

THE TROPHIES
WITH OTHER SONNETS
BY JOSÉ-MARIA DE HEREDIA

NOW FIRST COMPLETELY
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH
BY JOHN MYERS O'HARA
& JOHN HERVEY ☉ ☉ ☉

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THIS translation of LES TROPHÉES is dedicated, by permission, to Monsieur Henri de Régnier, whose poems, contes and romances are among the most beautiful and enduring trophies of the literature of modern France and whose wife, herself an exquisite literary artist, is the daughter of José-Maria de Heredia.

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INTRODUCTION

IN THE city of Paris there is a spot, serene and gracious, where, sheltered by noble trees and flanked by fountains and parterres of flowers, memorials which lovers of beauty have erected to its creators preside benignantly over the joys of infancy, the confidences of lovers, the dreams of poets and the meditations of those who, having experienced the storms of life, find pleasure in surveying a vista where existence seems care-free and unclouded.

Among these, the most stately is one whose marble—supported upon either hand by a column about which ivy twines—has been pierced to frame a bust of bronze in an oval opening, beyond which the sunlit verdure forms a shimmering background. Chiseled in letters of simple dignity is a name: JOSÉ-MARIA DE HEREDIA. Lower down, at the right, appears the brief inscription: LES TROPHÉES, 1893.

In their promenades those who visit this spot often pause to contemplate the virile, bearded head, to which the sculptor, with life-like touch, has imparted an expression resembling that of some sage or hero of antiquity; and, upon certain anniversaries, to observe the wreaths of laurel, palm branches and garlands of flowers laid by reverent hands upon the pedestal.

Perfection in art is something so rarely attained that posterity not alone does it honor—in its own time it cannot fail of recognition. Hence it was that when thirty-six years ago there appeared in Paris, from the press of Lemerre, a volume of poems bearing the title *The Trophies*, its author was at once acclaimed one of the greatest of French poets and the following year, despite the candidacy of other men long famous—Zola, Verlaine and others—was elected to the Académie Française. José-Maria de Heredia had never previously published a volume of poetry, neither did he publish another. Yet from the moment of the appearance of *The Trophies* his fame was so firmly established that in the decades since elapsed time has but confirmed it. *The Trophies* has gone through nearly a hundred editions, among them sumptuous monuments of typography, embellished by celebrated painters, etchers and engravers. Translations, complete or partial, have been made into many different languages, including the Norse, the Russian, the Roumanian, the Serbian, the Czech, the Polish, the Greek and even the Japanese, beside English, Spanish and Italian. An extensive critical literature devoted to Heredia and his work has grown up; a biography and bibliography, in two volumes, was published in 1923; and, in 1925, the

memorial to him was unveiled in the Luxembourg Gardens, the occasion being, in effect, an apotheosis.

No other poet with but a solitary volume to offer has risen to such immediate and monumental fame and been accorded such world-wide recognition.

This homage, universal and unequivocal, has been evoked by the perfection of *The Trophies* as a work of art. With the exception of four narrative poems which conclude the volume, it consists of a cycle of one hundred and eighteen sonnets, in conception so beautiful and in execution so faultless that in the entire range of poetry they defy comparison. The mastery, in its highest reaches, of the most difficult of all fixed poetical forms which Heredia displays has, indeed, led to a critical paradox. For criticism, unhappy when without just cause for complaint, has been driven to reproach *The Trophies* for their very impeccability. "Is it an infirmity of the critical nature," Georges Pellissier has written, "a suspicion of envy, to wish to surprise some weakness, if only to show our indulgence? But Heredia's sustained magnificence and unfailing exactitude deny us that satisfaction." This triumphant perfection has in consequence been impugned in the same spirit in which other poets are censured for their faults. Could a higher compliment be possible? In the end these criticisms have made for the greater glory of their object. Intimate familiarity with *The Trophies*, while increasing our admiration for their unmatched virtuosity, inspires also the conviction that these poems are absolute creations, not only superb in design and execution but informed with intellectual vigor, spiritual insight and an imaginative power cosmic in its scope.

They are not for the casual reader. From even the discerning, for their full appreciation much is demanded. The poet ranges through realms many and diverse, and thence into infinitude itself. There unfold before the vision incomparable pageants, epic conflicts waged by both gods and men, landscapes now sublime, now intimate, ferocious passions and untroubled peace; monsters, madonnas, myths and miracles; charmed corners of forgotten lives, the glories of art and nature, the reverberations of triumph and the melancholy of forsaken gardens and temples fallen to decay. Over everything is draped a veil of poesy at once dazzling and delicate, grandly fashioned yet exquisitely wrought, its flow resembling that of the iridescent garment of a goddess. Beneath this glowing vesture the conceptions of the poet are embodied in forms nobly sculpturesque, heightened and adorned by the touch of the enameler and the goldsmith and the chaser of intaglios and medals. The effect is that most appropriately described by the word chryselephantine, which the Greeks applied to those works of Phidias upon

which had been lavished not only bronze and marble but ivory, gold and precious stones.

Like the stars, the sonnets of Heredia pass processionally, “forever singing as they shine.” Their octaves and sestets not only sing—they swell upon the ear with an orchestral sonority. Called a sculptor of speech, Heredia was equally a modeler of sound. He belongs with the supreme poets, Homer and Shakespeare, because like them his poems were conceived primarily as things to be heard. Originally spoken, not written, creations, he composed them orally and first read or declaimed them to chosen friends before giving them their printed shape upon the page. In the expressive phrase used by Arthur Symons of Gautier, he knew that words can be themselves music as well as structure. Tireless, like Flaubert—with whom he was on terms of intimate friendship—in the quest of the *mot juste*, the effects he sought were attained by actual utterance, unwearied remodeling and reutterance, until at last he had achieved the precise union of sound with sense necessary to perfectly embody his conception. This perfection, so deceptive in its seeming lack of effort, was the fruit of sustained endeavor which took no count of time nor pains. The ten years spent in turning the final terzet of a single sonnet (“Stained Glass”) have become legendary, yet are the actual fact. The resonance of his lines, their cadences and inner harmonies, what has been termed their “vocalism,” forms a study in itself. And as the prose of Flaubert becomes at times as it were symphonic—Beethovenesque, critics of music have called the pages of “Salammbô” and “Herodias”—so certain groups of *The Trophies* resemble the tone-poems of Liszt in the splendor of their polyphony. In obedience to the spirit of the poem, lines which clang and peal, move with the heavy beat of marching hosts or surge like billows, are relieved by others of nuances so delicate that, Maurice Grammont has said, they cannot be analyzed or described without exaggeration. Here the effect is chromatic, there “grey upon the grey,” moods alternate as cycles change, the atmosphere is now tropical, now polar. Thus *The Trophies*, while of organic unity, presents an extraordinary variety not only of forms and colors, themes and motives, but tones and overtones.

Thirty years were consumed in its creation, which in itself is a sufficient answer to the charge sometimes preferred that Heredia is “the poet of one book.” A poet in his adolescence, a contributor to distinguished revues and anthologies while still a youth, he had turned fifty ere he offered this one volume to the world after consecrating to it the labor of a lifetime, with all its aspirations, urges, faiths and dreams. Into it he distilled the essences, perfumes and holy oils extracted from the whole range of culture and of art. The meditations of a vast erudition enrich without encumbering it, a robust

virility energizes all its parts and from the first page to the last it is instinct with power and mastery. His one book, *Heredia resolved*, should be as nearly faultless in its workmanship as he was able to make it and in this object he succeeded by the exercise of a detached self-criticism such as few writers ever have achieved. Of that portion of its contents previously published in periodicals and the like, there was no single item that, before permanently entering it, was not subjected to the most fastidious revision. Some twenty sonnets, almost without exception of rare beauty, he deliberately excluded because in his mature estimation they were not completely satisfactory. Hence it is that changes from the *editio princeps*, in the many succeeding ones published during his lifetime, were almost negligible; a slightly different punctuation here, the transposition there of a word or accent which could have suggested themselves to him alone.

In the prefatory epistle, addressed to Leconte de Lisle, which Heredia prefixed to *The Trophies*, he refers expressly to “These sonnets whose birth, one by one, you have witnessed,” thereby himself affirming that it is upon the merits of these poems, rather than of the four concluding narrative ones — superb, unquestionably, as the latter are — that the book must stand or fall. It is as the supreme master of the sonnet that his fame rests and when we think of *The Trophies*, it is as a book of sonnets, always. Which being so, we may with propriety pause here to consider how Heredia’s supremacy in this domain of poetry has been bodied forth.

It was Thomas Hardy who asserted that every poem is the expression of a “moment of vision.” Going farther back, we find Joubert affirming that the most beautiful forms of expression in all the arts are those that seem the fruit of some moment of high contemplation. A modern critic has amplified the idea by enunciating it as an axiom that the excellence of a poem is due wholly to its interpretation of the mood of an instant, in which some scene is beheld with such intensity of vision as to endow it with “the whole promise of life.”

Poetry, ancient and modern, can produce nothing which more admirably illustrates the validity of these affirmations than the sonnets of Heredia. Theirs is that intense significance as of something seen in moments of clairvoyance. Projecting himself into the far-distant and the fabulous he evokes them so vividly that they take on an even startling semblance of reality. The elements composing them may be and often are strange, remote in time and space, unusual in mood and feeling, yet the evocation never fails — they kindle into life at the creator’s touch.

This is because Heredia beholds with such distinctness whatever moves him to poetic utterance. The Parnassians, at whose head he stands, were

sometimes accused of perceiving only the exterior aspects of those things which they portrayed, with being the apostles of a materialism magnificent but unilluminated; seeing so clearly that they forgot to feel or, in the deeper sense, to apprehend. But in making this accusation a still profounder truth was ignored, regarding which M. Paul Valéry has made some searching observations. Sight, he declares, is the most intellectual of all our senses, visual images being so dominant that unconsciously they affect the concepts formed by our other faculties. To all save the blind, the idea of every object is largely conditioned by its presentation to the eye, and thus stamped upon the consciousness. Developing this assumption farther, he proceeds:

“Certain men feel with an especial delicacy the pleasure proceeding from the individuality of an object. What they prefer in one, that which causes their delight, is that quality of being unique which all things possess. . . . There is nothing more powerful in the imaginative life. The object selected becomes as it were the focus of this life, a center of associations which are more or less numerous as the object is more or less complex. Fundamentally this faculty must be a medium for exciting the imaginative powers, of setting potential energy at work.”

Had the author of *The Trophies* left us a formal confession of faith, his *apologia* as a poet, it might well have been couched in these terms, which, as a rubric, at once explain and justify.

The sonnets of Heredia are the trophies of his visions. What, in those moments of illumination, he beheld may have been Hercules or Hannibal, a centaur or a shepherd, the ship of Virgil or the barge of Cleopatra; it may have been the Wise Men of the East kneeling before the new-born Christ or the Conquistadores setting sail from Palos; the burning Land of Khem or the last glacier that gives upon the Polar Sea; the cactus flower upon the slopes of Chimborazo or the Breton heather; an urn of carven ivory or a Renaissance rapier with the Borgian crest; an Oriental warrior, exotically gorgeous, or the grey and lonely painter of the Sistine spending titanic efforts upon the struggle with rebellious matter—whatever it may have been, so piercing was his vision, so perfect the art with which he envisaged it in verse, that henceforth it lives forever on the printed page.

So powerfully did his imagination, when emotionally excited, react to the stimuli which inflamed it that each poem seems to quiver with the unique individuality of that which it portrays. The polish of his workmanship, the splendor of his expression, the reverberant chords and melodious cadences are not the sonnet's *raison d'être* but the method by which his potential energy re-created in poetry those objects, seen in the radiant vistas of his dreams—dreams which had become for him centers of

intense and vibrant life. Hence to say, as has M. René Lalou, that “Heredia’s sovereign mastery consists in transforming the mobile into immobility, in fixing it in an attitude,” is to miss the inner life of his verse. Beneath the forms which he wrought in words, as a sculptor might have in bronze or marble, there are pulsations such as the eye of Rodin detected in those Attic fragments which to him possessed a life beyond that of the flesh. When most marmoreal they still are veined with blood.

Nor is the moment of the Heredian sonnet one isolated in the stream of time or lifted from it. The sense of the past possessed the poet in many of his dreams. He roamed through Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance at will, with that familiarity which only love and comprehension can beget. There he breathed the air of immortality. But aside from this condition of his art, there are few of his sonnets which do not depict in their action the prolongation of some past event or deed of which the future also is foreshadowed. His protagonists are not transfixed in rigid poses but enact scenes in a continuity often thrillingly dramatic. To imply that their essential quality is static argues a superficial reading. Even when of a meditative or reflective cast they are penetrated with sentience. Beneath Olympian contours and postures classically restrained lurk passions, fevers and insatiable desires.

The great sonnet sequences of literature begin in the *trecento* with that in which Petrarch sang of Laura—the archetype of all those which have succeeded it; for while still earlier Dante had sung Beatrice, her celebration in the later *terza rima* of the “Divina Commedia” so overshadowed his sonnets that for centuries they remained little known. Next in chronological order came Ronsard’s “Book of Loves,” of the sixteenth century, for the sonnets of Michael Angelo, though antedating them in composition, were not printed until almost a century later. Shakespeare’s, with whose key he may or may not have unlocked his heart, are of the dawn of the seventeenth. The eighteenth was the age of prose in heroic couplets, and while previous to the nineteenth Wordsworth wrote his early poems it was not until subsequent to its opening that he found himself in the verse-form that was to prove his most congenial medium of expression. Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s “Sonnets from the Portuguese” belong to the mid-nineteenth century, as does George Meredith’s “Modern Love,” if we grant it a place in such company, for in form it departs from the strict sonnet structure by an expansion of two lines. Rossetti’s “House of Life” came out in 1881, while the sonnets of Longfellow, America’s one contribution to the major works of poetic art in this genre, were not collected for separate publication until after his death in 1882. *The Trophies* is, therefore, the last in date of all the group

for since its appearance no book of sonnets in any language, although some memorable ones have been published, ranks with those above-named in eminence.

Petrarch, Dante, Ronsard, Shakespeare, Michael Angelo, Mrs. Browning, Meredith, Rossetti—all united in using the sonnet as the vehicle for a *confessio amantis*, an instrument touched to give out the rhythmic record of inner experiences whose impassioned utterance they could not repress. Wordsworth employed it for the enunciation of that creed of nature-worship blent with a moralized philosophy so peculiarly and personally his own; while to Longfellow it afforded an ideal vessel into which to pour the pellucid current of his memories and meditations.

Though he paid his homage to Petrarch and Ronsard upon two of the most exquisite pages of *The Trophies*, from all these models Heredia departed. To “make a pageant of his bleeding heart,” or in the market place avow the inmost secrets of his soul, his temperament and his artistic convictions alike forbade. Nor was ethics nor philosophy to him a function of the poet’s art save as by implication it might teach them. On the contrary, he would have been at one with Remy de Gourmont in declaring that “Life is a series of movements of which the lines interlace, forming a design. Is it harmonious? That is the whole of morality.” While with Joubert he would have held that the poet, more intelligent than the philosopher, in his search for beauty discovers deeper things than does the savant in his quest for truth.

Looking without rather than within, it remained for him to widen the range of his chosen form of verse beyond anything else previously attempted. For his themes he took the wonder and splendor of the visible world, illumined by the deeds and dreams of man—the heroism and pathos of existence, the glamor of myth and fable, the sagas of antique demigods or medieval adventurers, the pomps of courts or rustic charms of field and garden, the enchantment of art, the solace of the life of letters, the immortality of beauty and the divinity of love. Escaping from the prison-house of introspection, in the outer world he found a freedom which preserved him from monotony and, by allowing him complete liberty in the choice of materials and their handling, enabled him to create something unprecedented and unique. Of purpose consistently objective, only at rare intervals does he return upon himself, as it were by accident rather than design and thus only betraying, behind the artist, the man who has loved and suffered, aspired, attempted and achieved.

And here, perhaps, is the most appropriate interval in which to examine the contention, which has more than once been made, that Heredia in the scheme of *The Trophies*, has imitated Victor Hugo’s “Legend of the Ages,”

endeavoring in the sonnet form to emulate what the older and still more illustrious poet had accomplished by the employment of almost every metrical device. A critical comparison renders it surprising that such an assertion ever should be made. The "Legend" has been well described as "a sort of cyclic poem inspired by faith in infinite progress and of which man is the hero." This last great poetic testament of Romanticism, an immense Gothic edifice in verse whose unity comprehends what is in effect a chaos of form and thought, a bewildering complex of idea and utterance, is intended as an allegorical depiction of humanity's slow and struggling ascension toward the light. *The Trophies* is no such performance. Its scheme is cyclical in part only and this feature was obviously an afterthought, as was that of Balzac in his arrangement of the "Comédie Humaine." As, in the passage of thirty years, the body of Heredia's sonnets gradually accumulated, owing their inspiration to sources extremely diverse, he perceived that for publication in a single volume a semi-cyclic grouping would be more effective than any other. His sole object, however, had been the creation of beauty and for his readers he wished only the emotion of perceiving it. Thus he gave his poems to the world, not as a social evangel but a work of art. The intrinsic difference between the "Legend" and *The Trophies* could not better be expressed than by describing the former, in both conception and execution, as humanitarian, the latter as humanistic. The two principles can be, and in this instance are, worlds apart.

If *The Trophies* must be likened to anything that preceded it, the volume most fitly to be chosen is the "Enamels and Cameos" of Gautier, dating as far back as 1852. Study of these poems is persuasive of their influence upon Heredia, but this he developed in a poetry so different as to make of it a new creation. Gautier's work, a landmark in the evolution of modern literature, is a book of lyrics in many keys which without exception abjure the Alexandrine and the "grand manner," while it does not include a single poem in the sonnet form, in which respects it is conspicuously different from *The Trophies*. But in its closing stanzas was enunciated the gospel of "Art for art's sake" in lines of such force and beauty that they became one of the most potent esthetic influences of the nineteenth century. In the early stages of his career Heredia recognized Gautier as a master and accepted with enthusiasm his canon of art, yet in his own practice exhibited neither servility nor an imitative tendency, utilizing for new and independent purposes the lessons that the older man had to teach, but going no farther in that direction. As we shall presently see, the real master of Heredia was neither Hugo nor Gautier, but another and a quite different poet.

To the great sonnet-masters that had preceded him, Heredia's debt is even smaller. He suggests neither the honeyed sweetness of Petrarch, the self-abasement of Dante, the rugged, undisciplined speech of Michael Angelo, the troubadour touch of Ronsard, the delight in word-play and antithesis of Shakespeare, the slow-moving serenity of Wordsworth, the surging, throbbing phrase of Mrs. Browning, the feverish neurosis of Meredith, the undulating, echoing, voluptuous cadences of Rossetti nor the melodious suavety of Longfellow. The secret of his style, like those of all unique ones, transcends laboratory analysis. It may, however, be said, that nowhere else in modern poetry can there be found so consummate a combination of verbal mastery, sonorous rhythm, clarity of thought, force and vigor of expression, pictorial power, imaginative evocation and technical virtuosity.

The ultimate triumph is the perfection of tonality achieved in every sonnet. There are few great poems, even brief ones, in which the sensitive reader cannot detect here a line, there a word or phrase, in which the poet has fallen short of pure felicity. The parts may be greater than the whole, or, conversely, the details inferior to the general effect. There are breaks, lapses, hesitations, moments in which the inspiration flags or the expression falters. With Heredia no such shortcomings disturb us. Everything is so coordinated, equalized and sustained that the impression is invariably that of something triumphantly rounded and complete.

The twin temptations of the sonneteer, from the time when the verse-form first became a recognized poetic organism, have been, on the one hand, to attempt a subject too large for his structural limitations, leaving him at the end to take refuge in obscurity; and, upon the other, to depend for his success upon some single splendid line or couplet to which all else is subordinated. Many famous sonnets owe their places in the anthologies to some sudden flash of light or spot of color, isolated thought or profound intuition, while otherwise they sink to lower levels. Heredia's architectonic is differently conceived and carried out. He offers us no mediocre octaves atoned for by marvelous sestets, no feeble openings offset by glorious final lines, no wavering designs, no pictures whose obscurity is only here and there illumined by shafts of light, no amorphous conceptions, no crude ideas rhetorically disguised. Beneath their grandeur of style, their sometimes elaborate ornamentation, *The Trophies* are simple with the simplicity of truly great art. This has misled an English critic, Professor Saintsbury, into stigmatizing them as "exquisite but empty," he having failed to perceive, perhaps through temperamental inability, that despite their directness they are so packed with meaning that there is never a superfluous word. Their

verbal transparency has not been gained at the expense of sinew or density of texture, their substance sacrificed for superficial grace.

The materials as well as the methods of Heredia have not failed to exercise the critical expertness, the attempts to trace his origins having been carried to fantastic lengths. French poetry has been ransacked in the effort to discover instances in which his rhymes, often so striking and so unexpected, had been anticipated. His vocabulary has been analyzed and itemized and his utilization of proper names dwelt particularly upon. These names he introduces much as a painter "spots" his canvas with flecks of brilliant color, loving them for their picturesque linear qualities and the tonal relief they provide from the uniformity of a purely verbal orchestration. None of his sonnets more strikingly illustrates this than that entitled "A Name" which he did not insert in *The Trophies*, though it was written long prior to the appearance of that volume. Just why it is difficult to surmise, for he himself liked it so well that, in manuscript form, he dedicated it to Théophile Gautier. In his turn, Gautier greatly admired it, going so far as to characterize the final line,

Alonso Hernandez de Puertocarrero,

as the most beautiful in the French language, whereupon François Coppée is said to have responded maliciously: "You should rather say, in the language of Spain!" Which brings us to a curious circumstance, most significant in any consideration of Heredia's art.

This marvelous master of the French tongue, who evoked from it nuances and reverberations hitherto unheard and unsuspected, was not a son of France by birth and only in the latter years of his life became one by adoption. Of Spanish ancestry paternally, his diction owes much to his familiarity from birth with the stateliest and most sonorous of modern languages, which, like the French, is of Latin derivation. Equal facility in both enabled him to interpenetrate the one with the spirit of the other, but so subtly that it remains always a latent and never a dominant trait of his style. Again, only a master of Latin, as well as a master and lover of Greek, could have composed the opening cycles of *The Trophies*. No other modern poet has so closely approached the majestic rhythms of the great Romans and only André Chénier has so beautifully exemplified the affinity between the Hellenic and the Gallic genius.

What an American poet has called "proud words" Heredia uses habitually with the grace of one to whom they are a natural idiom, not a rhetorical device. In this regard he has been compared to Pindar, despite the

vast difference between the sonnet and the ode. True, he attempts no such soaring flights as the celebrator of the victors of Olympia and Pytho, but neither does he perpetrate any of the excesses of the Theban bard, nor upon any occasion make ostentatious display of his erudition. The entire text of *The Trophies* contains few words that any French lexicon not unduly abridged fails to define. Many of Heredia's finest lines are so simply worded and so naturally phrased that a foreigner without a profound knowledge of the language can read him with less difficulty than other modern French poets whose range is not only narrower but whose vocabularies are more limited. He aims invariably at clearness of expression, directness and intelligibility. With an artist's appreciation of *chiaroscuro*, which he uses upon occasion with intense effect, what he presents to us he preferably bathes in light. He would reveal, not mystify. His verbal music never degenerates into mere meaningless bravura, nor, dissolving into ambiguity, leaves us as it were suspended in mid-air, unable to penetrate his intention. This characteristic, present throughout his work, has aroused the antagonism of those critics who contend that true poetry, existing only in the undefined, the mysterious and the vague, spurns exactitude in its forms, hues and ideation. But amid the waste land of latter-day lyricism, palpitant with nebulosity and deliberately cryptic, a sonnet by Heredia, in its clarity, firmness of fibre and purity of outline rises upon us like one of those columns which tower above the desert at Timgad or Tebessa.

To-day only pedantry still anxiously concerns itself, in the consideration of a poet, with inquiredos regarding his "originality," with whether or not he is "derivative" and whether, in the process of creation, he chooses to traffic with the crude and raw, or, taking what has already been refined for use, transforms it by his touch into something new and, henceforth, his own. Art, which has never so perturbed itself, since Homer wove into his epics the materials provided by generations of nameless predecessors, remains indifferent, knowing that originality is only a method of handling; there being, save that, "nothing new under the sun." For art, poetry exists in and of itself, regardless of what may have evoked it. While they may be of great interest and their study an instructive one to the analyst, its sources are relatively unimportant in comparison with what they have inspired.

