

SHAPES OF CLAY

BY

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THE PASSING SHOW.

I.

I know not if it was a dream. I viewed
A city where the restless multitude,
Between the eastern and the western deep
Had roared gigantic fabrics, strong and rude.
Colossal palaces crowned every height;
Towers from valleys climbed into the light;
O'er dwellings at their feet, great golden domes
Hung in the blue, barbarically bright.
But now, new-glimmering to-east, the day
Touched the black masses with a grace of gray,
Dim spires of temples to the nation's God
Studding high spaces of the wide survey.
Well did the roofs their solemn secret keep
Of life and death stayed by the truce of sleep,
Yet whispered of an hour-when sleepers wake,
The fool to hope afresh, the wise to weep.
The gardens greened upon the builded hills
Above the tethered thunders of the mills
With sleeping wheels unstirred to service yet
By the tamed torrents and the quickened rills.
A hewn acclivity, reprieved a space,
Looked on the builder's blocks about his base
And bared his wounded breast in sign to say:
"Strike! 't is my destiny to lodge your race.
"T was but a breath ago the mammoth browsed
Upon my slopes, and in my caves I housed
Your shaggy fathers in their nakedness,
While on their foeman's offal they caroused."
Ships from afar afforested the bay.
Within their huge and chambered bodies lay
The wealth of continents; and merrily sailed
The hardy argosies to far Cathay.
Beside the city of the living spread
Strange fellowship!—the city of the dead;
And much I wondered what its humble folk,
To see how bravely they were housed, had said.

Noting how firm their habitations stood,
Broad-based and free of perishable wood
How deep in granite and how high in brass
The names were wrought of eminent and good,
I said: "When gold or power is their aim,
The smile of beauty or the wage of shame,
Men dwell in cities; to this place they fare
When they would conquer an abiding fame."
From the red East the sun—a solemn rite
Crowned with a flame the cross upon a height
Above the dead; and then with all his strength
Struck the great city all aroar with light!

II.

I know not if it was a dream. I came
Unto a land where something seemed the same
That I had known as 't were but yesterday,
But what it was I could not rightly name.
It was a strange and melancholy land.
Silent and desolate. On either hand
Lay waters of a sea that seemed as dead,
And dead above it seemed the hills to stand,
Grayed all with age, those lonely hills—ah me,
How worn and weary they appeared to be!
Between their feet long dusty fissures clove
The plain in aimless windings to the sea.
One hill there was which, parted from the rest,
Stood where the eastern water curved a-west.
Silent and passionless it stood. I thought
I saw a scar upon its giant breast.
The sun with sullen and portentous gleam
Hung like a menace on the sea's extreme;
Nor the dead waters, nor the far, bleak bars
Of cloud were conscious of his failing beam.
It was a dismal and a dreadful sight,
That desert in its cold, uncanny light;
No soul but I alone to mark the fear
And imminence of everlasting night!

All presages and prophecies of doom
Glimmered and babbled in the ghastly gloom,
And in the midst of that accursèd scene
A wolf sat howling on a broken tomb.

ELIXER VITAE.

Of life's elixir I had writ, when sleep
(Pray Heaven it spared him who the writing read!)
Sealed upon my senses with so deep
A stupefaction that men thought me dead.
The centuries stole by with noiseless tread,
Like spectres in the twilight of my dream;
I saw mankind in dim procession sweep
Through life, oblivion at each extreme.
Meanwhile my beard, like Barbarossa's growing,
Loaded my lap and o'er my knees was flowing.
The generations came with dance and song,
And each observed me curiously there.
Some asked: "Who was he?" Others in the throng
Replied: "A wicked monk who slept at prayer."
Some said I was a saint, and some a bear
These all were women. So the young and gay,
Visibly wrinkling as they fared along,
Doddered at last on failing limbs away;
Though some, their footing in my beard entangled,
Fell into its abysses and were strangled.
At last a generation came that walked
More slowly forward to the common tomb,
Then altogether stopped. The women talked
Excitedly; the men, with eyes agloom
Looked darkly on them with a look of doom;
And one cried out: "We are immortal now
How need we these?" And a dread figure stalked,
Silent, with gleaming axe and shrouded brow,
And all men cried: "Decapitate the women,
Or soon there'll be no room to stand or swim in!"
So (in my dream) each lovely head was chopped
From its fair shoulders, and but men alone
Were left in all the world. Birth being stopped,

Enough of room remained in every zone,
And Peace ascended Woman's vacant throne.
Thus, life's elixir being found (the quacks
Their bread-and-butter in it gladly sopped)
'Twas made worth having by the headsman's axe.
Seeing which, I gave myself a hearty shaking,
And crumbled all to powder in the waking.

CONVALESCENT.

What! "Out of danger?" Can the slighted Dame
Or canting Pharisee no more defame?
Will Treachery caress my hand no more,
Nor Hatred He alurk about my door?
Ingratitude, with benefits dismissed,
Not close the loaded palm to make a fist?
Will Envy henceforth not retaliate
For virtues it were vain to emulate?
Will Ignorance my knowledge fail to scout,
Not understanding what 'tis all about,
Yet feeling in its light so mean and small
That all his little soul is turned to gall?
What! "Out of danger?" Jealousy disarmed?
Greed from exaction magically charmed?
Ambition stayed from trampling whom it meets,
Like horses fugitive in crowded streets?
The Bigot, with his candle, book and bell,
Tongue-tied, unlunged and paralyzed as well?
The Critic righteously to justice haled,
His own ear to the post securely nailed
What most he dreads unable to inflict,
And powerless to hawk the faults he's picked?
The liar choked upon his choicest lie,
And impotent alike to villify
Or flatter for the gold of thrifty men
Who hate his person but employ his pen
Who love and loathe, respectively, the dirt
Belonging to his character and shirt?
What! "Out of danger?"—Nature's minions all,

Like hounds returning to the huntsman's call,
Obedient to the unwelcome note
That stays them from the quarry's bursting throat?
Famine and Pestilence and Earthquake dire,
Torrent and Tempest, Lightning, Frost and Fire,
The soulless Tiger and the mindless Snake,
The noxious Insect from the stagnant lake
(Automaton malevolences wrought
Out of the substance of Creative Thought)
These from their immemorial prey restrained,
Their fury baffled and their power chained?
I'm safe? Is that what the physician said?
What! "Out of danger?" Then, by Heaven, I'm dead!

AT THE CLOSE OF THE CANVASS.

'Twas a Venerable Person, whom I met one Sunday morning,
All appareled as a prophet of a melancholy sect;
And in a jeremaid of objurgatory warning
He lifted up his jodel to the following effect:
O ye sanguinary statesmen, intermit your verbal tussles
O ye editors and orators, consent to hear my lay!
And a little while the digital and maxillary muscles
And attend to what a Venerable Person has to say.
Cease your writing, cease your shouting, cease your wild unearthly lying;
Cease to bandy such expressions as are never, never found
In the letter of a lover; cease "exposing" and "replying"
Let there be abated fury and a decrement of sound.
For to-morrow will be Monday and the fifth day of November
Only day of opportunity before the final rush.
Carpe diem! go conciliate each person who's a member
Of the other party—do it while you can without a blush.
"Lo! the time is close upon you when the madness of the season
Having howled itself to silence, like a Minnesota 'clone,
Will at last be superseded by the still, small voice of reason,
When the whelpage of your folly you would willingly disown.
"Ah, 'tis mournful to consider what remorse will be thronging,
With a consciousness of having been so ghastly indiscreet,
When by accident untoward two ex-gentlemen belonging
To the opposite political denominations meet!
"Yes, 'tis melancholy, truly, to forecast the fierce, unruly
Supersurging of their blushes, like the flushes upon high
When Aurora Borealis lights her circumpolar palace
And in customary manner sets her banner in the sky.
"Each will think: 'This falsifier knows that I too am a liar.
Curse him for a son of Satan, all unholily compound!
Curse my leader for another! Curse that pelican, my mother!
Would to God that I when little in my victual had been drowned!"
Then that Venerable Person went away without returning
And, the madness of the season having also taken flight,
All the people soon were blushing like the skies to crimson burning
When Aurora Borealis fires her premises by night.

NOVUM ORGANUM.

In Bacon see the culminating prime
Of Anglo-Saxon intellect and crime.
He dies and Nature, settling his affairs,
Parts his endowments among us, his heirs:
To every one a pinch of brain for seed,
And, to develop it, a pinch of greed.
Each thrifty heir, to make the gift suffice,
Buries the talent to manure the vice.

GEOTHEOS.

As sweet as the look of a lover
Saluting the eyes of a maid,
That blossom to blue as the maid
Is ablush to the glances above her,
The sunshine is gilding the glade
And lifting the lark out of shade.
Sing therefore high praises, and therefore
Sing songs that are ancient as gold,
Of Earth in her garments of gold;
Nor ask of their meaning, nor wherefore
They charm as of yore, for behold!
The Earth is as fair as of old.
Sing songs of the pride of the mountains,
And songs of the strength of the seas,
And the fountains that fall to the seas
From the hands of the hills, and the fountains
That shine in the temples of trees,
In valleys of roses and bees.
Sing songs that are dreamy and tender,
Of slender Arabian palms,
And shadows that circle the palms,
Where caravans, veiled from the splendor,
Are kneeling in blossoms and balms,
In islands of infinite calms.
Barbaric, O Man, was thy runing

When mountains were stained as with wine
By the dawning of Time, and as wine
Were the seas, yet its echoes are crooning,
Achant in the gusty pine
And the pulse of the poet's line.

YORICK.

Hard by an excavated street one sat
In solitary session on the sand;
And ever and anon he spake and spat
And spake again—a yellow skull in hand,
To which that retrospective Pioneer
Addressed the few remarks that follow here:
"Who are you? Did you come 'der blains agross,
Or 'Horn aroundt'? In days o' '49
Did them thar eye-holes see the Southern Cross
From the Antarctic Sea git up an' shine?
Or did you drive a bull team 'all the way
From Pike,' with Mr. Joseph Bowers?—say!
"Was you in Frisco when the water came
Up to Montgum'ry street? and do you mind
The time when Peters run the faro game
Jim Peters from old Mississip—behind
Wells Fargo's, where he subsequent was bust
By Sandy, as regards both bank and crust?
"I wonder was you here when Casey shot
James King o' William? And did you attend
The neck-tie dance ensuin'? I did not,
But j'ined the rush to Go Creek with my friend
Ed'ard McGowan; for we was resolved
In sech diversions not to be involved.
"Maybe I knowed you; seems to me I've seed
Your face afore. I don't forget a face,
But names I disremember—I'm that breed
Of owls. I'm talking some'at into space
An' maybe my remarks is too derved free,
Seein' yer name is unbeknown to me.
"Ther' was a time, I reckon, when I knowed

Nigh onto every dern galoot in town.
That was as late as '50. Now she's growed
Surprisin'! Yes, me an' my pardner, Brown,
Was wide acquainted. If ther' was a cuss
We didn't know, the cause was—he knowed us.
"Maybe you had that claim adjoinin' mine
Up thar in Calaveras. Was it you
To which Long Mary took a mighty shine,
An' throwed squar' off on Jake the Kangaroo?
I guess if she could see ye now she'd take
Her chance o' happiness along o' Jake.
"You ain't so purty now as you was then:
Yer eyes is nothin' but two prospect holes,
An' women which are hitched to better men
Would hardly for sech glances damn their souls,
As Lenghie did. By G—! I hope it's you,
For" (kicks the skull) "I'm Jake the Kangaroo."

A VISION OF DOOM.

I stood upon a hill. The setting sun
Was crimson with a curse and a portent,
And scarce his angry ray lit up the land
That lay below, whose lurid gloom appeared
Freaked with a moving mist, which, reeking up
From dim tarns hateful with some horrid ban,
Took shapes forbidden and without a name.
Gigantic night-birds, rising from the reeds
With cries discordant, startled all the air,
And bodiless voices babbled in the gloom
The ghosts of blasphemies long ages stilled,
And shrieks of women, and men's curses. All
These visible shapes, and sounds no mortal ear
Had ever heard, some spiritual sense
Interpreted, though brokenly; for I
Was haunted by a consciousness of crime,
Some giant guilt, but whose I knew not. All
These things malign, by sight and sound revealed,
Were sin-begotten; that I knew—no more
And that but dimly, as in dreadful dreams
The sleepy senses babble to the brain
Imperfect witness. As I stood a voice,
But whence it came I knew not, cried aloud
Some words to me in a forgotten tongue,
Yet straight I knew me for a ghost forlorn,
Returned from the illimited inane.
Again, but in a language that I knew,
As in reply to something which in me
Had shaped itself a thought, but found no words,
It spake from the dread mystery about:
"Immortal shadow of a mortal soul
That perished with eternity, attend.
What thou beholdest is as void as thou:
The shadow of a poet's dream—himself
As thou, his soul as thine, long dead,
But not like thine outlasted by its shade.
His dreams alone survive eternity
As pictures in the unsubstantial void.
Excepting thee and me (and we because

The poet wove us in his thought) remains
Of nature and the universe no part
Or vestige but the poet's dreams. This dread,
Unspeakable land about thy feet, with all
Its desolation and its terrors—lo!
'T is but a phantom world. So long ago
That God and all the angels since have died
That poet lived—yourself long dead—his mind
Filled with the light of a prophetic fire,
And standing by the Western sea, above
The youngest, fairest city in the world,
Named in another tongue than his for one
Ensainted, saw its populous domain
Plague-smitten with a nameless shame. For there
Red-handed murder rioted; and there
The people gathered gold, nor cared to loose
The assassin's fingers from the victim's throat,
But said, each in his vile pursuit engrossed:
'Am I my brother's keeper? Let the Law
Look to the matter.' But the Law did not.
And there, O pitiful! the babe was slain
Within its mother's breast and the same grave
Held babe and mother; and the people smiled,
Still gathering gold, and said: 'The Law, the Law,'
Then the great poet, touched upon the lips
With a live coal from Truth's high altar, raised
His arms to heaven and sang a song of doom
Sang of the time to be, when God should lean
Indignant from the Throne and lift his hand,
And that foul city be no more!—a tale,
A dream, a desolation and a curse!
No vestige of its glory should survive
In fact or memory: its people dead,
Its site forgotten, and its very name
Disputed."
"Was the prophecy fulfilled?"
The sullen disc of the declining sun
Was crimson with a curse and a portent,
And scarce his angry ray lit up the land
That lay below, whose lurid gloom appeared
Freaked with a moving mist, which, reeking up

From dim tarns hateful with a horrid ban,
Took shapes forbidden and without a name.
Gigantic night-birds, rising from the reeds
With cries discordant, startled all the air,
And bodiless voices babbled in the gloom.
But not to me came any voice again;
And, covering my face with thin, dead hands,
I wept, and woke, and cried aloud to God!

