

THE TORCH-BEARERS

Watchers of the Sky

The Book of Earth

The Last Voyage

ALFRED NOYES

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THE TORCH- BEARERS

by
ALFRED NOYES

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PREFATORY NOTE.

This volume, while it is complete in itself, is also the first of a trilogy, the scope of which is suggested in the prologue. The story of scientific discovery has its own epic unity—a unity of purpose and endeavour—the single torch passing from hand to hand through the centuries; and the great moments of science when, after long labour, the pioneers saw their accumulated facts falling into a significant order—sometimes in the form of a law that revolutionised the whole world of thought—have an intense human interest and belong essentially to the creative imagination of poetry. It is with these moments that my poem is chiefly concerned, not with any impossible attempt to cover the whole field or to make a new poetic system, after the Lucretian model, out of modern science.

The theme has been in my mind for a good many years; and the first volume, dealing with the 'Watchers of the Sky,' began to take definite shape during what was to me an unforgettable experience—the night I was privileged to spend on a summit of the Sierra Madre Mountains, when the first trial was made of the new 100-inch telescope. The prologue to this volume attempts to give a picture of that night, and to elucidate my own purpose.

The first tale in this volume plunges into the middle of things, with the revolution brought about by Copernicus; but, within the tale, partly by means of an incidental lyric, there is an attempt to give a bird's-eye view of what had gone before. The torch then passes to Tycho Brahe, who, driven into exile with his tables of the stars, at the very point of death hands them over to a young man named Kepler. Kepler, with their help, arrives at his own great laws, and corresponds with Galileo—the intensely human drama of whose life I have endeavoured to depict with more historical accuracy than can be attributed to much of the poetic literature that has gathered

around his name. Too many writers have succumbed to the temptation of the cry, "E pur si muove!" It is, of course, rejected by every reliable historian, and was first attributed to Galileo a hundred years after his death. M. Ponsard, in his play on the subject, succumbed to the extent of making his final scene end with Galileo "frappant du pied la terre," and crying, "pourtant elle tourne." Galileo's recantation was a far more subtle and tragically complicated affair than that. Even Landor succumbed to the easy method of making him display his entirely legendary scars to Milton. If these familiar pictures are not to be found in my poem, it may be well for me to assure the hasty reader that it is because I have endeavoured to present a more just picture. I have tried to suggest the complications of motive in this section by a series of letters passing between the characters chiefly concerned. There was, of course, a certain poetic significance in the legend of "E pur si muove"; and this significance I have endeavoured to retain without violating historical truth.

In the year of Galileo's death Newton was born, and the subsequent sections carry the story on to the modern observatory again. The form I have adopted is a development from that of an earlier book, 'Tales of the Mermaid Tavern,' where certain poets and discoverers of another kind were brought together round a central idea, and their stories told in a combination of narrative and lyrical verse. 'The Torch-Bearers' flowed all the more naturally into a similar form in view of the fact that Tycho Brahe, Kepler, and many other pioneers of science wrote a considerable number of poems. Those imbedded in the works of Kepler—whose blazing and fantastic genius was, indeed, primarily poetic—are of extraordinary interest. I was helped, too, in the general scheme by those constant meetings between science and poetry, of which the most famous and beautiful are the visit of Sir Henry Wotton to Kepler, and the visit of Milton to Galileo in prison.

Even if science and poetry were as deadly opposites as the shallow often affirm, the method and scheme indicated above would at

least make it possible to convey something of the splendour of the long battle for the light in its most human aspect. Poetry has its own precision of expression, and, in modern times, it has been seeking more and more for truth, sometimes even at the expense of beauty. May it not be possible to carry that quest a stage farther, to the point where, in the great rhythmical laws of the universe revealed by science, truth and beauty are reunited. If poetry can do this, it will not be without some value to science itself, and it will be playing its part in the reconstruction of a shattered world.

The passing of the old order of dogmatic religion has left the modern world in a strange chaos, craving for something in which it can unfeignedly believe, and often following will-o'-the-wisps. Forty years ago, Matthew Arnold prophesied that it would be for poetry, "where it is worthy of its high destinies," to carry on the purer fire, and to express in new terms those eternal ideas which must ever be the only sure stay of the human race. It is not within the province of science to attempt a post-Copernican justification of the ways of

God to man; but, in the laws of nature revealed by science, and in "that grand sequence of events which"—as Darwin affirmed—"the mind refuses to accept as the result of blind chance," poetry may discover its own new grounds for the attempt. It is easy to assume that all hope and faith are shallow. It is even easier to practise a really shallow and devitalising pessimism. The modern annunciation that there is a skeleton an inch beneath the skin of man is neither new nor profound. Neither science nor poetry can rest there; and if, in this poem, an attempt is made to show that spiritual values are not diminished or overwhelmed by the "fifteen hundred universes" that passed in review before the telescope of Herschel, it is only after the opposite argument—so common and so easy to-day—has been faced; and only after poetry has at least endeavoured to follow the torch of science to its own deep-set boundary-mark in that immense darkness of Space and Time.

THE TORCH-BEARERS

PART I.—WATCHERS OF THE SKY

PROLOGUE: THE OBSERVATORY

At noon, upon the mountain's purple
height,
Above the pine-woods and the clouds it
shone
No larger than the small white dome of
shell
Left by the fledgling wren when wings are
born.
By night it joined the company of heaven,
And, with its constant light, became a
star.
A needle-point of light, minute, remote,
It sent a subtler message through the
abyss,
Held more significance for the seeing eye

Than all the darkness that would blot it
out,
Yet could not dwarf it.

High in

heaven it shone,
Alive with all the thoughts, and hopes,
and dreams
Of man's adventurous mind

U

there, I knew
The explorers of the sky, a quiet throng
Of pioneers, made ready to attack
That darkness once again, and win new
worlds.
To-morrow night they hoped to crown the
toil
Of twenty years, and turn upon the sky
The noblest weapon ever made by man.
War had delayed them. They had been
drawn away
Designing darker weapons. But no gun
Could outrange this.
"To-morrow night"—so wrote their chief
—"we try
Our great new telescope, the hundred-
inch.

Your Milton's 'optic tube' has grown in
power
Since Galileo, famous, blind, and old,
Talked with him, in that darkness, of the
sky.
We creep to power by inches. Europe
trusts
Her 'giant forty' still. Even to-night
Our own old sixty has its work to do;
And now our hundred-inch . . . I hardly
dare
To think what this new muzzle of ours
may find.
Come up, and spend that night among the
stars
Here, on our mountain-top. If all goes
well,
Then, at the least, my friend, you'll see a
moon
Stranger, but nearer, many a thousand mile
Than earth has ever seen her, even in
dreams.
As for the stars, if seeing them were all,
Three thousand million new-found points
of light
Is our rough guess. But never speak of

this.

You know our press. They'd miss the one
result

To flash 'three thousand million' round the
world."

To-morrow night! For more than twenty
years

They had thought and planned and
worked.

 Ten years had gone,
One-fourth, or more, of man's brief
working-life,
Before they made those solid tons of
glass,
Their hundred-inch reflector, the clear
pool,
The polished flawless pool that it must be
To hold the perfect image of a star.
And, even now, some secret flaw—none
knew
Until to-morrow's test—might waste it
all.

Where was the gambler that would stake
so much,—

Time, patience, treasure, on a single
throw?

The cost of it,—they'd not find that again,
Either in gold or life-stuff! All their youth
Was fuel to the flame of this one work.
Once in a lifetime to the man of science,
Despite what fools believe his ice-cooled
blood,
There comes this drama.

If he

fails, he fails
Utterly. He at least will have no time
For fresh beginnings. Other men, no
doubt,
Years hence, will use the footholes that he
cut
In those precipitous cliffs, and reach the
height,
But he will never see it.

So for me,

The light words of that letter seemed to
hide
The passion of a lifetime, and I shared
The crowning moment of its hope and
fear.

Next day, through whispering aisles of
palm we rode

Up to the foot-hills, dreaming desert-hills
That to assuage their own delicious
drought
Had set each tawny sun-kissed slope
ablaze
With peach and orange orchards.

and up,
Along the thin white trail that wound and
climbed
And zig-zagged through the grey-green
mountain sage,
The car went crawling, till the shining
plain
Below it, like an airman's map, unrolled.
Houses and orchards dwindled to white
specks
In midget cubes and squares of tufted
green.
Once, as we rounded one steep curve, that
made
The head swim at the canyoned gulf
below,
We saw through thirty miles of lucid air
Elvishly small, sharp as a crumpled petal
Blown from the stem, a yard away, a sail

Lazily drifting on the warm blue sea.
Up for nine miles along that spiral trail
Slowly we wound to reach the lucid
height
Above the clouds, where that white dome
of shell,
No wren's now, but an eagle's, took the
flush
Of dying day. The sage-brush all died out,
And all the southern growths, and round
us now,
Firs of the north, and strong, storm-rooted
pines
Exhaled a keener fragrance; till, at last,
Reversing all the laws of lesser hills,
They towered like giants round us.
Darkness fell
Before we reached the mountain's naked
height.

Over us, like a great cathedral dome,
The observatory loomed against the sky;
And the dark mountain with its headlong
gulfs
Had lost all memory of the world below;
For all those cloudless throngs of

glittering stars,
And all those glimmerings where the
abyss of space
Is powdered with a milky dust, each grain
A burning sun, and every sun the lord
Of its own darkling planets,—all those
lights
Met, in a darker deep, the lights of earth,
Lights on the sea, lights of invisible
towns,
Trembling and indistinguishable from
stars,
In those black gulfs around the mountain's
feet.
Then, into the glimmering dome, with
bated breath,
We entered, and, above us, in the gloom
Saw that majestic weapon of the light
Uptowering like the shaft of a huge gun
Through one arched rift of sky.

at its base
With naked arms, the crew that all day
long
Had sweated to make ready for this night
Waited their captain's word.

The
switchboard shone
With elfin lamps of white and red, and
keys
Whence, at a finger's touch, that
monstrous tube
Moved like a creature dowered with life
and will,
To peer from deep to deep.

Below
it pulsed
The clock-machine that slowly, throb by
throb,
Timed to the pace of the revolving earth,
Drove the titanic muzzle on and on,
Fixed to the chosen star that else would
glide
Out of its field of vision.

So, set
free,
Balanced against the wheel of time, it
swung,
Or rested, while, to find new realms of
sky
The dome that housed it, like a moon
revolved,

So smoothly that the watchers hardly
knew
They moved within; till, through the
glimmering doors,
They saw the dark procession of the pines
Like Indian warriors, quietly stealing by.

Then, at a word, the mighty weapon
dipped
Its muzzle and aimed at one small point of
light,
One seeming insignificant star.

chief,
Mounting the ladder, while we held our
breath,
Looked through the eye-piece.

The

we heard him laugh
His thanks to God, and hide it in a jest.
"A prominence on Jupiter!"—

T

laughed,
"What do you mean?"—"It's moving,"
cried the chief,
They laughed again, and watched his

glimmering face
High overhead against that moving tower.
"Come up and see, then!"

One

by one they went,
And, though each laughed as he returned
to earth,
Their souls were in their eyes.

The

I, too, looked,
And saw that insignificant spark of light
Touched with new meaning, beautifully
reborn,
A swimming world, a perfect rounded
pearl,
Poised in the violet sky; and, as I gazed,
I saw a miracle,—right on its upmost
edge
A tiny mound of white that slowly rose,
Then, like an exquisite seed-pearl, swung
quite clear
And swam in heaven above its parent
world
To greet its three bright sister-moons.

moon,

Of Jupiter, no more, but clearer far
Than mortal eyes had seen before from
earth.
Beautiful, keen and clear beyond all
dreams
Was that one silver phrase of the starry
tune
Which Galileo's "old discoverer" first
Dimly revealed, dissolving into clouds
The imagined fabric of our universe.
*"Jupiter stands in heaven and will stand
Though all the sycophants bark at him,"*
he cried,
Hailing the truth before he, too, went
down,
Whelmed in the cloudy wreckage of that
dream.

So one by one we looked, the men who
served
Urania, and the men from Vulcan's forge.
A beautiful eagerness in the darkness lit
The swarthy faces that too long had
missed
A meaning in the dull mechanic maze
Of labour on this blind earth, but found it

now.

Though only a moment's wandering
melody
Hopelessly far above, it gave their toil
Its only consecration and its joy.
There, with dark-smouldering eyes and
naked throats,
Blue-dungareed, red-shirted, grimed and
smeared
With engine-grease and sweat, they
gathered round
The foot of that dim ladder; each
muttering low,
As he came down, his wonder at what he
saw
To those who waited,—a picture for the
brush
Of Rembrandt, lighted only by the rift
Above them, where the giant muzzle thrust
Out through the dim arched roof, and
slowly throbbed,
Against the slowly moving wheel of the
earth,
Holding their chosen star.

like an elf,

There,

Perched on the side of that dark slanting
tower,
The Italian mechanic watched the
moons
That Italy discovered.

One by one,
English, American, French, and Dutch,
they climbed
To see the wonder that their own blind
hands
Had helped to achieve.

At midnight
while they paused
To adjust the clock-machine, I wandered
out
Alone, into the silence of the night.
The silence? On that lonely height I heard
Eternal voices;
For, as I looked into the gulf beneath,
Whence almost all the lights had vanished
now,
The whole dark mountain seemed to have
lost its earth
And to be sailing like a ship through
heaven.
All round it surged the mighty sea-like

sound
Of sighing pine-woods, one vast ebb
and flow
Of absolute peace, aloof from all earth's
pain,
So calm, so quiet, it seemed the cradle-
song,
The deep soft breathing of the universe
Over its youngest child, the soul of man.
And, as I listened, that Æolian voice
Became an invocation and a prayer:
O you, that on your loftier mountain dwell
And move like light in light among the
thoughts
Of heaven, translating our mortality
Into immortal song, is there not one
Among you that can turn to music now
This long dark fight for truth? Not one to
touch
With beauty this long battle for the light,
This little victory of the spirit of man,
Doomed to defeat—for what was all we
saw
To that which neither eyes nor soul could
see?—
Doomed to defeat and yet unconquerable,

Climbing its nine miles nearer to the
stars.
Wars we have sung. The blind, blood-
boltered kings
Move with an epic music to their thrones.
Have you no song, then, of that nobler
war?
Of those who strove for light, but could
not dream
Even of this victory that they helped to
win,
Silent discoverers, lonely pioneers,
Prisoners and exiles, martyrs of the truth
Who handed on the fire, from age to age;
Of those who, step by step, drove back
the night
And struggled, year on year, for one more
glimpse
Among the stars, of sovran law, their
guide;
Of those who searching inward, saw the
rocks
Dissolving into a new abyss, and saw
Those planetary systems far within,
Atoms, electrons, whirling on their way
To build and to unbuild our solid world;

Of those who conquered, inch by difficult
inch,
The freedom of this realm of law for man;
Dreamers of dreams, the builders of our
hope,
The healers and the binders up of
wounds,
Who, while the dynasts drenched the
world with blood,
Would in the still small circle of a lamp
Wrestle with death like Heracles of old
To save one stricken child?

Is

there no song
To touch this moving universe of law
With ultimate light, the glimmer of that
great dawn
Which over our ruined altars yet shall
break
In purer splendour, and restore mankind
From darker dreams than even Lucretius
knew,
To vision of that one Power which guides
the world?
How should men find it? Only through
those doors

Which, opening inward, in each separate
soul
Give each man access to that Soul of all
Living within each life, not to be found
Or known, till, looking inward, each
alone
Meets the unknowable and eternal God.

And there was one that moved like light
in light
Before me there,—Love, human and
divine,
That can exalt all weakness into power,—
Whispering, *Take this deathless torch of
song . . .*
Whispering, but with such faith, that even
I
Was humbled into thinking this might be
Through love, though all the wisdom of
the world
Account it folly.

Let my breast be
bared
To every shaft, then, so that Love be still
My one celestial guide the while I sing
Of those who caught the pure Promethean

fire

One from another, each crying as he went
down

To one that waited, crowned with youth
and joy,—

*Take thou the splendour, carry it out of
sight*

*Into the great new age I must not know,
Into the great new realm I must not
tread.*

TABLETS OF CLAY

In old Cathay, in far Cathay,

Before the western world began,

They saw the moving fount of day

Eclipsed, as by a shadowy fan;

They stood upon their Chinese wall,

They saw his fire to ashes fade,

And felt the deeper slumber fall

On domes of pearl and towers of jade.

With slim brown hands, in Araby,

They traced, upon the desert sand,

*Their Rams and Scorpions of the sky,
And strove—and failed—to
understand.*

*Before their footprints were effaced
The shifting sand forgot their rune;
Their hieroglyphs were all erased,
Their desert naked to the moon.*

*In Bagdad of the purple nights,
Haroun Al Raschid built a tower,
Where sages watched a thousand lights
And read their legends, for an hour.
The tower is down, the Caliph dead,
Their astrolabes are wrecked with
rust.*

*Orion glitters overhead,
Aladdin's lamp is in the dust.*

*In Babylon, in Babylon,
They baked their tablets of the clay;
And, year by year, inscribed thereon
The dark eclipses of their day;
They saw the moving finger write
Its Mene, Mene, on their sun,
A mightier shadow cloaks their light,
And clay is clay in Babylon.*

I

COPERNICUS

The neighbours gossiped idly at the door.
Copernicus lay dying overhead.

His little throng of friends, with startled
eyes,
Whispered together, in that dark house of
thought,

From which by one dim crevice in the
wall

He used to watch the stars.

"His book

has come

From Nuremberg at last; but who would
dare

To let him see it now?"—

"They

have altered it!

Though Rome approved in full, this
preface, look,
Declares that his discoveries are a
dream!"—

"He has asked a thousand times if it has
come;
Could we tear out those pages?"—

suspect."—

"What shall be done, then?"—

"Ho

it back awhile.

That was the priest's voice in the room
above.

He may forget it. The last sacrament
May set his mind at rest, and bring him
peace."—

Then, stealing quietly to that upper door,
They opened it a little, and saw within
The lean white deathbed of Copernicus
Who made our world a world without an
end.

There, in that narrow room, they saw his
face

Grey, seamed with thought, lit by a
strange faint light;

They saw those glorious eyes
Closing, that once had looked beyond the
spheres
And seen our ancient firmaments dissolve
Into a boundless night.

Beside him

knelt

Two women, like bowed shadows. At his
head,

An old physician watched him. At his
feet,

A cowed Franciscan knelt. Two altar-
tapers

Gleamed on his crucifix.

The

stillness prayed;

And the night air seemed fragrant with
faint flowers,

The first breath of those far celestial
fields. . . .

Then, like a dying soldier, that must leave
His last command to others, while the
fight

Is yet uncertain, and the victory far,
Copernicus whispered, in a fevered

dream,
"Yes, it is Death. But you must hold him
back,
There, in the doorway, for a little while,
Until I know the work is rightly done.
Use all your weapons, doctor. I must live
To see and touch one copy of my book.
Have they not brought it yet?

The:

promised me
It should be here by nightfall.

One

of you go
And hasten it. I can hold back Death till
dawn.

Have they not brought it yet—from
Nuremberg?

Do not deceive me. I must know it safe,
Printed and safe, for other men to use.
I could die then. My use would be
fulfilled.

What has delayed them? Will not some
one go
And tell them that my strength is running
out?

Tell them that book would be an angel's
hand
In mine, an easier pillow for my head,
A little lantern in the engulfing dark.
You see, I hid its struggling light so long
Under too small a bushel, and I fear
It may go out for ever. In the noon
Of life's brief day, I could not see the
need
As now I see it, when the night shuts
down.
I was afraid, perhaps, it might confuse
The lights that guide us for the souls of
men.

But now I see three stages in our life.
At first, we bask contented in our sun
And take what daylight shows us for the
truth.
Then we discover, in some midnight grief,
How all day long the sunlight blinded us
To depths beyond, where all our
knowledge dies.
That's where men shrink, and lose their
way in doubt.
Then, last, as death draws nearer, comes

a night
In whose majestic shadow men see God,
Absolute Knowledge, reconciling all.
So, all my life I pondered on that scheme
Which makes this earth the centre of all
worlds,
Lighted and wheeled around by sun and
moon
And that great crystal sphere wherein men
thought
Myriads of lesser stars were fixed like
lamps,
Each in its place,—one mighty glittering
wheel
Revolving round this dark abode of man.
Night after night, with even pace they
moved,
Year after year, not altering by one point,
Their order, or their stations, those fixed
stars
In that revolving firmament. The Plough
Still pointed to the Pole. Fixed in their
sphere,
How else explain that vast unchanging
wheel?
How, but by thinking all those lesser

lights

Were huger suns, divided from our earth
By so immense a gulf that, if they moved
Ten thousand leagues an hour among
themselves,

It would not seem one hair's-breadth to
our eyes?

Utterly inconceivable, I know;

And yet we daily kneel to boundless

Power

And build our hope on that Infinitude.

This did not daunt me, then. Indeed, I saw
Light upon chaos. Many discordant
dreams

Began to move in lucid music now.

For what could be more baffling than the
thought

That those enormous heavens must circle
earth

Diurnally—a journey that would need
Swiftness to which the lightning-flash
would seem

A white slug creeping on the walls of
night;

While, if earth softly on her axle spun

One quiet revolution answered all.
It was our moving selves that made the
sky
Seem to revolve. Have not all ages seen
A like illusion baffling half mankind
In life, thought, art? Men think, at every
turn
Of their own souls, the very heavens have
moved.

Light upon chaos, light, and yet more
light;
For—as I watched the planets—Venus,
Mars,
Appeared to wax and wane from month to
month
As though they moved, now near, now far,
from earth.
Earth could not be their centre. Was the
sun
Their sovran lord then, as Pythagoras
held?
Was this great earth, so stablished, so
secure,
A planet also? Did it also move
Around the sun? If this were true, my

friends,
No revolution in this world's affairs,
Not that blind maelstrom where imperial
Rome
Went down into the dark, could so engulf
All that we thought we knew. We who
believed
In our own majesty, we who walked with
gods
As younger sons on this proud central
stage,
Round which the whole bright firmament
revolved
For our especial glory, must we creep
Like ants upon our midget ball of dust
Lost in immensity?

I could not take
That darkness lightly. I withheld my book
For many a year, until I clearly saw,
And Rome approved me—have they not
brought it yet?—
That this tremendous music could not
drown
The still supernal music of the soul,
Or quench the light that shone when Christ
was born.

For who, if one lost star could lead the
kings
To God's own Son, would shrink from
following these
To His eternal throne?

This at the

least

We know, the soul of man can soar
through heaven.

It is our own wild wings that dwarf the
world

To nothingness beneath us. Let the soul
Take courage, then. If its own thought be
true,

Not all the immensities of little minds
Can ever quench its own celestial fire.

No. This new night was needed, that the
soul
Might conquer its own kingdom and arise
To its full stature. So, in face of death,
I saw that I must speak the truth I knew.

Have they not brought it? What delays my
book?
I am afraid. Tell me the truth, my friends.

At this last hour, the Church may yet
withhold
Her sanction. Not the Church, but those
who think
A little darkness helps her.

Were

this true,
They would do well. If the poor light we
win
Confuse or blind us, to the Light of lights,
Let all our wisdom perish. I affirm
A greater Darkness, where the one true
Church
Shall after all her agonies of loss
And many an age of doubt, perhaps, to
come,
See this processional host of splendours
burn
Like tapers round her altar.

So I

speak
Not for myself, but for the age unborn.
I caught the fire from those who went
before,
The bearers of the torch who could not
see

The goal to which they strained. I caught
their fire,
And carried it, only a little way beyond;
But there are those that wait for it, I know,
Those who will carry it on to victory.
I dare not fail them. Looking back, I see
Those others,—fallen, with their arms
outstretched
Dead, pointing to the future.

Far,

far back,
Before the Egyptians built their pyramids
With those dark funnels pointing to the
north,
Through which the Pharaohs from their
desert tombs
Gaze all night long upon the Polar Star,
Some wandering Arab crept from death to
life
Led by the Plough across those wastes of
pearl." . . .

A shadow moved towards him from the
door.
Copernicus, with a cry, upraised his head.
"The book, I cannot see it, let me feel

The lettering on the cover."

"It is

here!" . . .

A shadow quenched the tapers, and drew
back

A window-curtain. The unchanging stars
Looked down upon the dying face. His
words

Came gently as a sleeping child's—"a
hand

To grasp, in mine, more closely. . . .

There will be light,

More light—when men can look on it, and
live—

In that pure realm whose darkness was
our peace."

II

TYCHO BRAHE

I

They thought him a magician, Tycho
Brahe,
Who lived on that strange island in the
Sound,
Nine miles from Elsinore.

His

legend reached
The Mermaid Inn the year that
Shakespeare died.
Fynes Moryson had brought his travellers'
tales
Of When, the heart-shaped isle where
Tycho made
His great discoveries, and, with Jeppe,
his dwarf,
And flaxen-haired Christine, the peasant
girl,
Dreamed his great dreams for five-and-
twenty years.
For there he lit that lanthorn of the law,
Uraniborg; that fortress of the truth,
With Pegasus flying above its loftiest
tower,
While, in its roofs, like wide enchanted

eyes
Watching, the brightest windows in the
world,
Opened upon the stars.

Nine miles from Elsinore, with all those
ghosts,
There's magic enough in that! But white-
cliffed When,
Six miles in girth, with crowds of
hunchback waves
Crawling all round it, and those
moonstruck windows,
Held its own magic, too; for Tycho Brahe
By his mysterious alchemy of dreams
Had so enriched its soil, that when the
king
Of England wished to buy it, Denmark
asked
A price too great for any king on earth.
"Give us," they said, "in scarlet cardinal's
cloth
Enough to cover it, and, at every corner,
Of every piece, a right rose-noble too;
Then all that kings can buy of When is
yours.

Only," said they, "a merchant bought it
once;
And, when he came to claim it, goblins
flocked
All round him, from its forty goblin farms,
And mocked him, bidding him take away
the stones
That he had bought, for nothing else was
his."
These things were fables. They were also
true.

They thought him a magician, Tycho
Brahe,
The astrologer, who wore the mask of
gold.
Perhaps he was. There's magic in the
truth;
And only those who find and follow its
laws
Can work its miracles.

Tycho

sought the truth
From that strange year in boyhood when
he heard
The great eclipse foretold; and, on the day

Appointed, at the very minute even,
Beheld the weirdly punctual shadow
creep
Across the sun, bewildering all the birds
With thoughts of evening.

Picture

him, on that day,
The boy at Copenhagen, with his mane
Of thick red hair, thrusting his freckled
face
Out of his upper window, holding the
piece
Of glass he blackened above his candle-
flame
To watch that orange ember in the sky
Wane into smouldering ash.

He

whispered there,
"So it is true. By searching in the heavens,
Men can foretell the future."

In the

street
Below him, throngs were babbling of the
plague
That might or might not follow.

resolved
To make himself the master of that deep
art,
And know what might be known.

bought the books
Of Stadius with his tables of the stars.
Night after night, among the gabled roofs,
Climbing and creeping through a world
unknown
Save to the roosting stork, he learned to
find
The constellations, Cassiopeia's throne,
The Plough still pointing to the Polar Star,
The sword-belt of Orion. There he
watched
The movement of the planets, hour on
hour,
And wondered at the mystery of it all.

All this he did in secret, for his birth
Was noble, and such wonderings were a
sign
Of low estate, when Tycho Brahe was
young;
And all his kinsmen hoped that Tycho

Brahe

Would live, serene as they, among his
dogs

And horses; or, if honour must be won,
Let the superfluous glory flow from fields
Where blood might still be shed; or from
those courts

Where statesmen lie. But Tycho sought the
truth.

So, when they sent him in his tutor's
charge

To Leipzig, for such studies as they held
More worthy of his princely blood, he
searched

The Almagest; and while his tutor slept,
Measured the delicate angles of the stars,
Out of his window, with his compasses,
His only instrument. Even with this rude
aid

He found so many an ancient record
wrong

That more and more he burned to find the
truth.

One night at home, as Tycho searched the
sky,

Out of his window, compasses in hand,
Fixing one point upon a planet, one
Upon some loftier star, a ripple of
laughter
Startled him, from the garden walk below.
He lowered his compass, peered into the
dark
And saw—Christine, the blue-eyed
peasant girl,
With bare brown feet, standing among the
flowers.

She held what seemed an apple in her
hand;
And, in a voice that Aprilled all his
blood,
The low soft voice of earth, drawing him
down
From those cold heights to that warm
breast of Spring,
A natural voice that had not learned to use
The false tones of the world, simple and
clear
As a bird's voice, out of the fragrant
darkness called,
"I saw it falling from your window-ledge!

I thought it was an apple, till it rolled
Over my foot.

It's heavy. Shall I try
To throw it back to you?"

Tycho

saw a stain
Of purple across one small arched
glistening foot.

"Your foot is bruised," he cried.

no," she laughed,
And plucked the stain off. "Only a petal,
see."

She showed it to him.

"But this—I

wonder now
If I can throw it."

Twice she tried

and failed;
Or Tycho failed to catch that slippery
sphere.
He saw the supple body swaying below,
The ripe red lips that parted as she
laughed,
And those deep eyes where all the stars
were drowned.

At the third time he caught it; and she
vanished,
Waving her hand, a little floating moth,
Between the pine-trees, into the warm
dark night.
He turned into his room, and quickly
thrust
Under his pillow that forbidden fruit;
For the door opened, and the hot red face
Of Otto Brahe, his father, glowered at
him.

"What's this? What's this?"

The

furious-eyed old man
Limped to the bedside, pulled the mystery
out,
And stared upon the strangest apple of
Eve
That ever troubled Eden,—heavy as
bronze,
And delicately enchased with silver stars,
The small celestial globe that Tycho
bought
In Leipzig.

Then the storm burst on his
head!

This moon-struck 'pothecary's-prentice
work,
These cheap-jack calendar-maker's gipsy
tricks
Would damn the mother of any Knutsdorp
squire,
And crown his father like a stag of ten.
Quarrel on quarrel followed from that
night,
Till Tycho sickened of his ancient name;
And, wandering through the woods about
his home,
Found on a hill-top, ringed with fragrant
pines,
A little open glade of whispering ferns.
Thither, at night, he stole to watch the
stars;
And there he told the oldest tale on earth
To one that watched beside him, one
whose eyes
Shone with true love, more beautiful than
the stars,
A daughter of earth, the peasant-girl,
Christine.

They met there, in the dusk, on his last

night

At home, before he went to Wittenberg.
They stood knee-deep among the
whispering ferns,
And said good-bye.

"I shall return," he

said,

"And shame them for their folly, who
would set

Their pride above the stars, Christine,
and you.

At Wittenberg or Rostoch I shall find
More chances and more knowledge. All
those worlds

Are still to conquer. We know nothing yet;
The books are crammed with fables. They
foretell

Here an eclipse, and there a dawning
moon,

But most of them were out a month or
more

On Jupiter and Saturn.

There's one

way,

And only one, to knowledge of the law
Whereby the stars are steered, and so to

read

The future, even perhaps the destinies
Of men and nations,—only one sure way,
And that's to watch them, watch them, and
record

The truth we know, and not the lies we
dream.

Dear, while I watch them, though the hills
and sea

Divide us, every night our eyes can meet
Among those constant glories. Every night
Your eyes and mine, upraised to that
bright realm,

Can, in one moment, speak across the
world.

I shall come back with knowledge and
with power,
And you—will wait for me?"

She

answered him

In silence, with the starlight of her eyes.

He watched the skies at Wittenberg. The
plague
Drove him to Rostoch, and he watched
them there;
But, even there, the plague of little minds
Beset him. At a wedding-feast he met
His noble countryman, Manderup, who
asked,
With mocking courtesy, whether Tycho
Brahe
Was ready yet to practise his black art
At country fairs. The guests, and Tycho,
laughed;
Whereat the swaggering Junker blandly
sneered,
"If fortune-telling fail, Christine will
dance,
Thus—tambourine on hip," he struck a
pose.
"Her pretty feet will pack that booth of
yours."

They fought, at midnight, in a wood, with
swords,
And not a spark of light but those that
leapt

Blue from the clashing blades. Tycho had
lost
His moon and stars awhile, almost his
life;
For, in one furious bout, his enemy's
blade
Dashed like a scribble of lightning into
the face
Of Tycho Brahe, and left him spluttering
blood,
Groping through that dark wood with
outstretched hands,
To fall in a death-black swoon.

T

carried him back
To Rostoch; and when Tycho saw at last
That mirrored patch of mutilated flesh,
Seared as by fire, between the frank blue
eyes
And firm young mouth where, like a
living flower
Upon a stricken tree, youth lingered still,
He'd but one thought, Christine would
shrink from him
In fear, or worse, in pity. An end had
come

Worse than old age, to all the glory of
youth.

Urania would not let her lover stray
Into a mortal's arms. He must remain
Her own, for ever; and for ever, alone.

Yet, as the days went by, to face the
world,
He made himself a delicate mask of gold
And silver, shaped like those that
minstrels wear
At carnival in Venice, or when love,
Disguising its disguise of mortal flesh,
Wooes as a nameless prince from far
away.

And when this world's day, with its blaze
and coil
Was ended, and the first white star awoke
In that pure realm where dreams may find
their own,
His eyes and hers, meeting on Hesperus,
Renewed their troth.

He seemed to
see Christine,
Ringed by the pine-trees on that distant
hill,

A small white figure, lost in space and
time,
Yet gazing at the sky, and conquering all,
Height, depth, and heaven itself, by the
sheer power
Of love at one with everlasting laws,
A love that shared the constancy of
heaven,
And spoke to him across, above, the
world.

III

Not till he crossed the Danube did he find
Among the fountains and the storied eaves
Of Augsburg, one to share his task with
him.
Paul Hainzel, of that city, greatly loved
To talk with Tycho of the strange new
dreams
Copernicus had kindled. Did this earth
Move? Was the sun the centre of our
scheme?
And Tycho told him, there is but one way

To know the truth, and that's to sweep
aside
All the dark cobwebs of old sophistry,
And watch and learn that moving
alphabet,
Each smallest silver character inscribed
Upon the skies themselves, noting them
down,
Till on a day we find them taking shape
In phrases, with a meaning; and, at last,
The hard-won beauty of that celestial
book
With all its epic harmonies unfold
Like some great poet's universal song.

He was a great magician, Tycho Brahe.
"Hainzel," he said, "we have no magic
wand,
But what the truth can give us. If we find
Even with a compass, through a bedroom
window,
That half the glittering Almagest is wrong,
Think you, what noble conquests might be
ours,
Had we but nobler instruments."

showed,
Quivering with eagerness, his first rude
plan
For that great quadrant,—not the wooden
toy
Of old Scultetus, but a kingly weapon,
Huge as a Roman battering-ram, and fine
In its divisions as any goldsmith's work.
"It could be built," said Tycho, "but the
cost
Would buy a dozen culverin for your
wars."
Then Hainzel, fired by Tycho's burning
brain,
Answered, "We'll make it. We've a war to
wage
On Chaos, and his kingdoms of the night."
They chose the cunningest artists of the
town,
Clock-makers, jewellers, carpenters, and
smiths,
And, setting them all afire with Tycho's
dream,
Within a month his dream was oak and
brass.
Its beams were fourteen cubits, solid oak,

Banded with iron. Its arch was polished
brass
Whereon five thousand exquisite
divisions
Were marked to show the minutes of
degrees.

So huge and heavy it was, a score of men
Could hardly drag and fix it to its place
In Hainzel's garden.

Many a
shining night,
Tycho and Hainzel, out of that maze of
flowers,
Charted the stars, discovering point by
point,
How all the records erred, until the fame
Of this new master, hovering above the
schools
Like a strange hawk, threatened the
creeping dreams
Of all the Aristotelians, and began
To set their mouse-holes twittering
"Tycho Brahe!"
Then Tycho Brahe came home, to find
Christine.

Up to that whispering glade of ferns he
sped,
At the first wink of Hesperus.

H

stood
In shadow, under the darkest pine, to hide
The little golden mask upon his face.
He wondered, will she shrink from me in
fear
Or loathing? Will she even come at all?
And, as he wondered, like a light she
moved
Before him.

"Is it you?"—

"Chris-

Christine,"
He whispered, "It is I, the mountebank,
Playing a jest upon you. It's only a mask!
Do not be frightened. I am here behind it."

Her red lips parted, and between them
shone
The little teeth like white pomegranate
seeds.
He saw her frightened eyes.

Then,

with a cry,
Her arms went round him, and her eyelids
closed.
Lying against his heart, she set her lips
Against his lips, and claimed him for her
own.

IV

One frosty night, as Tycho bent his way
Home to the dark old abbey, he upraised
His eyes, and saw a portent in the sky.
There, in its most familiar patch of blue,
Where Cassiopeia's five-fold glory
burned,
An unknown brilliance quivered, a huge
star
Unseen before, a strange new visitant
To heavens unchangeable, as the world
believed,
Since the creation.

Could new stars be
born?
Night after night he watched that miracle

Growing and changing colour as it grew;
White at the first, and large as Jupiter;
And, in the third month, yellow, and
larger yet;
Red in the fifth month, like Aldebaran,
And larger even than Lyra. In the seventh,
Bluish like Saturn; whence it dulled and
dwined
Little by little, till after eight months more
Into the dark abysmal blue of night,
Whence it arose, the wonder died away.
But, while it blazed above him, Tycho
brought
Those delicate records of two hundred
nights
To Copenhagen. There, in his golden
mask,
At supper with Pratensis, who believed
Only what old books told him, Tycho met
Dancey, the French Ambassador,
rainbow-gay
In satin hose and doublet, supple and thin,
Brown-eyed, and bearded with a soft
black tuft
Neat as a blackbird's wing,—a spirit as
keen

And swift as France on all the starry
trails
Of thought.

He saw the deep and
simple fire,
The mystery of all genius, in those eyes
Above the golden vizard.

Tycho
raised
His wine-cup, brimming—they thought—
with purple dreams;
And bade them drink to their triumphant
Queen
Of all the Muses, to their Lady of Light
Urania, and the great new star.

T
laughed,
Thinking the young astrologer's golden
mask
Hid a sardonic jest.

"The skies
are clear,"
Said Tycho Brahe, "and we have eyes to
see.
Put out your candles. Open those
windows there!"

The colder darkness breathed upon their
brows,
And Tycho pointed, into the deep blue
night.

There, in their most immutable height of
heaven,
In *ipso caelo*, in the ethereal realm,
Beyond all planets, red as Mars it burned,
The one impossible glory.

"But it's
true!"

Pratensis gasped; then, clutching the first
straw,

"Now I recall how Pliny the Elder said,
Hipparchus also saw a strange new star,
Not where the comets, not where the
Rosæ bloom

And fade, but in that solid crystal sphere
Where nothing changes."

Tycho
smiled, and showed
The record of his watchings.

"But
the world
Must know all this," cried Dancey. "You

must print it."

"Print it?" said Tycho, turning that golden
mask

On both his friends. "Could I, a noble,
print

This trafficking with Urania in a book?
They'd hound me out of Denmark! This
disgrace

Of work, with hands or brain, no matter
why,

No matter how, in one who ought to dwell
Fixed to the solid upper sphere, my
friends,

Would never be forgiven."

Dancey

stared

In mute amazement, but that mask of gold
Outstared him, sphinx-like, and
inscrutable.

Soon through all Europe, like the blinded
moths,

Roused by a lantern in old palaces
Among the mouldering tapestries of
thought,

Weird fables woke and fluttered to and

fro,
And wild-eyed sages hunted them for
truth.

The Italian, Frangipani, thought the star
The lost Electra, that had left her throne
Among the Pleiads, and plunged into the
night

Like a veiled mourner, when Troy town
was burned.

The German painter, Busch, of Erfurt,
wrote,

"It was a comet, made of mortal sins;
A poisonous mist, touched by the wrath of
God

To fire; from which there would descend
on earth

All manner of evil—plagues and sudden
death,

Frenchmen and famine."

Preachers

thumped and raved.

Theodore Beza in Calvin's pulpit tore
His grim black gown, and vowed it was
the Star

That led the Magi. It had now returned
To mark the world's end and the Judgment

Day.

Then, in this hubbub, Dancey told the king
Of Denmark, "There is one who knows
the truth—

Your subject Tycho Brahe, who, night by
night,
Watched and recorded all that truth could
see.

It would bring honour to all Denmark,
sire,
If Tycho could forget his rank awhile,
And print these great discoveries in a
book,
For all the world to read."

So

Tycho Brahe
Received a letter in the king's own hand,
Urging him, "Truth is the one pure
fountain-head
Of all nobility. Pray forget your rank."
His noble kinsmen echoed, "If you wish
To please His Majesty and ourselves,
forget
Your rank."

"I will," said Tycho Brahe;
"Your reasoning has convinced me. I will

print
My book, *De Nova Stella*. And to prove
All you have said concerning temporal
rank
And this eternal truth you love so well,
I marry, to-day,"—they foamed, but all
their mouths
Were stopped and stuffed and sealed with
their own words,—
"I marry to-day my own true love,
Christine."

V

They thought him a magician, Tycho
Brahe.
Perhaps he was. There's magic all around
us
In rocks and trees, and in the minds of
men,
Deep hidden springs of magic.
He
that strikes
The rock aright, may find them where he

will.

And Tycho tasted happiness in his hour.
There was a prince in Denmark in those
days;
And, when he heard how other kings
desired
The secrets of this new astrology,
He said, "This man, in after years, will
bring
Glory to Denmark, honour to her prince.
He is a Dane. Give him this isle of
Wheen,
And let him make his great discoveries
there.
Let him have gold to buy his instruments,
And build his house and his observatory.

So Tycho set this island where he lived
Whispering with wizardry; and, in its
heart,
He lighted that strange lanthorn of the
law,
And built himself that wonder of the
world,
Uraniborg, a fortress for the truth,

A city of the heavens.

Around it

ran

A mighty rampart twenty-two feet high,
And twenty feet in thickness at the base.
Its angles pointed north, south, east and
west,
With gates and turrets; and, within this
wall,
Were fruitful orchards, apple and cherry,
and pear;
And, sheltered in their midst from all but
sun,
A garden, warm and busy with singing
bees.

There, many an hour, his flaxen-haired
Christine
Sang to her child, her first-born,
Magdalen,
Or watched her playing, a flower among
the flowers.

Dark in the centre of that zone of bliss
Arose the magic towers of Tycho Brahe.
Two of them had great windows in their
roofs
Opening upon the sky where'er he willed,

And under these observatories he made
A library of many a golden book;
Poets and sages of old Greece and Rome,
And many a mellow legend, many a
dream
Of dawning truth in Egypt, or the dusk
Of Araby. Under all of these he made
A subterranean crypt for alchemy,
With sixteen furnaces; and, under this,
He sank a well, so deep, that Jeppe
declared
He had tapped the central fountains of the
world,
And drew his magic from those cold clear
springs.

This was the very well, said Jeppe, the
dwarf,
Where Truth was hidden; but, by Tycho
Brahe
And his weird skill, the magic water
flowed,
Through pipes, uphill, to all the house
above:
The kitchen where his cooks could broil a
trout

For sages or prepare a feast for kings;
The garrets for the students in the roof;
The guest-rooms, and the red room to the
north,
The study and the blue room to the south;
The small octagonal yellow room that
held
The sunlight like a jewel all day long,
And Magdalen, with her happy dreams, at
night;
Then, facing to the west, one long green
room,
The ceiling painted like the bower of Eve
With flowers and leaves, the windows
opening wide
Through which Christine and Tycho Brahe
at dawn
Could see the white sails drifting on the
Sound
Like petals from their orchard.

T

the north,
He built a printing house for noble books,
Poems, and those deep legends of the sky,
Still to be born at his Uraniborg.
Beyond the rampart to the north arose

A workshop for his instruments. To the
south
A low thatched farm-house rambled round
a yard
Alive with clucking hens; and, further yet
To southward on another hill, he made
A great house for his larger instruments,
And called it Stiernberg, mountain of the
stars.

And, on his towers and turrets, Tycho set
Statues with golden verses in the praise
Of famous men, the bearers of the torch,
From Ptolemy to the new Copernicus.
Then, in that storm-proof mountain of the
stars,
He set in all their splendour of new-made
brass
His armouries for the assault of heaven,
—
Circles in azimuth, armillary spheres,
Revolving zodiacs with great brazen
rings;
Quadrants of solid brass, ten cubits
broad,
Brass parallactic rules, made to revolve

In azimuth; clocks with wheels; an
astrolabe;
And that large globe strengthened by
oaken beams
He made at Augsburg.

All his gold

he spent;
But Denmark had a prince in those great
days;
And, in his brain, the dreams of Tycho
Brahe
Kindled a thirst for glory. So he made
Tycho the Lord of sundry lands and rents,
And Keeper of the Chapel where the
kings
Of Oldenburg were buried; for he said,
'To whom could all these kings entrust
their bones
More fitly than to him who read the stars,
And though a mortal, knew immortal
laws;
And paced, at night, the silent halls of
heaven?'

VI

He was a great magician, Tycho Brahe.
There, on his island, for a score of years,
He watched the skies, recording star on
star,
For future ages, and, by patient toil,
Perfected his great tables of the sun,
The moon, the planets.

There, too

happy far
For any history, sons and daughters rose,
A little clan of love, around Christine;
And Tycho thought, when I am dead, my
sons
Will rule and work in my Uraniborg.
And yet a doubt would trouble him, for he
knew
The children of Christine would still be
held
Ignoble by the world.

Disciples

came,
Young-eyed and swift, the bearers of the
torch
From many a city to Uraniborg,

And Tycho Brahe received them like a
king,
And bade them light their torches at his
fire.
The King of Scotland came, with all his
court,
And dwelt eight days in Tycho Brahe's
domain,
Asking him many a riddle, deep and dark,
Whose answer, none the less, a king
should know.
What boots it on this earth to be a king,
To rule a part of earth, and not to know
The worth of his own realm, whether he
rule
As God's vice-gerent, and his realm be
still
The centre of the centre of all worlds;
Or whether, as Copernicus proclaimed,
This earth itself be moving, a lost grain
Of dust among the innumerable stars?
For this would dwarf all glory but the
soul,
In king or peasant, that can hail the truth,
Though truth should slay it."

So

to Tycho Brahe,
The king became a subject for eight days.
But, in the crowded hall, when he had
gone,
Jeppe raised his matted head, with a
chuckle of glee,
Quiet as the gurgle of joy in a dark rock-
pool,
When the first ripple and wash of the first
spring-tide
Flows bubbling under the dry sun-
blackened fringe
Of seaweed, setting it all afloat again,
In magical colours, like a merman's hair.
"Jeppe has a thought," the gay young
students cried,
Thronging him round, for all believed that
Jeppe
Was fey, and had strange visions of the
truth.
"What is the thought, Jeppe?"
"I can
think no thoughts,"
Croaked Jeppe. "But I have made myself
a song."
"Silence," they cried, "for Jeppe the

nightingale!
Sing, Jeppe!"

And, wagging his great
head to and fro
Before the fire, with deep dark eyes, he
crooned:

THE SONG OF JEPPE

"What!" said the king,
"Is earth a bird or bee?
Can this uncharted boundless realm of
ours
Drone thro' the sky, with leagues of
struggling sea,
Forests, and hills, and towns, and
palace-towers?"
"Ay," said the dwarf,
"I have watched from Stiernborg's
crown
Her far dark rim uplift against the sky;
But, while earth soars, men say the stars
go down;
And, while earth sails, men say the

stars go by."

An elvish tale!

Ask Jeppe, the dwarf! *He* knows.

That's why his eyes look fey; for,
chuckling deep,
Heels over head amongst the stars he
goes,

As all men go; but most are sound
asleep.

King, saint, and sage,

Even those that count it true,

Act as this miracle touched them not at
all.

They are borne, undizzied, thro' the
rushing blue,

And build their empires on a sky-
tossed ball.

Then said the king,

"If earth so lightly move,

What of my realm? O, what shall now
stand sure?"

"Nought," said the dwarf, "in all this
world, but love.

All else is dream-stuff and shall not

endure.

'Tis nearer now!

Our universe hath no centre,
Our shadowy earth and fleeting heaven
no stay,
But that deep inward realm which each
can enter,
Even Jeppe, the dwarf, by his own
secret way."

"Where?" said the king,

"O, where? I have not found it!"

"Here," said the dwarf, and music
echoed "here."

"This infinite circle hath no line to bound
it;

Therefore its deep strange centre is
everywhere.

Let the earth soar thro' heaven, that centre
abideth;

Or plunge to the pit, His covenant still
holds true.

In the heart of a dying bird, the Master
hideth;

In the soul of a king," said the dwarf,
"and in *my* soul, too."

VII

Princes and courtiers came, a few to seek
A little knowledge, many more to gape
In wonder at Tycho's gold and silver
mask;
Or when they saw the beauty of his
towers,
Envy and hate him for them.

Thus

arose
The small grey cloud upon the distant sky,
That broke in storm at last.

"Be"

croaked Jeppe,
Lifting his shaggy head beside the fire,
When guests like these had gone, "Master,
beware!"
And Tycho of the frank blue eyes would
laugh.

Even when he found Witichius playing
him false,
His anger, like a momentary breeze,

Died on the dreaming deep; for Tycho
Brahe
Turned to a nobler riddle,— "Have you
thought,"
He asked his young disciples, "how the
sea
Is moved to that strange rhythm we call
the tides?
He that can answer this shall have his
name
Honoured among the bearers of the torch
While Pegasus flies above Uraniborg.
I was delayed three hours or more to-day
By the neap-tide. The fishermen on the
coast
Are never wrong. They time it by the
moon.
Post hoc, perhaps, not *propter hoc*; and
yet
Through all the changes of the sky and sea
That old white clock of ours with the
battered face
Does seem infallible.

There's a
love-song too,
The sailors on the coast of Sweden sing,

I have often pondered it. Your courtly
poets
Upbraided the inconstant moon. But these
men know
The moon and sea are lovers, and they
move
In a most constant measure. Hear the
words
And tell me, if you can, what silver
chains
Bind them together." Then, in a voice as
low
And rhythmical as the sea, he spoke that
song:

THE SHEPHERDESS OF THE SEA

Reproach not yet our sails' delay;
You cannot see the shoaling bay,
The banks of sand, the fretful bars,
That ebb left naked to the stars.
The sea's white shepherdess, the moon,
Shall lead us into harbour soon.

Dear, when you see her glory shine
Between your fragrant boughs of pine,
Know there is but one hour to wait
Before her hands unlock the gate,
 And the full flood of singing foam
 Follow her lovely footsteps home.

Then waves like flocks of silver sheep
Come rustling inland from the deep,
And into rambling valleys press
Behind their heavenly shepherdess.
 You cannot see them? Lift your eyes
 And see their mistress in the skies.

She rises with her silver bow.
I feel the tide begin to flow;

And every thought and hope and dream
Follow her call, and homeward stream.
Borne on the universal tide,
The wanderer hastens to his bride.
 The sea's white shepherdess, the moon,
 Shall lead him into harbour soon.

VIII

He was a great magician, Tycho Brahe,
But not so great that he could read the
heart
Or rule the hand of princes.

Whe

his friend
King Frederick died, the young Prince
Christian reigned
And, round him, fool and knave made
common cause
Against the magic that could pour their
gold
Into a gulf of stars. This Tycho Brahe
Had grown too proud. He held them in
contempt,
So they believed; for, when he spoke,
their thoughts
Crept at his feet like spaniels. Junkerdom
Felt it was foolish, for he towered above
it,
And so it hated him. Did he not spend
Gold that a fool could spend as quickly as
he?
Were there not great estates bestowed

upon him
In wisdom's name, that from the dawn of
time
Had been the natural right of Junkerdom?
And would he not bequeath them to his
heirs,
The children of Christine, an unfree
woman?
"And you, sire, even you," they told the
king,
"He has made a laughing-stock. That
horoscope
He read for you, the night when you were
born,
Printed, and bound it in green velvet, too,
—
Read it. The whole world laughs at it. He
said
That Venus was the star that ruled your
fate,
And Venus would destroy you. Tycho
Brahe
Inspired your royal father with the fear
That kept your youth so long in leading-
strings,
The fear that every pretty hedgerow

flower
Would be your Circe. So he thought to
avenge
Our mockery of this peasant-girl,
Christine,
To whom, indeed, he plays the faithful
swine,
Knowing full well his gold and silver
nose
Would never win another."

Thus the

sky
Darkened above Uraniborg, and those
Who dwelt within it, till one evil day,
One seeming happy day, when Tycho
marked
The seven-hundredth star upon his chart,
Two pompous officers from
Walchendorp,
The chancellor, knocked at Tycho's
eastern gate.
"We are sent," they said, "to see and to
report
What use you make of these estates of
yours.
Your alchemy has turned more gold to

lead

Than Denmark can approve. The uses
now!

Show us the uses of this work of yours."

Then Tycho showed his tables of the
stars,

Seven hundred stars, each noted in its
place

With exquisite precision, the result
Of watching heaven for five-and-twenty
years.

"And is this all?" they said.

The:

thought to invent

Some ground for damning him. The truth
alone

Would serve them, as it seemed. For these
were men

Who could not understand.

"Not all,

I hope,"

Said Tycho, "for I think, before I die,

I shall have marked a thousand."

what end?

When shall we reap the fruits of all this
toil?

Show us its uses."

"In the time to

come,"

Said Tycho Brahe, "perhaps a hundred
years,

Perhaps a thousand, when our own poor
names

Are quite forgotten, and our kingdoms
dust,

On one sure certain day, the torch-bearers

Will, at some point of contact, see a light

Moving upon this chaos. Though our eyes

Be shut for ever in an iron sleep,

Their eyes shall see the kingdom of the
law,

Our undiscovered cosmos. They shall see
it,—

A new creation rising from the deep,

Beautiful, whole.

We are like men

that hear

Disjointed notes of some supernal choir.

Year after year, we patiently record

All we can gather. In that far-off time,

A people that we have not known shall
hear them,
Moving like music to a single end."

They could not understand: this life that
sought
Only to bear the torch and hand it on;
And so they made report that all the
dreams
Of Tycho Brahe were fruitless; perilous,
too,
Since he avowed that any fruit they bore
Would fall, in distant years, to alien
hands.

Little by little, Walchendorp withdrew
His rents from Tycho Brahe, accusing him
Of gross neglects. The Chapel at Roskilde
Was falling into ruin. Tycho Brahe
Was Keeper of the Bones of Oldenburg,
He must rebuild the Chapel. All the gifts
That Frederick gave to help him in his
task,
Were turned to stumbling-blocks; till, one
dark day,
He called his young disciples round him

there,
And in that mellow library of dreams,
Lit by the dying sunset, poured his heart
And mind before them, bidding them
farewell.

Through the wide-open windows as he
spoke
They heard the sorrowful whisper of the
sea
Ebbing and flowing around Uraniborg.
"An end has come," he said, "to all we
planned.

Uraniborg has drained her treasury dry.
Your Alma Mater now must close her
gates
On you, her guests; on me; and, worst of
all,
On one most dear, who made this place
my home.

For you are young, your homes are all to
win,
And you would all have gone your
separate ways
In a brief while; and, though I think you
love
Your college of the skies, it could not

mean

All that it meant to those who called it
'home.'

You that have worked with me, for one
brief year,

Will never quite forget Uraniborg.

This room, the sunset gilding all those
books,

The star-charts, and that old celestial
globe,

The long bright evenings by the winter
fire,

The talk that opened heaven, the songs
you sung,

Yes, even, I think, the tricks you played
with Jeppe,

Will somehow, when yourselves are
growing old,

Be hallowed into beauty, touched with
tears,

For you will wish they might be yours
again.

These have been mine for five-and-twenty
years,

And more than these,—the work, the
dreams I shared
With you, and others here. My heart will
break
To leave them. But the appointed time has
come
As it must come to all men.

You

and I
Have watched too many constant stars to
dream
That heaven or earth, the destinies of men
Or nations, are the sport of chance. An
end
Comes to us all through blindness, age, or
death.
If mine must come in exile, it shall find
me
Bearing the torch as far as I can bear it,
Until I fall at the feet of the young runner,
Who takes it from me, and carries it out of
sight,
Into the great new age I shall not know,
Into the great new realm I must not tread.
Come, then, swift-footed, let me see you
stand

Waiting before me, crowned with youth
and joy,
At the next turning. Take it from my hand,
For I am almost ready now to fall.

Something I have achieved, yes, though I
say it,
I have not loitered on that fiery way.
And if I front the judgment of the wise
In centuries to come, with more of dread
Than my destroyers, it is because this
work
Will be of use, remembered and
appraised,
When all their hate is dead.

I say

the work,
Not the blind rumour, the glory or fame of
it.
These observations of seven hundred
stars
Are little enough in sight of those great
hosts
Which nightly wheel around us, though I
hope,
Yes, I still hope, in some more generous

land
To make my thousand up before I die.
Little enough, I know,—a midget's work!
The men that follow me, with more
delicate art
May add their tens of thousands; yet my
sum
Will save them just that five-and-twenty
years
Of patience, bring them sooner to their
goal,
That kingdom of the law I shall not see.
We are on the verge of great discoveries.
I feel them as a dreamer feels the dawn
Before his eyes are opened. Many of you
Will see them. In that day you will recall
This, our last meeting at Uraniborg,
And how I told you that this work of ours
Would lead to victories for the coming
age.
The victors may forget us. What of that?
Theirs be the palms, the shouting, and the
praise.
Ours be the fathers' glory in the sons.
Ours the delight of giving, the deep joy
Of labouring, on the cliff's face, all night

long,
Cutting them foot-holes in the solid rock,
Whereby they climb so gaily to the
heights,
And gaze upon their new-discovered
worlds.
You will not find me there. When you
descend,
Look for me in the darkness at the foot
Of those high cliffs, under the drifted
leaves.
That's where we hide at last, we
pioneers,
For we are very proud, and must be
sought
Before the world can find us, in our
graves.
There have been compensations. I have
seen
In darkness, more perhaps than eyes can
see
When sunlight blinds them on the
mountain-tops;
Guessed at a glory past our mortal range,
And only mine because the night was
mine.

Of those three systems of the universe,
The Ptolemaic, held by all the schools,
May yet be proven false. We yet may find
This earth of ours is not the sovereign
lord

Of all those wheeling spheres. Ourselves
have marked

Movements among the planets that forbid
Acceptance of it wholly. Some of these
Are moving round the sun, if we can trust
Our years of watching. There are stranger
dreams.

This radical, Copernicus, the priest,
Of whom I often talked with you, declares
All of these movements can be
reconciled,

If—a hypothesis only—we should take
The sun itself for centre, and assume
That this huge earth, so stablished, so
secure

In its foundations, is a planet also,
And moves around the sun.

I cannot
think it.

This leap of thought is yet too great for
me.

I have no doubt that Ptolemy was wrong.
Some of his planets move around the sun.
Copernicus is nearer to the truth
In some things. But the planets we have
watched
Still wander from the course that he
assigned.
Therefore, my system, which includes the
best
Of both, I hold may yet be proven true.
This earth of ours, as Jeppe declared one
day,
So simply that we laughed, is 'much too
big
To move,' so let it be the centre still,
And let the planets move around their sun;
But let the sun with all its planets move
Around our central earth.

This at

the least
Accords with all we know, and saves
mankind
From that enormous plunge into the night;
Saves them from voyaging for ten
thousand years
Through boundless darkness without sight

of land;
Saves them from all that agony of loss,
As one by one the beacon-fires of faith
Are drowned in blackness.

I

beseech you, then,
Let me be proven wrong, before you take
That darkness lightly. If at last you find
The proven facts against me, take the
plunge.
Launch out into that darkness. Let the
lamps
Of heaven, the glowing hearth-fires that
we knew
Die out behind you, while the freshening
wind
Blows on your brows, and overhead you
see
The stars of truth that lead you from your
home.

I love this island,—every little glen,
Hazel-wood, brook, and fish-pond; every
bough
And blossom in that garden; and I hoped
To die here. But it is not chance, I know,

That sends me wandering through the
world again.

My use perhaps is ended; and the power
That made me, breaks me."

As he
spoke, they saw
The tears upon his face. He bowed his
head
And left them silent in the darkened room.
They saw his face no more.

The
self-same hour,
Tycho, Christine, and all their children,
left
Their island-home for ever. In their ship
They took a few of the smaller
instruments,
And that most precious record of the
stars,
His legacy to the future. Into the night
They vanished, leaving on the ghostly
cliffs
Only one dark, distorted, dog-like shape
To watch them, sobbing, under its matted
hair,
"Master, have you forgotten Jeppe, your

dwarf?"

IX

He was a great magician, Tycho Brahe,
And yet his magic, under changing skies,
Could never change his heart, or touch the
hills

Of those far countries with the tints of
home.

And, after many a month of wandering,
He came to Prague; and, though with open
hands

Rodolphe received him, like an exiled
king,

A new Æneas, exiled for the truth
(For so they called him), none could heal
the wounds

That bled within, or lull his grief to sleep
With that familiar whisper of the waves,
Ebbing and flowing around Uraniborg.

Doggedly still he laboured; point by
point,

Crept on, with aching heart and burning
brain,
Until his table of the stars had reached
The thousand that he hoped, to crown his
toil.
But Christine heard him murmuring in the
night,
"The work, the work! Not to have lived in
vain!
Into whose hands can I entrust it all?
I thought to find him standing by the way,
Waiting to seize the splendour from my
hand,
The swift, the young-eyed runner with the
torch.
Let me not live in vain, let me not fall
Before I yield it to the appointed soul."
And yet the Power that made and broke
him heard:
For, on a certain day, to Tycho came
Another exile, guided through the dark
Of Europe by the starlight in his eyes,
Or that invisible hand which guides the
world.
He asked him, as the runner with the torch
Alone could ask, asked as a natural right

For Tycho's hard-won life-work, those
results,
His tables of the stars. He gave his name
Almost as one who told him, *It is I*;
And yet unconscious that he told; a name
Not famous yet, though truth had marked
him out
Already, by his exile, as her own,—
The name of Johann Kepler.

