



The Project Gutenberg eBook of Griselda: a society novel in rhymed verse, by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Griselda: a society novel in rhymed verse

Author: Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

Release date: June 30, 2013 [EBook #43066]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Clarity, Charlie Howard, and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net> (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive/Canadian Libraries)

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GRISELDA: A SOCIETY NOVEL IN RHYMED VERSE \*\*\*

Table of Contents added by Transcriber.

# Contents

[CHAPTER I.](#)

[CHAPTER II.](#)

[CHAPTER III.](#)

[CHAPTER IV.](#)

[CHAPTER V.](#)

---

# GRISELDA

---

## GRISELDA

*A SOCIETY NOVEL IN RHYMED VERSE*

"Unnatural? My dear, these things are life:  
And life, some think, is worthy of the Muse."

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER, & Co. L<sup>TD</sup>

PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD

1893

---

*The rights of translation and of reproduction are reserved.*

---

# GRISELDA

## CHAPTER I.

An idle story with an idle moral!  
Why do I tell it, at the risk of quarrel  
With nobler themes? The world, alas! is so,  
And who would gather truth must bend him low,  
Nor fear to soil his knees with graveyard ground,  
If haply there some flower of truth be found.  
For human nature is an earthy fruit,  
Mired at the stem and fleshy at the root,  
And thrives with folly's mison best o'erlaid,  
Nor less divinely so, when all is said.  
Brave lives are lived, and worthy deeds are done  
Each virtuous day, 'neath the all-pitying sun;  
But these are not the most, perhaps not even  
The surest road to our soul's modern heaven.  
The best of us are creatures of God's chance  
(Call it His grace), which works deliverance;  
The rest mere pendulums 'twixt good and ill,  
Like soldiers marking time while standing still.  
'Tis all their strategy, who have lost faith  
In things Divine beyond man's life and death,  
Pleasure and pain. Of heaven what know we,  
Save as unfit for angels' company,  
Say rather hell's? We cling to sins confessed,  
And say our prayers still hoping for the best.  
We fear old age and ugliness and pain,  
And love our lives, nor look to live again.

6

I do but parable the crowd I know,  
The human cattle grazing as they go,  
Unheedful of the heavens. Here and there  
Some prouder, may be, or less hungry steer  
Lifting his face an instant to the sky,  
And left behind as the bent herd goes by,  
Or stung to a short madness, tossing wild  
His horns aloft, and charging the gay field,  
Till the fence stops him, and he vanquished too,  
Turns to his browsing—lost his Waterloo.

7

The moral of my tale I leave to others  
More bold, who point the finger at their brothers,  
And surer know than I which way is best  
To virtue's goal, where all of us find rest,  
Whether in stern denial of things sweet,  
Or yielding timely, lest life lose its feet  
And fall the further.

A plain tale is mine  
Of naked fact, unconscious of design,  
Told of the world in this last century  
Of man's (not God's) disgrace, the XIXth. We  
Have made it all a little as it is  
In our own images and likenesses,  
And need the more forgiveness for our sin.

8

Therefore, my Muse, impatient to begin,  
I bid thee fearless forward on thy road:  
Steer thou thy honest course 'twixt bad and good.  
Know this, in art that thing alone is evil  
Which shuns the one plain word that shames the devil.  
Tell truth without preamble or excuse,  
And all shall be forgiven thee—all, my Muse!

\* \* \* \* \*

In London then not many years ago  
There lived a lady of high fashion, who  
For her friends' sake, if any still there be  
Who hold her virtues green in memory,  
Shall not be further named in this true tale  
Than as Griselda or the Lady L.,  
Such, if I err not, was the second name

Her parents gave when to the font she came,  
And such the initial letter bravely set  
On her coach door, beneath the coronet,  
Which bore her and her fortunes—bore, alas!  
For, as in this sad world all things must pass,  
However great and nobly framed and fair:  
Griselda, too, is of the things that were.

9

But while she lived Griselda had no need  
Of the world's pity. She was proudly bred  
And proudly nurtured. Plenty her full horn  
Had fairly emptied out when she was born,  
And dowered her with all bounties. She was fair  
As only children of the noblest are,  
And brave and strong and opulent of health,  
Which made her take full pleasure of her wealth.  
She had a pitying scorn of little souls  
And little bodies, levying heavy tolls  
On all the world which was less strong than she.  
She used her natural strength most naturally,  
And yet with due discretion, so that all  
Stood equally in bondage to her thrall.  
She was of that high godlike shape and size  
Which has authority in all men's eyes:  
Her hair was brown, her colour white and red,  
Nor idly moved to blush. She held her head  
Straight with her back. Her body, from the knee  
Tall and clean shaped, like some well-nurtured tree,  
Rose finely finished to the finger tips;  
She had a noble carriage of the hips,  
And that proportionate waist which only art  
Dares to divine, harmonious part with part.  
But of this more anon, or rather never.  
All that the world could vaunt for its endeavour  
Was the fair promise of her ankles set  
Upon a pair of small high-insteped feet,  
In whose behalf, though modestly, God wot,  
As any nun, she raised her petticoat  
One little inch more high than reason meet  
Was for one crossing a well-besomed street.  
This was the only tribute she allowed  
To human folly and the envious crowd;  
Nor for my part would I be found her judge  
For her one weakness, nor appear to grudge  
What in myself, as surely in the rest,  
Bred strange sweet fancies such as feet suggest.  
We owe her all too much. This point apart,  
Griselda, modesty's own counterpart,  
Moved in the sphere of folly like a star,  
Aloof and bright and most particular.

10

11

By girlish choice and whim of her first will  
She had espoused the amiable Lord L.,  
A worthy nobleman, in high repute  
For wealth and virtue, and her kin to boot;  
A silent man, well mannered and well dressed,  
Courteous, deliberate, kind, sublimely blessed  
With fortune's favours, but without pretence,  
Whom manners almost made a man of sense.  
In early life he had aspired to fame  
In the world of letters by the stratagem  
Of a new issue, from his private press,  
Of classic bards in senatorial dress,  
"In usum Marchionis." He had spent  
Much of his youth upon the Continent,  
Purchasing marbles, bronzes, pictures, gems,  
In every town from Tiber unto Thames,  
And gaining store of curious knowledge too  
On divers subjects that the world least knew:  
Knowledge uncatalogued, and overlaid  
With dust and lumber somewhere in his head.  
A slumberous man, in whom the lamp of life  
Had never quite been lighted for the strife  
And turmoil of the world, but flickered down  
In an uncertain twilight of its own,

12

With an occasional flash, that only made  
A deeper shadow for its world of shade.  
When he returned to England, all admired  
The taste of his collections, and inquired  
To whose fair fortunate head the lot should fall  
To wear these gems and jewels after all.  
But years went by, and still unclaimed they shone,  
A snare and stumbling-block to more than one,  
Till in his fiftieth year 'twas vaguely said,  
Lord L. already had too long delayed.  
Be it as it may, he abdicated life  
The day he took Griselda to his wife.

13

And then Griselda loved him. All agreed,  
The world's chief sponsors for its social creed,  
That, whether poor Lord L. was or was not  
The very fool some said and idiot,  
Or whether under cloak of dulness crass,  
He veiled that sense best suited to his case,  
Sparing his wit, as housewives spare their light,  
For curtain eloquence and dead of night;  
And spite of whispered tales obscurely spread,  
Doubting the fortunes of her nuptial bed,  
Here at this word all sides agreed to rest:  
Griselda did her duty with the best.

Yet, poor Griselda! When in lusty youth  
A love-sick boy I stood unformed, uncouth,  
And watched with sad and ever jealous eye  
The vision of your beauty passing by,  
Why was it that that brow inviolate,  
That virginal courage yet unscared by fate,  
That look the immortal queen and huntress wore  
To frightened shepherds' eyes in days of yore  
Consoled me thus, and soothed unconsciously,  
And stilled my jealous fears I knew not why?  
How shall I tell the secret of your soul  
Which then I blindly guessed, or how cajole  
My boyhood's ancient folly to declare  
Now in my wisdom the dear maid you were,  
Though such the truth?

14

Griselda's early days  
Of married life were not that fitful maze  
Of tears and laughter which betoken aught,  
Changed or exchanged, of pain with pleasure bought,  
Of maiden freedom conquered and subdued,  
Of hopes new born and fears of womanhood.  
Those who then saw Griselda saw a child  
Well pleased and happy, thoughtlessly beguiled  
By every simplest pleasure of her age,  
Gay as a bird just issued from its cage,  
When every flower is sweet. No eye could trace  
Doubt or disquiet written on her face,  
Where none there was. And, if the truth be told,  
Griselda grieved not that Lord L. was old.  
She found it well that her sweet seventeen  
Should live at peace with fifty, and was seen  
Just as she felt, contented with her lot,  
Pleased with what was and pleased with what was not.  
She held her husband the more dear that he  
Was kind within the bounds of courtesy,  
And love was not as yet within her plan,  
And life was fair, and wisdom led the van.

15

For she was wise—oh, wise! She rose at eight  
And played her scales till breakfast, and then sat  
The morning through with staid and serious looks,  
Counting the columns of her household books,  
Her daily labour, or with puzzled head  
Bent over languages alive and dead,  
Wise as, alas! in life those only are  
Who have not yet beheld a twentieth year.  
Wealth had its duties, time its proper use,  
Youth and her marriage should be no excuse;

16



Her education must be made complete!  
Lord L. looked on and quite approved of it.  
The afternoons, in sense of duty done,  
Went by more idly than the rest had gone.  
If in the country, which Lord L. preferred,  
She had her horse, her dogs, her favourite bird,  
Her own rose-garden, which she loved to rake,  
Her fish to feed with bread crumbs in the lake,  
Her schools, old women, poor and almshouses,  
Her sick to visit, or her church to dress.  
Lord L. was pleased to see her bountiful:  
They hardly found the time to find it dull.

17

In London, where they spent their second year,  
Came occupations suited to the sphere  
In which they lived; and to the just pretence  
Of our Griselda's high-born consequence,  
New duties to the world which no excuse  
Admitted. She was mistress of L. House  
And heir to its traditions. These must be  
Observed by her in due solemnity.  
Her natural taste, I think, repelled the noise,  
The rush, and dust, and crush of London joys;  
But habit, which becomes a second sense,  
Had reconciled her to its influence  
Even in girlhood, and she long had known  
That life in crowds may still be life alone,  
While mere timidity and want of ease  
She never ranked among youth's miseries.  
She had her parents too, who made demand  
Upon her thoughts and time, and close at hand  
Sisters and friends. With these her days were spent  
In simple joys and girlish merriment.  
She would not own that being called a wife  
Should make a difference in her daily life.

18

Then London lacks not of attractions fit  
For serious minds, and treasures infinite  
Of art and science for ingenious eyes,  
And learning for such wits as would be wise,  
Lectures in classes, galleries, schools of art:  
In each Griselda played conspicuous part—  
Pupil and patron, ay, and patron-saint  
To no few poor who live by pens and paint.  
The world admired and flattered as a friend,  
And only wondered what would be the end.

And so the days went by. Griselda's face,  
Calm in its outline of romantic grace,  
Became a type even to the vulgar mind  
Of all that beauty means when most refined,  
The visible symbol of a soul within,  
Conceived immaculate of human sin,  
And only clothed in our humanity  
That we may learn to praise and better be.  
Where'er she went, instinctively the crowd  
Made way before her, and ungrudging bowed  
To one so fair as to a queen of earth,  
Ruling by right of conquest and of birth.

19

And thus I first beheld her, standing calm  
In the swayed crowd upon her husband's arm,  
One opera night, the centre of all eyes,  
So proud she seemed, so fair, so sweet, so wise.  
Some one behind me whispered "Lady L.!"  
His Lordship too! and thereby hangs a tale."