POLITICS.

That land full surely hastens to its end
Where public sycophants in homage bend
The populace to flatter, and repeat
The doubled echoes of its loud conceit.
Lowly their attitude but high their aim,
They creep to eminence through paths of shame,
Till fixed securely in the seats of pow'r,
The dupes they flattered they at last devour.

POESY.

Successive bards pursue Ambition's fire
That shines, Oblivion, above thy mire.
The latest mounts his predecessor's trunk,
And sinks his brother ere himself is sunk.
So die ingloriously Fame's élite,
But dams of dunces keep the line complete.

IN DEFENSE.

You may say, if you please, Johnny Bull, that our girls
Are crazy to marry your dukes and your earls;
But I've heard that the maids of your own little isle
Greet bachelor lords with a favoring smile.
Nay, titles, 'tis said in defense of our fair,
Are popular here because popular there;

And for them our ladies persistently go
 Because 'tis exceedingly English, you know.
 Whatever the motive, you'll have to confess
 The effort's attended with easy success;
 And—pardon the freedom—'tis thought, over here,
 'Tis mortification you mask with a sneer.
 It's all very well, sir, your scorn to parade
 Of the high nasal twang of the Yankee maid,
 But, ah, to my lord when he dares to propose
 No sound is so sweet as that "Yes" from the nose.
 Our ladies, we grant, walk alone in the street
 (Observe, by-the-by, on what delicate feet!)
 'Tis a habit they got here at home, where they say
 The men from politeness go seldom astray.
 Ah, well, if the dukes and the earls and that lot
 Can stand it (God succor them if they cannot!)
 Your commoners ought to assent, I am sure,
 And what they 're not called on to suffer, endure.
 "'Tis nothing but money?" "Your nobles are bought?"
 As to that, I submit, it is commonly thought
 That England's a country not specially free
 Of Croesi and (if you'll allow it) Croesae.
 You've many a widow and many a girl
 With money to purchase a duke or an earl.
 'Tis a very remarkable thing, you'll agree,
 When goods import buyers from over the sea.
 Alas for the woman of Albion's isle!
 She may simper; as well as she can she may smile;
 She may wear pantalettes and an air of repose
 But my lord of the future will talk through his nose.

AN INVOCATION.

Goddess of Liberty! O thou
 Whose tearless eyes behold the chain,
 And look unmoved upon the slain,
 Eternal peace upon thy brow,
 Before thy shrine the races press,
 Thy perfect favor to implore
 The proudest tyrant asks no more,
 The ironed anarchist no less.

Thine altar-coals that touch the lips
Of prophets kindle, too, the brand
By Discord flung with wanton hand
Among the houses and the ships.
Upon thy tranquil front the star
Burns bleak and passionless and white,
Its cold inclemency of light
More dreadful than the shadows are.
Thy name we do not here invoke
Our civic rites to sanctify:
Enthroned in thy remoter sky,
Thou heedest not our broken yoke.
Thou carest not for such as we:
Our millions die to serve the still
And secret purpose of thy will.
They perish—what is that to thee?
The light that fills the patriot's tomb
Is not of thee. The shining crown
Compassionately offered down
To those who falter in the gloom,
And fall, and call upon thy name,
And die desiring—'tis the sign
Of a diviner love than thine,
Rewarding with a richer fame.
To him alone let freemen cry
Who hears alike the victor's shout,
The song of faith, the moan of doubt,
And bends him from his nearer sky.
God of my country and my race!
So greater than the gods of old
So fairer than the prophets told
Who dimly saw and feared thy face,
Who didst but half reveal thy will
And gracious ends to their desire,
Behind the dawn's advancing fire
Thy tender day-beam veiling still,
To whom the unceasing suns belong,
And cause is one with consequence,
To whose divine, inclusive sense
The moan is blended with the song,
Whose laws, imperfect and unjust,

Thy just and perfect purpose serve:
The needle, howsoe'er it swerve,
Still warranting the sailor's trust,
God, lift thy hand and make us free
To crown the work thou hast designed.
O, strike away the chains that bind
Our souls to one idolatry!
The liberty thy love hath given
We thank thee for. We thank thee for
Our great dead fathers' holy war
Wherein our manacles were riven.
We thank thee for the stronger stroke
Ourselves delivered and incurred
When—thine incitement half unheard
The chains we riveted we broke.
We thank thee that beyond the sea
The people, growing ever wise,
Turn to the west their serious eyes
And dumbly strive to be as we.
As when the sun's returning flame
Upon the Nileside statue shone,
And struck from the enchanted stone
The music of a mighty fame,
Let Man salute the rising day
Of Liberty, but not adore.
'Tis Opportunity—no more
A useful, not a sacred, ray.
It bringeth good, it bringeth ill,
As he possessing shall elect.
He maketh it of none effect
Who walketh not within thy will.
Give thou or more or less, as we
Shall serve the right or serve the wrong.
Confirm our freedom but so long
As we are worthy to be free.
But when (O, distant be the time!)
Majorities in passion draw
Insurgent swords to murder Law,
And all the land is red with crime;
Or—nearer menace!—when the band
Of feeble spirits cringe and plead

To the gigantic strength of Greed,
And fawn upon his iron hand;
Nay, when the steps to state are worn
In hollows by the feet of thieves,
And Mammon sits among the sheaves
And chuckles while the reapers mourn;
Then stay thy miracle!—replace
The broken throne, repair the chain,
Restore the interrupted reign
And veil again thy patient face.
Lo! here upon the world's extreme
We stand with lifted arms and dare
By thine eternal name to swear
Our country, which so fair we deem
Upon whose hills, a bannered throng,
The spirits of the sun display
Their flashing lances day by day
And hear the sea's pacific song—
Shall be so ruled in right and grace
That men shall say: "O, drive afield
The lawless eagle from the shield,
And call an angel to the place!"

RELIGION.

Hassan Bedreddin, clad in rags, ill-shod,
Sought the great temple of the living God.
The worshippers arose and drove him forth,
And one in power beat him with a rod.
"Allah," he cried, "thou seest what I got;
Thy servants bar me from the sacred spot."
"Be comforted," the Holy One replied;
"It is the only place where I am not."

A MORNING FANCY.

I drifted (or I seemed to) in a boat
Upon the surface of a shoreless sea
Whereon no ship nor anything did float,
Save only the frail bark supporting me;
And that—it was so shadowy—seemed to be
Almost from out the very vapors wrought
Of the great ocean underneath its keel;
And all that blue profound appeared as naught
But thicker sky, translucent to reveal,
Miles down, whatever through its spaces glided,
Or at the bottom traveled or abided.
Great cities there I saw—of rich and poor,
The palace and the hovel; mountains, vales,
Forest and field, the desert and the moor,
Tombs of the good and wise who'd lived in jails,
And seas of denser fluid, white with sails
Pushed at by currents moving here and there
And sensible to sight above the flat
Of that opaquer deep. Ah, strange and fair
The nether world that I was gazing at
With beating heart from that exalted level,
And—lest I founder—trembling like the devil!
The cities all were populous: men swarmed
In public places—chattered, laughed and wept;
And savages their shining bodies warmed
At fires in primal woods. The wild beast leapt
Upon its prey and slew it as it slept.
Armies went forth to battle on the plain

So far, far down in that unfathomed deep
The living seemed as silent as the slain,
Nor even the widows could be heard to weep.
One might have thought their shaking was but laughter;
And, truly, most were married shortly after.
Above the wreckage of that silent fray
Strange fishes swam in circles, round and round
Black, double-finned; and once a little way
A bubble rose and burst without a sound
And a man tumbled out upon the ground.
Lord! 'twas an eerie thing to drift apace
On that pellucid sea, beneath black skies
And o'er the heads of an undrowning race;
And when I woke I said—to her surprise
Who came with chocolate, for me to drink it:
"The atmosphere is deeper than you think it."

VISIONS OF SIN.

"My eyes are better, and I shall travel slowly toward home."

DANENHOWER.

From the regions of the Night,
Coming with recovered sight
From the spell of darkness free,
What will Danenhower see?
He will see when he arrives,
Doctors taking human lives.
He will see a learned judge
Whose decision will not budge
Till both litigants are fleeced
And his palm is duly greased.
Lawyers he will see who fight
Day by day and night by night;
Never both upon a side,
Though their fees they still divide.
Preachers he will see who teach
That it is divine to preach
That they fan a sacred fire
And are worthy of their hire.

He will see a trusted wife
(Pride of some good husband's life)
Enter at a certain door
And—but he will see no more.
He will see Good Templars reel
See a prosecutor steal,
And a father beat his child.
He'll perhaps see Oscar Wilde.
From the regions of the Night
Coming with recovered sight
From the bliss of blindness free,
That's what Danenhower'll see.

THE TOWN OF DAE.

Swains and maidens, young and old,
You to me this tale have told.
Where the squalid town of Dae
Irks the comfortable sea,
Spreading webs to gather fish,
As for wealth we set a wish,
Dwelt a king by right divine,
Sprung from Adam's royal line,
Town of Dae by the sea,
Divers kinds of kings there be.
Name nor fame had Picklepip:
Ne'er a soldier nor a ship
Bore his banners in the sun;
Naught knew he of kingly sport,
And he held his royal court
Under an inverted tun.
Love and roses, ages through,
Bloom where cot and trellis stand;
Never yet these blossoms grew
Never yet was room for two
In a cask upon the strand.

So it happened, as it ought,
That his simple schemes he wrought
Through the lagging summer's day
In a solitary way.

So it happened, as was best,
That he took his nightly rest
With no dreadful incubus
This way eyed and that way tressed,
Featured thus, and thus, and thus,
Lying lead-like on a breast
By cares of State enough oppressed.

Yet in dreams his fancies rude
Claimed a lordly latitude.

Town of Dae by the sea,
Dreamers mate above their state
And waken back to their degree.

Once to cask himself away
He prepared at close of day.

As he tugged with swelling throat

At a most unkingly coat—

Not to get it off, but on,

For the serving sun was gone

Passed a silk-appareled sprite

Toward her castle on the height,

Seized and set the garment right.

Turned the startled Picklepip—

Splendid crimson cheek and lip!

Turned again to sneak away,

But she bade the villain stay,

Bade him thank her, which he did

With a speech that slipped and slid,

Sprawled and stumbled in its gait

As a dancer tries to skate.

Town of Dae by the sea,

In the face of silk and lace

Rags too bold should never be.

Lady Minnow cocked her head:

"Mister Picklepip," she said,

"Do you ever think to wed?"

Town of Dae by the sea,

No fair lady ever made a

Wicked speech like that to me!
Wretched little Picklepip
Said he hadn't any ship,
Any flocks at his command,
Nor to feed them any land;
Said he never in his life
Owned a mine to keep a wife.
But the guilty stammer so
That his meaning wouldn't flow;
So he thought his aim to reach
By some figurative speech:
Said his Fate had been unkind
Had pursued him from behind
(How the mischief could it else?)
Came upon him unaware,
Caught him by the collar—there
Gushed the little lady's glee
Like a gush of golden bells:
"Picklepip, why, that is me!"
Town of Dae by the sea,
Grammar's for great scholars—she
Loved the summer and the lea.
Stupid little Picklepip
Allowed the subtle hint to slip
Maundered on about the ship
That he did not chance to own;
Told this grievance o'er and o'er,
Knowing that she knew before;
Told her how he dwelt alone.
Lady Minnow, for reply,
Cut him off with "So do I!"
But she reddened at the fib;
Servitors had she, ad lib.
Town of Dae by the sea,
In her youth who speaks no truth
Ne'er shall young and honest be.
Witless little Picklepip
Manned again his mental ship
And veered her with a sudden shift.
Painted to the lady's thought
How he wrestled and he wrought

Stoutly with the swimming drift
By the kindly river brought
From the mountain to the sea,
Fuel for the town of Dae.
Tedious tale for lady's ear:
From her castle on the height,
She had watched her water-knight
Through the seasons of a year,
Challenge more than met his view
And conquer better than he knew.
Now she shook her pretty pate
And stamped her foot—'t was growing late:
"Mister Picklepip, when I
Drifting seaward pass you by;
When the waves my forehead kiss
And my tresses float above
Dead and drowned for lack of love
You'll be sorry, sir, for this!"
And the silly creature cried
Feared, perchance, the rising tide.
Town of Dae by the sea,
Madam Adam, when she had 'em,
May have been as bad as she.
Fiat lux! Love's lumination
Fell in floods of revelation!
Blinded brain by world aglare,
Sense of pulses in the air,
Sense of swooning and the beating
Of a voice somewhere repeating
Something indistinctly heard!
And the soul of Picklepip
Sprang upon his trembling lip,
But he spake no further word
Of the wealth he did not own;
In that moment had outgrown
Ship and mine and flock and land
Even his cask upon the strand.
Dropped a stricken star to earth,
Type of wealth and worldly worth.
Clomb the moon into the sky,
Type of love's immensity!

Shaking silver seemed the sea,
Throne of God the town of Dae!
Town of Dae by the sea,
From above there cometh love,
Blessing all good souls that be.

AN ANARCHIST.

