

*Val.* How should they let me pause  
or turn aside?  
*Gau.* [to VALENCE.] My worthy sir,  
one question! You've come  
straight  
From Cleves, you tell us: heard you  
any talk  
At Cleves about our lady?  
*Val.* Much.  
*Gau.* And what?  
*Val.* Her wish was to redress all  
wrongs she knew.  
*Gau.* That, you believed?  
*Val.* You see me, sir!  
*Gau.* —Nor stopped  
Upon the road from Cleves to Juliers  
here,  
For any—rumours you might find  
afloat?  
*Val.* I had my townsmen's wrongs to  
busy me.  
*Gau.* This is the lady's birthday, do  
you know?  
—Her day of pleasure?  
*Val.* —That the great, I know,  
For pleasure born, should still be on the  
watch  
To exclude pleasure when a duty offers:  
Even as, for duty born, the lowly too  
May ever snatch a pleasure if in reach:  
Both will have plenty of their birth-  
right, sir!  
*Gau.* [Aside to GUIBERT] Sir Guibert,  
here's your man! No scruples  
now—  
You'll never find his like! Time  
presses hard.  
I've seen your drift and Adolf's too,  
this while,  
But you can't keep the hour of audi-  
ence back  
Much longer, and at noon the Prince  
arrives.  
[Pointing to VALENCE.] Entrust him  
with it—fool no chance away!  
*Gui.* —Him?  
*Gau.* —With the missive! What's  
the man to her?  
*Gui.* No bad thought!—Yet, 't is  
yours, who ever played  
The tempting serpent. else 't were no  
bad thought!  
I should—and do—mistrust it for your  
sake,  
Or else . . .  
Enter an Official who communicates  
with ADOLF.

*Adolf.* The Duchess will receive the  
court!  
*Gui.* Give us a moment, Adolf!  
Valence, friend,  
I'll help you! We of the service,  
you're to mark,  
Have special entry, while the herd . . .  
the folks  
Outside, get access through our help  
alone;  
—Well, it is so, was so, and I suppose  
So ever will be: your natural lot is,  
therefore,  
To wait your turn and opportunity,  
And probably miss both. Now, I  
engage  
To set you, here and in a minute's  
space,  
Before the lady, with full leave to plead  
Chapter and verse, and A, and B, and  
C,  
To heart's content.  
*Val.* I grieve that I must ask,—  
This being, yourself admit, the custom  
here,—  
To what the price of such a favour  
mounts?  
*Gui.* Just so! You're not without a  
courtier's tact.  
Little at court, as your quick instinct  
prompts,  
Do such as we without a recompense.  
*Val.* Yours is?—  
*Gui.* A trifle: here's a document  
'T is some one's duty to present her  
Grace—  
I say, not mine—these say, not theirs  
—such points  
Have weight at court. Will you re-  
lieve us all [lay  
And take it? Just say, "I am bidden  
"This paper at the Duchess' feet!"  
*Val.* No more?  
I thank you, sir!  
*Adolf.* Her Grace receives the  
court!  
*Gui.* [Aside.] Now, *sursum corda*,  
quothe the mass-priest! Do—  
Whoever's my kind saint, do let alone  
These pushings to and fro, and pullings  
back;  
Peaceably let me hang o' the devil's  
arm  
The downward path, if you can't pluck  
me off  
Completely! Let me live quite his, or  
yours!

[The Courtiers begin to range themselves, and move toward the door.]  
after me, Valence! So, our famous Cleves

Lacks bread? Yet don't we gallants buy their lace? [know,

And dear enough—it beggars me, I To keep my very gloves fringed properly.

This, Valence, is our Great State Hall you cross;

You grey urn's veritable marcasite, The Pope's gift: and those salvers testify

The Emperor. Presently you'll set your foot

. . . But you don't speak, friend Valence!

*Val.* I shall speak.

*Gau.* [Aside to GUIBERT.] Guibert—it were no such ungraceful thing if you and I, at first, seemed horror-struck

With the bad news. Look here, what you shall do!

Suppose you, first, clap hand to sword and cry

"Yield strangers our allegiance? First I'll perish

"Beside your Grace!"—and so give me the cue

To . . .

*Gui.* —Clap your hand to note-book and jot down

That to regale the Prince with? I conceive.

[To VALENCE.] Do, Valence, speak, or I shall half suspect [first,

You're plotting to supplant us, me the I' the lady's favour! Is 't the grand harangue

You mean to make, that thus engrosses you?

—Which of her virtues you'll apostrophize?

Or is 't the fashion you aspire to start, Of that close-curled, not unbecoming hair?

Or what else ponder you?

*Val.* My townsmen's wrongs.

## ACT II

Noon.—SCENE. *The Presence-chamber.*

*The DUCHESS and SABYNE.*

*The D.* Announce that I am ready for the court!

*Sab.* 'T is scarcely audience-hour, I think; your Grace

May best consult your own relief, no doubt,

And shun the crowd: but few can have arrived.

*The D.* Let those not yet arrived, then, keep away!

'T was me, this day last year at Ravestein,

You hurried. It has been full time, beside,

This half-hour. Do you hesitate?

*Sab.* Forgive me!

*The D.* Stay, Sabyne; let me hasten to make sure

Of one true thanker: here with you begins

My audience, claim you first its privilege!

It is my birth's event they celebrate: You need not wish me more such happy days,

But—ask some favour! Have you none to ask?

Has Adolf none, then? this was far from least

Of much I waited for impatiently, Assure yourself! It seemed so natural

Your gift, beside this bunch of river-bells,

Should be the power and leave of doing To you, and greater pleasure to myself.

You ask my leave to-day to marry Adolf?

The rest is my concern.

*Sab.* Your Grace is ever Our lady of dear Ravestein,—but, for Adolf . . .

*The D.* "But"? You have not, sure, changed in your regard

And purpose towards him?

*Sab.* We change?

*The D.* Well then? Well?

*Sab.* How could we two be happy, and, most like,

Leave Juliers, when—when . . . but 't is audience-time!

*The D.* "When, if you left me, I were left indeed!"

Would you subjoin that?—Bid the court approach!

—Why should we play thus with each other, Sabyne?

Do I not know, if courtiers prove remiss, If friends detain me, and get blame for it,

There is a cause ? Of last year's fervid  
throng

Scarce one half comes now.

*Sab.* [*Aside.*] One half ? No, alas !

*The D.* So can the mere suspicion of  
a cloud

Over my fortunes, strike each loyal  
heart.

They've heard of this Prince Berthold ;  
and, forsooth,

Some foolish arrogant pretence he  
makes,

May grow more foolish and more  
arrogant,

They please to apprehend ! I thank  
their love.

Admit them !

*Sab.* [*Aside.*] How much has she  
really learned ?

*The D.* Surely, whoever's absent,  
Tristan waits ?

—Or at least Romuald, whom my  
father raised

From nothing—come, he's faithful to  
me, come !

(Sabyne, I should but be the prouder—  
yes,

The fitter to comport myself aright )  
Not Romuald ? Xavier—what said  
he to that ?

For Xavier hates a parasite, I know !

[SABYNE goes out.]

*The D.* Well, sunshine's everywhere,  
and summer too.

Next year 't is the old place again, per-  
haps—

The water-breeze again, the birds again.

—It cannot be ! It is too late to be !

What part had I, or choice in all of it ?

Hither they brought me ; I had not  
to think [good

Nor care, concern myself with doing  
Or ill, my task was just—to live,—to  
live,

And, answering ends there was no need  
explain,

To render Juliers happy—so they said.  
All could not have been falsehood :

some was love,

And wonder and obedience. I did all  
They looked for : why then cease to do  
it now ?

Yet this is to be calmly set aside,  
And—ere next birthday's dawn, for  
aught I know,

Things change, a claimant may arrive,  
and I . . .

It cannot nor it shall not be ! His  
right ?

Well then, he has the right, and I have  
not

—But who bade all of you surround my  
life

And close its growth up with your  
ducal crown

Which, plucked off rudely, leaves me  
perishing ?

I could have been like one of you,—  
loved, hoped,

Feared, lived and died like one of you  
—but you

Would take that life away and give me  
this,

And I will keep this ! I will face you !  
Come !

*Enter the Courtiers and VALENCE.*

*The Courtiers.* Many such happy  
mornings to your Grace !

*The D.* [*Aside, as they pay their  
devoir.*] The same words, the  
same faces,—the same love !

I have been overfearful. These are  
few ;

But these, at least, stand firmly : these  
are mine.

As many come as may ; and if no more,  
'T is that these few suffice—they do  
suffice !

What succour may not next year bring  
me ? Plainly,

I feared too soon. [*To the Court.*]  
I thank you, sirs : all thanks !

*Val.* [*Aside, as the DUCHESS passes  
from one group to another, con-  
versing.*]

'T is she—the vision this day last year  
brought,

When, for a golden moment at our  
Cleves,

She tarried in her progress hither.  
Cleves

Chose me to speak its welcome, and I  
spoke

—Not that she could have noted the  
recluse

—Ungainly, old before his time—who  
gazed.

Well, Heaven's gifts are not wasted,  
and that gaze

Kept, and shall keep me to the end, her  
own !

She was above it—but so would not  
sink

My gaze to earth! The People caught  
it, hers—

Thenceforward, mine; but thus  
entirely mine,

Who shall affirm, had she not raised  
my soul

Ere she retired and left me—them?  
She turns—

There's all her wondrous face at once!  
The ground

Reels and . . . [*suddenly occupying  
himself with his paper.*]

These wrongs of theirs I have to plead!  
*The D. [to the Court.]* Nay, compliment

enough! and kindness' self  
Should pause before it wish me more

such years.

'T was fortunate that thus, ere youth  
escaped, [pure,

I tasted life's pure pleasure—one such,  
Is worth a thousand, mixed—and

youth 's for pleasure:  
Mine is received; let my age pay for it.

*Gau.* So pay, and pleasure paid for,  
thinks your Grace,

Should never go together?  
*Gui.* How, Sir Gaucelme?

Hurry one's feast down unenjoyingly  
At the snatched breathing-intervals of

work?  
As good you saved it till the dull day's-

end  
When, stiff and sleepy, appetite is gone.

Eat first, then work upon the strength  
of food!

*The D.* True: you enable me to risk  
my future,

By giving me a past beyond recall.  
I lived, a girl, one happy leisure year:

Let me endeavour to be the Duchess  
now!

And so,—what new's, Sir Guibert,  
spoke you of?

[*As they advance a little, and  
GUIBERT speaks—*

—That gentleman?  
*Val. [Aside.]* I feel her eyes on

me.  
*Gui. [to VALENCE.]* The Duchess,

sir, inclines to hear your suit.  
Advance! He is from Cleves.

*Val. [coming forward.] [Aside.]*  
Their wrongs—their wrongs!

*The D.* And you, sir, are from  
Cleves? How fresh in mind,

The hour or two I passed at queenly  
Cleves!

She entertained me bravely, but the  
best

Of her good pageant seemed its  
standers-by

With insuppressive joy on every face!  
What says my ancient famous happy

Cleves?  
*Val.* Take the truth, lady—you are

made for truth!  
So think my friends: nor do they less

deserve  
The having you to take it, you shall

think,  
When you know all—nay, when you

only know  
How, on that day you recollect at

Cleves,  
When the poor acquiescing multitude

Who thrust themselves with all their  
woes apart

Into unnoticed corners, that the few,  
Their means sufficed to muster trap-

pings for,  
Might fill the foreground, occupy your

sight  
With joyous faces fit to bear away

And boast of as a sample of all Cleves  
—How, when to daylight these crept

out once more,  
Clutching, unconscious, each his empty

rags  
Whence the scant coin, which had not

half bought bread,  
That morn he shook forth, counted

piece by piece,  
And, well-advisedly, on perfumes spent

them  
To burn, or flowers to strew, before

your path  
—How, when the golden flood of music

and bliss  
Ebbed, as their moon retreated, and

again  
Left the sharp black-point rocks of

misery bare  
—Then I, their friend had only to

suggest  
“Saw she the horror as she saw the

pomp!”  
And as one man they cried “He speaks

the truth:  
“Show her the horror! Take from

our own mouths  
“Our wrongs and show them, she will

see them too!”  
This they cried, lady! I have brough

the wrongs.

*The D.* Wrongs? Cleves has wrongs  
—apparent now and thus?

I thank you! In that paper? Give  
it me!

*Val.* (There, Cleves!) In this! (What  
did I promise, Cleves?)

Our weavers, clothiers, spinners are  
reduced

Since . . . Oh, I crave your pardon!  
I forget

I buy the privilege of this approach,  
And promptly would discharge my  
debt. I lay

This paper humbly at the Duchess'  
feet.

[*Presenting GUIBERT'S paper.*

*Gui.* Stay! for the present . . .

*The D.* Stay, sir? I take aught  
That teaches me their wrongs with  
greater pride

Than this your ducal circlet. Thank  
you, sir!

[*The DUCHESS reads hastily; then,  
turning to the Courtiers—*

What have I done to you? Your  
deed or mine

Was it, this crowning me? I gave  
myself

No more a title to your homage, no,  
Than church-flowers, born this season,  
wrote the words

In the saint's-book that sanctified them  
first.

For such a flower, you plucked me;  
well, you erred—

Well, 't was a weed: remove the eye-  
sore quick!

But should you not remember it has  
lain

Steeped in the candles' glory, palely  
shrined,

Nearer God's Mother than most earthly  
things?

—That if 't be faded 't is with prayer's  
sole breath—

That the one day it boasted was God's  
day?

Still, I do thank you! Had you used  
respect,

Here might I dwindle to my last white  
leaf,

Here lose life's latest freshness, which  
even yet

May yield some wandering insect rest  
and food:

So, fling me forth, and—all is best for  
all!

[*After a pause.*] Prince Berthold, who  
art Juliers' Duke, it seems—

The King's choice, and the Emperor's,  
and the Pope's—

Be mine, too! Take this People!  
Tell not me

Of rescripts, precedents, authorities,  
—But take them, from a heart that

yearns to give!  
Find out their love,—I could not; find  
their fear,—

I would not; find their like,—I never  
shall,

Among the flowers!

[*Taking off her coronet.*

Colombe of Ravestein

Thanks God she is no longer Duchess  
here!

*Val.* [*advancing to GUIBERT.*] Sir  
Guibert, knight they call you—  
this of mine

Is the first step I ever set at court.  
You dared make me your instrument, I

find;

For that, so sure as you and I are men,  
We reckon to the utmost presently:

But as you are a courtier and I none,  
Your knowledge may instruct me. I,

already,  
Have too far outraged, by my ignor-  
ance

Of courtier-ways, this lady, to proceed  
A second step and risk addressing her:

—I am degraded—you, let me address!  
Out of her presence, all is plain enough

What I shall do—but in her presence,  
too,

Surely there's something proper to be  
done.

[*To the others.*] You, gentles, tell me if  
I guess aright—

May I not strike this man to earth?

*The Courtiers.* [*as GUIBERT springs  
forward, withholding him.*] Let go!

—The clothiers' spokesman, Guibert?  
Grace a churl?

*The D.* [*to VALENCE.*] Oh, be ac-  
quainted with your party, sir!

He's of the oldest lineage Juliers boasts;  
A lion crests him for a cognisance

"Scorning to waver"—that's his  
'scutcheon's word;

His office with the new Duke—pro-  
bably

The same in honour as with me; or  
more,  
Byso much as this gallant turn deserves.

He's now, I dare say, of a thousand times

The rank and influence that remain with her

Whose part you take! So, lest for taking it

You suffer . . .

*Val.* I may strike him then to earth?

*Gui.* [*falling on his knee.*] Great and dear lady, pardon me! Hear once! Believe me and be merciful—be just! I could not bring myself to give that paper

Without a keener pang than I dared meet

—And so felt Clugnet here, and Maufroy here

—No one dared meet it. Protestation's cheap,—

But, if to die for you did any good, [*To GAUCELME.*] Would not I die, sir? Say your worst of me!

But it does no good, that's the mournful truth.

And since the hint of a resistance, even,

Would just precipitate, on you the first, A speedier ruin—I shall not deny,

Saving myself indubitable pain, I thought to give you pleasure (who might say?)

By showing that your only subject found

To carry the sad notice, was the man Precisely ignorant of its contents;

A nameless, mere provincial advocate; One whom 't was like you never saw before,

Never would see again. All has gone wrong;

But I meant right, God knows, and you, I trust!

*The D.* A nameless advocate, this gentleman?—

—(I pardon you, Sir Guibert!)

*Gui.* [*rising, to VALENCE*]—Sir, and you?—

*Val.* —Rejoice that you are lightened of a load.

Now, you have only me to reckon with.

*The D.* One I have never seen, much less obliged?—

*Val.* Dare I speak, lady?

*The D.* Dare you! Heard you not

I rde no longer?

*Val.* Lady, if your rule Were based alone on such a ground as these

[*Pointing to the Courtiers.* Could furnish you,—abjure it! They have hidden

A source of true dominion from your sight.

*The D.* You hear them—no such source is left . . .

*Val.* Hear Cleves! Whose haggard craftsmen rose to starve this day,

Starve now, and will lie down at night to starve,

Sure of a like to-morrow—but as sure Of a most unlike morrow-after-that,

Since end things must, end howsoe'er things may.

What curbs the brute-force instinct in its hour?

What makes—instead of rising, all as one,

And teaching fingers, so expert to wield Their tool, the broadsword's play or carbine's trick,

—What makes that there's an easier help, they think,

For you, whose name so few of them can spell,

Whose face scarce one in every hundred saw,—

You simply have to understand their wrongs,

And wrongs will vanish—so, still trades are plied,

And swords lie rusting, and myself stand here?

There is a vision in the heart of each Of justice, mercy, wisdom, tenderness

To wrong and pain, and knowledge of its cure:

And these embodied in a woman's form That best transmits them, pure as first received,

From God above her, to mankind below.

Will you derive your rule from such a ground,

Or rather hold it by the suffrage, say, Of this man—this—and this?

*The D.* [*after a pause.*] You come from Cleves.

How many are at Cleves of such a mind?

*Val.* [*from his paper.*] "We, all the manufacturers of Cleves—"

*The D.* Or stay, sir—lest I seem too covetous—  
 Are you my subject? such as you describe,  
 Am I to you, though to no other man?  
*Val.* [from his paper.]—"Valence ordained your Advocate at Cleves"—  
*The D.* [replacing the coronet.] Then I remain Cleves' Duchess! Take you note,  
 While Cleves but yields one subject of this stamp,  
 I stand her lady till she waves me off!  
 For her sake, all the Prince claims I withhold;  
 Laugh at each menace; and, his power defying,  
 Return his missive with its due contempt!

[Casting it away.

*Gui.* [picking it up.]—Which to the Prince I will deliver, lady,  
 [Note it down, Gaucelme]—with your message too!

*The D.* I think the office is a subject's, sir!  
 —Either . . . how style you him?—my special guarder  
 The Marshal's—for who knows but violence  
 May follow the delivery?—Or, perhaps,  
 My Chancellor's—for law may be to urge  
 On its receipt!—Or, even my Chamberlain's—  
 For I may violate established form!  
 [To VALENCE.] Sir,—for the half-hour till this service ends,  
 Will you become all these to me?

*Val.* [falling on his knee.] My liege!  
*The D.* Give me!

[The Courtiers present their badges of office.

[Putting them by.]—Whatever was their virtue once,  
 They need new consecration. [raising VALENCE.] Are you mine?  
 —I will be Duchess yet! [She retires.  
*The Courtiers.* Our Duchess yet!  
 A glorious lady! Worthy love and dread!

I'll stand by her,—and I, whate'er betide!

*Gui.* [to VALENCE.] Well done, well done, sir! I care not who knows,  
 You have done nobly and I envy you—

Tho' I am but unfairly used, I think:  
 For when one gets a place like this I hold,

One gets too the remark that its mere wages,  
 The pay and the preferment, make our prize.

Talk about zeal and faith apart from these,

We're laughed at—much would zeal and faith subsist

Without these also! Yet, let these be stopped,

Our wages discontinue,—then, indeed,  
 Our zeal and faith, (we hear on every side,)

Are not released—having been pledged away

I wonder, for what zeal and faith in turn?

Hard money purchased me my place!  
 No, no—

I'm right, sir—but your wrong is better still,

If I had time and skill to argue it.  
 Therefore, I say, I'll serve you, how you please—

If you like,—fight you, as you seem to wish—

(The kinder of me that, in sober truth,  
 I never dreamed I did you any harm) . . .

*Gau.* —Or, kinder still, you'll introduce, no doubt,

His merits to the Prince who's just at hand,

And let no hint drop he's made Chancellor

And Chamberlain and Heaven knows what beside!

*Clug.* [to VALENCE.] You stare, young sir, and threaten! Let me say,

That at your age, when first I came to court,

I was not much above a gentleman;  
 While now . . .

*Val.* —You are Head-Lackey  
 With your office

I have not yet been graced, sir!  
*Other Courtiers to Clug.* Let him talk.

Fidelity, disinterestedness,  
 Excuse so much! Men claim my worship ever

Who staunchly and steadfastly . . .

Enter ADOLF.

*Adolf.* The Prince arrives.  
*Courtiers.* Ha? How?  
*Adolf.* He leaves his guard a stage behind  
 At Aix, and enters almost by himself.  
*1st Court.* The Prince! This foolish business puts all out.  
*2nd Court.* Let Gauce me speak first!  
*3rd Court.* Better I began  
 About the state of Juliers: should one say  
 All's prosperous and inviting him?  
*4th Court.* —Or rather,  
 All's prostrate and imploring him?  
*5th Court.* That's best.  
 Where's the Cleves' paper, by the way?  
*4th Court.* [to VALENCE.] Sir—sir—  
 If you'll but lend that paper—trust it me,  
 I'll warrant . . .  
*5th Court.* Softly, sir—the Marshal's duty!  
*Clug.* Has not the Chamberlain a hearing first  
 By virtue of his patent?  
*Gau.* Patents?—Duties?  
 All that, my masters, must begin again!  
 One word composes the whole controversy:  
 We're simply now—the Prince's!  
*The Others.* Ay—the Prince's!

Enter SABYNE.

*Sab.* Adolf! Bid . . . Oh, no time for ceremony!  
 Where's whom our lady calls her only subject?  
 She needs him. Who is here the Duchess's?  
*Val.* [starting from his reverie.] Most gratefully I follow to her feet.

ACT III

Afternoon. SCENE.—The Vestibule.

Enter PRINCE BERTHOLD and MELCHIOR.

*Berth.* A thriving little burgh this Juliers looks.  
 [Half-apart.] Keep Juliers, and as good you kept Cologne:  
 Better try Aix, though!  
*Mel.* Please 't your Highness speak?  
*Berth.* [as before.] Aix, Cologne, Frankfort,—Milan;—Rome!

*Mel.* —The Grave.  
 —More weary seems your Highness, I remark,  
 Than sundry conquerors whose path I've watched  
 Through fire and blood to any prize they gain.  
 I could well wish you, for your proper sake,  
 Had met some shade of opposition here  
 —Found a blunt seneschal refuse un-  
 lock,  
 Or a scared usher lead your steps astray.  
 You must not look for next achievement's palm  
 So easily: this will hurt your conquering.  
*Berth.* My next? Ay—as you say, my next and next!  
 Well, I am tired, that's truth, and moody too,  
 This quiet entrance-morning: listen why!  
 Our little burgh, now, Juliers—'t is indeed  
 One link, however insignificant,  
 Of the great chain by which I reach my hope,  
 —A link I must secure; but otherwise,  
 You'd wonder I esteem it worth my grasp.  
 Just see what life is, with its shifts and turns!  
 It happens now—this very nook—to be  
 A place that once . . . not a long while since, neither—  
 When I lived an ambiguous hanger-on  
 Of foreign courts, and bore my claims about,  
 Discarded by one kinsman, and the other  
 A poor priest merely,—then, I say, this place  
 Shone my ambition's object; to be Duke—  
 Seemed then, what to be Emperor seems now.  
 My rights were far from being judged as plain  
 In those days as of late, I promise you:  
 And 't was my day-dream, Lady Colombe here  
 Might e'en compound the matter, pity me,  
 Be struck, say, with my chivalry and grace

(I was a boy!)—bestow her hand at length,

And make me Duke, in her right if not mine.

Here am I, Duke confessed, at Juliers now.

Hearken: if ever I be Emperor, Remind me what I felt and said to-day!

*Mel.* All this consoles a bookish man like me.

—And so will weariness cling to you. Wrong,

Wrong! Had you sought the lady's court yourself,—

Faced the redoubtables composing it, Flattered this, threatened that man,

bribed the other,—

Pleaded by writ and word and deed, your cause,—

Conquered a footing inch by painful inch,—

And, after long years' struggle, pounced at last

On her for prize,—the right life had been lived,

And justice done to divers faculties Shut in that brow. Yourself were visible

As you stood victor, then; whom now —(your pardon!)

I am forced narrowly to search and see—

So are you hid by helps—this Pope, your uncle—

Your cousin, the other King! You are a mind,—

They, body: too much of mere legs-and-arms

Obstructs the mind so! Match these with their like:

Match mind with mind!

*Berth.* And where's your mind to match?

They show me legs-and-arms to cope withal!

I'd subjugate this city—where's its mind?

[*The Courtiers enter slowly.*

*Mel.* Got out of sight when you came troops and all!

And in its stead, here greets you flesh-and-blood—

A smug oeconomy of both, this first!

[*As CLUGNET bows obsequiously.*

Well done, gout, all considered!—I may go?

*Berth.* Help me receive them!

*Mel.* Oh, they just will say What yesterday at Aix their fellows said,—

At Treves, the day before!—Sir Prince, my friend,

Why do you let your life slip thus?—Meantime,

I have my little Juliers to achieve—

The understanding this tough Platonist, Your holy uncle disinterred, Amelius—

Lend me a company of horse and foot, To help me through his tractate—gain my Duchy!

*Berth.* And Empire, after that is gained, will be—?

*Mel.* To help me through your uncle's comment, Prince! [*Goes.*

*Berth.* Ah? Well: he o'er-refines —the scholar's fault!

How do I let my life slip? Say, this life,

I lead now, differs from the common life

Of other men in mere degree, not kind, Of joys and griefs,—still there is such degree—

Mere largeness in a life is something, sure,—

Enough to care about and struggle for, In this world: for this world, the size of things;

The sort of things, for that to come, no doubt.

A great is better than a little aim: And when I wooed Priscilla's rosy mouth [*wall,*

And failed so, under that grey convent— Was I more happy than I should be now.

[*By this time, the Courtiers are ranged before him.*

If failing of my Empire? Not a whit. —Here comes the mind, it once had tasked me sore

To baffle, but for my advantages! All's best as 't is: these scholars talk and talk.

[*Seats himself.*

*The Courtiers.* Welcome our Prince to Juliers!—to his heritage!

Our dutifullest service proffer we!

*Clug.* I, please your Highness, having exercised

The function of Grand Chamberlain at court,

With much acceptance, as men testify . . .

*Berth.* I cannot greatly thank you, gentlemen!

The Pope declares my claim to the Duchy founded

On strictest justice; if you concede it, therefore,

I do not wonder: and the kings my friends

Protesting they will see such claim enforced,

You easily may offer to assist us.

But there's a slight discretionary power

To serve me in the matter, you've had long,

Though late you use it. This is well to say—

But could you not have said it months ago?

I'm not denied my own Duke's truncheon, true—

'Tis flung me—I stoop down, and from the ground

Pick it, with all you placid standers-by—

And now I have it, gems and mire at once,

Grace go with it to my soiled hands, you say!

*Gui.* (By Paul, the advocate our doughty friend

Cuts the best figure!)

*Gau.* If our ignorance

May have offended, sure our loyalty. . .

*Berth.* Loyalty? Yours?—Oh—of yourselves you speak!

—I mean the Duchess all this time, I hope!

And since I have been forced repeat my claims

As if they never had been made before, As I began, so must I end, it seems.

The formal answer to the grave demand!

What says the lady?

*Courtiers.* [one to another.] 1st Court. Marshal! 2nd Court. Orator!

*Gui.* A variation of our mistress' way!

Wipe off his boots' dust, Clugnet!—that, he waits!

1st Court. Your place!

2nd Court. Just now it was your own!

*Gui.* The devil's!

*Berth.* [to GUIBERT.] Come forward, friend—you with the paper, there!

Is Juliers the first city I've obtained?

By this time, I may boast proficiency

In each decorum of the circumstance.

Give it me as she gave it—the petition

Demand, you style it—What's required, in brief?

What title's reservation, appanage's Allowance?—I heard all at Treves, last week,

*Gau.* [to GUIBERT.] "Give it him as she gave it!"

*Gui.* And why not?

[To BERTHOLD.] The lady crushed your summons thus together,

And bade me, with the very greatest scorn

So fair a frame could hold, inform you . . .

*Courtiers.* Stop—

Idiot!

*Gui.* —Inform you she denied your claim,

Defied yourself! (I tread upon his heel, The blustering advocate!)

*Berth.* By heaven and earth!

Dare you jest, sir?

*Gui.* Did they at Treves, last week?

*Berth.* [starting up.] Why then, I look much bolder than I knew,

And you prove better actors than I thought—

Since, as I live, I took you as you entered [mine]

For just so many dearest friends of Fled from the sinking to the rising power

—The sneaking'st crew, in short, I e'er despised!

Whereas, I am alone here for the moment,

With every soldier left behind at Aix!

Silence? That means the worst? I thought as much!

What follows next then?

*Courtiers.* Gracious Prince—he raves!

*Gui.* He asked the truth and why not get the truth?

*Berth.* Am I a prisoner? Speak, will somebody?

—But why stand paltering with imbeciles?

Let me see her, or . . .

*Gui.* Her, without her leave, Shall no one see: she's Duchess yet!

*Courtiers.* [Footsteps without, as they are disputing.] Good chance!

She's here—the Lady Colombe's self!  
*Berth.* 'T is well!

[*Aside.*] Array a handful thus against  
 my world?

Not ill done, truly! Were not this a  
 mind

To match one's mind with? Colombe!  
 —Let us wait!

I failed so, under that grey convent  
 wall!

She comes.

*Gui.* The Duchess! Strangers,  
 range yourselves!

[*As the DUCHESS enters in conversation with VALENCE, BERTHOLD and the Courtiers fall back a little.*]

*The D.* Presagefully it beats, presagefully,

My heart: the right is Berthold's and  
 not mine.

*Val.* Grant that he has the right,  
 dare I mistrust

Your power to acquiesce so patiently  
 As you believe, in such a dream-like  
 change

Of fortune—change abrupt, profound,  
 complete?

*The D.* Ah, the first bitterness is  
 over now!

Bitter I may have felt it to confront  
 The truth, and ascertain those natures'  
 value

I had so counted on; that was a pang:  
 But I did bear it, and the worst is over.  
 Let the Prince take them!

*Val.* —And take Juliers too?  
 —Your people without crosses, wands  
 and chains—

Only with hearts?

*The D.* There I feel guilty, sir!

I cannot give up what I never had:  
 For I ruled these, not them—these  
 stood between.

Shall I confess, sir? I have heard by  
 stealth

Of Berthold from the first; more news  
 and more:

Closer and closer swam the thunder  
 cloud,

But I was safely housed with these, I  
 knew! [turn]

At times, when to the casement I would  
 At a bird's passage or a flower-trail's  
 play,

I caught the storm's red glimpses on its  
 edge—

Yet I was sure some one of all these  
 friends

Would interpose: I followed the bird's  
 flight

Or plucked the flower—some one would  
 interpose!

*Val.* Not one thought on the People  
 —and Cleves there!

*The D.* Now, sadly conscious my real  
 sway was missed,

Its shadow goes without so much regret:  
 Else could I not again thus calmly bid  
 you,

Answer Prince Berthold!

*Val.* Then you acquiesce?  
*The D.* Remember over whom it was  
 I ruled!

*Gui.* [*stepping forward.*] Prince Berthold,  
 yonder, craves an audience,  
 lady!

*The D.* [*to VALENCE.*] I only have to  
 turn, and I shall face

Prince Berthold! Oh, my very heart  
 is sick!

It is the daughter of a line of Dukes,  
 This scornful insolent adventurer

Will bid depart from my dead father's  
 halls!

I shall not answer him—dispute with  
 him— [sir!

But, as he bids, depart! Prevent it,  
 Sir—but a mere day's respite! Urge  
 for me

—What I shall call to mind I should  
 have urged

When time's gone by—'t will all be  
 mine, you urge!

A day—an hour—that I myself may  
 lay

My rule down! 'T is too sudden—  
 must not be!

The world's to hear of it! Once done  
 —for ever!

How will it read, sir? How be sung  
 about?

Prevent it!

*Berth.* [*approaching.*] Your frank  
 indignation, lady,

Cannot escape me. Overbold I seem;  
 But somewhat should be pardoned my  
 surprise,

At this reception,—this defiance, rather.  
 And if, for their and your sakes, I re-  
 joice

Your virtues could inspire a trusty few  
 To make such gallant stand in your  
 behalf,

I cannot but be sorry, for my own,  
Your friends should force me to retrace  
my steps.

Since I no longer am permitted speak  
After the pleasant peaceful course pre-  
scribed

No less by courtesy than relationship  
Which I remember, if you once forgot.  
But never must attack pass unrepelled.  
Suffer, that through you, I demand of  
these,

Who controverts my claim to Juliers ?

*The D.* —Me,

You say, you do not speak to—

*Berth.* Of your subjects

I ask, then : whom do you accredit ?

Where

Stand those should answer ?

*Val.* [*advancing.*] The lady is  
alone !

*Berth.* Alone, and thus ? So weak  
and yet so bold ?

*Val.* I said she was alone—

*Berth.* —And weak, I said.

*Val.* When is man strong until he  
feels alone ?

It was some lonely strength at first, be  
sure,

Created organs, such as those you seek,  
By which to give its varied pur, ose  
shape—

And, naming the selected ministrants,  
Took sword, and shield, and sceptre,—  
each, a man !

That strength performed its work and  
passed its way :

You see our lady : there, the old shapes  
stand !

—A Marshal, Chamberlain, and Chan-  
cellor—

“ Be helped their way, into their death  
put life

“ And find advantage ! ”—so you  
counsel us.

But let strength feel alone, seek help  
itself,—

And, as the inland-hatched sea-creature  
hunts

The s'eas breast out,—as, littered  
'mid the waves

The desert-brute makes for the desert's  
joy.

So turns our lady to her true resource,  
Passing o'er hollow fictions, worn-out  
types,

—And I am first her instinct fastens  
on.

And prompt I say, as clear as heart can  
speak,

The People will not have you ; nor  
shall have !

It is not merely I shall go bring Cleves  
And fight you to the last,—though  
that does much,

And men and children,—ay, and  
women too,

Fighting for home, are rather to be  
feared

Than mercenaries fighting for their  
pay—

But, say you beat us, since such things  
have been,

And, where this Juliers laughed, you  
set your foot

Upon a steaming bloody plash—what  
then ?

Stand you the more our lord that there  
you stand ?

Lord it o'er troops whose force you  
concentrate,

A pillared flame whereto all ardours  
tend—

Lord it 'mid priests whose schemes  
you amplify,

A cloud of smoke 'neath which all  
shadows brood—

But never, in this gentle spot of earth,  
Can you become our Colombe, our  
play-queen,

For whom, to furnish lilies for her  
hair,

We'd pour our veins forth to enrich  
the soil !

—Our conqueror ? Yes !—Our despot ?  
Yes !—Our Duke ?

Know yourself, know us !

*Berth.* [*who has been in thought.*]

Know your lady, also !

[*Very deferentially.*]—To whom I needs  
must exculpate myself

For having made a rash demand, at  
least.

Wherefore to you, sir, who appear to be  
Her chief adviser, I submit my claims,

[*Giving papers.*]

But, this step taken, take no further  
step,

Until the Duchess shall pronounce  
their worth.

Here be our meeting-place ; at night,  
its time :

Till when I humbly take the lady's  
leave !

[*He withdraws. As the DUCHESS*

turns to VALENCE, the Courtiers interchange glances and come forward a little.

1st Court. So, this was their device !

2nd Court. No bad device !

3rd Court. You'd say they love each other, Guibert's friend

From Cleves, and she, the Duchess !

4th Court. —And moreover,

That all Prince Berthold comes for, is to help

Their loves !

5th Court. Pray, Guibert, what is next to do ?

Gui. [advancing.] I laid my office at the Duchess' foot—

Others. And I—and I—and I !

The D. I took them, sirs.

Gui. [Apart to VALENCE.] And now, sir, I am simple knight again—

Guibert, of the great ancient house, as yet

That never bore affront ; whate'er your birth,—

As things stand now, I recognise yourself

(If you'll accept experience of some date)

As like to be the leading man o' the time,

Therefore as much above me now, as I Seemed above you this morning. Then, I offered

To fight you : will you be as generous And now fight me ?

Val. Ask when my life is mine !

Gui. ('Tis hers now !)

Clug. [Apart to VALENCE, as Guibert turns from him.]

You, sir, have insulted me Grossly,—will grant me, too, the self-same favour

You've granted him, just now, I make no question ?

Val. I promise you, as him, sir.

Clug. Do you so ?

Handsomely said ! I hold you to it, sir.

You'll get me reinstated in my office As you will Guibert !

The D. I would be alone !

[They begin to retire slowly ; as

VALENCE is about to follow—

Alone, sir—only with my heart : you stay !

Gau. You hear that ? Ah, light breaks upon me ! Cleves—

It was at Cleves some man harangued us all—

With great effect,—so those who listened said,

My thoughts being busy elsewhere : was this he ?

Guibert,—your strange, disinterested man !

Your uncorrupted, if uncourtly friend ! The modest worth you mean to patronize !

He cares about no Duchesses, not he— His sole concern is with the wrongs of Cleves !

What, Guibert ? What, it breaks on you at last ?

Gui. Would this hall's floor were a mine's roof !—I'd back

And in her very face . . .

Gau. Apply the match That fired the train,—and where would you be, pray ?

Gui. With him !

Gau. Stand, rather, safe outside with me !

The mine's charged—shall I furnish you the match

And place you properly ?—To the antechamber !

Gui. Can you ?

Gau. Try me !—Your friend's in fortune !

Gui. Quick— To the antechamber !—He is pale with bliss !

Gau. No wonder ! Mark her eyes !

Gui. To the antechamber !

[The Courtiers retire.]

The D. Sir, could you know all you have done for me

You were content ! You spoke, and I am saved !

Val. Be not too sanguine, lady ! Ere you dream,

That transient flush of generosity Fades off, perchance ! The man,

beside, is gone,— Him we might bend ; but see, the

papers here— Inalterably his requirement stays,

And cold hard words have we to deal with now. [pride,

In that large eye there seemed a latent To self-denial not incompetent,

But very like to hold itself dispensed From such a grace : however, let us

hope !

He is a noble spirit in noble form.  
I wish he less had bent that brow to  
smile

As with the fancy how he could subject  
Himself upon occasion to—himself!

From rudeness, violence, you rest  
secure ;

But do not think your Duchy rescued  
yet!

*The D.* You,—who have opened a  
new world to me,

Will never take the faded language up  
Of that I leave? My Duchy—keeping  
it,

Or losing it—is that my sole world now?

*Val.* Ill have I spoken if you thence  
despise

Juliers; although the lowest, on true  
grounds,

Be worth more than the highest rule,  
on false:

Aspire to rule, on the true grounds!

*The D.* Nay, hear—  
False, I will never—rash, I would not  
be!

This is indeed my birthday—soul and  
body,

Its hours have done on me the work of  
years.

You hold the requisition: ponder it!

If I have right, my duty's plain: if he—  
Say so, nor ever change a tone of voice!

At night you meet the Prince; meet  
me at eve!

Till when, farewell! This discomposes  
you?

Believe in your own nature, and its  
force

Of renovating mine! I take my stand

Only as an er me the earth is firm:

So, prove the first step stable, all will  
prove.

That first, I choose—[*laying her hand  
on his,*—the next to take, choose  
you! [*She withdraws.*]

*Val.* [*after a pause.*] What drew  
down this on me?—on me, dead  
once,

She thus bids live,—since all I hitherto  
Thought dead in me, youth's ardours  
and emprise,

Burst into life before her, as she bids  
Who needs them. Whither will this  
reach, where end?

Her hand's print burns on mine . . .  
Yet she's above—

So very far above me! All's too plain:

I served her when the others sank away,  
And she rewards me as such souls re-  
ward—

The changed voice, the suffusion of the  
cheek,

The eye's acceptance, the expressive  
hand,

—Reward, that's little, in her generous  
thought,

Though all to me . . .  
I cannot so disclaim

Heaven's gift, nor call it other than it is,  
She loves me!

[*Looking at the Prince's papers.*—  
Which love, these perchance, for-  
bid.

Can I decide against myself—pronounce  
She is the Duchess and no mate for me?

—Cleves, help me! Teach me,—  
every haggard face,—

To sorrow and endure! I will do right  
Whatever be the issue. Help me,  
Cleves!

ACT IV

*Evening.* SCENE. *An Antechamber.*

*Enter the Courtiers.*

*Mau.* Now then, that we may  
speak—how spring this mine?

*Gau.* Is Guibert ready for its match?  
He cools!

Not so friend Valence with the Duchess  
there!

“Stay, Valence! Are you not my  
better self?”

And her cheek mantled—  
*Gui.* Well, she loves him, sir:

And more,—since you will have it I  
grow cool,—

‘he's right: he's worth it.  
*Gau.* For his deeds to-day?

Say so!  
*Gui.* What should I say beside?  
*Gau.* Not this—

For friendship's sake leave this for me  
to say—

That we're the dupes of an egregious  
cheat!

This plain unpractised suitor, who  
found way

To the Duchess through the merest  
die's turn-up

A year ago, had seen her and been seen,  
Loved and been loved.

*Gui.* Impossible!  
*Gau.* —Nor say,

How sly and exquisite a trick, moreover,  
 Was this which—taking not their stand  
 on facts  
 Boldly, for that had been endurable,  
 But worming on their way by craft,  
 they choose  
 Resort to, rather,—and which you and  
 we,  
 Sheep-like, assist them in the playing  
 off !  
 The Duchess thus parades him as preferred,  
 Not on the honest ground of preference,  
 Seeing first, liking more, and there an  
 end—  
 But as we all had started equally,  
 And at the close of a fair race he proved  
 The only valiant, sage and loyal man.  
 Herself, too, with the pretty fits and  
 starts,—  
 The careless, winning, candid ignorance  
 Of what the Prince might challenge or  
 forego—  
 She had a hero in reserve ! What risk  
 Ran she ? This deferential easy Prince  
 Who brings his claims for her to ratify  
 —He's just her puppet for the nonce !  
 You'll see,—  
 Valence pronounces, as is equitable,  
 Against him : off goes the confederate :  
 As equitably, Valence takes her hand !  
*The Chancellor.* You run too fast :  
 her hand, no subject takes.  
 Do not our archives hold her father's  
 will ?  
 That will provides against such accident,  
 And gives next heir, Prince Berthold,  
 the reversion  
 Of Juliers, which she forfeits, wedding  
 so.  
*Gau.* I know that, well as you,—but  
 does the Prince ?  
 Knows Berthold, think you, that this  
 plan, he helps,  
 For Valence's ennoblement—would  
 end,  
 If crowned with the success which  
 seems its due,  
 In making him the very thing he plays,  
 The actual Duke of Juliers ? All  
 agree  
 That Colombe's title waived or set  
 aside,  
 He is next heir.

*The Chan.* Incontrovertibly.  
*Gau.* Guibert, your match, now, to  
 the train !  
*Gui.* Enough !  
 I'm with you : selfishness is best again.  
 I thought of turning honest—what a  
 dream !  
 Let's wake now !  
*Gau.* Selfish, friend, you never  
 were :  
 'T was but a series of revenges taken  
 On your unselfishness for prospering ill.  
 But now that you're grown wiser,  
 what's our course ?  
*Gui.* —Wait, I suppose, till Valence  
 weds our lady,  
 And then, if we must needs revenge  
 ourselves,  
 Apprise the Prince.  
*Gau.* —The Prince, ere then dis-  
 missed  
 With thanks for playing his mock part  
 so well ?  
 Tell the Prince now, sir ! Ay, this  
 very night—  
 Ere he accepts his dole and goes his  
 Explain how such a marriage makes  
 him Duke,  
 Then trust his gratitude for the sur-  
 prise !  
*Gui.* —Our lady wedding Valence all  
 the same  
 As if the penalty were undisclosed ?  
 Good ! If she loves, she'll not disown  
 her love,  
 Throw Valence up. I wonder you see  
 that.  
*Gau.* The shame of it—the sudden-  
 ness and shame !  
 Within her, the inclining heart—with-  
 out,  
 A terrible array of witnesses—  
 And Valence by, to keep her to her  
 word,  
 With Berthold's indignation or disgust !  
 We'll try it !—Not that we can venture  
 much.  
 Her confidence we've lost for ever :  
 Berthold's  
 Is all to gain  
*Gui.* To-night, then, venture we !  
 Yet—if lost confidence might be re-  
 newed ?  
*Gau.* Never in noble natures ! With  
 the base ones,—  
 Twist off the crab's claw, wait a  
 smarting-while,

And something grows and grows and gets to be

A mimic of the lost joint, just so like  
As keeps in mind it never, never will  
Replace its predecessor! Crabs do that:

But lop the lion's foot—and . . .  
*Gai.* To the Prince!

*Gau. [Aside.]* And come what will to the lion's foot, I pay you, My cat's-paw, as I long have yearned to pay!

*[Aloud.]* Footsteps! Himself! 'Tis Valence breaks on us,  
Exulting that their scheme succeeds.  
We'll hence—

And perfect ours! Consult the archives, first—  
Then, fortified with knowledge, seek the Hall!

*Clug. [to GAUCELME as they retire.]*  
You have not smiled so since your father died!

*As they retire, enter VALENCE with papers.*

*Val.* So must it be! I have examined these  
With scarce a palpitating heart—so calm,

Keeping her image almost wholly off,  
Setting upon myself determined watch,  
Repelling to the uttermost his claims,  
And the result is—all men would pronounce

And not I, only, the result to be—  
Berthold is heir; she has no shade of right

To the distinction which divided us,  
But, suffered to rule first, I know not why,

Her rule connived at by those Kings and Popes,  
To serve some devil's-purpose,—now 'tis gained,

Whate'er it was, the rule expires as well.  
—Valence, this rapture . . . selfish can it be?

Eject it from your heart, her home!—  
It stays!

Ah, the brave world that opens on us both!

—Do my poor townsmen so esteem it? Cleves,—

I need not your pale faces! This, reward

For service done to you? Too horrible!

I never served you: 't was myself I served—

Nay, served not—rather saved from punishment

Which, had I failed you then, would plague me now!

My life continues yours, and your life, mine.

But if, to take God's gift, I swerve no step—

Cleves!—If I breathe no prayer for it—  
—if she,

*[Footsteps without.]*

Colombe, that comes now, freely gives herself—

Will Cleves require, that, turning thus to her,

I . . .

*Enter PRINCE BERTHOLD.*

Pardon, sir! I did not look for you  
Till night, in the Hall; nor have as yet declared

My judgment to the lady.

*Berth.* So I hoped.

*Val.* And yet I scarcely know why that should check

The frank disclosure of it first to you—  
What her right seems, and what, in consequence,

She will decide on—

*Berth.* That I need not ask.

*Val.* You need not: I have proved the lady's mind—

And justice being to do, dare act for her.

*Berth.* Doubtless she has a very noble mind.

*Val.* Oh, never fear but she'll in each conjuncture

Bear herself bravely! She no whit depends

On circumstance; as she adorns a throne,  
She had adorned . . .

*Berth.* A cottage—in what book  
Have I read that, of every queen that lived?

A throne! You have not been instructed, sure,

To forestall my request?

*Val.* 'Tis granted, sir!  
My heart instructs me. I have scrutinized

Your claims . . .

*Berth.* Ah—claims, you mean, at first preferred?

I come, before the hour appointed me,  
To pray you let those claims at present  
rest,

In favour of a new and stronger one.

*Val.* You shall not need a stronger :  
on the part

Of the lady, all you offer I accept,  
Since one clear right suffices : yours is  
clear.

Propose !

*Berth.* I offer her my hand.

*Val.* Your hand ?

*Berth.* A Duke's, yourself say ; and,  
at no far time,  
Something here whispers me—the  
Emperor's.

The lady's mind is noble ; which  
induced

This seizure of occasion ere my claims  
Were—settled, let us amicably say !

*Val.* Your hand !

*Berth.* (He will fall down and  
kiss it next !)

Sir, this astonishment's too flattering,  
Nor must you hold your mistress' worth  
so cheap.

Enhance it, rather,—urge that blood is  
blood—

The daughter of the Burgraves, Land-  
graves, Markgraves,

Remains their daughter ! I shall  
scarce gainsay.

Elsewhere or here, the lady needs must  
rule :

Like the imperial crown's great  
chrysopease,

They talk of—somewhat out of keeping  
there,

And yet no jewel for a meaner cap.

*Val.* You wed the Duchess ?

*Berth.* Cry you mercy, friend !

Will the match also influence fortunes  
here ?

A natural solicitude enough.

Be certain, no bad chance it proves for  
you !

However high you take your present  
stand,

There's prospect of a higher still re-  
move—

For Juliers will not be my resting-place,  
And, when I have to choose a sub-  
stitute

To rule the little burgh, I'll think of  
you.

You need not give your mates a char-  
acter.

And yet I doubt your fitness to sup-  
plant

The grey smooth Chamberlain : he'd  
hesitate

A doubt his lady could demean herself  
So low as to accept me. Courage, sir !

I like your method better : feeling's  
play

Is franker much, and flatters me beside.

*Val.* I am to say, you love her ?

*Berth.* Say that too !

Love has no great concernment, thinks  
the world,

With a Duke's marriage. How go  
precedents

In Juliers' story—how use Juliers'  
Dukes ?

I see you have them here in goodly  
row ;

You must be Luitpold,—ay, a stalwart  
sire !

—Say, I have been arrested suddenly  
In my ambition's course, its rocky  
course,

By this sweet flower : I fain would  
gather it

And then proceed—so say and speedily  
—(Nor stand there like Duke Luitpold's  
brazen self !)

Enough, sir : you possess my mind, I  
think.

This is my claim, the others being  
withdrawn,

And to this be it that, in the Hall  
to-night,

Your lady's answer comes ; till when,  
farewell !

[*He retires.*]

*Val.* [*after a pause.*] The heavens  
and earth stay as they were ; my  
heart

Beats as it beat : the truth remains  
the truth.

What falls away, then, if not faith in  
her ?

Was it my faith, that she could  
estimate

Love's value, and, such faith still  
guiding me,

Dare I now test her ? Or grew faith  
so strong

Solely because no power of test was  
mine ?

*Enter the DUCHESS.*

*The D.* My fate, sir ! Ah, you turn  
away. All 's over.

But you are sorry for me? Be not so!  
What I might have become, and never  
was,

Regret with me! What I have merely  
been,

Rejoice I am no longer! What I seem  
Beginning now, in my new state, to be,  
Hope that I am!—for, once my rights  
proved void,

This heavy roof seems easy to exchange  
For the blue sky outside—my lot  
henceforth.

*Val.* And what a lot is Berthold's!  
*The D.* How of him?

*Val.* He gathers earth's whole good  
into his arms;

Standing, as man now, stately, strong  
and wise,

Marching to fortune, not surprised by  
her.

One great aim, like a guiding-star,  
above—

Which tasks strength, wisdom, stateli-  
ness, to lift

His manhood to the height that takes  
the prize;

A prize not near—lest overlooking earth  
He rashly spring to seize it—nor re-  
mote,

So that he rest upon his path content:  
But day by day, while shimmering  
grows shine,

And the faint cirlet prophesies the  
orb,

He sees so much as, just evolving these,  
The stateliness, the wisdom and the  
strength,

To due completion, will suffice this life,  
And lead him at his grandest to the  
grave.

After this star, out of a night he springs:  
A beggar's cradle for the throne of  
thrones

He quits; so, mounting, feels each  
step he mounts,

Nor, as from each to each exultingly  
He passes, overleaps one grade of joy.

This, for his own good:—with the  
world, each gift

Of God and man—reality, tradition,  
Fancy and fact—so well environ him,

That as a mystic panoply they serve—  
Of force, untenanted, to awe mankind,

And work his purpose out with half the  
world,

While he, their master, dexterously  
slipt

From such encumbrance, is meantime  
employed

With his own prowess on the other half.  
Thus shall he prosper, every day's  
success

Adding, to what is he, a solid strength—  
An æry might to what encircles him,  
Till at the last, so life's routine lends  
help,

That as the Emperor only breathes and  
moves,

His shadow shall be watched, his step  
or stalk

Become a comfort or a portent, how  
He trails his ermine take significance,—

Till even his power shall cease to be  
most power,

And men shall dread his weakness  
more, nor dare

Peril their earth its bravest, first and  
best,

Its typified invincibility.  
Thus shall he go on, greatening, till he  
ends—

The man of men, the spirit of all flesh,  
The fiery centre of an earthly world!

*The D.* Some such a fortune I had  
dreamed should rise

Out of my own—that is, above my  
power

Seemed other, greater potencies to  
stretch—

*Val.* For you?  
*The D.* It was not I moved there,  
I think:

But one I could,—though constantly  
beside,

And aye approaching,—still keep dis-  
tant from, [there.

And so adore. 'T was a man moved  
*Val.* Who?

*The D.* I felt the spirit, never saw  
the face.

*Val.* See it! 'T is Berthold's! He  
enables you

To realize your vision.  
*The D.* Berthold?

*Val.* Duke—  
Emperor to be: he proffers you his  
hand.

*The D.* Generous and princely!  
*Val.* He is all of this.

*The D.* Thanks, Berthold, for my  
father's sake! No hand

Degrades me!

*Val.* You accept the proffered  
hand?

*The D.* That he should love me!  
*Val.* "Loved" I did not say!  
 Had that been—love might so incline  
 the Prince  
 To the world's good, the world that's  
 at his foot,—  
 I do not know, this moment, I should  
 dare  
 Desire that you refused the world—  
 and Cleves—  
 The sacrifice he asks.  
*The D.* Not love me, sir?  
*Val.* He scarce affirmed it.  
*The D.* May not deeds affirm?  
*Val.* What does he? . . . Yes, yes,  
 very much he does!  
 All the shame saved, he thinks, and  
 sorrow saved—  
 Immitigable sorrow, so he thinks,—  
 Sorrow that's deeper than we dream,  
 perchance!  
*The D.* Is not this love?  
*Val.* So very much he does!  
 For look, you can descend now grace-  
 fully:  
 All doubts are banished, that the world  
 might have,  
 Or worst, the doubts yourself, in after-  
 time,  
 May call up of your heart's sincereness  
 now.  
 To such, reply, "I could have kept  
 my rule—  
 "Increased it to the utmost of my  
 dreams—  
 "Yet I abjured it." This, he does for  
 you:  
 It is munificently much.  
*The D.* Still "much!"  
 But why is it not love, sir? Answer  
 me!  
*Val.* Because not one of Berthold's  
 words and looks  
 Had gone with love's presentment of a  
 flower  
 To the beloved: because bold confid-  
 ence,  
 Open superiority, free pride—  
 Love owns not, yet were all that Berthold owned:  
 Because where reason, even, finds no  
 flaw,  
 Unerringly a lover's instinct may.  
*The D.* You reason, then, and doubt?  
*Val.* I love, and know.  
*The D.* You love?—How strange!  
 I never cast a thought

On that! Just see our selfishness!  
 You seemed  
 So much my own . . . I had no ground  
 —and yet,  
 I never dreamed another might divide  
 My power with you, much less exceed  
 it.  
*Val.* Lady,  
 I am yours wholly,  
*The D.* Oh, no, no, not mine!  
 'T is not the same now, never more can  
 be.  
 —Your first love, doubtless. Well,  
 What's gone from me?  
 What have I lost in you?  
*Val.* My heart replies—  
 No loss there! So, to Berthold back  
 again:  
 This offer of his hand, he bids me  
 make—  
 Its obvious magnitude is well to weigh.  
*The D.* She's . . . yes, she must  
 be very fair for you!  
*Val.* I am a simple advocate of  
 Cleves.  
*The D.* You! With the heart and  
 brain that so helped me,  
 I fancied them exclusively my own,  
 Yet find are subject to a stronger sway!  
 She must be . . . tell me, is she very  
 fair?  
*Val.* Most fair, beyond conception or  
 belief.  
*The D.* Black eyes?—no matter!  
 Colombe, the world leads  
 Its life without you, whom your friends  
 professed [spoke!  
 The only woman—see how true they  
 One lived this while, who never saw  
 your face,  
 Nor heard your voice—unless . . . Is  
 she from Cleves?  
*Val.* Cleves knows her well.  
*The D.* Ah—just a fancy, now!  
 When you poured forth the wrongs of  
 Cleves,—I said,  
 —Thought, that is, afterward . . .  
*Val.* You thought of me?  
*The D.* Of whom else? Only such  
 great cause, I thought,  
 For such effect: see what true love  
 can do!  
 Cleves is his love. I almost fear to ask  
 . . . And will not. This is idling: to  
 our work!  
 Admit before the Prince, without re-  
 serve,

My claims misgrounded; then may follow better

... When you poured out Cleves' wrongs impetuously,  
Was she in your mind?

*Val.* All done was done for her—  
To humble me!

*The D.* She will be proud at least.

*Val.* She?

*The D.* When you tell her.

*Val.* That will never be.

*The D.* How—are there sweeter things you hope to tell?

No, sir! You counselled me,—I counsel you

In the one point I—any woman—can. Your worth, the first thing; let her own come next—

Say what you did through her, and she through you—

The praises of her beauty afterward! Will you?

*Val.* I dare not.

*The D.* Dare not?

*Val.* She I love  
Suspects not such a love in me.

*The D.* You jest.

*Val.* The lady is above me and away. Not only the brave form, and the bright mind,

And the great heart, combine to press me low—

But all the world calls rank divides us.

*The D.* Rank?

Now grant me patience! Here's a man declares

Oracularly in another's case—  
Sees the true value and the false, for them—

Nay, bids them see it, and they straight do see.

You called my court's love worthless—  
so it turned:

I threw away as dross my heap of wealth,

And here you stickle for a piece or two!  
First—has she seen you?

*Val.* Yes.

*The D.* She loves you, then.

*Val.* One flash of hope burst; then succeeded night:

And all's at darkest now. Impossible!

*The D.* We'll try: you are—so to speak—my subject yet?

*Val.* As ever—to the death.

*The D.* Obey me, then!

*Val.* I must.

*The D.* Approach her, and . . .  
no! first of all

Get more assurance. "My instructress," say,

"Was great, descended from a line of kings,

"And even fair"—(wait why I say this folly)—

"She said, of all men, none for eloquence,

"Courage, and (what cast even these to shade)

"The heart they sprung from,—none deserved like him

"Who saved her at her need: if she said this,

"What should not one I love, say?"

*Val.* Heaven—this hope—  
Oh lady, you are filling me with fire!

*The D.* Say this!—nor think I bid you cast aside

One touch of all the awe and reverence;  
Nay—make her proud for once to heart's content

That all this wealth of heart and soul's her own!

Think you are all of this,—and, thinking it,

. . . (Obey!)

*Val.* I cannot choose.

*The D.* Then, kneel to her—  
[VALENCE sinks on his knee.

I dream!

*Val.* Have mercy! Yours, unto the death,—

I have obeyed. Despise, and let me die!

*The D.* Alas, sir, is it to be ever thus?  
Even with you as with the world? I know

[deed  
This morning's service was no vulgar  
Whose motive, once it dares avow itself,

Explains all done and infinitely more,  
So, takes the shelter of a nobler cause,

Your service named its true source,—  
loyalty!

The rest's unsaid again. The Duchess bids you,

Rise, sir! The Prince's words were in debate.

*Val.* [rising.] Rise? Truth, as ever,  
lady, comes from you!

I should rise—I who spoke for Cleves,  
can speak

For Man—yet tremble now, who stood firm then!

I laughed—for 't was past tears—that  
 Cleves should starve  
 With all hearts beating loud the infamy,  
 And no tongue daring trust as much to  
 air :  
 Yet here, where all hearts speak, shall  
 I be mute ?  
 Oh lady, for your own sake look on  
 me !  
 On all I am, and have, and do—heart,  
 brain,  
 Body and soul, this Valence and his  
 gifts ! [sank,  
 I was proud once : I saw you, and they  
 So that each, magnified a thousand  
 times,  
 Were nothing to you—but such no-  
 thingness,  
 Would a crown gild it, or a sceptre prop,  
 A treasure speed, a laurel-wreath  
 enhance ?  
 What is my own desert ? But should  
 your love  
 Have . . . there's no language helps  
 here . . . singled me,—  
 Then—oh, that wild word " then ! "  
 —be just to love,  
 In generosity its attribute !  
 Love, since you pleased to love ! All's  
 cleared—a stage  
 For trial of the question kept so long :  
 Judge you—Is love or vanity the best ?  
 You, solve it for the world's sake—you,  
 speak first  
 What all will shout one day—you,  
 vindicate  
 Our earth and be its angel ! All is said.  
 Lady, I offer nothing—I am yours :  
 But, for the cause' sake, look on me  
 and him  
 And speak !  
*The D.* I have received the  
 Prince's message :  
 Say, I prepare my answer !  
*Val.* Take me, Cleves !  
 [He withdraws.  
*The D.* Mournful—that nothing 's  
 what it calls itself !  
 Devotion, zeal, faith, loyalty—mere  
 love !  
 And, love in question, what may Ber-  
 thold's be ?  
 I did ill to mistrust the world so soon :  
 Already was this Berthold at my side.  
 The valley-level has its hawks no doubt :  
 May not the rock-top have its eagles,  
 too ?

Yet Valence . . . let me see his rival  
 then !

## ACT V

Night.—SCENE. *The Hall.*

*Enter BERTHOLD and MELCHIOR.*

*Mel.* And here you wait the matter's  
 issue ?

*Berth.* Here.

*Mel.* I don't regret I shut Amelius,  
 then.

But tell me, on this grand disclosure,—  
 how

Behaved our spokesman with the fore-  
 head ?

*Berth.* Oh,

Turned out no better than the fore-  
 headless—

Was dazzled not so very soon, that's  
 all !

For my part, this is scarce the hasty  
 showy

Chivalrous measure you give me credit  
 of.

Perhaps I had a fancy,—but 't is gone.  
 —Let her commence the unfriended  
 innocent,

And carry wrongs about from court to  
 court ?

No, truly ! The least shake of for-  
 tune's sand,

—My uncle-Pope chokes in a coughing  
 fit,

King-cousin takes a fancy to blue  
 eyes,—

And wondrously her claims would  
 brighten up ;

Forth comes a new gloss on the ancient  
 law,

O'er-looked provisoes, past o'er  
 premises,

Follow in plenty. No : 't is the safer  
 step.

The hour beneath the convent-wall is  
 lost :

Juliers and she, once mine are ever  
 mine.

*Mel.* Which is to say, you, losing  
 heart already,

Elude the adventure.

*Berth.* Not so—or, if so—  
 Why not confess at once, that I advise  
 None of our kingly craft and guild just  
 now

To lay, one moment, down their  
privilege  
With the notion they can any time at  
pleasure  
Retake it: that may turn out hazard-  
ous.  
We seem, in Europe, pretty well at  
end  
O' the night, with our great masque:  
those favoured few  
Who keep the chamber's top, and  
honour's chance  
Of the early evening, may retain their  
place  
And figure as they list till out of breath.  
But it is growing late: and I observe  
A dim grim kind of tipstaves at the  
doorway  
Not only bar new-comers entering now,  
But caution those who left, for any  
cause,  
And would return, that morning draws  
too near;  
The ball must die off, shut itself up.  
We—  
I think, may dance lights out and sun-  
shine in,  
And sleep off headache on our frippery:  
But friend the other, who cunningly  
stole out,  
And, after breathing the fresh air out-  
side,  
Means to re-enter with a new costume,  
Will be advised go back to bed, I fear.  
I stick to privilege, on second thoughts.  
*Mel.* Yes—you evade the adventure:  
and, beside,  
Give yourself out for colder than you  
are.  
King Philip, only, notes the lady's eyes?  
Don't they come in for somewhat of  
the motive  
With you too?  
*Berth.* Yes—no: I am past that  
now.  
Gone 't is: I cannot shut my soul to  
fact.  
Of course, I might by forethought and  
contrivance  
Reason myself into a rapture. Gone:  
And something better come instead, no  
doubt.  
*Mel.* So be it! Yet, all the same,  
proceed my way,  
Though to your ends; so shall you  
prosper best!  
The lady,—to be won for selfish ends,—

Will be won easier my unselfish . . .  
call it,  
Romantic way.  
*Berth.* Won easier?  
*Mel.* Will not she?  
*Berth.* There I profess humility  
without bound:  
Ill cannot speed—not I—the Emperor.  
\* *Mel.* And I should think the Em-  
peror best waived,  
From your description of her mood and  
way.  
You could look, if it pleased you, into  
hearts;  
But are too indolent and fond of  
watching  
Your own—you know that, for you  
study it.  
*Berth.* Had you but seen the orator  
her friend,  
So bold and voluble an hour before,  
Abashed to earth at aspect of the  
change!  
Make her an Empress? Ah, that  
changed the case!  
Oh, I read hearts! 'T is for my own  
behoof,  
I court her with my true worth: wait  
the event!  
I learned my final lesson on that head  
When years ago,—my first and last  
essay—  
Before the priest my uncle could by  
help  
Of his superior, raise me from the dirt—  
Priscilla left me for a Brabant lord  
Whose cheek was like the topaz on his  
thumb.  
I am past illusion on that score.  
*Mel.* Here comes  
The lady—  
*Berth.* —And there you go. But do  
not! Give me  
Another chance to please you! Hear  
me plead!  
*Mel.* You'll keep, then, to the lover,  
to the man?  
*Enter the DUCHESS—followed by ADOLF  
and SABYNE, and after an interval,  
by the Courtiers.*  
*Berth.* Good auspice to our meeting!  
*The D.* May it prove!  
—And you, sir, will be Emperor one  
day?  
*Berth.* (Ay, that's the point!) I  
may be Emperor.

