

THE CLUB.

As from the mist a noble pine we tell
Grown old upon the heights of Appenzel,
When morning freshness breathes round all the wood,
So Eviradnus now before them stood,
Opening his visor, which at once revealed
The snowy beard it had so well concealed.
Thin Sigismond was still as dog at gaze,
But Ladisläus leaped, and howl did raise,
And laughed and gnashed his teeth, till, like a cloud
That sudden bursts, his rage was all avowed.
"Tis but an old man after all!" he cried.

Then the great knight, who looked at both, replied,
"Oh, kings! an old man of my time can cope
With two much younger ones of yours, I hope.
To mortal combat I defy you both
Singly; or, if you will, I'm nothing loth
With two together to contend; choose here
From out the heap what weapon shall appear
Most fit. As you no cuirass wear, I see,
I will take off my own, for all must be
In order perfect—e'en your punishment."

Then Eviradnus, true to his intent,

Stripped to his Utrecht jerkin; but the while
He calmly had disarmed—with dexterous guile
Had Ladisläus seized a knife that lay
Upon the damask cloth, and slipped away
His shoes; then barefoot, swiftly, silently
He crept behind the knight, with arm held high.
But Eviradnus was of all aware,
And turned upon the murderous weapon there,
And twisted it away; then in a trice
His strong colossal hand grasped like a vice
The neck of Ladisläus, who the blade
Now dropped; over his eyes a misty shade
Showed that the royal dwarf was near to death.

"Traitor!" said Eviradnus in his wrath,
"I rather should have hewn your limbs away,
And left you crawling on your stumps, I say,—
But now die fast."

Ghastly, with starting eyes,
The King without a cry or struggle dies.
One dead—but lo! the other stands bold-faced,
Defiant; for the knight, when he unlaced
His cuirass, had his trusty sword laid down,
And Sigismond now grasps it as his own.
The monster-youth laughed at the silv'ry beard,

And, sword in hand, a murderer glad appeared.
Crossing his arms, he cried, "'Tis my turn now!"
And the black mounted knights in solemn row
Were judges of the strife. Before them lay
The sleeping Mahaud—and not far away
The fatal pit, near which the champion knight
With evil Emperor must contend for right,
Though weaponless he was. And yawned the pit
Expectant which should be engulfed in it.

"Now we shall see for whom this ready grave,"
Said Sigismond, "you dog, whom naught can save!"
Aware was Eviradnus that if he
Turned for a blade unto the armory,
He would be instant pierced—what can he do?
The moment is for him supreme. But, lo!
He glances now at Ladisläus dead,
And with a smile triumphant and yet dread,
And air of lion caged to whom is shown
Some loophole of escape, he bends him down.

"Ha! ha! no other club than this I need!"
He cried, as seizing in his hands with speed
The dead King's heels, the body lifted high,
Then to the frightened Emperor he came nigh,
And made him shake with horror and with fear,

The weapon all so ghastly did appear.
The head became the stone to this strange sling,
Of which the body was the potent string;
And while 'twas brandished in a deadly way,
The dislocated arms made monstrous play
With hideous gestures, as now upside down
The bludgeon corpse a giant force had grown.
"Tis well!" said Eviradnus, and he cried,
"Arrange between yourselves, you two allied;
If hell-fire were extinguished, surely it
By such a contest might be all relit;
From kindling spark struck out from dead King's brow,
Batt'ring to death a living Emperor now."

And Sigismond, thus met and horrified,
Recoiled to near the unseen opening wide;
The human club was raised, and struck again * * *
And Eviradnus did alone remain
All empty-handed—but he heard the sound
Of spectres two falling to depths profound;
Then, stooping o'er the pit, he gazed below,
And, as half-dreaming now, he murmured low,
"Tiger and jackal meet their portion here,
'Tis well together they should disappear!"

XVIII.

DAYBREAK.

Then lifts he Mahaud to the ducal chair,
And shuts the trap with noiseless, gentle care;
And puts in order everything around,
So that, on waking, naught should her astound.

"No drop of blood the thing has cost," mused he,
"And that is best indeed."

But suddenly

Some distant bells clang out. The mountains gray
Have scarlet tips, proclaiming dawning day;
The hamlets are astir, and crowds come out—
Bearing fresh branches of the broom—about
To seek their Lady, who herself awakes
Rosy as morn, just when the morning breaks;
Half-dreaming still, she ponders, can it be
Some mystic change has passed, for her to see
One old man in the place of two quite young!
Her wondering eyes search carefully and long.
It may be she regrets the change: meanwhile,
The valiant knight salutes her with a smile,
And then approaching her with friendly mien,
Says, "Madam, has your sleep all pleasant been?"

MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND.

THE SOUDAN, THE SPHINXES, THE CUP, THE LAMP.

("Zim-Zizimi, Soudan d'Égypte.")

{Bk. XVI. i.}

Zim Zizimi—(of the Soudan of burnt Egypt,

The Commander of Believers, a Bashaw

Whose very robes were from Asia's greatest stript,

More powerful than any lion with resistless paw)

A master weighed on by his immense splendor—

Once had a dream when he was at his evening feast,

When the broad table smoked like a perfumed censer,

And its grateful odors the appetite increased.

The banquet was outspread in a hall, high as vast,

With pillars painted, and with ceiling bright with gold,

Upreamed by Zim's ancestors in the days long past,

And added to till now worth a sum untold.

Howe'er rich no rarity was absent, it seemed,

Fruit blushed upon the side-boards, groaning 'neath rich meats,

With all the dainties palate ever dreamed

In lavishness to waste—for dwellers in the streets

Of cities, whether Troy, or Tyre, or Ispahan,
Consume, in point of cost, food at a single meal
Much less than what is spread before this crowned man—
Who rules his couchant nation with a rod of steel,
And whose servitors' chiefest arts it was to squeeze
The world's full teats into his royal helpless mouth.
Each hard-sought dainty that never failed to please,
All delicacies, wines, from east, west, north or south,
Are plenty here—for Sultan Zizimi drinks wine
In its variety, trying to find what never sates.
Laughs at the holy writings and the text divine,
O'er which the humble dervish prays and venerates.
There is a common saying which holds often good:
That cruel is he who is sparing in his cups.
That they are such as are most thirsty of man's blood—
Yet he will see a slave beheaded whilst he sups.
But be this as it all may, glory gilds his reign,
He has overrun Africa, the old and black;
Asia as well—holding them both beneath a rain
Of bloody drops from scaffold, pyre, the stake, or rack,
To leave his empire's confines, one must run a race
Far past the river Baxtile southward; in the north,
To the rude, rocky, barren land of Thrace,
Yet near enough to shudder when great Zim is wroth.
Conquering in every field, he finds delight
In battle-storms; his music is the shout of camps.

On seeing him the eagle speeds away in fright,
Whilst hid 'mong rocks, the grisly wolf its victim champs.
Mysore's as well as Agra's rajah is his kin;
The great sheiks of the arid sands confess him lord;
Omar, who vaunting cried: "Through me doth Allah win!"
Was of his blood—a dreaded line of fire and sword.
The waters of Nagain, sands of Sahara warm,
The Atlas and the Caucasus, snow-capped and lone,
Mecca, Marcatta, these were massed in part to form
A portion of the giant shadow of Zim's throne.
Before his might, to theirs, as hardest rock to dust,
There have recoiled a horde of savage, warlike chiefs,
Who have been into Afric's fiery furnace thrust—
Its scorching heat to his rage greatest of reliefs.
There is no being but fears Zim; to him bows down
Even the sainted Llama in the holy place;
And the wild Kasburder chieftain at his dark power
Turns pale, and seeks a foeman of some lesser race.
Cities and states are bought and sold by Soudan Zim,
Whose simple word their thousand people hold as law.
He ruins them at will, for what are men to him,
More than to stabled cattle is the sheaf of straw?

