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, whoso 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 deduce
He wrote the little tract ' On worming dogs,'
Whereof the name in sundry catalogues
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!

HOLY-CROSS DAY,

ON WHICH THE JEWS WERE FORCED TO ATTEND AN ANNUAL CHRISTIAN SERMON IN ROME.

Though 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 piggledy, 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 self-same 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 hangman entered our bounds,
Yelled, pricked us out to this church like hounds.
It got to a pitch, when the hand indeed
Which gutted 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 the 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 we were 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 fellowship,

XX. "We boast our proofs, 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, a band
South, east, and on to the Pleasant Land!"

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL:

A PICTURE AT FANO.

I. DEAR and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
That child, when thou hast done with him, for me!
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
Shall find performed thy special ministry
And time come for departure, thou, suspending
Thy flight, mayst see another child for tending,
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

II. Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
And suddenly my head be covered o'er
With those wings, white above the child who prays
Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding
Me, out of all the world! for me, discarding
Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door!

III. I would not look up thither past thy head
Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
For I should have thy gracious face instead,
Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me low
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread?

IV. If this was ever granted, I would rest
My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands
Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
And all lay quiet, happy and supprest.

V. How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired!
I think how I should view the earth and skies
And sea, when once again my brow was bared
After thy healing, with such different eyes.
O, world, as God has made it! all is beauty:
And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
What further may be sought for or declared?

VI. Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
(Alfred, dear friend)—that little child to pray,
Holding the little hands up, each to each
Pressed gently,—with his own head turned away
Over the earth where so much lay before him
Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
And he was left at Fano by the beach.

VII. We were at Fano, and three times we went
To sit and see him in his chapel there,
And drink his beauty to our soul's content
—My angel with me too: and since I care
For dear Guercino's fame, (to which in power
And glory comes this picture for a dower,
Fraught with a pathos so magnificent)

VIII. And since he did not work so earnestly
At all times, and has else endured some wrong,—
I took one thought his picture struck from me,
And spread it out, translating it to song.
My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?
This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

CLEON.

"As certain also of your own poets have said."—

CLEON the poet, (from the sprinkled isles,
Lily on lily, that o'erlace the sea,
And laugh their pride when the light wave lisps "Greece")—
To Protos in his Tyranny: much health!

They give thy letter to me, even now:
I read and seem as if I heard thee speak.
The master of thy galley still unlades
Gift after gift; they block my court at last
And pile themselves along its portico
Royal with sunset, like a thought of thee:
And one white she-slave from the group dispersed
Of black and white slaves, (like the chequer-work
Pavement, at once my nation's work and gift,
Now covered with this settle-down of doves)
One lyric woman, in her crocus vest
Woven of sea-wools, with her two white hands
Commends to me the strainer and the cup
Thy lip hath bettered ere it blesses mine.

Well-counselled, king, in thy munificence!
For so shall men remark, in such an act
Of love for him whose song gives life its joy,
Thy recognition of the use of life;
Nor call thy spirit barely adequate
To help on life in straight ways, broad enough
For vulgar souls, by ruling and the rest.
Thou, in the daily building of thy tower,
Whether in fierce and sudden spasms of toil,
Or through dim lulls of unapparent growth,
Or when the general work 'mid good acclaim
Climbed with the eye to cheer the architect,
Didst ne'er engage in work for mere work's sake—
Hadst ever in thy heart the luring hope
Of some eventual rest a-top of it,
Whence, all the tumult of the building hushed,
Thou first of men mightst look out to the east.
The vulgar saw thy tower; thou sawest the sun.

For this, I promise on thy festival
To pour libation, looking o'er the sea,
Making this slave narrate thy fortunes, speak
Thy great words, and describe thy royal face—
Wishing thee wholly where Zeus lives the most
Within the eventual element of calm.

Thy letter's first requirement meets me here.
It is as thou hast heard: in one short life
I, Cleon, have effected all those things
Thou wonderingly dost enumerate.
That epos on thy hundred plates of gold
Is mine,—and also mine the little chant,
So sure to rise from every fishing-bark
When, lights at prow, the seamen haul their nets.
The image of the sun-god on the phare
Men turn from the sun's self to see, is mine;
The Pœcile, o'er-storied its whole length,
As thou didst hear, with painting, is mine too.
I know the true proportions of a man
And woman also, not observed before;
And I have written three books on the soul,
Proving absurd all written hitherto,
And putting us to ignorance again.
For music,—why, I have combined the moods,
Inventing one. In brief, all arts are mine;
Thus much the people know and recognise,
Throughout our seventeen islands. Marvel not.
We of these latter days, with greater mind
Than our forerunners, since more composite,
Look not so great (beside their simple way)
To a judge who only sees one way at once,
One mind-point, and no other at a time,—
Compares the small part of a man of us
With some whole man of the heroic age,
Great in his way,—not ours, nor meant for ours,
And ours is greater, had we skill to know.
Yet, what we call this life of men on earth,
This sequence of the soul's achievements here,
Being, as I find much reason to conceive,
Intended to be viewed eventually
As a great whole, not analysed to parts,
But each part having reference to all,—

How shall a certain part, pronounced complete,
Endure effacement by another part?
Was the thing done?—Then what's to do again?
See, in the chequered pavement opposite,
Suppose the artist made a perfect rhomb,
And next a lozenge, then a trapezoid—
He did not overlay them, superimpose
The new upon the old and blot it out,
But laid them on a level in his work,
Making at last a picture; there it lies.
So, first the perfect separate forms were made,
The portions of mankind—and after, so,
Occurred the combination of the same.
Or where had been a progress, or otherwise?
Mankind, made up of all the single men,—
In such a synthesis the labour ends.
Now, mark me—those divine men of old time
Have reached, thou sayest well, each at one point
The outside verge that rounds our faculty;
And where they reached, who can do more than reach?
It takes but little water just to touch
At some one point the inside of a sphere,
And, as we turn the sphere, touch all the rest
In due succession; but the finer air
Which not so palpably nor obviously,
Though no less universally, can touch
The whole circumference of that emptied sphere,
Fills it more fully than the water did;
Holds thrice the weight of water in itself
Resolved into a subtler element.
And yet the vulgar call the sphere first full
Up to the visible height—and after, void;
Not knowing air's more hidden properties.
And thus our soul, misknown, cries out to Zeus
To vindicate his purpose in its life—
Why stay we on the earth unless to grow?
Long since, I imaged, wrote the fiction out,
That he or other God, descended here
And, once for all, showed simultaneously
What, in its nature, never can be shown
Piecemeal or in succession;—showed, I say,
The worth both absolute and relative
Of all his children from the birth of time,

His instruments for all appointed work.
I now go on to image,—might we hear
The judgment which should give the due to each,
Show where the labour lay and where the ease,
And prove Zeus' self, the latent, everywhere!
This is a dream. But no dream, let us hope,
That years and days, the summers and the springs
Follow each other with unwaning powers—
The grapes which dye thy wine, are richer far
Through culture, than the wild wealth of the rock;
The suave plum than the savage-tasted drupe;
The pastured honey-bee drops choicer sweet!
The flowers turn double, and the leaves turn flowers;
That young and tender crescent-moon, thy slave,
Sleeping upon her robe as if on clouds,
Refines upon the women of my youth.
What, and the soul alone deteriorates?
I have not chanted verse like Homer's, no—
Nor swept string like Terpander, no—nor carved
And painted men like Phidias and his friend:
I am not great as they are, point by point:
But I have entered into sympathy
With these four, running these into one soul,
Who, separate, ignored each others' arts.
Say, is it nothing that I know them all?
The wild flower was the larger—I have dashed
Rose-blood upon its petals, pricked its cup's
Honey with wine, and driven its seed to fruit,
And show a better flower if not so large.
I stand, myself. Refer this to the gods
Whose gift alone it is! which, shall I dare
(All pride apart) upon the absurd pretext
That such a gift by chance lay in my hand,
Discourse of lightly or depreciate?
It might have fallen to another's hand—what then?
I pass too surely—let at least truth stay!

And next, of what thou followest on to ask.
This being with me as I declare, O king,
My works, in all these varicoloured kinds,
So done by me, accepted so by men—
Thou askest if (my soul thus in men's hearts)
I must not be accounted to attain

The very crown and proper end of life.
Inquiring thence how, now life closeth up,
I face death with success in my right hand:
Whether I fear death less than dost thyself
The fortunate of men. "For" (writest thou)
"Thou leavest much behind, while I leave nought:
Thy life stays in the poems men shall sing,
The pictures men shall study; while my life,
Complete and whole now in its power and joy,
Dies altogether with my brain and arm,
Is lost indeed; since,—what survives myself?
The brazen statue that o'erlooks my grave,
Set on the promontory which I named.
And that—some supple courtier of my heir
Shall use its robed and sceptred arm, perhaps,
To fix the rope to, which best drags it down.
I go, then: triumph thou, who dost not go!"

