



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.



28001
d. 631

Bk. from Clewiston

W. H. ~~Stearns~~ ^{Stearns} Esq.
Corpus Christi Cm

Oxford

Arch. Coll. C. VI. 70

11 d. 531

Chitswell Bow Hill

Oct 13

Dear Sir.

In Mr. Hanby's book there is
the statement "85 copies on
paper and 6 on vellum" I
have one of the vellum copies. I
cannot answer your other questions
about this book.

The paper on Free Verse, which
I wrote for and read to the Pelican
Society, was printed also in The
North American Review Nov.
1922. It has not been reprinted.

As you seem interested in
typography I send you a cutting
off a first proof of a book sh:

New

2e

I saw it
and you
you ye
away fa
then sur
to take
Ruddoc
nor gav
watching
lost in
felt how
if a bir
If yo
it might
propoun
which h
but, bei
show up
Thus r
your v
the dom
and you
harryin
Yet N
whereb

possibly say something that was worth repeating:
I am adding (do you think?) pages to literature
that gouty excrement of human intellect
accumulating slowly and everlastingly
depositing, like guano on the Peruvian shore,
to be perhaps exhumed in some remotest age
(piis secunda, vate me, detur fuga)
to fertilize the scanty dwarf'd intelligence
of a new race of beings the unhallow'd offspring
of them who shall have quite dismember'd and destroy'd
our temple of Christian faith and fair Hellenic art
just as that monkey would, Poor Polly, have done for you.

21

21

[REDACTED]

THE TAPESTRY
Poems
by
Robert Bridges

[Prospectus]

London
Privately Printed
Mcmxxv



*One hundred and fifty copies (one hundred and forty
copies for sale, ten for presentation) printed with
Arrighi type
by F.W. and S.M. at
41 Bedford Square
London
November MCMXXV*

*Application for copies to be made to
Messrs. John & Edward Bumpus Limited
350 Oxford Street, London, W.1*

Printers' Note

In response to our request to the Poet Laureate for permission to use one of his recent poems as the material for a first presentation of our new cursive type, Mr. Bridges has generously authorized the printing of the following complete collection up to the present date of all his "New Verse" described by him as 'Neo-miltonic syllabics' and

ORDER FORM

To

Messrs. John & Edward Bumpus, Limited, Booksellers
350 Oxford Street, London, W. 1

*Please send me one copy of THE TAPESTRY
Poems by Robert Bridges
for which I enclose cheque—or order—for Two Guineas*

Name

Address

Lodovico degli Arrighi, born at Vicenza, who worked as a calligrapher and printer in Rome where he was known as Lodovico Vicentino. Our punches were cut by hand.

Contents

I	<i>The Flowering Tree</i>	7
II	<i>Noel: Christmas Eve (1913)</i>	9
III	<i>In der Fremde</i>	11
IV	<i>Epitaph: Hubert Hastings Parry</i>	12
V	<i>Cheddar Pinks</i>	13
VI	<i>Poor Poll</i>	15
VII	<i>The Tapestry</i>	19
VIII	<i>Kate's Mother</i>	23
IX	<i>The College Garden</i>	28
X	<i>The Psalm</i>	31
XI	<i>Come si Quando</i>	33

THE FLOWERING TREE

What Fairy fann'd my dreams
while I slept in the sun?
As if a flowering tree'
were standing over me:
Its young stem strong and lithe
went branching overhead
And willowy sprays around
fell tasseling to the ground
All with wild blossom gay
as is the cherry in May
When her fresh flaunt of leaf
gives crowns of golden green.

The sunlight was enmesh'd
in the shifting splendour
And I saw through on high
to soft lakes of blue sky:
Ne'er was mortal slumber
so lapt in luxury.

Rather—Endymion—
would I sleep in the sun
Neath the trees divinely
with day's azure above
When my love of Beauty
is met by beauty's love.

So I slept enchanted
under my loving tree
Till from his late resting
the sweet songster of night
Rousing awaken'd me:
Then! this—the bird's note—
Was the voice of thy throat
which thou gav'st me to kiss.

NOEL : CHRISTMAS EVE,
(1913)

Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis

A frosty Christmas Eve
when the stars were shining
Fared I forth alone
where westward falls the hill,
And from many a village
in the water'd valley
Distant music reach'd me
peals of bells aringing :
The constellated sounds
ran sprinkling on earth's floor
As the dark vault above
with stars was spangled o'er.

Then sped my thought to keep
that first Christmas of all
When the shepherds watching
by their folds ere the dawn
Heard music in the fields
and marveling could not tell
Whether it were angels
or the bright stars singing.

Now blessed be the tow'rs
that crown England so fair
That stand up strong in prayer
unto God for our souls:
Blessed be their founders
(said I) an' our country folk
Who are ringing for Christ
in the belfries to-night
With arms lifted to clutch
the rattling ropes that race
Into the dark above
and the mad romping din.

But to me heard afar
it war starry music
Angels' song, comforting
as the comfort of Christ
When he spake tenderly
to his sorrowful flock:
The old words came to me
by the riches of time
Mellow'd and transfigured
as I stood on the hill
Hearkening in the aspect
of th' eternal silence.