His Lordship! I beheld a placid man,  
With gentle deep-set eyes, and rather wan,  
And rather withered, yet on whose smooth face  
Time seemed to have been in doubt what lines to trace  
Of youth or age, and so had left it bare,  
As it had left its colour to his hair.  
An old young man perhaps, or really old,  
Which of the two could never quite be told.

20

I judged him younger than his years gave right:  
His looks betrayed him least by candlelight.  
Yet, young or old, that night he seemed to me  
Sublime, the priest of her divinity  
At whose new shrine I worshipped. But enough  
Of me and my concerns! More pertinent stuff  
My tale requires than this first boyish love,  
Which never found the hour its fate to prove.  
My Lady smiling motions with her hand;  
The crowd falls back; his Lordship, gravely bland,  
Leads down the steps to where his footmen stay  
In state. Griselda's carriage stops the way!

And was Griselda happy? Happy?—Yes,  
In her first year of marriage, and no less  
Perhaps, too, in her second and her third. 21  
For youth is proud, nor cares its last sad word  
To ask of fate, and not unwilling clings  
To what the present hour in triumph brings.  
It was enough, as I have said, for her  
That she was young and fortunate and fair.  
The world that loved her was a lovely world,  
The rest she knew not of. Fate had not hurled  
A single spear as yet against her life.  
She would not argue as 'twixt maid and wife,  
Where both were woman, human nature, man,  
Which held the nobler place in the world's plan.  
Her soul at least was single, and must be  
Unmated still through its eternity.  
And, even here in life, what reason yet  
To doubt or question or despair of Fate?  
Her youth, an ample web, before her shone  
For hope to weave its subtlest fancies on,  
If she had cared to dream. Her lot was good  
Beyond the common lot of womanhood,  
And she would prove her fortune best in this, 22  
That she would not repine at happiness.  
Thus to her soul she argued as the Spring  
Brought back its joy to each begotten thing—  
Begotten and begetting. Who shall say  
Which had the better reason, she or they?

In the fourth year a half acknowledged grief  
Made its appearance in Griselda's life.  
Her sisters married, younger both than she,  
Mere children she had thought, and happily.  
Each went her way engrossed by her new bliss,  
Too gay to guess Griselda's dumb distress.  
Her home was broken. In their pride they wrote  
Things that like swords against her bosom smote,  
The detail of their hopes, and loves, and fears.  
Griselda read, and scarce restrained her tears.  
Her mother too, the latest fledgling flown,  
Had vanished from the world. She was alone. 23

When she returned to London, earlier  
Than was her custom, in the following year,  
She found her home a desert, dark and gaunt;  
L. House looked emptier, gloomier than its wont.  
Griselda sighed, for on the table lay  
Two letters, which announced each in its way  
The expected tidings of her sisters' joy.  
Either was brought to bed—and with a boy.  
Her generous heart leaped forth to these in vain,  
It could not cheat a first sharp touch of pain,  
But yielded to its sorrow.

That same night,  
Lord L., whose sleep was neither vexed nor light,  
And who for many years had ceased to dream,  
Beheld a vision. Slowly he became  
Aware of a strange light which in his eyes  
Shone to his vast discomfort and surprise;  
And, while perplexed with vague mistrusts and fears,  
He saw a face, Griselda's face, in tears 24

Before him. She was standing by his bed  
Holding a candle. It was cold, she said,  
And shivered. And he saw her wrap her shawl  
About her shoulders closely like a pall.  
Why was she there? Why weeping? Why this light,  
Burning so brightly in the dead of night?  
These riddles poor Lord L.'s half-wakened brain  
Tried dimly to resolve, but tried in vain.

"I cannot sleep to-night," went on the voice,  
"The streets disturb me strangely with their noise,  
The cabs, the striking clocks." Lord L.'s distress  
Struggled with sleep. He thought he answered "Yes."  
"What can I do to make me sleep? I am ill,  
Unnerv'd to-night. This house is like a well.  
Do I disturb you here, and shall I go?"  
Lord L. was moved. He thought he answered "No."  
"If you would speak, perhaps my tears would stop.  
Speak! only speak!"

25

Lord L. here felt a drop  
Upon his hand. She had put down the light,  
And sat upon his bed forlornly white  
And pale and trembling. Her dark hair unbound  
Lay on her knees. Her lips moved, but their sound  
Came strangely to his ears and half-unheard.  
He only could remember the last word:  
"I am unhappy—listen L.!—alone."  
She touched his shoulder and he gave a groan.  
"This is too much. You do not hear me. See,  
I cannot stop these tears. Too much!"

And he  
Now well awake, looked round him. He could catch  
A gleam of light just vanished, and the latch  
Seemed hardly silent. This was all he knew.  
He sat some moments doubting what to do,  
Rose, went out, shivered, hearing nothing, crept  
Back to his pillow, where the vision wept  
Or seemed to weep awhile ago, and then  
With some disquiet went to sleep again.

26

Next morning, thinking of his dream, Lord L.  
Went down to breakfast in intent to tell  
The story of his vision. But he met  
With little sympathy. His wife was late,  
And in a hurry for her school of art.  
His lordship needed time to make a start  
On any topic, and no time she gave.  
Griselda had appointments she must save,  
And could not stop to hear of rhyme or reason—  
The dream must wait a more convenient season.  
And so it was not told.

Alas, alas!  
Who shall foretell what wars shall come to pass,  
What woes be wrought, what fates accomplishèd,  
What new dreams dreamt, what new tears vainly shed,  
What doubts, what anguish, what remorse, what fears  
Begotten in the womb of what new years!—  
And all because of this, that poor Lord L.  
Was slow of speech, or that he slept too well!

27

28

## CHAPTER II.

Thus then it was. Griselda's childhood ends  
With this untoward night; and what portends  
May only now be guessed by those who read  
Signs on the earth and wonders overhead.  
I dare not prophesy.

What next appears  
In the vain record of Griselda's years  
Is hardly yet a token, for her life  
Showed little outward sign of change or strife,  
Though she was changed and though perhaps at war.  
Her face still shone untroubled as a star  
In the world's firmament, and still she moved,  
A creature to be wondered at and loved.  
Her zeal, her wit, her talents, her good sense  
Were all unchanged, though each seemed more intense  
And lit up with new passion and inspired  
To active purpose, valiant and untired.  
She faced the world, talked much and well, made friends,  
Promoted divers schemes for divers ends,  
Artistic, social, philanthropical:  
She had a store of zeal for each and all.  
She pensioned poets, nobly took in hand  
An emigration plan to Newfoundland,  
Which ended in disaster and a ball.  
She visited St. George's hospital,  
The Home for Fallen Women, founded schools  
Of music taught on transcendental rules.  
L. House was dull though splendid. She had schemes  
Of a vast London palace on the Thames,  
Which should combine all orders new and old  
Of architectural taste a house could hold,  
And educate the masses. Then one day,  
She fairly wearied and her soul gave way.

Again she sought Lord L., but not to ask  
This time his counsel in the thankless task  
She could no more make good, the task of living.  
He was too mere a stranger to her grieving,  
Her needs, her weakness. All her woman's heart  
Was in rebellion at the idle part  
He played in her sad life, and needed not  
Mere pity for a pain to madness wrought.  
She did not ask his sympathy. She said  
Only that she was weary as the dead,  
And needed change of air, and life, and scene:  
She wished to go where all the world had been—  
To Paris, Florence, Rome. She could not die  
And not have seen the Alps and Italy.  
Lord L. had tried all Europe, and knew best  
Where she could flee her troubles and find rest.  
Such was her will. Lord L., without more goad,  
Prepared for travel—and they went abroad.

I will not follow here from day to day  
Griselda's steps. Suffice it if I say  
She found her wished-for Paris wearisome,  
Another London and without her home,  
And so went on, as still the fashion was,  
Some years ago, e'er Pulman cars with gas  
And quick night flittings had submerged mankind  
In one mad dream of luggage left behind,  
By the Rhone boat to Provence. This to her  
Seemed a delicious land, strange, barren, fair,  
An old-world wilderness of greys and browns,  
Rocks, olive-gardens, grim dismantled towns,  
Deep-streeted, desolate, yet dear to see,  
Smelling of oil and of the Papacy.  
Griselda first gave reins to her romance  
In this forgotten corner of old France,  
Feeding her soul on that ethereal food,  
The manna of days spent in solitude.

Lord L. was silent. She, as far away  
Saw other worlds which were not of to-day,  
With cardinals, popes, Petrarch and the Muse.  
She stopped to weep with Laura at Vacluse,  
Where waiting in the Mistral poor Lord L.,  
Who did not weep, sat, slept and caught a chill;  
This sent them southwards on through Christendom,  
To Genoa, Florence, and at last to Rome,  
Where they remained the winter.

32

Change had wrought  
A cure already in Griselda's thought,  
Or half a cure. The world in truth is wide,  
If we but pace it out from side to side,  
And our worst miseries thus the smaller come.  
Griselda was ashamed to grieve in Rome,  
Among the buried griefs of centuries,  
Her own sweet soul's too pitiful disease.  
She found amid that dust of human hopes  
An incantation for all horoscopes,  
A better patience in that wreck of Time:  
Her secret woes seemed chastened and sublime  
There in the amphitheatre of woe.  
She suffered with the martyrs. These would know,  
Who offered their chaste lives and virgin blood,  
How mortal frailty best might be subdued.  
She saw the incense of her sorrow rise  
With theirs as an accepted sacrifice  
Before the face of the Eternal God  
Of that Eternal City, and she trod  
The very stones which seemed their griefs to sound  
Beneath her steps, as consecrated ground.  
In face of such a suffering hers must be  
A drop, a tear in the unbounded sea  
Which girds our lives. Rome was the home of grief,  
Where all might bring their pain and find relief,  
The temple of all sorrows: surely yet,  
Sorrow's self here seemed swallowed up in it.

33

'Twas thus she comforted her soul. And then,  
She had found a friend, a phoenix among men,  
Which made it easier to compound with life,  
Easier to be a woman and a wife.

34

This was Prince Belgirate. He of all  
The noble band to whose high fortune fall  
The name and title proudest upon earth  
While pride shall live by privilege of birth,  
The name of Roman, shone conspicuous  
The head and front of his illustrious house,  
Which had produced two pontiffs and a saint  
Before the world had heard of Charles le Quint;  
A most accomplished nobleman in truth,  
And wise beyond the manner of his youth,  
With wit and art and learning, and that sense  
Of policy which still is most intense  
Among the fertile brains of Italy,  
A craft inherited from days gone by.  
As scholar he was known the pupil apt  
Of Mezzofanti, in whose learning lapped  
And prized and tutored as a wondrous child,  
He had sucked the milk of knowledge undefiled  
While yet a boy, and brilliantly anon  
Had pushed his reputation thus begun  
Through half a score of tongues. In art his place  
Was as chief patron of the rising race,  
Which dreamed new conquests on the glorious womb  
Of ancient beauty laid asleep in Rome.  
The glories of the past he fain would see  
Wrought to new life in this new century,  
By that continuous instinct of her sons,  
Which had survived Goths, Vandals, Lombards, Huns,  
To burst upon a wondering world again  
With full effulgence in the Julian reign.

35

In politics, though prudently withdrawn  
From the public service, which he held in scorn,  
As being unworthy the deliberate zeal  
Of one with head to think or heart to feel;  
And being neither priest, nor soldier, nor  
Versed in the practice of Canonic lore,  
He made his counsels felt and privately  
Lent his best influence to "the Powers that be,"—  
Counsels the better valued that he stood  
Alone among the youth of stirring blood,  
And bowed not to that Baal his proud knee,  
The national false goddess, Italy.

36

He was too stubborn in his Roman pride  
To trick out this young strumpet as a bride,  
And held in classic scorn who would become  
Less than a Roman citizen in Rome.  
A man of heart besides and that light wit  
Which leavens all, even pedantry's conceit.  
None better knew than he the art to shew  
A little less in talk than all he knew.  
His manner too, and voice, and countenance,  
Imposed on all, and these he knew to enhance  
By certain freedoms and simplicities  
Of language, which set all his world at ease.  
A very peer and prince and paragon,  
Griselda thought, Rome's latest, worthiest son,  
An intellectual phoenix.