Nay, thou art worthy of hearing my whole mind.
Is this apparent, when thou turn'st to muse
Upon the scheme of earth and man in chief,
That admiration grows as knowledge grows?
That imperfection means perfection hid,
Reserved in part, to grace the after-time?
If, in the morning of philosophy,
Ere ought had been recorded, ought perceived,
Thou, with the light now in thee, could'st have looked
On all earth's tenantry, from worm to bird,
Ere man had yet appeared upon the stage—
Thou wouldst have seen them perfect, and deduced
The perfectness of others yet unseen.
Conceding which,—had Zeus then questioned thee
"Wilt thou go on a step, improve on this,
Do more for visible creatures than is done?"
Thou wouldst have answered, "Ay, by making each
Grow conscious in himself—by that alone.
All's perfect else: the shell sucks fast the rock,
The fish strikes through the sea, the snake both swims
And slides; the birds take flight, forth range the beasts,
Till life's mechanics can no further go—
And all this joy in natural life, is put,
Like fire from off Thy finger into each,
So exquisitely perfect is the same.

But 'tis pure fire—and they mere matter are;
It has them, not they it: and so I choose,
For man, Thy last premeditated work
(If I might add a glory to this scheme)
That a third thing should stand apart from both,
A quality arise within the soul,
Which, intro-active, made to supervise
And feel the force it has, may view itself,
And so be happy." Man might live at first
The animal life: but is there nothing more?
In due time, let him critically learn
How he lives; and, the more he gets to know
Of his own life's adaptabilities,
The more joy-giving will his life become.
The man who hath this quality, is best.

But thou, king, hadst more reasonably said:
"Let progress end at once,—man make no step
Beyond the natural man, the better beast,
Using his senses, not the sense of sense."
In man there's failure, only since he left
The lower and inconscious forms of life.
We called it an advance, the rendering plain
A spirit might grow conscious of that life,
And, by new lore so added to the old,
Take each step higher over the brute's head.
This grew the only life, the pleasure-house,
Watch-tower and treasure-fortress of the soul,
Which whole surrounding flats of natural life
Seemed only fit to yield subsistence to;
A tower that crowns a country. But alas!
The soul now climbs it just to perish there,
For thence we have discovered ('tis no dream—
We know this, which we had not else perceived)
That there's a world of capability
For joy, spread round about us, meant for us,
Inviting us; and still the soul craves all,
And still the flesh replies, "Take no jot more
Than ere you climbed the tower to look abroad!
Nay, so much less, as that fatigue has brought
Deduction to it." We struggle—fain to enlarge
Our bounded physical recipiency,
Increase our power, supply fresh oil to life,

Repair the waste of age and sickness. No,
It skills not: life's inadequate to joy,
As the soul sees joy, tempting life to take.
They praise a fountain in my garden here
Wherein a Naiad sends the water-spurt
Thin from her tube; she smiles to see it rise.
What if I told her, it is just a thread
From that great river which the hills shut up,
And mock her with my leave to take the same?
The artificer has given her one small tube
Past power to widen or exchange—what boots
To know she might spout oceans if she could?
She cannot lift beyond her first straight thread.
And so a man can use but a man's joy
While he sees God's. Is it, for Zeus to boast
" See, man, how happy I live, and despair—
That I may be still happier—for thy use! "
If this were so, we could not thank our Lord,
As hearts beat on to doing: 'tis not so—
Malice it is not. Is it carelessness?
Still, no. If care—where is the sign, I ask—
And get no answer: and agree in sum,
O king, with thy profound discouragement,
Who seest the wider but to sigh the more.
Most progress is most failure! thou sayest well.

The last point now:—thou dost except a case—
Holding joy not impossible to one
With artist-gifts—to such a man as I—
Who leave behind me living works indeed;
For, such a poem, such a painting lives.
What? dost thou verily trip upon a word,
Confound the accurate view of what joy is
(Caught somewhat clearer by my eyes than thine)
With feeling joy? confound the knowing how
And showing how to live (my faculty)
With actually living?—Otherwise
Where is the artist's vantage o'er the king?
Because in my great epos I display
How divers men young, strong, fair, wise, can act—
Is this as though I acted? if I paint,
Carve the young Phœbus, am I therefore young?
Methinks I'm older that I bowed myself

The many years of pain that taught me art!
Indeed, to know is something, and to prove
How all this beauty might be enjoyed, is more:
But, knowing nought, to enjoy is something too.
Yon rower with the moulded muscles there
Lowering the sail, is nearer it than I.
I can write love-odes—thy fair slave's an ode.
I get to sing of love, when grown too grey
For being beloved: she turns to that young man
The muscles all a-ripple on his back.
I know the joy of kingship: well—thou art king!

" But," sayest thou—(and I marvel, I repeat,
To find thee tripping on a mere word) " what
Thou writest, paintest, stays: that does not die:
Sappho survives, because we sing her songs,
And Æschylus, because we read his plays! "
Why, if they live still, let them come and take
Thy slave in my despite—drink from thy cup—
Speak in my place. Thou diest while I survive?
Say rather that my fate is deadlier still,—
In this, that every day my sense of joy
Grows more acute, my soul (intensified
In power and insight) more enlarged, more keen;
While every day my hairs fall more and more,
My hand shakes, and the heavy years increase—
The horror quickening still from year to year,
The consummation coming past escape
When I shall know most, and yet least enjoy—
When all my works wherein I prove my worth,
Being present still to mock me in men's mouths,
Alive still, in the phrase of such as thou,
I, I, the feeling, thinking, acting man,
The man who loved his life so over much,
Shall sleep in my urn. It is so horrible,
I dare at times imagine to my need
Some future state revealed to us by Zeus,
Unlimited in capability
For joy, as this is in desire for joy,
To seek which, the joy-hunger forces us.
That, stung by straitness of our life, made strait
On purpose to make sweet the life at large—
Freed by the throbbing impulse we call death

We burst there as the worm into the fly,
Who, while a worm still, wants his wings. But, no!
Zeus has not yet revealed it; and, alas!
He must have done so—were it possible!

Live long and happy, and in that thought die,
Glad for what was. Farewell. And for the rest,
I cannot tell thy messenger aright
Where to deliver what he bears of thine
To one called Paulus—we have heard his fame
Indeed, if Christus be not one with him—
I know not, nor am troubled much to know,
Thou canst not think a mere barbarian Jew,
As Paulus proves to be, one circumcised,
Hath access to a secret shut from us?
Thou wrongest our philosophy, O king,
In stooping to inquire of such an one,
As if his answer could impose at all.
He writeth, doth he? well, and he may write.
Oh, the Jew findeth scholars! certain slaves
Who touched on this same isle, preached him and Christ;
And (as I gathered from a bystander)
Their doctrines could be held by no sane man.

THE TWINS.

"Give" and "It-shall-be-given-unto-you."

I. Grand rough old Martin Luther
Bloomed fables—flowers on furze,
The better the uncouther:
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.

POPULARITY.

I. Stand still, true poet that you are,
I know you; let me try and draw you.
Some night you'll fail us. When afar
You rise, remember one man saw you,
Knew you, and named a star.

II. My star, God's glow-worm! Why extend
That loving hand of His which leads you,
Yet locks you safe from end to end
Of this dark world, unless He needs you—
Just saves your light to spend?

III. His clenched Hand shall unclose at last
I know, and let out all the beauty.
My poet holds the future fast,
Accepts the coming ages' duty,
Their present for this past.

IV. That day, the earth's feast-master's brow
Shall clear, to God the chalice raising;
"Others give best at first, but Thou
For ever set'st our table praising,—
Keep'st the good wine till now."

v. Meantime, I'll draw you as you stand,
With few or none to watch and wonder.
I'll say—a fisher (on the sand
By Tyre the Old) his ocean-plunder,
A netful, brought to land.

vi. Who has not heard how Tyrian shells
Enclosed the blue, that dye of dyes
Whereof one drop worked miracles,
And coloured like Astarte's eyes
Raw silk the merchant sells?

vii. And each bystander of them all
Could criticise, and quote tradition
How depths of blue sublimed some pall,
To get which, pricked a king's ambition;
Worth sceptre, crown and ball.

viii. Yet there's the dye,—in that rough mesh,
The sea has only just o'er-whispered!
Live whelks, the lip's-beard dripping fresh,
As if they still the water's lisp heard
Through foam the rock-weeds thresh.

ix. Enough to furnish Solomon
Such hangings for his cedar-house,
That when gold-robed he took the throne
In that abyss of blue, the Spouse
Might swear his presence shone

x. Most like the centre-spike of gold
Which burns deep in the blue-bell's womb,
What time, with ardours manifold,
The bee goes singing to her groom,
Drunken and overbold.

xi. Mere conchs! not fit for warp or woof!
Till art comes,—comes to pound and squeeze
And clarify,—refines to proof
The liquor filtered by degrees,
While the world stands aloof.

xii. And there's the extract, flasked and fine,
And priced, and saleable at last!
And Hobbs, Nobbs, Stokes and Nokes combine
To paint the future from the past,
Put blue into their line.

xiii. Hobbs hints blue,—straight he turtle eats.
Nobbs prints blue,—claret crowns his cup.
Nokes outdares Stokes in azure feats,—
Both gorge. Who fished the murex up?
What porridge had John Keats?

THE HERETIC'S TRAGEDY.

A MIDDLE-AGE INTERLUDE.

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 St. Paul,
Nor the shadow of turning, for the nonce.
See him no other than as he is;
Give both the Infinites 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-buzzing there,
Hornet-prince of the mad wasps' hive,
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 confirm 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 tumbrils 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,
Reached 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 forthwith;
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?
—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.

'Tis 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 plucks now at his rose
To rid himself of a sorrow at heart!
Lo,—petal on petal, fierce rays unclose;
Anther on anther, sharp spikes outstart;
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!

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA.