The Soudan is not pleased, for he is e'er alone,
For who may in his royal sports or joys be leagued.
He must never speak to any one in equal tones,

But be by his own dazzling weightiness fatigued.
He has exhausted all the pastimes of the earth;
In vain skilled men have fought with sword, the spear, or lance,
The quips and cranks most laughed at have to him no mirth;
He gives a regal yawn as fairest women dance;
Music has outpoured all its notes, the soft and loud,
But dully on his wearied ear its accents roll,
As dully as the praises of the servile crowd
Who falsely sing the purity of his black soul.
He has had before his daïs from the prison brought
Two thieves, whose terror makes their chains to loudly ring,
Then gaping most unkingly, he dismissed his slaves,
And tranquilly, half rising, looked around to seek
In the weighty stillness—such as broods round graves—
Something within his royal scope to which to speak.

The throne, on which at length his eyes came back to rest,
Is upheld by rose-crowned Sphinxes, which lyres hold,
All cut in whitest marble, with uncovered breast,
While their eyes contain that enigma never told.
Each figure has its title carved upon its head:
Health, and Voluptuousness, Greatness, Joy, and Play,
With *Victory, Beauty, Happiness,* may be read,
Adorning brands they wear unblushing in the day.

The Soudan cried: "O, Sphinxes, with the torch-like eye,

I am the Conqueror—my name is high-arrayed
In characters like flame upon the vaulted sky,
Far from oblivion's reach or an effacing shade.
Upon a sheaf of thunderbolts I rest my arm,
And gods might wish my exploits with them were their own.
I live—I am not open to the points of harm,
And e'en my throne will be with age an altar-stone.
When the time comes for me to cast off earthly robe,
And enter—being Day—into the realms of light,
The gods will say, we call Zizimi from his globe
That we may have our brother nearer to our sight!
Glory is but my menial, Pride my own chained slave,
Humbly standing when Zizimi is in his seat.
I scorn base man, and have sent thousands to the grave.
They are but as a rushen carpet to my feet.
Instead of human beings, eunuchs, blacks, or mutes,
Be yours, oh, Sphinxes, with the glad names on your fronts!
The task, with voice attuned to emulate the flute's,
To charm the king, whose chase is man, and wars his hunts.

"Some portion of your splendor back on me reflect,
Sing out in praiseful chains of melodious links!
Oh, throne, which I with bloody spoils have so bedecked,
Speak to your lord! Speak you, the first rose-crested Sphinx!"

Soon on the summons, once again was stillness broke,

For the ten figures, in a voice which all else drowned,
Parting their stony lips, alternatively spoke—
Spoke clearly, with a deeply penetrative sound.

THE FIRST SPHINX.

So lofty as to brush the heavens' dome,
Upon the highest terrace of her tomb
Is Queen Nitrocis, thinking all alone,
Upon her line, long tenants of the throne,
Terrors, scourges of the Greeks and Hebrews,
Harsh and bloodthirsty, narrow in their views.
Against the pure scroll of the sky, a blot,
Stands out her sepulchre, a fatal spot
That seems a baneful breath around to spread.
The birds which chance to near it, drop down dead.
The queen is now attended on by shades,
Which have replaced, in horrid guise, her maids.
No life is here—the law says such as bore
A corpse alone may enter through yon door.
Before, behind, around the queen, her sight
Encounters but the same blank void of night.
Above, the pilasters are like to bars,
And, through their gaps, the dead look at the stars,
While, till the dawn, around Nitrocis' bones,
Spectres hold council, crouching on the stones.

THE SECOND SPHINX.

Howe'er great is pharaoh, the magi, king,
Encompassed by an idolizing ring,
None is so high as Tiglath Pileser.
Who, like the God before whom pales the star,
Has temples, with a prophet for a priest,
Who serves up daily sacrilegious feast.
His anger there are none who dare provoke,
His very mildness is looked on as a yoke;
And under his, more feared than other rules,
He holds his people bound, like tamèd bulls.
Asia is banded with his paths of war;
He is more of a scourge than Attila.
He triumphs glorious—but, day by day,
The earth falls at his feet, piecemeal away;
And the bricks for his tomb's wall, one by one,
Are being shaped—are baking in the sun.

THE THIRD SPHINX.

Equal to archangel, for one short while,
Was Nimroud, builder of tall Babel's pile.
His sceptre reached across the space between
The sites where Sol to rise and set is seen.

Baal made him terrible to all alike,
The greatest cow'ring when he rose to strike.
Unbelief had shown in ev'ry eye,
Had any dared to say: "Nimroud will die!"
He lived and ruled, but is—at this time, where?
Winds blow free o'er his realm—a desert bare!

THE FOURTH SPHINX.

There is a statue of King Chrem of old,
Of unknown date and maker, but of gold.
How many grandest rulers in his day
Chrem pluckèd down, there are now none can say.
Whether he ruled with gentle hand or rough,
None know. He once was—no longer is—enough,
Crowned Time, whose seat is on a ruined mass,
Holds, and aye turns, a strange sand in his glass,
A sand scraped from the mould, brushed from the shroud
Of all passed things, mean, great, lowly, or proud.
Thus meting with the ashes of the dead
How hours of the living have quickly fled.
The sand runs, monarchs! the clepsydra weeps.
Wherefore? They see through future's gloomy deeps,
Through the church wall, into the catacomb,
And mark the change when thrones do graves become.

THE FIFTH SPHINX.

To swerve the earth seemed from its wonted path

When marched the Four of Asia in their wrath,

And when they were bound slaves to Cyrus' car,

The rivers shrank back from their banks afar.

"Who can this be," was Nineveh's appeal;

"Who dares to drag the gods at his car-wheel?"

The ground is still there that these wheel-rims tore—

The people and the armies are no more.

THE SIXTH SPHINX.

Never again Cambyses earth will tread.

He slept, and rotted, for his ghost had fled.

So long as sovereigns live, the subjects kneel,

Crouching like spaniels at their royal heel;

But when their might flies, they are shunned by all,

Save worms, which—human-like—still to them crawl

On Troy or Memphis, on Pyrrhus the Great,

Or on Psammeticus, alike falls fate.

Those who in rightful purple are arrayed,

The prideful vanquisher, like vanquished, fade.

Death grins as he the fallen man bestrides—

And less of faults than of his glories hides.

THE SEVENTH SPHINX.

The time is come for Belus' tomb to fall,
Long has been ruined its high granite wall;
And its cupola, sister of the cloud,
Has now to lowest mire its tall head bowed.
The herdsman comes to it to choose the stones
To build a hut, and overturns the bones,
From which he has just scared a jackal pack,
Waiting to gnaw them when he turns his back.
Upon this scene the night is doubly night,
And the lone passer vainly strains his sight,
Musing: Was Belus not buried near this spot?
The royal resting-place is now forgot.

THE EIGHTH SPHINX.

The inmates of the Pyramids assume
The hue of Rhamesis, black with the gloom.
A Jailer who ne'er needs bolts, bars, or hasps,
Is Death. With unawed hand a god he grasps,
He thrusts, to stiffen, in a narrow case,
Or cell, where struggling air-blasts constant moan;
Walling them round with huge, damp, slimy stone;
And (leaving mem'ry of bloodshed as drink,
And thoughts of crime as food) he stops each chink.

THE NINTH SPHINX.

Who would see Cleopatra on her bed?
Come in. The place is filled with fog like lead,
Which clammy has settled on the frame
Of her who was a burning, dazzling flame
To all mankind—who durst not lift their gaze,
And meet the brightness of her beauty's rays.
Her teeth were pearls, her breath a rare perfume.
Men died with love on entering her room.
Poised 'twixt the world and her—acme of joys!
Antony took her of the double choice.
The ice-cold heart that passion seldom warms,
Would find heat torrid in that queen's soft arms.
She won without a single woman's wile,
Illumining the earth with peerless smile.
Come in!—but muffle closely up your face,
No grateful scents have ta'en sweet odors' place.

