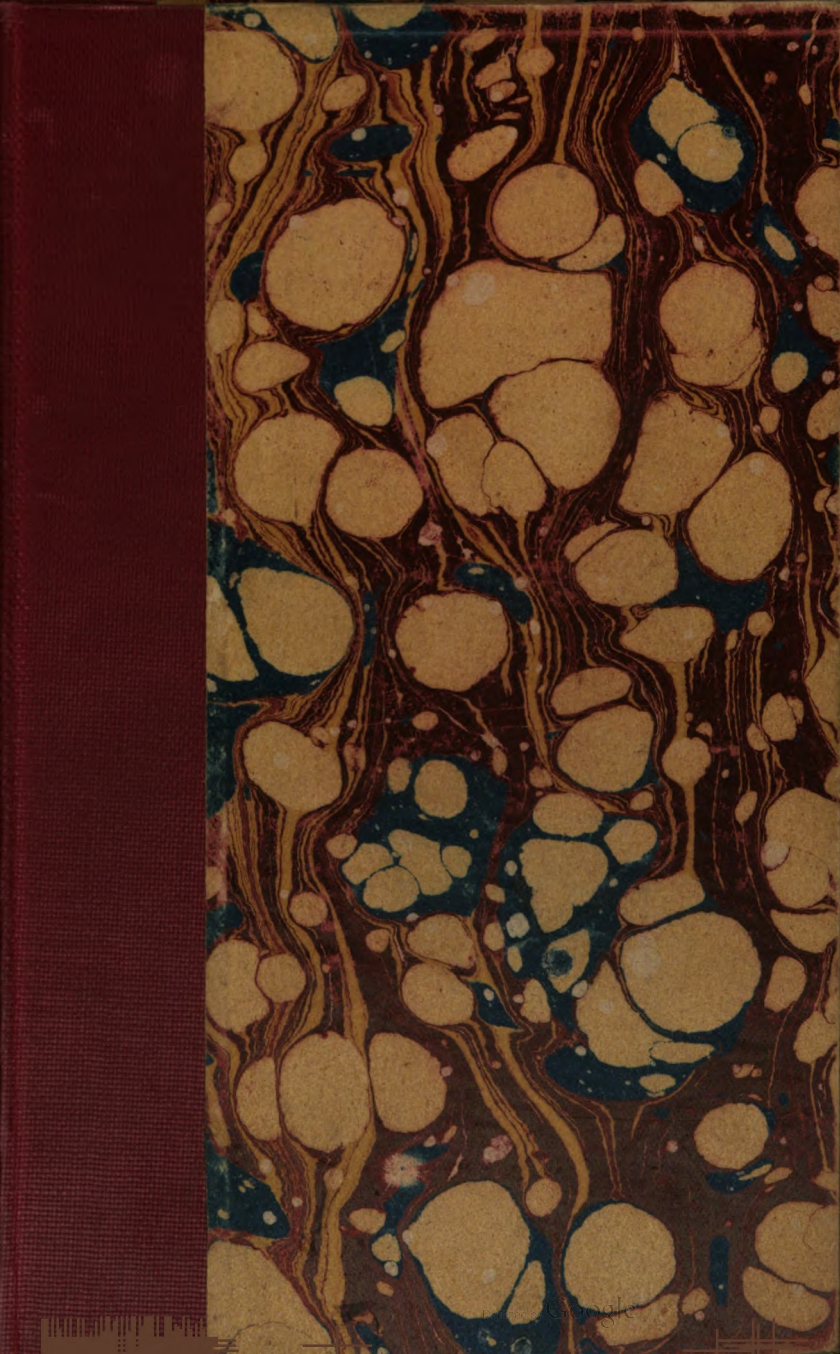

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Corquato Tasso :

A DRAMA,

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE,

AND

Other Poems,

TRANSLATED AND ORIGINAL.

BY

M. A. H.

London :

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.

1856.



LONDON:

James Truscott & Son, Suffolk Lane, City,
and Nelson Square.

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TORQUATO TASSO:

A Drama,

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

PERSONS.

ALPHONSO THE SECOND, *Duke of Ferrara.*

LEONORA D'ESTE, *Sister of the Duke.*

LEONORA SANVITALE, *Countess of Scandiano.*

TORQUATO TASSO.

ANTONIO MONTECATINO, *Secretary of State.*

The Scene is at Belriguardo, a Pleasure House.

TORQUATO TASSO.

ACT THE FIRST.

Scene I.

*A lawn ornamented with the statues of Epic Poets.
In the foreground, on the right hand of the Scene,
Virgil; on the left, Ariosto.*

The PRINCESS and LEONORA.

Prin. Smiling, thou lookest on me, Leonora,
Anon, survey'st thyself, still smilingly,—
What moves thee? Let a friend the secret share;
Thoughtful thy seeming, and yet glad withal.

Leon. E'en so, my Princess ; joyously I do
 Survey us both, clad in these rural weeds,
 Showing like two right happy shepherdesses ;
 And, like the happy, are we busied too,
 In weaving garlands. This, all gay with flowers,
 Grows ever, more and more, beneath my hand ;
 Thou hast, with loftier mind and nobler heart,
 Chosen the slender laurel for thine own.

Prin. And here, the sprays I in my musing wove
 Have found a worthy head on which to rest :
 To Virgil, gratefully, my crown I give.

[*She crowns the bust of Virgil.*

Leon. So will I place my rich and glowing wreath
 On Master Ludovico's lofty brow.

[*She crowns Ariosto.*

He, whose mirth never fades, shall have his share
 In the rejoicing of the new-born spring !

Prin. 'Tis kind of my good brother thus to bring us
 Hither, in spring-time, to the woodlands free ;
 Here we can be our own, and, by the hour,
 Dream ourselves in the poet's golden time.

Prin. Nay, thou wilt find,
In yon great city, all thou leavest here,
And doubly all.

Leon. 'Tis duty bids me hence,
And calls me to my husband, who so long
Has spared me. I restore his son to him,
Who, in this year, so much is grown and formed ;
And I shall share the father's pride and joy.
Florence is great and noble—yet the worth
Of all her heaped-up treasures cannot reach
Ferrara's jewels. There the people make
Their city's pride, their city's fame ; Ferrara
Is, through her princes, great.

Prin. Or, rather say,
Through men of note that chance has hither brought,
Good fortune here retained.

Leon. Lightly doth chance
Scatter what chance hath gathered. Noble spirits
Draw noble spirits to them, knowing well
Whereby to hold them fast, as you have done.
Around thy brother and thyself, unite

Minds worthy of your own ; and yours are worthy
Of your great father's. Here the beauteous dawn
Of learning kindled liberty of thought ;
While Barbarism's oppressive twilight yet
Hung o'er the world around. The glorious names,
Hercules d'Este, and Hippolytus,
Rang in my childish ear : my father lauded
Ferrara e'en as Rome or Florence. Oft
My heart did hither yearn. Now am I here.
Here Petrarch was a guest—a cherish'd one ;
And Ariosto found his master here.
Italia does not know one mighty name,
But this house calls its guest ; and profitable
It is, to play the host to Genius ; give him
A parting gift,—he leaves behind with thee
One nobler far. Where'er the mighty treads,
That place is hallow'd. Ages pass away :
His words, his deeds, speak to our children's children.

Prin. Aye, if our children's children feel as thou,
Oft do I envy thee this happiness.

Leon. Which thou, as others rarely do, enjoyest,

Prin. All this, my Leonora,
Can little move me, when I ponder well
How little I possess, and of that little
How much to others owe. Thus, for the knowledge
Of ancient tongues, and the best gifts bequeathed us
Of hoar antiquity, I thank my mother,
And still with her, in learning or in judgment,
Not one of her two daughters may compare ;
Or, if one may at all be likened with her,
Certes, Lucretia hath the better claim.
Also, let me assure thee, I have never,
Or as distinction, or possession, held,
What nature, or what fortune, lends to me.
It gives me pleasure, that, when wise men speak,
I can embrace their meaning. If they sit
In judgment on the worthies of old Time
And on their deeds ; or, if the talk should be
Of science, through experience spreading wide,
And profiting mankind while it exalts them ;
Wherever thus the noble converse leads,
I follow pleased,—easy it is to follow,—

Well pleased I hear the contest of the wise,
When, with the powers that stir man's inmost heart,
So gently and so fearfully, the lips
Of graceful eloquence disport ; most pleased
When princely thirst of glory, or more wide
Extended sway, becomes the thinker's matter ;
And when fine policy, softly unravelled
By skilful hands, instructs—not goes beyond us.

Leon. And then, this earnest converse at an end,
Then our ear dwelleth, and our inward sense,
Delightedly, upon the Poet's rhyme,
In which the latest and the loveliest feelings
Gush forth in melody upon our souls.
Thy loftier spirit grasps a wider realm :
I, rather, bide contented on the isle
Of poesy, among her laurel groves.

Prin. Here, in this lovely land, they would persuade
me,
Beyond all other trees, the myrtles flourish ;
And if the Muses many be, among them
One rarely seeks a friend, or playfellow,

Such as one fain would in the Poet find,
Who seems to shun us,—aye, who seems to fly ;
Who something seems to seek, of which we know not,—
Somewhat, perchance, he scarce himself may know.
Pleasant it were then, if, in happy hour,
He chanced upon us, and with swift-felt rapture,
Confess'd in us the treasure he had sought
Through the wide world so long, and all in vain.

Leon. I must content me with your raillery,
It hits me truly, but it strikes not deep ;
I honour ev'ry man by his desert,
And thus towards Tasso am I merely just.
His eye scarce dwells upon this nether earth,
His ear drinks in the harmony of nature :
What history bequeaths, and life gives forth,
His heart receives alike and willingly.
Things widely scattered doth his mind unite,
And his quick feelings can the lifeless quicken :
Often doth he ennoble what, to us,
Seem common things, while things most highly prized
To him are nothing. In his own charmed circle

Wanders this wondrous being, charming us,
To wander with him, and with him to feel.
He seems as he drew nigh us—yet remains
Far off—he seems to look on us, the while
Strange spirits stand, filling our place before him.

Prin. Gently and skilfully thou hast pourtrayed
The Poet, floating in his realm of dreams ;
And yet, to me, it seems that even him,
Reality, with giant grasp, compels.
The beauteous lays that we, upon our trees,
Find hanging here and there, like golden apples,
Making for us here new Hesperides, —
Wilt thou not own all these, the lovely fruit
Of true affection ?

Leon. I do much delight
In these fair leaves ; with ever varied genius,
A single image hallows all his rhyme.
Now he exalts it on a ray of glory
Among the starry heavens, and bends in homage,
Like a cloud-resting angel, to the form ;
Then steals behind it, through the silent plain,

And weaves of ev'ry flower its changeful wreath.
Is she, the worshipped, absent, he doth hallow
The path her lovely foot hath lightly trod ;
Or, like the nightingale in foliage hid,
From out his love-pained bosom, sweetly fills
With melody of mourning, air and grove,
His witching lay ;—that blissful melancholy,
Charms ev'ry ear, and ev'ry heart must follow.

Prin. And, when he names the subject of his song,
He gives to it the name of—Leonora !

Leon. It is your name, even as it is mine,—
I would be sorry were it otherwise ;
And I am glad that, in this double sense,
He thus may hide all that he feels for thee.
I am well pleased that he should also be
Minded of me by this name's gracious sound.
Here is no question of that love which must
Conquer its object, must possess it wholly,—
And jealous guard it from all other eyes :
When he, in blissful meditation, dwells
Upon thy worth ;—so may he also take

A pleasant thought from my more idle being.
 He loves *us* not,—forgive me that I say it;—
 From all the spheres he gathers what he loves,
 Bringing it down upon the name we bear.
 He shares his feelings with us : we appear
 To love the man, while we do only love,
 With him, the highest that our love can reach.

Prin. Oh ! thou hast plunged full deeply in this
 science,

My Leonora, and dost tell me things
 That may but barely touch my outward ear,
 And, to my spirit, hardly can descend.

Leon. Thou ? Plato's scholar ! Thou not compre-
 hend

What I, a novice, dare to prate before thee ?
 It must be, then, that I am much in error ;
 Yet, well I know, I do not wholly err.
 Love, in this gentle school, shows not himself,
 As he was wont of old, a petted child ;
 But rather, as the youth who Psyche wedded,
 Who, in the awful council of the gods,

Has place and voice. He fumes not insolent.
 Hither and thither now, from breast to breast ;
 He fastens not at once on form or feature
 With sweet delusion ; nor, for brief delight,
 Finds penance in disgust and weariness.

Prin. Here comes my brother. Let us not betray
 Whither our converse led, or we should have
 To bear his jests, as late on our attire.

Scene III.

The PRINCESS, LEONORA, and ALPHONSO.

Alph. I am seeking Tasso, whom I nowhere
 find—

Not even here, with you. Can you not give me
 Some tidings of him ?

Prin. No, for yesterday
 I saw but little of him ; this day, nothing.

Alph. 'Tis an old failing in him—more to affect

Solitude than companionship ; I can
Forgive him when he flees the painted crowd ;
And rather, in the freedom of repose,
Would commune with his spirit. But when thus
He shuns the circle that his friends enclose,
I do not praise him.

Leon. Prince, if I mistake not,
You soon will change your blame for glad applause.
To-day I watched him from afar ; he held
A book, and tablets,—wrote, and walked, and wrote.
A passing word, that yesterday he spoke,
To me appeared to announce his work accomplished.
He studies but some trifles to amend,
That, to your grace, which him so much has given,
He may, at length, a worthy off'ring bring.

Alph. Most welcome shall he be, whene'er he
brings it,
And hold indulgence for long idleness.
So great an interest have I in his labour,
So much, in diverse ways, the mighty work
Rejoices me, and ever must rejoice,

So much the more doth my impatience wax ;
He cannot end it, cannot make complete,—
Still does he alter—slowly makes advance :
Again stands still, and so he cheats our hope.
Unwillingly we see a joy postponed
To a distant day, when we believe it near.

Prin. I must commend the modesty, the care,
With which he, step by step, would reach the goal ;
Only, by favour of the Muses, blend
So many rhymes in one harmonious whole ;
And still, his spirit cherishes the aim
To round this poem to such unity.
He would not fable upon fable heap,
To charm, divert, and then to disappoint :
Dying, like scattered words, in sound away.
Oh ! bear with him, my brother ! Time is not
The measure of a mighty work ; and when
The enjoyment after ages are to share,
The Artist's own age must forget itself.

Alph. Well, let us work together, dearest sister,
As, to the gain of each, we oft have done.

Am I too zealous, thou shalt moderate,—
Art thou too-gentle, I will urge him on :
And thus, perchance, we soon may see him reach
The goal where we so long have wished to see him.
Then shall our fatherland, and the whole world,
View with amazement such a task fulfilled.
I shall receive a portion of the glory,
And he in busier life shall be advanced :
The noble mind can, to no narrow circle,
Its shaping owe. His country and the world
Must work upon him. He must learn to bear
Both fame and blame with equal mind. He shall
Be forced to know aright himself and others ;
With smoother flattery, loneliness might lull him.
Abroad, foes *will* not, and friends *may* not, spare ;
In contest, then, the youth will use his strength,
Feel what he is, and know himself a man.

Leon. After this manner, will you all do for him,
My lord, as hitherto you have done much ;
In solitude may talent form itself,
But character in the world's rushing stream.

Oh ! that he would his mind frame, as his art,
Upon your teaching ! That he would no more
Flee from mankind, until his dim suspicion
Transform itself, at last, to fear and hate.

Alph. He only fears mankind who knows them not,
And he who shuns them quickly misconceives ;
Such is his case—so, by-and-by, becomes
The freest spirit fettered and perplexed :
Thus, oft about my favour is he anxious,
More than beseems himself ; thus, towards many
He cherishes mistrust, who yet, most surely,
I know are not his foes. If it do chance
A letter goes astray—a menial quits
His service for another—he mislays
A paper, then he straight espies design,
Treason, and trick, to undermine his fortunes.

Prin. Oh ! let us, dearest brother, not forget
That man can never from himself depart ;
And when a friend, who's bound to journey with us,
Has harmed a foot, we are fain to wend more slowly,
And lend a willing arm to aid him on.

Alph. Better it were to heal him ; better seek
A cure in the physician's faithful skill ;
Then, with the sane one, take our joyous way
Along life's path anew. Yet do I hope,
My love, that I may ne'er deserve the blame
Of a too rough physician ; for whate'er
I can, I do,—security and trust
To impress upon his bosom. Oft I give him,
In presence, too, of many witnesses,
Singular marks of favour. When to me
He brings complaints, I throughly search the cause,
As late I did, when he believed his chamber
Unfairly entered ; if nought be discovered,
I show him calmly how I look upon it.
And, as one must use all means, I with Tasso
Use patience, as, in truth, he well deserves ;
And you, I know, assist me willingly.
Now, having brought you hither, I return
This evening to the city ; you will see,
For a short space, Antonio ; he arrives
From Rome, and takes me back, for we have much

To do, and to consult upon . decisions
 Are to be made, and many letters written,
 And all these urge me to a quick return.

Prin. Wilt thou permit we keep thee company ?

Alph. Not so ; remain at Belriguardo. Go
 Together to Consandoli : enjoy,
 At your free pleasure, these most lovely days.

Prin. Canst thou not stay with us ? and cannot
 business

Be furthered here, as well as in the city ?

Leon. And will you also take Antonio from us,
 Who should so much recount to us of Rome ?

Alph. It cannot be, my children ; but, as shortly
 As possible, I will with him return :
 Then shall he all relate to you, and ye
 Shall help me to reward him, who so much
 Has in my service lately toiled ; and when
 We have had some quiet talk, then shall the swarm
 Enter, and make our gardens gay. And me
 Some fair one, in the shade, may kindly greet,
 As is but just, if I do seek her.

Leon. We
Will, friendlike, through our fingers peep.

Alph. You know,
I, on the other hand, can spare—

Prin. [*Turning towards the side scene.*] Some time
I have seen Tasso coming : slow he treads :
At intervals he stops, as unresolved ;
Then moves more swiftly towards us, and again
Stands still.

Alph. When thus he thinks and works, disturb not
The current of his dreams, and let him wander—

Leon. No, he has seen us, and he comes this way.

Scene III.

*The PRINCESS, LEONORA, ALPHONSO, and TASSO,
holding a Book bound with parchment.*

Tasso. Slowly I come, bringing to thee a work,
Which yet I linger in the offering.
Too well I know it still is incomplete,

Even though ended it appear to be.
 It would distress me thus to give it thee,
 Still unaccomplished ; but a new distress
 Constrains me now. I would not willingly
 Through great anxiety unthankful seem ;
 And as a man may say but “ Here I am,”
 Trusting his friends may greet him and rejoice,
 So can I only say, “ Accept thou this !”

Alph. Thou hast surprised me with thy gift, and
 made

This lovely day into a festival.
 So now, at last, I hold it in my hands,
 And, in a certain sense, may call it mine !
 Long have I wish'd to see thee thus resolv'd,
 And hear thee say at length, “ Here ! 'tis enough.”

Tasso. Are you contented ? then it is accomplished ;
 To you it must in ev'ry sense belong.
 Looking upon the labour I have spent,
 Or on the patient movement of my pen,
 Then, surely, may I say, the work is mine.
 But if I view more nearly that which gives

This poesy its inward weight and worth,
Freely, I own, from thee alone I have it.
If friendly Nature, of her bounteous choice,
Bestowed on me the pleasant gift of song,
So did capricious Fortune, with fierce strength,
Thrust me from her. And when the beauteous world
Won the boy's eye, with its full majesty ;
So, all too soon, the youthful heart was troubled,
With his dear parents' undeserved need.
And, if the young lips op'd themselves in song,
It was a lay of sorrow from them flowed ;
While I accompanied with murmured tones,
A Father's anguish and a Mother's wail.
'T was thou alone that from this narrow life
Raised me to freedom, took the load of care
From off my head. Thou gavest to my spirit
Liberty to unfold in fearless song.
And now, whatever praise my work may win,
I thank thee for it ; all belongs to thee.

Alph. A second time thou meritest all praise,
Modestly honouring thyself and us.

Tasso. Oh! could I speak as warmly as I feel,
 How I from you alone gained what I bring!
 The deedless youth—how should he of himself
 Give life to Poesy? Could he invent
 The skilful ordering of the hasty battle?
 The science of defence, which ev'ry warrior
 Shows strongly forth, at his appointed time;
 The leader's skill and the knights' bravery;
 How stratagem must strive with watchfulness?
 Hast thou not these, oh! wise and valiant Prince,
 All these imparted to me; as thou wert
 My genius, who delighted to reveal
 Somewhat of his unreachable high being,
 Thus, through a mortal's voice?

Prin. Do thou enjoy

The work that so rejoices us!

Alph. Rejoice

In gaining all the suffrage of the good!

Leon. And oh! in universal Fame rejoice!

Tasso. To me this moment is enough. On you

Alone I thought, whene'er I mused and wrote ;
Only to please you was my loftiest wish ;
To give delight to you my farthest aim.
He, who the world beholds not in his friends,
Deserves not that the world take note of him.
Here is my fatherland—the circle here
In which my soul would willingly abide.
Here do I listen, here mark every look,
Here speaks experience, learning, taste refin'd,—
My present and my future stand before me.
The many make the artist doubt and err ;
They only who, like you, conceive and feel,
They, they alone, shall judge and shall reward !

Alph. If we the present and the future world
Enact, then doth it not beseem us merely
Thus passive to accept. The graceful token
That gives the Poet praise—which e'en the Hero,
Who ever needs his aid, unenvying sees,
Twined round his brow—that token see I here,
Upon the forehead of thy prototype.

[*Pointing to Virgil's Statue.*

Is it the sport of chance, or has some genius
 Woven, and brought it hither? Not in vain
 Appears it to us. Virgil's words I hear :
 " Why honour ye the dead? They had their part
 In recompense and gladness while they lived :
 And if ye pay us wondering reverence,
 So to the living also give their share.
 My marble form enough is garlanded ;
 The green and living wreath belongs to life."

[ALPHONSO *signs to his Sister; she takes the wreath from the bust of Virgil and approaches TASSO. He draws back.*

Leon. Thou dost refuse? And seest thou the hand
 That offers thee this fair and fadeless wreath !

Tasso. Ah, let me linger ! One thing see I not ;
 It is, how I shall live after this hour.

Alph. In the enjoyment of the proud possession
 Which in its earliest moments frights thee thus.

Prin. Tasso, thou grantest me the rare delight,

[*Holding up the crown.*

Without a word, to tell thee what I feel.

Tasso. Kneeling, the lovely burthen I receive,
From thy dear hands, on my unworthy head.

[*He kneels, and the Princess places the wreath
on his head.*]

Leon. [*applauding.*] Now, hail to thee! thus for
the first time crown'd :

How well the wreath the modest man becomes.

Alph. It is a symbol, only, of the crown
That shall adorn thee in the Capitol.

Prin. And there shall louder voices greet thy name ;
With softer tones, Friendship repays thee here.

Tasso. Oh! take it ; take it from my head again :
Take it away—it seems to scorch my brow—
And, like a sunbeam that too hotly strikes
Upon the head, it burneth all the power
Of thought from out my brain. A fever heat
Stirs in my blood. Forgive! It is too much!

Leon. Nay, rather would this wreath protect the
head
Of him who in Fame's burning regions walks,
Cooling his brow.

Tasso. But I am too unworthy
That coolness to perceive, which only should
Breathe on the Hero's forehead. Oh! ye gods,
Bear it aloft, and fix it shining there
Among the clouds—higher, and still more high,
There hover unattainable—that life
May be to me but as one ceaseless climbing,
To reach that goal!

Alph. The man who early gains,
Learns early how to value the high worth
Of this world's pleasant goods; and he who early
Enjoys, will ne'er in after life be willing
To want what he has once possess'd; and who
Possesses should be armed.

Tasso. He who would arm
Himself, must feel a power within his bosom
That ne'er forsaketh him. Alas! for mine
Forsakes me even now. In happiness,
It leaves me helpless; all that inborn power
Which taught me, firmly, to endure mischance,
Proudly to meet injustice. Has then Joy,

*

Has, then, the rapture of these moments melted
 The marrow of my limbs? My knees give way.
 Princess, again thou seest me bend before thee.
 Oh! listen to my prayer; take it away!
 That I may feel as from a pleasant dream
 Awaking into new and quickened life.

Prin. If thou can, modestly and calmly, bear
 The talents which the gods bestowed on thee,
 Well may'st thou learn to bear the simple bough,
 Albeit the fairest that we have to give;
 For he who once hath borne it worthily,
 Must have it wave for ever round his brow.

Tasso. So let me, then, ashamed, from hence depart!
 Let me my gladness in the deep woods hide,
 As there of old I'm wont to hide my sorrow.
 There will I lonely wander—there no eye
 Shall mind me of my undeserved fortune.
 And if by chance some limpid spring should show
 In its pure glass a man who (strangely crown'd,
 Amid the clear reflected light of Heaven,
 And among trees and rocks), doth musing rest,

Then shall it seem to me that I behold
Elysium imaged in that magic mirror.
Then silent shall I meditate and ask,
Who the departed one may be—the Youth
Out of the far off Past, so fairly wreathed?
Who shall his name declare? What his desert?
Then shall I linger long, and think, Oh! might
Another come, and yet another, mingling
With him in friendly converse; might I see
Heroes and Poets of the ancient time
Gather'd around this well. Might I behold them
Ever inseparable here; as they,
In life, were fast united! As the magnet,
Through its own power binds iron fast with iron,
So does a like endeavour bind the Hero
Close with the Bard: Homer forgot himself,
And to the study of two men, devoted
His being: Alexander, in Elysium,
Hastens to seek out Homer and Achilles.
Oh! that I too were present, to behold
Those mighty souls united!

Leon. Wake! Awake!
And let us not believe that thou dost quite
Misapprehend the present!

Tasso. 'Tis the present
That thus exalts me. I seem only absent—
I am enraptured!

Prin. I rejoice, that when
With spirits thou holdest colloquy, thou yet
Canst speak so humanly. Well pleas'd I listen.

[*A Page approaches ALPHONSO and announces something in a low voice.*]

Alph. He is arriv'd; and in a happy hour.
Antonio! Bring him hither.—Here he comes!

Scene III.

The PRINCESS, LEONORA, ALPHONSO, TASSO, and ANTONIO.

Alph. Welcome! In that thou bring'st at once to us
Good tidings, and thyself.

Prin. We greet you kindly !

Ant. Hardly I dare express with what delight
Your presence has inspir'd me. In your eyes,
I find again all I so long have wanted.
You seem content with all that I have done,
Or brought to pass. And thus am I repaid
For ev'ry care—for many a weary day
Toil'd through impatient—or in longing lost.
Now have we all we wish, and no more strife.

Leon. I greet you also ; angry though I be
That you come only when I must depart.

Ant. And, that my happiness be not complete,
You take a fair proportion hence with you.

Tasso. I also greet you ; hoping much to gain
By your experience and companionship.

Ant. Thou'lt find me trusty, if it chance that thou
From thine own world do e'er look forth in mine.

Alph. Though much thy letters have instructed me,
Of what thou'st done, and what did thee betide,
Yet have I many things to question of :
First, through what means the business might succeed ?

In that strange land must every step be measured
 By him, who, only, his own aim would reach.
 He, who his master's profit purely seeks,
 In Rome will find a heavy task ; for Rome
 Will all things take and nothing give away ;
 And if one thither wend, somewhat to gain,
 He gaineth nothing ; bears he something thither,
 Happy if there he what he has may hold.

Ant. Sir, it was not my conduct or my skill
 By which your wishes were fulfilled. What cunning
 Finds not its master in the Vatican ?
 Many things wrought together which I could
 Turn to our profit. Gregory honours you ;
 He greets and blesses you. The grey haired man,
 The worthiest of our age, whose head a crown
 But burthens, thinks with pleasure on the time
 He bore you in his arms. The man, 'mong men
 Distinguish'd, knows you well, and highly values.
 For your sake did he much.

Alph. I, his good will
 Value, so far as it is honest. Yet

Thou knowest well, that, from the Vatican,
Men looking downward, see the realms around
Lie small beneath their feet—make little note
Of Princes or of men. Tell me, however,
What most did aid thee?

Ant. Well, if you so will it—
The Pope's high intellect,—he views the little
As little, and the great as great; and, while
He rules a world, yields friendly to his neighbours.
The strip of land, which he gives up to you,
He knows as well to value as your friendship.
He would have Italy at peace, would see
Friends near him, and have quiet round his borders;
That so, the powers of Christendom, which he
Mightily sways, may here the heretic,
And there the Turk, extirpate.

Prin. Is it known,
What men he favours most especially,
And who are nearest to his confidence?

Ant. Only experienced men possess his ear:
The diligent, his favour and his trust.

Leon. You would provoke me—you shall not succeed.

Alph. Much am I in thy debt for other days.

Leon. Be it so. For to-day, I rest your debtor.

Pardon and interrupt not my demands.

[*To Antonio*] Tell me, has he much for his kinsme
done?

Ant. Nor more nor less than it was just he should.

A man in power, who cared not for his own,
Would, even by the people, be condemned.
With silent moderation, Gregory knows
How to advance his own, who to the State
Are servants good and true. Thus he fulfils,
With one exertion, two connected duties.

Prin. And Learning too, and Art, do they rejoice
In his protection? Doth his zeal in this
Vie with great Princes of the olden time?

Ant. He honours knowledge so far as it aids
To rule the State, teaches to know the people.
He prizes Art so far as it adorns
And makes his Rome illustrious; rendering
Her temples and her palaces the wonders

Of nether earth. With him must nought be idle ;
All that would prosper, first must serve and toil.

Alph. Dost thou believe that we shall have this
matter

Shortly completed? That perchance they may not
Strew difficulties here and there at last?

Ant. I must deceive me much, if this contention
Be not, at once, with your mere signature,
And a few letters, set at rest for ever.

Alph. So must I hallow this day of my life,
A season both of pleasure and of gain.
To day I see my boundaries extended,
And for the future more secure. Thou hast,
Without the drawing of a sword, attain'd it,
And well, in this, hast earned a civic crown.
From the oak's earliest leaves our maids shall twine it ;
And on the sunniest morning deck thy brow.
This selfsame day has Tasso too enrich'd me,
Since he for us has won Jerusalem,
And shamed in this our modern Christendom—
With cheerful courage and hard toil has reached

A widely distant, high exalted aim,
And, for his labour, dost thou see him crowned.

Ant. You have read a riddle for me. I did marvel
To see two crowned ones when I here arrived.

Tasso. Oh, as thine eyes behold my happiness,
Fain would I that thou saw'st, at one same glance,
My much-sham'd spirit.

Ant. I have long since known
Alphonso is unmeasured in reward.
Thou only findest what each of his servants
Has much experienced.

Prin. But, when you learn
What he has done, you will acknowledge us
But moderate and just. We are alone
The first mute witness of those suffrages
The world shall not deny him—future years
Tenfold to him accord.