*The D.* 'Tis not for my sake only, I am proud  
Of this you offer : I am prouder far  
That from the highest state should  
duly spring

The highest, since most generous, of  
deeds.

*Berth.* (Generous—still that!) You  
underrate yourself.

You are, what I, to be complete, must  
have—

Find now, and may not find, another  
time.

While I career on all the world for stage,  
There needs at home my representative.

*The D.* —Such, rather, would some  
warrior-woman be—

One dowered with lands and gold, or  
rich in friends—

One like yourself.

*Berth.* Lady, I am myself,  
And have all these : I want what's not  
myself,

Nor has all these. Why give one hand  
two swords?

Here's one already : be a friend's next  
gift

A silk glove, if you will—I have a sword.

*The D.* You love me, then?

*Berth.* Your lineage I revere,  
Honour your virtue, in your truth  
believe,

Do homage to your intellect, and bow  
Before your peerless beauty.

*The D.* But, for love—

*Berth.* A further love I do not under-  
stand.

Our best course is to say these hideous  
truths,

And see them, once said, grow endur-  
able :

Like waters shuddering from their  
central bed,

Black with the midnight bowels of the  
earth,

That, once up-spouted by an earth-  
quake's throe,

A portent and a terror—soon subside,  
Freshen apace, take gold and rainbow  
hues

In sunshine, sleep in shadow, and at  
last

Grow common to the earth as hills or  
trees—

Accepted by all things they came to  
scare.

*The D.* You cannot love, then?

*Berth.* —Charlemagne, perhaps!  
Are you not over-curious in love-lore?

*The D.* I have become so, very  
recently.

It seems, then, I shall best deserve  
esteem,

Respect, and all your candour promises,  
By putting on a calculating mood—

Asking the terms of my becoming  
yours?

*Berth.* Let me not do myself in-  
justice, neither

Because I will not condescend to fictions  
That promise what my soul can ne'er

acquit,

It does not follow that my guarded  
phrase

May not include far more of what you  
seek,

Than wide profession of less scrupulous  
men.

You will be Empress, once for all:  
with me

The Pope disputes supremacy—you  
stand,

And none gainsays, the earth's first  
woman.

*The D.* That—

Or simple Lady of Ravestein again?

*Berth.* The matter's not in my arbit-  
rament :

Now I have made my claims—which I  
regret—

Cede one, cede all.

*The D.* This claim then, you  
enforce?

*Berth.* The world looks on.

*The D.* And when must I decide?

*Berth.* When, lady? Have I said  
thus much so promptly

For nothing?—Poured out, with such  
pains, at once

What I might else have suffered to  
ooze forth

Droplet by droplet in a lifetime long—  
For aught less than as prompt an

answer, too?

All's fairly told now : who can teach  
you more?

*The D.* I do not see him.

*Berth.* I shall ne'er deceive.  
This offer should be made befittingly

Did time allow the better setting forth  
The good of it, with what is not so good,

Advantage, and disparagement as well :  
But as it is, the sum of both must serve.

I am already weary of this place ;

My thoughts are next stage on to Rome.

Decide!

The Empire—or,—not even Juliers now!

Hail to the Empress—farewell to the Duchess!

[*The Courtiers, who have been drawing nearer and nearer, interpose.*

*Gau.*—"Farewell," Prince? when we break in at our risk—

*Clug.* Almost upon court-licence trespassing—

*Gau.*—To point out how your claims are valid yet!

You know not, by the Duke her father's will,

The lady, if she weds beneath her rank, Forfeits her Duchy in the next heir's favour—

So 't is expressly stipulate. And if It can be shown 't is her intent to wed A subject, then yourself, next heir, by right

Succeed to Juliers.

*Berth.* What insanity?—

*Gui.* Sir, there's one Valence, the pale fiery man

You saw and heard this morning—thought, no doubt,

Was of considerable standing here: I put it to your penetration, Prince, If aught save love, the truest love for her

Could make him serve the lady as he did!

He's simply a poor advocate of Cleves—Creeps here with difficulty, finds a place

With danger, gets in by a miracle, And for the first time meets the lady's face—

So runs the story: is that credible? For, first—no sooner in, than he's appraised

Fortunes have changed; you are all-powerful here,

The lady as powerless: he stands fast by her!

*The D.* [*Aside.*] And do such deeds spring up from love alone?

*Gui.* But here occurs the question, does the lady

Love him again? I say, how else can she?

Can she forget how he stood singly forth In her defence, dared outrage all of us,

Insult yourself—for what, save love's reward?

*The D.* [*Aside.*] And is love then the sole reward of love?

*Gui.* But, love him as she may and must—you ask,

Means she to wed him? "Yes," both natures answer!

Both, in their pride, point out the sole result;

Nought less would he accept nor she propose.

For each conjecture was she great enough

—Will be, for this.

*Clug.* Though, now that this is known,

Policy, doubtless, urges she deny . . .

*The D.*—What, sir, and wherefore?—since I am not sure

That all is any other than you say!

You take this Valence, hold him close to me,

Him with his actions: can I choose but look?

I am not sure, love trulier shows itself Than in this man, you hate and would degrade,

Yet, with your worst abatement, show me thus.

Nor am I—(thus made look within myself,

Ere I had dared)—now that the look is dared—

Sure that I do not love him!

*Gui.* Hear you, Prince?

*Berth.* And what, sirs, please you, may this prattle mean

Unless to prove with what alacrity You give your lady's secrets to the world?

How much indebted, for discovering That quality, you make me, will be found

When there's a keeper for my own to seek.

*Courtiers.* "Our lady?"

*Berth.*—She assuredly remains.

*The D.* Ah, Prince—and you too can be generous?

You could renounce your power, if this were so,

And let me, as these phrase it, wed my love

Yet keep my Duchy? You perhaps exceed

Him, even, in disinterestedness!

*Berth.* How, lady, should all this affect my purpose ?

Your will and choice are still as ever, free.

Say, you have known a worthier than myself [face—

In mind and heart, of happier form and Others must have their birthright : I have gifts,

To balance theirs, not blot them out of sight.

Against a hundred alien qualities, I lay the prize I offer. I am nothing : Wed you the Empire ?

*The D.* And my heart away ?

*Berth.* When have I made pretension to your heart ?

I give none. I shall keep your honour safe ;

With mine I trust you, as the sculptor trusts

You marble woman with the marble rose, [fall,

Loose on her hand, she never will let In graceful, slight, silent security.

You will be proud of my world-wide career,

And I content in you the fair and good. What were the use of planting a few seeds,

The thankless climate never would mature—

Affections all repelled by circumstance ?

Enough : to these no credit I attach,—To what you own, find nothing to object.

Write simply on my requisition's face What shall content my friends—that you admit,

As Colombe of Ravestein, the claims therein,

Or never need admit them, as my wife—And either way, all's ended !

*The D.* Let all end !

*Berth.* The requisition !

*Gui.* —Valence holds, of course !

*Berth.* Desire his presence !

[ADOLF goes out.

*Courtiers [to each other.]* Out it all comes yet ;

He'll have his word against the bargain yet :

He's not the man to tamely acquiesce. One passionate appeal—upbraiding even,

May turn the tide again. Despair not yet !

[*They retire a little.*

*Berth.* [to MELCHIOR.] The Empire has its old success, my friend !

*Mel.* You've had your way : before the spokesman speaks,

Let me, but this once, work a problem out,

And ever more be dumb ! The Empire wins ?

To better purpose have I read my books !

*Enter VALENCE.*

*Mel.* [to the Courtiers.] Apart, my masters !

[To VALENCE.] Sir, one word with you !

I am a poor dependant of the Prince's—Pitched on to speak, as of slight consequence.

You are no higher, I find : in other words,

We two, as probably the wisest here, Need not hold diplomatic talk like fools.

Suppose I speak, divesting the plain fact

Of all their tortuous phrases, fit for them ?

Do you reply so, and what trouble saved !

The Prince, then—an embroiled strange heap of news

This moment reaches him—if true or false,

All dignity forbids he should inquire In person, or by worthier deputy ;

Yet somehow must inquire, lest slander come :

And so, 't is I am pitched on. You have heard

His offer to your lady ?

*Val.* Yes.

*Mel.* —Conceive

Her joy thereat ?

*Val.* I cannot.

*Mel.* No one can :

All draws to a conclusion, therefore.

*Val.* [Aside.] So !

No after-judgment—no first thought revised—

Her first and last decision !—me, she leaves,

Takes him ; a simple heart is flung aside,

The ermine o'er a heartless breast embraced.

Oh Heaven, this mockery has been played too oft !

Once, to surprise the angels—twice,  
that fiends  
Recording, might be proud they chose  
not so—  
Thrice, many thousand times, to teach  
the world  
All men should pause, misdoubt their  
strength, since men  
Can have such chance yet fail so sig-  
nally,  
—But ever, ever this farewell to  
Heaven,  
Welcome to earth—this taking death  
for life—  
This spurning love and kneeling to the  
world—  
Oh Heaven, it is too often and too old !  
*Mel.* Well, on this point, what but  
an absurd rumour  
Arises—these, its source—its subject,  
you !  
Your faith and loyalty misconstruing,  
They say, your service claims the lady's  
hand !  
Of course, nor Prince nor lady can  
respond :  
Yet something must be said : for, were  
it true  
You made such claim, the Prince  
would . . .  
*Val.* Well sir,—would ?  
*Mel.* —Not only probably withdraw  
his suit,  
But, very like, the lady might be forced  
Accept your own. Oh, there are  
reasons why !  
But you'll excuse at present all save  
one,—  
I think so. What we want is, your  
own witness,  
For, or against—her good, or yours :  
decide !  
*Val.* [*Aside.*] Be it her good if she  
accounts it so !  
[*After a contest.*] For what am I but  
hers, to choose as she ?  
Who knows how far, beside, the light  
from her  
May reach, and dwell with, what she  
looks upon ?  
*Mel.* [*to the Prince.*] Now to him,  
you !  
*Berth.* [*to VALENCE.*] My friend ac-  
quaints you, sir,  
The noise runs . . .  
*Val.* —Prince, how fortunate  
are you,

Wedding her as you will, in spite of  
noise,  
To show belief in love ! Let her but  
love you,  
All else you disregard ! What else  
can be ?  
You know how love is incompatible  
With falsehood—purifies, assimilates  
All other passions to itself.  
*Mel.* Ay, sir :  
But softly ! Where, in the object we  
select,  
Such love is, perchance, wanting ?  
*Val.* Then indeed,  
What is it you can take ?  
*Mel.* Nay, ask the world !  
Youth, beauty, virtue, an illustrious  
name,  
An influence o'er mankind.  
*Val.* When man perceives . . .  
—Ah, I can only speak as for myself !  
*The D.* Speak for yourself !  
*Val.* May I ?—no, I have  
spoken,  
And time's gone by. Had I seen such  
an one,  
As I loved her—weighing thoroughly  
that word— [love :  
So should my task be to evolve her  
If for myself !—if for another—well.  
*Berth.* Heroic truly ! And your sole  
reward,—  
The secret pride in yielding up love's  
right ?  
*Val.* Who thought upon reward ?  
And yet how much  
Comes after—oh what amplest recom-  
pense !  
Is the knowledge of her, nought ? the  
memory, nought ?  
—Lady, should such an one have  
looked on you,  
Ne'er wrong yourself so far as quote  
the world  
And say, love can go unrequited here !  
You will have blessed him to his whole  
life's end—  
Low passions hindered, baser cares  
kept back,  
All goodness cherished where you  
dwelt—and dwell.  
What would he have ? He holds you  
—you, both form  
And mind, in his,—where self-love  
makes such room  
For love of you, he would not serve  
you now

The vulgar way,—repulse your enemies,  
Win you new realms, or best, in saving  
old

Die blissfully—that's past so long ago!  
He wishes you no need, thought, care  
of him—

Your good, by any means, himself  
unseen,

Away, forgotten!—He gives that life's  
task up,

As it were . . . but this charge which  
I return—

[Offers the requisition, which she  
takes.

Wishing your good.

*The D.* [having subscribed it.] And  
opportunistly, sir—

Since at a birthday's close, like this of  
mine,

Good wishes gentle deeds reciprocate.  
Most on a wedding day, as mine is too,

Should gifts be thought of: yours  
comes first by right.

Ask of me! [asks,  
*Berth.* He shall have whate'er he

For your sake and his own.

*Val.* [Aside.] If I should ask—  
The withered bunch of flowers she

wears—perhaps,  
One last touch of her hand, I never

more  
shall see!

[After a pause, presenting his  
paper to the Prince.  
*Cleves' Prince,* redress the  
wrongs of Cleves!

*Berth.* I will, sir.

*The D.* [as VALENCE prepares to  
retire.]—Nay, do out your duty,  
first!

You bore this paper; I have regis-  
tered

My answer to it: read it and have  
done!

[VALENCE reads it.

I take him—give up Juliers and the  
world.

This is my Birthday.

*Mel.* Berthold, my one hero  
Of the world she gives up, one friend  
worth my books,

Sole man I think it pays the pains to  
watch,—

Speak, for I know you through your  
Popes and Kings!

*Berth.* [after a pause.] Lady, well  
rewarded! Sir, as well deserved!

I could not imitate—I hardly envy—  
I do admire you. All is for the best.

Too costly a flower were this, I see it  
now,

To pluck and set upon my barren helm  
To wither—any garish plume will do.

I'll not insult you and refuse your  
Duchy—

You can so well afford to yield it me,  
And I were left, without it, sadly off.

As it is—for me—if that will flatter  
you,

A somewhat wearier life seems to re-  
main

Than I thought possible where . . .  
'faith, their life

Begins already! They're too occupied  
To listen: and few words content me

best.

[Abruptly to the Courtiers.] I am your  
Duke, though! Who obey me  
here?

*The D.* Adolf and Sabyne follow us—  
*Gui.* [starting from the Courtiers.]

—And I?

Do I not follow them, if I mayn't you?  
Shall not I get some little duties up

At Ravestein and emulate the rest?  
God save you, Gaucelme! 'Tis my

Birthday, too!

*Berth.* You happy handful that  
remain with me

. . . That is, with Dietrich the black  
Barnabite

I shall leave over you—will earn your  
wages,

Or Dietrich has forgot to ply his  
trade!

Meantime,—go copy me the precedents  
Of every installation, proper styles

And pedigrees of all your Juliers'  
Dukes—

While I prepare to plod on my old way,  
And somewhat wearily, I must confess!

*The D.* [with a light joyous laugh as  
she turns from them.] Come, Val-  
ence, to our friends, God's earth . . .

*Val.* [as she falls into his arms.]—  
And thee!

DRAMATIC ROMANCES

INCIDENT OF THE  
FRENCH CAMP

I

You know, we French stormed Ratis-  
bon :

A mile or so away  
On a little mound, Napoleon  
Stood on our storming-day ;  
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,  
Legs wide, arms locked behind,  
As if to balance the prone brow  
Oppressive with its mind.

II

Just as perhaps he mused " My plans  
" That soar, to earth may fall,  
" Let once my army-leader Lannes  
" Waver at yonder wall,"—  
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there  
flew

A rider, bound on bound  
Full-galloping ; nor bridle drew  
Until he reached the mound.

III

Then off there flung in smiling joy,  
And held himself erect  
By just his horse's mane, a boy :  
You hardly could suspect—  
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,  
Scarce any blood came through)  
You looked twice ere you saw his  
breast  
Was all but shot in two.

IV

" Well," cried he, " Emperor, by God's  
grace  
" We've got you Ratisbon !  
" The Marshal's in the market-place,  
" And you'll be there anon  
" To see your flag-bird flap his vans  
" Where I, to heart's desire,  
" Perched him ! " The chief's eye  
flashed ; his plans  
Soared up again like fire.

V

The chief's eye flashed ; but presently  
Softened itself, as sheathes

A film the mother-eagle's eye  
When her bruised eaglet breathes :  
" You're wounded ! " " Nay," the  
soldier's pride  
Touched to the quick, he said :  
" I'm killed, Sire ! " And his chief  
beside,  
Smiling the boy fell dead.

THE PATRIOT  
AN OLD STORY

I

It was roses, all the way,  
With myrtle mixed in my path like  
mad :  
The house-roofs seemed to heave and  
sway,  
The church-spires flamed, such flags  
they had.  
A year ago on this very day.

II

The air broke into a mist with bells,  
The old walls rocked with the crowd  
and cries.  
Had I said, " Good folk, mere noise  
repels—  
" But give me your sun from yonder  
skies ! "  
They had answered, " And afterward,  
what else ? "

III

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun  
To give it my loving friends to keep !  
Nought man could do, have I left un-  
done :  
And you see my harvest, what I reap  
This very day, now a year is run.

IV

There's nobody on the house-tops now—  
Just a palsied few at the windows set ;  
For the best of the sight is, all allow,  
At the Shambles' Gate—or, better  
yet,  
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

V

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,  
A rope cuts both my wrists behind ;

And I think, by the feel, my forehead  
bleeds,

For they fling, whoever has a mind,  
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

## VI

Thus I entered, and thus I go!

In triumphs, people have dropped  
down dead.

"Paid by the world, what dost thou  
owe

"Me?"—God might question; now  
instead,

'T is God shall repay: I am safer so.

## MY LAST DUCHESS

## FERRARA

THAT'S my last Duchess painted on the  
wall,

Looking as if she were alive. I call

That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pan-  
dolf's hands

Worked busily a day, and there she  
stands.

Will 't please you sit and look at her?  
I said

"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never  
read

Strangers like you that pictured coun-  
tenance,

The depth and passion of its earnest  
glance,

But to myself they turned (since none  
puts by

The curtain I have drawn for you, but  
I)

And seemed as they would ask me, if  
they durst,

How such a glance came there; so, not  
the first

Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir,  
't was not

Her husband's presence only, called  
that spot

Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: per-  
haps

Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her  
mantle laps

"Over my lady's wrist too much," or  
"Paint

"Must never hope to reproduce the  
faint

"Half-flush that dies along her throat:"  
such stuff

Was courtesy, she thought, and cause  
enough

For calling up that spot of joy. She  
had

A heart—how shall I say?—too soon  
made glad,

Too easily impressed; she liked what-  
e'er

She looked on, and her looks went  
everywhere.

Sir, 't was all one! My favour at her  
breast,

The dropping of the daylight in the  
West,

The bough of cherries some officious  
fool

Broke in the orchard for her, the white  
mule

She rode with round the terrace—all  
and each

Would draw from her alike the approv-  
ing speech,

Or blush, at least. She thanked men,  
—good! but thanked

Somehow—I know not how—as if she  
ranked

My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old  
name

With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to  
blame

This sort of trifling? Even had you  
skill

In speech—(which I have not)—to  
make your will

Quite clear to such an one, and say,  
"Just this

"Or that in you disgusts me; here you  
miss,

"Or there exceed the mark"—and if  
she let

Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set  
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made

excuse,  
—E'en then would be some stooping  
and I choose

Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no  
doubt,

Whene'er I passed her; but who  
passed without

Much the same smile? This grew; I  
gave commands;

Then all smiles stopped together.  
There she stands

As if alive. Will't please you rise?  
We'll meet

The company below, then. I repeat,  
The Count your master's known

munificence

Is ample warrant that no just pretence

Of mine for dowry will be disallowed ;  
Though his fair daughter's self, as I  
avowed

At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll  
go

Together down, sir. Notice Neptune,  
though,

Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,  
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in  
bronze for me !

COUNT GISMOND

AIX IN PROVENCE

I

CHRIST God who savest man, save most  
Of men Count Gismond who saved  
me !

Count Gauthier, when he chose his  
post,

Chose time and place and company  
To suit it ; when he struck at length  
My honour, 't was with all his strength.

II

And doubtlessly ere he could draw  
All points to one, he must have  
schemed !

That miserable morning saw  
Few half so happy as I seemed,  
While being dressed in queen's array  
To give our tourney prize away.

III

I thought they loved me, did me grace  
To please themselves ; 't was all their  
deed ;

God makes, or fair or foul, our face ;  
If showing mine so caused to bleed  
My cousins' hearts, they should have  
dropped

A word, and straight the play had  
stopped.

IV

They, too, so beauteous ! Each a  
queen

By virtue of her brow and breast ;  
Not needing to be crowned, I mean,  
As I do. E'en when I was dressed,  
Had either of them spoke, instead  
Of glancing sideways with still head !

V

But no : they let me laugh, and sing  
My birthday song quite through,  
adjust

The last rose in my garland, fling  
A last look on the mirror, trust  
My arms to each an arm of theirs,  
And so descend the castle-stairs—

VI

And come out on the morning-troop  
Of merry friends who kissed my  
cheek,

And called me queen, and made me  
stoop

Under the canopy—(a streak  
That pierced it, of the outside sun,  
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft  
dun)—

VII

And they could let me take my state  
And foolish throne amid applause  
Of all come there to celebrate

My queen's-day—Oh I think the  
cause

Of much was, they forgot no crowd  
Makes up for parents in their shroud !

VIII

However that be, all eyes were bent  
Upon me, when my cousins cast  
Theirs down ; 't was time I should  
present

The victor's crown, but . . . there,  
't will last

No long time . . . the old mist again  
Blinds me as then it did. How vain !

IX

See ! Gismond's at the gate, in talk  
With his two boys : I can proceed.  
Well, at that moment, who should  
stalk

Forth boldly—to my face, indeed—  
But Gauthier, and he thundered  
"Stay !"

And all stayed. "Bring no crowns, I  
say !"

X

"Bring torches ! Wind the penance-  
sheet

"About her ! Let her shun the  
chaste,

"Or lay herself before their feet !  
"Shall she whose body I embraced

"A night long, queen it in the day ?  
"For honour's sake no crowns, I say !"

## XI

I? What I answered? As I live,  
I never fancied such a thing  
As answer possible to give.  
What says the body when they spring  
Some monstrous torture-engine's  
whole  
Strength on it? No more says the  
soul.

## XII

Till out strode Gismond; then I knew  
That I was saved. I never met  
His face before, but, at first view,  
I felt quite sure that God had set  
Himself to Satan; who would spend  
A minute's mistrust on the end?

## XIII

He strode to Gauthier, in his throat  
Gave him the lie, then struck his  
mouth  
With one back-handed blow that  
wrote  
In blood men's verdict there. North,  
South,  
East, West, I looked. The lie was  
dead,  
And damned, and truth stood up  
instead.

## XIV

This glads me most, that I enjoyed  
The heart of the joy, with my con-  
tent  
In watching Gismond unalloyed  
By any doubt of the event:  
God took that on him—I was bid  
Watch Gismond for my part: I did.

## XV

Did I not watch him while he let  
His armourer just brace his greaves,  
Rivet his hauberk, on the fret  
The while! His foot . . . my  
memory leaves  
No least stamp out, nor how anon  
He pulled his ringing gauntlets on.

## XVI

And e'en before the trumpet's sound  
Was finished, prone lay the false  
knight,  
Prone as his lie, upon the ground:  
Gismond flew at him, used no sleight  
Of the sword, but open-breasted drove,  
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

## XVII

Which done, he dragged him to my  
feet  
And said "Here die, but end thy  
breath  
"In full confession, lest thou fleet  
"From my fist, to God's second  
death!  
"Say, hast thou lied?" And, "I  
have lied  
"To God and her," he said, and died.

## XVIII

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked  
—What safe my heart holds, though  
no word  
Could I repeat now, if I tasked  
My powers for ever, to a third  
Dear even as you are. Pass the rest  
Until I sank upon his breast.

## XIX

Over my head his arm he flung  
Against the world; and scarce I felt  
His sword (that dripped by me and  
swung)  
A little shifted in its belt:  
For he began to say the while  
How South our home lay many a mile.

## XX

So 'mid the shouting multitude  
We two walked forth to never more  
Return. My cousins have pursued  
Their life, untroubled as before  
I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling-  
place  
God lighten! May his soul find grace!

## XXI

Our elder boy has got the clear  
Great brow; tho' when his brother's  
black  
Full eye shows scorn, it . . . Gismond  
here?  
And have you brought my tercel  
back?  
I just was telling Adela  
How many birds it struck since May.

## THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

MORNING, evening, noon and night,  
"Praise God!" sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,  
Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he laboured, long and well ;  
O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever, at each period,  
He stopped and sang, " Praise God ! "

Then back again his curls he threw,  
And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk, " Well  
done ;

" I doubt not thou art heard, my son :

" As well as if thy voice to-day  
" Were praising God, the Pope's great  
way.

" This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome  
" Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, " Would God that I  
" Might praise him, that great way,  
and die ! "

Night passed, day shone,  
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway,  
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, " Nor day nor night  
" Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,  
Spread his wings and sank to earth ;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,  
Lived there, and played the craftsman  
well ;

And morning, evening, noon and night,  
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew :  
The man put off the stripling's hue :

The man matured and fell away  
Into the season of decay :

And ever o'er the trade he bent,  
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will ; to him, all one  
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, " A praise is in mine ear ;  
" There is no doubt in it, no fear :

" So sing old worlds, and so  
" New worlds that from my footstool  
go.

" Clearer loves sound other ways :  
" I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off  
fell  
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'T was Easter Day : he flew to Rome,  
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by  
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,  
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite :

And all his past career  
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,  
Till on his life the sickness weighed ;

And in his cell, when death drew near,  
An angel in a dream brought cheer :

And rising from the sickness drear  
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned,  
And on his sight the angel burned.

" I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell,  
" And set thee here ; I did not well.

" Vainly I left my angel-sphere,  
" Vain was thy dream of many a year.

" Thy voice's praise seemed weak ; it  
dropped—  
" Creation's chorus stopped !

" Go back and praise again  
" The early way, while I remain.

" With that weak voice of our disdain,  
" Take up creation's pausing strain.

" Back to the call and poor employ :  
" Resume the craftsman and the boy ! "

Theocrite grew old at home ;  
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died :  
They sought God side by side.

## INSTANS TYRANNUS

## I

OF the million or two, more or less,  
I rule and possess,  
One man, for some cause undefined,  
Was least to my mind.

## II

I struck him, he grovelled of course—  
For, what was his force ?  
I pinned him to earth with my weight  
And persistence of hate :  
And he lay, would not moan, would not  
curse,  
As his lot might be worse.

## III

" Were the object less mean, would he  
stand  
" At the swing of my hand !  
" For obscurity helps him and blots  
" The hole where he squats."  
So, I set my five wits on the stretch  
To inveigle the wretch.  
All in vain ! Gold and jewels I threw,  
Still he crouched there perdue ;  
I tempted his blood and his flesh,  
Hid in roses my mesh,  
Choicest cates and the flagon's best  
spilth :  
Still he kept to his filth.

## IV

Had he kith now or kin, were access  
To his heart, did I press—  
Just a son or a mother to seize !  
No such booty as these.  
Were it simply a friend to pursue  
'Mid my million or two,  
Who could pay me in person or pelf  
What he owes me himself !  
No : I could not but smile through my  
chafe :  
For the fellow lay safe  
As his mates do, the midge and the nit,  
—Through minuteness, to wit.

## V

Then a humour more great took its  
place  
At the thought of his face,  
The droop, the low cares of the mouth,  
The trouble uncouth

" Twixt the brows, all that air one is fain  
To put out of its pain.  
And, " no ! " I admonished myself,  
" Is one mocked by an elf,  
" Is one baffled by toad or by rat ?  
" The gravamen's in that !  
" How the lion, who crouches to suit  
" His back to my foot,  
" Would admire that I stand in de-  
bate !  
" But the small turns the great  
" If it vexes you,—that is the thing !  
" Toad or rat vex the king ?  
" Though I waste half my realm to  
unearth  
" Toad or rat, 't is well worth !

## VI

So, I soberly laid my last plan  
To extinguish the man.  
Round his creep-hole, with never a  
break  
Ran my fires for his sake ;  
Over-head, did my thunder combine  
With my under-ground mine :  
Till I looked from my labour content  
To enjoy the event.

## VII

When sudden . . . how think ye, the  
end ?  
Did I say " without friend ? "  
Say rather, from marge to blue marge  
The whole sky grew his targe  
With the sun's self for visible boss,  
While an Arm ran across  
Which the earth heaved beneath like a  
breast  
Where the wretch was safe prest !  
Do you see ? Just my vengeance  
complete,  
The man sprang to his feet,  
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and  
prayed !  
—So, I was afraid !

## MESMERISM

## I

ALL I believed is true !  
I am able yet  
All I want, to get  
By a method as strange as new :  
Dare I trust the same to you ?

## II

If at night, when doors are shut,  
And the wood-worm picks,  
And the death-watch ticks,

And the bar has a flag of smut,  
And a cat's in the water-butt—

III

And the socket floats and flares,  
And the house-beams groan,  
And a foot unknown  
Is surmised on the garret-stairs,  
And the locks slip unawares—

IV

And the spider, to serve his ends,  
By a sudden thread,  
Arms and legs outspread,  
On the table's midst descends,  
Comes to find, God knows what  
friends!—

V

If since eve drew in, I say,  
I have sat and brought  
(So to speak) my thought  
To bear on the woman away,  
Till I felt my hair turn grey—

VI

Till I seemed to have and hold,  
In the vacancy  
'Twixt the wall and me  
From the hair-plait's chestnut-gold  
To the foot in its muslin fold—

VII

Have and hold, then and there,  
Her, from head to foot,  
Breathing and mute,  
Passive and yet aware,  
In the grasp of my steady stare—

VIII

Hold and have, there and then,  
All her body and soul  
That completes my whole,  
All that women add to men,  
In the clutch of my steady ken—

IX

Having and holding, till  
I imprint her fast  
On the void at last  
As the sun does whom he will  
By the calotypist's skill—

X

Then,—if my heart's strength serve,  
And through all and each  
Of the veils I reach

To her soul and never swerve,  
Knitting an iron nerve—

XI

Command her soul to advance  
And inform the shape  
Which has made escape  
And before my countenance  
Answers me glance for glance—

XII

I, still with a gesture fit  
Of my hands that best  
Do my soul's behest,  
Pointing the power from it,  
While myself do steadfast sit—

XIII

Steadfast and still the same  
On my object bent,  
While the hands give vent  
To my ardour and my aim  
And break into very flame—

XIV

Then I reach, I must believe,  
Not her soul in vain,  
For to me again  
It reaches, and past retrieve  
Is wound in the toils I weave;

XV

And must follow as I require,  
As befits a thrall,  
Bringing flesh and all,  
Essence and earth-attire,  
To the source of the tractile fire:

XVI

Till the house called hers, not mine,  
With a growing weight  
Seems to suffocate  
If she break not its leaden line  
And escape from its close confine.

XVII

Out of doors into the night!  
On to the maze  
Of the wild wood-ways,  
Not turning to left nor right  
From the pathway, blind with sight—

XVIII

Making thro' rain and wind  
O'er the broken shrubs,  
'Twixt the stems and stubs,  
With a still, composed, strong mind,  
Nor a care for the world behind—

## XIX

Swifter and still more swift,  
As the crowding peace  
Doth to joy increase  
In the wide blind eyes uplift  
Thro' the darkness and the drift!

## XX

While I—to the shape, I too  
Feel my soul dilate  
Nor a whit abate,  
And relax not a gesture due,  
As I see my belief come true.

## XXI

For, there! have I drawn or no  
Life to that lip?  
Do my fingers dip  
In a flame which again they throw  
On the cheek that breaks a-glow?

## XXII

Ha! was the hair so first?  
What, unfilleted,  
Made alive, and spread  
Through the void with a rich outburst,  
Chestnut gold-interspersed?

## XXIII

Like the doors of a casket-shrine,  
See, on either side,  
Her two arms divide  
Till the heart betwixt makes sign,  
Take me, for I am thine!

## XXIV

"Now—now"—the door is heard!  
Hark, the stairs! and near—  
Nearer—and here—  
"Now!" and at call the third  
She enters without a word.

## XXV

On doth she march and on  
To the fancied shape;  
It is, past escape,  
Herself, now: the dream is done  
And the shadow and she are one.

## XXVI

First I will pray. Do Thou  
That ownest the soul,  
Ye wilt grant control  
To another, nor disallow  
For a time, restrain me now!

## XXVII

I admonish me while I may,  
Not to squander guilt,  
Since require Thou wilt  
At my hand its price one day!  
What the price is, who can say?

## THE GLOVE

(PETER RONSARD *loquitur*)

"HEIGHO," yawned one day King  
Francis,  
"Distance all value enhances!  
"When a man's busy, why, leisure  
"Strikes him as wonderful pleasure:  
"Faith, and at leisure once is he?  
"Straightway he wants to be busy.  
"Here we've got peace; and aghast  
I'm  
"Caught thinking war the true pastime.  
"Is there a reason in metre?  
"Give us your speech, master Peter!"  
I who, if mortal dare say so,  
Ne'er am at loss with my Naso,  
"Sire," I replied, "joys prove cloudlets:  
"Men are the merest Ixions"—  
Here the King whistled aloud, "Let's  
"... Heigho... go look at our  
lions!"  
Such are the sorrowful chances  
If you talk fine to King Francis.

And so, to the courtyard proceeding,  
Our company, Francis was leading.  
Increased by new followers tenfold  
Before he arrived at the penfold;  
Lords, ladies, like clouds which bedizen  
At sunset the western horizon.  
And Sir De Lorge pressed 'mid the  
foremost  
With the dame he professed to adore  
most—  
Oh, what a face! One by fits eyed  
Her, and the horrible pitside;  
For the penfold surrounded a hollow  
Which led where the eye scarce dared  
follow,  
And shelved to the chamber secluded  
Where Bluebeard, the great lion,  
brooded.  
The King hailed his keeper, an Arab,  
As glossy and black as a scarab,  
And bade him make sport and at once  
stir  
Up and out of his den the old monster.  
They opened a hole in the wire-work  
Across it, and dropped there a firework.

And fled: one's heart's beating redoubled;

A pause, while the pit's mouth was troubled,

The blackness and silence so utter,  
By the firework's slow sparkling and sputter;

Then earth in a sudden contortion  
Gave out to our gaze her abortion.  
Such a brute! Were I friend Clement Marot

(Whose experience of nature's but narrow, [mist

And whose faculties move in no small  
When he versifies David the Psalmist)  
I should study that brute to describe you

*Illum Juda Leonem de Tribu.*

One's whole blood grew curdling and creepy

To see the black mane, vast and heapy,  
The tail in the air stiff and straining,  
The wide eyes, nor waxing nor waning,  
As over the barrier which bounded  
His platform, and us who surrounded  
The barrier, they reached and they rested

On the space that might stand him in best stead:

For who knew, he thought, what the amazement,

The eruption of clatter and blaze meant,  
And if, in this minute of wonder,  
No outlet, 'mid lightning and thunder.  
Lay broad, and, his shackles all shivered,

The lion at last was delivered?  
Ay, that was the open sky o'erhead!  
And you saw by the flash on his forehead,

By the hope in those eyes wide and steady,

He was leagues in the desert already,  
Driving the flocks up the mountain,  
Or catlike crouched hard by the fountain

To waylay the date-gathering negress:  
So guarded he entrance or egress.

"How he stands!" quoth the King:  
"we may well swear,

("No novice, we've won our spurs elsewhere

"And so can afford the confession,)  
"We exercise wholesome discretion

"In keeping aloof from his threshold;  
"Once hold you, those jaws want no fresh hold,

"Their first would too pleasantly purloin

"The visitor's brisket or surloin:

"But who's he would prove so fool-hardy?  
"Not the best man of Marignan, pardie!"

The sentence no sooner was uttered,  
Than over the rails a glove fluttered,  
Fell close to the lion, and rested:

The dame 'twas, who flung it and jested  
With life so, De Lorge had been wooing  
For months past; he sat there pursuing  
His suit, weighing out with nonchalance  
Fine speeches like gold from a balance.

Sound the trumpet, no true knight's a tarrier!

De Lorge made one leap at the barrier,  
Walked straight to the glove,—while the lion

Ne'er moved, kept his far-reaching eye on

The palm-tree-edged desert-spring's sapphire,

And the musky oiled skin of the Kaffir,—

Picked it up, and as calmly retreated,  
Leaped back where the lady was seated,  
And full in the face of its owner  
Flung the glove.

"Your heart's queen, you de-throne her?"

"So should I!"—cried the King—  
" 't was mere vanity,

"Not love, set that task to humanity!"  
Lords and ladies alike turned with loathing

From such a proved wolf in sheep's clothing.

Not so, I: for I caught an expression  
In her brow's undisturbed self-possession;

Amid the Court's scoffing and merriment,—

As if from no pleasing experiment  
She rose, yet of pain not much heedful

So long as the process was needful,—  
As if she had tried in a crucible,

To what "speeches like gold" were reducible,

And, finding the finest prove copper,  
Felt the smoke in her face was but proper;

To know what she had *not* to trust to,

Was worth all the ashes and dust too.  
She went out 'mid hooting and laughter;  
Clement Marot stayed; I followed after.  
And asked, as a grace, what it all meant?

If she wished not the rash deed's recalculation?

"For I"—so I spoke—"am a poet:  
"Human nature,—behoves that I know it!"

She told me, "Too long had I heard  
"Of the deed proved alone by the word:

"For my love—what De Lorge would nor dare!

"With my scorn—what De Lorge could compare!

"And the endless descriptions of death  
"He would brave when my lip formed a breath,

"I must reckon as braved, or, of course,  
"Doubt his word—and moreover, perforce,

"For such gifts as no lady could spurn,  
"Must offer my love in return.

"When I looked on your lion, it brought

"All the dangers at once to my thought,  
"Encountered by all sorts of men,

"Before he was lodged in his den,—  
"From the poor slave whose club or bare hands

"Dug the trap, set the snare on the sands,

"With no King and no Court to applaud,

"By no shame, should he shrink, overawed,

"Yet to capture the creature made shift,

"That his rude boys might laugh at the gift,

"—To the page who last leaped o'er the fence

"Of the pit, on no greater pretence  
"Than to get back the bonnet he dropped,

"Lest his pay for a week should be stopped.

"So, wiser I judged it to make  
"One trial what 'death for my sake'

"Really meant, while the power was yet mine,

"Than to wait until time should define  
"Such a phrase not so simply as I,

"Who took it to mean just 'to die.'  
"The blow a glove gives is but weak:

"Does the mark yet discolour my cheek?

"But when the heart suffers a blow,  
"Will the pain pass so soon, do you know?"

I looked, as away she was sweeping,  
And saw a youth eagerly keeping  
As close as he dared to the doorway.  
No doubt that a noble should more weigh

His life than befits a plebeian;  
And yet, had our brute been Nemean—  
(I judge by a certain calm fervour  
The youth stepped with, forward to serve her)

—He'd have scarce thought you did him the worst turn

If you whispered "Friend, what you'd get, first earn!"

And when, shortly after, she carried  
Her shame from the Court, and they married,

To that marriage some happiness, maugre

The voice of the Court, I dared augur.

For De Lorge, he made women with men vie,

Those in wonder and praise, these in envy;

And in short stood so plain a head taller  
That he wooed and won . . . how do you call her?

The beauty, that rose in the sequel  
To the King's love, who loved her a week well.

And 't was noticed he never would honour

De Lorge (who looked daggers upon her)  
With the easy commission of stretching

His legs in the service, and fetching  
His wife, from her chamber, those straying

Sad gloves she was always mislaying,  
While the King took the closet to chat in,—

But of course this adventure came pat in.

And never the King told the story,  
How bringing a glove brought such glory,

But the wife smiled—"His nerves are grown firmer:

"Mine he brings now and utters no murmur."

*Venienti occurrere morbo!*

With which moral I drop my theorbo.

TIME'S REVENGES

I've a Friend, over the sea ;  
I like him, but he loves me.  
It all grew out of the books I write ;  
They find such favour in his sight  
That he slaughters you with savage  
looks

Because you don't admire my books.  
He does himself though,—and if some  
vein

Were to snap to-night in this heavy  
brain,

To-morrow month, if I lived to try,  
Round should I just turn quietly,  
Or out of the bedclothes stretch my  
hand

Till I found him, come from his foreign  
land

To be my nurse in this poor place,  
And make my broth and wash my face  
And light my fire and, all the while,  
Bear with his old good-humoured smile  
That I told him " Better have kept  
away

" Than come and kill me, night and  
day,

" With worse than fever's throbs and  
shoots,

" The creaking of his clumsy boots."  
I am as sure that this he would do,  
As that Saint Paul's is striking two.  
And I think I rather . . . woe is me !  
—Yes, rather should see him than not  
see,

If lifting a hand would seat him there  
Before me in the empty chair  
To-night, when my head aches indeed,  
And I can neither think nor read  
Nor make these purple fingers hold  
The pen ; this garret's freezing cold !

And I've a Lady—there he wakes  
The laughing fiend and prince of snakes  
Within me, at her name, to pray  
Fate send some creature in the way  
Of my love for her, to be down-torn,  
Upthrust and outward-borne,  
So I might prove myself that sea  
Of passion which I needs must be !  
Call my thoughts false and my fancies  
quaint

And my style infirm and its figures  
faint,

All the critics say, and more blame yet,  
And not one angry word you get.  
But, please you, wonder I would put  
My cheek beneath that lady's foot

Rather than trample under mine  
The laurels of the Florentine,  
And you shall see how the devil spends  
A fire God gave for other ends !  
I tell you, I stride up and down  
This garret, crowned with love's best  
crown,

And feasted with love's perfect feast,  
To think I kill for her, at least,  
Body and soul and peace and fame,  
Alike youth's end and manhood's aim,  
—So is my spirit, as flesh with sin,  
Filled full, eaten out and in  
With the face of her, the eyes of her,  
The lips, the little chin, the stir  
Of shadow round her mouth ; and she  
—I'll tell you,—calmly would decree  
That I should roast at a slow fire,  
If that would compass her desire  
And make her one whom they invite  
To the famous ball to-morrow night.

There may be heaven ; there must be  
hell ;

Meantime, there is our earth here—  
well !

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

THAT second time they hunted me  
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,  
And Austria, hounding far and wide  
Her blood-hounds thro' the country-  
side

Breathed hot and instant on my trace—  
I made six days a hiding-place  
Of that dry green old aqueduct  
Where I and Charles, when boys, have  
plucked

The fire-flies from the roof above,  
Bright creeping thro' the moss they  
love :

—How long it seems since Charles was  
lost !

Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed  
The country in my very sight ;  
And when that peril ceased at night,  
The sky broke out in red dismay  
With signal fires ; well, there I lay  
Close covered o'er in my recess,  
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,  
Thinking on Metternich our friend,  
And Charles's miserable end,  
And much beside, two days ; the third,  
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard  
The peasants from the village go  
To work among the maize ; you know,  
With us in Lombardy, they bring

Provisions packed on mules, a string  
 With little bells that cheer their task,  
 And casks, and boughs on every cask  
 To keep the sun's heat from the wine ;  
 These I let pass in jingling line,  
 And, close on them, dear noisy crew,  
 The peasants from the village, too ;  
 For at the very rear would troop  
 Their wives and sisters in a group  
 To help, I knew ; when these had  
 passed,

I threw my glove to strike the last,  
 Taking the chance : she did not start,  
 Much less cry out, but stooped apart,  
 One instant rapidly glanced round,  
 And saw me beckon from the ground :  
 A wild bush grows and hides my crypt ;  
 She picked my glove up while she  
 stripped

A branch off, then rejoined the rest  
 With that ; my glove lay in her breast :  
 Then I drew breath ; they disappeared :  
 It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone  
 Exactly where my glove was thrown.  
 Meanwhile came many thoughts ; on  
 me

Rested the hopes of Italy ;  
 I had devised a certain tale  
 Which, when 't was told her, could not  
 fail

Persuade a peasant of its truth ;  
 I meant to call a freak of youth  
 This hiding, and give hopes of pay,  
 And no temptation to betray.  
 But when I saw that woman's face,  
 Its calm simplicity of grace,  
 Our Italy's own attitude  
 In which she walked thus far, and  
 stood,

Planting each naked foot so firm,  
 To crush the snake and spare the  
 worm—

At first sight of her eyes, I said,  
 " I am that man upon whose head  
 " They fix the price, because I hate  
 " The Austrians over us : the State  
 " Will give you gold—oh, gold so  
 much !—

" If you betray me to their clutch,  
 " And be your death, for aught I know,  
 " If once they find you saved their foe.  
 " Now, you must bring me food and  
 drink,

" And also paper, pen and ink,  
 " And carry safe what I shall write

" To Padua, which you'll reach at night  
 " Before the duomo shuts ; go in,  
 " And wait till Tenebræ begin ;  
 " Walk to the third confessional,  
 " Between the pillar and the wall,  
 " And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes  
 peace ?*

" Say it a second time, then cease ;  
 " And if the voice inside returns,  
 " *From Christ and Freedom ; what  
 concerns*

" *The cause of Peace ?*—for answer, slip  
 " My letter where you placed your lip ;  
 " Then come back happy we have done  
 " Our mother service—I, the son,  
 " As you the daughter of our land ! "

Three mornings more, she took her  
 stand

In the same place, with the same eyes :  
 I was no surer of sun-rise  
 Than of her coming : we conferred  
 Of her own prospects, and I heard  
 She had a lover—stout and tall,  
 She said—then let her eyelids fall,  
 " He could do much"—as if some  
 doubt

Entered her heart,—then, passing out,  
 " She could not speak for others, who  
 " Had other thoughts ; herself she  
 knew : "

And so she brought me drink and food.  
 After four days, the scouts pursued  
 Another path ; at last arrived  
 The help my Paduan friends contrived  
 To furnish me : she brought the news.  
 For the first time I could not choose  
 But kiss her hand, and lay my own  
 Upon her head—" This faith was  
 shown

" To Italy, our mother ; she  
 " Uses my hand and blesses thee."  
 She followed down to the sea-shore ;  
 I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought  
 Concerning—much less wished for—  
 aught

Beside the good of Italy,  
 For which I live and mean to die !  
 I never was in love ; and since  
 Charles proved false, what shall now,  
 convince

My inmost heart I have a friend ?  
 However, if I pleased to spend  
 Real wishes on myself—say, three—  
 I know at least what one should be,

I would grasp Metternich until  
I felt his red wet throat distil  
In blood thro' these two hands. And  
next,

—Nor much for that am I perplexed—  
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,  
Should die slow of a broken heart  
Under his new employers. Last  
—Ah, there, what should I wish? For  
fast

Do I grow old and out of strength.  
If I resolved to seek at length  
My father's house again, how scared  
They all would look, and unprepared!  
My brothers live in Austria's pay  
—Disowned me long ago, men say;  
And all my early mates who used  
To praise me so—perhaps induced  
More than one early step of mine—  
Are turning wise: while some opine  
"Freedom grows license," some suspect  
"Haste breeds delay," and recollect  
They always said, such premature  
Beginnings never could endure!  
So with a sullen "All's for best,"  
The land seems settling to its rest.  
I think then, I should wish to stand  
This evening in that dear, lost land,  
Over the sea the thousand miles,  
And know if yet that woman smiles  
With the calm smile; some little farm  
She lives in there, no doubt: what  
harm

If I sat on the door-side bench,  
And, while her spindle made a trench  
Fantastically in the dust,  
Inquired of all her fortunes—just  
Her children's ages and their names,  
And what may be the husband's aims  
For each of them. I'd talk this out,  
And sit there, for an hour about,  
Then kiss her hand once more, and lay  
Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing—how  
It steals the time! To business now.

THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY

PIANO DI SORRENTO

FORTÙ, Fortù, my beloved one,  
Sit here by my side,  
On my knees put up both little feet!  
I was sure, if I tried,  
I could make you laugh spite of Scirocco,  
Now, open your eyes,  
Let me keep you amused till he vanish  
In black from the skies,

With telling my memories over  
As you tell your beads;  
All the Plain saw, me gather, I garland  
—The flowers or the weeds.

Time for rain! for your long hot dry  
Autumn

Had net-worked with brown  
The white skin of each grape on the  
bunches,

Marked like a quail's crown,  
Those creatures you make such account  
of,

Whose heads,—speckled with white  
Over brown like a great spider's back,  
As I told you last night,—

Your mother bites off for her supper.  
Red-ripe as could be,

Pomegranates were chapping and  
splitting

In halves on the tree:  
And betwixt the loose walls of great  
flintstone,

Or in the thick dust  
On the path, or straight out of the  
rock-side,

Wherever could thrust  
Some burnt sprig of bold hardy rock-  
flower

Its yellow face up,  
For the prize were great butterflies  
fighting,

Some five for one cup.  
So, I guessed, ere I got up this morning,  
What change was in store,

By the quick rustle-down of the quail-  
nets

Which woke me before  
I could open my shutter, made fast  
With a bough and a stone,

And look thro' the twisted dead vine-  
twigs,

Sole lattice that's known.  
Quick and sharp rang the rings down  
the net-poles,

While, busy beneath,  
Your priest and his brother tugged at  
them,

The rain in their teeth.  
And out upon all the flat house-roofs  
Where split figs lay drying,

The girls took the frails under cover:  
Nor use seemed in trying  
To get out the boats and go fishing,

For, under the cliff,  
Fierce the black water frothed o'er the  
blind-rock.

No seeing our skiff

Arrive about noon from Amalfi,  
 —Our fisher arrive,  
 And pitch down his basket before us,  
 All trembling alive  
 With pink and grey jellies, your sea-  
 fruit ;  
 You touch the strange lumps,  
 And mouths gape there, eyes open, all  
 manner  
 Of horns and of humps,  
 Which only the fisher looks grave at,  
 While round him like imps  
 Cling screaming the children as naked  
 And brown as his shrimps ;  
 Himself too as bare to the middle  
 —You see round his neck  
 The string and its brass coin suspended,  
 That saves him from wreck.  
 But to-day not a boat reached Salerno,  
 So back, to a man,  
 Came our friends, with whose help in  
 the vineyards  
 Grape-harvest began.  
 In the vat, halfway up in our house-  
 side,  
 Like blood the juice spins,  
 While your brother all bare-legged is  
 dancing  
 Till breathless he grins  
 Dead-beaten in effort on effort  
 To keep the grapes under,  
 Since still when he seems all but master,  
 In pours the fresh plunder  
 From girls who keep coming and going  
 With basket on shoulder,  
 And eyes shut against the rain's  
 driving ;  
 Your girls that are older,—  
 For under the hedges of aloe,  
 And where, on its bed  
 Of the orchard's black mould, the love-  
 apple  
 Lies pulpy and red, [filling  
 All the young ones are kneeling and  
 Their laps with the snails  
 Tempted out by this first rainy  
 weather,—  
 Your best of regales,  
 As to-night will be proved to my sorrow,  
 When, supping in state,  
 We shall feast our grape-gleaners (two  
 dozen,  
 Three over one plate)  
 With lasagne so tempting to swallow  
 In slippery ropes,  
 And gourds fried in great purple slices,  
 That colour of popes.

Meantime, see the grape bunch they've  
 brought you :  
 The rain-water slips  
 O'er the heavy blue bloom on each globe  
 Which the wasp to your lips  
 Still follows with fretful persistence :  
 Nay, taste, while awake,  
 This half of a curd-white smooth cheese-  
 ball  
 That peels, flake by flake,  
 Like an onion, each smoother and  
 whiter ;  
 Next, sip this weak wine  
 From the thin green glass flask, with its  
 stopper,  
 A leaf of the vine ;  
 And end with the prickly-pear's red  
 flesh  
 That leaves thro' its juice  
 The stony black seeds on your pearl-  
 teeth.  
 Scirocco is loose !  
 Hark, the quick, whistling pelt of the  
 olives  
 Which, thick in one's track,  
 Tempt the stranger to pick up and bite  
 them,  
 Tho' not yet half black !  
 How the old twisted olive trunks  
 shudder,  
 The medlars let fall  
 Their hard fruit, and the brittle great  
 fig-trees  
 Snap off, figs and all,  
 For here comes the whole of the tem-  
 pest !  
 No refuge, but creep  
 Back again to my side and my shoulder,  
 And listen or sleep.  
 O how will your country show next  
 week,  
 When all the vine-boughs  
 Have been stripped of their foliage to  
 pasture  
 The mules and the cows ?  
 Last eve, I rode over the mountains ;  
 Your brother, my guide,  
 Soon left me, to feast on the myrtles  
 That offered, each side,  
 Their fruit-balls, black, glossy and  
 luscious,—  
 Or strip from the sorbs  
 A treasure, or, rosy and wondrous,  
 Those hairy gold orbs !  
 But my mule picked his sure sober  
 path out,  
 Just stopping to neigh

When he recognized down in the valley  
 His mates on their way  
 With the faggots and barrels of water ;  
 And soon we emerged  
 From the plain, where the woods could  
 scarce follow ;  
 And still as we urged  
 Our way, the woods wondered, and left  
 us,  
 As up still we trudged  
 Though the wild path grew wilder each  
 instant,  
 And place was e'en grudged  
 'Mid the rock-chasms and piles of loose  
 stones  
 Like the loose broken teeth  
 Of some monster which climbed there  
 to die  
 From the ocean beneath—  
 Place was grudged to the silver-grey  
 fume-weed  
 That clung to the path,  
 And dark rosemary ever a-dying  
 That, 'spite the wind's wrath,  
 So loves the salt rock's face to seaward,  
 And lentisks as staunch  
 To the stone where they root and bear  
 berries,  
 And . . . what shows a branch  
 'Coral-coloured, transparent, with cir-  
 clets  
 Of pale sea green leaves ;  
 Over all trod my mule with the caution  
 Of gleaners o'er sheaves,  
 Still, foot after foot like a lady :  
 So, round after round,  
 He climbed to the top of Calvano,  
 And God's own profound  
 Was above me, and round me the  
 mountains,  
 And under, the sea, [ness  
 And within me my heart to bear wit-  
 What was and shall be.  
 Oh, heaven and the terrible crystal !  
 No rampart excludes  
 Your eye from the life to be lived  
 In the blue solitudes.  
 Oh, those mountains, their infinite  
 movement !  
 Still moving with you ;  
 For, ever some new head and breast of  
 them  
 Thrusts into view  
 To observe the intruder ; you see it  
 If quickly you turn  
 And, before they escape you, surprise  
 them :

They grudge you should learn  
 How the soft plains they look on, lean  
 over  
 And love (they pretend)  
 —Cover beneath them, the flat sea-  
 pine crouches,  
 The wild fruit-trees bend, [shut :  
 E'en the myrtle-leaves curl, shrink and  
 All is silent and grave :  
 'Tis a sensual and timorous beauty,  
 How fair ! but a slave.  
 So, I turned to the sea ; and there  
 slumbered  
 As greenly as ever  
 Those isles of the siren, your Galli ;  
 No ages can sever  
 The Three, nor enable their sister  
 To join them,—halfway  
 On the voyage, she looked at Ulysses—  
 No farther to-day,  
 Tho' the small one, just launched in the  
 wave,  
 Watches breast-high and steady  
 From under the rock, her bold sister  
 Swum halfway already.  
 Fortù, shall we sail there together  
 And see from the sides  
 Quite new rocks show their faces, new  
 haunts  
 Where the siren abides ?  
 Shall we sail round and round them,  
 close over  
 The rocks, tho' unseen,  
 That ruffle the grey glassy water  
 To glorious green ?  
 Then scramble from splinter to splinter,  
 Reach land and explore,  
 On the largest, the strange square  
 black turret  
 With never a door,  
 Just a loop to admit the quick lizards ;  
 Then, stand there and hear  
 The birds' quiet singing, that tells us  
 What life is, so clear ?  
 —The secret they sang to Ulysses  
 When, ages ago,  
 He heard and he knew this life's secret  
 I hear and I know.  
 Ah, see ! The sun breaks o'er Calvano  
 He strikes the great gloom  
 And flutters it o'er the mount's summit  
 In airy gold fume.  
 All is over. Look out, see the gipsy,  
 Our tinker and smith,  
 Has arrived, set up bellows and forge,  
 And down-squatted forthwith

To his hammering, under the wall there ;  
 One eye keeps aloof  
 The urchins that itch to be putting  
 His jews'-harps to proof,  
 While the other, thro' locks of curled  
 wire,  
 Is watching how sleek  
 Shines the hog, come to share in the  
 windfall  
 —An abbot's own cheek.  
 All is over. Wake up and come out  
 now,  
 And down let us go,  
 And see the fine things got in order  
 At church for the show  
 Of the Sacrament, set forth this evening ;  
 To-morrow's the Feast  
 Of the Rosary's Virgin, by no means  
 Of Virgins the least,  
 As you'll hear in the off-hand discourse  
 Which (all nature, no art)  
 The Dominican brother, these three  
 weeks,  
 Was getting by heart.  
 Not a pillar nor post but is dized  
 With red and blue papers ;  
 All the roof waves with ribbons, each  
 altar  
 A-blaze with long tapers ;  
 But the great masterpiece is the scaffold  
 Rigged glorious to hold  
 All the fiddlers and fifers and drummers  
 And trumpeters bold,  
 Not afraid of Bellini nor Auber,  
 Who, when the priest's hoarse,  
 Will strike us up something that's brisk  
 For the feast's second course.  
 And then will the flaxen-wigged Image  
 Be carried in pomp  
 Thro' the plain, while in gallant proces-  
 sion  
 The priests mean to stomp.  
 All round the glad church lie old bottles  
 With gunpowder stopped,  
 Which will be, when the Image re-  
 enters,  
 Religiously popped ;  
 And at night from the crest of Calvano  
 Great bonfires will hang,  
 On the plain will the trumpets join  
 chorus,  
 And more poppers bang.  
 At all events, come—to the garden,  
 As far as the wall ;  
 See me tap with a hoe on the plaster  
 Till out there shall fall  
 A scorpion with wide angry nippers !

—“ Such trifles ! ” you say ?  
 Fortū, in my England at home,  
 Men meet gravely to-day  
 And debate, if abolishing Corn-laws  
 Be righteous and wise  
 —If 't were proper, Scirocco should  
 vanish  
 In black from the skies !

## IN A GONDOLA

*He sings.*

I SEND my heart up to thee, all my  
 heart  
 In this my singing.  
 For the stars help me, and the sea bears  
 part ;  
 The very night is clinging  
 Closer to Venice' streets to leave one  
 space  
 Above me, whence thy face  
 May light my joyous heart to thee its  
 dwelling-place.

*She speaks.*

Say after me, and try to say  
 My very words, as if each word  
 Came from you of your own accord,  
 In your own voice, in your own way ;  
 “ This woman's heart and soul and  
 brain  
 “ Are mine as much as this gold chain  
 “ She bids me wear ; which ” (say  
 again)  
 “ I choose to make by cherishing  
 “ A precious thing, or choose to fling  
 “ Over the boat-side, ring by ring.”  
 And yet once more say . . . no word  
 more !  
 Since words are only words. Give o'er !

Unless you call me, all the same,  
 Familiarly by my pet name,  
 Which if the Three should hear you call,  
 And me reply to, would proclaim  
 At once our secret to them all.  
 Ask of me, too, command me, blame—  
 Do, break down the partition-wall  
 'Twixt us, the daylight world beholds  
 Curtained in dusk and splendid folds !  
 What's left but—all of me to take ?  
 I am the Three's : prevent them, slake  
 Your thirst ! 'T is said, the Arab sage  
 In practising with gems can loose  
 Their subtle spirit in his cruce  
 And leave but ashes : so, sweet mage,

Leave them my ashes when thy use  
Sucks out my soul, thy heritage!

*He sings.*

I

Past we glide, and past, and past!  
What's that poor Agnese doing  
Where they make the shutters fast?  
Grey Zanobi's just a-wooing  
To his couch the purchased bride:  
Past we glide!

II

Past we glide, and past, and past!  
Why's the Pucci Palace flaring  
Like a beacon to the blast?  
Guests by hundreds, not one caring  
If the dear host's neck were wried:  
Past we glide!

*She sings.*

I

The moth's kiss, first!  
Kiss me as if you made believe  
You were not sure, this eve,  
How my face, your flower, had pursed  
Its petals up; so, here and there  
You brush it, till I grow aware  
Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.

II

The bee's kiss, now!  
Kiss me as if you entered gay  
My heart at some noonday,  
A bud that dares not disallow  
The claim, so all is rendered up,  
And passively its shattered cup  
Over your head to sleep I bow.

*He sings.*

I

What are we two?  
I am a Jew,  
And carry thee, farther than friends  
can pursue,  
To a feast of our tribe;  
Where they need thee to bribe  
The devil that blasts them unless he  
imbibe  
Thy . . . Scatter the vision for ever!  
And now,  
As of old, I am I, thou art thou!

II

Say again, what we are?  
The sprite of a star,

I lure thee above where the destinies bar  
My plumes their full play  
Till a ruddier ray  
Than my pale one announce there is  
withering away  
Some . . . Scatter the vision for ever!  
And now.  
As of old, I am I, thou art thou!

*He muses.*

Oh, which were best, to roam or rest?  
The land's lap or the water's breast?  
To sleep on yellow millet-sheaves,  
Or swim in lucid shallows just  
Eluding water-lily leaves,  
An inch from Death's black fingers,  
thrust  
To lock you, whom release he must;  
Which life were best on Summer eves?

*He speaks, musing.*

Lie back; could thought of mine im-  
prove you?  
From this shoulder let there spring  
A wing; from this, another wing;  
Wings, not legs and feet, shall move  
you!  
Snow-white must they spring, to blend  
With your flesh, but I intend  
They shall deepen to the end,  
Broader, into burning gold,  
Till both wings crescent-wise enfold  
Your perfect self, from 'neath your feet  
To o'er your head, where, lo, they meet  
As if a million sword-blades hurled  
Defiance from you to the world!  
Rescue me thou, the only real!  
And scare away this mad ideal  
That came, nor motions to depart!  
Thanks! Now, stay ever as thou art!

*Still he muses.*

I

What if the Three should catch at last  
Thy serenader? While there's cast,  
Paul's cloak about my head, and fast  
Gian pinions me, himself has past  
His stylet thro' my back; I reel;  
And . . . is it thou I feel?

II

They trail me, these three godles-  
knaves,  
Past every church that saints and saves,  
Nor stop till, where the cold sea raves  
By Lido's wet accursed graves,

They scoop mine, roll me to its brink,  
And . . . on thy breast I sink !

*She replies, musing.*

Dip your arm o'er the boat-side, elbow-deep,

As I do : thus : were death so unlike sleep,

Caught this way ? Death's to fear from flame or steel, [—feel !

Or poison doubtless ; but from water

Go find the bottom ! Would you stay me ? There !

Now pluck a great blade of that ribbon-grass

To plait in where the foolish jewel was,  
I flung away : since you have praised my hair,

'T is proper to be choice in what I wear.

*He speaks.*

Row home ? must we row home ? Too surely

Know I where its front 's demurely  
Over the Giudecca piled ;

Window just with window mating,

Door on door exactly waiting,

All 's the set face of a child :

But behind it, where 's a trace

Of the staidness and reserve,

And formal lines without a curve,

In the same child's playing-face ?

No two windows look one way

O'er the small sea-water thread

Below them. Ah, the autumn day

I, passing, saw you overhead !

First, out a cloud of curtain blew,

Then a sweet cry, and last came you—

To catch your lory that must needs

Escape just then, of all times then,

To peck a tall plant's fleecy seeds,

And make me happiest of men.

I scarce could breathe to see you reach

So far back o'er the balcony

To catch him ere he climbed too high

Above you in the Smyrna peach

That quick the round smooth cord of gold,

This coiled hair on your head, unrolled,

Fell down you like a gorgeous snake

The Roman girls were wont, of old.

When Rome there was, for coolness' sake

To lie lie curling o'er their bosoms.

Dear lory, may his beak retain

Ever its delicate rose stain

As if the wounded lotus-blossoms  
Had marked their thief to know again !

Stay longer yet, for others' sake  
Than mine ! What should your chamber do ?

—With all its rarities that ache  
In silence while day lasts, but wake  
At night-time and their life renew,  
Suspended just to pleasure you  
Who brought against their will together  
These objects, and, while day lasts,  
weave

Around them such a magic tether  
That dumb they look : your harp,  
believe,

With all the sensitive tight strings  
Which dare not speak, now to itself  
Breathes slumberously, as if some elf  
Went in and out the chords, his wings  
Make murmur wheresoe'er they graze,  
As an angel may, between the maze  
Of midnight palace-pillars, on [gone

And on, to sow God's plagues, have  
Through guilty glorious Babylon.

And while such murmurs flow, the nymph

Bends o'er the harp-top from her shell  
As the dry limpet for the lymph

Come with a tune he knows so well.

And how your statues' hearts must swell !

And how your pictures must descend  
To see each other, friend with friend !

Oh, could you take them by surprise,  
You'd find Schidone's eager Duke

Doing the quaintest courtesies

To that prim saint by Haste-thee-Luke !

And, deeper into her rock den,

Bold Castelfranco's Magdalen

You'd find retreated from the ken

Of that robed counsel-keeping Ser—

As if the Tizian thinks of her,

And is not, rather, gravely bent

On seeing for himself what toys

Are these, his progeny invent,

What litter now the board employs

Whereon he signed a document

That got him murdered ! Each enjoys

Its night so well, you cannot break

The sport up, so, indeed must make

More stay with me, for others' sake.

*She speaks.*

I

To-morrow, if a harp-string, say,  
Is used to tie the jasmine back

That overflows my room with sweets,  
 Contrive your Zorzi somehow meets  
 My Zanze! If the ribbon's black,  
 The Three are watching: keep away!

II

Your gondola—let Zorzi wreath  
 A mesh of water-weeds about  
 Its prow, as if he unaware  
 Had struck some quay or bridge-foot  
 stair!

That I may throw a paper out  
 As you and he go underneath.

There's Zanze's vigilant taper; safe are  
 we.

Only one minute more to-night with me?  
 Resume your past self of a month ago!  
 Be you the bashful gallant, I will be  
 The lady with the colder breast than  
 snow.

