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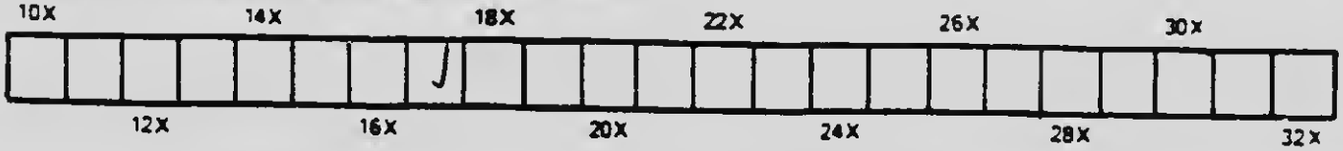

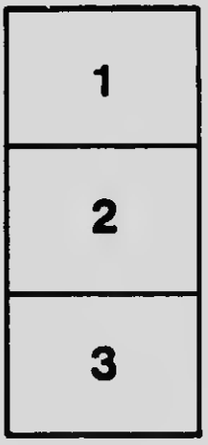

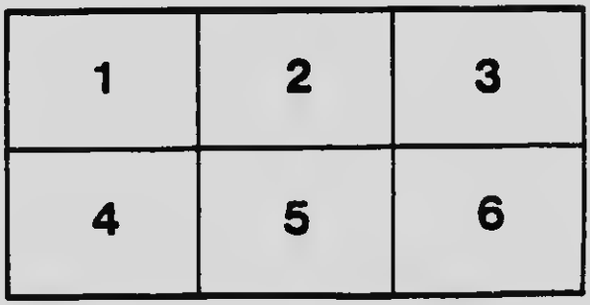

Number 30

MORANG'S LITERATURE SERIES

Selections from

Browning and Tennyson

EDITED WITH NOTES BY

JOHN C. SAUL, M.A.

TORONTO
MORANG EDUCATIONAL COMPANY LIMITED
1907

Price 15 cents

1.50

Fano, Italy. FROM PAINTING BY GUERCINO. 1590-1666.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

MORANG'S MODERN TEXT-BOOKS

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE selections in this edition are those required for the Junior Matriculation and Junior Teachers' in Ontario, 1908. No other selections are included.

The editor desires to acknowledge, in connection with the Browning portion of the book, his indebtedness to *Selections from Browning*, by Frederic Ryland, M.A.; *The Browning Cyclopædia*, by Edward Berdoe, and *Introduction to the Poetry of Robert Browning*, by Professor W. J. Alexander of Toronto University.

Toronto, August 1, 1907.

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ROBERT BROWNING

BROWNING

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough [1]
In England — now!
And after April, when May follows,
And the white-throat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark! where my blossomed pear tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover.
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge —
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower [2]
— Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower.

---

[1] **Orchard bough**—"In many parts of Europe the trees have all been ruthlessly cut down lest they should harbour birds." —*Berdoe.*

[2] **Children's dower**—The gift of England to the children.

CAVALIER TUNES

I. Marching Along

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed [1] Parliament swing:
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

God for King Charles! Pym [2] and such carles [3]
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles!
Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup
Till you're —

Chorus. — Marching along, fifty score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies knell.
Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well!
England, good cheer! Rupert is near!
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,

---

[1] **Crop headed**—The adherents of the Parliament were called "crop-heads" or "Roundheads," on account of their fashion of wearing their hair short.

[2] **Pym, etc.**—All the men mentioned in this poem were leading spirits during the Civil War. "Young Harry," was Sir Harry Vane, the son of the elder Vane of the same name. Pym, Hampden and Hazelrig, were three of the five members whose attempted arrest widened the breach between the King and the Parliament. Prince Rupert of the Palatinate, better known as Rupert of the Rhine, was a nephew of King Charles and the most dashing of the cavalry leaders during the war.

[3] **Carles**—Fellows.

CHO.— Marching along, fifty score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!
Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham,[1] fresh for the fight,

CHO.— March we along, fifty score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

II. GIVE A ROUSE[2]

KING CHARLES, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since?
Who raised me the house that sank once?
Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found me in wine you drank once?

CHO.— King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles.

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
While Noll's[3] damned troopers shot him?

---

[1] **Nottingham**—It was here that at the beginning of the Civil War the king first raised his standard.

[2] **Give a Rouse**—Drink a health.

[3] **Noll**—A contemptuous name for Oliver Cromwell.

CHO.— King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

III. BOOT AND SADDLE

BOOT, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,

CHO.— Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay —

CHO.— Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts castle Brancepath the Roundhead's array:[1]
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,[2]

CHO.— Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I've better counsellors; what counsel they?

CHO.— Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

---

[1] **Flouts——array**—The castle bids defiance to the Roundheads who are besieging it.

[2] **Fay**—Faith.

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX"

[16—]

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern,[1] the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'T was moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Duffeld, 't was morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So, Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

---

[1] **Postern**—A small gate in the wall.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,— ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes [1] which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
We'll remember at Aix"— for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire [2] sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!"— and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

---

[1] **Spume-flakes**—Flakes of foam.

[2] **Dome-spire**—Spire of the cathedral.

Then I cast loose my buff-coat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is,— friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine.
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

UP AT A VILLA — DOWN IN THE CITY

(*As distinguished by an Italian person of quality.*)

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there! [1]

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast; [5]
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

---

[1] **By Bacchus**—"Per Bacco," is a favourite Italian expletive. Bacchus was the Roman god of wine.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag[1] of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
— I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned wool.

But the city, oh the city — the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

What of a villa? Tho' winter be over in March by rights,
'T is May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights:
You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked[2] behind by the faint gray olive trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.

---

[1] **Shag**—Rough hair.

[2] **Over-smoked**—"Gray with the olive trees."—*Ryland.*

'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foam-bows flash.
On the horses[1] with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch — fifty gazers do not abash,
Tho' all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons,— I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

---

[1] **On the horses**—Lines 28-30 are a description of the fountain.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence[1] rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet[2] breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture — the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves[3] were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's![4]
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante,[5] Boccaccio, Petrarca, St. Jerome and Cicero,

---

[1] **Diligence**—Stage-coach.

[2] **Pulcinello**—A clown or mountebank somewhat similar to our Punch.

[3] **Liberal thieves**—The "Liberals" at this time were engaged in a determined effort to establish an independent and united Italy. As it is a "person of quality" who is speaking, naturally he would look on the Liberals as thieves, who should be treated as such.

[4] **The Duke's**—There is no locality fixed for the poem, but the Dukes of Modena wore as a badge a crowned lion.

[5] **Dante, etc.**—Dante, (1265-1321), the greatest of the Italian writers, the author of the *Divina Comedia;* Boccaccio, (1313-1375), the most celebrated of the Italian novelists, the author of the *Decamerone* or *Hundred Tales;* Petrarca, (1304-1374), the greatest of the Italian lyric poets, the author of the *Sonnets* in honour of Laura; St. Jerome, (340-420), one of the early Fathers of the Church, the translator of the *Vulgate* edition of the Bible; Cicero, (B.C. 106-43), the famous Roman statesman and orator.

"And moreover" (the sonnet goes rhyming), "the skirts of St. Paul has reached,[1]
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached."
Noon strikes,— here sweeps the procession! our Lady[2] borne smiling and smart,
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords[3] stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it's the greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear — it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax[4] upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still — ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow candles;[5]

---

[1] **Has reached**—Has almost equalled St. Paul.

[2] **Our Lady**—The Virgin Mary.

[3] **Seven swords**—In commemoration of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin: (1) Her grief at the prophecy of Simeon;(2) Her affliction during the flight into Egypt; (3) Her distress at the loss of her Son, before finding Him in the temple; (4) Her sorrow when she met her Son, bearing His cross; (5) Her martyrdom at the sight of His agony; (6) The wound to her heart when His was pierced; (7)Her agony at His burial.

[4] **New tax**—There is a tax on salt in Italy, and in addition, all provisions entering the gates of a town or city are taxed.

[5] **Yellow candles**—Candles made of unbleached wax, used at funerals and penetential processions.

One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with handles,[1]
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better prevention of scandals:
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;
Oh, a day in the city square, there is no such pleasure in life.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

WHERE the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop —
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now,— the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to (else they run
Into one),
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires

[1] **With handles**—For ease in carrying.

O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone —
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now,— the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Thro' the chinks —
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

And I know — while thus the quiet-coloured eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away —

That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul [1]
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades' Colonnades,
All the causeys,[2] bridges, aqueducts,— and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force —
Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise, and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

---

[1] **Caught soul**—Gathered inspiration that urged them to do their utmost.

[2] **Causeys**—Causeways.

PROSPICE[1]

FEAR death? — to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt,[2] in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest![3]

---

[1] **Prospice**—The word means "Look forward." What is the significance of the title?

[2] **Brunt**—The attack.

[3] **With God be the rest**—Compare Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*, and also the farewell speech of Arthur in *The Epic*, especially lines 291-215.

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL

A Picture at Fano[1]

Dear and great angel, wouldst thou only leave
That child, when thou hast done with him, for me!
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
Shall find performed thy special ministry,
And time come for departure, thou, suspending
Thy flight, mayst see another child for tending,
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
— And suddenly my head is covered o'er
With those wings, white above the child who prays
Now on that tomb — and I shall feel thee guarding
Me, out of all the world; for me, discarding
Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

I would not look up thither past thy head
Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
For I should have thy gracious face instead,
Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me low
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garments spread?

If this was ever granted, I would rest
My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands,

---

[1] **Fano**—A city in Italy on the Adriatic at the mouth of the Metauro. Its population is about 7,000. It contains many beautiful churches adorned with paintings and statuary.

Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
And all lay quiet, happy and suppressed.[1]

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired!
I think how I should view the earth and skies
And sea, when once again my brow was bared
After thy healing, with such different eyes.
O world, as God has made it! All is beauty:
And knowing this, is love and love is duty.
What further may be sought for or declared?

Guercino[2] drew this angel I saw teach —
(Alfred,[3] dear friend!) — that little child to pray,
Holding the little hands up, each to each
Pressed gently,—with his own head turned away
Over the earth where so much lay before him
Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
And he[4] was left at Fano by the beach.

---

[1] **Suppressed**—"The whole stanza expresses a desire for calm after intellectual effort and strife."—*Ryland.*

[2] **Guercino**—Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (1590-1666), better known as Guercino, or "the squinter." He was a very rapid worker and has left behind him over 250 pictures. His most famous painting is the "Burial of Saint Petronilla," now in the Capitol at Rome.

[3] **Alfred**—Alfred Domett, the son of one of Nelson's captains, and one of Browning's earliest and closest friends. He graduated from Cambridge, and, after some years spent in travel and in literary work, was called to the bar. In 1842 he made his home in New Zealand, where he remained for many years. He entered heartily into the life of his adopted country, eventually becoming the head of the government. In 1880 he returned to England and again took up literary work. He died in 1887. Domett is the "Waring" of the poem, "*What's become of Waring?*"

[4] **He**—The angel.

We were at Fano,[1] and three times we went
To sit and see him in his chapel there,
And drink his beauty to our soul's content
— My angel[2] with me too: and since I care
For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power
And glory comes this picture for a dower,[3]
Fraught with a pathos so magnificent) —

And since he did not work thus earnestly
At all times, and has else endured some wrong —
I took one thought his picture struck from me,
And spread it out, translating it to song.
My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
How rolls the Wairoa[4] at your world's far end?
This is Ancona,[5] yonder is the sea.