Many of Heredia's subjects are as old as poesy itself, but none of them was ever before fashioned into just such poems as he made about them. For thousands of years Hercules and the Centaurs, Perseus and Andromeda, Jason and Medea, Bacchus and Ariadne, had been the themes of verses—yet he succeeded in composing new ones more beautiful than anything surviving from antiquity. When he expands a motif from the Anthology or

an epigram from Martial into a sonnet he has added something to “the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome.” A canvas by Gustave Moreau or Theodore Chassériau becomes more gem-like or suavely plastic after he has struck the chord which its harmonies awakes. In his “Samurai” and “Daimio” he has enriched poetry with equivalents of the *ukiyo*e of Harunobu and Hokusai, painting pictures of the “floating world” of Old Japan which, Lafcadio Hearn has testified, no other western artist has approached. The traditions of his house and his own memories of the Caribbean he weaves into an epopee of the Spanish Main more vivid than anything to be found in the pages of the chroniclers. In the “Vision of Khem” he first calls up modern Egypt, asleep beneath the blazing sun of noon, then with a wave of his wand transforms it into a moonlit pageant in which its ancient beasts and peoples, kings and deities, once more alive, descending from their granite tombs defile before us. Turning direct to nature, he dives beneath the sea to paint in iridescent hues a coral reef through which a great fish gleams and glides; or, placing to his ear a shell long cradled by the waves, hears murmured there his own heart’s stormy secret. Ascending Andean heights he witnesses the blossoming of the century flower, and, though separated from his native isle by the Atlantic’s breadth, upon its breeze inhales the odor of the Cuban roses. Traversing the sombre Breton moors, where menhirs rise and elves and demons dwell, he hears through the misty twilight the chime of the Angelus mingling with the far boom of the surf and coming out at last upon some black cape lashed by breakers, is seized by the vertiginous delirium of space. From the ancestral couch proceeds the whole cycle of human existence, of which he dreams, its draperies wrapped about him. The songs of the vintagers stir in his blood the Bacchic fervor of old Naxos, and as he watches the peasant lad swimming his wild stallion in the surf, gilded by sun and spray, they seem some bronze by Myron come to life.

It is always life, life in its infinite variety, which he loves and upon which he lavishes the treasures of his art—for art, he has perceived, is the most perfect and enduring thing which life can leave behind it upon earth. And after that? After, there will be the Life of the Dead, in which, borne along enchanted ways from star to star and mounting to the sun, the soul of the singer shall be united to those of the Great of Song in immortality.

The lives of few great poets were outwardly less eventful than that of José-Maria de Heredia, yet its quiet record is indispensable to the proper appreciation of his works.

A native of Cuba, he was born November 22, 1842, at "La Fortuna," the coffee-plantation of his father, Don Domingo de Heredia, near the city of Guantanamo, province of Santiago. No modern poet has sprung from an ancestry more illustrious, the male line tracing directly back to the Conquistador, Don Pedro de Heredia (circa 1475-1552); while as early as 1376 a member of the family, Don Juan Fernando de Heredia, had been Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes, trusted friend and minister of Pope Innocent VI., governor of Avignon (then the seat of the Papal Court) and of the Comtat Venaissin, and Papal Legate in turn to King Edward III. of England and King Philip VI. of France. When, at the battle of Crécy, fought in 1346 between the French and the English, commanded by these two sovereigns, the horse of Philip was killed under him, his life was saved by the Spanish grandee. And when, in 1376, the long-exiled Papacy returned in triumph from Avignon to Rome, it was Don Juan Fernando de Heredia who rode, appareled in full armor, just before the Holy Father, bearing the banner of the Church. Going soon after to Rhodes as Grand Master of the Knights, he displayed great vigor in the wars fought by them against the Turks, but, upon one occasion, while leading an expedition into Greece, was ambuscaded near Corinth and taken prisoner. His Order offered, as his ransom, the seaport of Patras, which he himself had captured from the Pagans, but when this was made known to him he refused his freedom upon such terms. Loaded with chains and treated as a slave, during a lengthy captivity he had, says an old historian, ample opportunity to meditate upon the vanity of human grandeur—a passage in his fortunes which recalls a similar one in those of Cervantes. Ransomed at length by the payment of an immense sum by his family, it was not until 1399 that, in his extreme old age, he died while voyaging from Rhodes to Avignon, the frame that had endured so much being interred in the soil of his native Aragon, from one of whose most ancient houses he had come.

Don Pedro de Heredia, the Conquistador, also Aragonese by birth, fought in his youth in the Italian wars of Spain under the "Great Captain," Gonsalvo de Cordova. Returning to his native land, he received in a duel that facial mutilation which in after years caused his countenance to strike terror among savage foes in another hemisphere. When, in the wake of Columbus, the latter's brother Bartolomeo headed an expedition to the New World, Don Pedro de Heredia was among his companions. There he saw extensive service, notably as lieutenant to Vadillo, governor of Santa Marta,

one of the principal seats of the government of Spain upon the main land of South America, its site being that of the modern city of the same name in the republic of Colombia. Three decades, crowded with adventurous exploits, elapsed ere he returned to Spain in 1529, with a rich treasure of gold and other booty. The next three years were spent in obtaining the royal sanction for an expedition of his own and the making ready to recross the Atlantic. Named adelantado, or governor, of Nueva Andalucia (now north-western Colombia) in letters patent granted by Charles V., at his own expense he raised and equipped a force of one hundred and fifty men, loaded his ship with arms and munitions of war, food supplies and implements of colonization and sailed from Cadiz in 1532, reaching his new principality—for such in effect it was—in January, 1533.

There his first act was to found his capital, the city of Cartagena de las Indias, or New Carthage, so named in honor of his birthplace, the Aragonese Cartagena. Twenty years of achievement and vicissitude yet remained to him, during which he sustained incredible toils and hardships and, like his ancestor, Don Juan Fernando, all the extremes of fortune. Their most graphic narration in English is that from the pen of R. B. Cunninghame Graham in his picturesque and vivid volume, “Cartagena and the Banks of the Sinu,” preceding whose opening chapter he has set that sonnet from *The Trophies* in which the descendant of its founder apostrophizes with sombre eloquence the

Sad city, of old time the Ocean’s queen!

None of the Conquistadores had a career in which triumphs and defeats alternated more continuously, none had a nobler soul, a higher courage, a more indomitable will, than Don Pedro. Twice, in 1537 and again in 1548, he found it necessary to return to Spain to defend himself from the accusations of envious rivals, each time refuting them and retaining his dignities and the royal favour. Twenty years of rule, discovery and conquest had passed since the founding of his city when, once again threatened with supplantation there, for the third time he took ship for Spain. The passage, from the outset, was tempestuous, and, after touching at Havana, just as he was making port at Cadiz his galleon was shipwrecked. “A sudden hurricane,” says the old chronicler, “a tempest similar to those which had pursued Don Pedro throughout his life, overwhelmed the ship and sank her only a cable’s length from land. The crew all perished in the waves. Heredia, left alive upon the wreck, swam strongly for the shore. Those standing on the beach thought him in safety when, a great billow dashing him upon the rocks, his body was swept back to sea. His corpse was never found, and so he died as he had lived, struggling with destiny.”

The treasure accumulated by Don Pedro de Heredia during his explorations and conquests along the Spanish Main was so immense, so fabulous in amount, as to have been little if any inferior to that taken by Cortez in Mexico or by Pizarro in Peru, and enough of it remained in the possession of his family to make it for many generations one of the richest in the Spanish Indies. Among his possessions had been the province of Bani, in the island of San Domingo, and thither his son, Don Domingo, emigrated from Cartagena and took up his permanent residence. It was three hundred years after Don Pedro's stormy passage from this world that another Don Domingo was born there, who became the father of José-Maria de Heredia, destined to celebrate the deeds of his ancestors in incomparable verse.

That division of his sonnets, in the cycle devoted to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, entitled, "The Conquistadores," and the final narrative poem closing *The Trophies*, entitled, "The Conquerors of Gold," constitute the poet's celebration of the glory of his ancestors and the period in which they flourished. The eight sonnets comprising the group first-named are held by many critics and admirers of Heredia to embody his finest work and the opening one, which gives its title to the entire octave, is often cited as the single sonnet which most perfectly exemplifies both his mastery of the form and his verbal virtuosity. It is somewhat remarkable, however, that so little attention, in comparison, has been bestowed upon the long narrative poem, Heredia's most sustained effort, his largest and in many respects most ambitious canvas and one in which he attained some of his most superb effects.

In his prefatory epistle to Leconte de Lisle, Heredia speaks of *The Trophies* as in effect but a fragment of what he had hoped to offer to the world. The reference here is undoubtedly to "The Conquerors of Gold." Originally intended as only the prelude to an epic poem, planned on the grand scale, it was first published in the *Parnasse contemporain* of 1869 under the title: "The Downfall of Atahualpa. Prologue: The Conquerors of Gold." The poet then intended to relate the entire story of Pizarro's conquest of Peru in a series of similar sections, but the éclat with which his sonnets, upon their appearance here and there, were greeted caused him to abandon the project and confine his farther poems deriving their inspiration from this epoch to that form. Leconte de Lisle besought him to complete the Peruvian epic as he had first conceived it, repeatedly urging him to do so, but without avail. Whether Heredia shrank from the vast labor that such a work would entail, or felt that it would be impossible to sustain so long a poem at the same pitch of magnificence as marked the prelude, can only be surmised. As it stands, it is one of the most glorious narrative poems in the French

language, containing passages of incomparable splendor and from the first line to the last of its six cantos moving with a vigor and ease of continuity truly epical. It is interesting to know that aside from his studies in the old chronicles, his sources for the poem were derived from the American writers Prescott and Irving, the former's two histories of the conquests of Mexico and Peru and the latter's lives of Columbus and of his companions, being works for which he entertained the highest admiration.

Here also may be mentioned the three narrative poems intervening between the sonnets and the Peruvian epic fragment in *The Trophies*, as the most quintessentially Spanish, in their inspiration and feeling, of all Heredia's compositions. Entitled respectively, "The Clasp of Hands," "The Revenge of Diego Laynez" and "The Triumph of the Cid" and assembled under the general caption of "Romancero," here is Heredia's version of three episodes in the career of the Cid as he found them narrated in the ancient Spanish popular songs and stories. Their hero, a figure that has fascinated so many French poets, from Corneille, three centuries ago, to the present, was one to whom Heredia's Spanish blood naturally thrilled, but his three poems devoted to him have been the least appealing portion of *The Trophies*. Written in *terza rima*, which, like Leconte de Lisle he handles with mastery, the first two are so gruesome in theme that they do not fall far short of repelling the reader. The third, however, much more grateful in subject, is like a piece of ancient arras in its richness of effect, which the poet has heightened by many telling touches.

That pride of race is written large over two of the most splendid sections of *The Trophies* cannot be considered strange. Among the contemporaries of its author were French poets of renown, claimants of ancient and noble lineages, imaginative rather than attested, but his own was both direct and indisputable. The hereditary influence of Spain, the Spain of both the Old World and the New, was a potent force in his endowment—so much so that chauvinistic critics have insisted that while using the French language he was, as poet and artist, intrinsically Spanish; an exaggeration illustrative of the license which critics will permit themselves.

The author of *The Trophies* was the son of his fathers, but he had a mother as well, from whom he received a different but as strongly racial heritage. Born Louise Girard, she descended from that Girard d'Ouille, seigneur des Trois Rivières, who under Louis XV. had been president of the parliament of Normandy. A branch of his family had emigrated to San Domingo and thence, when the "black rebellion" led by Toussaint l'Ouverture broke out, to Cuba—as did, at the same time, the parents of Don Domingo de Heredia, whom she was to marry (his second wife) in 1830.

Their son the poet, born as we have seen in 1842, twelve years after their union, was not, however, the first poet of his house and name. An elder José-Maria de Heredia, son of a brother of Don Domingo, had been born at Santiago in 1803. His poetic talent developed early, as did his patriotic enthusiasm. When only twenty he was banished from Cuba for participating in an abortive uprising and fled to New York. There he was made welcome by its literati of that day and there, during a three-year sojourn in the United States, published the volume of poems which, received at the time with high praise, remains his title to fame. Among its contents was "The Storm," so much admired by William Cullen Bryant that he translated it into English and always included it in the authorized editions of his works, while other translations from the same volume were later on made by Longfellow. The "Ode to Niagara," inspired by a visit to the great waterfall, was considered the masterpiece of the young poet, who died in Mexico in 1839, still an exile but already acclaimed the laureate of Latin America. This position he still holds and his centenary in 1903 was the occasion of distinguished honors to his memory throughout the Spanish-American literary world. It was for this celebration that his cousin and namesake, born three years subsequent to his death and destined to a fame far wider, composed the three memorial sonnets, his only poems in the Spanish tongue.

The son of Domingo de Heredia and Louise Girard, in whose veins the blood of Aragonese hidalgos and Conquistadores was mixed with that of Norse vikings and the French noblesse, claimed two languages and cultures as his birthright. Spanish, he tells us, was his childhood's speech; but, his father dying when he was seven years of age—like his ancestors Don Juan Fernando and Don Pedro, Don Domingo died at sea, and within sight of the Old World, whither he was voyaging from the New—his education and the formation of his character devolved upon his mother, a woman whose fitness for that responsibility was to be well approved by the result, one of whose tokens was the filial love so beautifully expressed in the dedication of *The Trophies*.

Despite her Creole birth, girlhood and married life, Louise Girard de Heredia was French to her marrow in temperament and tastes. It was but natural, therefore, that at the age of nine, in 1851, the young José-Maria should quit his native isle for France, where as the pupil of Nicolas Fauvelle he entered the college of Saint-Vincent at Senlis; which he quitted, with his bachelor's degree, in November, 1858, having but just completed his sixteenth year. His return to Cuba followed immediately and we may imagine with what joy the mother gathered to her heart this son, her youngest-born, after the long separation. He came preceded by the

assurances of his mentor that he had been an earnest student, with a sincere love of learning and unmistakably possessing the literary gift.

What should be made of him Mme. de Heredia seems to have been somewhat undecided. The first impulse was that he should, like his father, become a coffee-planter. But the youth felt no call to that vocation, his ambitions turning toward one of the learned professions. . . . It should be, then, the law. . . . In preparation for it a year was spent at the University of Havana, but the time was wasted. The French Romantics had captured the boy's imagination, while the poetic fame of his dead cousin and namesake shone luminous before him. Verses, not theses, occupied his pen and in fancy he was living over the ancestral glories of the great Don Pedro. His mother, a fond one, had also a maternal prescience and when he begged to be delivered from a future that could not be happy, she yielded and consented to his return to France. Cuba, while he never ceased to love it, he had found a "spiritual desert," Havana insupportable. On April 15, 1861, accompanied by his mother he sailed away from them forever.

Arrived in Paris, he enrolled at the University, making a final and conscientious effort to complete his legal education and, in August, 1862, took his degree. But by December he had matriculated at the *École des Chartes* for the purpose of training himself as an archivist. At last his feet were set in the paths he would follow.

It was at a decisive moment that this youth of twenty so inconspicuously made his *début* upon the scene in literary Paris. New winds were blowing, new movements forming. Romanticism had passed into history, though its leaders, Hugo and Dumas, Lamartine, Vigny and Gautier still remained in the foreground. Their successors, for the most part hailing Hugo as their model and master, as they gathered strength pursued far different ways. The first group to attain an independent individuality of their own in poetry were the Parnassians, and it was behind Leconte de Lisle that they aligned themselves. His first published volume, *Poèmes Antiques*, dated 1853, was the bible of the new faith, which his *Poèmes Barbares*, of 1859, fortified and made militant. To him the young Cuban turned, for like himself he was not a native son of France but was born beneath the sun of the tropics, while in his principles of art the budding poet from the Antilles found the guidance which he sought.

From this allegiance Heredia never swerved and when, over thirty years later he at last collected his poems for publication in the volume whose fame has become world-wide, while dedicating it to the memory of his mother it was to Leconte de Lisle that he addressed the prefatory epistle, avowing himself his "well-beloved disciple." The words in which this declaration was

made are still memorable. "You have," he exclaimed, "taught the young devotees of the Muse, with laws and subtle secrets of the art, the love of pure poetry and the golden tongue of France. I, more than any other, am your debtor. . . . It is to please you that I have gathered together my scattered poems; you have assured me that this volume, even though in part incomplete, will, nevertheless, preserve in the eyes of the indulgent reader something of the noble order of which I have dreamed. Such as it is, I offer it to you."

The gesture of homage, so sincere and unreserved, was one also eminently appropriate. Leconte de Lisle was the true master of Heredia, although, as no great poet but has felt and in various ways revealed the influence of more than one great predecessor, he derives also from others. From Hugo, though we have declared emphatically that *The Trophies* is not an imitation of the "Legend of the Ages." From Gautier, also, as has been indicated. From Banville, too, that marvelous technician, most inexhaustibly resourceful of all makers of rhymes. From André Chénier, who first perhaps disclosed to him the spell of antiquity, also powerfully working upon his imagination through the prose of Ménard and Decharme. It was Chénier who most potently interpreted the Greek spirit to modern France. All the Romantics had drunk at the fountain, but none of them had lingered there. Not until the advent of Leconte de Lisle was it proclaimed the one supreme, perennial source. Without antiquity he could never have shaped the form nor permeated it with the spirit which made of his poetry a new dispensation. His was no superficial paganism but one pervasive and profound. A priest of absolute beauty, his creed was the repression of self in the presence of the universe, instead of, romantic-wise, its use as a sounding-board for the loquacious ego. The nobility of his ideal, the dignity and magnificence of its embodiments, his largeness of utterance, piercing vision and intellectual impact—all combined to point the way to the neophyte from the Caribbean, to win him insensibly to the attitude toward art which they expressed and to mould him, at a plastic moment, into the poet that he became. But at one point the disciple escaped the master. The pessimism of Leconte de Lisle, so omnipresent throughout his work, was powerless to infect with its persuasive poison the robust spirit whose forbears had never laid down their arms in the struggle.

The first published sonnet of Heredia, "The Death of Agamemnon," dating in his twentieth year, is not only upon a classical subject but betrays thus early the influence of his chosen master as well as his own native predilections. He had first encountered the poetry of Leconte de Lisle in the *Antiques*, three years before, and in his own words the book had been to him

“a revelation.” His experiments with the sonnet had, however, begun quite differently. “To a Fountain of the Indies,” never published during his lifetime, had been composed in Cuba, when he was not yet eighteen. For a mere lad it discloses a surprising fluency and grace of style, as well as management of the stanzaic structure, but in both feeling and phraseology it is essentially lyrical and, suggestive of Lamartine or Musset, has nothing in common with his later work. The difference between it and the “Agamemnon” is so marked and in every way so intrinsic as to emphasize the long way he had traveled in two years, as well as the guide he had followed.

Heredia’s début as a poet was made in the memorable “Conférence of La Bruyère” for 1861-62, to which he contributed a group of five lyrics in various metres and two sonnets, the “Agamemnon” and “Heliotrope,” neither of which he later on included in *The Trophies*. In May, 1863, to the *Revue Française*, he next contributed four sonnets, two of them on Greek subjects, the “Triumph of Bacchus” (afterward recast and inserted in *The Trophies* as “Ariadne”) and “Pan”; and a double sonnet, “The Lily,” which he never republished. The entire group was formally dedicated to Leconte de Lisle. Thereafter, while he ranged through his entire repertoire of subjects as *The Trophies* gradually took shape, the classical ones, continuously recurring, resemble the leading motives in a polyphonic orchestration. Nor could anything be in its way more significant than the fact that his last poem, dated but a short time before his death and published posthumously, “The Vision of Ajax,” is not only Greek in theme but supremely Greek in feeling. Yet this fascination with the pagan world produced in him no disgust for modernity. He found earth still beautiful and art itself, he perceived, need be confined to no period nor philosophy of life, as it transcends all limitations.

At twenty we find the young poet definitely launched upon the literary career. Welcomed to the salons, the cénacles and the sanctums where intellectual and artistic Paris congregated, his was a figure of distinction even among those of such rising stars as Verlaine, Mallarmé, Coppeé, Catulle Mendès, Anatole France, Daudet, Sully-Prudhomme, Villiers de l’Isle Adam, Louis Bouilhet, Armand Sylvestre, Albert Glatigny, Émile Zola, to name only a few of the young men of talent as yet unknown but all destined to become famous. Musset was dead, Vigny dying, remote in his tower of ivory, Baudelaire lapsing into the living death of his last years. Hugo, Dumas, Merimée, Lamartine, George Sand, Gautier, Flaubert, Taine, the Goncourts, Renan, Ste.-Beuve, Michelet, Sarcey, Scherer, sat in the seats of the mighty, acknowledged masters, dispensing praise or blame, now extending, now withholding the helping hand and making or thwarting the

futures of aspiring writers. To them all the scion of the Conquistadores seemed a charming yet strong personality whose initial offerings were rich with promise.

His “arrival,” the event that was to lift him definitely above the poetic sky-line, was not long deferred. In 1866 Alphonse Lemerre, the publisher, to encourage the “new poetry,” brought out a volume, now historic, to which he gave the title, “Parnassus of To-day: A Collection of New Poems” (*Le Parnasse contemporain, recueil de vers nouveaux*). An anthology selected from the productions of the group which Leconte de Lisle had gathered about him, the salient feature was a sestet of sonnets by Heredia of such beauty as to overshadow the rest of its contents. It was from the title of this volume, rather idly chosen, that the epithet, “Parnassian,” as applied to the school of poetry to which its contributors belonged, was derived. The first true school subsequent to the Romantics and intermediary between them and the Symbolists—and, just as some of them had begun as Romantics, so others later seceded to Symbolism—the credo of the Parnassians might be summed up in these watchwords: Concision of matter, precision of method, serenity of poise, perfection of technique, objectivity, the avoidance of the commonplace and the worship of beauty for its own sake. It was reserved for José-Maria de Heredia to become *primus inter pares* in a galaxy which no later constellation of French poets has eclipsed.

Still, three decades were to elapse before he at last offered to the world the unique and single volume which was to make his position indisputable. Throughout that period he remained content to contribute from time to time, and as a rule infrequently, to some anthology or favorite periodical, this slender outgiving of creative effort being diversified by translations of the old Spanish chronicles narrating the exploration and conquest of the New World, monuments of historical erudition and literary address. While the recurrent confusion of Cuban affairs had resulted in the loss of a considerable portion of the fortune of the Heredias, his own share of it was ample to free him from financial cares, to preserve him from turning out inferior work under economic pressure and to allow him quietly to pursue his studies, the composition of *The Trophies* and the cultivation of his love for art in all its forms. Anatole France, originally a Parnassian, has left this thumb-nail sketch of him in the 'seventies:

“Heredia. Thirty-two. Handsome, rich. A Spanish grandee. High-sounding and heroic. Writes better verses than Hugo.”

His home, for many years at No. 11 Rue Balzac, was of almost sumptuous affluence and there each Saturday gathered the Parisian “lions” of literature and art. His circle included not only the Parnassians, but

members of other groups, together with painters, sculptors, musicians, publicists and men of science. Alphonse Daudet and Paul Bourget, Taine, Renan, Hervieu, Hanotaux, Albert Samain and Henri de Régnier, Pierre Louÿ's, Jules Breton, Gounod and Saint-Saëns were among those who might be seen there, with visiting foreigners such as Wilde or D'Annunzio. While dispensing a mellow hospitality, the poet remained always personally something of the *grand seigneur*, a trait inborn and so simply natural as to escape any imputation of pose or aristocratic affectation. Heredia himself went into society but seldom, especially in his latter years, occasionally being encountered in the salon of Mme. Daudet, at the apartment of the Goncourts or the soirées of Albert Sorel. Possessed of a voice of great compass and sonority, peculiarly rich in timbre and an admirable speaker, he was often solicited to preside at some notable literary function or to extend to some distinguished foreigner the welcome of intellectual Paris. The discourses he pronounced upon such occasions, and most especially those delivered when he was admitted to the Académie Française and at the funeral of Leconte de Lisle, were memorable events.

It was Jules Lemaître who, some time previous to the appearance of *The Trophies*, characterized him, in a happy phrase, as "celebrated but unpublished," and when at last that volume came from the press the admiration and homage of which he had so long and as it were informally been the object, culminated in a triumph almost unprecedented. After his election to the Academy, the immediate sequel, he had only to preserve serenely the attitude of one in his own realm unconditionally "Conquistador." In 1896 he was officially recognized by the Government as France's foremost living poet, being then asked to compose the official poem of welcome to the Tsar and Tsarina of Russia when they visited Paris. Perhaps nothing could be more grotesque than the portrait of him sketched by Leon Daudet in his recent memoirs, in which that brilliant but intransigent son of a great father depicts the "last phase" of Heredia as that of a man saddened and embittered by a sense of sterility tantamount to failure; it being a complete *bouleversement* of the facts.

In 1901 he was nominated librarian of the Arsenal, one of the highest scholarly honors attainable in France, a post held before him by many eminent men of letters. The appointment involved his removal to the building in the Rue de Sully, where he and his family were obliged to accommodate themselves in quarters much more modest in size and appointments than those of the Rue Balzac. "But," said he, "while we roast in summer and freeze in winter, everything speaks of history and I love it."

Of him at this period Hilaire Belloc has sketched the following attractive portrait:

“Heredia in his person expressed the activity which impelled him, for he was strong, brown, erect, a rapid walker, and a man whose voice was perpetually modulated in resonant, powerful tones. In his last years, during his administration of the Library of the Arsenal, this vitality of his took on an aspect of good nature very charming and very fruitful. His organization of the place was thorough, his knowledge of the readers intimate. He refused the manuscripts of none, he advised, laughed and consoled. His criticism was sure. Several, notably Marcel Prévost, were launched by his authority. The same deep secularity of literary judgment which had permitted him to chastise and to perfect his impeccable sonnets into their final form permitted him also to hold up before his eyes, grasp, and judge the work of every other man.”

The Arsenal was the home of Heredia during the last four years of his life, with periodic sojourns in Brittany, for which he cherished an affection attested by the ten sonnets in the final section of *The Trophies*, grouped together under the heading of “The Sea of Brittany,” and containing some of his finest work. Of travel for its own sake he was never fond. As a youth he had visited Italy, returning for a second tour on his honeymoon. Spain, the land of his paternal ancestors, seems to have been the only other European country whose borders he crossed, with the exception of Belgium, while he never went back to Cuba after leaving it in 1861.