IN DER FREMDE

*Ah! wild-hearted wand'rer
far in the world away
Restless nor knowest why
only thou canst not stay
And now turnest trembling
hearing the wind to sigh:
'Twas thy lover calling
whom thou didst leave forby.*

*So faint and yet so far
so far and yet so fain —
"Return'd, belov'd, to me"
but thou must onward strain:
Thy trembling is in vain
as thy wand'ring shall be.
What so well thou lovest
thou nevermore shalt see.*

HUBERT HASTINGS PARRY

for his monument in Gloucester Cathedral

(1920)

From boyhood's eager play call'd by the English Muse
Her fine scholar to be then her Masters' compeer
A spirit elect whom no unworthy thought might wrong
Nor any fear touch thee joyously o'er life's waves
Navigating thy soul into her holy haven
Long these familiar walls shall re-echo thy song
And this Stone remember thy bounteous gaiety
Thy honour and thy grace and the love of thy friends.

CHEDDAR PINKS

Mid the squander'd colour
 idling as I lay
Reading the *Odyssey*
 in my rock-garden
I espied the cluster'd
 tufts of Cheddar pinks
Burgeoning with promise
 of their scented bloom
All the modish motley
 of their bloom to-be
Thrust up in narrow buds
 on the slender stalks
Thronging springing urgent
 hasting (so I thought)
As if they fear'd to be
 too late for summer —
Like schoolgirls overslept
 waken'd by the bell
Leaping from bed to don
 their muslin dresses
 on a May morning.

Then felt I like to one
 indulging in sin
(Whereto Nature is oft
 a blind accomplice)
Because my aged bones
 so enjoyed the sun
There as I lay along
 idling with my thoughts
Reading an old poet
 while the busy world
Toil'd toil'd fuss'd and scurried
 worried bought and sold
Plotted stole and quarrel'd
 fought and God knows what.
I had forgotten Homer
 dallying with my thoughts
Till I fell to making
 these little verses
Communing with the flowers
 in my rock-garden
 on a May morning.

POOR POLL

I saw it all, Polly, how when you had call'd for sop
and your good friend the cook came and fill'd up your pan
you jerk'd it out deftly by beakfuls scattering it
away far as you might upon the sunny lawn
then summon'd with loud cry the little garden birds
to take their feast. Quickly came they flustering around
Ruddock & Merle & Finch squabbling among themselves
nor gave you thanks nor heed while you sat silently
watching, and I beside you in perplexity
lost in the maze of all mystery and all knowledge
felt how deep lieth the fount of man's benevolence
if a bird can share it and take pleasure in it.

If you, my bird, I thought, had a philosophy
it might be a sounder scheme than what our moralists
propound: because thou, Poll, livest in the darkness
which human Reason searching from outside would pierce,
but, being of so feeble a candle-power, can only
show up to view the cloud that it illuminates.
Thus reason'd I: then marvell'd how you can adapt
your wild bird-mood to endure your tame environment
the domesticities of English household life
and your small brass-wire cabin, who shouldst live on wing
harrying the tropical branch-flowering wilderness:
Yet Nature gave you a gift of easy mimicry
whereby you have come to win uncanny sympathies
and morsell'd utterance of our Germanic talk
as schoolmasters in Greek will flaunt their hackney'd tags

φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν and κτῆμα ἐς αἰὲν

ἢ γλῶσσ' ὀμόμοχ', ἢ δὲ φρήν ἀνώμοτος.

tho' you with a better ear copy us more perfectly
nor without connotation as when you call'd for sop
all with that stumpy wooden tongue and vicious beak
that dry whistling shrieking tearing cutting pincer
now eagerly subservient to your cautious claws
exploring all varieties of attitude
in irrepressible blind groping for escape
— a very figure and image of man's soul on earth
the almighty cosmic Will fidgeting in a trap —
in your quenchless unknown desire for the unknown life
of which some homely British sailor robb'd you, alas!
'Tis all that doth your silly thoughts so busy keep
the while you sit moping like Patience on a perch
— Wie viele Tag' und Nächte bist du geblieben!
La possa delle gambe posta in tregue —
the impeccable spruceness of your grey-feather'd poll
a model in hairdressing for the daintiest old Duke
enough to qualify you for the House of Lords
or the Athenaeum Club, to poke among the nobs
great intellectual nobs and literary nobs
scientific nobs and Bishops ex officio:
nor lack you simulation of profoundest wisdom
such as men's features oft acquire in very old age
by mere cooling of passion and decay of muscle
by faint renunciation even of untold regrets;
who seeing themselves a picture of that which man should-be

learn almost what it were to be what they are-not.
 But you can never have cherish'd a determined hope
 consciously to renounce or lose it, you will live
 your threescore years and ten idle and puzzle-headed
 as any mumping monk in his unfurnish'd cell
 in peace that, poor Polly, passeth Understanding—
 merely because you lack what we men understand
 by Understanding. Well! well! that's the difference
C'est la seule différence, mais c'est important.

Ah! your pale sedentary life! but would you change?
 exchange it for one crowded hour of glorious life,
 one blind furious tussle with a madden'd monkey
 who would throttle you and throw your crude fragments away
 shreds unintelligible of an unmeaning act
dans la profonde horreur de l'éternelle nuit?

Why ask? You cannot know. 'Twas by no choice of yours
 that you mischanged for monkeys' man's society,
 'twas that British sailor drove you from Paradise—

Εἶθ' ὠφελ' Ἀργοῦς μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος!

