on because a gone thing could not come;  
 And some were silent, doubting all things for  
     That popular conviction,—evermore  
     Emperor.

## IV.

That day I did not hate  
 Nor doubt, nor quail nor curse.  
 I, reverencing the people, did not bate  
 My reverence of their deed and oracle,  
     Nor vainly prate  
     Of better and of worse  
 Against the great conclusion of their will.  
     And yet, O voice and verse,  
 Which God set in me to acclaim and sing  
 Conviction, exaltation, aspiration,  
 We gave no music to the patent thing,  
 Nor spared a holy rhythm to throb and swim  
     About the name of him  
 Translated to the sphere of domination  
     By democratic passion!  
     I was not used, at least,  
     Nor can be, now or then,  
     To stroke the ermine beast  
     On any kind of throne  
 (Though builded by a nation for its own),

And swell the surging choir for kings of men—  
 “ Emperor  
 Evermore.”

v.

But now, Napoleon, now  
 That, leaving far behind the purple throng  
 Of vulgar monarchs, thou  
 Tread'st higher in thy deed  
 Than stair of throne can lead,  
 To help in the hour of wrong  
 The broken hearts of nations to be strong,—  
 Now, lifted as thou art  
 To the level of pure song,  
 We stand to meet thee on these Alpine snows !  
 And while the palpitating peaks break out  
 Ecstatic from somnambular repose  
 With answers to the presence and the shout,  
 We, poets of the people, who take part  
 With elemental justice, natural right,  
 Join in our echoes also, nor refrain.  
 We meet thee, O Napoleon, at this height  
 At last, and find thee great enough to praise.  
 Receive the poet's chrism, which smells beyond  
 The priest's, and pass thy ways ;—  
 An English poet warns thee to maintain  
 God's word, not England's :—let His truth be true  
 And all men liars ! with His truth respond  
 To all men's lie. Exalt the sword and smite  
 On that long anvil of the Apennine  
 Where Austria forged the Italian chain in view  
 Of seven consenting nations, sparks of fine  
 Admonitory light,  
 Till men's eyes wink before convictions new.  
 Flash in God's justice to the world's amaze,

Sublime Deliverer!—after many days  
 Found worthy of the deed thou art come to do—  
 Emperor  
 Evermore.

## VI.

But Italy, my Italy,  
 Can it last, this gleam?  
 Can she live and be strong,  
 Or is it another dream  
 Like the rest we have dreamed so long?  
 And shall it, must it be,  
 That after the battle-cloud has broken  
 She will die off again  
 Like the rain,  
 Or like a poet's song  
 Sung of her, sad at the end  
 Because her name is Italy,—  
 Die and count no friend?  
 Is it true,—may it be spoken,—  
 That she who has lain so still,  
 With a wound in her breast,  
 And a flower in her hand,  
 And a grave-stone under her head,  
 While every nation at will  
 Beside her has dared to stand  
 And flout her with pity and scorn,  
 Saying, "She is at rest,  
 She is fair, she is dead,  
 And, leaving room in her stead  
 To Us who are later born,  
 This is certainly best!"  
 Saying, "Alas, she is fair,  
 Very fair, but dead,  
 And so we have room for the race."

—Can it be true, be true,  
That she lives anew?  
That she rises up at the shout of her sons,  
At the trumpet of France,  
And lives anew?—is it true  
That she has not moved in a trance,  
As in Forty-eight?  
When her eyes were troubled with blood  
Till she knew not friend from foe,  
Till her hand was caught in a strait  
Of her cerement and baffled so  
From doing the deed she would ;  
And her weak foot stumbled across  
The grave of a king,  
And down she dropt at heavy loss,  
And we gloomily covered her face and said,  
“ We have dreamed the thing ;  
She is not alive, but dead.”

## VII.

Now, shall we say  
Our Italy lives indeed?  
And if it were not for the beat and bray  
Of drum and trump of martial men,  
Should we feel the underground heave and strain.  
Where heroes left their dust as a seed  
Sure to emerge one day?  
And if it were not for the rhythmic march  
Of France and Piedmont's double hosts,  
Should we hear the ghosts  
Thrill through ruined aisle and arch,  
Throb along the frescoed wall,  
Whisper an oath by that divine  
They left in picture, book, and stone,  
That Italy is not dead at all?

Ay, if it were not for the tears in our eyes,  
 These tears of a sudden passionate joy,  
     Should we see her arise  
 From the place where the wicked are overthrown,  
     Italy, Italy? loosed at length  
     From the tyrant's thrall,  
 Pale and calm in her strength?  
 Pale as the silver cross of Savoy  
 When the hand that bears the flag is brave,  
 And not a breath is stirring, save  
     What is blown  
 Over the war-trump's lip of brass,  
 Ere Garibaldi forces the pass!

## VIII.

Ay, it is so, even so.  
 Ay, and it shall be so.  
 Each broken stone that long ago  
 She flung behind her as she went  
 In discouragement and bewilderment  
 Through the cairns of Time, and missed her way  
     Between to-day and yesterday,  
     Up springs a living man.  
 And each man stands with his face in the light  
     Of his own drawn sword,  
 Ready to do what a hero can.  
 Wall to sap, or river to ford,  
 Cannon to front, or foe to pursue,  
 Still ready to do, and sworn to be true,  
     As a man and a patriot can.  
 Piedmontese, Neapolitan,  
 Lombard, Tuscan, Romagnole,  
 Each man's body having a soul,—  
 Count how many they stand,  
 All of them sons of the land,



Every live man there  
 Allied to a dead man below,  
 And the deadest with blood to spare  
 To quicken a living hand  
 In case it should ever be slow.  
 Count how many they come  
 To the beat of Piedmont's drum,  
 With faces keener and grayer  
 Than swords of the Austrian slayer,  
 All set against the foe.

“ Emperor  
 Evermore.”

IX.

Out of the dust, where they ground them,  
 Out of the holes, where they dogged them,  
 Out of the hulks, where they wound them  
 In iron, tortured and flogged them ;  
 Out of the streets, where they chased them,  
 Taxed them and then bayoneted them,—  
 Out of the homes, where they spied on them  
 (Using their daughters and wives),  
 Out of the church, where they fretted them,  
 Rotted their souls and debased them,  
 Trained them to answer with knives,  
 Then cursed them all at their prayers !—  
 Out of cold lands, not theirs,  
 Where they exiled them, starved them, lied on them ;  
 Back they come like a wind, in vain  
 Cramped up in the hills, that roars its road  
 The stronger into the open plain ;  
 Or like a fire that burns the hotter  
 And longer for the crust of cinder,  
 Serving better the ends of the potter ;  
 Or like a restrained word of God,

Fulfilling itself by what seems to hinder.

“ Emperor  
Evermore.”

X.

Shout for France and Savoy !  
Shout for the helper and doer.  
Shout for the good sword's ring,  
Shout for the thought still truer.  
Shout for the spirits at large  
Who passed for the dead this spring,  
Whose living glory is sure.  
Shout for France and Savoy !  
Shout for the council and charge !  
Shout for the head of Cavour ;  
And shout for the heart of a King  
That's great with a nation's joy.  
Shout for France and Savoy !

XI.

Take up the child, Macmahon, though  
Thy hand be red  
From Magenta's dead,  
And riding on, in front of the troop,  
In the dust of the whirlwind of war  
Through the gate of the city of Milan, stoop  
And take up the child to thy saddle-bow,  
Nor fear the touch as soft as a flower  
Of his smile as clear as a star !  
Thou hast a right to the child, we say,  
Since the women are weeping for joy as those  
Who, by thy help and from this day,  
Shall be happy mothers indeed.  
They are raining flowers from terrace and roof :  
Take up the flower in the child.

While the shout goes up of a nation freed  
 And heroically self-reconciled,  
 Till the snow on that peaked Alp aloof  
 Starts, as feeling God's finger anew,  
 And all those cold white marble fires  
 Of mounting saints on the Duomo-spires  
 Flicker against the Blue.  
 "Emperor  
 Evermore."

XII.

Ay, it is He,  
 Who rides at the King's right hand !  
 Leave room to his horse and draw to the side,  
 Nor press too near in the ecstasy  
 Of a newly delivered impassioned land :  
     He is moved, you see,  
     He who has done it all.  
 They call it a cold stern face ;  
     But this is Italy  
 Who rises up to her place !—  
 For this he fought in his youth,  
 Of this he dreamed in the past ;  
 The lines of the resolute mouth  
 Tremble a little at last.  
 Cry, he has done it all !  
     "Emperor  
     Evermore."

XIII.

It is not strange that he did it,  
 Though the deed may seem to strain  
 To the wonderful, unpermitted,  
 For such as lead and reign.  
 But he is strange, this man :

The people's instinct found him  
 (A wind in the dark that ran  
 Through a chink where was no door),  
 And elected him and crowned him  
     Emperor  
     Evermore.

## XIV.

Autocrat? let them scoff,  
     Who fail to comprehend  
 That a ruler incarnate of  
     The people, must transcend  
 All common king-born kings.  
 These subterranean springs  
 A sudden outlet winning,  
 Have special virtues to spend.  
 The people's blood runs through him,  
 Dilates from head to foot,  
 Creates him absolute,  
 And from this great beginning  
 Evokes a greater end  
 To justify and renew him—  
     Emperor  
     Evermore.

## XV.

What! did any maintain  
 That God or the people (think !)  
 Could make a marvel in vain?—  
 Out of the water-jar there,  
 Draw wine that none could drink?  
 Is this a man like the rest,  
 This miracle, made unaware  
 By a rapture of popular air,  
 And caught to the place that was best?

You think he could barter and cheat  
 As vulgar diplomates use,  
 With the people's heart in his breast ?  
 Prate a lie into shape  
 Lest truth should cumber the road ;  
 Play at the fast and loose  
 Till the world is strangled with tape ;  
 Maim the soul's complete  
 To fit the hole of a toad ;  
 And filch the dogman's meat  
 To feed the offspring of God ?

## XVI.

Nay, but he, this wonder,  
 He cannot palter nor prate,  
 Though many around him and under,  
 With intellects trained to the curve,  
 Distrust him in spirit and nerve  
 Because his meaning is straight.  
 Measure him ere he depart  
 With those who have governed and led ;  
 Larger so much by the heart,  
 Larger so much by the head.  
     Emperor  
     Evermore.

## XVII.

He holds that, consenting or dissident,  
     Nations must move with the time ;  
 Assumes that crime with a precedent  
     Doubles the guilt of the crime ;  
 —Denies that a slaver's bond,  
     Or a treaty signed by knaves,  
 (*Quorum magna pars* and beyond

Was one of an honest name)  
 Gives an inexpugnable claim  
 To abolishing men into slaves.

Emperor  
 Evermore.

## XVIII.

He will not swagger nor boast  
 Of his country's meeds, in a tone  
 Missuiting a great man most  
 If such should speak of his own ;  
 Nor will he act, on her side,  
 From motives baser, indeed,  
 Than a man of a noble pride  
 Can avow for himself at need ;  
 Never, for lucre or laurels,  
 Or custom, though such should be rife,  
 Adapting the smaller morals  
 To measure the larger life.  
 He, though the merchants persuade,  
 And the soldiers are eager for strife,  
 Finds not his country in quarrels  
 Only to find her in trade,—  
 While still he accords her such honour  
 As never to flinch for her sake  
 Where men put service upon her,  
 Found heavy to undertake  
 And scarcely like to be paid :  
 Believing a nation may act  
 Unselfishly—shiver a lance  
 (As the least of her sons may, in fact)  
 And not for a cause of finance.

Emperor  
 Evermore.

