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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AULD LANG SYNE: SELECTIONS FROM THE PAPERS OF THE "PEN AND PENCIL CLUB" ***

Transcribed from the 1877 Chiswick Press edition by David Price, email ccx074@pglaf.org

AULD LANG SYNE.

SELECTIONS FROM THE PAPERS
OF THE
"PEN AND PENCIL CLUB."

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min',
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne!"

BURNS.



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CRADLE.

p. 1

The human heart is cradle of deep love,
 Which growing and expanding from its birth,
 Ever finds space within that living cot;
 Howe'er remotely o'er this beauteous earth
 Its subtle influences may joy impart,
 Whilst nestling in the human heart.

The human mind is cradle of high thought,
 Ever aspiring to extend its sphere,
 To penetrate those mysteries of life
 Philosophy has fail'd to render clear.
 Howe'er expansive, thought will ever find
 Its cradle in the human mind.

The human soul is cradle of deep faith,
 Of aspirations, and of purpose strong,
 To kindle into life the seeds of truth—

Eradicate the germs of vice and wrong.
Howe'er these seeds develop and increase,
Within man's soul they'll find their place.

Three living cradles in one living form,
Expanding ever from their early birth;
High thought and sweet affection in ye dwell,
And Faith which hallows all things on this earth.
Each human being in himself may find
Three living cradles—soul, heart, mind.

p. 2

THE SOUND OF BELLS.

p. 3

O HAPPY bells that thrill the air
Of tranquil English summer-eves,
When stirless hang the aspen leaves,
And Silence listens everywhere.

And sinks and swells the tender chime,
Sad, as regret for buried fears,
Sweet, as repentant yearning tears—
The fit voice of the holy time.

O wond'rous voice! O mystic sound!
We listen, and our thoughts aspire
Like spiritual flame, from fire
That idly smoulders on the ground.

Forgotten longings have new birth
For better, purer, nobler life,
Lifted above the noisy strife
That drowns the music of this earth.

And human sorrow seems to be
A link unto diviner things,
The budding of the spirit's wings
That only thus can soar—and see.

The twilight fades—the sweet bells cease,
The common world's come back again,
But for a little space, its pain
And weariness are steep'd in peace.

MIRROR.

p. 4

I SEE myself reflected in thine eyes,
The dainty mirrors set in golden frame
Of eyelash, quiver with a sweet surprise,
And most ingenuous shame.

Like Eve, who hid her from the dread command
Deep in the dewy blooms of paradise;
So thy shy soul, love calling, fears to stand
Discover'd at thine eyes.

Or, like a tender little fawn, which lies
Asleep amid the fern, and waking, hears
Some careless footstep drawing near, and flies,
Yet knows not what she fears.

So shrinks thy soul, but, dearest, shrink not so;
Look thou into mine eyes as I in thine,
So our reflected souls shall meet and grow,
And each with each combine

In something nobler; as when one has laid
Opposite mirrors on a cottage wall;
And lo! the never-ending colonnade,
The vast palatial hall.

So our twin souls, by one sweet suicide,

Shall fade into an essence more sublime;
Living through death, and dying glorified,
Beyond the reach of time.

SHADOWS.

p. 5

SHADOW gives to sunshine brightness,
And it gives to joy its lightness;
Shadow gives to honour meekness,
And imparts its strength to weakness;
Shadow deepens human kindness,
Draws the veil from mental blindness;
Shadow sweetens love's own sweetness,
And gives to life its deep intenseness;
Shadow is earth's sacredness,
And the heaven's loveliness;
Shadow is day's tenderness,
And the night's calm holiness;
Shadow's deepest night of darkness
Will break in day's eternal brightness.

SHADOWS.

p. 6

IN the band of noble workers,
Seems no place for such as I—
They have faith, where I have yearning,
They can speak where I but sigh,
They can point the way distinctly
Where for me the shadows lie.

Lofty purpose, strong endeavour,
These are not ordain'd for me—
Wayside flower might strive for ever,
Never could it grow a tree—
Yet a child may laugh to gather,
Or a sick man smile to see.

So I too in God's creation
Have my own peculiar part,
He must have some purpose surely
For weak hand and timid heart,
Transient joys for my diffusing,
For my healing transient smart.

Just to fling a moment's brightness
Over dreary down-trod ways,
Just to fan a better impulse
By a full and ready praise—
Pitying where I may not succour,
Loving where I cannot raise.

ORGAN-BOYS.

p. 7

A LEGEND OF LONDON.

BY THOMAS INGOLDSBY, MINOR.

IN days—not old—a Demon lived,
And a terrible Fiend was he,
For he ground and he ground
All London around,
A huge barrel-organ of hideous sound,
Incessantly!
From morning's light
Till the deep midnight,
In all sorts of streets and all sorts of squares.

Up the *cul-de-sacs*—down the thoroughfares,
Where Thames rolls his waters from Greenwich to Kew,
Not a lane could you find that he didn't go through.
You heard him at all times when most unaware,
In quiet back-parlours up five flights of stair;
When you ate, when you drank, when you read morning prayer,
Or sat dozing awhile in an easy armchair,
Or read a new novel—or talk'd to a friend,
Or endeavour'd to settle accounts without end,
Or when grief (or champagne), caused an ache in your head,
Or you promised yourself to lie latish in bed,

It was all the same
That Demon came,
Grind! grind!
Peace there was none,
Under the sun;

That odious organ never had done.

Sick, sad, or sorry,
No end to the worry.
No sort of grief
Brought the slightest relief;

You might send out to say you were dying or dead,
The organ ground on as if nothing were said!

Grind! grind!
Till you lost your mind.

No use to scold, or draw down the blind,
The fiend only ground more loud and more fast,
Till you *had* to give him a shilling at last.
So that having tormented you madly that day,
He would surely next morning come round the same way,
And grind and grind—till in frenzy of pain,
You should bribe him once more—just to come back again!

Know ye, my friends, who this Fiend may be?
Here is the key to the mystery—
It is TUBAL CAIN! who—the Bible says—
Invented organs in very old days,
And for that dread crime, so atrocious and black,
Was sentenced thenceforth to bear one on his back,
A heavier fate (as was justly his due),
Than befell his Papa when poor Abel he slew:
For Cain, killing *one* man, was let off quite cheap—
Tubal murdered us *all*—at least “murder'd our sleep.”

p. 8

THE ORGAN-BOY.

p. 9

GREAT brown eyes,
Thick plumes of hair,
Old corduroys
The worse for wear.
A button'd jacket,
And peeping out
An ape's grave poll,
Or a guinea-pig's snout.
A sun-kiss'd face
And a dimpled mouth,
With the white flashing teeth,
And soft smile of the south.
A young back bent,
Not with age or care,
But the load of poor music
'Tis fated to bear.
But a common-place picture
To common-place eyes,
Yet full of a charm
Which the thinker will prize.
They were stern, cold rulers,
Those Romans of old,
Scorning art and letters
For conquest and gold;
Yet leavening mankind,

In mind and tongue,
With the laws that they made
And the songs that they sung.
Sitting, rose-crown'd,
With pleasure-choked breath,
As the nude young limbs crimson'd,
Then stiffen'd in death.
Piling up monuments
Greater than praise,
Thoughts and deeds that shall live
To the latest of days.
Adding province to province,
And sea to sea,
Till the idol fell down
And the world rose up free.

p. 10

And this is the outcome,
This vagabond child
With that statue-like face
And eyes soft and mild;
This creature so humble,
So gay, yet so meek,
Whose sole strength is only
The strength of the weak.
Of those long cruel ages
Of lust and of guile,
Nought left us to-day
But an innocent smile.
For the labour'd appeal
Of the orator's art,
A few foolish accents
That reach to the heart.
For those stern legions speeding
O'er sea and o'er land,
But a pitiful glance
And a suppliant hand.
I could moralize still
But the organ begins,
And the tired ape swings downward,
And capers and grins,
And away flies romance.
And yet, time after time,
As I dwell on days spent
In a sunnier clime,
Of blue lakes deep set
In the olive-clad mountains,
Of gleaming white palaces
Girt with cool fountains,
Of minsters where every
Carved stone is a treasure,
Of sweet music hovering
'Twixt pain and 'twixt pleasure;
Of chambers enrich'd
On all sides, overhead,
With the deathless creations
Of hands that are dead;
Of still cloisters holy,
And twilight arcade,
Where the lovers still saunter
Thro' chequers of shade;
Of tomb and of temple,
Arena and column,
'Mid to-day's garish splendours,
Sombre and solemn;
Of the marvellous town
With the salt-flowing street,
Where colour burns deepest,
And music most sweet;
Of her the great mother,
Who centuries sate
'Neath a black shadow blotting
The days she was great;
Who was plunged in such shame—
She, our source and our home—
That a foul spectre only

p. 11

p. 12

Was left us of Rome;
She who, seeming to sleep
Through all ages to be,
Was the priest's, is mankind's,—
Was a slave, and is free!

I turn with grave thought
To this child of the ages,
And to all that is writ
In Time's hidden pages.
Shall young Howards or Guelphs,
In the days that shall come,
Wander forth, seeking bread,
Far from England and home?

Shall they sail to new continents,
English no more,
Or turn—strange reverse—
To the old classic shore?
Shall fair locks and blue eyes,
And the rose on the cheek,
Find a language of pity
The tongue cannot speak—
“Not English, but angels?”
Shall this tale be told
Of Romans to be
As of Romans of old?
Shall they too have monkeys
And music? Will any
Try their luck with an engine
Or toy spinning-jenny?

p. 13

Shall we too be led
By that mirage of Art
Which saps the true strength
Of the national heart?
The sensuous glamour,
The dreamland of grace,
Which rot the strong manhood
They fail to replace;
Which at once are the glory,
The ruin, the shame,
Of the beautiful lands
And ripe souls whence they came?

Oh, my England! oh, Mother
Of Freemen! oh, sweet,
Sad toiler majestic,
With labour-worn feet!
Brave worker, girt round,
Inexpugnable, free,
With tumultuous sound
And salt spume of the sea,
Fenced off from the clamour
Of alien mankind
By the surf on the rock,
And the shriek of the wind,
Tho' the hot Gaul shall envy,
The cold German flout thee,
Thy far children scorn thee,
Still thou shalt be great,
Still march on uncaring,
Thy perils unsharing,
Alone, and yet daring
Thy infinite fate.
Yet ever remembering
The precepts of gold
That were written in part
For the great ones of old—
“Let other hands fashion
The marvels of art;
To thee fate has given
A loftier part,
To rule the wide peoples,
To bind them to thee.”
By the sole bond of loving,

p. 14

That bindeth the free,
To hold thy own place,
Neither lawless nor slave;
Not driven by the despot,
Nor trick'd by the knave.

But these thoughts are too solemn.
So play, my child, play,
Never heeding the connoisseur
Over the way,
The last dances of course;
Then with scant pause between,
"Home, sweet Home," the "Old Hundredth,"
And "God Save the Queen."

See the poor children swarm
From dark court and dull street,
As the gay music quickens
The lightsome young feet.
See them now whirl away,
Now insidiously come,
With a coy grace which conquers
The squalor of home.
See the pallid cheeks flushing
With innocent pleasure
At the hurry and haste
Of the quick-footed measure.
See the dull eyes now bright,
And now happily dim,
For some soft-dying cadence
Of love-song or hymn.
Dear souls, little joy
Of their young lives have they,
So thro' hymn-tune and song-tune
Play on, my child, play.

For though dull pedants chatter
Of musical taste,
Talk of hindered researches
And hours run to waste;
Though they tell us of thoughts
To ennoble mankind,
Which your poor measures chase
From the labouring mind;
While your music rejoices
One joyless young heart,
Perish bookworms and books,
Perish learning and art—
Of my vagabond fancies
I'll even take my fill.
"Qualche cosa, signor?"
Yes, my child, that I will.

p. 15

STUMBLING-BLOCKS.

p. 16

THINK when you blame the present age, my friends,
This age has one redeeming point—it *mends*.
With many monstrous ills we're forced to cope;
But we have life and movement, we have hope.
Oh! this is much! Thrice pitiable they
Whose lot is cast in ages of decay,
Who watch a waning light, an ebbing tide,
Decline of energy and fall of pride,
Old glories disappearing unreplaced,
Receding culture and encroaching waste,
Art grown pedantic, manners waxing coarse,
The good thing still succeeded by the worse.
We see not what those latest Romans saw,
When o'er Italian cities, Latin law,
Greek beauty, swept the barbarizing tide,
And all fair things in slow succession died.
'Tis much that such defeat and blank despair,

Whate'er our trials, 'tis not ours to bear,
Much that the mass of foul abuse grows less,
Much that the injured have sometimes redress,
Wealth grows less haughty, misery less resigned,
That policy grows just, religion kind,
That all worst things towards some better tend,
And long endurance nears at last its end;
The ponderous cloud grows thin and pierced with bright,
And its wild edge is fused in blinding light.

Yet disappointment still with hope appears,
And with desires that strengthen, strengthen fears,
'Tis the swift-sailing ship that dreads the rocks,
The active foot must 'ware of stumbling-blocks.
Alas! along the way towards social good,
How many stones of dire offence lie strew'd.
Whence frequent failure, many shrewd mishaps
And dismal pause or helpless backward lapse.
Such was the hard reverse that Milton mourn'd,
An old man, when he saw the King returned
With right divine, and that fantastic train
Of banished fopperies come back again.
Thus France, too wildly clutching happiness.
Stumbled perplexed, and paid in long distress,
In carnage, where the bloody conduit runs,
And one whole generation of her sons
Devoted to the Power of Fratricide
For one great year, one eager onward stride.

From all these stumbling-blocks that strew the way
What wisest cautions may ensure us, say.
Cling to the present good with steadfast grip,
And for no fancied better let it slip,
Whether thy fancy in the future live
Or yearn to make the buried past revive.
The past is dead,—let the dead have his dues,
Remembrance of historian and of Muse;
But try no lawless magic on the urn,
It shocks to see the brightest past return.
Some good things linger when their date is fled,
These honour as you do the hoary head,
And treat them tenderly for what they were,
But dream not to detain them always there.
The living good the present moments bring
To this devote thyself and chiefly cling;
And for the novel schemes that round thee rise,
Watch them with hopeful and indulgent eyes,
Treat them as children, love them, mark their ways,
And blame their faults and dole out cautious praise,
And give them space, yet limit them with rule,
And hold them down and keep them long at school:
Yet know in these is life most fresh and strong,
And that to these at last shall all belong.

Be proved and present good thy safe-guard still,
And thy one quarrel be with present ill.
Learn by degrees a steady onward stride
With sleepless circumspection for thy guide.
And since so thick the stumbling-blocks are placed,
You are not safe but in renouncing haste;
Permit not so your zeal to be repressed,
But make the loss up by renouncing rest.

WITCHCRAFT.

I SPOSE 'tis I—and yet, so strange
I feel, I doubt if I'm all right.
Only since Tuesday last this change,
And this is Friday night.

On Monday, life was very drear,
My missus was *so* cross,
'Cos how I'd spilt a jug of beer—
She, who calls money dross.

She thinks herself a very saint,
'Cos she reads prayers to us;
But Sal the cook, and I, we ain't
Imposed on by her fuss.

'Tis not the prayers I think is bad,
But those who are so good
Should act as if they feelings had
Towards we—who are flesh and blood.

But *now* if missus 'gins to scold
I do not care a straw,
For Tom, on Tuesday morning, told
Me not to mind her jaw.

I now can dance, and laugh, and sing,
Altho' I work all day.
Surely it is a funny thing,
I'm all at once so gay.

All 'cos Tom's in love with me,
And I'm sure he says what's true.
He says love's a mystery
Which in Eden's garden grew.

I call love witchcraft, that I do;
It's made me quite another;
Instead of being Mary Roe,
I may be any other.

Missus thinks I'm going mad,
I work with such good glee;
'Tis only that my heart is glad
'Cos Tom's in love with me.

I wish some man would missus love;
She might be kinder then.
She says her 'fections are above,
'Cos sinful are all men.

If she but had the chance, I b'lieve,
She'd 'cept the first with glee,
And would not any longer grieve
O'er man's depravity.

She'd be as different as I—
Oh, laws! what fun 'twould be;
For missus is a very guy,
'Twixt you and Tom and me.

P'rhaps love would make her young once more,
And change her temper too,
For certain, love has witchcraft's power,
All things he likes, to do.

Tom says *so*, and *so* 'tis true,
Tom never tells a lie;
And what Tom bids I'll always do,
Until at last I die.

p. 20

p. 21

CHIVALRY.

p. 22

CHIVALRY, ho yes, I have heerd of such a thing, but I don't mind owning—not allus having a Tomson's Dixonary aside o' me—as I never rightly unnerstood the full meanin' o' the word until this very day, when the subjick was suggested and my opinion arxed, which, why should I deny, I *had* supposed it strictly limited to the man in Brass ninth o' November Lord Mayor's Show, as they says it is to be abolished in future times, and a great loss I'm sure to the rising generation, though apt to be mostly all mud and squeegeing and more pains than profit to grownups, and likewise in Christmas pantomines and bur-lesks at theayters I have seen Alls of Chivalry most georgius to beeold with young ladies in uncountless troops coming out o' shells and flowers and bells and stars as made the rime of infancy seem quite reesnable, though why slugs and snails only for the other sect is more than I can explain, and I don't blush to own free and frank as I believed the time for it in reel life was past and gone these ages, though efforts made many a year back at the Eglington Turnamount rung through the country, and well I remember seeing picters of queens o' beauty and gentlemen done up in harmer and a hossback as looked when

once they was hup it was more than they could do to save their lives to get down again without most competent assistance, and far from comfortable or easy I should say them mettal dresses was, as it stands to reesin, man being of a active character, was never intended by nature to go about with a shell outside of him like snails, which is both slow and useless, *I* should say, unless making your palings slimy and nibbling at your cabbage sprouts is useful acts, which much I doubt, though how I've got from Chivalry to snails is most surpriging, only the workings of the huming mind *is* so surpriging as no one never need be surpriged at nothing of the sort,—where was I, ho at harmer which, if you arx my opinion, I do consider such a ill-conwenience as there ought to be a deal to make up for it, and if you can't have Chivalry without harmer I must say I think we're better as we are, fur what with crinnerlin the world's ardly big enough as it is, and if these coats of male was to come in, made of steel likewise, you couldn't walk in London, except in Portland Place, praps, and in quiet distrix like Islington and Upper Baker Street, while as for omnibuses, my belief is they're only kep going as it is by the lightness and tightness of manly figgers and costoom, and if *they* took to harmer there'd be an end of twelve inside, much less of thirteen out, and pit seats would have to be enlarged, as also pews in church, and especially pulpits, likewise the Houses of Parliament and the Corts of Lor, and everythink would be deranged together fur no particklar good that I can see, but Mrs. Jones she ses it's not the harmer, it's not the outside man as needs a haltering in this year age of ourn, it's not the costoom she ses, it's the manners, she ses, which in ancient times was so much superior to any think we know on in the presint day, she ses, fur in them distant days there was galliant knights which wore a scarve or a ribbing of the lady as they preferred, and went about the world with long spears a defying all the other knights to say as that there lady of theirs wasn't the most beautifulest of all living ladies, and fight they would with them spears, and sometimes got ard nox too, in spite of their harmer, but got up again a hossback mostly, and went off to other parts a doing the same thing, which, if that's chivalry, why I arx you what on erth is the good of such goings on as that, but ho Mrs. Jones ses, that's not all, she ses, and torx at me fur hours on end, she does, a trying to show me what a deal more obliginger and politer was the manners of them there knights to the manners of these year days, and how they was always a helping of the helpless, and a succouring the distressed, and how they thought it a honner and no trouble to put theirselves to all sorts of inconvenience to oblige one of our sect which, especially the unprotected female, was their joy and pride, never you mind how many bangboxes she might have, nor how pouring of rain, outside of the omnibuses of the period them knights would go immediate, and only count it a ordinary part of what they called their devour to the fare, which I will own I *have* met with quite contrairy condick from well drest pussons, as doubtless calls theirselves gentlemen, and after standing hours, I may say, in Regint Circus or corner of Tottenham Court Road, have been pushed from getting of my place inside by the very harms that in other times Mrs. Jones ses would have been lifted to my haid, but lor! I ses to her, though this may appen occasional, I ses, what can you expeck in London in the midst of millions of snobs as thinks only of theirselves, and has never learned any better, poor deers, which I'm sorry fur 'em, fur sure I am as the feelins is much more comfortabler of a reel and right down *gentle* man, which the word explains itself, don't it, and we don't want no knights in harmer while there's men left, and proud I am to say I know a many such, and have met with kindness from a many more as I don't know the names on, which if they'd had harmer on twice over couldn't be more ready to lend their strength to the weak, and their elp to the elpless, and chivalry can't mean no more than that, so let alone the harmer, we can't have too much of it, *I* ses, and Mrs. Jones she ses so too, and we ses it not as wimming only but as humane beings as likes to see their feller creeturs a growing in good arts and appiness, not forgetting as wimming likewise has *our* duties, which is seldom done as well as one could wish, and so has no manner of rite to preech, which much I fear I've been a running on most unconscionable, and took up a deal too much of your time, but umbly arx your parding and won't intrude no further.