I'd hold embargoes on such a ghastly traffic.

I am writing verses to you and grieve that you should be
 absolument incapable de les comprendre,

Tu, Polle, nescis ista nec potes scire:—

Alas! Iambic, scazon and alexandrine,
 spondee or choriamb, all is alike to you—
 my well-continued fanciful experiment
 wherein so many strange verses amalgamate
 on the secure bedrock of Milton's prosody:

not but that when I speak you will incline an ear
in critical attention lest by chance I might
possibly say something that was worth repeating:
I am adding (do you think?) pages to literature
that gouty excrement of human intellect
accumulating slowly and everlastingly
depositing, like guano on the Peruvian shore,
to be perhaps exhumed in some remotest age
(piis secunda, vate me, detur fuga)
to fertilize the scanty dwarf'd intelligence
of a new race of beings the unhallow'd offspring
of them who shall have quite dismember'd and destroy'd
our temple of Christian faith and fair Hellenic art
just as that monkey would, Poor Polly, have done for you.

THE TAPESTRY

'Sequel to the foregoing' W.W.

*'These tapestries have hung fading around my hall
centuries long; their old fashion'd mythology
infects the fresh and young with blighting influence'
like Abram there with knife and faggot standing stark
to slay his son. I'm vow'd I'll have no more of them.
Turn me them outside-in, their faces to the wall,
so shall we have more colour and less solemnity.'—*

*Thus the young heir and lord enjoin'd his wondering steward
who obey'd, and many a guest was bidden, and at the feast
the wine flow'd free with fine hubbub and merriment.*

*My tale is but a fable of God's fair tapestry
the decorated room wherein my spirit hath dwelt
from infancy a nursling of great Nature's beauty
which keepeth fresh my wonder as when I was a child.
Such is the joy of the eye, that dark conduit whereby
the swift creative ray, offspring of heavenly fire,
steals to the mind, wakening in her secret chamber
vast potencies of thought which there lie slumbering
in the image of God. Ah! had I not heard and seen
to-day, when at my window a meryl sat fluting
his happy canticle to hail the sun's uprise?
Then looked I forth and lo! The Elysian fields of Dawn!
and there in naked peace my dumb expectancy
mirror'd above the hills, a pageant like music*

heard in imagination or the silence of dreams.

What if I had not seen the cloths of Night take hue'
soft-tinged as of brown bear-skin on green opal spread
which still persisting through shift imperceptible
grew to an incandescent copper on a pale light-blue!

Then one flame-yellow streak pierced thru' the molten bronze
with lilac freak'd above, where fiery in red mist
the orb with slow surprise surged, till his whole blank blaze
dispell'd from out his path all colour—and Day began.

Thus ever at every season in every hour and place
visions await the soul on wide ocean or shore
mountain forest or garden in wind and floating cloud
in busy murmur of bees or blithe carol of birds:
nor is it memoried thought only nor pleased sense
that holds us, nor whate'er Reason sits puzzling out
of light or atom, as if—say, the Rainbow's beauty
lay in our skill to fray the Sun's white-tissued ray
to unravel and measure-off the gaudy threads thereof:
It is a deeper thrill, the joy that lovers learn
taking divine instruction from each other's eyes,
the Truth that all men feel gazing upon the skies
in constellated Night—Oh God the Father of Heaven!

'When I arose and saw the dawn, I sighed for Thee.'

Reckon the backward stretch of Mankind's pedigree,
should it be fifteen thousand generations told
were that so long to climb from dim selfconsciousness
up to the eagle aëry of high philosophy?
to escape from his wild-beast cave in the wilderness

to till'd plains and safe homes, farms and mansion'd gardens,
 populous wall'd cities, temples and pillar'd schools,
 to dwell in grace, gravity, amity and good manners?
 Was then the first dawning of his savage wonder
 a vain terror to scare him from his aim astray?
 all his prophetic seers, poets, enthusiasts,
 dreamers, artists, adorners, whose meditation
 won to purity of soul in the visions of God,
 have guided him on securely and taught him wisely;
 their soul's desire came with man's Reason from Nature,
 transfiguring his sorrows in heroic grace;
 their temples even in ruin reproach his follies
 his science is consecrated by their beauty.

I prop so far my slight fable with argument
 to lay malison and ban on the upstart leprous clan
 who wrong Nature's beauty turning her face about:
 for, ^{certes} ~~certes~~, hath the goddess also her hinder parts
 which men of all ages have kindly thought to hide:
 But as a man, owning a fine cloth of Arras,
 in reverence for his heirloom will examine it all
 inside and out, and learn whether of white wool or silk
 the high-warp, what of silver and gold, how fine the thread,
 what number of graded tints in hatching of the woof;
 so we study Nature, wrong side as well as right
 and in the eternal mystery of God's working find
 full many unsightly a token of beauty's trouble;
 and gain knowledge of Nature and much wisdom thereby:
 but these making no part of beauty's welcome face,

these we turn to the wall, hiding away the mean
ugly brutish obscene, clumsy irrelevances
which Honesty will own to with baffling humour
and in heightening the paradox can find pleasure ;
since without such full knowledge can no man have faith
nor will his thought or picture of life be worth a bean.

