

Rouge et Noir.

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TROY.

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All the sweet day the fav'ring Zephyr sped
Our white-sailed pinnace o'er the wavy main,
And now, at eve, we watching from her head
Saw the dark outline of the Trojan plain,
Misty and dim as things at distance seem
Through the fast-waning light of summer eve,
When waking from their sultry, sad day dream,
The wan-faced stars grow bright and cease to grieve.
And nearer yet and nearer grew the shore,
Which eve was tinting sober-grey and pale ;
And louder swell'd the long, low, broken roar
Of surges climbing o'er loose-heaped shale.
No voices chid the silence of the air,
That seem'd to sink and die among the corals,
Scarcely helping the loosed-hanging sail to bear
Us all-expectant to those hoped-for swards,
Save when a sailor cheerily call'd his mate,
Or shrill-tongued halcyon pass'd in landward flight,
On wide-spread pinion home returning late,
And shuddering from him brine drops silv'ry bright.
Full soon we grated on the shingly beach ;
Soon disembarked upon that storied shore,
Whose very rocks are eloquent to teach
A world of legend and forgotten lore.
Then parted ; and I musing went along,
Half-fearing it might prove delusion strange,
Or sweet enchantment of a magic song,
Which loud-spoke word might dissipate or change.
Still on ; while overhead the moon alway
Kept on its course across the sea of sky,
Fathomless-blue, save for some cloudy spray,
And those bright isles, the stars that never die ;
Until I reach'd a narrow long and low,
Which the tall gras clothed o'er and wild vines free,
That still, whenever any breeze did blow,
Waved shadowy like the falling of the sea ;
And gazing thence upon the moon-lit plain,
The voiceful silence of the saddening scene
Call'd up a city's phantom to my brain.
And caused me muse of what Troy once had been.
How doth the mem'ry of heroic deeds,
Wrought by the heroes of the elder time,
Clothe o'er thy-site more than the mantling weeds,
And round thy brows a deathless laurel twine.
Just as those fires which lit the midnight sky,
Changing so many watchful tears to smiles,
Wafted to Hellas the exultant cry,
'Troja is fallen,' o'er the Grecian Isles ;
So doth thy story, 'mid the rocks of time,
Echo along th' unending cycles through,
Pealing thy name in most melodious chime,
No'er growing fainter, nor its notes more few.

All to the magic of that world-sung song,
That god-breath'd legend dost thou owe thy fame ;
The golden west the blind man wove so long,
Hath linked to immortality thy name.
His tale to many another's lyre hath given
Its stirring echoes : and in every age
What story more than of thy woes hath riven
Their hearts who dream upon thy poet's page,
And though for long thou in the dust hast lain,
Still, still the visions of the mighty past,
The mem'ry of thy struggle, and thy pain,
Thy god-built turrets,—these forever last.
We call to mind thine ancient royal state,
Thy gold-star'd ceilings, heaven-reaching towers,
Thine ivory sceptre, and thy Scæan gate,
Thine altars garlanded with sunny flowers :
And mournful hero Hector o'er the field
Bearing his targe that smites his steps behind ;
Most mighty Hector knowing not to yield,
The best and noblest of a noble kind :
And sad Achilles sitting by the shore,
The shore whereon the violet waves do sigh,
Praying the Gods who live forever more,
Pleading for glory, or to quickly die :
And silver-footed Thetis from the wave
Rising when Phæbus had the snow-peaks kist,
Such grace for him from mighty Jove to crave,
Obscurely fair—most like a morning mist :
And gold-hair'd Paris, beautiful and base ;
And her, the Spartan's glorious erring bride
All for the witch'ry of whose goddess face,
So many Greeks, so many Trojans died :
And many a hero else whom death befell,
And in the zenith of his fame subdued,
And now in meads of gleaming asphodel
The phantom pleasures of his life delude.
Yet still 'twixt thee and Tenedos there pours
Just as of old the trough of angry sea,
And on the oozy sand still breaks and roars,
As when the black keels lined the yellow lea.
And still the pines of Ida wave aloft
Their tuneful, scented, dove embow'ring shade ;
And 'neath them twilight broods as grey and soft,
As when of yore the shepherd Paris stray'd
With glad Cænone ; white their bleating flocks
Grazed the wild thyme bright with ambrosial dew,
And lovers piping 'neath th' o'ershadowing rocks
Laded with love the breezes as they flew.
Still Simois wanders 'mid his voiceful reeds,
And Nanthus rolls his slender length along,
Telling the story of thy mighty deeds,
In lagging accents of a tearful song.
All these, O Troy,—thy streams and woody hill,
Thy barren beach whereon the long ships lay,
Thy famous isle—th' invaders haunt—are still ;
But Priam's Ilion hath pass'd away.
Hath pass'd, I said ; thy mem'ry no'er can fade !
The muse hath won thee from the dead again ;
A golden glory crowns for aye thy shade ;
Thou livest, O Troy, forever unto men !