False to his art and to the high command
God laid upon him, Markham's rebel hand
Beats all in vain the harp he touched before:
It yields a jingle and it yields no more.
No more the strings beneath his finger-tips
Sing harmonies divine. No more his lips,
Touched with a living coal from sacred fires,
Lead the sweet chorus of the golden wires.
The voice is raucous and the phrases squeak;
They labor, they complain, they sweat, they reek!
The more the wayward, disobedient song
Errs from the right to celebrate the wrong,
More diligently still the singer strums,
To drown the horrid sound, with all his thumbs.
Gods, what a spectacle! The angels lean
Out of high Heaven to view the sorry scene,
And Israfel, "whose heart-strings are a lute,"
Though now compassion makes their music mute,
Among the weeping company appears,
Pearls in his eyes and cotton in his ears.

AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

Once I "dipt into the future far as human eye could see,"
And saw—it was not Sandow, nor John Sullivan, but she
The Emancipated Woman, who was weeping as she ran
Here and there for the discovery of Expurgated Man.
But the sun of Evolution ever rose and ever set,
And that tardiest of mortals hadn't evolved yet.
Hence the tears that she cascaded, hence the sighs that tore apart
All the tendinous connections of her indurated heart.
Cried Emancipated Woman, as she wearied of the search:
"In Advancing I have left myself distinctly in the lurch!
Seeking still a worthy partner, from the land of brutes and dudes
I have penetrated rashly into manless solitudes.
Now without a mate of any kind where am I?—that's to say,
Where shall I be to-morrow?—where exert my rightful sway

And the purifying strength of my emancipated mind?
Can solitude be lifted up, vacuity refined?
Calling, calling from the shadows in the rear of my Advance
From the Region of Unprogress in the Dark Domain of Chance
Long I heard the Unevolvable beseeching my return
To share the degradation he's reluctant to unlearn.
But I fancy I detected—though I pray it wasn't that
A low reverberation, like an echo in a hat.
So I've held my way regardless, evolving year by year,
Till I'm what you now behold me—or would if you were here
A condensed Emancipation and a Purifier proud
An Independent Entity appropriately loud!
Independent? Yes, in spirit, but (O, woful, woful state!)
Doomed to premature extinction by privation of a mate
To extinction or reversion, for Unexpurgated Man
Still awaits me in the backward if I sicken of the van.
O the horrible dilemma!—to be odiously linked
With an Undeveloped Species, or become a Type Extinct!"
As Emancipated Woman wailed her sorrow to the air,
Stalking out of desolation came a being strange and rare
Plato's Man!—bipedal, featherless from mandible to rump,
Its wings two quillless flippers and its tail a plumeless stump.
First it scratched and then it clucked, as if in hospitable terms
It invited her to banquet on imaginary worms.
Then it strutted up before her with a lifting of the head,
And in accents of affection and of sympathy it said:
"My estate is some 'at 'umble, but I'm qualified to draw
Near the hymeneal altar and whack up my heart and claw
To Emancipated Anything as walks upon the earth;
And them things is at your service for whatever they are worth.
I'm sure to be congenial, marm, nor e'er deserve a scowl
I'm Emancipated Rooster, I am Expurgated Fowl!"
From the future and its wonders I withdrew my gaze, and then
Wrote this wild unfestive prophecy about the Coming Hen.

ARMA VIRUMQUE.

"Ours is a Christian Army"; so he said
A regiment of bangomen who led.
"And ours a Christian Navy," added he
Who sailed a thunder-junk upon the sea.
Better they know than men unwarlike do
What is an army and a navy, too.
Pray God there may be sent them by-and-by
The knowledge what a Christian is, and why.
For somewhat lamely the conception runs
Of a brass-buttoned Jesus firing guns.

ON A PROPOSED CREMATORY.

When a fair bridge is builded o'er the gulf
Between two cities, some ambitious fool,
Hot for distinction, pleads for earliest leave
To push his clumsy feet upon the span,
That men in after years may single him,
Saying: "Behold the fool who first went o'er!"
So be it when, as now the promise is,
Next summer sees the edifice complete
Which some do name a crematorium,
Within the vantage of whose greater maw's
Quicker digestion we shall cheat the worm
And circumvent the handed mole who loves,
With tunnel, adit, drift and roomy stope,
To mine our mortal parts in all their dips
And spurs and angles. Let the fool stand forth
To link his name with this fair enterprise,
As first decarcassed by the flame. And if
With rival greedings for the fiery fame
They push in clamoring multitudes, or if
With unaccustomed modesty they all
Hold off, being something loth to qualify,
Let me select the fittest for the rite.
By heaven! I'll make so warrantable, wise
And excellent censure of their true deserts,

And such a searching canvass of their claims,
That none shall bait the ballot. I'll spread my choice
 Upon the main and general of those
 Who, moved of holy impulse, pulpit-born,
 Protested 'twere a sacrilege to burn
 God's gracious images, designed to rot,
 And bellowed for the right of way for each
Distempered carrion through the water pipes.
 With such a sturdy, boisterous exclaim
They did discharge themselves from their own throats
 Against the splintered gates of audience
 'Twere wholesomer to take them in at mouth
 Than ear. These shall burn first: their ignible
And seasoned substances—trunks, legs and arms,
 Blent indistinguishable in a mass,
 Like winter-woven serpents in a pit
None vantaged of his fellow-fools in point
 Of precedence, and all alive—shall serve
 As fueling to fervor the retort
 For after cineration of true men.

A DEMAND.

You promised to paint me a picture,
 Dear Mat,
 And I was to pay you in rhyme.
Although I am loth to inflict your
 Most easy of consciences, I'm
 Of opinion that fibbing is awful,
And breaking a contract unlawful,
 Indictable, too, as a crime,
 A slight and all that.
 If, Lady Unbountiful, any
 Of that
 By mortals called pity has part
 In your obdurate soul—if a penny
You care for the health of my heart,
 By performing your undertaking
You'll succor that organ from breaking
 And spare it for some new smart,

As puss does a rat.
Do you think it is very becoming,
Dear Mat,
To deny me my rights evermore
And—bless you! if I begin summing
Your sins they will make a long score!
You never were generous, madam,
If you had been Eve and I Adam
You'd have given me naught but the core,
And little of that.
Had I been content with a Titian,
A cat
By Landseer, a meadow by Claude,
No doubt I'd have had your permission
To take it—by purchase abroad.
But why should I sail o'er the ocean
For Landseers and Claudes? I've a notion
All's bad that the critics belaud.
I wanted a Mat.
Presumption's a sin, and I suffer
For that:
But still you did say that sometime,
If I'd pay you enough (here's enouger
That's more than enough) of rhyme
You'd paint me a picture. I pay you
Hereby in advance; and I pray you
Condone, while you can, your crime,
And send me a Mat.
But if you don't do it I warn you,
Dear Mat,
I'll raise such a clamor and cry
On Parnassus the Muses will scorn you
As mocker of poets and fly
With bitter complaints to Apollo:
"Her spirit is proud, her heart hollow,
Her beauty"—they'll hardly deny,
On second thought, that!

THE WEATHER WIGHT.

The way was long, the hill was steep,
My footing scarcely I could keep.
The night enshrouded me in gloom,
I heard the ocean's distant boom
The trampling of the surges vast
Was borne upon the rising blast.
"God help the mariner," I cried,
"Whose ship to-morrow braves the tide!"
Then from the impenetrable dark
A solemn voice made this remark:
"For this locality—warm, bright;
Barometer unchanged; breeze light."
"Unseen consoler-man," I cried,
"Whoe'er you are, where'er abide,
"Thanks—but my care is somewhat less
For Jack's, than for my own, distress.
"Could I but find a friendly roof,
Small odds what weather were aloof.
"For he whose comfort is secure
Another's woes can well endure."
"The latch-string's out," the voice replied,
"And so's the door—jes' step inside."
Then through the darkness I discerned
A hovel, into which I turned.
Groping about beneath its thatch,
I struck my head and then a match.
A candle by that gleam betrayed
Soon lent paraffinaceous aid.
A pallid, bald and thin old man
I saw, who this complaint began:
"Through summer suns and winter snows
I sets observin' of my toes.
"I rambles with increasin' pain
The path of duty, but in vain.
"Rewards and honors pass me by
No Congress hears this raven cry!"
Filled with astonishment, I spoke:
"Thou ancient raven, why this croak?"

"With observation of your toes
What Congress has to do, Heaven knows!

"And swallow me if e'er I knew
That one could sit and ramble too!"

To answer me that ancient swain
Took up his parable again:

"Through winter snows and summer suns
A Weather Bureau here I runs.

"I calls the turn, and can declare
Jes' when she'll storm and when she'll fair.

"Three times a day I sings out clear
The probs to all which wants to hear.

"Some weather stations run with light
Frivolity is seldom right.

"A scientist from times remote,
In Scienceville my birth is wrote.

"And when I h'ist the 'rainy' sign
Jes' take your clo'es in off the line."

"Not mine, O marvelous old man,
The methods of your art to scan,
"Yet here no instruments there be
Nor 'ometer nor 'scope I see.

"Did you (if questions you permit)
At the asylum leave your kit?"

That strange old man with motion rude
Grew to surprising altitude.

"Tools (and sarcazzems too) I scorns
I tells the weather by my corns.

"No doors and windows here you see
The wind and m'isture enters free.

"No fires nor lights, no wool nor fur
Here falsifies the tempercher.

"My corns unleathered I expose
To feel the rain's foretelling throes.

"No stockin' from their ears keeps out
The comin' tempest's warnin' shout.

"Sich delicacy some has got
They know next summer's to be hot.

"This here one says (for that he's best):
'Storm center passin' to the west.'

"This feller's vitals is transfixed

With frost for Janawary sixt'.
"One chap jes' now is occy'pied
In fig'rin on next Fridy's tide.
"I've shaved this cuss so thin and true
He'll spot a fog in South Peru.
"Sech are my tools, which ne'er a swell
Observatory can excel.
"By long a-studyin' their throbs
I catches onto all the probs."
Much more, no doubt, he would have said,
But suddenly he turned and fled;
For in mine eye's indignant green
Lay storms that he had not foreseen,
Till all at once, with silent squeals,
His toes "caught on" and told his heels.
T.A.H.

Yes, he was that, or that, as you prefer
Did so and so, though, faith, it wasn't all;
Lived like a fool, or a philosopher.
And had whatever's needful for a fall.
As rough inflections on a planet merge
In the true bend of the gigantic sphere,
Nor mar the perfect circle of its verge,
So in the survey of his worth the small
Asperities of spirit disappear,
Lost in the grander curves of character.
He lately was hit hard: none knew but I
The strength and terror of that ghastly stroke
Not even herself. He uttered not a cry,
But set his teeth and made a revelry;
Drank like a devil—staining sometimes red
The goblet's edge; diced with his conscience; spread,
Like Sisyphus, a feast for Death, and spoke
His welcome in a tongue so long forgot
That even his ancient guest remembered not
What race had cursed him in it. Thus my friend
Still conjugating with each failing sense
The verb "to die" in every mood and tense,
Pursued his awful humor to the end.
When like a stormy dawn the crimson broke

From his white lips he smiled and mutely bled,
And, having meanly lived, is grandly dead.

MY MONUMENT.

It is pleasant to think, as I'm watching my ink
A-drying along my paper,
That a monument fine will surely be mine
When death has extinguished my taper.
From each rhyming scribe of the journalist tribe
Purged clean of all sentiments narrow,
A pebble will mark his respect for the stark
Stiff body that's under the barrow.
By fellow-bards thrown, thus stone upon stone
Will make my celebrity deathless.
O, I wish I could think, as I gaze at my ink,
They'd wait till my carcass is breathless.

MAD.

O ye who push and fight
To hear a wanton sing
Who utter the delight
That has the bogus ring,
O men mature in years,
In understanding young,
The membranes of whose ears
She tickles with her tongue,
O wives and daughters sweet,
Who call it love of art
To kiss a woman's feet
That crush a woman's heart,
O prudent dams and sires,
Your docile young who bring
To see how man admires
A sinner if she sing,
O husbands who impart
To each assenting spouse
The lesson that shall start
The buds upon your brows,
All whose applauding hands
Assist to rear the fame
That throws o'er all the lands

The shadow of its shame,
Go drag her car!—the mud
Through which its axle rolls
Is partly human blood
And partly human souls.
Mad, mad!—your senses whirl
Like devils dancing free,
Because a strolling girl
Can hold the note high C.
For this the avenging rod
Of Heaven ye dare defy,
And tear the law that God
Thundered from Sinai!

HOSPITALITY.

Why ask me, Gastrogogue, to dine
(Unless to praise your rascal wine)
Yet never ask some luckless sinner
Who needs, as I do not, a dinner?

FOR A CERTAIN CRITIC.

Let lowly themes engage my humble pen
Stupidities of critics, not of men.
Be it mine once more the maanderings to trace
Of the expounders' self-directed race—
Their wire-drawn fancies, finically fine,
Of diligent vacuity the sign.
Let them in jargon of their trade rehearse
The moral meaning of the random verse
That runs spontaneous from the poet's pen
To be half-blotted by ambitious men
Who hope with his their meaner names to link
By writing o'er it in another ink
The thoughts unreal which they think they think,

Until the mental eye in vain inspects
The hateful palimpsest to find the text.
The lark ascending heavenward, loud and long
Sings to the dawning day his wanton song.
The moaning dove, attentive to the sound,
Its hidden meaning hastens to expound:
Explains its principles, design—in brief,
Pronounces it a parable of grief!
The bee, just pausing ere he daubs his thigh
With pollen from a hollyhock near by,
Declares he never heard in terms so just
The labor problem thoughtfully discussed!
The browsing ass looks up and clears his whistle
To say: "A monologue upon the thistle!"
Meanwhile the lark, descending, folds his wing
And innocently asks: "What!—did I sing?"
O literary parasites! who thrive
Upon the fame of better men, derive
Your sustenance by suction, like a leech,
And, for you preach of them, think masters preach,
Who find it half is profit, half delight,
To write about what you could never write,
Consider, pray, how sharp had been the throes
Of famine and discomfiture in those
You write of if they had been critics, too,
And doomed to write of nothing but of you!
Lo! where the gaping crowd throngs yonder tent,
To see the lion resolutely bent!
The prosing showman who the beast displays
Grows rich and richer daily in its praise.
But how if, to attract the curious yeoman,
The lion owned the show and showed the showman?

RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

Every religion is important. When men rise above existing conditions a new religion comes in, and it is better than the old one.—Professor Howison.

Professor dear, I think it queer
That all these good religions
('Twixt you and me, some two or three
Are schemes for plucking pigeons)
I mean 'tis strange that every change
Our poor minds to unfetter
Entails a new religion—true
As t' other one, and better.
From each in turn the truth we learn,
That wood or flesh or spirit
May justly boast it rules the roast
Until we cease to fear it.
Nay, once upon a time long gone
Man worshipped Cat and Lizard:
His God he'd find in any kind
Of beast, from a to izzard.
When risen above his early love
Of dirt and blood and slumber,
He pulled down these vain deities,
And made one out of lumber.
"Far better that than even a cat,"
The Howisons all shouted;
"When God is wood religion's good!"
But one poor cynic doubted.
"A timber God—that's very odd!"
Said Progress, and invented
The simple plan to worship Man,
Who, kindly soul! consented.
But soon our eye we lift asky,
Our vows all unregarded,
And find (at least so says the priest)
The Truth—and Man's discarded.
Along our line of march recline
Dead gods devoid of feeling;
And thick about each sun-cracked lout
Dried Howisons are kneeling.

MAGNANIMITY.

"To the will of the people we loyally bow!"
That's the minority shibboleth now.
O noble antagonists, answer me flat
What would you do if you didn't do that?

TO HER.

O, Sinner A, to me unknown
Be such a conscience as your own!
To ease it you to Sinner B
Confess the sins of Sinner C.

TO A SUMMER POET.

Yes, the Summer girl is flirting on the beach,
With a him.
And the damboy is a-climbing for the peach,
On the limb;
Yes, the bullfrog is a-croaking
And the dudelet is a-smoking
Cigarettes;
And the hackman is a-hacking
And the showman is a-cracking
Up his pets;
Yes, the Jersey 'skeeter flits along the shore
And the snapdog—we have heard it o'er and o'er;
Yes, my poet,
Well we know it
Know the spooners how they spoon
In the bright
Dollar light
Of the country tavern moon;
Yes, the caterpillars fall
From the trees (we know it all),
And with beetles all the shelves
Are alive.
Please unbuttonhole us—O,
Have the grace to let us go,

For we know
How you Summer poets thrive,
By the recapitulation
And insistent iteration
Of the wondrous doings incident to Life Among
Ourselves!
So, I pray you stop the fervor and the fuss.
For you, poor human linnet,
There's a half a living in it,
But there's not a copper cent in it for us!

ARTHUR McEWEN.

Posterity with all its eyes
Will come and view him where he lies.
Then, turning from the scene away
With a concerted shrug, will say:
"H'm, Scarabaeus Sisyphus
What interest has that to us?
We can't admire at all, at all,
A tumble-bug without its ball."
And then a sage will rise and say:
"Good friends, you err—turn back, I pray:
This freak that you unwisely shun
Is bug and ball rolled into one."

CHARLES AND PETER.

Ere Gabriel's note to silence died
All graves of men were gaping wide.
Then Charles A. Dana, of "The Sun,"
Rose slowly from the deepest one.
"The dead in Christ rise first, 't is writ,"
Quoth he—"ick, bick, ban, doe,—I'm It!"
(His headstone, footstone, counted slow,
Were "ick" and "bick," he "ban" and "doe":
Of beating Nick the subtle art
Was part of his immortal part.)
Then straight to Heaven he took his flight,
Arriving at the Gates of Light.

There Warden Peter, in the throes
Of sleep, lay roaring in the nose.
"Get up, you sluggard!" Dana cried
"I've an engagement there inside."
The Saint arose and scratched his head.
"I recollect your face," he said.
"(And, pardon me, 't is rather hard),
But—" Dana handed him a card.
"Ah, yes, I now remember—bless
My soul, how dull I am I—yes, yes,
"We've nothing better here than bliss.
Walk in. But I must tell you this:
"We've rest and comfort, though, and peace."
"H'm—puddles," Dana said, "for geese.
"Have you in Heaven no Hell?" "Why, no,"
Said Peter, "nor, in truth, below.
"'T is not included in our scheme
'T is but a preacher's idle dream."
The great man slowly moved away.
"I'll call," he said, "another day.
"On earth I played it, o'er and o'er,
And Heaven without it were a bore."
"O, stuff!—come in. You'll make," said Pete,
"A hell where'er you set your feet."

CONTEMPLATION.

I muse upon the distant town
In many a dreamy mood.
Above my head the sunbeams crown
The graveyard's giant rood.
The lupin blooms among the tombs.
The quail recalls her brood.
Ah, good it is to sit and trace
The shadow of the cross;
It moves so still from place to place
O'er marble, bronze and moss;
With graves to mark upon its arc
Our time's eternal loss.
And sweet it is to watch the bee

That reve's in the rose,
And sense the fragrance floating free
On every breeze that blows
O'er many a mound, where, safe and sound,
Mine enemies repose.

CREATION.

God dreamed—the suns sprang flaming into place,
And sailing worlds with many a venturous race!
He woke—His smile alone illumined space.

BUSINESS.

Two villains of the highest rank
Set out one night to rob a bank.
They found the building, looked it o'er,
Each window noted, tried each door,
Scanned carefully the lidded hole
For minstrels to cascade the coal
In short, examined five-and-twenty
Good paths from poverty to plenty.
But all were sealed, they saw full soon,
Against the minions of the moon.
"Enough," said one: "I'm satisfied."
The other, smiling fair and wide,
Said: "I'm as highly pleased as you:
No burglar ever can get through.
Fate surely prospers our design—
The booty all is yours and mine."
So, full of hope, the following day
To the exchange they took their way
And bought, with manner free and frank,
Some stock of that devoted bank;
And they became, inside the year,
One President and one Cashier.
Their crime I can no further trace
The means of safety to embrace,
I overdrew and left the place.

A POSSIBILITY.

If the wicked gods were willing
(Pray it never may be true!)
That a universal chilling
Should ensue
Of the sentiment of loving,
If they made a great undoing
Of the plan of turtle-doving,
Then farewell all poet-lore,
Evermore.

If there were no more of billing
There would be no more of cooing
And we all should be but owls—
Lonely fowls
Blinking wonderfully wise,
With our great round eyes—
Sitting singly in the gloaming and no longer two and two,
As unwilling to be wedded as unpracticed how to woo;
With regard to being mated,
Asking still with aggravated
Ungrammatical acerbity: "To who? To who?"

TO A CENSOR.

"The delay granted by the weakness and good nature of our judges is responsible for half the murders."—Daily Newspaper.

Delay responsible? Why, then; my friend,
Impeach Delay and you will make an end.
Thrust vile Delay in jail and let it rot
For doing all the things that it should not.
Put not good-natured judges under bond,
But make Delay in damages respond.
Minos, Aeacus, Rhadamanthus, rolled
Into one pitiless, unsmiling scold—
Unsparing censor, be your thongs uncurled
To "lash the rascals naked through the world."
The rascals? Nay, Rascality's the thing
Above whose back your knotted scourges sing.
Your satire, truly, like a razor keen,
"Wounds with a touch that's neither felt nor seen;"
For naught that you assail with falchion free
Has either nerves to feel or eyes to see.
Against abstractions evermore you charge
You hack no helmet and you need no targe.
That wickedness is wrong and sin a vice,
That wrong's not right and foulness never nice,
Fearless affirm. All consequences dare:
Smite the offense and the offender spare.
When Ananias and Sapphira lied
Falsehood, had you been there, had surely died.
When money-changers in the Temple sat,
At money-changing you'd have whirled the "cat"
(That John-the-Baptist of the modern pen)
And all the brokers would have cried amen!
Good friend, if any judge deserve your blame
Have you no courage, or has he no name?
Upon his method will you wreak your wrath,
Himself all unmolested in his path?
Fall to! fall to!—your club no longer draw
To beat the air or flail a man of straw.
Scorn to do justice like the Saxon thrall
Who cuffed the offender's shadow on a wall.
Let rascals in the flesh attest your zeal

Knocked on the mazzard or tripped up at heel!
We know that judges are corrupt. We know
That crimes are lively and that laws are slow.
We know that lawyers lie and doctors slay;
That priests and preachers are but birds of pray;
That merchants cheat and journalists for gold
Flatter the vicious while at vice they scold.
'Tis all familiar as the simple lore
That two policemen and two thieves make four.
But since, while some are wicked, some are good,
(As trees may differ though they all are wood)
Names, here and there, to show whose head is hit,
The bad would sentence and the good acquit.
In sparing everybody none you spare:
Rebukes most personal are least unfair.
To fire at random if you still prefer,
And swear at Dog but never kick a cur,
Permit me yet one ultimate appeal
To something that you understand and feel:
Let thrift and vanity your heart persuade
You might be read if you would learn your trade.
Good brother cynics (you have doubtless guessed
Not one of you but all are here addressed)
Remember this: the shaft that seeks a heart
Draws all eyes after it; an idle dart
Shot at some shadow flutters o'er the green,
Its flight unheeded and its fall unseen.

THE HESITATING VETERAN.

When I was young and full of faith
And other fads that youngsters cherish
A cry rose as of one that saith
With unction: "Help me or I perish!"
'Twas heard in all the land, and men
The sound were each to each repeating.
It made my heart beat faster then
Than any heart can now be beating.
For the world is old and the world is gray
Grown prudent and, I guess, more witty.
She's cut her wisdom teeth, they say,
And doesn't now go in for Pity.
Besides, the melancholy cry
Was that of one, 'tis now conceded,
Whose plight no one beneath the sky
Felt half so poignantly as he did.
Moreover, he was black. And yet
That sentimental generation
With an austere compassion set
Its face and faith to the occasion.
Then there were hate and strife to spare,
And various hard knocks a-plenty;
And I ('twas more than my true share,
I must confess) took five-and-twenty.
That all is over now—the reign
Of love and trade stills all dissensions,
And the clear heavens arch again
Above a land of peace and pensions.
The black chap—at the last we gave
Him everything that he had cried for,
Though many white chaps in the grave
'Twould puzzle to say what they died for.
I hope he's better off—I trust
That his society and his master's
Are worth the price we paid, and must
Continue paying, in disasters;
But sometimes doubts press thronging round
('Tis mostly when my hurts are aching)
If war for union was a sound

And profitable undertaking.
'Tis said they mean to take away
The Negro's vote for he's unlettered.
'Tis true he sits in darkness day
And night, as formerly, when fettered;
But pray observe—howe'er he vote
To whatsoever party turning,
He'll be with gentlemen of note
And wealth and consequence and learning.
With Hales and Morgans on each side,
How could a fool through lack of knowledge,
Vote wrong? If learning is no guide
Why ought one to have been in college?
O Son of Day, O Son of Night!
What are your preferences made of?
I know not which of you is right,
Nor which to be the more afraid of.
The world is old and the world is bad,
And creaks and grinds upon its axis;
And man's an ape and the gods are mad!
There's nothing sure, not even our taxes.
No mortal man can Truth restore,
Or say where she is to be sought for.
I know what uniform I wore—
O, that I knew which side I fought for!

A YEAR'S CASUALTIES.

Slain as they lay by the secret, slow,
Pitiless hand of an unseen foe,
Two score thousand old soldiers have crossed
The river to join the loved and lost.
In the space of a year their spirits fled,
Silent and white, to the camp of the dead.
One after one, they fall asleep
And the pension agents awake to weep,
And orphaned statesmen are loud in their wail
As the souls flit by on the evening gale.
O Father of Battles, pray give us release
From the horrors of peace, the horrors of peace!

INSPIRATION.

O hoary sculptor, stay thy hand:
I fain would view the lettered stone.
What carvest thou?—perchance some grand
And solemn fancy all thine own.
For oft to know the fitting word
Some humble worker God permits.
"Jain Ann Meginnis,
Agid 3rd.
He givith His beluved fits."
TO-DAY.

I saw a man who knelt in prayer,
And heard him say:
"I'll lay my inmost spirit bare
To-day.
"Lord, for to-morrow and its need
I do not pray;
Let me upon my neighbor feed
To-day.
"Let me my duty duly shirk
And run away
From any form or phase of work
To-day.
"From Thy commands exempted still
Let me obey
The promptings of my private will
To-day.
"Let me no word profane, no lie
Unthinking say
If anyone is standing by
To-day.
"My secret sins and vices grave
Let none betray;
The scoffer's jeers I do not crave
To-day.
"And if to-day my fortune all
Should ebb away,
Help me on other men's to fall
To-day.

"So, for to-morrow and its mite
I do not pray;
Just give me everything in sight
To-day."
I cried: "Amen!" He rose and ran
Like oil away.
I said: "I've seen an honest man
To-day."
AN ALIBI.