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CHILDHOOD'S CASTLES IN THE AIR.

p. 26

GENTLY, no pushing; there's room to sit
All three without grumbling,
One in front, two behind, well you fit,
And mamma to hold you from tumbling.
Rock, rock, old rocking chair,
You'll last us a long time with care,
And still without balking
Of us four any one,
From rocking and talking—
That is what we call fun.

Curtains drawn, and no candles lit,
Great red caves in the fire,
This is the time for us four to sit
Rocking and talking all till we tire.
Rock, rock, old rocking chair,
How the fire-light glows up there,
Red on the white ceiling;

The shadows every one
Might be giants, reeling
On their great heads, for fun.

Shall we call this a boat out at sea,
We, four sailors rowing?
Can you fancy it well? As for me
I feel the salt wind blowing.
Up, up and down, lazy boat,
On the top of a wave we float,
Down we go with a rush;
Far off I see a strand
Glimmer; our boat we'll push
Ashore on Fairy-land.

p. 27

The fairy people come running
To meet us down on the sand,
Each holding out toward us the very thing
We've long wished for, held in his hand.
Up, up again; one wave more
Holds us back from the fairy shore;
Let's pull all together,
Then with it, up we'll climb,
To the always fine weather
That makes up fairy time.

Come to us through the dark, children,
Hark! the fairy people call,
But a step between us and you, children,
And in Fairy-land room for us all.
Climb the main and you will be
Landed safe in gay Fairie,
Sporting, feasting, both night and noon,
No pause in fairy pleasures;
Silver ships that sail to the moon,
Magic toys for treasures.

Ah! the tide sweeps us out of our track,
The glimmer dies in the fire,
There's no climbing the wave that holds back
Just the things that we all most desire!
Never mind, rock, rocking-chair;
While there's room for us four there,
To sit by fire-light swinging,
Till some one open the door,
Birds in their own nest singing
Ain't happier than we four.

AUTUMN LEAVES.

p. 28

I.

Who cares to think of autumn leaves in spring?
When the birds sing,
And buds are new, and every tree is seen
Veil'd in a mist of tender gradual green;
And every bole and bough
Makes ready for the soft low-brooding wings
Of nested ones to settle there and prove
How sweet is love;
Alas, who then will notice or avow
Such bygone things?

II.

For, hath not spring the promise of the year?
Is she not always dear
To those who can look forward and forget?
Her woods do nurse the violet;
With cowslips fair her fragrant fields are set;
And freckled butterflies
Gleam in her gleaming skies;

And life looks larger, as each lengthening day
Withdraws the shadow, and drinks up the tear:
Youth shall be youth for ever; and the gay
High-hearted summer with her pomps is near.

III.

Yes; but the soul that meditates and grieves,
And guards a precious past,
And feels that neither joy nor loveliness can last—
To her, the fervid flutter of our Spring
Is like the warmth of that barbarian hall
To the scared bird, whose wet and wearied wing
Shot through it once, and came not back at all.
Poor shrunken soul! she knows her fate too well;
Too surely she can tell
That each most delicate toy her fancy made,
And she herself, and what she prized and knew,
And all her loved ones too,
Shall soon lie low, forgotten and decay'd,
Like autumn leaves.

p. 29

SILENCE.

(OF A DEAF PERSON.)

p. 30

I SEE the small birds fluttering on the trees,
And *know* the sweet notes they are softly singing;
I see the green leaves trembling in the breeze,
And *know* the rustling that such breeze is bringing;
I see the waters rippling as they flow,
And *know* the soothing murmur of their noise;
I see the children in the fire-light's glow,
Laughing and playing with their varied toys;
I see the signs of merriment and mirth;
I see the music of God's lovely earth;
I see the earnest talk of friend with friend,
And wish my earnest thoughts with theirs could blend;
But oh! to my deaf ears there comes no sound,
I live a life of silence most profound.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

p. 31

DEAR heart! what a little time it is, since Francis and I used to walk
From church in the still June evenings together, busy with loving talk;
And now he is gone far away over seas, to some strange foreign country,—and I
Shall never rise from my bed any more, till the day when I come to die.

I tried not to think of him during the prayers; but when his dear voice I heard
I fail'd to take part in the hymns, for my heart flutter'd up to my throat like a bird;
And scarcely a word of the sermon I caught. I doubt 'twas a grievous sin;
But 'twas only one poor little hour in the week that I had to be happy in.

When the blessing was given, and we left the dim aisles for the light of the evening star,
Though I durst not lift up my eyes from the ground, yet I knew that he was not far;
And I hurried on, though I fain would have stayed, till I heard his footstep draw near,
And love rising up in my breast like a flame, cast out every shadow of fear.

Ah me! 'twas a pleasant pathway home, a pleasant pathway and sweet,
Ankle deep through the purple clover, breast high 'mid the blossoming wheat:
I can hear the landrails call through the dew, and the night-jars' tremulous thrill,
And the nightingale pouring her passionate song from the hawthorn under the hill.

p. 32

One day, when we came to the wicket gate, 'neath the elms, where we used to part,
His voice began to falter and break as he told me I had his heart;
And I whisper'd that mine was his; we knew what we felt long ago:
Six weeks are as long as a lifetime almost when you love each other so.

So we put up the banns, and were man and wife in the sweet fading time of the year,
And till Christmas was over and past I knew neither sorrow nor fear.

It seems like a dream already, a sweet dream vanished and gone;
So hurried and brief while passing away, so long to look back upon.

I had only had him three months, and the world lay frozen and dead,
When the summons came which we feared and hoped, and he sail'd over sea for our bread.
Ah well! it is fine to be wealthy and grand, and never to need to part;
But 'tis better to love and be poor, than be rich with an empty heart.

Though I thought 'twould have kill'd me to lose him at first, yet was he not going for me?
So I hid all the grief in my breast which I knew it would pain him to see.
He'd be back by the autumn, he said; and since his last passionate kiss
He has scarcely been out of my thoughts, day or night, for a moment, from that day to this.

p. 33

When I wrote to him how I thought it would be, and he answered so full of love;
Ah! there was no angel happier than I, in all the bright chorus above;
And I seem'd to be lonely no longer, the days slipp'd so swiftly away;
And the March winds died, and the sweet April showers gave place to the blossoms of May.

And then came the sad summer eve, when I sat with the little frock in the sun,
And Annie ran in with the news of the ship. Ah, well! may His will be done!
They said that all hands were lost, and I swoon'd away like a stone,
And another life came ere I knew he was safe, and that mine was over and gone.

So now I lie helpless here, and shall never rise up again,
I grow weaker and weaker, day by day, till my weakness itself is a pain.
Every morning the creeping dawn, every evening I see from my bed
The orange-gold fade into lifeless grey, and the old evening star overhead.

Sometimes in the twilight dim, or the awful birth of the day,
As I lie, not asleep nor awake, my soul seems to flutter away,
And I seem to be floating beyond the stars, till I thrill with an exquisite pain,
And the feeble touch of a tiny hand recalls me to life again.

p. 34

And the doctor says she will live. Ah! 'tis hard to leave her alone,
And to think she will never know in the world the love of the mother who's gone!
He will tell her of me, by and by,—she will shed me a childish tear;
But if I should stoop to her bed in the night, she would start with a horrible fear.

She will grow into girlhood, I trust, and will bask in the light of love,
And I, if I see her at all, shall only look on from above—
I shall see her, and cannot help, though she fall into evil and woe.
Ah! how can the angels find heart to rejoice when they think of their loved ones below?

And Francis, he too, will forget me, and will go on the journey of life,
And I hope, though I dare not think of it yet, will take him another wife.
It will scarcely be Annie, I think, though she liked him in days gone by;
Was that why she came?—but what thoughts are these for one who is going to die?

I hope he will come ere I go, though I feel no longer the thirst
For the sound of his voice, and the light of his eye, that I used to feel at first:
'Tis not that I love him less, but death dries, like a whirlwind of fire,
The tender springs of innocent love, and the torrents of strong desire.

p. 35

And I know we shall meet again. I have done many things that are wrong,
But, surely, the Lord of Life and of Love, cannot bear to be angry long.
I am only a girl of eighteen, and have had no teacher but love;
And, it may be, the sorrow and pain I have known will be counted for me, above;

For I doubt if the minister knows all the depths of the goodness of God,
When he says He is jealous of earthly love, and bids me bow down 'neath the rod.
He is learnèd and wise, I know, but, somehow, to dying eyes
God opens the secret doors of the shrine that are closed to the learnèd and wise.

So now I am ready to go, for I know He will do what is best,
Though he call me away while the sun is on high, like a child sent early to rest.
I should like to see Francis look on our child, though the longing is over and past—
But what is that footstep upon the stair? Oh! my darling—at last! at last!

ECHOES.

p. 36

ON Thursday I sat in the choir of Canterbury Cathedral and watched the Bishops, Deans, Canons, and other clergy as they walked up in procession, leading the new Archbishop. The Archbishop seemed, I thought, to look with sheepish glances at two young men in full ball-room dress, who walked behind, holding up his long train; and I am satisfied that nothing but the proprieties of the place prevented his Grace from kicking them both, and carrying his tail in his own hands. The clergy, in their white gowns, with their various University colours, presented a rather

pleasant appearance in the aggregate, and, with the environment of the old Cathedral arches, I thought they must have appeared to the best advantage. But while I gazed upon the old Archbishop and those who were doing him homage, the first notes of a distant chant broke faintly through the air. The choristers had just entered the western door far away, and as they slowly moved at the end of the long procession, they uttered a sweet old Gregorian chant. At first, as I listened, I thought how very sweet it was; then I thought it was in danger of becoming monotonous; nevertheless, the little cherubs had not consulted me about the length of it, and so continued their chant. But then the old music began to strike me with subtle effects, like the strain of some long sound-seasoned Cremona violin. And at length it began to work some strange spell upon me, and weave for my ear echoes caught up as it were from the dead past which before had seemed sleeping in its many tombs around. The echoes of wild pagan song, uttered with the tramp of mystic dances, gathering at last to the dying groan of some poor wretch perishing on a rude altar that a complacent smile may be won to the face of his god. The echo of the voice of a monk who finds that altar, and raises the crucifix above it. His voice blends with the outcry of the people for their old gods, and the loud command of the baptized King. What wild echoes are these hiding under that outburst of young voices? The echoes of a thousand savage martyrs who will not bow down to the Pope. Their protest is stifled with their blood; they pass to Valhalla for whose All-Father they have died; and the howling tempest marks his passage over the scene. Echoes again; the sounds of war. Hark! a tumult—words of anger—a hoarse cry—an Archbishop's last sigh as his life ebbs away on the floor—there on the spot near the choir's gate, where Archbishop Tait now gazes as if he could see the stark form of à-Becket lying there. Yes, plainly I heard that groan in the Gregorian chant. Then there were the echoes of stripes. A King in the dark crypt, beneath the shrine of the murdered Archbishop, now canonized, is being scourged in penance for his sins. Blended with these, the echoes of the voices of the great prelates and princes of many kingdoms, who have come to build a shrine for the martyr: their exclamations before the shrine decked with all the gleaming gems owned by the monarchs of Europe. One of them, Louis of France, has refused to offer a diamond, the finest in the world, but when the shrine is uncovered, the stone leaps from his ring and sets itself in the centre of the brilliants. The people shout, nay, weep with excitement at this miracle. All these I heard again in the chant. Then came pathetic echoes out of many ages: the tones of mourners as they followed here their honoured dead; the prayers of souls here aspiring towards the mysteries of existence; voices of hearts that found peace; the sobs of those who found it not; the low-toned benediction or exhortation of confessors. The voices of priests from pulpits, and of those who responded. All are hushed in death; but I heard their awakened echoes. The echoes of tolling bells, of marriage chimes. The tones of marriage vows. The startled cry of the infant wondering at the holy water sprinkled upon it. The echoes of Chaucer's merry or sad pilgrims with their gracious or wanton stories, beguiling their way to the old inn near Christ Church Gate, which one seeks now only to find it has been burnt down. The echoes of their prayers for health at St. Dunstan's or St. Thomas's Shrine, and that other shrine where the stones are worn deepest with the knees of pilgrims, but whose saint is unknown. All these echoes were awakened for my ear by the sweet chant of the boys in Canterbury Cathedral; and unreal as they were, I confess they still seem to me more real than the actual prayers for the confusion of Dr. Tait's imaginary enemies, or the ceremony of his enthronement. To sit upon fourteen centuries and see a London gentleman in a coat so much too large for him that his friends have to hold up its skirts for him, and to see plethoric Englishmen, suggestive of sirloins, on their knees praying that the snares set for their feet shall be broken,—produced in me feelings, to say the least, of a mixed character; such as those which may have been experienced by the landlady in the Strand, when she found that her lodger Mr. Taylor (the Platonist) had sacrificed a bull to Jupiter in her back parlour. There is something not undignified in an old Greek sacrificing a heifer, laurel-crowned, to Zeus; and there is something not unimpressive in old missionaries of the Cross struggling with pagan foes, and symbolizing their faith in their vesture and in their candles which lit up the caves to which they often had to fly. But to the crowd that went down between business and business, to see so long as a return-ticket permitted this effigy of a real past, there must have been more absurdity than impressiveness in it. From the whole pageant I recall with pleasure only the long sweet chant,—a theme ensouled by genius and piety,—which, between the doorway and the altar, filled the old Cathedral and made it a vast organ, with historic tones breathing the echoes of millions of heaven-seeking pilgrims whose prayers and hymns began at that spot before the advent of Christianity, and may perhaps remain there after it has passed away.

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EXPEDIENCY.

p. 40

THUS to his scholars once Confucius said:
Better to die than not be rich: get wealth.
He who has nothing, trust me, nothing is;
Nay, tenfold worse than nothing. Not to be
Is neither good nor bad; but to be poor!—
'Tis to be nothing with an envious wish,
A zero conscious of nonentity.
To get wealth, and to keep it—this is all,
And the one rule of life, expediency.
This was the lesson that the master taught,

And then he gave some rules for getting wealth:
Happy, who once can say, I have a thing.
All things are given us, all things to be had,
Except, alas! the faculty of having.
If you are sated with one dish of fruit,
Why, no more fruit have you, to call it having,
Though a whole Autumn lay in heaps about you.

How to *have*, this, my scholars, would I teach.
Yet who can teach it? it is great and hard.
This one thing dare I say. Be not deceived,
Nor dream that those called rich *have* anything;
Who think that what the pocket treasures up,
And jealous foldings of the robe, is theirs;
Theirs all the plate the burglar cannot reach,
Theirs all the land they warn the traveller off:
Fools! Because we are poorer, are they rich?
What is none other's, is it therefore theirs?

Endeavour, O my scholars, to be rich,
Scheme to get riches when you wake from sleep,
All day pursue them, pray for them at night.

As when one leans long time upon his hand,
Then, moving it, finds all its strength is gone
And it can now grasp nothing, so the soul
Loses in listlessness the grasping power,
And in the midst of wealth, *has* nothing still.

I know not, O my scholars, how to bring
The tingling blood through the soul's palsied limbs,
But when 'tis done how rich the soul may be
How royal in possessions, I can tell,—
One half of wisdom—seek elsewhere the other.
The gods divorce knowledge of good from good.
He who is happy and rich does seldom know it,
And he who knows the true wealth seldom has it.

Not only all this world of eye and ear
Becomes his house and palace of delights
Whose soul has grasping power; so that each form
To him becomes a picture that is his,
The light-stream as a fountain in his court,
The murmur of all movement music to him,
And time's mere lapse rhythmical in his heart.
Not only so; a greater treasure still,
The lives of other men, by sympathy
Incorporated with his own, are his.

Get wealth, my scholars, this wealth first of all.
One life is beggary; live a thousand lives.
In those about you live and those remote;
Live many lives at once and call it country,
And call it kind; in the great future live
And make it in your life rehearse its life,
And make the pallid past repeat its life.
Be public-hearted and be myriad-soul'd,
So shall you noble be as well as rich,
And as a king watch for the general good.
Raised to a higher level, you shall find
With large enjoyments vast constraints, vast cares.
Be swayed by wider interests, be touched
By wiser instincts of the experienced heart,
And, since all greatness is a ponderous weight,
Be capable of vaster sufferance.
Your joys shall be as heaven, your griefs as hell.

Rise early, O my scholars, to be rich,
And make Expediency your rule of life.

Then, when the utmost scale of wealth is gain'd,
And other lives are to your own annex'd
By the soul's grasping power, this guide of life,
This sure Expediency, shall suffer change.

When appetites shall tame to prudences
And Prudence purge herself to Sacred Law,
When lusts shall sweeten into sympathies,
And royal Justice out of Anger spring,
When the expanding Self grows infinite,
Then shall Expediency, the guide of life,
In Virtue die, in Virtue rise again.

DEAREST FRIEND,

THE subject of your meeting of to-morrow is so suggestive that I would gladly join you all, and write an essay on it, if I had health and time. I have neither, and, perhaps, better so. My essay, I candidly avow, would tend to prove that no essay ought to be written on the subject. It has no reality. A sort of intuitive instinct led you to couple "Ghosts and Rest" together.

There is, here down, and there ought to be, no Rest. Life is an *aim*; an aim which can be *approached*, not *reached*, here down. There is, therefore, no rest. Rest is immoral.

It is not mine now to give a definition of the *aim*; whatever it is, there is one, there *must* be one. Without it, Life has no sense. It is atheistical; and, moreover, an irony and a deception.

I entertain all possible respect for the members of your Club; but I venture to say that any contribution on Rest which will not exhibit at the top a definition of Life will wander sadly between wild arbitrary intellectual display and commonplaces.

Life is no sinecure, no "*recherche du bonheur*" to be secured, as the promulgators of the theory had it, by guillotine, or, as their less energetic followers have it, by railway shares, selfishness, or contemplation. Life is, as Schiller said, "a battle and a march;" a battle for Good against Evil, for Justice against arbitrary privileges, for Liberty against Oppression, for associated Love against Individualism; a march onwards to Self, through collective Perfecting, to the progressive realization of an Ideal, which is only dawning to our mind and soul. Shall the battle be finally won during life-time? Shall it on Earth? are we believing in a Millennium? Don't we feel that the spiral curve through which we ascend had its beginning elsewhere, and has its end, if any, beyond this terrestrial world of ours? Where is then a possible foundation for your essays and sketches?

p. 44

Goethe's "Contemplation" has created a multitude of little sects aiming at Rest, where is no Rest, falsifying art, the element of which is evolution, not re-production, transformation, not contemplation, and enervating the soul in self-abdicating Brahmanic attempts. For God's sake let not your Club add one little sect to the fatally existing hundreds!

There is nothing to be looked for in life except the uninterrupted fulfilment of Duty, and, not Rest, but consolation and strengthening from Love. There is, not rest, but a promise, a shadowing forth of Rest in Love. Only there must be in Love absolute *trust*; and it is very seldom that this blessing depends on us. The child goes to sleep, a dreamless sleep, with unbounded trust, on the mother's bosom; but *our* sleep is a restless one, agitated by sad dreams and alarms.

You will smile at my lugubrious turn of mind; but if I was one of *your* Artists, I would sketch a man on the scaffold going to die for a great Idea, for the cause of Truth, with his eye looking trustfully on a loving woman, whose finger would trustfully and smilingly point out to him the unbounded. Under the sketch I would write, not Rest, but "a Promise of Rest." Addio: tell me one word about the point of view of your contributors.

Ever affectionately yours,
JOSEPH MAZZINI.

REST.

p. 45

Poor restless heart! still thy lament,
Crave not for rest, refusèd still,
There is some struggle,—discontent,
That stays thy will.

Be brave to meet unrest,
Nor seek from work release,
Clasp struggle close unto thy breast,
Until it brings thee peace.

Seek not in creed a resting-place
From problems that around thee surge,
But look doubt bravely in the face,
Till truth emerge.

Work out the problem of thy life,
To no convention chainèd be,
Against self-love wage ceaseless strife,
And thus be free.

Then, if in harmony thou livest,
With all that's in thy nature best,

Who "Sleep to his beloved giveth,"
Will give thee rest.

REST.

p. 46

His Mother was a Prince's child,
His Father was a King;
There wanted not to that proud lot
What power or wealth could bring;
Great nobles served him, bending low,
Strong captains wrought his will;
Fair fortune!—but it wearied him,
His spirit thirsted still!