Now, bean, button, or boterfly, pray accept of me
for my parrot verses this after apology :

making experiments in versification

I wrote them as they came in the mood of the day
whether for good or ill—it was them or nothing.

KATE'S MOTHER

Perch'd on the upland wheatfields beyond the village end
a red-brick Windmill stood with black bonnet of wood
that trimm'd the whirling cross of its great arms around
upon the wind, pumping up water night and day
from the deep Kentish chalk to feed a little town
where miniatur'd afar it huddled on the coast
its glistening roofs and thrust its short pier in the sea.

Erewhile beside the Mill I had often come and gazed
across the golden cornland to the purple main
and distant town, so distant that I could not hear
the barrack bugles but might spy the castle-flag
a speck of bunting held against the foam-fleck'd waves:
and luggers in black rank on the high shingle-bank
drawn up beside the tarr'd huts of the fishermen
(those channel boatmen famous for courage and skill)
and ships that in the offing their scatter'd courses fetch'd
with sunlit sails, or bare-masted outrode the tide:
'Twas such a scene of bright perspective and brave hues
as no painter can forge, brushing his greys and blues
his madder, vermilion, chrome and ultramarine,
'Twas very England herself as I grew to love her
— as any manchild loveth looking on beauty —
England in the peace and delight of her glory,
beneath the summer sun in the wild-roving wind
the mighty fans hurtling steadily above me as there
Nature flooded my heart in unseizable dream:

Long ago — when as yet the house where I was born

was the only home I knew and I no bigger then
than a mastiff-dog may be, and little of clothing wore
but shirt and trews and shoes and holland pinafore :
then was my father's garden a fairy realm of tree-
worship, mimic warfare and ritual savagery
and past its gates a land of peril and venture lay
my field of romance the steep beach of the wild sea
whither might I go wander on high-days for long hours
tended at every step by a saint, a nurse and mate
of such loving devotion patience and full trust
that of all Catharines she hath been my only Kate.

But inland past the Windmill lay a country unknown,
so that upon the day when I was grown so strong
(to my great pride 'twas told) that I might walk with Kate
on her half-holiday's accustomed pilgrimage
to see her old mother who lived across the downs
in the next combe, it happ'd that I so stirred must be
that after seventy years I can revive the day.

A blazing afternoon in splendor of mid-July
Kate and my elder sister and I trudged down the street
past village pond and church, and up the winding lane'
came out beside the windmill on the high cornland
where my new world began. A wheel-worn sunken track
parted the tilth, deep rugged ruts patch'd here and there'
with broken flints raked in from strewage of the ground,
baked clay fissured by drought, as splinter'd rock unkind
to a child's tread, and on either hand the full-grown corn
rose up a wall above me, where no breeze might come

nor any more sight thence of the undulating sweep
of the yellow acres nor of the blue main below.

For difficulty and roughness and scorch of the way
then a great Bible-thought came on me: I was going
like the Israelites of old in the desert of Sin,
where forty years long they journey'd in punishment:
'twas such a treeless plain as this whereon they went,
this torrid afternoon under the fiery sun
might be the forty years; but I forgot them soon
picking my way to run on the low skirting banks
that shelved the fields, anon foraging mid the ranks
fending the spikey awns off from my cheeks and eyes
wherever I might espy the larger flowers, and pull'd
blue Cockle and scarlet Poppy and yellow Marigold
whose idle blazonry persists to decorate
the mantle of green and gold which man toileth to weave
for his old grandmother Earth:—with such posies in hand
we ran bragging to Kate who plodded on the track
and now with skilful words beguiled us in her train
warning how far off yet the promised land, and how
journey so great required our full Strength husbanded
for the return: 'twere wise today to prove our Strength
and walk like men. Whereat we wished most to be wise
and keeping near beside her heeded closely our steps
so that our thoughts now wander'd no more from the way
(O how interminable to me seem'd that way!)
till it fell sloping downwards and we saw the green
of great elms that uplifted their heads in the combe:

when for joy of the shade racing ahead we sat
 till Kate again came up with us and led us on
 by shelter'd nooks where among apple and cherry trees
 many a straw-thatched cottage nestled back from the road.
 A warp'd wicket hidden in a flowery Privet-hedge
 admitted to her mother's along a pebbled path
 between two little squares of crowded garden framed
 in high clipt Box, that blent its faint pervading scent
 with fragrant Black-currant, gay Sweet-william and Mint,
 and white Jasmin that hung drooping over the door.
 A bobbin sprang the latch and following Kate we stood
 in shade of a low room with one small window, and there
 facing the meagre light of its lace-curtain'd panes
 a bland silver-hair'd dame clad in a cotton frock
 sat in a rocking chair by an open hearth, whereon
 a few wood embers smouldering kept a kettle at steam.
 She did not rise, but speaking with soft courtesy
 and full respectful pride of her daughter's charges
 gave us kind welcome, bade us sit and be rested
 while Kate prepared the tea. Many strange things the while
 allured me: a lofty clock with loud insistent tick
 beguiled the solemn moments as it doled them out
 picturing upon its face a full-rigg'd ship that rocked
 tossing behind an unmoved billow to and fro:
 beside it a huge batter'd copper warming-pan
 with burnish'd bowl fit for Goliath's giant spoon,
 and crockery whimsies ranged on the high mantel-shelf:
 'twas a storeroom of wonders, but my eyes returned
 still to the old dame, she was the greatest wonder of all,