A famous journalist, who long
Had told the great unheaded throng
Whate'er they thought, by day or night.
Was true as Holy Writ, and right,
Was caught in—well, on second thought,
It is enough that he was caught,
And being thrown in jail became
The fuel of a public flame.
"Vox populi vox Dei," said
The jailer. Inxling bent his head
Without remark: that motto good
In bold-faced type had always stood
Above the columns where his pen
Had rioted in praise of men
And all they said—provided he
Was sure they mostly did agree.
Meanwhile a sharp and bitter strife
To take, or save, the culprit's life
Or liberty (which, I suppose,
Was much the same to him) arose
Outside. The journal that his pen
Adorned denounced his crime—but then
Its editor in secret tried
To have the indictment set aside.
The opposition papers swore
His father was a rogue before,
And all his wife's relations were
Like him and similar to her.
They begged their readers to subscribe
A dollar each to make a bribe
That any Judge would feel was large

Enough to prove the gravest charge
Unless, it might be, the defense
Put up superior evidence.
The law's traditional delay
Was all too short: the trial day
Dawned red and menacing. The Judge
Sat on the Bench and wouldn't budge,
And all the motions counsel made
Could not move him—and there he stayed.
"The case must now proceed," he said,
"While I am just in heart and head,
It happens—as, indeed, it ought—
Both sides with equal sums have bought
My favor: I can try the cause
Impartially." (Prolonged applause.)
The prisoner was now arraigned
And said that he was greatly pained
To be suspected—he, whose pen
Had charged so many other men
With crimes and misdemeanors! "Why,"
He said, a tear in either eye,
"If men who live by crying out
'Stop thief!' are not themselves from doubt
Of their integrity exempt,
Let all forego the vain attempt
To make a reputation! Sir,
I'm innocent, and I demur."
Whereat a thousand voices cried
Amain he manifestly lied—
Vox populi as loudly roared
As bull by picadores gored,
In his own coin receiving pay
To make a Spanish holiday.
The jury—twelve good men and true
Were then sworn in to see it through,
And each made solemn oath that he
As any babe unborn was free
From prejudice, opinion, thought,
Respectability, brains—aught
That could disqualify; and some
Explained that they were deaf and dumb.

A better twelve, his Honor said,
Was rare, except among the dead.
The witnesses were called and sworn.
The tales they told made angels mourn,
And the Good Book they'd kissed became
Red with the consciousness of shame.
Whenever one of them approached
The truth, "That witness wasn't coached,
Your Honor!" cried the lawyers both.
"Strike out his testimony," quoth
The learned judge: "This Court denies
Its ear to stories which surprise.
I hold that witnesses exempt
From coaching all are in contempt."
Both Prosecution and Defense
Applauded the judicial sense,
And the spectators all averred
Such wisdom they had never heard:
'Twas plain the prisoner would be
Found guilty in the first degree.
Meanwhile that wight's pale cheek confessed
The nameless terrors in his breast.
He felt remorseful, too, because
He wasn't half they said he was.
"If I'd been such a rogue," he mused
On opportunities unused,
"I might have easily become
As wealthy as Methusalum."
This journalist adorned, alas,
The middle, not the Bible, class.
With equal skill the lawyers' pleas
Attested their divided fees.
Each gave the other one the lie,
Then helped him frame a sharp reply.
Good Lord! it was a bitter fight,
And lasted all the day and night.
When once or oftener the roar
Had silenced the judicial snore
The speaker suffered for the sport
By fining for contempt of court.
Twelve jurors' noses good and true

Unceasing sang the trial through,
And even vox populi was spent
In rattles through a nasal vent.
Clerk, bailiff, constables and all
Heard Morpheus sound the trumpet call
To arms—his arms—and all fell in
Save counsel for the Man of Sin.
That thaumaturgist stood and swayed
The wand their faculties obeyed
That magic wand which, like a flame.
Leapt, wavered, quivered and became
A wonder-worker—known among
The ignoble vulgar as a Tongue.
How long, O Lord, how long my verse
Runs on for better or for worse
In meter which o'ermasters me,
Octosyllabically free!—
A meter which, the poets say,
No power of restraint can stay;—
A hard-mouthed meter, suited well
To him who, having naught to tell,
Must hold attention as a trout
Is held, by paying out and out
The slender line which else would break
Should one attempt the fish to take.
Thus tavern guides who've naught to show
But some adjacent curio
By devious trails their patrons lead
And make them think 't is far indeed.
Where was I?
While the lawyer talked
The rogue took up his feet and walked:
While all about him, roaring, slept,
Into the street he calmly stepped.
In very truth, the man who thought
The people's voice from heaven had caught
God's inspiration took a change
Of venue—it was passing strange!
Straight to his editor he went
And that ingenious person sent
A Negro to impersonate

The fugitive. In adequate
Disguise he took his vacant place
And buried in his arms his face.
When all was done the lawyer stopped
And silence like a bombshell dropped
Upon the Court: judge, jury, all
Within that venerable hall
(Except the deaf and dumb, indeed,
And one or two whom death had freed)
Awoke and tried to look as though
Slumber was all they did not know.
And now that tireless lawyer-man
Took breath, and then again began:
"Your Honor, if you did attend
To what I've urged (my learned friend
Nodded concurrence) to support
The motion I have made, this court
May soon adjourn. With your assent
I've shown abundant precedent
For introducing now, though late,
New evidence to exculpate
My client. So, if you'll allow,
I'll prove an alibi!" "What?—how?"
Stammered the judge. "Well, yes, I can't
Deny your showing, and I grant
The motion. Do I understand
You undertake to prove—good land!
That when the crime—you mean to show
Your client wasn't there?" "O, no,
I cannot quite do that, I find:
My alibi's another kind
Of alibi,—I'll make it clear,
Your Honor, that he isn't here."
The Darky here upreared his head,
Tranquillity affrighted fled
And consternation reigned instead!
REBUKE.

When Admonition's hand essays
Our greed to curse,
Its lifted finger oft displays

Our missing purse.
J.F.B.

How well this man unfolded to our view
The world's beliefs of Death and Heaven and Hell
This man whose own convictions none could tell,
Nor if his maze of reason had a clew.
Dogmas he wrote for daily bread, but knew
The fair philosophies of doubt so well
That while we listened to his words there fell
Some that were strangely comforting, though true.
Marking how wise we grew upon his doubt,
We said: "If so, by groping in the night,
He can proclaim some certain paths of trust,
How great our profit if he saw about
His feet the highways leading to the light."
Now he sees all. Ah, Christ! his mouth is dust!

THE DYING STATESMAN.

It is a politician man—
He draweth near his end,
And friends weep round that partisan,
Of every man the friend.
Between the Known and the Unknown
He lieth on the strand;
The light upon the sea is thrown
That lay upon the land.
It shineth in his glazing eye,
It burneth on his face;
God send that when we come to die
We know that sign of grace!
Upon his lips his blessed sprite
Poiseth her joyous wing.
"How is it with thee, child of light?
Dost hear the angels sing?"
"The song I hear, the crown I see,
And know that God is love.
Farewell, dark world—I go to be
A postmaster above!"
For him no monumental arch,
But, O, 'tis good and brave
To see the Grand Old Party march
To office o'er his grave!

THE DEATH OF GRANT.

Father! whose hard and cruel law
Is part of thy compassion's plan,
Thy works presumptuously we scan
For what the prophets say they saw.
Unbidden still the awful slope
Walling us in we climb to gain
Assurance of the shining plain
That faith has certified to hope.
In vain!—beyond the circling hill
The shadow and the cloud abide.
Subdue the doubt, our spirits guide

To trust the Record and be still.
To trust it loyally as he
Who, heedful of his high design,
Ne'er raised a seeking eye to thine,
But wrought thy will unconsciously,
Disputing not of chance or fate,
Nor questioning of cause or creed;
For anything but duty's deed
Too simply wise, too humbly great.
The cannon syllabled his name;
His shadow shifted o'er the land,
Portentous, as at his command
Successive cities sprang to flame!
He fringed the continent with fire,
The rivers ran in lines of light!
Thy will be done on earth—if right
Or wrong he cared not to inquire.
His was the heavy hand, and his
The service of the despot blade;
His the soft answer that allayed
War's giant animosities.
Let us have peace: our clouded eyes,
Fill, Father, with another light,
That we may see with clearer sight
Thy servant's soul in Paradise.

THE FOUNTAIN REFILLED.

Of Hans Pietro Shanahan
(Who was a most ingenious man)
The Muse of History records
That he'd get drunk as twenty lords.
He'd get so truly drunk that men
Stood by to marvel at him when
His slow advance along the street
Was but a vain cycloidal feat.
And when 'twas fated that he fall
With a wide geographical sprawl,
They signified assent by sounds
Heard (faintly) at its utmost bounds.
And yet this Mr. Shanahan

(Who was a most ingenious man)
Cast not on wine his thirsty eyes
When it was red or otherwise.
All malt, or spirituous, tope
He loathed as cats dissent from soap;
And cider, if it touched his lip,
Evoked a groan at every sip.
But still, as heretofore explained,
He not infrequently was grained.
(I'm not of those who call it "corned."
Coarse speech I've always duly scorned.)
Though truth to say, and that's but right,
Strong drink (it hath an adder's bite!)
Was what had put him in the mud,
The only kind he used was blood!
Alas, that an immortal soul
Addicted to the flowing bowl,
The emptied flagon should again
Replenish from a neighbor's vein.
But, Mr. Shanahan was so
Constructed, and his taste that low.
Nor more deplorable was he
In kind of thirst than in degree;
For sometimes fifty souls would pay
The debt of nature in a day
To free him from the shame and pain
Of dread Sobriety's misreign.
His native land, proud of its sense
Of his unique inabstinence,
Abated something of its pride
At thought of his unfilled inside.
And some the boldness had to say
'Twere well if he were called away
To slake his thirst forevermore
In oceans of celestial gore.
But Hans Pietro Shanahan
(Who was a most ingenious man)
Knew that his thirst was mortal; so
Remained unsainted here below
Unsainted and unsaintly, for
He neither went to glory nor

To abdicate his power deigned
Where, under Providence, he reigned,
But kept his Boss's power accurst
To serve his wild uncommon thirst.
Which now had grown so truly great
It was a drain upon the State.
Soon, soon there came a time, alas!
When he turned down an empty glass
All practicable means were vain
His special wassail to obtain.
In vain poor Decimation tried
To furnish forth the needful tide;
And Civil War as vainly shed
Her niggard offering of red.
Poor Shanahan! his thirst increased
Until he wished himself deceased,
Invoked the firearm and the knife,
But could not die to save his life!
He was so dry his own veins made
No answer to the seeking blade;
So parched that when he would have passed
Away he could not breathe his last.
'Twas then, when almost in despair,
(Unlaced his shoon, unkempt his hair)
He saw as in a dream a way
To wet afresh his mortal clay.
Yes, Hans Pietro Shanahan
(Who was a most ingenious man)
Saw freedom, and with joy and pride
"Thalassa! (or Thalatta!)" cried.
Straight to the Aldermen went he,
With many a "pull" and many a fee,
And many a most corrupt "combine"
(The Press for twenty cents a line
Held out and fought him—O, God, bless
Forevermore the holy Press!)
Till he had franchises complete
For trolley lines on every street!
The cars were builded and, they say,
Were run on rails laid every way
Rhomboidal roads, and circular,

And oval—everywhere a car
Square, dodecagonal
And many other kinds of shapes
As various as tails of apes.
No other group of men's abodes
E'er had such odd electric roads,
That winding in and winding out,
Began and ended all about.
No city had, unless in Mars,
That city's wealth of trolley cars.
They ran by day, they flew by night,
And O, the sorry, sorry sight!
And Hans Pietro Shanahan
(Who was a most ingenious man)
Incessantly, the Muse records,
Lay drunk as twenty thousand lords!

LAUS LUCIS.

Theosophists are about to build a "Temple for the revival of the Mysteries of Antiquity."—Vide the Newspapers, passim.

Each to his taste: some men prefer to play
At mystery, as others at piquet.
Some sit in mystic meditation; some
Parade the street with tambourine and drum.
One studies to decipher ancient lore
Which, proving stuff, he studies all the more;
Another swears that learning is but good
To darken things already understood,
Then writes upon Simplicity so well
That none agree on what he wants to tell,
And future ages will declare his pen
Inspired by gods with messages to men.
To found an ancient order those devote
Their time—with ritual, regalia, goat,
Blankets for tossing, chairs of little ease
And all the modern inconveniences;
These, saner, frown upon unmeaning rites
And go to church for rational delights.
So all are suited, shallow and profound,
The prophets prosper and the world goes round.
For me—unread in the occult, I'm fain
To damn all mysteries alike as vain,
Spurn the obscure and base my faith upon
The Revelations of the good St. John.

NANINE.

We heard a song-bird trilling
'T was but a night ago.
Such rapture he was rilling
As only we could know.
This morning he is flinging
His music from the tree,
But something in the singing
Is not the same to me.
His inspiration fails him,

Or he has lost his skill.
Nanine, Nanine, what ails him
That he should sing so ill?
Nanine is not replying—
She hears no earthly song.
The sun and bird are lying
And the night is, O, so long!

TECHNOLOGY.

'Twas a serious person with locks of gray
And a figure like a crescent;
His gravity, clearly, had come to stay,
But his smile was evanescent.
He stood and conversed with a neighbor, and
With (likewise) a high falsetto;
And he stabbed his forefinger into his hand
As if it had been a stiletto.
His words, like the notes of a tenor drum,
Came out of his head unblended,
And the wonderful altitude of some
Was exceptionally splendid.
While executing a shake of the head,
With the hand, as it were, of a master,
This agonizing old gentleman said:
" 'Twas a truly sad disaster!
"Four hundred and ten longs and shorts in all,
Went down"—he paused and snuffled.
A single tear was observed to fall,
And the old man's drum was muffled.
"A very calamitous year," he said.
And again his head-piece hoary
He shook, and another pearl he shed,
As if he wept con amore.
"O lacrymose person," I cried, "pray why
Should these failures so affect you?
With speculators in stocks no eye
That's normal would ever connect you."
He focused his orbs upon mine and smiled
In a sinister sort of manner.
"Young man," he said, "your words are wild:

I spoke of the steamship 'Hanner.'
"For she has went down in a howlin' squall,
And my heart is nigh to breakin'
Four hundred and ten longs and shorts in all
Will never need undertakin'!
"I'm in the business myself," said he,
"And you've mistook my expression;
For I uses the technical terms, you see,
Employed in my perfession."
That old undertaker has joined the throng
On the other side of the River,
But I'm still unhappy to think I'm a "long,"
And a tape-line makes me shiver.

A REPLY TO A LETTER.