Despite his vigorous physique, never undermined by excesses such as have shortened the careers of many men of genius, Heredia did not long survive the attainment of his high fame. While Hugo became an octogenarian and Leconte de Lisle reached seventy-six, death came to him when he was still six weeks from celebrating his sixty-third birthday, upon October 2, 1905; he being at the time the guest of M. and Mme. Georges Itasse, at the château of Bourdonne, near Paris. His health had been visibly declining for over a year, but there was no similar decline of his poetical powers, his last sonnet, “The Vision of Ajax,” dated June 18, 1905, being among his chefs-d’œuvre. He had but recently finished a critical edition of the “Bucolics” of André Chénier, but left uncompleted a far more important undertaking—what was to have been the definitive edition of *The Trophies*, incorporating numerous sonnets previously excluded, together with others composed subsequent to its first publication. In accordance with his expressed wish, after funeral obsequies at the Arsenal, he was, with the simplest ceremonies, interred beside his mother, whose life had closed in 1877, in the cemetery of Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours, at Rouen.

In 1867, being then twenty-four, Heredia had espoused Mlle. Louise-Cécile Despaigne, who, with three daughters, born of their union, survived him. Mme. de Heredia died no longer ago than May, 1928, having attained the great age of eighty-eight and long been the center of a circle in which she was profoundly loved and admired. The eldest daughter, Hélène, married first the novelist and historian Maurice Maindron, and, after his death, M. René Doumic, of the Académie Française, the eminent littérateur and present editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in which celebrated magazine many of her father's sonnets first appeared. The second daughter, Marie, is the wife of M. Henri de Régnier, also of the Académie, who ranks among the foremost poets and prose writers of modern France. Mme. de Régnier, using the pen-name of "Gérard d'Houville," made a successful literary début before her father's death and is to-day among the most exquisite of French women poets, while she has also published several volumes of equally exquisite prose. The youngest of the three, Louise, became first the wife of the late Pierre Louÿs, chiseler of verses and tales of a Greek perfection of technique, and is now the Comtesse Gilbert de Voisins, wife of the distinguished novelist.

The Present Translation

The present translation is offered as an act of homage and an endeavor on the part of the translators to extend the appreciation of the poems of Heredia in English-speaking lands.

America has shown an interest in the poet and accorded him a recognition second only to that of France herself, a condition furthered by the fact that he was born almost within sight of its shores and has celebrated in his verse scenes and figures memorable in the epoch of its discovery and exploration. While several English critics have written of him, most notably Professor J. C. Bailey, Mr. Belloc and Sir Edmund Gosse, no effort has ever been made in England to translate him save in fugitive specimens; which renderings have been so ineffective that it may be said that his greatness, while conceded, is there a matter of hearsay rather than of comprehension.

As early as 1897, however, or only three years after the first publication of *The Trophies*, a translation of all the sonnets had appeared in the United States, subsequent to which there have been three others, including the present, and still another volume of selected ones. Many versions of chosen sonnets have been contributed to anthologies, magazines, etc. The late Maurice Francis Egan, distinguished as both a man of letters and a diplomat, prepared, also in 1897, a critical notice of Heredia for the Charles Dudley

Warner "Library of the World's Best Literature," to which he appended translations of ten sonnets.

It was Edward Robeson Taylor, sometime mayor of San Francisco, who, in the year above-named, brought out in that city the first complete translation of the sonnets made into any language. A second edition followed in 1898, a third in 1902 and a fourth and final one in 1906, each being revised and corrected in attempts at betterment. These versions, rhymed in every instance to correspond with the schemes of the originals, were the fruit of a pure enthusiasm and the most praiseworthy intention; but while the meaning of the text is given with accuracy, the poetical values present are negligible.

In 1900 the late Frank Sewall, a clergyman of Washington, D. C., came forward with a second version, printed in Boston, a beautiful little book, of choice format and typography and embellished with decorations designed expressly for it by the late Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, than whom America has produced no more accomplished ornamental draughtsman. The metrical form of this translation was a species of pedestrian blank verse. In 1910 the late Professor Henry Johnson, of Yale University, published, at the Yale University Press, a third rendering, also in blank verse, which in literary value excelled both its predecessors but was in effect a volume of poetic prose rather than of poetry. Devoid of rhyme, it does not suggest the verbal music without which Heredia is not Heredia, nor a sonnet a sonnet. This translation, it may here be noted, is unknown to Professor Ibrovac, whose bibliography, appended to his biography of Heredia (Paris: 1923), is indispensable to all students of *The Trophies*.

Each of these translations was published in a limited edition of a few hundred copies and has long been out of print, which fact, coupled with the desire to make accessible one conveying a truer impression of the original, in both form and spirit, has inspired the present attempt. The translators are, however, well aware that at best they can only approximate their ambition and if they have succeeded even to that extent, will feel that what they have to offer is not entirely unworthy.

The difficulties attending the translation, rather, the transubstantiation, of a French poem of unique beauty into an English poem of similar estate are infinite, aside from the critical contention that "poetry cannot be translated," a contention more sweeping than correct in view of the many examples to the contrary that exist. . . . The two languages differ from each other so radically as to have only superficial resemblances. French is compact, clean-cut, lucid and implicit with delicacies of tone and shade; English diffuse, wavering, cloudy and lacking in nuance. French turns easily upon itself,

describing graceful patterns in the most circumscribed spaces. English requires wide elbow-room and stumbles at the slightest provocation. French is rich in rhymes, English so poor that an unhackneyed one must almost be despaired of unless eccentric or baroque. Even in prose a smooth and flowing *traduction* from the tongue of Gaul into that of Albion is accomplished only by a process of expansion, a book of moderate size often gaining by thousands of words, as compression within the limits of the original results in crabbedness.

The sovereign quality of poetry being to excel prose in expressiveness and to do so with greater brevity, it follows that the translation of a French poem into an English one of identical structure and conventions but still more compact becomes peculiarly difficult. The French sonnet is composed of Alexandrines, or lines of twelve syllables, the English sonnet of pentameters, or lines of ten syllables. Hence within the rigid limit of the form, which Heredia respected inviolably, the translator must make shift with twenty-eight syllables less; whereas, could he have his way, that many more would not exceed his requirements. Despite the sumptuousness of Heredia's vocabulary, he uses of habit many monosyllabic words, lines frequently consisting almost exclusively of such vocables. The Alexandrine never having been naturalized in English metrics, the rendering of his sonnets in pentameters is obligatory—to attempt to do so in English Alexandrines would defeat the object of this volume, which has been to refashion *The Trophies* into authentic poems that shall have the effect of original creations native to the translators' language. Only one exception, among the sonnets, has been made to this rule: "A Name" having been done in the Alexandrine measure for the reason that one of its lines, consisting in its entirety of a proper name, cannot be condensed in any manner whatsoever, but must be introduced, *verbatim et literatim*, in its original form.

The compression imperative is made still more difficult because no poem by Heredia contains a particle of redundancy. Every line, every word in every line, and every syllable of every word represent the most scrupulous care and subtle artistry in their choice and combination—nothing other would have expressed the exact shade of meaning or verbal nuance which the poet desired to convey. As previously observed, Heredia never degenerates into empty sonority, nor atmosphere created at the expense of lucidity. Therefore no poet to-day deserves study more richly nor will more richly repay it. We live in a period when poetry seems well-nigh to have become invertebrate, to have lost firmness of texture, clearness of conception and economy of presentation and to have bartered its intellectual

dignity for an incoherent flux in which triviality of theme is matched by puerility of treatment. As a corrective of such tendencies nothing could be more salutary than verse so unflinchingly ordered and controlled, so clearly thought and firmly wrought and so melodiously breathed out as that of Heredia. Again we recall Joubert: "To finish and complete one's thought!—how long it takes, how rare it is, what an immense delight! The condition of soul from which it springs communicates itself to other souls and conveys to them its own repose." It required thirty years for the creation of *The Trophies*, but it is a thing so finished and complete that in its presence we experience that delight and repose of soul which only such creations can inspire.

Soon after the first publication of *The Trophies*, one of the present translators made some experimental versions of selected sonnets which were printed in various publications at the time. He then contemplated a complete translation but the magnitude and difficulty of the task seemed such that the project was abandoned. The idea, nevertheless, continued to recur and the resolution to carry it out was taken when at length a collaborator was secured who brought to the work a similar enthusiasm, the result of long-standing admiration and study of the original text. Some four years have been spent in making the renderings herewith presented and in case the reader may desire some information about the system of translation pursued, an outline is as follows:

Of the official canon of one hundred and eighteen sonnets, half were allotted to each translator, who, working independently, made a version of each one assigned him, then submitted it to his collaborator for criticism and suggestion. A second complete set of renderings followed, incorporating these criticisms and suggestions, then a second interchange and still another revision. In this manner at least three draughts were made of every sonnet; while in some instances involving special difficulties, as many as six different ones were found necessary before the censorship could be passed. In the process it was discovered that two heads were better than one in the solution of many problems.

Heredia's range is so wide, the variety of his subjects and sources is so great, that in order to render his thought with exactness and to approximate his verbal style as closely as another language permits, familiarity with three different modern tongues and two ancient ones was imperative, together with a similar knowledge of their associated cultures throughout the entire scope of literature, art and history. Beyond this, points requiring special research continuously arose, of which neglect was impossible if either accuracy or felicity were aspired to. The resources of both public and private

libraries were drawn upon, hundreds of different works being consulted. Heredia did not parade his erudition, importing into his poems only enough of it to provide those elements and touches necessary to the dominant artistic effect, and its vast extent can be fully appreciated only when the entire body of his work is analyzed, the perfect manner in which it has been assimilated for the purposes of poetry becoming then beautifully apparent.

When Heredia collected his “scattered poems” for publication in *The Trophies*, as has been recorded, he excluded a number of sonnets previously printed, because for the most part they did not in structure conform to the Petrarchan canon which he had adopted. Subsequently he also published a number of others, while still others were left, completed, in manuscript, when he died. There were something over twenty of these, including the triptych written in Spanish for the centenary of his cousin. He had intended inserting a majority of them in the definitive edition which he did not live to complete and of them all none is without its own interest and beauty. As none of these poems has ever been translated, all being hitherto unknown to the English-reading public, they have been incorporated in the present volume, making its contents a complete corpus of Heredia’s published poems in the sonnet form. All but a few of these interpolations fit harmoniously into the various cycles of *The Trophies* and have there been inserted, a number of them in niches which the poet had himself indicated, the exceptions being given in an appended section. Each of these auxiliary sonnets is designated by the printing of its title in italics, in order that the integrity of the official canon be not confused. They have been translated from the texts as originally published in the *Parnasse contemporain*, etc., and from those appearing in the limited edition of the complete poems of Heredia published by Lemerre, in Paris, in 1924, in which all variorum readings have been meticulously collated. In translating several of these sonnets, it should be explained that they have been rhymed to conform to the Petrarchan canon, not to the *rimes croisées* of the originals. This was not “correcting Heredia,” a presumption which the translators would not entertain, but was in accordance with their plan of work—namely, to render French sonnets into correct and plastic English ones. On principle also they have not considered it imperative invariably to follow Heredia’s rhyme-schemes with absolute precision in all instances, so long as they did respect the structural laws of the Petrarchan sonnet in the English mode—their object being always and without exception to produce an English poem, not merely a translation of a French one. It may be added also that in the work of translation the famous injunction, “Use your imagination as well as a

lexicon," has been obeyed—it being, in fact, impossible to do otherwise and translate Heredia at all.

First translations have been made as follows, the translator indicated being in all cases responsible for the general scheme of the rendering, though collaboratory criticism and suggestion may have changed and modified it, sometimes to a great extent.

The introductory sonnet, "Oblivion," was translated by J. M. O., and in the opening cycle he is represented by the entire section of "Epigrams and Bucolics" except the last two; the remainder of this cycle being by J. H.

The entire cycle of "Rome and the Barbarians," except three sonnets, "The Trebbia," "After Cannæ" and "To a Triumphator," is by J. M. O.

The cycle of "The Middle Ages and the Renaissance" is by J. H., with the exceptions of "Ronsard's Book of Loves," "The Beautiful Viole," "Gilded Vellum," "The Dogaressa," "The Sword," "Enamel" and "Dreams of Enamel," which are by J. M. O.

Of the cycle, "The Orient and the Tropics," J. M. O. has done all but "The Samurai" and "The Daimio."

Of the cycle, "Nature and Dream," J. M. O. has done all the four opening sonnets except "Funeral Lament." To the section, "The Sea of Brittany," he has contributed "A Painter," "Star of the Sea," "Celestial Blazonry," "Rising Tide" and "Sea Breeze"; and of the concluding miscellaneous section, "The Conch," "To the Tragedian E. Rossi," "Michael Angelo" and "On a Broken Marble," the remainder being by J. H.

This enumeration refers only to the main body of the sonnets. Of the supplemental ones, J. M. O. has rendered "Rising Tide," "The Wish," "Land of Khem" (I-III-IV), "The Black Mass," "The Krater," "On a Bust of Psyche," "The Spinner," "Rivers of Shadow" and "Hortorum Deus" (VI), together with the Spanish triad; J. H. the others.

The translations of the four narrative poems are the first ever made into English and are the work of J. H. In rendering these poems it was decided to adopt a metre more flexible than an English Alexandrine and better fitted for narrative verse. In them Heredia permitted himself, as in one or two of the sonnets of the "Middle Ages" cycle, slight touches of naïveté and archaism suggestive of their sources, thus heightening their artistic effect. The *terza rima* of the "Romancero" triad presents special difficulties to the translator, as despite many essays by eminent hands, this verse form has resisted all efforts to naturalize it in English. Of the success of the specimens offered herewith the reader must decide for himself.

In conclusion it is desired to state that this is the first and only translation ever made of the entire body of the sonnets of José-Maria de Heredia, as well as the first into English of the complete text of *The Trophies*. It is also the only one that has been made with the encouragement of the family of the poet and the assent of his authorized publisher, M. Lemerre. The translators wish here to express their gratitude for the sympathy extended to their undertaking by Mme. de Heredia, widow of the poet, and by his daughters, in especial Mme. Doumic and Mme. de Régnier, as well as to MM. Doumic and de Régnier themselves, the last-named having also accepted the dedication of the volume. To Mr. Vincent O'Sullivan, of Paris, thanks are due for admirably useful advice and assistance. M. l'Abbé Ernest Dimnet has shown an interest that is appreciated and Mrs. Louise Morgan Sill, also of Paris, has been of aid. Among helpful American friends, Mrs. Jack London is to be thanked for her offices in obtaining the use of the photograph of the bust used on the jacket of the general edition, kindly loaned for the purpose by the editor of "Les Annales," through the intercession of M. Louis Postif. Mr. Louis Lamb, of Chicago, has repeatedly afforded us the resources of his profound knowledge of the French language.

THE TRANSLATORS

May, 1929

THE TROPHIES



MANIBUS
CARISSIMAE
ET
AMANTISSIMAE
MATRIS
FILIUS MEMOR
J. M. H.

TO LECONTE DE LISLE

It is to you, dear and illustrious friend, that I would have dedicated The Trophies, if respect for a sacred memory which, I know, is cherished by you, also, had not forbidden the inscription of a name, glorious though it be, on the frontispiece of this book.

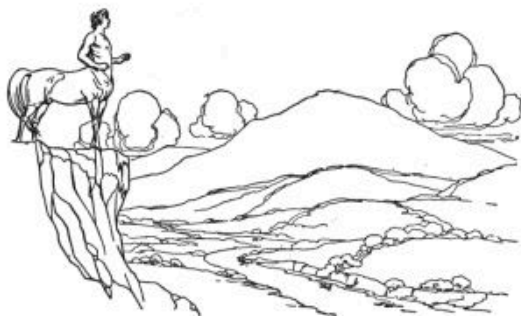
One by one you have witnessed the birth of these sonnets. They are as links which bind you to a time, now distant far, when you taught the young devotees of the Muse, with rules and subtle secrets of the art, the love of pure poetry and the golden tongue of France. I am more your debtor than any other; for you have deemed me worthy of your friendship. I have been able, in the course of a long intimacy, to understand best the excellency of your precepts and advice, all the beauty of your example. And my surest title to whatever glory is mine will be the fact that I have been your well-beloved disciple.

It is to please you that I have gathered together my scattered poems. You have assured me that this volume, even though partly incomplete, will, nevertheless, preserve in the eyes of the indulgent reader something of the noble order of which I have dreamed. Such as it is, I offer it to you, not without regret that it might not have been better, but with the consciousness that I have done my best.

Receive it, dear and illustrious friend, in testimony of my affectionate gratitude, and as it would be unseemly to close a prefatory epistle, however brief it may be, without the customary salutation, permit that I wish you, and all those who turn these pages for the perusal of my poems, as much pleasure in reading them as I had in their composition.

JOSÉ-MARIA DE HEREDIA

GREECE AND SICILY



OBLIVION

THE ruined temple crowns the promontory.
By death commingled in this wild domain
Bronze God and marble Goddess long have lain;
Their only shroud the grass that hides their glory.
Alone, at times, some shepherd flutes their story,
Leading his flock to drink, the old refrain
Filling the tranquil skies that arch the main,
His figure limned against them, dark and hoary.
Yet to the Gods maternal earth is kind;
With fresh acanthus, vain solicitude,
Each shattered capital she strives to bind;
But man, now careless of the ancient mood,
Serenely hears, with no ancestral fright,
The wild sea mourn the Sirens in the night.

HERCULES
AND
THE CENTAURS

NEMEA

SINCE to the forest the Subduer went,
 Marking upon the earth the lion's trace,
 One roar alone has told of their embrace.
Then silence—and the dying sun's descent.
Through thicket, glade and field, toward Tiryns bent,
 The frightened herdsman flees, yet turns his face
 And sees the tawny monster clear the space
At the wood's edge. Wide-eyed, with courage spent,
He shrieks. Nemea's terror he descries
 With jaws agape against the bloody skies,
 Ferocious fangs and ruffled mane erect;
For, towering through the shade crepuscular,
His figure in the frightful skin bedecked,
 More beast than man seems Hercules afar.

STYMPHALUS

IN startled flight, before him everywhere
As Hercules descends the miry steep,
A cloud of birds tempestuously sweep
Out on the gloomy lake that welters there.
Others about him circling brush the hair
And brow that yet Omphale's kisses keep;
Trampling the reeds, the Archer for its leap
Sets to the string the shaft that shall not spare.
Then bolts of fire pierce the affrighted cloud
And from it falls about him, screaming loud,
A rain most horrible, by lightnings riven;
Until at last, through rifts his arrows make,
As the sun's dazzling rays upon him break,
The Hero, bathed in blood, smiles up at Heaven.

NESSUS

WHAT time my brothers' lot was mine to share,
Like them no other fate to understand,
The hills of Thessaly my empire spanned,
Their icy torrents drenched my ruddy hair.
Beneath its sun I grew, free, happy, fair;
Only, when borne from the Epirote land
The odor of its mares my nostrils fanned,
Restless in sport and sleep I sniffed the air.
But since in the Stymphalian Archer's arms
I saw his smiling spouse, a woman's charms
Torture me till my mane lifts with desire.
Some cruel God—accursed be his name!—
Has in my feverish blood a stallion's fire
Blent with man's passion in a raging flame.

THE CENTAURESS

THROUGH woods and valleys, rocky torrents leaping,
The cavalcade of centaurs rushed of old,
Their black manes mingled with our locks of gold,
Upon their flanks the sun and shadows sweeping.
In vain now bloom the meadows. Lonely keeping,
In caverns choked with brushwood, unconsolated,
In summer nights I shiver as with cold,
When the far stallions call through shadows creeping.
From day to day the Cloud-begotten race
Prodigious, slowly dies, as our embrace
Its sons abjure, for women desperate.
For us, their urge is but the brutal lust
That seeks a neighing mare with which to mate,
Not for love's sake but only that they must.

CENTAURS AND LAPITHÆ

S W I F T to the nuptial banquet throngs the crowd,
Centaur and warriors, drunken, daring, fair;
Heroic torsos, in the flambeaux' flare,
Gleam 'mid the glossy scions of the Cloud.
A cry! . . . The bride is ravished! . . . Wailing loud,
From a black breast she breaks, her bosom bare,
Her purple rent. Bronze rings with hoof-beats where
The table crashes, to the revel vowed.
Now leaps up one who dwarfs earth's tallest sons,
His visage, lion-crowned and bristling, stuns,
His wrathful glare appals. 'Tis Hercules!
Sweeping the hall's vast amplitude his glance
Subdues with terror all the combatants:
The monstrous troop recoils and, snorting, flees.

FLIGHT OF THE CENTAURS

WITH murder and rebellion drunk they fly
To the scarped height that guards their wild retreat;
The dread of death impending makes them fleet—
Sniffing the lion's scent they fear to die.
Naught can arrest them as they thunder by,
Serpent and lizard crushed beneath their feet;
Ossa, Olympus, darkling Pelion greet
Their sight at last, far-towering to the sky.
One of the fugitives at times may pause
And, rearing, turn to glimpse their terror's cause,
Then with one bound his fellows overtakes;
For, lengthening in the moon's transplendency
A horror gigantesque he still can see—
The shadow Hercules, pursuing, makes.

THE BIRTH OF APHRODITE

CHAOS came first, wrapping the universe,
Where Time and Space rolled measureless in Night;
Then Gaia, that her sons the Titans might
Possess it, gave them her great breasts to nurse.
They fell. Styx rose the ruins to immerse;
And never Spring brought stormy skies nor bright
Suns bursting from the clouds with sudden light,
Nor Summer came, her bounty to disburse.
The High Gods, knowing neither mirth nor sport,
Upon Olympus' snows held their wild court.
But heaven let fall the germinating dew;
The Ocean opened! From its clasping flood
Rose Kypris, radiantly nude, the true,
The foam-born blossom of celestial blood.

JASON AND MEDEA

To Gustave Moreau

IN an enchanted calm, deep in the shade
Of a great forest, haunt of ancient fears,
A wondrous dawn has shed its sparkling tears
And a strange bower of blooms about them made.
Through magic air that poisonous scents pervade
Her whisper with its potent charm he hears,
And follows and the Golden Fleece uprears,
Whose lightnings dazzle on the Hero's blade.
Like coruscating gems, great birds in flight
Beneath the flowery vault the wood make bright;
The azure skies o'erarch a silver lake.
Love smiles upon them, but the fatal Bride,
Bearing her philtres and her jealous pride,
Her father and her Gods will not forsake.

THE THERMODON

TOWARD flaming Themiscyra, which all day
Has trembled with the shock of cavalry,
Thermodon's sombre flood bears mournfully
The slain whose arms and chariots drift away.
Phœbe, Marpessa, Aella, where are they?
Hippolyta, Philippa, Asterie,
Who led the squadrons on to butchery?
Disheveled, wan they lie, death's royal prey.
Like great white lilies by the whirlwind reaped,
Along both banks the warrior maids lie heaped,
While neighing steeds plunge wildly to and fro;
And Euxine saw at dawn, beyond the shore
Of the ensanguined stream's descending flow,
White stallions fleeing, splashed with virgins' gore.

THE RAPE OF ANTIOPE

As a great eagle swoops from stormy skies,
The Hero seizes, in his strong embrace,
The Amazon, and with triumphant grace
Upon his smoking steed bears off his prize.
To her uplifted arms and frantic cries
The thunder's roll, reverberant through space,
Alone replies. With terror-quicken'd pace
Over the shaking earth the stallion flies.
With speed vertiginous they cleave the air;
Streaming upon the wind her unbound hair
Blends with the charger's mane and whips his throat;
Upon her flesh she feels fierce kisses fall
From breast to flank and rising over all
Hears Theseus' laugh of triumph round her float.

THE VISION OF AJAX

THAT mighty azure shade that dims the night—
 'Tis She! Against the stars' translucency
 Her lance a flash of lightning seems to be;
She holds a captive Victory, poised for flight.
Pallas! . . . In nudity so dazzling bright
 It veils her heavenly flesh of ivory. . . .
 Her feet the ether spurn. She calls to me:—
Guard thee, Oileus' son, against my might!
She comes! . . . She's here! . . . Ajax, thou shall not yield! . . .
 The awe divine that Force and Order wield
 With each of her advancing steps I feel.
Her vengeance flashes from her eyes of steel.
My heart contracts as I behold revealed
 The vipers rampant on her azure shield.

DEATH OF AGAMEMNON

DEEP in the palace Agamemnon sleeps,
 Upon his couch of bronze. Some ghost of Troy
 Wrinkling his placid brow, can scarce annoy
Nor break the godlike slumber that he keeps.
But when the morrow's dawn in splendor sweeps
 It shall not shine for him. With hate and joy,
 Knowing the prey her lover shall destroy,
The heart of Clytemnestra fiercely leaps.
He trembles; his hair rises on his head;
 But toward the King reposing on the bed,
 Gripped by her passion, with resistless might
She urges him. Breathless they creep within. . . .
Aegisthus strikes. . . . The lamp's expiring light
 Gleams redly on their deed of blood and sin.