THE TENTH SPHINX.

What did the greatest king that e'er earth bore,
Sennacherib? No matter—he's no more!
What were the words Sardanapalus said?
Who cares to hear—that ruler long is dead.

The Soudan, turning pale, stared at the TEN aghast.
"Before to-morrow's night," he said, "in dust to rest,
These walls with croaking images shall be downcast;
I will not have fiends speak when angels are addressed."
But while Zim at the Sphinxes clenched his hand and shook,
The cup in which it seems the rich wine sweetly breathes,
The cup with jewels sparkling, met his lowered look,
Dwelling on the rim which the rippling wine enwreathes.
"Ha! You!" Zim cried, "have often cleared my heated head
Of heavy thoughts which your great lord have come to seek
And torture with their pain and weight like molten lead.
Let us two—power, I—you, wine—together speak."

THE CUP.

"Phur," spoke the Cup, "O king, dwelt as Day's god,
Ruled Alexandria with sword and rod.
He from his people drew force after force,
Leaving in ev'ry clime an army's corse.
But what gained he by having, like the sea,
Flooded with human waves to enslave the free?
Where lies the good in having been the chief
In conquering, to cause a nation's grief?
Darius, Assar-addon, Hamilcar;
Who have led men in legions out to war,

Or have o'er Time's shade cast rays from their seat,
Or throngs in worship made their name repeat,
These were, but all the cup of life have drank;
Rising 'midst clamor, they in stillness sank.
Death's dart beat down the sword—the kings high reared,
Were brought full low—judges, like culprits, feared.
The body—when the soul had ceased its sway—
Was placed where earth upon it heavy lay,
While seek the mouldering bones rare oils anoint
Claw of tree's root and tooth of rocky point.
Weeds thrive on them who made the world a mart
Of human flesh, plants force their joints apart.
No deed of eminence the greatest saves,
And of mausoleums make panthers caves."

The Cup, Zim, in his fury, dashed upon the floor,
Crying aloud for lights. Slaves, at his angry call,
In to him hastily, a candelabra bore,
And set it, branching o'er the table, in the hall,
From whose wide bounds it hunted instantly the gloom.
"Ah, light!" exclaimed the Soudan, "welcome light, all hail!
Dull witnesses were yonder Sphinxes of this room;
The Cup was always drunk, in wit did ever fail;
But you fling gleams forth brightly, dazzling as a torch;
Vainly to quell your power all Night's attempts are spent;
The murky, black-eyed clouds you eat away and scorch,

Making where'er you spring to life an Orient.
To charm your lord give voice, thou spark of paradise!
Speak forth against the Sphinxes' enigmatic word,
And 'gainst the Wine-Cup, with its sharp and biting spice!"

THE LAMP.

Oh, Crusher of Countless Cities, such as earth knew
Scarce once before him, Ninus (who his brother slew),
Was borne within the walls which, in Assyrian rite,
Were built to hide dead majesty from outer sight.
If eye of man the gift uncommon could assume,
And pierce the mass, thick, black as hearse's plume,
To where lays on a horrifying bed
What was King Ninus, now hedged round with dread,
'Twould see by what is shadow of the light,
A line of feath'ry dust, bones marble-white.
A shudder overtakes the pois'nous snakes
When they glide near that powder, laid in flakes.
Death comes at times to him—*Life* comes no more!
And sets a jug and loaf upon the floor.
He then with bony foot the corpse o'erturns,
And says: "It is I, Ninus! 'Tis Death who spurns!
I bring thee, hungry king, some bread and meat."
"I have no hands," Ninus replies. "Yet, eat!"
Zim pierced to the very quick by these repeated stabs,

Sprang to his feet, while from him pealed a fearful shout,
And, furious, flung down upon the marble slabs
The richly carved and golden Lamp, whose light went out—
Then glided in a form strange-shaped,
In likeness of a woman, moulded in dense smoke,
Veiled in thick, ebon fog, in utter darkness draped,
A glimpse of which, in short, one's inmost fears awoke.
Zim was alone with her, this Goddess of the Night.
The massy walls of stone like vapor part and fade,
Zim, shuddering, tried to call guard or satellite,
But as the figure grasped him firmly, "Come!" she said.

BP. ALEXANDER

A QUEEN FIVE SUMMERS OLD.

("Elle est toute petite.")

{Bk. XXVI.}

She is so little—in her hands a rose:
A stern duenna watches where she goes,
What sees Old Spain's Infanta—the clear shine
Of waters shadowed by the birch and pine.
What lies before? A swan with silver wing,
The wave that murmurs to the branch's swing,
Or the deep garden flowering below?
Fair as an angel frozen into snow,

The royal child looks on, and hardly seems to know.

As in a depth of glory far away,

Down in the green park, a lofty palace lay,

There, drank the deer from many a crystal pond,

And the starred peacock gemmed the shade beyond.

Around that child all nature shone more bright;

Her innocence was as an added light.

Rubies and diamonds strewed the grass she trode,

And jets of sapphire from the dolphins flowed.

Still at the water's side she holds her place,

Her bodice bright is set with Genoa lace;

O'er her rich robe, through every satin fold,

Wanders an arabesque in threads of gold.

From its green urn the rose unfolding grand,

Weighs down the exquisite smallness of her hand.

And when the child bends to the red leaf's tip,

Her laughing nostril, and her carmine lip,

The royal flower purpureal, kissing there,

Hides more than half that young face bright and fair,

So that the eye deceived can scarcely speak

Where shows the rose, or where the rose-red cheek.

Her eyes look bluer from their dark brown frame:

Sweet eyes, sweet form, and Mary's sweeter name.

All joy, enchantment, perfume, waits she there,

Heaven in her glance, her very name a prayer.

Yet 'neath the sky, and before life and fate,
Poor child, she feels herself so vaguely great.
With stately grace she gives her presence high
To dawn, to spring, to shadows flitting by,
To the dark sunset glories of the heaven,
And all the wild magnificence of even;
On nature waits, eternal and serene,
With all the graveness of a little queen.
She never sees a man but on his knee,
She Duchess of Brabant one day will be,
Or rule Sardinia, or the Flemish crowd
She is the Infanta, five years old, and proud.

Thus is it with kings' children, for they wear
A shadowy circlet on their forehead fair;
Their tottering steps are towards a kingly chair.
Calmly she waits, and breathes her gathered flower
Till one shall cull for her imperial power.
Already her eye saith, "It is my right;"
Even love flows from her, mingled with affright.
If some one seeing her so fragile stand,
Were it to save her, should put forth his hand,
Ere he had made a step, or breathed a vow,
The scaffold's shadow were upon his brow.

While the child laughs, beyond the bastion thick
Of that vast palace, Roman Catholic,
Whose every turret like a mitre shows,
Behind the lattice something dreadful goes.
Men shake to see a shadow from beneath
Passing from pane to pane, like vapory wreath,
Pale, black, and still it glides from room to room;
In the same spot, like ghost upon a tomb;
Or glues its dark brown to the casement wan,
Dim shade that lengthens as the night draws on.
Its step funereal lingers like the swing
Of passing bell—'tis death, or else the king.
'Tis he, the man by whom men live and die;
But could one look beyond that phantom eye,
As by the wall he leans a little space,
And see what shadows fill his soul's dark place,
Not the fair child, the waters clear, the flowers
Golden with sunset—not the birds, the bowers—
No; 'neath that eye, those fatal brows that keep
The fathomless brain, like ocean, dark and deep,
There, as in moving mirage, should one find
A fleet of ships that go before the wind:
On the foamed wave, and 'neath the starlight pale,
The strain and rattle of a fleet in sail,
And through the fog an isle on her white rock
Harkening from far the thunder's coming shock.