For him the glorious music roll'd
Of singers, silent long;
Grave histories told, in scrolls of old,
The strife of right and wrong;
For him Philosophy unveil'd
Athenian Plato's lore,
Might these not serve to fill a life?
Not this! he sigh'd for more!

He loved!—the truest, newest lip
That ever lover pressed,
The queenliest mouth of all the south
Long love for him confess'd:
Round him his children's joyousness
Rang silverly and shrill;
Thrice blessed! save *that* blessedness
Lack'd something—something still!

To battle all his spears he led,
In streams of winding steel;
On breast and head of foeman dead
His war-horse set its heel;
The jewell'd housings of its flank
Swung wet with blood of kings;
Yet the rich victory seem'd rank
With the blood taint it brings!

p. 47

The splendid passion seized his soul
To heal, by statutes sage,
The ills that bind our hapless kind.
And chafe to crime and rage;
And dear the people's blessing was,
The praising of the poor;
But evil stronger is than thrones,
And hate no laws can cure!

He laid aside the sword and pen,
And lit the lamp, to wrest
From nature's range the secrets strange,
The treasures of her breast;
And wisdom deep his guerdon was,
And wondrous things he knew;
Yet from each vanquish'd mystery
Some harder marvel grew!

No pause! no respite! no sure ground,
To stay the spirit's quest!
In all around not one thing found
So good as to be "best;"
Not even love proved quite divine;
Therefore his search did cease,
Lord of all gifts that life can give
Save the one sweet gift—Peace!

p. 48

Then came it!—crown, sword, wreath—each lay,
An unregarded thing!
The funeral sheet from head to feet,
Was royal robe to that king!
And strange!—Love, learning, statecraft, sway,
Look'd always on before,

But those pale, happy, lips of clay,
Lack'd nothing!—nothing more!

GOSSIP.

p. 49

I FEEL impelled to say a word, and it shall be but a word—and so more patiently endured—in defence of that much abused, much maligned thing—gossipry. Johnson, among many other designations, gives for “gossiped,” “spiritual affinity;” a very good definition, and the one I shall adopt; that is, sympathy, the need to give and to receive it; and I must say I know few things more charming than this sympathy in small things, this gossipry between kindly hearts and well filled heads. That light pouring out the thoughts and feelings and observations of the passing hour, which, while it commences with the external, is sure to touch, ever and anon, those deeper springs of thought, and feeling, and action, from which well up pleasant memories, apt thoughts, and pertinent reflections.

Poring over old letters and papers which chanced recently to come into my hands, I came upon an old leaf of yellow paper and faded ink, which caught my attention; it appeared to be either a scrap of an old diary, or of a letter; it seemed to me somewhat germane to our present subject, and being venerable from its antiquity, I venture to quote it. Its date is too indistinct to be sure of, but it seems to be 1700 and something. Thus it runs:—“My husband was bidden to dinner yesterday to our Rector’s, I with him; my husband was pleased thereat, because there was, he said, to be there a man of parts, from London; so I laid out my husband’s best coat and long flowered waistcoat, and his kerseys and silk stockings, which he did not often wear, for I desired him to be seemly in his attire, that he might do fitting honour to our Rector; I was a little flustered at first with the notion of this great man; but I noted that my husband bore himself towards him exactly as if he had been an ordinary man. At table I found myself set next to him. The gardens at the great house are very fine, and kept excellently well, as indeed is not wonderful, as there are two whole gardeners and a boy to do the work. Looking out of the large bay-window which looked upon the flower garden, and stood open, for it was mighty warm, I could not keep my eyes off the flowers, they were so exceeding gay; the sun shone out surprisingly; one spot in particular took my attention: a large clump of daffodils had been allowed on the lawn, the grass was high round them, and on the top of every blade there was a drop that sparkled like a diamond—for there had been a slight shower—and as I looked upon them, I thought of the description in holy writ of the gates of the temple of Jerusalem, all studded with sapphires and emeralds and diamonds; and I was so taken up that I forgot it was the great man that was sitting by me, and I asked him if it was not beautiful? ‘It is vastly fine indeed, ma’am,’ he said; but he looked at me with wonderment, I thought, and from the look in his eyes, I am sure he did not know a daffodil from a daisy, poor man. So I felt very much abashed, and sat still and said no more; and there was not much discourse, but everybody looked wise and silent; and I remembered that somewhere it is said, it is a grand thing to know how to be silent; but I thought a little talking would have been more agreeable, only perhaps not so wise-like, only of course I knew I was quite a common person, and had no parts at all; so when it was about three of the clock—the hour fixed for the dinner was rather late, as it was a bye common occasion—and we ladies left the gentlemen to settle down to their wine, I thought I would go home to my children, for I thought our lady Rector looked somewhat puffed up and stately with the great honour she had had, and done to us; and to say the very truth, I felt longing to speak and to hear in the ordinary way. So I took my leave in a beseeming and courteous manner, and stepped across to my own place; and my eldest daughter came running to me and said she had got so many things to tell me; and then out of her little heart she poured out all her little troubles and pleasures; and oh! she said, little brother had been so naughty, and had cried dreadfully for the pretty cup from China, and stamped and fought her when she would not let him have it, because dear mamma liked it so much, and would be sorry to have it broken. ‘But then, mamma,’ she said, ‘when he got a little quieter, I talked to him, and hushed him and kissed him, and so he was soon good, and we had a great game at horses.’ Then I kissed the little maid, and called her a ‘dear little mother,’ but she was greatly puzzled, and said, ‘Oh, mamma, I am only a little girl.’ Then she said I must tell her all about the gentleman that she had heard papa say had a great many parts—‘more, I suppose, mamma, than any of us.’ I only kissed her at this, and told her of the golden daffodils and many other flowers I had noticed; and of two great blackbirds I had seen hopping very lovingly together upon the lawn. She said she liked to hear of these extremely; and I told of the roast sucking-pig with an orange in its mouth, which was at the top of the table; but she did not like this; she said it would remind her of the little piggy running about, which that little pig would never do any more. Then she said she would tell me of one of her little misfortunes, which she thought was almost a big one: ‘the poor brown hen with ten little chicks had been shut up by themselves, because the little chicks would run about too far; and the boy had forgotten them, and they had been shut up without anything to eat for ever so many hours; and when we put some barley in, dear old browney clucked and clucked, and showed the grains to the chicks, but never touched one herself, mamma, and when the little chicks had eaten till they were quite full, she called them all under her wings, and they went fast asleep; but then, mamma, there was not one single barley left near the poor mother; and so I do believe mamma, she would have been quite starved to death, only we put some barley and some nice crumbs quite close to her; so she got them without moving a bit, or waking the chicks, and oh, mamma, she did gobble it up so

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fast; I know she was so hungry, for she did not eat one single barley-corn before, for I watched her all the time; wasn't it sweet and good of her, mamma? I shall love that dear old browney for always.' And so my little daughter and I chatted away and enjoyed ourselves hugely, till my dear good man, who I had thought was sitting over his wine, and perhaps his pipe—but I don't know about that because of the company—came suddenly behind us. He kissed us both, saying, 'My two sweet gossips, it does my heart good to hear you. It seems to me, my Margery,' he said, 'that our little one here hath both a sound heart and a wise head.'"

There the paper is torn, and I could see no other word. It appears to me that this, and many other gossipries, are, in their small way, good, and that when they are not good, it is because the heart is cankered, and the head empty; and so we come round to the conclusion on all subjects and on all difficulties, especially social difficulties—educate, educate, educate; teach the mind to find subjects for thought in all things, and purify the heart by enabling it to find "sermons in stones, and good in everything;" then will Gossip be the graceful unbending of the loving heart and well-filled head.

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CHIPS.

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CHIPS! chips!

We had climb'd to the top of the cliff that day,
Just where the brow look'd over the bay;
And you stood, and you watch'd the shifting ships
Till I found you a seat in the heather.
As we reach'd the top you had touch'd me thrice;
I had felt your hand on my shoulder twice,
And once I had brush'd your feather.
And I turn'd at last, and saw you stand,
Looking down seaward hat in hand,
At the shelving sweep of the scoop'd-out sand,
And the great blue gem within it.
The bright, sweet sky was over your head,
Your cheek was aflame with the climber's red,
And a something leapt in my heart that said,—
Happy or sorry, living or dead,—
My fate had begun that minute.
And we sat, and we watch'd the clouds go by
(There were none but the clouds and you and I
As we sat on the hill together);
As you sketch'd the rack as it drifted by,
Fleece upon fleece through the pathless sky,
Did you wonder, Florence, whether,
When you held me up your point to cut,
I had kept the chips, when the knife was shut,—
For none of them fell in the heather.

Chips! chips!—

Yet what was I but the cousin, you know?—
Only the boy that you favour'd so—
And the word that stirr'd my lips
I must hide away in my heart, and keep,
For the road to you was dizzy and steep
As the cliff we had climb'd together.
There was many an older lover nigh,
With the will and the right to seek your eye;
And for me, I know not whether,
If I chose to live, or I chose to die,
It would matter to you a feather.
But this I know, as the feather's weight
Will keep the poise of the balance straight,
In the doubtful climb—in the day's eclipse,
In the stumbling steps, in the faults and trips,
I have gain'd a strength from the tiniest scraps
That ever were help to a man, perhaps,—
Chips! chips!

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Look, these are "the tiniest scraps," you see,
And this is their casket of filigree,
That I bought that year "far over the sea,"
With a volley of chaff, and a half-rupee,
From a huckstering, fox-faced Bengalee,
That set himself up for a dealer.
They have slept with me by the jungle fires,

They have watch'd with me under Indian spires,
I have kept them safe in their gilded wires
From the clutch of the coolie stealer;
And when at last they relieved "the Nest,"—
Alick, and Ellis, and all the rest,—
March'd into Lucknow four abreast,
That I had the chips still under my vest,
That they pray'd with me, must be confess'd,
Who never was much of a kneeler.
And now that I come, and I find you free,
You, that have waken'd this thing in me,
Will you tell me, Florence, whether,
When I kept your pencil's chips that day,
Was it better perhaps to have let them stay
To be lost in the mountain heather!

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CHIPS.

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CHIPS! It may be well disputed
If a word exists, less suited,
Or more odd and uninviting
As a theme for rhyme or writing;
Coinage of that dull Max Müller,
Title of a book still duller.
Fill'd with words so cabalistic,
That methought the German mystic
Must have found the dialect
Spoken ere man walk'd erect.

Never mind! what must be, must;
Men must eat both crumb and crust.
And the dodge of many a poet
(Half the verses publish'd show it),
When his Pegasus rides restive,
Is to make his *rhymes* suggestive.
If in what you chance to seize on
Rhyme and reason will not chime,
Better rhyme without the reason
Than the reason and no rhyme;
Better anything than prose,
So, as Milton says, "here goes."

"When the Grecian chiefs in ships
Sail'd on Argonautic trips!"

"When the Furies with their whips
Flogg'd Orestes all to strips!"

"When the sun in dim eclipse
In the darken'd ocean dips!"

Still I see no clue to chips!

"Meadows where the lambkin skips,
Where the dew from roses drips
And the bee the honey sips . . ."

Odd, that nothing leads to chips!

Then I thought of "cranks and quips,"
Wanton wiles and laughing lips,
Luring us to fatal slips,
And leaving us in Satan's grips.

Then I made a desperate trial,
With the sixth and seventh vial—
Thinking I could steal some Chips
From St. John's Apocalypse.

Then there came a long hiatus,
While I kept repeating Chips,
Feeling the divine afflatus
Oozing through my finger-tips.

Gone and going hopelessly,

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So, in my accustom'd manner,
Underneath my favourite tree,
I began a mild havannah—
'Twas indeed my favourite station,
For recruiting mind and body;
Drinking draughts of inspiration,
Alternate with whisky toddy.
'Twas an oak tree old and hoary.
And my garden's pride and glory;
Hallow'd trunk and boughs in splinters,
Mossy with a thousand winters.

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Here I found the Muses' fountain,
And perceived my spirits mounting,
And exclaim'd in accents burning,
To the tree my eyes upturning,
"Venerable tree and vast,
Speak to me of ages past!
Sylvan monarch of the wold,
Tell me of the days of old!
Did thy giant boughs o'er-arching
View the Roman legions marching?
Has the painted Briton stray'd
Underneath thy hoary shade?
Did some heathen oracle
In thy knotty bosom dwell,
As in groves of old Dodona,
Or the Druid oaks of Mona?
Dwelt the outlaw'd foresters
Here in 'otium cum dig.'
While the feather'd choristers
In thy branches 'hopp'd the twig?'
Help me, Nymph! Fawn! Hamadryad!
One at once, or all the Triad."

Lo! a voice to my invoking!
'Twas my stupid gardener croaking,
"Please, Sir, mayn't I fall this tree,
'Cos it spoils the crops, you see:
And the grass it shades and lumbers,
And we shan't have no *cow*cumbers.
Some time it will fall for good,
And the Missis wants the wood."

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Shock'd at such a scheme audacious,
Faint, I gasp'd out, "Goodness gracious!"
"Yes," I said, "the tree must fall,
'Tis, alas! the lot of all;
But no mortal shall presume
To accelerate its doom.
Rescued from thy low desires,
It shall warm my poet fires.
Let the strokes of fate subdue it,
Let the axe of Time cut through it;
When it must fall, let it fall,
But, oh! never let me view it."

Seeing that my phrase exalted
Fell upon his senses vainly,
In my full career I halted,
And I spoke my orders plainly.
"Never seek to trim or lop it,
Once for all I charge thee, drop it."
And I added, to my sorrow,
"You shall 'cut your stick' to-morrow
Know what *that* means, I suppose?"
"Yes," he said, "I thinks I does."
So I left him at this crisis,
Left him to his own devices,
Left him like the royal Vandal,
Leaning on his old spade handle.
Oh! those vulgar slang expressions,—
How I smart for my transgressions!
Judge my wrath, surprise, and horror,
When I rose upon the morrow,
To behold my tree in ruin,

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And be told 'twas all *my* doing,
While the villain grinn'd in glee!
"Wretch!" I thunder'd, "Where's my tree?"
And these words came from his lips,
"There's the tree, and them's the Chips."

TRANSFORMATION.

p. 62

THE LAST SPEECH AND CONFESSION OF A MAHOGANY-TREE NYMPH.

You've heard in Greek mythology
Of nymph and hamadryad
Who had their being in a tree;
Perchance, the tale admired.
Yet live we, in oblivion sunk;
Though strange, my tale's as sure as
That I was once a stately trunk
In the forests of Honduras.

My home was in a jungle low,
And tall tree ferns grew round me;
The humming-birds flew to and fro,
And wild lianas bound me;
The panther, jaguar, and ounce,
Lurk'd ever in my branches
On weary travellers to pounce
While journeying to their ranches.
Me, merchants from Honduras found
Who had not got a log any;
They cut me prostrate on the ground
To make first-rate mahogany.

They pack'd me in a darksome hold;
We cross'd the ocean quivering;
They took me to a region cold
That set my timbers shivering;
Above, an atmosphere of fog;
Around me, masts upstanding—
When they had piled me log by log,
Upon the dockyard landing.

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And then they came with rule and chalk
Numb'ring my feet and inches,
And pack'd us high beside that walk
With pullies, cranks, and winches;
And one by one my logs were sold,
And one by one were taken,
Till I, the spirit of the whole,
Was left of form forsaken.

And when the auction sale was past,
Mourning each separate splinter
I flitted formless round the masts,
Through all that ice-bound winter,
Still with benumb'd and torpid sense
All plan or hope deferring,
Till, when the spring sun shone intense,
My spirit's sap was stirring,

I heard a wordless, whisper'd sound,
(Such as we tree-nymphs utter,)
Of swelling twigs, and buds unbound,
And tremulous leaflets' flutter,—
And saw a dim, green, glossy face
With eyes like pearly flowers,—
And knew the spirit of our race,
Fresh from Honduras' bowers.

"Poor disembodied nymph," I thought
It said; "Go, seek thy children,
A true statistical report
To bring us, though bewild'ring,
Of what with every inch they've done,
Each splintering and chipling;

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Then, backwards to Honduras flown,
Thou'lt have another sapling."

I wing'd my way elate with hopes,
To seek each cabinet maker—
To Druse and Heal's well furnish'd shops,
And the Bazaar of Baker—
Each piano manufactory,
To Broadwood and to Collard—
Where'er a portion of my tree,
Was carried, there I follow'd:

And where'er a sofa or chair I saw,
Or bedstead or wardrobe furnish'd,
Or centre-table with spreading claw,
With my wood all brightly burnish'd,
Each knot, and knob, and scar, and split,
And delicate grain appearing.
Long was my search, made longer yet
By the general use of veneering.

I've flitted through a mansion proud
To watch a grand piano,
The centre of a list'ning crowd
High-bred in tone and manner:
I've stood by many a shining board,
Were dinners were demolish'd,
And view'd the silver and glass *encored*—
Seen double in the polish.

And beside a stately bed I've stood,
Where curtains of silken splendour
O'er damask hangings and polish'd wood,
Threw a lustre subdued and tender.
A dainty cradle stood near its head,
But no form was in it sleeping,
For the couch of state held the baby dead,
And the mother knelt near it weeping:

I came beneath a gorgeous dome,
With fretted arch and column,
And stained glass windows through the gloom
That made it very solemn.
And by the pulpit stairs I stood
The preacher's words to follow—
The sounding-board was my own wood—
(That, and the words were hollow):

And I've wandered to the library—
The bookshelves there were mine—
Belonging to one of the Ministry;
The whole was wondrous fine.
(I thought the pay seem'd very high,
The work of an easy nature,
And wondered if that was the reason why
They would not suffer women to try
To sit in the Legislature):

And I've been up a dismal attic flight,
Not knowing why there I hasten'd,
And I found 'twas the sewing-table bright
To which a machine was fasten'd;
And a girl was working, so pale and drear,
And in such a forlorn condition,
That, ghost as I was, I had shed a tear,
But I knew that that garret was woman's sphere,
And dressmaking her mission.

Last month I came to a table round
Which cover'd, to my surprise, is,
(Whilst a critical crowd collects around,
With chips of all lengths and sizes:
And I knew I'd found the last piece of wood;
And back, to my former station,
My spirit crossed the Atlantic flood
To begin a new transformation.
So I laid the glimpses that I had had
Of the motley life of this nation

Upon this table—or good or bad—
For the general delectation.

TRANSFORMATION. LITTLE SEAL-SKIN.

p. 67

THE fisherman walked up the hill,
His boat lay on the sand,
His net was on his shoulder still,
His home a mile inland.
And as he walk'd among the whin
He saw a little white seal-skin,
Which he took up in his hand.
Then "How," said he, "can this thing be?
A seal-skin, and no seal within?"
Thus pondered he,
Partly in fear,
Till he remember'd what he'd heard
Of creatures in the sea,—
Sea-men and women, who are stirred
One day in every year
To drop their seal-skins on the sand,
To leave the sea, and seek the land
For twelve long hours,
Playing about in sweet sunshine,
Among the corn-fields, with corn-flowers,
Wild roses, and woodbine:
Till night comes on, and then they flit
Adown the fields, and sit
Upon the shore and put their seal-skins on,
And slip into the sea, and they are gone.
The fisherman strok'd the fur
Of the little white seal-skin,
Soft as silk, and white as snow;
And he said to himself, "I know
That some little sea-woman lived in
This seal-skin, perhaps not long ago.
I wonder what has become of her!
And why she left this on the whin,
Instead of slipping it on again
When all the little sea-women and men
Went hurrying down to the sea!
Ah! well, she never meant
It for me,
That I should take it, but I will,
Home to my house on the hill,"
Said the fisherman; and home he went.

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The Fisher dozed before his fire,
The night was cold outside,
The bright full moon was rising higher
Above the swelling tide,
And the wind brought the sound of breakers nigher,
Even to the hill side;
When suddenly
Something broke at the cottage door,
Like the plash
Of a little wave on a pebbly shore;
And as water frets in the backward drain
Of the wave, seeming to fall in pain,
There came a wailing after the plash.—
The fisherman woke, and said, "Is it rain?"
Then he rose from his seat
And open'd his door a little way,
But soon shut it again
With a kind of awe;
For the prettiest little sea-woman lay
On the grass at his feet
That you ever saw;
She began to sob and to say,
"Who has stolen my skin from me?"

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And who is there will take me in?
For I have lost my little seal-skin,
And I can't get back to the sea."

The Fisherman stroked the fur
Of the downy white seal-skin,
And he said, "Shall I give it her?—
But then she would get in,
And hurry away to the sea,
And not come back to me,
And I should be sorry all my life,
I want her so for my little wife."
The Fisherman thought for a minute,
Then he carried the seal-skin to
A secret hole in the thatch,
Where he hid it cleverly, so
That a sharp-sighted person might go,
In front of the hole and not catch
A glimpse of the seal-skin within it.
After this he lifted the latch
Of his door once more,
But the night was darker, for
The moon was swimming under a cloud,
So the Fisherman couldn't see
The little sea-woman plainly,
Seeing a fleck of white foam only,
That was sobbing aloud
As before.