ARTEMIS
AND
THE NYMPHS

ARTEMIS

WILD forest scents the breeze blows everywhere;
O Huntress, let thy nostrils drink them in!
Virginal, virile, Goddess without sin,
Fleet-footed one with backward-flowing hair!
The roaring of the leopards rends the air
Until the stars their nightly watch begin;
Bounding across Ortygia through the din,
Thy bleeding hounds at heel, what joy is there!
But a still keener thrill is thine to feel,
O Goddess, and avenge with thy sharp steel
The talons in thy glorious arm sunk deep.
A cruel sweetness thy high heart transfixes
When, in thy sport, thy ichor's purple mixes
With the black blood of monsters as they leap.

THE CHASE

THE sun's white stallions gallop up the skies
 Sheer to the zenith, whence their breath is shed
 Like flame upon the fields beneath outspread.
Under the ardent heat earth quivering lies.
The forest to protect it vainly tries,
 Massing its foliage. Through the boughs o'erhead
 The lances of the glowing God are sped
Where laughingly the silver fountains rise.
This is the flaming hour when through the brake
 The hounds of Artemis the pathway take,
 Baying deep-mouthed for slaughter and for blood;
While on their track, shafts hurtling from her bow,
Hair streaming, breathless, furious, all aglow,
 The Goddess bounds and terror fills the wood.

NYMPHÆA

FROM heaven the quadriga makes descent,
And seeing under him the western plain,
Vainly the God curbs with quadruple rein
His steeds that spurn the blazing firmament.
The chariot sinks. The sea's deep-breathed content
Fills the sonorous vault whose purples wane;
Serene the azure deeps of night remain
Wherein the Crescent's silver bow is bent.
This is the hour when by the clear cold river
The Nymphs throw down spent bow and empty quiver.
Only a stag, belling afar, is heard.
On the nocturnal dance the moonlight falls
As Pan now slow, now fast, the measure calls,
With laughter by his reed-blown music stirred.

PAN

T H R E A D I N G the thickets by their secret ways,
Lost in the depths of their green avenues,
The Satyr who the naked Nymphs pursues
Glides ardent-eyed beneath the bough that sways.
Sweet is the sigh that from the covert strays,
The voice of some cool spring, some shy recluse,
When the sun's conquering shafts the clouds suffuse,
And pierce the leafy gloom with golden rays.
Missing the path a nymph delays to listen
Where on the moss dawn's falling tear-drops glisten:
Tremulous ecstasies her young heart fill.
But from the copse the God, with one great bound,
Bursts, grasps her, vanishes, and as the sound
Of mocking laughter dies the wood is still.

BATH OF THE NYMPHS

IN a wild valley by the Euxine Sea,
 Above a spring where the black laurels lean,
 Grasping a branch, a Nymph of joyous mien
In the cold pool her foot dips fearfully.
At the conch's call her sisters plunge with glee
 Into the gushing waters, where the sheen
 Of amber hair and rosy breasts is seen,
Or, wreathed with foam, white torsos' lucency.
With gaiety divine the dark wood rings.
 But suddenly two orbs its gloom makes bright:
 The Satyr! . . . At his laugh they pause in fright,
Then dart away. So, when a crow's dark wings
And hoarse croak threaten, Cayster's every swan,
 Rising distractedly, in flight is gone.

THE VASE

A S U B T L E hand chiseled this ivory.
The Colchian forest, Jason, we behold,
Medea, magic-eyed. The Fleece of Gold
Gleams on a stele's summit dazzlingly.
Nile couches near, first in paternity
Of streams; and drunk with honeyed poison bold
Bacchantes, lifting vine-leaves manifold,
Garland the yokes of bullocks they set free.
Beneath are horsemen on the battlefield;
Heroes borne dying, each upon his shield,
Mothers that weep, grandsires that mourn the slain.
Lastly, for handles, coiled about the brim,
Their firm white breasts upholding it, two grim
Chimeras that its depths forever drain.

ARIADNE

B R O N Z E cymbals clash. The Queen, reclining nude
On a great tiger's back, beholds the train
Of orgiasts advance along the main,
Iacchos leading on the multitude.
The royal beast, by her caresses wooed,
Arches his loins and spurns the yellow plain,
Roars amorously as she drops the rein,
And champs his flowery bit in servitude.
Upon his flanks her unbound tresses streaming
Like clustered amber amid dark grapes gleaming,
The Spouse, his growls of protest heeding not,
Lifts her wild lips, flushed with ambrosial bliss,
Her outcries stilled, the faithless one forgot,
And smiles to Asia's Conqueror for his kiss.

BACCHANALE

GANGES with sudden clamor is aghast.
Tigers, their leashes broken, leap and scream,
Bacchantes fly before them down the stream,
Trampling the vintage as they hurtle past.
Clawing and biting, in the vines caught fast,
Stained by the grape, their flanks and gorges gleam
Where among pards with bellies white as cream
They roll in purple mire, together massed.
Crouched above forms that shudder and dilate,
The beasts' hoarse roars rise in a swelling flood:
Beneath flushed skins they scent still redder blood.
While, orgy-maddened, the infuriate
God with his thyrsus and his cries assails
The howling females and the roaring males.

THE AWAKENING OF A GOD

WITH wounded throats and with disheveled hair,
Tears shedding that in frenzied torrents flow,
The maids of Byblos, in procession slow,
Chant as they come an anthem of despair.
A bier, wreathed with anemones, they bear,
For death has dimmed the eyes' voluptuous glow
Of him the Syrian virgins loved. Where low
He lies the perfumed incense fills the air.
Till dawn the chorus swells funereal;
Then lo, he wakens at Astarte's call,
Her mystic Spouse, from myrrh-besprinkled sleep,
Regaining life, forever adolescent;
And like a great rose flushing efflorescent
Heaven seems as with Adonis' blood dyed deep.

THE ENCHANTRESS

EVEN at the altar's foot that I embrace,
I hear her call, her white arms open wide!
O sire revered, O mother who with pride
Bore me, am I of an accursed race?
Never his bloody robes in Samothrace
Vengeful Eumolpid shook where ye abide,
Yet with tired heart I flee and halting stride,
The sacred hounds baying upon my trace.
Must I then live, feeling how vile I am?
With black enchantments and with baleful charms
The angry Gods envelop me to damn;
For irresistible they make her arms—
Her maddening lips, her eyes of somber gloom,
Her tears and kisses, that shall be my doom.

THE SPHINX

UPON Cithæron, in a wild recess,
There lurked resplendent in her rock-cleft lair,
With golden eyes, and throat and bosom bare,
The Virgin eagle-winged none might possess.
Yet, dazzled, one would now her threshold press.
—What shadow darkens from the outer air?—
—Love!—What, the God?—No God, a Hero!—Dare
To enter and court death. Wouldst brave it?—Yes!
Bellerophon the fierce Chimæra slew!—
—Approach me not!—Ah, my lips thirst for thine!—
—Then come! My arms that clasp can strangle too;
My talons rend thy flesh. . . . —But if thy kiss
I conquer, let the penalty be mine!—
—In vain thy triumph! Kiss and die!—O bliss!

MARSYAS

THY native pines, O most unhappy one,
 Charmed by thy breath, shall never make thy pyre!
 Thy blood, thy bones, dissolved, but not by fire,
Shall be effused where Phrygia's waters run.
The jealous Citharedos, Hellas' sun,
 With his great plectrum shattered in his ire
 Thy reeds that tamed the lion, taught the choir
Of birds to sing; then was thy singing done.
He flayed dice, living, bound upon the yew—
 Its trunk thy fragments with thy blood bedew.
 O cruel God! O cries! Voice sad and tender!
Waked by thy wondrous fingers nevermore
Thy flute-notes shall sigh over the Meander . . .
 For with thy skin the wind sports on its shore.

PERSEUS
AND
ANDROMEDA

ANDROMEDA AND THE MONSTER

THE Cephean Virgin, alas, living still,
Naked, disheveled, to the black rocks bound,
Writhes with vain sobs—O, lamentable sound!—
Her regal form convulsed by terror's thrill.
Colossal waves, born of the tempest's will,
Crash at the frozen feet they strive to wound;
Green gaping jaws on every side surround
And through her half-closed eyes her vision fill.
As thunder from a sky without a cloud
A sudden neigh rings resonant and loud!
Her eyes unclose, fear dies in ecstasy,
As she beholds in flight vertiginous,
His mighty shadow sweeping the blue sea,
Great Pegasus bearing the son of Zeus.

PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA

CURBING amid the foam his courser's flight,
Medusa's Conqueror the monster slays,
Then, drenched with blood and venom, stoops to raise
Into his arms the maid with tresses bright.
His steed divine refuses to alight—
Chrysaor's brother spurns the sea and neighs;
The Hero clasps his loved one, all ablaze
With blushes, laughing, sobbing her delight.
She feels his arms enfold her, surges hide
Them as she struggles to her lover's side.
Upon her foot a kiss of wanton spray
Stirs Pegasus to anger like a lash:
At Perseus' call, bounding he soars away
On wings of flame that up the heavens flash.

ANDROMEDA BORNE OFF

THE mighty winged steed in silence soars,
From his wide nostrils his hot breath exhales,
His plumage quivers as he onward sails,
Bearing them through the vault where starlight pours.
Into the cloven void fade Afric's shores,
Then Asia's . . . then the Desert . . . then the vales
Of mist-girt Lebanon . . . then gleams and pales
The sea that over Helle foams and roars.
Before the wind his pinions wide outspread
Cradle the lovers in a warm embrace,
From star to star upon their pathway sped;
While as they gaze, their shadows palpitate,
Aries, Aquarius, glow in azure space,
Where, rising, their own constellations wait.

EPIGRAMS
AND
BUCOLICS

THE GOATHERD

O SHEPHERD, down the gulch's steep decline
Chase not thy goat that leaps in wilful flight;
On Menalus, where summer finds us, night
Descends the slope too swift; thy quest resign.
A refuge wild, but we have figs and wine;
O Mnasyles, speak low and wait the light!
The Gods are everywhere; Hecate might
Even now regard us with her eyes divine.
The demon of the heights may lurk below,
That somber cave may be the Satyr's lair;
If not alarmed, he may emerge, perchance!
Listen! he plays the reed; 'tis he, I know!
His horns grow larger in the light and there,
Where the moon shines, my goats begin to dance.

THE SHEPHERDS

C O M E ! down Cyllene's slopes the path winds steep;
Here are the dell and spring; and where the breeze
Sings in the pine a bed will not displease,
If made of grass and thyme, for slumber deep.
This old mossed trunk thy tethered ewe will keep;
Knowst thou that she, ere twice a fortnight flees,
Will bear a kid and lavish milk for cheese?
The Nymphs will weave her wool in robes for sleep.
O Pan, whom I invoke, propitious be!
Goat-footed guardian of the flocks that graze
Arcadian hills! He hears! I saw the tree
Tremble; come, red are the sun's last rays;
The poor man's gift, O friend, is worth a shrine,
If offered with pure heart to those divine.

VOTIVE EPIGRAM

To Ares fierce! Discord belligerent!
Help an old man upon this pillar high
To hang his helmet, bloody-plumed, and tie
His heavy shield and sword with many a dent.
Suspend this bow! No arm has ever bent
Its medlar hard but mine; ah, vain that I
Should stretch the cord with trembling hand and try
How far the smiting arrow might be sent.
This quiver, also, take! Thy eyes would seem
To search the leather sheath for shafts that fled—
The arrows by the winds of battle sped;
'Tis empty! I have lost them, dost thou deem?
Nay, on the field of Marathon they rest;
Each for its target found a Persian breast!

FUNERAL EPIGRAM

HERE, Stranger, little Helle did inter
The locust green, her pet since yester-year,
Whose rasping wing and leg she loved to hear
Drone in the beanfield, berry-bush and fir.
Ah, silent now is Nature's chorister,
Muse of the furrowed fields! O friend, for fear
That its light sleep be troubled, come not near!
Pass quickly, nor disturb its sepulcher!
Under the funeral stele freshly set,
Pallid upon a tuft of thyme it lies,
With honor that some mortals never knew;
Its grave with childish tears has just been wet,
And Eos every morning from the skies
Will make libation with a drop of dew.

THE SHIPWRECK

HE sailed from Egypt ere the wind could shift,
And saw across his masts, on cloudless skies,
The Pharos vanish and Arcturus rise,
Proud of his galley copper-flanked and swift.
The Alexandrian mole will never lift,
The tempest knows, again to meet his eyes;
The storm has made the sad tomb where he lies
The deepest furrow of the sands that drift.
Above him droops a shrub the gust has flayed;
In night no moon or star, no dawn may save,
The mariner must sleep eternally;
Have pity on his poor unresting shade,
And where an alien shore is now his grave,
Rest lightly on him, Earth, be silent, Sea!

RIVERS OF SHADOW

NOT I, like Orpheus, Love's own hero, o'er
The Styx without my obol, dared to brave
The dusk of Erebus where Lethe's wave,
Whence none return, beats noiseless on the shore.
I am not certain which infernal door,
Of ivory or brass, a passage gave;
New Pirithoüs, from the night none crave
I reascended, loving day the more.
I have seen Hell, heard Cerberus' howlings rend
Eternal silence, die and echo on
Where Lethe, Styx, and slow Cocytus flow;
And I have seen avengers apprehend
A regal shade near bloody Phlegethon,
Orestes pale with wan Electra go.

PRAYER OF THE DEAD

PAUSE! hear me, traveler! If to Hebrus' shore
And Cypsela thy journey carry thee,
Seek the old Hyllos who still mourns for me,
Tell him that he will see his son no more.
Murdered, the wolves devoured my flesh, and o'er
This dismal place my scattered bones you see;
My shade an outcast on the Styx must be,
Weeping the shame left unavenged of yore.
Depart! If ever in the fading light
Thou seest a woman kneel beside a tomb,
On whose pale brow the mourning veil appears,
Approach, and fear not magic nor the night!
It is my mother, Stranger, in the gloom
Clasping the empty urn that drinks her tears.

THE SLAVE

FED with vile food, naked, repulsive too,
A slave—behold, my body bears the sign!
I was born free where curves the gulf divine
And honeyed Hybla lifts its summits blue.
Alas, I left the happy isle! If you
To Syracuse return when swans incline
In vernal flight above the bee and vine,
Inquire for her I love, dear patron, do!
Shall her deep eyes of azure where one sees
Heaven's reflection, greet me with their smile,
Under the brow's proud arch so pure and glad?
Pity me! Go, seek Clearista, please!
Say I will see her in a little while;
Ah, you will know her! She is always sad.

THE PLOWMAN

THE drill, the yoke, the shining shares, the plow,
Harrow and goad; the scythe with edge so keen
That in a day has cut an acre clean,
The fork that filled with hay the peasant's mow;
All these familiar tools, too heavy now,
Old Parmis vows to Rhea, deathless queen,
Who sprouts, in earth she blessed, the seed unseen;
His eighty years no further work allow.
Almost a century, beneath the sun,
He tramped behind the plow with nothing gained;
He knew no joy, so age brings no regret.
But he is weary, now his work is done,
And wonders if, when dead, he is ordained
To till the fields the dews of Hades wet.

THE SPINNER

PLATTHIS is gone, the good old soul is dead,
That through the long, long years, the old and new,
Had spun and woven flax as none could do,
The white balls rolling, in her basket spread.
And oft when she would droop her drowsy head,
Her empty fingers spinning would pursue
Unconsciously the motion that they knew;
Ah, death alone could take from her the thread!
Scarcely among her poor things could be found
The obol which the fingers must receive
To pay grim Charon's boat-fee at the last;
Now Platthis o'er the somber stream is bound,
Intent to see if they, the Fates, can weave
As well as she, and turn the wheel as fast.

TO HERMES CRIOPHOROS

THAT he, companion of the Naiads, may
Render the ewe attractive to its mate,
And through their union endlessly create
New flocks to roam the steep Gallesian way,
The shepherd 'neath a roof of reeds must lay
A feast for him, that he may gladly wait;
The gift is sweet and will propitiate
On marble altar laid or mound of clay.
Then let us honor Hermes, subtly wise,
For he, to splendid temples and their shrines,
Prefers pure hands and victims without stain;
Friend, let a hillock on your land arise,
And blood an old ram's throat incarnadines
Dark on the clay, red on the grass remain.

THE DEAD GIRL

PASS, Living One, whoever thou mayst be,
The mound where my unsolaced ashes lie;
Tread not the flowers upon my grave, for I
Would hear the ant and ivy creep on me.
Why pause? A grieving dove complains to thee;
Nay, immolate it not for me! And why?
Existence is so sweet! Ah, let it fly!
If thou wouldst please me, passer, set it free!
Knowst thou, with wreaths above the nuptial door,
I passed, a wife and virgin, stricken there,
So near to him yet far from love's delight?
And now my eyes are closed forevermore,
The happy light is gone, and I must bear
Relentless Hades and eternal night.

REGILLA

PASSER, this marble is her sepulcher!
Annia Regilla, of Æneas' strain,
Of Kypris' blood and Ganymede's vein;
Young, happy, fair, she died! Ah, weep for her
Whom Herodes had loved! A wanderer
In Pluto's Happy Isle that few may gain,
She counts the days and months that shall remain
Ere that reclaiming hour the Fates defer.
Haunted in dreams by charms he once surveyed,
The sleepless Herodes despairing cries,
And on his ivory bed in torture shifts;
He stays! He does not come! Her anxious shade,
Still waiting the beloved one, ever flies
Round the black scepter Rhadamanthus lifts.

THE RUNNER

As Delphi saw him, Thymos close behind,
Fly down the course and through the clamor's thunder,
Here Ladas still, spurning the socle under
His metal foot, runs swifter than the wind.
With arm outstretched, fixed eye, and breast inclined,
The bronze sweat dripping from his brow, no wonder
The athlete seems to burst the mould asunder,
While still beneath the sculptor's cast defined.
Trembling, he pants, as hope and fever sway!
The air he cleaves from gasping lips departs
And the bronze muscles strain beyond control;
The struggle's frenzy carries him away,
And leaping from the pedestal he darts
Along the course to triumph and the goal!

THE CHARIOTEER

HE, Stranger, with the chariot-pole of gold,
Whose right hand grasps his black steeds' four-fold rein,
His left the urging whip of ashen grain,
Surpasses Castor's fabled skill of old.
Son of a famous sire, but more extolled,
When to the crimson goal his coursers strain
Strewn in the dust his rivals all remain. . . .
Ah, dear to Cæsar is the Libyan bold!
Dazzling the Circus, to the goal and palm
Victor seven times, vertiginous yet calm
He now has whirled. Hail, Calchas' son, the Blue!
Behold! If mortal may, thine eyes shall view
His apotheosis, as Victory

ON OTHRYS

THE air grows cool. Red is the sun's descent.
No more the heifer dreads the winged pest.
On Othrys' slopes the shadows lengthen. Rest,
Rest with me, guest beloved the Gods have sent.
Let from my rustic roof your gaze be bent,
While to the foaming milk your lips are pressed,
Upon Tymphreste's snow, Olympus' crest,
Rich Thessaly and peaks magnificent.
There is the sea; Eubœa; evening's glow
On Callidrome; and Cæta, where his pyre
Hercules raised, 'twas his first altar, too.
Beyond, Parnassus, where, through sunset's fire,
Weary from flight, descending soft and slow,
Comes Pegasus, to vanish with the dew.

THE KRATER

THESE, curious Stranger, are the painted vases,
With revelry or triumph as their pride,
Which down the narrow neck and swelling side
Bear all Olympus on their curving spaces.
Choose well, for mine is better, by the Graces!
This krater made of Phrygian clay was dyed
With Atys' virile blood, and deified
By lips of drunken Gods in mad embraces.
Behold, it has no flaw from brim to base,
And doubtless to some Satrap will be sold,
Its price as costly as a cup of gold;
Euphronius made this gem, this argil vase,
And deemed it, signed with his illustrious name,
More precious for its fragile dream of fame.

ROME
AND
THE BARBARIANS



FOR THE SHIP OF VIRGIL

BRIGHT twain of stars, O clearest of the skies,
Brothers of Helen, guard from every harm
The Latin poet who would see the swarm
Of golden Cyclads from the azure rise.
And thou, Iapyx, softest wind that flies,
Doubling thy sweetest breath, with perfume's charm
Swell the full sail, and safe from rock and storm
Waft him to where the shore of Hellas lies.
Amid the islands where the dolphin plays,
Guide happily the bard of Mantua;
Sons of the Swan, lend thy fraternal rays!
For on the sea Arion sang with awe,
The half my soul is in the ship that bears
Virgil as toward the land of Gods he fares.

THE LITTLE VILLA

OLD Gallus owns the villa you espy,
It nestles where the Alpine slopes decline;
The house entirely sheltered by a pine,
The stubble roof scarcely a story high.
One guest is all his larder can supply,
His oven holds a loaf and he has wine,
And lettuce in his garden's small confine;
Not much! but Gallus for no more would sigh.
His winter fagots come from this estate,
His trees in summer yield a grateful shade;
A thrush, in autumn, fills the snare he made.
Here Gallus ends, contented with his fate,
His dreary life, so long and unheroic;
Oh, now you know that Gallus is a stoic!

THE FLUTE

THE dusk descends, with doves on passing wing:
Ah, nothing soothes so much the amorous fire,
O shepherd, as the flute, when lips inspire
The notes that flow harmonious with the spring
That ripples from the reeds; and here we fling
Upon the shadowed grass our limbs that tire.
Let thy goat stray, O friend! She may desire,
Deaf to her bleating kid, the herbs that cling
To the high rocks. My flute, of hemlock made,
With seven unequal stems wax-welded, shrill
With joy or sad, weeps, laughs at my sweet will;
Come! I will teach thee how Silenus played
The sacred pipe, and all love's sighs will be,
With art divine, dissolved in harmony.

TO SEXTIUS

THE sky is blue! The galley nears the shore;
The orchards bloom; the silver frost is gone,
That made the meadows iris-hued at dawn;
The oxen issue from the stable door.
All things revive! but mortuary lore
Half saddens us; for thee, though death should yawn,
No day is sure, when from the feast withdrawn,
The dice shall make thee king of play no more.
O Sextius, life is brief! Make haste to live!
Even now a stiffness in our knees we mark;
No spring will bless the cold vales of surcease.
Come, then! the woods are green; 'tis time to give
A goat to Faunus in his covert dark,
Or immolate a lamb with golden fleece.

HORTORUM DEUS

To Paul Arène.

I

Olim truncus eram ficulnus

HORACE

APPROACH not, Stranger! Pass! Be on your way!
Insidious pilferer! What, wouldst thou steal
The orchard's grapes and olives that reveal
Hues of the warm sun, ripened by its ray?
'Tis my domain! With pruning knife one day,
From hard Ægina wood a shepherd's zeal
Produced me; knave, deride him if you feel
That no revenge Priapus will essay!
Once, long ago, upon a galley's prow
I stood erect and red, to sailors dear,
Breasting with joy the revel of the seas;
Vile guardian of fruits and lettuce now,
A menace to marauders, moping here,
I never more shall see the Cyclades.

II

Hujus nam domini colunt me Deumque salutant

CATULLUS

Respect, O traveler, if you would fear
My wrath, this roof of grass on rushes laid;
Master of field and spring, his children's aid,
A sturdy grandsire makes his dwelling here.
And in the orchard's center I appear,
My emblem square of carven linden made;
No other Gods are his; I guard his glade,
The spot he tills, whose bloom to me is dear.
Poor peasants these, but pious ones, you see!
The poppy and the violet they wreath
With tufts of barley to adorn my sheath;
And twice a year their altar faithfully,
The sacred knife piercing his bearded throat,
Drinks the red life-blood of a wanton goat.

III

*Ecce villicus
Venit . . .*

CATULLUS

Mischievous imps! The trap, the dog, beware!
I watch this garden and am wary lest,
A shoot of garlic his pretended quest,
Some pillager to steal my grapes should dare.
Besides, if from the stubble field, I swear,
Yon farmer sees you here, your backs will test
How hard a God of linden may be pressed,
When wielded by an arm that will not spare.
Quick! Take the pathway to the left, pursue
It to the hedge's end where grows the beech,
And profit by this whisper in your ear;
A negligent Priapus you will view,
And all his grapes that ripen you may reach;
The posts that prop his trellis, see, are near!

I V

Mihi corolla picta vere ponitur

CATULLUS

Enter! My posts are freshly painted white,
The sunbeams through my arbor softly beat,
Where shadow and the scent of spring are sweet,
Earth takes from April's hand a raiment bright.
The seasons come and go and bring no blight,
Rich grapes, green olives, flowers and yellow wheat;
While milk, that dripping from the she-goat's teat,
Fills to its frothing brim the amphor quite.
The master honors me as well he should;
Nor bird nor thief may prey upon his vine,
For none is better guarded in the land;
His wife is virtuous, his sons are good,
And every night, from Rome returning, shine
The silver coins he jingles in his hand.

Rigetque dura barba juncta crystallo
Diversarum Poetarum Lusus

How cold! The last green leaves with frost are starred;
 I wait the sun; the very hour I know
 When dawn will redden on Soracte's snow;
Man is perverse! A field God's fate is hard!
For twenty winters in this ruined yard
 I froze; and now, with matted beard, I show
 Red paint that peels and wood that cracks below,
And much I fear the worms have left me scarred.
With Lares and Penates I would be
 A fireside God, repainted, ever gay,
 That honey gorges, April flowers bedeck;
And were the ancestral room assigned to me,
The children, reaching manhood, would array
 Their toys around my venerated neck.