the wrinkles innumerable of her sallow skin
her thin voice and the trembling of her patient face'
as there she swayed incessantly on her rocking-chair
like the ship in the clock: she had sprung into my ken
wholly to enthral me, a fresh nucleus of life-surprise
such as I knew must hold mystery and could reveal:
for I had observed strange movement of her cotton skirt
and as she sat with one knee across the other, I saw
how her right foot in the air was all a-tremble and jerked
in little restless kicks: so when we sat to feast
about the table spread with tea and cottage cakes
whenever her eye was off me I watched her furtively
to make myself assured of all the manner and truth
of this new thing, and ere we were sent out to play
(that so Kate might awhile chat with her mother alone)
I knew the SHAKING PALSY. What follow'd is lost,
how I chew'd mint-leaves waiting there in the garden
is my latest remembrance of that July day,
all after is blank, the time like a yesterday's loaf
is sliced as with a knife, or like as where the sea
in some diluvian rage swallowing a part of the earth
left a sheer cliff where erst the unbroken height ran on,
and by the rupture has built a landmark seen afar
— as 'tis at the South Foreland or St. Margaret's bay—
so memory being broken may stand out more clearly
as that day's happenings live so freshly by me, and most
the old widow with her great courtesy and affliction:
and I love to remember it was to her I made
the first visit of compliment that ever I paid.

THE COLLEGE GARDEN

IN 1917

*The infinitude of Life is in the heart of man,
a fount surging to fill a lake that mirrors heav'n,
and now to himself he seemeth stream to be and now pool
as he acteth his impulse or stayeth brooding thereon.*

*There is no beauty of love or peace, nor joy nor mirth
but by kindred artistry of contemplation enhanc'd
decketh his sovranly with immortalities.*

*Jewels of imagination hath he, purities
and sanctities whereby he dareth approach God
plenishing his temples with incense of music
in praise and lyric litanies that call on Christ:
his Destiny is one with the eternal skies: he lieth
a dream in the elemental far vistas of Truth
inhaling life to his soul as the ambient azurous air
that he draweth into his mortal body unconscious
to fire the dutiful-desperate pulse of his blood.*

*And yet again there is neither any evil nor mischief
sprung from teeming chaos to assault his mind, but he
will harbour it—he will be goodfellow in turn with Sin.
Hark to him how cheerily he windeth his hunting-horn
whipping-in his wolf-pack to their pasture of blood!
See his comforting mastery of Nature's forces
how he skilleth it to his own ruin, ev'n to mimic
cosmic catastrophe in her hideous destructions!
He will have surfeit of passion and revel in wrong*

till like a shameless prodigal at death's door he find
his one nobility is but to suffer bravely
in the lazar-house of souls his self-betrayal.

Surely I know there is none that hath not taint at heart :
Yet drink I of heav'nly hope and faith in God's dealing
basking this summer day under the stately limes
by the immemorial beauty of this gothic college,
a place more peaceful now than even sweet peace should be,
hush'd in spiritual vacancy of desolation
by sad desertion of throng'd study and gay merriment—
since all the gamesome boys are fled with their glory
light-hearted in far lands making fierce sport with Hell
and to save home from the spoiler have despoil'd their homes
leaving nought in their trace but empty expectancy
of their return, Alas! for how few shall return!
what love-names write we daily in the long roll of death!
And yet some shall return, and others with them come :
life will renew; tho' now none cometh here all day
but a pensive philosopher from his dark room
pacing the terrace, slow as his earth-burden'd thought,
and the aged gardener with scythe wheelbarrow and broom
loitering in expert parcimony of skill and time
while on the grassy slope of the old city-rampart
I watch his idleness and hearken to the clocks
in punctual dispute clanging the quarter-hours—
dull preaching calendars ticking upon their wheels
punctilious subdivisions of infinity
and reckoning now as usual all the monstrous hours

these monstrous heartless hours that pass and yet must pass
till this mischief shall pass and England's foe be o'erthrown—
and shall be o'erthrown—'tis for this thing her dear boys die
and this at each full hour the chimes from Magdalen tow'r
proclaim with dominant gay cloze hurl'd to the sky.
Thus hour draggeth on hour, and I feel every thrill
of time's eternal stream that passeth over me
the dream-stream of God's Will that made things as they be
and me as I am, as unreluctant in the stream
I lie, like one who hath wander'd all his summer morn
among the heathery hills and hath come down at noon
in a breathless valley upon a mountain-brook
and for animal recreation of hot fatigue
hath stripp'd his body naked to lie down and taste
the play of the cool water on all his limbs and flesh
and lying in a pebbly shallow beneath the sky
supine and motionless feeleth each ripple pass
until his thought is merged in the flow of the stream
as it cometh upon him and lappeth him there
stark as a white corpse that stranded upon the stones
blocketh and for a moment delayeth the current
ere it can pass to pay its thin tribute of salt
into the choking storage of the quenchless sea.

THE PSALM

While Northward the hot sun was sinking o'er the trees
as we sat pleasantly talking in the meadow,
the swell of a rich music suddenly on our ears
gush'd thru' the wide-flung doors, where village-folk in church
stood to their evening psalm praising God together—
and when it came to close, paused, and broke forth anew.

