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THE PENANCE OF SIR GILDO.

I.

Idly on an island shore,
Gazing out upon the sea,
Hearing but the distant roar,
And the dull monotony
Of the breaking waves as they
Tossing o'er each other play,
Stood the Knight of my lay.

II.

Troubled was Sir Gildo's brow,
Passed a cloud across his face.
Ah! his form is bended now,
Silver sheen has ta'en the place
Of the jet that could not stay,
And the lone Knight's beard is grey,
For his years pass away.

III.

He is dreaming of his youth,
Of the songs that he had sung
With a loved one, for in sooth
He had loved when he was young,
He had joined in laughter gay,
Sorrow on his head ne'er lay,
But those years passed away.

IV.

Till the Knight is thoughtful grown,
And the laughing eyes that found
Answer to the love they own
Hurt and wounded seek the ground,
Wisdom high will not to-day
Homage due to Beauty pay,
Youthful years pass away.

V.

And his heart is colder turned—
Lured by a maiden cold
In whose breast no passion burned,
(For the maiden's name was Gold),
Will the Knight for her betray
Love he swore to Beauty? Say,
Shall Life thus pass away?

VI.

But he touched her silken dress,
Slowly trod her marble halls,
Vainly sought for happiness
Pent within those lofty walls.
God! the thought—a Knight to pay
Court to Mammon, and to pray
For what soon flies away.

VII.

Slow on the island broke the sea,
Sadly the Knight but calmly—"Good.
Blue eyes laugh no more for me,
I have wedded solitude,
This the penance I must pay."
Reader, hear the ballad say,
"Gather roses while ye may
For the years pass away."

T. A. G.

THE PROPHET OF THE NEW POETRY.

Ever since Matthew Arnold wrote his now famous lines—

"Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth, I wait forlorn,"—

we have been accustomed to think that our lot has been cast in evil days, that it is an age without an epoch, that the old literature is dead, and that the rope that spans the chasmic break is one of sand. True it is that the new Music is said to have come, and to have cast an eternal shadow upon Beethoven, Handel, Mozart. The schools of the prophets have put new tunes to their words, and if the wine and the bottle do not always fit, it is one of the inevitable accidents of change. But in art the world is at a standstill; not even the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood availed to evolve a new order by modelling upon the old; and its principal members, Millais, Dante Rossetti and Holman Hunt, finally departed from their early faith. And thus, say the critics, is our condition in the field of poetry. Our present divinities are set at naught. Tennyson is a copyist, and when not, his muse is feminine and sometimes feeble. Browning is a philosopher in tones. Swinburne is a colourist, who paints but women, and them in scarlet. Morris tells

"A tale not too importunate
To those who in the sleepy region stay,
Lulled by the singer of an empty day."

Thus it is that Matthew Arnold sings:—

"Achilles ponders in his tent:
The kings of modern thought are dumb;
Silent they are, though not content,
And wait to see the future come."

And again he says:—

"Your creeds are dead, your rites are dead;
Your social order too!
Where tarries He, the Power who said,
See, I make all things new?
" the past is out of date,
The future not yet born;
And who can be alone elate
While the world lies forlorn?"

In one important respect, however, the age differs from its predecessors. It waits to welcome the new tide of song. Its neck is craned to catch the first strains, be they the heralding song of

"The busy lark, the messenger of day,"

or mutterings of the far-off thunder of a new announcement. Whatever be the signs, it is determined not to miss them; and so its literary scouts have been sent out to scan the horizon, to listen for the echo of the voice and to announce to us, when found, the incarnation of new poetic spirit.

Two of these scouts have recently come in from their search. As we advance to ask, What cheer? we remark the flush of haste with which they approach to vent the news, the eye of each bright with the promise of a secret unrevealed. The first, by name W. M. Rossetti, whispers