I. I WONDER do you feel to-day
As I have felt, since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

II. For me, I touched a thought, I know,
Has tantalised me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

III. Help me to hold it: first it left
The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
Some old tomb's ruin: yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

IV. Where one small orange cup amassed
Five beetles,—blind and green they grope
Among the honey-meal,—and last
Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast!

V. The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease.

VI. Such life there, through such lengths of hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting Nature have her way
While Heaven looks from its towers.

VII. How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above.
How is it under our control
To love or not to love?

VIII. I would that you were all to me,
You that are just so much, no more—
Nor yours, nor mine,—nor slave nor free!
Where does the fault lie? what the core
Of the wound, since wound must be?

IX. I would I could adopt your will,
See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
At your soul's springs,—your part, my part
In life, for good and ill.

X. No. I yearn upward—touch you close,
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck the rose
And love it more than tongue can speak—
Then the good minute goes.

XI. Already how am I so far
Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star?

XII. Just when I seemed about to learn!
Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern—
Infinite passion and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

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's not the 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, citied 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 the 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 convey 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?
Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
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!
Image the whole, then execute the parts—
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)
Still 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 For ever."
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, shew 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 unperplext

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.

ONE WAY OF LOVE.

I. All June I bound the rose in sheaves.
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves,
And strew them where Pauline may pass.
She will not turn aside? Alas!
Let them lie. Suppose they die?
The chance was they might take her eye.

II. How many a month I strove to suit
These stubborn fingers to the lute!
To-day I venture all I know.
She will not hear my music? So!
Break the string—fold music's wing.
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing!

III. My whole life long I learned to love.
This hour my utmost art I prove
And speak my passion.—Heaven or hell?
She will not give me heaven? 'Tis well!
Lose who may—I still can say,
Those who win heaven, blest are they.

ANOTHER WAY OF LOVE.

I. JUNE was not over,
Though past the full,
And the best of her roses
Had yet to blow,
When a man I know
(But shall not discover,
Since ears are dull,
And time discloses)
Turned him and said with a man's true air,
Half sighing a smile in a yawn, as 'twere,—
"If I tire of your June, will she greatly care?"

II. Well, Dear, in-doors with you!
True, serene deadness
Tries a man's temper.
What's in the blossom
June wears on her bosom?
Can it clear scores with you?
Sweetness and redness,
Eadem semper!
Go, let me care for it greatly or slightly!
If June mends her bowers now, your hand left unsightly
By plucking their roses,—my June will do rightly.

III. And after, for pastime,
If June be refulgent
With flowers in completeness,
All petals, no prickles,
Delicious as trickles
Of wine poured at mass-time,—
And choose One indulgent
To redness and sweetness:
Or if, with experience of man and of spider,
She use my June-lightning, the strong insect-ridder,
To stop the fresh spinning,—why, June will consider.

"TRANSCENDENTALISM:"

A POEM IN TWELVE BOOKS.

STOP playing, poet! may a brother speak?
'Tis 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 display,
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 holloa 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, 'tis true,
We see and hear and do not wonder much.
If you could tell us what they mean, indeed!
As Swedish Bœhme never cared for plants
Until it happed, 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—
Colloquised 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 amendating the same
And settling on the sense most to our mind)
We shut the clasps and find life's summer past.
Then, who helps more, pray, to repair our loss—
Another Bœhme with a tougher book
And subtler meanings of what roses say,—

Or some stout Mage like him of Halberstadt,
John, who made things Bœhme 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, Bœhme'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 did before, believe,
Was your own boy's face o'er the finer chords
Bent, following the cherub at the top
That points to God with his paired half-moon wings.

MISCONCEPTIONS.

I. This is a spray the Bird clung to,
Making it blossom with pleasure,
Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,
Fit for her nest and her treasure.
Oh, what a hope beyond measure
Was the poor spray's, which the flying feet hung to,—
So to be singled out, built in, and sung to!

II. This is a heart the Queen leant on,
Thrilled in a minute erratic,
Ere the true bosom she bent on,
Meet for love's regal dalmatic.
Oh, what a fancy ecstatic
Was the poor heart's, ere the wanderer went on—
Love to be saved for it, proffered to, spent on!

ONE WORD MORE.

TO E. B. B.

I. THERE they are, my fifty men and women
Naming me the fifty poems finished!
Take them, Love, the book and me together.
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

II. Rafael made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain volume
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas:
These, the world might view—but One, the volume.
Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you.
Did she live and love it all her life-time?
Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,
Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,
Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving—
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

III. You and I would rather read that volume,
(Take to his beating bosom by it)
Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas—
Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,
Her, that visits Florence in a vision,
Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre—
Seen by us and all the world in circle.

IV. You and I will never read that volume.
Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple
Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
Cried, and the world with it, "Ours—the treasure!"
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

V. Dante once prepared to paint an angel:
Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice."
While he mused and traced it and retraced it,
(Peradventure with a pen corroded

Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,
When, his left hand i' the hair o' the wicked,
Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,
Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,
Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle,
Let the wretch go festering thro' Florence)—
Dante, who loved well because he hated,
Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
Dante standing, studying his angel,—
In there broke the folk of his Inferno.
Says he—" Certain people of importance "
(Such he gave his daily, dreadful line to)
Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet.
Says the poet—" Then I stopped my painting."

VI. You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno.

VII. You and I will never see that picture.
While he mused on love and Beatrice,
While he softened o'er his outlined angel,
In they broke, those " people of importance: "
We and Bice bear the loss forever.

VIII. What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?

IX. This: no artist lives and loves that longs not
Once, and only once, and for One only,
(Ah, the prize!) to find his love a language
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient—
Using nature that's an art to others,
Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.
Ay, of all the artists living, loving,
None but would forego his proper dowry,—
Does he paint? he fain would write a poem,—
Does he write? he fain would paint a picture,
Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
Once, and only once, and for One only,
So to be the man and leave the artist,
Save the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

X. Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
He who smites the rock and spreads the water,
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,

Even he, the minute makes immortal,
Proves, perchance, his mortal in the minute,
Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.
While he smites, how can he but remember,
So he smote before, in such a peril,
When they stood and mocked—" Shall smiting help us? "
When they drank and sneered—" A stroke is easy! "
When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,
Throwing him for thanks—" But drought was pleasant."
Thus old memories mar the actual triumph;
Thus the doing savours of disrelish;
Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;
O'er importuned brows becloud the mandate,
Carelessness or consciousness, the gesture.
For he bears an ancient wrong about him,
Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,
Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude—
" How should'st thou, of all men, smite, and save us? "
Guesses what is like to prove the sequel—
" Egypt's flesh-pots—nay, the drought was better."

XI. Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant!
Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,
Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.
Never dares the man put off the prophet.

XII. Did he love one face from out the thousands,
(Were she Jethro's daughter, white and wifely,
Were she but the Æthiopian bondslave,)
He would envy yon dumb patient camel,
Keeping a reserve of scanty water
Meant to save his own life in the desert;
Ready in the desert to deliver
(Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)
Hoard and life together for his mistress.

XIII. I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
Make you music that should all-express me;
So it seems: I stand on my attainment.

This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.
Other heights in other lives, God willing—
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

XIV. Yet a semblance of resource avails us—
Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.
Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
Lines I write the first time and the last time.
He who works in fresco, steals a hair-brush.
Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,
Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,
Makes a strange art of an art familiar,
Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets.
He who blows thro' bronze, may breathe thro' silver
Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.
He who writes, may write for once, as I do.

XV. Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service,
Speak from every mouth,—the speech, a poem.
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving:
I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's,
Karshook, Cleon, Norbert and the fifty.
Let me speak this once in my true person,
Not as Lippo, Roland or Andrea,
Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence—
Pray you, look on these my men and women,
Take and keep my fifty poems finished;
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!
Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

XVI. Not but that you know me! Lo, the moon's self!
Here in London, yonder late in Florence,
Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured.
Curving on a sky imbrued with colour,
Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,
Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.
Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,
Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.

Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,
Hard to greet, she traverses the houseroofs,
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver,
Goes dispiritedly,—glad to finish.

XVII. What, there's nothing in the moon note-worthy?
Nay—for if that moon could love a mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy)
All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos)
She would turn a new side to her mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—him, even!
Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal—
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
Opens out anew for worse or better?
Proves she like some portent of an ice-berg
Swimming full upon the ship it founders,
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered chrystals?
Proves she as the paved-work of a sapphire
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?
Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest,
Stand upon the paved-work of a sapphire.
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved-work,
When they ate and drank and saw God also!

XVIII. What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know.
Only this is sure—the sight were other,
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in London.
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.

XIX. This I say of me, but think of you, Love!
This to you—yourself my moon of poets!
Ah, but that's the world's side—there's the wonder—
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you.
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you,

Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

xx. Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom!

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

1864

JAMES LEE'S WIFE.

I.—JAMES LEE'S WIFE SPEAKS AT THE WINDOW.

I. Ah, Love, but a day
And the world has changed!
The sun's away,
And the bird estranged;
The wind has dropped,
And the sky's deranged:
Summer has stopped.

II. Look in my eyes!
Wilt thou change too?
Should I fear surprise?
Shall I find aught new
In the old and dear,
In the good and true,
With the changing year?

III. Thou art a man,
But I am thy love.
For the lake, its swan;
For the dell, its dove;
And for thee—(oh, haste!)
Me, to bend above,
Me, to hold embraced.

II.—BY THE FIRESIDE.

