

I guess what's going on outside the
 veil,
 Just as a prisoned crane feels pairing-
 time
 In the islands where his kind are, so
 must fall
 To capering by himself some shiny
 night,
 As if your back-yard were a plot of
 spice—
 Thus am I 'ware o' the spirit-world :
 while you,
 Blind as a beetle that way,—for
 amends,
 Why, you can double fist and floor
 me, sir !
 Ride that hot hardmouthed horrid
 horse of yours.
 Laugh while it lightens, play with the
 great dog.
 Speak your mind though it vex some
 friend to hear,
 Never brag, never bluster, never
 blush,—
 In short, you've pluck, when I'm
 coward—there !
 I know it, I can't help it,—folly or no,
 I'm paralyzed, my hand's no more a
 hand,
 Nor my head a head, in danger : you
 can smile
 And change the pipe in your cheek.
 Your gift's not mine.
 Would you swap for mine? No !
 but you'd add my gift
 To yours : I dare say ! I too sigh at
 times,
 Wish I were stouter, could tell truth
 nor flinch,
 Kept cool when threatened, did not
 mind so much
 Being dressed gaily, making strangers
 stare,
 Eating nice things ; when I'd amuse
 myself.
 I shut my eyes and fancy in my brain
 I'm—now the President, now Jenny
 Lind,
 Now Emerson, now the Benicia
 Boy—
 With all the civilized world a-wonder-
 ing

And worshipping. I know it's jolly
 and worse ;
 I feel such tricks sap, honeycomb the
 soul,
 But I can't cure myself : despond,
 despair.
 And then, hey, presto, there's a turn
 o' the wheel,
 Under comes uppermost, fate makes
 full amends ;
 Sludge knows and sees and hears a
 hundred things
 You all are blind to,—I've my taste
 of truth,
 Likewise my touch of falsehood,—
 vice no doubt,
 But you've your vices also : I'm
 content.
 What, sir? You won't shake hands?
 "Because I cheat!"
 "You've found me out in cheating!"
 That's enough
 To make an apostle swear ! Why,
 when I cheat,
*Mean to cheat, do cheat, and am
 caught in the act,*
*Are you, or, rather, am I sure o' the
 fact?*
 (There's verse again, but I'm inspired
 somehow.)
 Well then I'm not sure ! I may be,
 perhaps,
 Free as a babe from cheating : how
 it began,
 My gift,—no matter ; what 'tis got to be
 In the end now, that's the question ;
 answer that !
 Had I seen, perhaps, what hand was
 holding mine,
 Leading me whither, I had died of
 fright :
 So, I was made believe I led myself.
 If I should lay a six-inch plank from
 roof
 To roof, you would not cross the
 street, one step,
 Even at your mother's summons : but,
 being shrewd,
 If I paste paper on each side the
 plank
 And swear 'tis solid pavement, why,
 you'll cross