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA[6]

THAT's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's[7] hands

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[1] **We were at Fano**—Browning and his wife were at Fano during the sumer of 1848. Mrs. Browning says in a letter to Miss Mitford: "The churches are very beautiful and a divine picture of Guercino's is worth going all that way to see."

[2] **My angel**—Mrs. Browning.

[3] **Dower**—Gift.

[4] **Wairoa**—A river in North Island, New Zealand.

[5] **Ancona**—After remaining three days at Fano, the Brownings went to Ancona, about thirty miles to the south, where they spent a delightful week.

[6] **Ferrara**—The Dukes of Ferrara were celebrated as patrons of art and literature. Of course, no particular duke is here referred to. Ferrara is a small town in Northern Italy, about 30 miles from Bologna.

[7] **Fra Pandolf**—An imaginary artist.

Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 't was all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,— good! but thanked
Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech — (which I have not) —to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark" — and if she let

Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
— E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands[1];
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We 'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence[2]
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we 'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune,[3] though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck[4] cast in bronze for me!

ANDREA DEL SARTO

(Called "The Faultless Painter")

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia! bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I 'll work then for your friend's friend[5], never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,

---

[1] **I gave commands**—"Certainly must not be understood to mean commands for her death as it is understood by the writer of the article in *The St. Paul's Magazine* for December, 1870, and January, 1871."—*Professor Corson.*

[2] **Pretence**—Claim.

[3] **Neptune**—The Roman god of the sea.

[4] **Claus of Innsbruck**—Another imaginary artist.

[5] **Friend's friend**—A friend of one of Lucrezia's lovers who had begged her to induce Andrea to undertake a commission for him.

And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him,— but to-morrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if — forgive now — should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine,
And look a half hour forth on Fiesole,[1]
Both as one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model.[2] So! keep looking so —
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
— How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet —
My face, my moon,[3] my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks — no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,[4]

---

[1] **Fiesole**—A small town about three miles west of Florence on the top of a hill overlooking the Arno.

[2] **It saves a model**—An appeal to a motive that Lucrezia would readily understand.

[3] **My moon**—"Once, like the moon, I made
The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humour ebb and flow."
Tennyson's *A Dream of Fair Women.*

[4] **Ready Made**—"As he talks, she smiles a weary, lovely, autumn smile, and born in that instant and of her smile he sees his picture, knows its atmosphere, realizes its tone of colour, feels its prevailing sentiment. How he will execute

There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything,—
All in a twilight, you and I alike
— You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone, you know),— but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now, looks the life he makes us lead!
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example — turn your head —
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at lest when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door
— It is the thing, Love! so such things should be —
Behold Madonna![1]— I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep —
Do easily, too — when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,

---

it is another question, and depends on other things; but no better sketch could be given of the sudden spiritual fashion in which great pictures are generated."—*Stopford Brooke.*

[1] **Behold Madonna**—He draws her attention to a painting of the Virgin Mary.

And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 't is easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of, all their lives,
— Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive — you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter) — so much less!
Well, less is more,[1] Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Tho' they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word —
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's[2] outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,

---

[1] **Less is more**—The effort is sometimes more than the achievement.

[2] **Morello**—A mountain seven miles from Florence, about three thousand feet in height.

Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray,[1]
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain,
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate[2] who died five years ago.
('T is copied, George Vasari[3] sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and thro' his art — for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put — and there again —
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak; its soul is right,
He means right — that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch —
Out of[4] me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think —
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you — oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare —

---

[1] **Silver Gray**—Not golden as it should be,

[2] **The Urbinate**—Raphael (1483-1520), one of the greatest of the Italian painters, was born at Urbino. He was but thirty-seven years of age when he died.

[3] **George Vasari**—Vasari (1512-1574), the author of the book from which Browning drew his material for the poem, had formerly been a pupil of Andrea.

[4] **Out of**—Beyond.

Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo![1]
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat — somewhat, too, the power —
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'T is safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.[2]
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainbleau![3]
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl

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[1] **Agnolo**—Michael Angelo (1475-1567), the great Italian painter, sculptor, architect and poet. Strictly speaking his name was Michelagniolo Buonarroti.

[2] **Paris lords**—He was afraid of meeting the noblemen from Paris, who, of course, knew of his having stolen the money entrusted to him by Francis.

[3] **Fontainbleau**—A French town about thirty-seven miles from Paris, celebrated for its beautiful palace.

Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile.
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward![1]
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know —
'T is done and past; 't was right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray:
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was — to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,[2]
But still the other's Virgin was his wife —"
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,

---

[1] **Last Reward**—All the time he was thinking of the delight of Lucrezia in the results of his work, and of the time when he would return to her.

[2] **When you pray**—For purposes of worship the sacred pictures of Raphael are the better.

Too lifted up in heart because of it)
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's! — And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here — quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?)
If really there was such a chance, so lost,—
Is, whether you're — not grateful — but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls[1] speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, Love — come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house[2]
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?

---

[1] **Cue-owls**—The Scops owl, called in Italy "chiu," from its cry.

[2] **Little House**—The house was built with the money stolen from the King of France.

That Cousin[1] here again? he waits outside?
Must see you — you, and not with me? Those loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more — the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them — that is, Michel Agnolo —
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand — there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak.[2] Beside,
What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi[3] for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?
I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis! — it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.[4]

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[1] **Cousin**—Lover.

[2] **Cousin's freak**—To pay her lover's gambling debts.

[3] **Scudi**—An Italian coin worth about one dollar.

[4] **Died of want**—The accusation that he neglected his father and mother, while squandering money upon his wife, is several times brought against Andrea by Vasari.

Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have laboured somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures — let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You love me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance —
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,[1]
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard,[2] Rafael, Agnolo, and me
To cover — the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So — still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,— as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.[3]

---

[1] **New Jerusalem**—*Revelation* xxi-15.

[2] **Leonard**—Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), another famous Italian painter. His most celebrated work is "The Last Supper."

[3] **Go, my love**—"The only criticism I should make of this admirable poem is that, when we come to the end, we dislike the woman and despise the man more than we pity either of them: and in tragic art work of a fine quality, pity for human nature, with a far-off tenderness in it should remain as the most lasting impression. All the greater artists, even when they went to the bottom of sorrow and wickedness, have done this wise and beautiful thing, and Browning rarely omits it."—*Stopford Brooke.*

AN EPISTLE

Containing the Strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician

Karshish, the picker-up of learning's crumbs,
The not-incurious in God's handiwork
(This man's flesh he hath admirably made,
Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste,
To coop up and keep down on earth a space
That puff of vapour from his mouth, man's soul)
— To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,
Breeder in me of what poor skill I boast,
Like me inqusitive how pricks and cracks
Befall the flesh through too much stress and strain,
Whereby the wily vapour fain would slip
Back and rejoin its source before the term,— [1]
And aptest in contrivance (under God)
To baffle it by deftly stopping such —
The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at home
Sends greeting (health and knowledge, fame with peace)
Three samples of true snake-stone [2] — rarer still,
One of the other sort, the melon-shaped,
(But fitter, pounded fine, for charms than drugs)
And writeth now the twenty-second time.

My journeyings [3] were brought to Jericho:
Thus I resume. Who studious in our art
Shall count a little labour unrepaid?
I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and bone

---

[1] **The term**—The appointed time.

[2] **Snake-stone**—A stone used as a remedy for snake bite. It was said to possess the peculiar quality of absorbing the poison.

[3] **My journeyings**—He had written his last letter from Jericho.

On many a flinty furlong of this land.
Also, the country-side is all on fire
With rumours of a marching hitherward:
Some say Vespasian[1] cometh, some, his son.
A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear;
Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow balls:
I cried and threw my staff and he was gone.
Twice have the robbers stripped and beaten me,
And once a town declared me for a spy;
But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,
Since this poor covert where I pass the night,
This Bethany,[2] lies scarce the distance thence
A man with plague-sores at the third degree
Runs till he drops down dead. Thou laughest here!
'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and safe,
To void the stuffing[3] of my travel-scrip[4]
And share with thee whatever Jewry yields.
A viscid choler[5] is observable
In tertians,[6] I was nearly bold to say;
And falling-sickness hath a happier cure
Than our school wots of: there's a spider[7] here
Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,

---

[1] **Vespasian**—Vespasian invaded Judea in 67 A.D., bringing with him his son Titus. When two years later he was proclaimed emperor, he left Titus in charge of the war.

[2] **Bethany**—The village is about two miles from Jerusalem.

[3] **Void the stuffing**—Tell you the story of all I have done and seen.

[4] **Travel scrip**—Traveller's wallet.

[5] **Viscid choler**—Sticky bile.

[6] **Tertians**—A malarial fever having its severe attacks every other day.

[7] **Spider**—Dr. H. McCook in *Poet Lore* says that the spider referred to belongs to the Wandering group: they stalk their prey in the open field or in various lurking places, and are quite different in their habits from the web-spinners. He thinks the spider sprinkled with mottles is the Zebra spider. Spiders were quite commonly used for medicinal purposes among the ancients.

Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-gray back;
Take five and drop them . . . but who knows his mind,
The Syrian run-a-gate I trust this to?
His service payeth[1] me a sublimate[2]
Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.
Best wait: I reach Jerusalem at morn,
There set in order my experiences,
Gather what most deserves, and give thee all —
Or I might add, Judæa's gum-tragacanth[3]
Scales off in purer flakes, shines clearer-grained,
Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the porphyry,[4]
In fine exceeds our produce. Scalp-disease
Confounds me, crossing so[5] with leprosy —
Thou hadst admired[6] one sort I gained at Zoar[7] —
But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end.

Yet stay! my Syrian blinketh gratefully,
Protesteth his devotion is my price —
Suppose I write what harms not, tho' he steal?
I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush,
What set me off a-writing first of all.
An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang!
For, be it this town's barrenness — or else
The man had something in the look of him —
His case has struck me far more than 't is worth.
So, pardon if — (lest presently I lose,
In the great press of novelty at hand,

---

[1] **Payeth me**—Pays me for.

[2] **Sublimate**—A fine powder made from the condensation of a solid substance vapourized.

[3] **Gum-tragacanth**—More familiarly known as gum-dragon, a gum used for medicinal purposes.

[4] **Porphyry**—The mortar made of porphyry.

[5] **Crossing so**—Resembling so much.

[6] **Hadst admired**—Would have wondered at.

[7] **Zoar**—One of the ancient cities near the Dead Sea. Its site cannot now be identified.

The care and pains this somehow stole from me)
I bid thee take the thing while fresh in mind,
Almost in sight — for, wilt thou have the truth?
The very man is gone from me but now,
Whose ailment is the subject of discourse.
Thus then, and let thy better wit help all!

'T is but a case of mania — subinduced
By epilepsy, at the turning-point
Of trance prolonged unduly some three days:
When, by the exhibition[1] of some drug
Or spell, exorcisation, stroke of art
Unknown to me and which 't were well to know,
The evil thing, out-breaking all at once,
Left the man whole and sound of body indeed,—
But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates too wide,
Making a clear house of it too suddenly,
The first conceit[2] that entered might inscribe
Whatever it was minded on the wall
So plainly at that vantage, as it were,
(First come, first served) that nothing subsequent
Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls
The just returned and new-established soul
Hath gotten now so thoroughly by heart
That henceforth she will read or these or none.
And first — the man's own firm conviction rests
That he was dead (in fact they buried him)
— That he was dead and then restored to life
By a Nazarene physician of his tribe:
—'Sayeth, the same bade "Rise," and he did rise.
"Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt cry.
Not so this figment! — not, that such a fume,[3]
Instead of giving way to time and health,

---

[1] **Exhibition**—Administering.