I. Is all our fire of shipwreck wood,
Oak and pine?
Oh, for the ills half-understood,
The dim dead woe
Long ago

Befallen this bitter coast of France!
Well, poor sailors took their chance;
I take mine.

II. A ruddy shaft our fire must shoot
O'er the sea:
Do sailors eye the casement—mute,
Drenched and stark,
From their bark—
And envy, gnash their teeth for hate
O' the warm safe house and happy freight
—Thee and me?

III. God help you, sailors, at your need!
Spare the curse!
For some ships, safe in port indeed,
Rot and rust,
Run to dust,
All through worms i' the wood, which crept,
Gnawed our hearts out while we slept:
That is worse.

IV. Who lived here before us two?
Old-world pairs.
Did a woman ever—would I knew!—
Watch the man
With whom began
Love's voyage full-sail,—(now, gnash your teeth!)
When planks start, open hell beneath
Unawares?

III.—IN THE DOORWAY.

I.

The swallow has set her six young on the rail,
And looks sea-ward:
The water's in stripes like a snake, olive-pale
To the leeward,—
On the weather-side, black, spotted white with the wind.
"Good fortune departs, and disaster's behind,"—
Hark, the wind with its wants and its infinite wail!

II.

Our fig-tree, that leaned for the saltness, has furled
Her five fingers,
Each leaf like a hand opened wide to the world
Where there lingers
No glint of the gold, Summer sent for her sake:
How the vines writhe in rows, each impaled on its stake!
My heart shrivels up and my spirit shrinks curled.

III.

Yet here are we two; we have love, house enough,
With the field there,
This house of four rooms, that field red and rough,
Though it yield there,
For the rabbit that robs, scarce a blade or a bent;
If a magpie alight now, it seems an event;
And they both will be gone at November's rebuff.

IV.

But why must cold spread? but wherefore bring change
To the spirit,
God meant should mate his with an infinite range,
And inherit
His power to put life in the darkness and cold?
Oh, live and love worthily, bear and be bold!
Whom Summer made friends of, let Winter estrange!

IV.—ALONG THE BEACH.

I. I WILL be quiet and talk with you,
And reason why you are wrong,
You wanted my love—is that much true?
And so I did love, so I do:
What has come of it all along?

II. I took you—how could I otherwise?
For a world to me, and more;
For all, love greatens and glorifies
Till God's a-glow, to the loving eyes,
In what was mere earth before.

III. Yes, earth—yes, mere ignoble earth!
Now do I mis-state, mistake?
Do I wrong your weakness and call it worth?
Expect all harvest, dread no dearth,
Seal my sense up for your sake?

IV. Oh, Love, Love, no, Love! not so, indeed!
You were just weak earth, I knew:
With much in you waste, with many a weed,
And plenty of passions run to seed,
But a little good grain too.

V. And such as you were, I took you for mine:
Did not you find me yours,
To watch the olive and wait the vine,
And wonder when rivers of oil and wine
Would flow, as the Book assures?

VI. Well, and if none of these good things came,
What did the failure prove?
The man was my whole world, all the same,
With his flowers to praise or his weeds to blame,
And, either or both, to love.

VII. Yet this turns now to a fault—there! there!
That I do love, watch too long,
And wait too well, and weary and wear;
And 'tis all an old story, and my despair
Fit subject for some new song:

VIII. "How the light, light love, he has wings to fly
"At suspicion of a bond:
"My wisdom has bidden your pleasure good-bye,
"Which will turn up next in a laughing eye,
"And why should you look beyond?"

V.—ON THE CLIFF.

I. I LEANED on the turf,
I looked at a rock
Left dry by the surf;
For the turf, to call it grass were to mock:
Dead to the roots, so deep was done
The work of the summer sun.

II. And the rock lay flat
As an anvil's face:
No iron like that!
Baked dry; of a weed, of a shell, no trace;
Sunshine outside, but ice at the core,
Death's altar by the lone shore.

III. On the turf, sprang gay
With his films of blue,
No cricket, I'll say,
But a warhorse, barded and chanfroned too,
The gift of a quixote-mage to his knight,
Real fairy, with wings all right.

IV. On the rock, they scorch
Like a drop of fire
From a brandished torch,
Fall two red fans of a butterfly:
No turf, no rock: in their ugly stead,
See, wonderful blue and red!

V. Is it not so
With the minds of men?
The level and low,
The burnt and bare, in themselves; but then
With such a blue and red grace, not theirs,—
Love settling unawares!

VI.—READING A BOOK, UNDER THE CLIFF.

I.

"Still ailing, Wind? Wilt be appeased or no?
"Which needs the other's office, thou or I?
"Dost want to be disburthened of a woe,
"And can, in truth, my voice untie
"Its links, and let it go?

II.

"Art thou a dumb wronged thing that would be righted,
"Entrusting thus thy cause to me? Forbear!
"No tongue can mend such pleadings; faith, requited
"With falsehood,—love, at last aware
"Of scorn,—hopes, early blighted,—

III.

"We have them; but I know not any tone
"So fit as thine to falter forth a sorrow:
"Dost think men would go mad without a moan,
"If they knew any way to borrow
"A pathos like my own?

IV.

"Which sigh wouldst mock, of all the sighs? The one
"So long escaping from lips starved and blue,
"That lasts while on her pallet-bed the nun
"Stretches her length; her foot comes through
"The straw she shivers on;

V.

"You had not thought she was so tall: and spent,
"Her shrunk lids open, her lean fingers shut
"Close, close, their sharp and livid nails indent
"Their clammy palm; then all is mute:
"That way, the spirit went.

VI.

"Or wouldst thou rather that I understand
"Thy will to help me?—like the dog I found
"Once, pacing sad this solitary strand,
"Who would not take my food, poor hound,
"But whined and licked my hand."

VII.

All this, and more, comes from some young man's pride
Of power to see,—in failure and mistake,
Relinquishment, disgrace, on every side,—
Merely examples for his sake,
Helps to his path untried:

VIII.

Instances he must—simply recognize?
Oh, more than so!—must, with a learner's zeal,
Make doubly prominent, twice emphasize,
By added touches that reveal
The god in babe's disguise.

IX.

Oh, he knows what defeat means, and the rest!
  Himself the undefeated that shall be:
Failure, disgrace, he flings them you to test,—
  His triumph, in eternity
Too plainly manifest!

X.

Whence, judge if he learn forthwith what the wind
  Means in its moaning—by the happy prompt
Instinctive way of youth, I mean; for kind
  Calm years, exacting their accompt
Of pain, mature the mind:

XI.

And some midsummer morning, at the lull
  Just about daybreak, as he looks across
A sparkling foreign country, wonderful
  To the sea's edge for gloom and gloss,
Next minute must annul.—

XII.

Then, when the wind begins among the vines,
  So low, so low, what shall it say but this?
" Here is the change beginning, here the lines
  " Circumscribe beauty, set to bliss
" The limit time assigns."

XIII.

Nothing can be as it has been before;
  Better, so call it, only not the same.
To draw one beauty into our hearts' core,
  And keep it changeless! such our claim;
So answered,—Never more!

XIV.

Simple? Why this is the old woe o' the world;
  Tune, to whose rise and fall we live and die.
Rise with it, then! Rejoice that man is hurled
  From change to change unceasingly,
His soul's wings never furled!

XV.

That's a new question; still replies the fact,
  Nothing endures: the wind moans, saying so;
We moan in acquiescence: there's life's pact.
  Perhaps probation—do *I* know?
God does; endure his act!

XVI.

Only, for man, how bitter not to grave
  On his soul's hands' palms one fair good wise thing
Just as he grasped it! For himself, death's wave;
  While time first washes—ah, the sting!—
O'er all he'd sink to save.

VII.—AMONG THE ROCKS.

I.

Oh, good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth,
  This autumn morning! How he sets his bones
To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out knees and feet
For the ripple to run over in its mirth;
  Listening the while, where on the heap of stones
The white breast of the sea-lark twitters sweet.

II.

That is the doctrine, simple, ancient, true;
  Such is life's trial, as old earth smiles and knows.
If you loved only what were worth your love,
Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you:
  Make the low nature better by your throes!
Give earth yourself, go up for gain above.

VIII.—BESIDE THE DRAWING BOARD.

I. " As like as a Hand to another Hand! "
  Whoever said that foolish thing,
Could not have studied to understand
  The counsels of God in fashioning,
Out of the infinite love of his heart,
This Hand, whose beauty I praise, apart

From the world of wonder left to praise,
If I tried to learn the other ways
Of love in its skill, or love in its power.
" As like as a Hand to another Hand ":
Who said that, never took his stand,
Found and followed, like me, an hour,
The beauty in this,—how free, how fine
To fear, almost,—of the limit-line!
As I looked at this, and learned and drew,
Drew and learned, and looked again,
While fast the happy minutes flew,
Its beauty mounted into my brain,
And a fancy seized me; I was fain
To efface my work, begin anew,
Kiss what before I only drew;
Ay, laying the red chalk 'twixt my lips,
With soul to help if the mere lips failed,
I kissed all right where the drawing ailed,
Kissed fast the grace that somehow slips
Still from one's soulless finger-tips.