Now bow you, as becomes, nor touch  
 my hand

More than I touch yours when I step  
 to land,

And say, "All thanks, Siora!"—  
 Heart to heart

And lips to lips! Yet once more, ere  
 we part,

Clasp me and make me thine, as mine  
 thou art!

*He is surprised, and stabbed.*

It was ordained to be so, sweet!—and  
 best

Comes now, beneath thine eyes, upon  
 thy breast.

Still kiss me! Care not for the  
 cowards! Care

Only to put aside the beautiful hair  
 My blood will hurt! The Three, I do  
 not scorn

To death, because they never lived:  
 but I

Have lived indeed, and so—(yet one  
 more kiss)—can die!

WARING

I

I

WHAT'S become of Waring  
 Since he gave us all the slip,  
 Chose land-travel or seafaring,  
 Boots and chest or staff and scrip,  
 Rather than pace up and down  
 Any longer London town?

II

Who'd have guessed it from his lip  
 Or his brow's accustomed bearing,  
 On the night he thus took ship  
 Or started landward?—little caring  
 For us, it seems, who supped together  
 (Friends of his too, I remember)  
 And walked home thro' the merry  
 weather,

The snowiest in all December.

I left his arm that night myself

For what's-his-name's, the new prose-  
 poet

Who wrote the book there, on the shelf—

How, forsooth, was I to know it

If Waring meant to glide away

Like a ghost at break of day?

Ne'er looked he half so gay!

III

He was prouder than the devil:

How he must have cursed our revel!

Ay and many other meetings,

Indoor visits, outdoor greetings,

As up and down he paced this London,

With no work done, but great works  
 undone,

Where scarce twenty knew his name.

Why not, then, have earlier spoken,

Written, bustled? Who's to blame

If your silence kept unbroken?

"True, but there were sundry jottings,

"Stray-leaves, fragments, blurs and  
 blottings,

"Certain first steps were achieved

"Already which"—(is that your  
 meaning?)

"Had well borne out whot'er believed

"In more to come!" But who goes  
 gleaning

Hedge-side chance-blades, while full-  
 sheaved

Stand corn-fields by him? Pride,  
 o'erweening

Pride alone, puts forth such claims

O'er the day's distinguished names.

IV

Meant me, how much I loved him,

I find out now I've lost him.

I who cared not if I moved him,

Who could so carelessly accost him,

Henceforth ne'er shall get free

Of his ghostly company.

His eyes that just a little wink

As deep I go into the merit

Of this and that distinguished spirit—  
 His cheeks' raised colour, soon to sink,  
 As long I dwell on some stupendous  
 And tremendous (Heaven defend us!)  
 Monstr'-inform'-ingens-horrend-ous  
 Demoniaco-seraphic  
 Penman's latest piece of graphic.  
 Nay, my very wrist grows warm  
 With his dragging weight of arm.  
 E'en so, swimmingly appears,  
 Through one's after-supper musings,  
 Some lost lady of old years  
 With her beauteous vain endeavour  
 And goodness unrepaid as ever;  
 The face, accustomed to refusings,  
 We, puppies that we were . . . Oh  
 never

Surely, nice of conscience, scrupled  
 Being aught like false, forsooth, to?  
 Telling aught but honest truth to?  
 What a sin, had we centupled  
 Its possessor's grace and sweetness!  
 No! she heard in its completeness  
 Truth, for truth's a weighty matter,  
 And truth, at issue, we can't flatter!  
 Well, 'tis done with; she's exempt  
 From damning us thro' such a sally;  
 And so she glides, as down a valley,  
 Taking up with her contempt,  
 Past our reach; and in the flowers  
 Shut her unregarded hours.

## v

Oh, could I have him back once more,  
 This Waring, but one half-day more!  
 Back, with the quiet face of yore,  
 So hungry for acknowledgment  
 Like mine! I'd fool him to his bent,  
 Feed, should not he, to heart's content?  
 I'd say, "to only have conceived,  
 "Planned your great works, apart  
 from progress,  
 "Surpasses little works achieved!"  
 I'd lie so, I should be believed.  
 I'd make such havoc of the claims  
 Of the day's distinguished names  
 To feast him with, as feasts an ogress  
 Her feverish sharp-toothed gold-  
 crowned child!  
 Or as one feasts a creature rarely  
 Captured here, unreconciled  
 To capture; and completely gives  
 Its pettish humours license, barely  
 Requiring that it lives,

## vi

Ichabod, Ichabod,  
 The glory is departed!  
 Travels Waring East away?  
 Who, of knowledge, by hearsay,  
 Reports a man upstarted  
 Somewhere as a god,  
 Hordes grown European-hearted,  
 Millions of the wild made tame  
 On a sudden at his fame?  
 In Vishnu-land what Avatar?  
 Or who in Moscow, toward the Czar,  
 With the demurest of footfalls  
 Over the Kremlin's pavement bright  
 With serpentine and syenite,  
 Steps, with five other Generals  
 That simultaneously take snuff,  
 For each to have pretext enough  
 And kerchiefwise unfold his sash  
 Which, softness' self, is yet the stuff  
 To hold fast where a steel chain snaps,  
 And leave the grand white neck no gash?  
 Waring in Moscow, to those rough  
 Cold northern natures borne perhaps,  
 Like the lambwhite maiden dear  
 From the circle of mute kings  
 Unable to repress the tear,  
 Each as his sceptre down he flings,  
 To Dian's fane at Taurica,  
 Where now a captive priestess, she  
 always  
 Mingles her tender grave Hellenic  
 speech  
 With theirs, turned to the hailstone-  
 beaten beach,  
 As pours some pigeon, from the myrrhy  
 lands  
 Rapt by the whirlbast to fierce Scythian  
 strands  
 Where breed the swallows, her melodi-  
 ous cry  
 Amid their barbarous twitter!  
 In Russia? Never! Spain were  
 fitter!  
 Ay, most likely 'tis in Spain  
 That we and Waring meet again  
 Now, while he turns down that cool  
 narrow lane  
 Into the blackness, out of grave Madri'd  
 All fire and shine, abrupt as when  
 their's slid  
 Its stiff gold blazing pall  
 From some black coffin-lid.  
 Or, best of all,  
 I love to think  
 The leaving us was just a feint;

Back here to London did he slink,  
 And now works on without a wink  
 Of sleep, and we are on the brink  
 Of something great in fresco-paint :  
 Some garret's ceiling, walls and floor,  
 Up and down and o'er and o'er  
 He splashes, as none splashed before  
 Since great Caldara Polidore,  
 Or Music means this land of ours  
 Some favour yet, to pity won  
 By Purcell from his *Rosy Bowers*,—  
 " Give me my so-long promised son,  
 " Let Waring end what I begun ! "  
 Then down he creeps and out he steals  
 Only when the night conceals  
 His face ; in Kent 't is cherry-time,  
 Or hops are picking : or at prime  
 Of March he wanders as, too happy,  
 Years ago when he was young,  
 Some mild eve when woods grew sappy  
 And the early moths had sprung  
 To life from many a trembling sheath  
 Woven the warm boughs beneath ;  
 While small birds said to themselves  
 What should soon be actual song,  
 And young gnats, by tens and twelves,  
 Made as if they were the throng  
 That crowd around and carry aloft  
 The sound they have nursed, so sweet  
 and pure,  
 Out of a myriad noises soft,  
 Into a tone that can endure  
 Amid the noise of a July noon  
 When all God's creatures crave their  
 boon,  
 All at once and all in tune,  
 And get it, happy as Waring then,  
 Having first within his ken  
 What a man might do with men :  
 And far too glad, in the even-glow,  
 To mix with the world he meant to take  
 Into his hand, he told you, so—  
 And out of it his world to make,  
 To contract and to expand  
 As he shut or oped his hand.  
 Oh Waring, what's to really be ?  
 A clear stage and a crowd to see !  
 Some Garrick, say, out shall not he  
 The heart of Hamlet's mystery pluck ?  
 Or, where most unclean beasts are rife,  
 Some Junius—am I right ?—shall tuck  
 His sleeve, and forth with flaying-knife !  
 Some Chatterton shall have the luck  
 Of calling Rowley into life !  
 Some one shall somehow run a muck  
 With this old world for want of strife  
 Sound asleep. Contrive, contrive

To rouse us, Waring ! Who's alive ?  
 Our men scarce seem in earnest now,  
 Distinguished names ! —but 't is, some-  
 how,  
 As if they played at being names  
 Still more distinguished, like the games  
 Of children. Turn our sport to earnest  
 With a visage of the sternest !  
 Bring the real times back, confessed  
 Still better than our very best !

II

I

" WHEN I last saw Waring . . . "  
 (How all turned to him who spoke !  
 You saw Waring ? Truth or joke ?  
 In land-travel or sea-faring ?)

II

" We were sailing by Triest  
 " Where a day or two we harboured :  
 " A sunset was in the West,  
 " When, looking over the vessel's side,  
 " One of our company espied  
 " A sudden speck to larboard.  
 " And as a sea-duck flies and swims  
 " At once, so came the light craft up,  
 " With its sole lateen sail that trims  
 " And turns (the water round its rims  
 " Dancing, as round a sinking cup)  
 " And by us like a fish it curled,  
 " And drew itself up close beside,  
 " Its great sail on the instant furled,  
 " And o'er its thwarts a shrill voice  
 cried,  
 " (A neck as bronzed as a Lascar's)  
 " ' Buy wine of us, you English brig ?  
 " ' Or fruit, tobacco and cigars ?  
 " ' A pilot for you to Triest ?  
 " ' Without one, look you ne'er so big  
 " ' They'll never let you up the bay !  
 " ' We natives should know best.'  
 " I turned, and ' just those fellows'  
 way.'  
 " Our captain said, ' The ' long-shore  
 thieves  
 " ' Are laughing at us in their sleeves.'

III

" In truth, the boy leaned laughing  
 back ;  
 " And one, half-hidden by his side  
 " Under the furled sail, soon I spied,  
 " With great grass hat and kerchief  
 black,  
 " Who looked up with his kingly throat,  
 " Said somewhat, while the other shook

" His hair back from his eyes to look  
 " Their longest at us ; then the boat,  
 " I know not how, turned sharply  
 round,  
 " Laying her whole side on the sea  
 " As a leaping fish does ; from the lee  
 " Into the weather, cut somehow  
 " Her sparkling path beneath our bow,  
 " And so went off, as with a bound,  
 " Into the rosy and golden half  
 " Of the sky, to overtake the sun  
 " And reach the shore, like the sea-calf  
 " Its singing cave ; yet I caught one  
 " Glance ere away the boat quite  
 passed,  
 " And neither time nor toil could mar  
 " Those features : so I saw the last  
 " Of Waring !"—You ? Oh, never  
 star  
 Was lost here but it rose afar !  
 Look East, where whole new thousands  
 are !  
 In Vishnu-land what Avatar ?

## THE TWINS

" Give " and " It-shall-be-given-unto-  
 you."

## I

GRAND rough old Martin Luther  
 Bloomed fables—flowers on furze,  
 The better the uncouth :  
 Do roses stick like burrs ?

## II

A beggar asked an alms  
 One day at an abbey-door,  
 Said Luther ; but, seized with qualms,  
 The abbot replied, " We're poor !

## III

" Poor, who had plenty once,  
 " When gifts fell thick as rain :  
 " But they give us nought, for the  
 nonce,  
 " And how should we give again ? "

## IV

Then the beggar, " See your sins !  
 " Of old, unless I err,  
 " Ye had brothers for inmates, twins,  
 " Date and Dabitur.

## V

" While Date was in good case  
 " Dabitur flourished too :  
 " For Dabitur's lenten face  
 " No wonder if Date rue.

## VI

" Would ye retrieve the one ?  
 " Try and make plump the other !  
 " When Date's penance is done,  
 " Dabitur helps his brother.

## VII

" Only, beware relapse ! "  
 The Abbot hung his head.  
 This beggar might be perhaps  
 An angel, Luther said.

## A LIGHT WOMAN

## I

So far as our story approaches the end,  
 Which do you pity the most of us  
 three ?—  
 My friend, or the mistress of my friend  
 With her wanton eyes, or me ?

## II

My friend was already too good to lose,  
 And seemed in the way of improve-  
 ment yet,  
 When she crossed his path with her  
 hunting-noose  
 And over him drew her net.

## III

When I saw him tangled in her toils,  
 A shame, said I, if she adds just him  
 To her nine-and-ninety other spoils,  
 The hundredth for a whim !

## IV

And before my friend be wholly hers,  
 How easy to prove to him, I said,  
 An eagle's the game her pride prefers,  
 Though she snaps at a wren instead !

## V

So, I gave her eyes my own eyes to take,  
 My hand sought hers as in earnest  
 need,  
 And round she turned for my noble sake,  
 And gave me herself indeed.

## VI

The eagle am I, with my fame in the  
 world,  
 The wren is he, with his maiden face.  
 —You look away and your lip is curled ?  
 Patience, a moment's space !

## VII

For see, my friend goes shaking and  
 white ;

He eyes me as the basilisk :  
I have turned, it appears, his day to  
night,  
Eclipsing his sun's disk.

VIII

And I did it, he thinks, as a very thief :  
" Though I love her—that, he com-  
prehends—  
One should master one's passions,  
(love, in chief)  
" And be loyal to one's friends ! "

IX

And she,—she lies in my hand as tame  
As a pear late basking over a wall ;  
Just a touch to try and off it came ;  
'Tis mine,—can I let it fall ?

X

With no mind to eat it, that's the worst !  
Were it thrown in the road, would  
the case assist ?  
'T was quenching a dozen blue-flies'  
thirst  
When I gave its stalk a twist.

XI

And I,—what I seem to my friend, you  
see ;  
What I soon shall seem to his love,  
you guess :  
What I seem to myself, do you ask of  
me ?  
No hero, I confess.

XII

'Tis an awkward thing to play with  
souls,  
And matter enough to save one's own :  
Yet think of my friend, and the burn-  
ing coals  
He played with for bits of stone !

XIII

One likes to show the truth for the  
truth ;  
That the woman was light is very  
true :  
But suppose she says,—Never mind  
that youth !  
What wrong have I done to you ?

XIV

Well, any how, here the story stays,  
So far at least as I understand ;

And, Robert Browning, you writer of  
plays,  
Here's a subject made to your hand !

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I

I SAID—Then, dearest, since 't is so,  
Since now at length my fate I know,  
'ince nothing all my love avails,  
Since all, my life seemed meant for,  
fails,  
Since this was written and needs  
must be—  
My whole heart rises up to bless  
Your name in pride and thankfulness !  
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim  
Only a memory of the same,  
—And this beside, if you will not blame,  
Your leave for one more last ride  
with me.

II

My mistress bent that brow of hers ;  
Those deep dark eyes where pride  
demurs  
When pity would be softening through,  
Fixed me a breathing-while or two  
With life or death in the balance :  
right !  
The blood replenished me again ;  
My last thought was at least not vain :  
I and my mistress, side by side  
Shall be together, breathe and ride,  
So, one day more am I deified.  
Who knows but the world may end  
to-night ?

III

Hush ! if you saw some western cloud  
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed  
By many benedictions—sun's  
And moon's and evening-star's at once—  
And so, you, looking and loving best,  
Conscious grew, your passion drew  
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,  
Down on you, near and yet more near,  
Till flesh must fade for heaven was  
here !—  
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and  
fear !  
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

IV

Then we began to ride. My soul  
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped  
scroll

Freshening and fluttering in the wind,  
Past hopes already lay behind.

What need to strive with a life awry?  
Had I said that, had I done this,  
So might I gain, so might I miss.  
Might she have loved me? just as well  
She might have hated, who can tell!  
Where had I been now if the worst  
befell?

And here we are riding, she and I.

## v

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?  
Why, all men strive and who succeeds?  
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,  
Saw other regions, cities new,

As the world rushed by on either  
side.

I thought,—All labour, yet no less  
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.  
Look at the end of work, contrast  
The petty done, the undone vast,  
This present of theirs with the hopeful  
past!

I hoped she would love me; here we  
ride.

## vi

What hand and brain went ever paired?  
What heart alike conceived and dared?  
What act proved all its thought had  
been?

What will but felt the fleshly screen?  
We ride and I see her bosom heave.  
There's many a crown for who can  
reach.

Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!  
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,  
A soldier's doing! what atones?  
They scratch his name on the Abbey-  
stones.

My riding is better, by their leave.

## vii

What does it all mean, poet? Well,  
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell  
What we felt only; you expressed  
You hold things beautiful the best.

And pace them in rhyme so, side by  
side.

'Tis something, nay 'tis much: but  
then,

Have you yourself what's best for men?  
Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—  
Nearer one whit your own sublime  
Than we who never have turned a  
rhyme?

Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I  
ride.

## viii

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave  
A score of years to Art, her slave,  
And that's your Venus, whence we turn  
To yonder girl that fords the burn!

You acquiesce, and shall I repine?  
What, man of music, you grown grey  
With notes and nothing else to say,  
Is this your sole praise from a friend,  
"Greatly his opera's strains intend,  
"But in music we know how fashions  
end!"

I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

## ix

Who knows what's fit for us? Had  
fate

Proposed bliss here should sublimate  
My being—had I signed the bond—  
Still one must lead some life beyond,

Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.  
This foot once planted on the goal,  
This glory-garland round my soul,  
Could I descry such? Try and test!  
I sink back shuddering from the quest.  
Earth being so good, would heaven seem  
best?

Now, heaven and she are beyond this  
ride.

## x

And yet—she has not spoke so long!  
What if heaven be that, fair and strong  
At life's best, with our eyes upturned  
Whither life's flower is first discerned,

We, fixed so, ever should so abide?  
What if we still ride on, we two,  
With life for ever old yet new,  
Changed not in kind but in degree,  
The instant made eternity,—  
And heaven just prove that I and she  
Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

## THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

## A CHILD'S STORY

(WRITTEN FOR, AND INSCRIBED TO, W. M.  
THE YOUNGER.)

## i

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,  
By famous Hanover city;  
The river Weser, deep and wide,  
Washes its wall on the southern side;  
A pleasanter spot you never spied;

But, when begins my ditty,  
Almost five hundred years ago,  
To see the townfolk suffer so  
From vermin, was a pity.

II

Rats!  
They fought the dogs, and killed the  
cats,  
And bit the babies in the cradles,  
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,  
And licked the soup from the  
cooks' own ladles,  
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,  
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,  
And even spoiled the women's chats,  
By drowning their speaking  
With shrieking and squeaking  
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III

At last the people in a body  
To the Town Hall came flocking:  
" 'Tis clear," cried they, " our Mayor's  
a noddy;  
" And as for our Corporation—  
shocking  
" To think we buy gowns lined with  
ermine  
" For dolls that can't or won't deter-  
mine  
" What's best to rid us of our vermin!  
" You hope, because you're old and  
obese,  
" To find in the furry civic robe ease?  
" Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a  
racking  
" To find the remedy we're lacking,  
" Or, sure as fate, we'll send you pack-  
ing!"  
At this the Mayor and Corporation  
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV

An hour they sat in council,  
At length the Mayor broke silence:  
" For a guilder I'd my ermine gown  
sell,  
" I wish I were a mile hence!  
" It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—  
" I'm sure my poor head aches again,  
" I've scratched it so, and all in vain.  
" Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"  
Just as he said this, what should hap  
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?  
" Bless us," cried the Mayor, " what's  
that?"

(With the Corporation as he sat,  
Looking little though wondrous fat;  
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister  
Than a too-long-opened oyster,  
Save when at noon his paunch grew  
mutinous

For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)  
" Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?  
" Anything like the sound of a rat  
" Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

V

" Come in!"—the Mayor cried, look-  
ing bigger:  
And in did come the strangest figure!  
His queer long coat from heel to head  
Was half of yellow and half of red,  
And he himself was tall and thin,  
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,  
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,  
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,  
But lips where smiles went out and in;  
There was no guessing his kith and kin:  
And nobody could enough admire  
The tall man and his quaint attire.  
Quoth one: " It's as my great-grand-  
sire,  
" Starting up at the Trump of Doom's  
tone,  
" Had walked this way from his  
painted tomb-stone!"

VI

He advanced to the council-table:  
And, " Please your honours," said he,  
" I'm able,  
" By means of a secret charm, to draw  
" All creatures living beneath the sun,  
" That creep or swim or fly or run,  
" After me so as you never saw!  
" And I chiefly use my charm  
" On creatures that do people harm,  
" The mole and toad and newt and  
viper;  
" And people call me the Pied Piper."  
(And here they noticed round his neck  
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,  
To match with his coat of the self-same  
cheque;  
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;  
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever  
straying  
As if impatient to be playing  
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled  
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)  
" Yet," said he, " poor piper as I am,  
" In Tartary I freed the Cham,

" Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;  
 " I eased in Asia the Nizam  
 " Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-bats:  
 " And as for what your brain bewilders,  
 " If I can rid your town of rats  
 " Will you give me a thousand guilders?"  
 " One? fifty thousand!"—was the exclamation  
 Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

## VII

Into the street the Piper stept,  
 Smiling first a little smile,  
 As if he knew what magic slept  
 In his quiet pipe the while;  
 Then, like a musical adept,  
 To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,  
 And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,  
 Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;  
 And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,  
 You heard as if an army muttered;  
 And the muttering grew to a grumbling;  
 And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;  
 And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.  
 Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,  
 Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,  
 Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,  
 Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,  
 Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,  
 Families by tens and dozens,  
 Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—  
 Followed the Piper for their lives.  
 From street to street he piped advancing,  
 And step for step they followed dancing,  
 Until they came to the river Weser  
 Wherein all plunged and perished!  
 —Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,  
 Swam across and lived to carry  
 (As he, the manuscript he cherished)  
 To Rat-land home his commentary:  
 Which was, " At the first shrill notes  
 of the pipe,  
 " I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,  
 " And putting apples, wondrous ripe,  
 " Into a cider-press's gripe:

" And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,  
 " And a leaving ajar of conserve-cup-boards,  
 " And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,  
 " And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:  
 " And it seemed as if a voice  
 " (Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery  
 " Is breathed) called out, ' Oh rats, rejoice!  
 " ' The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!  
 " ' So, munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,  
 " ' Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!  
 " And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,  
 " All ready staved, like a great sun shone  
 " Glorious scarce an inch before me,  
 " Just as methought it said, ' Come, bore me!  
 " —I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

## VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people  
 Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.  
 " Go," cried the Mayor, " and get long poles,  
 " Poke out the nests and block up the holes!  
 " Consult with carpenters and builders,  
 " And leave in our town not even a trace  
 " Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face  
 Of the Piper perked in the market-place,  
 With a, " First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

## IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;  
 So did the Corporation too.  
 For council dinners made rare havoc  
 With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave,  
 Hock;  
 And half the money would replenish  
 Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.  
 To pay this sum to a wandering fellow  
 With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!  
 " Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,

" Our business was done at the river's  
brink ;  
" We saw with our eyes the vermin  
sink,  
" And what's dead can't come to life, I  
think.  
" So, friend, we're not the folks to  
shrink  
" From the duty of giving you some-  
thing for drink,  
" And a matter of money to put in  
your poke ;  
" But as for the guilders, what we spoke  
" Of them, as you very well know, was  
in joke.  
" Beside, our losses have made us  
thrifty.  
" A thousand guilders ! Come, take  
fifty !"

X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried  
" No trifling ! I can't wait, beside !  
" I've promised to visit by dinnertime  
" Bagdat, and accept the prime  
" Of the Head-cook's pottage, all he's  
rich in,  
" For having left, in the Caliph's  
kitchen,  
" Of a nest of scorpions no survivor :  
" With him I proved no bargain-driver,  
" With you, don't think I'll bate a  
stiver !  
" And folks who put me in a passion  
" May find me pipe after another  
fashion."

XI

" How ? " cried the Mayor, " d'ye  
think I brook  
" Being worse treated than a Cook ?  
" Insulted by a lazy ribald  
" With idle pipe and vesture piebald ?  
" You threaten us, fellow ? Do your  
worst,  
" Blow your pipe there till you burst !"

XII

Once more he stept into the street,  
And to his lips again  
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight  
cane ;  
And ere he blew three notes (such  
sweet  
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning  
Never gave the enraptured air)  
There was a rustling that seemed like a  
bustling

Of merry crowds jostling at pitching  
and hustling,  
Small feet were pattering, wooden  
shoes clattering,  
Little hands clapping and little tongues  
chattering,  
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when  
barley is scattering,  
Out came the children running.  
All the little boys and girls,  
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,  
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,  
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily  
after  
The wonderful music with shouting  
and laughter.

XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council  
stood  
As if they were changed into blocks of  
wood,  
Unable to move a step, or cry  
To the children merrily skipping by,  
—Could only follow with the eye  
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.  
But how the Mayor was on the rack,  
And the wretched Council's bosoms  
beat, [Street  
As the Piper turned from the High  
To where the Weser rolled its waters  
Right in the way of their sons and  
daughters !  
However he turned from South to West,  
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps  
addressed,  
And after him the children pressed ;  
Great was the joy in every breast.  
" He never can cross that mighty top !  
" He's forced to let the piping drop,  
" And we shall see our children stop !"  
When, lo, as they reached the moun-  
tain-side,  
A wondrous portal opened wide,  
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed ;  
And the Piper advanced and the child-  
ren followed,  
And when all were in to the very last,  
The door in the mountain-side shut  
fast.  
Did I say, all ? No ! One was lame,  
And could not dance the whole of the  
way ;  
And in after years, if you would blame  
His sadness, he was used to say,—  
" It's dull in our town since my play-  
mates left !"

" I can't forget that I'm bereft  
 " Of all the pleasant sights they see,  
 " Which the Piper also promised me.  
 " For he led us, he said, to a joyous  
 land,  
 " Joining the town and just at hand,  
 " Where waters gushed and fruit-trees  
 grew,  
 " And flowers put forth a fairer hue,  
 " And everything was strange and new ;  
 " The sparrows were brighter than  
 peacocks here,  
 " And their dogs outran our fallow  
 deer,  
 " And honey-bees had lost their sting ;,  
 " And horses were born with eagles'  
 wings :  
 " And just as I became assured  
 " My lame foot would be speedily cured,  
 " The music stopped and I stood still,  
 " And found myself outside the hill,  
 " Left alone against my will,  
 " To go now limping as before,  
 " And never hear of that country  
 more ! "

## XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin !

There came into many a burgher's  
 pate  
 A text which says that heaven's gate  
 Opes to the rich at as easy rate  
 As the needle's eye takes a camel in !  
 The Mayor sent East, West, North and  
 South,  
 To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,  
 Wherever it was men's lot to find  
 him,  
 Silver and gold to his heart's content,  
 If he'd only return the way he went,  
 And bring the children behind him.  
 But when they saw 't was a lost endeav-  
 our, [ever,  
 And Piper and dancers were gone for  
 They made a decree that lawyers never  
 Should think their records dated duly  
 If, after the day of the month and year,  
 These words did not as well appear,  
 " And so long after what happened  
 here  
 " On the Twenty-second of July,  
 " Thirteen hundred and seventy-six : "  
 And the better in memory to fix  
 The place of the children's last retreat,  
 They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—  
 Where any one playing on pipe or  
 tabor

Was sure for the future to lose his  
 labour.  
 Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern  
 To shock with mirth a street so  
 solemn ;  
 But opposite the place of the cavern  
 They wrote the story on a column,  
 And on the great church-window  
 painted  
 The same, to make the world acquainted  
 How their children were stolen away,  
 And there it stands to this very day.  
 And I must not omit to say  
 That in Transylvania there's a tribe  
 Of alien people that ascribe  
 The outlandish ways and dress  
 On which their neighbours lay such  
 stress,  
 To their fathers and mothers having  
 risen  
 Out of some subterraneous prison  
 Into which they were trepanned  
 Long time ago in a mighty band  
 Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick  
 land,  
 But how or why, they don't understand.

## XV

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers  
 Of scores out with all men—especially  
 pipers !  
 And, whether they pipe us free from  
 rats or from mice,  
 If we've promised them aught, let us  
 keep our promise !

## THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS

## I

YOU'RE my friend :  
 I was the man the Duke spoke to ;  
 I helped the Duchess to cast off his  
 yoke, too ;  
 So, here's the tale from beginning to  
 end,  
 My friend !

## II

Ours is a great wild country .  
 If you climb to our castle's top,  
 I don't see where your eye can stop ;  
 For when you've passed the corn-field  
 country,  
 Where vineyards leave off, flocks are  
 packed,  
 And sheep-range leads to cattle-tract,  
 And cattle-tract to open-chase,  
 And open-chase to the very base

Of the mountain where, at a funeral  
pace,  
Round about, solemn and slow,  
One by one, row after row,  
Up and up the pine-trees go,  
So, like black priests up, and so  
Down the other side again  
To another greater, wilder country,  
That's one vast red drear burnt-up  
plain,  
Branched through and through with  
many a vein  
Whence iron's dug, and copper's dealt ;  
Look right, look left, look straight  
before,—  
Beneath they mine, above they smelt,  
Copper-ore and iron-ore,  
And forge and furnace mould and melt,  
And so on, more and ever more,  
Till at the last, for a bounding belt,  
Comes the salt sand hoar of the great  
sea-shore,  
—And the whole is our Duke's country.

## III

I was born the day this present Duke  
was—  
(And O, says the song, ere I was old !)  
In the castle where the other Duke  
was—  
(When I was happy and young, not old !)  
I in the kennel, he in the bower :  
We are of like age to an hour.  
My father was huntsman in that day ;  
Who has not heard my father say  
That, when a boar was brought to bay,  
Three times, four times out of five,  
With his huntspear he'd contrive  
To get the killing-place transfixed,  
And pin him true, both eyes betwixt ?  
And that's why the old Duke would  
rather  
He lost a salt-pit than my father,  
And loved to have him ever in call ;  
That's why my father stood in the hall  
When the old Duke brought his infant  
out  
To show the people, and while they  
passed  
The wondrous bantling round about,  
Was first to start at the outside blast  
As the Kaiser's courier blew his horn,  
Just a month after the babe was born.  
"And," quoth the Kaiser's courier,  
"since  
"The Duke has got an heir, our Prince  
"Needs the Duke's self at his side : "

The Duke looked down and seemed to  
wince,  
But he thought of wars o'er the world  
wide,  
Castles a-fire, men on their march,  
The toppling tower, the crashing arch ;  
And up he looked, and awhile he eyed  
The row of crests and shields and  
banners  
Of all achievements after all manners,  
And "ay," said the Duke with a surly  
pride.  
The more was his comfort when he died  
At next year's end, in a velvet suit,  
With a gilt glove on his hand, and his  
foot  
In a silken shoe for a leather boot,  
Petticoated like a herald,  
In a chamber next to an ante-room,  
Where he breathed the breath of page  
and groom,  
What he called stink, and they, per-  
fume :  
—They should have set him on red  
Berold  
Mad with pride, like fire to manage !  
They should have got his cheek fresh  
tannage  
Such a day as to-day in the merry sun-  
shine !  
Had they stuck on his fist a rough-foot  
merlin !  
(Hark, the wind's on the heath at its  
game !  
Oh for a noble falcon-lanner  
To flap each broad wing like a banner,  
And turn in the wind, and dance like  
flame !)  
Had they broached a cask of white beer  
from Berlin !  
—Or if you incline to prescribe mere  
wine  
Put to his lips when they saw him pine,  
A cup of our own Moldavia fine,  
Cotnar for instance, green as May sorrel  
And rosy with sweet,—we shall not  
quarrel.

## IV

So, at home, the sick tall yellow Duchess  
Was left with the infant in her clutches,  
She being the daughter of God knows  
who :  
And now was the time to revisit her  
tribe.  
Abroad and afar they went, the two,  
And let our people rail and gibe

At the empty hall and extinguished  
fire,  
As loud as we liked, but ever in vain,  
Till after long years we had our desire,  
And back came the Duke and his  
mother again.

## v

And he came back the pertest little ape  
That ever affronted human shape ;  
Full of his travel, struck at himself.  
You'd say, he despised our bluff old  
ways ?

—Not he ! For in Paris they told the  
elf

That our rough North land was the  
Land of Lays,

The one good thing left in evil days ;  
Since the Mid-Age was the Heroic Time,  
And only in wild nooks like ours

Could you taste of it yet as in its prime,  
And see true castles, with proper  
towers,

Young-hearted women, old-minded  
men,

And manners now as manners were then.  
So, all that the old Dukes had been,  
without knowing it,

This Duke would fain know he was,  
without being it ;

'T was not for the joy's self, but the joy  
of his showing it,

Nor for the pride's self, but the pride of  
our seeing it,

He revived all usages thoroughly worn-  
out,

The souls of them fumed-forth, the  
hearts of them torn-out :

And chief in the chase his neck he  
perilled,

On a lathy horse, all legs and length,  
With blood for bone, all speed, no  
strength ;

—They should have set him on red  
Berold

With the red eye slow consuming in fire,  
And the thin stiff ear like an abbey  
spire !

## vi

Well, such as he was, he must marry,  
we heard :

And out of a convent, at the word,  
Came the lady, in time of spring.

—Oh, old thoughts they cling, they  
cling !

That day, I know, with a dozen oaths

I clad myself in thick hunting-clothes  
Fit for the chase of urox or buffle  
In winter-time when you need to  
muffle.

But the Duke had a mind we should  
cut a figure,

And so we saw the lady arrive :  
My friend, I have seen a white crane  
bigger !

She was the smallest lady alive,  
Made in a piece of nature's madness,  
Too small, almost, for the life and  
gladness

That over-filled her, as some hive  
Out of the bears' reach on the high  
trees

Is crowded with its safe merry bees :  
In truth, she was not hard to please !  
Up she looked, down she looked, round  
at the mead,

Straight at the castle, that's best indeed  
To look at from outside the walls :

As for us, stiled the " serfs and thralls,"  
She as much thanked me as if she had  
said it,

(With her eyes, do you understand ?)  
Because I patted her horse while I led  
it ;

And Max, who rode on her other hand,  
Said, no bird flew past but she inquired  
What its true name was, nor ever  
seemed tired—

If that was an eagle she saw hover,  
And the green and grey bird on the  
field was the plover.

When suddenly appeared the Duke :  
And as down she sprung, the small foot  
pointed

On to my hand,—as with a rebuke,  
And as if his backbone were not jointed,  
The Duke stepped rather aside than  
forward,

And welcomed her with his grandest  
smile ;

And, mind you, his mother all the  
while

Chilled in the rear, like a wind to nor'-  
ward ;

And up, like a weary yawn, with its  
pullies

Went, in a shriek, the rusty portcullis :  
And, like a glad sky the north-wind  
sullies,

The lady's face stopped its play,  
As if her first hair had grown grey :  
For such things must begin some one  
day.

VII

In a day or two she was well again ;  
As who should say, " You labour in  
vain !

" This is all a jest against God, who  
meant

" I should ever be, as I am, content  
" And glad in his sight ; therefore, glad  
I will be."

So, smiling as at first went she.

VIII

She was active, stirring, all fire—  
Could not rest, could not tire—  
To a stone she might have given life !  
(I myself loved once, in my day)  
—For a shepherd's, miner's, huntsman's  
wife,

(I had a wife, I know what I say)  
Never in all the world such an one !

And here was plenty to be done,  
And she that could do it, great or small,  
She was to do nothing at all.

There was already this man in his post,  
This in his station, and that in his  
office,

And the Duke's plan admitted a wife,  
at most,

To meet his eye, with the other trophies,  
Now outside the hall, now in it,  
To sit thus, stand thus, see and be seen,  
At the proper place in the proper  
minute,

And die away the life between.

And it was amusing enough, each  
infraction

Of rule—(but for after-sadness that  
came)

To hear the consummate self-satis-  
faction

With which the young Duke and the  
old dame

Would let her advise, and criticise,  
And, being a fool, instruct the wise,  
And, child-like, parcel out praise or  
blame :

They bore it all in complacent guise,  
As though an artificer, after contriving  
A wheel-work image as if it were living,  
Should find with delight it could motion  
to strike him !

So found the Duke, and his mother like  
him :

The lady hardly got a rebuff—  
That had not been contemptuous  
enough,

With his cursed smirk, as he nodded  
applause,  
And kept off the old mother-cat's claws.

IX

So, the little lady grew silent and thin,  
Paling and ever paling,

As the way is with a hid chagrin ;  
And the Duke perceived that she was  
ailing,

And said in his heart, " 'T is done to  
spite me,

" But I shall find in my power to right  
me ! "

Don't swear, friend ! The old one,  
many a year,

Is in hell, and the Duke's self . . . you  
shall hear.

X

Well, early in autumn, at first winter-  
warning,

When the stag had to break with his  
foot, of a morning,

A drinking-hole out of the fresh tender  
ice,

That covered the pond till the sun, in a  
trice,

Loosening it, let out a ripple of gold,  
And another and another, and faster  
and faster,

Till, dimpling to blindness, the wide  
water rolled :

Then it so chanced that the Duke our  
master

Asked himself what were the pleasures  
in season,

And found, since the calendar bade  
him be hearty,

He should do the Middle Age no treason  
In resolving on a hunting-party.

Always provided, old books showed the  
way of it !

What meant old poets by their strict-  
ures ?

And when old poets had said their say  
of it,

How taught old painters in their  
pictures ?

We must revert to the proper channels,  
Workings in tapestry, paintings on  
panels,

And gather up woodcraft's authentic  
traditions :

Here was food for our various ambitions,  
As on each case, exactly stated—

To encourage your dog, now, the  
 properest chirrup,  
 Or best prayer to St. Hubert on mount-  
 ing your stirrup—  
 We of the household took thought and  
 debated.  
 Blessed was he whose back ached with  
 the jerkin  
 His sire was wont to do forest-work in ;  
 Blessed he who nobly sunk " ohs "   
 And " ahs " while he tugged on his  
 grandsire's trunk-hose ;  
 What signifies hats if they had no rims  
 on,  
 Each slouching before and behind like  
 the scallop,  
 And able to serve at sea for a shallop,  
 Loaded with lacquer and looped with  
 crimson ?  
 So that the deer now, to make a short  
 rhyme on 't,  
 What with our Venerers, Prickers and  
 Verderers,  
 Might hope for real hunters at length  
 and not murderers,  
 And oh the Duke's tailor, he had a hot  
 time on 't !

## XI

Now you must know that when the first  
 dizziness  
 Of flap-hats and buff-coats and jack-  
 boots subsided,  
 The Duke put this question, " The  
 Duke's part provided,  
 " Had not the Duchesse some share in  
 the business ? "   
 For out of the mouth of two or three  
 witnesses  
 Did he establish all fit-or-unfitnesses :  
 And, after much laying of heads to-  
 gether,  
 Somebody's cap got a notable feather  
 By the announcement with proper  
 unction  
 That he had discovered the lady's  
 function ;  
 Since ancient authors gave this tenet,  
 " When horns wind a mort and the  
 deer is at siege,  
 " Let the dame of the castle prick forth  
 on her jennet,  
 " And, with water to wash the hands of  
 her liege  
 " In a clean ewer with a fair towelling,  
 " Let her preside at the disembowel-  
 ling."

Now, my friend, if you had so little  
 religion  
 As to catch a hawk, some falcon-lannier,  
 And thrust her broad wings like a  
 banner  
 Into a coop for a vulgar pigeon ;  
 And if day by day and week by week  
 You cut her claws, and sealed her eyes,  
 And clipped her wings, and tied her  
 beak,  
 Would it cause you any great surprise  
 If, when you decided to give her an  
 airing,  
 You found she needed a little preparing ?  
 —I say, should you be such a cur-  
 mudgeon,  
 If she clung to the perch, as to take it  
 in dudgeon ?  
 Yet when the Duke to his lady signified,  
 Just a day before, as he judged most  
 dignified,  
 In what a pleasure she was to partici-  
 pate,—  
 And, instead of leaping wide in flashes,  
 Her eyes just lifted their long lashes,  
 As if pressed by fatigue even he could  
 not dissipate,  
 And duly acknowledged the Duke's  
 forethought,  
 But spoke of her health, if her health  
 were worth aught,  
 Of the weight by day and the watch by  
 night,  
 And much wrong now that used to be  
 right,  
 So, thanking him, declined the hunt-  
 ing,—  
 Was conduct ever more affronting ?  
 With all the ceremony settled—  
 With the towel ready, and the sewer  
 Polishing up his oldest ewer,  
 And the jennet pitched upon, a piebald,  
 Black-barred, cream-coated and pink  
 eye-balled,—  
 No wonder if the Duke was nettled !  
 And when she persisted nevertheless,—  
 Well, I suppose here's the time to con-  
 fess  
 That there ran half round our lady's  
 chamber  
 A balcony none of the hardest to  
 clamber ;  
 And that Jacynth the tire-woman,  
 ready in waiting,  
 Stayed in call outside, what need of  
 relating ?  
 And since Jacynth was like a June rose,  
 why, a fervent



Horseshoes they hammer which turn  
 on a swivel  
 And won't allow the hoof to shrivel  
 Then they cast bells like the shell of  
 the winkle  
 That keep a stout heart in the ram  
 with their tinkle ;  
 But the sand—they pinch and pound it  
 like otters ;  
 Commend me to gipsy glass-makers  
 and potters !  
 Glasses they'll blow you, crystal-clear,  
 Where just a faint cloud of rose shall  
 appear,  
 As if in pure water you dropped and  
 let die  
 A bruised black-blooded mulberry ;  
 And that other sort, their crowning  
 pride,  
 With long white threads distinct inside,  
 Like the lake-flower's fibrous roots  
 which dangle  
 Loose such a length and never tangle,  
 Where the bold sword-lily cuts the clear  
 waters,  
 And the cup-lily couches with all the  
 white daughters :  
 Such are the works they put their hand  
 to,  
 The uses they turn and twist iron  
 and sand to.  
 And these made the troop, which our  
 Duke saw sally  
 Toward his castle from out of the valley,  
 Men and women, like new-hatched  
 spiders,  
 Come out with the morning to greet our  
 riders.  
 And up they wound till they reached  
 the ditch,  
 Whereat all stopped save one, a witch  
 That I knew, as she hobbled from the  
 group,  
 By her gait directly and her stoop,  
 I, whom Jacynth was used to importune  
 To let that same witch tell us our for-  
 tune,  
 The oldest gipsy then above ground ;  
 And, sure as the autumn season came  
 round,  
 She paid us a visit for profit or pastime,  
 And every time, as she swore, for the  
 last time.  
 And presently she was seen to sidle  
 Up to the Duke till she touched his  
 bridle,  
 So that the horse of a sudden reared up

As under its nose the old witch peered  
 up  
 With her worn-out eyes, or rather eye-  
 holes  
 Of no use now but to gather brine,  
 And began a kind of level whine  
 Such as they use to sing to their vio's  
 When their ditties they go grinding  
 Up and down with nobody minding :  
 And then, as of old, at the end of the  
 humming  
 Her usual presents were forthcoming  
 —A dog-whistle blowing the fiercest of  
 trebles,  
 (Just a sea-shore stone holding a dozen  
 fine pebbles,)  
 Or a porcelain mouth-piece to screw on  
 a pipe-end,—  
 And so she awaited her annual stipend.  
 But this time, the Duke would scarcely  
 vouchsafe  
 A word in reply ; and in vain she felt  
 With twitching fingers at her belt  
 For the purse of sleek pine-marten pelt,  
 Ready to put what he gave in her  
 pouch safe,—  
 Till, either to quicken his apprehension,  
 Or possibly with an after-intention,  
 She was come, she said, to pay her duty  
 To the new Duchess, the youthful  
 beauty.  
 No sooner had she named his lady,  
 Than a shine lit up the face so shady,  
 And its smirk returned with a novel  
 meaning—  
 For it struck him, the babe just wanted  
 weaning ;  
 If one gave her a taste of what life was  
 and sorrow,  
 She, foolish to-day, would be wiser to-  
 morrow ;  
 And who so fit a teacher of trouble  
 As this sordid crone bent wellnigh  
 double ?  
 So, glancing at her wolf-skin vesture,  
 (If such it was, for they grow so hirsute  
 That their own fleece serves for natural  
 fur-suit)  
 He was contrasting, 't was plain from  
 his gesture,  
 The life of the lady so flower-like and  
 delicate [helicat.  
 With the loathsome squalor of this  
 I, in brief, was the man the Duke  
 beckoned  
 From out of the throng, and while I  
 drew near

He told the crone—as I since have reckoned  
 By the way he bent and spoke into her ear  
 With circumspection and mystery—  
 The main of the lady's history,  
 Her frowardness and ingratitude ;  
 And for all the crone's submissive attitude  
 I could see round her mouth the loose plaits tightening,  
 And her brow with assenting intelligence brightening,  
 As though she engaged with hearty goodwill  
 Whatever he now might enjoin to fulfil,  
 And promised the lady a thorough frightening.  
 And so, just giving her a glimpse  
 Of a purse, with the air of a man who imps  
 The wing of the hawk that shall fetch the hernshaw,  
 He bade me take the gipsy mother  
 And set her telling some story or other  
 Of hill or dale, oak-wood or fernshaw,  
 To wile away a weary hour  
 For the lady left alone in her bower,  
 Whose mind and body craved exertion  
 And yet shrank from all better diversion.

XIV

Then clapping heel to his horse, the mere curveter,  
 Out rode the Duke, and after his hollo  
 Horses and hounds swept, huntsman and servitor,  
 And back I turned and bade the crone follow.  
 And what makes me confident what's to be told you  
 Had all along been of this crone's devising,  
 Is, that, on looking round sharply, behold you,  
 There was a novelty quick as surprising :  
 For first, she had shot up a full head in stature,  
 And her step kept pace with mine nor faltered,  
 As if age had foregone its usurpature,  
 And the ignoble mien was wholly altered,  
 And the face looked quite of another nature,

And the change reached too, whatever the change meant,  
 Her shaggy wolf-skin cloak's arrangement :  
 For where its tatters hung loose like sedges,  
 Gold coins were glittering on the edges,  
 Like the band-roll strung with tomans  
 Which proves the veil a Persian woman's :  
 And under her brow, like a snail's horns newly  
 Come out as after the rain he paces,  
 Two unmistakable eye-points duly  
 Live and aware looked out of their places.  
 So, we went and found Jacynth at the entry  
 Of the lady's chamber standing sentry ;  
 I told the command and produced my companion,  
 And Jacynth rejoiced to admit any one,  
 For since last night, by the same token,  
 Not a single word had the lady spoken :  
 They went in both to the presence together,  
 While I in the balcony watched the weather.

XV

And now, what took place at the very first of all,  
 I cannot tell, as I never could learn it ;  
 Jacynth constantly wished a curse to fall  
 On that little head of hers and burn it  
 If she knew how she came to drop so soundly  
 Asleep of a sudden and there continue  
 The whole time sleeping as profoundly  
 As one of the boars my father would pin you  
 'Twixt the eyes where life holds garrison,  
 —Jacynth forgive me the comparison !  
 But where I begin my own narration  
 Is a little after I took my station  
 To breathe the fresh air from the balcony,  
 And, having in those days a falcon eye,  
 To follow the hunt thro' the open country,  
 From where the bushes thinlier crested  
 The hillocks, to a plain where's not one tree.  
 When, in a moment, my ear was arrested  
 By—was it singing, or was it saying,

Or a strange musical instrument playing  
In the chamber?—and to be certain  
I pushed the lattice, pulled the curtain,  
And there lay Jacynth asleep,  
Yet as if a watch she tried to keep,  
In a rosy sleep along the floor  
With her head against the door ;  
While in the midst, on the seat of state,  
Was a queen—the gipsy woman late,  
With head and face downbent  
On the lady's head and face intent :  
For, coiled at her feet like a child at  
ease,

The lady sat between her knees,  
And o'er them the lady's clasped hands  
met,

And on those hands her chin was set,  
And her upturned face met the face of  
the crone

Wherein the eyes had grown and grown  
As if she could double and quadruple  
At pleasure the play of either pupil  
—Very like, by her hands' slow fanning,  
As up and down like a gor-crow's  
flappers

They moved to measure, or bell  
clappers.

I said, is it blessing, is it banning,  
Do they applaud you or burlesque you—  
Those hands and fingers with no flesh  
on ?

But, just as I thought to spring in to  
the rescue,

At once I was stopped by the lady's  
expression :

For it was life her eyes were drinking  
From the crone's wide pair above  
unwinking,

—Life's pure fire received without  
shrinking,

Into the heart and breast whose heav-  
ing

Told you no single drop they were  
leaving,

—Life, that filling her, passed redund-  
ant

Into her very hair, back swerving  
Over each shoulder, loose and abund-  
ant,

As her head thrown back showed the  
white throat curving,

And the very tresses shared in the  
pleasure,

Moving to the mystic measure,  
Bounding as the bosom bounded.

I stopped short, more and more con-  
founded,

As still her cheeks burned and eyes  
glistened,

As she listened and she listened :

When all at once a hand detained me,  
The selfsame contagion gained me,

And I kept time to the wondrous chime,  
Making out words and prose and rhyme,

Till it seemed that the music hurried  
Its wings like a task fulfilled, and  
dropped

From under the words it first had  
propped,

And left them midway in the world,  
Word took word as hand takes hand,

I could hear at last, and understand,  
And when I held the unbroken thread,

The gipsy said :—

“ And so at last we find my tribe,

“ And so I set thee in the midst,

“ And to one and all of them describe

“ What thou saidst and what thou  
didst,

“ Our long and terrible journey through,

“ And all thou art ready to say and do

“ In the trials that remain :

“ I trace them the vein and the other  
vein

“ That meet on thy brow and part  
again,

“ Making our rapid mystic mark ;

“ And I bid my people prove and probe

“ Each eye's profound and glorious  
globe

“ Till they detect the kindred spark

“ In those depths so dear and dark,

“ Like the spots that snap and burst  
and flee,

“ Circling over the midnight sea.

“ And on that round young cheek of  
thine

“ I make them recognise the tinge,

“ As when of the costly scarlet wine

“ They drip so much as will impinge

“ And spread in a thinnest scale afloat

“ One thick gold drop from the olive's  
coat

“ Over a silver plate whose sheen

“ Still thro' the mixture shall be seen.

“ For so I prove thee, to one and all

“ Fit, when my people ope their

“ To see the sign, and hear the call,

“ And take the vow, and stand the test

“ Which adds one more child to the  
rest—

“ When the breast is bare and the  
arms are wide,

" And the world is left outside.  
 " For there is probation to decree,  
 " And many and long must the trials  
 be  
 " Thou shalt victoriously endure,  
 " If that brow is true and those eyes are  
 sure ;  
 " Like a jewel-finder's fierce assay  
 " Of the prize he dug from its mountain  
 tomb,—  
 " Let once the vindicating ray  
 " Leap out amid the anxious gloom,  
 " And steel and fire have done their  
 part  
 " And the prize falls on its finder's  
 heart ;  
 " So, trial after trial past,  
 " Wilt thou fall at the very last  
 " Breathless, half in trance  
 " With the thrill of the great deliver-  
 ance,  
 " Into our arms for evermore ;  
 " And thou shalt know, those arms  
 once curled  
 " About thee, what we knew before,  
 " How love is the only good in the  
 world.  
 " Henceforth be loved as heart can love,  
 " Or brain devise, or hand approve !  
 " Stand up, look below,  
 " It is our life at thy feet we throw  
 " To step with into light and joy ;  
 " Not a power of life but we employ  
 " To satisfy thy nature's want ;  
 " Art thou the tree that props the  
 plant,  
 " Or the climbing plant that seeks the  
 tree—  
 " Canst thou help us, must we help  
 thee ?  
 " If any two creatures grew into one,  
 " They would do more than the world  
 has done ;  
 " Though each apart were never so  
 weak,  
 " Ye vainly through the world should  
 seek  
 " For the knowledge and the might  
 " Which in such union grew their  
 right :  
 " So, to approach at least that end,  
 " And blend,—as much as may be,  
 blend  
 " Thee with us or us with thee,—  
 " As climbing plant or propping-tree,  
 " Shall some one deck thee, over and  
 down,  
 " Up and about, with blossoms and  
 leaves ?  
 " Fix his heart's fruit for thy garland  
 crown,  
 " Cling with his soul as the gourd-vine  
 cleave,  
 " Die on thy boughs and disappear  
 " While not a leaf of thine is sere ?  
 " Or is the other fate in store,  
 " And art thou fitted to adore,  
 " To give thy wondrous self away,  
 " And take a stronger nature's sway ?  
 " I foresee and could foretell  
 " Thy future portion, sure and well :  
 " But those passionate eyes speak true,  
 speak true,  
 " Let them say what thou shalt do !  
 " Only be sure thy daily life,  
 " In its peace or in its strife,  
 " Never shall be unobserved ;  
 " We pursue thy whole career,  
 " And hope for it, or doubt, or fear,—  
 " Lo, hast thou kept thy path or  
 swerved,  
 " We are beside thee in all thy ways,  
 " With our blame, with our praise,  
 " Our shame to feel, our pride to show,  
 " Glad, angry—but indifferent, no !  
 " Whether it be thy lot to go,  
 " For the good of us all, where the  
 haters meet  
 " In the crowded city's horrible street ;  
 " Or thou step alone through the moros :  
 " Where never sound yet was  
 " Save the dry quick clap of the stork's  
 bill,  
 " For the air is still, and the water still,  
 " When the blue breast of the dipping  
 coot  
 " Dives under, and all is mute.  
 " So, at the last shall come old age,  
 " Decrepit as befits that stage ;  
 " How else wouldst thou retire apart  
 " With the hoarded memories of thy  
 heart,  
 " And gather all to the very least  
 " Of the fragments of life's earlier feast,  
 " Let fall through eagerness to find  
 " The crowning dainties yet behind ?  
 " Ponder on the entire past  
 " Laid together thus at last,  
 " When the twilight helps to fuse  
 " The first fresh with the faded hues,  
 " And the outline of the whole,  
 " As round eve's shades their frame-  
 work roll,  
 " Grandly fronts for once thy soul.

" And then as, 'mid the dark, a gleam  
 " Of yet another morning breaks,  
 " And like the hand which ends a  
 dream,  
 " Death, with the might of his sun-  
 beam,  
 " Touches the flesh and the soul awakes,  
 " Then— "

Ay, then indeed something  
 would happen !  
 But what ? For here her voice  
 changed like a bird's ;  
 There grew more of the music and less  
 of the words ;  
 Had Jacynth only been by me to clap  
 pen  
 To paper and put you down every  
 syllable  
 With those clever clerkly fingers,  
 All I've forgotten as well as what lingers  
 In this old brain of mine that's but ill  
 able  
 To give you even this poor version  
 Of the speech I spoil, as it were, with  
 stammering  
 —More fault of those who had the  
 hammering  
 Of prosody into me and syntax,  
 And did it, not with hobnails but tin-  
 tacks !  
 But to return from this excursion,—  
 Just, do you mark, when the song was  
 sweetest,  
 The peace most deep and the charm  
 completest,  
 Then came, shall I say, a snap—  
 And the charm vanished !  
 And my sense returned, so strangely  
 banished,  
 And, starting as from a nap,  
 I knew the crone was bewitching my  
 lady,  
 With Jacynth asleep : and but one  
 spring made I  
 Down from the casement, round to the  
 portal,  
 Another minute and I had entered,—  
 When the door opened, and more than  
 mortal  
 Stood, with a face where to my mind  
 centred  
 All beauties I ever saw or shall see,  
 The Duchess : I stopped as if struck by  
 palsy.  
 She was so different, happy and beau-  
 tiful,  
 I felt at once that all was best,

And that I had nothing to do, for the  
 rest,  
 But wait her commands, obey and be  
 dutiful.  
 Not that, in fact, there was any com-  
 manding ;  
 I saw the glory of her eye,  
 And the brow's height and the breast's  
 expanding,  
 And I was hers to live or to die.  
 As for finding what she wanted,  
 You know God Almighty granted  
 Such little signs should serve wild  
 creatures  
 To tell one another all their desires,  
 So that each knows what its friend  
 requires,  
 And does its bidding without teachers.  
 I preceded her ; the crone  
 Followed silent and alone ;  
 I spoke to her, but she merely jabbered  
 In the old style ; both her eyes had  
 slunk  
 Back to their pits ; her stature shrunk ;  
 In short, the soul in its body sunk  
 Like a blade sent home to its scabbard.  
 We descended, I preceding ;  
 Crossed the court with nobody heeding ;  
 All the world was at the chase,  
 The courtyard like a desertplace,  
 The stable emptied of its small fry ;  
 I saddled myself the very palfrey  
 I remember patting while it carried her,  
 The day she arrived and the Duke  
 married her.  
 And, do you know, though it's easy  
 deceiving  
 Oneself in such matters, I can't help  
 believing  
 The lady had not forgotten it either,  
 And knew the poor devil so much be-  
 neath her  
 Would have been only too glad for her  
 service  
 To dance on hot ploughshares like a  
 Turk dervise,  
 But, unable to pay proper duty where  
 owing it,  
 Was reduced to that pitiful method of  
 showing it.  
 For though the moment I began setting  
 His saddle on my own nag of Berold's  
 begetting,  
 (Not that I meant to be obtrusive)  
 She stopped me, while his rug was  
 shifting,  
 By a single rapid finger's lifting,

And, with a gesture kind but conclusive,  
And a little shake of the head, refused  
me,—

I say, although she never used me,  
Yet when she was mounted, the gipsy  
behind her,

And I ventured to remind her,  
I suppose with a voice of less steadiness  
Than usual, for my feeling exceeded me,  
—Something to the effect that I was in  
readiness [me,—

Whenever God should please she needed  
Then, do you know, her face looked  
down on me

With a look that placed a crown on me,  
And she felt in her bosom,—mark, her  
bosom—

And, as a flower-tree drops its blossom,  
Dropped me . . . ah, had it been a purse  
Of silver, my friend, or gold that's  
worse,

Why, you see, as soon as I found myself  
So understood,—that a true heart so  
may gain

Such a reward,—I should have gone  
home again,

Kissed Jacynth, and soberly drowned  
myself!

It was a little plait of hair  
Such as friends in a convent make  
To wear, each for the other's sake,—  
This, see, which at my breast I wear,  
Ever did (rather to Jacynth's grudge-  
ment),

And ever shall, till the Day of Judg-  
ment,

And then,—and then,—to cut short,  
—this is idle,

These are feelings it is not good to  
foster,—

I pushed the gate wide, she shook the  
bridle,

And the palfrey bounded,—and so we  
lost her.

XVI

When the liquor's out why clink the  
cannikin?

I did think to describe you the panic in  
The redoubtable breast of our master  
the mannikin,

And what was the pitch of his mother's  
yellowness,

How she turned as a shark to snap the  
spare-rib

Clean off, sailors say, from a pearl-  
diving Carib,

When she heard, what she called the  
flight of the feloness

—But it seems such child's play,  
What they said and did with the lady  
away!

And to dance on, when we've lost the  
music,

Always made me—and no doubt makes  
you—sick.

Nay, to my mind, the world's face  
looked so stern

As that sweet form disappeared through  
the postern,

She that kept it in constant good  
humour,

It ought to have stopped; there  
seemed nothing to do more.

But the world thought otherwise and  
went on,

And my head's one that its spite was  
spent on:

Thirty years are fled since that morning,  
And with them all my head's adorning.

Nor did the old Duchess die outright,  
As you expect, of suppressed spite,

The natural end of every adder  
Not suffered to empty its poison-  
bladder:

But she and her son agreed, I take it,  
That no one should touch on the story  
to wake it,

For the wound in the Duke's pride  
rankled fiery,

So, they made no search and small  
inquiry—

And when fresh gipsies have paid us a  
visit, I've

Noticed the couple were never in-  
quisitive,

But told them they're folks the Duke  
don't want here,

And bade them make haste and cross  
the frontier.

Brief, the Duchess was gone and the  
Duke was glad of it

And the old one was in the young one's  
stead, [head,

And took, in her place, the household's  
And a blessed time the household had  
of it!

And were I not, as a man may say,  
cautious

How I trench, more than needs, on the  
nauseous,

I could favour you with sundry touches  
Of the paint-smutches with which the  
Duchess

Heightened the mellowness of her  
cheek's yellowness

(To get on faster) until at last her  
Cheek grew to be one master-plaster  
Of mucus and fucus from mere use of  
ceruse :

In short, she grew from scalp to udder  
Just the object to make you shudder.

## XVII

You're my friend—

What a thing friendship is, world  
without end !

How it gives the heart and soul a stir-  
up

As if somebody broached you a glorious  
runlet,

And poured out, all lovelily, sparkingly,  
sunlit,

Our green Moldavia, the streaky syrup,  
Cotnar as old as the time of the Druids—  
Friendship may match with that  
monarch of fluids ;

Each supples a dry brain, fills you its  
ins-and-outs,

Gives your life's hour-glass a shake  
when the thin sand doubts

Whether to run on or stop short, and  
guarantees

Age is not all made of stark sloth and  
arrant ease.

I have seen my little lady once more,  
Jacynth, the gipsy, Berold, and the  
rest of it, [before ;

For to me spoke the Duke, as I told you  
I always wanted to make a clean breast  
of it :

And now it is made—why, my heart's  
blood, that went trickle,

Trickle, but anon, in such muddy  
dribblets,

Is pumped up brisk now, through the  
main ventricle,

And genially floats me about the giblets.  
I'll tell you what I intend to do :

I must see this fellow his sad life  
through—

He is our Duke, after all,

And I, as he says, but a serf and thrall.  
My father was born here, and I inherit  
His fame, a chain he bound his son  
with :

Could I pay in a lump I should prefer it,  
But there's no mine to blow up and get  
done with :

So, I must stay till the end of the  
chapter.

For, as to our middle-age-manners-  
adapter,

Be it a thing to be glad on or sorry on,  
Some day or other, his head in a morion  
And breast in a hauberk, his heels he'll  
kick up,

Slain by an onslaught fierce of hiccup.  
And then, when red doth the sword  
of our Duke rust,

And its leathern sheath lie o'ergrown  
with a blue crust,

Then I shall scrape together my earn-  
ings ;

For, you see, in the churchyard Jacynth  
reposes,

And our children all went the way of  
the roses :

It's a long lane that knows no turnings.  
One needs but little tackle to travel in ;

So, just one stout cloak shall I induce :  
And for a staff, what beats the javelin  
With which his boars my father pinned  
you ?

And then, for a purpose you shall hear  
presently,

Taking some Cotnar, a tight plump  
skinfull,

I shall go journeying, who but I,  
pleasantly !

Sorrow is vain and despondency sinful.  
What's a man's age ? We must hurry

more, that's all ;  
Cram in a day, what his youth took a  
year to hold :

When we mind labour, then only, we're  
too old—

What age had Methusalem when he  
began Saul ?

And at last, as its haven some buffeted  
ship sees,

(Come all the way from the north-  
parts with sperm oil)

I hope to get safely out of the turmoil  
And arrive one day at the land of the  
gipsies,

And find my lady, or hear the last news  
of her

From some old thief and son of Lucifer,  
His forehead chapleted green with  
wreathy hop,

Sunburned all over like an Æthiop.  
And when my Cotnar begins to operate

And the tongue of the rogue to run at a  
proper rate,

And our wine-skin, tight once, shows  
each flaccid dent,

I shall drop it with—as if by accident—

" You never knew then, how it all ended,  
 " What fortune good or bad attended  
 " The little lady your Queen befriended ? "  
 —And when that's told me, what's remaining ?  
 This world's too hard for my explaining.  
 The same wise judge of matters equine  
 Who still preferred some slim four-year-old  
 To the big-boned stock of mighty Berold,  
 And, for strong Cotnar, drank French weak wine,  
 He also must be such a lady's scorner !  
 Smooth Jacob still robs homely Esau :  
 Now up, now down, the world's one see-saw.

—So, I shall find out some snug corner  
 Under a hedge, like Orson the wood-knight,  
 Turn myself round and bid the world good night ;  
 And sleep a sound sleep till the trumpet's blowing  
 Wakes me (unless priests cheat us laymen)  
 To a world where will be no further throwing  
 Pearls before swine that can't value them. Amen !

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL,  
 SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF  
 LEARNING IN EUROPE

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,  
 Singing together.  
 Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes,  
 Each in its tether  
 Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,  
 Cared-for till cock-crow :  
 Look out if yonder be not day again  
 Rimming the rock-row !  
 That's the appropriate country ; there,  
 man's thought,  
 Rarer, intenser,  
 Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,  
 Chafes in the censer.  
 Leave we the unlettered plain its herd  
 and crop ;  
 Seek we sepulture  
 On a tall mountain, citted to the top,  
 Crowded with culture !