## XIX.

Great is he,  
Who uses his greatness for all.  
His name shall stand perpetually  
As a name to applaud and cherish,  
Not only within the civic wall  
For the loyal, but also without  
For the generous and free.  
Just is he,  
Who is just for the popular due  
As well as the private debt.  
The praise of nations ready to perish  
Fall on him,—crown him in view  
Of tyrants caught in the net,  
And statesmen dizzy with fear and doubt!  
And though, because they are many,  
And he is merely one,  
And nations selfish and cruel  
Heap up the inquisitor's fuel  
To kill the body of high intents,  
And burn great deeds from their place,  
Till this, the greatest of any  
May seem imperfectly done;  
Courage, whoever circumvents!  
Courage, courage, whoever is base!  
The soul of a high intent, be it known,  
Can die no more than any soul  
Which God keeps by him under the throne  
And this, at whatever interim,  
Shall live, and be consummated  
Into the being of deeds made whole.  
Courage, courage! happy is he,  
Of whom (himself among the dead  
And silent), this word shall be said;

## THE DANCE.

—That he might have had the world with him,  
 But chose to side with suffering men,  
 And had the world against him when  
 He came to deliver Italy.

Emperor  
 Evermore.

## THE DANCE.

## I.

You remember down at Florence our Cascine,  
 Where the people on the feast-days walk and drive,  
 And, through the trees, long-drawn in many a green way,  
 O'er-roofing hum and murmur like a hive,  
 The river and the mountains look alive ?

## II.

You remember the piazzone there, the stand-place  
 Of carriages a-brim with Florence Beauties,  
 Who lean and melt to music as the band plays,  
 Or smile and chat with some one who a-foot is,  
 Or on horseback, in observance of male duties ?

## III.

'Tis so pretty, in the afternoons of summer,  
 So many gracious faces brought together !  
 Call it rout, or call it concert, they have come here,  
 In the floating of the fan and of the feather,  
 To reciprocate with beauty the fine weather.

## IV.

While the flower-girls offer nosegays (because *they* too  
 Go with other sweets) at every carriage-door ;



Here, by shake of a white finger, signed away to  
 Some next buyer, who sits buying score on score,  
 Piling roses upon roses evermore.

## v.

And last season, when the French camp had its station  
 In the meadow-ground, things quickened and grew gayer  
 Through the mingling of the liberating nation  
 With this people ; groups of Frenchmen everywhere,  
 Strolling, gazing, judging lightly . . . " who was fair."

## vi.

Then the noblest lady present took upon her  
 To speak nobly from her carriage for the rest ;  
 " Pray these officers from France to do us honour  
 By dancing with us straightway."—The request  
 Was gravely apprehended as addressed.

## vii.

And the men of France bareheaded, bowing lowly,  
 Led out each a proud signora to the space  
 Which the startled crowd had rounded for them—slowly,  
 Just a touch of still emotion in his face,  
 Not presuming, through the symbol, on the grace.

## viii.

There was silence in the people : some lips trembled,  
 But none jested. Broke the music, at a glance :  
 And the daughters of our princes, thus assembled,  
 Stepped the measure with the gallant sons of France.  
 Hush ! it might have been a Mass, and not a dance.

## ix.

And they danced there till the blue that overskied us  
 Swooned with passion, though the footing seemed sedate

And the mountains, heaving mighty hearts beside us,  
 Sighed a rapture in a shadow, to dilate,  
 And touch the holy stone where Dante sate.

## X.

Then the sons of France bareheaded, lowly bowing,  
 Led the ladies back where kinsmen of the south  
 Stood, received them ;—till, with burst of overflowing  
 Feeling . . . husbands, brothers, Florence's male youth,  
 Turned, and kissed the martial strangers mouth to mouth.

## XI.

And a cry went up, a cry from all that people !  
 —You have heard a people cheering, you suppose,  
 For the Member, mayor . . . with chorus from the steeple ?  
 This was different : scarce as loud perhaps (who knows ?)  
 For we saw wet eyes around us ere the close.

## XII.

And we felt as if a nation, too long borne in  
 By hard wrongers, comprehending in such attitude  
 That God had spoken somewhere since the morning,  
 That men were somehow brothers, by no platitude,  
 Cried exultant in great wonder and free gratitude.

## A TALE OF VILLAGRANCA.

TOLD IN TUSCANY.

## I.

My little son, my Florentine,  
 Sit down beside my knee,  
 And I will tell you why the sign  
 Of joy which flushed our Italy,

Has faded since but yesternight ;  
And why your Florence of delight  
Is mourning as you see.

## II.

A great man (who was crowned one day)  
Imagined a great Deed :  
He shaped it out of cloud and clay,  
He touched it finely till the seed  
Possessed the flower : from heart and brain  
He fed it with large thoughts humane,  
To help a people's need.

## III.

He brought it out into the sun—  
They blessed it to his face :  
“ O great pure Deed, that hast undone  
So many bad and base !  
O generous Deed, heroic Deed,  
Come forth, be perfected, succeed,  
Deliver by God's grace.”

## IV.

Then sovereigns, statesmen, north and south,  
Rose up in wrath and fear,  
And cried, protesting by one mouth,  
“ What monster have we here ?  
A great Deed at this hour of day ?  
A great just Deed—and not for pay ?  
Absurd,—or insincere.”

## V.

“ And if sincere, the heavier blow  
In that case we shall bear,

For where's our blessed 'status quo'  
 Our holy treaties, where,—  
 Our rights to sell a race, or buy,  
 Protect and pillage, occupy,  
 And civilise despair?"

## VI.

Some muttered that the great Deed meant  
 A great pretext to sin;  
 And others, the pretext, so lent,  
 Was heinous (to begin).  
 Volcanic terms of "great" and "just?"  
 Admit such tongues of flame, the crust  
 Of time and law falls in.

## VII.

A great Deed in this world of ours?  
 Unheard of the pretence is:  
 It threatens plainly the great Powers;  
 Is fatal in all senses.  
 A just deed in the world?—call out  
 The rifles! be not slack about  
 The national defences.

## VIII.

And many murmured, "From this source  
 What red blood must be poured!"  
 And some rejoined, "'Tis even worse;  
 What red tape is ignored!"  
 All cursed the Doer for an evil  
 Called here, enlarging on the Devil,—  
 There, monkeying the Lord!

## IX.

Some said, it could not be explained,  
 Some, could not be excused ;  
 And others, " Leave it unrestrained,  
 Gehenna's self is loosed."  
 And all cried, " Crush it, maim it, gag it !  
 Set dog-toothed lies to tear it ragged,  
 Truncated and traduced !"

## X.

But HE stood sad before the sun,  
 (The peoples felt their fate).  
 " The world is many,—I am one ;  
 My great Deed was too great.  
 God's fruit of justice ripens slow :  
 Men's souls are narrow ; let them grow.  
 My brothers, we must wait."

## XI.

The tale is ended, child of mine,  
 Turned graver at my knee.  
 They say your eyes, my Florentine,  
 Are English : it may be :  
 And yet I've marked as blue a pair  
 Following the doves across the square  
 At Venice by the sea.

## XII.

Ah, child ! ah, child ! I cannot say  
 A word more. You conceive  
 The reason now, why just to-day  
 We see our Florence grieve.  
 Ah child, look up into the sky !  
 In this low world, where great Deeds die,  
 What matter if we live ?

## A COURT LADY.

## I.

HER hair was tawny with gold, her eyes with purple were  
dark,  
Her cheeks' pale opal burnt with a red and restless spark.

## II.

Never was lady of Milan nobler in name and in race :  
Never was lady of Italy fairer to see in the face.

## III.

Never was lady on earth more true as woman and wife,  
Larger in judgment and instinct, prouder in manners and  
life.

## IV.

She stood in the early morning, and said to her maidens,  
"Bring  
That silken robe made ready to wear at the court of the  
king.

## V.

"Bring me the clasps of diamond, lucid, clear of the mote,  
Clasp me the large at the waist, and clasp me the small at  
the throat.

## VI.

"Diamonds to fasten the hair, and diamonds to fasten the  
sleeves,  
Laces to drop from their rays like a powder of snow from  
the eaves."

## VII.

Gorgeous she entered the sunlight which gathered her up  
in a flame,  
While, straight in her open carriage, she to the hospital  
came.

## VIII.

In she went at the door, and gazing from end to end,  
"Many and low are the pallets, but each is the place of a  
friend."

## IX.

Up she passed through the wards, and stood at a young  
man's bed :  
Bloody the band on his brow, and livid the droop of his  
head.

## X.

"Art thou a Lombard, my brother? Happy art thou," she  
cried,  
And smiled like Italy on him : he dreamed in her face and  
died.

## XI.

Pale with his passing soul, she went on still to a second :  
*He* was a grave hard man, whose years by dungeons were  
reckoned.

## XII.

Wounds in his body were sore, wounds in his life were  
sorer.  
"Art thou a Romagnole?" Her eyes drove lightnings  
before her.

## XIII.

“Austrian and priest had joined to double and tighten the  
cord  
Able to bind thee, O strong one,—free by the stroke of a  
sword.

## XIV.

“Now be grave for the rest of us, using the life over-  
cast  
To ripen our wine of the present (too new) in glooms of the  
past.”

## XV.

Down she stepped to a pallet where lay a face like a  
girl's  
Young, and pathetic with dying,—a deep black hole in the  
curls.

## XVI.

“Art thou from Tuscany, brother? and seest thou, dream-  
ing in pain,  
Thy mother stand in the piazza, searching the List of the  
slain?”

## XVII.

Kind as a mother herself, she touched his cheeks with her  
hands:  
“Blessed is she who has borne thee, although she should  
weep as she stands.”

## XVIII.

On she passed to a Frenchman, his arm carried off by a  
ball:  
Kneeling, . . . “O more than my brother! how shall I  
thank thee for all?”



## XIX.

“ Each of the heroes around us has fought for his land and  
line,  
But *thou* hast fought for a stranger, in hate of a wrong not  
thine.

## XX.

“ Happy are all free peoples, too strong to be dispossessed.  
But blessed are those among nations, who dare to be strong  
for the rest ! ”

## XXI.

Ever she passed on her way, and came to a couch where  
pined  
One with a face from Venetia, white with a hope out of  
mind.

## XXII.

Long she stood and gazed, and twice she tried at the name,  
But two great crystal tears were all that faltered and came.

## XXIII.

Only a tear for Venice ?—she turned as in passion and loss,  
And stooped to his forehead and kissed it, as if she were  
kissing the cross.

## XXIV.

Faint with that strain of heart she moved on then to  
another,  
Stern and strong in his death. “ And dost thou suffer, my  
brother ? ”

## XXV.

Holding his hands in hers :—“ Out of the Piedmont lion  
Cometh the sweetness of freedom ; sweetest to live or to  
die on.”

## XXVI.

Holding his cold rough hands,—“Well, oh, well have ye  
done  
In noble, noble Piedmont, who would not be noble alone.”

## XXVII.

Back he fell while she spoke. She rose to her feet with a  
spring,—  
“That was a Piedmontese! and this is the Court of the  
King.”

## AN AUGUST VOICE.

*Una voce augusta.*—MONITORE TOSCANO.

## I.

YOU'LL take back your Grand Duke?  
I made the treaty upon it.  
Just venture a quiet rebuke;  
Dall' Ongaro write him a sonnet;  
Ricasoli gently explain  
Some need of the constitution:  
He'll swear to it over again,  
Providing an “easy solution.”  
You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## II.

You'll take back your Grand Duke?  
I promised the Emperor Francis  
To argue the case by his book,  
And ask you to meet his advances.  
The Ducal cause, we know  
(Whether you or he be the wronger)  
Has very strong points;—although  
Your bayonets, there, have stronger.  
You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## III.

You'll take back your Grand Duke ?  
 He is not pure altogether.  
 For instance, the oath which he took  
 (In the Forty-eight rough weather)  
 He'd " nail your flag to his mast,"  
 Then softly scuttled the boat you  
 Hoped to escape in at last,  
 And both by a " *Proprio motu.*"  
 You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## IV.