[2] **Conceit**—Thought or notion.

[3] **Fume**—A fancy without any reality, a mere vapour.

Should eat itself into the life of life,
As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones, and all!
For see, how he takes up[1] the after-life.
The man — it is one Lazarus, a Jew,
Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,
The body's habit wholly laudable,
As much, indeed, beyond the common health
As he were made and put aside to show.
Think, could we penetrate by any drug
And bathe the wearied soul and worried flesh,
And bring it clear and fair, by three day's sleep!
Whence has the man the balm that brightens all?
This grown man eyes the world now like a child.
Some elders of his tribe, I should premise,
Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,
To bear my inquisition. While they spoke,
Now sharply, now with sorrow,— told the case,—
He listened not except I spoke to him,
But folded his two hands and let them talk,
Watching the flies that buzzed: and yet no fool.
And that's a sample how his years must go.
Look, if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,
Should find a treasure,— can he use the same
With straitened habits and with tastes starved small,
And take at once to his impoverished brain
The sudden element that changes things,
That sets the undreamed-of rapture at his hand,
And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned dust?
Is he not such an one as moves to mirth —
Warily parsimonious, when no need,
Wasteful as drunkeness at undue times?
All prudent counsel as to what befits
The golden mean, is lost on such an one:
The man's fantastic will is the man's law.
So here — we call the treasure knowledge, say,

[1] **Takes up**—Acts during the remainder of his life.

Increased beyond the fleshly faculty —
Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven:
The man is witless of the size, the sum,
The value in proportion of all things,
Or whether it be little or be much.
Discourse to him of prodigious armaments
Assembled to besiege his city now,
And of the passing of a mule with gourds —
'T is one! Then take it on the other side,
Speak of some trifling fact,— he will gaze rapt
With stupor at its very littleness,
(Far as I see) as if in that indeed
He caught prodigious import, whole results;
And so will turn to us the bystanders
In ever the same stupor (note this point)
That we too see not with his opened eyes.
Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play.
Preposterously, at cross purposes.
Should his child sicken unto death,— why look
For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness,
Or pretermission of the daily craft!
While a word, gesture, glance from that same child
At play or in the school or laid asleep,
Will startle him to an agony of fear,
Exasperation, just as like. Demand
The reason why — "'t is but a word," object [1] —
"A gesture"— he regards thee as our lord [2]
Who lived there in the pyramid alone,
Looked at us (dost thou mind?) when, being young,
We both would unadvisedly recite
Some charm's beginning, from that book of his,
Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst

---

[1] **Object**—"If you object that it is only a word."—*Ryland.*

[2] **Our lord**—A sage under whom both Karshish and Abib studied.

All into stars, as suns grown old are wont.
Thou and the child[1] have each a veil alike
Thrown o'er your heads, from under which ye both
Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a match
Over a mine of Greek fire,[2] did ye know!
He holds on firmly to some thread of life
(It is the life to lead[3] perforcedly)
Which runs across some vast distracting orb
Of glory on either side that meagre thread,
Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet —
The spiritual life around the earthly life:
The law of that is known to him as this,[4]
His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here.
So is the man perplext with impulses
Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight on,
Proclaiming what is right and wrong[5] across,
And not along, this black thread thro' the blaze —
"It should be" balked by "here it cannot be."
And oft the man's soul springs into his face
As if he saw again and heard again
His sage[6] that bade him "Rise" and he did rise.
Something, a word, a tick o' the blood within
Admonishes: then back he sinks at once
To ashes, who was very fire before,

---

[1] **Thou and the child**—As far as Lazarus is concerned.

[2] **Greek fire**—A very inflammable substance which would burn in water, first used by the Greeks during the seventh century at the siege of Constantinople.

[3] **Lead**—He must lead.

[4] **As this**—As he knows this.

[5] **Right and wrong**—"Lazarus in his premature spiritual development has acquired some of the instincts of the eternal life, which do not fit in with the needs of this transitory existence. The great facts to which they refer are represented as running across the path of this mortal life, which traverses the wide glories of the everlasting light like a black thread."—*Ryland.*

[6] **His sage**—Jesus Christ.

In sedulous recurrence to his trade
Whereby he earneth him the daily bread;
And studiously the humbler for that pride,
Professedly the faultier that he knows
God's secret, while he holds the thread of life.
Indeed the especial marking of the man
Is prone submission to the heavenly will —
Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.
'Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last
For that same death which must restore his being
To equilibrium, body loosening soul
Divorced even now by premature full growth:
He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live
So long as God please, and just how God please.
He even seeketh not to please God more
(Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.
Hence, I perceive not he affects to preach
The doctrine of his sect whate'er it be,
Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do:
How can he give his neighbour the real ground,
His own conviction? Ardent as he is —
Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old
"Be it as God please" reassureth him.
I probed the sore as thy disciple should:
"How, beast," said I, "this stolid carelessness
Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march
To stamp out like a little spark thy town,
Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at once?"
He merely looked with his large eyes on me.
The man is apathetic, you deduce?
Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,
Able and weak, affects the very brutes
And birds — how say I? flowers of the field —
As a wise workman recognizes tools
In a master's workshop, loving what they make.
Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:
Only impatient, let him do his best,

At ignorance and carelessness and sin —
An indignation which is promptly curbed:
As when in certain travel I have feigned
To be an ignoramus in our art
According to some preconceived design,
And happed to hear the land's practitioners
Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignorance,
Prattle fantastically on disease,
Its cause and cure — and I must hold my peace!
Thou wilt object — Why have I not ere this
Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene
Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the source,
Conferring with the frankness that befits?
Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech[1]
Perished in a tumult many years ago,
Accused — our learning's fate — of wizardry,
Rebellion, to the setting up a rule
And creed prodigious as described to me.
His death, which happened when the earthquake fell
(Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss
To occult learning in our lord the sage[2]
Who lived there in the pyramid alone)
Was wrought by the mad people — that's their wont!
On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,
To his tried virtue, for miraculous help —
How could he stop the earthquake? That's their way!
The other imputations must be lies:
But take one, tho' I loathe to give it thee,
In mere respect for any good man's fame.
(And after all, our patient Lazarus
Is stark mad; should we count on what he says?
Perhaps not: tho' in writing to a leech •

---

[1] **Leech**—Physician.

[2] **Our lord the sage**—The earthquake which preceded the death of Christ was, in the mind of Karshish, a sign which foretold the death of the sage of the Pyramid.

'T is well to keep back nothing of a case.)
This man so cured regards the curer, then,
As — God forgive me! who but God Himself,
Creator and sustainer of the world,
That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile!
—'Sayeth that such an one was born and lived,
Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own house,
Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,
And yet was . . . what I said nor choose repeat,
And must have so avouched himself, in fact,
In hearing of this very Lazarus
Who saith — but why all this of what he saith?
Why write of trivial matters, things of price
Calling at every moment for remark?
I noticed on the margin of a pool
Blue-flowering borage,[1] the Aleppo sort,
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange!

Thy pardon for this long and tedious case,
Which, now that I review it, needs must seem
Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth!
Nor I myself discern in what is writ
Good cause for the peculiar interest
And awe indeed this man has touched me with.
Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness
Had wrought upon me first. I met him thus:
I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken hills
Like an old lion's cheek teeth. Out there came
A moon made like a face with certain spots
Multiform, manifold, and menacing:
Then a wind rose behind me. So we met
In this old sleepy town at unaware,
The man and I. I send thee what is writ.

[1] **Borage**—One of the four "cordial flowers" known to the ancients, the effect of which was to cheer and exhilarate. The stem contains nitre and readily communicates its flavour to water. Aleppo is in Syria.

Regard it as a chance, a matter risked
To this ambiguous[1] Syrian: he may lose,
Or steal, or give it thee with equal good.
Jerusalem's repose shall make amends
For time this letter wastes, thy time and mine;
Till when, once more thy pardon and farewell!

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too —
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me[2] who have died for thee!"
The madman saith He said so; it is strange.

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[1] **Ambiguous**—"Of doubtful character."

[2] **Must love me**—Although man cannot understand God, he can love him.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

TENNYSON

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold[1] and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;[2]
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten,[3] aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk[4] and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

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[1] **Wold**—An open tract of rolling country.

[2] **Camelot**—The capital of Arthur's dominions, built on the top of a high hill. See *Gareth and Lynette*, lines 184-191.

[3] **Willows whiten**—"How exquisite is the word 'whiten,' to describe the turning of the long willow leaves in the wind, and how well it suggests the cool colouring of the whole picture, all in low tones, except the little spot of flowers below the square gray castle."—*Henry Van Dyke.*

[4] **Dusk**—Darken the water. A rare use as a verb.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd[1]
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'T is the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror[2] clear
That hangs before her all the year,

[1] **Unhail'd**—From the castle.

[2] **A mirror**—Used in tapestry weaving for the purpose of seeing the effect of the stitches in the web; but the mirror here has the additional purpose of reflecting the outside world.

Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,[1]
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,[2]
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot:
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still[3] delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows,"[4] said
The Lady of Shalott.

---

[1] **Churls**—Labourers.

[2] **Ambling pad**—An easy riding horse—Pad meant originally *path*, the word being cut down from path-horse, (road-horse).

[3] **Still**—Continually.

[4] **Sick of shadows**—"The sight of death cannot move her from her happy trance, but the sight of love stirs a strange yearning within her, and inspires discontent with her lot." —*Pelham Edgar.*

PART III

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves [1]
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight [2] for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy [3] bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.[4]
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric [5] slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.

---

[1] **Greaves**—Armour for the legs between the knee and the ankle.

[2] **Red-cross**—The emblem of the Knights Templar, signifying the devotion of the order to the religion of Christ. The knight kneeling to the lady typifies homage to womanhood, another of the great principles of chivalry.

[3] **Gemmy**—Inlaid with jewels.

[4] **Galaxy**—The Milky Way.

[5] **Blazon'd baldric**—A richly ornamented belt, worn diagonally across the body over the shoulder.

As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor,[1] trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces[2] thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy[3] east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,

[1] **Bearded meteor**—A comet with a tail of light. Comet means "having long hair."

[2] **Three paces**—There is a suggestion of mystery here. Paces were used in weaving spells. It was by means of a "charm of woven paces and of waving hands" that Vivien imprisoned Merlin in a hollow oak. *Three* is one of the mystic numbers.

[3] **Stormy**—Contrast the description of nature in Part IV with that in Part III

The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer[1] in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right —
The leaves upon her falling light —
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.

---

[1] **Bold seer**—One who, having the power to penetrate the future, is daring enough to look upon his own, and sees all the evils that will befall him.

For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in His mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

THE VOYAGE

We left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbour-mouth;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fleeted to the south:
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main[1] or winding shore!
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

[1] **Main**—The ocean.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
  Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail:
The Lady's-head[1] upon the prow
  Caught the shrill[2] salt, and sheer'd[3] the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
  And swept behind; so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
  We seem'd to sail into the Sun!

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
  And burn the threshold of the night,[4]
Fall from his Ocean-lane[5] of fire,
  And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe[6]
  Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe[7]
  Again we dash'd into the dawn!

New stars all night above the brim
  Of waters lighten'd into view;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim[8]
  Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
  The houseless ocean's heaving field,

---

[1] **Lady's-head**—The figure-head of the ship, carved to represent the Virgin Mary.

[2] **Shrill**—The sound made by the salt water dashing against the vessel.

[3] **Sheer'd**—Cut through.

[4] **Threshold of the night**—The gates of the west.

[5] **Ocean lane**—The light of the setting sun thrown across the water.