"Little sea-woman," said the Fisherman,
"Will you come home to me,
Will you help me to work, and help me to save,
Care for my house and me,
And the little children that we shall have?"
"Yes, Fisherman," said she.
So the Fisherman had his way,
And seven years of life
Pass'd by him like one happy day;
But, as for his sea-wife,
She sorrowed for the sea always
And loved not her land life.
Morning and evening, and all day
She would say
To herself—"The sea! the sea!"
And at night, when dreaming,
She stretch'd her arms about her, seeming
To seek little Willie,
It was the sea
She would have clasp'd, not he—
The great sea's purple water,
Dearer to her than little son or daughter.
Yet she was kind
To her children three,
Harry, fair Alice, and baby Willie;
And set her mind
To keep things orderly.
"Only," thought she,
"If I *could* but find
That little seal-skin I lost one day."
She didn't know
That her husband had it hidden away;
Nor he
That she long'd for it so.

Until
One evening as he climb'd the hill,
The Fisherman found her amongst the whin,
Sobbing, saying, "My little seal-skin—
Who has stolen my skin from me?
How shall I find it, and get in,
And hurry away to the sea?"
"Then she shall have her will,"
Said he.

So
Next morning, when he rose to go
A-fishing, and his wife still slept,

He stole
The seal-skin from that secret hole
Where he had kept
It, and flung it on a chair,
Saying, "She will be glad to find it there
To-day
When I am gone,
And yet
Perhaps she will not put it on,"
He said, "Nor go away."
In sleeping his wife wept;
Then the Fisherman took his net
And crept
Into the chill air.

The night drew on—the air was still,
Homeward the fisher climbed the hill.
All day he'd thought, "She will not go;"
And now, "She has not," pondered he.
"She is not gone," he said, "I know,
There is a lamp in our window,
Put ready on the sill
To guide me home, and I shall see
The dear light glimmering presently,
Just as I round the hill."
But when he turn'd, there was no light
To guide him homeward through the night.
Then, "I am late," he said,
"And maybe she was weary
Looking so long for me.
She lays the little ones in bed
Well content,
In the inner room where I shall find her,
And where she went,
Forgetting to leave the light behind her."

So he came to his cottage door,
And threw it open wide;
But stood a breathing space, before
He dared to look inside.
No fire was in the fireplace, nor
A light on any side;
But a little heap lay on the floor,
And the voice of a baby cried.
Rocking and moaning on the floor,
That little heap
Was the children, tired with crying,
Trying to sleep,
Moaning and rocking to and fro;
But Baby Willie hindered the trying
By wailing so.

Then "Wife! wife!" said the Fisherman,
"Come from the inner room."
There was no answer, and he ran
Searching into the gloom.

"Wife! wife! why don't you come?
The children want you, and I've come home."
"Mammy's gone, Daddy," said Harry—
"Gone into the sea;
She'll never come back to carry
Tired Baby Willie.
It's no use now, Daddy, looking about;
I can tell you just how it all fell out.

"There was a seal-skin
In the kitchen—
A little crumpled thing;
I can't think how it came there;
But this morning
Mammy found it on a chair,
And when she began
To feel it, she dropped
It on the floor—
But snatch'd it up again and ran

Straight out at the door,
And never stopped
Till she-reach'd the shore.

"Then we three, Daddy,
Ran after, crying, "Take us to the sea!
Wait for us, Mammy, we are coming too!
Here's Alice, Willie can't keep up with you!
Mammy, stop—just for a minute or two!"
But Alice said, 'Maybe
She's making us a boat
Out of the seal-skin cleverly,
And by-and-by she'll float
It on the water from the sands
For us.' Then Willie clapt his hands
And shouted, 'Run on, Mammy, to the sea,
And we are coming, Willie understands.'

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"At last we came to where the hill
Slopes straight down to the beach,
And there we stood all breathless, still,
Fast clinging each to each.
We saw her sitting upon a stone,
Putting the little seal-skin on.
Oh! Mammy! Mammy!
She never said good-bye, Daddy,
She didn't kiss us three;
She just put the little seal-skin on,
And slipped into the sea!
Oh! Mammy's gone, Daddy; Mammy's gone!
She slipp'd into the sea!"

A SURPRISE.

p. 75

"SHE is dead!" they said to him. "Come away;
Kiss her! and leave her!—thy love is clay!"

They smoothed her tresses of dark brown hair;
On her forehead of stone they laid it fair:

Over her eyes, which gazed too much,
They drew the lids with a gentle touch;

With a tender touch they closed up well
The sweet thin lips that had secrets to tell;

About her brows, and her dear, pale face
They tied her veil and her marriage-lace;

And drew on her white feet her white silk shoes;—
Which were the whiter no eye could choose!

And over her bosom they crossed her hands;
"Come away," they said,—"God understands!"

And then there was Silence;—and nothing there
But the Silence—and scents of eglantere,

And jasmine, and roses, and rosemary;
For they said, "As a lady should lie, lies she!"

And they held their breath as they left the room,
With a shudder to glance at its stillness and gloom.

But he—who loved her too well to dread
The sweet, the stately, the beautiful dead,—

He lit his lamp, and took the key,
And turn'd it!—Alone again—he and she!

He and she; but she would not speak,
Though he kiss'd, in the old place, the quiet cheek;

He and she; yet she would not smile,
Though he call'd her the name that was fondest erewhile.

He and she; and she did not move

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To any one passionate whisper of love.

Then he said, "Cold lips! and breast without breath!
Is there no voice?—no language of death

"Dumb to the ear and still to the sense,
But to heart and to soul distinct,—intense?

"See, now,—I listen with soul, not ear—
What was the secret of dying, Dear?

"Was it the infinite wonder of all,
That you ever could let life's flower fall?

"Or was it a greater marvel to feel
The perfect calm o'er the agony steal?

"Was the miracle greatest to find how deep,
Beyond all dreams, sank downward that sleep?

"Did life roll backward its record, Dear,
And show, as they say it does, past things clear?

"And was it the innermost heart of the bliss
To find out so what a wisdom love is?

"Oh, perfect Dead! oh, Dead most dear,
I hold the breath of my soul to hear;

"I listen—as deep as to horrible hell,
As high as to heaven!—and you do not tell!

"There must be pleasures in dying, Sweet,
To make you so placid from head to feet!

"I would tell you, Darling, if I were dead,
And 'twere your hot tears upon my brow shed.

"I would say, though the angel of death had laid
His sword on my lips to keep it unsaid.

"You should not ask, vainly, with streaming eyes,
Which in Death's touch was the chiefest surprise;

"The very strangest and suddenest thing
Of all the surprises that dying must bring."

* * * *

Ah! foolish world! Oh! most kind Dead!
Though he told me, who will believe it was said?

Who will believe that he heard her say,
With the soft rich voice, in the dear old way:—

"The utmost wonder is this,—I hear,
And see you, and love you, and kiss you, Dear;

"I can speak now you listen with soul, not ear;
If your soul could see, it would all be clear

"What a strange delicious amazement is Death,
To be without body and breathe without breath.

"I should laugh for joy if you did not cry;
Oh, listen! Love lasts!—Love never will die.

"I am only your Angel who was your Bride;
And I see, that though dead, I have never died."

THE GLOAMING.

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THE gloaming! the gloaming! "What is the gloaming?" was asked by some honourable member of this honourable Society, when the word was chosen a month ago. "Twilight," was promptly answered by another honourable member! And although the gloaming is undoubtedly *twilight*, is twilight as undoubtedly the gloaming?—the gloaming of Burns, of Scott, the gloaming so often referred to in our old Northern minstrelsy? The City clerk on the knife-board of his familiar "bus," soothing himself with a fragrant Pickwick, after his ten hours' labour in that turmoil and eddy of restless humanity—the City—may see, as he rolls westward, the sun slowly sinking and

setting in its fiery grandeur behind the Marble Arch. He may see the shades of evening stealing over the Park and the Bayswater Road, and darkness settling softly over gentle Notting Hill; and he may see, if there be no fog, or not too much smoke in the atmosphere to prevent astronomical observations, the stars stealing out one by one in the Heavens above him, as the gas-lamps are being lit in the streets around him; but would that observant youth on his knife-board, with his Pickwick, amidst the lamp-lights, in the roar of London, be justified in describing what he had seen as "the gloaming?" I think not. Is not the gloaming twilight only in certain localities, and under certain conditions? Is not the gloaming chiefly confined to the North country, or to mountainous districts? It is difficult to say where the gloaming shall be called gloaming no more, and where twilight is just simple twilight, and no gloaming; but surely there lives not the man who will assert that he has seen a real gloaming effect in the *Tottenham Court Road*, for instance!

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Can it be applied to eventide in the flat fens of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire? Does the gloaming ever fall on the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire—Leeds, Sheffield, Huddersfield? Twilight in the Potteries is surely twilight and no gloaming. May not, are not the limits within which the latter word may be used as aptly describing eventide, be the limits within which our old balladry sprung and flourished? May not, are not the limits within which the word is wholly inapplicable to describe the close of day, be the limits within which the love of song was not so strongly developed—where external nature did not, and does not suggest song, or poetry to the mind? Well, that definition is quite enough for the present day, in which "hard and fast lines" are at a discount! But there is still that awkward question, "What is the gloaming?" And what is there in the gloaming that distinguishes it from that which is twilight merely? To answer that with any hope of conveying any sense of the difference which undoubtedly *does* exist, is a matter which is beyond the capacity of any one not being a Ruskin. As to *define* the gloaming is beyond the powers of ordinary mortals, and as ostracism is threatened if I do not do something—as I am writing *in terrorem*, and to save my pen-and-pencil existence, which is hanging on this slender thread—I will, in default of being able to do better, give my own experiences of a real "GLOAMING."

Time of year—the end of August. Locality, *not* the Tottenham Court Road, but one of the northernmost points of the Northumberland border—a wild, rough, hard land—the fighting ground, for centuries upon centuries, first of the old Romans, and then of our own border laddies, who held it against the "rieving Scots"—a land over which the famous Sixth Legion has marched—a land which has seen Hotspur fight and Douglas fall—a land where almost every hillside and burn has its legend and ballad—a land on which one would reasonably expect to see the gloaming, as distinguished from twilight, fall! I had had ten days walking after wild grouse—tramping through the heather, generally dripping wet, for the Scotch mist did not observe or keep the border line, worse luck to it. At last a fine day, and a long tramp on the moors. At the close of it, having first walked enough over the soft moss and young heather to make me exult in the grand condition for exercise which ten days' hill air will give, I separated from my party to try for a snipe down by a little tarn, lying in the midst of a "faded bent" in the moor, intending to tramp home afterwards in my own company—and in my own company it *was* that I had full opportunity of studying the effect of the gloaming.

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The sun was getting low as I separated from my party and walked up the side of a long hill covered with old heather, moss, patches of grass, patches of reeds, and bogs. It was a glorious scene! A sea of moorland—wave over wave of undulating hill—rolled from me northward to the foot of old Cheviot, whose long back, some twenty miles away, was lit up by the brilliant sinking sun so clearly that I could distinguish the gullies and inequalities in its time-honoured old sides. Wave over wave, southward and westward, rolled those same moorland hills from my feet, seemingly into the still more distant hills of Cumberland, and from north to south, east to west, was a sea of purple heather in its fullest bloom, lit up by the golden floods of light of the setting sun. In another five minutes the sun had disappeared, and I was down by the side of the little Tarn. Already the air, always fresh on the hills, became fresher; the golden light was dying out of the sky; the blue of the Heaven above me was darkening, the hills, a mass of purple sheen so few minutes ago, stood out sharp and black against the sky; and so I started on my long tramp home, watching the growth of the "gloaming." There was still the heather. I was still tramping through it, but its colour was gone. It was now an expanse of purple blackness. More intensely dark became the blue of the sky above me as the red streaks, still hovering over the place where the sun had dipped, faded. Gradually, imperceptibly was darkness spreading over everything; and as the darkness spread, the stillness and sweetness of the "gloaming" made itself felt. The stillness and freshness of the air, the mysterious blackness of the hills; the startling white flashes of the little pools, in the moors, looking as though they had absorbed light from somewhere, and were loth to part with it; the faintly reflected colours of the fading sky given back by the burns and streamlets which crossed my path, the whispering of the reeds and long grass; the great grey boulders looming here and there through the dark heather and bracken—boulders behind which at that hour one could not help believing that Kelpies and Pixies were hiding, and might dart out at any moment for some Tam-o'-Shanter frolic over the moor—and the soft springy moss, grass, and heather, still under my feet deadening all the sound of my tread. Light dying, fading, and darkness, a rich purple darkness, spreading; and everywhere the scent of heather bloom and stillness and freshness—freshness indescribable, a stillness only broken by the call here and there of the scattered grouse; or the soft rush of wings and whistling of golden plover far away over head; or the cry of the lapwing—or the bark miles away of a collie dog; or the dripping and murmuring and bubbling of the little burns in the gullies!

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Light still dying away! What was left only "dealt a doubtful sense of things not so much seen as

felt." And then it was that I realized what Robert Burns had sung:—

"Gie me the hour o' gloamin grey,
For it mak's my heart sae cheery O."

SKETCHES.

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SKETCHES of life upon the slabs of death
Our loving hand on living stone indites:
Sketches of death upon the screens of life
Time, the great limner, for a warning writes.

Sketches of joy upon the face of sorrow,
Still credulous, our aching fingers trace:
Time steals the pencil, and with bitter scorn,
Sketches old sorrow on our young joy's face.

E'en so our sketch of life is framed and fashion'd;
In vain with glowing touches we begin—
By day we work upon the light and colour,
Time comes by night and puts the shadows in.

SKETCHES.

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A CONVERSATION.

KATEY.

"THERE! I have finished my sketch of the sloping field, and the misty strip of woodland above, in its autumn dress, by putting you in in the foreground, the only living thing in my misty-autumn picture; though, after all, you don't look much more than a brown spot on the green, with your brown hat and skirt and your old brown book. I am much obliged to it for keeping you still so long this misty morning. What is there in it?"

"Sketches," I answered. "Misty sketches like this of yours." And I stretched out my hand for my cousin's drawing, while she looked over my shoulder down on to the volume on my knee and uttered an exclamation of surprise when her eye fell on nothing but black letters on a damp spotted yellow page. "'Treating of the four complexions, into which men are bound during their sojourn in their earthly houses,'" she read aloud; "what does it mean? Let me look on. 'Of those that draw their complexion from the dark and melancholy earth. Of those who take their complexion from the friendly air. Of those who are complexioned after the manner of fire. Of those who partake of the nature of the subtle and yielding water;' who writes this queer stuff; is it sense or nonsense?" I held up the book that she might read the faded gilt letters on its wormeaten leather back. "Letters of Jacob Böhme to John Schauffman and others," she read. "Oh!"—rather a doubtful "oh!" it was, as if the name did not settle the question about sense or nonsense as completely as she had expected it would.

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"This is rather a rare book I flatter myself," I went on. "I bought it at a book-stall because it looked so odd and old, and found to my great joy that it was a miscellaneous collection of Jacob Böhme's letters, on all sorts of subjects; the four that I have been reading this morning about the four different temperaments, or, as he calls it, complexions into which men may be divided, come in oddly enough among much more mystical and transcendental matter. They are, as I said, misty sketches of character, but I think they show that the dreamy old cobbler knew something about his fellow-men."

K. "What are Jacob Böhme's writings like?"

"Oh, I can't tell you that, I can only tell you what it makes one feel like to read them. Something, as we should feel, you and I, if we climbed up to that peak above the wood there, and looked down on the mist in the valley now the sun is gilding it. We should have a vague feeling of having got up on to a height, and perceived something glorious; but we should not be able to give much account of what we had seen when we came down."

K. "But I hope you will be able to give me an account of what you have been reading to-day. I want you to explain to me about the four complexions as we walk home."

"Well, I will try; these four letters have something in them that one can get hold of and venture to put into fresh words. You must remember, to begin with, that Böhme still held to there being only four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—and thought that everything, our bodies included, was made up of various proportions of these elemental substances—the soul, a pure indivisible essence, he thinks of as living imprisoned in these compound bodies. Shadowed and clouded and

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hindered in its work by the material form that shuts it in from the true fount of being; individualizing it and debasing it at the same time. Character, according to him, depends upon the element that preponderates in the composition of our bodies; our souls work through it and are more or less free. His theory of the causes of differences of character may be ever so foolish, yet I think the classification he draws from it is interesting, and does somehow or other help us to understand ourselves and our fellow-creatures a little better."

K. "Let me see, he divides people into earth, air, fire, and water people. What sort of character does he suppose the earth element colours the soul with?"

"You are quite right to use the word *colour*, Böhme thinks of the complexion, or, as we should say, the humour of a person, as of an independent *atmosphere* through which the soul works, but which is no part of it. He speaks of souls shut up in the dark and melancholy earth element; these are the silent, sensitive, brooding people, who find it very difficult either to give out or receive impressions to or from their fellow-creatures. They are shut up, and as the earth (so at least Böhme says) draws a great deal more heat and light from the sun than it ever gives back, and darkly absorbs and stores up heat within itself, so these earth men and women, separated from their fellows, have the power of drawing great enlightenment and deep warmth of love *direct* from the spiritual source of light and love. Religious enthusiasts are all of this class; Böhme was an earth person himself, he says so; so was Dante and John Bunyan, and all the other people one reads of who have had terrible experiences in the depths of their own souls and ecstatic visions to comfort them. Böhme says that the very best and the very worst people are those shut in by the earth. They are the most *individual*, the most thoroughly separated; if conquering this hindrance, they re-absorb the Divine into themselves by *direct* vision; they rise to heights of wisdom, love, and self-sacrifice that no other souls can reach; but if by pride and self-will they cut themselves from spiritual influences, they remain solitary, dark, hungry, always striving vainly to extract the light and warmth they want from some one or two of their fellow-creatures, and being constantly disappointed, because, not having the power of ray-ing out love, they can rarely attract it. They are eaten up by a sad dark egotism. If they have a great deal of intellect they throw themselves vehemently into some one pursuit or study, and become great but never happy."

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K. "I am thankful to say I don't know any earth people."

"Nor do I, pure earth, but I think I have come across one or two with a touch of earth in their temperaments. The air folk are much more common. They are the eager inquisitive people, who want to get into everything and understand everything, just as the air pervades and permeates all creation. Great lovers of knowledge and scientific observers must always be air people. Böhme thinks that in spite of their not being generally very spiritual, they have the best chance of getting to heaven, because of all classes they have most sympathy and are least shut up in themselves, getting everywhere, like their element the air: they get into the souls of others and understand them and live in them. Their influence is of a very peculiar kind; not being very individual, they don't impress the people round them with a strong sense of their personality; they are not loved passionately, and they don't love passionately, but people turn to them to be understood and helped, and they are always benevolently ready to understand and help. They are satisfied that their influence should be breathed like the air, without being more recognized than the air: Shakespeare was, I expect, a typical *air* man. He had been everywhere, into all sorts of souls, peering about, and understanding them all, and how little any one seems to have known about himself! He was separated as little as possible from the universal fount of Being."

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K. "Socrates was an air man too I suppose? Your air people would be all philosophers."

"More or less lovers of knowledge they must be; but remember that temperament does not affect the quality of the soul itself, it is only more or less of a hindrance. The peculiar faults of air people are, as you will imagine, fickleness and coldness; their sympathy partakes of the nature of curiosity, and they easily adapt themselves to changes of circumstance; they can as easily live in one person as in another, and the love of knowledge in little souls would degenerate into restless curiosity and fussiness."

K. "Would not Goethe be as good a type of the air temperament as Shakespeare? He certainly had the besetting faults of the complexion, fickleness and coldness."

"Yes, but the great influence he exercised over his contemporaries, points to his drawing something too from the fire nature."

K. "Those complexioned after the manner of the fire are, I suppose, the warm-hearted, affectionate souls?"

"Not at all; Böhme would not have consented to lay hold of such an obvious analogy. He dives deeper into fire characteristics than to think chiefly of its warmth. It is above all a consuming element; it takes substances of all kinds and transmutes them into itself, a greedy devourer, reckless of the value of what it takes, intent only on increasing and maintaining itself. The fire people are the ambitious conquerors and rulers of the world, who by the strength and attractive warmth of their own natures force others to bend to them and become absorbed in their projects. They are in reality as great egotists as the earth people, only they don't keep their egotism at smouldering fever heat in their own hearts; they let it blaze forth into a living flame, which draws weaker natures to be consumed in it, or at least forces them to live only in its heat and light. Napoleon Bonaparte, I think, might stand for a typical fire man. In women the fire

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nature shows rather differently: pure fire women have acted very conspicuous parts in the world's history, and generally very disastrous ones, they are the women who inspire great passions and feel very little themselves. They draw others to them for the sake of homage to add to their own light. Madame de Chevreuse and Madame de Longueville must have been pure fire women, I should say. Don't suppose, however, that the fire, more than any other temperament, secures greatness or real superiority; it enables those who follow its complexion to impress themselves more on other people than the air spirits can, but their influence may be only temporary, and it may be very disagreeable, and in the end repelling. Don't you know people, both men and women, who have a mysterious way of making their will felt, and who always count for something in whatever society they are in as long as they are present, but who leave no permanent impression? Those I suppose would be, according to Böhme, stupid souls acting through the fire temperament. The influence of the air souls, inconspicuous as it is, is more permanent. Like the air it nourishes and changes without destroying; air people give more than they take. Fire people take more than they give."