37

#### On her night

A sudden dawn had broke, portentous, bright.  
Her soul had found its fellow. From the day  
Of their first meeting on the Appian Way,  
Beside Metella's tomb, where they had discussed  
The doubtful merit of a new found bust,  
And had agreed to differ or agree,  
I know not which, a hidden sympathy  
Had taken root between them. Either mind  
Found in the other tokens of its kind  
Which spoke in more than words, and naturally  
Leaned to its fellow-mind as tree to tree.  
Lord L., who had known the prince in other days,  
While riding home had spoken in his praise,  
And won Griselda's heart and patient smile,  
For divers threadbare tales of blameless guile  
Among the virtuosi, where the prince  
Had played his part with skill and influence,  
His sworn ally. Lord L. grew eloquent,  
Finding her ears such rapt attention lent,  
And could have gone on talking all his life  
About his friend's perfections to his wife.

38

Griselda listened. In her heart there stirred  
A strange unconscious pleasure at each word,  
Which made the sunshine brighter and the sky  
More blue, more tender in its sympathy.  
The hills of the Campagna crowned with snow  
Moved her and touched, she knew not why nor how.  
The solemn beauty of the world; the fate  
Of all things living, vast and inchoate  
Yet clothed with flowers; the soul's eternal dream  
Of something still beyond; the passionate whim  
Of every noble mind for something good,  
Which should assuage its hunger with new food;  
The thrill of hope, the pulse of happiness,  
The vague half-conscious longing of the eyes—  
All these appealed to her, and seemed to lie  
In form and substance under the blue sky,  
Filling the shadows of the Sabine Hills  
As with a presence, till her natural ills,  
Transfigured through a happy mist of tears,  
Gave place to hopes yet hardly dreamed as hers.  
And still Lord L. talked calmly on, and she  
Listened as to the voice of prophecy,  
Nursing the pressure which the Prince's hand  
Had left in hers, nor cared to understand.

39

From this day forth, I say, a tender mood  
Possessed them both scarce conscious and unwooed,  
Even in the Prince, her elder and a man.  
At least Griselda had no thought nor plan  
Beyond the pleasure of a friendship dear  
To all alike, Lord L., the Prince, and her:  
No plan but that the day would be more sweet,  
More full of meaning, if they chanced to meet;  
And this chanced every day. The Prince was kind  
Beyond all kindness, and Lord L. could find  
No words to speak his thanks he thus should be  
The cicerone of their company.

40

And where a better? Belgirate's lore  
In all things Roman was in truth a store  
From which to steal. At her Gamaliel's knees  
Griselda sat and learned Rome's mysteries  
With all the zeal of a disciple young  
And strange to genius and a pleading tongue.  
The Prince was eloquent. His theme was high,  
One which had taught less vigorous wings to fly,  
The world of other days, the Pagan Rome,  
The scarce less Pagan Rome of Christendom.  
On these the Prince spoke warmly much and well,  
Holding Griselda's patient ears in spell,  
Yet broke off smiling when he met her eye  
Fixed on his face in its mute sympathy:  
A smile which was a question, an appeal,  
And seemed to ask the meaning of her zeal.  
He did not understand her quite. He saw  
Something beyond, unfix'd by any law  
Of woman's nature his experience knew:  
He knew not what to hold or hope as true.  
For she was young and sad and beautiful,  
A very woman with a woman's soul.  
She had so strange a pathos in her eyes,  
A tone so deep, such echoes in her voice.  
What was this Roman Hecuba to her?  
This prate of consul, pontiff, emperor?  
These broken symbols of forgotten pride?  
These ashes of old fame by fame denied?  
What were these stones to her that she should weep,  
Or spend her passion on a cause less deep  
Than her own joys and sorrows? Was it love,  
Or what thing else had such a power to move?  
If there was meaning in red lips! And yet  
'Twere rank impiety to think of it.  
An Italian woman—yes. But she? Who knew  
What English virtue dared yet dared not do?

41

This was the thought which lent its mockery  
To the more tender omen of his eye,  
And checked the pride and chilled the vague desire  
Her beauty half had kindled into fire.  
Yet hope was born and struggled to more life,  
A puny infant with its fears at strife,  
An unacknowledged hidden bastard child,  
Too fair to crush, too wise to be beguiled;  
Even Griselda's prudery confessed  
A star of Bethlehem risen in her East.

42

And thus the winter passed in happiness  
If not in love. I leave to each to guess  
What name 'twere best to give it, for to some  
Who judge such things by simple rule of thumb,  
'Twill seem impossible they thus should meet  
Day after day in palace, temple, street,  
Beneath the sun of heaven or in the shade  
Of those old gardens by the cypress made,  
Or on their horses drinking in the wind  
Of the Campagna, and with care behind,  
Left to take vengeance upon poor Lord L.,  
Some furlongs back a solemn sentinel,  
Or in the twilight slowly stealing home  
Towards the hundred cupolas of Rome,

43

To greet the new-born moon and so repeat  
 Old Tuscan ditties, tender, wise, and sweet,  
 To the light clatter of their horse-hoof's chime  
 In echoing answer of their terza-rhyme—  
 'Twill seem, I say, to some impossible  
 That all this was not love. Yet, sooth to tell,  
 Easter had come and gone, and yet 'twas true  
 No word of love had passed between the two.

The fact is, after the first halcyon hour  
 When she had met the Prince and proved his power  
 To move her inmost soul, Griselda made  
 This compact with her heart no less than head,  
 Being a woman of much logic sense,  
 And knowing all, at least by inference:  
 She was resolved that, come what evil might  
 On her poor heart, the right should still be right,  
 And not a hair's-breadth would she swerve from this,  
 Though it should cost her soul its happiness.  
 She would not trifle longer, nor provide  
 The Prince with pretext for his further pride,  
 Or grant more favour than a friendship given  
 Once and for all, in this world as in heaven.  
 This she indeed could offer, but, if more  
 Were asked, why then, alas! her dream was o'er.  
 I think no actual covenant had passed  
 In words between them either first or last,  
 But that the Prince, though puzzled and perplexed,  
 Had drawn a just conclusion from his text,  
 And read her meaning, while the hazard made,  
 Of certain idle words at random said,  
 Had sapped his confidence, and served to show  
 If speech were wise, 'twas wiser to forego.

Once too he wrote a sonnet. They had spent  
 An afternoon (it was in early Lent)  
 At that fair angle of the city wall  
 Which is the English place of burial,  
 A poet's pilgrimage to Shelley's tomb,—  
 The holiest spot, Griselda thought, in Rome,—  
 A place to worship in, perhaps to pray,  
 At least to meditate and spend the day.

She had brought her friend with her. She had at heart  
 To win his homage for the unknown art  
 Of this dead alien priest of Italy,  
 This lover of the earth, and sea, and sky;  
 And, reading there and talking in that mood  
 Which comes of happiness and youthful blood  
 So near akin to sorrow, their discourse  
 Had touched on human change and pain's remorse  
 Amid the eternal greenness of the spring;  
 And, when they came to part, there had seemed to ring  
 A note of trouble in Griselda's voice,  
 A sigh as if in grief for human joys,  
 An echo of unspoken tenderness,  
 Which caused the Prince to hold her hand in his  
 One little moment longer than was right,  
 When they had shaken hands and bid good night.

And so he wrote that evening on the spur  
 Of the first tender impulse of the hour  
 A sonnet to Griselda, a farewell  
 It seemed to be, yet also an appeal—  
 Perhaps a declaration; who shall say  
 Whether the thought which lightened into day,  
 Between the sorrowing accents of each line,  
 Was more despair or hope which asked a sign?

"Farewell," it said, "although nor seas divide  
 Nor kingdoms separate, but a single street,  
 The sole sad gap between us, scarce too wide  
 For hands to cross, and though we needs must meet  
 Not in a year, a month, but just to-morrow,  
 When the first happy instinct of our feet



Bears us together,—yet we part in sorrow,  
Bidding good-bye, as though we would repeat  
Good-byes for ever. There are gulfs that yawn  
Between us wide with time and circumstance,  
Deep as the gulf which lies 'twixt dead and dead.  
The day of promise finds no second dawn:  
See, while I speak, the pressure of our hands  
Fades slowly from remembrance, and is fled,  
And our weak hearts accept their fate. Nay, nay,  
We meet again, but never as to-day."

47

To this Griselda answered nothing. She  
Was pleased, yet disconcerted. Poetry  
Is always pleasant to a woman's ear,  
And to Griselda had been doubly dear,  
If it had touched less nearly. But her heart  
Had bounded with too violent a start  
To leave her certain of her self-control,  
In this new joy which seemed to probe her soul.  
And feeling frightened she had tried to find  
A reason for the tumult of her mind  
In being angry. He should not have dared  
To strike so near the truth. Or had she bared  
Her soul so plain to his that he should speak  
Of both as an eye-witness? She felt weak  
And out of temper with herself and him,  
And with the sudden waking from a dream  
Too long indulged, and with her own sad fate,  
Which made all dreams a crime against the State.  
There yawned indeed a gulf between them. This  
It needed no such word as had been his  
To bring back to her memory or show  
How wide it was, and deep, and far below;  
And yet she shuddered, for already thought  
Had led her to the brink where reason fought  
With folly, and conjured it to look down  
Into the vast and terrible unknown.  
This was itself an omen.

48

All that day  
Griselda had a headache, and said nay  
To those who called, the Prince among the rest,  
Who came distrusting and returned distressed.  
Awhile this humour lasted. Then they met,  
And Belgirate, venturing a regret  
For having vexed her with so poor a rhyme,  
Griselda had protested want of time  
And want of talent as her sole excuse  
For having made no answer to his Muse,  
Yet cast withal a look so pitiful  
Upon his face it moved his very soul.  
This closed the incident. He might have spoken  
Perhaps that instant, and received some token  
Of more than a forgiveness. But his fate  
Had willed it otherwise or willed too late.  
For love forgives not, plead it as we may  
To speak the unspoken "Yes" of yesterday.

49

---

50

## CHAPTER III.

Who has not seen the falls of Tivoli,  
The rocks, the foam-white water, and the three  
Fair ruined temples which adorn the hill?  
Who has not sat and listened to the shrill  
Sweet melody of blackbirds, and the roar  
Of Anio's voice rebounding from the shore,  
Nor would have given his very soul to greet  
Some passing vision of a white nymph's feet,  
And weaving arms, as the wild chasm's spray  
Beat on his face, for ever answering "Nay?"  
Who has not turned away with sadder face,  
Abashed before the genius of the place,  
A wiser man, and owned upon his knees,  
The dull transmontane Goth and boor he is?  
Who that was born to feel?

What sons of clay  
Are these that stand among your shrines to-day,  
Gods of the ancient rivers! and who set  
The heavy impress of barbarian feet  
Upon your classic shores, and dare to love  
Your ruined homes in temple, rock, and grove!  
What new rude sons of Japhet! What mad crew,  
Whose only creed is what it dares to do  
Through lack of knowledge, whose undoubting heart,  
Here in the very temples of old art,  
Brings out its little tribute, builds its shrines,  
Wreathes its sad garlands of untutored lines,  
Writes, paints, professes, sculptures its new gods,  
And dares to have its home in your abodes!

Oh, if I had a soul oppressed with song,  
A tongue on fire to prophesy among  
My brother prophets, if I had a hand  
Which needs must write its legend on life's sand  
With brush or chisel, I at least would choose  
Some soil less fair, less sacred to the Muse,  
Some younger, wilder land, where no sad voice  
Had ever stammered forth its tale of joys,  
And loves and sorrows, or in tones less rude  
Than the brute pulsing of its human blood;  
If I would build a temple, it should be  
At least not here, not here in Italy,  
Where all these temples stand. My thought should shape  
Its fancies in rough granite on some cape  
O'erlooking the Atlantic, from whose foam  
No goddess ever leaped, and not in Rome,  
Beneath the mockery of immortal eyes,  
Gazing in marble down, so coldly wise!

