

HERMAN MELVILLE

UNCOLLECTED POEMS.

UNCOLLECTED POEMS

≈ ≈ ≈ ≈ ≈

Marquis de Grandvin at the Hostelry.
Naples in the Time of Bomba.
Immolated.
Madam Mirror.
The Wise Virgins to Madam Mirror.
The New Ancient of Days.
The Rusty Man.
Thy Aim, Thy Aim?
The Old Shipmaster and his Crazy Barn.
Camoens.
Camoens in the Hospital.
Montaigne and his Kitten.
Falstaffs Lament over Prince Hal.
Shadow at the Feast.
Merry Ditty of the Sad Man.
Honor.
Fruit and Flower Painter.
The Medallion.
Time's Long Ago!
In the Hall of Marbles.
Gold in the Mountain.
In Shards the Sylvan Vases Lie.
In the Jovial Age of Old.
A Spirit Appeared to Me.
Give Me the Nerve.
My Jacket Old.
In the Old Farm-House.
To ——.
A Battle Picture.
Old Age in his Ailing.
Hearts-of-Gold.
Pontoosuce.
Epistle to Daniel Shepherd.
Inscription for the Slain at Fredericksburgh.
The Admiral of the White.
To Tom.
Suggested by the Ruins of a Mountain-Temple in Arcadia.
Puzzlement.
The Continents.
The Dust-Layers.
A Rail Road Cutting near Alexandria in 1855.
A Reasonable Constitution.
Rammon.

Ditty of Aristippus.

In A Nutshell.

Adieu.

MARQUIS DE GRANDVIN AT THE HOSTELRY.

Not wanting in the traditional suavity of his countrymen, the Marquis makes his salutation. Thereafter, with an ulterior design, entering upon a running retrospect touching Italian affairs.

Candid eyes in open faces
Clear, not keen, no narrowing line:
Hither turn your favoring graces
Now the cloth is drawn for wine.

In best of worlds if all's not bright,
Allow, the shadow's chased by light,
Though rest for neither yet may be.
And beauty's charm, where Nature reigns,
Nor crimes nor codes may quite subdue,
As witness Naples long in chains
Exposed dishevelled by the sea—
Ah, so much more her beauty drew,
Till Savoy's red-shirt Perseus flew
And cut that fair Andromeda free.

Then Fancy flies. Nor less the trite
Matter-of-fact transcends the flight:
A rail-way train took Naples' town;
But Garibaldi sped thereon:
This movement's rush sufficing there
To rout King Fanny, Bomba's heir,
Already stuffing trunks and hampers,
At news that from Sicilia passed—
The banished Bullock from the Pampas
Trampling the royal levies massed.
And, later: *He has swum the Strait,*
And in Calabria making head,
Cheered by the peasants garlanded,
Pushes for Naples' nearest gate.
From that red Taurus plunging on
With lowered horns and forehead dun,
Shall matadores save Bomba's son?
He fled. And her Redeemer's banners
Glad Naples greeted with strown flowers

Hurrahs and secular hosannas
That fidgety made all tyrant powers.

Ye halls of history, arched by time,
Founded in fate, enlarged by crime,
Now shines like phosphorus scratched in dark
'Gainst your grimed walls the luminous mark
Of one who in no paladin age
Was knightly—him who lends a page
Now signal in time's recent story
Where scarce in vogue are "Plutarch's Men,"
And jobbers deal in popular glory.—
But he the hero was a sword
Whereto at whiles Cavour was guard.
The point described a fiery arc,
A swerve of wrist ordained the mark.
Wise statemanship, a ruling star
Made peace itself subserve the war.
In forging into fact a dream—
For dream it was, a dream for long—
Italia disenthralled and one,
Above her but the Alps—no thong
High flourished, held by Don or Hun;
Italia, how cut up, divided
Nigh paralysed, by cowls misguided;
Locked as in Chancery's numbing hand,
Fattening the predatory band
Of shyster-princes, whose ill sway
Still kept her a calamitous land;
In ending this, spite cruel delay,
And making, in the People's name,
Of Italy's disunited frame,
A unit and a telling State .
Participant in the world's debate;
Few deeds of arms, in fruitful end,
The statecraft of Cavour transcend.
What towns with alien guards that teemed
Attest Art's Holy Land redeemed.

Slipt from the Grand Duke's gouty tread,
Florence, fair flower up-lifts the head.
Ancona, plucked from Peter's Chair,
With all the Papal fiefs in band,
Her Arch Imperial now may wear

For popular triumph and command.
 And Venice: there the Croatian horde
 Swagger no more with clattering sword
 Ruffling the doves that dot the Square.
 In Rome no furtive cloaked one now
 Scribbles his gibe on Pasquin's brow,
 Since wag his tongue at Popes who may
 The Popedom needs endure his say.
 But (happier) feuds with princelings cease,
 The *People* federate a peace.
 Cremona fiddles, blithe to see
 Contentious cities comrades free.
 Sicilia,—Umbria,—muster in
 Their towns in squads, and hail Turin.
 One state, one flag, one sword, one crown,
 Till time build higher or Cade pull down.
 Counts this for much? Well, more is won.
 Brave public works are schemed or done.
 Swart Tiber, dredged, may rich repay—
 The Pontine Marsh, too, drained away.
 And, far along the Tuscan shore
 The weird Maremma reassume
 Her ancient tilth and wheaten plume.
 Ay, to reclaim Ansonia's land
 The Spirit o' the Age he'll take a hand.
 He means to dust each bric-a-brac city,
 Pluck the feathers from all banditti;
 The Pope he'll hat, and, yea or nay ye,
 Rejuvenate e'en poor old Pompeii!
 Concede, accomplished aims unite
 With many a promise hopeful and as bright.

II

Effecting a counterturn, the Marquis evokes—and from the Shades, as would seem—an inconclusive debate as to the exact import of a current term significant of that one of the manifold aspects of life and nature which under various forms all artists strive to transmit to canvas. A term, be it added, whereof the lexicons give definitions more lexicographical than satisfactory.

Ay. But the *Picturesque*, I wonder—
 The *Picturesque* and *Old Romance*!
 May these conform and share advance
 With Italy and the world's career?

At little suppers, where I'm one,
My artist-friends this question ponder
When ale goes round; but, in brave cheer
The vineyards yield, they'll beading run
Like Arethusa burst from ground.
Ay, and in lateral freaks of gamesome wit
Moribund Old Romance irreverent twit.
"Adieu, rosettes!" sighs Steen in way
Of fun convivial, frankly gay,
"Adieu, rosettes and point-de-vise!"
All garnish strenuous time refuse;
In peacocks' tails put out the eyes!
Utility reigns—Ah, well-a-way!—
And bustles along in Bentham's shoes.
For the Picturesque—suffice, suffice
The picture that fetches a picturesque price!
Less jovial ones propound at start
Your Picturesque in what inheres?
"In nature point, in life, in art
Where the essential thing appears.
First settle that, we'll then take up
The prior question."

 "Well, so be,"

Said Frater Lippi, who but he—
Exchanging late in changeable weather
The cowl for the cap, a cap and feather;
With wicked eye then twinkling fun,
Suppressed in friendly decorous tone,
"Here's Spagnoletto. He, I trow
Can best avail here, and bestead.—
Come then, hidalgo, what sayst thou?
The *Picturesque*—an example yield."
The man invoked, a man of brawn
Tho' stumpt in stature, raised his head
From sombre musings, and revealed
A brow by no blest angel sealed,
And mouth at corners droopt and drawn;
And, catching but the last words, said
"The Picturesque?—Have ye not seen
My Flaying of St. Batholomew—
My Laurence on the gridiron lean?
There's Picturesque; and done as well
As old Giotto's *Dammed in Hell*

At Pisa in the Campo Santa.”
They turn hereat. In merriment
Ironic jeers and juniors vent,
“That’s modest now, one hates a vaunter.”
But Lippi: “Why not Guido cite
In *Herod’s Massacre?*”—weening well
The *Little Spaniard’s* envious spite
Guido against, as gossips tell.
The sombrous one igniting here
And piercing Lippi’s mannered mien
Flared up volcanic.—Ah, too clear,
At odds are furious and serene.

Misliking Lippi’s mischievous eye
As much as Spagnoletto’s mood,
And thinking to put unpleasantness by,
Swanevelt spake, that Dutchman good:
“Friends, but the Don errs not so wide.
Like beauty strange with horror allied,—
As shown in great Leonardo’s head
Of snaky Medusa,—so as well
Grace and the Picturesque may dwell
With Terror. Vain here to divide—
The Picturesque has many a side.
For me, I take to Nature’s scene
Some scene select, set off serene
With any tranquil thing you please—
A crumbling tower, a shepherd piping.
My master, sure, with this agrees,”
His turned appeal on Claude here lighting.
But he, the mildest tempered swain
And eke discreetest, too, may be,
That ever came out from Lorraine
To lose himself in Arcady
(Sweet there to be lost, as some have been,
And find oneself in losing e’en)
To Claude no pastime, none, nor gain
Wavering in theory’s wildering maze;
Better he likes, though sunny he,
To haunt the Arcadian woods in haze,
Intent shy charms to win or ensnare,
Beauty his Daphne, he the pursuer there.
So naught he said whate’er he felt,

Yet friendly nodded to Swanevelt.

III

With all the ease of a Prince of the Blood gallantly testifying in behalf of an indiscreet lady the Marquis incontinently fibs, laying the cornerstone of a Munchausen fable—

But you, ye pleasant faces wise
Saluted late, your candid eyes
Methinks ye rub them in surprise:
“What’s this? Jan Steen and Lippi? Claude?
Long since they embarked for Far Abroad!
Have met them, you?”

“Indeed, have I!

Ma foi! The immortals never die;
They are not so weak, they are not so craven;
They keep time’s sea and skip the haven.—
Well, letting minor memories go:
With other illustrious ones in row
I met them once at that brave tavern
Founded by the first Delmonico,
Forefather of a flourishing line!
’Twas all in off-hand easy way—
Pour passer le temps, as loungers say.
In upper chamber did we sit
The dolts below never dreaming it.
The cloth was drawn—we left alone,
No solemn lackeys looking on.
In wine’s meridian, halcyon noon,
Beatitude excludes elation.

Thus for a while. Anon ensues
All round their horizon, ruddying it,
Such Lights Auroral, mirth and wit—
Thy flashes, O Falernian Muse!

IV

After a little bye-scene between Van Dyke, and Franz Hals of Mechlin, an old topic is by the company, here and there, discussed anew. In which rambling talk Adrian Brouwer, tickled undesignedly by two chance-words from a certain grandee of artists, and more waggish than polite in addressing Carlo Dolce and Rembrandt whimsically delivers his mind.

’Twas Hals began. He to Vandyck,

In whose well-polished gentle mien
The practiced courtier of Kings was seen:
“Van, how, pray, do these revels strike?
Once you’d have me to England—there
Riches to get at St.. James’s. Nay—
Patronage! ’Gainst that flattering snare,
The more of it lure from hearth away,
Old friends—old vintages carry the day! “
Whereto Vandyck, in silken dress
Not smoother than his courteousness
Smiled back, “Well, Franz, go then thy ways;
Thy pencil anywhere earns thee praise,
If not heapt gold.—But hark the chat!”
“’Tis gay,” said Hals, not deaf to that,
“And witty should be. O the cup,
Wit rises in exhalation up! “
And sympathetic viewed the scene.
Then, turning, with yet livelier mien,
“More candid than kings, less coy than the Graces,
The pleasantness, Van, of these festival faces!—
But what’s the theme?”

