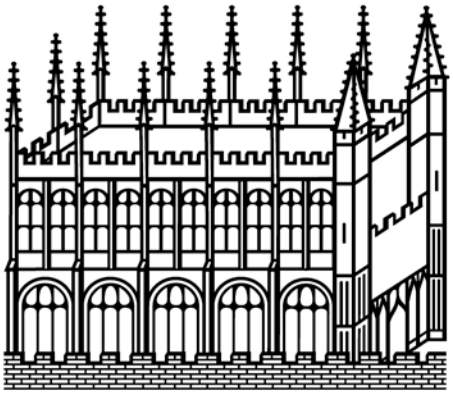

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THE WORKS OF HERMAN MELVILLE

STANDARD EDITION

VOLUME

XV

CLAREL

A POEM AND PILGRIMAGE IN THE HOLY LAND

BY

HERMAN MELVILLE

IN TWO VOLUMES

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PART III

MAR SABA

I

IN THE MOUNTAIN

WHAT reveries be in yonder heaven
Whither, if yet faith rule it so,
The tried and ransomed natures flow ?
If there peace after strife be given
Shall hearts remember yet and know ?
Thy vista, Lord, of havens dear,
May that in such entrancement bind
That never starts a wandering tear
For wail and willow left behind ?
Then wherefore, chaplet, quivering throw
A dusk e'en on the martyr's brow
You crown ? Do seraphim shed balm
At last on all of earnest mind,
Unworldly yearners, nor the palm
Awarded St. Teresa, ban
To Leopardi, Obermann ?
Translated where the anthem 's sung
Beyond the thunder, in a strain
Whose harmony unwinds and solves
Each mystery that life involves ;
There shall the Tree whereon He hung,
The olive wood, leaf out again—
Again leaf out, and endless reign
Type of the peace that buds from sinless pain ?

Exhalings ! Tending toward the skies
By natural law, from heart they rise

Of one there by the moundless bed
Where stones they roll to feet and head ;
Then mount, and fall behind the guard
And so away.
But whitherward ?
'Tis the high desert, sultry Alp
Which suns decay, which lightnings scalp.
For now, to round the waste in large,
Christ's Tomb re-win by Saba's marge
Of grots and ossuary cells,
And Bethlehem where remembrance dwells—
From Sodom in her pit dismayed
Westward they wheel, and there invade
Judah's main ridge, which horrors deaden—
Where Chaos holds the wilds in pawn,
As here had happed an Armageddon,
Betwixt the good and ill a fray,
But ending in a battle drawn,
Victory undetermined. Nay,
For how an indecisive day
When one side camps upon the ground
Contested.
Ere enlocked in bound
They enter where the ridge is riven,
A look, one natural look is given
Toward Margoth and his henchmen twain,
Dwindling to ants far off upon the plain.

' So fade men from each other !—Jew,
We do forgive thee now thy scoff,
Now that thou dim recedest off
Forever. Fair hap to thee, Jew :
Consolator whom thou disownest
Attend thee in last hour lonest ! '
Rolfe, gazing, could not all repress

That utterance ; and more or less,
Albeit they left it undeclared,
The others in the feeling shared.

They turn, and enter now the pass
Wherein, all unredeemed by weeds,
Trees, moss, the winding cornice leads
For road along the calcined mass
Of aged mountain. Slow they urge
Sidelong their way betwixt the wall
And flanked abyss. They hark the fall
Of stones, hoof-loosened, down the crags :
The crumblings note they of the verge.
In rear one strange steed timid lags :
On foot an Arab goes before
And coaxes him to steepy shore
Of scooped-out gulfs, would halt him there :
Back shrinks the foal with snort and glare.
Then downward from the giddy brim
They peep ; but hardly may they tell
If the black gulf affrighted him
Or lingering scent he caught in air
From relics in mid lodgment placed,
Now first perceived within the dell—
Two human skeletons enlaced
In grapple as alive they fell,
Or so disposed in overthrow
As to suggest encounter so.
A ticklish rim, an imminent pass
For quarrel ; and blood-feud, alas,
The Arab keeps, and where or when,
Cain meeting Abel, closes then.
That desert's age the gorge may prove,
Piercing profound the mountain bare ;
Yet hardly churned out in the groove

By a perennial wear and tear
Of floods ; nay, dry it shows within ;
But twice a year the waters flow,
Nor then in tide, but dribbling thin :
Avers Mar Saba's abbot so.
Nor less perchance before the day
When Joshua met the tribes in fray,
What wave here ran though leafy scene
Like uplands in Vermont the green ;
What sylvan folk by mountain-base
Descrying showers about the crown
Of woods, foreknew the freshet's race
Quick to descend in torrent down ;
And watched for it, and hailed in glee,
Then rode the comb of freshet wild,
As peaked upon the roller free
With gulls for mates, the Maldives' merry
child.
Or, earlier yet, could be a day
In time's first youth and pristine May
When here the hunter stood alone—
Moccasined Nimrod, belted Boone ;
And down the tube of fringed ravine
Siddim descried, a lilied scene ?
But crime and earthquake, throes and war ;
And heaven remands the flower and star.
Aside they turn, and leave that gorge,
And slant upon the mountain long,
And toward a ledge they toilsome urge
High over Siddim, and overhung
By loftier crags. In spirals curled
And pearly nothings buoyant whirled,
Eddies of exhalations light,
As over lime-kilns, swim in sight.
The fog dispersed, those vapours show

Diurnal from the waters won
By the athirst demanding sun—
Recalling text of Scripture so ;
For on the morn which followed rain
Of fire, when Abraham looked again,
The smoke went up from all the plain.
Their mount of vision, voiceless, bare,
It is that ridge, the desert's own,
Which by its dead Medusa stare
Petrific o'er the valley thrown,
Congeals Arabia into stone.
With dull metallic glint, the sea
Slumbers beneath the silent lee
Of sulphurous hills. These stretch away
Toward wilds of Kadesh Barnea,
And Zin the waste.
In pale regard
Intent the Swede turned thitherward :
' God came from Teman ; in His hour
The Holy One from Paran came ;
They knew Him not ; He hid His power
Within the forking of the flame,
Within the thunder and the roll.
Imperious in its swift control,
The lion's instantaneous lick
Not more effaces to the quick
Than His fierce indignation then.
Look ! for His wake is here. O men,
Since Science can so much explode,
Evaporated is this God ?—
Recall the red year Forty-eight :
He storms in Paris ; thence divides ;
The menace scarce outspeeds the fate :
He 's over the Rhine—He 's at Berlin—
At Munich—Dresden—fires Vien ;

He 's over the Alps—the whirlwind rides
In Rome ; London 's alert—the Czar :
The portent and the fact of war,
And terror that into hate subsides.
There, through His instruments made known,
Including Atheist and his tribes,
Behold the prophet's marching One,
He at whose coming Midian shook—
The God, the striding God of Habakkuk.'

Distempered ! Nor might passion tire,
Nor pale reaction from it quell
The craze of grief's intolerant fire
Unwearied and unweariable.

II

THE CARPENTER

FROM vehemence too mad to stem
Fain would they turn and solace them.
Turn where they may they find a dart.
For while recumbent here they view,
Beneath them spread, the seats malign,
Nehemiah recurs—in last recline
A hermit there. And some renew
Their wonderment at such a heart
Single in life—in death, how far apart!
That life they question, seek a clue:
Those virtues which his meekness knew,
Marked these indeed but wreckful wane
Of strength, or the organic man?
The hardy hemlock, if subdued,
Decays to violets in the wood,
Which put forth from the sodden stem:
His virtues, might they breed like them?
    Nor less that tale by Rolfe narrated
(Thrown out some theory to achieve),
Erewhile upon Mount Olivet,
That sea-tale of the master fated;
Not wholly might it here receive
An application such as met
The case. It needed something more
Or else to penetrate the core.
    But Clarel—made remindful so
Of bygone things which death can show

In kindled meaning—here revealed
That once Nehemiah his lips unsealed
(How prompted he could not recall)
In story which seemed rambling all,
And yet, in him, not quite amiss.
In pointed version it was this :
A gentle wight of Jesu's trade,
A carpenter, for years had made
His living in a quiet dell,
And toiled and ate and slept alone,
Esteemed a harmless witless one.
Had I a friend, thought he, 'twere well.
A friend he made, and through device
Of jobbing for him without price.
But on a day there came a word—
A word unblest, a blow abhorred.
Thereafter, in the mid of night,
When from the rafter and the joist
The insect ticked ; and he, lone sprite,
How wakeful lay, what word was voiced ?
Me love ; fear only man. And he—
He willed what seemed too strange to be :
The hamlet marvelled and the glade :
Interring him within his house,
He there his monastery made,
And grew familiar with the mouse.
Down to the beggar who might sing,
Alms, silent alms, unseen he 'd fling,
And cakes to children. But no more
Abroad he went, till spent and gray,
Feet foremost he was borne away.

As when upon a misty shore
The watchful seaman marks a light
Blurred by the fog, uncertain quite ;

And thereto instant turns the glass
And studies it, and thinks it o'er
By compass : Is 't the cape we pass ?
So Rolfe from Clarel's mention caught
Food for an eagerness of thought :
' It bears, it bears ; such things may be :
Shut from the busy world's pell-mell
And man's aggressive energy—
In cloistral Palestine to dwell
And pace the stone ! '
And Mortmain heard,
Attesting ; more his look did tell
Than comment of a bitter word.
Meantime the ass, high o'er the bed
Late scooped by Siddim's borders there—
As stupefied by brute despair,
Motionless hung the earthward head.

III

OF THE MANY MANSIONS

'THE Elysium of the Greek was given
By haughty bards, a hero-heaven;
No victim looked for solace there:
The marble gate disowned the plea—
Ye heavy laden, come to Me.
Nor Fortune's Isles, nor Tempe's dale
Nor Araby the Blest did bear
A saving balm—might not avail
To lull one pang, one lot repair.
Dreams, narrow dreams; nor of a kind
Showing inventiveness of mind
Beyond our earth. But oh! 'twas rare,
In world like this, the world we know
(Sole know, and reason from) to dare
To pledge indemnifying good
In worlds not known; boldly avow,
Against experience, the brood
Of Christian hopes.'
So Rolfe, and sat
Clouded. But, changing, up he gat:
'Whence sprang the vision? They who freeze,
On earth here, under want or wrong;
The Sermon on the Mount shall these
Find verified? is love so strong?
Or bounds are hers, that Python mars
Your gentler influence, ye stars?

If so, how seem they given o'er
To worse than Circe's fooling spell ;
Enslaved, degraded, tractable
To each mean atheist's crafty power.
So winning in enthusiast plea
Here may the Gospel but the more
Operate like a perfidy ? '
' So worldlings deem,' the Swede in glow ;
' Much so they deem ; or, if not so,
Hereon they act. But what said he,
The Jew whose feet the blisters know,
To Christ as sore He trailed the Tree
Toward Golgotha : " Ha, is it *Thou*,
The king, the god ? Well then, be strong :
No royal steed with galls is wrung :
That 's for the hack." There he but hurled
The scoff of Nature and the World,
Those monstrous twins.' It jarred the nerve
Of Derwent, but he masked the thrill.
For Vine, he kindled, sitting still ;
Respected he the Swede's wild will
As did the Swede Vine's ruled reserve.
Mortmain went on : ' We 've touched a theme
From which the club and lyceum swerve,
Nor Herr von Goethe would esteem ;
And yet of such compulsive worth,
It dragged a god here down to earth,
As some account. And, truth to say,
Religion oft-times, one may deem,
Is man's appeal from fellow-clay :
Thibetan faith implies the extreme—
That death emancipates the good,
Absorbs them into deity,
Dropping the wicked into bestialhood.'

With that for text to revery due,
In lifted waste, on ashy ground
Like Job's pale group, without a sound
They sat. But hark ! what strains ensue
Voiced from the crags above their view.

IV

THE CYPRIOTE

'NOBLE gods at the board
Where lord unto lord
Light pushes the care-killing wine :
Urbane in their pleasure,
Superb in their leisure—
Lax ease—
Lax ease after labour divine !

'Golden ages eternal,
Autumnal, supernal,
Deep mellow their temper serene :
The rose by their gate
Shall it yield unto fate ?
They are gods—
They are gods and their garlands keep green.

'Ever blandly adore them ;
But spare to implore them :
They rest, they discharge them from time ;
Yet believe, light believe
They would succour, reprieve—
Nay, retrieve—
Might but revellers pause in the prime ! '

'Who sings ? ' cried Rolfe ; 'dare say no Quaker :
Fine song o'er funeral Siddim here :
So, mindless of the undertaker,
In cage above her mistress' bier
The gold canary chirps. What cheer ?
Who comes ? '

'Ay, welcome as the drums
Of marching allies unto men
Beleaguered—comes, who hymning comes—
What rescuer, what Delian?'
So Derwent, and with quick remove
Scaling the rock which hemmed their cove
He thence descried where higher yet
A traveller came, by cliffs beset,
Descending, and where terrors met.
Nor Orpheus of heavenly seed
Adown thrilled Hades' gorges singing,
About him personally flinging
The bloom transmitted from the mead;
In listening ghost such thoughts could breed
As did the vocal stranger here
In Mortmain, where relaxed he lay
Under that voice from other sphere
And carol laughing at the clay.
Nearer the minstrel drew. How fair
And light he leaned with easeful air
Backward in saddle, so to frame
A counterpoise as down he came.
Against the dolorous mountain-side
His Phrygian cap in scarlet pride
Burned like a cardinal-flower in glen.
And after him, in trappings paced
His escort armed, three goodly men.
Observing now the other train,
He halted. Young he was, and graced
With fortunate aspect, such as draws
Hearts to good-will by natural laws.
No furtive scrutiny he made,
But frankly flung salute, and said:
'Well met in desert! Hear my song?'
'Indeed we did,' cried Derwent boon.

'And wondered where you got that tune,'
Rolfe added there. 'Oh, brought along
From Cyprus; I 'm a Cypriote,
You see; one catches many a note
Wafted from only heaven knows where.'
'And, pray, how name you it?' 'The air?
Why, hymn of Aristippus.' 'Ah:
And whither wends your train?' 'Not far';
And sidelong in the saddle free
A thigh he lolled: ''Tis thus, you see:
My dame beneath Our Lady's star
Vowed in her need, to Saba's shrine
Three flagons good for holy wine:
Vowed, and through me performed. Even
now
I come from Saba, having done
Her will, accomplishing the vow.
But late I made a private one—
Meant to surprise her with a present
She 'll value more than juicy pheasant,
Good mother mine. Yes, here I go
To Jordan, in desert there below,
To dip this shroud for her.' 'Shroud, *shroud*?'
Cried Derwent, following the hand
In startled wonderment unfeigned,
Which here a little tap bestowed
In designation on a roll
Strapped to the pommel: 'Azrael's scroll!
You do not mean you carry there
A—a——' 'The same; 'tis woven fair:

'My shroud is saintly linen,
In lavender 'tis laid;
I have chosen a bed by the marigold
And supplied me a silver spade!'

The priest gazed at the singer ; then
Turned his perplexed entreating ken
Upon Djalea. But Rolfe explained :
' I chance to know. Last year I gained
The Jordan at the Easter tide,
And saw the Greeks in numbers there,
Men, women, blithe on every side,
Dipping their winding-sheets. With care
They bleach and fold and put away
And take home to await the day :
A custom of old precedent,
And curious too in mode 'tis kept,
Showing how under Christian sway
Greeks still retain their primal bent,
Nor let grave doctrine intercept
That gay Hellene light-heartedness
Which in the pagan years did twine
The funeral urn with fair caress
Of vintage holiday divine.'
He turned him toward the Cypriote :
' Your courier, the forerunning note
Which ere we sighted you, we heard—
You 're bold to trill it so, my bird.'
' And why ? It is a fluent song.
Though who they be I cannot say,
I trust their lordships think no wrong ;
I do but trill it for the air ;
'Tis anything as down we fare.'
Enough ; Rolfe let him have his way ;
Yes, there he let the matter stay.
And so, with mutual good-will shown,
They parted.
For *l'envoy* anon
They heard his lilting voice impel
Among the crags this versicle :

'With a rose in thy mouth
Through the world lightly veer :
Rose in the mouth
Makes a rose of the year ! '

Then, after interval again,
But fainter, further in the strain :

'With the Prince of the South
O'er the Styx bravely steer :
Rose in the mouth
And a wreath on the bier ! '

Chord deeper now that touched within.
Listening, they at each other look ;
Some charitable hope they brook,
Yes, vague belief they fondly win
That heaven would brim his happy years
Nor time mature him into tears.

And Vine in heart of revery saith :
Like any flute inspired with breath
Pervasive, and which duly renders
Unconscious in melodious play
Whate'er the light musician tenders ;
So warblest thou lay after lay
Scarce self-derived ; and (shroud before)
Down goest singing toward Death's Sea,
Where lies aloof our pilgrim hoar
In pit thou 'lt pass. Ah, young to be !

V

THE HIGH DESERT

WHERE silence and the legend dwell,
A cleft in Horeb is, they tell,
Through which upon one happy day
(The sun on his heraldic track
Due sign having gained in Zodiac)
A sunbeam darts, which slants away
Through ancient carven oriel
Or window in the Convent there,
Illuming so with annual flush
The sombre vaulted chamber spare
Of Catherine's Chapel of the Bush—
The Burning Bush. Brief visitant,
It makes no lasting covenant;
It brings, but cannot leave, the ray.
To hearts which here the desert smote,
So came, so went the Cypriote.
Derwent deep felt it; and, as fain
His prior spirits to regain;
Impatient too of scenes which led
To converse such as late was bred,
Moved to go on. But some declined.
So, for relief to heart which pined,
Belex he sought, by him sat down
In cordial ease upon a stone
Apart, and heard his stories free
Of Ibrahim's wild infantry.

The rest abide. To these there comes,
As down on Siddim's scene they peer,
The contrast of their vernal homes—
Field, orchard, and the harvest cheer.
At variance in their revery move
The spleen of nature and her love :
At variance, yet entangled too—
Like wrestlers. Here in apt review
They call to mind Abel and Cain—
Ormuzd involved with Ahriman
In deadly lock. Were those gods gone ?
Or under other names lived on ?
The theme they started. 'Twas averred
That, in old Gnostic pages blurred,
Jehovah was construed to be
Author of evil, yea, its god ;
And Christ divine His contrary :
A god was held against a god,
But Christ revered alone. Herefrom,
If inference availeth aught
(For still the topic pressed they home),
The twofold Testaments become
Transmitters of Chaldaic thought
By implication. If no more
Those Gnostic heretics prevail
Which shook the East from shore to shore,
Their strife forgotten now and pale ;
Yet, with the sects, that old revolt
Now reappears, if in assault
Less frank : none say Jehovah 's evil,
None gainsay that He bears the rod ;
Scarce that ; but there 's dismission civil,
And Jesus is the indulgent God.
This change, this dusking change that slips
(Like the penumbra o'er the sun),

Over the faith transmitted down ;
Foreshadows it complete eclipse ?
Science and Faith, can these unite ?
Or is that priestly instinct right
(Right as regards conserving still
The Church's reign) whose strenuous will
Made Galileo pale recite
The Penitential Psalms in vest
Of sackcloth ; which to-day would blight
Those potent solvents late expressed
In laboratories of the West ?
But in her Protestant repose
Snores faith toward her mortal close ?
Nay, like a sachem petrified,
Encaved found in the mountain-side,
Perfect in feature, true in limb,
Life's full similitude in him,
Yet all mere stone—is faith dead *now*,
A petrifaction ? Grant it so,
Then what 's in store ? what shapeless birth ?
Reveal the doom reserved for earth ?
How far may seas retiring go ?
But, to redeem us, shall we say
That faith, undying, does but range,
Casting the skin—the creed. In change
Dead always does some creed delay—
Dead, not interred, though hard upon
Interment's brink ? At Saint Denis,
Where slept the Capets, sire and son,
Eight centuries of lineal clay,
On steps that led down into vault
The prince inurned last made a halt,
The coffin left they there, 'tis said,
Till the inheritor was dead ;
Then, not till then 'twas laid away.

But if no more the creeds be linked,
If the long line 's at last extinct,
If time both creed and faith betray,
Vesture and vested—yet again
What interregnum or what reign
Ensues ? Or does a period come ?
The Sibyls' books lodged in the tomb ?
Shall endless time no more unfold
Of truth at core ? Some things discerned
By the far Noahs of India old—
Earth's first spectators, the clear-eyed,
Unvitiated, unfalsified
Seers at first hand—shall these be learned,
Though late, even by the New World, say,
Which now contemns ?
But what shall stay
The fever of advance ? London immense
Still wax for aye ? A check : but whence ?
How of the teeming Prairie-Land ?
There shall the plenitude expand
Unthinned, unawed ? Or does it need
Only that men should breed and breed
To enrich those forces into play
Which in past times could oversway
Pride at his proudest ? Do they come,
The locusts, only to the bloom ?
Prosperity sire them ?
Thus they swept,
Nor sequence held, consistent tone—
Imagination wildering on
Through vacant halls which faith once kept
With ushers good.
Themselves thus lost,
At settled hearts they wonder most.
For those (they asked) who still adhere

In homely habit's dull delay,
To dreams dreamed out or passed away ;
Do these, our pagans, all appear
Much like each poor and busy one
Who when the Tartar took Pekin
(If credence hearsay old may win),
Knew not the fact—so vast the town,
The multitude, the maze, the din ?
Still laggeth in deferred adieu
The A.D. (Anno Domini)
Overlapping into era new
Even as the Roman A.U.C.
Yet ran for time, regardless all
That Christ was born, and after fall
Of Rome itself ?
But now our age,
So infidel in equipage,
While carrying still the Christian name—
For all its self-asserted claim,
How fares it, tell ? Can the age stem
Its own conclusions ? is 't a king
Awed by his conquests which enring
With menaces his diadem ?
Bright visions of the times to be—
Must these recoil, ere long be cowed
Before the march in league avowed
Of Mammon and Democracy ?
In one result whereto we tend
Shall Science disappoint the hope,
Yea, to confound us in the end,
New doors to superstition ope ?
As years, as years and annals grow,
And action and reaction vie,
And never men attain, but know
How waves on waves forever die ;
Does all more enigmatic show ?

So they ; and in the vain appeal
Persisted yet, as ever still
Blown back in sleet that blinds the eyes,
Not less the fervid Geysers rise.

Clarel meantime ungladdened bent
Regardful, and the more intent
For silence held. At whiles his eye
Lit on the Druze, reclined half prone,
The long pipe resting on the stone
And wreaths of vapour floating by—
The man and pipe in peace as one.
How clear the profile, clear and true ;
And he so tawny. Bust ye view,
Antique, in alabaster brown,
Might show like that. There, all aside,
How passionless he took for bride
The calm—the calm, but not the dearth—
The dearth or waste ; nor would he fall
In waste of words, that waste of all.

For Vine, from that unchristened earth
Bits he picked up of porous stone,
And crushed in fist : or one by one,
Through the dull void of desert air,
He tossed them into valley down ;
Or pelted his own shadow there ;
Nor sided he with anything :
By fits, indeed, he wakeful looked ;
But, in the main, how ill he brooked
That weary length of arguing—
Like tale interminable told
In Hades by some gossip old
To while the never-ending night.
Apart he went. Meantime, like kite
On Sidon perched, which doth enfold,

Slowly exact, the noiseless wing :
Each wrinkled Arab Bethlehemite,
Or trooper of the Arab ring,
With look of Endor's withered sprite
Slant peered on them from lateral height ;
While unperturbed over deserts riven,
Stretched the clear vault of hollow heaven.

VI

DERWENT

At night upon the darkling main
To ship return with muffled sound
The rowers without comment vain—
The messmate overboard not found :
So, baffled in deep quest but late,
These on the mountain.
But from chat
With Belex in campaigning mood,
Derwent drew nigh. The sight of him
Ruffled the Swede—evoked a whim
Which took these words : ' O, well bestowed !
Hither and help us, man of God :
Doctor of consolation, here !
Be warned though : truth won't docile be
To codes of good society.'
Allowing for pain's bitter jeer,
Or hearing but in part perchance,
The comely cleric pilgrim came
With what he might of suiting frame,
And air approaching nonchalance ;
And ' How to serve you, friends ? ' he said.
' Ah, that ! ' cried Rolfe ; ' for we, misled,
We peer from brinks of all we know ;
Our eyes are blurred against the haze :
Canst help us track in snow on snow
The footprint of the Ancient of Days ?

'Scarce without snow-shoes'; Derwent mild
In gravity; 'But come; we 've whiled
The time; up then, and let us go.'
'Delay,' said Mortmain; 'stay, roseace:
What word is thine for sinking heart,
What is thy wont in such a case,
Who sends for thee to act thy part
Consoling—not in life's last hour
Indeed—but when some deprivation sore
Unnerves, and every hope lies flat?'
That troubled Derwent, for the tone
Brake into tremble unbeknown
E'en to the speaker. Down he sat
Beside them: 'Well, if such one—nay!
But never yet such sent for me—
I mean, none in that last degree;
Assume it though: to him I 'd say—
"The less in hand the more in store,
Dear friend." No formula I 'd trace,
But honest comfort face to face;
And, yes, with tonic strong I 'd brace,
Closing with cheerful Paul in lore
Of text—*Rejoice ye evermore.*'
The Swede here of a sudden drooped,
A hump dropped on him, one would say;
He reached and some burnt gravel scooped,
Then stared down on the plain away.
The priest in fidget moved to part:
'Abide,' said Mortmain with a start;
'Abide, for more I yet would know:
Is God an omnipresent God?
Is He in Siddim yonder? No?
If anywhere He 's disavowed
How think to shun the final schism—
Blind elements, flat atheism?'

Whereto the priest : ' Far let it be
That ground where Durham's prelate stood
Who saw no proof that God was good
But only righteous.—Woe is me !
These controversies. Oft I 've said
That never, never would I be led
Into their maze of vanity.
Behead me—rid me of pride's part
And let me live but by the heart ! '
' Hast proved thy heart ? first prove it. Stay :
The Bible, tell me, is it true,
And thence deriv'st thy flattering view ? '
But Derwent glanced aside, as vexed ;
Inly assured, nor less perplexed
How to impart ; and grieved too late
At being drawn within the strait
Of vexed discussion : nor quite free
From ill conjecture, that the Swede,
Though no dissembler, yet indeed
Part played on him : ' Why question me ?
Why pound the text ? Ah, modern be,
And share the truth's munificence.
Look now, one reasons thus : Immense
Is tropic India ; hence she breeds
Brahma tremendous, gods like seeds.
The genial clime of Hellas gay
Begat Apollo. Take that way ;
Nor query—Ramayana true ?
The Iliad ? '
Mortmain nothing said,
But lumped his limbs and sunk his head.
Then Rolfe to Derwent : ' But the Jew :
Since clime and country, as you own,
So much effect, how with the Jew
Herein ? '

There Derwent sat him down
Afresh, well pleased and leisurely,
As one in favourite theory
Invoked : ' That bondman from his doom
By Nile, and subsequent distress,
With punishment in wilderness,
Methinks he brought an added gloom
To nature here. Here church and state
He founded—would perpetuate
Exclusive and withdrawn. But no :
Advancing years prohibit rest ;
All turns or alters for the best.
Time ran ; and that expansive light
Of Greeks about the bordering sea,
Their happy genial spirits bright,
Wit, grace urbane, amenity
Contagious, and so hard to ban
By bigot law, or any plan ;
These influences stole their way,
Affecting here and there a Jew ;
Likewise the Magi tincture too
Derived from the Captivity :
Hence Hillel's fair reforming school,
Liberal gloss and leavening rule.
How then ? could other issue be
At last but ferment and a change ?
True, none recanted or dared range :
To Moses' law they yet did cling,
But some would fain have tempering—
In the bare place a bit of green.
And lo, an advent—the Essene,
Gentle and holy, meek, retired,
With virgin charity inspired :
Precursor, nay, a pledge, agree,
Of light to break from Galilee.

And, ay, He comes : the lilies blow !
In hamlet, field, and on the road,
To every man, in every mode
How did the crowning Teacher show
His broad and blessed comity.
I do avow He still doth seem
Pontiff of optimists supreme ! '

The Swede sat stone-like. Suddenly :
' Leave thy carmine ! From thorns the streak
Ruddies enough that tortured cheek.
'Twas Shaftesbury first assumed your tone,
Trying to cheerfulise Christ's moan.'
' Nay now,' plead Derwent, earnest here,
And in his eyes the forming tear ;
' But hear me, hear ! '
' No more of it ! '
And rose. It was his passion-fit.
The other changed ; his pleasant cheer,
Confronted by that aspect wild,
Dropped like the flower from Ceres' child
In Enna, seeing the pale brow
Of Pluto dank from scud below.

Though by Gethsemane, where first
Derwent encountered Mortmain's mien,
Christian forbearance well he nursed,
Allowing for distempered spleen ;
Now all was altered, quite reversed—
'Twas now as at the burial scene
By Siddim's marge. And yet—and yet
Was here a proof the priest had met
His confutation ? Hardly so
(Mused Clarel), but he longed to know
How it could be, that while the rest

Contented scarce the splenetic Swede,
They hardly so provoked the man
To biting outburst unrepressed
As did the cleric's gentle fan.
    But had the student paid more heed
To Derwent's look, he might have caught
Hints of reserves within the thought.
Nor failed the priest ere all too late
His patience here to vindicate.

VII

BELL AND CAIRN

'ELOI LAMA SABACHTHANI!'
And, swooning, strove no more.
Nor gone
For every heart, whate'er they say,
The eclipse that cry of cries brought down,
And clamours through the darkness blown.
More wide for some it spreads in sway,
Involves the lily of the Easter Day.

A chance word of the Swede in place—
Allusion to the anguished face,
Recalled to Clarel now the cry,
The ghost's reproachful litany.
Disturbed then, he apart would go;
And passed among the crags; and there,
Like David in Adullam's lair—
Could it be Vine, and quivering so?
'Twas Vine. He wore that nameless look
About the mouth—so hard to brook—
Which in the Cenci portrait shows,
Lost in each copy, oil or print;
Lost, or else slurred, as 'twere a hint
Which if received, few might sustain:
A trembling over of small throes
In weak swoll'n lips, which to restrain
Desire is none, nor any rein.

Clarel recalled the garden's shade,
And Vine therein, with all that made
The estrangement in Gethsemane.
Reserves laid bare ? and can it be ?
The dockyard forge's silent mound,
Played over by small nimble flame—
Raked open, lo, the anchor 's found
In white-heat's alb.
With shrinking frame,
Grateful that he was unespied,
Clarel quite noiseless slipped aside :
Ill hour (thought he), an evil sign :
No more need dream of winning Vine
Or coming at his mystery.
O, lives which languish in the shade,
Puzzle and tease us, or upbraid ;
What noteless confidant, may be,
Withholds the talisman, the key !
Or if indeed it run not so,
And he 's above me where I cling ;
Then how these higher natures know
Except in shadow from the wing ?—

Hark ! as in benison to all,
Borne on waste air in wasteful clime,
What swell on swell of mellowing chime,
Which every drooping pilgrim rallies ;
How much unlike that ominous call
Pealed in the blast from Roncesvalles !
Was more than silver in this shell
By distance toned. What festival ?
What feast ? of Adam's kind, or fay ?
Hark—no, not yet it dies away.
Where the sexton of the vaulted seas
Buries the drowned in weedy grave,

While tolls the buoy-bell down the breeze ;
There, off the shoals of rainy wave
Outside the channel which they crave,
The sailors lost in shrouding mist,
Unto that muffled knelling list,
The more because for fogged remove
The floating belfry none may prove ;
So, yet with difference, do these
Attend.
' Chimes, chimes ? but whence ? thou breeze,'
Here Derwent ; ' convent none is near.'
' Ay,' said the Druze, ' but quick 's the ear
In deep hush of the desert wide.'
' 'Tis Saba calling ; yea,' Rolfe cried,
' Saba, Mar Saba summons us :
O, hither, pilgrims, turn to me,
Escape the desert perilous ;
Here 's refuge, hither unto me ! '

A lateral lodgment won, they wheeled,
And toward the abandoned ledge they glanced :
Near, in the high void waste advanced,
They saw, in turn abrupt revealed,
An object reared aloof by Vine
In whim of silence, when debate
Was held upon the cliff but late
And ended where all words decline :
A heap of stones in arid state.

The cairn (thought Clarel), meant he—yes,
A monument to barrenness ?

VIII

TENTS OF KEDAR

THEY climb. In Indian file they gain
A sheeted blank white lifted plain—
A moor of chalk or slimy clay,
With gluey track and streaky trail
Of some small slug or torpid snail.
With hooded brows against the sun,
Man after man they labour on.
    Corrupt and mortally intense,
What fumes ere long pollute the sense ?
But, hark the flap and lumbering rise
Of launching wing ; see the gaunt size
Of the ground-shadow thereby thrown.
Behind a great and sheltering stone
A camel, worn out, down had laid—
Never to rise. 'Tis thence the kite
Ascends, sails off in Tyreward flight.
As 'twere Apollyon, angel bad,
They watch him as he speeds away.
    But Vine, in mere caprice of clay,
Or else because a pride had birth
Slighting high claims which vaunted be
And favouring things of low degree—
From heaven he turned him down to earth,
Eagle to ass. She now, ahead
Went riderless, with even tread
And in official manner, sooth,
For bell and cord she 'd known in youth ;

Through mart and wild, bazaar and waste
Preceding camels strung in train,
Full often had the dwarf thing paced,
Conductress of the caravan
Of creatures tall. What meant Vine's glance
Ironic here which impish ran
In thievish way ? O, world's advance !
We wise limp after !
The cavalcade
Anon file by a pit-like glade
Clean scooped of last lean dregs of soil ;
Attesting in rude terraced stones
The ancient husbandmen's hard toil—
All now a valley of dry bones—
In shade a hopper. 'Twas a sight
So marked with dead, dead undelight,
That Derwent half unconscious here
Stole a quick glance at Mortmain's face
To note how it received the cheer.
Whereat the moody man, with sting
Returned the imprudent glance apace—
Wayward retort all withering
Though wordless. Clarel looking on,
Saw there repeated the wild tone
Of that discountenancing late
In sequel to prolonged debate
Upon the mountain. And again
Puzzled, and earnest, less to know
What rasped the Swede in such a man
Than how indeed the priest could show
Such strange forbearance ; ventured now
To put a question to him fair.
' Oh, oh,' he answered, all his air
Recovered from the disarray ;
' The shadow flung by Ebal's hill

On Gerizim, it cannot stay,
But passes. Ay, and ever still—
But don't you see the man is mad ?
His fits he has ; sad, sad, how sad !
Besides ; but let me tell you now ;
Do you read Greek ? Well, long ago,
In stage when goslings try the wing,
And peacock-chicks would softly sing,
And roosters small essay to crow ;
Reading Theocritus divine,
Envious I grew of all that charm
Where sweet and simple so entwine ;
But I plucked up and won a balm ;
Thought I, I 'll beat him in his place :
If, in my verses, and what not,
If I can't have this pagan grace,
Still—nor alone in page I blot,
But all encounters that may be—
I 'll make it up with Christian charity.'

Another brink they win, and view
Adown in faintly greenish hollow
An oval camp of sable hue
Pitched full across the track they follow—
Twelve tents of shaggy goat's wool dun.
' Ah, tents of Kedar may these be,'
Cried Derwent ; ' named by Solomon
In song ? Black, but scarce comely, see.
Whom have we here ? The brood of Lot ? '
' The oval seems his burial-plot,'
Said Rolfe ; ' and, for his brood, these men—
They rove perchance from Moab's den
Or Ammon's. Belex here seems well
To know them, and no doubt will tell.'

The Spahi, not at all remiss
In airing his Turk prejudice,
Exclaimed : ' Ay, sirs ; and ill betide
These Moabites and Ammonites
Ferrying Jordan either side—
Robbers and starvelings, mangy wights.
Sirs, I will vouch one thing they do :
Each year they harry Jericho
In harvest ; yet thereby they gain
But meagre, rusty spears of grain.
What right have such black thieves to live ?
Much more to think here to receive
Our toll ? Just Allah ! say the word,
And——' here he signified with sword.
The rest, impatient of delay
While yet on height at brink they stay,
So bidden by Djalea, who slow
Descends into the hopper low,
Riding. ' To parley with the knaves ! '
Cried Belex ; ' spur them down ; that saves
All trouble, sirs ; 'twas Ibrahim's way ;
When, in the Lebanon one day
We came upon a——'
' Pardon me,'
The priest ; ' but look how leisurely
He enters ; yes, and straight he goes
To meet our friend with scowling brows,
The warder in yon outlet, see,
Holding his desert spear transverse,
Bar-like, from sable hearse to hearse
Of toll-gate tents. Foreboding ill,
The woman calls there to her brood.
But what 's to fear ! Ah, with good-will
They bustle in the warlike mood ;
Save us from those long fish-pole lances !

