**A Midsummer Holiday and Other Poems eBook**

**A Midsummer Holiday and Other Poems by Algernon Swinburne**

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

**Contents**

**Table of Contents**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table of Contents | |
| Section | Page |
|  | |
| Start of eBook | 1 |
| THE SEABOARD. | 1 |
| A HAVEN. | 1 |
| ON A COUNTRY ROAD. | 2 |
| THE MILL GARDEN. | 2 |
| A SEA-MARK. | 3 |
| THE CLIFFSIDE PATH. | 4 |
| IN THE WATER. | 4 |
| THE SUNBOWS. | 5 |
| ON THE VERGE. | 6 |
| TO VICTOR HUGO | 7 |
| I. | 7 |
| II. | 8 |
| III. | 8 |
| IV. | 8 |
| V. | 9 |
| VI. | 9 |
| VII. | 9 |
| VIII. | 9 |
| IX. | 10 |
| X. | 10 |
| XI. | 10 |
| XII. | 10 |
| XIII. | 11 |
| XIV. | 11 |
| XV. | 11 |
| XVI. | 12 |
| XVII. | 12 |
| XVIII. | 12 |
| XIX. | 12 |
| XX. | 13 |
| XXI. | 13 |
| XXII. | 13 |
| XXIII. | 14 |
| XXIV. | 14 |
| XXV. | 14 |
| NOTES | 14 |
| I. | 20 |
| II. | 20 |
| III. | 20 |
| IV. | 20 |
| V. | 20 |
| VI. | 21 |
| VII. | 21 |
| VIII. | 21 |
| IX. | 21 |
| I. | 25 |
| II. | 25 |
| III. | 25 |
| IV. | 25 |
| V. | 25 |
| VI. | 25 |
| VII. | 26 |
| I. | 26 |
| II. | 26 |
| III. | 26 |
| I. | 27 |
| II. | 27 |
| III. | 27 |
| I. | 27 |
| II. | 28 |
| III. | 28 |
| I. | 29 |
| II. | 29 |
| III. | 29 |
| IV. | 30 |
| I. | 30 |
| II. | 30 |
| III. | 30 |
| I. | 32 |
| II. | 32 |
| III. | 32 |
| I. | 36 |
| II. | 36 |
| III. | 36 |
| IV. | 36 |
| V. | 36 |
| VI. | 36 |
| VII. | 37 |
| VIII. | 37 |
| IX. | 37 |
| I. | 37 |
| II. | 37 |
| III. | 38 |
| IV. | 38 |
| V. | 38 |
| VI. | 38 |
| VII. | 39 |
| VIII. | 39 |
| IX. | 39 |

**Page 1**

**THE SEABOARD.**

The sea is at ebb, and the sound of her utmost word  
Is soft as the least wave’s lapse in a still small reach.   
From bay into bay, on quest of a goal deferred,  
From headland ever to headland and breach to breach  
Where earth gives ear to the message that all days preach  
With changes of gladness and sadness that cheer and chide,  
The lone way lures me along by a chance untried  
That haply, if hope dissolve not and faith be whole,  
Not all for nought shall I seek, with a dream for guide.   
The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.

The trackless ways are untravelled of sail or bird;  
The hoar wave hardly recedes from the soundless beach.   
The silence of instant noon goes nigh to be heard,  
The viewless void to be visible:  all and each,  
A closure of calm no clamour of storm can breach  
Concludes and confines and absorbs them on either side,  
All forces of light and of life and the live world’s pride.   
Sands hardly ruffled of ripples that hardly roll  
Seem ever to show as in reach of a swift brief stride  
The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.

The waves are a joy to the seamew, the meads to the herd,  
And a joy to the heart is a goal that it may not reach.   
No sense that for ever the limits of sense engird,  
No hearing or sight that is vassal to form or speech,  
Learns ever the secret that shadow and silence teach,  
Hears ever the notes that or ever they swell subside,  
Sees ever the light that lights not the loud world’s tide,  
Clasps ever the cause of the lifelong scheme’s control  
Wherethrough we pursue, till the waters of life be dried,  
The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.

Friend, what have we sought or seek we, whate’er betide,  
Though the seaboard shift its mark from afar descried,  
But aims whence ever anew shall arise the soul?   
Love, thought, song, life, but show for a glimpse and hide  
The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.

**A HAVEN.**

East and north a waste of waters, south and west  
Lonelier lands than dreams in sleep would feign to be,  
When the soul goes forth on travel, and is prest  
Round and compassed in with clouds that flash and flee  
Dells without a streamlet, downs without a tree,  
Cirques of hollow cliff that crumble, give their guest  
Little hope, till hard at hand he pause, to see  
Where the small town smiles, a warm still sea-side nest.

Many a lone long mile, by many a headland’s crest,  
Down by many a garden dear to bird and bee,  
Up by many a sea-down’s bare and breezy breast,  
Winds the sandy strait of road where flowers run free.   
Here along the deep steep lanes by field and lea  
Knights have carolled, pilgrims chanted, on their quest,  
Haply, ere a roof rose toward the bleak strand’s lee,  
Where the small town smiles, a warm still sea-side nest.

**Page 2**

Are the wild lands cursed perchance of time, or blest,  
Sad with fear or glad with comfort of the sea?   
Are the ruinous towers of churches fallen on rest  
Watched of wanderers woful now, glad once as we,  
When the night has all men’s eyes and hearts in fee,  
When the soul bows down dethroned and dispossest?   
Yet must peace keep guard, by day’s and night’s decree,  
Where the small town smiles, a warm still sea-side nest.

Friend, the lonely land is bright for you and me  
All its wild ways through:  but this methinks is best,  
Here to watch how kindly time and change agree  
Where the small town smiles, a warm still sea-side nest.

**ON A COUNTRY ROAD.**

Along these low pleached lanes, on such a day,  
So soft a day as this, through shade and sun,  
With glad grave eyes that scanned the glad wild way,  
And heart still hovering o’er a song begun,  
And smile that warmed the world with benison,  
Our father, lord long since of lordly rhyme,  
Long since hath haply ridden, when the lime  
Bloomed broad above him, flowering where he came.   
Because thy passage once made warm this clime,  
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each year that England clothes herself with May,  
She takes thy likeness on her.  Time hath spun  
Fresh raiment all in vain and strange array  
For earth and man’s new spirit, fain to shun  
Things past for dreams of better to be won,  
Through many a century since thy funeral chime  
Rang, and men deemed it death’s most direful crime  
To have spared not thee for very love or shame;  
And yet, while mists round last year’s memories climb,  
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each turn of the old wild road whereon we stray,  
Meseems, might bring us face to face with one  
Whom seeing we could not but give thanks, and pray  
For England’s love our father and her son  
To speak with us as once in days long done  
With all men, sage and churl and monk and mime,  
Who knew not as we know the soul sublime  
That sang for song’s love more than lust of fame.   
Yet, though this be not, yet, in happy time,  
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Friend, even as bees about the flowering thyme,  
Years crowd on years, till hoar decay begrime  
Names once beloved; but, seeing the sun the same,  
As birds of autumn fain to praise the prime,  
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

**THE MILL GARDEN.**

Stately stand the sunflowers, glowing down the garden-side,  
Ranged in royal rank arow along the warm grey wall,  
Whence their deep disks burn at rich midnoon afire with pride,  
Even as though their beams indeed were sunbeams, and the tall  
Sceptral stems bore stars whose reign endures, not flowers that fall.   
Lowlier laughs and basks the kindlier flower of homelier

**Page 3**

fame,  
Held by love the sweeter that it blooms in Shakespeare’s name,  
Fragrant yet as though his hand had touched and made it thrill,  
Like the whole world’s heart, with warm new life and gladdening flame.   
Fair befall the fair green close that lies below the mill!

Softlier here the flower-soft feet of refluent seasons glide,  
Lightlier breathes the long low note of change’s gentler call.   
Wind and storm and landslip feed the lone sea’s gulf outside,  
Half a seamew’s first flight hence; but scarce may these appal  
Peace, whose perfect seal is set for signet here on all.   
Steep and deep and sterile, under fields no plough can tame,  
Dip the cliffs full-fledged with poppies red as love or shame,  
Wide wan daisies bleak and bold, or herbage harsh and chill;  
Here the full clove pinks and wallflowers crown the love they claim.   
Fair befall the fair green close that lies below the mill!

All the place breathes low, but not for fear lest ill betide,  
Soft as roses answering roses, or a dove’s recall.   
Little heeds it how the seaward banks may stoop and slide,  
How the winds and years may hold all outer things in thrall,  
How their wrath may work on hoar church tower and boundary wall.   
Far and wide the waste and ravin of their rule proclaim  
Change alone the changeless lord of things, alone the same:   
Here a flower is stronger than the winds that work their will,  
Or the years that wing their way through darkness toward their aim.   
Fair befall the fair green close that lies below the mill!

Friend, the home that smiled us welcome hither when we came,  
When we pass again with summer, surely should reclaim  
Somewhat given of heart’s thanksgiving more than words fulfil—­  
More than song, were song more sweet than all but love, might frame.   
Fair befall the fair green close that lies below the mill!

**A SEA-MARK.**

Rains have left the sea-banks ill to climb:   
Waveward sinks the loosening seaboard’s floor:   
Half the sliding cliffs are mire and slime.   
Earth, a fruit rain-rotted to the core,  
Drops dissolving down in flakes, that pour  
Dense as gouts from eaves grown foul with grime.   
One sole rock which years that scathe not score  
Stands a sea-mark in the tides of time.

Time were even as even the rainiest clime,  
Life were even as even this lapsing shore,  
Might not aught outlive their trustless prime:   
Vainly fear would wail or hope implore,  
Vainly grief revile or love adore  
Seasons clothed in sunshine, rain, or rime  
Now for me one comfort held in store  
Stands a sea-mark in the tides of time.

Once, by fate’s default or chance’s crime,  
Each apart, our burdens each we bore;  
Heard, in monotones like bells that chime,  
Chime the sounds of sorrows, float and soar  
Joy’s full carols, near or far before;  
Heard not yet across the alternate rhyme  
Time’s tongue tell what sign set fast of yore  
Stands a sea-mark in the tides of time.

**Page 4**

Friend, the sign we knew not heretofore  
Towers in sight here present and sublime.   
Faith in faith established evermore  
Stands a sea-mark in the tides of time.

**THE CLIFFSIDE PATH.**

Seaward goes the sun, and homeward by the down  
We, before the night upon his grave be sealed.   
Low behind us lies the bright steep murmuring town,  
High before us heaves the steep rough silent field.   
Breach by ghastlier breach, the cliffs collapsing yield:   
Half the path is broken, half the banks divide;  
Flawed and crumbled, riven and rent, they cleave and slide  
Toward the ridged and wrinkled waste of girdling sand  
Deep beneath, whose furrows tell how far and wide  
Wind is lord and change is sovereign of the strand.

Star by star on the unsunned waters twiring down.   
Golden spear-points glance against a silver shield.   
Over banks and bents, across the headland’s crown,  
As by pulse of gradual plumes through twilight wheeled,  
Soft as sleep, the waking wind awakes the weald.   
Moor and copse and fallow, near or far descried.   
Feel the mild wings move, and gladden where they glide:   
Silence, uttering love that all things understand,  
Bids the quiet fields forget that hard beside  
Wind is lord and change is sovereign of the strand.

Yet may sight, ere all the hoar soft shade grow brown,  
Hardly reckon half the lifts and rents unhealed  
Where the scarred cliffs downward sundering drive and drown,  
Hewn as if with stroke of swords in tempest steeled,  
Wielded as the night’s will and the wind’s may wield.   
Crowned and zoned in vain with flowers of autumn-tide,  
Soon the blasts shall break them, soon the waters hide,  
Soon, where late we stood, shall no man ever stand.   
Life and love seek harbourage on the landward side:   
Wind is lord and change is sovereign of the strand.

Friend, though man be less than these, for all his pride,  
Yet, for all his weakness, shall not hope abide?   
Wind and change can wreck but life and waste but land:   
Truth and trust are sure, though here till all subside  
Wind is lord and change is sovereign of the strand.

**IN THE WATER.**

The sea is awake, and the sound of the song  
        of the joy of her waking is rolled  
From afar to the star that recedes, from anear  
        to the wastes of the wild wide shore.   
Her call is a trumpet compelling us homeward:   
        if dawn in her east be acold,  
From the sea shall we crave not her grace to rekindle  
        the life that it kindled before,  
Her breath to requicken, her bosom to rock us,  
        her kisses to bless as of yore?   
For the wind, with his wings half open, at pause  
        in the sky, neither fettered nor free,  
Leans waveward and flutters the ripple to laughter

**Page 5**

        and fain would the twain of us be  
Where lightly the wave yearns forward from under  
        the curve of the deep dawn’s dome,  
And, full of the morning and fired with the pride  
        of the glory thereof and the glee,  
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids  
        and beseeches, athirst for the foam.