“The theme was bent—

Be sure, in no dry argument—
On the Picturesque, what ’tis,—its essence,
Fibre and root, bud, efflorescence,
Congenial soil, and where at best;
Till, drawing attention from the rest,
Some syllables dropt from Tintoretto,
Negligent dropt; with limp lax air
One long arm lolling over chair,
Nor less evincing latent nerve
Potential lazing in reserve.
For strong he was—the dyer’s son,
A leonine strength, no strained falsetto—
The *Little Tinto*, Tintoretto,
Yes, Titan work by him was done.
And now as one in Art’s degree
Superior to his topic—he:
“This *Picturesque* is scarce my care.
But note it now in Nature’s work—
A thatched hut settling, rotting trees
Mossed over. Some decay must lurk:
In florid things but small its share.

You'll find it in Rome's squalid Ghetto,
In Algiers at the lazaretto,
In many a grimy slimy lair."

"Well put!" cried Brouwer with ruddled face,
His wine-stained vesture,—hardly new,—
Buttoned with silver florins true;
"Grime mark and *slime!*—Squirm not, *Sweet Charles.*"

Slyly, in tone mellifluous
Addressing Carlo Dolce thus,
Fidgety in shy fellowship,
Fastidious even to finger-tip,
And dainty prim; "In Art the stye
Is quite inodorous. Here am I:
I don't paint smells, no no, no no,
No more than Huysum here, whose touch
In pinks and tulips takes us so;
But haunts that reek may harbor much;
Hey, Teniers? Give us boors at inns,
Mud floor—dark settles—jugs—old bins,
Under rafters foul with fume that blinks
From logs too soggy much to blaze
Which yet diffuse an umberish haze
That beautifies the grime, methinks."
To Rembrandt then: "Your sooty stroke!
'Tis you, old sweep, believe in smoke."
But he, reserved in self-control,
Jostled by that convivial droll,
Seemed not to hear, nor silence broke.

V

One of the greater Dutchman dirges the departed three-deckers of De Ruyter and Van Trump. To divert from which monody, a Lesser Master verbally hits off a kitchen-dresser, and in such sort as to evoke commendation from one [of] the Grand Masters, who nevertheless proposes a certain transmuting enhancement in the spirit of the latter's own florid and allegoric style.

Here Van der Velde, who dreamy heard
Familiar Brouwer's unanswered word,
Started from thoughts leagues off at sea:
"Believe in smoke? Why, ay, such smoke
As the swart old *Dunderberg* erst did fold—
When, like the cloud-voice from the mountain rolled,
Van Tromp through the bolts of her broadside spoke—

Bolts heard by me!" And lapsed in thought
Of yet other frays himself had seen
When, fired by adventurous love of Art,
With De Ruyter he'd cruised, yea, a tar had been.
Reminiscent he sat. Some lion-heart old,
Austerely aside, on latter days cast,
So muses on glories engulfed in the Past,
And laurelled ones stranded or overrolled
By eventful Time.—He awoke non,
Or, rather, his dream took audible tone.—
Then filling his cup:

“On Zealand's strand

I saw morn's rays slant 'twixt the bones
Of the oaken *Dunderberg* broken up;
Saw her ribbed shadow on the sand.
Ay—picturesque! But naught atones
For heroic navies, Pan's own ribs and knees,
But a story now that storied made the seas!”
There the gray master-hand marine
Fell back with desolated mien
Leaving the rest in fluttered mood
Disturbed by such an interlude
Scarce genial in over earnest tone,
Nor quite harmonious with their own.
To meet and turn the tide-wave there,
“For me, friends,” Gerard Douw here said,
Twirling a glass with sprightly air,
“I too revere forefather Eld,
Just feeling's mine too for old oak,
One here am I with Van der Velde;
But take thereto in grade that's lesser:
I like old oak in kitchen-dresser,
The same set out with Delf ware olden
And well scoured copper sauce-pans—golden
In aureate rays that on the hearth
Flit like fairies or frisk in mirth.
Oak buffet too; and, flung thereon,
As just from evening-market won,
Pigeons and prawns, bunched carrots bright,
Gilled fish, clean radish red and white,
And greens and cauliflowers, and things
The good wife's good provider brings;
All these too touched with fire-side light.

On settle there, a Phillis pleasant
Plucking a delicate fat pheasant.
Agree, the picture's *picturesque*."

"Ay, hollow beats all Arabsque!
But Phillis? Make her Venus, man,
Peachy and plump; and for the pheasant,
No fowl but will prove acquiescent
Promoted into Venus' swan;
Then in suffused warm rosy weather
Sublime them in sun-cloud together.
The Knight, Sir Peter Paul, 'twas he,
Hatted in rich felt, spick and span,
Right comely in equipment free
With court-air of Lord Chamberlain:
"So! 'twere a canvas meet for donor.
What say you, Paola of Verona?"—
Appealing here.

"Namesake, 'tis good!"

Laughed the frank master, gorgeous fellow,
Whose raiment matched his artist-mood:
Gold chain over russet velvet mellow—
A chain of honor; silver-gilt,
Gleamed at his side a jewelled hilt.
In feather high, in fortune free,
Like to a Golden Pheasant, he.
"By Paul, 'tis good, Sir Peter! Yet
Our Hollander here his picture set
In flushful light much like your own,
Tho' but from kitchen-ingle thrown.—
But come to Venice, Gerard,—do,"
Round turning genial on him there,
"Her sunsets,—there's hearth-light for you;
And matter for you on the Square.
To Venice, Gerard!"

"O, we Dutch,

Signor, know Venice, like her much.
Our unction thence we got, some say,
Tho' scarce our subjects, nor your touch."—
"To Saint Mark's again, Mynheer, and stay!
We're Cyprus wine.—But, Monsieur," turning
To Watteau nigh; "You vow in France,
This *Pittoresque* our friends advance,
How seems it to your ripe discerning?"

If by a sketch it best were shown,
A hand I'll try, yes, venture one:—
A chamber on the Grand Canal
In season, say, of Carnival.
A revel reigns; and, look, the host
Hahdsome as Cassar Borgia sits—”

“Then Borgia be it, bless your wits!”
Snapped Spagnoletto, late engrossed
In splenetic mood, now riling up;
I'll lend you hits. And let His Grace
Be launching, ay, the loving-cup
Among the princes in the hall
At Sinigaglia: You recall?
I mean those gudgeons whom his smile
Flattered to sup, ere yet awhile,
In Hades with Domitian's lords.

Let sunny frankness charm his air,
His raiment lace with silver cords,
Trick forth the '*Christian statesman*' there.
And, mind ye, don't forget the pall;
Suggest it—how politeness ended:
Let lurk in shade of rearward wall
Three bravoos by the arras splendid.”

VI

The superb gentleman from Verona, pleasantly parrying the not-so-pleasant little man from Spain, resumes his oft-hand sketch.— Toward Jan Steen, sapient spendthrift in shabby raiment, smoking his tavern-pipe and whiffing out his unconventional philosophy, Watteau, habited like one of his own holiday-courtiers in the Park of Fontainebleau, proves himself, tho' but in a minor incident, not lacking in considerate courtesy humane.

“O, O, too picturesque by half!”
Was Veronese's turning laugh;
“Nay, nay: but see, on ample round
Of marble table silver-bound
Prince Comus, in mosaic, crowned;
Vin d'oro there in crystal flutes—
Shapely as those, good host of mine,
You summoned ere our *Sillery* fine
We popped to Bacchus in salutes;—
Well, cavaliers in manhood's flower

Fanning the flight o' the fleeing hour;
Dames, too, like sportful dolphins free:—
Silks irridescent, wit and glee.
Midmost, a Maltese knight of honor
Toasting and clasping his Bella Donna;
One arm round waist with pressure soft,
Returned in throbb'd transporting rhyme
A hand with minaret-glass aloft,
Pinnacle of the jovial prime!
What think? I daub, but daub it, true;
And yet some dashes there may do.”

The Frank assented. But Jan Steen,
With fellowly yet thoughtful mien,
Puffing at skull-bowl pipe serene
“Come, a brave sketch, no mincing one!
And yet, adzooks, to this I hold,
Be it cloth of frieze or cloth of gold,
All's picturesque beneath the sun;
I mean, all's picture; death and life
Pictures and pendants, nor at strife—
No, never to hearts that muse thereon.
For me, 'tis life, plain life, I limn—
Not satin-glossed and flossy-fine
(Our Turburg's forte here, good for him).
No, but the life that's *wine and brine*,
The mingled brew; the thing as spanned
By Jan who kept the Leyden tavern
And every rollicker fellowly scanned—
And, under his vineyard, lo, a cavern!
But jolly is Jan, and never in picture
Sins against sinners by Pharisee stricture.
Jan o' the Inn, 'tis he, for ruth,
Dashes with fun art's canvas of truth.”

Here Veronese swerved him round
With glance well-bred of ruled surprise
To mark a prodigal so profound,
Nor too good-natured to be wise.

Watteau, first complimenting Steen,
Ignoring there his thriftless guise,
Took up the fallen thread between.
Tho' unto Veronese bowing—
Much pleasure at his sketch avowing;

Yet fain he would in brief convey
Some added words—perchance, in way
To vindicate his own renown,
Modest and true in pictures done:
“Ay, Signor; but—your leave—admit,
Besides such scenes as well you’ve hit,
Your *Pittoresco* too abounds
In life of old patrician grounds
For centuries kept for luxury mere:
Ladies and lords in mimic dress
Playing at shepherd and shepherdess
By founts that sing *The sweet o’the year!*
But, Signor—how! what’s this? you seem
Drugged off in miserable dream.
How? What impends?”

“Barbaric doom!

Worse than the Constable’s sack of Rome!”

“*Ceil, ceil!* The matter? tell us, do.”

“This cabbage *Utility, parbleu!*

What shall insure the Carnival—

The gondola—the Grand Canal?

That palaced duct they’ll yet deplete,

Improve it to a huckster’s street.

And why? Forsooth, *malarial!*”

There ending with an odd grimace,

Reflected from the Frenchman’s face.

VII

Brouwer inurbanelly applauds Veronese, and is convivially disrespectful in covert remark on M. Angelo across the table.—Raphael’s concern for the melancholy estate of Albert Durer. And so forth.

At such a sally, half grotesque,

That indirectly seemed to favor

His *own* view of the Picturesque,

Suggesting Dutch canals in savor;

Pleased Brouwer gave a porpoise-snort,

A trunk-hose Triton trumping glee.

Claude was but moved to smile in thought;

The while Velasques, seldom free,

Kept council with himself sedate,

Isled in his ruffed Castilian state,

Viewing as from aloft the mien

Of Hals hilarious, Lippi, Steen,
In chorus frolicking back the mirth
Of Brouwer, careless child of earth;
Salvator Rosa posing nigh
With sombre-proud satiric eye.

But Poussin, he, with antique air,
Complexioned like a marble old,
Unconscious kept in merit there
Art's pure Acropolis in hold.

For Durer, piteous good fellow—
(His Agnes seldom let him mellow)
His Sampson locks, dense curling brown,
Sideways unbrageously fell down,
Enshrining so the Calvary face.
Hals says, Angelico sighed to Durer,
Taking to heart his desperate case,
“Would, friend, that Paradise might allure her!”
If Fra Angelico so could wish
(That fleece that fed on lilies fine)
Ah, saints! the head in Durer's dish,
And how may hen-pecked seraph pine!

For Leonardo, lost in dream,
His eye absorbed the effect of light
Rayed thro' red wine in glass—a gleam
Pink on the polished table bright;
The subtle brain, convolved in snare,
Inferring and over-refining there.
But Michael Angelo, brief his stay,
And, even while present, sat withdrawn.
Irreverent Brouwer in sly way
To Lippi whispered, “Brother good,
How to be free and hob-nob with
Yon broken-nosed old monolith
Kin to the battered colossi-brood?
Challenged by rays of sunny wine
Not Memnon's stone in olden years
Ere magic fled, had grudged a sign!
Water he drinks, he munches bread.
And on pale lymph of fame may dine.
Cheaply is this Archangel fed!”