Look, menacingly one advances ;
But he, our Druze, he mindeth none,
But paces. So ! they soften down.
'Tis Zar, it is that dainty steed,
High-bred fine equine lady brave,
Of stock derived from long ago ;
'Tis she they now admiring heed,
Picking her mincing way so grave,
None jostling, grazing scarce a toe
Of all the press. The sulky clan,
Yes, make way for the mare—and man !
There 's homage ! '
' Ay, ay,' Belex said,
' They 'd like to steal her and retire :
Her beauty is their heart's desire—
Base jackals with their jades ! '
Well sped
The Druze. The champion he nears
Posted in outlet, keeping ward,
Who, altering at that aspect, peers,
And him needs own for natural lord.
Though claiming kingship of the land,
He hesitates to make demand :
Salute he yields. The Druze returns
The salutation ; nor he spurns
To smoke with Ammon, but in way
Not derogating—brief delay.
They part. The unmolested train
Are beckoned, and come down. Amain
The camp they enter and pass through ;
No conflict here, no weak ado
Of words or blows.
This policy
(Djalea's) bred now a pleasing thought
In Derwent : ' Wars might ended be,

Yes, Japhet, Shem, and Ham be brought
To confluence of amity,
Were leaders but discreet and wise
Like this our chief.'
The armed man's eyes
Turned toward him tolerantly there
As 'twere a prattling child.
They fare
Further, and win a nook of stone,
And there a fountain making moan.
The shade invites, though not of trees :
They tarry in this chapel of ease ;
Then up, and journey on and on,
Nor tent they see—not even a lonely one.

IX

OF MONASTERIES

THE lake ink-black mid slopes of snow—
The dead-house for the frozen, barred—
And the stone hospice ; chill they show
Monastic in thy pass, Bernard.
Apostle of the Alps storm-riven,
How lone didst build so near the heaven !
    Anchored in seas of Nitria's sand,
The desert convent of the Copt—
No aerolite can more command
The sense of dead detachment, dropped
All solitary from the sky.
    The herdsmen of Olympus lie
In summer when the eve is won
Viewing white Spermos lower down,
The mountain-convent ; and winds bear
The chimes that bid the monks to prayer ;
Nor man-of-war hawk sole in sky
O'er lonely ship sends lonelier cry.
    The Grand Chartreuse with crystal peaks
Mid pines—the wintry Paradise
Of soul which but a Saviour seeks—
The mountains round all slabbed with ice ;
May well recall the founder true,
St. Bruno, who to heaven has gone
And proved his motto—that whereto
Each locked Carthusian yet adheres :
Troubled I was, but spake I none ;
I kept in mind the eternal years.

And Vallombrosa—in, shut in ;
And Montserrat—enisled aloft ;
With many more the verse might win,
Solitudes all, austere or soft.

But Saba ! Of retreats where heart
Longing for more than downy rest,
Fit place would find from world apart,
Saba abides the loneliest :
Saba, that with an eagle's theft
Seizeth and dwelleth in the cleft.
Aloof the monks their aerie keep,
Down from their hanging cells they peep,
Like samphire-gatherers o'er the bay
Faint hearing there the hammering deep
Of surf that smites the ledges gray.

But up and down, from grot to shrine,
Along the gorge, hard by the brink
File the gowned monks in even line,
And never shrink !
With litany or dirge they wend
Where nature as in travail dwells ;
And the worn grots and pensive dells
In wail for wail responses send—
Echoes in plaintive syllables.
With mystic silvery brede divine,
Saint Basil's banner of Our Lord
(In lieu of crucifix adored
By Greeks which images decline),
Stained with the five small wounds and red,
Down through the darkling gulf is led—
By night oft-times, while tapers glow
Small in the depths, as stars may show
Reflected far in well profound.

Full fifteen hundred years have wound
Since cenobite first harboured here ;
The bones of men, deemed martyrs crowned,
To fossils turn in mountain near ;
Nor less while now lone scribe may write,
Even now, in living dead of night,
In Saba's lamps the flames aspire—
The votaries tend the far-transmitted fire.

X

BEFORE THE GATE

'Tis Kedron, that profound ravine
Whence Saba soars. And all between
Zion and Saba one may stray,
Sunk from the sun, through Kedron's way.
By road more menacingly dead
Than that which wins the convent's base
No ghost to Tartarus is led.
    Through scuttle small, that keepeth place
In floor of cellars which impend—
Cellars or cloisters—men ascend
By ladder which the monks let down
And quick withdraw ; and thence yet on
Higher and higher, flight by flight,
They mount from Erebus to light,
And off look, world-wide, much in tone
Of Uriel, warder in the sun,
Who serious views this earthly scene
Since Satan passed his guard and entered in.
    But not by Kedron these now come
Who ride from Siddim ; no, they roam
The roof of mountains—win the tall
Towers of Saba, and huge wall
Builded along the steep, and there
A postern with a door, full spare
Yet strong, a clamped and bucklered mass
Bolted. In waste whose king is Fear,
Sole port of refuge, it is here.

Strange (and it might repel, alas)
Fair haven 's won by such a pass.
In London Tower the Traitors' Gate
Through which the guilty waters flow
Looks not more grim. Yet shalt thou know
If once thou enter, good estate.
Beneath these walls what frays have been
What clash and outcry, sabres crossed
Pilgrim and Perizzite between ;
And some have here given up the ghost
Before the gate in last despair.
Nor, for the most part, lacking fair
Sign-manual from a mitred lord,
Admission shall that arch afford
To any.
Weary now the train
At eve halt by the gate and knock.
No answer. Belex shouts amain :
As well invoke the Pico Rock.
' Bide,' breathes the Druze, and dropping rein,
He points. A wallet 's lowered down
From under where a hood projects
High up the tower, a cowl of stone,
Wherefrom alert an eye inspects
All applicants, and unbeknown.
Djalea promptly from his vest
A missive draws, which duly placed
In budget, rises from the ground
And vanishes. So, without sound,
Monks fish up to their donjon dark
The voucher from their Patriarch,
Even him who dwells in damask state
On Zion throned. Not long they wait :
The postern swings. Dismounting nigh,
The horses through the needle's eye,

That small and narrow gate, they lead.
But while low ducks each lofty steed,
Behold how through the crucial pass
Slips unabased the humble ass.
And so they all with clattering din
The stony fortress courtyard win.
There see them served and bidden rest ;
Horse, ass too, treated as a guest.
Friars tend as grooms. Yet others call
And lead them to the frater-hall
Cliff-hung. By monks the board is spread ;
They break the monastery bread,
Moist'ning the same with Saba's wine,
Product of painful toil mid stones
In terraces, whose Bacchic zones
That desert gird. Olive and vine
To flinty places well incline,
Once crush the flint. Even so they fared,
So well for them the brethren cared.
Refection done, for grateful bed
Cool mats of dye sedate were spread :
The lamps were looked to, freshly trimmed ;
And last (at hint from mellow man
Who seemed to know how all things ran,
And who in place shall soon be hymned)
A young monk-servant, slender-limbed,
And of a comely countenance,
Set out one flask of stature tall,
Against men's needs medicinal,
Travellers, subject to mischance ;
Devout then, and with aspect bright
Invoked Mar Saba's blessing—bade good-night.

He goes. But now in change of tune,
Shall friar be followed by buffoon ?

Saba supply a Pantaloon ?
Wise largess of true licence yield.
Howe'er the river, winding round,
May win an unexpected bound ;
The aim and destiny, unsealed
In the first fount, hold unrepealed.

XI

THE BEAKER

'LIFE is not by square and line :
  Wisdom 's stupid without folly :
Sherbet to-day, to-morrow wine—
  Feather in cap and the world is jolly ! '

So he, the aforesaid mellow man,
Thrumming upon the table's span.
Scarce audible except in air
Mirth's modest overture seemed there.
Nor less the pilgrims, folding wing,
Weary, would now in slumber fall—
Sleep, held for a superfluous thing
By that free heart at home in hall.
And who was *he* so jovial ?
Purveyor, he some needful stores
Supplied from Syrian towns and shores ;
And on his trips, dismissing care,
His stores delivered all and told,
Would rest a while in Saba's fold.
Not broken he with fast and prayer :
The leg did well plump out the sock ;
Nor young, nor old, but did enlock
In reconcilement a bright cheek
And fleecy beard ; that cheek, in show,
Arbutus flaked about with snow,
Running-arbutus in spring's freak

Overtaken so. In Mytilene,
Sappho and Phaon's Lesbos green,
His home was, his lax paradise,
An island yet luxurious seen,
Fruitful in all that can entice.
For chum he had a mountaineer,
A giant man, beneath whose lee
Lightly he bloomed, like pinks that cheer
The base of tower where cannon be.
That mountaineer the battle tans,
An Arnaut of no mean degree,
A lion of war, and drew descent
Through dames heroic from the tent
Of Pyrrhus and those Epirot clans
Which routed Rome. And, furthermore,
In after-line enlinked he stood
To Scanderbeg's Albanian brood,
And Arslan, famous heretofore,
The horse-tail pennon dyed in gore.
An Islamite he was by creed—
In act, what fortune's chances breed :
Attest the medal, vouch the scar—
Had bled for Sultan, won for Czar ;
His psalter bugle was and drum,
Any scorched rag his *Labarum.*
For time adherent of the Turk,
In Saba's hold he sheathed his dirk,
Waiting arrival of a troop
Destined for some dragooning swoop
On the wild tribes beyond the wave
Of Jordan. Unconstrained though grave.
Stalwart but agile, nobly tall,
Complexion a burnt red, and all
His carriage charged with courage high
And devil-dare. A hawk's his eye

While, for the garb : a snow-white kilt
Was background to his great sword-hilt :
The waistcoat blue, with plates and chains
Tarnished a bit with grapy stains ;
Oaches in silver rows : stout greaves
Of leather : buskins thonged ; light cloak
Of broidered stuff Damascus weaves ;
And, scorched one side with powder smoke,
A crimson fez, bald as a skull
Save for long tassel prodigal.
Last, add hereto a blood-red sash,
With dagger and pistol's silvery charms,
And there you have this Arnaut rash,
In zone of war—a trophy of arms.
While yet the monks stood by serene,
He, as to kill time, his moustache
Adjusted in his scimetar's sheen ;
But when they made their mild adieu,
Response he nodded, seemly too.
And now, the last gowned friar gone,
His heart of onslaught he toned down
Into a solemn sort of grace,
Each pilgrim looking full in face,
As he should say : Why now, let 's be
Good comrades here to-night.
Grave plea
For brotherly love and jollity
From such an arsenal of man
A little strange seemed and remote.
To bring it nearer—spice—promote—
Nor mindless of some aspects wan,
Lesbos, with fair engaging tone,
Threw in some moral cinnamon :
' Sir pilgrims, look ; 'tis early yet ;
In evening arbour here forget

The heat, the burden of the day.
Life has its trials, sorrows—yes,
I know—I feel ; but blessedness
Makes up. Ye 've grieved the tender clay :
Solace should now all that requite ;
'Tis duty, sirs. And—by the way—
Not vainly Anselm bade *good* night,
For see ! ' and cheery on the board
The flask he set.
' I and the sword,'
The Arnaut said (and in a tone
Of natural bass which startled one—
Profound as the profound trombone)—
' I and the sword stand by the red.
But this will pass, this molten ore
Of yellow gold. Is there no more ? '
' Trust wit for that,' the other said :
' Purveyor, shall he not purvey ? '
And slid a panel, showing store
Of cups and bottles in array.
' Then arms at ease, and ho, the bench ! '
It made the slender student blench
To hark the jangling of the steel,
Vibration of the floor to feel,
Tremor through beams and bones which ran
As that ripe masterpiece of man
Plumped solid down upon the deal.
Derwent a little hung behind—
Censorious not, nor disinclined,
But with self-querying countenance,
As if one of the cloth, perchance,
Due bound should set, observe degree
In liberal play of social glee.
Through instinct of good fellow bright,
His poise, as seemed, the Lesbian wight

Divined : and justly deeming here
The stage required a riper cheer
Than that before—solicitous,
With bubbling cup in either hand,
Toward Derwent drew he, archly bland ;
Then posed ; and tunefully e'en thus :

' A shady rock, and trickling too,
Is good to meet in desert drear :
Prithee now, the beading here—
Beads of Saba, saintly dew :
Quaff it, sweetheart, I and you :
Quaff it, for thereby ye bless
Beadsmen here in wilderness.
Spite of sorrow, maugre sin,
Bless their larder and laud their bin :
Nor deem that here they vainly pine
Who toil for heaven and till the vine ! '

He sings ; and in the act of singing,
Near and more near one cup he 's bringing,
Till by his genial sleight of hand
'Tis lodged in Derwent's, and—retained.
As lit by vintage sunset's hue
Which mellow warms the grapes that bleed,
In amber light the good man view ;
Nor text of sanction lacked at need ;
' At Cana, who renewed the wine ?
Sourly did I this cup decline
(Which lo, I quaff, and not for food),
'Twould by an implication rude
Asperse that festival benign.—
We 're brethren, ay ! '
The lamps disclose
The Spahi, Arnaut, and the priest,

With Rolfe and the not-of-Sharon Rose,
Ranged at the board for family feast.
' But where 's Djalea ? ' the cleric cried ;
' 'Tis royalty should here preside ' :
And looked about him. Truth to own,
The Druze, his office having done
And brought them into haven there,
Discharged himself of further care
Till the next start : the interim
Accounting rightfully his own ;
And may be, heedful not to dim
The escutcheon of an emir's son
By any needless letting down.

The Lesbian who had Derwent served,
Officiated for them all ;
And, as from man to man he swerved,
Grotesque a bit of song let fall :

' The mufti in park suburban
Lies under a stone,
Surmounted serene by a turban
Magnific—a marble one ! '

So, man by man, with twinkling air,
And cup and text of stanza fair :

' A rabbi in Prague they muster
In mound evermore
Looking up at his monument's cluster—
A cluster of grapes of Noah ! '

When all were served with wine and rhyme,
' Ho, comrade,' cried armed Og sublime,
' Your singing makes the filling scant ;
The flask to me, let *me* decant.'

With that, the host he played—brimmed up
And off-hand pushed the frequent cup ;
Flung out his thigh, and quaffed apace,
Barbaric in his hardy grace ;
The while his haughty port did say,
Who 's here uncivilised, I pray ?
I know good customs : stint I ye ?
Indeed (thought Rolfe), a man of mark,
And makes a rare symposiarch ;
I like him ; I 'll e'en feel his grip.
With that, in vinous fellowship
Frank he put out his hand. In mood
Of questionable brotherhood
The slayer stared—anon construed
The overture aright, and yet
Not unreservedly he met
The palm. Came it in sort too close ?
Was it embraces were for foes ?

Rolfe, noting a fine colour stir,
Flushing each happy reveller,
Now leaned back, with this ditty wee :

' The Mountain-Ash
And Sumach fine,
Tipplers of summer,
Betray the wine
In autumn leaf
Of vermil flame :
Bramble and Thorn
Cry—Fie, for shame ! '

Mortmain aloof and single sat—
In range with Rolfe, as viewed from mat
Where Vine reposed, observing there

That these in contour of the head
And goodly profile made a pair,
Though one looked like a statue dead.
Methinks (mused Vine), 'tis Ahab's court
And yon the Tishbite ; he 'll consort
Not long, but Kedron seek. It proved
Even so : the desert-heart removed.
But he of bins, whose wakeful eye
On him had fixed, and followed sly
Until the shadow left the door,
Turned short, and tristful visage wore
In quaint appeal. A shrug ; and then,
' Beseech ye now, ye friendly men,
Who 's *he*—a cup, pray ;—O, my faith !
That funeral cap of his means death
To all good fellowship in feast.
Mad, say he 's mad ! '
Awhile the priest
And Rolfe, reminded here in heart
Of more than well they might impart,
Uneasy sat. But this went by :
Ill sort some truths with revelry.—
The giant plied the flask. For Vine
Relaxed he viewed nor spurned the wine,
But humorously moralised
On those five souls imparadised
For term how brief ; well pleased to scan
The Mytilene, the juicy man.
Earth—of the earth (thought Vine) well, well,
So 's a fresh turf, but good the smell.
Yes, deemed by some medicinal—
Most too if damped with wine of Xeres
And snuffed at when the spirit wearies.
I have it under strong advising
'Tis good at whiles this sensualising ;

Would I could joy in it myself ;
But no !—
For Derwent, he, light elf,
Not vainly stifling recent fret,
Under the table his two knees
Pushed deeper, so as e'en to get
Closer in comradeship at ease.
Arnaut and Spahi, in respect
Of all adventures they had known,
These chiefly did the priest affect :
Adventures, such as duly shown
Printed in books, seem passing strange
To clerks which read them by the fire,
Yet be the wonted commonplace
Of some who in the Orient range,
Free-lances, spendthrifts of their hire,
And who in end, when they retrace
Their lives, see little to admire
Or wonder at, so dull they be
(Like fish mid marvels of the sea)
To everything that is not pent
In self, or thereto ministrant.

XII

THE TIMONEER'S STORY

BUT ere those Sinbads had begun
Their Orient Decameron,
Rolfe rose, to view the further hall.
Here showed, set up against the wall,
Heroic traditionary arms,
Protecting tutelary charms
(Like Godfrey's sword and Baldwin's spur
In treasury of the Sepulchre,
Wherewith they knighthood yet confer,
The monks or their Superior)—
Sanctified heirlooms of old time ;
With trophies of the paynim clime ;
These last with tarnish on the gilt,
The jewels vanished from the hilt.
    Upon one serpent-curving blade
Love-motto beamed from Antar's rhyme
In Arabic. A second said
(A scimetar the Turk had made,
And likely, it had clove a skull),
IN NAME OF GOD THE MERCIFUL !
A third was given suspended place,
And as in salutation waved,
And in old Greek was finely graved
With this : HAIL, MARY, FULL OF GRACE !

    'Tis a rare sheaf of arms be here,
Thought Rolfe : ' Who 's this ? ' and turned to peer

At one who had but late come in,
(A stranger) and, avoiding din
Made by each distant reveller,
Anchored beside him. His sea-gear
Announced a pilgrim-timoneer.
The weird and weather-beaten face,
Bearded and pitted, and fine vexed
With wrinkles of cabbala text,
Did yet reveal a twinge-like trace
Of some late trial undergone :
Nor less a beauty grave pertained
To him, part such as is ordained
To eld, for each age hath its own,
And even scars may share the tone.
Bald was his head as any bell—
Quite bald, except a silvery round
Of small curled budlike locks which bound
His temples as with asphodel.
Such he, who in nigh nook disturbed
Upon his mat by late uncurbed
Light revel, came with air subdued,
And by the clustered arms here stood
Regarding them with dullish eye
Of some old reminiscence sad.
On him Rolfe gazed : ' And do ye sigh ?
Hardly they seem to cheer ye : why ? '
He pursed the mouth and shook the head.
' But speak ! ' ' 'Tis but an old bewailing.'
' No matter, tell.' ' 'Twere unavailing.'
' Come, now.'
' Since you entreat of me—
'Tis long ago—I 'm agèd, see—
From Egypt sailing—hurrying too—
For spite the sky there, always blue,
And blue-daubed seas so bland, the pest

Was breaking out—the people quailing
In houses hushed ; from Egypt sailing,
In ship, I say, which shunned the pest,
Cargo half-stored, and—and—alack !
One passenger of visage black,
But whom a white robe did invest
And linen turban, like the rest—
A Moor he was, with but a chest ;—
A fugitive poor Wahabee—
So ran his story—who by me
Was smuggled aboard ; and ah, a crew
That did their wrangles still renew,
Jabbing the poniard in the fray,
And mutinous withal ;—I say,
From Egypt bound for Venice sailing—
On Friday—well might heart forebode !
In this same craft from Cadiz hailing,
Christened by friar ' *The Peace of God* '
(She laden now with rusted cannon
Which long beneath the Crescent's pennon
On beach had laid, condemned and dead,
Beneath a rampart, and from bed
Were shipped off to be sold and smelted
And into new artillery melted)—
I say that to *The Peace of God*
(Your iron the salt seas corrode)
I say there fell to her unblest
A hap more baleful than the pest.
Yea, from the first I knew a fear,
So strangely did the needle veer.
A gale came up, with frequent din
Of cracking thunder out and in :
Corposants on yard-arms did burn,
Red lightning forked upon the stern :
The needle like an imp did spin.

Three gulls continual plied in wake,
Which wriggled like a wounded snake,
For I, the wretched timoneer,
By fitful stars yet tried to steer
'Neath shortened sail. The needle flew
(The glass thick blurred with damp and dew),
And flew the ship we knew not where.
Meantime the mutinous bad crew
Got at the casks and drowned despair,
Carousing, fighting. What to do ?
To all the saints I put up prayer,
Seeing against the gloomy shades
Breakers in ghastly palisades.
Nevertheless she took the rocks ;
And dinning through the grinds and shocks,
(Attend the solving of the riddle)
I heard the clattering of blades
Shaken within the Moor's strong-box
In cabin underneath the needle.
How screamed those three birds round the
mast
Slant going over. The keel was broken
And heaved aboard us for death-token.
To quit the wreck I was the last,
Yet I sole wight that 'scaped the sea.'
' But he, the Moor ? '
' O, sorcery !
For him no heaven is, no atoner.
He proved an armourer, the Jonah !
And dealt in blades that poisoned were,
A black lieutenant of Lucifer.
I heard in Algiers, as befell
Afterward, his crimes of hell.
I 'm far from superstitious, see ;
But arms in sheaf, somehow they trouble me.'

'Ha, *trouble, trouble?* what 's that, pray?
I 've heard of it; bad thing, they say;

'Bug there, lady bug, plumped in your wine?
Only rose-leaves flutter by mine!'

The gracioso man, 'twas he,
Flagon in hand, held tiltingly.
How peered at him that timoneer,
With what a changed, still, merman-cheer,
As much he could, but would not say:
So murmuring naught, he moved away.
'Old, old,' the Lesbian dropped; 'old—dry:
Remainder biscuit; and alas,
But recent 'scaped from luckless pass.'
'Indeed? relate.'—'Oh, by and by.'
But Rolfe would have it then. And so
The incident narrated was
Forthwith.
Recast, it thus may flow:
The shipmen of the Cyclades
Being Greeks, even of St. Saba's creed,
Are frequent pilgrims. From the seas
Greek convents welcome them, and feed.
Agath, with hardy messmates ten,
To Saba, and on foot, had fared
From Joppa. Duly in the glen
His prayers he said; but rashly dared
Afar to range without the wall.
Upon him fell a robber-brood,
Some Ammonites. Choking his call,
They beat and stripped him, drawing blood,
And left him prone. His mates made search
With friars, and ere night found him so,
And bore him moaning back to porch

Of Saba's refuge. Cure proved slow ;
The end his messmates might not wait ;
Therefore they left him unto love
And charity—within that gate
Not lacking. Mended now in main,
Or convalescent, he would fain
Back unto Joppa make remove
With the first charitable train.
His story told, the teller turned
And seemed like one who instant yearned
To rid him of intrusive sigh :
' Yon happier pilgrim, by the by—
I like him : his vocation, pray ?
Purveyor he ? like me, purvey ? '
' Ay—for the conscience : he 's our priest.'
' Priest ? he 's a grape, judicious one—
Keeps on the right side of the sun.
But here 's a song I heard at feast.'

XIII

SONG AND RECITATIVE

'THE chalice tall of beaten gold
  Is hung with bells about :
The flamen serves in temple old,
And weirdly are the tinklings rolled
  When he pours libation out.
O Cybele, dread Cybele,
Thy turrets nod, thy terrors be !

'But service done, and vestment doffed,
  With cronies in a row
Behind night's violet velvet soft,
The chalice drained he rings aloft
  To another tune, I trow.
O Cybele, fine Cybele,
Jolly thy bins and belfries be ! '

With action timing well the song,
His flagon flourished up in air,
The varlet of the isle so flung
His madcap intimation—there
Comic on Rolfe his eye retaining
In mirth how full of roguish feigning.
  Ought I protest ? (thought Rolfe) the man
Nor malice has, nor faith : why ban
This heart though of religion scant,
A true child of the lax Levant,

That polyglot and loose-laced mother ?
In such variety he 's lived
Where creeds dovetail into each other ;
Such influences he 's received :
Thrown among all—Medes, Elamites,
Egyptians, Jews and proselytes,
Strangers from Rome, and men of Crete—
And parts of Lybia round Cyrene—
Arabians, and the throngs ye meet
On Smyrna's quays, and all between
Stamboul and Fez—thrown among these,
A caterer to revelries,
He 's caught the tints of many a scene,
And so became a harlequin
Gay patchwork of all levities.
Holding to *now*, swearing by *here*,
His course conducting by no keen
Observance of the stellar sphere—
He coasteth under sail lateen :
Then let him laugh, enjoy his dinner,
He 's an excusable poor sinner.
'Twas Rolfe. But Clarel, what thought he ?
For he too heard the Lesbian's song
There by the casement where he hung :
In heart of Saba's mystery
This mocker light !—
But now in waltz
The Pantaloon here Rolfe assaults ;
Then, keeping arm around his waist,
Sees Rolfe's reciprocally placed ;
'Tis side by side entwined in ease
Of Chang and Eng the Siamese
When leaning mutually embraced ;
And so these improvised twin brothers
Dance forward and salute the others,

The Lesbian flourishing for sign
His wine-cup, though it lacked the wine.
They sit. With random scraps of song
He whips the tandem hours along,
Or moments, rather ; in the end
Calling on Derwent to unbend
In lyric.
'I ?' said Derwent, 'I ?
Well, if you like, I 'll even give
A trifle in recitative—
A something—nothing—anything—
Since little does it signify
In festive free contributing :

'To Hafiz in grape-arbour comes
Didymus, with book he thumbs :
My lord Hafiz, priest of bowers—
Flowers in such a world as ours ?
Who is the god of all these flowers ?—
Signior Didymus, who knows ?
None the less I take repose—
Believe, and worship here with wine
In vaulted chapel of the vine
Before the altar of the rose.

'Ah, who sits here ? a sailor meek ? '
It was that sea-apparelled Greek :
'Gray brother, here, partake our wine.'
He shook his head, yes, did decline.
'Or quaff or sing,' cried Derwent then,
'For learn, we be hilarious men.
Pray, now, you seamen know to sing.'
'I 'm old,' he breathed.—'So 's many a tree,
Yet green the leaves and dance in glee.'

The Arnaut made the scabbard ring :
' Sing, man, and here 's the chorus—sing ! '
' Sing, sing ! ' the Islesman, ' bear the bell ;
Sing, and the other songs excel.'
' Ay, sing,' cried Rolfe, ' here now 's a sample ;
'Tis virtue teaches by example :

' Jars of honey,
Wine-skin, dates, and macaroni :
Falling back upon the senses—
O, the wrong—
Need take up with recompenses :
Song, a song ! '

They sang about him till he said :
' Sing, sirs, I cannot : this I 'll do,
Repeat a thing Methodius made,
Good chaplain of *The Apostles*' crew :

' Priest in ship with saintly bow,
Warship named from Paul and Peter
Grandly carved on castled prow ;
Gliding by the grouped Canaries
Under liquid light of Mary's
Mellow star of eventide ;
Lulled by tinklings at the side,
I, along the taffrail leaning,
Yielding to the ship's careening,
Shared that peace the upland owns
Where the palm—the palm and pine
Meeting on the frontier line
Seal a truce between the zones.
This be ever ! (mused I lowly)
Dear repose is this and holy ;

Like the Gospel it is gracious
And prevailing.—There, audacious—
Boom ! the signal-gun it jarred me,
Flash and boom together marred me
And I thought of horrid war ;
But never moved grand Paul and Peter,
Never blenched Our Lady's star ! '

XIV

THE REVEL CLOSED

'BLESS that good chaplain,' Derwent here;
'All doves and halcyons round the sphere
Defend him from war's rude alarms!'
Then (O, sweet impudence of wine)
Then rising and approaching Vine
In suppliant way: 'I crave an alms:
Since this gray guest, this serious one,
Our wrinkled old Euroclydon,
Since even he, with genial breath
His quota here contributeth,
Helping our gladness to prolong—
Thou too! Nay, nay; as everywhere
Water is found if one not spare
To delve—tale, prithee now, or song!'
Vine's brow shot up with crimson lights
As may the North on frosty nights
Over Dilston Hall and his low state—
The fair young Earl whose bloody end
Those red rays do commemorate,
And take his name.
Now all did bend
In chorus, crying, 'Tale or song!'
Investing him. Was no escape
Beset by such a Bacchic throng.
'Ambushed in leaves we spy your grape,'
Cried Derwent; 'black but juicy one—
A song!'

No way for Vine to shun :
' Well, if you 'll let me here recline
At ease the while, I 'll hum a word
Which in his Florence loft I heard
An artist trill one morning fine :—

' What is beauty ? 'tis a dream
Dispensing still with gladness :
The dolphin haunteth not the shoal,
And deeps there be in sadness.

' The rose-leaves, see, disbanded be—
Blowing, about me blowing ;
But on the death-bed of the rose
My amaranths are growing.

' *His amaranths :* a fond conceit,
Yes, last illusion of retreat !
Short measure 'tis.' ' And yet enough,'
Said Derwent ; ' 'tis a hopeful song ;
Or, if part sad, not less adorning,
Like purple in a royal mourning.
We debtors be. Now come along
To table, we 'll take no rebuff.'
So Vine sat down among them then—
Adept—shy prying into men.
Derwent here wheeled him : ' But for sake
Of conscience, noble Arnaut, tell ;
When now I as from dream awake
It just dawns on me : how is this ?
Wine-bibbing ? No ! that kind of bliss
Your Koran bars. And Belex, man,
Thou'st smoked before the sun low fell ;
And this month 's what ? your Ramadan ?
May true believers thus rebel ? '

Good sooth, did neither know to tell,
Or care to know, what time did fall
The Islam fast ; yet took it so
As Derwent roguish prompted, though
It was no Ramadan at all ;
'Twas far ahead, a movable fast
Of lunar month, which to forecast
Needs reckoning.
Ponderous pause
The Anak made : ' Mahone has laws,
And Allah 's great—of course :—forefend !
Ho, rouse a stave, and so an end :

' The Bey, the Emir, and Mameluke lords
Charged down on the field in a grove of swords :
Hurrah ! hurrah and hurrah
For the grove of swords in the wind of war !

' And the Bey to the Emir exclaimed, Who knows ?
In the shade of the scimetars Paradise shows !
Hurrah ! hurrah and hurrah
For the grove of swords in the wind of war ! '

He sang ; then settled down, a mate
For Mars' high pontiff—solemn sate,
And on his long broad Bazra blade
Deep ruminated. Less sedate,
The Spahi now in escapade
Vented some Turkish guardroom joke,
But scarce thereby the other woke
To laughter, for he never laughed,
Into whatever mood he broke,
Nor verbal levity vouchsafed,
So leonine the man. But here
The Spahi, with another cheer

Into a vein of mockery ran,
Toasting the feast of Ramadan,
Laughing thereat, removed from fear.
It was a deep-mouthed mastiff burst,
Nor less, for all the jovial tone
The echo startling import won—
At least for Clarel, little versed
In men, their levities and tides
Unequal, and of much besides.
There by a lattice open swung
Over the Kedron's gulf he hung,
And pored and pondered : With what sweep
Doubt plunges, and from maw to maw ;
Traditions none the nations keep—
Old ties dissolve in one wide thaw ;
The Frank, the Turk, and e'en the Jew
Share it ; perchance the Brahmin too.
Returns each thing that may withdraw ?
The schools of blue-fish years desert
Our sounds and shores—but they revert ;
The ship returns on her long tack :
The bones of Theseus are brought back :
A comet shall resume its path
Though three millenniums go. But faith ?
Ah, Nehemiah—and, Derwent, thou
'Twas dust to dust : what is it now
And here ? Is life indeed a dream ?
Are these the pilgrims late that heard
The wheeling desert vultures scream
Above the Man and Book interred—
Scream like the haglet and the gull
Off Chiloe o'er the foundered hull ?

But hark : while here light fell the clink
The five cups made touched brink to brink

In fair bouquet of fellowship,
And just as the gay Lesbian's lip
Was parted—jetting came a wail
In litany from Kedron's jail
Profound, and belly of the whale :

' Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Intercede for me,
Angel of the Agony.
Spare me, spare me !
Merciful be—
Lord, spare me—
Spare and deliver me ! '

Arrested, those five revellers there,
Fixed in light postures of their glee,
Seemed problematic shapes ye see
In linked caprice of festal air
Graved round the Greek sarcophagi.

XV

IN MOONLIGHT

THE roller upon Borneo's strand
Halts not, but in recoiling throe
Drags back the shells involved with sand,
Shuffled and muffled in the flow
And hollow of the wallowing undertow.

In night Rolfe waked, and whelming felt
That refluence of disquiet dealt
In sequel to redundant joy.
Around he gazed in vague annoy
Upon his mates. The lamplight dim
Obscurely showed them, strangely thrown
In sleep, nor heeding eye of him ;
Flung every way, with random limb—
Like corses, when the battle 's done
And stars come up. No sound but slight
Calm breathing, or low elfin shriek
In dream. But Mortmain, coiled in plight,
Lay with one arm wedged under cheek,
Mumbling by starts the other hand,
As the wolf-hound the bone. Rolfe rose
And shook him. Whereat, from his throes
He started, glaring ; then lapsed down :
' Soft, soft and tender ; feels so bland—
Grind it ! 'tis hers, Brinvilliers' hand,
My nurse.' From which mad dream anon
He seemed his frame to re-command ;
And yet would give an animal moan.