All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels ;  
 Clouds overcome it ;  
 No, yonder sparkle is the citadel's  
 Circling its summit.  
 Thither our path lies ; wind we up the heights :  
 Wait ye the warning ?  
 Our low life was the level's and the night's ;  
 He's for the morning.  
 Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,  
 'Ware the beholders !  
 This is our master, famous calm and dead,  
 Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd ! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft  
 Safe from the weather !  
 He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,  
 Singing together,  
 He was a man born with thy face and throat,  
 Lyric Apollo !  
 Long he lived nameless : how should spring take note  
 Winter would follow ? [gone !  
 Till lo, the little touch, and youth was Cramped and diminished,  
 Moaned he, " New measures, other feet anon !  
 " My dance is finished ? "  
 No, that's the world's way : (keep the mountain-side,  
 Make for the city !)  
 He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride  
 Over men's pity ;  
 Left play for work, and grappled with the world  
 Bent on escaping :  
 " What's in the scroll," quoth he,  
 " thou keepest furled ?  
 " Show me their shaping,  
 " Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage,—  
 " Give ! "—So, he gowned him,  
 Straight got by heart that book to its last page :  
 Learned, we found him.  
 Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,  
 Accents uncertain :  
 " Time to taste life," another would have said,

"Up with the curtain!"  
 This man said rather, "Actual life  
 comes next?"  
 "Patience a moment!"  
 "Grant I have mastered learning's  
 crabbed text,  
 "Still there's the comment.  
 "Let me know all! Prate not of  
 most or least,  
 "Painful or easy!"  
 "Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up  
 the feast,  
 "Ay, nor feel queasy."  
 Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,  
 When he had learned it,  
 When he had gathered all books had to  
 give!  
 Sooner, he spurned it. [parts—  
 Image the whole, then execute the  
 Fancy the fabric  
 Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike  
 fire from quartz,  
 Ere mortar dab brick!  
 (Here's the town-gate reached: there's  
 the market-place  
 Gaping before us.)  
 Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace  
 (Hearten our chorus!)  
 That before living he'd learn how to  
 live—  
 No end to learning:  
 Earn the means first—God surely will  
 contrive  
 Use for our earning.  
 Others mistrust and say, "But time  
 escapes:  
 "Live now or never!"  
 He said, "What's time? Leave Now  
 for dogs and apes!  
 Man has Forever."  
 Back to his book then: deeper drooped  
 his head:  
*Calculus* racked him:  
 Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of  
 lead:  
*Tussis* attacked him.  
 "Now, master, take a little rest!"—  
 not he!  
 (Caution redoubled,  
 Step two a-breast, the way winds  
 narrowly!)  
 Not a whit troubled,  
 Back to his studies, 'fresher than at first,  
 Fierce as a dragon  
 He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred  
 thirst)

Sucked at the flagon.  
 Oh, if we draw a circle premature,  
 Heedless of far gain,  
 Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure  
 Bad is our bargain!  
 Was it not great? did not he throw on  
 God,  
 (He loves the burthen)—  
 God's task to make the heavenly period  
 Perfect the earthen?  
 Did not he magnify the mind, show  
 clear  
 Just what it all meant?  
 He would not discount life, as fools do  
 here,  
 Paid by instalment.  
 He ventured neck or nothing—  
 heaven's success  
 Found, or earth's failure:  
 "Wilt thou trust death or not?" He  
 answered "Yes!"  
 "Hence with life's pale lure!"  
 That low man seeks a little thing to do,  
 Sees it and does it:  
 This high man, with a great thing to  
 pursue,  
 Dies ere he knows it.  
 That low man goes on adding one to one,  
 His hundred's soon hit:  
 This high man, aiming at a million,  
 Misses an unit.  
 That, has the world here—should he  
 need the next,  
 Let the world mind him!  
 This, throws himself on God, and un-  
 perplexed  
 Seeking shall find him.  
 So, with the throttling hands of death  
 at strife,  
 Ground he at grammar;  
 Still, thro' the rattle, parts of speech  
 were rife:  
 While he could stammer  
 He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—  
 Properly based *Oun*—  
 Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,  
 Dead from the waist down.  
 Well, here's the platform, here's the  
 proper place:  
 Hail to your purlieus,  
 All ye highfliers of the feathered race,  
 Swallows and curlews!  
 Here's the top-peak; the multitude  
 below  
 Live, for they can, there:  
 This man decided not to Live but  
 Know—

Bury this man there ?  
 Here—here's his place, where meteors  
 shoot, clouds form,  
 Lightnings are loosened,  
 Stars come and go! Let joy break  
 with the storm,  
 Peace let the dew send!  
 Lofty designs must close in like effects :  
 Loftily lying,  
 Leave him—still loftier than the world  
 suspects,  
 Living and dying.

THE HERETIC'S TRAGEDY

A MIDDLE-AGE INTERLUDE

ROSA MUNDI; SEU, FULCITE ME  
 FLORIBUS. A CONCEIT OF MASTER  
 GYSBRECHT, CANON-REGULAR OF  
 SAINT JODOCUS-BY-THE-BAR, YPRES  
 CITY. CANTUQUE, *Virgilius*. AND  
 HATH OFTEN BEEN SUNG AT HOCK-  
 TIDE AND FESTIVALS. GAVISUS  
 ERAM, *Jessides*.

(It would seem to be a glimpse from  
 the burning of Jacques du Bourg-  
 Molay, at Paris, A.D. 1314; as dis-  
 torted by the refraction from Flemish  
 brain to brain, during the course of a  
 couple of centuries.)

I

PREADMONISHETH THE ABBOT DEODAET

THE Lord, we look to once for all,  
 Is the Lord we should look at, all at  
 once :

He knows not to vary, saith Saint Paul,  
 Nor the shadow of turning, for the  
 nonce.

See him no other than as he is !  
 Give both the infinitudes their due—  
 Infinite mercy, but, I wis,  
 As infinite a justice too.

[*Organ : plagal-cadence.*

As infinite a justice too.

II

ONE SINGETH.

John, Master of the Temple of God,  
 Falling to sin the Unknown Sin,  
 What he bought of Emperor Aldabrod,  
 He sold it to Sultan Saladin :  
 Till, caught by Pope Clement, a-buzz-  
 ing there,  
 Hornet-prince of the mad wasps'  
 hive,

B.P.

And clipt of his wings in Paris square,  
 They bring him now to be burned  
 alive.

[*And wanteth there grace of lute or  
 clavicithern, ye shall say to con-  
 firm him who singeth—*

We bring John now to be burned  
 alive.

III

In the midst is a goodly gallows built ;  
 'Twixt fork and fork, a stake is stuck  
 But first they set divers tumbrels a-tilt,  
 Make a trench all round with the city  
 muck ;

Inside they pile log upon log, good store ;  
 Faggots not few, blocks great and  
 small,

Reach a man's mid-thigh, no less, no  
 more,—

For they mean he should roast in the  
 sight of all.

CHORUS

We mean he should roast in the sight  
 of all.

IV

Good sappy bavins that kindle forth-  
 with ;

Billets that blaze substantial and  
 slow ;

Pine-stump split deftly, dry as pith ;  
 Larch-heart that chars to a chalk-  
 white glow :

Then up they hoist me John in a chafe,  
 Sling him fast like a hog to scorch,  
 Spit in his face, then leap back safe,  
 Sing " Laudes " and bid clap-to the  
 torch.

CHORUS

*Laus Deo*—who bids clap-to the  
 torch.

V

John of the Temple, whose fame so  
 bragged,

Is burning alive in Paris square !  
 How can he curse, if his mouth is  
 gagged ?

Or wriggle his neck, with a collar  
 there ?

Or heave his chest, while a band goes  
 round ?

Or threat with his fist, since his arms  
 are spliced ?

Or kick with his feet, now his legs are  
 bound ?

G G

—Thinks John, I will call upon Jesus Christ.

[Here one crosseth himself.

## VI

Jesus Christ—John had bought and sold,

Jesus Christ—John had eaten and drunk ;

To him, the Flesh meant silver and gold.  
(*Salvâ reverentiâ.*)

Now it was, " Saviour, bountiful lamb,  
" I have roasted thee Turks, though men roast me !

" See thy servant, the plight wherein I am !

" Art thou a saviour ? Save thou me ! "

## CHORUS

'T is John the mocker cries, " Save thou me ! "

## VII

Who maketh God's menace an idle word ?

—Saith, it no more means what it proclaims,

Than a damsel's threat to her wanton bird ?—

For she too prattles of ugly names.

—Saith, he knoweth but one thing,— what he knows ?

That God is good and the rest is breath ;

Why else is the same styled Sharon's rose ?

Once a rose, ever a rose, he saith.

## CHORUS

O, John shall yet find a rose, he saith !

## VIII

Alack, there be roses and roses, John !  
Some, honied of taste like your leman's tongue :

Some bitter ; for why ? (roast gaily on !)

Their tree struck root in devil's dung.  
When Paul once reasoned of righteousness

And of temperance and of judgment to come,

Good Felix trembled, he could no less :  
John, snickering, crook'd his wicked thumb.

## CHORUS

What cometh to John of the wicked thumb ?

## IX

Ha, ha, John plucketh now at his rose  
To rid himself of a sorrow at heart !

Lo,—petal on petal, fierce rays unclose ;  
Anther on anther, sharp spikes out-

start ;

And with blood for dew, the bosom boils ;

And a gust of sulphur is all its smell ;

And lo, he is horribly in the toils

Of a coal-black giant flower of hell !

## CHORUS

What maketh heaven, That maketh hell.

## X

So, as John called now, through the fire amain,

On the Name, he had cursed with, all his life—

To the Person, he bought and sold again—

For the Face, with his daily buffets rife—

Feature by feature It took its place :  
And his voice, like a mad dog's

choking bark,

At the steady whole of the Judge's face—

Died. Forth John's soul flared into the dark.

## SUBJOINETH THE ABBOT DEODAET

God help all poor souls lost in the dark !

## HOLY-CROSS DAY

ON WHICH THE JEWS WERE FORCED  
TO ATTEND AN ANNUAL CHRISTIAN  
SERMON IN ROME

[ " Now was come about Holy-Cross Day, and now must my lord preach his first sermon to the Jews : as it was of old cared for in the merciful bowels of the Church, that, so to speak, a crumb at least from her conspicuous table here in Rome, should be, though but once yearly, cast to the famishing dogs, under-trampled and bespitten-upon beneath the feet of the guests. And a moving sight in truth, this, of so many of the besotted blind restif and ready-to-perish Hebrews ! now maternally brought—nay, (for He saith, ' Com-

pel them to come in") haled, as it were, by the head and hair, and against their obstinate hearts, to partake of the heavenly grace. What awakening, what striving with tears, what working of a yeasty conscience! Nor was my lord wanting to himself on so apt an occasion; witness the abundance of conversions which did incontinently reward him: though not to my lord be altogether the glory."—*Diary by the Bishop's Secretary, 1600.*]

What the Jews really said, on thus being driven to church, was rather to this effect:—

I

FEE, faw, fum! bubble and squeak!  
Blessedest Thursday's the fat of the week.  
Rumble and tumble, sleek and rough,  
Stinking and savoury, smug and gruff,  
Take the church-road, for the bell's due chime  
Gives us the summons—'tis sermon-time!

II

Boh, here's Barnabas! Job, that's you?  
Up stumps Solomon—bustling too?  
Shame, man! greedy beyond your years  
To handsel the bishop's shaving-shears?  
Fair play's a jewel! Leave friends in the lurch?  
Stand on a line ere you start for the church!

III

Higgledy piggedly, packed we lie,  
Rats in a hamper, swine in a sty,  
Wasps in a bottle, frogs in a sieve,  
Worms in a carcase, fleas in a sleeve.  
Hist! square shoulders, settle your thumbs  
And buzz for the bishop—here he comes.

IV

Bow, wow, wow—a bone for the dog!  
I liken his Grace to an acorned hog.  
What, a boy at his side, with the bloom of a lass,  
To help and handle my lord's hour-glass!  
Didst ever behold so lithe a chine?  
His cheek hath laps like a fresh-singed swine.

V

Aaron's asleep—shove hip to haunch,  
Or somebody deal him a dig in the paunch!  
Look at the purse with the tassel and knob,  
And the gown with the angel and thingumbob!  
What's he at, quotha? reading his text!  
Now you've his curtsey—and what comes next?

VI

See to our converts—you doomed black dozen—  
No stealing away—nor cog nor cozen!  
You five, that were thieves, deserve it fairly;  
You seven, that were beggars, will live less sparely;  
You took your turn and dipped in the hat,  
Got fortune—and fortune gets you; mind that!

VII

Give your first groan—compunction's at work;  
And soft! from a Jew you mount to a Turk.  
Lo, Micah,—the selfsame beard on chin  
He was four times already converted in!  
Here's a knife, clip quick—it's a sign of grace—  
Or he ruins us all with his hanging-face.

VIII

Whom now is the bishop a-leering at?  
I know a point where his text falls pat.  
I'll tell him to-morrow, a word just now  
Went to my heart and made me vow  
I meddle no more with the worst of trades—  
Let somebody else pay his serenades.

IX

Groan all together now, whee—hee—hee!  
It's a-work, it's a-work, ah, woe is me!  
It began, when a herd of us, picked and placed,  
Were spurred through the Corso, stripped to the waist;  
Jew brutes, with sweat and blood well spent  
To usher in worthily Christian Lent.

## x

It grew, when the hangmen entered our bounds,  
Yelled, pricked us out to his church like hounds :  
It got to a pitch, when the hand indeed  
Which guffed my purse, would throttle my creed :  
And it overflows, when, to even the odd,  
Men I helped to their sins, help me to their God.

## xi

But now, while the scapegoats leave our flock,  
And the rest sit silent and count the clock,  
Since forced to muse the appointed time  
On these precious facts and truths sublime,—  
Let us fitly employ it, under our breath,  
In saying Ben Ezra's Song of Death.

## xii

For Rabbi Ben Ezra, the night he died,  
Called sons and sons' sons to his side,  
And spoke, "This world has been harsh and strange ;  
"Something is wrong : there needeth a change.  
"But what, or where ? at the last or first ?  
"In one point only we sinned, at worst.

## xiii

"The Lord will have mercy on Jacob yet,  
"And again in his border see Israel set.  
"When Judah beholds Jerusalem,  
"The stranger-seed shall be joined to them :  
"To Jacob's House shall the Gentiles cleave.  
"So the Prophet saith and his sons believe.

## xiv

"Ay, the children of the chosen race  
"Shall carry and bring them to their place :  
"In the land of the Lord shall lead the same,  
"Bondsmen and handmaids. Who shall blame,

"When the slaves enslave, the oppressed ones o'er—  
"The oppressor triumph for evermore ?

## xv

"God spoke, and gave us the word to keep :  
"Bade never fold the hands nor sleep  
"Mid a faithless world,—at watch and ward,  
"Till Christ at the end relieve our guard.  
"By his servant Moses the watch was set :  
"Though near upon cock-crow, we keep it yet.

## xvi

"Thou ! if thou wast he, who at mid-watch came,  
"By the starlight, naming a dubious name !  
"And if, too heavy with sleep—too rash  
"With fear—O thou, if that martyr-gash  
"Fell on thee coming to take thine own,  
"And we gave the Cross, when we owed the Throne—

## xvii

"Thou art the Judge. We are bruised thus.  
"But, the judgment over, join sides with us !  
"Thine too is the cause ! and not more thine  
"Than ours, is the work of these dogs and swine,  
"Whose life laughs through and spits at their creed,  
"Who maintain thee in word, and defy thee in deed !

## xviii

"We withstood Christ then ? Be mindful how  
"At least we withstand Barabbas now !  
"Was our outrage sore ? But the worst we spared,  
"To have called these—Christians, had we dared !  
"Let defiance to them pay mistrust of thee,  
"And Rome make amends for Calvary !

XIX

" By the torture, prolonged from age  
to age,  
" By the infamy, Israel's heritage,  
" By the Ghetto's plague, by the garb's  
disgrace,  
" By the badge of shame, by the felon's  
place,  
" By the branding-tool, the bloody  
whip,  
" And the summons to Christian fellow-  
ship,—

XX

" We boast our proof that at least the  
Jew  
" Would wrest Christ's name from the  
Devil's crew.  
" Thy face took never so deep a shade  
" But we fought them in it, God our aid !  
" A trophy to bear, as we march, thy  
band  
" South, East, and on to the Pleasant  
Land !"  
*[The present Pope abolished this  
bad business of the Sermon.—  
R. B.]*

PROTUS

AMONG these latter busts we count by  
scores,  
Half-emperors and quarter-emperors,  
Each with his bay-leaf fillet, loose-  
thonged vest,  
Loric and low-browed Gorgon on the  
breast,—  
Ones loves a baby face, with violets  
there,  
Violets instead of laurel in the hair,  
As those were all the little locks could  
bear.  
Now read here. " Protus ends a  
period  
" Of empery beginning with a god ;  
" Born in the porphyry chamber at  
Byzant,  
" Queens by his cradle, proud and  
ministrant :  
" And if he quickened breath there,  
't would like fire  
" Pantingly through the dim vast  
realm transpire.  
" A fame that he was missing, spread  
afar :  
" The world, from its four corners, rose  
in war,

" Till he was borne out on a balcony  
" To pacify the world when it should  
see.  
" The captains ranged before him, one,  
his hand  
" Made baby points at, gained the  
chief command.  
" And day by day more beautiful he  
grew [hue,  
" In shape, all said, in feature and in  
" While young Greek sculptors gazing  
on the child  
" Became, with old Greek sculpture,  
reconciled.  
" Already sages laboured to condense  
" In easy tomes a life's experience :  
" And artists took grave counsel to  
impart  
" In one breath and one hand-sweep,  
all their art—  
" To make his graces prompt as  
blossoming  
" Of plentifully-watered palms in  
spring :  
" Since well beseems it, whose mounts  
the throne,  
" For beauty, knowledge, strength,  
should stand alone,  
" And mortals love the letters of his  
name."

—Stop! Have you turned two pages?  
Still the same.  
New reign, same date. The scribe goes  
on to say  
How that same year, on such a month  
and day,  
" John the Pannonian, groundedly  
believed  
" A blacksmith's bastard, whose hard  
hand reprieved  
" The Empire from its fate the year  
before,—  
" Came, had a mind to take the crown,  
and wore  
" The same for six years, (during which  
the Huns  
" Kept off their fingers from us) till his  
sons  
" Put something in his liquor"—and  
so forth.  
Then a new reign. Stay—" Take at  
its just worth"  
(Subjoins an annotator) " what I give  
" As hearsay. Some think, John let  
Protus live

" And slip away. 'Tis said, he reached  
man's age  
" At some blind northern court ; made,  
first a page,  
" Then tutor to the children ; last, of  
use  
" About the hunting-stables. I de-  
duce  
" He wrote the little tract ' On worm-  
ing dogs.'  
" Whereof the name in sundry cata-  
logues  
" Is extant yet. A Protus of the race  
" Is rumoured to have died a monk in  
Thrace,—  
" And if the same, he reached senility."  
Here's John the Smith's rough-  
hammered head. Great eye,  
Gross jaw and griped lips do what  
granite can  
To give you the crown-grasper. What  
a man !

#### THE STATUE AND THE BUST

THERE'S a palace in Florence, the world  
knows well,  
And a statue watches it from the  
square,  
And this story of both do our towns-  
men tell.  
Ages ago, a lady there,  
At the farthest window facing the East  
Asked, " Who rides by with the royal  
air ? "  
The bridesmaids' prattle around her  
ceased ;  
She leaned forth, one on either hand ;  
They saw how the blush of the bride  
increased—  
They felt by its beats her heart ex-  
pand—  
As one at each ear and both in a breath  
Whispered, " The Great-Duke Fer-  
dinand."  
That selfsame instant, underneath,  
The Duke rode past in his idle way,  
Empty and fine like a swordless sheath.  
Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,  
Till he threw his head back—" Who is  
she ? "  
—" A bride the Riccardi brings home  
to-day."

Hair in heaps lay heavily  
Over a pale brow spirit-pure—  
Carved like the heart of the coal-black  
tree,

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure—  
And vainly sought to dissemble her eyes  
Of the blackest black our eyes endure.

And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise  
Filled the fine empty sheath of a man,—  
The Duke grew straightway brave and  
wise.

He looked at her, as a lover can ;  
She looked at him, as one who awakes :  
The past was a sleep, and her life began.

Now, love so ordered for both their  
sakes,  
A feast was held that selfsame night  
In the pile which the mighty shadow  
makes.

(For Via Larga is three-parts light,  
But the palace overshadows one,  
Because of a crime which may God  
requite !

To Florence and God the wrong was  
done,  
Through the first republic's murder  
there  
By Cosimo and his cursed son.)

The Duke (with the statue's face in the  
square)  
Turned in the midst of his multitude  
At the bright approach of the bridal  
pair.

Face to face the lovers stood  
A single minute and no more,  
While the bridegroom bent as a man  
subdued—

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor—  
For the Duke on the lady a kiss con-  
ferred,  
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a word ?  
If a word did pass, which I do not think,  
Only one out of the thousand heard.

That was the bridegroom. At day's  
brink

He and his bride were alone at last  
In a bed-chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,  
That the door she had passed was shut  
on her  
Till the final catafalk repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir,  
Through a certain window facing the  
East  
She could watch like a convent's  
chronicler.

Since passing the door might lead to a  
feast,  
And a feast might lead to so much  
beside,  
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose too," said the bride—  
"Your window and its world suffice,"  
Replied the tongue, while the heart  
replied—

"If I spend the night with that devil  
twice,  
"May his window serve as my loop of  
hell  
"Whence a damned soul looks on  
paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well,  
"Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow  
"Ere I count another ave-bell.

"'Tis only the coat of a page to borrow,  
"And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim,  
"And I save my soul—but not to-  
morrow"—

(She checked herself and her eye grew  
dim)

"My father tarries to bless my state :  
"I must keep it one day more for him.

"Is one day more so long to wait ?  
"Moreover the Duke rides past, I know ;  
"We shall see each other, sure as fate."

She turned on her side and slept. Just  
so!

So we resolve on a thing and sleep :  
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or  
cheap

"As the cost of this cup of bliss may  
prove

"To body or soul, I will drain it deep."

And on the morrow, bold with love,  
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on  
call,

As his duty bade, by the Duke's  
alcove)

And smiled "'T was a very funeral,  
"Your lady will think this feast of  
ours,—

"A sham to efface, whate'er befall!

"What if we break from the Arno  
bowers,

"And try if Petraja, cool and green,  
"Cure last night's fault with this  
morning's flowers?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be  
seen

On his steady brow and quiet mouth,  
Said, "Too much favour for me so  
mean!

"But, alas! my lady leaves the South ;  
"Each wind that comes from the  
Apennine

"Is a menace to her tender youth :

"Nor a way exists, the wise opine,  
"If she quits her palace twice this year,  
"To avert the flower of life's decline."

Quoth the Duke, "A sage and a kindly  
fear.

"Moreover Petraja is cold this spring ;  
"Be our feast to-night as usual here!"

And then to himself—"Which night  
shall bring

"Thy bride to her lover's embraces,  
fool—

"Or I am the fool, and thou art the  
king!

"Yet my passion must wait a night,  
nor cool—

"For to-night the Envoy arrives from  
France,

"Whose heart I unlock with thyself,  
my tool.

"I need thee still and might miss per-  
chance.

" To-day is not wholly lost, beside,  
" With its hope of my lady's countenance :

" For I ride—what should I do but ride ?  
" And passing her palace, if I list,  
" May glance at its window—well betide ! "

So said, so done : nor the lady missed  
One ray that broke from the ardent brow,  
Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow,  
No morrow's sun should arise and set  
And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,  
With still fresh cause to wait one day more  
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore,  
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,  
They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,  
But not in despite of heaven and earth :  
The rose would blow when the storm passed by.

Meantime they could profit in winter's dearth  
By store of fruits that supplant the rose :

The world and its ways have a certain worth :

And to press a point while these oppose  
Were simple policy ; better wait :  
We lose no friends and we gain no foes.

Meantime, worse fates than a lover's fate,  
Who daily may ride and pass and look  
Where his lady watches behind the grate !

And she—she watched the square like a book  
Holding one picture and only one,  
Which daily to find she undertook :

When the picture was reached the book was done,

And she turned from the picture at night to scheme  
Of tearing it out for herself next sun.

So weeks grew months, years ; gleam by gleam  
The glory dropped from their youth and love,  
And both perceived they had dreamed a dream ;

Which hovered as dreams do, still above :  
But who can take a dream for a truth ?  
Oh, hide our eyes from the next remove !

One day as the lady saw her youth depart,  
And the silver thread that streaked  
Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so peaked,—  
And wondered who the woman was,  
Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass—  
" Summon here," she suddenly said,  
" Before the rest of my old self pass,

" Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,  
" Who fashions the clay no love will change,  
" And fixes a beauty never to fade.

" Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange  
" Arrest the remains of young and fair,  
" And rivet them while the seasons range.

" Make me a face on the window there,  
" Waiting as ever, mute the while,  
" My love to pass below in the square !

" And let me think that it may beguile  
" Dreary days which the dead must spend  
" Down in their darkness under the aisle,

" To say, ' What matters it at the end ?  
" ' I did no more while my heart was warm  
" ' Than does that image, my pale-faced friend.'

" Where is the use of the lip's red  
charm,  
" The heaven of hair, the pride of the  
brow,  
" And the blood that blues the inside  
arm—

" Unless we turn, as the soul knows  
how,  
" The earthly gift to an end divine ?  
" A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine  
With flowers and fruits which leaves  
enlace,  
Was set where now is the empty  
shrine—

(And, leaning out of a bright blue space,  
As a ghost might lean from a chink of  
sky,  
The passionate pale lady's face—

Eyeing ever, with earnest eye  
And quick-turned neck at its breathless  
stretch,  
Some one who ever is passing by—)

The Duke had sighed like the simplest  
wretch  
In Florence, " Youth—my dream  
escapes !  
" Will its record stay ? " And he bade  
them fetch

Some subtle moulder of brazen shapes—  
" Can the soul, the will, die out of a  
man  
" Ere his body find the grave that  
gapes ?

" John of Douay shall effect my plan,  
" Set me on horseback here aloft,  
" Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

" In the very square I have crossed so  
oft :  
" That men may admire, when future  
suns

" Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

" While the mouth and the brow stay  
brave in bronze—  
" Admire and say, ' When he was alive  
" ' How he would take his pleasure  
once ! ' "

" And it shall go hard but I contrive  
" To listen the while, and laugh in my  
tomb  
" At idleness which aspires to strive."

So ! While these wait the trump of  
doom,  
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,  
Nights and days in the narrow room ?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder  
What a gift life was, ages ago,  
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Only they see not God, I know,  
Nor all that chivalry of his,  
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of bliss—  
Since, the end of life being manifest,  
He had burned his way thro' the world  
to this.

I hear you reproach, " But delay was  
best,  
" For their end was a crime."—Ch, a  
crime will do  
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and through,  
Sufficient to vindicate itself  
And prove its worth at a moment's  
view !

Must a game be played for the sake of  
pelf ?  
Where a button goes, 't were an epigram  
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.

The true has no value beyond the sham :  
As well the counter as coin, I submit,  
When your table 's a hat, and your prize,  
a dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every  
whit,  
Venture as warily, use the same skill,  
Do your best, whether winning or  
losing it,

If you choose to play !—is my principle.  
Let a man contend to the uttermost  
For his life's set prize, be it what it will !

The counter our lover's staked was lost  
As surely as if it were lawful coin :  
And the sin I impute to each frustrate  
ghost

Is, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,  
Though the end in sight was a vice, I  
say.

You of the virtue (we issue join)  
How strive you? *De te, fabula!*

### PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

THE rain set early in to-night,  
The sullen wind was soon awake,  
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,  
And did its worst to vex the lake,  
I listened with heart fit to break.  
When glided in Porphyria; straight  
She shut the cold out and the storm,  
And kneeled and made the cheerless  
grate  
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;  
Which done, she rose, and from her  
form  
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,  
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied  
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,  
And, last, she sat down by my side  
And called me. When no voice replied,  
She put my arm about her waist,  
And made her smooth white shoulder  
bare,  
And all her yellow hair displaced,  
And, stooping, made my cheek lie  
there,  
And spread o'er all her yellow hair,  
Murmuring how she loved me—she  
Too weak, for all her heart's endeav-  
our,  
To set its struggling passion free  
From pride, and vainer ties dis sever,  
And give herself to me for ever.  
But passion sometimes would prevail,  
Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain  
A sudden thought of one so pale  
For love of her, and all in vain:  
So, she was come through wind and  
rain.  
Be sure I looked up at her eyes  
Happy and proud; at last I knew  
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise  
Made my heart swell, and still it  
grew  
While I debated what to do.  
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,  
Perfectly pure and good: I found  
A thing to do, and all her hair  
In one long yellow string I wound  
Three times her little throat around,  
And strangled her. No pain felt she;  
I am quite sure she felt no pain.

As a shut bud that holds a bee,  
I warily oped her lids: again  
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain,  
And I untightened next the tress  
About her neck; her cheeks once  
more  
Blushed bright beneath my burning  
kiss:

I propped her head up as before,  
Only, this time my shoulder bore  
Her head, which droops upon it still;  
The smiling rosy little head,  
So glad it has its utmost will,  
That all it scorned at once is fled,  
And I, its love, am gained instead!  
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how  
Her darling one wish would be heard.  
And thus we sit together now,  
And all night long we have not stirred,  
And yet God has not said a word!

### "CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME"

(See Edgar's song in "LEAR.")

#### I

My first thought was, he lied in every  
word,  
That hoary cripple, with malicious  
eye  
Askance to watch the working of his  
lie  
On mine, and mouth scarce able to  
afford  
Suppression of the glee, that pursed and  
scored  
Its edge, at one more victim gained  
thereby.

#### II

What else should he be set for, with his  
staff?  
What, save to waylay with his lies,  
ensnare  
All travellers who might find him  
posted there,  
And ask the road? I guessed what  
skull-like laugh  
Would break, what crutch 'gin write  
my epitaph  
For pastime in the dusty thorough-  
fare,

#### III

If at his counsel I should turn aside  
Into that ominous tract which, all  
agree,

Hides the Dark Tower. Yet  
acquiescingly

I did turn as he pointed : neither pride  
Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,  
So much as gladness that some end  
might be.

IV

For, what with my whole world-wide  
wandering,

What with my search drawn out  
thro' years, my hope

Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope  
With that obstreperous joy success  
would bring,—

hardly tried now to rebuke the spring  
My heart made, finding failure in its  
scope.

V

As when a sick man very near to death  
Seems dead indeed, and feels begin  
and end

The tears and takes the farewell of  
each friend,

And hears one bid the other go, draw  
breath

Freelier outside, (" since all is o'er," he  
saith,

" And the blow fallen no grieving  
can amend ; ")

VI

While some discuss if near the other  
graves

Be room enough for this, and when a  
day

Suits best for carrying the corpse  
away,

With care about the banners, scarves  
and staves :

And still the man hears all, and only  
craves

He may not shame such tender love  
and stay.

VII

Thus, I had so long suffered in this  
quest,

Heard failure prophesied so oft, been  
writ

So many times among " The Band "  
—to wit,

The knights who to the Dark Tower's  
search addressed

Their steps—that just to fail as they,  
seemed best,

And all the doubt was now—should I  
be fit ?

VIII

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,  
That hateful cripple, out of his high-  
way

Into the path he pointed. All the  
day

Had been a dreary one at best, and dim  
Was settling to its close, yet shot one  
grim

Red leer to see the plain catch its  
estrays.

IX

For mark ! no sooner was I fairly found  
Pledged to the plain, after a pace or  
two,

Than, pausing to throw backward a  
last view

O'er the safe road, 't was gone ; grey  
plain all round :

Nothing but plain to the horizon's  
bound.

I might go on ; nought else remained  
to do.

X

So, on I went. I think I never saw  
Such starved ignoble nature ; no-  
thing throve :

For flowers—as well expect a cedar  
grove !

But cockle, spurge, according to their  
law

Might propagate their kind, with none  
to awe,

You'd think ; a burr had been a  
treasure-trove.

XI

No ! penury, inertness and grimace,  
In some strange sort, were the land's  
portion. " See

" Or shut your eyes," said Nature  
peevishly,

" It nothing skills : I cannot help my  
case :

" 'Tis the Last Judgment's fire must  
cure this place,

" Calcine its clods and set my  
prisoners free."

XII

If there pushed any ragged thistle-  
stalk

Above its mates, the head was  
chopped ; the bents

Were jealous else. What made  
those holes and rents

In the dock's harsh swarth leaves,  
bruised as to baulk  
All hope of greenness ? 't is a brute must  
walk  
Pashing their life out, with a brute's  
intents.

## XIII

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair  
In leprosy ; thin dry blades pricked  
the mud  
Which underneath looked kneaded  
up with blood.  
One stiff blind horse, his every bone  
a-stare,  
Stood stupefied, however he came there :  
Thrust out past service from the  
devil's stud !

## XIV

Alive ? he might be dead for aught I  
know,  
With that red gaunt and colloped  
neck a-strain,  
And shut eyes underneath the rusty  
mane ;  
Seldom went such grotesqueness with  
such woe ;  
I never saw a brute I hated so ;  
He must be wicked to deserve such  
pain.

## XV

I shut my eyes and turned them on my  
heart.  
As a man calls for wine before he  
fights,  
I asked one draught of earlier,  
happier sights,  
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.  
Think first, fight afterwards—the  
soldier's art :  
One taste of the old time sets all to  
rights.

## XVI

Not it ! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening  
face  
Beneath its garniture of curly gold,  
Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold  
An arm in mine to fix me to the place,  
That way he used. Alas, one night's  
disgrace !  
Out went my heart's new fire and  
left it cold.

## XVII

Giles then, the soul of honour—there he  
stands  
Frank as ten years ago when knighted  
first.  
What honest men should dare (he  
said) he durst.  
Good—but the scene shifts—faugh !  
what hangman hands  
Pin to his breast a parchment ? His  
own bands  
Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and  
curst !

## XVIII

Better this present than a past like  
that ;  
Back therefore to my darkening path  
again !  
No sound, no sight as far as eye could  
strain.  
Will the night send a howlet or a bat ?  
I asked : when something on the dis-  
mal flat  
Came to arrest my thoughts and  
change their train.

## XIX

A sudden little river crossed my path  
As unexpected as a serpent comes.  
No sluggish tide congenial to the  
glooms ;  
This, as it frothed by, might have been  
a bath  
For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see  
the wrath  
Of its black eddy bespate with flakes  
and spumes.

## XX

So petty yet so spiteful ! All along,  
Low scrubby alders kneeled down  
over it ;  
Drenched willows flung them head-  
long in a fit  
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng :  
The river which had done them all the  
wrong,  
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred  
no whit.

## XXI

Which, while I forded,—good saints,  
how I feared  
To set my foot upon a dead man's  
check,

Each step, or feel the spear I thrust  
to seek  
For hollows, tangled in his hair or  
beard!  
—It may have been a water-rat I  
speared,  
But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's  
shriek.

XXII

Glad was I when I reached the other  
bank.  
Now for a better country. Vain  
presage!  
Who were the strugglers, what war  
did they wage  
Whose savage trample thus could pad  
the dank  
Soil to a plash? Toads in a poisoned  
tank,  
Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—

XXIII

The fight must so have seemed in that  
fell cirque.  
What penned them there, with all  
the plain to choose?  
No foot-print leading to that horrid  
mews,  
None out of it. Mad brewage set to  
work  
Their brains, no doubt, like galley-  
slaves the Turk  
Pits for his pastime, Christians  
against Jews.

XXIV

And more than that—a furlong on—  
why, there!  
What bad use was that engine for,  
that wheel,  
Or brake, not wheel—that harrow fit  
to reel  
Men's bodies out like silk? with all the  
air  
Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware,  
Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth  
of steel.

XXV

Then came a bit of stubbed ground,  
once a wood,  
Next a marsh, it would seem, and  
now mere earth  
Desperate and done with; (so a fool  
finds mirth,  
Makes a thing and then mars it, till his  
mood

Changes and off he goes!) within a  
rood—  
Bog, clay and rubble, sand and stark  
black dearth.

XXVI

Now blotches rankling, coloured gay  
and grim,  
Now patches where some leanness of  
the soil's  
Broke into moss or substances like  
boils;  
Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in  
him  
Like a distorted mouth that splits its  
rim  
Gaping at death, and dies while it  
recoils.

XXVII

And just as far as ever from the end!  
Nought in the distance but the  
evening, nought  
To point my footstep further! At  
the thought,  
A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-  
friend,  
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing  
dragon-penned  
That brushed my cap—perchance  
the guide I sought.

XXVIII

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew,  
'Spite of the dusk, the plain had  
given place  
All round to mountains—with such  
name to grace  
Mere ugly heights and heaps now  
stolen in view.  
How thus they had surprised me,—  
solve it, you!  
How to get from them was no clearer  
case.

XXIX

Yet half I seemed to recognise some  
trick  
Of mischief happened to me, God  
knows when—  
In a bad dream perhaps. Here  
ended, then,  
Progress this way. When, in the very  
nick  
Of giving up, one time more, came a  
click  
As when a trap shuts—you're inside  
the den!

xxx

Burningly it came on me all at once,  
 This was the place! those two hills  
 on the right,  
 Crouched like two bulls locked horn  
 in horn in fight;  
 While to the left, a tall scalped moun-  
 tain . . . Dunce,  
 Dotard, a-dozing at the very nonce,  
 After a life spent training for the  
 sight!

xxxI

What in the midst lay but the Tower  
 itself?  
 The round squat turret, blind as the  
 fool's heart,  
 Built of brown stone, without a coun-  
 terpart  
 In the whole world. The tempest's  
 mocking elf  
 Points to the shipman thus the unseen  
 shelf  
 He strikes on, only when the timbers  
 start.

xxxII

Not see? because of night perhaps?—  
 why, day  
 Came back again for that! before it  
 left,

The dying sunset kindled through a  
 cleft:  
 The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,  
 Chin upon hand, to see the game at  
 bay,—  
 "Now stab and end the creature—  
 to the heft!"

xxxIII

Not hear? when noise was everywhere!  
 it tolled  
 Increasing like a bell. Names in my  
 ears,  
 Of all the lost adventurers my peers,—  
 How such a one was strong, and such  
 was bold,  
 And such was fortunate, yet each of old  
 Lost, lost! one moment knelled the  
 woe of years.

xxxIV

There they stood, ranged along the hill-  
 sides, met  
 To view the last of me, a living frame  
 For one more picture! in a sheet of  
 flame  
 I saw them and I knew them all. And  
 yet  
 Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,  
 And blew "*Childe Roland to the  
 Dark Tower came.*"

## A SOUL'S TRAGEDY

ACT FIRST,

BEING WHAT WAS CALLED THE  
 POETRY OF CHIAPPINO'S LIFE:  
 AND ACT SECOND, ITS PROSE.

London, 1846.

PERSONS.

LUITOLFO and EULALIA, betrothed lovers. | OGNIBEN, the Pope's Legate.  
 CHIAPPINO, their friend. | Citizens of Faenza.

TIME, 15—. PLACE, FAENZA.

ACT I

Inside LUITOLFO'S house. CHIAPPINO,  
 EULALIA.

*Eu.* What is it keeps Luitolfo?  
 Night's fast falling,

And 't was scarce sunset . . . had the  
 ave-bell  
 Sounded before he sought the Provost's  
 house?  
 I think not; all he had to say would  
 take

- Few minutes, such a very few, to say !  
How do you think, Chiappino ? If our  
lord  
The Provost were less friendly to your  
friend  
Than everybody here professes him,  
I should begin to tremble—should not  
you ?  
Why are you silent when so many  
times  
I turn and speak to you ?  
*Ch.* That 's good !  
*Eu.* You laugh ?  
*Ch.* Yes. I had fancied nothing  
that bears price  
In the whole world was left to call my  
own ;  
And, may be, felt a little pride thereat.  
Up to a single man's or woman's love,  
Down to the right in my own flesh and  
blood,  
There 's nothing mine, I fancied,—till  
you spoke :  
—Counting, you see, as " nothing " the  
permission  
To study this peculiar lot of mine  
In silence : well, go silence with the  
rest  
Of the world's good ! What can I say,  
shall serve ?  
*Eu.* This,—lest you, even more than  
needs, embitter  
Our parting : say your wrongs have  
cast, for once,  
A cloud across your spirit !  
*Ch.* How a cloud ?  
*Eu.* No man nor woman loves you,  
did you say ?  
*Ch.* My God, were 't not for thee !  
*Eu.* Ay, God remains,  
Even did men forsake you.  
*Ch.* Oh, not so !  
Were 't not for God, I mean, what hope  
of truth—  
Speaking truth, hearing truth, would  
stay with man ?  
I, now—the homeless friendless penni-  
less  
Proscribed and exiled wretch who  
speak to you,—  
Ought to speak truth, yet could not,  
for my death,  
(The thing that tempts me most) help  
speaking lies  
About your friendship and Luitolfo's  
courage  
And all our townfolk's equanimity—
- Through sheer incompetence to rid my-  
self  
Of the old miserable lying trick  
Caught from the liars I have lived with,  
—God,  
Did I not turn to thee ! It is thy  
prompting [sel  
I dare to be ashamed of, and thy coun-  
Would die along my coward lip, I  
know.  
But I do turn to thee. This craven  
tongue,  
These features which refuse the soul its  
way,  
Reclaim thou ! Give me truth—  
truth, power to speak  
—And after be sole present to approve  
The spoken truth ! Or, stay, that  
spoken truth,  
Who knows but you, too, may ap-  
prove ?  
*Eu.* Ah, well—  
Keep silence then, Chiappino !  
*Ch.* You would hear,  
You shall now,—why the thing we  
please to style  
My gratitude to you and all your friends  
For service done me, is just gratitude  
So much as yours was service—and no  
more.  
I was born here, so was Luitolfo ; both  
At one time, much with the same cir-  
cumstance  
Of rank and wealth ; and both, up to  
this night  
Of parting company, have side by side  
Still fared, he in the sunshine—I, the  
shadow.  
" Why ? " asks the world. " Be-  
cause," replies the world  
To its complacent self, " these play-  
fellows,  
" Who took at church the holy-water  
drop  
" Each from the other's finger, and so  
forth,—  
" Were of two moods : Luitolfo was  
the proper  
" Friend-making, everywhere friend-  
finding soul,  
" Fit for the sunshine, so, it followed  
him.  
" A happy-tempered bringer of the best  
" Out of the worst ; who bears with  
what 's past cure,  
" And puts so good a face on 't—wisely  
passive

" Where action's fruitless, while he  
 remedies  
 " In silence what the foolish rail  
 against ;  
 " A man to smooth such natures as  
 parade  
 " Of opposition must exasperate ;  
 " No general gauntlet-gatherer for the  
 weak  
 " Against the strong, yet over-scrupu-  
 lous  
 " At lucky junctures ; one who won't  
 forego  
 " The after-battle work of binding  
 wounds,  
 " Because, forsooth he'd have to bring  
 himself  
 " To side with wound-infictors for  
 their leave !"  
 —Why do you gaze, nor help me to  
 repeat  
 What comes so glibly from the com-  
 mon mouth,  
 About Luitolfo and his so-styled  
 friend ?  
*Eu.* Because, that friend's sense is  
 obscured . . .  
*Ch.* I thought  
 You would be readier with the other  
 half  
 Of the world's story, my half ! Yet,  
 't is true,  
 For all the world does say it. Say  
 your worst !  
 True, I thank God, I ever said " you  
 sin,"  
 When a man did sin : if I could not  
 say it,  
 I glared it at him ; if I could not glare  
 it,  
 I prayed against him ; then my part  
 seemed over.  
 God's may begin yet : so it will, I  
 trust.  
*Eu.* If the world outraged you, did  
 we ?  
*Ch.* What 's " me "  
 That you use well or ill ? It 's man, in  
 me,  
 All your successes are an outrage to,  
 You all, whom sunshine follows, as you  
 say !  
 Here 's our Faenza birthplace ; they  
 send here  
 A provost from Ravenna : how he  
 rules,  
 You can at times be eloquent about.

" Then, end his rule ! " — " Ah yes, one  
 stroke does that !  
 " But patience under wrong works  
 slow and sure.  
 " Must violence still bring peace forth ?  
 He, beside,  
 " Returns so blandly one's obeisance !  
 ah—  
 " Some latent virtue may be lingering  
 yet,  
 " Some human sympathy which, once  
 excite,  
 " And all the lump were leavened  
 quietly :  
 " So, no more talk of striking, for this  
 time ! "  
 But I, as one of those he rules, won't  
 bear  
 These pretty takings-up and layings-  
 down  
 Our cause, just as you think occasion  
 suits.  
 Enough of earnest, is there ? You'll  
 play, will you ?  
 Diversify your tactics, give submission,  
 Obsequiousness and flattery a turn,  
 While we die in our misery patient  
 deaths ? [first :  
 We all are outraged then, and I the  
 I, for mankind, resent each shrug and  
 smirk,  
 Each beck and bend, each . . all you  
 do and are,  
 I hate !  
*Eu.* We share a common censure,  
 then.  
 'T is well you have not poor Luitolfo's  
 part  
 Nor mine to point out in the wide of-  
 fence.  
*Ch.* Oh, shall I let you so escape me,  
 lady ?  
 Come, on your own ground, lady,—from  
 yourself,  
 (Leaving the people's wrong, which  
 most is mine)  
 What have I got to be so grate'ul for ?  
 These three last fines, no doubt, one on  
 the other  
 Paid by Luitolfo ?  
*Eu.* Shame, Chiappino !  
*Ch.* Shame  
 Fall presently on who deserves it most !  
 —Which is to see. He paid my fines  
 —my friend,  
 Your prosperous smooth lover pres-  
 ently,

Then, scarce your wooer,—soon, your  
husband : well—

I loved you.

*Eu.* Hold !

*Ch.* You knew it, years ago.  
When my voice faltered and my eye  
grew dim

Because you gave me your silk mask to  
hold—

My voice that greatens when there 's  
need to curse

The people's Provost to their heart's  
content,

—My eye, the Provost, who bears all  
men's eyes,

Banishes now because he cannot  
bear,—

You knew . . . but you do your parts—  
my part, I :

So be it ! You flourish, I decay : all's  
well.

*Eu.* I hear this for the first time.

*Ch.* The fault 's there ?

Then my days spoke not, and my  
nights of fire

Were voiceless ? Then the very heart  
may burst

Yet all prove nought, because no minc-  
ing speech

Tells leisurely that thus it is and thus ?  
Eulalia, truce with toying for this once !

A banished fool, who troubles you to-  
night

For the last time—why, what 's to fear  
from me ?

You knew I loved you !

*Eu.* Not so, on my faith !

You were my now-affianced lover's  
friend—

Came in, went out with him, could  
speak as he.

All praise your ready parts and preg-  
nant wit ;

See how your words come from you in a  
crowd !

Luitolfo 's first to place you o'er him-  
self

In all that challenges respect and love :  
Yet you were silent then, who blame  
me now.

I say all this by fascination, sure :

I am all but wed to one I love, yet  
listen !

It must be, you are wronged, and that  
the wrongs

Luitolfo pities . . .

*Ch.* —You too pity ? Do !

But hear first what my wrongs are ; so  
began

This talk and so shall end this talk. I  
say,

Was't not enough that I must strive (I  
saw)

To grow so far familiar with your  
charms

As next contrive some way to win them  
—which

To do, an age seemed far too little—for,  
see !

We all aspire to heaven ; and there is  
heaven

Above us : go there ! Dare we go ?  
no, surely !

How dare we go without a reverent  
pause,

A growing less unfit for heaven ? Even  
so,

I dared not speak : the greater fool, it  
seems !

Was 't not enough to struggle with  
such folly,

But I must have, beside, the very man  
Whose slight free loose and incapacious

soul  
Gave his tongue scope to say whate'er  
he would

—Must have him load me with his  
benefits

For fortune's fiercest stroke ?

*Eu.* Justice to him  
That 's now entreating, at his risk per-  
haps,

Justice for you ! Did he once call  
those acts [fits ?

Of simple friendship—bounties, bene-  
*Ch.* No : the straight course had

been to call them so.

Then, I had flung them back, and kept  
myself

Unhampered, free as he to win the  
prize

We both sought. But " the gold was  
dross," he said :

" He loved me, and I loved him not :  
why spurn

" A trifle out of superfluity ?  
" He had forgotten he had done as  
much."

So had not I ! Henceforth, try as I  
could

To take him at his word, there stood by  
you

My benefactor ; who might speak and  
laugh

And urge his nothings, even banter me  
Before you—but my tongue was tied.

A dream!

Let 's wake: your husband . . . how  
you shake at that!

Good—my revenge!

*Eu.* Why should I shake? What  
forced

Or forces me to be Luitolfo's bride?

*Ch.* There 's my revenge, that no-  
thing forces you.

No gratitude, no liking of the eye  
Nor longing of the heart, but the poor  
bond

Of habit—here so many times he came,  
So much he spoke,—all these compose  
the tie

That pulls you from me. Well, he  
paid my fines,

Nor missed a cloak from wardrobe, dish  
from table;

He spoke a good word to the Provost  
here,

Held me up when my fortunes fell away  
—It had not looked so well to let me  
drop—

Men take pains to preserve a tree-  
stump, even,

Whose boughs they played beneath—  
much more a friend.

But one grows tired of seeing, after the  
first,

Pains spent upon impracticable stuff  
Like me. I could not change: you  
know the rest.

I've spoke my mind too fully out, by  
chance,

This morning to our Provost; so, ere  
night

I leave the city on pain of death. And  
now

On my account there 's gallant inter-  
cession

Goes forward—that 's so graceful!—  
and anon

He 'll noisily come back: "the inter-  
cession

"Was made and fails; all 's over for us  
both:

"'T is vain contending; I would  
better go."

And I do go—and straight to you he  
turns

Light of a load; and ease of that per-  
mits

His visage to repair the natural bland  
Economy, sore broken late to suit

My discontent. Thus, all are pleased  
—you, with him,

He with himself, and all of you with me  
—"Who," say the citizens, "had done  
far better

"In letting people sleep upon their  
woes,

"If not possessed with talent to relieve  
them

"When once awake;—but then I  
had," they'll say,

"Doubtless some unknown compensat-  
ing pride

"In what I did; and as I seem content  
"With ruining myself, why, so should  
they be."

And so they are, and so be with his  
prize

The devil, when he gets them speedily!  
Why does not your Luitolfo come? I  
long

To don this cloak and take the Lugo  
path.

It seems you never loved me, then?

*Eu.* Chiappino!

*Ch.* Never?

*Eu.* Never.

*Ch.* That's sad. Say what I might,  
There was no help from being sure this  
while

You loved me. Love like mine must  
have return,

I thought: no river starts but to some  
sea.

And had you loved me, I could soon  
devise

Some specious reason why you stifled  
love,

Some fancied self-denial on your part,  
Which made you choose Luitolfo; so,  
excepting

From the wide condemnation of all  
here,

One woman. Well, the other dream  
may break!

If I knew any heart, as mine loved you,  
Loved me, though in the vilest breast  
't were lodged,

I should, I think, be forced to love  
again:

Else there 's no right nor reason in the  
world.

*Eu.* "If you knew," say you,—but  
I did not know.

That 's where you're blind, Chiappino!  
—a disease

Which if I may remove, I'll not repent

The listening to. You cannot, will not,  
see

How, place you but in every circumstance

Of us, you are just now indignant at,  
You'd be as we.

*Ch.* I should be? . . . that, again!  
I, to my friend, my country and my  
love,

Be as Luitolfo and these Faentines?

*Eu.* As we.

*Ch.* Now, I'll say something to  
remember.

I trust in nature for the stable laws

Of beauty and utility—Spring shall  
plant,

And Autumn garner to the end of time:  
I trust in God—the right shall be the  
right

And other than the wrong, while he en-  
dures:

I trust in my own soul, that can per-  
ceive [good

The outward and the inward, nature's  
And God's: so, seeing these men and  
myself,

Having a right to speak, thus do I  
speak.—

I'll not curse—God bears with them,  
well may I—

But I—protest against their claiming  
me.

I simply say, if that 's allowable,  
I would not (broadly) do as they have  
done.

—God curse this townful of born slaves,  
bred slaves,

Branded into the blood and bone,  
slaves! Curse

Whoever loves, above his liberty,  
House, land or life! and . . .

[*A knocking without.*  
—bless my hero-friend,

Luitolfo!

*Eu.* How he knocks!

*Ch.* The peril, lady!

"Chiappino, I have run a risk—a risk!"

"For when I prayed the Provost (he 's  
my friend)

"To grant you a week's respite of the  
sentence

"That confiscates your goods, exiles  
yourself,

"He shrugged his shoulder—I say,  
shrugged it! Yes,

"And fright of that drove all else from  
my head.

"Here 's a good purse of *scudi*: off  
with you,

"Lest of that shrug come what God  
only knows!

"The *scudi*—friend, they're trash—no  
thanks, I beg!

"Take the north gate,—for San Vi-  
tale's suburb,

"Whose double taxes you appealed  
against,

"In discomposure at your ill-success

"Is apt to stone you: there, there—  
only go!

"Beside, Eulalia here looks sleepily.

"Shake . . . oh, you hurt me, so you  
squeeze my wrist!"

—Is it not thus you'll speak, adven-  
turous friend?

[*As he opens the door, LUITOLFO  
rushes in, his garments disordered.*

*Eu.* Luitolfo! Blood?

*Luit.* There's more—and more of it!  
Eulalia—take the garment! No—

you, friend!

You take it and the blood from me—  
you dare!

*Eu.* Oh, who has hurt you? where's  
the wound?

*Ch.* "Who," say you?  
The man with many a touch of virtue  
yet!

The Provost's friend has proved too  
frank of speech,

And this comes of it. Miserable hound!  
This comes of temporizing, as I said!

Here's fruit of your smooth speeches  
and soft looks!

Now see my way! As God lives, I go  
straight

To the palace and do justice, once for  
all!

*Luit.* What says he?

*Ch.* I'll do justice on him.

*Luit.* Him?

*Ch.* The Provost.

*Luit.* I've just killed him.

*Eu.* Oh, my God!

*Luit.* My friend, they're on my  
trace; they'll have me—now!

They're round him, busy with him:  
soon they'll find

He 's past their help, and then they'll  
be on me!

Chiappino, save Eulalia! I forget . . .  
Were you not bound for . . .

*Ch.* Lugo?

*Luit.* Ah—yes—yes!

That was the point I prayed of him to change.

Well, go—be happy! Is Eulalia safe? They're on me!

*Ch.* 'T is through me they reach you, then!

Friend, seem the man you are! Lock arms—that's right!

Now tell me what you've done; explain how you

That still professed forbearance, still preached peace,

Could bring yourself . . .

*Luit.* What was peace for, Chiappino?

I tried peace: did that promise, when peace failed,

Strife should not follow? All my peaceful days

Were just the prelude to a day like this.

I cried "You call me 'friend': save my true friend!

"Save him, or lose me!"

*Ch.* But you never said you meant to tell the Provost thus and thus.

*Luit.* Why should I say it? What else did I mean?

*Ch.* Well? He persisted?

*Luit.* —"Would so order it you should not trouble him too soon again."

I saw a meaning in his eye and lip;

I poured my heart's store of indignant words

Out on him: then—I know not! He retorted,

And I . . . some staff lay there to hand—I think

He bade his servants thrust me out—I struck . . .

Ah, they come! Fly you, save yourselves, you two!

The dead back-weight of the beheading axe!

The glowing trip-hook, thumbscrews and the gadge!

*Eu.* They do come! Torches in the Place! Farewell, [us—

Chiappino! You can work no good to much to yourself; believe not, all the world

Must needs be cursed henceforth!

*Ch.* And you?

*Eu.* I stay.

*Ch.* Ha, ha! Now, listen! I am master here!

This was my coarse disguise; this paper shows

My path of flight and place of refuge—see—

Lugo, Argenta, past San Nicolo, Ferrara, then to Venice and all 's safe!

Put on the cloak! His people have to fetch

A compass round about. There's time enough

Ere they can reach us, so you straight-way make

For Lugo . . . nay, he hears not! On with it—

He obeys he knows not how. Then, if I must— [gate?

Answer me! Do you know the Lugo

*Eu.* The north-west gate, over the bridge?

*Luit.* I know.

*Ch.* Well, there—you are not frightened? all my route

Is traced in that: at Venice you escape their power. Eulalia, I am master here!

[*Shouts from without. He pushes out LUITOLFO, who complies mechanically.*

In time! Nay, help me with him—so! He's gone.

*Eu.* What have you done? On you, perchance, all know

The Provost's hater, will men's vengeance fall

As our accomplice.

*Ch.* Mere accomplice? See! [Putting on LUITOLFO's vest.

Now, lady, am I true to my profession, Or one of these?

*Eu.* You take Luitolfo's place?

*Ch.* Die for him.

*Eu.* Well done! [*Shouts increase.*

*Ch.* How the people tarry!

I can 't be silent; I must speak: or sing—

How natural to sing now!

*Eu.* Hush and pray!

We are to die; but even I perceive

'T is not a very hard thing so to die.

My cousin of the pale-blue tearful eyes,

Poor Cesca, suffers more from one

day's life

With the stern husband; Tisbe's heart

goes forth

Each evening after that wild son offers,

To track his thoughtless footstep through the streets:

How easy for them both to die like this!  
I am not sure that I could live as they.

*Ch.* Here they come, crowds! They pass the gate? Yes!—No!—  
One torch is in the courtyard. Here flock all.

*Eu.* At least Luitolfo has escaped. What cries!

*Ch.* If they would drag one to the market-place,  
One might speak there!

*Eu.* List, list!

*Ch.* They mount the steps.

*Enter the Populace.*

*Ch.* I killed the Provost!

*The Populace [speaking together.]* 'T was Chiappino, friends!

Our saviour! The best man at last as first!

He who first made us feel what chains we wore,

He also strikes the blow that shatters them,

He at last saves us—our best citizen!

—Oh, have you only courage to speak now?

My eldest son was christened a year since

"Cino" to keep Chiappino's name in mind—

Cino, for shortness merely, you observe!

The city's in our hands. The guards are fled.

Do you, the cause of all, come down—come up—

Come out to counsel us, our chief, our king,

Whate'er rewards you! Choose your own reward!

The peril over, its reward begins!

Come and harangue us in the market-place!

*Eu.* Chiappino?

*Ch.* Yes—I understand your eyes!  
You think I should have promptlier disowned

This deed with its strange unforeseen success,

In favour of Luitolfo. But the peril,  
So far from ended, hardly seems begun.

To-morrow, rather, when a calm succeeds,

We easily shall make him full amends:  
And meantime—if we save them as they pray,

And justify the deed by its effects?

*Eu.* You would, for worlds, you had denied at once.

*Ch.* I know my own intention, be assured!

All's well. Precede us, fellow-citizens!

## ACT II

*The Market-place. LUITOLFO in disguise mingling with the Populace assembled opposite the Provost's Palace.*

*1st Bystander (To LUIT.)* You, a friend of Luitolfo's? Then, your friend is vanished,—in all probability killed on the night that his patron the tyrannical Provost was loyally suppressed here, exactly a month ago, by our illustrious fellow-citizen, thrice-noble saviour, and new Provost that is like to be, this very morning,—Chiappino!

*Luit.* He the new Provost?

*2nd.* Up those steps will he go, and beneath yonder pillar stand, while Ogniben, the Pope's Legate from Ravenna, reads the new dignitary's title to the people, according to established custom: for which reason, there is the assemblage you inquire about.

*Luit.* Chiappino—the late Provost's successor? Impossible! But tell me of that presently. What I would know first of all is, wherefore Luitolfo must so necessarily have been killed on that memorable night?

*3rd.* You were Luitolfo's friend? So was I. Never, if you will credit me, did there exist so poor-spirited a milk-sop. He, with all the opportunities in the world, furnished by daily converse with our oppressor, would not stir a finger to help us: and, when Chiappino rose in solitary majesty and . . . how does one go on saying? . . . dealt the godlike blow,—this Luitolfo, not unreasonably fearing the indignation of an aroused and liberated people, fled precipitately. He may have got trodden to death in the press at the south-east gate, when the Provost's guards fled through it to Ravenna, with their wounded master,—if he did not rather hang himself under some hedge.

*Luit.* Or why not simply have lain perdué in some quiet corner,—such as

San Cassiano, where his estate was,—receiving daily intelligence from some sure friend, meanwhile, as to the turn matters were taking here—how, for instance, the Provost was not dead, after all, only wounded—or, as to-day's news would seem to prove, how Chiappino was not Brutus the Elder, after all, only the new Provost—and thus Luitolfo be enabled to watch a favourable opportunity for returning? Might it not have been so?

3rd. Why, he may have taken that care of himself, certainly, for he came of a cautious stock. I'll tell you how his uncle, just such another gingerly treader on tiptoes with finger on lip,—how he met his death in the great plague-year: *dico vobis!* Hearing that the seventeenth house in a certain street was infected, he calculates to pass it in safety by taking plentiful breath, say, when he shall arrive at the eleventh house; then scouring by, holding that breath, till he be got so far on the other side as number twenty-three, and thus elude the danger.—And so did he begin; but, as he arrived at thirteen, we will say,—thinking to improve on his precaution by putting up a little prayer to St. Nepomucene of Prague, this exhausted so much of his lungs' reserve, that at sixteen it was clean spent,—consequently at the fatal seventeen he inhaled with a vigour and persistence enough to suck you any latent venom out of the heart of a stone—Ha, ha!

*Luit.* [*Aside.*] (If I had not lent that man the money he wanted last spring, I should fear this bitterness was attributable to me.) Luitolfo is dead then, one may conclude?

3rd. Why, he had a house here, and a woman to whom he was affianced; and as they both pass naturally to the new Provost, his friend and heir . . .

*Luit.* Ah, I suspected you of imposing on me with your pleasantry! I know Chiappino better.

1st. (Our friend has the bile! After all, I do not dislike finding somebody vary a little this general gape of admiration at Chiappino's glorious qualities.) Pray, how much may you know of what has taken place in Faenza since that memorable night?

*Luit.* It is most to the purpose, that I know Chiappino to have been by profession a hater of that very office of Provost, you now charge him with proposing to accept

1st. Sir, I'll tell you. That night was indeed memorable. Up we rose, a mass of us, men, women, children; out fled the guards with the body of the tyrant; we were to defy the world: but, next grey morning, "What will Rome say?" began everybody. You know we are governed by Ravenna, which is governed by Rome. And quietly into the town, by the Ravenna road, comes on muleback a portly personage, Ogniben by name, with the quality of Pontifical Legate; trots briskly through the streets humming a "*Cur fremuere gentes,*" and makes directly for the Provost's Palace—there it faces you. "One Messer Chiappino is your leader? I have known three-and-twenty leaders of revolts!" (laughing gently to himself)—"Give me the help of your arm from my mule to yonder steps under the pillar—So! And now, my revolters and good friends, what do you want? The guards burst into Ravenna last night bearing your wounded Provost; and, having had a little talk with him, I take on myself to come and try appease the disorderliness, before Rome, hearing of it, resort to another method: 't is I come, and not another, from a certain love I confess to, of composing differences. So do you understand, you are about to experience this unheard-of tyranny from me, that there shall be no heading nor hanging, no confiscation nor exile: I insist on your simply pleasing yourselves. And now, pray, what does please you? To live without any government at all? Or having decided for one, to see its minister murdered by the first of your body that chooses to find himself wronged, or disposed for reverting to first principles and a justice anterior to all institutions,—and so will you carry matters, that the rest of the world must at length unite and put down such a den of wild beasts? As for vengeance on what has just taken place,—once for all, the wounded man assures me he cannot conjecture who struck him; and this

so earnestly, that one may be sure he knows perfectly well what intimate acquaintance could find admission to speak with him late last evening. I come not for vengeance therefore, but from pure curiosity to hear what you will do next." And thus he ran on, on, easily and volubly, till he seemed to arrive quite naturally at the praise of law, order, and paternal government by somebody from rather a distance. All our citizens were in the snare, and about to be friends with so congenial an adviser; but that Chiappino suddenly stood forth, spoke out indignantly, and set things right again.

*Luit.* Do you see? I recognise him there!

*3d.* Ay but, mark you, at the end of Chiappino's longest period in praise of a pure republic,—“And by whom do I desire such a government should be administered, perhaps, but by one like yourself?”—returns the Legate: thereupon speaking for a quarter of an hour together, on the natural and only legitimate government by the best and wisest. And it should seem there was soon discovered to be no such vast discrepancy at bottom between this and Chiappino's theory, place but each in its proper light. “Oh, are you there?” quoth Chiappino: “Ay, in that, I agree,” returns Chiappino: and so on.

*Luit.* But did Chiappino cede at once to this?

*1st.* Why, not altogether at once. For instance, he said that the difference between him and all his fellows was, that they seemed all wishing to be kings in one or another way,—“whereas what right,” asked he, “has any man to wish to be superior to another?”—whereat, “Ah, sir,” answers the Legate, “this is the death of me, so often as I expect something is really going to be revealed to us by you clearer-seers, deeper-thinkers—this—that your righthand (to speak by a figure) should be found taking up the weapon it displayed so ostentatiously, not to destroy any dragon in our path, as was prophesied, but simply to cut off its own fellow lefthand: yourself set about attacking yourself. For see now! Here are you who, I make sure, glory exceedingly in knowing the noble

nature of the soul, its divine impulses, and so forth; and with such a knowledge you stand, as it were, armed to encounter the natural doubts and fears as to that same inherent nobility, that are apt to waylay us, the weaker ones, in the road of life. And when we look eagerly to see them fall before you, lo, round you wheel, only the left hand gets the blow; one proof of the soul's nobility destroys simply another proof, quite as good, of the same, for you are found delivering an opinion like this! Why, what is this perpetual yearning to exceed, to subdue, to be better than, and a king over, one's fellows,—all that you so disclaim,—but the very tendency yourself are most proud of, and under another form, would oppose to it,—only in a lower stage of manifestation? You don't want to be vulgarly superior to your fellows after their poor fashion—to have me hold solemnly up your gown's tail, or hand you an express of the last importance from the Pope, with all these bystanders noticing how unconcerned you look the while: but neither does our gaping friend, the burgess yonder, want the other kind of kingship, that consists in understanding better than his fellows this and similar points of human nature, nor to roll under his tongue this sweeter morsel still,—the feeling that, through immense philosophy, he does *not* feel, he rather thinks, above you and me! And so chatting, they glided off arm in arm.

*Luit.* And the result is . . .

*1st.* Why that, a month gone by, the indomitable Chiappino, marrying as he will Luitolfo's love—at all events succeeding to Luitolfo's wealth—becomes the first inhabitant of Faenza, and a proper aspirant to the provostship; which we assemble here to see conferred on him this morning. The Legate's Guard to clear the way! He will follow presently.

*Luit.* (*withdrawing a little.*) I understand the drift of Eulalia's communications less than ever. Yet she surely said, in so many words, that Chiappino was in urgent danger: wherefore, disregarding her injunction to continue in my retreat and await the result of, what she called, some experi-

ment yet in process—I hastened here without her leave or knowledge: what could I else? But if this they say be true—if it were for such a purpose, she and Chiappino kept me away. . . . Oh, no, no! I must confront him and her before I believe this of them. And at the word, see!

*Enter CHIAPPINO and EULALIA.*

*Eu.* We part here, then? The change in your principles would seem to be complete.