"It was

strange,"
Wrote Kepler, not long after, "for I asked
Unheard-of things, and yet he gave them
to me
As if I were his son. When first I saw
him,
We seemed to have known each other
years ago
In some forgotten world. I could not guess
That Tycho Brahe was dying. He was
quick
Of temper, and we quarrelled now and
then,
Only to find ourselves more closely
bound
Than ever. I believe that Tycho died

Simply of heartache for his native land.
For though he always met me with a smile
Or jest upon his lips, he could not sleep
Or work, and often unawares I caught
Odd little whispered phrases on his lips
As if he talked to himself, in a kind of
dream.

Yet I believe the clouds dispersed a little
Around his deathbed, and with that
strange joy

Which comes in death, he saw the
unchanging stars.

Christine was there. She held him in her
arms.

I think, too, that he knew his work was
safe.

An hour before he died, he smiled at me,
And whispered,—what he meant I hardly
know—

Perhaps a broken echo from the past,
A fragment of some old familiar thought,
And yet I seemed to know. It haunts me
still:

*'Come then, swift-footed, let me see you
stand,*

Waiting before me, crowned with youth

*and joy;
This is the turning. Take it from my
hand.
For I am ready, ready now, to fall."*

III

KEPLER

John Kepler, from the chimney corner,
watched
His wife Susannah, with her sleeves
rolled back
Making a salad in a big blue bowl.
The thick tufts of his black rebellious hair
Brushed into sleek submission; his trim
beard
Snug as the soft round body of a thrush
Between the white wings of his fan-

shaped ruff
(His best, with the fine lace border)
spoke of guests
Expected; and his quick grey humorous
eyes,
His firm red whimsical pleasure-loving
mouth,
And all those elvish twinklings of his
face,
Were lit with eagerness. Only between his
brows,
Perplexed beneath that subtle load of
dreams,
Two delicate shadows brooded.

"W

does it mean?
Sir Henry Wotton's letter breathed a hint
That Italy is prohibiting my book,"
He muttered. "Then, if Austria damns it
too,
Susannah mine, we may be forced to
choose
Between the truth and exile. When he
comes,
He'll tell me more. Ambassadors, I
suppose,

Can only write in cipher, while our world
Is steered to heaven by murderers and
thieves;
But, if he'd wrapped his friendly
warnings up
In a verse or two, I might have done more
work
These last three days, eh, Sue?"

John," said she,
"What beautiful hearts of lettuce? Tell me
now
How shall I mix it? Will your English
guest
Turn up his nose at dandelion leaves
As crisp and young as these? They've just
the tang
Of bitterness in their milk that gives a
relish
And makes all sweet; and that's
philosophy, John.
Now—these spring onions! Would his
Excellency
Like sugared rose-leaves better?"

a poet,

Not an ambassador only, so I think
He'll like a cottage salad."

"A

poet, John!
I hate their arrogant little insect ways!
I'll put a toadstool in."

"Poet

dear heart,
Can be divided into two clear kinds,—
One that, by virtue of a half-grown brain,
Lives in a silly world of his own making,
A bubble, blown by himself, in which he
flits
And dizzily bombinates, chanting 'I, I, I,'
For there is nothing in the heavens above
Or the earth, or hell beneath, but goes to
swell
His personal pronoun. Bring him some
dreadful news
His dearest friend is burned to death,—
You'll see
The monstrous insect strike an attitude
And shape himself into one capital I,
A rubric, with red eyes. You'll see him
use
The coffin for his pedestal, hear him

mouth

His 'I, I, I,' instructing haggard grief
Concerning his odd ego. Does he chirp
Of love, it's 'I, I, I Narcissus, love,
Myself, Narcissus, imaged in those eyes.'
For all the love-notes that he sounds are
made

After the fashion of passionate
grasshoppers,
By grating one hind-leg across another.
Nor does he learn to sound that mellower
'You,'

Until his bubble bursts and leaves him
drowned,

An insect in a soap-sud.

But there's another kind, whose mind still
moves

In vital concord with the soul of things;
So that it thinks in music, and its thoughts
Pulse into natural song. A separate voice,
And yet caught up by the surrounding
choirs,

There, in the harmonies of the Universe,
Losing himself, he saves his soul alive."

"John, I'm afraid!"—

"Afraid of

what, Susannah?"—

"Afraid to put those Ducklings on to roast.
Your friend may miss his road; and, if he's
late,

My little part of the music will be
spoiled."—

"He won't, Susannah. Bad poets are
always late.

Good poets, at times, delay a note or two;
But all the great are punctual as the sun.
What's that? He's early! That's his knock,
I think!"

"The Lord have mercy, John, there's
nothing ready!

Take him into your study and talk to him,
Talk hard. He's come an hour before his
time;

And I've to change my dress. I'll into the
kitchen!"

Then, in a moment, all the cottage rang
With greetings; hand grasped hand; his
Excellency

Forgot the careful prologue he'd
prepared,

And made an end of mystery. He had

brought

A message from his wisdom-loving king
Who, hearing of new menaces to the light
In Europe, urged the illustrious Kepler
now

To make his home in England. There, his
thought
And speech would both be free.

"My

friend," said Wotton,

"I have moved in those old strongholds of
the night,

And heard strange mutterings. It is not
many years

Since Bruno burned. There's trouble
brewing too,

For one you know, I think,—the
Florentine

Who made that curious optic tube."—

mean

The man at Padua, Galileo?"—

"Yes

"They will not dare or need. Proof or
disproof

Rests with their eyes."—

"Kepler,

have you not heard
Of those who, fifteen hundred years ago,
Had eyes and would not see? Eyes
quickly close
When souls prefer the dark."—
"So be it. Other and younger eyes will
see.
Perhaps that's why God gave the young a
spice
Of devilry. They'll go look, while elders
gasp;
And, when the Devil and Truth go hand in
hand,
God help their enemies. You will send my
thanks,
My grateful thanks, Sir Henry, to your
king.
To-day I cannot answer you. I must think.
It would be very difficult. My wife
Would find it hard to leave her native
land.
Say nothing yet before her."

The

to hide
Their secret from Susannah, Kepler

poured
His mind out, and the world's dead
branches bloomed.
For, when he talked, another spring began
To which our May was winter; and, in the
boughs
Of his delicious thoughts, like feathered
choirs,
Bits of old rhyme, scraps from the Sabine
farm,
Celestial phrases from the Shepherd
King,
And fluttering morsels from Catullus
sang.
Much was fantastic. All was touched with
light
That only genius knows to steal from
heaven.
He spoke of poetry, as the "flowering
time
Of knowledge," called it "thought in
passionate tune
With those great rhythms that steer the
moon and sun;
Thought in such concord with the soul of
things

That it can only move, like tides and
stars,
And man's own beating heart, and the
wings of birds,
In law, whose service only sets them
free."
Therefore it often leaps to the truth we
seek,
Clasping it, as a lover clasps his bride
In darkness, ere the sage can light his
lamp.
And so, in music, men might find the road
To truth, at many a point, where sages
grope.
One day, a greater Plato would arise
To write a new philosophy, he said,
Showing how music is the golden clue
To all the windings of this world's dark
maze.
Himself had used it, partly proved it, too,
In his own book,—*The Harmonies of the
World*.

"All that the years discover points one
way
To this great ordered harmony," he said,

"Revealed on earth by music. Planets
move
In subtle accord like notes of one great
song
Audible only to the Artificer,
The Eternal Artist. There's no grief, no
pain,
But music—follow it simply as a clue,
A microcosmic pattern of the whole—
Can show you, somewhere in its golden
scheme,
The use of all such discords; and, at last,
Their exquisite solution. Then darkness
breaks
Into diviner light, love's agony climbs
Through death to life, and evil builds up
heaven.
Have you not heard, in some great
symphony,
Those golden mathematics making clear
The victory of the soul? Have you not
heard
The very heavens opening?

Do

those fools
Who thought me an infidel then, still smile

at me
For trying to read the stars in terms of
song,
Discern their orbits, measure their
distances,
By musical proportions? Let them smile.
My folly at least revealed those three
great laws;
Gave me the golden vases of the
Egyptians,
To set in the great new temple of my God
Beyond the bounds of Egypt.

T

will forget
My methods, doubtless, as the years go
by,
And the world's wisdom shuts its music
out.
The dust will gather on all my harmonies;
Or scholars turn my pages listlessly,
Glance at the musical phrases, and pass
on,
Not troubling even to read one Latin page.
Yet they'll accept those great results as
mine.
I call them mine. How can I help exulting,

Who climbed my ladder of music to the
skies
And found, by accident, let them call it
so,
Or by the inspiration of that Power
Which built His world of music, those
three laws:—
First, how the speed of planets round the
sun
Bears a proportion, beautifully precise
As music, to their silver distances;
Next, that although they seem to swerve
aside
From those plain circles of old
Copernicus,
Their paths were not less rhythmical and
exact,
But followed always that most exquisite
curve
In its most perfect form, the pure ellipse;
Third, that although their speed from point
to point
Appeared to change, their radii always
moved
Through equal fields of space in equal
times.

Was this my infidelity, was this
Less full of beauty, less divine in truth,
Than their dull chaos? You, the poet, will
know

How, as those dark perplexities grew
clear,
And old anomalous discords changed to
song,

My whole soul bowed and cried,
Almighty God,
These are Thy thoughts, I am thinking
after Thee!

I hope that Tycho knows. I owed so much
To Tycho Brahe; for it was he who built
The towers from which I hailed those
three great laws.

How strange and far away it all seems
now.

The thistles grow upon that little isle
Where Tycho's great Uraniborg once was.
Yet, for a few sad years, before it fell
Into decay and ruin, there was one
Who crept about its crumbling corridors,
And lit the fire of memory on its
hearth."—

Wotton looked quickly up, "I think I have

heard

Something of that. You mean poor Jeppe,
his dwarf.

Fynes Moryson, at the Mermaid Inn one
night

Showed a most curious manuscript, a
scrawl

On yellow parchment, crusted here and
there

With sea-salt, or the salt of those thick
tears

Creatures like Jeppe, the crooked dwarf,
could weep.

It had been found, clasped in a crooked
hand,

Under the cliffs of Wheen, a crooked hand
That many a time had beckoned to passing
ships,

Hoping to find some voyager who would
take

A letter to its master.

The sailors

laughed

And jeered at him, till Jeppe threw stones
at them.

And now Jeppe, too, was dead, and one

who knew
Fynes Moryson, had found him, and
brought home
That curious crooked scrawl. Fynes
Englished it
Out of its barbarous Danish. Thus it ran:
'Master, have you forgotten Jeppe, your
dwarf,
Who used to lie beside the big log-fire
And feed from your own hand? The hall
is dark,
There are no voices now,—only the wind
And the sea-gulls crying round Uraniborg.
I too am crying, Master, even I,
Because there is no fire upon the hearth,
No light in any window. It is night,
And all the faces that I knew are gone.

Master, I watched you leaving us. I saw
The white sails dwindling into sea-gull's
wings,
Then melting into foam, and all was dark.
I lay among the wild flowers on the cliff
And dug my nails into the stiff white chalk
And called you, Tycho Brahe. You did not
hear;

But gulls and jackdaws, wheeling round
my head,
Mocked me with *Tycho Brahe*, and *Tycho
Brahe!*

You were a great magician, Tycho Brahe;
And, now that they have driven you away,
I, that am only Jeppe,—the crooked
dwarf,
You used to laugh at for his matted hair,
And head too big and heavy—take your
pen
Here in your study. I will write it down
And send it by a sailor to the King
Of Scotland, and who knows, the mouse
that gnawed
The lion free, may save you, Tycho
Brahe."

"He is free now," said Kepler. "Had he
lived,
He would have sent for Jeppe to join him
there
At Prague. But death forestalled him, and
your king.
The years in which he watched that planet

Mars,
His patient notes and records, all were
mine;
And, mark you, had he clipped or
trimmed one fact
By even a hair's-breadth, so that his
results
Made a pure circle of that planet's path,
It might have baffled us for an age and
drowned
All our new light in darkness. But he held
To what he saw. He might so easily,
So comfortably have said, 'My
instruments
Are crude and fallible. In so fine a point
Eyes may have erred, too. Why not
acquiesce?
Why mar the tune, why dislocate a world,
For one slight clash of seeming fact with
faith?'
But no, though stars might swerve, he held
his course,
Recording only what his eyes could see
Until death closed them.

Then, to
his results,

I added mine and saw, in one wild gleam,
Strange as the light of day to one born
blind,

A subtler concord ruling them, and heard
Profounder tones of harmony resolve
Those broken melodies into song
again."—

"Faintly and far away, I, too, have seen
In music, and in verse, that golden clue
Whereof you speak," said Wotton. "In all
true song

There is a hidden logic. Even the rhyme
That, in bad poets, wrings the neck of
thought,

Is like a subtle calculus to the true,
An instrument of discovery. It reveals
New harmonies, new analogies. It links
Far things and near, not in unnatural
chains,

But in those true accords which still
escape

The plodding reason, yet unify the world.

I caught some glimpses of this mystic
power

in verses of your own, that elegy

On Tycho, and that great quatrain of yours

—
I cannot quite recall the Latin words,
But made it roughly mine in words like
these:

*'I know that I am dust, and daily die;
Yet, as I trace those rhythmic spheres
at night,
I stand before the Thunderer's throne on
high
And feast on nectar in the halls of
light.'*

My version lacks the glory of your lines
But . . ."

"Mine too was a version,"

laughed,
"Turned into Latin from old Ptolemy's
Greek;
For, even in verse, half of the joy, I think,
Is just to pass the torch from hand to hand
An undimmed splendour. But, last night, I
tried
Some music all my own. I had a dream
That I was wandering in some distant
world.

I have often dreamed it. Once it was the
moon.
I wrote that down in prose. When I am
dead,
It may be printed. This was a fairer
dream;
For I was walking in a far-off spring
Upon the planet, Venus. Only verse
Could spread true wings for that delicious
world;
And so I wrote it—for no eyes but mine,
Or 'twould be seized on, doubtless, as
fresh proof
Of poor old Kepler's madness."—

"L

me hear,
Madman to madman; for I, too, write
verse."
Then Kepler, in a rhythmic murmur,
breathed
His rich enchanted memories of that
dream:

Beauty burned before me
Swinging a lanthorn through that
fragrant night.

I followed a distant singing,
 And a dreaming light.
How she led me, I cannot tell
 To that strange world afar,
Nor how I walked, in that wild glen
 Upon the sunset star.
Wingèd creatures floated
 Under those rose-red boughs of
violet bloom,
 With delicate forms unknown on Earth
 'Twixt irised plume and plume;
Human-hearted, angel-eyed,
 And crowned with unknown
flowers;
 For nothing in that enchanted world
 Followed the way of ours.

Only I saw that Beauty,
 On Hesper, as on earth, still held
command;
 And though, as one in slumber,
 I roamed that radiant land,
With all these earth-born senses sealed
 To what the Hesperians knew,
The faithful lanthorn of her law
 Was mine on Hesper too.

Then, half at home with wonder,
I saw strange flocks of flowers like
birds take flight;
Great trees that burned like opals
To lure their loves at night;
Dark beings that could move in realms
No dream of ours has known,
Till these became as common things
As men account their own.

Yet, when that lanthorn led me
Back to the world where once I
thought me wise;
I saw, on this my planet,
What souls, with awful eyes.
Hardly I dared to walk her fields
As in that strange re-birth
I looked on those wild miracles
The birds and flowers of earth.

Silence a moment held them, loth to break
The spell of that strange dream.

proof the more,"
Said Wotton at last, "that songs can mount
and fly

To truth; for this fantastic vision of yours
Of life in other spheres, awakes in me,
Either that slumbering knowledge of
Socrates,
Or some strange premonition that the
years
Will prove it true. This music leads us far
From all our creeds, except that faith in
law.
Your quest for knowledge—how it rests
on that!
How sure the soul is that if truth destroy
The temple, in three days the truth will
build
A nobler temple; and that order reigns
In all things. Even your atheist builds his
doubt
On that strange faith; destroys his heaven
and God
In absolute faith that his own thought is
true
To law, God's lanthorn to our stumbling
feet;
And so, despite himself, he worships
God,
For where true souls are, there are God

and heaven."—

"It is an ancient wisdom. Long ago,"
Said Kepler, "under the glittering Eastern
sky,
The shepherd king looked up at those
great stars,
Those ordered hosts, and cried *Cæli*
narrant
Gloriam Dei!

Though there be some
to-day
Who'd ape Lucretius, and believe
themselves
Epicureans, little they know of him
Who, even in utter darkness, bowed his
head,
To something nobler than the gods of
Rome
Reigning beyond the darkness.

Th
accept
The law, the music of these ordered
worlds;
And straight deny the law's first postulate,
That out of nothingness nothing can be

born,
Nor greater things from less. Can music
rise
By chance from chaos, as they said that
star
In Serpentarius rose? I told them, then,
That when I was a boy, with time to
spare,
I played at anagrams. Out of my Latin
name
Johannes Keplerus came that sinister
phrase
Serpens in akuleo. Struck by this,
I tried again, but trusted it to chance.
I took some playing-cards, and wrote on
each
One letter of my name. Then I began
To shuffle them; and, at every shuffle, I
read
The letters, in their order, as they came,
To see what meaning chance might give to
them.
Wotton, the gods and goddesses must have
laughed
To see the weeks I lost in studying
chance;

For had I scattered those cards into the
black
Epicurean eternity, I'll swear
They'd still be playing at leap-frog in the
dark,
And show no glimmer of sense. And yet
—to hear
Those wittols talk, you'd think you'd but
to mix
A bushel of good Greek letters in a sack
And shake them roundly for an age or so,
To pour the Odyssey out.

At last,

I told
Those disputants what my wife had said.
One night
When I was tired and all my mind a-dust
With pondering on their atoms, I was
called
To supper, and she placed before me there
A most delicious salad. 'It would appear,'
I thought aloud, 'that if these pewter
dishes,
Green hearts of lettuce, tarragon, slips of
thyme,
Slices of hard-boiled egg, and grains of

salt,
With drops of water, vinegar and oil,
Had in a bottomless gulf been flying about
From all eternity, one sure certain day
The sweet invisible hand of Happy
Chance
Would serve them as a salad.'

'Like

enough,'
My wife replied, 'but not so good as
mine,
Nor so well dressed.'"

They

laughed. Susannah's voice
Broke in, "I've made a better one. The
receipt
Came from the *Golden Lion*. I have
dished
Ducklings and peas and all. Come, John,
say grace."

GALILEO

I

(Celeste, in the Convent at Arcetri, writes to her old lover at Rome)

My friend, my dearest friend, my own
dear love,
I, who am dead to love, and see around
me
The funeral tapers lighted, send this cry
Out of my heart to yours, before the end.
You told me once you would endure the
rack
To save my heart one pang. Oh, save it
now!
Last night there came a dreadful word
from Rome
For my dear lord and father, summoning
him
Before the inquisitors there, to take his
trial

At threescore years and ten. There is a
threat
Of torture, if his lips will not deny
The truth his eyes have seen.

Y

know my father,
You know me, too. You never will
believe
That he and I are enemies of the faith.
Could I, who put away all earthly love,
Deny the Cross to which I nailed this
flesh?
Could he, who, on the night when all
those heavens
Opened above us, with their circling
worlds,
Knelt with me, crushed beneath that
weight of glory,
Forget the Maker of that glory now?
You'll not believe it. Neither would the
Church,
Had not his enemies poisoned all the
springs
And fountain-heads of truth. It is not
Rome
That summons him, but Magini, Sizy,

Scheiner,
Lorini, all the blind, pedantic crew
That envy him his fame, and hate his
works
For dwarfing theirs.

Must such
things always be
When truth is born?
Only five nights ago we walked together,
My father and I, here in the Convent
garden;
And, as the dusk turned everything to
dreams,
We dreamed together of his work well
done
And happiness to be. We did not dream
That even then, muttering above his book,
His enemies, those enemies whom the
truth
Stings into hate, were plotting to destroy
him.
Yet something shadowed him. I recall his
words—
"The grapes are ripening. See, Celeste,
how black
And heavy. We shall have good wine this

year."—

"Yes, all grows ripe," I said, "your life-
work, too,

Dear father. Are you happy now to know
Your book is printed, and the new world
born?"

He shook his head, a little sadly, I
thought.

"Autumn's too full of endings. Fruits grow
ripe
And fall, and then comes winter."

for you!

Never," I said, "for those who write their
names

In heaven. Think, father, through all ages
now

No one can ever watch that starry sky
Without remembering you. Your fame . . ."

there

He stopped me, laid his hand upon my
arm,

And standing in the darkness with dead
leaves

Drifting around him, and his bare grey

head

Bowed in complete humility, his voice
Shaken and low, he said like one in
prayer,

"Celeste, beware of that. Say truth, not
fame.

If there be any happiness on earth,
It springs from truth alone, the truth we
live

In act and thought. I have looked up there
and seen

Too many worlds to talk of fame on earth.
Fame, on this grain of dust among the
stars,

The trumpet of a gnat that thinks to halt
The great sun-clusters moving on their
way

In silence! Yes, that's fame. But truth,
Celeste,

Truth and its laws are constant, even up
there;

That's where one man may face and fight
the world.

His weakness turns to strength. He is
made one

With universal forces, and he holds

The password to eternity.
Gate after gate swings back through all
the heavens.
No sentry halts him, and no flaming
sword.
Say truth, Celeste, not fame."

for I'll say
A better word," I told him. "I'll say love."
He took my face between his hands and
said—
His face all dark between me and the
stars—
"What's love, Celeste, but this dear face
of truth
Upturned to heaven."

He left
me, and I heard,
Some twelve hours later, that this man
whose soul
Was dedicate to truth, was threatened now
With torture, if his lips did not deny
The truth he loved.

I tell you all
these things
Because to help him, you must understand

him;
And even you may doubt him, if you hear
Only those plausible outside witnesses
Who never heard his heart-beats as have
I.

So let me tell you all—his quest for truth,
And how this hate began.

Even

from the first,
He made his enemies of those almost-
minds
Who chanced upon some new thing in the
dark
And could not see its meaning, for he
saw,
Always, the law illumining it within.
So when he heard of that strange optic-
glass
Which brought the distance near, he
thought it out
By reason, where that other hit upon it
Only by chance. He made his telescope;
And Oh, how vividly that day comes
back,
When in their gorgeous robes the Senate
stood

Beside him on that high Venetian tower,
Scanning the bare blue sea that showed no
speck
Of sail. Then, one by one, he bade them
look;
And one by one they gasped, "a miracle."
Brown sails and red, a fleet of fishing
boats,
See how the bright foam bursts around
their bows!
See how the bare-legged sailors walk the
decks!
Then, quickly looking up, as if to catch
The vision, ere it tricked them, all they
saw
Was empty sea again.

Many

believed
That all was trickery, but he bade them
note
The colours of the boats, and count their
sails.
Then, in a little while, the naked eye
Saw on the sky-line certain specks that
grew,
Took form and colour; and, within an

hour,
Their magic fleet came foaming into port.
Whereat old senators, wagging their
white beards,
And plucking at golden chains with stiff
old claws
Too feeble for the sword-hilt, squeaked at
once:
"This glass will give us great advantages
In time of war."

War, war, O God
of love,
Even amidst their wonder at Thy world,
Dazed with new beauty, gifted with new
powers,
These old men dreamed of blood. This
was the thought
To which all else must pander, if he
hoped
Even for one hour to see those dull eyes
blaze
At his discoveries.

"Wolves," he
called them, "wolves";
And yet he humoured them. He stooped to
them,

Promised them more advantages, and
talked
As elders do to children. You may call it
Weakness, and yet could any man do
more,
Alone, against a world, with such a trust
To guard for future ages? All his life
He has had some weanling truth to guard,
has fought
Desperately to defend it, taking cover
Wherever he could, behind old fallen
trees
Of superstition, or ruins of old thought.
He has read horoscopes to keep his work
Among the stars in favour with his prince.
I tell you this that you may understand
What seems inconstant in him. It may be
That he was wrong in these things, and
must pay
A dreadful penalty. But you must explore
His mind's great ranges, plains and lonely
peaks
Before you know him, as I know him now.
How could he talk to children, but in
words
That children understand? Have not some

said
That God Himself has made His glory
dark
For men to bear it. In his human sphere
My father has done this.

War was

the dream
That filmed those old men's eyes. They
did not hear
My father, when he hinted at his hope
Of opening up the heavens for mankind
With that new power of bringing far
things near.
My heart burned as I heard him; but they
blinked
Like owls at noonday. Then I saw him
turn,
Desperately, to humour them, from
thoughts
Of heaven to thoughts of warfare.

that night
My own dear lord and father came to me
And whispered, with a glory in his face
As one who has looked on things too
beautiful

To breathe aloud, "Come out, Celeste, and
see
A miracle."

I followed him.

He showed me,
Looking along his outstretched hand, a
star,
A point of light above our olive-trees.
It was the star called Jupiter. And then
He bade me look again, but through his
glass.

I feared to look at first, lest I should see
Some wonder never meant for mortal
eyes.

He too had felt the same, not fear, but
awe,

As if his hand were laid upon the veil
Between this world and heaven.

. . . I, too, saw,
Small as the smallest bead of mist that
clings
To a spider's thread at dawn, the floating
disk
Of what had been a star, a planet now,
And near it, with no disk that eyes could

see,
Four needle-points of light, unseen
before.
"The moons of Jupiter," he whispered
low,
"I have watched them as they moved,
from night to night;
A system like our own, although the
world
Their fourfold lights and shadows make
so strange
Must—as I think—be mightier than we
dreamed,
A Titan planet. Earth begins to fade
And dwindle; yes, the heavens are
opening now.
Perhaps up there, this night, some lonely
soul
Gazes at earth, watches our dawning
moon,
And wonders, as we wonder."

In

that dark
We knelt together . . .

Very

strange to see

The vanity and fickleness of princes.
Before his enemies had provoked the
wrath
Of Rome against him, he had given the
name
Of Medicean stars to those four moons
In honour of Prince Cosmo. This aroused
The court of France to seek a lasting
place
Upon the map of heaven. A letter came
Beseeching him to find another star
Even more brilliant, and to call it *Henri*
After the reigning and most brilliant
prince
Of France. They did not wish the family
name
Of Bourbon. This would dissipate the
glory.
No, they preferred his proper name of
Henri.
We read it together in the garden here,
Weeping with laughter, never dreaming
then
That this, this, this, could stir the little
hearts
Of men to envy.

O, but afterwards,
The blindness of the men who thought
themselves
His enemies. The men who never knew
him,
The men that had set up a thing of straw
And called it by his name, and wished to
burn
Their image and himself in one wild fire.
Men? Were they men or children? They
refused
Even to look through Galileo's glass,
Lest seeing might persuade them. Even
that sage,
That great Aristotelian, Julius Libri,
Holding his breath there, like a fractious
child
Until his cheeks grew purple, and the
veins
Were bursting on his brow, swore he
would die
Sooner than look.

And that poor
monstrous babe
Not long thereafter, kept his word and
died,

Died of his own pent rage, as I have
heard.

Whereat my lord and father shook his
head

And, smiling, somewhat sadly—oh, you
know

That smile of his, more deadly to the false
Than even his reasoning—murmured,

"Libri, dead,

*Who called the moons of Jupiter absurd!
He swore he would not look at them from
earth.*

*I hope he saw them on his way to
heaven."*

Welser in Augsburg, Clavius at Rome,
Scoffed at the fabled moons of Jupiter.

It was a trick, they said. He had made a
glass

To fool the world with false appearances.
Perhaps the lens was flawed. Perhaps his
wits

Were wandering. Anything rather than the
truth

Which might disturb the mighty in their
seat.

"Let Galileo hold his own opinions.

I, Clavius, will hold mine."

He

wrote to Kepler:

"You, Kepler, are the first, whose open
mind

And lofty genius could accept for truth
The things which I have seen. With you
for friend,

The abuse of the multitude will not
trouble me.

Jupiter stands in heaven and will stand,
Though all the sycophants bark at him.

Pisa,

Florence, Bologna, Venice, Padua,

Many have seen the moons. These
witnesses

Are silent and uncertain. Do you wonder?

Most of them could not, even when they
saw them,

Distinguish Mars from Jupiter. Shall we
side

With Heraclitus or Democritus?

I think, my Kepler, we will only laugh
At this immeasurable stupidity.

Picture the leaders of our college here.

A thousand times I have offered them the
proof
Of their own eyes. They sleep here, like
gorged snakes,
Refusing even to look at planets, moons,
Or telescope. They think philosophy
Is all in books, and that the truth is found
Neither in nature, nor the Universe,
But in comparing texts. How you would
laugh
Had you but heard our first philosopher
Before the Grand Duke, trying to tear
down
And argue the new planets out of heaven,
Now by his own weird logic and closed
eyes
And now by magic spells."

Hov

could he help
Despising them a little? It's an error
Even for a giant to despise a midge;
For, when the giant reels beneath some
stroke
Of fate, the buzzing clouds will swoop
upon him,
Cluster and feed upon his bleeding

wounds,

And do what midges can to sting him
blind.

These human midges have not missed
their chance.

They have missed no smallest spot upon
that sun.

My mother was not married—they have
found—

To my dear father. All his children, then,
And doubtless all their thoughts are evil,
too;

But who that judged him ever sought to
know

Whether, as evil sometimes wears the
cloak

Of virtue, nobler virtue in this man

Might wear that outward semblance of a
sin?

Yes, even you who love me, may believe
These thoughts are born of my own
tainted heart;

And yet I write them, kneeling in my cell
And whisper them to One who blesses me
Here, from His Cross, upon the bare grey
wall.

So, if you love me, bless me also, you,
By helping him. Make plain to all you
meet,
What part his enemies have played in this.
How someone, somehow, altered the
command
Laid on him all those years ago, by Rome,
So that it reads to-day as if he vowed
Never to think or breathe that this round
earth
Moves with its sister-planets round the
sun.
'Tis true he promised not to write or
speak
As if this truth were stablished equally
With God's eternal laws; and so he wrote
His Dialogues, reasoning for it, and
against,
And gave the last word to Simplicius,
Saying that human reason must bow down
Before the power of God.

And

even this
His enemies have twisted to a sneer
Against the Pope, and cunningly declared
Simplicius to be Urban.

Why, my
friend,
There were three dolphins on the title-
page,
Each with the tail of another in its mouth.
The censor had not seen this, and they
swore
It held some hidden meaning. Then they
found
The same three dolphins sprawled on all
the books
Landini printed at his Florence press.
They tried another charge.

I am
not afraid
Of any truth that they can bring against
him;
But, O, my friend, I more than fear their
lies.
I do not fear the justice of our God;
But I do fear the vanity of men;
Even of Urban; not His Holiness,
But Urban, the weak man, who may
resent,
And in resentment rush half-way to meet
This cunning lie with credence. Vanity!

Oh, half the wrongs on earth arise from
that!
Greed, and war's pomp, all envy, and
most hate,
Are born of that; while one dear humble
heart,
Beating with love for man, between two
thieves,
Proves more than all His wounds and
miracles
Our Crucified to be the Son of God.
Say that I long to see him; that my prayers
Knock at the gates of mercy, night and
day.
Urge him to leave the judgment now with
God
And strive no more.

If he be

right, the stars
Fight for him in their courses. Let him
bow
His poor, dishonoured, glorious, old grey
head
Before this storm, and then come home to
me.
Oh, quickly, or I fear 'twill be too late;

For I am dying. Do not tell him this;
But I must live to hold his hands again,
And know that he is safe.
I dare not leave him, helpless and half
blind,
Half father and half child, to rack and
cord.
By all the Christ within you, save him,
you;
And, though you may have ceased to love
me now,
One faithful shadow in your own last hour
Shall watch beside you till all shadows
die,
And heaven unfold to bless you where I
failed.

II

(Scheiner writes to Castelli, after the Trial)

What think you of your Galileo now,
Your hero that like Ajax should defy
The lightning? Yesterday I saw him stand

Trembling before our court of Cardinals,
Trembling before the colour of their robes
As sheep, before the slaughter, at the sight
And smell of blood. His lips could hardly
speak,

And—mark you—neither rack nor cord
had touched him.

Out of the Inquisition's five degrees
Of rigor: first, the public threat of torture;
Second, the repetition of the threat
Within the torture-chamber, where we
show

The instruments of torture to the accused;

Third, the undressing and the binding;

fourth,

Laying him on the rack; then, fifth and

last,

Torture, *territio realis*; out of these,

Your Galileo reached the second only,

When, clapping both his hands against his
sides,

He whined about a rupture that forbade

These extreme courses. Great heroic soul

Dropped like a cur into a sea of terror,

He sank right under. Then he came up

gasping,

Ready to swear, deny, abjure, recant,
Anything, everything! Foolish, weak, old
man,
Who had been so proud of his
discoveries,
And dared to teach his betters. How we
grinned
To see him kneeling there and whispering,
thus,
Through his white lips, bending his old
grey head:

*"I, Galileo Galilei, born
A Florentine, now seventy years of age,
Kneeling before you, having before mine
eyes,
And touching with my hands the Holy
Gospels,
Swear that I always have believed, do
now,
And always will believe what Holy
Church
Has held and preached and taught me to
believe;
And now, whereas I rightly am accused,
Of heresy, having falsely held the sun
To be the centre of our Universe,*

*And also that this earth is not the centre,
But moves;
I most illogically desire
Completely to expunge this dark
suspicion,
So reasonably conceived. I now abjure,
Detest and curse these errors; and I
swear
That should I know another, friend or
foe,
Holding the selfsame heresy as myself,
I will denounce him to the Inquisitor
In whatsoever place I chance to be.
So help me God, and these His holy
Gospels,
Which with my hands I touch."*

Yo

will observe
His promise to denounce. Beware,
Castelli!
What think you of your Galileo now?

*(Castelli writes, enclosing Scheiner's letter
to Campanella)*

What think I? This,—that he has laid his
hands
Like Samson on the pillars of our world,
And one more trembling utterance such as
this
Will overwhelm us all.

Oh,

Campanella,
You know that I am loyal to our faith,
As Galileo too has always been.
You know that I believe, as he believes,
In the one Catholic Apostolic Church;
Yet there are many times when I could
wish
That some blind Samson would indeed
tear down
All this proud temporal fabric, made with
hands,
And that, once more, we suffered with our
Lord,
Were persecuted, crucified with Him.
I tell you, Campanella, on that day
When Galileo faced our Cardinals,

A veil was rent for me. There, in one
flash,
I saw the eternal tragedy, transformed
Into new terms. I saw the Christ once
more,
Before the court of Pilate. Peter there
Denied Him once again; and, as for me,
Never has all my soul so humbly knelt
To God in Christ, as when that sad old
man
Bowed his grey head, and knelt—at
seventy years—
To acquiesce, and shake the world with
shame.
He shall not strive or cry! Strange, is it
not,
How nearly Scheiner—even amidst his
hate—
Quoted the Prophets? Do we think this
world
So greatly bettered, that the ancient cry,
"*Despised, rejected,* hails our God no
more?"

IV

*(Celeste writes to her father in his
imprisonment at Siena)*

Dear father, it will seem a thousand years
Until I see you home again and well.
I would not have you doubt that all this
time
I have prayed for you continually. I saw
A copy of your sentence. I was grieved;
And yet it gladdened me, for I found a
way
To be of use, by taking on myself
Your penance. Therefore, if you fail in
this,
If you forget it—and indeed, to save you
The trouble of remembering it—your
child
Will do it for you.

Ah, could she
do more
How willingly would your Celeste
endure
A straiter prison than she lives in now
To set you free.

"A prison," I have
said;
And yet, if you were here, 'twould not be
so.
When you were pent in Rome, I used to
say,
"Would he were at Siena!" God fulfilled
That wish. You are at Siena; and I now
say
Would he were at Arcetri.

So

perhaps
Little by little, angels can be wooed
Each day, by some new prayer of mine or
yours,
To bring you wholly back to me, and save
Some few of the flying days that yet
remain.
You see, these other Nuns have each their
friend,
Their patron Saint, their ever near *devoto*,
To whom they tell their joys and griefs;
but I
Have only you, dear father, and if you
Were only near me, I could want no more.
Your garden looks as if it missed your

love.

The unpruned branches lean against the
wall

To look for you. The walks run wild with
flowers.

Even your watch-tower seems to wait for
you;

And, though the fruit is not so good this
year

(The vines were hurt by hail, I think, and
thieves

Have climbed the wall too often for the
pears),

The crop of peas is good, and only waits
Your hand to gather it.

In the

dovecote, too,

You'll find some plump young pigeons.

We must make

A feast for your return.

In my small

plot.

Here at the Convent, better watched than
yours,

I raised a little harvest. With the price

I got for it, I had three Masses said

For my dear father's sake.

V

*(Galileo writes to his friend Castelli, after
his return to Arcetri)*

Castelli, O Castelli, she is dead.
I found her driving death back with her
soul
Till I should come.

I could not even

see
Her face.—These useless eyes had spent
their power
On distant worlds, and lost that last faint
look
Of love on earth.

I am in the dark,

Castelli,
Utterly and irreparably blind.
The Universe which once these outworn
eyes
Enlarged so far beyond its ancient bounds

Is henceforth shrunk into that narrow
space
Which I myself inhabit.

Yet I found

Even in the dark, her tears against my
face,
Her thin soft childish arms around my
neck,
And her voice whispering . . . love,
undying love;
Asking me, at this last, to tell her true,
If we should meet again.

Her trust in

me
Had shaken her faith in what my judges
held;
And, as I felt her fingers clutch my hand,
Like a child drowning. "Tell me the truth,"
she said,
"Before I lose the light of your dear
face"—
It seemed so strange that dying she could
see me
While I had lost her,— "tell me, before I
go."
"Believe in Love," was all my soul could

breathe.

I heard no answer. Only I felt her hand
Clasp mine and hold it tighter. Then she
died,

And left me to my darkness. Could I guess
At unseen glories, in this deeper night,
Make new discoveries of profounder
realms,

Within the soul? O, could I find Him
there,

Rise to Him through His harmonies of
law

And make His will my own!

T

much, at least,

I know already, that—in some strange
way—

His law implies His love; for, failing that,
All grows discordant, and the primal
Power

Ignobler than His children.

So I

trust

One day to find her, waiting for me still,
When all things are made new.

raise this torch
Of knowledge. It is one with my right
hand,
And the dark sap that keeps it burning
flows
Out of my heart; and yet, for all my faith,
It shows me only darkness.

Was

I wrong?
Did I forget the subtler truth of Rome
And, in my pride, obscure the world's one
light?
Did I subordinate to this moving earth
Our swifelier-moving God?

O, my

Celeste,
Once, once at least, you knew far more
than I;
And she is dead, Castelli, she is dead.

VI

*(Viviani, many years later, writes to a friend
in England)*

I was his last disciple, as you say
I went to him, at seventeen years of age,
And offered him my hands and eyes to
use,
When, voicing the true mind and heart of
Rome,
Father Castelli, his most faithful friend,
Wrote, for my master, that compassionate
plea;
*The noblest eye that Nature ever made
Is darkened; one so exquisitely dowered,
So delicate in power that it beheld
More than all other eyes in ages gone
And opened the eyes of all that are to
come.*
But, out of England, even then, there
shone
The first ethereal promise of the light
That crowns my master dead. Well I
recall
That day of days. There was no faintest
breath
Among his garden cypress-trees. They
dreamed
Dark, on a sky too beautiful for tears,
And the first star was trembling overhead,

When, quietly as a messenger from
heaven,
Moving unseen, through his own purer
realm,
Among the shadows of our mortal world,
A young man, with a strange light on his
face
Knocked at the door of Galileo's house.
His name was Milton.

By the
hand of God,
He, the one living soul on earth with
power
To read the starry soul of this blind man,
Was led through Italy to his prison door.
He looked on Galileo, touched his hand . .

.
*O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of
noon,
Irrecoverably dark. . . .*

In after
days,
He wrote it; but it pulsed within him then;
And Galileo rising to his feet
And turning on him those unseeing eyes
That had searched heaven and seen so

many worlds,
Said to him, "You have found me."
Often he told me in those last sad months
Of how your grave young island poet
brought
Peace to him, with the knowledge that, far
off,
In other lands, the truth he had proclaimed
Was gathering power.

Soon

after, death unlocked
His prison, and the city that he loved,
Florence, his town of flowers, whose
gates in life
He was forbid to pass, received him
dead.

You write to me from England, that his
name
Is now among the mightiest in the world,
And in his name I thank you.

I am

old;
And I was very young when, long ago,
I stood beside his poor dishonoured grave
Where hate denied him even an epitaph;

And I have seen, slowly and silently,
His purer fame arising, like a moon
In marble on the twilight of those aisles
At Santa Croce, where the dread decree
Was read against him.

Now,

against two wrongs,
Let me defend two victims: first, the
Church
Whom many have vilified for my master's
doom;
And second, Galileo, whom they
reproach
Because they think that in his blind old
age
He might with one great eagle's glance
have cowed
His judges, played the hero, raised his
hands
Above his head, and posturing like a
mummer
Cried (as one empty rumour now
declares)
After his recantation—*yet, it moves!*
Out of this wild confusion, fourfold
wrongs

Are heaped on both sides.—I would fain
bring peace,
The peace of truth to both before I die;
And, as I hope, rest at my master's feet.
It was not Rome that tried to murder truth;
But the blind hate and vanity of man.
Had Galileo but concealed the smile
With which, like Socrates, he answered
fools,
They would not, in the name of Christ,
have mixed
This hemlock in His chalice.

O

pitiful,
Pitiful human hearts that must deny
Their own unfolding heavens, for one
light word
Twisted by whispering malice.

he mean
Simplicio, in his dialogues, for the Pope?
Doubtful enough—the name was
borrowed straight
From older dialogues.

thought
If he gave one

Of Urban's to Simplicio—you know well
How composite are all characters in
books,

How authors find their colours here and
there,

And paint both saints and villains from
themselves.

No matter. This was Urban. Make it clear.
Simplicio means a simpleton. The saints
Are roused by ridicule to most human
wrath.

Urban was once his friend. This hint of
ours

Kills all of that. And so we mortals close
The doors of Love and Knowledge on the
world.

And so, for many an age, the name of
Christ

Has been misused by man to mask man's
hate.

How should the Church escape, then? I
who loved

My master, know he had no truer friend
Than many of those true servants of the
Church,

Fathers and priests who, in their lowlier

sphere,
Moved nearer than her cardinals to the
Christ.
These were the very Rome, and held her
keys.
Those who charge Rome with hatred of
the light
Would charge the sun with darkness, and
accuse
This dome of sky for all the blood-red
wrongs
That men commit beneath it. Art and song
That found her once in Europe their sole
shrine
And sanctuary absolve her from that stain.

But there's this other charge against my
friend,
And master, Galileo. It is brought
By friends, made sharper by their pity and
grief,
The charge that he refused his martyrdom
And so denied his own high faith.

faith,—
His friends', his Protestant followers', or

his own?

Faced by the torture, that sublime old man
Was still a faithful Catholic, and his
thought

Plunged deeper than his Protestant
followers knew.

His aim was not to strike a blow at Rome
But to confound his enemies. He believed
As humbly as Castelli or Celeste
That there is nothing absolute but that
Power

With which his Church confronted him. To
this

He bowed his head, acknowledging that
his light

Was darkness; but affirming, all the more,
That Ptolemy's light was even darker yet.
Read your own Protestant Milton, who
derived

His mighty argument from my master's
lips:

*"Whether the sun predominant in heaven
Rise on the earth, or earth rise on the
sun;*

*Leave them to God above; Him serve
and fear."*

Just as in boyhood, when my master
watched
The swinging lamp in the cathedral there
At Pisa; and, by one finger on his pulse,
Found that, although the great bronze
miracle swung
Through ever-shortening spaces, yet it
moved
More slowly, and so still swung in equal
times;
He straight devised another boon to man,
Those pulse-clocks which by many a
fevered bed
Our doctors use; dreamed of that
timepiece, too,
Whose punctual swinging pendulum on
earth
Measures the starry periods, and to-day
Talks peacefully to children by the fire
Like an old grandad full of ancient tales,
Remembering endless ages, and
foretelling
Eternities to come; but, all the while
There, in the dim cathedral, he knew
well,
That dreaming youngster, with his tawny

mane
Of red-gold hair, and deep ethereal eyes,
What odorous clouds of incense round
him rose;
Was conscious in the dimness, of great
throings
Kneeling around him; shared in his own
heart
The music and the silence and the cry,
O salutaris hostia!—so now,
There was no mortal conflict in his mind
Between his dream-clocks and things
absolute,
And one far voice, most absolute of all,
Feeble with suffering, calling night and
day
"Return, return," the voice of his Celeste.
All these things co-existed, and the less
Were comprehended, like the swinging
lamp,
Within that great cathedral of his soul.
Often he bade me, in that desolate house,
Il Giojello, of old a jewel of light,
Read to him one sad letter, till he knew
The most of it by heart, and while he
walked

His garden, leaning on my arm, at times
I think he quite forgot that I was there;
For he would quietly murmur it to
himself,
As if she had sent it, half an hour ago:
"Now, with this little Winter's gift of fruit
I send you, father, from our southward
wall,
Our convent's rarest flower, a Christmas
rose.
At this cold season, it should please you
much,
Seeing how rare it is; but, with the rose,
You must accept its thorns, which bring to
mind
Our Lord's own bitter Passion. Its green
leaves
Image the hope that through His Passion
we,
After this winter of our mortal life,
May find the beauty of an eternal spring
In heaven."
Praise me the martyr, out of whose
agonies
Some great new hope is born, but not the
fool

Who starves his heart to prove what eyes
can see

And intellect confirm throughout the
world.

Why must he follow the idiot schoolboy
code,

Torture her soul to reinforce the sight
Of those that closed their eyes and would
not see.

To your own men of science, fifty turns
Of the thumbscrew would not prove that
earth revolved.

Call it Italian subtlety if you will,
I say his intricate cause could not be won
By blind heroics. Much that his enemies
challenged

Was not yet wholly proven, though his
mind

Had leapt to a certainty. He must leave
the rest

To those that should come after, swift and
young,—

Those runners with the torch for whom he
longed

As his deliverers. Had he chosen death
Before his hour, his proofs had been

obscured
For many a year. His respite gave him
time
To push new pawns out, in the blindfold
play
Of those last months, and checkmate, not
the Church
But those that hid behind her. He believed
His truth was all harmonious with her
own.
How could he choose between them?
Must he die
To affirm a discord that himself denied?
On many a point, he was less sure than
we:
But surer far of much that we forget.
The movements that he saw he could but
judge
By some fixed point in space. He chose
the sun.
Could this be absolute? Could he then be
sure
That this great sun did not with all its
worlds
Move round a deeper centre? What
became

Of your Copernicus then? Could he be
sure
Of any unchanging centre, whence to
judge
This myriad-marching universe, but one

—
The absolute throne of God.

Affi

this
Eternal Rock, his own uncertainties
Became more certain, and although his
lips
Breathed not a syllable of it, though he
stood
Silent as earth that also seemed so still,
The very silence thundered, *yet it moves!*
He held to what he knew, secured his
work
Through feeble hands like mine, in other
lands,
Not least in England, as I think you know.
For, partly through your poet, as I believe,
When his great music rolled upon your
skies,
New thoughts were kindled in the general
mind.

'Twas at Arcetri that your Milton gained
The first great glimpse of his celestial
realm.

Picture him,—still a prisoner of our light,
Closing his glorious eyes—that in the
dark,

He might behold this wheeling universe,
—

The planets gilding their ethereal horns
With sun-fire. Many a pure immortal
phrase

In his own work, as I have pondered it,
Lived first upon the lips of him whose
eyes

Were darkened first,—in whom, too,
Milton found

That Samson Agonistes, not himself
As many have thought, but my dear master
dead.

These are a part of England's memories
now,

The music blown upon her sea-bright air
When, in the year of Galileo's death,
Newton, the mightiest of the sons of light,
Was born to lift the splendour of this torch
And carry it, as I heard that Tycho said

Long since to Kepler, "Carry it out of
sight,
Into the great new age I must not know,
Into the great new realm I must not tread."

V

NEWTON

I

"If I saw farther, 'twas because I stood
On giant shoulders," wrote the king of
thought,
Too proud of his great line to slight the
toils
Of his forebears. He turned to their dim
past,
Their fading victories and their fond
defeats,

And knelt as at an altar, drawing all
Their strengths into his own; and so went
forth
With all their glory shining in his face,
To win new victories for the age to come.
So, where Copernicus had destroyed the
dream
We called our world; where Galileo
watched
Those ancient firmaments melt, a thin blue
smoke
Into a vaster night; where Kepler heard
Only stray fragments, isolated chords
Of that tremendous music which should
bind
All things anew in one, Newton arose
And carried on their fire.

Around

him reeled
Through lingering fumes of hate and
clouds of doubt,
Lit by the afterglow of the Civil War,
The dissolute throngs of that Walpurgis
night
Where all the cynical spirits that deny
Danced with the vicious lusts that drown

the soul

In flesh too gross for Circe or her swine.

But, in his heart, he heard one instant
voice.

*"On with the torch once more, make all
things new,*

*Build the new heaven and earth, and
save the world."*

Ah, but the infinite patience, the long
months

Lavished on tasks that, to the common
eye,

Were insignificant, never to be crowned
With great results, or even with earth's
rewards.

Could Rembrandt but have painted him, in
those hours

Making his first analysis of light

Alone, there, in his darkened Cambridge
room

At Trinity! Could he have painted, too,

The secret glow, the mystery, and the
power,

The sense of all the thoughts and unseen
spires

That soared to heaven around him!

stood there,
Obscure, unknown, the shadow of a man
In darkness, like a grey dishevelled ghost,
—Bare-throated, down at heel, his last
night's supper
Littering his desk, untouched; his
glimmering face,
Under his tangled hair, intent and still,—
Preparing our new universe.

He

caught
The sunbeam striking through that bullet-
hole
In his closed shutter—a round white spot
of light
Upon a small dark screen.

He

interposed
A prism of glass. He saw the sunbeam
break
And spread upon the screen its rainbow
band
Of disentangled colours, all in scale
Like notes in music; first, the violet ray,

Then indigo, trembling softly into blue;
Then green and yellow, quivering side by
side;
Then orange, mellowing richly into red.
Then, in the screen, he made a small
round hole
Like to the first; and through it passed
once more
Each separate coloured ray. He let it
strike
Another prism of glass, and saw each hue
Bent at a different angle from its path,
The red the least, the violet ray the most;
But all in scale and order, all precise
As notes in music. Last, he took a lens,
And, passing through it all those coloured
rays,
Drew them together again, reemerging all
On that dark screen, in one white spot of
light.

So, watching, testing, proving, he
resolved
The seeming random glories of our day
Into a constant harmony, and found
How in the whiteness of the sunlight sleep

Compounded, all the colours of the
world.
He saw how raindrops in the clouds of
heaven
Breaking the light, revealed that
sevenfold arch
Of colours, ranged as on his own dark
screen,
Though now they spanned the mountains
and wild seas.
Then, where that old-world order had
gone down
Beneath a darker deluge, he beheld
Gleams of the great new order and
recalled
—Fraught with new meaning and a
deeper hope—
That covenant which God made with all
mankind
Throughout all generations: *I will set
My bow in the cloud, that henceforth ye
may know
How deeper than the wreckage of your
dreams
Abides My law, in beauty and in power.*

II

Yet for that exquisite balance of the mind,
He, too, must pay the price. He stood
alone
Bewildered, at the sudden assault of fools
On this, his first discovery.

"I

have lost
The most substantial blessing of my quiet
To follow a vain shadow.

I

would fain
Attempt no more. So few can understand,
Or read one thought. So many are ready at
once
To swoop and sting. Indeed I would
withdraw
For ever from philosophy." So he wrote
In grief, the mightiest mind of that new
age.
Let those who'd stone the Roman Curia
For all the griefs that Galileo knew
Remember the dark hours that well-nigh

quenched

The splendour of that spirit. He could not sleep.

Yet, with that patience of the God in man
That still must seek the Splendour whence
it came,

Through midnight hours of mockery and
defeat,

In loneliness and hopelessness and tears,
He laboured on. He had no power to see
How, after many years, when he was
dead,

Out of this new discovery men should
make

An instrument to explore the farthest stars
And, delicately dividing their white rays,
Divine what metals in their beauty
burned,

Extort red secrets from the heart of Mars,
Or measure the molten iron in the sun.

He bent himself to nearer, lowlier tasks;
And seeing, first, that those deflected
rays,

Though it were only by the faintest bloom
Of colour, imperceptible to our eyes,
Must dim the vision of Galileo's glass,

He made his own new weapon of the sky,
—

That first reflecting telescope which
should hold
In its deep mirror, as in a breathless pool
The undistorted image of a star.

III

In that deep night where Galileo groped
Like a blind giant in dreams to find what
power
Held moons and planets to their constant
road
Through vastness, ordered like a moving
fleet;
What law so married them that they could
not clash
Or sunder, but still kept their rhythmic
pace
As if those ancient tales indeed were true
And some great angel helmed each
gliding sphere;
Many had sought an answer. Many had

caught
Gleams of the truth; and yet, as when a
torch
Is waved above a multitude at night,
And shows wild streams of faces, all
confused,
But not the single law that knits them all
Into an ordered nation, so our skies
For all those fragmentary glimpses,
whirled
In chaos, till one eagle-spirit soared,
Found the one law that bound them all in
one,
And through that awful unity upraised
The soul to That which made and guides
them all.

Did Newton, dreaming in his orchard
there
Beside the dreaming Witham, see the
moon
Burn like a huge gold apple in the boughs
And wonder why should moons not fall
like fruit?
Or did he see as those old tales declare
(Those fairy-tales that gather form and

fire

Till, in one jewel, they pack the whole
bright world)

A ripe fruit fall from some immortal tree
Of knowledge, while he wondered at
what height

Would this earth-magnet lose its darkling
power?

Would not the fruit fall earthward, though
it grew

High o'er the hills as yonder brightening
cloud?

Would not the selfsame power that
plucked the fruit

Draw the white moon, then, sailing in the
blue?

Then, in one flash, as light and song are
born,

And the soul wakes, he saw it—this dark
earth

Holding the moon that else would fly
through space

To her sure orbit, as a stone is held

In a whirled sling; and, by the selfsame
power,

Her sister planets guiding all their moons;

While, exquisitely balanced and
controlled
In one vast system, moons and planets
wheeled
Around one sovran majesty the sun.

IV

Light and more light! the spark from
heaven was there,
The flash of that reintegrating fire
Flung from heaven's altars, where all light
is born,
To feed the imagination of mankind
With vision, and reveal all worlds in one.
But let no dreamer dream that his great
work
Sprang, armed, like Pallas from the
Thunderer's brain.
With infinite patience he must test and
prove
His vision now, in those clear courts of
Truth
Whose absolute laws (bemocked by

shallower minds
As less than dreams, less than the
faithless faith
That fears the Truth, lest Truth should slay
the dream)
Are man's one guide to his transcendent
heaven;
For there's no wandering splendour in the
soul,
But in the highest heaven of all is one
With absolute reality. None can climb
Back to that Fount of Beauty but through
pain.
Long, long he toiled, comparing first the
curves
Traced by the cannon-ball as it soared
and fell
With that great curving road across the
sky
Traced by the sailing moon.

Was

earth a loadstone
Holding them to their paths by that dark
force
Whose mystery men have cloaked beneath
a name?

Yet, when he came to test and prove, he
found
That all the great deflections of the moon,
Her shining cadences from the path direct,
Were utterly inharmonious with the law
Of that dark force, at such a distance
acting,
Measured from earth's own centre. . . .
For three long years, Newton withheld his
hope
Until that day when light was brought
from France,
New light, new hope, in one small
glistening fact,
Clear-cut as any diamond; and to him
Loaded with all significance, like the
point
Of light that shows where constellations
burn.
Picard in France—all glory to her name
Who is herself a light among all lands—
Had measured earth's diameter once more
And with a new precision.

To the
throng,
Those few corrected ciphers, his results

Were less than nothing; yet they changed
the world.

For Newton seized them and, with
trembling hands,

Began to work his problem out anew.

Then, then, as on the page those figures
turned

To hieroglyphs of heaven, and he beheld

The moving moon, with awful cadences

Falling into the path his law ordained,

Even to the foot and second, his hand
shook

And dropped the pencil.

"Work it

out for me,"

He cried to those around him; for the
weight

Of that celestial music overwhelmed him;

And, on his page, those burning

hieroglyphs

Were Thrones and Principalities and

Powers . . .

For far beyond, immeasurably far

Beyond our sun, he saw that river of suns

We call the Milky Way, that glittering host

Powdering the night, each grain a solar

blaze
Divided from its neighbour by a gulf
Too wide for thought to measure; each a
sun
Huger than ours, with its own fleet of
worlds,
Visible and invisible. Those bright
thongs
That seemed dispersed like a defeated
host
Through blindly wandering skies, now, at
the word
Of one great dreamer, height o'er height
revealed
Hints of a vaster order, and moved on
In boundless intricacies of harmony
Around one centre, deeper than all suns,
The burning throne of God.

V

He could not sleep. That intellect, whose
wings
Dared the cold ultimate heights of Space

and Time
Sank, like a wounded eagle, with dazed
eyes
Back, headlong through the clouds to
throb on earth.
What shaft had pierced him? That which
also pierced
His great forebears—the hate of little
men.
They flocked around him, and they flung
their dust
Into the sensitive eyes, and laughed to see
How dust could blind them.

If

one prickling grain
Could so put out his vision and so torment
That delicate brain, what weakness! How
the mind
That seemed to dwarf us, dwindles! Is he
mad?
So buzzed the fools, whose ponderous
mental wheels
Nor dust, nor grit, nor stones, nor rocks
could irk
Even for an instant.

Newton

could not sleep,
But all that careful malice could design
Was blindly fostered by well-meaning
folly,
And great sane folk like Mr. Samuel
Pepys
Canvassed his weakness and slept sound
all night.
For little Samuel with his rosy face
Came chirping into a coffee-house one
day
Like a plump robin, "Sir, the unhappy
state
Of Mr. Isaac Newton grieves me much.
Last week I had a letter from him, filled
With strange complainings, very curious
hints,
Such as, I grieve to say, are common signs
—I have observed it often—of worse to
come.
He said that he could neither eat nor sleep
Because of all the embroilments he was
in,
Hinting at nameless enemies. Then he
begged
My pardon, very strangely. I believe

Physicians would confirm me in my fears.
'Tis very sad. . . . Only last night, I found
Among my papers certain lines composed
By—whom d'you think?—My lord of
Halifax

(Or so dear Mrs. Porterhouse assured me)
Expressing, sir, the uttermost satisfaction
In Mr. Newton's talent. Sir, he wrote
Answering the charge that science would
put out
The light of beauty, these very handsome
lines:

'When Newton walked by Witham
stream

There fell no chilling shade
To blight the drifting naiad's dream
Or make her garland fade.

The mist of sun was not less bright
That crowned Urania's hair.
He robbed it of its colder light,
But left the rainbow there.'

They are very neat and handsome, you'll
agree.

Solid in sense as Dryden at his best,
And smooth as Waller, but with something
more,—
That touch of grace, that airier elegance
"Which only rank can give.

'Tis

very sad

That one so nobly praised should—well,
no matter!—

I am told, sir, that these troubles all began
At Cambridge, when his manuscripts
were burned.

He had been working, in his curious way,
All through the night; and, in the morning
greyness,

Went down to chapel, leaving on his desk
A lighted candle. You can imagine it,—
A sadly sloven altar to his Muse,
Littered with papers, cups, and greasy
plates

Of untouched food. I am told that he
would eat

His Monday's breakfast, sir, on Tuesday
morning,

Such was his absent way!

When he

returned,
He found that Diamond (his little dog
Named Diamond, for a black patch near
his tail)
Had overturned the candle. All his work
Was burned to ashes.

It struck him

to the quick,
Though, when his terrier fawned about his
feet,
He showed no anger. He was heard to
say,
'O Diamond, Diamond, little do you know
... !'
But, from that hour, ah, well, we'll say no
more."

Halley was there that day, and spoke up
sharply,
"Sir, there are hints and hints! Do you
mean more?"
—"I do, sir," chirruped Samuel, mightily
pleased
To find all eyes, for once, on his fat face.
"I fear his intellects are disordered, sir."
—"Good! That's an answer! I can deal

with that.

But tell me first," quoth Halley, "why he wrote

That letter, a week ago, to Mr. Pepys."

—"Why, sir," piped Samuel, innocent of the trap.

"I had an argument in this coffee-house
Last week, with certain gentlemen, on the laws

Of chance, and what fair hopes a man
might have

Of throwing six at dice. I happened to say
That Mr. Isaac Newton was my friend,
And promised I would sound him."

said Halley,

"You'll pardon me, but I forgot to tell you
I heard, a minute since, outside these
doors,

A very modish woman of the town,
Or else a most delicious lady of fashion,
A melting creature, with a bold black eye,
A bosom like twin doves; and, sir, a
mouth

Like a Turk's dream of Paradise. She
cooed,

'Is Mr. Pepys within?' I greatly fear
That they denied you to her!"

ran Pepys!

"A hint's a hint," laughed Halley, "and so
to bed."

But, as for Isaac Newton, let me say,
Whatever his embroilments were, he
solved

With just one hour of thought, not long
ago,

The problem set by Leibnitz as a
challenge

To all of Europe. He published his result
Anonymously, but Leibnitz, when he saw
it,

Cried out, at once, old enemy as he was,
"That's Newton, none but Newton! From
this claw

I know the old lion, in his midnight lair."

VI

(Sir Isaac Newton writes to Mrs. Vincent at

Woolthorpe)

Your letter, on my eightieth birthday,
wakes
Memories, like violets, in this London
gloom.
You have never failed, for more than
three-score years,
To send these annual greetings from the
haunts
Where you and I were boy and girl
together.
A day must come—it cannot now be far—
When I shall have no power to thank you
for them,
So let me tell you now that, all my life,
They have come to me with healing in
their wings
Like birds from home, birds from the
happy woods
Above the Witham, where you walked
with me
When you and I were young.

D

you remember
Old Barley—how he tried to teach us

drawing?

He found some promise, I believe, in you,
But quite despaired of me.

I

treasure all

Those little sketches that you sent to me
Each Christmas, carrying each some
glimpse of home.