[6] **Purple-skirted robe**—As if the twilight were a purple mantle drawn over the sky, as the light of the sun faded away.

[7] **Slumber of the globe**—The darkness of the night.

[8] **Rim**—Horizon.

Or flying shone, the silver boss
  Of her own halo's dusky shield;[1]

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
  High towns on hills were dimly seen,
We past long lines of Northern capes
  And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
  Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
  The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.[2]

By peaks that flamed,[3] or, all in shade,
  Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
  Fantastic plume or sable pine;[4]
By sands and steaming flats, and floods
  Of mighty mouth,[5] we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
  Glow'd for a moment as we past.

O hundred shores of happy climes,
  How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark!
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
  With wakes of fire[6] we tore the dark;

---

[1] **Dusky shield**—The moon, seen through a mist, was surrounded by a bright ring or halo, resembling a shield, of which she herself was the boss or projection in the centre.

[2] **Nutmeg—clove**—The tropical islands of the east.

[3] **Peaks that flamed**—Volcanoes.

[4] **Plume—pine**—The cloud of dark smoke and ashes flung up by the volcanoes resembled a plume or a pine tree.

[5] **Mighty mouth**—Estuaries of large rivers.

[6] **Wakes of fire**—At times the whole sea glowed with a phosphorescent light; at other times the light was seen only in the waves through which the ship had passed, or had made in her course.

At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
But we nor paused[1] for fruit nor flowers.

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line;[2]
But each man murmur'd, "O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine."

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
Like Fancy[3] made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,
And now, the bloodless point[4] reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

And only one[5] among us — him
We pleased not — he was seldom pleased:
He saw not far: his eyes were dim:
But ours he swore were all diseased.

---

[1] **Paused**—Note the skilful manner in which the change is made from the description of the voyage to the pursuit of the ideal.

[2] **Far sea-line**—The horizon; they seemed never to be able to approach nearer.

[3] **Fancy**—"The powers of imagination."

[4] **Bloodless point**—Freedom without bloodshed.

[5] **Only one**—The cynic, one who has no belief in high ideals.

"A ship of fools," he shriek'd in spite,
"A ship of fools," he sneer'd and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;
We lov'd the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn.[1]
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,[2]
And to and thro' the counter gale?

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led:
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead;
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow[3] that which flies before:
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail for evermore.

---

[1] **Our scorn**—The spirit within them, that hurried them always onward, was more powerful than any of the laws of nature.

[2] **Heart of peace**—The centre of a rotary storm is always calm.

[3] **We follow**—The idealists are growing old and infirm, but nothing can daunt their enthusiasm or change their purpose.

ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapour goes:
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord:
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;[1]
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house[2] I am,
To that I hope to be.

Break up[3] the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.
He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights[4] below,

---

[1] **Argent round**—The silver full moon.

[2] **Earthly house**—II *Corinthians* v-1.

[3] **Break up**—Break open. II *Kings* xxv-4 and *Matthew* xxiv-43.

[4] **Strows her lights**—The glory of heaven shines through.

And deepens on and up! the gates
  Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom[1] waits,
  To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths[2] of Eternity,
  One sabbath deep and wide —
A light upon the shining sea[3] —
  The Bridegroom with his bride!

"BREAK, BREAK, BKEAK."

Break, break, break,
  On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
  The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
  That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
  That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
  To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
  And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
  At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
  Will never come back to me.

---

[1] **Heavenly Bridegroom**—*Isaiah* LXII-5 and *Matthew* XXV, 1-13.

[2] **Sabbaths**—The word means *rest*.

[3] **Shining sea**—*Revelation* XV-2.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

THE POET

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.[1]

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,[2]

Before him lay: with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And wing'd with flame,

---

[1] **Love of love**—The poet hates hate, scorns scorn and loves love. In a message of thanks published in the London *Times*, after the death of the poet, his wife and son said: "God bless all for the love and reverence shown to the memory of him who above all things loved love."

[2] **Open scroll**—As easily read as an open book.

Like Indian reeds[1] blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus[2] they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,[3]
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely[4] furnish'd all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul[5] in many dreams
Of high desire.

---

[1] **Indian reeds**—Arrows shot from the blow pipes used by the South American Indians.

[2] **Calpe—Caucasus**—"From one end of the world to the other." Calpe, now Gibraltar, was at the extreme western edge of Europe, while Mount Caucasus was similarly situated in the east.

[3] **Field flower**—The dandelion.

[4] **Bravely**—Admirably.

[5] **Upon the soul**—"Love all things that lovely be,
And God will show His best to thee."
—*Goethe.*

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
  Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,[1]
  Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
  Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms[2] before his burning eyes
  Melted like snow.

There was no blood[3] upon her maiden robes
  Sunn'd by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
  Of her keen eyes.

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
  WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power — a sacred name.
  And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
  And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
  Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
  Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
  She shook the world.

---

[1] **Upcurl'd**—"The breaking up of the darkness like mist or cloud."—*Rolfe.*

[2] **Rites and forms**—The mere outward semblance without the reality.

[3] **Blood**—Freedom was accomplished without the shedding of blood. Compare *The Voyage*, lines 71-72.

THE EPIC

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—
The game of forfeits done — the girls all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush[1] and past away —
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,
Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held a talk,
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,
Or[2] gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,[3]
Now hawking at geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world, "at home was little left,
And none abroad: there was no anchor, none,
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him."
"And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-bowl."
"Why yes," I said, "we knew your gift that way
At college: but another which you had,
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
What came of that?" "You know," said Frank,
"he burnt
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books"—

---

[1] **Sacred bush**—The mistletoe, which formerly was held in the highest veneration by the Druids, the priests of the ancient Britons.

[2] **Or**—Either.

[3] **Church-commissioners**—A fruitful subject of controversy at this time.

And then to me demanding why? "Oh, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else
Something so said 't was nothing — that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:
God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.
It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay, nay," said Hall,
"Why take the style of those heroic times?
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,[1]
Nor we those times; and why should any man
Remodel models? these twelve books of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes,[2] nothing-worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt." "But I,"
Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh from this hearth
And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;
For I remember'd Everard's college fame
When we were Freshmen: then at my request
He brought it; and the poet little urged,
But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes.
Deep-chested music,[3] and to this result.

Morte D'Arthur

So[4] all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;

---

[1] **Mastodon**—One of the largest of the pre-historic animals.

[2] **Homeric echoes**—Resembling but very faintly the work of Homer.

[3] **Deep-chested music**—This is said to be a good description of the poet's manner of reading.

[4] **So**—The connecting link with the supposed preceding part of the poem.

Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonnesse[1] about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold[2] Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel[3] with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water,[4] and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin[5] sware that I should come again

---

[1] **Lyonnesse**—This country, said to have been since submerged, extended from Cornwall to the Scilly Islands.

[2] **Bold**—The permanent epithet applied to the knight throughout the *Idylls of the King*.

"For bold in heart and act and word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against the king."
The Coming of Arthur.

[3] **Chancel**—The portion of the church containing the choir and altar.

[4] **Water**—Lake. Malory thus uses the word.

[5] **Merlin**—The famous enchanter and the adviser of King Arthur. He appears constantly throughout the *Idylls of the King*, and is one of the chief characters in *Merlin and Vivien*.

"And there I-saw mage Merlin, whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as the hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege."
The Coming of Arthur.

To rule once more — but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,[1]
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite,[2] mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:[3]
Watch what thou seest, and lightly[4] bring me word."
To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest[5] will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."
So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,

---

[1] **Excalibur**—The word means "cut-steel." See *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 294-308.

[2] **Samite**—A rich silk stuff interwoven with gold or silver thread.

[3] **Middle mere**—The middle of the lake.

[4] **Lightly**—Quickly.

[5] **Hest**—Command.

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,[1]
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere.
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."
To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,[2]
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief[3] and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."
Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;

---

[1] **Many-knotted waterflags**—"Reeds, with numerous joints and with long leaves, that wave like flags in the wind." —*Rowe* and *Webb*.

[2] **Name**—Name of knight.

[3] **Lief**—Beloved.

But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,
"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey, then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.[1]
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost."
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,[2]
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

---

[1] **Maiden of the Lake**—See *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 282-293, and *Gareth and Lynette*, lines 209-219.

[2] **Conceit**—Thought, idea.

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,[1]
Seen where the moving isles of winter[2] shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.
Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:

---

[1] **Northern morn**—Aurora Borealis.
[2] **Isles of winter**—Icebergs.

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard or seen?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."
So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully[1] regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.
But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare[2] on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

---

[1] **Remorsefully**—Pityingly.

[2] **Nightmare**—Among the Norse, a frightful fiend that haunted people in the night and caused evil dreams.

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought[1] drove him, like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled,[2] black-hooded, like a dream —by these
Three Queens[3] with crowns of gold — and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,[4]
And, as it were one voice an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"

---

[1] **Thought**—Remorse for his disobedience.

[2] **Black-stoled**—Clothed in long loose robes reaching to the feet.

[3] **Three Queens**—"That one was King Arthur's sister, Morgan le Fay; the other was the Queen of Northgales (Wales); the third was the Lady of the Lake."—*Sir Thomas Malory.* See *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 275-278.

[4] **Tingling stars**—"The cry comes from a company of spirits, amid mountains whose natural powers of echo is heightened by the silence of night, the clearness of the winter air, and the hardening effect of frost."—*George Brimley.*

And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest [1] of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining [2] loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east [3];
And all his greaves and cuisses [4] dash'd with drops
Of onset [5]; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne [6] — were parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?

---

[1] **The tallest**—Morgan le Fay.

[2] **Complaining**—Lamenting.

[3] **Springing east**—The rising sun.

[4] **Cuisses**—Armour for the thighs.

[5] **Drops of onset**—Spattered with blood, the result of the encounter.

[6] **Dais-throne**—Throne elevated on a platform.

For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light[1] that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE[2] is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."
And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order[3] changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils[4] Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure![5] but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life[6] within the brain,

---

[1] **The light**—The Star of Bethlehem. See *Matthew* II-2.

[2] **Round table**—"Also Merlin made the Round Table in tokening to the roundness of the world, for by the Round Table is the world signified by right."—*Sir Thomas Malary.*

[3] **The old order**—"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."
—*In Memoriam.*

[4] **Fulfils**—Carries out His purposes.

[5] **Make pure**—"May God accept my work, and absorbing it, as it were, unto Himself, purify it of all unworthy elements."—*Rowe* and *Webb.*

[6] **Blind life**—Guided merely by instinct.

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;[1]
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd[2] with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol[3] ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell:
At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but we
Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read —
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness —

---

[1] **Avilion**—An island near Glastonbury, named after Avalon, one of the Celtic divinities. It corresponds to the "Islands of the Blessed" of the Greeks.

[2] **Crowned**—"Ringed round as with a coronet."

[3] **Wild carol**—See Tennyson's *The Dying Swan*.

Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud; as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
"There now — that's nothing!" drew a little back,
And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:
And so to bed: where yet in sleep I seem'd
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
"Arthur is come again: he cannot die."
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated — "Come again, and thrice as fair;"
And, further inland, voices echo'd —"Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more."
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

ŒNONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida,[1] lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.[2]
The swimming[3] vapour slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus[4]
Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas[5] and Ilion's[6] column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

---

[1] **Ida**—A mountain range in Mysia, near Troy.

[2] **Ionian Hills**—Ionia was the district adjacent to Mysia.

[3] **Swimming**—Drifting slowly.

[4] **Topmost Gargarus**—A Latinism cf. *summus mons*, the top of the mountain. Gargarus was a peak about 5000 feet high, at the southern end of the Mysian mountains.