A great Huguenot psalm it trod forth on the air
with full slow notes moving as a goddess stepping
through the responsive figures of a stately dance
conscious of beauty and of her fair-flowing array
in the severe perfection of an habitual grace,
then stooping to its cloze, paused to dance forth anew;

To unfold its bud of melody everlastingly
fresh as in Springtime when, four centuries ago,
it wing'd the souls of martyrs on their way to heav'n
chain'd at the barbarous stake, mid the burning faggots
standing with tongues cut out, all singing in the flames—
O evermore, sweet Psalm, shalt thou break forth anew.

Thou, when in France that self-idolatrous idol reign'd
that starv'd his folk to fatten his priests and concubines,
thou wast the unconquerable paean of resolute men
who fell in coward massacre or with freedom fled
from the palatial horror into far lands away,
and England learnt to voice thy deathless strain anew.

Ah! they endured beyond worst pangs of fire and steel
torturings invisible of tenderness and untold;
No Muse may name them, nay, no man will whisper them;
sitting alone he dare not think of them—and wail
of babes and mothers' wail flouted in ribald song.
Draw to thy cloze, sweet Psalm, pause and break forth anew!

Thy minstrels were no more, yet thy triumphing plaint
haunted their homes, as once in a deserted house
in Orthes, as 'twas told, the madden'd soldiery
burst in and search'd but found nor living man nor maid
only the sound flow'd round them and desisted not
but when it wound to close, paused, and broke forth anew.

And oft again in some lone valley of the Cevennes
where unabsolvèd crime yet calleth plagues on France
thy heavenly voice would lure the bloodhounds on, astray,
hunting their fancied prey afar in the dark night
and with its ghostly music mock'd their oaths and knives.
O evermore great Psalm spring forth! spring forth anew!

COME SI QUANDO

How thickly the far fields of heaven are strewn with stars!
Tho' the open eye of day shendeth them with its glare
yet, if no cloudy wind curtain them nor low mist
of earth blindfold us, soon as Night in grey mantle
wrappeth all else, they appear in their optimacy
from under the ocean or behind the high mountains
climbing in spacious ranks upon the stark-black void:
Ev'n so in our mind's night burn far beacons of thought
and the infinite architecture of our darkness,
the dim essence and being of our mortalities,
is sparkled with fair fire-flecks of eternity
whose measure we know not nor the wealth of their rays.

It happ'd to me sleeping in the Autumn night, what time
Sirius was uplifting his great lamp o'er the hills,
I saw him not — my sight was astray, my wonder
held by the epiphany of a seraphic figure
that was walking on earth — in my visions it was —
I saw one in the full form and delight of man,
the signature of godhead in his motion'd grace,
and the aureole of his head was not dimm'd to my view;
the shekinah of azure floating o'er him in the air
seem'd the glow of a fire that burn'd steadfast within
prison'd to feed the radiance of his countenance;
as a lighthouse flasheth over broken waters
a far resistless beam from its strong tower: it was
as if Nature had deign'd to take back from man's hand
some work of her own as art had refashion'd it
— when Giorgione (it might be) portraying the face

of one who hath left no memory but that picture
and watching well the features at their play to find
some truth worthy of his skill, caught them for a moment
transfigured by a phantom visitation of spirit
which seizing he drew forth and fix'd on the canvas
as thence it hath gazed out for ever, and once on me:
Even such immanent beauty had that heroic face
and all that look'd on it loved and many worshipp'd.

For me, comfort possess'd me, the intimate comfort
of Beauty that is the soul's familiar angel
who bringeth me alway such joy as a man feeleth
returning to the accustom'd homeliness of home
after long absence or exile among strange things,
and my heart in me was laughing for happiness—
when I saw a great fear fell on the worshippers,
The fear of God: I saw its smoky shadow of dread;
and as a vast Plutonian mountain that burieth
its feet in molten lava and its high peak in heaven,
whenever it hath decoy'd some dark voyaging storm
to lave its granite shoulders, dischargeth the flood
in a thousand torrents o'er its flanks to the plain
and all the land is vocal with the swirl and gush
of the hurrying waters, so suddenly in this folk
a flood of troublous passion arose and mock'd control.

Then I saw the light vanities and follies of man
put on dragonish faces and glour with Gorgon eyes
disowning Shame and Reason, and one poet I saw
who from the interdependence and rivalry of men
loathing his kind had fled into the wilderness

to wander among the beasts and make home of their caves :
like to those Asian hermits color'd by their clime
who drank the infatuation of the wide torrid sand
the whelming tyranny of the lonely sun by day
the boundless nomadry of the stars by night, who sought
primeval brotherhood with things unbegotten ;
who for ultimate comfort clothing them i' the skin
of nakedness wrapt nothingness closely about them
choosing want for wealth and shapeless terrors for friends,
in the embrace of desolation and wearied silence
to lie babe-like on the bosom of unpitying power.

But he found not rest nor peace for his soul : I read
his turbulent passion, the blasphemy of his heart
as I stood among the rocks that chuckled the cry
wherewith he upcast reproach into the face of heaven.