'God help thee, and may such ice
make
Except against some solid ? nay—
But thou who mark'st, get thee away,
Nor in such coals of Tartarus rake.'
So Rolfe ; and wide a casement threw.
Aroma ! and is this Judæa ?
Down the long gorge of Kedron blew
A balm beyond the sweet Sabæa—
An air as from Elysian grass ;
Such freshening redolence divine
As mariners upon the brine
Inhale, when barren beach they pass
By night ; a musk of wafted spoil
From Nature's scent-bags in the soil,
Not in her flowers ; nor seems it known
Even on the shores wherefrom 'tis blown.
Clarel, he likewise wakeful grew,
And rose, joined Rolfe, and both repaired
Out to a railed-in ledge. In view
Across the gulf a fox was scared
Even by their quiet coming so,
And noiseless fled along a line
Of giddy cornice, till more slow
He skulked out of the clear moonshine ;
For great part of that wall did show,
To these beneath the shadowed height,
With arras hung of fair moonlight.
The limestone mountain cloven asunder,
With scars of many a plunge and shock
Tremendous of the rifted rock ;
So hushed now after all the thunder,
Begat a pain of troubled wonder.
The student felt it ; for redress
He turned him—anywhere—to find

Some simple thing to ease the mind
Dejected in her littleness.
Rolfe read him ; and in quiet way
Would interpose, lead off, allay.
' Look,' whispered he, ' yon object white—
This side here, on the crag at brink—
'Tis touched, just touched by paler light ;
Stood we in Finland, one might think
An ermine there lay coiled. But no,
A turban 'tis, Djalea's, aloof
Reclining, as he used to do
In Lebanon upon proud roof—
His sire's. And, see, long pipe in state,
He inhales the friendly fume sedate.
Yon turban with the snowy folds
Announces that my lord there holds
The rank of Druze initiate—
Not versed in portion mere, but total—
Advanced in secrets sacerdotal ;
Though what these be, or high or low,
Who dreams ? Might Lady Esther learn ? '
' Who ? '
' Lady Esther. Don't you know ?
Pitt's sibyl-niece, who made sojourn
In Libanus, and read the stars ;
Self-exiled lady, long ago
She prophesied of wizard wars,
And kept a saddled steed in stall
Awaiting some Messiah's call
Who came not.—But yon Druze's veil
Of Sais may one lift, nor quail ?
We 'll try.'
To courteous challenge sent,
The Druze responded, not by word
Indeed, but act : he came ; content

He leaned beside them in accord,
Resting the pipe-bowl. His assent
In joining them, nay, all his air
Mute testimony seemed to bear
That now night's siren element,
Stealing upon his inner frame,
Pliant had made it and more tame.
With welcome having greeted him,
Rolfe led along by easy skim
And won the topic : ' Tell us here—
Your Druze faith : are there not degrees,
Orders, ascents of mysteries
Therein ? One would not pry and peer :
Of course there 's no disclosing these ;
But what 's that *working* thought you win ?
The prelate-princes of your kin,
They—they—doubtless they take their ease.'
No ripple stirred the Emir's son,
He whiffed the vapour, kept him staid,
Then from the lip the amber won :
' No God there is but God,' he said,
And tapped the ashes from the bowl,
And stood. 'Twas passive self-control
Of Pallas' statue in sacked Rome
Which bode till pushed from off the plinth ;
Then through the rocky labyrinth
Betook him where cool sleep might come ;
But not before farewell sedate :
' Allah preserve ye, Allah great ! '

XVI

THE EASTER FIRE

'THERE 's politesse ! we 're left behind.
And yet I like this Prince of Pith ;
Too pithy almost. Where 'll ye find
Nobleman to keep silence with
Better than Lord Djalea ?—But you—
It cannot be this interview
Has somehow——' 'No,' said Clarel ; 'no,'
And sighed ; then, 'How irreverent
Was Belex in the wassail-flow :
His Ramadan he links with Lent.'
'No marvel : what else to infer ?
Toll-taker at the Sepulchre.
To me he gave his history late,
The which I sought.—You 've marked the state
Of warders shawled, on old divan,
Sword, pipe, and coffee-cup at knee,
Cross-legg'd within that portal's span
Which wins the Holy Tomb ? Ay me,
With what a bored dead apathy
Faith's eager pilgrims they let in ! '
'Guard of the Urn has Belex been ? '
Said Clarel, starting ; 'why then—yes——'
He checked himself.—
'Nay, but confess,'
Cried Rolfe ; 'I know the revery lurks :
Frankly admit that for these Turks

There 's nothing that can so entice
To disbelieve, nay, atheise—
Nothing so baneful unto them
As shrined El Cods, Jerusalem.
For look now how it operates :
To Christ the Turk as much as Frank
Concedes a supernatural rank ;
Our Holy Places too he mates
All but with Mecca's own. But then
If chance he mark the Cross profaned
By violence of Christian men
So called—*his* faith then needs be strained ;
The more, if he himself have done
(Enforced thereto by harsh command)
Irreverence unto Mary's Son.'
' How mean you ? ' and the speaker scanned.
' Why, not alone has Belex been
An idling guard about the Tomb :
Nay, but he knows another scene
In fray beneath the selfsame dome
At festivals. What backs he 's scored
When on the day by Greeks adored,
St. Basil's Easter, all the friars
Schismatic, with the pilgrim tribes,
Levantine, Russian, heave their tides
Of uproar in among the shrines,
Waiting the burst of fraudful fires
From vent there in the Holy Tomb
Which closeteth the mongers. Room !
It jets ! To quell the rush, the lines
Of soldiers sway : crack falls the thong ;
And mid the press, some there, though strong,
Are trampled, trodden, till they die.
In transfer swift, igniting fly
The magic flames, which, caught along

By countless candles, multiply.
Like seas phosphoric on calm nights,
Blue shows the fane in fog of lights ;
But here 'tis hurricane and high :
Zeal, furious zeal, and frenzying faith
And ecstasy of Aty's scathe
When up the Phrygian mount he rushed
Bleeding, yet heeding not his shame,
While round him frantic timbrels pushed
In rites delirious to name.
No : Dindymus' nor Brahma's crew
Dream what these Christian fakirs do :
Wrecked banners, crosses, ragged palms—
Red wounds thro' vestments white ye view ;
And priests who shout ferocious psalms
And hoarse hosannas to their King,
Even Christ ; and naught may work a lull,
Nor timely truce of reason bring ;
Not cutting lash, nor smiting sword,
Nor yet—O ! more than wonderful—
The Tomb, the pleading Tomb where lay Our Lord.'
' But who ordains the imposture ? speak.'
' The vivid, ever-inventive Greek.'
' The Greek ? But that is hard to think.
Seemly the port, gentle the cheer
Of friars which lodge upon this brink
Of Kedron, and do worship here
With rites august, and keep the creed.'—
' Ah, *rites august* ;—this ancient sect,
Stately upholstered and bedecked,
Is but a catafalque, concede—
Prolongs in sacerdotal way
The Lower Empire's bastard sway ;
It does not grow, it does but bide—
An orthodoxy petrified.

Or, if it grow, it grows but with
Russia, and thence derives its pith.
The Czar is its armed bishop. See,
The Czar's purse, so it comes to me,
Contributes to this convent's pride.
But what 's that twinkling through the gloom
Far down ? the lights in chantry ? Yes !
Whence came the flame that lit ? Confess,
E'en from Jerusalem—the Tomb,
Last Easter. Horseman from the porch
Hither each Easter spurs with torch
To re-ignite the flames extinct
Upon Good Friday. Thus, you see,
Contagious is this cheatery ;
Nay, that 's unhandsome ; guests we are ;
And hosts are sacred—house and all ;
And one may think, and scarcely mar
The truth, that it may so befall
That, as yon docile lamps receive
The fraudful flame, yet honest burn,
So, no collusive guile may cleave
Unto these simple friars, who turn
And take whate'er the forms dispense,
Nor question, *Wherefore ?* ask not, *Whence ?* '

Clarel, as if in search of aught
To mitigate unwelcome thought,
Appealed to turret, crag and star ;
But all was strange, withdrawn and far.

' Yet need we grant,' Rolfe here resumed,
' This trick its source had in a dream
Artless, which few will disesteem—
That angels verily illumed

Those lamps at Easter, long ago ;
Though now indeed all come from prayer
(As Greeks believe—at least avow)
Of bishops in the Sepulchre.
Be rumour just, which small birds sing,
Greek churchmen would let drop this thing
Of fraud, e'en let it cease. But no ;
'Tis ancient, 'tis entangled so
With vital things of needful sway,
Scarce dare they deviate that way.
The Latin in this spurious rite
Joined with the Greek : but long ago,
Long years since, he abjured it quite.
Still, few Rome's pilgrims here, and they
Less credulous than Greeks to-day.
Now worldlings in their worldliness
Enjoin upon us, *Never retract :*
With ignorant folk, think you, no less
Of policy priestcraft may exact ?
But Luther's clergy : though their deeds
Take not imposture, yet 'tis seen
That, in some matters more abstract,
These, too, may be impeached herein.
While, as each plain observer heeds,
Some doctrines fall away from creeds,
And therewith, hopes, which scarce again,
In those same forms, shall solace men—
Perchance, suspended and inert
May hang, with few to controvert,
For ages ; does the Lutheran,
To such disciples as may sit
Receptive of his sanctioned wit,
In candour own the dubious weather
And lengthen out the cable's tether ?—
You catch my drift ? '

'I do. But, nay,
Some ease the cable.'
'Derwent, pray ?
Ah, he—he is a generous wight,
And lets it slip, yes, run out quite.
Whether now in his priestly state
He seek indeed to mediate
'Tween faith and science (which still slight
Each truce deceptive) or discreet
Would kindly cover faith's retreat,
Alike he labours vainly. Nay,
And, since I think it, why not say—
Things all diverse he would unite :
His idol 's an hermaphrodite.'
The student shrank. Again he knew
Return for Rolfe of quick distaste ;
But mastered it ; for still the hue
Rolfe kept of candour undefaced,
Quoting pure nature at his need,
As 'twere the Venerable Bede :
An Adam in his natural ways.
But scrupulous lest any phrase
Through inference might seem unjust
Unto the friend they here discussed,
Rolfe supplements : 'Derwent but errs—
No, buoyantly but overstates
In much his genial heart avers :
I cannot dream he simulates.
For pulpiteers which make their mart—
Who, in the Truth not for a day,
Debarred from growth as from decay,
Truth one forever, Scriptures say,
Do yet the fine progressive part
So jauntily maintain ; these find
(For sciolists abound) a kind

And favouring audience. But none
Exceed in flushed repute the one
Who bold can harmonise for all
Moses and Comte, Renan and Paul :
'Tis the robustious circus-man :
With legs astride the dappled span
Elate he drives white, black, before :
The small apprentices adore.
Astute ones be though, staid and grave,
Who in the wars of Faith and Science
Remind one of old tactics brave—
Imposing front of false defiance :
The king a corpse in armour led
On a live horse.—You turn your head :
You hardly like that. Woe is me :
What would you have ? For one to hold
That he must still trim down, and cold
Dissemble—this were coxcombry !
Indulgence should with frankness mate :
Fraternal be : Ah, tolerate ! '
The modulated voice here won
Ingress where scarce the plea alone
Had entrance gained. But—to forget
Allusions which no welcome met
In him who heard—Rolfe thus went on :
' Never I 've seen it ; but they claim
That the Greek prelate's artifice
Comes as a tragic after-piece
To farce, or rather prank and game ;
Racers and tumblers round the Tomb :
Sports such as might the mound confront,
The funeral mound, by Hellespont,
Of slain Patroclus. Linger still
Such games beneath some groves of bloom
In mid Pacific, where life's thrill

Is primal—pagan ; and fauns deck
Green theatres for that tattooed Greek
The Polynesian.—Who will say
These Syrians are more wise than they,
Or more humane ? not those, believe,
Who may the narrative receive
Of Ibrahim the conqueror, borne
Dead-faint, by soldiers red with gore,
Over slippery corses heaped forlorn
Out from splashed Calvary through the door
Into heaven's light. Urged to ordain
That nevermore the frenzying ray
Should issue—" That would but sustain
The cry of persecution ; nay,
Let Allah, if he will, remand
These sects to reason. Let it stand."—
Cynical Moslem ! but didst err,
Arch-Captain of the Sepulchre ? '—

He stayed : and Clarel knew decline
Of all his spirits, as may one
Who hears some story of his line
Which shows him half his house undone.
Revulsion came : with lifted brows
He gazed on Rolfe : Is this the man
Whom Jordan heard in part espouse
The appeal of that Dominican
And Rome ? and here, all sects, behold,
All creeds involving in one fold
Of doubt ? Better a partisan !
Earnest he seems : can union be
'Twixt earnestness and levity ?
Or need at last in Rolfe confess
Thy hollow, Manysidedness !

But, timely, here diversion fell.
Dawn broke ; and from each cliff-hung cell
'Twas hailed with hymns—confusion sweet
As of some aviary's seat :
Commemorative matin din :
'Tis Saba's festival they usher in.

XVII

A CHANT

THAT day, though to the convent brood
A holiday, was kept in mood
Of serious sort, yet took the tone
And livery of legend grown
Poetical if grave. The fane
Was garnished, and it heard a strain
Reserved for festa. And befell
That now and then at interval
Some, gathered on the cliffs around,
Would sing Saint Cosmos' canticle ;
Some read aloud from book embrowned
While others listened ; some prefer
A chant in Scripture character,
Or monkish sort of melodrame.

Upon one group the pilgrims came
In gallery of slender space,
Locked in the echoing embrace
Of crags : a choir of seemly men
Reposed in cirque, nor wanting grace,
Whose tones went eddying down the glen :

First Voice

No more the princes flout the word—
  Jeremiah 's in dungeon cast :
The siege is up, the walls give way :
  This desolation is the last.

The Chaldee army, pouring in,
  Fiercer grown for disarray,
Hunt Zedekiah that fleeth out:
  Baal and Assyria win:
Israel's last king is shamed in rout,
Taken and blinded, chains put on,
And captive dragged to Babylon.

Second Voice

O daughter of Jerusalem,
  Cast up the ashes on the brow!
Nergal and Samgar, Sarsechim
  Break down thy towers, abase thee now.

Third Voice

Oh, now each lover leaveth!

Fourth Voice

None comfort me, she saith:

First Voice

Abroad the sword bereaveth:

Second Voice

At home there is as death.

The Four

Behold, behold! the days foretold begin:
A sword without—the pestilence within.

First and Second Voices

But thou that pull'st the city down,
Ah, vauntest thou thy glory so ?

Second and Third Voices

God is against thee, haughty one ;
His archers round about thee go :

The Four

Earth shall be moved, the nations groan
At the jar of Bel and Babylon
In din of overthrow.

First Voice

But Zion shall be built again !

Third and Fourth Voices

Nor shepherd from the flock shall sever ;
For lo, His mercy doth remain,
His tender mercy—

Second Voice

And forever !

The Four

Forever and forever !

Choral

Forever and forever
His mercy shall remain :
In rivers flow forever,
Forever fall in rain !

XVIII

THE MINSTER

HUGE be the buttresses enmassed
Which shoulder up, like Titan men,
Against the precipices vast
The ancient minster of the glen.
One holds the library foursquare,
A study, but with students few :
Books, manuscripts, and—cobwebs too.
Within, the church were rich and rare
But for the time-stain which ye see :
Gilded with venerable gold,
It shows in magnified degree
Much like some tarnished casket old
Which in the dusty place ye view
Through window of the broker Jew.
But Asiatic pomp adheres
To ministry and ministers
Of Basil's Church ; that night 'twas seen
In all that festival confers :
Plate of Byzantium, stones and spars,
Urim and Thummim, gold and green ;
Music like cymbals clashed in wars
Of great Semiramis the queen.
And texts sonorous they intone
From parchment, not plebeian print ;
From old and golden parchment brown
They voice the old Septuagint,
And Gospels, and Epistles, all
In the same tongue employed by Paul.

Flags, beatific flags they view :
Ascetics which the haircloth knew
And wooden pillow, here were seen
Pictured on satin soft—serene
In fair translation. But advanced
Above the others, and enhanced
About the staff with ring and boss,
They mark the standard of the Cross.
That emblem, here, in Eastern form,
For Derwent seemed to have a charm.
' I like this Greek cross, it has grace ' ;
He whispered Rolfe : ' the Greeks eschew
The long limb ; beauty must have place—
Attic ! I like it. And do you ? '
' Better I 'd like it, were it true.'
' What mean you there ? '
' I do but mean
'Tis not the cross of Calvary's scene.
The Latin cross (by that name known)
Holds the true semblance ; that 's the one
Was lifted up and knew the nail ;
'Tis realistic—can avail ! '
Breathed Derwent then, ' These arches quite
Set off and aggrandise the rite :
A goodly fane. The incense, though,
Somehow it drugs, makes sleepy so.
They purpose down there in ravine
Having an *auto*, act, or scene,
Or something. Come, pray, let us go.'

XIX

THE MASQUE

'Tis night, with silence, save low moan
Of winds. By torches red in glen
A muffled man upon a stone
Sits desolate sole denizen.
Pilgrims and friars on ledge above
Repose. A figure in remove
This prologue renders : ' He in view
Is that Cartaphilus, the Jew
Who wanders ever ; in low state,
Behold him in Jehoshaphat
The valley, underneath the hem
And towers of gray Jerusalem :
This must ye feign. With quick conceit
Ingenuous, attuned in heart,
Help out the actor in his part,
And gracious be ' ; and made retreat.
Then slouching rose the muffled man ;
Gazed toward the turrets, and began :
' O city yonder,
Exposed in penalty and wonder,
Again thou seest me ! Hither I
Still drawn am by the guilty tie
Between us ; all the load I bear
Only thou know'st, for thou dost share.
As round my heart the phantoms throng
Of tribe and era perished long,
So *thou* art haunted, sister in wrong !

While ghosts from mounds of recent date
Invest and knock at every gate—
Spectres of thirty sieges old
Your outer line of trenches hold :
Egyptian, Mede, Greek, Arab, Turk,
Roman, and Frank, beleaguering lurk.—
    Jerusalem !
Not solely for that bond of doom
Between us, do I frequent come
Hither, and make profound resort
In Shaveh's dale, in Joel's court ;
But hungering also for the day
Whose dawn these weary feet shall stay,
When Michael's trump the call shall
    spread
Through all your warrens of the dead.
    ' Time, never may I know the calm
Till then ? my lull the world's alarm ?
But many mortal fears and feelings
In me, in me here stand reversed :
The unappeased judicial pealings
Wrench me, not wither me, accursed.
" Just let him live, just let him rove "
(Pronounced the voice estranged from love),
" Live—live and rove the sea and land ;
Long live, rove far, and understand
And sum all knowledge for his dower ;
For he forbid is, he is banned ;
His brain shall tingle, but his hand
Shall palsied be in power :
Ruthless, he meriteth no ruth,
On him I imprecate the truth." '

    He quailed ; then, after little truce,
Moaned querulous :

'My fate!
Cut off I am, made separate;
For man's embrace I strive no more;
For, would I be
Friendly with one, the mystery
He guesses of that dreadful lore
Which eld accumulates in me:
He fleeth me.
My face begetteth superstition:
In dungeons of Spain's Inquisition
Thrice languished I for sorcery,
An Elymas. In Venice, long
Immured beneath the wave I lay
For a conspirator. Some wrong
On me is heaped, go where I may,
Among mankind. Hence solitude
Elect I; in waste places brood
More lonely than an only god;
For, human still, I yearn, I yearn,
Yea, after a millennium, turn
Back to my wife, my wife and boy;
Yet ever I shun the dear abode
Or site thereof, of homely joy.
I fold ye in the watch of night,
Esther! then start. And hast thou been?
And I for ages in this plight?
Caitiff I am; but there 's no sin
Conjecturable, possible,
No crime they expiate in hell
Justly whereto such pangs belong:
The wrongdoer he endureth wrong.
Yea, now the Jew, inhuman erst,
With penal sympathy is cursed—
The burden shares of every crime,
And throttled miseries undirged,

Unchronicled, and guilt submerged
Each moment in the flood of time.
Go mad I cannot : I maintain
The perilous outpost of the sane.
Memory could I mitigate,
Or would the long years vary any !
But no, 'tis fate repeating fate :
Banquet and war, bridal and hate,
And tumults of the people many ;
And wind, and dust soon laid again :
Vanity, vanity's endless reign !—
What 's there ? '
He paused, and all was hush
Save a wild screech, and hurtling rush
Of wings. An owl—the hermit true
Of grot the eremite once knew
Up in the cleft—alarmed by ray
Of shifted flambeau, burst from cave
On bushy wing, and brushed away
Down the long Kedron gorge and grave.

' It flees, but it will be at rest
Anon ! But I——' and hung oppressed—
' Years, three-score years, seem much to men ;
Three hundred—five—eight hundred, then ;
And add a thousand ; these I know !
That eighth dim cycle of my woe,
The which, ahead, did so delay,
To me now seems but yesterday :
To Rome I wandered out of Spain,
And saw thy crowning, Charlemagne,
On Christmas eve. Is all but dream ?
Or is this Shaveh, and on high,
Is that, even *that*, Jerusalem ?—
How long, how long ? Compute hereby :

The years, the penal years to be,
Reckon by years, years, years, and years
Whose calendar thou here mayst see
On grave-slabs which the blister sears—
Of ancient Jews which sought this clime,
Inscriptions nigh extinct,
Or blent or interlinked
With dotard scrawl of idiot Time.
Transported felon on the seas
Pacing the deck while spray-clouds freeze ;
Pacing and pacing, night and morn,
Until he staggers overworn ;
Through time, so I, Christ's convict grim,
Deathless and sleepless lurching fare—
Deathless and sleepless through remorse for Him ;
Deathless, when sleepless were enough to bear.'

Rising, he slouched along the glen
Halting at base of crag—detached
Erect, as from the barrier snatched,
And upright lodged below ; and then :
' Absalom's Pillar ! See the shoal
Before it—pebble, flint, and stone,
With malediction, jeer or groan
Cast through long ages. Ah, what soul
That was but human, without sin,
Did hither the first just missile spin !
Culprit am I—this hand flings none ;
Rather through yon dark-yawning gap,
Missed by the rabble in mishap
Of peltings vain—abject I 'd go,
And, contrite, coil down there within,
Lie still, and try to ease the throe.
But nay—away !
Not long the feet unblest may stay.

They come : the vengeful vixens strive—
The harpies, lo—hag, gorgon, drive ! '

There caught along, as swept by sand
In fierce Sahara hurricaned,
He fled, and vanished down the glen.

The Spahi, who absorbed had been
By the true acting, turned amain,
And letting go the mental strain,
Vented a resonant, ' *Bismillah !* '
Strange answering which pealed from on high—
' *Dies iræ, dies illa !* '
They looked, and through the lurid fume
Profuse of torches that but die,
And ghastly there the cliffs illume ;
The skull-capped man they mark on high—
Fitful revealed, as when, through rift
Of clouds which dyed by sunset drift,
The Matterhorn shows its cragged austerity.

XX

AFTERWARD

'SEEDSMEN of old Saturn's land,
Love and peace went hand in hand,
And sowed the Era Golden!

'Golden time for man and mead:
Title none, nor title-deed,
Nor any slave, nor Soldan.

'Venus burned both large and bright,
Honey-moon from night to night,
Nor bride, nor groom waxed olden.

'Big the tears, but ruddy ones,
Crushed from grapes in vats and tuns
Of vineyards green and golden!

'Sweet to sour did never sue,
None repented ardour true—
Those years did so embolden.

'Glum Don Graveairs slunk in den:
Frankly roved the gods with men
In gracious talk and golden.

'Thrill it, cymbals of my rhyme,
Power was love, and love in prime,
Nor revel to toil beholden.

'Back, come back, good age, and reign,
Goodly age, and long remain—
Saturnian Age, the Golden!'

The masquer gone, by stairs that climb,
In seemly sort, the friars withdrew;
And, waiting that, the Islesman threw
His couplets of the Arcadian time,
Then turning on the pilgrims: 'Hoo!

'The bird-of-paradise don't like owls:
A handful of acorns after the cowls!'

But Clarel, bantered by the song,
Sad questioned, if in frames of thought
And feeling, there be right and wrong;
Whether the lesson Joel taught
Confute what from the marble 's caught
In sylvan sculpture—Bacchant, Faun,
Or shapes more lax by Titian drawn.
Such counter natures in mankind—
Mole, bird, not more unlike we find:
Instincts adverse, nor less how true
Each to itself. What clue, what clue?

XXI

IN CONFIDENCE

Towers twain crown Saba's mountain height ;
And one, with larger outlook bold,
Monks frequent climb or day or night
To peer for Arabs. In the breeze
So the ship's lifted topmen hold
Watch on the blue and silver seas,
To guard against the slim Malay,
That perilous imp whose slender proa
Great hulls have rued—as in ill hour
The whale the swordfish lank assay.

Upon that pile, to catch the dawn,
Alert next day see Derwent stand
With Clarel. All the mountain-land
Disclosed through Kedron far withdrawn,
Cloven and shattered, hushed and banned,
Seemed poised as in a chaos true,
Or throe-lock of transitional earth
When old forms are annulled, and new
Rebel, and pangs suspend the birth.
That aspect influenced Clarel. Fair
Derwent's regard played otherwhere—
Expectant. Twilight gray took on
Suffusion faint of cherry tone.
The student marked it ; but the priest
Marked whence it came : ' Turn, turn—the East !

Oh, look ! how like an ember red
The seed of fire, by early hand
Raked forth from out the ashy bed,
Shows yon tinged flake of dawn. See, fanned
As 'twere by this spice-air that blows,
The live coal kindles—the fire grows ! '
And mute, he watched till all the East
Was flame : ' Ah, who would not here come,
And from dull drowsiness released,
Behold morn's rosy martyrdom ! '
It was an unaffected joy,
And showed him free from all annoy
Within—such, say, as mutiny
Of non-content in random touch
That he perchance had overmuch
Favoured the first night's revelry.
For Clarel—though at call indeed
He might not else than turn and feed
On florid dawn—not less, anon,
When wonted light of day was won,
Sober and common light, with that
Returned to him his unelate
And unalleviated tone ;
And thoughts, strange thoughts, derived overnight,
Touching the Swede's dark undelight,
Recurred ; with sequence how profuse
Concerning all the company—
The Arnaut, and the man of glee—
The Lesbian, and calm grave Druze,
And Belex ; yes, and in degree
Even Rolfe ; Vine too. Less he who trim
Beside him stood, eludes his doubt—
Derwent himself, whose easy skim
Never had satisfied throughout.
He now, if not deemed less devout

Through wassail and late hint of him,
Was keenlier scanned. Yet part might be
Effect of long society,
Which still detracts. But in review
Of one who could such doubt renew,
Clarel inveighs : Parhelion orb
Of faith autumnal, may the dew
Of earth's sad tears thy rays absorb ?
Truth bitter : Derwent bred distrust
Heavier than came from Mortmain's thrust
Into the cloud—profounder far
Than Achor's glen with ominous scar.
All aliens now being quite aloof,
Fain would he put that soul to proof.
Yet, fearful lest he might displease,
His topics broached he by degrees.
Needless. For Derwent never shrunk :
'Lad, lad, this diffidence forget ;
Believe, you talk here to no monk :
Who 's old Duns Scotus ? We 're well met.
Glad that at last your mind you set
In frank communion here with me.
Better had this been earlier, though ;
There lacked not times of privacy
Had such been sought. But yes, I know ;
You 're young, you 're off the poise ; and so
A link have felt with hearts the same
Though more advanced. I scarce can blame.
And yet perhaps one here might plead
These rather stimulate than feed.
Nor less let each tongue say its say ;
Therefrom we truth elicit. Nay,
And with the worst, 'tis understood
We broader clergy think it good
No more to use censorious tone :

Licence to all.—We are alone ;
Speak out, that 's right.'
The student first
Cited the din of clashed belief
So loud in Palestine, and chief
By Calvary, where are rehearsed
Within the Sepulchre's one fane
All rituals which, ere Luther's reign,
Shared the assent of Christendom.
Besides : how was it even at home ?
Behind the mellow chancel's rail
Lurked strife intestine. What avail
The parlour-chapels liberal ?
The hearers their own minds elect ;
The very pews are each a sect ;
No one opinion's steadfast sway :
A wide, an elemental fray.
As with ships moored in road unsafe,
When gales augment and billows chafe,
Hull drives 'gainst hull, endangering all
In crossing cables ; while from thrall
Of anchor, others, dragged amain,
Drift seaward : so the churches strain,
Much so the fleets sectarian meet
Doubt's equinox. Yes, all was dim ;
He saw no one secure retreat ;
Of late so much had shaken him.
Derwent in grave concern inclined.
' Part true, alas ! ' Nor less he claimed
Reserves of solace, and of kind
Beyond that in the desert named,
When the debate was scarce with men
Who owned with him a common ground—
True centre where they might convene.
And yet this solace when unbound

At best proved vague (so Clarel deemed).
He thought, too, that the priest here seemed
Embarrassed on the sudden, nay,
He faltered. What could so betray ?
In single contact, heart to heart,
With young, fresh, fervid earnestness,
Was he surprised into distress—
An honest quandary, a smart
More trying e'en than Mortmain's dart,
Grieving and gravelling, could deal ?
But Derwent rallied, and with zeal :
' Shall everything then plain be made ?
Not that there 's any ambuscade :
In youth's first heat to think to know !
For time 'tis well to bear a cross :
Yet on some waters here below
Pilots there be, if one 's at loss.'
The pupil coloured ; then restrained
An apt retort too personal,
Content with this : ' Pilots retained ?
But in debates which I recall
Such proved but naught. This side—that side,
They crossing hail through fogs that dwell
Upon a limitless deep tide,
While their own cutters toll the bell
Of groping.'
Derwent bit the lip ;
Altered again, had fain let slip
' Throw all this burden upon HIM ' ;
But hesitated. Changing trim,
Considerate then he turned a look
Which seemed to weigh as in a book
Just how far youth might well be let
Into maturity's cabinet.

He, as in trial, took this tone :
' Not but there 's here and there a heart
Which shares at whiles strange throbs alone.
Such at the freakish sting will start :
No umpirage ! they cry—we dote
To dream heaven drops a casting vote,
In these perplexities takes part ! '
Clarel, uncertain, stood at gaze,
But Derwent, riving that amaze,
Advanced impulsively : ' Your hand !
No longer will I be restrained.
Yours is a sect—but never mind :
By function we are intertwined,
Our common function. Weigh it thus :
Clerics we are—clerics, my son ;
Nay, shrink not so incredulous ;
Paternally my sympathies run—
Toward you I yearn. Well, now : what joy,
What saving calm, what but annoy
In all this hunt without one clue ?
What lack ye, pray ? what would ye do ?
Have Faith, which, even from the myth,
Draws something to be useful with :
In any form some truths will hold ;
Employ the present-sanctioned mould.
Nay, hear me out ; clean breast I make,
Quite unreserved—and for whose sake ?
Suppose an instituted creed
(Or truth or fable) should indeed
To ashes fall ; the spirit exhales,
But reinfunds in active forms :
Verse, popular verse, it charms or warms—
Bellies Philosophy's flattened sails—
Tinctures the very book, perchance,
Which claims arrest of its advance.

Why, the true import, deeper use,
Shows first when Reason quite slips noose,
And Faith 's long dead. Attest that gold
Which Bacon counted down and told
In one ripe tract, by time unshamed,
Wherein from riddle he reclaimed
The myths of Greece. But go back—well,
Reach to the years of first decay
Or totter : prithee, lad, but tell
How with the flamens of that day ?
When brake the sun from morning's tents
And walked the hills, and gilded thence
The fane in porch ; the priest in view
Bowed—hailed Apollo, as before,
Ere change set in ; what else to do ?
Or whither turn, or what adore ?
What but to temporise for him,
Stranded upon an interim
Between the ebb and flood ? He knew.—
You see ? Transfer—apply it, you.'
' Ill know I what you there advise.—
Ah, heaven ! ' and for a moment stood ;
Then turned : ' A rite they solemnise—
An awful rite, and yet how sweet
To humble hearts which sorrows beat.
Tell, is that mystic flesh and blood—
I shrink to utter it !—Of old
For medicine they mummy sold—
Conjurer's balsam.—God, my God,
Sorely Thou triest me, the clod ! '

Upon the impassioned novice here
Discreet the kind proficient throws
The glance of one who still would peer
Where best to take the hedge or close.

Ere long : ' You 'd do the world some good ?
Well, then : no good man will gainsay
That good is good, done any way,
In any name, by any brotherhood.
How think you there ? '
From Clarel naught.
Derwent went on : ' For lamp you yearn—
A lantern to benighted thought.
Obtain it—whither will you turn ?
Still lost you 'd be in banks of snow.
My fellow-creature, do you know
That what most satisfies the head
Least solaces the heart ? Less light
Than warmth needs earthly wight.
Christ built a hearth : the flame is dead
We 'll say, extinct ; but lingers yet,
Enlodged in stone, the hoarded heat.
Why not nurse that ? Would rive the door
And let the sleet in ? But, once o'er,
This tarrying glow, never to man,
Methinks, shall come the like again.
What if some camp on crags austere
The Stoic held ere Gospel cheer ?
There may the common herd abide,
Having dreamed of heaven ? Nay, and can you ?
You shun that ; what shall needier do ?
Think, think ! '
The student, sorely tried,
The appeal and implication felt,
But comfort none.
And Derwent dealt
Heaped measure still : ' All your ado
In youth was mine ; your swarm I knew
Of buzzing doubts. But is it good
Such gnats to fight ? or well to brood

In selfish introverted search,
Leaving the poor world in the lurch ?
Not so did Christ. Nor less He knew
And shared a troubled era too ;
And shared besides that problem gray
Which is forever and alway :
His person our own shadow threw.
Then heed Him, heed His eldership :
In all respects did Christ indeed
Credit the Jews' crab-apple creed
Whereto He yet conformed ? or so
But use it, graft it with His slip
From Paradise ? No, no—no, no !
Spare fervid speech ! But, for the rest,
Be not extreme. Midway is best.
Herein 'tis never as by Nile—
From waste to garden but a stile.
Betwixt rejection and belief,
Shadings there are—degrees, in brief.
But ween you, gentle friend, your way
Of giving to yourself the goad
Is obsolete, no more the mode ?
Our comrades—frankly let me say—
That Rolfe, good fellow though he be,
And Vine, methinks, would you but see,
Are much like prints from plates but old.
Interpretations so unfold
New finding, happy gloss or key,
A decade 's now a century.
Byron's storm-cloud away has rolled—
Joined Werter's ; Shelley 's drowned ; and—why,
Perverse were now e'en Hamlet's sigh :
Perverse ?—indecorous indeed ! '
' E'en so ? e'en sadly is it so
' Not sad, but veritable, know.

But what—how 's this ! ' For here, with speed
Of passion, Clarel turned : ' Forbear !
Ah, wherefore not at once name Job,
In whom these Hamlets all conglobe.
Own, own with me, and spare to feign,
Doubt bleeds, nor Faith is free from pain ! '
Derwent averted here his face—
With his own heart he seemed to strive ;
Then said : ' Alas, too deep you dive.
But hear me yet for little space :
This shaft you sink shall strike no bloom :
The surface, ah, heaven keeps *that* green ;
Green, sunny : nature's active scene,
For man appointed, man's true home.'

He ended. Saba's desert lay—
Glare rived by gloom. That comment's sway
He felt : ' Our privacy is gone ;
Here trips young Anselm to espy
Arab or pilgrim drawing nigh.
Dost hear him ? come then, we 'll go down.
Precede.'
At every step and steep,
While higher came the youthful monk,
Lower and lower in Clarel sunk
The freighted heart. It touched this deep :
Ah, Nehemiah, alone art true ?
Secure in reason's wane or loss ?
Thy folly that folly of the cross
Contemned by reason, yet how dear to you ?

XXII

THE MEDALLION

In Saba, as by one consent,
Frequent the pilgrims single went;
So, parting with his young compeer,
And breaking fast without delay,
For more restorative and cheer,
Good Derwent lightly strolled away
Within this monkish capital.
Chapels and oratories all,
And shrines in coves of gilded gloom;
The kitchen, too, and pantler's room—
Naught came amiss.
Anear the church
He drew unto a kind of porch
Such as next some old minsters be,
An inner porch (named *Galilee*
In parlance of the times gone by),
A place for discipline and grief.
And here his tarry had been brief
But for a shield of marble nigh,
Set in the living rock: a stone
In low relief, where well was shown,
Before an altar under sky,
A man in armour, visor down,
Enlocked complete in panoply,
Uplifting reverent a crown
In invocation.
This armed man
In corselet showed the dented plate,
And dread streaks down the thigh-piece ran;

But the bright helm inviolate
Seemed raised above the battle-zone—
Cherubic with a rare device :
Perch for the bird-of-paradise.
A victor seemed he, without pride
Of victory, or joy in fame :
'Twas reverence, and naught beside,
Unless it might that shadow claim
Which comes of trial. Yes, the art
So cunning was, that it in part
By fair expressiveness of grace
Atoned even for the visored face.

Long time becharmed here Derwent stood,
Charmed by the marble's quiet mood
Of beauty, more than by its tone
Of earnestness, though these were one
In that good piece. Yes, long he fed
Ere yet the eye was lower led
To trace the inscription underrun :

'O fair and friendly manifested Spirit !
Before thine altar dear
Let me recount the marvel of the story
Fulfilled in tribute here.

'In battle waged where all was fraudful silence,
Foul battle against odds,
Disarmed, I, fall'n and trampled, prayed :
Death, succour !
Come, Death : thy hand is God's !

'A pale hand noiseless from the turf responded,
Riving the turf and stone :
It raised, rearmed me, sword and golden armour,
And waved me warring on.

'O fairest, friendliest, and ever holy!
O Love, dissuading fate—
To thee, to thee the rescuer, thee sainted,
The crown I dedicate:

'To thee I dedicate the crown, a guerdon
The winner may not wear;
His wound reopens, and he goes to haven:
Spirit! befriend him there.'

'A hero, and shall he repine?
'Tis not Achilles'; and straightway
He felt the charm in sort decline;
And, turning, saw a votary gray:
'Good brother, tell: make this thing clear:
Who set this up?' 'Twas long ago,
Yes, long before I harboured here,
Long centuries, they say.' 'Why, no!
So bright it looks, 'tis recent, sure.
Who set it up?' 'A count turned monk.'
'What count?' 'His name he did abjure
For Lazarus, and ever shrunk
From aught of his life's history:
Yon slab tells all or nothing, see.
But this I 've heard; that when the stone
Hither was brought from Cyprus fair
(Some happy sculptors flourished there
When Venice ruled), he said to one:
'They 've made the knight too rich appear—
Too rich in helm.' He set it here
In Saba as securest place,
For a memorial of grace
To outlast him, and many a year.'

XXIII

DERWENT WITH THE ABBOT

'Tis travel teaches much that 's strange,
Mused Derwent in his further range ;
Then fell into uneasy frame :
The visored man, relinquished name,
And touch of unglad mystery.
He rallied : I will go and see
The archimandrate in his court :
And thither straight he made resort
And met with much benignity.

The abbot's days were near the span,
A holy and right reverend man,
By name Christodulus, which means
Servant of Christ. Behind the screens
He kept, but issued the decree :
Unseen he ruled, and sightlessly :
Yes, blind he was, stone-blind and old ;
But, in his silken vestment rolled,
At midday, on his Persian rug,
Showed cosy as the puss Maltese
Demure, in rosy firelight snug,
Upon the velvet hem at ease
Of seated lady's luxuries
Of robe. For all his days, and nights,
Which eld finds wakeful, and the slights
Of churlish Time, life still could please.
And chief what made the charm to be,
Was his retention of that toy,
Dear to the old—authority.