Life holds not an hour that is better to live in:   
        the past is a tale that is told,  
The future a sun-flecked shadow, alive and asleep,  
        with a blessing in store.   
As we give us again to the waters, the rapture  
        of limbs that the waters enfold  
Is less than the rapture of spirit whereby,  
        though the burden it quits were sore,  
Our souls and the bodies they wield at their will  
        are absorbed in the life they adore—­  
In the life that endures no burden, and bows not  
        the forehead, and bends not the knee—­  
In the life everlasting of earth and of heaven,  
        in the laws that atone and agree,  
In the measureless music of things, in the fervour  
        of forces that rest or that roam,  
That cross and return and reissue, as I  
        after you and as you after me  
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids  
        and beseeches, athirst for the foam.

For, albeit he were less than the least of them, haply  
        the heart of a man may be bold  
To rejoice in the word of the sea as a mother’s  
        that saith to the son she bore,  
Child, was not the life in thee mine, and my spirit  
        the breath in thy lips from of old?   
Have I let not thy weakness exult in my strength,  
        and thy foolishness learn of my lore?   
Have I helped not or healed not thine anguish, or made not  
        the might of thy gladness more?   
And surely his heart should answer, The light  
        of the love of my life is in thee.   
She is fairer than earth, and the sun is not fairer,  
        the wind is not blither than she:   
From my youth hath she shown me the joy of her bays  
        that I crossed, of her cliffs that I clomb,  
Till now that the twain of us here, in desire  
        of the dawn and in trust of the sea,  
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids  
        and beseeches, athirst for the foam.

Friend, earth is a harbour of refuge for winter,  
        a covert whereunder to flee  
When day is the vassal of night, and the strength  
        of the hosts of her mightier than he;  
But here is the presence adored of me, here  
        my desire is at rest and at home.   
There are cliffs to be climbed upon land, there are ways  
        to be trodden and ridden, but we  
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids  
        and beseeches, athirst for the foam.

**THE SUNBOWS.**

**Page 6**

Spray of song that springs in April,  
        light of love that laughs through May,  
Live and die and live for ever:   
        nought of all thing far less fair  
Keeps a surer life than these  
        that seem to pass like fire away.   
In the souls they live which are  
        but all the brighter that they were;  
In the hearts that kindle, thinking  
        what delight of old was there.   
Wind that shapes and lifts and shifts them  
        bids perpetual memory play  
Over dreams and in and out  
        of deeds and thoughts which seem to wear  
Light that leaps and runs and revels  
        through the springing flames of spray.

Dawn is wild upon the waters  
        where we drink of dawn to-day:   
Wide, from wave to wave rekindling  
        in rebound through radiant air,  
Flash the fires unwoven and woven  
        again of wind that works in play,  
Working wonders more than heart  
        may note or sight may wellnigh dare,  
Wefts of rarer light than colours  
        rain from heaven, though this be rare.   
Arch on arch unbuilt in building,  
        reared and ruined ray by ray,  
Breaks and brightens, laughs and lessens,  
        even till eyes may hardly bear  
Light that leaps and runs and revels  
        through the springing flames of spray.

Year on year sheds light and music  
        rolled and flashed from bay to bay  
Round the summer capes of time  
        and winter headlands keen and bare  
Whence the soul keeps watch, and bids  
        her vassal memory watch and pray,  
If perchance the dawn may quicken,  
        or perchance the midnight spare.   
Silence quells not music, darkness  
        takes not sunlight in her snare;  
Shall not joys endure that perish?   
        Yea, saith dawn, though night say nay:   
Life on life goes out, but very  
        life enkindles everywhere  
Light that leaps and runs and revels  
        through the springing flames of spray.

Friend, were life no more than this is,  
        well would yet the living fare.   
All aflower and all afire  
        and all flung heavenward, who shall say  
Such a flash of life were worthless?   
        This is worth a world of care—­  
Light that leaps and runs and revels  
        through the springing flames of spray.

**ON THE VERGE.**

Here begins the sea that ends not  
        till the world’s end.  Where we stand,  
Could we know the next high sea-mark  
        set beyond these waves that gleam,  
We should know what never man hath  
        known, nor eye of man hath scanned.   
Nought beyond these coiling clouds  
        that melt like fume of shrines that steam  
Breaks or stays the strength of waters  
        till they pass our bounds of dream.   
Where the waste Land’s End leans westward,

**Page 7**

        all the seas it watches roll  
Find their border fixed beyond them,  
        and a worldwide shore’s control:   
These whereby we stand no shore  
        beyond us limits:  these are free.   
Gazing hence, we see the water  
        that grows iron round the Pole,  
From the shore that hath no shore  
        beyond it set in all the sea.

Sail on sail along the sea-line  
        fades and flashes; here on land  
Flash and fade the wheeling wings  
        on wings of mews that plunge and scream.   
Hour on hour along the line  
        of life and time’s evasive strand  
Shines and darkens, wanes and waxes,  
        slays and dies:  and scarce they seem  
More than motes that thronged and trembled  
        in the brief noon’s breath and beam.   
Some with crying and wailing, some  
        with notes like sound of bells that toll,  
Some with sighing and laughing, some  
        with words that blessed and made us whole,  
Passed, and left us, and we know not  
        what they were, nor what were we.   
Would we know, being mortal?  Never  
        breath of answering whisper stole  
From the shore that hath no shore  
        beyond it set in all the sea.

Shadows, would we question darkness?   
        Ere our eyes and brows be fanned  
Round with airs of twilight, washed  
        with dews from sleep’s eternal stream,  
Would we know sleep’s guarded secret?   
        Ere the fire consume the brand,  
Would it know if yet its ashes  
        may requicken? yet we deem  
Surely man may know, or ever  
        night unyoke her starry team,  
What the dawn shall be, or if  
        the dawn shall be not, yea, the scroll  
Would we read of sleep’s dark scripture,  
        pledge of peace or doom of dole.   
Ah, but here man’s heart leaps, yearning  
        toward the gloom with venturous glee,  
Though his pilot eye behold  
        nor bay nor harbour, rock nor shoal,  
From the shore that hath no shore  
        beyond it set in all the sea.

Friend, who knows if death indeed  
        have life or life have death for goal?   
Day nor night can tell us, nor  
        may seas declare nor skies unroll  
What has been from everlasting,  
        or if aught shall always be.   
Silence answering only strikes  
        response reverberate on the soul  
From the shore that hath no shore  
        beyond it set in all the sea.

*A NEW-YEAR ODE*

**TO VICTOR HUGO**

**I.**

Twice twelve times have the springs of years refilled  
  Their fountains from the river-head of time  
Since by the green sea’s marge, ere autumn chilled  
  Waters and woods with sense of changing clime,  
A great light rose upon my soul, and thrilled  
  My spirit of sense with sense of spheres

**Page 8**

in chime,  
Sound as of song wherewith a God would build  
  Towers that no force of conquering war might climb.   
      Wind shook the glimmering sea  
      Even as my soul in me  
  Was stirred with breath of mastery more sublime,  
      Uplift and borne along  
      More thunderous tides of song,  
  Where wave rang back to wave more rapturous rhyme  
    And world on world flashed lordlier light  
Than ever lit the wandering ways of ships by night.

**II.**

The spirit of God, whose breath of life is song,  
  Moved, though his word was human, on the face  
Of those deep waters of the soul, too long  
  Dumb, dark, and cold, that waited for the grace  
Wherewith day kindles heaven:  and as some throng  
  Of quiring wings fills full some lone chill place  
With sudden rush of life and joy, more strong  
  Than death or sorrow or all night’s darkling race,  
      So was my heart, that heard  
      All heaven in each deep word,  
  Filled full with light of thought, and waxed apace  
      Itself more wide and deep,  
      To take that gift and keep  
  And cherish while my days fulfilled their space;  
    A record wide as earth and sea,  
The Legend writ of Ages past and yet to be.

**III.**

As high the chant of Paradise and Hell  
  Rose, when the soul of Milton gave it wings;  
As wide the sweep of Shakespeare’s empire fell,  
  When life had bared for him her secret springs;  
But not his various soul might range and dwell  
  Amid the mysteries of the founts of things;  
Nor Milton’s range of rule so far might swell  
  Across the kingdoms of forgotten kings.   
      Men, centuries, nations, time,  
      Life, death, love, trust, and crime,  
  Rang record through the change of smitten strings  
      That felt an exile’s hand  
      Sound hope for every land  
  More loud than storm’s cloud-sundering trumpet rings,  
    And bid strong death for judgment rise,  
And life bow down for judgment of his awless eyes.

**IV.**

And death, soul-stricken in his strength, resigned  
  The keeping of the sepulchres to song;  
And life was humbled, and his height of mind  
  Brought lower than lies a grave-stone fallen along;  
And like a ghost and like a God mankind  
  Rose clad with light and darkness; weak and strong,  
Clean and unclean, with eyes afire and blind,  
  Wounded and whole, fast bound with cord and thong,  
      Free; fair and foul, sin-stained,  
      And sinless; crowned and chained;  
  Fleet-limbed, and halting all his lifetime long;  
      Glad of deep shame, and sad  
      For shame’s sake; wise, and mad;  
  Girt round with love and hate of right and wrong;  
    Armed and disarmed for sleep and strife;  
Proud, and sore fear made havoc of his pride of life.

**Page 9**

**V.**

Shadows and shapes of fable and storied sooth  
  Rose glorious as with gleam of gold unpriced;  
Eve, clothed with heavenly nakedness and youth  
  That matched the morning’s; Cain, self-sacrificed  
On crime’s first altar:  legends wise as truth,  
  And truth in legends deep embalmed and spiced;  
The stars that saw the starlike eyes of Ruth,  
  The grave that heard the clarion call of Christ.   
      And higher than sorrow and mirth  
      The heavenly song of earth  
  Sprang, in such notes as might have well sufficed  
      To still the storms of time  
      And sin’s contentious clime  
  With peace renewed of life reparadised:   
    Earth, scarred not yet with temporal scars;  
Goddess of gods, our mother, chosen among the stars.

**VI.**

Earth fair as heaven, ere change and time set odds  
  Between them, light and darkness know not when,  
And fear, grown strong through panic periods,  
  Crouched, a crowned worm, in faith’s Lernean fen,  
And love lay bound, and hope was scourged with rods,  
  And death cried out from desert and from den,  
Seeing all the heaven above him dark with gods  
  And all the world about him marred of men.   
      Cities that nought might purge  
      Save the sea’s whelming surge  
  From all the pent pollutions in their pen  
      Deep death drank down, and wrought,  
      With wreck of all things, nought,  
  That none might live of all their names again,  
    Nor aught of all whose life is breath  
Serve any God whose likeness was not like to death.

**VII.**

Till by the lips and eyes of one live nation  
  The blind mute world found grace to see and speak,  
And light watched rise a more divine creation  
  At that more godlike utterance of the Greek,  
Let there be freedom.  Kings whose orient station  
  Made pale the morn, and all her presage bleak,  
Girt each with strengths of all his generation,  
  Dim tribes of shamefaced soul and sun-swart cheek,  
      Twice, urged with one desire,  
      Son following hard on sire,  
  With all the wrath of all a world to wreak,  
      And all the rage of night  
      Afire against the light  
  Whose weakness makes her strong-winged empire weak,  
    Stood up to unsay that saying, and fell  
Too far for song, though song were thousand-tongued, to tell.

**VIII.**

From those deep echoes of the loud AEgean  
  That rolled response whereat false fear was chid  
By songs of joy sublime and Sophoclean,  
  Fresh notes reverberate westward rose to bid  
All wearier times take comfort from the paean  
  That tells the night what deeds the sunrise did,  
Even till the lawns and torrents Pyrenean

**Page 10**

  Ring answer from the records of the Cid.   
      But never force of fountains  
      From sunniest hearts of mountains  
  Wherein the soul of hidden June was hid  
      Poured forth so pure and strong  
      Springs of reiterate song,  
  Loud as the streams his fame was reared amid,  
    More sweet than flowers they feed, and fair  
With grace of lordlier sunshine and more lambent air.

**IX.**

A star more prosperous than the storm-clothed east’s  
  Clothed all the warm south-west with light like spring’s,  
When hands of strong men spread the wolves their feasts  
  And from snake-spirited princes plucked the stings;  
Ere earth, grown all one den of hurtling beasts,  
  Had for her sunshine and her watersprings  
The fire of hell that warmed the hearts of priests,  
  The wells of blood that slaked the lips of kings.   
      The shadow of night made stone  
      Stood populous and alone,  
  Dense with its dead and loathed of living things  
      That draw not life from death,  
      And as with hell’s own breath  
  And clangour of immitigable wings  
    Vexed the fair face of Paris, made  
Foul in its murderous imminence of sound and shade.