[5] **Troas**—The district surrounding Troy, usually called "The Troad."

[6] **Ilion**—Another name for Troy.

"O mother Ida,[1] many-fountain'd[2] Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass:
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.
The purple flower droops: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake![3] O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,[4]
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly[5] to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather'd shape: for it may be

---

[1] **Mother Ida**—An instance of the personification of nature, constantly employed among the Greeks.

[2] **Many-fountain'd**—A Homeric epithet borrowed by Tennyson. Many rivers both large and small had their sources in the mountain range.

[3] **Crown'd snake**—A reference to the semblance of a crown on the heads of certain snakes, such as cobras.

[4] **River-God**—Œnone was the daughter of the River-God, Kebren or Cebrenus in Phrygia.

[5] **Rose slowly**—Apollo, having been banished from Olympus by Zeus, the king of the gods, took refuge with Laomedon, king of Troy, with whom he remained in servitude one year. During this time, with the assistance of Poseidon, he built the walls of Troy, the walls taking shape to the music of his flute.

"Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing
When Ilion, like a mist, rose into towers."
—*Tithonous.*

That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.[1]

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois[2] all alone.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star[3]
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's:
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,[4]

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[1] **Deeper woe**—That in talking about my sorrow, I may be lulled into forgetfulness of it. Compare *In Memoriam*.

[2] **Simois**—The Simois takes its rise in Mount Ida, and flowing into the plain of Troas, there joins the Scamander.

[3] **Like a star**—Becoming whiter as the morning dawns.

[4] **Hesperian gold**—On their wedding day, Herè presented to Zeus a number of golden apples. These were entrusted for safe-keeping to the daughters of Hesperus, who lived on an island far out in the western ocean. It was one of the labours of Hercules to steal some of these golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides.

That smelt ambrosially,[1] and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.
'My own Œnone,
Beautiful-brow'd Œnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
'For the most fair,' would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread[2] haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'[3]

"'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, 'This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced[4] presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 't were due:
But light-foot Iris[5] brought it yester-eve,
Delivering,[6] that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herè[7] comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each
This meed of fairest.[8] Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,

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[1] **Ambrosially**—*Ambrosia* was the food of the gods as *nectar* was their drink. "The food was sweeter than honey and was of a most fragrant odor." It was sometimes used by the goddesses as a perfume.

[2] **Oread**—Mountain-nymphs.

[3] **Married brows**—Eyebrows that meet across the forehead.

[4] **Full-faced**—Either "none being absent," or an allusion to the majestic appearance of the gods.

[5] **Iris**—The messenger of the gods. The rainbow is her symbol.

[6] **Delivering**—Announcing.

[7] **Here—Pallas—Aphrodite**—Herè was the Roman Juno, the queen of Heaven and the wife of Zeus or Jupiter; Pallas, the Roman Minerva, the goddess of war and wisdom; and Aphroditè, the Roman Venus, the goddess of love and beauty.

[8] **Meed of fairest**—Prize as being the most beautiful.

Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon: one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piney sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,[1]
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock[2] lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud,[3] and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power,[4] ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale
And river-sunder'd champaign[5] clothed with corn,

[1] **Brake like fire**—"burst out of the ground like tongues of flame; alluding to the fiery yellow-red colour of the crocus."—*Rowe* and *Webb*.

[2] **Peacock**—The peacock was sacred to Herè.

[3] **Golden cloud**—The canopy of the gods on Olympus.

[4] **Royal power**—Being the queen of Heaven, she would naturally offer power and dominion.

[5] **River-sunder'd champaign**—Plain through which numerous rivers flowed.

Or labour'd mine undrainable[1] of ore.
Honour,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
'Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season;[2] wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom — from all neighbour crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail[3] from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's length, so much the thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted[4] with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,

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[1] **Undrainable**—Inexhaustible.

[2] **Fitted to the season**—"Power that adapts itself to every crisis; power which is born of wisdom and enthroned by wisdom."—*Pelham Edgar.*

[3] **Fail**—Weakened by old age.

[4] **O'erthwarted**—Crossed by.

The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.
"'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by [1] without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.[2]'"

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: 'I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon [3] could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'[4]

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[1] **We live by**—The law of the higher life.

[2] **Scorn of consequence**—Do right no matter what the consequences may be.

[3] **Sequel of guerdon**—To follow up what I have said by promises of rich reward.

[4] **Perfect freedom**—This passage is paraphrased by Rowe and Webb as follows: "Invigorated by my influence, you shall be filled with energy and enthusiasm sufficient to urge you through the storms and perils of a life of great deeds, until your powers of endurance become strengthened by

"Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian[1] Aphroditè beautiful,
Fresh as the foam,[2] new-bathed in Paphian wells,[3]
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald . her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,

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frequent exercise, and you will grow to maturity, after experiencing every variety of trial, and having become identical with the absolute rule (of duty), find perfect freedom in willing obedience to that rule." Moral courage is what Pallas promises Paris.

[1] **Idalian**—Idalum was a town in Cyprus where the worship of Aphroditè was established and where there was a temple in her honour.

[2] **The foam**—Aphroditè is said to have been born from the foam of the sea.

[3] **Paphian wells**—It was at Paphos that Aphroditè first touched the shore after her birth and here she was worshipped with special reverence.

And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,[1]
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling[2] Simois.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,[3]
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster'd the callow eaglet — from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid

[1] **Pard**—Leopard. The influence of beauty on the wild beasts is a favourite theme of the poet.

[2] **Whirling**—The Simois in the first part of its course is a rapid mountain stream full of eddies.

[3] **Tallest pines**—To furnish the ships for the expedition of Paris to Greece, which resulted in the abduction of Helen and ultimately the ruin of Troy. Œnone speaks of the pines as her own, because she loved them so much.

With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth;
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts[1]
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,

[1] **Fiery thoughts**—Of revenge.

Whereof I catch the issue,[1] as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born: her child! — a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their[2] shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra,[3] for she says
A fire dances[4] before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

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[1] **Catch the issue**—Understand the result.

[2] **Their**—The laughter of Paris and Heler. She vows that if she shall die that Paris shall die also.

[3] **Cassandra**—The daughter of Priam and sister of Paris. She possessed the gift of prophecy, but was fated never to be believed. After the fall of Troy, she fell to the share of Agamemnon, by whom she was taken to Greece, where she was killed by Clytemnestra, the wife of her captor.

[4] **Fire dances**—The burning of Troy by the Greeks.

NOTES

NOTES

Life of Robert Browning

Robert Browning was born in Camberwell, London, May 7, 1812. He was exceptionally fortunate in his early surroundings. His father, a clerk in the Bank of England, was a man of scholarly tastes, fond of books, and fonder of discussing them with his family and friends; he was also possessed of sufficient means to gratify these tastes and to afford his son an ample education. His mother was Scotch, a type, as Carlyle says, of the true Scottish gentlewoman. She was fond of music, deeply religious, and devoted to her gifted son. Both parents early recognized the boy's undoubted poetic bent and encouraged him in every possible way.

Browning received the greater part of his education at private academies and at home. He did not attend any of the great Public Schools, neither was he a student of Oxford or Cambridge. At the age of ten he was sent to a school near his home, kept by a Mr. Ready, where he remained until he was fourteen. Subsequently he read at home with a private tutor and at the age of seventeen attended some of the classes at the University of London. His time, however, seemed to have been devoted principally during these years to the study of poetry. When he was eight years of age he read Pope's translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. At the age of twelve he wrote a number of poems, which were bound in a manuscript book, but these contained little promise of his future greatness, and were in no way different from somewhat clever verse written by other precocious boys. He early familiarized himself with the great Elizabethan poets and with Byron, but it was not until he fell under the influence of Shelley and Keats—

the books were procured for him by his mother, the bookseller to whom she applied for Shelley's works adding on his own account three volumes of Keats — that the boy began to realize his own powers and to cultivate them. He early made up his mind to devote himself to poetry, and to this purpose he remained constant during his life.

At the age of twenty, in the year 1833, Browning's first printed poem was published, at the expense of his aunt, and received some very favourable notices from the critics of the time. The *Athenæum* was specially complimentary: "There is not a little true poetry in this very little book; here and there we have a touch of the mysterious which we cannot admire; and now and then a want of true melody which we can forgive, with perhaps more abruptness than is necessary; all that, however, is as a grain of sand in a cup of pure water, compared to the nature, and passion, and fancy of the poem." On the other hand, the *Literary Gazette* characterized the book as "a dreamy volume without an object, and unfit for publication."

In 1833-34, the poet, at the invitation of a friend, paid a visit to Russia, afterwards extending his travels into Italy. In 1834 he was back in London engaged in literary work, and in 1835 *Paracelsus* was published. This book procured for him the acquaintance and friendship of the chief literary men of the day, including Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, Dickens and Wordsworth. In the same year he was introduced to Macready, the actor, who suggested that he should write a tragedy to be produced on the stage. The result of this suggestion was *Strafford*, but the play did not prove a success, and was withdrawn after five nights.

From 1835 to 1846, Browning spent the greater part of his time in London, engaged in the production of his poems and dramas. He made several trips to Italy, the sea-voyage in 1838 being noteworthy as it resulted

in "How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix." In 1840 *Sordello* was published, followed in the next year by *Pippa Passes*, issued as No. 1 of a series of volumes entitled *Bells and Pomegranates*. In rapid succession followed *King Victor and King Charles*, *Dramatic Lyrics*, The *Return of the Druses*, *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon*, and *Colombe's Birthday*. In all seven volumes were published before the end of 1845.

In 1845 Browning met Elizabeth Barrett, who at this time had gained some considerable reputation as a writer of verse. Miss Barrett was an invalid and spent her time principally on a sofa. Her father had peculiar ideas as to his daughter; he did not wish her to travel, even with the hope of benefiting her health, neither did he desire that she should be married. Browning early saw that it would be useless to expect that Mr. Barrett would consent to his daughter's marriage and resolved to take her from her home without consulting her father. On the 12th of September, 1846, Miss Barrett stole secretly from the house, and the two poets were married at the parish church of Marylebone. Shortly afterwards they left England together and took up their residence in Florence. Frequently they visited England, but for the most part their time was spent in Italy. At Florence their son, Robert Barrett Browning was born in 1849. Browning never regretted his action in marrying Miss Barrett. The marriage was in every respect an ideal one. The two had every taste in common, and were devoted to one another.

From his marriage the life of Browning was singularly uneventful, varied only by the publication of his various volumes. In 1846 appeared the eighth and last volume of *Bells and Pomegranates*, containing *Luria* and *A Soul's Tragedy*. In 1850, *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* was published, followed in 1855 by *Men and Women*. In 1861 Mrs. Browning died and was

buried in Florence. The poet, after this sad event, returned to London, where he lived until his death.

In 1864 *Dramatis Personæ* was published, and five years later, *The Ring and the Book*, Browning's great work, was given to the world. The poem is in blank verse and contains 21,000 lines. In 1867 the University of Oxford conferred on Browning the degree of Master of Arts. He was now beginning to be recognized as a true poet, and to take his own place in the realm of letters.

Browning's remaining works were published between 1871 and 1890. The more important of these are: *Balaustion's Adventure*, *Fifine at the Fair*, *Red-Cotton Nightcap Country*, *Aristophanes' Apology*, *The Inn Album*, *La Saisiaz and the two Poets of Croisic*, *Dramatic Idylls*, *Ferishtah's Fancies* and *Asolando*.