There's one I love that shows the narrow
lane

Behind the schoolhouse, where I had that
bout

Of schoolboy fisticuffs. I have never
known

More pleasure, I believe, than when I
beat

That black-haired bully and won, for my
reward,

Those April smiles from you.

I

see you still

Standing among the fox-gloves in the
hedge;

And just behind you, in the field, I know
There was a patch of aromatic flowers,—
Rest-harrow, was it? Yes; their tangled

roots

Pluck at the harrow; halt the sharp harrow
of thought,

Even in old age. I never breathe their
scent

But I am back in boyhood, dreaming there
Over some book, among the diligent bees,
Until you join me, and we dream together.

They called me lazy, then. Oddly
enough

It was that fight that stirred my mind to
beat

My bully at his books, and head the
school;

Blind rivalry, at first. By such fond tricks
The invisible Power that shapes us—not
ourselves—

Punishes, teaches, leads us gently on
Like children, all our lives, until we
grasp

A sudden meaning and are born, through
death

Into full knowledge that our Guide was
Love.

Another picture shows those woods of
ours,

Around whose warm dark edges in the
spring
Primroses, knots of living sunlight, woke;
And, always, you, their radiant
shepherdess
From Elfland, led them rambling back for
me,
The dew still clinging to their golden
fleece,
Through these grey memory-mists.

shows
My old sun-dial. You say that it is known
As "Isaac's dial" still. I took great pains
To set it rightly. If it has not shifted
'Twill mark the time long after I am gone;
Not like those curious water-clocks I
made
Do you remember? They worked well at
first;
But the least particles in the water
clogged
The holes through which it dripped; and
so, one day,
We two came home so late that we were
sent

Supperless to our beds; and suffered
much
From the world's harshness, as we
thought it then.
Would God that we might taste that
harshness now.

I cannot send you what you've sent to me;
And so I wish you'll never thank me more
For those poor gifts I have sent from year
to year.
I send another, and hope that you can use
it
To buy yourself those comforts which you
need
This Christmas-time.

How strange
it is to wake
And find that half a century has gone by,
With all our endless youth.

The
talk to me
Of my discoveries, prate of undying fame
Too late to help me. Anything I achieved
Was done through work and patience; and
the men

Who sought quick roads to glory for
themselves
Were capable of neither. So I won
Their hatred, and it often hampered me,
Because it vexed my mind.

This

world of ours
Would give me all, now I have ceased to
want it;
For I sit here, alone, a sad old man,
Sipping his orange-water, nodding to
sleep,
Not caring any more for aught they say,
Not caring any more for praise or blame;
But dreaming—things we dreamed of,
long ago,
In childhood.

You and I had

laughed away
That boy and girl affair. We were too
poor
For anything but laughter.

I am old;

And you, twice wedded and twice
widowed, still
Retain, through all your nearer joys and

griefs,
The old affection. Vaguely our blind old
hands
Grove for each other in this growing dark
And deepening loneliness,—to say
"good-bye."
Would that my words could tell you all
my heart;
But even my words grow old.

Perhaps

these lines,
Written not long ago, may tell you more.
I have no skill in verse, despite the praise
Your kindness gave me, once; but since I
wrote
Thinking of you, among the woods of
home,
My heart was in them. Let them turn to
yours:

*Give me, for friends, my own true folk
Who kept the very word they spoke;
Whose quiet prayers, from day to day,
Have brought the heavens about my
way.*

*Not those whose intellectual pride
Would quench the only lights that guide;
 Confuse the lines 'twixt good and ill
 Then throne their own capricious
will;*

*Not those whose eyes in mockery scan
The deeper, simpler dreams of man;
 Not those keen wits, so quick to hurt,
 So swift to trip you in the dirt.*

*Not those who'd pluck your mystery out,
Yet never saw your last redoubt;
 Who kill the music at your heart,
 Then flay you for your lack of art.*

*Give me those eyes I used to know
Where thoughts like angels come and
go;
 —Not glittering eyes, nor dimmed by
books,
 But eyes through which the deep soul
looks.*

*Give me the quiet hands and face
That never strove for fame and place;*

*The soul whose love, so many a day,
Has brought the heavens about my
way.*

VII

*Was it a dream, that low dim-lighted
room
With that dark periwigged phantom of
Dean Swift
Writing, beside a fire, to one he loved,—
Beautiful Catherine Barton, once the
light
Of Newton's house, and his half-sister's
child?*

"Yes, Catherine Barton, I am brave
enough
To face this pale, unhappy, wistful ghost
Of our departed friendship.

It

was I
Savage and mad, a snarling kennel of
sins,
"Your Holiness," as you called me, with

that smile
Which even your ghost would quietly turn
on me—
Who raised it up. It has no terrors, dear,
And I shall never lay it while I live.
You write to me. You think I have the
power
To shield the fame of Newton from a lie.
Poor little ghost! You think I hold the keys
Not only of Parnassus, then, but hell.

There is a tale abroad that Newton owed
His public office to Lord Halifax,
Your secret lover. Coarseness, as you
know,
Is my peculiar privilege. I'll be plain,
And let them wince who are whispering
in the dark.
They are hinting that he gained his public
post
Through you, his flesh and blood; and that
he knew
You were his patron's mistress!

I know
The coffee-house that hatched it—to be

scotched,
Nay, killed, before one snuff-box could
say "snap,"
Had it not been for that ironic point
Which was not aimed at Newton, or at
you,
But at the ways of courts and governments
And used this pretty tale to drive it home.
The dates are clear. You need no more
defence.
Historians will explore it, soon or late,
And show you for the laughing child you
were
When Newton won his office.

For

yourself
You say you have no fear. Your only
thought
Is that they'll soil his fame. Ah, yes,
they'll try,
But they'll not hurt it. For all time to come
It stands there, firm as marble and as
pure.
They can do nothing that the sun and rain
Will not erase at last.

Let

venomous tongues
Flicker against that marble as they will,
They cannot wound it.

I am far

more grieved
For you, who sit there wondering now,
too late,
If it were some suspicion, some dark hint
Newton had heard that robbed him of his
sleep,
And almost broke his mind up. I recall
How the town buzzed that Newton had
gone mad.

You copy me that sad letter which he
wrote
To Locke, wherein he begs him to forgive
The hard words he had spoken, thinking
Locke
Had tried to embroil him, as he says, with
women;
A piteous, humble letter.

Had

he heard
Some hint of scandal that he could not
breathe
To you, because he honoured you too

well?
I cannot tell. His mind was greatly
troubled
With other things. England has many ways
Of smothering her great men. The Mint for
Newton,
While Flamsteed, at the Royal
Observatory
Refused him information. Ah, my dear,
But we must still remember how they
tried
To atone, in that dark Abbey of theirs, at
last
With one last burial. So farewell, my dear
Kate,
And God Almighty bless you, and me,
too.

VIII

(Halley writes to Newton's niece)

always walked aloof,

He

Treading a deeper, stranger world than
ours.
Have you not told me how he would
forget
Even to eat and drink, when he was wrapt
In those miraculous new discoveries,
And, under this wild maze of shadow and
sun
Beheld—though not the Master Player's
hand—
The keys from which His organ music
rolls,
Those visible symphonies of wild cloud
and light
Which clothe the invisible world for
mortal eyes?
I have heard that Leibnitz whispered to
the court
That Newton was an "atheist." Leibnitz
knew
His audience. He could stoop to it.

have said
That knowledge drives out wonder from
the world;
They'll say it still, though all the dust's

ablaze
With miracles at their feet; while
Newton's laws
Foretell that knowledge one day shall be
song,
And those whom Truth has taken to her
heart
Find that it beats in music.

Even this

age
Has glimmerings of it. Newton never saw
His own full victory; but at least he knew
That all the world was linked in one
again;
And, if men found new worlds in years to
come,
These too must join the universal song.
That's why true poets love him; and you'll
find
Their love will cancel all that hate can
do.
They are the sentinels of the House of
Fame;
And that quick challenging couplet from
the pen
Of Alexander Pope is answer enough

To all those whisperers round the outer
doors.
There's Addison, too. The very spirit and
thought
Of Newton moved to music when he
wrote
The Spacious Firmament. Some keen-
eyed age to come
Will say, though Newton seldom wrote a
verse,
That music was his own and speaks his
faith.

And, last, for those who doubt his faith in
God
And man's immortal destiny, there
remains
The granite monument of his own great
work,
That dark cathedral of man's intellect,
The vast "Principia," pointing to the
skies,
Wherein our intellectual king proclaimed
The task of science,—through this
wilderness
Of Time and Space and false

appearances,
To make the path straight from effect to
cause,
Until we come to that First Cause of all,
The Power, above, beyond the blind
machine,
The Primal Power, the originating Power,
Which cannot be mechanical. He affirmed
it
With absolute certainty. Whence arises all
This order, this unbroken chain of law,
This human will, this death-defying love?
Whence, but from some divine
transcendent Power,
Not less, but infinitely more than these,
Because it is their Fountain and their
Guide.
Fools in their hearts have said, "Whence
comes this Power,
Why throw the riddle back this one stage
more?"
And Newton, from a height above all
worlds
Answered and answers still:

"T]

universe

Exists, and by that one impossible fact
Declares itself a miracle; postulates
An infinite Power within itself, a Whole
Greater than any part, a Unity
Sustaining all, binding all worlds in one.
This is the Mystery, palpable here and
now,
'Tis not the lack of links within the chain
From cause to cause, but that the chain
exists;
That's the unfathomable mystery,
The one unquestioned miracle that we
know,
Implying every attribute of God,
The ultimate, absolute, omnipresent
Power,
In its own being, deep and high as heaven.
But men still trace the greater to the less,
Account for soul with flesh and dreams
with dust,
Forgetting in their manifold world the
One,
In whom for every splendour shining here
Abides an equal power behind the veil.
Was the eye contrived by blindly moving
atoms,

Or the still-listening ear fulfilled with
music
By forces without knowledge of sweet
sounds?
Are nerves and brain so sensitively
fashioned
That they convey these pictures of the
world
Into the very substance of our life,
While That from which we came, the
Power that made us,
Is drowned in blank unconsciousness of
all?
Does it not from the things we know
appear
That there exists a Being, incorporeal,
Living, intelligent, who in infinite space,
As in His infinite sensory, perceives
Things in themselves, by His immediate
presence
Everywhere? Of which things, we see no
more
Than images only, flashed through nerves
and brain
To our small sensories?

What is

all science then
But pure religion, seeking everywhere
The true commandments, and through
many forms
The eternal power that binds all worlds
in one?
It is man's age-long struggle to draw near
His maker, learn His thoughts, discern
His law,—
A boundless task, in whose infinitude,
As in the unfolding light and law of love,
Abides our hope, and our eternal joy.
I know not how my work may seem to
others——"
So wrote our mightiest mind—"But to
myself
I seem a child that, wandering all day
long
Upon the sea-shore, gathers here a shell,
And there a pebble, coloured by the
wave,
While the great ocean of truth, from sky to
sky
Stretches before him, boundless,
unexplored."

He has explored it now, and needs of me
Neither defence nor tribute. His own
work
Remains his monument. He rose at last so
near
The Power divine that none can nearer
go;
None in this age! To carry on his fire
We must await a mightier age to come.

VI

WILLIAM HERSCHEL CONDUCTS

*Was it a dream?—that crowded concert-
room
In Bath; that sea of ruffles and laced
coats;*

*And William Herschel, in his powdered
wig,
Waiting upon the platform, to conduct
His choir and Linley's orchestra? He
stood
Tapping his music-rest, lost in his own
thoughts
And (did I hear or dream them?) all were
mine:*

My periwig's askew, my ruffle stained
With grease from my new telescope!

to-morrow
How Caroline will be vexed, although
she grows
Almost as bad as I, who cannot leave
My workshop for one evening.

must give
One last recital at St. Margaret's,
And then—farewell to music.

can lead
Two lives at once?

Yet—it has

taught me much,
Thrown curious lights upon our world, to
pass
From one life to another. Much that I took
For substance turns to shadow. I shall see
No throngs like this again; wring no more
praise
Out of their hearts; forego that instant joy
—Let those who have not known it count
it vain—
When human souls at once respond to
yours.
Here, on the brink of fortune and of fame,
As men account these things, the moment
comes
When I must choose between them and the
stars;
And I have chosen.

Handel, good old
friend,
We part to-night. Hereafter, I must watch
That other wand, to which the worlds
keep time.

What has decided me? That marvellous
night

When—ah, how difficult it will be to
guide,
With all these wonders whirling through
my brain!—

After a Pump-room concert I came home
Hot-foot, out of the fluttering sea of fans,
Coquelicot-ribboned belles and
periwigged beaux,
To my Newtonian telescope.

The

design

Was his; but more than half the joy my
own,
Because it was the work of my own hand,
A new one, with an eye six inches wide,
Better than even the best that Newton
made.

Then, as I turned it on the *Gemini*,
And the deep stillness of those constant
lights,

Castor and Pollux, lucid pilot-stars,
Began to calm the fever of my blood,
I saw, O, first of all mankind I saw
The disk of my new planet gliding there
Beyond our tumults, in that realm of
peace.

What will they christen it? Ach—not
Herschel, no!
Nor *Georgium Sidus*, as I once proposed;
Although he scarce could lose it, as he
lost
That world in 'seventy-six.

Ind

so far
From trying to tax it, he has granted me
How much?—two hundred golden pounds
a year,
In the great name of science,—half the
cost
Of one state-coach, with all those worlds
to win!
Well—well—we must be grateful. This
mad king
Has done far more than all the worldly-
wise,
Who'll charge even this to madness.

believe
One day he'll have me pardoned for that .
. . . crime,
When I escaped—deserted, some would
say—

From those drill-sergeants in my native
land;

Deserted drill for music, as I now
Desert my music for the orchestral
spheres.

No. This new planet is only new to man.
His majesty has done much. Yet, as my
friend

Declared last night, "Never did monarch
buy

Honour so cheaply"; and—he has not
bought it.

I think that it should bear some ancient
name,

And wear it like a crown; some deep,
dark name,

Like *Uranus*, known to remoter gods.

How strange it seems—this buzzing
concert-room!

There's Doctor Burney bowing and,
behind him,

His fox-eyed daughter Fanny.

Is it

a dream,

These crowding midgets, dense as

clustering bees
In a great bee-skep?

Now, as I

lift my wand,
A silence grips them, and the strings
begin,
Throbbing. The faint lights flicker in gusts
of sound.
Before me, glimmering like a crescent
moon,
The dim half circle of the choir awaits
Its own appointed time.

Beside me

now,
Watching my wand, plump and
immaculate
From buckled shoes to that white bunch of
lace
Under his chin, the midget tenor rises,
Music in hand, a linnet and a king.
The bullfinch bass, that other emperor,
Leans back indifferently, and clears his
throat
As if to say, "This prelude leads to *Me!*"
While, on their own proud thrones, on
either hand,

The sumptuously bosomed midget queens,
Contralto and soprano, jealously eye
Each other's plumage.

Round me the

music throbs

With an immortal passion. I grow aware
Of an appalling mystery. . . . We, this
throng

Of midgets, playing, listening, tense and
still,

Are sailing on a midget ball of dust

We call our planet; will have sailed
through space

Ten thousand leagues before this music
ends.

What does it mean? O, God, what *can* it
mean?—

This weird hushed ant-hill with a
thousand eyes;

These midget periwigs; all those little
blurs,

Tier over tier, of faces, masks of flesh,
Corruptible, hiding each its hopes and
dreams,

Its tragi-comic dreams.

And all this

throng
Will be forgotten, mixed with dust,
crushed out,
Before this book of music is outworn
Or that tall organ crumbles. Violins
Outlast their players. Other hands may
touch
That harpsichord; but ere this planet
makes
Another threescore journeys round its sun,
These breathing listeners will have
vanished. Whither?
I watch my moving hands, and they grow
strange!
What is it moves this body? What am I?
How came I here, a ghost, to hear that
voice
Of infinite compassion, far away,
Above the throbbing strings, hark!
Comfort ye . . .
If music lead us to a cry like this,
I think I shall not lose it in the skies.
I do but follow its own secret law
As long ago I sought to understand
Its golden mathematics; taught myself
The way to lay one stone upon another,

Before I dared to dream that I might build
My Holy City of Song. I gave myself
To all its branches. How they stared at
me,
Those men of "sensibility," when I said
That algebra, conic sections, fluxions, all
Pertained to music. Let them stare again.
Old Kepler knew, by instinct, what I now
Desire to learn. I have resolved to leave
No tract of heaven unvisited.

T

night,
—The music carries me back to it again!
—

I see beyond this island universe,
Beyond our sun, and all those other suns
That through the Milky Way, far, far
beyond,
A thousand little wisps, faint nebulæ,
Luminous fans and milky streaks of fire;
Some like soft brushes of electric mist
Streaming from one bright point; others
that spread
And branch, like growing systems; others
discrete,
Keen, ripe, with stars in clusters; others

drawn back
By central forces into one dense death,
Thence to be kindled into fire, reborn,
And scattered abroad once more in a
delicate spray
Faint as the mist by one bright dewdrop
breathed
At dawn, and yet a universe like our own;
Each wisp a universe, a vast galaxy
Wide as our night of stars.

The

Milky Way
In which our sun is drowned, to these
would seem
Less than to us their faintest drift of haze;
Yet we, who are borne on one dark grain
of dust
Around one indistinguishable spark
Of star-mist, lost in one lost feather of
light,
Can by the strength of our own thought,
ascend
Through universe after universe; trace
their growth
Through boundless time, their glory, their
decay;

And, on the invisible road of law, more
firm
Than granite, range through all their
length and breadth,
Their height and depth, past, present, and
to come.
So, those who follow the great
Workmaster's law
From small things up to great, may one
day learn
The structure of the heavens, discern the
whole
Within the part, as men through Love see
God.

Oh, holy night, deep night of stars, whose
peace
Descends upon the troubled mind like
dew,
Healing it with the sense of that pure
reign
Of constant law, enduring through all
change;
Shall I not, one day, after faithful years,
Find that thy heavens are built on music,
too,

And hear, once more, above thy throbbing
worlds
This voice of all compassion, *Comfort*
ye,—
Yes—*comfort ye, my people, saith your*
God?

VII

SIR JOHN HERSCHEL REMEMBERS

True type of all, from his own father's
hand
He caught the fire; and, though he carried
it far
Into new regions; and, from southern
fields
Of yellow lupin, added host on host

To those bright armies which his father
knew,
Surely the crowning hour of all his life
Was when, his task accomplished, he
returned
A lonely pilgrim to the twilit shrine
Of first beginnings and his father's youth
There, in the Octagon Chapel, with bared
head
Grey, honoured for his father and himself,
He touched the glimmering keyboard,
touched the books
Those dear lost hands had touched so
long ago.

"Strange that these poor inanimate things
outlast
The life that used them.

Yes. I

should like to try
This good old friend of his. You'll leave
me here
An hour or so?"

His hands

explored the stops;
And, while the music breathed what else

were mute,
His mind through many thoughts and
memories ranged.
Picture on picture passed before him
there
In living colours, painted on the gloom:
Not what the world acclaimed, the great
work crowned,
But all that went before, the years of toil;
The years of infinite patience, hope,
despair.
He saw the little house where all began,
His father's first resolve to explore the
sky,
His first defeat, when telescopes were
found
Too costly for a music-master's purse;
And then that dogged and all-conquering
will
Declaring, "Be it so. I'll make my own,
A better than even the best that Newton
made."
He saw his first rude telescope—a tube
Of pasteboard, with a lens at either end;
And then,—that arduous growth to size
and power

With each new instrument, as his
knowledge grew;
And, to reward each growth, a deeper
heaven.
He saw the good Aunt Caroline's dismay
When her trim drawing-room, as by
wizardry, turned
Into a workshop, where her brother's
hands
Cut, ground and burnished, hour on aching
hour,
Month after month, new mirrors of the
sky.

Yet, while from dawn to dark her brother
moved
Around some new-cut mirror, burnishing
it,
Knowing that if he once removed his
hands
The surface would be dimmed and must
forego
Its heaven for ever, her quiet hands would
raise
Food to his lips; or, with that musical
voice

Which once—for she, too, offered her
sacrifice—
Had promised her fame, she whiled away
the hours
Reading how, long ago, Aladdin raised
The djinns, by burnishing that old battered
lamp;
Or, from Cervantes, how one crazy soul
Tilting at windmills, challenged a
purblind world.

He saw her seized at last by that same
fire,
Burning to help, a sleepless Vestal,
dowered
With lightning-quickness, rushing from
desk to clock,
Or measuring distances at dead of night
Between the lamp-micrometer and his
eyes.

He saw her in mid-winter, hurrying out,
A slim shawled figure through the drifted
snow,
To help him; saw her fall with a stifled
cry,

Gashing herself upon that buried hook,
And struggling up, out of the blood-
stained drift,
To greet him with a smile.

"For

any soldier,
This wound," the surgeon muttered,
"would have meant
Six weeks in hospital."

Not six

days for her!

"I am glad these nights were cloudy, and
we lost
So little," was all she said.

Sir

John pulled out
Another stop. A little ironical march
Of flutes began to goose-step through the
gloom.
He saw that first "success"! Ay, call it so!
The royal command,—the court desires to
see
The planet Saturn and his marvellous
rings
On Friday night. The skies, on Friday
night,

Were black with clouds. "Canute me no
Canutes,"
Muttered their new magician, and
unpacked
His telescope. "You shall see what you
can see."
He levelled it through a window; and they
saw
"Wonderful! Marvellous! Glorious! Eh,
what, what!"
A planet of paper, with a paper ring,
Lit by a lamp, in a hollow of Windsor
Park,
Among the ferns, where Herne the Hunter
walks,
And Falstaff found that fairies live on
cheese.
Thus all were satisfied; while, above the
clouds—
The thunder of the pedals reaffirmed—
The Titan planet, every minute, rolled
Three hundred leagues upon his awful
way.
Then, through that night, the *vox humana*
spoke
With deeper longing than Lucretius knew

When, in his great third book, the sombre
chant
Kindled and soared on those exultant
wings,
Praising the master's hand from which he,
too,
—Father, discoverer, hero—caught the
fire.
It spoke of those vast labours, incomplete,
But, through their incompleteness, infinite
In beauty, and in hope; the task
bequeathed
From dying hand to hand.

Close

to his grave
Like a *memento mori* stood the hulk
Of that great weapon rusted and outworn,
Which once broke down the barriers of
the sky.
"*Perrupit claustra*"; yes, and bridged
their gulfs;
For, far beyond our solar scheme, it
showed
The law that bound our planets binding
still
Those coupled suns which year by year

he watched
Around each other circling.

Had

our own
Some distant comrade, lost among the
stars?
Should we not, one day, just as Kepler
drew
His planetary music and its laws
From all those faithful records Tycho
made,
Discern at last what vaster music rules
The vaster drift of stars from deep to
deep;
Around what awful Poles, those wisps of
light
Those fifteen hundred universes move?
One signal, even now, across the dark,
Declared their worlds confederate with
our own;
For, carrying many secrets, which we
now
Slowly decipher, one swift messenger
comes
Across the abyss . . .
The light that, flashing through the

immeasurable,
From universe to universe proclaims
The single reign of law that binds them
all.
We shall break up those rays and, in their
lines
And colours, read the history of their
stars.
Year after year, the slow sure records
grow,
Awaiting their interpreter. They shall see
it,
Our sons, in that far day, the swift, the
strong,
The triumphing young-eyed runners with
the torch.

No deep-set boundary-mark in Space or
Time
Shall halt or daunt them. Who that once
has seen
How truth leads on to truth, shall ever
dare
To set a bound to knowledge?

that he knew"

—So thought the visitant at that shadowy
shrine—

"Even as the maker of a song can hear
With the soul's ear, far off, the unstricken
chords

To which, by its own inner law, it climbs,
Would that my father knew how younger
hands

Completed his own planetary tune;
How from the planet that his own eyes
found

The mind of man would plunge into the
dark,

And, blindfold, find without the help of
eyes

A mightier planet, in the depths beyond."

Then, while the reeds, with quiet
melodious pace

Followed the dream, as in a picture
passed,

Adams, the boy at Cambridge, making his
vow

By that still lamp, alone in that deep night,
Beneath the crumbling battlements of St.
John's,

To know why Uranus, uttermost planet
known,
Moved in a rhythm delicately astray
From all the golden harmonies ordained
By those known measures of its sister-
worlds.
Was there an unknown planet, far beyond,
Sailing through unimaginable deeps
And drawing it from its path?

Th

challenging chords
Echoed the prophecy that Sir John had
made,
Guided by his own faith in Newton's law:
*We have not found it, but we feel it
trembling
Along the lines of our analysis now
As once Columbus, from the shores of
Spain,
Felt the new Continent.*

Then, in swift

fugues, began
A race between two nations for the prize
Of that new world.

Le Verrier in

France,

Adams in England, each of them unaware
Of his own rival, at the selfsame hour
Resolved to find it.

Not by the telescope

now!

Skies might be swept for æons ere one
spark

Among those myriads were both found
and seen

To move, at that vast distance round our
sun.

They worked by faith in law alone. They
knew

The wanderings of great Uranus, and they
knew

The law of Newton.

By the

midnight lamp,

Pencil in hand, shut in a four-walled
room,

Each by pure thought must work his
problem out,—

Given that law, to find the mass and place
Of that which drew their planet from his
course.

There were no throngs to applaud them.
Each alone,
Without the heat of conflict laboured on,
Consuming brain and nerve; for throngs
applaud
Only the flash and tinsel of their day,
Never the quiet runners with the torch.
Night after night they laboured. Line on
line
Of intricate figures, moving all in law,
They marshalled. Their long columns
formed and marched
From battle to battle, and no sound was
heard
Of victory or defeat. They marched
through snows
Bleak as the drifts that broke Napoleon's
pride
And through a vaster desert. They drilled
their hosts
With that divine precision of the mind
To which one second's error in a year
Were anarchy, that precision which is felt
Throbbing through music.

Month

on month they toiled,

With worlds for ciphers. One rich autumn
night

Brooding over his figures there alone
In Cambridge, Adams found them moving
all

To one solution. To the unseeing eye
His long neat pages had no more to tell
Than any merchant's ledger, yet they
shone

With epic splendour, and like trumpets
pealed;

*Three hundred million leagues beyond
the path*

*Of our remotest planet, drowned in night
Another and a mightier planet rolls;*

*In volume, fifty times more vast than
earth,*

*And of so huge an orbit that its year
Wellnigh outlasts our nations. Though it
moves*

*A thousand leagues an hour, it has not
ranged*

*Thrice through its seasons since
Columbus sailed,*

Or more than once since Galileo died.

He took his proofs to Greenwich. "Sweep
the skies
Within this limited region now," he said.
"You'll find your moving planet. I'm not
more
Than one degree in error."

He

left his proofs;
But Airy, king of Greenwich, looked
askance
At unofficial genius in the young,
And pigeon-holed that music of the
spheres.
Nine months he waited till Le Verrier,
too,
Pointed to that same region of the sky.
Then Airy, opening his big sleepy lids,
Bade Challis use his telescope,—too late,
To make that honour all his country's own;
For all Le Verrier's proofs were now with
Galle
Who, being German, had his star-charts
ready
And, in that region, found one needle-
point
Had moved. A monster planet!

to France!
Honour to England, too, the cry began,
Who found it also, though she drowsed at
Greenwich.
So—as the French said, with some sting
in it—
"We gave the name of Neptune to our
prize
Because our neighbour England rules the
sea."

"Honour to all," say we; for, in these
wars,
Whoever wins a battle wins for all.
But, most of all, honour to him who found
The law that was a lantern to their feet,—
Newton, the first whose thought could
soar beyond
The bounds of human vision and declare,
"Thus saith the law of Nature and of God
Concerning things invisible."

This

new world
What was it but one harmony the more
In that great music which himself had

heard,—

The chant of those reintegrated spheres
Moving around their sun, while all things
moved

Around one deeper Light, revealed by
law,

Beyond all vision, past all understanding,
Yet darkly shadowed forth for dreaming
men

On earth in music . . .

Music, all

comes back

To music in the end.

in the gloom

Of the Octagon Chapel, the dreamer lifted
up

His face, as if to all those great forebears.

The quivering organ rolled upon the dusk

His dream of that new symphony,—the
sun

Chanting to all his planets on their way

While, stop to stop replying, height o'er
height,

His planets answered, voices of a dream:

THE SUN

Light, on the far faint planets that attend
me!

Light! But for me—the fury and the fire.
My white-hot maelstroms, the red storms
that rend me

Can yield them still the harvest they
desire.

I kiss with light their sunward-lifted
faces.

With dew-drenched flowers I crown
their dusky brows.

They praise me, lightly, from their
pleasant places.

Their birds belaud me, lightly, from
their boughs.

And men, on lute and lyre, have breathed
their pleasure.

They have watched Apollo's golden
chariot roll;
Hymned his bright wheels, but never mine

that measure

A million leagues of flame from Pole to Pole.

Like harbour-lights the stars divide
before me,

I draw my worlds ten thousand leagues
a day.

Their far blue seas like April eyes adore
me.

They follow, dreaming, on my
soundless way.

How should they know, who wheel
around my burning,

What torments bore them, or what
power am I,

I, that with all those worlds around me
turning,

Sail, every hour, from sky to deepening
sky?

My planets, these live embers of my
passion,

These children of my hurricanes of
flame,

Flung thro' the night, for midnight to
refashion,

Praise, and forget, the splendour
whence they came.

THE EARTH

*Was it a dream that, in those bright
dominions,*

*Are other worlds that sing, with lives
like mine,*

*Lives that with beating hearts and
broken pinions*

*Aspire and fall, half-mortal, half-
divine?*

*A grain of dust among those glittering
legions—*

*Am I, I only, touched with joy and
tears?*

*O, silver sisters, from your azure
regions,*

*Breathe, once again, your music of the
spheres:—*

VENUS

A nearer sun, a rose of light arises,
 To clothe my glens with richer clouds
of flowers,
To paint my clouds with ever new
surprises
 And wreath with mist my rosier
domes and towers;

Where now, to praise their gods, a throng
assembles
 Whose hopes and dreams no sphere but
mine has known.
On other worlds the same warm sunlight
trembles;
 But life, love, worship, these are mine
alone.

MARS

And now, as dewdrops in the dawn-light

glisten,

Remote and cold—see—Earth and
Venus roll.

We signalled them—in music! Did they
listen?

Could they not hear those whispers of
the soul?

May not their flesh have sealed that fount
of glory,

That pure ninth sense which told us of
mankind?

Can some deep sleep bereave them of our
story

As darkness hides all colours from the
blind?

JUPITER

I that am sailing deeper skies and dimmer,

Twelve million leagues beyond the
path of Mars,

Salute the sun, that cloudy pearl, whose
glimmer

Renews my spring and steers me
through the stars.

Think not that I by distances am darkened.

My months are years; yet light is in
mine eyes.

Mine eyes are not as yours. Mine ears
have hearkened

To sounds from earth. Five moons
enchant my skies.

SATURN

And deeper yet, like molten opal shining

My belt of rainbow glory softly
streams,

And seven white moons around me
intertwining

Hide my vast beauty in a mist of
dreams.

Huge is my orbit; and your flickering
planet

A mote that flecks your sun, that faint

white star;
Yet, in my magic pools, I still can scan it;
For I have ways to look on worlds afar.

URANUS

And deeper yet—twelve million leagues
of twilight
Divide mine empire even from Saturn's
ken.
Is there a world whose light is not as my
light,
A midget world of light-imprisoned
men?

Shut from this inner vision that hath found
me,
They hunt bright shadows, painted to
betray;
And know not that, because their night
hath drowned me,
My giants walk with gods in boundless
day.

NEPTUNE

Plunge through immensity anew and find
me.

Though scarce I see your sun,—that
dying spark—
Across a myriad leagues it still can bind
me

To my sure path, and steer me through
the dark.

I sail through vastness, and its rhythms
hold me,

Though threescore earths could in my
volume sleep!
Whose are the might and music that enfold
me?

Whose is the law that guides me thro'
the Deep?

THE SUN

*I hear their song. They wheel around my
burning!*

*I know their orbits; but what path
have I?*

*I that with all those worlds around me
turning*

*Sail, every hour, ten thousand leagues
of sky?*

*My planets, these live embers of my
passion,*

*And I, too, filled with music and with
flame,*

*Flung thro' the night, for midnight to
refashion,*

*Praise, and forget, the splendour
whence we came.*

EPILOGUE

Once more upon the mountain's lonely
height
I woke, and round me heard the sea-like
sound
Of pine-woods, as the solemn night-wind
washed
Through the long canyons and precipitous
gorges
Where coyotes moaned and eagles made
their nest.
Once more, far, far below, I saw the lights
Of distant cities, at the mountain's feet,
Clustered like constellations . . .
Over me, like the dome of a strange
shrine,
Housing our great new weapon of the sky,
And moving on its axis like a moon
Glimmered the new Uraniborg.

S.

passed
Like monks, between it and the low grey
walls
That lodged them, like a fortress in the
rocks,
Their monastery of thought.

A

shadow neared me.

I heard, once more, an eager living voice:

"Year after year, the slow sure records
grow.

I wish that old Copernicus could see
How, through his truth, that once
dispelled a dream,

Broke the false axle-trees of heaven,
destroyed

All central certainty in the universe,
And seemed to dwarf mankind, the spirit
of man

Laid hold on law, that Jacob's-ladder of
light,

And mounting, slowly, surely, step by
step,

Entered into its kingdom and its power.

For just as Tycho's tables of the stars

Within the bounds of our own galaxy

Led Kepler to the music of his laws,

So, father and son, the Herschels, with
their charts

Of all those fire-mists, those faint nebulae,

Those hosts of drifting universes, lead

Our new discoverers to yet mightier laws

Enthroned above all worlds.

We

have not found them,
And yet—only the intellectual fool
Dreams in his heart that even his brain
can tick
In isolated measure, a centre of law,
Amidst the whirl of universal chaos.
For law descends from law. Though all
the spheres
Through all the abysmal depths of Space
were blown
Like dust before a colder darker wind
Than even Lucretius dreamed, yet if one
thought,
One gleam of law within the mind of man,
Lighten our darkness, there's a law
beyond;
And even that tempest of destruction
moves
To a mightier music, shatters its myriad
worlds
Only to gather them up, as a shattered
wave
Is gathered again into a rhythmic sea,
Whose ebb and flow are but the pulse of

Life,
In its creative passion.

The
records grow
Unceasingly, and each new grain of truth
Is packed, like radium, with whole
worlds of light.
The eclipses timed in Babylon help us
now
To clock that gradual quickening of the
moon,
Ten seconds in a century.

Who
that wrote
On those clay tablets could foresee his
gift
To future ages; dreamed that the groping
mind,
Dowered with so brief a life, could ever
range
With that divine precision through the
abyss?
Who, when that good Dutch spectacle-
maker set
Two lenses in a tube, to read the time
Upon the distant clock-tower of his

church,
Could dream of this, our hundred-inch
that shows
The snow upon the polar caps of Mars
Whitening and darkening as the seasons
change?
Or who could dream when Galileo
watched
His moons of Jupiter, that from their
eclipses
And from that change in their appointed
times,
Now late, now early, as the watching
earth
Farther or nearer on its orbit rolled,
The immeasurable speed of light at last
Should be reduced to measure?

C

Newton dream
When, through his prism, he broke the
pure white shaft
Into that rainbow band, how men should
gather
And disentangle ray by delicate ray
The colours of the stars,—not only those
That burn in heaven, but those that long

since perished,
Those vanished suns that eyes can still
behold,
The strange lost stars whose light still
reaches earth
Although they died ten thousand years
ago.
Here, night by night, the innumerable
heavens
Speak to an eye more sensitive than
man's,
Write on the camera's delicate retina
A thousand messages, lines of dark and
bright
That speak of elements unknown on earth.
How shall men doubt, who thus can read
the Book
Of Judgment, and transcend both Space
and Time,
Analyse worlds that long since passed
away,
And scan the future, how shall they doubt
His power
From whom their power and all creation
came?"

I think that, when the second Herschel
tried
Those great hexameters in our English
tongue,
A nobler shield than ever Achilles knew
Shone through the song and made his
echoes live:
*"There he depicted, the earth, and the
canopied sky, and the sea-waves,
There the unwearied sun, and the full-
orbed moon in their courses,
All the configured stars that gem the
circuit of heaven,
Pleiads and Hyads were there and the
giant force of Orion,
There the revolving Bear, which the Wain
they call, was ensculptured,
Circling on high, and in all his courses
regarding Orion,
Sole of the starry train that descends not
to bathe in the ocean."*

A nobler shield for us, a deeper sky;
But even to us who know how far away
Those constellations burn, the wonder
bides

That each vast sun can speed through the
abyss
Age after age more swiftly than an eagle,
Each on its different road, alone like ours
With its own satellites; yet, since Homer
sang,
Their aspect has not altered! All their
flight
Has not yet changed the old pattern of the
Wain.
The sword-belt of Orion is not sundered.
Nor has one fugitive splendour broken yet
From Cassiopeia's throne.

A

thousand years
Are but as yesterday, even unto these.
How shall men doubt His empery over
time
Whose dwelling is a deep so absolute
That we can only find Him in our souls.
For there, despite Copernicus, each may
find
The centre of all things. There He lives
and reigns.
There infinite distance into nearness
grows,

And infinite majesty stoops to dust again;
All things in little, infinite love in man . . .
Oh, beating wings, descend to earth once
more,
And hear, reborn, the desert singer's cry:
*When I consider the heavens, the work
of Thy fingers,
The sun and the moon and the stars
which Thou hast ordained,
Though man be as dust, I know Thou art
mindful of him;
And, through Thy law, Thy light still
visiteth him.*

PART II. THE BOOK OF EARTH

I

THE GRAND CANYON

Let the stars fade. Open the Book of
Earth.

Out of the Painted Desert, in broad noon,
Walking through pine-clad bluffs, in an air
like wine,
I came to the dreadful brink.

I saw, with a swimming brain, the solid
earth
Splitting apart, into two hemispheres,
Cleft, as though by the axe of an angry
god.

On the brink of the Grand Canyon,
Over that reeling gulf of amethyst
shadows,
From the edge of one sundered
hemisphere I looked down,
Down from abyss to abyss,
Into the dreadful heart of the old earth
dreaming
Like a slaked furnace of her far
beginnings,
The inhuman ages, alien as the moon,
Æons unborn, and the unimagined end.
There, on the terrible brink, against the
sky,
I saw a black speck on a boulder jutting
Over a hundred forests that dropped and
dropped
Down to a tangle of red precipitous
gorges
That dropped again and dropped,
endlessly down.

A mile away, or ten, on its jutting rock,
The black speck moved. In that dry
diamond light

It seemed so near me that my hand

could touch it.

It stirred like a midge, cleaning its wings
in the sun.

All measure was lost. It broke—into five
black dots.

I looked, through the glass, and saw that
these were men.

Beyond them, round them, under them,
swam the abyss
Endlessly on.

Far down, as a cloud

sailed over,
A sun-shaft struck, between forests and
sandstone cliffs,
Down, endlessly down, to the naked and
dusky granite,
Crystalline granite that still seemed to
glow
With smouldering colours of those buried
fires
Which formed it, long ago, in earth's deep
womb.
And there, so far below that not a sound,
Even in that desert air, rose from its bed,
I saw the thin green thread of the

Colorado,
The dragon of rivers, dwarfed to a vein of
jade,
The Colorado that, out of the Rocky
Mountains,
For fifteen hundred miles of glory and
thunder,
Rolls to the broad Pacific.

From

Flaming Gorge,
Through the Grand Canyon with its
monstrous chain
Of subject canyons, the green river flows,
Linking them all together in one vast
gulch,
But christening it, at each earth-cleaving
turn,
With names like pictures, for six hundred
miles:
Black Canyon, where it rushes in opal
foam;
Red Canyon, where it sleeks to jade
again
And slides through quartz, three thousand
feet below;
Split-Mountain Canyon, with its cotton-

wood trees;
And, opening out of this, *Whirlpool
Ravine*,
Where the wild rapids wash the gleaming
walls
With rainbows, for nine miles of mist and
fire;
Kingfisher Canyon, gorgeous as the
plumes
Of its winged denizens, glistening with all
hues;
 Glen Canyon, where the Cave of
Music rang
Long since, with the discoverers' desert-
song;
Vermilion Cliffs, like sunset clouds
congealed
To solid crags; the *Valley of Surprise*,
Where blind walls open, into a Titan
pass;
Labyrinth Canyon, and the *Valley of
Echoes*;
Cataract Canyon, rolling boulders down
In floods of emerald thunder; *Gunnison's
Valley*
Crossed, once, by the forgotten Spanish

Trail;
Then, for a hundred miles, *Desolation
Canyon*,
Savagely pinnacled, strange as the lost
road
Of Death, cleaving a long-deserted
world;
Gray Canyon next; then *Marble Canyon*,
stained
With iron-rust above, but brightly veined
As Parian, where the wave had
sculptured it;
Then deep *Still-water*.

And all

these conjunct
In one huge chasm, were but the towering
gates
And dim approaches to the august abyss
That opened here,—one sempiternal page
Baring those awful hieroglyphs of stone,
Seven systems, and seven ages, darkly
scrolled
In the deep Book of Earth.

Acro

the gulf
I looked to that vast coast opposed,

whose crests
Of raw rough amethyst, over the Canyon,
flamed,
A league away, or ten. No eye could tell.
All measure was lost. The tallest pine
was a feather
Under my feet, in that ocean of violet
gloom.
Then, with a dizzying brain, I saw below
me,
A little way out, a tiny shape, like a gnat
Flying and spinning,—now like a gilded
grain
Of dust in a shaft of light, now sharp and
black
Over a blood-red sandstone precipice.

The Indian guide thrust out a lean dark
hand
That hid a hundred forests, and pointed to
it,
Muttering low, "Big Eagle!"

Al

that day,
Riding along the brink, we found no end.
Still, on the right, the pageant of the

Abyss

Unfolded. There gigantic walls of rock,
Sheer as the world's end, seemed to float
in air

Over the hollow of space, and change
their forms

Like soft blue wood-smoke, with each
change of light.

Here massed red boulders, over the
Angel Trail

Darkened to thunder, or like a sunset
burned.

Here, while the mind reeled from the
imagined plunge,

Tall amethystine towers, dark

Matterhorns,

Rose out of shadowy nothingness to
crown

Their mighty heads with morning.

wild crags

Black and abrupt, over the swimming
dimness

Of coloured mist, and under the moving
clouds,

Themselves appeared to move, stately

and slow
As the moon moves, with an invisible
pace,
Or darkling planets quietly onward steal
Through their immense dominion.

far down,
A phantom sword, a search-beam of the
sun,
Glanced upon purple pyramids, and set
One facet aflame in each, the rest in
gloom;
While from their own deep chasms of
shadow, that seemed
Small inch-wide rings of darkness round
them, rose
Tabular foothills, mesas, hard and bright,
Bevelled and flat, like gems; or, softly
bloomed
Like alabaster, stained with lucid wine;
Then slowly changed, under the changing
clouds,
Where the light sharpened, into monstrous
tombs
Of trap-rock, hornblende, greenstone and
basalt.

There,—under isles of pine, washed
round with mist,
Dark isles that seemed to sail through
heaven, and cliffs
That towered like Teneriffe,—far, far
below,
Striving to link those huge dissolving
steeps,
Gigantic causeways drowned or swam in
vain,
Column on column, arch on broken arch,
Groping and winding, like the foundered
spans
Of lost Atlantis, under the weltering deep.
For, over them, the abysmal tides of air,
Inconstant as the colours of the sea,
From amethyst into wreathing opal
flowed,
Ebbed into rose through grey, then melted
all
In universal amethyst again.
There, wild cathedrals, with light-
splintering spires,
Shone like a dream in the Eternal mind
And changed as earth and sea and heaven
must change.

Over them soared a promontory, black
As night, but in the deepening gulf
beyond,
Far down in that vast hollow of violet air,
Winding between the huge Plutonian
walls,
The semblance of a ruined city lay.
Dungeons flung wide, and palaces
brought low,
Altars and temples, wrecked and
overthrown,
Gigantic stairs that climbed into the light
And found no hope, and ended in the
void:
It burned and darkened, a city of
porphyry,
Paved with obsidian, walled with
serpentine,
Beautiful, desolate, stricken as by strange
gods
Who, long ago, from cloudy summits flung
Boulder on mountainous boulder of
blood-red marl
Into a gulf so deep that, when they fell,
The soft wine-tinted mists closed over
them

Like ocean, and the Indian heard no
sound.

II

NIGHT AND THE ABYSS

A lonely cabin, like an eagle's nest,
Lodged us that night upon the monstrous
brink,
And roofed us from the burning desert
stars;
But, on my couch of hemlock as I lay,
The Book of Earth still opened in my
dreams.
Below me, only guessed by the slow
sound
Of forests, through unfathomable gulfs
Of midnight, vaster, more mysterious
now,
Breathed that invisible Presence of deep

awe.

Through the wide open window, once, a
moth
Beat its dark wings, and flew—out—over
that,
Brave little fluttering atheist, unaware
Of aught beyond the reach of his antennæ,
Thinking his light quick thoughts; while,
under him,
God opened His immeasurable Abyss.

All night I heard the insistent whisper
rise:

*One page of Earth's abysmal Book lies
bare.*

Read—in its awful hieroglyphs of stone

—
*His own deep scripture. Is its music
sealed?*

*Or is the inscrutable secret growing
clearer?*

Then, like the night-wind, souging
through the pines,
Another voice replied, cold with despair:
*It opens, and it opens. By what Power?
A silent river, hastening to the sea,*

*Age after age, through crumbling desert
rocks*

*Clove the dread chasm. Wild snows that
had their birth*

*In Ocean-mists, and folded their white
wings*

*Among far mountains, fed that sharp-
edged stream.*

*Ask Ocean whence it came. Ask Earth.
Ask Heaven.*

*I see the manifold instruments as they
move,*

*Remote or near, with intricate inter-
play;*

*But that which moves them, and
determines all,*

*Remains in darkness. Man must bow his
head*

Before the Inscrutable.

Then, far

off, I heard,

As from a deeper gulf, the antiphonal
voice:

*It opens, and it opens, and it opens,—
The abyss of Heaven, the rock-leaved
Book of Earth,*

*And that Abyss as dreadful and profound
Locked in each atom.*

*Under
the high stars,
Man creeps, too infinitesimal to be
scanned;
And, over all the worlds that dwindle
away
Beyond the uttermost microscopic sight,
He towers—a god.*

*Midway,
between the height
That crushes, and the depth that flatters
him,
He stands within the little ring of light
He calls his knowledge. Its horizon-line,
The frontier of the dark, was narrow,
once;
And he could bear it. But the light is
growing;
The ring is widening; and, with each
increase,
The frontiers of the night are widening,
too.
They grow and grow. The very blaze of
truth*

*That drives them back, enlarges the grim
coasts
Of utter darkness.*

*Man must
bow his head
Before the Inscrutable.*

*Then,
from far within,
The insistent whisper rose:*

*is himself
The key to all he seeks.
He is not exiled from this majesty,
But is himself a part of it. To know
Himself, and read this Book of Earth
aright,
Flooding it as his ancient poets, once,
Illumed old legends with their inborn
fire,
Were to discover music that out-soars
His plodding thought, and all his fables,
too;
A song of truth that deepens, not
destroys
The ethereal realm of wonder; and still
lures*

*The spirit of man on more adventurous
quests
Into the wildest mystery of all,
The miracle of reality, which he shares.*

But Oh, what art could guide me through
that maze?
What kingly shade unlock the music
sealed
In that dread volume?

Sons of an
earlier age,
Poet and painter stretched no guiding
hand.

Even the gaunt spirit, whom the Mantuan
led
Through the dark chasms and fiery clefts
of pain,
Could set a bound to his own realms of
night,
Enwall them round, build his own stairs
to heaven,
And slept now, prisoned, in his own
coiling towers. . . .

Leonardo—found a shell among the hills,
A sea-shell, turned to stone, as at the gaze
Of his own cold Medusa. His dark eyes,
Hawk-swift to hunt the subtle lines of law
Through all the forms of beauty, on that
wild height
Saw how the waves of a forgotten world
Had washed and sculptured every soaring
crag,
Ere Italy was born. He stood alone,—
His rose-red cloak out-rippling on the
breeze,—

A wondering sun-god. Through the
mountain-peaks,
The rumour of a phantom ocean rolled.
It tossed a flying rainbow at his feet
And vanished. . . .

Milton—walked

in Paradise.

He saw the golden compasses of God
Turning through darkness to create the
world.

He saw the creatures of a thousand æons
Rise, in six days, out of the mire and clay,
Pawing for freedom. With the great blind
power

Of his own song, he riveted one more
clasp,
Though wrought of fabulous gold, on that
dark Book,
Not to be loosed for centuries.

yet,
Goethe, the torch of science in his own
hand,
Poet and seeker, pressed into the dark,
Caught one mysterious gleam from flower
and leaf,
And one from man's own frame, of that
which binds
All forms of life together. He turned aside
And lost it, saying, "I wait for light, more
light."

And these all towered among celestial
glories,
And wore their legends like prophetic
robes;
But who should teach me, in this deeper
night,
The tale of this despised and wandering
house,

Our lodge among the stars; the song of
Earth;
Her birth in a mist of fire,—a ball of
flame,
Slowly contracting, crusting, cracking and
folding
Into deep valleys and mountains that still
changed
And slowly rose and sank like age-long
waves
On the dark ocean of ever-dissolving
forms;
Earth, a magical globe, an elfin sphere,
Quietly turning through boundlessness,
Budding with miracles, burgeoning into
life;
A murmuring forest of ferns, where the
misty sun
 Saw winged monsters fighting to bring
forth men;
Earth, and her savage youth, her
monstrous lusts,
Mastered and curbed, till these, too,
pulsed into music,
And became for man the fountain of his
own power;

Earth, on her shining way,
Coloured and warmed by the sun, and
quietly spinning
Her towns and seas to shadow and light
in turn;
Earth, by what brooding Power
Endowed at birth with those dread
potencies
Which out of her teeming womb at last
brought forth
Creatures that loved and sinned, laughed,
wept and prayed,
Died, and returned to the unknown Power
that made them;
Earth, and that tale of men, the kings of
thought,
Who strove to read her secret in the
rocks,
And turned, amid wild calumny and
wrong,
The lucid sword-like search-beams of the
mind
On the dark passion that through
uncounted æons
Crept, fought, and climbed to the celestial
gates,

Three gates in one, one heavenly gate in
three,
Whose golden names are Beauty,
Goodness, Truth.

Then, without sound, like an unspoken
prayer,
The voice I heard upon the mountain
height,
Out of a deeper gulf of midnight rose,
Within me, or without, invoking One
To whom this dust, not of itself, would
pray:

Muse of the World, O terrible, beautiful
Spirit,
Throned in pure light, since all the worlds
obey
Thy golden law which, even here on
earth,
Though followed blindly, leads to thy
pure realm,
Couldst thou deliver me from this night at
last,
Teach me the burning syllables of thy
tongue

That I, even I, out of the mire and clay,
With face uplifted, and with arms
upstretched

To the Eternal Sun of Truth, might raise
My song of adoration, not in vain.
Throned above Time, thou sawest when
earth was born
In darkness, though none else was there to
see;
For there was fury in the dark, and fire,
And power, and that creative pulse of
thine,
The throb of music, the deep rhythmic
throes
Of That which made and binds all worlds
in one.

* * * * *

*In the beginning, God made heaven and
earth.*

One sentence burned upon the formless
dark—
One sentence, and no more, from that high
realm.

The long-sought consummation of all law,
Through all this manifold universe, might
shine clear
In those eight words one day; not yet; not
yet!
They would be larger, then;
Not the glib prelude to a lifeless creed,
But wide as the unbounded realms of
thought,
The last great simplification of them all,
The single formula, like an infinite sphere
Enfolding Space and Time, atoms and
suns,
With all the wild fantastic hosts of life
And all their generations, through all
worlds,
In one pure phrase of music, like a star
Seen in a distant sky.

I

could not reach it.
All night I waited for the word in vain.

* * * * *

III

THE WINGS

Night greyed, and up the immeasurable
abyss,
Brimmed with a blacker night than ocean
knew,
The dawn-wind, like a host of spirits,
flowed,
Chanting those airy melodies which, long
since,
The same wild breath, obeying the same
law,
Taught the first pine-woods in the primal
world.

*We are the voices.
Could man only
Spell our tongue,
He might learn
The inscrutable secret
And grow young.*

*Young as we are
Who, on shores
Unknown to man,
Long, long since,
In waves and woods
Our song began.*

*Ere his footsteps
Printed earth,
Wild ferns and grass
Breathed it. No man
Heard that whispering
Spirit pass.*

*Not one mortal
Lay and listened
There was none
Even to hear
The sea-wave crumbling
In the sun.*

*None to hear
Our choral pine-woods
Chanting deep,
Even as now
Our solemn cadence*

Haunts your sleep.

*Ear was none
To heed or hear
When earth was young
Even now
Man understands not
Our strange tongue.*

There came a clearer rustle of nearer
boughs.
A bird cried, once, a sharp ecstatic cry
As if it saw an angel.

He stood

there
Against the window's dusky square of
sky,
Carrying the long curled crosier of a fern,
My singer of the woods, my Shadow-of-
a-Leaf,
The invisible friend with whom I used to
talk
In childhood, and that none but I could
see,—
Shadow-of-a-Leaf, shy whisperer of the
songs

That none could capture, and so few
could hear;
A creature of the misty hills of home,
Quick as the thought that hides in the deep
heart
When the loud world goes by; vivid to me
As flesh and blood, yet with an elfin
strain
That set him free of earth, free to run wild
Through all the ethereal kingdoms of the
mind,
His dark eyes fey with wonder at the
world,
And that profoundest mystery of all,
The miracle of reality; clear, strange eyes,
Deep-sighted, joyous, touched with
hidden tears.
Often he left me when I was not worthy;
And many a time I locked my heart
against him,
Only to find him creeping in again
Like memory, or a wild vine through a
window
When I most needed that still voice of his
Which never yet spoke louder than the
breath

Of conscience in my soul. He would
return
Quietly as the rustling of a bough
After the bird had flown; and, through a
rift
Of evening sky, the shining eyes of a
child,
The cold clear ripple of thrushes after
rain,
The sound of a mountain-brook, or a
breaking wave
Would teach my slumbering soul the ways
of love.
He looked at me, more gently than of late,
And spoke (O, if this world had ears to
hear
The sound of falling dew, the power that
wrote
The Paradiso might recall that voice!)
*It is near daybreak. I am faithful still;
And I am here to answer all your need.
The hills are old, but not so old as I;
The blackbird's eyes are young, but not
so young
As mine that know the wonder of their
sight.*

*Eagles have wings. Mine are too swift to
see;
For while I stand and whisper at your
side,
Time dwindles to a shadow. . . .*

a mist
The world dissolved around us as he
spoke.
I saw him standing dark against the sky.
 I heard him, murmuring like a spirit in
trance,—
Dawn on Crotona, dawn without a cloud.
. . . .

Then, slowly emerging from that mist of
dreams,
As at an incantation, a lost world
Arose, and shone before me in the dawn.

II. THE GREEKS

I

PYTHAGORAS

I. THE GOLDEN BROTHERHOOD

Dawn on Crotona, dawn without a
cloud.

In the still garden that Pythagoras made,
The Temple of the Muses, firm as truth,
Lucid as beauty, the white marriage-song
Made visible, of beauty and truth in one,
Flushed with the deepening East.

was no dream.

The thrush that with his long beak shook
and beat

The dark striped snail-shell on the marble
flags

Between the cool white columns told me
this.

The birds among the silvery olives pealed
So many jargoning rivulet-throated bells
That in their golden clashings discord
drowned,
And one wild harmony closed and
crowned them all.
And yet, as if the spread wings of a hawk
Froze in the sky above them, every note
Died on an instant.

Over the
sparkling grass
The long dark shadows of ash and pine
began
To shrink, as though the rising of the sun
Menaced, not only shadows, but the
world.

A frightened bird flew, crying, and
scattering dew
Blindly away; though, on this dawn of
dawns,
Nothing had changed. The Golden
Brotherhood stole
Up through the drifts of wet rose-laurel
bloom
As on so many a dawn for many a year,

To make their morning vows.

thronged the porch,
The lean athletes of truth, trained body
and mind,
For their immortal trial. Among them
towered
Milon, the soldier-wrestler. His brown
limbs
Moved with the panther's grace, the
warrior's pride;
Milon, who in the Olympic contests won
Crown after crown, but wore them on
broad brows
Cut like fine steel for thought; and, in his
eyes,
Carried the light of those deep distances
That challenge the spirit of man.

entered in;
And, like the very Muses following them,
Theano, and her Golden Sisterhood,
First of that chosen womanhood, by the
grace
Of whose heaven-walking souls the race
ascends,

Passed through the shining porch.

was no dream.

In the bright marble, under the sandalled
feet,

And in the glimmering columns as they
passed,

The reflex of their flowing vestments
glowed

White, violet, saffron, like another dawn.

* * * * *

Before them, through the temple's fragrant
gloom,

The Muses, in their dim half-circle,
towered;

And, in the midst, over the smouldering
myrrh,

The form of Hestia.

In her

mighty shadow,

Pythagoras, with a scroll in his right hand,

Arose and spoke.

"Our work is

well-nigh done.

Our enemies are closing round us now.
I have given the sacred scrolls into the
hands
Of Lysis; and, though all else be
destroyed,
If but a Golden Verse or two live on
In other lands, and kindle other souls
To seek the law, our work is not in vain.
If it be death that comes to us, we shall
lose
Nothing that could endure. It was not
chance
That sent us on this pilgrimage through
time,
But that which lives within us, the desire
Of gods, to know what once was dark in
heaven.
Gods were not gods who, in eternal bliss,
Had never known this wonder—the deep
joy
Of coming home. But we have purchased
it,
And now return, enriched with memories
Of mortal love, terrestrial grief and pain,
Into our own lost realm."

His

dark eyes flashed.
He lifted his proud head as one who
heard
Strains of immortal music even now.
He towered among the Muses in the dusk,
And then, as though he, too, were carved
in stone,
And all their voices breathed through his
own voice,
"Fear nothing now," he said. "Our foes
can steal
The burdens we lay down, but nothing
more.
All that we are we keep. They strike at
shadows
And cannot hurt us. Little as we may
know,
We have learned at least to know the
abiding Power
From these poor masks of clay. This dust,
this flesh,
All that we see and touch, are shadows of
it,
And hourly change and perish. Have we
not seen
Cities and nations, all that is built of

earth,
Fleeting into the darkness, like grey
clouds,
And only one thing constant—the great
law,
The eternal order of their march to death?
Have we not seen it written upon the
hills?
The continents and seas do not endure.
They change their borders. Where the
seas are now
Mountains will rise; and, where the land
was, once,
The dark Atlantic ends the world for man.
But all these changes are not wrought by
chance.
They follow a great order. It may be
That all things are repeated and reborn;
And, in their mighty periods, men return
And pass through their forgotten lives
anew.
It may be; for, at times, the mind recalls—
Or half recalls—the turning of a road,
A statue on a hill, a passing face. . . .
It may be; for our universe is bound
In rhythm; and the setting star will rise.

This many a cunning ballad-singer knows
Who haunts the mind of man with dark
refrains;
Or those deep poets who foretell in verse
The restoration of the world's great Year.
Time never fails. Not Tanais, or the Nile
Can flow for ever. They spring up and
perish;
But, after many changes, it may be
These, too, return, with Egypt and her
kings."

He paused a moment; then compassion,
grief,
Wonder and triumph, like one music,
spoke
Farewell to shadows, from his own deep
soul
Rapt, in pure vision, above the vanishing
world:

"The torrents drag the rocks into the sea.
The great sea smiles, and overflows the
land.
It hollows out the valleys and returns.
The sea has washed the shining rocks

away

And cleft the headland with its golden
fields

That once bound Sicily to her mother's
breast.

Pharos, that was an island, far from
shore

When Homer sang, is wedded now and
one

With Egypt. The wild height where
Sappho stood,

The beautiful, white, immortal
promontory,

Crowned with Apollo's temple, long ago
The struggling seas have severed from the
land.

And those fair Grecian cities, Helice

And Buris, wondering fishermen see, far
down,

With snowy walls and columns all aslant,
Trembling under the unremembering
wave.

The waters of Anigris, that were sweet
As love, are bitter as death. There was a
time

When Etna did not burn. A time will come

When it will cease to burn; for all things
change;
And mightier things by far have changed
than these
In the slow lapse of never-ending time.
I have seen an anchor on the naked hills,
And ocean-shells among the mountain-
tops.
Continents, oceans, all things pass away;
But One, One only; for the Eternal Mind
Enfolds all changes, and can never
change."

II. DEATH IN THE TEMPLE

Night on Crotona, night without a star.
I heard the mob, outside the Temple,
roaring
*Death to Pythagoras! Death to those
who know!*

Before the flushed white columns, in the
glare
Of all those angry torches, Cylon stood

Wickedly smiling. "They have barred the doors.

Pythagoras and his forty chosen souls
Are all within. They are trapped, and they shall die.

It will be best to whet the people's rage
 Before we lay the axe, or set the torch
Against the Muses' temple. One wild
howl

Of 'sacrilege' may defeat us."—This he
called

"Faith in the people."

He

moistened his dry lips,
And raised his hand. The savage
clamouring ceased.

One breathless moment, ere he spoke, he
paused,

Gathering his thoughts. His thin white
weasel face

Narrowed, his eyes contracted. In their
pain

—Pain pitiable, a torment of the mind—
A bitter memory burned, of how he sued
To join that golden brotherhood in vain.
For when the Master saw him, he

discerned

A spirit in darkness, violent, empty of
thought,

But full of shallow vanity, cunning lies,
Intense ambition.