**X.**

And all these things were parcels of the vision  
  That moved a cloud before his eyes, or stood  
A tower half shattered by the strong collision  
  Of spirit and spirit, of evil gods with good;  
A ruinous wall rent through with grim division,  
  Where time had marked his every monstrous mood  
Of scorn and strength and pride and self-derision:   
  The Tower of Things, that felt upon it brood  
      Night, and about it cast  
      The storm of all the past  
  Now mute and forceless as a fire subdued:   
      Yet through the rifted years  
      And centuries veiled with tears  
  And ages as with very death imbrued  
    Freedom, whence hope and faith grow strong,  
Smiles, and firm love sustains the indissoluble song.

**XI.**

Above the cloudy coil of days deceased,  
  Its might of flight, with mists and storms beset,  
Burns heavenward, as with heart and hope increased,  
  For all the change of tempests, all the fret  
Of frost or fire, keen fraud or force released,  
  Wherewith the world once wasted knows not yet  
If evil or good lit all the darkling east  
  From the ardent moon of sovereign Mahomet.   
      Sublime in work and will  
      The song sublimer still  
  Salutes him, ere the splendour shrink and set;  
      Then with imperious eye  
      And wing that sounds the sky  
  Soars and sees risen as ghosts in concourse met  
    The old world’s seven elder wonders, firm  
As dust and fixed as shadows, weaker than the worm.

**XII.**

**Page 11**

High witness borne of knights high-souled and hoary  
  Before death’s face and empire’s rings and glows  
Even from the dust their life poured forth left gory,  
  As the eagle’s cry rings after from the snows  
Supreme rebuke of shame clothed round with glory  
  And hosts whose track the false crowned eagle shows;  
More loud than sounds through stormiest song and story  
  The laugh of slayers whose names the sea-wind knows;  
      More loud than peals on land  
      In many a red wet hand  
  The clash of gold and cymbals as they close;  
      Loud as the blast that meets  
      The might of marshalled fleets  
  And sheds it into shipwreck, like a rose  
    Blown from a child’s light grasp in sign  
That earth’s high lords are lords not over breeze and brine.

**XIII.**

Above the dust and mire of man’s dejection  
  The wide-winged spirit of song resurgent sees  
His wingless and long-labouring resurrection  
  Up the arduous heaven, by sore and strange degrees  
Mount, and with splendour of the soul’s reflection  
  Strike heaven’s dark sovereign down upon his knees,  
Pale in the light of orient insurrection,  
  And dumb before the almightier lord’s decrees  
      Who bade him be of yore,  
      Who bids him be no more:   
  And all earth’s heart is quickened as the sea’s,  
      Even as when sunrise burns  
      The very sea’s heart yearns  
  That heard not on the midnight-walking breeze  
    The wail that woke with evensong  
From hearts of poor folk watching all the darkness long.

**XIV.**

Dawn and the beams of sunbright song illume  
  Love, with strange children at her piteous breast,  
By grace of weakness from the grave-mouthed gloom  
  Plucked, and by mercy lulled to living rest,  
Soft as the nursling’s nigh the grandsire’s tomb  
  That fell on sleep, a bird of rifled nest;  
Soft as the lips whose smile unsaid the doom  
  That gave their sire to violent death’s arrest.   
      Even for such love’s sake strong,  
      Wrath fires the inveterate song  
  That bids hell gape for one whose bland mouth blest  
      All slayers and liars that sighed  
      Prayer as they slew and lied  
  Till blood had clothed his priesthood as a vest,  
    And hears, though darkness yet be dumb,  
The silence of the trumpet of the wrath to come.

**XV.**

Nor lacked these lights of constellated age  
  A star among them fed with life more dire,  
Lit with his bloodied fame, whose withering rage  
  Made earth for heaven’s sake one funereal pyre  
And life in faith’s name one appointed stage  
  For death to purge the souls of men with fire.   
Heaven, earth, and hell on one thrice tragic page  
  Mixed all their light and darkness:

**Page 12**

one man’s lyre  
      Gave all their echoes voice;  
      Bade rose-cheeked love rejoice,  
  And cold-lipped craft with ravenous fear conspire,  
      And fire-eyed faith smite hope  
      Dead, seeing enthroned as Pope  
  And crowned of heaven on earth at hell’s desire  
    Sin, called by death’s incestuous name  
Borgia:  the world that heard it flushed and quailed with shame.

**XVI.**

Another year, and hope triumphant heard  
  The consummating sound of song that spake  
Conclusion to the multitudinous word  
  Whose expectation held her spirit awake  
Till full delight for twice twelve years deferred  
  Bade all souls entering eat and drink, and take  
A third time comfort given them, that the third  
  Might heap the measure up of twain, and make  
      The sinking year sublime  
      Among all sons of time  
  And fan in all men’s memories for his sake.   
      Each thought of ours became  
      Fire, kindling from his flame,  
  And music widening in his wide song’s wake.   
    Yea, and the world bore witness here  
How great a light was risen upon this darkening year.

**XVII.**

It was the dawn of winter:  sword in sheath,  
  Change, veiled and mild, came down the gradual air  
With cold slow smiles that hid the doom beneath.   
  Five days to die in yet were autumn’s, ere  
The last leaf withered from his flowerless wreath.   
  South, east, and north, our skies were all blown bare,  
But westward over glimmering holt and heath  
  Cloud, wind, and light had made a heaven more fair  
      Than ever dream or truth  
      Showed earth in time’s keen youth  
  When men with angels communed unaware.   
      Above the sun’s head, now  
      Veiled even to the ardent brow,  
  Rose two sheer wings of sundering cloud, that were  
    As a bird’s poised for vehement flight,  
Full-fledged with plumes of tawny fire and hoar grey light.

**XVIII.**

As midnight black, as twilight brown, they spread,  
  But feathered thick with flame that streaked and lined  
Their living darkness, ominous else of dread,  
  From south to northmost verge of heaven inclined  
Most like some giant angel’s, whose bent head  
  Bowed earthward, as with message for mankind  
Of doom or benediction to be shed  
  From passage of his presence.  Far behind,  
      Even while they seemed to close,  
      Stoop, and take flight, arose  
  Above them, higher than heavenliest thought may find  
      In light or night supreme  
      Of vision or of dream,  
  Immeasurable of men’s eyes or mounting mind,  
    Heaven, manifest in manifold  
Light of pure pallid amber, cheered with fire of gold.

**XIX.**

**Page 13**

And where the fine gold faded all the sky  
  Shone green as the outer sea when April glows,  
Inlaid with flakes and feathers fledged to fly  
  Of cloud suspense in rapture and repose,  
With large live petals, broad as love bids lie  
  Full open when the sun salutes the rose,  
And small rent sprays wherewith the heavens most high  
  Were strewn as autumn strews the garden-close  
      With ruinous roseleaves whirled  
      About their wan chill world,  
  Through wind-worn bowers that now no music knows,  
      Spoil of the dim dusk year  
      Whose utter night is near,  
  And near the flower of dawn beyond it blows;  
    Till east and west were fire and light,  
As though the dawn to come had flushed the coming night.

**XX.**

The highways paced of men that toil or play,  
  The byways known of none but lonely feet,  
Were paven of purple woven of night and day  
  With hands that met as hands of friends might meet—­  
As though night’s were not lifted up to slay  
  And day’s had waxed not weaker.  Peace more sweet  
Than music, light more soft than shadow, lay  
  On downs and moorlands wan with day’s defeat,  
      That watched afar above  
      Life’s very rose of love  
  Let all its lustrous leaves fall, fade, and fleet,  
      And fill all heaven and earth  
      Full as with fires of birth  
  Whence time should feed his years with light and heat:   
    Nay, not life’s, but a flower more strong  
Than life or time or death, love’s very rose of song.

**XXI.**

Song visible, whence all men’s eyes were lit  
  With love and loving wonder:  song that glowed  
Through cloud and change on souls that knew not it  
  And hearts that wist not whence their comfort flowed,  
Whence fear was lightened of her fever-fit,  
  Whence anguish of her life-compelling load.   
Yea, no man’s head whereon the fire alit,  
  Of all that passed along that sunset road  
      Westward, no brow so drear,  
      No eye so dull of cheer,  
  No face so mean whereon that light abode,  
      But as with alien pride  
      Strange godhead glorified  
  Each feature flushed from heaven with fire that showed  
    The likeness of its own life wrought  
By strong transfiguration as of living thought.

**XXII.**

Nor only clouds of the everlasting sky,  
  Nor only men that paced that sunward way  
To the utter bourne of evening, passed not by  
  Unblest or unillumined:  none might say,  
Of all things visible in the wide world’s eye,  
  That all too low for all that grace it lay:   
The lowliest lakelets of the moorland nigh,  
  The narrowest pools where shallowest wavelets play,  
      Were filled from heaven above  
      With light like fire of love,

**Page 14**

  With flames and colours like a dawn in May,  
      As hearts that lowlier live  
      With light of thoughts that give  
  Light from the depth of souls more deep than they  
      Through song’s or story’s kindling scroll,  
The splendour of the shadow that reveals the soul.

**XXIII.**

For, when such light is in the world, we share,  
  All of us, all the rays thereof that shine:   
Its presence is alive in the unseen air,  
  Its fire within our veins as quickening wine;  
A spirit is shed on all men everywhere,  
  Known or not known of all men for divine.   
Yea, as the sun makes heaven, that light makes fair  
  All souls of ours, all lesser souls than thine,  
      Priest, prophet, seer and sage,  
      Lord of a subject age  
  That bears thy seal upon it for a sign;  
      Whose name shall be thy name,  
      Whose light thy light of fame,  
  The light of love that makes thy soul a shrine;  
    Whose record through all years to be  
Shall bear this witness written—­that its womb bare thee.

**XXIV.**

O mystery, whence to one man’s hand was given  
  Power upon all things of the spirit, and might  
Whereby the veil of all the years was riven  
  And naked stood the secret soul of night!   
O marvel, hailed of eyes whence cloud is driven,  
  That shows at last wrong reconciled with right  
By death divine of evil and sin forgiven!   
  O light of song, whose fire is perfect light!   
      No speech, no voice, no thought,  
      No love, avails us aught  
  For service of thanksgiving in his sight  
      Who hath given us all for ever  
      Such gifts that man gave never  
  So many and great since first Time’s wings took flight.   
    Man may not praise a spirit above  
Man’s:  life and death shall praise him:  we can only love.

**XXV.**

Life, everlasting while the worlds endure,  
  Death, self-abased before a power more high,  
Shall bear one witness, and their word stand sure,  
  That not till time be dead shall this man die  
Love, like a bird, comes loyal to his lure;  
  Fame flies before him, wingless else to fly.   
A child’s heart toward his kind is not more pure,  
  An eagle’s toward the sun no lordlier eye.   
      Awe sweet as love and proud  
      As fame, though hushed and bowed,  
  Yearns toward him silent as his face goes by:   
      All crowns before his crown  
      Triumphantly bow down,  
  For pride that one more great than all draws nigh:   
    All souls applaud, all hearts acclaim,  
One heart benign, one soul supreme, one conquering name.

**NOTES**

**Page 15**

  St. V.  
   V. 3.  La Legende des Siecles:  Le Sacre de la Femme.  
       4.  La Conscience.  
       7.  Booz endormi.  
       8.  Premiere rencontre du Christ avec le tombeau.  
       9.  La Terre:  Hymne.   
  VI. 3.  Les Temps Paniques.  
       9.  La Ville Disparue.   
 VII.  Les Trois Cents.   
VIII. 1.  Le Detroit de l’Euripe:  La Chanson de Sophocle a Salamine.  
       7.  Le Romancero du Cid.   
  IX. 3.  Le Petit Roi de Galice.  
       5.  Le Jour des Rois.  
       9.  Montfaucon.   
   X. La vision d’ou est sorti ce livre.   
  XI. 9.  L’an neuf de l’Hegire.  
      12.  Les sept merveilles du monde.   
 XII. 1.  Les quatre jours d’Elciis.  
       4.  Le Regiment du baron Madruce.  
       7.  La Chanson des Aventuriers de la Mer.  
       9.  Les Reitres.  
      12.  La Rose de l’Infante.   
XIII. 1.  Le Satyre.  
      12.  Les paysans au bord de la mer.   
 XIV. 1.  Les pauvres gens.  
       5.  Petit Paul.  
       7.  Guerre Civile.  
       9.  La Vision de Dante.  
      15.  La Trompette du Jugement.   
  XV.  Torquemada (1882).   
 XVI.  La Legende des Siecles:  tome cinquieme et dernier (1883).  XVII.  November 25, 1883.