And blent herewith was soothing balm,
Senior complacency of calm—
A settledness without alloy,
In tried belief how orthodox
And venerable ; which the shocks
Of schism had stood, ere yet the state
Of Peter claimed earth's pastorate.
So far back his Greek Church did plant,
Rome's Pope he deemed but Protestant—
A Rationalist, a bigger Paine—
Heretic, worse than Arian ;
He lumped him with that compound mass
Of sectaries of the West, alas !

Breathed Derwent : ' This is a lone life ;
Removed thou art from din and strife,
But from all news as well.'
' Even so,
My son. But what 's news here below ?
For hearts that do Christ's promise claim,
No hap 's important since He came.
Besides : in Saba here remain
Ten years ; then back, the world regain—
Five minutes' talk with any one
Would put thee even with him, son.
Pretentious are events, but vain.'
' But new books, authors of the time ? '
' Books have we ever new—sublime :
The Scriptures—drama, precept fine,
Verse and philosophy divine,
All best. Believe again, O son,
God's revelation, Holy Writ,
Quite supersedes and makes unfit
All text save comment thereupon.
The Fathers have we, these discuss :

Sweet Chrysostom, Basilius,
Great Athanese, and—but all 's known
To you, no question.'
In the mien
Of Derwent, as this dropped in ear,
A junior's deference was seen.
Nothing he controverted. Here
He won the old man's heart, he knew,
And readier brought to pass the thing
That he designed : which was, to view
The treasures of this hermit-king.
At hint urbane, the abbot called
An acolyth, a blue-robed boy,
So used to service, he forestalled
His lighter wishes, and took joy
In serving. Keys were given. He took
From out a coffer's deeper nook
Small shrines and reliquaries old :
Beryl and Indian seed-pearl set
In little folding-doors of gold
And ivory, of triptych form,
With starred Byzantine pictures warm,
And opening into cabinet
Where lay secured in precious zone
The honeycombed gray-greenish bone
Of storied saint. But prized supreme
Were some he dwelt upon, detained,
Felt of them lovingly in hand ;
Making of such a text or theme
For grave particulars ; far back
Tracing them in monastic dream :
While fondling them (in way, alack,
Of Jews his coins) with just esteem
For rich encasings. Here anew
Derwent's attention was not slack ;

Yet underneath a reverence due,
Slyly he kept his pleasant state :
The dowager—her family plate.
The abbot, with a blind man's way
Of meek divining, guessed the play
Of inkept comment : ' Son,' said he,
' These dry bones cannot live : what then ?
In times ere Christianity
By worldlings was professed, true men
And brave, which sealed their faith in blood
Or flame, the Christian brotherhood
Revered—attended them in death ;
Caught the last parting of the breath :
Happy were they could they but own
Some true memento, but a bone
Purchased from executioner,
Or begged : hence relics. Trust me, son,
'Twas love began, and pious care
Prolongs this homage.' Derwent bowed ;
And, bland : ' Have miracles been wrought
From these ? ' ' No, none by me avowed
From knowledge personal. But then
Such things may be, for they have been.'
' Have been ? ' ' 'Tis in the Scripture taught
That contact with Elisha's bones
Restored the dead to life.' ' Most true,'
Eyeing the bits of skeletons
As in enlightened reverence new,
Forgetting that his host was blind,
Nor might the flattery receive.

Erelong, observing the old man
Waxed weary, and to doze began,
Strange settling sidelong, half reclined,
His blessing craved he, and took leave.

XXIV

VAULT AND GROTTO

But Clarel, bides he still by tower ?
His was no sprightly frame ; nor mate
He sought : it was his inner hour.
Yes, keeping to himself his state,
Nor thinking to break fast till late,
He moved along the gulf's built flank
Within the enclosures rank o'er rank.
Accost was none, for none he saw,
Until the Druze he chanced to meet,
Smoking, nor did the Emir draw
The amber from the mouth, to greet,
Not caring so to break the spell
Of that Elysian interval ;
But lay, his pipe at lengthy lean,
Reclined along the crag serene,
As under Spain's San Pedro dome
The long-sword Cid upon his tomb ;
And with an unobtrusive eye
Yet apprehending, and mild mien,
Regarded him as he went by
Tossed in his trouble. 'Twas a glance
Clarel did many a time recall,
Though its unmeant significance—
That was the last thing learned of all.
    But passing on by ways that wind,
A place he gained secluded there
In ledge. A cenobite inclined

Busy at scuttle-hole in floor
Of rock, like smith who may repair
A bolt of Mammon's vault. The door
Or stony slab lay pushed aside.
Deeming that here the monks might store,
In times of menace which they bide,
Their altar plate, Clarel drew near,
But faltered at the friar's sad tone
Ascetical. He looked like one
Whose life is but a patience mere,
Or worse, a fretting doubt of cheer
Beyond ; he toiled as in employ
Imposed, a bondman far from joy.
No answer made he to salute,
Yet deaf might be. And now, while mute
The student lingered, lo, down slipped
Through cleft of crags, the sun did win
Aloft in Kedron's citadel,
A fiery shaft into that crypt
(Like well-pole slant in farm-house well)
And lighted it : and he looked in.
On stony benches, head by head,
In court where no recorders be,
Preserved by nature's chemistry
Sat the dim conclave of the dead,
Encircled where the shadow rules
By sloping theatres of skulls.
He rose—retreated by the line
Of cliff, but paused at tones which sent :
' So pale ? the end 's nor imminent
Nor far. Stand, thou ; the countersign ! '—
It came from over Kedron's rent.
Thitherward then his glance he bent,
And saw, by mouth of grot or mine,
Rustic with wicket's rude design,

A sheeted apparition wait,
Like Lazarus at the charnel gate
In Bethany.
'The countersign!'
'Reply, say something; yea, say *Death*,'
Prompted the monk, erewhile so mute.
Clarel obeyed; and, in a breath,
'Advance!' the shroud cried, turning foot,
And so retired there into gloom
Within, and all again was dumb.
'And who that man—or ghost?' he yearned
Unto the toiler; who returned:
'Cyril. 'Tis long since that he craved
Over against to dwell encaved.
In youth he was a soldier. Go.'
But Clarel might not end it so:
'I pray thee, friend, what grief or zeal
Could so unhinge him? *that* reveal.'
'Go—ask your world': and grim toiled on,
Fitting his clamp as if alone,
Dismissing him austerely thus.
And Clarel, sooth, felt timorous.
Conscious of seeds within his frame
Transmitted from the early gone,
Scarce in his heart might he disclaim
That challenge from the shrouded one.
He walked in vision—saw in fright
Where through the limitless of night
The spirits innumerable lie,
Strewn like snared miners in vain flight
From the dull black-damp. Die—to die!
To be, then not to be! to end,
And yet time never, never suspend
His going.—This is cowardice

To brood on this !—Ah, Ruth, thine eyes
Abash these base mortalities !
    But slid the change, anew it slid
As by the Dead Sea marge forbid :
The vision took another guise :
From 'neath the closing, lingering lid
Ruth's glance of love is glazing met,
Reproaching him : *Dost tarry, tarry yet ?*

XXV

DERWENT AND THE LESBIAN

If where, in blocks unbeautified,
But lath and plaster may divide
The cot of dole from bed of bride ;
Here, then, a page's slender shell
Is thick enough to set between
The graver moral, lighter mien—
The student and the cap-and-bell.
'Tis nature.
Pastime to achieve,
After he reverent did leave
The dozer in the gallery,
Derwent, good man of pleasantry,
He sauntered by the stables old,
And there the ass spied through a door,
Lodged in a darksome stall or hold,
The head communing with the floor.
Taking some barley, near at hand,
He entered, but was brought to stand,
Hearing a voice : ' Don't bother her ;
She cares not, she, for provender ;
Respect her nunnery, her cell :
She 's pondering, see, the asses' hell.'
He turned ; it was the Lesbian wag,
Who offered straight to be his guide
Even anywhere, be it vault or crag.
' Well, thanks ; but first to feed your nun,
She fasts overmuch.—There, it is done.
Come show me, do, that famous tide

Evoked up from the waste, they tell,
The canonised abbot's miracle,
St. Saba's fount : where foams it, pray ? '
' Near where the damned ones den.' ' What
say ? '
' Down, plummets down. But come along ' ;
And leading, whiled the way with song :

' Saintly lily, credit me,
Sweet is the thigh of the honey-bee !
Ruddy ever and oleose,
Ho for the balm of the red, red rose ! '

Stair after stair, and stair again,
And ladder after ladder free,
Lower and steeper, till the strain
Of cord irked Derwent : ' Verily,
E'en as but now you lightly said,
'Tis to Avernus we are bending ;
And how much further this descending ? '
At last they dropped down on the bed
Of Kedron, sought a cavern dead
And there the fount.
' 'Tis cool to sip,
I 'm told ; my cup, here 'tis ; wilt dip ? '
And proffered it : ' With me, with me,
Alas, this natural dilution
Of water never did agree ;
Mine is a touchy constitution ;
'Tis a respectable fluid though,
Ah, you don't care. Well, come out, do.
The thing to mark here 's not the well,
But Saba in her crescent swell,
Terrace on terrace piled. And see,
Up there by yon small balcony

Our famous palm stands sentinel.
Are you a good believer ? ' ' Why ? '
' Because that blessed tree (not I,
But all our monks avouch it so)
Was set a thousand years ago
By dibble in St. Saba's hand.'
' Indeed ? Heaven crown him for it. Palm !
Thou benediction in the land,
A new millennium mayst thou stand :
So fair, no fate would do thee harm.'
Much he admired the impressive view ;
Then facing round and gazing up
Where soared the crags : ' Yon grottoes few
Which make the most ambitious group
Of all the laura row on row,
Can one attain ? ' ' Forward ! ' And so
Up by a cloven rift they plied—
Saffron and black—branded beside,
Like to some felon's wall of cell
Smoked with his name. Up they impel
Till Derwent, overwearied, cried :
' Dear Virgil mine, you are so strong,
But I, thy Dante, am nigh dead.'
' Who *daunts* ye, friend ? don't catch the thread.'
' The ascending path was ever long.'
' Ah yes ; well, cheer it with a song :

' My love but she has little feet
And slippers of the rose,
From under—Oh, the lavender sweet—
Just peeping out, demurely neat ;
But she, she never knows—
No, no, she never knows !

' A dimpled hand is hers, and e en
As dainty as her toes ;
In mine confiding it she 'll lean
Till heaven knows what my tinglings mean ;
But she, she never knows—
Oh no, she never knows !

' No, never !—Hist ! '
' Nay, revellers, stay.
Lachryma Christi makes ye glad !
Where joys he now shall next go mad ?
His snare the spider weaves in sun :
But ye, your lease has yet to run ;
Go, go : from ye no countersign.'
Such incoherence ! where lurks he,
The ghoul, the riddler ? in what mine ?
It came from an impending crag
Or cleft therein, or cavity.
The man of bins a bit did drag ;
But quick to Derwent, ' Never lag :
A crazy friar ; but prithee, haste :
I know him—Cyril ; there, we 've passed.'
' Well, that is queer—the queerest thing,'
Said Derwent, breathing nervously.
' He 's ever ready with his sting,
Though dozing in his grotto dull.'
' Demented—pity ! let him be.'
' Ay, if he like that kind of hull,
Let the poor wasp den in the skull.'
' What 's that ? ' here Derwent ; ' that shrill cry ? '
And glanced aloft ; ' for mercy, look ! '
A great bird crossed high up in sky
Over the gulf ; and, under him,
Its downward flight a black thing took,
And, eddying by the path's sheer rim,

Still spun below : ' 'Tis Mortmain's cap,
The skull-cap ! ' ' *Skull* is 't ? say ye *skull*
From heaven flung into Kedron's lap ?
The gods were ever bountiful !
No—there : I see. Small as a wren—
That death's-head of all mortal men—
Look where he 's perched on topmost crag,
Bareheaded brooding. Oh, the hag,
That from the very brow could pluck
The cap of a philosopher
So near the sky, then, with a mock,
Disdain and drop it.' ' Queer, 'tis queer
Indeed ! ' ' One did the same to me,
Yes, much the same—pecked at my hat,
I mountain-riding, dozingly,
Upon a dromedary drear.
The devil 's in these eagles-gier.
She ones they are, be sure of that,
That be so saucy.—Ahoy there, thou ! '
Shooting the voice in sudden freak
Athwart the chasm, where wended slow
The timoneer, that pilgrim Greek,
The graybeard in the mariner trim,
The same that told the story o'er
Of crazy compass and the Moor.
But he, indeed, not hearing him,
Pursued his way.
' That salted one,
That pickled old sea-Solomon,
Tempests have deafened him, I think.
He has a tale can make ye wink ;
And pat it comes in too. But dwell !
Here, sit we down here while I tell.'

XXVI

VINE AND THE PALM

ALONG those ledges, up and down—
Through terce, sext, nones, in ritual flight
To vespers and mild evening brown ;
On errand best to angels known,
A shadow creepeth, brushed by light.
Behold it stealing now over one
Reclined aloof upon a stone
High up. 'Tis Vine.
And is it I
(He muses), I that leave the others,
Or do they leave me ? One could sigh
For Achmed with his hundred brothers :
How share the gushing amity
With all ? Divine philanthropy !
For my part, I but love the past—
The further back the better ; yes,
In the past is the true blessedness ;
The future 's ever overcast—
The present aye plebeian. So,
Mar Saba, thou fine long-ago
Lithographed here, thee do I love ;
And yet to-morrow I 'll remove
With right good will ; a fickle lover
Is only constant as a rover.
Here I lie, poor solitaire ;
But see the brave one over there—

The Palm ! Come now, to pass the time
I 'll try an invocation free—
Invoke it in a style sublime,
Yet sad as sad sincerity :—

' Witness to a watered land,
Voucher of a vernal year—
St. Saba's Palm, why there dost stand ?
Would'st thou win the desert here
To dreams of Eden ? Thy device
Intimates a Paradise !
Nay, thy plume would give us proof
That thou thyself art prince thereof,
Fair lord of that domain.
But, lonely dwelling in thy reign,
Kinship claimest with the tree
Worshipped on Delos in the sea—
Apollo's Palm ? It ended ;
Nor dear divinities befriended.—
Thou that pledgest heaven to me,
Stem of beauty, shaft of light,
Behold, thou hang'st suspended
Over Kedron and the night !
Shall come the fall ? shall time disarm
The grace, the glory of the Palm ?
Tropic seraph ! thou once gone,
Who then shall take thy office on—
Redeem the waste, and high appear,
Apostle of Talassa's year
And climes where rivers of waters run ?
But braid thy tresses—yet thou'rt fair :
Every age for itself must care :
Braid thy green tresses ; let the grim
Awaiter find thee never dim !
Serenely still thy glance be sent

Plumb down from horror's battlement :
Though the deep Fates be concerting
A reversion, a subverting,
Still bear thee like the Seraphim.'
He loitered, lounging on the stair :
Howbeit, the sunlight still is fair.
Next meetly here behooves narrate
How fared they, seated left but late—
Viewless to Vine above their dell,
Viewless and quite inaudible :
Derwent, and his good gossip cosy,
The man of Lesbos, light and rosy,
His anecdote about to tell.

XXVII

MAN AND BIRD

'YES, pat it comes in here for me :
He says, that one fine day at sea—
'Twas when he younger was and spry—
Being at mast-head all alone,
While he his business there did ply,
Strapping a block where halyards run,
He felt a fanning overhead—
Looked up, and so into the eye
Of a big bird, red-billed and black
In plume. It startled him, he said,
It seemed a thing demoniac.
From poise, it went to wheeling round him ;
Then, when in daze it well had bound him,
It pounced upon him with a buffet ;
He, enraged, essayed to cuff it,
But only had one hand, the other
Still holding on the spar. And so,
While yet they shouted from below,
And yet the wings did whirr and smother,
The bird tore at his old wool cap,
And chanced upon the brain to tap.
Up went both hands ; he lost his stay,
And down he fell—he and the bird
Maintaining still the airy fray—
And, souse, plumped into sea ; and heard,
While sinking there, the piercing gird
Of the grim fowl, that bore away
The prize at last.'

'And did he drown?'
'Why, there he goes!' and pointed him
Where still the mariner wended on:
''Twas in smooth water; he could swim.
They luffed and flung the rope, and fired
The harpoon at the shark untired
Astern, and dragged him—not the shark,
But man—they dragged him 'board the barque;
And down he dropped there with a thump,
Being water-logged with spongy lump
Of quilted patches on the shirt
Of wool, and trowsers. All inert
He lay. He says, and true 's the word,
That bitterer than the brine he drank
Was that shrill gird the while he sank.'
'A curious story, who e'er heard
Of such a fray 'twixt man and bird!'—
'Bird? but he deemed it was the devil,
And that he carried off his soul
In the old cap, nor was made whole
Till some good vicar did unravel
The snarled illusion in the skein,
And he got back his soul again.'
'But lost his cap. A curious story—
A bit of Nature's allegory.
And—well, what now? You seem perplexed.'
'And so I am.—Your friend there, see,
Up on yon peak, he puzzles me.
Wonder where I shall find him next?
Last time 'twas where the corn-cribs be—
Bone-cribs, I mean; in church, you know;
The blessed martyrs' holy bones,
Hard by the porch as in you go—
Sabaïtes' bones, the thousand ones
Of slaughtered monks—so faith avers.

Dumb, peering in there through the bars
He stood. Then, in the spiders' room,
I saw him there, yes, quite at home
In long-abandoned library old,
Conning a venerable tome,
While dust of ages round him rolled ;
Nor heeded he the big fly's buzz,
But mid heaped parchment leaves that mould
Sat like the bankrupt man of Uz
Among the ashes, and read and read.
Much learning, has it made him mad ?
Kedron well suits him, 'twould appear :
Why don't he stay, yes, anchor here,
Turn anchorite ? '
And do ye pun,
And he, he such an austere one ?
(Thought Derwent then.) Well, run your rig—
Hard to be comic and revere ;
And once 'twas tittered in mine ear
St. Paul himself was but a prig.
Who 's safe from the derision ?—Here
Aloud : ' Why, yes ; our friend is queer,
And yet, as some esteem him, not
Without some wisdom to his lot.'
' Wisdom ? our Cyril is deemed wise.
In the East here, one who 's lost his wits
For saint or sage they canonise :
That 's pretty good for perquisites.
I 'll tell you : Cyril (some do own)
Has gained such prescience as to man
(Through seldom seeing anyone),
To him 's revealed the mortal span
Of any wight he peers upon.
And that 's his hobby—as we proved
But late.'

'Then not in vain we 've roved,
Winning the oracle whose caprice
Avers *we 've* yet to run our lease.'
'Length to that lease! But let 's return,
Give over climbing, and adjourn.'
'Just as you will.'
'But first to show
A curious caverned place hard by.
Another crazed monk—start not so—
He 's gone, clean vanished from the eye!
Another crazed one, deemed inspired,
Long dwelt in it. He never tired—
Ah, here it is, the vestibule.'

They reach an inner grotto cool,
Lighted by fissure up in dome;
Fixed was each thing, each fixture stone:
Stone bed, bench, cross, and altar—stone.
'How like you it—Habbibi's home?
You see these writings on the wall?
His craze was this: he heard a call
Ever from heaven: O scribe, write
write!
Write this—that write—to these indite—
To them! For ever it was—write!
Well, write he did, as here you see.
What is it all?'
'Dim, dim to me,'
Said Derwent; 'ay, obscurely traced;
And much is rubbed off or defaced.
But here now, this is pretty clear:
'*I, Self, I am the enemy*
Of all. From me deliver me,
O Lord.'—Poor man!—But here, dim here:
'*There is a hell over which mere hell*

Serves—for—a—heaven.'—Oh, terrible !
Profound pit that must be !—What 's here
Half faded : ' . . . *teen* . . *six*,
The hundred summers run,
Except it be in cicatrix
The aloe—flowers—none.'—
Ah, Nostrodamus ; prophecy
Is so explicit.—But this, see.
Much blurred again : . . . ' *testimony*,
. . . . . *grown fat and gray*,
The lion down, and—full of honey,
The bears shall rummage—him—in—May.'—
Yes, bears like honey.—Yon gap there
Well lights the grotto ; and this air
Is dry and sweet ; nice citadel
For study.'
' Or dessert-room. So,
Hast seen enough ? then let us go.
Write, write—indite !—what peer you at ? '
Emerging, Derwent, turning round,
Small text spied which the doorway crowned.
' Ha, new to me ; and what is that ? '
The Islesman asked ; ' pray, read it o'er.'
' " *Ye here who enter Habbi's den,*
Beware what hence ye take ! " ' ' Amen !
Why didn't he say that before ?
But what 's to take ? all 's fixture here.'
' Occult, occult,' said Derwent, ' queer.'
Returning now, they made descent,
The pilot trilling as they went :

' King Cole sang as he clinked the can,
Sol goes round, and the mill-horse too :
A thousand pound for a fire-proof man !
The devil vows he 's the sole true-blue ;

And the prick-louse sings,
See the humbug of kings—
'Tis I take their measure, ninth part of a man ! '

Lightly he sheds it off (mused then
The priest), a man for Daniel's den.

In by-place now they join the twain,
Belex, and Og in red fez bald ;
And Derwent, in his easy vein
Ear gives to chat, with wine and gladness,
Pleased to elude the Siddim madness,
And, yes, even that in grotto scrawled ;
Nor grieving that each pilgrim friend
For time now leave him to unbend.
Yet, intervening even there,
A touch he knew of gliding care :
We loiterers whom life can please,
(Thought he) could we but find our mates
Ever ! but no ; before the gates
Of joy lie some who carp and tease :
Collisions of men's destinies !—
But quick, to nullify that tone
He turned to mark the jovial one
Telling the twain, the martial pair,
Of Cairo and his tarry there ;
And how, his humorous soul to please,
He visited the dervishes,
The dancing ones : ' But what think ye ?
The captain-dervish vowed to me
That those same cheeses, whirl-round-rings
He made, were David's—yes, the king's
Who danced before the Ark. But, look :
This was the step King David took ' ;
And cut fantastic pigeon-wings.

XXVIII

MORTMAIN AND THE PALM

'SEE him !—How all your threat he braves,
Saba ! your ominous architraves
Impending, stir him not a jot.
Scarce *he* would change with me in lot :
Wiser am I ?—Curse on this store
Of knowledge ! Nay, 'twas cursed of yore.
Knowledge is power : tell that to knaves ;
'Tis knavish knowledge : the true lore
Is impotent for earth : " *Thyself*
Thou canst not save ; come down from
cross ! "
They cast it in His teeth ; trim Pelf
Stood by, and jeered, *Is gold then dross ?*—
Cling to His tree, and there find hope :
Me it but makes a misanthrope.
Makes ? nay, but 'twould, did not the hate
Dissolve in pity of the fate.—
This legend, dream, and *fact* of life !
The drooping hands, the dancing feet
Which in the endless series meet ;
And rumours of *No God* so rife ! '

The Swede, the brotherless—who else ?
'Twas he, upon the brink opposed,
To whom the Lesbian was disclosed
In antic : hence those syllables.

Ere long (at distance from that scene)
A voice dropped on him from a screen
Above : ' Ho, halt ! ' It chanced to be
The challenged here no start incurred,
Forewarned of near vicinity
Of Cyril and his freak. He heard,
Looked up, and answered, ' Well ? ' ' The word ! '
' *Hope*,' in derision. ' Stand, delay :
That was password for yesterday.'
' *Despair*.' ' Advance.'
He, going, scanned
The testimony of the hand
Gnawed in the dream : ' Yea, but 'tis here.
Despair ? nay, death ; and what 's death's cheer ?
Death means—the sea-beat gains the shore ;
He 's home ; his watch is called no more.
So looks it. Not *I* tax thee, Death,
With that, which might make Strength a trembler—
While yet for me it scants no breath—
That, quiet under sleepiest mound,
Thou art a dangerous dissembler ;
That he whose evil is profound
In multiform of life's disguises,
Whom none dare check, and naught chastises,
And in his licence thinks no bound—
For him thou hoardest strange surprises !—
But what—the Tree ? O holy Palm,
If 'tis a world where hearts wax warm
Oftener through hate than love, and chief
The bland thing be the adder's charm,
And the true thing virtue's ancient grief—
Thee yet it nourishes—even thee !
' Envoy, whose looks the pang assuage,
Disclose thy heavenly embassage !

That lily-rod which Gabriel bore
To Mary, kneeling her before,
Announcing a God, the mother she ;
That budded stalk from Paradise—
Like that thou shin'st in thy device :
And sway'st thou over here toward me—
Toward *me* can such a symbol sway ! '

In rounded turn of craggy way,
Across the interposed abyss,
He had encountered it. Submiss,
He dropped upon the under stone,
And soon in such a dream was thrown
He felt as floated up in cheer
Of saint borne heavenward from the bier.
Indeed, each wakeful night, and fast
(That feeds and keeps what clay would clutch)
With thrills which he did still outlast,
His fibres made so fine in end
That though in trials fate can lend
Firm to withstand, strong to contend ;
Sensitive he to a spirit's touch.

A wind awakened him—a breath.
He lay like light upon the heath,
Alive though still. And all came back,
The years outlived, with all their black ;
While bright he saw the angel-tree
Across the gulf alluring sway :
Come over ! be—forever be
As in the trance.—' Wilt no delay ?
Yet hear me in appeal to thee :
When the last light shall fade from me,
If, groping round, no hand I meet ;
Thee I 'll recall—invoke thee, Palm :

Comfort me then, thou Paraclete !
The lull late mine beneath thy lee,
Then, then renew, and seal the calm.'

Upon the ledge of hanging stair,
And under Vine, invisible there,
With eyes still feeding on the Tree,
Relapsed he lingered as in Lethe's snare.

XXIX

ROLFE AND THE PALM

PURSUED, the mounted robber flies
Unawed through Kedron's plunged demesne :
The clink, and clinking echo dies :
He vanishes : a long ravine.
And stealthy there, in little chinks
Betwixt or under slab-rocks, slinks
The dwindled amber current lean.

Far down see Rolfe there, hidden low
By ledges slant. Small does he show
(If eagles eye), small and far off
As Mother Carey's bird in den
Of Cape Horn's hollowing billow-trough,
When from the rail where lashed they bide
The sweep of overcurling tide—
Down, down, in bonds the seamen gaze
Upon that flutterer in glen
Of waters where it sheltered plays,
While, over it, each briny height
Is torn with bubbling torrents white
In slant foam tumbling from the snow
Upon the crest ; and far as eye
Can range through mist and scud which fly,
Peak behind peak the liquid summits grow.

By chance Rolfe won the rocky stair
At base, and queried if it were

Man's work or nature's, or the twain
Had wrought together in that lane
Of high ascent, so crooked with turns
And flanked by coigns, that one discerns
But links thereof in flights encaved,
Whate'er the point of view. Up, slow
He climbed for little space; then craved
A respite, turned and sat; and, lo,
The Tree in salutation waved
Across the chasm. Remindings swell;
Sweet troubles of emotion mount—
Sylvan reveries, and they well
From memory's Bandusa fount;
Yet scarce the memory alone,
But that and question merged in one:

'Whom weave ye in,
Ye vines, ye palms? whom now, Soolee?
Lives yet your Indian Arcady?
His sunburnt face what Saxon shows—
His limbs all white as lilies be—
Where Eden, isled, empurpled glows
In old Mendanna's sea?
Takes who the venture after me?
'Who now adown the mountain dell
(Till mine, by human foot untrod—
Nor easy, like the steps to hell)
In panic leaps the appalling crag,
Alighting on the cloistral sod
Where strange Hesperian orchards drag,
Walled round by cliff and cascatelle—
Arcades of Iris; and though lorn,
A truant ship-boy overworn,
Is hailed for a descended god?

'Who sips the vernal cocoa's cream—
The nereids dimpling in the darkling stream ?
For whom the gambol of the tricksy dream—
Even Puck's substantiated scene,
Yea, much as man might hope and more than
heaven may mean ?
'And whom do priest and people sue,
In terms which pathos yet shall tone
When memory comes unto her own,
To dwell with them and ever find them true :
"Abide, for peace is here :
Behold, nor heat nor cold we fear,
Nor any dearth : one happy tide—
A dance, a garland of the year :
Abide ! "
'But who so feels the stars annoy,
Upbraiding him—how far astray !—
That he abjures the simple joy,
And hurries over the briny world away ?
'Renouncer ! is it Adam's flight
Without compulsion or the sin ?
And shall the vale avenge the slight
By haunting thee in hours thou yet shalt win ? '

He tarried. And each swaying fan
Sighed to his mood in threnodies of Pan.

XXX

THE CELIBATE

All distant through that afternoon
The student kept, nor might attune
His heart to any steadfast thought
But Ruth—still Ruth, yet strange involved
With every mystery unresolved
In time and fate. In cloud thus caught,
Her image laboured like a star
Fitful revealed in midnight heaven
When inland from the seacoast far
The storm-rack and dark scud are driven.
Words scarce might tell his frame, in sooth :
'Twas Ruth, and oh, much more than Ruth.

That flank of Kedron still he held
Which is built up ; and, passing on—
While now sweet peal of chimings swelled
From belfry old, withdrawn in zone—
A way through cloisters deep he won
And winding vaults that slope to height ;
And heard a voice, espied a light
In twinkle through far passage dim,
And aimed for it, a friendly gleam ;
And so came out upon the Tree
Mid-poised, and ledge-built balcony
Enrailed, and one who, leaning o'er,
Beneath the Palm—from shore to shore
Of Kedron's overwhelming walls
And up and down her gap and grave,
A golden cry sent, such as calls
To creatures which the summons know.

And, launching from crag, tower, and cave,
Beatified in flight they go :
St. Saba's doves, in Saba bred.
For wonted bounty they repair,
These convent-pensioners of air ;
Fly to their friend ; from hand outspread
Or fluttering at his feet are fed.
Some, iridescent round his brow,
Wheel, and with nimbus him endow.
Not fortune's darling here was seen,
But heaven's elect. The robe of blue
So sorted with the doves in hue
Prevailing, and clear skies serene
Without a cloud ; so pure he showed—
Of stature tall, in aspect bright—
He looked an almoner of God,
Dispenser of the bread of light.
'Twas not the intellectual air—
Not solely that, though that be fair :
Another order, and more rare—
As high above the Plato mind
As this above the Mammon kind.
In beauty of his port unsealed,
To Clarel part he stood revealed
At first encounter ; but the sweet
Small pecking bills and hopping feet
Had previous won ; the most urbane,
In courtesy that could not feign,
Mute welcome yielding, and a seat.
It charmed away half Clarel's care,
And charmed the picture that he saw,
To think how like that turtle pair
Which Mary, to fulfil the law,
From Bethlehem to temple brought
For offering ; these Saba doves

Seemed natives—not of Venus' court
Voluptuous with wanton wreath—
But colonnades where Enoch roves,
Or walks with God, as Scripture saith.
Nor myrtle here, but sole the Palm
Whose vernal fans take rich release
From crowns of foot-stalks golden warm.
O martyr's sceptre, type of peace,
And trouble glorified to calm !
What stillness in the almoner's face :
Nor Fomalhaut more mild may reign
Mellow above the purple main
Of autumn hills. It was a grace
Beyond medallions ye recall.
The student murmured, filial—
' Father,' and tremulously gleamed,
' Here, sure, is peace.' The father beamed ;
The nature of the peace was such
It shunned to venture any touch
Of word. ' And yet,' went Clarel on ;
But faltered there. The saint but glanced.
' Father, if Good, 'tis unenhanced :
No life domestic do ye own
Within these walls : woman I miss.
Like cranes, what years from time's abyss
Their flight have taken, one by one,
Since Saba founded this retreat :
In cells here many a stifled moan
Of lonely generations gone ;
And more shall pine as more shall fleet.'

With dove on wrist, he, robed, stood hushed,
Mused on the bird, and softly brushed.
Scarce reassured by air so mute,
Anxiously Clarel urged his suit.

The celibate let go the dove ;
Cooing, it won the shoulder—lit
Even at his ear, as whispering it.
But he one pace made in remove,
And from a little alcove took
A silver-clasped and vellum book ;
And turned a leaf, and gave that page
For answer.—
Rhyme, old hermit-rhyme
Composed in Decius' cruel age
By Christian of Thebæan clime :
'Twas David's son, and he of Dan,
With him misloved that fled the bride,
And Job whose wife but mocked his ban ;
Then rose, or in redemption ran—
The rib restored to Adam's side,
And man made whole, as man began.
And lustral hymns and prayers were here :
Renouncings, yearnings, charges dread
Against our human nature dear :
Worship and wail, which, if misled,
Not less might fervour high instil
In hearts which, striving in their fear
Of clay, to bridle, curb or kill ;
In the pure desert of the will
Chastised, live the vowed life austere.

The given page the student scanned :
Started—reviewed, nor might withstand.
He turned ; the celibate was gone ;
Over the gulf he hung alone :
Alone, but for the comment caught
Or dreamed, in face seen far below,
Upturned toward the Palm in thought,
Or else on him—he scarce might know.

Fixed seemed it in assent indeed
Which indexed all ? It was the Swede.
Over the Swede, upon the stair—
Long Bethel-stair of ledges brown
Sloping as from the heaven let down—
Apart lay Vine ; lowermost there,
Rolfe he discerned ; nor less the three,
While of each other unaware,
In one consent of frame might be.
How vaguely, while yet influenced so
By late encounter, and his glance
Rested on Vine, his reveries flow
Recalling that repulsed advance
He knew by Jordan in the wood,
And the enigma unsubdued—
Possessing Ruth, nor less his heart
Aye hungering still, in deeper part
Unsatisfied. Can be a bond
(Thought he) as David sings in strain
That dirges beauteous Jonathan,
Passing the love of woman fond ?
And may experience but dull
The longing for it ? Can time teach ?
Shall all these billows win the lull
And shallow on life's hardened beach ?—

He lingered. The last dove had fled,
And nothing breathed—breathed, waved, or fed,
Along the uppermost sublime
Blank ridge. He wandered as in sleep ;
A saffron sun's last rays were shed ;
More still, more solemn waxed the time,
Till Apathy upon the steep
Sat one with Silence and the Dead.

XXXI

THE RECOIL

BUT who was SHE (if Luke attest)
Whom generations hail for blest—
Immaculate though human one ;
What diademed and starry Nun—
Bearing in English old the name
And hallowed style of HOLIDAME ;
She, She, the Mater of the Rood—
Sprang She from Ruth's young sisterhood ? '

On cliff in moonlight roaming out,
So Clarel, thrilled by deep dissent,
Revulsion from injected doubt
And many a strange presentiment.
But came ere long profound relapse :
The Rhyme recurred, made voids or gaps
In dear relations ; while anew,
From chambers of his mind's review,
Emerged the saint, who with the Palm
Shared heaven on earth in gracious calm,
Even as his robe partook the hue.
And needs from that high mentor part ?
Is strength too strong to teach the weak ?
Though tame the life seem, turn the cheek,
Does the call elect the hero heart ?—
The thunder smites our tropic bloom :
If live the abodes unvexed and balmy—

No equinox with annual doom ;
If Eden 's wafted from the plume
Of shining Raphael, Michael palmy ;
If these in more than fable be,
With natures variously divine—
Through all their ranks they are masculine ;
Else how the power with purity ?
Or in yon worlds of light is known
The clear intelligence alone ?
Express the Founder's words declare,
Marrying none is in the heaven ;
Yet love in heaven itself to spare—
Love feminine ! Can Eve be riven
From sex, and disengaged retain
Its charm ? Think this—then may ye feign
The perfumed rose shall keep its bloom,
Cut off from sustenance of loam.
But if Eve's charm be not supernal,
Enduring not divine transplanting—
Love kindled thence, is that eternal ?
Here, here 's the hollow—here the haunting !
Ah, love, ah wherefore thus unsure ?
Linked art thou—locked, with Self impure ?
Yearnings benign the angels know,
Saint Francis and Saint John have felt :
Good-will—desires that overflow,
And reaching far as life is dealt.
That *other* love !—Oh heavy load—
Is naught then trustworthy but God ?

On more hereof, derived in frame
From the eremite's Thebæan flame,
Mused Clarel, taking self to task,
Nor might determined thought reclaim :
But, the waste invoking, this did ask :

'Truth, truth cherubic! claim'st thou worth
Foreign to time and hearts which dwell
Helots of habit old as earth
Suspended 'twixt the heaven and hell?'
But turn thee, rest the burden there;
To-morrow new deserts must thou share.