All now was

turned to hate;

Hate the destroyer of men, the wrecker of
cities,

The last disease of nations; hate, the fire
That eats away the heart; hate, the lean rat
That gnaws the brain, till even reason
glares

Like madness through blind eyes; hate, the
thin snake

That coils like whip-cord round the
victim's soul

And strangles it; hate, that slides up
through his throat,

And with its flat and quivering head
usurps

The function of his tongue,—to sting and
sting,

Till all that poison which is now his life
Is drained, and he lies dead; hate, that
still lives,

And for the power to strike and sting
again,
May yet destroy this world.

So

Cylon stood
Quivering a moment, in the fiery glare,
Over the multitude.

Then, in his

right hand,
He shook a roll of parchment over his
head,

Crying, *The Master said it!*

At

that word,
A snarl, as of a myriad-throated beast,
Broke out again, and deepened into a roar

—
*Death to Pythagoras! Death to those
who know!*

Cylon upheld his hand, as if to bless
A stormy sea with calm. The howling
died
Into a deadly hush. With twisted lips
He spoke.

"This is their Scroll, the
Sacred Word,
The Secret Doctrine of their Golden
Order!
Hear it!"

Then, interweaving truth
with lies,
Till even the truth struck like a venomed
dart
Into his hearers' minds, he read aloud
His cunningly chosen fragments.

the end,
He tore the scroll, and trampled it
underfoot.
"Ye have heard," he said. "Ye are kin to
all the beasts!
And, when ye die, your souls again
inhabit
Bodies of beasts, wild beasts, and beasts
of burden.
Even yet more loathsome—he that will
not starve
His flesh, and tame himself and all
mankind
To bear this golden yoke shall, after

death,
Dwell in the flesh of swine. He that
rejects
This wisdom shall, hereafter, seek the
light
Through endless years, with toads, asps,
creeping things.
Thus would they exile all our happier
gods!
Away with Bacchus and his feasts of joy!
Back, Aphrodite, to your shameful foam!
Men must be tamed, like beasts.

Master said it!
And wherefore? There are certain
lordly souls
Who rise above the beasts, and talk with
gods.
These are his Golden Brotherhood; these
must rule!
Ye heard that verse from Homer—whom
he loves—
Homer, the sycophant, who could call a
prince
'The shepherd of his people.' What are ye,
Even in this life, then, but their bleating

flocks?

The Master said it!

Hon

—his demi-god,
Ye know his kind; ye know whence
Homer sprang;
An old blind beggarman, singing for his
food,
Through every city in Greece"—(This
Cylon called
Honouring the people)—"already he is
out-worn,
Forgotten, without a word for this young
age;
And great Pythagoras crowns him!

they choose
Their Golden Brotherhood, they lay down
their laws,
Declaring none may rule until he learn,
Prostrate himself in reverence to the
dead,
And pass, through golden discipline, to
power
Over himself and you; but—mark this
well—

Under Pythagoras! Discipline! Ah, that
path
Is narrow and difficult. Only three
hundred souls,
Aristocrats of knowledge, have attained
This glory. It is against the people's will
To know, or to acknowledge those that
know,
Or let their knowledge lead them for one
hour.
For see—see how the gods have driven
them mad,
Even in their knowledge! In their own
Sacred Scroll,
Pythagoras, who derives you from the
beasts,
Affirms that earth, this earth beneath our
feet,
Spins like a little planet round the sun!"

A brutal bellowing, as of Asian bulls,
Boomed from a thousand mouths. (This
Cylon called

The laughter of the people and their
gods.)

He raised his hand. It ceased.

"T

is their knowledge,
And *this*," he cried, "their charter to
obscure
What all men know, the natural face of
things.
This proves their right to rule us from
above.
They meet here nightly. Nightly they
conspire
Against your rights, your liberties, and
mine.
Was it not they who, when the people rose
In Sybaris, housed her noble fugitives
here?
And was it not Pythagoras who refused
To send them back to Sybaris and their
death?
Was it not this that plunged us into war
With Sybaris; and, when victory crowned
our arms,
Who but Pythagoras robbed us of its
fruits?
We gathered booty, and he called it theft.
We burned their palaces, and he called it
hate.

We avenged our sons. He called it
butchery,
And said the wild beast wakes again in
man.
What have we gained, then? Nothing but
the pride
Of saving those Pythagoras wished to
save;
Counting gold dross, and serving his pure
gods.
The Master said it. What is your
judgment, then?"
He stretched one hand, appealing to the
crowd,
And one to the white still Temple.

"1

Death! Death!"
Under the flaring torches, the long waves
Of tense hot faces opened a thousand
mouths,
Little blue pits of shadow that raced along
them,
And shook the red smoke with one
volleying roar,—
*Death to Pythagoras! Death to those
who know!*

* * * * *

But, in the Temple, through those massive
walls,
While Cylon spoke, no whisper had been
heard;

 Only, at times, a murmur, when he
paused,
As of a ninth wave breaking, far away.

The half-moon of the Muses, crowned
with calm,
Towered through the dimness. Under their
giant knees,
In their immortal shadow, those who
knew
How little was their knowledge waited
death
Proudly, around their Master. Robed in
white,
Beautiful as Apollo in old age,
He stood amongst them, laying a gentle
hand,
One last caress, upon that dearest head
Bowed there before him, his own
daughter's hair.

Then, tenderly, the god within him moved
His mortal lips; and, in the darkness
there,
He spoke, as though the music of the
spheres
Welled from his heart, to ease the hurts of
death.

"Not tears, beloved. Give it welcome,
rather!
Soon, though they spared us, this blind
flesh would fail.
They are saving us the weary mile or two
That end a dusty journey. The dull stains
Of travel; the soiled vesture; the sick
heart
That hoped at every turning of the road
To see the Perfect City, and hoped in vain,
Shall grieve us now no more. Now, at the
last,
After a stern novitiate, iron tests,
And grinding failures, the great light
draws near,
And we shall pass together, through the
Veil."
He bowed his head. It was their hour of

prayer;
And, from among the Muses in the dark,
A woman's voice, a voice in ecstasy,
As if a wound should bless the sword that
made it,
Breathed through the night the music of
their law:

*Close not thine eyes in sleep
Till thou hast searched thy memories of
the day,
Graved in thy heart the vow thou
didst not keep,
And called each wandering thought back
to the way.*

*Pray to the gods! Their aid,
Their aid alone can crown thy work
aright;
Teach thee that song whereof all
worlds were made;
Rend the last veil, and feed thine eyes
with light.*

*Nought shall deceive thee, then.
All creatures of the sea and earth and*

air,

*The circling stars, the warring tribes
of men
Shall make one harmony, and thy soul
shall hear.*

*Out of this prison of clay
With lifted face, a mask of struggling
fire,
With arms of flesh and bone stretched
up to pray,
Dumb, thou shalt hear that Voice of thy
desire.*

*Thou that wast brought so low;
And through those lower lives hast risen
again,
Kin to the beasts, with power at last
to know
Thine own proud banishment and diviner
pain;*

*Courage, O conquering soul!
For all the boundless night that whelms
thee now,
Though worlds on worlds into that*

*darkness roll,
The gods abide; and of their race art
thou!*

There was a thunder of axes at the doors;
A glare as of a furnace; and the cry,
*Death to Pythagoras! Death to those
who know!*

Then, over the streaming smoke and the
wild light
That like a stormy sunset sank away
Into a darker night, the deeper mist
Rolled down, and of that death I knew no
more.

II

ARISTOTLE

I. YOUTH AND THE SEA

The mists unfolded on a sparkling coast
Washed by a violet sea.

It was no
dream.

The clustering irised bubbles in the foam,
The grinding stir as through the shining
pebbles

The wave ran back; the little drifts of
smoke

Where wet black rocks dried grey in the
hot sun;

The pods of sea-weed, crackling
underfoot,

All told me this.

My comrade at my
side,

Moved like a shadow. I turned a
promontory,

And like a memory of my own lost youth,

Shining and far, across the gulf I saw

Stagira, like a little city of snow,

Under the Thracian hills.

Nothing
had changed.

I saw the City where that Greek was born
Who ranged all art, all life, and lit a fire
That shines yet, after twice a thousand
years;
And strange, but strange as truth, it was to
hear
No slightest change in that old rhythmic
sound
Of waves against the shore.

Then,

at my side,
My soul's companion whispered, all
unseen,
'Two thousand years have hidden him
from the world,
Robed him in grey and bearded him with
eld,

Untrue to his warm life. There was a
time
When he was young as truth is; and the
sun
Browned his young body, danced in his
young grey eyes;
And look—the time is now.'

Then

as he spoke,

I saw among the rocks on my right hand,
Lying, face downward, over a deep rock-
pool,
A youth, so still that, till a herring-gull
swooped
And sheered away from him with a
startled cry
And a wild flutter of its brown mottled
wings,
I had not seen him.

Quietly we

drew near,
As shadows may, unseen.

He

pored intent
Upon a sea-anemone, like a flower
Opening its disk of blue and crimson rays
Under the lucid water.

He

stretched his hand,
And, with a sea-gull's feather, touched its
heart.
The bright disk shrank, and closed, as
though a flower
Turned instantly to fruit, ripe, soft, and
round

As the pursed lips of a sea-god hiding
there.

They fastened, sucking, on the quill and
held it.

Young Aristotle laughed. He rose to his
feet.

"Come and see this!" he called.

the cliff

Nicomachus arose, and drawing his robe
More closely round him, crossed the
slippery rocks
To join his son.

There, side by
side, they crouched
Over the limpid pool,—the grey
physician
And eager boy.

"See, how it grips
the feather!
And grips the rock, too. Yet it has no
roots.

Your sea-flowers turn to animals with
mouths.

Take out the quill. Now it turns back
again

Into a flower; look—look—what lovely
colours,
What marvellous artistry.

This

never was formed
By chance. It has an aim beyond this pool.
What does it mean? This unity of design?
This delicate scale of life that seems to
ascend
Without a break, through all the forms of
earth
From plants to men? The sea-sponge that I
found
Grew like a blind rock-rooted clump of
moss
Dilating in water, shrinking in the sun;
I know it for a strange sea-animal now,
Shaped like the brain of a man. Can it be
true
That, as the poets fable in their songs
Of Aphrodite, life itself was born
Here, in the sea?"

Nicomachus

looked at him.

"That's a dark riddle, my son. You will
not hear

An answer in the groves of Academe,
Not even from Plato. When you go to
Athens
Next year, remember, among the loftiest
flights
Of their philosophy, that the living truth
Is here on earth if we could only see it.
This, this at least, all true Asclepiads
know.
Remember, always, in that battle of
words,
The truth that father handed down to son
Through the long line of men that served
their kind
From Æsculapius, father of us all,
To you his own descendant:—naught
avails
In science, till the light you seize from
heaven
Shines through the clear sharp fact
beneath your feet.
This is the test of both—that, in their
wedding,
The light that was a disembodied dream
Burns through the fact, and makes a
lanthorn of it,

Transfigures it, confirms it, gives it new
And deeper meanings; and itself, in
turn,
Is thereby seen more truly.

Use

your eyes;
And you, or those that follow you, will
outsoar
Pythagoras.

He believed the soul
descends
From the pure realm of gods; is clothed
with clay;
And, struggling upward through a myriad
forms,
After a myriad lives and deaths, returns
Enriched with all those memories, lord of
all
That knowledge, master of all those griefs
and pains
As else it could not be, home to the gods,
Itself a god, prepared for the full bliss,
The living consummation of the whole.
Earth must be old, if all these things are
true.
But take this tale and read it. If it seem

Only a tale, the light in it has turned
Dark facts to lanthorns for me. There are
tales
More true than any fragment of the truth.

One of his homeless clan (who came to
me
Dying), his last disciple's wandering son,
Gave me the scroll. I give it now to you,

The young swift-footed runner with the
fire.
You'll find strange thoughts; and, woven
into the close,
His Golden Verses, with a thought more
strange."

Then, from his breast, the Asclepiad drew
a scroll,
Smooth as old ivory, honey-stained by
time,
A wand of whispering magic; and the boy
Seized it with brown young hands.

father smiled
And turned away, between the shining

pools

To seek Stagira. Under his sandalled feet
The sea-weeds crackled. His footsteps
crunched away

Along the beach.

Upon a sun-

warmed rock

The boy outspread the curled papyrus-
roll,

Keeping each corner in place with a
small grey stone.

There, while the white robe drifting down
the coast

Grew smaller and smaller, till at last it
seemed

A flake of vanishing foam, he lay full
length,

Reading the tale.

The salt on his

brown skin

Dried to a faint white powder in the sun.

Over him, growing bold, the peering gulls
Wheeled closer, as he lay there, tranced
and still;

Till, through the tale, the golden verses
breathed

Like a returning music, rhythmic tones
Changed by new voices, coloured by new
minds,
Yet speaking still for one time-conquering
soul,
As on the shore the wandering ripples
changed
And tossed new spray-drops into the
sparkling air,
Yet pulsed with the ancient breathing of
the sea:

*Guard the immortal fire.
Honour the glorious line of the great
dead.
To the new height let all thy soul
aspire;
But let those memories be thy wine and
bread.*

*Quench not in any shrine
The smouldering storax. In no human
heart
Quench what love kindled. Faintly
though it shine,
Not till it wholly dies the gods depart.*

*Truth has remembering eyes.
The wind-blown throng will clamour at
Falsehood's gate.*

*Has Falsehood triumphed? Let the
world despise
Thy constant mind. Stand thou aside,
and wait.*

*Write not thy thoughts on snow.
Grave them in rock to front the
thundering sky.*

*From Time's proud feast, when it is
time to go,
Take the dark road; bid one more world
good-bye.*

*The lie may steal an hour.
The truth has living roots, and they
strike deep.*

*A moment's glory kills the rootless
flower,
While the true stem is gathering strength
in sleep.*

*Out of this earth, this dust,
Out of this flesh, this blood, this living*

tomb;

*Out of these cosmic throes of wrath
and lust,
Breaks the lost splendour from the
world's blind womb.*

*Courage, O conquering soul!
For all the boundless night that whelms
thee now,
Though suns and stars into oblivion
roll,
The gods abide, and of their race art
thou.*

II. THE EXILE

Time dwindled to a shadow. The grey
mist,
Wreathed with old legends, drifted
slowly away
From the clear hill-top, where the
invisible wings
Had brought me through the years.

was no dream.

Clearly, as in a picture, at my feet,
Among dark groves, the columned
temples gleamed,
And I saw Athens, in the sunset, dying.

Dying; for though her shrines had not yet
lost
One radiant grain of what lies crumbling
now
Like a god's bones upon the naked hills;
 Though the whole city wound through
gate on gate
Of visionary splendour to one height
Where, throned above this world, the
Parthenon
Smiled at the thought of Time, her violet
crown
Was woven of shadows from a darker
realm,
And I saw Athens, dying.

From

that hill—

The hill of Lycabettus—on our right
Eridanus flowed, Ilissus on the left,
Girdling the City like two coils of fire.

Then, as a spirit sees, I saw, unseen,
One standing near me on the bare hillside,
Still as a statue, gazing to the west;
So still that, till his lengthening shadow
crept
Up to my feet, the wonder of the City
Withheld my gaze from something more
august
In that one lonely presence.

Eart

and sun,
On their great way, revealed him, with the
touch
Of his long stealing shadow; yet it seemed
The power that cast it was no mortal
power.
He towered against the dying gleams
below
Like Truth in exile.

On him, too, at

last
The doom had fallen. Claspng his grey
robe
More closely round him, Aristotle looked
Long, long, at his proud City. She had lost
More glories in that sunset than she knew;

For, though the sun went down in kingly
gold
To westward, on that darkening eastern
hill,
The bearer of a more celestial fire
Now looked his last on Athens.

C

how changed,
Was this grey form from that immortal
youth
Who read the Golden Verses by the sea.
His brow was furrowed now; and, on
his face,
Life, with her sharp-edged tools of joy
and pain,
Had deeply engraved a legend of her
own.

There, as his lengthening shadow had
drawn my gaze,
He seemed himself a shadow of vaster
things,
A still dark portent of those moving
worlds
Whose huge events, unseen and far away,
Had led him thither; and, as he once had

shaped

Their course, now shaped his destiny and
doom.

He had ranged all art, all science. He had
shaped

Kingdoms and kings, by virtue of his part
In the one all-shaping Mind. Had he not
lived,

The world that never knows its noblest
powers

Had moved, with half mankind, another
way.

There, looking backward, through his life,
he knew

That, though the gods conceal their ways
from men,

Yet in their great conjunctures there are
gleams

That show them at their work. Theirs was
the word,

Twenty years back, when Philip of
Macedon

Summoned him, as the uncrowned king of
thought,

To teach his eaglet how to use his wings.

For, by that thought, and by the
disciplined power,
The sovran power of judgment, swift to
seize
Causes, effects, and laws, and wield the
blind
Unreasoning mass, he had wellnigh
brought to birth
What Plato saw in vision—a State
enthroned
Above the flux of time, Hellas at one,
A harmony of cities, each a chord
In an immortal song of Beauty and Truth,
Freedom and Law. His was the moving
power,
Not wholly aware, that strove to an end
unseen;
And in that power had Alexander reigned.
Autocrator of the Greek hegemony,
He had rolled all Asia back into the
night.
Satraps of Persia, the proud kings of Tyre,
Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt, all bowed
down;
And Alexander shaped the conquered
world,

But Aristotle shaped the conqueror's
mind.
He had shaped that mind to ends not all
its own.
His was the well-thumbed Odyssey that
reposed
Under the conqueror's pillow; his the
love,
Fragrant with memories of the hills and
sea,
That had rebuilt Stagira; his the voice
In the night-watches; his the harnessed
thoughts
That, like immortal sentries, mounted
guard
In the dark gates of that world-quelling
mind.
His was the whisper, the dark vanishing
hint,
The clue to the riddle of slowly emerging
life,
That, imaged in Egyptian granite, rose
Before the silent conqueror when he
stared
At that strange shape, half human and half
brute,

The Sphinx, who knew the secret of the
world
And smiled at him, and all his victories,
Under the desert stars, while the deep
night
Silently deepened round him.

Fa1

away,
In Athens, towered the bearer of the fire.
His was the secret harmony of law
That, while the squadrons wheeled in
ordered ranks,
Each finding its full life only in the
whole,
Flashed light upon the cosmos; his the
quest
That taught the conqueror how to honour
truth
And led him, while he watered his proud
steeds
In all the streams from Danube to the
Nile,
To send another army through the wilds,
Ten thousand huntsmen, ranging hills and
woods
At Aristotle's hest, for birds and beasts;

So that the master-intellect might lay hold
 Upon the ladder of life that mounts
through Time,
From plants to beasts, and up, through
man, to God.
So all the might of Macedon had been
turned
To serve the truth, and to complete his
work
At Athens, for the conquering age to
come;
When Athens, like the very City of Truth,
Might shine upon all nations, and might
wear,
On her clear brows, his glory as her own.

Then came a flying rumour through the
night.

Earth's overlord, the autocrator, his
friend,
Alexander the Great had fallen in
Babylon.

A little cup of poison, subtle drops
Of Lethe—in a cup of delicate gold,—
And the world's victor slept, an iron
sleep;

The conqueror, stricken in his conquered
city,
Cold, in the purple of Babylon, lay dead:
And the slow tread of his armies as they
passed,
Soldier by soldier, through that chamber
of death,
To look their last upon his marble face,
Pulsed like a muffled drum across the
world.
Had Aristotle's cunning mixed the draught
That murdered tyranny? Let that
whispered lie
Estrange the heart of Macedon.

in Athens,
It was enough, now that his friend lay
dead,
To know that, as the body is rent away
From the immortal soul, his greatness
now
Had lost its earthly stay. His mighty mind
Walked like a ghost in Athens. It was
enough
To hint that he had taught his king too
well;

Served him too well; and played the spy
for him;
While, for main charge, since he had
greatly loved
The mother who had borne him, since he
had poured
His love out on her tomb, it would suffice
 To snarl that rites like these were
meant for gods
And that this man who had seen behind
the world
The Mover of all things, the eternal God,
The supreme Good, by these fond rites of
love,
Too simple and too great, too clear, too
deep,
Had robbed the little sophists of their
dues
And so blasphemed against their gods of
clay.

* * * * *

Hurrying footsteps neared. He turned and
saw
His young adopted son and Tyrtamus.

"Nicanor! Theophrastus!—nay, lift up
Your heads. You cannot bring me bitterer
news
Than I foresaw. I must be brought to
judgment.
But on what grounds?"—

"Dear

father of us all——"

The youth, Nicanor, answered, "When the
crowd

Grins in the very face of those who ask,
Or think, or dream that truth should be
their guide;

Nay, grins at truth itself, as at a fool
Tricked in his grandsire's rags, a rustic
oaf,

A blundering country simpleton who
gapes

At the great city's reeling dance of lies,
How can the grounds be wanting?"

true grounds,"

His 'Theophrastus' muttered, "we know
too well.

Eurymedon, and the rest, those gnat-like
clans,

The sophists' buzzing swarms, desire a
change.

They hold with Heraclitus—all things
change."

His irony stung the youth. His grey eyes
gleamed.

His voice grew harsh with anger. "Ay, all
things change!

So justice and injustice, right and wrong,
Evil and good, must wear each other's
cloaks;

And, in that chaos, when all excellence
And honour are plucked down, and the
clear truth

Trampled into the dirt, themselves may
rise.

Athens is dying."

"They speak

truly enough

Of all that they can know," the master
said.

"Change is the rhythm that draws this
world along.

They see the change. Its law they cannot
see.

But man who is mortal in this body of

earth

Has also a part, by virtue of his reason,
In an enduring realm. Their prophet knew
And heard what sophists have no souls to
hear,—

The Harmony that includes the pulse of
change;
The divine Reason, past the flux of things;
The eternal Logos, ordering the whole
world."

And, as he spoke, I heard, through his
own words,

Tones that were now a part of his own
mind,

The murmur of that old legend which he
read

So long ago, in boyhood, by the sea.

*Time never fails. Not Tanais or the Nile
Can flow for ever. All things pass away
But One, One only; for the eternal Mind
Enfolds all changes, and can never
change.*

Tyrtamus touched his arm. "Time presses
now.

Come with us. All is ready. On the coast,

In a lonely creek, the quiet keel is
rocking.
Three trusty sailors wait us, and at dawn
We, too, shall find new life in a new
world
With all that could endure. The voyager
knows
The blindness of the cities. Each believes
Its narrow wall the boundary of the
world;
And when he puts to sea, their buzzing
cries
Fade out behind him like a wrangle of
bees."—

"If I remain, what then?"—

The

hill-top shone
In the last rays. Athens was growing dark.
Tyrtaeus answered him. "A colder cup
Of hemlock, and the fate of Socrates."
The Master looked at Athens. Far away
He traced the glimmering aisle of olive-
trees
Where, for so long, with many a youthful
friend

He had walked, and taught, and striven
himself to learn.
Southward, below the Acropolis, he
could see
The shadowy precincts of the Asclepiads,
Guarding their sacred spring, the natural
fount,
Loved for his father's memory.

beside,
The Dionysiac theatre, like a moon
Hewn from the marble of Hymettus,
gleamed,
A silvery crescent, dying into a cloud.
There, though the shade of Sophocles had
fled,
Long since, he heard even now in his
deep soul
The stately chorus on a ghostly stage
Chanting the praise of thought that builds
the city,
Hoists the strong sail to cross the hoary
sea,
Ploughs the unwearied earth, yokes the
wild steed
And the untamed mountain-bull; thought

that contrives
Devices that can cure all ills but death:
*Of all strong things none is more strong
than man;*
*Man that has learned to shield himself
from cold*
*And the sharp rain; and turns his
marvellous arts*
Awhile to evil; and yet again, to good;
*Man that is made all-glorious with his
city*
*When he obeys the inviolable laws
Of earth and heaven; but when, in subtle
pride,*
*He makes a friend of wrong, is driven
astray*
*And broken apart, like dust before the
wind.*

All now, except the heights had died
away
Into the dark. Only the Parthenon raised
A brow like drifted snow against the
west.

He watched it, melting into the flood of
night

With all those memories.

Then he

turned and said,

"If in a moment's thoughtless greed I
grasped

The prize that Athens offers me to-night,
She is not so rich but this might make her
poor.

Death wears a gentle smile when we
grow old;

And I could welcome it. But she shall not
stain

Her hands a second time. Let Athens
know

That Aristotle left her, not to save
His last few lingering days of life on
earth

But to save Athens.

I have truly

loved her,

Next to the sea-washed town where I was
born,

Best of all cities built by men on earth.

But there's another Athens, pure and
white,

Where Plato walks, a City invisible,

Whereof this Athens is only a dim
shadow;
And I shall not be exiled from that City."

The hill-top darkened. The blind mist
rolled down;
The voices died. I saw and heard no
more.

III. MOVING EASTWARD

I

FARABI AND AVICENNA

*Grey mists enfolded Europe; and I
heard
Sounds of bewildered warfare in the
gloom.*

*Yet, like a misty star, one lampad moved
Eastward, beyond the mountains where
of old
Prometheus, in whose hand the fire first
shone,
Was chained in agony. His undying ghost
Beheld the fire returning on its course
Unquenched, and smiled from his dark
crag in peace,
Implacable peace, at heaven.*

E

*the fire
Followed the road Pythagoras trod, to
meet
The great new morning.*

The grey

*mists dissolved.
And was it I—or Shadow-of-a-Leaf—
that saw
And heard, and lived through all he
showed me then?*

*I saw a desert blazing in the sun,
Tufts of tall palm; and then—that City of
dreams.
As though an age went past me in an hour*

I saw the silken Khalifs and their court
Flowing like orient clouds along the
streets
Of Bagdad. In great Mahmoun's train I
saw
Nazzam, who from the Stagirite caught his
fire.
Long had he pondered on the Eternal
Power
Who, in the dark palm of His timeless
hand
 Rolls the whole cosmos like one
gleaming pearl.
Had he not made, in one pure timeless
thought,
All things at once, the last things with the
first,
The first life with the last; so that
mankind,
Through all its generations, co-exists
For His eternal eyes? Yet, from our own
Who in the time-sphere move, the Maker
hides
The full revolving glory, and unfolds
The glimmering miracles of its loveliness
Each at its destined moment, one by one,

In an æonian pageant that returns
For ever to the night whence it began.
Thus Nazzam bowed before the
inscrutable Power,
Yet found Him in his own time-
conquering soul.

I saw the hundred scribes of El Mansour
Making their radiant versions from the
Greek.

I saw Farabi, moving through the throng
Like a gaunt chieftain. His world-ranging
eyes
Beheld the Cause of causes.

In

his mind,
Lucid and deep, the reasoning of the
Greeks
Flooded the world with new celestial
light,
Golden interpretations that made clear
To mighty shades the thing they strove to
say.

He carried on their fire, with five-score
books

In Arabic, where the thoughts of Athens,
fledged
With orient colours, towered to the pure
realm
Of Plato; but, returning earthward still,
Would wheel around his Aristotle's mind
Like doves around the cote where they
were born.

Then the dark mists that round the vision
flowed
Like incense-clouds, dividing scene from
scene,
Rolled back from a wide prospect, and I
saw,

 As one that mounts upon an eagle's
wing,
A savage range of mountains, peaked with
snow,
To northward.

 They glowed faintly,
for the day
Was ending, and the shadows of the rocks
Were stretched out to the very feet of
night.

Yet, far away, to southward, I could see
The swollen Oxus, like a vanishing snake

That slid away in slippery streaks and
gleams
Through his grey reed-beds to the setting
sun.

Earthward we moved; and, in the tawny
plain,
Before me, like a lantern of dark fire
Bokhara shone, a city of shadowy towers
Crimsoned with sunset. In its turreted
walls
I saw eleven gates, and all were closed
Against the onrushing night.

Then,

at my side,
My soul's companion whispered, "You
shall see
The Gates of Knowledge opening here
anew.
Here Avicenna dwelt in his first youth."

At once, as on the very wings of night,
We entered. In the rustling musky gloom
Of those hot streets, thousands of falcon
eyes
Were round us; but our shadows passed
unseen

Into the glimmering palace of the Prince
Whom Avicenna, when all others failed,
Restored to life, and claimed for all
reward

Freedom to use the Sultan's library,
The pride of El Mansour; a wasted joy
To the new Sultan. Radiances were there
Imprisoned like the innumerable slaves
Of one too wealthy even to know their
names;

Beautiful Grecian captives, bought with
gold

From tawny traffickers in the Ionian sea.

A shadow, with a shadow at my side,
I saw him reading there, intent and still,
Under a silver lamp; his dusky brow
Wreathed with white silk, a goblet close
at hand

Brimmed with a subtle wine that could
uncloud

The closing eyes of Sleep.

Along

each wall

Great carven chests of fragrant cedar-
wood

Released the imprisoned magic,—radiant

scrolls,
Inscribed with wisdom's earliest wonder-
cry;
Dark lore; the secrets of the Asclepiads;
History wild as legend; legends true
As history, all being shadows of one light;
Philosophies of earth and heaven; and
rhymes
That murmured still of their celestial
springs.
He thrust his book aside, as in despair.
Our shadows followed him through the
swarming streets
Into the glimmering mosque. I saw him
bowed
Prostrate in prayer for light, light on a
page
Of subtle-minded Greek which many a
day
Had baffled him, when he sought therein
the mind
Of his forerunner.

I saw him as he
rose;
And, as by chance, at the outer gates he
met

A wandering vendor of old tattered books
Who, for three dirhems, offered him a
prize.
He bought it, out of gentle heart, and
found
A wonder on every page,—Farabi's
work,
Flooding his Greek with light.

could not see
What intricate law had swept it into his
hand;
But, having more than knowledge, he
returned
Through the dark gates of prayer; and,
pouring out
His alms upon the poor, lifted his heart
In silent thanks to God.

II

AVICENNA'S DREAM

But all these books—for him—were
living thoughts,
Clues to the darker Book of Nature's law;
For, when he climbed, a goat-foot boy, in
Spring
Up through the savage Hissar range, he
saw
A hundred gorges thundering at his feet
With snow-fed cataracts; torrents whose
fierce flight
Uprooted forests, tore great boulders
down,
Ground the huge rocks together; and every
year
Channelled raw gullies and swept old
scars away;
So that the wildered eagle beating up
To seek his last year's eyry, found that all
Was new and strange; and even the tuft of
pines
That used to guide him to his last year's
nest
Had vanished from the crags he knew no
more.

There, pondering on the changes of the
world,
Young Avicenna, with a kinglier eye,
Saw in the lapse of ages the great hills
Melting away like waves; and, from the
sea,
New lands arising; and the whole dark
earth
Dissolving, and reshaping all its realms
Around him, like a dream.

Thus

of his hills
And of their high snows flowing through
his thoughts
Was born the tale that afterwards was told
By golden-tongued Kazwini, and wafted
thence
Through many lands, from Tartary to
Pameer.

For, cross-legged, in the shadow of a
palm,
The hawk-eyed teller of tales, in years
unborn
Holding his wild clan spell-bound, would
intone
The deep melodious legend, flowing thus,

As all the world flows, through the
eternal mind.

I came one day upon an ancient City.
I saw the long white crescent of its wall
Stained with thin peach-blood, blistered
by the sun.

I saw beyond it, clustering in the sky,
Ethereal throngs of ivory minarets,
Tall slender towers, each crowned with
one bright pearl.

It was no desert phantom; for it grew
And sharpened as I neared it, till I saw,
Under the slim carved windows in the
towers,
The clean-cut shadows, forked and black
and small
Like clinging swallows.

In the
midst up-swam
The Sultan's palace with its faint blue
domes,
The moons of morning.

Wreaths

of frankincense
Floated around me as I entered in.
A thousand thousand warrior faces
thronged
The glimmering streets. Blood-rubies
burned like stars
In shadowy silks and turbans of all hues.

The markets glowed with costly
merchandise.
I saw proud stallions, pacing to and fro
Before the rulers of a hundred kings.
I saw, unrolled beneath the slender feet
Of slave-girls, white as April's breathing
snow,
Soft prayer-rugs of a subtler drift of
bloom
 Than flows with sunset over the blue
and grey
And opal of the drifting desert sand.

Princes and thieves, philosophers and
fools
Jostled together, among hot scents of
musk.
Dark eyes were flashing. Blood throbbed

darker yet.

Lean dusky fingers groped for hilts of
jade.

Then, with a roll of drums, through
Eastern gates,

Out of the dawn, and softer than its
clouds,

Tall camels, long tumultuous caravans,
Like stately ships came slowly stepping
in,

Loaded with shining plunder from Cathay.

I turned and asked my neighbour in the
throng

Who built that city, and how long ago.

He stared at me in wonder. "It is old,
Older than any memory," he replied.

"Nor can our fathers' oldest legend tell
Who built so great a city."

I

went my way.

And in a thousand ages I returned,
And found not even a stone of that great
City,

Not even a shadow of all that lust and
pride.

But only an old peasant gathering herbs

Where once it stood, upon the naked
plain.

"What wars destroyed it, and how long
ago?"

I asked him. Slowly lifting his grey head,
He stared at me in wonder.

"This

bleak land

Was always thus. Our bread was always
black

And our wine harsh. It is a bitter wind
That scourges us. But where these nettles
grew

Nettles have always grown. Nothing has
changed

In mortal memory here."

"Was

there not, once,

A mighty City?" I said, "with shining
streets,

Here, on this ground?" I spoke with bated
breath.

He shook his head and smiled, the pitying
smile

That wise men use to poets and to fools.

—
"Our fathers never told us of that City.
Doubtless it was a dream."

I

went my way.

And in a thousand ages I returned;
And, where the plain was, I beheld the
sea.

The sea-gulls mewed and pounced upon
their prey.

The brown-legged fishermen crouched
upon the shore,
Mending their tarry nets.

I asked

how long

That country had been drowned beneath
the waves.

They mocked at me. "His wits are
drowned in wine.

Tides ebb and flow, and fishes leap
ashore;

But all our harvest, since the first wind
blew,

Swam in deep waters. Are not wrecks
washed up

With coins that none can use, because they

bear

The blind old images of forgotten kings?
The waves have shaped these cliffs, dug
out these caves,
Rounded each agate on this battered
beach.

How long? Ask earth, ask heaven.
Nothing has changed.
The sea was always here."—

I went

my way.

And in a thousand ages I returned.
The sea had vanished. Where the ships
had sailed
Warm vineyards basked, among the
enfolding hills.

I saw, below me, on the winding road,
Two milk-white oxen, under a wooden
yoke,
Drawing a waggon, loaded black with
grapes.

Beside them walked a slim brown-ankled
girl.

I stood beneath a shadowy wayside oak
To watch them. They drew near.

was no dream.

Blood of the grape upon the wrinkled
throats

And smoking flanks of the oxen told me
this.

I saw the branching veins and satin skin
Twitch at the flickering touch of a fly. I
saw

The knobs of brass that sheathed their
curling horns,
The moist black muzzles.

Like many

whose coats are white,
Their big dark eyes had mists of blue.

breath

Was meadows newly mown.

By

all the gods

That ever wrung man's heart out in the
grave

I did not dream this life into the world.—

Blood of the grape upon the girl's brown
arms

And lean, young, bird-like fingers told me

this.

Her smooth feet powdered by the warm
grey dust;
The grape-stalk that she held in her white
teeth;
Her mouth a redder rose than Omar knew;
Her eyes, dark pools where stars could
shine by day;
These were no dream. And yet,—

long ago,"

I asked her, "did the bitter sea withdraw
Its foam from all your happy sun-burnt
hills?"

She looked at me in fear. Then, with a
smile,

She answered, "Nothing here has ever
changed.

My father's father, in his childhood,
played

Among these vines. That oak-tree where
you stand

Had lived a century, then. The parent oak
From which its acorn dropped had long
been dead.

But hills are hills. I never saw the sea.

Nothing has ever changed."

I

went my way.

Last, in a thousand ages I returned,
And found, once more, a City, thronged
and tall,

More rich, more marvellous even than
the first;

A City of pride and lust and gold and
grime,

A City of clustering domes and stately
towers,

And temples where the great new gods
might dwell.

But, turning to a citizen in the gates,
I asked who built it and how long ago.

He stared at me as wise men stare at
fools;

Then, pitying the afflicted, he replied
Gently, as to a child:

"The City

is old,

Older than all our histories. Its birth

Is lost among the impenetrable mists
That shroud the most remote antiquity.

None knows, nor can our oldest legends

tell
Who built so great a City."

my way. I went

IV. THE TORCH IN ITALY

LEONARDO DA VINCI

I

HILLS AND THE SEA

The mists rolled back. I saw the City of
Flowers
Far down, upon the plain; and, on the
slope
Beside us—we were shadows and
unseen,—

Giulio, the painter, sketching rocks and
trees.

We watched him working, till a pine-cone
crackled

On the dark ridge beyond us, and we saw,
Descending from the summits like a god,
A deep-eyed stranger with a rose-red
cloak

Fluttering against the blue of the distant
hills.

He stood awhile, above a raw ravine,
Studying the furrows that the rains had
made

Last winter. Then he searched among the
rocks

As though for buried gold.

As he

drew near

Giulio looked up and spoke, and he
replied.

Their voices rose upon the mountain air
Like a deep river answering a brook,
While each pursued his work in his own
way.

Giulio

What are you seeking? Something you
have lost?

The Stranger

Something I hope to find.

Giulio

dropped it here?
Was it of value? Not your purse, I hope.

You

The Stranger

More precious than my purse.

Giulio

lady's ring?
A jewel, perhaps?

You

The Stranger

A jewel of a
sort;
But it may take a thousand years to trace it
Back to its rightful owner.

Giulio (laughing)

O,
you are bitten
By the prevailing fashion. Since the
plough
Upturned those broken statues, all the
world
Is relic-hunting; but, my friend, you'll find
No Aphrodite here.

The Stranger (picking up a fossil)

And yet I
think
It was the sea, from which she rose alive,
That shaped these rocks and left these
twisted shells
Locked up, like stone in stone. They must

have lived
Once, in the sea.

Giulio

Ah, now I
understand.
You're a philosopher,—one of those who
tread
The dusty road to Nowhere, which they
call
Science.

The Stranger

All roads to truth are one
to me.

Giulio

Sir, you deceive yourself. Your road
can lead
Only to error. The Adriatic lies
How many miles away? We stand up here
On these unchanging hills; and yet, to fit
Your theory, you would roll the seas

above
The peaks of Monte Rosa.

The Stranger

But
these shells?
How did they come here?

Giulio

O
enough,
The sea being where it is, it was the
Flood
That left them here.

The Stranger

Then Noah
must have dropped them
Out of his Ark. They never crept so far;
And Noah must have dumped his ballast,
too,
Among our hills; for all those rippled
rocks

Up yonder were composed of blue sea-
clay.

I have found sea-weed in them, turned to
stone,

The claws of crabs, the skeletons of fish.

Think you that, if your Adriatic lay
Where it now lies, its little sidling crabs
Could scuttle through the Deluge to the
hills?

Your Deluge must have risen above the
tops

Of all the mountains. If it rose so high,
Then it embraced the globe, and made our
earth

One smooth blue round of water. When it
sank

What chasm received those monstrous
cataracts?

Or was the sun so hot it sucked them up
And turned them into a mist?

Is

not that tale

A racial memory, lingering in our blood,
Of realms that now lie buried in the sea,
Or isles that heaved up shining from the
deep

In old volcanic throes?

Giulio

I

must confess

I always feel a pang, sir, when I see
A man of talent wasting his fine powers
On this blind road.

The Stranger

Show me

a better way.

Giulio

The way of Art, sir.

The Stranger

Yes.

That is a road

I have wished that I might travel. But are
you sure

Our paths are not eventually the same?

Why have you climbed up here? To paint

the truth,
As you perceive it, in those rocks and
trees.
Suppose that, with your skill of hand, you
saw
The truth more clearly, saw the lines of
growth,
 The bones and structure of the world
you paint,
And the great rhythm of law that runs
through all,
Might you not paint them better even than
now?
Might you not even approach the final
cause
Of all our art and science,—the pure truth
Which also is pure beauty?

Giulio

leaps
Like lightning to that mark, sir, and can
waive
These pains and labours.

The Stranger

Oh, I
have no doubt
That you are right. I speak with
diffidence,
And as a mere spectator; one who likes
To know, and seizes on this happy chance
Of learning what an artist really thinks.

Giulio

We artists, sir, are not concerned with
laws,
Except to break them. Genius is a law
Unto itself.

The Stranger

And that is why you've
made
Your wood-smoke blue against that
shining cloud?
Against the darker background of the hill
It is blue in nature also; but it turns
To grey against the sky.

Giulio

I

am not concerned
With trivial points.

The Stranger

But if they

point to truth
Beyond themselves, and through that
change of colour
Reveal its cause, and knit your scheme in
law;
Nay, as a single point of light will speak
To seamen of the land that they desire,
Transfiguring all the darkness with one
spark,
Would this be trivial? Sir, a touch will do
it.
Lend me your brush a moment. Had you
drawn
Your rocks here in the foreground, thus
and thus,
Following the ribbed lines of those beds
of clay

As the sea laid them, and the fire
upheaved
And cracked them, you'll forgive me if I
say
That they'd not only indicate the law
Of their creation; but they'd look like
rocks
Instead of——

Giulio

Pray don't
hesitate.

The Stranger

Speak
As a spectator only; but to me——
Sponges or clouds perhaps——

Giulio

artists, sir,
Aim at this very effect. To us, the fact

Is nothing. There is a kingdom of the
mind,
Where all things turn to dreams. Nothing
is true
In that great kingdom; and our subtlest
work
Is that which has no basis.

The Stranger

Th

I fear
My thoughts are all astray; for I believed
That kingdom to be more substantial far
Than anything we see; and that the road
Into that kingdom is the road of law
Which we discover here,—the Word
made Flesh.

Giulio

I do not understand you—quite. I fear
Yours is the popular view—that art
requires
Purposes, meanings, even moralities
With which we artists, sir, are not

concerned.

The Stranger

Oh, no. I merely inquire. I wish to hear
From one who knows. I am a little
puzzled.

You have dismissed so much—this outer
world

And all its laws; and now this other, too.

I am no moralist; but I must confess

That, in the greatest Art, I have always
found

A certain probity, a certain splendour
Of inner and outer constancy to law.

Giulio

All genius is capricious. You'll admit
That men who lived like beasts have
painted well.

The Stranger

Yes; but not greatly, except when their
own souls

Have gripped the beast within them by the
throat,
And risen again to reassert the law.

Giulio

Art lives by its technique, a fact the
herd
Will never understand. A noble soul
Is useless, if it cannot wield a brush.

The Stranger

May not technique include control and
judgment?
Alone, they are not enough; but, for the
heights,
More is required, not less. I'd even add
Some factors you despise.

Giulio

Your
shells, for instance?
And that mysterious and invisible sea?

The Stranger

The sea whence Beauty rose.

Giulio

You

have an eye
For Beauty, too. You are a lover of art
And you are rich. What opportunities
You throw away! Was it not you I saw
Yesterday, in the market-place at
Florence,
Buying caged birds and tossing them into
the air?

The Stranger

It may have been. I like to see them fly.
The structure of the wing,—I think that
men
Will fly one day.

Giulio

It was not pity,

then?

The Stranger

I'd not exclude it. As I said before,
I would include much.

Giulio

You
were speaking, sir,
Of Art. There are so few, so very few
Who understand what Art is.

The Stranger

For
still
Who know the few to choose.

Giulio

1
you'd care
To see some work of mine. I do not live
In Florence; but I'd like to set your feet
On the right way. We are a little group
Known to the few that know. You'd find
our works
Far better worth your buying than caged

birds.

Pray let me know your name, sir.

The Stranger

II

AT FLORENCE

I saw the house at Florence, cool and
white
With violet shadows, drowsing in the sun.
The fountain splashed and bubbled in the
court.
Beside it, in a space of softened light,
Under a linen awning, ten feet high,
Roofing a half-enclosure, where three
walls
Were tinted to a pine-wood's blue-black
shade,

I saw a woman seated on a throne,
And Leonardo, with his radiant eyes,
Glancing from his wet canvas to her face.

Her face was filled with music. Music
swelled
Above them, from a gallery out of sight;
And as the soft pulsation of the strings
Died into infinite distances, he spoke.
His voice was more than music. It was
thought
Ebbing and flowing, like a strange dark
sea.

"Listen to me; for I have things to say
That I can only tell the world through you.
Were you not just a little afraid of me
At first? You know by popular report
I dabble in Black Arts, and so I would
To keep you here, an hour or two each
day,
Until the mystery we have conjured up
Between us—there again, it came and
went—
Smiles at the centuries in their
masquerade

As you smiled, then, at me.

Not

mockery—quite—

Not irony either; something we evoked
That seems to have caught the ironist off
his guard,

And slyly observes the mocker's naked
heel.

So we'll defend humanity, you and I,
Against the worst of tyrannies,—the blind
sneer

Of intellectual pride. The subtle fool
And cunning sham at least shall meet one
gaze

More subtle, more secure; not yours or
mine,

But Nature's own—that calm, inscrutable
smile

Whereby each erring atomy is restored
To its true place, taught its true worth at
last,

And heaven's divine simplicity renewed.

Not yours or mine, Madonna. Could I
trust

To brush and palette or my skill of hand

For this? Oh, no! We need Black Arts, I
think,
Black Arts and incantations, or you'd
grow
Weary of sitting here.

Last night

I made
Five bubbles of glass—you blow them
with a pipe
Over a flame,—and set them there to
dance
Upon the fountain's feathery crest of
spray.
Piero thought it waste of time. He jeers
At these mechanical arts of mine. I
watched
That dance and learned a little of the
machine
We call the world. I left them leaping
there
To catch your eyes this morning, and
learned more.
So one thing leads to another. A device,
Mechanical as the spinning of the stars
In the Arch-Mechanic's Cosmos, woke a
gleam

Of wonder; and I lay these Black Arts
bare
To make you wonder more.

Bl:

Arts, Madonna;
For even such trifles may discover depths
Dark as the pit of death; as when I laid
Dice on a drum, and by their trembling
showed
Where underneath our armoured city
walls
The enemy dug his mines.

And now

—you smile,
To think how wars are won.

Catgut

and wood
Have served our wizardry. Yes; that's
why I set
Musicians in the gallery overhead,
To pluck their strings; and, while you
listened, so
Painted the living spirit that they bound
With their bright spells before me, in your
face.

Black Arts, Madonna, and cold-blooded,
too.

Oh, sheer mechanical, playing upon your
mind

And senses, as they too were instruments,
Or colours to be ground and mixed and
used

For purposes that were not yours at all,
Until the living Power that uses me
Breathes on this fabric, also made by
hands,

The inscrutable face that smiles all arts
away.

How many tales I have told you sitting
here

To make you see, according to my need,
The comedy of the world, its lights and
shades:

The sensual feast; the mockery of renown;
Youth and his innocent boastings,
unaware

How swiftly run the sands; Youth that
believes

His own bright scorn for others' aching
faults

Has crowned him conqueror; Youth so
nobly sure
That plans are all achievements; quite,
quite sure
Of his own victory where all others
failed;
Age, with blind eyes, or staring at defeat,
Dishonoured; Age, in honour, with a
wreath
Of fading leaves in one old trembling
hand,
 And at his feet the dark all-gulping
grave;
Envy, the lean and wizened witch behind
him,
Riding on death, like his own crooked
shadow,
Snapping at heaven with one
contemptuous hand,
As though she hated God; and, on her
face,
A mask of fairness; Envy, with those
barbs
Of wicked lightning darting from her
flesh;
Envy, whose eyes the palm and olive

wound;
Whose ears the laurel and myrtle pierce
with pain;
A fiery serpent eating at her heart;
A quiver on her back with tongues for
arrows.
Each of these pictures left its little
shadow,
A little memory in your spellbound face,
And so your picture smiles at all of these,
And at one secret never breathed aloud,
Because I think we knew it all too well.

Once only, in a riddle, I made you smile
At our own secret also, when I said
'If liberty be dear to you, Madonna,
Never discover that your painter's face
Is Love's dark prison.'

Sailing to

the south
From our Cilicia, you and I have seen
Beautiful Cyprus, rising from the wave;
Cyprus, that island where Queen Venus
reigned.
The blood of men was drawn to that
rough coast

As tides, on other shores, obey the moon.
Glens of wild dittany, winding through the
hills
From Paphos, her lost harbour, to the
peak
Of old Olympus, where she tamed the
gods,
Enticed how many a wanderer.

O

winds
Welcomed us, ruffling, crumpling the
smooth brine
Into a sea of violets. We drew near.
We heard the muffled thunder of the
surf!
What ships, what fleets had broken among
those rocks!
We saw a dreadful host of shattered hulls,
Great splintered masts, innumerable keels
With naked ribs, like skeletons of whales
All weltering there, half-buried in the
sand.
The foam rushed through them. On their
rotted prows
And weed-grown poops the sea-gulls
perched and screamed;

And all around them with an eerie cry
An icy wind was blowing.

It

would seem

Like the Last Judgment, should there ever
be

A resurrection of the ships we saw
Lying there dead. These things we saw
and live.

And now your picture smiles at all of
these.

The secret still evades me everywhere;
And everywhere I feel it, close at hand.
Do you remember when Vesuvius flamed
And the earth shivered and cracked
beneath our feet?

Ten villages were engulfed. I wandered
out

Among the smoking fragments of earth's
crust

To see if, in that breaking-up of things,
Nature herself had now perhaps unsealed
Some of her hidden wonders.

On

that day,

I found a monstrous cavern in the hills,

A rift so black and terrible that it dazed
me.
I stood there, with my back bent to an
arch,
My left hand clutching at my knee, my
right
Shading contracted eyes. I strained to see
Into that blackness, till the strong desire
To know what marvellous thing might lurk
within
Conquered my fear. I took a ball of thread
And tied one end to a lightning-blasted
tree.
I made myself a torch of resinous pine
 And entered, running the thread through
my left hand,
On, on, into the entrails of the world.

Oh, not Odysseus, when his halting steps
Crept through that monstrous hollow to
the dead,
Felt such a fearful loneliness as I;
For there were voices echoing through *his*
night,
And shadows of lost friends to welcome
him;

But my fierce road to knowledge clove its
way
Into a silence deeper than the grave,
Into a darkness where not even a ghost
Could stretch its hands out, even in
farewell.
And all that I could see around me there
Was my own smoking torchlight, walls of
rock
And awful rifts where other caverns
yawned.
And all that I could hear was my own
steps
Echoing through endless darkness, on and
on.

My thread ran out. My torch was burning
low,
When, through the darkness, I became
aware
Of something darker, looming up in front;
Solid as rock, and yet more strange and
wild
Than any shadow. My flesh and blood
turned cold
Before that awful Presence in the dark.

I left the thread behind me, and crept on;
Held up the guttering torch; and there, O
there,
I saw it, and I live.

A monstrous
thing
With jaws that might have crushed a ship,
and bones
That might upheave a mountain; a
Minotaur,
A dreadful god of beasts, now turned to
stone,
Like a great smoke-bleared idol. The
wild light
Smearred it with blood; a thing that once
had lived;
A thing that once might turn the sea to mist
 With its huge flounderings, and would
make a spoil
For kingdoms with the ships it drove
ashore.
The torchlight flared against it, and went
out;
And I groped back, in darkness. . . .

you smile.

Oh, what a marvel of enginery was there!
What giant thews and sinews once
controlled
The enormous hinges of the rock-bound
bones
I saw in my dark cavern. Yet it perished,
And all its monstrous race has perished,
too.
Was it all waste? Did it prepare the way
For lordlier races? Even, perhaps, for
men?

Only one life to track these wonders
home,
So many roads to follow. Never the light
Till all be travelled.

We will not

despise
Mechanical arts, Madonna, while we use
These marvellous living instruments of
ours.
Rather we'll seek to master for ourselves
The Master's own devices. Birds can fly,
And so shall men, when they have learned
the law
Revealed in every wing. Far off, I have

seen

Men flying like eagles over the highest
clouds;

Men that in ships like long grey swordfish
glide

Under the sea; men that in distant lands
Will speak to men in Italy; men that bring
The distant near, and bind all worlds in
one.

And yet—I shall not see it. I have
explored

This human instrument, traced its delicate
tree

Of nerves, discovering how the life-blood
flows

Out of the heart, through every branching
vein;

And how, in age, the thickening arteries
close

And the red streams no longer feed this
frame,

And the parched body starves at last and
dies.

I have built bridges. Armies tread them
now.

The rains will come. The torrents will

roll down
And sweep them headlong to the sea, one
day.
I have painted pictures. Let cicadas
chirrup
Of their brief immortality. I know
How soon these colours fade.

An

yet, and yet,
I do not think the Master of us all
Would set us in His outer courts at night
As the Magnificent, once, in the flush of
wine,
Set Angelo, to flatter an idle whim
And sculpture him a godhead out of snow.

The work's not wasted. In my youth I
thought
That I was learning how to live, and now
I see that I was learning how to die.
Then comes the crowning wonder. We
strip off
The scaffolding; for the law is learned at
last;
And our reality, Parian then, not snow,
Dares the full sun of morning, fronts the

gaze
Of its divine Pygmalion; lives and
breathes;
And knows, then, why it passed through
all those pains.

Now—the last touch of all! And, as this
face
Begins to breathe against those ancient
rocks,
Let music breathe these arts of mine
away."

Music awoke. It throbbed like hidden
wings
Above them. Then a minstrel's golden
voice,
As from a distance, on those wings arose
And poured the Master's passion into
song:

*Burn, Phoenix, burn;
And, in thy burning, take
All that love taught me, all I strove to
learn,
All that I made, and all I failed to*

make.

*If it be true
That from the fire thou rise
In splendour, as men say dead worlds
renew
Their light from their own embers
in the skies,*

*In thy fierce nest
I'd share that death with thee,
To make one shining feather on thy
breast
Of all I am, and all I strove to be.*

*The worthless bough
May kindle a rich coal;
And in our mingling ashes, how wilt thou
Know mine from thine, ere both
re clothe thy soul?*

*Now—as thy wings
Arise from this proud fire,
My dust in thy assumption mounts and
sings;
And, being a part of thee, I still*

aspire.

V. IN FRANCE

JEAN GUETTARD

I

THE ROCK OF THE GOOD VIRGIN

Who knows the name of Jean Guettard
to-day?
I wrestled with oblivion all night long.
At times a curtain on a lighted stage
Would lift a moment, and fall back again.
Once, in the dark, a sunlit row of vines
Gleamed through grey mists on his
invisible hill.

The mists rolled down. Then, like a
miser, Night
Caught the brief glory in her blind cloak
anew.

At dawn I heard the voice of Shadow-of-
a-Leaf
Breathing a quiet song. It seemed remote
And yet was near, as when the listener's
heart
Fills a cold shell with its remembered
waves.

"When I was young," said Jean Guettard,
 "My comrades and myself would
hide
Beneath a tall and shadowy Rock
 In summer, on the mountain-side.
The wind and rain had sculptured it—
 Such tricks the rain and wind will
play,—
To likeness of a Mother and Child;
 But wind and rain," said Jean
Guettard,
"Have worn the rocks for many a day."

"The peasants in that quiet valley,

Among their vineyards bending
there,
Called it the Rock of the Good Virgin,
And breathed it many an evening
prayer.

When I grew up I left my home
For dark Auvergne, to seek and
know
How all this wondrous world was made;
And I have learned," said Jean
Guettard,
"How rains can beat, and winds can
blow."

"When I came home," said Jean Guettard,
"Not fifty years had fled by.
I looked to see the Form I loved
With arms outstretched against the
sky.
Flesh and blood as a wraith might go.
This, at least, was enduring stone.
I lifted heart and eyes aglow,
Over the vines," said Jean Guettard.

...

"The rain had beaten, the wind had

blown,

The hill was bare as the sky that day.
Mother and Child from the height had
gone.

The wind and rain," said Jean
Guettard,
"Had crumbled even the Rock away."

"Shadow-of-a-Leaf," I whispered, for I
saw

The crosier of a fern against the grey;
And, as the voice died, he stood dark
before me.

"You sang as though you loved him. Let
the mists
Unfold."

He smiled. "See, first, that
Rock," he said,
"Dividing them."

At once,
through drifting wreaths
I saw a hill emerging, a green hill
Clothed with the dying rainbow of those
tears

The mist had left there. From the
rugged crest

Slowly the last thin veils dissolved away.
I saw the Rock upstanding on the height
So closely, and so near me, that I knew
Its kinship with the rocks of
Fontainebleau;
The sandstone whose red grains for many
an age
Had been laid down, under a vanished
sea;
A Rock, upthrust from darkness into light,
By buried powers, as power upthrust it
now
In the strong soul, with those
remembering hills,
Till, graven by frost and beaten by wind
and rain,
It slowly assumed the semblance of that
Form
Of Love, the Mother, holding in her arms
The Child of Earth and Heaven; a shape
of stone;
An image; but it was not made by hands.

Footsteps drew near. I heard an eager
voice
Naming a flower in Latin.

Up

they came—

Each with a bunch of wild flowers in his
hand,—

A lean old man, with snowy wind-blown
hair,

Panting a little; and, lightly at his side,
Offering a strong young arm, a sun-burnt

boy,
Of eighteen years, with darkly shining
eyes.

It was those eyes, deep, scornful, tender,
gay,

Dark fires at which all falsehood must
consume,

That told me who they were—the young
Guettard,

And his old grandsire.

Under the

Rock they stood.

"Good-bye. I'll leave you here," the old
man said.

"We've had good luck. These are fine
specimens.

The last, perhaps, that we shall find
together;

For when you leave your home to-
morrow, Jean,
I think you are going on a longer journey
Even than you know. Perhaps, when you
are famous,

 You will not be so proud as I should
be,
Were I still living, to recall the days
When even I, the old apothecary,
Could teach you something."

Jean

caught a wrinkled hand,
Held it between his own, and laughed
away
That shadow, but old Descurain looked at
him,
Proudly and sadly. "It will not rest with
you,
Or your affection, Jean. The world will
see to it.
The world that knows as much of you and
me,
As you and I of how that creeper grew
Around your bedroom window."

he spoke,

Along the lower slopes the mists began
To blow away like smoke. The patch of
vines
Crept out again; and, far below, I saw,
Sparkling with sun, the valley of the
Juine,
The shining river, and the small clear
town
Étampes, the grey old church, the
clustering roofs,
The cobbled square, the gardens, wet and
bright
With blots of colour.

"I have lived

my life
Out of the world, down there," Descurain
said,
"Compounding simples out of herbs and
flowers;
Reading my Virgil in the quiet evenings,
Alone, for all those years; and, then, with
you.
O fortunatos—Do we ever know
Our happiness till we lose it? You'll
remember
Those Georgics—the great praise of

jars,
The smell of the grey bunches of dried
herbs,
The little bedroom over the market-
square,
The thrifty little house where you were
born,
The life that all earth's great ones would
despise—
All these, perhaps, were needed, as the
hand
That led you, first, in childhood to the
hills.
You'll see strange links, threads of effect
and cause,
In complicated patterns, growing clear
And binding all these memories, each to
each,
And all in one; how one thing led to
another,
My simples to your love of plants and
flowers,
And this to your new interest in the haunts
That please them best—the kinds of earth,
the rocks,
And minerals that determine where they

grow,
Foster them, or reject them. You'll
discover
That all these indirections are not ruled
By chance, but by dark predetermined
laws.
You'll grope to find what Power, what
Thought, what Will,
Determined them; till, after many a year,
At one swift clue, one new-found link,
one touch,
They are flooded with a new transfiguring
light,
Deep as the light our kneeling peasants
know
When, dumbly, at the ringing of a bell
They adore the sacred elements; a light
That shows all Nature, of which your life
is part,
 Bound to that harmony which alone sets
free;
And every grain of dust upon its way
As punctual to its purpose as a star.

This Rock has played its part in many a
life.

We know it, for we see it every day.
No angelus ever rang, but someone's eyes
Were lifted to it; and, returning home,
The wanderer strains to see it from the
road.

What is it, then? It plays no greater part
Than any grain of dust beneath our feet,
Could we discern it. A dumb block of
stone,
A shadow in the mind, a thought of God,
A little fragment of the eternal order,
That postulates the whole.

If we

could see
The universal Temple in which it stands
We, too, should bow our heads; for if this
Form
Were shaped by Chance, it was the
selfsame Chance
That gave us love and death. In this the
fool
Descries a reason for denying all
To which our peasants kneel. The years to
come
(And you will speed them, Jean) will
rather make

This dust the floor of heaven."

old man laid
His bunch of herbs and flowers below the
Rock,
Smiled, nodded, and went his way.

it by chance,"
Thought Jean Guettard, "that grandad laid
them so;
Or by design; or by some vaster art
Transcending, yet including, all our
thoughts,
And memories, with those flowers and
that dumb stone,
As chords in its world-music? Why
should flowers
Laid thus"—he laid his own at the feet of
the Rock—
"Transfigure it with such beauty that it
stood
 Blessing him, from its arch of soft blue
sky
Above him, like a Figure in a shrine?"

He touched its glistening grains. "I think

that Ray
Was right," he murmured. "This was
surely made
Under the sea; sifted and drifted down
From vanished hills and spread in level
beds,
Under deep waters; compressed by the
sea's weight;
Upheaved again by fire; and now, once
more,
Wears down by way of the rain and brook
and river,
Back to the sea; but all by roads of law."
Then, looking round him furtively, to
make sure
No one was near, he dropped upon his
knees.
The mist closed over him. Rock and hill
were lost
In greyness once again.

II

MALESHERBES AND THE BLACK MILESTONES

Momei

were years,
Till, at the quiet whisper of Shadow-of-a-
Leaf,
Those veils withdrew, and showed
another scene.
I saw two dusty travellers, blithely
walking
With staffs and knapsacks, on a straight
white road
Lined with tall sentinel poplars as to
await
A king's return; but scarce a bird took
heed
Of those two travel-stained wanderers—
Jean Guettard
And Malesherbes, his old school-friend.

might see
Two wingless dots that crept along the
road.
The Duke rode by and saw two

vagabonds

With keenly searching eyes, as they
jogged on

To Moulins. Birds and Duke and horse
could see,

Against the sky, that old square prison-
tower,

The tall cathedral, the dark gabled roofs,
Thronging together behind its moated
wall;

But not one eye in all that wide green land
Saw what those two could see; and not
one soul

Espied the pilgrim thought upon its way
To change the world for man.

pilgrim thought!