Such was Griselda's thought, which, half aloud,  
She uttered one May morning 'mid a crowd  
Of pleasure-seekers, come from Rome to see  
The wonder of these falls of Tivoli,  
And Belgirate's villa, where the Prince  
Was offering entertainment (for his sins),  
And dancing to all such as called him friend  
That Spring in Rome, now nearly at an end;—  
A thought suggested by the place and by  
A German painter, who undauntedly  
Was plying a huge canvas just begun,  
With brush and palette seated in the sun.  
She had hardly meant to speak, and when Lord L.  
Objected (for he knew his classics well)  
That landscape-painting was an unknown trade  
In the days of Horace, blushed for her tirade,  
And turned to Belgirate, who stood near,  
Playing the host to all the world and her.

The Prince appealed to, though his care was less  
With what was spoken than the speaker's face,  
Took up the parable, confessed the truth

Of all each ventured, and agreed with both.  
Nature, he said, and art, though now allied,  
Had not in all times thus walked side by side.  
Indeed the love of Nature, now so real,  
Was alien to the love of the ideal,  
The classic love which claimed as though of need  
Some living presence for each fountain-head,  
Each grove, each cavern, satyr, nymph, or god,  
A human shape unseen yet understood.  
This was the thought which lived in ancient art,  
Eschewing the waste places of the heart,  
And only on compulsion brought to face  
Brute Nature's aspect in its nakedness.  
Nature as Nature was a thought too rude  
For these, untempered in its solitude.  
It had no counterpart in our new love  
Of mountain, sea and forest. Then, each grove  
Asked for its statue, each perennial spring  
Its fountain. Solitude itself must bring  
Its echo. Every mountain top of Greece  
Beheld fair temples rise. A law of peace  
Reigned over art in protest at the mood  
Of social life which drenched the world in blood.  
All now had been reversed. Our modern creed  
Scouted the law that men were born to bleed.  
It turned from human nature, if untaught,  
And wrought mankind, perhaps and overwrought  
Into trim shapes, and then for its relief  
Rushed to the wilderness to vent its grief  
In lonely passion. Here it neither sought  
Nor found a presence which it needed not.  
It chose wild hills and barren seas. It saw  
Beauty in tumult, in revolt a law.  
Here it gave reins to its brute instincts. Here  
It owned no god, no guide, no arbiter.  
Its soul it must avenge of discipline,  
And Nature had gone naked from the shrine.  
This was its consolation.

Of the score  
Who stood around him and who praised his lore,  
Perhaps no single listener understood  
The thought which underlay the Prince's mood,  
Or guessed its bitterness—not even she  
Who lent the moral to his mockery.  
Yet she was moved. In her too was a need  
Of consolation for too fair a creed,  
An impulse of rebellion. In her blood  
There lived a germ of Nature unsubdued,  
Which would not be appeased. She too had sought  
A refuge from the tyranny of thought  
In the brute impulses of sea and plain  
And cloud and forest far from haunts of men.  
A vain mad search. The fetters of her pride  
Galled her like sores. Griselda turned and sighed.

That evening on the terrace, vaguely lit  
With paper lanterns and the infinite  
Display of those fair natural lamps, the stars,  
And 'neath the influence of the planet Mars  
Or Venus or another—which it was  
We best may judge by that which came to pass—  
The Prince essayed his fortune.

From the hour  
Of their first flash of eloquence, some power,  
Some most persistent and ingenious fate  
Of idle tongues had held them separate,  
Griselda and the Prince—him in his part  
Of host, with cares not wholly of the heart  
Demanding his attention, while on her  
Friends fastened more than dull and less than dear.  
In vain they stopped, and loitered, and went on,  
Leaving no trick untried, unturned no stone;  
In vain they waited. Still their hope deferred

Failed of its object, one consoling word,  
One little sigh as of relief thus given:  
"Well, they are gone at last, and thanked be Heaven."  
But hour on hour went by, and accident  
Seemed still at pains to frustrate their intent,  
Piling up grief for them and poor Lord L.,  
On whom, in fault of foes, their vengeance fell.  
'Twas worst for her. She knew not whom to strike,  
Lord L., her friends, the Prince—'twas now alike.  
She had lost in fact her temper, if I dare  
Thus speak of one so wise and one so fair,  
And to the point that now there was no room  
For other thought, but L. should take her home,  
Away and speedily.

58

The Prince, who knew  
No word of what a storm Fate held in brew,  
And who had sought, in innocence of all,  
Griselda's hand to lead the opening ball,  
And sought in vain, now found, to his despair,  
My lady cloaked and standing on the stair.  
She was alone. "Lord L. had gone," she said,  
"To bid the Prince good night. Her foolish head  
Had played her false, and ached with the new heat  
Of the May sun (even L. complained of it).  
They must be home betimes. Next day was Sunday,  
And they had much to do 'twixt that and Monday,  
In view of their departure." "Whither? whence?  
In Heaven's name," exclaimed the astounded Prince.  
"Why, home to England, she had thought he knew:  
She must have told him. L. was more than due  
In London, where his place in Parliament  
Required his presence. He had missed the Lent,  
And dared not miss the Easter session. She  
Thought he was right, altho',"—and suddenly  
She burst in tears. The Prince, in dire distress,  
Besought her to be calm. But she, with face  
Hid in both hands, and turning from the light,  
Broke from his arms, and rushed into the night.  
Across the hall, beneath the portico,  
And down the steps she fled, to where below  
The garden lay all dim with starlit shade,  
And the white glimmer of the main façade.  
Here Belgirate found her on a seat,  
Crouched in an angle of the parapet,  
And sobbing as in terror. His surprise  
Was changed to resolution. To his eyes  
The world became transfigured. "Lady L.,"  
He whispered, "what is this? You love me? Well,  
Why do you weep?"

59

He took her hands in his  
And pressed them to his lips; and at the kiss  
Griselda started from the heap she was  
And sat upright, with pale pathetic face  
Turned to the night. By the dim starlight he  
Beheld, half-awed and half in ecstasy,  
The strange emotion of her countenance.  
She made no gesture to withdraw her hands,  
No sign of disagreement with his words.  
Her eyes looked scared and troubled like a bird's  
Caught in a net, and seemed to ask of Fate  
Where the next blow should fall. 'Twas thus she sat  
Speechless, inanimate, nor seemed to breathe.  
The Prince could hear the chattering of her teeth,  
And feel her shiver in the warm night wind,—  
And yet its touch was hardly thus unkind.

60

He too, poor soul, in hope and tenderness,  
Still kissed her hands, and kissed her gloves and dress,  
And kneeling at her feet embraced her knees  
With soothing arms and soft cajoleries.  
She dared not turn nor speak. The balustrade  
Served as a pretext for her with its shade  
Hiding his face. She would not seem to guess

61

All that his fondness asked of her distress:  
A word might break the spell. She only knew  
She was a poor sad woman, doomed to do  
Sorrow to all who loved her, that the Prince  
Had spoken truly, and her long pretence  
Of innocence was o'er. She scorned to make  
An idle protest now for honour's sake.  
He had a right to ask for what he would  
Now that she loved him, and her womanhood  
Reserved one tearful right, and only one,  
To hide her face an instant and be gone.

How long they sat thus silent who shall say?  
Griselda knew not. Time was far away;  
She wanted courage to prepare her heart  
For that last bitterest word of all, "We part;"  
And he cared naught for time: his heaven was there,  
Nor needed thought, nor speech, nor even prayer.

62

A sound of music roused them. From the house  
Voices broke in and strains tumultuous,  
Proving the dance begun. Then with a sigh  
Griselda turned her head, and piteously  
Looked in his face. She moved as if to go,  
And when he held her still, "For pity, no,  
Let me be gone," she cried. "I ask it thus,"  
Clasping her hands. "You will not? No! alas!  
You must not doubt me when I speak the truth;  
This is a great misfortune for us both."  
"Griselda," he began. "Oh, stop," she said,  
"You know not what you ask." She bent her head  
Close to his own. "I am not what I seem,  
A woman to be loved, not even by him  
Whom I might choose to worship. Mine must be  
An unfinished life, not quite a tragedy,  
Even to my friends, an idle aimless life,  
Not worth an argument, still less a strife.  
You must forget, forgive me. We were friends,  
Friends still perhaps; but, oh! this first day ends  
Our love for ever. What you said was true,  
Only I never guessed it."

63

The Prince knew  
That she was weeping, and a single sob  
Broke from her lips. She seemed her wounds to probe.  
"Yes, I have loved you, loved you from the first,  
The day we met at Terni, when you burst  
Like sunshine on the storm of my dark life—  
You, wise and free—I, only the sad wife  
Of one you called a friend. The fault was mine  
And mine alone. In you there was no sin:  
You stood too far from me, too high above  
My woman's follies even to dream of love.  
There, do not answer. You were kind to me,  
Good, patient, wise—you could no other be—  
But, oh! you never loved me."

64

Here again  
The Prince broke in protesting (but in vain):  
Her words were madness and his heart was hers.  
She would not listen nor control her tears—  
"You never loved me. This one thought I hold  
In consolation of my manifold  
Deceits and errors. You at least are free  
From all deceptions and remorse and me:—  
I cannot cause you sorrow, else it were  
Indeed too pitiful, too hard to bear."

She stooped and kissed his forehead reverently,  
As one would kiss a relic; and when he  
Still would have spoken, stopped him with a hand  
Laid on his lips, half-prayer and half-command.  
She would not let him speak. The prince, tho' mute,  
Now pleaded with his hands and pressed his suit  
With better eloquence, for this to her

65

Seemed less a crime than speech. Her ignorant fear  
Had hardly fathomed yet the troubled sea  
On which her lot was cast thus dangerously.  
She only feared his words to prove him right;  
And these caresses in the dim still night  
Soothed and consoled her. They were too unreal,  
Too strange to her experience, quite to feel  
Or quite to question. She, with half-shut eyes,  
And face averted, ceased to feel surprise,  
And ceased to think. She was a child again,  
Caressed and fondled. She forgot her pain,  
And almost even his presence in the place.  
He was too near and could not see her face.  
Besides, Griselda loved him. Only once  
She made a silent protest with her hands,  
As one might make asleep, and in her dream  
Opened her eyes, and seemed to question him  
With the pathetic instinct as of doom.  
The Prince in rapture judged his hour was come.

66

Alas! poor Prince. If thou hadst had thy bliss,  
I would not then have grudged thy happiness,  
Thine nor Griselda's. Happiness is not  
A merchandise men buy or leave unbought  
And find again. It is a wild bird winging  
Its way through heaven, in joyous circles ringing,  
Aloft, at its own will. Then, e'er we wist,  
It stooped and sat a moment on our wrist,  
And fondled with our fingers, and made play  
With jess and hood as if it meant to stay.  
And we, if we were wise and fortunate,  
And if the hour had been decreed of fate,  
Seized the glad bird and held it in our hand,  
And forced it to obey our least command,  
Knowing that never more, if not made sure,  
It would come again to voice, or sign, or lure.

Oh, such is happiness. That night for them  
Fate stood, a genius, suppliant and tame,  
Demanding to do service. Had they willed,  
The treasure-house of heaven had been unfilled  
And emptied in their lap. They too, even they,  
Mere mortals born, inheritors of clay,  
Had known eternal life, and been as gods,  
Only the will between them was at odds,  
Only the word was wanting.