Herein, after noting certain topics glanced at by the company, the Marquis concludes the entertainment by rallying the Old Guard of Greybeards upon the somnolent tendency of their years. This, with polite considerateness he does under the fellowly form of the plural pronoun. Finally he recommends them to give audience, by way of pastime, to the "Afternoon in Naples" of his friend and disciple Jack Gentian. And so the genial Frenchman takes French leave, a judicious way of parting as best sparing the feelings on both sides.

So Brouwer, the droll. But others sit
 Flinting at whiles scintillant wit
 On themes whose tinder takes the spark,
 Igniting some less light perchance—
 The *romanesque* in men of mark;
 And this, Shall coming time enhance
 Through favoring influence, or abate
 Character picturesquely great—
 That rumored age whose scouts advance?
 And costume too they touch upon:
 The Cid, his net-work shirt of mail,
 And Garibaldi's woolen one:
 In higher art would each avail
 So just expression nobly grace—
 Declare the hero in the face?

On themes that under orchards old
 The chapleted Greek would frank unfold,
 And Socrates, a spirit divine,
 Not alien held to cheerful wine,
 That reassurer of the soul—
 On these they chat.

But more whom they,
 Even at the Inn of Inns do meet—
 The Inn with greens above the door:
 There the mahogany's waxed how bright,
 And, under chins such napkins white.
 Never comes the mart's intrusive roar,
 Nor heard the shriek that starts the train,
 Nor teasing telegraph clicks again,
 No news is cried, and hurry is no more—
 For us, whose lagging cobs delay
 To win that tavern free from cumber,
 Old lads, in saddle shall we slumber?
 Here's Jack, whose genial sigh-and-laugh

Where youth and years yblend in sway,
Is like the alewife's half-and-half;
Jack Gentian, in whose beard of gray
Persistent threads of auburn tarry
Like streaks of amber after day
Down in the west; you'll not miscarry
Attending here his bright-and-sombre
Companion good to while the way
With Naples in the Times of Bomba.

A SEQUEL

Touching the Grand Canal's depletion
If Veronese did but feign,
Grave frolic of a gay Venetian
Masking in Jeremy his vein;
Believe, that others too may gambol
In syllables as light—yea, ramble
All over each esthetic park,
Playing, as on the violin,
One random theme our dames to win—
The picturesque in Men of Mark.
Nor here some lateral points they shun,
And pirouette on this, for one:
That rumored Age, whose scouts advance,
Musters it one chivalric lance?
Or shall it foster or abate
Qualities picturesquely great?
There's Garibaldi, off-hand hero,
A very Cid Campeadôr,
Lion-Nemesis of Naples' Nero—
But, tut, why tell that story o'er!
A natural knight-errant, truly,
Nor priding him in parrying fence,
But charging at the helm-piece—hence
By statesmen deemed a lord unruly.
Well now, in days the gods decree,
Toward which the levellers scything move
(The Sibyl's page consult, and see)
Could this our Cid a hero prove?
What meet emprise? What plumed career?
No challenges from crimes flagitious

When all is uniform in cheer;
For Tarquins—none would be extant,
Or, if they were, would hardly daunt,
Ferruling brats, like Dionysius;
And Mulciber's sultans, overawed,
In dumps and mumps, how far from menace,
Tippling some claret about deal board
Like Voltaire's kings at inn in Venice.
In fine, the dragons penned or slain,
What for St. George would then remain!

A don of rich erratic tone,
By jaunty junior club-men known
As one, who buckram in demur,
Applies then the Johnsonian *Sir*;
'Twas he that rollicked thus of late
Filliped by turn of chance debate.
Repeat he did, or vary more
The same conceit, in devious way
Of grandees with dyed whiskers hoar
Tho' virile yet: 'Assume, and say
The Red Shirt Champion's natal day
Is yet to fall in promised time,
Millennium of the busy bee;
How would he fare in such a Prime?
By Jove, sir, not so bravely, see!
Never he'd quit his trading trips,
Perchance, would fag in trade at desk,
Or, slopped in slimy slippery sludge,
Lifelong on Staten Island drudge,
Melting his tallow, Sir, dipping his *dips*,
Scarce savoring much of the Picturesque!"
"Pardon," here purled a cultured wight
Lucid with transcendental light;
"Pardon, but tallow none nor trade
When, thro' this Iron Age's reign
The Golden one comes in again;
That's on the card."

 "She plays the spade!

Delving days, Sir, heave in sight—
Digging days, Sir; and, sweet youth,
They'll set on edge the sugary tooth:
A treadmill—Paradise they plight."
Let be, and curb this rhyming race!—

Angel o' the Age! advance, God speed.
Harvest us all good grain in seed;
But sprinkle, do, some drops of grace
Nor polish us into commonplace.

≈ ≈ ≈

NAPLES IN THE TIME OF BOMBA.

AS TOLD BY MAJOR JACK GENTIAN

Chartering a nondescript holiday hack at his Neapolitan inn, Jack Gentian drives out, and-is unexpectedly made the object of a spontaneous demonstration more to be prized by an appreciative recipient than the freedom of the city of New Jerusalem presented in a diamond box by a deputation from the Crown Council of Seraphim.

Behind a span whose cheery pace
Accorded well with gala trim—
Each harness, in arch triumphal reared,
With festive ribbons fluttering gay;
In Bomba's Naples sallying forth
In season when the vineyards mellow,
Suddenly turning a corner round—
Ha, happy to meet you, Punchinello!

And, merrily there, in license free,
The crowd they caper, droll as he;
While, arch as any, rolled in fun,
Such tatterdemalions, many a one!

We jounced along till, just ahead,
Nor far from shrine in niche of wall,
A stoppage fell. His rug or bed
In midmost way a tumbler spread,
A posturing mountebank withall;
Who, though his stage was out of doors,
Brought down the house in jolly applause.

“Signor,” exclaims my charioteer,
Turning, and reining up, the while
Trying to touch his jaunty hat;
But here, essaying to condense
Such opposite movements into one
Failing, and letting fall his whip,
“His Excellency stops the way! “
His Excellency there, meanwhile—
Reversed in stature, legs aloft,
And hobbling jigs on hands for heels—
Gazed up with blood-shot brow that told

The tension of that nimble play—
Gazed up as martyred Peter might;
And, noting me in landeau-seat
(*Milor*, there he opined, no doubt)
Brisk somersetted back, and stood
Urbanely bowing, then gave place;
While, tickled at my puzzled plight,
Yet mindful that a move was due,
And knowing me a stranger there,
With one consent the people part
Yielding a passage, and with eyes
Of friendly fun,—how courteous too!
Catching an impulse from their air,
To feet I spring, my beaver doff
And broadcast wave a blithe salute.
In genial way how humorsome
What pleased responses of surprise;
From o'er the Alps, and so polite!
They clap their hands in frank acclaim
Matrons in door-ways nod and smile
From balcony roguish girls laugh out
Or kiss their fingers, rain their nosegays down.
At such a shower—laugh, clap, and flower—
My horses shy, the landeau tilts,
Distractedly the driver pulls.

But I, Jack Gentian, what reck I,
The popular hero, object sole
Of this ovation!—I aver
No viceroy, king, nor emperor,
Panjandrum Grand, conquistador—
Not Caesar's self in car aloft
Triumphal on the Sacred Way,
No, nor young Bacchus through glad Asia borne,
Pelted with grapes, exulted so
As I in hackney-landeau here
Jolting and jouncing thro' the waves
Of confluent commoners who in glee
Good natured past before my prow.

II

Arrested by a second surprise not in harmony with the first, he is thereupon precipitated into meditations

more or less profound, though a little mixed, as they say.

Flattered along by following cheers
We sped; I musing here in mind,
Beshrew me, needs be overdrawn
Those shocking stories bruited wide,
In England which I left but late,
Touching dire tyranny in Naples.
True freedom is to be care-free!
And care-free seem the people here
A truce indeed they seem to keep
Gay truce to care and all her brood.

But, look: what mean yon surly walls?
A fortress? and in heart of town?
Even so. And rapt I stare thereon.
The battlements black-beetling hang
Over the embrasures' tiers of throats
Whose enfilading tongues seem trained
Less to beat alien foemen off
Than awe the town. "Rabble!" they said,
Or in dumb threatening seemed to say,
"Revolt, and we will rake your lanes!"

But what strange quietude of wall!
While musing if response would be
Did tourist on the clamped gate tap
Politely there with slender cane—
Abrupt, to din condensed of drums
And blast of thronged trumps trooping first,
Right and left with clangor and clash
The double portals outward burst
Before streamed thronged bayonets that flash
Like lightning's sortie from the cloud.
Storming from the gloomy tower
Tempestuous thro' the carved arch,
Like one long lance they lunge along,
A thousand strong of infantry!
The captains like to torches flaring,
Red plumes and scarlet sashes blown,
Bare sword in hand audacious gleaming;
While, like ejected lava rolled,
The files on files are vomited forth
Eruptive from their crater belched!
Sidelong, in vulpine craven sort,

On either flank at louring brows
Of tag-rag who before their sortie
Divide in way how all unlike
Their parting late before my wheels!
Who makes this sortie? who? and why?
Anon I learned. Sicilians, these—
Sicilians from Palermo shipped
In meet exchange for hirelings lent
From Naples here to hold the Isle;
And daily thus in seething town
From fort to fort are trooping streamed
To threaten, intimidate, and cow.

Flaunting the overlording flag,
Thumping the domineering drum,
With insolent march of blustering arms
They clean put out the festive stir,
Ay, quench the popular fun.

The fun they quench, but scarce the hate
In bridled imprecations pale
Of brooding hearts vindictive there,
The deadlier bent for rasping curb,
Through mutterings like deep thunder low,
Couched thunder ere the leaping bolt,
The swaggering troops and bullying trumpets go.

They fleet—they fade. And, altered much,
In serious sort my way I hold,
Till revery, taking candor's tone
With optimistic influence plead:
Sad, bad, confess; but solace bides!
For much has Nature done, methinks,
In offset here with kindlier aim.

If bayonets flash, what vineyards glow!
Of all these hells of wrath and wrong
How little feels the losel light
Who, thrown upon the odorous sod
In this indulgent clime of charm
Scarce knows a thought or feels a care
Except to take his careless pleasure:
A fig for Bomba! life is fair
Squandered in superabundant leisure!

Ay, but ye ragamuffs cutting pranks

About the capering mountebanks
Was *that* indeed mirth's true elation?
Or even in some a patched despair,
Bravery in tatters debonair,
True devil-may-care dilapidation?
Well, be these rubs even how they may,
Smart cock-plumes in yon headstalls dance,
Each harness with ribbons flutters gay,
I see at pole our wreath advance:
Inodorous muslin garland—true:
Impostor, but of jocund hue!
Ah, could one but realities rout
A holiday-world it were, no doubt.
But Naples, sure she lacks not cheer,
Religion, it is jubilee here—
Feast follows festa thro' the year;
And then such Nature all about!
No surly moor of forge and mill,
She charms us glum barbarians still,
Fleeing from frost, bad bread, or duns,
Despotic *Biz*, and devils blue,
And there's our pallid invalid ones,
Their hollow eyes the scene survey;
They win this clime of more than spice,
These myrtled shores, to wait the boat
That ferries (so the pilots say),
Yes, ferries to the isles afloat,
The floating Isles of Paradise
If God's Ægean far away!
O, scarce in trival tenor all,
Much less to mock man's mortal sigh,
Those syllables proverbial fall,
Naples, see Naples, and—then die!
But hark: yon low note rising clear;
A singer!—rein up, charioteer!

III

Opening with a fervent little lyric which, if obscure in purport or anyway questionable to a Hyperborean professor of Agnostic Moral Philosophy, will nevertheless to readers as intelligently sympathetic as our honest narrator, be transparent enough and innocent as the Thirty Thousand Virgins of Cologne.

“Name me, do, that dulcet Donna

Whose perennial gifts engaging
Win the world to dote upon her
In meridian never ageing!