You'll take back your Grand Duke ?  
 The scheme meets nothing to shock it  
 In this smart letter, look,  
 We found in Radetsky's pocket ;  
 Where his Highness in sprightly style  
 Of the flower of his Tuscans wrote,  
 " These heads be the hottest in file ;  
 Pray shoot them the quickest." Quote,  
 And call back the Grand Duke.

## V.

You'll take back your Grand Duke ?  
 There *are* some things to object to.  
 He cheated, betrayed, and forsook,  
 Then called in the foe to protect you.  
 He taxed you for wines and for meats  
 Throughout that eight years' pastime  
 Of Austria's drum in your streets—  
 Of course you remember the last time  
 You called back your Grand Duke.

## VI.

You'll take back the Grand Duke?  
 It is not race he is poor in,  
 Although he never could brook  
 The patriot cousin at Turin.  
 His love of kin you discern,  
 By his hate of your flag and me—  
 So decidedly apt to turn  
 All colours at sight of the Three.<sup>1</sup>  
 You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## VII.

You'll take back your Grand Duke?  
 'Twas weak that he fled from the Pitti;  
 But consider how little he shook  
 At thought of bombarding your city!  
 And, balancing that with this,  
 The Christian rule is plain for us;  
 . . . Or the Holy Father's Swiss  
 Have shot his Perugians in vain for us.  
 You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## VIII.

Pray take back your Grand Duke.  
 —I, too, have suffered persuasion.  
 All Europe, raven and rook,  
 Screeched at me armed for your nation.  
 Your cause in my heart struck spurs;  
 I swept such warnings aside for you:  
 My very child's eyes, and Hers,  
 Grew like my brother's who died for you.  
 You'll call back the Grand Duke?

<sup>1</sup> The Italian tricolor: red, green, and white.

## IX.

You'll take back your Grand Duke?

My French fought nobly with reason,—  
Left many a Lombardy nook

Red as with wine out of season.

Little we grudged what was done there,

Paid freely your ransom of blood :

Our heroes stark in the sun there,

We would not recall if we could.

You'll call back the Grand Duke?

## X.

You'll take back your Grand Duke?

His son rode fast as he got off

That day on the enemy's hook,

When *I* had an epaulette shot off.

Though splashed (as I saw him afar, no,

Near) by those ghastly rains,

The mark, when you've washed him in Arno,

Will scarcely be larger than Cain's.

You'll call back the Grand Duke.

## XI.

You'll take back your Grand Duke?

'Twill be so simple, quite beautiful :

The shepherd recovers his crook,

. . . If you should be sheep, and dutiful.

I spoke a word worth chalking

On Milan's wall—but stay,

Here's Poniatowsky talking,—

You'll listen to *him* to-day,

And call back the Grand Duke.

## XII.

You'll take back your Grand Duke ?  
 Observe, there's no one to force it,—  
 Unless the Madonna, St. Luke  
 Drew for you, choose to endorse it.  
*I* charge you by great St. Martino  
 And prodigies quickened by wrong,  
 Remember your Dead on Ticino ;  
 Be worthy, be constant, be strong.  
 —Bah !—call back the Grand Duke !!

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

*ὡς βασιλει, ὡς θεῷ, ὡς νεκρῷ.*—GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

## I.

THE Pope on Christmas Day  
 Sits in St. Peter's chair ;  
 But the peoples murmur and say,  
 " Our souls are sick and forlorn,  
 And who will show us where  
 Is the stable where Christ was born ? "

## II.

The star is lost in the dark ;  
 The manger is lost in the straw ;  
 The Christ cries faintly . . . hark ! . . .  
 Through bands that swaddle and strangle—  
 But the Pope in the chair of awe  
 Looks down the great quadrangle.

## III.

The magi kneel at his foot,  
 Kings of the east and west,

But, instead of the angels (mute  
 Is the "Peace on earth" of their song),  
 The peoples, perplexed and opprest,  
 Are sighing, "How long, how long?"

## IV.

And, instead of the kine, bewilder in  
 Shadow of aisle and dome,  
 The bear who tore up the children,  
 The fox who burnt up the corn,  
 And the wolf who suckled at Rome  
 Brothers to slay and to scorn.

## V.

Cardinals left and right of him,  
 Worshippers round and beneath,  
 The silver trumpets at sight of him  
 Thrill with a musical blast :  
 But the people say through their teeth,  
 "Trumpets? we wait for the Last!"

## VI.

He sits in the place of the Lord,  
 And asks for the gifts of the time ;  
 Gold, for the haft of a sword,  
 To win back Romagna averse,  
 Incense, to sweeten a crime,  
 And myrrh, to embitter a curse.

## VII.

Then a king of the west said, "Good }  
 I bring thee the gifts of the time :  
 Red, for the patriot's blood,  
 Green, for the martyr's crown,

White, for the dew and the rime,  
When the morning of God comes down."

## VIII.

—O mystic tricolor bright !  
The Pope's heart quailed like a man's :  
The cardinals froze at the sight,  
Bowing their tonsures hoary :  
And the eyes in the peacock-fans  
Winked at the alien glory.

## IX.

But the peoples exclaimed in hope,  
" Now blessed be he who has brought  
These gifts of the time to the Pope,  
When our souls were sick and forlorn.  
—And *here* is the star we sought,  
To show us where Christ was born !"

## ITALY AND THE WORLD.

## I.

FLORENCE, Bologna, Parma, Modena.  
When you named them a year ago,  
So many graves reserved by God, in a  
Day of judgment, you seemed to know,  
To open and let out the resurrection.

## II.

And meantime (you made your reflection  
If you were English), was nought to be done  
But sorting sables, in predilection  
For all those martyrs dead and gone,  
Till the new earth and heaven made ready.



## III.

And if your politics were not heady,  
 Violent, . . . "Good," you added, "good  
 In all things! mourn on sure and steady.  
 Churchyard thistles are wholesome food  
 For our European wandering asses.

## IV.

"The date of the resurrection passes  
 Human fore-knowledge: men unborn  
 Will gain by it (even in the lower classes),  
 But none of these. It is not the morn  
 Because the cock of France is crowing.

## V.

"Cocks crow at midnight, seldom knowing  
 Starlight from dawn-light: 'tis a mad  
 Poor creature." Here you paused, and growing  
 Scornful, . . . suddenly, let us add,  
 The trumpet sounded, the graves were open.

## VI.

Life and life and life! agropo in  
 The dusk of death, warm hands, stretched out  
 For swords, proved more life still to hope in,  
 Beyond and behind. Arise with a shout,  
 Nation of Italy, slain and buried!

## VII.

Hill to hill and turret to turret  
 Flashing the tricolor,—newly created  
 Beautiful Italy, calm, unhurried,  
 Rise heroic and renovated,  
 Rise to the final restitution.

## VIII.

Rise ; prefigure the grand solution  
 Of earth's municipal, insular schisms,—  
 Statesmen draping self-love's conclusion  
 In cheap, vernacular patriotisms,  
 Unable to give up Judæa for Jesus.

## IX.

Bring us the higher example ; release us  
 Into the larger coming time :  
 And into Christ's broad garment piece us  
 Rags of virtue as poor as crime,  
 National selfishness, civic vaunting.

## X.

No more Jew nor Greek then,—taunting  
 Nor taunted ;—no more England nor France !  
 But one confederate brotherhood planting  
 One flag only, to mark the advance,  
 Onward and upward, of all humanity.

## XI.

For civilisation perfected  
 Is fully developed Christianity.  
 "Measure the frontier," shall it be said,  
 "Count the ships," in national vanity ?  
 —Count the nation's heart-beats sooner.

## XII.

For, though behind by a cannon or schooner,  
 That nation still is predominant,  
 Whose pulse beats quickest in zeal to oppugn or  
 Succour another, in wrong or want,  
 Passing the frontier in love and abhorrence.

## XIII.

Modena, Parma, Bologna, Florence,  
Open us out the wider way!  
Dwarf in that chapel of old St. Lawrence  
Your Michel Angelo's giant Day,  
With the grandeur of this Day breaking o'er us!

## XIV.

Ye who, restrained as an ancient chorus,  
Mute while the coryphæus spake,  
Hush your separate voices before us,  
Sink your separate lives for the sake  
Of one sole Italy's living for ever!

## XV.

Givers of coat and cloak too,—never  
Grudging that purple of yours at the best,—  
By your heroic will and endeavour  
Each sublimely dispossessed,  
That all may inherit what each surrenders!

## XVI.

Earth shall bless you, O noble emenders  
On egotist nations! Ye shall lead  
The plough of the world, and sow new splendours  
Into the furrow of things, for seed,—  
Ever the richer for what ye have given.

## XVII.

Lead us and teach us, till earth and heaven  
Grow larger around us and higher above.  
Our sacrament-bread has a bitter leaven;  
We bait our traps with the name of love,  
Till hate itself has a kinder meaning.

## XVIII.

Oh, this world : this cheating and screening  
 Of cheats ! this conscience for candle-wicks,  
 Not beacon-fires ! this over-weening  
 Of under-hand diplomatical tricks,  
 Dared for the country while scorned for the counter !

## XIX.

Oh, this envy of those who mount here,  
 And oh, this malice to make them trip !  
 Rather quenching the fire there, drying the fount here,  
 To frozen body and thirsty lip,  
 Than leave to a neighbour their ministration.

## XX.

I cry aloud in my poet-passion,  
 Viewing my England o'er Alp and sea.  
 I loved her more in her ancient fashion :  
 She carries her rifles too thick for me,  
 Who spares them so in the cause of a brother.

## XXI.

Suspicion, panic ? end this pother.  
 The sword, kept sheathless at peace-time, rusts.  
 None fears for himself while he feels for another :  
 The brave man either fights or trusts,  
 And wears no mail in his private chamber.

## XXII.

Beautiful Italy ! golden amber  
 Warm with the kisses of lover and traitor !  
 Thou who hast drawn us on to remember,  
 Draw us to hope now : let us be greater  
 By this new future than that old story.

## XXIII.

Till truer glory replaces all glory,  
 As the torch grows blind at the dawn of day;  
 And the nations, rising up, their sorry  
 And foolish sins shall put away,  
 As children their toys when the teacher enters.

## XXIV.

Till Love's one centre devour these centres  
 Of many self-loves; and the patriot's trick  
 To better his land by egotist ventures,  
 Defamed from a virtue, shall make men sick,  
 As the scalp at the belt of some red hero.

## XXV.

For certain virtues have dropped to zero,  
 Left by the sun on the mountain's dewy side;  
 Churchman's charities, tender as Nero,  
 Indian suttee, heathen suicide,  
 Service to rights divine, proved hollow:

## XXVI.

And Heptarchy patriotisms must follow.  
 —National voices, distinct yet dependent,  
 Ensphering each other, as swallow does swallow,  
 With circles still widening and ever ascendant,  
 In multiform life to united progression,—

## XXVII.

These shall remain. And when, in the session  
 Of nations, the separate language is heard,  
 Each shall aspire, in sublime indiscretion,  
 To help with a thought or exalt with a word  
 Less her own than her rival's honour.

## XXVIII.

Each Christian nation shall take upon her  
 The law of the Christian man in vast :  
 The crown of the getter shall fall to the donor,  
 And last shall be first while first shall be last,  
 And to love best shall still be, to reign unsurpassed.

## A CURSE FOR A NATION.

## PROLOGUE.

I HEARD an angel speak last night,  
 And he said, "Write !  
 Write a Nation's curse for me,  
 And send it over the Western Sea."

I faltered, taking up the word :  
 "Not so, my lord !  
 If curses must be, choose another  
 To send thy curse against my brother.