Still by the water's edge doth silent stand
The Infanta with the rose-flower in her hand,
Caresses it with eyes as blue as heaven;
Sudden a breeze, such breeze as panting even
From her full heart flings out to field and brake,
Ruffles the waters, bids the rushes shake,
And makes through all their green recesses swell
The massive myrtle and the asphodel.
To the fair child it comes, and tears away
On its strong wing the rose-flower from the spray.
On the wild waters casts it bruised and torn,
And the Infanta only holds a thorn.
Frightened, perplexed, she follows with her eyes
Into the basin where her ruin lies,
Looks up to heaven, and questions of the breeze
That had not feared her highness to displease;
But all the pond is changed; anon so clear,
Now back it swells, as though with rage and fear;
A mimic sea its small waves rise and fall,
And the poor rose is broken by them all.
Its hundred leaves tossed wildly round and round
Beneath a thousand waves are whelmed and drowned;
It was a foundering fleet you might have said;
And the duenna with her face of shade,—
"Madam," for she had marked her ruffled mind,

"All things belong to princes—but God's wind."

BP. ALEXANDER

SEA-ADVENTURERS' SONG.

("En partant du Golfe d'Otrante.")

{Bk. XXVIII.}

We told thirty when we started
From port so taut and fine,
But soon our crew were parted,
Till now we number nine.

Tom Robbins, English, tall and straight,
Left us at Aetna light;
He left us to investigate
What made the mountain bright;
"I mean to ask Old Nick himself,
(And here his eye he rolls)
If I can't bring Newcastle pelf
By selling him some coals!"

In Calabree, a lass and cup

Drove scowling Spada wild:
She only held her finger up,
And there he drank and smiled;
And over in Gaëta Bay,
Ascanio—ashore
A fool!—must wed a widow gay
Who'd buried three or four.

At Naples, woe! poor Ned they hanged—
Hemp neckcloth he disdained—
And prettily we all were banged—
And two more blades remained

To serve the Duke, and row in chains—
Thank saints! 'twas not my cast!
We drank deliverance from pains—
We who'd the ducats fast.

At Malta Dick became a monk—
(What vineyards have those priests!)
And Gobbo to quack-salver sunk,
To leech vile murrained beasts;
And lazy André, blown off shore,
Was picked up by the Turk,
And in some harem, you be sure,
Is forced at last to work.

Next, three of us whom nothing daunts,
Marched off with Prince Eugene,
To take Genoa! oh, it vaunts
Girls fit—each one—for queen!
Had they but promised us the pick,
Perchance we had joined, all;
But battering bastions built of brick—
Bah, give me wooden wall!

By Leghorn, twenty caravels
Came 'cross our lonely sail—
Spinoza's Sea-Invincibles!
But, whew! our shots like hail
Made shortish work of galley long
And chubby sailing craft—
Our making ready first to close
Sent them a-spinning aft.

Off Marseilles, ne'er by sun forsook
We friends fell-to as foes!
For Lucca Diavolo mistook
Angelo's wife for Rose,

And hang me! soon the angel slid
The devil in the sea,

And would of lass likewise be rid—

And so we fought it free!

At Palmas eight or so gave slip,

Pescara to pursue,

And more, perchance, had left the ship,

But Algiers loomed in view;

And here we cruised to intercept

Some lucky-laden rogues,

Whose gold-galleons but slowly crept,

So that we trounced the dogs!

And after making war out there,

We made love at "the Gib."

We ten—no more! we took it fair,

And kissed the gov'nor's "rib,"

And made the King of Spain our take,

Believe or not, who cares?

I tell ye that he begged till black

I' the face to have his shares.

We're rovers of the restless main,

But we've some conscience, mark!

And we know what it is to reign,

And finally did heark—

Aye, masters of the narrow Neck,

We hearkened to our heart,
And gave him freedom on our deck,
His town, and gold—in part.

My lucky mates for that were made
Grandeas of Old Castile,
And maids of honor went to wed,
Somewhere in sweet Seville;

Not they for me were fair enough,
And so his Majesty
Declared his daughter—'tis no scoff!
My beauteous bride should be.

"A royal daughter!" think of that!
But I would never one.
I have a lass (I said it pat)
Who's not been bred like nun—
But, merry maid with eagle eye,
It's proud she smiles and bright,
And sings upon the cliff, to spy
My ship a-heave in sight!

My Faenzetta has my heart!
In Fiesoné she
The fairest! Nothing shall us part,

Saving, in sooth, the Sea!
And that not long! its rolling wave
And such breeze holding now
Will send me along to her I love—
And so I made my bow.

We told thirty when we started
From port so taut and fine,
But thus our crew were parted,
And now we number nine.

THE SWISS MERCENARIES.

("Lorsque le regiment des hallebardiers.")

{Bk. XXXI.}

When the regiment of Halberdiers
Is proudly marching by,
The eagle of the mountain screams
From out his stormy sky;
Who speaketh to the precipice,
And to the chasm sheer;
Who hovers o'er the thrones of kings,
And bids the caitiffs fear.

King of the peak and glacier,
King of the cold, white scalps—
He lifts his head, at that close tread,
The eagle of the Alps.

O shame! those men that march below—

O ignominy dire!
Are the sons of my free mountains
Sold for imperial hire.

Ah! the vilest in the dungeon!

Ah! the slave upon the seas—
Is great, is pure, is glorious,
Is grand compared with these,
Who, born amid my holy rocks,
In solemn places high,
Where the tall pines bend like rushes
When the storm goes sweeping by;

Yet give the strength of foot they learned

By perilous path and flood,
And from their blue-eyed mothers won,

The old, mysterious blood;
The daring that the good south wind
Into their nostrils blew,
And the proud swelling of the heart
With each pure breath they drew;

The graces of the mountain glens,
With flowers in summer gay;
And all the glories of the hills
To earn a lackey's pay.

Their country free and joyous—
She of the rugged sides—
She of the rough peaks arrogant
Whereon the tempest rides:
Mother of the unconquered thought
And of the savage form,
Who brings out of her sturdy heart
The hero and the storm:
Who giveth freedom unto man,
And life unto the beast;
Who hears her silver torrents ring
Like joy-bells at a feast;

Who hath her caves for palaces,
And where her châteaux stand—
The proud, old archer of Altorf,
With his good bow in his hand.
Is she to suckle jailers?
Shall shame and glory rest,
Amid her lakes and glaciers,
Like twins upon her breast?

Shall the two-headed eagle,
 Marked with her double blow,
Drink of her milk through all those hearts
 Whose blood he bids to flow?

Say, was it pomp ye needed,
 And all the proud array
Of courtly joust and high parade
 Upon a gala day?

Look up; have not my valleys
 Their torrents white with foam—

Their lines of silver bullion
 On the blue hillocks of home?

Doth not sweet May embroider
 My rocks with pearls and flowers?

Her fingers trace a richer lace
 Than yours in all my bowers.

Are not my old peaks gilded
 When the sun arises proud,
And each one shakes a white mist plume
 Out of the thunder-cloud?

O, neighbor of the golden sky—
 Sons of the mountain sod—
Why wear a base king's colors
 For the livery of God?

O shame! despair! to see my Alps
Their giant shadows fling
Into the very waiting-room
Of tyrant and of king!

O thou deep heaven, unsullied yet,
Into thy gulfs sublime—
Up azure tracts of flaming light—
Let my free pinion climb;
Till from my sight, in that clear light,
Earth and her crimes be gone—
The men who act the evil deeds—
The caitiffs who look on.
Far, far into that space immense,
Beyond the vast white veil,
Where distant stars come out and shine,
And the great sun grows pale.

BP. ALEXANDER

THE CUP ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

("Mon père, ce héros au sourire.")