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K. "And now what are the water followers? I hope we are coming to some amiable, pleasant people at last, for you have not described anything very attractive yet."

"I am afraid you will like the water complexion least of all, and be obliged to acknowledge too that 'the subtle and yielding water' has more followers than any of the other elements. The water element has a sort of resemblance to the air element; it mimics it without having its power. Water people are that large majority of mankind who have too weak a hold on life to be anything very distinctive of themselves. They simulate living and thinking, rather than really think and live. Just as water receives impressions in itself that it cannot clasp and hold, that seem to be part of it and are not. They are easily influenced by others—by air people for example; but they only *image* their thoughts in themselves. They look like them when they are with them, and when the influence is removed they are empty like a lake when a veil of clouds is drawn over the sky. The distinctive mark of water people is that they are *self-conscious*, they are always thinking of themselves, because they live a sort of double life—occupied not only with what they are doing but with the thought that they actually are doing it. Unconsciously they are continually acting a part. They have notions about themselves and act up to them. They see themselves in different lights, and everything else as it concerns themselves. Seeing not the real thing, but the thing reflected in themselves. You must know such people, though they are difficult to describe, and I cannot just now think of any historical typical water person to help out my description. Perhaps Napoleon the Third would do. I think he must be what Böhme meant by 'those who partake of the nature of the subtle and yielding nature;' and, by the way, Böhme does not describe the water people as really yielding; on the contrary, he says they are very persistent. In a slow, obstinate way, by seeming to yield and always returning to the point from which they had been diverging (always finding their own level) they have more power than the followers of any of the other elements."

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K. "Is there nothing good about these poor water creatures? Have they no redeeming qualities?"

"Oh yes! The water temperament conduces to industry and perseverance. Water men and women are very good imitators, not actors, and do most of the second-rate work in the world. They are not un-sympathizing. Like air people, they take in easily the thoughts and lives of others, only they are always conscious of taking them in; they don't lose themselves in others, as it is possible for the air followers to do. While they sympathize, they think how nice it is to be sympathetic; or, if they are women, perhaps the thought is how interesting I look while I am listening to this sad story."

K. "Come now, I believe you have some particular water person in your mind, for you are getting satirical. It is well we are nearly home. What I can't understand is, why all the four complexions have so much that is disagreeable in them. In which class would Böhme put really good and noble people?"

"They might come into any one of the four classes. You must remember that according to Böhme the temperament is an outer material atmosphere surrounding the soul, and of necessity partly evil, because it is material; the pure soul has to work through it, and conquer it, according to Böhme."

SKETCHES.

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(*In a Garden.*)

A LADY.—A POET.

THE LADY.

I.

SIR POET, ere you crossed the lawn
(If it was wrong to watch you, pardon)
Behind this weeping birch withdrawn,

I watched you saunter round the garden.
I saw you bend beside the phlox;
Pluck, as you passed, a sprig of myrtle,
Review my well-ranged hollyhocks,
Smile at the fountain's slender spurtle;

II.

You paused beneath the cherry-tree,
Where my marauder thrush was singing,
Peered at the bee-hives curiously,
And narrowly escaped a stinging;
And then—you see I watched—you passed
Down the espalier walk that reaches
Out to the western wall, and last
Dropped on the seat before the peaches.

III.

What was your thought? You waited long.
Sublime or graceful,—grave,—satiric?
A Morris Greek-and-Gothic song?
A tender Tennysonian lyric?
Tell me. That garden-seat shall be,
So long as speech renown disperses,
Illustrious as the spot where he—
The gifted Blank—composed his verses.

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THE POET.

IV.

Madam,—whose uncensorious eye
Grows gracious over certain pages.
Wherein the Jester's maxims lie,
It may be, thicker than the Sage's
I hear but to obey, and could
Mere wish of mine the pleasure do you,
Some verse as whimsical as Hood,—
As gay as Praed,—should answer to you.

V.

But, though the common voice proclaims
Our only serious vocation
Confined to giving nothings names,
And dreams a "local habitation;"
Believe me, there are tuneless days,
When neither marble, brass, nor vellum,
Would profit much by any lays
That haunt the poet's cerebellum.

VI.

More empty things, I fear, than rhymes,
More idle things than songs, absorb it;
The "finely-frenzied" eye, at times,
Reposes mildly in its orbit;
And, painful truth, at times, to him,
Whose jog-trot thought is nowise restive,
"A primrose by a river's brim"
Is absolutely unsuggestive.

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VII.

The fickle Muse! As ladies will,
She sometimes wearies of her wooer;
A goddess, yet a woman still,
She flies the more that we pursue her;
In short, with worst as well as best,
Five months in six, your hapless poet
Is just as prosy as the rest,
But cannot comfortably show it.

VIII.

You thought, no doubt, the garden-scent
Brings back some brief-winged bright sensation
Of love that came and love that went,—
Some fragrance of a lost flirtation,
Born when the cuckoo changes song,
Dead ere the apple's red is on it,
That should have been an epic long,
Yet scarcely served to fill a sonnet.

IX.

Or else you thought,—the murmuring noon,
He turns it to a lyric sweeter,
With birds that gossip in the tune,
And windy bough-swing in the metre;
Or else the zigzag fruit-tree arms
Recall some dream of harp-prest bosoms,
Round singing mouths, and chanted charms,
And mediæval orchard blossoms,—

X.

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Quite *à la mode*. Alas! for prose,—
My vagrant fancies only rambled
Back to the red-walled Rectory close,
Where first my graceless boyhood gambolled,
Climbed on the dial, teased the fish,
And chased the kitten round the beeches,
Till widening instincts made me wish
For certain slowly-ripening peaches.

XI.

Three peaches. Not the Graces three
Had more equality of beauty:
I would not look, yet went to see;
I wrestled with Desire and Duty;
I felt the pangs of those who feel
The Laws of Property beset them;
The conflict made my reason reel,
And, half-abstractedly, I ate them;—

XII.

Or Two of them. Forthwith Despair—
More keen than one of these was rotten—
Moved me to seek some forest lair
Where I might hide and dwell forgotten,
Attired in skins, by berries stained,
Absolved from brushes and ablution;—
But, ere my sylvan haunt was gained,
Fate gave me up to execution.

XIII.

I saw it all but now. The grin
That gnarled old Gardener Sandy's features;
My father, scholar-like and thin,
Unroused, the tenderest of creatures;
I saw—ah me—I saw again
My dear and deprecating mother;
And then, remembering the cane,
Regretted—THAT I'D LEFT THE OTHER.

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THINGS GONE BY.

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Is it that things go by, or is it that people go by the things? If the former, it is no wonder that a good deal of gloom hangs about the matter. To be standing still, and to have a panorama

constantly moving by one, bearing on its face all things fair and beautiful—happy love scenes, kindly friends, pleasant meetings, wise speeches, noble acts, stirring words, national epochs, as well as gay landscapes of hill and dale, and river and sun, and shade and trees, and cottages and labouring men and grazing cattle; to have all things moving by one, and oneself to stagnate and alone to be left behind, as all else moves on to greet the young, the hopeful, and the untried,—there is indeed something sad in this. We have seen these good and beautiful and soul-touching visions once. They charmed and entranced us as they lingered with us for a few brief and blissful moments, but they have gone by and left us alone. We shall never look upon them again. Yes, it is bitter—too bitter almost for man to dwell upon much. He must turn elsewhere, and try to bury the past in forgetfulness, gazing on the new visions as they in turn pass by him, knowing that their time is short, and that they too, like all the old ones, will very soon be as though they were not.

But it is not so. Man is passing the world by, and not the world man. Man is passing on, year after year, in his magnificent and irresistible course, never losing, and ever gaining. All he sees, and knows, and feels, and does becomes an inseparable part of himself, far more closely bound up with his life and nature than even his flesh, and nerves, and bones. It is not merely that he remembers the past and loves the past, but he is the past; and he is more the whole assembly of the past than he is anything else whatever. Man alone moves onward to perfection and to happiness, as a universe stands still ministering to his lordly progress. Even the life, the passions, and the personal progress of each particular man stand still, as it were, in the service of all the rest, and become their lasting and inalienable treasure. Nothing is wasted or irreparable but wrong-doing, and that too is not lost.

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THINGS GONE BY.

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“ONCE more, who would not be a boy?”—or *gir?* and revel in the delights—real or imaginary—of *things gone by?* What a halo is round them! Their pleasures were exquisite, and their very miseries have in remembrance, a piquancy of flavour that is almost agreeable. I suppose the habit of most of us who have attained a certain, or rather uncertain age, is to revel in the past, to endure the present, and to let the future look after itself.

Now this is all well enough for the sentimentalist, or for the poet who, like Bulwer, can write at thirty “on the departure of youth.” But to the philosopher—that is, of course, to each member of “Pen and Pencil”—another and more useful tone of mind and method of comparison should not be absent. Is not the present what was the future to the past, and may we not by comparing the existing with what has been, as also with what was the aspiration of the past, throw some light, borrowed though it be, on what will be the present to our descendants? Mr. Pecksniff observes: “It is a poor heart that never rejoices.” Let us manifest our wealth—of imagination, shall I say?—by endeavouring to realize how, through the falsehood and wickedness of the past, we have arrived at our own lofty and noble eminence.

When we read, in the blood-stained pages of history, of nations and continents plunged into warfare of the most horrible and heartrending description, at the call of national glory or dynastic ambition, how can we sufficiently rejoice at the soft accents of peace and happiness which none would now venture to interrupt over the length and breadth of happy Europe?

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The age of falsehood and party spirit may be said to have passed away. Our newspapers tell nothing but truth, and the only difference perceptible in their mild criticisms of friend or foe, is that they betray a generous tendency to do more than justice to their enemies.

If we cannot say that pauperism is extinct, yet we can honestly affirm that, if we cannot destroy the accursed thing itself, yet we can, and do so deal with paupers that the weakest, at least, soon cease to be a burden on the rates. Science and humanity have shaken hands, and the soft persuasions of chemical compounds are employed to assist down any unhappy girl who should be betrayed into aspirations towards the chimney-pot. We all know that gluttony is one of the greatest evils in the world, and which of our hearts could be hard enough not to glow with rapture at the benevolent rule of a London Union, mentioned in to-day’s paper, of never giving their inmates anything to tax their digestive forces between 5 P.M. and 8 A.M.

Again, when we read in our “Spectators” or other venerable records of the follies of fashion of 150 years ago, or indeed of any other epoch we like to recur to—of hoops and paint, and patches—how may we rejoice at the greater wisdom of our ladies in these days, in recognizing how beautifully they blend the tasteful with the useful! Their crinoline, how Grecian in its elegance; their chignons, how intellectual in appearance; their bonnets, how well calculated to protect from rain and sun; their trains, how cleanly; their boot-heels, how well calculated to produce by natural means what the barbarian Chinese seek by coarser methods—to deform the foot, and thus, by limiting their power of walking, to leave them more time for high intellectual culture.

Of the improvement in our social morals it is needless to speak, and indeed I must decline to do so, if only that in drawing a comparison I should have to shock the ears of “Pen and Pencil” with some allusions to *things gone by*. I will but casually refer to two salient characteristics of the enormities of bygone times—to novels and to the theatre. Compare but for a moment the wild and almost licentious writings of a Walter Scott, an Edgeworth, or an Austen with the pure and

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unexaggerated novels of the present halcyon time. And for our theatres, if it be possible to imagine anything more chaste and elevating than the existing drama—anything more stimulating to all that is purest, more repressive of all that is vulgar and low in our ballets or pantomimes—why, I very much mistake the realities that lie before us.

Finally, in the religion of the country—there where one looks for the summing up and climax as it were of all the incidental advances we have glanced at, how glorious is the spectacle! The fopperies of ecclesiastical upholstery banished from the land; the hardness and cruelty of dogmatic intolerance heard no more; a noble life everywhere more honoured than an orthodox belief.

Surely we have reached the Promised Land—it overflows with charity, with peace, plenty, and concord; and the only regret left to us is the fear that in so good a world none of us can entertain the hope to leave it better than we found it!

THINGS GONE BY.

p. 102

SOME years go by so comfortably calm,
So like their fellows, that they all seem one;
Each answering each, as verses in a psalm,
We miss them not—until the psalm is done:
Until, above the mild responsive strain,
An alter'd note, a louder passage rolls,
Whose diapason of delight or pain
Ends once for all the sameness of our souls:
Until some year, with passionate bold hand,
Breaks up at length our languid liberty,
And changes for us, in one brief command,
Both all that was, and all that was to be.
Thenceforth, the New Year never comes unheard;
No noise of mirth, no lulling winter's snow
Can hush the footsteps which are bringing word
Of things that make us other than we know.
Thenceforth, we differ from our former selves;
We have an insight new, a sharper sense
Of being; how unlike those thoughtless elves
Who wait no end, and watch no providence!
We watch, we wait, with not a star in view:
Content, if haply whilst we dwell alone
The memory of something live and true
Can keep our hearts from freezing into stone.

NO; OR, THE LITTLE GOOSE-GIRL. A TALE OF THE FIRST OF MAY, 2099.

p. 103

THE little Goose-girl came singing
Along the fields, "Sweet May, oh! the long sweet day."
That was her song,
Bringing about her, floating about
In and out through the long fair tresses
Of her hair; oh! a thousand thousand idlenesses,
Spreading away on May's breath everywhere
"Idleness, sweet idleness."
But this was a time,
Two thousand and ninety-nine,
When, singing of idleness even in Spring,
Or drinking wind-wine,
Or looking up into the blue heaven
Was counted a crime.
A time, harsh, not sublime,
One terrible sort of school-
Hour all the year through,
When everyone had to do something, and do it by rule.
Why, even the babies could calculate

Two and two at the least, mentally, without a slate,
Each calling itself an aggregate
Of molecules—
It was always school—schools,
All over the world as far as the sky could cover
It—dry land and sea.
High Priests said,
“Let matter be Z,
Thoroughly calculated and tried
To work our problems with, before all eyes—
Anything beside that might prove a dangerous guide:
X’s and Y’s,
Unknown quantities,
We hesitate not, at once to designate
Fit only, now and for ever to be laid aside.”
So, you see
Everything was made as plain as could be,
Not the ghost of a doubt even left to roam about free.
Everybody’s concern
Being just to learn, learn, learn,
In one way—but only in one way.

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Where then did the little Goose-girl come from that day?
I don’t know. Though
Isn’t there hard by
A place, tender and sunny,
One can feel slid between
Our seen and unseen,
And whose shadows we trace on the Earth’s face
Now and then dimly?—Well, she
Was as ignorant as she could ignorant be.
The world wasn’t school to her
Who came singing
“Sweet Idleness, sweet Idleness” up to the very feet
Of the Professors’ chairs,
And of the thousand thousand pupils sitting round upon theirs;
Who, up all sprang,
At the sound of the words she sang
With “No, no, no, no, no,
There are no sweets in May,
None in the weary day;
What foolish thing is this, singing of idleness in spring?”

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“Oh! sunny spring,”
Still sang the little Goose-girl. Wondering
As she was passing—
And suddenly stay’d for a moment basking
In the broad light, with wide eyes asking
What “nay” could mean to the soft warm day.
And as she stay’d
There stray’d out from her
May breaths, wandering all the school over.

But now, the hard eyes move her
And her lips quiver
As the sweet notes shiver
Between them and die.
So her singing ceases, she
Looking up, crying, “Why is my May not sweet?
Is the wide sky fair?
Are the free winds fleet?
Are the feet of the Spring not rare
That tread flowers out of the soil?
Oh! long hours, not for toil,
But for wondering and singing.”
“No, no, no, no,”
These reply,
“Silly fancies of flowers and skies,
All these things we know.
There is nothing to wonder at, sing,
Love, or fear—
Is not everything simple, and clear,
And common, and near us, and weary?
So, pass by idle dreaming—
And you, if you would like to know
Being from seeming,

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Come into the schools and study.”

“Still to sing sometimes when I have the will,
 And be idle and ponder,”

Said the Goose-girl, “and look up to heaven and wonder?”

“What! Squander Truth’s time
 In dreams of the unknown sublime—
 No—” Then “Ignorant always,” said she,
 “I must be,”

And went on her way. “Sweet May, sad May”—
 Hanging her head—

Till, “The mills of the gods grind slowly,” she said,
 “But they grind exceeding small,
 Let be, I will sit by the mills of the gods, and watch the slow atoms fall.”

So, patient and still, through long patient hours
 As she laid her heart low in the hearts of the flowers,
 Through clouds and through shine,
 With smiles and with tears,
 Through long hours, through sweet years;
 Oh! *years*—for a hundred years was one
 School-hour in two thousand and ninety-nine.
 And see!

Who are these that come creeping out from the schools?
 —Long ago, when idlenesses
 Out of her tresses, stray’d the school over,
 Some slept of the learners, some played.
 These crept out to wonder and sing,
 And look for *her* yonder,
 Away up the hills,
 Amongst the gods’ mills.
 And now
 “Is it this way?” they say,
 Bowing low,
 “Oh! wise, by the heaven in thine eyes
 Teach—we will learn from thee—
 Is it no, is it yes,
 Labour or Idleness?”
 She,
 Answering meekly: “This—
 Neither no, nor yes,
 But ‘come into God and see.’”

Oh! the deeps we can feel; oh! the heights we must climb.
 Oh! slow gentle hours of the golden time—
 Here, the end of my rhyme.

May, 1869.

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EXILE.

NIGHT falls in the convict prison,—
 The eve of a summer day;
 Through the heated cells and galleries,
 The cooler nightwinds play.
 And slumber on folded pinions
 With oblivion brought relief;
 Stilling the weary tossings,—
 Smoothing the brow of grief.

Through a dungeon’s narrow grating
 The slanting moonlight fell
 Down by a careworn prisoner,
 Asleep in his lonely cell.
 The hand which lay so nerveless
 Had grasp’d a sword ere now,
 And the lips now parch’d with fever
 Had utter’d a patriot’s vow.

He stirr’d and the silence was broken,
 By the clanking of a chain,
 He sigh’d, but the sigh no longer,
 Show’d the spirit’s restless pain.
 For to him the dark walls faded,

p. 108

And the prisoner stood once more
Beneath the vine-wreath'd trellis,
Beside his loved home's door.

And memory drew the faces
So dear in earlier days,
Of the sisters who were with him
Joining in childish plays,
And the mother whose lips first murmured
The prayer which had made him brave,
"Let his fate be what Thou wiltiest,
But not, oh! not a slave."

And the friends whose blood beat quickly
At the wrongs of their native land
And the vow they had vowed together,
Grasping each other's hand.
He dreamt of the first resistance,
Of the one who basely fled;
And the guard's o'erwhelming numbers
And the hopes of life all dead.

And then of the weary waiting,
An exile on foreign ground;
With stranger voices near him,
And unknown faces round.
Oh! ships o'er the gladsome waters,
What news do you bring to-day?
What tidings of home and kindred
To the exile far away?

And he dreamt of the glad returning
To the well-loved native shore;
When news had come—All are ready
To dare the fight once more.
Of the hearts that throbb'd exulting,
With hope of the coming strife,
Of the sigh which fell unheeded
To the thought of child and wife.

And he dreamt of the day of contest,
Of whistling shot and shell,
When he bore his country's banner,
And had borne it high and well.
"Rally for Freedom! Forward!
Stand! for our cause is Right;
Sooner be slain than defeated,
Better is death than flight."

Ah! happy the first who perished,
Who saw not the turning day,
And the fallen flag, and the broken line,
And the rout without hope or stay!
And the prisoner groaned in his slumbers,
But now, with a sudden glow,
The glorious moonlight's splendour
Poured full on his humid brow.

On its rays there floated to him
The friends of his early youth,
Who had borne their steadfast witness
In the holy cause of Truth.
"Welcome," they said, "we await thee;
Come, and receive thy meed,
The crown of those who flinched not
In our country's greatest need."

Was it a dream, or delusion?
Or vision? Who shall say?
Its spell consoled the hours
Of many a weary day.
And months went slowly over,
And the winter's icy breath
Blew chill through an empty dungeon:
The convict was freed—by Death.