VI

*Interque cunctos ultimum Deos omen
Cucurbitarum ligneus vocor custos
Veterum Poet. Catalecta*

Must I to-day, as yesterday, still shield
To-morrow and forever, all alone,
This lot where lupine dies and weeds have grown,
This waste deserted, once a Roman field?
Alas, an armless stick I stand revealed,
So weary with the days that I have known,
Seeing my sun-revolving shadow thrown,
A target for the stones the passers wield.
Meanwhile, as far from Rome I bear disgrace,
Vertumnus' statue lords the market-place;
None worships me, of deity I tire.
Ah, would some prowler's ruthless hand might seize
And throw me, God forgotten, in the fire,
Making of me another Hercules.

THE TEPIDARIUM

WITH myrrh-anointed limbs of supple grace,
They dream, enjoying mild December's close,
While the bronze brazier through the chamber throws
Shadow and flame on every lovely face.
Noiseless from purple cushions they displace.
Bodies of brown or marmorean rose
Alter anew their postures of repose,
Sensuous contours that the linens trace.
Feeling the fluent heat upon her nude
Body, a woman of Asia languidly
Lifts her tired arms in drowsy lassitude;
While pale Ausonian girls enchanted see
Tresses in rich and savage harmony
Flow dark upon her torso amber-hued.

TRANQUILLUS

C. Plinii Secundi Epist. Lib. I, Ep. XXIV

IN this sweet vale lived Suetonius
And of his villa in the vineyards set
A vestige near the Tiber still is met,
A wall and arch the ivy hides from us.
Each autumn, far from Rome, it pleased him thus,
When the last skies of azure lingered yet,
To glean the wealth of ripened vines and let
Life's tide run tranquil and monotonous.
And here the Cæsars haunted him the while,
Amid the pastoral peace, and still the track
Of roving Messalina, purple-garbed;
And here his pen, so pitilessly barbed,
Searing the wax, divulged the leisures black
Of the old Sybarite of Capri's isle.

LUPERCUS

M. Val. Martialis Lib. I, Epigr. CXVIII

LUPERCUS, from afar, his friend would greet!
Dear poet, your new epigram is splendid;
Say, shall I send to-morrow, as intended,
For loan of all the rolls, your works complete?
Nay, your old slave has asthma, limping feet,
My stairs are hard, a long way must be wended;
Your home is by the Palatine befriended,
Atrectus makes the Cœlian his retreat.
His bookshop, near the Forum, can supply
The volumes of the living and the dead,
Silius, Virgil, Pliny, be it said;
There on a shelf, and surely not too high,
In cedar boxed, pumiced and bound in red,
Martial is priced at five denarii.

THE TREBBIA

A FATEFUL dawn whitens the topmost hill.
The camp awakes. Below the waters roar
Where the Numidian squadrons throng the shore.
The calls of trumpets everywhere are shrill.
Scornful of Scipio and of augured ill,
Of Trebbia's rage, of wind and rain, once more
Sempronius bids his lictors march before
His host as new-won glory fires his will.
A mournful glow reddens the somber sky
Where the Insubrian villages blaze high
On the horizon. From afar is heard
An elephant. Beneath the bridge's arch,
Hannibal harks, by victory unstirred,
The hollow thunder of his legions' march.

AFTER CANNÆ

ONE Consul slain, one to Liternum fled
Or to Venusia. Dead choke the flow
Of Aufidus. Heaven frowns, a bolt lays low
The Capitol; bronze sweats. In vain is spread
The sacrifice and the High Pontiff led
Thrice to the Sibyl, fate's decree to know.
Terror fills Rome. The grandsire in his woe,
Widow and orphan, weep uncomforted.
Each evening to the aqueducts the spawn
Of the Subura, all the rabble, rush,
From prison and cloaca vomited;
Dreading to see the One-eyed Chief upon
His lurching elephant loom where the flush
Of sunset dyes the Sabine Hills blood-red.

TO A TRIUMPHATOR

CARVE on thine arch, illustrious Imperator,
Files of barbarians, chiefs beneath thy yoke,
Figures of arms and ships in fragments broke,
Of hosts and fleets that thou didst take or scatter.
Issue of Ancus or a serf, what matter?
Thy name, thy race, thy deeds by fame bespoke,
On frieze or bas-relief with trenchant stroke
Carve deep to balk the future that may shatter.
Time's fatal arm already threatens thee—
Why hope to make eternal thy renown?
The creeping ivy may thy trophy raze,
And where thy haughty marbles are cast down,
Thy glory choked with weeds, their fate may be
To notch the scythe some Samnite mower sways.

THE ROSTRA

G A Z E from the Arch of Triumph, crumbling fast,
And see, the vaster in nocturnal space,
From Curtius' to Juturna's lake, the place
That was Rome's Forum, in her mighty past.
There, with the world at stake, the votes were cast,
Choking the urns, by mobs suborned and base.
The Senate mute, the consuls in disgrace,
Rome and the globe one tyrant had at last.
There Cæsar's fierce harangues the tribune stirred,
There every race defiled, all tongues were heard,
Even Thule's rhetoricians journeyed thence.
Beyond lie scattered, in the dusty grass,
The ancient rostra. Hark, their vibrant brass
Seems still to echo Gracchus' eloquence!

ANTONY
AND
CLEOPATRA

THE CYDNUS

IN the last glow, under triumphal blue,
 The silver galley cleaves the somber river,
 And in its furrow leaves the scent and shiver
Of trailing silk and sigh of flutes that sue.
Near the prow's burnished hawk she leans to view,
 Out of her throne, a far glance to deliver,
 Like a great golden bird in light a-quiver,
Dreaming she tastes the prey to which she flew.
While Antony unarmed at Tarsus waits,
 The dark Lagian opens her amber arms
 That dusk's reflection stains with purple charms;
She does not see, a presage of their fates,
Strewing the wave with roses as with fire,
 Float near her, twins divine, Death and Desire.

AFTER THE BATTLE

THEY clash, recoil! Centurions resume
Command! The cohorts rally, as they try
To breathe the air that holds their battle-cry,
The heat of carnage and its acrid fume.
Counting their dead, with eyes of sullen gloom,
The warriors see afar, like leaves blown high,
The whirling bowmen of Phraortes fly;
Their grimy faces drip the sweat of doom.
Then, red with stain of wounds that freshly flow,
His cuirass thick with darts that could not maim,
And robe of purple floating as he hears
The trumpets with a crashing fanfare blow,
Curbing his steed against a heaven of flame,
Superbly now the Emperor appears.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

T H E Y gaze from the high terrace where they trace,
As Egypt sleeps beneath the burning sky,
Toward Sais and Bubastis rolling nigh,
The fertile stream to the black Delta's base.
The steel-clad Roman feels her body's grace,
As charmed the soldier soothes her drowsy sigh,
Relax and on his heart triumphant lie,
Swooning voluptuous in his embrace.
Drunk with her hair's invincible perfume,
He holds her as she proffers, pale with doom,
Her limpid eyes and lips with passion bold;
And bending close, the ardent Emperor sees
In her great orbs, enstarred with glints of gold,
An ocean widen where her galley flees.

EPIGRAPHIC SONNETS

Bagnères-de-Luchon, Sept. 188 — .

THE VOW

ILIXONI
DEO
FAB. FESTA
V. S. L. M.

ISCITTO DEO
HVNNV
VLOHOXIS
FIL.
V. S. L. M.

THE dark Iberian, shaggy Gaul and brown
Garumnian, streaked with paint, long since have told
The virtue these benefic waters hold,
And carved on votive marble their renown.
An Emperor, under Venasque's bare crown
Built here the Roman Baths and pool of gold;
And Fabia Festa on this road, of old,
Culled for the Gods verbena in her gown.
And now the springs still chant their song divine
As in Iscittus' and Ilixon's days;
The sulphur's vapor in the air I glimpse.
Like Hunnu, son of Ulohox, be mine,
This verse my vow, the alien right to raise
An altar to the subterranean Nymphs.

THE SPRING

NYMPHIS AVG. SACRVM

BURIED beneath the bramble and the grass
The altar lies, and drop by drop the spring
Fills the lorn dell with plaintive murmuring;
'Tis the forgotten Nymph who weeps, alas!
No ripples on her useless mirror pass,
So rarely touched by doves on truant wing;
Only the moon that skies of darkness bring
May catch her pale reflection in the glass.
At intervals, a straying shepherd slakes
His thirst, and on the old stone where he stands
Scatters the drops remaining in his hands;
Unconsciously the ritual sign he makes,
Though on the column he may not discern
The patera and libatory urn.

THE BEECH GOD

FAGO DEO

THE Garumnian reared his rustic domicile
 Beneath a giant beech with massive trunk,
 Whose bark of some deific sap had drunk;
His sky the maternal woods for many a mile.
In freedom here he found, each season's while,
 With bow or spear or baited pitfall sunk,
 Nuts, fagots, shade, and beasts that fought or slunk,
For food or clothes yielding to force or wile.
Long years he lived, rich, happy, free, and when
 He reached his home at night, the old tree, thus,
 With arms familiar seemed to welcome him;
And when death came to bow this chief of men,
His grandsons hewed his rude sarcophagus
 From the supreme and uncorrupted limb.

TO THE DIVINE MOUNTAINS

GEMINVS SERVVS
ET PRO SVIS CONSERVIS

BLUE glaciers, marble peaks, the granite crest,
Plateaus where winds from Bègle to Néthou
Ravaged the grain that in the valley grew;
Wild gorges, lakes, dim woods, the predal nest!
Dark vales with secret caves that those oppressed,
Fleeing the ancient servitude they knew,
Shared with the bear and wolf, the eagle, too;
Torrent, abyss and precipice, be ye blest!
Far from his prison and the cruel chains,
Geminus, slave, this shaft inscribed, austere
And sacred mountains, Freedom's home, to thee!
On summits clear, where the vast silence reigns,
In the inviolate air I seem to hear
His cry, exulting yet, that he was free!

THE EXILE

MONTIBUS . . .

GARRI DEO . . .

SABINULA.

V. S. L. M.

B Y Cæsar banished to this wild abode,
Each night with drooping head and footstep slow,
Your forehead silvered with untimely snow,
You seek the mossy rock upon the road.
In dreams return the joys that youth bestowed,
Your villa dear, the thronged Flaminian's glow;
And when, Sabinula, your grief would grow,
You scan the skies to ease the bitter load.
Toward radiant Gar that shines with seven peaks,
Belated eagles, flying to their nest,
Carry your cherished dreams and bear them home;
Hopeless, alone, a man who nothing seeks,
Your altars on the friendly mountains rest,
Whose nearer Gods console the loss of Rome.

THE WISH

I SHOULD have been a dame of Grecian race,
 Borne heroes in my flanks and felt no shame,
 When with nude bosom bathed in sunlight came
The Muse to lead her choir with mirthful grace.
With Spartan girls to wrestle was my place,
 And, Orpheus' rival, spurred by Linus' fame,
 Feel quiver in me with the hidden flame
The Goddess hoping for the God's embrace.
But fate denied the Attic thrill to me;
 The shape superb with grace in every line
 Is gone with Love. Thy lofty thoughts, despite
Thy faith, O Bard, that would eternal be,
And joy for which thy heart must still repine,
 Will perish, too, in everlasting night.

THE MIDDLE AGES
AND
THE RENAISSANCE



STAINED GLASS

T H E S E panes have seen fair dames and barons grand,
Blazing with azure and with gold and nacre,
Bow their proud crests and hoods before their Maker,
Beneath an august consecrating hand,
Ere they took horse, at horn's or trump's command,
With glaive or dagger, gerfalcon or saker,
For wood or field, Byzance or Saint-Jean d'Acre,
Questing the heron or the Holy Land.
With hounds and coursers carved in effigy,
To-day these seigneurs and their chatelaines
Upon the tessellated stones repose;
Silent they lie, unhearing, movelessly,
With eyes that stare unseeing where the panes
Expand above them their undying rose.

EPIPHANY

GASPAR, Balthasar, Melchior, three Sages,
Who silver, corals and enamels bring,
With their long train of camels following,
Advance as imaged in forgotten ages.
From the far East with homage come these mages,
Praying God's son shall heal their suffering,
Who suffer shall for each created thing;
Their broidered robes are borne by Ethiop pages.
As each King humbly doffs his diadem,
Kneeling before the Babe who smiles on them,
St. Joseph at the stable's threshold stands.
Augustus Cæsar reigned in days of old,
When the Three Kings brought incense, myrrh and gold—
Gaspar, Balthasar, Melchior, from far lands.

THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH

THE master-carpenter, since dawn grew bright,
Over his bench, with chisel and with plane,
Here rasping and there polishing the grain,
Has bent, the press to finish before night.
Not without pleasure now, as fails the light,
He sees the shadow of the great platane
Fall on his sill; Madame the Virgin, fain
With Anne and My Lord Jesus would unite
To stay his hand. No leaf stirs in the heat;
Saint Joseph, wearied, lets his chisel drop
And with his apron's corner wipes his face.
But deep within the dimness of the shop
The Divine Apprentice glorifies the space
While golden shavings fall about his feet.

THE RAPIER

U P O N the pommel read: Calixtus, Pope.
The tiara, the keys, the barque, the net,
Sumptuously blazoned, in relief are set,
With the ancestral bull, upon the cope.
In fretted coral, on the handle's slope,
Some pagan God or Faun is laughing yet;
So lustrous its enamel we forget
It was not made to shine, but veins to ope.
As if the Borgias' fame he had foreknown,
This pastoral staff was forged for the first lord
By Perez de Las Cellas. More is shown
Of the Prince Cæsar and the Pope his sire
By this steel-bladed, golden-hilted sword
Than Ariosto's or Sannazar's lyre.

THE MEDAL

RIMINI'S ruler, priest and magistrate,
His hawk-like profile seems to come and go
On the bronze medal with the dusky glow
That Matteo de' Pastis chased. No great
Tyrant that earned a people's fear and hate,
Prince, duke, count, marquis nor magnifico,
Like Malatesta raged, not Ercolo,
Can Grand nor Etzel the Infuriate.
Supreme among them, Sigismund Pandulph
Deluged with blood Romagna, March and Gulf,
Built temples, made hot love, sang burning songs.
And to his Lady his fierce air belongs;
The same bronze that Isotta's smile reveals
Shows blossoms trampled beneath bestial heels.

AFTER PETRARCH

W H E N , coming forth from church, your charity
 You gave with noble hand and pious grace,
 Your beauty lit the porch's shadowed space,
The dazzled poor saw heaven's almonry.
And I saluted you most courteously,
 Most humbly, as would one in modest case,
 When, gathering your cloak, with haughty face,
You covered up your eyes and turned from me.
But Love, who most rebellious hearts subdues,
 Pity from mercy's source could not refuse,
 Nor suffer one so fair to be less sweet;
Demurely, slowly, you let fall your veil,
And through your trembling lashes' covert frail,
 From dusky depths there fell a starbeam fleet.

FOR RONSARD'S "BOOK OF LOVES"

MORE than one lover carved upon a tree
In gardens of Bourgueil, more names than one;
More than one heart, when the Louvre's ceilings shone,
Thrilled by a smile, knew pride and ecstasy.
Yet now it matters not, since memory
Forgets them in their narrow beds and none
Has sung their joy, nor where the grasses run,
Disputed for their dust oblivion's fee.
All die; Cassandre, thou, Marie, Hélène!
Dust, too, would be your bodies once so fair,
(No morrow, rose nor lily, may be thine)
Did not Ronsard, by yellow Loire or Seine,
Around your foreheads, with immortal care,
Love's myrtle and the bays of glory twine.

THE BEAUTIFUL VIOLE

To Henry Cros

*A vous troupe légère
Qui d'aile passagère
Par le monde volez . . .
JOACHIM DU BELLAY*

SHE leans upon the balcony and sees,
Her sad brow shaded by an olive tree,
The road along the Loire to Italy;
The flower that soon must fade, so fate decrees.
Touched by her slender hand, her grief to ease,
The viol soothes her loneliness, and she
Flies far in dream to him whose memory,
Where Rome is dust, forgets her smile could please.
When love's keen pang pierces her stricken heart,
Floats on the vibrant chords the soul divine
Of her he called his dearest Angevine;
And winds that for a distant land depart,
Perchance, caress him now, unfaithful long,
With her sweet voice that sings his harvest song.

EPITAPH

Suivant le vers de Henri III.

O P A S S E R , Hyacinth reposes here,
In life Maugiron's lordship he possessed;
He died—God pardon him and give him rest!—
For honor. Holy earth is now his bier.
Fairer than Quelus was this cavalier,
In plumed and jeweled toque and ruffled vest;
And so, behold his tomb with jacynth dressed,
By some new Myron carved in clusters clear.
After the last fond kiss, his hair was shorn,
And Henri had his beauteous body borne,
Wan in its winding-sheet, to Saint-Germain;
Then, that he should be mourned eternally,
This monument he raised within this fane,
The emblem of Apollo's grief to be.

GILDED VELLUM

OLD master-binder, aureate lines and bold,
 Tooled by the certain pressure of thy hand,
 Upon the volume's back and edge command
No more the splendor of their pristine gold;
The cyphers that thy flourishes enfold
 Each day grow fainter as their curves are scanned;
 The eye can scarcely trace the winding strand
Of vine upon the vellum cover scrolled.
This ivory, diaphanous and frail,
 Marie, Diane or Marguerite caressed
 In olden time, perhaps, with amorous fingers;
Gilded by Clovis Eve, the vellum pale
Evokes the elusive charm they once possessed,
 Their perfume's ghost, and dream whose shadow lingers.

THE DOGARESSA

A MARBLE palace in whose portico
The lords that Titian painted loiter while
Their massive chains of medieval style
Enrich their red dalmatics' gorgeous flow.
Their eyes, where gleams of pride patrician show,
Glimpse far beyond, where old lagoons beguile,
Canopied by the cloudless heaven's smile,
The sparkling Adriatic's azure glow.
And while a brilliant swarm of cavaliers,
Bathed in the light, gaily descend the stairs,
Trailing their gold and purple robes, a vain
And regal dame, standing apart, appears;
Who, turning in the rich brocade she wears,
Smiles at the negro carrying her train.

ON THE PONTE VECCHIO

Antonio di Sandro orefice

THE worthy master-goldsmith, since the morn,
 Enamel dripping from his brush's tip,
 Some golden clasp or nielloed Pax's lip
With flowery Latin mottoes would adorn.
Over the Bridge, where silvery chimes are borne,
 Cape, frock and cassock pass in fellowship;
 The sun sheds on fair maidens as they trip,
As from rose-windows, haloes sweetly worn.
By ardent dreams charmed to forgetfulness,
 Pensive apprentices love's hands that press
 Have ceased to chase on bezeled rings of gilt;
But with a burin keen as a stiletto,
The young Cellini, rapt, carves in concetto,
 Titans in combat on a dagger's hilt.

THE OLD GOLDSMITH

No other master in our guild enrolled,
Ruyz, Ximenes, Becerril nor Arphé,
The beryl, pearl and ruby could inlay
Like me, nor frieze beat out, nor handle mould.
I wrought, a painter-sculptor, pagan-souled,
In silver, with enamel's irised play,
O shame! no Christ on cross but Bacchus gay,
No martyred saint but Danaë nude and bold.
More than one sword-blade have I damascened,
My pride in Satan's works I never screened,
Wherefore eternal life I may have lost.
So, now that evening's shades encompass me,
Fain would I, like Fray Juan of Segovie,
Die chiseling a monstrance for the Host.

THE SWORD

BELIEVE me, pious child, old ways are best.
The sword with vine-wound hilt and cross-bar straight,
In a chivalric hand with strength elate,
Bears lighter than the Roman ritual's test.
Take it! The golden Hercules, caressed
By hands ancestral, polished by their hate,
Will warm thy fingers and with pride inflate
The splendid muscles of its metal breast.
Now brandish it! The supple steel will rain
Bouquets of sparks. And then your heart will feel
The haughty thrill that such a blade may bring;
As a gem of which a queenly breast is vain,
Behold, upon its shining groove the seal
Of Julian del Rey, the forge's king.

TO CLAUDIUS POPELIN

OLD masters painted on the fragile glass,
 In leaden frames, barons of high renown,
 And, on their knees, the beggar and the clown,
Hoods in their pious hands, before the mass.
On vellum rare illumined saints that pass
 Through scrolls of flowers, the breviary's crown;
 Or with swift strokes and subtle, flowing down
The ewer's curves, wrought gold fantasias.
Claudius, their son and rival of to-day,
 In his own works revives their art sublime,
 Stamping the metal with his genius' play;
Wherefore, beneath the luster of my rhyme
I would make green for future time to see,
 The laureled brow, his glory's panoply.

ENAMEL

THE furnace glows! The plate is ready! Now,
Thy lamp! Model the pigment's seething tints
And fix with flame the lines thy brush imprints,
Drenched in the sparkling powder! Say, wilt thou
With myrtle or with laurel wreath the brow
Of thinker, hero, lord or lover? Since
In some dark sky a God thou wouldst convince,
What hippocamp to him, or hydra vow?
Nay, sooner in an azure circle set,
Limn the proud face of Ophir's Amazon,
Thalestris, Bradamante or Aude; invest
Penthesilea with beauty fiercer yet;
Casque her blond tresses with a scorpion,
Make golden gorgons curb her swelling breast.

DREAMS OF ENAMEL

THE great fire roaring in the dark to-night,
Shackled in reddened bricks, with ardor deep
Whispers the bronze its magic that will keep,
Like burnished gold, the new enamel bright.
Renascent from my brush take foot or flight
The mythologic monsters. Centaurs leap!
Pan, Sphinx, Chimera, join the orgy's sweep;
Pegasus, Chrysaor, Gorgo's kin, alight!
Shall I paint in Orpheus' arms the wife he found,
From Hell's unyielding gate shall she emerge?
Achilles for the Amazon lament?
Shall Hercules throw the Hadean hound?
Or a maid writhe upon the cavern's verge,
With trembling body that the dragons scent?

THE
CONQUISTADORES

THE CONQUISTADORES

As from their native eyries hawks take wing,
Spurred by the miseries they proudly share,
Bravos and chiefs from Palos de Moguer
Sail drunk with dreams that brutal conquests bring.
They seek the treasure fabulous to wring
From the far mines Cipango's mountains bear,
The trade winds fill their sails and waft them where
Mysterious western shores lie beckoning.
Each evening for an epic dawn they yearn,
The phosphorescent seas that round them burn
Enchant their restless sleep with phantom gold;
And as from white-winged caravels they lean,
In unknown skies their wondering eyes behold
Strange stars ascend from Ocean's depths unseen.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

PONCE DE LEON, by the Fiend allured,
Stricken in years and full of ancient lore,
Seeing his scanty locks with age grown hoar
Took ship to seek the fountain that assured
Perpetual Youth. Dream-led, the quest endured
Three years. Through lonely seas his galleys bore
Until beyond Bermuda's misty shore
Rose Florida from skies no cloud obscured.
Blessing his madness, the Conquistador
Planted his pennon with a shaking hand
In the bright land so soon to be his grave.
Old Dreamer, happy was thy fortune for
Despite thee death made fair thy visioned land
And Glory to thee Youth immortal gave.

THE CONQUEROR'S GRAVE

THE blossoming catalpa's arching shade,
The ebon tulip-trees with white blooms starred—
Their fatal land his slumbers shall not guard:
With Florida his conquests were not staid.
For such a death shall no mean tomb be made:
Let the Great River keep him in its ward,
Defend him from the redskin and the pard:
There let West India's Conqueror be laid.
Let virgin waters hollow out his bed—
No catafalque, no candles at his head,
No psalm, no chapel-ardent, no ex-voto.
There shall the north wind in the cypress trees
Chant through its tears eternal litanies
Above the flood that sepulchres De Soto.

CAROLO QUINTO IMPERANTE

LET him be named among the glorious dead:
He guided through the Archipelago
Of the Queen's Gardens, where forever blow
Its perfumed breezes, the first keel they sped.
Age did not bleach his beard nor frost his head
As did the waves, the spray they whip to snow,
The still seas burning in the tropic glow,
The sirens that allured yet filled with dread.
By this man Castile triumphed, for her fleet
Won under him an empire where the sun
Never went down, so boundless was its scope;
Bartolomeo Ruiz, prince of pilots, one
Whose royal shield bears blazoned, as is meet,
An anchor, sable, with a golden rope.

THE ANCESTOR

To Claudius Popelin

GLORY has grooved the furrows on thy brow
And seamed thy cheek, illustrious cavalier;
The scars of wars and scorching suns appear
On that bold front that none could force to bow.
On mainland, islands, barren peaks didst thou
Plant everywhere the cross; among the sheer
Andean heights thy pennon fluttered clear,
And through the stormy Gulf, above thy prow.
For thy posterity has Claudius' brush
Made live again, in splendid armor wrought
With palms, their fierce and gloomy ancestor;
In the enamel's rich metallic flush
His searching eyes, aglow with somber thought,
Seem to behold the skies of Castille d'Or.

A NAME

WHEN with resonant voice, from the depths of my breast,
I name the great warriors that won Mexico
In the train of Cortez when he took the plateau,
'Tis the clangor of steel on the forge they suggest
The five Alvarados, Pierre, Jorge and the rest,
Velasquez, Avila, Sandoval, Montejó,
Olid, Ordaz. . . . Where barley and wheat did not grow
Each fed his brave charger the maize of the West.
Of these beautiful names, all more vibrant than bronze,
An entire Alexandrine one forms as it stands—
Far too weighty it seems to be only one Don's.
The hero who bore it, a plain caballero,
Like a gigantic Cid, this proud title commands:
Alonso Hernandez de Puertocarrero.