{Bk. XLIX. iv.}

My sire, the hero with the smile so soft,
And a tall trooper, his companion oft,
Whom he loved greatly for his courage high
And strength and stature, as the night drew nigh
Rode out together. The battle was done;
The dead strewed the field; long sunk was the sun.
It seemed in the darkness a sound they heard,—
Was it feeble moaning or uttered word?
'Twas a Spaniard left from the force in flight,
Who had crawled to the roadside after fight;
Shattered and livid, less live than dead,
Rattled his throat as hoarsely he said:
"Water, water to drink, for pity's sake!
Oh, a drop of water this thirst to slake!"
My father, moved at his speech heart-wrung,
Handed the orderly, downward leapt,
The flask of rum at the holster kept.
"Let him have some!" cried my father, as ran
The trooper o'er to the wounded man,—
A sort of Moor, swart, bloody and grim;
But just as the trooper was nearing him,
He lifted a pistol, with eye of flame,
And covered my father with murd'rous aim.
The hurtling slug grazed the very head,
And the helmet fell, pierced, streaked with red,

And the steed reared up; but in steady tone:

"Give him the whole!" said my father, "and on!"

TORU DUTT

HOW GOOD ARE THE POOR.

("Il est nuit. La cabane est pauvre.")

{Bk. LII. iii.}

'Tis night—within the close stout cabin door,
The room is wrapped in shade save where there fall
Some twilight rays that creep along the floor,
And show the fisher's nets upon the wall.

In the dim corner, from the oaken chest,
A few white dishes glimmer; through the shade
Stands a tall bed with dusky curtains dressed,
And a rough mattress at its side is laid.

Five children on the long low mattress lie—
A nest of little souls, it heaves with dreams;
In the high chimney the last embers die,

And redden the dark room with crimson gleams.

The mother kneels and thinks, and pale with fear,

She prays alone, hearing the billows shout:

While to wild winds, to rocks, to midnight drear,

The ominous old ocean sobs without.

Poor wives of fishers! Ah! 'tis sad to say,

Our sons, our husbands, all that we love best,

Our hearts, our souls, are on those waves away,

Those ravening wolves that know not ruth, nor rest.

Think how they sport with these beloved forms;

And how the clarion-blowing wind unties

Above their heads the tresses of the storms:

Perchance even now the child, the husband, dies.

For we can never tell where they may be

Who, to make head against the tide and gale,

Between them and the starless, soulless sea

Have but one bit of plank, with one poor sail.

Terrible fear! We seek the pebbly shore,

Cry to the rising billows, "Bring them home."

Alas! what answer gives their troubled roar,

To the dark thought that haunts us as we roam.

Janet is sad: her husband is alone,
 Wrapped in the black shroud of this bitter night:

His children are so little, there is none
 To give him aid. "Were they but old, they might."
Ah, mother! when they too are on the main,
How wilt thou weep: "Would they were young again!"

She takes his lantern—'tis his hour at last
 She will go forth, and see if the day breaks,
And if his signal-fire be at the mast;
 Ah, no—not yet—no breath of morning wakes.

No line of light o'er the dark water lies;
 It rains, it rains, how black is rain at morn:
The day comes trembling, and the young dawn cries—
 Cries like a baby fearing to be born.

Sudden her humane eyes that peer and watch
 Through the deep shade, a mouldering dwelling find,
No light within—the thin door shakes—the thatch
 O'er the green walls is twisted of the wind,

Yellow, and dirty, as a swollen rill,
 "Ah, me," she saith, "here does that widow dwell;

Few days ago my good man left her ill:

I will go in and see if all be well."

She strikes the door, she listens, none replies,

And Janet shudders. "Husbandless, alone,

And with two children—they have scant supplies.

Good neighbor! She sleeps heavy as a stone."

She calls again, she knocks, 'tis silence still;

No sound—no answer—suddenly the door,

As if the senseless creature felt some thrill

Of pity, turned—and open lay before.

She entered, and her lantern lighted all

The house so still, but for the rude waves' din.

Through the thin roof the plashing rain-drops fall,

But something terrible is couched within.

"So, for the kisses that delight the flesh,

For mother's worship, and for children's bloom,

For song, for smile, for love so fair and fresh,

For laugh, for dance, there is one goal—the tomb."

And why does Janet pass so fast away?
What hath she done within that house of dread?
What foldeth she beneath her mantle gray?
And hurries home, and hides it in her bed:
With half-averted face, and nervous tread,
What hath she stolen from the awful dead?

The dawn was whitening over the sea's verge
As she sat pensive, touching broken chords
Of half-remorseful thought, while the hoarse surge
Howled a sad concert to her broken words.

"Ah, my poor husband! we had five before,
Already so much care, so much to find,
For he must work for all. I give him more.
What was that noise? His step! Ah, no! the wind.

"That I should be afraid of him I love!
I have done ill. If he should beat me now,
I would not blame him. Did not the door move?
Not yet, poor man." She sits with careful brow
Wrapped in her inward grief; nor hears the roar
Of winds and waves that dash against his prow,
Nor the black cormorant shrieking on the shore.

Sudden the door flies open wide, and lets

Noisily in the dawn-light scarcely clear,
And the good fisher, dragging his damp nets,
Stands on the threshold, with a joyous cheer.

"'Tis thou!" she cries, and, eager as a lover,
Leaps up and holds her husband to her breast;
Her greeting kisses all his vesture cover;
"'Tis I, good wife!" and his broad face expressed

How gay his heart that Janet's love made light.
"What weather was it?" "Hard." "Your fishing?" "Bad.
The sea was like a nest of thieves to-night;
But I embrace thee, and my heart is glad.

"There was a devil in the wind that blew;
I tore my net, caught nothing, broke my line,
And once I thought the bark was broken too;
What did you all the night long, Janet mine?"

She, trembling in the darkness, answered, "I!
Oh, naught—I sew'd, I watch'd, I was afraid,
The waves were loud as thunders from the sky;
But it is over." Shyly then she said—

"Our neighbor died last night; it must have been
When you were gone. She left two little ones,

So small, so frail—William and Madeline;
The one just lisps, the other scarcely runs."

The man looked grave, and in the corner cast
His old fur bonnet, wet with rain and sea,
Muttered awhile, and scratched his head,—at last
"We have five children, this makes seven," said he.

"Already in bad weather we must sleep
Sometimes without our supper. Now! Ah, well—
'Tis not my fault. These accidents are deep;
It was the good God's will. I cannot tell.

"Why did He take the mother from those scraps,
No bigger than my fist. 'Tis hard to read;
A learned man might understand, perhaps—
So little, they can neither work nor need.

"Go fetch them, wife; they will be frightened sore,
If with the dead alone they waken thus.
That was the mother knocking at our door,
And we must take the children home to us.

"Brother and sister shall they be to ours,
And they will learn to climb my knee at even;
When He shall see these strangers in our bowers,

More fish, more food, will give the God of Heaven.

"I will work harder; I will drink no wine—

Go fetch them. Wherefore dost thou linger, dear?

Not thus were wont to move those feet of thine."

She drew the curtain, saying, "They are here!"

BP. ALEXANDER

LA VOIX DE GUERNESEY.

MENTANA. {1}

(VICTOR HUGO TO GARIBALDI.)

("Ces jeunes gens, combien étaient-ils.")

{LA VOIX DE GUERNESEY, December, 1868.}

I.

Young soldiers of the noble Latin blood,
How many are ye—Boys? Four thousand odd.
How many are there dead? Six hundred: count!
Their limbs lie strewn about the fatal mount,
Blackened and torn, eyes gummed with blood, hearts rolled
Out from their ribs, to give the wolves of the wold
A red feast; nothing of them left but these
Pierced relics, underneath the olive trees,
Show where the gin was sprung—the scoundrel-trap
Which brought those hero-lads their foul mishap.
See how they fell in swathes—like barley-ears!
Their crime? to claim Rome and her glories theirs;
To fight for Right and Honor;—foolish names!
Come—Mothers of the soil! Italian dames!
Turn the dead over!—try your battle luck!
(Bearded or smooth, to her that gave him suck
The man is always child)—Stay, here's a brow
Split by the Zouaves' bullets! This one, now,
With the bright curly hair soaked so in blood,
Was yours, ma donna!—sweet and fair and good.

