

Where the pigeons settle — "If the
 further bird,
 "The white, takes wing first. I'll
 confess when thrashed;
 "Not, if the blue does"—so I said
 to myself
 Last week, lest you should take me
 by surprise,
 Off flapped the white,—and I'm con-
 fessing, sir!
 Perhaps 'tis Providence's whim and
 way
 With only me, I? the world: how
 can you tell?
 "Because unlikely!" Was it likelier,
 now,
 That this our one out of all worlds
 beside,
 The what-if-you-call-'em millions,
 should be just
 Precisely chosen to make Adam for,
 And the rest of the tale? Yet the
 tale's true, you know:
 Such unleserving clod was graced so
 once;
 Why not graced likewise undeserving
 Sludge?
 Are we merit-mongers, flaunt we
 filthy rags?
 All you can bring against my privilege
 Is, that another way was taken with
 you,—
 Which I don't question. It's pure
 grace, my luck:
 I'm broken to the way of nods and
 winks,
 And need no formal summoning.
 You've a help:
 Holloa his name or whistle, clap your
 hands
 Stamp with your foot or pull the bell:
 all's one,
 He understands you want him, here
 he comes.
 Just so, I come at the knocking: you,
 sir, wait
 The tongue of the bell, nor stir before
 you catch
 Reason's clear tingle, nature's clapper
 brisk.
 Or that traditional peal was wont to
 cheer

Your mother's face turned heaven-
 ward: short of these
 There's no authentic intimation, eh?
 Well, when you hear, you'll answer
 them, start up
 And stride into the presence, top of
 toe.
 And there find Sludge beforehand.
 Sludge that sprang
 At noise of the knuckle on the par-
 titi-on-wall!
 I think myself the more religious man.
 Religion's all or nothing: it's no mere
 smile
 O' contentment, sigh of aspiration,
 sir—
 No quality of the finelier-tempered
 clod.
 Like its whiteness or its lightness:
 rather, stuff
 Of the very stuff, life of life, and self
 of self.
 I tell you, men won't notice: when
 they do,
 They'll understand. I notice nothing
 else:
 I'm eyes, ears, mouth of me, one gaze
 and gape,
 Nothing eludes me, everything's a hint,
 Huddle and help. It's all absurd,
 and yet
 There's something in it all, I know:
 how much?
 No answer! What does that prove?
 Man's still man,
 Still meant for a poor blundering
 piece of work
 When all's done: but, if somewhat's
 done, like this,
 Or not done, is the case the same?
 Suppose
 I blunder in my guess at the true sense
 Of the knuckle-summons, nine times
 out of ten,—
 What if the tenth guess happen to be
 right?
 If the tenth shovel-load of powdered
 quartz
 Yield me the nugget? I gather,
 crush, sift all.
 Pass o'er the failure, pounce on the
 success,