*LINES ON THE MONUMENT OF GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.*

Italia, mother of the souls of men,  
      Mother divine,  
Of all that served thee best with sword or pen,  
      All sons of thine,

Thou knowest that here the likeness of the best  
      Before thee stands,  
The head most high, the heart found faithfullest,  
      The purest hands.

Above the fume and foam of time that flits,  
      The soul, we know,  
Now sits on high where Alighieri sits  
      With Angelo.

Not his own heavenly tongue hath heavenly speech  
      Enough to say  
What this man was, whose praise no thought may reach,  
      No words can weigh.

Since man’s first mother brought to mortal birth  
      Her first-born son,  
Such grace befell not ever man on earth  
      As crowns this one.

Of God nor man was ever this thing said,  
      That he could give  
Life back to her who gave him, whence his dead  
      Mother might live.

But this man found his mother dead and slain,  
      With fast sealed eyes,  
And bade the dead rise up and live again,  
      And she did rise.

And all the world was bright with her through him:   
      But dark with strife,  
Like heaven’s own sun that storming clouds bedim,  
      Was all his life.

Life and the clouds are vanished:  hate and fear  
      Have had their span  
Of time to hunt, and are not:  he is here,  
      The sunlike man.

City superb that hadst Columbus first  
      For sovereign son,  
Be prouder that thy breast hath later nurst  
      This mightier one.

Glory be his for ever, while his land  
      Lives and is free,  
As with controlling breath and sovereign hand  
      He bade her be.

**Page 16**

Earth shows to heaven the names by thousands told  
      That crown her fame,  
But highest of all that heaven and earth behold  
      Mazzini’s name.

*LES CASQUETS.*

From the depths of the waters that lighten and darken  
  With change everlasting of life and of death,  
Where hardly by noon if the lulled ear hearken  
  It hears the sea’s as a tired child’s breath,  
Where hardly by night if an eye dare scan it  
  The storm lets shipwreck be seen or heard,  
As the reefs to the waves and the foam to the granite  
      Respond one merciless word,

Sheer seen and far, in the sea’s live heaven,  
  A seamew’s flight from the wild sweet land,  
White-plumed with foam if the wind wake, seven  
  Black helms as of warriors that stir not stand.   
From the depths that abide and the waves that environ  
  Seven rocks rear heads that the midnight masks,  
And the strokes of the swords of the storm are as iron  
      On the steel of the wave-worn casques.

Be night’s dark word as the word of a wizard,  
  Be the word of dawn as a god’s glad word,  
Like heads of the spirits of darkness visored  
  That see not for ever, nor ever have heard,  
These basnets, plumed as for fight or plumeless,  
  Crowned of the storm and by storm discrowned,  
Keep ward of the lists where the dead lie tombless  
      And the tale of them is not found.

Nor eye may number nor hand may reckon  
  The tithes that are taken of life by the dark,  
Or the ways of the path, if doom’s hand beckon,  
  For the soul to fare as a helmless bark—­  
Fare forth on a way that no sign showeth,  
  Nor aught of its goal or of aught between,  
A path for her flight which no fowl knoweth,  
      Which the vulture’s eye hath not seen.

Here still, though the wave and the wind seem lovers  
  Lulled half asleep by their own soft words,  
A dream as of death in the sun’s light hovers,  
  And a sign in the motions and cries of the birds.   
Dark auguries and keen from the sweet sea-swallows  
  Strike noon with a sense as of midnight’s breath,  
And the wing that flees and the wing that follows  
      Are as types of the wings of death.

For here, when the night roars round, and under  
  The white sea lightens and leaps like fire,  
Acclaimed of storm and applauded in thunder,  
  Sits death on the throne of his crowned desire.   
Yea, hardly the hand of the god might fashion  
  A seat more strong for his strength to take,  
For the might of his heart and the pride of his passion  
      To rejoice in the wars they make.

When the heart in him brightens with blitheness of battle  
  And the depth of its thirst is fulfilled with strife,  
And his ear with the ravage of bolts that rattle,  
  And the soul of death with the pride of life,  
Till the darkness is loud with his dark thanksgiving  
  And wind and cloud are as chords of his hymn,  
There is nought save death in the deep night living  
      And the whole night worships him.

**Page 17**

Heaven’s height bows down to him, signed with his token,  
  And the sea’s depth, moved as a heart that yearns,  
Heaves up to him, strong as a heart half broken,  
  A heart that breaks in a prayer that burns  
Of cloud is the shrine of his worship moulded,  
  But the altar therein is of sea-shaped stone,  
Whereon, with the strength of his wide wings folded,  
      Sits death in the dark, alone.

He hears the word of his servant spoken,  
  The word that the wind his servant saith,  
Storm writes on the front of the night his token,  
  That the skies may seem to bow down to death  
But the clouds that stoop and the storms that minister  
  Serve but as thralls that fulfil their tasks;  
And his seal is not set save here on the sinister  
      Crests reared of the crownless casques.

Nor flame nor plume of the storm that crowned them  
  Gilds or quickens their stark black strength.   
Life lightens and murmurs and laughs right round them,  
  At peace with the noon’s whole breadth and length,  
At one with the heart of the soft-souled heaven,  
  At one with the life of the kind wild land:   
But its touch may unbrace not the strengths of the seven  
      Casques hewn of the storm-wind’s hand.

No touch may loosen the black braced helmlets  
  For the wild elves’ heads of the wild waves wrought.   
As flowers on the sea are her small green realmlets,  
  Like heavens made out of a child’s heart’s thought;  
But these as thorns of her desolate places,  
  Strong fangs that fasten and hold lives fast:   
And the vizors are framed as for formless faces  
      That a dark dream sees go past.

Of fear and of fate are the frontlets fashioned,  
  And the heads behind them are dire and dumb.   
When the heart of the darkness is scarce impassioned,  
  Thrilled scarce with sense of the wrath to come,  
They bear the sign from of old engraven,  
  Though peace be round them and strife seem far,  
That here is none but the night-wind’s haven,  
      With death for the harbour bar.

Of the iron of doom are the casquets carven,  
  That never the rivets thereof should burst.   
When the heart of the darkness is hunger-starven,  
  And the throats of the gulfs are agape for thirst,  
And stars are as flowers that the wind bids wither,  
  And dawn is as hope struck dead by fear,  
The rage of the ravenous night sets hither,  
      And the crown of her work is here.

All shores about and afar lie lonely,  
  But lonelier are these than the heart of grief,  
These loose-linked rivets of rock, whence only  
  Strange life scarce gleams from the sheer main reef,  
With a blind wan face in the wild wan morning,  
  With a live lit flame on its brows by night,  
That the lost may lose not its word’s mute warning  
      And the blind by its grace have sight.

**Page 18**

Here, walled in with the wide waste water,  
  Grew the grace of a girl’s lone life,  
The sea’s and the sea-wind’s foster-daughter,  
  And peace was hers in the main mid strife.   
For her were the rocks clothed round with thunder,  
  And the crests of them carved by the storm-smith’s craft:   
For her was the mid storm rent in sunder  
      As with passion that wailed and laughed.

For her the sunrise kindled and scattered  
  The red rose-leaflets of countless cloud:   
For her the blasts of the springtide shattered  
  The strengths reluctant of waves back-bowed.   
For her would winds in the mid sky levy  
  Bright wars that hardly the night bade cease  
At noon, when sleep on the sea lies heavy,  
      For her would the sun make peace.

Peace rose crowned with the dawn on golden  
  Lit leagues of triumph that flamed and smiled:   
Peace lay lulled in the moon-beholden  
  Warm darkness making the world’s heart mild  
For all the wide waves’ troubles and treasons,  
  One word only her soul’s ear heard  
Speak from stormless and storm-rent seasons,  
      And nought save peace was the word.

All her life waxed large with the light of it,  
  All her heart fed full on the sound:   
Spirit and sense were exalted in sight of it,  
  Compassed and girdled and clothed with it round.   
Sense was none but a strong still rapture,  
  Spirit was none but a joy sublime,  
Of strength to curb and of craft to capture  
      The craft and the strength of Time.

Time lay bound as in painless prison  
  There, closed in with a strait small space.   
Never thereon as a strange light risen  
  Change had unveiled for her grief’s far face  
Three white walls flung out from the basement  
  Girt the width of the world whereon  
Gazing at night from her flame-lit casement  
      She saw where the dark sea shone.

Hardly the breadth of a few brief paces,  
  Hardly the length of a strong man’s stride,  
The small court flower lit with children’s faces  
  Scarce held scope for a bud to hide.   
Yet here was a man’s brood reared and hidden  
  Between the rocks and the towers and the foam,  
Where peril and pity and peace were bidden  
      As guests to the same sure home.

Here would pity keep watch for peril,  
  And surety comfort his heart with peace.   
No flower save one, where the reefs lie sterile,  
  Gave of the seed of its heart’s increase.   
Pity and surety and peace most lowly  
  Were the root and the stem and the bloom of the flower:   
And the light and the breath of the buds kept holy  
      That maid’s else blossomless bower.

With never a leaf but the seaweed’s tangle,  
  Never a bird’s but the seamew’s note,  
It heard all round it the strong storms wrangle,  
  Watched far past it the waste wrecks float.   
But her soul was stilled by the sky’s endurance,  
  And her heart made glad with the sea’s content;  
And her faith waxed more in the sun’s assurance  
      For the winds that came and went.

**Page 19**

Sweetness was brought for her forth of the bitter  
  Sea’s strength, and light of the deep sea’s dark,  
From where green lawns on Alderney glitter  
  To the bastioned crags of the steeps of Sark.   
These she knew from afar beholden,  
  And marvelled haply what life would be  
On moors that sunset and dawn leave golden,  
      In dells that smile on the sea.

And forth she fared as a stout-souled rover,  
  For a brief blithe raid on the bounding brine:   
And light winds ferried her light bark over  
  To the lone soft island of fair-limbed kine.   
But the league-long length of its wild green border,  
  And the small bright streets of serene St. Anne,  
Perplexed her sense with a strange disorder  
      At sight of the works of man.

The world was here, and the world’s confusion,  
  And the dust of the wheels of revolving life,  
Pain, labour, change, and the fierce illusion  
  Of strife more vain than the sea’s old strife.   
And her heart within her was vexed, and dizzy  
  The sense of her soul as a wheel that whirled:   
She might not endure for a space that busy  
      Loud coil of the troublous world.

Too full, she said, was the world of trouble,  
  Too dense with noise of contentious things,  
And shews less bright than the blithe foam’s bubble  
  As home she fared on the smooth wind’s wings.   
For joy grows loftier in air more lonely,  
  Where only the sea’s brood fain would be;  
Where only the heart may receive in it only  
      The love of the heart of the sea.

*A BALLAD OF SARK.*

High beyond the granite portal arched across  
  Like the gateway of some godlike giant’s hold  
Sweep and swell the billowy breasts of moor and moss  
  East and westward, and the dell their slopes enfold  
  Basks in purple, glows in green, exults in gold  
Glens that know the dove and fells that hear the lark  
Fill with joy the rapturous island, as an ark  
  Full of spicery wrought from herb and flower and tree.   
None would dream that grief even here may disembark  
  On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

Rocks emblazoned like the mid shield’s royal boss  
  Take the sun with all their blossom broad and bold.   
None would dream that all this moorland’s glow and gloss  
  Could be dark as tombs that strike the spirit acold  
  Even in eyes that opened here, and here behold  
Now no sun relume from hope’s belated spark  
Any comfort, nor may ears of mourners hark  
  Though the ripe woods ring with golden-throated glee,  
While the soul lies shattered, like a stranded bark  
  On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

**Page 20**

Death and doom are they whose crested triumphs toss  
  On the proud plumed waves whence mourning notes are tolled.   
Wail of perfect woe and moan for utter loss  
  Raise the bride-song through the graveyard on the wold  
  Where the bride-bed keeps the bridegroom fast in mould,  
Where the bride, with death for priest and doom for clerk,  
Hears for choir the throats of waves like wolves that bark,  
  Sore anhungered, off the drear Eperquerie,  
Fain to spoil the strongholds of the strength of Sark  
  On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

Prince of storm and tempest, lord whose ways are dark,  
Wind whose wings are spread for flight that none may mark,  
  Lightly dies the joy that lives by grace of thee.   
Love through thee lies bleeding, hope lies cold and stark,  
  On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

*NINE YEARS OLD.*

*February* 4, 1883.

**I.**

Lord of light, whose shine no hands destroy,  
  God of song, whose hymn no tongue refuses,  
Now, though spring far hence be cold and coy,  
  Bid the golden mouths of all the Muses  
Ring forth gold of strains without alloy,  
  Till the ninefold rapture that suffuses  
Heaven with song bid earth exult for joy,  
  Since the child whose head this dawn bedews is  
Sweet as once thy violet-cradled boy.