Say rather the swift hunter, tracking down
More subtly than an Indian the dark spoor
Of his gigantic prey.

I saw them

halt

Where, at the white road's edge, a
milestone rose

Out of the long grass, like a strange
black gnome,

A gnome that had been dragged from his
dark cave
Under the mountains, and now stood there
dumb,
Striving to speak. But what?

"There!

There! Again!"
Cried Jean Guettard. They stood and
stared at it,
But not to read as other travellers use
How far themselves must journey.

knelt down
And looked at it, and felt it with their
hands.
A farmer passed, and wondered were
they mad.
For, when they hailed him, and his tongue
prepared
To talk of that short cut across the fields
Beside the mill-stream, they desired to
know
Whence the black milestone came. It was
the fourth
That they had passed since noon.

grinned at them.

"Black stones?" he said, "you'll find them
all the way
To Volvic now!"

"To Volvic,"

cried Guettard,
"Volcani vicus!"

They seized

their staffs again;

Halted at Moulins, only to break a crust
Of bread and cheese, and drink one bottle
of wine,

Then hastened on, following the giant
trail,

Milestone by milestone, till the scent
grew hot;

For now they saw, in the wayside
cottages,

The black stone under the jasmine's
clustering stars;

And children, at the half-doors, wondered
why

Those two strange travellers pushed the
leaves away

And tapped upon their walls.

At

last they saw,
Black as a thundercloud anchored to its
hill,
Above the golden orchards of Limagne,
The town of Riom. All its walls were
black.
Its turreted heights with leering gargoyles
crawled
Above them, like that fortress of old
Night
To which Childe Roland came.

slughorn's note
Challenged it, and they set no lance in
rest,
But dusty and lame, with strangely
burning eyes,
Those footpads, quietly as the ancient
Word,
Stole into that dark lair and sought their
prey.
Surely, they thought, the secret must be
known
To some that live, eat, sleep, in this grim
den.
Have they not guessed what monster lurks

behind

This blackness?

In the chattering

streets they saw

The throng around the fruit-stalls, and the
priest

Entering the Sainte Chapelle. With eyes of
stone

The statue of that lover of liberty

The chancellor, L'Hôpital, from his great
dark throne

Gazed, and saw less than the indifferent
sparrow

That perched upon his hand. Barefooted
boys

Ran shouting round the fountain in the
square.

It was no dream. Along the cobbled
street,

Clattering like ponies in their wooden
shoes,

Three girls went by with baskets full of
apples.

The princely butcher, standing at his door,
Rosily breathing sawdust and fresh blood,

Sleeked his moustache and rolled an

amorous eye.

It was no dream. They lived their light-winged lives

In this prodigious fabric of black stone,
Slept between walls of lava, drank their wine

In taverns whose black walls had risen in fire;

Prayed on the slag of the furnace; roofed their tombs

With slabs of that slaked wrath; and saw no more

Than any flock of birds that nightly roost
On the still quivering Etna.

was late,

Ere the two travellers found a wise old host

Who knew the quarries where that stone was hewn;

Too far for them that night. His inn could lodge them.

A young roast fowl? Also he had a wine,
The Duc de Berry, once. . . . Enough! they supped

And talked. Gods, how they talked and

questioned him,—
The strangest guests his inn had ever seen.
They wished to know the shape of all the
hills
Around those quarries. "There were
many," he said,
"Shaped at the top like this." He lifted up
An old round-bellied wine-cup.

the word
He wellnigh lost his guests. They leapt to
their feet.
They wished to pay their quittance and
press on
To see those hills. But, while they raved,
the fowl
Was laid before them, luscious, fragrant,
brown.
He pointed, speechless, to the gathering
dusk,
And poured their wine, and conquered.

Bon Dieu
Who made the sensual part of man be
praised,"
He said to his wife; "for if He had made a

world
Of pure philosophers, every tavern in
France
Might close its shutters, and take down its
sign."

So Jean Guettard and Malesherbes stayed
and supped;
And, ere they slept, being restless, they
went out
And rambled through the sombre streets
again.
They passed that haunted palace of
Auvergne,
Brooding on its wild memories and grim
birth;
And from the Sainte Chapelle, uplifting
all
That monstrous darkness in one lean
black spire
To heaven, they heard an organ muttering
low
As though the stones once more were
stirred to life
By the deep soul within. Then, arched and
tall,

In the sheer blackness of that lava,
shone
One rich stained window, where the
Mother stood,
In gold and blue and crimson, with the
Child.
They looked at it as men who see the life
And light of heaven through the Plutonian
walls
Of this material universe. They heard
The young-voiced choir, in silver-
throated peals,
Filling the night with ecstasy. They stood
Bareheaded in the dark deserted street,
Outcasts from all that innocence within,
And silent; till the last celestial cry,
Like one great flight of angels, ebbed
away.

III

THE SHADOW OF PASCAL

At daybreak they pressed on. Strange
hills arose
Clustering before them, hills whose
fragrant turf,
Softer than velvet, hid what savage
hearts!
At noon they saw, beside the road, a gash
Rending the sunlit skin of that green
peace;
An old abandoned quarry, half overgrown
With ferns, and masked by boughs.

left the road
And looked at it. Volcanic rock! A flood
Of frozen lava!
They marked its glossy blackness, the
rough cords
And wrinkles where, as the fiery waves
congealed,
It had crept on a little; and strangely there
New beauty, like the smile on truth's hard
face,
Gleamed on them. Never did bracken and
hart's tongue fern

Whisper a tale like those whose dauntless
roots
Were creviced in that grim rock. They
tracked it up
Through heather and thyme. They saw
what human eyes
Had seen for ages, yet had never seen,—
The tall green hill, a great truncated cone,
Robed in wild summer and haunted by the
bee,
But shaped like grey engravings that they
knew
Of Etna and Vesuvius.

Near its

crest
They saw the sunlight on a shepherd's
crook,
Bright as a star. A flock of nibbling sheep
Flowed round it like a cloud, a rambling
cloud
 With drifting edges that broke and
formed again
Before one small black barking speck that
flew
Swift as a bird about a cloud in heaven.
Thyme underfoot, wild honey in the

thyme;
But, under the thyme and honey, if eyes
could see,
In every runnel and crevice and slip and
patch,
A powdery rubble of pumice, black and
red,
Flakes of cooled lava and stones
congealed from fire.
It was no dream. A butterfly spread its
fans
White, veined with green, on a rock of
sunlit slag,
Slag of the seething furnaces below.
They reached the summit; and, under
them, beheld
The hollow cup, the crater, whence that
flood
Out of the dreadful molten heart of the
earth
Poured in red fury to create Auvergne.
But now, instead of smoke and fire, they
saw
Red of the heather in that deep grassy
hollow,
And heard, instead of the hissing of the

abyss,
The small grey locust, stridulant in the
sun.
They came to Clermont. All its dark old
streets
Were built of lava. By the *Place de
Jaude*,
O, strangely in their own swift race for
truth,
They met the phantom of an earlier fire!
They found the house where Pascal first
beheld
The sunlight, through a window in lava-
stone;
And many a time had passed, a brooding
child,
With all his deep celestial thoughts to
come,
Through that volcanic porch, but never
saw
The wonder of the walls wherein he
slept.
They saw, through mists, as I through
mists discerned
Their own strange drama, that scene
within the scene.

They climbed the very hill that Pascal
made
A beacon-height of truth—the Puy de
Dôme,
Where Florin Périer, at his bidding, took
His tubes of soft quicksilver; and, at the
base,
 And, at the summit, tested, proved, and
weighed
The pressure of that lovely body of light,
Our globe-engirdling air. On one swift
hint,
One flash of truth that Torricelli caught
From Galileo, and Pascal caught in turn,
He weighed that glory.

Ever
the drama grew.
The vital fire, in yet more intricate ways
(As life itself, enkindling point by point
In the dark formless embryo, grows to
power),
Coursed on, from mind to mind, each
working out
Its separate purpose, yet all linked in one.
For those two pilgrims, on the cone-
shaped hill

That Pascal knew, and yet had never
known,
Met his great spirit among the scoriac
flakes,
And found themselves, in vision, on that
pure height
Where all the paths to truth shall one day
meet.

They met his brooding spirit as they
climbed.

They passed the dead man's words from
mouth to mouth,

With new significance, deeper and more
strange

Even than they knew. "*We are on fire to
explore*

*The universe, and build our tower of
truth*

*Into the Infinite. Then the firm earth
laughs,*

*Opens, under its cracked walls, an
abyss.*"—

*Lavoisier! Malesherbes! Friends of Jean
Guettard.*

*Was it only the whisper of Shadow-of-a-
Leaf that showed me*

*Gleams of the Terror approaching, a
wild storm*

*Of fiercer, hell-hot lava, and that far
sound*

*Of tumbrils. . . . The Republic has no
need*

Of savants!

*This dream went by, with
the dead man's words.*

They reached the highest crest. Before
their eyes

The hill-scape opened like a mighty
vision

That, quietly, has come true.

T

stood there, dumb,

To see what they foresaw, the invisible
thought

Grown firm as granite; for, as a man might
die

In faith, yet wake amazed in his new
world,

They saw those chains of dead volcanoes
rise,

Cone behind cone, with green truncated
crowns,

And smokeless craters, on the dazzling
blue.

There, in the very sunlit heart of France,
They saw what human eyes had daily seen
Yet never seen till now. They stood and
gazed,
More lonely in that loneliness of thought
Than winged men, alighting on the moon.

Old as the moon's own craters were those
hills;

And all their wrath had cooled so long
ago

That as the explorers on their downward
path

Passed by a cup-shaped crater, smooth
and green,

Three hundred feet in depth and breadth,
they saw,

Within it, an old shepherd and his flock
Quietly wandering over its gentle slopes
Of short sweet grass, through clumps of
saffron-broom.

They asked him by what name that hill
was known.

He answered, *The Hen's Nest!*

"Hen's Nest," cried Jean Guettard, "the
good God grant
This fowl be not a phoenix and renew
Its feathers in Auvergne."

They

chuckled aloud,
And left the shepherd wondering, many a
day,
What secret knowledge in the stranger's
eye
Cast that uncanny light upon the hill,
A moment, and no more; and yet enough
To make him feel, even when the north
wind blew,
Less at his ease in that green windless
cup;
And, once or twice, although he knew not
why,
He turned, and drove his flock another
way.

IV

AT PARIS

"Few know the name of Jean Guettard
to-day,"
Said Shadow-of-a-Leaf; for now the mists
concealed
All that clear vision. "I often visited him,
Between the lights, in after years. He
lived
Alone at Paris then, in two lean rooms,
A sad old prisoner, at the Palais Royal;
And many a time, beside a dying fire,
We talked together. I was only a shadow,
A creature flickering on the fire-lit wall;
But, while he bowed his head upon his
hands
And gazed into the flame with misted
eyes,
I could steal nearer and whisper time
away.
And sometimes he would breathe his
thoughts aloud;
And when at night his faithful servant,
Claire,

Stole into the room to lay his frugal meal,
She'd glance at him with big brown
troubled eyes
To find him talking to himself alone.

And sometimes when the masters of the
hour
Won easy victories in the light world's
fashion,
With fables, easily spun in light quick
minds,
He'd leave the Academy thundering its
applause,
And there, in his bare room, with none to
see
But Shadow-of-a-Leaf, he would unfold
again
—Smiling a little grimly to himself—
Those curious beautiful tinted maps he
drew,
The very first that any man had made
 To show, beneath the kingdoms made
by man,
The truth, that hidden structure, ribbed
with rock,
And track the vanished ages by the lives

And deaths imprinted there.

They

had made him rich
In nothing but the truth.

He had

mapped the rocks.

"The time is not yet come," he used to say,

"When we can clothe them with a radiant

Spring

Of happy meanings. I have never made

A theory. That's for happier men to come;

It will be time to answer the great riddle

When we have read the question.

and there

Already, I note, they use this work of

mine

And shuffle the old forerunner out of

sight.

No matter. Let the truth live. I shall watch

Its progress, proudly, from the outer dark;

More happily, I believe, thus free from

self,

Than if my soul went whoring after fame.

One thing alone I'll claim. It is not good

To let all lies go dancing by on flowers.

This—what's his name?—who claims to
be the first
To find a dead volcano in Auvergne,
And sees, in that, only an easy road
To glory for himself, shall find, ere long,
One live volcano in old Jean Guettard.
The fool has forced me to it; for he thinks
That I'll claim nothing. I prefer my peace;
But truth compels me here. I'll set my heel
On him, at least. Malesherbes will bear
me out.
As for the rest—no theory of the earth
Can live without these rock-ribbed facts
of mine,
The facts that I first mapped, I claim no
more.
These rocks, these bones, these fossil
ferns and shells,
Of which the grinning moon-calf makes
a jest,
A byword for all dotage and decay,
Shall yet be touched with beauty, and
reveal
The secrets of the book of earth to man."

"He made no theory," whispered Shadow-

of-a-Leaf,

"And yet, I think, he looked on all these things

Devoutly; on a sea-shell turned to stone
As on a sacred relic, at whose touch
Time opened like a gate, and let him pass
Out of this mocking and ephemeral world
Through the eternal ages, home to God."

And so I watched him, growing old and grey,

In seeking truth; a man with enemies,
Ten enemies for every truth he told;
And friends that still, despite his caustic tongue,
Loved him for his true heart.

Yet

even these

Never quite reached it; never quite discerned

That even his gruffest words were but the pledge

Of his own passionate truth; the harsh pained cry

For truth, for truth, of one who saw the throng

Bewildered and astray, the ways of love
Grown tortuous, and the path to heaven
grown dim
Through man's unheed for truth.

I

saw him greet
Condorcet, at the Academy. "We have lost
Two members. I condole with you, my
friend.

It is their last *éloges* you'll speak to-day!
How will you bury their false theories?
In irony, or in academic robes?

No matter. There'll be only one or two
Who really know; and I shall not be there
To vex you, from my corner, with one
smile.

Lord, what a pack of lies you'll have to
tell!

It is the custom. When my turn arrives—
'Twill not be long,—remember, please, I
want
Truth, the whole truth, or nothing."

saw one night
A member walking home with him—to
thank him

For his support that morning. Jean
Guettard
Turned on his threshold, growling like a
bear.
"You owe me nothing. I believed my vote
Was right, or else you never should have
had it.
Pray do not think I liked you."

grim door
Opened and closed like iron in the face
Of his late friend and now indignant foe;
To whom no less, if he had needed it,
Guettard would still have given his own
last sou.

He came into his lonely room that night,
And sat and stared into the fluttering fire.
I, Shadow-of-a-Leaf, was there; and I
could see
More in his eyes than even Condorcet
saw,
Condorcet, who of all his friends
remained
Most faithful to the end.

But, at the

hour
When Claire would lay his supper, a light
hand tapped
Timidly on his door. He sat upright
And turned with startled eyes.

"]

he called.
A wide-eyed, pale-faced child came
creeping in.
"What! Little Claire!" he cried.
"Your mother is not better!"

stood before him,
The fire-light faintly colouring her thin
face,—
"M'sieur, she is very ill. You are a doctor.
Come, quickly."

Through the
narrow, ill-lighted streets
Old Jean Guettard went hobbling, a small
hand
Clutching his own, and two small wooden
shoes
Clattering beside him, till the child began
To droop. He lifted her gently in his arms
And hobbled on. The thin, white, tear-

stained face,
Pressing against his old grey-bristled
cheek,
Directed him, now to left and now to
right.
"O, quick, M'sieur!" Then, into an alley,
dark
As pitch, they plunged. The third door on
the right!
Into the small sad house they went, and
saw
By the faint guttering candle-light—the
mother,
Shivering and burning on her tattered bed.
Two smaller children knelt on either side
Worn out with fear and weeping.

that night
Guettard, of all true kings of science then,
Obscure, yet first in France and all the
world,
Watched, laboured, bathed the brow and
raised the head,
Moistened the thirsting lips, and knew it
vain;
Knew, as I knew, that in a hundred years

Knowledge might conquer this; but he
must fight
A losing battle, and fight it in the dark
No better armed than Galen.

He
closed her eyes
At dawn. He took the children to his
house;
Prayed with them; dried their tears; and,
while they slept,
Shed tears himself, remembering—a
green hill,
A Rock against the sky.

He cared for them, as though they were
his own.
Guettard, the founder of two worlds of
thought,
Taught them their letters. "None can tell,"
he said,
"What harvests are enfolded for the world
In one small grain of this immortal wheat.
But I, who owe so much to little things
In childhood; and have seen, among the
rocks,
What vast results may wait upon the path

Of one blind life, under a vanished sea,
Bow down in awe before this human
life."

V

THE RETURN

Ever, as he grew older, life became
More sacred to him.

"In a thousand

years

Man will look back with horror on this
world

Where men could babble about the Lamb
of God,

Then turn and kill for food one living
thing

That looks through two great eyes, so like
their own.

I have had living creatures killed for me;

But I will have no more."

Though

Nature laughed

His mood to scorn, said Shadow-of-a-
Leaf, the day

Will come (I have seen it come a myriad
times)

When, through one mood like this, Nature
will climb

Out of its nature, and make all things new.
Who prophesied cities, when the first
blind life

Crawled from the sea, to breathe that
strange bright air,

And conquer its own past?

"I have no theory of this wild strange
world,"

Said Jean Guettard,

"But, if the God that made it dies with us
Into immortal life. . . ."

"There, there's the meaning," whispered
Shadow-of-a-Leaf

"Could we but grasp it. There's the
harmony

Of life, and death, and all our mortal
pain."

I heard that old man whispering in the
dark,
"O, little human life, so lost to sight
Among the eternal ages, I, at least,
Find in this very darkness the one Fact
That bows my soul before you."

again
The mists began to roll away like smoke.
I saw a patch of vines upon the hill
Above Étampes; and through the mists I
saw
Old Jean Guettard, with snowy wind-
blown hair,
Nearing the shrouded summit. As he
climbed,
Slowly the last thin veils dissolved away.
He lifted up his eyes to see the Rock.
The hill was bare. His facts were well
confirmed.
Sun, wind, and rain, and the sharp chisels
of frost
Had broken it down. The Rock was on its
way
In brook and river, with all the drifting

hills,
And all his life, to the remembering sea.
He looked around him, furtively. None
was near.

Down, on his knees,
Among the weather-worn shards of his
lost youth,
Dropt Jean Guettard.

The mist
closed over him.
The world dissolved away. The vision
died,
Leaving me only a voice within the heart,
Far off, yet near, the whisper of Shadow-
of-a-Leaf.

*The rain had beaten. The wind had
blown.*

*The hill was bare as the sky that
day.
Mother and Child from the height had
gone.*

*The wind and rain, said Jean
Guettard,
Had crumbled even the Rock away.*

VI. IN SWEDEN

LINNÆUS

It was his garden that began it all,
A magical garden for a changeling child.

"The garden has bewitched him!
Carl! Carl! O, Carl! Now where is that
elfkin hiding?"

It was the voice of Christina, wife of the
Pastor,
Nils Linnæus, the Man of the Linden-tree.
Youthful and comely, she stood at her
door in the twilight,
Calling her truant son.

Her

flaxen hair
Kerchiefed with crisp white wings; her

rose-coloured apron
And blue-grey gown, like a harebell,
yielding a glimpse
Of the shapeliest ankle and snowiest
stocking in Sweden;
She stood at her door, a picture breathed
upon air.

She called yet again, and tilted her head
to listen
As a faint, flushed, wild anemone turning
aside
From a breeze out of elf land, teasing her
delicate petals,
The breeze of the warm, white, green-
veined wings of her wooer;
And again, a little more troubled at heart,
she called,
"Supper-time, Carl!"

But out of
the fragrant pinewoods
Darkening round her, only the wood-
pigeon cooed.
Down by the lake, from the alders, only
the red-cap
Whistled three notes. Then all grew quiet

again.

Yet, he was there, she knew, though he
did not answer.

The lad was at hand, she knew, though she
could not see him.

Her elf-child, nine years old, was about
and around her,

A queer little presence, invisible,
everywhere, nowhere,

Hiding, intensely still. . . .

S

listened; the leaves

All whispered, "hush."

It was just as though Carl had whispered,

"Hush! I am watching.

"Hush! I am thinking.

"Hush! I am listening, too."

She tiptoed through the garden, her fair
head

Turning to left and right, with birdlike
glances,

Peeping round lichened boulders and
clumps of fern.

She passed by the little garden his father
gave him,

Elfdom within an elfdom, where he had
sown
Not only flowers that rightly grow in
gardens,
The delicate aristocracies of bloom,
But hedgerow waifs and ragamuffin strays
That sprawled across his borders
everywhere
And troubled even the queendom of the
rose
With swarming insurrections.

last she saw him,
His tousled head a little golden cloud
Among the dark green reeds at the edge of
the lake,
Bending over the breathless water to
watch—
What?

She tiptoed nearer, until
she saw
The spell that bound him. Floating upon
the lake,
A yard away, a water-lily closed
Its petals, as an elfin cygnet smoothes
Its ruffled plumes, composing them for

sleep.

He watched it, rapt, intent.

S

watched her son,

Intent and rapt, with a stirring at her heart,

And beautiful shining wonder in her eyes,

Feeling a mystery near her.

S

of-a-Leaf

Whispered. The garden died into the dark.

Mother and child had gone—I knew not

whither.

It seemed as though the dark stream of the
years

Flowed round me.

Then, as one

that walks all night

Lifts up his head in the early light of

dawn,

I found myself in a long deserted street

Of little wooden houses, with thatched
roofs.

It was Uppsala.

Over the silent

town

I heard a skylark quivering, up and up,

As though the very dew from its wild
wings
Were shaken to silvery trills of elfin song.
Tirile, tirile, tirile, it arose,
Praising the Giver of one more shining
day.

Then, with a clatter of doors and a
yodelling call
Of young men's voices, the Svartbäcken
woke;
And down the ringing street the students
came
In loose blue linen suits, knapsack on
back
And sturdy stick in hand, to rouse old
Carl
For their long ramble through the
blossoming fields.
I saw them clustering round the Master's
door.
I heard their jolly song—*Papa Linnæus*:

Linnæus, Papa Linnæus,
He gave his pipe a rap.
He donned his gown of crimson.

He donned his green fur-cap.
He walked in a meadow at daybreak
To see what he might see;
And the linnet cried, "Linnæus!
O hide! Here comes Linnæus.
Beware of old Linnæus,
The Man of the Linden-tree."

So beautiful, bright and early
He brushed away the dews
He found the wicked wild-flowers
All courting there in twos;
And buzzing loud for pardon,
Sir Pandarus, the bee:
"Vincit Amor, Linnæus,
Linnæus, Papa Linnæus!"
O, ho, quoth old Linnæus,
The Man of the Linden-tree.

Quoth he, 'Tis my conviction
These innocents must be wed!
So he murmured a benediction,
And blessed their fragrant bed;
And the butterflies fanned their blushes,
And the red-cap whistled in glee,
They are married by old Linnæus,

Linnæus, Papa Linnæus!
Vivat, vivat Linnæus,
The Man of the Linden-tree.

Vivat Linnæus! And out the old Master
came,
Jauntily as a throstle-cock in Spring,
His big bright eyes aglow; the fine curved
beak,
The kindly lips, the broad well-
sculptured brow,
All looked as though the wisdom that had
shaped them
Desired that they should always wear a
smile

To teach the world that kindness makes
men happy.
He shook his head at his uproarious
troop,
And chose his officers for the day's
campaign:
One, for a marksman, with a fowling-
piece,
To bring down bird or beast, if need
arose;
One for a bugler, to recall their lines

From echoing valley and hill, when
something rare
Lay in the Master's hand; one to make
notes
Of new discoveries; one for discipline;
all
For seeking out the truth, in youth and joy.
To-day they made for Junkil, miles away
Along the singing river, where that prize
The *Sceptrum Carolinum* used to grow.
And, ever as they went, Linnæus touched
All that they saw with gleams of new
delight.
As when the sun first rises over the sea
Myriads of ripples wear a crest of fire;
And over all the hills a myriad flowers
Lift each a cup of dew that burns like
wine;
And all these gleams reflect one heavenly
light;
He changed the world around him; filled
the woods
With rapture; made each footpath wind
away
Into new depths of elfin-land. The ferns
Became its whispering fringe; and every

stile

A faerie bridge into a lovelier world.

His magic sunlight touched the
adventurous plants

That grew on the thatch of wayside
cottages,

Crepis and *Bromus*, with the straggling
brood

Of flowers he called *tectorum*, dancing
there

Above the heads of mortals, like swart
gnomes

In rusty red and gold.

"My

Svartbäck Latin,"

Linnæus laughed, "may make the pedants
writhe;

But I would sooner take three slaps from
Priscian

Than one from Mother Nature."

books

Had made their pretty pattern of the
world.

They had named and labelled all their
flowers by rote,

Grouping them in a little man-made
scheme
Empty of true significance as the wheel
Of stars that Egypt turned for her dead
kings.
His was the very life-stream of the
flowers;
And everywhere in Nature he revealed
Their subtle kinships; wedded bloom and
bloom;
Traced the proud beauty, flaunting in her
garden,
To gipsy grandsires, camping in a ditch;
Linked the forgotten wanderers to their
clan;
Grouped many-coloured clans in one
great tribe;
And gathered scores of scattered tribes
again
Into one radiant nation.

He
revealed
Mysterious clues to changes wild as those
That Ovid sang—the dust that rose to a
stem,
The stem that changed to a leaf, the

crowning leaf
That changed to a fruitful flower; and,
under all,
Sustaining, moving, binding all in one,
One Power that like a Master-Dramatist,
Through every act and atom of the world
Advanced the triumph that must crown the
whole.
Unseen by man—that drama—here on
earth
It must be; but could man survey the
whole,
As even now, in flashes, he discerns
Its gleaming moments, vanishing sharp-
etched scenes
Loaded with strange significance, he
would know,
Like Shadow-of-a-Leaf, that not a cloud
can sail
Across a summer sky, but plays its part.
There's not a shadow drifting on the hills,
Or stain of colour where the sun goes
down,
Or least bright flake upon the hawk-
moth's wing
But that great drama needs them.

wild thrush,
The falling petal, the bubble upon the
brook,
Each has its cue, to sing, to fall, to shine,
And exquisitely responds. The drunken
bee
Blundering and stumbling through a world
of flowers
Has his own tingling entrances, unknown
To man or to himself; and, though he lives
In his own bee-world, following his own
law,
He is yet the unweaving shuttle in a loom
That marries rose to rose in other worlds,
And shapes the wonder of Springs he
cannot see.
O, little bee-like man, thou shalt not raise
Thy hand, or close thine eyes, or sigh in
sleep;
But, over all thy freedom, there abides
The law of this world-drama.

Und

the stars,
Between sweet-breathing gardens in the
dusk,

I heard the song of the students marching
home.
I saw their eyes, mad nightingales of joy,
Shining with youth's eternal ecstasy.
I saw them tossing vines entwined with
flowers
Over girls' necks, and drawing them all
along;
Flags flying, French horns blowing,
kettledrums throbbing,
And Carl Linnæus marching at their head.
Up to the great old barn they marched for
supper,—
Four rounds of beef and a cask of ripened
ale;
And, afterwards, each with his own
flower-fettered girl,
They'd dance the rest of the summer night
away.

Greybeards had frowned upon this frolic
feast;
But Carl Linnæus told them "Youth's a
flower,
And we're botanic students."

a time,
In green fur-cap and crimson dressing-
gown,
He sat and smoked his pipe and watched
them there

On winter nights; and when the fiddles
played
His Polish dance, Linné would shuffle it
too.

But now, to-night—they had tramped too
many miles.

The old man was tired. He left them at the
door,

And turned to his own house, as one who
leaves

Much that he loved behind him.

he went

They cheered their chief—"Vivat, vivat
Linæus!"

And broke into their frolic song again.

I saw him in the shadowy house alone
Entering the room, above whose happy
door

The watchword of his youth and his old

age

Was written in gold—*Innocue vivito.*
Numen adest.

I

saw him writing there

His last great joyous testament, to be read
Only by his own children, as he thought,
After he'd gone; an ecstasy of praise,
As though a bird were singing in his
mind,
Praise, praise, to the Giver of life and
love and death!

*God led him with His own Almighty
Hand,*

*And made him grow up like a goodly
tree.*

*God filled his heart with such a loving
fire*

*For truth, that truth returned him love
for love.*

*God aided him, with all that his own age
Had yet brought forth, to speed him on
his way.*

*God set him in a garden, as of old,
And gave him, for his duty and delight,*

*The task that he loved best in all the
world.
God gave him for his help-mate, from his
youth
Into old age, the wife he most desired.
And blessed him with her goodness.*

*revealed
His secrets to him; touched his eyes with
light
And let him gaze into His Council Hall.
God so determined even his defeats
That they became his greatest victories.
God made his enemies as a wind to fill
His homeward-rushing sails. Wherever
he went
The Lord was with him, and the Lord
upheld him.*

*And yet, O yet, one glory was to come;
One strangest gate into infinitude
Was yet to be swung back and take him
home.
I know not how the fields that gave us
birth
Draw us with sweetness, never to be*

forgotten
Back through the dark.

I saw
him groping out,
As through a mist, into a shadowy garden;
And this was not Uppsala any more,
But the lost garden where his boyhood
reigned.
The little dwindling path at Journey's End
Ran through the dark, into a path he knew.

Carl! Carl! Carl! Now where is that
elfkin hiding!
Down by the lake, from the alders, only
the red-cap
Whistled three notes. Then all grew quiet
again.

Carl! O Carl! Her voice, though he could
not answer,
Called him. He knew she was there,
though he could not see her.
He stood and listened. The leaves were
listening, too.

He tiptoed through the garden. His grey

head

Turning to left and right with birdlike
glances.

He passed by the little garden his father
gave him.

He knew its breath in the night.

heart stood still.

She was there. He saw her at last. Her
back was towards him.

He saw her fair young head, through the
deepening shadows,

Bending, breathlessly, forward to watch a
child

At the edge of the lake, who watched a
floating flower.

He watched her, rapt, intent. She watched
her son,

Intent and rapt.

Tears in his heart, he waited, dark and
still,

Feeling a mystery near him.

VII. LAMARCK AND THE REVOLUTION

I

LAMARCK AND BUFFON

What wars are these? Far off, a bugle
blew.
Out of oblivion rose the vanished world.
I stood in Amiens, in a narrow street
Outside a dark old college. I saw a boy,
A budding Abbé, pallid from his books,
Beaked like a Roman eagle. He stole out
Between grim gates; and stripping off his
bands,
Hastened away, a distance in his eyes;
As though, through an earthly bugle, he
had heard
A deeper bugle, summoning to a war
Beyond these wars, with enemies yet
unknown.

I saw him bargaining for a starveling
horse
In Picardy and riding to the North,
Over chalk downs, through fields of
poppied wheat.
A tattered farm lad, sixteen years of age,
Followed like Sancho at his master's
heel.
Up to the flaming battle-front he rode.
Flinging a stubborn "no" at those who'd
send him
Back to learn war among the raw recruits,
He took his place before the astonished
ranks
Of grenadiers, and faced the enemy's fire.
Death swooped upon them, tearing long
red lanes
Through their massed squadrons. His
commander fell
 Beside him. One by one his officers
died.
Death placed him in command. The
shattered troops
Of Beaujolais were wavering
everywhere.
"Retreat!" the cry began. In smoke and

fire,
Lamarck, with fourteen grenadiers, held
on.
"This is the post assigned. This post we
hold
Till Life or Death relieve us."

Who
assigned it?
Who summoned him thither? And when
Peace returned
Was it blind chance that garrisoned
Lamarck
Among the radiant gardens of the South,
Dazzled him with their beauty, and then
slipt
That volume of Chomel into his hand,
Traité des Plantes?

Was it blind
accident,
Environment—Oh, mighty word that
masks
The innumerable potencies of God,—
When his own comrade, in wild horse-
play, wrenched
And crippled him in body, and he

returned

Discharged to Paris, free to take up arms
In an immortal army? Was it chance
That lodged him there, despite his own
desire,

So high above the streets that all he saw
Out of his window was the drifting clouds
Flowing and changing, drawing his lonely
mind

In subtle ways to Nature's pageantry,
And the great golden laws that governed
all?

Was it blind chance that drew him out to
watch

The sunset clouds o'er Mont Valérien,
Where the same power, for the same
purpose, drew

Jean Jacques Rousseau? Flowers and the
dying clouds

Drew them together, and mind from mind
caught fire?

What universal Power through all and
each

Was labouring to create when first they
met

And talked and wondered, whether the
forms of life
Through earth's innumerable ages
changed?
Were species constant? Let the rose run
wild,
How swiftly it returns into the briar!
Transplant the southern wilding to the
north
And it will change, to suit the harsher sky.
Nourish it in a garden,—you shall see
The trailer of the hedgerow stand upright,
And every blossom with a threefold
crown.

Buffon, upon his hill-top at Montbard
In his red turret, among his flowers and
birds,
Gazing through all his epochs of the
world,
Had guessed at a long ancestry for man,
Too long for the upstart kings.

could not prove it;
And the Sorbonne, with *Genesis* in its
hand,

Had frowned upon his æons. *In six days
God made the heaven and earth.*

had withdrawn,
Smiling as wise men smile at children's
talk;
And when Lamarck had visited him alone,
He smiled again, a little ironically.
"Six epochs of the world may mean six
days;
But then, my friend, six days must also
mean
Six epochs. Call it compromise, or peace.
They cannot claim the victory.

There

are some
Think me too—orthodox. Oh, I know the
whine
That fools will raise hereafter. Buffon
quailed;
Why did not Buffon, like our noble
selves,
Wear a vicarious halo of martyrdom?
Strange—that desire of small sadistic
eyes

At ease on the shore to watch a

shipwrecked man
Drowning. Lucretius praised that
barbarous pleasure
Mine is a subtler savagery. I prefer
To watch, from a little hill above their
world,
The foes of science, floundering in the
waves
Of their new compromise. Every crooked
flash
Of irony lightening their dark skies to-day
Shows them more wickedly buffeted, in a
sea
Of wilder contradictions.

I had
no proof.
Time was not ripe. The scripture of the
rocks
Must first be read more deeply. But the
law
Pointed to one conclusion everywhere,
That forms of flesh and bone, in the long
lapse
Of time, were plastic as the sculptor's
clay,
And born of earlier forms.

Under

man's eyes,
Had not the forms of bird and beast been
changed
Into new species? Children of the wolf,
Greyhound and mastiff, in their several
kinds,
Fawned on his children, slept upon his
hearth.
The spaniel and the bloodhound owned
one sire.
Man's own selective artistry had shaped
New flowers, confirmed the morning
glory's crown,
And out of the wild briar evoked the rose.
Like a magician, in a few brief years,
He had changed the forms and colours of
his birds.
He had whistled the wild pigeons from
the rocks
And by his choice, and nature's own deep
law
Evoked the rustling fan-tails that
displayed
Their splendours on his cottage roof, or
bowed

Like courtiers on his lawn. The pouter
swelled
A rainbow breast to please him. Tumblers
played
Their tricks as for a king. The carrier
flew
From the spy's window, or the soldiers'
camp,
 The schoolboy's cage, the lover's
latticed heart,
And bore his messages over turbulent
seas
And snow-capt mountains, with a sinewy
wing
That raced the falcon, beating stroke for
stroke."

II

LAMARCK, LAVOISIER, AND NINETY-THREE

So, seizing the pure fire from Buffon's
hand,
Lamarck pressed on, flinging all else
aside,
To follow all those clues to his own end.
Ten years he spent among the flowers of
France,
Unravelling, and more truly than Linné,
The natural orders of their tangled clans;
Then, in "six months of unremitting toil,"
As Cuvier subtly sneered, he wrote his
book,
The *Flore Française*; compact, as Cuvier
knew,
And did not care to say, with ten years'
thought.
But Buffon did not sneer. The great old
man,
A king of men, enthroned there at
Montbard,
Aided Lamarck as Jove might aid his son.
He sent the book to the king's own
printing press.
Daubenton wrote his foreword; and
Rousseau
Had long prepared the way.

"Li

of France,"

The stream of praise through every salon
flowed.

Une science à la mode, great Cuvier
sneered.

Was it blind chance that crushed Lamarck
again

Back to his lean-ribbed poverty?

died.

Lamarck, who had married in his
prosperous hour,

Had five young mouths to feed. With ten
long years

Of toil he had made the great *Jardin du
Roi*

Illustrious through the world. As his
reward

The ministers of the king now granted
him

A keepership at one thousand francs a
year;

And, over him, in Buffon's place, they set
The exquisite dilettante, Bernardin

Saint Pierre, a delicate twitcher of silken strings.

Lamarck held grimly to the post assigned.
Under that glittering rose-pink world he heard

Titanic powers upsurging from the abyss.
Then, in the blood-red dawn of ninety-three,

The bright crust cracked. The furious lava rolled

Through Paris, and a thundercloud of doom

Pealed over thrones and peoples. Flash on flash,

Blind lightnings of the guillotine replied.

Blind throats around the headsman's basket roared.

The slippery cobbles were greased with human blood,

Old thrones, old creeds, old wrongs, at a Mænad shout,

Went up in smoke and flame. Earth's dynasties

Rocked to their dark foundations. Tyrants died;

But in that madness of the human soul

They did not die alone. Innocence died;
And pity died; and those whose hands
upheld
The torch of knowledge died in the
bestial storm.

Lavoisier had escaped. They lured him
back
Into the Terror's hot red tiger-mouth,
Promising, "Face your trial with these
your friends,
And all will be set free. If not, they die."
He faced it, and returned. The guillotine
Flashed down on one and all.

the wide earth,
Still echoing its old wrath against the
kings
And priests who exiled, stoned and
burned and starved
The bearers of the fire, remember well
How the Republic in its red right hand
Held up Lavoisier's head, and told
mankind
 In mockery, colder than the cynical
snarl

Of Nero, "The Republic has no need
Of savants. Let the people's will be done
On earth, and let the headless trunk of
Truth
Be trampled down by numbers. Tread in
the mire
All excellence and all skill. Daub your
raw wounds
With dirt of the street; elect the sick to
health.
It is the people's will, and they shall live.
Nay, crown the eternal Power who rules
by law
With this red cap of your capricious will,
And ye shall hear His everlasting voice
More clearly than ye heard it when He
spoke
In stillness, through the souls of lonely
men,
On starry heights. Lift up your heads and
hear
His voice in the whirling multitude's
wild-beast roar,
Not these men, but Barabbas."

Mt

the mind

Turn back to tyranny, then, and trust anew
To harnessed might? The listening soul
still heard
A more imperative call. Though Evil
wore
A myriad masks and reigned as wickedly
In peoples as in kings, Truth, Truth alone,
Whether upheld by many or by few,
Wore the one absolute crown. Though
Pilate flung
His murderous jest at Truth—the law
remained
That answered his dark question; man's
one clue,
The law that all true seekers after Truth
Hold in their hands; the law, a golden
thread
That, loyally followed, leads them to full
light,
Each by his own dark way, till all the
world
Is knit together in harmony that sets free.
Bridge-builders of the universe, they fling
Their firm and shining roads from star to
star,
From earth to heaven. At his appointed

task,
Lamarck held grimly on (as once he
gripped
His wavering grenadiers) till Life or
Death
Relieved him. But he knew his cause at
last.

Jardin du Roi became *Jardin des
Plantes*;
And the red tumult surging round his
walls
Died to a whisper of leaves.

His
mind groped back,
Back through the inconceivable ages now,
To terrible revolutions of the globe,
Huge catastrophic rendings of the hills,
Red floods of lava; cataracts of fire;
Monstrous upheavals of the nethermost
deep;
Whereby as Cuvier painted them, in hues
Of blind disaster, all the hosts of life
In each æonian period, like a swarm
Of ants beneath the wheels of Juggernaut,
Were utterly abolished.

Did

God create
After each earth-disaster, then, new hosts
Of life to range her mountains and her
seas;
New forms, new patterns, fresh from His
careless Hand,
Yet all so closely akin to those destroyed?
Or did this life-stream, from one fountain-
head,
Through the long changes of unnumbered
years
Flow on, unbroken, slowly branching out
Into new beauty, as a river winds
Into new channels? One, singing through
the hills,
Mirrors the hanging precipice and the
pine;
And one through level meadows curves
away,
Turns a dark wheel, or foams along a
weir,
Then, in a pool of shadow, drowns the
moon.

III

AN ENGLISH INTERLUDE: ERASMUS DARWIN

Already in England, bearing the same
fire,
A far companion whom he never knew
Had long been moving on the same dark
quest,
But through what quiet secluded walks of
peace.

Out of the mist emerged the little City
Of Lichfield, clustering round its Minster
Pool
That, like a fragment of the sky on earth,
Reflected its two bridges, gnarled old
trees,
Half-timbered walls; a bare-legged child
at play
Upon its brink; two clouds like floating
swans,

Two swans like small white clouds; a boy
that rode
A big brown cart-horse lazily jingling by;
And the cathedral, like a three-spired
crown,
Set on its northern bank.

Then,
from the west,
Above it, walled away from the steep
street,
I saw Erasmus Darwin's bluff square
house.
Along its front, above the five stone steps
That climbed to its high door, strange
vines and fronds
Made a green jungle in their dim prison of
glass.
Behind, its windows overlooked a close
Of rambling mellow roofs, and coldly
stared
At the cathedral's three fore-shortened
spires,
Which seemed to draw together, as though
in doubt
Of what lay hidden in those bleak staring
eyes.

There dwelt that eager mind, whom
fools deride
For laced and periwigged verses on his
flowers;
Forgetting how he strode before his age,
And how his grandson caught from his
right hand
A fire that lit the world.

I saw
him there,
In his brown-skirted coat, among his
plants,
Pondering the thoughts, at which that
dreamer sneered,
Who, through a haze of opium, saw a star
Twinkling within the tip of the crescent
moon.
Dispraise no song for tricks that fancy
plays,
Nor for blind gropings after an unknown
light,
But let no echo of Abora praise for this
The drooping pinion and unseeing eye.
Seek, poet, on thy sacred height, the
strength
And glory of that true vision which shall

grasp,
In clear imagination, earth and heaven,
And from the truly seen ascend in power
To those high realms whereof our heaven
and earth
Are images and shadows, and their law
Our shining lanthorn and unfailing guide.
There, if the periwigged numbers failed
to fly,
Let babbling dreamers who have also
failed
Wait for another age. The time will come
When all he sought and lost shall mount
and sing.
He saw the life-stream branching out
before him,
Its forms and colours changing with their
sky:
Flocks in the south that lost their warm
white fleece;
And, in the north, the stubble-coloured
hare
Growing snow-white against the winter
snows.
The frog that had no jewel in his head,
Except his eyes, was yet a fairy prince,

For he could change the colours of his
coat
To match the mud of the stream wherein
he reigned;
And, if he dwelt in trees, his coat was
green.

He saw the green-winged birds of
Paraguay
Hardening their beaks upon the shells they
cracked;
The humming-bird, with beak made
needle-fine
For sucking honey from long-throated
blooms;
Finches with delicate beaks for buds of
trees,
And water-fowl that, in their age-long
plashing
At the lake's edge, had stretched the films
of skin
Between their claws to webs. Out through
the reeds
They rowed at last, and swam to seek
their prey.
He saw how, in their war against the
world,

Myriads of lives mysteriously assumed
The hues that hid them best; the butterfly
dancing
With its four petals among so many
flowers,
Itself a winged flower; the hedgerow
birds
With greenish backs like leaves, but their
soft breasts
Light as a downy sky, so that the hawk,
Poised overhead, sees only a vanishing
leaf;
Or, if he swoops along the field below
them,
Loses their silvery flight against the
cloud.

He saw the goldfinch, vivid as the blooms
Through which it flutters, as though their
dews had splashed
Red of the thistle upon its head and throat,
And on its wings the dandelion's gold.
He saw the skylark coloured like its nest
In the dry grass; the partridge, grey and
brown
In mottled fields, escaping every eye,

Till the foot stumbles over it, and the
clump
Of quiet earth takes wing and whirrs
away.

I saw him there, a strange and lonely soul,
An eagle in the Swan of Lichfield's pen,
Stretching clipped wings and staring at
the sky.

He saw the multitudinous hosts of life,
All creatures of the sea and earth and air,
Ascending from one living spiral thread,
Through tracts of time, unreckonable in
years.

He saw them varying as the plastic clay
Under the Sculptor's hands.

He saw

them flowing

From one Eternal Fount beyond our
world,

The inscrutable and indwelling Primal
Power,

His only *vera causa*; by whose will

There was no gulf between the first and
last.

There was no break in that long line of
law

Between the first life drifting in the sea,
And man, proud man, the crowning form
of earth,
Man whose own spine, the framework of
his pride,
The fern-stem of his life, trunk of his tree,
Sleeps in the fish, the reptile, and the
orang,
As all those lives in his own embryo
sleep.

What deeper revolution, then, must shake
Those proud ancestral dynasties of earth?
What little man-made temples must go
down?
And what august new temple must arise,
One vast cathedral, gargoyled with
strange life,
Surging through darkness, up to the
unknown end?

IV

LAMARCK AND CUVIER: THE *VERA CAUSA*

Fear nothing, Swan of Lichfield. Tuck
thy head
Beneath thy snowy wing and sleep at
ease.
Drift quietly on thy shadowy Minster
Pool.
No voice comes yet to shake thy placid
world.
Far off—in France—thy wingless angels
make
Strange havoc, but the bearer of this fire,
The wise physician's unknown comrade
toils
Obscurely now, through his more perilous
night,
Seeking his *vera causa*, with blind eyes.
Blind, blind as Galileo in his age,
Lamarck embraced his doom and, as in
youth,
Held to the post assigned, till Life or
Death

Relieved him. All those changes of the
world
He had seen more clearly than his
unknown friend;
And traced their natural order.
He saw the sea-gull like a flake of foam
Tossed from the waves of that creative
sea;
The fish that like a speckled patch of sand
Slides over sand upon its broad flat side,
And twists its head until its nether eye
Looks upward, too, and what swam
upright once
Is fixed in its new shape, and the wry
mouth
Grimaces like a gnome at its old foes.
He saw the swarming mackerel shoals
that swim
Near the crisp surface, rippled with blue
and green
Round their dark backs to trick the
pouncing gull,
But silver-bellied to flash like streaks of
light
 Over the ravenous mouths that from
below

Snap at the leaping gleams of the upper
sea.
And all these delicate artistries were
wrought
By that strange Something-Else which
blind men call
"Environment," and the name is all their
need;
A Something-Else that, through the sum of
things,
Labours unseen; and, for its own strange
ends,
Desirous of more swiftness and more
strength,
Will teach the hunted deer to escape and
fly,
Even while it leads the tiger to pursue.

He saw that sexual war; the stags that
fought
In mating-time; the strong confirmed in
power
By victory. Lust and hunger, pleasure and
pain,
Like instruments in a dread Designer's
hand,

Lured or dissuaded, tempted and
transformed.

He saw dark monsters in primeval forests
Tearing the high green branches down for
food

Age after age, till from their ponderous
heads

Out of their own elastic flesh they
stretched

A trunk that, like a long grey muscular
snake,

Could curl up through the bunches of
green leaves,

And pluck their food at ease as cattle
browse;

Life's own dark effort aiding that strange
Power

Without, and all controlled in one great
plan,

Grotesquely free, and beautifully at one
With law, upsurging to the unknown end.

All Nature like a vast chameleon
changed;

And all these forms of life through
endless years,

Changing, developing, from one filament
rose.

Man, on the heights, retravelled in nine
moons

All that long journey in little, never to
lose

What life had learned on its æonian way:

Man on the heights; but not divided now

From his own struggling kindred of the
night.

Few dared to think it yet and set him free

Through knowledge of himself and his
own power;

Few, yet, in France or England. Let him
bask

Where in six days God set him at his ease

Among His wingless angels; there to hate

The truth, until he breaks his own vain
heart

And finds the law at last and walks with
God,

Who, not abhorring even the mire and
clay

In the beginning, breathed His life through
all.

This was his *vera causa*. Hate, contempt,

Ridicule, like a scurrilous wind swooped
down
From every side. Great Cuvier, with the
friends
Of orthodoxy, sneered—could species
change
Their forms at will? Could the lean tiger's
need
To crouch in hiding stripe his tawny flesh
With shadows of the cane-brake where he
lay?
Could the giraffe, by wishing for the
leaves
Beyond his reach, add to his height one
inch?
Or could the reptile's fond desire to fly
Create his wings?

Could Cuvier

read one line
Of this blind man, he might have held his
peace,
Found his own *vera causa*, and sunk his
pride;
And even the wiser Darwin, when he
came
Might have withheld his judgment for an

hour,
And learned from his forerunner. But, in
their haste,
They flung away his fire; and, as he fell,
They set their heels upon it and stamped it
out.

Not always does the distant age restore
The balance, or posterity renew
The laurel on the cold dishonoured brow
Unjustly robbed and blindly beaten down.
He laboured on in blindness. At his side
One faithful daughter, labouring with her
pen,

As he dictated, wrote, month after
month,
Year after year; and, when her father died,
She saw him tossed into the general
grave,
The pauper's fosse, where none can trace
him now,
In Montparnasse, but wrapt in deeper
peace
Among the unknown and long-forgotten
dead.

VIII. IN GERMANY

GOETHE

I

THE DISCOVERER

The wreathing mist was quietly
breathed away.
I walked below a little hill at night;
The dark Ilm flowed beside me; the night
air
Was bright with stars and blossoming
apple-boughs
That clustered round one small dark
hermitage
His *Gartenhaus*, above me on the hill,
As though it were the heart of all earth's
beauty.

Its open door, a gap of golden light
In deep blue gloom, told me that he was
there.

I saw the darker trees asleep below.
Beyond them, like a cloud of memories
Unseen, that great small kingdom of the
mind,
The city of Weimar, slumbered.

a shadow,
Tracking the Sun-god to his midnight lair,
I climbed to the lighted cabin on the hill,
And I saw Goethe.

At his side, a
lamp
On a rude table, out of tumbled waves
Of manuscript, like an elfin lighthouse
rose.
His bed, a forester's couch for summer
nights,
Was thrust into a corner. Rows of books
Lined the rough walls.

A letter
was in his hand
From Craigenputtock; and while he
looked at it,

The unuttered thoughts came flowing into
the mind
Of his invisible listener—Shadow-of-a-
Leaf.
All true, my friend; but there's no half-
way house.
Rid you of Houndsditch, and you'll not
maintain
This quite ungodlike severance of
mankind
From Nature and its laws; though I should
lose
My Scots apostle, if I called it so.
What's an apostle? Is it one who sees
Just so much of his hero, as reflects
Himself and his own thoughts? I like him
well
And yet he makes me lonelier than before.
Houndsditch may go; but Cuvier will go
first;
With all the rest who isolate mankind
From its true place in Nature.

Ev

I saw the one remodulated form.
The leaf ascended to mysterious bliss
And was assumed, with happy sister-

leaves,
Into the heavenly glory of a flower.
Pistil and stamen, calyx and bright crown
Of coloured petals, all were leaves
transformed,
Transfigured, from one type.

I

saw in man
And his wild kinsfolk of the woods and
seas,
In fish and serpent, eagle and orang,
One knotted spine that curled into a skull.
It ran through all their patterns
everywhere,
Playing a thousand variants on one theme,
Branching through all the frame of fins
and wings
And spreading through their jointed hands
and feet.

Throughout this infinite universe I heard
The music of one law.

Is

man alone
Belied by all the signs of his ascent?
Are men even now so far above the

beasts?

What can the tiger teach them when they
kill?

Are they so vain that they'd deny the
bones

An inch beneath their skin—bones that
when stripped

Of flesh and mixed with those of their
dumb kin

Themselves could not distinguish? How
they clung

To that distinction in the skull of man.

It lacked the inter-maxillary. They grew
angry

When I foretold it would be found one
day.

What's truth to a poet? Back to your
dainty lies!

And then—one day—I found it.

D

they say

Strange work for a poet? Is mankind
asleep

That it can never feel what then I felt,
To find my faith so quietly confirmed?

I held it in my hand and stared at it,

An eyeless hollow skull that once could
think
Its own strange thoughts and stare as well
as we;
A skull that once was rocked upon a
breast,
And looked its deathless love through
dying eyes;
And, in that skull, above the incisor teeth,
The signs that men denied,—of its ascent
Through endless ages, in the savage night
Of jungle-worlds, before mankind was
born.

No thought for poets, and no wonder
there?
No gateway to the kingdoms of the mind?
No miracle in the miracle that I saw
Touched, held.

My body tingled.

All my veins
Froze with the inconceivable mystery,
The weirdness and the wonder of it all.
No vision? And no dream? Let poets play
At bowls with Yorick's relic then, for
ever;

Or blow dream-bubbles. I've a world to
shape;
A law to guide me, and a God to find.

That night in sleep I saw—it was no
dream!—
It was too wild, too strange, too darkly
true
And all too human in its monstrous pangs
To be a dream. I saw it, and I live.
I saw, I saw, and closed these eyes to see
That terrible birth in darkness, the black
night
Of naked agony that first woke the soul.

Night and the jungle, burning with great
stars,
Rolled all around me. There were
steaming pools
Of darkness, and the smell of the wild
beast
Musky and acrid on the blood-warm air.
The night was like a tiger's hot sweet
mouth;
I heard a muffled roar, and a wild cry,
A shriek, a fall.

I saw an uncouth
form,
Matted with hair, stretched on the
bloodstained earth;
And, in the darkness, darker than the
night,
Another form uncouth, with matted hair,
Long-armed, like a gorilla, stooping low
Above his mate.

She did not move
or breathe.
He felt her body with his long-clawed
hands,
And called to her—a harsh, quick,
startled cry.
She did not hear. One arm was tightly
wound
About her little one. Both were strangely
still,
Stiller than sleep.

He squatted down
to wait.
They did not move all night. At dawn he
stood
By that stiff mockery. He stretched up his
arms

And clutched at the red sun that mocked
him, too.

Then, out of his blind heart, with one
fierce pang,
The man-child, Grief, was born.

round dark eyes
Pricked with strange brine, and his broad
twitching mouth
Quivered. He fell on the dark
unanswering earth
Beside his dead, with inarticulate cries,
Great gasping sobs that seemed to rend
his flesh
And shook him through and through.
The night returned and, with the night, a
hope,
Because he could not see their staring
eyes.
He rushed into the jungle and returned
With fruits and berries, ripe and soft and
red.
He rubbed the dark wet plums against
their lips.
He smeared the juices on their locked
white teeth;

Pleading with little murmurs, while the
stars
Wheeled overhead, and velvet-footed
beasts
Approached and stared with eyes of gold
and green;
And even the little leaves were all alive;
And tree-toads chirruped; but those dark
forms lay still.

Day followed night. He did not know
them now.
All that had been so swift to answer him
Was gone. But whither? Every day he saw
A ball of light, arising in the East,
And moving overhead the self-same way
Into the West. . . .
The strange new hunger eating at his heart
Urged him to follow it, stumbling blindly
on
Through endless forests; but it moved so
swiftly
He could not overtake it, could not reach
The place where it went down, ere
darkness came.
Then—in the dark—a shadow sometimes

moved

Before him, like the shadow he had lost,
And with a cry, *Yoo! Yoo!* he would
awake

And, crashing through the forests to the
West,

 Would try to steal a march upon the
sun,

And see it rise inexorably behind him,
And sail above, inexorably, at noon,
And sink beyond, inexorably, at night.

Then, after many suns had risen and set,
He saw at dusk a blaze of crimson light
Between the thinning tree-trunks and
emerged

Out of the forest into a place of rocks,
Washed by a water greater than the world.
He stood, an uncouth image carved in
stone,

Staring into the West. He saw the sun
Staining the clouds and sinking into the
flood.

His lips were parched with thirst, a
deeper thirst

Than any spring on earth could quench

again;
And when he laid him down upon the
shore
To drink of that deep water, he knew well
That he was nearer now to what he
sought,
Because it tasted salt as his lost tears.

He drank. He waded out, and drank again.
Then a big wave of darkness rushed upon
him,
And rolled him under. He rose, and with
great arms
Swam out into that boundless flood of
brine
Towards the last glimmer of light; a dark,
blind brute,
Sobbing and panting, till the merciful
waves,
Salt in his eyes and salt upon his lips,
Had drawn the agony out of his labouring
limbs
And gently as the cradling boughs that
once
Rocked him to sleep, embraced and drew
him down

Into oblivion, the first life that caught
With eyes bewildered by the light they
knew,
A glimpse of the unknown light beyond
the world.

GOETHE

II

THE PROPHET

Before the first wild matins of the
thrush
Had ended, or the sun sucked up the dew,
I saw him wrestling with his thoughts. He
rose,
Laid down that eagle's feather in his hand,
And looked at his own dawn.

did not speak. H

Only the secret music of his mind
In an enchanted silence flowed to meet
The listener, as his own great morning
flowed
Through all the woods and meadows at
his feet.
Colours and forms of earth and heaven
you flow
Like clouds around a star—the streaming
robe
Of an Eternal Glory. Let the law
Of Beauty, in your rhythmic folds, by
night
And day, through all the universe, reveal
The way of the unseen Mover to these
eyes.

Last night I groped into the dark abyss
Under the feet of man, and saw Thee there
Ascending, from that depth below all
depth.
Oh, now, at dawn, as I look up to heaven
Descend to meet me, on my upward way.
How shall they grasp Thy glory who
despise
The law that is Thy kingdom here on

earth,

Our way of freedom and our path to
Thee?

How shall they grasp that law, or rightly
know

One truth in Nature, who deny Thy Power,
Unresting and unhasting, everywhere?

How shall the seekers, bound to their own
tasks,

Each following his own quest, each
spying out

His fragment of a truth, reintegrate
Their universe and behold all things in
one?

Be this the task of Song, then, to renew
That universal vision in the soul.

Rise, Poet, to thy universal height,
Then stoop, as eagles do from their wide
heaven

On their particular prey. Between the
clouds

They see more widely and truly than the
mole

At work in his dark tunnel, though he cast
His earth upon the fields they watch afar.

Work on, inductive mole; but there's a use

In that too lightly abandoned way of
thought,
The way of Plato, and the way of Christ,
That man must find again, ere he can build
The temple of true knowledge. Those who
trust
To Verulam's *Novum Organum* alone,
Never can build it. Quarriers of the truth,
They cut the stones, but cannot truly lay
them;
For only he whose deep remembering
mind
Holds the white archetype, can to music
build
His towers, from the pure pattern
imprinted there.
He, and he only, in one timeless flash
Through all this moving universe discerns
The inexorable sequences of law,
And, in the self-same flash, transfiguring
all,
Uniting and transcending all, beholds
With my Spinoza's own ecstatic eyes
God in the hidden law that fools call
"chance,"
God in the star, the flower, the

moondrawn wave,
God in the snake, the bird, and the wild
beast,
God in that long ascension from the dark,
God in the body and in the soul of man,
God uttering life, and God receiving
death.

IX. IN ENGLAND

DARWIN

I

CHANCE AND DESIGN

*"I am the whisper that he ceased to
hear,"
The quiet voice of Shadow-of-a-Leaf*

*began,
And, as he spoke, the flowing air before
me
Shone like a crystal sphere, wherein I
saw
All that he pictured, through his own
deep eyes.*

I waited in his garden there, at Down.
I peered between the crooklights of a
hedge
Where ragged robins grew.

Far

off, I heard
The clocklike rhythm of an ironshod staff
Clicking on gravel, clanking on a flint.
Then, round the sand-walk, under his
trees he strode,
A tall lean man, wrapt in a loose dark
cloak,
His big soft hat of battered sun-burnt
straw
Pulled down to shade his face. But I
could see,
For I looked upward, the dim brooding
weight

Of silent thought that soon would shake
the world.

He paused to watch an ant upon its way.
He bared his head. I saw the shaggy
brows
That like a mountain-fortress overhung
The deep voracious eyes, the dogged face
 Where kindness and patience,
knowledge, power,
And pain quiescent under the conquering
will,
In that profound simplicity which marks
The stature of the mind, the truth of art,
The majesty of every natural law.
The child's wise innocence, and the silent
worth
Of human grief and love, had set their
seal.

I stole behind him, and he did not hear
Or see me. I was only Shadow-of-a-Leaf;
And yet—I knew the word was on its way
That might annul his life-work in an hour.
I heard the whisper of every passing wing
Where, wrapt in peace, among the hills of

Kent,
The patient watchful intellect had
prepared
A mightier revolution for mankind
Even than the world-change of
Copernicus
When the great central earth began to
move
And dwine to a grain of dust among the
stars.
I saw him pondering over a light-winged
seed
That floated, like an elfin aeronaut,
Across the path. He caught it in his hand
And looked at it. He touched its delicate
hooks
And set it afloat again. He watched it
sailing,
Carrying its tiny freight of life away
Over the quick-set hedge, up, into the
hills.
I heard him muttering, "beautiful! Surely
this
Implies design!
Design?" Then, from
his face

The wonder faded, and he shook his head;
But with such reverence and humility
That his denial almost seemed a prayer.

A prayer—for, not long after, in his house,
I saw him bowed, the first mind of his
age,

Bowed, helpless, by the deathbed of
his child;

Pondering, with all that knowledge, all
that power,

Powerless, and ignorant of the means to
save;

A dumb Prometheus, bending his great
head

In silence, as he drank those broken
words

Of thanks, the pitiful thanks of small
parched lips,

For a sip of water, a smile, a cooling
hand

On the hot brow; thanks for his goodness
—God!

Thanks from a dying child, just ten years
old!

And, while he stood in silence by her
grave,
Hearing the ropes creak as they lowered
her down
Into the cold dark hollow, while he
breathed
The smell of the moist earth, those calm
strange words—
I am the Resurrection and the Life,
Echoed and echoed through his lonely
mind,
Only to deepen his agony of farewell
Into Eternity.

Dumbly there he
strove
To understand how accents so divine,
In words so worthy of eternal power,
So postulant of it in their calm majesty,
Could breathe through mortal lips.

or God,
Who else could say them?