Ant. He is secure,
Through you, of his renown. Who dares to doubt
Where you have deigned to praise? But tell me, who
Has placed this wreath on Ariosto's brow?

Leon. This hand !

Ant. You have done well ; it doth
become him,

As e'en the laurel's self might scarce become.
For as the inward teeming breast of Nature
Is with a vesture clad, of many hues ;
So doth he veil, in Fable's flowery garb,
All that makes man worthy of love or honour,
Content, and judgment, and experience,
With strength of mind, fine taste, and a clear sense
Of real goodness ; all show lively forth,
In his true song, seeming impersonate ;
As they might under flowering trees repose,
Strewn with the snow fall of the light borne blossoms,
With roses crowned, and circled in strange sport,
By wicked witchery of frolic Loves.
The waters of abundance, flowing nigh,
Give out their wondrous coloured fish to view ;
The very air is filled with marvellous wings ;
And, with strange herds, the meadow and the grove.
Amid the verdure, Mischief lurks half hid ;

And Wisdom's voice, from time to time, rings out,
Speaking from clouds of gold her maxims sage ;
Meantime, in wild, yet well accorded tones,
Madness, at intervals, is heard to rave,
Yet with the finest tact is still restrained.
Who dares with such a man to weigh himself,
Does for his boldness well deserve the crown.
Forgive me if, feeling myself inspired,
I, like a true enthusiast, time nor place,
Nor what I say, can well consider. All
These poets, and these garlands, with the quaint
Festal adornment of these fair ones, set me
Beyond myself, as in some foreign land.

Prin. He who so well can one great merit value,
Will not misprize another. Presently,
You shall point out to us, in Tasso's lays,
What we may feel, but you may best discern.

Alph. Now come with me, Antonio, much there is,
Of which I still am anxious to enquire.
That done, you shall until the setting sun
Belong to these fair ladies. Come, Farewell !

ACT THE SECOND.

Scene I.

*A Hall.**The PRINCESS and TASSO.*

Tasso. With weak uncertain steps, I follow thee,
Oh, Princess!—and, the while, unmeasured thoughts,
Disorderly, arise within my soul.
It seems as Solitude did beckon me,
Still gently whispering, “Come, I will dispel
The new raised doubts that vex thy breast.” Yet, if
I cast one look on thee, or if mine ear,
My listening ear, catch from thy lips one word,
A new day dawns around me, and I feel
All blinding folds fall loose. I freely own,
The man who, so unlooked for, came among us,
Waked me ungently from a lovely dream :

His words, his bearing, have so strangely mov'd me,
That, more than ever, I do feel myself
Beside myself,—and with myself at strife,
Anew am struggling in perplexity.

Prin. It is not possible that an old friend,
Who, absent long, a foreign life has led,
In the first moments, when we meet again,
Should seem to us the same he seemed of yore.
He, in his inner man, is all unchanged.
Let us but dwell with him a few short days,
So will the jarring chords attune themselves,
Till, happily, a pleasant harmony
Has linked them all anew. When he shall know,
More nearly, what thou to thine age hast given,
Then surely will he set thee at the side
Of the great Poet, whom, but now, he placed,
A giant, in thy path.

Tasso. Believe, my Princess,
The praise of Ariosto from his lips,
Far more delighted me than pained. It is
Comfort for us to hear the man extolled,

Who, as a mighty master stands before us.
For then may we, within our still heart, say—
Do thou attain a portion of his worth,
A portion of his glory shall be thine.
No—that which stirred my spirit to its depths,
Which, even now, is filling all my soul,
It was the spoken image of that world,
Which ever, full of life—restless—immense,
Round One, a mighty, wise, and lonely man,
With measured movement turns : the appointed course
Fulfilling, which its demi-god prescribes.
Greedy, I listened, with delight received,
The words assur'd of the experienced man ;
And yet, alas, the more I heard, the more,
In my own eyes, I sank—the more I fear'd
To vanish—as an echo in the rocks,
To lose myself for aye—a sound—a nothing.

Prin. Yet thou did'st seem but now to feel so truly,
How Bard and Hero for each other lived ;
How Bard and Hero should each other seek ;
How neither should the other envy. True,

Illustrious is the deed of worth. But, also,
Illustrious such deeds' fulness to bequeath,
In worthy strains, unto posterity.
Content thyself, from out this little state,
That gives thee shelter, calmly to behold
The world's wild course, as from a friendly shore.

Tasso. And was't not here I first astonished saw
How proud the brave man's meed? When, long ago,
I hither came, a young unpractised boy,
Then, festival on festival, did make
Ferrara seem the centre point of glory.
Oh! what a sight was that! The ample square
(Whereon, in all its splendour, valour came
To shew its active prowess) by a ring
Was circled, as not soon, a second time,
The sun might shine upon it thus. There sate,
In crowds, the loveliest women. There were seen,
Crowding, the mightiest men of latter days.
The eye, astounded, pierced the noble throng,
And we exclaimed—All these our fatherland,
That small, that solitary, sea-girt land,



Hath hither sent—and they, united, form
The loftiest tribunal that, e'er yet,
Gave sentence on desert, or fame, or virtue :
Go singly through their numbers, thou shalt find
Not one, by whom his neighbours need be shamed !—
Then were the barriers open flung—there stamped
The impatient charger—there gleam'd helm and
shield—

Then hurried past the Squires—then shrill rang out
The trumpet's tone—and crashed the shiver'd lance—
And stricken shield and helmet clang—then dust,
In eddying clouds, a moment veil'd at once
The victor's glory and the vanquished's shame.
Oh ! let me draw a veil before the whole
Too glowing vision, lest, in these bright minutes,
I feel too deeply my unworthiness !

Prin. While thee, that noble circle, and those
deeds,

Inflamed to thirst for toil and strife—e'en then,
I could to thee, my youthful friend, have taught
The silent lore of suffering. That gay festal

Which thou extollest, which a hundred tongues
Prais'd to me then, and many an after year
Have prais'd—I saw not. In a stilly place,
Where, all unbroken, Joy's last faintest echo
Might lose itself, I, many a bitter pang,
And many a saddened thought, was forced to bear.
With wide-spread wings, the awful form of Death
Hovered before mine eyes, and from me hid
All out-look on the yet new world. At length
By slow degrees it passed away, and left me
To view, as through a glass, the changeful tints
Of Life, all pale but lovely. Living shapes,
There saw I, softly rising. The first time,
Supported by my women, I stepped forth
From my sick chamber, then Lucretia came,
Full of glad life, leading thee in her hand.
Thou wert the first in my new being trod,
New and unknown, to meet me ; then I hoped
Much, both for thee and me—and, to this hour
That hope has not deceived me.

Tasso.

Oh! and *I,*

Stunned with the tumult of the crushing throng,
Dazzled with so much brilliance, inly stirred
With many passions, through the silent palace,
Had, speechlessly, beside thy sister moved ;
Then entered we that chamber, where thou soon
Appear'd'st to us, upon thy women leaning.—
For me, oh, what a moment that ! Forgive !
As the enchanted, from his drunken dream,
Is, by the Godhead's presence, lightly cured ;
E'en so was I, of all such phantasies,
Of all that dizziness,—each false emotion,
Healed, by a single look into thine eyes.
When the desire of inexperience,
Craving a thousand objects, vanished thus,
Then I drew back ashamed, within myself,
And learned to know all that was worthy wishing.
So man, in vain, among the wide sea sand,
Seeketh a pearl that (hidden from his search)
Is lying closed within a silent shell.

Prin. Then happy times began ; and, had not soon,
The Duke d'Urbino torn my sister from us,

Our years had vanished in untroubled joy.
But woe is me, e'en now we sorely miss
The gladsome spirit, and the lavish wit,
The warm and open heart of that sweet lady.

Tasso. Only too well I know it; since the day
That she departed hence, that pure delight
None could to thee replace. Oft has it wrung
My breast, and often to the voiceless woods
Have I poured forth my grief for thee, and cried,
Alas! and had her sister then, alone,
The happiness, the right, so much to be
To this most dear one? Is none other heart
Worthy her trust? No other mind attuned
To accord with hers? Are wit and spirit quenched?
And (how soe'er excelling) this sole lady,
Was she then all? Oh, Princess, pardon me;
Oft have I thought thus in my heart, and yearned,
Something to be to thee—of small account,
Yet something. I would fain with deeds, not words,
Shew thee in stirring life, how, in repose,
My heart had vowed itself to thee. But, oh!

This aim I reach not ; and too often find,
 I do, in error, what must give thee pain ;
 Offend the man thou wishest to protect ;
 Perplex, unskilful, that thou would'st unravel ;
 And, at the very moment when I would
 Draw nigh to thee, feel but more widely severed.

Prin. Tasso, I never have thy will misdeemed ;
 And well I know, how thou, to wrong thyself,
 Art ever busied. All unlike my sister,
 (Well skilled to live with whomsoe'er she may)
 Thou scarce art capable, in many years,
 To understand a friend.

Tasso. Oh ! blame me still,
 But after, tell me where to find the man,
 Or where the woman seek, with whom I dare
 Speak from an open breast, as now to thee ?

Prin. Thou in my brother should'st have confidence.

Tasso. He is my Prince ! Yet think thou not of
 me ;
 Freedom's wild instinct blazes in my breast ;
 Man is not born for Freedom. To the noble,

There is no fairer lot, than to obey
 A Prince whom they can reverence. And so
 Is he my Lord and Master, and I feel
 All these large words include ; so must I learn
 Silence when he commands or when he speaks,
 Though heart and mind may warmly disavow.

Prin. That with my brother never is the case.
 And now we have Antonio here again ;
 A new and prudent friend secured to thee.

Tasso. I hoped so once—now I almost despair.
 To me how full of profit were his converse ;
 How good his counsel in a thousand chances !
 He owns, well may I say it, all I need.
 And yet—though all the Gods assembled round
 His cradle, bringing gifts—sure 't was a pity,
 The Graces stayed behind : and he, to whom
 The offering of those gentle ones hath failed,
 May truly much possess and much bestow :
 And yet his bosom is no place of rest.

Prin. Still we may trust in him, and that is much.
 You must not, from one man, all things demand ;

And he fulfils whate'er he promises.
Let him but once declare himself thy friend,
He shall care for thee where thyself thou failest.
You must be friends ; and I do flatter me,
This good work to accomplish speedily :
Only, withstand it not, as thou art wont.
So long as Leonora has been here,
She who is fair and gentle, and with whom
Most easy 'tis to live, yet hast thou never
Drawn nigh to her as she would fain have had thee.

Tasso. To thee I ever listened—otherwise,
I rather had avoided than drawn nigh.
However amiable she seems to be,
I know not how it is, but very rarely
Could I with her be unreserved ; and if
She does design a kindness to her friend,
One feels design and so is out of humour.

Prin. On this wise, Tasso, shall we never find
Companionship !—this path leads us to roam
Through lonely thickets and in silent dells.
And more and more the mind will wear itself,

Striving, that golden time, which faileth it
 In outward things, from inward to supply—
 Little as such endeavour may succeed.

Tasso. Ah me, what words were those my Princess
 spake?

The Golden Time! Aye whither is it fled,
 For which all hearts, so deep, so vainly yearn?
 Then did men spread themselves o'er the free earth,
 As the glad herds in unrestrained enjoyment
 On the gay mead; then lent some patriarch tree,
 Shepherd and shepherdess, its friendly shade;
 The tender branches of a younger wood,
 Bowed, as in sadness, over pining love;
 While clear and still, upon their silvery sand,
 Softly the yielding waves a nymph received;
 Where, gliding through the grass, the startled snake
 Unharming lost itself; and the bold Faun
 Pursued by valiant youth, took swift to flight;
 Where every bird thus in the free air sang,
 And every brute, o'er hill and valley straying,
 Spoke thus to man: "Lawful is all delight."

Prin. My friend, the golden time indeed is past ;
And virtue only can that time restore.
And (may I tell thee all I think thereon ?)
That golden time, with which Poets are wont
To flatter us, that lovely time gone by,
Was (so I deem) as little as 't is now :
Or, if it e'er existed, 't was alone
What we have power still with us to recall.
For yet do kindred hearts each other meet,
And all th' enjoyment share of this fair world :
And only in your motto change, my friend,
A single word—Lawful is all that's right.

Tasso. Oh, if of good and noble men alone,
Were formed a common jury to decide
On what is righteous ! Rather each believes
Whate'er is gainful to him must be right.
All things are right unto the wise and mighty,
They making all things lawful for themselves.

Prin. Would'st thou more surely learn, then, what
is right,
To noble women bear thy questioning.

For them most nearly must it still concern,
 That all which chances be by fitness ruled.
 Propriety surrounds, as with a wall,
 Our tender and too lightly wounded sex ;
 Where sways Morality, there do they sway ;
 And so where license governs they are nothing.
 Or, wilt thou ask both sexes, thou shalt find,
 Freedom is Man's sole aim—and Woman's, Virtue.

Tasso. Thou deemest us licentious, rough, unfeeling ?

Prin. Not so—only you seek a distant good,
 And, therefore, must the toil be mighty. You
 Devote your labours to eternity ;
 While we, upon this earth, may but possess
 A single, limited, and present good ;
 All that we wish, securely to possess it.
 Of no man's heart, however warmly once
 It has to us been given, are we assured.
 Beauty is fleeting ; beauty, that doth seem
 All that you value. What remains, that gone,
 Can charm no more ; what charmeth not is dead.
 If men there were could prize a woman's heart,—

That could discern what fair and precious treasure,
Of Love and Truth, a woman's breast may guard,—
If the remembrance of bright hours gone by,
Would bide, a living inmate in your souls,—
And, if your eyes, in other things so searching,
Could also pierce through the dark veil, which age
Or sickness o'er us flings ; or, if possession
Might, as it should do, give repose, and not,
Rather, to stranger goods, your fancy wake ·
Then would, for us, a brighter day arise—
Then should we celebrate our Golden Time !

Tasso. Thou speakest words that rouse within my
breast,

To added might, cares that half sleeping lay.

Prin. What mean'st thou Tasso? Freely speak
to me.

Tasso. I many times have heard—this day anew
I heard it—and, e'en if I heard it not,
I still must think it. Noble Princes strive
To win thy hand ! That which we must expect,
We yet do dread—Aye, and well nigh despair.

Thou wilt forsake us—that is natural :

How we are to endure it, that I know not

Prin. Yet, for the present hour be thou at rest !

And, I may almost say, at rest for ever.

Contented am I here ; content may bide ;

As yet, I no alliance know that charms me.

And, if you fain would keep me here, then prove it

By concord, and by making for yourself

A happy life, and, through yourself, for me.

Tasso. Ah, teach me what is possible to do !

Devoted unto thee are all my days ;

And when my heart unfolds itself to praise

Or thank thee, then, then only, do I feel

The purest happiness that man can know ;

The most celestial find I but in thee.

The gods of earth do so distinguish them

From other men—as lofty Destiny

Itself distinguishes e'en from the will

And counsel of the wisest. Oft when we

See mighty billows upon billows roll,

They only let them, unremarked, pass by,

As summer waves, that murmur at their feet ;
They hear nought of the storm that howls around,
And overwhelms us ; scarcely heed our prayers ;
And leave us, as we leave poor helpless children,
To fill the vexed air with our shrieks and moans.
Thou oft, oh heavenly one ! hast borne with me,
And, like the sunbeam, has thy pitying glance,
From my worn eyelids dried the dews away.

Prin. It is but just that woman should toward thee
Be friendliest ; in divers ways thy song
Has glorified the sex. Tender or brave,
Thou still hast found the means to make them seem
Worthy of love and honour. If Armida
Appear too hateful, by her charms, her love,
We are appeased.

Tasso. For all that in my song
Re-echoes, I indebted stand to one,
And one alone. No dim uncertain form
Floats on my brain, vanishing, as the mind
Scans it more nearly. No : mine eyes have seen
This model of all beauty and all good ;

And that I moulded from it shall endure.
 Tancred's heroic passion for Clorinda ;
 Erminia's silent and unnoted faith ;
 Sophronia's majesty ; Olinda's need ;
 These are not phantoms, all of error raised ;
 I know they *are*, therefore they are immortal.
 And what has better title to remain
 Through ages, working on its silent way,
 Than hath the secret of a loyal love,
 Humbly entrusted to a gracious lay ?

Prin. And shall I whisper one advantage more,
 That, without note, the lay steals unawares ?
 It charms us on, and on, we listen still—
 We listen, and believe we understand ;
 And what we understand we cannot blame.
 So by the lay at last we are all won.

Tasso. Oh ! what a Heaven openest thou before me,
 My Princess ! If the light make me not blind,
 I see an endless, an unhoped-for bliss,
 Glorious in golden rays descend.

Prin.

No more,

Tasso. Some things there are we ought to grasp
With energy ; others, through moderation
And through forbearance only can be ours.
Oft say they, such is Virtue ; such is Love,
Which is to Virtue kin. This ponder well !

Scene III.

TASSO [*alone*].

Tasso. Is it permitted thee to lift thine eyes ?
Darest thou to look around ? Thou art alone !
Did not these pillars hear the words she spake ?
Hast thou to fear these witnesses, these mute
Witnesses to this height of happiness ?
The sun goes forth on this new day of life,
That with no former day may be compared.
Lowly descending, swift the Goddess bore
The mortal far aloft. What a new orb
Before mine eyes expands. And what a realm !

How richly was the burning wish repaid !
I dreamed that I approached the highest joy—
This joy is far, how far, above all dreams ?
The wretch, born blind, may image to himself
The light and colour as he will ; but, when
For him the new day dawns, 'tis a new sense.
I trace this path with boldness and foreboding ;
Faltering, intoxicate with joy. Thou hast
Given me much—thou giv'st as Earth and Heaven
Pour on us, with full hands, unmeasured gifts.
And thou demandest that, which to demand,
No less than such a gift could justify.
I must forbear, must prove myself discreet ;
And thereby must deserve thy confidence.
What have I ever done that she should choose me ?
What shall I do to make me worthy her ?
She can put trust in thee, therein thou art so.
Aye, Lady, to thy words and to thine eyes,
My soul be ever solely consecrate !
Aye, claim thou what thou wilt, for I am thine !
Send she me forth, toil, danger, and renown,

In foreign lands to seek ; or, let her give me
A golden lyre, in some green forest stillness,
Devoting me to Peace and to her praise.
Her's am I—my creations all are her's :
My heart shall all its treasures guard for her.
Had the Gods granted me an instrument
Of thousand tones, scarce might I so express,
Meetly, this reverence unspeakable.
The Painter's pencil and the Poet's lips,
(The sweetest e'er on virgin honey nourished)
Fain would I call my own. No, never more
Shall Tasso lose himself among the woods,
Or among men, lonely, and faint, and troubled.
He is no more alone ; he is with thee.
Oh ! that the loftiest of deeds were placed
Here visible before me ; circled round
With grisly perils : onward would I press,
And fearless risk the life, that, from thy hands,
But now I hold : would claim the bravest men
To be my friends : and, with a noble troop,
The impossible accomplish at thy will

Or at thy glance. Thou over hasty, wherefore
Hid not thy lips all thou didst feel, till worthy,
And worthier, thou could'st lay thee at her feet !
That was thy project ; that thy wiser wish ;
Yet let it be—far better is it ; pure,
And of free grace to gather such a boon,
Than half to imagine that one might, perchance,
Have dared to claim it. Joyously look up !
So vast, so wide, is what before thee lies :
And Youth, so rich in Hope, still charms thee on,—
Far onward to a bright and unknown Future !
Heave then my breast. Oh ! atmosphere of bliss,
Be, yet awhile, gracious unto this plant :
It strives toward Heaven ; a thousand shoots are
springing
From out it, and unfold themselves in blossoms :
Oh ! that it fruit,—oh ! that it joy may bear :
That one dear hand a golden ornament
May gather from the freshly laden boughs !

Scene III.

TASSO and ANTONIO.

Tasso. Be welcome thou, who, as it were, but now,
For the first time I see. More fairly none
Could be commended to me—oh, be welcome !
I know thee now, and know thy perfect worth.
Unling'ringly, I proffer heart and hand ;
And trust withal that thou wilt not reject me.

Ant. Most liberally thou offerest me fair gifts,
Whose worth I do acknowledge as I ought ;
And, therefore, let me tarry ere I grasp them.
As yet, I know not, if I can to thee,
Return the like again. I am unwilling
Or hasty, or unthankful, to appear :
Let me be prudent—cautious for us both.

Tasso. Who will complain of prudence ? Every step
Of life may shew how needful is the virtue ;
And yet, 'tis pleasanter, when our souls tell us
Where we, with her fine foresight, may dispense.

Ant. Thereof may each one question his own spirit,
Since he his errors needs must expiate.

Tasso. Be it so! I have now fulfilled my duty ;
I have obeyed the Princess's behest,
Who wished us friends ; and so myself have offered
To thee, Antonio : hold back I dared not ;
Yet surely will I not intrude. So be it—
Time and acquaintance shall perhaps incite you
Warmly to ask those gifts which you have now
So coldly laid aside and almost scorned.

Ant. The moderate man is oftentimes blamed as cold,
By those who deem themselves more warm than others,
Because some passing fever fit o'ertakes them.

Tasso. Thou blamest what I also blame and shun ;
I have lived long enough to comprehend
How much endurance outweighs vehemence.

Ant. 'Tis wisely done ! Keep ever in that mind.

Tasso. Thou hast the right to counsel and to warn.
Experience stands closely at thy side,
A long tried friend,—and yet believe thou this ;
The still heart listens, every day and hour,

To warnings, and, in secret, exercises
 Itself to all good lessons, which thy sternness
 Believes it newly teaches.

Ant. It is pleasant
 To be thus busied with ourselves, if only
 It were as profitable. No man learns,
 Inwardly, to discern his inmost self,
 Because he metes himself by his own measure—
 Sometimes too small—alas! and oft too great.
 Man only in mankind can know himself;
 And life alone, to each, shows what he is.

Tasso. I hear thee with assent and reverence.

Ant. And not the less thou thinkest, from these
 words,
 Something far wide of what I meant to say.

Tasso. After this manner shall we ne'er come nigh;
 This is not well—it is not wisely done—
 Wilfully thus to misconceive a man,
 Be he whate'er he may. The Princess' words
 Were scarcely needed; quickly I discerned thee.
 I know the goodness of thy will and deed;

Thy proper fate leaves thee without concern ;
For others carest thou, others dost aid,
And on the waves of life (so lightly stirred)
Thou hold'st a stedfast heart. Thus see I thee ;
And what were I, did I not hasten tow'rd thee ?
What, if I sought not eagerly to win
A share of that locked treasure thou dost keep ?
I know, once opened, thou wilt not repent ;
I know that, knowing me, thou art my friend,
And such a friend as I too long have needed.
I do not feel shamed by my inexperience,
Or by my youth. The Future's golden clouds
Still sleep around my head. Ah ! noble man,
Take, take me to thy breast, and strengthen me,—
The rash, the inexperienced,—to the use,
The measured use of life.

Ant. Thou, in a moment,
Askest what Time alone may wisely warrant.

Tasso. Love in a moment warrants that which toil
May scarce, by length of time, attain. I do not
Crave it from thee,—I dare demand it. In

The name of Virtue do I call on thee,
 Which zealously must all good men unite.
 And shall I speak to thee another name?
 The Princess hopes it—wills it. Leonora—
 She will bind me to thee, and thee to me.
 Oh! let us hasten to forestall her wish;
 Let us, together, come before the Goddess,
 Off'ring to her our service—our whole souls;
 Joined, all that's worthiest to perform for her.
 Yet, once again, here is my hand,—oh! take it;
 Do not draw back,—do not deny me still!
 Excellent man, accord to me the joy
 (The best a good man knows), to give himself,
 In unreserved confiding, to one better!

Ant. Thou goest with full sails. It seems as
 though

Thou had'st been used to conquer: everywhere
 To find a wide path, and an open door.
 I willingly accord thee every worth,
 And every blessing; yet, I see too well,
 As yet we two stand far, far wide asunder.

Tasso. Be it in years, then, in approved worth ;
In courage and good will, I yield to none.

Ant. The will not always wins the deed to follow,
And courage images its way too brief ;
He who has reached the goal alone is crown'd,
And oft a worthier goes without a crown.
Yet there are light-won garlands ;—wreaths there
are,

Of very diverse kinds ;—some you may reach
Conveniently, e'en as you walk abroad.

Tasso. That which a God gives freely unto some,
Sternly to some denies ; not such a gift
Doth every man snatch as he will or may.

Ant. To Fortune, o'er all other gods, ascribe it,
And I will hear thee, for her choice is blind.

Tasso. E'en so does Justice wear a fillet too,
And thus her eyes are closed to all illusion.

Ant. Fity the fortunate upholdeth Fortune !
He gives to her a hundred eyes for merit,
And choice discreet, and strictest carefulness :
Name her *Minerva*—name her as he will—

He holds a gracious gift for a reward,—
A casual toy for well-earned ornament.

Tasso. Thou needest not be more significant.
It is enough! I look deep in thy heart,
And know thee now for life. Oh! knew thee thus,
My Princess, also! Prythee, waste not thus
The arrows of thine eyes, and of thy tongue;
All vainly dost thou aim them at the wreath—
The fair and fadeless one—that decks my brow.
First, be so great as not to envy it,
And then, perchance, thou may'st contest it with me.
I prize it as the holiest, highest good;
Yet, show me but the man who has attained
The aim at which I strive. Show me the hero,
Such, as yet, History alone has shown me,—
The Poet set before me,—who may dare
Measure himself with Homer, or with Virgil.
Aye, and 'tis saying more: show me the man
Who, threefold, does the prize deserve, in that
He, thrice more humbly, would the fair crown wear,
Than I. Show me, and thou shalt see me kneel

Before the Deity who gifted me ;
 Nor will I e'er arise till she the wreath
 Has taken from my head, and placed on his.

Ant. Till then thou truly art most worthy of it.

Tasso. Let me be tried, for that I will not shun,
 But this mispraisal have I not deserved,—
 The crown, of which my Prince has deemed me
 worthy,

And my Princess's hand has for me twined,
 No man shall question, or shall grudge to me.

Ant. This lofty tone, and this rash violence,
 Beseem thee not, to me, or in this place.

Tasso. What thou perittest thyself here, beseems
 Me also. What! is truth, then, banished hence?
 Is the free spirit in a palace prisoned?
 Here, are the noble to endure oppression?
 Methinks nobility is foremost here,—
 The soul's nobility. Must they not joy
 In the presence of the great ones of the earth?
 They must and shall. We have the approach to
 princes

By the gentility our fathers left us ;
Then wherefore not through Genius—that which Nature
Lavishes not on all, e'en as to all
She gives no line of mighty ancestors.
Meanness alone should feel vexation here,
And Envy, blazoning her own disgrace,—
They, even as the spider's unclean web,
Should never fasten on these marble walls.

Ant. Thou provest, of thyself, my right to scorn thee.
The impatient boy who will, with insolence,
Compel the trust and friendship of the man.
Unmannered as thou art—wilt make excuse ?

Tasso. Far rather what you name unmannerly,
Than what I to myself must call ignoble.

Ant. Thou art yet young enough ; good discipline
May teach and guide thee in a better way.

Tasso. Not young enough to bow the knee to idols,
And old enough to bandy scorn for scorn.

Ant. Where sport of lips and strings the strife
decides,
Hero and victor shalt thou thence return.

Tasso. It were an idle boast to vaunt my arm,
Which yet hath nothing done ; but I can trust it.

Ant. Thou trustest in forbearance, which, too far,
Has led thee in the bold course of thy fortune.

Tasso. I feel but now that I am grown a man ;
Thou wert the last with whom I'd wished to try
The hazard play of weapons, only that
Thou rakest fire on fire, until it seethes
My inmost blood—until the smarting thirst
Of vengeance, foaming, boils within my breast :
Art thou the man thou vauntest, stand to me.

Ant. Thou knowest as little who, as where, thou art.

Tasso. No sanctuary bids us bear disgrace.
Thy injuries desecrate this place, not I,
Who reverence, trust, and love, the fairest offerings,
To meet thee bare. Thy spirit hath defiled
This paradise ; thy words, this stainless hall ;
And not the swelling feelings of my heart,
That will not calmly bear the smallest stain.

Ant. What a vast spirit in a narrow breast !

Tasso. Here is yet room to give the bosom vent.

Ant. The mob are wont to give it vent in words.

Tasso. Art thou a nobleman, as I am, prove it.

Ant. I am, indeed ; yet know I where I am.

Tasso. Come, then, elsewhere, where weapons may
avail.

Ant. Thou should'st not challenge, and I follow not.

Tasso. Such hindrances are to the coward welcome.

Ant. The coward threatens where he is secure.

Tasso. Most joyfully will I renounce this shield.

Ant. Excuse thyself—the place thou nought excusest.

Tasso. Oh, may the place excuse what I have borne ;
[*He draws his sword.*

Or draw, or follow me, that I may not,

As I do hate thee, evermore despise !

Scene III.

TASSO, ANTONIO, and ALPHONSO.

Alph. What strife is this in which I have surprised
you ?

Ant. You find me, Prince, standing with all com-
posure

Before one with a sudden frenzy seized.

Tasso. I do implore thee, as a Deity,

That thou would'st curb me with one warning glance.

Alph. Recount, Antonio, and thou, Tasso—tell me,

How hath this strife thrust itself in my house ?

How hath it seized you,—dragged you into tumult,

From courtesy and from discretion's path ?

I am amazed.

Tasso. I think you do not know us.

Here, this man, famed for wisdom and for virtue,

Has rudely and despitefully, like one

Unnurtured and ignoble, borne him toward me.

Trustingly, I approached him, and he spurned me ;

I on him pressed with kindly perseverance,

And bitter, still more bitterly, he stayed not,

Until the purest blood-drop in my veins

He turned to gall. Forgive me ! Thou hast here

Surprised me as one raving ; but on him

Be all the guilt, if I have made me guilty.

With all his might has he the frenzy kindled
That seized on me, and harmed both me and him.

Ant. The poet's lofty flight bears him away ;
To me, my Prince, you first addressed yourself,
And questioned me. To me be it permitted
To speak now, after this rash orator.

Tasso. Oh, yea ; relate, recount it, word by word ;
And, if thou canst, each syllable, each look
Enact before this judge : adventure it,
And injure thus thyself ;—a second time
Witness against thyself. On the other hand,
I will no breath, no pulse's throb deny.

Ant. If thou have somewhat yet to speak, say on ;
If not, keep silence : interrupt me not.
Whether, my Prince, I or this hot brain, here,
Did first begin the strife,—or who it was
That had the wrong,—is a wide-seeking question,
Which, for the present, may be left at rest.

Tasso. How so ?—methinks that should be the first
query,
Which, of us both, was in the right or wrong.

Ant. Not so entirely as the unchecked mind
May deem.

Alph. Antonio !