67

What one thing  
It was that frightened Fate to taking wing,  
And scared for ever the celestial bird,  
And left them desolate, if I have heard  
I do not now remember, nor would say  
Even if I knew. 'Twas told me not to-day  
Nor yesterday, but in a time long since,  
By one of the two who knew, in confidence,  
And then not quite perhaps the utter truth—  
Whoever tells it? But there came to both  
A moment when, as Belgirate knew,  
There was no further power to plead or sue:  
They had played with Fate too long. Their hour was over;  
She was no more his love nor he her lover.  
His courage was exhausted. One by one  
His fingers, which still held Griselda's gown,  
Relaxed their hold. His hands dropped by his side,  
His head upon his bosom, and the pride,  
Which was the reason of his being, quailed.  
Grief in that hour and tenderness prevailed,  
And tears rushed to his eyes, long strangers there,  
And to his lips, Italian-like, a prayer,  
While he lay prostrate, his face turned from heaven,  
Under the stars.

68

The tower clock struck eleven  
And roused him. He had neither heard nor known  
Griselda's going, but he was alone.

And she? Griselda? In a whirl of grief,  
 Tortured, distracted, hopeless of relief,  
 And careless now what eye should see her tears,  
 Whom none could mock with bitterer jibes than hers,  
 And speechless to all question of her lord,  
 Who sought to learn what portent had occurred,  
 And still reverted to the theme begun  
 Of Roman fever and the Roman sun;  
 She was driven back to Rome. Two days her door  
 Was shut to all the world, both rich and poor,  
 And on the third she went to Ostia,  
 Pleading a wild desire to see the sea.

69

The sea! What virtue is there in the sea  
 That it consoles us thus in misery?  
 In joy we do not love it, and our bliss  
 Scoffs at its tears and scorns its barrenness.  
 Our pride of life is in the fruitful Earth,  
 The mother of all joy, which gave us birth,  
 The Earth so touching in its hopes to be,  
 So green, so tender in its sympathy.  
 But when life turns to bitterness—ah! then,  
 Where is Earth's message to the sons of men?  
 How does she speak? What sound of grief is hers  
 To match our grief? What tale of pity stirs  
 Her jubilant heart? The laughing woods give back  
 Naught of their happiness to those who lack.  
 The beauty of the uplands bars relief,  
 The prosperous fields are insolent to grief;  
 There is no comfort in the lowing herds,  
 The hum of bees, the songs, the shouts of birds;  
 There is no sob in all the living earth,  
 Naught but the flutter of discordant mirth,  
 On which, as on a pageant, morn and even  
 The careless sun shines mockingly from heaven.  
 There is no grief in all the world save one,  
 The ocean's voice, as tearful as our own.  
 Then from the Earth we turn—too potent mother,  
 Too joyous in her offspring—to that other,  
 The childless, joyless, unproductive Sea,  
 And mourn with her her dread virginity.  
 We clasp her naked rocks with our two hands,  
 Barefoot we tread her barren waste of sands,  
 Her breadths of shingle and her treeless shore,  
 Knowing her griefs are as our griefs, and more,  
 An eternal lack of love.

70

'Twas in this guise  
 Griselda cradled her soul's miseries,  
 And nursed it in its anguish like a child,  
 And soothed it to oblivion. The sea smiled  
 With its eternal smile upon her sorrow,  
 The selfsame yesterday, to-day, to-morrow,  
 And kept its tears in its own bosom sealed,  
 A mystery of passion unrevealed,  
 Save in the tremor of its voice at noon,  
 When the wind rose and played wild chords thereon.  
 So she.

71

The memory of that place long stood  
 In her remembrance as a dream of good,  
 Dividing life as sleep divides the day,  
 A place of utter weakness. Let those say  
 Who will, that deeds of strength life's milestones are.  
 The dearest days are not the days of war,  
 And victory is forgotten in the peace  
 Of certain hours gone by in helplessness,  
 When the soul ceased to battle, and lay still  
 As on a deathbed dumb to good and ill.  
 These are its treasures.

72

Nor was silence all  
 Griselda's ointment. Hard by the sea-wall,

Where daily her steps turned fresh peace to find,  
A convent stood, inviting to the mind.  
Here she found entrance at the chapel gate,  
And knelt in prayer half-inarticulate,  
Bowed to the earth. For patron saints it had  
The Marys three—"two virtuous, and one bad,"  
Griselda thought, "like her own self"—who came  
In flight together from Jerusalem,  
And landed there; and these in her great need,  
She suppliant asked for her soul's daily bread,  
Using all fondest words her lips could frame,  
To speak her secret wishes without blame.  
Six candlesticks she vowed, to each a pair,  
So they would listen to and grant her prayer.  
The superstition pleased her. In her pride  
She bowed and begged like any peasant's bride,  
For what? for whom? she hardly could explain  
Even to her, the dear St. Magdalen.  
"And yet," she argued, "she at least will know  
And understand me if no other do."

All this was folly, but it comforted  
And gave her strength. Then with a calmer head,  
If not a calmer heart, she turned once more  
From love to life. Her first strong grief was o'er.

---



## CHAPTER IV.

How shall I take up this vain parable  
And ravel out its issue? Heaven and hell,  
The principles of good and evil thought,  
Embodied in our lives, have blindly fought  
Too long for empire in my soul to leave  
Much for its utterance, much that it can grieve.  
A soldier on the battlefield of life,  
I have grown callous to the signs of strife,  
And feel the wounds of others and my own  
With scarce a tremor and without a groan.  
I have seen many perish in their sins,  
Known much of frailty and inconsequence,  
And if I laughed once, now I dare not be  
Other than sad at man's insanity.  
Therefore, in all humility of years,  
Colder and wiser for hopes drowned in tears,  
And seeking no more quarries for my mirth,  
Who most need pity of the sons of earth,  
I dip in kindlier ink my chastened pen,  
And fill of my lost tale what leaves remain.

75

Years passed. Griselda from my wandering sight  
Had waned and vanished, like a meteor bright,  
Leaving no pathway in my manhood's heaven,  
Save only memories vaguely unforgiven  
Of something fair and sad, which for a day  
Had lit its zenith and had gone its way.  
Rome and the Prince, the tale that I had heard,  
Griselda's beauty—all that once had stirred  
My curious thought to wonder and regret,  
In the vexed problem of her woman's fate,  
Had yielded place to the world's work-day cares,  
The wealth it covets and the toil it dares.  
I was no more a boy, when idle chance  
And that light favour which attends romance  
Brought me once more within the transient spell  
Of other days, and dreams of Lady L.

76

'Twas in September (I have always found  
That month in my life's record dangerous ground,  
Whether it be due to some unreasoned stress  
Of the mad stars which dog our happiness,  
Or whether—since in truth most things are due  
To natural causes, if our blindness knew—  
To the strong law of Nature's first decay,  
Warning betimes of time that cannot stay,  
And summer perishing, and hours to come,  
Lit by less hope in the year's martyrdom;  
And so we needs must seize at any cost  
Fleet pleasure's hem lest all our day be lost)  
'Twas in September, at a country house  
In the Midland shires, where I had come, God knows,  
Without a thought but of such joyous sort  
As manhood ventures in the realms of sport  
With that dear god of slaughter England's sons  
Adore with incense-smoke and roar of guns,  
That this new chapter opens. Who had guessed  
So rare a phoenix housed in such a nest?

77

For we, in truth, were no wise company,  
Men strong and joyous, keen of hand and eye,  
And shrewd for pleasure, but whose subtlest wit  
Was still to jest at life while using it,  
And jest at love, as at a fruit low hung  
To all men's lips, no matter whence it sprung.  
A fool's philosophy, yet dear to youth  
Bred without knowledge of the nobler truth,  
And seeming wisdom, till the bitter taste  
Of grief has come to cure its overhaste.  
Naught was there, in the scene nor in the parts  
Played by the actors, worthy serious hearts,  
Or worthy her whose passion trod a stage

High o'er the frailties of our prurient age,  
Griselda and her unattained fair dream  
Of noble deeds and griefs unknown to them.  
How came she there?

78

Our hostess was a woman  
Less famed for wisdom than a heart all human,  
Rich in life's gifts, a wealthy generous soul,  
But still too fair and still too bountiful.  
The rest, mad hoydens of the world, whose worth  
Lay mired with folly, earthiest of the earth.  
How came she there?

When I, unconscious all  
Of such high presence at our festival,  
Heard her name bandied in the general hum  
Of hungry tongues, which told the guests had come,  
And saw in converse with our host the form,  
Familiar once in sunshine and in storm,  
Of her who was to me the type and sign  
Of all things noble, not to say Divine,  
Breathing the atmosphere of that vain house,  
My heart stopped beating. Half incredulous,  
I looked and questioned in my neighbours' eyes,  
Seeking the sense of this supreme surprise.  
My thought took words, as at the table set  
Men's lips were loosed, discoursing while they ate,  
And each to each.

79

Beside me, of the crew  
Of gilded youths who swelled the retinue  
Of our fair hostess in her daily lot  
Of hunting laughter when field sports were not,  
Sat one, a joyous boy, whom fashion's freak,  
A mad-cap courage and a beardless cheek,  
Had set pre-eminent in pleasure's school  
To play the hero and to play the fool  
For those few years which are the summer's day  
Of fashion's foils ere they are cast away.  
Young Jerry Manton! Happy fortune's son,  
What heights of vanity your creed had won,  
Creed of adventure, and untiring words  
And songs and loves as brainless as a bird's.  
Who would not envy you your lack of sense,  
Your lawless jibes, your wealth of insolence,  
The glory of your triumphs unconcealed  
In pleasure's inmost and most sacred field!  
Who would not share the sunshine of your mirth,  
Your god-like smile, your consciousness of worth,  
The keenness of your wit in the world's ways,  
Your heart so callous to its blame or praise!  
Him I addressed, in pursuance of my doubt  
How such a prodigy had come about.

80

Young Manton eyed me. "Every road," he said,  
"Leads—well—to Rome." He laughed and shook his head,  
As if in censure of a thought less sage.  
"My lady's thirty is a dangerous age,  
And of the three where most misfortunes come  
Is the worst strewn with wrecks in Christendom."  
"You see," he added, "we are not all wise  
In all dilemmas and all companies,  
And there are times and seasons when the best  
Has need of an hour's frolic with the rest,  
If only to set free the importunate load  
Of trouble pressing on an uphill road.  
Women's first snare is vanity. At twenty  
Praises are pleasant, be they ne'er so plenty;  
And some, the foolish ones, are thus soon caught  
Seeking to justify the flattery taught.  
These are the spendthrifts, dear ingenuous souls,  
Whose names emblazoned stand on pleasure's rolls,  
Manning the hosts of mirth. Apart from them,  
More serious or less eager in their aim,  
The wise ones wait like birds that hold aloof,

81

Conscious of danger and the cloven hoof.  
Yet there are times."

He paused awhile and sighed.  
"The second snare," said he, "is set less wide;  
It stands midway between the dawn of youth  
And beauty's sunset, with its naked truth,  
A danger hidden cunningly in flowers,  
And the wild drowsing of the noontide hours.  
Here fall the elect, the chosen virtuous few,  
Who have outlived the worst the storm could do,  
But faint when it is over, through mere stress  
Of their mortality's first weariness.  
'Tis hard to see youth perish, even when  
Ourselves to the mad warrant have set pen;  
And for the wisest there are days of grief  
And secret doubts and hours of unbelief  
In all things but the one forbidden bliss  
Churchmen forbid, and poets call a kiss.  
Why should we wonder? 'Tis a kindlier fate  
At least than that, the last, which comes too late,  
The old fool's folly nursed at forty-five.  
Griselda is an angel, but alive,  
Believe me, to her wings." A fatuous flush  
Mantled his face, not quite perhaps a blush,  
But something conscious, as of one who knows.  
"Virtue and pleasure are not always foes,"  
He sighed. "And much depends upon the man."

82

I turned impatient. There, behind her fan,  
At the far table's end, Griselda's eyes  
Were watching us, half hid by its disguise,  
But conscious too, as if a secret string  
Had vibrated 'twixt her and that vain thing,  
The cynic boy, whose word was in my ear,  
Dishonouring to me and him and her.  
Our eyes met, and hers fell; a sudden pain  
Touched me of memory, and in every vein  
Ran jealous anger at young Manton's wit,  
While, half aloud, I flung my curse on it.