"For I am bound by gratitude,  
 By love and blood,  
 To brothers of mine across the sea,  
 Who stretch out kindly hands to me.

"Therefore," the voice said, "shalt thou write  
 My curse to-night.  
 From the summits of love a curse is driven,  
 As lightning is from the tops of heaven."

"Not so," I answered. "Evermore  
 My heart is sore  
 From my own land's sins : for little feet  
 Of children bleeding along the street :

“ For parked-up honours that gainsay  
 The right of way :  
 For almsgiving through a door that is  
 Not open enough for two friends to kiss :

“ For love of freedom which abates  
 Beyond the Straits :  
 For patriot virtue starved to vice on  
 Self-praise, self-interest, and suspicion :

“ For an oligarchic parliament,  
 And bribes well-meant.  
 What curse to another land assign,  
 When heavy-souled for the sins of mine ? ”

“ Therefore,” the voice said, “ shalt thou write  
 My curse to-night.  
 Because thou hast strength to see and hate  
 A foul thing done *within* thy gate.”

“ Not so,” I answered once again.  
 “ To curse, choose men.  
 For I, a woman, have only known  
 How the heart melts and the tears run down.”

“ Therefore,” the voice said, “ shalt thou write  
 My curse to-night.  
 Some women weep and curse, I say  
 (And no one marvels) night and day.

“ And thou shalt take their part to-night,  
 Weep and write.  
 A curse from the depths of womanhood  
 Is very salt, and bitter, and good.”

So thus I wrote, and mourned indeed,  
 What all may read.  
 And thus, as was enjoined on me,  
 I send it over the Western Sea.

### THE CURSE.

#### I.

BECAUSE ye have broken your own chain  
 With the strain  
 Of brave men climbing a Nation's height,  
 Yet thence bear down with brand and thong  
 On souls of others,—for this wrong  
 This is the curse. Write.

Because yourselves are standing straight  
 In the state  
 Of Freedom's foremost acolyte,  
 Yet keep calm footing all the time  
 On writhing bond-slaves,—for this crime  
 This is the curse. Write.

Because ye prosper in God's name,  
 With a claim  
 To honour in the old world's sight,  
 Yet do the fiend's work perfectly  
 In strangling martyrs,—for this lie  
 This is the curse. Write.

#### II.

Ye shall watch while kings conspire  
 Round the people's smouldering fire,  
 And, warm for your part,  
 Shall never dare—O shame!



To utter the thought into flame  
Which burns at your heart.  
This is the curse. Write.

Ye shall watch while nations strive  
With the bloodhounds, die or survive,  
Drop faint from their jaws,  
Or throttle them backward to death,  
And only under your breath  
Shall favour the cause.  
This is the curse. Write.

Ye shall watch while strong men draw  
The nets of feudal law  
To strangle the weak,  
And, counting the sin for a sin,  
Your soul shall be sadder within  
Than the word ye shall speak.  
This is the curse. Write.

When good men are praying erect  
That Christ may avenge his elect  
And deliver the earth,  
The prayer in your ears, said low,  
Shall sound like the tramp of a foe  
That's driving you forth.  
This is the curse. Write.

When wise men give you their praise,  
They shall pause in the heat of the phrase,  
As if carried too far.  
When ye boast your own charters kept true,  
Ye shall blush ;—for the thing which ye do  
Derides what ye are.  
This is the curse. Write.

When fools cast taunts at your gate,  
Your scorn ye shall somewhat abate  
As ye look o'er the wall,  
For your conscience, tradition, and name  
Explode with a deadlier blame  
Than the worst of them all.

This is the curse. Write.

Go, wherever ill deeds shall be done,  
Go, plant your flag in the sun  
Beside the ill-doers!  
And recoil from clenching the curse  
Of God's witnessing Universe  
With a curse of yours.

THIS is the curse. Write.

LAST POEMS.

LAST FOLIOS

## LITTLE MATTIE.

## I.

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

## II.

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

## III.

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

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

## IV.

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

## V.

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

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

## VI.

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

## VII.

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

## A FALSE STEP.

## I.

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

## II.

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

## III.

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

## IV.

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

## V.

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



## VI.

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

## VOID IN LAW.

## I.

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

## II.

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

## III.

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

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

## IV.

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

## V.

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

## VI.

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

## VII.

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

Yes, Cæsar's—but not in our case.

Let him learn we are waiting before  
The grave's mouth, the heaven's gate, God's face,  
With implacable love evermore.  
Sleep.

## VIII.

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

## IX.

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

## X.

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

## XI.

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

## LORD WALTER'S WIFE.

## I.

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

## II.

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

## III.

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

## IV.

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

## V.

"Oh, that," she said, "is no reason. You smell a rose through a fence :

If two should smell it, what matter? who grumbles, and where's the pretence?"

## VI.

"But I," he replied, "have promised another, when love was free,

To love her alone, alone, who alone and afar loves me."

## VII.

"Why, that," she said, "is no reason. Love's always free, I am told.

Will you vow to be safe from the headache on Tuesday, and think it will hold?"

## VIII.

"But you," he replied, "have a daughter, a young little child, who was laid

In your lap to be pure; so I leave you: the angels would make me afraid."

## IX.

"Oh, that," she said, "is no reason. The angels keep out of the way;

And Dora, the child, observes nothing, although you should please me and stay."

## X.

At which he rose up in his anger,—“Why, now, you no longer are fair!

Why, now, you no longer are fatal, but ugly and hateful, I swear.”

## XI.

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

## XII.

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

## XIII.

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

## XIV.

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

## XV.

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

## XVI.

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

## XVII.

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

## XVIII.

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

## XIX.

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

## XX.

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

## XXI.

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

## XXII.

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

## XXIII.

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

## XXIV.

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

## XXV.

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

## XXVI.

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

## XXVII.

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



BIANCA AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES.

I.

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

II.

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

III.

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

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

## IV.

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

## V.

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

## VI.

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

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

## VII.

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

## VIII.

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

## IX.

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

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

## X.

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

## XI.

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

## XII.

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

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

XIII.

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

XIV.

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

XV.

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

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

## XVI.

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

## MY KATE.

## I.

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

## II.

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

## III.

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

## IV.

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

## V.

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

## VI.

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

## VII.

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

## VIII.

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

## A SONG

## FOR

## THE RAGGED SCHOOLS OF LONDON.

## WRITTEN IN ROME.

## I.

I AM listening here in Rome.

“England’s strong,” say many speakers,  
 “If she winks, the Czar must come,  
 Prow and topsail, to the breakers.”

## II.

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

## III.

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



## IV.

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

## V.

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

## VI.

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

## VII.

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

## VIII.

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

## IX.

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

You have cannons on your shore,  
And free Parliaments in London,

## X.

Princes' parks, and merchants' homes,  
Tents for soldiers, ships for seamen,—  
Ay, but ruins worse than Rome's  
In your pauper men and women.

## XI.

Women, leering through the gas,  
(Just such bosoms used to nurse you)  
Men, turned wolves by famine—pass!  
Those can speak themselves, and curse you.

## XII.

But these others—children small,  
Spilt like blots about the city,  
Quay, and street, and palace-wall—  
Take them up into your pity!

## XIII.

Ragged children with bare feet,  
Whom the angels in white raiment  
Know the names of, to repeat  
When they come on you for payment.

## XIV.

Ragged children, hungry-eyed,  
Huddled up out of the coldness  
On your doorsteps, side by side,  
Till your footman damns their boldness.

## XV.

In the alleys, in the squares,  
    Begging, lying little rebels ;  
In the noisy thoroughfares,  
    Struggling on with piteous trebles.

## XVI.

Patient children—think what pain  
    Makes a young child patient—ponder !  
Wronged too commonly to strain  
    After right, or wish, or wonder.

## XVII.

Wicked children, with peaked chins,  
    And old foreheads ! there are many  
With no pleasures except sins,  
    Gambling with a stolen penny.

## XVIII.

Sickly children, that whine low  
    To themselves and not their mothers,  
From mere habit,—never so  
    Hoping help or care from others.

## XIX.

Healthy children, with those blue  
    English eyes, fresh from their Maker,  
Fierce and ravenous, staring through  
    At the brown loaves of the baker.

## XX.

I am listening here in Rome,  
    And the Romans are confessing,

“English children pass in bloom  
All the prettiest made for blessing.

## XXI.

“*Angli angeli!*” (resumed  
From the mediæval story)  
“Such rose angelhoods, emplumed  
In such ringlets of pure glory!”

## XXII.

Can we smooth down the bright hair,  
O my sisters, calm, unthrilled in  
Our heart's pulses? Can we bear  
The sweet looks of our own children,

## XXIII.

While those others, lean and small,  
Scurf and mildew of the city,  
Spot our streets, convict us all  
Till we take them into pity?

## XXIV.

“Is it our fault?” you reply,  
“When, throughout civilisation,  
Every nation's empery  
Is asserted by starvation?”

## XXV.

“All these mouths we cannot feed,  
And we cannot clothe these bodies.”  
Well, if man's so hard indeed,  
Let them learn at least what God is!

## XXVI.

Little outcasts from life's fold,  
 The grave's hope they may be joined in,  
 By Christ's covenant consoled  
 For our social contract's grinding.

## XXVII.

If no better can be done,  
 Let us do but this,—endeavour  
 That the sun behind the sun  
 Shine upon them while they shiver!

## XXVIII.

On the dismal London flags,  
 Through the cruel social juggle,  
 Put a thought beneath their rags  
 To ennoble the heart's struggle.

## XXIX.

O my sisters, not so much  
 Are we asked for—not a blossom  
 From our children's nosegay, such  
 As we gave it from our bosom,—

## XXX.

Not the milk left in their cup,  
 Not the lamp while they are sleeping,  
 Not the little cloak hung up  
 While the coat's in daily keeping,—

## XXXI.

But a place in RAGGED SCHOOLS,  
 Where the outcasts may to-morrow

## MAY'S LOVE.

Learn by gentle words and rules  
Just the uses of their sorrow.

## XXXII.

O my sisters! children small,  
Blue-eyed, wailing through the city—  
Our own babes cry in them all :  
Let us take them into pity.

## MAY'S LOVE.

## I.

You love all, you say,  
Round, beneath, above me :  
Find me then some way  
Better than to love me,  
Me, too, dearest May !

## II.

O world-kissing eyes  
Which the blue heavens melt to :  
I, sad, otherwise,  
Loathe the sweet looks dealt to  
All things—men and flies.

## III.

You love all, you say :  
Therefore, Dear, abate me  
Just your love, I pray !  
Shut your eyes and hate me—  
Only *me*—fair May !

## AMY'S CRUELTY.

## I.

FAIR Amy of the terraced house,  
Assist me to discover  
Why you who would not hurt a mouse  
Can torture so your lover.

## II.

You give your coffee to the cat,  
You stroke the dog for coming,  
And all your face grows kinder at  
The little brown bee's humming.

## III.

But when *he* haunts your door . . . the town  
Marks coming and marks going . . .  
You seem to have stitched your eyelids down  
To that long piece of sewing !

## IV.

You never give a look, not you,  
Nor drop him a "Good morning,"  
To keep his long day warm and blue,  
So fretted by your scorning.

## V.

She shook her head—"The mouse and bee  
For crumb or flower will linger :  
The dog is happy at my knee,  
The cat purrs at my finger.

## VI.

“But *he* . . . to *him*, the least thing given  
Means great things at a distance ;  
He wants my world, my sun, my heaven,  
Soul, body, whole existence.

## VII.

“They say love gives as well as takes ;  
But I'm a simple maiden,—  
My mother's first smile when she wakes  
I still have smiled and prayed in.

## VIII.

“I only know my mother's love  
Which gives all and asks nothing ;  
And this new loving sets the groove  
Too much the way of loathing.