Ant. Gracious Lord, I honour
Your sign, but first let him be silent. When
I have spoken, let him then say on ; and you
Shall, 'twixt the two, decide. I only say,
With him I cannot try my cause,—can neither
Plead against him, nor yet defend myself,—
Nor e'en propose to give him satisfaction.
He stands not there a freeman, for there hangs
A heavy law above him, which your Grace,
At most, may only mitigate. He, here,
Has threatened me, and challenged. Before you
Scarcely did he conceal his naked weapon ;
And if, my Lord, you had not stepped between us,
I, too, had been forgetful of my duty,
Guilty alike, and shamed to meet your glance.

Alph. [*to TASSO.*] 'Twas not well done.

Tasso. Yet my own heart acquits me,
My Lord, and surely also yours. Most true

It is, I threatened and I challenged him ;—
I drew. But oh ! with what malicious tongue,
With what well chosen words, he wounded me ;
How sharp and swift his tooth its subtle poison
Distilled into my veins ; how he, the fever
Did more and more inflame—you cannot guess,—
So calmly, and so cold, did he persist
To goad me to distraction. Oh ! thou knowest—
Thou knowest him not ; and never wilt thou know him.
Warmly I offered him the fairest friendship ;
He flung my off'ring at my feet,—and had not
My spirit glowed, I had been much unworthy
Thy service, and thy grace. If I have been
Unmindful of the law, and of this place,
Forgive me. On no spot can I be base,
And on no spot will I abasement suffer.
Whene'er this heart—when, where, or how it may—
Fai leth itself or thee,—then punish, spurn me,
And let me look upon thine eyes no more.

Ant. How lightly bears the youth a heavy load,
Shaking off crimes as dust from off his cloak !

'Twere food for wonder, if the magic art
Of poesy were not well known, that loves,
Always, to sport with things impossible.
But whether you, Prince—whether all your Court—
This deed will hold so insignificant,
I somewhat doubt ; for Majesty extends
To every one a shield, who, as toward
A Deity, to her draws nigh, and to
Her unarmed dwelling : as at the altar's foot,
Is every passion on the threshold tamed ;
There gleams no sword, there falls no threat'ning word,
There even injury claims no revenge :
And the wide fields remain an open space,
Enough for wrath and unforgivingness.
There will no coward threaten—no man fly.
These walls thy noble forefathers established
In fast security, and fortified
Their worth—a sanctuary ; this repose
Maintained, with heavy pains, severe and wise—
Exile—the dungeon—death—seized on the guilty !
And there was no respect of persons. There

Mercy might not withhold the arm of justice,
And e'en audacity felt there o'erawed.

Now, after long and lovely peace, we see
Rude fury roused to tumult ; even here,
Where courtesy holds jurisdiction. Sire,
Decide, and punish ! For who can, within
The narrow limits of his duty, tread
By law unshielded, and his Prince's power ?

Alph. More than you both have said, or both can say,
Has my own mind impartially revealed.
You both had, better far, performed your duty,
If I had not this sentence to pronounce.
Here right and wrong are but too near allied.
If thee Antonio has injured, he
Must, in some way, afford the satisfaction
Thou wilt demand, and I would fain that you
Chose me to be your umpire. The meanwhile,
Tasso, your fault makes you a prisoner.
As I forgive thee, so I mitigate
The sentence for thy sake. Go, keep thy chamber,
Watched by thyself, and with thyself alone.

Tasso. Is this, oh, Prince! the sentence of my
judge?

Ant. Dost thou not recognise a father's pity?

Tasso [*to ANTONIO.*] With thee I henceforth hold
no communing.

[*To ALPHONSO.*] Oh! Prince, thy solemn word con-
signeth me,

A freeman, to captivity;—so be it:

Thou deem'st it just. Thy sacred word obeying,
I bid my heart within its depths be still.

'Tis new to me; so new, I almost cease

To know myself, or thee, or this fair spot.

Yet this much know I well,—I will obey;

Although I here have many things to say,

And should have said them. Oh! my lips grow
mute.

Was it a crime? at least it so doth seem,

For I am looked on as a criminal;

And, as my heart, too, whispers, am a captive.

Alph. Tasso, thou takest it more seriously
Than I myself.

Tasso. To me it rests, as 'tis
Incomprehensible. No, truly, not
Incomprehensible. I am a child ;
I almost deem that I must learn to think so.
Sometimes a sudden brightness gleams upon me,
Then, in an instant, is it overcast.
I only hear my sentence, and submit ;
There are too many wasted words already.
Use thyself now, and henceforth, to obey.
Impotent ! thou forgettest where thou art ;
The hall of gods to thee seemed level earth,
And now, the sudden fall hath overwhelmed thee.
Obey, content, for it beseems a man
To do, with willingness, what seems most hard.
Here, take thou first this sword thou gavest me,
When I, to France, followed the Cardinal.
I drew it not with glory, nor with shame ;
Not e'en to-day. The gift, so full of hope,
I from myself remove, with deep-stirred heart.
Alph. Thou feelest not how I'm disposed to thee.
Tasso. My lot is to obey, and not to think !

And woe is me ; a far more precious gift's
Renunciation, Fate demands from me.
A crown may ill beseem a captive's brow :
From my own head I take the ornament
That seem'd bestowed for all eternity.
Too early was to me the blessing lent ;
And now, as if I had too much aspired,
Is, all too early, from me snatched away.
Thou hast robbed thyself of what none other could,
And what no God a second time may give.
Strangely are we poor mortals tried. We could not
Endure it, had not Nature lent to us
An easy fickleness. With costliest treasures,
Need teaches us coldly to play the spendthrift ;
We open wilfully our hands, that thence
Some good may irrecoverably glide.
A tear blends with this kiss, and hallows thee
Unto the changeless past ! It is allowed :
This gentle token of our feebleness
Who would not keep, when Immortality
Itself is not secure before destruction ?

Companion thou this sword—(alas ! that it
 Obtained thee not !)—and, twining round it, bide
 (As on the coffin of the brave) above
 The grave alike of all my joy and hope !
 Here, willingly, I lay both at thy feet ;
 For who is safely armed when thou art wroth ?
 Or who, my Lord, adorned, that thou misprisest ?
 I go, a prisoner, and await thy judgment.

[*At a sign from the PRINCE, a Page removes
 the sword and wreath.*]

SCENE II.

ALPHONSO and ANTONIO.

Ant. Now, whither soars the boy ? With what
 false colours
 He paints his proper worth—his proper fate !
 Bounded and inexperienced, youth still deems
 He is a single, choice-elected being,
 And all things may permit himself toward all.

He feels himself corrected—and correction
 Is, to the youth, a benefit, the man
 Will thank us for.

Alph. He's punished, and, I fear,
 Only too much.

Ant. If you, my Prince, with him
 Would gently deal, give him his liberty,
 And this, our quarrel, let the sword decide.

Alph. Be it so, if opinion so demand ;
 But tell me, how hast thou provoked his rage ?

Ant In sooth, I scarce can tell how it befel ;
 Perchance I may have hurt him, as a man,
 But, as a nobleman, I wronged him not ;
 And from his lips, e'en in his highest rage,
 Has no unmannered word escaped.

Alph. Thus seemed
 To me your quarrel, and all you have said
 Strengthens me more in my first supposition.
 When men fall out, 'tis fit that we should hold
 The wiser more to blame. Thou shouldest not
 Have angered been by him ; it more became thee

To lead him right. Yet is there time enough.
Here nought has passed that forces you to combat.
So long as peace is granted me, I wish,
In my own house, to enjoy it. Thou must here
Restore the calm, as easily thou canst.
Leonora Sanvitale first shall seek,
With gentle lips, to soften him ; and then
Go thou to him, and give him, in my name,
Full liberty again, and win, with true
And generous words, his confidence. Achieve
This shortly as thou canst. Thou wilt, as friend
And father, speak with him. Ere we depart
I must ensure this peace ; and, if thou wilt,
Nothing is e'er impossible to thee.
For this will we remain here one hour longer,
And leave the ladies gently to complete
What thou beginnest ; and when we return
They will have quite effaced the latest trace
Of this too harsh impression. It would seem,
Antonio, thou would'st not be out of practice.
One business scarce completed, thou returnest

To make thyself a new one, in the which
I trust that thou shalt prosper equally.

Ant. I am ashamed ; and in thy words I see
My fault, as in the clearest mirror shown !
Easy it is to obey a gen'rous master,
Who thus convinces us while he commands.

To lead him right. Yet is there time enough.
Here nought has passed that forces you to combat.
So long as peace is granted me, I wish,
In my own house, to enjoy it. Thou must here
Restore the calm, as easily thou canst.
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And father, speak with him. Ere we depart
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To make thyself a new one, in the which
I trust that thou shalt prosper equally.

Ant. I am ashamed ; and in thy words I see
My fault, as in the clearest mirror shown !
Easy it is to obey a gen'rous master,
Who thus convinces us while he commands.

The very tread—in all do they contrast ;
And never can they give exchange of love.
Yet Hope deluded me—Hope, the dissembler—
Whisp'ring they both are reasonable—both
Right noble, well instructed, and thy friends.
And what is a securer bond than goodness ?
I urged the youth, and he did wholly yield.
How beautiful the warmth with which he wholly
Gave himself up to me. Oh ! that I also
Had spoken to Antonio. I delayed,
And only for a little while. I shunned,
As 'twere, with my first words, and pressingly
To recommend the young man to him : thus
I lost myself upon proprieties,
Courtesy, and the fashion of the world,
That lay themselves so smooth e'en betwixt foes ;
Not fearing from the long-tried man this rashness
Of hasty youth—now it is done. The evil
Was then far off—now is it present with me.
Oh ! give me counsel. What is to be done ?
Leon. How difficult 'tis to advise you feel,

According to your saying. Here is not
A misconstruction 'tween two equal minds,
To be arranged by words, aye, or at need
By weapons easily and pleasantly.
Two men are these, as I have long time felt,
Who^o will be foes for this, that Nature formed not
One being from the two ; and, were they wise,
For their own gain they would unite as friends.
Then would they be as one, and pass united
Through life with power, with pleasure, and success.
So hoped I once, but now I see in vain.
To-day's contention, be it what it may,
Is laid aside ; but that secures us not
In future, no, not even for the morrow.
Methinks 'twere better that, for some short space,
Tasso should journey hence—he could his way
To Rome or Florence wend—in a few weeks,
I there should meet him, and upon his mind
Work as a friend. You, in the meanwhile, here,
Antonio, who to us is grown so strange,
Would draw again, back to your friends and you.

So that which now appears impossible
Good Time perchance may grant, that grants so much.

Prin. Thou wilt, my friend, to thee secure enjoyment

Which I must lack. Is that called equity?

Leon. You will lack nothing, save that which you are,

In this mischance, unable to enjoy.

Prin. And shall I then my friend thus coldly banish?

Leon. Preserve: thy banishment is only seeming.

Prin. My brother will not willingly release him.

Leon. He will consent, when viewing it as we do.

Prin. 'Tis hard oneself to punish in a friend.

Leon. Yet thereby savest thou thy friend in thee.

Prin. I give not my consent that this may be.

Leon. Wait then a greater evil.

Prin. Thou dost pain me,
And whether thou dost profit me thou know'st not.

Leon. Which is in error we shall soon discern.

Prin. An' it must be, question with me no more.

Leon. They who are resolute can conquer pain.

Prin. I am not resolute. But let it be,
If he be not long absent : and let us
Care for him, Leonora, lest, perchance,
He suffer need. And that my brother may
Provide, alike in absence, his support,
Speak to Antonio, he much influence
Has with my brother, and will not remember,
Against our friend or us, this day's dispute.

Leon. A word from you, Princess, would more
avail.

Prin. Thou know'st, my friend, I cannot, as my
sister
D'Urbino can, entreat for me and mine.
I am content so still a life to lead,
And from my brother thankfully receive
Whatever 'tis his pleasure to bestow :
And thereupon I often have reproached
Myself in vain, and now give up the point.
A friend has therefore often chided me,
Saying, "Thou art unselfish—that is lovely ;

Only thou art so much so, that the needs
Even of thy friends thou canst not feel aright."

I let it pass, and the reproof must bear.
But, all the more for this, I am rejoiced
That now indeed I can avail my friend.
My mother's heritage has fallen to me,
And gladly will I aid in his provision.

Leon. And I, my Princess, too, am rich enough,
That I can also prove myself a friend.
He is no thrifty steward, and where he fails
I shall know how to aid him skilfully.

Prin. Then take him hence, and if I needs must
 spare him,
Before all others, be he given to thee.
I feel it all: it will be better thus.
Must I again then prize this pang as good
And wholesome? Such has been my lot from youth,
Even until now. I am grown used to it.
Half only do we love the brightest bliss,
When we have never reckoned ourselves sure
Of its possession.

Leon. Yet I hope to see you
Happy as you do merit.

Prin. Leonora !
Happy ! Who then is happy ? I might call
My brother truly so, for his high heart
Bears to his lot an ever equal mind ;
Only what he deserves has ne'er been his.
My sister of Urbino, is she happy ?
The lovely woman and the noble heart !
She bears no children to her youthful lord :
He prizes her, nor makes her grieve for that ;
And yet no joy abideth in their home.
What did our mother's wisdom profit her ?
The knowledge of all science—her great mind ?
Could it preserve her from strange heresies ?
They severed her from us. Now she is dead ;
And has not, to her children, left the comfort
That she, in death, was reconciled to God.

Leon. Oh ! do not thus search out what each one needs,
But rather count what rests to each. To thee
What rests not, Princess ?

Prin. What doth rest for me ?
 Patience ! my Leonora. From my youth
 I much have used it. When my friends, my sister,
 Festal and sport in company enjoyed,
 Then in my chamber sickness held me fast,
 And, in companionship with many pains,
 I early learned to spare what most I loved ;
 One, above all, the joy of song, which gladdened
 Me in my loneliness. I made myself
 Society with this ; lulled pain and longing,
 And every wish with melody. So grew
 E'en suffering to enjoyment ; mournful feelings
 To harmony ; but, oh ! not long this blessing
 Was granted me. This also the physician
 Took from me : thenceforth his stern ordinance
 Bade me be mute. I was to live, and suffer :
 The small and only comfort must renounce.

Leon. But thou hast found so many, many friends,
 And now art well and full of joyous life.

Prin. Yes, I am well ; that is, I am not sick.
 And I have many friends, whose faithfulness
 Should make me happy : also I had one—

Leon. Thou hast him still.

Prin. And I shall shortly lose him.

That moment, in the which I saw him first,
 Was of great import : scarce had I recovered
 From many sufferings—pain and sickness yet
 Were hardly conquered ; still I timidly
 Glanced into life anew—rejoiced to see
 The day again, and, my dear sister—drank,
 Encouraged by sweet Hope, her purest balm.
 I ventured forward farther into life
 To gaze, and friendly forms came from afar
 To greet me. Leonora, it was then
 My sister placed this youth before me. He
 Came guided by her hand. To thee I will
 Acknowledge all. My spirit clave to him,
 And will for ever hold him.

Leon. Oh ! my Princess,
 Do not repent it. To esteem the noble
 Is gain that never can from us be torn.

Prin. And yet the Beautiful, the Excellent,
 Is fearful likewise, even as the flame

That profits thee, so long as on thy hearth
It burns : so long as from a torch it lights thee,
How mild ! who may, who can endure its want ?
But if, unwatched, it rush devouring forth,
How wretched can it make us. Leave me now ;
I am too prating, and would rather hide,
Even from thee, how weak, how sick I am.

Leon. The sickness of the spirit is relieved
Most swiftly by complaint and confidence.

Prin. If confidence can heal, I soon am well :
I have it pure and wholly, and in thee.
Alas ! my friend, I am indeed resolved.
He may depart ; but yet I keenly feel
The long extending anguish of those days
When I shall miss all that I now enjoy.
The sun no more shall from my waking eyes
Remove the brilliant image of my dream.
The hope of seeing him no more shall fill,
With joyous yearning the scarce wakened spirit ;
And my first morning glance, down in our garden,
Shall seek him 'mid the shadows' dew in vain.

How sweetly satisfied the wish was felt,
To be with him on every sunny eve !
How with our converse still the longing grew
To know each other more,—more comprehend ;
And, day by day, our minds were more attuned
To ever purer, lovelier harmony.
Oh ! what a twilight closes o'er me now !
The glory of the sun—the joyous feeling
Of the broad day—the many-coloured world's
Most brilliant presence,—empty is, and deep
Veiled in the clouds that all around me spread.
Of late was every day to me a life ;
Silent was care—foreboding's self was dumb :
And, prosp'rously embarked on placid waves,
The stream, without a rudder, bore us on ;
Now, mid the troubl'd present, secret dread
Of future evil overwhelms my heart.

Leon. The future shall restore to thee thy friends—
And bring thee new delight and happiness.

Prin. That which I now possess I fain would keep ;
Change may amuse us, but it rarely profits.

I never eagerly, with youthful longing,
 Groped in the lottery of the unknown world,
 To seize upon some accidental object
 For my poor, needy, inexperienced heart.
 Perforce I honoured him, and therefore loved,—
 Perforce I loved him, since with him, my life
 Grew into life, such as I ne'er had known.
 At first I bade myself withdraw from him,
 Yet yielded—yielded—and but nigher drew ;
 So pleasantly charmed on—so hardly punished !
 A true, a blameless good, vanishes from me,
 And to my yearning doth an evil spirit
 Give for repose and pleasure—kindred woes.

Leon. If a friend's words no power of comfort hold,
 Yet will the silent might of this fair world,
 And kindly time, unmarked, revive thy soul.

Prin. Aye, lovely is the world ! Through its wide
 bounds,
 So much of good is moving to and fro ;
 Alas ! that always, by a single step,
 From us, it seems to hold itself withdrawn,

'Ticing our saddened yearning on through life,
Still, step by step, until it reach the grave.
So very rarely is it man may find
What yet appears, as 't were, his destiny ;
So rarely is it that he may retain
What yet the lucky hand did sometime grasp.
What gave itself to us is snatched away,—
What eagerly we sought is light let go :
There is a blessing—and we know it not—
Or know it well, yet know not how to prize it.

SCENE III.

LEONORA [*alone*].

Leon. How grieveth me that fair, that noble heart !
How sad the lot cast to her high estate !
Alas ! *she* loses, and think'st *thou* to win ?
Is't, then, so needful that he must depart ?
Or dost thou make it needful, that alone

Thou his whole heart and talents may possess,
Which heretofore with thee another shared?
And shared not equally. Is this fair dealing?
Art thou not rich enough? What fails thee yet?
Husband and child, and wealth, and rank, and beauty,—
Thou hast all these, and yet would'st thou have him
To all these added? Lovest thou him? What else
May it be called, since thou no more canst bear
To lose him? Thou darest own it to thyself!
Ah! how enchanting is't oneself to mirror
In his bright spirit! Doth not happiness
Grow doubly vast and lofty, when his lay
Bears us aloft as on the clouds of heaven?
Then art thou worthiest envy! for thou art,
And hast, not only what so many covet,—
But all know, all acknowledge it is thine!
Thy fatherland names and looks up to thee—
That is the highest pinnacle of bliss.
Is Laura, then, the only name which shall
Be echoed by all loving lips? and had
Petrarch alone sole right to deify

An unknown loveliness? Where is a man
Dares with my friend measure himself? The world,
How doth it honour him, as future times
Will name him, too, with honour. Glorious is it,
In all the lustre of this life, to have him
Still at thy side, with him, Futurity,
By easy steps, to reach; so Time and Age
May harm thee not, nor Rumour's insolence,
That urgeth to and fro the waves of praise.
All perishable things his lay preserves;
Still fair, still happy shalt thou be, long after
The incessant wheel of Time hath borne thee on.
Thou must have him; from her thou takest nothing.
Her leaning to this priceless one is but
As all her other passions are. They light,
(As doth the quiet glimmer of the moon,)
Scantly, the wanderer on his path of night;
They give no warmth, they pour no pleasure forth—
No joyous life around. She will be glad,
Knowing him distant, if she know him happy,
As she was glad daily to look upon him.

Moreover, I do neither mean to banish
Myself, nor yet my friend, from this fair court ;
I will return, and I will bring him back.
So shall it be ! But here comes our rude friend ;
Now shall we see if we have power to tame him.

Scene III.

LEONORA and ANTONIO.

Leon. You bring us war instead of peace. 'T would
seem

That you had come from camp, or battle-field,
Where might commands, and the strong hand decides,
And not from Rome, where solemn wisdom lifts
Her hands in blessing ; seeing, at her feet,
A world that cheerfully obeys.

Ant. I must,
Fair friend, endure your chiding—yet the excuse
Lieth not far to seek. 'Tis dangerous,

When man too long must measured prudence wear ;
There skulks an evil genius at his side,
Who will, too, mightily, from time to time,
An offering claim : this time, alas ! I brought it
At my friend's cost.

Leon. You have so long with strangers
Laboured, and shaped your course to their opinions,
That, now you see again your former friends,
You do mistake them, acting as with strangers.

Ant. Yea, dearest friend—in this the danger lies.
With strangers does a man collect his mind,—
Then he is heedful ; then he seeks his aim
In their good favour, by the which to prosper.
But among friends, he freely goes his way,
Reposes on their love, and so allows
Himself his humours. Passion works uncurbed—
So we most injure whom we dearest love.

Leon. In this calm observation, with delight
I find you wholly my dear friend again.

Ant. Yes, it has vexed me much, I freely own,
I so unmeasured lost myself to-day ;

Only, you must confess, when a brave man,
With heated brow, comes from unpleasant labour,
And, late at even-tide, thinks he shall rest
For other toils beneath the long'd-for shade,
Then finds the shadow widely occupied
By a sluggard,—shall he not, within his breast,
Feel then some touch of our humanity?

Leon. But, if he rightly human be, he will
Contented share the shadow with a man,
Who for him makes rest sweet, and labour light,
Whether by converse, or by pleasant song.
The tree spreads wide, my friend, that gives the shade,
And neither needs to incommode the other.

Ant. Let us not, Leonora, longer play
Backward and forward with a simile;
Many things are there in the world that we
To others may accord—with others share.
Nevertheless, there is a treasure which
We'd fain to high desert alone resign;
Another—that, with loftiest deserving,
We, with our own good will, would never share;

And, would you farther of these treasures ask,
They are the laurel wreath, and woman's smile.

Leon. And has the laurel on that youthful brow
The grave man so offended? Could yourself,
For all his toil, his beauteous poesy,
Have found more lowly wages? For a merit
That is not of this earth, but hovering
In air, with tones and shadowy forms, alone
Witches our spirits, has its meet reward
In a bright image, and a graceful sign;
And if he scarcely touch the earth, e'en so
Doth this most high reward scarce touch his head:
A poor and barren bough is the donation
The worshipper's unfruitful homage brings;
Most willingly, that they thereby a debt
May easily discharge. You scarce would grudge
The martyrs' images, the golden glory,
That streams round their shorn heads; and, oh!
believe,
The laurel wreath (see it where'er you may)
A token more of suffering than of joy.

Ant. Will, then, perchance those lovely lips instruct
me,

How to despise *all* the world's vanities ?

Leon. To prize each good according to its worth,
I do not need to teach you ; ne'er the less,
It seems, from time to time, the wise may need
As much as others, that we show to him,
In their just light, the blessings which he owes.
You, noble-minded man, will, on a phantom
Of favour and of glory, make no claim ;
The services with which you've firmly bound
Your Prince, your friends, are real living deeds !
So must their price real and living be.
Your laurel is the royal confidence,
That on your shoulders heaped,—a cherished load,
Rests lightly borne,—your fame, the general trust.

Ant. And thou, of woman's favour, nothing sayest !
Thou wilt not paint me that, as to be spared ?

Leon. E'en as one thinks ; for though you want not
of it,
More easy 't were for thee to spare it, than

It is to you good man. For tell me, now,
What should a woman do, if she were thinking,
After her manner, to provide for you,
And undertook to busy her about you ?
With you is all in safety and in order ;
You for yourself can care, and others too ;
You have all we might give you ;—he, the while,
Gives us employment in our proper province.
He needs a thousand trifles which a woman
So gladly toils to make. The finest linen
And silken garments, with embroidery,
He loves to wear ; pleased—sees himself adorned.
Far more, he cannot suffer common stuff,
Or such as marks a menial, on his person :
All must with him be fine, fair, good, and noble ;
Nevertheless, he has no skill to seek
All these—or, if he have them, to preserve.
He ever wants or gold or thriftiness.
Now leaves he one thing here, another there :
Never returned he from a journey yet,
But he had lost a third part of his goods ;

And now a servant robs him. Thus, Antonio,
The whole year through we needs must care for him.

Ant. And such cares make him dearer—still more
dear.

Fortunate youth ! to whom you, e'en his failings,
Reckon as virtues ; to whom it is given,
Being a man, to play the boy : who dares
To pride himself upon his graceful weakness.
Thou must forgive me, lovely friend, if here
I do grow somewhat bitter. Thou hast not
Told all : thou tellest not all that he dares,
And that he is more subtle than one deems.
He glories in two flames ; he twines and looses
The knots,—now here, now there,—and thus he
wins,
With acts like these, such hearts ! Is this to be
Believed ?

Leon. Well, this itself must clearly show,
'Tis friendship solely is our inspiration ;
And even did we love for love exchange,
We should but fitly pay the generous heart,

That, its whole self forgotten and resigned,
In dreams so beautiful, lives for his friends.

Ant. Spoil him, then, now and alway ; more and
more,

Allow his selfishness to pass for love ;
Injure the friends who dedicate to you
Their faithful souls,—give a free offering
To this proud boy,—unsparingly destroy
The circle of all social confidence !

Leon. Nay, we are not so partial as you think ;
In many cases we reprove our friend.
We fain would form him better to enjoy,
And more enjoyment to bestow on others.
That which is blamable in him, is not
Concealed from us.

Ant. And yet you often praise
What should be blamed. I knew him long ago,
For he is lightly known, and far too haughty,
Aught to conceal. Now sinks he in himself,
As if the world were all within his breast ;
Himself alone, in his world, all sufficient,

And all without had vanished from his sight.
He looses it,—he lets it fall,—he spurns it
Away, reposing in himself: but sudden
(As, with an unseen spark, the mine takes fire),
So he, in joy or grief, caprice or anger,
Hotly breaks forth. Then will he grasp all—hold all;
Then all must come to pass that he has dreamed;
Then in a breathless moment must arise
What only by long years can be prepared.
And in a moment that must be removed,
Which patient toil in years might hardly loose.
He, from himself, claims things impossible,
Only that he from others, too, may claim them.
The final end of all things will his spirit
Presumptuous, comprehend, which scarce may reach
One man among a million. Surely he
Is not that one; and so he falls at last,
In nothing bettered, back within himself.

Leon. He harms not others; 'tis himself he harms.

Ant. And yet he, but too much, harms others also.
Can you deny that sometimes, in the moment

Of passion that so rashly seizes him,
 He dares upon the Prince, the Princess even,
 Or whosoe'er it be, vent his reproaches ?
 Truly but for a moment, yet enough.
 The moment comes again, and he can govern
 His lips as little as his heart.

Leon.

Methinks

If he from hence absented him awhile,
 'T were profitable for himself and others.

Ant. Perhaps, and perhaps not. But at this time
 It is not to be thought of. I will not
 This error bear upon my shoulders too :
 It might appear as I had chased him hence.
 I do not chase him ; and, for aught I care,
 He may in peace continue at our court :
 And if he will with me be reconciled,
 And if he can my counsel bear to follow,
 So may we live together passably.

Leon. Thus you are hoping to improve a mind
 Which seemed to you, but now, as wholly lost.

Ant. We ever hope, and 'tis, in all things, better

To hope than to despair—for who can reckon
 What may be possible? He to our prince
 Is dear; he must with us abide; and if
 We toil in vain to shape him, he is not
 The only one we bear.

Leon. So passionless
 And so impartial I believed thee not.
 Thou art quickly changed!

Ant. Age must have one advantage,
 That, if it do not error quite avoid,
 It can more speedily recall itself.
 But now, 't was your endeavour with your friend
 To reconcile me; now, I beg it of you,
 Do all you can to bring him to himself,
 And all shall be just as it was before.
 I go myself to him, so soon as I
 Shall learn from you that he is calmed; so soon
 As you shall be convinced my presence will not
 Increase the evil. What you have to do,
 Do then this very hour. Alphonso goes
 This evening back—I in his company.
 In the meanwhile, farewell.

Scene 8.

LEONORA [*alone*].

Leon. For once, good friend,
We are not of the same mind : thy gain and mine
To-day do not go hand in hand. This time
I'll use, in seeking to win Tasso. Haste.

ACT THE FOURTH.

Scene I.

*A Chamber.*TASSO [*alone*].

Tasso. Art thou awakened from a dream, and hath
The lovely cheat forsaken thee for aye?
Or has a sleep thus chained thee on a day
Of loftiest blessing—Clasps it now, and vexes
Thy soul with heavy fetters? Yea, thou wakest
And dreamest! Whither are the bright hours flown
That sported round thy head with flowery wreaths?
The days wherein thy spirit's yearning free
Pierced through the Heaven's farthest expanded blue.
And yet dost thou live on, feeling thyself—
Feelest thyself, not knowing if thou livest?
Is it my fault, or is the fault another's,

By which I find myself as guilty here ?
Am I a criminal that I must suffer ?
Is not my failing rather a desert ?
I looked on him, and was, through my good will,
And my heart's hopeful error, hurried on.
That should be man which bears a human face.
I rushed to meet him then with open arms,
And felt a lock and bolt, but not a bosom.
Ah ! had I rather pondered prudently
How I should greet the man, who was by me
In former days suspected. Still, whate'er
Befal me, firmly do I cling to that—
That certainty—I saw her ! She did stand
Before me—spake to me—I understood her !
The look—the tone—the words of gracious meaning—
They are for ever mine : of them no time,
No fate shall rob me, nor the wildest joy !
And if my spirit soared too swift aloft ;
If I too rashly, in my bosom, gave
Air to the flame that now consumes my being,
I cannot rue it ; no, not even were

The fortunes of my life for ever lost.
To her did I devote myself, and gladly
Followed the sign that beckoned me to ruin.
Be it so. Thus far have I proved me worthy
The precious trust that gave me comfort ; aye,
And gives me comfort in this very hour
Which the black portals of a tedious sorrow
Has opened wide before me. Now 'tis ended.
For me, the sun of the most brilliant favour
At once is set. The Prince withdraws from me
His gracious countenance : leaves me forlorn,
To tread alone this narrow darkling way.
The hideous doubtful wings—the doleful train
Of ancient night, are swarming o'er me—whirring
Around my head. Oh ! whither, whither can I
Direct my steps, to flee the loathsome things
That whisper round me—to escape the abyss
That lies before me ?

Scene III.

LEONORA and TASSO.

