

The dreams which lull'd me, and the visions proud
Which flash'd across the future. Argosies
Of wealth, which sailed from those dim ports of youth,
Have never reached the shore; and I am poor,
With nothing left me but the thought of past
Enchantment, and the bare, bald aspect of
Things as they are; for life is a continuous
Process of disenchantment; what to-day
Is our ideal glory, fades to-morrow."

Said I: "I see the rock you've stranded on.
The passionate poem of your life has changed
To the slow-pacing prose; in this you meet
A kindred fate with man. The morning light
Shows myriad glories shrined in the clear dew-drop,
Outrivaling Golconda; but the sun
In the full strength of his meridian blaze,
Dispels them. So with youth, and sterner manhood—
We cannot always live in Fairyland;
Life merges from the incense-cloud of peace
To th' murky rack of war. He who expects
Peace ever, fails; but yet should not inveigh
Against the happiness he had because
It changes.

"You have dreamed of things to come,
With the soft zephyr playing on your cheek;
And in your ears the melody of birds,
And trees, and streams. Then, when the dream was past,
And you had risen aglow for the day's toil,
And heard no bird-song,—feeling torrid suns
Burn you, nor winds to kiss the colour back
To your wan cheeks,—you straightway cursed the dream.
The dream was true, and blessed; pity those
Who have them not;—the fault is yours alone.

"I used to watch the ships go out to sea;
Alive, they seem'd to cleave the sparkling foam,
And bravely bound across the tuneful wave,
Freighted with joy, I thought, and golden hope;
But yet, each ship was full of weary hearts,—
Eyes dimmed with parting tears,—with many weeks
Of dull monotony in view, unbroke
Save by the rush of tempests, and the tread
Of frightened sailors, hurrying to and fro.
From the rare light that floods the halls of youth
Life is projected forth in rainbow hues,
Which straightway lose their lustre, when the sun
Dissolves the pearly dew, and turn to white.
Proudly you gazed into the world afar
From your cloud-tower, and saw yourself a man
Of men; and, knowing nought of actual life,
You won great triumphs there, wearing the crown
Of your dominion in anticipation.
But you have found the lofty mount of fame
Steep to ascend, and sore to untried feet.
Your dream has flown, and you a weary man,
With feelings tending to misanthropy;
Who build their palaces in clouds must look
To see them pass; why murmur you at that.

PART II.

The crimson flushing all his face, he said:
"Probe deep, and spare not; I have been a fool:
In early life I rhymed, and sang, and dreamed;
Haunted the woods at morn, at eve, at night,
And listen'd to the tremulous, whispering leaves;
The rill, that rippled, and the daffodil,
Had mystic language for my secret soul.
I've walked this sea-beach often, when the world
Was half asleep, with feelings that throng'd through
My soul, expressionless; then every wave,
In its low, sullen wash, or distant roar,
Was answered by the passionate thought within.
And when I went into the world of men,
With all my strange ideals, I was as child
Strayed from its home, and just as powerless;
I failed, in part,—my bubbles soon were burst;
I learned my lesson hard, but learned it well.
This age wants *workers* more than it wants *poets*;
And I would sooner, with a pick and spade,
Dig nourishment from th' granite-hearted soil,
Than be a poet by profession only.

"A good prize-fighter now can make his way
To th' Senate with the price of the brute's blood;
Preferment goes by favour, or by chance,
Sometimes, adroit, secret manipulation.
Great Jeffreys rules a king, while Otway starves;
Homer must beg, and Camoens die in want;—
Sure, the grim record flatters not mankind.
Already we have poetry enough,
And the fount runs dry. Parnassus is a hill
For flocks to graze on; and Castalia
A spring for watering cattle. Who hears now
The mighty march of Milton's wondrous song?
Henceforth, let love-lorn swains monopolize
The realms of rhyme, or silly girls at school,
Who spend their souls in sentimental sighs
Over the latest novel.

"The stage buffoon
Grows rich and famed; but Johnson's clothed in rags,—
Flouted by lackeys of the titled rich.
Well, if I've failed, I partly blame the Age!
Why, in this Age of ours—this boasted Age—
This golden year, led up by golden deeds;
This offspring of the universal soul
Of man,—after the throes of toiling centuries,
That tremble still from their great agony;—

Here!—in this land, carved out, as from rude rock,
By indefatigable powers of mind
And soul—these powers supreme, for recompense,
Must trudge laboriously under heavy yoke,
Like beasts of burden on a dusty road.
Who holds the mart, but Mammon? who bestows
The laurel now, but Folly, gaily drest,
Who must be tickled, even as of old?