**II.**

Even as he lay lapped about with flowers,  
  Lies the life now nine years old before us  
Lapped about with love in all its hours;  
  Hailed of many loves that chant in chorus  
Loud or low from lush or leafless bowers,  
  Some from hearts exultant born sonorous,  
Some scarce louder-voiced than soft-tongued showers  
  Two months hence, when spring’s light wings poised o’er us  
High shall hover, and her heart be ours.

**III.**

Even as he, though man-forsaken, smiled  
  On the soft kind snakes divinely bidden  
There to feed him in the green mid wild  
  Full with hurtless honey, till the hidden  
Birth should prosper, finding fate more mild,  
  So full-fed with pleasures unforbidden,  
So by love’s lines blamelessly beguiled,  
  Laughs the nursling of our hearts unchidden  
Yet by change that mars not yet the child.

**IV.**

Ah, not yet!  Thou, lord of night and day,  
  Time, sweet father of such blameless pleasure,  
Time, false friend who tak’st thy gifts away,  
  Spare us yet some scantlings of the treasure,  
Leave us yet some rapture of delay,  
  Yet some bliss of blind and fearless leisure  
Unprophetic of delight’s decay,  
  Yet some nights and days wherein to measure  
All the joys that bless us while they may.

**V.**

**Page 21**

Not the waste Arcadian woodland, wet  
  Still with dawn and vocal with Alpheus,  
Reared a nursling worthier love’s regret,  
  Lord, than this, whose eyes beholden free us  
Straight from bonds the soul would fain forget,  
  Fain cast off, that night and day might see us  
Clear once more of life’s vain fume and fret:   
  Leave us, then, whate’er thy doom decree us,  
Yet some days wherein to love him yet.

**VI.**

Yet some days wherein the child is ours,  
  Ours, not thine, O lord whose hand is o’er us  
Always, as the sky with suns and showers  
  Dense and radiant, soundless or sonorous;  
Yet some days for love’s sake, ere the bowers  
  Fade wherein his fair first years kept chorus  
Night and day with Graces robed like hours,  
  Ere this worshipped childhood wane before us,  
Change, and bring forth fruit—­but no more flowers.

**VII.**

Love we may the thing that is to be,  
  Love we must; but how forego this olden  
Joy, this flower of childish love, that we  
  Held more dear than aught of Time is holden—­  
Time, whose laugh is like as Death’s to see—­  
  Time, who heeds not aught of all beholden,  
Heard, or touched in passing—­flower or tree,  
  Tares or grain of leaden days or golden—­  
More than wind has heed of ships at sea?

**VIII.**

First the babe, a very rose of joy,  
  Sweet as hope’s first note of jubilation,  
Passes:  then must growth and change destroy  
  Next the child, and mar the consecration  
Hallowing yet, ere thought or sense annoy,  
  Childhood’s yet half heavenlike habitation,  
Bright as truth and frailer than a toy;  
  Whence its guest with eager gratulation  
Springs, and life grows larger round the boy.

**IX.**

Yet, ere sunrise wholly cease to shine,  
  Ere change come to chide our hearts, and scatter  
Memories marked for love’s sake with a sign,  
  Let the light of dawn beholden flatter  
Yet some while our eyes that feed on thine,  
  Child, with love that change nor time can shatter,  
Love, whose silent song says more than mine  
  Now, though charged with elder loves and latter  
Here it hails a lord whose years are nine.

*AFTER A READING.*

For the seven times seventh time love would renew  
        the delight without end or alloy  
That it takes in the praise as it takes in the presence  
        of eyes that fulfil it with joy;  
But how shall it praise them and rest unrebuked  
        by the presence and pride of the boy?

Praise meet for a child is unmeet for an elder  
        whose winters and springs are nine  
What song may have strength in its wings to expand them,  
        or light in its eyes to shine,  
That shall seem not as weakness and darkness if matched  
        with the theme I would fain make mine?

**Page 22**

The round little flower of a face that exults  
        in the sunshine of shadowless days  
Defies the delight it enkindles to sing of it  
        aught not unfit for the praise  
Of the sweetest of all things that eyes may rejoice in  
        and tremble with love as they gaze.

Such tricks and such meanings abound on the lips  
        and the brows that are brighter than light,  
The demure little chin, the sedate little nose,  
        and the forehead of sun-stained white,  
That love overflows into laughter and laughter  
        subsides into love at the sight.

Each limb and each feature has action in tune  
        with the meaning that smiles as it speaks  
From the fervour of eyes and the fluttering of hands  
        in a foretaste of fancies and freaks,  
When the thought of them deepens the dimples that laugh  
        in the corners and curves of his cheeks.

As a bird when the music within her is yet  
        too intense to be spoken in song,  
That pauses a little for pleasure to feel  
        how the notes from withinwards throng,  
So pauses the laugh at his lips for a little,  
        and waxes within more strong.

As the music elate and triumphal that bids  
        all things of the dawn bear part  
With the tune that prevails when her passion has risen  
        into rapture of passionate art,  
So lightens the laughter made perfect that leaps  
        from its nest in the heaven of his heart.

Deep, grave and sedate is the gaze of expectant  
        intensity bent for awhile  
And absorbed on its aim as the tale that enthralls him  
        uncovers the weft of its wile,  
Till the goal of attention is touched, and expectancy  
        kisses delight in a smile.

And it seems to us here that in Paradise hardly  
        the spirit of Lamb or of Blake  
May hear or behold aught sweeter than lightens  
        and rings when his bright thoughts break  
In laughter that well might lure them to look,  
        and to smile as of old for his sake.

O singers that best loved children, and best  
        for their sakes are beloved of us here,  
In the world of your life everlasting, where love  
        has no thorn and desire has no fear,  
All else may be sweeter than aught is on earth,  
        nought dearer than these are dear.

*MAYTIME IN MIDWINTER.*

A new year gleams on us, tearful  
  And troubled and smiling dim  
As the smile on a lip still fearful,  
  As glances of eyes that swim:   
But the bird of my heart makes cheerful  
  The days that are bright for him.

Child, how may a man’s love merit  
  The grace you shed as you stand,  
The gift that is yours to inherit?   
  Through you are the bleak days bland;  
Your voice is a light to my spirit;  
  You bring the sun in your hand.

The year’s wing shows not a feather  
  As yet of the plumes to be;  
Yet here in the shrill grey weather  
  The spring’s self stands at my knee,  
And laughs as we commune together,  
  And lightens the world we see.

**Page 23**

The rains are as dews for the christening  
  Of dawns that the nights benumb:   
The spring’s voice answers me listening  
  For speech of a child to come,  
While promise of music is glistening  
  On lips that delight keeps dumb.

The mists and the storms receding  
  At sight of you smile and die:   
Your eyes held wide on me reading  
  Shed summer across the sky:   
Your heart shines clear for me, heeding  
  No more of the world than I.

The world, what is it to you, dear,  
  And me, if its face be grey,  
And the new-born year be a shrewd year  
  For flowers that the fierce winds fray?   
You smile, and the sky seems blue, dear;  
  You laugh, and the month turns May.

Love cares not for care, he has daffed her  
  Aside as a mate for guile:   
The sight that my soul yearns after  
  Feeds full my sense for awhile;  
Your sweet little sun-faced laughter,  
  Your good little glad grave smile.

Your hands through the bookshelves flutter;  
  Scott, Shakespeare, Dickens, are caught;  
Blake’s visions, that lighten and mutter;  
  Moliere—­and his smile has nought  
Left on it of sorrow, to utter  
  The secret things of his thought.

No grim thing written or graven  
  But grows, if you gaze on it, bright;  
A lark’s note rings from the raven,  
  And tragedy’s robe turns white;  
And shipwrecks drift into haven;  
  And darkness laughs, and is light.

Grief seems but a vision of madness;  
  Life’s key-note peals from above  
With nought in it more of sadness  
  Than broods on the heart of a dove:   
At sight of you, thought grows gladness,  
  And life, through love of you, love.

*A DOUBLE BALLAD OF AUGUST.*

(1884.)

All Afric, winged with death and fire,  
Pants in our pleasant English air.   
Each blade of grass is tense as wire,  
And all the wood’s loose trembling hair  
Stark in the broad and breathless glare  
Of hours whose touch wastes herb and tree.   
This bright sharp death shines everywhere;  
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

Earth seems a corpse upon the pyre;  
The sun, a scourge for slaves to bear.   
All power to fear, all keen desire,  
Lies dead as dreams of days that were  
Before the new-born world lay bare  
In heaven’s wide eye, whereunder we  
Lie breathless till the season spare:   
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

Fierce hours, with ravening fangs that tire  
On spirit and sense, divide and share  
The throbs of thoughts that scarce respire,  
The throes of dreams that scarce forbear  
One mute immitigable prayer  
For cold perpetual sleep to be  
Shed snowlike on the sense of care.   
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

The dust of ways where men suspire  
Seems even the dust of death’s dim lair.   
But though the feverish days be dire  
The sea-wind rears and cheers its fair  
Blithe broods of babes that here and there  
Make the sands laugh and glow for glee  
With gladder flowers than gardens wear.   
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

**Page 24**

The music dies not off the lyre  
That lets no soul alive despair.   
Sleep strikes not dumb the breathless choir  
Of waves whose note bids sorrow spare.   
As glad they sound, as fast they fare,  
As when fate’s word first set them free  
And gave them light and night to wear.   
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

For there, though night and day conspire  
To compass round with toil and snare  
And changeless whirl of change, whose gyre  
Draws all things deathwards unaware,  
The spirit of life they scourge and scare,  
Wild waves that follow on waves that flee  
Laugh, knowing that yet, though earth despair,  
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

*HEARTSEASE COUNTRY.*

TO ISABEL SWINBURNE.

The far green westward heavens are bland,  
  The far green Wiltshire downs are clear  
As these deep meadows hard at hand:   
  The sight knows hardly far from near,  
  Nor morning joy from evening cheer.   
In cottage garden-plots their bees  
Find many a fervent flower to seize  
  And strain and drain the heart away  
From ripe sweet-williams and sweet-peas  
  At every turn on every way.

But gladliest seems one flower to expand  
  Its whole sweet heart all round us here;  
’Tis Heartsease Country, Pansy Land.   
  Nor sounds nor savours harsh and drear  
  Where engines yell and halt and veer  
Can vex the sense of him who sees  
One flower-plot midway, that for trees  
  Has poles, and sheds all grimed or grey  
For bowers like those that take the breeze  
  At every turn on every way.

Content even there they smile and stand,  
  Sweet thought’s heart-easing flowers, nor fear,  
With reek and roaring steam though fanned,  
  Nor shrink nor perish as they peer.   
  The heart’s eye holds not those more dear  
That glow between the lanes and leas  
Where’er the homeliest hand may please  
  To bid them blossom as they may  
Where light approves and wind agrees  
  At every turn on every way.

Sister, the word of winds and seas  
Endures not as the word of these  
  Your wayside flowers whose breath would say  
How hearts that love may find heart’s ease  
  At every turn on every way.

*A BALLAD OF APPEAL.*

TO CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

Song wakes with every wakening year  
  From hearts of birds that only feel  
Brief spring’s deciduous flower-time near:   
  And song more strong to help or heal  
  Shall silence worse than winter seal?   
From love-lit thought’s remurmuring cave  
The notes that rippled, wave on wave,  
  Were clear as love, as faith were strong;  
And all souls blessed the soul that gave  
  Sweet water from the well of song.

All hearts bore fruit of joy to hear,  
  All eyes felt mist upon them steal  
For joy’s sake, trembling toward a tear,  
  When, loud as marriage-bells that peal,  
  Or flutelike soft, or keen like steel,  
Sprang the sheer music; sharp or grave,  
We heard the drift of winds that drave,  
  And saw, swept round by ghosts in throng,  
Dark rocks, that yielded, where they clave,  
  Sweet water from the well of song.

**Page 25**

Blithe verse made all the dim sense clear  
  That smiles of babbling babes conceal:   
Prayer’s perfect heart spake here:  and here  
  Rose notes of blameless woe and weal,  
  More soft than this poor song’s appeal.   
Where orchards bask, where cornfields wave,  
They dropped like rains that cleanse and lave,  
  And scattered all the year along,  
Like dewfall on an April grave,  
  Sweet water from the well of song.

Ballad, go bear our prayer, and crave  
Pardon, because thy lowlier stave  
  Can do this plea no right, but wrong.   
Ask nought beside thy pardon, save  
  Sweet water from the well of song.

*CRADLE SONGS.*

(TO A TUNE OF BLAKE’S)

**I.**

Baby, baby bright,  
Sleep can steal from sight  
Little of your light:

Soft as fire in dew,  
Still the life in you  
Lights your slumber through.

Four white eyelids keep  
Fast the seal of sleep  
Deep as love is deep:

Yet, though closed it lies,  
Love behind them spies  
Heaven in two blue eyes.