The spirit sat upon his fearless face
Before they murdered it, in all the grace
Of manhood's dawn. Sisters, here's yours! his lips,
Over whose bloom the bloody death-foam slips,
Lisped house-songs after you, and said your name

In loving prattle once. That hand, the same
Which lies so cold over the eyelids shut,
Was once a small pink baby-fist, and wet
With milk beads from thy yearning breasts.

Take thou

Thine eldest,—thou, thy youngest born. Oh, flow
Of tears never to cease! Oh, Hope quite gone,
Dead like the dead!—Yet could they live alone—
Without their Tiber and their Rome? and be
Young and Italian—and not also free?
They longed to see the ancient eagle try
His lordly pinions in a modern sky.
They bore—each on himself—the insults laid
On the dear foster-land: of naught afraid,
Save of not finding foes enough to dare
For Italy. Ah; gallant, free, and rare
Young martyrs of a sacred cause,—Adieu!
No more of life—no more of love—for you!
No sweet long-straying in the star-lit glades
At Ave-Mary, with the Italian maids;
No welcome home!

II.

This Garibaldi now, the Italian boys

Go mad to hear him—take to dying—take
To passion for "the pure and high";—God's sake!
It's monstrous, horrible! One sees quite clear
Society—our charge—must shake with fear,
And shriek for help, and call on us to act
When there's a hero, taken in the fact.
If Light shines in the dark, there's guilt in that!
What's viler than a lantern to a bat?

III.

Your Garibaldi missed the mark! You see
The end of life's to cheat, and not to be
Cheated: The knave is nobler than the fool!
Get all you can and keep it! Life's a pool,
The best luck wins; if Virtue starves in rags,
I laugh at Virtue; here's my money-bags!
Here's righteous metal! We have kings, I say,
To keep cash going, and the game at play;
There's why a king wants money—he'd be missed
Without a fertilizing civil list.

Do but try

The question with a steady moral eye!
The colonel strives to be a brigadier,
The marshal, constable. Call the game fair,
And pay your winners! Show the trump, I say!

A renegade's a rascal—till the day
They make him Pasha: is he rascal then?
What with these sequins? Bah! you speak to Men,
And Men want money—power—luck—life's joy—
Those take who can: we could, and fobbed Savoy;
For those who live content with honest state,
They're public pests; knock we 'em on the pate!
They set a vile example! Quick—arrest
That Fool, who ruled and failed to line his nest.
Just hit a bell, you'll see the clapper shake—
Meddle with Priests, you'll find the barrack wake—
Ah! Princes know the People's a tight boot,
March 'em sometimes to be shot and to shoot,
Then they'll wear easier. So let them preach
The righteousness of howitzers; and teach
At the fag end of prayer: "Now, slit their throats!
My holy Zouaves! my good yellow-coats!"
We like to see the Holy Father send
Powder and steel and lead without an end,
To feed Death fat; and broken battles mend.
So they!

IV.

But thou, our Hero, baffled, foiled,
The Glorious Chief who vainly bled and toiled.

The trust of all the Peoples—Freedom's Knight!
The Paladin unstained—the Sword of Right!
What wilt thou do, whose land finds thee but jails!
The banished claim the banished! deign to cheer
The refuge of the homeless—enter here,
And light upon our households dark will fall
Even as thou enterest. Oh, Brother, all,
Each one of us—hurt with thy sorrows' proof,
Will make a country for thee of his roof.
Come, sit with those who live as exiles learn:
Come! Thou whom kings could conquer but not yet turn.
We'll talk of "Palermo"^{2}—"the Thousand" true,
Will tell the tears of blood of France to you;
Then by his own great Sea we'll read, together,
Old Homer in the quiet summer weather,
And after, thou shalt go to thy desire
While that faint star of Justice grows to fire.^{3}

V.

Oh, Italy! hail your Deliverer,
Oh, Nations! almost he gave Rome to her!
Strong-arm and prophet-heart had all but come
To win the city, and to make it "Rome."
Calm, of the antique grandeur, ripe to be
Named with the noblest of her history.

He would have Romanized your Rome—controlled
Her glory, lordships, Gods, in a new mould.
Her spirits' fervor would have melted in
The hundred cities with her; made a twin
Vesuvius and the Capitol; and blended
Strong Juvenal's with the soul, tender and splendid,
Of Dante—smelted old with new alloy—
Stormed at the Titans' road full of bold joy
Whereby men storm Olympus. Italy,
Weep!—This man could have made one Rome of thee!

VI.

But the crime's wrought! Who wrought it?

Honest Man—

Priest Pius? No! Each does but what he can.
Yonder's the criminal! The warlike wight
Who hides behind the ranks of France to fight,
Greek Sinon's blood crossed thick with Judas-Jew's,
The Traitor who with smile which true men woos,
Lip mouthing pledges—hand grasping the knife—
Waylaid French Liberty, and took her life.
Kings, he is of you! fit companion! one
Whom day by day the lightning looks upon
Keen; while the sentenced man triples his guard
And trembles; for his hour approaches hard.

Ye ask me "when?" I say *soon!* Hear ye not
Yon muttering in the skies above the spot?
Mark ye no coming shadow, Kings? the shroud
Of a great storm driving the thunder-cloud?
Hark! like the thief-catcher who pulls the pin,
God's thunder asks to *speak to one within!*

VII.

And meanwhile this death-odor—this corpse-scent
Which makes the priestly incense redolent
Of rotting men, and the Te Deums stink—
Reeks through the forests—past the river's brink,
O'er wood and plain and mountain, till it fouls
Fair Paris in her pleasures; then it prowls,
A deadly stench, to Crete, to Mexico,
To Poland—wheresoe'er kings' armies go:
And Earth one Upas-tree of bitter sadness,
Opening vast blossoms of a bloody madness.
Throats cut by thousands—slain men by the ton!
Earth quite corpse-cumbered, though the half not done!
They lie, stretched out, where the blood-puddles soak,
Their black lips gaping with the last cry spoke.
"Stretched;" nay! *sown broadcast*; yes, the word is "sown."
The fallows Liberty—the harsh wind blown
Over the furrows, Fate: and these stark dead

Are grain sublime, from Death's cold fingers shed
To make the Abyss conceive: the Future bear
More noble Heroes! Swell, oh, Corpses dear!
Rot quick to the green blade of Freedom! Death!
Do thy kind will with them! They without breath,
Stripped, scattered, ragged, festering, slashed and blue,
Dangle towards God the arms French shot tore through
And wait in meekness, Death! for Him and You!

VIII.

Oh, France! oh, People! sleeping unabashed!
Liest thou like a hound when it was lashed?
Thou liest! thine own blood fouling both thy hands,
And on thy limbs the rust of iron bands,
And round thy wrists the cut where cords went deep.
Say did they numb thy soul, that thou didst sleep?
Alas! sad France is grown a cave for sleeping,
Which a worse night than Midnight holds in keeping,
Thou sleepest sottish—lost to life and fame—
While the stars stare on thee, and pale for shame.
Stir! rouse thee! Sit! if thou know'st not to rise;
Sit up, thou tortured sluggard! ope thine eyes!
Stretch thy brawn, Giant! Sleep is foul and vile!
Art fagged, art deaf, art dumb? art blind this while?
They lie who say so! Thou dost know and feel

The things they do to thee and thine. The heel
That scratched thy neck in passing—whose? Canst say?
Yes, yes, 'twas *his*, and this is his *fête-day*.
Oh, thou that wert of humankind—couched so—
A beast of burden on this dunghill! oh!
Bray to them, Mule! Oh, Bullock! bellow then!
Since they have made thee blind, grope in thy den!
Do something, Outcast One, that wast so grand!
Who knows if thou putt'st forth thy poor maimed hand,
There may be venging weapon within reach!
Feel with both hands—with both huge arms go stretch
Along the black wall of thy cellar. Nay,
There *may* be some odd thing hidden away?
Who knows—there *may*! Those great hands might so come
In course of ghastly fumble through the gloom,
Upon a sword—a *sword*! The hands once clasp
Its hilt, must wield it with a Victor's grasp.