In exile, hopeless of relief,
 I pine, a hapless sailor,
 And this is how I came to grief,
 Upon an Arctic whaler.
 My exile is no land of palms,
 Of tropic groves and spices,
 But placed amid the savage charms
 Of polar snows and ices.

It was a sad funereal coast,
 The billows moaned a dirge;
 The coast itself was lined with *bays*,
 The rocks were cloth'd with *surge*.
 And here by cruel fogs and fates
 Our ship was cast away—
 Where Davis found himself in straits,
 And Baffin turn'd to bay.

And from my chilly watch aloft
 I saw the icebergs sailing,
 Where I sat weeping very oft,
 While all the crew were whaling.
 For one and all, both great and small,
 From veteran to lubber,
 From captain down to cabin boy,
 Were used to *whale* and *blubber*.

Our ship misled by ill advice—
 Our skipper, half seas over,
 Upon this continent of ice
 Incontinently drove her.
 While I alone to land did drive,
 Among the spars and splinters,
 And since have kept myself alive,
 Through two long Arctic winters.

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It was a land most desolate,
 Where ice, and frost, and fog,
 Too truly did prognosticate,
 An utter want of prog.
 Another would have reeved a rope,
 And made himself a necklace;
 My wreck bereaved me of my hope,
 But did not leave me reckless.

And since, on oil and fat I've kept
 My freezing blood in motion.
 (I think the "fatness" of the land
 Transcends the land of Goshen.)
 In vain, gaunt hunger to beguile,
 I try each strange device;
 Alas! my ribs grow thin the while,
 Amid the thick-ribb'd ice.

In vain I pour the midnight oil,
 As eating cares increase;
 And make the study of my nights
 A history of Greece.
 Monarch of all that I survey,
 By right divine appointed;
 (If lubrication in and out
 Can make a Lord's anointed).

Though lord of both the fowl and brute
 My schemes to catch them work ill,
 And three she-walrui constitute
 My social Arctic circle;
Three, did I say? there are but two,
 For she I chiefly fancied
 Has been my stay the winter through,
 And now is turning rancid.

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The cruel frost has nipped me some;

My mournful glances linger
Upon a solitary thumb,
And half a middle finger.
In toto I have lost my toes,
Down to the latest joint:
And there is little of my nose
Above the freezing point.

Upon this floe of ice my tears
Are freezing as they flow;
I lie between two sheets of ice,
Upon a bed of snow.
I have a hybernating feel,
And with the Bear and Dormouse,
Shall take it out in sleep until
Something turns up to warm us:

Until some Gulf-Stream vagaries
Or astronomic cycles,
Shall bring to these raw latitudes
The climate of St. Michael's.
Or else some cataclysm rude
With polar laws shall *play* tricks,
And Nature in a melting mood
Dissolve my icy matrix.

Maybe, a hundred centuries hence,
Pr'aps thousands (say the latter),
Amid the war of elements
And even the wreck of matter,
When in the crush of worlds, our own
Gets squeezed into a hexagon,
The natives of this frozen zone
May see me on my legs again.

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THE LITTLE FAIRY.
TRADITION.
From Béranger.

p. 115

ONCE on a time, my children dear,
A Fairy, called Urgande, lived here,
Who though but as my finger tall,
Was just as good as she was small;
For of her wand one touch, they say,
Could perfect happiness convey.
O dear Urgande! O good Urgande!
Do tell us where you've hid your wand!

Eight butterflies, in harness, drew
Her tiny car of sapphire blue,
In which, as o'er the land she went,
Her smile to earth fresh vigour lent;
The grape grew sweeter on the vine,
More golden did the cornfield shine.
O dear Urgande! O good Urgande!
Do tell us where you've hid your wand!

The King a godson was of hers,
And so she chose his Ministers—
Just men who held the laws in sight,
And whose accounts could face the light.
The crook as shepherds did they keep
To scare the wolves and not the sheep.
O dear Urgande! O good Urgande!
Do tell us where you've hid your wand!

To show what love she tow'rds him bore,
She touched the crown her godson wore—
A happy people met his eye,
Who for his sake would freely die;
Did foreign foes the realm invade
Not long they lived, or short they stayed.

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O dear Urgande! O good Urgande!
Do tell us where you've hid your wand!

The judges of this King so good
Decided always as they should:
Not once throughout that pleasant reign
Did Innocence unheard complain,
Or guilt repentant vainly pray
For guidance in the better way.
O dear Urgande! O good Urgande!
Do tell us where you've hid your wand!

Alas! my dear, I must allow
There's no Urgande on earth just now.
America is sore be-mobbed;
Poor Asia's conquered, crushed, and robbed;
And though at home, of course, we find
Our rulers all that's nice and kind—
Still—dear Urgande! O good Urgande!
Do tell us where you've hid your wand!

REGRET.

p. 117

I.

VIOLETS in the Springtide gathered,
To the child-heart prest,
Treasured in the breast
With a tender wistful joy,
In their fading, fragrant yet:—
 A tearful sweet regret
 Of the early time.

II.

Glowing, wayward crimson roses,
Shedding perfume rare
O'er the summer air,
With a canker at the heart
And a stem where thorns are set:—
 O bitter-sweet regret
 Of the golden prime!

III.

Snowflakes falling through the darkness,
Hiding out of sight
Graves of past delight,
Till the folded whiteness mocks
Watching faces, wan and wet:—
 O mournful-sweet regret
 Of the wintry time.

REALITIES.

p. 118

I AM informed by "Pen and Pencil," with a certain harsh inexorableness of tone, that *something* I must produce this evening, or—incur a sentence too dreadful to be contemplated, no less than that of ostracism (perhaps ostracism for incapacity should be spelt *asstracism*).

Well, what are the words? *Realities* and *drifting*. Very good; then I'll take both, for the most characteristic element that I have noted of *realities* is that they are constantly *drifting*.

Wishing to start from an undoubted basis, I asked a friend, before sitting down to write, what exactly he understood by *realities*, and he replied, with the air of a philosopher, "whatever man, through the medium of his senses, can surely realize." The conclusion I draw is, that there is some inextricable connection between *realities* and *real lies*. In which I am confirmed by Johnson, who traces the derivation of the word *reality* as *from* real.

Sir John Lubbock, in his "Origin of Civilization," under the heading of "Savage Tendency to

Deification," states as a fact that "The king of the Koussa Kaffirs, having broken off a piece of a stranded anchor, died soon afterwards, upon which all the Kaffirs looked upon the anchor as alive, and saluted it respectfully whenever they passed near it." At a glance it occurred to me, this is a *reality* well worthy of being brought under the notice of "Pen and Pencil." Will it not furnish, thought I, material for their philosophers, and mirth for their humorists, and surely an excellent subject for their artists? *But is it true?* Ay, that must be my first discovery. Who shall hope to palm off doubtful *realities* upon "Pen and Pencil," without deservedly *drifting* to disgrace?

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Without indecent boasting, I believe I may assure this august assembly that I have probed this matter to its very root; the whole truth is in my hands, and shall be faithfully presented to this critical company. I shall be excused from detailing my method of examination; time would fail us were I to make the attempt; suffice it to say that I have brought all possible modes under contribution, and many more, and that not a single fact has been set down unless previously tested by a wild flight of imagination. Upon principle, too, I decline to say how I have arrived at the realities of the case, lest truth should suffer through disapproval of my process.

If I say that I have telegraphed direct, some wretched caviller may observe that he never heard of Kaffir wires. I may have conversed with the ghost of the wicked king of Koussa Kaffir through the medium of Mrs. Marshall, but some joker—how I do detest the race—might object to my plan of *marshalling* my facts. I may have "asked that solemn question" of the leg of my loo-table, which does *not* by any means "seem eternal," something after the fashion of Ion. I may have caught the little toe of Mr. Home, as he was floating in mid-air, and so found my information, as honest debts should be paid, *on the nail*. I may have—but no more—I respectfully decline to communicate, to-night at least, aught but the ascertained *realities*.

It is true, then, that a stranded anchor was thrown on the shore of Koussa Kaffir; that it created widespread wonder and inquiry as to its whence, its wherefore, and its whither; that the king, being of an inquiring mind, often examined the anchor, pondered over its shape and its materials; that one day, testing this last with too much energy, one fluke was quite lopped off. His majesty was pleased with the result, although it did not seem to do much towards solving the difficult questions connected with the strange visitor; but it was afterwards generally reported that some of the wisest of the Kaffirs had shaken their heads three times, and had remarked that if anything should happen they should doubt whether it was not for something.

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Something did happen. The king that night ate for his supper forty-four ostrich eggs, beside two kangaroos and a missionary. It was too much for even a Kaffir king; he was seized with nightmare, raved of the weight of the anchor on his chest, and died.

The effect produced upon Kaffir public opinion, and the Kaffir press, was startling and instantaneous. The king had broken the anchor; the king had died—had died *because* he broke the anchor; that was evident, nay was proved—proved by unerring figures, as thus: the king was fifty-five years old; had lived, that is to say, 20,075 days; to say, therefore, that he had not died this day *because* of his daring impiety was more than 20,000 to one against the doctrine of probabilities.

The anchor, therefore, was a power—was a devil to be feared—that is, a god to be worshipped; for in savage countries there is a wonderful likeness between the two. Thus was born a religion in Koussa Kaffir. Divine honours or dastard fears were lavished on the anchor; a priesthood sprang up who made their account in the Kaffir superstition. They were called anchorites. They were partly cheats, and partly dupes; but they made a livelihood between the two characters. They fixed the nature and the amount of the sacrifices to be offered, and the requirements of the anchor were in remarkable harmony with the wants of its priests. Natural causes, too, were happily blended with supernatural. The anchor was declared to be the great healer of diseases. For immense sums the ministering priests would give small filings to the diseased, and marvellous were the cures produced by oxides and by iron; never, in short, was there a more prosperous faith. The morals of the people, I grieve to say, did not improve in proportion to their faith. An anchor that is supposed to remit sins on sacerdotal intercession is probably not favourable to the higher morals in Koussa Kaffir.

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But a trial had to come upon the anchor-devil and its worshippers. Under it it must collapse, or passing through it as through the flame of persecution, come forth stronger and brighter than ever. Which should it be? It was an interesting spectacle. Let me finish my story.

There returned to Koussa Kaffir a native who had voyaged round the world since he had left his native land; he had seen and had observed much; he was well acquainted with anchors; had seen them in all stages and under all conditions; he knew their use by long experience; he had handled them. One time his vessel had been saved by its stout anchor, another time he had had to save the ship by slipping his cable and leaving the anchor at the bottom; he had never known an anchor resent the worst usage; he would not worship this old broken one. Some thought him mad, some wicked; he was called infidel by those who knew his mind, but for a long time he followed his friends' advice, and said nothing of his awful heresy.

But this condition of mind would hardly last for ever. Travel had improved his intellectual force, as well as given special knowledge about anchors and other things; he began to lament over and even to despise the folly of his race; he burned to cast off some at least of their shackles of ignorance and superstition. "How shall I begin," cried he one day, "to raise their souls to something higher, while they worship that stupid old rusty anchor in the sand?"

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His soul began to burn with the spirit of martyrs and reformers. "I will expose this folly; I will break to pieces their anchor-devil, and when they see that all is well as it was before, they will begin to laugh at their own devil, and will have their minds open to a higher faith."

But first he would consult his friends; if possible obtain their sanction, and act in unison with others. He met with no encouragement. One gravely rebuked him for his presumption and conceit, and produced a long list of eminent Kaffirs who had bowed before the anchor. Another found in the absurdity of the anchor faith its best evidence of solidity. It was, he said, a faith too improbable for a Kaffir to have invented; any fool, he added, could believe a probable religion, but it needed a superior Kaffir to swallow this. Some put their tongues in their cheeks (a vulgar habit amongst the Koussa Kaffirs), and said: "Silly fellow, we know all that as well as you do, but the anchor is a profitable anchor, and as needs must, you shall be one amongst the priests."

Again, others said: "We, too, have our doubts, but as a political engine we must retain our anchor. How should we keep down the lower orders? How restrain our servants from pilfering without its influence and sanctifying power? The fact is, that in our complicated social system all society depends upon the anchor." "Between ourselves," one added, "if heaven had not sent that particular anchor some of us think we must have sent to Woolwich for another."

p. 123

But the only arguments that caused him any hesitation, and which did give him some pain, were from certain women who implored him not to destroy their anchor idol. "We cannot judge," said one of these, "between your arguments and the conclusions we have been brought up to reverence. The anchor may not be a god but only a symbol, but how beautiful a one! Does not the anchor save the ship? And are not our own lives, too, like the storm-tossed vessel? That anchor is associated with all we have felt, suffered, prayed for. Destroy that symbol, and you wound and endanger the deepest element of religion in our hearts."

Finally, one very intelligent friend said to him with much solemnity: "Rash man, forbear! Stop while there is time in a course that may bring down ruin on the State and on yourself, and for the doing of which you can have, as a rational being, no temptation whatever. I grant you you may be right, and the rest all wrong; but what then? We can know nothing of the matter, and *you may be wrong*. Now, anyhow, *we are on the safe side of the hedge*. If the anchor be a devil he may do you harm, and if he be only a bit of rusty iron, you will be none the worse for a bow and a grimace."

The rash man was immovable. Doomed by the infernal gods to pay the penalty of having lit his Promethean torch at Woolwich dockyard, armed with a mighty hammer, and followed by an awe-struck crowd, he fell upon the anchor, and with one mighty blow, struck off the other fluke. It was his last! Inspired by religious zeal, the Koussa Kaffirs rushed upon him, and in the sight of the outraged anchor beat his brains out on the beach. It was observed that his friend who liked to be "on the safe side" threw the first stone, and the advocate of public morals was the next; after that they rained too thick to tell who did the most.

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Meantime the anchor of Koussa Kaffir will be worshipped for a thousand years, for has it not slain the only two men who dared to question its authority?

REALITIES; A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS.

p. 125

[Ye Prologue.]

I HAD been to the theatre, swallowed a play,
Seen bright Marie Wilton, and cried with the best
O'er the poor parting lovers; then laugh'd and was gay
At the plump roly-poly, the puns, and the rest.

[Acte ye fyrste.]

So into the streets, warmly muffled, I came,
And turn'd my steps homeward, three miles in the fog;
When, threading a court (I can't tell you its name),
I tripp'd against something I thought was a dog,

For it moan'd. I stoop'd down, half-expecting a bite;
But the thing never moved; then I look'd, and behold,
A baby, wrapt up in brown paper and night,
Half-dying with hunger, half-frozen with cold.

I return'd to the Foundling, and ringing the bell,
Gave Baby in charge; then, retracing my way,
I mused upon this which had happen'd, and fell
From my comedy-mood to a tragedy-play.

[Acte ye second.]

I had seen the first act—now the second began.
Night lifted her curtain; and, here in the street,
A minute City Arab, the least of his clan,
Patter'd past on the pavement,—no shoes to his feet;

Black, shivering, starving; not daring to beg,
Not able to work, not unwilling to steal,
If a chance came his way; he was fleet of his leg;
He would risk a policeman to pilfer a meal.

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Sure enough the chance came; 'twas a truckful of bread;
No Gorgon to watch it—no dragon to slay;
Like a juvenile Jason, he plunder'd and fled;
Like a Jason, he found a Medea to pay—

In the shape of a lout, twice the size of himself,
The sole witness, by hunger made ruthless and keen;
He demolish'd the pilferer, pilfer'd the pelf,
Disappear'd with his booty—and down came the scene.

[Acte ye thyrde.]

Act the third was a garret;—I thought I had clomb
Up a hundred of stairs, to a hole in the roof,
Where a lad of eighteen had made shift of a home,—
With a wife, if you please—and a baby for proof.

He was thief by profession—a cadger—a sot—
Sticking close to his calling; and so, as we say,
An habitual rogue;—had he chosen his lot,
It may be he had pitch'd on an honest way.

As it was, he was light of his fingers—adept
At shop-lifting and burglary—nimble and cute;
Never fear'd a policeman (unless when he slept),
And was held by his pals in the highest repute.

[Acte ye fovrthe.]

Act the fourth is the hulks, where our hero appears
In the proper stage garments of yellow and red;
With a chain to his leg this last dozen of years,
And a warder to see that he works for his bread.

[Morall Reflecciouns.]

Once again—'tis his lot; you won't hear him complain;
He was born to it, kick'd to it—Fortune is blind;
And if some have the pleasure, some *must* have the pain;
So it's each for himself—and the devil behind.

[Acte ye last and Ingenious rhyme.]

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The last act of our drama—well, what shall it be?
The august British Public, defraying the cost?—
Or . . . P-a-r-l-i-a-m-e-n-t?
Or the angels, lamenting the soul that is lost?

BARK.

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BOW-WOW!

I'm my master's dog; whose dog are you? I live in a kennel, which somebody was good enough to make for me; and I sleep on straw, which grew that I might sleep on it. I have my meals brought to me punctually; and, therefore, I conclude that meals are a noble institution and that punctuality is a virtue. When I act as a good dog ought to act, I get a bone, and my master pats me on the back. Therefore I always do what is expected of me; and that I call morality. Dogs which have no kennels flounder about in the gutter. Having a kennel, I eschew the gutter;—and that I call respectability. It is in the nature of dogs to lick their masters' feet. The best dogs do it, so I follow their example;—and that I call religion. If I do what is not expected of me, I get the stick. I do not like the stick, so I behave myself;—and that I call conventionality. There is a chain round my neck, lest I should run away. I cannot break the chain, so I play with it;—and that I call the proper subjection of the individual. But I am free to pull at my chain till my neck is sore;—and that I call liberty . . . For the rest, I bark.

There are three kinds of spiritual beings: men, dogs, and cats. Men are supreme, and made both dogs and cats. Dogs were created for happiness, and cats for misery. We are the good race, and

they are the evil. It is the duty of a dog to kill a cat. Then hate cats, and hang them up by the tails in the back garden. If I am a bad dog, I shall be turned into a cat, and hung up by my tail. Cats are fed on black beetles; but men are very happy, and eat bones all day long. I eat a bone when I can get one; which makes me think that I shall some day be turned into a man. When I am, I shall hang up cats by the tails.

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Of created beings dogs are the only ones who have souls. There is a heaven for dogs, but for no one else. There are no cats in heaven; and for that matter, very few dogs; but I hope to be one of them; for there the dogs have meaty bones, and bark all day long, making sweet music. This is the Dogs' creed. All who believe it will go to Bone-land; and all who do not, will be hung up with the cats in the back garden.

Bow-wow!

SMOKE. THE IRONWORKERS.

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UNDER the rolling smoke, the brave black smoke,
Our work is wrought;
Fashion'd strong with every sturdy stroke
That does wild music from the roofs provoke
In echoes brought.
A rare bold sport
Rather than labour stern, or blunting task;
A toil to ask
Not blench from. Merrily round the fire
We work our will,
Producing still
Some new form daily to our hearts' desire.

Delicate iron bands
That, as with fairy hands,
Heavenward aspire
To carry roofs, sun pierced and ever gleaming,
Wherein the varied race
Of fruit or flowers finds place,
While the weak Northern rays through mist are streaming.

Or lofty gate
Of palace or of temple set apart;
The hallowed goals of art,
Where low estate
Is never welcome; ever warmly bidden
To enter and abide. Far better hidden
Life's earnest prime behind the factory gate.
Always the rolling smoke, the brave black smoke,
Is overhead,
Like floating incense looming through the sky,
It tells the prayer of work goes on hard by
Where zeal new energies of life evokes;
While iron red
From earthy bed
Blackens to use beneath the smith's firm strokes.

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Under the rolling smoke, the brave black smoke,
Our lot is laid.
Our ever-flaming altar spreads on high
This great scroll as a witness in the sky
Of effort made.
Here, rare workmanship, we, day by day,
Strive to display,
Not heeding if our work make weal or woe.
We do our best,
Ye will the rest,
To meet whose wants me make our furnace glow.

Pleasant are our rough hands
That work the world's demands
And never tire,
Bringing to shape forms past the quaintest dreaming.
Hot, and with grimy arms
We weave the Earth's new charms,
Only a hymn of praise our toil esteeming.

Under the rolling smoke, the brave black smoke,
Our work is wrought;
Not a cloud, the summer air to choke,
But banner of our craft, the floating smoke
Ensigns our labour, with bright meanings fraught.

WHEREFORE HORRIBLE SPRING? *From Béranger.*

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WHEN winter was here, from my window on high
I saw her sweet face up at hers where she sat.
We never had met, but 'twas plain she and I
From falling in love were not hinder'd by that.
Between the bare boughs of these lindens how oft
Kind kisses we blew I've no patience to sing,
For there are the leaves now all quiv'ring aloft—
Ah! why are you here again, horrible Spring?