THE FOUNDER OF A CITY

WEARY in undiscovered Ophir's quest,
Planting the royal standard that he bore,
He founded on the Gulf's enchanted shore
A newer Carthage in the fabled West.
The wish for deathless fame his deed expressed,
The faith that by cementing them with gore
His city's stones should stand forevermore:
Yet was his hope built on the sand's unrest.
Stifled beneath her burning azure skies
Lies Cartagena, feverish waters rise
To gnaw her strand and sap her blackened walls;
The brilliant crest of the Conquistador
Alone the splendor of his dream recalls:
A city, argent, and a palm-tree, or.

THE SAME

THOUGH pampas, floods and wilds they overcame,
Inca and Aztec and Hiaqui foes,
Naught have those others now that glory knows
Save titles vain—count, marquis—or a name.
Pride of my race, thine is the Founder's fame:
In Carib waters thy New Carthage rose,
The cross, from where the Magdalena flows
To Darien's red land thou didst proclaim.
Upon her Ocean isle's surf-beaten coast,
Defying man, time, bolts and hurricanes,
Thy city lifts to heaven its forts and fanes;
No trefoil, wreath nor pearl thy house can boast,
But on its shield a golden palm displayed
Shelters a silver city in its shade.

TO A DEAD CITY

Cartagena de Indias
1532-1583-1697

SAD city, of old time the Ocean's queen!
 To-day the shark in peace pursues his prey,
 And in thy road where giant galleons lay
Shadows of drifting clouds alone are seen.
Since Drake's assault, his miscreants' rapine,
 Thy walls have crumbled in a black decay
 And seem, where Pointis rent them, to display
A zone of glorious pearls of somber sheen.
Between a burning sky and fleecy sea,
 While the sun sleeps through noon's monotony,
 Thy dream is of the old Conquistadores;
In enervating nights of tropic calm,
Beneath the unending shudder of the palm
 Thou slumberest, cradled in thy vanished glories.

THE ORIENT
AND
THE TROPICS



THE VISION OF KHEM

I

THE Nile, still sleeping in its reedy bed,
Is cradled by the wind's contented sigh;
The stars, that blaze like torches from the sky,
Shed in the dawn their flowers of paling red.
Afar, toward Luxor, with immobile head,
Against the rosy heaven standing high,
A doe, that sniffed the freshness, starts to fly,
And instantly with flashing hoofs has sped.
Bathed in the hues that mount the eastern skies,
The Pyramids in burnished splendor stand,
Holding like bronze the rays that vibrant run.
Day breaks. And strains, scarce audible, arise,
Floating elusive on the sea of sand;
The voice of Memnon that salutes the sun.

II

Noon. The air burns. Under terrible light
Rolls, with its leaden wave, the ancient stream;
Sheer from the zenith falls the blinding beam,
And Phra, relentless, gloats on Egypt's plight.
Stretched on the sand, flanks sunken deep from sight,
With eyes that never close great sphinxes seem
To scan with long and cryptic looks of dream
The obelisks that lift in endless flight.
Dark specks upon the sky serene and clear,
The vultures float on wings that never tire;
All things a sleep lethargic have begun.
The hot rays beat, and motionless and near,
Sits silent in the very solar fire
The bronze Anubis baying at the sun.

III

A band of steel in windings manifold,
The torpid river with unwrinkled breast,
By fields of rice along the Desert's crest
Flows in the heat the burning heavens hold.
Thy barque, O Sun, by Amon-Ra controlled,
Resplendent pilot, of the Gods most blest,
Behind it leaves a blazing furrow rest,
And sinks, a disc of fire, in fluid gold.
The holy hour has come when toward the Nile
The fellahs from the harvest fields descend
In pairs whose profiles silhouette the light;
With amphors balanced to their step they file,
And on the air, while stirs the burning wind,
Fall bursts of laughter like a cooling rite.

IV

Trampling the reeds with heavy hoofs that scare
 The nesting birds, a Nubian buffalo
 Plunges through fields of rice and bursts in snow
Superb as Apis; and advancing there,
While drowsy crocodiles desert their lair,
 He bellows toward the river's deeper flow,
 With great orbs lambent in the purple glow
And thirsty nostrils fuming in the air.
The day has slowly waned and now the light,
 Low in the west, dissolves in dusk at last,
 While lengthening shadows to the landscape cling;
And suddenly has come the solemn night,
Leaving a tremor in the heavens vast,
 And covers Egypt with its sable wing.

V

The full moon shines in splendor on the Nile.
The old necropolis begins to waken,
Where lie in hieratic pose unshaken
The mummied monarchs, swathed and lacquered, while
Countless as in the days of Pharaoh's guile,
All Egypt in migration, tombs forsaken,
Goes rapt in granite dream with way retaken,
Noiseless through night, for many a ghostly mile.
From the hieroglyph-emblazoned wall
Freeing themselves, come casket-bearing priests
Of Amon-Ra, great God that guides the sun;
And bounding to their feet, stand dazzled all
The rams, the sphinxes, crimson-belted beasts,
Roused from eternal sleep, and start to run.

VI

The throngs still more innumerable loom.
 Vacant the bier-lined hypogeum now;
 Deserting the cartouches, wondrous how
The sacred hawks their skyward flight resume.
They pass, beasts, peoples, kings! Lighting its gloom,
 The gold uræus girds each sullen brow;
 But the thin lips of pitch no word allow.
First the great Gods: Hor, Ptah, Neith, Hathor, Khnoum!
Then ibis-headed Thoth, his retinue
 Crowned with the pschent, adorned with lotus, pour
 In shenti clad. The veering pomp invades
Ruins of temples, writhing their horror through;
And shining on the cold length of the floor,
 The moon makes weird colossi of their shades.

THE PRISONER

To Gérôme

MUEZZINS cease their call to evening prayer,
Green skies grow purple, with a fringe of red,
The crocodile dives to his muddy bed,
The Nile's last murmur melts upon the air.
Legs crossed, as if he smoked his chibouk there,
A Pacha dreams, with some strange hasheesh fed,
While straining hard to drive the boat ahead,
Two negroes grip the oars, their torsos bare.
From a harsh guzla scraping savage strains,
A leering Arnaut, jibing as he plays,
Hurls from the stern an imprecation vile;
For, in the boat, and bleeding from his chains,
Lies an old Sheikh who marks with stupid gaze
The minarets that tremble in the Nile.

THE SAMURAI

He was a man with two swords

TOUCHING the sonorous biwa absently
She watches, through her lattice of bamboo,
Along the glaring level shore, one who
Advances like a victor. Yes, 'tis he
Of whom she dreamed. A sabre sweeps each knee,
His fan waves high, his sash of scarlet hue
Girdles his sable mail, where glitters, too,
Hizen's and Tokungawa's blazonry.
The superb warrior, sheathed in scale and placque,
Brilliant in bronze and lacquer, seems to mock
Some great crustacean, dark yet brightly gleaming.
He sees her, smiles beneath his bearded masque,
And at each stride the sun upon his casque
Gilds its antennæ, quivering and beaming.

THE DAIMIO

Morning of battle

FLECKED with his war-whip's black quadruple lash,
His charger bellicose curvets and neighs,
His sabre rings and clatters where it sways,
His plated skirts against his cuirass clash.
The Chief, in lacquered bronze and crépon sash,
Dropping his masque a beardless face betrays,
And lifts to Fuji an adoring gaze
Where snows reflect the red aurora's flash.
And in the glowing East he sees a star,
Gloriously bright that morning of disaster,
A dazzling orb above the sea afar;
As if to shield his eyes from glory vaster,
His iron fan with gesture swift he raises,
On whose white satin arc a red sun blazes.

THE SCREEN

THIS bizarre screen, with its exotic scent,
Shows, broidered on its silk, kiosques and trees;
A golden junk bears richly-garbed Chinese
Across a lake—fantastic ornament.
Two mandarins, superbly corpulent,
A damsel from beneath her sunshade sees;
They smile and ogle her, but do not please
The dainty-footed fair indifferent.
With love-lorn and devouring eyes they gaze
At her slim-fingered, rosy hand that plays
Among the ripples where she lets it trail.
Ah, she is charming, with her fan at play,
This wee Celestial, ivory-fair and frail,
Enameled, almond-eyed and quaintly gay.

FLOWERS OF FIRE

TORRENTS of flame for eons spurted high,
In Chaos' time, from the volcano's pyre;
The solitary crater's plume of fire
Blazed above Chimborazo's to the sky.
No echo from the peak now makes reply;
Birds quench their thirst where fell the ashes dire;
Earth's blood, the lava, when its molten ire
Congealed at length, in long repose would lie.
A final throe the old volcano tries,
At the gaping crater's edge, forever cold,
Shining across the dust with red acclaim;
A sudden thunder echoes from the skies,
And in the hurtled pollen's shower of gold
The kindled cactus bursts, a rose of flame.

THE CENTURY FLOWER

UPON the lava, at the last descent,
Where the volcanic stream dried long ago,
A seed from Gualatieri chanced to blow,
And, sprouting, seemed a fragile resident.
It thrived, and drained a secret nourishment
With stem the moist root quickened from below;
Under a century's suns maturing slow,
The bud colossal crowned the stalk that bent.
At last, in regal flame, one burning hour,
With giant pistil held erect, it burst,
The stamen hurling pollen far away;
And the great aloe with its scarlet flower,
Whose nuptial dream a hundred years had nursed,
Blossomed to find it live a single day.

THE CORAL REEF

THE sun beneath the sea, mysterious dawn,
 Illumes the dusk the coral forests keep,
 Where mingled thrive in Ocean valleys deep
The quickened flora and the growing spawn.
Seaweed, anemone and moss have drawn,
 With hues they gathered in their saline sleep,
 A purple robe of rich design to sweep
The madrepore's vermiculated lawn.
With scales more lustrous than the enamel's glow,
 Across the coral branches in the sun
 A stately fish glides indolently bold;
Then swift his fin strikes flaming from below
And makes across the unrippled surface run
 Tremors of pearl, of emerald and gold.

NATURE AND DREAM



ANTIQUÉ MEDALLION

STILL Etna's grapes ripen for golden wine,
Such as Theocritus imbibed of old,
But girls whose loveliness his verse extolled
The poet seeks to-day and finds no sign.
Losing her profile's purity divine,
Arethusa, slave and favorite, behold,
Blends in her Grecian blood the uncontrolled
Saracen flame with Anjou's pride of line.
Time passes. All things die. The marble breaks.
A myth is Agrigentum; Syracuse
Under the sky's blue winding-sheet reposes;
But stamped by love, the pliant silver takes
Beauty the old medallions never lose,
The fair Sicilian girl that each encloses.

FUNERAL LAMENT

To Phocis and the shrines that dominate
The crags of Pytho, by the lightnings rent,
When down to Hades her great warriors went,
Their divine effigies Greece sent in state.
And when the soft stars would illuminate
The radiant Isles' and lonely Gulf's extent,
Their listening shades heard o'er their tombs lament
The Sea of Salamis that mourned their fate.
Hoary and old in grief I shall descend
Into bought earth, paid candles pierce the night,
A hireling priest my narrow grave attend.
And I had dreamed of laurels I should reap,
Of falling like my fathers in the light,
Still young, of youths and maidens that would weep.

THE VINTAGE

THE weary vintagers have broken lines,
Clear voices in the air of evening blend;
The women marching toward the press extend
A greeting while they sing, with friendly signs.
Once Naxos fumed a censer from its wines,
Under such skies as snowy swans ascend,
And Ariadne, at the revel's end,
Clasped the fair God, drunk with the blood of vines.
No more does Dionysos brandish bright
His thyrsus, victor over man and beast,
Nor yoke with flowers his panthers for the feast;
But autumn, daughter of the amber light,
Twines in her tawny hair, a golden mane,
Leaves of old rites still reddened with their stain.

THE SIESTA

No insect hums or no marauding bee,
All Nature slumbers in the burning heat,
And through the heavy frondage sifts a sweet
And velvet dusk, green as the moss to me.
Piercing the somber dome, high noon I see,
And on my languid drooping eyelids beat
A thousand furtive sunbeams that complete
The crimson web that shines from tree to tree.
And toward this net of fire, of woven rays,
Swarm fragile butterflies in brilliant flight,
Intoxicated with the scent and light;
And then with trembling fingers in the blaze
Of golden threads, for my harmonious schemes,
I take them singly and enmesh my dreams.

TO A CUBAN FOUNTAIN

BESIDE the fountain, at the close of day,
I love to lie, by its sweet coolness wooed,
And from my heart rise in that solitude
Thoughts like the drops that wreath its urn with spray.
Oft the white splendors of the moonlight play
Upon its sculptured shape and half delude;
Living it seems—fond error of my mood,
Its form endowed with charms that melt away.
O my fair Indian, the sun's own love,
From maiden dreams awakened by the dove
That lulls thee with her vague and tender song;
Cuba, my land, beneath thy palms so fair,
Whose sweet-voiced streams murmur of passion where
Through radiant nights their music they prolong.

THE SEA
OF BRITTANY

To Emmanuel Lansyer

A PAINTER

HE understood the old and pensive-eyed
People who trod this sterile Breton way,
The level lands, monotonous and grey,
Where vine and oak the crumbling manors hide.
From the steep slope where twisted trees abide,
He saw on stormy nights that dash the spray,
The red sun sink in surges far away
And on his lips the salty foam has dried.
He painted the sea, splendid and vast, where white
Clouds pass and leave an amethystine shade,
Its emerald anger and its azure sigh;
Fixing the moment's furtive dusk and light
Upon a narrow canvas, he has made
A shallow pool reflect the evening sky.

BRITTANY

THAT thy sad soul to rapture may awake,
 Breathe deeply of the sea-wrack's salty scent,
 Borne on the Ocean breeze beneficent
Where around Arvor's capes the white seas break.
A rosy flush the furze and heather take.
 Here men change not, here all is permanent,
 And in the granite hills' encirclement
Their elves and clans are shielded for thy sake.
Come. Everywhere behold against grey skies
 Unscathed the cypresses of Arthez rise,
 The menhirs guard the ashes of the brave;
And Ocean, cradling in a bed of gold
Voluptuous Is and Occismor the bold,
 Shall soothe thy heart-ache with her murmur grave.

FLORIDUM MARE

THE harvest floods the diapered plateau,
Rolls, undulates and foams, by fresh winds swayed;
A harrow's profile, distantly displayed,
Heaves like the bowsprit of a black bateau.
Beneath my feet the sea, in sunset's glow,
Rose, azure, purple, every orient shade,
Seems, where it ebbs, with fleecy whiteness sprayed,
A great green field of boundless breadth and flow.
The gulls that follow where the tides may go,
Fly to the ripened corn and to and fro
Wheel o'er its golden waves with joyous cries;
While from the land the honeyed breezes blow,
And as they will on wings enraptured sow
The flowery sea with swarms of butterflies.

SETTING SUN

THE dazzling furze shines like a golden crest
In sunset splendor on the granite height;
Afar the foam upon the bar is bright,
Where the earth's end the endless seas arrest.
Below, the dark, the silence, the hushed nest,
The smoking roof the toiler gains with night.
The Angelus sounds through the fading light,
Blent with the Ocean's sonorous unrest.
From distant moorland path and from ravine,
As from abysmal depths the voices come
Of shepherds urging laggard cattle home;
To the horizon twilight veils the scene,
All heaven darkens, and the sun expires,
Furling his crimson fan of branching fires.

MARIS STELLA

THEY kneel, in linen bonnets, to implore,
 With prayer-clasped hands, all coarsely clothed and pale—
 The women who, upon the rocky shale,
Gaze toward the Isle of Batz, where breakers roar.
The men departing for a distant shore,
 Sons, fathers, husbands, lovers, those that hail
 From Paimpol, Audierne, Cancale, northward sail;
Brave fishermen, some to return no more!
The plaintive chant invokes, with voices high
 Above the clamor of the sea and town,
 The imperiled sailors' hope, the holy star;
From Roscoff to Sybiril bells reply,
The Angelus, while all are kneeling down,
 Chimes in the crimson heaven and dies afar.

THE BATH

As might a centaur, man and beast in one,
 Into the surf they plunge, naked and free;
 Powdered with golden mist, they seem to be
Athletes of bronze aglow beneath the sun.
The rustic rider and wild stallion
 Breathe in the briny odor thirstily,
 And as they meet the chill surge of the sea
Through flesh and mane delicious shivers run.
The wave swells, rushes, rises like a wall,
 Then breaks in foam. The bathers shout and neigh,
 And from the stallion's tail blue showers fly;
Mane streaming wild, he rears against the sky,
Then dark breasts cleave the billows as they fall
 Whipped into frothing cataracts of spray.

CELESTIAL BLAZONRY

U S I N G for their enamel all the sky,
Often appear, and dazzle in the west,
Purple and silver clouds that paint a crest
Enormous on the heavenly window high.
Eagle and serpent to support it fly,
Captives the wind delivers to the test,
Heraldic monsters, each with straining breast,
Rearing until their stature fills the eye.
In combat strange, on just such fields of space,
When the archangels met the hosts of Hell,
Such shield a George or Michael might have won;
Like those they captured once with Christian grace
And carried when Constantinople fell—
On a sea vert, Byzantine gold, the sun!

ARMOR

AT Trogor, to direct my steps to Raz,
I hired a guide shaggy as some old Gaul;
We strode inhaling odors pastoral
Of Cymric wilds where grow the genistas.
The west grew red; we were still trudging as
A keen wind smote my cheek. An interval
The churl surveyed that land funereal:
Ar-mor, long arm outstretched, he said this was.
I saw, from high upon the ruddy heath,
The Ocean monstrous but sublime beneath,
Hurl its green billows at the black cape's base;
And my heart felt, as moving toward the west
Nightfall the vast horizon's void possessed,
The wind's joy and the ecstasy of space.

RISING TIDE

THE sun is like a beacon's steady flare,
From Raz to Penmarch slopes in mist recline;
Alone, against the wind, in errant line,
The gulls on beaten wing the tempest dare.
Billows of green with furious onslaught fare,
Wave upon wave with foaming manes that shine;
They break in thunder and their seething brine
Lends the far reefs the tossing plumes they wear.
And I drift with the current of my thought,
Wasting myself in dreams, with hope, regret,
Of which alone the bitter lees remain;
The while, fraternal from the sea is caught,
The same remonstrance man is lifting yet,
A protest to the Gods, forever vain.

SEA BREEZE

WINTER has stripped of bloom both moor and field;
Naught lives, and on the grey rocks of the cave,
Where breaks the Atlantic's unrelenting wave,
Hangs the sere leaf the last stem will not yield.
And yet, what subtle perfume has unsealed
From wind and sea, the odor that I crave,
Stirring me strangely with the breath it gave?
Whence came this scent that to my heart appealed?
Ah, now I know! From the far West it came,
Three thousand miles, where the blue Antilles
Swoon with the burning stars above their strand;
And I, whom this wave-beaten shore may claim,
Have caught an olden fragrance on the breeze
From garden roses of my native land.

THE CONCH

THROUGH countless winters, under what cold seas
That none shall know, O frail and tinted shell,
Have the deep currents, with their hidden swell,
Rolled thee in their profound immensities?
But now beneath the sky in golden ease,
Far from the wave, thou fain wouldst couch thee well;
Ah, vain thy hope! For the great Ocean's knell
Moaning in thee, thou never canst appease.
My soul, too, is a prison like to thine;
As in thy curving fold the ancient woe
Still keeps the thunder of its sad refrain,
So deeper echoes in this heart of mine,
Still full of Her, with far and stormy throes,
The memory of an eternal pain.

THE HELIOTROPE

THE heliotrope, unfolding to the dawn,
Trembles and sways in its effulgence bright,
Smiling, where dewdrops linger in their flight,
Like azure eyes whence tears not yet are gone.
Noon comes. Kissed by the sun its fronds are drawn
In upward aspiration to the light,
While love's hot lips, in their consuming rite,
Make pale the blossoms that they press upon.
Withered, at last, the shadows it would seek,
But the God's shafts are ceaseless, pitiless,
Implacable in his triumphant hour;
O soul of mine, would destiny might wreak
Such doom on thee! so smite me and caress,
Love, ardent sun, almighty in thy power.

THE LILY

I

R O Y A L flower that I love, splendor of May!
Tall on thy stalk, unsullied from the mire;
At nightfall from thy chalice there respire
Virginal perfumes, as thy censers sway.
Along the stream, where spring has wreathed the way,
Thy snows unfold their gossamer attire;
Woe to the slug that seeks thee with desire!
With bliss made drunk he dies, for love can slay.
O flower of the Ideal! Immaculate
Lily, with golden pistils aureoled,
Thy whiteness honor for her emblem chose;
God loves thee and the Virgin did create
After thine image. In her we behold
Thy noble fairness and thy chaste repose.

II

O maiden, lily-like in purity,
 Crowned with thy diadem of golden hair,
 Of youth and innocence! Ah, everywhere
Thy presence breathes the scent of modesty.
Thy clear eyes, wide with wonder, cannot see
 The ardor that they stay when love would dare,
 Veiled in thy ignorance, divinely fair,
Which, of thy virtue weft, envelops thee.
Desire will come, when, swooning, thou shall know
 The touch of love as his profaning hands
 Gather the fragile flower of maidenhood!
Thus, as with burning kiss the breezes blow
The yearning pollen where the lily stands,
 Its treasured gold is scattered in a flood.

THE BED

W H E T H E R of serge its curtains or brocade,
Sad like a tomb or happy like a nest,
There we are born, repose and are caressed,
Babe, bridegroom, grandsire, grandam, wife or maid.
Wedded or dead, with holy water sprayed,
Beneath the black cross or the palm-branch blessed,
There all begin, all find eternal rest,
From life's first dawn till death's last candles fade.
In humble walls enclosed or proud pavilion,
Triumphant in its gilding and vermilion,
Of oak rough-hewn, cypress or maple built;
Happy the sleeper, without fear or guilt,
In the great venerable, paternal bed,
Couch of his race, the living and the dead.

DEATH OF THE EAGLE

THE eagle soars above the eternal snows,
Spreading his pinions in the upper blue,
Nearer the sun, whose lambent deeps renew
His orbs' dull fires, where new effulgence glows.
He breathes the sparkling flood that round him flows,
Rising in pride the tempest to pursue;
Courting the lightning's bolt it strikes him through,
Crushing both wings with thunder-driven blows.
A wild scream, and the vortex whirls him down;
Sublime, he drinks the flames that round him hiss
And plunges, shriveled, into the abyss.
What joy, for Liberty and Glory's crown,
In pride of might and ecstasy's uplift,
To die a death so dazzling and so swift!

PLUS ULTRA

MAN has subdued the lion's burning land,
The lands ophidian, venomous, the seas
Where o'er the paths of olden argosies
The frail wings of the nautilus expand.
But, far beyond Spitzbergen's desert strand,
The Maelstrom, and the snows' immensities,
The Pole is washed by tides that never freeze,
Where never flag was raised by seaman's hand.
Come! I would crash through that unconquered ice!
My soul the facile fame will not suffice
Of conquered gold by strength alone achieved.
Farewell! And at the farthest promontory
The sea shall break the silence unrelieved
To soothe my pride with whispers of my glory.

THE LIFE OF THE DEAD

To the poet Armand Silvestre

WHEN over us the somber cross they raise,
And to itself our bodies earth receives,
From thine the lily shall put forth its leaves,
From mine the rose to ruddy birth shall blaze.
And death divine, that thou hast hymned with praise,
That in oblivion hushes all that grieves,
Shall bear us heavenward on wing that cleaves
To new-born stars along enchanted ways.
And, mounting to the sun, companion souls,
Bathed in the deathless flame that round it rolls,
Shall be dissolved in pure felicity;
Poet and friend, to glory's sacred throng,
The hierarchy of the great of song,
Forever joined in confraternity.

THE COMBAT

EACH hurls himself with fury on his foe
 Until beneath the shock the mountain shakes;
 The lightning through the misty darkness breaks,
Tumultuous shadows shrouding all below.
The clash of arms, blow answering to blow,
 The wind upon its whirling eddies takes.
 Die! cries Halmgunnar. Death! the other makes
Reply. A great bolt strikes. The heavens glow.
Stunned, Agnar totters. Then, his broken blade
 Brandishing vainly, falls, and where he swayed,
 Prone in the dust, a giant frame, he lies.
And lo, with her protecting shield outspread,
The Valkyr, fulgorant, above his head,
 Beats with her silver wings the lurid skies.

THE BLACK MASS

To Félicien Rops

EMBRACE me closer! so that my desire
 May lend ecstatic frenzy to our kiss;
 Remorse shall vanish in thy breast's abyss—
Take, burn my heart upon a carnal pyre!
My oath eternal I have spurned entire,
 Finding with each new sin increasing bliss;
 Scourger and victim at the same time, this,
Thy flank divine shall bear my altar-fire!
O God, what matters death, the final goal,
 Ineffable hope, inexplicable pain?
 Not for an instant while my arms restrain
And all thy ardent flesh dissolves my soul,
Shall I lose sentience of thy kiss of flame,
 Though heaven I brave and hell await to claim!