XXXII

EMPTY STIRRUPS

THE gray of dawn. A tremor slight :
The trouble of imperfect light
Anew begins. In floating cloud
Midway suspended down the gorge,
A long mist trails white shreds of shroud
How languorous toward the Dead Sea's verge.
Riders in seat halt by the gate :
Why not set forth ? For one they wait
Whose stirrups empty be—the Swede.
Still absent from the frater-hall
Since afternoon and vesper-call,
He, they imagined, had but sought
Some cave in keeping with his thought,
And reappear would with the light
Suddenly as the Gileadite
In Obadiah's way. But—no,
He cometh not when they would go.
Dismounting, they make search in vain ;
Till Clarel—minding him again
Of something settled in his air—
A quietude beyond mere calm—
When seen from ledge beside the Palm
Reclined in nook of Bethel stair,
Thitherward led them in a thrill
Of nervous apprehension, till
Startled he stops, with eyes avert
And indicating hand.—

'Tis *he*—
So undisturbed, supine, inert—
The filmed orbs fixed upon the Tree—
Night's dews upon his eyelids be.
To test if breath remain, none tries :
On those thin lips a feather lies—
An eagle's, wafted from the skies.
The vow : and had the genius heard,
Benignant ? nor had made delay,
But, more than taking him at word,
Quick wafted where the palm-boughs sway
In Saint John's heaven ? Some divined
That long had he been undermined
In frame ; the brain a tocsin-bell
Overburdensome for citadel
Whose base was shattered. They refrain
From aught but that dumb look that fell
Identifying ; feeling pain
That such a heart could beat, and will—
Aspire, yearn, suffer, baffled still,
And end. With monks which round them stood
Concerned, not discomposed in mood,
Interment they provided for—
Heaved a last sigh, nor tarried more.

Nay ; one a little lingered there ;
'Twas Rolfe. And as the rising sun,
Though viewless yet from Bethel stair,
More lit the mountains, he was won
To invocation, scarce to prayer :

' Holy Morning,
What blessed lore reservest thou,
Withheld from man, that evermore
Without surprise,

But, rather, with a hurtless scorning
In thy placid eyes,
Thou viewest all events alike ?
Oh, tell me, do thy bright beams strike
The healing hills of Gilead now ? '
And glanced toward the pale one near
In shadow of the crag's dark brow.—
Did Charity follow that poor bier ?
It did ; but Bigotry did steer :
Friars buried him without the walls
(Nor in a consecrated bed)
Where vulture unto vulture calls,
And only ill things find a friend :
There let the beak and claw contend,
There the hyena's cub be fed :
Heaven that disclaims, and him beweeps
In annual showers ; and the tried spirit sleeps.

END OF PART III

PART IV

BETHLEHEM

I

IN SADDLE

Of old, if legend truth aver,
With hearts that did in aim concur,
Three mitred kings—Amerrian,
Apelius, and Damazon—
By miracle in Cassak met
(An Indian city, bards infer) ;
Thence, prompted by the vision yet
To find the new-born Lord nor err,
Westward their pious feet they set—
With gold and frankincense and myrrh.
Nor failed they, though by deserts vast
And voids and menaces they passed :
They failed not, for a light was given—
The light and pilotage of heaven :
A light, a lead, no longer won
By any, now, who seekers are :
Or fable is it ? but if none,
Let man lament the foundered Star.

And Kedron's pilgrims : In review
The wilds receive those guests anew.
Yet ere, the Manger now to win,
Their desert march they re-begin,
Belated leaving Saba's tower ;
Reverted glance they grateful throw,
Nor slight the abbot's parting dower
Whose benedictions with them go.

Nor did the sinner of the isle
From friendly cheer refrain, though lax :
' Our Lady of the Vines beguile
Your travel and bedew your tracks ! '
Blithe wishes, which slim mirth bestow ;
For, ah, with chill at heart they mind
Two now for ever left behind.
But as men drop, replacements rule :
Though fleeting be each part assigned,
The eternal ranks of life keep full :
So here—if but in small degree—
Recruits for fallen ones atone ;
The Arnaut and pilgrim from the sea
The muster joining ; also one
In military undress dun—
A stranger quite.
The Arnaut rode
For escort mere. His martial stud
A brother seemed—as strong as he,
As brave in trappings, and with blood
As proud, and equal gravity,
Reserving latent mettle. Good
To mark the rider in his seat—
Tall, shapely, powerful and complete ;
Alean, too, in an easy way,
Like Pisa's Tower confirmed in place,
Nor lacking in subordinate grace
Of lighter beauty. Truth to say,
This horseman seemed to waive command :
Abeyance of the bridle-hand.
But winning space more wide and clear,
He showed in ostentation here
How but a pulse conveyed through rein
Could thrill and fire, or prompt detain.
On dappled steed, in kilt snow-white,

With burnished arms refracting light,
He orbits round the plodding train.
Djalea in quiet seat observes ;
'Tis little from his poise he swerves ;
Sedate he nods, as he should say :
Rough road may tame this holiday
Of thine ; but pleasant to look on :
Come, that 's polite ! for on the wing,
Or in suspense of curveting
Chiron salutes the Emir's son.

Meantime, remiss, with dangling sword,
Upon a cloistral beast but sad,
A Saba friar's befitting pad
(His own steed, having sprained a cord,
Left now behind in convent ward)
The plain-clad soldier, heeding none
Though marked himself, in neutral tone
Maintained his place. His shoulders lithe
Were long-sloped and yet ample, too,
In keeping with each limb and thew :
Waist flexile as a willow withe ;
Withal, a slouched reserve of strength,
As in the pard's luxurious length ;
The cheek, high-boned, of copperish show
Enhanced by sun on land and seas ;
Long hair, much like a Cherokee's,
Curving behind the ear in flow
And veiling part a sabre-scar
Slant on the neck, a livid bar ;
Nor might the felt hat hide from view
One temple pitted with strange blue
Of powder-burn. Of him you 'd say—
A veteran, no more. But nay :
Brown eyes, what reveries they keep—

Sad woods they be, where wild things
sleep.
Hereby, and by yet other sign,
To Rolfe, and Clarel part, and Vine,
The stranger stood revealed, confessed
A native of the fair South-West—
Their countryman, though of a zone
Varied in nature from their own :
A countryman—but how estranged !
Nor any word as yet exchanged
With them. But yester-evening's hour
Then first he came to Saba's tower,
And saw the Epirot aside
In conference, and word supplied
Touching detention of the troop
Destined to join him for the swoop
Over Jordan. But the pilgrims few
Knew not hereof, not yet they knew,
But deemed him one who took his way
Eccentric in an armed survey
Of Judah.
On the pearl-gray ass
(From Siddim riderless, alas !)
Rode now the timoneer sedate,
Jogging beneath the Druze's lee,
As well he might, instructed late
What perils in lack of convoy be.
A frater-feeling of the sea
Influenced Rolfe, and made him take
Solace with him of salt romance,
Albeit Agath scarce did wake
To full requital—chill, perchance
Derived from years or diffidence ;
Howe'er, in friendly way Rolfe plied
One-sided chat.

As on they ride
And o'er the ridge begin to go,
A parting glance they turn ; and lo !
The convent's twin towers disappear—
Engulfed like a brig's masts below
Submerging waters. Thence they steer
Upward anew, in lane of steeps—
Ravine hewn out, as 'twere by sledges ;
Enwalled, from ledges unto ledges,
And stepwise still, each rider creeps,
Until, at top, their eyes behold
Judæa in highlands far unrolled.
A horseman so, in easier play
Wheeling aloft (so travellers say)
Up the Moor's Tower, may outlook gain
From saddle over Seville's plain.
But here, 'twixt tent-lapped hills, they see,
Northward, a land immovably
Haggard and haggish, specked gray-green—
Pale tint of those frilled lichens lean,
Which on a prostrate pine ye view,
When fallen from the banks of grace
Down to the sand-pit's sterile place,
Blisters supplant the beads of dew.
Canker and palmer-worm both must
Famished have left those fields of rust :
The rain is powder—land of dust :
There few do tarry, none may live—
Save mad, possessed, or fugitive.
Exalted in accursed estate,
Like Naaman in his leprous plight
Haughty before Elisha's gate,
Show the blanched hills.
All now alight
Upon the Promethean ledge.

The Druze stands by the imminent edge
Peering, and rein in hand. With head
Over her master's shoulder laid,
The mare, too, gazed, nor feared a check,
Though leaning half her lovesome neck,
Yet lightly, as a swan might do.
An arm Djalea enfolding stretched,
While sighs the sensitive creature fetched,
As e'en that waste to sorrow moved
Instinctive. So, to take the view
See man and mare, lover and loved.
Slant palm to brow against the haze,
Meantime the salt one sent his gaze
As from the mast-head o'er the pale
Expanse. But what may eyes avail ?
Land lone as seas without a sail.
' Wreck, ho—the wreck ! ' Not unamazed
They hear his sudden outcry. Crazed ?
Or subject yet by starts dismayed
To flighty turns, for friars said
Much wandered he in mind when low.
But never Agath heeded them :
Forth did his levelled finger go
And, fixing, pointed : ' See ye, see ?
'Way over where the gray hills be ;
Yonder—no, there—that upland dim :
Wreck, ho ! the wreck—Jerusalem ! '
' Keen-sighted art thou ! ' said Djalea,
Confirming him ; ' ay, it is there.'
Then Agath, that excitement gone,
Relapsed into his quiet tone.

II

THE ENSIGN

NEEDS well to know the distant site
(Like Agath, who late on the way
From Joppa here had made delay)
Ere, if unprompted, thou aright
Mayst single Zion's mountain out
From kindred summits round about.
Abandoned quarry mid the hills
Remote, as well one's dream fulfils
Of what Jerusalem should be,
As that vague heap, whose neutral tones
Blend in with Nature's, helplessly :
Stony metropolis of stones.
    But much as distant shows the town
Erst glorious under Solomon,
Appears now, in these latter days,
To languid eyes, through dwelling haze,
The city St. John saw so bright
With sardonyx and ruby ? Gleam
No more, like Monte Rosa's height,
Thy towers, O New Jerusalem ?
To Patmos now may visions steal ?
Lone crag where lone the ospreys wheel !

    Such thought, or something near akin,
Touched Clarel, and perchance might win
(To judge them by their absent air)

Others at hand. But not of these
The Illyrian bold : impatient stare
He random flung ; then, like a breeze
Which fitful rushes through the glen
Over clansmen low—Prince Charlie's men—
Shot down the ledges, while the clang
Of sabre 'gainst the stirrup rang,
And clinked the steel shoe on the stone.
His freak of gallantry in cheer
Of barbarous escort ending here,
Back for the stronghold dashed he lone.
When died the din, it left them more
Becalmed upon that hollow shore.

Not slack was ocean's wrinkled son
In study of the mountain town—
Much like himself, indeed, so gray
Left in life's waste to slow decay.
For index now as he stretched forth
His loose-sleeved arm in sailor way
Pointing the bearings south and north,
Derwent, arrested, cried, ' Dost bleed ? '
Touching the naked skin : ' Look here—
A living fresco ! ' And indeed,
Upon the forearm did appear
A thing of art, vermil and blue,
A crucifixion in tattoo,
With trickling blood-drops strange to see.
Above that emblem of the loss,
Twin curving palm-boughs draping met
In manner of a canopy
Over an equi-limbed small cross
And three tri-spiked and sister crowns :
And under these a star was set :
And all was tanned and toned in browns.

In chapel erst which knew the mass,
A mullioned window's umber glass
Dyed with some saintly legend old,
Obscured by cobwebs ; this might hold
Some likeness to the picture rare
On arm here webbed with straggling hair.
' Leave out the crucifixion's hint,'
Said Rolfe, ' the rest will show in tint
The *Ensign* : palms, cross, diadems,
And star—the *Sign !*—Jerusalem's,
Coeval with King Baldwin's sway.—
Skilled monk in sooth ye need have sought
In Saba.'
Quoth the sea-sage : ' Nay ;
Sketched out it was one Christmas day
Off Java Head. Little I thought
(A heedless lad, scarce through youth's straits—
How hopeful on the wreckful way)
What meant this thing which here ye see,
The bleeding man upon the tree ;
Since then I 've felt it, and the fates.'
' Ah—yes,' sighed Derwent ; ' yes, indeed !
But 'tis the *Ensign* now we heed.'
The stranger here his dusk eye ran
In reading sort from man to man,
Cleric to sailor—back again.
' But, shipmate,' Derwent cried ; ' tell me :
How came you by this blazonry ? '
' We seamen, when there 's naught to do
In calms, the straw for hats we plait,
Or one another we tattoo
With marks we copy from a mate,
Which he has from his elders ta'en,
And those from prior ones again ;

And few, if any, think or reck
But so with pains their skin to deck.
This crucifixion, though, by some
A charm is held 'gainst watery doom.'

'Comrades,' said Rolfe, 'tis here we note
Downhanded in a way blindfold,
A pious use of times remote.
Ah, but it dim grows, and more dim,
The gold of legend, that fine gold!
Washed in with wine of Bethlehem,
This *Ensign* in the ages old
Was stamped on every pilgrim's arm
By grave practitioners elect
Whose calling lacked not for respect
In Zion. Like the sprig of palm,
Token it was at home that he
Which bore had kneeled at Calvary.
Nay, those monk-soldiers helmet-crowned,
Whose effigies in armed sleep, lie—
Stone, in the stony Temple round
In London; and (to verify
Them more) with carved greaves crossed, for sign
Of duty done in Palestine;
Exceeds it, pray, conjecture fair,
These may have borne this blazon rare,
And not alone on standard fine,
But pricked on chest or sinewy arm,
Pledged to defend against alarm
His tomb for whom they warred? But see,
From these mailed Templars now the sign,
Losing the import and true key,
Descends to boatswains of the brine.'

Clarel, reposing there aside,
By secret thought preoccupied,
Now, as he inward chafe would shun,
A feigned quick interest put on :
'The import of these marks ? Tell me.'
'Come, come,' cried Derwent; 'dull ye bide !
By palm-leaves here are signified
Judæa, as on the Roman gem ;
The cross scarce needs a word, agree ;
The crowns are for the magi three ;
This star—the star of Bethlehem.'
'One might have known' ; and fell anew
In void relapse.
'Why, why so blue ? '
Derwent again ; and rallying ran :
'While now for Bethlehem we aim,
Our stellar friend the post should claim
Of guide. We 'll put him in the van—
Follow the star on the tattooed man,
We wise men here.—What 's that ? '
A gun,
At distance fired, startles the group.
Around they gaze, and down and up ;
But in the wilds they seem alone.
Long time the echo sent its din,
Hurled round about, and out and in—
A football tossed from crag to crag ;
Then died away in ether thin—
Died, as they deemed, yet did but lag,
For all abrupt one far rebound
Gave pause ; that o'er, the hush was crowned.
'We loiter,' Derwent said, in tone
Uneasy ; 'come, shall we go on ? '
'Wherefore ? ' the saturnine demands.

Toward him they look, for his eclipse
There gave way for the first ; and stands
The adage old, that one's own lips
Proclaim the character : ' A gun :
A gun 's man's voice—sincerest one.
Blench we to have assurance here,
Here in the waste, that kind is near ? '
Eyes settle on his scars in view,
Both warp and burn, the which evince
Experience of the thing he hints.
' Nay—hark ! ' and all turn round anew :
Remoter shot came duller there :
' The Arnaut—and but fires in air,'
Djalea averred : ' his last adieu.'

By chance directed here in thought,
Clarel upon that warrior haught
Low mused : The rowel of thy spur
The robe rips of philosopher !
Naught reckest thou of wisest book :
The creeds thou star'st down with a look.
And how the worse for such wild sense ?
And where is wisdom's recompense ?
And as for heaven—Oh, heavens enlarge
Beyond each designated marge :
Valhalla's hall would hardly bar
Welcome to one whose end need be
In grace and grief of harnessed war,
To sink mid swords and minstrelsy.

So wilful ! but 'tis loss and smart,
Clarel, in thy dissolving heart
Will 't form anew ?
Vine's watchful eye,
While none perceived where bent his view,

Had fed on Agath sitting by ;
He seemed to like him, one whose print
The impress bore of Nature's mint.
Authentic ; man of nature true,
If simple ; naught that slid between
Him and the elemental scene—
Unless it were that thing indeed
Uplooming from his ancient creed ;
Yet that but deepen might the sense
Of awe, and serve dumb reverence
And resignation —' Anywhere,'
Asked Vine—here now to converse led—
' In those far regions, strange or rare,
Where thou hast been, may aught compare
With Judah here ? '
' Sooth, sir,' he said,
' Some chance comparison I 've made
In mind between this stricken land
And one far isle forever banned
I camped on in life's early days :
I view it now—but through a haze :
Our boats I view, reversed, turned down
For shelter by the midnight sea ;
The very slag comes back to me
I raked for shells, but found not one ;
That harpy sea-hawk—him I view
Which, pouncing, from the red coal drew
Our hissing meat—we lounging nigh—
An instant's dash—and with it flew
To his sea-rock detached, his cry
Thence sent, to mock the marl we threw—
I hear, I see ; return those days
Again—but 'tis through deepening haze :
How like a flash that life is gone—
So brief the youth by sailors known ! '

'But tell us, tell,' now others cried,
And grouped them as by hearthstone wide.
The timoneer, at hazard thrown
With men of order not his own,
Evinced abashment, yes, proved shy.
They urged; and he could but comply.
But, more of clearness to confer—
Less dimly to express the thing
Rude outlined by this mariner,
Licence is claimed in rendering;
And tones he felt but scarce might give,
The verse essays to interweave.

III

THE ISLAND

'In waters where no charts avail,
Where only fin and spout ye see,
The lonely spout of hermit-whale,
God set that isle which haunteth me.
There clouds hang low, but yield no rain—
For ever hang, since wind is none
Or light; nor ship-boy's eye may gain
The smoke-wrapped peak, the inland one
Volcanic; this, within its shroud
Streaked black and red, burns unrevealed;
It burns by night—by day the cloud
Shows leaden all, and dull and sealed.
The beach is cinders. With the tide
Salt creek and ashy inlet bring
More loneness from the outer ring
Of ocean.'

Pause he made, and sighed.—
'But take the way across the marl,
A broken field of tumbled slabs
Like ice-cakes frozen in a snarl
After the break-up in a sound;
So win the thicket's upper ground
Where silence like a poniard stabs,
Since there the low throb of the sea
Not heard is, and the sea-fowl flee
Far off the shore, all the long day
Hunting the flying-fish their prey.

Haply in bush ye find a path :
Of man or beast it scarce may be ;
And yet a wasted look it hath,
As it were travelled ceaselessly—
Century after century—
The rock in places much worn down
Like to some old, old kneeling-stone
Before a shrine. But naught 's to see,
At least naught there was seen by me,
Of any moving, creeping one.
No berry do those thickets bear,
Nor many leaves. Yet even there,
Some sailor from the steerage den
Put sick ashore—alas, by men
Who weary of him thus abjure--
The way may follow, in pursuit
Of apples red—the homestead-fruit
He dreams of in his calenture.
He drops, lost soul ; but we go on—
Advance, until in end be won
The terraced orchard's mysteries,
Which well do that imp-isle beseem ;
Paved with jet blocks those terraces,
The surface rubbed to unctuous gleam
By something which has life, you feel :
And yet, the shades but death reveal ;
For under cobwebbed cactus trees,
White by their trunks—what hulks be these
Which, like old skulls of Anaks, are
Set round as in a Golgotha ?
But, list—a sound ! Dull, dull it booms—
Dull as the jar in vaulted tombs
When urns are shifted. With amaze
Into the dim retreats ye gaze.
Lo, 'tis the monstrous tortoise drear !

Of huge humped arch, the ancient shell
Is trenched with seams where lichens dwell,
Or some adhesive growth and sere :
A lumpish languor marks the pace—
A hideous, harmless look, with trace
Of hopelessness ; the eyes are dull
As in the bog the dead black pool :
Penal his aspect ; all is dragged,
As he for more than years had lagged—
A convict doomed to bide the place ;
A soul transformed—for earned disgrace
Degraded, and from higher race.
Ye watch him—him so woebegone :
Searching, he creeps with labouring neck,
Each crevice tries, and long may seek :
Water he craves, where rain is none—
Water within the parching zone,
Where only dews of midnight fall
And dribbling lodge in chinks of stone.
For meat the bitter tree is all—
The cactus, whose nipped fruit is shed
On those bleached skull-like hulks below,
Which, when by life inhabited,
Crept hither in last journey slow
After a hundred years of pain
And pilgrimage here to and fro,
For other hundred years to reign
In hollow of white armour so—
Then perish piecemeal. You advance :
Instant, more rapid than a glance,
Long neck and four legs are drawn in,
Letting the shell down with report
Upon the stone ; so falls in court
The clattering buckler with a din.
There leave him, since for hours he 'll keep

That feint of death.—But for the isle——
Much seems it like this barren steep :
As here, few there would think to smile.'

So, paraphrased in lines sincere
Which still similitude would win,
The sketch ran of that timoneer.
He ended, and how passive sate :
Nature's own look, which might recall
Dumb patience of mere animal,
Which better may abide life's fate
Than comprehend.
What may man know ?
(Here pondered Clarel ;) let him rule—
Pull down, build up, creed, system, school,
And reason's endless battle wage,
Make and remake his verbiage—
But solve the world ! Scarce that he 'll do :
Too wild it is, too wonderful.
Since *this* world, then, can baffle so—
Our natural harbour—it were strange
If *that* alleged, which is afar,
Should not confound us when we range
In revery where its problems are.—
Such thoughts ! and can they e'en be mine
In fount ? Did Derwent true divine
Upon the tower of Saba—yes,
Hinting I too much felt the stress
Of Rolfe—or whom ? Green and unsure,
And in attendance on a mind
Poised at self-centre and mature,
Do I but lacquey it behind ?
Yea, here in frame of thought and word
But wear the cast clothes of my lord ?

IV

AN INTRUDER

QUIET Agath, with a start, just then
Shrieked out, abhorrent or in fright.
Disturbed in its pernicious den
Amid dry flints and shards of blight,
A crabbed scorpion, dingy brown,
With nervous tail slant upward thrown
(Like to a snake's wroth neck and head
Dilating when the coil 's unmade
Before the poor affrighted clown
Whose foot offends it unbeknown)
Writhing, faint crackling, like wire spring,
With anguish of the poisonous bile .
Inflaming the slim duct, the while
In act of shooting toward the sting ;
This, the unblest, small, evil thing,
'Tis this they mark, wriggling in range,
Fearless, and with ill menace, strange
In such a minim.
Derwent rose,
And Clarel ; Vine and Rolfe remained
At gaze ; the soldier too and Druze.
Cried Rolfe, while thus they stood enchained :
' O small epitome of devil,
Wert thou an ox couldst thou thus sway ?
No, disproportionate is evil
In influence. *Evil*, do I say ?
But speak not evil of the evil :

Evil and good they braided play
Into one cord.'
While they delay,
The object vanished. Turning head
Toward the salt one, Derwent said :
' The thing 's not sweet ; but why start so,
My good man, you that frequent know
The wonders of the deep ? ' He flushed,
And in embarrassment kept dumb.
But Rolfe here to the rescue pushed :
' Men not deemed craven will succumb
To such an apparition. Why,
Soldiers that into battle marching,
Elastic pace with instep arching—
Sailors (and *he 's* a sailor nigh)
Who out upon the jib-boom hie,
At world's end, in the midnight gale,
And wrestle with the thrashing sail,
The while the speared spar like a javelin flies
Slant up from thundering seas to skies
Electric : these—I 've known one start
Seeing a spider run athwart ! '

In commonplace here lightly blew
Across them through the desert air
A whiff from pipe that Belex smoked :
The Druze his sleek mare smooth bestroked,
Then gave a sign. One parting view
At Zion blurred, and on they fare.

V

OF THE STRANGER

While Agath was his story telling
(Ere yet the ill thing worked surprise)
The officer with forest eyes
Still kept them dwelling, sombre dwelling
On that mild merman gray. His mien
In part was that of one who tries
Something outside his own routine
Of memories, all too profuse
In personal pain monotonous.
And yet derived he little here,
As seemed, to soothe his mind—austere
With deep impressions uneffaced.
At chance allusion—at the hint
That the dragged tortoise bore the print
Of something mystic and debased,
How glowed the comment in his eyes :
No cynic fire sarcastic ; nay,
But deeper in the startled sway
Of illustrations to surmise.
    Ever on him they turned the look,
While yet the hearing not forsook
The salt seer while narration ran.
The desert march resumed, in thought
They dwell, till Rolfe the Druze besought
If he before had met this man—
So distant, though a countryman

By birth. Why, yes—had met him : see,
Drilling some tawny infantry
In shadow of a Memphian wall,
White-robed young conscripts up the Nile ;
And, afterward, on Jaffa beach,
With Turkish captains holding speech
Over some cannon in a pile
Late landed—with the conic ball.
No more ? No more the Druze let fall,
If more he knew.
Thought Rolfe : Ah me,
Ah me, poor Freedom, can it be
A countryman 's a refugee ?
What maketh him abroad to roam,
Sharing with infidels a home ?
Is it the immense charred solitudes
Once farms ? and chimney-stacks that reign
War-burnt upon the houseless plain
Of hearthstones without neighbourhoods ?
Is it the wilds whose memories own
More spectres than the woods bestrown
With Varus' legions mossy grown ?
Is 't misrule after strife ? and dust
From victor heels ? Is it disgust
For times when honour 's out of date
And serveth but to alienate ?
The usurping altar doth he scout—
The Parsee of a sun gone out ?
And this, may all this mar his state ?
His very virtues, in the blench
And violence of fortune's wrench,
Alas, serve but to vitiate ?
Strong natures have a strong recoil
Whose shock may wreck them or despoil.
Oh, but it yields a thought that smarts,

To note this man. Our New World bold
Had fain improved upon the Old ;
But the hemispheres are counterparts.
So inly Rolfe ; and did incline
In briefer question there to Vine,
Who could but answer him with eyes
Opulent in withheld replies.
And here—without a thought to chide—
Feeling the tremor of the ground—
Reluctant touching on the wound
Unhealed yet in our mother's side ;
Behooveth it to hint in brief
The rankling thing in Ungar's grief ;
For bravest grieve.—That evil day,
Black in the New World's calendar—
The dolorous winter ere the war ;
True Bridge of Sighs—so yet 'twill be
Esteemed in riper history—
Sad arch between contrasted eras ;
The span of fate ; that evil day
When the cadets from rival zones,
Tradition's generous adherers,
Their country's pick and flower of sons,
Abrupt were called upon to act—
For life or death, nor brook delay—
Touching construction of a pact,
A paper pact, with points abstruse
As theologic ones—profuse
In matter for an honest doubt ;
And which, in end, a stubborn knot
Some cut but with the sword ; that day
With its decision yet could sway
Ungar, and plunging thoughts excite.
Reading and revery imped his pain,
Confirmed, and made it take a flight

Beyond experience and the reign
Of self ; till, in a sort, the man
Grew much like that Pamphylian
Who, dying (as the fable goes)
In walks of Hades met with those
Which, though he was a sage of worth,
Did such new pregnancies implant,
Hadean lore, he did recant
All science he had brought from earth.
Herewith in Ungar, though, ensued
A bias, bitterness—a strain
Much like an Indian's hopeless feud
Under the white's aggressive reign.
Indian 's the word ; nor it impeach
For over-pointedness of speech ;
No, let the story rearward run
And its propriety be shown :

Up Chesapeake in days of old,
By winding banks whose curves unfold
Cape after cape in bright remove,
Steered the ship *Ark* with her attendant *Dove*.
From the nonconformists' zeal or bile
Which urged, inflamed the civil check
Upon the dreaded Popish guile,
The New World's fairer flowers and dews
Welcomed the English Catholic :
Like sheltering arms the shores expand
To embrace and take to heart the crews.
Care-worn, sea-worn, and tempest-tanned,
Devout they hail that harbour green ;
And, mindful of heaven's gracious Queen
And Britain's princess, name it Mary-Land.
It was from one of Calvert's friends
The exile of the verse descends ;

And gifts, brave gifts, and martial fame
Won under Tilly's great command
That sire of after-sires might claim.
But heedless, in the Indian glade
He wedded with a wigwam maid,
Transmitting through his line, far down,
Along with touch in lineaments,
A latent nature, which events
Developed in this distant son,
And overrode the genial part—
An Anglo brain, but Indian heart.
And yet not so but Ungar knew
(In freak, his forest name alone
Retained he now) that instinct true
Which tempered him in years bygone,
When, spite the prejudice of kin
And custom, he with friends could be
Outspoken in his heart's belief
That holding slaves was aye a grief—
The system an iniquity
In those who plant it and begin ;
While for inheritors—alas,
Who knows ? and let the problem pass.
But now all that was over—gone ;
Now was he the self-exiled one.
Too steadfast ! Wherefore should be lent
The profitless high sentiment ?
Renounce conviction in defeat :
Pass over, share the spoiler's seat
And thrive. Behooves thee else turn cheek
To fate with wisdom of the meek.
Wilt not ? Unblest then with the store
Of heaven, and spurning worldly lore
Astute, eat thou thy cake of pride,
And henceforth live on unallied.—

His passion, that—mused, never said ;
And his own pride did him upbraid.

The habit of his mind, and tone
Tenacious touching issues gone,
Expression found, nor all amiss,
In thing he 'd murmur : it was this :

' Who abideth by the dead
Which ye hung before your Lord ?
Steadfast who, when all have fled
Tree and corse abhorred ?
Who drives off the wolf, the kite—
Bird by day, and beast by night,
And keeps the hill through all ?
It is Rizpah : true is one
Unto death ; nor then will shun
The Seven throttled and undone,
To glut the foes of Saul.'

That for the past ; and for the surge
Reactionary, which years urge :

' Elating and elate,
Do they mount them in their pride ?
Let them wait a little, wait,
For the brimming of the flood
Brings the turning of the tide.'

His lyric. Yet in heart of hearts
Perchance its vanity he knew,
At least suspected. What to do ?
Time cares not to avenge your smarts,
But presses on, impatient of review.

VI

BETHLEHEM

Over uplands now toward eve they pass
By higher uplands tinged with grass.
Lower it crept as they went on—
Grew in advance, and rugged the ground ;
Yea, seemed before these pilgrims thrown
To carpet them to royal bound.
Each rider here in saddle-seat
Lounges relaxed, and glads his sight ;
Solomon whinnies ; those small feet
Of Zar tread lightly and more light :
Even Agath's ass the awakened head
Turns for a nibble. So they sped,
Till now Djalea turns short aside,
Ascends, and by a happy brink
Makes halt, and beckons them to ride
And there with him at pleasure drink
A prospect good.
Below, serene
In olive-yards and vineyards fair,
They view a theatre pale green
Of terraces, which stair by stair
Rise toward most venerable walls
On summits twin, and one squared heap
Of buttressed masonry based deep
Adown the crag on lasting pedestals.
Though on that mount but towers convene,
And hamlet none nor cot they see,

They cannot choose but know the scene ;
And Derwent's eyes show humidly :
' What other hill ? We view it here :
Blessed in story, and heart-cheer,
Hail to thee, Bethlehem of Judæa !
Oh, look : as if with conscious sense
Here nature shows meet reverence :
See, at the sacred mountain's feet
How kneels she with her fragrance sweet,
And swathes them with her grasses fair :
So Mary with the spikenard shed
A lowly love, and bowed her head
And made a napkin of her trailing hair.'

He turned, but met no answering eyes ;
The animation of surprise
Had vanished ; strange, but they were dumb :
What wayward afterthought had come ?
Those dim recurrings in the mind,
Sad visitations ill defined,
Which led the trio erst that met
Upon the crown of Olivet
Nehemiah's proffer to decline
When he invited them away
To Bethany—might such things sway
Even these by Bethlehem ? The sign
Derwent respected, and he said
No more. And so, with spirits shrunk,
Over the placid hills they tread
And win the stronghold of the monk.

VII

AT TABLE

As shipwrecked men adrift, whose boat
In war-time on the houseless seas
Draws nigh to some embattled hull
With pinnacles and traceries—
Grim abbey on the wave afloat;
And mark her bulwarks sorrowful
With briny stains, and answering mien
And cenobite dumb discipline,
And homely uniform of crew
Peering from ports where cannon lean,
Or pacing in deep galleries far,
Black cloisters of the god of war;
And hear a language which is new
Or foreign: so now with this band
Who, after desert rovings, win
The fort monastic, close at hand,
Survey it, meditate it—see,
Through vaultings, the girt Capuchin,
Or list his speech of Italy.

Up to the arch the graybeard train
Of Bethlehemites attend, salute,
And in expectancy remain
At stand; their escort ending here,
They wait the recompense and fruit;
'Tis given; and with friendly cheer
Parting, they bear a meed beyond
The dry price set down in the bond.

The bonus Derwent did suggest,
Saying : ' They 're old : of all sweet food
Naught they take in so cheers their blood
As ruddy coin ; it pads the vest.'
Belex abides—true as his steel
To noble pilgrims which such largess deal.
    While these now at refection sit,
Rolfe speaks : ' Provided for so well,
Much at our ease methinks we dwell.
Our merit's guerdon ? far from it !
Unworthy, here we welcome win
Where Mary found no room at inn.'
    ' True, true,' the priest sighed, staying there
The cup of Bethlehem wine in hand ;
Then sipped ; yet by sad absent air
The flavour seeming to forswear ;
Nor less the juice did glad the gland.
    The abstemious Ungar noted all,
Grave silence keeping. Rolfe let fall :
' Strange ! of the sacred places here,
And all through Palestine indeed,
Not one we Protestants hold dear
Enough to tend and care for.'
                ' Pray,'
The priest, ' and why now should that breed
Astonishment ? but say your say.'
    ' Why, Shakespeare's house in Stratford town
Ye keep with loving tendance true,
Set it apart in reverence due :
A shrine to which the pilgrim 's won
Across an ocean's stormy tide :
What zeal, what faith is there implied ;
Pure worship localised in grace,
Tradition sole providing base.'
    ' Your drift I catch. And yet I think

That they who most and deepest drink
At Shakespeare's fountain, scarce incline
To idolise the local shrine :
What 's in mere place that can bestead ? '
' Nay, 'tis the heart here, not the head.
You note some pilgrims hither bring
The rich or humble offering :
If that 's irrational—what then ?
In kindred way your Lutheran
Will rival it ; yes, in sad hour
The Lutheran widow lays her flower
Before the picture of the dead :
Vital affections do not draw
Precepts from Reason's arid law.'
' Ah, clever ! But we won't contend.
As for these *Places*, my dear friend,
Thus stands the matter—as you know :
Ere Luther yet made his demur,
These legend-precincts high and low
In custody already were
Of Greek and Latin, who retain.
So, even did we wish to be
Shrine-keepers here and share the fee—
No sites for Protestants remain.'

The compline service they attend ;
Then bedward, travel-worn, they wend ;
And, like a bland breeze out of heaven,
The gracious boon of sleep is given.

But Ungar, islanded in thought
Which not from place a prompting caught,
Alone, upon the terrace stair
Lingered, in adoration there
Of Eastern skies : ' Now night enthrones

Arcturus and his shining sons ;
And lo, Job's chambers of the South :
How might his hand not go to mouth
In kiss adoring ye, bright zones ?
Look up : the age, the age forget—
There 's something to look up to yet !

VIII

THE PILLOW

WHEN rule and era passed away
With old Sylvanus (stories say),
The oracles adrift were hurled,
And ocean moaned about the world,
And wandering voices without name
At sea to sailors did proclaim,
Pan, Pan is dead!
Such fables old—
From man's deep nature are they rolled,
Pained and perplexed—awed, overawed
By sense of change? But never word
Aerial by mortal heard,
Rumours that vast eclipse, if slow,
Whose passage yet we undergo,
Emerging on an age untried.
If not all oracles be dead,
The upstart ones the old deride:
Parrots replace the sibyls fled—
By rote repeat in lilting pride:

> Lodged in power, enlarged in all,
> Man achieves his last exemption—
> Hopes no heaven, but fears no fall,
> King in time, nor needs redemption.

They hymn. But these who cloistral dwell
In Bethlehem here, and share faith's spell

Meekly, and keep her tenor mild—
What know they of a world beguiled ?
Or, knowing, they but know too well.

Buzzed thoughts ! To Rolfe they came in doze
(His brain like ocean's murmuring shell)
Between the dream and slumber's light repose.