The latter years of Browning's life were passed in happiness and prosperity. He lived for the most part in London, making, however, frequent visits to the continent, and especially to his beloved Italy. He was surrounded by troops of friends, was welcomed everywhere in society, and given his due mead of praise as one of the leading poets of his time. Perhaps his only regret was that his wife had not lived to share with him his fame, and to rejoice with him in his success. He died at Venice, on December 12, 1889, shortly after the publication of his last volume *Asolando*. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Home Thoughts from Abroad

First published in *Bells and Pomegranates*, No. VII, in 1845. The poem is a contrast between the beauties of an English spring and the gorgeous landscape of the continent at the same season.

Cavalier Tunes

First published in *Bells and Pomegranates*, No. III, in 1842. There is a rapidity and martial swing in the metre of the poems that accords well with the spirit of the followers of King Charles, in his fight against the more staid and sober adherents of the Parliament. Edward Dowden says: "The reckless loyalty, with its animal spirits and its dash of grief, the bitterer because grief must be dismissed, of the *Cavalier Tunes*, is true to England and the time, in its heartiness and gallant bluffness."

"How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix"

First published in *Bells and Pomegranates*, No. VII, in 1845. Browning says: "I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse 'York,' then in my stable at home." The poem was written in pencil on the blank leaves in an Italian book he had with him. Rylands point out that "the poem is not founded on any actual historical occurrence. The route followed, however, is actual enough. They go north-easterly to Lokeren, then keep due east to Boom, and then more south-easterly to Aerschot, about ten miles from Louvain. The poet does not say that they went to Hasselt, but 'by Hasselt,' and so with Loos and Tongres. They probably passed between Hasselt and the two latter places, riding straight across country to Aix-la-Chapelle. The ride can hardly have been less than 130 miles, and perhaps twenty or thirty more."

Up at a Villa—Down in the City

First published in *Men and Women*, in 1855. The

poem is an amusing contrast drawn by an Italian person of quality between the dullness of the country and the delights of city life. He is bored in the country, but unfortunately cannot afford to live in the city.

Love Among the Ruins

First published in *Men and Women* in 1855. The poem paints a picture of a grassy plain in which the ruins of an immense and powerful city lie buried. Its wealth was fabulous, its power enormous. Its kings held magnificent courts, its armies traversed the earth. Now it lies in ruins and nothing remains but the fragment of an ancient tower. The thought is forced on him that time is relentless, that both that which is glorious, and that which is shameful, will alike be swallowed up and forgotten. But in the tower awaits a maiden, and as they meet and embrace, he forgets about the years of folly and crime, and comes to a realization of the eternal fact that "Love is best."

Edward Dowden in his *Robert Browning* says: "The lover keeps at arm's-length from his heart and brain what yet fills them all the while; here in this placid pasture-land is one vivid point of intensest life; here where once was the grandeur and tumult of the enormous city is that which in a moment can abolish for the lover all its glories and its shames. His eager anticipation of meeting his beloved, face to face and heart to heart, is not sung as a jet of unmingled joy; he delays his rapture to make its arrival more entirely rapturous; he uses his imagination to check and enhance his passion; and the poem, though not a simple cry of the heart, is entirely true as a rendering of emotion which has taken imagination into its service."

Prospice

First published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and after-

wards included in *Dramatis Personae*, in 1864. It was written shortly after the death of Mrs. Browning, June 29, 1861. There is no doubt that the reference in the text is to the poet's deceased wife. Dowden says: "The poem is an act of faith which comes through love; it is ascribed to no imaginary speaker, and does not indeed veil its personal character." Professor Corson adds: "The speaker in this noble monologue is one who, having fought a good fight and finished his course, lived and wrought thoroughly, in sense and soul and intellect, is now ready and eager to encounter the 'Arch-fear' Death; and then he will clasp again his beloved, the soul of his soul, who has gone before. He leaves the rest to God."

One Word More, written at London, September 1855, and addressed to E. B. B., should be read in connection with this poem.

The Guardian Angel

First published in *Men and Women*, in 1855. The picture by Guercino, referred to in the text, is in the church of St. Augustine at Fano. Ryland thus describes the picture: "A tall angel with wings partially extended, seems to encourage a kneeling child, represented as nude, to pray. The child is on the angel's left hand, and kneels on a cubical block of stone. Both gaze upwards to the left of the picture, where the sky seems opening, and a group of three cherubs is seen.

My Last Duchess

First published in *Bells and Pomegranates*, No. III, *Dramatic Lyrics* in 1842. This poem is in the form of a *dramatic monologue*, a kind of composition of which Browning was very fond. The speaker is evidently an elderly duke, who, having broken his former wife's heart by his coldness and pride, is now engaged in

treating with a representative of another duke in regard to a second marriage. This poem is a splendid specimen of Browning's power of compression and suggestion. Each line of the poem adds something not only to the picture of the duke himself, but also to that of his unfortunate wife.

Andrea del Sarto

First published in *Men and Women*, 1855. One of Mr. Browning's friends in England had written to him to procure a copy of the picture of *Andrea del Sarto and his Wife*, which hangs in the Pitti Palace, Florence. Mr. Browning was unable to procure a satisfactory copy, and instead wrote and sent this poem to his friend. The picture in question, however, was not painted by Andrea himself. The portrait shows two half-length figures, the woman, very beautiful, is on the left hand and holds an open letter; the man's hand rests on her shoulder.

Andrea dei Sarto (Andrea, the son of the tailor), was born in Florence in 1487. He was first apprenticed to a goldsmith, but he did not like the business, and was afterwards placed with a wood carver and painter. He remained with him until 1498, when he left him and studied drawing and colouring under Piero de Casino. After an unsuccessful attempt at business with a friend, he was employed by the Order of the Servi to decorate their church in Florence. The frescoes in this church are among the best paintings made by Andrea. Some time afterwards he fell in love with Lucrezia del Fede, wife of a hatter named Carlo Recenati. On the death of her husband, Andrea married her on December 26, 1512. She was a strikingly beautiful woman, so much so that Andrea constantly used her for his model in painting his Virgins and Saints. In 1516, two of his pictures found their way to the court of Francis I,

King of France, and these pictures so pleased the French monarch that he invited the artist to visit his court. He left his wife behind, and set out for Paris. Here he was graciously received and well paid for his work. His wife, however, urged him to return to her and the artist yielded to her request. Francis gave him permission to depart, but made him promise to return, and, in addition, entrusted him with a large sum of money with which to purchase pictures. Instead of buying the pictures for the King, Andrea used the money to build a house in Florence, and of course did not dare to return to France. He was not punished for this theft. He continued to reside in Florence until his death in 1531. During the siege of the city, he caught the plague, and passed away deserted by his wife for whom he had sacrificed so much. He was buried in the Church of the Servi.

Vasari, in his first edition of the *Lives of the Painters*, from which Browning drew his materials for the poem, has given a very unfavourable account of Lucrezia. He does not, however, ascribe to her the faults upon which Browning has dwelt at length. Further, it should be remembered that Vasari was an apprentice of Andrea, and during the residence with his master, may have had occasion to feel the displeasure of Lucrezia. At any rate she was selfish and frivolous, but perhaps not more so than Andrea himself who set her on such a lofty pedestal. We may perhaps judge the painter by the object of his worship.

The poem is self-explanatory, but Berdoe has an excellent note on the secret of the failure of Andrea: "'Faultless but soulless' is the verdict of art critics on Andrea's works. Why is this? Mr. Browning's poem tells us in no hesitating phrase that the secret lay in the fact that Andrea was an immoral man, an infatuated man, passionately demanding love from a woman who had neither heart nor intellect, a wife

for whom he sacrificed his soul and the highest interests of his art. He knew and loved Lucrezia while she was another man's wife; he was content that she should also love other men when she was his. He robbed King Francis, his generous patron, that he might give the money to his unworthy spouse. He neglected his parents in their poverty and old age. Is there not in these facts the secret of his failure?"

An Epistle

First published in *Men and Women*, 1855. Karshish, an Arab physician, is writing to his master Abib, giving him an account of his journeyings and the things seen on the way. He comes to Bethany and there meets Lazarus. The personality of Lazarus, the man raised from the dead, has such an impression on him, that though half-ashamed, he devotes the greater part of his letter to the discussion of the subject.

Karshish is a type of the purely scientific intellect, determined to have positive, substantial proof before he will believe, and to prove everything by the touch-stone of experience and knowledge. To such a man the story told by Lazarus would seem incredible, and for this reason Browning has used him in order to show, as Alexander points out, "the universality of the yearning in the human heart for a God of love." The struggle between the intellect and the heart of the physician is finely presented in the poem. The portrait of Karshish is admirably drawn: his keen interest in everything pertaining to his art; his fondness for technical terms; his supreme belief in himself; his impatience with and lack of tolerence for others; his skepticism concerning anything without his own experience, and yet with the heart of a man beneath it all.

But it is the portrait of Lazarus that is drawn with

a master-hand. "Lazarus, having actually passed into another world, and seen those things which are eternal, thoroughly realises and lives up to the truths, so frequent and often so meaningless on the lips of Christians,—of the nothingness of this world,—of having our hearts and treasures above. He measures everything by the standard which experience of the infinite has taught him to apply. So, the great and small events of external history (as we reckon them), seem to him alike unimportant. The death of his child is for him no cause of sorrow. He realizes that the child has but gone before to a happier and better sphere. But some trifling word or gesture which gives evidence of the presence and power of evil, throws him into an agony of fear. Just as, Karshish goes on to explain, their former teacher, the great sage of the pyramid, would be thrown into a paroxysm of terror by their repeating words of one of his books, trifling and meaningless to them, but which belonged to a charm, as the sage knew, able to upturn the universe from its foundations."—*Alexander.*

NOTES

Life of Tennyson

Alfred Tennyson was born at Somersby, a small hamlet among the Lincolnshire wolds, on August 6, 1809. His father, the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, the vicar of Somersby, was a man of large and cultivated intellect, interested in poetry, mathematics, painting, music and architecture, but somewhat harsh and austere in manner, and subject to fits of gloomy depression, during which his prescence was avoided by his family. He was sincerely devoted to them, however, and himself supervised their education. His mother, Elizabeth Fytche, the daughter of the Rev. Stephen Fytche of Louth, was a kind-hearted, gentle, refined woman, beloved by her family and friends. Her influence over her sons and daughters was unbounded, and over none more so than Alfred, who in after life recognized to the full what he owed to his mother.

The family was large, consisting of twelve sons and daughters, of whom the eldest died in infancy. Alfred was the fourth child, his brothers Frederick and Charles being older than he. The home life was a very happy one. The boys and girls were all fond of books and their games partook of the nature of the books they had been reading. They were given to writing, and in this they were encouraged by their father, who proved himself a wise and discriminating critic. Alfred early showed signs of his poetic bent; at the age of twelve he had written an epic of four thousand lines, and even before this a tragedy and innumerable poems in blank verse. He was not encouraged, however, to preserve these specimens of his early powers, and they are now lost.

Alfred attended for a time a small school near his home, but at the age of seven he was sent to the Grammar School at Louth. While at Louth he lived with his grandmother, but his days at school were not happy, and he afterwards looked back over them with almost a shudder. Before he was twelve he returned home, and began his preparation for the university under his father's care. His time was not all devoted to serious study, but was spent in roaming through his father's library devouring the great classics of ancient and modern times, and in writing his own poems. The family each summer removed to Mablethorpe on the Lincolnshire coast. Here Alfred learned to love the sea in all its moods, a love which lasted through his life.