*Ch.* Now, why refuse to see that in my present course I change no principles, only re-adapt them and more adroitly? I had despaired of, what you may call the material instrumentality of life; of ever being able to rightly operate on mankind through such a deranged machinery as the existing modes of government: but now, if I suddenly discover how to inform these perverted institutions with fresh purpose, bring the functionary limbs once more into immediate communication with, and subjection to, the soul I am about to bestow on them—do you see? Why should one desire to invent, as long as it remains possible to renew and transform? When all further hope of the old organization shall be extinct, then, I grant you, it may be time to try and create another.

*Eu.* And there being discoverable some hope yet in the hitherto much-abused old system of absolute government by a Provost here, you mean to take your time about endeavouring to realize those visions of a perfect State, we once heard of?

*Ch.* Say, I would fain realize my conception of a palace, for instance, and that there is, abstractedly, but a single way of erecting one perfectly. Here, in the market-place is my allotted building-ground; here I stand without a stone to lay, or a labourer to help me,—stand, too, during a short day of life, close on which the night comes. On the other hand, circumstances suddenly offer me (turn and see it) the old Provost's house to experiment upon—ruinous, if you please, wrongly constructed at the beginning, and ready to tumble now. But materials abound, a crowd of workmen

offer their services; here, exists yet a Hall of Audience of originally noble proportions, there a Guest-chamber of symmetrical design enough: and I may restore, enlarge, abolish or unite these to heart's content. Ought I not make the best of such an opportunity, rather than continue to gaze disconsolately with folded arms on the flat pavement here, while the sun goes slowly down, never to rise again? Since you cannot understand this nor me, it is better we should part as you desire.

*Eu.* So, the love breaks away too!

*Ch.* No, rather my soul's capacity for love widens—needs more than one object to content it,—and, being better instructed, will not persist in seeing all the component parts of love in what is only a single part,—nor in finding that so many and so various loves, are all united in the love of a woman,— manifold uses in one instrument, as the savage has his sword, sceptre and idol, all in one club-stick. Love is a very compound thing. The intellectual part of my love I shall give to men, the mighty dead or the illustrious living; and determine to call a mere sensual instinct by as few fine names as possible. What do I lose?

*Eu.* Nay, I only think, what do I lose? and, one more word—which shall complete my instruction—does friendship go too? What of Luitolfo, the author of your present prosperity?

*Ch.* How the author?—

*Eu.* That blow now called yours . . .

*Ch.* Struck without principle or purpose, as by a blind natural operation: yet to which all my thought and life directly and advisedly tended. I would have struck it, and could not: he would have done his utmost to avoid striking it, yet did so. I dispute his right to that deed of mine—a final action with him, from the first effect of which he fled away,—a mere first step with me, on which I base a whole mighty superstructure of good to follow. Could he get good from it?

*Eu.* So we profess, so we perform!

*Enter OGNIBEN. EULALIA stands apart.*

*Ogni.* I have seen three-and-twenty leaders of revolts! By your leave, sir!

Perform? What does the lady say of performing?

*Ch.* Only the trite saying, that we must not trust profession, only performance.

*Ogni.* She'll not say that, sir, when she knows you longer; you'll instruct her better. Ever judge of men by their professions! For though the bright moment of promising is but a moment and cannot be prolonged, yet, if sincere in its moment's extravagant goodness, why, trust it and know the man by it, I say—not by his performance; which is half the world's work, interfere as the world needs must, with its accidents and circumstances: the profession was purely the man's own. I judge people by what they might be,—not are, nor will be.

*Ch.* But have there not been found, too, performing natures, not merely promising?

*Ogni.* Plenty. Little Bindo of our town, for instance, promised his friend, great ugly Masaccio, once, "I will repay you!"—for a favour done him. So, when his father came to die, and Bindo succeeded to the inheritance, he sends straightway for Masaccio and shares all with him—gives him half the land, half the money, half the kegs of wine in the cellar. "Good," say you: and it is good. But had little Bindo found himself possessor of all this wealth some five years before—on the happy night when Masaccio procured him that interview in the garden with his pretty cousin Lisa—instead of being the beggar he then was,—I am bound to believe that in the warm moment of promise he would have given away all the winekegs and all the money and all the land, and only reserved to himself some hut on a hill-top hard by, whence he might spend his life in looking and seeing his friend enjoy himself: he meant fully that much, but the world interfered.—To our business! Did I understand you just now within-doors? You are not going to marry your old friend's love, after all?

*Ch.* I must have a woman that can sympathize with, and appreciate me, I told you.

*Ogni.* Oh, I remember! you, the greater nature, needs must have a lesser

one (—avowedly lesser—contest with you on that score would never do)—such a nature must comprehend you, as the phrase is, accompany and testify of your greatness from point to point onward. Why, that were being not merely as great as yourself, but greater considerably! Meantime, might not the more bounded nature as reasonably count on your appreciation of it, rather?—on your keeping close by it, so far as you both go together, and then going on by yourself as far as you please? Thus God serves us.

*Ch.* And yet a woman that could understand the whole of me, to whom I could reveal alike the strength and the weakness—

*Ogni.* Ah my friend, wish for nothing so foolish! Worship your love, give her the best of you to see; be to her like the western lands (they bring us such strange news of) to the Spanish Court; send her only your lumps of gold, fans of feathers, your spirit-like birds, and fruits and gems! So shall you, what is unseen of you, be supposed altogether a paradise by her,—as these western lands by Spain: though I warrant there is filth, red baboons, ugly reptiles and squalor enough, which they bring Spain as few samples of as possible. Do you want your mistress to respect your body generally? Offer her your mouth to kiss; don't strip off your boot and put your foot to her lips! You understand my humour by this time? I help men to carry out their own principles: if they please to say two and two make five, I assent, so they will but go on and say, four and four make ten.

*Ch.* But these are my private affairs; what I desire you to occupy yourself about, is my public appearance presently: for when the people hear that I am appointed Provost, though you and I may thoroughly discern—and easily, too—the right principle at bottom of such a movement, and how my republicanism remains thoroughly unaltered, only takes a form of expression hitherto commonly judged (and heretofore by myself) incompatible with its existence—when thus I reconcile myself to an old form of government instead of proposing a new one . . .

*Ogni.* Why, you must deal with people broadly. Begin at a distance from this matter and say,—New truths, old truths! sirs, there is nothing new possible to be revealed to us in the moral world; we know all we shall ever know: and it is for simply reminding us, by their various respective expedients, how we do know this and the other matter, that men get called prophets, poets and the like. A philosopher's life is spent in discovering that, of the half-dozen truths he knew when a child, such an one is a lie, as the world states it in set terms; and then, after a weary lapse of years, and plenty of hard-thinking, it becomes a truth again after all, as he happens to newly consider it and view it in a different relation with the others: and so he restates it, to the confusion of somebody else in good time. As for adding to the original stock of truths,—impossible! Thus, you see the expression of them is the grand business:—you have got a truth in your head about the right way of governing people, and you took a mode of expressing it which now you confess to be imperfect. But what then? There is truth in falsehood, falsehood in truth. No man ever told one great truth, that I know, without the help of a good dozen of lies at least, generally unconscious ones. And as when a child comes in breathlessly and relates a strange story, you try to conjecture from the very falsities in it, what the reality was,—do not conclude that he saw nothing in the sky, because he assuredly did not see a flying horse there as he says,—so, through the contradictory expression, do you see, men should look painfully for, and trust to arrive eventually at, what you call the true principle at bottom. Ah, what an answer is there! to what will it not prove applicable?—“Contradictions? Of course there were,” say you!

*Ch.* Still, the world at large may call it inconsistency, and what shall I urge in reply?

*Ogni.* Why, look you, when they tax you with tergiversation or duplicity, you may answer—you begin to perceive that, when all's done and said, both great parties in the State, the

advocators of change in the present system of things, and the opponents of it, patriot and anti-patriot, are found working together for the common good; and that in the midst of their efforts for and against its progress, the world somehow or other still advances: to which result they contribute in equal proportions, those who spend their life in pushing it onward, as those who give theirs to the business of pulling it back. Now, if you found the world stand still between the opposite forces, and were glad, I should conceive you: but it steadily advances, you rejoice to see! By the side of such a rejoicer, the man who only winks as he keeps cunning and quiet, and says, “Let yonder hot-headed fellow fight out my battle! I, for one, shall win in the end by the blows he gives, and which I ought to be giving”—even he seems graceful in his avowal, when one considers that he might say, “I shall win quite as much by the blows our antagonist gives him, blows from which he saves me—I thank the antagonist equally!” Moreover, you may enlarge on the loss of the edge of party-animosity with age and experience . . .

*Ch.* And naturally time must wear off such asperities: the bitterest adversaries get to discover certain points of similarity between each other, common sympathies—do they not?

*Ogni.* Ay, had the young David but sat first to dine on his cheeses with the Philistine, he had soon discovered an abundance of such common sympathies. He of Gath, it is recorded, was born of a father and mother, had brothers and sisters like another man,—they, no more than the sons of Jesse, were used to eat each other. But, for the sake of one broad antipathy that had existed from the beginning, David slung the stone, cut off the giant's head, made a spoil of it, and after ate his cheeses alone, with the better appetite, for all I can learn. My friend, as you, with a quickened eye-sight, go on discovering, much good on the worse side, remember that the same process should proportionably magnify and demonstrate to you the much more good on the better side!—And when I profess no sympathy for the Goliaths of

our time, and you object that a large nature should sympathize with every form of intelligence, and see the good in it, however limited—I answer, “So I do; but preserve the proportions of my sympathy, however finelier or widelier I may extend its action.” I desire to be able, with a quickened eye-sight, to descry beauty in corruption where others see foulness only: but I hope I shall also continue to see a redoubled beauty in the higher forms of matter, where already everybody sees no foulness at all. I must retain, too, my old power of selection, and choice of appropriation, to apply to such new gifts; else they only dazzle instead of enlightening me. God has his archangels and consorts with them: though he made too, and intimately sees what is good in, the worm. Observe, I speak only as you profess to think and so ought to speak: I do justice to your own principles, that is all.

*Ch.* But you very well know that the two parties do, on occasion, assume each other's characteristics. What more disgusting, for instance, than to see how promptly the new emancipated slave will adopt, in his own favour, the very measures of precaution, which pressed soreliest on himself as institutions of the tyranny he has just escaped from? Do the classes, hitherto without opinion, get leave to express it? there follows a confederacy immediately, from which—exercise your individual right and dissent, and woe be to you!

*Ogni.* And a journey over the sea to you! That is the generous way. Cry—“Emancipated slaves, the first excess, and off I go!” The first time a poor devil, who has been bastinadoed steadily his whole life long, finds himself let alone and able to legislate, so, begins pettishly, while he rubs his soles, “Woe be to whoever brings anything in the shape of a stick this way!”—you, rather than give up the very innocent pleasure of carrying one to switch flies with,—you go away, to everybody's sorrow. Yet you were quite reconciled to staying at home while the governors used to pass, every now and then, some such edict as “Let no man indulge in owning a stick which

is not thick enough to chastise our slaves, if need require!” Well, there are pre-ordained hierarchies among us, and a profane vulgar subjected to a different law altogether; yet I am rather sorry you should see it so clearly: for, do you know what is to—all but save you at the Day of Judgment, all you men of genius? It is this; that, while you generally began by pulling down God, and went on to the end of your life, in one effort at setting up your own genius in his place,—still, the last, bitterest concession wrung with the utmost unwillingness from the experience of the very loftiest of you, was invariably—would one think it?—that the rest of mankind, down to the lowest of the mass, stood not, nor ever could stand, just on a level and equality with yourselves. That will be a point in the favour of all such, I hope and believe.

*Ch.* Why, men of genius are usually charged, I think, with doing just the reverse; and at once acknowledging the natural inequality of mankind, by themselves participating in the universal craving after, and deference to, the civil distinctions which represent it. You wonder they pay such undue respect to titles and badges of superior rank.

*Ogni.* Not I (always on your own ground and showing, be it noted!) Who doubts that, with a weapon to brandish, a man is the more formidable? Titles and badges are exercised as such a weapon, to which you and I look up wistfully. We could pin lions with it moreover, while in its present owner's hands it hardly prods rats. Nay, better than a mere weapon of easy mastery and obvious use, it is a mysterious divining rod that may serve us in undreamed-of ways. Beauty, strength, intellect—men often have none of these, and yet conceive pretty accurately what kind of advantages they would bestow on the possessor. We know at least what it is we make up our mind to forego, and so can apply the fittest substitute in our power. Wanting beauty, we cultivate good humour; missing wit, we get riches: but the mystic unimaginable operation of that gold collar and string

of Latin names which suddenly turned poor stupid little peevish Cecco of our town into natural lord of the best of us—a Duke, he is now—there indeed is a virtue to be revered!

*Ch.* Ay, by the vulgar: not by Messere Stiatto the poet, who pays more assiduous court to him than anybody.

*Ogni.* What else should Stiatto pay court to? He has talent, not honour and riches: men naturally covet what they have not.

*Ch.* No, or Cecco would covet talent, which he has not, whereas he covets more riches, of which he has plenty, already.

*Ogni.* Because a purse added to a purse makes the holder twice as rich: but just such another talent as Stiatto's, added to what he now possesses, what would that profit him? Give the talent a purse indeed, to do something with! But lo, how we keep the good people waiting! I only desired to do justice to the noble sentiments which animate you, and which you are too modest to duly enforce. Come, to our main business: shall we ascend the steps? I am going to propose you for Provost to the people; they know your antecedents, and will accept you with a joyful unanimity: whereon I confirm their choice. Rouse up! Are you nerving yourself to an effort? Beware the disaster of Messere Stiatto we were talking of! who, determining to keep an equal mind and constant face on whatever might be the fortune of his last new poem with our townsmen, heard too plainly "hiss, hiss, hiss," increase every moment. Till at last the man fell senseless: not perceiving that the portentous sounds had all the while been issuing from between his own nobly clenched teeth, and nostrils narrowed by resolve.

*Ch.* Do you begin to throw off the mask?—to jest with me, having got me effectually into your trap?

*Ogni.* Where is the trap, my friend? You hear what I engage to do, for my part: you, for yours, have only to fulfil your promise made just now within doors, of professing unlimited obedience to Rome's authority in my person. And I shall authorize no

more than the simple re-establishment of the Provostship and the conferment of its privileges upon yourself: the only novel stipulation being a birth of the peculiar circumstances of the time.

*Ch.* And that stipulation?

*Ogni.* Just the obvious one—that in the event of the discovery of the actual assailant of the late Provost . . .

*Ch.* Ha!

*Ogni.* Why, he shall suffer the proper penalty, of course; what did you expect?

*Ch.* Who heard of this?

*Ogni.* Rather, who needed to hear of this?

*Ch.* Can it be, the popular rumour never reached you . . .

*Ogni.* Many more such rumours reach me, friend, than I choose to receive; those which wait longest have best chance. Has the present one sufficiently waited? Now is its time for entry with effect. See the good people crowding about yonder palace steps—which we may not have to ascend, after all! My good friends! (nay, two or three of you will answer every purpose)—who was it fell upon and proved nearly the death of your late Provost? His successor desires to hear, that his day of inauguration may be graced by the act of prompt, bare justice we all anticipate. Who dealt the blow that night, does anybody know?

*Luitolfo.* [coming forward.] I!

*All.* Luitolfo!

*Luit.* I avow the deed, justify and approve it, and stand forth now, to relieve my friend of an unearned responsibility. Having taken thought, I am grown stronger: I shall shrink from nothing that awaits me." Nay, Chiappino—we are friends still: I dare say there is some proof of your superior nature in this starting aside, strange as it seemed at first. So, they tell me, my horse is of the right stock, because a shadow in the path frightens him into a frenzy, makes him dash my brains out. I understand only the dull mule's way of standing stockishly, plodding soberly, suffering on occasion a blow or two with due patience.

*Eu.* I was determined to justify my choice, Chiappino; to let Luitolfo's

nature vindicate itself. Henceforth we are undivided, whatever be our fortune.

*Ogni.* Now, in these last ten minutes of silence, what have I been doing, deem you? Putting the finishing stroke to a homily of mine, I have long taken thought to perfect, on the text, "Let whoso thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." To your house, Luitolfo! Still, silent, my patriotic friend? Well, that is a good sign however. And you will go aside for a time? That is better still. I understand: it would be easy for you to die of remorse here on the spot and shock us all, but you mean to live and grow worthy of coming back to us one day. There, I will tell everybody; and you only do right to believe you must get better as you get older. All men do so: they are worst in childhood, improve in manhood, and get ready in old age for another world. Youth, with its beauty and grace, would seem bestowed on us for some such reason as to make us partly endurable till we have time for really becoming so of ourselves, without their aid; when they leave us. The sweetest child we

all smile on for his pleasant want of the whole world to break up, or suck in his mouth, seeing no other good in it—would be rudely handled by that world's inhabitants, if he retained those angelic infantine desires when he had grown six feet high, black and bearded. But, little by little, he sees fit to forego claim after claim on the world, puts up with a less and less share of its good as his proper portion; and when the octogenarian asks barely a sup of gruel and a fire of dry sticks, and thanks you as for his full allowance and right in the common good of life,—hoping nobody may murder him,—he who began by asking and expecting the whole of us to bow down in worship to him,—why, I say he is advanced, far onward, very far, nearly out of sight like our friend Chiappino yonder. And now—(Ay, good-bye to you! He turns round the north-west gate: going to Lugo again? Good-bye!)—And now give thanks to God, the keys of the Provost's palace to me, and yourselves to profitable meditation at home! I have known *Four-and-twenty* leaders of revolts.

## LURIA

### A TRAGEDY

I DEDICATE

THIS LAST ATTEMPT FOR THE PRESENT AT DRAMATIC POETRY  
TO A GREAT DRAMATIC POET;

"WISHING WHAT I WRITE MAY BE READ BY HIS LIGHT:"

IF A PHRASE ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED, BY NOT THE LEAST

WORTHY OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES,

TO SHAKESPEARE,

MAY BE APPLIED HERE, BY ONE WHOSE SOLE PRIVILEGE IS IN

A GRATEFUL ADMIRATION,

TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

London, 1846.

#### PERSONS.

LURIA, a Moor, Commander of the Florentine Forces.	BRACCIO, Commissary of the Republic of Florence.
HUSAIN, a Moor, his friend.	JACOPO (LAFO), his Secretary.
PUCCIO, the old Florentine Commander, now LURIA's Chief Officer.	TIBURZIO, Commander of the Pisans.
	DOMIZIA, a noble Florentine Lady.

TIME, 14—SCENE.—LURIA'S *Camp between Florence and Pisa.*

ACT I

MORNING

BRACCIO, *as dictating to his Secretary;*  
PUCCIO *standing by.*

*Brac.* [to *Puc.*] Then, you join battle in an hour?

*Puc.*

Not I;

Luria, the captain.

- Brac.* [to the Sec.] "In an hour, the battle."
- [To Puc.] Sir, let your eye run o'er this loose digest,  
And see if very much of your report  
Have slipped away through my civilian phrase.  
Does this instruct the Signory aright  
How army stands with army?  
*Puc.* [taking the paper.] All seems here:  
—That Luria, seizing with our city's force  
The several points of vantage, hill and plain,  
Shuts Pisa safe from help on every side,  
And, baffling the Lucchese arrived too late,  
Must, in the battle he delivers now,  
Beat her best troops and first of chiefs.  
*Brac.* So sure?  
Tiburzio's a consummate captain too!  
*Puc.* Luria holds Pisa's fortune in his hand.  
*Brac.* [to the Sec.] "The Signory hold Pisa in their hand."  
Your own proved soldiership's our warrant, sir:  
So, while my secretary ends his task,  
Have out two horsemen, by the open roads,  
To post with it to Florence!  
*Puc.* [returning the paper.] All seems here;  
Unless . . . Ser Braccio, 't is my last report!  
Since Pisa's outbreak, and my overthrow,  
And Luria's hastening at the city's call  
To save her, as he only could, no doubt;  
Till now that she is saved or sure to be,—  
Whatever you tell Florence, I tell you:  
Each day's note you, her Commissary, make  
Of Luria's movements, I myself supply.  
No youngster am I longer, to my cost;  
Therefore while Florence gloried in her choice  
And vaunted Luria, whom but Luria, still,  
As if zeal, courage, prudence, conduct, faith,  
Had never met in any man before,  
I saw no pressing need to swell the cry.  
But now, this last report and I have done—  
So, ere to-night comes with its roar of praise,  
'T were not amiss if some one old i' the trade  
Subscribed with, "True, for once rash counsel's best."  
"This Moor of the bad faith and doubtful race,  
"This boy to whose untried sagacity,  
"Raw valour, Florence trusts without reserve  
"The charge to save her,—justifies her choice;  
"In no point has this stranger failed his friends:  
"Now praise!" I say this, and it is not here.  
*Brac.* [to the Sec.] Write, "Puccio, superseded in the charge,  
"By Luria, bears full witness to his worth,  
"And no reward our Signory can give  
"Their champion but he'll back it cheerfully."  
Aught more? Five minutes hence, both messengers! [*Puccio goes.*  
*Brac.* [after a pause, and while he slowly tears the paper into shreds.]  
I think . . . (pray God, I hold in fit contempt  
This warfare's noble art and ordering,  
And,—once the brace of prizers fairly matched,  
Poleaxe with poleaxe, knife with knife as good,—  
Spit properly at what men term their skill!—)  
Yet here I think our fighter has the odds.  
With Pisa's strength diminished thus and thus,  
Such points of vantage in our hands and such,  
Lucca still off the stage, too,—all's assured:  
Luria must win this battle. Write the Court,  
That Luria's trial end and sentence pass!  
*Sec.* Patron,—  
*Brac.* Ay, Lapo?  
*Sec.* If you trip, I fall;  
'T is in self-interest I speak—  
*Brac.* Nay, nay,  
You overshoot the mark, my Lapo!  
Nay!  
When did I say pure love's impossible?  
I make you daily write those red cheeks thin,

Load your young brow with what concerns it least,  
 And, when we visit Florence, let you pace  
 The Piazza by my side as if we talked,  
 Where all your old acquaintances may see :  
 You'd die for me, I should not be surprised.  
 Now then !  
*Sec.* Sir, look about and love yourself !  
 Step after step, the Signory and you  
 Tread gay till this tremendous point 's  
 to pass ;  
 Which, pass not, pass not, ere you ask  
 yourself,—  
 Bears the brain steadily such draughts  
 of fire,  
 Or too delicious may not prove the  
 pride  
 Of this long secret trial you dared plan,  
 Dare execute, you solitary here,  
 With the grey-headed toothless fools at  
 home,  
 Who think themselves your lords, such  
 slaves are they ?  
 If they pronounce this sentence as you  
 bid,  
 Declare the treason, claim its penalty,—  
 And sudden out of all the blaze of life,  
 On the best minute of his brightest day,  
 From that adoring army at his back,  
 Thro' Florence' joyous crowds before  
 his face,  
 Into the dark you beckon Luria . . .  
*Brac.* Then—  
 Why, Lapo, when the fighting-people  
 vaunt,  
 We of the other craft and mystery,  
 May we not smile demure, the danger  
 past ?  
*Sec.* Sir, no, no, no,—the danger, and  
 your spirit  
 At watch and ward ? Where 's danger  
 on your part,  
 With that thin flitting instantaneous  
 steel  
 'Gainst the blind bull-front of a brute-  
 force world ?  
 If Luria, that 's to perish sure as fate,  
 Should have been really guiltless after  
 all ?  
*Brac.* Ah, you have thought that ?  
*Sec.* Here I sit, your scribe,  
 And in and out goes Luria, days and  
 nights ;

This Puccio comes ; the Moor his other  
 friend,  
 Husain ; they talk—all that 's feigned  
 easily ;  
 He speaks (I would not listen if I could),  
 Reads, orders, counsels :—but he rests  
 sometimes,—  
 I see him stand and eat, sleep stretched  
 an hour  
 On the lynxskins, yonder ; hold his  
 bared black arms  
 Into the sun from the tent-opening ;  
 laugh  
 When his horse drops the forage from  
 his teeth  
 And neighs to hear him hum his Moor-  
 ish songs.  
 That man believes in Florence, as the  
 saint  
 Tied to the wheel believes in God.  
*Brac.* How strange !  
 You too have thought that !  
*Sec.* Do but you think too,  
 And all is saved ! I only have to write,  
 " The man seemed false awhile, proves  
 true at last ;  
 " Bury it " . . . so I write the Sig-  
 nory . . .  
 " Bury this trial in your breast for  
 ever,  
 " Blot it from things or done or  
 dreamed about !  
 " So Luria shall receive his meed to-day  
 " With no suspicion what reverse was  
 near,—  
 " As if no meteoric finger hushed  
 " The doom-word just on the de-  
 stroyer's lip,  
 " Motioned him off, and let life's sun  
 fall straight."  
*Brac.* [looks to the wall of the tent.]  
 Did he draw that ?  
*Sec.* With charcoal, when the watch  
 Made the report at midnight ; Lady  
 Domizia  
 Spoke of the unfinished Duomo, you  
 remember ;  
 That is his fancy how a Moorish front  
 Might join to, and complete, the body,  
 —a sketch,—  
 And again where the cloak hangs, yon-  
 der in the shadow.  
*Brac.* He loves that woman.  
*Sec.* She is sent the spy  
 Of Florence,—spies on you as you on  
 him :  
 Florence, if only for Domizia's sake,

Is surely safe. What shall I write ?  
*Brac.* I see—  
 A Moorish front, nor of such ill design !  
 Lapo, there 's one thing plain and positive ;  
 Man seeks his own good at the whole world's cost.  
 What ? If to lead our troops, stand forth our chiefs,  
 And hold our fate, and see us at their beck,  
 Yet render up the charge when peace return,  
 Have ever proved too much for Florentines,  
 Even for the best and bravest of ourselves—  
 If in the struggle when the soldier's sword  
 Should sink its point before the statist's pen,  
 And the calm head replace the violent hand,  
 Virtue on virtue still have fallen away  
 Before ambition with unvarying fate,  
 Till Florence' self at last in bitterness  
 Be forced to own such falls the natural end,  
 And, sparing further to expose her sons  
 To a vain strife and profitless disgrace,  
 Declare, " The foreigner, one not my child,  
 " Shall henceforth lead my troops, reach height by height  
 " The glory, then descend into the shame ;  
 " So shall rebellion be less guilt in him,  
 " And punishment the easier task for me : "  
 —If on the best of us such brand she set,  
 Can I suppose an utter alien here,  
 This Luria, our inevitable foe,  
 Confessed a mercenary and a Moor,  
 Born free from many ties that bind the rest  
 Of common faith in Heaven or hope on earth,  
 No past with us, no future,—such a spirit  
 Shall hold the path from which our staunchest broke,  
 Stand firm where every famed precursor fell ?  
 My Lapo, I will frankly say, these proofs  
 So duly noted of the man's intent,  
 Are for the doting fools at home, not me.

The charges here, they may be true or false :  
 —What is set down ? Errors and oversights,  
 A dallying interchange of courtesies  
 With Pisa's General,—all that, hour by hour,  
 Puccio's pale discontent has furnished us,  
 Of petulant speeches, inconsiderate acts,  
 Now overhazard, overcaution now ;  
 Even that he loves this lady who believes  
 She outwits Florence, and whom Florence posted  
 By my procurement here, to spy on me,  
 Lest I one minute lose her from my sight—  
 She who remembering her whole House's fall,  
 That nest of traitors strangled in the birth,  
 Now labours to make Luria (poor device  
 As plain) the instrument of her revenge !  
 —That she is ever at his ear to prompt  
 Inordinate conceptions of his worth,  
 Exorbitant belief in its reward,  
 And after, when sure disappointment follows,  
 Proportionable rage at such a wrong—  
 Why, all these reasons, while I urge them most,  
 Weigh with me less than least ; as nothing weigh.  
 Upon that broad man's-heart of his, I go : [live  
 On what I know must be, yet while I  
 Shall never be, because I live and know.  
 Brute-force shall not rule Florence !  
 Intellect  
 May rule her, bad or good as chance supplies,—  
 But intellect it shall be, pure if bad,  
 And intellect's tradition so kept up !  
 Till the good come—'t was intellect that ruled,  
 Not brute-force bringing from the battle-field  
 The attributes of wisdom, foresight's graces  
 We lent it there to lure its grossness on ;  
 All which it took for earnest and kept safe  
 To show against us in our market-place,

Just as the plumes and tags and swords-  
man's-gear

(Fetched from the camp where, at their  
foolish best,

When all was done they frightened no-  
body)

Perk in our faces in the street, forsooth,  
With our own warrant and allowance.

No!

The whole procedure 's overcharged,—  
its end

In too strict keeping with the bad first  
step.

To conquer Pisa was sheer inspiration?  
Well then, to perish for a single fault,

Let that be simple justice!—There, my  
Lapo!

A Moorish front ill suits our Duomo's  
body:

Blot it out—and bid Luria's sentence  
come!

*Lur.* [who, with DOMIZIA, has  
entered unobserved at the close of  
the last phrase, now advancing.]

And Luria, Luria, what of Luria now?

*Brac.* Ah, you so close, sir? Lady  
Domizia too?

I said it needs must be a busy moment  
For one like you; that you were now 'i  
the thick

Of your duties, doubtless, while we  
idlers sat . . .

*Lur.* No—in that paper,—it was in  
that paper

What you were saying!

*Brac.* Oh—my day's dispatch!

I censure you to Florence: will you  
see?

*Lur.* See your dispatch, your last,  
for the first time?

Well, if I should, now? For in truth,  
Domizia,

He would be forced to set about an-  
other,

In his sly cool way, the true Florentine,  
To mention that important circum-  
stance.

So, while he wrote I should gain time,  
such time!

Do not send this!

*Brac.* And wherefore?

*Lur.* These Lucchese

Are not arrived—they never will arrive!  
And I must fight to-day, arrived or not;  
And I shall beat Tiburzio, that is sure:  
And then will be arriving his Lucchese,  
But slowly, oh so slowly, just in time,

To look upon my battle from the hills,  
Like a late moon, of use to nobody!

And I must break my battle up, send  
forth,

Surround on this side, hold in check on  
that.

Then comes to-morrow, we negotiate,  
You make me send for fresh instruc-  
tions home,

—Incompleteness, incompleteness!

*Brac.* Ah, we scribes!

Why, I had registered that very point,  
The non-appearance of our foes' ally,

As a most happy fortune; both at once  
Were formidable: singly faced, each  
falls.

*Lur.* So, no great battle for my Flor-  
entines!

No crowning deed, decisive and com-  
plete,

For all of them, the simple as the wise,  
Old, young, alike, that do not under-  
stand

Our wearisome pedantic art of war,  
By which we prove retreat may be suc-  
cess,

Delay—best speed,—half loss, at times,  
—whole gain!

They want results—as if it were their  
fault!

And you, with warmest wish to be my  
friend,

Will not be able now to simply say  
"Your servant has performed his task  
—enough!"

"You ordered, he has executed: good!  
"Now walk the streets in holiday attire,  
"Congratulate your friends, till noon  
strikes fierce,

"Then form bright groups beneath the  
Duomo's shade!"

No, you will have to argue and explain,  
Persuade them, all is not so ill in the  
end,

Tease, tire them out! Arrive, arrive,  
Lucchese!

*Dom.* Well, you will triumph for the  
past enough,

Whatever be the present chance; no  
service

Falls to the ground with Florence: she  
awaits

Her saviour, will receive him fittingly.

*Lur.* Ah Braccio, you know Florence!  
Will she, think you,

Receive one . . . what means "fit-  
tingly receive"?

—Receive compatriots, doubtless—I  
am none :  
And yet Domizia promises so much !  
*Brac.* Kind women still give men a  
woman's prize.  
I know not o'er which gate most boughs  
will arch,  
Nor if the Square will wave red flags or  
blue.  
I should have judged, the fullest of  
rewards  
Our State gave Luria, when she made  
him chief  
Of her whole force, in her best captain's  
place.  
*Lur.* That, my reward ? Florence  
on my account  
Relieved Ser Puccio ?—mark you, my  
reward !  
And Puccio's having all the fight's true  
joy—  
Goes here and there, gets close, may  
fight, himself,  
While I must order, stand aloof, o'ersee.  
That was my calling, there was my  
true place !  
I should have felt, in some one over me,  
Florence impersonate, my visible head,  
As I am over Puccio,—taking life  
Directly from her eye ! They give me  
you :  
But do you cross me, set me half to  
work ?  
I enjoy nothing—though I will, for  
once !  
Decide, shall we join battle ? may I  
wait ?  
*Brac.* Let us compound the matter ;  
wait till noon :  
Then, no arrival,—  
*Lur.* Ah, noon comes too fast !  
I wonder, do you guess why I delay  
Involuntarily the final blow  
As long as possible ? Peace follows it !  
Florence at peace, and the calm studi-  
ous heads  
Come out again, the penetrating eyes ;  
As if a spell broke, all resumed, each  
art  
You boast, more vivid that it slept  
awhile.  
'Gainst the glad heaven, o'er the white  
palace-front  
The interrupted scaffold climbs anew ;  
The walls are peopled by the painter's  
brush ;  
The statue to its niche ascends to dwell.

The present noise and trouble have re-  
tired  
And left the eternal past to rule once  
more ;—  
You speak its speech and read its  
records plain,  
Greece lives with you, each Roman  
breathes your friend :  
But Luria—where will then be Luria's  
place ?  
*Dom.* Highest in honour, for that  
past's own sake,  
Of which his actions, sealing up the sum  
By saving all that went before from  
wreck,  
Will range as part, with which be wor-  
shipped too.  
*Lur.* Then I may walk and watch  
you in your streets,  
Lead the smooth life my rough life  
helps no more,  
So different, so new, so beautiful—  
Nor fear that you will tire to see parade  
The club that slew the lion, now that  
crooks  
And shepherd-pipes come into use  
again ?  
For very lone and silent seems my East  
In its drear vastness : still it spreads,  
and still  
No Braccios, no Domizias anywhere—  
Not ever more !—Well, well, to-day is  
ours !  
*Dom.* [to BRAC.] Should he not have  
been one of us ?  
*Lur.* Oh, no !  
Not one of you, and so escape the thrill  
Of coming into you, of changing thus,—  
Feeling a soul grow on me that restricts  
The boundless unrest of the savage  
heart !  
The sea heaves up, hangs loaded o'er  
the land,  
Breaks there and buries its tumultuous  
strength ;  
Horror, and silence, and a pause awhile :  
Lo, inland glides the gulf-stream, miles  
away,  
In rapture of assent, subdued and still,  
'Neath those strange banks, those  
unimagined skies.  
Well, 't is not sure the quiet lasts for  
ever !  
Your placid heads still find rough hands  
new work ;  
Some minutes' chance—there comes  
the need of mine :

And, all resolved on, I too hear at last.  
Oh, you must find some use for me, Ser  
Braccio!

You hold my strength; 't were best  
dispose of it:

What you created, see that you find  
food for—

I shall be dangerous else!

*Brac.* How dangerous, sir?

*Lur.* There are so many ways, Domi-  
zia warns me,

And one with half the power that I  
possess,

Grows very formidable! Do you  
doubt?

Why, first, who holds the army . . .

*Dom.* While we talk,

Morn wears; we keep you from your  
proper place,

The field.

*Lur.* Nay, to the field I move no  
more;

My part is done, and Puccio's may  
begin:

I cannot trench upon his province  
longer

With any face.—You think yourselves  
so safe?

Why see—in concert with Tiburzio,  
now—

One could . . .

*Dom.* A trumpet!

*Lur.* My Lucchese at last!

Arrived, as sure as Florence stands!  
Your leave! [*Springs out.*]

*Dom.* How plainly is true greatness  
charactered

By such unconscious sport as Luria's  
here,

Strength sharing least the secret of  
itself!

Be it with head that schemes or hand  
that acts,

Such save the world which none but  
they could save,

Yet think what'er they did, that  
world could do.

*Brac.* Yes: and how worthy note,  
that these same great ones

In hand or head, with such uncon-  
sciousness

And all its due entailed humility,  
Should never shrink, so far as I per-  
ceive,

From taking up whatever tool there be  
Effects the whole world's safety or

mishap,

Into their mild hands as a thing of  
course!

The statist finds it natural to lead  
The mob who might as easily lead  
him—

The captain marshals troops born  
skilled in war—

Statist and captain verily believe!

While we poor scribes . . . you catch  
me thinking now,

That I shall in this very letter write  
What none of you are able! To it,  
Lapo!

[*DOMIZIA goes.*]

This last, worst, all-affected childish fit  
Of Luria's, this be-praised uncon-  
sciousness,

Convinces me; the past was no child's  
play:

It was a man beat Pisa,—not a child.  
All's mere dissimulation—to remove

The fear, he best knows we should  
entertain.

The utmost danger was at hand. Is 't  
written?

Now make a duplicate, lest this should  
fail,

And speak your fullest on the other  
side.

*Sec.* I noticed he was busily repairing  
My half-effacement of his Duomo  
sketch,

And, while he spoke of Florence, turned  
to it,

As the Mage Negro king to Christ the  
babe.—

I judge his childishness the mere re-  
lapse

To boyhood of a man who has worked  
lately,

And presently will work, so, meantime,  
plays:

Whence, more than ever I believe in  
him.

*Brac.* [*after a pause.*] The sword!

At best, the soldier, as he says,  
In Florence—the black face, the bar-  
barous name,

For Italy to boast her show of the age,  
Her man of men!—To Florence with  
each letter!

## ACT II

NOON

*Dom.* Well, Florence, shall I reach  
thee, pierce thy heart

Thro' all its safeguards? Hate is said  
to help—

Quicken the eye, invigorate the arm ;  
 And this my hate, made up of many  
     hates,  
 Might stand in scorn of visible instru-  
     ment,  
 And will thee dead : yet do I trust it  
     not.  
 Nor man's devices nor Heaven's mem-  
     ory  
 Of wickedness forgot on earth so soon,  
 But thy own nature,—hell and thee I  
     trust,  
 To keep thee constant in that wicked-  
     ness,  
 Where my revenge may meet thee.  
     Turn aside  
 A single step, for gratitude or shame,—  
 Grace but this Luria,—this wild mass  
     of rage  
 I have prepared to launch against thee  
     now,—  
 With other payment than thy noblest  
     found,—  
 Give his desert for once its due reward,—  
 And past thee would my sure destruc-  
     tion roll.  
 But thou, who mad'st our House thy  
     sacrifice,  
 It cannot be thou wilt except this Moor  
 From the accustomed fate of zeal and  
     truth :  
 Thou wilt deny his looked-for recom-  
     pense,  
 And then—I reach thee. Old and  
     trained, my sire  
 Could bow down on his quiet broken  
     heart,  
 Die awe-struck and submissive, when  
     at last  
 The strange blow came for the expected  
     wreath ;  
 And Porzio passed in blind bewilder-  
     ment  
 To exile, never to return,—they say,  
 Perplexed in his frank simple honest  
     soul,  
 As if some natural law had changed,—  
     how else  
 Could Florence, on plain fact pronounc-  
     ing thus,  
 Judge Porzio's actions worthy such  
     reward ?  
 But Berto, with the ever-passionate  
     pulse,  
 —Oh that long night, its dreadful hour  
     on hour,

In which no way of getting his fair fame  
 From their inexplicable charges free,  
 Was found, save pouring forth the  
     impatient blood  
 To show its colour whether false or no !  
 My brothers never had a friend like me  
 Close in their need to watch the time,  
     then speak,  
 —Burst with a wakening laughter on  
     their dream,  
 Cry, " Florence was all falseness, so,  
     false here ! "  
 And show them what a simple task re-  
     mained—  
 To leave dreams, rise, and punish in  
     God's name  
 The city wedded to the wickedness.  
 None stood by them as I by Luria  
     stand. [due  
 So, when the stranger cheated of his  
 Turns on thee as his rapid nature bids,  
 Then, Florence, think, a hireling at thy  
     throat  
 For the first outrage, think who bore  
     thy last,  
 Yet mutely in forlorn obedience died !  
 He comes—his friend—black faces in  
     the camp  
 Where moved those peerless brows and  
     eyes of old !

*Enter LURIA and HUSAIN.*

*Dom.* Well, and the movement—is it  
 as you hope ?

'T is Lucca ?

*Lur.* Ah, the Pisan trumpet merely !  
 Tiburzio's envoy, I must needs receive.

*Dom.* Whom I withdraw before ;  
 tho' if I lingered

You could not wonder, for my time  
 fleets fast.

The overtaking night brings such re-  
 ward !

And where will then be room for me ?  
 Yet, praised,

Remember who was first to promise  
 praise,

And envy those who also can perform !

[*Goes.*  
*Lur.* This trumpet from the  
 Pisans ?—

*Hus.* In the camp ;  
 A very noble presence—Braccio's vis-  
 age

On Puccio's body—calm and fixed and  
 good ;

A man I seem as I had seen before :  
Most like, it was some statue had the  
face.

*Lur.* Admit him! This will prove  
the last delay.

*Hus.* Ay, friend, go on, and die thou  
going on!

Thou heardst what the grave woman  
said but now :

To-night rewards thee. That is well to  
hear ;

But stop not therefore : hear it, and go  
on !

*Lur.* Oh, their reward and triumph  
and the rest

They round me in the ears with, all  
day long ?

All that, I never take for earnest,  
friend !

Well would it suit us,—their triumphal  
arch

Or storied pillar,—thee and me, the  
Moors !

But gratitude in those Italian eyes—  
That, we shall get ?

*Hus.* It is too cold an air.

Our sun rose out of yonder mound of  
mist :

Where is he now ? So, I trust none of  
them.

*Lur.* Truly ?

*Hus.* I doubt and fear. There  
stands a wall

\*Twixt our expansive and explosive  
race [men.

And those absorbing, concentrating  
They use thee.

*Lur.* And I feel it, Husain! yes,  
And care not—yes, an alien force like  
mine

Is only called to play its part outside

Their different nature ; where its sole  
use seems

To fight with and keep off an adverse  
force

As alien,—which repelled, mine too  
withdraws :

Inside, they know not what to do with  
me.

Thus I have told them laughingly and  
off,

But long since am prepared to learn  
the worst.

*Hus.* What is the worst ?

*Lur.* I will forestall them, Husain,  
Will speak the destiny they dare not  
speak—

Banish myself before they find the  
heart.

I will be first to say, "The work re-  
wards !

"I know, for all your praise, my use is  
over.

"So may it prove!—meanwhile 't is  
best I go,

"Go carry safe my memories of you all  
"To other scenes of action, newer  
lands."—

Thus leaving them confirmed in their  
belief

They would not easily have tired of me.  
You think this hard to say ?

*Hus.* Say or not say,  
So thou but go, so they but let thee go !

This hating people, that hate each  
the other,

And in one blandness to us Moors  
unite—

Locked each to each like slippery  
snakes, I say,

Which still in all their tangles, hissing  
tongue

And threatening tail, ne'er do each  
other harm ;

While any creature of a better blood,  
They seem to fight for, while they circle  
safe

And never touch it,—pines without a  
wound, [breath.

Withers away beside their eyes and  
See thou, if Puccio come not safely out  
Of Braccio's grasp, this Braccio sworn  
his foe,

As Braccio safely from Domizia's toils  
Who hates him most ! But thou, the  
friend of all,

.. Come out of them !

*Lur.* The Pisan trumpet now !  
*Hus.* Breathe free—it is an enemy,  
no friend ! [Goes.

*Lur.* He keeps his instincts, no new  
culture mars

Their perfect use in him ; just so the  
brutes

Rest not, are anxious without visible  
cause,

When change is in the elements at  
work,

Which man's trained senses fail to  
apprehend.

But here,—he takes the distant chariot-  
wheel

For thunder, festal flame for lightning's  
flash,

The finer traits of cultivated life  
For treachery and malevolence : I see !

*Enter* TIBURZIO.

*Lur.* Quick, sir, your message ! I  
but wait your message  
To sound the charge. You bring no  
overture

For truce ?—I would not, for your  
General's sake,  
You spoke of truce : a time to fight is  
come,

And, whatsoe'er the fight's event, he  
keeps

His honest soldier's name to beat me  
with,

Or leaves me all himself to beat, I  
trust !

*Tib.* I am Tiburzio.

*Lur.* You ? 'Tis—yes . . . Tiburzio !

You were the last to keep the ford i'  
the valley

From Puccio, when I threw in succours  
there !

Why, I was on the heights—through  
the defile

Ten minutes after, when the prey was  
lost !

You wore an open skull-cap with a  
twist

Of water-reeds—the plume being hewn  
away ;

While I drove down my battle from the  
heights,

I saw with my own eyes !

*Tib.* And you are Luria

Who sent my cohort, that laid down its  
arms

In error of the battle-signal's sense,  
Back safely to me at the critical time—

One of a hundred deeds. I know you !  
Therefore

To none but you could I . . .

*Lur.* No truce, Tiburzio !

*Tib.* Luria, you know the peril im-  
minent

On Pisa,—that you have us in the  
toils,

Us her last safeguard, all that inter-  
cepts

The rage of her implacablest of foes  
From Pisa,—if we fall to-day, she falls.

Tho' Lucca will arrive, yet, 't is too  
late.

You have so plainly here the best of it,  
That you must feel, brave soldier as  
you are,

How dangerous we grow in this ex-  
treme,

How truly formidable by despair.

Still, probabilities should have their  
weight :

The extreme chance is ours, but, that  
chance failing,

You win this battle. Wherefore say I  
this ?

To be well apprehended when I add,  
This danger absolutely comes from  
you.

Were you, who threaten thus, a Flor-  
entine . . .

*Lur.* Sir, I am nearer Florence than  
her sons.

I can, and have perhaps obliged the  
State,

Nor paid a mere son's duty.

*Tib.* Even so.

Were you the son of Florence, yet  
endued

With all your present nobleness of soul,  
No question, what I must communi-  
cate

Would not detach you from her.

*Lur.* Me, detach ?

*Tib.* Time urges. You will ruin  
presently

Pisa, you never knew, for Florence'  
sake

You think you know. I have from  
time to time

Made prize of certain secret missives  
sent

From Braccio here, the Commissary,  
home :

And knowing Florence otherwise, I  
piece

The entire chain out, from these its  
scattered links.

Your trial occupies the Signory ;

They sit in judgment on your conduct  
now.

When men at home inquire into the  
acts

Which in the field e'en foes appre-  
ciate . . .

Brief, they are Florentines ! You,  
saving them,

Seek but the sure destruction saviours  
find.

*Lur.* Tiburzio !

*Tib.* All the wonder is of course.

I am not here to teach you, nor direct,  
Only to loyally apprise—scarce that.

This is the latest letter, sealed and safe,

As it left here an hour ago. One way  
Of two thought free to Florence, I  
command.

The duplicate is on its road; but this,—  
Read it, and then I shall have more to  
say.

*Lur.* Florence!

*Tib.* Now, were yourself a Florentine,

This letter, let it hold the worst it can,  
Would be no reason you should fall  
away.

The mother city is the mother still,  
And recognition of the children's service,

Her own affair; reward—there 's no  
reward!

But you are bound by quite another tie.  
Nor nature shows, nor reason, why at  
first

A foreigner, born friend to all alike,  
Should give himself to any special  
State

More than another, stand by Florence'  
side

Rather than Pisa; 't is as fair a city  
You war against, as that you fight for  
—famed

As well as she in story, graced no less  
With noble heads and patriotic hearts:  
Nor to a stranger's eye would either  
cause,

Stripped of the cumulative loves and  
hates

Which take importance from familiar  
view,

Stand as the right and sole to be up-  
held.

Therefore, should the preponderating  
gift

Of love and trust, Florence was first to  
throw,

Which made you hers, not Pisa's, void  
the scale,—

Old ties dissolving, things resume their  
place

And all begins again. Break seal and  
read!

At least let Pisa offer for you now!  
And I, as a good Pisan, shall rejoice—

Though for myself I lose, in gaining  
you,

This last fight and its opportunity;  
The chance it brings of saving Pisa yet,

Or in the turn of battle dying so  
That shame should want its extreme  
bitterness.

*Lur.* Tiburzio, you that fight for  
Pisa now

As I for Florence . . . say my chance  
were yours!

You read this letter, and you find . . .  
no, no!

Too mad!

*Tib.* I read the letter, find they  
purpose

When I have crushed their foe, to crush  
me: well?

*Lur.* You, being their captain, what  
is it you do?

*Tib.* Why as it is, all cities are alike;  
As Florence pays you, Pisa will pay me.  
I shall be as belied, whate'er the event,  
As you, or more: my weak head, they  
will say,

Prompted this last expedient, my faint  
heart

Entailed on them indelible disgrace,  
Both which defects ask proper punish-  
ment.

Another tenure of obedience, mine!  
You are no son of Pisa's: break and  
read!

*Lur.* And act on what I read? What  
act were fit?

If the firm-fixed foundation of my faith  
In Florence, who to me stands for man-  
kind,

—If that break up and, disimprisoning  
From the abyss . . . Ah friend, it  
cannot be!

You may be very sage, yet—all the  
world

Having to fail, or your sagacity,  
You do not wish to find yourself alone!

What would the world be worth?  
Whose love be sure?

The world remains: you are deceived!  
*Tib.* Your hand!

I lead the vanguard.—If you fall, be-  
side,

The better: I am left to speak! For  
me,

This was my duty, nor would I rejoice  
If I could help, it misses its effect;

And after all you will look gallantly  
Found dead here with that letter in  
your breast.

*Lur.* Tiburzio—I would see these  
people once

And test them ere I answer finally!  
At your arrival let the trumpet sound:

If mine return not then the wonted cry  
It means that I believe—am Pisa's!

*Tib.* Well! [*Goes.*  
*Lur.* My heart will have it he speaks true! My blood  
 Beats close to this Tiburzio as a friend.  
 If he had stept into my watch-tent,  
 night  
 And the wild desert full of foes around,  
 I should have broke the bread and  
 given the salt  
 Secure, and, when my hour of watch  
 was done,  
 Taken my turn to sleep between his  
 knees,  
 Safe in the untroubled brow and honest  
 cheek.  
 Oh world, where all things pass and  
 nought abides,  
 Oh life, the long mutation—is it so?  
 Is it with life as with the body's change?  
 —Where, e'en tho' better follow, good  
 must pass,  
 Nor manhood's strength can mate with  
 boyhood's grace,  
 Nor age's wisdom, in its turn, find  
 strength,  
 But silently the first gift dies away,  
 And though the new stays, never both  
 at once.  
 Life's time of savage instinct o'er with  
 me,  
 It fades and dies away, past trusting  
 more,  
 As if to punish the ingratitude  
 With which I turned to grow in these  
 new lights,  
 And learned to look with European  
 eyes.  
 Yet it is better, this cold certain way,  
 Where Braccio's brow tells nothing,  
 Puccio's mouth,  
 Domizia's eyes reject the searcher:  
 yes!  
 For on their calm sagacity I lean,  
 Their sense of right, deliberate choice of  
 good,  
 Sure, as they know my deeds, they deal  
 with me.  
 Yes, that is better—that is best of all!  
 Such faith stays when mere wild belief  
 would go.  
 Yes—when the desert creature's heart,  
 at fault  
 Amid the scattering tempest's pillared  
 sands,  
 Betrays its step into the pathless drift—  
 The calm instructed eye of man holds  
 fast

By the sole bearing of the visible star,  
 Sure that when slow the whirling  
 wreck subside,  
 The boundaries, lost now, shall be  
 found again,—  
 The palm-trees and the pyramid over  
 all.

Yes: I trust Florence: Pisa is de-  
 ceived.

*Enter BRACCIO, PUCCIO, and DOMIZIA.*

*Brac.* Noon's at an end: no Lucca?  
 You must fight.

*Lur.* Do you remember ever, gentle  
 friends,  
 I am no Florentine?

*Dom.* It is yourself  
 Who still are forcing us, importunately,  
 To bear in mind what else we should  
 forget.

*Lur.* For loss!—for what I lose in  
 being none!  
 No shrewd man, such as you yourselves  
 respect,  
 But would remind you of the stranger's  
 loss  
 In natural friends and advocates at  
 home,

Hereditary loves, even rivalships  
 With precedent for honour and reward.  
 Still, there's a gain, too! If you take  
 it so,

The stranger's lot has special gain as  
 well.

Do you forget there was my own far  
 East

[once,  
 I might have given away myself to,  
 As now to Florence, and for such a gift,  
 Stood there like a descended deity?

There, worship waits us: what is it  
 waits here? [*Shows the letter.*  
 See! Chance has put into my hand  
 the means

Of knowing what I earn, before I work.  
 Should I fight better, should I fight the  
 worse,

With payment palpably before me?  
 See!

Here lies my whole reward! Best  
 learn it now

Or keep it for the end's entire delight?

*Brac.* If you serve Florence as the  
 vulgar serve,

For swordsman's-pay alone,—break  
 seal and read!

In that case, you will find your full  
 desert.

*Lur.* Give me my one last happy moment, friends!  
 You need me now, and all the graciousness  
 This letter can contain will hardly balance  
 The after feeling that you need no more.  
 This moment . . . oh, the East has use with you!  
 Its sword still flashes—is not flung aside  
 With the past praise, in a dark corner yet!  
 How say you? 'T is not so with Florentines—  
 Captains of yours—for them, the ended war  
 Is but a first step to the peace begun:  
 He who did well in war, just earns the right  
 To begin doing well in peace, you know:  
 And certain my precursors,—would not such  
 Look to themselves in such a chance as mine,  
 Secure the ground they trod upon, per-  
 For I have heard, by fits, or seemed to hear,  
 Of strange mishap, mistake, ingratitude,  
 Treachery even. Say that one of you  
 Surmised this letter carried what might turn  
 To harm hereafter, cause him prejudice:  
 What would he do?  
*Dom.* [*hastily.*] Thank God and take revenge!  
 Hurl her own force against the city straight!  
 And, even at the moment when the foe  
 Sounded defiance . . .  
 [TIBURZIO'S trumpet sounds in the distance.]  
*Lur.* Ah, you Florentines!  
 So would you do? Wisely for you, no doubt!  
 My simple Moorish instinct bids me clench  
 The obligation you relieve me from,  
 Still deeper! [*To Puc.*] Sound our answer, I should say,  
 And thus;—[*tearing the paper.*]—The battle! That solves every doubt.

## ACT III

AFTERNOON

PUCCIO, as making a report to JACOPO.

*Puc.* And here, your captain must report the rest;  
 For, as I say, the main engagement over  
 And Luria's special part in it performed,  
 How could subaltern like myself expect  
 Leisure or leave to occupy the field  
 And glean what dropped from his wide harvesting?  
 I thought, when Lucca at the battle's end  
 Came up, just as the Pisan centre broke,  
 That Luria would detach me and pre-  
 The flying Pisans seeking what they found,  
 Friends in the rear, a point to rally by.  
 But no, more honourable proved my post!  
 I had the august captive to escort  
 Safe to our camp; some other could pursue,  
 Fight, and be famous; gentler chance was mine—  
 Tiburzio's wounded spirit must be soothed!  
 He 's in the tent there.

*Jac.* Is the substance down?  
 I write—"The vanguard beaten and both wings  
 "In full retreat, Tiburzio prisoner"—  
 And now,—"That they fell back and formed again  
 "On Lucca's coming." Why then, after all,  
 'T is half a victory, no conclusive one?  
*Puc.* Two operations where a sole had served.

*Jac.* And Luria's fault was—?  
*Puc.* Oh, for fault—not much!  
 He led the attack, a thought impetuously,  
 —There 's commonly more prudence; now, he seemed  
 To hurry measures, otherwise well-judged.  
 By over-concentrating strength at first  
 Against the enemy's van, both wings escaped:  
 That 's reparable, yet it is a fault.

Enter BRACCIO.

*Jac.* As good as a full victory to Florence,  
 With the advantage of a fault beside—  
 What is it, Puccio?—that by pressing forward

With too impetuous . . .

*Brac.* The report anon!  
Thanks, sir—you have elsewhere a  
charge, I know. [*Puccio goes.*  
There 's nothing done but I would do  
again.]

Yet, Lapo, it may be the past proves  
nothing,

And Luria has kept faithful to the close.

*Jac.* I was for waiting.

*Brac.* Yes: so was not I.  
He could not choose but tear that letter  
—true!

Still, certain of his tones, I mind, and  
looks:

You saw, too, with a fresher soul than I.  
So, Porzio seemed an injured man,  
they say!

Well, I have gone upon the broad, sure  
ground.

Enter LURIA, PUCCIO, and DOMIZIA.

*Lur.* [*to Puc.*] Say, at his pleasure I  
will see Tiburzio!

All 's at his pleasure.

*Dom.* [*to LUR.*] Were not fore-  
warned

You would reject, as you do constantly,  
Praise,—I might tell you how you have  
deserved

Of Florence by this last and crowning  
feat:

But words offend.

*Lur.* Nay, you may praise me now.  
I want instruction every hour, I find,  
On points where once I saw least need  
of it;

And praise, I have been used to slight  
perhaps,

Seems scarce so easily dispensed with  
now.

After a battle half one's strength is  
gone;

The glorious passion in us once ap-  
peased,

Our reason's calm cold dreadful voice  
begins.

All justice, power and beauty scarce  
appear

Monopolized by Florence, as of late,  
To me, the stranger: you, no doubt,  
may know

Why Pisa needs must bear her rival's  
yoke.

And peradventure I grow nearer you.  
For I, too, want to know and be as-  
sured.

When a cause ceases to reward itself,  
Its friend seeks fresh sustainments;  
praise is one,

And here stand you—you, lady, praise  
me well.

But yours—(your pardon)—is un-  
learned praise.

To the motive, the endeavour, the  
heart's self,

Your quick sense looks: you crown  
and call aright

The soul of the purpose, ere 't is shaped  
as act,

Takes flesh 'i' the world, and clothes it-  
self a king.

But when the act comes, stands for  
what 't is worth,

—Here 's Puccio, the skilled soldier,  
he 's my judge!

Was all well, Puccio?

*Puc.* All was . . . must be well:  
If we beat Lucca presently, as doubt-  
less . . .

—No, there 's no doubt, we must—all  
was well done.

*Lur.* In truth? Still, you are of the  
trade, my Puccio!

You have the fellow-craftsman's sym-  
pathy.

There 's none cares, like a fellow of the  
craft,

For the all-unestimated sum of pains  
That go to a success the world can see:

They praise then, but the best they  
never know

—While you know! So, if envy mix  
with it,

Hate even, still the bottom-praise of  
all,

Whatever be the dregs, that drop 's  
pure gold!

—For nothing 's like it; nothing else  
records

Those daily, nightly drippings in the  
dark

Of the heart's blood, the world lets  
drop away

For ever—so, pure gold that praise  
must be!

And I have yours, my soldier! yet  
the best

Is still to come. There 's one looks on  
apart

Whom all refers to, failure or success;  
What 's done might be our best, our  
utmost work,

And yet inadequate to serve his need.  
Here 's Braccio now, for Florence—  
here 's our service—

Well done for us, seems it well done for  
him ?

His chosen engine, tasked to its full  
strength

Answers the end ? Should he have  
chosen higher ?

Do we help Florence, now our best is  
wrought ?

*Brac.* This battle, with the foregone  
services,

Saves Florence.

*Lur.* Why then, all is very well !  
Here am I in the middle of my friends,  
Who know me and who love me, one  
and all !

And yet . . . 't is like . . . this instant  
while I speak

Is like the turning-moment of a dream

When . . . Ah, you are not foreigners

like me !

Well then, one always dreams of friends  
at home ;

And always comes, I say, the turning-  
point

When something changes in the friendly  
eyes

That love and look on you . . . so  
slight, so slight . . .

And yet it tells you they are dead and  
gone,

Or changed and enemies, for all their  
words,

And all is mockery and a maddening  
show.

You now, so kind here, all you Floren-  
tines,

What is it in your eyes . . . those lips,  
those brows . . .

Nobody spoke it, yet I know it well !—  
Come now—this battle saves you, all 's  
at end,

Your use of me is o'er, for good, for ill,—  
Come now, what 's done against me,  
while I speak,

In Florence ? Come ! I feel it in my  
blood,

My eyes, my hair, a voice is in my ears  
That spite of all this smiling and soft  
speech

You are betraying me ! What is it  
you do ?

Have it your way, and think my use is  
over—

Think you are saved and may throw off  
the mask—

Have it my way, and think more work  
remains

Which I could do,—so, show you fear  
me not !

Or prudent be, or daring, as you choose,  
But tell me—tell what I refused to  
know

At noon, lest heart should fail me !  
Well ? That letter ?

My fate is sealed at Florence ! What is  
it ?

*Brac.* Sir, I shall not deny what you  
divine.

It is no novelty for innocence  
To be suspected, but a privilege :

The after certain compensation comes,  
Charges, I say not whether false or true,  
Have been preferred against you some  
time since,

Which Florence was bound, plainly, to  
receive,

And which are therefore undergoing  
now

The due investigation. That is all.  
I doubt not but your innocence will  
prove

Apparent and illustrious, as to me,  
To them this evening, when the trial  
ends.

*Lur.* My trial ?

*Dom.* Florence, Florence to the end,  
My whole heart thanks thee !

*Puc.* [to BRAC.] What is " trial,"  
sir ?

It was not for a trial—surely, no—  
I furnished you those notes from time  
to time ?

I held myself aggrieved—I am a man—  
And I might speak,—ay, and speak  
mere truth, too,

And yet not mean at bottom of my  
heart

What should assist a—trial, do you  
say ?

You should have told me !

*Dom.* Nay, go on, go on !  
His sentence ! Do they sentence him ?

What is it ?

The block—wheel ?

*Brac.* Sentence there is none as yet,  
Nor shall I give my own opinion now  
Of what it should be, or is like to be.

When it is passed, applaud or disap-  
prove !

Up to that point, what is there to impugn ?

*Lur.* They are right, then, to try me?  
*Brac.* I assert,

Maintain and justify the absolute right  
Of Florence to do all she can have done  
In this procedure,—standing on her  
guard,

Receiving even services like yours  
With utmost fit suspicious wariness.

In other matters, keep the mummery  
up!

Take all the experiences of all the  
world,

Each knowledge that broke through a  
heart to life,

Each reasoning which, to reach, burnt  
out a brain,

—In other cases, know these, warrant  
these,

And then dispense with these—'t is  
very well!

Let friend trust friend, and love de-  
mand love's like,

And gratitude be claimed for benefits,—  
There 's grace in that,—and when the  
fresh heart breaks,

The new brain proves a ruin, what of  
them ?

Where is the matter of one moth the  
more

Singed in the candle, at a summer's  
end ?

But Florence is no simple John or  
James

To have his toy, his fancy, his conceit  
That he 's the one excepted man by  
fate,

And, when fate shows him he 's mis-  
taken there,

Die with all good men's praise, and  
yield his place

To Paul and George intent to try their  
chance!

Florence exists because these pass  
away.

She 's a contrivance to supply a type  
Of man, which men's deficiencies re-  
fuse ;

She binds so many, that she grows out  
of them—

Stands steady o'er their numbers,  
though they change

And pass away—there 's always what  
upholds,

Always enough to fashion the great  
show.

As see, yon hanging city, in the sun,  
Of shapely cloud substantially the  
same!

A thousand vapours rise and sink  
again,

Are interfused, and live their life and  
die,—

Yet ever hangs the steady show i' the  
air,

Under the sun's straight influence :  
that is well,

That is worth heaven to hold, and God  
to bless!

And so is Florence,—the unseen sun  
above,

Which draws and holds suspended all  
of us,

Binds transient vapours into a single  
cloud

Differing from each and better than  
they all.

And shall she dare to stake this per-  
manence

On any one man's faith? Man's  
heart is weak,

And its temptations many: let her  
prove

Each servant to the very uttermost  
Before she grant him her reward, I say!

*Dom.* And as for hearts she chances  
to mistake,

Wronged hearts, not destined to re-  
ceive reward,

Though they deserve it, did she only  
know!

—What should she do for these ?  
*Brac.* What does she not ?

Say, that she gives them but herself to  
serve!

Here 's Luria—what had profited his  
strength,

When half an hour of sober fancying  
Had shown him step by step the use-  
lessness

Of strength exerted for strength's  
proper sake ?

But the truth is, she did create that  
strength,

Draw to the end the corresponding  
means.

The world is wide—are we the only  
men ?

Oh, for the time, the social purpose'  
sake,

Use words agreed on, bandy epithets,  
Call any man the sole great wise and  
good!

- But shall we therefore, standing by  
ourselves,  
Insult our souls and God with the same  
speech ?  
There, swarm the ignoble thousands  
under him :  
What marks us from the hundreds and  
the tens ?  
Florence took up, turned all one way  
the soul  
Of Luria with its fires, and here he  
glows !  
She takes me out of all the world as him,  
Fixing my coldness till like ice it checks  
The fire ! So, Braccio, Luria, which is  
best ?  
*Lur.* Ah, brave me ? And is this  
indeed the way  
To gain your good word and sincere  
esteem ?  
Am I the baited animal that must turn  
And fight his baiters to deserve their  
praise ?  
Obedience is mistake then ? Be it so !  
Do you indeed remember I stand here  
The captain of the conquering army,—  
mine—  
With all your tokens, praise and  
promise, ready  
To show for what their names meant  
when you gave,  
Not what you style them now you take  
away ?  
If I call in my troops to arbitrate,  
And dash the first enthusiastic thrill  
Of victory with this you menace now—  
Commend to the instinctive popular  
sense, [ward,—  
My story first, your comment after—  
Will they take, think you, part with  
you or me ?  
If I say, I, the labourer they saw work,  
Ending my work, ask pay, and find my  
lords  
Have all this while provided silently  
Against the day of pay and proving  
faith,  
By what you call my sentence that 's  
to come—  
Will friends advise I wait complacently ?  
If I meet Florence half way at their  
head,  
What will you do, my mild antagonist ?  
*Brac.* I will rise up like fire, proud  
and triumphant  
That Florence knew you thoroughly  
and by me,
- And so was saved. " See, Italy," I'll  
say,  
" The crown of our precautions ! Here's  
a man  
" Was far advanced, just touched on  
the belief  
" Less subtle cities had accorded long ;  
" But we were wiser : at the end comes  
this ! "  
And from that minute, where is Luria ?  
Lost !  
The very stones of Florence cry against  
The all-exacting, nought-enduring fool,  
Who thus resents her first probation,  
flouts  
As if he, only, shone and cast no shade,  
He, only, walked the earth with privi-  
lege  
Against suspicion, free where angels  
fear :  
He, for the first inquisitive mother's-  
word,  
Must turn, and stand on his defence,  
forsooth !  
Reward ? You will not be worth pun-  
ishment !  
*Lur.* And Florence knew me thus !  
Thus I have lived,—  
And thus you, with the clear fine intel-  
lect,  
Braccio, the cold acute instructed mind,  
Out of the stir, so calm and unconfused,  
Reported me—how could you other-  
wise !  
Ay ?—and what dropped from you,  
just now, moreover ?  
Your information, Puccio ?—Did your  
skill,  
Your understanding sympathy ap-  
prove  
Such a report of me ? Was this the  
end ?  
Or is even this the end ? Can I stop  
here ?  
You, lady, with the woman's stand  
apart,  
The heart to see with, past man's brain  
and eyes,  
. . . I cannot fathom why you should  
destroy  
The unoffending one, you call your  
friend—  
Still, lessoned by the good examples  
here  
Of friendship, 't is but natural I ask—  
Had you a further aim, in aught you  
urged,

Than your friend's profit—in all those instances

Of perfidy, all Florence wrought of wrong—

All I remember now for the first time ?