O nonsense, parson—tell me not they thrive
And jubilate who follow your dictation.
The good are the unhappiest lot alive—
I know they are from careful observation.
If freedom from the terrors of damnation
Lengthens the visage like a telescope,
And lacrymation is a sign of hope,
Then I'll continue, in my dreadful plight,
To tread the dusky paths of sin, and grope
Contentedly without your lantern's light;
And though in many a bog beslubbered quite,
Refuse to flay me with ecclesiastic soap.
You say 'tis a sad world, seeing I'm condemned,
With many a million others of my kidney.
Each continent's Hammed, Japheted and Shemmed
With sinners—worldlings like Sir Philip Sidney
And scoffers like Voltaire, who thought it bliss
To simulate respect for Genesis—
Who bent the mental knee as if in prayer,
But mocked at Moses underneath his hair,
And like an angry gander bowed his head to hiss.

Seeing such as these, who die without contrition,
Must go to—beg your pardon, sir—perdition,
The sons of light, you tell me, can't be gay,
But count it sin of the sort called omission
The groan to smother or the tear to stay
Or fail to—what is that they live by?—pray.
So down they flop, and the whole serious race is
Put by divine compassion on a praying basis.
Well, if you take it so to heart, while yet
Our own hearts are so light with nature's leaven,
You'll weep indeed when we in Hades sweat,
And you look down upon us out of Heaven.
In fancy, lo! I see your wailing shades
Thronging the crystal battlements. Cascades
Of tears spring singing from each golden spout,
Run roaring from the verge with hoarser sound,
Dash downward through the glimmering profound,
Quench the tormenting flame and put the Devil out!
Presumptuous ass! to you no power belongs
To pitchfork me to Heaven upon the prongs
Of a bad pen, whose disobedient sputter,
With less of ink than incoherence fraught
Befits the folly that it tries to utter.
Brains, I observe, as well as tongues, can stutter:
You suffer from impediment of thought.
When next you "point the way to Heaven," take care:
Your fingers all being thumbs, point, Heaven knows where!
Farewell, poor dunce! your letter though I blame,
Bears witness how my anger I can tame:
I've called you everything except your hateful name!

TO OSCAR WILDE.

Because from Folly's lips you got
Some babbled mandate to subdue
The realm of Common Sense, and you
Made promise and considered not
Because you strike a random blow
At what you do not understand,
And beckon with a friendly hand
To something that you do not know,

I hold no speech of your desert,
Nor answer with porrected shield
The wooden weapon that you wield,
But meet you with a cast of dirt.
Dispute with such a thing as you
Twin show to the two-headed calf?
Why, sir, if I repress my laugh,
'T is more than half the world can do.

PRAYER.

Fear not in any tongue to call
Upon the Lord—He's skilled in all.
But if He answereth my plea
He speaketh one unknown to me.
A "BORN LEADER OF MEN."

Tuckerton Tamerlane Morey Mahosh
Is a statesman of world-wide fame,
With a notable knack at rhetorical bosh
To glorify somebody's name
Somebody chosen by Tuckerton's masters
To succor the country from divers disasters
Portentous to Mr. Mahosh.
Percy O'Halloran Tarpy Cabee
Is in the political swim.
He cares not a button for men, not he:
Great principles captivate him
Principles cleverly cut out and fitted
To Percy's capacity, duly submitted,
And fought for by Mr. Cabee.
Drusus Turn Swinnerton Porfer Fitzurse
Holds office the most of his life.
For men nor for principles cares he a curse,
But much for his neighbor's wife.
The Ship of State leaks, but he doesn't pump any,
Messrs. Mahosh, Cabee & Company
Pump for good Mr. Fitzurse.

TO THE BARTHOLDI STATUE.

O Liberty, God-gifted—
Young and immortal maid—
In your high hand uplifted;
The torch declares your trade.
Its crimson menace, flaming
Upon the sea and shore,
Is, trumpet-like, proclaiming
That Law shall be no more.
Austere incendiary,
We're blinking in the light;
Where is your customary
Grenade of dynamite?
Where are your staves and switches
For men of gentle birth?
Your mask and dirk for riches?
Your chains for wit and worth?
Perhaps, you've brought the halters
You used in the old days,
When round religion's altars
You stabled Cromwell's bays?
Behind you, unsuspected,
Have you the axe, fair wench,
Wherewith you once collected
A poll-tax from the French?
America salutes you
Preparing to disgorge.
Take everything that suits you,
And marry Henry George.

AN UNMERRY CHRISTMAS.

Christmas, you tell me, comes but once a year.
One place it never comes, and that is here.
Here, in these pages no good wishes spring,
No well-worn greetings tediously ring
For Christmas greetings are like pots of ore:
The hollower they are they ring the more.
Here shall no holly cast a spiny shade,
Nor mistletoe my solitude invade,
No trinket-laden vegetable come,
No jorum steam with Sheolate of rum.
No shrilling children shall their voices rear.
Hurrah for Christmas without Christmas cheer!
No presents, if you please—I know too well
What Herbert Spencer, if he didn't tell
(I know not if he did) yet might have told
Of present-giving in the days of old,
When Early Man with gifts propitiated
The chiefs whom most he doubted, feared and hated,
Or tendered them in hope to reap some rude
Advantage from the taker's gratitude.
Since thus the Gift its origin derives
(How much of its first character survives
You know as well as I) my stocking's tied,
My pocket buttoned—with my soul inside.
I save my money and I save my pride.
Dinner? Yes; thank you—just a human body
Done to a nutty brown, and a tear toddy
To give me appetite; and as for drink,
About a half a jug of blood, I think,
Will do; for still I love the red, red wine,
Coagulating well, with wrinkles fine
Fretting the satin surface of its flood.
O tope of kings—divine Falernian—blood!
Duse take the shouting fowls upon the limb,
The kneeling cattle and the rising hymn!
Has not a pagan rights to be regarded—
His heart assaulted and his ear bombarded
With sentiments and sounds that good old Pan
Even in his demonium would ban?

No, friends—no Christmas here, for I have sworn
To keep my heart hard and my knees unworn.
Enough you have of jester, player, priest:
I as the skeleton attend your feast,
In the mad revelry to make a lull
With shaken finger and with bobbing skull.
However you my services may flout,
Philosophy disdain and reason doubt,
I mean to hold in customary state,
My dismal revelry and celebrate
My yearly rite until the crack o' doom,
Ignore the cheerful season's warmth and bloom
And cultivate an oasis of gloom.

BY A DEFEATED LITIGANT.

Liars for witnesses; for lawyers brutes
Who lose their tempers to retrieve their suits;
Cowards for jurors; and for judge a clown
Who ne'er took up the law, yet lays it down;
Justice denied, authority abused,
And the one honest person the accused
Thy courts, my country, all these awful years,
Move fools to laughter and the wise to tears.

AN EPITAPH.

Here lies Greer Harrison, a well cracked louse
So small a tenant of so big a house!
He joyed in fighting with his eyes (his fist
Prudently pendent from a peaceful wrist)
And loved to loll on the Parnassian mount,
His pen to suck and all his thumbs to count,
What poetry he'd written but for lack
Of skill, when he had counted, to count back!
Alas, no more he'll climb the sacred steep

To wake the lyre and put the world to sleep!
To his rapt lip his soul no longer springs
And like a jaybird from a knot-hole sings.
No more the clubmen, pickled with his wine,
Spread wide their ears and hiccough "That's divine!"
The genius of his purse no longer draws
The pleasing thunders of a paid applause.
All silent now, nor sound nor sense remains,
Though riddances of worms improve his brains.
All his no talents to the earth revert,
And Fame concludes the record: "Dirt to dirt!"

THE POLITICIAN.

"Let Glory's sons manipulate
The tiller of the Ship of State.
Be mine the humble, useful toil
To work the tiller of the soil."

AN INSCRIPTION

For a Proposed Monument in Washington to Him who
Made it Beautiful.
Erected to "Boss" Shepherd by the dear
Good folk he lived and moved among in peace
Guarded on either hand by the police,
With soldiers in his front and in his rear.

FROM VIRGINIA TO PARIS.

The polecat, sovereign of its native wood,
Dashes damnation upon bad and good;
The health of all the upas trees impairs
By exhalations deadlier than theirs;
Poisons the rattlesnake and warts the toad
The creeks go rotten and the rocks corrode!
She shakes o'er breathless hill and shrinking dale
The horrid aspergillus of her tail!
From every saturated hair, till dry,

The spargent fragrances divergent fly,
Deafen the earth and scream along the sky!
Removed to alien scenes, amid the strife
Of urban odors to ungladden life
Where gas and sewers and dead dogs conspire
The flesh to torture and the soul to fire
Where all the "well defined and several stinks"
Known to mankind hold revel and high jinks
Humbled in spirit, smitten with a sense
Of lost distinction, leveled eminence,
She suddenly resigns her baleful trust,
Nor ever lays again our mortal dust.
Her powers atrophied, her vigor sunk,
She lives deodorized, a sweeter skunk.

A "MUTE INGLORIOUS MILTON."

"O, I'm the Unaverage Man,
But you never have heard of me,
For my brother, the Average Man, outran
My fame with rapiditee,
And I'm sunk in Oblivion's sea,
But my bully big brother the world can span
With his wide notorietee.
I do everything that I can
To make 'em attend to me,
But the papers ignore the Unaverage Man
With a weird uniformitee."
So sang with a dolorous note
A voice that I heard from the beach;
On the sable waters it seemed to float
Like a mortal part of speech.
The sea was Oblivion's sea,
And I cried as I plunged to swim:
"The Unaverage Man shall reside with me."
But he didn't—I stayed with him!

THE FREE TRADER'S LAMENT.

Oft from a trading-boat I purchased spice
And shells and corals, brought for my inspection
From the fair tropics—paid a Christian price
And was content in my fool's paradise,
Where never had been heard the word "Protection."
'T was my sole island; there I dwelt alone
No customs-house, collector nor collection,
But a man came, who, in a pious tone
Condoled with me that I had never known
The manifest advantage of Protection.
So, when the trading-boat arrived one day,
He threw a stink-pot into its mid-section.
The traders paddled for their lives away,
Nor came again into that haunted bay,
The blessed home thereafter of Protection.
Then down he sat, that philanthropic man,
And spat upon some mud of his selection,
And worked it, with his knuckles in a pan,
To shapes of shells and coral things, and span
A thread of song in glory of Protection.
He baked them in the sun. His air devout
Enchanted me. I made a genuflexion:
"God help you, gentle sir," I said. "No doubt,"
He answered gravely, "I'll get on without
Assistance now that we have got Protection."
Thenceforth I bought his wares—at what a price
For shells and corals of such imperfection!
"Ah, now," said he, "your lot is truly nice."
But still in all that isle there was no spice
To season to my taste that dish, Protection.

SUBTERRANEAN PHANTASIES.

I died. As meekly in the earth I lay,
With shriveled fingers reverently folded,
The worm—uncivil engineer!—my clay
Tunneled industriously, and the mole did.
My body could not dodge them, but my soul did;
For that had flown from this terrestrial ball
And I was rid of it for good and all.
So there I lay, debating what to do—
What measures might most usefully be taken
To circumvent the subterranean crew
Of anthropophagi and save my bacon.
My fortitude was all this while unshaken,
But any gentleman, of course, protests
Against receiving uninvited guests.
However proud he might be of his meats,
Not even Apicius, nor, I think, Lucullus,
Wasted on tramps his culinary sweets;
"Aut Caesar," say judicious hosts, "aut nullus."
And though when Marcius came unbidden Tullus
Aufidius feasted him because he starved,
Marcius by Tullus afterward was carved.
We feed the hungry, as the book commands
(For men might question else our orthodoxy)
But do not care to see the outstretched hands,
And so we minister to them by proxy.
When Want, in his improper person, knocks he
Finds we're engaged. The graveworm's very fresh
To think we like his presence in the flesh.
So, as I said, I lay in doubt; in all
That underworld no judges could determine
My rights. When Death approaches them they fall,
And falling, naturally soil their ermine.
And still below ground, as above, the vermin
That work by dark and silent methods win
The case—the burial case that one is in.
Cases at law so slowly get ahead,
Even when the right is visibly unclouded,
That if all men are classed as quick and dead,
The judges all are dead, though some unshrouded.

Pray Jove that when they're actually crowded
On Styx's brink, and Charon rows in sight,
His bark prove worse than Cerberus's bite.
Ah! Cerberus, if you had but begot
A race of three-mouthed dogs for man to nourish
And woman to caress, the muse had not
Lamented the decay of virtues currish,
And triple-hydrophobia now would flourish,
For barking, biting, kissing to employ
Canine repeaters were indeed a joy.
Lord! how we cling to this vile world! Here I,
Whose dust was laid ere I began this carping,
By moles and worms and such familiar fry
Run through and through, am singing still and harping
Of mundane matters—flattering, too, and sharpening.
I hate the Angel of the Sleeping Cup:
So I'm for getting—and for shutting—up.

IN MEMORIAM

Beauty (they called her) wasn't a maid
Of many things in the world afraid.
She wasn't a maid who turned and fled
At sight of a mouse, alive or dead.
She wasn't a maid a man could "shoo"
By shouting, however abruptly, "Boo!"
She wasn't a maid who'd run and hide
If her face and figure you idly eyed.
She wasn't a maid who'd blush and shake
When asked what part of the fowl she'd take.
(I blush myself to confess she preferred,
And commonly got, the most of the bird.)
She wasn't a maid to simper because
She was asked to sing—if she ever was.
In short, if the truth must be displayed
In puris—Beauty wasn't a maid.
Beauty, furry and fine and fat,
Yawny and clawy, sleek and all that,
Was a pampered and spoiled Angora cat!
I loved her well, and I'm proud that she
Wasn't indifferent, quite, to me;

In fact I have sometimes gone so far
(You know, mesdames, how silly men are)
As to think she preferred—excuse the conceit
My legs upon which to sharpen her feet.
Perhaps it shouldn't have gone for much,
But I started and thrilled beneath her touch!
Ah, well, that's ancient history now:
The fingers of Time have touched my brow,
And I hear with never a start to-day
That Beauty has passed from the earth away.
Gone!—her death-song (it killed her) sung.
Gone!—her fiddlestrings all unstrung.
Gone to the bliss of a new régime
Of turkey smothered in seas of cream;
Of roasted mice (a superior breed,
To science unknown and the coarser need
Of the living cat) cooked by the flame
Of the dainty soul of an erring dame
Who gave to purity all her care,
Neglecting the duty of daily prayer,—
Crisp, delicate mice, just touched with spice
By the ghost of a breeze from Paradise;
A very digestible sort of mice.
Let scoffers sneer, I propose to hold
That Beauty has mounted the Stair of Gold,
To eat and eat, forever and aye,
On a velvet rug from a golden tray.
But the human spirit—that is my creed
Rots in the ground like a barren seed.
That is my creed, abhorred by Man
But approved by Cat since time began.
Till Death shall kick at me, thundering "Scat!"
I shall hold to that, I shall hold to that.