God

it could not be,
If in his mortal blindness he saw clear;
And yet, and yet, could madness wring the

heart

Thus, thus, and thus, for nineteen hundred
years?

*Would that she knew, would God that she
knew now,*

How much we loved her!

The

blind world, still ruled

By shams, and following in hypnotic
flocks

The sheep-bell of an hour, still thought of
him

"The Man of Science" as less or more
than man,

Coldly aloof from love and grief and
pain;

Held that he knew far more, and felt far
less

Than other men, and, even while it
praised

The babblers for their reticence and their
strength,

The shallow for their depth, the blind for
sight,

The rattling weathercocks for their love

of truth,
Ere long would brand, as an irreverent
fool,
This great dumb simple man, with his
bowed head.

Could the throng see that drama, as I saw
it—
I, Shadow-of-a-Leaf,—could the blind
throng discern
The true gigantic drama of those hours
Among the quiet hills as, one by one,
His facts fell into place; their broken
edges
Joined, like the fragments of a vast
mosaic,
And, slowly, the new picture of the
world,
Emerging in majestic pageantry
Out of the primal dark, before him grew;
Grew by its own inevitable law;
Grew, and earth's ancient fantasies
dwindled down;
The stately fabric of the old creation
Crumbled away; while man, proud
demigod,

Stripped of all arrogance now, priest,
beggar, king,
Captive and conqueror, all must own
alike
Their ancient lineage. Kin to the dumb
beasts
By the red life that flowed through all
their veins
From hearts of the same shape, beating all
as one
In man and brute; kin, by those kindred
forms
Of flesh and bone, with eyes and ears and
mouths
That saw and heard and hungered like his
own,
His mother Earth reclaimed him.

and back,
He traced them, till the last faint clue died
out
In lifeless earth and sea.

I

watched him striving
To follow further, bending his great
brows

Over the intense lens. . . .

Far

off, I heard
The murmur of human life, laughter and
weeping;
Heard the choked sobbings by a million
graves,
And saw a million faces, wrung with
grief,
Lifted forlornly to the Inscrutable Power.

* * * * *

I saw him raise his head. I heard his
thought
As others hear a whisper—*Surely this
Implies design!*

And worlds on
aching worlds
Of dying hope were wrapped in those
four words.
He stared before him, wellnigh
overwhelmed
For one brief moment, with instinctive
awe
Of Something that . . . determined every

force
Directed every atom. . . .

Then,

in a flash,
The indwelling vision vanished at the
voice
Of his own blindfold reason. For what
mind
Could so unravel the complicated threads,
The causes that are caused by the effects
Of other causes, intricately involved,
Woven and interwoven, in endless mazes,
Wandering through infinite time, infinite
space,
And yet, an ordered and mysterious
whole,
Before whose very being all mortal
power
Must abdicate its sovereignty?

A

dog
Might sooner hope to leap beyond the
mind
Of Newton than a man might hope to
grasp
Even in this little whirl of earth and sun

The Scheme of the All-determining
Absolute.

And yet—if that—the All-moving,
were the One
Reality, and sustained and made all
forms,
Then, by the self-same power in man
himself
Whatever was real in man might
understand
That same Reality, being one substance
with it,
One substance with the essential Soul of
all,—
Might understand, as children understand,
Even in ignorance, those who love them
best;
Might recognise, as through their innocent
eyes,
The highest, which is Love, though all the
worlds
Of lesser knowledge passed unheeded by.
What meant those moments else?
Moments that came
And went on wings, wild as these wings
of mine,

The wings of Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
Quick with a light that never could be
reached
By toiling up the mountain-sides of
thought;
Consummate meanings that were never
found
By adding units; moments of strange awe
When that majestic sequence of events
We call the cosmos, from its wheeling
atoms
Up to its wheeling suns, all spoke one
Power,
One Presence, One Unknowable, and One
Known?

*In the beginning, God made heaven and
earth:*
He, too, believed it, once. . . .

II

THE VOYAGE

if the wings
Of Shadow-of-a-Leaf had borne me
through the West
So that the sunset changed into the dawn,
I saw him in his youth.

The large
salt wind,
The creak of cordage, the wild swash of
waves
Were round him as he paced the clean
white deck,
An odd loose-tweedeed sojourner, in a
world
Of uniforms and guns.

The
Beagle plunged
Westward, upon the road that Drake had
sailed;
But this new voyager, on a longer quest,
Sailed on a stranger sea; and, though I
heard
His ringing laugh, he seemed to live apart
In his own mind, from all who moved

around him.

I saw him while the *Beagle* basked at
anchor
Under West Indian palms. He lounged
there, tanned
With sun; tall, lankier in his cool white
drill;
The big slouched straw pulled down to
shade his eyes.
The stirring wharf was one bright haze of
colour;
Kaleidoscopic flakes, orange and green,
Blood-red and opal, glancing to and fro,
Through purple shadows. The warm air
smelt of fruit.

He leaned his elbows on the butt of a gun
And listened, while a red-faced officer,
breathing
 Faint whiffs of rum, expounded lazily,
With loosely stumbling tongue, the cynic's
code,
His easy rule of life, belying the creed
That both professed.

And, in one

flash, I caught
A glimpse of something deeper, missed by
both,—
The subtle touch of the Master-Ironist
Unfolding his world-drama, point by
point,
In every sight and sound and word and
thought,
Packed with significance.

Out of

its myriad scenes
All moving swiftly on, unguessed by man,
To close in one great climax of clear
light,
This vivid moment flashed.

The

cynic ceased;
And Darwin, slowly knitting his puzzled
brows,
Answered, "*But it is wrong!*"
"Wrong?" chuckled the other. "Why
should it be wrong?"
And Darwin, Darwin,—he that was to
grasp
The crumbling pillars of their infidel
Temple

And bring them headlong down to the
honest earth,
Answered again, naïvely as a child,
"Does not the Bible say so?"

A

broad grin
Wreathed the red face that stared into his
own;
And, later, when the wardroom heard the
jest,
The same wide grin from Christian mouth
to mouth
Spread like the ripples on a single pool,
Quietly enough. They liked him. They'd
not hurt him.
And Darwin, strange, observant, simple
soul,
Saw clearly enough; had eyes behind his
back
For every smile; though in his big slow
mind
He now revolved a thought that greatly
puzzled him,
A thought that, in their light
sophistication,
These humorists had not guessed.

in his cabin,
His red-faced cynic had picked up a book
By one whose life was like a constant
light
On the high altar of Truth.

He
had read a page,
Then flung it down, with a contemptuous
oath,
Muttering, "These damned atheists! Why
d'you read them?"

Could pagan minds be stirred, then, to
such wrath
Because the man they called an "atheist"
smiled
At dates assigned by bland ecclesiasts
To God for His creation?

M
was made
On March the ninth, at ten o'clock in the
morning
(A Tuesday), just six thousand years
ago:
A legend of a somewhat different cast

From that deep music of the first great
phrase
In *Genesis*. The strange irony here struck
home.
For Darwin, here, was with the soul-
bowed throng
Of prophets, while the ecclesiasts blandly
toyed
With little calendars, which his "atheist's
book,"
In its irreverence, whispered quite away;
Whispered (for all such atheists bend
their heads
Doubtless in shame) that, in the Book of
Earth,
Six thousand years were but as yesterday,
A flying cloud, a shadow, a breaking
wave.
Millions of years were written upon the
rocks
That told its history. To upheave one
range
Of mountains, out of the sea that had
submerged
So many a continent, ere mankind was
born,

The harnessed forces, governed all by
law,
Had laboured, dragging down and
building up,
Through distances of Time, unthinkable
As those of starry space.

It dared to

say
(This book so empty of mystery and awe!)
That, searching the dark scripture of the
rocks,
It found therein no sign of a beginning,
No prospect of an end.

Strange that

the Truth,
Whether upheld by the pure law within
Or by the power of reason, thus dismayed
These worshippers of a little man-made
code.

Alone there in his cabin, with the books
Of Humboldt, Lyell, Herschel, spread
before him,
He made his great decision.

If the

realm
Beyond the bounds of human knowledge

gave
So large a sanctuary to mortal lies,
Henceforth his Bible should be one
inscribed
Directly with the law—the Book of Earth.

III

THE TESTIMONY OF THE ROCKS

I saw him climbing like a small dark
speck
—Fraught with what vast significance to
the world—
Among the snow-capt Andes, a dark point
Of travelling thought, alone upon the
heights,
To watch the terrible craters as they
breathed
Their smouldering wrath against the sky.

saw him,
Pausing above Portillo's pass to hear
The sea-like tumult, where brown torrents
rolled
Innumerable thousands of rough stones,
Jarring together, and hurrying all one way.
He stood there, spellbound, listening to
the voice
Of Time itself, the moments hurrying by
For ever irrecoverably. I heard
His very thought. The stones were on
their way
To the ocean that had made them; every
note
In their wild music was a prophecy
Of continents unborn.

When he
had seen
Those continents in embryo, beds of sand
And shingle, cumulant on the coastwise
plains,
Thousands of feet in thickness, he had
doubted
Whether the river of time itself could
grind

And pile such masses there. But when he
heard
The mountain-torrents rattling, he recalled
How races had been born and passed
away,
And night and day, through years
unreckonable,
 These grinding stones had never ceased
to roll
On their steep course. Not even the
Cordilleras,
Had they been ribbed with adamant,
could withstand
That slow sure waste. Even those
majestic heights
Would vanish. Nothing—not the wind that
blows
Was more unstable than the crust of the
earth.

He landed at Valdivia, on the day
When the great earthquake shuddered
through the hills
From Valparaiso, southward to Cape
Horn.
I saw him wandering through a ruined city

Of Paraguay, and measuring on the coast
The upheaval of new land, discovering
rocks
Ten feet above high-water, rocks with
shells
For which the dark-eyed panic-stricken
thongs
Had dived at ebb, a few short days ago.
I saw him—strange discoverer—as he
sailed
Through isles, not only uncharted, but
new-born,
Isles newly arisen and glistening in the
sun,
And atolls where he thought an older
height
Had sunk below the smooth Pacific sea.

He explored the Pampas; and before him
passed
The centuries that had made them; the
great streams
Gathering the red earth at their estuaries
In soft rich deltas, till new plains of loam
Over the Banda granite slowly spread,
And seeds took root and mightier forests

towered,
Forests that human foot could never tread,
Forests that human eye could never see;
But by the all-conquering human mind at
last
Trodden and seen, waving their leaves in
air
As at an incantation,
And filled once more with monstrous
forms of life.

He found their monstrous bones
embedded there,
And, as he found them, all those dry
bones lived.
I stole beside him in the dark, and heard,
In the unfathomable forest deeps, the
crash
Of distant boughs, a wild and lonely
sound,
Where Megatherium, the gigantic Sloth
Whose thigh was thrice an elephant's in
girth,
Rose, blindly groping, and with armoured
hands
Tore down the trees to reach their tender
crests

And strip them of their more delicious
green.

I saw him pondering on the secret bond
Between the living creatures that he found
On the main coast, and those on lonely
isles;

Forms that diverged, and yet were closely
akin.

One key, one only, unlocked the mystery
there.

Unless God made, for every separate isle
As it arose, new tribes of plants, birds,
beasts,

In variant images of the tribes He set
Upon their nearest continent, grading all
By time, and place, and distance from the
shore,

The bond between them was the bond of
blood.

All, all had branched from one original
tree.

I saw him off the Patagonian coast
Staring at something stranger than a
dream.

There, on a rocky point above the ship
With its world-voyaging thoughts, he first
beheld
Primeval man. There, clustering on the
crag,
Backed by their echoing forests of dark
beech,
The naked savages yelled at the white
sails,
Like wolves that bay the moon. They
tossed their arms
Wildly through their long manes of
streaming hair,
Like troubled spirits from an alien world.
Whence had they risen? From what
ancestral night?

What bond of blood was there? What
dreadful Power
Begot them—fallen or risen—from
heaven or hell?

I saw him hunting everywhere for light
On life's dark mystery; gathering
everywhere
Armies of fact, that pointed all one way,
And yet—what *vera causa* could he find

In blindfold Nature?

Even had he
found it,
What æons would be needed! Earth was
old;
But could the unresting loom of infinite
time
Weave this wild miracle, or evolve one
nerve
Of all this intricate network in the brain,
This exquisite machine that looked
through heaven,
Revelled in colours of a sunset sky,
Or met love's eyes on earth?

Ev

now,
He found new clues that led him all one
way.
And, everywhere, in the record of the
rocks,
Time and to spare for all that Time could
do,
But not his *vera causa*.

Earth

grew strange.
Even in the ghostly gleam that told the

watch

One daybreak that the ship was nearing
home

He saw those endless distances again. . . .

He saw through mist, over the struggling
waves

That run between the white-chalk cliffs of
France

And England, sundered coasts that once
were joined

And clothed with one wide forest.

deep sea

Had made the strange white body of that
broad land,

Beautifully establishing it on death,

Building it, inch by inch, through endless
years

Out of innumerable little gleaming bones,

The midget skeletons of the twinkling
tribes

That swarmed above in the more lucid
green

Ten thousand fathoms nearer to the sun.

There they lived out their gleam of life
and died,

Then slowly drifted down into the dark,
And spread in layers upon the cold sea-
bed
The invisible grains and flakes that were
their bones.
Layer on layer of flakes and grains of
lime,
Where life could never build, they built it
up
By their incessant death. Though but an
inch
In every thousand years, they built it up,
Inch upon inch, age after endless age;
And the dark weight of the incumbent
Deep
Compressed them (Power determined by
what Will?)
Out of the night that dim creation rose
The seas withdrew. The bright new land
appeared.
Then Gaul and Albion, nameless yet,
were one;
And the wind brought a myriad wingéd
seeds,
And the birds carried them, and the
forests grew,

And through their tangled ways the tall
elk roared.
But sun and frost and rain, the grinding
streams
And rhythmic tides (the tools of what
dread Hand?)
Still laboured on; till, after many a
change,
The great moon-harnessed energies of the
sea
Came swinging back, the way of the
south-west wind,
And, æon after æon, hammering there,
Rechannelled through that land their
shining way.
There all those little bones now greet the
sun
In gleaming cliffs of chalk; and, in their
chines
The chattering jackdaw builds, while
overhead
On the soft mantle of turf the violet wakes
In March, and young-eyed lovers look for
Spring.
What of the Cause? Oh, no more rounded
creeds

Framed in a realm where no man could
refute them!
Honesty, honesty, honesty, first of all.
And so he turned upon the world around
him,

The same grave eyes of deep simplicity
With which he had faced his pagan-
christian friends
And quoted them their Bible. . . .
Slowly he marshalled his worldwide
hosts of fact,
Legions new-found, or first assembled
now,
In their due order. Lyell had not dared
To tell the truth he knew. He found in
earth
The records of its vanished worlds of
life,
Each with its own strange forms, in its
own age,
Sealed in its own rock-system.

the first,
The rocks congealed from fire, no sign of
life;
And, through the rest, in order as they

were made,
From oldest up to youngest, first the signs
Of life's first gropings; then, in gathering
power,
Strange fishes, lizards, birds, and uncouth
beasts,
Worlds of strange life, but all in ordered
grades,
World over world, each tombed in its
own age
Or merging into the next with subtle
changes,
Delicate modulations of one form
(Urged by what force? Impelled by what
dark power?)
Progressing upward, into subtler forms
Through all the buried strata, till there
came
Forms that still live, still fight for life on
earth,
Tiger and wolf and ape; and, last of all,
The form of man; the child of yesterday.
Of yesterday! For none had ever found
Among the myriad forms of older worlds,
Locked in those older rocks through tracts
of time

Out-spanning thought, one vestige of
mankind.

There was no human footprint on the
shores

Whose old compacted sand, now turned
to stone,

Still showed the ripples where a summer
sea

Once whispered, ere the mastodon was
born.

There were the pitted marks, all driven
one way,

That showed how raindrops fell, and
the west wind blew.

There on the naked stone remained the
tracks

Where first the sea-beasts crawled, out of
the sea,

A few salt yards upon the long dark trail

That led through æons to the tidal roar

Of lighted cities and this world of tears.

The shell, the fern, the bird's foot, the
beast's claw,

Had left their myriad signs. Their forms
remained,

Their delicate whorls, their branching

fronds, their bones,
Age after age, like jewels in the rocks;
But, till the dawning of an age so late,
It seemed like yesterday, no sign, no
trace,
No relic of mankind!

Then, in that

age
Among the skulls, made equal in the
grave,
Of ape and wolf, last of them all, looked
up
That naked shrine with its receding
brows,
And its two sightless holes, the skull of
man.
Round it, his tools and weapons, the
chipped flints,
The first beginnings of his fight for
power,
The first results of his first groping
thought
Proclaimed his birth, the youngest child
of time.
Born, and not made? Born—of what
lesser life?

Was man so arrogant that he could disdain
The words he used so glibly of his God—
Born, and not made?

Could Lyell,

who believed

That, in the world around us, we should
find

The self-same causes and the self-same
laws

To-day as yesterday; and throughout all
time;

And that the Power behind all changes
works

By law alone; law that includes all
heights,

All depths, of reason, harmony, and love;
Could Lyell hold that all those realms of
life,

Each sealed apart in its own separate
age,

With its own separate species, had been
called

Suddenly, by a special Act of God,

Out of the void and formless? Could he
think

Even that mankind, this last emergent

form,
After so many æons of ordered law,
Was by miraculous Hands in one wild
hour,
Suddenly kneaded out of the formless
clay?
And was the formless clay more noble,
then,
Than this that breathed, this that had eyes
to see,
This whose dark heart could beat, this
that could die?
No! Lyell knew that this wild house of
flesh
Was never made by hands, not even those
Hands;
And that to think so were to discrown
God,
And not to crown Him, as the blind
believed.
The miracle was a vaster than they knew.
The law by which He worked was all
unknown;
Subtler than music, quieter than light,
The mighty process that through countless
changes,

Delicate grades and tones and semi-tones,
Out of the formless slowly brought forth
forms,
Lifeless as crystals, or translucent globes
Drifting in water; till, through endless
years,
Out of their myriad changes, one or two
More subtle in combination, at the touch
Of light began to move, began to attract
Substances that could feed them; blindly
at first;
But as an artist, with all heaven for prize,
Pores over every syllable, tests each
thread
Of his most tenuous thought, the moving
Power
Spent endless æons of that which men call
Time,
To form one floating tendril that could
close
On what it touched.

Who

whispered in his ear
That fleeting thought?

We

must suppose a Power

Intently watching—through all the
universe—
Each slightest variant, seizing on the best,
Selecting them, as men by conscious
choice
In their small realm selected and
reshaped
Their birds and flowers.

We

must suppose a Power
In that immense night-cleaving pageantry
Which men call Nature, a selective
Power,
Choosing through æons as men choose
through years.

*Many are called, few chosen, quietly
breathed
Shadow-of-a-Leaf, in exquisite undertone
One phrase of the secret music. . . .*

did not hear.
Lamarck—all too impatiently he flung
Lamarck aside; forgetting how in days
When the dark Book of Earth was darker
yet

Lamarck had spelled gigantic secrets out,
And left an easier task for the age to
come;
Forgetting more than this; for Darwin's
mind,
Working at ease in Nature, lost its way
In history, and the thoughts of other men.
For him Lamarck had failed, and he
misread
His own forerunner's mind. Blindfold
desires
Had never shaped a wing. The grape-
vine's need
To cling and climb could thrust no
tendrils out.
The environing snows of Greenland could
not cloak
Its little foxes with their whiter fur.
Nor could the wing-shut butterfly's inner
will
Mimic the shrivelled leaf on the withered
bough
So cunningly that the bird might perch
beside it
And never see its prey.

Was it

blind chance

That flashed his own great fragment of the
truth

Into his mind? What *vera causa*, then,
What leap of Nature brought that truth to
birth,
Illumining all the world?

It

flashed upon him

As at a sudden contact of two wires
The current flashes through; or, when
through space,

A meteorite for endless ages rolls
In darkness, and its world of night
appears

Unchangeable for ever, till, all at once,
It plunges into a soft resisting sea
Of planet-girdling air, and burns with
heat,

And bursts into a blaze, while far below,
Two lovers, in a world beyond its ken,
Look from a little window into the night
And see a falling star.

By such

wild light,

An image of his own ambiguous "chance,"

Which was not "chance," but governed by
a law
Unknown, too vast for men to comprehend
(Too vast for any to comprehend but One,
Breathed Shadow-of-a-Leaf, who in each
part discerns
Its harmony with the whole), at last the
clue
Flashed on him. . . .

In the strange
ironical scheme
Wherein he moved, of the Master-
Dramatist,
It was his own ambiguous "chance" that
slipt
A book of Malthus into his drowsy hand
And drew his drowsy eyes down to that
law
Of struggling men and nations.

it "chance"
That in this intricate torch-race tossed
him there
Light from one struggling on an alien track
And yet not alien, since all roads to truth
Meet in one goal at last?

Was

it blind chance

That even in this triumphant flash
prepared

The downfall of his human pride, and
slipt

The self-same volume into another hand;
And, in the lonely islands of Malay,
Drew Wallace to the self-same page, and
said

—Though only Shadow-of-a-Leaf could
hear that voice,—

*Whose is the kingdom, whose the glory
and power?*

Oh, exquisite irony of the Master, there
Unseen by both, their generous rivalry
Evolved, perfected, the new thought for
man;

And, over both, and all their thoughts, a
Power

Intently watching, made of their struggle
for truth

An image of the law that they illumed.

So all that wasting of a myriad seeds

In Nature's wild profusion was not waste,
Not even such waste as drives the flying
grains
Under the sculptor's chisel, but was itself
A cause of that unending struggle of life
Through which all life ascends.

conqueror there
Was chosen by laws inexorably precise,
As though to infinite Reason infinite Art
Were wedded, and had found in infinite
"chance"
Full scope for their consummate
certainties,—
Choice and caprice, freedom and law in
one.
Each slightest variant, in a myriad ways,
That armed or shielded or could help its
kind,
Would lead to a new triumph; would
reveal,
In varying, subtler ways of varying still;
New strokes of that divinest "chance" of
all
Which poet and sculptor count as
unforeseen,

And unforeseeable; yet, when once
achieved,
They recognise as crowning law with
law,

And witnessing to infinitudes of Power
In that creative Will which shapes the
world.

Oh, in that widening splendour of the
mind,

Blinder than Buffon, blinder than
Lamarck,

His eyes amazed with all that leapt to
light,

Dazed with a myriad details, lost the
whole.

He saw the law whereby the few were
chosen

From forms already at variance. Back and
back

He traced his law, and every step was
true.

And yet his *vera causa* was no Cause,
For it determined nothing. It revealed,
In part, how subtler variants had arisen
From earlier simpler variants, but no
more.

* * * * *

Subtler than music, quieter than light,
The Power that wrought those changes;
and the last
Were all implied and folded in the first,
As the gnarled oak-tree with its thousand
boughs
Writhing to heaven and striking its grim
roots
Like monstrous talons into the mountain's
heart
Is pent in one smooth acorn. So each life,
In little, retold the tale; each separate man
Was, in himself, the world's epitome,
A microcosm, wherein who runs may
read
The history of the whole; from the first
seed
Enclosed in the blind womb, until life
wake
Through moons or æons of embryonic
change
To human thought and love, and those
desires
Which still grope upward, into the

unknown realms

As far beyond us now as Europe lay
From the first life that crawled out of the
sea.

There lies our hope; but Oh, the endless
way!

And the lost road of knowledge, endless,
too!

That infinite hope was not for him. One
life

Hardly sufficed for his appointed task,
To find on earth his clues to the unknown
law,

Out-miracling all miracles had he known,
Whereby this lifeless earth, so clearly
seen

Across the abyss of time, this lifeless
earth

Washed by a lifeless ocean, by no power
But that which moves within the things we
see,

Swept the blind rocks into the cities of
men,

With great cathedrals towering to the sky,
And little ant-like swarms in their dark

aisles
Kneeling to that Unknowable.

Hi:

to trace
The way by inches, never to see the
whole,
Never to grasp the miracle in the law,
And wrestling with it, to be writhen by
light
As by an Angel's finger in the dark.
Could he have stood on that first lifeless
coast
With Shadow-of-a-Leaf, and seen that
lifeless brine,
Rocks where no mollusc clung, nor
seaweed grew;
Could he have heard a whisper,—*Only*
wait.
Be patient. On one sure and certain day,
Out of the natural changes of these
rocks
And seas, at last, a great ship will go by;
Cities will dusk that heaven; and you
shall see
Two lovers pass, reading one printed
book,

The Paradiso. . . .

Would he
have been so sure
That Nature had no miracles in her heart
More inconceivably shattering to the mind
Than madness ever dreamed? For this,
this, this,
Had happened, though the part obscured
the whole;
And his own labour, in a myriad ways,
Endlessly linking part to part, had lost
The *vera causa* that Lamarck had known,
The one determining Cause that moved
through all.

IV

THE PROTAGONISTS

The mist cleared. As an airman flying, I
saw,

Between the quiet wings of Shadow-of-a-
Leaf,
Far down, a coiling glitter of willowy
streams;
Then grey remembered battlements that
enclosed
Gardens, like nests of nightingales; a
bridge;
An airy tower; a shadowy dome; the
High;
St. Mary's delicate spire.

A

sound of bells
Rose like a spray of melody from the far
Diminished fountains of the City of Youth.
I heard and almost wept.

The

walls grew large
And soared to meet me. As the patterned
streets
Break into new dimensions, passing from
sight
While the airman glides and circles
down, they rose,
And the outer City, vanishing, revealed
The secret life within. At once I passed

Through walls of stone on those ethereal
wings;
And, as an unseen spirit might survey
A crowded theatre from above, I saw
A packed assembly, gazing, hushed and
still,
At certain famous leaders of that hour
On their raised dais. Henslow in the
midst,
Their president, gentle, tolerant, reverent,
kind,
Darwin's old tutor, scientist and half-
saint;
Owen beside him, crabbed as John Knox,
And dry as his dead bones; bland
Wilberforce,
 The great smooth Bishop of Oxford,
pledged and primed
To make an end of Darwin, once for all.
Not far away, a little in shadow, sat
A strange young man, tall, slight, with
keen dark eyes,
Who might, in the irresponsible way of
youth,
Defend an absent thinker. Let him beware.
There was a balance of power in science,

too,
Which would resent disturbance. He'd be
crushed
By sheer weight of authority, then set,
Duly submissive, in his proper place.
His name was Huxley.

A

square close-crowded room,
It held, in little, a concentrated world,
Imaging, on a microcosmic stage,
The doubts, the fears, the jealousies, and
dull hates
That now beset one lonely soul at Down;
But imaging, also, dauntless love of truth
In two or three, the bearers of the fire.

Henslow, subdued, with twenty reticent
words
That, in their mere formality, seemed
aware
Of silent dark momentous currents
flowing
Under the trivial ripple of use and wont,
Called on Daubeny, first, for his
discourse
On Sex in Flowers, and their descent

through time.

Daubeny, glancing over his glasses,
bowed
And twinkled a wise physician's rosy
smile,
As one of his many parts; an all-round
man,
Sound Latinist and an excellent judge of
wine,
Humanist and geologist, who had tracked
Guettard through all his craters in
Auvergne,
And, afterwards, with a map in his right
hand,
And Ovid, or Catullus, in his left,
Traced the volcanic chains through
Hungary,
Italy, Transylvania, and returned
To Oxford, as her botanist at the last,
With silvery hair, but otherwise
unchanged,
Oxford in bloom and Oxford to the core.
Swimming serene in academic air,
With open mind and non-committal phrase
He proved he knew how little all men

know;
And whoso kept that little to himself
Could never be caught tripping.

he smiled,
And so remained the wisest of them all.

For half an hour the sexes of the flowers
Danced from his learned discourse,
through the minds
Of half his feminine hearers, like a troop
Of Bacchanals, blowing kisses.

the crowd
I saw, at the whimsical chuckle of
Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
The large-eyed spinster with the small
pursed mouth,
Eliza Pym of Woodstock, who desired
To know about the wild flowers that she
drew
In delicate water-colours for her friends.
She sat bolt upright, innocently amazed
And vaguely trepidant in her hooped
green gown.
What? Even the flowers? How startling

was the sound
Of pistil! Awed, intent, she caught at
clues;
Meticulously quivering at the thought
Of bees; and blushing deeply when he
spoke
In baritone of male virtue in the rose.
Through all, the evasive academic phrase,
Putting out vaguely sensitive tentacles
That instantly withdrew from what they
touched,
Implied that he could view, quite
unperturbed,
All theories, and remain detached, aloft
Among the gods, in philosophic calm;
Nay, by his critical logic was endowed
With something loftier.

What were

gods to him
Who, being ephemeral, mortal, born to
die,
Could, over the port of Corpus and All
Souls
Mellowed in classic cellars, quiz the
powers
That doomed him, as the aristocrat of

thought
Looks through ironical lorgnettes at the
might
Of Demos round his tumbril. They lived
on,
Wasting their nectar, wrecking worlds on
worlds.
He had risen, at least, superior to all that.
He held it somewhat barbarous, vulgar,
crude
To wallow in such profusion as the gods.
All this implied, not spoken; for he found
His final causes in his dry pressed
flowers;
Proved that he knew—none better—all
the tribe
Who had dragged a net of Latin through
the fields;
Proved that some flowers, at least, had
never changed
Through many centuries. The black-
seeded poppy
Was known to Homer. He rolled out the
lines.
Almonds, the bitter-kernelled and the
sweet,

Were tasted by the prophets; and he found
White-seeded sesamum, in the night of
time,
Among the old Egyptians. . . .
He showed that, while his library was
vast,
Fragrant with leather, crested, tooled, and
gilt,
He had closed the Book of Nature, and,
on the whole,
Despite his open mind, dismissed the
views
Of this—er—new philosopher, with a
smile
That, don-wise, almost seemed to ask
aloud,
"Who is he, after all?" Not one of *us*.
Why weigh his facts, then, further, since
we hold
The official seals of truth in this our time.
Such men are always wrong. They come
and go.
The breeze would soon blow over.

this implied,
Not spoken, in that small dry steady

smile,
Doctor Daubeny gathered up his tails
And made one definite and emphatic point
By sitting down, while some eight
hundred hands
Acclaimed his perfect don-hood.

H

rose,
A little nervously. Had much pleasure,
though . . .
And turned to Mr. Huxley. Would he
speak?
A whisper passed, a queer new stillness
gripped
The expectant crowd. The clock ticked
audibly
Not yet, not yet! A sense of change at
hand
Stole through the silence, like the first
cool breath
That, over a great ship's company at night,
Steals through the port-holes from the
open sea.
Then, with sure foresight, seeing the clash
to come,
The strange young man with the

determined mouth
And quick dark eyes rose grimly, and
flung down
A single sentence, like a gyve of steel
Wrenched from the wrists to set the strong
hands free
For whatsoever need might rise, if clock
And *Zeitgeist* changed their quiet *Not Yet*
to *Now*.
*"A general audience, sir, where
sentiment
May interfere, unduly interfere,
With intellect"*—as a thin steel wire
drawn tight
By an iron winch, the hush grew tense and
rang
Low, hard, clear, cold—"*is not a fitting
place
For this discussion.*"

Silence, and
the clock,
Two great allies, the surest of them all,
Dead silence, and the voice *Not Yet, Not
Yet*,
A cough, the creak of the chair as he sat
down,

A shuffle of feet, the chairman's baffled
face,
Then little indignant mutterings round the
hall,
Turning to gasps of mockery. Insolence?
—no,—
 Sheer weakness, full retreat!

Th

Bishop raised
His eyebrows, looked at the dense
disflattered crowd,
And had no further fear. The battle was
won.
Victory, of the only kind he knew,
Was in his hands. Retreat must now be
turned
Into full rout. He glanced at Owen, met
His little sardonic smile with a wise nod,
As if to say, "Ah, just as we foresaw."
Excited clerics caught the flying hint
And whispered, eyes agog, "You noticed
that?
He's a great man, the Bishop! What a
brow!
And Owen, too. Of course, they know;
they know;

And understand each other, thick as
thieves."

Then Owen rose; waved Huxley's empty
excuse

Remorselessly aside; and plunged right
on,

Declaring there were facts, whereby the
crowd

Could very fitly judge.

The

crowd's own feet

Tapped a benign applause.

Then

came the facts,

Facts from a realm that Huxley had made
his own.

The brain of the gorilla—someone
turned

A faint hysterical laugh into a sneeze—

*Linked it more closely to the lowest
groups*

Of QUADRUMANA.

"Quadru—

what-did-he-say?"

Whispered Miss Pym unconsciously to
herself,

"Mana, four-handed," clerical whiskers
breathed,
With Evangelical titillance in her ear,
"Apes, monkeys, all the things that climb
up trees.
Says the gorilla's more like them than us."
"Thank you." Eliza Pym inclined her head
A little stiffly.

Had the
world gone mad?
Was some one in the background trying to
find
A pedigree for mankind among the brutes?
Absurd, of course, and yet—one must
confess
How like they were in some things. Unto
each
A mouth, a nose, two eyes, flesh, blood,
and bones
Of the same pattern.

Comic
enough, and weird;
But what became of *Genesis*, then, and
God?
If all these whiskered men but one or two

So utterly disbelieved it, why discuss
Degrees of kinship? Surely the gulf was
fixed
Wide as the severance between heaven
and hell.
Then, in one dreadful gleam, she seemed
to see
The rows of whiskered listeners, darkly
perched,
Herself among them, on long swaying
boughs,
Mesmerised, and all dumbly staring down
With horrible fascination at great eyes,
Green moons of cruelty, steadily
smouldering,
In depths that—smelt of tigers; or the salts
Unstoppered by the vicar's wife in front.

Smile at Eliza Pym with Shadow-of-a-
Leaf;
But only if your inward sight can see
Her memories, too—a child's uplifted
face,
The clean white cot, the fluttering nursery
fire;
Old days, old faces, teaching her those

lines
From Blake, about a Lamb. Yet that—why
that
Might be the clue they lacked in all this
talk
Of our dumb kinsfolk. If she could but
speak
And—hint it! Why don't Bishops think of
things
Like that, she wondered.

Owen

resumed his chair
With loud applause.

That

grim young man again,
Huxley, was on his feet, his dark eyes lit
With thrice the vital power of all the rest.
In one cool sentence, like a shining lance,
He touched the centre of his opponent's
shield,
And ended all the shuffling, all the doubts
Of where he stood, how far he dared to
go,
If truth required it. He could not accept
Those facts from any authority; gave
direct

Unqualified contradiction to those facts;
And pledged himself to justify this
course,
Unusual as it seemed perhaps—
elsewhere.

"Elsewhere," and as he said it, came a
gleam
Into his face, reflected from the heights
Where a tribunal sits whose judgment
holds
Not for the fleeting moment, but all time.

"Elsewhere"—the Bishop smiled. He had
not caught
That gleam. "Elsewhere" was only
another sign
Of weakness, even timidity perhaps,
And certainly retreat, not from the truth
(He felt so sure of that) but from the might
And deep resources of the established
powers
Whose influence ruled the world.

for him
Meant Saturday, and here. The lists were
set,

The battle joined, and the great issue
plain,—
Whether the human race came straight
from God,
Or traced its dark descent back to the
brute,
And left his creed a wreck of hollow
towers,
The haunt of bats and owls. His time to
strike
Would come on Saturday. Pleadings of
"elsewhere"
Would not avail. He set his jaw. Please
God,
He meant to drive this victory crashing
home,
And make an end of Darwin once for all.
So closed the first strange scene.

rumour spread
Everywhere, of the Bishop's grim intent.
Saturday's crowd, an hour before its time
Choked all the doors, and crammed the
long west hall.
Black-coated members of all shades of
thought,

Knowledge and doubt and bigotry,
crushed their sides
In chair-packed rows together (Eliza Pym
Among them, with her startled innocent
eyes).
A bevy of undergraduates at the back,
Quietly thoughtful, held their watching
brief
For youth and for the future. Fame to
come
Already touched the brows of a rare few
With faint leaf-shadows of her invisible
wreath:
Green, the philosopher, gazing at the
world
With youth's aloofness, and that inward
light
Which shines from Oxford still; not far
away
The young historian of the coloured
stream
Of outward life, the ancestral pageantry
Of England, and its tributary rills
Flowing in dawn-gleams out of the mists
of time.
There, too, in front, with atavistic face

And Van Dyck beard, so oddly like King
Charles
And proud of it, sat Admiral FitzRoy,
Late captain of the *Beagle*, quite prick-
eared
With personal curiosity. Twice he told
His neighbour that, by George, he
wouldn't ha' missed
This Donnybrook Fair for anything. He
had sailed
With Darwin round the world. They used
to call him
The old philosopher. Heard the bosun
once,
Pointing the officers out—damned funny it
was!—
"That's Captain FitzRoy. That's the second
mate;
And *that*"—pointing a thumb at Darwin's
back—
"*That's* our Fly-Catcher!"

of fellows, too,

But queer. He'd tell you, in the simplest
way
—As if it meant no more than pass the

salt,—
Something that knocked you endways;
calmly shift
A mountain-range, in half a dozen words,
And sink it in the sea.

In fact,

FitzRoy
Felt it his duty more than once, by
George,
To expostulate; told him plainly he'd upset
Genesis and the Church; and then there'd
be
The devil and all to pay. And now, by
George,
He'd done it; and her Majesty's Admiral
Had come on purpose, all the way from
town,
To hear and see the end of it.

So

he said,
Not wholly understanding why he came,
—
The memory of a figure rapt and bowed
Over a shell, or finding in the rocks,
As though by wizardry, relics of lost
worlds;

Moments that, by a hardly noticed phrase,
Had touched with orderly meaning and
new light
The giant flaws and foldings in the hills;
Moments when, in the cabin, he had
stared
Into the "old philosopher's" microscope,
And seen the invisible speck in a water-
drop
Grow to a great rose-window of radiant
life
In an immense cathedral.

Vaguely

enough,
Perhaps in the dimmest hinterland of his
mind,
There lurked a quiet suspicion that, after
all,
His queer old friend *had* hit on something
queer.
Three places off, his face a twinkling
mask
Of keen Scots humour, Robert Chambers
glanced
Quietly at his watch, to hide a smile
When someone who had "written the

Vestiges,"

And only half denied it, met his eye.

The vacant platform glared expectancy,
And held the gaze now of the impatient
crowd.

Then Henslow led the conquering Bishop
in.

Two rows of clerics, half-way down the
hall,

Drummed for their doughty champion
with their heels.

Above, in each recessed high window-
seat,

Bishop-adoring ladies clapped their
hands.

The rest filed in, mere adjuncts, modest
foils.

Hooker and Lubbock and Huxley took
their chairs

On Henslow's left. The beautiful gaitered
legs,

By their divine prerogative, on his right,
So carelessly crossed, more eloquently
than words

Assured the world that everything was
well,
And their translation into forms of speech
A mere formality. Next to the Bishop sat
A Transatlantic visitor with a twang,
One Doctor Draper, his hard wrinkled
skin
Tinged by the infinite coffee he absorbed,
A gaunt bone-coloured desert,
unassuaged.
He was a grim diplomatist, as befits
A pilgrim of the cosmos; ready at Rome
To tickle the Romans; and, if bishops
ruled,
And found themselves at odds with
freeborn souls
Outside the Land of Freedom, he'd
befriend
Bishops, bring in the New World, stars
and all,
To rectify that balance, and take home
For souvenir, with a chip of the pyramids,
The last odd homages of the obsequious
Old.

The president called him for his opening

speech.

He stood and beamed, enjoying to the full
The sense that, with his mighty
manuscript,
He could delay the antagonists for an
hour.

He cleared his throat. He took from a
little box
A small black lozenge, popped it into his
mouth,
Leisurely rolled it under a ruminant
tongue,
Then placidly drawled his most
momentous words:
"Proh-fessur Henslow, Bishop Wilbur-
force,
Members, AND friends, in this historic
hall,
I assk first, AIR we a fortooitous
Con-course of atoms?" Half
unconsciously,
He struck at once to the single central
heart
Of all the questions asked by every age;
As though he saw what only Shadow-of-
a-Leaf

Had watched last night, as in a crystal
globe,
That scene preparing, the interweaving
clues
Whose inconceivable intricacy at length,
By "chance," as blind men call it, through
the maze
Of life and time, at the one right juncture
brought
Two shadows, face to face, in an Oxford
Street,
Chambers and Huxley. "You'll be there to-
morrow."—
"No, I leave Oxford now."—

"The

enemy means
To annihilate Darwin. You will not desert
us?"—

"If you say that, I stay."

Each to

his place
Had moved in his own orbit, like a star,
Or like an atom, free-will at one with
law,
In the unplanned plan of the Master-
Dramatist,

Where Doctor Draper blindly played his
part

And asked his pregnant question. He
droned on,

For one enormous hour, starkly
maintained

That Europe, in its intellectual life,
By mere "fortooity," never could have
flowered

To such results as blushed before him
there

In that historic hall of halls to-night.

If Darwin thought so, he took leave to
stand

Beside them, and to smile the vast calm
smile

Of Arizona's desert distances,
Till all such dragon thoughts had coiled
away.

He took his chair. The great debate began.
For prelude came a menacing growl of
storm.

A furious figure rose, like a sperm-whale,
Out of the seething audience. A huge man,
With small, hot, wicked eyes and
cavernous mouth,

Bellowed his own ferocious claim to
speak
On economic grounds. He had subscribed
His guineas, ringing guineas of red gold,
Ungrudgingly for years; but prophesied
Withdrawal of all such guineas, on all
sides,
From this Association, if it failed
To brand these most abominable views
As blasphemous, bearing on their devilish
brows,
Between their horns, the birth-mark of the
Beast.
This last word hissed, he sank again. At
once,
Ere Henslow found his feet or spoke a
word,
Up leapt a raw-boned parson from the
North,
To seize his moment's fame. With sawing
arm
The Reverend Dingle, like a windmill,
vowed
He'd prove upon the blackboard, in white
chalk,
By diagram—and the chalk was in his

hand—

"That mawnkey and mahn had separate pedigrees.

Let A here be the mawnkey, and B the mahn."

Loud laughter; shouts of "mawnkey!" and "sit down"

Extinguished him. He sat; and Henslow quelled

The hubbub with one clarion-clear demand,

Dictated, surely, by the ironic powers Who had primed the Bishop and prepared his fall:

"Gentlemen, this discussion now must rest

On scientific grounds."

At

once there came

Calls for the Bishop, who, rising from his chair,

Urged by the same invisible ironies,

 Remarked that his old friend, Professor Beale,

Had something to say *first*. That weighty first

Conveyed the weight of his own words to
come.

Urged still by those invisible ones, his
friend

Dug the pit deeper; modestly declared,
Despite his keen worn face and shoulders
bowed

In histologic vigils, that he felt
His knowledge quite inadequate; and the
way

Was made straight—for the Bishop.
The Bishop rose, mellifluous, bland,
adroit.

A gesture, lacking only the lawn sleeves
To make it perfect, delicately conveyed
His comfortable thought—that what
amazed

The sheepfold must be folly.

Ha

the throng,

His own experience told him, had not
grasped

The world-inweaving argument, could not
think

In æons. Æons, then, would be dismissed

As vague and airy fantasies. He might
choose
His facts at will, unchallenged. He stood
there
Secure that his traditions could not fail,
Basing his faith on schemes of thought
designed
By authorised "thinkers" in pure artistry,
As free from Nature's law as coloured
blocks
That children play with on the nursery
hearth,
And puzzle about and shift and twist and
turn
Until the beautiful picture, as ordained,
Comes out, exact to the pattern, and
reveals
The artificer's plan, the pattern, as
arranged,
By bishops, politic statesmen, teachers,
guides,
Who hold it in reserve, their final test
Of truth, for times like this. He had been
so sure
Of something deeper than all schemes of
thought

That he had all too lightly primed himself
With "facts" to match their fables;
hastily crammed
Into his mind's convenient travelling bag
(Sound leather, British) all that he
required,—
Not truth, but "a good argument." He had
asked
Owen, who hated Huxley, to provide it;
And he had brought it with him,—not the
truth,
Not even facts, those unrelated crumbs
Of truth, the abiding consecrated whole.
He had brought his borrowed "facts,"
misunderstood,
To meet, for the first time in all his life,
Stark earnest thought, wrestling for truth
alone,
As men on earth discerned it. He had
prayed,
With something deeper than blind make-
believe,
Thy will be done on earth; and yet, and
yet,
The law wherein that will might be
discerned,

The law wherein that unity of heaven
And earth might yet be found (could he
but trust
The truth, could he believe that his own
God
Lived in the living truth), he waved aside.
These others had not found it, but they
kept
One faith that he had lost. Though it
should slay them,
They trusted in the truth. They could not
see
Where it might lead them. Only at times
they felt
As they deciphered the dark Book of
Earth
That, following its majestic rhythm of
law,
They followed the true path, the eternal
way
Of That which reigns. Prophetic flashes
came.
Words that the priest mechanically
intoned
Burned upon Huxley's keen ironical page
Like sudden sapphires, drawing their

deeper light
From that celestial City which endures
Because it hath foundations: *Shall I come
Before the Eternal with burnt offerings?
Hath not the Eternal showed thee what
is good,*
 *That thou do justly and mercifully,
and walk
Humbly with the Eternal?*

Oh, irony of the Master-Dramatist,
Who set once more those lists; and sent
His truth
Unrecognised, as of old, to fight for life
And prove itself in struggle and raise
once more
A nobler world above the world out-
worn,
Crushing all easy sophistry, though it
stood
Garbed as the priest of God.

The

Bishop seized
His diplomatic vantage. The blunt truth
Of Huxley's warning offered itself to him
As a rash gambit in their game of—tact.

He seized it; gracefully smoothed the
ruffled pride
Of that great audience, trained in a sound
school
To judge by common-sense.

His

mobile face
Revealed much that his politic words
concealed.
His strength was in that sound old British
way—
Derision of all things that transcend its
codes
In life, thought, art; the moon-calf's happy
creed
That, if a moon-calf only sees the moon
In thoughts that range the cosmos, his
broad grin
Sums the whole question; there's no more
to see.
In all these aids, an innocent infidel,
The Bishop put his trust; and, more than
all,
In vanity, the vacant self-conceit
That, when it meets the masters of the
mind

And finds them bowed before the
Inscrutable Power,
Accepts their reverence and humility
As tribute, due acknowledgment of fool's
right
To give the final judgment, and annul
The labour of a life-time in an hour.
Dulcetly, first, he scoffed at Darwin's
facts.

"Rock-pigeons now were what they
had always been.
Species had never changed. What were
the proofs
Even of the variation they required
To make this theory possible? We had
heard
Mysterious rumours of a long-legged
sheep
Somewhere in Yorkshire (laughter). Let
me ask
Professor Huxley, here upon the left
(All eyes on Huxley), who believes
himself
Descended from an ape (chuckles of
glee),
How recently this happened."

Bishop turned,
 All smiling insolence, "May I beg to
 know
 If this descent is on your father's side,
 Or on your mother's?"

He
 paused, to let the crowd
 Bellow its laughter. The unseen ironies
 Had trapped him and his flock; and
 neither knew.
 But Huxley knew. He turned, with a grim
 smile,
 And while the opposing triumph rocked
 and pealed,
 Struck one decisive palm upon his knee,
 And muttered low—"The Lord hath
delivered him
Into my hands."

His neighbour
 stared and thought
 His wits were wandering. Yet that
 undertone
 Sounded more deadly, had more victory
 in it,
 Than all the loud-mouthed minute's dying

roar.

It died to a tense hush. The Bishop closed
In solemn diapason. Darwin's views
Degraded woman. They debased
mankind,
And contradicted God's most Holy Word.
Applause! Applause! The hall a quivering
mist
Of clapping hands. From every window-
seat
A flutter of ladies' handkerchiefs and
shrill cries
As of white swarming sea-gulls. The
black rows
 Of clerics all exchanging red-faced
nods,
And drumming with their feet, as though
to fill
A hundred-pedalled organ with fresh
wind.
The Bishop, like a *Gloire de Dijon* rose
With many-petalled smiles, his plump
right hand
Clasped in a firm congratulatory grip
Of hickory-bones by Draper of New

York;
Who had small faith in what the Bishop
said
But heard the cheers, and gripped him as
a man
Who never means to let this good thing
go.
Motionless, on the left, the observant few,
The silent delegates of a sterner power,
With grave set faces, quietly looking on.
At last the tumult, as all tumult must,
Sank back to that deep silence. Henslow
turned
To Huxley without speaking. Once again
The clock ticked audibly, but its old "Not
Yet"
Had somehow, in that uproar, in the face
Of that tumultuous mockery, changed to
Now!

The lean tall figure of Huxley quietly
rose.
He looked, for a moment, thoughtfully, at
the crowd;
Saw rows of hostile faces; caught the grin
Of ignorant curiosity; here and there,

A hopeful gleam of friendship; and, far
back,
The young, swift-footed, waiting for the
fire.
He fixed his eyes on these—then, in low
tones,
Clear, cool, incisive, "*I have come here,*"
he said,
"*In the cause of Science only.*"

He

paused again.
Then, striking the mockery out of the
 mocker's face,
His voice rang out like steel—

"I

have heard nothing
To prejudice the case of my august
Client, who, as I told you, is not here."

At once a threefold picture flashed
upon me,
A glimpse, far off, through eyes of
Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
First, of a human seeker, there at Down,
Gathering his endless cloud of witnesses
From rocks, from stones, from trees; and
from the signs

In man's own body of life's æonian way;
But, far above him, clothed with purer
light,
The stern, majestic Spirit of living Truth;
And, more august than even his prophets
knew,
Through that eternal Spirit, the primal
Power
Returning into a world of faiths out-worn.

Once more, as he spoke on, a thousand
years
Were but as yesterday. If these truths were
true,
This theory flooded the whole world with
light.
Could we believe that the Creator set
In mockery all these birth-signs in the
world,
Or once in a million years had wrecked
His work
And shaped, in a flash, a myriad lives
anew,
Bearing in their own bodies all the signs
Of their descent from those that He
destroyed?

Who left that ancient leaf within the
flower?
Who hid within the reptile those lost fins,
And under the skin of the sea-floundering
whale
The bones of the lost thigh? Who dusked
the foal
With shadowy stripes, and under its hoof
concealed
Those ancient birdlike feet of its lost kin?
Who matched that hoof with a rosy finger-
nail,
Or furred that point within the human ear?
Who had imprinted in the body of man,
And in his embryo, all those intricate
signs
Of his forgotten lineage, even those gills
Through which he drew his breath once in
the sea?

The speaker glanced at his antagonist.
"You think all this too marvellous to be
true;

Yet you believe in miracles. You think
The unfolding of this complicated life
Around us, out of a simple primal form,

Impossible; yet you know that every man
Before his birth, a few brief years ago,
Was once no more than a single living
cell.

You think it ends your theory of creation.
You say that God made *you*; and yet you
know

—And reconcile your creed with what
you know—

That you yourself originally"—he held up
A gleaming pencil-case—"were a little
piece

Of matter, not so large as the end of this.

if you ask, in fine,

Whether I'd be ashamed to claim descent
From that poor animal with the stooping
gait

And low intelligence, who can only grin
And chatter as we pass by, or from a *man*
Who could use high position and great
gifts

To crush one humble seeker after truth—
I hesitate, but"—an outburst of applause
From all who understood him drowned
the words.

He paused. The clock ticked audibly
again.
Then, quietly measuring every word, he
drove
The sentence home. "I asserted and repeat
A man would have no cause to feel
ashamed
Of being descended through vast tracts of
time
From that poor ape.

Were there an
ancestor
Whom I could not recall without a sense
Of shame, it were a *man*, so placed, so
gifted,
Who sought to sway his hearers from the
truth
By aimless eloquence and by skilled
appeals
To their religious prejudice."

W

it the truth
That conquered, or the blind sense of the
blow
Justly considered, delivered, and
driven home,

That brought a crash of applause from
half the house?
And more (for even the outright enemy
Joined in that hubbub), though indignant
cries,
Protested vainly, "Abominable to treat
The Bishop so!"

The Bishop sat

there dumb.
Eliza Pym, adding her own quaint touch
Of comedy, saw that pencil shine again
In Huxley's hand; compared it, at a glance
Of fawn-like eyes, with the portentous
form
In gaiters; felt the whole world growing
strange;
Drew one hysterical breath, and swooned
away.

THE *VERA CAUSA*

And yet, and yet, the victor knew too
well
His victory had a relish of the dust.
Even while the plaudits echoed in his
ears,
It troubled him. When he pondered it that
night,
A finer shame had touched him. He had
used
The weapons of his enemy at the last;
And, if he had struck his enemy down for
truth,
He had struck him down with weapons he
despised.
He had used them with a swifter hand and
eye,
A subtler cunning; and he had set his heel
On those who took too simply to their
hearts
A tale, whose ancient imagery enshrined
A mystery that endured. He had
proclaimed
A fragment of a truth which, he knew

well,
Left the true Cause in darkness. Did he
know
More of that Cause than *Genesis*? Could
he see
Farther into that darkness than the child
Folding its hands in prayer?

More

clearly far
Than Darwin, whom he had warned of it,
he knew
The bounds of this new law; bade him
beware
Of his repeated dogma—*Nature makes
No leap*. He pointed always to the abyss
Of darkness round the flickering spark of
light
Upheld by Science. Had Wilberforce
been armed
With knowledge and the spiritual steel
Of Saint Augustine, who had also seen,
Even in his age, a ladder of life to
heaven,
There had been a victory of another kind
To lighten through the world.

A

Darwin knew it;
But, while he marshalled his unnumbered
truths,
He lost the Truth; as one who takes
command
Of multitudinous armies in the night,
And strives to envisage, in one sweep of
the mind,
Each squadron and each regiment of the
whole,
Ever the host that swept through his
mind's eye,
Though all in ordered ranks and files,
obscured
Army on army the infinite truth beyond.
The gates of Beauty closed against his
mind,
And barred him out from that eternal
realm,
Whose lucid harmonies on our night
bestow
Glimpses of absolute knowledge from
above;
Unravelling and ennobling, making clear
Much that had baffled us, much that else
was dark;

So that the laws of Nature shine like
roads,
Firm roads that lead through a significant
world
Not downward, from the greater to the
less,
But up to the consummate Soul of all.
He could not follow them now. Back,
back and back,
He groped along the dark diminishing
road.

The ecstasy of music died away.
The poet's vision melted into a dream.
He knew his loss, and mourned it; but it
marred
Not only his own happiness, as he
thought.
It blurred his vision, even of his own
truths.

He looked long at the butterfly's radiant
wings,
Pondered their blaze of colour, and
believed
That butterfly wooers choosing their
bright mates

Through centuries of attraction and desire
Evolved this loveliness. For he only saw

The blaze of colour, the flash that lured
the eye.

He did not see the exquisite pattern there,
The diamonded fans of the under-wing,
Inlaid with intricate harmonies of design;
The delicate little octagons of pearl,
The moons like infinitesimal fairy
flowers,

The lozenges of gold, and grey, and blue
All ordered in an intellectual scheme,
Where form to form responded and faint
lights

Echoed faint lights, and shadowy fringes
ran

Like elfin curtains on a silvery thread,
Shadow replying to shadow through the
whole.

Did eyes of the butterfly wooer mark all
this,—

A subtlety too fine for half mankind?
He tossed a shred of paper on to his lawn;
He saw the white wings blindly fluttering
round it.

He did not hear the whisper of Shadow-
of-a-Leaf,
*Was this their exquisite artistry of
choice?*
*Had wooers like these evolved this
loveliness?*

He groped into the orchestral universe
As one who strives to trace a symphony
Back to its cause, and with laborious care
Feels with his hand the wood of the
violins,
And bids you mark—Oh, good, bleak,
honest soul,
So fearful of false hopes!—that all is
hollow.
He tells you on what tree the wood was
grown.
He plucks the catgut, tells you whence it
came,
Gives you the name and pedigree of the
cat;
Nay, even affirms a mystery, and will talk
Of sundry dark vibrations that affect
The fleshly instrument of the human ear;
And so, with a world-excluding accuracy

—
Oh, never doubt that every step was true!
—

Melts the great music into less than air
And misses everything.

Everythir

On one side

The music soaring endlessly through
heavens

Within the human soul; on the other side,
The unseen Composer of whose
transcendent life

The music speaks in souls made still to
hear.

He clung to his *vera causa*. In that law
He saw the way of the Power, but not the
Power

Determining the way. Did men reject
The laws of Newton, binding all the
worlds,

Because they still knew nothing of the
Power

That bound them? The stone fell. He knew
not why.

The sun controlled the planets, and the
law

Was constant; but the mystery of it was
masked
Under a name; and no man knew the
Power
That gripped the worlds in that
unchanging bond,
Or whether, in the twinkling of an eye,
The Power might not release them from
that bond,
As a hand opens, and the wide universe
Change in a flash, and vanish like a
shadow,
As prophets had foretold.

He

could not think
That chance decreed the boundless march
of law
He saw in the starry heavens. Yet he
could think
Of "chance" on earth; and, while he
thought, declare
"Chance" was not "chance" but law
unrecognised;
Then, even while he said it, he would use
The ambiguous word, base his own law
on "chance";

And, even while he used it, there would
move
Before his eyes, in every flake of colour
Inlaid upon the butterfly's patterned wing,
Legions of atoms wheeling each to its
place
In ever constant law; and he knew well
That, even in the living eye that saw them,
 The self-same Power that bound the
starry worlds
Controlled a myriad atoms, every one
An ordered system; and, in every cloud
Of wind-blown dust and every breaking
wave
Upon the storm-tossed sea, an infinite
host
Of infinitesimal systems moved by law
Each to its place; and, in each growing
flower,
Myriads of atoms like concentrated suns
And planets, these to the leaf and those to
the crown,
Moved in unerring order, and by a law
That bound all heights and depths of the
universe,
In an unbroken unity. By what Power?

There was one Power, one only known to
man,
That could determine action. Herschel
knew it;
The power whereby the mind uplifts the
hand
And lets it fall, the living personal Will.

Ah, but his task, his endless task on earth,
Bent his head earthward. He must find the
way
Before he claimed the heights. No
Newton he;
Though men began to acclaim him and his
law
As though they solved all mysteries and
annulled
All former creeds, and changed the heart
of heaven.
No Newton he; not even a Galileo;
But one who patiently, doggedly laboured
on,
As Tycho Brahe laboured in old days,
Numbering the stars, recording fact on
fact,
For those, who, after centuries, might

discern

The meaning and the cause of what he
saw.

Visions of God and heaven were not for
him,

Unless his "facts" revealed them, as the
crown

Of his own fight for knowledge.

might be

The final test of man, the narrow way
Proving him worthy of immortal life,

That he should face this darkness and
this death

Worthily and renounce all easy hope,

All consolation, all but the wintry smile

Upon the face of Truth as he discerns it,

Here upon earth, his only glimmer of
light,

Leading him onward to an end unknown.

Faith! Faith! O patient, inarticulate soul,

If this were faithlessness, there was a
Power,

So whispered Shadow-of-a-Leaf, that
shared it with him;

The Power that bowed His glory into

darkness

To make a world in suffering and in death,
The passionate price that even the
Omnipotent
Must pay for love, and love's undying
crown.

He hardly heard the whisper; could not
hear it
And keep his own resolve. He bowed his
head
In darkness; and, henceforth, those inward
gates
Into the realms of the supernal light
Began to close.

He knew that they
were closing;
And yet—was this the dark key to
Creation?—
He shared the ecstasy also; shared that
sense
Of triumph; broke the Bread and drank the
Wine
In sacred drops and morsels of the truth;
Shared, in renouncement of all else but
truth,

A sense that he could never breathe in
words
To any one else, a sense that in this age
It was expedient that a man should lose
The glory, and die this darker new-found
death,
To save the people from their rounded
creeds,
Their faithless faith, and crowns too
lightly won.

* * * * *

Oh, yet the memory of one midnight hour!
*Would that she knew. Would God that she
knew now . . .*

Truer than all his knowledge was that
cry;
The cry of the blind life struggling through
the dark,
Upward . . . the blind brow lifted to the
unseen.

He groped along the dark unending way
And saw, although he knew not what he
saw,

Out of the struggle of life, a mightier law
Emerging; and, when man could rise no
higher
By the fierce law of Nature, he beheld
Nature herself at war against herself.
He heard, although he knew not what he
heard,
A Voice that, triumphing over her clashing
chords,
Resolved them into an infinite harmony.
Whose was that Voice? What Power
within the flesh
Cast off the flesh for a glory in the mind,
And leapt to victory in self-conquering
love?
What Voice, whose Power, cast Nature
underfoot
In Bruno, when the flames gnawed at his
flesh;
In Socrates; and, in those obscure Christs
Who daily die; and, though none other
sees,
Lay hands upon the wheel of the universe
And master it; and the sun stands dark at
noon?
These things he saw but dimly. All his life

He moved along the steep and difficult
way
Of Truth in darkness; but the Voice of
Truth
Whispered in darkness, out of the mire
and clay,
And through the blood-stained agony of
the world,
"Fear nothing. Follow Me. I *am* the Way."

So, when Death touched him also, and
England bore
His dust into her deepening innermost
shrine,
The Voice he heard long since, and could
not hear,
Rose like the fuller knowledge, given by
Death
To one that could best lead him upward
now,
Rose like a child's voice, opening up the
heavens,
I am the Resurrection and the Life.