Look, in climes beyond the palms
Younger sisters bare young charms—
She the mellower graces!
Ripened heart maturely kind,
St. Martin's summer of the mind,
And pathos of the years behind—
More than empty faces! “

Who sings? Behold him under bush
Of vintner's ivy nigh a porch,
His rag-fair raiment botched and darned
But face much like a Delphic coin's
New disinterred with clinging soil.
Tarnished Apollo!—But let pass.
Best here be heedful, yes, and chary,
Sentiment nowadays waxeth wary,
And idle the ever-cooked *Alas*.

IV

Quick as lightning he is presented with a festive flower by the titillating fingers of a flying Peri, who thereupon spinning in pirouette, evaporates or vanishes.

Advancing now, we passed hard by
A regal court where under drill
Drawn up in line the palace-guard
Behind tall iron pickets spiked
With gilded barbs, in martial din
Clanged down their muskets on the pave.
Some urchins small looked on, and men
With eye-lids squeezed, yet letting out
A flame as of quick lightning thin;
The Captain of the guard meanwhile,
A nervous corpulence, on these
Stealing a restive sidelong glance.
A curve. And rounding by the bay
Nigh Edens parked along the verge,
Brief halt was made amid the press;
And, instantaneous thereupon,
A buoyant nymph on odorous wing

Alighting on the landeau-step,
Half hovering like a humming-bird,
A flower pinned to my lapelle,
Letting a thrill from finger brush
(Sure, unaware) the sensitive chin;
Yes, badged me in a twinkling bright
With O a red and royal rose;
A rose just flowering from the bud
Received my tribute, random coins,
Beaming received it, chirped adieu,
Twirled on her pivot and—was gone!
An opening came; and in a trice
The horses went, my landeau rocked,
The ribbons streamed; while, ruddy now,
Flushed with the rose's reflex bloom,
I dwelt no more on things amiss:
Come, take thine ease; lean back, my soul;
The world let spin; what signifies?
Look, she, the flower-girl—what recks she
Of Bomba's sortie? what indeed!
Fine sortie of her own, the witch,
But now she made upon my purse,
And even a craftier sally too!

V

Giving way to thoughts less cheerful than archaic, he is checked by a sportive sally from the Rose. But is anew troubled, catching sight of an object attesting a Power even more nitrous and menacing than the Bomb-King himself. In short, another and greater crowned artilleryman, a capricious dominator, impossible to dethrone, and reigning by right incontestably divine. Pondering which discouraging fact, once more our genial friend is twitted by the festive Mentor.

“Signor, turn here?” And turn we did,
Repassing scenes that charmed erewhile,
Nor less could charm reviewed even now.
What blandishment in clime, or else
What subtler influence, my rose,
From thee exhaled, thou Lydian one,
Seductive here could flatter me
Even in emotion not unfelt
While fleeting from that warmish pair!
If, taking tone indeed from them,
No lightsome thought awhile prevailed

Devious it drifted like a dream.
I mused on Virgil, here inurned
On Pausilippo, legend tells—
Here on the slope that pledges ease to pain,
For him a pledge assuredly true
If here indeed his ashes be—
Rome's lauréat in Rome's palmy time;
Nor less whose epic's undertone
In volumed numbers rolling bland,
Chafing against the metric bound,
Plains like the South Sea ground-swell heaved
Against the palm-isle's halcyon strand.
What Mohawk of a mountain 'lours!
A scalp-lock of Tartarian smoke
Thin streaming forth from tawny brow,
One heel on painted Pompeii set,
And one on Hercules'whelmed town!

The Siren's seat for pleasurists lies
Betwixt two threatening bombardiers
Their mortars loaded, linstocks lit—
Vesuvius yonder—Bomba here.
Events may Bomba's batteries spike:
But how with thee, sulphurous Hill
Whose vent far hellward reaches down!

Ah, funeral urns of time antique
Inwrought with flowers in gala play,
Whose form and bacchanal dance in freak,
Even as of pagan time ye speak
Type ye what Naples is alway?
Yes, round these curved volcanic shores,
Vined urn of ashes, bed on bed,
Abandonment as thoughtless pours
As when the revelling pagan led.
And here again I droopt the brow,
And, lo, again I saw the Rose,
The red red ruddy and royal Rose!
Expanded more from bud but late
Sensuous it lured, and took the tone
Of some light taunting Cyprian gay
In shadow deep of college-wall
Startling some museful youth afoot—
"Mooning in mind? Ah, lack-a-day!"

Uninfluenced by the pranks and rhymes of certain Merry Andrews of the beach, he unaccountably falls into an untimely fit of historic reminiscences. For which dereliction, the Rose, now in a pleading mood, touchingly upbraids him. But again he relapses, notwithstanding an animated call, subsequently heard, to regale himself with ruddy apples and sweet oranges.

I turned me short; and, timely now,
Beheld this scene: damsels sun-burnt,
In holiday garb with tinsel trimmed;
And men and lads behind them ranged
About a carpet on the beach,
Whereon a juggler in brocade
Made rainbows of his glittering balls,
Cascading them with dexterous sleight;
And as from hand to hand they flew
With minglings of interior din,
He trilled a ditty deftly timed
To every lilted motion light:—

“The balls, hey! the balls,
Cascatella of balls—
Baseless arches I toss up in air!
Spinning we go,—
Now over, now under;
High Jack is Jack low,
And never a blunder!
Come hither—go thither:
But wherefor nowhither?
I lose them—I win them,
From hand to hand spin them,
Reject them, and seize them,
And toss them, and tease them,
And keep them forever in air,
All to serve but a freak of my glee!

Sport ye thus with your spoonies, ye fair,
For your mirth? nor even forbear
To juggle with Nestors your thralls?
Do ye keep them in play with your smiling and frowning,
Your flirting, your fooling, abasing and crowning,
And dance them as I do these balls?”

With that, and hurrying his two hands,
Arching he made his meteors play;

When, lo, like Mercury dropped from heaven,
Precipitate there a tumbler flew,
Alighting on winged feet; then sang,
Dancing at whiles, and beating time,
Clicking his nimble heels together
In hornpipe of the gamesome kid:

“Over mines, by vines
That take hot flavor
From Vesuvius—
Hark, in vintage
Sounds the tabor!

“In brimstone-colored
Tights or breeches
There the Wag-fiend
Dancing teaches;

“High in wine-press
Hoop elastic
Pigeon-wings cut
In rite fantastic;
“While the black grape,
Spiriting, gushing,
Into red wine
Foameth rushing!

“Which wine drinking,
Drowning thinking,
Every night-fall,
Heard in Strada,
Kiss the doves
And coos the adder!”

While yet I listened, vivid came
A flash of thought that carried me
Back to five hundred years ago.
I saw the panoramic bay
In afternoon beneath me spread—
All Naples from siesta risen
Peopling the benches, barges, moles.
Cooled over blue waves tinkling bland
Came waftures from Sorrento’s vines,
And Queen Joanna, queen and bride,
Sat in her casement by the sea,
Twining three strands of silk and gold

Into a cord how softly strung.
“For what this dainty rope, sweet wife?”
It was the bridegroom who had stolen
Behind her chair, and now first spoke.
“To hang you with, Andrea,” she said
Smiling. He shrugged his shoulders; “Nay,
What need? I’ll hang but on your neck.”
And straight caressed her; and when she
Sat mutely passive, smiling still.
For jest he took it? But that night
A rope of twisted silk and gold
Droopt from a balcony where vines
In flower showed violently torn;
And, starlit, thence what tassel swung!
For offset to Eve’s serpent twined
In that same sleek and shimmering cord,
Quite other scene recurred. In hall
Of Naples here, withall I stood
Before the pale mute-speaking stone
Of seated Agrippina—she
The truest woman that ever wed
In tragic widowhood transfixed;
In cruel craft exiled from Rome
To gaze on Naples’ sunny bay,
More sharp to feel her sunless doom.
O ageing face, O youthful form,
O listless hand in idle lap,
And, ah, what thoughts of God and man!

But intervening here, my Flower,
Opening yet more in bloom the less,
Maturing toward the wane,—low-breathed,
Again? and quite forgotten me?
You wear an Order, me, the Rose,
To whom the favoring fates allot
A term that shall not bloom outlast;
No future’s mine, nor mine a past.
Yet I’m the Rose, the flower of flowers.
Ah, let time’s present time suffice,
No Past pertains to Paradise.

Time present. Well, in present time
It chanced a lilting note I heard,
A fruit-girl’s, and she fluted this:

“Love-apples, love-apples!
All dew, honey-dew,
From orchards of Cyprus—
Blood-oranges too!

“Will you buy? prithee, try!
They grew facing south;
See, mutely they languish
To melt in your mouth!

“ ’Tis now, take them now
In the hey-day of flush,
While the crisis is on,
And the juices can gush!

“Love-apples, love-apples,
All dew, honey-dew,
From orchards of Cyprus—
Blood-oranges, too!”

Warbling and proffering them she went,
And passed, and left me as erewhile,
For the dun annals would not down.
Murky along the sunny strand
New spectres streamed from shades below,
Spectres of Naples under Spain,
Phantoms of that incensed Revolt
With whose return Wrath threatens still
Bomba engirt with guards.—Lo, there,
A throng confused, in arms they pass,
Arms snatched from smithy, forge and shop:
Craftsman and sailors, peasants, boys,
And swarthier faces dusked between—
Brigands and outlaws; linked with these
Salvator Rosa, and the fierce
Falcone with his fiery school;
Pell-mell with riff-raff, banded all
In league as violent as the sway
Of feudal claims and foreign lords
Whose iron heel evoked the spark
That fired the populace into flame.
And, see, dark eyes and sunny locks
Of Masaniello, bridegroom young,
Tanned marigold-cheek and tasselled cap;
The darling of the mob; nine days

Their great Apollo; then, in pomp
Of Pandemonium's red parade,
His curled head Gorgoned on the pike,
And jerked aloft for God to see.

A portent. Yes, and typed the years
Red after-years, and whirl of error
When Freedom linkt with Furies raved
In Carmagnole and cannibal hymn,
Mad song and dance before the ark
From France imported with *The Terror!*
To match the poison, mock the clime,
Hell's cornucopia crammed with crime!
Scarce cheerful here the revery ran.
Nor did my Rose now intervene,
Full opening out in dust and sun
Which hurried along that given term,
She said would never bloom outlast.

VII

He encounters a prepossessing little tatterdemalion Triton, shell in hand, dewy in luminous spray of a rainbowed fountain. With the precocity of his precocious tribe, the juvenile Levantine, knowing that there is nothing the populace everywhere more like to hear than something touching upon themselves, their town and their period, entertains his street-audience accordingly with certain improvisations partaking alike of the sentiment and devil-may-care incident to the Neapolitan.

By marbles where a fountain rose
In jubilant waters scurrying high
To break in sleet against the blue,
I saw a thing as freshly bright—
A boy, who holding up a shell,
Enamelled part, with pinkish valve
New dipped in rainbows of the spray,
By mute appeal, with deference touched,
As if invoking Naples' monarch,
Not her mob, attention craved.

A weed of life, a sea-weed he
From the Levant adventuring out;
A cruiser light, like all his clan
Who, in repletion's lust for more,
And penury's strife for daily bread,
As licensed by compassionate heaven

To privateer it on their wits,
The Mid Sea rove from quay to quay,
At home with Turban, Fez, or Hat;
Ready in French, Italian, Greek—
Linguists at large; alert to serve
As chance interpreters or guides;
Suave in address, with winning ways—
Arch imps of Pandarus, a few;
Others with improvising gift
Of voweled rhyme in antic sort,
Or passionate, spirited by their sun
That ripens them in early teens;
And some with small brown fingers slim
Busier than the jackdaw's bill.