THE STATESMEN.

How blest the land that counts among
Her sons so many good and wise,
To execute great feats of tongue
When troubles rise.
Behold them mounting every stump
Our liberty by speech to guard.
Observe their courage:—see them jump
And come down hard!
"Walk up, walk up!" each cries aloud,
"And learn from me what you must do
To turn aside the thunder cloud,
The earthquake too.
"Beware the wiles of yonder quack
Who stuffs the ears of all that pass.
I—I alone can show that black
Is white as grass."
They shout through all the day and break
The silence of the night as well.
They'd make—I wish they'd go and make
Of Heaven a Hell.
A advocates free silver, B
Free trade and C free banking laws.
Free board, clothes, lodging would from me
Win warm applause.
Lo, D lifts up his voice: "You see
The single tax on land would fall
On all alike." More evenly
No tax at all.
"With paper money" bellows E
"We'll all be rich as lords." No doubt
And richest of the lot will be
The chap without.
As many "cures" as addle wits
Who know not what the ailment is!
Meanwhile the patient foams and spits
Like a gin fizz.
Alas, poor Body Politic,
Your fate is all too clearly read:
To be not altogether quick,

Nor very dead.
You take your exercise in squirms,
Your rest in fainting fits between.
'T is plain that your disorder's worms
Worms fat and lean.
Worm Capital, Worm Labor dwell
Within your maw and muscle's scope.
Their quarrels make your life a Hell,
Your death a hope.
God send you find not such an end
To ills however sharp and huge!
God send you convalesce! God send
You vermifuge.

THE BROTHERS.

Scene—A lawyer's dreadful den. Enter stall-fed citizen.

LAWYER.—'Mornin'. How-de-do?

CITIZEN.—Sir, same to you.
Called as counsel to retain you
In a case that I'll explain you.
Sad, so sad! Heart almost broke.
Hang it! where's my kerchief? Smoke?
Brother, sir, and I, of late,
Came into a large estate.
Brother's—h'm, ha,—rather queer
Sometimes _(tapping forehead) _here.
What he needs—you know—a "writ"
Something, eh? that will permit
Me to manage, sir, in fine,
His estate, as well as mine.
'Course he'll kick; 't will break, I fear,
His loving heart—excuse this tear.
LAWYER.—Have you nothing more?
All of this you said before—
When last night I took your case.

CITIZEN.—Why, sir, your face
Ne'er before has met my view!
LAWYER.—Eh? The devil! True:
My mistake—it was your brother.
But you're very like each other.

THE CYNIC'S BEQUEST

In that fair city, Ispahan,
There dwelt a problematic man,
Whose angel never was released,
Who never once let out his beast,
But kept, through all the seasons' round,
Silence unbroken and profound.
No Prophecy, with ear applied
To key-hole of the future, tried
Successfully to catch a hint
Of what he'd do nor when begin 't;
As sternly did his past defy
Mild Retrospection's backward eye.
Though all admired his silent ways,
The women loudest were in praise:
For ladies love those men the most
Who never, never, never boast
Who ne'er disclose their aims and ends
To naughty, naughty, naughty friends.
Yet, sooth to say, the fame outran
The merit of this doubtful man,
For taciturnity in him,
Though not a mere caprice or whim,
Was not a virtue, such as truth,
High birth, or beauty, wealth or youth.
'Twas known, indeed, throughout the span
Of Ispahan, of Gulistan—
These utmost limits of the earth
Knew that the man was dumb from birth.
Unto the Sun with deep salaams
The Parsee spreads his morning palms
(A beacon blazing on a height
Warms o'er his piety by night.)

The Moslem deprecates the deed,
Cuts off the head that holds the creed,
Then reverently goes to grass,
Muttering thanks to Balaam's Ass
For faith and learning to refute
Idolatry so dissolute!
But should a maniac dash past,
With straws in beard and hands upcast,
To him (through whom, whene'er inclined
To preach a bit to Madmankind,
The Holy Prophet speaks his mind)
Our True Believer lifts his eyes
Devoutly and his prayer applies;
But next to Solyman the Great
Reveres the idiot's sacred state.
Small wonder then, our worthy mute
Was held in popular repute.
Had he been blind as well as mum,
Been lame as well as blind and dumb,
No bard that ever sang or soared
Could say how he had been adored.
More meagerly endowed, he drew
An homage less prodigious. True,
No soul his praises but did utter—
All plied him with devotion's butter,
But none had out—'t was to their credit
The proselyting sword to spread it.
I state these truths, exactly why
The reader knows as well as I;
They've nothing in the world to do
With what I hope we're coming to
If Pegasus be good enough
To move when he has stood enough.
Egad! his ribs I would examine
Had I a sharper spur than famine,
Or even with that if 'twould incline
To examine his instead of mine.
Where was I? Ah, that silent man
Who dwelt one time in Ispahan
He had a name—was known to all
As Meerza Solyman Zingall.

There lived afar in Astrabad,
A man the world agreed was mad,
So wickedly he broke his joke
Upon the heads of duller folk,
So miserly, from day to day,
He gathered up and hid away
In vaults obscure and cellars haunted
What many worthy people wanted,
A stingy man!—the tradesmen's palms
Were spread in vain: "I give no alms
Without inquiry"—so he'd say,
And beat the needy duns away.
The bastinado did, 'tis true,
Persuade him, now and then, a few
Odd tens of thousands to disburse
To glut the taxman's hungry purse,
But still, so rich he grew, his fear
Was constant that the Shah might hear.
(The Shah had heard it long ago,
And asked the taxman if 'twere so,
Who promptly answered, rather airish,
The man had long been on the parish.)
The more he feared, the more he grew
A cynic and a miser, too,
Until his bitterness and pelf
Made him a terror to himself;
Then, with a razor's neckwise stroke,
He tartly cut his final joke.
So perished, not an hour too soon,
The wicked Muley Ben Maroon.
From Astrabad to Ispahan
At camel speed the rumor ran
That, breaking through tradition hoar,
And throwing all his kinsmen o'er,
The miser'd left his mighty store
Of gold—his palaces and lands
To needy and deserving hands
(Except a penny here and there
To pay the dervishes for prayer.)
'Twas known indeed throughout the span
Of earth, and into Hindostan,

That our beloved mute was the
Residuary legatee.
The people said 'twas very well,
And each man had a tale to tell
Of how he'd had a finger in 't
By dropping many a friendly hint
At Astrabad, you see. But ah,
They feared the news might reach the Shah!
To prove the will the lawyers bore 't
Before the Kadi's awful court,
Who nodded, when he heard it read,
Confirmingly his drowsy head,
Nor thought, his sleepiness so great,
Himself to gobble the estate.
"I give," the dead had writ, "my all
To Meerza Solyman Zingall
Of Ispahan. With this estate
I might quite easily create
Ten thousand ingrates, but I shun
Temptation and create but one,
In whom the whole unthankful crew
The rich man's air that ever drew
To fat their pauper lungs I fire
Vicarious with vain desire!
From foul Ingratitude's base rout
I pick this hapless devil out,
Bestowing on him all my lands,
My treasures, camels, slaves and bands
Of wives—I give him all this loot,
And throw my blessing in to boot.
Behold, O man, in this bequest
Philanthropy's long wrongs redressed:
To speak me ill that man I dower
With fiercest will who lacks the power.
Allah il Allah! now let him bloat
With rancor till his heart's afloat,
Unable to discharge the wave
Upon his benefactor's grave!"
Forth in their wrath the people came
And swore it was a sin and shame
To trick their blessed mute; and each

Protested, serious of speech,
That though he'd long foreseen the worst
He'd been against it from the first.
By various means they vainly tried
The testament to set aside,
Each ready with his empty purse
To take upon himself the curse;
For they had powers of invective
Enough to make it ineffective.
The ingrates mustered, every man,
And marched in force to Ispahan
(Which had not quite accommodation)
And held a camp of indignation.
The man, this while, who never spoke
On whom had fallen this thunder-stroke
Of fortune, gave no feeling vent
Nor dropped a clue to his intent.
Whereas no power to him came
His benefactor to defame,
Some (such a length had slander gone to)
Even whispered that he didn't want to!
But none his secret could divine;
If suffering he made no sign,
Until one night as winter neared
From all his haunts he disappeared
Evanished in a doubtful blank
Like little crayfish in a bank,
Their heads retracting for a spell,
And pulling in their holes as well.
All through the land of Gul, the stout
Young Spring is kicking Winter out.
The grass sneaks in upon the scene,
Defacing it with bottle-green.
The stumbling lamb arrives to ply
His restless tail in every eye,
Eats nasty mint to spoil his meat
And make himself unfit to eat.
Madly his throat the bulbul tears
In every grove blasphemes and swears
As the immodest rose displays
Her shameless charms a dozen ways.

Lo! now, throughout the utmost span
Of Ispahan—of Gulistan—
A big new book's displayed in all
The shops and cumbers every stall.
The price is low—the dealers say 'tis
And the rich are treated to it gratis.
Engraven on its foremost page
These title-words the eye engage:
"The Life of Muley Ben Maroon,
Of Astrabad—Rogue, Thief, Buffoon
And Miser—Liver by the Sweat
Of Better Men: A Lamponette
Composed in Rhyme and Written all
By Meerza Solyman Zingall!"

CORRECTED NEWS.

'T was a maiden lady (the newspapers say)
Pious and prim and a bit gone-gray.
She slept like an angel, holy and white,
Till ten o' the clock in the shank o' the night
(When men and other wild animals prey)
And then she cried in the viewless gloom:
"There's a man in the room, a man in the room!"
And this maiden lady (they make it appear)
Leapt out of the window, five fathom sheer!
Alas, that lying is such a sin
When newspaper men need bread and gin
And none can be had for less than a lie!
For the maiden lady a bit gone-gray
Saw the man in the room from across the way,
And leapt, not out of the window but in
Ten fathom sheer, as I hope to die!

AN EXPLANATION.

"I never yet exactly could determine
Just how it is that the judicial ermine
Is kept so safely from predacious vermin."
"It is not so, my friend: though in a garret
'Tis kept in camphor, and you often air it,
The vermin will get into it and wear it."

JUSTICE.

Jack Doe met Dick Roe, whose wife he loved,
And said: "I will get the best of him."
So pulling a knife from his boot, he shoved
It up to the hilt in the breast of him.
Then he moved that weapon forth and back,
Enlarging the hole he had made with it,
Till the smoking liver fell out, and Jack
Merrily, merrily played with it.
Then he reached within and he seized the slack
Of the lesser bowel, and, traveling
Hither and thither, looked idly back
On that small intestine, raveling.
The wretched Richard, with many a grin
Laid on with exceeding suavity,
Curled up and died, and they ran John in
And charged him with sins of gravity.
The case was tried and a verdict found:
The jury, with great humanity,
Acquitted the prisoner on the ground
Of extemporary insanity.

MR. FINK'S DEBATING DONKEY.

Of a person known as Peters I will humbly crave your leave
An unusual adventure into narrative to weave
Mr. William Perry Peters, of the town of Muscatel,
A public educator and an orator as well.
Mr. Peters had a weakness which, 'tis painful to relate,
Was a strong predisposition to the pleasures of debate.
He would foster disputation wheresoever he might be;
In polygonal contention none so happy was as he.
'Twas observable, however, that the exercises ran
Into monologue by Peters, that rhetorical young man.
And the Muscatelian rustics who assisted at the show,
By involuntary silence testified their overthrow
Mr. Peters, all unheedful of their silence and their grief,
Still effacing every vestige of erroneous belief.
O, he was a sore affliction to all heretics so bold
As to entertain opinions that he didn't care to hold.
One day—'t was in pursuance of a pedagogic plan
For the mental elevation of Uncultivated Man
Mr. Peters, to his pupils, in dismissing them, explained
That the Friday evening following (unless, indeed, it rained)
Would be signalized by holding in the schoolhouse a debate
Free to all who their opinions might desire to ventilate
On the question, "Which is better, as a serviceable gift,
Speech or hearing, from barbarity the human mind to lift?"
The pupils told their fathers, who, forehanded always, met
At the barroom to discuss it every evening, dry or wet,
They argued it and argued it and spat upon the stove,
And the non-committal "barkeep" on their differences throve.
And I state it as a maxim in a loosish kind of way:
You'll have the more to back your word the less you have to say.
Public interest was lively, but one Ebenezer Fink
Of the Rancho del Jackrabbit, only seemed to sit and think.
On the memorable evening all the men of Muscatel
Came to listen to the logic and the eloquence as well—
All but William Perry Peters, whose attendance there, I fear,
Was to wreak his ready rhetoric upon the public ear,
And prove (whichever side he took) that hearing wouldn't lift
The human mind as ably as the other, greater gift.
The judges being chosen and the disputants enrolled,

The question he proceeded in extenso to unfold:
"Resolved—The sense of hearing lifts the mind up out of reach
Of the fogs of error better than the faculty of speech."
This simple proposition he expounded, word by word,
Until they best understood it who least perfectly had heard.
Even the judges comprehended as he ventured to explain
The impact of a spit-ball admonishing in vain.
Beginning at a period before Creation's morn,
He had reached the bounds of tolerance and Adam yet unborn.
As down the early centuries of pre-historic time
He tracked important principles and quoted striking rhyme,
And Whisky Bill, prosaic soul! proclaiming him a jay,
Had risen and like an earthquake, "reeled unheededly away,"
And a late lamented cat, when opportunity should serve,
Was preparing to embark upon her parabolic curve,
A noise arose outside—the door was opened with a bang
And old Ebenezer Fink was heard ejaculating "G'lang!"
Straight into that assembly gravely marched without a wink
An ancient ass—the property it was of Mr. Fink.
Its ears depressed and beating time to its infestive tread,
Silent through silence moved amain that stately quadruped!
It stopped before the orator, and in the lamplight thrown
Upon its tail they saw that member weighted with a stone.
Then spake old Ebenezer: "Gents, I heern o' this debate
On w'ether v'ice or y'ears is best the mind to elevate.
Now 'yer's a bird ken throw some light uponto that tough theme:
He has 'em both, I'm free to say, uncommonly extreme.
He wa'n't invited for to speak, but he will not refuse
(If t'other gentleman ken wait) to exposay his views."
Ere merriment or anger o'er amazement could prevail;
He cut the string that held the stone on that canary's tail.
Freed from the weight, that member made a gesture of delight,
Then rose until its rigid length was horizontal quite.
With lifted head and level ears along his withers laid,
Jack sighed, refilled his lungs and then—to put it mildly—brayed!
He brayed until the stones were stirred in circumjacent hills,
And sleeping women rose and fled, in divers kinds of frills.
'T is said that awful bugle-blast—to make the story brief
Wafted William Perry Peters through the window, like a leaf!
Such is the tale. If anything additional occurred
'Tis not set down, though, truly, I remember to have heard

That a gentleman named Peters, now residing at Soquel,
A considerable distance from the town of Muscatel,
Is opposed to education, and to rhetoric, as well.