EDWIN ARNOLD, C.S.I.

{Footnote 1: The Battle of Mentana, so named from a village by Rome, was fought between the allied French and Papal Armies and the Volunteer Forces of Garibaldi, Nov. 3, 1867.}

{Footnote 2: Palermo was taken immediately after the Garibaldian volunteers, 1000 strong, landed at Marsala to inaugurate the rising which

made Italy free.}

{Footnote 3: Both poet and his idol lived to see the French Republic for the fourth time proclaimed. When Hugo rose in the Senate, on the first occasion after his return to Paris after the expulsion of the Napoleons, and his white head was seen above that of Rouher, ex-Prime Minister of the Empire, all the house shuddered, and in a nearly unanimous voice shouted: "The judgment of God! expiation!"}

LES CHANSONS DES RUES ET DES BOIS.

LOVE OF THE WOODLAND.

("Orphée au bois du Caystre.")

{Bk. I. ii.}

Orpheus, through the hellward wood
Hurried, ere the eve-star glowed,
For the fauns' lugubrious hoots
Followed, hollow, from crookèd roots;

Aeschylus, where Aetna smoked,
Gods of Sicily evoked
With the flute, till sulphur taint
Dulled and lulled the echoes faint;
Pliny, soon his style mislaid,
Dogged Miletus' merry maid,
As she showed eburnean limbs
All-multiplied by brooklet brims;
Plautus, see! like Plutus, hold
Bosomfuls of orchard-gold,
Learns he why that mystic core
Was sweet Venus' meed of yore?
Dante dreamt (while spirits pass
As in wizard's jetty glass)
Each black-bossed Briarian trunk
Waved live arms like furies drunk;
Winsome Will, 'neath Windsor Oak,
Eyed each elf that cracked a joke
At poor panting grease-hart fast—
Obese, roguish Jack harassed;
At Versailles, Molière did court
Cues from Pan (in heron port,
Half in ooze, half treeward raised),
"Words so witty, that Boileau's 'mazed!"

Foliage! fondly you attract!

Dian's faith I keep intact,
And declare that thy dryads dance
Still, and will, in thy green expanse!

SHOOTING STARS.

{FOR MY LITTLE CHILD ONLY.}

("Tas de feux tombants.")

{Bk. III. vii.}

See the scintillating shower!
Like a burst from golden mine—
Incandescent coals that pour
From the incense-bowl divine,
And around us dewdrops, shaken,
Mirror each a twinkling ray
'Twixt the flowers that awaken
In this glory great as day.
Mists and fogs all vanish fleetly;
And the birds begin to sing,
Whilst the rain is murm'ring sweetly
As if angels echoing.
And, methinks, to show she's grateful

For this seed from heaven come,
Earth is holding up a plateful
Of the birds and buds a-bloom!

L'ANNÉE TERRIBLE.

TO LITTLE JEANNE.

("Vous eûtes donc hier un an.")

{September, 1870.}

You've lived a year, then, yesterday, sweet child,
Prattling thus happily! So fledglings wild,
New-hatched in warmer nest 'neath sheltering bough,
Chirp merrily to feel their feathers grow.
Your mouth's a rose, Jeanne! In these volumes grand
Whose pictures please you—while I trembling stand
To see their big leaves tattered by your hand—
Are noble lines; but nothing half your worth,
When all your tiny frame rustles with mirth

To welcome me. No work of author wise
Can match the thought half springing to your eyes,
And your dim reveries, unfettered, strange,
Regarding man with all the boundless range
Of angel innocence. Methinks, 'tis clear
That God's not far, Jeanne, when I see you here.

Ah! twelve months old: 'tis quite an age, and brings
Grave moments, though your soul to rapture clings,
You're at that hour of life most like to heaven,
When present joy no cares, no sorrows leaven
When man no shadow feels: if fond caress
Round parent twines, children the world possess.
Your waking hopes, your dreams of mirth and love
From Charles to Alice, father to mother, rove;
No wider range of view your heart can take
Than what her nursing and his bright smiles make;
They two alone on this your opening hour
Can gleams of tenderness and gladness pour:
They two—none else, Jeanne! Yet 'tis just, and I,
Poor grandsire, dare but to stand humbly by.
You come—I go: though gloom alone my right,
Blest be the destiny which gives you light.

Your fair-haired brother George and you beside
Me play—in watching you is all my pride;

And all I ask—by countless sorrows tried—
The grave; o'er which in shadowy form may show
Your cradles gilded by the morning's glow.

Pure new-born wonderer! your infant life
Strange welcome found, Jeanne, in this time of strife.
Like wild-bee humming through the woods your play,
And baby smiles have dared a world at bay:
Your tiny accents lisp their gentle charms
To mighty Paris clashing mighty arms.
Ah! when I see you, child, and when I hear
You sing, or try, with low voice whispering near,
And touch of fingers soft, my grief to cheer,
I dream this darkness, where the tempests groan,
Trembles, and passes with half-uttered moan.
For though these hundred towers of Paris bend,
Though close as foundering ship her glory's end,
Though rocks the universe, which we defend;
Still to great cannon on our ramparts piled,
God sends His blessing by a little child.

MARWOOD TUCKER.

TO A SICK CHILD DURING THE SIEGE OF PARIS.

("Si vous continuez toute pâle.")

{November, 1870.}

If you continue thus so wan and white;

 If I, one day, behold

You pass from out our dull air to the light,

 You, infant—I, so old:

If I the thread of our two lives must see

 Thus blent to human view,

I who would fain know death was near to me,

 And far away for you;

If your small hands remain such fragile things;

 If, in your cradle stirred,

You have the mien of waiting there for wings,

 Like to some new-fledged bird;

Not rooted to our earth you seem to be.

 If still, beneath the skies,

You turn, O Jeanne, on our mystery

 Soft, discontented eyes!

If I behold you, gay and strong no more;

 If you mope sadly thus;

If you behind you have not shut the door,

 Through which you came to us;

If you no more like some fair dame I see

 Laugh, walk, be well and gay;

If like a little soul you seem to me
That fain would fly away—
I'll deem that to this world, where oft are blent
The pall and swaddling-band,
You came but to depart—an angel sent
To bear me from the land.

LUCY H. HOOPER.

THE CARRIER PIGEON.

("Oh! qu'est-ce que c'est donc que l'Inconnu.")

{January, 1871.}

Who then—oh, who, is like our God so great,
Who makes the seed expand beneath the mountain's weight;
Who for a swallow's nest leaves one old castle wall,
Who lets for famished beetles savory apples fall,
Who bids a pigmy win where Titans fail, in yoke,
And, in what we deem fruitless roar and smoke,
Makes Etna, Chimborazo, still His praises sing,
And saves a city by a word lapped 'neath a pigeon's wing!

TOYS AND TRAGEDY.

("Enfants, on vous dira plus tard.")

{January, 1871.}

In later years, they'll tell you grandpapa
Adored his little darlings; for them did
His utmost just to pleasure them and mar
No moments with a frown or growl amid
Their rosy rompings; that he loved them so
(Though men have called him bitter, cold, and stern,)
That in the famous winter when the snow
Covered poor Paris, he went, old and worn,
To buy them dolls, despite the falling shells,
At which laughed Punch, and they, and shook his bells.