*Dom.* I am a daughter of the Traversari,

Sister of Porzio and of Berto both :

So, have foreseen all that has come to pass.

I knew the Florence that could doubt their faith,

Must needs mistrust a stranger's—dealing them

Punishment, would deny him his reward.

And I believed, the shame they bore and died,

He would not bear, but live and fight against—

Seeing he was of other stuff than they.

*Lur.* Hear them ! All these against one foreigner !

And all this while, where is in the whole world

To his good faith a single witness ?

*Tiburzio.* [*who has entered unseen during the preceding dialogue.*]

Here !

Thus I bear witness, not in word but deed.

I live for Pisa ; she's not lost to-day  
By many chances—much prevents from that !

Her army has been beaten, I am here,  
But Lucca comes at last, one happy chance !

I rather would see Pisa three times lost  
Than saved by any traitor, even by you ;

The example of a traitor's happy fortune  
Would bring more evil in the end than good ;—

Pisa rejects the traitor, craves yourself !  
I, in her name, resign forthwith to you  
My charge,—the highest office, sword  
and shield !

You shall not, by my counsel, turn on  
Florence

Your army, give her calumny that  
ground—

Nor bring one soldier : be you all we  
gain !

And all she 'll lose,—a head to deck  
some bridge,

And save the cost o' the crown should  
deck the head.

Leave her to perish in her perfidy,  
Plague-stricken and stripped naked to  
all eyes,

A proverb and a bye-word in all mouths !

Go you to Pisa ! Florence is my place—

Leave me to tell her of the rectitude,  
I, from the first, told Pisa, knowing it.

To Pisa !

*Dom.* Ah my Braccio, are you  
caught ?

*Brac.* Puccio, good soldier and good  
citizen

Whom I have ever kept beneath my  
eye,

Ready as fit, to serve in this event

Florence, who clear foretold it from the  
first—

Through me, she gives you the com-  
mand and charge

She takes, through me, from him who  
held it late !

A painful trial, very sore, was yours :

All that could draw out, marshal in  
array [good—

The selfish passions 'gainst the public  
Sights, scorns, neglects, were heaped  
on you to bear :

And ever you did bear and bow the  
head !

It had been sorry trial, to precede

Your feet, hold up the promise of reward

For luring gleam ; your footsteps  
kept the track

Thro' dark and doubt : take all the  
light at once !

Trial is over, consummation shines ;

Well have you served, as well hence-  
forth command !

*Puc.* No, no . . I dare not ! I  
am grateful, glad ;

But Luria—you shall understand he's  
wronged—

And he's my captain—this is not the  
way

We soldiers climb to fortune : think  
again !

The sentence is not even passed, be-  
side !

I dare not . . where 's the soldier  
could ?

*Lur.* Now, Florence—  
Is it to be ?—You will know all the  
strength

Of the savage—to your neck the proof  
must go ?

You will prove the brute nature ? Ah,  
I see !

The savage plainly is impassible—  
 He keeps his calm way through insulting words,  
 Sarcastic looks, sharp gestures—one of which  
 Would stop you, fatal to your finer sense.  
 But if he stolidly advance, march mute  
 Without a mark upon his callous hide,  
 Through the mere brushwood you grow angry with,  
 And leave the tatters of your flesh upon,  
 —You have to learn that when the true bar comes,  
 The murk mid-forest, the grand obstacle,  
 Which when you reach, you give the labour up,  
 Nor dash on, but lie down composed before,  
 —He goes against it, like the brute he is:  
 It falls before him, or he dies in his course.  
 I kept my course through past ingratitude:  
 I saw—it does seem, now, as if I saw,  
 Could not but see, those insults as they fell,  
 —Ay, let them glance from off me, very like,  
 Laughing, perhaps, to think the quality  
 You grew so bold on, while you so despised  
 The Moor's dull mute inapprehensive mood,  
 Was saving you: I bore and kept my course. [cumb!]  
 Now real wrong fronts me: see if I succumb!  
 Florence withstands me?—I will punish her.

At night my sentence will arrive, you say.  
 Till then I cannot, if I would, rebel  
 —Unauthorized to lay my office down,  
 Retaining my full power to will and do:  
 After—it is to see. Tiburzio, thanks!  
 Go; you are free: join Lucca! I suspend  
 All further operations till to-night.  
 Thank you, and for the silence most of all!

[To BRAC.] Let my complacent bland accuser go,  
 Carry his self-approving head and heart

Safe through the army which would trample him  
 Dead in a moment at my word or sign!  
 Go, sir, to Florence; tell friends what I say—  
 That while I wait my sentence, theirs waits them!  
 [To DOM.] You, lady,—you have black Italian eyes!  
 I would be generous if I might . . . oh, yes—  
 For I remember how so oft you seemed  
 Inclined at heart to break the barrier down  
 Which Florence finds God built between us both.  
 Alas, for generosity! this hour  
 Asks retribution: bear it as you may,  
 I must—the Moor—the savage,—pardon you!  
 Puccio, my trusty soldier, see them forth!

## ACT IV

## EVENING

*Enter PUCCIO and JACOPO*

*Puc.* What Luria will do? Ah, 'tis yours, fair sir,  
 You and your subtle-witted master's part,  
 To tell me that; I tell you what he can.  
*Jac.* Friend, you mistake my station:  
 I observe  
 The game, watch how my betters play,  
 no more.

*Puc.* But mankind are not pieces—  
 there's your fault!  
 You cannot push them, and, the first move made,  
 Lean back and study what the next shall be,  
 In confidence that, when 't is fixed upon,  
 You find just where you left them, blacks and whites:  
 Men go on moving when your hand's away.  
 You build, I notice, firm on Luria's faith  
 This whole time,—firmlier than I choose to build,  
 Who never doubted it—of old, that is—  
 With Luria in his ordinary mind.  
 But now, oppression makes the wise man mad:  
 How do I know he will not turn and stand

And hold his own against you, as he may?

Suppose he but withdraw to Pisa—well,—

Then, even if all happen to your wish, Which is a chance . . .

*Jac.* Nay—'t was an oversight, Not waiting till the proper warrant came:

You could not take what was not ours to give.

But when at night the sentence really comes,

Our city authorizes past dispute Luria's removal and transfers the charge,

You will perceive your duty and accept?

*Puc.* Accept what? muster-rolls of soldiers' names?

An army upon paper?—I want men, The hearts as well as hands—and where 's a heart

But beats with Luria, in the multitude I come from walking through by Luria's side?

You gave them Luria, set him thus to grow, Head-like, upon their trunk; one heart feeds both,

They feel him there, live twice, and well know why. [*ant.*]

—For they do know, if you are ignorant, Who kept his own place and respected theirs.

Managed their sweat, yet never spared his blood.

All was your act: another might have served—

There 's peradventure no such dearth of heads—

But you choose Luria—so, they grew one flesh.

And now, for nothing they can understand,

Luria removed, off is to roll the head; The body 's mine—much I shall do with it!

*Jac.* That 's at the worst.

*Puc.* —No, at the best, it is! Best, do you hear? I saw them by his side.

Only we two with Luria in the camp Are left that keep the secret? You think that?

Hear what I know: from rear to van, no heart

But felt the quiet patient hero there Was wronged, nor in the moveless ranks an eye

But glancing told its fellow the whole story

Of that convicted silent knot of spies Who passed thro' them to Florence; they might pass—

No breast but gladlier beat when free of such!

Our troops will catch up Luria, close him round,

Bear him to Florence as their natural lord,

Partake his fortune, live or die with him.

*Jac.* And by mistake catch up along with him

Puccio, no doubt, compelled in self-despite

To still continue second in command!

*Puc.* No, sir, no second nor so fortunate!

Your tricks succeed with me too well for that!

I am as you have made me, live and die To serve your end; a mere trained fighting-hack

With words, you laugh at while they leave your mouth,

For my life's rule and ordinance of God! I have to do my duty, keep my faith,

And earn my praise, and guard against my blame,

As I was trained. I shall accept your charge,

And fight against one better than myself,

Spite of my heart's conviction of his worth.

That, you may count on!—just as hitherto

I have gone on, persuaded I was wronged,

Slighted, insulted, terms we learn by rote,—

All because Luria superseded me— Because the better nature, fresh-inspired,

Mounted above me to its proper place! What mattered all the kindly gracious-

ness,

The cordial brother's-bearing? This was clear—

I, once the captain, was subaltern now,

And so must keep complaining like a fool!

Go, take the curse of a lost soul, I say !  
You neither play your puppets to the  
end,

Nor treat the real man,—for his real-  
ness' sake

Thrust rudely in their place,—with  
such regard

As might console them for their altered  
rank.

Me, the mere steady soldier, you depose  
For Luria, and here 's all your pet  
deserves !

Of what account, then, is your laugh-  
ing-stock ?

One word for all : whatever Luria does,  
—If backed by his indignant troops he  
turn,

Revenge himself, and Florence go to  
ground,—

Or, for a signal everlasting shame,  
He pardon you, simply seek better  
friends,

Side with the Pisans and Lucchese for  
change

—And if I, pledged to ingrates past be-  
lief,

Dare fight against a man such fools call  
false,

Who, inasmuch as he was true, fights  
me,—

Whichever way we win, he wins for  
worth,

For every soldier, for all true and good !  
Sir, chronicling the rest, omit not this !

As they go, enter LURIA and HUSAIN.

Hus. Saw'st thou ?—For they are  
gone ! The world lies bare

Before thee, to be tasted, felt and seen  
Like what it is, now Florence goes  
away !

Thou livest now, with men art man  
again !

Those Florentines were all to thee of  
old ;

But Braccio, but Domizia, gone is each,  
There lie beneath thee thine own multi-  
tudes !

Saw'st thou ?

Lur. I saw.

Hus. Then, hold thy course,  
my king !

The years return. Let thy heart have  
its way !

Ah, they would play with thee as with  
all else,

Turn thee to use, and fashion thee anew,  
B.P.

Find out God's fault in thee as in the  
rest ?

Oh watch, but listen only to these fiends  
Once at their occupation ! Ere ye  
know,

The free great heaven is shut, their  
stifling pall

Drops till it frets the very tingling hair,  
So weighs it on our head,—and, for the  
earth,

Our common earth is tethered up and  
down,

Over and across—" here shalt thou  
move," they cry !

Lur. Ay, Husain ?

Hus. So have they spoiled all be-  
side !

So stands a man girt round with Flor-  
entines,

Priests, greybeards, Braccios, women,  
boys and spies,

All in one tale, all singing the same  
song,

How thou must house, and live at bed  
and board, [way,

Take pledge and give it, go their every  
Breathe to their measure, make thy  
blood beat time

With theirs—or, all is nothing—thou  
art lost—

A savage, how shouldst thou perceive  
as they ?

Feel glad to stand 'neath God's close  
naked hand !

Look up to it ! Why down they pull  
thy neck,

Lest it crush thee, who feel'st it and  
wouldst kiss,

Without their priests that needs must  
glove it first,

Lest peradventure flesh offend thy lip.  
Love woman ! Why, a very beast  
thou art !

Thou must . . .

Lur. Peace, Husain !

Hus. Ay but, spoiling all,  
For all, else true things, substituting  
false,

That they should dare spoil, of all in-  
stincts, thine !

Should dare to take thee with thine in-  
stincts up,

Thy battle-ardours, like a ball of fire,  
And class them and allow them place  
and play

So far, no farther—unabashed the  
while !

Thou with the soul that never can take  
rest—

Thou born to do, undo, and do again,  
And never to be still,—wouldst thou  
make war?

Oh, that is commendable, just and  
right!

"Come over," say they, "have the  
honour due

"In living out thy nature! Fight thy  
best:

"It is to be for Florence, not thyself!

"For thee, it were a horror and a  
plague;

"For us, when war is made for Flor-  
ence, see,

"How all is changed: the fire that fed  
on earth

"Now towers to heaven!"—

*Lur.* And what sealed up so long  
My Husain's mouth?

*Hus.* Oh friend, oh lord—for me,  
What am I?—I was silent at thy side,  
Who am a part of thee. It is thy hand,  
Thy foot that glows when in the heart  
fresh blood

Boils up, thou heart of me! Now, live  
again!

Again love as thou likest, hate as free!  
Turn to no Braccios nor Domizias now,  
To ask, before thy very limbs dare  
move,

If Florence' welfare be concerned  
thereby!

*Lur.* So clear what Florence must  
expect of me?

*Hus.* Both armies against Florence!  
Take revenge!

Wide, deep—to live upon, in feeling  
now,—

And, after live, in memory, year by  
year—

And, with the dear conviction, die at  
last!

She lies now at thy pleasure: pleasure  
have!

Their vaunted intellect that gilds our  
sense,

And blends with life, to show it better  
by,

—How think'st thou?—I have turned  
that light on them!

They called our thirst of war a transient  
thing;

"The battle-element must pass away  
"From life," they said, "and leave a  
tranquil world."

—Master, I took their light and turned  
it full

On that dull turgid vein they said  
would burst

And pass away; and as I looked on  
life,

Still everywhere I tracked this, though  
it hid

And shifted, lay so silent as it thought,  
Changed shape and hue yet ever was

the same. [life!

Why, 't was all fighting, all their nobler  
All work was fighting, every harm—  
defeat,

And every joy obtained—a victory!  
Be not their dupe!

—Their dupe? That hour is past!  
Here stand'st thou in the glory and the  
calm!

All is determined! Silence for me  
now! [HUSAIN goes.

*Lur.* Have I heard all?

*Dom.* [advancing from the back-  
ground.] No, Luria, I remain!

Not from the motives these have urged  
on thee,

Ignoble, insufficient, incomplete,  
And pregnant each with sure seeds of  
decay,

As failing of sustainment from thyself,  
—Neither from low revenge, nor sel-  
fishness,

Nor savage lust of power, nor one, nor  
all,

Shalt thou abolish Florence! I pro-  
claim

The angel in thee, and reject the sprites  
Which ineffectual crowd about his  
strength,

And mingle with his work and claim a  
share!

Inconsciously to the augustest end  
Thou hast arisen: second not in rank

So much as time, to him who first or-  
dained

That Florence, thou art to destroy,  
should be.

Yet him a star, too, guided, who broke  
first

The pride of lonely power, the life  
apart,

And made the eminences, each to each,  
Lean o'er the level world and let it lie

Safe from the thunder henceforth  
'neath their tops;

So the few famous men of old com-  
bined,

And let the multitude rise underneath,  
 And reach them and unite—so Florence  
 grew :  
 Braccio speaks true, it was well worth  
 the price.  
 But when the sheltered many grew in  
 pride  
 And grudged the station of the elected  
 ones,  
 Who, greater than their kind, are truly  
 great  
 Only in voluntary servitude—  
 Time was for thee to rise, and thou art  
 here.  
 Such plague possessed this Florence :  
 who can tell  
 The mighty girth and greatness at the  
 heart  
 Of those so perfect pillars of the grove  
 She pulled down in her envy ? Who  
 as I,  
 The light weak parasite born but to  
 twine  
 Round each of them and, measuring  
 them, live ?  
 My light love keeps the matchless circle  
 safe,  
 My slender life proves what has passed  
 away.  
 I lived when they departed ; lived to  
 cling  
 To thee, the mighty stranger ; thou  
 wouldst rise  
 And burst the thralldom, and avenge, I  
 knew.  
 I have done nothing ; all was thy  
 strong bole.  
 But a bird's weight can break the infant  
 tree  
 Which after holds an aery in its arms,  
 And 't was my care that nought should  
 warp thy spire  
 From rising to the height ; the roof is  
 reached  
 O' the forest, break through, see extend  
 the sky !  
 Go on to Florence, Luria ! 'T is man's  
 cause !  
 Fail thou, and thine own fall were least  
 to dread :  
 Thou keepest Florence in her evil way,  
 Encouragest her sin so much the more—  
 And while the ignoble past is justified,  
 Thou all the surelier warp'st the future  
 growth,  
 The chiefs to come, the Lurias yet un-  
 born,

That, greater than thyself, are reached  
 o'er thee  
 Who giv'st the vantage-ground their  
 foes require,  
 As o'er my prostrate House thyself  
 wast reached !  
 Man calls thee, God requites thee ! All  
 is said,  
 The mission of my House fulfilled at  
 last :  
 And the mere woman, speaking for her-  
 self,  
 Reserves speech—it is now no woman's  
 time. [DOMIZIA goes.  
*Lur.* Thus at the last must figure  
 Luria, then !  
 Doing the various work of all his  
 friends,  
 And answering every purpose save his  
 own.  
 No doubt, 't is well for them to wish ;  
 but him—  
 After the exploit what were left ? Per-  
 chance  
 A little pride upon the swarthy brow,  
 At having brought successfully to bear  
 'Gainst Florence' self her own especial  
 arms,—  
 Her craftiness, impelled by fiercer  
 strength  
 From Moorish blood than feeds the  
 northern wit.  
 But after !—once the easy vengeance  
 willed,  
 Beautiful Florence at a word laid low  
 —(Not in her domes and towers and  
 palaces, [low,  
 Not even in a dream, that outrage !)—  
 As shamed in her own eyes henceforth  
 for ever,  
 Low, for the rival cities round to laugh,  
 Conquered and pardoned by a hireling  
 Moor !  
 —For him, who did the irreparable  
 wrong,  
 What would be left, his life's illusion  
 fled,—  
 What hope or trust in the forlorn wide  
 world ?  
 How strange that Florence should mis-  
 take me so !  
 Whence grew this ? What withdrew  
 her faith from me ?  
 Some cause ! These fretful-blooded  
 children talk  
 Against their mother,—they are  
 wronged, they say—

Notable wrongs her smile makes up again!  
 So, taking fire at each supposed offence,  
 They may speak rashly, suffer for their speech:  
 But what could it have been in word or deed  
 Thus injured me? Some one word spoken more  
 Out of my heart, and all had changed perhaps  
 My fault, it must have been,—for, what gain they?  
 Why risk the danger? See, what I could do!  
 And my fault, wherefore visit upon them,  
 My Florentines? The notable revenge,  
 I meditated! To stay passively,  
 Attend their summons, be as they dispose!  
 Why, if my very soldiers keep the rank,  
 And if my chieftains acquiesce, what then?  
 I ruin Florence, teach her friends mistrust,  
 Confirm her enemies in harsh belief,  
 And when she finds one day, as find she must,  
 The strange mistake, and how my heart was hers,  
 Shall it console me, that my Florentines  
 Walk with a sadder step, in graver guise,  
 Who took me with such frankness, praised me so,  
 At the glad outset? Had they loved me less,  
 They had less feared what seemed a change in me.  
 And after all, who did the harm? Not they!  
 How could they interpose with those old fools  
 In the council? Suffer for those old fools' sakes  
 They, who made pictures of me, sang the songs  
 About my battles? Ah, we Moors get blind  
 Out of our proper world where we can see!  
 The sun that guides is closer to us! There—  
 There, my own orb! He sinks from out the sky!

Why, there! a whole day has he blessed the land,  
 My land, our Florence all about the hills,  
 The fields and gardens, vineyards, olive-grounds,  
 All have been blest—and yet we Florentines  
 With souls intent upon our battle here,  
 Found that he rose too soon, or set too late,  
 Gave us no vantage, or gave Pisa much—  
 Therefore we wronged him! Does he turn in ire  
 To burn the earth that cannot understand?  
 Or drop out quietly, and leave the sky,  
 His task once ended? Night wipes blame away.  
 Another morning from my East shall spring  
 And find all eyes at leisure, all disposed  
 To watch and understand its work, no doubt.  
 So, praise the new sun, the successor  
 praise,  
 Praise the new Luria and forget the old!

[*Taking a phial from his breast.*]

—Strange! This is all I brought from my own land  
 To help me: Europe would supply the rest,  
 All needs beside, all other helps save one!  
 I thought of adverse fortune, battles lost,  
 The natural upbraiding of the loser,  
 And then this quiet remedy to seek  
 At end of the disastrous day.

[*He drinks.*]

'T is sought!

This was my happy triumph-morning:  
 Florence  
 Is saved: I drink this, and ere night,—  
 die! Strange!

## ACT V

### NIGHT

#### LURIA and PUCCIO.

*Lur.* I thought to do this, not to talk this: well,  
 Such were my projects for the city's good,  
 To help her in attack or by defence.

- Time, here as elsewhere, soon or late  
may take  
Our foresight by surprise thro' chance  
and change ;  
But not a little we provide against  
—If you see clear on every point.  
*Puc.* Most clear.  
*Lur.* Then all is said—not much, if  
you count words,  
Yet to an understanding ear enough ;  
And all that my brief stay permits, be-  
side.  
Nor must you blame me, as I sought to  
teach  
My elder in command, or threw a doubt  
Upon the very skill, it comforts me  
To know I leave,—your steady soldier-  
ship  
Which never failed me : yet, because it  
seemed  
A stranger's eye might haply note de-  
fect  
That skill, through use and custom,  
overlooks,  
I have gone into the old cares once  
more,  
As if I had to come and save again  
Florence—that May—that morning !  
'T is night now.  
Well—I broke off with ? . . .  
*Puc.* Of the past campaign  
You spoke—of measures to be kept in  
mind  
For future use. [time !  
*Lur.* True, so . . . but, time—no  
As well end here : remember this, and  
me !  
Farewell now !  
*Puc.* Dare I speak ?  
*Lur.* South o' the river—  
How is the second stream called . . . no,  
—the third ?  
*Puc.* Pesa.  
*Lur.* And a stone's-cast from the  
fording-place,  
To the east,—the little mount's name ?  
*Puc.* Lupo.  
*Lur.* Ay !  
Ay—there the tower, and all that side  
is safe !  
With San Romano, west of Evola,  
San Miniato, Scala, Empoli,  
Five towers in all,—forget not !  
*Puc.* Fear not me !  
*Lur.*—Nor to memorialize the Coun-  
cil now,
- I' the easy hour, on those battalions'  
claim,  
On the other side by Staggia on the  
hills,  
Who kept the Sieneze at check !  
*Puc.* One word—  
Sir, I must speak ! That you submit  
yourself  
To Florence' bidding, howsoe'er it  
prove,  
And give up the command to me—is  
much,  
Too much, perhaps : but what you tell  
me now,  
Even will affect the other course you  
choose—  
Poor as it may be, perils even that !  
Refuge you seek at Pisa : yet these  
plans  
All militate for Florence, all conclude  
Your formidable work to make her  
queen  
Of the country,—which her rivals rose  
against  
When you began it,—which to inter-  
rupt,  
Pisa would buy you off at any price !  
You cannot mean to sue for Pisa's  
help,  
With this made perfect and on record ?  
*Lur.* I—  
At Pisa, and for refuge, do you say ?  
*Puc.* Where are you going, then ?  
You must decide  
On leaving us, a silent fugitive,  
Alone, at night—you, stealing through  
our lines,  
Who were this morning's Luria,—you  
escape  
To painfully begin the world once more,  
With such a past, as it had never been !  
Where are you going ?  
*Lur.* Not so far, my Puccio,  
But that I hope to hear, enjoy and  
praise  
(If you mind praise from your old cap-  
tain yet)  
Each happy blow you strike for Flor-  
ence !  
*Puc.* Ay,  
But ere you gain your shelter, what  
may come ?  
For see—though nothing 's surely  
known as yet,  
Still—truth must out—I apprehend the  
worst.

If mere suspicion stood for certainty  
 Before, there 's nothing can arrest the  
 step  
 Of Florence toward your ruin, once on  
 foot.  
 Forgive her fifty times, it matters not !  
 And having disbelieved your innocence,  
 How can she trust your magnanimity ?  
 You may do harm to her—why then,  
 you will !  
 And Florence is sagacious in pursuit.  
 Have you a friend to count on ?  
*Lur.* One sure friend.  
*Puc.* Potent ?  
*Lur.* All-potent.  
*Puc.* And he is apprised ?  
*Lur.* He waits me.  
*Puc.* So !—Then I, put in your  
 place,  
 Making my profit of all done by you,  
 Calling your labours mine, reaping  
 their fruit,  
 To this, the State's gift, now add yours  
 beside—  
 That I may take as my peculiar store  
 These your instructions to work Flo-  
 rence good.  
 And if, by putting some few happily  
 In practice, I should both advantage  
 her  
 And draw down honour on myself,—  
 what then ?  
*Lur.* Do it, my Puccio ! I shall know  
 and praise !  
*Puc.* Though so, men say, " mark  
 what we gain by change  
 "—A Puccio for a Luria !"  
*Lur.* Even so !  
*Puc.* Then, not for fifty hundred  
 Florences,  
 Would I accept one office save my own,  
 Fill any other than my rightful post  
 Here at your feet, my captain and my  
 lord !  
 That such a cloud should break, such  
 trouble be,  
 Ere a man settle, soul and body, down  
 Into his true place and take rest for  
 ever !  
 Here were my wise eyes fixed on your  
 righthand,  
 And so the bad thoughts came and the  
 worse words,  
 And all went wrong and painfully  
 enough,—  
 No wonder,—till, the right spot  
 stumbled on,

All the jar stops, and there is peace at  
 once !  
 I am yours now,—a tool your right  
 hand wields !  
 God's love, that I should live, the  
 man I am,  
 On orders, warrants, patents and the  
 like,  
 As if there were no glowing eye i' the  
 world,  
 To glance straight inspiration to my  
 brain,  
 No glorious heart to give mine twice the  
 beats !  
 For, see—my doubt, where is it ?—  
 fear ? 't is flown !  
 And Florence and her anger are a tale  
 To scare a child ! Why, half-a-dozen  
 words  
 Will tell her, spoken as I now can  
 speak,  
 Her error, my past folly—and all 's  
 right,  
 And you are Luria, our great chief  
 again !  
 Or at the worst—which worst were best  
 of all—  
 To exile or to death I follow you !  
*Lur.* Thanks, Puccio ! Let me use  
 the privilege  
 You grant me : if I still command you,  
 —stay !  
 Remain here—my vicegerent, it shall  
 be,  
 And not successor : let me, as of old,  
 Still serve the State, my spirit prompt-  
 ing yours—  
 Still triumph, one for both. There !  
 Leave me now !  
 You cannot disobey my first command ?  
 Remember what I spoke of Jacopo,  
 And what you promised to concert  
 with him !  
 Send him to speak with me—nay, no  
 farewell !  
 You shall be by me when the sentence  
 comes. [*Puccio goes.*]  
 So, there 's one Florentine returns  
 again !  
 Out of the genial morning-company,  
 One face is left to take into the night.  
*Enter JACOPO.*  
*Jac.* I wait for your command, sir.  
*Lur.* What, so soon ?  
 I thank your ready presence and fair  
 word.

I used to notice you in early days  
 As of the other species, so to speak,  
 Those watchers of the lives of us who  
 act—  
 That weigh our motives, scrutinize our  
 thoughts.  
 So, I propound this to your faculty  
 As you would tell me, were a town to  
 take  
 . . . That is, of old. I am departing  
 hence  
 Under these imputations; that is  
 nought—  
 I leave no friend on whom they may  
 rebound,  
 Hardly a name behind me in the land,  
 Being a stranger: all the more behoves  
 That I regard how altered were the case  
 With natives of the country, Florentines  
 On whom the like mischance should  
 fall: the roots  
 O' the tree survive the ruin of the  
 trunk—  
 No root of mine will throb—you under-  
 stand.  
 But I had predecessors, Florentines,  
 Accused as I am now, and punished so—  
 The Traversari: you know more than I  
 How stigmatized they are, and lost in  
 shame.  
 Now Puccio, who succeeds me in com-  
 mand,  
 Both served them and succeeded, in  
 due time;  
 He knows the way, holds proper docu-  
 ments, [truth  
 And has the power to lay the simple  
 Before an active spirit, as I count  
 yours:  
 And also there 's Tiburzio, my new  
 friend,  
 Will, at a word, confirm such evidence,  
 He being the great chivalric soul we  
 know.  
 I put it to your tact, sir—were 't not  
 well,  
 —A grace, though but for contrast's  
 sake, no more,—  
 If you who witness, and have borne a  
 share  
 Involuntarily in my mischance,  
 Should, of your proper motion, set your  
 skill  
 To indicate—that is, investigate  
 The right or wrong of what mischance  
 befell

Those famous citizens, your country-  
 men?  
 Nay, you shall promise nothing: but  
 reflect,  
 And if your sense of justice prompt  
 you—good!  
*Jac.* And if, the trial past, their  
 fame stand clear  
 To all men's eyes, as yours, my lord, to  
 mine—  
 Their ghosts may sleep in quiet satisfied!  
 For me, a straw thrown up into the air,  
 My testimony goes for a straw's worth.  
 I used to hold by the instructed brain,  
 And move with Braccio as my master-  
 wind;  
 The heart leads surelier: I must move  
 with you—  
 As greatest now, who ever were the  
 best.  
 So, let the last and humblest of your  
 servants  
 Accept your charge, as Braccio's here-  
 tofore,  
 And tender homage by obeying you!  
 [*ACOPO goes.*  
*Lur.* Another!—Luria goes not  
 poorly forth.  
 If we could wait! The only fault 's  
 with time;  
 All men become good creatures: but  
 so slow!

*Enter DOMIZIA.*

*Lur.* Ah, you once more?  
*Dom.* Domizia, whom you knew,  
 Performed her task, and died with it.  
 'T is I,  
 Another woman, you have never  
 known,  
 Let the past sleep now!  
*Lur.* I have done with it.  
*Dom.* How inexhaustibly the spirit  
 grows!  
 One object, she seemed erewhile born  
 to reach  
 With her whole energies and die con-  
 tent,—  
 So like a wall at the world's edge it  
 stood,  
 With nought beyond to live for,—is  
 that reached?  
 Already are new undreamed energies  
 Outgrowing under, and extending far-  
 ther  
 To a new object;—there 's another  
 world!

See! I have told the purpose of my life;

'T is gained: you are decided, well or ill—

You march on Florence, or submit to her—

My work is done with you, your brow declares.

But—leave you? More of you seems yet to reach!

I stay for what I just begin to see.

*Lur.* So that you turn not to the past!

*Dom.* You trace  
Nothing but ill in it—my selfish impulse,

Which sought its end and disregarded yours?

*Lur.* Speak not against your nature: best, each keep

His own—you, yours—most, now that I keep mine,

—At least, fall by it, having too weakly stood.

God's finger marks distinctions, all so fine,

We would confound: the lesser has its [use,  
Which, when it apes the greater, is foregone.

I, born a Moor, lived half a Florentine;

But, punished properly, can end, a Moor.

Beside, there 's something makes me understand

Your nature: I have seen it.

*Dom.* Aught like mine?  
*Lur.* In my own East . . if you would stoop and help

My barbarous illustration! It sounds ill;

Yet there 's no wrong at bottom: rather, praise.

*Dom.* Well?

*Lur.* We have creatures there, which if you saw

The first time, you would doubtless marvel at

For their surpassing beauty, craft and strength.

And though it were a lively moment's shock

Wherein you found the purpose of forked tongues

That seem innocuous in their lambent play,

Yet, once made know such grace requires such guard,

Your reason soon would acquiesce, I think,

In wisdom which made all things for the best—

So, take them, good with ill, contentedly, [sting.

The prominent beauty with the latent I am glad to have seen you wondrous

Florentines:

Yet . .

*Dom.* I am here to listen.

*Lur.* My own East!  
How nearer God we were! He glows above

With scarce an intervention, presses close

And palpitatingly, his soul o'er ours!

We feel him, nor by painful reason know!

The everlasting minute of creation Is felt there; now it is, as it was then;

All changes at his instantaneous will, Not by the operation of a law

Whose maker is elsewhere at other work.

His hand is still engaged upon his world—

Man's praise can forward it, man's prayer suspend,

For is not God all-mighty? To recast The world, erase old things and make them new,

What costs it him? So, man breathes nobly there!

And inasmuch as feeling, the East's gift,

Is quick and transient—comes, and lo, is gone—

While Northern thought is slow and durable,

Surely a mission was reserved for me, Who, born with a perception of the power

And use of the North's thought for us of the East,

Should have remained and turned it to account,

Giving thought's character and permanence

To the too transitory feeling there— Writing God's message plain in mortal words.

Instead of which, I leave my fated field For this where such a task is needed

least,

Where all are born consummate in the art

I just perceive a chance of making mine,—  
 And then, deserting thus my early post,  
 I wonder that the men I come among  
 Mistake me! There, how all had understood,  
 Still brought fresh stuff for me to stamp  
 and keep,  
 Fresh instinct to translate them into  
 law!  
 Me, who . . .  
*Dom.* Who here the greater task  
 achieve,  
 More needful even: who have brought  
 fresh stuff  
 For us to mould, interpret and prove  
 right,—  
 New feeling fresh from God, which,  
 could we know  
 O' the instant, where had been our need  
 of it?  
 —Whose life re-teaches us what life  
 should be,  
 What faith is, loyalty and simpleness,  
 All, once revealed but taught us so long  
 since  
 That, having mere tradition of the  
 fact,—  
 Truth copied falteringly from copies  
 faint, [said  
 The early traits all dropped away,—we  
 On sight of faith like yours, "So looks  
 not faith  
 "We understand, described and praised  
 before."  
 But still, the feat was dared; and  
 though at first  
 It suffered from our haste, yet trace by  
 trace  
 Old memories reappear, old truth re-  
 turns,  
 Our slow thought does its work, and  
 all 's re-known.  
 Oh noble Luria! What you have  
 decreed  
 I see not, but no animal revenge,  
 No brute-like punishment of bad by  
 worse—  
 It cannot be, the gross and vulgar way  
 Traced for me by convention and mis-  
 take,  
 Has gained that calm approving eye  
 and brow!  
 Spare Florence, after all! Let Luria  
 trust  
 To his own soul, and I will trust him  
 mine!

*Lur.* In time!

*Dom.* How, Luria?

*Lur.* It is midnight now,  
 And they arrive from Florence with my  
 fate.

*Dom.* I hear no step.

*Lur.* I feel one, as you say.

*Enter HUSAIN.*

*Hus.* The man returned from Flor-  
 ence!

*Lur.* As I knew.

*Hus.* He seeks thee.

*Lur.* And I only wait for him.  
 Aught else?

*Hus.* A movement of the Lucchese  
 troops

Southward—

*Lur.* Toward Florence? Have out  
 instantly . . .

Ah, old use clings! Puccio must care  
 henceforth.

In—quick—'t is nearly midnight!  
 Bid him come!

*Enter TIBURZIO, BRACCIO, and PUCCIO.*

*Lur.* Tiburzio?—not at Pisa?

*Tib.* I return  
 From Florence: I serve Pisa, and must  
 think

By such procedure I have served her  
 best.

A people is but the attempt of many  
 To rise to the completer life of one;

And those who live as models for the  
 mass

Are singly of more value than they all.  
 Such man are you, and such a time is

this,  
 That your sole fate concerns a nation  
 more

Than its apparent welfare; and to  
 prove

Your rectitude, and duly crown the  
 same,

Imports us far beyond the day's event,  
 A battle's loss or gain: the mass re-  
 mains,—

Keep but the model safe, new men will  
 rise

To take its mould, and other days to  
 prove

How great a good was Luria's having  
 lived.

I might go try my fortune as you bade,  
 And joining Lucca, helped by your dis-  
 grace,

Repair our harm—so were to-day's  
work done ; [see ?

But where find Luria for our sons to  
No, I look farther. I have testified

(Declaring my submission to your arms)  
Her full success to Florence, making  
clear [spoke,

Your probity, as none else could : I  
And out it shone !

*Lur.* Ah—until Braccio spoke !

*Brac.* Till Braccio told in just a  
word the whole—

His lapse to error, his return to know-  
ledge :

Which told . . . Nay, Luria, I should  
droop the head,

I whom shame rests with ! Yet I dare  
look up,

Sure of your pardon when I sue for it,  
Knowing you wholly. Let the mid-  
night end !

'T is morn approaches ! Still you  
answer not ?

Sunshine succeeds the shadow past  
away ;

Our faces, which phantasmal grew and  
false,

Are all that felt it : they close round  
you, turn

Themselves now in its complete vanish-  
ing.

Speak, Luria ! Here begins your true  
career :

Look up to it ! All now is possible,  
The glory and the grandeur of each  
dream.

And every prophecy shall be fulfilled  
Save one—(nay, now your word must  
come at last)

—That you would punish Florence !  
*Hus.* (pointing to LURIA'S dead body.)  
That is done.

## CHRISTMAS-EVE AND EASTER-DAY

FLORENCE, 1850

### CHRISTMAS-EVE

I

OUT of the little chapel I burst,  
Into the fresh night-air again.  
Five minutes full, I waited first  
In the doorway, to escape the rain  
That drove in gusts down the common's  
centre,

At the edge of which the chapel stands,  
Before I plucked up heart to enter.  
Heaven knows how many sorts of  
hands

Reached past me, groping for the latch  
Of the inner door that hung on catch  
More obstinate the more they fumbled,  
Till, giving way at last with a scold  
Of the crazy hinge, in squeezed or  
tumbled

One sheep more to the rest in fold,  
And left me irresolute, standing sentry  
In the sheepfold's lath-and-plaster  
entry,

Four feet long by two feet wide,  
Partitioned off from the vast inside—  
I blocked up half of it at least.  
No remedy ; the rain kept driving.  
They eyed me much as some wild beast,

That congregation, still arriving,  
Some of them by the main road, white  
A long way past me into the night,  
Skirting the common, then diverging ;  
Not a few suddenly emerging  
From the common's self thro' the pal-  
ing-gaps,

—They house in the gravel-pits per-  
haps,

Where the road stops short with its  
safeguard border

Of lamps, as tired of such disorder ;—  
But the most turned in yet more  
abruptly

From a certain squalid knot of alleys,  
Where the town's bad blood once slept  
corruptly,

Which now the little chapel rallies  
And leads into day again,—its priestli-  
ness

Lending itself to hide their beastliness  
So cleverly (thanks in part to the ma-  
son),

And putting so cheery a whitewashed  
face on

Those neophytes too much in lack of it,  
That, where you cross the common as I  
did,

And meet the party thus presided,  
 "Mount Zion," with Love-lane at the  
 back of it,  
 They front you as little disconcerted  
 As, bound for the hills, her fate averted,  
 And her wicked people made to mind  
 him,  
 Lot might have marched with Gomorrah  
 behind him.

## II

Well, from the road, the lanes or the  
 common,  
 In came the flock: the fat weary  
 woman,  
 Panting and bewildered, down-clap-  
 ping  
 Her umbrella with a mighty report,  
 Grounded it by me, wry and flapping,  
 A wreck of whalebones; then, with a  
 snort,  
 Like a startled horse, at the interloper  
 (Who humbly knew himself improper,  
 But could not shrink up small enough)  
 —Round to the door, and in,—the  
 gruff  
 Hinge's invariable scold  
 Making my very blood run cold.  
 Prompt in the wake of her, up-pattered  
 On broken clogs, the many-tattered  
 Little old-faced peaking sister-turned-  
 mother  
 Of the sickly babe she tried to smother  
 Somehow up, with its spotted face,  
 From the cold, on her breast, the one  
 warm place;  
 She too must stop, wring the poor ends  
 dry  
 Of a draggled shawl, and add thereby  
 Her tribute to the door-mat, sopping  
 Already from my own clothes' drop-  
 ping,  
 Which yet she seemed to grudge I  
 should stand on;  
 Then, stooping down to take off her  
 pattens,  
 She bore them defiantly, in each hand  
 one,  
 Planted together before her breast  
 And its babe, as good as a lance in rest.  
 Close on her heels, the dingy satins  
 Of a female something, past me flitted,  
 With lips as much too white, as a streak  
 Lay far too red on each hollow cheek;  
 And it seemed the very door-hinge  
 pitied  
 All that was left of a woman once,

Holding at least its tongue for the  
 nonce.  
 Then a tall yellow man, like the Peni-  
 tent Thief,  
 With his jaw bound up in a handker-  
 chief,  
 And eyelids screwed together tight,  
 Led himself in by some inner light.  
 And, except from him, from each that  
 entered,  
 I got the same interrogation—  
 "What, you, the alien, you have ven-  
 tured  
 "To take with us, the elect, your sta-  
 tion?  
 "A carer for none of it, a Gallio!"—  
 Thus, plain as print, I read the glance  
 At a common prey, in each counten-  
 ance  
 As of huntsman giving his hounds the  
 tallyho.  
 And, when the door's cry drowned  
 their wonder  
 The draught, it always sent in shutting,  
 Made the flame of the single tallow  
 candle  
 In the cracked square lantern I stood  
 under,  
 Shoot its blue lip at me, rebutting  
 As it were, the luckless cause of scan-  
 dal:  
 I verily fancied the zealous light  
 (In the chapel's secret, too!) for spite  
 Would shudder itself clean off the wick,  
 With the airs of a Saint John's Candle-  
 stick.  
 There was no standing it much longer.  
 "Good folks," thought I, as resolve  
 grew stronger,  
 "This way you perform the Grand-  
 Inquisitor,  
 "When the weather sends you a chance  
 visitor?  
 "You are the men, and wisdom shall  
 die with you,  
 "And none of the old Seven Churches  
 vie with you!  
 "But still, despite the pretty perfec-  
 tion  
 "To which you carry your trick of ex-  
 clusiveness,  
 "And, taking God's word under wise  
 protection,  
 "Correct its tendency to diffusiveness,  
 "And bid one reach it over hot plough-  
 shares,—

" Still, as I say, though you've found  
salvation,  
" If I should choose to cry, as now,  
' Shares ! '—  
" See if the best of you bars me my  
ration !  
" I prefer, if you please, for my ex-  
pounder  
" Of the laws of the feast, the feast's  
own Founder ;  
" Mine's the same right with your poor-  
est and sickliest,  
" Supposing I don the marriage-vesti-  
ment :  
" So, shut your mouth and open your  
Testament,  
" And carve me my portion at your  
quickest ! "

Accordingly, as a shoemaker's lad  
With wizened face in want of soap,  
And wet apron wound round his waist  
like a rope,  
(After stopping outside, for his cough  
was bad,  
To get the fit over, poor gentle creature,  
And so avoid disturbing the preacher)  
—Passed in, I sent my elbow spikewise  
At the shutting door, and entered like-  
wise,  
Received the hinge's accustomed greet-  
ing,  
And crossed the threshold's magic  
pentacle,  
And found myself in full conventicle,  
—To wit, in Zion Chapel Meeting,  
On the Christmas-Eve of 'Forty-nine,  
Which, calling its flock to their special  
clover,  
Found all assembled and one sheep  
over,  
Whose lot, as the weather pleased, was  
mine.

## III

I very soon had enough of it.  
The hot smell and the human noises,  
And my neighbour's coat, the greasy  
cuff of it,  
Were a pebble-stone that a child's  
hand poises,  
Compared with the pig-of-lead-like  
pressure  
Of the preaching-man's immense stu-  
pidity,  
As he poured his doctrine forth, full  
measure,  
To meet his audience's avidity.

You needed not the wit of the Sibyl  
To guess the cause of it all, in a twink-  
ling :  
No sooner got our friend an inkling  
Of treasure hid in the Holy Bible,  
(Whene'er 't was that the thought first  
struck him,  
How death, at unawares, might duck  
him  
Deeper than the grave, and quench  
The gin-shop's light in hell's grim  
drench)  
Than he handled it so, in fine irrever-  
ence,  
As to hug the book of books to pieces :  
And, a patchwork of chapters and texts  
in severance,  
Not improved by the private dog's-ears  
and creases,  
Having clothed his own soul with, he'd  
fain see equipt yours,—  
So, tossed you again your Holy Scrip-  
tures.  
And you picked them up, in a sense, no  
doubt :  
Nay, had but a single face of my neigh-  
bours  
Appeared to suspect that the preacher's  
labours  
Were help which the world could be  
saved without,  
'T is odds but I might have borne in  
quiet  
A qualm or two at my spiritual diet,  
Or (who can tell ?) perchance even  
mustered  
Somewhat to urge in behalf of the  
sermon :  
But the flock sat on, divinely flustered,  
Sniffing, methought, its dew of Hermon  
With such content in every snuffle,  
As the devil inside us loves to ruffle.  
My old fat woman purred with plea-  
sure,  
And thumb round thumb went twirling  
faster,  
While she, to his periods keeping mea-  
sure,  
Maternally devoured the pastor.  
The man with the handkerchief, untied  
it,  
Showed us a horrible wen inside it,  
Gave his eyelids yet another screwing,  
And rocked himself as the woman was  
doing.  
The shoemaker's lad, discreetly chok-  
ing,

Kept down his cough. 'T was too pro-  
voking !  
My gorge rose at the nonsense and stuff  
of it ;  
So, saying like Eve when she plucked  
the apple,  
' I wanted a taste, and now there 's  
enough of it,'  
I flung out of the little chapel.

## IV

There was a lull in the rain, a lull  
In the wind too ; the moon was risen,  
And would have shone out pure and  
full,  
But for the ramparted cloud-prison,  
Block on block built up in the West,  
For what purpose the wind knows best,  
Who changes his mind continually.  
And the empty other half of the sky  
Seemed in its silence as if it knew  
What, any moment, might look  
through  
A chance gap in that fortress massy :—  
Through its fissures you got hints  
Of the flying moon, by the shifting tints,  
Now, a dull lion-colour, now, brassy  
Burning to yellow, and whitest yellow,  
Like furnace-smoke just ere the flames  
bellow,  
All a-simmer with intense strain  
To let her through,—then blank again,  
At the hope of her appearance failing.  
Just by the chapel, a break in the rail-  
ing  
Shows a narrow path directly across ;  
'T is ever dry walking there, on the  
moss— [hill.  
Besides, you go gently all the way up—  
I stooped under and soon felt better ;  
My head grew lighter, my limbs more  
supple,  
As I walked on, glad to have slipt the  
fetter.  
My mind was full of the scene I had left,  
That placid flock, that pastor vocifer-  
ant,  
—How this outside was pure and dif-  
ferent !  
The sermon, now—what a mingled  
weft  
Of good and ill ! Were either less,  
Its fellow had coloured the whole dis-  
tinctly ;  
But alas for the excellent earnestness,  
And the truths, quite true if stated suc-  
cinctly,

But as surely false, in their quaint pre-  
sentment,  
However to pastor and flock's content-  
ment !  
Say rather, such truths looked false to  
your eyes,  
With his provings and parallels twisted  
and twined,  
Till how could you know them, grown  
double their size  
In the natural fog of the good man's  
mind,  
Like yonder spots of our roadside  
lamps,  
Haloed about with the common's  
damps ?  
Truth remains true, the fault 's in the  
prover ;  
The zeal was good, and the aspiration ;  
And yet, and yet, yet, fifty times over,  
Pharaoh received no demonstration,  
By his Baker's dream of Baskets Three,  
Of the doctrine of the Trinity,—  
Although, as our preacher thus embel-  
lished it,  
Apparently his hearers relished it  
With so unfeigned a gust—who knows  
if  
They did not prefer our friend to Jo-  
seph ?  
But so it is everywhere, one way with  
all of them !  
These people have really felt, no doubt,  
A something, the motion they style the  
Call of them ;  
And this is their method of bringing  
about,  
By a mechanism of words and tones,  
(So many texts in so many groans)  
A sort of reviving and reproducing,  
More or less perfectly (who can tell ?),  
Of the mood itself, that strengthens by  
using ;  
And how it happens, I understand well.  
A tune was born in my head last week,  
Out of the thump-thump and shriek-  
shriek  
Of the train, as I came by it, up from  
Manchester ;  
And when, next week, I take it back  
again,  
My head will sing to the engine's clack  
again,  
While it only makes my neighbour's  
haunches stir,  
—Finding no dormant musical sprout  
In him, as in me, to be jolted out.

'Tis the taught already that profits by  
teaching ;  
He gets no more from the railway's  
preaching  
Than, from this preacher who does the  
rail's office, I :  
Whom therefore the flock cast a jealous  
eye on.  
Still, why paint over their door "Mount  
Zion,"  
To which all flesh shall come, saith the  
prophecy ?

v

But wherefore be harsh on a single case ?  
After how many modes, this Christmas-  
Eve,  
Does the selfsame weary thing take  
place ?  
The same endeavour to make you be-  
lieve,  
And with much the same effect, no  
more :  
Each method abundantly convincing,  
As I say, to those convinced before,  
But scarce to be swallowed without  
wincing  
By the not-as-yet-convinced. For  
me,  
I have my own church equally :  
And in this church my faith sprang  
first !  
(I said, as I reached the rising ground,  
And the wind began again, with a burst  
Of rain in my face, and a glad rebound  
From the heart beneath, as if, God  
speeding me,  
I entered his church-door, nature lead-  
ing me)  
—In youth I looked to these very skies,  
And probing their immensities,  
I found God there, his visible power ;  
Yet felt in my heart, amid all its sense  
Of the power, an equal evidence  
That his love, there too, was the nobler  
dower.  
For the loving worm within its clod,  
Were diviner than a loveless god  
Amid his worlds, I will dare to say.  
You know what I mean : God 's all,  
man 's nought :  
But also, God, whose pleasure brought  
Man into being, stands away  
As it were a handbreadth off, to give  
Room for the newly-made to live,  
And look at him from a place apart,  
And use his gifts of brain and heart,

Given, indeed, but to keep for ever.  
Who speaks of man, then, must not  
sever  
Man's very elements from man,  
Saying, " But all is God's "—whose  
plan  
Was to create man and then leave him  
Able, his own word saith, to grieve him,  
But able to glorify him too,  
As a mere machine could never do,  
That prayed or praised, all unaware  
Of its fitness for aught but praise and  
prayer,  
Made perfect as a thing of course.  
Man, therefore, stands on his own stock  
Of love and power as a pin-point rock,  
And, looking to God who ordained di-  
vorce  
Of the rock from his boundless contin-  
ent,  
Sees, in his power made evident,  
Only excess by a million-fold  
O'er the power God gave man in the  
mould.  
For, note : man's hand, first formed  
to carry  
A few pounds' weight, when taught to  
marry  
Its strength with an engine's, lifts a  
mountain,  
—Advancing in power by one degree ;  
And why count stops through eternity ?  
But love is the ever-springing fountain :  
Man may enlarge or narrow his bed  
For the water's play, but the water-  
head—  
How can he multiply or reduce it ?  
As easy create it, as cause it to cease ;  
He may profit by it, or abuse it,  
But 't is not a thing to bear increase  
As power does : be love less or more  
In the heart of man, he keeps it shut  
Or opens it wide, as he pleases, but  
Love's sum remains what it was before  
So, gazing up, in my youth, at love  
As seen through power, ever above  
All modes which make it manifest,  
My soul brought all to a single test—  
That he, the Eternal First and Last,  
Who, in his power, had so surpassed  
All man conceives of what is might,  
Whose wisdom, too, showed infinite,  
—Would prove as infinitely good ;  
Would never, (my soul understood,  
With power to work all love desires,  
Bestow e'en less than man requires :  
That he who endlessly was teaching,

Above my spirit's utmost reaching,  
 What love can do in the leaf or stone,  
 (So that to master this alone,  
 This done in the stone or leaf for me,  
 I must go on learning endlessly)  
 Would never need that I, in turn,  
 Should point him out defect unheeded,  
 And show that God had yet to learn  
 What the meanest human creature  
 needed,—

—Not life, to wit, for a few short years,  
 Tracking his way through doubts and  
 fears,

While the stupid earth on which I stay  
 Suffers no change, but passive adds  
 Its myriad years to myriads,  
 Though I, he gave it to, decay,  
 Seeing death come and choose about  
 me.

And my dearest ones depart without  
 me,

No: love which, on earth, amid all the  
 shows of it,

Has ever been seen the sole good of  
 life in it,

The love, ever growing there, spite of  
 the strife in it,

Shall arise, made perfect, from death's  
 repose of it.

And I shall behold thee, face to face,  
 O God, and in thy light retrace

How in all I loved here, still wast thou!  
 Whom pressing to, then, as I fain would  
 now,

I shall find as able to satiate  
 The love, thy gift, as my spirit's wonder

Thou art able to quicken and sublim-  
 ate,

With this sky of thine, that I now walk  
 under,

And glory in thee for, as I gaze  
 Thus, thus! Oh, let men keep their  
 ways

Of seeking thee in a narrow shrine—  
 Be this my way! And this is mine!

## VI

For lo, what think you? suddenly  
 The rain and the wind ceased, and the  
 sky

Received at once the full fruition  
 Of the moon's consummate apparition.

The black cloud-barricade was riven,  
 Ruined beneath her feet, and driven  
 Deep in the West; while, bare and  
 breathless,

North and South and East lay ready

For a glorious thing that, dauntless,  
 deathless,

Sprang across them and stood steady.  
 'T was a moon-rainbow, vast and per-  
 fect,

From heaven to heaven extending, per-  
 fect

As the mother-moon's self, full in face.  
 It rose, distinctly at the base

With its seven proper colours chorded,  
 Which still, in the rising, were com-  
 pressed,

Until at last they coalesced,  
 And supreme the spectral creature  
 lorded

In a triumph of whitest white,—  
 Above which intervened the night.

But above night too, like only the next,  
 The second of a wondrous sequence,  
 Reaching in rare and rarer frequence,  
 Till the heaven of heavens were circum-  
 flexed,

Another rainbow rose, a mightier,  
 Fainter, flushier and flightier,—  
 Rapture dying along its verge.

Oh, whose foot shall I see emerge,  
 Whose, from the straining topmost  
 dark,

On to the keystone of that arc?

## VII

This sight was shown me, there and  
 then,—

Me, one out of a world of men,  
 Singled forth, as the chance might hap  
 To another if, in a thunderclap

Where I heard noise and you saw flame,  
 Some one man knew God called his  
 name.

For me, I think I said, "Appear!  
 " Good were it to be ever here.

" If thou wilt, let me build to thee  
 " Service-tabernacles three,  
 " Where, forever in thy presence,  
 " In ecstatic acquiescence,  
 " Far alike from thriftless learning  
 " And ignorance's undiscerning,  
 " I may worship and remain!"

Thus at the show above me, gazing  
 With upturned eyes, I felt my brain  
 Glutted with the glory, blazing  
 Throughout its whole mass, over and  
 under,

Until at length it burst asunder,  
 And out of it bodily there streamed,  
 The too-much glory, as it seemed,  
 Passing from out me to the ground,

Then palely serpentine round  
Into the dark with mazy error.

## VIII

All at once I looked up with terror.  
He was there.  
He himself with his human air,  
On the narrow pathway, just before.  
I saw the back of him, no more—  
He had left the chapel, then, as I.  
I forgot all about the sky.  
No face : only the sight  
Of a sweepy garment, vast and white,  
With a hem that I could recognise.  
I felt terror, no surprise ;  
My mind filled with the cataract,  
At one bound of the mighty fact.  
" I remember, he did say  
Doubtless, that, to this world's end,  
Where two or three should meet and  
pray,  
He would be in the midst, their friend ;  
Certainly he was there with them ! "  
And my pulses leaped for joy  
Of the golden thought without alloy,  
That I saw his very vesture's hem.  
Then rushed the blood back, cold and  
clear  
With a fresh enhancing shiver of fear ;  
And I hastened, cried out while I  
pressed  
To the salvation of the vest,  
" But not so, Lord ! It cannot be  
" That thou, indeed, art leaving me—  
" Me, that have despised thy friends !  
" Did my heart make no amends ?  
" Thou art the love of God—above  
" His power, didst hear me place his  
love,  
" And that was leaving the world for  
thee :  
" Therefore thou must not turn from  
me  
" As I had chosen the other part.  
" Folly and pride o'ercame my heart.  
" Our best is bad, nor bears thy test ;  
" Still, it should be our very best.  
" I thought it best that thou, the spirit,  
" Be worshipped in spirit and in truth,  
" And in beauty, as even we require it—  
" Not in the forms burlesque, uncouth,  
" I left but now, as scarcely fitted  
" For thee : I knew not what I pitied.  
" But, all I felt there, right or wrong,  
" What is it to thee, who curest sin-  
ning ?  
" Am I not weak as thou art strong ?

" I have looked to thee from the be-  
ginning,  
" Straight up to thee through all the  
world  
" Which, like an idle scroll, lay furled  
" To nothingness on either side :  
" And since the time thou wast des-  
cried,  
" Spite of the weak heart, so have I  
" Lived ever, and so fain would die,  
" Living and dying, thee before !  
" But if thou leavest me—"

## IX

Less or more,  
I suppose that I spoke thus.  
When,—have mercy, Lord, on us !  
The whole face turned upon me full.  
And I spread myself beneath it,  
As when the bleacher spreads, to seethe  
it  
In the cleansing sun, his wool,—  
Steeps in the flood of noontide white-  
ness  
Some defiled, discoloured web—  
So lay I, saturate with brightness.  
And when the flood appeared to ebb,  
Lo, I was walking, light and swift,  
With my senses settling fast and  
steadying,  
But my body caught up in the whirl  
and drift  
Of the vesture's amplitude, still eddy-  
ing  
On, just before me, still to be followed,  
As it carried me after with its motion :  
What shall I say ?—as a path were hol-  
lowed  
And a man went weltering through the  
ocean,  
Sucked along in the flying wake  
Of the luminous water-snake.  
Darkness and cold were cloven, as  
through  
I passed, upborne yet walking too.  
And I turned to myself at intervals,—  
" So he said, so it befalls.  
" God who registers the cup  
" Of mere cold water, for his sake  
" To a disciple rendered up,  
" Disdains not his own thirst to slake  
" At the poorest love was ever offered :  
" And because my heart I proffered,  
" With true love trembling at the brim,  
" He suffers me to follow him  
" For ever, my own way,—dispensed  
" From seeking to be influenced

"By all the less immediate ways  
 "That earth, in worships manifold,  
 "Adopts to reach, by prayer and praise,  
 "The garment's hem, which, lo, I  
 hold!"

## x

And so we crossed the world and  
 stopped.

For where am I, in city or plain,  
 Since I am 'ware of the world again?  
 And what is this that rises propped  
 With pillars of prodigious girth?  
 Is it really on the earth,  
 This miraculous Dome of God?  
 Has the angel's measuring-rod  
 Which numbered cubits, gem from  
 gem,

'Twixt the gates of the New Jerusalem,  
 Meted it out,—and what he meted,  
 Have the sons of men completed?  
 —Binding, ever as he bade,  
 Columns in the colonnade  
 With arms wide open to embrace  
 The entry of the human race  
 To the breast of . . . what is it, yon  
 building,

Ablaze in front, all paint and gilding,  
 With marble for brick, and stones of  
 price

For garniture of the edifice?  
 Now I see; it is no dream;  
 It stands there and it does not seem:  
 For ever, in pictures, thus it looks,  
 And thus I have read of it in books  
 Often in England, leagues away,  
 And wondered how these fountains  
 play,

Growing up eternally  
 Each to a musical water-tree,  
 Whose blossoms drop, a glittering boon,  
 Before my eyes, in the light of the  
 moon,

To the granite lavers underneath.  
 Liar and dreamer in your teeth!  
 I, the sinner that speak to you,  
 Was in Rome this night, and stood,  
 and knew

Both this and more. For see, for see,  
 The dark is rent, mine eye is free  
 To pierce the crust of the outer wall,  
 And I view inside, and all there, all,  
 As the swarming hollow of a hive,  
 The whole Basilica alive!  
 Men in the chancel, body and nave,  
 Men on the pillars' architrave,  
 Men on the statues, men on the tombs

With popes and kings in their porphyry  
 wombs,  
 All famishing in expectation  
 Of the main-altar's consummation.  
 For see, for see, the rapturous moment  
 Approaches, and earth's best endow-  
 ment

Blends with heaven's; the taper-fires  
 Pant up, the winding brazen spires  
 Heave loftier yet the baldachin;  
 The incense-gaspings, long kept in,  
 Suspire in clouds; the organ blatant  
 Holds his breath and grovels latent,  
 As if God's hushing finger grazed him,  
 (Like Behemoth when he praised him)  
 At the silver bell's shrill tinkling,  
 Quick cold drops of terror sprinkling  
 On the sudden pavement strewed  
 With faces of the multitude.  
 Earth breaks up, time drops away,  
 In flows heaven, with its new day  
 Of endless life, when he who trod,  
 Very man and very God,  
 This earth in weakness, shame and pain,  
 Dying the death whose signs remain  
 Up yonder on the accursed tree,—  
 Shall come again, no more to be  
 Of captivity the thrall,  
 But the one God, All in all,  
 King of kings, Lord of lords,  
 As his servant John received the words,  
 "I died, and live for evermore!"

## xi

Yet I was left outside the door.  
 "Why sit I here on the threshold-stone,  
 Left till he return, alone  
 Save for the garment's extreme fold  
 Abandoned still to bless my hold?"  
 My reason, to my doubt, replied,  
 As if a book were opened wide,  
 And at a certain page I traced  
 Every record undefaced,  
 Added by successive years,—  
 The harvestings of truth's stray years  
 Singly gleaned, and in one sheaf  
 Bound together for belief.  
 Yes, I said—that he will go  
 And sit with these in turn, I know.  
 Their faith's heart beats, though her  
 head swims  
 Too giddily to guide her limbs,  
 Disabled by their palsy-stroke  
 From propping me. Though Rome's  
 gross yoke  
 Drops off, no more to be endured,  
 Her teaching is not so obscured

By errors and perversities,  
That no truth shines athwart the lies :  
And he, whose eye detects a spark  
Even where, to man's, the whole seems  
dark,

May well see flame where each beholder  
Acknowledges the embers smoulder.  
But I, a mere man, fear to quit  
The clue God gave me as most fit  
To guide my footsteps through life's  
maze,

Because himself discerns all ways  
Open to reach him : I, a man  
Able to mark where faith began  
To swerve aside, till from its summit  
Judgment drops her damning plummet,  
Pronouncing such a fatal space  
Departed from the founder's base :  
He will not bid me enter too,  
But rather sit, as now I do,  
Awaiting his return outside.

—'T was thus my reason straight re-  
plied

And joyously I turned, and pressed  
The garment's skirt upon my breast,  
Until, afresh its light suffusing me,  
My heart cried "What has been abus-  
ing me

That I should wait here lonely and  
coldly,

Instead of rising, entering boldly,  
Baring truth's face, and letting drift  
Her veils of lies as they choose to shift ?  
Do these men praise him ? I will raise  
My voice up to their point of praise !  
I see the error ; but above

The scope of error, see the love.—  
Oh, love of those first Christian days !

—Fanned so soon into a blaze,  
From the spark preserved by the  
trampled sect,

That the antique sovereign Intellect  
Which then sat ruling in the world,  
Like a change in dreams, was hurled  
From the throne he reigned upon :  
You looked up and he was gone.

Gone, his glory of the pen !  
—Love, with Greece and Rome in ken,  
Bade her scribes abhor the trick  
Of poetry and rhetoric,  
And exult with hearts set free,  
In blessed imbecility

Scrawled, perchance, on some torn sheet  
Leaving Sallust incomplete.

Gone, his pride of sculptor, painter !  
—Love, while able to acquaint her  
While the thousand statues yet

Fresh from chisel, pictures wet  
From brush, she saw on every side,  
Chose rather with an infant's pride  
To frame those portents which impart  
Such unction to true Christian Art.  
Gone, music too ! The air was stirred  
By happy wings : Terpander's bird  
(That, when the cold came, fled away)  
Would tarry not the wintry day,—  
As more-enduring sculpture must,  
Till filthy saints rebuked the gust  
With which they chanced to get a sight  
Of some dear naked Aphrodite  
They glanced a thought above the toes  
of,

By breaking zealously her nose off.  
Love, surely, from that music's linger-  
ing,

Might have filched her organ-fingering,  
Nor chosen rather to set prayings  
To hog-grunts, praises to horse-neigh-  
ings.

Love was the startling thing, the new ;  
Love was the all-sufficient too ;  
And seeing that, you see the rest :

As a babe can find its mother's breast.  
As well in darkness as in light,  
Love shut our eyes, and all seemed right.

True, the world's eyes are open now :  
—Less need for me to disallow

Some few that keep Love's zone un-  
buckled,

Peevish as ever to be suckled,  
Lulled by the same old baby-prattle  
With intermixture of the rattle,  
When she would have them creep,  
stand steady

Upon their feet, or walk already,  
Not to speak of trying to climb.

I will be wise another time,  
And not desire a wall between us,  
When next I see a church-roof cover  
So many species of one genus,  
All with foreheads bearing *lover*  
Written above the earnest eyes of them ;  
All with breasts that beat for beauty,  
Whether sublimed, to the surprise of  
them,

In noble daring, steadfast duty,  
The heroic in passion, or in action.—  
Or, lowered for sense's satisfaction  
To the mere outside of human crea-  
tures,

Mere perfect form and faultless fea-  
tures.