83

Later, I found Griselda gravely gay,  
And glad to see me in the accustomed way  
Of half affection my long zeal had won,  
Her face no older, though the years had spun  
Some threads unnoticed in her fair brown hair  
Of lighter hue than I remembered there,  
Less silver streaked than gold. All else had grown  
Fairer with time, and tenderer in its tone,  
As when in August woods a second burst  
Of leaves is seen more golden than the first.  
A woman truly to be loved—but loving?  
There was the riddle wit despaired of proving,  
For who can read the stars? I sat with her  
The evening through, and rose up happier:  
In all that crowd there was no single face  
Worthy her notice, not to say her grace,  
And once again her charm was on my soul.  
"If she love any"—this was still the goal  
Of my night thoughts in argument with fear—  
"Say what they will, the lover is not here."  
Not here! And yet, at parting, she had pressed  
Manton's sole hand, and nodded to the rest.

84

Four days I lived in my fool's paradise,  
Importuning Griselda's changing eyes  
With idle flattery. I found her mood  
Softer than once in her young womanhood,  
Yet restless and uncertain. There were hours  
Of a wild gaiety, when all the powers  
Of her keen mind were in revolt with folly,  
Others bedimmed with wordless melancholy.  
Once too or twice she shocked me with a phrase  
Of doubtful sense, revealing thoughts and ways  
New to her past, an echo of the noise

85

Of that mad world we lived in and its joys:  
Such things were sacrilege. I could not see  
Unmoved my angel smirched with vanity,  
Even though, it seemed at moments, for my sake.  
Her laughter, when she laughed, made my heart ache,  
And I had spared some pain to see her sad  
Rather than thus unseasonably glad.

Who would have dreamed it? Each new idle day,  
When, tired with sport, we rested from the fray,  
Five jovial shooters, jaded by the sun,  
Seeking refreshment at the stroke of noon,—  
There, with the luncheon carts all trimly dight,  
Stood Lady L., to the fool crowd's delight.  
You would have thought her life had always been  
Passed in the stubbles, as, with questions keen,  
She eyed the bags and parleyed with the "guns;"  
Rome's matron she with us the Goths and Huns.  
Young Manton proudly spread for her his coat  
Under a hedge, and she resented not.  
Resented! Why resent? Nay, smiles were there.  
And a swift look of pleasure, still more rare,  
Pleasure and gratitude, as though the act  
Had been of chivalry in form and fact  
Transcending Raleigh's. Ay, indeed! Resent!  
That eye were blind which doubted what it meant.

And still I doubted. Vanity dies hard.  
And love, however starving of reward,  
And youth's creed of belief. It seemed a thing  
Monstrous, impossible, bewildering,  
As tales of dwarfs and giants gravely told  
By men of science, and transmuted gold,  
And magic potions turning men to beasts,  
And lewd witch Sabbaths danced by unfrocked priests.  
Griselda! Manton! In what mood or tense  
Could folly conjugate such dreams to sense,  
Or draw the contract not in terms absurd  
Of such a friendship or of act or word?  
Where was the common thought between the two—  
Even of partridges—the other knew?  
Manton—Griselda! Nay 'twere fabulous,  
A mere profanity, to argue thus;  
Only I watched them closer when they strayed  
To gather blackberries, as boy and maid  
In a first courting, and her eager eyes  
Turned as he spoke, and laughter came unwise  
Before she answered, and an hour was flown,  
Before he joined the rest and she was gone.

O Love! what an absurdity thou art,  
How heedless of proportion, whole or part!  
Time, place, occasion, what are they to thee?  
Thou playest the wanton with Solemnity,  
The prince with Poverty, the rogue with Worth,  
The fool with all the Wisdoms of the Earth.  
Thou art a leveller, more renowned than Death,  
For he, when in his rage he stops our breath,  
Leaves us at least the harvest of our years,  
The right to be heroic in our tears.  
But thou dost only mock. Thou art a king  
Dealing with slaves, who waits no questioning,  
But gives—to this a province and a crown,  
To that a beggar's staff and spangled gown;  
And when some weep their undeserved disgrace,  
Plucks at their cheeks and smites them in the face.  
Thou hast no reverence, no respect for right.  
Virtue to thee is a lewd appetite,  
Remorse a pastime, modesty a lure,  
And love, the malady, love's only cure.

Griselda, in her love at thirty-three,  
Was the supreme fool of felicity.  
Reason and she had taken separate roads,  
A spectacle of mirth for men and gods.

And the world laughed—discreetly in its sleeves—  
At her poor artless shifts and make-believes.  
For it was true, true to the very text,  
This whispered thing that had my soul perplexed,  
Manton was her beloved—by what art,  
What mute equation of the human heart,  
What blind jibe of dame Fortune, who shall say?  
The road of passion is no king's highway,  
Mapped out with finger-posts for all to see,  
But each soul journeys on it separately,  
And only those who have walked its mazes through  
Remember on what paths the wild flowers grew.

89

Ay, who shall say? Nor had the truth been sung,  
Save for the incontinence of Manton's tongue,  
Wagging in argument on certain themes,  
With boast of craft in pleasure's stratagems.  
"For Love" ('twas thus he made his parable  
In cynic phrase, as hero of his tale,  
One evening when the others were abed,  
And we two sat on smoking, head to head,  
Discoursing in that tone of men scarce friends,  
Who prate philosophy to candle ends),  
"Love, though its laws have not as yet been written  
By any Balzac for our modern Britain,  
And though perhaps there is no strategy  
Youth can quite count upon or argue by,  
Is none the less an art, with some few rules  
Wise men observe, who would outrun the fools.  
Now, for myself" (here Manton spread his hands  
With professorial wave in white wrist-bands)  
"I hold it as a maxim always wise  
In making love to deal with contraries.  
Colours, books tell us, to be strongly blent,  
Need opposite colours for their complement,  
And so too women whose ill-reasoning mind  
Requires some contradiction to be kind."

90

"It is not enough in this late year of grace  
To answer fools with their own foolishness—  
Rather with your best wisdom. You will need  
Your folly to perplex some wiser head.  
And so my maxim is, whatever least  
Women expect, that thing will serve you best.  
Thus, with young souls in their first unfledged years,  
Ask their opinion as philosophers:  
Consult their knowledge in the ways of life.  
The repute of sin will please a too chaste wife.  
Your deference keep for harlots: these you touch  
Best by your modesty, which makes them blush.  
With a proud beauty deal out insolence,  
And bear her fence down with a stronger fence.  
She will be angry, but a softer cheek  
Turn to the smiter who has proved her weak.  
And so with wisdom: meet it with surprise,  
Laugh at it idly gazing in its eyes,  
Leave it no solid ground for its fair feet,  
And lead it lightly where love's waters meet.  
Even virtue—virtue of the noblest type,  
The fair sad woman, whose romance is ripe,  
Needs but a little knowledge to be led,  
Perhaps less than the rest if truth be said.  
You must not parley with her. Words are vain,  
And you might wake some half forgotten pain.  
Avoid her soul. It is a place too strong  
For your assaulting, and a siege were long.  
Others have failed before it. Touch it not,  
But march beyond, nor fire a single shot.  
The fields of pleasure less defended lie:  
These are your vantage-ground for victory.  
Strike boldly for possession and command;  
An hour may win it, if you hold her hand.  
I knew one once:"...

91

92

I would have stopped him here

But for the shame which held me prisoner;  
And his undaunted reassuring smile,  
Commanding confidence. "I knew once on a while,"  
He said, "a woman whom the world called proud,  
A saintly soul, untouched by the vain crowd,  
Who had survived all battle, siege, and sack,  
Love ever led with armies at his back,  
Yet fell at last to the mere accident  
Of a chance meeting, for another meant:  
Her lover had not dared it, had he known,  
But faces in the dark are all as one.  
You know the rhyme."

93

But at this point I rose,  
Fearing what worse his folly might disclose,  
And having learned my lesson of romance,  
A sadder man and wiser for the chance,  
Bade him good night: (it was in truth good-bye,  
For pretexting next morning some small lie  
Of business calling me in haste to town,  
I fled the house). He looked me up and down,  
Yawned, rose to light his candle at the lamp,  
Pressed with warm hand my own hand which was damp,  
And as he sauntered cheerily to bed,  
I heard him sing—they linger in my head—  
The first staves of a ballad, then the fashion  
With the young bloods who shape their love and passion  
At the music-halls of the Metropolis;  
What I remember of the song was this:

94

But, no, I cannot write it. There are things  
Too bitter in their taste, and this one stings  
My soul to a mad anger even yet.  
I seem to hear the voices of the pit  
Lewdly discoursing of incestuous scenes,  
Bottom the weaver's and the enamoured queen's.  
Alas, Titania! thou poor soul, alas!  
How art thou fallen, and to what an ass!

---

95

## CHAPTER V.

Griselda's madness lasted forty days,  
Forty eternities! Men went their ways,  
And suns arose and set, and women smiled,  
And tongues wagged lightly in impeachment wild  
Of Lady L.'s adventure. She was gone,  
None knew by whom escorted or alone,  
Or why or whither, only that one morning,  
Without pretext or subterfuge or warning,  
She had disappeared in silence from L. House,  
Leaving her lord in multitudinous  
And agonised conjecture of her fate:  
So the tale went. And truly less sedate  
Than his wont was in intricate affairs,  
Such as his Garter or his lack of heirs,  
Lord L. was seen in this new tribulation.  
Griselda long had been his life's equation,  
The pivot of his dealings with the world,  
The mainstay of his comfort, all now hurled  
To unforeseen confusion by her flight:  
There was need of action swift and definite.  
Where was she? Who could tell him? Divers visions  
Passed through his fancy—thieves, and street collisions,  
And all the hundred accidents of towns,  
From broken axle trees to broken crowns.  
In vain he questioned; no response was made  
More than the fact that, as already said,  
My lady, unattended and on foot,  
(A sad imprudence here Lord L. took note),  
Had gone out dressed in a black morning gown  
And dark tweed waterproof, 'twixt twelve and one,  
Leaving no orders to her maid, or plan  
About her carriage to or groom or man.  
Such was in sum the downstairs' evidence.  
The hall porter, a man of ponderous sense,  
Averred her ladyship had eastward turned  
From the front door, and some small credit earned  
For the suggestion that her steps were bent  
To Whitechapel on merciful intent,  
A visit of compassion to the poor,  
A clue which led to a commissioner  
Being sent for in hot haste from Scotland Yard.  
And so the news was bruited abroad.

It reached my ears among the earliest,  
And from Lord L. himself, whose long suppressed  
Emotion found its vent one afternoon  
On me, the only listener left in town.  
His thoughts now ran on "a religious craze  
Of his poor wife's," he said, "in these last days  
Indulged beyond all reason." The police  
Would listen to no talk of casualties,  
Still less of crime, since they had nothing found  
In evidence above or under ground,  
But held the case to be of simpler kind,  
Home left in a disordered state of mind  
Lord L. had noticed, now they talked of it,  
Temper less equable and flightier wit,  
"A craving for religious services  
And sacred music." Something was amiss,  
Or why were they in London in September?  
Griselda latterly, he could remember,  
Had raved of a conventual retreat  
In terms no Protestant would deem discreet,  
As the sole refuge in a world of sin  
For human frailty, griefs best anodyne.  
"The *Times* was right. Rome threatened to absorb us:  
The convents must be searched by *habeas corpus*."

And so I came to help him. I had guessed  
From his first word the vainness of his quest,  
And half was moved to serve him in a strait  
Where her fair fame I loved was in debate,

Yet held my peace, nor hazarded a word  
 Save of surprise at the strange case I heard,  
 Till, fortune aiding, I should find the clue  
 My heart desired to do what I would do.  
 And not in vain. Night found me duly sped,  
 Lord L.'s ambassador accredited,  
 With fullest powers to find and fetch her home,  
 If need should be, from the Pope's jaws in Rome.