## IX.

“Unless he gives me all in change,  
I forfeit all things by him :  
The risk is terrible and strange—  
I tremble, doubt, . . . deny him.

## X.

“He's sweetest friend or hardest foe,  
Best angel or worst devil ;  
I either hate or . . . love him so,  
I can't be merely civil !

## XI.

“You trust a woman who puts forth  
Her blossoms thick as summer's ?



You think she dreams what love is worth,  
Who casts it to new-comers?

## XII.

"Such love 's a cowslip-ball to fling,  
A moment's pretty pastime ;  
*I* give . . . all me, if anything,  
The first time and the last time.

## XIII.

"Dear neighbour of the trellised house,  
A man should murmur never,  
Though treated worse than dog and mouse,  
Till doated on for ever !"

## MY HEART AND I.

## I.

ENOUGH! we're tired, my heart and I.  
We sit beside the headstone thus,  
And wish that name were carved for us.  
The moss reprints more tenderly  
The hard types of the mason's knife,  
As heaven's sweet life renews earth's life  
With which we're tired, my heart and I.

## II.

You see we're tired, my heart and I.  
We dealt with books, we trusted men,  
And in our own blood drenched the pen,

As if such colours could not fly.  
 We walked too straight for fortune's end,  
 We loved too true to keep a friend ;  
 At last we're tired, my heart and I.

## III.

How tired we feel, my heart and I !  
 We seem of no use in the world ;  
 Our fancies hang gray and uncurled  
 About men's eyes indifferently ;  
 Our voice which thrilled you so, will let  
 You sleep ; our tears are only wet :  
 What do we here, my heart and I ?

## IV.

So tired, so tired, my heart and I !  
 It was not thus in that old time  
 When Ralph sat with me 'neath the lime  
 To watch the sunset from the sky.  
 " Dear love, you're looking tired," he said ;  
 I, smiling at him, shook my head :  
 'Tis now we're tired, my heart and I.

## V.

So tired, so tired, my heart and I !  
 Though now none takes me on his arm  
 To fold me close and kiss me warm  
 Till each quick breath end in a sigh  
 Of happy languor. Now, alone,  
 We lean upon this graveyard stone,  
 Uncheered, unloved, my heart and I.

## VI.

Tired out we are, my heart and I.  
Suppose the world brought diadems  
To tempt us, crusted with loose gems  
Of powers and pleasures? Let it try.  
We scarcely care to look at even  
A pretty child, or God's blue heaven,  
We feel so tired, my heart and I.

## VII.

Yet who complains? My heart and I?  
In this abundant earth no doubt  
Is little room for things worn out:  
Disdain them, break them, throw them by!  
And if before the days grew rough  
We *once* were loved, used,—well enough,  
I think, we've fared, my heart and I.

## THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD.

WHAT'S the best thing in the world ?  
June-rose, by May-dew impearled ;  
Sweet south-wind, that means no rain ;  
Truth, not cruel to a friend ;  
Pleasure, not in haste to end ;  
Beauty, not self-decked and curled  
Till its pride is over-plain ;  
Light, that never makes you wink ;  
Memory, that gives no pain ;  
Love, when, *so*, you're loved again.  
What's the best thing in the world ?  
—Something out of it, I think.

## WHERE'S AGNES?

## I.

NAY, if I had come back so,  
And found her dead in her grave,  
And if a friend I know  
Had said, "Be strong, nor rave :  
She lies there, dead below ;

## II.

"I saw her, I who speak,  
White, stiff, the face one blank :  
The blue shade came to her cheek  
Before they nailed the plank,  
For she had been dead a week."

## III.

Why, if he had spoken so,  
I might have believed the thing,  
Although her look, although  
Her step, laugh, voice's ring  
Lived in me still as they do.

## IV.

But dead that other way,  
Corrupted thus and lost ?  
That sort of worm in the clay ?  
I cannot count the cost,  
That I should rise and pay.

## V.

My Agnes false ? such shame ?  
 She ? Rather be it said  
 That the pure saint of her name  
 Has stood there in her stead,  
 And tricked you to this blame.

## VI.

Her very gown, her cloak  
 Fell chastely : no disguise,  
 But expression ! while she broke  
 With her clear gray morning-eyes  
 Full upon me and then spoke.

## VII.

She wore her hair away  
 From her forehead,—like a cloud  
 Which a little wind in May  
 Peels off finely : disallowed  
 Though bright enough to stay.

## VIII.

For the heavens must have the place  
 To themselves, to use and shine in,  
 As her soul would have her face  
 To press through upon mine, in  
 That orb of angel grace.

## IX.

Had she any fault at all,  
 'Twas having none, I thought too—

There seemed a sort of thrall ;  
 As she felt her shadow ought to  
 Fall straight upon the wall.

## X.

Her sweetness strained the sense  
 Of common life and duty ;  
 And every day's expense  
 Of moving in such beauty  
 Required, almost, defence.

## XI.

What good, I thought, is done  
 By such sweet things, if any ?  
 This world smells ill i' the sun  
 Though the garden-flowers are many,—  
*She* is only one.

## XII.

Can a voice so low and soft  
 Take open actual part  
 With Right,—maintain aloft  
 Pure truth in life or art,  
 Vexed always, wounded oft?—

## XIII.

*She* fit, with that fair pose  
 Which melts from curve to curve,  
 To stand, run, work with those  
 Who wrestle and deserve,  
 And speak plain without glose ?

## XIV.

But I turned round on my fear  
 Defiant, disagreeing—  
 What if God has set her here  
 Less for action than for Being?—  
 For the eye and for the ear.

## XV.

Just to show what beauty may,  
 Just to prove what music can,—  
 And then to die away  
 From the presence of a man,  
 Who shall learn, henceforth, to pray?

## XVI.

As a door, left half ajar  
 In heaven, would make him think  
 How heavenly-different are  
 Things glanced at through the chink,  
 Till he pined from near to far.

## XVII.

That door could lead to hell?  
 That shining merely meant  
 Damnation? What! She fell  
 Like a woman, who was sent  
 Like an angel, by a spell?

## XVIII.

She, who scarcely trod the earth,  
 Turned mere dirt? My Agnes,—mine!



Called so ! felt of too much worth  
 To be used so ! too divine  
 To be breathed near, and so forth !

## XIX.

Why, I dared not name a sin  
 In her presence : I went round,  
 Clipped its name and shut it in  
 Some mysterious crystal sound,—  
 Changed the dagger for the pin.

## XX.

Now you name herself *that word* ?  
 O my Agnes ! O my saint !  
 Then the great joys of the Lord  
 Do not last ? Then all this paint  
 Runs off nature ? leaves a board ?

## XXI.

Who's dead here ? No, not she :  
 Rather I ! or whence this damp  
 Cold corruption's misery ?  
 While my very mourners stamp  
 Closer in the clods on me.

## XXII.

And my mouth is full of dust  
 Till I cannot speak and curse—  
 Speak and damn him . . . " Blame's unjust " ?  
 Sin blots out the universe,  
 All because she would and must ?

## XXIII.

She, my white rose, dropping off  
The high rose-tree branch ! and not  
That the night-wind blew too rough,  
Or the noon-sun burnt too hot,  
But, that being a rose—'twas enough !

## XXIV.

Then henceforth, may earth grow trees !  
No more roses !—hard straight lines  
To score lies out ! none of these  
Fluctuant curves, but firs and pines,  
Poplars, cedars, cypresses !

## DE PROFUNDIS.

## I.

THE face which, duly as the sun,  
Rose up for me with life begun,  
To mark all bright hours of the day  
With hourly love, is dimmed away,—  
And yet my days go on, go on.

## II.

The tongue which, like a stream, could run  
Smooth music from the roughest stone,  
And every morning with "Good day"  
Make each day good, is hushed away,—  
And yet my days go on, go on.

## III.

The heart which, like a staff, was one  
For mine to lean and rest upon,  
The strongest on the longest day  
With steadfast love, is caught away,—  
And yet my days go on, go on.

## IV.

And cold before my summer 's done,  
And deaf in Nature's general tune,  
And fallen too low for special fear,  
And here, with hope no longer here,—  
While the tears drop, my days go on.

## v.

The world goes whispering to its own,  
 "This anguish pierces to the bone;"  
 And tender friends go sighing round,  
 "What love can ever cure this wound?"  
 My days go on, my days go on.

## vi.

The past rolls forward on the sun  
 And makes all night. O dreams begun,  
 Not to be ended! Ended bliss,  
 And life that will not end in this!  
 My days go on, my days go on.

## vii.

Breath freezes on my lips to moan:  
 As one alone, once not alone,  
 I sit and knock at Nature's door,  
 Heart-bare, heart-hungry, very poor,  
 Whose desolated days go on.

## viii.

I knock and cry,—Undone, undone!  
 Is there no help, no comfort,—none?  
 No gleaning in the wide wheat-plains  
 Where others drive their loaded wains?  
 My vacant days go on, go on.

## ix.

This Nature, though the snows be down,  
 Thinks kindly of the bird of June:

The little red hip on the tree  
Is ripe for such. What is for me,  
Whose days so winterly go on?

## X.

No bird am I, to sing in June,  
And dare not ask an equal boon.  
Good nests and berries red are Nature's  
To give away to better creatures,—  
And yet my days go on, go on.

## XI.

*I* ask less kindness to be done,—  
Only to loose these pilgrim-shoon,  
(Too early worn and grimed) with sweet  
Cool deathly touch to these tired feet,  
Till days go out which now go on.

## XII.

Only to lift the turf unmown  
From off the earth where it has grown,  
Some cubit-space, and say, "Behold,  
Creep in, poor Heart, beneath that fold,  
Forgetting how the days go on."

## XIII.

What harm would that do? Green anon  
The sward would quicken, overshone  
By skies as blue; and crickets might  
Have leave to chirp there day and night  
While my new rest went on, went on.

## XIV.

From gracious Nature have I won  
 Such liberal bounty? may I run  
 So, lizard-like, within her side,  
 And there be safe, who now am tried  
 By days that painfully go on?

## XV.

—A Voice reproves me thereupon,  
 More sweet than Nature's when the drone  
 Of bees is sweetest and more deep  
 Than when the rivers overleap  
 The shuddering pines, and thunder on

## XVI.

God's Voice, not Nature's! Night and noon  
 He sits upon the great white throne  
 And listens for the creatures' praise.  
 What babble we of days and days?  
 The Day-spring He, whose days go on.

## XVII.

He reigns above, He reigns alone;  
 Systems burn out and leave his throne;  
 Fair mists of seraphs melt and fall  
 Around Him, changeless amid all,—  
 Ancient of Days, whose days go on.

## XVIII.

He reigns below, He reigns alone,  
 And, having life in love forgone

Beneath the crown of sovran thorns,  
 He reigns the Jealous God. Who mourns  
 Or rules with Him, while days go on?

## XIX.

By anguish which made pale the sun,  
 I hear Him charge His saints that none  
 Among His creatures anywhere  
 Blaspheme against Him with despair,  
 However darkly days go on.

## XX.

Take from my head the thorn-wreath brown!  
 No mortal grief deserves that crown.  
 O súpreme Love, chief misery,  
 The sharp regalia are for THEE  
 Whose days eternally go on!

## XXI.

For us,—whatever's undergone,  
 Thou knowest, willest what is done.  
 Grief may be joy misunderstood;  
 Only the Good discerns the good.  
 I trust Thee while my days go on.

## XXII.

Whatever 's lost, it first was won;  
 We will not struggle nor impugn.  
 Perhaps the cup was broken here,  
 That Heaven's new wine might show more clear.  
 I praise Thee while my days go on.

## XXIII.

I praise Thee while my days go on ;  
I love Thee while my days go on :  
Through dark and dearth, through fire and frost,  
With emptied arms and treasure lost,  
I thank Thee while my days go on.

