

Counted his gains and grudges on a chaplet  
And crossed himself asleep for fear of spies;  
Trusting the God of Israel would see  
'Twas Christian tyranny that made him base.  
Our host his son was born ten years too soon,  
Had heard his mother call him Ephraim,  
Knew holy things from common, thought it sin  
To feast on days when Israel's children mourned,  
So had to be converted with his sire,  
To doff the awe he learned as Ephraim,  
And suit his manners to a Christian name.  
But infant awe, that unborn moving thing,  
Dies with what nourished it, can never rise  
From the dead womb and walk and seek new pasture.  
Thus baptism seemed to him a merry game  
Not tried before, all sacraments a mode  
Of doing homage for one's property,  
And all religions a queer human whim  
Or else a vice, according to degrees:  
As, 'tis a whim to like your chestnuts hot,  
Burn your own mouth and draw your face awry,  
A vice to pelt frogs with them—animals  
Content to take life coolly. And Lorenzo  
Would have all lives made easy, even lives  
Of spiders and inquisitors, yet still  
Wishing so well to flies and Moors and Jews  
He rather wished the others easy death;  
For loving all men clearly was deferred  
Till all men loved each other. Such mine Host,  
With chiselled smile caressing Seneca,  
The solemn mastiff leaning on his knee.  
His right-hand guest is solemn as the dog,  
Square-faced and massive: BLASCO is his name,  
A prosperous silversmith from Aragon;  
In speech not silvery, rather tuned as notes  
From a deep vessel made of plenteous iron,  
Or some great bell of slow but certain swing  
That, if you only wait, will tell the hour  
As well as flippant clocks that strike in haste