**II.**

Baby, baby dear,  
Earth and heaven are near  
Now, for heaven is here.

Heaven is every place  
Where your flower-sweet face  
Fills our eyes with grace.

Till your own eyes deign  
Earth a glance again,  
Earth and heaven are twain.

Now your sleep is done,  
Shine, and show the sun  
Earth and heaven are one.

**III.**

Baby, baby sweet,  
Love’s own lips are meet  
Scarce to kiss your feet.

Hardly love’s own ear,  
When your laugh crows clear,  
Quite deserves to hear.

Hardly love’s own wile,  
Though it please awhile,  
Quite deserves your smile.

Baby full of grace,  
Bless us yet a space:   
Sleep will come apace.

**IV.**

Baby, baby true,  
Man, whate’er he do,  
May deceive not you.

Smiles whose love is guile,  
Worn a flattering while,  
Win from you no smile.

One, the smile alone  
Out of love’s heart grown,  
Ever wins your own.

Man, a dunce uncouth,  
Errs in age and youth:   
Babies know the truth.

**V.**

Baby, baby fair,  
Love is fain to dare  
Bless your haughtiest air.

Baby blithe and bland,  
Reach but forth a hand  
None may dare withstand;

Love, though wellnigh cowed,  
Yet would praise aloud  
Pride so sweetly proud.

No! the fitting word  
Even from breeze or bird  
Never yet was heard.

**VI.**

Baby, baby kind,  
Though no word we find,  
Bear us yet in mind.

**Page 26**

Half a little hour,  
Baby bright in bower,  
Keep this thought aflower—­

Love it is, I see,  
Here with heart and knee  
Bows and worships me.

What can baby do,  
Then, for love so true?—­  
Let it worship you.

**VII.**

Baby, baby wise,  
Love’s divine surmise  
Lights your constant eyes.

Day and night and day  
One mute word would they,  
As the soul saith, say.

Trouble comes and goes;  
Wonder ebbs and flows;  
Love remains and glows.

As the fledgeling dove  
Feels the breast above,  
So your heart feels love.

*PELAGIUS.*

**I.**

The sea shall praise him and the shores bear part  
  That reared him when the bright south world was black  
  With fume of creeds more foul than hell’s own rack,  
Still darkening more love’s face with loveless art  
Since Paul, faith’s fervent Antichrist, of heart  
  Heroic, haled the world vehemently back  
  From Christ’s pure path on dire Jehovah’s track,  
And said to dark Elisha’s Lord, ‘Thou art.’   
But one whose soul had put the raiment on  
Of love that Jesus left with James and John  
  Withstood that Lord whose seals of love were lies,  
Seeing what we see—­how, touched by Truth’s bright rod,  
The fiend whom Jews and Africans called God  
  Feels his own hell take hold on him, and dies.

**II.**

The world has no such flower in any land,  
  And no such pearl in any gulf the sea,  
  As any babe on any mother’s knee.   
But all things blessed of men by saints are banned:   
God gives them grace to read and understand  
  The palimpsest of evil, writ where we,  
  Poor fools and lovers but of love, can see  
Nought save a blessing signed by Love’s own hand.   
The smile that opens heaven on us for them  
  Hath sin’s transmitted birthmark hid therein:   
    The kiss it craves calls down from heaven a rod.   
If innocence be sin that Gods condemn,  
  Praise we the men who so being born in sin  
    First dared the doom and broke the bonds of God.

**III.**

Man’s heel is on the Almighty’s neck who said,  
  Let there be hell, and there was hell—­on earth.   
  But not for that may men forget their worth—­  
Nay, but much more remember them—­who led  
The living first from dwellings of the dead,  
  And rent the cerecloths that were wont to engirth  
  Souls wrapped and swathed and swaddled from their birth  
With lies that bound them fast from heel to head.   
Among the tombs when wise men all their lives  
Dwelt, and cried out, and cut themselves with knives,  
These men, being foolish, and of saints abhorred,  
  Beheld in heaven the sun by saints reviled,  
Love, and on earth one everlasting Lord  
  In every likeness of a little child.

**Page 27**

*LOUIS BLANC.*

THREE SONNETS TO HIS MEMORY.

**I.**

The stainless soul that smiled through glorious eyes;  
  The bright grave brow whereon dark fortune’s blast  
  Might blow, but might not bend it, nor o’ercast,  
Save for one fierce fleet hour of shame, the skies  
Thrilled with warm dreams of worthier days to rise  
  And end the whole world’s winter; here at last,  
  If death be death, have passed into the past;  
If death be life, live, though their semblance dies.   
Hope and high faith inviolate of distrust  
  Shone strong as life inviolate of the grave  
    Through each bright word and lineament serene.   
Most loving righteousness and love most just  
  Crowned, as day crowns the dawn-enkindled wave,  
    With visible aureole thine unfaltering mien.

**II.**

Strong time and fire-swift change, with lightnings clad  
  And shod with thunders of reverberate years,  
  Have filled with light and sound of hopes and fears  
The space of many a season, since I had  
Grace of good hap to make my spirit glad,  
  Once communing with thine:  and memory hears  
  The bright voice yet that then rejoiced mine ears,  
Sees yet the light of eyes that spake, and bade  
Fear not, but hope, though then time’s heart were weak  
  And heaven by hell shade-stricken, and the range  
  Of high-born hope made questionable and strange  
As twilight trembling till the sunlight speak.   
  Thou sawest the sunrise and the storm in one  
  Break:  seest thou now the storm-compelling sun?

**III.**

Surely thou seest, O spirit of light and fire,  
  Surely thou canst not choose, O soul, but see  
  The days whose dayspring was beheld of thee  
Ere eyes less pure might have their hope’s desire,  
Beholding life in heaven again respire  
  Where men saw nought that was or was to be,  
  Save only death imperial.  Thou and he  
Who has the heart of all men’s hearts for lyre,  
Ye twain, being great of spirit as time is great,  
  And sure of sight as truth’s own heavenward eye,  
  Beheld the forms of forces passing by  
And certitude of equal-balanced fate,  
Whose breath forefelt makes darkness palpitate,  
  And knew that light should live and darkness die.

*VOS DEOS LAUDAMUS:*

THE CONSERVATIVE JOURNALIST’S ANTHEM.

’As a matter of fact, no man living, or who ever lived—­not CAESAR or PERICLES, not SHAKESPEARE or MICHAEL ANGELO—­could confer honour more than he took on entering the House of Lords.’—­*Saturday Review*, December 15, 1883.

’Clumsy and shallow snobbery—­can do no hurt.’—­*Ibid.*

**I.**

**Page 28**

O Lords our Gods, beneficent, sublime,  
  In the evening, and before the morning flames,  
  We praise, we bless, we magnify your names.   
The slave is he that serves not; his the crime  
And shame, who hails not as the crown of Time  
  That House wherein the all-envious world acclaims  
  Such glory that the reflex of it shames  
All crowns bestowed of men for prose or rhyme.   
The serf, the cur, the sycophant is he  
Who feels no cringing motion twitch his knee  
  When from a height too high for Shakespeare nods  
The wearer of a higher than Milton’s crown.   
Stoop, Chaucer, stoop:  Keats, Shelley, Burns, bow down:   
  These have no part with you, O Lords our Gods.

**II.**

O Lords our Gods, it is not that ye sit  
  Serene above the thunder, and exempt  
  From strife of tongues and casualties that tempt  
Men merely found by proof of manhood fit  
For service of their fellows:  this is it  
  Which sets you past the reach of Time’s attempt,  
  Which gives us right of justified contempt  
For commonwealths built up by mere men’s wit:   
That gold unlocks not, nor may flatteries ope,  
The portals of your heaven; that none may hope  
  With you to watch how life beneath you plods,  
Save for high service given, high duty done;  
That never was your rank ignobly won:   
  For this we give you praise, O Lords our Gods.

**III.**

O Lords our Gods, the times are evil:  you  
  Redeem the time, because of evil days.   
  While abject souls in servitude of praise  
Bow down to heads untitled, and the crew  
Whose honour dwells but in the deeds they do,  
  From loftier hearts your nobler servants raise  
  More manful salutation:  yours are bays  
That not the dawn’s plebeian pearls bedew;  
Yours, laurels plucked not of such hands as wove  
Old age its chaplet in Colonos’ grove.   
  Our time, with heaven and with itself at odds,  
Makes all lands else as seas that seethe and boil;  
But yours are yet the corn and wine and oil,  
  And yours our worship yet, O Lords our Gods.

*December 15.*

*ON THE BICENTENARY OF CORNEILLE*,

CELEBRATED UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF VICTOR HUGO.

Scarce two hundred years are gone, and the world is past away  
  As a noise of brawling wind, as a flash of breaking foam,  
That beheld the singer born who raised up the dead of Rome;  
  And a mightier now than he bids him too rise up to-day,  
All the dim great age is dust, and its king is tombless clay,  
  But its loftier laurel green as in living eyes it clomb,  
  And his memory whom it crowned hath his people’s heart for home,  
And the shade across it falls of a lordlier-flowering bay.

**Page 29**

Stately shapes about the tomb of their mighty maker pace,  
Heads of high-plumed Spaniards shine, souls revive of Roman race,  
Sound of arms and words of wail through the glowing darkness rise,  
  Speech of hearts heroic rings forth of lips that know not breath,  
And the light of thoughts august fills the pride of kindling eyes  
  Whence of yore the spell of song drove the shadow of darkling death.

*IN SEPULCRETIS.*

’Vidistis ipso rapere de rogo coenam.’—­CATULLUS, LIX. 3.

’To publish even one line of an author which he himself has not intended for the public at large—­especially letters which are addressed to private persons—­is to commit a despicable act of felony.’—­HEINE.

**I.**

It is not then enough that men who give  
  The best gifts given of man to man should feel,  
  Alive, a snake’s head ever at their heel:   
Small hurt the worms may do them while they live—­  
Such hurt as scorn for scorn’s sake may forgive.   
  But now, when death and fame have set one seal  
  On tombs whereat Love, Grief, and Glory kneel,  
Men sift all secrets, in their critic sieve,  
Of graves wherein the dust of death might shrink  
  To know what tongues defile the dead man’s name  
  With loathsome love, and praise that stings like shame.   
Rest once was theirs, who had crossed the mortal brink:   
  No rest, no reverence now:  dull fools undress  
  Death’s holiest shrine, life’s veriest nakedness.

**II.**

A man was born, sang, suffered, loved, and died.   
  Men scorned him living:  let us praise him dead.   
  His life was brief and bitter, gently led  
And proudly, but with pure and blameless pride.   
He wrought no wrong toward any; satisfied  
  With love and labour, whence our souls are fed  
  With largesse yet of living wine and bread.   
Come, let us praise him:  here is nought to hide.   
Make bare the poor dead secrets of his heart,  
  Strip the stark-naked soul, that all may peer,  
  Spy, smirk, sniff, snap, snort, snivel, snarl, and sneer:   
Let none so sad, let none so sacred part  
  Lie still for pity, rest unstirred for shame,  
  But all be scanned of all men.  This is fame.

**III.**

’Now, what a thing it is to be an ass!’[1]  
  If one, that strutted up the brawling streets  
  As foreman of the flock whose concourse greets  
Men’s ears with bray more dissonant than brass,  
Would change from blame to praise as coarse and crass  
  His natural note, and learn the fawning feats  
  Of lapdogs, who but knows what luck he meets?   
But all in vain old fable holds her glass.

Mocked and reviled by men of poisonous breath,  
  A great man dies:  but one thing worst was spared,  
  Not all his heart by their base hands lay bared.   
One comes to crown with praise the dust of death;  
  And lo, through him this worst is brought to pass.   
  Now, what a thing it is to be an ass!

**Page 30**

[Footnote 1:  *Titus Andronicus*, Act iv., Scene 2.]

**IV.**

Shame, such as never yet dealt heavier stroke  
  On heads more shameful, fall on theirs through whom  
  Dead men may keep inviolate not their tomb,  
But all its depths these ravenous grave-worms choke  
And yet what waste of wrath were this, to invoke  
  Shame on the shameless?  Even their twin-born doom,  
  Their native air of life, a carrion fume,  
Their natural breath of love, a noisome smoke,  
The bread they break, the cup whereof they drink,  
  The record whose remembrance damns their name,  
  Smells, tastes, and sounds of nothing but of shame.   
If thankfulness nor pity bids them think  
  What work is this of theirs, and pause betimes,  
  Not Shakespeare’s grave would scare them off with rhymes.