II. 'Tis a clay cast, the perfect thing,
From Hand live once, dead long ago:
Princess-like it wears the ring
To fancy's eye, by which we know
That here at length a master found
His match, a proud lone soul its mate,
As soaring genius sank to ground,
And pencil could not emulate
The beauty in this,—how free, how fine
To fear almost!—of the limit-line.
Long ago the god, like me
The worm, learned, each in our degree:
Looked and loved, learned and drew,
Drew and learned and loved again,
While fast the happy minutes flew,
Till beauty mounted into his brain
And on the finger which outvied
His art he placed the ring that's there,
Still by fancy's eye descried,
In token of a marriage rare:
For him on earth, his art's despair,
For him in heaven, his soul's fit bride.

III. Little girl with the poor coarse hand
I turned from to a cold clay cast—
I have my lesson, understand
The world of flesh and blood at last.
Nothing but beauty in a Hand?
Because he could not change the hue,
Mend the lines and make them true
To this which met his soul's demand,—
Would Da Vinci turn from you?
I hear him laugh my woes to scorn—
" The fool forsooth is all forlorn
" Because the beauty, she thinks best,
" Lived long ago or was never born,—
" Because no beauty bears the test
" In this rough peasant Hand! Confessed!
" ' Art is null and study void!'
" So sayest thou? So said not I,
" Who threw the faulty pencil by,
" And years instead of hours employed,
" Learning the veritable use
" Of flesh and bone and nerve beneath
" Lines and hue of the outer sheath,
" If haply I might reproduce
" One motive of the powers profuse,
" Flesh and bone and nerve that make
" The poorest coarsest human hand
" An object worthy to be scanned
" A whole life long for their sole sake.
" Shall earth and the cramped moment-space
" Yield the heavenly crowning grace?
" Now the parts and then the whole!
" Who art thou, with stinted soul
" And stunted body, thus to cry
" ' I love,—shall that be life's strait dole?
" ' I must live beloved or die!'
" This peasant hand that spins the wool
" And bakes the bread, why lives it on,
" Poor and coarse with beauty gone,—
" What use survives the beauty? " Fool!

Go, little girl with the poor coarse hand!
I have my lesson, shall understand.

IX.—ON DECK.

I. THERE is nothing to remember in me,
Nothing I ever said with a grace,
Nothing I did that you care to see,
Nothing I was that deserves a place
In your mind, now I leave you, set you free.

II. Conceded! In turn, concede to me,
Such things have been as a mutual flame.
Your soul's locked fast; but, love for a key,
You might let it loose, till I grew the same
In your eyes, as in mine you stand: strange plea!

III. For then, then, what would it matter to me
That I was the harsh ill-favoured one?
We both should be like as pea and pea;
It was ever so since the world begun:
So, let me proceed with my reverie.

IV. How strange it were if you had all me,
As I have all you in my heart and brain,
You, whose least word brought gloom or glee,
Who never lifted the hand in vain—
Will hold mine yet, from over the sea!

V. Strange, if a face, when you thought of me,
Rose like your own face present now,
With eyes as dear in their due degree,
Much such a mouth, and as bright a brow,
Till you saw yourself, while you cried "'Tis She!"

VI. Well, you may, you must, set down to me
Love that was life, life that was love;
A tenure of breath at your lips' decree,
A passion to stand as your thoughts approve,
A rapture to fall where your foot might be.

VII. But did one touch of such love for me
Come in a word or a look of yours,
Whose words and looks will, circling, flee
Round me and round while life endures,—
Could I fancy "As I feel, thus feels he";

VIII. Why, fade you might to a thing like me,
And your hair grow these coarse hanks of hair,
Your skin, this bark of a gnarled tree,—
You might turn myself!—should I know or care
When I should be dead of joy, James Lee?

GOLD HAIR:

A STORY OF PORNIC.

I. OH, the beautiful girl, too white,
Who lived at Pornic, down by the sea,
Just where the sea and the Loire unite!
And a boasted name in Brittany
She bore, which I will not write.

II. Too white, for the flower of life is red;
Her flesh was the soft seraphic screen
Of a soul that is meant (her parents said)
To just see earth, and hardly be seen,
And blossom in heaven instead.

III. Yet earth saw one thing, one how fair!
One grace that grew to its full on earth:
Smiles might be sparse on her cheek so spare,
And her waist want half a girdle's girth,
But she had her great gold hair.

IV. Hair, such a wonder of flix and floss,
Freshness and fragrance—floods of it, too!
Gold, did I say? Nay, gold's mere dross:
Here, Life smiled, "Think what I meant to do!"
And Love sighed, "Fancy my loss!"

V. So, when she died, it was scarce more strange
Than that, when delicate evening dies,
And you follow its spent sun's pallid range,
There's a shoot of colour startles the skies
With sudden, violent change,—

VI. That, while the breath was nearly to seek,
As they put the little cross to her lips,
She changed; a spot came out on her cheek,
A spark from her eye in mid-eclipse,
And she broke forth, "I must speak!"

VII. " Not my hair! " made the girl her moan—
" All the rest is gone or to go;
" But the last, last grace, my all, my own,
" Let it stay in the grave, that the ghost may know!
" Leave my poor gold hair alone! "

VIII. The passion thus vented, dead lay she;
Her parents sobbed their worst on that;
All friends joined in, nor observed degree:
For indeed the hair was to wonder at,
As it spread—not flowing free,

IX. But curled around her brow, like a crown,
And coiled beside her cheeks, like a cap,
And calmed about her neck—ay, down
To her breast, pressed flat, without a gap
I' the gold, it reached her gown.

X. All kissed that face, like a silver wedge
Mid the yellow wealth, nor disturbed its hair:
E'en the priest allowed death's privilege,
As he planted the crucifix with care
On her breast, 'twixt edge and edge.

XI. And thus was she buried, inviolate
Of body and soul, in the very space
By the altar; keeping saintly state
In Pornic church, for her pride of race,
Pure life and piteous fate.

XII. And in after-time would your fresh tear fall,
Though your mouth might twitch with a dubious smile,
As they told you of gold, both robe and pall,
How she prayed them leave it alone awhile,
So it never was touched at all.

XIII. Years flew; this legend grew at last
The life of the lady; all she had done,
All been, in the memories fading fast
Of lover and friend, was summed in one
Sentence survivors passed:

XIV. To wit, she was meant for heaven, not earth;
Had turned an angel before the time:
Yet since she was mortal, in such dearth
Of frailty, all you could count a crime
Was—she knew her gold hair's worth.

XV. At little pleasant Pornic church,
It chanced, the pavement wanted repair,
Was taken to pieces: left in the lurch,
A certain sacred space lay bare,
And the boys began research.

XVI. 'Twas the space where our sires would lay a saint,
A benefactor,—a bishop, suppose,
A baron with armour-adornments quaint,
Dame with chased ring and jewelled rose,
Things sanctity saves from taint;

XVII. So we come to find them in after-days
When the corpse is presumed to have done with gauds
Of use to the living, in many ways:
For the boys get pelf, and the town applauds,
And the church deserves the praise.

XVIII. They grubbed with a will: and at length—*O cor Humanum, pectora cœca*, and the rest!—
They found—no gaud they were prying for,
No ring, no rose, but—who would have guessed?—
A double Louis-d'or!

XIX. Here was a case for the priest: he heard,
Marked, inwardly digested, laid
Finger on nose, smiled, " There's a bird
" Chirps in my ear ": then, " Bring a spade,
Dig deeper! "—he gave the word.

XX. And lo, when they came to the coffin-lid,
Or rotten planks which composed it once,
Why, there lay the girl's skull wedged amid
A mint of money, it served for the nonce
To hold in its hair-heaps hid!

XXI. Hid there? Why? Could the girl be wont
(She the stainless soul) to treasure up
Money, earth's trash and heaven's affront?
Had a spider found out the communion-cup,
Was a toad in the christening-font?

XXII. Truth is truth: too true it was.
Gold! She hoarded and hugged it first,
Longed for it, leaned o'er it, loved it—alas—
Till the humour grew to a head and burst,
And she cried, at the final pass,—

XXIII. "Talk not of God, my heart is stone!
"Nor lover nor friend—be gold for both!
"Gold I lack; and, my all, my own,
"It shall hide in my hair. I scarce die loth
"If they let my hair alone!"

XXIV. Louis-d'or, some six times five,
And duly double, every piece.
Now do you see? With the priest to shrive,
With parents preventing her soul's release
By kisses that kept alive,—

XXV. With heaven's gold gates about to ope,
With friends' praise, gold-like, lingering still,
An instinct had bidden the girl's hand grope
For gold, the true sort—"Gold in heaven, if you will;
"But I keep earth's too, I hope."

XXVI. Enough! The priest took the grave's grim yield:
The parents, they eyed that price of sin
As if *thirty pieces* lay revealed
On the place *to bury strangers in*,
The hideous Potter's Field.

XXVII. But the priest bethought him: "'Milk that's spilt'
"—You know the adage! Watch and pray!
"Saints tumble to earth with so slight a tilt!
"It would build a new altar; that, we may!"
And the altar therewith was built.

XXVIII. Why I deliver this horrible verse?
As the text of a sermon, which now I preach:
Evil or good may be better or worse
In the human heart, but the mixture of each
Is a marvel and a curse.

XXIX. The candid incline to surmise of late
That the Christian faith proves false, I find:
For our Essays-and-Reviews' debate
Begins to tell on the public mind,
And Colenso's words have weight:

XXX. I still, to suppose it true, for my part,
See reasons and reasons; this, to begin:
'Tis the faith that launched point-blank her dart
At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin.
The Corruption of Man's Heart.

