

14.—EXTREME UNCTION.

Upon the hour when I was born,
 God said, "Another man shall be,"
 And the great Maker did not scorn
 Out of himself to fashion me;
 He sunned me with his ripening looks,
 And Heaven's rich instincts in me grew,
 As effortless as woodland nocks
 Send violets up and paint them blue.

Yes, I who now, with angry tears,
 Am exiled back to brutish clod,
 Have borne unquenched for fourscore years
 A spark of the eternal God:
 And to what end? How yield I back
 The trust for such high uses given?
 Heaven's light hath but revealed a track
 Whereby to crawl away from Heaven.

Men think it is an awful sight
 To see a soul just set adrift
 On that drear voyage from whose night
 The ominous shadows never lift;
 But 'tis more awful to behold
 A helpless infant newly born,
 Whose little hand, unconscious hold
 The keys of darkness and of morn.

Mine held them once; I flung away
 Those keys that might have open set
 The golden sluices of the day,
 But clutch the keys of darkness yet;—
 I hear the reapers singing go
 Into God's harvest; I, that might
 With them have chosen, here below
 Grope shuddering at the gates of night.

O glorious Youth, that once wast mine!
 O high Ideal! all in vain
 Ye enter at this ruined shrine
 Whence worship ne'er shall rise again;