Yes, there are the leaves, and no more I behold
My kind little neighbour put forth her dear head
To scatter the bread-crumbs, when, tamed by the cold,
The robins, her pensioners, wait to be fed.
The minute her casement she open would throw,
The Loves with our errands were all on the wing.
What is there for beauty to equal the snow?
Ah! why are you here again, horrible Spring?

And 'twere not for you I should still with the dawn
Behold her new-risen in simplest array;
So, radiant and lovely, great painters have drawn
Aurora enclosing the curtains of day.
At eve, in the heavens though stars might be bright,
I watched for her taper my planet to bring;
How lonely I felt when she put out her light;
Ah! why are you here again, horrible Spring?

Ever dear to my heart must the winter remain;
How glad I should be if I only could hear
The sharp little tinkling of sleet on the pane,
Than whispering of zephyrs more dulcet and dear.
Your fruits and your flowers are odious and vile,
Your long sunny days only sadness can bring;
More sunny by far was the light of her smile.
Ah! why are you here again, horrible Spring?

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VOICES.

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THROUGH hoary centuries, through History's page,
Like tongues of fire unquench'd, undimm'd by age,
Whisper the voices, living, clear and true,
The crust of Time and changes piercing through;
Sometimes like trumpets' martial tones they ring—
Anon, scarce heard, in trembling accents sing,
Yet there is life in what they tell and say,
A life nor years nor days can sweep away:
From out the Past, from out the silent grave,
From the lone deep where beats the ceaseless wave,
They yearn, they rise, they plead with deathless tone:
From hill, from field, from cot, from kingly throne
They bring their witness;—if we list or learn,
The days shall tell of each one in his turn:—
Oh, who shall say a voice, however weak,
Its message doth not bear—its lesson speak!

THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOW.

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THREE VOICES.

The Child speaks.

TWEET, tweet, tweet!
The birds cry out of the sky.
Tweet, tweet, tweet,
Mother I want to fly.
Up, and up, and up,
Above the poplars tall,
Mother, if I had wings,
I would fly and never fall!

The Mother speaks.

Sweet, sweet, sweet!
So the swallows are here again,
Flying over the village street,
And out to the open plain.
Sweet, sweet, sweet!
As they cried three springs ago,
When Will led me through the fields
Down to the church below.
Three years have come and gone,
Through warm summer and winter cold
I have carried his dinner afield,
And led the cattle to fold.
Three years have come and gone,
And my child is just two years old,
And the swallows are crying again Sweet, sweet,
And my tale is told.

The Grandmother speaks.

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Fleet, fleet, fleet,
Are those the swallows I hear?
The sound was sudden and sweet,
And this is the spring of the year.
To my dim eyes they seem
But a sudden light as they pass;
But I know how they skim o'er the stream,
And over the churchyard grass.
Their wings are a sudden light,
Thy tunes will not be long,
For my spirit is nearer its flight
Than that of the young and the strong;
Fleet, fleet, fleet, my days are waning fast,
I hear them cry, for out of the sky,
"There are wings for the soul at last."

SWALLOWS.

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A NEW season is begun. Parliament met to-day. London is getting full, and the price of coals has fallen. The celandine (swallow-flower) is beginning to cover the hedgerow banks of the Isle of Wight with yellow stars, and the swallows themselves will soon be with us again.

I may mention as another agreeable sign of spring the return of "Pen and Pencil," not to the old nest, but under shelter of the old hospitality.

The Rhodians used to salute the return of the swallows with a traditional popular song, the *Chelidonisma*; perhaps some lady present may gratify us with a chant of the like purport. My own aim this evening is merely to give some brief natural history notes on the British swallows, drawn partly from books and partly from my own observation.

There are about sixty species of the family of Hirundinidæ, but only four kinds (counting the swift as one) are habitual visitors of the British Islands—the chimney swallow, the house martin, the bank martin (*Hirundo rustica, urbica, and riparia*), and fourthly the swift (*Cypselus*).

The chimney swallow (*rustica*) has a brownish-red throat, back of blue-black lustre, under part of body reddish-white, and a long forked tail. It is a bold bird, and trusting to its superior speed, dashes at a hawk whenever it sees one. It always builds near men, and makes its cup-shaped nest inside chimneys and old wells, in barns, gateways, sheds, and arches of bridges. There are

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four or five spotted eggs, and it brings out two broods each year. The chimney swallow has a sweet little song of its own, and is one of the earliest birds heard of a summer morning, beginning soon after two o'clock. It is said to grow very tame in confinement, but I never saw and should not like to see one in a cage. These are the most abundant of our swallows, and the same birds return year after year, while their little time endures, to the same localities, and often very likely to the same nests.

The house martin (*urbica*), or window swallow or martlet, is smaller and less agile than its cousin just described, and has a far shorter tail. Its feet and toes are downy. It comes later than the chimney swallow, builds amidst towns, on the *outside* of houses, under eaves and in window niches, and chooses a northern aspect to avoid the direct rays of the sun, which would crack its mud nest. Martlets sometimes build on the face of cliffs, as may be seen at the Giant's Causeway. It has four or five *white* eggs, and brings out two broods. As a vocalist it can only get as far as a chirp, or at most a small twitter. Its body is white below, and purple on the back and wings. The house martin does not, like the chimney swallow, sweep the ground and water in its flight.

The bank swallow (*riparian*) or sand martin, which is so sociable with its own kind but not with man, digs horizontal and serpentine holes in banks, sloping upwards to avoid rain, where it lays in a careless nest four or six white eggs. It has sometimes, but perhaps not always, two broods. These are the smallest and wildest of our swallows; nearly mute, or with only a tiny chirp; and, when they can, frequent large spaces of water. They often fly waveringly with a quick fluttering of wings, somewhat like butterflies, and anon sail circling like other swallows. They use their old caves for some years, but may often be seen digging new ones. They are probably driven out sometimes by the fleas which, as I have often seen, abound in their habitations. Birds, indeed, free and airy as their life seems, suffer much from vermin, and the poor baby swallows are terribly preyed upon. The sand martin is mouse-coloured on the back and brownish-white below. It is the earliest to arrive in England, and may be expected now in three weeks or so. Next we may look for the chimney swallow with his long tail—then for the house martin, and latest of all comes the swift (*Cypselus*), which some naturalists say is no true swallow, having several anatomical peculiarities, the most noticeable being that all four toes go forward. No other bird, I think (save the Gibraltar swift), has a similar foot. The swift can cling well to the face of a wall, but cannot perch in the usual bird fashion, and gets on very badly on the ground, finding it difficult to rise on the wing. Once in the air, with its long wings in motion, it is truly master of the situation. It is one of the speediest, if not the speediest, and can keep on the wing for sixteen hours, which is longer than any other bird. The swifts are most active in sultry thundery weather. They fly in rain, but dislike wind. They are the latest day-birds in summer, and their one very shrill note may be heard up to nearly nine o'clock. Sometimes they get excited and dart about screaming, perhaps quarrelling, but usually the swallows, all of them, agree well among themselves, though they also keep a proper distance. The swifts build high in holes of walls and rocks. The Tower of London is one of their London palaces. The nest is bulky and has two white eggs. There is but one brood in the season, and the swift leaves town for Africa in August, going earliest, although he was the latest to come.

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Swallows for several weeks after their arrival in England play about before beginning their nests

—
“Like children coursing every room
Of some new house.”

They wait for fit weather to go away, and may then be seen sitting in rows as though meditating on their journey, perhaps dimly sorry to part—

“With a birdish trouble, half-perplexed.”

Utterly mysterious and inscrutable to us are the feelings of our lower fellow-creatures on this earth, and how the bird of passage, “lone-wandering but not lost,” finds its distant goal, is beyond man's wit to explain.

After this I fear tedious sketch of our four winged friends, I will only add another word or two as to the name swallow, a rather odd word, entirely different from the Greek *χελιδών*, and the Latin *hirundo* (which, unlike as it may appear, philologists tell us is formed from the Greek name). The Italians call the bird *ron dine* (evidently from the Latin), and the French *hirondelle*. We get our word from the Anglo-Saxon, *swalewe*, and the modern German is *schwalbe*. What does this mean? I must own with regret that it seems to me most likely that the name is given on account of the voracity of this bird, which is engaged in swallowing gnats, beetles, bees, may-flies, dragon-flies, and all kinds of flies from break of day till sunset. The Anglo-Saxon verb to swallow is *swelgan*. Fain would I take the word *swelgel*, air, sky; but the Spanish name for our bird seems conclusive for the baser derivation. The Spaniards call it *golondrina* (evidently from *gola*, throat); and it may be added, make a cruel kind of amusement out of the gulosity of the swallows, by angling for them with fishing-flies from the walls of the Alhambra, round which the birds dart in myriads on a summer's day—descendants of those that played round the heads of the Moorish kings, who perhaps were kinder to their visitors.

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THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS.

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“Out in the meadows the young grass springs,
Shivering with sap,” said the larks, “and we
Shoot into air with our strong young wings,
Spirally up over level and lea;
Come, O Swallows, and fly with us
Now that horizons are luminous!
Evening and morning the world of light,
Spreading and kindling, is infinite!”

Far away, by the sea in the south,
The hills of olive and slopes of fern
Whiten and glow in the sun’s long drouth,
Under the heavens that beam and burn;
And all the swallows were gathered there
Flitting about in the fragrant air,
And heard no sound from the larks, but flew
Flashing under the blinding blue.

Out of the depth of their soft rich throats
Languidly fluted the thrushes, and said:
“Musical thought in the mild air floats,
Spring is coming, and winter is dead!
Come, O Swallows, and stir the air,
For the buds are all bursting unaware,
And the drooping eaves and the elm-trees long
To hear the sound of your low sweet song.”

Over the roofs of the white Algiers,
Flashingly shadowing the bright bazaar,
Flitted the swallows, and not one hears
The call of the thrushes from far, from far;
Sighed the thrushes; then, all at once,
Broke out singing the old sweet tones,
Singing the bridal of sap and shoot,
The tree’s slow life between root and fruit.

But just when the dingles of April flowers
Shine with the earliest daffodils,
When, before sunrise, the cold, clear hours
Gleam with a promise that noon fulfils,—
Deep in the leafage the cuckoo cried,
Perched on a spray by a rivulet-side,
“Swallows, O Swallows, come back again
To swoop and herald the April rain!”

And something awoke in the slumbering heart
Of the alien birds in their African air,
And they paused, and alighted, and twittered apart,
And met in the broad white dreamy square,
And the sad slave woman, who lifted up
From the fountain her broad-lipped earthen cup,
Said to herself with a weary sigh,
“To-morrow the swallows will northward fly!”

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AULD LANG SYNE; OR, THE LAW IN 1874.

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IN 1868 it was determined by Lord Cairns, then Lord Chancellor, that a revised edition of the statutes of the realm should be published containing only such statutes as were actually in force.

In looking over the first volume, which contains statutes passed between 1235 and 1685, one is struck by the number of stringent Acts of Parliament forming part of our present law, which nevertheless are habitually neglected.

Now that the destroying hands of the Gladstonian iconoclasts are stayed there can be no more useful task than to look around us and see how many of these relics of the embodied wisdom of our ancestors still remain to us, rusted indeed but ready for our use.

In enumerating a few of these enactments I have two objects in view. First, I would remind those whose province it is to administer law and justice to the subjects of Queen Victoria of powers with which they are armed; and, secondly, I would offer timely warning to those against whom these powers, when again exercised, which the present healthy state of public feeling assures us they will be, must inevitably be directed.

To begin then. Can there be a more appalling spectacle than the “Monstrous Regiment of Women?” Well, we have our weapons of defence ready in 3 Henry VIII. c. 11., 34 and 35 Henry VIII. c. 8, and 5 Elizabeth c. 4. s. 17. What a sound and vigorous ring is there in the first of these statutes with the pains and penalties it enacts against ignorant persons practising physic or surgery, “such,” it goes on to say, “as common artificers, smythes, wevers and women.” And how discreetly liberal is the second of these statutes, which indicates a legitimate field for women’s activity, and allows them, in common with all other unqualified persons, to cure outward sores, such as “a pyn and the web in the eye, uncoomes of hands, scaldings, burnings, sore mouths, saucelin, morfew” and the like, by herbs, ointments, baths, poultices, and plasters. But most practical, perhaps, of all these three statutes is the statute of Elizabeth, which, making no exception, sweeps within its enactments all women under the age of forty who have failed to fulfil the great end of their being, matrimony.

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“And bee it further enacted that twoo justices of the peace the maior or other head officer of any citie burghe or towne corporate and twoo aldermen, or twoo other discrete burgesses of the same citie burghe or towne corporate yf ther be no aldermen, shall and may by vertue hereof appoint any suche woman as is of thage of twelfe yeres and under thage of fourtye yeres and unmarried and foorthe of service, as they shall thinck meete to serve, to be reteyned or serve by the yere or by the weeke or daye, for such wages and in such reasonable sorte and maner as they shall thinck meete: And yf any such woman shall refuse so to serve, then yt shalbe lawfull for the said justices of peace maior or head officers to comit suche woman to warde untill she shalbe bounden to serve as aforesaid.”

The effect of enforcing this law would be salutary indeed. Under the existing state of things men are frequently employed upon duties so disagreeable and ill-paid that Providence can only have intended them for women. Why then do we not take advantage of the power, nay, the duty of sending women to their proper sphere and mission which is entrusted to our magistrates and discreet burgesses? As the wages will be fixed by these authorities, the burden to the rate-payers need not be great. And we should thus silence the demand which, I am told, women are beginning to make not only for work (as if their male relations were not always ready and willing to find them plenty), but even for remunerative work.

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But I pass from our women to our agricultural labourers. We have lately heard much debate on the conduct of commanding officers who, when labourers at harvest-time were holding out for wages, allowed their soldiers to help in getting in the harvest. But such aid would never have been required had not the fifteenth section of the same statute of Elizabeth been unaccountably overlooked.

“Provided always that in the time of hey or corne harvest, the justices of peace and every of them, and also the cunstable or other head officer of every townshipe, upon request and for thavoyding of the los of any corne grayne or heye, shall and may cause all suche artificers and persons as be meete to labour, by the discretions of the said justices or cunstables or other head officers or by any of them, to serve by the daye for the mowing reaping shearing getting or inning of corne grayne and heye, according to the skill and qualite of the person; and that none of the said persons shall refuse so to doo, upon payne to suffer imprisonment in the stockes by the space of twoo dayes and one night.”

Nor need our farmers at any other times in the year fear a deficiency of labour if they will but invoke the aid of the fifth section of the same statute, whereby every person between the ages of twelve and sixty not being employed in any of a few callings mentioned in the Act, nor being a gentleman born, nor being a student or scholar in any of the universities or in any school, nor having real estate worth forty shillings a year or goods and chattels worth £10, nor being the heir-apparent of any one with real estate worth £10 a year or goods and chattels worth £40, is declared compellable to be retained to serve in husbandry by the year with any person that keepeth husbandry.

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Again we have Acts of 1275 and 1378 (3 Edward I., and 2 Richard II.), as our defences against those who are described as “devisors of false news and of horrible and false lies of prelates dukes earls barons” and, comprehensively, “other nobles and great men of the realm,” and also of various officials enumerated, with a like comprehensive “and of other great officers of the realm.” The Act of Richard II. reiterates and confirms that of Edward I., and under these Acts “all persons so hardy as to devise speak or tell any false news, lies, or such other false things” about great people, incur the penalty of imprisonment “until they have brought him into Court who was the first author of the tale.” What a check would the carrying out of these provisions put upon the impertinences of Own Correspondents, social reformers, gossips, novelists, caricaturists, and moralists! It will be a happy day for England when the many thoughtless or malignant persons who now permit themselves to retail stories inconvenient to members of the aristocracy or to the dignitaries of the country, suffer the punishment of their infraction of the law. To take but one instance of the great need there exists for the protection of our upper classes—an instance, as it chances, which enables me to show that I would not wish the private character of even a political enemy to be traduced—I may remind you that if the statutes of *Scandalum Magnatum* were enforced there would not now be at large persons ascribing to the late Prime Minister himself the authorship of the Greenwich stanza on the Straits of Malacca.

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There are many other statutes on which I might enlarge. I might remind coroners of duties which they have forgotten, and the clergy of rights which they are allowing to lapse, but time will not permit me.

It is true that when I read my Statute Book I meet with some provisions of which I do not comprehend the necessity. As a Protestant I do not see why I should be imprisoned for three years and fined besides, if I carry off a nun from a convent with her consent; and as a botanist I do not see why, since January, 1660, I have been prohibited from setting or planting so much as a single tobacco plant in my garden. Still, all are parts of one stupendous whole, parts of the sacred fabric built by our forefathers in "Auld Lang Syne." Touch one stone and the British Constitution may crumble. And as a humble member of the Great Constitutional Party I desire to raise my protest against the canker of decay being left to eat insidiously into our ancient and revered legislative code, by our suffering any Acts of Parliament which appear on our Statute Book as parts of the living Law of the Land to drop into disuse, as if, contrary to the doctrine of the highest legal authorities, an Act of Parliament unrepealed *could* become obsolete.

AULD LANG SYNE, WHERE HOME WAS.

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'Twas yesterday; 'twas long ago;
And for this flaunting grimy street,
And for this crowding to and fro,
And thud and roar of wheels and feet,
Were elm-trees and the linnet's trill,
The little gurgles of the rill,
And breath of meadow flowers that blow
Ere roses make the summer sweet.

'Twas long ago; 'twas yesterday.
Our peach would just be new with leaves,
The swallow pair that used to lay
Their glimmering eggs beneath our eaves
Would flutter busy with their brood,
And, haply, in our hazel-wood,
Small village urchins hide at play,
And girls sit binding bluebell sheaves.

Was the house here, or there, or there?
No landmark tells. All changed; all lost;
As when the waves that fret and tear
The fore-shores of some level coast
Roll smoothly where the sea-pinks grew.
All changed, and all grown old anew;
And I pass over, unaware,
The memories I am seeking most.

But where these huddled house-rows spread,
And where this thickened air hangs murk
And the dim sun peers round and red
On stir and haste and cares and work,
For me were baby's daisy-chains,
For me the meetings in the lanes,
The shy good-morrows softly said
That paid my morning's lying lurk.

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Oh lingering days of long ago,
Not until now you passed away.
Years wane between and we unknow;
Our youth is always yesterday.
But, like a traveller home who craves
For friends and finds forgotten graves,
I seek you where you dwelled, and, lo,
Even farewells not left to say!

RIVER. AN AUTUMN IDYL.

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"Sweet Thames! ran softly, till I end my song."

LAURENCE. FRANK. JACK.

LAURENCE.

HERE, where the beech-nuts drop among the grasses,
 Push the boat in, and throw the rope ashore.
 Jack, hand me out the claret and the glasses;—
 Here let us sit. We landed here before.

FRANK.

Jack's undecided. Say, *formose puer*,
 Bent in a dream above the "water wan;"
 Shall we row higher, for the reeds are fewer,
 There by the pollards, where you see the swan?

JACK.

Hist! That's a pike. Look,—note against the river,
 Gaunt as a wolf,—the sly old privateer,
 Enter a gudgeon. Snap,—a gulp, a shiver;—
 Exit the gudgeon. Let us anchor here.

FRANK. (*In the grass.*)

Jove, what a day! Black Care upon the crupper
 Nods at his post, and slumbers in the sun,
 Half of Theocritus, with a touch of Tupper
 Churns in my head. The frenzy has begun.

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LAURENCE.

Sing to us then. Damoetas in a choker
 Much out of tune, will edify the rooks.

FRANK.

Sing you again. So musical a croaker
 Surely will draw the fish upon the hooks.

JACK.

Sing while you may. The beard of manhood still is
 Faint on your cheeks, but I, alas! am old.
 Doubtless you yet believe in Amaryllis;—
 Sing me of Her, whose name may not be told.

FRANK.

Listen, O Thames. His budding beard is riper
 Say, by a week. Well, Laurence, shall we sing?

LAURENCE.

Yes, if you will. But, ere I play the piper,
 Let him declare the prize he has to bring.

JACK.

Hear then, my Shepherds. Lo to him accounted
 First in the song—a Pipe I will impart;
 This, my Belovèd, marvellously mounted,
 Amber and foam—a miracle of art.

LAURENCE.

Lordly the gift. O Muse of many numbers,
 Grant me a soft alliterative song.

FRANK.

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Me, too, O Muse. And when the umpire slumbers,
Sting him with gnats a summer evening long.

LAURENCE.

Not in a cot, begarlanded of spiders,
Not where the brook traditionally purls,
No; in the Row, supreme among the riders,
Seek I the gem, the paragon of girls.

FRANK.

Not in the waste of column and of coping,
Not in the sham and stucco of a square;
No; on a June-lawn to the water sloping
Stands she I honour, beautifully fair.

LAURENCE.