THE WORST OF IT.

I. WOULD it were I had been false, not you!
I that am nothing, not you that are all:
I, never the worse for a touch or two
On my speckled hide: not you, the pride
Of the day, my swan, that a first fleck's fall
On her wonder of white must unswan, undo!

II. I had dipped in life's struggle and, out again,
Bore specks of it here, there, easy to see,
When I found my swan and the cure was plain;
The dull turned bright as I caught your white
On my bosom: you saved me—saved in vain
If you ruined yourself, and all through me!

III. Yes, all through the speckled beast that I am,
Who taught you to stoop; you gave me yourself,
And bound your soul by the vows that damn:
Since on better thought you break, as you ought,
Vows—words, no angel set down, some elf
Mistook,—for an oath, an epigram!

IV. Yes, might I judge you, here were my heart,
And a hundred its like, to treat as you pleased!
I choose to be yours, for my proper part,
Yours, leave or take, or mar me or make;
If I acquiesce, why should you be teased
With the conscience-prick and the memory-smart?

V. But what will God say? Oh, my sweet,
Think, and be sorry you did this thing
Though earth were unworthy to feel your feet,
There's a heaven above may deserve your love:
Should you forfeit heaven for a snapt gold ring
And a promise broke, were it just or meet?

VI. And I to have tempted you! I, who tired
Your soul, no doubt, till it sank! Unwise,
I loved and was lowly, loved and aspired,
Loved, grieving or glad, till I made you mad,
And you meant to have hated and despised—
Whereas, you deceived me nor inquired!

VII. She, ruined? How? No heaven for her?
Crowns to give, and none for the brow
That looked like marble and smelt like myrrh?
Shall the robe be worn, and the palm-branch borne.
And she go graceless, she graced now
Beyond all saints, as themselves aver?

VIII. Hardly! That must be understood!
The earth is your place of penance, then;
And what will it prove? I desire your good,
But, plot as I may, I can find no way
How a blow should fall such as falls on men,
Nor prove too much for your womanhood.

IX. It will come, I suspect, at the end of life,
When you walk alone, and review the past;
And I, who so long shall have done with strife,
And journeyed my stage and earned my wage
And retired as was right,—I am called at last,
When the devil stabs you, to lend the knife.

X. He stabs for the minute of trivial wrong,
Nor the other hours are able to save,
The happy, that lasted my whole life long:
For a promise broke, not for first words spoke,
The true, the only, that turn my grave
To a blaze of joy and a crash of song.

XI. Witness beforehand! Off I trip
On a safe path gay through the flowers you flung:
My very name made great by your lip,
And my heart a-glow with the good I know
Of a perfect year when we both were young,
And I tasted the angels' fellowship.

XII. And witness, moreover . . . Ah, but wait!
I spy the loop whence an arrow shoots!
It may be for yourself, when you meditate,
That you grieve—for slain ruth, murdered truth.
"Though falsehood escape in the end, what boots?
"How truth would have triumphed!"—you sigh too late.

XIII. Ay, who would have triumphed like you, I say!
Well, it is lost now; well, you must bear,

Abide and grow fit for a better day:
You should hardly grudge, could I be your judge.
But hush! For you, can be no despair:
There's amends: 'tis a secret: hope and pray!

XIV. For I was true at least—oh, true enough!
And, Dear, truth is not as good as it seems!
Commend me to conscience! Idle stuff!
Much help is in mine, as I mope and pine,
And skulk through day, and scowl in my dreams
At my swan's obtaining the crow's rebuff.

XV. Men tell me of truth now—"False!" I cry:
Of beauty—"A mask, friend! Look beneath!"
We take our own method, the devil and I,
With pleasant and fair and wise and rare:
And the best we wish to what lives, is—death;
Which even in wishing, perhaps we lie!

XVI. Far better commit a fault and have done—
As you, Dear!—for ever; and choose the pure,
And look where the healing waters run,
And strive and strain to be good again
And a place in the other world ensure,
All glass and gold, with God for its sun.

XVII. Misery! What shall I say or do?
I cannot advise, or, at least, persuade:
Most like, you are glad you deceived me—rue
No whit of the wrong: you endured too long,
Have done no evil and want no aid,
Will live the old life out and chance the new.

XVIII. And your sentence is written all the same,
And I can do nothing,—pray, perhaps:
But somehow the world pursues its game,—
If I pray, if I curse,—for better or worse:
And my faith is torn to a thousand scraps,
And my heart feels ice while my words breathe flame.

XIX. Dear, I look from my hiding-place.
Are you still so fair? Have you still the eyes?
Be happy! Add but the other grace,
Be good! Why want what the angels vaunt?
I knew you once: but in Paradise,
If we meet, I will pass nor turn my face.

DÎS ALITER VISUM; OR, LE BYRON DE NOS JOURS.

I. Stop, let me have the truth of that!
Is that all true? I say, the day
Ten years ago when both of us
Met on a morning, friends—as thus
We meet this evening, friends or what?—

II. Did you—because I took your arm
And sillily smiled, " A mass of brass
" That sea looks, blazing underneath!"
While up the cliff-road edged with heath,
We took the turns nor came to harm—

III. Did you consider " Now makes twice
" That I have seen her, walked and talked
" With this poor pretty thoughtful thing,
" Whose worth I weigh: she tries to sing;
" Draws, hopes in time the eye grows nice;

IV. " Reads verse and thinks she understands;
" Loves all, at any rate, that's great,
" Good, beautiful; but much as we
" Down at the bath-house love the sea,
" Who breathe its salt and bruise its sands:

V. " While . . . do but follow the fishing-gull
" That flaps and floats from wave to cave!
" There's the sea-lover, fair my friend!
" What then? Be patient, mark and mend!
" Had you the making of your scull?"

VI. And did you, when we faced the church
With spire and sad slate roof, aloof
From human fellowship so far,
Where a few graveyard crosses are,
And garlands for the swallows' perch,—

VII. Did you determine, as we stepped
O'er the lone stone fence, " Let me get
" Her for myself, and what's the earth
" With all its art, verse, music, worth—
" Compared with love, found, gained, and kept?

VIII. " Schumann's our music-maker now;
" Has his march-movement youth and mouth?
" Ingres's the modern man that paints;
" Which will lean on me, of his saints?
" Heine for songs; for kisses, how?"

IX. And did you, when we entered, reached
The votive frigate, soft aloft
Riding on air this hundred years,
Safe-smiling at old hopes and fears,—
Did you draw profit while she preached?

X. Resolving, " Fools we wise men grow!
" Yes, I could easily blurt out curt
" Some question that might find reply
" As prompt in her stopped lips, dropped eye,
" And rush of red to cheek and brow:

XI. " Thus were a match made, sure and fast,
" Mid the blue weed-flowers round the mound
" Where, issuing, we shall stand and stay
" For one more look at baths and bay,
" Sands, sea-gulls, and the old church last—

XII. " A match 'twixt me, bent, wigged and lamed,
" Famous, however, for verse and worse,
" Sure of the Fortieth spare Arm-chair
" When gout and glory seat me there,
" So, one whose love-freaks pass unblamed,—

XIII. " And this young beauty, round and sound
" As a mountain-apple, youth and truth
" With loves and doves, at all events
" With money in the Three per Cents;
" Whose choice of me would seem profound:—

XIV. " She might take me as I take her.
" Perfect the hour would pass, alas!
" Climb high, love high, what matter? Still,
" Feet, feelings, must descend the hill:
" An hour's perfection can't recur.

XV. " Then follows Paris and full time
" For both to reason: 'Thus with us!'
" She'll sigh, 'Thus girls give body and soul
" ' At first word, think they gain the goal,
" ' When 'tis the starting-place they climb!

XVI. " ' My friend makes verse and gets renown;
" ' Have they all fifty years, his peers?
" ' He knows the world, firm, quiet and gay;
" ' Boys will become as much one day:
" ' They're fools; he cheats, with beard less brown.

XVII. " ' For boys say, *Love me or I die!*
" ' He did not say, *The truth is, youth*
" ' *I want, who am old and know too much;*
" ' *I'd catch youth: lend me sight and touch!*
" ' *Drop heart's blood where life's wheels grate dry!*'

XVIII. " While I should make rejoinder "—(then
It was, no doubt, you ceased that least
Light pressure of my arm in yours)
" ' I can conceive of cheaper cures
" ' For a yawning-fit o'er books and men.

XIX. " ' What? All I am, was, and might be,
" ' All, books taught, art brought, life's whole strife,
" ' Painful results since precious, just
" ' Were fitly exchanged, in wise disgust,
" ' For two cheeks freshened by youth and sea?

XX. " ' All for a nosegay!—what came first;
" ' With fields on flower, untried each side;
" ' I rally, need my books and men,
" ' And find a nosegay ': drop it, then,
" No match yet made for best or worst!"

XXI. That ended me. You judged the porch
We left by, Norman; took our look
At sea and sky; wondered so few
Find out the place for air and view;
Remarked the sun began to scorch;

XXII. Descended, soon regained the baths,
And then, good-bye! Years ten since then:
Ten years! We meet: you tell me, now,
By a window-seat for that cliff-brow,
On carpet-stripes for those sand-paths.

XXIII. Now I may speak: you fool, for all
Your lore! WHO made things plain in vain?
What was the sea for? What, the grey
Sad church, that solitary day,
Crosses and graves and swallows' call?