'UNVEIL thine eyes, O THEMIS ! Stand, unveil thine eyes !
from the high zenith hang thy balance in the skies !
In one scale set thy Codes of Justice Duty and Awe
thy penal interdicts the tables of thy Law
and in the other the postulant plea of Mercy and Love :
then thine unbandaged sight shall know thy cause how light
and see thy thankless pan fly back to thee above'

'Or wilt thou deeper wager, and if thou hast the key
to unlock the cryptic storehouse of futurity,
fetch the mint-treasure forth, unpack the Final Cause
whose prime almighty metal must give Reason pause ;
or if 'tis of such stuff as man's wit cannot gauge
scale thou the seal'd deposit in its iron-bound cage

Nay, lengthen out the beam of the balance on thy side
unequal as thou wilt, so that on mine the pan
to hold the thoughts of man be deep enough and wide.

‘What Providence is this that maketh sport with Chance
blindly staking against things of no ordinance?
Must the innocent dear birds that singing in the shaw
with motherly instinct wove their nest of twisted straw
see in some icy hail-gust their loved mansion drown’d
and all their callow nurselings batter’d on the ground?
Even so a many-generation’d city of men
the storied temple of their endeavour and amorous ken
is toss’d back into rubbish by a shudder of the earth’s crust:
Nor even the eternal stars have any sanction’d trust
that, like ships in dark night ill-fatedly on their course,
they shall not meet and crash together, and all their force
be churn’d back to the vapory magma whence they grew
age-long to plod henceforth their frustrate path anew.

‘From this blind wreckage then hath Wisdom no escape
but limitless production of every living shape?
How shall man honour this Demiurge and yet keep
in due honour the gift that he rateth so cheap?
Myriad seeds perfected that one seed may survive—
Millions of men, that Reason in a scant few may thrive,
Multiplication alike of good bad strong and weak
and the overflow of life more wasteful than the leak.

‘And what this treasure, of which, so prodigal of the whole,
he granteth unto each pensioner in such niggard dole?
its short lease on such terms as only can be enjoy’d

against some equal title invaded or destroy'd ?
What is this banquet where the guests are served for meat ?
What hospitality ? What kind of host is he
the bill of whose purveyance is Kill ye each other and eat ?

‘Or why, if the excellence of conscient Reason is such,
the accomplishment so high, that it renounce all touch
of kindness with its kin and humbler parentage
— building the slaughter-house beside the pasturage —
Why must this last best most miraculous flower of all
be canker'd at the core, prey to the spawn and spawl
of meanest motes ? must stoop from its divine degree
to learn the spire and spilth of every insensate filth
that swarmeth in the chaos of obscenity ?

‘And if the formless ferment of life's primal slime
bred without stint, and came through plant and beast in time
to elaborate the higher appurtenance of sex
Why should this low-born urgency persist to vex
man's growth in grace ? for sure the procreant multitude
would riot to outcrowd the earth wer t not for lack of food,
and thus the common welfare serveth but to swell
the common woe, whereat the starvelings more rebel.
See, never hungry horde of savage raiders slipp'd
from Tartary's parching steppes so for destruction equipp'd
as midst our crowded luxury now the sneaking swarm
that pilfereth intelligence from Science to storm
Civilization in her well-order'd citadel.
Thus Culture doeth herself to death reinforcing hell
and seeth no hope but this, that what she hath wrought in vain
since it was wrought before, may yet be wrought again

and fall to a like destruction again and evermore.

‘And what Man’s Mind? since even without this foul offence
it breedeth its own poison of its own excellence:
it riseth but to fall deeper, it cannot endure.

Attainment stayeth pursuit and being itself impure
dispiriteth the soul. All power engendereth pride
and poor vainglory seeing its image magnified
upon the ignoble mirror of common thought, will trust
the enticements of self-love and the flattery thereof
and call on fame to enthrone ambition and mortal lust.

‘Wherefore, since Reason assureth neither final term
nor substantive foundations impeccable and firm
as brutish instincts are — and Virtue in default
goeth down before the passions crowding to the assault;
Nothing being justified all things are ill or well
are justifiable alike or unjustifiable
till, whether in mocking laughter or mere melancholy,
Philosophy will turn to vindicate folly:
and if thru’ thought it came that man first learnt his woe,
his Memory accumulating the recorded sum
his Prescience anticipating fresh ills to come,
How could it be otherwise? Why should it not be so?

‘And last, O worst! for surely all wrongs had else been nought
had never Imagination exalted human thought
with spiritual affection of tenderness intense
beyond all finest delicacy of bodily sense;
so that the gift of tears, that is the fount of song
maketh intolerable agony of Nature’s wrong.

Ask her that taught man filial love, what she hath done
the mother of all mothers, she unto her own dear son?
him innocently desirous to love her well
by unmotherly cruelty she hath driven to rebel,
hath cast out in the night homeless and to his last cry
for guidance on his way hath deign'd him no reply.

‘And thou that in symbolic mockery feign’st to seal
thine eyes from horrors that thou hast no heart to feel,
Thou, THEMIS, wilt suspect not the celestial weight
of the small parcels that I now pile on the plate.

These are love’s bereavements and the blightings of bloom
the tears of mourners inconsolable at the tomb
of promise wither’d and fond hope blasted in prime:
These, the torrential commiserations of all time
These, the crime-shrieks of war, plague-groans and famine-cries
These, the slow-standing tears in children’s questioning eyes
These, profuse tears of fools, These, coy tears of the wise
in solitude bewailing and in sad silence
the perishing record of hard-won experience
Ruin of accomplishment that no toil can restore
Heroic Will chain’d down on Fate’s cold dungeon-floor.
See here the tears of prophets, confessors of faith
the tears of beauty-lovers, merchants of the unpriced
in calumny and reproach, in want, wanhope and death
persecuted betray’d imprison’d sacrificed;
All tears from Adam’s tears unto the tears of Christ.