"Philosophers are sick to their hearts' core,
As in past time, for want of bread and butter;
The few, we call the fortunate; the many,
With the chill sinking in their hearts, despair.
Epictetus yet lives on prison fare,
While Commodus doth don the robe.
How hard, O brave Jean Paul, with you to say,
I will not hate, but love you, O, my brothers!—
Henceforth I mock you not, but give you cheer!
How hard, divine complacency, and kindness,
At times, when we behold this world's strange way!
Go to! Canst thou hit heavy from the shoulder?—
Canst thou stand out with bold effrontery
Against mankind? Canst thou browbeat a judge
And jury, or tell a doubtful story to a crowd,
With swaggering bravado? Canst thou bellow
Noisy invective, or hoodwink the rabble?

Come, then,—we'll send you to the House of Commons!
There an elastic soul and plethoric purse
May carry you so high in men's esteem
They'll wink and blink, while looking on your glory,
Like owls that eye the sun.

"Or if you carve
A goose with dearest art and courtly grace,
You may purvey in a king's larder, whence
You shall command far more of earthly goods
Than Milton's brain could furnish you to-day.
And must a man spend forty years, or more,
In gloom of mines, with toilsome digging up,
'Mid tears, oft shed, a nation's truest wealth;
Or, grimy with the soot and dust therein,
Far underground, swing heavy sledges at
The forge of thought—for what!—for what, ye gods?
Rich is he in his scanty recompense;—
*One hundred pounds a year, perchance, half paid
In butter, cheese and eggs!*

"Not Burns, alone,
Guaged ale-house casks for bread, when his high muse
Should have been striking flakes of living fire
From rich mosaics of ideal worlds.
We could do better now;—a consulship
Would shelve the poet in him as completely.

"The world is being cultured, very true;
'Tis fashionable now to have B. A.
Tack'd to your sleeve; though sometimes it means—ba!
The great Democracy of culture now—
With shadowy racks of mathematic lore,
And trite quotations out of Tacitus,
Or Horace, drifting o'er their mental sky,—
Inquire of every man: 'Ah, is he *learned*? . . .
He'll never suit our educated taste."

"Now, the fond father, with the meagre purse,
Or with the full one,—matters little which,—
Sends his son up to the academy,
How'er the virile metal may be lacking,
To get him made a man. Five years are spent,
And forth in shape he comes—no matter how,—
With bray of academic trump triumph brought
Brow-bound with wreathed laurels blossoming.
The plow he well had graced, or lusty anvil;
But in the learned world he passes current,
With these our symbols, for the stamp is put.
Now black your boots with Plato's hallowed brush,
And part your hair i' the middle; get yourself
Perfumed from head to toe with subtle breath
Of that aroma which floats round a college;
Th' effect is magical;—yawn through the lectures,
Then proudly step you forth a cultured man.
That is the way they do it: Truth beholds,
Amazed, recoiled, indignant. Nature strain'd
And broken to unlawful ways; the mind
Dammed out of proper channels by the force
Of social lies, all aping verily.
Say, of the scores of men who crowd our schools,
How many toil from the pure love of truth?
Rather, how few!—The frequent smattering man,
The wide-read miss, who glibly talks of books,
Conned well on th' title page;—of Milton talks—
Sublime,—who reads a fragmentary sketch
In school books,—these are fitting types of half
The educated world. These are the men
Who sit in judgment on the struggling mind!
My blood boils when I think on't.

"The world at last
Has put on stays; and every year's a twist
To draw them tighter, till the strangled soul
Cries out,—'For heaven's sake, give me air—pure air,
And a touch of banished nature!' Let us go."

"No doubt but that the world is bad enough,"
Rous'd by his argument, I held my way;
"But when was it e'er better—nay, more,
When was it e'er so good, by many a stage?
If Vice rears high her shameless front to-day,
And hydra-headed Error stalks abroad,
The dual monster had emerged from
The centuries past; the only difference being

The modern dress put on to suit the time.
But I believe the hellish Cerberus
Hath bark'd so loud and long he waxeth hoarse
And worn. Life slowly cometh to perfection,
Yet gains. I know old earth hath rottenness
I' th' bones, and every individual man
A share; the good and bad are mixed, and must,
For aught I know, be mixed until the end.