But *he*, what gravity is his!
Precociously sedate indeed
In beauty sensuously serene.
White-draped, and ranked aloft in choir
A treble clear in rolling laud
Meet would he look on Easter morn.
The muster round him closing more,
How circumspect he plays his part;
His glance intelligent taking in
The motley miscellaneous groups:
Large-chested porters, swarthy dames
In dress provincial that beseems;
Fishermen bronzed, and barbers curled;
Fat monk with paunched umbrella blue;
The quack, magnifie in brocade
Chapeau and aigulets; the wight
That cobbles shoes in public way;
Mariners in red Phrygian caps.
But, twinkling brief, his liquid glance
Skims one poor figure limp that leans
Listlessly deaf amid the hum.
A purblind man, too, sly he views
With staff before him, pattering thin;
Informers these, perchance, and spies?
So queries one, a craftsman there,
Nudging his fellow, winking back.
And, verily, rumor long has run
That Bomba's blind men well can see,
His deaf men hear, his dumb men talk.

But never amid the varied throng
The boy a straggling soldier notes
In livery lace declaring him.
Howbeit, some sombre garbs he views:
A Jesuit grave, genteely sleek
In dapper small-clothes and fine hose
Of sable silk, and shovel-hat,
Hard by a doctor of the law,
In sables, too, with parchment cheek;
A useful man to lawless power,
Expert to legalise the wrong.
The twain, brief tarrying there behind,
Went sauntering off ere came the close.

But now the lad, in posture grave,
With sidelong leaning head intent,
The shell's lips to his listening ear,
In modulating tone began:

“Metheglin befuddles this freak o’ the sea,
Humming, low humming—in brain a bee!

“Hymns it of Naples her myriads warming?
Involute hive in fever of swarming,

“What Hades of sighs in irruption suppressed,
Suffused with huzzahs that buzz in arrest!

“Neapolitans, ay, ’tis the soul of the shell
Intoning your Naples, Parthenope’s bell.

“O, couch of the Siren renowned thro’ the sea
That enervates Salerno, seduces Baias;

“I attend you, I hear; but how to resolve
The complex of conflux your murmurs involve!”
He paused, as after prelude won
Abrupt then in recitative, he:

“Hark, the stir
The ear invading;

“Crowds on crowds
All promenading;

“Clatter and clink
Of cavalcading;

“*Yo-heave-ho!*

From ships unloading;

“Funeral dole,
Thro’ arches fading;

“*All hands round!*
In masquerading;

“Litany low—
High rodomontading;

“*Grapes, ripe grapes!*
In cheer evading;

“Lazarus’ plaint
All vines upbraiding;
“*Crack-crick-crack*
Of fusillading!

“Hurly-burly, late and early,
Gossips prating, quacks orating,
Daft debating;
Furious wild reiteration
And incensed expostulation!

“Din condensed,
All hubbub summing:
Larking, laughing,
Chattering, chaffing,
Thrumming, strumming
Singing, jingling
All commingling—
Till the *Drum*,

Rub-a-dub sounded, doubly pounded,
Redundant in deep din rebounded,
Deafning all this hive of noises
Babel-tongued with myriad voices,
Drubs them *dumb!*

No more larking,
No more laughing,
No more chattering,
Nay, nor chaffing—
All is *glum!*

To blab the reason—
Were out of season,

For, look, they *come!*
Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub,
Rub-a-double-dub-dub,
Rub-a-double-dub-dub- o' the drum!"

Alert in his young senses five
The lad had caught the wafted roll
Of Bomba's barbarous tom-toms thumped,
And improvised the beat. Anon
The files wheeled into open view.
A second troop a thousand strong
With band and banners, flourished blades,
Launched from second cannoned den
And now in countermarch thereon;
The great drum-major towering up
In aigulets and tinsel tags—
Pagoda glittering in Cathay!
Arch whiskerando and gigantic
A grandiose magnifico antic
Tossing his truncheon in the van.
A hifalutin exaggeration,
Barbaric in his bearskin shako,
Of bullying Bomba's puffed elation
And blood-and-thunder proclamation,
A braggadocio Bourbon-Draco!

VIII

While yet the bayonets flashed along
And all was silent save the drum,
Then first it was I chanced to note
Some rose-leaves fluttering off in air,
While on my lap lay wilted ones.
Ah, Rose, that should not bloom outlast
Now leaf by leaf art leaving me?
But here anew the lad broke in:—

“Lo, the King's men
They go marching!
O, the instep
Haughty arching!—
Live the King!

“What's the grin for—

Queer grimacing?
Who, yon grenadiers
Outfacing,
Here dare sing
Ironically—
Live the King?”

But there, a comely wine-wife plump,
A bustling motherly good body
Who all along in fidgety sort
Concern had shown, and tried her way
To push up to this imp satiric,
Got next him now, and clapping hand
Across his mouth, she whispered him.
He heard; then, turning toward the throng,
“She says, Young chick come down a peg,
Nor risk being pent anew in egg.”
Castel dell Ovo here was meant,
The oval fortress on the bay,
Hiving its captives in sea-cells;
Nor patriots only, plotters deemed,
But talkers, rhymesters, every kind
Of indiscreetly innocent mind.
Nor less the volatile audience—late
Grinding their teeth at Bomba’s guards,
Were tickled by the allusive pun,
Howbeit, the boy here made an end;
And dulcet now, with decent air,
Of mild petitionary grace:
“Carlo am I, some *carlins* then!”
He twitched his sash up, scarlet rag,
Blithely in bonnet caught the coins,
Then disappeared beyond the marge
To dice with other imps as young,
Ere yet a little and his star
Evanish like the Pleiad lost.

IX

Herein, if Jack Gentian, ever reputed a man of veracity, is to be credited, so thin a thing as a wafer made of a little flour and water, and so forth, the same being viewless, or carefully covered from view, proves of far more efficacy in bringing a semi-insurgent populace to their knees than all the bombs, bayonets, and fusilades of the despot of Naples.

The younker faded, voice and all—
He faded, and his carol died,
Forgot anon in shifted scene;
For, hark, what slender chimes are these
On zephyr borne? And, look, the folk
In one consent of strange accord,
Part, and in expectation stand;
Yet scarce as men who mirth await—
More like to crowds that wait eclipse,
So gravely sobering seems to fall
Those light lilt chimes now floating near,
In harbinger of—what behind?
It comes; a corpulent form erect,
And holds what looks a Titan stem
Of lily-of-the-vale, the buds
A congregation of small bells—
Small, silver, and of dulcet tone,
Drooping from willowy light wires;
Behind, in square, four boys in albs
Whose staves uphold a canopy,
And, under this, a shining priest
Who to some death-bed bears the *host*
In mystic state before him veiled.

A hush falls; and the people drop
Stilly and instantaneous all
As plumps the apple ripe from twig
And cushions motionless in sod.
My charioteer reins short—transfixed;
The very mountebanks, they kneel;
And idlers, all along and far,
Bow over as the *host* moves on—
Bow over, and for time remain
Like to Pompeiian masquers caught
With fluttering garb in act of flight,
For ages glued in deadly drift.
But, look, the Rose, brave Rose, is where?
Last petals falling, and its soul
Of musk dissolved in empty air!

And here this draught at hazard drawn,
Like squares of fresco newly dashed,
Cools, hardens, nor will more receive,
Scarce even the touch that mends a slip:

The plaster sets; quietus—bide.

Let bide; nor all the piece esteem
A medley mad of each extreme;
Since, in those days, gyved Naples, stung
By tickling tantalising pain,
Like tried St. Anthony giddy hung
Betwixt the tittering hussies twain:
She sobbed, she laughed, she rattled her chain;
Till the Red Shirt proved signal apt
Of danger ahead to Bomba's son,
And presently freedom's thunder clapt,
And lo, he fell from toppling throne—
Fell down, like Dagon on his face,
And ah, the unfeeling populace!

But Garibaldi—Naples' host
Uncovers to her deliverer's ghost,
While down time's aisle, mid clarions clear
Pale glory walks by valor's bier.

AFTER-PIECE

Skimming over the Poem a book, he tables it, and after sipping a cup of peevisish tea, dwells upon the first verse.

Pale "Glory-walks-by-Valor's-bier."
Now why a catafalque in close?
No relish I that stupid cheer
Ringing down the curtain on the Rose.

≈ ≈ ≈

IMMOLATED.

Children of my happier prime,
When One yet lived with me, and threw
Her rainbow over life and time,
Even Hope, my bride, and mother to you!
O, nurtured in sweet pastoral air,
And fed on flowers and light, and dew
Of morning meadows—spare, Ah, spare
Reproach; spare, and upbraid me not
That, yielding scarce to reckless mood
But jealous of your future lot,
I sealed you in a fate subdued.
Have I not saved you from the drear
Theft and ignoring which need be
The triumph of the insincere
Unanimous Mediocrity?
Rest therefore, free from all despite,
Snugged in the arms of comfortable night.

≈ ≈ ≈

MADAM MIRROR.

With wrecks in a garret I'm stranded,
Where, no longer returning a face,
I take to reflections the deeper
On memories far to retrace.

In me have all people confided,
The maiden her charms has displayed,
And truths unrevealed and unuttered
To me have been freely betrayed.

Some truths I might tell of the toilet
Did not tenderness make me forget;
But the glance of proud beauty slow fading
It dies not away from me yet;
Nor the eyes too long ceasing to shine,—
Soliciting, shunning, well knowing that mine
Were too candid to flatter when met.

But pledged unto trueness forever,
My confessional close as the friar's,
How sacred to me are the trusting,
Here nothing for scandal transpires.
But ah, what of all that is perished,
Nor less shall again be, again!
What pangs after parties of pleasure,
What smiles but disclosures of pain!
O, the tears of the hopeless unloved,
O, the start at old age drawing near—
And what shadows of thoughts more tragical far
Like clouds on a lake have been here!

Tho' lone in a loft I must languish
Far from closet and parlor at strife,
Content I escape from the anguish
Of the Real and the Seeming in life.

THE WISE VIRGINS TO MADAM MIRROR.

Madam Mirror, believe we are sorry for you;
But Ah, how console you or cheer!
We are young, we go skipping, but you
Are an old and forlorn garreteer!
'Tis we view the world thro' an arbor,
The bride with the bridegroom appears;
But you, retrospecting thro' tunnels
See but widowers and widows on biers!
To us that is foreign, in no sense will pair
With cake, wine and diamonds, and blossoms in hair!

But *age!*—Ah, the crow will scarce venture
To tread near the eyes flashing bold;
He's a craven; and youth is immortal;
'Tis the elderly only grow old!

But, Dame, for all misty recurrings
To beacons befogged in the past—
Less dismal they are, dame, than dubious;
Nor joy leaves us time to forecast.
Tho' the battered we hardly would banter,
And never will ridicule use,
Let us say that a twilight of inklings
Is worth scarce the Pope's old shoes.
For the rest, the skeletons meeting glass eyes
Let a parable serve, if by chance it applies.
A brace of green goggles they gabbled, old elves,
Touching my queer *spectacles* they had descried;
But the queerest of all were the goggles themselves,
Rusty, fusty shagreen of the puckered fish-hide!
But you, Madam Mirror, not here we type you,
Nor twit you for being a glass
With a druggish green blur and a horrible way
Of distorting all objects, alas!
Ourselves, so symmetric, our cavaliers tell,
What, squint us to witches with broomsticks to sell!
Oh yes, we are giddy, we whirl in youth's waltz,

But a fig for *Reflections* when crookedly false!

≈ ≈ ≈

THE NEW ANCIENT OF DAYS.