## XXIV.

And having in Thy life-depth thrown  
Being and suffering (which are one),  
As a child drops his pebble small  
Down some deep well, and hears it fall  
Smiling—so I. THY DAYS GO ON.



## A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

## I.

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,  
Down in the reeds by the river?  
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,  
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,  
And breaking the golden lilies afloat  
With the dragon-fly on the river.

## II.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,  
From the deep cool bed of the river:  
The limpid water turbidly ran,  
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,  
And the dragon-fly had fled away,  
Ere he brought it out of the river.

## III.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan,  
While turbidly flowed the river;  
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,  
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,  
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed  
To prove it fresh from the river.

## IV.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,  
(How tall it stood in the river!)  
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,

Steadily from the outside ring,  
 And notched the poor dry empty thing  
 In holes, as he sat by the river.

## v.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan,  
 (Laughed while he sat by the river,)  
 "The only way, since gods began  
 To make sweet music, they could succeed."  
 Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,  
 He blew in power by the river.

## vi.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!  
 Piercing sweet by the river!  
 Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!  
 The sun on the hill forgot to die,  
 And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly  
 Came back to dream on the river.

## vii.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,  
 To laugh as he sits by the river,  
 Making a poet out of a man:  
 The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—  
 For the reed which grows nevermore again  
 As a reed with the reeds in the river.

## FIRST NEWS FROM VILLAGRANCA.

## I.

PEACE, peace, peace, do you say?  
 What!—with the enemy's guns in our ears?  
 With the country's wrong not rendered back?  
 What!—while Austria stands at bay  
 In Mantua, and our Venice bears  
 The cursed flag of the yellow and black?

## II.

Peace, peace, peace, do you say?  
 And this the Mincio? Where 's the fleet,  
 And where 's the sea? Are we all blind  
 Or mad with the blood shed yesterday,  
 Ignoring Italy under our feet,  
 And seeing things before, behind?

## III.

Peace, peace, peace, do you say?  
 What!—uncontested, undenied?  
 Because we triumph, we succumb?  
 A pair of Emperors stand in the way,  
 (One of whom is a man, beside)  
 To sign and seal our cannons dumb?

## IV.

No, not Napoleon!—he who mused  
 At Paris, and at Milan spake,  
 And at Solferino led the fight:

Not he we trusted, honoured, used  
 Our hopes and hearts for . . . till they break—  
 Even so, you tell us . . . in his sight.

## v.

Peace, peace, is still your word?  
*We* say you lie then!—that is plain.  
 There *is* no peace, and shall be none.  
 Our very Dead would cry "Absurd!"  
 And clamour that they died in vain,  
 And whine to come back to the sun.

## vi.

Hush! more reverence for the Dead!  
*They* 've done the most for Italy  
 Evermore since the earth was fair.  
 Now would that *we* had died instead,  
 Still dreaming peace meant liberty,  
 And did not, could not mean despair.

## vii.

Peace, you say?—yes, peace, in truth!  
 But such a peace as the ear can achieve  
 'Twixt the rifle's click and the rush of the ball,  
 'Twixt the tiger's spring and the crunch of the tooth,  
 'Twixt the dying atheist's negative  
 And God's Face—waiting, after all!

KING VICTOR EMANUEL ENTERING  
FLORENCE, APRIL, 1860.

## I.

KING of us all, we cried to thee, cried to thee,  
Trampled to earth by the beasts impure,  
Dragged by the chariots which shame as they roll :  
The dust of our torment far and wide to thee  
Went up, dark'ning thy royal soul.  
Be witness, Cavour,  
That the King was sad for the people in thrall.  
This King of us all !

## II.

King, we cried to thee ! Strong in replying,  
Thy word and thy sword sprang rapid and sure,  
Cleaving our way to a nation's place.  
Oh, first soldier of Italy !—crying  
Now grateful, exultant, we look in thy face.  
Be witness, Cavour,  
That, freedom's first soldier, the freed should call  
First King of them all !

## III.

This is our beautiful Italy's birthday ;  
High-thoughted souls, whether many or fewer,  
Bring her the gift, and wish her the good,  
While Heaven presents on this sunny earth-day  
The noble King to the land renewed :  
Be witness, Cavour !  
Roar, cannon-mouths ! Proclaim, install  
The King of us all !

## IV.

Grave he rides through the Florence gateway,  
 Clenching his face into calm, to immure  
 His struggling heart till it half disappears ;  
 If he relaxed for a moment, straightway  
 He would break out into passionate tears—  
 (Be witness, Cavour !)  
 While rings the cry without interval,  
 "Live, King of us all !"

## V.

Cry, free peoples ! Honour the nation  
 By crowning the true man—and none is truer :  
 Pisa is here, and Livorno is here,  
 And thousands of faces, in wild exultation,  
 Burn over the windows to feel him near—  
 (Be witness, Cavour !)  
 Burn over from terrace, roof, window and wall,  
 On this King of us all.

## VI.

Grave ! A good man 's ever the graver  
 For bearing a nation's trust secure ;  
 And *he*, he thinks of the Heart, beside,  
 Which broke for Italy, failing to save her,  
 And pining away by Oporto's tide :  
 Be witness, Cavour,  
 That he thinks of his vow on that royal pall,  
 This King of us all.

## VII.

Flowers, flowers, from the flowery city !  
 Such innocent thanks for a deed so pure,

As, melting away for joy into flowers,  
The nation invites him to enter his Pitti  
And evermore reign in this Florence of ours.  
Be witness, Cavour !  
He'll stand where the reptiles were used to crawl,  
This King of us all.

## VIII.

Grave, as the manner of noble men is—  
Deeds unfinished will weigh on the doer :  
And, baring his head to those crape-veiled flags,  
He bows to the grief of the South and Venice.  
Oh, riddle the last of the yellow to rags,  
And swear by Cavour  
That the King shall reign where the tyrants fall,  
True King of us all !

THE SWORD OF CASTRUCCIO  
CASTRACANI.

*"Questa è per me."*—KING VICTOR EMANUEL.

I.

WHEN Victor Emanuel the King,  
Went down to his Lucca that day,  
The people, each vaunting the thing  
As he gave it, gave all things away,—  
In a burst of fierce gratitude, say,  
As they tore out their hearts for the King.

II.

—Gave the green forest-walk on the wall,  
With the Apennine blue through the trees ;  
Gave the palaces, churches, and all  
The great pictures which burn out of these :  
But the eyes of the King seemed to freeze  
As he glanced upon ceiling and wall.

III.

"Good," said the King as he passed.  
Was he cold to the arts?—or else coy  
To possession? or crossed, at the last,



(Whispered some) by the vote in Savoy?  
 Shout! Love him enough for his joy!  
 "Good," said the King as he passed.

## IV.

He, travelling the whole day through flowers  
 And protesting amenities, found  
 At Pistoia, betwixt the two showers  
 Of red roses, the 'Orphans,' (renowned  
 As the heirs of Puccini) who wound  
 With a sword through the crowd and the flowers.

## V.

"'Tis the sword of Castruccio, O King,—  
 In that strife of intestinal hate,  
 Very famous! Accept what we bring,  
 We who cannot be sons, by our fate,  
 Rendered citizens by thee of late,  
 And endowed with a country and king.

## VI.

"Read! Puccini has willed that this sword  
 (Which once made in an ignorant feud  
 Many orphans) remain in our ward  
 Till some patriot its pure civic blood  
 Wipe away in the foe's and make good,  
 In delivering the land by the sword."

## VII.

Then the King exclaimed, "This is for *me!*"  
 And he dashed out his hand on the hilt,  
 While his blue eye shot fire openly,  
 And his heart overboiled till it spilt  
 A hot prayer,—“God! the rest as Thou wilt  
 But grant me this!—*This is for me.*”

## VIII.

O Victor Emanuel, the King,  
 The sword is for *thee*, and the deed,  
 And nought for the alien, next spring,  
 Nought for Hapsburg and Bourbon agreed—  
 But, for us, a great Italy-freed,  
 With a hero to head us,—our King!

## SUMMING UP IN ITALY.

(INSCRIBED TO INTELLIGENT PUBLICS OUT OF IT.)

## I.

OBSERVE how it will be at last,  
When our Italy stands at full stature,  
A year ago tied down so fast  
That the cord cut the quick of her nature !  
You'll honour the deed and its scope,  
Then, in logical sequence upon it,  
Will use up the remnants of rope  
By hanging the men who have done it.

## II.

The speech in the Commons, which hits you  
A sketch off, how dungeons must feel,—  
The official despatch, which commits you  
From stamping out groans with your heel,—  
Suggestions in journal or book for  
Good efforts,—are praised as is meet :  
But what in this world can men look for,  
Who only achieve and complete ?

## III.

True, you've praise for the fireman who sets his  
Brave face to the axe of the flame,  
Disappears in the smoke, and then fetches  
A babe down or idiot that's lame,—

For the boor even, who rescues through pity  
 A sheep from the brute who would kick it :  
 But saviours of nations !—'tis pretty,  
 And doubtful : they *may* be so wicked :

## IV.

Azeglio, Farini, Mamiani,  
 Ricasoli,—doubt by the dozen !—here's  
 Pepoli too, and Cipriani,  
 Imperial cousins and cozeners—  
 Arese, Laiatico,—courtly  
 Of manners, if stringent of mouth :  
 Garibaldi ! we'll come to him shortly,  
 (As soon as he *ends* in the South).

## V.

Napoleon—as strong as ten armies,  
 Corrupt as seven devils—a fact  
 You accede to, then seek where the harm is  
 Drained off from the man to his act,  
 And find—a free nation ! Suppose  
 Some hell-brood in Eden's sweet greenery,  
 Convoked for creating—a rose !  
 Would it suit the infernal machinery ?

## VI.

Cavour,—to the despot's desire,  
 Who his own thought so craftily marries—  
 What is he but just a thin wire  
 For conducting the lightning from Paris ?  
 Yes, write down the two as compeers,  
 Confessing (you would not permit a lie)

He bore up his Piedmont ten years  
Till she suddenly smiled and was Italy.

## VII.

And the King, with that "stain on his scutcheon,"<sup>1</sup>  
Savoy—as the calumny runs ;  
(If it be not his blood,—with his clutch on  
The sword, and his face to the guns.)  
O first, where the battle-storm gathers,  
O loyal of heart on the throne,  
Let those keep the "graves of their fathers,"  
Who quail, in a nerve, from their own !

## VIII.

For *thee*—through the dim Hades-portal  
The dream of a voice—"Blessed thou  
Who hast made all thy race twice immortal !  
No need of the sepulchres now !  
—Left to Bourbons and Hapsburgs, who fester  
Above-ground with worm-eaten souls,  
While the ghost of some pale feudal jester  
Before them strews treaties in holes."

## IX.

But hush !—am I dreaming a poem  
Of Hades, Heaven, Justice? Not I ;  
I began too far off, in my proem,  
With what men believe and deny :  
And on earth, whatsoever the need is,  
(To sum up as thoughtful reviewers)  
The moral of every great deed is—  
The virtue of slandering the doers.

<sup>1</sup> Blue Book. Diplomatical Correspondence,

“DIED . . .”

(*The “Times” Obituary.*)

I.

WHAT shall we add now? He is dead.  
 And I who praise and you who blame,  
 With wash of words across his name,  
 Find suddenly declared instead—  
 “*On Sunday, third of August, dead.*”

II.

Which stops the whole we talked to-day.  
 I, quickened to a plausible glance  
 At his large general tolerance  
 By common people's narrow way,  
 Stopped short in praising. Dead, they say.

III.

And you, who had just put in a sort  
 Of cold deduction—“rather, large  
 Through weakness of the continent marge,  
 Than greatness of the thing contained”—  
 Broke off. Dead!—there, you stood restrained.