"But you will find the stage philosopher
Most eloquent upon your present ills,
When he shall look back on the toilsome road
Tro'd by humanity to this ripe Present;
Will find in all the strangely mark'd expanse
No resting-place so sweet, no stream so cool
As on the greensward of this Nineteenth Age,
And by its founts of knowledge.

"The Age of Sham
And Cant; of Vice, o'ergloss'd, bedizen'd and
Refined! As if the long, unrighteous list
Were newly made, and not ancestral dower,—
The heirloom of the ever-travelling years.
Let us be thankful if some gains be made;
That yet survive the noble, the sincere,
The pure, the true,—if we will look to them.
Ev'n now we boast of superstition dead,
Or gasping in death's agony; aloud
We boast of freedom for the human mind
To carve out from the unhewn rock of life
Whatever destiny it may or can.
Still may the soul be strong and gain her crown,
Without annihilation of her foes,
Instantly; for is not this life's sure warfare
Mind's ever-daring, immemorial task?
It fights alone 'gainst ills inevitable,
In the soul's essence,—envy, arrogance,
Sloth, avarice and all th' offensive train,
Vices of little minds, in high or low
Degree;—strong floods of hostile circumstance,
That bear away and sweep to the abyss.
Such foes man hath; nor need he hope to find
The field e'er uncontested. Strive! Not less
Shall virtue thrive, and manhood shall be more!

Thus hope, and triumph. For other foes, strong Earth
At last has shaken off the petty kings
Of brass and clay, that once with whip and spur
Rode her to ruin,—and still she flings them from her.
Outraged, she trembles; tremble, Doge and Czar!
Has she not had the cruel ordeal,
Of Sceptred tyrants; pageants, proud with blood,
And hot with flames,—that, like Campanian cities,
Sunk 'neath a sulphurous sea, are now exhumed,
As melancholy remnants of the past,
To teach us Wisdom and true Liberty?
Man, being man, must dwell in imperfection,
Save Love be regnant and of a solute sway,
Nor this redeems from error wholly here;
The evil lurks i' the blood, and will have vent
Howe'er it can; it taints the fairest forms
With some faint finger touch.

"But would you have
Our colleges hewn down—their proud heads bow'd,
And their foundations levelled in the dust,
Because the mode of education yet
Lacks roundness; or, because, perchance, there may
Be dolts at school? And would you now recall
Th' Augustan Age, when Virgil sang of arms
And Roman glory, kneeling all the while
In servile baseness at great Cæsar's throne?
Or suits you better England's Golden Age
Of Genius, knocking at the door of power,
And hanging on the smile of patronage,
And courting wealth in perfumed palaces?
Content you, then, with your prosperity;
For ne'er did will of man or God advance
The complaining spirit, eloquent of blame.
Peculiar vices show peculiar virtues;
For where sin did abound, there sovereign grace
Much more. Up, ever, through invisible cycles,
Earth wheels progressively,—seeming oft returning
Upon its track, in vain; and, men may moan
Or eulogize, 'tis upward—upward still!
Hark! *Forward!* is the cry;—the word is writ
First in Time's book; and never resting Time
Moves constant to fulfil his royal doom.

BURTON WELLESLEY LOCKHART.

DRIED JAPANESE PERSIMMON.

Very few people, says the San Francisco *Chronicle*, are aware of the fact that the Japanese persimmon, when dried, is one of the most delicious fruits imaginable. Those who are acquainted with this fruit know that it must be fully ripe when picked, otherwise the flavour will not be what it should. But the perfectly ripe persimmon is difficult of handling without damage, and therefore considerable loss is apt to result. Experiments made, however, show that the Japanese persimmon may be dried as readily as a fig, which indeed, it resembles in appearance after being cured. The dried persimmon has a very meaty, pleasant taste, and will, undoubtedly, as soon as its excellence becomes known, take a prominent place among table delicacies. The persimmon ought also to make a very acceptable *glacé* fruit, and a good profit awaits the man who shall take advantage of these hints and prepare this product for market in pleasing shape.