THE MAN OF THE CAVE OF ENGIHOUL

The man of bone confirms his throne
In cave where fossils be;
Outdaring every mummy known,
Not older Cuvier's mastodon,
Nor older much the sea:
Old as the Glacial Period, he;
And claims he calls to mind the day
When Thule's king, by reindeer drawn,
His sleigh-bells jingling in icy morn,
Slid clean from the Pole to the Wetterhorn
Over frozen waters in May!
Oh, the man of the cave of Engihoul,
With Eld doth he dote and drule?
A wizard one, his lore is none
Ye spell with A. B. C.;
But *do-do* tracks, all up and down
That slate he poreth much upon,
His algebra may be:—
Yea, there he cyphers and sums it free;
To ages ere Indus met ocean's swell
Addeth aecons ere Satan or Saturn fell.
His totals of time make an awful schism,
And old Chronos he pitches adown the abysm
Like a pebble down Carisbrook well.
Yea, the man of the cave of Engihoul
From Moses knocks under the stool.

In *bas-relief* he late has shown
A horrible show, agree—
Megalosaurus, iguanodon,
Palasotherium Glyphascon,
A Barnum-show raree;
The vomit of slimy and sludgy sea:
Purposeless creatures, odd inchoate things
Which splashed thro' morasses on fleshly wings;
The cubs of Chaos, with eyes askance,

Preposterous griffins that squint at Chance
And Anarch's cracked decree!

Oh the showman who dens in Engihoul,
Would he fright us, or quit us, or fool?

But, needs to own, he takes a tone,
Satiric on nobbs, pardee!

"Though in ages whose term is yet to run,
Old Adam a seraph may have for son,
His gran'ther's a crab, d'y'see!

And why cut your kinsman the ape?" adds he:
"Your trick of scratching is borrowed from him,
Grimace and cunning, with many a whim,
Your fidgets and hypoes, and each megrim—
All's traced in the family tree!"

Ha, the wag of the cave of Engihoul:
Buss me, gorilla and ghoul!

Obstreperous grown he'd fain dethrone

Joe Smith, and e'en Jones Three;

Against even Jos and great Mahone

He flings his fossiliffer's stone

And rattles his shanks for glee.

I'll settle these parvenu fellows, he-he!

Diluvian Jove of Ducalion's day—

A parting take to the Phocene clay!

He swears no Ens that takes a name

Commensurate is with the vasty claim

Of the protoplactic Fegee.

O, the spook of the cave of Engihoul

He flogs us and sends us to school.

Hyena of bone! Ah, beat him down,

Great Pope, with Peter's key,

Ere the Grand Pan-Jam be overthrown

With Joe and Jos and great Mahone,

And the firmament mix with the sea;

And then, my masters, where should we be?

But the ogre of bone he snickers alone,

He grins for his godless glee:

"I have flung my stone, my fossil stone,

And your gods, how they scamper," saith he.

Imp! imp of the cave of Engihoul,

Shall he grin like the Gorgon and rule?

THE RUSTY MAN.

(BY A SOURED ONE)

In La Mancha he mopeth,
 With beard thin and dusty;
He doteth and mopeth
 In library fusty—
'Mong his old folios gropeth:
 Cites obsolete saws
 Of chivalry's laws—
 Be the wronged one's knight:
 Die, but do right.
So he rusts and musts,
While each grocer green
Thriveth apace with the fulsome face
Of a fool serene.

≈ ≈ ≈

THY AIM, THY AIM?.

Thy aim, thy aim?
'Mid the dust dearth and din,
An exception wouldst win
By some deed shall ignite the acclaim?
Then beware, and prepare thee
Lest Envy ensnare thee,
And yearning be sequelled by shame.
But strive bravely on, yet on and yet on,
Let the goal be won;
Then if, living, you kindle a flame,
Your guerdon will be but a flower,
Only a flower,
The flower of repute,
A flower cut down in an hour.
But repute, if this be too tame,
And, dying, you truly ennoble a name—
Again but a flower!
Only a flower,
A funeral flower,
A blossom of Dis from Proserpine's bower—
The belated funeral flower of fame.

≈ ≈ ≈

THE OLD SHIPMASTER AND HIS CRAZY BARN.

Bewrinkled in shingle and lichened in board,
With sills settling down to the sward,
My old barn it leaneth awry;
It sags, and the wags wag their heads going by.

In March winds it creaks,
Each gaunt timber shrieks
Like ribs of a craft off Cape Horn;
And in midst of the din
The foul weather beats in;
And the grain-chest—'twould mould any corn!

Pull it down, says a neighbor.
Never mine be that labor!
For a Spirit inhabits, a fellowly one,
The like of which never responded to me
From the long hills and hollows that make up the sea,
Hills and hollows where Echo is none.

The site should I clear, and rebuild,
Would that Voice reinhabit?—Self-willed,
Says each pleasing thing
Never Dives can buy,
Let me keep where I cling!
I am touchy as tinder
Yea, quick to take wing,
Nor return if I fly.

≈ ≈ ≈

CAMOENS.

1

(BEFORE)

Restless, restless, craving rest,
Forever must I fan this fire,
Forever in flame on flame aspire?
Yea, for the God demands thy best.
The world with endless beauty teems,
And thought evokes new worlds of dreams
Then hunt the flying herds of themes.
And fan, yet fan thy fervid fire
Until the crucible ore shall show
That fire can purge, as well as glow.
In ordered ardor nobly strong,
Flame to the height of ancient song.

≈ ≈ ≈

CAMOENS IN THE HOSPITAL.

2

(AFTER)

What now avails the pageant verse,
Trophies and arms with music borne?
Base is the world; and some rehearse
How noblest meet ignoble scorn.
Vain now the ardor, vain thy fire,
Delirium mere, unsound desire:
Fate's knife hath ripped the chorded lyre.
Exhausted by the exacting lay,
Thou dost but fall a surer prey
To wile and guile ill understood;
While they who work them, fair in face,
Still keep their strength in prudent place,
And claim they worthier run life's race,
Serving high God with useful good.

≈ ≈ ≈

MONTAIGNE AND HIS KITTEN.

Hither, Blanche! 'Tis you and I.
Now that not a fool is by
To say we fool it—let us fool!
We, you know, in mind are one,
Alumni of no fagging school;
Superfluous business still we shun;
And ambition we let go,
The while poor dizzards strain and strive,
Rave and slave, drudge and drive,
Chasing ever, to and fro,
After ends that seldom gain
Scant exemption from life's pain.

But preachment proses, and so I.
Blanche, round your furred neck let me tie
This Order, with brave ribbon, see,—
The King he pinned it upon me.

But, hark ye, sweeting—well-a-day!
Forever shall ye purr this way—
Forever comfortable be?
Don't you wish now 'twas for ye,
Our grandiose eternity?
Pish! what fops we humans here,
Won't admit within our sphere
The whitest doe, nor even thee—
We, the spotless humans, we!

Preaching, prosing—scud and run,
Earnestness is far from fun.
Bless me, Blanche; we'll frisk to-night,
Hearts be ours lilt and light-
Gambol, skip, and frolic, play:
Wise ones fool it while they may!

FALSTAFFS LAMENT OVER PRINCE HAL.

BECOME HENRY V

One that I cherisheed,
Yea, loved as a son—
Up early, up late with,
My promising one:
No use in good nurture,
None, lads, none!

Here on this settle
He wore the true crown,
King of good fellows,
And Fat Jack was one—
Now, Beadle of England
In formal array—
Best fellow alive
On a throne flung away!

Companions and cronies
Keep fast and lament;—
Come drawer, more sack here
To drown discontent;

For now intuitions
Shall wither to codes,
Pragmatical morals
Shall libel the gods.—

One I instructed,
Yea, talked to—alone:
Precept—example
Clean away thrown!

(Sorrow makes thisty:
Sack, drawer, more sack!—)

One that I prayed for,
I, Honest Jack!—

To bring down these gray hairs-
To cut his old pal!

But, I'll be magnanimous—
Here's to thee, Hal!

≈ ≈ ≈

SHADOW AT THE FEAST.

MRS. B
(1847)

Now churches are leafy,
Now evergreens reign;
'Tis green Burnam wood
Come to gray Dunsinane!

Now the night it is starry
And lavishly go
In a largess of music
The bells thro' the snow.

Now burn the decanters
Like turrets that rise
All garnet in sunset
Of orient skies.

O, snugged in the Valley,
A homestead of hearts!
Love flies like a shuttle,
And knits while it darts.

Brown brothers, fair sisters,
Bright cousins and all,
Keeping Christmas at table,
The large and the small.
But a kinswoman glideth,
Infantile in grace,
Sits down and is silent—
Medallion in place!

O, the hearth is like ruby,
The curtains they glow;
But she who sits sadly
Her story we know:

The blossom of orange
Turned cypress so soon!
Child-bride of the May-time
Child-widow in June!

Snow-white is her raiment;
And sorrow so mild,
An elf-sorrow seemeth,
As she an elf-child.

In patience she sitteth;
Tho' cometh no balm,
She floats, holy lily,
On waters of calm.

Come pass the decanter!
Our hearts let us cheer,
Yea, I wish *Merry Christmas*—
But let her not hear!

≈ ≈ ≈

MERRY DITTY OF THE SAD MAN.

Let us all take to singing
Who feel the life-thong;
Let us all take to singing,
And this be the song—
 Nothing like singing
 When blue-devils throng!

Along, come along:
Nothing like singing
(The rhyme keep a' ringing)
Just nothing like singing,
No, nothing for sorrow but song!

≈ ≈ ≈

HONOR.

With jeweled tusks and damask housings
August the elephants appear:
Grandeers, trumpets, banners, soldiers—
One flame from van to rear!

Bid by India's King they travel
In solemn embassy to-day,
To meet the Diamond from Golconda,
The Great Find of Cathay.

O the honor, O the homage!
But, methinks, 'twere nice,
Would they say but *How-de-do?*
To the Little Pearl of Price.

≈ ≈ ≈

FRUIT AND FLOWER PAINTER.

She dens in a garret
As void as a drum;
In lieu of plum-pudding—
She paints the plum!

No use in my grieving,
The shops I must suit:
Broken hearts are but potsherds—
Paint flowers and fruit!

How whistles her garret,
A seine for the snows:
She hums *Si fortuna*,
And—paints the rose!

December is howling,
But feign it a flute:
Help on the deceiving—
Paint flowers and fruit!

≈ ≈ ≈

THE MEDALLION

IN VILLA ALBINA &C.

Since seriousness in many a face,
Open or latent, you may trace—
The ground-expression, wherein close
All smiles at last; and ever still
The revelation of repose;
Which sums the life, and tells the mood
Of inmost self in solitude—

Then wherefore, World, of bards complain
Whose verse the years and fate imbue
With reveries where no glosings reign—
An even unrelated strain
In candor grave, to nature due?

≈ ≈ ≈

TIME'S LONG AGO!.

Time's Long Ago! Nor coral isles
In the blue South Sea more serene
When the lagoons unruffled show.
There, Fates and Furies change their mien.
Though strewn with wreckage be the shore
The halcyon haunts it; all is green
And wins the heart that hope can lure no more.

≈ ≈ ≈

IN THE HALL OF MARBLES.

(LINES RECALLED FROM A DESTROYED POEM)

If genius, turned to sordid ends
 Ye count to glory lost,
How with mankind that flouts the aims
 Time's Attic years engrossed?
Waxes the world so rich and old?
 Richer and narrower, age's way?
But, primal fervors all displaced
 Our arts but serve the clay.
This plaint the sibyls unconsoled renew:
Man fell from Edem, fall from Athens too.

≈ ≈ ≈

GOLD IN THE MOUNTAIN.

Gold in the mountain
And gold in the glen,
And greed in the heart,
Heaven having no part,
And unsatisfied men.

≈ ≈ ≈

IN SHARDS THE SYLVAN VASES LIE.

In shards the sylvan vases lie,
Their links of dance undone;
And brambles wither by thy brim,
Choked Fountain of the Sun!
The spider in the laurel spins,
The weed exiles the flower,
And, flung to kiln, Apollo's bust
Makes lime for Mammon's tower.

≈ ≈ ≈

IN THE JOVIAL AGE OF OLD.