What ? with all Rome here, whence to  
levy

Such contributions to their appetite,  
 With women and men in a gorgeous  
 bevy,  
 They take, as it were, a padlock, clap it  
 tight  
 On their southern eyes, restrained from  
 feeding  
 On the glories of their ancient reading,  
 On the beauties of their modern singing,  
 On the wonders of the builder's bring-  
 ing,  
 On the majesties of Art around them,—  
 And, all these loves, late struggling in-  
 cessant,  
 When faith has at last united and  
 bound them,  
 They offer up to God for a present ?  
 Why, I will, on the whole, be rather  
 proud of it,—  
 And, only taking the act in reference  
 To the other recipients who might have  
 allowed it,  
 I will rejoice that God had the prefer-  
 ence."

## XII

So I summed up my new resolves :  
 "Too much love there can never be.  
 And where the intellect devolves  
 Its function on love exclusively,  
 I, a man who possesses both,  
 Will accept the provision, nothing loth,  
 —Will feast my love, then depart else-  
 where,  
 That my intellect may find its share.  
 And ponder, O soul, the while thou  
 departest,  
 And see thou applaud the great heart  
 of the artist,  
 Who, examining the capabilities  
 Of the block of marble he has to  
 fashion  
 Into a type of thought or passion,—  
 Not always, using obvious facilities,  
 Shapes it, as any artist can,  
 Into a perfect symmetrical man,  
 Complete from head to foot of the life-  
 size, [eyes,—  
 Such as old Adam stood in his wife's  
 But, now and then, bravely aspires to  
 consummate  
 A Colossus by no means so easy to come  
 at,  
 And uses the whole of his block for the  
 bust,  
 Leaving the mind of the public to finish  
 it,

Since cut it ruefully short he must :  
 On the face alone he expends his devo-  
 tion,  
 He rather would mar than resolve to  
 diminish it,  
 —Saying, 'Applaud me for this grand  
 notion  
 'Of what a face may be ! As for com-  
 pleting it  
 'In breast and body and limbs, do  
 that, you !'  
 All hail ! I fancy how, happily meet-  
 ing it,  
 A trunk and legs would perfect the  
 statue,  
 Could man carve so as to answer voli-  
 tion.  
 And how much nobler than petty cavils,  
 Were a hope to find, in my spirit-  
 travels,  
 Some artist of another ambition,  
 Who having a block to carve, no bigger,  
 Has spent his power on the opposite  
 quest,  
 And believed to begin at the feet was  
 best—  
 For so may I see, ere I die, the whole  
 figure !'

## XIII

No sooner said than out in the night !  
 My heart beat lighter and more light :  
 And still, as before, I was walking swift,  
 With my senses settling fast and  
 steadying,  
 But my body caught up in the whirl  
 and drift  
 Of the vesture's amplitude, still eddy-  
 ing  
 On just before me, still to be followed,  
 As it carried me after with its motion,  
 —What shall I say ?—as a path were  
 hollowed,  
 And a man went weltering through the  
 ocean,  
 Sucked along in the flying wake  
 Of the luminous water-snake.

## XIV

Alone ! I am left alone once more—  
 (Save for the garment's extreme fold  
 Abandoned still to bless my hold)  
 Alone, beside the entrance-door  
 Of a sort of temple,—perhaps a college,  
 —Like nothing I ever saw before  
 At home in England, to my knowledge.  
 The tall old quaint irregular town !

It may be . . . though which, I can't  
 affirm . . . any  
 Of the famous middle-age towns of  
 Germany;  
 And this flight of stairs where I sit  
 down,  
 Is it Halle, Weimar, Cassel, Frankfort,  
 Or Göttingen, I have to thank for 't?  
 It may be Göttingen,—most likely.  
 Through the open door I catch ob-  
 liquely  
 Glimpses of a lecture-hall;  
 And not a bad assembly neither,  
 Ranged decent and symmetrical  
 On benches, waiting what 's to see  
 there;  
 Which, holding still by the vesture's  
 hem,  
 I also resolve to see with them,  
 Cautious this time how I suffer to slip  
 The chance of joining in fellowship  
 With any that call themselves his  
 friends;  
 As these folks do, I have a notion.  
 But hist—a buzzing and emotion!  
 All settle themselves, the while ascends  
 By the creaking rail to the lecture-desk,  
 Step by step, deliberate  
 Because of his cranium's over-freight,  
 Three parts sublime to one grotesque,  
 If I have proved an accurate guesser,  
 The hawk-nosed, high-cheek-boned  
 Professor.  
 I felt at once as if there ran [man—  
 A shoot of love from my heart to the  
 That sallow virgin-minded studious  
 Martyr to mild enthusiasm,  
 As he uttered a kind of cough-prelu-  
 dious  
 That woke my sympathetic spasm,  
 (Beside some spitting that made me  
 sorry)  
 And stood, surveying his auditory  
 With a wan pure look, well nigh celest-  
 tial,—  
 Those blue eyes had survived so much!  
 While, under the foot they could not  
 smutch,  
 Lay all the fleshly and the bestial.  
 Over he bowed, and arranged his notes,  
 Till the auditory's clearing of throats  
 Was done with, died into a silence;  
 And, when each glance was upward  
 sent,  
 Each bearded mouth composed intent,  
 And a pin might be heard drop half a  
 mile hence,—

He pushed back higher his spectacles,  
 Let the eyes stream out like lamps  
 from cells,  
 And giving his head of hair—a hake  
 Of undressed tow, for colour and quan-  
 tity—  
 One rapid and impatient shake,  
 (As our own young England adjusts a  
 jaunty tie  
 When about to impart, on mature di-  
 gestion,  
 Some thrilling view of the surplice-  
 question)  
 —The Professor's grave voice, sweet  
 though hoarse,  
 Broke into his Christmas-Eve discourse.

## xv

And he began it by observing  
 How reason dictated that men  
 Should rectify the natural swerving,  
 By a reversion, now and then,  
 To the well-heads of knowledge, few  
 And far away, whence rolling grew  
 The life-stream wide whereat we drink,  
 Commingled, as we needs must think,  
 With waters alien to the source;  
 To do which, aimed this eve's discourse;  
 Since, where could be a fitter time  
 For tracing backward to its prime,  
 This Christianity, this lake,  
 This reservoir, whereat we slake,  
 From one or other bank, our thirst?  
 So, he proposed inquiring first  
 Into the various sources whence  
 This Myth of Christ is derivable;  
 Demanding from the evidence,  
 (Since plainly no such life was liveable)  
 How these phenomena should class?  
 Whether 't were best opine Christ was,  
 Or never was at all, or whether  
 He was and was not, both together—  
 It matters little for the name,  
 So the idea be left the same.  
 Only, for practical purpose' sake,  
 'T was obviously as well to take  
 The popular story,—understanding  
 How the ineptitude of the time,  
 And the penman's prejudice, expand-  
 ing  
 Fact into fable fit for the clime,  
 Had, by slow and sure degrees, tran-  
 slated it  
 Into this myth, this Individuum,—  
 Which, when reason had strained and  
 abated it  
 Of foreign matter, left, for residuum,

A Man!—a right true man, however,  
 Whose work was worthy a man's endeavour:  
 Work, that gave warrant almost sufficient  
 To his disciples, for rather believing  
 He was just omnipotent and omniscient,  
 As it gives to us, for as frankly receiving  
 His word, their tradition,—which, though it meant  
 Something entirely different  
 From all that those who only heard it,  
 In their simplicity thought and averred it,  
 Had yet a meaning quite as respectable:  
 For, among other doctrines delectable,  
 Was he not surely the first to insist on  
 The natural sovereignty of our race?—  
 Here the lecturer came to a pausing-place.  
 And while his cough, like a drouthy piston,  
 Tried to dislodge the husk that grew to him,  
 I seized the occasion of bidding adieu  
 to him,  
 The vesture still within my hand.

## XVI

I could interpret its command.  
 This time he would not bid me enter  
 The exhausted air-bell of the Critic.  
 Truth's atmosphere may grow mephitic  
 When Papist struggles with Dissenter,  
 Impregnating its pristine clarity,  
 —One, by his daily fare's vulgarity,  
 Its gust of broken meat and garlic;  
 —One, by his soul's too-much presuming  
 To turn the frankincense's fuming  
 And vapours of the candle starlike  
 Into the cloud her wings she buoys on.  
 Each, that thus sets the pure air seething.  
 May poison it for healthy breathing—  
 But the Critic leaves no air to poison;  
 Pumps out with ruthless ingenuity  
 Atom by atom, and leaves you—vacuity.  
 Thus much of Christ, does he reject?  
 And what retain? His intellect?  
 What is it I must reverence duly?  
 Poor intellect for worship, truly,  
 Which tells me simply what was told

(If mere morality, bereft  
 Of the God in Christ, be all that 's left)  
 Elsewhere by voices manifold;  
 With this advantage, that the stater  
 Made nowise the important stumble  
 Of adding, he, the sage and humble,  
 Was also one with the Creator.  
 You urge Christ's followers' simplicity:  
 But how does shifting blame, evade it?  
 Have wisdom's words no more felicity?  
 The stumbling-block, his speech—who  
 laid it?  
 How comes it that for one found able  
 To sift the truth of it from fable,  
 Millions believe it to the letter?  
 Christ's goodness, then—does that fare  
 better?  
 Strange goodness, which upon the score  
 Of being goodness, the mere due  
 Of man to fellow-man, much more  
 To God,—should take another view  
 Of its possessor's privilege,  
 And bid him rule his race! You pledge  
 Your fealty to such rule? What, all—  
 From heavenly John and Attic Paul,  
 And that brave weather-battered  
 Peter  
 Whose stout faith only stood completer  
 For buffets, sinning to be pardoned,  
 As, more his hands hauled nets, they  
 hardened,—  
 All, down to you, the man of men,  
 Professing here at Göttingen,  
 Compose Christ's flock! They, you  
 and I,  
 Are sheep of a good man! And why?  
 The goodness,—how did he acquire it?  
 Was it self-gained, did God inspire it?  
 Choose which; then tell me, on what  
 ground  
 Should its possessor dare propound  
 His claim to rise o'er us an inch?  
 Were goodness all some man's invention,  
 Who arbitrarily made mention  
 What we should follow, and whence  
 flinch,—  
 What qualities might take the style  
 Of right and wrong,—and had such  
 guessing  
 Met with as general acquiescing  
 As graced the alphabet erewhile,  
 When A got leave an Ox to be,  
 No Camel (quoth the Jews), like G,—  
 For thus inventing thing and title  
 Worship were that man's fit requital.  
 But if the common conscience must

Be ultimately judge, adjust  
 Its apt name to each quality  
 Already known,—I would decree  
 Worship for such mere demonstration  
 And simple work of nomenclature,  
 Only the day I praised, not nature,  
 But Harvey, for the circulation.  
 I would praise such a Christ, with pride  
 And joy, that he, as none beside,  
 Had taught us how to keep the mind  
 God gave him, as God gave his kind,  
 Freer than they from fleshly taint :  
 I would call such a Christ our Saint,  
 As I declare our Poet, him  
 Whose insight makes all others dim :  
 A thousand poets pried at life,  
 And only one amid the strife  
 Rose to be Shakespeare : each shall  
 take  
 His crown, I'd say, for the world's  
 sake—  
 Though some objected—" Had we seen  
 " The heart and head of each, what  
 screen  
 " Was broken there to give them light,  
 " While in ourselves it shuts the sight,  
 " We should no more admire, per-  
 chance,  
 " That these found truth out at a  
 glance,  
 " Than marvel how the bat discerns  
 " Some pitch-dark cavern's fifty turns,  
 " Led by a finer tact, a gift  
 " He boasts, which other birds must  
 shift  
 " Without, and grope as best they can."  
 No, freely I would praise the man,—  
 Nor one whit more, if he contended  
 That gift of his, from God, descended.  
 Ah friend, what gift of man's does not ?  
 No nearer something, by a jot,  
 Rise an infinity of nothings  
 Than one : take Euclid for your  
 teacher :  
 Distinguish kinds : do crownings,  
 clothings,  
 Make that creator which was creature ?  
 Multiply gifts upon man's head,  
 And what, when all 's done, shall be  
 said  
 But—the more gifted he, I ween !  
 That one 's made Christ, this other,  
 Pilate,  
 And this might be all that has been,—  
 So what is there to frown or smile at ?  
 What is left for us, save, in growth  
 Of soul, to rise up, far past both,

From the gift looking to the giver,  
 And from the cistern to the river,  
 And from the finite to infinity,  
 And from man's dust to God's divinity?

## XVII

Take all in a word : the truth in God's  
 breast  
 Lies trace for trace upon ours im-  
 pressed :  
 Though he is so bright and we so dim,  
 We are made in his image to witness  
 him :  
 And were no eye in us to tell,  
 Instructed by no inner sense,  
 The light of heaven from the dark of  
 hell,  
 That light would want its evidence,—  
 Though justice, good and truth were  
 still  
 Divine, if, by some demon's will,  
 Hatred and wrong had been pro-  
 claimed [named.  
 Law through the worlds, and right mis-  
 No mere exposition of morality  
 Made or in part or in totality,  
 Should win you to give it worship,  
 therefore :  
 And, if no better proof you will care for,  
 —Whom do you count the worst man  
 upon earth ?  
 Be sure, he knows, in his conscience,  
 more  
 Of what right is, than arrives at birth  
 In the best man's acts that we bow  
 before :  
 This last knows better—true, but my  
 fact is,  
 'T is one thing to know, and another to  
 practise.  
 And thence I conclude that the real  
 God-function  
 Is to furnish a motive and injunction  
 For practising what we know already,  
 And such an injunction and such a mo-  
 tive  
 As the God in Christ, do you waive,  
 and " heady,  
 " High-minded," hang your tablet-  
 votive  
 Outside the fane on a finger-post ?  
 Morality to the uttermost,  
 Supreme in Christ as we all confess,  
 Why need we prove would avail no jot  
 To make him God, if God he were not ?  
 What is the point where himself lays  
 stress ?

Does the precept run " Believe in good,  
 " In justice, truth, now understood  
 " For the first time ? "—or, " Believe  
 in me,  
 " Who lived and died, yet essentially  
 " Am Lord of Life ? " Whoever can  
 take  
 The same to his heart and for mere  
 love's sake  
 Conceive of the love,—that man ob-  
 tains  
 A new truth ; no conviction gains  
 Of an old one only, made intense  
 By a fresh appeal to his faded sense.

## XVIII

" Can it be that he stays inside ?  
 Is the vesture left me to commune with ?  
 Could my soul find aught to sing in tune  
 with  
 Even at this lecture, if she tried ?  
 Oh, let me at lowest sympathize  
 With the lurking drop of blood that lies  
 In the desiccated brain's white roots  
 Without throb for Christ's attributes,  
 As the lecturer makes his special boast !  
 If love's dead there, it has left a ghost.  
 Admire we, how from heart to brain  
 (Though to say so strike the doctors  
 dumb)  
 One instinct rises and falls again,  
 Restoring the equilibrium.  
 And how when the Critic had done his  
 best,  
 And the pearl of price, at reason's test,  
 Lay dust and ashes levigable  
 On the Professor's lecture-table,—  
 When we looked for the inference and  
 monition  
 That our faith, reduced to such condi-  
 tion, [hole,—  
 Be swept forthwith to its natural dust-  
 He bids us, when we least expect it,  
 Take back our faith,—if it be not just  
 whole,  
 Yet a pearl indeed, as his tests affect it,  
 Which fact pays damage done reward-  
 ingly,  
 So, prize we our dust and ashes accord-  
 ingly !  
 ' Go home and venerate the myth  
 ' I thus have experimented with—  
 ' This man, continue to adore him  
 ' Rather than all who went before him,  
 ' And all who ever followed after ! '—  
 Surely for this I may praise you, my  
 brother !

Will you take the praise in tears or  
 laughter ?  
 That 's one point gained : can I com-  
 pass another ?  
 Unlearned love was safe from spurning—  
 Can 't we respect your loveless learn-  
 ing ?  
 Let us at least give learning honour !  
 What laurels had we showered upon  
 her,  
 Girding her loins up to perturb  
 Our theory of the Middle Verb ;  
 Or Turk-like brandishing a scimitar  
 O'er anapæsts in comic-trimeter ;  
 Or curing the halt and maimed ' Ike-  
 tides,' [ease :  
 While we lounged on at our indebted  
 Instead of which, a tricky demon  
 Sets her at Titus or Philemon !  
 When ignorance wags his ears of  
 leather  
 And hates God's word, 't is altogether ;  
 Nor leaves he his congenial thistles  
 To go and browse on Paul's Epistles.  
 —And you, the audience, who might  
 ravage  
 The world wide, enviably savage,  
 Nor heed the cry of the retriever,  
 More than Herr Heine (before his  
 fever),—  
 I do not tell a lie so arrant  
 As say my passion's wings are furled up  
 And, without plainest heavenly war-  
 rant,  
 I were ready and glad to give the world  
 up—  
 But still, when you rub brow meticu-  
 lous,  
 And ponder the profit of turning holy  
 If not for God's, for your own sake  
 solely,  
 —God forbid I should find you ridicu-  
 lous !  
 Deduce from this lecture all that eases  
 you,  
 Nay, call yourselves, if the calling  
 pleases you,  
 ' Christians,'—abhor the deist's pra-  
 vity,—  
 Go on, you shall no more move my  
 gravity  
 Than, when I see boys ride a-cockhorse,  
 I find it in my heart to embarrass them  
 By hinting that their stick 's a mock  
 horse,  
 And they really carry what they say  
 carries them."

## XIX

So sat I talking with my mind,  
I did not long to leave the door  
And find a new church, as before,  
But rather was quiet and inclined  
To prolong and enjoy the gentle resting  
From further tracking and trying and  
testing.

"This tolerance is a genial mood!"  
(Said I, and a little pause ensued).  
"One trims the bark 'twixt shoal and  
shelf,  
And sees, each side, the good effects of  
it,

A value for religion's self,  
A carelessness about the sects of it.  
Let me enjoy my own conviction,  
Not watch my neighbour's faith with  
fretfulness,

Still spying there some dereliction  
Of truth, perversity, forgetfulness!  
Better a mild indifferentism,  
Teaching that both our faiths (though  
duller

His shine through a dull spirit's prism)  
Originally had one colour!  
Better pursue a pilgrimage  
Through ancient and through modern  
times

To many peoples, various climes,  
Where I may see saint, savage, sage  
Fuse their respective creeds in one  
Before the general Father's throne!"

## XX

—'T was the horrible storm began  
afresh!

The black night caught me in his mesh,  
Whirled me up, and flung me prone.  
I was left on the college-step alone.  
I looked, and far there, ever fleeting  
Far, far away, the receding gesture,  
And looming of the lessening vesture!—  
Swept forward from my stupid hand,  
While I watched my foolish heart ex-  
pand

In the lazy glow of benevolence,  
O'er the various modes of man's belief.  
I sprang up with fear's vehemence.  
"Needs must there be one way, our  
chief

Best way of worship: let me strive  
To find it, and when found, contrive  
My fellows also take their share!  
This constitutes my earthly care:  
God's is above it and distinct.  
For I, a man, with men am linked,

And not a brute with brutes; no gain  
That I experience, must remain  
Unshared: but should my best endea-  
vour

To share it, fail—subsisteth ever  
God's care above, and I exult  
That God, by God's own ways occult,  
May—doth, I will believe—bring back  
All wanderers to a single track.

Meantime, I can but testify  
God's care for me—no more, can I—  
It is but for myself I know;  
The world rolls witnessing around me  
Only to leave me as it found me;  
Men cry there, but my ear is slow:  
Their races flourish or decay  
—What boots it, while yon lucid way  
Loaded with stars divides the vault?  
But soon my soul repairs its fault  
When, sharpening sense's hebetude,  
She turns on my own life! So viewed,  
No mere mote's-breadth but teems  
immense

With witnessings of providence:  
And woe to me if when I look  
Upon that record, the sole book  
Unsealed to me, I take no heed  
Of any warning that I read!  
Have I been sure, this Christmas-Eve,  
God's own hand did the rainbow weave,  
Whereby the truth from heaven slid  
Into my soul?—I cannot bid  
The world admit he stooped to heal  
My soul, as if in a thunder-peal  
Where one heard noise, and one saw  
flame,

I only knew he named my name:  
But what is the world to me, for sorrow  
Or joy in its censure, when to-morrow  
It drops the remark, with just-turned  
head

Then, on again, 'That man is dead?'  
Yes, but for me—my name called,—  
drawn

As a conscript's lot from the lap's  
black yawn,

He has dipt into on a battle-dawn:  
Bid out of life by a nod, a glance,—  
Stumbling, mute-mazed, at nature's  
chance,—

With a rapid finger circled round,  
Fixed to the first poor inch of ground  
To fight from, where his foot was found;  
Whose ear but a minute since lay free  
To the wide camp's buzz and gossipry—  
Summoned, a solitary man,  
To end his life where his life began,

From the safe glad rear, to the dreadful  
van !  
Soul of mine, hadst thou caught and  
held  
By the hem of the vesture !—"

## XXI

And I caught  
At the flying robe, and unrepelled  
Was lapped again in its folds full-  
fraught  
With warmth and wonder and delight,  
God's mercy being infinite,  
For scarce had the words escaped my  
tongue,  
When, at a passionate bound, I sprung  
Out of the wandering world of rain,  
Into the little chapel again.

## XXII

How else was I found there, bolt up-  
right.  
On my bench, as if I had never left it ?  
—Never flung out on the common at  
night  
Nor met the storm and wedge-like cleft  
it,  
Seen the raree-show of Peter's succes-  
sor,  
Or the laboratory of the Professor !  
For the Vision, that was true, I wist,  
True as that heaven and earth exist.  
There sat my friend, the yellow and tall,  
With his neck and its wen in the self-  
same place ;  
Yet my nearest neighbour's cheek  
showed gall,  
She had slid away a contemptuous  
space :  
And the old fat woman, late so plac-  
able,  
Eyed me with symptoms, hardly mis-  
takable,  
Of her milk of kindness turning rancid.  
In short, a spectator might have fancied  
that I had nodded betrayed by slum-  
ber,  
Yet kept my seat, a warning ghastly,  
Through the heads of the sermon, nine  
in number,  
And woke up now at the tenth and  
lastly.  
But again, could such disgrace have  
happened ?  
Each friend at my elbow had surely  
judged it ;

And, as for the sermon, where did my  
nap end ?  
Unless I heard it, could I have judged  
it ?  
Could I report as I do at the close,  
First, the preacher speaks through his  
nose :  
Second, his gesture is too emphatic :  
Thirdly, to waive what 's pedagogic,  
The subject-matter itself lacks logic :  
Fourthly, the English is ungrammatic.  
Great news ! the preacher is found no  
Pascal,  
Whom, if I pleased, I might to the task  
call  
Of making square to a finite eye  
The circle of infinity,  
And find so all-but-just-succeeding !  
Great news ! the sermon proves no  
reading  
Where bee-like in the flowers I may  
bury me,  
Like Taylor's, the immortal Jeremy !  
And now that I know the very worst of  
him,  
What was it I thought to obtain at  
first of him ?  
Ha ! Is God mocked, as he asks ?  
Shall I take on me to change his tasks,  
And dare, dispatched to a river-head  
For a simple draught of the element,  
Neglect the thing for which he sent,  
And return with another thing in-  
stead ?—  
Saying, " Because the water found  
" Welling up from underground,  
" Is mingled with the taints of earth,  
" While thou, I know, dost laugh at  
dearth,  
" And couldst, at wink or word, con-  
vulse  
" The world with the leap of a river-  
pulse,—  
" Therefore I turned from the oozeings  
muddy,  
" And bring thee a chalice I found, in-  
stead :  
" See the brave veins in the breccia  
ruddy !  
" One would suppose that the marble  
bled.  
" What matters the water ? A hope I  
have nursed,  
" The waterless cup will quench my  
thirst."  
—Better have knelt at the poorest  
stream

That trickles in pain from the straight-  
est rift !

For the less or the more is all God's gift,  
Who blocks up or breaks wide the  
granite-seam.

And here, is there water or not, to  
drink ?

I then, in ignorance and weakness,  
Taking God's help, have attained to  
think

My heart does best to receive in meek-  
ness

That mode of worship, as most to his  
mind,

Where earthly aids being cast behind,  
His All in All appears serene

With the thinnest human veil between,  
Letting the mystic lamps, the seven,

The many motions of his spirit,  
Pass, as they list, to earth from heaven.

For the preacher's merit or demerit,  
It were to be wished the flaws were  
fewer

In the earthen vessel, holding treasure,  
Which lies as safe in a golden ewer ;  
But the main thing is, does it hold good  
measure ?

Heaven soon sets right all other mat-  
ters !—

Ask, else, these ruins of humanity,  
This flesh worn out to rags and tatters,

This soul at struggle with insanity,  
Who thence take comfort, can I doubt ?

Which an empire gained, were a loss  
without.

May it be mine ! And let us hope  
That no worse blessing befall the Pope,  
Turn'd sick at last of to-day's buffoon-  
ery,

Of posturings and petticoatings,  
Beside his Bourbon bully's gloatings

In the bloody orgies of drunk poltroon-  
ery !

Nor may the Professor forego its peace  
At Göttingen presently, when, in the  
dusk

Of his life, if his cough, as I fear, should  
increase,

Prophesied of by that horrible husk—  
When thicker and thicker the darkness  
fills

The world through his misty spectacles,  
And he gropes for something more sub-  
stantial

Than a fable, myth or personification,—  
May Christ do for him what no mere  
man shall,

And stand confessed as the God of sal-  
vation !

Meantime, in the still recurring fear  
Lest myself, at unawares, be found,  
While attacking the choice of my neigh-  
bours round,

With none of my own made—I choose  
here !

The giving out of the hymn reclaims  
me ;

I have done : and if any blames me,  
Thinking that merely to touch in  
brevity

The topics I dwell on, were unlawful,—  
Or worse, that I trench, with undue  
levity,

On the bounds of the holy and the  
awful,—

I praise the heart, and pity the head of  
him,

And refer myself to THEE, instead of  
him,

Who head and heart alike discernest,  
Looking below light speech we utter  
When frothy spume and frequent sput-  
ter

Prove that the soul's depths boil in  
earnest !

May truth shine out, stand ever before  
us !

I put up pencil and join chorus  
To Hepzibah Tune, without further  
apology,

The last five verses of the third section  
Of the seventeenth hymn of Whitfield's  
Collection,

To conclude with the doxology.

EASTER-DAY

I

How very hard it is to be  
A Christian ! Hard for you and me,  
—Not the mere task of making real  
That duty up to its ideal,

Effecting thus, complete and whole,  
A purpose of the human soul—  
For that is always hard to do ;  
But hard, I mean, for me and you  
To realize it, more or less,  
With even the moderate success  
Which commonly repays our strife  
To carry out the aims of life.

" This aim is greater," you will say,  
" And so more arduous every way."

—But the importance of their fruits  
Still proves to man, in all pursuits,

Proportional encouragement.  
 "Then, what if it be God's intent  
 "That labour to this one result  
 "Should seem unduly difficult?"  
 Ah, that's a question in the dark—  
 And the sole thing that I remark  
 Upon the difficulty, this;  
 We do not see it where it is,  
 At the beginning of the race:  
 As we proceed, it shifts its place,  
 And where we looked for crowns to fall,  
 We find the tug's to come,—that's all.

## II

At first you say, "The whole, or chief  
 "Of difficulties, is belief.  
 "Could I believe once thoroughly,  
 "The rest were simple. What? Am I  
 "An idiot, do you think,—a beast?  
 "Prove to me, only that the least  
 "Command of God is God's indeed,  
 "And what injunction shall I need  
 "To pay obedience? Death so nigh,  
 "When time must end, eternity  
 "Begin,—and cannot I compute,  
 "Weigh loss and gain together, suit  
 "My actions to the balance drawn,  
 "And give my body to be sawn  
 "Asunder, hacked in pieces, tied  
 "To horses, stoned, burned, crucified,  
 "Like any martyr of the list?  
 "How gladly!—if I make acquit,  
 "Through the brief minute's fierce  
 "Annoy,  
 "Of God's eternity of joy."

## III

—And certainly you name the point  
 Whereon all turns: for could you joint  
 This flexile finite life once tight  
 Into the fixed and infinite,  
 You, safe inside, would spurn what's  
 out,  
 With carelessness enough, no doubt—  
 Would spurn mere life: but when time  
 brings  
 To their next stage your reasonings,  
 Your eyes, late wide, begin to wink  
 Nor see the path so well, I think.

## IV

You say, "Faith may be, one agrees,  
 "A touchstone for God's purposes,  
 "Even as ourselves conceive of them.  
 "Could he acquit us or condemn  
 "For holding what no hand can loose,  
 "Rejecting when we can't but choose?

"As well award the victor's wreath  
 "To whosoever should take breath  
 "Duly each minute while he lived—  
 "Grant heaven, because a man con-  
 trived  
 "To see its sunlight every day  
 "He walked forth on the public way.  
 "You must mix some uncertainty  
 "With faith, if you would have faith  
 be.  
 "Why, what but faith, do we abhor  
 "And idolize each other for—  
 "Faith in our evil or our good,  
 "Which is or is not understood  
 "Aright by those we love or those  
 "We hate, thence called our friends or  
 foes?  
 "Your mistress saw your spirit's grace,  
 "When, turning from the ugly face,  
 "I found belief in it too hard;  
 "And she and I have our reward.  
 "—Yet here a doubt peeps: well for  
 us  
 "Weak beings, to go using thus  
 "A touchstone for our little ends,  
 "Trying with faith the foes and friends;  
 "—But God, bethink you! I would  
 fain  
 "Conceive of the Creator's reign  
 "As based upon exacter laws  
 "Than creatures build by with ap-  
 plause.  
 "In all God's acts—(as Plato cries  
 "He doth)—he should geometrize.  
 "Whence, I desiderate . . ."

## V

I see!

You would grow as a natural tree,  
 Stand as a rock, soar up like fire.  
 The world's so perfect and entire,  
 Quite above faith, so right and fit!  
 Go there, walk up and down in it!  
 No. The creation travails, groans—  
 Contrive your music from its moans,  
 Without or let or hindrance, friend!  
 That's an old story, and its end  
 As old—you come back (be sincere)  
 With every question you put here  
 (Here where there once was, and is still,  
 We think, a living oracle,  
 Whose answers you stand carping at)  
 This time flung back unanswered flat,—  
 Beside, perhaps, as many more  
 As those that drove you out before,  
 Now added, where was little need.  
 Questions impossible, indeed,

To us who sat still, all and each  
 Persuaded that our earth had speech,  
 Of God's, writ down, no matter if  
 In cursive type or hieroglyph,—  
 Which one fact freed us from the yoke  
 Of guessing why he never spoke.  
 You come back in no better plight  
 Than when you left us,—am I right ?

## VI

So, the old process, I conclude,  
 Goes on, the reasoning 's pursued  
 Further. You own, " 'T is well  
 averred,  
 " A scientific faith 's absurd,  
 "—Frustrates the very end 't was  
 meant  
 " To serve. So, I would rest content  
 " With a mere probability,  
 " But, probable; the chance must lie  
 " Clear on one side,—lie all in rough,  
 " So long as there be just enough  
 " To pin my faith to, though it hap  
 " Only at points: from gap to gap  
 " One hangs up a huge curtain so,  
 " Grandly, nor seeks to have it go  
 " Foldless and flat along the wall.  
 " What care I if some interval  
 " Of life less plainly may depend  
 " On God? I'd hang there to the end;  
 " And thus I should not find it hard  
 " To be a Christian and debarred  
 " From trailing on the earth, till furled  
 " Away by death.—Renounce the  
 world!  
 " Were that a mighty hardship? Plan  
 " A pleasant life, and straight some  
 man  
 " Beside you, with, if he thought fit,  
 " Abundant means to compass it,  
 " Shall turn deliberate aside  
 " To try and live as, if you tried  
 " You clearly might, yet most despise.  
 " One friend of mine wears out his eyes,  
 " Slighting the stupid joys of sense,  
 " In patient hope that, ten years hence,  
 " 'Somewhat completer,' he may say,  
 " 'My list of *coleoptera* !'  
 " While just the other who most laughs  
 " At him, above all epitaphs  
 " Aspires to have his tomb describe  
 " Himself as sole among the tribe  
 " Of snuffbox-fanciers, who possessed  
 " A Grignon with the Regent's crest.  
 " So that, subduing, as you want,  
 " Whatever stands predominant  
 " Among my earthly appetites

" For tastes and smells and sounds and  
 sights,  
 " I shall be doing that alone,  
 " To gain a palm-branch and a throne,  
 " Which fifty people undertake  
 " To do, and gladly, for the sake  
 " Of gying a Semitic guess,  
 " Or playing pawns at blindfold chess."

## VII

Good: and the next thing is,—look  
 round  
 For evidence enough! 'T is found,  
 No doubt: as is your sort of mind,  
 So is your sort of search: you'll find  
 What you desire, and that 's to be  
 A Christian. What says history?  
 How comforting a point it were  
 To find some mummy-scrap declare  
 There lived a Moses! Better still,  
 Prove Jonah's whale translatable  
 Into some quicksand of the seas,  
 Isle, cavern, rock, or what you please,  
 That faith might clap her wings and  
 crow  
 From such an eminence! Or, no—  
 The human heart 's best; you prefer  
 Making that prove the minister  
 To truth; you probe its wants and  
 needs,  
 And hopes and fears, then try what  
 creeds  
 Meet these most aptly,—resolute  
 That faith plucks such substantial fruit  
 Wherever these two correspond,  
 She little needs to look beyond,  
 And puzzle out who Orpheus was,  
 Or Dionysius Zagrias.  
 You'll find sufficient, as I say,  
 To satisfy you either way;  
 You wanted to believe; your pains  
 Are crowned—you do: and what re-  
 nains?  
 " Renounce the world!"—Ah, were it  
 done  
 By merely cutting one by one  
 Your limbs off, with your wise head  
 last,  
 How easy were it!—how soon past,  
 If once in the believing mood!  
 " Such is man's usual gratitude,  
 " Such thanks to God do we return,  
 " For not exacting that we spurn  
 " A single gift of life, forego  
 " One real gain,—only taste them so  
 " With gravity and temperance,  
 " That those mild virtues may enhance

"Such pleasures, rather than abstract—  
 "Last spice of which, will be the fact  
 "Of love discerned in every gift;  
 "While, when the scene of life shall shift,  
 "And the gay heart be taught to ache,  
 "As sorrows and privations take  
 "The place of joy,—the thing that seems  
 "Mere misery, under human schemes,  
 "Becomes, regarded by the light  
 "Of love, as very near, or quite  
 "As good a gift as joy before.  
 "So plain is it that, all the more  
 "God's dispensation 's merciful,  
 "More pettishly we try and cull  
 "Briars, thistles, from our private plot,  
 "To mar God's ground where thorns are not!"

## VIII

Do you say this, or I?—Oh, you!  
 Then, what, my friend?—(thus I pursue

Our parley)—you indeed opine  
 That the Eternal and Divine  
 Did, eighteen centuries ago,  
 In a very truth . . . Enough! you know

The all-stupendous tale,—that Birth,  
 That Life, that Death! And all, the earth [black

Shuddered at,—all, the heavens grew  
 Rather than see; all, nature's rack

And throe at dissolution's brink  
 Attested,—all took place, you think,  
 Only to give our joys a zest,

And prove our sorrows for the best?  
 We differ, then! Were I, still pale

And heartstruck at the dreadful tale,  
 Waiting to hear God's voice declare  
 What horror followed for my share,

As implicated in the deed,  
 Apart from other sins,—concede

That if he blacked out in a blot  
 My brief life's pleasantness, 't were not  
 So very disproportionate!

Or there might be another fate—  
 I certainly could understand

(If fancies were the thing in hand)  
 How God might save, at that day's

price,  
 The impure in their impurities,

Give formal licence and complete  
 To choose the fair and pick the sweet.

But there be certain words, broad,  
 plain,

Uttered again and yet again,  
 Hard to mistake or overgloss—  
 Announcing this world's gain for loss,  
 And bidding us reject the same:  
 The whole world lieth (they proclaim)  
 In wickedness,—come out of it!  
 Turn a deaf ear, if you think fit,  
 But I who thrill through every nerve  
 At thought of what deaf ears deserve,—  
 How do you counsel in the case?

## IX

"I'd take, by all means, in your place,  
 "The safe side, since it so appears:

"Deny myself, a few brief years,

"The natural pleasure, leave the fruit

"Or cut the plant up by the root,

"Remember what a martyr said

"On the rude tablet overhead!

"I was born sickly, poor and mean,

"A slave: no misery could screen

"The holders of the pearl of price

"From Cæsar's envy; therefore twice

"I fought with beasts, and three  
 times saw

"My children suffer by his law;

"At last my own release was earned:

"I was some time in being burned,

"But at the close a Hand came  
 through

"The fire above my head, and drew

"My soul to Christ, whom now I see.

"Sergius, a brother, writes for me

"This testimony on the wall—

"For me, I have forgot it all."

"You say right; this were not so hard!

"And since one nowise is debarred

"From this, why not escape some sins

"By such a method?"

## X

Then begins

To the old point, revulsion new—  
 (For 't is just this, I bring you to)

If after all we should mistake,

And so renounce life for the sake

Of death and nothing else? You hear

Our friends were jeered at, send the jeer

Back to ourselves with good effect—

"There were my beetles to collect!

"My box—a trifle, I confess,

"But here I hold it, ne'ertheless!"

Poor idiots, (let us pluck up heart

And answer) we, the better part

Have chosen, though 't were only

hope,—

Nor envy moles like you that grope

Amid your veritable muck,  
More than the grasshoppers would  
truck,

For yours, their passionate life away,  
That spends itself in leaps all day  
To reach the sun, you want the eyes  
To see, as they the wings to rise  
And match the noble hearts of them !  
Thus the contemner we contemn,—  
And, when doubt strikes us, thus we  
ward

Its stroke off, caught upon our guard,  
—Not struck enough to overturn  
Our faith, but shake it—make us learn  
What I began with, and, I wis,  
End, having proved,—how hard it is  
To be a Christian !

## XI

“ Proved, or not,  
“ Howe'er you wis, small thanks, I wot,  
“ You get of mine, for taking pains  
“ To make it hard to me. Who gains  
“ By that, I wonder ? Here I live  
“ In trusting ease ; and here you drive  
“ At causing me to lose what most  
“ Yourself would mourn for had you  
lost ! ”

## XII

But, do you see, my friend, that thus  
You leave St. Paul for Æschylus ?  
—Who made his Titan's arch-device  
The giving men *blind hopes* to spive  
The meal of life with, else devoured  
In bitter haste, while lo, death loured  
Before them at the platter's edge !  
If faith should be, as I allege,  
Quite other than a condiment  
To heighten flavours with, or meant  
(Like that brave curry of his Grace)  
To take at need the victuals' place ?  
If, having dined, you would digest  
Besides, and turning to your rest  
Should find instead . . .

## XIII

Now, you shall see  
And judge if a mere foppery  
Pricks on my speaking ! I resolve  
To utter—yes, it shall devolve  
On you to hear as solemn, strange  
And dread a thing as in the range  
Of facts,—or fancies, if God will—  
E'er happened to our kind ! I still  
Stand in the cloud and, while it wraps  
My face, ought not to speak perhaps ;

Seeing that if I carry through  
My purpose, if my words in you  
Find a live actual listener,  
My story, reason must aver  
False after all—the happy chance !  
While, if each human countenance  
I meet in London day by day,  
Be what I fear,—my warnings fray  
No one, and no one they convert,  
And no one helps me to assert  
How hard it is to really be  
A Christian, and in vacancy  
I pour this story !

## XIV

I commence  
By trying to inform you, whence  
It comes that every Easter-night  
As now, I sit up, watch, till light,  
Upon those chimney-stacks and roofs,  
Give, through my window-pane, grey  
proofs

That Easter-day is breaking slow.  
On such a night, three years ago,  
It chanced that I had cause to cross  
The common, where the chapel was,  
Our friend spoke of, the other day—  
You 've not forgotten, I dare say.  
I fell to musing of the time  
So close, the blessed matin-prime  
All hearts leap up at, in some guise—  
One could not well do otherwise.  
Insensibly my thoughts were bent  
Toward the main point ;—I overwent  
Much the same ground of reasoning  
As you and I just now. One thing  
Remained, however—one that tasked  
My soul to answer ; and I asked,  
Fairly and frankly, what might be  
That History, that Faith, to me  
—Me there—not me in some domain  
Built up and peopled by my brain,  
Weighing its merits as one weighs  
Mere theories for blame or praise,  
—The kingcraft of the Lucumons,  
Or Fourier's scheme, its pros and cons,—  
But my faith there, or none at all.  
“ How were my case, now, did I fall  
“ Dead here, this minute—should I lie  
“ Faithful or faithless ? ”—Note that I  
Inclined thus ever !—little prone  
For instance, when I lay alone  
In childhood, to go calm to sleep  
And leave a closet where might keep  
His watch perdue some murderer  
Waiting till twelve o'clock to stir,  
As good authentic legends tell ;

" He might : but how improbable !  
 " How little likely to deserve  
 " The pains and trial to the nerve  
 " Of thrusting head into the dark !"—  
 Urged my old nurse, and bade me mark  
 Beside, that, should the dreadful scout  
 Really lie hid there, and leap out  
 At first turn of the rusty key,  
 Mine were small gain that she could see,  
 Killed not in bed but on the floor,  
 And losing one night's sleep the more.  
 I tell you, I would always burst  
 The door ope, know my fate at first.  
 This time, indeed, the closet penned  
 No such assassin : but a friend  
 Rather, peeped out to guard me, fit  
 For counsel, Common Sense, to wit,  
 Who said a good deal that might pass,—  
 Heartening, impartial too, it was,  
 Judge else : " For, soberly now,—who  
 " Should be a Christian if not you ?"  
 (Hear how he smoothed me down.)  
 " One takes  
 " A whole life, sees what course it  
 makes  
 " Mainly, and not by fits and starts—  
 " In spite of stoppage which imparts  
 " Fresh value to the general speed.  
 " A life, with none, would fly indeed :  
 " Your progressing is slower—right !  
 " We deal with progress and not flight.  
 " Through baffling senses passionate,  
 " Fancies as restless,—with a freight  
 " Of knowledge cumbersome enough  
 " To sink your ship when waves grow  
 rough,  
 " Though meant for ballast in the hold,—  
 " I find, 'mid dangers manifold,  
 " The good bark answers to the helm  
 " Where faith sits, easier to o'erwhelm  
 " Than some stout peasant's heavenly  
 guide,  
 " Whose hard head could not, if it tried,  
 " Conceive a doubt, nor understand  
 " How senses hornier than his hand  
 " Should 'tice the Christian off his  
 guard.  
 " More happy ! But shall we award  
 " Less honour to the hull which, dogged  
 " By storms, a mere wreck, water-  
 logged,  
 " Masts by the board, her bulwarks  
 gone  
 " And stanchions going, yet bears on,—  
 " Than to mere life-boats, built to save,  
 " And triumph o'er the breaking wave?  
 " Make perfect your good ship as these,

" And what were her performances !"  
 I added—" Would the ship reach home!  
 " I wish indeed ' God's kingdom come—'  
 " The day when I shall see appear  
 " His bidding, as my duty, clear  
 " From doubt ! And it shall dawn,  
 that day,  
 " Some future season ; Easter may  
 " Prove, not impossibly, the time—  
 " Yes, that were striking—fates would  
 chime  
 " So aptly ! Easter-morn, to bring  
 " The Judgment !—deeper in the spring  
 " Than now, however, when there's  
 snow [show  
 " Capping the hills ; for earth must  
 " All signs of meaning to pursue  
 " Her tasks as she was wont to do  
 " —The skylark, taken by surprise  
 " As we ourselves, shall recognise  
 " Sudden the end. For suddenly  
 " It comes ; the dreadfulness must be  
 " In that ; all warrants the belief—  
 " ' At night it cometh like a thief.'  
 " I fancy why the trumpet blows ;  
 " —Plainly, to wake one. From repose  
 " We shall start up, at last awake  
 " From life, that insane dream we take  
 " For waking now, because it seems.  
 " And as, when now we wake from  
 dreams,  
 " We laugh, while we recall them,  
 ' Fool,  
 " ' To let the chance slip, linger cool  
 " ' When such adventure offered ! Just  
 " ' A bridge to cross, a dwarf to thrust  
 " ' Aside, a wicked mage to stab—  
 " ' And, lo ye, I had kissed Queen  
 Mab !'  
 " So shall we marvel why we grudged  
 " Our labour here, and idly judged  
 " Of heaven, we might have gained,  
 but lose !  
 " Lose ? Talk of loss, and I refuse  
 " To plead at all ! You speak no worse  
 " Nor better than my ancient nurse  
 " When she would tell me in my youth  
 " I well deserved that shapes uncouth  
 " Frighted and teased me in my sleep :  
 " Why could I not in memory keep  
 " Her precept for the evil's cure ?  
 " ' Pinch your own arm, boy, and be  
 sure  
 " ' You 'll wake forthwith !'

This nonsense, throwing back my head  
With light complacent laugh, I found  
Suddenly all the midnight round  
One fire. The dome of heaven had  
stood

As made up of a multitude  
Of handbreadth cloudlets, one vast  
rack

Of ripples infinite and black,  
From sky to sky. Sudden there went,  
Like horror and astonishment,  
A fierce vindictive scribble of red  
Quick flame across, as if one said  
(The angry scribe of Judgment)

"There—

"Burn it!" And straight I was aware  
That the whole ribwork round, minute  
Cloud touching cloud beyond compute,  
Was tinted, each with its own spot  
Of burning at the core, till clot  
Jammed against clot, and spilt its fire  
Over all heaven, which 'gan suspire  
As fanned to measure equable,—  
Just so great conflagrations kill  
Night overhead, and rise and sink,  
Reflected. Now the fire would shrink  
And wither off the blasted face  
Of heaven, and I distinct might trace  
The sharp black ridgy outlines left  
Unburned like network—then, each  
cleft

The fire had been sucked back into,  
Regorged, and out it surging flew  
Furiously, and night writhed inflamed,  
Till, tolerating to be tamed  
No longer, certain rays world-wide  
Shot downwardly. On every side  
Caught past escape, the earth was lit;  
As if a dragon's nostril split  
And all his famished ire o'erflowed;  
Then as he winced at his lord's goad,  
Back he inhaled: whereat I found  
The clouds into vast pillars bound,  
Based on the corners of the earth,  
Propping the skies at top: a dearth  
Of fire in the violet intervals,  
Leaving exposed the utmost walls  
Of time, about to tumble in  
And end the world.

XVI

I felt begin

The Judgment-Day: to retrocede  
Was too late now. "In very deed,"  
(I uttered to myself) "that Day!"  
The intuition burned away  
All darkness from my spirit too:

There, stood I, found and fixed, I knew,  
Choosing the world. The choice was  
made;

And naked and disguiseless stayed,  
And unevadable, the fact.  
My brain held ne'ertheless compact  
Its senses, nor my heart declined  
Its office; rather, both combined  
To help me in this juncture. I  
Lost not a second,—agony  
Gave boldness: since my life had end  
And my choice with it—best defend,  
Applaud both! I resolved to say,  
"So was I framed by thee, such way  
"I put to use thy senses here!  
"It was so beautiful, so near,  
"Thy world,—what could I then but  
choose

"My part there? Nor did I refuse  
"To look above the transient boon  
"Of time; but it was hard so soon  
"As in a short life, to give up  
"Such beauty: I could put the cup  
"Undrained of half its fulness, by;  
"But, to renounce it utterly,  
"—That was too hard! Nor did the  
cry

"Which bade renounce it, touch my  
brain  
"Authentically deep and plain  
"Enough to make my lips let go,  
"But thou, who knowest all, dost  
know

"Whether I was not, life's brief while,  
"Endeavouring to reconcile  
"Those lips (too tardily, alas!)  
"To letting the dear remnant pass,  
"One day,—some drops of earthly good  
"Untasted! Is it for this mood,  
"That thou, whose earth delights so  
well,

"Hast made its complement a hell?"

XVII

A final belch of fire like blood,  
Overbroke all heaven in one flood  
Of doom. Then fire was sky, and sky  
Fire, and both, one brief ecstasy,  
Then ashes. But I heard no noise  
(Whatever was) because a voice  
Beside me spoke thus, "Life is done,  
"Time ends, Eternity's begun,  
"And thou art judged for evermore."

XVIII

I looked up; all seemed as before;  
Of that cloud-Tophet overhead,

No trace was left : I saw instead  
The common round me, and the sky  
Above, stretched drear and empty  
Of life. 'T was the last watch of night,  
Except what brings the morning quite ;  
When the armed angel, conscience-  
clear,

His task nigh done, leans o'er his spear  
And gazes on the earth he guards,  
Safe one night more through all its  
wards,

Till God relieve him at his post.

" A dream—a waking dream at most !"  
(I spoke out quick, that I might shake  
The horrid nightmare off, and wake.)  
" The world gone, yet the world is here ?  
" Are not all things as they appear ?  
" Is Judgment past for me alone ?  
"—And where had place the great  
white throne ?

" The rising of the quick and dead ?  
" Where stood they, small and great ?  
Who read

" The sentence from the opened book ?"  
So, by degrees, the blood forsook  
My heart, and let it beat afresh ;  
I knew I should break through the mesh  
Of horror, and breathe presently :  
When, lo, again, the voice by me !

## XIX

I saw . . . Oh brother, 'mid far sands  
The palm-tree-cinctured city stands,  
Bright-white beneath, as heaven,  
bright-blue,

Leans o'er it, while the years pursue  
Their course, unable to abate  
Its paradisaal laugh at fate !  
One morn,—the Arab staggers blind  
O'er a new tract of death, calcined  
To ashes, silence, nothingness,—  
And strives, with dizzy wits, to guess  
Whence fell the blow. What if,  
'twixt skies

And prostrate earth, he should surprise  
The imaged vapour, head to foot,  
Surveying, motionless and mute,  
Its work, ere, in a whirlwind rapt  
It vanish up again ?—So hapt  
My chance. He stood there. Like the  
smoke

Pillared o'er Sodom, when day broke,—  
I saw him. One magnific pall  
Mantled in massive fold and fall  
His dread, and coiled in snaky swathes  
About his feet : night's black, that  
bathes

All else, broke, grizzled with despair,  
Against the soul of blackness there.  
A gesture told the mood within—  
That wrapped right hand which based  
the chin,

That intense meditation fixed  
On his procedure,—pity mixed  
With the fulfilment of decree.  
Motionless, thus, he spoke to me,  
Who fell before his feet, a mass,  
No man now.

## XX

" All is come to pass.

" Such shows are over for each soul  
" They had respect to. In the roll  
" Of Judgment which convinced man-  
kind

" Of sin, stood many, bold and blind,  
" Terror must burn the truth into :  
" Their fate for them !—thou hadst to  
do

" With absolute omnipotence,  
" Able its judgments to dispense '  
" To the whole race, as every one  
" Were its sole object. Judgment done,  
" God is, thou art,—the rest is hurled  
" To nothingness for thee. This world,  
" This finite life, thou hast preferred,  
" In disbelief of God's own word,  
" To heaven and to infinity.

" Here the probation was for thee,  
" To show thy soul the earthly mixed  
" With heavenly, it must choose be-  
twixt.

" The earthly joys lay palpable,—  
" A taint, in each, distinct as well ;  
" The heavenly flitted, faint and rare,  
" Above them, but as truly were  
" Taintless, so, in their nature, best.  
" Thy choice was earth : thou didst at-  
test

" 'T was fitter spirit should subserve  
" The flesh, than flesh refine to nerve  
" Beneath the spirit's play. Advance  
" No claim to their inheritance  
" Who chose the spirit's fugitive  
" Brief gleams, and yearned, ' This  
were to live

" ' Indeed, if rays, completely pure  
" ' From flesh that dulls them, could  
endure,—

" ' Not shoot in meteor-light athwart  
" ' Our earth, to show how cold and  
swart

" ' It lies beneath their fire, but stand  
" ' As stars do, destined to expand,

“ Prove veritable worlds, our home ! ”  
 “ Thou saidst,— ‘ Let spirit star the  
 dome  
 “ Of sky, that flesh may miss no peak,  
 “ No nook of earth,— I shall not seek  
 “ Its service further ! ’ Thou art  
 shut  
 “ Of the heaven of spirit ; glut  
 “ Thy sense upon the world : ’ t is thine  
 “ For ever—take it ! ”

## XXI

“ How ? Is mine,  
 “ The world ? ” ( I cried, while my soul  
 broke  
 Out in a transport. ) “ Hast thou  
 spoke  
 “ Plainly in that ? Earth’s exquisite  
 “ Treasures of wonder and delight,  
 “ For me ? ”

## XXII

The austere voice returned,—  
 “ So soon made happy ? Hadst thou  
 learned  
 “ What God accounteth happiness,  
 “ Thou wouldst not find it hard to  
 guess  
 “ What hell may be his punishment  
 “ For those who doubt if God invent  
 “ Better than they. Let such men rest  
 “ Content with what they judged the  
 best.  
 “ Let the unjust usurp at will :  
 “ The filthy shall be filthy still :  
 “ Miser, there waits the gold for thee !  
 “ Hater, indulge thine enmity !  
 “ And thou, whose heaven self-  
 ordained  
 “ Was, to enjoy earth unrestrained,  
 “ Do it ! Take all the ancient show !  
 “ The woods shall wave, the rivers  
 flow,  
 “ And men apparently pursue  
 “ Their works, as they were wont to do,  
 “ While living in probation yet.  
 “ I promise not thou shalt forget  
 “ The past, now gone to its account ;  
 “ But leave thee with the old amount  
 “ Of faculties, nor less nor more,  
 “ Unvisited, as heretofore,  
 “ By God’s free spirit, that makes an  
 end.  
 “ So, once more, take thy world ! Ex-  
 pend  
 “ Eternity upon its shows,  
 “ Flung thee as freely as one rose

“ Out of a summer’s opulence,  
 “ Over the Eden-barrier whence  
 “ Thou art excluded. Knock in vain ! ”

## XXIII

I sat up. All was still again.  
 I breathed free : to my heart, back fled  
 The warmth. “ But, all the world ! ”  
 — I said.

I stooped and picked a leaf of fern,  
 And recollected I might learn  
 From books, how many myriad sorts  
 Of fern exist, to trust reports,  
 Each as distinct and beautiful  
 As this, the very first I cull.  
 Think, from the first leaf to the last !  
 Conceive, then, earth’s resources ! Vast  
 Exhaustless beauty, endless change  
 Of wonder ! And this foot shall range  
 Alps, Andes,—and this eye devour  
 The bee-bird and the aloe-flower ?

## XXIV

Then the voice, “ Welcome so to rate  
 “ The arras-folds that variegate  
 “ The earth, God’s antechamber, well !  
 “ The wise, who waited there, could tell  
 “ By these, what royalties in store  
 “ Lay one step past the entrance-door.  
 “ For whom, was reckoned, not too  
 much,  
 “ This life’s munificence ? For such  
 “ As thou,—a race, whereof scarce one  
 “ Was able, in a million,  
 “ To feel that any marvel lay  
 “ In objects round his feet all day ;  
 “ Scarce one, in many millions more,  
 “ Willing, if able, to explore  
 “ The secreter, minuter charm !  
 “ — Brave souls, a fern-leaf could dis-  
 arm  
 “ Of power to cope with God’s intent,—  
 “ Or scared if the south firmament  
 “ With north-fire did its wings reledge !  
 “ All partial beauty was a pledge  
 “ Of beauty in its plenitude :  
 “ But since the pledge sufficed thy  
 mood,  
 “ Retain it ! plenitude be theirs  
 “ Who looked above ! ”

## XXV

Though sharp despair  
 Shot through me, I held up, bore on  
 “ What matter though my trust were  
 gone  
 “ From natural things ? Henceforth  
 my part



## XXVII

I cried in anguish, " Mind, the mind,  
 " So miserably cast behind,  
 " To gain what had been wisely lost !  
 " Oh, let me strive to make the most  
 " Of the poor stunted soul, I nipped  
 " Of budding wings, else now equipped  
 " For voyage from summer isle to isle !  
 " And though she needs must reconcile  
 " Ambition to the life on ground,  
 " Still, I can profit by late found  
 " But precious knowledge. Mind is  
 best—  
 " I will seize mind, forego the rest,  
 " And try how far my tethered strength  
 " May crawl in this poor breadth and  
 length.  
 " Let me, since I can fly no more,  
 " At least spin dervish-like about  
 " (Till giddy rapture almost doubt  
 " I fly) through circling sciences,  
 " Philosophies and histories !  
 " Should the whirl slacken there, then  
 verse,  
 " Fining to music, shall asperse  
 " Fresh and fresh fire-dew, till I strain  
 " Intoxicate, half-break my chain !  
 " Not joyless, though more favoured  
 feet  
 " Stand calm, where I want wings to  
 beat  
 " The floor. At least earth's bond is  
 broke ! "

## XXVIII

Then, (sickening even while I spoke)  
 " Let me alone ! No answer, pray,  
 " To this ! I know what thou wilt say !  
 " All still is earth's,—to know, as  
 much  
 " As feel its truths, which if we touch  
 " With sense, or apprehend in soul,  
 " What matter ? I have reached the  
 goal—  
 " ' Where to does knowledge serve ! '  
 will burn  
 " My eyes, too sure, at every turn !  
 " I cannot look back now, nor stake  
 " Bliss on the race, for running's sake.  
 " The goal 's a ruin like the rest !—  
 " And so much worse thy latter quest,"  
 (Added the voice) " that even on  
 earth—  
 " Whenever, in man's soul, had birth  
 " Those intuitions, grasps of guess,  
 " That pull the more into the less,  
 " Making the finite comprehend

" Infinity,—the bard would spend  
 " Such praise alone, upon his craft,  
 " As, when wind-lyres obey the waft,  
 " Goes to the craftsman who arranged  
 " The seven strings, changed them and  
 rechanged—  
 " Knowing it was the South that  
 harped.  
 " He felt his song, in singing, warped ;  
 " Distinguished his and God's part :  
 whence  
 " A world of spirit as of sense  
 " Was plain to him, yet not too plain,  
 " Which he could traverse, not remain  
 " A guest in :—else were permanent  
 " Heaven on earth which its gleams  
 were meant  
 " To sting with hunger for full light,—  
 " Made visible in verse, despite  
 " The veiling weakness,—truth by  
 means  
 " Of fable, showing while it screens,—  
 " Since highest truth, man e'er sup-  
 plied,  
 " Was ever fable on outside.  
 " Such gleams made bright the earth an  
 age ;  
 " Now, the whole sun 's his heritage !  
 " Take up thy world, it is allowed,  
 " Thou who hast entered in the cloud ! "

## XXIX

Then I—" Behold, my spirit bleeds,  
 " Catches no more at broken reeds,—  
 " But lilies flower those reeds above :  
 " I let the world go, and take love !  
 " Love survives in me, albeit those  
 " I love be henceforth masks and shows,  
 " Not loving men and women : still  
 " I mind how love repaired all ill,  
 " Cured wrong, soothed grief, made  
 earth amends  
 " With parents, brothers, children,  
 friends !  
 " Some semblance of a woman yet  
 " With eyes to help me to forget,  
 " Shall live with me ; and I will match  
 " Departed love with love, attach  
 " Its fragments to my whole, nor scorn  
 " The poorest of the grains of corn  
 " I save from shipwreck on this isle,  
 " Trusting its barrenness may smile  
 " With happy foodful green one day,  
 " More precious for the pains. I pray,  
 " For love, then, only ! "

## XXX

At the word,

The form, I looked to have been stirred  
 With pity and approval, rose  
 O'er me, as when the headsman throws  
 Axe over shoulder to make end—  
 I fell prone, letting him expend  
 His wrath, while thus the inflicting  
 voice

Smote me. "Is this thy final choice?  
 "Love is the best? 'T is somewhat  
 late!

"And all thou dost enumerate  
 "Of power and beauty in the world,  
 "The mightiness of love was curled  
 "Inextricably round about.  
 "Love lay within it and without,  
 "To clasp thee,—but in vain! Thy  
 soul

"Still shrunk from him who made the  
 whole,

"Still set deliberate aside  
 "His love!—Now take love! Well  
 betide

"Thy tardy conscience! Haste to  
 take

"The show of love for the name's sake,  
 "Remembering every moment Who  
 "Beside creating thee unto

"These ends, and these for thee, was  
 said

"To undergo death in thy stead  
 "In flesh like thine: so ran the tale.

"What doubt in thee could countervail  
 "Belief in it? Upon the ground

"That in the story had been found  
 "'Too much love! How could God  
 love so?"

"He who in all his works below  
 "Adapted to the needs of man,

"Made love the basis of the plan,—  
 "Did love, as was demonstrated:

"While man, who was so fit instead  
 "To hate, as every day gave proof,—

"Man thought man, for his kind's be-  
 hoof,

"Both could and did invent that  
 scheme

"Of perfect love: 't would well beseem  
 "Cain's nature thou wast wont to  
 praise,

"Not tally with God's usual ways!"

## XXXI

And I cowered deprecatingly—  
 "Thou Love of God! Or let me die,

"Or grant what shall seem heaven al-  
 most!

"Let me not know that all is lost,

"Though lost it be—leave me not tied  
 "To this despair, this corpse-like bride!  
 "Let that old life seem mine—no  
 more—

"With limitation as before,  
 "With darkness, hunger, toil, distress:

"Be all the earth a wilderness!  
 "Only let me go on, go on,

"Still hoping ever and anon  
 "To reach one eve the Better Land!"

## XXXII

Then did the form expand, expand—  
 I knew him through the dread disguise,  
 As the whole God within his eyes  
 Embraced me.

## XXXIII

When I lived again,  
 The day was breaking,—the grey plain  
 I rose from, silvered thick with dew.

Was this a vision? False or true?  
 Since then, three varied years are spent,  
 And commonly my mind is bent

To think it was a dream—be sure  
 A mere dream and distemperature—

The last day's watching: then the  
 night,— [Light

The shock of that strange Northern  
 Set my head swimming, bred in me

A dream. And so I live, you see,  
 Go through the world, try, prove, re-  
 ject,

Prefer, still struggling to effect  
 My warfare; happy that I can

Be crossed and thwarted as a man,  
 Not left in God's contempt apart,

With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,  
 Tame in earth's paddock as her prize.

Thank God, she still each method tries  
 To catch me, who may yet escape,

She knows, the fiend in angel's shape!  
 Thank God, no paradise stands barred

To entry, and I find it hard  
 To be a Christian, as I said!

Still every now and then my head  
 Raised glad, sinks mournful—all grows  
 drear

Spite of the sunshine, while I fear  
 And think, "How dreadful to be  
 gruded

judged,  
 "No ease henceforth, as one that's  
 "Condemned to earth for ever, shut  
 "From heaven!"

But Easter-Day breaks! But  
 Christ rises! Mercy every way  
 Is infinite,—and who can say?

## MEN AND WOMEN

FLORENCE, 185—.

“TRANSCENDENTALISM:  
A POEM IN TWELVE BOOKS”

STOP playing, poet! May a brother  
speak?  
'T is you speak, that 's your error.  
Song 's our art:  
Whereas you please to speak these  
naked thoughts  
Instead of draping them in sights and  
sounds.  
—True thoughts, good thoughts,  
thoughts fit to treasure up!  
But why such long prolusion and dis-  
play,  
Such turning and adjustment of the  
harp,  
And taking it upon your breast, at  
length,  
Only to speak dry words across its  
strings?  
Stark-naked thought is in request  
enough:  
Speak prose and hollo it till Europe  
hears!  
The six-foot Swiss tube, braced about  
with bark,  
Which helps the hunter's voice from  
Alp to Alp—  
Exchange our harp for that,—who  
hinders you?

But here 's your fault; grown men  
want thought, you think;  
Thought 's what they mean by verse,  
and seek in verse:  
Boys seek for images and melody,  
Men must have reason—so, you aim at  
men.  
Quite otherwise! Objects throng our  
youth, 't is true;  
We see and hear and do not wonder  
much:  
If you could tell us what they mean,  
indeed!  
As German Boehme never cared for  
plants  
Until it happened, a-walking in the fields,  
He noticed all at once that plants could  
speak,

Nay, turned with loosened tongue to  
talk with him.  
That day the daisy had an eye indeed—  
Colloquized with the cowslip on such  
themes!  
We find them extant yet in Jacob's  
prose.  
But by the time youth slips a stage or  
two  
While reading prose in that tough book  
he wrote,  
(Collating and emendating the same  
And settling on the sense most to our  
mind)  
We shut the clasps and find life's sum-  
mer past.  
Then, who helps more, pray, to repair  
our loss—  
Another Boehme with a tougher book  
And subtler meanings of what roses  
say,—  
Or some stout mage like him of Halber-  
stadt,  
John, who made things Boehme wrote  
thoughts about?  
He with a “look you!” vents a brace  
of rhymes,  
And in there breaks the sudden rose  
herself,  
Over us, under, round us every side,  
Nay, in and out the tables and the  
chairs  
And musty volumes, Boehme's book  
and all,—  
Buries us with a glory, young once  
more,  
Pouring heaven into this shut house of  
life.  
So come, the harp back to your heart  
again!  
You are a poem, though your poem 's  
naught.  
The best of all you showed before, be-  
lieve,  
Was your own boy-face o'er the finer  
chords  
Bent, following the cherub at the top  
That points to God with his paired half-  
moon wings.

## HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY.

I ONLY knew one poet in my life :  
 And this, or something like it, was his way.  
 You saw go up and down Valladolid,  
 A man of mark, to know next time you saw.  
 His very serviceable suit of black  
 Was courtly once and conscientious still,  
 And many might have worn it, though none did :  
 The cloak, that somewhat shone and showed the threads,  
 Had purpose, and the ruff, significance.  
 He walked and tapped the pavement with his cane,  
 Scenting the world, looking it full in face,  
 An old dog, bald and blindish, at his heels.  
 They turned up, now, the alley by the church,  
 That leads no whither ; now, they breathed themselves  
 On the main promenade just at the wrong time :  
 You 'd come upon his scrutinizing hat,  
 Making a peaked shade blacker than itself  
 Against the single window spared some house  
 Intact yet with its mouldered Moorish work,—  
 Or else surprise the ferrel of his stick  
 Trying the mortar's temper 'tween the chinks  
 Of some new shop a-building, French and fine.  
 He stood and watched the cobbler at his trade,  
 The man who slices lemons into drink,  
 The coffee-roaster's brasier, and the boys  
 That volunteer to help him turn its winch.  
 He glanced o'er books on stalls with half an eye,  
 And fly-leaf ballads on the vendor's string,  
 And broad-edge bold-print posters by the wall.  
 He took such cognisance of men and things,  
 If any beat a horse, you felt he saw ;

If any cursed a woman, he took note ;  
 Yet stared at nobody,—you stared at him,  
 And found, less to your pleasure than surprise,  
 He seemed to know you and expect as much.  
 So, next time that a neighbour's tongue was loosed,  
 It marked the shameful and notorious fact,  
 We had among us, not so much a spy,  
 As a recording chief-inquisitor,  
 The town's true master if the town but knew !  
 We merely kept a governor for form,  
 While this man walked about and took account  
 Of all thought, said and acted, then went home,  
 And wrote it fully to our Lord the King  
 Who has an itch to know things, he knows why,  
 And reads them in his bed-room of a night,  
 Oh, you might smile ! there wanted not a touch,  
 A tang of . . . well, it was not wholly ease  
 As back into your mind the man's look came—  
 Stricken in years a little,—such a brow  
 His eyes had to live under !—clear as flint  
 On either side the formidable nose  
 Curved, cut and coloured like an eagle's claw.  
 Had he to do with A.'s surprising fate ?  
 When altogether old B. disappeared  
 And young C. got his mistress,—was 't our friend,  
 His letter to the King, that did it all ?  
 What paid the bloodless man for so much pains ?  
 Our Lord the King has favourites manifold,  
 And shifts his ministry some once a month ;  
 Our city gets new governors at whiles,—  
 But never word or sign, that I could hear,  
 Notified to this man about the streets  
 The King's approval of those letters conned  
 The last thing duly at the dead of night.  
 Did the man love his office ? Frowned our Lord,

Exhorting when none heard—"Be-  
seech me not!

"Too far above my people,—beneath  
me!

"I set the watch,—how should the  
people know?

"Forget them, keep me all the more in  
mind!"

Was some such understanding 'twixt  
the two?

I found no truth in one report at  
least—

That if you tracked him to his home,  
down lanes

Beyond the Jewry, and as clean to  
pace,

You found he ate his supper in a room  
blazing with lights, four Titians on the  
wall,

And twenty naked girls to change his  
plate!

Poor man, he lived another kind of life  
in that new stuccoed third house by  
the bridge,

Fresh-painted, rather smart than  
otherwise!

The whole street might o'erlook him as  
he sat,

Leg crossing leg, one foot on the dog's  
back,

Playing a decent cribbage with his maid  
(Jacynth, you 're sure her name was)  
o'er the cheese

And fruit, three red halves of starved  
winter-pears,

Or treat of radishes in April. Nine,  
Ten, struck the church clock, straight to  
bed went he.

My father, like the man of sense he  
was,

Would point him out to me a dozen  
times;

"St—St," he'd whisper, "the Corregi-  
dor!"

I had been used to think that personage  
was one with lacquered breeches, lus-  
trous belt,

And feathers like a forest in his hat,  
Who blew the trumpet and proclaimed  
the news,

Announced the bull-fights, gave each  
church its turn,

And memorized the miracle in vogue!  
He had a great observance from us  
boys;

We were in error; that was not the  
man.

I'd like now, yet had haply been  
afraid,

To have just looked, when this man  
came to die,

And seen who lined the clean gay garret  
sides

And stood about the neat low truckle-  
bed,

With the heavenly manner of relieving  
guard.

Here had been, mark, the general-in-  
chief,

Thro' a whole campaign of the world's  
life and death,

Doing the King's work all the dim day  
long,

In his old coat and up to knees in mud,  
Smoked like a herring, dining on a  
crust,—

And, now the day was won, relieved at  
once!

No further show or need for that old  
coat,

You are sure, for one thing! Bless us,  
all the while

How sprucely we are dressed out, you  
and I!

A second, and the angels alter that.  
Well, I could never write a verse,—  
could you?

Let's to the Prado and make the most  
of time.

#### ARTEMIS PROLOGIZE

I AM a goddess of the ambrosial courts,  
And save by Here, Queen of Pride, sur-  
passed

By none whose temples whiten this the  
world.

Through heaven I roll my lucid moon  
along;

I shed in hell o'er my pale people peace;  
On earth I, caring for the creatures,  
guard

Each pregnant yellow wolf and fox-  
bitch sleek,

And every feathered mother's callow  
brood,

And all that love green haunts and lone-  
liness.

Of men, the chaste adore me, hanging  
crowns

Of poppies red to blackness, bell and  
stem,

Upon my image at Athenai here ;  
 And this dead Youth, Asclepius bends  
     above,  
 Was dearest to me. He, my buskined  
     step  
 To follow through the wild-wood leafy  
     ways,  
 And chase the panting stag, or swift  
     with darts  
 Stop the swift ounce, or lay the leopard  
     low,  
 Neglected homage to another god :  
 Whence Aphrodite, by no midnight  
     smoke  
 Of tapers lulled, in jealousy despatched  
 A noisome lust that, as the gadbee  
     stings,  
 Possessed his stepdame Phaidra for  
     himself  
 The son of Theseus her great absent  
     spouse.  
 Hippolotos exclaiming in his rage  
 Against the fury of the Queen, she  
     judged  
 Life insupportable ; and, pricked at  
     heart  
 An Amazonian stranger's race should  
     dare  
 To scorn her, perished by the murder-  
     ous cord :  
 Yet, ere she perished, blasted in a scroll  
 The fame of him her swerving made not  
     swerve.  
 And Theseus, read, returning, and be-  
     lieved,  
 And exiled, in the blindness of his  
     wrath, [first,  
 The man without a crime who, last as  
 Loyal, divulged not to his sire the  
     truth.  
 Now Theseus from Poseidon had ob-  
     tained  
 That of his wishes should be granted  
     three,  
 And one he imprecated straight—  
     " Alive  
 " May ne'er Hippolotos reach other  
     lands ! "  
 Poseidon heard, ai ai ! And scarce the  
     prince  
 Had stepped into the fixed boots of the  
     car  
 That give the feet a stay against the  
     strength  
 Of the Henetian horses, and around  
 His body flung the rein, and urged  
     their speed

Along the rocks and shingles of the  
     shore,  
 When from the gaping wave a monster  
     flung  
 His obscene body in the coursers' path.  
 These, mad with terror, as the sea-bull  
     sprawled  
 Wallowing about their feet, lost care of  
     him  
 That reared them ; and the master-  
     chariot-pole  
 Snapping beneath their plunges like a  
     reed,  
 Hippolotos, whose feet were tram-  
     melled fast,  
 Was yet dragged forward by the cir-  
     cling rein  
 Which either hand directed ; nor they  
     quenched  
 The frenzy of their flight before each  
     trace,  
 Wheel-spoke and splinter of the woeful  
     car,  
 Each boulder-stone, sharp stub and  
     spiny shell,  
 Huge fish-bone wrecked and wreathed  
     amid the sands  
 On that detested beach, was bright  
     with blood  
 And morsels of his flesh : then fell the  
     steeds  
 Head-foremost, crashing in their  
     mooned fronts,  
 Shivering with sweat, each white eye  
     horror-fixed.  
 His people, who had witnessed all afar,  
 Bore back the ruins of Hippolotos.  
 But when his sire, too swoln with pride,  
     rejoiced  
 (Indomitable as a man foredoomed)  
 That vast Poseidon had fulfilled his  
     prayer,  
 I, in a flood of glory visible,  
 Stood o'er my dying votary and, deed  
 By deed, revealed, as all took place,  
     the truth.  
 Then Theseus lay the woefullest of men,  
 And worthily ; but ere the death-veils  
     hid  
 His face, the murdered prince full par-  
     don  
 breathed  
 To his rash sire. Whereat Athenai  
     wails.

So I, who ne'er forsake my votaries,  
 Lest in the cross-way none the honey-  
     cake

Should tender, nor pour out the dog's  
hot life ;  
Lest at my fane the priests disconsolate  
Should dress my image with some  
faded poor  
Few crowns, made favours of, nor dare  
object  
Such slackness to my worshippers who  
turn  
Elsewhere the trusting heart and loaded  
hand,  
As they had climbed Olumpos to re-  
port  
Of Artemis and nowhere found her  
throne—  
Interposed: and, this eventful night,—  
(While round the funeral pyre the pop-  
ulace  
Stood with fierce light on their black  
robes which bound  
Each sobbing head, while yet their hair  
they clipped  
O'er the dead body of their withered  
prince,  
And, in his palace, Theseus prostrated  
On the cold hearth, his brow cold as the  
slab  
'T was bruised on, groaned away the  
heavy grief—  
As the pyre fell, and down the cross  
logs crashed  
Sending a crowd of sparkles through  
the night,  
And the gay fire, elate with mastery,  
Towered like a serpent o'er the clotted  
jars  
Of wine, dissolving oils and frankin-  
cense,  
And splendid gums like gold,)—my  
potency  
Conveyed the perished man to my re-  
treat  
In the thrice-venerable forest here.  
And this white-bearded sage who  
squeezes now  
The berried plant, is Phoibos' son of  
fame,  
Asclepios, whom my radiant brother  
taught  
The doctrine of each herb and flower  
and root,  
To know their secret'st virtue and ex-  
press  
The saving soul of all: who so has  
soothed  
With lavers the torn brow and mur-  
dered cheeks,

Composed the hair and brought its  
gloss again,  
And called the red bloom to the pale  
skin back,  
And laid the strips and jagged ends of  
flesh  
Even once more, and slacked the  
sinew's knot  
Of every tortured limb—that now he  
lies  
As if mere sleep possessed him under-  
neath  
These interwoven oaks and pines. Oh  
cheer,  
Divine presenter of the healing rod,  
Thy snake, with ardent throat and  
lulling eye,  
Twines his lithe spires around ! I say,  
much cheer !  
Proceed thou with thy wisest pharma-  
cies !  
And ye, white crowd of woodland sister-  
nymphs,  
Ply, as the sage directs, these buds and  
leaves  
That strew the turf around the twain !  
While I  
Await, in fitting silence, the event.

## AN EPISTLE

## CONTAINING THE

STRANGE MEDICAL EXPERI-  
ENCE OF KARSHISH, THE  
ARAB PHYSICIAN.

KARSHISH, the picker-up of learning's  
crumbs,  
The not-incurious in God's handiwork  
(This man's-flesh he hath admirably  
made,  
Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a  
paste,  
To coop up and keep down on earth a  
space  
That puff of vapour from his mouth,  
man's soul)  
—To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,  
Breeder in me of what poor skill I boast,  
Like me inquisitive how pricks and  
cracks  
Befall the flesh through too much stress  
and strain,  
Whereby the wily vapour fain' would  
slip  
Back and rejoin its source before the  
term,—

And aptest in contrivance (under God)  
To baffle it by deftly stopping such :—  
The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at  
home  
Sends greeting (health and knowledge,  
fame with peace)  
Three samples of true snake-stone—  
rarer still,  
One of the other sort, the melon-shaped,  
(But fitter, pounded fine, for charms  
than drugs)  
And writeth now the twenty-second  
time.

My journeyings were brought to  
Jericho :  
Thus I resume. Who studious in our  
art  
Shall count a little labour unrepaid ?  
I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and  
bone  
On many a flinty furlong of this land.  
Also, the country-side is all on fire  
With rumours of a marching hither-  
ward :  
Some say Vespasian cometh, some, his  
son.  
A black lynx snarled and pricked a  
tufted ear ;  
Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow  
balls : [gone.]  
I cried and threw my staff and he was  
Twice have the robbers stripped and  
beaten me,  
And once a town declared me for a spy ;  
But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,  
Since this poor covert where I pass the  
night,  
This Bethany, lies scarce the distance  
thence  
A man with plague-sores at the third  
degree  
Runs till he drops down dead. Thou  
laughest here !  
'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and  
safe,  
To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip  
And share with thee whatever Jewry  
yields.  
A viscid choler is observable  
In tertians, I was nearly bold to say ;  
And falling-sickness hath a happier  
cure  
Than our school wots of : there 's a  
spider here  
Weaves no web, watches on the ledge  
of tombs,

Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-grey  
back ;  
Take five and drop them . . . but who  
knows his mind,  
The Syrian run-a-gate I trust this to ?  
His service payeth me a sublimate  
Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.  
Best wait : I reach Jerusalem at morn,  
There set in order my experiences,  
Gather what most deserves, and give  
thee all—  
Or I might add, Judæa's gum-traga-  
canth  
Scales off in purer flakes, shines clearer-  
grained,  
Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the por-  
phyry,  
In fine exceeds our produce. Scalp-  
disease  
Confounds me, crossing so with leprosy—  
Thou hadst admired one sort I gained  
at Zoar—  
But zeal outruns discretion. Here I  
end.

Yet stay : my Syrian blinketh grate-  
fully,  
Protesteth his devotion is my price—  
Suppose I write what harms not,  
though he steal ?  
I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush,  
Which set me off a-writing first of all.  
An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang !  
For, be it this town's barrenness—or  
else  
The Man had something in the look of  
him—  
His case has struck me far more than  
't is worth.  
So, pardon if—(lest presently I lose  
In the great press of novelty at hand  
The care and pains this somehow stole  
from me)  
I bid thee take the thing while fresh in  
mind,  
Almost in sight—for, wilt thou have  
the truth ?  
The very man is gone from me but now,  
Whose ailment is the subject of dis-  
course.  
Thus then, and let thy better wit help  
all !  
'T is but a case of mania—subin-  
duced  
By epilepsy, at the turning-point  
Of trance prolonged unduly some three  
days ;

When, by the exhibition of some drug  
 Or spell, exorcization, stroke of art  
 Unknown to me and which 't were well  
 to know,  
 The evil thing out-breaking all at once  
 Left the man whole and sound of body  
 indeed,—  
 But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates  
 too wide,  
 Making a clear house of it too suddenly,  
 The first conceit that entered might in-  
 scribe  
 Whatever it was minded on the wall  
 So plainly at that vantage, as it were,  
 (First come, first served) that nothing  
 subsequent  
 Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls  
 The just-returned and new-established  
 soul [heart  
 Hath gotten now so thoroughly by  
 That henceforth she will read or these  
 or none.  
 And first—the man's own firm convic-  
 tion rests  
 That he was dead (in fact they buried  
 him)  
 —That he was dead and then restored  
 to life  
 By a Nazarene physician of his tribe :  
 —Sayeth, the same bade " Rise," and  
 he did rise.  
 " Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt  
 cry.  
 Not so this figment !—not, that such a  
 fume,  
 Instead of giving way to time and  
 health,  
 Should eat itself into the life of life,  
 As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones  
 and all !  
 For see, how he takes up the after-life.  
 The man—it is one Lazarus a Jew,  
 Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of  
 age,  
 The body's habit wholly laudable,  
 As much, indeed, beyond the common  
 health  
 As he were made and put aside to show.  
 Think, could we penetrate by any drug  
 And bathe the wearied soul and worried  
 flesh,  
 And bring it clear and fair, by three  
 days' sleep !  
 Whence has the man the balm that  
 brightens all ?  
 This grown man eyes the world now  
 like a child.

Some elders of his tribe, I should pre-  
 mise,  
 Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,  
 To bear my inquisition. While they  
 spoke,  
 Now sharply, now with sorrow,—told  
 the case,—  
 He listened not except I spoke to him,  
 But folded his two hands and let them  
 talk,  
 Watching the flies that buzzed : and  
 yet no fool.  
 And that 's a sample how his years  
 must go.  
 Look if a beggar, in mixed middle-life,  
 Should find a treasure,—can he use the  
 same  
 With straitened habits and with  
 tastes starved small,  
 And take at once to his impoverished  
 brain  
 The sudden element that changes  
 things,  
 That sets the undreamed-of rapture at  
 his hand,  
 And puts the cheap old joy in the  
 scorned dust ?  
 Is he not such an one as moves to  
 mirth—  
 Warily parsimonious, when no need,  
 Wasteful as drunkenness at undue  
 times ?  
 All prudent counsel as to what befits  
 The golden mean, is lost on such an one :  
 The man's fantastic will is the man's  
 law.  
 So here—we call the treasure know-  
 ledge, say,  
 Increased beyond the fleshly faculty—  
 Heaven opened to a soul while yet on  
 earth,  
 Earth forced on a soul's use while see-  
 ing heaven :  
 The man is witless of the size, the sum,  
 The value in proportion of all things,  
 Or whether it be little or be much.  
 Discourse to him of prodigious arma-  
 ments  
 Assembled to besiege his city now,  
 And of the passing of a mule with  
 gourds—  
 'T is one ! Then take it on the other  
 side,  
 Speak of some trifling fact,—he will  
 gaze rapt  
 With stupor at its very littleness,  
 (Far as I see) as if in that indeed

He caught prodigious import, whole  
 results ;  
 And so will turn to us the bystanders  
 In ever the same stupor (note this point)  
 That we too see not with his opened  
 eyes.  
 Wonder and doubt come wrongly into  
 play,  
 Preposterously, at cross purposes.  
 Should his child sicken unto death,—  
 why, look  
 For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness,  
 Or pretermission of the daily craft !  
 While a word, gesture, glance from that  
 same child  
 At play or in the school or laid asleep,  
 Will startle him to an agony of fear,  
 Exasperation, just as like. Demand  
 The reason why—" 't is but a word,"  
 object—  
 " A gesture "—he regards thee as our  
 lord  
 Who lived there in the pyramid alone,  
 Looked at us (dost thou mind ?) when,  
 being young,  
 We both would unadvisedly recite  
 Some charm's beginning, from that  
 book of his,  
 Able to bid the sun throb wide and  
 burst  
 All into stars, as suns grown old are  
 wont.  
 Thou and the child have each a veil  
 alike  
 Thrown o'er your heads, from under  
 which ye both  
 Stretch your blind hands and trifle with  
 a match  
 Over a mine of Greek fire, did ye know !  
 He holds on firmly to some thread of  
 life—  
 (It is the life to lead perforcedly)  
 Which runs across some vast distract-  
 ing orb  
 Of glory on either side that meagre  
 thread,  
 Which, conscious of, he must not enter  
 yet—  
 The spiritual life around the earthly  
 life :  
 The law of that is known to him as this,  
 His heart and brain move there, his feet  
 stay here.  
 So is the man perplexed with impulses  
 Sudden to start off crosswise, not  
 straight on,  
 Proclaiming what is right and wrong  
 across,  
 And not along, this black thread  
 through the blaze—  
 " It should be " baulked by " here it  
 cannot be."  
 And oft the man's soul springs into his  
 face  
 As if he saw again and heard again  
 His sage that bade him " Rise " and he  
 did rise.  
 Something, a word, a tick of the blood  
 within  
 Admonishes : ' then back he sinks at  
 once  
 To ashes, who was very fire before,  
 In sedulous recurrence to his trade  
 Whereby he earneth him the daily  
 bread ;  
 And studiously the humbler for that  
 pride,  
 Professedly the faultier that he knows  
 God's secret, while he holds the thread  
 of life.  
 Indeed the especial marking of the man  
 Is prone submission to the heavenly  
 will—  
 Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.  
 Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last  
 For that same death which must re-  
 store his being  
 To equilibrium, body loosening soul  
 Divorced even now by premature full  
 growth :  
 He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live  
 So long as God please, and just how  
 God please.  
 He even seeketh not to please God more  
 (Which meaneth, otherwise) than as  
 God please.  
 Hence, I perceive not he affects to  
 preach  
 The doctrine of his sect whate'er it be,  
 Make proselytes as madmen thirst to  
 do : [ground,  
 How can he give his neighbour the real  
 His own conviction ? Ardent as he is—  
 Call his great truth a lie, why, still the  
 old  
 " Be it as God please " reassureth him.  
 I probed the sore as thy disciple should:  
 " How, beast," said I, " this stolid  
 carelessness  
 " Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her  
 march  
 " To stamp out like a little spark thy  
 town,

"Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee  
at once?"

He merely looked with his large eyes  
on me.

The man is apathetic, you deduce?

Contrariwise, he loves both old and  
young,

Able and weak, affects the very brutes  
And birds—how say I? flowers of the  
field—

As a wise workman recognises tools  
In a master's workshop, loving what  
they make.

Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:  
Only impatient, let him do his best,  
At ignorance and carelessness and sin—  
An indignation which is promptly  
curbed:

As when in certain travel I have feigned  
To be an ignoramus in our art  
According to some preconceived design,  
And happed to hear the land's practi-  
tioners

Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignor-  
ance,

Prattle fantastically on disease,  
Its cause and cure—and I must hold  
my peace!

Thou wilt object—Why have I not  
ere this

Sought out the sage himself, the Naza-  
Who wrought this cure, inquiring at  
the source,

Conferring with the frankness that  
befits?

Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech  
Perished in a tumult many years ago,  
Accused,—our learning's fate,—of wiz-  
ardry,

Rebellion, to the setting up a rule  
And creed prodigious as described to  
me.

His death, which happened when the  
earthquake fell

(Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss  
To occult learning in our lord the sage  
Who lived there in the pyramid alone)  
Was wrought by the mad people—  
that 's their wont!

On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,  
To his tried virtue, for miraculous help—  
How could he stop the earthquake?  
That 's their way!

The other imputations must be lies:  
But take one, though I loathe to give it  
thee,

In mere respect for any good man's  
fame.

(And after all, our patient Lazarus  
Is stark mad; should we count on  
what he says?)

Perhaps not: though in writing to a  
leech

'Tis well to keep back nothing of a case.)  
This man so cured regards the curer,  
then,

As—God forgive me! who but God  
himself,

Creator and sustainer of the world,  
That came and dwelt in flesh on it  
awhile!

—Sayeth that such an one was born  
and lived,

Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at  
his own house,

Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught  
I know,

And yet was . . . what I said nor  
choose repeat,

And must have so avouched himself, in  
fact,

In hearing of this very Lazarus  
Who saith—but why all this of what he  
saith?

Why write of trivial matters, things of  
price

Calling at every moment for remark?  
I noticed on the margin of a pool

Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,  
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange!

Thy pardon for this long and tedious  
case,

Which, now that I review it, needs  
must seem

Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth!  
Nor I myself discern in what is writ

Good cause for the peculiar interest  
And awe indeed this man has touched  
me with.

Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness

Had wrought upon me first. I met  
him thus:

I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken  
hills

Like an old lion's cheek teeth. Out  
there came

A moon made like a face with certain  
spots

Multiform, manifold and menacing:  
Then a wind rose behind me. So we  
met

In this old sleepy town at unaware,  
The man and I. I send thee what is writ.

Regard it as a chance, a matter risked  
To this ambiguous Syrian—he may lose,

Or steal, or give it thee with equal good.  
Jerusalem's repose shall make amends  
For time this letter wastes, thy time  
and mine ;

Till when, once more thy pardon and  
farewell !

The very God ! think, Abib ; dost  
thou think ?

So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving  
too—

So, through the thunder comes a human  
voice

Saying, " O heart I made, a heart beats  
here !

" Face, my hands fashioned, see it in  
myself,

" Thou hast no power nor may'st con-  
ceive of mine,

" But love I gave thee, with myself to  
love,

" And thou must love me who have  
died for thee ! "

The madman saith He said so : it is  
strange.

#### JOHANNES AGRICOLA IN MEDI- TATION

THERE 's heaven above, and night by  
night

I look right through its gorgeous roof ;  
No suns and moons though e'er so  
bright

Avail to stop me ; splendour-proof  
I keep the broods of stars aloof :

For I intend to get to God,  
For 't is to God I speed so fast,

For in God's breast, my own abode,  
Those shoals of dazzling glory,  
passed,

I lay my spirit down at last.  
I lie where I have always lain,

God smiles as he has always smiled ;  
Ere suns and moons could wax and  
wane,

Ere stars were thundergirt, or piled  
The heavens, God thought on me his  
child ;

Ornated a life for me, arrayed  
Its circumstances every one

To the minutest ; ay, God said  
This head this hand should rest upon  
Thus, ere he fashioned star or sun.

And having thus created me,  
Thus rooted me, he bade me grow,  
Guiltless for ever, like a tree

That buds and blooms, nor seeks to  
know

The law by which it prospers so ;  
But sure that thought and word and  
deed

All go to swell his love for me,  
Me, made because that love had need

Of something irrevocably  
Pledged solely its content to be.

Yes, yes, a tree which must ascend,  
No poison-gourd foredoomed to  
stoop !

I have God's warrant, could I blend  
All hideous sins, as in a cup,

To drink the mingled venoms up ;  
Secure my nature will convert

The draught to blossoming gladness  
fast :

While sweet dews turn to the gourd's  
hurt,

And bloat, and while they bloat it,  
blast,

As from the first its lot was cast.  
For as I lie, smiled on, full-fed

By unexhausted power to bless,  
I gaze below on hell's fierce bed,

And those its waves of flame oppress,  
Swarming in ghastly wretchedness ;

Whose life on earth aspired to be  
One altar-smoke, so pure !—to win

If not love like God's love for me,  
At least to keep his anger in ;

And all their striving turned to sin.  
Priest, doctor, hermit, monk grown  
white

With prayer, the broken-hearted nun,  
The martyr, the wan acolyte,

The incense-swinging child,—undone  
Before God fashioned star or sun !

God, whom I praise ; how could I  
praise,

If such as I might understand,  
Make out and reckon on his ways,

And bargain for his love, and stand,  
Paying a price, at his right hand ?

#### PICTOR IGNOTUS

FLORENCE, 15—.

I COULD have painted pictures like that  
youth's

Ye praise so. How my soul springs  
up! No bar  
Stayed me—ah, thought which sad-  
dens while it soothes!  
—Never did fate forbid me, star by  
star,  
To outburst on your night with all my  
gift  
Of fires from God: nor would my  
flesh have shrunk  
From seconding my soul, with eyes up-  
lift  
And wide to heaven, or, straight like  
thunder, sunk  
To the centre, of an instant; or around  
Turned calmly and inquisitive, to  
scan  
The licence and the limit, space and  
bound,  
Allowed to truth made visible in man.  
And, like that youth ye praise so, all I  
saw,  
Over the canvas could my hand have  
flung,  
Each face obedient to its passion's law,  
Each passion clear proclaimed with-  
out a tongue;  
Whether Hope rose at once in all the  
blood,  
A-tiptoe for the blessing of embrace,  
Or Rapture drooped the eyes, as when  
her brood  
Pull down the nesting dove's heart  
to its place;  
Or Confidence lit swift the forehead up,  
And locked the mouth fast, like a  
castle braved,—  
O human faces, hath it spilt, my cup?  
What did ye give me that I have not  
saved?  
Nor will I say I have not dreamed (how  
well!)  
Of going—I, in each new picture,—  
forth,  
As, making new hearts beat and  
bosoms swell,  
To Pope or Kaiser, East, West, South  
or North,  
Bound for the calmly satisfied great  
State,  
Or glad aspiring little burgh, it went,  
Flowers cast upon the car which bore  
the freight,  
Through old streets named afresh  
from the event,  
Till it reached home, where learned age  
should greet

My face, and youth, the star not yet  
distinct  
Above his hair, lie learning at my feet!—  
Oh, thus to live, I and my picture,  
linked  
With love about, and praise, till life  
should end,  
And then not go to heaven, but linger  
here,  
Here on my earth, earth's every man  
my friend,—  
The thought grew frightful, 't was so  
wildly dear!  
But a voice changed it. Glimpses of  
such sights  
Have scared me, like the revels  
through a door  
Of some strange house of idols at its  
rites!  
This world seemed not the world it  
was before:  
Mixed with my loving trusting ones  
there trooped  
... Who summoned those cold  
faces that begun  
To press on me and judge me? Though  
I stooped  
Shrinking, as from the soldiery a nun,  
They drew me forth, and spite of me . . .  
enough!  
These buy and sell our pictures, take  
and give,  
Count them for garniture and house-  
hold-stuff,  
And where they live needs must our  
pictures live  
And see their faces, listen to their prate,  
Partakers of their daily pettiness,  
Discussed of,—“This I love, or this I  
hate,  
“This likes me more, and this affects  
me less!” [whiles  
Wherefore I chose my portion. If at  
My heart sinks, as monotonous I  
paint  
These endless cloisters and eternal  
aisles  
With the same series, Virgin, Babe  
and Saint,  
With the same cold calm beautiful  
regard,—  
At least no merchant traffics in my  
heart;  
The sanctuary's gloom at least shall  
ward  
Vain tongues from where my pictures  
stand apart:

Only prayer breaks the silence of the shrine  
 While blackening in the daily candle-smoke,  
 They moulder on the damp wall's travertine,  
 'Mid echoes the light footstep never woke.  
 So, die my pictures! surely, gently die!  
 O youth, men praise so,—holds their praise its worth?  
 Blown harshly, keeps the trump its golden cry?  
 Tastes sweet the water with such specks of earth?

## FRA LIPPO LIPPI

I AM poor brother Lippo, by your leave!  
 You need not clap your torches to my face.  
 Zooks, what 's to blame? you think you see a monk!  
 What, 't is past midnight, and you go the rounds,  
 And here you catch me at an alley's end  
 Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?  
 The Carmine 's my cloister: hunt it up,  
 Do,—harry out, if you must show your zeal,  
 Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,  
 And nip each softling of a wee white mouse,  
*Weke, weke*, that 's crept to keep him company!  
 Aha, you know your betters? Then, you'll take  
 Your hand away that 's fiddling on my throat,  
 And please to know me likewise. Who am I?  
 Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend  
 Three streets off—he 's a certain . . . how d' ye call?  
 Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,  
 In the house that caps the corner.  
 Boh! you were best!  
 Remember and tell me, the day you 're hanged,  
 How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!  
 But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves  
 Pick up a manner nor discredit you:

B. P.

Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets  
 And count fair prize what comes into their net?  
 He 's Judas to a tittle, that man is!  
 Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends.  
 Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hang-dogs go  
 Drink out this quarter-florin to the health  
 Of the munificent House that harbours me  
 (And many more beside, lads! more beside!)  
 And all 's come square again. I 'd like his face—  
 His, elbowing on his comrade in the door  
 With the pike and lantern,—for the slave that holds  
 John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair  
 With one hand ("Look you, now," as who should say)  
 And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!  
 It 's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,  
 A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!  
 Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.  
 What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,  
 You know them and they take you? like enough!  
 I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—  
 'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.  
 Let 's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.  
 Here 's spring come, and the nights one makes up bands  
 To roam the town and sing out carnival,  
 And I 've been three weeks shut within my mew,  
 A-painting for the great man, saints and saints  
 And saints again. I could not paint all night—  
 Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air.  
 There came a hurry of feet and little feet,  
 A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whiffs of song,—

N N

*Flower o' the broom,*  
*Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!*  
*Flower o' the quince,*  
*I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?*  
*Flower o' the thyme*—and so on. Round  
 they went.  
 Scarce had they turned the corner when  
 a titter  
 Like the skipping of rabbits by moon-  
 light,—three slim shapes,  
 And a face that looked up . . . zooks,  
 sir, flesh and blood,  
 That 's all I 'm made of! Into shreds  
 it went,  
 Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,  
 All the bed-furniture—a dozen knots,  
 There was a ladder! Down I let my-  
 self,  
 Hands and feet, scrambling somehow,  
 and so dropped, [fun  
 And after them. I came up with the  
 Hard by Saint Laurence, hail fellow,  
 well met,—  
*Flower o' the rose,*  
*If I've been merry, what matter who*  
*knows?*  
 And so as I was stealing back again  
 To get to bed and have a bit of sleep  
 Ere I rise up to-morrow and go work  
 On Jerome knocking at his poor old  
 breast  
 With his great round stone to subdue  
 the flesh,  
 You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see!  
 Though your eye twinkles still, you  
 shake your head—  
 Mine 's shaved—a monk, you say—the  
 sting 's in that!  
 If Master Cosimo announced himself,  
 Mum 's the word naturally; but a  
 monk!  
 Come, what am I a beast for? tell us,  
 now!  
 I was a baby when my mother died  
 And father died and left me in the  
 street.  
 I starved there, God knows how, a year  
 or two  
 On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and  
 shucks,  
 Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty  
 day,  
 My stomach being empty as your hat,  
 The wind doubled me up and down I  
 went.  
 Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one  
 hand,

(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew)  
 And so along the wall, over the bridge,  
 By the straight cut to the convent.  
 Six words there,  
 While I stood munching my first bread  
 that month:  
 "So, boy, you 're minded," quoth the  
 good fat father  
 Wiping his own mouth, 't was refection-  
 time,—  
 "To quit this very miserable world?  
 Will you renounce" . . . "the mouth-  
 ful of bread?" thought I;  
 By no means! Brief, they made a  
 monk of me;  
 I did renounce the world, its pride and  
 greed,  
 Palace, farm, villa, shop and banking-  
 house,  
 Trash, such as these poor devils of  
 Medici  
 Have given their hearts to—all at eight  
 years old.  
 Well, sir, I found in time, you may be  
 sure,  
 'T was not for nothing—the good belly-  
 ful,  
 The warm serge and the rope that goes  
 all round,  
 And day-long blessed idleness beside!  
 "Let 's see what the urchin 's fit for"  
 —that came next.  
 Not overmuch their way, I must con-  
 fess.  
 Such a to-do! They tried me with  
 their books:  
 Lord, they 'd have taught me Latin in  
 pure waste!  
*Flower o' the clove,*  
*All the Latin I construe is, "amo" I*  
*love!*  
 But, mind you, when a boy starves in  
 the streets [was,  
 Eight years together as my fortune  
 Watching folk's faces to know who will  
 flog  
 The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he  
 desires,  
 And who will curse or kick him for his  
 pains,—  
 Which gentleman processional and fine,  
 Holding a candle to the Sacrament  
 Will wink and let him lift a plate and  
 catch  
 The droppings of the wax to sell again.  
 Or holla for the Eight and have him  
 whipped,—

- How say I?—nay, which dog bites,  
which lets drop  
His bone from the heap of offal in the  
street,—  
Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp  
alike,  
He learns the look of things, and none  
the less  
For admonition from the hunger-pinch.  
I had a store of such remarks, be sure,  
Which, after I found leisure, turned to  
use :  
I drew men's faces on my copy-books,  
Scrawled them within the antiphona-  
ry's marge,  
Joined legs and arms to the long music-  
notes,  
Found eyes and nose and chin for A.s  
and B.s,  
And made a string of pictures of the  
world  
Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and  
noun,  
On the wall, the bench, the door. The  
monks looked black.  
"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him  
out, d'ye say ?  
"In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a  
lark.  
"What if at last we get our man of  
parts,  
"We Carmelites, like those Camaldo-  
lese  
"And Preaching Friars, to do our  
church up fine  
"And put the front on it that ought to  
be !"  
And hereupon he bade me daub away.  
Thank you ! my head being crammed,  
the walls a blink,  
Never was such prompt disemburden-  
ing.  
First, every sort of monk, the black  
and white,  
I drew them, fat and lean : then, folks  
at church, [fess  
From good old gossips waiting to con-  
Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-  
ends,—  
To the breathless fellow at the altar-  
foot,  
Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting  
there  
With the little children round him in a  
row  
Of admiration, half for his beard and  
half
- For that white anger of his victim's son  
Shaking a fist at him with one fierce  
arm,  
Signing himself with the other because  
of Christ  
(Whose sad face on the cross sees only  
this  
After the passion of a thousand years)  
Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her  
head,  
(Which the intense eyes looked through)  
came at eve  
On tip-toe, said a word, dropped in a  
loaf,  
Her pair of ear-rings and a bunch of  
flowers  
(The brute took growling) prayed, and  
so was gone.  
I painted all, then cried " 'T is ask and  
have ;  
Choose, for more 's ready !"—laid the  
ladder flat,  
And showed my covered bit of cloister-  
wall.  
The monks closed in a circle and praised  
loud  
Till checked, taught what to see and  
not to see,  
Being simple bodies,— "That 's the  
very man !  
"Look at the boy who stoops to pat  
the dog !  
"That woman 's like the Prior's niece  
who comes  
"To care about his asthma : it 's the  
life !"  
But there my triumph's straw-fire  
flared and fumed ;  
Their betters took their turn to see and  
say :  
The Prior and the learned pulled a face  
And stopped all that in no time.  
"How ? what 's here ?  
"Quite from the mark of painting,  
bless us all !  
"Faces, arms, legs and bodies like the  
true  
"As much as pea and pea ! it 's devil's  
game !  
"Your business is not to catch men  
with show,  
"With homage to the perishable clay,  
"But lift them over it, ignore it all,  
"Make them forget there 's such a  
thing as flesh.  
"Your business is to paint the souls of  
men—

- " Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . .  
no, it's not . . .
- " It's vapour done up like a new-born  
babe—
- " (In that shape when you die it leaves  
your mouth)
- " It's . . . well, what matters talking,  
it's the soul!
- " Give us no more of body than shows  
soul!
- " Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-  
praising God,
- " That sets us praising,—why not  
stop with him?
- " Why put all thoughts of praise out of  
our head
- " With wonder at lines, colours, and  
what not?
- " Paint the soul, never mind the legs  
and arms!
- " Rub all out, try at it a second time.
- " Oh, that white smallish female with  
the breasts,
- " She's just my niece . . . Herodias, I  
would say,—
- " Who went and danced and got men's  
heads cut off!
- " Have it all out!" Now, is this  
sense, I ask?
- A fine way to paint soul, by painting  
body
- So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go  
further
- And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow  
does for white
- When what you put for yellow's simply  
black,
- And any sort of meaning looks intense
- When all beside itself means and looks  
nought.
- Why can't a painter lift each foot in  
turn,
- Left foot and right foot, go a double  
step, [like,
- Make his flesh liker and his soul more
- Both in their order? Take the pretti-  
est face,
- The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint—  
is it so pretty
- You can't discover if it means hope,  
fear,
- Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with  
these?
- Suppose I've made her eyes all right  
and blue,
- Can't I take breath and try to add life's  
flash,
- And then add soul and heighten them  
threefold?
- Or say there's beauty with no soul at  
all—
- (I never saw it—put the case the  
same—)
- If you get simple beauty and nought  
else,
- You get about the best thing God in-  
vents:
- That's somewhat: and you'll find the  
soul you have missed,
- Within yourself, when you return him  
thanks.
- " Rub all out!" Well, well, there's  
my life, in short
- And so the thing has gone on ever  
since.
- I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken  
bounds:
- You should not take a fellow eight  
years old
- And make him swear to never kiss the  
girls.
- I'm my own master, paint now as I  
please—
- Having a friend, you see in the Corner-  
house!
- Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in  
front—
- Those great rings serve more purposes  
than just
- To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!
- And yet the old schooling sticks, the  
old grave eyes
- Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work.
- The heads shake still—" It's art's  
decline, my son!
- " You're not of the true painters,  
great and old;
- " Brother Angelico's the man, you'll  
find;
- " Brother Lorenzo stands his single  
peer:
- " Fag on at flesh, you'll never make  
the third!"
- Flower o' the pine,*  
*You keep your mistr . . . manners,*  
*and I'll stick to mine!*
- I'm not the third, then: bless us, they  
must know!
- Don't you think they're the likeliest to  
know,
- They with their Latin? So, I swallow  
my rage,
- Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight,  
and paint

To please them—sometimes do, and  
sometimes don't ;  
For, doing most, there 's pretty sure to  
come  
A turn, some warm eve finds me at my  
saints—  
A laugh, a cry, the business of the  
world—  
*(Flower o' the peach,  
Death for us all, and his own life for  
each !)*  
And my whole soul revolves, the cup  
runs over,  
The world and life 's too big to pass for  
a dream,  
And I do these wild things in sheer  
despite,  
And play the fooleries you catch me at,  
In pure rage ! The old mill-horse, out  
at grass  
After hard years, throws up his stiff  
heels so,  
Although the miller does not preach to  
him  
The only good of grass is to make chaff.  
What would men have ? Do they like  
grass or no—  
May they or mayn't they ? all I want 's  
the thing  
Settled for ever one way. As it is,  
You tell too many lies and hurt your-  
self :  
You don't like what you only like too  
much,  
You do like what, if given you at your  
word,  
You find abundantly detestable.  
For n e, I think I speak as I was taught ;  
I always see the garden and God there  
A-making man's wife : and, my lesson  
learned,  
The value and significance of flesh,  
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.

You understand me : I'm a beast, I  
know.  
But see, now—why, I see as certainly  
As that the morning-star 's about to  
shine,  
What will hap some day. We 've a  
youngster here  
Comes to our convent, studies what I  
do,  
Slouches and stares and lets no atom  
drop :  
His name is Guidi—he'll not mind the  
monks—

They call him Hulking Tom, he lets  
them talk—  
He picks my practice up—he 'll paint  
apace,  
I hope so—though I never live so long,  
I know what 's sure to follow. You be  
judge !  
You speak no Latin more than I, be-  
like ;  
However, you 're my man, you 've seen  
the world  
—The beauty and the wonder and the  
power,  
The shapes of things, their colours, light  
and shades,  
Changes, surprises,—and God made it  
all !  
—For what ? Do you feel thankful,  
ay or no,  
For this fair town's face, yonder river's  
line,  
The mountain round it and the sky  
above,  
Much more the figures of man, woman,  
child,  
These are the frame to ? What 's it all  
about ?  
To be passed over, despised ? or dwelt  
upon,  
Wondered at ? oh, this last of course !  
—you say.  
But why not do as well as say,—paint  
these [it ?  
Just as they are, careless what comes of  
God's works—paint anyone, and  
count it crime  
To let a truth slip. Don't object,  
" His works  
" Are here already ; nature is com-  
plete :  
" Suppose you reproduce her—(which  
you can't)  
" There 's no advantage ! you must  
beat her, then."  
For, don't you mark, we 're made so  
that we love  
First when we see them painted, things  
we have passed  
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to  
see ;  
And so they are better, painted—better  
to us,  
Which is the same thing. Art was  
given for that ;  
God uses us to help each other so,  
Lending our minds out. Have you  
noticed, now,

Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of  
chalk,  
And trust me but you should, though!  
How much more,  
If I drew higher things with the same  
truth!  
That were to take the Prior's pulpit-  
place,  
Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,  
It makes me mad to see what men shall  
do  
And we in our graves! This world's  
no blot for us,  
Nor blank; it means intensely, and  
means good:  
To find its meaning is my meat and  
drink.  
"Ay, but you don't so instigate to  
prayer!"  
Strikes in the Prior: "when your  
meaning's plain  
"It does not say to folks—remember  
matins,  
'Or, mind you fast next Friday!"  
'Why, for this  
What need of art at all? A skull and  
bones,  
Two bits of stick nailed cross-wise, or,  
what's best,  
A bell to chime the hour with, does as  
well.  
I painted a Saint Laurence six months  
since  
At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine  
style:  
"How looks my painting, now the scaff-  
old's down?"  
I ask a brother: "Hugely," he re-  
turns—  
"Already not one phiz of your three  
slaves  
"Who turn the Deacon off his toasted  
side,  
"But's scratched and prodded to our  
heart's content,  
"The pious people have so eased their  
own  
"With coming to say prayers there in  
a rage:  
"We get on fast to see the bricks be-  
neath.  
"Expect another job this time next  
year,  
"For pity and religion grow i' the  
crowd—  
"Your painting serves its purpose!"  
Hang the fools!

—That is—you'll not mistake an  
idle word  
Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, Got  
wot,  
Tasting the air this spicy night which  
turns  
The unaccustomed head like Chianti  
wine!  
Oh, the church knows! don't misre-  
port me, now!  
It's natural a poor monk out of bounds  
Should have his apt word to excuse  
himself:  
And hearken how I plot to make  
amends.  
I have bethought me: I shall paint a  
piece  
... There's for you! Give me six  
months, then go, see  
Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless  
the nuns!  
They want a cast of my office. I shall  
paint  
God in the midst, Madonna and her  
babe,  
Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-  
brood,  
Lilies and vestments and white faces,  
sweet  
As puff on puff of grated orris-root  
When ladies crowd to Church at mid-  
summer.  
And then in the front, of course a saint  
or two—  
Saint John, because he saves the Flor-  
entines,  
Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black  
and white  
The convent's friends and gives them a  
long day,  
And Job, I must have him there past  
mistake,  
The man of Uz, (and Us without the z,  
Painters who need his patience.) Well,  
all these  
Secured at their devotion, up shall  
come  
Out of a corner when you least expect,  
As one by a dark stair into a great  
light,  
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I!—  
Mazed, motionless and moon-struck—  
I'm the man!  
Back I shrink—what is this I see and  
hear?  
I, caught up with my monk's things by  
mistake,

My old serge gown and rope that goes  
all round,

I, in this presence, this pure company!  
Where 's a hole, where 's a corner for  
escape?

Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a  
thing

Forward, puts out a soft palm—"Not  
so fast!"

—Addresses the celestial presence,  
"nay—

"He made you and devised you, after  
all,

"Though he 's none of you! Could  
Saint John there, draw—

"His camel-hair make up a painting-  
brush?

"We come to brother Lippo for all  
that,

"*Iste perfect opus!*" So, all smile—  
I shuffle sideways with my blushing face

Under the cover of a hundred wings  
Thrown like a spread of kirtles when

you 're gay  
And play hot cockles, all the doors be-  
ing shut,

Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops  
The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle

off  
To some safe bench behind, not letting

go  
The palm of her, the little lily thing  
That spoke the good word for me in the

nick,  
Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint  
Lucy, I would say.

And so all 's saved for me, and for the  
church

A pretty picture gained. Go, six  
months hence!

Your hand, sir, and good bye: no  
lights, no lights!

The street 's hushed, and I know my  
own way back,

Don't fear me! There 's the grey be-  
ginning. Zooks!

ANDREA DEL SARTO

(CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER.")

BUT do not let us quarrel any more,  
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for  
once:

Sit down and all shall happen as you  
wish.

You turn your face, but does it bring  
your heart?

I 'll work then for your friend's friend,  
never fear,

Treat his own subject after his own  
way,

Fix his own time, accept too his own  
price,

And shut the money into this small  
hand

When next it takes mine. Will it?  
tenderly?

Oh, I 'll content him,—but to-morrow,  
love!

I often am much wearier than you  
think,

This evening more than usual, and it  
seems

As if—forgive now—should you let me  
sit

Here by the window with your hand in  
mine

And look a half hour forth on Fiesole,  
Both of one mind, as married people

use,  
Quietly, quietly the evening through,  
I might get up to-morrow to my work

Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.  
To-morrow, how you shall be glad for  
this!

Your soft hand is a woman of itself,  
And mine the man's bared breast she

curls inside.  
Don't count the time lost, neither;  
you must serve

For each of the five pictures we re-  
quire:

It saves a model. So! keep looking  
so—

My serpentine beauty, rounds on  
rounds!

—How could you ever prick those  
perfect ears,

Even to put the pearl there! oh, so  
sweet—

My face, my moon, my everybody's  
moon,

Which everybody looks on and calls  
his,

And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,  
While she looks—no one's: very dear,  
no less.

You smile? why, there 's my picture  
ready made,

There 's what we painters call our har-  
mony!

A common greyness silvers every-  
thing,—

All in a twilight, you and I alike

—You, at the point of your first pride  
 in me  
 (That 's gone you know),—but I, at  
 every point ;  
 My youth, my hope, my art, being all  
 toned down  
 To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.  
 There 's the bell clinking from the  
 chapel-top ;  
 That length of convent-wall across the  
 way  
 Holds the trees safer, huddled more in-  
 side ;  
 The last monk leaves the garden ;  
 days decrease,  
 And autumn grows, autumn in every-  
 thing. [shape  
 Eh ? the whole seems to fall into a  
 As if I saw alike my work and self  
 And all that I was born to be and do,  
 A twilight-piece. Love, we are in  
 God's hand.  
 How strange now, looks the life he  
 makes us lead ;  
 So free we seem, so fettered fast we are !  
 I feel he laid the fetter : let it lie !  
 This chamber for example—turn your  
 head—  
 All that 's behind us ! You don't  
 understand  
 Nor care to understand about my art,  
 But you can hear at least when people  
 speak :  
 And that cartoon, the second from the  
 door  
 —It is the thing, love ! so such things  
 should be—  
 Behold Madonna !—I am bold to say.  
 I can do with my pencil what I know,  
 What I see, what at bottom of my  
 heart  
 I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—  
 Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,  
 I do not boast, perhaps : yourself are  
 judge  
 Who listened to the Legate's talk last  
 week,  
 And just as much they used to say in  
 France.  
 At any rate 't is easy, all of it ;  
 No sketches first, no studies, that 's  
 long past :  
 I do what many dream of all their lives  
 —Dream ? strive to do, and agonize to  
 do,  
 And fail in doing. I could count  
 twenty such

On twice your fingers, and not leave  
 this town,  
 Who strive—you don't know how the  
 others strive  
 To paint a little thing like that you  
 smeared  
 Carelessly passing with your robes  
 afloat,—  
 Yet do much less, so much less, Some-  
 one says,  
 (I know his name, no matter)—so much  
 less !  
 Well, less is more, Lucrezia : I am  
 judged.  
 There burns a truer light of God in  
 them,  
 In their vexed beating stuffed and  
 stopped-up brain,  
 Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to  
 prompt  
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's  
 hand of mine.  
 Their works drop groundward, but  
 themselves, I know,  
 Reach many a time a heaven that 's  
 shut to me,  
 Enter and take their place there sure  
 enough,  
 Though they come back and cannot  
 tell the world.  
 My works are nearer heaven, but I sit  
 here.  
 The sudden blood of these men ! at a  
 word—  
 Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it  
 boils too.  
 I, painting from myself and to myself,  
 Know what I do, am unmoved by men's  
 blame  
 Or their praise either. Somebody re-  
 marks  
 Morello's outline there is wrongly  
 traced,  
 His hue mistaken ; what of that ? of  
 else,  
 Rightly traced and well ordered ; what  
 of that ?  
 Speak as they please, what does the  
 mountain care ?  
 Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his  
 grasp,  
 Or what 's a heaven for ? All is silver  
 grey  
 Placid and perfect with my art : the  
 worse !  
 I know both what I want and what  
 might gain ;

And yet how profitless to know, to sigh  
 "Had I been two, another and myself,  
 "Our head would have o'erlooked the  
 world!" No doubt.  
 Yonder 's a work now, of that famous  
 youth  
 The Urbinate who died five years ago.  
 ('T is copied, George Vasari sent it me.)  
 Well, I can fancy how he did it all,  
 Pouring his soul, with kings and popes  
 to see,  
 Reaching, that heaven might so replen-  
 ish him,  
 Above and through his art—for it gives  
 way;  
 That arm is wrongly put—and there  
 again—  
 A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,  
 Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,  
 He means right—that, a child may  
 understand.  
 Still, what an arm! and I could alter  
 it:  
 But all the play, the insight and the  
 stretch—  
 Out of me, out of me! And wherefore  
 out?  
 Had you enjoined them on me, given  
 me soul,  
 We might have risen to Rafael, I and  
 you.  
 Nay, love, you did give all I asked, I  
 think—  
 More than I merit, yes, by many times.  
 But had you—oh, with the same per-  
 fect brow,  
 And perfect eyes, and more than per-  
 fect mouth,  
 And the low voice my soul hears, as a  
 bird  
 The fowler's pipe, and follows to the  
 snare—  
 Had you, with these the same, but  
 brought a mind!  
 Some women do so. Had the mouth  
 there urged  
 "God and the glory! never care for  
 gain.  
 "The present by the future, what is  
 that?  
 "Live for fame, side by side with  
 Agnolo!  
 "Rafael is waiting: up to God, all  
 three!"  
 I might have done it for you. So it  
 seems:  
 Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.

Beside, incentives come from the soul's  
 self;  
 The rest avail not. Why do I need  
 you?  
 What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?  
 In this world, who can do a thing, will  
 not;  
 And who would do it, cannot, I per-  
 ceive:  
 Yet the will 's somewhat—somewhat,  
 too, the power—  
 And thus we half-men struggle. At  
 the end,  
 God, I conclude, compensates, pun-  
 ishes.  
 'T is safer for me, if the award be  
 strict,  
 That I am something underrated here,  
 Poor this long while, despised, to speak  
 the truth.  
 I dared not, do you know, leave home  
 all day,  
 For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.  
 The best is when they pass and look  
 aside;  
 But they speak sometimes; I must  
 bear it all.  
 Well may they speak! That Francis,  
 that first time,  
 And that long festal year at Fontaine-  
 bleau!  
 I surely then could sometimes leave  
 the ground,  
 Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,  
 In that humane great monarch's  
 golden look,—  
 One finger in his beard or twisted curl  
 Over his mouth's good mark that made  
 the smile,  
 One arm about my shoulder, round my  
 neck,  
 The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,  
 I painting proudly with his breath on  
 me,  
 All his court round him, seeing with his  
 eyes,  
 Such frank French eyes, and such a fire  
 of souls  
 Profuse, my hand kept plying by those  
 hearts,—  
 And, best of all, this, this, this face be-  
 yond,  
 This in the background, waiting on my  
 work,  
 To crown the issue with a last reward!  
 A good time, was it not, my kingly  
 days?

And had you not grown restless . . .  
 but I know—  
 'T is done and past ; 't was right, my  
 instinct said ;  
 Too live the life grew, golden and not  
 grey,  
 And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun  
 should tempt  
 Out of the grange whose four walls  
 make his world.  
 How could it end in any other way ?  
 You called me, and I came home to your  
 heart.  
 The triumph was, to have ended there ;  
 then, if  
 I reached it ere the triumph, what is  
 lost ?  
 Let my hands frame your face in your  
 hair's gold,  
 You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine !  
 " Rafael did this, Andrea painted that ;  
 " The Roman's is the better when you  
 pray,  
 " But still the other's Virgin was his  
 wife— "  
 Men will excuse me. I am glad to  
 judge  
 Both pictures in your presence ; clearer  
 grows  
 My better fortune, I resolve to think.  
 For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God  
 lives,  
 Said one day Agnolo, his very self,  
 To Rafael . . . I have known it all  
 these years . . .  
 (When the young man was flaming out  
 his thoughts  
 Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,  
 Too lifted up in heart because of it)  
 " Friend, there 's a certain sorry little  
 scrub  
 " Goes up and down our Florence,  
 none cares how,  
 " Who, were he set to plan and execute  
 " As you are, pricked on by your popes  
 and kings,  
 " Would bring the sweat into that  
 brow of yours ! "  
 To Rafael's !—And indeed the arm is  
 wrong.  
 I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to  
 see,  
 Give the chalk here—quick, thus the  
 line should go !  
 Ay, but the soul ! he 's Rafael ! rub it  
 out !  
 Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,

(What he ? why, who but Michel Ag  
 nolo ?  
 Do you forget already words like those) ?  
 If really there was such a chance, so  
 lost,—  
 Is, whether you 're—not grateful—but  
 more pleased.  
 Well, let me think so. And you smile  
 indeed !  
 This hour has been an hour ! Another  
 smile ?  
 If you would sit thus by me every night  
 I should work better, do you compre-  
 hend ?  
 I mean that I should earn more, give  
 you more. [star ;  
 See, it is settled dusk now ; there 's a  
 Morello 's gone, the watch-lights show  
 the wall,  
 The cue-owls speak the name we call  
 them by.  
 Come from the window, love,—come  
 in, at last,  
 Inside the melancholy little house  
 We built to be so gay with. God is  
 just.  
 King Francis may forgive me : oft at  
 nights  
 When I look up from painting, eyes  
 tired out,  
 The walls become illumined, brick  
 from brick  
 Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce  
 bright gold,  
 That gold of his I did cement them  
 with !  
 Let us but love each other. Must you  
 go ?  
 That Cousin here again ? he waits out-  
 side ?  
 Must see you—you, and not with me ?  
 Those loans ?  
 More gaming debts to pay ? you  
 smiled for that ?  
 Well, let smiles buy me ! have you  
 more to spend ?  
 While hand and eye and something of a  
 heart  
 Are left me, work 's my ware, and  
 what 's it worth ?  
 I 'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit  
 The grey remainder of the evening out,  
 Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly  
 How I could paint, were I but back in  
 France,  
 One picture, just one more—the Vir-  
 gin's face,

Not your's this time! I want you at my side

To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo.—  
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.  
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.

I take the subjects for his corridor,  
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,  
And throw him in another thing or two  
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough

To pay for this same Cousin's freak.  
Beside,  
What 's better and what 's all I care about,

Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!  
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,  
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.

I regret little, I would change still less.  
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?

The very wrong to Francis!—it is true  
I took his coin, was tempted and compelled,  
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.

My father and my mother died of want.  
Well, had I riches of my own? you see  
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.

They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:

And I have laboured somewhat in my time

And not been paid profusely. Some good son

Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!

No doubt, there 's something strikes a balance. Yes,

You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.

This must suffice me here. What would one have?

In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem  
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,  
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me  
To cover—the three first without a wife,

Whilst I have mine! So—still they overcome

Because there 's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my love.

#### THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH

ROME. 15—.

VANITY, saith the preacher, vanity!  
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?

Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well—

She, men would have to be your mother once,

Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!  
What 's done is done, and she is dead beside,

Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,  
And as she died so must we die ourselves,

And thence ye may perceive the world 's a dream.

Life, how and what is it? As here I lie  
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,

Hours and long hours in the dead night,  
I ask

“Do I live, am I dead?” Peace, peace seems all.

Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;

And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought

With tooth and nail to save my niche,  
ye know:

—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;

Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South

He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!

Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence

One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,  
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,

And up into the aery dome where live  
The angels, and a sunbeam 's sure to lurk:

And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,  
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,

With those nine columns round me,  
 two and two,  
 The odd one at my feet where Anselm  
 stands :  
 Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the  
 ripe  
 As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty  
 pulse.  
 —Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-  
 stone,  
 Put me where I may look at him !  
 True peach,  
 Rosy and flawless : how I earned the  
 prize !  
 Draw close : that conflagration of my  
 church  
 —What then ? So much was saved if  
 aught were missed !  
 My sons, ye would not be my death ?  
 Go dig  
 The white-grape vineyard where the  
 oil-press stood,  
 Drop water gently till the surface sink,  
 And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not,  
 I ! . . .  
 Bedded in store of rotten figleaves soft,  
 And corded up in a tight olive-frail,  
 Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,  
 Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,  
 Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's  
 breast . . . [all,  
 Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas,  
 That brave Frascati villa with its bath,  
 So, let the blue lump poise between  
 my knees,  
 Like God the Father's globe on both  
 his hands  
 Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,  
 For Gandolf shall not choose but see  
 and burst !  
 Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our  
 yeats :  
 Man goeth to the grave, and where is  
 he ?  
 Did I say basalt for my slab, sons ?  
 Black—  
 'T was ever antique-black I meant !  
 How else  
 Shall ye contrast my frieze to come be-  
 neath ?  
 The bas-relief in bronze ye promised  
 me,  
 Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of,  
 and perchance  
 Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,  
 The Saviour at his sermon on the  
 mount,

Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan  
 Ready to twitch the Nymph's last  
 garment off,  
 And Moses with the tables . . . but I  
 know  
 Ye mark me not ! What do they  
 whisper thee,  
 Child of my bowels, Anselm ? Ah, ye  
 hope  
 To revel down my villas while I gasp  
 Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy  
 travertine  
 Which Gandolf from his tomb-top  
 chuckles at !  
 Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper,  
 then !  
 'T is jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I  
 grieve  
 My bath must needs be left behind,  
 alas !  
 One block, pure green as a pistachio-  
 nut,  
 There 's plenty jasper somewhere in  
 the world—  
 And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to  
 pray  
 Horses for ye, and brown Greek manu-  
 scripts,  
 And mistresses with great smooth  
 marbly limbs ?  
 —That 's if ye carve my epitaph aright,  
 Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's  
 every word,  
 No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second  
 line—  
 Tully, my masters ? Ulpian serves  
 his need !  
 And then how I shall lie through cen-  
 turies,  
 And hear the blessed mutter of the  
 mass,  
 And see God made and eaten all day  
 long,  
 And feel the steady candle-flame, and  
 taste  
 Good strong thick stupefying incense-  
 smoke !  
 For as I lie here, hours of the dead  
 night,  
 Dying in state and by such slow de-  
 grees,  
 I fold my arms as if they clasped a  
 crook,  
 And stretch my feet forth straight  
 as stone can point,  
 And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth,  
 drop

Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work :  
 And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts  
 Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,  
 About the life before I lived this life,  
 And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,  
 Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,  
 Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,  
 And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,  
 And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,  
 Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend ?  
 No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best !  
 Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.  
 All *lapis*, all, sons ! Else I give the Pope  
 My villas ! Will ye ever eat my heart ?  
 Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,  
 They glitter like your mother's for my soul,  
 Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,  
 Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase  
 With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term,  
 And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx  
 That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,  
 To comfort me on my entablature  
 Whereon I am to lie till I must ask  
 " Do I live, am I dead ? " There, leave me, there !  
 For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude  
 To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it !  
 Stone—  
 Gritstone, a-crumble ! Clammy squares  
 which sweat  
 As if the corpse they keep were oozing  
 through—  
 And no more *lapis* to delight the world !  
 Well go ! I bless ye. Fewer tapers  
 there,  
 But in a row : and, going, turn your  
 backs  
 —Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,  
 And leave me in my church, the church  
 for peace,  
 That I may watch at leisure if he leers—

Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone,  
 As still he envied me, so fair she was !

## BISHOP BLOUGRAM'S APOLOGY

No more wine ? then we 'll push  
 back chairs and talk.  
 A final glass for me, though : cool, i'  
 faith !  
 We ought to have our Abbey back,  
 you see.  
 It 's different, preaeching in basilicas,  
 And doing duty in some masterpiece  
 Like this of brother Pugin's, bless his  
 heart !  
 I doubt if they 're half-baked, those  
 chalk rosettes,  
 Ciphers and stucco-twiddlings every-  
 where ;  
 It 's just like breathing in a lime-kiln :  
 eh ?  
 These hot long ceremonies of our  
 church  
 Cost us a little—oh, they pay the price,  
 You take me—amply pay it ! Now,  
 we 'll talk.

So, you despise me, Mr. Gigadibs.  
 No deprecation,—nay, I beg you, sir !  
 Beside 't is our engagement : don't  
 you know,  
 I promised, if you 'd watch a dinner  
 out,  
 We 'd see truth dawn together ?—  
 truth that peeps  
 Over the glass's edge when dinner 's  
 done,  
 And body gets its sop and holds its  
 noise  
 And leaves soul free a little. Now 's  
 the time :  
 'T is break of day ! You do despise  
 me then.  
 And if I say, " despise me,"—never  
 fear !  
 I know you do not in a certain sense—  
 Not in my arm-chair, for example :  
 here,  
 I well imagine you respect my place  
 (*Status, entourage, worldly circum-*  
*stance*)  
 Quite to its value—very much indeed :  
 —Are up to the protesting eyes of you  
 In pride at being seated here for once—  
 You 'll turn it to such capital account !

When somebody, through years and years to come,  
Hints of the bishop,—names me—  
that 's enough :  
" Blougram ? I knew him "—(into it you slide)  
" Dined with him once, a Corpus Christi Day,  
" All alone, we two ; he 's a clever man :  
" And after dinner,—why, the wine you know,—  
" Oh, there was wine, and good !—  
what with the wine . . .  
" Faith, we began upon all sorts of talk !  
" He 's no bad fellow, Blougram ; he had seen  
" Something of mine herelished, some review :  
" He 's quite above their humbug in his heart,  
" Half-said as much, indeed—the thing 's his trade.  
" I warrant, Blougram 's sceptical at times :  
" How otherwise ? I liked him, I confess !"  
*Che che*, my dear sir, as we say at Rome,  
Don't you protest now ! It 's fair give and take ;  
You have had your turn and spoken your home-truths :  
The hand 's mine now, and here you follow suit.

Thus much conceded, still the first fact stays—  
You do despise me ; your ideal of life  
Is not the bishop's : you would not be I.  
You would like better to be Goethe, now,  
Or Buonaparte, or, bless me, lower still,  
Count D'Orsay,—so you did what you preferred,  
Spoke as you thought, and, as you cannot help,  
Believed or disbelieved, no matter what,  
So long as on that point, whate'er it was,  
You loosed your mind, were whole and sole yourself.  
—That, my ideal never can include,  
Upon that element of truth and worth  
Never be based ! for say they make me  
Pope

(They can't—suppose it for our argument)  
Why, there I 'm at my tether's end,  
I've reached  
My height, and not a height which pleases you :  
An unbelieving Pope won't do, you say,  
It 's like those eerie stories nurses tell,  
Of how some actor played Death on a stage,  
With pasteboard crown, sham orb and tinsel-dart,  
And called himself the monarch of the world ;  
Then, going in the tire-room afterward,  
Because the play was done, to shift himself,  
Got touched upon the sleeve familiarly,  
The moment he had shut the closet door,  
By Death himself. Thus God might touch a Pope  
At unawares, ask what his baubles mean,  
And whose part he presumed to play just now ?  
Best be yourself, imperial, plain and true !  
So, drawing comfortable breath again,  
You weigh and find, whatever more or less  
I boast of my ideal realized,  
Is nothing in the balance when opposed  
To your ideal, your grand simple life,  
Of which you will not realize one jot.  
I am much, you are nothing ; you would be all,  
I would be merely much : you beat me there.  
No, friend, you do not beat me : hear-ken why.  
The common problem, yours, mine, every one's,  
Is—not to fancy what were fair in life  
Provided it could be,—but, finding first  
What may be, then find how to make it fair  
Up to our means : a very different thing !  
No abstract intellectual plan of life  
Quite irrespective of life's plainest laws,  
But one, a man, who is man and nothing more,