Leon. What has chanced, dear Tasso ;
Have anger and suspicion thus misled thee ?
How did it happen ? We are all amazed.
Thy gentleness, thy courtesy of nature,
Thy quickness of perception, and right judgment,
With which thou'rt wont to give to all their due ;
Thy equal mind, bearing that which the noble
So quickly learn to bear—the vain scarce ever ;
The government discreet of lip and tongue—
My own dear friend, almost I cease to know thee.

Tasso. And if all you enumerate be lost ?
And if a friend, you once believed so rich,
You find at once a beggar ? Truly you
Are in the right. I am no more myself ;
And yet am I as much as e'er I was.
This seems a riddle, and it yet is none.
The silent moon which gladdens thee by night,

Charming so irresistibly thine eyes,
Thy spirit, with its gentle light, by day
Glides on a pallid and unmeaning cloud.
Thus am I by the blaze of day outshone ;
You know me not—I know myself no more.

Leon. All that thou sayest, friend, I understand not
As thou dost say it. Be more plain with me.
What, has the injury of this harsh man
So wounded thee, that thou, thyself, and us,
Thus wholly can mistake? Confide in me.

Tasso. I am not the injured one ; do you not
see me
Punished because I did the injury ?
The sword had loosed the knots of many words,
Easy and swiftly,—but I am a prisoner.
You scarce know ——. Be not frightened, gentle
friend,
That you have met your friend within a prison.
The Prince does but chastise me like a schoolboy ;
I will not plead with him,—in sooth, I cannot.

Leon. It seems to move thee more than's fit it should.

Tasso. You deem me, then, so weak, so very childish,
 That such an accident can quite disturb me ;
 That which has happen'd wounds me not so much ;
 But that which it implies has wounded me ;
 Yet, let my foes, my enviers, beware !
 The field is free and open.

Leon. Thou suspectest
 Many most falsely,—I am well of that
 Persuaded. Neither is Antonio
 Thy foe, as thou believest. This day's strife ——

Tasso. I lay that quite aside, and only take
 Antonio as he was, and does continue.
 To me was his stiff wisdom always tedious,
 And that incessantly he played the master,
 Instead of searching if his hearer's mind
 Be not already following the right track.
 He lectures you on many things which you,
 Better and deeper, feel ; and does take in
 No word you say, but ever will mistake you.
 To be misdeemed, misprised, by that proud man—
 Who, smiling, fancies that he looks you through !

I am not old enough, or wise enough,
Only, to patient smile on him again ;
Early or late, it could not so continue.
A breach there must be,—had it later been,
It might have been the worse. One lord alone
I recognise,—the lord that doth maintain me ;
Him cheerfully I follow, else will have
No master ;—will be free, in thought and song ;
In action, the world limits us enough.

Leon. He often speaks of thee with much esteem.

Tasso. You would say with forbearance fine and subtle ;
And even that vexes me. He knows so smoothly,
And so exceptingly, to speak his praise.
Straight grows it into blame ; and nothing more,
Nothing more deeply injures you, than doth
Praise from his mouth.

Leon. Could you, my friend, have heard
How he now spake of thee, and of the talents
Which Nature has on thee, beyond all others,
So kindly lavished. Oh, he surely feels
All that thou art and hast—and values all.

Tasso. Oh, trust me ! never can a selfish spirit
Escape the pangs of narrow jealousy.
A man like this, indeed, may others pardon,—
Their wealth, their rank, their honours,—for he
thinks
Thou hast those, too—or shalt have, if thou wilt—
If thou but persevere, and Fortune favour.
But that which Nature can alone bestow,
Which bides to every toil and every strife,
Still unattainable—which neither gold,
Nor sword, nor prudence, nor yet perseverance,
Can conquer : that he never will forgive.
He grant it me ? He, who with stubborn mind
Thinks fiercely to compel the Muse's grace ;
Who, when he has the thoughts of many poets
Together strung, believes himself a poet ?
Far rather would he, e'en the Prince's favour,
Yield to me (which he yet more willingly
Would to himself confine), than that same talent,
Given by those heavenly ones unto the poor,
The orphan youth.

Leon. Oh, saw'st thou clear as I!
Tow'rd him thou art in error; such he is not.

Tasso. And if I err tow'rd him, content I err.
I think of him as of my staunchest foe,
And would be most disconsolate, if forced
To think more gently of him. Folly 'tis
To be in everything so equitable.
'Tis to destroy oneself—for, deals mankind
With us so equitably? No—oh, no!
Man, even in his narrow being, needs
The double feelings—love and hate! The night
Needs he not, also, as the day? and sleep,
As much as waking? No, I henceforth hold
This man the object of my dearest hate!
Nothing can tear this pleasure from me,—worse,
Still worse, to think of him.

Leon. Wilt thou, dear friend,
This fancy not forsake, I hardly see
How thou canst longer at this court abide:
Thou knowest how much he is, and must be,
prized.

Tasso. How much I here, my lovely friend, have
 long
 Superfluous been, I know full well.

Leon. Thou art
 Not that, nor ever canst become so. Rather,
 Thou see'st the Prince well pleased to live with
 thee ;

Well pleased the Princess also. And when comes
 Their sister of Urbino, she comes hither,
 Almost as much for thy sake as for theirs :
 They, all alike, think well and kindly of thee,
 And each one places in thee boundless trust.

Tasso. Oh, Leonora ! what trust call you that ?
 Doth he e'er speak to me one serious word
 Of his state's weal ?—comes there a chance wherein,
 E'en in my presence, he takes counsel with
 His sister, or with others ?—me he asks not.
 The cry is evermore—“ Antonio comes ;
 Antonio we must write to,—ask Antonio !”

Leon. Thou makest a grievance where thou should'st
 be thankful.

If he leave thee to unconditioned freedom,
He honours thee as much as he can honour.

Tasso. He lets me rest, because he thinks me useless.

Leon. Thou art not useless, even in thy rest.
So long hast thou thus cherish'd care and pain
Within thy bosom, like a much-loved child.
I oft have pondered it, and 'tis the same,
Ponder it as I may : in this fair land,
To which it seem'd Fortune transplanted thee,
Thou thrivest not. Tasso ! shall I advise thee ?
Must I speak out ? Thou shalt from hence depart !

Tasso. Nay, do not spare the patient, sweet physician !

Give him the remedy, nor stay to think
If it be bitter ; whether it can heal,
Consider well. Oh, wise and gentle friend !
I see it all myself,—it is gone by !
I can well pardon him,—he cannot me ;
He, too, is needful,—I, alas ! am not ;
And he is wise,—and I, alas ! am not ;
He works for my destruction,—and I cannot,

And may not counterwork. And for my friends,
They let it pass—see't in another light—
And scarce try to defend, where they should conquer.
Thou think'st I should away,—I, too, believe it.
So then, farewell! I will endure this also,
Ye are severed from me—and to me be given
Courage and strength, so from you to be severed.

Leon. That in the distance clearly is discerned
Which present but perplexes us: perchance
Thou'lt learn what special love circled thee here;
And how to prize the truth of real friends,
And that the wide, wide world cannot replace
Those nearest to us.

Tasso. That we shall make proof of.
But well I know the world—from my youth up;
How light it leaves us, helpless and alone;
And like the sun and moon, and other gods,
Goes on its way.

Leon. Wilt thou but list to me,
My friend, so shalt thou never more repeat
Such sorrowful experience. Take my counsel,

And thou wilt first to Florence turn thy steps ;
A friend shall there right friendlike care for thee :
Be of good cheer, it is myself : I journey
Within the next few days to join my husband ;
And nought could greater joy prepare for him
Or me, than to bring thee among us. Not
A word, I say, (for well thou knowest thyself,)
Of what a prince thou there wilt find, and who
The men that yon fair city cherishes
Within her bosom, and what women. Thou
Art silent. Ponder well. Make thy resolve.

Tasso. Oh ! it is all alluring that thou sayest ;
All measured to the wish I silent nurtured ;
Only it is too sudden. I beseech thee
Let me consider : I will soon resolve.

Leon. I will depart then, with the brightest hopes
For thee and me, and also for this house.
Consider, and if thou consider right,
Thou hardly may'st conceive a better scheme.

Tasso. Yet one thing more, dear friend, tell me but
this,—

How is the Princess minded toward me? Was she
Much angered with me? Speak! what did she say?
Did she not sorely blame me? Speak, speak freely.

Leon. Knowing thee well, she easily excused thee.

Tasso. Am I not lost with her? Flatter me not.

Leon. No, not thus lightly lost is woman's favour.

Tasso. And will she willingly let me depart?

Leon. If it be for thy welfare, surely, yes.

Tasso. But shall I not thus lose the Prince's grace?

Leon. Thou may'st depend securely on his greatness.

Tasso. And shall we leave the Princess all alone?

Thou wilt go hence; and I, however little,

I know that something I have been to her.

Leon. An absent friend still gives companionship,

When we can think of him, and know him happy:

And happy thou wilt be if this succeed.

Thou wilt not part from hence in discontent;

The Prince commands it, and Antonio seeks thee.

He doth reproach himself the bitterness

With which he wounded thee. I pray thee, then,

Receive him calmly, as he comes to thee.

Tasso. I dare, in every sense, stand up before him.

Leon. And so Heaven grant me this, my dearest
friend,

That thine eyes may be opened ere thou part
To see that none, in all thy fatherland,
Or persecutes or hates thee, or in secret
Goads and oppresses. Oh! thou art in error;
And, being wont to imagine for the pleasure
Of others, in this case thou hast imagined,
Alas, some strange spun web to pain thyself.
I will do all to rend it, that thou may'st
Wander forth freely on life's pleasant path.
Farewell! I soon shall hope for happy tidings,

Scene III.

TASSO [*alone*].

Tasso. I am to learn to know that no man hates me;
That no man persecutes me: that all arts,
All secret toils, are only spun and woven

In my own brain. I must confess that I
Alone am in the wrong—do wrong to many,
Who have not such from me deserved. And this
In the same hour, when to the open face
O' the blessed sun doth my full right lie clear,
As do their wiles. I must, too, deeply feel
How the Prince grants to me, with open heart,
His gracious favour; how his gifts bestows
In lavish measure, at the very moment
When he (weakly enough) suffers my foes
To dim his eyes—aye, and his hands to fetter.
That he is thus deceived he cannot see;
That they deceivers are, I cannot show:
And that, in peace, he may deceive himself,
That they conveniently may him deceive,
I must be silent—I must wholly yield.
And who gives me this counsel? Who so sagely,
With kind and true intent, presses it on me?
Leonora's self—Leonora Sanvitale,
The tender friend! Ha! I do know thee now.
Oh! wherefore did I ever trust those lips?

They were not honest, e'en when they so strongly
Her favour toward me, and her tenderness,
With sweet words witnessed! No, she was and is
A guileful heart, bending herself, with light
And cautious steps, to follow after favour.
How often and how wilfully have I
Deceived myself in her! and yet the ground
Of this deceit was—solely vanity.
Well knowing her, I yet flatter'd myself:
Thus is she tow'rd all others, would I say;
Yet to thee is her meaning good and true.
Now I see all—only too late, I see it.
I was in favour, and she could draw near,
So gently, to the favourite. Now I fall,
And she forsaketh me, as Fortune doth.
Now comes she here, as my foe's instrument:
She glideth round, whisper'ring, with smoothest tongue,
The little snake! her tones of witchery.
How lovely looked she! More than ever lovely!
How well was acted every word of love.
Yet not from me can flattery long conceal

The falseness of the mind. Upon her brow
Seemed all too clearly writ the contrary
Of that she spake. Too quickly do I feel,
When one would seek the way into my heart,
And means not honestly. I must away !
I must to Florence, with what speed I can !
And wherefore then to Florence ? Oh ! I see—
There rules the new raised house of Medici ;
And not indeed at open enmity
With our Ferrara, yet doth silent envy
Keep, with chill hands, the noblest hearts asunder.
Receive I there from those illustrious princes
Some signal marks of favour, as most surely
I may expect, how quickly will this courtier
Render my faith, my gratitude suspected.
Lightly will he succeed. Aye, I will hence,
Only not as they will. I will away,
And farther than they dream. What should I here ?
Who here retains me ? Ah ! I understand
Each single word so well that I have won
From Leonora's lips. I only drew it

Syllable after syllable, yet now
How wholly do I know the Princess' mind.
Yes, yes, e'en that is true—do not despair !
“ She willingly will let me hence depart,
When it assures my weal.” Oh ! that she felt
A passion in her heart, which to the earth
Must hurl my weal and me ! More welcome far
To me the grasp of death, than were this hand,
Which, cold and motionless, thus lets me go !
I go—now guard thee well, and let no seeming
Of friendship, or of goodness, cheat thee ! None
Betrays thee now, if thou thyself betray not.

Scene III.

ANTONIO *and* TASSO.

Ant. Tasso, I come to say one word to you,
If that you can and will with calmness hear.

Tasso. Action, you know, is interdicted me ;
So it becomes me well to wait and listen.

Ant. Composed I find you, even as I could wish ;
And gladly will I speak, with open heart.

But let me first, i' the Prince's name, unloose
The feeble bond which seemed to shackle you.

Tasso. 'Tis despotism frees me as it bound ;
But I accept it, and demand no judgment.

Ant. Then for myself I have to say, it seems
I have with words more hurt you, and much deeper
Than I (by many passions moved) perceived.
Yet no insulting word has from my lips
Escaped unheeded : nothing, as a noble,
You have to avenge, and, as a man, you will not
Refuse forgiveness.

Tasso. Which doth harder strike,
Insult or injury, will I not enquire :
One pierces to the marrow, and the other
May only rase the skin—the shaft of insult
Recoils upon the man who thinks to wound.
The well-drawn sword soon satisfies opinion ;
An injured heart in sooth is hard to heal.

Ant. Now is it mine ! Earnestly let me pray thee,

Do not draw back ; fulfil my wish, and, farther,
The wishes of the Prince, who sent me to thee.

Tasso. I know my duty, and I do submit.
Be it forgiven, as far as possible !
The Poets tell us of a spear, could heal
The wounds itself had made by friendly touch ;
So doth the tongue of man like power possess,
And I will not maliciously resist it.

Ant. I thank thee, and I fain would have thee
 prove
My will to serve thee, with like confidence.
Tell me, can I in aught be useful to thee ?
Gladly I'd show it.

Tasso. Thou dost offer me
All I could wish ; thou broughtest back my freedom,
And now, I pray thee, help me to its use.

Ant. What can thy meaning be ? Say on more
 clearly.

Tasso. Thou knowest that I have my poem ended,
However much it fails to be complete.
This day I to the Prince presented it,

Meaning withal a prayer to lay before him.
 I find that very many of my friends
 Are now at Rome assembled ; singly have they
 To me set forth, in letters, their opinion
 Of divers passages. I have made use
 Of many : it appears to me that more
 Rest to consider of. Some passages
 I fain would leave unaltered, if they fail
 More to convince me than they yet have done.
 All this by letters cannot well be wrought ;
 In converse should the knots be lightly loosed.
 Therefore I meant this day to pray the Prince,
 But no occasion found, and now I dare not ;
 And this permission hope through you alone.

Ant. To me it would not seem advisable
 That thou absent thyself the moment when
 Thy finished work, both to the Prince and Princess,
 Much recommends thee ; for a day of favour
 Is like a harvest day, we must be busy
 Soon as it ripens. If thou absent thyself,
 Thou shalt win nought, or lose, perhaps, what was

Already won. The Present is a Goddess—
 A mighty one ; her influence learn to know,
 And tarry here !

Tasso. Nay, I have nought to *fear*.
 Alphonso is right noble, and to me
 Has ever shown himself most generous.
 For what I have to *hope* I fain would thank
 His heart alone. I would not filch his grace ;
 Nothing would I receive from him, that he
 Might afterward repent that he had given.

Ant. Then wilt thou not demand that he should now
 Let thee depart : reluctantly he'd do it,—
 Nay, half I fear he would indeed refuse.

Tasso. He would do willingly, if prayed aright ;
 And well hast thou the power, if thou so wilt.

Ant. Yet say what reasons shall I lay before him ?

Tasso. In ev'ry stanza let my poem speak !
 My wish is laudable, and if the goal
 Be (to my powers) still unattainable,
 In toil and diligence has nought been wanting.
 The wanderings light of many a sunny day,

The silent space of many a midnight deep,
Were all devoted to this cheering song.
Humbly I hoped yet nigher to approach
The mighty masters of the olden time ;
Or, bolder still, the mighty of our own
From their long sleep to rouse for noble deeds—
Perchance to share, with a proud Christian host,
The glorious perils of a holy war.
And should my lay the noblest hearts awake,
So should it worthy of the noblest be.
I owe Alphonso all I yet have done ;
For its fulfilment may I also thank him.

Ant. Just so : this Prince is here, with others too,
Who may, as well as Romans, counsel thee.
Here finish then thy work ; this is the spot
To work upon it ; after, haste to Rome.

Tasso. Alphonso first inspired me, and shall be,
Surely, the one to give me latest counsel ;
And thy advice, with that of skilful men,
Whom here our court unites, I highly prize.
Ye shall decide, if, e'en at Rome, my friends

Not wholly may convince me. Yet I *must*
 Those also see. Gonzago there has gathered
 Such a tribunal for me, that I needs
 Must place myself before it,—scarce can wait.
 Flamínio di Nobili, Angelo
 Da Barga, Antoniano, Speron Speroni !
 Thou knowest them : and, oh, what names are they !
 Anxiety and confidence, at once,
 They on my spirit pour, fain to succumb.

Ant. Thou think'st but of thyself, not of the Prince.
 I tell thee he will never let thee go ;
 Or if he do, unwillingly will do it.
 Thou sure wilt not demand what he to thee
 Not willingly may grant ; and should I now
 Mediate that which I myself approve not ?

Tasso. Thou dost deny me then the earliest service
 By which I would thy proffered friendship try ?

Ant. Aye, for true friendship in denial shows
 At the right season. Love too often grants
 A hurtful good, heeding the pleader's will
 More than his welfare. Thus to me it seems,

Thou, at this moment, deemest good the thing
Thou warmly wishest ; at this moment, wilt,
What thou dost crave. Thus error will make up
By zeal, what faileth it of truth and strength.
My duty bids me, in so far I may,
To moderate the haste which so misleads thee.

Tasso. Long have I known this tyranny of friend-
ship,

That, of all tyrannies, to me appears
Most unendurable. Thou differest,
And, *therefore*, must be right. I own thou wishest
My welfare ; only, do not hence demand
That I shall find it in thy way alone.

Ant. And shall I now, and in cold blood, against
My full and clear conviction, aid thy harm ?

Tasso. From all such care will I deliver thee.
Thou hast, with words, no power to fetter me.
Thou hast declared me free,—to me these doors
Are open, leading to the Prince's presence.
I leave thee but the choice. Or thou, or I !
The Prince goes forth—it is no time to linger.

Choose quickly! Goest thou not, I go myself;
Come what, come may.

Ant. Let me but gain from thee
A little time. Wait till the Prince return!
But only not to-day!

Tasso. No, this same hour,
If it be possible. My footsoles burn
Upon this marble floor; nor can my spirit
Find rest until the dust of open ways
Shall rise around my haste. I do beseech thee!
Thou seest how unfit I am at present
To parley with my Lord; thou seest (for how
Can I conceal it?) at this hour I cannot
Command myself; therefore, no power on earth
Can now command me. Chains alone might hold me!
Alphonso is no tyrant. I am free.
Pleased I was wont to hearken to his words!
To-day I cannot hearken. This day, only,
Leave me in freedom, that my spirit may
Recal itself, and I make quick return
Unto my duty.

Ant. Thou dost make me waver.

What I am forced to do, I know is wrong.

Tasso. Must I believe that thou dost mean me well,
Then do thou what I wish, and what thou canst.
The Prince will give me leave of absence, therefore
I shall not lose his favour or his aid.

Thee shall I thank for this—most willingly
Will pay my thanks. But if thy bosom yet
Nourish thine ancient grudge, and if thou would'st
Banish me from this Court,—if thou for ever
Wilt turn my fortune's current, drive me forth
Helpless on the wide world—then hold thou fast
Thine own opinion, and withstand my will !

Ant. Nay, if it must be that I harm thee, Tasso,
Then be it in the way thyself hast chosen :
Which is in error let the end decide.
Thou wilt away ! and I foretell thee thus :
Scarce hast thou turned thy footsteps from this house,
Thy heart shall backward yearn, while thy self-will
Shall urge thee forward ; grief, perplexity,
And trouble wait on thee in Rome, and here

And there, alike, thou of thy aim shalt fail.
Yet, as advice, I tell thee this no more ;
I do but prophesy what soon must fall ;
And thus, beforehand, earnestly invite thee,
In thy most evil case, to trust in me.
Now go I to the Prince with thy entreaty.

Scene 8.

TASSO [*alone*].

Tasso. Aye, do but go ; and go thou hence secure
That thou persuadest me of what thou wilt.
I learn to play a part, too, for thou art
A mighty master, and I apt to learn.
And thus life forces us to seem—seem ! aye,
To *be* as those whom yet we bravely, proudly,
Can much despise. How plainly see I now
The arts unravelled of this courtly web !
Antonio is fain to banish me,

But will not have it seem he drives me hence.
He plays the prudent, the forbearing,—so
May I be deemed morbid, unmannerly :
Presents himself my proxy ; so that he
Humbles me as a child, because he cannot
Compel me as a slave : thus he o'erclouds
The Prince's brow and the Princess's glance.
He thinks they should restrain me. What though

Nature

Have given me some merit ; she, alas !
The lofty gift, with many weaknesses,
Has ill accompanied—with boundless pride,
With o'er-wrought sensibility, and more,
With darkened judgment. It can not be altered.
When Fate has formed a man so singular,
We must e'en take him as he is—endure him,
Bear with him, and perhaps, in happy hour,
Enjoy aught that he for enjoyment brings,
As unexpected gain ; and, for the rest,
As he was born, so let him live and die.
Do I not know Alphonso's stedfast mind,

That can his foes defy and shield his friends !
Now know I him, as thus he shows to me ?
Aye, truly, here I know my own mischance !
It is my evil fate. To me, alone,
Ev'ry man changes. He who, for all others,
Stedfast and true remains, thus lightly changes
Toward me, through but a breath, and in a moment.
Has not the coming of this man alone
Troubled my bliss, and in one little hour
Has't not o'erthrown the building of my fortunes,
Hurled to its lowest basement ? Oh ! and must I
Endure all this ? Must I, and on this day ?
Aye, e'en as all around me pressed, so all
Forsake me now. Even as each one strove
To win me, and to bind me to himself,
All spurn me now away, and shun my path.
And wherefore ? Can it be that he alone
The balance turns of all my worth, and all
The love in which, but now, I was so rich ?
Yes, all, all shun me now. Thou, even thou,
Beloved Princess ! thou forsakest me !

In these dark hours of trouble she has not
Vouchsafed a single token of her favour.
Have I deserved this from her? Thou poor heart,
To which her worship seemed so natural!
Heard I her voice's tone, how was my breast
Pierced through with feelings all unspeakable!
And if I saw her, then the day's clear light
To me was dimmed; and irresistibly
Her eyes, her lips compelled me, that I scarce
Refrained my knee, and needed all my strength
Of spirit not to fall beneath her feet;
And hardly might this tumult dissipate.
Here hold thou firm my heart! And thou, clear
mind,
Here be thou yet unclouded! Aye, e'en she!
Dare I to say it, when I scarce believe?
I do believe it, and would fain be mute.
She also, she! Exonerate her wholly,
But from thee hide it not. She also, she!
Alas! this word of which I yet should doubt,
So long as in me lived one breath of faith,—

This very word has deeply graved itself,
Like Fate's last sentence, on the iron margin
Of the full written tablets of my woe.
Now, for the first time, are my foes grown strong ;
Now am I spoiled of every power for ever.
How should I war, when *she* has placed herself
Among the foemen's ranks? How patient strive,
When *she* her hand reaches not forth afar?
And when her eye the implorer meets no more?
Thou hast dared think it; thou hast spoken it:
And it is true, ere thou hadst time to fear!
And now, ere yet Despair with iron fangs
Thy senses from each other rend, bewail,
Aye, still bewail this bitter destiny.
Still echo this alone—She also, she!

ACT THE FIFTH.

Scene 3.

*A Garden.*ALPHONSO *and* ANTONIO.

Ant. At your command, a second time I went
To Tasso, and I come from him to you.
I have striven to persuade—have even urged him—
But from his first resolve he moveth not,
And earnestly entreats that you will give him
License, for some short while, to go to Rome.

Alph. I am indignant, I will own to thee,
And rather would I tell thee that I am so,
Than, hiding it, increase the angry feeling.
He journies hence—good ; I restrain him not.
He will away ; he will to Rome ;—so be it !
But from me let not Scipio Gonzago,

L. 2

Nor the sly Medici, steal him away.
He who has made our Italy so great,
That every neighbour with another strives
Who shall the best possess—the best employ.
The prince, who talent gathers not around him,
To me a general seems without a host :
He who hears not the voice of poesy
Is a barbarian, be he who he may.
'Twas I sought out this Tasso—I who chose him ;
I am of him, as of my vassal, proud,
And having done so much for him, I would
Be loth to lose him needlessly.

Ant.

I am

Much grieved to have incurred your highness' blame
By what befel to-day, and readily
Confess my fault, it resting with your grace
To pardon me ; but, if you could believe
I had not tried all possible endeavour
To reconcile him, I indeed were wretched.
Oh ! speak to me with gentle looks, that I
May be assured—may trust myself once more.

Alph. Antonio, no! Of this be satisfied,
 In no wise unto thee do I ascribe it;
 Too well I know the temper of this man,—
 Only too well I know what I have done.
 How much I have forborne him; how entirely
 Forgotten what I should have claimed from him.
 The lord of many things man makes himself;
 His temper, time and need may hardly rule.

Ant. When others have so much performed for one,
 'Tis fitting that the one should, in return,
 Be diligent to seek what helpeth others.
 He who so much has toiled to form his mind,
 Who greedily has gathered of all science,
 And every knowledge that permitted is
 For us to grasp, is not he doubly bound
 To rule himself? and does he think thereon?

Alph. Never may we abide in sluggish rest!
 To us, alike, when planning for enjoyment,
 A foe is given to exercise our courage,
 And for our patience' exercise, a friend.

Ant. Man's simplest duty—food and drink to choose

(Since Nature has not him to narrow bounds
Limited, like the brutes)—fulfils he this ?
Rather, allows he not himself to be,
Childlike, seduced by all that soothes his palate ?
When does he water mingle with his wine ?
While vegetables, sweetmeats, fiery liquids,
One on the other, hastily he swallows ;
And then bemoans him of his troubled spirits,
His fevered blood, his too excited being—
And flings the blame on Nature, and on Fate.
How bitter, and how foolishly have I
Oft heard him thus with his physician chide ;
’T were almost ludicrous, if aught could be so,
That injures one man, and torments another.
“ I feel this pain,” he sadly says, and full
Of anxiousness. “ Why boast ye of your art ?
Give me a cure ! ” — “ Good ! ” answers the physician ;
“ Refrain from so and so. ” — “ That can I not. ”
“ Then take this potion. ” — “ Oh, no ! for its savour
Is horrible ; Nature rebels against it. ”
“ Well, then, drink water. ” — “ Water ! name it not ;

I dread it as one bit with hydrophobia.”

“Then is there no more help for you.”—“And wherefore?”

“Ailments will still on ailments heap themselves,
And if they cannot kill, yet, more and more,
With every day will pain you.”—“Very fine!
For what are you physicians, then? You know
My ill, and so should know the remedy,
And make it less distasteful, that I need not,
To rid myself of suff’ring, suffer more.”
You smile yourself, and yet, it is most sure,
That you have heard this oft from his own lips.

Alph. Oft have I heard it, and have oft excused.

Ant. Certain it is that an immoderate life,
E’en as it gives us wild and dismal dreams,
Makes us, at length, in the clear daylight dream,—
And what, beside a dream, are his suspicions?
Where’er he treads he deems himself surrounded
By foes. No man can look upon his talents,
But envies him; and no man envy him,
But bitterly must hate and persecute!

Thus hath he often wearied you with plaints
Of broken locks and intercepted letters,
Dagger and poison ! all that floats before him !—
You have let all be sought into—examined ;
And have you found aught ? Barely an appearance !
No Prince's guardianship makes him secure,—
The bosom of no friend can give him rest ;
To such an one, then, will you peace and joy
Promise, or pleasure to yourself from him ?

Alph. You would be right, Antonio, if from him
I only did my selfish profit seek ;
And 'tis, in truth, my profit, though I do not
A pure and unconditional gain expect.
All do not serve us in the self-same manner ;
Who would make use of many, must use each
In his own nature : thus he'll be well served.
This learning have we from the Medici ;
This lesson, too, the Pope himself has taught us.
With what sage foresight, with what princely pa-
tience,
What long-enduring temper, these men bear

With many gifted ones, who their rich grace
Seem reckless of, and yet do sorely need !

Ant. Who knows not this, my Prince ? It is life's
toil

Alone that teaches us to prize life's goods.
So young, he has unto so much attained,
That he is well nigh sated with enjoyment.
Oh ! if he first had earned what now to him
With open hand is offered—he his powers
Had strengthened manfully, and felt himself,
From step to step, content. A needy noble
Has well attained the aim of his first wishes,
When chosen by a mighty Prince to be
Companion of his court ; from poverty
Withdrawn by gentle hands. But when he gives
him

Favour and trust, and ever at his side
Prefers him to all others—be it in war,
Be it in business, or alone in converse—
Why then, methinks, the humble man may well,
In silent thankfulness, give praise to Fortune.

And Tasso hath, still added to all these,
Youth's brightest glory: him his fatherland
Acknowledges, and gazes on with hope.
Oh, credit me, his whimsical misdoings
Rest on the wide-spread pillow of his luck.
He comes. Give him your gracious leave of absence ;
Give him full time at Naples, and at Rome,
And where he will, to seek what fails him here,
And what he, here alone, may find again.

Alph. But will he first return back to Ferrara ?

Ant. In Belriguardo he prefers to stay ;
And let the matters needful for his journey
Be sent him by a friend.

Alph. I am content.

My sister and her friend instant set forth—
Riding, I may arrive at home before them ;
Thou followest us so soon as he is cared for.
Give to the Castellan the needful orders,
That he may at the castle here remain,
So long as seems him good, or till his friend
Forward his packages, and till we send .

The letters hither, which I am most willing
To furnish him for Rome. He comes. Farewell!

Scene III.

ALPHONSO *and* TASSO.

Tasso [*with constraint*]. The grace which you so
oft to me have shown,
Appears to me in fullest light to-day.
You have forgiven what, almost in your presence,
I thoughtlessly and blamably have done;
You have my adversary reconciled.
You will permit me to absent myself
A little from your side, and will meanwhile
Most graciously preserve your favour for me.
Now I depart with fullest confidence,
And in the hope that this brief holiday
May work the cure of all that pains me now.
So shall my spirit raise itself afresh,

And on the way, which, bold and joyously
 Cheered by your glance, I for the first time tread,
 Form itself worthy of your grace anew.