TO THE TRAGEDIAN E. ROSSI

After a recitation from Dante

I SAW thee, Rossi, trailing thy mantle black,
Break sad Ophelia's heart, and stifle, then,
Sobs in the fatal kerchief of thy sin;
A goaded tiger, mad with love's attack.
As Lear, Macbeth, I marked thee! Wept, alack,
At Juliet's tomb, to see thee kiss her when
As Romeo thou wert supreme of men.
Yet, greater still, one night with thee comes back!
Ah, then I felt the terror and joy sublime,
For the first time to hear thy golden voice
Roll the iron fanfare of the triple rhyme;
And then to me, too fearful to rejoice,
Singing of Hell the living Dante came
In red reflection of the infernal flame.

MICHAEL ANGELO

IN the Sistine, while Rome held Carnival,
A tragic torment drew him from the gay;
Alone he painted sibyls, prophets grey,
And the Last Judgment on the somber wall.
He heard the moaning Titan in him call,
Shackled upon a summit far away;
Love, glory, country, these, he mused, decay,
High dreams deceive, death is the end of all.
These massive giants, too, weary of might,
These slaves that clasp in the enduring stone,
So strangely moulded to a tortured mood;
In marble cold, his soul's supremest flight,
How well, with mighty quiver, he has shown
Rage of a God that Matter has subdued.

THE SCALIGERI

IN old Verona, martial still, still fair,
Stand the great tombs, where, each with iron beard,
The Scaligeri sleep on shields upreared,
Mutely, with mailed hands crossed, as if in prayer.
Each visage shows the outrage of the air,
In rigid robes of stone each form is geared,
And gleams of Hell's reflected pride have peered
For centuries through those dead eyelids there.
Of these stern lords, Night's sons, the race of Can,
It was that Petrarch penned the line that ran:
"Then shall Verona's dogs their flesh devour!"
And yet, O city, would their tyranny
Be better than thy pave's servility
To alien sabres insolent with power.

PROMETHEUS

STRUCK by the bolt of angry Zeus' decree,
As down the vault of heaven the Titan fell,
From his wild eyes no tears were forced to tell
That he was vanquished; unsubdued was he!
Torn by the vulture's claws, in agony,
Pity for man still made his bosom swell;
His brow the fatal wing-beats could repel
With hopes of vengeance and of liberty.
That ancient anguish once again is ours,
But justice comes not with the lagging hours:
No Hercules will save, the Gods are dead.
On our bruised souls we feel the crushing weight
Of shameful wrong, and bowed beneath our fate
The hot tears flow, for outraged honor shed.

ON A BUST OF PSYCHE

DEEP in a park deserted, far away,
Where sound of bird or bee is heard alone,
A bust with Grecian grace, a flower of stone,
Blooms on its stem, a shaft of marble grey.
The dewy eglantine, at dawn of day,
A scarcely opened scarlet bud has thrown
Against the vestal mouth, from which has flown,
It seems, a silver laughter, ghostly gay.
With golden powder from the stamens frail
Drenched by the azure quiver of its wings,
A butterfly has made the bud its goal;
And on thy lips I see, O Psyche pale,
Where heaven's passion and earth's beauty cling
In Attic dream, tremble thy pagan soul!

ON A BROKEN STATUE

THE pious moss has closed its mournful eyes;
In this drear wood, its task to once define,
They seek in vain the Nymph that poured the wine
On the idyllic spot where now it lies.
Erewhile, viburnum and the ivy rise,
Careless, around the wreckage once divine,
If Pan, or Faun, or Hermes they entwine,
Or what green horns its broken brow surprise.
Behold! A slanting beam, caressing yet
Its flattened face, inserts two orbs of gold,
The vine a red lip laughing from the sod;
And wind and leaf in moving magic met,
And sun and shadow as they shift and hold,
Of this old marble make a living God.

ADDITIONAL SONNETS

THE TRIUMPH OF IACCHOS

EVOHE! Cymbals crash! The echoes thrill!
It is Iacchos, twice-born God, Zeus' son,
Guiding his tigers, which he smiles upon;
Symbol of force, that genius guides at will.
Pale, bleeding, for Love's wounds may almost kill,
Ariadne, careless of the Perjured One,
Lips parted in ambrosial abandon,
At Asia's Conqueror laughs, impassioned still.
Cybele's flanks pulsate as they advance;
The sunny hillsides, purple with the grape,
Resound as eager teeth crush amber fruit.
Trampling the tender herbage as they dance,
While old Silenus runs, a staggering shape,
The mad Bacchantes follow in pursuit.

RISING TIDE

ONCE more the storm, whose every trumpet cries
 The charge, assails the high unshaken rocks;
 The vanquished gulls are tossed in screaming flocks
Under the whip the whirling tempest plies.
Like troops of cavalry the surges rise;
 The waves, uprearing, with disheveled locks,
 Bend, foaming rivals, to the gust that shocks—
The splendor flames before my blinded eyes.
And you, tormenting thoughts, mount, too, in me,
 Hopes that deceived and wasted energies
 Beating the rocks with fury profitless.
As aspirations vain incite the sea,
Such is my fate: my heart that naught can ease
 Must cry for peace it never can possess.

SONNETS

Written by José-Maria de Heredia in 1903

On the occasion of the centenary of his cousin

The Cuban Poet, His Namesake

I

To thee, from France! The mother most benign
Of Liberty, sublime and smiling where
Over the lands Columbus found so fair,
It lives in ardent life with strength divine.
Soldier, to thee! A dauntless shield was thine
Ever when virtue's combat thou wouldst dare;
To thee, who swung that beacon in the air,
Star of the Isle that smiles by seas malign.
To thee, the champion of Cuba's glory!
Thy dreams of love and hope that shall endure
See no reverse for her but fortune sure;
Rejoicing, in my song I breathe the story,
Touching on bended knee thy vibrant shield,
Because to death thy voice shall never yield.

II

To thee, from France! Mother of beauty, too,
 And light divine! Whose crown immortal shows
 The vital grace that decks the living rose;
Lover of Nature's beauty, painter, who
The Antilles in all their splendor knew!
 To thee, the ode's great king, whose genius chose
 To chant a pilgrim song, whose music flows
With strength melodious and rhythm true.
To thee, the chanter of Niagara's roar,
 Whose strophes throw its thunder to the world,
 Its hues of changing iridescence whirled
In the great foaming flood the waters pour;
Of its profound abyss that mortals fear,—
 Thy namesake, great Heredia, sings thee here!

III

And I, forsaking now the tongue of France
For childhood's speech, in which my parents told
Of the Conquistadores' deeds of old,
Spain's heroes splendid in their arrogance,
Remember boyhood's dreams, a backward glance,
And from their rhythm and their hues of gold
Would weave a wreath of roses to enfold
Thy sepulcher like fragrant suppliants.
Oh, thou great spirit that adored the light!
I, who am of thy blood and bear thy name
And as my heritage thy lyre would claim,
Thy pardon, should I stammer in my plight
When rendering in thy tongue, and as I can,
To the poet homage, honor to the man.

ROMANCERO



THE CLASPING OF HANDS

BROODING within his castle, still great among the great,
Yea, greater than Abarca himself or than Inigo,
The old Diego Laynez tastes nothing on his plate.

He has not slept, he cannot, since the Count struck the blow
That on his cheek left burning the livid brand of shame,
No strength has he for vengeance, age took it long ago.

None of his friends, fear tells him, will vindicate his fame—
What care they for his honor?—Heart broken, in despair,
Fain would he live no longer to bear a sullied name.

So, bidding them be summoned, he sees before him there
The four young princes standing, branches of royalty;
Sancho, Alfonso, Manrique, and Ruy, the youngest heir.

His white beard on his bosom trembles so all can see,
But to his withered muscles strength comes with honor's thrill,
And Sancho's hand, the eldest, he clasps convulsively.

But Sancho cries in stupor:—Enough! What is your will?
To maim me with your hand-clasp?—The next, Alfonso, too,
Exclaims:—What would you, father? You do me grievous ill!—

And Manrique spake in his turn:—My lord! Why then do you
So deeply sink your talons I feel the pangs of Hell?—
No answer makes Diego for none he deems their due.

The woe and desperation that in his bosom swell
Awake the ancient courage that nerved his mighty arm;
He strides to Ruy, the youngest, his answer to compel.

Close clutching him, his father, with passionate alarm,
Feels of his boyish body, his slim white wrists and hands—
Alas, what feeble weapons an enemy to harm!

One throb supreme of ardor and hope his heart expands;
His fingers, gnarled by warfare, close with ferocious force.
Eyes flashing fire, undaunted, erect young Ruy stands.

The old man's glazed eyes glitter. Ruy's blood stops in its course

As in that vise's pressure his tender flesh is ground;
But the boy's cry is strangled, dies in a rattle hoarse.

Then he breaks forth:—Unhand me! Unhand me! By Mahound!
Soon shall his heart, his liver, be torn from out his breast!
My hands shall bruise like marble, like steel my claws shall wound!—

His tears, that flow in transport, the old man's joy attest:
—Son of my soul and body, Rodrigo mine! he cries,
God guard thee till thy fury our honor hath redressed!—

With words of deadly hatred and burning, swimming eyes,
He tells him of the insult, the blow that would degrade,
The name of him who struck it, the shame it signifies.

Then drawing from his scabbard a sword Tizona made,
The crucifix he kisses adorning the quillon
And to Rodrigo proffers the proud and heavy blade.

—Take it. And when you use it think what your sire had done.
Be thy foot firmly planted, thy hand to strike be prompt.
Thy house hath lost its honor. Regain it. Go my son.—

One hour after, Ruy Diaz slew the Count.

THE REVENGE OF DIEGO LAYNEZ

A T the table's head that evening—he has no equal there—
Pale sits Diego Laynez in the candelabra's light,
To sup with his hidalgos, sole in his chieftain's chair.

Three sons he sees, the eldest, but missing from his sight
Is the youngest that his old heart is yearning for. Alas,
He returns not—he has fallen! The Count was swift to smite.

The red wine laughs in the silver beakers as they pass:
The squire, his dagger gleaming, his flowing sleeve makes neat
To pour the fiery vintage and ice each waiting glass.

Naught says the lord and master, nor bids his guests to meat.
Down his white beard are creeping two streams of silent tears:
He sits transfixed, unseeing, before them in his seat.

The carver at his dresser nor word nor signal hears,
Upon an empty table gazes the waiting throng,
They shall not sup this evening, sons, vassals, cavaliers.

As one that fronts a spectre, a shape of woe and wrong,
His eyes Diego Laynez closes, he bows his head,
Beholding his boy murdered, his foe alive and strong.

He sees the insulter scatheless and honor forfeited;
His fathers rise before him, mighty and stainless men
Who on the Day of Judgment shall speak in accents dread.

With outrage come accoupled contumely and disgrace.
The Laynez' pride ancestral no longer can survive:
Dead is his son, his glory dead; he, living still, is base.

—My lord, look up! Regard me! 'Tis I, and as I live
This table without viands makes but a sorry show;
To-day I have been hunting and what I bring I give!

With neither hound nor huntsman I chased the boar, and lo,
Here is the head I offer!—Outstretched, his fearful prize
Ruy by its locks disheveled holds, that his sire may know.

With a bound Diego Laynez springs to his feet and cries:

—Is it thou? Thou, O accursed? Why is thy face so white?
Why is thy smile so frozen? Why so convulsed thine eyes?

Aye, 'tis thou! And now thine own tongue thine own teeth deeply bite,
For the last time hath it uttered thy insolence and scorn,
The sword thy speech hath severed, never to reunite.—

A single stroke from the blade Tizona wrought has shorn
The mocker's neck; to its fibres the dark blood, clotted, clings.
The old man dabbles in it, then smites that visage lorn.

In a voice of joy triumphant, with which the castle rings,
He shouts:—My son! Rodrigo! Beloved conqueror!
I was a slave, insulted! Thy stroke my freedom brings!

And thou, O fearful visage, rejoice my bosom for
Now shall my rage and fury, forever quenchless, take
Revenge for my dishonor on thee that I abhor!—

Once more the cheek he buffets, his hatred's thirst to slake.
—Behold, all ye assembled! Hear ye what I shall say!
Ruy, in my chair be seated, at the table's head! I make.

Him who this head hath brought it, head of my house this day!—

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CID

THE palace doors swing open their widest and the King
Emerges, Don Fernando. He is coming forth to greet
The young chief with his army triumphant following.

From cloister, workshop, tavern and vega to the street
Flock, in their joy exultant, priest, citizen and clown,
Stout wives and smiling maidens gaze from each window seat.

He comes, Christ's strong avenger, who threw the Crescent down!
'Tis Rodrigo de Bivar, the conqueror, to-day
Who comes back to Zamora, while tumult fills the town.

Before him he has driven in terror from the fray,
Spurring the striped genets, like zebras, they bestride,
The Saracens that blasphemed as fast they fled away.

He has stormed, razed, burnt and pillaged till from the Ebro's tide
To where the Gaudiana rolls past its golden shore,
Is heard the sound of wailing, o'er Algarve flaming wide.

He comes, with booty burdened, to glory evermore;
Behold, he leads behind him five kings of Barbarie,
His captives, who have hailed him, El Cid Campeador!

In triumph rides Ruy Diaz, acclaimed with ecstasy,
His lance couched as for battle, while flags and flowers fly
Their aureoles about him for Zamora to see.

And now the heralds' voices are raised to cry: The King!
The clamor dies as when startled a cloud of rooks and crows
Circling round tower and belfry in sudden flight take wing.

The painted doors have opened, Fernando to disclose:
He stands an instant dazzled upon the threshold there,
While in his ears the thunder of salutation grows.

Then he advances, glowing, while vivas shake the air. . . .
Suddenly guards and people part. In her frenzy bold,
A woman rushes forward, a vision of despair.

From her black veil escaping flow locks of tawny gold,

Great orbs of burning splendor illumine her haggard face;
Staggering, sobbing, fainting, she cries to the King: — Behold!

Dost thou not know me, Seigneur? I, who thy knees embrace?
Dead is my father — murdered! Thy vassal, tried and true!
Justice, Fernando, vengeance! For him and for his race.

Has the King then forgotten her who kneels here to sue?
Cares no more to befriend her, loving the murderer?
Heeds not her oath of vengeance, sworn against him that slew?

Of tears, O King, I am weary. Hate, like a fiery spur,
Goads the heart in my bosom, wrings from my throat the cry
That will not be stilled till you hear it, the prayer that I prefer.

Vengeance, O King! Swift vengeance! Justice! Would you deny
The assassin's blood to the orphan who claims it as her right? —
— It is Count Gomez' daughter! — say those that stand anigh.

Her rigid finger, lifting, points to the warrior knight,
Cid Ruy Diaz de Bivar, high on his battle-steed,
Who turns his glance upon her, like a blazing arrow's flight.

The somber eyes of the victor meet, with the lightning's speed,
The orbs of his accuser; fire flashes upon fire,
As when swords cross and parry twin streams of sparks are freed.

Silent stands Don Fernando, perplexed, in doubt most dire,
The right of the one and the other balancing in his mind,
Equal the scales he poises, justice his sole desire.

He hesitates, muses, ponders, the verdict undivined.
A hush falls on the people. The old King's absent gaze
Dwells on the gleaming lances beyond the throng aligned.

The knights that guard the booty he sees; the sunlight plays
Upon their helms and harness, the bared swords in their hands,
Ranged round the Cid, immobile, whose pride his port betrays.

Bearing the bright green banner blessed in far Moslem lands,
He sees the Emirs captured at Miramamolin;

Each of the five in vestments of silken scarlet stands.

Behind, their snowy turbans making more dark their skin,
A dozen negroes circle, each at a war-steed's rein.
Pensive the hoary monarch caresses his bearded chin.

And now to render justice the noble prince is fain.

—He has avenged his father, conquered the Algarve, too.
She has denounced her lover, he who her sire has slain.—

—What, then, shall be my judgment? Hero's and orphan's due?—
Ximena kneels before him, bathed in her flowing tears.
He raises her benignly, as a gracious King should do.

—Be of good heart, my daughter, quiet thy sobs and fears.
A Spanish prince and a Christian feels in thy streaming tears
A power whose force is greater than an army strong with spears.

Certes, Bivar I hold dear; Castile's hope and succor lies
In him. And yet despite that I grant thee thy request.
He is thine, O Ximena, and at thy word he dies!

Decide. I give him to thee, should the axe be thy behest!—
The Cid looks down upon her, silently, calm and grave.
Her eyes close, swimming, sightless, her head droops on her breast.

That countenance triumphant the maiden cannot brave,
That burning gaze whose ardor subdues her haughty soul:
Her head droops, her eyes falter—she knows herself his slave.

No more Count Gomez' daughter, swayed by revenge and dole,
She feels her cheek grow crimson, her hatred melt in shame,
As love, o'ercoming rancor, exerts its soft control.

—It was an arm most loyal, bearing a stainless name,
That sped thy father's spirit to God, Who reigns on high!
Whose stroke, by men applauded, I as his King, must blame.

The honor of the Laynez, of Calvo—even I
Can claim no blood more royal, for from it I descend:
The Gothic strain that gilds thy hair cannot so dignify.

Condemn him?—ah, thou canst not! . . . Forgive! And let me blend
The Gomez with the Laynez till from their wedded stem
Crowned with undying blossoms the branches shall extend!

Speak! And I give to Ruy, for nuptial diadem,
Saldagna, Belforado, Carrias de Castile!—
Wildly Ximena gazes, breathing no word, on them.

Fernando murmurs softly:—Speak! Canst thy heart not feel
The olden love for Ruy that once in thy bosom hid?—
Low in her ear the monarch utters his last appeal.

Ximena listens . . . trembles . . . then gives her hand to the Cid.

THE CONQUERORS
OF GOLD



THE CONQUERORS OF GOLD

'T WAS after great Balboa, leading his faithful horse,
 Had trailed through pathless forests the winding river's course,
 From the high Cordilleras descending to the west
 Won to the slimy seacoast, breathing out plague and pest,
 Where the Isthmus, crowned with mountains, parted on either hand
 The two grey wastes of ocean that washed each sullen strand,
 And, in his flashing armor, raised o'er a new-found sea
 The flag of Spain where the white crests of the billows fluttered free,
 All of the souls adventurous, with dreams from fevers bred,
 To Panama came thronging, by greed and glory led.
 To the shores of the Pacific, where in a haze of gold
 The promised El Dorado beckoned to wealth untold,
 Mingling, in monstrous visions, treasure and fierce desire
 For the Amazonian virgins of the tropic zones of fire;
 A race of epic heroes no savage might subdue,
 Who the bullock-headed idols in their temples overthrew,
 And like Hercules their father vanquished and put to flight
 The people of the morning and the dwellers in the night.

Well did they know the perils, the terrors they must brave
 To reach the far-off fastness and win what they would crave,
 Deep in Doboia hidden, where valley and ravine,
 Cumbered with ruined temples, held booty berylline
 In golden tombs where slumbered the princes of Xenu.
 They knew the unknown pathway that faded on their view
 To India would bring them and to the Isles of Spice,
 And to the land where leaped from its cloud-hung precipice
 The spring whose silvery waters heal every human ill;
 Where as they gazed enchanted the zenith's arch would thrill
 With flaming light whose splendors burnt like a diadem
 Lit by a sun of faëry, kindling each fiery gem—
 Blazing emerald summits, lances of sapphire glint,
 The fabulous gold of Ophir, glowing with every tint.

Though for deeds and dreams of conquest Vasco Nuñez paid
 With his noble life when his head on the block was laid,
 Despite it, still pursuing the same mirage as he,
 After his death the flower of all Spain's chivalry,
 Bearing the flag of Castile, charged with Austria's crest,

Marched through the wildernesses of the utmost Golden West.
Traversed the frightful mountains, sailed round the gloomy reefs
Encircling dark Veragua, guided by fearless chiefs,
Until, the East attaining, careless of doom or wreck,
They saw the Orinoco loom from a storm-swept deck,
Its mighty inundation filling the boundless sweep
Of a fever-scourged horizon, debouching to the deep
By its five-fold estuary, under a noxious sky.

At last a hundred comrades, of birth and lineage high,
Embarking under Pascual d'Andagoya's command,
Steering steadily onward, coasted the unknown land
Where the Pacific's breakers combed in a seething swirl,
Stood past the cape to southward, doubled the Isles of Pearl,
Tacking before the breezes with all their canvas spread.
First among all the Conquerors by fortune's winds they sped
Into new seas whose waters their cumbrous caravels
Parted with prows that proudly breasted the mighty swells.
Ten months passed to no purpose. With ills and woes oppressed,
Sailing, evermore sailing, upon a fruitless quest
For a mythic El Dorado, a phantom of the mind,
A hundred deaths defying, they left the world behind.
Then, five-and-twenty soldiers lost from his company,
D'Andagoya's shattered vessels sailed back over the sea
To Pedrarias who waited, strong in his wrath and state;
There, with their wild adventures endlessly to relate,
The hidalgos and the bravos, in Panama once more,
Gathered, restless and troubled beneath fate's buffets sore.

Those of the lords and captains, saving the few whose strength
No more permitted warfare, for Mexico at length
Departed. Those with nothing, desperate, dauntless men,
Wandered across the Isthmus to the shores of Darien,
Hoping to cheat disaster, to ease their misery
And triumph over fortune; or, starving, still could see
The visions that had duped them, waiting with idle sword
And tattered cape to follow at some new leader's word—
Hardy hunters and sailors, lingering on the beach
They watched the white-caps tossing beyond the harbor's reach.

II

Two years later a soldier, obscure, but who one day
Should as his conquests' guerdon a Marquis' shield display —
Don Francisco Pizarro, presented a request
To arm and equip a vessel and sail into the west
Beyond Puerto Pinas. Pedrarias heard, replied
The times, for such a venture, could only ill betide:
Dangers unnumbered threatened, profit there none could be,
No more it pleased Spain's Viceroy her bravest sons to see
Wasting their blood like spendthrifts in folly's enterprise
Whose lure was an idle vision of a golden paradise.
None that had yet adventured beyond its grim frontiers
Had triumphed o'er the jungle, of all his cavaliers.
Tempests had rent asunder cable and stay and yard
Of every ship that vainly had put forth thitherward,
None but returned exhausted, crippled by storm and strife,
Happy if fate had granted the saving of naught but life.

His purpose only quickened, Francisco and his friend
Almagro strength and fortune compacted to that end,
While Dom Fernando Luque lent moneys from his store.
On a November morning of fifteen-twenty-four
Pizarro led his comrades, something above five score,
Aboard his tossing galley and from a storm-lashed shore
Stood out to sea with sails set from every mast and spar,
Buoyed by the wind's fierce music, trusting his happy star.

Soon everything united to menace every hope.
The gale became a whirlwind, like night the heavens' cope,
The waves, lashed into mountains, their inky masses hurled
Into the open portholes; the mast snapped and was whirled
Into the sea and the vessel left but a naked raft.
Through six long days of anguish they clung to the shattered craft
With neither food nor water, death fronting every soul
Till at last Pizarro landed them safe on a barren shoal.

Beyond it clustering mangroves rose in a far-flung screen,
Impenetrable, splendid; lianas wove between
Festoons of brilliant blossoms suspending overhead.
Gently the shelving seashore upward and backward led

To where the distant forest lifted its somber mass.
This land that lay before them was naught but a vast morass.

It rained. The shipwrecked soldiers grew frantic, stabbed and stung
By the venomous mosquitoes whose buzzing myriads hung
About them till the daylight was darkened by their cloud.
Beneath their feet, with horror, as through the swamps they plowed,
They trampled unknown reptiles, insects of novel shape,
Or, from the steaming bayou emerged with jaws agape
The monstrous alligators, their startled gaze to greet,
Crawling on scaly bellies upborne by twisted feet.
When night closed in about them, upon the reeking ground,
Their useless swords beside them, each in his mantle wound,
They fell in their exhaustion, their only food some root
Bitter upon the tongue, or the red pimiento's fruit;
While round the weary sleepers, searchers for empires new,
On weaving wings of darkness the silent vampires flew,
And those on whom descended their clinging velvet kiss
Woke only from their slumbers to another world than this.
Worn beyond all endurance, his troops, by prayer and force,
At last compelled Pizarro to take the backward course;
Despite himself then bidding eternally adieu
To the desolate encampment at Port de Saint Matieu,
Once more he spread his canvas, on conquest still intent,
While from the lookout gazing, Bartolomeo bent
The brigantine's helm ever into the sunset's glow
Until the lone ship doubled Punta de Pasado.
Boldest of pilots, Ruiz, the glory then was thine,
Of all the world's great helmsmen the first to cross the Line
Into the farthest ocean of the new Occident.

From the low coast the breezes bore o'er the sea the scent
Of the sandalwood's exotic and delicate perfume,
Rising, floating about them as from a world in bloom.
Mad with joy, the sailors, perched upon mast and shroud,
Saw where a sunlit river, winding to seaward, flowed
Past villages and meadows and fields of growing grain,
As, like a silver ribbon, it threaded the champaign.
Farther along, and pressing down to the nearer strand
The forest loomed upon them, a mighty wonderland.

On the slopes of dead volcanoes, whose craters pierced the blue,
The ebony, the guiac and palisander grew,
While to the far horizon, luminous, infinite,
Billows of dense green tree-tops rolled in the azure light.
The intermingled branches of a thousand species blent
In a panoply of splendor, a pageant magnificent.
From north to south extending, from east to west, the globe
Wherever the vision rested, the forest's heavy robe
Clothed like a living garment, whence, in a long-drawn sigh
Breathed an eternal murmur which to the bending sky
Echoed the sigh of Ocean. Set in a frame of black,
Like an immobile mirror, a lonely lake gave back
A flash of dazzling brightness when in its depths the sun
Plunged down a path of glory cleft through the shadows dun.