In the jovial age of old
Named from gold,
Gold
Was none for Danaes shower;
While forever silvery fell
Down in dell
Bridal blossoms from love's bower.

≈ ≈ ≈

A SPIRIT APPEARED TO ME.

A Spirit appeared to me, and said
“Where now would you choose to dwell?
In the Paradise of the Fool,
Or in wise Solomon’s hell?”

Never he asked me twice:
“Give me the fool’s Paradise.”

≈ ≈ ≈

GIVE ME THE NERVE.

Give me the nerve
That never will swerve
Running out on life's ledges of danger;
Mine, mine be the nerve
That in peril will serve,
Since life is to safety a stranger.

When roaring below
The cataracts go,
And tempests are over me scudding;
Give, give me the calm
That is better than balm,
And the courage that keepeth new-budding.

≈ ≈ ≈

MY JACKET OLD.

My jacket old, with narrow seam—
When the dull day's work is done
I dust it, and of Asia dream,
Old Asia of the sun!
There other garbs prevail;
Yea, lingering there, free robe and vest
Edenic Leisure's age attest
Ere Work, alack, came in with Wail.

≈ ≈ ≈

IN THE OLD FARM-HOUSE.

THE GHOST

Dead of night, dead of night,
Living souls are a'bed;
Dead of night, dead of night,
And I sit with the dead.

He laughs in white sheet,
And I, I laugh too,
'Tis Shakespeare—good fellow—
And Falstaff in view.

≈ ≈ ≈

To —.

Ah, wherefore, lonely, to and fro
Flittest like the shades that go
Pale wandering by the weedy stream?
We, like they, are but a dream:
Then dreams, and less, our miseries be;
Yea, fear and sorrow, pain, despair
Are but phantoms. But what plea
Avals here? phantoms having power
To make the heart quake and the spirit cower.

≈ ≈ ≈

A BATTLE PICTURE.

Three mounted buglers laced in gold,
 Sidelong veering, light in seat,
High on the crest of battle rolled
 Ere yet the surge is downward beat,
The pennoned trumpets lightly hold—
 Mark how they snatch the swift occasion
 To thrill their rearward invocation—
While the sabres, never coy,
 Ring responses as they ride;
And, like breakers of the tide,
 All the mad plumes dance for joy!

≈ ≈ ≈

OLD AGE IN HIS AILING.

Old Age in his ailing
At youth will be railing
It scorns youth's regaling
Pooh-pooh it does, silly dream;
But me, the fool, save
From waxing so grave
As, reduced to skimmed milk, to slander the cream.

≈ ≈ ≈

HEARTS-OF-GOLD.

Pity, if true,
What the pewterer said—
Hearts-of-gold be few.
Howbeit, when snug in my bed,
And the fire-light flickers and yellows,
I dream of the hearts-of-gold sped—
The Falernian fellows—
Hafiz and Horace,
And Beranger—all
Dexterous tumblers eluding the Fall,
Fled? can be sped?
But the marygold's morris
Is danced o'er their head;
And their memory mellows,
Embalmed and becharmed,
Hearts-of-gold and good fellows!

≈ ≈ ≈

PONTOOSUCE.

Crowning a bluff where gleams the lake below,
Some pillared pines in well-spaced order stand
And like an open temple show.
And here in best of seasons bland,
Autumnal noon-tide, I look out
From dusk arcades on sunshine all about.

Beyond the Lake, in upland cheer
Fields, pastoral fields and barns appear,
They skirt the hills where lonely roads
Revealed in links thro' tiers of woods
Wind up to indistinct abodes
And faery-peopled neighborhoods;
While further fainter mountains keep
Hazed in romance impenetrably deep.

Look, corn in stacks, on many a farm,
And orchards ripe in languorous charm,
As dreamy Nature, feeling sure
Of all her genial labor done,
And the last mellow fruitage won,
Would idle out her term mature;
Reposing like a thing reclined
In kinship with man's meditative mind.

For me, within the brown arcade—
Rich life, methought; sweet here in shade
And pleasant abroad in air!—But, nay,
A counter thought intrusive played,
A thought as old as thought itself,
And who shall lay it on the shelf!—
I felt the beauty bless the day
In opulence of autumn's dower;
But evanescence will not stay!
A year ago was such an hour,
As this, which but foreruns the blast
Shall sweep these live leaves to the dead leaves past.

All dies!—

I stood in revery long.

Then, to forget death's ancient wrong,
I turned me in the deep arcade,
And there by chance in lateral glade
I saw low tawny mounds in lines
Relics of trunks of stately pines
Ranked erst in colonnades where, lo!
Erect succeeding pillars show!

All dies! and not alone

The aspiring trees and men and grass;
The poet's forms of beauty pass,
And noblest deeds they are undone
Even truth itself decays, and lo,
From truth's sad ashes fraud and falsehood grow.

All dies!

The workman dies, and after him, the work;
Like to these pines whose graves I trace,
Statue and statuary fall upon their face:
In very amaranths the worm doth lurk,
Even stars, Chaldasans say, have left their place.
Andes and Apalachee tell
Of havoc ere our Adam fell,
And present Nature as a moss doth show
On the ruins of the Nature of the aeons of long ago.
But look—and hark!

A down the glade,

Where light and shadow sport at will,
Who cometh vocal, and arrayed
As in the first pale tints of morn—
So pure, rose-clear, and fresh and chill!
Some ground-pine sprigs her brow adorn,
The earthy rootlets tangled clinging.
Over tufts of moss which dead things made,
Under vital twigs which danced or swayed,
Along she floats, and lightly singing:

“Dies, all dies!

The grass it dies, but in vernal rain
Up it springs and it lives again;
Over and over, again and again

It lives, it dies and it lives again.
Who sighs that all dies?
Summer and winter, and pleasure and pain
And everything everywhere in God's reign,
They end, and anon they begin again:
Wane and wax, wax and wane:
Over and over and over amain
End, ever end, and begin again—
End, ever end, and forever and ever begin again!”

She ceased, and nearer slid, and hung
In dewy guise; then softer sung:
“Since light and shade are equal set
And all revolves, nor more ye know;
Ah, why should tears the pale cheek fret
For aught that waneth here below.
Let go, let go!”

With that, her warm lips thrilled me through,
She kissed me, while her chaplet cold
Its rootlets brushed against my brow,
With all their humid clinging mould.
She vanished, leaving fragrant breath
And warmth and chill of wedded life and death.

≈ ≈ ≈

EPISTLE TO DANIEL SHEPHERD.

Come, Shepherd, come and visit me:
Come, we'll make it Arcady;
Come, if but for charity.
Sure, with such a pastoral name,
Thee the city should not claim.
Come, then, Shepherd, come away,
Thy sheep in bordering pastures stray.

Come, Daniel, come and visit me:
I'm lost in many a quandary:
I've dreamed, like Bab'lon's Majesty:
Prophet, come expound for me.
—I dreamed I saw a laurel grove,
Claimed for his by the bird of Jove,
Who, elate with such dominion,
Oft cuffed the boughs with haughty pinion.
Indignantly the trees complain,
Accursing his afflictive reign.
Their plaints the chivalry excite
Of churlishness, a plucky host:
They battle with the bird of light.
Beaten, he wings his Northward flight,
No more his laurel realm to boast,
Where now, to crow, the cocks alight,
And—break down all the branches quite!
Such a weight of friendship pure
The grateful trees could not endure.
This dream, it still disturbeth me:
Seer, foreshows it Italy?

But other visions stir my head;
No poet-problems, fancy-fed—
Domestic prose of board and bed.
I marvel oft how guest *unwined*
Will to this farm-house be resigned.
Not a hint of ruby claret
Cooleth in our cellar-bin;

And, ripening in our sultry garret,
 Otard glows no flask within.
(Claret and otard here I name
Because each is your fav'rite flame:
Placed 'tween the two decanters, you,
Like Alexander, your dear charmers view,
And both so fair you find, you neither can eschew:
—That's what they call an Alexandrine;
Don't you think it very damn'd fine?)
—Brackets serve to fence this prattle,
Pound for episodic cattle.—

I said that me the Fates do cripple
In matter of a wholesome "tipple."
Now, is it for oft cursing gold,
 For lucre vile,
The Hags do thus from me withhold
 Sweet Bacchus' smile?
Smile, that like other smiles as mellow,
Not often greets Truth's simple fellow:—
For why? Not his the magic Dollar?
You should know, you Wall-Street scholar!
—Of Bourbon that is rather new
I brag a fat black bottle or two,—
Shepherd, is this such Mountain-Dew
As one might fitly offer you?
But if cold water will content ye
My word, of that ye shall have plenty.
Thanks to late floods, our spring, it brims,—
Will't mind o'crunch of goblet-rims?

—I've told some doubts that sadly pose me:
Come thou now, and straight resolve me.
Come, these matters sagely read,
Daniel, of the prophet breed.

Daniel Shepherd, come and rove—
 Freely rove two fally dells;
The one the Housatonic clove,
 And that where genial Friendship dwells.

INSCRIPTION
FOR THE SLAIN AT FREDERICKSBURGH.

A glory lights an earnest end;
In jubilee the patriot ghosts ascend.
Transfigured at the rapturous height
 Of their passionate feat of arms,
Death to the brave's a starry night,—
 Strown their vale of death with palms.

≈ ≈ ≈

THE ADMIRAL OF THE WHITE.

Proud, O proud in his oaken hall
The Admiral walks to-day,
From the top of his turreted citadel
French colors 'neath English play.—

Why skips the needle so frolic about,
Why danceth the ship so to-day?
Is it to think of those French Captains' swords
Surrendered when ended the fray?
O well may you skip, and well may you dance,
You dance on your homeward way;
O well may you skip and well may you dance
With homeward-bound victors to-day.
Like a baron bold from his mountain-hold,
At night looks the Admiral forth:
Heavy the clouds, and thick and dun,
They slant from the sullen North.

Catching at each little opening for life,
The moon in her wane swims forlorn;
Fades, fades mid the clouds her pinched paled face
Like the foeman's in seas sinking down.

Tack off from the land! And the watch below
Old England the oak-crownd to drink:—
Knock, knock, knock, the loud billows go,
Rapping "Bravo my boys!" ere they sink—
Knock, knock, knock, on the windward bow;
The Anvil-Head Whale you would think.

'Tis Saturday night,—the last of the week,
The last of the week, month, and year—
On deck! shout it out, you forecastle-man,
Shout "Sail ho, Sail ho—the New Year!"

Drink, messmates, drink; tis sweet to think
Tis the last of the week, month, and year,
Then perils are past, and Old England at last,
Though now shunned, in the morn we will near;

We've beaten the foe, their ship blown below,
Their flags in St.. Paul's Church we'll rear.

Knock, knock, knock, the loud billows go—
God! what's that shouting and roar?
Breakers!—close, close ahead and abeam:
She strikes—knock, knock—we're ashore!

Why went the needle so trembling about,
Why shook you, and trembled to-day?
Was it, perchance, that those French Captains' swords
In the arm-chest too near you lay?
Was it to think that those French Captains' swords,
Surrendered, might yet win the day?
O woe for the brave no courage can save,
Woe, woe for the ship led astray.

High-beetling the rocks below which she shocks,
Her boats they are stove by her side,
Fated seas lick her round, as in flames she were bound,
Roar, roar like a furnace the tide.

O jagged the rocks, repeated she knocks,
Splits the hull like a cracked filbert there,
Her timbers are torn, and ground-up are thrown,
Float the small chips like filbert-bits there.

Pale, pale, but proud, 'neath the billows loud,
The Admiral sleeps to night;
Pale, pale, but proud, in his sea-weed shroud,—
The Admiral of the White:
And by their gun the dutiful ones,
Who had fought, bravely fought the good fight.

≈ ≈ ≈

To Tom.

Thou that dost thy Christmas keep
Lonesome on the torrid deep,
But in thy "Meteor" proudly sweep
O'er the waves that vainly comb—
 Of thee we think,
 To thee we drink,
And drain the glass, my gallant Tom!