Gods! what a mission! First my round I went  
 Through half the slums of Middlesex and Kent,  
 Surrey and Essex—this to soothe Lord L.,  
 Though witless all, as my heart told too well;  
 The hospitals no less and casual wards,  
 Each house as idly as his House of Lords,  
 And only at the week's end dared to stop  
 At the one door I knew still housing hope,  
 Young Manton's chambers. There, with reddened cheek  
 I heard the answer given I came to seek:  
 Manton was gone, his landlady half feared  
 He too, in some mishap, and disappeared,—  
 Proof all too positive. His letters lay  
 A fortnight deep untouched upon the tray.  
 She could not forward them or risk a guess  
 As to his last or likeliest address.  
 He was in Scotland often at this season,  
 "But not without his guns"—a cogent reason,  
 And leaving, too, his valet here in town,  
 Perplexed of what to do or leave undone.  
 Abroad? Perhaps. If so, his friends might try  
 As a best chance the Paris Embassy.  
 He had been there last Spring, and might be now.

100

Paris! It was enough, I made my bow,  
 And took my leave. I seemed to touch the thread  
 Of the blind labyrinth 'twas mine to tread.  
 Where should they be, in truth, these too fond lovers,  
 But in the land of all such lawless rovers:  
 The land of Gautier, Bourget, Maupassant,  
 Where still "you can" makes answer to "I can't:"  
 The fair domain where all romance begins  
 In a light borderland of venial sins,  
 But deepening onwards, till the fatal day  
 Vice swoops upon us, plead we as we may.  
 Griselda's bonnet o'er the windmills thrown,  
 Had surely crossed the Seine e'er it came down;  
 And I, if I would find and win her back,  
 Must earliest search the boulevards for her track:  
 And so to Paris in my zeal I passed,  
 Breaking my idol, mad Iconoclast.

101

There is a little inn by Meudon wood  
 Dear to Parisians in their amorous mood,  
 A place of rendezvous, where bourgeois meet  
 Their best beloved in congregation sweet:  
 Clandestine, undisturbed, illicit loves,  
 Made half romantic by the adjoining groves,  
 So beautiful in spring, with the new green  
 Clothing the birch stems scattered white between,  
 Nor yet, in autumn, when the first frosts burn,  
 And the wind rustles in the reddening fern,  
 Quite robbed of sentiment for lovers' eyes,  
 Who seek earth's blessing on a bliss unwise,  
 And find the happy sanction for their state  
 In nature's face, unshocked by their debate,  
 As who should say "Let preachers frown their fill,  
 Here one approves. 'Tis Eden with us still."

102

Such fancy, may be, in her too fond heart  
 Had led Griselda—with her friend—apart,  
 Yet not apart, from the world's curious gaze,  
 To this secluded, ill-frequented place:  
 A compromise of wills and varying moods,  
 His for gay crowds, her own for solitudes.  
 Manton knew Paris well, and loved its noise,



Its mirthful parody of serious joys,  
Its pomp and circumstance. His wish had been  
To flaunt the boulevards with his captured queen,  
And make parade of a last triumph won  
In the chaste field of prudish Albion,  
Outscandalising scandal. Love and he  
In any sense but of male vanity,  
And the delirium of adventures new  
In the world's eye—the thing he next should do—  
Were terms diverse and incompatible.  
Griselda, to his eyes, was Lady L.,  
The fair, the chaste, the unapproached proud name  
Men breathed in reverence, woman, all the same,  
And not as such, and when the truth was said,  
Worth more than others lightlier credited.  
It all had been a jest from the beginning,  
A *tour de force*, whose wit was in the winning,  
A stroke of fortune and of accident,  
The embrace he had told of for another meant,  
While she stood grieving for a first grey hair  
(A psychologic moment) on the stair,  
And, kneeling down, he had adored her foot,  
The one weak spot where her self-love had root,  
And laughed at her, and told her she was old,  
Yet growing tenderer as he grew more bold;  
And so from jest to jest, and chance to chance,  
To that last scene at the mad country dance  
Where she had played the hoyden, he the swain,  
Pretending love till love was in their brain,  
And he had followed to her chamber door,  
And helped her to undo the dress she wore.

103

Then the elopement. That had been her doing,  
Which he accepted to make good his wooing,  
And careless what to both the result might be,  
So it but served his end of vanity.  
It all had been to this vain boy a whim,  
Something grotesque, a play, a pantomime,  
Where nothing had been serious but her heart,  
And that was soon too tearful for its part.  
He wearied in a week of her mature  
Old maidish venturings in ways obscure,  
Her agony of conscience dimly guessed,  
The silences she stifled in her breast,  
Her awkwardness—it was his word—in all  
That love could teach; her sighs funereal,  
And more the unnatural laughter she essayed  
To meet the doubtful sense of things he said.  
She was at once too tender and too prim,  
Too prudish and too crazed with love and him.  
At a month's end his flame had leaped beyond  
Already to friends frailer and less fond,  
The light Parisian world of venal charms  
Which welcomed him with wide and laughing arms:  
There he was happier, more at home, more gay,  
King of the "high life," hero of the day.

104

105

Griselda, in her sad suburban nook  
Watched his departures with a mute rebuke,  
Yet daring not to speak. The choice was hers  
To stay at home or run the theatres  
With her young lover in such company  
As her soul loathed. She had tried despairingly  
To be one, even as these, for his loved sake,  
And would have followed spite of her heart's ache,  
But that he hardly further cared to press,  
After one failure, stamped with "dowdiness:"  
That too had been his word, a bitter word,  
Biting and true, which smote her like a sword,  
Or rather a whip's sting to her proud cheek,  
Leaving her humbled, agonised and weak.

106

Poor beautiful Griselda! What was now  
The value of thy beauty, chaste as snow  
In thy youth's morning, the unchallenged worth

Of thy eyes' kindness, queenliest of the earth;  
The tradition of thy Fra-angelic face,  
Blessed as Mary's, and as full of grace;  
The fame which thou despisedst, yet which made  
A glory for thee meet for thy dear head?  
What, if in this last crisis of thy fate,  
When all a heaven and hell was in debate,  
And thy archangel, with the feet of clay,  
Stood mocking there in doubt to go or stay,  
The unstable fabric of thy woman's dower,  
Thy beauty, failed and left thee in *their* power  
Whose only law of beauty was the sting  
Lent to man's lust by light bedizening?  
What use was in thy beauty, if, alas!  
Thou gavest them cause to mock—those tongues of brass—  
At thy too crude and insular attire,  
Thy naïvetés of colour, the false fire  
Of thy first dallings with the red and white,  
Thy sweet pictorial robes, Pre-Raphaelite,  
Quaint in their tones and *outrées* in design,  
Thy lack of unity and shape and line,  
Thy English angularity—who knows,  
The less than perfect fitting of thy shoes?

107

Griselda, in her flight, had left behind  
All but the dress she stood in, too refined,  
In her fair righteousness of thought and deed,  
To make provision for a future need,  
However dire. She was no Israelite  
To go forth from her Pharaoh in the night,  
With spoils of the Egyptians in her hands,  
And had thrown herself on Manton and on France  
With a full courage worth a nobler cause,  
Grandly oblivious of prudential laws.  
Her earliest trouble, marring even the bliss  
Of love's first ecstasy, had come of this,  
Her want of clothes—a worse and weightier care  
At the mere moment than her soul's despair  
For its deep fall from virtuous estate.  
How should she dress herself, she asked of Fate,  
With neither maid, nor money, nor a name?  
It was her first experiment in shame.  
Now, after all her poor economies,  
This was the ending read in his vexed eyes,  
And spoken by his lips: her utmost art  
Had failed to please that idle thing, his heart,  
Or even to avert his petulant scorn  
For one so little to love's manner born.

108

And thus I found them, at the angry noon  
Of their "red month," the next to honeymoon:  
Two silent revellers at a loveless feast,  
Scared by hate's morning breaking in their east—  
A dawn which was of penance and despair,  
With pleasure's ghost to fill the vacant chair.  
I took it, and was welcomed rapturously,  
As a far sail by shipwrecked souls at sea,  
An opportune deliverer, timely sent  
To break the autumn of their discontent,  
And give a pretext to their need grown sore  
Of issue from joys dead by any door.

109

Manton, all confidential from the first,  
Told me the tale of his last sins and worst,  
As meriting a sympathy not less  
Than the best actions virtuous men confess.  
He was overwhelmed with women and with debt—  
Women who loved him, bills which must be met.  
What could he do? Her ladyship was mad—  
It was her fault, not his, this escapade.  
He had warned her from the first, and as a friend,  
That all such frolics had a serious end,  
And that to leave her home was the worst way  
A woman would who wanted to be gay.

110

"For look," said he, "we men, who note these things,  
And how the unthinking flutterers burn their wings,  
Know that a woman, be she what she will,  
The fairest, noblest, most adorable,  
Dowered in her home with all seraphic charms,  
Whom heaven itself might envy in your arms,  
A paragon of pleasure undenied  
At her own chaste respectable fireside,  
Becomes, what shall I say, when she steps down  
From the high world of her untouched renown—  
A something differing in no serious mood  
From the sad rest of the light sisterhood:  
Perhaps indeed more troublesome than these,  
Because she keenlier feels the agonies:  
A wounded soul, who has not even the wit  
To hide its hurt and make a jest of it;  
A maid of Astolat, launched in her barge,  
A corpse on all the world, a *femme à charge*."

"'Tis not," he argued, "our poor human sins  
That make us what we are when shame begins,  
But the world pointing at our naked state:  
Then we are shocked and humbled at our fate,  
Silent and shamed in all we honour most—  
For what is virtue but the right to boast?  
A married woman's love, three weeks from home,  
Is the absurdest thing in Christendom,  
Dull as a *ménage* in the demi-monde  
And dismaller far by reason of the bond.  
All this I told my lady ere we went,  
But warning wasted is on sentiment.  
You see the net result here in one word,  
A crying woman and a lover bored."

So far young Manton. She for whom I came,  
Griselda's self, sweet soul, in her new shame  
Essayed awhile to hide from me the truth  
Of this last hap of her belated youth,  
Her disillusion with her graceless lover.  
She made sad cloaks for him which could not cover  
His great unworthiness and her despair,  
All with a frightened half-maternal air,  
Most pitiful and touching. To my plea,  
Urging her home, she answered mournfully,  
That she was bound now to her way of life,  
And owed herself no less than as his wife  
To him she had chosen out of all mankind.  
'Twas better to be foolish, even blind,  
If he had faults, so she could serve him still—  
And this had been her promise and her will.  
She would not hear of duties owed elsewhere:  
What was she to Lord L., or he to her?  
I need not speak of it. And yet she clung  
To my protecting presence in her wrong;  
And once, when Manton's jibes made bitterer play,  
Implored me with appealing eyes to stay.  
And so I lingered on.

Those autumn days,  
Spent with Griselda in the woodland ways  
Of Meudon with her lover, or alone,  
When his mad fancies carried him to town,  
Remain to me an unsubstantial act  
Of dreaming fancy, rather than the fact  
Of any waking moment in my past,  
The sweetest, saddest, and with her the last—  
For suddenly they ended.

We had been  
One Sunday for a jaunt upon the Seine,  
We two—in Manton's absence, now prolonged  
To a third night—and in a steamboat, thronged  
With idle bourgeois folk, whom the last glory  
Of a late autumn had sent forth in foray  
To Passy and St. Cloud, from stage to stage,

Had made with heavy souls our pilgrimage;  
And homeward turning and with little zest,  
The fair day done, to love's deserted nest  
Had come with lagging feet and weary eyes,  
Expectant still of some new dark surprise,  
When the blow fell unsparing on her head,  
Already by what fortunes buffeted.