*LOVE AND SCORN.*

**I.**

Love, loyallest and lordliest born of things,  
  Immortal that shouldst be, though all else end,  
  In plighted hearts of fearless friend with friend,  
Whose hand may curb or clip thy plume-plucked wings?   
Not grief’s nor time’s:  though these be lords and kings  
  Crowned, and their yoke bid vassal passions bend,  
  They may not pierce the spirit of sense, or blend  
Quick poison with the soul’s live watersprings.   
The true clear heart whose core is manful trust  
Fears not that very death may turn to dust  
  Love lit therein as toward a brother born,  
If one touch make not all its fine gold rust,  
  If one breath blight not all its glad ripe corn,  
  And all its fire be turned to fire of scorn.

**II.**

Scorn only, scorn begot of bitter proof  
  By keen experience of a trustless heart,  
  Bears burning in her new-born hand the dart  
Wherewith love dies heart-stricken, and the roof  
Falls of his palace, and the storied woof  
  Long woven of many a year with life’s whole art  
  Is rent like any rotten weed apart,  
And hardly with reluctant eyes aloof  
Cold memory guards one relic scarce exempt  
Yet from the fierce corrosion of contempt,  
  And hardly saved by pity.  Woe are we  
That once we loved, and love not; but we know  
The ghost of love, surviving yet in show,  
  Where scorn has passed, is vain as grief must be.

**III.**

O sacred, just, inevitable scorn,  
  Strong child of righteous judgment, whom with grief  
  The rent heart bears, and wins not yet relief,  
Seeing of its pain so dire a portent born,  
Must thou not spare one sheaf of all the corn,  
  One doit of all the treasure? not one sheaf,  
  Not one poor doit of all? not one dead leaf  
Of all that fell and left behind a thorn?   
Is man so strong that one should scorn another?

**Page 31**

Is any as God, not made of mortal mother,  
  That love should turn in him to gall and flame?   
Nay:  but the true is not the false heart’s brother:   
  Love cannot love disloyalty:  the name  
  That else it wears is love no more, but shame.

*ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD DOYLE.*

A light of blameless laughter, fancy-bred,  
  Soft-souled and glad and kind as love or sleep,  
  Fades, and sweet mirth’s own eyes are fain to weep  
Because her blithe and gentlest bird is dead.   
Weep, elves and fairies all, that never shed  
  Tear yet for mortal mourning:  you that keep  
  The doors of dreams whence nought of ill may creep,  
Mourn once for one whose lips your honey fed.   
Let waters of the Golden River steep  
  The rose-roots whence his grave blooms rosy-red  
And murmuring of Hyblaean hives be deep  
  About the summer silence of its bed,  
And nought less gracious than a violet peep  
  Between the grass grown greener round his head.

*IN MEMORY OF HENRY A. BRIGHT.*

Yet again another, ere his crowning year,  
  Gone from friends that here may look for him no more.   
  Never now for him shall hope set wide the door,  
Hope that hailed him hither, fain to greet him here.   
All the gracious garden-flowers he held so dear,  
  Oldworld English blossoms, all his homestead store,  
  Oldworld grief had strewn them round his bier of yore,  
Bidding each drop leaf by leaf as tear by tear;  
Rarer lutes than mine had borne more tuneful token,  
  Touched by subtler hands than echoing time can wrong,  
  Sweet as flowers had strewn his graveward path along.   
Now may no such old sweet dirges more be spoken,  
Now the flowers whose breath was very song are broken,  
  Nor may sorrow find again so sweet a song.

*A SOLITUDE.*

Sea beyond sea, sand after sweep of sand,  
  Here ivory smooth, here cloven and ridged with flow  
  Of channelled waters soft as rain or snow,  
Stretch their lone length at ease beneath the bland  
Grey gleam of skies whose smile on wave and strand  
  Shines weary like a man’s who smiles to know  
  That now no dream can mock his faith with show,  
Nor cloud for him seem living sea or land.

Is there an end at all of all this waste,  
These crumbling cliffs defeatured and defaced,  
These ruinous heights of sea-sapped walls that slide  
  Seaward with all their banks of bleak blown flowers  
Glad yet of life, ere yet their hope subside  
  Beneath the coil of dull dense waves and hours?

*VICTOR HUGO:  L’ARCHIPEL DE LA MANCHE.*

Sea and land are fairer now, nor aught is all the same,  
  Since a mightier hand than Time’s hath woven their votive wreath.   
Rocks as swords half drawn from out the smooth wave’s jewelled sheath,  
Fields whose flowers a tongue divine hath numbered name by name,  
Shores whereby the midnight or the noon clothed round

**Page 32**

with flame  
Hears the clamour jar and grind which utters from beneath  
  Cries of hungering waves like beasts fast bound that gnash their teeth,  
All of these the sun that lights them lights not like his fame;  
None of these is but the thing it was before he came  
  Where the darkling overfalls like dens of torment seethe,  
High on tameless moorlands, down in meadows bland and tame,  
  Where the garden hides, and where the wind uproots the heath,  
Glory now henceforth for ever, while the world shall be,  
Shines, a star that keeps not time with change on earth and sea.

*THE TWILIGHT OF THE LORDS.*

**I.**

Is the sound a trumpet blown, or a bell for burial tolled,  
  Whence the whole air vibrates now to the clash of words like swords—­  
  ’Let us break their bonds in sunder, and cast away their cords;  
Long enough the world has mocked us, and marvelled to behold  
How the grown man bears the curb whence his boyhood was controlled’?   
  Nay, but hearken:  surer counsel more sober speech affords:   
  ’Is the past not all inscribed with the praises of our Lords?   
Is the memory dead of deeds done of yore, the love grown cold  
That should bind our hearts to trust in their counsels wise and bold?   
  These that stand against you now, senseless crowds and heartless hordes,  
Are not these the sons of men that withstood your kings of old?   
  Theirs it is to bind and loose; theirs the key that knows the wards,  
Theirs the staff to lead or smite; yours, the spades and ploughs and hods:   
Theirs to hear and yours to cry, Power is yours, O Lords our Gods.’

**II.**

Hear, O England:  these are they that would counsel thee aright.   
  Wouldst thou fain have all thy sons sons of thine indeed, and free?   
  Nay, but then no more at all as thou hast been shalt thou be:   
Needs must many dwell in darkness, that some may look on light;  
Needs must poor men brook the wrong that ensures the rich man’s right.   
  How shall kings and lords be worshipped, if no man bow the knee?   
  How, if no man worship these, may thy praise endure with thee?   
How, except thou trust in these, shall thy name not lose its might?   
These have had their will of thee since the Norman came to smite:   
  Sires on grandsires, even as wave after wave along the sea,  
Sons on sires have followed, steadfast as clouds or hours in flight.   
  Time alone hath power to say, time alone hath eyes to see,  
If your walls of rule be built but of clay-compacted sods,  
If your place of old shall know you no more, O Lords our Gods.

**III.**

**Page 33**

Through the stalls wherein ye sit sounds a sentence while we wait,  
  Set your house in order:  is it not builded on the sand?   
  Set your house in order, seeing the night is hard at hand.   
As the twilight of the Gods in the northern dream of fate  
Is this hour that comes against you, albeit this hour come late.   
  Ye whom Time and Truth bade heed, and ye would not understand,  
  Now an axe draws nigh the tree overshadowing all the land,  
And its edge of doom is set to the root of all your state.   
Light is more than darkness now, faith than fear and hope than hate,  
  And what morning wills, behold, all the night shall not withstand.   
Rods of office, helms of rule, staffs of wise men, crowns of great,  
  While the people willed, ye bare; now their hopes and hearts expand,  
Time with silent foot makes dust of your broken crowns and rods,  
And the lordship of your godhead is gone, O Lords our Gods.

*CLEAR THE WAY!*

Clear the way, my lords and lackeys! you have had your day.   
Here you have your answer—­England’s yea against your nay:   
Long enough your house has held you:  up, and clear the way!

Lust and falsehood, craft and traffic, precedent and gold,  
Tongue of courtier, kiss of harlot, promise bought and sold,  
Gave you heritage of empire over thralls of old.

Now that all these things are rotten, all their gold is rust,  
Quenched the pride they lived by, dead the faith and cold the lust,  
Shall their heritage not also turn again to dust?

By the grace of these they reigned, who left their sons their sway:   
By the grace of these, what England says her lords unsay:   
Till at last her cry go forth against them—­Clear the way!

By the grace of trust in treason knaves have lived and lied:   
By the force of fear and folly fools have fed their pride:   
By the strength of sloth and custom reason stands defied.

Lest perchance your reckoning on some latter day be worse,  
Halt and hearken, lords of land and princes of the purse,  
Ere the tide be full that comes with blessing and with curse.

Where we stand; as where you sit, scarce falls a sprinkling spray;  
But the wind that swells, the wave that follows, none shall stay:   
Spread no more of sail for shipwreck:  out, and clear the way!

*A WORD FOR THE COUNTRY.*

Men, born of the land that for ages  
  Has been honoured where freedom was dear,  
Till your labour wax fat on its wages  
  You shall never be peers of a peer.   
      Where might is, the right is:   
        Long purses make strong swords.   
      Let weakness learn meekness:   
        God save the House of Lords!

You are free to consume in stagnation:   
  You are equal in right to obey:   
You are brothers in bonds, and the nation  
  Is your mother—­whose sons are her prey.   
      Those others your brothers,  
        Who toil not, weave, nor till,  
      Refuse you and use you  
        As waiters on their will.

**Page 34**

But your fathers bowed down to their masters  
  And obeyed them and served and adored.   
Shall the sheep not give thanks to their pastors?   
  Shall the serf not give praise to his lord?   
      Time, waning and gaining,  
        Grown other now than then,  
      Needs pastors and masters  
        For sheep, and not for men.

If his grandsire did service in battle,  
  If his grandam was kissed by a king,  
Must men to my lord be as cattle  
  Or as apes that he leads in a string?   
      To deem so, to dream so,  
        Would bid the world proclaim  
      The dastards for bastards,  
        Not heirs of England’s fame.

Not in spite but in right of dishonour,  
  There are actors who trample your boards  
Till the earth that endures you upon her  
  Grows weary to bear you, my lords.   
      Your token is broken,  
        It will not pass for gold:   
      Your glory looks hoary,  
        Your sun in heaven turns cold.

They are worthy to reign on their brothers,  
  To contemn them as clods and as carles,  
Who are Graces by grace of such mothers  
  As brightened the bed of King Charles.   
      What manner of banner,  
        What fame is this they flaunt,  
      That Britain, soul-smitten,  
        Should shrink before their vaunt?

Bright sons of sublime prostitution,  
  You are made of the mire of the street  
Where your grandmothers walked in pollution  
  Till a coronet shone at their feet.   
      Your Graces, whose faces  
        Bear high the bastard’s brand,  
      Seem stronger no longer  
        Than all this honest land.

But the sons of her soldiers and seamen,  
  They are worthy forsooth of their hire.   
If the father won praise from all free men,  
  Shall the sons not exult in their sire?   
      Let money make sunny  
        And power make proud their lives,  
      And feed them and breed them  
        Like drones in drowsiest hives.

But if haply the name be a burden  
  And the souls be no kindred of theirs,  
Should wise men rejoice in such guerdon  
  Or brave men exult in such heirs?   
      Or rather the father  
        Frown, shamefaced, on the son,  
      And no men but foemen,  
        Deriding, cry ‘Well done’?

Let the gold and the land they inherit  
  Pass ever from hand into hand:   
In right of the forefather’s merit  
  Let the gold be the son’s, and the land.   
      Soft raiment, rich payment,  
        High place, the state affords;  
      Full measure of pleasure,  
        But now no more, my lords.

Is the future beleaguered with dangers  
  If the poor be far other than slaves?   
Shall the sons of the land be as strangers  
  In the land of their forefathers’ graves?   
      Shame were it to bear it,  
        And shame it were to see:   
      If free men you be, men,  
        Let proof proclaim you free.

**Page 35**

’But democracy means dissolution:   
  See, laden with clamour and crime,  
How the darkness of dim revolution  
  Comes deepening the twilight of time!   
      Ah, better the fetter  
        That holds the poor man’s hand  
      Than peril of sterile  
        Blind change that wastes the land.

’Gaze forward through clouds that environ;  
  It shall be as it was in the past.   
Not with dreams, but with blood and with iron,  
  Shall a nation be moulded to last.’   
      So teach they, so preach they,  
        Who dream themselves the dream  
      That hallows the gallows  
        And bids the scaffold stream.

’With a hero at head, and a nation  
  Well gagged and well drilled and well cowed,  
And a gospel of war and damnation,  
  Has not empire a right to be proud?   
      Fools prattle and tattle  
        Of freedom, reason, right,  
      The beauty of duty,  
        The loveliness of light.

’But we know, we believe it, we see it,  
  Force only has power upon earth.’   
So be it! and ever so be it  
  For souls that are bestial by birth!   
      Let Prussian with Russian  
        Exchange the kiss of slaves:   
      But sea-folk are free folk  
        By grace of winds and waves.