Thou that, duty-led, dost roam
Far from thy shepherd-brother's home—
Shearer of the ocean-foam!
To whom one Christmas may not come,—
 Of thee I think
 Till on its brink
The glass shows tears, beloved Tom!

≈ ≈ ≈

SUGGESTED BY THE RUINS OF A MOUNTAIN-TEMPLE IN ARCADIA,

ONE BUILT BY THE ARCHITECT OF THE PARTHENON.

Like stranded ice when freshets die
These shattered marbles tumbled lie:
 They trouble me.

What solace?—Old in inexhaustion,
Interred alive from storms of fortune,
 The quarries be!

≈ ≈ ≈

PUZZLEMENT

AS TO A FIGURE LEFT SOLITARY ON A UNIQUE FRAGMENT OF GREEK BASSO-RILIEVO.

A crescent brow—a quiver thrown
Behind the shoulder. A huntress, own.
It needs be Artemis. But, nay,
It breathes too much of Eve's sweet way,
And Artemis is high, austere,
Chill as her morn, a goddess mere.

She bends, and with one backward hand
Adjusts her buskin light,
The sidelong face upturned—how arch!
Sure, *somebody* meets her sight.

But never virgin on another
Virgin, or approaching brother
Turned a look like that, I wis.
Profane, if meant for Artemis!
Why, could one but piece out the stone—
Complete restore its primal state,
Some handsome fellow would be shown,
Some Lover she would fascinate
By that arch look.—

Nay—can it be?

Again methinks't is Artemis.
Rogue of a Greek! and is it she?
Show'st thou the goddess, human yet—
The austere Artemis a coquette?
If so in sooth, some latter age
In faith's decay begot thine art—
Such impudence of sweet persiflage!

≈ ≈ ≈

THE CONTINENTS.

From bright Stamboul Death crosses o'er;
Beneath the cypress evermore
His camp he pitches by the shore
Of Asia old.

Requiting this unsocial mood
Stamboul's inmyrtled multitude
Bless Allah and the sherbert good
And Europe hold.

Even so the cleaving Bosphorous parts
Life and Death.—Dissembling hearts!
Over the gulf the yearning starts
To meet—infold!

≈ ≈ ≈

THE DUST-LAYERS.

Abreast through town by Nile they go
 With water-skins the dust to lay,
A soggy set in sorry row
 Squeezing their skins in bag-pipe way.
With droning rhyme that times the twitch
They squirt the water, squirt and switch
 In execrable play!

Osiris! what indignity,
 In open eye of day,
Offered the arch majesty
 Of Thotmes passed away;
The atoms of his pomp no prouder
Than to be blown about in powder,
 Or made a muddy clay!

≈ ≈ ≈

A RAIL ROAD CUTTING NEAR ALEXANDRIA IN 1855.

Plump thro' tomb and catacomb
Rolls the Engine ripping;
 Egypt's ancient dust
 This before the gust,
The Pyramid is slipping!

Too long inurned, Sesostres's spurned,
 What glory left to Isis
Mid loud acclaim to Watts his name
 Alack for Miriam's spices!

≈ ≈ ≈

A REASONABLE CONSTITUTION.

What though Reason forged your scheme?
'Twas Reason dreamed the Utopia's dream:
'Tis dream to think that Reason can
Govern the reasoning creature, man.

≈ ≈ ≈

RAMMON.

In touching upon historical matters the romancer and poet have generously been accorded a certain license, elastic in proportion to the remoteness of the period embraced and consequent incompleteness and incertitude of our knowledge as to events, personages, and dates. It is upon this privilege, assumed for granted, that I here venture to proceed.

Rammon, not mentioned in canonic Scripture, the unrobust child of Solomon's old age and inheriting its despondent philosophy, was immoderately influenced thereby. Vanity of vanities—such is this life. As to a translated life in some world hereafter—far be that thought! A primary law binds the universe. The worlds are like apples on the tree; in flavor and tint one apple perchance may somewhat differ from another, but all partake of the same sap. One of the worlds we know. And what find we here? Much good, a preponderance of good; that is, good it would be could it be winnowed from the associate evil that taints it. But evil is no accident. Like good it is an irremovable element. Bale out your individual boat, if you can, but the sea abides.

To Rammon then cessation of being was the desirable event. But desired or not, an end or what would seem to be an end, does come. Here he would have rested—rested but foe Buddha.

Solomon a very lax Hebrew did not altogether repel foreign ideas. It was in his time that reports of Buddha and the Buddhistic belief had, along with the recorded spices and pearls, been conveyed into Palestine by that travelled and learned Indian dame, not less communicative than inquisitive, the Princess of Sheba. Through her it was that the doctrine of the successive transmigration of souls came to circulate, along with legends of Ashtaroah and Chemosh, among a people whose theocratic lawgiver was silent as to any life to come. A significant abstention and serving the more to invest with speculative novelty Buddha's affirmative scheme. But profound doctrine not directly imparted by miracle, but through many removes and in end through the sprightly chat of a clever queen, though naturally enough they might supply a passing topic for the amateur of thought, yet in any vital was they would scarcely affect but the exceptionally few. This applies to Rammon. But the wonderful conceptions of Prince—Siddhata? were backed by something equally marvelous, his personality and life.

These singularly appealed to Rammon also born a Prince, and conscious, too, that rank had not hardened his heart as to the mass of mankind, toilers and sufferers, nor in any wise intercepted a just view of the immense spectacle of things.

But, in large, his thought of Buddha partook of that tender awe with which long after Rammon's time, the earlier unconventional Christians were impressed by the story and character of Christ. It was not possible for him therefore to deem unworthy regard any doctrine however repugnant to his understanding and desire, authentically ascribed to so transcendent a nature.

Besides: If Buddha's estimate of this present life confirms, and more than confirms, Solomon my wise father's view, so much the more then should a son of his attend to what Buddha reveals or alleges touching an unescapable life indefinitely continuous after death.

Rammon was young; his precocious mind eagerly receptive; in practical matters the honesty of his

intellect in part compensated for his lack of experience and acquired knowledge. Nevertheless he had no grounding in axiomatic matters of the first consequence in passing judgement upon those vast claims, sometimes made as from heaven itself, upon the credence of man.

Moreover, in connection with Buddha it had never occurred to him as a conjecture, much less as a verity that the more spiritual, wide-seeing, conscientious and sympathetic the nature, so much the more is spiritually it isolated, and isolation is the mother of illusion.

Lost between reverential love for Buddha's person and alarm at his confused teaching, (like all teaching alike unprovable and irrefutable) and with none to enlighten him, there was no end to the sensitive Prince's reveries & misgivings.

He was left the more a prey to these disquietudes inasmuch as he took no part in public affairs. And for this reason.

Upon the accession of Rehoboam his half-brother, troubles began, ending in the permanent disruption of the kingdom, a calamity directly traceable to the young king's disdain of the counsel of i. e. and advice of his father's councillors, and leaning to flatterers of his own age and arrogance of ignorance. The depressing event confirmed Rammon in his natural bias for a life with men. What avails it now that Solomon my father was wise? Rehoboam succeeds. Such oscillations are not of a day. Why strive? Rehoboam is my brother. When the oil of coronation was not yet dry upon him, and repentant Jeroboam proffered his allegiance, only imploring that the king would not make his yoke grievous, and while the king had not yet determined the matter, I said to him, It is not wisdom to repulse a penitent. Jeroboam is a valorous, a mighty man. If you make him hopeless of lenity, he will stir up mischief, perchance a rebellion. When I said this much to the king my brother, without a word he turned on his heel. Then I foresaw what would come, and now I see it. But now as then, he holds me for an imbecile.

He surrounds himself with those natives he calls practical men. Why strive? And he withdrew to his meditations and abstractions.

But an interruption not unwelcome occurred. Tho' the Hebrews were not disposed as a people to superfluous intercourse with the Gentile's races, yet in one instance they would seem to have made an exception. The commercial alliance, between Solomon and Hiram partook something of personal good feeling which radiating out, resulted in an international amity that for a period survived both monarchs.

And so it came to pass that Tardi an importer of the coast, a versatile man, in reports for gifts other than the one popularly charting him, made a visit to the court in Jerusalem, a court still retaining something of the magnificence & luxury introduced by the Son of Jethro the shepherd.

News of the Tyrian's arrival reaches Rammon's retreat. It interest him. With a view of eliciting something bearing on those questions that were ceaselessly agitating his heart, he effects a privy interview with the new-comer; thinking beforehand, My countrymen are stay-at-homes; whatsoever is extant in their thought is as contracted as their territory; but here comes an urbane stranger travelled intellectual,—

Well, we shall see!

For Tardi, he was struck with the pure-minded ingenuousness of Rammon born to a station not favorable to candor.

He was interested, perhaps entertained, by his youth and ardor entangled in problems which he for his own part had never seriously considered, holding them not more abstruse than profitless. But humoring a Prince so amiable, affably he lends himself to Rammon's purpose. But it is not long before Rammon divines, that Tardi, exempt from popular errors the he was endowed with far beyond his own, and, so bright too and prepossessing, was in essential character little more than a highly agreeable man-of-the-

world, and as such, unconsciously prepared to avert himself, in a light-hearted way, from entire segments of life and thought. A fair urn, beautifully sculptured, but opaque and clay. True, among other things he is a poet; a poet, of a sensuous relish for the harmonious as to numbers and the thoughts they embody and a magic facility in infusing that double harmony, makes a poet then Tardi is such, and it is not necessary for a poet to be a seer. With a passionate exclamation he breaks off the conference, and for diversion from his disappointment solicits a trial of the accomplished stranger's improvising gift.

Let us attend the Prince & Tardi at that point in their interview when after some general discussion as to the strange doctrine troubling the former, he takes up the one mainly disturbing him, and makes a heart-felt appeal.

Who, friend that has lived, taking ampler view,
Running life's chances, would life renew?

Ay, Prince, but why fear? no use to dismay
When turning to enter death's chamber of spell
One waves back to life a good-natured farewell,
Bye-bye, I must sleep. That's in Tyrian way.

Not hereabouts very new.

But, piercing our Siddata's comfortable word,
Buddha, benign yet terrible, is heard:
It is Buddha I love.—

From his Ever-and-a-Day, friend, ravish me away!
Fable me something that may solace or repay—
Something of your art.

Well,—for a theme?
A Phoenician are you. And your voyages of Tyre
From Ophir's far strand they return full of dream
That leaps to the heart of the nearby desire.

Fable me, then, those Enviale Isles
Whereof King Hiram's tars used to tell;
Now looms the dim shore when the land is ahead;
And what the strange charm the tarrier beguiles
Time without end content there to dwell.
Ay, fable me, those enviable isles.

≈ ≈ ≈

DITTY OF ARISTIPPUS.

Noble gods at the board

Where lord unto lord

Light pushes the care-killing wine:

Urbane in their pleasure,

Superb in their leisure—

Lax ease—

Lax ease after labor divine!

Golden ages eternal

Autumnal, supernal,

Deep mellow their temper serene:

The rose by their gate

Shall it yield into fate?

They are gods—

They are gods and their garlands keep green.

Ever blandly adore them;

But spare to implore them:

They rest, they discharge them from time;

Yet believe, light believe

They would succor, reprieve—

Nay, retrieve—

Might but revellers pause in the prime.

≈ ≈ ≈

IN A NUTSHELL.

Take a reef, take a reef
In your wisdom: be brief.
Well then—well-a-day!
Wag the world how it may,
The knaves will be tricking
And fools still be kicking
And Grief, the sad thief
Will forever Joy's pocket be picking!

≈ ≈ ≈

ADIEU.

Ring down! The curtain falls and ye
Will go your ways. Yet think of me.
And genie take what's genie given
And long be happy under heaven.

≈ ≈ ≈