Stretched along yellow sand-bars, enormous caimans lay
Waiting on red flamingoes or tapirs black to prey.
The majas, mailed in silver, the giant cobras' coils,
Crushed down the nodding grasses through which they spread their
toils,

Or, twined in convolutions round trunks of dying trees,
Abode the hour when to the spring ventured the peccaries.
Upon the margin of the lake, with spawning serpents rife,
Batrachians pullulating in every form of life,
They saw, as daylight faded and the sun began to sink,
The wild beasts of the forest descend in troops to drink;
The ocelot, the puma, the sinuous tiger-cat,
And, among all flesh-eaters the sovereign autocrat,
Most beautiful and terrible in his ferocious grace,
Always in couples questing, king of the feline race,
The jaguar. High above them, against the rosy sky
The tropic vegetation flamed on the dazzled eye;
The cactus and the aloe mingled together grew,
While in the bending branches chattered the cockatoo,
The paroquet and the ara, whose lustrous plumage shone
In the lambent light of sunset with iridescent tone;
The wings of gorgeous insects and giant butterflies,
Whirling and glittering with myriad glints and dyes,
Hovered and vibrated like showers of sparkling gems
About the looped lianas with flowery diadems.

Through the surrounding thickets, ceases and underbrush

Through the surrounding thickets, copses and underbrush
That clothed ravines and gorges, there swarmed a furry crush
Plundering the iacos and monbins of their fruit,
A horde of hairy monkeys, intent on sport and loot—
Capuchins, sable sakis, tumblers and sapajous,
Scaling the giant fig-trees and towering cashews,
Leaping from bough to bough or suspended by the queue,
In multitudes unnumbered, from morn till eve the crew
Frolicked, gibbered and gestured in simian revelry
Following, as they gamboled, the curving shores of the sea.

Borne by odorous breezes, the galleon doubled past
The Cape of Saint Elena and glided, safe at last,
Into a gulf of azure whose shimmering expanse
Basked 'neath a cloudless heaven's supernal radiance;
Guayaquil's sea, whose bosom, tranquil, ever at peace,
Curved to its golden sands in a vesture of silver fleece,
To the far horizon arching its vast volute's extent.

In the sky that glowed above it strange splendors came and went.

The mountains, with their summits clothed in immortal snows,
Cleaving the deeps of heaven, in sheer effulgence rose,
Piercing the highest ether, pinnacle, peak and spire,
The Prince of Thunder sleeping by the wakeful Lord of Fire:
There Chimborazo lifted his dome's prodigious round,
Brooding the bolts which shivered the air and the quaking ground;
Beyond, his brother titan, great Cotopaxi shone,
Seeming to scale the zenith with his incandescent cone.
Pizarro, heeding only the topsman's warning cries,
Felt in his soul conviction, saw Fortune's star arise;
From the bridge with Almagro he watched without amaze
The wonders that unfolded before his steady gaze,
When suddenly the vessel, round the last promontory
Circling, the crew sent up the victor's shout of glory,
Shaking the gulf's calm waters on which reflections swayed
Of palaces and temples gold-roofed and overlaid,
And wharves and jetties blackened by throngs that seaward surged.
Between the blue above it and that beneath emerged,
Upon the shore of Ocean, Tumbez before their sight!

Tallying his companions departed into night

Carrying his companions departed into night,
Fallen from thirst and famine, by sea and in the wild,
Seeing the few remaining rather to be beguiled
By rest than by resuming their wanderings and strife,
Pizarro comprehended the crisis in his life;
The madness, with such forces, the conquest to essay
Of such a mighty empire as now before him lay.
Wisely his judgment prompted that the great prize at length
Might only be attempted, and won, by his greatest strength.
Dealing peacefully with them, learning their language strange,
Much gold he got from the natives by gift and by exchange,
To Panama then returning on his old brigantine,
Heavy laden with booty; three years had gone between
His going and home-coming when he anchored in the port.
At the end of men and money, strange to the ways of a court,
But determined to stake his future upon one last campaign,
From Nombre de Dios he embarked once more for Spain.

III

Now, when Pizarro landed at the port of San Lucar
He found all Spain rejoicing, not for a new-won war
But that the Queen and Empress had in a happy hour
Fulfilled her marriage vows, exalting the royal power,
And to the world had given a son, an heir to the throne,
The Infante, Don Felipe—God guard him as his own!
The Emperor at Toledo a noble fête had made
And thence Francisco hastened to pray his sovereign's aid,
Recount his toils and perils and as he knelt to sue
Do homage as a vassal for the kingdom of Peru.
Once presented, he offered, not without some chagrin,
The scanty store of his gold, with a vicuña's skin,
A pair of living llamas and an alpaca; then
Laid his claims before Don Carlos, who each strange specimen,
Each curious beast remarking, its novel shape and size,
Its stately port and stature and fleece that cold defies,
Between his kingly fingers, heavy with jewels rare,
Graciously deigned to fondle its soft and silky hair.
But when Pizarro humbly urged once again his claim,
Brusquely, with Flemish rudeness, the monarch's answer came:

—Know that the valiant Marquis, Don Hernando Cortez, to
Our royal inclination, has won an empire new,
Conquered and subjugated the mighty Aztec land;
Now we and our Archbishops unite in our command—
Our Council has proclaimed it, with firmness resolute—
No more to lend protection to those who prosecute
Discoveries or conquests in our Occidental realm.
Who seeks its fatal courses their waters overwhelm:
Our Admiral, Nicuesa, in their abysses lies! —
And then Pizarro answered, fire flashing from his eyes:
—The scandal of that conquest Your Majesty shall know!
Rejected from the bosom of the Church in Mexico
For lack of gold, an ounce or two, all the unfortunate
Born in idolatry and ignorant of their state,
Knowing nothing of grace, banned from the holy chrism,
Die unpurged of their sins by the waters of baptism! —

Continuing he painted, in language eloquent,

The Cordilleras with summits grazing the firmament,
The fire of whose volcanoes, shaking the nether earth,
Forged in a molten mass on the crater's awful hearth
The floods of burning lava, gushing in waves of gold,
Which guarded the condor's nest, the fabulous Roc of old.

He told how prodigal Nature lavished her riches there;
A world of crystal torrents leaping and gliding where
Emeralds lay like pebbles gleaming upon the sand;
How the wine from palace cellars foamed in that wondrous land
In golden vases larger than the hugest earthen jar
That held the oil of the olive in deepest Alpuxar;
How the whole land was covered with temples of the Sun
Gold-encrusted; the borders where fields of maize begun,
Their golden ears uplifting, marked from those to be grazed
By figures which well might leave an Emperor amazed—
A miracle seizing the gazer as with the vertigo—
Shepherds of massy gold, with golden sheep in a row!

Startled, Don Carlos listened. Listening too, the Queen
Deigned, as she weighed his discourse, at length to intervene.
The aid he asked was little, the prize he promised great:
Without delay she ordered Francisco to relate
To the lords of the Grand Council his story and renew
His offers to serve the Church and replenish its revenue.
Hearing, they gave him the robe of the order of Saint John,
Hung round his neck its collar and bade him swear upon
The good Saint's holy relics true ever to remain
To Their Most Catholic Majesties, the King and Queen of Spain,
Long as he lived upholding the glory and the fame
Of the Church of Rome and the grace of the Christian name.

Then the Emperor dictated the august warranty
Bidding the most incredulous to hear and see
That, saving the rights of the heirs of the Admiral,
Don Francisco Pizarro, Lieutenant-General
Of His Majesty was named lord with unhindered sway
Of every island, country and continent that lay
In the realms he had discovered, or in the future should.
The minutes read, now waiting the royal order stood
The signatures attesting the protocols as true.

But schooling in his boyhood Pizarro never knew,
When in Estremadura a swineherd's part he played.
Upon the blazoned parchment from which the Great Seal swayed,
He made a cross, declaring he knew not how to write,
Speaking in tones so haughty that jeers gave way to fright;
Then, on a brodered cushion, received the gilt baton
Of Grand Alguazil and Alcayde, aforetime borne by Don
Juan Rodriguez Fonseca. With everything secured
And duly set in order, his rank and rights assured,
The new Adelantado, before he took the sea,
Keeping well in remembrance its bitter memory,
To his parents in Truxillo journeyed to say farewell
Ere from Seville in triumph he sailed, his caravel
Companioned by two consorts, crowded with men and freight.
Passing by the Canaries, where the gentle trade-winds wait
To swell the sailor's canvas, with every sail unfurled
He pointed his flotilla on the path toward the world
Which to Spain and to Columbus gave immortality.

IV

In Panama, four weeks later, they knelt on bended knee
Before the highest altar, on Saint John's holy-day,
For the new Armada's welfare and victory to pray.
Fray Juan Vargas naming each one in the command
Invoked the grace of heaven upon Pizarro's band;
Then the two chiefs between them breaking the blessed Host,
Forth from the church departed, each to his duty's post.

When the Adelantado of all had taken leave
And the Bishop, with his clergy, just at the fall of eve,
Given his benediction to the army and the fleet,
Bartolomeo Ruiz, appareled as was meet,
In a royal pilot's raiment, pompous with rich brocade,
Mounted the quarter-deck with his speaking-trump displayed
And with a noble gesture, lifting it to his mouth,
Ordered the anchor weighed and put the helm to the South.

'Mid farewell acclamations, hurrahs and flowing tears,
Tumult among the soldiers and the sailors' cries and cheers
As they swarmed into the rigging, perching on spar and yard,
Whence flags and pennons fluttered, with shields and mottoes starred,
The thunder of the cannon the parting signal gave
While the Ave Maris Stella sounded over the wave,
And the ships, from their masts a thousand streamers floating wide,
Leaped forth into the billows, over the crested tide.

Smooth was the Ocean's bosom, the north wind clear and strong,
As they voyaged unimpeded, save, as they coursed along
They put in at some haven, fresh water to obtain.
Lightly and swiftly gliding over the tropic main,
Pizarro, with proud courage, like friends remembered hailed
Each headland, bay and inlet past which the vessels sailed,
And soon, left far behind him, conquered, all tides and calms,
Saw rise on the horizon bouquets of verdant palms
Across a gulf, like signals, and landing on the ramp
Of the port of Tumbes planted his flag and pitched his camp.

Eager to see him, caciques, flocking from near and far,
Told, as he interviewed them, how a great civil war

Was bathing in blood and slaughter the Empire of the Sun.
The bastard, Atahualpa, as flame through forests run,
Had swept through towns and kingdoms, destroying as he went,
Everywhere triumphant, until omnipotent
Cuzco itself, the center and navel of the world,
Fell, and its sacred monarch from his golden throne was hurled,
Himself a God, who reigned there, seed of the primal God,
And all the land of Manco shook at the bastard's nod.

Hastily leaving the seacoast, spurring his little band
As they traversed the pampas' undulant wastes of sand,
Pizarro, fiery ardor surging over his soul,
Began the ascent of the Andes, beyond which lay his goal.

Plateau to plateau succeeded, talus on talus rose,
From dawn until with darkness exhaustion sought repose,
They climbed, ascending ever into a deepening gloom,
Which, as it closed about them, seemed like the shades of doom.
Sometimes, perchance, far-shining in a huge cirque of stone,
A leaden lake would glimmer, desolate, grey and lone.
Beneath a heaven now glacial, now like a vault of fire,
Pulling their steeds along as they clambered ever higher,
Plunging from gulf to gulf, then rising from steep to steep,
They staggered and stumbled on, pausing only for sleep;
Endless the struggle seemed to conquer the final height
Above whose granite cañons its pinnacles shone bright.
Over the vast sierra, as giddier grew each range,
A sense of peril brooded, so terrible, so strange,
That veterans whose bosoms fear never had possessed
Felt their hearts contract as danger closer and closer pressed.
The earth beneath their footsteps heaved like a granite sea,
In terrible crepitations, quivered convulsively,
Rending apart with thunders; the wind, with a screaming shout,
Whirled the tormented snow and the trumpeting waterspout,
Its voice of lamentation ascending over all,
While bolts of livid lightning burst through the tumult's pall.

Delirious, frozen, rigid, the soldiers blindly clung
To dizzy crags and ledges that sheer cliffs overhung,
The ice upon the pathway making each step a snare.
Above soared precipices, vertiginous and bare;

Below, in unplumbed chasms, each in its narrow bed,
With a distant muffled roar as between their walls they sped,
Chafing on giant boulders rouged by the sunset's flare,
The mountain torrents scattered their foam on the deafened air.

The vertigo assailed them. From their tortured lungs the blood
Was forced by the altitude in a choking, sanguine flood.
When night came, freezing darkness benumbed the weary troop;
Their steeds, in nervous terror, trembling and croup to croup,
Crowded against each other, nibbling the frozen grass,
While their masters, violating the tombs of the Aymaras,
Stripping their shrouded mummies, built on the bitter stones
Roaring fires replenished with the dead men's brittle bones.

Alone among his comrades Pizarro felt no stress.
Five rivers had been forded, a boundless wilderness
Traversed where neither village nor people met the eye,
Famine and frost been suffered; then, mounting to the sky,
The Andes scaled, those summits whose horrors froze the soul;
Unswerving still, each action and word in sure control,
His great heart to his courage its dauntless spirit lent,
As still the vision led him, the mirage orient,
Of golden Caxamarca, the goal of his desire.

The peaks of the sierra, like a pharos' guiding fire,
Five months after their landing, shone on them as they wound
Down to the lowest plateau with flourishes of sound
From clarions and tambours and banners on the wind
Above the marching warriors whose toils their ranks had thinned.
No pause for breath permitting, lost vigor to regain,
Pizarro urged them onward to the road across the plain.

Six men above a hundred were those that marched on foot.
 By history unnoticed, still should the names be put
 Upon the roll of heroes, of all of those that led
 In this war forever famous, nobly or basely bred;
 The breeds and hues of their horses, duly recorded too,
 That shared in all the perils and triumphs they passed through,
 Even the beasts of burden ranged on the scroll of fame—
 Of every good gentleman the valiant servant's name.

Sixty and two hidalgos, nobly-born cavaliers,
 Equal in blood and valor, reining their steeds as peers,
 Rallied around the ensign, whose royal azure field
 Upon its red impalement a golden tower revealed.
 Its bearer—next him riding the chronicler, Xerez—
 Was Gabriel de Rojas, the fiery alferéz.
 His curried leather pourpoint was edged with ribboned steel
 And gaufred with the écu of the twin crowns of Castile.
 His broidered toque was wrought of velure of Aragon,
 Saint Michael and the Dragon, in gold, shone thereupon.
 His sinewy hand reined backward the horse that he bestrode,
 The famous piebald charger Carbajal later rode;
 An Andalusian Arab, rebellious to the bit,
 Champing and caracoling, his blood ensanguined it
 While from his steel-clad hoof-beats the sparks in showers flashed,
 When, with his gallant rider, past all the rest he dashed;
 Swift as the swiftest arrow, was he, that ever sped
 From the stoutest archer's bowstring, drawn to the very head.
 Gathered around the standard, rode in a close-formed group,
 Powdered with dust and sunshine, the leaders of the troop:
 Cristobal de Peralta, whose shield the motto bore
 Of *Ad summum per alta*; then Juan de la Torre;
 Domingo de Serra Luca, his face a one-eyed mask;
 Alonso de Molina, bronzed 'neath his brazen casque;
 Francisco de Cuellar, the Andalusian lord,
 Who like a wolf pursued and slaughtered the Indian horde;
 Mena, he of Valencia, of all the combatants
 Unrivaled in the tourney, the master of the lance.
 Moving aligned, their horses kept to an equal stride,
 Came two great rival chieftains, following side by side:

Del Barco, the discoverer of lands before unfound,
Who down their mighty rivers with Orellana wound,
And Juan de Salcedo, proud of his noble blood,
Who when a smooth-faced stripling had with the foremost stood,
Mounted upon a stallion that, as he arched his crest,
Tossed from his smoking nostrils foam o'er his ebon breast.

Rearward a sorry legion toiled along on their track,
The crippled and dismounted, steadily falling back.
Forez, pricking vainly, with a shaft from his arbalast.
A foundered roan that staggered and panted as he passed;
Ribera, keeping by him, trudged with his bridle-rein
Thrown on the neck of his charger, a foot-sore brown whose pain
Made him a mournful figure as his way he sought to pick
On shoeless feet that stumbled, worn to the bleeding quick.
Among these shabby stragglers came Don Pedro de Alcon,
Who, on a scutcheon, or, displayed a sable falcon,
Wearing a chaperon gules, having its talons belled:
Once had this hoary warrior been by the Moors compelled
To turn Grenada's mill-stones, when in a long-gone year
Their prisoner. Mighty was he and a brave halberdier.

Well escorted there ambled, mounted upon their mules,
Two men who loved not warfare, learned men of the schools:
Requelma, first of the couple, as an accountant should,
Silently—silence is golden, as he well understood;
While the other one, Gil Tellez, the licensed notary—
His future inventory in his busy brain made he,
Ready prepared beforehand to deduct the proper rate
From every warrior's booty, after that of the state.
The foragers then followed, scampering from the rear,
Heedless of bog or pitfall, in headlong, mad career;
Striving their nimble horses no longer to restrain,
Braving the vertigo and the sun that scorched the brain,
The steep inclines descending, bellies grazing the ground,
Their gallop in its fury mocking the thunder's sound,
With blood upon their rowels, reins gripped betwixt their jaws,
Startling the weary marchers with curses and huzzas,
Amid a boisterous tumult and threats from the Alcayde,
Debouched like a tornado. Leading the wild brigade,
Most arrogant of aspect, habited in brocade,

wheeling his horse abruptly in a threatening passage
As he saluted Alvar de Paz, who kept his ground,
Sweeping the earth with his orange plume in a bow profound,
Rode Fernando, eldest and haughtiest of the clan
Of terrible Pizarros; hard on his heels Juan
And Martin d'Alcantara, of the same mother born.
Briceño, who, as a horseman challenged his comrades' scorn,
Awkward was he in the saddle, with bridle or with spur—
Later, in Lima they made him cleric and chorister—
Foolishly lost his stirrups and as he saw his plight,
The others far before him, trying to speed his flight
In his impotent endeavors their company to reach,
Cruelly urged his filly, color o' flower-o'-peach.
Antonio, the valiant, galloping to his place,
Carried his poverty with a proud and noble grace;
None could the sword and buckler handle so well as he
Whose crest was wreathed with garlands of the wild celery,
Crowning the shield heraldic of the dukes of Carrion.

So they passed in a whirlwind of dust and shouts and were gone.

Hearing their cries, a seigneur, one of the avant-guard,
Pausing, curbed his genet, to fix them with his regard.
His snowy steed curveted, caparisoned in red,
As he rose high in his saddle, better to see ahead.
Popayan's future victor, his stalwart form seemed made
To wear the battle harness in which it was arrayed:
Galaor was not fairer, Cæsar a kinglier man,
Than was bold Benalcazar, the leader of the van.
Orestes-like, beside him was his sworn Pylades;
Swarthy beneath his helmet, lost in his reveries,
Dreaming, he wrapped about him the folds of his manteau;
It was the brave De Soto, that history shall know
As the vision-led explorer of the unknown tropic zone
Where Florida the fabled in its effulgence shone,
And where the Mississippi, Father of Waters, flowed.
Near him, his convex morion shading his brow, there rode
With heavy halberd buckled to the armor of his thigh,
Soothing his chestnut mare with a voice like a lullaby,
Don Pedro de Candia, the Greek adventurer,
Who, having burnt ten cities, dedicated to Her,
Our Lady, in exultation, ten lamps of beaming light

Our Lady, in exultation, ten lamps of beaming light.
He watched, upon the summit of a steep's giddy height,
How Gonzalo Pizarro made his steed caracole—
Under the axe at Lima departed Gonzalo's soul.
There, Carbajal's beside it, they nailed his severed head,
After the blade had struck, on the gibbet as it bled,
Before the staring soldiers that, seduced by his name,
Revolting, raised his pennon, but that Gasca overcame.
Though to his king disloyal, a rebel—still, a friend
To his friends, a true hidalgo, his was an epic end.

Several steps behind him, beads through his sword-hilt wound,
Wearing above his snowy tunic that grazed the ground
A sable scapulary over the hair-cloth shirt
That mortified his body, misdoing's just desert,
The saintly missionary, of all false gods the foe,
A prodigy of learning, with holy zeal aglow,
Fray Vincent de Valverde, came, the Dominican;
Who, trembling for the hereafter lest, as a sinful man
Through all eternity he burn in the nether pit,
Thousands of helpless pagans sent to the stake and spit,
Kindled the flames beneath them, gave to the axe and rope,
Confident that the Saviour, God of his trust and hope,
With gracious recognition his pious work had blessed
And all the innocent martyrs gathered into His breast.

In front of all the others, ten yards or more ahead,
Marched Francisco Pizarro, leader of all who led.

His cape, whose folds were rudely disarranged by the gale,
Flying open about him, revealed his burnished mail.
He alone of his army had not laid aside his steel
For a cuirass of cotton and seemed no weight to feel
As in his metal garments he marched beneath the rays
Of the ardent sun of Cancer that burnt with a steady blaze.

The Barb he rode, Cordovan, in restive circles swept,
Neighing; its rider, meanwhile, curbing it as it leapt,
Let his spurs' silver rowels strike on its armored flank,
Making, with every contact, a shivering, silver clank,
While in the saddle stirless as a cavalier of stone,
From beneath his dark eyelashes the leaning lightning shone

From beneath his dark eyes shone the leaping lightning storm
As from those of a gerfalcon, too terrible to bear.

Faultless, too, was the armor of his great spirit where
It dwelt, arrayed for conquest. A simple captain, still
Caressing in his fancy the project of his will,
The dizzy hope which led him, the dream that soon or late
He, a bastard, should be lifted to an Emperor's estate.

VI

In their precipitation, hastening their descent
Along the narrow pathway's treacherous gradient,
Following after their chief, tireless, agile and fleet,
Showering stones and gravel from under their eager feet,
The reckless troop dashed downward into the twilight gloom
Of deep defiles and gorges, tenebrous as the tomb.
High above them was dying the light of an anxious day
When suddenly before them the barrier gave way.
The mountain on the heavens unfolded like an arch,
A giant open portal, midway upon their march,
And like prisoners emerging from a dungeon to the light,
Space on their blind eyes shimmered, horizons infinite,
Gulfs of limitless grandeur, the immensity of the void
Swam in a dazzling vista. To either hand deployed
The lava's undulations, by subterranean fires
Thrown from the earth's hot bowels to cool in monstrous gyres,
Laved by the sulphur waters born of the ages' strife,
Opening from the Andes a gate to glowing life.

The ground beneath them shaking, ranged on a narrow ledge
Where the overhanging pathway skirted the plateau's edge,
The Conquerors, men and horses, came to a sudden halt.

The mountains tapered upward in towers of basalt,
Of porphyry and granite, sandstone and slate and schist,
To the ultimate escarpment, where in a veil of mist
The snow, like a winding-sheet, covered the precipice.
Higher still, over a forest of sheer aiguilles of ice,
The vibrant blue of heaven gave back their scintillance;
Terrible in their grandeur, their stately radiance,
Like warriors helmed in silver, with ermine robes of state,
Camped on the world's last confines, whence they might dominate
Its uttermost recesses, colossi dark and bright,
Clothed in the evening splendor; one great volcano's height
Far above all the others into the ether rose,
Its fiery banner floating over the realm of snows.

But now all eyes were fastened upon the slopes below,
Where through a land of gardens they saw fair rivers flow,

While in the softened brilliance of the sunset's level rays,
Whitening the horizon, far as the eye could gaze,
The myriad tents of the Inca spread like the foaming seas,
Their streamers and pavilions bellying in the breeze.
From the vast solfatara, as the prospect they beheld,
Mounted in a confusion of fumes that swayed and swelled
A vortex of smoke and vapor, veiling the view from sight,
And from its clouds exhaling an awful sense of might.

The Conquerors in silence, letting their lances fall
Upon the necks of their horses, somberly mused. On all
A sadness that blanched the visage descended as they saw
The smallness of their number to conquer and overawe
This mighty host.

Pizarro, from Gabriel Roja's hand
Snatching his banner, shouted, like a king that takes command:
—For Don Carlos, my master, and in his name most royal,
I, Francisco Pizarro, his servitor most loyal,
In due form requisitioned, before his notary,
Take from henceforth possession of all these lands ye see!
Brooking no act nor word from any would-be rival,
On horseback or on foot, looking to my deprivation,
I shall maintain my right, let none my vengeance dare:
By my patron Saint, Francisco, witness ye, this I swear!—

As he spoke, with an arm of fury he planted, where the sun
Made on its silken ripples quivering splendors run,
The royal Spanish standard, which, to the gusty air
Gave all its golden fringes as it stood in triumph there.

Meanwhile the listening soldiers, silently standing by,
Contemplated in wonder the pomp of the evening sky.

Far below and behind them, to the west's extreme extent,
Into the dimmest distance the Pacific's surges went
In a mist of gold and purple, a gleaming orient flood,
Stained, like the shroud of monarchs, with a God's rufescent blood,
Beneath which sank the father of the Incas he enthroned.
Above the sierra towered, somber and many-zoned;
Then, as the orb majestic sank in the waiting sea,
The Andes, from base to summit, flamed in effulgency