In 1827, after Frederick had entered Cambridge, the two brothers, Charles and Alfred, being in want of pocket money, resolved to publish a volume of poems. They made a selection from their numerous poems and offered the book to a bookseller in Louth. For some unknown reason, he accepted the book, and soon after, it was published under the title, *Poems by Two Brothers*. There were in reality three brothers, as some of Frederick's poems were included in the volume. The brothers were promised £20, but more than one half of this sum they had to take out in books. With the balance they went on a triumphal expedition to the sea, rejoicing in the successful launching of their first literary effort.

In 1828 Charles and Alfred Tennyson matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where their elder brother Frederic had already been for some time. Alfred was a somewhat shy lad, and did not at once take kindly to the life of his college. He soon, however, found himself one of a famous society known as "The Apostles," to which belonged some of the best men in the University. Not one member of the

"Apostles" at this time, but afterwards made a name for himself and made his influence felt in the world of politics or letters. The society met at regular intervals, but Alfred did not take much part in the debates, preferring to sit silent and listen to what was said. All his friends had unbounded admiration for his poetry and unlimited faith in his poetic powers. This faith was strengthened by the award of the University Prize for English Verse to Alfred in June, 1829. He did not wish to compete, but on being pressed, polished up an old poem he had written some years ago, and presented it for competition, the subject being *Timbuctoo*. The poem was in blank verse, and showed considerable power; in fact it was a remarkable poem for one so young.

Perhaps the most powerful influence on the life of Tennyson was the friendship he formed while at Cambridge with Arthur Henry Hallam, the son of the historian, Henry Hallam. The two became inseparable friends, a friendship strengthened by the engagement of Hallam to the poet's sister. The two friends agreed to publish a volume of poems as a joint-production, but Henry Hallam, the elder, did not encourage the project and it was dropped. The result was that in 1830, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, was published with the name of Alfred Tennyson alone on the title page. The volume was reviewed enthusiastically by Hallam, but was more or less slated by Christopher North in the columns of *Blackwoods' Magazine*. Tennyson was very angry about the latter review, and replied to the reviewer in some caustic, but entirely unnecessary, verses.

In the same year Hallam and Tennyson made an expedition into Spain to carry aid to the rebel leader against the King of Spain. The expedition was not by any means a success. In 1831 Tennyson left Cambridge, without taking his degree, and shortly

after his return home his father died. The family, however, did not remove from Somersby, but remained there until 1837. Late in 1832 appeared another volume entitled *Poems by Alfred Tennyson*. This drew upon the unfortunate author a bitterly sarcastic article in the *Quarterly*, probably written by its brilliant editor, John Gibson Lockhart. The result of this article was that Tennyson was silent for ten years, a period spent in ridding himself of the weaknesses so brutally pointed out by the reviewer.

In 1833, Arthur Henry Hallam died, and for a time the light of life seemed to have gone out for Alfred Tennyson. The effect of the death of Hallam upon the poet was extraordinary. It seemed to have changed the whole current of his life; indeed he is said under the strain of the awful suddenness and unexpectedness of the event to have contemplated suicide. But saner thoughts intervened, and he again took up the burden of life, with the determination to do what he could in helping others. From this time of storm and stress came *In Memoriam*.

From 1832 to 1842 Tennyson spent a roving life. Now at home, now in London, now with his friends in various parts of England. He was spending his time in finishing his poems, so that when he again came before the world with a volume, he would be a master. The circle of his friends was widening and now included the greater number of the master-minds of England. He was poor, so poor in fact that he was reduced to the necessity of borrowing the books he wished to read from his friends. But during all this time he never wavered in his allegiance to poetry; he had determined to be a poet, and to devote his life to poetry. At last in 1842 he published his *Poems* in two volumes, and the world was conquered. From this time onward he was recognised as the leading poet of his century.

In 1845, Tennyson, poor still, was granted a pension of £200, chiefly through the influence of his friend Richard Monckton Milnes, and Thomas Carlyle. There was a great deal of criticism regarding this pension from sources that should have been favourable, but the general verdict approved the grant. In 1847 appeared *The Princess*, a poem, which, at that time, did not materially add to his fame, but the poet was now hailed as one of the great ones of his time, and much was expected of him.

In 1850 three most important events in the life of Tennyson happened. He published *In Memoriam*, in memory of his friend, Arthur Henry Hallam; he was appointed Poet Laureate, in succession to Wordsworth; and he married Emily Selwood, a lady to whom he had been engaged for seventeen years, but whom his poverty had prevented him from leading to the altar. From this time onward the life of the poet flowed smoothly. He was happily married, his fame was established, his books brought him a sufficient income on which to live comfortably and well. From this point there is little to relate in his career, except the publication of his various volumes.

After his marriage, Tennyson lived for some time at Twickenham, where in 1852 Hallam Tennyson was born. In 1851 he and his wife visited Italy, a visit commemorated in *The Daisy*. In 1853 they removed to Farringford, at Freshwater in the Isle of Wight, a residence subequently purchased with the proceeds of *Maud*, published in 1855. The poem had a somewhat mixed reception, being received in some quarters with unstinted abuse, and in others with the warmest praise. In the year that *Maud* was published Tennyson received the honorary degree of D.C.L., from Oxford. In 1859 was published the first four of the *Idylls of the King*, followed in 1864 by *Enoch Arden, and Other Poems*. In 1865 his mother died. In 1869 he purchased

Aldworth, an almost inaccessible residence in Surrey, near London, in order to escape the annoyance of summer visitors to the Isle of Wight, who insisted on invading his privacy, which, perhaps, more than any other, he especially valued.

From 1870 to 1880 Tennyson was engaged principally on his dramas — *Queen Mary*, *Harold* and *Becket*,—but, with the exception of the last, these did not prove particularly successful on the stage. In 1880 *Ballads and Poems* was published, an astonishing volume from one so advanced in years. In 1882 the *Promise of May* was produced in public, but was soon withdrawn. In 1884 Tennyson was raised to the peerage as Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford, after having on two previous occasions refused a baronetcy. In 1885, *Tiresias and other Poems* was published. In this volume was published *Balin and Balan*, thus completing the *Idylls of the King*, which now assumed their permanent order and form. *Demeter and Other Poems* followed in 1889, including *Crossing the Bar*. In 1892, on October 6th, the poet died at Aldworth, "with the moonlight upon his bed and an open Shakespeare by his side." A few days later he was buried in Westminster Abbey, by the side of Robert Browning, his friend and contemporary, who had preceded him by only a few years.

The Lady of Shalott

First published in 1832, but very much altered and improved in 1842. A complete list of the variant readings is given in Mr. Churton Collins's *The Early Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, published by Methuen & Co. London. The poem is specially valuable as showing the interest taken by Tennyson, even at this early date, in the Arthurian legends, although the treatment was suggested not by the *Mort d'Arthur* of Sir

Thomas Malory, but by an Italian romance upon the *Donna di Scalotta.* Twenty seven years later the poet used the same material in the *Lancelot and Elaine* of *The Idylls of the King.* The word "Shalott" is derived from the French "Escalot," a form of the word "Astolat."

Hallam, Lord Tennyson in the *Memoir* says: "The key to this tale of magic symbolism is of deep human significance, and is to be found in the lines:

> Or when the moon was overhead,
> Came two young lovers lately wed;
> 'I am half sick of shadows' said
> The Lady of Shalott.

Canon Ainger in his *Tennyson for the Young*, quotes the following interpretation given him by my father: 'The new-born love for something, for some one in the wide world from which she has so long been secluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities." Perhaps, however, in interpreting the poem it is just as well to ask the question of Edgar Allen Poe: "Why do some persons fatigue themselves in endeavours to unravel such phantasy pieces as *The Lady of Shalott*?"

The Voyage

First published in the *Enoch Arden* volume of 1864, and altered since only in unimportant points.

Palgrave interprets this poem as follows: "Life as Energy, in the great ethical sense of the word,—Life as the pursuit of the Ideal—is figured in this brilliantly-descriptive allegory." Stopford Brooke in his *Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life* says: "Again and again this wild attraction of the unknown in the deep sea is expressed by Tennyson. It lives in the *The Voyage*, that delightful poem, with its double meaning, half of the life on the sea, and half of the life

of the soul, and wholly of those who, like seamen, have no care for business and science and the real world; who race after the undiscovered shore, who follow the gleam, who live for ideas, not for things.

The thought expressed in the last two lines of *The Voyage* is one of the strongest notes in the poetry of Tennyson. It is especially strong in *Locksley Hall*, *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, *Ulysses* and *Merlin and the Gleam*. The same thought is found in the last line of the last poem Tennyson wrote, *The Silent Voices*:

"On, and always on."

St. Agnes' Eve

First published under the title of *St. Agnes*, in 1837, in *The Keepsake*, an annual edited by Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley, and afterwards included in the volume of 1842. No changes have been made in the text since 1842, but in 1857, the title was changed to *St. Agnes' Eve*. Keats has written a poem with a similar title, but the treatment of the two poems is entirely different.

Saint Agnes was a Roman virgin who suffered martyrdom under Diocletian (284-305 A.D.), because she refused to marry the son of the Prætor on the ground that he was a heathen. She was beheaded at the age of thirteen. Her festival is celebrated on the 21st of January. It is an old superstition that on the eve of St. Agnes' day

> "Young virgins might have visions of delight
> And soft adorings from their loves receive
> Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
> If ceremonies due they did aright."

Tennyson, however, seems to have thought a heavenly bridegroom more consistent with the character of the virgin martyr, and accordingly he has

changed entirely the meaning of the legend, the treatment being religious throughout.

Morton Luce in his *Handbook to Tennyson's Works*, says of this poem: "We ar made to sympathize with the pure and beautiful enthu ast who has died away from all her human emotions id become a bride for whom a Heavenly Bridegroom is waiting. Wordsworth at his best might scarcely match the music of these stanzas; their pictorial perfection he could hardly attain unto; every image is in such delicate harmony with the pure young worshipper, that it seems to have been transfigured by her purity, and in the last four lines the very sentences faint with the breathless culmination of her rapture."

Professor Pelham Edgar notes that three poems written by Tennyson at almost the same period deal with three several aspects of mediaeval Catholicism. "The *St. Agnes' Eve* breathes the mysticism of the cloister, the yearning for spiritual communion with God, manifesting itself in a pure yet human rapture for the Saviour. The *Sir Galahad*, is the Christian mystic militant, whose sacred duties lie in the world of shock and action. *St. Simon Stylites* represents the ideal of human virtue in the harsh light of a repellant asceticism."

"Break, Break, Break"

Published in the volume of 1842, although written some years before that date, while under the spell of the dejection caused by the death of Arthur Henry Hallam. It was made, says Hallam, Lord Tennyson "in a Lincolnshire lane at five o'clock in the morning between blossoming hedges."

Arthur Henry Hallam, the son of Henry Hallam, the historian, was born in 1811. He entered Eton in 1822, and remained there until 1827, when he went to Cambridge. Here he met Alfred Tennyson, and the

two young men formed a friendship for one another, broken only by Hallam's early death. In 1832, he he graduated from Cambridge, became engaged to Emily Tennyson, the sister of Alfred, and entered on the study of law. In 1833, he had a severe illness and after his recovery was taken by his father for a tour on the continent, in the hope of restoring his health. Sir Francis Hastings Doyle tells the story of his death: "A severe bout of influenza weakened him, and whilst he was travelling abroad for change of air, and to recover his strength, one of his usual attacks apparently returned upon him without warning, whilst he was still unfitted to resist it; so that when his poor father came back from a walk through the streets of Vienna, he was lying dead on the sofa where he had been left to take a short rest. Mr. Hallam sat down to write his letters, and it was only by slow and imperceptible degrees that a certain anxiety, in consequence of Arthur's stillness and silence, dawned upon his mind; he drew near to ascertain why he had not moved nor spoken, and found that all was over." The body was brought back to England and buried in Clevedon Church, on the banks of the Severn.