Alph. All pleasure do I wish thee in thy journey,
 And hope that thou to us wilt soon return,
 Cheerful and wholly cured, so wilt thou bring
 To us a double winning of delight,
 For every hour thou stealest from us now.
 I give thee letters to my people, being
 Also thy friends, at Rome ; and earnestly
 I wish that thou to mine, above all others,
 Should hold in friendliness ; since I must ever,
 Though widely severed, look on thee as mine.

Tasso. You do your favours heap, oh, Prince ! on
 one

Who feels himself unworthy, and who is
 Unable at this moment e'en for thanks.
 In place of thanks, another prayer I bring !
 My poem lies most nearly to my heart.
 I have done much to it,—have spared no toil,
 No diligence ; yet there remains behind

Too much for me to do. Fain would I then
(Where yet the spirits of the mighty float
And active hover) put myself to school ;
My lay should then be worthier your approval.
Oh ! give me back the pages, which I now
But feel ashamed to know are in your hands.

Alph. Thou wilt not take from me on this same
day,

What, only on this day, to me thou'st brought.
Oh ! let me as a mediator step
Between thee and thy poem. Take good heed
Lest thou, perchance, with thy stern labour harm
The lovely nature living in thy song,
And hearken not to many-sided counsel.
The thousandfold imaginings of many
And diverse men (each opposite to each
In life and in opinion) doth the poet
Artfully blend in one ; and shunneth not
Some many to displease, since thus he may .
Another many please the more. And yet
I tell thee not thou should'st not, here and there,

Gently employ the file. I promise thee
 Thou soon shalt have thy poem fairly writ ;
 But leave it now, out of thy hands, in mine,
 In order that I first, may with my sister,
 Rightly enjoy it. If thou bring it back
 Yet more complete, we shall again delight
 In heightening our enjoyment, giving thee
 Only, in many parts, our friendly warning.

Tasso. I am ashamed, and yet repeat my prayer !
 Oh ! let me quickly have the copy. Wholly
 Dwelleth my spirit now upon this work :
 Now must it grow to what its growth may be.

Alph. The zeal that so inspires thee I respect.
 Yet, my good Tasso, were it possible,
 'Twere well thou first should'st, for a little while,
 Enjoy the world at large ; divert thyself ;
 Amend the sickness of thy blood ; and then
 To thee were granted, by the harmony
 Of re-established health, what now thou seekest,
 Amid thy troubled eagerness, in vain.

Tasso. My Prince, so it may seem ; yet I am well

When I can give myself up to this toil ;
And so my toil can make me well again.
Long have you seen in me, that boundless leisure
Is not my good. Rest leaves me least at rest.
Alas ! I feel Nature formed not this spirit
On the day's yielding element to float
Joyously down to the wide sea of time.

Alph. Thou'rt led by all, whate'er thou think'st or
dost,

Still deep into thyself. There lie around us
Many abysses, hollowed out by Fate ;
Deepest of all, is that in our own hearts,
And ever luring us to plunge therein.
I do beseech thee, tear thee from thyself !
So shall the Man gain what the Bard may lose.

Tasso. Vain, all in vain ! I struggle with the force
Which, day and night, alternates in my breast.
If I no more may dream, no more may write,
Then is this life no longer life for me.
Go and forbid the silkworm spinning too,
Because she spins herself more nigh to death.

The costly web she evermore untwines
Forth from her inmost being, ceasing not
Till she has closed herself within her tomb.
Oh! that a gracious God to me may grant
Like destiny with th' enviable worm,—
With sudden gladness to unfold our wings
In a new world of sunshine!

Alph. Nay, but hear me!
Thou to so many givest double joy
In life. I do implore thee, learn to know
The worth of life, which, richly in thyself,
Thou tenfold dost possess. Now, fare thee well!
The earlier thou to us shalt make return,
The fairer shall thy welcome from us be.

Scene III.

TASSO [*alone*].

Tasso. So, hold thou fast my heart—thus far 'tis
well!

It grew too hard for thee. 'Tis the first time
Thou ever could'st, or sought'st to, feign a part.
Thou heardest plainly : that was not his mind ;
Those words were not his own. To me it seemed
As though Antonio's voice were sounding still.
Only take heed ! Thus shalt thou henceforth hear
From every side. Only be firm, still firm !
A few brief moments is it yet to do.
He who thus late in life hath learned to feign,
Has all the advantage of an honest seeming.
All will go well, if thou but use thee to it.
[*After a pause.*] Too early dost thou triumph. She
comes hither !
The lovely Princess comes ! What passion's this ?
She draweth nigh, and anger and suspicion,
My bosom's dwellers, lose themselves in sorrow.

SCENE III.

The PRINCESS and TASSO.

Towards the end of the Scene the other Persons.

Prin. Thou meanest to forsake us, then, or rather,
Thou would'st remain behind at Belriguardo.
Wilt thou go from us, Tasso, far away?
At least, I hope, but for a little time.
To Rome thou goest?

Tasso. I direct my steps,
First, thitherward; and if my friends receive me
With kindness there, as I have room to hope,
Perchance I there, with patient carefulness,
May give the latest finish to my poem.
There shall I find assembled many men,
Who masters in all arts may well be named.
And there, in that first city of the world,
Speaks not to us each spot and ev'ry stone?
How thousands of mute teachers, friendlike, there

Beckon us on with earnest majesty !
 If there I finish not my work, I never
 Can finish it. Woe's me ; alas ! I find
 In no endeavour is there weal for me !
 Still shall I alter it—complete it never.
 I feel, I feel it well—the mighty art
 That nurtures all that the sound spirit strengthens
 And quickens, will but crush me to the earth,
 Will drive me to despair. I hasten forth !
 Soon will I on to Naples.

Prin. Wilt thou venture ?

Remember the strong ban is unannulled
 Which thou lay'st under, even as thy sire.

Tasso. You warn me well ; I have bethought me of
 it.

Thither I go disguised ; I will put on
 Or the poor pilgrim's frock or shepherd's weed ;
 Steal through the city, where the ceaseless motion
 Of thousands easily will *one* conceal.
 Then hasten to the shore, where I may find
 Quickly a boat, with kind and willing crew ;

With peasants who to market came, and now
Are home returning—people of Sorrento.
Then over to Sorrento shall I speed ;
There dwells my only sister ; she who made,
With me, our parents' joy in bitterness.
I keep me quiet in the boat, and tread,
Still silently, ashore ; then softly mount
The upward path, and, at a door, I ask,
Where dwells Cornelia ? Point it out to me !
Cornelia Sersale ? So the street
A friendly spinner shows to me, and more,
Signs to the house. Still farther I ascend :
The children, running to and fro, are gazing
On the sad stranger's wildly streaming hair.
So come I to the threshold : open stands
The door already, and I tread within.

Prin. Look up, oh, Tasso ! if thou have the power ;
The perils recognise on which thou rushest !
I fain would spare thee, else I thus might say,
Is't generous thus to speak as thou hast spoken ?
Is't generous only of thyself to think,

As if the hearts of friends thou could'st not pain ?
 My brother's thoughts, are they from thee concealed ?
 Or how his sisters both have treasured thee ?
 Hast thou not ever felt, and owned it all ?
 And is it all, within a few brief moments,
 All altered, Tasso ? If thou wilt depart,
 Leave not behind with us heartache and care.

[TASSO *turns away.*

It is a comfort to us, when we give
 The friend, who from us journies for awhile,
 Some parting token, though it be no more
 Than a new mantle, or a trusty weapon.
 To thee we nought can give, since thou dost fling
 All wilfully away that now thou ownest.
 The Pilgrim's cockle-shell, and sable gown,
 And the long staff thou choolest ; stubbornly,
 In poverty departest, taking from us
 That which, with us alone, might'st thou enjoy.

Tasso. Thou wilt not cast me wholly then away ?
 Oh, most sweet word ! oh, fairest dearest comfort !
 Trample me down, yet take me to thy keeping !

Leave me in Belriguardo here, or send me
Home to Consandoli, or where thou wilt.
Many fair castles does the Prince possess—
So many gardens, that the whole year through
Must be o'erlooked, and you scarce enter them
A single day, perhaps, but for an hour.
Aye, choose the one most far away ; the one
Which, in the whole year's round, you visit not ;
Which now, perhaps, is lying waste, uncared for ;
And thither send me ! There let me be yours !
How will I cherish all your trees ! The citrons,
With boards and tiles, from the cold winter hide,
And shield them carefully with woven reeds.
There shall the loveliest flowers in the parterre
Strike their wide spreading roots : all fair and seemly
Shall be each path, and every tiny spot.
And leave the palace also to my care.
At stated hours will I the windows open,
So that no damp the costly pictures harm.
The walls, with stucco fairly ornament,
I, with a feathered brush, will gently clean ;

And there the marble floors shall spotless shine.
There shall no stone, no tile suffer decay ;
There shall no grass from any corner spring !

Prin. Alas ! I find no counsel in my heart,
Nor aught of comfort find for thee and—us.
Mine eye seeks vainly round, whether no God
May yet some help afford ; may yet, to me,
Some healing herb discover, or some potion
To bring thy spirit peace, and peace to us !
The truest word that from the lips can flow,
The fairest means of healing, all avail not ;
And I must leave thee, aye, although my heart
Forsakes thee not.

Tasso. Ye Gods ! is it thus she
Who holdeth converse with thee, pities thee ?
And couldest thou misdeem that noble heart ?
Was't possible that, even in her presence,
Such little-mindedness could hold or urge thee ?
No, no, 'tis she ! and now am I myself.
Oh, go thou on, and let me from thy mouth
Hear every comfort ! Do not thy good counsel

Withdraw from me. Oh, speak! What shall I do?
Whereby your brother may be pacified,
Whereby yourself may willingly forgive,
Whereby you both once more may reckon me
With joy among your own? Say on—say on.

Prin. Little indeed from thee do we require,
Yet, not the less, seems it to be too much;
Friendlike, thou should'st to us resign thyself.
We nothing ask of thee, save what thou art,
If thou would'st only with thyself be pleased.
Thou mak'st our joy by having joy in thee,
And sadd'nest us only in flying from it;
And if thou sometimes move us to impatience,
Then is it only that we fain would help thee,
And see, alas! there is for thee no help,
Because thou wilt not grasp the friendly hands
That yearningly stretch forth, and reach thee not.

Tasso. Oh, thou art still the same as when at first,
A holy angel, thou before me stood'st!
Forgive a mortal's dim and troubled glance,
If it for but a moment did mistake thee.

Now knows he thee again ! Now may the soul
Open to worship thee alone—for ever !
The heart be wholly filled with tenderness.
'Tis she,—she is before me. Oh, what feelings !
Is it bewilderment that draws me toward thee ?
Is't frenzy ? is it an exalted mind,
That now first grasps the highest, purest truth ?
Aye, this, this is the feeling which alone,
Here on this lower earth, can make me blest ;
The feeling that alone left me so wretched,
When I resisted it, and from my heart
Would fain have banished. This the passion which
I dreamed to battle with, and strove, and strove,
Against my inmost being, wildly troubling
Myself—the self to which thou dost belong.

Prin. Tasso, if thou would'st have me longer hear
thee,

Then moderate this warmth, which frightens me.

Tasso. The beaker's rim, can that confine the wine
That foaming heaves, and bubbling overflows ?
With every word exaltest thou my spirit,—

With every word glanceth thine eye more bright.
 I feel that, deep within me, all is changed ;
 I feel myself relieved from every care—
 Free as a God—and owe it all to thee !
 The power unspeakable that governs me,
 Flows from those lips of thine. Aye, thou hast made me
 Wholly thine own ; and in the future nothing
 Of this whole Me may to myself belong.
 Mine eye grows dim in light and blessedness—
 My senses fail,—my feet uphold me not :
 Thou irresistibly compell'st me to thee,
 And my heart rushes toward thee unrestrained ;
 Thou hast won me to thee, wholly and for ever—
 So take thou my whole being into thine !

[*He falls into her arms, and clings to her.*

Prin. [*Throwing him from her, and hurrying off
 the stage.*] Away !

Leon. [*who has been seen for some time in the
 background, hastens forward.*] What hast thou
 done ? Oh, Tasso, Tasso !

[*She follows the PRINCESS.*

Tasso. [*about to follow.*] Oh, God!

Alph. [*who for some time has been drawing nearer with ANTONIO.*] Seize on him—hold him! He is mad! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

TASSO and ANTONIO.

Ant. Oh, were there now (as thou believest ever,
That thou art all environed by thy foes,)
A foe beside thee here—how would he triumph!
Unfortunate,—I scarce retain my breath!
When we encounter things so all unlooked for,
And when our eyes such monstrous things behold,
Our startled spirit for awhile is mute,
Not knowing aught with which to liken them!

Tasso. [*after a long pause*]. Fulfil thine office. I see thou art he!

Aye, thou deservest princely confidence!

Only fulfil thine office,—torture me
 (Since shivered is my staff) yet lingeringly,
 To death! Pull, pull the shaft, that I may feel
 Sternly the barbed steel that must rend my flesh!
 Thou art a darling tool of tyranny.
 Be gaoler, too,—be minion of the rack;
 How well—how singularly both become thee!
 [*Turning to the side.*] Aye, tyrant—go! Thou
 could'st not to the last
 Play out thy part. Triumph! thou hast well fettered
 The slave, and spared him for protracted pangs;
 But go, I hate thee. I do wholly feel
 The abhorrence despotism should arouse,
 When shameless and unrighteously it grasps!
 [*After a pause.*] And so, I find myself a banished
 man;
 Aye, like a beggar—spurned, and banished hence!
 Thus have they crowned me—thus have they adorned—
 To lead me, as a victim, to the altar!
 Thus have they won from me this very day,
 With their smooth words, my only property—

My song ; and forcibly will they retain it.
Within their hands lies now my only wealth,
That in all lands had won my ready way ;
All that remained to save me e'en from hunger !
Now see I why I must make holiday ;
'Twas a conspiracy, and thou its head.
Therefore my song should not be perfected,
For that my name should ne'er be wider known ;
For that my enviers thousand faults should find :
That, finally, I should be quite forgotten.
Therefore must I acquaint myself with leisure,—
Therefore must I spare both my health and mind.
Oh, worthy friendship ! kindly carefulness !
I dreamed of horrible conspiracy,
That ceaseless, viewless, ever round me spun—
But far more horrible now is it grown.
And thou, too, Syren ! who so tenderly,
So heavenlike, lured me toward thee ! Now I see
Thee as thou art. Oh, God, wherefore so late !
But we do cheat ourselves—so wilfully
Honouring the cast-aways, that do us honour.

Men do not know each other, save, belike
The galley-slaves, they may each other know,
Wedged in, and toiling on their narrow bench,
Where none has aught to ask, neither has aught
Which he may lose. There do they know each other,
Where, each a villain, frankly owns himself—
And holds his fellow, also, for a villain.
But we—we mistake others, courteously,
That they, with like return, may us mistake.
How long thy hallowed image hid from me
The wanton, driving on her little art.
The mask has fallen : now I see Armida,
And stripped of all her charms. Aye, thou art she !
Of thee my lay forebodingly was sung !
And that deceitful little go-between !
How deeply humbled see I her before me.
Now do I hear the sound of that light tread ;
I know the circle now round which she crept,—
I know you all ! Be that enough for me.
If wretchedness have robbed me of my all,
Yet will I prize it : it hath taught me truth.

Ant. I listen to thee, Tasso, with amazement,
Well as I knew how lightly thy rash spirit,
From one extreme, could vibrate to the other.
Bethink thyself! o'errule this frenzied rage!
Thou slanderest, words on words thyself permitting,
Which well may be forgiven to thy grief,
But which thyself thou never canst forgive.

Tasso. Oh, do not speak to me with gentle lips,—
Let me no word of wisdom hear from thee.
Leave me this dismal pleasure, that I may not
Bethink me first, then lose all power of thought.
I feel as if my very inmost bones
Were shivered—and I only lived to feel it.
Despair hath seized on me with all his rage,
And in the hell-pains that are tearing me,
Grief's stifled moan grows into calumny.
I will away! If thou indeed be honest,
Prove it, and let me speedily from hence!

Ant. I will not leave thee in this utmost need,
And if it rend from thee all self-restraint,
In patience will I surely not be wanting.

Tasso. Must I, then, yield myself thy prisoner ?
I do give up myself, and so 't is done ;
I nothing will resist,—so is it well.
And be it painfully re-echoed to me,
How fair was that, in sport, I flung away.
They go. Oh, God ! there do I see already
The dust that rises round their chariot wheels.
The riders are before : there they advance :
They thither go ! Came I not also thence ?
They are departed,—they are gone in anger.
Oh, might I only kiss that hand once more !
Oh, that I yet might only take my leave !
Might only yet once whisper, oh, forgive !
Might hear this only, Go, thou art forgiven !
I hear not. I shall hear it never more.
Yes, I will go ; let me but take my leave ;
Only take leave ! Give, oh, but give me back
That presence ; be it only one brief moment !
Perchance I may in that be cur'd again.
No, I am spurned away, am banished hence ;
I am self-exiled ; I shall hear that voice
No more : that glance no more shall meet.

Ant. Let a man's voice recall thee to thyself,
Who, not unmoved, can stand beside thee now !
Thou art not so wretched as thou dost believe.
Nay, man thyself ! Thou dost too much despair.

Tasso. And am I then so wretched as I seem ?
Am I so weak as I do show to thee ?
Is all then wholly lost ? and hath this sorrow,
As by an earthquake, all the fabric shattered,
Changing it to a hideous heap of ruin ?
Rests there no talent more, which, manifold,
Might yet divert my spirit, and sustain ?
Are all the powers thus quenched, which rose of yore
Within my bosom ? Am I nothing grown ?
Nothing ? No, all is past, and I am nought !
I am stolen from myself, as she from me !

Ant. And if thou deem thyself thus wholly lost,
Still calm thee, and remember what thou art !

Tasso. Aye, in right season, thou remindest me !
Has history no example left to aid ?
No mighty one to place before mine eyes,
Who suffered more than I have yet endured—

That, likening me to him, I may be calm ?
No, all is gone ! One thing alone remains :
Nature has lent to us the boon of tears,
The cry of misery, when man, at last,
May bear no more ; and, above all, to me
She leaves, in anguish, words and melody,
To wail the deepest fulness of my need ;
And while mankind grow speechless in their pain,
God's gift to me is utterance for my woe.

[ANTONIO *draws near, and takes his hand.*

Oh, noble man ! thou standest firm and still,
And I, the while, seem as the storm-stirred wave ;
Yet, yet bethink thee, let not thine own strength
Exalt thee over much. That mighty nature,
Which fixed this rock's foundations, also gave
The wave alike its mutability.
She sendeth forth her storms—the billows flee,
And roll, and swell—and, foaming, bow their crests.
How fairly did the sun upon those waters
Mirror himself ! How slept the silent stars
Upon this breast, that heaved so tenderly !

Now vanished is the brightness—flown the peace !
I, in this peril, know myself no more,
And shame myself no more, in the confession.
The rudder's shivered, and the vessel splits
On every side. The deck is rent, and yawns
Beneath my feet ! Thee grasp I with mine arms !
So clings, at last, the ship-wrecked mariner,
Fast to the rock on which he should have perished.

END OF TORQUATO TASSO.

From the German of Schiller.

FROM THE "BRIDE OF MESSINA:"

A Tragedy.

CHORUS.

SAY, what work shall now be ours,
Since the Princes rest from strife ;
How shall we fill the empty hours
Of long and tedious life ?
Something to fear, and hope, and shun,
Man must have for each coming sun,
That he may bear the load of being,
And the weary sameness of the day ;
And with the freshening wind's breath fleeing,
Ripple life's stagnancy away.

MANFRED.

Beauteous is Peace—a lovely boy—

He lies along by a lulling stream ;

The lambs are sporting in their joy,

On the sunny turf around,

And from his flute he wakes a sound

That breaks the mountain echo's dream ;

Or in the evening's fading gleam,

Is soothed to sleep by the whispering stream.

But honour be to Strife !

The mover of human destiny ;

Oh, give to me a living life,

And be it mine unceasingly,

To float and fall and fluctuate

With the ebbing and flowing waves of Fate.

Man stagnates in peace ; and idle rest

Is valour's grave,—and law's behest

Is friend to the weak alone.

'T would make all even—'t would flatten the world,

But 'tis war that makes the brave appear,

And rouses all to wondrous deeds,
And stirs e'en the coward heart of Fear.

BERENGAR.

Doth not Love's temple open stand,
And the world to Beauty's shrine repair?
There is Fear, and there is Hope,
And who wins the eye is monarch there.
Love, too—Love gives life its motion;
'Tis Love its darkling hue relieves:
The graceful daughter of foamy ocean
Still cheats the happy hours of youth,
And, out of vulgar or mournful Truth,
Her phantoms of golden dreams she weaves.

CAJETAN.

Rest the flowers with blooming spring;
Let Beauty shine,
And garlands twine,
O'er the flowing locks of youth to fling;
But a sterner God to serve
Becomes a manlier age.

MANFRED.

The mighty Diana, the hunter's friend,
Let us with her through the thickets wend,
Where deepen the forests in dusky pride,
Where the wild deer springs from the mountain's side;
For the chase is the image of battle's rage,
The real war-god's joyous bride.
Up and away with the dawn of morn,
Called by the sound of the merry horn ;
Blythely over the misty vale,
Over the hill and over the dale,
Bathing each rest-enfeebled limb
In the quickening current of morning air.

BERENGAR.

Or shall we swim ?
Trusting ourselves to the goddess fair
Of the blue and undulating vest,
That sparkling woos us from the brim
To her unfathomable breast ?

Shall we build on the dancing foam,
 A floating palace of delight ?
 He who ploughs with the swift ship's keel
 The plain of green, as crystal bright,
 He is wedded to Luck—him the world obeys—
 He without seed shall his harvest raise,
 For the sea is Hope's best home,
 And the freakish realm of chance.
 Here rich to poor is quickly brought ;
 The poorest may revel in prince's state,
 While the wind changes, swift as thought—
 Changes here the tide of Fate.
 All ebbs and flows as the billows dance,
 Who says on the sea, " Mine own ? "

CAJETAN.

But not in the realm of waves alone,
 Not alone on the heaving tide,
 But on earth, which stands so fixedly
 On the pillars of Eternity,
 Fortune is fickle, and will not bide.

* * * * *

Scene, a Garden opening on the Sea.

BEATRICE *walks restlessly about, then stands and listens.*

It is not he—it was the glad wind pressed
Through the tall pine tops in its whispering play ;
The sun is bending toward his evening rest,
With sluggish footsteps steal the hours away :
A shudd'ring horror grasps my aching breast,
In shadowy stillness fearfully I stray ;
Far as mine eye may reach, none meets it there—
He leaves me in mine anguish to despair.

Yet do I hear, for ever murmuring near,
The bustle of the city's restless crowd ;
Afar the monstrous deep's rude waves I hear,
Breaking o'er sunken rocks in anger loud :
All, all alike to me seem sounds of fear,
My soul is in this frightful vastness bowed,
And, like a quivering leaf whirled from its tree,
I lose myself in this immensity.

Oh, wherefore did I leave my quiet cell?

There was I free from care, and free from harms ;
My heart was tranquil as the purest well,
And void of wishes, but not void of charms.

But now the waves of life around me swell—

The world has clasped me with its giant arms,
And I have early ties asunder riven,
Trusting in vows, perchance, but lightly given.

Where were my senses? what have I done?

Headlong in error, deluded I've run!

I rent the veil of maidenly shame,

And brake the doors of the holy cell ;
With this bold stranger I hither came,
Blinded, entangled with magic spell!
Following him through guilt and blame.

Oh, come, my lover!

Where lingering stayest thou? Come and free
My struggling soul in its agony ;
This gnawing remorse will not depart,—
Oh, come! with thy presence assure my heart.

Alas ! and should I not his vows believe,
Who only on this earth is bound to me ?
For I was left in the wide world to grieve,
And early, by mysterious destiny
(I dare not now its curtain dark upheave)
Torn from my mother's breast in infancy.
Once, only once, my lonely path she crossed,
And, as a dream, to me her form was lost.
I grew to womanhood in yon still state,
Holding companionship with phantoms cold.
Sudden he stood before the cloister gate,
Bright as a God, and as a Hero bold.
There is no word to name that moment's change,
He came a stranger from a world all strange.
Yet soon, as if it had been thus for ever,
Was twined a bond no hand of man may sever.
Now, to the past no curious search I bring ;
O'er its dark secrets will I ponder not.
Loving, on love alone my trust shall cling ;
And is there here than Love's a brighter lot ?
Right willing to my fate I bow in this,
Since I have learned in life no other bliss.

I know not—never will I seek to know
The hidden ones to whom my life I owe :
From thee, beloved, they might sunder me.
An everlasting riddle let it be.
I know enough in knowing I love thee.

[*Listening.*

Hark ! it was that voice so dear.
No ! 'twas but the echo clear,
And the sea's unquiet sound
Dashing itself on the rocks around.

My love it is not. Woe is me !

Where lingers he ?

Chilly terrors over me creep.
The sun is sinking beneath the deep :
Strangely the shadows come and part ;
And heavy, still heavier grows my heart.

Where lingers he ?

TO A FRIEND.

Dear Friend, there have been brighter days
Than these of ours are—who gainsays?

And a nobler race has lived and taught.

If History were a silent thing,

A thousand stones would tokens bring,

That forth from Earth's dark breast are wrought.

Yet are they gone, like vanished hours,

This favoured race of might;

While we—we live; to-day is ours,

And the living is ever right.

Friend, there are climes more blest, more fair,

Than the land in which our lot we share,

As the far travelled wanderers tell.

But here, though Nature much denies,

More friendly Art her help supplies:

In her warm light our hearts may swell.

Though our soil the laurel may not nourish,
Our winter the myrtle reaves ;
To wreath our temples, greenly flourish
The vine's more joyous leaves.

True, Man may play 'a busier part
Where flows the Thames—the world's great mart,
Where many lands their gifts unfold.
Thousands of ships are sailing there,
And countless costly treasures bear ;
And there Earth's god is worshipped—Gold.
But never on that troubled stream,
When with the storm it swells,
Or on its sluggish calm, the beam
Of mirrored sunshine dwells.

Prouder than we in our northern state,
The beggar bides at the angels' gate,
For he gazes on the eternal Rome.
Around him forms of beauty crowd,
And to the heavens is rising proud
A second Heaven—St. Peter's dome.

Yet Rome, in all her loveliness,
Of the Past is but the grave,
Where nothing breathes of life, unless
The weeds that o'er it wave.

Greater events elsewhere befall
Than in our life—so still and small ;
But nothing new the sun hath seen
We'll view the great of every age,
As actors on the world's wide stage,
And wisely ponder what hath been.
Fancy alone is young for ever ;
Life but a tale oft told ;
What never hath been—shall be never,
Can only not grow old.

COLUMBUS.

SAIL on, sail on, bold Mariner, nor heed the witling's
scorn,
Though from the helm the steersman's hand falls
wearied and forlorn ;
Yet ever, ever Westward-ho ! for there the land must
lie,
In certainty, as it hath loomed upon thy fancy's eye.
Aye, trust thou in the guiding God, and track the
silent sea ;
E'en were it not, it yet should rise from out the wave
for thee.
For Nature holds with Genius her eternal commune
still :
What one's true spirit hath foreshown, the other shall
fulfil.

From the German of Körner.

TO THE HILLS.

MONUMENTS of the day,

On which, from out chaotic deep,
As witnesses of his Almighty sway,

Did God's creative word command your steep.

I hail you—with delight

Glances tow'rd you the minstrel's raptured eye,
And heaves his breast, while gazing on your height,

With wondering reverence and extasy.

Of purest granite raised,

From lowest depths, e'en to your peaks on high,
Long have ye lifted up your heads, and gazed

With fearless front, upon the starry sky.

Up to your height ascends

No plague breath from the valley's graves—
Only the eagle on his free path wends,
And in your purest Heaven his pinion waves.

Time's murderous tooth in vain,

Gnaws at your dark, unchanging form ;
Boldly have ye defied the hurricane,
And mocked the raging of the lightning storm.

From your full bosom gushing,

Bright springs their richest treasures shower,
And the glad Pilgrim listens to their rushing,
With silvery tone, beside his leafy bower.

They stream their paths along,

Wide plains and distant valleys greeting,
While onward dance their waves in frolic throng,
The far rejoicing shores with kisses meeting.

The woods bud forth around,—

Green are the meads, the golden cornfields shine,
And ye may hear from far off hills resound,
The labourer's song of triumph to the vine.

From your rich breast they well,
By many an untold winding onward pressing,
Creeping through flowery tuft and mossy dell,
And bearing down from you the valley's blessing.

The flower-decked plains may fade—
Groves wither—pyramids in ruin fall ;
Whate'er by man is won or made,
Is dust—and to the dust returneth all.

But ye immutable remain,
In your unconscious, voiceless majesty ;
Ye have the flight of ages ta'en,
As of a moment flitting by.

Ye giant sons of Nature ! Lays,
More worthy you, might but the Poet sing ;
Then—then—the woods and plains to you their praise,
One choral hymn of thankfulness should bring.

WHAT RESTS FOR US?

WHAT rests for us—our country's pillars broken,
Unheeded human wrongs for vengeance cry ;
When god-like words but to deceive are spoken,
Our holiest trust a lie ?

When round their fatherland's wide prison sweeping,
With lightning force our youth have vainly sped ;
When fruitlessly their Spartan zeal is heaping
The dead upon the dead.

What rests for us, when thus our right must stand,
Quailing and gnashing at false Fortune's rein ;
And when the tyrant his assassin band,
Leads on through Freedom's fane ?

What rests for us—when our best blood in strife,
Poured on our country's grave, is vainly given ;
And Freedom's star—the star of German life—
Sets in the German heaven ?

What rests for us? The springs of knowledge lave
No more the Art's abode, the peaceful strand;
Alas! no sun may rise upon the slave—
Art craves a fatherland!

All tones of heavenly melody expire,
Lost in the wailing notes of slavery;
And Homer's self had never waked the lyre,
Had not his Greece been free.

What rests for us? To bear—the Christian's part
Suffering—o'er which the sufferer's weak tears flow;
The altar I had raised within my heart,
Must my own hand o'erthrow?

While man's good angel shall for vengeance pray,
Must I the hand of God submissive see?
Surely where demons hold their devilish sway,
Must hell's own triumph be!

Does nothing rest for us? Spirits of light,
Did ye with kindred flight your charge forsake?
Do all Hope's flowers lie crush'd beneath the might,
That Victory's garlands brake?

No saving cross can the weak arm enclasp,
E'en in its highest need—its latest breath ;
Is there no help, but we must wail and gasp ?
No freedom but in death ?