XXIV. Was there nought better than to enjoy?
No feat which, done, would make time break
And let us pent-up creatures through
Into eternity, our due?
No forcing earth teach heaven's employ?

XXV. No wise beginning, here and now,
What cannot grow complete (earth's feat)
And heaven must finish, there and then?
No tasting earth's true food for men,
Its sweet in sad, its sad in sweet?

XXVI. No grasping at love, gaining a share
O' the sole spark from God's life at strife
With death, so, sure of range above
The limits here? For us and love,
Failure; but, when God fails, despair.

XXVII. This you call wisdom? Thus you add
Good unto good again, in vain?
You loved, with body worn and weak;
I loved, with faculties to seek:
Were both loves worthless since ill-clad?

XXVIII. Let the mere star-fish in his vault
Crawl in a wash of weed, indeed,
Rose-jacynth to the finger-tips:
He, whole in body and soul, outstrips
Man, found with either in default.

XXIX. But what's whole, can increase no more,
Is dwarfed and dies, since here's its sphere.
The devil laughed at you in his sleeve!
You knew not? That I well believe;
Or you had saved two souls: nay, four.

XXX. For Stephanie sprained last night her wrist,
Ankle or something. " Pooh," cry you?
At any rate she danced, all say,
Vilely; her vogue has had its day.
Here comes my husband from his whist.

TOO LATE.

I. HERE was I with my arm and heart
And brain, all yours for a word, a want
Put into a look—just a look, your part,—
While mine, to repay it . . . vainest vaunt,
Were the woman, that's dead, alive to hear,
Had her lover, that's lost, love's proof to show!
But I cannot show it; you cannot speak
From the churchyard neither, miles removed,
Though I feel by a pulse within my cheek,
Which stabs and stops, that the woman I loved
Needs help in her grave and finds none near,
Wants warmth from the heart which sends it—so!

II. Did I speak once angrily, all the drear days
You lived, you woman I loved so well,
Who married the other? Blame or praise,
Where was the use then? Time would tell,
And the end declare what man for you,
What woman for me, was the choice of God.
But, Edith dead! no doubting more!
I used to sit and look at my life
As it rippled and ran till, right before,
A great stone stopped it: oh, the strife
Of waves at the stone some devil threw
In my life's midcurrent, thwarting God!

III. But either I thought, "They may churn and chide
"Awhile, my waves which came for their joy
"And found this horrible stone full-tide:
"Yet I see just a thread escape, deploy
"Through the evening-country, silent and safe,
"And it suffers no more till it finds the sea."
Or else I would think, "Perhaps some night
"When new things happen, a meteor-ball
"May slip through the sky in a line of light,
"And earth breathe hard, and landmarks fall,
"And my waves no longer champ nor chafe,
"Since a stone will have rolled from its place: let be!"

IV. But, dead! All's done with: wait who may,
Watch and wear and wonder who will.
Oh, my whole life that ends to-day!
Oh, my soul's sentence, sounding still,
"The woman is dead that was none of his;
"And the man that was none of hers may go!"
There's only the past left: worry that!
Wreak, like a bull, on the empty coat,
Rage, its late wearer is laughing at!
Tear the collar to rags, having missed his throat;
Strike stupidly on—"This, this and this,
"Where I would that a bosom received the blow!"

V. I ought to have done more: once my speech,
And once your answer, and there, the end,
And Edith was henceforth out of reach!
Why, men do more to deserve a friend,
Be rid of a foe, get rich, grow wise,
Nor, folding their arms, stare fate in the face.
Why, better even have burst like a thief
And borne you away to a rock for us two,
In a moment's horror, bright, bloody and brief:
Then changed to myself again—"I slew
"Myself in that moment: a ruffian lies
"Somewhere: your slave, see, born in his place!"

VI. What did the other do? You be judge!
Look at us, Edith! Here are we both!
Give him his six whole years: I grudge
None of the life with you, nay, loathe
Myself that I grudged his start in advance
Of me who could overtake and pass.
But, as if he loved you! No, not he,
Nor anyone else in the world, 'tis plain:
Who ever heard that another, free
As I, young, prosperous, sound and sane,
Poured life out, proffered it—"Half a glance
"Of those eyes of yours and I drop the glass!"

VII. Handsome, were you? 'Tis more than they held,
More than they said; I was 'ware and watched:
I was the 'scapegrace, this rat belled
The cat, this fool got his whiskers scratched:

The others? No head that was turned, no heart
Broken, my lady, assure yourself!
Each soon made his mind up; so and so
Married a dancer, such and such
Stole his friend's wife, stagnated slow,
Or maundered, unable to do as much,
And muttered of peace where he had no part:
While, hid in the closet, laid on the shelf,—

VIII. On the whole, you were let alone, I think!
So, you looked to the other, who acquiesced;
My rival, the proud man,—prize your pink
Of poets! A poet he was! I've guessed:
He rhymed you his rubbish nobody read,
Loved you and doved you—did not I laugh!
There was a prize! But we both were tried.
Oh, heart of mine, marked broad with her mark,
Tekel, found wanting, set aside,
Scorned! See, I bleed these tears in the dark
Till comfort come and the last he bled:
He? He is tagging your epitaph.

IX. If it would only come over again!
—Time to be patient with me, and probe
This heart till you punctured the proper vein,
Just to learn what blood is: twitch the robe
From that blank lay-figure your fancy draped,
Prick the leathern heart till the—verses spirt!
And late it was easy; late, you walked
Where a friend might meet you; Edith's name
Arose to one's lip if one laughed or talked;
If I heard good news, you heard the same;
When I woke, I knew that your breath escaped;
I could bide my time, keep alive, alert.

X. And alive I shall keep and long, you will see!
I knew a man, was kicked like a dog
From gutter to cesspool; what cared he
So long as he picked from the filth his prog?
He saw youth, beauty and genius die,
And jollily lived to his hundredth year.
But I will live otherwise: none of such life!
At once I begin as I mean to end.

Go on with the world, get gold in its strife,
Give your spouse the slip and betray your friend!
There are two who decline, a woman and I,
And enjoy our death in the darkness here.

XI. I liked that way you had with your curls
Wound to a ball in a net behind:
Your cheek was chaste as a quaker-girl's,
And your mouth—there was never, to my mind,
Such a funny mouth, for it would not shut;
And the dented chin too—what a chin!
There were certain ways when you spoke, some words
That you know you never could pronounce:
You were thin, however; like a bird's
Your hand seemed—some would say, the pounce
Of a scaly-footed hawk—all but!
The world was right when it called you thin.

XII. But I turn my back on the world: I take
Your hand, and kneel, and lay to my lips.
Bid me live, Edith! Let me slake
Thirst at your presence! Fear no slips:
'Tis your slave shall pay, while his soul endures,
Full due, love's whole debt, *summum jus*.
My queen shall have high observance, planned
Courtship made perfect, no least line
Crossed without warrant. There you stand,
Warm too, and white too: would this wine
Had washed all over that body of yours,
Ere I drank it, and you down with it, thus!

ABT VOGLER.

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING UPON THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION.)

I.

WOULD that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when Solomon willed
Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,

Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end and of aim,
Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep removed,—
Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable Name,
And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess he loved!

II.

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of mine,
This which my keys in a crowd pressed and importuned to raise!
Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and now combine,
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his praise!
And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down to hell,
Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of things,
Then up again swim into sight, having based me my palace well,
Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether springs.

III.

And another would mount and march, like the excellent minion he was,
Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with many a crest,
Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest:
For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,
When a great illumination surprises a festal night—
Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space to spire)
Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride of my soul was in sight.

IV.

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was certain, to match man's birth,
Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I;
And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth,
As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale the sky:

Novel splendours burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt with mine,
Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its wandering star;
Meteor-moons, balls of blaze: and they did not pale nor pine,
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more near nor far.

V.

Nay more; for there wanted not who walked in the glare and glow,
Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the Protoplast,
Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should blow,
Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking at last;
Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the body and gone,
But were back once more to breathe in an old world worth their new;
What never had been, was now; what was, as it shall be anon;
And what is,—shall I say, matched both? for I was made perfect too.

VI.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me! For think, had I painted the whole,
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-worth;
Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect proceeds from cause,
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is told;
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list enrolled:—

VII.

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!

And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star,
Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself is nought;
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is said:
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my thought:
And, there! Ye have heard and seen: consider and bow the head!

VIII.

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared;
Gone! and the good tears start, the praises that come too slow;
For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that he feared,
That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing was to go.
Never to be again! But many more of the kind
As good, nay, better perchance: is this your comfort to me
To me, who must be saved because I cling with my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same God: ay, what was, shall be.

IX.

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with hands!
What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power expands?
There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.

X.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it by-and-by.

XI.

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should be prized?
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe:
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians know.

XII.

Well, it is earth with me; silence resumes her reign:
I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,
Sliding by semitones, till I sink to the minor,—yes,
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into the deep;
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place is found,
The C Major of this life: so, now I will try to sleep.

RABBI BEN EZRA

1. Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith "A whole I planned,
"Youth shows but half; trust God: see all nor be afraid!"

2. Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed "Which rose make ours,
"Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
"Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!"

III. Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

IV. Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

V. Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

VI. Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe.

VII. For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

VIII. What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

IX. Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good to live and learn?"