MOURNING.

("Charle! ô mon fils!")

{March, 1871.}

Charles, Charles, my son! hast thou, then, quitted me?

Must all fade, naught endure?
Hast vanished in that radiance, clear for thee,
But still for us obscure?

My sunset lingers, boy, thy morn declines!
Sweet mutual love we've known;
For man, alas! plans, dreams, and smiling twines
With others' souls his own.

He cries, "This has no end!" pursues his way:
He soon is downward bound:
He lives, he suffers; in his grasp one day
Mere dust and ashes found.

I've wandered twenty years, in distant lands,
With sore heart forced to stay:
Why fell the blow Fate only understands!
God took my home away.

To-day one daughter and one son remain
Of all my goodly show:
Wellnigh in solitude my dark hours wane;
God takes my children now.

Linger, ye two still left me! though decays
Our nest, our hearts remain;

In gloom of death your mother silent prays,
I in this life of pain.

Martyr of Sion! holding Thee in sight,
I'll drain this cup of gall,
And scale with step resolved that dangerous height,
Which rather seems a fall.

Truth is sufficient guide; no more man needs
Than end so nobly shown.
Mourning, but brave, I march; where duty leads,
I seek the vast unknown.

MARWOOD TUCKER.

THE LESSON OF THE PATRIOT DEAD.

("O caresse sublime.")

{April, 1871.}

Upon the grave's cold mouth there ever have caresses clung
For those who died ideally good and grand and pure and young;
Under the scorn of all who clamor: "There is nothing just!"
And bow to dread inquisitor and worship lords of dust;

Let sophists give the lie, hearts droop, and courtiers play the worm,
Our martyrs of Democracy the Truth sublime affirm!
And when all seems inert upon this seething, troublous round,
And when the rashest knows not best to flee or stand his ground,
When not a single war-cry from the sombre mass will rush,
When o'er the universe is spread by Doubting utter hush,
Then he who searches well within the walls that close immure
Our teachers, leaders, heroes slain because they lived too pure,
May glue his ear upon the ground where few else came to grieve,
And ask the austere shadows: "Ho! and must one still believe?
Read yet the orders: 'Forward, march!' and 'charge!'" Then from the lime,
Which burnt the bones but left the soul (Oh! tyrants' useless crime!)
Will rise reply: "Yes!" "yes!" and "yes!" the thousand, thousandth time!

H.L.W.

THE BOY ON THE BARRICADE.

("Sur une barricade.")

{June, 1871.}

Like Casabianca on the devastated deck,
In years yet younger, but the selfsame core.
Beside the battered barricade's restless wreck,

A lad stood splashed with gouts of guilty gore,
But gemmed with purest blood of patriot more.

Upon his fragile form the troopers' bloody grip
Was deeply dug, while sharply challenged they:
"Were you one of this currish crew?"—pride pursed his lip,
As firm as bandog's, brought the bull to bay—
While answered he: "I fought with others. Yea!"

"Prepare then to be shot! Go join that death-doomed row."
As paced he pertly past, a volley rang—
And as he fell in line, mock mercies once more flow
Of man's lead-lightning's sudden scathing pang,
But to his home-turned thoughts the balls but sang.

"Here's half-a-franc I saved to buy my mother's bread!"—
The captain started—who mourns not a dear,
The dearest! mother!—"Where is she, wolf-cub?" he said
Still gruffly. "There, d'ye see? not far from here."
"Haste! make it hers! then back to swell *their* bier."

He sprang aloof as springald from detested school,
Or ocean-rover from protected port.
"The little rascal has the laugh on us! no fool
To breast our bullets!"—but the scoff was short,
For soon! the rogue is racing from his court;

And with still fearless front he faces them and calls:

"READY! but level low—*she's* kissed these eyes!"

From cooling hands of *men* each rifle falls,

And their gray officer, in grave surprise,

Life grants the lad whilst his last comrade dies.

Brave youth! I know not well what urged thy act,

Whether thou'lt pass in palace, or die rackt;

But *then*, shone on the guns, a sublime soul.—

A Bayard-boy's, bound by his pure parole!

Honor redeemed though paid by parlous price,

Though lost be sunlit sports, wild boyhood's spice,

The Gates, the cheers of mates for bright device!

Greeks would, whilom, have choicely clasped and circled thee,

Set thee the first to shield some new Thermopylae;

Thy deed had touched and tuned their true Tyrtaeus tongue,

And staged by Aeschylus, grouped thee grand gods among.

And thy lost name (now known no more) been gilt and graved

On cloud-kissed column, by the sweet south ocean laved.

From us no crown! no honors from the civic sheaf—

Purely this poet's tear-bejewelled, aye-green leaf!

H.L.W.

TO HIS ORPHAN GRANDCHILDREN.

("O Charles, je te sens près de moi.")

{July, 1871.}

I feel thy presence, Charles. Sweet martyr! down

In earth, where men decay,

I search, and see from cracks which rend thy tomb,

Burst out pale morning's ray.

Close linked are bier and cradle: here the dead,

To charm us, live again:

Kneeling, I mourn, when on my threshold sounds

Two little children's strain.

George, Jeanne, sing on! George, Jeanne, unconscious play!

Your father's form recall,

Now darkened by his sombre shade, now gilt

By beams that wandering fall.

Oh, knowledge! what thy use? did we not know

Death holds no more the dead;

But Heaven, where, hand in hand, angel and star

Smile at the grave we dread?

A Heaven, which childhood represents on earth.

Orphans, may God be nigh!

That God, who can your bright steps turn aside

From darkness, where I sigh.

All joy be yours, though sorrow bows me down!

To each his fitting wage:

Children, I've passed life's span, and men are plagued

By shadows at that stage.

Hath any done—nay, only half performed—

The good he might for others?

Hath any conquered hatred, or had strength

To treat his foes like brothers?

E'en he, who's tried his best, hath evil wrought:

Pain springs from happiness:

My heart has triumphed in defeat, my pulse

Ne'er quickened at success.

I seemed the greater when I felt the blow:

The prick gives sense of gain;

Since to make others bleed my courage fails,

I'd rather bear the pain.

To grow is sad, since evils grow no less;

Great height is mark for all:

The more I have of branches, more of clustering boughs,

The ghastlier shadows fall.

Thence comes my sadness, though I grant your charms:

Ye are the outbursting

Of the soul in bloom, steeped in the draughts

Of nature's boundless spring.

George is the sapling, set in mournful soil;

Jeanne's folding petals shroud

A mind which trembles at our uproar, yet

Half longs to speak aloud.

Give, then, my children—lowly, blushing plants,

Whom sorrow waits to seize—

Free course to instincts, whispering 'mid the flowers,

Like hum of murmuring bees.

Some day you'll find that chaos comes, alas!

That angry lightning's hurled,

When any cheer the People, Atlas huge,

Grim bearer of the world!

You'll see that, since our fate is ruled by chance,
Each man, unknowing, great,
Should frame life so, that at some future hour
Fact and his dreamings meet.

I, too, when death is past, one day shall grasp
That end I know not now;
And over you will bend me down, all filled
With dawn's mysterious glow.

I'll learn what means this exile, what this shroud
Enveloping your prime;
And why the truth and sweetness of one man
Seem to all others crime.

I'll hear—though midst these dismal boughs you sang—
How came it, that for me,
Who every pity feel for every woe,
So vast a gloom could be.

I'll know why night relentless holds me, why
So great a pile of doom:
Why endless frost enfolds me, and methinks
My nightly bed's a tomb:

Why all these battles, all these tears, regrets,

And sorrows were my share;
And why God's will of me a cypress made,
When roses bright ye were.

MARWOOD TUCKER.