IV.

As if we had talked in following one  
 Up some long gallery. “Would you choose  
 An air like that? The gait is loose—

Or noble." Sudden in the sun  
 An oubliette winks. Where *is* he? Gone.

## v.

Dead. Man's "I was" by God's "I am"—  
 All hero-worship comes to that.  
 High heart, high thought, high fame, as flat  
 As a gravestone. Bring your *Jacet jam*—  
 The epitaph's an epigram.

## vi.

Dead. There's an answer to arrest  
 All carping. Dust's his natural place?  
 He'll let the flies buzz round his face  
 And, though you slander, not protest?  
 —From such an one, exact the Best?

## vii.

Opinions gold or brass are null.  
 We chuck our flattery or abuse,  
 Called Cæsar's due, as Charon's dues,  
 I' the teeth of some dead sage or fool,  
 To mend the grinning of a skull.

## viii.

Be abstinent in praise and blame.  
 The man's still mortal, who stands first,  
 And mortal only, if last and worst.  
 Then slowly lift so frail a fame,  
 Or softly drop so poor a shame.

## THE FORCED RECRUIT.

SOLFERINO, 1859.

## I.

IN the ranks of the Austrian you found him,  
He died with his face to you all ;  
Yet bury him here where around him  
You honour your bravest that fall.

## II.

Venetian, fair-featured and slender,  
He lies shot to death in his youth,  
With a smile on his lips over-tender  
For any mere soldier's dead mouth.

## III.

No stranger, and yet not a traitor,  
Though alien the cloth on his breast,  
Underneath it how seldom a greater  
Young heart, has a shot sent to rest !

## IV.

By your enemy tortured and goaded  
To march with them, stand in their file,  
His musket (see) never was loaded,  
He facing your guns with that smile !



## V.

As orphans yearn on to their mothers,  
He yearned to your patriot bands ;—  
“ Let me die for our Italy, brothers,  
If not in your ranks, by your hands !

## VI.

“ Aim straightly, fire steadily ! spare me  
A ball in the body which may  
Deliver my heart here, and tear me  
This badge of the Austrian away ! ”

## VII.

So thought he, so died he this morning.  
What then ? many others have died.  
Ay, but easy for men to die scorning  
The death-stroke, who fought side by side—

## VIII.

One tricolour floating above them ;  
Struck down 'mid triumphant acclaims  
Of an Italy rescued to love them  
And blazon the brass with their names.

## IX.

But he,—without witness or honour,  
Mixed, shamed in his country's regard,  
With the tyrants who march in upon her,  
Died faithful and passive : 'twas hard.

## X.

'Twas sublime. In a cruel restriction  
Cut off from the guerdon of sons,  
With most filial obedience, conviction,  
His soul kissed the lips of her guns.

## XI.

That moves you? Nay, grudge not to show it,  
While digging a grave for him here :  
The others who died, says your poet,  
Have glory,—let *him* have a tear.

## GARIBALDI.

## I.

HE bent his head upon his breast  
Wherein his lion-heart lay sick :—  
“ Perhaps we are not ill-repaid ;  
Perhaps this is not a true test ;  
Perhaps this was not a foul trick ;  
Perhaps none wronged, and none betrayed.

## II.

“ Perhaps the people's vote which here  
United, there may disunite,  
And both be lawful as they think ;  
Perhaps a patriot statesman, dear  
For chartering nations, can with right  
Disfranchise those who hold the ink.

## III.

“ Perhaps men's wisdom is not craft ;  
Men's greatness, not a selfish greed ;  
Men's justice, not the safer side ;  
Perhaps even women, when they laughed,  
Wept, thanked us that the land was freed,  
Not wholly (though they kissed us) lied.

## IV.

“ Perhaps no more than this we meant,  
When up at Austria's guns we flew,  
And quenched them with a cry apiece,

*Italia!*—Yet a dream was sent . . .  
 The little house my father knew,  
 The olives and the palms of Nice.”

## v.

He paused, and drew his sword out slow,  
 Then pored upon the blade intent,  
 As if to read some written thing ;  
 While many murmured,—“ He will go  
 In that despairing sentiment  
 And break his sword before the King.”

## vi.

He poring still upon the blade,  
 His large lid quivered, something fell.  
 “ Perhaps,” he said, “ I was not born  
 With such fine brains to treat and trade,—  
 And if a woman knew it well,  
 Her falsehood only meant her scorn.

## vii.

“ Yet through Varese’s cannon-smoke  
 My eye saw clear : men feared this man  
 At Como, where this sword could seal  
 Death’s protocol with every stroke :  
 And now . . . the drop there scarcely can  
 Impair the keenness of the steel.

## viii.

“ So man and sword may have their use ;  
 And if the soil beneath my foot  
 In valour’s act is forfeited,

I'll strike the harder, take my dues  
Out nobler, and all loss confute  
From ampler heavens above my head.

## IX.

“ My King, King Victor, I am thine !  
So much Nice-dust as what I am  
(To make our Italy) must cleave.  
Forgive that.” Forward with a sign  
He went.

You've seen the telegram ?  
*Palermo's taken, we believe.*

## ONLY A CURL.

## I.

FRIENDS of faces unknown and a land  
Unvisited over the sea,  
Who tell me how lonely you stand  
With a single gold curl in the hand  
Held up to be looked at by me,—

## II.

While you ask me to ponder and say  
What a father and mother can do,  
With the bright fellow-locks put away  
Out of reach, beyond kiss, in the clay  
Where the violets press nearer than you :

## III.

Shall I speak like a poet, or run  
Into weak woman's tears for relief?  
Oh, children!—I never lost one,—  
Yet my arm's round my own little son,  
And Love knows the secret of Grief.

## IV.

And I feel what it must be and is,  
When God draws a new angel so  
Through the house of a man up to His,

With a murmur of music, you miss,  
And a rapture of light, you forgo.

## v.

How you think, staring on at the door,  
Where the face of your angel flashed in,  
That its brightness, familiar before,  
Burns off from you ever the more  
For the dark of your sorrow and sin.

## vi.

"God lent him and takes him," you sigh;  
—Nay, there let me break with your pain:  
God's generous in giving, say I,—  
And the thing which He gives, I deny  
That He ever can take back again.

## vii.

He gives what He gives. I appeal  
To all who bear babes—in the hour  
When the veil of the body we feel  
Rent round us,—while torments reveal  
The motherhood's advent in power,

## viii.

And the babe cries!—has each of us known  
By apocalypse (God being there  
Full in nature) the child is our own,  
Life of life, love of love, moan of moan,  
Through all changes, all times, everywhere.

## IX.

He's ours and for ever. Believe,  
 O father!—O mother, look back  
 To the first love's assurance! To give  
 Means with God not to tempt or deceive  
 With a cup thrust in Benjamin's sack.

## X.

He gives what He gives. Be content!  
 He resumes nothing given,—be sure!  
 God lend? Where the usurers lent  
 In His temple, indignant He went  
 And scourged away all those impure.

## XI.

He lends not; but gives to the end,  
 As He loves to the end. If it seem  
 That He draws back a gift, comprehend  
 'Tis to add to it rather,—amend,  
 And finish it up to your dream,—

## XII.

Or keep,—as a mother will toys  
 Too costly, though given by herself,  
 Till the room shall be stiller from noise,  
 And the children more fit for such joys,  
 Kept over their heads on the shelf.

## XIII.

So look up, friends! you, who indeed  
 Have possessed in your house a sweet piece



Of the Heaven which men strive for, must need  
Be more earnest than others are,—speed  
Where they loiter, persist where they cease.

## XIV.

You know how one angel smiles there.  
Then weep not. 'Tis easy for you  
To be drawn by a single gold hair  
Of that curl, from earth's storm and despair,  
To the safe place above us. Adieu.

## A VIEW ACROSS THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA.

1861.

## I.

OVER the dumb Campagna-sea,  
 Out in the offing through mist and rain,  
 Saint Peter's Church heaves silently  
 Like a mighty ship in pain,  
 Facing the tempest with struggle and strain.

## II.

Motionless waifs of ruined towers,  
 Soundless breakers of desolate land :  
 The sullen surf of the mist devours  
 That mountain-range upon either hand,  
 Eaten away from its outline grand.

## III.

And over the dumb Campagna-sea  
 Where the ship of the Church heaves on to wreck,  
 Alone and silent as God must be,  
 The Christ walks. Ay, but Peter's neck  
 Is stiff to turn on the foundering deck.

## IV.

Peter, Peter ! if such be thy name,  
 Now leave the ship for another to steer,  
 And proving thy faith evermore the same,

Come forth, tread out through the dark and drear,  
 Since He who walks on the sea is here.

## v.

Peter, Peter ! He does not speak ;  
 He is not as rash as in old Galilee :  
 Safer a ship, though it toss and leak,  
 Than a reeling foot on a rolling sea !  
 And he's got to be round in the girth, thinks he.

## vi.

Peter, Peter ! He does not stir ;  
 His nets are heavy with silver fish ;  
 He reckons his gains, and is keen to infer  
 —“ The broil on the shore, if the Lord should wish ;  
 But the sturgeon goes to the Cæsar's dish.”

## vii.

Peter, Peter ! thou fisher of men,  
 Fisher of fish wouldst thou live instead ?  
 Haggling for pence with the other Ten,  
 Cheating the market at so much a head,  
 Griping the Bag of the traitor Dead ?

## viii.

At the triple crow of the Gallic cock  
 Thou weep'st not, thou, though thine eyes be dazed :  
 What bird comes next in the tempest-shock ?  
 —Vultures ! see,—as when Romulus gazed,—  
 To inaugurate Rome for a world amazed !

## THE KING'S GIFT.

## I.

TERESA, ah, Teresita !  
 Now what has the messenger brought her,  
 Our Garibaldi's young daughter,  
 To make her stop short in her singing ?  
 Will she not once more repeat a  
 Verse from that hymn of our hero's,  
 Setting the souls of us ringing ?  
 Break off the song where the tear rose ?  
 Ah, Teresita !

## II.

A young thing, mark, is Teresa :  
 Her eyes have caught fire, to be sure, in  
 That necklace of jewels from Turin,  
 Till blind their regard to us men is.  
 But still she remembers to raise a  
 Sly look to her father, and note—  
 " Could she sing on as well about Venice,  
 Yet wear such a flame at her throat ?  
 Decide for Teresa."

## III.

Teresa, ah, Teresita !

His right hand has paused on her head—

“Accept it, my daughter,” he said ;

“Ay, wear it, true child of thy mother !

Then sing, till all start to their feet, a

New verse ever bolder and freer !

King Victor 's no king like another,

But verily noble as *we* are,

Child, Teresita !”

## PARTING LOVERS.

(SIENA, 1860.)

## I.

I LOVE thee, love thee, Giulio ;  
Some call me cold, and some demure :  
And if thou hast ever guessed that so  
I loved thee . . . well, the proof was poor,  
And no one could be sure.

## II.

Before thy song (with shifted rhymes  
To suit my name) did I undo  
The persian? If it stirred sometimes,  
Thou hast not seen a hand push through  
A foolish flower or two.

## III.

My mother listening to my sleep,  
Heard nothing but a sigh at night,—  
The short sigh rippling on the deep,  
When hearts run out of breath and sight  
Of men, to God's clear light.

## IV.

When others named thee,—thought thy brows  
Were straight, thy smile was tender,—“ Here

He comes between the vineyard-rows!"  
I said not "Ay," nor waited, Dear,  
To feel thee step too near.

## v.

I left such things to bolder girls,—  
Olivia or Clotilda. Nay,  
When that Clotilda, through her curls,  
Held both thine eyes in hers one day,  
I marvelled, let me say.