X. Not once beat "Praise be Thine!
"I see the whole design,
"I, who saw power, see now love perfect too:
"Perfect I call Thy plan:
"Thanks that I was a man!
"Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou shalt do!"

XI. For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest;
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!

XII. Let us not always say
"Spite of this flesh to-day
"I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry "All good things
"Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

XIII. Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.

XIV. And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armour to indue.

xv. Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

xvi. For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the grey:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
"Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

xvii. So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
"That acquiescence vain:
"The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

xviii. For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

xix. As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedest age: wait death nor be afraid!

xx. Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

xxi. Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,

Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

xxii. Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

xxiii. Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

xxiv. But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

xxv. Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

xxvi. Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

xxvii. Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

XXVIII. He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

XXIX. What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Scull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

XXX. Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new mine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel?

XXXI. But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I,—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst:

XXXII. So, take and use Thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in Thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

[SUPPOSED of Pamphylax the Antiochene:
It is a parchment, of my rolls the fifth,
Hath three skins glued together, is all Greek
And goeth from *Epsilon* down to *Mu*:
Lies second in the surnamed Chosen Chest,

Stained and conserved with juice of terebinth,
Covered with cloth of hair, and lettered *Xi*,
From Xanthus, my wife's uncle, now at peace:
Mu and *Epsilon* stand for my own name.
I may not write it, but I make a cross
To show I wait His coming, with the rest,
And leave off here: beginneth Pamphylax.]

I said, "If one should wet his lips with wine,
"And slip the broadest plantain-leaf we find,
"Or else the lappet of a linen robe,
"Into the water-vessel, lay it right,
"And cool his forehead just above the eyes,
"The while a brother, kneeling either side,
"Should chafe each hand and try to make it warm,—
"He is not so far gone but he might speak."

This did not happen in the outer cave,
Nor in the secret chamber of the rock
Where, sixty days since the decree was out,
We had him, bedded on a camel-skin,
And waited for his dying all the while;
But in the midmost grotto: since noon's light
Reached there a little, and we would not lose
The last of what might happen on his face.

I at the head, and Xanthus at the feet,
With Valens and the Boy, had lifted him,
And brought him from the chamber in the depths,
And laid him in the light where we might see:
For certain smiles began about his mouth,
And his lids moved, presageful of the end.

Beyond, and half way up the mouth o' the cave,
The Bactrian convert, having his desire,
Kept watch, and made pretence to graze a goat
That gave us milk, on rags of various herb,
Plantain and quitch, the rocks' shade keeps alive:
So that if any thief or soldier passed,
(Because the persecution was aware)
Yielding the goat up promptly with his life,
Such man might pass on, joyful at a prize,
Nor care to pry into the cool o' the cave.
Outside was all noon and the burning blue.

" Here is wine," answered Xanthus,—dropped a drop;
I stooped and placed the lap of cloth aright,
Then chafed his right hand, and the Boy his left:
But Valens had bethought him, and produced
And broke a ball of nard, and made perfume.
Only, he did—not so much wake, as—turn
And smile a little, as a sleeper does
If any dear one call him, touch his face—
And smiles and loves, but will not be disturbed.
Then Xanthus said a prayer, but still he slept:
It is the Xanthus that escaped to Rome,
Was burned, and could not write the chronicle.

Then the Boy sprang up from his knees, and ran,
Stung by the splendour of a sudden thought,
And fetched the seventh plate of graven lead
Out of the secret chamber, found a place,
Pressing with finger on the deeper dints,
And spoke, as 'twere his mouth proclaiming first,
" I am the Resurrection and the Life."

Whereat he opened his eyes wide at once,
And sat up of himself, and looked at us;
And thenceforth nobody pronounced a word;
Only, outside, the Bactrian cried his cry
Like the lone desert-bird that wears the ruff,
As signal we were safe, from time to time.

First he said, " If a friend declared to me,
" This my son Valens, this my other son,
" Were James and Peter,—nay, declared as well
" This lad was very John,—I could believe!
" —Could, for a moment, doubtlessly believe:
" So is myself withdrawn into my depths,
" The soul retreated from the perished brain
" Whence it was wont to feel and use the world
" Through these dull members, done with long ago.
" Yet I myself remain; I feel myself:
" And there is nothing lost. Let be, awhile! "

[This is the doctrine he was wont to teach,
How divers persons witness in each man,
Three souls which make up one soul: first, to wit,
A soul of each and all the bodily parts,

Seated therein, which works, and is what Does,
And has the use of earth, and ends the man
Downward: but, tending upward for advice,
Grows into, and again is grown into
By the next soul, which, seated in the brain,
Useth the first with its collected use,
And feeleth, thinketh, willeth,—is what Knows:
Which, duly tending upward in its turn,
Grows into, and again is grown into
By the last soul, that uses both the first,
Subsisting whether they assist or no,
And, constituting man's self, is what Is—
And leans upon the former, makes it play,
As that played off the first: and, tending up,
Holds, is upheld by, God, and ends the man
Upward in that dread point of intercourse,
Nor needs a place, for it returns to Him.
What Does, what Knows, what Is; three souls, one man.
I give the glossa of Theotypas.]

And then, " A stick, once fire from end to end
" Now, ashes save the tip that holds a spark!
" Yet, blow the spark, it runs back, spreads itself
" A little where the fire was: thus I urge
" The soul that served me, till it task once more
" What ashes of my brain have kept their shape,
" And these make effort on the last o' the flesh,
" Trying to taste again the truth of things—"
(He smiled)—" their very superficial truth;
" As that ye are my sons, that it is long
" Since James and Peter had release by death,
" And I am only he, your brother John,
" Who saw and heard, and could remember all.
" Remember all! It is not much to say.
" What if the truth broke on me from above
" As once and oft-times? Such might hap again:
" Doubtlessly He might stand in presence here,
" With head wool-white, eyes flame, and feet like brass,
" The sword and the seven stars, as I have seen—
" I who now shudder only and surmise
" ' How did your brother bear that sight and live? '

" If I live yet, it is for good, more love
" Through me to men: be nought but ashes here

" That keep awhile my semblance, who was John,—
" Still, when they scatter, there is left on earth
" No one alive who knew (consider this !)
" —Saw with his eyes and handled with his hands
" That which was from the first, the Word of Life.
" How will it be when none more saith ' I saw ' ?

" Such ever was love's way: to rise, it stoops.
" Since I, whom Christ's mouth taught, was bidden teach,
" I went, for many years, about the world,
" Saying ' It was so; so I heard and saw,'
" Speaking as the case asked: and men believed.
" Afterward came the message to myself
" In Patmos isle; I was not bidden teach,
" But simply listen, take a book and write,
" Nor set down other than the given word,
" With nothing left to my arbitrament
" To choose or change: I wrote, and men believed.
" Then, for my time grew brief, no message more.
" No call to write again, I found a way,
" And, reasoning from my knowledge, merely taught
" Men should, for love's sake, in love's strength believe;
" Or I would pen a letter to a friend
" And urge the same as friend, nor less nor more:
" Friends said I reasoned rightly, and believed.
" But at the last, why, I seemed left alive
" Like a sea-jelly weak on Patmos strand,
" To tell dry sea-beach gazers how I fared
" When there was mid-sea, and the mighty things:
" Left to repeat, ' I saw, I heard, I knew,'
" And go all over the old ground again,
" With Antichrist already in the world,
" And many Antichrists, who answered prompt
" ' Am I not Jasper as thyself art John?
" ' Nay, young, whereas through age thou mayest forget:
" ' Wherefore, explain, or how shall we believe? '
" I never thought to call down fire on such,
" Or, as in wonderful and early days,
" Pick up the scorpion, tread the serpent dumb;
" But patient stated much of the Lord's life
" Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it work:
" Since much that at the first, in deed and word,
" Lay simply and sufficiently exposed,

" Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,
" Fed through such years, familiar with such light,
" Guarded and guided still to see and speak)
" Of new significance and fresh result;
" What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars,
" And named them in the Gospel I have writ.
" For men said, ' It is getting long ago:
" ' Where is the promise of His coming? '—asked
" These young ones in their strength, as loth to wait,
" Of me who, when their sires were born, was old.
" I, for I loved them, answered, joyfully,
" Since I was there, and helpful in my age;
" And, in the main, I think such men believed.
" Finally, thus endeavouring, I fell sick,
" Ye brought me here, and I supposed the end,
" And went to sleep with one thought that, at least,
" Though the whole earth should lie in wickedness,
" We had the truth, might leave the rest to God.
" Yet now I wake in such decrepitude
" As I had slidden down and fallen afar,
" Past even the presence of my former self,
" Grasping the while for stay at facts which snap,
" Till I am found away from my own world,
" Feeling for foot-hold through a blank profound,
" Along with unborn people in strange lands,
" Who say—I hear said or conceive they say—
" ' Was John at all, and did he say he saw?
" ' Assure us, ere we ask what he might see! '

" And how shall I assure them? Can they share
" —They, who have flesh, a veil of youth and strength
" About each spirit, that needs must bide its time,
" Living and learning still as years assist
" Which wear the thickness thin, and let man see—
" With me who hardly am withheld at all,
" But shudderingly, scarce a shred between,
" Lie bare to the universal prick of light?
" Is it for nothing we grow old and weak,
" We whom God loves? When pain ends, gain ends too.
" To me, that story—ay, that Life and Death
" Of which I wrote ' it was '—to me, it is;
" —Is, here and now: I apprehend nought else.
" Is not God now i' the world His power first made?