‘Look to thy balance, THEMIS; Should thy scale descend
bind up thine eyes again, I shall no more contend;
for if the Final Cause vindicate Nature’s laws

her universal plan giveth no heed to man
No place ; for him Confusion is his Final Cause.'

Thus threw he to the wilderness and silent sky
his outrageous despair the self-pity of mankind
and the disburdenment of his great heaviness
left his heart suddenly so shaken and unsteadied
he seem'd like one who fording a rapid river
and poising on his head a huge stone that its weight
may plant his footing firmly and stiffen his body upright
against the rushing water, hath midway let it fall
and with his burden hath lost his balance, and staggering
into the bubbling eddy is borne helpless away.
Even so a stream of natural feeling o'erwhelm'd him
whether of home maybe and childhood or of lovers' eyes
of fond friendship and service, or perchance he felt
himself a rebel untaught who had pilfer'd Wisdom's arms
to work disorder and havoc in the city of God :
For suddenly he was dumbstruck and with humbled step
of unwitting repentance he stole back to his cave
and wrapping his poor rags about him took his way
again to his own people and the city whence he had fled.
There in the market-place a wild haggard figure
I saw him anon where high above a surging crowd
he stood waving his hands like some prophet of old
dream-sent to warn God's people ; but them the strong words
of his chasten'd humanity inflame but the more ;
for why they cannot suffer mention of holiness
nor the sound of the names that convince them of sin

If there be any virtue, if there be any praise,
'tis not for them to hear of or think on those things.
I saw what he spake to them tho' I heard it not
only at the sting thereof the loud wrath that arose.

As a wild herd of cattle on the prairie pasturing
if they are aware of one amongst them sick or maim'd
or in some part freak-hued differently from themselves
will be moved by instinct of danger and set on him
and bowing all their heads drive him out with their horns
as enemy to their selfwill'd community;
even such brutish instinct impell'd that human herd
and some had stoop'd to gather loose stones from the ground
and were hurling at him: he crouch'd with both his arms
covering his head and would have hid himself from them
in fear more of their crime than of his own peril
Then with a plunge of terror he turn'd and fled for life
and they in wild joy of the chase with hue and cry
broke after him and away and bent on sport to kill
hunted their startled game before them down the streets.

Awhile he escaped and ran apart, but soon I saw
the leaders closing on him — I was hiding my eyes
lest I should see him taken and torn in blood, when, lo!
the street whereon they ran was block'd across his way
by a white-robed throng that came moving with solemn pace
waving banners and incense and high chant on the air,
and bearing 'neath a rich canopy of reverence
their object of devotion — as oft in papal Rome
was seen vying with pomps of earthly majesty
or now on Corpus Christi day thro' Westminster

in babylonish exile paradeth our roads —
and as I looked in wonder on the apparition, I saw
the hunted man into their midst dash'd wildly and fell.

'Twas like as when a fox that long with speed and guile
hath resolutely outstay'd the yelling murderous pack
if when at last his limbs fail him and he knoweth
the hounds hot on his trail and himself quite outworn
will in desperation forgo his native fear
and run for refuge into some hamlet of men
and there will enter a cotter's confined cabin and plead
panting with half-closed eyes to the heart of his foe,
altho' he knoweth nought of the Divinity
of that Nature to whom he pleadeth, nor knoweth
ev'n that he pleadeth, yet he pleadeth not in vain
— so great is Nature — for the good wife hath pity,
will suffer him to hide there under settle or bed
until the hunt be pass'd, will cheer him and give him
milk of her children's share until he be restor'd
when she will let him forth to his roguish freedom again —

So now this choral convoy of heavenly pasture
gave ready succour and harbour to the hunted man
and silencing their music broke their bright-robed ranks
to admit him, and again closed round him where foredone
he fell down in their midst: and hands I saw outstretch'd
to upraise him, but when he neither rose up nor stirr'd
they knelt aghast, and one, who in solemn haste came up
and for the splendour of his apparel an elder seem'd,
bent over him there and whisper'd sacred words, whereat
he motion'd and gave sign, and offering his dumb mouth

took from the priestly fingers such food as is dealt
unto the dying, and when the priest stood up I knew
by the gesture of his silence that the man was dead.

Then feet and head his body in fair linen winding
they raised and bore along with dirge and shrieving prayer
such as they use when one of their own brotherhood
after mortal probation has enter'd into rest
and they will bury his bones where Christ at his coming
shall bid them all arise from their tombs in the church;
Whereto their long procession now went filing back
threading the streets, and dwarfed beneath the bright façade
crept with its head to climb the wide steps to the porch
whereunder, as ever there they arrived, the dark doorway
swallowed them out of sight: and still the train came on
with lurching bannerets and tottering canopy
threading the streets and mounting to the shadowy porch
arriving entering disappearing without end
when I awoke, the dirge still sounding in my ears
the night wind blowing thro' the open window upon me
as I lay marvelling at the riddle of my strange dream.