Has the past from the sepulchres beckoned?   
  Let answer from Englishmen be—­  
No man shall be lord of us reckoned  
  Who is baser, not better, than we.   
      No coward, empowered  
        To soil a brave man’s name;  
      For shame’s sake and fame’s sake,  
        Enough of fame and shame.

Fame needs not the golden addition;  
  Shame bears it abroad as a brand.   
Let the deed, and no more the tradition,  
  Speak out and be heard through the land.   
      Pride, rootless and fruitless,  
        No longer takes and gives:   
      But surer and purer  
        The soul of England lives.

He is master and lord of his brothers  
  Who is worthier and wiser than they.   
Him only, him surely, shall others,  
  Else equal, observe and obey.   
      Truth, flawless and awless,  
        Do falsehood what it can,  
      Makes royal the loyal  
        And simple heart of man.

Who are these, then, that England should hearken,  
  Who rage and wax wroth and grow pale  
If she turn from the sunsets that darken  
  And her ship for the morning set sail?   
      Let strangers fear dangers:   
        All know, that hold her dear,  
      Dishonour upon her  
        Can only fall through fear.

Men, born of the landsmen and seamen  
  Who served her with souls and with swords,  
She bids you be brothers, and free men,  
  And lordless, and fearless of lords.   
      She cares not, she dares not  
        Care now for gold or steel:   
      Light lead her, truth speed her,  
        God save the Commonweal!

*A WORD FOR THE NATION.*

**Page 36**

**I.**

A word across the water  
  Against our ears is borne,  
Of threatenings and of slaughter,  
  Of rage and spite and scorn:   
We have not, alack, an ally to befriend us,  
And the season is ripe to extirpate and end us:   
Let the German touch hands with the Gaul,  
And the fortress of England must fall;  
And the sea shall be swept of her seamen,  
  And the waters they ruled be their graves,  
And Dutchmen and Frenchmen be free men,  
        And Englishmen slaves.

**II.**

Our time once more is over,  
  Once more our end is near:   
A bull without a drover,  
  The Briton reels to rear,  
And the van of the nations is held by his betters,  
And the seas of the world shall be loosed from his fetters,  
And his glory shall pass as a breath,  
And the life that is in him be death;  
And the sepulchre sealed on his glory  
  For a sign to the nations shall be  
As of Tyre and of Carthage in story,  
        Once lords of the sea.

**III.**

The lips are wise and loyal,  
  The hearts are brave and true,  
Imperial thoughts and royal  
  Make strong the clamorous crew,  
Whence louder and prouder the noise of defiance  
Rings rage from the grave of a trustless alliance,  
And bids us beware and be warned,  
As abhorred of all nations and scorned,  
As a swordless and spiritless nation,  
  A wreck on the waste of the waves.   
So foams the released indignation  
        Of masterless slaves.

**IV.**

Brute throats that miss the collar,  
  Bowed backs that ask the whip,  
Stretched hands that lack the dollar,  
  And many a lie-seared lip,  
Forefeel and foreshow for us signs as funereal  
As the signs that were regal of yore and imperial;  
We shall pass as the princes they served,  
We shall reap what our fathers deserved,  
And the place that was England’s be taken  
  By one that is worthier than she,  
And the yoke of her empire be shaken  
        Like spray from the sea.

**V.**

French hounds, whose necks are aching  
  Still from the chain they crave,  
In dog-day madness breaking  
  The dog-leash, thus may rave:   
But the seas that for ages have fostered and fenced her  
Laugh, echoing the yell of their kennel against her  
And their moan if destruction draw near them  
And the roar of her laughter to hear them;  
For she knows that if Englishmen be men  
  Their England has all that she craves;  
All love and all honour from free men,  
        All hatred from slaves.

**VI.**

**Page 37**

All love that rests upon her  
  Like sunshine and sweet air,  
All light of perfect honour  
  And praise that ends in prayer,  
She wins not more surely, she wears not more proudly,  
Than the token of tribute that clatters thus loudly,  
The tribute of foes when they meet  
That rattles and rings at her feet,  
The tribute of rage and of rancour,  
  The tribute of slaves to the free,  
To the people whose hope hath its anchor  
        Made fast in the sea.

**VII.**

No fool that bows the back he  
  Feels fit for scourge or brand,  
No scurril scribes that lackey  
  The lords of Lackeyland,  
No penman that yearns, as he turns on his pallet,  
For the place or the pence of a peer or a valet,  
No whelp of as currish a pack  
As the litter whose yelp it gives back,  
Though he answer the cry of his brother  
  As echoes might answer from caves,  
Shall be witness as though for a mother  
        Whose children were slaves.

**VIII.**

But those found fit to love her,  
  Whose love has root in faith,  
Who hear, though darkness cover  
  Time’s face, what memory saith,  
Who seek not the service of great men or small men  
But the weal that is common for comfort of all men,  
Those yet that in trust have beholden  
Truth’s dawn over England grow golden  
And quicken the darkness that stagnates  
  And scatter the shadows that flee,  
Shall reply for her meanest as magnates  
        And masters by sea.

**IX.**

And all shall mark her station,  
  Her message all shall hear,  
When, equal-eyed, the nation  
  Bids all her sons draw near,  
And freedom be more than tradition or faction,  
And thought be no swifter to serve her than action,  
And justice alone be above her,  
That love may be prouder to love her,  
And time on the crest of her story  
  Inscribe, as remembrance engraves,  
The sign that subdues with its glory  
        Kings, princes, and slaves.

*A WORD FROM THE PSALMIST.*

PS.  XCIV. 8.

**I.**

    ’Take heed, ye unwise among the people:   
      O ye fools, when will ye understand?’  
    From pulpit or choir beneath the steeple,  
      Though the words be fierce, the tones are bland.   
But a louder than the Church’s echo thunders  
  In the ears of men who may not choose but hear,  
And the heart in him that hears it leaps and wonders,  
  With triumphant hope astonished, or with fear  
    For the names whose sound was power awaken  
      Neither love nor reverence now nor dread;  
    Their strongholds and shrines are stormed and taken,  
      Their kingdom and all its works are dead.

**II.**

**Page 38**

    Take heed:  for the tide of time is risen:   
      It is full not yet, though now so high  
    That spirits and hopes long pent in prison  
      Feel round them a sense of freedom nigh,  
And a savour keen and sweet of brine and billow,  
  And a murmur deep and strong of deepening strength.   
Though the watchman dream, with sloth or pride for pillow,  
  And the night be long, not endless is its length.   
    From the springs of dawn, from clouds that sever  
      From the equal heavens and the eastward sea,  
    The witness comes that endures for ever,  
      Till men be brethren and thralls be free.

**III.**

    But the wind of the wings of dawn expanding  
      Strikes chill on your hearts as change and death.   
    Ye are old, but ye have not understanding,  
      And proud, but your pride is a dead man’s breath.   
And your wise men, toward whose words and signs ye hearken,  
  And your strong men, in whose hands ye put your trust,  
Strain eyes to behold but clouds and dreams that darken,  
  Stretch hands that can find but weapons red with rust.   
    Their watchword rings, and the night rejoices,  
      But the lark’s note laughs at the night-bird’s notes—­  
    ’Is virtue verily found in voices?   
      Or is wisdom won when all win votes?

**IV.**

    ’Take heed, ye unwise indeed, who listen  
      When the wind’s wings beat and shift and change;  
    Whose hearts are uplift, whose eyeballs glisten,  
      With desire of new things great and strange.   
Let not dreams misguide nor any visions wrong you:   
  That which has been, it is now as it was then.   
Is not Compromise of old a god among you?   
  Is not Precedent indeed a king of men?   
    But the windy hopes that lead mislead you,  
      And the sounds ye hear are void and vain.   
    Is a vote a coat? will franchise feed you,  
      Or words be a roof against the rain?

**V.**

    ’Eight ages are gone since kingship entered,  
      With knights and peers at its harnessed back,  
    And the land, no more in its own strength centred,  
      Was cast for a prey to the princely pack.   
But we pared the fangs and clipped the ravening claws of it,  
  And good was in time brought forth of an evil thing,  
And the land’s high name waxed lordlier in war because of it,  
  When chartered Right had bridled and curbed the king.   
    And what so fair has the world beholden,  
      And what so firm has withstood the years,  
    As Monarchy bound in chains all golden,  
      And Freedom guarded about with peers?

**VI.**

**Page 39**

    ’How think ye? know not your lords and masters  
      What collars are meet for brawling throats?   
    Is change not mother of strange disasters?   
      Shall plague or peril be stayed by votes?   
Out of precedent and privilege and order  
  Have we plucked the flower of compromise, whose root  
Bears blossoms that shine from border again to border,  
  And the mouths of many are fed with its temperate fruit.   
    Your masters are wiser than ye, their henchmen:   
      Your lords know surely whereof ye have need.   
    Equality?  Fools, would you fain be Frenchmen?   
      Is equity more than a word indeed?

**VII.**

    ’Your voices, forsooth, your most sweet voices,  
      Your worthy voices, your love, your hate,  
    Your choice, who know not whereof your choice is,  
      What stays are these for a stable state?   
Inconstancy, blind and deaf with its own fierce babble,  
  Swells ever your throats with storm of uncertain cheers:   
He leans on straws who leans on a light-souled rabble;  
  His trust is frail who puts not his trust in peers.’   
    So shrills the message whose word convinces  
      Of righteousness knaves, of wisdom fools;  
    That serfs may boast them because of princes,  
      And the weak rejoice that the strong man rules.

**VIII.**

    True friends, ye people, are these, the faction  
      Full-mouthed that flatters and snails and bays,  
    That fawns and foams with alternate action,  
      And mocks the names that it soils with praise.   
As from fraud and force their power had fast beginning,  
  So by righteousness and peace it may not stand,  
But by craft of state and nets of secret spinning,  
  Words that weave and unweave wiles like ropes of sand  
    Form, custom, and gold, and laws grown hoary,  
      And strong tradition that guards the gate:   
    To these, O people, to these give glory,  
      That your name among nations may be great.

**IX.**

  How long—­for haply not now much longer—­  
    Shall fear put faith in a faithless creed,  
  And shapes and shadows of truths be stronger  
    In strong men’s eyes than the truth indeed?   
If freedom be not a word that dies when spoken,  
  If justice be not a dream whence men must wake,  
How shall not the bonds of the thraldom of old be broken,  
  And right put might in the hands of them that break?   
    For clear as a tocsin from the steeple  
      Is the cry gone forth along the land,  
    Take heed, ye unwise among the people:   
      O ye fools, when will ye understand?

*A BALLAD AT PARTING.*

**Page 40**

Sea to sea that clasps and fosters England, uttering ever-more  
Song eterne and praise immortal of the indomitable shore,  
  Lifts aloud her constant heart up, south to north and east to west,  
Here in speech that shames all music, there in thunder-throated roar,  
  Chiming concord out of discord, waking rapture out of rest.   
All her ways are lovely, all her works and symbols are divine,  
  Yet shall man love best what first bade leap his heart and bend his knee;  
Yet where first his whole soul worshipped shall his soul set up her shrine:   
  Nor may love not know the lovelier, fair as both beheld may be,  
  Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait south-western sea.

Though their chant bear all one burden, as ere man was born it bore;  
Though the burden be diviner than the songs all souls adore;  
  Yet may love not choose but choose between them which to love the best.   
Me the sea my nursing-mother, me the Channel green and hoar,  
  Holds at heart more fast than all things, bares for me the goodlier breast,  
Lifts for me the lordlier love-song, bids for me more sunlight shine,  
  Sounds for me the stormier trumpet of the sweeter strain to me.   
So the broad pale Thames is loved not like the tawny springs of Tyne:   
  Choice is clear between them for the soul whose vision holds in fee  
  Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait south-western sea.

Choice is clear, but dear is either; nor has either not in store  
Many a likeness, many a written sign of spirit-searching lore,  
  Whence the soul takes fire of sweet remembrance, magnified and blest.   
Thought of songs whose flame-winged feet have trod the unfooted water-floor  
  When the lord of all the living lords of souls bade speed their quest,  
Soft live sound like children’s babble down the rippling sand’s incline,  
  Or the lovely song that loves them, hailed with thankful prayer and plea;  
These are parcels of the harvest here whose gathered sheaves are mine,  
  Garnered now, but sown and reaped where winds make wild with wrath or glee  
  Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait south-western sea.

Song, thy name is freedom, seeing thy strength was born of breeze and brine.   
  Fare now forth and fear no fortune; such a seal is set on thee.   
Joy begat and memory bare thee, seeing in spirit a two-fold sign,  
  Even the sign of those thy fosters, each as thou from all time free,  
  Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait south-western sea.

PRINTED BY  
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE  
LONDON