Yet—yet—our soaring youth fair promise gives—
Our people's bravery a cheering token ;
Aye, yet the mighty German spirit lives,
That once the chain has broken !

Though tyranny, through every vanquished hall
Of Freedom's temple, force his ruthless sway,
Oh, sons of Germany, e'en though ye fall,
Yet sink ye never may !

And Hope's bright ray of Heaven is living yet,
Shining athwart our evil Fortune's track ;
It was a star—and though it now be set,
Morning shall bring it back.

It was a star—the stars abide for ever—
It was the golden star of Liberty ;
Oh, let the blood-stain'd clouds drive on and sever—
God shall its guardian be !

Not to the tyrant's reach that height is given,
Though hell, in aid, its fearful thunderings lends ;
They cannot snatch one golden star from Heaven,
And lo ! *our* star ascends.

If shades of death may wrap our youth in woe,
Yet, for the soul, there is nor death nor night ;
The German heroes' blood shall proudly glow,
In Freedom's rosy light.

ON RAUCH'S STATUE OF QUEEN LOUISA.

THOU sleepest softly, and those features calm
Seem breathing of thy life's bright visions now ;
Slumber has drooped her wing upon thy brow,
And peace those clear eyes sealed with holy balm.
So slumber on, until thy people's strife,
When beacon fires are from the hills ascending,
They grasp the rusted sword, with God befriending,
For life's best blessing offering up their life !
The Lord shall be our guide through night and death—
So may we purchase, with our dying breath,
The boon—our children's children shall be free !
Then shall the day of freedom—vengeance break,—
Then hear thy people's cry,—then, lady, wake !
The guardian angel of our liberty.

ON LEAVING VIENNA.

FAREWELL, farewell! with sadly beating heart
I greet thee now—'tis duty casts my lot;
Unbidden tears from these dim eyes will start,—
Why strive I with myself,—tears shame me not?
Oh, if for paths of peace I now depart,
Or where grim Death his bloody wreath hath got,
To thy sweet image still, where'er I grieve,
With love, deep yearning love, my soul shall cleave.

My life's good genius—oh, mistake me never—
Mistrust thou not my spirit's earnest sway;
Oh, feel the true intent of my endeavour,
As in my song, so in the battle day.
Not vainly revelled I in dreams for ever,
All that I most have lauded in my lay,
An unforgotten death for liberty,—
Oh, may I now win that bright crown for me!

Far easier 'twere to twine a garland light,
The prize of song in gracious conflict sought ;
But a true heart beats truly for the right,
And this in youth's first glow, my cherish'd thought,
To win for Art a fatherland in fight,
And with my warmest blood be victory bought.
This kiss, if 'tis the last on which we dwell,
Yet for our love there is no death—farewell !

FAREWELL TO LIFE.

AS I LAY IN A WOOD, SORE WOUNDED, EXPECTING DEATH.

My wounds are burning, and my pale lips quiver—

I feel it in my heart's enfeebled beat,

I've reached the goal at last with weary feet ;

God, as Thou wilt—my life I give the Giver.

How many a golden vision o'er me swept,

Sweet dreamy lays they turn to dying moan,

Yet courage—still must live with me mine own,

That which through life with truest heart I kept.

And all I have as holy relics prized

(Burning for which I youth's wild joys despised),

Whether I name it liberty or love—

Seraph of light, I see it near me stay,

And, as my senses slowly fade away,

Its breath shall waft me to the realms above.

From the German of Ahland.

THE NORMAN CUSTOM.

BALDER, *a Sailor.*

RICHARD, *a Fisherman.*

THORILDA,

*Scene, a Fisher's Hut, on an Island near the Coast
of Normandy.*

Bald. This pledge I to thy weal, my honoured host.
Now, verily, I owe the rude storm thanks
For chasing me into thine island bay.
A friendly meal beside a quiet hearth,
I have not thus enjoyed this many a day.

Rich. One finds no better in a fisher's hut ;
If thou art pleased, it gives me joy and honour—
Of special worth to me a noble guest,
Who comes from that far northern land of Home,
From whence our fathers steered their vessels hither ;
Yet, noble sir, I should explain to thee,
From him who seeks my hut, however poor,
I still must claim the guest's accustomed gift.

Bald. My ship, which lies at anchor in the bay,
Is rich in costly wares of many kinds,
That from the mid seas I have hither brought—
Gold, fruits, and luscious wines, and bright-hued
birds,
With weapons, too, forged by the northern smiths—
Keen two-edged swords, harness, and helm, and shield.

Rich. Nothing of these I meant—thou dost mistake
me ;
It is a usage of our Normandy,
That he who at his hearth a guest receives,
May from him claim a legend, or a lay,
And so the like must give him in return.

In my old days, still love I song and story,
And therefore will not from my claim depart.

Bald. A legend oft is sweet as Cyprus wine—
Balmy as fruit—bright coloured as a bird ;
And many a warlike song of ancient days
Echoes like sword-clash and the clang of shields,
And so mine error was not all so gross.
Such stirring things as these I do not know,
Yet willingly do homage to the custom.
Listen, then, what on a clear moonlight night,
One of our shipmates on the deck did tell.

Rich. Another draught, my guest, and then begin.

Bald. Know, then, two northern Earls had many
years,
Sailed o'er the ocean with united flags—
Had braved, united, many a fearful storm,
And many a fiery fight by sea and shore ;
And also many times, in south or east,
In flowery lands together had reposed.
Now rested they within their castle homes,
Each by an equal sorrow deeply bowed.

For each, short while between, a dear loved wife
Had sadly yielded to the yawning grave.
Yet sprang for both from out this darkening grief,
A bright presentiment of future joy.
For one there bloomed a bold and hardy boy,
The other a fair tiny daughter cherished ;
And (more to crown their ancient friendship's bond,
And give to it enduring memory),
They pledged themselves in after years to twine
Their dear loved offspring in a holy band ;
Two rings of gold they had for them prepared,
Which (for the tender fingers all too wide)
Hung from bright chains around their slender necks.
A sapphire (blue as the little maiden's eye)
Was chased within the ring the young Earl wore,
And on the other glanced a ruby gem,
Red as the warm blood on the boy's young cheek.

Rich. A ruby stone set in a hoop of gold—
That was the maiden's jewel—am I right ?

Bald. Aye, as thou sayest, but nothing comes
thereof.

Already was the boy grown tall and slender,
In water sports already exercised,
And managed soon a small but mettled steed.
He should not (as his sires had done of yore)
Sweep o'er the wild main with adventurous fleet ;
His duty to protect with powerful hand
The lofty castles and the wide domain—
United heritage of two fair houses.
In the meanwhile, the young knight's little bride
Was cradled yet within her twilight chamber—
By old and faithful nurses tended well ;
But, when a mild and early spring day came,
They bore the pretty and impatient child
Down to the smooth sunshiny ocean strand ;
And brought her for her play sea shells and flowers.
The sea (by softest wind breath scarcely moved)
Reflected on its breast the sun's clear image,
And o'er the young green flung the quivering light.
Close to the shore there lies a fairy bark ;
The women deck it all with flowers and seaweed,
And lay their pretty fosterling therein,

And draw it to and fro upon the wave.
Loud laughs the child—loud laugh the women, too,
Yet (e'en amid their light and joyous laughter)
The band has slipped with which their sport they made,
And when 'tis first perceived, their arm no more
Can reach the little vessel from the strand !
So seeming still the sea, so waveless calm—
Yet washes it the bark far off—still farther ;
Still can they hear the child's unconscious laughter—
The women watch it with despairing eyes,
Wringing their hands with wild and anguish'd shrieks.
The boy who (visiting his little love),
Upon the green shore manages his steed,
Rushes to learn the meaning of that cry,
And spurs his charger bravely in the sea,
Swimming to overtake the bark of flowers ;
But scarce the horse has felt the chilly flood,
When, shuddering and wheeling stubborn round,
He bears his rider back upon the shore ;
And in meanwhile, the vessel with the child
Is drifted forth from out the quiet bay,

And the fresh breezes of the open sea
Soon waft it far away beyond their ken !

Rich. Poor child ! may holy angels round thee
sweep.

Bald. Soon to the father came the fearful news,
And swiftly are his good ships all sent forth
In eager search—the fastest bears himself ;
But trackless is the sea—the evening falls—
The wind has changed—the night-storm rages loud.
They, after a vain search of many weeks,
Bring only home the empty perished bark,
With faded garlands.

Rich. What stays thee in thy tale, my worthy
guest ?

Thou falterest—sighest deeply.

Bald. I will on.

Since that calamity, the boy no more
Took pleasure in his fiery steed, but rather
Would prove his strength in swimming, or in diving,
Or at the rudder try his willing arm.
And when he waxed a strong and hardy youth,

Nought craved he of his father but a ship—
Nought doth the firm land hold that he desires—
The castle damsels have no charms for him—
He seems as one to the wild sea betrothed,
Wherein were lost the maiden and the ring.
Also his vessel has he strangely decked
With purple streamers—images of gold—
As one who seeks his bride across the sea.

Rich. Somewhat like thine down yonder in the
bay,

Is't not, my gallant seaman?

Bald. As thou wilt ;
But, with that richly freighted bridal ship,
Has he out-ridden many a fearful storm ;
When to the thunder peal and hurricane,
The wild waves dance a joyous bridal measure ;
Through many a bloody battle has he fought,
And thereby in the north is dearly known ;
And a strange name, too, men have given him there ;
When he springs over, brandishing his sword,
Upon a boarded ship, the people cry,

“Woe, woe for us—destroy us not, Sea Bridegroom!”

There is my legend.

Rich. Much I thank thee for it.

Right pleasantly it hath my old heart stirred,

Only methinks it needs a full conclusion.

Who knows, in truth, whether the child was drowned,

Or if a strange ship might not, sailing by,

Have taken the poor foundling safe on board,

Leaving the fragile bark upon the waves?

Perchance upon an island, such as ours,

The tender little one might then be placed;

Might there by pious hands be reared and cherished,

And now be blooming there a lovely maid?

Bald. Most skilfully thou spinnest out a tale,

So let us, if it please thee, hear thine own.

Rich. In former days I knew full many a lay—

Sung of our ancient Dukes and warriors brave—

And specially of Richard, named the Fearless,

Who saw, they say, by night as clear as day;

But now my memory is weak with age,

And tangled all they flit before my mind;

Therefore shall that young maid supply my place,
Who, seated there so silent, turns away,
And weaves her nets beside the dim lamp's gleam ;
For she has studied store of ancient lays,
And has a voice sweet as the nightingale.
Thorilda, dear ! fear not our noble guest—
Sing us the song of “ The Maiden and the Ring,”
That the old minstrel rhymed for thee of yore ;
'Tis a brave lay—I know thou lov'st to sing it.

THORILDA [*sings*].

There sate upon the ocean strand,
A tender maiden fair,
She angled many a long, long hour,
No fish were biting there.

Upon her hand a ring she wore,
Of gold and ruby gem ;
She tied it to her fishing-line,
And flung the bait to them.

There raised itself from out the deep,
A hand as ivory white ;
That on its finger sparkling showed
Her golden ring so bright.

There raised himself upon the shore,
A knight so young and fine,
All pranked in pride of golden mail,
That gleamed in sunny shine.

Then spake the maid, with terror wild,
“No, no, Sir Knight, so brave ;
Leave thou to me my ring of gold,
Of thee I nought did crave.”

“Fair maid, they angle not for fish
With gold and precious stone ;
This little ring I ne'er will leave,
And thou must be mine own !”

Bald. What do I hear?—a strangely boding song !
What do I see ? Oh, what a heavenly face

Lifts its sweet blushes through those golden locks,
And minds me of my far off childhood's time !
Ah ! on her finger gleams the ring of gold—
The ruby stone. 'T is thou, my own lost bride !
And I am he whom men name the Sea Bridegroom.
Here is the sapphire, like thine eye of blue,
And yonder lies our Bridal Bark prepared.

Rich. This have I long suspected, noble chief.
Aye, hold her fast within thy warlike arm—
Thou claspest a true heart upon thy breast.
Yet, see how thou hast tangled thyself,
In these same nets my diligent child had woven.

THE MINSTREL'S CURSE.

THERE stood in days departed a lofty castle grand,
That to the deep blue ocean looked far across the land ;
And round it perfumed gardens spread out a flowery
ring,
Where glow'd in rainbow brightness full many a
freshening spring.

And rich in land and conquest there dwelt a haughty
King,
Who on his throne sat ever—a pale and gloomy thing ;
For in his thoughts was terror, and wrath was in his
sight,
And what he spake was scourges, and blood what he
did write.

Once came there to this castle a noble minstrel pair,
The one with golden ringlets, and one with silver hair ;

His harp the old man bearing, a gallant steed did
ride,

His young and blooming comrade stepped gaily at his
side.

Then to him spake the aged one—"My son, prepare,
I pray,

Sound forth the fullest melody—think o'er our deepest
lay ;

Bring all our powers together of gladness or of moan,
That we this day may soften the monarch's heart of
stone."

The minstrel pair stood boldly in the lofty pillared
hall,

The King and Queen sat throned among their courtiers
all ;

The King in pomp shone fearful as a bloody northern
light,

The Queen all sweet and gentle, as full moon mildly
bright.

The strings the Greybeard sweeping such wondrous
music held,
That richer still and richer upon the ear it swelled ;
Then heavenly clear came streaming the stripling's
voice along,
Like spirit's chorus mingling among the old man's
song.

They sang the blessed Golden Time—they sang of
Love and Youth—
Of manly worth and Freedom—of Holiness and
Truth ;
They sang of all the lofty things that human breasts
can fill—
They sang of all sweet impulses that human hearts
may thrill.

The crowd of courtiers round them forgot their wonted
sneer,
The King's bold warriors bowed them in meek and
pious fear ;

The Queen with mournful pleasure that could not be
repressed,
Flung down unto the Minstrels the rose from off her
breast.

“Ye have led astray my people—now will ye witch
my wife?”

The monarch raved in fury, and shook with inward
strife ;
To the young Minstrel's bosom his glitt'ring weapon
rushed,
And thence, instead of golden song, a stream of life-
blood gushed.

And, as by storm-wind scattered, are all that listening
pressed,
The youth's last breath was yielded upon his master's
breast ;
He wraps him in his mantle, and sets him on his steed,
And binds him fast and upright, and with him forth
does speed.

But at the lofty entrance the old man yet must bide—
His harp he wildly seizes—of all sweet harps the
pride ;

Against a marble pillar he has shattered it around,
And with the cry he utters, castle and court resound.

“ Woe to yon haughty dwelling ! no melody shall ring
Through your lone chambers ever—nor song nor min-
strel string ;

No ! Sighs alone, and wailing, and the timid tread of
slaves,

Till the foot of the Avenger tread down your moulder-
ing graves.

“ Woe to yon scented gardens ! in the May sun's
cheering glance,

To you I show my dead one's disfigured countenance,
That you thereat may wither—that all your springs
be dry—

That you, through future ages, stone-choked and waste
may lie !”

“Woe to thee, wretched murderer! The Minstrel's
curse beneath—

Vain, vain be all thy striving for glory's bloody
wreath;

And may thy name forgotten in endless night be
drowned,

Or as a faint death-rattle lost in the air around.”

The old man's cry is uttered, and Heaven has heard
his call,

The walls are rent and crumbled, and ruined is the hall;

One lonely lofty pillar still tells of vanished might,

Yet even this is shattered—may perish ere the night.

And round for perfumed gardens, a waste and desert
land—

No tree there flings its shadow, no spring bursts
through the sand;

That King's name ne'er was spoken in chronicle or
verse,

But buried and forgotten. Such is the Minstrel's Curse!

THE BLACK KNIGHT.

'T WAS Whitsuntide—that season gay,
When wood and wold make holiday—
And thus the old King proudly spake :
“ E'en from these ancient halls,
And my old castle walls,
A rich and joyous spring shall break.”

Trumpets and drums were sounding loud,
And crimson banners waving proud—
The King from his balcony looked on ;
And in the lance's play,
Saw every Knight give way,
Before his young and warlike son.

But, to the tourney's trellis light,
There rode at last a coal-black Knight ;

“ Sir Knight, your name and shield explain.”
“ If I should them deliver,
Ye all might quake and quiver—
I am a Prince of wide domain.”

And as within the lists he rode,
The Heaven's broad arch all darkly glowed,
The castle trembled to its base ;
In the first shock of force
The youth sank from his horse,
And scarce might lift him from the place.

Now harps and flutes call to the dance,
Where torches through the wide hall glance—
But a mighty shadow flits therein ;
The guest in courteous phrase,
Now the King's daughter prays—
Together they the dance begin.

He dances in black mailed guise,
He dances in a fearful wise—

Her limbs a creeping chill's invading ;
And from her breast and hair,
The flowers that bloomed so fair,
All to the earth are fallen—fading !

Then to the rich spread table came,
Each valiant knight, each lovely dame—
The King, his wonted station chusing,
Betwixt his children sate,
In melancholy state,
And on them gazed in silent musing.

So pale his children both are growing,
The dark guest fills a beaker flowing—
“ Reviving is this golden wine.”
The youth and maiden drank,
And courteously they thank—
“ Cool—oh, how cool this drink of thine !”

Now on their father's breast they fling
Themselves, and silently they cling,—

Fast from their cheeks the life-blood flying ;
And look where'er he may,
The affrighted father grey,
One of his children sees he dying.

“ Woe for my gentle children twain,
Thou snatchest from youth and joy amain—
Take also me, whose joy now closes !”
Then spake the Fearful One,
In hoarse and hollow tone,
“ Greybeard, in spring I gather roses !”

WALTER THE TRUE.

WALTER the True was riding by
Our lady's chapel fair—
A maiden kneeled in penitence,
Upon the threshold there ;
“ Oh, stay—oh, stay ! my Walter dear,—
Knowest thou no more the voice's tone,
That of yore thou wert fain to hear ? ”

“ What see I here ? Is't thou, false maid,
That once, alas ! wert mine ?
Where hast thou left thy silken garb,
Thy gold and jewels fine ?
Oh ! that my truth I could forget—
Lost, lost is now my paradise,—
With thee might I find it yet ! ”

He lifted up that damsel fair—
Mild pity in him grew ;
And fast she clung, and round his neck
Her soft white arms she threw.
“ Oh, Walter dear, this heart of mine,
It beats against the stiff cold mail,—
It does not throb on thine !”

On, on they ride to Walter's tower—
The tower was still and lone—
She loosed the helmet of the Knight,
His beauty all was gone.
“ These cheeks are pale, these eyes are drear—
True love, it is thy livery—
Thou wert ne'er to me so dear !”

The damsel meek the armour loosed,
For him she'd sorely crossed—
“ What do I see !—a mourning weed ?
Whom hast thou loved and lost ?”
“ Mine own dear love,—I mourn her sore,
That beyond the grave I yet may find,—
On earth—oh, never more !”

Then out she reached her pleading arms,
At his feet down falling low—
“ Here will I lie—poor penitent—
Have pity on my woe !
Oh, bid me rise to joy and peace,
That now upon thy faithful breast,
Past sorrows all may cease !”

“ Rise up, rise up, poor erring child,
I cannot give thee rest ;
These arms of mine are pinioned down,
And lifeless is my breast.
Mourn thou, as I must ever mourn—
For love is gone—aye, love is gone—
And never shall return !”

LITTLE ROLAND.

DAME BERTHA sate in the rocky cleft,
Wailing her bitter fate ;
Little Roland played in the open air—
His griefs they were not great.

“ Alas ! King Carl, my brother proud,
Why did I fly from thee ?
For love I left both pride and place,—
Now art thou wrath with me !

“ Oh, Milon ! oh, my husband sweet,
Floods roll betwixt us twain ;
He, for whose love I all things left,
Leaves me to love in vain.

“ Little Roland ! thou my own dear child,
Thou joy and pride to me ;
Little Roland ! come thou here with speed—
My trust is all in thee.

“ Little Roland, to the city hie—
There beg for drink and food ;
And who gives thee a little gift,
Wish him God’s blessing good.”

King Carl, he at his table sate,
In his golden knightly hall,
Where servants sped, with cup and bowl,
Unceasing at his call.

There flutes and well strung harps and song,
All hearts did cheer and bless—
Yet might not reach that gladsome sound,
To Bertha’s loneliness.

And in a court without the hall,
There sate the beggars round,
'Joying themselves in drink and food,
More than in harp’s sweet sound.

The King looked forth upon the crowd,
Out through the open door,
And there pressed in a noble boy,
He had not seen before.

The pretty boy was strangely clad
In clothes of many a hue—
Yet he darted forward in the hall,
Nor stayed with the beggar crew.

And in the hall little Roland trod,
As if his home were there ;
He took a goblet from the board,
And silent off it bare.

The King, he thought, “ What’s this I see ?
Sure these are manners new ! ”
But as he silent let it pass,
The rest were silent too.

And in a little further while,
Little Roland grew so bold,
He hastened straight unto the King,
And seized his cup of gold.

“ Hollo ! hold there, thou daring wight ! ”
The King cried out, amazed ;
Little Roland held the beaker fast,
And on the King he gazed.

The King at first looked grave and grim,

But soon he laughed, I ween ;

“ Thou treadest in my golden hall,

As in the forest green.

“ Thou snatchest the bowl from the board of kings,

As one plucks an apple from the tree ;

Thou drinkest of my red wine’s foam,

As of the brooklet free.”

“ The peasant drinks of the running brook,

And pulls the apple from the tree ;

My mother beseems the red wine’s foam,

With fish and venison free.”

“ And is thy mother so noble a dame,

Fair child, as thou vauntest loud ?

Then has she sure a palace fine,

And stately courtiers proud ?

“ Say, then, who is her cup-bearer,

And who her carver deft ?”

“ Oh, my right hand her carver is,

Her cup-bearer my left.”

“Then say, who is her minstrel gay,
And who her warder true?”

“My own red mouth her minstrel is,
Her warders, mine eyes of blue.”

“The dame has worthy servants, sure—
Loves she strange livery, too?
For as the rainbow dost thou shine,
In clothes of many a hue.”

“Oh, I have vanquished eight bold boys,
From all quarters of the town,
And they their garments of many a hue,
Have paid in tribute down.”

“The dame has truly to my mind
The best of servants bold;
She needs must be the Beggar’s Queen,
And open house must hold.

“So noble a dame ought not afar
From this my court to be;
So up, three dames—away, three knights,
And bring her here to me.”

Little Roland bore the beaker off,
From out the kingly hall—
Three knights and dames, at the monarch's word,
Him followed swiftly all.

The King looked forth in a little while,
To see what he could see,
And there came sweeping back amain,
His knights and ladies three.

But soon the King cried out aloud,
“ Help Heaven ! what have I done ?
Sure I have mocked in open hall,
My own dear sister's son !

“ Help Heaven ! my sister Bertha pale,
In pilgrim grey doth stand ;
Help Heaven ! and in my hall of state,
With pilgrim staff in hand ! ”

Dame Bertha is fallen at his feet—
That lady pale and mild ;
Then waked in him the ancient wrath,
He gazed upon her wild.

No word Dame Bertha dared to speak—
Her head she meekly bowed ;
Little Roland raised his clear blue eyes,
Greeting his uncle loud.

Then spake the King, in a milder tone,
“ Stand up, thou sister mine,
And all shall be forgiven to thee,
For this dear son of thine.”

Dame Bertha joyfully arose—
“ My brother dear, to thee,
Little Roland shall right well repay,
The good thou dost to me.

“ And he shall like his King become—
A brave and lofty knight;
Shall bear the colours of many lands,
On his shield and banner bright.

“ Shall grasp at many a kingly board,
With free and knightly hand ;
Shall weal and glory bring anew—
His moaning motherland !”

A FAIRY TALE.

YE all have heard the story
Of that young maiden's sleep,
Who lay through long, long ages,
Hid in the forest deep.
But the name of that fair wonder,
Told never yet might be .
I have but lately learned it—
'Twas German Poesie.

There came two mighty fairies,
To that fair child of kings,
Each, o'er her cradle bending,
A birthday offering brings.
"Aye, only smile upon me,"
(The first thus quickly spoke,)
"An early death I give thee,
And from a spindle's stroke."

Against her spake the other,
 “ Aye, only smile on me,
And the blessing that I bring thee,
 From the death-wound makes thee free.
So safely shall it guard thee,
 Sweet sleep shall on thee lie,
Till a King's son come to wake thee,
 Four hundred years gone by.”

Then through the realm was published
 A solemn stern command—
Death to the disobedient,
 Proclaimed o'er all the land.
All spindles whatsoever
 Delivered up must be,
And in the open places,
 Be burned immediately.

Not after common fashions
 The child was reared and taught,
Mid walls of gloomy chambers,
 Nor else where spindles wrought.

Oh, no ! in flowery gardens,
In the cool fresh woods away,
With young and blithe companions,
In free and fearless play.

She, as the years flew o'er her,
The loveliest damsel grew,
With hair so long and golden,
With eyes so deeply blue.
In speech so frank and gentle,
In bearing sweet and staid,—
Well skilled in every labour,
Save but the spindle's trade.

Now many a proud knight coming,
That Beauty's service took,—
Henry of Ofterdingen,
Wolfram of Ashenbrooke.
They went in steel and iron,
With gold-strung harps in hand,—
Well honoured was the Princess,
Such servants could command.

R

Aye, ready were they ever,
With their spears and with their swords,
And sang of woman's glory,
In many a strife of words.
They sang of pure devotion,
Of Warrior's dauntless might,
Of Love's more soft emotion,
Of sweet May's flowery light.

From the walls of ancient cities
The echo sounded long,—
The burgher and the peasant
Uplifted joyous song.
A lay came from the mountains
That watch above the cloud,
And the miners' deepest caverns
Re-echoed it aloud.

So wondrous bright were glancing
The stars one fair May night,
They tempted forth the Princess,
Up to her turret's height.

Thence on the roof she wandered,—

That gentle one alone,—

And there from out a chamber,

A glimmering lamplight shone.

A little grey haired woman

There with a distaff span :

No tidings yet had reached her

Of that strict spindle ban.

Before that time the Princess

Such craft did never view ;

She stepped to the little old woman,

“ By your leave, pray who are you ? ”

“ My name, my pretty darling,

Is Closet Poesie,

For from my own dear closet

Astray I ne'er may be.

In my own snug corner sitting,

Still to my distaff true,

My old blind cat, you see her,

In my lap is spinning too.

R 2

“ A long, long learned poem
I spin with care and coil ;
But quick a flaxen Epic
Is wound with little toil.
My cat is Tragedy mewing,—
My wheel has a Lyric whirl,—
And Comedy plays my spindle,
And can a Ballet twirl.”

When thus she named the spindle,
Pale, pale the Princess grew,
And swiftly had departed,
But the spindle toward her flew !
And on the mouldering threshold
The maiden stumbling fell,
Her heel the spindle piercing,—
So worked the promised spell.

How were they terror stricken,
Who found her at morning peep ;
In vain they strove to wake her,—
She slept a charmed sleep.

In the Hall of Knights so lofty,
Her couch was ready soon,
With cloth of gold 't was covered,
With countless roses strewn.

So in the Hall lay sleeping
The Princess, richly dressed ;
And shortly all around her
Were with like sleep oppressed.
E'en in their dreams the minstrels
Their strings yet mournful tried,
Till, in the castle's vastness,
The last lone echo died.

The dame in her silent closet,
Still on her spinning sped,
And soon, through every chamber,
Her cobwebs seemed to spread.
The forest boughs were weaving,
Around that castle proud ;
Above it, in the heaven's vault,
Was spun a grisly cloud.

Four hundred years had fled,
The King's son rode thereby,
And came, with all his hunters,
That woodland fastness nigh.
“What see I yonder rising
Above the forest tall,—
Grey pinnacles and towers high,
Of wondrous seeming all?”

An old brother of the spindle,
In his way rose up with speed,—
“O mighty Prince, excuse me,
And my true warning heed.
Romantic men devourers
Dwell in yon ruined Hall,
Who, with their barbarous daggers,
Will slay both great and small.”

The King's son all undaunted,
Chose forth three hunters stout,—
A path unto the castle,
They with their swords hewed out.

And lowered was the drawbridge,
And opened wide the door ;
A little fawn that moment,
Skipped out their steps before.

For in the empty courtyard,
Unchecked the thicket sprang ;
And there among the branches,
The wild bird freely sang.

Without delay the hunters
Pressed boldly on their road,
To where a door, with pillars,
From out the forest showed.

Two giants there lay sleeping,
Without that pillared door,
And, as to bar their entrance,
Their halberds crossed before.

But, o'er them lightly treading,
The hunters onward passed,
With fearless steps advancing,
They reached the Hall at last.

There many a gorgeous lady,
In lofty niche was seen,
And there lay Knights in armour,
With gold strung harps between.
Those forms so fair and mighty,—
Eyes closed and mute,—might be
For monuments mistaken,
Of hoar antiquity.

And in the midst there saw they
A golden couch so rare,
Where all bedecked was lying
A lady wondrous fair.
And all around the sweet one,
Fresh roses thickly strown,—
But rose hues far more lovely,
On lip and cheek were thrown.

If life or sculptured image,
The Prince was fain to test,
And, on her red lips, bending,
A gentle kiss impressed.

The truth he soon discovered,

In that breath so sweet and warm ;

And as his neck she circled,

Yet sleeping, with her arm,

She stroked the golden ringlets

From off her forehead white ;

She raised in sweet amazement

Her blue eyes' startled light.

Then, in the niches round her,

Waked knights and ladies all,

And the ancient lays resounded

Through the wide regal Hall.

A rosy golden morning

The glad May o'er us flings,—

The youthful Prince his beauty

From the dark forest brings.

And there, with lofty bearing,

The ancient minstrels throng,

Like some gigantic spirits,

With strangely thrilling song.

The sleep-bewildered vallies
Wake to that music blest ;
Whoe'er one spark hath cherished
Of youth within his breast,
Echoes, with deep emotion,
“ Hail, golden morn, to thee,
Who back to us art bringing
Our German Poesie !”

The old dame still is sitting
Within that chamber small ;
The roof has sunk in ruin,
And chill the rain-drops fall.
She scarce her thread is drawing,
So crippled is her sway,—
So rest and peace be with her,
For ever and a day !

THE RING.

THERE went forth at early morning,
A knight oppressed with care,—
He wandered o'er the meadows,
And thought of his lady fair.

“ My little gold ring so trusty,
Good tidings I seek from thee,—
Thou pledge from my own fair lady,
How stands her truth to me ?”

As closer he observed it,
The little ring of gold
Sprang fairly from his finger,
And along the meadow rolled.

With hasty hands and trembling,
He would fain its course have stopped,
But the dazzling flow'rets blind him,
And the grass with dew be-dropped.

A Falcon that had watched him,
Beneath the linden pass,
From its summit downward swooping,
Has snatched it from the grass.

With strong and mighty pinion,
High in the air he flies,
And there his brother meets him,
To snatch the golden prize.