The effect upon Tennyson of the death of Arthur Hallam was overwhelming. For a time it "blotted out all joy from his life and made him long for death, in spite of his feeling that he was in some measure a help and comfort to his sister." Under the influence of this great sorrow he wrote *The Two Voices*, *Ulysses*, "*Break, Break, Break*," and began that exquisite series of lyric poems, afterwards joined together in the *In Memoriam*. His friendship for Hallam remained throughout life with him as one of his most precious possessions.

The Poems of Arthur Henry Hallam, with an introduction by Richard Le Gallienne, was published by John Lane, London, in 1893. Mr. Gladstone contributed to *The Youths' Companion*, on January 6, 1898,

an interesting sketch of his early friend, afterwards published in pamphlet form by Perry Mason & Company, Boston.

Morton Luce in his *Handbook to Tennyson's Works*, says: "Few of Tennyson's productions are so spontaneous as this; yet it is more than a mere cry of despair; for in none does nature so eloquently express what words and even melody can only conceal. Five times the poet abandons the disguise of speech, and paints his sorrow in a vivid picture. Before us lies the sea, powerless to tell its sobbing trouble to the shore, as wave after wave of utterance dies broken on the cold, grey stones. On the shore the children are playing; what could they know of death? Out on the bay the sailor boy is singing in the happy activity of life; in the offing are ships returning from a prosperous voyage and sailing on majestically to the neighbouring port—four pictures in one; and in these the poet expresses more eloquently than in any words the sense of desolation made yet more desolate by contrast with joys it cannot share. The fifth picture is of the sea breaking hopelessly at the foot of crags that seem to spurn it from its desire; so death stands inexorable between him and all that he loved."

In the Valley of Cauteretz

Published in the *Enoch Arden* volume of 1864. Two quotations from the *Memoir* explain the poem: "During the summer [1830], my father joined Arthur Hallam, and both started off for the Pyrenees, with money for the insurgent allies of Torrejos—a noble, accomplished, truthful man, worthy to be a leader. Alfred and Arthur held a secret meeting with the heads of the conspiracy on the Spanish border and were not heard of by their friends for some weeks," and "On August 6th, [1861], my father's birthday, we arrived

at Cauteretz, his favorite valley in the Pyrences. Before our windows we had the torrent rushing over its rocky bed from far away among the mountains, and falling in cataracts. Patches of snow lay on the peaks above, and nearer were great wooded heights glorious with autumnal colours, bare rocks here and there, and greenest mountain meadows below. He wrote his lyric *All Along the Valley*, 'after hearing the voice of the torrent seemingly sound deeper as the night grew' (in memory of his visit here with Arthur Hallam)."

In a footnote Hallam, Lord Tennyson adds: "My father was vexed that he had written 'two-and-thirty years ago' in his *All Along the Valley* instead of "one-and-thirty years ago," and as late as 1892 wished to alter it since he hated inaccuracy. I persuaded him to let his first reading stand, for the public had learnt to love the poem in its present form: and besides 'two and-thirty' was more melodious."

It is interesting to note that when, in 1863, Tennyson was asked to write something in the Queen's album, he chose this little poem. In a letter to Lady Augusta Bruce, he speaks of the poem: "Altogether I like the little piece as well as anything I have written."

The Poet

First published in 1830, but written much earlier. It is a remarkable poem from the pen of a young man not yet twenty-one years of age. John Stuart Mill, writing of the volume of 1830, in which the poem appeared, says: "If our estimate of Mr. Tennyson be correct, he too is a poet; and many years hence may he read his juvenile description of that character with the proud consciousness that it has become the description and history of his own work.

Exception has been taken to Tennyson's conception of the poet on the ground that thought has precedence

over emotion, morality over beauty. This is to a certain extent true, and it is also true of almost all the poetry written by Tennyson, although he would have been the last to admit that these terms could be set over the one against the other. After the death of Hallam, a change seemed to come over the poet; his thought became more serious, and his poetry showed the effect. His poems for the most part are interpenetrated with lofty, moral teaching, not intruded in such a way as to spoil the artistic beauty of the composition, but none the less there. Art for art's sake was not alone sufficient; it must be art for man's sake as well. The epigram he wrote on this subject, says his son, [*Memoir*, Vol. II, page 92], "in a measure expressed his strong and sorrowful conviction that the English were beginning to forget what was, in Voltaire's words, the glory of English literature:—'No nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation.'" To take away the moral element from the poetry of Tennyson is to leave little behind.

The Epic

First published in 1842. The *Morte d'Arthur* was written as early as 1835, as Edward Fitzgerald states that Tennyson read it to him at that time. The introductory portion was subsequently added. In 1869 the poet added 169 lines at the beginning and 30 at the end of the *Morte d'Arthur*, and republished it as *The Passing of Arthur*, one of *The Idylls of the King*. In its place in the completed *Idylls* the fragment has a symbolic meaning, but here, perhaps, it is as well to treat it as a portion of an epic poem, without any reference except such as appears on the surface, to an underlying meaning or motive. Indeed this is what the poet himself desired, as his son states in the *Memoir*. "How much of history we have in the story of Arthur

is doubtful. Let not my readers press too hardly on details, whether for history or allegory."

Tennyson early showed his interest in the legends that cluster around the person of the early British King Arthur. His early volumes contained *The Lady of Shalott, Sir Galahad, Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere* and the *Morte d'Arthur*. He himself told Mr. Knowles that when he was twenty-four he meant to write a whole great poem having Arthur as his hero, and that he began it in the *Morte d'Arthur*, but that the reviewers had stopped him. Among his early favorites was the *Morte d' Arthur* of Sir Thomas Malory, this book later becoming the mine from which he drew most of the material that went to make up his *Idylls of the King*. The material for the *Morte d'Arthur* is taken from the third, fourth and fifth chapters of the twenty-first book. Tennyson has adhered quite closely to his original; indeed some of the very finest passages in the poem are but slightly changed from the simple but stately prose of Sir Thomas Malory.

The events leading up to the opening of the poem may be briefly stated. Arthur had succeeded in establishing himself firmly on the throne and was now engaged in stamping out wrong-doing within his dominions, and everywhere establishing law and order. Engaged with all his heart and soul in redressing human wrongs, he did not perceive what all others saw, that his queen Guinevere and Lancelot had conceived a guilty passion for one another. This open wrong-doing of Lancelot and the Queen seemed to encourage evil in others and soon corruption spread throughout the court, and the country. At last the lovers were betrayed, and Arthur's eyes were opened. Guinevere fled to the convent at Amesbury, while Lancelot withdrew to his dominions over the seas. Here he was followed by Arthur, who, however, could not prevail against him. In the midst of this conflict, Arthur was forced

to return in order to defend his kingdom against his nephew, Modred, who had rebelled and attempted to seize the throne. The two armies met in the land of Lyonesse. Here a frightful battle took place, both armies being wiped out. At the end only Modred, Arthur and Bedivere are left. The king rushes at his nephew. In the conflict that ensues Modred is killed and Arthur is mortally wounded. It is at this point that the poem opens.

Stopford Brooke, in his *Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life*, has this to say with reference to the epilogue: "The old tale thus modernized in an epilogue, does not lose its dignity; for now the recoming of Arthur is the recoming of Christ in a wider and fairer Christianity. We feel here how the new movement of religion and theology had sent its full and exciting wave into Tennyson. Arthur's death in the battle and the mist is the death of a form of Christianity, which, exhausted, died in doubt and darkness. His advent as a modern gentleman is the coming of a brighter and more loving Christ into the hearts of men."

The description of the reading of the poem given in lines 50 and 51 is said to be an excellent description of the poet's own style of reading. Henry Van Dyke has an article on *The Voice of Tennyson* in *The Century Magazine* for February, 1893.

ŒNONE

First published in 1832 but very much revised and improved in 1842. A few changes of little importance were made in the text during later years.

The story of Œnone may be briefly given as follows: At the marriage of Peleus to Thetis, one of the sea deities, all things were invited, even the gods and goddesses honouring the wedding with their presence. There was one exception, however, to the general

invitation, and that was Eris, the goddess of Discord. Enraged at the slight offered to her, she resolved to have revenge. Accordingly, while the rejoicing was at its height, she appeared in the banqueting hall, and threw upon the table a golden apple marked, "For the Fairest." At once strife arose for the possession of the apple, but all withdrew before the superior claims of Herè, Pallas and Aphroditè. Zeus, too wise to decide himself such an important question, resolved to submit the claims of the three goddesses to a mortal, and chose Paris, a young shephard on Mount Ida, as the arbiter.

Paris, although a shepherd, was in reality of royal birth, being the son of Priam, king of Troy. Before his birth, his mother dreamed that he would prove the ruin of his country, and, accordingly, when he was born, he was exposed on Mount Ida. Fortunately for him he was found by some shepherds, who brought him up carefully and trained him in their own occupation. Here he married Œnone, and they were living happily together, when Iris came with the message from the gods.

The three goddesses appeared before Paris, and each endeavoured to gain the award by rich promises. At last Paris decided in favour of Aphroditè, she having promised him the most beautiful woman in the world for his wife. This brought upon Paris, the hatred of Herè and Pallas, both of whom relentlessly pursued Paris until his death.

Soon afterwards Paris visited Troy in order to take part in the games. He proved victorious over all competitors and plots were laid to kill him. The result was that he was recognized as the son of Priam, who, forgetting all about the ominous dream, acknowledged him as his son. Paris now deserted Œnone and shortly afterwards set sail on an embassy to Greece. While at the court of Menelaus, king of Sparta, he fell in love with Helen, the wife of his host and the most beautiful

woman in Greece. During the absence of Menelaus, Paris persuaded Helen to elope with him, and carried her to Troy. The injured husband at once summoned the Grecian chiefs, who hurried to his relief. An expedition set out for Troy, which after a siege of ten years, was captured and destroyed by the Greeks. So the dream was fulfilled and Paris proved the ruin of his country.

Although *Œnone* is Grecian in form it is entirely modern in spirit. Peter Bayne in *Lessons from my Masters*, puts this very clearly: "Œnone wails melodiously for Paris without the remotest suggestion of fierceness or revengeful wrath. She does not upbraid him for having preferred to her the fairest and most loving wife in Greece, but wonders how anyone could love him better than she does. A Greek poet would have used his whole power of expression to instil bitterness into her resentful words. The classic legend, instead of representing Œnone as forgiving Paris, makes her nurse her wrath throughout all the anguish and terror of the Trojan war. At its end, her Paris comes back to her. Deprived of Helen, a broken and baffled man, he returns from the ruins of his native Troy, and entreats Œnone to heal him of a wound, which, unless she lends her aid, must be mortal. Œnone gnashes her teeth at him, refuses him the remedy, and lets him die. In the end, no doubt, she falls into remorse, and kills herself—this is quite in the spirit of classic legend; implacable vengeance, soul-sickened with its own victory, dies in despair. That forgiveness of injuries could be any thing but weakness—that it could be honourable, beautiful, brave—is an entirely Christian idea; and it is because this idea, although it has not yet practically conquered the world, although it has indeed but slightly modified the conduct of nations, has nevertheless secured recognition as ethically and socially right, that Tennyson could not hope to enlist

the sympathy and admiration of his readers for his Œnone, if he had cast her image in the tearless bronze of Pagan obduracy."

Stopford Brooke in his *Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life*, has an excellent chapter on "The Classical and Romantic Poems of 1842," and Hubert Paul deals with the same subject in the first chapter of his *Men and Letters*.

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