## vi.

I could not try the woman's trick :  
Between us straightway fell the blush  
Which kept me separate, blind and sick.  
A wind came with thee in a flush,  
As blown through Sinai's bush.

## vii.

But now that Italy invokes  
Her young men to go forth and chase  
The foe or perish,—nothing chokes  
My voice, or drives me from the place,  
I look thee in the face.

## viii.

I love thee ! It is understood,  
Confest : I do not shrink or start.  
No blushes ! all my body's blood  
Has gone to greaten this poor heart,  
That, loving, we may part.

## PARTING LOVERS.

## IX.

Our Italy invokes the youth  
 To die if need be. Still there's room,  
 Though earth is strained with dead in truth :  
 Since twice the lilies were in bloom  
 They have not grudged a tomb.

## X.

And many a plighted maid and wife  
 And mother, who can say since then  
 ' My country,'— cannot say through life  
 " My son," " my spouse," " my flower of men,"  
 And not weep dumb again.

## XI.

Heroic males the country bears,—  
 But daughters give up more than sons :  
 Flags wave, drums beat, and unawares  
 You flash your souls out with the guns,  
 And take your Heaven at once.

## XII.

But we !—we empty heart and home  
 Of life's life, love ! We bear to think  
 You're gone,—to feel you may not come,—  
 To hear the door-latch stir and clink,  
 Yet no more you ! . . . nor sink.

## XIII.

Dear God ! when Italy is one,  
 Complete, content from bound to bound,



Suppose, for my share, earth 's undone  
By one grave in 't!—as one small wound  
Will kill a man, 'tis found.

## xiv.

What then? If love's delight must end,  
At least we'll clear its truth from flaws.  
I love thee, love thee, sweetest friend!  
Now take my sweetest without pause,  
And help the nation's cause.

## xv.

And thus, of noble Italy  
We'll both be worthy! Let her show  
The future how we made her free,  
Not sparing life . . . nor Giulio,  
Nor this . . . this heartbreak! Go.

## MOTHER AND POET.

(TURIN, AFTER NEWS FROM GAETA, 1861.)

## I.

DEAD ! One of them shot by the sea in the east,  
 And one of them shot in the west by the sea.  
 Dead ! both my boys ! When you sit at the feast  
 And are wanting a great song for Italy free,  
 Let none look at *me* !

## II.

Yet I was a poetess only last year,  
 And good at my art, for a woman, men said ;  
 But *this* woman, *this*, who is agonised here,  
 —The east sea and west sea rhyme on in her head  
 For ever instead.

## III.

What art can a woman be good at ? Oh, vain !  
 What art *is* she good at, but hurting her breast  
 With the milk-teeth of babes, and a smile at the pain ?  
 Ah, boys, how you hurt ! you were strong as you pressed,  
 And I proud, by that test.

## IV.

What art's for a woman ? To hold on her knees  
 Both darlings ! to feel all their arms round her throat,  
 Cling, strangle a little ! to sew by degrees  
 And 'broider the long-clothes and neat little coat ;  
 To dream and to doat.

## v.

To teach them . . . It stings there ! *I* made them indeed  
 Speak plain the word *country*. *I* taught them, no doubt,  
 That a country's a thing men should die for at need.  
*I* prated of liberty, rights, and about  
 The tyrant cast out.

## vi.

And when their eyes flashed . . . O my beautiful eyes ! . . .  
*I* exulted ; nay, let them go forth at the wheels  
 Of the guns, and denied not. But then the surprise  
 When one sits quite alone ! Then one weeps, then one  
 kneels !  
 God, how the house feels !

## vii.

At first, happy news came, in gay letters moiled  
 With my kisses,—of camp-life and glory, and how  
 They both loved me ; and, soon coming home to be spoiled,  
 In return would fan off every fly from my brow  
 With their green laurel-bough.

## viii.

Then was triumph at Turin : “ Ancona was free ! ”  
 And some one came out of the cheers in the street,  
 With a face pale as stone, to say something to me.  
 My Guido was dead ! *I* fell down at his feet,  
 While they cheered in the street.

## ix.

*I* bore it ; friends soothed me ; my grief looked sublime  
 As the ransom of Italy. One boy remained

To be leant on and walked with, recalling the time  
 When the first grew immortal, while both of us strained  
 To the height he had gained.

## X.

And letters still came, shorter, sadder, more strong,  
 Writ now but in one hand, "I was not to faint,—  
 One loved me for two—would be with me ere long :  
 And *Viva l'Italia!*—he died for, our saint,  
 Who forbids our complaint."

## XI.

My Nanni would add, "he was safe, and aware  
 Of a presence that turned off the balls, was imprest  
 It was Guido himself, who knew what I could bear,  
 And how 'twas impossible, quite dispossessed,  
 To live on for the rest."

## XII.

On which, without pause, up the telegraph-line  
 Swept smoothly the next news from Gaeta :—*Shot.*  
*Tell his mother.* Ah, ah, "his," "their" mother,—not  
 "mine,"  
 No voice says, "*My* mother" again to me. What !  
 You think Guido forgot ?

## XIII.

Are souls straight so happy that, dizzy with Heaven,  
 They drop earth's affections, conceive not of woe ?  
 I think not. Themselves were too lately forgiven  
 Through THAT Love and Sorrow which reconciled so  
 The Above and Below.

## XIV.

O Christ of the five wounds, who look'dst through the dark  
 To the face of Thy mother ! consider, I pray,  
 How we common mothers stand desolate, mark,  
 Whose sons, not being Christs, die with eyes turned away,  
 And no last word to say !

## XV.

Both boys dead ? but that's out of nature. We all  
 Have been patriots, yet each house must always keep one.  
 'Twere imbecile, hewing out roads to a wall ;  
 And, when Italy's made, for what end is it done  
 If we have not a son ?

## XVI.

Ah, ah, ah ! when Gaeta's taken, what then ?  
 When the fair wicked queen sits no more at her sport  
 Of the fire-balls of death crashing souls out of men ?  
 When the guns of Cavalli with final retort  
 Have cut the game short ?

## XVII.

When Venice and Rome keep their new jubilee,  
 When your flag takes all heaven for its white, green,  
 and red,  
 When *you* have your country from mountain to sea,  
 When King Victor has Italy's crown on his head,  
 (And *I* have my Dead)—

## XVIII.

What then ? Do not mock me. Ah, ring your bells low,  
 And burn your lights faintly ! *My* country is *there*,

Above the star pricked by the last peak of snow :  
My Italy's THERE, with my brave civic Pair,  
To disfranchise despair !

## XIX.

Forgive me. Some women bear children in strength,  
And bite back the cry of their pain in self-scorn ;  
But the birth-pangs of nations will wring us at length  
Into wail such as this—and we sit on forlorn  
When the man-child is born.

## XX.

Dead ! One of them shot by the sea in the east,  
And one of them shot in the west by the sea.  
Both ! both my boys ! If in keeping the feast  
You want a great song for your Italy free,  
Let none look at *me* !

[This was Laura Savio, of Turin, a poetess and patriot, whose sons were killed at Ancona and Gaeta.]

## NATURE'S REMORSES.

(ROME, 1861.)

## I.

HER soul was bred by a throne, and fed  
From the sucking-bottle used in her race  
On starch and water (for mother's milk  
Which gives a larger growth instead),  
And, out of the natural liberal grace,  
Was swaddled away in violet silk.

## II.

And young and kind, and royally blind,  
Forth she stepped from her palace-door  
On three-piled carpet of compliments,  
Curtains of incense drawn by the wind  
In between her for evermore  
And daylight issues of events.

## III.

On she drew, as a queen might do,  
To meet a Dream of Italy,—  
Of magical town and musical wave,  
Where even a god, his amulet blue  
Of shining sea, in an ecstasy  
Dropt and forgot in a nereid's cave.

## IV.

Down she goes, as the soft wind blows,  
 To live more smoothly than mortals can,  
 To love and to reign as queen and wife,  
 To wear a crown that smells of a rose,  
 And still, with a sceptre as light as a fan,  
 Beat sweet time to the song of life.

## V.

What is this? As quick as a kiss  
 Falls the smile from her girlish mouth;  
 The lion-people has left its lair,  
 Roaring along her garden of bliss,  
 And the fiery underworld of the South  
 Scorched a way to the upper air.

## VI.

And a fire-stone ran in the form of a man,  
 Burningly, boundingly, fatal and fell,  
 Bowling the kingdom down! Where was the King?  
 She had heard somewhat, since life began,  
 Of terrors on earth and horrors in hell,  
 But never, never of such a thing.

## VII.

You think she dropped when her dream was stopped,  
 When the blotch of Bourbon blood inlay,  
 Lividly rank, her new lord's cheek?  
 Not so. Her high heart overtopped



The royal part she had come to play.  
 Only the men in that hour were weak.

## VIII.

And twice a wife by her ravaged life,  
 And twice a queen by her kingdom lost,  
 She braved the shock and the counter-shock  
 Of hero and traitor, bullet and knife,  
 While Italy pushed, like a vengeful ghost,  
 That son of the Cursed from Gaeta's rock.

## IX.

What will ye give her, who could not deliver,  
 German Princesses? A laurel-wreath  
 All over-scored with your signatures,  
 Graces, Serenities, Highnesses ever?  
 Mock her not, fresh from the truth of Death,  
 Conscious of dignities higher than yours.

## X.

What will ye put in your casket shut,  
 Ladies of Paris, in sympathy's name?  
 Guizot's daughter, what have you brought her?  
 Withered immortelles, long ago cut  
 For guilty dynasties perished in shame,  
 Putrid to memory, Guizot's daughter?

## XI.

Ah poor queen! so young and serene!  
 What shall we do for her, now hope's done,  
 Standing at Rome in these ruins old,

She too a ruin and no more a queen ?  
Leave her that diadem made by the sun  
Turning her hair to an innocent gold.

## XII.

Ay! bring close to her, as 'twere a rose, to her,  
Yon free child from an Apennine city  
Singing for Italy,—dumb in the place!  
Something like solace, let us suppose, to her  
Given, in that homage of wonder and pity,  
By his pure eyes to her beautiful face.

## XIII.

Nature, excluded, savagely brooded;  
Ruined all queendom and dogmas of state:  
Then, in reaction remorseful and mild,  
Rescues the womanhood, nearly eluded,  
Shows her what 's sweetest in womanly fate—  
Sunshine from Heaven, and the eyes of a child.

## THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH.

[THE LAST POEM.]

ROME, MAY, 1861.

## I.

“ Now give us lands where the olives grow,”  
Cried the North to the South,  
“ Where the sun with a golden mouth can blow  
Blue bubbles of grapes down a vineyard-row !”  
Cried the North to the South.

“ Now give us men from the sunless plain,”  
Cried the South to the North,  
“ By need of work in the snow and the rain,  
Made strong, and brave by familiar pain !”  
Cried the South to the North.

## II.

“ Give lucider hills and intenser seas,”  
Said the North to the South,  
“ Since ever by symbols and bright degrees  
Art, childlike, climbs to the dear Lord's knees,”  
Said the North to the South.

“ Give strenuous souls for belief and prayer,”  
Said the South to the North,  
“ That stand in the dark on the lowest stair,  
While affirming of God, ‘ He is certainly there,’”  
Said the South to the North.

## III.

“Yet oh, for the skies that are softer and higher!”

Sighed the North to the South;

“For the flowers that blaze, and the trees that aspire,  
And the insects made of a song or a fire!”

Sighed the North to the South.

“And oh, for a seer to discern the same!”

Sighed the South to the North;

“For a poet’s tongue of baptismal flame,  
To call the tree or the flower by its name!”

Sighed the South to the North.

## IV.

The North sent therefore a man of men

As a grace to the South;

And thus to Rome came Andersen.

—“*Alas, but must you take him again?*”

Said the South to the North.

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