Yet neither of them won it,—
The little ring downward went ;
And the Knight has watch'd its falling,
Afar in the deep lake sent.

The fish all eager darted
To catch the bauble bright,
But the little ring sank under,
Till it vanished from his sight.

“ Oh, little gold ring in the meadow,
There mocked thee grass and flower !
Oh, little gold ring in the heavens,
There bore thee the wild bird's power.

“ Oh, little gold ring in the water,
The fish may snatch thee free !
Little ring ! and are these the tokens,
Of my lady-love’s truth to me ? ”

BERTRAND DE BORN.

HIGH upon its craggy fastness,
Ruined smoulders Autafort,
And its chief, in heavy fetters,
Stands the victor's tent before.
" Art thou he whose sword and singing
Spread rebellion far and wide ;
Who my children lured to daring,
Which their sire's behest defied ?
" There thou standest who hast vaunted
(Boasting with unmeasured flight)
That thou never yet hast needed
More than half thy spirit's might !
Now the half has failed to aid thee,—
Call then forth the whole amain,
That it rear again thy fortress,—
That it rend thy gyves in twain !"

“As thou sayest, my lord and master,
Standeth here Bertrand de Born,
Who with song has roused to vengeance
Perigord and Ventadorn !
He who (spurned of mighty monarchs)
In their eyes was still a thorn ;
Who, too well the children loving,
Bore for that the father's scorn.

“To the festal hall thy daughter,
Brought a Prince's bride to dwell ;
There my Envoy sang before her,—
Sang the song I taught him well :
Sang what erst had been her glory—
How her minstrel loved of yore,—
Till her shining bridal raiment
Falling teardrops sparkled o'er !

“From the olive's slumbering shadow,
Rushed thy noblest son to war,
When my battle-song resounded,
Like a trumpet note afar.

Swiftly was his good steed saddled,—
Proudly I his banner bore ;
Onward—till the death shaft smote him,—
Stricken down at Montfort's door.

“In my arms as he lay bleeding—
Ah ! 'twas not the sharp cold steel,
'Twas thy curse lay heavy on him—
Made him all death's anguish feel.
Over mountain, vale, and ocean,
Tow'rd thee stretched his hand in vain ;
And, as thine came not to meet it,
Mine he clasped again—again.

“Then (as Autafort lies ruined)
Ruined was my spirit's sway ;
Neither whole nor half is left me—
Warrior's glaive or minstrel's lay.
Lightly thou my arm hast fettered,
Since my spirit's rent in twain ;
Only for a lay of sorrow,
Has it wakened once again.”

Spake the King, his brow o'erclouded,
 "Thou my son hast led astray ;
Hast my daughter's heart enthralled—
 E'en mine own hast moved to-day !
Take my hand, Friend of the Lost One,
 Grace to thee shall do him right.
Off with the fetters ! Of thy spirit
 I have felt the breathing might."

RENUNCIATION.

WHO mid the flow'rs is wand'ring late,
In the pale starlight dim ?
Do hope and love his coming wait ?
Will the night be bless'd for him ?
No, 'tis the minstrel's foot that breaks
Upon the silent hour,—
And now a mournful lay he wakes
Beneath that lofty tower.

“ Oh ! listen, Lady, from thine height,
List to a hallowed rhyme,
That to thee a dream is wafting light
From childhood's rosy time.
Hither I came at the vesper bell,
And ere dawn far hence must be ;
And the castle where I once did dwell,
May no more in sunshine see.

“Far from the taper-lighted hall,
Where thou art throned, I bide ;
Where nobles, at thy festive call,
Are thronging in their pride.
Where joy is all familiar grown,
And the glad alone are sought ;
And where, alas ! Love’s plaining tone
And Childhood’s claims are nought.

“Oh ! heavy twilight, cease to overwhelm
Awhile each dusky tree,
That I once more in the fairy realm
Of Childhood blest may be.
And here upon the turf I’ll lean,
Till a child, with noiseless tread,
Shall, wandering like an elfin queen,
Fling flowers around my head.

“Aye, but that time is past away,
Yet Memory yieldeth never,—
She lighteth with her rainbow ray
The troubled clouds for ever.

Buried alike are joy and smart,
But let not Memory perish ;
Oh ! tell me only if thy heart
One thought of Childhood cherish.”

The song was hushed ; but one had listened—
The window open'd slow,
And something downward fell and glisten'd
On the shadowy turf below.
“Go, take this ring—still be the dream
Of me and of Childhood dear—
Keep it : upon the circlet gleam
A Diamond—and a Tear.”

A DREAM.

I HAD a dream not long ago,
On a height I seemed to be ;
It was beside the ocean strand,
I looked far inward to the land,
And over the wide, wide sea.

And there below me on the tide,
A gallant vessel lay,
With gorgeous colours waving o'er,—
The pilot standing on the shore,
As it wearied him to stay.

Down from the distant hills there came
A fair and gladsome train ;
Brightly as angels on they wound,
With flowery wreaths their temples bound,
And swift they neared the main.

Before the long procession moved
 A swarm of children gay,—
Some high their foaming beakers bore,
Some played, some sang, and evermore
 Swept on with dance and play.

And thus they to the Helmsman spake,
 “Wilt thou our troop convey?
We are the race of Joy and Mirth,
Fain would we part from this dull earth,
 Far from the earth away!”

He bade them in his vessel tread,
 But ere he loosed his sail,
He spake, “Now say, ye loved ones, mind,
Does there not one remain behind,
 On mountain or in vale?”

They shouted forth, “We are all—we are all!
 Make sail, for we’re in haste!”
With freshening wind they onward spring,
Far, far I see them vanishing,
 From the dark earth’s joyless waste.

TO DEATH.

THOU who still in evening's light,
Wanderest through earth's garden free,
Gathering flowers and golden fruit—
All that God has sown for thee.

Spare him, Death ! who peaceful lies,
Shrinking upon Life's soft breast ;
Lulled by sweetest song to rest,
Gazing on his mother's eyes.

Leave thou unto earth her son—
Him whose might the storm compels ;
Him for whom a joyous tone
Through the lifeless forest swells.

Quench not the spirit of the wise,
Him around whose sunny glance,
Woven fair in measured dance,
Youthful moons may circling rise.

Float thou on the silver clouds,
Mutely in the starlight clear—
Where Age unto his household gods,
Nightly consecrates a tear.

Speak the names most loved by him—
Lead him in your garland bright—
Where the eye's immortal light,
Parting tears no more shall dim.

And the youth, whose spirit burning,
Love's new longing wakes and warms,
Him who, with unquiet yearning,
Stretches forth his open arms—

Who to every flower-like star
Fondly turns his eager face,
Clasp him in a friend's embrace—
Bear him through the azure far.

Where a bridal song is pealing,
Where Love's breath around him winds,
Where each once wild dreamy feeling—
Now a welcome greeting finds.

There the soul's blest spring shall be,
That waketh young in that new being,
Eternal inspiration seeing—
Rejoicing in eternal melody.

THE POET'S EVENING WALK.

Go lose thyself in evening light—
That is the hour for Poet's trance—
And ever turn thy longing sight
Upon the sun's declining glance ;
In loftier bliss thy spirits rove,
The Temple's halls thou there shalt find,
Where Heavenly phantoms floating move,
Where holiness is self-enshrined.

But when around that sacred dome
The darkening night-clouds roll and lower,
'Tis finished—and thou turnest home,
All blesséd by those wonders' power.
In still emotion wilt thou go,
Bearing within thee gift and lay ;
The light thou 'st looked on there shall glow,
Mildly around thy dusky way.

THE FERRY.

THIS self-same stream, long years ago,
I mind me I was ferried o'er ;
Here stands the fort in sunset glow,
The weir is rushing as of yore.

This self-same bark then with me bore
Two comrades in its narrow scope ;
One friend—alas ! a father more—
One younger—and how rich in hope !

The one in stillness onward driving—
So past, so ended was his life ;
The other, ever foremost striving,
Is fallen at last in storm and strife.

So when I dare, in hours like this,
Think on some past, some happier day,
Still must I those companions miss—
Those dear ones Death has snatched away.

Yet Friendship's bond has only power
 When soul with soul is fondly blent ;
Our spirits communed in that hour—
 The spirit's tie is yet unrent.

Here, Ferryman, thy hire is paid—
 I give thee threefold thy demand ;
Two that with me the voyage made,
 Were beings from the spirit land.

THE ELM OF HIRSAU.

At Hirsau an elm is growing
Among the ruins dark ;
Its fresh green coronal showing,
High o'er the gable's mark.

Deep down its roots are clinging
To the ancient cloister's site ;
As a vaulted roof 't is springing
Forth to the Heaven's own light.

While air and sun depriving
The building's narrow sway—
Still higher that elm was striving,
Until it reached the day.

The four walls girt around it,
As if they meant, in time,
That daring growth to bound it,
Ere to the clouds it climb.

Whene'er I wandered lonely
Down that green valley's side,
'Twas on the glad elm only
My spirit loved to bide.

'The mute damp ruin seeking,
While there I listening hushed—
Its bending boughs were speaking,
As the wind's flight o'er them rushed.

Oft times I saw it glowing
In morning's earliest ray ;
I saw light o'er it flowing,
When in shade the valley lay.

In Wittenberg's cloisters springing,
Was such another tree—
Its giant arms upflinging,
Till they forced the cell's roof free.

Oh, beam of Heaven ! thou rivest
The dark grave with thy might ;
Oh, Spirit of Life ! thou strivest
Upward to air and light !

THE KING ON THE WATCH TOWER.

THERE lie they all—each dusky vale,
Each hoary mountain—in soft repose ;
Sleep reigns around, and no voice of wail
To mine ear the night wind blows.

For all, for all have I watched and striven,
With sorrow I drank of the sparkling wine ;
Night comes, and new life to the Heaven is given—
I will gladden this soul of mine.

Oh, thou golden writing traced in each star,
Fondly to thee my gaze I rear ;
Their wondrous music scarce heard afar—
How it soothes my longing ear.

Mine eye is dim, and gray my hair—
The weapons of conquest hang in the hall ;
My word has been just, and my deed been fair—
When may I rest from all ?

Oh, blessed rest, how for thee I pine !

Oh, glorious night, how thou lingerest long !
Till I look on the stars more vivid shine,
And list to their choral song.

THE WREATH.

WHEN trees and flowers so many meanings borrow,
When Love has claimed the Rose leaves for his own,
Forget-me-not speaks in its name alone,
The Laurel tells of Fame—the Cypress, Sorrow,—
When, where the other tokens all are mute,
In colours still may tender fancies speak—
Envy and Pride we in the yellow seek,
And Hope is fluttering on each verdant shoot,—
So may I well within my garden find
Sweet flowers of every hue, of every kind,
And bring them strung in one wild Wreath to Thee.
Aye, since to Thee my Envy, Hope, and Sadness—
My Love, my Faith, my Glory, and my Gladness—
To Thee my Life, my Death, devoted be.

THE GOSSAMER.

As o'er the fields thy steps I led,
A Gossamer was floating free—
And light and bright the fairy thread
Soon formed a chain 'tween thee and me.

It seemed a gracious omen, lending
A token Love as soon employed ;
Oh, Hopes of one on Hope depending,
Woven of mist—by air destroyed !

ON A GRAVE STONE.

WHEN thou, upon this burial stone,
See'st hand in hand thus fondly grasped,
An earthly union there is shown—
Closely, but oh ! how briefly, clasped.

It tells, too, of a parting hour,
Where hand from hand was sadly riven—
Of bonds that o'er the soul have power,
Of greetings that in Heaven are given.

TO THE FATHERLAND.

I MIGHT devote these songs to thee,
My own beloved fatherland ;
Thy newly wakened powers to free,
Might all my soul's best gifts command.

Yet Heroes' blood for thee has gushed—
For thee Youth's brightest glories pale ;
Such pure, such lofty offerings crushed—
Oh ! what may these poor lays avail ?

THE GRAVE.

FEARFUL is the Grave !

Cold winds round it knelling,
Showers and chill mist swelling,
Grief and terror make their dwelling,
In the silent Grave !

Lovely is the Grave !

Soft doth that stillness call,
Cool do the shadows fall,
Deepest peace is whispering all,
In the quiet Grave !

Dismal is the Grave !

Irksome is that narrow wall,
Its breadth, and length, and depth, and height,
Just seven paces bound it all—
Dismal is the Grave !

Lovely is the Grave

A sure defence its narrowness,
From the ever wearying press ;
From the juggling pageants proud,
From the fools in motley crowd,
Shields us well that narrow shroud ;

Lovely is the grave !

Dismal is the Grave !

Its darkness blacker than the night,
Through which no sunbeam glances bright—
Not a star may ever gleam,
Or the softer moonlight stream—

Dark and dreadful is the Grave !

Lovely is the Grave !

Its shadow flinging
O'er the faint wanderer freshness bringing,
While its cool breast
Lulls the hot wearied pilgrim to his rest—

Lovely is the Grave !

Fearful is the Grave !

Rain is rushing—thunder growling—
Driving hail and fierce winds howling,
Round the storm-lashed Grave !

Lovely is the Grave !

O'er the turfed hillock spring winds blowing,
Sweet at its feet the violets growing,
And on it blooms Forget-me-not.
There falls the moon's pale beam,
Hesper's cold rays, and morning's rosy gleam,
While Echo's half-heard note,
And plaintive wailings float,
Around the grass-grown spot—
Lovely is the Grave !

Lonely is the Grave !

There all living sounds are mute,
There is heard no wanderer's foot ;
Joyous greetings never come
To visit that eternal gloom,—
Ah ! lonely is the Grave !

Aye, is the Grave so lonely ?

No : Joy's wild revel only,

And Folly's laughing glance,

And Riot's noisy dance—

They visit not the Grave.

But the life-wearied Sage and Sorrow's child,

The son of song will wander mild,

Beside the still and grassy heap,

And muse upon its secrets deep—

Not lonely is the Grave !

Senseless is the Grave !

Deaf and speechless—numb and cold—

Clothed alone in darksome mould,

Hope's glance of light,

And Fancy's visions bright,

And Love's delight,

Lost are they all within the senseless Grave—

Fearful is the Grave !

Lovely is the Grave !

All the discord, all the strife,

All the ceaseless feuds of life,

Sleep in the quiet Grave !

Hush'd is the battle's roar,

The red fire's rage is o'er,

The wild volcano heaves no more—

Deep peace is promised in the lasting Grave—

Lovely is the Grave !

L. TH. ROSEGARTEN.

VIA CRUCIS VIA LUCIS.

THROUGH night to light, and though thick darkness
hover,

Veiling creation from thy mournful sight ;
Yet trust—oh, trust, for midnight's deepest cover
Is followed by the sunrise glad and bright.

Through storm to calm, and when o'er earth and sky
The winds upon their thund'ring wheels roll wild ;
Yet trust—oh, trust—let the fierce storm pass by,
And soon shall follow stillness soft and mild.

Through frost to spring, and when the north wind blows,
And to its frozen heart the earth is numb,
Still hope and trust—after the winter snows,
May's genial breath shall kindly whispering come.

Through strife to freedom—in the raging battle,
When thousand fearful deaths around thee throng—
Yet trust—oh, trust—to the loud cannon's rattle
Succeeds the lay of peace—the victor's song.

Through toil to rest—and when the mid-day heat
On thy weak frame, heavy and sultry lies,
Still hope and trust—cool evening's dewy feet
Shall bring refreshing slumber to thine eyes.

Through pain to health—and when the ills of life
With giant strength come crushing fast on thee ;
Yet trust—oh, trust—soon from this tearful strife,
The mercy of thy God may set thee free.

Through woe to weal—weapest thou through the day,
And dost thou weep from night till morning breaks,
Still hope and trust—thy cares upon Him lay,
Who over thee in Heaven still watching wakes.

Through death to life—through this dim vale of tears,
This earth, where thorns and dangers round us stand,
Oh, haste we on, where our great home appears,
Amid the brightness of the better land.

L. TH. ROSEGARTEN.

ELEGY,

WRITTEN IN THE RUINS OF AN OLD MOUNTAIN CASTLE.

SILENT, beneath the ev'ning's twilight veil,
The plains are sleeping—hush'd the woodbird's
song ;

Only a cricket's melancholy wail
Is cheerless heard, these ancient walls among.
And there is stillness in the unclouded air ;
Slowly the cattle from the fields repair—
The wearied lab'rer hastes, his toil forgot,
To seek the shade of his paternal cot.

And here, upon this dark and wood-crown'd steep,
Amid the ruins of a bygone day,
Where phantoms of the past around me sweep,—
To thee, oh ! Sadness, I devote my lay.

Then sorrowing Fancy to my sight uprears
These crumbling relics, as in former years,—
A fortress, turreted in martial pride,
Rises above the mountain's rocky side.

There, where around the shattered pillar's base,
Mournfully whispering, the ivy clings ;
Where, through the perished window's yawning space,
One troubled gleam the crimson sunset flings—
E'en there, perchance, an aged father blest,
With parting tears, his bravest and his best,
Whose heart, with glory's fever burning high,
Swell'd wildly as the battle dawn drew nigh.

“Farewell, my boy,” thus spake the warrior grey,
Girding him with the sword that once he bore,
“Be worthy of thy father's name to-day ;
Return a victor—or, return no more !”
Then from the youthful champion's eye of light
A death-flame sparkled, ominously bright ;
While flushed the smooth young cheek, as softly glows,
In morning's early beam, the opening rose.

As Cœur-de-Lion brave, that knightly form
Rushed, like a thunder-bolt, amid the fight ;
As bends the pine wood in the wintry storm,
So sank the foe beneath that arm of might :
Yet mild as streamlets that o'er wild flowers roam,
Returned he to his castle's mountain home,
His father's glance of tearful joy to meet,
And his fond mother's clasp of welcome sweet.

Where the wild weeds their clinging tendrils twine,
Spreading the owlet's dusky nest around,
There, till the stars gave forth their silver shine,
Was heard the goblet's free and mirthful sound.
And there the tale of battle, hardly fought ;
Of mighty deeds, in holy warfare wrought,—
To each young heart the noble yearning gave—
He, too, might be remembered with the brave.

Alas, the change ! now night and terror shroud
The once gay scene of that fair chivalry ;
And, sadness bearing, evening winds moan loud,
Where erst the warrior threw his armour by.

And here, perchance, where lonely thistles wave,
The boy in vain for shield and spear might crave,—
When the fierce battle-cry around him rung,
And eagerly to horse his father sprung.

Bones of the mighty, ye are ashes now,
Deep in the darkness of earth's secret breast ;
Scarce one half-sunken stone remains to show
The long forgotten dwelling of your rest.
Flung to the heedless winds long since your doom,
And your remembrance sunk as is your tomb.
O'er deeds of high emprise, through ages told,
Forgetfulness her sullen cloud has rolled.

So pass away life, and life's purpose high—
So flees away our visions' idler might ;
So sink, as Time's swift current rushes by,
All that the earth has borne in silent night.
Laurels, whose wreaths the Conqueror's forehead
graced—
Deeds that on bronze and marble deep were traced ;
Urns, consecrated all to memory—
And songs, alas ! to immortality !

All that of love and longing worthiest seem
To noble hearts, in this our world below,
Vanish like autumn sunshine's fickle gleam,
When tempest clouds upon the horizon grow.
'Tis idlesse all—Wealth, Honour, Might, Renown !
A ruler of the world's most lofty crown,
And a poor trembling head, and pilgrim stave—
One self-same darkness shadows in the grave.

MATTHISON.

THE EMPEROR HENRY IV. AT HAMMERSTEIN.

WITHIN his lofty fastness sits Wolf of Hammerstein,—
So in his nest the eagle rests in the evenshine ;
So rests the cagéd lion within his silent den,
Who never through the forest shall roam for strife again.

Once bore he proud in battle the banner of the realm,
In scorn of foes upraising the visor of his helm,—
And followed Emperor Henry right true from land to
land,
Now victor and now vanquished—now banning and
now banned.

Oft thinks he yet with horror of that drear winter day,
When Henry in Canossa well nigh o'er mastered lay.
Anon he then bethinks him, with the youthful fire of
yore,
How they together triumphed the raging foemen o'er.

And oft a gentler image floats on his spirit's view,—
 The Emperor's lofty lady—so good, so mild, and true.
 Past many a bitter sorrow her wayward husband
 gave,
 She long in peace has slumbered low in her quiet
 grave.

Still is the Emperor striving with Time, and Fate, and
 Wrong,
 But Wolf, the aged warrior, in his tower has rested
 long ;
 Snow white his hair is growing, and weak the mighty
 hand—
 Thence looks he oft in sadness far over stream and
 land.

Yet, ah ! all vainly round him that troubled glance is
 cast,—
 No eaglet now is rushing like him upon the blast ;
 No lion's whelp is springing the foeman's force to dare,
 And bring the spoil of battle to the ancient lion's lair.

Oh, grief to heart so haughty ! in daughters ends his
line—

The fairest sister roses that bloom upon the Rhine ;
Yet scanty him may gladden those forms so fair and
mild,
And often must they listen to chiding rough and wild.

“ Away, away the distaff, and bid the spindle flee ;
Thou spinnest bridal trimmings—thou wilt not bide
with me.”

“ I spin for thee a mantle, my father dear and tried ;
So long as thou wilt love me I would not be a bride.”

“ Hence with that weaver’s shuttle ! Dost weave
my winding sheet !”

“ A costly robe I’m weaving for thee, my father
sweet.

Oh ! speak no more of dying, else must I moan and
sigh.

From us thou shalt not sever—not e’en for Heaven on
high.”

“ Aye, were ye gallant sons twain, with you I’d gladly
 bide,
 And to my heart would clasp you with honest joy and
 pride ;
 But ye are helpless women, in narrow circle bound—
 I am the last poor scion—my tree is fading round.”

He speaks, and from the lattice looks forth with
 darkening glance,
 And with a saddened spirit bewails his luckless chance ;
 The night is falling o’er him, and veils each distant
 sign ;
 Storm in the air is howling—beneath him roars the
 Rhine.

Hark ! who so late is knocking beneath the portal high ?
 “ Up, up, Sir Knight, and quickly—ere the pursuit
 draw nigh.”
 They fling the wide hall open—two pilgrims do they
 see ;
 One at the entrance waiteth—who may this other be ?

He flings him down exhausted, and sighs and moans
aloud ;

At such strange guest the maidens are both in terror
bowed ;

But when at length he raises that hoary head once more,
Before him, lowly kneeling, the old Knight trembles
sore.

He cries, " My Lord and Master ! what hath betided
thee ;

I from thy shoulders waving no more the purple see !

I see no circlet glittering upon thy honoured brow :

Oh ! say, have traitors smitten—have robbers spoiled
thee now ? "

" Ah ! dear and trusty Comrade, a fiercer foe was mine ;
In dungeon might he held me where never sun might
shine ;

He spoiled me of my purple—my throne he basely won ;
And he—oh, must thou know him ? the traitor is my
son."

With both his hands he covers his forehead pale and
high ;

In silence Wolf has risen, but light is in his eye ;
He feels his daughters clinging with soft arms round
his form,

And on his hands the teardrops are falling fast and
warm.

“ Oh ! well for thee,” said Henry, at length, in altered
tone,

“ In thy last hour to rest thee on faithful hearts alone.
No son thy heirdom covets with hard impatient will—
His secret wishes nursing, perchance, to open ill.

“ Yet up, and trusty message send forth without delay,
Cologne her faith still keepeth to the old Imperial
sway ;

And with to-morrow’s dawning must I be on the
Rhine,

And clad once more in armour for this last strife of
mine !”

He sinks upon his pillow to seek long needed rest,
And on those weary eyelids right soon is slumber
pressed.

“Good night!” Wolf clasps his daughters close to
his heart anew,

Then by the royal sleeper holds knightly vigil true.

A. V. STOLTERFOTH.

SILLY THINGS.

I WENT for a little walk one day,
And there happened a silly thing, you'll say.
In the forest a Hunter evermore
Rode up and down on the river shore,
And his bugle he blew through the forest free,—
Now tell me, good people, what that might be ?

As further I went on that same day,
There happened a sillier thing, you'll say.
A Fisher-maid sate in her little boat,
On the edge of the forest she let it float ;
The fish leaped up in the evening sun,—
And what did the Maiden ? She caught not one.
But she sang a lay to the forest free !—
Now tell me, good people, what that might be ?

As homeward I came that self-same day,
There happened the silliest thing, you'll say.
A riderless steed my pathway cross'd—
A pilotless boat on the shore was toss'd;
And, as I plodded the alders through,
What heard I among them? Why, whisperers two!
And 't was late, and the moonlight on stream and tree—
Now tell me, good people, what that might be?

From LIEDER UND BILDER.

FRANKENBERG BEI ACHEN.

I TREAD among thy ruins
With sadness and delight.
Oh, Past ! so rich in terrors,
My spirit owns thy might.

How oft these walls have listened
To the old Kaiser's glee,
And in the sunshine glistened,
And rung with minstrelsy.

Here was the warrior dwelling
When sank his love to sleep.
The bliss had been past telling—
The grief was all too deep.

And what thus sorely pained him,
What crushed the strong heart so,
These thousand years is lying
Beneath the blue lake's flow.

The ring of his fair lady,
That on her hand she wore,
On which the spell was graven
Of love for evermore ;

That ring the wave hath swallowed
Thus Karl his healing found ;
But still the gazing pilgrim
Lingers those waters round.

Aye, sooth, for all have drunken
Of that sweet beaker's flow ;
Aye, and for each lies sunken
Some Paradise below !

Thence is that lake so gloomy,
With weed and shingly side,—
For Love would fain its sorrow
Still from the cold world hide.

The Love that Joy is keeping
May frank and fearless be ;
But Love that's doomed to weeping,
Aye from the world would flee.

Oh! yearning all too mighty,
Now darkling—now confessed.
Oh! many visioned longing,
Thou lurkest in my breast.

Forth o'er the plain I wander,
And by the waters bright,
And traverse the green forest,
And ancient mountain height.

MAX VON SCHENKENDORF.

From the Spanish of Garcilaso.

SONNETS.

LIKE a fond mother, whom, with piteous wail,
Her suffering child doth tearfully entreat
For the small boon of some forbidden sweet,
Which given, she knows will but increase his ail ;
And yet, whose pitying love will not consent
That she consider of the future pain :
Speedy to do his bidding she is fain,
And stills the cry, though she the ill augment ;
Thus I my sick and wayward mind's intent
(That craveth thoughts of thee, for its own tine)
Would fain deny such mortal aliment ;
But still it craves, and, day by day, doth pine,
Till, to whate'er it will, do I relent,—
Forgetful of its peril, and of mine.

II.

OH! I am bathed in tears unceasingly,
For ever with my sighs I rend the air ;
And, most it grieveth me, I do not dare
Confess that I am brought to this by thee.
But, seeing where I am, and what I've passed
Of that strait path by which I follow thee,
If I am fain to turn my steps and flee,
On what is left, dismayed, mine eyes I cast.
If I essay to climb the toilsome height,
At every step, to fright me on my way,
Sad warnings of the fallen upon me press ;
And, worse than all, now faileth me the light
Of Hope, with which I wont of old to stray
Through the dark realm of thy forgetfulness.

III.


ALREADY Daphne's arms, extended wide,
In slender branches lengthening forth are seen ;
Already, turn'd to leaves of glossy green,
The hair, that with the bright gold's splendour vied.
Alas ! and rugged bark has now enshrined
Those tender limbs still, palpitating, warm ;
And now the pliant feet have lost their form
In clinging roots, among the cold earth twined.
And he who was the mover of this woe,
Even by force of weeping maketh grow
The tree, which he with tears, as rain-drops, steepeth.
Oh, miserable fate ! oh, load of ill !
That, weeping day by day, increaseth still
The source and reason for the which he weepeth.

IV.

LEVELLED to earth the pillars lie, and shattered,
On which my weary life did once depend.
Alas! how much of bliss one day may end.
Alas! how much of hope the wind hath scattered.
Alas! how vain and idle was my thought,
When occupied on aught of weal for me;
My hope a very vagrant seems to be,
And many times to chastisement is brought.
Most often I submit—sometimes rebel,
And with such fury, such renewing might,
That mountains heaped above had rended been:
And this, the wild desire on which I dwell,
That once again may bless my yearning sight,
One it were better I had never seen.

V.

If e'er in tears and moans such power might be,
That they the rivers in their course could rein,—
If, in the wild wood depths or shaded plain,
The trees were moved at Orpheus' melody,—
And if, in listening to his chaunt of woe,
Cold rocks their nature changed, and tigers fierce,
If (with less cause of grief than mine) could pierce
His plaints unto the realms of fear below,
Why softens not this weary life of mine
(This life with wretchedness and tears engrossed),
A heart against me hardened in its pride?
Surely to deeper pity should incline
The voice of him who mourns himself for lost,
Than his who mourns the loss of ought beside.



VI.

THINE image in my soul is graven deep,
And when to write of thee I vainly try,
Thou only writest, and a reader I
Alone—aye, even from thee aloof do keep.
In this persuasion rest I firm indeed,
Though worthless I thy sum of worth to hold,
So much good seen, I do believe the untold,
Taking for granted my unquestioned creed ;
For I was born to dote on thee alone,
My soul hath fitted thee to her own measure—
As my soul's garment would I wear thee nigh ;
For all I have, to thee my debt I own—
For thee was born—hold life but at thy pleasure, —
For thee to death am doomed—for thee will die.

From the French.

THE GOOD OLD DAME.

YES, you will grow old, my lady bright,
You will grow old, and I must die ;
This wicked old Time, the unlucky wight,
Takes pleasure in making our years flit by.
Survive me, dear, on this dreaming earth,
But in age forget not our youthful days,
And a good old dame by your quiet hearth,—
Remember your lover, and sing his lays.

Then, beneath the wrinkles that mar your cheek,
They will look for the charms that inspired my
song ;
And eagerly listen (while you shall speak),
To know more of the friend you have lost so
long.

Paint then the love and the faith you have tried,
And the jealousy, too, you were pleased to raise,
And a good old dame by your calm fireside,—
Remember your lover, and sing his lays.

Oh! thou, whom I taught to weep o'er the story
Of France's sorrows and France's fears,
Tell how I sang of Hope and Glory,
To make my country forget her tears.
Tell of the tempest, whose whelming tide
Has blighted the laurels of former days,
And a good old dame by thy calm fireside,—
Remember thy lover, and sing his lays.

My cherish'd one, when my fame shall fling
One gladdening ray o'er thy lonely hours—
When thy faded hand each coming spring
Shall deck my portrait with freshest flowers ;
Then lift thine eyes from this fleeting earth,
To our changeless home thy spirit raise,
And a good old dame by thy peaceful hearth,—
Remember thy lover, and sing his lays.

BERANGER.

THE DOG OF THE LOUVRE.*

PASSENGER! thy head uncover,

Here, where so many brave lie dead—
Flowers for the Martyr of the Louvre,—
For his friend, a bit of bread.