IX

THE SHEPHERDS' DALE

'Up, up! Around morn's standard rally;
She makes a sortie—join the sally:
Up, slug-a-beds; up, up!'
That call
Ere matins did each pilgrim hear
In cell, and knew the blithe voice clear.
'Beshrew thee, thou 'rt poetical,'
Rolfe murmured from his place withdrawn.
'Ay, brother; but 'tis not surprising:
Apollo 's the god of early rising.
Up, up! The negro-groom of Night
Leads forth the horses of the Dawn!
Up, up!' So Derwent, jocund sprite—
Although but two days now were passed
Since he had viewed a sunrise last—
Persuaded them to join him there
And unto convent roof repair.
Thought one: He 's of no nature surly,
So cheerful in the morning early.
Sun-worship over, they came down:
And Derwent lured them forth, and on.
Behind the Convent lies a dale,
The Valley of the Shepherds named,
(And never may the title fail!)
By old tradition fondly claimed
To be in truth the very ground
About whose hollow, on the mound
Of hills, reclined in dozing way

That simple group ere break of day,
Which, startled by their flocks' dismay—
All bleating up to them in panic
And sparkling in scintillant ray—
Beheld a splendour diaphanic—
Effulgence never dawn hath shot,
Nor flying meteors of the night;
And trembling rose, shading the sight;
But heard the angel breathe—*Fear not.*
So (might one reverently dare
Terrene with heavenly to compare),
So, oft in mid-watch on that sea
Where the ridged Andes of Peru
Are far seen by the coasting crew—
Waves, sails and sailors in accord
Illumed are in a mystery,
Wonder and glory of the Lord,
Though manifest in aspect minor—
Phosphoric ocean in shekinah.

And down now in that dale they go,
Meeting a little St. John boy
In sackcloth shirt and belt of tow,
Leading his sheep. Ever behind
He kept one hand, stained with a shrub,
The which a ewe licked, never coy;
And all the rest with docile mind
Followed; and fleece with fleece did rub.
Beyond, hard by twin planted tents,
Paced as in friendly conference
Two shepherds on the pastoral hill,
Brown patriarchs in shaggy cloak;
Peaceful they went, as in a yoke
The oxen unto pasture oak
To lie in shade when noon is still.
Nibbling the herb, or far or near,

Advanced their flocks, and yet would veer,
For width of range makes wayward will.

Ungar beheld : ' What treat they of ?
Halving the land ?—This might reclaim
Old years of Lot and Abraham
Just ere they parted in remove :
A peaceful parting : " Let there be
No strife, I pray thee, between me
And thee, my herdmen and thine own ;
For we be brethren. See, the land
Is all before thee, fenced by none :
Then separate thyself from me,
I pray thee. If now the left hand
Thou, Lot, wilt take, then I will go
Unto the right ; if thou depart
Unto the right, then I will go
Unto the left."—They parted so,
And not unwisely : both were wise.
'Twas East and West ; but *North* and *South !* '
Rolfe marked the nip of quivering mouth,
Passion repressed within the eyes ;
But ignorance feigned : ' This calm,' he said,
' How fitly hereabout is shed :
The site of Eden 's placed not far ;
In bond 'tween man and animal
Survives yet under Asia's star
A link with years before the Fall.'
' Indeed,' cried Derwent, pleased thereat,
' Blest, blest is here the creature's state.
Those pigeons, now, in Saba's hold,
Their wings how winsome would they fold
Alighting at one's feet so soft.
Doves, too, in mosque, I 've marked aloft,
At hour of prayer through window come
From trees adjacent, and athrill

Perch, coo, and nestle in the dome,
Or fly with green sprig in the bill.
How by the marble fount in court,
Where for ablution Turks resort
Ere going in to hear the Word,
These small apostles they regard
Which of sweet innocence report.
None stone the dog ; caressed, the steed ;
Only poor Dobbin (Jew indeed
Of brutes) seems slighted in the East.'

Ungar, who chafed in heart of him
At Rolfe's avoidance of his theme
(Although he felt he scarce could blame),
Here turned his vexed mood on the priest :
' *As cruel as a Turk :* Whence came
That proverb old as the crusades ?
From Anglo-Saxons. What are they ?
Let the horse answer, and blockades
Of medicine in civil fray !
The Anglo-Saxons—lacking grace
To win the love of any race ;
Hated by myriads dispossessed
Of rights—the Indians East and West.
These pirates of the sphere ! grave looters—
Grave, canting, Mammonite freebooters,
Who in the name of Christ and Trade
(Oh, bucklered forehead of the brass !)
Deflower the world's last sylvan glade ! '
' Alas, alas, ten times alas,
Poor Anglo-Saxons ! ' Derwent sighed.
' Nay, but if there I lurched too wide,
Respond to this : Old ballads sing
Fair Christian children crucified
By impious Jews : you 've heard the thing :

Yes, fable ; but there 's truth hard by :
How many Hughs of Lincoln, say,
Does Mammon in his mills, to-day,
Crook, if he do not crucify ? '
' Ah, come,' said Derwent ; ' come, now, come ;
Think you that we who build the home
For foundlings, and yield sums immense
To hospitals for indigence——'
' Your alms-box, smaller than your till,
And poorhouse won't absolve your mill.
But what ye are, a straw may tell—
Your dearth of phrases affable.
Italian, French—more tongues than these—
Addresses have of courtesies
In kindliness of man toward man,
By prince used and by artisan,
And not pervertible in sense
Of scorn or slight. Ye have the *Sir*,
That sole, employed in snub or slur,
Never in pure benevolence,
And at its best a formal term
Of cold regard.'
' Ah, why so warm
In mere philology, dear sir ? '
Pled Derwent ; ' there, don't that confer
Sweet amity ? I used the word.'
But Ungar heeded not—scarce heard ;
And, earnest as the earnest tomb,
With added feeling, sting, and gloom
His strange impeachment urged. Reply
Came none ; they let it go ; for why
Argue with man of bitter blood ?
But Rolfe he could but grieve within
For countryman in such a mood—
Knowing the cause, the origin.

While, facing as by second-sight,
Toward Mecca they direct the rite.
'Look; and their backs on Bethlehem turned,'
Cried Rolfe. The priest then, who discerned
The drift, replied, 'Yes, for they pray
To Allah. Well, and what of that?
Christ listens, standing in heaven's gate—
Benignant listens, nor doth stay
Upon a syllable in creed:
Vowels and consonants indeed!'
And Rolfe: 'But here were Margoth now,
Seeing yon shepherds praying so,
His gibe would run from man to man:
"Which is the humble publican?
Or do they but prostrate them there
To flout you Franks with Islam's prayer?"'
'Doubtless some shallow thing he 'd say,
Poor fellow,' Derwent then; 'but, nay,
Earnest they are; nor yet they 'd part
(If pealed the hour) in street or mart,
From like observance.'
'If 'tis so,'
The refugee, 'let all avow
As openly faith's loyal heart.
By Christians too was God confessed
How frankly! in those days that come
No more to misnamed Christendom!
Religion then was the good guest,
First served, and last, in every gate:
What mottoes upon wall and plate!
She every human venture shared:
The ship in manifest declared
That not disclaiming heaven she thrust
Her bowsprit into fog and storm:

Some current silver bore the palm
Of Christ, token of saint, or bust ;
In line devout the pikemen kneeled—
To battle by the rite were sealed.
Men were not lettered, but had sense
Beyond the mean intelligence
That knows to read, and but to read—
Not think. 'Twas harder to mislead
The people then, whose smattering now
Does but the more their ignorance show—
Nay, them to peril more expose—
Is as the ring in the bull's nose
Whereby a pert boy turns and winds
This monster of a million minds.
Men owned true masters ; kings owned God—
Their master ; Louis plied the rod
Upon himself. In high estate,
Not puffed up like a democrat
In office, how with Charlemagne ?
Look up he did, look up in reign—
Humbly look up, who might look down :
His meekest thing was still his crown :
How meek on *him* ; since, graven there,
Among the Apostles twelve—behold,
Stern Scriptural precepts were enrolled,
High admonitions, meet for kings.
The coronation was a prayer,
Which yet in ceremonial clings.
The church was like a bonfire warm :
All ranks were gathered round the charm.'
Derwent, who vainly had essayed
To impede the speaker, or blockade,
Snatched at the bridle here : ' Ho, wait ;
A word, impetuous laureate !
This *bric-à-brac-ish* style (outgrown

Almost, where first it gave the tone)
Of lauding the quaint ages old—
But nay, that 's satire ; I withhold.
Grant your side of the shield part true :
What then ? why, turn the other : view
The buckler in reverse. Don't sages
Denominate those times Dark Ages ?
Dark Middle Ages, time's midnight ! '
' If night, it was no starless one ;
Art still admires what then was done :
A strength they showed which is of light.
Not more the Phidian marbles prove
The graces of the Grecian prime
And indicate what men they were,
Than the grand minsters in remove
Do intimate, if not declare
A magnanimity which our time
Would envy, were it great enough
To comprehend. Your counterbuff,
However, holds. Yes, frankly, yes,
Another side there is, admit.
Nor less the very worst of it
Reveals not such a shamelessness
Of evildoer and hypocrite,
And sordid mercenary sin
As these days vaunt and revel in.'
' No use, no use,' the priest aside ;
' Patience ! it is the maddest tide ' ;
And seated him.
And Ungar then :
' What 's overtaken ye pale men ?
Shrewd are ye, the main chance ye heed :
Has God quite lost His throne indeed
That lukewarm now ye grow ? Wilt own,
Council ye take with fossil-stone ?

Your sects do nowadays create
Churches as worldly as the state.
And, for your more established forms—
Ah, once in York I viewed through storms
The Minster's majesty of mien—
Towers, peaks, and pinnacles sublime—
Faith's iceberg, stranded on a scene
How alien, and an alien time ;
But now '—he checked himself, and stood.

Whence this strange bias of his mood
(Thought they) leaning to things corroded,
By many deemed for aye exploded ?
But, truly, knowing not the man,
At fault they in conjecture ran.
But Ungar (as in fitter place
Set down) being sprung from Romish race,
Albeit himself had spared to feed
On any one elected creed
Or rite, though much he might recall
In annals bearing upon all ;
And, in this land named of Behest,
A wandering Ishmael from the West ;
Inherited the Latin mind,
Which late—blown by the adverse wind
Of harder fortunes that molest—
Kindled from ember into coal.

The priest, as one who keeps him whole,
Anew turns toward the kneeling twain :
' Your error 's slight, or, if a stain,
'Twill fade. Our Lord enjoins good deeds,
Nor catechiseth in the creeds.'
A something in the voice or man,
Or in assumption of the turn

Which prior theme did so adjourn,
Pricked Ungar, and a look he ran
Toward Derwent—an electric light
Chastising in its fierce revolt ;
Then settled into that still night
Of cloud which has discharged the bolt.

XI

DISQUIET

At breakfast in refectory there
The priest—if Clarel not mistook—
The good priest wore the troubled air
Of honest heart striving to brook
Injury, which from words abstained,
And, hence, not readily arraigned ;
Which to requite in its own sort
Is not allowed in heaven's high court,
Or self-respect's. Such would forget,
But for the teasing doubt or fret,
Lest unto worldly witness mere
The injury none the less appear
To challenge notice at the least.

Ungar withdrew, leaving the priest
Less ill at ease ; who now a thought
Threw out, as 'twere in sad concern
For one whose nature, sour or stern,
Still dealt in all unhandsome flings
At happy times and happy things :
' " *The bramble sayeth it is naught* " :
Poor man ! ' But that ; and quite forbore
To vent his grievance. Nor less sore
He felt it—Clarel so inferred,
Recalling here too Mortmain's word
Of cutting censorship. How then ?
While most who met him frank averred
That Derwent ranked with best of men,

The Swede and refugee unite
In one repugnance, yea, and slight.
Now take, construe their ill-content ?
A thing of vein and temperament ?
Rolfe liked him ; and if Vine said naught,
Yet even Vine seemed not uncheered
By fair address. Then stole the thought
Of how the priest had late appeared
In that one confidential hour,
Ambiguous on Saba's tower.
There he dismissed it, let it fall :
To probe overmuch seems finical.
Nor less (for still the point did tease,
Nor would away and leave at ease)
Nor less, I wonder, if ere long
He 'll turn this off, not worth a song,
As lightly as of late he turned
Poor Mortmain's sally when he burned ?

XII

OF POPE AND TURK

MARKING the priest not all sedate,
Rolfe, that a friend might fret discard,
Turned his attention to debate
Between two strangers at the board.
In furtherance of his point or plea
One said :
' Late it was told to me,
And by the man himself concerned,
A merchant Frank on Syria's coast,
That in a fire which travelled post,
His books and records being burned,
His Christian debtors held their peace ;
The Islam ones disclaimed release,
And came with purses and accounts.'
' And duly rendered their amounts ?
'Twas very kind. But oh, the greed,
Rapacity, and crime at need
In satraps which oppress the throng.'
' True. But with these 'tis, after all,
Wrongdoing purely personal—
Not legislated—not a wrong
Law-sanctioned. No : the Turk, admit,
In scheme of state, the scheme of it,
Upon the civil arm confers
A sway above the scimetar's—
The civil power itself subjects
Unto that Koran which respects

Nor place nor person. Nay, adjourn
The jeer ; for now aside we 'll turn.
Dismembered Poland and her throe
In Ninety-Five, all unredressed :
Did France, did England then protest ? '
' England ? I 'm sure I do not know.
Come, I distrust your shifting so.
Pray, to what end now is this pressed ? '
' Why, here armed Christendom looking on,
In protest the Sultan stood alone.'
' Indeed ? But all this, seems to me,
Savours of Urquhart's vanity.'
' The commentator on the East ? '
' The same : that very inexact
Eccentric ideologist
Now obsolete.'
' And that 's your view ?
He stands for God.'
' *I* stand by fact.'
' Well then, another fact or two :
When Poland's place in Thirty-One
Was blotted out, the Turk again
Protested, with one other man,
The Pope ; these, and but these alone ;
And in the protest both avowed
'Twas made for justice's sake and God.—
You smile.'
' Oh no : but very clear
The protest prompted was by fear
In Turk and Pope, that time might come
When spoliation should drive home
Upon themselves. Besides, you know
The Polish church was Catholic :
The Czar would wrest it to the Greek :
'Twas *that* touched Rome. But let it go.—

In pith, what is it you would show ?
Are Turks our betters ? Very strange
Heaven's favour does not choicely range
Upon these Islam people good :
Bed-rid they are, behindhand all,
While Europe flowers in plenitude
Of wealth and commerce.'
'I recall
Nothing in Testament which saith
That worldliness shall not succeed
In that wherein it laboureth.
Howbeit, the Sultan 's coming on :
Fine lesson from ye has he won
Of late ; apt pupil he indeed :
Ormus, that riches did confer,
Ormus is made a borrower :
Selim, who grandly turbaned sat,
Verges on bankruptcy and—hat.
But this don't touch the rank and file ;
At least, as yet. But preach and work :
You 'll civilise the barbarous Turk—
Nay, all the East may reconcile :
That done, let Mammon take the wings of even
And mount and civilise the saints in heaven.'
'I laugh—I like a brave caprice !
And, sir——'
But here did Rolfe release
His ear, and Derwent too. A stir
In court was heard of man and steed—
Neighings and mountings, din indeed ;
And Rolfe : 'Come, come ; our traveller.'

XIII

THE CHURCH OF THE STAR

THEY rise, and for a little space
In farewell Agath they detain,
Transferred here to a timelier train
Than theirs. A work-day, passive face
He turns to Derwent's *Luck to thee!*
No slight he means—'tis far from that;
But, schooled by the inhuman sea,
He feels 'tis vain to wave the hat
In God-speed on this mortal strand;
Recalling all the sailing crews
Destined to sleep in ocean sand,
Cheered from the wharf with blithe adieus.
Nor less the heart's farewell they say,
And bless the old man on his way.

Led by a slender monk and young,
With curls that ringed the shaven crown,
Courts now and shrines they trace. That thong
Ascetic which can life chastise
Down to her bleak necessities,
They mark in coarse serge of his gown,
And girdling rope, with cross of wood
For tag at end; and hut-like hood
Superfluous now behind him thrown;
And sandals which expose the skin
Transparent, and the blue vein thin
Meandering there: the feet, the face
Alike in lucid marble grace.

His simple manners self-possessed
Both saint and noble-born suggest ;
Yet under quietude they mark
The slumbering of a vivid spark—
Excitable, if brought to test.
A Tuscan, he exchanged the charm
Val d'Arno yields, for this dull calm
Of desert. Was his youth self-given
In frank oblation unto heaven ?
Or what inducement might disarm
This Isaac when too young to know ?

Hereon they, pacing, muse—till, lo,
The temple opens in dusk glades
Of long-drawn double colonnades :
Monoliths two-score and eight.
Rolfe looked about him, pleased in state :
' But this is goodly ! Here we rove
As down the deep Dodona grove :
Years, years and years these boles have stood !—
Late by the spring in idle mood
My will I made (if ye recall),
Providing for the Inn of Trees :
But ah, to set out trunks like these
In harbour open unto all
For generations ! ' So in vein
Rolfe free descanted as through fane
They passed. But noting now the guide
In acquiescence by their side,
He checked himself : ' Why prate I here ?
This brother—I usurp his sphere.'

They came unto a silver star
In pavement set which none do mar
By treading. Here at pause remained

The monk ; till, seeing Rolfe refrained,
And all, from words, he said : ' The place,
Signori, where that shining grace
Which led the Magi, stood ; below,
The Manger is.' They comment none ;
Not voicing everything they know,
In cirque about that silver star
They quietly gaze thereupon.
But, turning now, one glanced afar
Along the columned aisles, and thought
Of Baldwin whom the mailed knights
brought,
While Godfrey's requiem did ring,
Hither to Bethlehem, and crowned
His temples helmet-worn, with round
Of gold and velvet—crowned him king—
King of Jerusalem, on floor
Of this same nave august, above
The Manger in its low remove
Where lay, a thousand years before,
The Child of awful worshipping,
Destined to prove all slights and scorns,
And a God's coronation—thorns.
Not Derwent's was that revery ;
Another thing his heart possessed,
The clashing of the East and West,
Odd sense of incongruity ;
He felt a secret impulse move
To start a humorous comment slant
Upon the monk, and sly reprove.
But no : I 'll curb the Protestant
And modern in me—at least here
For time I 'll curb it. Perish truth
If it but act the boor, in sooth,
Requiting courtesy with jeer ;

For courteous is our guide, with grace
Of a pure heart.
Some little trace,
May be, of Derwent's passing thought
The Tuscan from his aspect caught;
And turned him: 'Pardon! but the crypt:
This way, signori—follow me.'
Down by a rock-hewn stair they slipped,
Turning by steps which winding be,
Winning a sparry chamber brave
Unsearched by that prose critic keen,
The daylight. Archimago's cave
Was here? or that more sorcerous scene
The Persian sibyl kept within
For turbaned musings? Bowing o'er,
Crossing himself, and on the knee,
Straight did the guide that grot adore;
Then, rising, and as one set free:
'The place of the Nativity.'
Dim pendent lamps, in cluster small
Were Pleiads of the mystic hall;
Fair lamps of silver, lamps of gold—
Rich gifts devout of monarchs old,
Kings catholic. Rare objects beamed
All round, recalling things but dreamed:
Solomon's talismans garnered up,
His sword, his signet-ring and cup.
In further caverns, part revealed,
What silent shapes like statues kneeled;
What brown monks moved by twinkling shrines
Like Aztecs down in silver mines.

This, this the Stable mean and poor?
Noting their looks, to ward surprise,
The Italian: 'Tis encrusted o'er

With marbles, so that now one's eyes
Meet not the natural wall. This floor——'
' But how ? within a cave we stand ! '
' Yes, caves of old to use were put
For cattle, and with gates were shut.
One meets them still—with arms at hand,
The keepers nigh. Sure it need be
That if in Gihon ye have been,
Or hereabouts, yourselves have seen
The grots in question.'
They agree ;
And silent in their hearts confess
The strangeness, but the truth no less.
Anew the guide : ' Ere now we get
Further herein, indulge me yet ' ;
But paused awhile : ' Though o'er this cave,
Where Christ ' (and crossed himself) ' had
birth,
Constantine's mother reared the nave
Whose Greek mosaics fade in bloom,
No older church in Christendom ;
And generations, with the girth
Of domes and walls, have still enlarged
And built about ; yet convents, shrines,
Cloisters and towers, take not for signs,
Entreat ye, of meek faith submerged
Under proud masses. Be it urged
As all began from these small bounds,
So, by all avenues and gates,
All here returns, hereto redounds :
In this one Cave all terminates :
In honour of the Manger sole,
Saints, kings, knights, prelates reared the whole.'
He warmed. Ah, fervour bought too dear :
The fingers clutching rope and cross ;

Life too intense ; the cheek austere
Deepening in hollow, waste and loss.
They marked him ; and at heart some knew
Inklings they loved not to pursue.
But Rolfe recalled in fleeting gleam
The first Franciscan, richly born—
The youthful one who, night and morn,
In Umbria ranged the hills in dream,
And first devised the girdling cord
In type that rebel senses so
Should led be—led like beast abroad
By halter. Tuscan ! in the glow
And white light of thy faith's illumings,
In vigils, fervent prayers and trances,
Agonies and self-consumings—
Renewest thou the young Saint Francis ?
So inly Rolfe ; when, in low tone
Considerate Derwent whispered near :
' 'Tis doubtless the poor boy's first year
In Bethlehem ; time will abate
This novice-ardour ; yes, sedate
He 'll grow, adapt him to the sphere.'

Close to the *Sanctum* now they drew,
A semicircular recess ;
And there, in marble floor, they view
A silver sun which (friars profess)
Is set in plummet-line exact
Beneath the star in pavement-tract
Above ; and raying from this sun
Shoot jasper-spikes, which so point out
Argent inscription round about
In Latin text ; which thus may run :
THE VIRGIN HERE BROUGHT FORTH THE SON.
The Tuscan bowed him ; then with air

Friendly he turned ; but something there
In Derwent's look—no matter what—
An open levity 'twas not—
Disturbed him ; and in accents clear,
As challenged in his faith sincere :
' I trust tradition ! Here He lay
Who shed on Mary's breasts the ray :
Salvator Mundi ! '
Turning now,
He noted, and he bade them see
Where, with a timid piety,
A band of rustics bent them low
In worship mute : ' Shepherds these are,
And come from pastoral hills not far
Whereon they keep the night-watch wild :
These, like their sires, adore the CHILD,
And in same spot. But, mixed with these,
Mark ye yon poor swart images
In other garb ? But late they fled
From over Jordan hither ; yes,
Escaping so the heinousness
Of one with price upon his head.
But look, and yet seem not to peer,
Lest pain ye give : an eye, an ear,
A hand, is mutilate or gone :
The mangler marked them for his own ;
But Christ redeems them.' Derwent here
His eyes withdrew, but Ungar not,
While visibly the red blood shot
Into his thin-skinned scar, and sent,
As seemed, a pulse of argument
Confirming so some angry sense
Of evil, and malevolence
In man toward man.

Now, lower down
The cave, the Manger they descry,
With marble lined ; and, o'er it thrown,
A lustrous saint-cloth meets the eye.
And suits of saint-cloths here they have
Wherewith to deck the Manger brave :
Gifts of the Latin princes, these—
Fair Christmas gifts, these draperies.
A damask one of gold and white
Rich flowered with pinks embroidered bright,
Was for the present week in turn
The adornment of the sacred Urn.
Impressive was it here to note
Those herdsmen in the shaggy coat :
Impressive, yet partook of dream ;
It touched the pilgrims, as might seem ;
Which pleased the monk ; but in disguise
Modest he dropped his damsel-eyes.
Thought Derwent then : Demure in sooth !
'Tis like a maid in lily of youth
Who grieves not in her core of glee,
By spells of grave virginity,
To cozen men to foolish looks ;
While she—who reads such hearts' hid nooks ?—
What now ? ' Signori, here, believe,
Where night and day, while ages run,
Faith in these lamps burns on and on,
'Tis good to spend one's Christmas Eve ;
Yea, better rather than in land
Which may your holly tree command,
And greens profuse which ye inweave.'

XIV

SOLDIER AND MONK

FERVID he spake. And Ungar there
Appeared (if looks allow surmise)
In latent way to sympathise,
Yet wonder at the votary's air ;
And frequent too he turned his face
To note the grotto, and compare
These haunted precincts with the guide,
As so to realise the place,
Or fact from fable to divide ;
At times his changeful aspect wore
Touch of the look the simple shepherds bore.
The Tuscan marked ; he pierced him through,
Yet gently, gifted with the clue—
Ascetic insight ; and he caught
The lapse within the soldier's thought,
The favourable frame, nor missed
Appealing to it, to enlist
Or influence, or drop a seed
Which might some latter harvest breed.
Gently approaching him, he said :
' True sign you bear : your sword 's a cross.'
Ungar but started, as at loss
To take the meaning, and yet led
To marvel how that mannered word
Did somehow slip into accord
With visitings that scarce might cleave—
Shadows, but shadows fugitive.

He lifted up the steel : the blade
Was straight ; the hilt, a bar : ' 'Tis true ;
A cross, it is a cross,' he said ;
And touched seemed, though 'twas hardly
new.
Then glowed the other ; and, again :
' Ignatius was a soldier too,
And Martin. 'Tis the pure disdain
Of life, or, holding life the real,
Still subject to a brave ideal—
'Tis this that makes the tent a porch
Whereby the warrior wins the church :
The habit of renouncing, yes,
'Tis good, a good preparedness.—
Our founder '—here he raised his eyes
As unto all the sanctities—
' Footing it near Rieti town,
Met a young knight on horseback, one
Named Angelo Tancredi : " Lo,"
He said, " Thy belt thou 'lt change for cord,
Thy spurs for mire, good Angelo,
And be a true knight of the Lord."
And he, the cavalier——' Aside
A brother of the cowl here drew
This ardent proselyting guide,
Detaining him in interview
About some matter. Ungar stood
Lost in his thoughts.
In neighbourhood
Derwent by Rolfe here chanced to bide ;
And said : ' It just occurs to me
As interesting in its way,
That these Franciscans steadily
Have been custodians of the Tomb
And Manger ever since the day

Of rescue under Godfrey's plume
Long centuries ago.' Rolfe said :
'Ay ; and appropriate seems it too
For the Franciscan retinue
To keep these places, since their head,
St. Francis, spite his scouted hood,
May claim more of similitude
To Christ than any man we know.
Through clouds of myth investing him—
Obscuring, yet attesting him,
He burns with the seraphic glow
And perfume of a holy flower.
Sweetness, simplicity, with power !
By love's true miracle of charm
He instituted a reform
(Not insurrection) which restored
For time the spirit of his Lord
On earth. If sad perversion came
Unto his order—what of that ?
All Christianity shares the same :
Pure things men need adulterate
And so adapt them to the kind.'
'Oh, oh ! But I have grown resigned
To these vagaries.—And for him,
Assisi's saint—a good young man,
No doubt, and beautiful to limn ;
Yes, something soft, Elysian ;
Nay, rather, the transparent hue
Unearthly of a maiden tranced
In sleep somnambulic ; no true
Colour of health ; beauty enhanced
To enervation. In a word,
For all his charity divine,
Love, self-devotion, ardour fine—
Unmanly seems he ! '

'Of our Lord
The same was said by Machiavel,
Or hinted, rather. Prithee, tell,
What is it to be *manly* ?'
'Why,
To be man-like '—and here the chest
Bold out he threw—'man at his best!'
'But even at best, one might reply,
Man is that thing of sad renown
Which moved a deity to come down
And save him. Lay not too much stress
Upon the carnal manliness :
The Christliness is better—higher ;
And Francis owned it, the first friar.
Too orthodox is that ?'
'See, see,'
Said Derwent, with kind air of one
Who would a brother's weak spot shun :
'Mark this most delicate drapery ;
If woven by some royal dame—
God bless her and her tambour frame!'

XV

SYMPHONIES

MEANWHILE with Vine there, Clarel stood
Aside in friendly neighbourhood,
And felt a flattering pleasure stir
At words—nor in equivocal tone
Freakish, or leaving to infer,
Such as beforetime he had known—
Breathed now by that exceptional one
In unconstraint :
' 'Tis very much
The cold fastidious heart to touch
This way ; nor is it mere address
That so could move one's silver chord.
How he transfigured Ungar's sword !
Delusive is this earnestness
Which holds him in its passion pale—
Tenant of melancholy's dale
Of mirage ? To interpret him,
Perhaps it needs a swallow-skim
Over distant time. Migrate with me
Across the years, across the sea.—
How like a Poor Clare in her cheer
(Grave Sister of his order sad)
Showed nature to that Cordelier
Who, roving in the Mexic glade,
Saw in a bud of happy dower
Whose stalk entwined the tropic tree,
Emblems of Christ's last agony :

In anthers, style, and fibres torn,
The five wounds, nails, and crown of thorn ;
And named it so the passion-flower.
What beauty in that sad conceit !
Such charm, the title still we meet.
Our guide, methinks, where'er he turns
For him this passion-flower burns ;
And all the world is elegy.
A green knoll is to you and me
But pastoral, and little more :
To him 'tis even Calvary
Where feeds the Lamb. This passion-flower—
But list ! '
Hid organ-pipes unclose
A timid rill of slender sound,
Which gains in volume—grows, and flows
Gladsome in amplitude of bound.
Low murmurs creep. From either side
Tenor and treble interpose,
And talk across the expanding tide :
Debate, which in confusion merges—
Din and clamour, discord's height :
Countering surges—pæans—dirges—
Mocks, and laughter light.
But rolled in long ground-swell persistent,
A tone, an undertone assails
And overpowers all near and distant ;
Earnest and sternest, it prevails.
Then terror, horror—wind and rain—
Accents of undetermined fear,
And voices as in shipwreck drear :
A sea, a sea of spirits in pain !
The suppliant cries decrease—
The voices in their ferment cease :
One wave rolls over all and whelms to peace.

But hark—oh, hark !
Whence, whence this stir, this whirr of wings ?
Numbers numberless convening—
Harps and childlike carolings
In happy holiday of meaning :

'To God be glory in the height,
For tidings glad we bring ;
Good-will to men, and peace on earth
We children-cherubs sing !

'To God be glory in the depth,
As in the height be praise ;
He who shall break the gates of death
A babe in manger rays.

'Ye people all in every land,
Embrace, embrace, be kin :
Immanuel 's born in Bethlehem,
And gracious years begin ! '

It dies ; and, half around the heavenly sphere,
Like silvery lances lightly touched aloft—
Like Northern Lights appealing to the ear,
An elfin melody chimes low and soft.
That also dies, that last strange fairy-thrill :
Slowly it dies away, and all is sweetly still.

XVI

THE CONVENT ROOF

To branching grottoes next they fare,
Old caves of penitence and prayer.
Where Paula kneeled—her urn is there—
Paula the Widow, Scipio's heir
But Christ's adopted. Well her tomb
Adjoins her friend's, renowned Jerome.
Never the attending Druze resigned
His temperate poise, his moderate mind ;
While Belex, in punctilious guard,
Relinquished not the martial ward :
' If by His tomb hot strife may be,
Trust ye His cradle shall be free ?
Heed one experienced, sirs.' His sword,
Held cavalier by jingling chain,
Dropping at whiles, would clank amain
Upon the pave.
' I pray ye now,'
To him said Rolfe in accents low,
' Have care ; for see ye not ye jar
These devotees ? they turn—they cease
(Hearing your clanging scimetar)
Their suppliance to the Prince of Peace.'

Like miners from the shaft, or tars
From forth the hold, up from those spars
And grottoes, by the stony stair
They climb, emerge, and seek the air
In open space.

'Save me, what now?
Cried Derwent, foremost of the group—
'The holy water!'
Hanging low
Outside, was fixed a scalloped stoup
Or marble shell, to hold the wave
Of Jordan, for true ones to lave
The finger, and so make the sign,
The Cross's sign, ere in they slip
And bend the knee. In this divine
Recess, deliberately a lip
Was lapping slow, with long-drawn pains,
The liquid globules, last remains
Of the full stone. Astray, alas,
Athirst and lazed, it was—the ass;
The friars, withdrawn for time, having left
That court untended and bereft.
'Was ever Saracen so bold!'
'Well, things have come to pretty pass—
The mysteries slobbered by an ass!'
'Mere Nature do we here behold?'
So they. But he, the earnest guide,
Turning the truant there aside,
Said, and in unaffected tone:
'What should it know, this foolish one?
It is an infidel we see:
Ah, the poor brute's stupidity!'
'I hardly think so,' Derwent said;
'For, look, it hangs the conscious head.'
The friar no relish had for wit,
No sense, perhaps, too rapt for it,
Preoccupied. So, having seen
The ass led back, he bade adieu;
But first, and with the kindliest mien:
'Signori, would ye have fair view

Of Bethlehem of Judæa, pray
Ascend to roof : ye take yon stair.
And now, heaven have ye in its care—
Me save from sin, and all from error !
Farewell.'—But Derwent : ' Yet delay :
Fain would we cherish when away :
Thy name, then ? ' ' Brother Salvaterra.'
' 'Tis a fair name. And, brother, we
Are not insensible, conceive,
To thy most Christian courtesy.—
He goes. Sweet echo does he leave
In *Salvaterra* : may it dwell !
Silver in every syllable ! '
"And import too,' said Rolfe.
They fare
And win the designated stair,
And climb ; and, as they climb, in bell
Of Derwent's repetition, fell :
' *Me save from sin, and all from error !*
So prays good brother Salvaterra.'

In paved flat roof, how ample there,
They tread a goodly St. Mark's Square
Aloft. An elder brother lorn
They meet, with shrunken cheek, and worn
Like to a slab whereon may weep
The unceasing water-drops. And deep
Within his hollow gown-sleeves old
His viewless hands he did enfold.
He never spake, but moved away
With shuffling pace of dragged infirm delay.
' Seaward he gazed,' said Rolfe, ' toward home :
An empty longing ! '

'Cruel Rome!'
Sighed Derwent; 'See, though, good to greet
The vale of eclogue, Boaz' seat.
Trips Ruth there, yonder?' thitherward
Down pointing where the vineyards meet.
At that dear name in Bethlehem heard,
How Clarel starts. Not Agar's child—
Naomi's! Then, unreconciled,
And in reaction falling low,
He saw the files Armenian go,
The tapers round the virgin's bier,
And heard the boys' light strophe free
Overborne by the men's antistrophe.
Illusion! yet he knew a fear:
'Fixed that this second night we bide
In Bethlehem?' he asked aside.
Yes, so 'twas planned. For moment there
He thought to leave them and repair
Alone forthwith to Salem. Nay,
Doubt had unhinged so, that her sway,
In minor things even, could retard
The will and purpose. And, beyond,
Prevailed the tacit pilgrim-bond—
Of no slight force in his regard;
Besides, a diffidence was sown:
None knew his heart, nor might he own;
And, last, feared he to prove the fear?
With outward things he sought to clear
His mind; and turned to list the tone
Of Derwent, who to Rolfe: 'Here now
One stands emancipated.'
'How?'
'The air—the air, the liberal air!
Those witcheries of the cave ill fare
Reviewed aloft. Ah, Salvaterra,

So winning in thy dulcet error—
How fervid thou! Nor less thy tone,
So heartfelt in sincere effusion,
Is hardly that more chastened one
We Protestants feel. But the illusion!
Those grottoes: yes, void now they seem
As phantoms which accost in dream—
Accost and fade. Hold you with me?'
'Yes, partly: I in part agree.
In Kedron too, thou mayst recall,
The monkish night of festival,
And masque enacted—how it shrank
When, afterward, in nature frank,
Upon the terrace thrown at ease,
Like magi of the old Chaldæa,
Viewing Rigel and Betelguese,
We breathed the balm-wind from Sabæa.
All shows and forms in Kedron had—
Nor hymn nor banner made them glad
To me. And yet—why, who may know!
These things come down from long ago.
While so much else partakes decay,
While states, tongues, manners pass away,
How wonderful the Latin rite
Surviving still like oak austere
Over crops rotated year by year,
Or Cæsar's tower on London's site.
But, tell me: stands it true in fact
That robe and ritual—every kind
By Rome employed in ways exact—
However strange to modern mind,
Or even absurd (like cards Chinese
In ceremonial usages),
Not less of faith or need were born—
Survive untampered with, unshorn;

Date far back to a primal day,
Obscure and hard to trace indeed—
The springing of the planted seed
In the church's first organic sway ?
Still for a type, a type or use,
Each decoration so profuse
Budding and flowering ? Tell me here.'
' If but one could ! To be sincere,
Rome's wide campania of old lore
Ecclesiastic—that waste shore
I 've shunned : an instinct makes one fear
Malarial places. But I 'll tell
That at the mass this very morn
I marked the broidered maniple
Which by the ministrant was worn :
How like a napkin does it show,
Thought I, a napkin on the arm
Of servitor. And hence we know
Its origin. In the first days
(And who denies their simple charm !)
When the church's were like household ways,
Some served the flock in humble state—
At Eucharist, passed cup or plate.
The thing of simple use, you see,
Tricked out—embellished—has become
Theatric and a form. There 's Rome !
Yet what of this, since happily
Each superflux men now disown.'
' Perchance !—'Tis an ambiguous time ;
And periods unforecast come on.
Recurs to me a Persian rhyme :
In Pera late an Asian man,
With stately cap of Astrakhan,
I knew in arboured coffee-house
On bluff above the Bosphorus.