EPILOGUE

Up the Grand Canyon the full morning
flowed.
I heard the voices moving through the
abyss
With the deep sound of pinewoods,
league on league
Of singing boughs, each separate, each a
voice,
Yet all one music;

The

*Eternal Mind
Enfolds all changes, and can never
change.*

*Man is not exiled from this Majesty,
The inscrutable Reality, which he shares
In his immortal essence. Man that
doubts
All but the sensuous veils of colour and
sound,*

*The appearances that he can measure
and weigh,
Trusts, as the very fashioner of his
doubt,
The imponderable thought that weighs
the worlds,
The invisible thought that sees; thought
that reveals
The miracle of the eternal paradox—
The pure unsearchable Being that
cannot be
Yet Is, and still creates and governs all;
A Power that, being Unknowable, is best
known;
For His transcendent Being can reply
To every agony, "I am that which waits
Beyond the last horizon of your pain,
Beyond your wildest hope, your last
despair,
Above your heaven, and deeper than
your hell.
There is not room on earth for what ye
seek.
Is there not room in Me?"*

Tim

is a shadow

*Of man's own thought. Things past and
things to come*

*Are closed in that full circle. He lives
and reigns;*

*Dies with the dying bird; and in its
death,*

*Receives it to His heart. No leaf can fall
Without Him; who, for ever pouring out
His passion into worlds that shall attain
Love in the highest at last, returns for
ever*

*Along these roads of suffering and of
death,*

*With all their lives upgathered to His
heart*

*Into the heaven of heavens. How else
could life*

*Lay hold on its infinitude, or win
The strength to walk with Love in
complete light?*

*For, as a child that learns to walk on
earth,*

*Life learns these little rhythms of
earthly law,*

*Listens to simple seas that ebb and flow,
And spells the large bright order of the*

stars
Wherein the moving Reason is revealed
To man's up-struggling mind, or
breathed like song
Into the quiet heart, as love to love.
So, step by step, the spirit of man
ascends
Through joy and grief; and is withdrawn
by death
From the sweet dust that might content it
here,
Into His kingdom, the one central goal
Of the universal agony. He lives.
He lives and reigns, throned above space
and time;
And, in that realm, freedom and law are
one;
Fore-knowledge and all-knowledge and
freewill,
Make everlasting music.

Far away
Along the unfathomable abyss it flowed,
A harmony so consummate that it shared
The silence of the sky; a song so deep
That only the still soul could hear it now:
New every morning the creative Word

*Moves upon chaos. Yea, our God grows
young.*

*Here, now, the eternal miracle is
renewed.*

*Now, and for ever, God makes heaven
and earth.*

PART III. THE LAST VOYAGE

PRELUDE

The mist rolled back.
There was a roar of waters;
And it was night, black night, in midmost
ocean,
Lonely and void, as when the lifeless
planet
Moved without eyes to see or ears to
hear,

Yet, after uncounted æons,
Out of the clashing of those blind
elements,
Endlessly heaving and sinking, tossing
their spindrift,

In what still seemed their old unchanging
way,
Something—by what wild chemistry?—
had arisen;
A vast and terrible Something had—
evolved;
Something that had four thousand
searching eyes,
And was approaching, through that
darkness, now.

Night still concealed it. Winds and waves
roared on,
Blind as of old; yet—as that Something
neared,
The innermost values of the whole dark
world
Seemed to be changed by its approaching
power.

Then, with a long-drawn thunder, and
blazing lights,
A monstrous portent surged across the
dark. . . .
I saw a great ship, like a lighted City,
Cleaving that night, between two unseen

worlds.

* * * * *

It passed, and left no trace, and the black
brine
Heaved, as of old, when the blind lifeless
planet
Moved without eyes to see or ears to
hear.

Out of this lifeless welter, hither and
thither,
Tossing its random spume through endless
years,
By chance, no more, as the fool's heart
ordains,
The life that shaped that monstrous
portent rose,
Evolved—by what wild miracle? Had the
less
Brought forth the greater, by those
delicate grades
And slight divisions wherein the dim-
eyed sophist
Delights to lose his soul; each grade a
gulf

In thought, yet in itself so seeming narrow,
He counts them all as nothing, and leaps
the abyss
Between the lifeless æons, and this dread
Now;
When, urged by a purpose, moving to a
goal,
That vast arrival thundered through the
deep?

Whence? Whither? Why? It passed, and
left no trace.
And That which lay beyond, the ultimate
Cause,
And Goal of all—enduring through all
change—
The self-subsistent, uncontingent Mover,
What word of That?

Only the vast
black seething;
The salt cold spindrift, and the ghostly
surf
As the dark hills dissolved and streamed
away
Whispering,—*as it was in the beginning*
...

Then, challenging, as the great new surges
rose,
Et nunc, et semper; then that æonian roar
In saecula saeculorum, from beyond
The last horizons of the unsearchable sea.

The mist rolled down; and it was night,
black night.

I

Night, and the great ship like a lighted
city
In mid-Atlantic, cleaving the cold black
storm;
A city detached from all the coasts of
man,
Speeding across the abyss of loneliness
Between two unseen worlds.

Unseen, I walked the long deserted decks
That dwindled into the gloom like rain-
washed streets.
I peered through lighted windows; heard

the sound
Of music from its wide, bright, pillared
rooms,
Crowded with festive tables, gay with
flowers.
I stole up shining corridors; and saw
In one dim cabin, under shaded lights,
A group of graver faces, hushed and still,
Intently watching a flushed unconscious
child.

It was no dream. I heard her difficult
breathing.
I saw the white-capped nurse; the
kneeling mother,
With drawn and quivering under-lip; the
father
Standing behind her, silent, with one hand
Laid gently on her shoulder; and the
surgeon,
Two fingers on the child's wrist as he
counted . . .
The gleam of the ticking watch.

last he rose,
Muttering to the father—"I shall come

back,
In half an hour."

Outside the
purser's office
The captain met him.

"How is
your little patient?"

"No hope, unless I operate. It's a risk.
One chance in a thousand. If only we
could have made

New York in time, Johns Hopkins has a
man

That might have saved her. It will be too
late.

We're fifteen hundred miles away to-
night."—

"Your skill and your experience. . . ."

but this

Is different. It's a case for specialists.

A fair all-round musician can't compete
With Kreisler—not in Bach. Besides, at
sea,

We haven't half the equipment."—

is the name

Of this Johns Hopkins' man, who might
have saved her?"

—"Marlowe. I wish to God I could
consult him."—

—"I think you can. He is on his way to
Europe.

I saw his name in our own wireless news
This morning. He is somewhere on the
Atlantic."—

—"What ship?"—

"The *City of*

Paris."—

"Where

is she now?"

"Four hundred miles away."

He

beckoned the purser—

"Telephone up to the wireless-room, and
tell them

To get the *City of Paris* . . . an urgent
message

Is coming through, at once."

* * * * *

storm roared
And whistled across the bare, dark, upper
deck
As they climbed up to the small bright
wireless-room.
All round them surged the night of
midmost ocean,
Inhuman, void, as when the lifeless planet
Moved without eye to see or ear to hear,
Unconscious through the unconscious. . . .
Four hundred miles away, through that
black night,
The *City of Paris*, plunging the opposite
way,
Bore, in the midget span of one man's
brow
The saving light—a little vanishing spark
. . . .
Sundered from those who needed it, by
gulfs
Of thundering darkness, leagues of
volleying sleet,
Wild howling maelstroms of the world of
matter,
Through which, outside the wireless-
room, no voice

Could pierce, no message pass from mind
to mind.

They closed the padded door. The tumult
died.

At once, in that small luminous inner
realm,

Through deeper regions, undisturbed by
storm,

Annihilating space the signals came.

Tap-tap, tap-tap, the moving finger
wrote.

Five hundred miles to westward the
Majestic

Told the *Homeric*, far to eastward now,

Of hurricanes approaching. *Tap-tap-tap*

The dark *Leviathan* answered from the
north.

The listener, with the head-clips, heard
their voices

In an ethereal calm. As though a child

Were playing with its toys, three feet
away,

The *Mauretania*, surging through the
night,

Six hundred miles to southward, droned
its tale.

Carmania, like an elfin horn, replied
Nearing the fog-bound Banks; while,
racing home,
Under clear stars, through sleeker softer
seas,
The *Berengaria* flung her deeper chords
Of welcome and farewell to half the
world.

"You have sent our call out?"

"Yes

—no answer yet.

Ah, here she comes!" *Tap-tap*, a silver
note

Rose high and clear, vibrating like a star,
The *City of Paris*.

The

moving finger wrote,

Dot—dash—dot—dash. "Is Dr. Marlowe
aboard?"

—"Yes"—

"Tell him that the surgeon of the *Olympic*
Wants his advice . . . an urgent case . . . a
child."

—"I'll send for him, immediately."

down

These details in the meantime, and repeat.
Marlowe will understand. When he has
read them

Give me his answer, as quickly as you
can." . . .

*Tap-tap, tap-tap, dot—dash, dot—dash,
dot—dash.*

* * * * *

I walked upon the sheltered deck below
While the swift messages passed. I heard
the sound
Of music, and the shuffle of dancing feet
In the great ball-room; caught a hundred
gleams
Of separate lives, each going its own
way,
While the one ship took all to the one goal
(As the one planet bears ten thousand
ships,
And the one cosmos binds a myriad
worlds . . .),
Whence? Whither? Why? . . .

In

the dark-panelled lounge
Wreathed with cigar-smoke, voices
quietly drawled,
Clubs and No Trumps. Cards gleamed
and glasses tinkled.
There, and there only, in solemn make-
believe,
I saw the reign of Chance.

In the

dark bows,
A strange old fellow-passenger, buried
and swathed
In travelling coat and muffler; his keen
face,
All but the deep magnetic eyes, obscured
Beneath his dark slouch hat,—came up
and joined me.
"You've heard," he said; and as he spoke,
my flesh
Tingled as at a voice from other worlds.
"They stop the ship at ten, for half an
hour,
While our good surgeon operates on that
child.
Marlowe advised it, instantly, by
wireless.

He'll be in touch throughout."

"You

think they'll save her?"

He glanced at me and answered, "*They*
may save her.

But who are *They*?"

II

In a small cabin, lit by a single port-
hole,
The poet, rapt and tense, took up his pen. .
. .

Whose Mind dictated, or whose Will
compelled
His half-unconscious music? Not his own.

But, while he pondered that deep mystery
Of order and control throughout the
world,
And groped for one clear instance, only
one
Wherein the Eternal Intellect might be

seen

Directly at work among material things,
Using them, and conveying them to an end
Directly, as the mind uplifts the hand
To ends beyond the scope of 'natural law'
And secondary causes,

a strange light

For one wild moment flashed on him. He
saw

The Supreme Art, the one world-ruling
Will

Directly at work, upon material things.
He saw them moved—caught the
controlling Power

In act, where Science dropt its proud
precision,

And fell back blindly on an empty name

—

Instinct. The swallow, drawn across the
seas

Like an unerring needle, to its goal.

Instinct. That elfin nest of twigs and clay
Built by the ignorant instrument—in
whose hand?

Instinct. The bee, a cluster of blind
atoms,

Building its architectural honeycomb
With intellectual gold. And, clearer still,
 Beyond the scope of chemistry as far
As the artist's canvas from the palette's
chaos,
That intricate pattern on a fritillary's
wing;
Wherein each separate atom in each grain
Of colour had been driven to its own
place,
Blindly, to form that intellectual scheme
Which men call Beauty. On those wings
he saw
Not only what the scientist sees, the
curves
Evolved for flight, or colours for
masquerade;
But something beyond use, beyond the
scope
And aim of the blind struggle for mere
life,—
A clear-cut pattern, a little heavenly plan,
A little wandering isle of art in nature,
Divine mosaic, exquisitely inlaid
As with celestial jewel-work. "Evolved,
By sex selection," drones the one-eyed

Up thro' the throat
Of an elf with wings?

Five sweet notes
In a golden order,
Out of that deep realm
Quivering through,
Flashed like a phrase
Of light through

darkness.

them?

But *Who* so ordered

Tell me, *Who*?

You whose throats
In the rain-drenched

orchard

Peal your joys
In a cadenced throng;
You whose wild notes,
Fettered by Beauty,
Move like the stars
In a rounded song;

Yours is the breath
But *Whose* is the

measure,

Shaped in an ecstasy
Past all art?
Yours is the spending;
Whose is the

treasure?

Yours is the blood-beat;
Whose is the heart?

your housen

Minstrels all
That have woven

wrought,

Of withies and twigs
With a Mind in-

Darkness

Ye are the shuttles;
But, out of what

doorways,

Gather your thoughtless
Patterns of thought?

Bright eyes glance
Through your elfin

Roofed with rushes,
And lined with moss.

Whose are the voiceless
Pangs of creation?
Yours is the wild
bough:
Whose is the Cross?
Carols of light
From a lovelier
kingdom,
Gleams of a music
On earth unheard,
Scattered like dew
By the careless
wayside,
Pour through the lifted
Throat of a bird.

III

*"The hand
that wields the knife
Will be our surgeon's. The controlling
mind
Four hundred miles away, through that*

thick night
Is whose?" . . .

The great ship buried
her blind bows
In foam.

"Not Marlowe's! Even his
I'd call
Only a subtler instrumental mind,
Through which, as through a thought-
exchange, linked up
With half the world, thousands of other
minds
Remote in time, as Marlowe's is remote
In space, are speaking now." . . .

Two voices in the dark, unconsciously
Thus answered my companion. Two dark
forms
Rug-wrapped in long deck-chairs, behind
my own,
Talked, while I lingered on the
glimmering deck
To watch the seamen as they lashed the
screens
Of flapping, thrashing sail-cloth, all along
The bulwarks on the buffeted weather-
side

Against the increasing storm.

The

first voice, clear

And crisp, was that of the Chief, the
astronomer friend

With whom I had watched the stars, one
summer night

Ten years ago, from Californian hills.

The second up-welled from other and
inner worlds,

Deep, quiet, musical, as an echo of Dante
In an old mountain-cloister.

It

revealed

Another friend,—an old Franciscan
padre,

Returning home, on his last earthly
voyage,

From Rome to Santa Barbara.

The

thoughts

Of all the ship were bent now on one
theme—

That child,—her life, or death.

did not turn

To greet those old companions, yet. The
spell
Of that strange meeting, like the ghostly
power
That in old legends, when the planets met
In certain dark conjunctures, gripped the
world
With sudden meanings, not discerned
before,
Constrained me still to listen.

as he spoke,
Struck his own chord in the moving
Symphony,—
*"The instrumental mind, in part, is
Marlowe's,"*
The first clear voice went on, in wonder
and awe,
*"But all this inter-dependent, intricate
web,
The invisible system of ethereal nerves
Connecting mind and hand with waves
of will,
Without which both were helpless, whose
are they?
We learned to use that system, by the*

*help
Of Gilbert, shall we say, whom Verulam
Dismissed with such contempt; Galvani,
too,
Ampère and Hertz, Clerk-Maxwell,
Humphry Davy,
Faraday, Lodge. Thousands of men, like
cells
In one organic brain have worked
together
To make this moment possible, and evoke
That one reply through darkness, to the
call
Our ship sent out to-night."*

"An

*thousands more
To guide our surgeon. Verulam dismissed
Another man, four hundred years ago,
Whose mind, I think, is touching us to-
night
With waves of thought, across the
abyss of Time,
As closely as those others. . . ."*

*and Space
Died at the word—the rushing waves*

went by
In darkness . . . yet I saw. . . .

IV

Gray's Inn,—a shadowy room, and
smouldering there
Like a strange jewel on one high-panelled
wall
A dark rich portrait by Sir Anthony More,
English, but all Madrid in colour and line.

Under it, hunched in a tasselled high-
backed chair,
A lean form, with a mean and shifty face
Of empty craft, a green and viperish eye,
And, round his neck, the Chancellor's
golden chain.

It was no dream. The fur on his rich gown
Fluffed grey as he breathed, below the
thin-lipped mouth.
He choked a cough. I heard the golden
links

Tinkling against his breast. . . .

him sat

A short and thick-set man with shining
eyes

Blithe as black cherries, in a thought-
ploughed face

Of olivaster hue; his raven hair

Already streaked with grey; and, at his
side,

For all his cheer, a dagger.

"So you

think

You've made a great discovery, Doctor
Harvey,"

The lawyer sneered, "and yet, not only
Galen,

But Homer knew the motion of the blood.

There's nothing strange in that. There's not
a maid

That blushes, when she meets her lover's
eye,

But knows your mighty secret, and would
pay

A handsome fee to cure it.

Doctor

Harvey,
You should observe more closely. We
need facts,
Not theories. Now my own philosophy
(Formed, as you know, in such brief hours
of leisure
As I could borrow from affairs of State,
And therefore couched in very general
terms)
Shows a new method of approaching
Nature,
Through facts alone. It will transform the
world,
It will pluck down the Stagirite, and
dethrone
The pride of Plato. Had you but observed
My rules, and looked to facts; had you but
seen,
Noted, considered, one poor maiden's
blush,
And all that poets from the birth of Time
Have writ of those blood-roses in her
face,
You had been spared the very pretty fall
That waits on all such—idols. Doctor
Harvey,

I have heard already several of your
friends
Calling you crack-brained. You will lose
your clients.
You were a good physician. Rest on that;
But leave philosophy to the master-minds.
Wrens have their nests and eagles have
their eyry
From which they scan the world."

little man
Flushed red.

"I did not mean to boast,
Lord Bacon,"
He answered softly, but with glinting eye.
"Nor did I hope to rob you of the fame
Which your philosophy, published from
the heights
(Of statesmanship and law), must needs
command.
Hundreds of other men have played their
part
In what I called my own; and, as you say,
The motion of the blood is nothing new,
Though hitherto it seemed a random flux,
Uncertain as the breeze that fills the sail

Of our Virginian voyagers." At that
phrase,

As under Raleigh's eye, the Chancellor
wincd.

"But now," continued Harvey, with a
smile,

"A moment comes when all the separate
facts

Whereof you speak so truly, may be seen
As notes in one great system. They obey
A single law. The motion of our earth
Was nothing new, but . . ."

"I

reject it wholly,"

The lawyer snapped.

"Your

lordship may be right,"

The little doctor answered, "and I bow
To your decision; but when Copernicus . .
."

"The prince of charlatans," the
Chancellor sneered,

"A Roman priest, a canon of the Church,
Who flouted the plain sense of all
mankind,

And troubled even Rome; a fabulist

Without a scruple, who would introduce
His fictions into Nature. Read your Bible.
The Bible says that Joshua stopped the
sun;

And though, as I have many a time
averred,

Theology and Science cannot clash
(Because they never meet), there are
occasions

When eyes confirm the truth that Scripture
tells.

Our eyes can see the movement of the sun.
The judgment of mankind has made our
earth

Central and motionless. Therefore I
accept

The fact incorporate in our daily speech,

—
'Sun-rising' and 'sun-setting.' Sir, my
system

Trusts to the senses, and depends on
facts."—

"But Galileo's glass! . . ."

—"

glass was flawed
Or Galileo lying? I prefer

Our natural eyesight, Harvey."

the lens

That aids our natural sight is natural, too.

I leave the Tuscan to more starry souls;
But this new microscope . . ."

"Ah

Harvey, Harvey,

Another idol! How can it ever achieve

All those fantastic promises? What is
glass

That it should open all those heights and
depths

Where eyes have failed. Now, could you
turn your lens

To a more natural purpose, use its powers
Of concentrating rays to kindle fires;
Or even, as an instrument of war,
Construct a burning-glass of monstrous
size

Through which the sun might strike an
enemy blind,

You'd then be following the true laws of
thought

Inductively, to their own natural ends.

We need induction, Harvey, based on

facts;
But, first, the facts. . . ."

"And,

therefore, first the power
To recognise and group them in their own
Significant order; and this knowledge
comes,
Most often, in an unexpected gleam,
Like memory, an intuitive synthesis,
Or a new light from heaven——"

must trust
Our senses, Harvey."

"And they

still deceive us.
The colours of the world are in our eyes;
The music of the world is in our ears;
And only when the microcosmic mind
Of man has made its own swift synthesis,
Does it reflect, in moments of strange
light,
Whether in art or science, beauty or truth,
The macrocosmic harmonies of God.
This means, I take it, that the world is
made
For souls; and that God's image here on

earth

Communes with its Creator, as it reads

The hieroglyphs of this material world;
Though these are only shadows."

perceive

You are still a slave of Plato. Give me
facts."

"So be it, then. The blood, that kingly
river,

Flows through the frame, as Rabelais
knew. But how?

There is a rhythmic order in its flow
As noble as the movement of the heavens;
More noble; for this little realm of man
Sustains a spirit above all Space and
Time.

Galen discovered much. He called the
heart

The acropolis of the body. He believed
There were two streams of blood, one
bright, one dark,

The bright stream flowing thro' the
arteries only,

The dark stream flowing only thro' the
veins.

They did not form one system. Sylvius
traced
The network of the veins; and Winter
found
That air gave up its brightness and its life
For some mysterious purpose in the lungs;
But all these facts were unrelated still.
They did not form one system. That
strange gleam
Of recognition; that swift synthesis
Within the mind, which dawns like
memory,
Discovering, not a new thing, but an old,
Something that, though unseen, was
always there—
Had not yet lightened on us."

"Facts, my friend,
Not these Platonic visions!"

"H

me first.
Vesalius found the valves within the
veins,
But did not see their purpose—why they
locked
Their little purple gates against the stream

In one direction only. Then Servetus,
Whom Calvin, the Reformer, burned
alive,

Found that the life-stream, flowing
through the lungs,
Drew its bright crimson from the fresh-
drawn breath.

He saw no more. But so the moment came
Which, in a single flash, revealed the
whole,

The single pulsing microcosmic plan
Which imaged the Creator in His work.
That crowning moment, by the grace of
God,

Was mine, though I know well how little
mine.

I traced the bright arterial stream of blood
To its remotest ends. I saw it flow,
The self-same stream, back thro' the
delicate veins,

Darkening with wastage, driven by that
strong tide

Behind it, back to the central throbbing
heart,

And thence, once more, into the breathing
lungs

To draw fresh crimson from the winds of
heaven

And pour fresh life through all the mortal
frame:

A steadfast rhythm, beyond our blind
control

Sustained, dictated, measured by the Will
Of One above, the Supreme Artifex."

"And your chief clue to this?" . . .

"

valves that locked

In one direction only. I asked myself
What purpose . . ."

"Ah, my friend,

you are not the first

To follow that old Jack-o'-Lent of the
mind.

In my philosophy, now, I wholly abjure
The clue of final causes. I depend

On facts, and facts alone. There was a
time

When I was greatly vexed with monstrous
warts,

Caused, I believe, by handling of a toad

In one of my inquiries; for my hands

Grew like two toads themselves, with

warts as large
And yellow as cowslip-buds, but cold—
like stones.
Physicians had no remedy. Moons went
by,
And every wart they killed engendered
five.
They worked on theories. Then I learned
a fact
And cured them. How? A lady of the
court
Told me of something she had heard in
France.
She said that if I nailed a lump of fat
Outside my window, as the sun dissolved
it
The warts would melt away. I did not ask
For theories. I was well content with
facts—
Facts I could test, observe with my own
eyes;
And so I nailed the fat up, in the sun,
And as the sun dissolved it, day by day,
The warts diminished, till, at one same
hour,
Both fat and warts completely

disappeared.

That's what I call true method, sir! The proof?

Experiment! Observation! And Result!
Look at my hand, sir, clean as any babe's.
I spoke of it to Gilbert, whom you know."

"Good God!" said Harvey, "what did Gilbert say?"—

"He only stared and muttered. He was vexed

Because I rallied him on his false ideas,
His idols, as I call them. He maintains
Some wild magnetic theories, which he thinks

Will one day change the world."

"]

God, they will,"

Breathed Harvey to himself. "But I suppose

God places these obstructions in our way
To make us fight for victory, and acquire
New strength in fighting."

"But

you never told me—

What think you of that other cure I found
For heaviness of the mind. It is well

known

That apes are of a lively disposition;
And I suggested that a young ape's head
New-severed, and applied, sir, like a
poultice

Against the nape of the neck, might well
transmit
Its virtues."

Harvey smiled. "I have

no doubt

Our pharmacists are right when they
declare

That torments of the brain may be
relieved

By wearing, on the dry, hot, throbbing
brow,

Frontlets of roses, wet with morning dew;
Cool water-lilies; acid elder-drupes,
Plucked from the innermost darkness of
the tree;

A frog's webbed feet; an oyster, stuffed
with snow;

Moist kernels of ripe peaches; or (an aid
Which I prefer, and they omit, sometimes)

A very simple strip of linen, dipt
In cold spring-water. . . ."

The

Lord Chancellor's eyes
Revolved portentously. "My chief
complaint
Against the state of learning in this age
Is its defective reasoning. Your reply
Well illustrates its vagueness. I contend
That unguents are absorbed, virtues
inhaled,
And poisons, too, as every murderer
knows,
By subtle transpirations through the skin.
There's nothing cures a bout of
sleeplessness
Like yolks of egg and powdered poppy-
seed,
Not eaten, sir, but poulticed on the skin,
And many an inward torment is appeased
By plastering the intestines of a wolf,
Warm and new-killed, against the naked
belly;
The sufferer's body, meanwhile, being
wrapped
In bloody wolf-skins. Why? It is well
known
That wolves are beasts of great edacity,

And my new method, by induction leads
Clearly to this conclusion—that their guts
Must comfort weaker bowels."

my God,"
Groaned Harvey, under breath.

only this,"
Continued the great lawyer. "I contend
That, as these vital influences may pass
Inward, so, also, if we take no care,
We may exhale our spirits through the
skin,
And thereby hasten death. Now, my new
method
(Which needs no special gift, for all can
use it)
Leads to this clear conclusion. We should
coat
Our bodies, close their pores up, with a
wax
Which would prevent our sweating life
away
So lavishly in summer. . . ."

have mercy,"

"Go

Groaned Harvey, once again; and, as he
groaned,
The lawyer, waxing eloquent, proclaimed
Not his own thoughts, but something that
he grasped
Only in general terms, a spirit breathed
Into the common air by greater men
Whom he rejected.

"'Tis for us to

build
Science anew, by a far nobler method.
Plato is dead, and Aristotle dust.
We shall observe and test and climb to
truth
And . . ."

As the soul revolts against the sound
Of God's own praises from a vacuous
mind,
The little doctor's gorge began to rise
Against this Pharisee of the Intellect,
Whose very *New Atlantis* was a theft,
Marred in the stealing, from Sir Thomas
More;
And all that he could hear was *quack*,
quack, quack;
And *quack, quack, quack*, and *quack*,

quack, quack again.

At last the Chancellor paused. His eye
grew crafty,
His voice dropt.

"You have had
distinguished patients,
Concerning whose infirmities you must
know

More than their nearest friends. Indeed,
you hold
Such knowledge as might help me greatly
now
In certain state affairs. If I but knew . . ."

He whispered something that made
Harvey shrink
And stare at him.

The little doctor
rose.

The things that had been whispered, then,
were true.

This was a man that could destroy his
friend,
And Raleigh's ghost was glimmering at
his side.

"Nay, Harvey! State-craft goes with
science here.

'Tis nothing more than science—to
employ
Our knowledge of the elements in a man
—

The chemistry of life. It is no time
For squeamishness. Men of the world
must take
The world at its own value."

Harve

bowed
With irony in his heart.

"So

much depends
Upon our choice of worlds, then," he
replied.

"Your lordship will forgive me if I say
That, in *my* world, there is a pagan code,
A pagan oath . . ."

"Hippoc

is dead,"
The Chancellor interrupted.

so dead,"
Said Harvey, "as a hundred I could name
Who still offend the sun. His words
endure.

They have been quietly handed down
through time
By all his followers; and that pagan code,
That pagan oath, though every other fail,
Thank God, his poor benighted followers
keep."
—"I have heard of it, of course," the
Chancellor smiled,
"But never saw the text . . ."

terms are quaint.
They take for granted old out-worn ideas,
Curious conventions, airy absolutes
(Honour, for instance), which inductive
thought,
Divorced from—Plato's method (shall we
say?)
Or wed to Machiavelli, would ignore.
But, roughly, they run thus. (You will
forgive
The crude fantastic rhetoric of the dead):
I swear by Paian Apollo, the Physician;
By Æsculapius and his radiant daughters
(Health and All-heal), Hygieia, Panakeia,
And all the gods and goddesses in
heaven,

That I will keep this oath:
To look on him who taught me this great
art
As my own father and, in after years,
If need should rise, to share my substance
with him;
To look upon his sons as my own
brothers,
And, if they should desire it, freely impart
My knowledge to them, asking for no
guerdon;
To hand this light of knowledge on,
undimmed,
To my own sons, and every true disciple
Who takes the self-same oath, but to none
other;
To pass my life, and practise this great art
In righteousness; that, whatsoever house
I enter, I bring help to all that need,
And work no evil or corruption there;
That whatsoever I may hear or see,
In entering thus the hidden lives of men,
Shall still be locked in silence.

I keep
This oath inviolate, may I still enjoy

The practice of this art, honoured by all,
In every age and clime; but, if I break it,
Then may I be dishonoured."

Chancellor smiled
In silence, for ten seconds. Then he
sneered,
"As you remarked, this rhetoric of the
dead

Has a fantastic sound. Well—Doctor
Harvey,
You will remember that a word from me
About your—great achievement, would
resound
Through Europe; but I shall not speak that
word.
You will remain—a wren.

But
this, of course
Will make it no less dangerous for
yourself
To indulge in petty jealousies, or hints
That I have any reason to condemn
Your theories, but my preference for
facts."
His narrowing eyes

Flashed, suddenly, like a viper's, as he
rose,
And Harvey caught that gleam.

"]

well believe,"
He answered, slowly, like a man too
dense
To grasp the deadly meaning, and thereby
Baffling his foe with doubt, "I well
believe
That all your lordship's curious—facts,
will weigh
More potently than mine, in after days.
They are vouched for by the Lord High
Chancellor,
Who can impose his greatness on the
world
With all the awe attached to his high
place.
Therefore, in future ages, when the world
Discovers other—facts, and no more
reads
Or cares for what we say, your lordship's
fame,
Spread by your lordship's eloquence, will
content

The world that hears it echoing, and must
take
(In general terms and principles, at least)
Greatness like yours on trust.

I must go.
I have a tryst with Science."

H

groped out,
Into that dark, that blind, that crooked
street,
Called by the crowd *Obscurity*, to join
Gilbert, of whose blind idols half the
laws
That rule the new electric world were
born. . . .

V

Night, on the loud Atlantic, boundless
night;
Electric messages, flashing, through the
storm
Like broken gleams of an order whereof

man's thought
Had only discovered a fragment; and,
under it all,
One voice, *You think they will save her!*
Swift! Be swift!
Or knowledge will come too late!

when the mind
Strives with the paralysed body, and
strives in vain
To flash the imperative will through the
leaden limbs
And rule once more, the single organic
whole;
Or as the first strange nervous currents
that thrill
The slow developing embryo, ere it
grows
Into co-ordinate unity and power;
So now, thro' the boundless night of
Space and Time,
From the centres of thought, and the brain-
cells of the world,
From the Æsculapian springs on the
ancient heights,
From the vine-clad islands of Cos in the

Myrtoan sea,
Where Burinna, the fount of Hippocrates,
murmurs and flows,
And the tree of Hippocrates bends with
the weight of its years;
From the centres of light and
remembrance, Athens and Rome,
Salerno, Bologna, and Paris; from rose-
coloured towers
Of Heidelberg, throned o'er the Necker,
but gazing afar
On the air-blue castles and mist-wreathed
crags of the Rhine;
 From Padua, *alma mater* of Harvey's
dreams,
Where the shadow of good Fabricus
walks and talks
With the shadow of Galileo, all night
long;
From the new electric cities of power and
speed,
London, Berlin, and the towers of the
western world;
The militant intellect flashed its messages
out,
Struck thro' the dense blind bulk of things

and strove
To make of our chaos that interdependent
whole
Which the mind and the spirit could use
for each and all,
Each being the centre of all, as that ship
in the night,
And the child on the ship, were the centre
of heaven's wide dome,
Wherever the child and the ship and the
planet might move.
Ten thousand minds, with that one small
life at stake,
Unconsciously laboured there, each set on
its task,
And each set apart, with its own small
lamp in the dark,
In its own strict bounds, the better to
serve the whole.
But always, at every blunder, and each
delay,
I heard that terrible whisper—*Swift! Be
swift,*
Or knowledge will come too late.
You think they will save her?
Delayed by folly, baffled and beaten

again
By lethargy, in man's own sleep-walking
world,
Driven back in defeat by the nightmare
chaos of war
But finding new light, even there, on that
blood-red road;
The struggle went on; each age with a
broken cry
Ars longa, vita brevis, re-echoing still
The cry of Hippocrates, Galen and
Harvey in turn,
But flinging the deathless fire with a
dying hand
To youth that should follow and conquer. .
. .

Be swift!
Burn thro' all obstacles now with the
lightning of law.
Seize the swift fire, or the knowledge
will come too late!
What years they were wasting on speed to
an alien goal,
Or ever Boerhaave, and Hunter and Lister
were born,

While the tardy discoverer dallied with
dreams that should grow
To ripeness, only through centuries, after
what pain;
Or the thinker crouched in a ditch, while
the chaos of battle
Shattered and trampled his life's work
into the mire.

VI

Edgehill, red sun on stubble, steel
blades in the sun;
Rupert, a-flash in the saddle, and
galloping by
At the head of his thundering mail-clad
cavalry charge
Plumed, mailed, with face up-lifted, as if
to sing;
Shouts of command; quick flickering
tongues of fire;
The blind concussion of guns in the
welter of smoke
That swallowed the cavalry, only a

furlong away;
Death in the air!

And Harvey, the
King's physician,
Crouching under a hedge, in a sheltering
ditch,
Where innocent wild-flowers, blind to the
madness of men,
Smiled at the sun.

The two young
princes were there,
Crouching beside him. . . . He rubbed a
red stain from his hand
With a dark green dock-leaf. . . .

"No," he
was saying, "you twist
The tourniquet tight, round the limb, on
the side of the wound
Farthest away from the heart, if it's blood
flowing back
Thro' the veins; but if it comes pulsing,
jetting and bright
From an artery, fasten your tourniquet
quickly above,
Between the wound and the heart."

He

plucked a great poppy,
Pressed its dark core to his nostrils, and
quietly breathed,
*"Could we only discover an opiate,
something to drown
The pangs of the body in sleep, while we
work with the knife,
What thousands on thousands of lives
would be saved.*

Scrope
*Had twenty-four terrible gashes. To
those who explore
The marvels of this most delicate house
of the soul,
This human body, the Temple of God
upon earth,
What sacrilege thus to misuse it!"* Then,
raising his voice,
He spoke to the listening princes,—

Galen not say
That his work on the Use of the Body was
nought but a hymn
To the God and Creator of all. *Conditore,*
he wrote,

Verum hymnum compono—

For

Galen, the truest of prayers
Was the search for the truth, the striving to
know, and make known,
The wisdom, the power, and the infinite
goodness of God.

We grieve when we look on an exquisite
tapestry torn,

A picture disfigured, a Parian
masterpiece wrecked,

A desecrate shrine; yet—yet—with our
wars and our sins

What havoc we make of God's image. . .

."

He shook his white head. He drew from
his pocket a book.

"God help, and forgive us," he muttered.

"Come—let us forget

These horrors awhile. Don't look at their
hell any more.

I'll read to you till I am needed. We'll try
to shut out

Their chaos; lay hold on the cosmos that
underlies all,

The cosmos of music. . . .

You know those great lines of the
Georgics

*Happy is he who can search out the
causes of things,*

*For thereby he masters all fear, and is
throned above fate.*

The Latin says less; but my rendering,
read by the light

Of those other great lines in his *Æneid*,
can hardly be wrong:

*Are not the sky and the earth, and the
wild-flowing plains of the ocean,*

*Ay, and the moon on her way, and the
sun in his chariot of splendour,*

*All sustained from within, by a Spirit, a
Mind in the cosmos,*

Moving the blindfold mass. . . .

Et magno se corpore miscet. . . ."

Was it thunder of horsemen, or only the
rush of the waves?

Was it only the pulse of the turbines,
down in the dark?

The throb of mechanical pistons, obeying
a law,

Moving in rhythm, but shaped and
controlled by a Mind;
But used for a purpose, and aimed at what
unseen goal?

VII

The lamps gleamed out along the well-
screened decks.
The wind keened through the cordage, and
I heard
The Atlantic seething by. . . .

I awake
In that far world, or was I dreaming now?
Two rug-wrapped forms behind me, in
deck-chairs
Were talking of that child—and that
strange fight
With Time and Space to save her.

*does it mean,—
This intricate organisation of the world
Into a single interdependent whole?"*

The Chief was speaking, my astronomer
friend.

"What does it mean? This growth of our
control

Over our space-time world, the racing
ships,

The electric word, and more mysterious
far,

That inconceivable speed of cosmic light
Which is controlled by Something, not
ourselves,

Controlled and urged in endless rhythmic
waves,

Flashing for ever through the unplumbed
abyss

For some inscrutable end, from star to
star.

What *can* it mean? An urgency so vast,
And so stupendous, flashing on and on,
Through endless ages, with such
constancy,

And such perfection of organic law
That we forget its movement and its
power,

An urgency that links all worlds in one
(For what deep purpose and at whose

command?)

Must have an aim stupendous as itself,
In God's own counsels.

Padre, there are times"—

His voice dropped low, and deepened
with his thought—

*"When, on my lonely mountain-top, the
sense*

*Of this appalling mystery drives my
thoughts*

*To the sheer brink of madness. I look up
And out, beyond our Milky Way, and see
Those twisting nebulæ, like coils of mist
Where suns as vast as our whole
universe*

*Are less than atoms. Then, beneath my
feet*

*I see the dust, of which each molecule
now,*

*Rends open, in its infinitesimal heart,
Unfathomable gulfs of suns and stars.*

*And man, who sails midway between the
heights*

*And depths, and is the measure of them
all,*

Can only dream that, as his own control

*Of Nature grows with his own growing
mind,
So the Supreme Control, from depth to
height,
Of all this moving universe abides
With the one Perfect Will and Supreme
Mind."*

Then, in the dark, the second voice
replied,
"That's what we seek for, in our mortal
blindness,—
The deep-set unseen Centre that controls
The vast organic cosmos it evolves
Through Time and Space. Armies of facts
are ours.
They crowd upon us till our knowledge
melts
Into a wilder chaos. Ant-like men,
As that lost poet said, go staggering by
Balancing awful libraries of fact
On their bald skulls, while, more than all,
we need
Co-ordinating power to grasp and use
The knowledge we have gained. We need
a mind

To grasp your own discoveries as one
whole
With ours, who, also, in our age-long war,
Experience and observe some flaming
truths;
So that our future Faradays need not say
'I enter another room, and lock my doors
On science, when I kneel.' With such a
mind,
We might achieve, not that armed truce of
thought
Between the Faith and Science,
reconciled
Only to pass, and shun each other's gaze,
But that great golden symphony of thought
Which, long ago, the Angelic Doctor
heard
Throbbing from hell to heaven, organic
truth,
Wherein each note, in its own grade, rings
clear,
As in a single orchestra, whose chords
Were chaos, till each filled its own true
place
In the one golden cosmos of the song.
We should discover, then, that all the gulfs

Between your friends and mine, are gulfs
indeed,
But only gulfs, not clashing contraries.
We need a new Aquinas now to bridge
them,
A pontifex to make our sundered truths
As true a whole as, in each human frame,
The orchestral personality of man,
That microcosm, clothed with mortal
clay,
Quickened by all the accordant senses,
crowned
By thought; and subtly ennobled, lifted
higher,
By that strange power which, in our
darkness kneels,
And sometimes moves the world. For
man himself,
In his mysterious unity, images
The hierarchic cosmos, through all grades
From earth's blind clay, up to the supreme
Mind
Which moves and rules the Whole. The
separate note
Not only plays its part within that Whole,
But is itself a symphony in little;

An atom, filled with music, by the wheels
Of planetary electrons, which reflect
The music of the spheres.

All

analogues

Fail; but we need that deeper monist now,
—

Not one who delves only to find the skull
Skin-deep beneath the skin, and
everywhere

Under the surface finds new surfaces;

But one who reads, in Nature's crookéd
script,

Scrawled on the rocks or scrolled within
the sky,

The eternal hieroglyphs; and truly sees

As Plato, for one burning moment, saw,

Through earth's distorting shadows,

Beauty enthroned;

Or as that strange Emanuel of the Moon,

The wild philosopher-fabulist,

Swedenborg,

Mightiest of all the minds that ever
crashed

To madness in the splendour of that Gaze

Which none can meet and live, still lived

to see
The secret correspondences of earth
And all its laws with that celestial world;
Walked through all gardens as thro'
Paradise,
And talked with angels on his native hills
As on the hills of heaven.

Science

now
So strangely nears by its own arduous
road
The idealist's world. . . . Your atomists
have dissolved
Their old material 'solids' into a mist
Not so unlike the veil that Berkeley drew
Between his face and God.

That

thin bright mist
Of protons and electrons veils a Power
That might annul or neutralise them all,
So that, like Prospero's gorgeous
pageantry
This universe of dense material forms
Might, in the apostle's 'twinkling of an
eye,'
Melt into spirit-realms, where we should

see

As when the film of cataract is removed
From blinded eyes, and all the coloured
fields

Shine out anew, with flocks on distant
hills;

Or when that veil which hides the
ethereal world

Was rifted, and men heard behind the
storms

Of their own world, in deep unbroken
calm

Those radiant messages, calling and
replying,

Across the Atlantic night. If our poor toys,
Our webs of wire, hung in the whistling
wind,

Give us these glimpses of unguessed at
realms,

What splendour and what music, what full
blaze

Of vivid life may burst on us, when Death
Strips off the cataract-veils of this dull
flesh.

The analogue fails, yet this discovery,
too,

This wireless miracle, like a lightning
flash,
Confirms old gropings into the dark
beyond;
Brings us a little nearer, not to heaven,
But to a glimpse, by parable, if you will,
Of how some ancient thoughts which men
cast off
As idle tales, came nearer to the truth
Than their first thinkers knew;
Suggests analogous laws in deeper realms
Hints at the means whereby Omniscience
works,
When prayer strikes home to the deep
heart of things.
Did not the Angelic Scholar who
unfolded
Out of the Aristotelian acorn all
Those heaven-embracing boughs for
Dante, write,—
Immortal spirits, transcending Space and
Time
Can instantly be present where they will;
Even as their thought, without process of
reason,
Grasps in immediate vision, all that man,

By slow discourse, groping from point to
point,
Sees but in fragments, losing what he won
On other heights, when he attains to new.
For seldom, even in memory, man holds
fast
The splendours he saw clearly yesterday;
Nor, though the Way inexorably leads him
On to new splendours, does the new
atone
For all he leaves behind, till on the last
Consummate height, full memory returns
With the full vision; and, in the mind of
God,
He sees the eternal aspect of the whole.
There, as Augustine says, the glorified
body
Moves wherever it will, to every
distance,
Like the sun's ray; for, in the City of God,
Wherever the spirit listeth, it shall be.
There shall we run, and not be weary
again;
Because the world is conquered. There
the mind
Using the bridle of law constrains and

guides
Dumb Nature, as in ancient days, the
Power
Rode into Jerusalem, on a foal that wore
A cross upon its shoulders. Here, the
palms
Of victory are soon withered; but, in
heaven,
Our warfare is accomplished. Here, on
earth,
The mind of man is like a little mirror,
Reflecting what it faces, and no more.
Carry it up the intellectual heights
And it will show you parables, one by
one,
In crag and pine and cloud. The wayside
flower
Will float within it, and the mountain
eagle
Gyre through its midget sky. It will reveal
A dark earth-cleaving valley, a snowy
peak,
Up-towering; each a fragment, a bright
patch
Of colour, a delicate shadow, a broken
image

Of that Completeness which must still
escape it.
For, round each gleaming picture, the
blind frame
Of man's own mind shuts out the Whence
and Why.
Letters and words we read, not sentences
Of the world's volume . . . single
hieroglyphs,
Not the vast epic of the eternal hills
Like armies of archangels thundering
home
Into the mind of God.

We stare

through heaven
And see a moment's eddy, a flying
whirlpool
On that dark river of stars;
But all its intricate intellectual systems,
Wheeling around the one eternal Throne,
Are hidden more deeply from man's
plodding reason,
Escape the range of that small mirror's
eye,
More utterly than the towers of the New
World,

Evade the mind and eye of a nestling
wren
Under its mother's breast, in a creviced
wall,
Among the coombs of Devon. Yet this
glory
Is ours, and not the wren's, that we
discern
Our failure, which is victory, in the end.
For, by the measurement of our loss we
know
Something of what we lose. That deep
abyss,
An infinite vacuum, opening in our minds
To earth's and heaven's abhorrence, must
be filled.
Like rushing air, like a wild ocean
plunging
Over a precipice, the whole universe,
And all that it can give, wealth,
knowledge, power,
May then be drawn into that infinite void;
But it is never filled till God Himself
Flow into it, with His Love, which is our
peace."

VIII

In her dim cabin, above the
unconscious child,
The mother bowed her head,
Remembering, not repeating with her lips,
The old supplication to the God in Man. .

..

*I am not worthy, Lord, that Thou
shouldst enter*

*Under my roof. Thy word, Lord, from
afar. . . .*

*I cannot understand the terrible powers
Encompassing us—only that they
confirm*

*Thy power, and all their laws are but
Thy will.*

*I cannot pray 'Thy will, not mine, be
done';*

*Not now; not now. At every other time,
But oh, not now. Save me but this, dear
Lord.*

*Mine is the prayer from which Thy soul
refrained,*

*In Thine own agony, to the Eternal
Father,
Who could have sent Thee, instantly,
from Heaven,
Legions of angels. As the words of man
Have struck across the darkness and the
storm,
Stand Thou far off, but send Thy healing
word.*

IX

I passed the door of the operating-
room.

Two white-capped nurses with their cool
quick hands
Had stripped a spacious cabin, and laid
out
A bare clean table.

All was ready
now.
The clinging pungent breath of the
antiseptic

Crept through the long white corridor and
submerged
Its oily smells of rubber and heated paint.
...

"God, but it carries you back," a voice
said, passing.
"Whiffs of iodoform, blowing all over
France,
From every village behind the lines. It
killed
Even the smell of the gasoline. . . ."

those two,
Walking behind me again, voicing my
thoughts,
Like voices heard in a dream.

"No

long ago,
They only laughed when Lister. . . ."

has joined
Those other voices now, beyond the
storm.
How many lives has Lister saved since
then?"

"In eighteen-seventy, armies rotted to
death
For lack of what he taught us; and the
knife
Sent more than half its victims to the
grave.
So Lister, whom they sneered at, must
have saved
Some fifty million lives throughout the
world,
Men, women, children."—

"M

than thrice the number
That fifteen nations, slaughtering night and
day,
For those five years of glorious war. . . ."

now
Here, in the ship, that child would die to-
night,
Had it not been for Lister."

"J

the mind
That flashed the light on Lister?"

I said,

'*They* still may save the child. But who
are *They*?'"

With that strange question echoing in my
brain
I reached my cabin, and shut all voices
out,
All but the swish of the long wave rushing
by.
Then, as I lay in the dark, with eyes half
shut,
One broken glimpse, as though an angel
tried
To answer a child's question with a
picture
Shown in a magic mirror, one fleeting
glimpse
Of all that intricate interdependent whole
Gleamed on me, and I saw,—
I saw, as if thro' a port-hole opening there
Its gleaming round in the solid and brass-
bound walls
Of our space-time world, a magical
vision, alive
As the living truth,—an exquisite old
French village,

Embosomed in vine-clad hills.

It

was no dream.

The bird's nest cottages, washed with
lilac and rose,

The brown thatched roofs, with flowers
growing out of the thatch,

Each side of the bright little straggling
sun-bathed street,

The chuckled delight of the river that
flowed beside them,

Belying its name, *La Furieuse*, dark and
cool;

The delight of the riverside willows, in
gleams of the wind,

Ruffling from green to grey, each leaf as it
turned

Distinct as a sparkle of dew; the clang of
the bell

At the Ursuline convent; the cluck of
the hens at the doors;

The faint sour whiff of the tannery—its
brown yard

So soft underfoot with the tatters of rusty
bark

That carts which had rattled like musketry

over the cobbles
Out in the street, and the clattering sabots
beside them
All seemed soundless as dreams as they
passed its gate;
And, drowning its acrid tang, all round it
breathed
Lavender, jessamine, roses, in clustering
gardens;
And, clear as in crystal, a little above and
beyond,
I saw the bright stalls and the butterfly
splashes of colour
Where seven old witches, with shawls
round their wicked old shoulders,
Hunched up on the stones of the market-
place (once a church),
Now turned out their butter, in round pats
yellow as cow-slips,
Now piled up their baskets of onions and
rosy-cheeked apples,
Now counted their eggs and their money,
or knitted and chattered.
It was no dream.
The glint of the sun on their needles;
The chime of a distant forge; the laugh of

a child;
Cocks crowing and oxen lowing;
All told me this.

*Far off, on the deck of a ship, like a
voice in a dream,
Echoed those words, once more—"You
think they will save her?"
Far off, in the thick of the dark Atlantic
storm
Like a voice in a dream, replying,—
They may save her;
But who are They?*

And then, as to
men in an airship
That swoops to its goal, the heart of their
vision draws nearer,
One cottage, one garden, grew large in the
magical window;
And, under a gnarled old mulberry tree, I
saw
In a stained blue nankeen blouse, with his
bare brown legs
Out-straddled in front of an easel, an
urchin of twelve,

(What fount of our hope was this?) whom
the town of Arbois,
Had nicknamed 'Louis the Artist.'

L

—look long,
Would you fathom those grey-green eyes. .

. .

For there, unknown to the world, was the
light that we looked for,
The fount of our hope for the child on the
storm-tossed ship,

Far off, in Space and Time, but
conquering both

As the message that flowed through the
ether under the storm,

Distinct to the sight, as that other was
clear to the hearing,

He stood there, making his picture,—
Louis Pasteur.

His bare brown legs apart, his sun-burnt
toes,

Down-settling into the turf, his mind
intent,

He was drawing a neighbour's portrait, in
coloured chalks.

He hummed to himself as he
worked,
An odd little ditty, that went to a tune of
his own:

*I saw an elf
Proudly enthroned on a
dandelion flower
And singing to himself:*

*A bee-sized boy
With little green eyes like
emerald sparks,
And little red lips of joy!*

*What sing you there?
I whispered him soft as a
cloud might whisper
High up in the April air.*

*But he sang on
With less than the heed that
a man might pay
To a voice beyond the sun.*

His sitter, at ease in a chair, with a glass

beside him,
Brimmed with red wine, was the Mayor
of Arbois himself,
Monsieur Pereau,—a little uneasy,
perhaps,
Not sure that it wholly befitted his dignity
thus
To sit for an urchin, and yet, as the lad's
pastels
Had won such approval (and cost very
little). . . Ah, well,
He was there, in his very best uniform,
braided with silver,
The cross of the Legion of Honour, the
tricolour scarf,
And a snowy-white stock, over which his
self-satisfied face
Smiled rosily down on the sun-burnt artist
of twelve
Through whom, and through this one hour,
could the great man know it,
All ages to come might borrow this one
swift glimpse
Of his plump and benignant memory,
otherwise lost
In the vast and gloomy abysses that

Nature reserves
For the special oblivion of mayors.

let him emerge
Blue-eyed, from a background of blue,
with his bristling hair
And the heavy moustache that seemed
made to be dipped in a froth
Of golden refreshment, and afterwards
wiped with a napkin.

"Who taught you to draw, mon petit?"

"My father. He made me this easel."

"But

tanners don't draw."

"He painted a picture at Marnoy, before
we came here

On one of the doors of our house. It
shows an old soldier,
Tilling the ground like a peasant. He leans
on his spade,
In his faded and tattered old uniform,
daubed with the clay,
And dreams of the Emperor's eagles,
against a grey sky
And misty blue hills. He painted his

memories there.

You know that my father was one of the
Emperor's men,
Though he never will talk of it now——"
"I

know. I have seen him,
On Sundays, he looks very smart, and he
wears his frock-coat
Like a veteran, too, and his ribbon, the
Legion of Honour,
Says everything. Why should he speak? I
myself should be proud
To be one of Napoleon's corporals——"

It's not pride.
His peasant is bowed, in deep thought. I
have seen the same look
In his eyes; and one evening, in winter,
beside our own fire,
He told me—some things he
remembered."

wonderful tales!
The trumpets! The banners!"
"No! No! They were
terrible things!

The thousands and thousands that died in
the hands of the surgeon,
For lack of——"

"For lack of——?"

"I don't

understand; but he said
Their wounds had all festered. He thought
that they needn't have died,
If only——"

"If only?"

"Ah well, you would

smile if I told you;
For all he could say was just this—if the
surgeon's own knives,

Before they were used, had been dropt
into scalding hot water

The chances were better. It happened, by
accident, once;

And the surgeon scalded his hands, in
pulling them out;

But after the amputation, although it was
bad,

The wound healed best of them all."

"W

reasoning, child!

What nonsense! Boiling the knives!"

"I

knew you would smile.
But—my father—he notices things.
He says that no gardener ever despises a
seed
No matter how small it may be.
He says that the
silk-looms of France
Would be idle to-morrow if silkworms
forgot to lay eggs.
Then half of her riches would go."

"Ti

la! What a child!
But it's true. Very true. For the women, all
over the world,
Sail under the fluttering colours of Lyons
to-day.
They must tread in the sheen of the
peacock, and shimmer like brooks
When the kingfisher streaks them with
blue, and the dragon-flies flash.
They must dance in a mist of the sunset,
with stars in their hair,
And a film of the rainbow to wrap round
their shoulders at dawn.
My daughters! Tut! tut! But no matter. I

suffer for France.

The world must have silks."

"And the silkworm its
mulberry leaves."

*They were whispering over his head.
The low wind shivered and breathed
through the mulberry leaves,
Above him, as though it were trying to
whisper a thought.*

For the Spirit of Time was there
And it knew that the silk-looms of France
Would be stilled in a few more years
By something that shrivelled the wings
Of the moth in its golden cocoon;
And then, under mulberry boughs,
The boy would be poring, intent,
Through a lens, to discover the cause
In that infinitesimal life
Which swarms in the blood of a gnat
And can bring down a kingdom to death.

And, when he discovered that cause,
And declared that the cause should be
crushed,

At once, in the hour of his triumph,
The hate of the world would begin.
Since the cause could only be crushed
By a sacrifice, moments of loss,
For a gain too great to be told,
The blind brute crowd that he saved
Would pelt him with stones in the streets;
And his envious rivals would turn
And jeer with the ignorant crowd.
In the name of the science he loved,
In the name of the truth he adored,
In the hour when he glorified France
With a splendour that never can die,
When he stretched out his hands to her,
filled
With miraculous gifts from his mind,
When he poured out his treasures of
thought
At her feet, they would spit in his face,
They would brand him as liar and fool,
And when they had broken his heart,
And basest and bitterest of all,
Robbed him of joy in his task,
They would bid him work on, in the
night.
Paralysed, desolate, old. . . .

Not caring at all any more. . . .

And *then*—they would crown him with
fame.

For the way of it never has changed,
Though the name of the way will be new
As each generation arrives,
And discards, not the wrong, but its name.
Yet, paralysed, desolate, old,
He would fight, and fight on till the end;
To the saving, not only of France,
Thro' her silk-looms which, after the War,
Would pay off the Prussian again;
But—on—on—on—thro' the dark
To the saving of myriads of men,
For the light that enkindled his mind
Would be flashed overseas to the North;
Where Lister, the Chief, in the wards
Of that hospital, wrestled with Death
As Heracles wrestled of old.

*And on—on—on—through the dark
Of that infinitesimal world
To the proof that no life without life
Could be born, and the infinite goal.*

"But it runs back farther than that,"

lad went on,
As though he heard nothing at all.

a curious rhyme
He'd repeat to us, saying it showed by
what fairy-like threads
Past, present and future, are bound in the
web of the world."
Then the barefoot artist, choosing his
creamiest chalk
For the plump white hand that reposed on
the breast of the Mayor,
Lowered his voice and quietly murmured
that song. . . .
Was it crooned by himself? Or droned
through the lavender clump
By a wandering bee, from a garden of
memory lost
In the drowsy recesses and dim
beginnings of time?

*A princess lived in China
Two thousand years ago,
And in her secret garden*

*Great mulberries used to
grow,
 With crooked boughs and
spreading leaves
 And deep dark roots
below. . . .*

He broke off, with a smile.

"Our
fairy-tale
Runs farther back than that. The song
means nothing
Unless you've heard the tale."

"But
tell me, then."
"Not I, m'sieu. There is no voice but one
Can tell that tale; and, even so, your ears
Must be attuned to it. If you lie awake
At midnight, you may hear it, in the sound
Of flowing water, or—leaves in a low
wind. . . ."

And there—as though my half-shut eyes
had closed
In bodily sleep, but left my soul awake,
The world grew dark; and, in the dark, I

heard
His voice die out. . . .

As when
the listener turns
The wireless disk; and, in a single breath,
Moves thro' a continent, hears the
murmuring throngs
Of capital after capital growing loud
And dying, with guttural scraps of
Northern speech,
Or softer tones from Mediterranean
shores;
A statesman bawling lies; a volley of
cheers;
Casino tunes; the shuffle of dancing feet
In far Vienna; or Kreisler's violin
Crying across the Babylonian night;

*Or even, in Morse, like faint bewildered
horns,
Groping through fog, calls of a ship at
sea. . . .*

So, not through Space, but out of the
depths of Time
A stream of music, softer than the wind

Whispering among the mulberry leaves
began
To breathe the tale that Louis refused to
tell. . . .
A smooth dark stream of rhythm, through
which I heard
Voices that died four thousand years ago
And voices yet unborn, orchestral cries
Of prophecy, and dramatic undertones
Deepening the legend, colouring it with
thoughts
Beyond the boy's horizon. It seemed to
flow
Like that mysterious timeless river of
Time
Out of the future, back into the past,
To that strange point where past and
future meet,
In one eternal and consummate Now.
For, as it whispered through the mulberry
trees,
It linked the day unborn—when young
Pasteur
Should seek and find among their rustling
leaves
The invisible and innumerable hosts

Of death, in worlds of infinitesimal life—
With that lost day, four thousand years
ago,
When, to the same low rustling tune, they
breathed
Through one wild fable, hints of the full
plan:

*Four thousand years ago, in old Peking,
A queen reigned in a palace, whose wild
domes*

*Gleamed like the magic bubbles
blown at dawn
From ivory hookahs by the dream-
drugged gods.*

*Four thousand years ago, in her lost
garden,*

*Enclosed by rose-red walls, great
mulberry trees*

*Drowsed in the sun; and, cradled on
their leaves,*

*The silk-worm spun its exquisite
cocoons.*

*She watched them, and a sudden shining
thought*

*Robed in a rainbow, like a statelier
queen
Moved through her mind.
She dreamed of it all night,
And, in the morning, called three
tongueless slaves
And told them to set up a secret loom
Within the palace. But to make quite
sure
The secret would be kept, their headless
trunks
Were thrown at night into the Yellow
River
Beyond those rose-red walls, in old
Pekin.*

*Then, with her singing daughters, she
went out
Into her garden, at the break of day,
To pluck the mulberries. In their hands
they bore
Three gilded baskets, covered with green
leaves
And, under those green leaves, if you
had looked,
You would have seen three freshly*

*severed heads.
They buried them in the garden, at the
roots
Of those great brooding trees; and then
they plucked
The mulberries, lifting hands like lotus-
flowers
To the dark clusters under the broad
leaves;
And that is why their finger-tips, which
glowed
Like delicate opal shells were stained so
red.*

*But when they came into the house
again,
Their baskets were still covered with
green leaves,
And, under those broad leaves, if you
had looked,
You would have seen, not mulberries, but
cocoons.
Four thousand years ago, in old Peking,
The queen and her two daughters wove
and spun
Secretly, and embroidered their strange*

dreams

*Through which there always ran one
crimson thread*

*Twisting and trickling through the golds
and blues*

On those first silken miracles of Cathay.

*And they still kept the secret, while the
world*

*Wondered whence those fantastic glories
came*

To smoulder on their walls.

An

then they died.

*The centuries passed, the mulberry trees
lived on,*

*And still that secret passed from queen
to queen*

Like a celestial jewel closely locked

And guarded, in the treasury of a king.

*And then, one summer night, a Princess
woke*

*And heard the jargon of great
nightingales,*

*And opened her bright window to the
stars,
Two thousand years ago, in old Peking.*

*She heard the leaves breathe and the
fountains flow,
Murmuring the same strange music as
to-day.
And she was beautiful as an almond
spray
In the first month of Spring.*

*Under
her walls
A shadow stirred. She saw her lover
stand
With face uplifted, through the dim blue
gloom,
In old Peking, two thousand years ago.*

*She let her silken ladder lightly down,
And fled with him into the boundless
dusk
Of Asia, like a little fluttering moth
Out of a lighted window, into the night.*

*But, in her silken turban she had hidden
A cluster of mulberry leaves and silk-
worm's eggs,
Because, she thought, when I am far
away
In India, I will make a loom and weave
My happier memories into happier
dawns
And turn my dreams to sunsets, as of old,
Two thousand years ago,
In old Peking.*

"And so the secret, as my father said,"
It was the lad's voice, not the murmuring
bees
In the dark lavender—"so the secret
spread
Through the great world. . . . There is a
curious song,
I heard him sing it once as a nursery
rhyme.
He often will hum it aloud, as we walk
thro' the fields.

tells of the magic
Wrapt up in the smallest of things."

"Eh! Eh!

What a child!

Come, sing me that song," said the Mayor.

Then the boy, as his grey-green eyes, from
easel to sitter,

Lifted and dropt, and his deft hand added
a wrinkle,

And puffed those pouches under the
Mayor's round eyes,

Chanted in undertone, almost as one in a
dream,

Aloof and afar, these rhymes, through
which I could hear

The lapse of the leaves, in the garden of
old Pekin,

And the whisper of lovers through all the
blind ages of death,

In a world beyond time, at one with the
rhythmical whole.

*Was it only the rush of the waves
outside, and the pulse*

*Of the turbines, down in the dark, that
shook the frame*

Of the world? With what rhythmical

She drew the sunset and
the dawn . . .

And smiled and stole
away.

Two thousand years ago,
it was,

And it seems like
yesterday.

Far off, on the deck of a ship, like a voice
in a dream,

You think they will save her.

Far off,
in the thick of the storm,
Then, suddenly, close at hand, through the
thunder of waves,
Like a voice in a dream replying,—Who
are *They*?