'T was in the raging battle hour

He rush'd within the volley's power—

His dog was with him gone ;
The lead struck both, and one struck deep—
But must we for the master weep ?

The dog lived on.

Mournful beside the brave man lying,

He calls him, his white head applying,

Caressing leant ;

* This dog belonged to one of the heroes who fell in "the Three Days," (July, 1830,) and were buried near the Louvre.

Upon his comrade's body, slow
The big tears roll, and in their flow,
 With red drops blent.

True watcher of the funeral mound,
No pleasure wins him from his bound
 Of misery ;
Shrinking from friendly hands away,
His look of sorrow seems to say,
 “ It is not he ! ”

When on the everlasting flowers
Sparkle the drops that morning pours
 From her bright urn,
His eye revives — his coat he sleeks —
His master's fondling thus he seeks
 At his return.

When wreaths that o'er the tomb are twined
Shiver in evening's chilly wind,
 Despairing quite,

As if to reach his master's ear
He growls—he whines—from him to hear
One more, “Good night.”

And if the snow-storm's fury come,
Hiding, with white flakes falling dumb,
The bed of Death,
He utters one sad tender cry,
And lays him down as to defy
The North wind's breath.

Ever before his eyelids doze
He makes, that marble to uncloze,
One effort vain.
And still his nightly comfort takes
The thought, “He'll call me when he wakes,”
Then sleeps again.

His dreams are of the barricade,—
His master, 'neath the fusillade,
Bleeding—alone.

He hears his whistle in the dark,
Springs toward the shade, with eager bark,
 Soon turned to moan.

Thus, hour by hour, his watch he keeps ;
Thus loves—thus suffers—and thus weeps,
 Till all be o'er.

What was his name? None, none can tell.
Never the voice he loved so well
 Shall speak it more.

CASIMIR DELAVIGNE.

GUSTAVUS.*

WHENCE is the joy of the shouting crowd?
Wherefore the trumpet's braying loud,
And banners floating free and light,
And torches, flashing far and bright,
From Upsal's palaces to-night?
The radiance falls with fitful gleam,
Upon the Sala's frozen stream,
Whose stirless waves, in crested pride,
Seem as the monarch of the tide
Had halted there his chivalry,
To grace that joyous revelry.

* Gustavus Ericson, or Vasa, having freed his country from the yoke of Denmark, was unanimously elected King of Sweden; Christiern, the Danish King, in revenge, caused the mother and sister of Gustavus, who were in his power, to be flung into the sea.— *Vide Vertot's "Histoire des Revolutions de la Swede."*

Hark ! hear ye not the thrilling tone,
To which the echoes ring ?
“ Hail to Gustavus Ericson—
To Sweden’s patriot King !
Our chosen King, whose good right hand
Has spurned the stranger from the land,
And sealed our liberty ;
Nobly his noble task is done,
And proudly that proud title won—
The monarch of the free.”
Within yon high and gorgeous hall
Gustavus holds his festival,
While gallant knights and ladies fair
Are met in bright assemblage there :
He sits enthroned in regal state,
A King by nature, as by fate,
Tho’ some unspoken sorrow now
Mars the proud beauty of his brow.
He sits in silence, and apart—
Oh, who may read the human heart ?
Or say why, in that shining hour,
That gives him grandeur, fame, and power,

The monarch's eye grows dim ;
Or why the patriot's cheek is pale,
When freedom, gladdening hill and vale,
His country owes to him.

That eye and cheek, which faded not,
E'en with the captive's pining lot ;
Or when (oh, foul ingratitude !)
He vainly for the shelter sued,

His ancestors had given,
And turned him from that convent gate,
A wandering outcast—desolate,

Disowned of all, save Heaven !
Or when his only welcome smiled
'Mid Dalecarlia's peasants wild.
Mourns he his Prince, his early friend ?
The warrior has no tears to spend,

On that half-envied grave ;
Peaceful and glorious be his sleep,
His fate let none but woman weep—
He fell as fall the brave.

Not, then, for him the monarch's eye
Unconscious falls on vacancy,

While Beauty's smile, and Minstrel's strain,
Around him woke, and woke in vain.
The festive hall is seen no more,
His fancy seeks thy hostile shore—
Thou stern, wave-thwarting Elsinore.
He sees two helpless captives stand,
Unpitied, on thy rugged strand—
 A matron grave, and weeping maid,
Who wildly round her mother clings,
And then to Heaven her white arms flings,
 And on her brother calls for aid.
He sees the smile of fierce delight
 On Christiern's gloomy brow,
And hears him cry, "Aye, from the height,
 Sweden, I smite thee now!"
And then the vision darker grows,
And round those gentle sufferers close
 Slaves of the tyrant's will;
There is a sudden splash—a cry—
And then the waves howl fearfully,
 And all beside is still.

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Gustavus starts, and wakes again
To light, and life, and minstrel strain,
 And greets the fair and brave ;
But irksome is the monarch's part,
While yet the son's and brother's heart
 Dwells in that moaning wave.

THE DEATH OF AGAG.

THE sun went down ere Israel's hand,
In Havilah was stayed,
Ere Saul recalled his scattered band,
And wiped his reeking blade.
But *one* was spared of all his foes,
And ere that sun again arose,
The Prophet of the Highest came,
With brow severe, and eye of flame,
And, at his bidding, stern and high,
They led the fallen one forth to die.

One little day—and he had been
The chief of that fair land,
And with unshrinking eye, had seen
Approach the hostile band.
And now he stands by Jordan's flood,
All crimsoned with his people's blood,

And sees, where'er his glance he bends,
Nought but stern foes and faithless friends ;
The Kenites turned aside to dwell
Beneath the shield of Israel ;
And he the last unpitied wreck
Of all the pride of Amalek.

He had not learned his trust to place
In Him who loves not wrong,
Who to the swift gives not the race,
Or battle to the strong ;
And guess'd not how his brave could fall,
So weak, beneath the hand of Saul.
And when before the avenger led,
No marvel that the lost one said,
As round his hopeless eyes he cast—
“ Surely the bitterness of death is past ! ”

And though some instinct wisely given
To mortals at their birth,
Makes the worn heart, however riven,
Still feebly cling to earth ;

Yet are there thousands lingering on,
In this dark world, when all is gone,
That to their hearts could ever give
One earthly joy for which to live ;
Yet shrinking from that pang—the last—
Although the bitterness of death be past.

The exile, yearning for the home
 He shall not see again ;
The mother pining o'er the tomb
 Of those she reared in vain ;
The patriot held in servile thrall,
Doomed to survive his country's fall ;
Or he, most wretched, who has proved
The worthlessness of those he loved :
For them, where'er such lot be cast,
“ Surely the bitterness of death is past ! ”

THE CHILD'S WATCH.

MOTHER, oh, Mother ! thy sleep is long—
The lark is chaunting his matin song ;
The flowers spring up where the morning treads,
And fling the dew from their drowsy heads.
They told me thou would'st awake again,
But I watch and listen, and cry in vain ;
Thy lowly bed the cold drops wet,—
Mother—oh, Mother ! sleepest thou yet ?

Wilt thou not wake ? 'tis the noontide hour—
The sunlight dwells on thy own loved bower ;
While all things else in that light rejoice,
I listen in vain for thy gentle voice.
The singing bee and the dragon fly,
On their restless wings are glancing by ;
The roses blossom thy hand had set,—
Mother—sweet Mother ! sleepest thou yet ?

Round me the evening shadows close—
The owl is waked from her day's repose ;
The yew's dark branches dimly wave,
But I know no fear by my Mother's grave.
When wilt thou rise from the cold dark earth,
To smile again on our fireside mirth ?
Thy name all hearts save mine forget,—
Mother—dear Mother ! sleepest thou yet ?

REMEMBRANCE.

“Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice,
Nella miseria.”—DANTE.

OH, song of days departed,
Why dost thou haunt mine ear?
To me, the weary hearted,
Too saddened is thy cheer.

Odours of withered flowers,
Why breathe ye still for me?
Bringing, of former hours,
The thought, but not the glee.

Kind words too idly measured,
Why seemed ye like a vow?
Bright looks, too fondly treasured,
Alas! what mean ye now?

Memories, from day-dreams banished,
Oh, wherefore haunt my sleep?
And at my waking vanished,
Leave me o'er dreams to weep!

THE WISE MAN'S WISH.*

STRANGE was the Sage's prayer,
That he might leave the haunts of men,
And sleep, till none the earth should bear,
Who lived around him then.

Did he thus worship low
The idol of earth's great ones—Fame ;
And only crave to wake, and know
The homage of his name ?

Alas ! the spell is broken,
The voice of praise is strange and drear,
When not by one loved lip 't is spoken,
Nor pleasures one loved ear.

* Dr. Franklin.

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Or nobler the demand,
If he but longed to close his eyes,
Till they might see his native lan
Among the nations rise.

Yet what that land, if void
Of the one home for which we pin
A lofty temple, undestroyed,
But with a ruined shrine.

Did the insatiate thirst
Of knowledge thus his spirit sway,
That half impels the soul to burst
Its darksome home of clay ?

That ceaseless toils and strives
(The goal ne'er reached—the prize ne'er won—)
The hoarded lore of many lives
To gather thus in one.

For this would he have roved
The shores the wide Atlantic laves,
To find, of all he knew or loved,
Nought save forgotten graves ?

Could his own era give
No home, no friend, no love, no tie?
And had he none for whom to live,
That thus he wished to die?

Still, while to meet and part,
Makes human joy and human care,
Strange, to affection's single heart,
Must seem the Sage's prayer.

A REVERIE.

OH, vain, vain musings, wherefore creep
 Around my loaded heart ?
Ye cannot lull one pain to sleep,
 Or bid one care depart.

Time's restless hand, that blights and sears,
 Has passed across my brow ;
The dreamy joys of other years
 Are not my solace now.

The brightness that around them shone
 Has waned to twilight gleams ;
The melody of gay hours gone,
 A dying echo seems.

Whence is the change—and what the spell ?
 And where the mystery ?
Alas ! two words the secret tell—
 Hope lost in Memory !

THE LEGEND OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT.*

THEY stood beside a deep blue lake,
 A stately knight, a maiden fair—
 The sky shone brightly o'er their head,
 The mountains seemed a barrier spread,
 'Twixt them and earthly care.

What reeked they, if behind them lay
 A world of woe, and strife, and lies ;
 They looked on Heaven's sunny glow,
 On Heaven in the lake below—
 Heaven in each other's eyes.

Poor wanderers in this nether world,
 Trained to our mournful parts, we come ;
 Silent our hopes, and loud our fears—
 Sorrow has words, and sighs, and tears,
 But joy most oft is dumb.

* The tale is told in Mills's "History of Chivalry."

There was no ripple on the wave,
 There was no cloud upon the sky ;
 Silent they stood, and nought was heard,
 Save when the mountain's kingly bird
 Floated majestic by.

They watched their shadows lengthening fall,
 Till, half afraid the calm to break,
 The maiden pointed with a smile,
 Where flowers upon a fairy isle
 Peered o'er the glassy lake.

The passing wish, if wish it were,
 Her gentle lips no utterance gave,
 But as she gazed across the tide,
 Her lover darted from her side,
 And plunged into the wave.

Fearless she sees him onward wend—
 The isle is gained—the wreath is won ;
 He turns : ha ! does her eye grow "dim ?
 Or does, indeed, the failing limb
 Refuse to bear him on ?

Is there no help? Her eager gaze
Glances o'er mountain, wave, and sky ;
The sky and wave are gleaming bright,
The eagle, from his mountain height,
Mocks her despairing cry.

Vain, vain her shrill and anguished shriek—
Vain, vain his fierce and wild endeavour ;
His dying voice floats o'er the tide,
“ Dearest—Forget-me-not—my bride !”
He sinks, and sinks for ever.

The fatal flowers are gently borne
On circling eddies to the spot,
Where she has fallen—and at her feet,
Seem still those death tones to repeat,
“ Dearest—Forget-me-not !”

* * * ● *

Ages have darkened o'er her grave—
Yet thou hast been, since that sad hour,
Still cherished on thy fragile stem ;
Affection's darling—Memory's gem—
A consecrated flower.

In many a clime, in many a tongue,
Thou, haunting well, or stream, or grot,
Borrowest familiar tones, and dear,
To cheat Love's superstitious ear,
Whisp'ring, "Forget-me-not."

And dost thou love the minstrel's lay?
And would'st thou cheer the poet's lot?
Then go for me, kind flower, and bear
To those I love, thy lowly prayer—
Bid them "Forget-me-not."

EXPERIENCE.

THEY smile to hear me say I'm old,
They mock me in their glee ;
'Tis not the summers I have told
That weigh so heavily.

It is not that my hair is gray,
Or that my eyes are dim ;
Time has not dulled mine ear, they say,
Or checked the active limb.

'Tis true—and yet my plaint of age
Is not a vain pretence ;
To some, life's lengthened pilgrimage
Brings but a quickened sense.

An iron measuring rod it brings,
And balance weights of woe,
And searcheth deep in hidden things,
That youth may never know.

Youth gazes on a laughing grace,
And nought beyond would ask ;
I look on grief's distorted face,
Behind that smiling mask.

I look upon a young fair face,
Which grief may never cloud ;
E'en there my practised eye may trace
The shadow of the shroud.

Youth deems each sweet and gentle phrase
Of truth and feeling born ;
But I have heard the voice of praise
Speak envy, pride, or scorn.

The spirit hidden pangs have stirred,
Speaks sharply to mine ear ;
And often, in a reckless word,
That bitter tone I hear.

And laughter, ringing clear and shrill,
The mother-tongue of mirth ;
Oh ! e'en in childhood's laugh lurks still
Some jarring note of earth.

And ask you how this lore was earned,
Of word, and look, and tone ?
Oh ! while the heart within me burned,
I've marked it in mine own.

And this, what men experience call,
And this their much-prized truth ;
Take—take this gathered wisdom all,
And give me back my youth !

THE LADY OF THE RHINE.

THE lady sate in her castle fair,
Above the flowing Rhine—
Nobles and knights were thronging there,
As pilgrims to her shrine.

The first who told his offers o'er
Was a lord of wealth and fame ;
He boasted of his golden store,
And his proud and stainless name.

“Lady, he said, “if wealth and power
May win thee to be mine,
With eastern gems I’ll deck thy bower,
On the beauteous banks of Rhine.”
But she turned in scorn from his proffer’d gold,
For woman’s heart may not be sold.

And next, there came the chieftain bold,
Of many a proud domain,
And lofty was the tale he told,
That lady's heart to gain.

“If thou dost joy in hawk or hound,
Oh, lady, wend with me ;
My forests fair are spreading round,
Far as thine eye can see.
The vaults, my castle halls below,
Are stored with ruby wine,
And far my sunny vineyards glow,
Along the banks of Rhine.”

But hawk, and hound, and wide domain,
To win the heart are all in vain.

A youthful knight stepped boldly forth,
With frank and dauntless word ;
“Lady, I've nought to meet thy worth,
But love and my own good sword.

“ I am a soldier, little taught,
In courtly haunts to shine,
But I will fight as thy fathers fought,
On the glorious banks of Rhine.”
A tear in the lady’s eye grew bright,
But her love was not for the gallant knight.

A minstrel came from a western isle,
And his voice was low and sweet ;
Joyous and proud was the minstrel’s smile,
As he knelt at his lady’s feet.

“ No costly gems, no gold I bring,
From my home beyond the deep,
But mine the song thou hast loved to sing,
And the lay that hath made thee weep.
Then, lady, scan this courtly throng,
And choose ’tween them and me ;
My heart, and my one poor gift of song,
Are all I offer thee.

“ And, not for love of thy sunny smile,
Or thy blue eyes' gentle shine,
May I forsake my western isle
For the pleasant banks of Rhine.”

The lady has passed from her bower away,
Her castle is mould'ring in slow decay ;
She is gone to light with her beaming smile
The minstrel's home in his western isle ;
Fairest and last of that ancient line,
She has wandered away from the banks of Rhine.

THE ECLIPSE.

I SATe and watched the moon's eclipse,
With glist'ning eye and parted lips,
 And heart that wildly thrilled ;
I watched the shadow wax and wane,
Yet sooth no science warm'd the vein,
 That thus my being filled.

I sate alone, in deepest shade,
And listened to the wind that made
 The light-leaved aspens quiver ;
All else was still—above, around,
Save that there came a murmured sound
 From my own gentle river.

Yet, though the scene was passing fair,
'Twas not its beauty chained me there,

Nor that bright orb to view ;
No, 'twas the thought, in that still time,
Of some who, in a distant clime,
Perchance were gazing too.

It was a fond and foolish thought,
And with a saddened feeling fraught—
As pondering mournfully,
I deemed their fancy wide would range
'Mong those who watched that shadowy change,
But never light on me.

As half aloud I breathed their name,
A wiser, holier sorrow came,
More pure from earthly leaven ;
The moon was darkened, and I sighed—
Alas ! 'tis thus earth's shadows glide,
Still between me and Heaven !

TO * * * *

DEAREST, while thou art far away,
To thee my thoughts unceasing roam ;
Amid the busy and the gay,
My heart is in thy unknown home.

Thick fogs obscure these gloomy walls,
Untuneful sounds are round me knelling,
Yet dream I how the sunlight falls
On blossomed woods, where thou art dwelling.

Oh, thus, whene'er our paths divide,
May all the sunshine rest on thine,
And I content will darkly glide,
With but that thought to comfort mine.

“WHAT IS TRUTH?”

FANCY and Hope, oh fond delusion,
Their spells around me fling ;
One making mine each bright illusion
The other loves to sing.

Vain Fancy's hoards of airy pleasures,
She pileth wide and high ;
They change—as childhood's fairy treasures
In age's altered eye.

Hope cheers me on through hours of sorrow,
Gilding the future way ;
Yet evermore, her brilliant morrow
Fadeth in dull to-day !

Oh solemn Truth ! thy face is pale,
Yet fearful bright thine eye ;
Beneath thy glance my visions quail—
At thy chill touch they die.

TO EARTH.

MY Mother Earth—my Mother Earth !

Oh, take me to thy quiet breast
Where gnawing cares and hollow mirth,
And cheating hopes are all at rest.
Oh, whither can the weak heart flee,
Where seek a shelter, but with thee ?

Sweet Mother, thou art sorely wronged,
By some who prate of earthly joys ;
As if to thy meek hand belonged,
The pomp and pride, the strife and noise,
That make men toil, and moan, and rave,
Betwixt the cradle and the grave !

What though within thy nursing fold,
(That gives the sinless flowers their life)
Thou hidest steel, and gems, and gold,
Those fruitful seeds of greed and strife ?
Yet Man's the blame, and Man's the loss,
Who turns thy precious gifts to dross !

Sweet Mother ! thou art green and fair,
As when from out thy Maker's hand,
Launched gently through the yielding air,
Thy path to seek at His command ;
Or, if some scars deform thy face,
'Tis Man has left his marring trace.

I'm weary of the failing reed,
The broken cisterns, rent and dry ;
Dumb idols ! at my utmost need,
Unmindful—heedless of my cry !
If thou hadst clasped me at my birth,
Much had been spared, dear Mother Earth !

Oh Mother ! find me, for my rest,
Some silent, lonely, dim retreat—
Then wrap me in thy kindly breast,
And thither charm some wandering feet—
And on the stone be warning borne,
For all who sin, or strive, or mourn,
That hallowed tears of priceless worth,
May fall on thee, my Mother Earth !

THE DYING CADET.

“Hame, hame, hame, hame,
Fain wad I be,
O hame, hame, hame,
In my ain countrie.”

Jacobite Relics.

MY far-off home, whose voices come,
With the night wind, o'er the deep,
As I lonely watch the billows' foam,
While all around me sleep.

I joy not in our vessel's race,
Across the bounding sea,
Each wave but rolls a lengthened space,
My home, 'tween thee and me.

But I love to search the deep blue skies,
Till the stars, that stud their dome,
Smile on me, like the kindly eyes
That light my far-off home.

I listen while my comrades tell
Gay tales of other times,
And paint the varied charms that dwell
In yon fair Eastern climes.

Their gorgeous roses' rich array,
The azure lotus flower—
More dear to me one jasmine spray
That scents my mother's bower.

Their pure fresh fountains ever playing
Within the marble dome—
I better love the brook that's straying
Around my far-off home.

On my pale brow, Death's chilling hand
Hath set a signet true ;
What care I for that foreign land,
I may not live to view ?

If slumber soothe my pains awhile,
My mother's eyes I see,
My little sister's quiet smile,
My brother's noisy glee.

Deep, deep and still, my rest will be,
Beneath the white sea-foam ;
That sleep will bring no dreams of thee,
My home—my far-off home.

“ I HAD A VISION IN MY SLEEP.”*

I SAT in a village churchyard fair,
 When the lime-blossom scented the evening air ;
 And I watched the sun as a king go down,
 With his crimson robe and his golden crown ;
 And thought, as I number'd each turfy mound,
 How many unconscious slumbered round,
 Who oft had looked on that westering sun,
 With lighter hearts than I had done—
 And how years might roll those slumberers o'er,
 And they should look on the sun no more ;
 And a shuddering smote me, as I said,
 Alas for the Dead ! the joyless Dead !

Sad in the holy ground I stayed ;
 The wind no more through the limetrees played ;

* Campbell.

Their mighty branches no shadow gave,
And I could not trace a single grave,
And the stirless air felt chill and thick,
And my spirit quailed, and my heart beat quick ;
Then there arose from the graves around,
Something that was not voice or sound ;
There was no breath, no tone, no word,
Yet spirits spake, and my spirit heard.

"Oh, joy for us that life is o'er,
That we may look on the sun no more ;
That never more on our aching eyes,
Another day of toil may rise ;
And we no more when the sun is set
Our weary couch with tears shall wet ;
All undisturbed is our darksome bed,—
Joy for the Dead ! the untroubled Dead.

"Say not we sleep—for sleepers start,
With burning head and throbbing heart,
From dreams of fear, or hate, or strife,
The restless shadows of restless life ;

Call it not sleep, our dreamless rest,
 For never babe, on its mother's breast,
 Lay free as we from care or dread,—
 Joy for the Dead ! the unsorrowing Dead !

“ We have hoped—and what in the wide world's scope
 Of falsest things, is false as Hope ?
 False is the blossom that brings not fruit ;
 False the fair tree with a canker'd root ;
 And the rainbow that smiles in a watery sky,
 And the sparkling stream that in summer is dry ;
 These come and pass—but when Hope is fled—
 Joy for the Dead ! the uncheated Dead !

“ We have feared—and Fear is a tyrant grim,
 That blanches the cheek, and fetters the limb,
 And crushes the spirit with iron sway ;
 But that ague-fever is passed away—
 No more to the wrath of the storm we bow,
 The oppressor's fury—where is it now ?
 They reach us not in our earth-bound bed—
 Joy for the Dead ! the unfearing Dead !

"We have loved—oh, is there one mortal grief,
But lies in those words, so few—so brief?
False Love has chilled us with bitter scorn,
True Love has left us, its loss to mourn,
And Love untold—that long dull pain—
'Tis past—we listen no more in vain
For the loved one's voice, or the loved one's tread—
Joy for the Dead! the unloving Dead!"

Ended, not hushed, that echoless song,
In the holy ground I lingered long;
Again the wind through the lime-trees blew,
Again the branches their shadows threw:
The moon arose and her lustre gave
Brightness and beauty to every grave—
But I—I turned from her silent rays
Back to the world, and its troubled ways;
And the thought is here, though the dream be fled—
Joy for the Dead! the unsorrowing Dead!

* * * * *

THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.

THE die is cast, the lot* is drawn—
The glad, the wretched, all are gone,
Save one who lingers on the shore,
Unmindful of the breaker's roar ;
And heedless of the tempest's din,
She has a wilder strife within.
Know ye the lot for which she sighs—
That envied lot her fate denies ?
To leave her pleasant native land,
 In distant climes to roam,
And seek, on some far foreign strand,
 Her country and her home.

To train her unaccustom'd ear,
New accents, harsh and strange, to hear,

* On the departure of a regiment for foreign service.

And half forget the kindly tongue
In which her lullaby was sung ;
To rend all earthly ties, save one,
 And that the latest given ;
Perchance by India's burning sun,
 To see that lone tie riven :
To see the strong man powerless lie,
 That burning sun beneath,
And watch his dim and glazing eye,
 And comfort strive to breathe.
Or, if the fever spare his life,
To seek on some dread field of strife,
All that the foe's relentless glaive,
Has left her of the kind and brave ;
And scare the jackalls from their prey,
Perhaps ere life has ebb'd away ;
And wipe the death-damp from his brow,
That e'en on her looks sadly now ;
And hear him panting for the rills,
That gush amid their native hills.

And when his voice she hears no more,
And knows the last faint struggle o'er,
To fling her down where he departed—
A widow'd exile, broken hearted.
Poor mourner, and is *this* the lot
So wildly craved, but granted not ?

She heard her doom with a thrilling start,
Like the last wild bound of the stricken hart,
Then sank upon the wave-beat shore,
As life and hope at once were o'er.
Her infant boy beside her stands,
And clasps her with his tiny hands,
And deep indeed a mother's pain,
When that weak clasp can plead in vain.

Stern sceptic to affection's creed,
Thy worldly faith above—
Go look on her, if thou would read
The truth and depth of love.

THE WINDS.

OH, Autumn wind, I like thee well,
Albeit thou art the passing bell
Of dying hopes, I love thy knell—
Sad Autumn wind.

Stern Winter's harsh and angry blast,
A hoarse upbraiding seems to cast,
Thou gentlier mind'st me of the past,
Soft Autumn wind.

The Spring breeze comes with tones of mirth
That well beseem fresh nature's birth,
But thine the lay more meet for earth,
Drear Autumn wind.

Sweet is the Summer's whispering breath,
And sweet the words she whispering saith,
But thou—oh, speak to me of Death!
Chill Autumn wind.

At Winter's voice I shivering start,
Unblest the Spring and Summer part ;
Thou wak'st the echoes of my heart,—
Oh, Autumn wind !

And sickening at a gladder tone,
I love to list, all still and lone,
Thy fitful gust—thy sullen moan,—
Sad Autumn wind.

CONTROVERSY.

I HAD a dream—oh, did I only dream ?
Two mighty hosts for bitter strife arrayed—
The Bible one, and one the Cross displayed ;
And much I mused how these opposed could seem.
But in the midst three radiant forms were seen—
From either host apart, serene and bright,
And clad in snow-like raiment, till the fight
Had marr'd with dust and blood their spotless sheen.
Then fearfully the din of battle rose,
And holy names, spoke in unholy ire—
I saw the bravest and the best retire ;
And friends estranged were turned to deadliest foes ;
Yet the worst harms, methought, fell on those three,
Meek sufferers all—Truth, Peace, and Charity !

A LIFE.

I turned me from the world and its beguiling,
To gaze upon a scene of holier charms—
A fair young mother, clasped in whose fond arms,
In rosy sleep, a little child lay smiling.
Years passed—a widow'd matron, weary hearted,
Wept o'er her only hope—yet prayed to God,
That he might tread the path his father trod ;
And so the stripling to the wars departed.
A few brief days, and, 'mid the dead and dying,
The hideous carnage of a battle-field,
Grasping the banner he had scorned to yield—
Lovely in death, the bright-haired boy was lying ;
Yet calm his smile as on his mother's breast—
Alas ! poor youth, how changed his couch of rest !

THE DAY OF REJOICING.

SEPTEMBER, 1855.

THERE is joy in the Highland Castle,
Where the Queen of the nation dwells ;
THERE is joy in the humblest shieling,
Where the shepherd that message tells.

Where the echoes of Craig-na'-gowan
Ring forth to the Nation's Hymn,
And the mountain's red fire is flinging
Its glare o'er the forest dim.

But woe for the brave ones perished,
Since greenly those branches grew,
Which (heaped on that pile for the false news)
Are kindled at last for the true.

For some white lips still must quiver,
Some hearts will be chilled and sore,
With a sigh for the Alma River,
Or a prayer for the Black Sea Shore.

There is joy in the Sultan's city,
That gleams o'er the dark blue sea ;
And a hope for the paling crescent
Of the sad eyed Osmanli.

There is joy where the vintage is glowing,
And lighter will be the dance,
And louder the chant of glory,
On the sunshiny hills of France.

The peaks of the snow-clad mountains
May list to the shouting afar,
Where the lofty Sardinian has given
His chosen and best to the war.

And wider and ever wider,
Those tidings shall circle the world,
Where our friendly tongues are spoken,
And our friendly pennons unfurled.

Through the length and breadth of England,
Over hill, and dale, and down,
Sweet bells, and the voice of cheering,
Come mingled from tower and town.

The toil-worn mechanics gather,
And listen with eager eye,
And the sturdy sun-browned reaper
Is flinging his sickle by.

For where is the murky alley
That may not the triumph share?
Or the hamlet, so still and lonely,
That says not, "our own are there?"

And hark, in that field of gleaners,
How they whisper, with bated breath,
Of that harvest, afar off gathered,
By the mighty reaper Death.

How one "followed our gay young master,
When boldly the colours he bore!"
And anon comes the same sad ending—
A grave, by the Black Sea Shore.

Then oh, let our joy be chastened,
And tamed in its hour of pride,
By the pale, pale shade of sorrow,
Still wringing her hands beside !

Alas, for the vacant places
By many an English hearth !
Alas, for the fair young faces,
So wistful amidst our mirth !

For the choking gasp of anguish
That the strong man fain would hide ;
For the wail of the childless mother,
And the moan of the widowed bride !

Forget not the loved and the lost ones,
Whom tempests shall vex no more,
In their rest by the Alma River,
Their sleep by the Black Sea Shore.

Oh, England, our brave old England,
We pray that thou yet may be,
For the exile a city of refuge—
For thy children the home of the free.

God grant that no selfish endeavour
 May sully the growth of thy might ;
God grant that thine arm may be strengthened,
 When only it strikes for the right !

God grant that our striving for freedom
 May hallow the blood we have shed !
That our aim, and our faith to the living,
 Be true as our love for the dead !

Then proudly our children's children
 Shall the names of the brave tell o'er,
Who fought by the Alma River—
 Who sleep by the Black Sea Shore.

22

A NAME.

“And a woman’s waving shadow
Is passing to and fro.”—LONGFELLOW.

SWEET is the flower that blooms by night,
Alike in storm or calm ;
Alike if skies be dark or bright,
Spreads round its fragrant balm.

Dear is the bird whose thrilling song
Pours through the midnight drear,
As if it comfort bore along
For sorrow’s sleepless ear.

Loved is that lady far away,
On holiest mission sent,
To bless the dreariest night or day,
Of lives for England spent.

And flower, and bird, and woman's fame,
Our English tongue shall fail,
Ere English hearts forget the name
Of Florence Nightingale.

THE END.

LONDON:
James Truscott & Son, Suffolk Lane, City,
and Nelson Square.



