

How swift the happy days in Atri sped,
 What wrongs were righted, need not here be said. 20
 Suffice it that, as all things must decay,
 The hempen rope at length was worn away,
 Unravelled at the end, and, strand by strand,
 Loosened and wasted in the ringer's hand.
 Till one, who noted this in passing by, 25
 Mended the rope with braids of briony,
 So that the leaves and tendrils of the vine
 Hung like a votive garland¹ at a shrine.

By chance it happened that in Atri dwelt
 A knight, with spur on heel and sword in belt, 30
 Who loved to hunt the wild-boar in the woods,
 Who loved his falcons with their crimson hoods,
 Who loved his hounds and horses, and all sports
 And prodigalities of camps and courts;—
 Loved, or had loved them; for at last, grown old, 35
 His only passion was the love of gold.
 He sold his horses, sold his hawks and hounds,
 Rented his vineyards and his garden-grounds,
 Kept but one steed, his favourite steed of all,
 To starve and shiver in a naked stall, 40
 And day by day sat brooding in his chair,
 Devising plans how best to hoard and spare.

At length he said: "What is the use or need
 To keep at my own cost this lazy steed,
 Eating his head off in my stables here. 45
 When rents are low and provender is dear?
 Let him go feed upon the public ways;
 I want him only for the holidays."
 So the old steed was turned into the heat
 Of the long, lonely, silent, shadeless street; 50
 And wandered in suburban lanes forlorn,
 Barked at by dogs, and torn by brier and thorn.

¹ **votive garland**—A wreath of flowers hung before a shrine in pursuance of a vow.