X

in his own cabin,
But never less lonely than when quite

A

alone,
The poet invoked that other magic now,
Magic that, through a woven order of
words,
A subtle arrangement of articulate sounds,
Could wake new values and suffuse his
line
With a celestial wonder, till it shone
Like something captured from the eternal
world,
Discovered, not composed; revealed, not
made;
Rhythmical as the cosmos, with the pulse
Of natural law; yet, by that service, free;
A flawless and inevitable form,
A wingèd phrase of the perfect symphony
Dictated by the heart-beats of that love
Which moves the sun and stars. . . .

sea went by
Thundering. He did not hear it. . . .
And now he turned the pages of his book
And tried to choose a cluster of lighter
songs
For his first reading in that distant land. . .

.

And, as he turned them over, he could see
Already, in thought, as through a magic
window,
The thronged and radiant hall beside the
lake
At Wellesley; or the doors of old Nassau,
With those bronze tigers, where the red-
coats passed
Up the grey steps of memory, long ago.
He saw the tower that calls across the sea
To Magdalen; saw the crumbling stones
they brought
From Oxford, stones incorporate now for
ever

 In the new walls that guard the eternal
flame.
There was the true America that he loved
As Shelley loved it; there, and at old
Yale,
Mother of men, to whom across the wave,
The denizens of the Mermaid Inn have
flown
And found, once more, the Elizabethan
fire;
There, and in those elm-shadowed
whispering ways

At Cambridge, where John Harvard left
the books
He brought from Cambridge, England,
with the hope
That gleams, as freshly as the may-flower
gleams,
Clear-cut in stone, above those gates of
youth
In his own country, for all ages now:
*When God had carried us safe to our
New England;
When we had built our houses; made
secure
The needs of life; established civil law;
And raised convenient places for God's
worship;
The next thing that we longed for was to
advance
Knowledge, and hand it on from sire to
son,
Dreading to leave our cause to the
forgetful
When we shall lie in dust. . . .*

All

these he saw,
And many another, touched with the

welcoming light
Of friendship, far beyond the weltering
flood;
And many a page of April song he turned,
But paused on one which seemed to
whisper there
Of stranger powers than when he wrote it
first;
Powers that with deeper magic, subtler
spells,
Were moving round the ship, in air and
sea,
And the deep ether, under the blind storm,
And his own voyaging soul; miraculous
powers
That make and shape, sustain and guide
the world.
He paused on this, and with a flickering
smile,
Remembering how the careless lyric leapt
Once, from a boy's heart, like a
blackbird's carol,
Out of a may-tree, murmured it anew.

Wizards

There's many a proud wizard in Araby
and Egypt

Can read the silver writing of the stars
as they run;

And many a dark gypsy, with a pheasant
in his knapsack,

Has gathered more by moonshine than
wiser men have won;

But *I* know a Wizardry

Can take a buried acorn
And whisper forests out of it, to tower
against the sun.

There's many a magician in Bagdad and
Benares

Can read you—for a penny—what your
future is to be;

And a flock of crazy prophets that by
staring at a crystal

Can fill it with more fancies than
there's herring in the sea;

But *I* know a Wizardry

Can break a freckled egg-shell
And shake a throstle out of it, in every
hawthorn-tree.

There's many a crafty alchemist in Mecca
and Jerusalem;

And Michael Scott and Merlin were
reckoned very wise;

But *I* know a Wizardry

Can take a wisp of sun-fire
And round it to a planet, and roll it
through the skies,

With cities, and sea-ports, and little
shining windows,
And hedgerows and gardens, and loving
human eyes. . . .

Those verses would not serve his purpose
now.

He had been asked for something they
could read

At the ship's concert, in a night or two
If all went well. . . .

The wireless
news was full
Of armaments, and peace; of speeches
flashed
From Washington and London; how to end
This armoured drag on 'progress.'

ago

He had written something—he
remembered it—

That might seem fitting now. Was it too
light,

Too hopeful for this war-stunned world of
ours?

He paced the sheltered and deserted deck,
Alone. The verses echoed through his
mind,

Recalling that old house above the sea,
The Golden Farm, hushed among tall blue
pines,

Where first he wrote them down, in
happier days.

Enriched with all those deeper undertones
Which none but he could hear, their
silence flowed

Like an old memory of a boyish faith,
And a true purpose, ardent in him then
(When few would hear what all were
preaching now,

Above the graves of twenty million
dead!)

Thank God, he had written it long before,
and joined

The voices that had failed. . . .
Salt, with that mockery, even as it smiled,
The very lightness of the music flowed
In its own harmony with this darkened
hour;
And somewhere, deep in his unconscious
mind,
Something was calling, calling through it
all,—
*Was it from France? What distant
thunder broke?*
*Was it in Seventy? Yesterday? To-morrow
. . . ?*
The verses flowed as lightly as the breath
Of the cool sea-wind playing round his
brow;
And what both said was true, not to be
mouthed
On any stage; but true as Nature here.
Although, outside, in darkness and in
storm,
The Atlantic powers moved to their own
strange dooms,
He walked the sail-screened deck, and
that light breath
Of their vast tumult played its part as well

As the spray plays it, when the surge goes
by.

* * * * *

In the lost woods of Virginia, I found, at
break of day,
An old colonial tavern, by a grass-grown
way,
With white porch-pillars where the wild
wisteria grew,
Rosy with the dawn-flush, and misty with
the dew.

Now I'd been rambling in the woods to
find the heart of things;
For all my mind was broken with the
wicked ways of kings;
When a low wind shifted all that deep
dim bloom,
And showed the golden name above the
old *Apollo Room*.

I had found the Raleigh Tavern, and the
ghostly door was wide,
And I saw two shadows talking by the

dark fire-side,
One was in a laced coat, and one in buff
and blue,
*And both of them were dead men, with
faces that I knew.*

Yes: there was Patrick Henry, in an oak
arm-chair,
With his long church-warden, and his
fiery mop of hair;
And he looked up, grimly: "Mr.
Jefferson," he said,
"If Peace has come on earth at last, the
Devil must be dead.

"I'm Scots and Welsh; but if *he's* dead,
and left no heads to break,
I'm thinking that auld Nick will have a
royal Irish Wake;
For the Irish will be feelin' like the lad
from Venus-land,
With the olive-buds all sproutin' on the
blackthorn in his hand.

"There's just one hope! If half the world
agrees that war shall cease,

You'll have to call the Irish up to keep the
rest at peace,
But England?"—"Ah," says Jefferson,
"we'll not say 'nay,'
If a Saxon chief, named Washington,
should lead us on the way.

"When with Adams, Lee, and Stockton,
that were England's blood and bone,
We stood for her own freedom, in the face
of court and throne;
When we wrenched it from the Hessian;
when we sealed our living creed
As the last red scripture, on the scroll of
Runnymede;

"There was many a golden Irish lad that
followed our Saint George
With his tattered starving armies thro' the
snows of Valley Forge. . . ."
"There's an auld cracked Bell," says
Patrick, "and it talks
 in Shakespeare's tongue;
But the bones of the dead men remember
and grow young.

"As I saw him, in the darkness, looming
up against the skies,
A great ghost, riding, with the battle in his
eyes,
I have seen the New World rising, with
the splendour of her stars,
And a Captain rides before her, that shall
make an end of wars.

"From his tomb by the Potomac, on his
proud white steed,
Well I know who comes to lead us, as of
old he used to lead,
And the drums of the morning up the
Rappahannock roll,
'It's the Father of his country, and it's
England's living soul.'"

*Then softly—very softly—while the
shadows died away,
In the ancient Raleigh Tavern, at the
dawning of the day,*

*"By God's good grace," quoth
Jefferson, "if both our hearts be true,
We, who split the world asunder, may
unite the world anew."*

* * * * *

*off, in France,
Through rolling mists, the desolate
villages,
And lightning-blasted trees—and the
long road
Where old Pasteur, all science left
behind,
Went driving, driving, driving to the
North,
Halting at wayside hospitals, hurrying
on,
Seeking and searching like a questing
hound,
With eyes of all too human agony, on,
On to the thunder of guns, his grey hair
flying,
Like a new Lear, the terrible outcast
King
Of human knowledge; but, in his
bursting heart,
Only one cry, "My son! My son! My
son!"*

XI

The throb of the engine died. The
rushing thunder
Of foam around the bows dissolved away.
The great ship drifted through a strange
new hush.
Only the wash now of the slow deep seas
Against her towering flanks arose and fell
With that primæval sound the sea-gull
heard
On lonely coasts,
Before the birth of man.

All that old mystery, with its rhythmic
speech
Encompassed us again, while—for one
child,
Out of the wide world's multitudes, one
child
The lonely, vivid, quivering centre now
Of that vast round of empty sea and sky,
The concentrated powers of man held
back

The Juggernaut wheels of death.

voice was that?

Quivering with elfin ecstasy, far away,—
What child's tale, what deep legend of old
days,
What wounded nightingale lost in the dark
woods
Of Time, breathed its blind passion
through the storm:

"Where?" said the King,

"Oh, where? I have not found it."

"Here," said the dwarf

And music echoed "here."

"This infinite circle hath no line to bound
it,

*Therefore its deep strange centre is
everywhere.*

*Let the earth soar through heaven,
that centre abideth;*

*Or plunge to the pit, His covenant
still holds true.*

*In the heart of a dying bird, the Master
hideth;*

*In the soul of a King," said the dwarf,
"and in my soul, too."*

Stillness—the dreadful waiting—and our
ship,
With that one child, the centre of all things
now. . . .

* * * * *

In a hushed corner of the sail-screened
deck
The astronomer and the old Franciscan
padre
Talked in low voices of that same strange
theme,—
Time, Space, and their infinitudes which
make
Each point the centre of all. This flying
moment,
Infinitudes being equal, stands midway
Between the past and future; and this
child,
Infinitudes being equal, lies midway
Between the abyss of stars, and those
dark gulfs

Wherein the electrons wheel. So Space
and Time,
As Plato, Hegel, Einstein, groped to see,
Dissolve into a shadow of man's mind;
And the one God is ever Here and Now,
God in the heights, and on ten thousand
altars,
Revealed to man, when the blind doors
are opened,
And the Bread broken, and the incarnate
Word
Breathes thro' the worlds which veil Him
from our sight,
Est enim Corpus Meum.

XII

The ship rocked idly.
The surgeon,
like a shadow,
With grey set face, came out through a
shadowy door,
Quickly, on to the deck. He did not see us.
He drew

A deep breath of the cold night air.

padre
Approached him.

"Is all well?"

shook his head.
"Not——"

"Worse than anyone
thought. It was too late.
The child is dead."

There was a
stifled cry below,
Faint, far, as the cry of a sea-mew, blindly
astray
In the black night. . . .
Then, muffling it, the indifferent engines
throbbed
And the great ship moved on its way
again,
Steered by its earth-bound compass.

poor mother,"
The padre whispered.

And the
foam swept by.

"Padre, I have no faith in any creed.
For me,—at death—the human life goes
out
Like a snuffed candle. But, if there's any
word
Of comfort you can give to that poor
woman,
For God's sake go and speak to her."

yet,"
The padre murmured. "No, not yet, my
friend."
And, though he said no more, his inmost
thoughts
Breathed through me, like a voice.

ship moves on,
To its own goal. It takes us all one way,
Living and dead; and the foam speaks of
speed.
And the dark planet spins on its own
course
Bearing us back. Look up. The stars are
still,
Fixed, fixed and still; yet they, too, speak
of speed.

And neither ship nor stars can move one
inch

The nearer to the final end of man,
Ours is a deeper goal, beyond this dream
Of Time and Space! . . .

Neithe

the speeding ship

Nor all the rushing seas can move my
mind

From its fixed centre. That great arch of
sky

Still keeps us in the centre of its round
Wherever we move; nor can we ever
escape

From that dread point, wherein each
blade of grass,

Each leaf, each flower, each separate
struggling life,

As though beneath the intense blue lens of
heaven

It lay alone, concentrates on itself

The gaze of That which only and ever
exists

In its own right, beyond. . . ."

"1

lies beyond?

Science has struck a death-blow at the
heart
Of all that you believe."

"I

answer that
Out of the mouth of Science." . . .

* * * * *

at once
The scene dissolved. The veils of Time
and Space
Like a blind mist rolled back.
I saw the lights of Paris. I heard the roar
Of trafficking streets. The Mazarin palace
flung
Its doors wide open, and my ghost passed
through.

There, in that glittering hall, I saw and
heard
The Academy of France with all its guests
Assembled to instal their new immortal,
Louis Pasteur, in a death-vacated chair.

It was no dream. The green embroidered
coats
Of those who were to live for ever
gleamed
Before me; and, among them, in a haze
Of starry decorations, their proud guests,
Plump statesmen, rosy senators, bowed
and shrugged,
Puffed out with self-importance. At their
sides
Bejewelled wives and white-armed
daughters raised
Their rounded mouths like desperate
choristers
Trying in vain to pierce the chattering din
And reach a neighbour's ear; for that
bright Babel
Sounded as though the reservoirs of
speech
In great Gargantua's Dictionary had burst,
And all the words in the world were
pouring out
In cataracts, over the drowning eyes of
thought.
And yet, it was truth itself they had come
to crown

In one whom France had bound to the
lonely peak
Where once Prometheus hung, and the
eagle of hate
Savaged his heart; till a world elsewhere
had caught
The torch that he flung thro' darkness, and
forced his land
To acknowledge his truth at last.

so they acclaimed
An immortal, Louis Pasteur.
A strange, dramatic scene, the antiphonal
hour
To an hour when Huxley, at Oxford, struck
his blow
For Science, at smooth-tongued
Wilberforce.

in France,
The parts were subtly reversed.

the chief place,
Renan sat smiling, ironically secure
As President of the Academy of France;
Renan, still hearing those deep sunken

bells
Of the celestial City, faint and far,
Like the deep chimes of that drowned
City of Is
The Breton sailors hear; Renan, so sure
That Science had dissolved his ancient
faith
Into a rose-pink myth, would now receive
This uncrowned King of Science, and
crown him there
Pasteur, the new immortal. . . .
Renan, superior to all folk-lore now;
The first of pseudo-moderns, sure, so
sure,
That Science was his ally through all
change,
Had come to hear this master of clear-cut
fact
Confirm his musical dilettante prose,
And prove once more that Reason leads
the mind
Into a creedless twilight, touching all
That most concerns a man, his purpose
here,
The meaning of the world, and his last
end.

Slight analyst of Christ; fond amateur
Of Reason, he sat there, in state, and
smiled,
Hatching a witty phrase for his own
speech
Which should lead subtly on to a minor
chord
Of vague emotion, and die on the hushed
air
Like wordless music.

On his

right, Pasteur,
The master of all those hard and clear-cut
facts,
The pioneer, a poor old, time-worn man,
Bent his grey head, and clutched his
manuscript,
With trembling hands, as one who felt
half-dazed
At thus emerging from the lonely night
Of his long fight for truth, into this
blaze
Of glory. A labouring miner who has cut
Through the sheer rock in darkness, and
emerged
On bright Olympus to the applause of

gods

Were not bewildered more. . . .

What should he say? How thank them for
their aid,

Now all was over and his brows were
crowned

With light and victory? Victory? Not till
death!

Crowned? Not by these, but by the
stubborn hands

Of his own proven facts, in the lying face
Of those that would have stoned him,
stoned to kill.

How should he tell them when he rose to
speak

The things that he had learned in that long
night,

The facts, the cold realities he had
proved,

Cold as cold iron through the hands and
feet. . . .

Renan sat smiling there.

First, as of use and wont, Pasteur must
speak

In eulogy of the dead, must pay his debt

To Littré, his forerunner, who had been
The chief disciple of Comte, but lost, at
last,
Even that earth-bound faith his master
held
In Man, whose godhead dies with his own
sun,
And perishes with his planet. . . .
Littré, for whom the visible, tangible
world
Was all; but whose departure from it now
Into a world invisible, left one chair
Among the immortals (Oh, ironic Death!)
Thus vacant for the bent and grey Pasteur.

How could he tell them of the thing he
saw
Three days ago, upon the dead man's
wall. . . .

How could he tell a cynical throng like
this
Of what he saw when, anxious for the
truth
 In its minutest detail, ere he spoke
His mind on Littré, he had visited

The dead man's house, a labourer's
cottage rather,
And seen the lowly garden of his delight,
The lilac-tree beneath whose boughs he
read
La Fontaine, Horace, Virgil; and that
room
Whence, labouring, with the midnight
lamp unquenched,
He heard the nightingale and skylark
blend
Their notes in one strange carol of night
and day.
There, on the bare cold wall of that small
room,
Where Littré worked . . . that crucifix.

his own. . . .
His wife's, and yet, O doubly then his
own. . . .
Far off, through Time and Space, what
music breathed,

*Quench not in any shrine
The smouldering storax. In no
human heart*

*Quench what love kindled.
Faintly though it shine,
Not till it wholly dies the
gods depart.*

*Courage, O conquering
soul.
For all the boundless night that
whelms thee now
Though suns and stars into
oblivion roll,
The gods abide, and of their race
art thou.*

The moment had arrived, and he must
speak.
A brief and quiet throbbing of acclaim
Broke the deep hush. Pasteur was on his
feet,
Nervous and awkward, paler than his
wont.
The Academician's green embroidered
coat
Felt new and strange. Across his breast
he wore
The cordon of the Legion. . . .

Fa

*how far,
Beyond those walls, a child was walking
now
Clasping his father's hand. The straight
old man,
 One of Napoleon's veterans . . .
murmuring streams. . . .
Blue hills, how far. . . .*

All this

was in his voice,
Welled up in him from deep unconscious
springs,
As he began to speak . . . of Littré first,
And his achievements in the positive
realm
Of Science. To all these he paid his debt
From a full mind. Then, suddenly, he
paused,
And the old grey man that had so long
explored
Those infinitesimal worlds beneath the
lens
Of Science, raised his head.

He

did not see

The throng who had come to hear the
world explained
In terms of dust, the greater by the less,
Revoking the first law of their own
thought
In intellectual arrogance. His voice
Rang clearly out. "*At the chief point of
all
This positivism fails.*"

The hush

grew tense.
Renan sat smiling there.

"*Because*

*it fails
To take into account another fact,
The most important, positive fact of all,
The Infinite. . . .*

*I can give no formula
For its expression here."*

Far off, in

time
A murmur from Stagira, gathering strength
And depth from Aquin, breathed, *The
order of Nature
Is not the order of Thought; for we*

explain

The first things by the last. The

maximum genus

Which is both first and last, explains

what man

*Finds least and lowest. It struck—to the
very heart*

Of Darwin's failure. They would not
understand,

 Though he spoke volumes. He must
choose his terms.

Renan sat smiling there. It was the Age
Of Doubt. True thought was dead. They
did not hear,

They could not read one thought except
their own.

Pasteur would choose and use their own
vague terms

And still refute that smile.

"What

is beyond?"

His voice rang out, as from a bursting
heart,

Deep, struggling to keep back those
deepest things

That, simple minds know best, because

extremes

In these things meet, as God in childhood dwells.

What is beyond? Trace man into the dust
Descend into those infinitesimal gulfs
Of microscopic life; or mount through
Space

And see ten thousand universes move
In order round you; never shall you
escape

From that one question every child can
ask,

And answer, out of the Light that dwells
within.

*"What is beyond?" The mind of man,
urged on
By an invincible passion, never will
cease
To ask, What is beyond?*

Vai

to reply

*'Unbounded Time and Space, unbounded
grandeur.'*

*Vague phrases, for the one most absolute
Fact.*

*He who discerns the Infinite in his heart
Transcends all human science, and
affirms
More of the supernatural than is found
In all the miracles.*

*It is forced
upon us.*

*None can avoid it. Everywhere in the
world
Behind all facts, this ultimate mystery
Remains, incomprehensible.*

*When
this vision
Dawns on our human minds, we can but
kneel."*

Renan still smiled that suave complacent
smile

Of *a priori* doubt and self-conceit,
So sure that, intellectually, he held
A more Olympian height, wherefrom to
lisp

"Come unto me, all ye that are most witty,
Refresh my soul with epigrams."

Lowered his voice a little, and spoke on.

*"The idea of God—what is it but the
sense
Of this dark mystery of the Infinite One;
Whereby, deep down in every human
heart,
The supernatural dwells.
As long as this eternal mystery weighs
On human thought, so long mankind will
build
Temples to heaven, whether their God be
known
As Brahma, Allah, Jahveh, or as Christ.
And, on the pavement of those temples,
men
Will be found kneeling, prostrate, all
their world
Annihilated, and in dust around them,
Before this thought, the Infinite."*

a moment,
The rows of listening faces faded out;
And he, Pasteur, who had come to speak
in praise
Of positive science, and himself was
crowned
For his discoveries in the dwindling gulf

Of infinitesimal things, no longer knew
If Renan smiled or not. He cared no more.
The voice with which he spoke was not
his own,
And, in the expectant silence, there were
those
Who heard the thought he did not choose
to speak:

*"This Infinite is not the mere unbounded,
Dying away through its unclosed
horizons
Into an endless void. The highest name,
And so the truest, given to it on earth,
Is that of the Perfect. This, indeed, is
bound
By its own character; and discerned,
though dimly,
And only in fragments, through the
beauty of Art;
But, sometimes, more completely, in
those hours
When, for a vision of right, the spirit of
man
Stands up alone against a mocking
world*

And drinks defeat like victory.

*at least,
Well nigh two thousand years ago,
outstretched
On the one frame that, pointing opposite
ways,
Can image still that ultimate paradox
Where at the centre of the whole
creation
The one impossible Fact sustains the
whole,
And, through the universe, on His cross
of law,
The Maker still redeems what He has
made,
The Infinite spoke to man."*

T

in a voice
Filled with all this, as at the appointed
note
A blind musician is caught up and forced
By the invisible orchestra around him
To play his part, his words rang out again,

*"Blessed is he who bears within his
breast
A God, a true ideal, and obeys it,
Whether through Art, or Science, or a
life
Of simple goodness. There is the deep
source
Of all good thoughts and actions. It
reflects
Light from the Infinite."*

He ceased, and took his place. The crowd
was hushed.

Renan, still smiling, turned his papers
over,
And then, still seated, in his loftier chair,
As President, cooed his airy answer out,
An answer couched in terms with but one
aim,

To ensure that all his light ironic praise
Should fall, as from an intellectual height,
On this up-struggling genius.

"Sir

we know

That we are hardly competent to judge
The glory of your work," he cooed and

purred.

"But there's a greatness, quite apart from this—

Which our experience of the human mind
Must recognise at once." The smile
conveyed,

The very tone and gesture seemed to
assume,

That a more special greatness was his
own,

And gave him power to judge its lesser
forms.

"We recognise this greatness in the work
Of widely various minds. In Galileo,
Molière, Pascal, Michael Angelo,
We see it shining,—something that can
give

To poets, the sublime; to orators
Enchantment; to philosophers the depths
Of reason; and to scientists the power
Of—divination.

Sir, that common

fount

Of true and beautiful work; that sacred
fire;

That indefinable truth which kindles Art,

Literature, Science, we have found in
you.

Sir, it is genius. No one ever walked
So surely through the elemental maze
Of Nature. Sir, your scientific life
Is like" (he smiled) "a little luminous tract
In the great night of the Infinitesimal,
The last abyss, where life itself is born.
But Truth, sir, Truth, sir, is a great
coquette.

She shrinks from too much passion, and
will prove
More yielding, sometimes, to
indifference."

(The very cadence murmured 'even as
mine.')

"She escapes when she seems caught, but
gives herself

To those who wait; reveals her
loveliness

When our farewells are said; but goes her
way

Inexorably, when loved with too much
fervour. . . ."

"Beautiful, beautiful," breathed the

senators' wives;
And all their daughters' eyes were on his
face.

Then, by a swift suggestion, subtly
masked
In compliment, he indirectly affirmed
His loftier sphere of abstract intellect.

"Nature, sir, is plebeian. She insists
On labour; calloused hands and care-
worn brows.

You are happy in your certainties. For me
There is a charm in doubt. We shall not
find

The secret of that exquisite enigma
Which so torments and charms us. Need
we care,

When even the hem of the garment we
have raised

Reveals such beauty. Allow me to recall
Your own discovery, sir, of right and left
Tartaric acids. Are there not some minds
That, like those acids, never can unite;
Minds, that, to use your own comparison,
sir,

Are like the gloves required by opposite

hands;
Minds that can meet, but never be
interchanged,
Though both are needed.

Sir, you

look beyond,
And you discern a light in death itself.
Death, which to Littré, was a function
only. . . ."

*(O, words, words, words, how emptily
they flowed
Through the deep aching mind of old
Pasteur!)*

"The last and quietest function of our
flesh,
Death seems to me most odious and
insane
When its cold touch is laid upon the heart
Of virtue and of genius. In great souls
There is a voice which cries unceasingly
 'Goodness and Truth must ever be your
goal.
Sacrifice all to these.' But, when we obey
That siren voice and reach the trysting-

tree

Where the reward should wait us, there is
nothing.

The vague Consoler fails us at the last.
Philosophy, which had promised us the
key

To the dark riddle of death, averts her
face,

Muttering a lame apology, like a man
Avoiding an old friend who asks for alms.

The bright ideal that had led us on
To the thin fringe of the last air we
breathe

Dies like a marsh-light at the supreme
hour

When we most need and look for it.

Nature's end

Has been attained; a cold experiment
made;

Then, with a harlot's gesture, the
Enchantress

Leaves our senility to the hooting birds
Of darkness. I agree, sir, that we owe,
And ought to pay, our little debt of virtue
To the implacable Power that treats us
thus;

But, while we pay it, sir, I also think
We have the right, upon our own account,
To add a little irony."

Assured

That he had proved his own pre-eminent
wit,
Renan would say no more.

Pasteur'

grey head
Was bowed. He did not smile. He thought
it strange,
That men should use their irony on a
theme
Which had so haunted many a master-
mind
And filled with light so many a simple
heart.
The applause grew faint and distant, like
a dream.
He hardly knew what followed; for he
heard
With his own innermost mind, another
voice
That tingled through the gulfs of Space
and Time
Like star-light, the far voice of one who

walked

Through Königsberg—a small dry
clockwork man,

Angular as his own cocked hat, and
brown

As his own coffee, who, while his
clockwork feet

Clicked through the market-place so
punctually

That townsmen told the time by him,
would range

In his own thought, through kingdoms
beyond Time;

And, though the clouds of that high region
swept

Around him often, through their rifts he
caught

Gleams of eternal radiance. Though he
failed

To build a mightier fane with his own
hands,

Unconsciously, and even against his will,

He still confirmed the strength of that
which stands

In saecula saeculorum, while he groped

Through Nature, and discovered in the

laws
Of his dark mind, an end above her own;
And higher yet, an end where both
accord,
And bear one witness to the Supreme
Good;
One vast synthetic witness, from the law
That bowed his head beneath the
wheeling stars,
And from the deeper law in man's own
soul,
Whose strange, imperative whisper, far
within,
Affirmed, 'Thou *must*, despite thine own
desires,
Though all thy hopes be shattered by this
choice,
Thou *must* uphold the right; and, in thy
power
To hear this absolute whisper and defy
What seemed the wheel of Nature, thou
hast proved
Thy freedom, in a loftier order now;
Proved to thine own true self the eternal
strength
Of its true fortress, founded on a rock

In kingdoms of reality, beyond
This world of fleeting shadows. Thou
hast proved
Though blind men cannot see, or deaf men
hear,
The three great affirmations which alone
Can save mankind from utter chaos now,
God, Freedom, Immortality.'

XIII

In a small cabin, lit by a single lamp.
The poet, rapt and tense, had dropt his
pen.
Whose Mind dictated, or whose Will
compelled
His half-unconscious music? Not his own.
He had written as one that listens and
strains long
To hear a distant harmony. It was there:
One *motif* in the world-wide symphony;
A form of truth, eternal in the heavens,
Not to be made with hands, composed by
minds,

But to be found, discovered, phrase by
phrase,
In its abiding Beauty.

Could he

grasp
The whole—record its half-remembered
notes,
Each by a golden logic leading on
And up, to a new wonder; Music then
Had opened the last blinding doors of
knowledge,
And shrivelled him in that last
consummate splendour,
The Beatific Vision.

Death, that had hushed the ship for half an
hour
As with a strange new presence, was to
him
No stranger, but a comrade of his thought,
Touching him daily, whispering in his ear;
And all his pity for that stricken child
Only renewed a memory and a pang,
Only confirmed a sad foreknowledge now
That ached in him from boyhood.

knew it then;

And, afterwards, he knew that not till
Death

Struck and the mortal body of one he
loved

Lay there before him in a strange content,
So still that, by a deeper contrast now,
With the imperceptible gathering of the
dark,

And the unseen moving air, it seemed to
breathe;

Never till one rapt form, in that strange
bliss

Lay smiling, through the mists of his own
grief,

At an invisible heaven, had he discerned
That what he loved was separable from
earth.

There, though the mortal body had not yet
lost

One shining atom in its frozen sleep,
And the still exquisite face looked up,
unchanged,

From those untroubled waves of lustrous
hair;

Something had vanished utterly from the

world,
Whose lightest whisper, half an hour ago
Out-valued all earth's kingdoms. Stocks
and stones
Endured. Could this, then, perish like a
flash
Struck from a flint. The mortal shell
remained.
The cold and stiffening fingers could be
touched,
Claspt, kissed, and idly stained with
human tears;
But, even in that last agony he knew
That he stretched out his blind imploring
hands
To an immortal fugitive.

Then,

oh then,
He clutched at hints and whispers from
beyond,
Messages from the dead! He turned a
page
And read, as he remembered his own
grief,
Strange words that love had whispered to
him then:

I

*Never again the heaven in those clear
eyes,*

*The dew, the glory, and the
unfaltering love;*

Never again those stars of Paradise

*Which watched my labouring
darkness from above;*

*Never again, O never again, the look
That like the sunlight blessed me
unaware;*

Innocence wiser far than any book,

*And silent faith out-soaring any
prayer.*

*Never again the hand that moved in
mine*

*With that quick pulse when love could
find no word,*

*Never again the white robe and the
shrine*

*And those dear songs that none but I
have heard,*

*Laughed out at dawn, lost songs of
childish years,
Remembered now, in darkness, and blind
tears.*

II

Every morning, a bird
Alights on the topmost bough of the
silver birch-tree
Between the house and the lake,
And sits there alone for an hour,
Looking in, looking in at my window.

It may be a blackbird or thrush,
But the light at that hour is
deceptive.

I only know it is different from all
other birds.

It utters no cry, no song.
I have never seen it alighting.
And yet, when the sky is like apple-
bloom over the lake,

And my eyes have grown used to the
light,

It is always there,

At the very same time by the sun,
A little while after daybreak.

It always chooses the same bare
bough,

And it sits there alone, for an hour,
Looking in, looking in at my window.

*Is it so that our lost ones return
With eager inquisitive love,
Using strange eyes for an hour,
To glance through an open window
And discover how much we have
changed?*

It is daybreak now,

And the bird is not here;

But strange and terrible thoughts
bewilder one's mind

Before it is half awake,

And my heart sinks,

With fear of some evil that may have
befallen my bird.

Wings rustle.

The topmost bough of the silver
birch-tree
Suddenly dips and sways
And all is well.
Dark on an apple-bloom sky
A silent bird
Sits there alone, looking in,
Looking in, looking in at my
window.

III

*Messages? Like the pagans of old
time
I grope for messages in the flight of
birds;
A book that opens at your favourite
rhyme;
A page turned down; a passing
stranger's words;
Till in this wide world's ordered mazes
now
No leaf can fall, no bird can come and
go,*

*No ray of sunlight touch a child's fair
brow,*

*But with a secret meaning that I know.
I prayed that, if you could, you'd let me
hear*

*The name you gave me, and none
other knew;
And that same evening, standing by my
chair,*

*A child, on tiptoe, whispered it for
you;
A stranger's child, not knowing what she
said,*

*Whispered that happy name. I bowed
my head.*

At times, it almost seemed as though a
light
Could shine through rifts in the dissolving
veil
Of Nature, and strange meanings
glimmered through
That others could not see. Even now, he
heard
And saw, beyond all hearing and all sight,
Messages flung through darkness from

afar,
Wild hieroglyphic hints, like those quick
cries
Of prophecy, those crooked lightnings
flashed
Through Pagan skies, before the Word
took flesh
And the Infinite God performed that only
Act
Wherein He fully expressed infinitude
And rounded His own infinite universe
By being born of that which He had made.

vain he strove
To seize and hold, through all the shows
of Time,
The intolerable messenger of God,
Who, cloaked with sordid shreds of
mortal clay,
Disguised in rags of this material world
Burns thro' the veil and smoulders thro'
the cloud,
As beauty everywhere; yet at one touch
Shrivels the wrestling sinews of the mind.

Messages,—from the dead?

Thou hast not heard them?
No;
Nor shalt thou ever hear
What whisperings come and
go.
But, when thou hast bowed
thy head
In the quietude of despair,
When thou hast ceased to
listen,
A meaning shall draw near
And startle thee like a light,
From valleys of surprise
Opening, out of sight
Behind thee; for 'tis written
They must not meet thine
eyes.
Between the effect and cause
They dare not intervene.
From the unseen to the seen
Their roads are Nature's
laws;
But, through them, they can
breathe
What none could speak

aloud;

And quietly inter-wreath
Through sea-wave and white

cloud

Strange gleams of loveliness
Whose deep unearthly drift
Thou couldst not even guess;
Light that no eyes can see;
Music no ear hath heard;
Till they strike home to thee
Through star and sunset rift
Or the cry of a wandering

bird;

And where the rainbow

shone

Across unshadowing skies,
Clear as through tear-lashed

eyes

Thy love smiles, and is gone.

Rememberest thou that hour,
Under the naked boughs,
When, desolate and alone,
Returning to thy house,
Thou stoodst amazed to find
Dropt on the lintel-stone

Which thou hadst left so
bare,
A radiant dew-drenched
flower—
And thou couldst never know
Whose hand had dropt it
there,
Fragrant and white as snow,
To save thy soul from hell?
Yet, in thy deepest mind,
Thou *didst* know, and know
well.

Not thine to understand
How the two worlds accord,
—
The will of Love, our Lord,
With this dark wheel of
Time.
Yet thou didst hear them
chime
Like one deep Sanctus bell
For the pure Host revealed
In the exquisite miracle
Of that white chance-dropt
flower;

A flower from a known field,
And dropt by a mortal hand;
But, breathing its wild dew,
Oh, simply as tears flow,
Thou didst most surely know
The hand from which it fell
Was thy lost angel's, too.

The implacable law was there; and yet he
knew
That, though the world, like music, moved
in law
Its notes are not mechanical, but express
The Spirit of its Creator, who unfolds
His infinite purpose and compassionate
will
With every touch, finding in law itself
His perfect freedom to extemporise
Fugues that redeem the chords that went
astray,
Tones that transfigure like the touch of
Christ,
And providential harmonies that receive
The breaking wave of melody into a tide
Of deeper power and purpose, where it
wakes

declare
That Bach's great choral Passion meant no
more
Than clicking wooden keys, and that an
eye
Which sees their patterned movements
from below
Sees the bleak naked truth, and can
despise
The vague hypothesis of a Mind beyond
The wooden frame-work. But in that deep
realm
Infinite, inexhaustible, though law
Still runs through all, the Music-maker
still
Works through the law His own deep
miracles;
For, as the will of man can lift the hand
Against the pull of the planet, higher laws
Can sway each lesser system to new ends.
Height over height of law, through all the
grades
Of hierarchic heaven, the law still runs;
Though every height, in its new splendour
seems
An utter miracle to the grade below;

The flower a miracle to the lifeless earth;
The moth a miracle to the wingless
flower;
Man, on his knees, in dark cathedral
aisles,
A miracle to the burning jungle-beast;
And the unconditioned Power that made
them all
A miracle to His universe. Thus the law
Climbs to His freedom, and sets the spirit
free
Which by earth's dull mechanic law
seemed bound;
 For law itself, through its own
changelessness,
Being steadfast as the memory of God,
Is Freedom's only surety, and the road
Whereon alone the spirit of man has
power
To choose that goal and walk with surety
to it,
Beyond the flaming ramparts of this
world.
So let the new monistic moderns take
Music for clue and golden analogue,
Not that blind web of wooden puppetry

Pulled by material strings;
But Music, with its infinite subtlety,
Moving the soul, as when love speaks to
love
In silence.

This deep constancy of
law
What is it but the covenant of our God
That His eternal Memory will retain
All that has ever been, or yet shall be;
The unchangeable scroll of judgment that
has lost
No vanished sun, no atom, in the mists
Of all the endless ages.

(*Far*
away
A voice breathed, 'not one bird or leaf
can fall
Beyond your Father's care.')

Th

implacable law
Is God's own seal on all that we hold
dear;
For Resurrection, in the eternal Mind,
Is but Remembrance. Into the world-wide
light

Of Memory there, His Memory, not our
own,
Our dead shall rise, out of the gulping
grave
Of Time, out of that blind forgetful deep,
With all their own lost memories in their
eyes,
In an eternal region.

Then shall

law
(Law that has never broken one frail link
In its long chain; the seeming callous law
Whose cruelty closed the melody of each
life,
And gave it form by closing it) appear
As Love at last, whereby the melody lives
In its own form for ever. . . .

Wi

trembling hands
He turned the pages of that worn old
script
He wrote so long ago, unconscious then
Of all the meaning that those words might
hold.
Messages from the dead! He read,
through tears,—

*And there was one that moved like light
in light*

*Before me there,—Love, human and
divine,*

That can exalt all weakness into power,

—

*Whispering, 'Take this deathless torch of
song,'*

*Whispering, but with such faith that
even I*

*Might call on Love to guide me, while I
sang*

*Of those who caught the pure
Promethean fire*

*One from another, each crying as he
went down*

*To one that waited, crowned with youth
and joy,*

*'Take thou the splendour. Carry it out of
sight,*

*Into the great new age I must not know,
Into the great new realm I must not
tread.'*

XIV

In her dark cabin, the stricken mother
knelt
By her dead child. Only ten yards away
In a dark cabin, a happier mother lulled
Her wakeful child to sleep; a rose-lipped
child
Hugging a Teddy Bear, and strangely
alive
To the unwonted silence of the ship.
Tell me another rhyme, then, and I'll try.
Please, mummy, the one about buckets
and ships at sea,
The childish treble piped; and, answering
it,
The mother's low soprano quietly
crooned:

Buckets and spades and a ship at sea
Are very fine things in their way,
maybe;
And the woods look gay when the
boughs are green,
But the very best things have never
been seen.

Nobody ever has weighed or caught
One glimpse, with his eyes, of your
happiest thought;

Or walked in white where your
prayers have been,

*For the very best things have never
been seen.*

There is much to be said for an ark,
one feels;

And almost as much for a horse on
wheels;

And the king has a crown (and so
has the queen)

*But the very best things have never
been seen.*

When the great winds blow and the
sere leaves fall,

Hide close, little elf, we can laugh at
them all!

If I whisper one word you will know
what I mean;

*For the very best things have never
been seen.*

One word whispered—strange, across the
night
Deeper than any wireless message
thrilled
The soundless voice of Aquin, one deep
chord
Sustaining that light song with undertones
Profound as death, in the innermost heart
of the world:

*Visus, tactus,
gustus,
In te fallitur.
Sed auditu solo
Tuto creditur.*

And then the voice of the child again,
"One more,
Please—please—one more—and then I'll
go to sleep.
The one about the grey wall in the garden,
The wall that had a picture on it, mummy,
A picture that had turned into a window,
And showed a lovely face."

"Ah
yes, I know,

The Invisible Garden. Cuddle your head
down
Here, on the pillow, then; and I will say
it;
Now, close your eyes." And softly as the
sound
Of fir-trees, when a breath at evening
moves
Their nodding plumes in a little sheltered
glen
Among the lonely hills, the mother
crooned:

You have never seen my garden,—
There are strange roses here,—
Five beds of sunset roses,
Afloat on the soft air.

Once in this happy garden,
A dial marked the hours.
But there is no more sorrow
Among my thoughtful flowers.

And, at the end of the garden,
Clasped on the rose-grey wall,
I see, above the roses,

The loveliest flower of all,—

A plaque enwreathed with sunset,
White on a ground of blue,
No della Robbia dreamed it;
For here all dreams come true;

No plaque, but a bright window,
In a wall of the unseen,
And one that sits within it,
A maiden and a queen.

Pure white on blue, our Lady,
The Child upon her knee,
Stretching his little arms out,
To pluck more flowers for me;

Stretching his arms out gently,
To tall celestial flowers. . . .

The dial marks no longer the shadow
of passing hours. . . .

The sunset quietly deepens,
The night will soon be here.
The stars will see my roses

Afloat on the soft air.

I am not afraid of darkness.
All mercy and all grace
Are shining through that window,
And I shall see her face.

You have never seen my garden. . . .

*'Hush! Fast asleep! Good night, dear
chick, good night!'*
And, in that other room—*Asleep! Asleep!*
*(Through streaming tears) 'Good night,
dear heart, good night!'*

XV

The turbines throbbed. The huge
Atlantic surge
Went seething past the port-holes. All was
dark.
I heard the ship's bell ringing in the night,
The cry of the watch, "All's well." But all
night long

I faced that mystery of a vaster deep
Whereon no mortal mind can ever sail
To any haven, till it dares embark
On yet another Ship, and be enclosed,
Cabined, confined, by bulwarks that shut
out
The vastness that would drown it.

a man
Must shape a cup to drink from, so the
mind
Must use its finite symbols to enclose
The eternal vintage of the infinite truth;
Whereof one little draught enlightens
more
Than all that human arrogance must lose
If with its naked hands it madly attempt
To grasp the rushing flood. It was for this
God made His finite creatures, and
enclosed
Our human love in forms of roseate flesh,
That we might slowly learn, with human
eyes,
To spell His infinite meanings; till, at last,
As when a child has learned to walk, it
needs

No fettering aid; or when the Temple is
built
And the strong pillars between the
cherubim
Support the cedar roofs, o'erlaid with
gold,
The mortal scaffoldings where the masons
worked
 Are stripped away, and man's immortal
soul,
Its wings full-grown, its elementary laws
All mastered, stands up radiant in the
light
Of heaven, to share the Godhead of His
love,
And serve with Him, in power.

T

only there
In that deep inner kingdom, which the fool
Accounts a world of dreams, abides the
truth.
Yet man still seeks it on the dwindling
road
Where Science traces great things back to
less
Till all runs out in nothing, which the fool

Accounts the sole reality,—as of old.

Reality, and Reality—how we grope
And clutch at shadows in the shadowy
flux
Of the unsubstantial universe, O God.
There was a time when Science walked
on earth
And found it "solid"; looked on the blind
bulk
Of matter, as the one sure final stuff
Which, through all change, endured,
imperishable;
While that invisible thought which fills no
space,
And is not weighed or measured, and that
strange Ego
Which, while it lives, through every
bodily change,
Remembers and controls, and half-creates
The little sensuous scheme of colour and
sound
We call our world, that central, personal
I,
Can vanish utterly. . . .
Oh, for a true Copernicus of the mind

Who shall reverse this mockery. As of
old,
Men thought their planet was the central
stage
Of the universal drama, fixed and flat,
And found it whirling, like a pellet of dust
Through boundless night, so now—this
earth, this flesh,
This matter again dissolves, dissolves,
dissolves,
Melts at a more than mortal Hamlet's cry,
 Into electric systems, whirling coils
Of protons and electrons; which, at last
Under the scrutiny of the invisible mind
Are merged into the invisible world again
And rest with all their bodiless
movements there
On That which only has the power to
move,—
The Living Will. Whose Will, O God, but
Thine?
Our minds are restless till they rest in
Thee.

There, and there only, is the final Cause
And Origin of the world, the Last and

First.

There, and there only is the secret found
Of that vast order which the astronomers
saw

Ruling each atom as it rules the stars,
When to create and shape and paint one
petal

In one brief April flower, a myriad atoms,
Each atom in itself a universe
Of constellations, must in order climb
And wheel to their own stations in a
scheme

Of intellectual beauty. The mind's eye
Can see them, radiant armies moving up
Through boundless night, to make one
delicate point

Of colour, in a single wayside flower.
But Oh, what poet's hand on earth shall
paint them?

*Up-whispered by what Power,
Deeper than moon or sun,
Must each of the myriad atoms of this
flower
To its own point of the coloured
pattern run;*

*Each atom, from earth's gloom,
A clean sun-cluster driven
To make, at its bright goal, one grain of
bloom,
Or fleck with rose one petal's edge in
heaven?*

*What blind roots lifted up
This sacramental sign
Transmuting their dark food in this
wild cup
Of glory, to what heavenly bread
and wine?*

*What Music was concealed,
What Logos in this loam,
That the celestial Beauty here
revealed
Should thus be struggling back to
its lost home?*

*Whence was the radiant storm,
The still up-rushing song,
That built of formless earth this
heavenly form,
Redeeming, with wild art, the*

world's blind wrong;

*Unlocking everywhere
The Spirit's wintry prison,
And whispering from the grave,
"Not here! Not here!"
He is not dead. The Light you
seek is risen!"*

But where, in this dissolving scheme, to
pause
And read its meanings, where to halt and
see
The picture of the cosmos? Is it here
On this world's coloured surface, in the
scheme
That children know, of fields and flowers
and birds
And kindly human faces? Is it there,
Along the dwindling road that Science
treads,
Where flowers dissolve into electric
mists,
And even the face of dying love dies out
Into a cloud of atoms. Better far
To walk with children through this present

world,
Clear as a coloured picture-book, than
lose
The light upon that face; for in God's
mercy,
It may be that His best of meanings here
Lies nearest to us. Yet the mind runs back
 Along those dwindling roads,
explaining still
The greater by the less, until they reach
On every line of thought, that vanishing
point
Where all runs out in absolute mystery.
There, at the last, seeking for that which
Is
In its own right, and needs no other cause;
Where even the vanishing atom cries
aloud
'I am, I am, yet have no right to be'
(For only Nothingness ever had that right,
Except by that mind-shattering Miracle
Of ultimate Being,—the one impossible
Fact
Which *is*, and lives, unfolding worlds on
worlds
Where Nothingness ought to be) there,

Science meets
The fundamental paradox. . . .
Reaches the final contradictory crux
Where all its long descending roads must
turn.

There stands the Gate, fine as a needle's
eye,
Through which the mind must pass, and
find the roads
Upon the further side of that strange point
Ascending, once again, to Thought and
Will;
Ascending, till—as water finds its level

It finds a height co-equal with the peaks
Of human thought; and infinitely higher,
Because that world beyond evolved our
own;
And we must find, upon the summits
there,
A self-subsistent Cause, the eternal Fount
Of all that flowed into our world with
Christ,
And showed us, in His Face, the Face of
God.

Did His creation, then, involve descent,
Renunciation, Sacrifice in Heaven,
A Calvary at the very heart of things,
Wherein the Eternal Passion still enacts
In an eternal world what mortal eyes
Saw dimly on one shadowy hill of Time?
Once, once, ascending on those distant
roads
Beyond our world, as in a dream, I came
Into a shining country, where I saw
A radiant throng, whose eyes in their
clear depths
Held all the heavens of beauty, mirrored
there
In ecstasy, as in a myriad pools
The splendour of the indivisible sun
Is mirrored, and the Godhead of all
worlds
Descends and shines within a myriad
souls,
In each a separate sacramental flame,
In each entire, the living form of God,
Super-substantial Life. They looked on
me
And all that had seemed ghostly in their
guise

Was now the very flesh and blood of life,
Firm as the ultimate forms of beauty and
truth,
While all the things that I had touched on
earth
Changed to intangible shadows. . . .
Then, as it seemed, the innermost Silence
breathed,
More instantly than music through my
soul,
The very voice of heaven,—*Be of good
cheer.*
I have overcome the world.

I could
not see
The Form that stood before me as I rose;
For this world's darkness like a midnight
cloud
Still hid the eternal Splendour from these
eyes;
But, at those words, a river of new
strange tears
Dissolved my darkness into heavenly
light,
And I beheld Him, not as eyes behold,
But as Love sees the light upon a face

Whereto the world is blind.

I saw

that Light;

And as a ship-wrecked man that would
not breathe

His fear while danger threatens wife or
child

Lest he should break their courage with
his own,

But, when the peril is over, sobs out all,

My heart broke, crying dumbly, not in
words,

All that dumb tears could speak,—

on the way!

Blood on the way; those agonies in the
dark;

Cruelties; madness; evil setting its heel

On goodness; all the pangs, the desolate
pangs

Of grief; the poor bowed head beside the
grave;

Was there no way but this?"

He

looked at me,

And whispered, once again, "I *am* the

Way."

Then, as a myriad flames will quiver and
burn

In one rich jewel's blood-red heart, I saw
In His own wounded hands and feet and
side

The wounds of all the world.

All

the wild pangs

Of all earth's wars, all the red throes of
Time,

All the long travail of Creation throbbed
Within those wounds. As in each rose on
earth

Myriads of atoms, each a universe
Ordered to music, move; wounds of the
bird

Under the falcon's beak; wounds of the
fawn

Under the tiger's fangs; wounds of
mankind

Grappling in armies on that road of pain,
From earth's blind jungles up to Calvary's
height;

Myriads of wounds; myriads of pangs

were there;
Each like a separate flame within His
wounds;
Rhythmical throes; not chaos now, not
strife,
Not even grief as mortals think of grief;
But the strong music of the eternal
Passion
Throbbing from hell to heaven in His own
frame.
As the sea breaks in rhythm against its
shores,
As the stars move in music through the
sky;
As the heart throbs in man, all throbbed in
Him,
The eternal God made flesh, the Incarnate
Word,
 The Logos of the evolving universe.
The iron of His world-ruling law was
driven
By the strong doom of His world-ruling
will
Through his own Body upon the eternal
cross
Of His creative sacrifice in heaven;

And dark as death on His death-
conquering brow
The whole world's thorns were woven to
make His crown.

XVI

About the break of day,
When the slow breakers of the Atlantic
crumbled
The crimson East through all their crests
of foam,
I walked along the long wet shining deck
Breathing the salt strange freshness.

the bows,
I saw a quiet throng, the throng I sought,
Bowing their heads to pass through a low
doorway,
As though they knew their purpose, not as
those
Who drift, but like strong swimmers to a
goal
Through this world's idle fashion. As they

entered,
And from their brows this outer daylight
faded,
There was a strange new light on every
face
As though they entered an unearthly chart-
room
Wherein the secret splendour of our
voyage
Must now be breathed to a few.

followed them in,
And found them kneeling there before an
altar
Spread with a linen cloth, whiter than
snow.
(*Yea, though your sins be scarlet—in my
heart
The strange voice breathed,—they shall
be white as snow.*)
Lighted with candles, whose unwavering
flames
Were of one order with those breathless
fires
Which burn for ever in the Eternal City,
On earth, and in the heavens; and all were

lit

From One Eternal Splendour, unto whom
All constellations burn; but here and now,
In little, those steadfast microcosmic fires
Held more significance for the mind of
man

Than all the stars that move across the
night
In their material order. Those twin flames
With that dark Crucifix, standing in the
midst
Of that pure altar, on the moving ship,
Marked but a moving shrine in one vast
Fane;
And, as we moved, behind them I could
see,
Through a broad window, the great
heaving ocean
And the unmoving sky.

Wherever

we moved

We moved not from the centre of that
circle
Which had no bounds, and always held us
there
Moving, yet motionless under the still

regard
Of that all-seeing heaven.

I heard a

voice
Breathing through Time in that now
timeless tongue
Which, being what Death calls dead, can
never die,—
Tuis fidelibus, Domine, vita mutatur. . . .
For unto Thy faithful, Lord, their life is
changed
Not taken away; and their brief earthly
abode
Being here dissolved, there is prepared
another. . . .
Aeterna in coelis habitatio—
Eternal in the heavens.

Therefore,

with angels,
Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, and the
host
Of the whole heavenly army without end
We hymn thy glory.

Sanctus,

sanctus, sanctus,
Dominus Deus. Heaven and earth are full

Of Thy pure glory.

Then the

heights and depths

Met in one point,—I saw the host
upraised,

Above the struggling sea, against the sky,
Gathering a million thoughts into one
centre,

With all those cloud-like drifting earth-
bound dreams

Of *Something far more deeply interfused*
Whose dwelling is the light of setting
suns;

Closed in Reality now. That living Will
Whereby this coloured pageant of the
world

In each material and electric atom
Is here and now sustained,—a myriad
dreams

Brought to one lucid instance, one clear
Fact

By that far Voice,—*In Memory of Me. . . .*

Brought to one present, living, personal
Act,

By that far Will which, through the
severing years,

Upraised that symbol, using mortal hands
Of flesh and blood, as His own
instruments,
Through all those distances of Time and
Space,
Here, now, to break that Bread and pour
that Wine
Whereon He fed Who feeds us.

Tim

and Space
Dissolved. . . . Two thousand years ago,
this Act
On earth (and in the heavens, before all
worlds);
Foreshadowed His own passion to create
Life that might share His own on high at
last,
And, by His own transfiguring entrance
here,
Ennoble the dark Nature He had made,
Stooping to Man, that men might rise to
God.
There, as that host, upraised against the
sky,
Bowed every head, I saw ten thousand
shrines,

Ten thousand altars, in the self-same Act
Made one, and shadowing forth that Act
in heaven

Before which all those heavenly armies
kneel. . . .

All these and more made one by that one
sign,

One thin white disk upraised against the
sky,

There, in one strict concentrating point at
last,

Closed all the thoughts and aims of earth
and heaven,

Shone the one signal that could never
change,

The ultimate sea-mark of our voyaging
souls.

Behind that Act, two thousand years ago
On earth, and in the heavens before all
worlds

 Stood, and for ever stands, the eternal
Christ,

Whose Presence is not separate from His
Act,

Because, in Him, Substance and Will are
one,

Breaking that Bread whereof His body
was made,
In union and communion with man's own;
A sacramental sign, earth's common
Bread,
Bread of a thousand grains, compact in
one,
To feed that flesh wherewith the soul of
Christ
Was clothed on earth, as man's own soul
is clothed;
And, as the living soul of man on earth
Is here and now incorporate into Christ,
Becomes His Body anew.

Time,
Space, dissolved.
The eternal Logos, ordering the whole
world,
The incarnate Word, in sacrament with
man,
Breathed through Creation, with His
instant voice,
Intelligible at last, as Love, not Death. . . .

*Now, and for ever, God makes heaven
and earth. . . .*

*Be of good cheer. I have overcome the
world. . . .*

I am the Resurrection, and the Life.

DEDICATION

TO MARY ANGELA

*Under the Pyrenees,
Where the warm sea-wind drifts thro'
tamarisk boughs,
There is a lonely house upon a hill-top
That I shall never forget or see again.*

*I shall not see that garden, filled with
roses,
On the high sun-burnt plateau,
girdled round
With that low parapet, on the lonely hill-*

top,

*By sunlight, or by moonlight, ever
again.*

*In that lost garden stands a little chapel,
And the strange ship wherein we made
our voyage,
Our little mortal ship of thoughts and
visions*

*Hangs there, in chains, before the
twilit altar.*

*The doors are locked. The lamp is
quenched for ever;
Though, at one corner of the house, our
Lady*

*Looks out, across the valley, to the
sea.*

*And, on the landward side, across a
valley,*

*Purple as grapes in autumn, the dark
mountains,
With peaks like broken swords, and
splintered helmets,
Remembering Roland's death, are*

listening still.

*Look down, look down, upon the sunlit
valley,*

*Over the low white parapet of that
garden;*

*And you shall see the long grey road go
winding*

Through the Basque vineyards . . .

you shall not see

*One face, nor shall you hear one voice
that whispered*

Love, as it died. . . .

Only

one wooden Image

*Knows where she knelt, among the
lonely mountains*

*At Roncesvalles, in one last prayer for
me.*

** * * * **

*And, when it was darkest, I came to a
strong City.*

No earthly tongue can tell how I

journeyed there,
Deaf to this world's compassion,
Blind to its pity,
With a heart wrung empty, even of its last
dumb prayer.

I had left the chattering throngs in the
night behind me,
And stumbled into a desert that had no
name.
Torn, bleeding of foot,
Through cactus and thorn I stumbled,
And, when it was darkest, to that strong
City I came.

Gate there was none, nor window. It
towered above me
Like a vast fortress into the midnight
sky.
And I beat on the granite walls,
But I found no doorway;
And the blood ran over my wrists, but I
heard no reply.

Yet—I knew well—no tongue can tell
how I knew it—

Though the walls were harder than
adamant, blacker than night,
Within that City
Was glory beyond all glory
Of wisdom and power enthroned in
absolute light.

Could I have entered there, all doubt
were over.

Stones would be bread at last, and
water wine;
All questioning closed
In absolute vision;
The long sad riddle solved, and the
answer mine.

But oh, on those cloud-wreathed walls,
there stood no sentry.
Naked as cliffs they towered, abrupt as
doom.

No shining gateway,
No shadowy postern,
No least small spark of a window broke
their gloom.

Hour after hopeless hour I groped around

them.

League after league, I followed that
girdling wall.
Burning with thirst,
I dragged through the drifted sand-heaps
Round its great coigns, and found them
adamant all.

Once, every league, a shadowy buttress
Like a vast Sphinx, outstretched in the
moon's pale sheen,
Loomed through the night,
With flanks worn sleek by the sand-
storms,
And calm strange face that gazed as at
worlds unseen.

I groped around them; I groped around
them;
Stared up at their cold eyes and found
them stone;
And crawled on, on,
Till I overtook strange foot-prints
Going my way, and knew them for my
own;

Strange foot-prints, clotted with blood, in
the sand before me,

Trailing the hopeless way I had trailed
before;

For, in that night,

I had girdled the whole dark City,

Feeling each adamant inch, and found
no door.

I fell on my face in the rank salt of the
desert.

Slow, hot, like blood, out of my
hopeless eyes,

The salt tears bled.

The salt of the desert drank them,

And I cried, once, to God, as a child
cries.

Then, then, I cannot tell

What strange thing happened,

Only, as at a breath of the midnight air,

These eyes, like two staunch wounds,
had ceased their bleeding

And my despair had ended my despair.

Far over the desert, like shadows trailed

by a moon-cloud,
I saw a train of mourners, two by two,
Following an open coffin.
They halted near me.
And I beheld, once more, the face I knew.

Blissful the up-turned face—the cold
hands folded,

Blissful the up-turned face, cold as
cold stone,
Cold as a midnight flower.

I bent above it—
Sweet, sweet cold kiss, the saddest earth
had known.

Quietly they moved on, in slow
procession.

They breathed no prayer. They sang no
funeral song.

Up to the adamant walls

Of that strong City,
Slowly they moved, a strange inscrutable
throng.

Behind their shining burden they stole like
shadows

Up to the shadowy City, two by two.
And like two ponderous doors of a tomb
revolving

Two stones in the wall swung back,
And they passed through.

I followed after. I followed after.

Theirs was the secret key, and the sure
goal:

And the adamant doors

Revolved again like midnight,
And closed, like a silent thunder, behind
my soul.

Dark! It was dark; but through that strange
new darkness

Great aisles of beauty rapturously
burned;

And I stole on,

Like a remembering pilgrim
From a long exile now at last returned.

All round me burned strange lights and
banners.

Above, great arches grasped and
spanned the sky.

Then, like a bell,
 In the armoured hands of Michael,
I heard Time ring its aeons out and die.

I saw that strange procession winding
 On through a veil that shielded my
dazed sight
From the absolute Dark that would have
drowned me
 At the first dreadful touch of absolute
Light.

Yet I saw glory on glory on glory
 Burning through those ethereal folds
Dusked by a myriad dawns, a myriad
sunsets
 With smouldering mercies, merciful
blood-red golds.

Before it smoked the Eternal Altar
 Branched with great trembling lights
that shone
As though at last all stars, all
constellations,
 Had swung to their true place before
God's throne.

There, there, at last, they burned in order,
Round that high Altar, under that rich
East.

All clouds, all snows, on that pure Table
Were spread like one white cloth for
God's own feast.

And I heard *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,*
Dominus Deus, echoing everywhere,
In tongues of earth, in tongues of ocean,
In tongues of fire, in tongues of air.

Far off, I heard once more the centuries
pealing

Like one brief sacring bell, I heard
Time die.

I saw Space fading, forms dissolving.
I saw the Host uplifted high.

Spirit and Substance, Victim-Victor,
One life in all, all lives in One,
Fast-bound to feed man's bounded vision
Shone through that strict concentrating
Sun.

Anima Mundi, World-Sustainer,

Sower to whom all seeds returned,
Through earth's dissolving mist of atoms
The Body of God in splendour burned.

And I heard *Agnus, Agnus Dei*,
Pleading for man with Love's own
breath;
And Love drew near me,
And Love drew near me
And I drank Life through God's own
death.

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*For other opinions of ALFRED NOYES see
over.*

Some views of the poetry of
ALFRED NOYES

Alice Meynell: "Passion and dignity, passion and thought—when they are together in 'intempestuous storm,' I am sure we have great poetry. After I had read *Mount Ida* to myself, a good reader of poetry read it out to us all. We dwelt on all its beauties, and the worst thing said was that we need (or think we need) something duller or plainer to spring from. I

don't at all agree. The sustained journey, the undeclining heights, the ardent ascent, the heights with summits of this poem give me a joy that no counterpoise of good or less good, of dull and radiant, would ever give me."

"I have read the *Trumpet of the Law* three times, and think it a very great poem."

Francis Thompson on the earlier poems: "A genuine poet, possessing imagination, feeling, lyric faculty, a rich sense of colour, and a melodious metrical gift. Even when his poems took narrative form, they belonged—like the *Ancient Mariner* or *Christabel*, to the lyrical order of narrative. He was essentially a lyrical poet; and as such his birthright was unquestioned. . . . This extremely beautiful passage effectually vindicates its author's right to the poet's name."

Swinburne on "Drake": "A noble work—a

gifted painter, skilled in his craft has, with signal success, made of the sky a studio; and for a canvas, upon which to paint his picture, he has taken the sea."

Also, in a letter to the author: "I congratulate you on the completion of so high and so grand a task."

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about it.... I am glad to have lived to see such
a blossoming of poetry on the large full scale."

[The end of *The Torch-Bearers* by Alfred
Noyes]