Strange lore was his, and Saadi's wit :
Over pipe and Mocha long we 'd sit
Discussing themes which thrive in shade.
In pause of talk a way he had
Of humming a low air of his :
I asked him once, What trills your bird ?
And he recited it in word,
To pleasure me, and this it is :

" Flamen, flamen, put away
Robe and mitre glorious :
Doubt undeifies the day !
Look, in vapours odorous
As the spice-king's funeral-pyre,
Dies the Zoroastrian fire
On your altars in decay :
The rule, the Magian rule is run,
And Mythra abdicates the sun ! " '

XVII

A TRANSITION

'FINE, very fine,' said Derwent light;
'But, look, yon rustics there in sight
Crossing the slope; and are they not
Those Arabs that we saw in grot?'
'Why, who they be their garb bespeaks:
Yes, 'tis those Arab Catholics.'
'Catholic Arabs? Say not that!
Some words don't chime together, see.'
'Oh, never mind the euphony:
We saw them worship, and but late.
Our Bethlehemites, the guard, they too
Are Catholics. I talked with one,
And much from his discourse I drew,
Which the conventicles would shun:
These be the children of the sun:
They like not prosing—turn the lip
From Luther's jug—prefer to sip
From that tall chalice brimmed with wine
Which Rome hath graved, and made to shine
For haughty West and barbarous East,
To win all people to her feast.'
'So, so! But, glamoured in that school
Of taking shows and charmful rites,
What ween they of Christ's genuine rule,
These credulous poor neophytes?
Alas for such disciples! No,
At mass before the altar, own,
The celebrant in mystic gown

To them is but a Prospero,
A prince of magic. I deplore
That zeal in such conversions seeks
Less Christians than good Catholics :
And here one might append much more.
But drop.—Yon vineyards they are fair.
For hill-side scenery—for curve
Of beauty in a meek reserve—
'Tis Bethlehem the bell may bear ! '
Longer he gazed, then turned aside.

Clarel was left with Rolfe. In view
Leaned Ungar, watching there the guide
Below, who passed on errand new.
' Your judgment of him let me crave—
Him there,' here lowly Rolfe.
' I would
I were his mate,' in earnest mood
Clarel rejoined ; ' such faith to have,
I 'd take the rest, even Crib and Cave.'
' Ah, you mistake me ; *him* I mean,
Our comrade, Ungar.'
' He ? at loss
I am : at loss, for he 's most strange ;
Wild, too, adventurous in range ;
And suffers ; so that one might glean
An added import from the word
The Tuscan spake : *You bear a cross*,
Referring to the straight-hilt sword.'
' I know. And when the Arnaut ran,
But yesterday, with arms how bright
(Like wheeling Phœbus flashing light),
Superb about this sombrous man—
A soldier too with vouching tinge ;
Methought, O War, thy bullion fringe

Never shall gladsome make thy pall.
Ungar is Mars in funeral
Of reminiscence—not in pledge
And glory of brave equipage
And manifesto. But some keen
Side-talk I had with him yestreen :
Brave soldier and stout thinker both ;
In this regard, and in degree,
An Ethan Allen, by my troth,
Or Herbert lord of Cherbury,
Dusked over. 'Tis an iron glove,
An armed man in the Druid grove.'

XVIII

THE HILLSIDE

PERTAINING unto nations three—
Or, rather, each unto its clan—
Greek, Latin, and Armenian,
About the fane three convents be.
Confederate on the mountain fair,
Blunt buttressed huge with masonry,
They mass an Ehrenbreitstein there.
In these, and in the Empress' fane
Enough they gather to detain
Or occupy till afternoon ;
When some of them the ridge went down
To view that legendary grot
Whose milky chalkiness of vest
Derived is (so the hinds allot)
From droppings of Madonna's breast :
A fairy tale : yet, grant it, due
To that creative love alone
Wherefrom the faun and cherub grew,
With genii good and Oberon.

Returning, part way up the height,
Ungar they met ; and Vine in sight.
Here all repose them.
'Look away,'
Cried Derwent, westward pointing ; 'see,
How glorified yon vapours be !
It is the dying of the day ;
A hopeful death-bed : yes, need own
There is a morrow for the sun.'

So, mild they sat in pleased delay.
Vine turned—what seemed a random word
Shyly let fall; and they were stirred
Thereby to broach anew the theme—
How wrought the sites of Bethlehem
On Western natures. Here some speech
Was had; and then: 'For me,' Rolfe said,
'From Bethlehem here my musings reach
Yes—frankly—to Tahiti's beach.'
'Tahiti?' Derwent; 'you have sped
'Ay, truant humour. But to me
That vine-wreathed urn of Ver, in sea
Of halcyons, where no tides do flow
Or ebb, but waves bide peacefully
At brim, by beach where palm-trees grow
That sheltered Omai's olive race—
Tahiti should have been the place
For Christ in advent.'
'Deem ye so?
Or on the topic's budding bough
But lights your fancy's robin?'
'Nay,'
Said Ungar, 'err one if he say
The God's design was, part, to broach
Rebuke of man's factitious life;
So, for His first point of approach,
Came thereunto where that was rife,
The land of Pharisees and scorn—
Judæa, with customs hard as horn.'
This, chief, to Rolfe and Derwent twain.
But Derwent, if no grudge he knew,
Still felt some twinges of the pain
(Vibrations of the residue)
That morning in the dale incurred;
Wherefore, at present he abstained,

When Ungar spake, from any word
Receptive. Rolfe reply maintained ;
And much here followed, though of kind
Scarce welcome to the priest. Resigned
He heard ; till, at a hint, the Cave
He named :
' If on the first review
Its shrines seemed each a gilded grave ;
Yet, reconsidered, they renew
The spell of the transmitted story—
The grace, the innocence, the glory :
Shepherds, the Manger, and the CHILD :
What wonder that it has beguiled
So many generations ! Ah,
Though much we knew in desert late,
Beneath no kind auspicious star,
Of lifted minds in poised debate—
'Twas of the brain. Consult the heart !
Spouse to the brain—can coax or thwart :
Does *she* renounce the trust divine ?
Hide it she may, but scarce resign ;
Like to a casket buried deep
Which, in a fine and fibrous throng,
The rootlets of the forest keep—
'Tis tangled in her meshes strong.'
' Yes, yes,' cried Rolfe ; ' that tone delights ;
But oh, these legends, relics, sites !
Of yore, you know, Greeks showed the place
Where Argo landed, and the stone
That served to anchor Argo ; yes,
And Agamemnon's sceptre, throne ;
Mars' spear ; and so on. More to please,
Where the goddess suckled Hercules—
Priests showed that spot, a sacred one.'
' Well then, Madonna 's but a dream,

The Manger and the Crib. So deem ;
So be it ; but undo it ! Nay,
Little avails what sages say :
Tell Romeo that Juliet's eyes
Are chemical ; e'en analyse
The iris ; show 'tis albumen—
Gluten—fish-jelly mere. What then ?
To Romeo it is still love's sky :
He loves : enough ! Though Faith no doubt
Seem insubstantial as a sigh,
Never ween that 'tis a waterspout
Dissolving, dropping into dew
At pistol-shot. Besides, review
That comprehensive Christian scheme :
It catches man at each extreme :
Simple—august ; strange as a dream,
Yet practical as plodding life :
Not use and sentiment at strife.'
They hearken : none aver dissent,
Nor one confirms him ; while his look
Unwitting an expression took,
Scarce insincere, yet so it lent
Provocative to Ungar's heart ;
Who, bridling the embittered part,
Thus spake : ' This yieldeth no content :
Your implication lacketh stay :
There is a callousness in clay.
Christ's pastoral parables divine,
Breathing the sweet breath of sweet kine,
As wholesome too ; how many feel ?
Feel ! rather put it—comprehend ?
Not unto all does nature lend
The gift ; at height such love's appeal
Is hard to know, as in her deep
Is hate ; a prior love must steep

The spirit ; head nor heart have marge
Commensurate in man at large.'
' Indulge me,' Derwent ; ' Grant it so
As you present it ; 'tis most strange
How Christ could work His powerful change :
The world turned Christian long ago.'
' The world but joined the Creed Divine
With prosperous days and Constantine ;
The world turned Christian, need confess,
But the world remained the world, no less :
The world turned Christian : where 's the odds ?
Hearts change not in the change of gods.
Despite professions, outward shows—
So far as working practice goes,
More minds with shrewd Voltaire have part
Than now own Jesus in the heart.'
' Not rashly judge,' said Derwent grave ;
' Prudence will here decision waive.'
' No : shift the test. How Buddha pined !
Pierced with the sense of all we bear,
Not only ills by fate assigned,
But misrule of our selfish mind,
Fain would the tender sage repair.
Well, Asia owns him. But the *lives* :
Buddha but in a name survives—
A name, a rite. Confucius, too :
Does China take his honest hue ?
Some forms they keep, some forms of his ;
But well we know them, the Chinese.
Ah, Moses, thy deterring dart !—
Ethereal visitants of earth,
Foiled benefactors, proves your worth
But sundry texts, disowned in mart,
Light scratched, not graved on man's hard heart ?
'Tis penalty makes sinners start.'

XIX

A NEW-COMER

'Good echoes, echo it! Ho, chant
'Tis penalty we sinners want:
By all means, penalty!'
What man
Thus struck in here so consonant?
They turn them, and a stranger scan.
As through the rigging of some port
Where cheek by jowl the ships resort—
The sea-beat hulls of briny oak—
Peereth the May-day's jocund sun;
So through his inlaced wrinkles broke
A nature bright, a beaming one.

'Hidalgos, pardon! Strolling here
These fine old villa-sites to see,
I caught that good word *penalty*,
And could not otherwise than cheer.
Pray now, here be—two, four, six, eight—
Ten legs; I 'll add one more, by leave,
And eke an arm.'
In hobbling state
He came among them, with one sleeve
Loose flying, and one wooden limb,
A leg. All eyes the cripple skim;
Each rises, and his seat would give:
But Derwent in advance: 'Why, Don—
My good Don Hannibal, I mean;

Señor Don Hannibal Rohon
Del Aquaviva—a good e'en ! '
' Ha, thou, is 't thou ? ' the other cried,
And peered and stared not unamazed ;
Then flung his one arm round him wide :
Then at arm's length : ' St. James be praised,
With all the calendar ! '
' But, tell :
What wind wafts here Don Hannibal ?
When last I left thee at " *The Cock* "
In Fleet Street, thou wert like a rock
For England—bent on anchoring there.'
' Oh, too much agitation ; yes,
Too proletarian it proved.
I 've stumped about since ; no redress ;
Norway 's too cold ; Egypt 's all glare ;
And everywhere that I removed
This cursed *Progress* still would greet.
Ah where (thought I) in Old World view
Some blest asylum from the New !
At last I steamed for Joppa's seat,
Resolved on Asia for retreat.
Asia for me, Asia will do.
But just where to pitch tent—invest—
Ah, that 's the point ; I 'm still in quest,
Don Derwent.—Look, the sun falls low ;
But lower the funds in Mexico
Whereto he 's sinking.'
' Gentlemen,'
Said Derwent, turning on them then ;
' I introduce and do commend
To ye Don Hannibal Rohon ;
He is my estimable friend
And well beloved. Great fame he 's won
In war. Those limbs——'

'St. James defend!'
Here cried Don Hannibal; 'stop! stop!
Pulled down is Montezuma's hall!—
Hidalgos, I am, as ye see,
Just a poor cripple—that is all;
A cripple, yet contrive to hop
Far off from Mexic liberty,
Thank God! I lost these limbs for that;
And would that they were mine again,
And all were back to former state—
I, Mexico, and poor Old Spain.
And for Don Derwent here, my friend—
You know his way. And so I end,
Poor penitent American:
Oh, 'tis the sorriest thing! In me
A *reformado* reformed ye see.'

Ungar, a very Indian here,
Too serious far to take a jest,
Or rather, who no sense possessed
Of humour; he, for aye austere,
Took much in earnest; and a light
Of attestation over-bright
Shot from his eyes, though part suppressed.
'But penalties, these *penalties*,'
Here cried the crippled one again;
'Proceed, hidalgo; name you these
Same capital good penalties:
They 're needed.'
'Hold, let me explain,'
Cried Derwent: 'We, as meek as worms—
Oh, far from taking any pique
As if the kind but formed a clique—
Have late been hearing in round terms
The sore disparagement of man,

Don Hannibal.' ' You think I 'll ban ?
Disparage him with all my heart !
What villain takes the rascal's part ?
Advance the argument.'
' But stay :
'Tis too much odds now ; it won't do,
Such reinforcement come. Nay, nay,
I of the Old World, all alone
Maintaining hope and ground for cheer
'Gainst ye, the offspring of the New ?
Ah, what reverses time can own ! '
So Derwent light. But earnest here,
Ungar : ' *Old* World ? if age's test
Be this—advanced experience,
Then, in the truer moral sense,
Ours is the Old World. You, at best,
In dreams of your advanced Reform,
Adopt the cast skin of our worm.'
' Hey, hey ? ' exclaimed Don Hannibal ;
' Not *cast* yet quite ; the snake is sick—
Would wriggle out. 'Tis pitiful !
But brave times for the empiric.—
You spake now of Reform. For me,
Among reformers in true way
There 's one—the imp of Semele ;
Ay, and brave Raleigh too, we 'll say.
Wine and the weed ! blest innovations,
How welcome to the weary nations !
But what 's in this Democracy ?
Eternal hacking ! Woe is me,
She lopped these limbs, Democracy.'
' Ah, now, Don Hannibal Rohon
Del Aquaviva ! ' Derwent cried ;
' I knew it : two upon a side ! '
But Ungar, earnest in his plea—

Intent, nor caring to have done ;
And turning where suggestion led
At tangent : ' Ay, Democracy
Lops, lops ; but where 's her planted bed ?
The future, what is that to her
Who vaunts she 's no inheritor ?
'Tis in her mouth, not in her heart.
The Past she spurns, though 'tis the Past
From which she gets her saving part—
That Good which lets her Evil last.
Behold her whom the panders crown,
Harlot on horseback, riding down
The very Ephesians who acclaim
This great Diana of ill fame !
Arch-strumpet of an impious age,
Upstart from ranker villanage,
'Tis well she must restriction taste,
Nor lay the world's broad manor waste :
Asia shall stop her at the least,
That old inertness of the East.
She 's limited ; lacking the free
And genial catholicity
Which in Christ's pristine scheme unfurled
Grace to the city and the world.'
' By Cotopaxi, a brave vent ! '
(And here he took a pinch of snuff,
Flapping the spill off with loose cuff)
' Good excellenza—excellent !
But, pardon me,' in altered tone ;
' I 'm sorry, but I must away ' ;
And, setting crutch, he footing won ;
' We 're just arrived in cloister there,
Our little party ; and they stay
My coming for the convent-fare.
Adieu : we 'll meet anon—we 'll meet,

Don Derwent. Nay, now, never stir ;
Nor I would such a group unseat ;
But happy the good rein and spur
That brought thee where once more we greet.
Good e'en, Don Derwent—not good-bye ;
And, cavaliers, the evil eye
Keep far from ye ! ' He limped away,
Rolling a wild ranchero lay :
' House your cattle and stall your steed :
Stand by, stand by for the great stampede ! '

XX

DERWENT AND UNGAR

'NOT thou com'st in the still small voice,'
Said Derwent, 'thou queer Mexican!'
And followed him with eyes: 'This man,'
And turned here, 'he likes not grave talk,
The settled undiluted tone;
It does his humorous nature baulk.
'Twas ever too his sly rebuff,
While yet obstreperous in praise,
Taking that dusty pinch of snuff.
An oddity, he has his ways;
Yet trust not, friends, the half he says:
Not he would do a weasel harm;
A secret agent of Reform;
At least, that is my theory.'
'The quicksilver is quick to skim,'
Ungar remarked, with eye on him.
'Yes, Nature has her levity,'
Dropped Derwent.
Nothing might disarm
The other; he: 'Your word *reform*:
What meaning 's to that word assigned?
From Luther's great initial down,
Through all the series following on,
The impetus augments—the blind
Precipitation: blind, for tell
Whitherward does the surge impel?
The end, the aim? 'Tis mystery.'
'Oh, no. Through all methinks I see
The object clear: belief revised,

Men liberated—equalised
In happiness. No mystery,
Just none at all ; plain sailing.'
'Well,
Assume this : is it feasible ?
Your methods ? These are of the world :
Now the world cannot save the world ;
And Christ renounces it. His faith,
Breaking with every mundane path,
Aims straight at heaven. To founded thrones
He says : Trust not to earthly stanchions ;
And unto poor and houseless ones—
My Father's house has many mansions.
Warning and solace be but this ;
No thought to mend a world amiss.'
'Ah now, ah now ! ' pled Derwent.
'Nay,
Test further ; take another way :
Go ask Aurelius Antonine—
A Cæsar wise, grave, just, benign,
Lord of the world—why, in the calm
Which through his reign the empire graced—
Why he, that most considerate heart
Superior, and at vantage placed,
Contrived no secular reform,
Though other he knew not, nor balm.'
'Alas,' cried Derwent (and, in part,
As vainly longing for retreat),
'Though good Aurelius was a man
Matchless in mind as sole in seat,
Yet pined he under numbing ban
Of virtue without Christian heat :
As much you intimated too,
Just saying that no balm he knew.
Howbeit, true reform goes on

By nature ; doing, never done.
Mark the advance : creeds drop the hate ;
Events still liberalise the state.'
' But tell : do men now more cohere
In bonds of duty which sustain ?
Cliffs crumble, and the parts regain
A liberal freedom, it is clear.
And for conventicles—I fear,
Much as a hard heart aged grown
Abates in rigour, losing tone ;
So sects decrepit, at death's door,
Dote into peace through loss of power.'
' You put it so,' said Derwent light :
' No more developments to cite ? '
' Ay, quench the true, the mock sun fails
Therewith. Much so, Hypocrisy,
The false thing, wanes just in degree
That Faith, the true thing, wanes : each pales.
There 's *one* development ; 'tis seen
In masters whom not low ye rate :
What lack, in some outgivings late,
Of the old Christian style toward men—
I do not mean the wicked ones,
But Pauperism's unhappy sons
In cloud so blackly ominous,
Grimy in Mammon's English pen—
Collaterals of his overplus :
How worse than them Immanuel fed
On hill-top—helped and comforted.
Thou, Poverty, erst free from shame,
Even sacred through the Saviour's claim,
Professed by saints, by sages prized—
A pariah now, and bastardised !
Reactions from the Christian plan
Bear others further. Quite they shun
A god to name, or cite a man

Save Greek, heroical, a Don :
'Tis Plato's aristocratic tone.
All recognition they forgo
Of Evil ; supercilious skim
With spurious wing of seraphim
The last abyss. Freemen avow
Belief in right divine of Might,
Yet spurn at kings. This is the light—
Divine the darkness. Mark the way
The Revolution, whose first mode,
Ere yet the maniacs overrode,
Despite the passion of the dream,
Evinced no disrespect for God ;
Mark how, in our denuding day,
E'en with the masses, as would seem,
It tears the fig-leaf quite away.
Contrast these incidents : The mob,
The Paris mob of 'Eighty-nine,
Haggard and bleeding, with a throb
Burst the long Tuileries. In shrine
Of chapel there, they saw the Cross
And Him thereon. Ah, bleeding Man,
The people's friend, thou bled'st for us
Who here bleed, too ! Ragged they ran—
They took the crucifix ; in van
They put it, marched with drum and psalm
And throned it in their Notre-Dame.
But yesterday—how did they then,
In new uprising of the Red,
The offspring of those Tuileries men ?
They made a clothes-stand of the Cross
Before the church ; and, on that head
Which bowed for them, could wanton toss
The sword-belt, while the gibing sped.
Transcended rebel angels ! Woe
To us ; without a God, 'tis woe ! '

XXI

UNGAR AND ROLFE

'SUCH earnestness! such wear and tear,
And man but a thin gossamer!'
So here the priest aside; then turned,
And, starting: 'List! the vesper-bell?
Nay, nay—the hour is passed. But, oh,
He must have supped, Don Hannibal,
Ere now. Come, friends, and shall we go?
This hot discussion, let it stand
And cool; to-morrow we 'll remand.'
'Not yet, I pray,' said Rolfe; 'a word';
And turned toward Ungar; 'be adjured,
And tell us if for earth may be
In ripening arts, no guarantee
Of happy sequel.'
'Arts are tools;
But tools, they say, are to the strong:
Is Satan weak? weak is the Wrong?
No blessed augury overrules:
Your arts advance in faith's decay:
You are but drilling the new Hun
Whose growl even now can some dismay;
Vindictive in his heart of hearts,
He schools him in your mines and marts—
A skilled destroyer.'
'But, need own
That portent does in no degree
Westward impend, across the sea.'
'Over there? And do ye not forebode?
Against pretences void or weak
The impieties of "Progress" speak.

What say *these*, in effect, to God ?
" How profits it ? And who art Thou
That we should serve Thee ? Of Thy ways
No knowledge we desire ; *new* ways
We have found out, and better. Go—
Depart from us ; we do erase
Thy sinecure : behold, the sun
Stands still no more in Ajalon :
Depart from us ! "—And if He do ?
(And that He may, the Scripture says)
Is aught betwixt ye and the hells ?
For He, nor in irreverent view,
'Tis He distils that savour true
Which keeps good essences from taint ;
Where He is not, corruption dwells,
And man and chaos are without restraint.'
' Oh, oh, you do but generalise
In void abstractions.'
' Hypothesise :
If be a people which began
Without impediment, or let
From any ruling which foreran ;
Even striving all things to forget
But this—the excellence of man
Left to himself, his natural bent,
His own devices and intent ;
And if, in satire of the heaven,
A world, a new world have been given
For stage whereon to deploy the event ;
If such a people be—well, well,
One hears the kettledrums of hell !
Exemplary act awaits its place
In drama of the human race.'
' Is such act certain ? ' Rolfe here ran ;
' Not much is certain.'

'God is—man.
The human nature, the divine—
Have both been proved by many a sign.
'Tis no astrologer and star.
The world has now so old become,
Historic memory goes so far
Backward through long defiles of doom;
Whoso consults it honestly
That mind grows prescient in degree;
For man, like God, abides the same
Always, through all variety
Of woven garments to the frame.'
'Yes, God is God, and men are men,
For ever and for aye. What then?
There 's Circumstance—there 's Time; and these
Are charged with store of latencies
Still working in to modify.
For mystic text that you recall,
Dilate upon, and e'en apply—
(Although I seek not to decry)
Theology 's scarce practical.
But leave this: the New World 's the theme,
Here, to oppose your dark extreme
(Since an old friend is good at need),
To an old thought I 'll fly. Pray, heed:
Those waste-weirs which the New World yields
To inland freshets—the free vents
Supplied to turbid elements;
The vast reserves—the untried fields;
These long shall keep off and delay
The class-war, rich-and-poor-man fray
Of history. From that alone
Can serious trouble spring. Even that
Itself, this good result may own—
The first firm founding of the state.'

Here ending, with a watchful air
Inquisitive, Rolfe waited him.
And Ungar :
'True heart do ye bear
In this discussion ? or but trim
To draw my monomania out,
For monomania, past doubt,
Some of ye deem it. Yet I 'll on.
Yours seems a reasonable tone ;
But in the New World things make haste ;
Not only men, the *state* lives fast—
Fast breeds the pregnant eggs and shells,
The slumberous combustibles
Sure to explode. 'Twill come, 'twill come !
One demagogue can trouble much :
How of a hundred thousand such ?
And universal suffrage lent
To back them with brute element
Overwhelming ? What shall bind these seas
Of rival sharp communities
Unchristianised ? Yea, but 'twill come ! '
'What come ? '
'Your Thirty Years (of) War.'
'Should fortune's favourable star
Avert it ? '
'Fortune ? nay, 'tis doom.'
'Then what comes after ? spasms but tend
Ever, at last, to quiet.'
'Know,
Whatever happen in the end,
Be sure 'twill yield to one and all
New confirmation of the fall
Of Adam. Sequel may ensue,
Indeed, whose germs one now may view :
Myriads playing pygmy parts—

Debased into equality :
In glut of all material arts
A civic barbarism may be :
Man disennobled—brutalised
By popular science—atheised
Into a smatterer——'
' Oh, oh ! '
' Yet knowing all self need to know
In self's base little fallacy ;
Dead level of rank commonplace :
An Anglo-Saxon China, see,
May on your vast plains shame the race
In the Dark Ages of Democracy.'

America !
In stilled estate,
On him, half-brother and co-mate—
In silence, and with vision dim
Rolfe, Vine, and Clarel gazed on him ;
They gazed, nor one of them found heart
To upbraid the crotchet of his smart,
Bethinking them whence sole it came,
Though birthright he renounced in hope,
Their sanguine country's wonted claim.
Nor dull they were in honest tone
To some misgivings of their own :
They felt how far beyond the scope
Of elder Europe's saddest thought
Might be the New World's sudden brought
In youth to share old age's pains—
To feel the arrest of hope's advance,
And squandered last inheritance ;
And cry—' To Terminus build fanes !
Columbus ended earth's romance :
No New World to mankind remains ! '

XXII

OF WICKEDNESS THE WORD

SINCE, for the charity they knew,
None cared the exile to upbraid
Or further breast—while yet he threw,
In silence that oppressive weighed,
The after-influence of his spell—
The priest in light disclaimer said
To Rolfe apart : ' The icicle,
The dagger-icicle draws blood ;
But give it sun ! ' ' You mean his mood
Is accident—would melt away
In fortune's favourable ray.
But if 'tis happiness he lacks,
Why, let the gods warm all cold backs
With that good sun. But list ! '
In vent
Of thought, abrupt the malcontent :
' What incantation shall make less
The ever-upbubbling wickedness !
Is this fount nature's ? '
Under guard
Asked Vine : ' Is wickedness the word ? '
' The right word ? Yes ; but scarce the *thing*
Is there conveyed ; for one need know
Wicked has been the tampering
With wickedness the word.' ' Even so ? '
' Ay, ridicule's light sacrilege
Has taken off the honest edge—

Quite turned aside—perverted all
That Saxon term and scriptural.'
' Restored to the incisive wedge,
What means it then, this wickedness ? '
Ungar regarded him with look
Of steady search : ' And wilt thou brook ?
Thee leaves it whole ?—This wickedness
(Might it retake true import well)
Means not default, nor vulgar vice,
Nor Adam's lapse in Paradise ;
But worse : 'twas this evoked the hell—
Gave in the conscious soul's recess
Credence to Calvin. What 's implied
In that deep utterance decried
Which Christians labially confess—
Be born anew ? '
' Ah, overstate
Thou dost ! ' the priest sighed ; ' but look there !
No jarring theme may violate
Yon tender evening sky ! How fair
These olive-orchards : see, the sheep
Mild drift toward the folds of sleep.
The blessed Nature ! still her glance
Returns the love she well receives
From hearts that with the stars advance,
Each heart that in the goal believes ! '
Ungar, though nettled, as might be,
At these bland substitutes in plea
(By him accounted so), yet sealed
His lips. In fine, all seemed to yield
With one consent a truce to talk.
But Clarel, who, since that one hour
Of unreserve on Saba's tower,
Less relished Derwent's pleasant walk
Of myrtles, hardly might remain

Uninfluenced by Ungar's vein :
If man in truth be what you say,
And such the prospects for the clay,
And outlook of the future—cease !
What 's left us but the senses' sway ?
Sinner, sin out life's petty lease :
We are not worth the saving. Nay,
For me, if thou speak true—but ah,
Yet, yet there gleams one beckoning star—
So near the horizon, judge I right
That 'tis of heaven ?
But wanes the light—
The evening *Angelus* is rolled :
They rise, and seek the convent's fold.

XXIII

DERWENT AND ROLFE

THERE as they wend, Derwent his arm
Demure, and brotherly, and grave,
Slips into Rolfe's : ' A bond we have ;
We lock, we symbolise it, see ;
Yes, you and I : but he, but *he* ! '
And checked himself, as under warm
Emotion. Rolfe kept still. ' Unlike,
Unlike ! Don Hannibal through storm
Has passed ; yet does his sunshine strike.
But Ungar, clouded man ! No balm
He 'll find in that unhappy vein ' ;
Pausing, awaiting Rolfe again.
Rolfe held his peace. ' But grant indeed
His strictures just—how few will heed !
The hippopotamus is tough ;
Well bucklered too behind. Enough :
Man has two sides : keep on the bright.'
' Two sides imply that one 's not right ;
So that won't do.'—' Wit, wit ! '—' Nay, truth.'
' Sententious are ye, pithy—sooth ! '
Yet quickened now that Rolfe began
To find a tongue, he sprightlier ran :
' As for his jeremiad spells,
Shall these the large hope countermand ?
The world 's outlived the oracles,
And the people never will disband !
Stroll by my hedgerows in the June,
The chirruping quite spoils his tune.'

'Ay, birds,' said Rolfe; nor more would own.
'But, look: to hold the censor-tone,
One need be qualified: is he?'
'He 's wise.' 'Too vehemently wise!
His factious memories tyrannise
And wrest the judgment.' 'In degree,
Perchance.' 'But come: shall we accord
Credentials to that homely sword
He wears? Would it had more of grace!
But 'tis in serviceable case.'
'Right! war 's his business.' '*Business*, say you?'
Resenting the unhandsome word;
'Unsay it quickly, friend, I pray you!
Fine business driving men through fires
To Hades, at the bidding blind
Of Heaven knows whom! but, now I mind
In this case 'tis the Turk that hires
A Christian for that end.'—'May be,'
Said Rolfe. 'And pretty business too
Is war for one who did instil
So much concern for *Lincoln Hugh*
Ground up by Mammon in the mill.
Or was it rhetoric?' 'May be,'
Said Rolfe. 'And let me hint, *may be*
You 're curt to-day. But, yes, I see:
Your countryman he is. Well, well,
That 's right—you 're right; no more I 'll dwell:
Your countryman; and, yes, at heart
Rather you sidled toward his part
Though playing well the foil, pardee!
Oh, now you stare: no need: a trick
To deal your dullish mood a prick.
But mind you, though, some things you said
By Jordan lounging in the shade
When our discourse so freely ran?

But whatsoe'er reserves be yours
Touching your native clime and clan,
And whatsoe'er *his* thought abjures ;
Still, when he 's criticised by one
Not of the tribe, not of the zone—
Chivalric still, though doggedly,
You stand up for a countryman :
I like your magnanimity ' ;
And silent pressed the enfolded arm
As he would so transmit a charm
Along the nerve, which might ensure,
However cynic challenge ran,
Faith genial in at least one man
Fraternal in love's overture.

XXIV

TWILIGHT

'OVER the river
In gloaming, ah, still do ye plain ?
Dove—dove in the mangroves,
How dear is thy pain !

'Sorrow—but fondled ;
Reproaches that never upbraid
Spite the passion, the yearning
Of love unrepaid.

'Teach me, oh ! teach me
Thy cadence, that Inez may thrill
With the bliss of the sadness,
And love have his will ! '

Through twilight of mild evening pale,
As now returning slow they fare—
In dubious keeping with the dale
And legends, floating came that air
From one invisible in shade,
Singing and lightly sauntering on
Toward the cloisters. Pause they made ;
But he a lateral way had won :
Viewless he passed, as might a wave
Rippling, which doth a frigate lave
At anchor in the midnight road.

Clarel a fleeting thought bestowed :
Unkenned ! to thee what thoughts belong—
Announced by such a tropic song.

XXV

THE INVITATION

RETURNED to harbour, Derwent sought
His Mexic friend ; and him he found
At home in by-place of a court
Of private kind—some tools around,
And planks and joiner's stuff, and more,
With little things, and odds and ends,
Conveniences which ease commends
Unto some plain old bachelor.
And here, indeed, one such a stay
At whiles did make ; a placid friar,
A sexton gratis in his way,
When some poor brother did require
The last fraternal offices.
This funeral monk, now much at ease,
Uncowled, upon a work-bench sat—
Lit by a greenish earthen lamp
(With cross-bones baked thereon for stamp)
Behind him placed upon a mat—
Engaged in gossip, old men's chat,
With the limb-lopped Eld of Mexico ;
Who, better to sustain him so
On his one leg, had niched him all
In one of some strange coffins there,
Alean and open by the wall
Like sentry-boxes.—
'Take a chair,
Don Derwent ; no, I mean—yes, take
A—coffin ; come, be sociable.'

'Don Hannibal, Don Hannibal,
What see I? Well, for pity's sake!'
'Eh? This is brother Placido,
And we are talking of old times,
For, learn thou, that in Mexico
First knew he matins and the chimes.
But, come, get in; there 's nothing else;
'Tis easy; here one lazy dwells
Almost as in a barber's chair;
See now, I lean my head.'
'Ah, yes;
But I—don't—feel the weariness:
Thanks, thanks; no, I the bench prefer.—
Good brother Placido, I 'm glad
You find a countryman.' And so
For little time discourse he made;
But presently—the monk away
Being called—proposed that they should go,
He and Don Hannibal the gray,
And in refectory sit down
That talk might more convenient run.
The others through the courts diverge,
Till all to cots conducted fare
Where reveries in slumber merge,
While lulling steals from many a cell
A bee-like buzz of bedside prayer—
Night in the hive monastical.

And now—not wantonly designed
Like lays in grove of Daphne sung,
But helping to fulfil the piece
Which in these cantos finds release,
Appealing to the museful mind—
A chord, the satyr's chord is strung.

XXVI

THE PRODIGAL

In adolescence thrilled by hope
Which fain would verify the gleam
And find if destiny concur,
How dwells upon life's horoscope
Youth, always an astrologer,
Forecasting happiness the dream !

Slumber interred them ; but not all,
For so it chanced that Clarel's cell
Was shared by one who did repel
The poppy. 'Twas a prodigal,
Yet pilgrim too in casual way,
And seen within the grots that day,
But only seen, no more than that.
In years he might be Clarel's mate.
Not talkative, he half reclined
In revery of dreamful kind ;
Or might the fable, the romance
Be tempered by experience ?
For ruling under spell serene,
A light precocity is seen.
That mobile face, voluptuous air
No Northern origin declare,
But Southern—where the nations bright,
The costumed nations, circled be
In garland round a tideless sea,
Eternal in its fresh delight.
Nor less he owned the common day ;
His avocation naught, in sooth—

A toy of Mammon ; but the ray
And fair aureola of youth
Deific makes the prosiest clay.
From revery now by Clarel won,
He brief his story entered on :
A native of the banks of Rhone,
He travelled for a Lyons house
Which dealt in bales luxurious ;
Detained by chance at Jaffa gray,
Rather than let ripe hours decay,
He 'd run o'er, in a freak of fun,
Green Sharon to Jerusalem,
And thence, not far, to Bethlehem.
Thy silvery voice, irreverent one !
'Twas musical ; and Clarel said :
' Greatly I err, or thou art he
Who singing along the hill-side sped
At fall of night.'
' And heard you me ?
'Twas sentimental, to be sure :
A little Spanish overture,
A Tombez air, which months ago
A young Peruvian let flow.
Locked friends we were ; he 's gone home now.'
To Clarel 'twas a novel style
And novel nature ; and awhile
Mutely he dwelt upon him here.
Earnest to know how the most drear
Solemnity of Judah's glade
Affect might such a mind, he said
Something to purpose ; but he shied.
One essay more ; whereat he cried :
' *Amigo !* favoured lads there are,
Born under such a lucky star,
They weigh not things too curious, see,

Albeit conforming to their time
And usages thereof, and clime :
Well, mine 's that happy family.'
The student faltered—felt annoy :
Absorbed in problems ill-defined,
Am *I* too curious in my mind ;
And, baffled in the vain employ,
Foregoing many an easy joy ?
That thought he hurried from ; and so
Unmindful in perturbed estate
Of that light intimation late,
He said : ' On hills of dead Judæa
Wherever one may faring go,
He dreams—Fit place to set the bier
Of Jacob, brought from Egypt's mead :
Here 's Atad's threshing-floor.'
' Indeed ? '
Scarce audible was that in tone ;
Nor Clarel heard it, but went on :
' 'Tis Jephthah's daughter holds the height ;
She, she 's the muse here.—But, I pray,
Confess to Judah's mournful sway.'
He held his peace. ' You grant the blight ? '
' No Boulevards.' ' Do other lands
Show equal ravage you 've beheld ? '
' Oh yes,' and eyed his emerald
In ring. ' But here a God commands,
A judgment dooms : you that gainsay ? '
Up looked he quick, then turned away,
And with a shrug that gave mute sign
That here the theme he would decline.
But Clarel urged. As in despair
The other turned—invoked the air :
' Was it in such talk, Don Rovenna,
We dealt in Seville, I and you ?