114

How did it happen, that last tragedy?—  
For tragedy it was, let none deny,  
Though all ignoble. Every soul of us  
Touches one moment in death's darkened house  
The plane of the heroic, and compels  
Men's laughter into tears—ay, heaven's and hell's.  
How did it happen? There was that upon  
Their faces at the door more than the tone  
Of their replies, that warned us of the thing  
We had not looked for in our questioning;  
And our lips faltered, and our ears, afraid,  
Shrank from more hearing. What was it they said  
In their fool's jargon, that he lay upstairs?  
He? Manton? The dispenser of our cares?  
The mountebank young reveller? Suffering? Ill?  
And she, poor soul, that suffered at his will!  
A sinister case? Not dying? Pitiful God!  
Truly Thou smitest blindly with Thy rod.  
For Manton was not worthy to die young,  
Beloved by her with blessings on her tongue.  
And such a cause of death!

115

She never heard  
The whole truth told, for each one spared his word,  
And he lay mute for ever. But to me  
The thing was storied void of mystery,  
And thus they told it. Hardly had we gone  
On our sad river outing, when from town  
Manton had come with a gay troop of friends,  
Such as the *coulisse* of the opera lends,  
To breakfast at the inn and spend the day  
In mirthful noise, as was his vagrant way.  
A drunken frolic, and most insolent  
To her whose honour with his own was blent,  
To end in this last tragedy. None knew  
Quite how it happened, or a cause could shew  
Further than this, that, rising from the table  
The last to go, with steps perhaps unstable—  
For they had feasted freely, and the stair  
Was steep and iron-edged, and needed care;  
And singing, as he went, the selfsame song,  
Which I remembered, to the laughing throng,  
He had slipped his length, and fallen feet-first down.  
When they picked him up his power to move was gone,  
Though he could speak. They laid him on a bed,  
Her bed, Griselda's, and called in with speed  
Such help of doctors and commissioners  
As law prescribed, and medicine for their fears.  
'Twas his last night.

116

There, in Griselda's hands,  
Young Jerry Manton lay with the last sands  
Of his life's hour-glass trickling to its close,  
Griselda watching, with what thoughts, God knows.  
We did not speak. But her lips moved in prayer,  
And mine too, in the way of man's despair.  
I did not love him, yet a human pity  
Softened my eyes. Afar, from the great city,  
The sound came to us of the eternal hum,  
Unceasing, changeless, pregnant with all doom  
Of insolent life that rises from its streets,  
The pulse of sin which ever beats and beats,  
Wearying the ears of God. O Paris, Paris!  
What doom is thine for every soul that tarries  
Too long with thee, a stranger in thy arms.  
Thy smiles are incantations, thy brave charms  
Death to thy lovers. Each gay mother's son,

117

Smitten with love for thee, is straight undone.  
And lo the chariot wheels upon thy ways!  
And a new garland hung in *Père la Chaise!*

Poor soul! I turned and looked into the night,  
Through the uncurtained windows, and there bright  
Saw the mute twinkle of a thousand stars.  
One night! the least in all time's calendars,  
Yet fraught with what a meaning for this one!  
One star, the least of all that million!  
One room in that one city! Yet for him  
The universe there was of space and time.  
What were his thoughts? In that chaotic soul,  
Home of sad jests, obscene, unbeautiful,  
Mired with the earthiest of brute desires,  
And lit to sentience only with lewd fires,  
Was there no secret, undisturbed, fair place  
Watered with love and favoured with God's grace  
To which the wounded consciousness had fled  
For its last refuge from a world of dread?  
Was his soul touched to tenderness, to awe,  
To softer recollection? All we saw  
Was the maimed body gasping forth its breath,  
A rigid setting of the silent teeth,  
And the hands trembling. Death was with us there.  
But where was he—O Heaven of pity! where?

118

We watched till morning by the dying man,  
She weeping silently, I grieved and wan,  
And still he moved not. But with the first break  
Of day in the window panes we saw him make  
A sign as if of speaking. Pressing near—  
For his lips moved, Griselda deemed, in prayer—  
We heard him make profession of his faith,  
As a man of pleasure face to face with death,  
A kind of gambler's Athanasian Creed,  
Repeated at the hour of his last need.  
"Five sovereigns," said he, steadying his will,  
As in defiance of death's power to kill,  
And with that smile of a superior mind,  
Which was his strength in dealing with mankind,  
The world of sporting jargon and gay livers.  
"Five sovereigns is a fiver, and five fivers  
A pony, and five ponies are a hundred—  
No, four," he added, seeing he had blundered.  
"*Four* to the hundred and *five* centuries  
Make up the monkey." From his dying eyes  
The smile of triumph faded. "There, I've done it,"  
He said, "but there was no great odds upon it,  
You see with a broken back."

119

He spoke no more,  
And in another hour had passed the door  
Which shuts the living from eternity.  
Where was he? God of pity, where was he?

This was the end of Lady L.'s romance.

When we had buried him, as they do in France,  
In a tomb inscribed "*à perpétuité*"  
(Formally rented till the Judgment Day),  
She put off black, and shed no further tears;  
Her face for the first time showed all its years,  
But not a trace beyond. Without demur  
She gave adhesion to my plans for her,  
And we went home to London and Lord L.,  
Silent together, by the next night's mail.  
She had been six weeks away.

120

The interview  
Between them was dramatic. I, who knew  
Her whole mad secret, and had seen her soul  
Stripped of its covering, and without control,  
Bowed down by circumstance and galled with shame,  
Yielding to wounds and griefs without a name,  
Had feared for her a wild unhappy scene.

I held Lord L. for the least stern of men,  
And yet I dared not hope even he would crave  
No explanation e'er he quite forgave.

121

I was with them when they met, unwilling third,  
In their mute bandying of the unspoken word.  
Lord L. essayed to speak. I saw his face  
Made up for a high act of tragic grace  
As he came forward. It was grave and mild,  
A father's welcoming a truant child,  
Forgiving, yet intent to mark the pain  
With hope "the thing should not occur again."  
His lips began to move as to some speech  
Framed in this sense, as one might gently preach  
A word in season to too gadding wives  
Of duties owed, at least by those whose lives  
Moved in high places. But it died unsaid.  
There was that about Griselda that forbade  
Marital questionings. Her queenly eyes  
Met his with a mute answer of surprise,  
Marking the unseemliness of all display  
More strongly than with words, as who should say  
*Noblesse oblige*. She took his outstretched hand,  
And kissed his cheek, but would not understand  
A word of his reproaches. Even I,  
With my full knowledge and no more a boy,  
But versed by years in the world's wickedness,  
And open-eyed to her, alas! no less  
Than to all womanhood, even I felt shame,  
And half absolved her in my mind from blame.  
And he, how could he less? He was but human,  
The fortunate husband of how fair a woman!  
He stammered his excuses.

122

What she told

When I had left them (since all coin is gold  
To those who would believe, and who the key  
Hold of their eyes, in blind faith's alchemy)  
I never learned.

123

I did not linger on,  
Seeing her peril past and the day won,  
But took my leave. She led me to the door  
With her old kindness of the days of yore,  
And thanked me as one thanks for little things.  
"You have been," she said, "an angel without wings,  
And I shall not forget,—nor will Lord L.;  
And yet," she said, with an imperceptible  
Change in her voice, "there are things the world will say  
Which are neither just nor kind, and, if to-day  
We part awhile, remember we are friends,  
If not now later. Time will make amends,  
And we shall meet again." I pressed her hand  
A moment to my lips. "I understand,"  
I said, and gazed a last time in her eyes;  
"Say all you will. I am your sacrifice."

And so, in truth, it was. Henceforth there lay  
A gulf between us, widening with delay,  
And which our souls were impotent to pass,  
The gulf of a dead secret; and, alas!  
Who knows what subtle treacheries within,  
For virtue rends its witnesses of sin,  
And hearts are strangely fashioned by their fears.  
We met no more in friendship through the years,  
Although I held her secret as my own,  
And fought her battles, her best champion,  
On many a stricken field in scandal's war,  
Till all was well forgotten. From afar  
I watched her fortunes still with tenderness,  
Yet sadly, as cast out of Paradise.  
For ever, spite her promise, from that day,  
When I met L., he looked another way;  
And she, Griselda, was reserved and chill.  
I had behaved, her women friends said, ill,

124

And caused a needless scandal in her life,  
—They told not what. Enough, that as a wife  
She had been compelled to close her doors on me,  
And that her lord knew all the iniquity.

125

And so I bore the burden of her sin.

What more shall I relate? The cynic vein  
Has overwhelmed my tale, and I must stop.  
Its heroine lived to justify all hope  
Of her long-suffering lord, that out of pain  
Blessings would grow, and his house smile again  
With the fulfilled expectance of an heir.  
Griselda sat no longer in despair,  
Nor wasted her full life on dreams of folly;  
She had little time for moods of melancholy,  
Or heart to venture further in love's ways;  
She was again the theme of all men's praise,  
And suffered no man's passion. Once a year,  
In the late autumn, when the leaves grew sere  
She made retreat to a lay sisterhood,  
And lived awhile there for her soul's more good,  
In pious meditation, fasts and prayer.  
Some say she wore concealed a shirt of hair  
Under her dresses, even at court balls,  
And certain 'tis that all Rome's rituals  
Were followed daily at the private Mass  
In her new chantry built behind Hans Place.  
Lord L. approved of all she did, even this,  
Strange as it seemed to his old fashionedness.

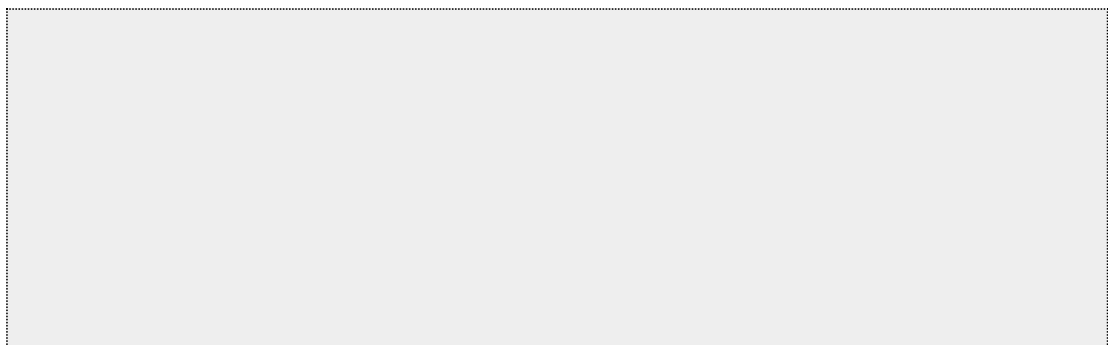
126

He, gentle soul, grown garrulous with years,  
Prosed of her virtues to all listeners,  
And of their son's, the child of his old age,  
A prodigy of beauty and ways sage.  
It was a vow, he said, once made in Rome,  
Had brought them this chief treasure of their home.  
A vow! The light world laughed—for miracles  
Are not believed in now, except as hell's.  
And yet the ways of God are passing strange.  
And this is certain (and therein the range  
Of my long tale is reached, and I am free),  
—There is at Ostia, close beside the sea,  
A convent church, the same where years ago  
Griselda kneeled in tears and made her vow;  
And in that shrine, beneath the crucifix,  
They show a votive offering, candlesticks  
Of more than common workmanship and size,  
And underneath inscribed the votary's  
Name in initials, and the date, all told,  
Hall-marked in England, and of massive gold.

127

THE END.

*Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.  
Edinburgh and London*



## Transcriber's Notes

Punctuation and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.

Simple typographical errors were corrected.

Page [81](#): "spendthrifts" was printed as "spendthifts".

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GRISELDA: A SOCIETY NOVEL IN RHYMED  
VERSE \*\*\*

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE



THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE  
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

## **Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms

will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT,

CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

## **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written

confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

## **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.