Dark-haired is mine, with splendid tresses plaited
Back from the brows, imperially curled;
Calm as a grand, far-looking Caryatid
Holding the roof that covers in a world.

FRANK.

Dark-haired is mine, with breezy ripples swinging
Loose as a vine-branch blowing in the morn;
Eyes like the morning, mouth for ever singing,—
Blythe as a bird, new risen from the corn.

LAURENCE.

Best is the song with music interwoven;
Mine's a musician, musical at heart,
Throbs to the gathered grieving of Beethoven—
Sways to the right coquetting of Mozart.

FRANK.

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Best? You should hear mine trilling out a ballad,
Queen at a picnic, leader of the glees;
Not too divine to toss you up a salad,
Great in "Sir Roger" danced among the trees.

LAURENCE.

Ah, when the thick night flares with dropping torches,
Ah, when the crush-room empties of the swarm,
Pleasant the hand that, in the gusty porches,
Light as a snowflake, settles on your arm.

FRANK.

Better the twilight and the cheery chatting,—
Better the dim, forgotten garden-seat,
Where one may lie, and watch the fingers tatting,
Lounging with Bran or Bevis at her feet.

LAURENCE.

All worship mine. Her purity doth hedge her
Round with so delicate divinity, that men
Stained to the soul with money-bag and ledger
Bend to the Goddess, manifest again.

FRANK.

None worship mine. But some, I fancy, love her,
Cynics to boot, I know the children run
Seeing her come, for naught that I discover
Save that she brings the summer and the sun.

LAURENCE.

Mine is a Lady, beautiful and queenly,
Crown'd with a sweet, continual control,
Grandly forbearing, lifting life serenely
E'en to her own nobility of soul.

FRANK.

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Mine is a Woman, kindly beyond measure,
Fearless in praising; faltering in blame,
Simply devoted to other people's pleasure.
Jack's sister Florence. Now you know her name.

LAURENCE.

"Jack's sister Florence!" Never, Francis, never!
Jack, do you hear? Why, it was She I meant.
She like the country! Ah! she's far too clever.

FRANK.

There you are wrong. I know her down in Kent.

LAURENCE.

You'll get a sunstroke, standing with your head bare.
Sorry to differ. Jack, the word's with you.

FRANK.

How is it, umpire? Though the motto's threadbare,
"*Cælum non animum,*" is, I take it, true.

JACK.

"*Souvent femme varie,*" as a rule, is truer.
Flatter'd, I'm sure—but both of you romance.
Happy to further suit of either wooer,
Merely observing—you haven't got a chance.

LAURENCE.

Yes. But the Pipe—

FRANK.

The Pipe is what we care for.

JACK.

Well, in this case, I scarcely need explain.
Judgment of mine were indiscreet, and therefore—
Peace to you both.—The pipe I shall retain.

RIVER.

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THREE rivers fell to strife, about their own renown,
Producing rival claims to wear the rivers' crown.
Proud Amazon was one, and yellow Tiber next,
And third, an English Thames—all three most fierce and vex'd.

Said Amazon: "The length of my majestic stream
Makes me amazed that you, two tiny rills, should deem
You can be e'en compared with me—enormous *me!*
Of rivers I'm the king!—Let that acknowledged be!"

"Absurd!" cried Tiber. "*Size*—and all that sort of thing
Are never reckon'd points in fixing on a king.
But Rome was *mine!* And *mine* her conquests, laws, and fame,

In fact, her total past is coupled with *my* name!"

"Be silent!" said the Thames; "I'm greater than you both!
Not hist'ry and not miles can match with present growth.
I'm proud to say *I* own a trading wealthy place,
By Anglo-Saxons built—that fearless, active race!"

The contest grew more sharp, they roll'd their waves in storm;
Thermometers, if there, had shown the waters warm.
Thames wreck'd some twenty ships, and Amazon still more,
While Tiber caused dire dread to Romans as of yore.

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At length the mighty sea, lamenting such a fray,
By these wise words prevailed their envious wrath to stay.
"Dear streams! you once were one—to me you all return.
Oh! cease then—being one—with jealousies to burn!"

FOOTPATH

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BETWEEN THE PATHWAY AND RIVER.

"FOLLOW that pathway till you come to some arches, and turn under them, and you will find the Blind School," was the answer given whenever we stopped in our bewildered pilgrimage to inquire: but no arches were visible, save one disreputable old bridge, under which no self-respecting school seemed likely to find shelter; so we went on hopelessly, asking the way from waggoners and countrymen, who all seemed interested in the question, but were unable to give us any guidance. A pitiless hailstorm rattled on our umbrellas and splashed the mud upon our boots: while the path, it was evident, was leading us on towards the river, not the school; so at last in despair we turned, and flying before the storm sought refuge under the despised railway bridge, where a group of children were playing dry and comfortable, while we were wet and muddy. Once again we inquired for the Blind School, and were told to go on. The path led under a succession of iron girders which apparently stand for arches in those regions, and we tramped on discontentedly, feeling we had been deceived, and that we too might have been dry and safe like the children, if only our misinformants had called a spade a spade, and a row of iron girders something else than arches. But the path took a turn, and we saw cottages and green fields, and we reached a house which had two doors, on one of which we read, "Mr. Wallis," and on the other nothing: so we chanced the second door, knocked, and were soon among a group of children, all neat, healthy, and cheerful—but blind. In this blind school there were but two people who could see, and these were not the only teachers, for here the blind helped the blind, as the rich helped the poor.

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For this school began with a blind man. Five years ago, near the banks of the Severn, a cart containing vitriol was overturned; and of four people who were there, only two were left alive, and one of these was blind. Childless and blind, this man had to begin life again—to learn to live in darkness, and in darkness to work for others. For as soon as he had learned to grope his way, he learned to read in the books provided for the blind, and went from village to village to find other blind persons, and teach them how to read also. Then a noble-hearted woman came forward to help him, and founded the school; where blind children are trained to work as well as read, and blind men and women come every day to be taught trades. These latter come daily to the school, groping their way along the path that had been so tedious to our impatience; and learn to work, and also to read, helped sometimes by the teachers, sometimes by the blind man: who also still goes as before, from village to village, teaching and comforting those in the same straits as himself.

We were guided through a back way, intricate and uneven, where our blind guide warned us carefully of every step—though he said the children ran about everywhere and never fell—till we went through the school and entered his little house alongside, and found ourselves in a bright little parlour upstairs, full of books, and tastefully furnished, with a woman's taste; for the woman who survived the accident which left her childless and crippled, had still the sight of one eye. There was an harmonium in the room, and one of the children came to play it. He was called Abraham; but this old name belonged to an intelligent, bright-faced English lad of twelve, well dressed and handsome but for his sad dim eyes. He is the son of a well-to-do farmer, and in education and intelligence far removed from some of his companions. He handled the harmonium with his small, delicate fingers as only a real musician can, and while the music lasted I nearly forgot all the sadness of the scene, and the hopeless life of the musician and the other children, who, one by one, guided by the sound, crept up the narrow stairs and came noiselessly into the room, and stood listening spell-bound till he finished. "And now, Lizzie, play," said some one, and a girl came to the harmonium. She knew far less of music than Abraham, and had as yet little execution, but the sweet, true feeling which she gave to the old hymn tunes stirred the heart and brought tears to my eyes. "And would you like to hear us sing the hymn we sang when she was buried?" they asked. For their benefactress and friend, the woman whose untiring energy had begun and carried on this work among them, rousing sympathy for them among her townspeople, and begging for them when her own means were insufficient, died a few

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weeks ago, and the children of the school had seen her laid in the churchyard. The harmonium was hushed, Lizzie only struck the keynote, and they all sang, as they had all sung at the grave in the cold February morning when they saw her lowered into the cold earth,

“I know there is a land where all is bright,”

and they turned their poor sightless eyes to the light, as if that were to them the symbol of the heaven they longed to reach. It was too sad. The singing ceased, and we all tried to speak of something else. “How did you get that Indian picture?” I asked, looking round, and as the words left my lips, I reproached myself for speaking to one who could not see it, of a thing that could have no present interest to him. But I had made no mistake, as it chanced. “Ay, my brother brought it me,” he answered. “I know what you mean.” “It is painted on ivory, is it not?” “Oh no! this is a picture; my sister wears the one on ivory for a brooch, though it is rather large for that, maybe; but my brother brought them. He was at Agra during the mutiny, and he brought a ball in his shoulder, too, back—that’s what he brought; but I’d forgotten the picture till you mentioned it. But will you hear the children read now? Read the history of England, Abraham.” And Abraham read, opening the book at hazard, and reading clearly and distinctly the death of Cœur de Lion, his forgiveness of his enemy, and his burial in Fontevrault in token of his deep repentance. The children all listened with pleasure till one little one, the pet of the flock, whimpered because “Bessie” did not read; so Bessie, whose fingers were busy with her knitting, was compelled to read, although coming after Abraham it was rather a trying ordeal. Still the pet had to be satisfied, and then every one went on with their straw work, for the funds of the home are dependent on charity or the sale of work, as friends visiting Worcester will do wisely to remember. Straw mats, baskets, and balls were the work of the little ones, and they took the keenest interest in the question whether I preferred blue and white mats, or purple and white. I bought both, and shook hands all round, and in a few minutes was retreading my way towards the broad rolling Severn. Never did I feel how intense the joy of sight was as I did when I stood by its silver stream, and thought of those I had just left in the little house near the railway bridge.

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THE FOOTPATH.

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OUT at the doorway with shrill delight
Ringing, clear of alloy,
After a butterfly flashing so white
As it wheels and floats in the soft sunlight,
He darts, O adventurous joy!

Away! the fields are waving, the wheat
Stands proudly over the path,
The path winds onward, winning his feet
Through avenues arched and shady and sweet,—
Sweet vista that childhood hath.

But stay: the butterfly has upflown
High in the stainless blue;
Under the shadowing wheat alone,
He stands and wonders, still as a stone,
For all the world is new.

He sees each beautiful stem, blue-green,
Standing alone in its grace,
Great pendulous poppies aflame between,
And little convolvulus climbing to screen
That dim forest world from his face.

He sees overhead as they dance to its tune
The ears flash white in the wind,
But that musical laugh before mid-noon
Ripples far and faint in the heat, and soon
Leaves silence only behind.

And the silence falls on his fresh young soul,
Like the far sound of the sea,
Infinite, solemn; its strange control
Possesses him quite; quick fancies roll
Through his brain; half fearfully

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He looks; and the long path seems to strain
His tremulous lips apart;
Some sudden trouble his eyes sustain;
For so the folded blossom of pain
Has broke in his childish heart.

What is it?—some swift intuitive glance,

Half-shapen only in thought,
Of stranger worlds, of wide mischance?
Some intimate sense of severance
Or loss?—I know not what.

He turns and leaps; for his mother's arms
Out of the doorway lean;
She folds him safely from all alarms,
And rallies his courage with rhythmical charms,—
Yet knows not what he has seen.

FOOTPATH.

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ONWARD, where through dewy grass
Slowly wading footsteps pass;
Where the daisy's peaceful eye
Gazes trustful to the sky;
Where the river rippling by
Makes scarce heeded harmony
With the deep bell's distant chime,
And the wandering waifs of rhyme,
Flung at random from the mind,
While the thought still lags behind,
Held in check by idle musing
Born of chance, not wilful choosing.
Now, more clear on either side,
See the meadows green divide;
Clearer lies the path before us;
Varied sounds are floating o'er us;
All the stirring noise of life,
All the ceaseless daily strife;
The larger world breaks strongly in
Where footpaths end and roads begin.

THE FOOTPATH.

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I.

REMEMBER how, the winter through,
While all the ways were choked with mire,
Half-maddened at the rain, we two
Have nestled closer to the fire,
And talk'd of all that should be done
When April brought us back the sun,
What gardens white with butterflies,
What soft green nooks of budded heather,
What moorlands open to the skies,
We two would scour together!

II.

And now the month comes round again!
Cool interchange of genial hours,
Soft gleams of sunlight, streams of rain,
Have starred the meadow-lands with flowers,
And in the orchards on the hills
The grass is gold with daffodils,
And we have wander'd, hand in hand,
Where sea below and sky above
Seem narrowing to a strip of land
The pathway that we love!

III.

Our path looks out on the wide sea,
And knows not of the land; we sit
For hours in silent reverie,

To watch the sea, and pulse with it;
Its deep monotonous refrain
Brings melancholy, almost pain:
We scarcely wish to speak or move,
But just to feel each other there,
And sense of presence is like love,
And silence more than prayer.

IV.

Sharp round the steep hill's utmost line
It winds, and, just below, the grass
Sinks with tumultuous incline
To where the rock-pools shine like glass;
The tufts of thrift can drink their fill
Of sea-wind on this rugged hill,
And all the herbage, toss'd and blown,
Is stain'd with salt and crush'd with wind,
Save where behind some boulder-stone
A harbour flowers may find.

V.

The bright sea sparkles, sunbeam-kiss'd,
And o'er its face such breezes float
As lightly turn to amethyst
The pearl-grey of a ring-dove's throat;
Thus stirr'd and ruffled, shines anew
The radiant plain of changing hue,
So gentle, that the eye divines
No reason why the foam should fall
So loudly, in such serried lines,
Against the dark rock-wall.

VI.

The wind is low now; even here,
Where all the breezes congregate,
The softest warbler need not fear
To linger with its downy mate;
And here where you have long'd to be
So many weeks and months with me,
Sit silently, or softly speak
Or sing some air of pensive mood,
Not loud enough to mar or break
This delicate solitude.

VII.

Are we not happy? Sun-lit air,
Soft colour, floods of dewy light,
A flowery perfume everywhere
Pour out their wealth for our delight;
Through dreary hours of snow and sleet
The hope of these wing'd winter's feet;
We have them now! The very breath
Of Nature seems an altar-fire
That wakes the bright world's heart from death
To satiate our desire!

VIII.

Sing to me, therefore, sing or speak!
Wake my dull heart to happiness;
Perchance my pulses are too weak
To stir with all this sweet excess!
Perhaps the sudden spring has come
Too soon, and found my spirit dumb!
Howe'er it be, my heart is cold,
No echo stirs within my brain,
To me, too suddenly grown old,
This beauty speaks in vain!

Why are you silent? Lo! to-day
 It is not as it once hath been;
 I cannot sit the old sweet way,
 Absorbed, contented, and serene;
 I cannot feel my heart rejoice,
 I crave the comfort of your voice!
 Speak, speak! remind me of the past!
 Let my spent embers at your fire
 Revive and kindle, till at last
 Delight surpass desire!

X.

Yea! are you silent, only press
 My hand, and turn your face away;
 You wince, too, from the fierce caress
 That April flings on us to-day?
 O human heart, too weak to bear
 The whole fulfilment of a prayer!
 This sudden summer strikes us dumb;
 The wild hope, realized, but scares!
 The substances of dreams become
 A burden unawares.

XI.

How can we sit here and not thrill
 With but the pleasure of past time?
 This footpath winding round the hill
 Should stir us like remember'd rhyme
 Nay! for the dull and sluggish brain
 Is spurred to action all in vain,
 And when the spirit cannot rise
 Through natural feeling into light,
 No perfumed air, no splendid skies,
 Can lend it wings for flight.

XII.

Come, then, and leave the sovereign sea
 To sparkle in the laughing air;
 Another day its face will be
 No less refulgent, no less fair,
 And we by custom be made strong
 To bear what we desired so long;
 To-day the slackening nerves demand
 A milder light, a sadder air,
 Some corner of forgotten land,
 Still winter-like and bare.

XIII.

Come! leave our pathway for to-day,
 And turning inland, seek the woods,
 Where last year's sombre leaves decay
 In brown sonorous solitudes;
 The murmurous voice of those dark trees
 Will teach us more than sun or seas,
 And in that twilight we may find
 Some golden flower of strange perfume,
 A blossom hidden from the wind,
 A flame within the tomb.

THE FOOTPATH.

You gave your hand to me, as through
 The low scrub-growth that spanned
 The Danes' old tower, we caught anew

The sharp salt-burdened breeze that blew
Across the reach of sand.

Too proud! the grace you scorned to do,
Where scarce your foot could stand;—
'Twas but from sheer fatigue, I knew,
You gave your hand!

How well that scene comes back to view!
Your cheeks' faint roses fanned,—
The gorge,—the twinkling seaward blue,
The black boats on the strand;
I gave you all my heart, and you—
You gave your hand.

A TURN OF THE TIDE.

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ONLY a turn of the tide!
I was sitting here, by myself alone
On this rock, now hardly three hours ago,
With my book on my knees, and my eyes on the sea,
And my thoughts still further adrift, when he
So suddenly stood by my side.

The sun shone white on the sails,
The waves were dimpling and sparkling in light;
And I, my visions were almost as bright.
But a mist is now creeping along the shore,
And I shiver with cold—it is nothing more;
If it were—what now avails?

Only one turn of the tide!
He told me his love was so deep and strong,
That in saying him nay, I did him wrong,
That I had not the right his life to break,
And before I half knew the words I spake
I had promised to be his bride.

I can see his footprints yet;
Though the stealthy waves have almost effaced
From the sand's dry bed the track they traced,
But I feel as if years had gone over my head,
As if I had died, and been raised from the dead,
Since those sands were glistening wet.

Only a turn of the tide!
Is it always so when our dreams come true?
Is the present so grey, and the future so blue?
Is the rainbow we chased nought but drizzling mist?
And the hope we hugged to our hearts and kiss'd,
Delusion, and nought beside?

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I had liked him truly for years,
I know he is greater and nobler than I,
With a larger brain and a clearer eye;
That my life is of small account, if it give
Him comfort; but shall I, so long as I live,
Feel these half-unreasoning fears?

Ah me! one turn of the tide!
This morning I was a careless child,
So gay, so petted, so thoughtless and wild;
I'm content with my fate, but one more year
Of freedom would have been very dear.
Was it I, or the wind that sigh'd?

I thought so—here comes the rain,
The mist grows dense, and the clouds gather fast,
And the tide has covered the sands at last;
I must hasten, and think of regrets no more,
But—could all things be as they were before,
I would not promise again.

FAR up the shingle crept the cruel wave,
With seeming coy reluctance to his feet,
Which—faint with toiling in the noonday heat—
He let his foe with flattering murmur lave,
Nor sought to flee the cool and pleasant grave
 Its soft arms laid about him, nor to cheat
 The patient billow of its victim meet,
For he had lost all power himself to save.
When, while he waited, thinking death was slow,
 Eyesight and hearing dim with tired despair,
The whisper of the sea grew faint and low,
 And, waked by stirring of the evening air,
He rose, and saw the waves in sunset glow,
 Gleaming far off in beauty new and rare.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE.**I.**

THE harbour lights are dim with smoke
 Which hangs about the under sky,
And wraps the simple fisher-folk
 In lurid mist as they go by.
Along the shore the wind blows free,
Keen twilight kisses the wan sea
Far out; steer thither, watch with me
 The tender stars come out on high.

II.

The sky is deepening overhead:
 The sail flaps loose: the wind has died:
The water laps the boat like lead:
 Faint ripples splash against the side,
And shimmer with unearthly light,
The harbour lamps are out of sight;
We drift into a starless night
 Together on the ebbing tide.

III.

How still—how strange—the tide is slack,
 We eddy round—we drift no more.
What swell is this which sweeps us back
 To where the gathering breakers roar?
About the pale unlighted land?
Can any tell if we shall stand
Safe in the morning hand in hand
 Upon the steep and rock-bound shore?

COMPROMISE.

"COME, promise, dear," I whispered low,
 "That you will take my name."
I never said I'd give it, but
 They swore 'twas all the same.
They brought an action to extort
 Four thousand pounds from me—
The Judge said "compromise," and so
 I had to give her three.
By my hard fate, unwary youth,
 Take warning, and be wise:

Once with "*come promise*" you begin,
The end is *compromise*.

FAREWELL.

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FAR through the vista of receding years
I dimly catch a glimpse through falling tears,
Of faces bending o'er some pictured glory
Or—brightly list'ning to some magic story,
Told by a gifted wielder of the Pen
Whose power and pathos touch'd the hearts of men.
But when the pathos 'gan to sadden all,
A comic writer would our smiles recall:
And by his clever travesty and fable
Excite a merry laughter round the table.
Then some philosopher with voice sonorous
Would read an essay—not too long, to bore us.
The papers read, around the board we press'd,
To scan the pictures of each artist-guest.
Then to discussion of a slight repast
Of fish and rolls, and velvet cream we'd haste,
Ere Pens and Pencils all would speed away,
To meet again some happy future day.
That day, alas! has pass'd, the night has come,
And witty Pens and Pencils all are dumb.

FOOTNOTES

[43] Although Mazzini was not a member of Pen and Pencil, he wrote this letter at the request of the President.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AULD LANG SYNE: SELECTIONS FROM THE PAPERS OF THE "PEN AND PENCIL CLUB" ***

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