No ! chat of love-wile and duenna
And *saya-manto* in Peru.
Ah, good Limeno, dear *amigo*,
What times were ours, the holidays flew ;
Life, life a revel and clear *allegro* ;
But home thou 'rt gone ; pity, but true ! '
At burst so lyrical, yet given
Not all without some mock in leaven,
Once more did Clarel puzzled sit ;
But rallying in spite of it,
Continued : ' Surely now, 'tis clear
That in the aspect of Judæa——'
' My friend, it is just naught to me !
Why, why so pertinacious be ?
Refrain ! ' Here, turning light away,
As quitting so the theme : ' How gay
Damascus ! orchard of a town :
Not yet she 's heard the tidings though.'
' Tidings ? '
' Tidings of long ago :
Isaiah's dark burden, malison :
Of course, to be perpetual fate :
Bat, serpent, screech-owl, and all that.
But truth is, grace and pleasure there,
In Abana and Pharpar's streams
(O shady haunts ! O sherbert-air !)
So twine the place in odorous dreams,
How may she think to mope and moan,
The news not yet being got to town
That she 's a ruin ! Oh, 'tis pity,
For she, she is earth's senior city !—
Pray, who was he, that man of state
Whose footman at Elisha's gate
Loud rapped ? The name has slipped. Howe'er,
That Damascene maintained it well :

" We 've better streams than Israel,
Yea, fairer waters." ' Weetless here
Clarel betrayed half cleric tone :
' Naaman, you mean. Poor leper one,
'Twas Jordan healed him.'
' As you please.'
And hereupon the Lyonese—
(Capricious, or inferring late
That he had yielded up his state
To priggish inroad) gave mute sign
'Twere well to end.
' But Palestine,'
Insisted Clarel, ' do you not
Concede some strangeness to her lot ? '
' *Amigo*, how you persecute !
You all but tempt one to refute
These stale megrims. You of the West,
What devil has your hearts possessed,
You can't enjoy ?—Ah, dear Rovenna,
With talk of donna and duenna,
You came too from that hemisphere,
But freighted with quite other cheer :
No pedant, no ! ' Then, changing free,
Laughed with a light audacity :
' Well, me for one, dame Judah here
Don't much depress : she 's not austere—
Nature has lodged her in good zone—
The true wine-zone of Noah : the Cape
Yields no such bounty of the grape.
Hence took King Herod festal tone ;
Else why the tavern-cluster gilt
Hang out before that fane he built,
The second temple ? ' Catching thus
A buoyant frolic impetus,
He bowled along : ' Herewith agrees

The ducat of the Maccabees,
Graved with the vine. Methinks I see
The spies from Eshcol, full of glee,
Trip back to camp with clusters swung
From jolting pole on shoulders hung :
" Cheer up, 'twill do ; it needs befit ;
Lo ye, behold the fruit of it ! "
And, tell me, does not Solomon's harp
(Oh, that it should have taken warp
In end !) confirm the festa ? Hear :
" Thy white neck is like ivory ;
I feed among thy lilies, dear :
Stay me with flagons, comfort me
With apples ; thee would I enclose !
Thy twin breasts are as two young roes.'

Clarel protested, yet as one
Part lamed in candour ; and took tone
In formal wise : ' Nay, pardon me,
But you misdeem it : Solomon's Song
Is allegoric—needs must be.'
' Proof, proof, pray, if 'tis not too long.'
' Why, Saint Bernard——'
' Who ? *Sir* Bernard ?
Never that knight for me left card ! '
' No, *Saint* Bernard, 'twas he of old
The Song's hid import first unrolled—
Confirmed in every after age :
The chapter-headings on the page
Of modern Bibles (in that Song)
Attest his rendering, and prolong :
A mystic burden.'
' Eh ? so too
The Bonzes Hafiz' rhyme construe
Which lauds the grape of Shiraz. See,

They cant that in his frolic fire
Some bed-rid fakir would aspire
In foggy symbols. Me, oh me !—
What stuff of Levite and Divine !
Come, look at straight things more in line,
Blue eyes or black, which like you best ?
Your Bella Donna, how 's she dressed ? '
'Twas very plain this sprightly youth
Little suspected the grave truth
That he, with whom he thus made free,
A student was, a student late
Of reverend theology :
Nor Clarel was displeased thereat.
The other now : ' There is no tress
Can thrall one like a Jewess's.
A Hebrew husband, Hebrew-wed,
Is wondrous faithful, it is said ;
Which needs be true ; for, I suppose,
As bees are loyal to the rose,
So men to beauty. Of his girls,
On which did the brown Indian king,
Ahasuerus, shower his pearls ?
Why, Esther : Judah wore the ring.
And Nero, captain of the world,
His arm about a Jewess curled—
Bright spouse, Poppæa. And with good will
Some Christian monarchs share the thrill,
In palace kneeling low before
Crowned Judah, like those nobs of yore.
These Hebrew witches ! well-a-day,
Of Jeremiah what reck they ? '

Clarel looked down : was he depressed ?
The prodigal resumed : ' Earth's best,
Earth's loveliest portrait, daintiest,

Reveals Judæan grace and form :
Urbino's ducal mistress fair—
Ay, Titian's Venus, golden-warm.
Her lineage languishes in air
Mysterious as the unfathomed sea :
That grave, deep Hebrew coquetry !
Thereby Bathsheba David won ;
In bath a purposed bait !—Have done !—
Blushing ? The cuticle 's but thin !
Blushing ? yet you my mind would win.
Priests make a goblin of the Jew :
Shares he not flesh with me—with you ? '
What wind was this ? And yet it swayed
Even Clarel's cypress. He delayed
All comment, gazing at him there.
Then first he marked the clustering hair
Which on the bright and shapely brow
At middle part grew slantly low :
Rich, tumbled, chestnut hood of curls,
Like to a Polynesian girl's,
Who, inland eloping with her lover,
The deacon-magistrates recover—
With sermon and black bread reprove
Who fed on berries and on love.
So young (thought Clarel) yet so knowing ;
With much of dubious at the heart,
Yet winsome in the outward showing ;
With whom, with what, hast thou thy part
In flaw upon the student's dream
A wafture of suspicion stirred :
He spake : ' The Hebrew, it would seem,
You study much ; you have averred
More than most Gentiles well may glean
In voyaging mere from scene to scene
Of shifting traffic.' Irksomeness

Here vexed the other's light address ;
But, ease assuming, gay he said :
' Oh, in my wanderings, why, I 've met
Among all kinds, Hebrews well-read,
And some nor dull nor bigot-bred ;
Yes, I pick up, nor all forget.'
So saying, and as to be rid
Of further prosing, he undid
His vesture, turned him, smoothed his cot :
' Late, late ; needs sleep, though sleep 's a sot.'
' A word,' cried Clarel : ' bear with me :
Just nothing strange at all you see
Touching the Hebrews and their lot ? '
Recumbent here : ' Why, yes, they share
That oddity the Gypsies heir :
About *them* why not make ado ?
The Parsees are an odd tribe too ;
Dispersed, no country, and yet hold
By immemorial rites, we 're told.
Amigo, do not scourge me on ;
Put up, put up your monkish thong !
Pray, pardon now ; by peep of sun
Take horse I must. Good-night, with song :

' Lights of Shushan, if your urn
Mellow shed the opal ray,
To delude one—damsels, turn,
Wherefore tarry ? why betray ?
Drop your garlands and away !
Leave me, phantoms that but feign;
Sting me not with inklings vain !

' But, if magic none prevail,
Mocking in untrue romance ;
Let your Paradise exhale

Odours ; and enlink the dance ;
And, ye rosy feet, advance
Till ye meet morn's ruddy Hours
Unabashed in Shushan's bowers ! '

No more : they slept. A spell came down ;
And Clarel dreamed, and seemed to stand
Betwixt a Shushan and a sand ;
The Lyonese was lord of one,
The desert did the Tuscan own,
The pale pure monk. A zephyr fanned ;
It vanished, and he felt the strain
Of clasping arms which would detain
His heart from each ascetic range.
He woke ; 'twas day ; he was alone,
The Lyonese being up and gone :
Vital he knew organic change,
Or felt, at least, that change was working—
A subtle innovator lurking.
He rose, arrayed himself, and won
The roof to take the dawn's fresh air,
And heard a ditty, and looked down.
Who singing rode so debonair ?
His cell-mate, flexible young blade,
Mounted in rear of cavalcade
Just from the gate, in rhythmic way
Switching a light malacca gay :

' Rules, who rules ?
Fools the wise, makes wise the fools—
Every ruling overrules ?
Who the dame that keeps the house,
Provides the diet, and oh, so quiet,
Brings all to pass, the slyest mouse ?
Tell, tell it me :
Signora Nature, who but she ! '

XXVII

BY PARAPET

'WELL may ye gaze! What 's good to see
Better than Adam's humanity
When genial lodged! Such spell is given,
It lured the staid grandees of heaven,
Though biased in their souls divine
Much to one side—the feminine.—
He is the pleasantest small fellow!'

It was the early-rising priest,
Who up there in the morning mellow
Had followed Clarel: 'Not the least
Of pleasures here which I have known
Is meeting with that laxer one.
We talked below; but all the while
My thoughts were wandering away,
Though never once mine eyes did stray,
He did so pleasingly beguile
To keep them fixed upon his form:
Such harmony pervades his warm
Soft outline.—Why now, what a scare
Of incredulity you speak
From eyes! But it was some such fair
Young sinner in the time antique
Suggested to the happy Greek
His form of Bacchus—the sweet shape!
Young Bacchus, mind ye, not the old:
The Egyptian ere he crushed the grape.—

But—how ? and home-sick are you ? Come,
What 's in your thoughts, pray ? Wherefore mum ? '
So Derwent ; though but ill he sped,
Clarel declining to be led
Or cheered. Nor less in covert way
That talk might have an after-sway
Beyond the revery which ran
Half-heeded now or dim : This man—
May Christian true such temper wish ?
His happiness seems paganish.

XXVIII

DAVID'S WELL

THE Lyonese had joined a train
Whereof the man of scars was one
Whose office led him further on
And barring longer stay. Farewell
He overnight had said, ere cell
He sought for slumber. Brief the word ;
No hand he grasped ; yet was he stirred,
Despite his will, in heart at core :
'Twas countrymen he here forsook :
He felt it ; and his aspect wore,
In the last parting, that strange look
Of one enlisted for sad fight
Upon some desperate dark shore,
Who bids adieu to the civilian,
Returning to his club-house bright,
In city cheerful with the million.
But Nature never heedeth this :
To Nature nothing is amiss.

It was a morning full of vent
And bustle. Other pilgrims went.
Later, accoutred in array,
Don Hannibal and party sate
In saddle at the convent gate,
For Hebron bound.—' Ah, well-a-day !
I 'm bolstered up here, tucked away :

My spare spar lashed behind, ye see ;
This crutch for sceptre. Come to me,
Embrace me, my dear friend,' and leant ;
' I 'm off for Mamre ; under oak
Of Abraham I 'll pitch my tent,
Perchance, far from the battle's smoke.
Good friars and friends, behold me here
A poor one-legged pioneer ;
I go, I march, I am the man
In forefront of the limping van
Of refluent emigration. So,
Farewell, Don Derwent ; Placido,
Farewell ; and God bless all and keep !—
Start, dragoman ; come, take your sheep
To Hebron.'
One among the rest
Attending the departure there
Was Clarel. Unto him, oppressed—
In travail of transition rare,
Scarce timely in its unconstraint
Was the droll Mexican's quirkish air
And humorous turn of hintings quaint.
The group dispersed.
Pleased by the hill
And vale, the minster, grot and vine,
Hardly the pilgrims found the will
To go and such fair scene decline.
But not less Bethlehem, avow,
Negative grew to him whose heart,
Swayed by love's nearer magnet now,
Would fain without delay depart ;
Yet comradeship did still require
That some few hours need yet expire.
Restive, he sallied out alone,
And, ere long, place secluded won,

And there a well. The spot he eyed ;
For fountains in that land, being rare,
Attention fix. ' And, yes,' he sighed,
Weighing the thing ; ' though everywhere
This vicinage quite altered be,
The well of Jesse's son I see ;
For this in parched Adullam's lair
How sore he yearned : *ah me, ah me,*
That one would now upon me wait
With that sweet water by the gate !—
He stood : But who will bring to *me*
That living water which who drinks
He thirsteth not again ! Let be :
A thirst that long may anguish thee,
Too long ungratified will die.
But whither now, my heart ? wouldst fly
Each thing that keepeth not the pace
Of common uninquiring life ?
What ! fall back on clay commonplace ?
Yearnest for peace so ? sick of strife ?
Yet how content thee with routine
Worldly ? how mix with tempers keen
And narrow like the knife ? how live
At all, if once a fugitive
From thy own nobler part, though pain
Be portion inwrought with the grain ?

But here, in fair accosting word,
A stranger's happy hail he heard
Descending from a vineyard nigh.
He turned : a pilgrim pleased his eye
(A Muscovite, late seen by shrine),
Good to behold—fresh as a pine—
Elastic, tall ; complexion clear

As dawn in frosty atmosphere
Rose-tinged.
They greet. At once, to reach
Accord, the Russian said, ' Sit here :
You sojourn with the Latin set,
I with the Greeks ; but well we 're met :
All 's much the same : many waves, one beach.
I 'm mateless now ; one, and but one
I 've taken to : and he 's late gone.
You may have crossed him, for indeed
He tarried with your Latin breed
While here : a juicy little fellow—
A Seckel pear, so small and mellow.'
' We shared a cell last night.' ' Ye did ?
And, doubtless, into chat ye slid :
The theme, now ; I am curious there.'
' Judæa—the Jews.' With heightened air
The Russ rejoined : ' And tell me, pray :
Who broached the topic ? he ? ' ' No, I ;
And chary he in grudged reply
At first, but afterward gave way.'
' Indeed ? ' the Russ, with meaning smile ;
' But (further) did he aught revile ? '
' The Jews, he said, were misconceived ;
Much too he dropped which quite bereaved
The Scripture of its Runic spell.
But *Runic* said I ? That 's not well !
I alter, sure.'
Not marking here
Clarel in his self-taxing cheer ;
But full of his own thoughts in clew,
' Right, I was right ! ' the other cried :
' Evade he cannot, no, nor hide.
Learn, he who whiled the hour for you,
His race supplied the theme : a Jew ! '

Clarel leaped up ; ' And can it be ?
Some vague suspicion peered in me ;
I sought to test it—test : and he—
Nay now, I mind me of a stir
Of colour quick ; and might it touch ? '
And paused ; then, as in slight demur :
' His cast of Hebrew is not much.'
' Enough to badge him.'
' Very well :
But why should he the badge repel ? '
' Our Russian sheep still hate the mark ;
They try to rub it off, nor cease
On hedge or briar to leave the fleece
In tell-tale tags. Well, much so he,
Averse to Aaron's cipher dark
And mystical. Society
Is not quite catholic, you know,
Retains some prejudices yet—
Likes not the singular ; and so
He 'd melt in, nor be separate—
Exclusive. And I see no blame.
Nor rare thing is it in French Jew,
Cast among strangers—travelling too—
To cut old grandsire Abraham
As out of mode. I talked, ere you,
With this our friend. Let me avow
My late surmise is surety now.'

They strolled, and parted. And amain
Confirmed the student felt the reign
Of reveries vague, which yet could mar,
Crossed by a surging element—
Surging while aiming at content :
So combs the billow ere it breaks upon the bar.

XXIX

THE NIGHT RIDE

It was the day preceding Lent,
Shrove Tuesday named in English old
(Forefathers' English), and content,
Some yet would tarry, to behold
The initiatory nocturn rite.
'Twas the small hour, as once again,
And final now, in mounted plight
They curve about the Bethlehem urn
Or vine-clad hollow of the swain,
And Clarel felt in every vein—
At last, Jerusalem! 'Twas thence
They started—thither they return,
Rounding the waste circumference.
Now Belex in his revery light
Rolls up and down those guineas bright
Whose minted recompense shall chink
In pouch of sash when travel's brink
Of end is won. Djalea in face
Wears an abstraction, lit by grace
Which governed hopes of rapture lend:
On coins *his* musings likewise bend—
The starry sequins woven fair
Into black tresses. But an air
Considerate and prudent reigns;
For his the love not vainly sure:
'Tis passion deep of man mature
For one who half a child remains:

Yes, underneath a look sedate,
What throbs are known !
But desolate
Upon the pilgrims strangely fall
Eclipses heavier far than come
To hinds, which, after carnival,
Return to toil and querulous home.
Revert did they ? in mind recall
Their pilgrimage, yes, sum it all ?
Could Siddim haunt them ? Saba's bay ?
Did the deep nature in them say—
Two, two are missing—laid away
In deserts twin ? They let it be,
Nor spake ; the candour of the heart
Shrank from suspected counterpart.
But one there was (and Clarel he)
Who, in his aspect free from cloud,
Here caught a gleam from source unspied,
As cliff may take on mountain-side,
When there one small brown cirque ye see
Lit up in mole, how mellowly,
Day going down in sombre shroud—
October-pall.
But tell the vein
Of new emotion, inly held,
That so the long contention quelled—
Languor, and indecision, pain.
Was it abrupt resolve ? a strain
Wiser than wisdom's self might teach ?
Yea, now his hand would boldly reach
And pluck the nodding fruit to him,
Fruit of the tree of life. If doubt
Spin spider-like her tissue out,
And make a snare in reason dim—
Why hang a fly in flimsy web ?

One thing was clear, one thing in sooth :
Stays not the prime of June or youth :
At flood that tide makes haste to ebb.
Recurred one mute appeal of Ruth
(Now first aright construed, he thought),
She seemed to fear for him, and say :
' Ah, tread not, sweet, my father's way,
In whom this evil spirit wrought
And dragged us hither where we die ! '
Yes, now would he forsake that road—
Alertly now and eager hie
To dame and daughter, where they trod
The Dolorosa—quick depart
With them and seek a happier sky.
Warblings he heard of hope in heart,
Responded to by duty's hymn ;
He, late but weak, felt now each limb
In strength how buoyant. But, in truth,
Was part caprice, sally of youth ?
What pulse was this with burning beat ?
Whence, whence the passion that could give
Feathers to thought, yea, Mercury's feet ?
The Lyonese, to sense so dear,
Nor less from faith a fugitive—
Had he infected Clarel here ?
    But came relapse : What end may prove ?
Ah, almoner to Saba's dove,
Ah, bodeful text of hermit-rhyme !
But what ! distrust the trustful eyes ?
Are the sphered breasts full of mysteries
Which not the maiden's self may know ?
May love's nice balance, finely slight,
Take tremor from fulfilled delight ?
Can Nature such a doom dispense
As, after ardour's tender glow,

To make the rapture more than pall
With evil secrets in the sense,
And guile whose bud is innocence—
Sweet blossom of the flower of gall ?
Nay, nay : Ah ! God, keep far from me
Cursed Manes and the Manichee !
At large here life proclaims the law :
Unto embraces myriads draw
Through sacred impulse. Take thy wife ;
Venture, and prove the soul of life,
And let fate drive.—So he the while,
In shadow from the ledges thrown,
As down the Bethlehem hill they file—
Abreast upon the plain anon
Advancing.
Far, in upland spot
A light is seen in Rama paling ;
But Clarel sped, and heeded not,
At least recalled not Rachel wailing.

Aside they win a fountain clear,
The Cistern of the Kings—so named
Because (as vouched) the Magi here
Watered their camels, and reclaimed
The Ray, brief hid. Ere this they passed
Clarel looked in and there saw glassed,
Down in the wave, one mellow star ;
Then, glancing up, beheld afar
Enisled serene, the orb itself—
Apt auspice here for journeying elf.

And now those skirting slopes they tread
Which devious bar the sunken bed
Of Hinnom. Thence uplifted shone
In hauntedness the deicide town

Faint silvered. Gates, of course, were barred ;
But at the further eastern one—
St. Stephen's—there the turbaned guard
(To Belex known) at whispered word
Would ope. Thither, the nearer way,
By Jeremy's grot—they shun that ground,
For there an Ottoman camp's array
Deters. Through Hinnom now they push
Their course round Zion by the glen
Toward Rogel—whither shadowy rush
And where, at last, in cloud convene
(Ere, one, they sweep to gloomier hush)
Those two black chasms which enfold
Jehovah's height. Flanking the well,
Ophel they turn, and gain the dell
Of Shaveh. Here the city old,
Fast locked in torpor, fixed in blight,
No hum sent forth, revealed no light :
Though, facing it, cliff-hung Siloam—
Sepulchral hamlet—showed in tomb
A twinkling lamp. The valley slept—
Obscure, in monitory dream
Oppressive, roofed with awful skies
Whose stars like silver nail-heads gleam
Which stud some lid over lifeless eyes.

XXX

THE VALLEY OF DECISION

DELAY !—Shall flute from forth the Gate
Issue, to warble welcome here—
Upon this safe returning wait
In gratulation ? And, for cheer,
When inn they gain, there shall they see
The door-post wreathed ?
Howe'er it be,
Through Clarel a revulsion ran,
Such as may seize debarking man
First hearing on Coquimbo's ground
That subterranean sullen sound
Which dull foreruns the shock. His heart,
In augury fair arrested here,
Upbraided him : Fool ! and didst part
From Ruth ? Strangely a novel fear
Obtruded—petty, and yet worse
And more from reason too averse,
Than that recurrent haunting bier
Molesting him erewhile. And yet
It was but irritation, fret—
Misgiving that the lines he writ
Upon the eve before the start
For Siddim, failed, or were unfit—
Came short of the occasion's tone :
To leave her, leave her in grief's smart :
To leave her—her, the stricken one :
Now first to feel full force of it !

Away ! to be but there, but there !
Vain goadings : yet of love true part.
But then the pledge with letter sent,
Though but a trifle, still might bear
A token in dumb argument
Expressive more than words.
With knee
Straining against the saddle-brace,
He urges on ; till, near the place
Of Hebrew graves, a light they see
Moving, and figures dimly trace :
Some furtive strange society.
Yet nearer as they ride, the light
Shuts down. ' Abide ! ' enjoined the Druze ;
' Waylayers these are none, but Jews,
Or I mistake, who here by night
Have stolen to do gravedigger's work.
During late outbreak in the town
The bigot in the baser Turk
Was so inflamed, some Hebrews dread
Assault, even here among their dead.
Abide a space ; let me ride on.'
Up pushed he, spake, allayed the fright
Of them who had shut down the light
At sound of comers.
Close they draw—
Advancing, lit by fan-shaped rays
Shot from a small dark-lantern's jaw
Presented pistol-like. They saw
Mattocks and men, in outline dim,
On either ominous side of him
From whom went forth that point of blaze.
Resting from labour, each one stays
His implement on gravestones old.
New dug, between these, they behold

Two narrow pits : and (nor remote)
Twin figures on the ground they note,
Folded in cloaks.
' And who rest there ? '
Rolfe sidelong asked.
' Our friends ; have care'! '
Replied the one that held in view
The lantern, slanting it ashift,
Plainer disclosing them, and, too,
A broidered scarf, love's first chance gift,
The student's (which how well he knew !)
Binding one mantle's slender span.
With piercing cry, as one distraught,
Down from his horse leaped Clarel—ran,
And hold of that cloak instant caught,
And bared the face. Then (like a man
Shot through the heart, but who retains
His posture) rigid he remains—
The mantle's border in his hand,
His glazed eyes unremoved. The band
Of Jews—the pilgrims—all look on
Shocked or amazed.
But speech he won :
' No—yes : enchanted here !—her name ? '
' Ruth, Nathan's daughter,' said a Jew
Who kenned him now—the youth that came
Oft to the close ; ' but, thou—forbear ;
The dawn 's at hand and haste is due :
See, by her side, 'tis Agar there.'
' Ruth ? Agar ?—*art* thou God ?—But ye—
All swims, and I but blackness see.—
How happed it ? speak ! '
' The fever—grief :
'Twere hard to tell ; was no relief.'
' And ye—your tribe—'twas *ye* denied

Me access to this virgin's side
In bitter trial : take my curse !—
O blind, blind, barren universe !
Now am I like a bough torn down,
And I must wither, cloud or sun !—
Had I been near, this had not been.
Do spirits look down upon this scene ?—
The message ? some last word was left ? '
' For thee ? no, none ; the life was reft
Sudden from Ruth ; and Agar died
Babbling of gulls and ocean wide—
Out of her mind.'
' And here 's the furl
Of Nathan's faith : then perish faith—
'Tis perjured !—Take me, take me, Death !
Where Ruth is gone, me thither whirl,
Where'er it be ! '
' Ye do outgo
Mad Korah. Boy, this is the Dale
Of Doom, God's last assizes ; so,
Curb thee ; even if sharp grief assail,
Respect these precincts lest thou know
An ill.'
' Give way, quit thou our dead ! '
Menaced another, striding out ;
' Art thou of us ? turn thee about ! '
' Spurn—I 'll endure ; all spirit 's fled
When one fears nothing.—Bear with me,
Yet bear !—Conviction is not gone
Though faith 's gone : that which shall not be
Still *ought* to be ! '
But here came on,
With heavy footing, hollow heard,
Hebrews, which bare rude slabs, to place
Athwart the bodies when interred,

That earth should weigh not on the face ;
For coffin was there none ; and all
Was makeshift in this funeral.
Uncouthly here a Jew began
To readjust Ruth's cloak. Amain
Did Clarel push him ; and, in hiss :
' Not thou—for me !—Alone, alone
In such bride-chamber to lie down !
Nay, leave one hand out—like to this—
That so the bridegroom may not miss
To kiss it first, when soon he comes.—
But 'tis not she ! ' and hid his face.

They laid them in the under-glooms—
Each pale one in her portioned place.
The gravel, from the bank raked down,
Dull sounded on those slabs of stone,
Grave answering grave—dull and more dull,
Each mass growing more, till either pit was full.

As up from Kedron dumb they drew,
Then first the shivering Clarel knew
Night's damp. The Martyr's port is won—
Stephen's ; harsh grates the bolt withdrawn ;
And, over Olivet, comes on
Ash Wednesday in the gray of dawn.

XXXI

DIRGE

STAY, Death. Not mine the Christus-wand
Wherewith to charge thee and command :
I plead. Most gently hold the hand
Of her thou leadest far away ;
Fear thou to let her naked feet
Tread ashes—but let mosses sweet
Her footing tempt, where'er ye stray.
Shun Orcus ; win the moonlit land
Belulled—the silent meadows lone,
Where never any leaf is blown
From lily-stem in Azrael's hand.
There, till her love rejoin her lowly
(Pensive, a shade, but all her own),
On honey feed her, wild and holy ;
Or trance her with thy choicest charm.
And if, ere yet the lover 's free,
Some added dusk thy rule decree—
That shadow only let it be
Thrown in the moon-glade by the palm.

XXXII

PASSION WEEK

DAY passed ; and passed a second one,
A third—fourth—fifth ; and bound he sate
In film of sorrow without moan—
Abandoned, in the stony strait
Of mutineer thrust on wild shore,
Hearing, beyond the roller's froth,
The last dip of the parting oar.
Alone, for all had left him so ;
Though Rolfe, Vine, Derwent—each was loath,
How loath to leave him, or to go
Be first. From Vine he caught new sense
Developed through fate's pertinence.
Friendly they tarried—blameless went :
Life, avaricious, still demands
Her own, and more ; the world is rent
With partings.
But, since all are gone,
Why lingers he, the stricken one ?
Why linger where no hope can be ?
Ask grief, love ask—fidelity
In dog that by the corse abides
Of shepherd fallen—abides, abides
Though autumn into winter glides,
Till on the mountain all is chill
And snow-bound, and the twain lie still.

How oft through Lent the feet were led
Of this chastised and fasting one
To neutral silence of the dead
In Kedron's gulf. One morn he sate
Down poring toward it from the gate
Sealed and named Golden. There a tomb,
Erected in time's recent day,
In block along the threshold lay
Impassable. From Omar's bloom
Came birds which lit, nor dreamed of harm,
On neighbouring stones. His visage calm
Seemed not the one which late showed play
Of passion's throe ; but here divine
No peace ; ignition in the mine
Announced is by the rush, the roar :
These end ; yet may the coal burn on—
Still slumberous burn beneath the floor
Of pastures where the sheep lie down.
Ere long a cheerful choral strain
He hears ; 'tis an Armenian train
Embowered in palms they bear, which (green,
And shifting oft) reveal the mien
Of flamens tall and singers young
In festal robes : a rainbow throng,
Like dolphins off Madeira seen
Which quick the ship and shout dismay.
With the blest anthem, censers sway,
Whose opal vapour, spiral borne,
Blends with the heavens' own azure Morn
Of Palms ; for 'twas Palm Sunday bright,
Though thereof he, oblivious quite,
Knew nothing, nor that here they came
In memory of the green acclaim
Triumphal, and hosanna-roll
Which hailed Him on the ass's foal.

But unto Clarel that bright view
Into a dusk reminder grew :
He saw the tapers—saw again
The censers, singers, and the wreath
And litter of the bride of death
Pass through the Broken Fountain's lane ;
In treble shrill and bass how deep
The men and boys he heard again
The undetermined contest keep
About the bier—the bier Armenian.
Yet dull, in torpor dim, he knew
The futile omen in review.

Yet three more days, and leadenly
From over Mary's port and arch,
On Holy Thursday, he the march
Of friars beheld, with litany
Filing beneath his feet, and bent
With crosses craped to sacrament
Down in the glenned Gethsemane.
Yes, Passion Week ; the altars cower—
Each shrine a dead dismantled bower.

But when Good Friday dirged her gloom
Ere brake the morning, and each light
Round Calvary faded and THE TOMB,
What exhalations met his sight :
Illusion of grief's wakeful doom :
The dead walked. There, amid the train,
White Nehemiah he saw again—
With charnel beard ; and Celio passed
As in a dampened mirror glassed ;
Gleamed Mortmain, pallid as wolf-bone
Which bleaches where no man hath gone ;
And Nathan in his murdered guise—

Sullen, and Hades in his eyes ;
Poor Agar, with such wandering mien
As in her last blank hour was seen.
And each and all kept lonely state,
Yea, man and wife passed separate.
But Ruth—ah, how estranged in face !
He knew her by no earthly grace :
Nor might he reach to her in place.
And languid vapours from them go
Like thaw-fogs curled from dankish snow.

Where, where now He who helpeth us,
The Comforter ?—Tell, Erebus !

XXXIII

EASTER

BUT ON THE THIRD DAY CHRIST AROSE ;
And, in the town He knew, the rite
Commemorative eager goes
Before the hour. Upon the night
Between the week's last day and first,
No more the Stabat is dispersed
Or Tenebræ. And when the day,
The Easter, falls in calendar
The same to Latin and the array
Of all schismatics from afar—
Armenians, Greeks from many a shore—
Syrians, Copts—profusely pour
The hymns : 'tis like the choric gush
Of torrents Alpine when they rush
To swell the anthem of the spring.
That year was now. Throughout the fane,
Floor, and arcades in double ring
About the gala of THE TOMB,
Blazing with lights, behung with bloom—
What childlike thousands roll the strain,
The hallelujah after pain,
Which in all tongues of Christendom
Still through the ages has rehearsed
That Best, the outcome of the Worst.
Nor blame them who by lavish rite
Thus greet the pale victorious Son,
Since Nature times the same delight,
And rises with the Emerging One ;

Her passion-week, her winter mood
She slips, with crape from off the Rood.
In soft rich shadow under dome,
With gems and robes repletely fine,
The priests like birds Brazilian shine :
And moving tapers charm the sight,
Enkindling the curled incense-fume :
A dancing ray, auroral light.

Burn on the hours, and meet the day.
The morn invites ; the suburbs call
The concourse to come forth—this way !
Out from the gate by Stephen's wall,
They issue, dot the hills, and stray
In bands, like sheep among the rocks ;
And the Good Shepherd in the heaven,
To whom the charge of these is given,
The Christ, ah ! counts He there His flocks ?
But they, at each suburban shrine,
Grateful adore that Friend benign ;
Though chapel now and cross divine
Too frequent show neglected ; nay,
For charities of early rains
Rim them about with vernal stains,
Forerunners of maturer May,
When those red flowers, which so can please
(*Christ's-Blood-Drops* named—anemones),
Spot Ephraim and the mountain-way.
But heart bereft is unrepaid
Though Thammuz' spring in Thammuz' glade
Invite ; then how in Joel's glen ?
What if dyed shawl and bodice gay
Make bright the black dell ? what if they
In distance clear diminished be
To seeming cherries dropped on pall

Borne graveward under laden tree ?
The cheer, so human, might not call
The maiden up ; *Christ is arisen :*
But Ruth, may Ruth so burst the prison ?

The rite supreme being ended now,
Their confluence here the nations part :
Homeward the tides of pilgrims flow,
By contrast making the walled town
Like a depopulated mart ;
More like some kirk on week-day lone,
On whose void benches broodeth still
The brown light from November hill.

But though the freshet quite be gone—
Sluggish, life's wonted stream flows on.

XXXIV

VIA CRUCIS

SOME leading thoroughfares of man
In wood-path, track, or trail began ;
Though threading heart of proudest town,
They follow in controlling grade
A hint or dictate, Nature's own,
By man, as by the brute, obeyed.

Within Jerusalem a lane,
Narrow, nor less an artery main
(Though little knoweth it of din),
In parts suggests such origin.
The restoration or repair,
Successive through long ages there,
Of city upon city tumbled,
Might scarce divert that thoroughfare,
Whose hill abideth yet unhumbled
Above the valley-side it meets.
Pronounce its name, this natural street's :
The *Via Crucis*—even the way
Tradition claims to be the one
Trod on that Friday far away
By Him our pure exemplar shown.

'Tis Whitsuntide. From paths without,
Through Stephen's gate—by many a vein
Convergent brought within this lane,
Ere sun-down shut the loiterer out—
As 'twere a frieze, behold the train !

Bowed water-carriers ; Jews with staves,
Infirm gray monks ; overloaded slaves ;
Turk soldiers—young, with home-sick eyes ;
A Bey, bereaved through luxuries ;
Strangers and exiles ; Moslem dames
Long-veiled in monumental white,
Dumb from the mounds which memory claims ;
A half-starved vagrant Edomite ;
Sore-footed Arab girls, which toil
Depressed under heap of garden-spoil ;
The patient ass with panniered urn ;
Sour camels humped by heaven and man,
Whose languid necks through habit turn
For ease—for ease they hardly gain.
In varied forms of fate they wend—
Or man or animal, 'tis one :
Cross-bearers all, alike they tend
And follow, slowly follow on.

But, lagging after, who is he
Called early every hope to test,
And now, at close of rarer quest,
Finds so much more the heavier tree ?
From slopes whence even Echo 's gone,
Wending, he murmurs in low tone :
' They wire the world—far under sea
They talk ; but never comes to me
A message from beneath the stone.'

Dusked Olivet he leaves behind,
And, taking now a slender wynd,
Vanishes in the obscurer town.

XXXV

EPILOGUE

If Luther's day expand to Darwin's year,
Shall that exclude the hope—foreclose the fear ?

Unmoved by all the claims our times avow,
The ancient Sphinx still keeps the porch of shade
And comes Despair, whom not her calm may cow,
And coldly on that adamantine brow
Scrawls undeterred his bitter pasquinade.
But Faith (who from the scrawl indignant turns),
With blood warm oozing from her wounded trust,
Inscribes even on her shards of broken urns
The sign o' the cross—*the spirit above the dust !*

Yea, ape and angel, strife and old debate—
The harps of heaven and dreary gongs of hell ;
Science the feud can only aggravate—
No umpire she betwixt the chimes and knell :
The running battle of the star and clod
Shall run for ever—if there be no God.

Degrees we know, unknown in days before ;
The light is greater, hence the shadow more ;
And tantalised and apprehensive Man
Appealing—Wherefore ripen us to pain ?
Seems there the spokesman of dumb Nature's
train.

But through such strange illusions have they passed
Who in life's pilgrimage have baffled striven—
Even death may prove unreal at the last,
And stoics be astounded into heaven.

Then keep thy heart, though yet but ill-resigned—
Clarel, thy heart, the issues there but mind ;
That like the crocus budding through the snow—
That like a swimmer rising from the deep—
That like a burning secret which doth go
Even from the bosom that would hoard and keep ;
Emerge thou mayst from the last whelming sea,
And prove that death but routs life into victory.

THE END