TO MY LAUNDRESS.

Saponacea, wert thou not so fair
I'd curse thee for thy multitude of sins—
For sending home my clothes all full of pins
A shirt occasionally that's a snare
And a delusion, got, the Lord knows where,
The Lord knows why—a sock whose outs and ins
None know, nor where it ends nor where begins,
And fewer cuffs than ought to be my share.
But when I mark thy lilies how they grow,
And the red roses of thy ripening charms,
I bless the lovelight in thy dark eyes dreaming.
I'll never pay thee, but I'd gladly go
Into the magic circle of thine arms,
Supple and fragrant from repeated steaming.

FAME.

One thousand years I slept beneath the sod,
My sleep in 1901 beginning,
Then, by the action of some scurvy god
Who happened then to recollect my sinning,
I was revived and given another inning.
On breaking from my grave I saw a crowd
A formless multitude of men and women,
Gathered about a ruin. Clamors loud
I heard, and curses deep enough to swim in;
And, pointing at me, one said: "Let's put him in."
Then each turned on me with an evil look,
As in my ragged shroud I stood and shook.
"Nay, good Posterity," I cried, "forbear!
If that's a jail I fain would be remaining

Outside, for truly I should little care
To catch my death of cold. I'm just regaining
The life lost long ago by my disdain
To take precautions against draughts like those
That, haply, penetrate that cracked and splitting
Old structure." Then an aged wight arose
From a chair of state in which he had been sitting,
And with preliminary coughing, spitting
And wheezing, said: "'T is not a jail, we're sure,
Whate'er it may have been when it was newer.
'T was found two centuries ago, o'ergrown
With brush and ivy, all undooed, ungated;
And in restoring it we found a stone
Set here and there in the dilapidated
And crumbling frieze, inscribed, in antiquated
Big characters, with certain uncouth names,
Which we conclude were borne of old by awful
Rapsallions guilty of all sinful games—
Vagrants engaged in purposes unlawful,
And orators less sensible than jawful.
So each ten years we add to the long row
A name, the most unworthy that we know."
"But why," I asked, "put me in?" He replied:
"You look it"—and the judgment pained me greatly;
Right gladly would I then and there have died,
But that I'd risen from the grave so lately.
But on examining that solemn, stately
Old ruin I remarked: "My friend, you err
The truth of this is just what I expected.
This building in its time made quite a stir.
I lived (was famous, too) when 't was erected.
The names here first inscribed were much respected.
This is the Hall of Fame, or I'm a stork,
And this goat pasture once was called New York."

OMNES VANITAS.

Alas for ambition's possessor!
Alas for the famous and proud!
The Isle of Manhattan's best dresser
Is wearing a hand-me-down shroud.

The world has forgotten his glory;
The wagoner sings on his wain,
And Chauncey Depew tells a story,
And jackasses laugh in the lane.

ASPIRATION.

No man can truthfully say that he would not like to
be President.—William C. Whitney.
Lo! the wild rabbit, happy in the pride
Of qualities to meaner beasts denied,
Surveys the ass with reverence and fear,
Adoring his superior length of ear,
And says: "No living creature, lean or fat,
But wishes in his heart to be like That!"

DEMOCRACY.

Let slaves and subjects with unvaried psalms
Before their sovereign execute salaams;
The freeman scorns one idol to adore
Tom, Dick and Harry and himself are four.

THE NEW "ULALUME."

The skies they were ashen and sober,
The leaves they were crisped and sere,
" " " withering " "
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
" " down " " dark tarn " "
In the misty mid region of Weir,
" " ghoul-haunted woodland " "

CONSOLATION.

Little's the good to sit and grieve
Because the serpent tempted Eve.
Better to wipe your eyes and take
A club and go out and kill a snake.
What do you gain by cursing Nick
For playing her such a scurvy trick?
Better go out and some villain find
Who serves the devil, and beat him blind.
But if you prefer, as I suspect,
To philosophize, why, then, reflect:
If the cunning rascal upon the limb
Hadn't tempted her she'd have tempted him.

FATE.

Alas, alas, for the tourist's guide!—
He turned from the beaten trail aside,
Wandered bewildered, lay down and died.
O grim is the Irony of Fate:
It switches the man of low estate
And loosens the dogs upon the great.
It lights the fireman to roast the cook;
The fisherman squirms upon the hook,
And the flirt is slain with a tender look.
The undertaker it overtakes;
It saddles the cavalier, and makes
The haughtiest butcher into steaks.
Assist me, gods, to balk the decree!
Nothing I'll do and nothing I'll be,
In order that nothing be done to me.

PHILOSOPHER BIMM.

Republicans think Jonas Bimm
A Democrat gone mad,
And Democrats consider him
Republican and bad.
The Tough reviles him as a Dude
And gives it him right hot;

The Dude condemns his crassitude
And calls him sans culottes.
Derided as an Anglophile
By Anglophobes, forsooth,
As Anglophobe he feels, the while,
The Anglophilic tooth.
The Churchman calls him Atheist;
The Atheists, rough-shod,
Have ridden o'er him long and hissed
"The wretch believes in God!"
The Saints whom clergymen we call
Would kill him if they could;
The Sinners (scientists and all)
Complain that he is good.
All men deplore the difference
Between themselves and him,
And all devise expedients
For paining Jonas Bimm.
I too, with wild demoniac glee,
Would put out both his eyes;
For Mr. Bimm appears to me
Insufferably wise!

REMINDED.

Beneath my window twilight made
Familiar mysteries of shade.
Faint voices from the darkening down
Were calling vaguely to the town.
Intent upon a low, far gleam
That burned upon the world's extreme,
I sat, with short reprieve from grief,
And turned the volume, leaf by leaf,
Wherein a hand, long dead, had wrought
A million miracles of thought.
My fingers carelessly unclung
The lettered pages, and among
Them wandered witless, nor divined
The wealth in which, poor fools, they mined.
The soul that should have led their quest

Was dreaming in the level west,
Where a tall tower, stark and still,
 Uplifted on a distant hill,
Stood lone and passionless to claim
Its guardian star's returning flame.
I know not how my dream was broke,
 But suddenly my spirit woke
 Filled with a foolish fear to look
Upon the hand that clove the book,
 Significantly pointing; next
 I bent attentive to the text,
And read—and as I read grew old
The mindless words: "Poor Tom's a-cold!"
 Ah me! to what a subtle touch
The brimming cup resigns its clutch
Upon the wine. Dear God, is 't writ
That hearts their overburden bear
 Of bitterness though thou permit
The pranks of Chance, alurk in nooks,
And striking coward blows from books,
And dead hands reaching everywhere?

SALVINI IN AMERICA.

Come, gentlemen—your gold.
Thanks: welcome to the show.
 To hear a story told
 In words you do not know.
 Now, great Salvini, rise
And thunder through your tears,
 Aha! friends, let your eyes
 Interpret to your ears.
 Gods! 't is a goodly game.
Observe his stride—how grand!
 When legs like his declaim
 Who can misunderstand?
See how that arm goes round.
 It says, as plain as day:
 "I love," "The lost is found,"

"Well met, sir," or, "Away!"
And mark the drawing down
Of brows. How accurate
The language of that frown:
Pain, gentlemen—or hate.
Those of the critic trade
Swear it is all as clear
As if his tongue were made
To fit an English ear.
Hear that Italian phrase!
Greek to your sense, 't is true;
But shrug, expression, gaze
Well, they are Grecian too.
But it is Art! God wot
Its tongue to all is known.
Faith! he to whom 't were not
Would better hold his own.
Shakespeare says act and word
Must match together true.
From what you've seen and heard,
How can you doubt they do?
Enchanting drama! Mark
The crowd "from pit to dome",
One box alone is dark—
The prompter stays at home.
Stupendous artist! You
Are lord of joy and woe:
We thrill if you say "Boo,"
And thrill if you say "Bo."

ANOTHER WAY.

I lay in silence, dead. A woman came
And laid a rose upon my breast and said:
"May God be merciful." She spoke my name,
And added: "It is strange to think him dead.
"He loved me well enough, but 't was his way
To speak it lightly." Then, beneath her breath:
"Besides"—I knew what further she would say,
But then a footfall broke my dream of death.
To-day the words are mine. I lay the rose

Upon her breast, and speak her name and deem
It strange indeed that she is dead. God knows
I had more pleasure in the other dream.

ART.

For Gladstone's portrait five thousand pounds
Were paid, 't is said, to Sir John Millais.
I cannot help thinking that such fine pay
Transcended reason's uttermost bounds.
For it seems to me uncommonly queer
That a painted British statesman's price
Exceeds the established value thrice
Of a living statesman over here.

AN ENEMY TO LAW AND ORDER.

A is defrauded of his land by B,
Who's driven from the premises by C.
D buys the place with coin of plundered E.
"That A's an Anarchist!" says F to G.

TO ONE ACROSS THE WAY.

When at your window radiant you've stood
I've sometimes thought—forgive me if I've erred
That some slight thought of me perhaps has stirred
Your heart to beat less gently than it should.
I know you beautiful; that you are good
I hope—or fear—I cannot choose the word,
Nor rightly suit it to the thought. I've heard
Reason at love's dictation never could.
Blindly to this dilemma so I grope,
As one whose every pathway has a snare:
If you are minded in the saintly fashion
Of your pure face my passion's without hope;
If not, alas! I equally despair,
For what to me were hope without the passion?

THE DEBTOR ABROAD.

Grief for an absent lover, husband, friend,
Is barely felt before it comes to end:
A score of early consolations serve
To modify its mouth's dejected curve.
But woes of creditors when debtors flee
Forever swell the separating sea.
When standing on an alien shore you mark
The steady course of some intrepid bark,
How sweet to think a tear for you abides,
Not all unuseful, in the wave she rides!
That sighs for you commingle in the gale
Beneficently bellying her sail!

FORESIGHT.

An "actors' cemetery"! Sure
The devil never tires
Of planning places to procure
The sticks to feed his fires.

A FAIR DIVISION.

Another Irish landlord gone to grass,
Slain by the bullets of the tenant class!
Pray, good agrarians, what wrong requires
Such foul redress? Between you and the squires
All Ireland's parted with an even hand
For you have all the ire, they all the land.

GENESIS.

God said: "Let there be Man," and from the clay
Adam came forth and, thoughtful, walked away.
The matrix whence his body was obtained,
An empty, man-shaped cavity, remained
All unregarded from that early time
Till in a recent storm it filled with slime.

Now Satan, envying the Master's power
To make the meat himself could but devour,
Strolled to the place and, standing by the pool,
Exerted all his will to make a fool.
A miracle!—from out that ancient hole
Rose Morehouse, lacking nothing but a soul.
"To give him that I've not the power divine,"
Said Satan, sadly, "but I'll lend him mine."
He breathed it into him, a vapor black,
And to this day has never got it back.

LIBERTY.

"Let there be Liberty!" God said, and, lo!
The red skies all were luminous. The glow
Struck first Columbia's kindling mountain peaks
One hundred and eleven years ago!"
So sang a patriot whom once I saw
Descending Bunker's holy hill. With awe
I noted that he shone with sacred light,
Like Moses with the tables of the Law.
One hundred and eleven years? O small
And paltry period compared with all
The tide of centuries that flowed and ebbed
To etch Yosemite's divided wall!
Ah, Liberty, they sing you always young
Whose harps are in your adoration strung
(Each swears you are his countrywoman, too,
And speak no language but his mother tongue).
And truly, lass, although with shout and horn
Man has all-hailed you from creation's morn,
I cannot think you old—I think, indeed,
You are by twenty centuries unborn.

1886.

THE PASSING OF "BOSS" SHEPHERD.

The sullen church-bell's intermittent moan,
The dirge's melancholy monotone,
The measured march, the drooping flags, attest
A great man's progress to his place of rest.
Along broad avenues himself decreed
To serve his fellow men's disputed need
Past parks he raped away from robbers' thrift
And gave to poverty, wherein to lift
Its voice to curse the giver and the gift—
Past noble structures that he reared for men
To meet in and revile him, tongue and pen,
Draws the long retinue of death to show
The fit credentials of a proper woe.
"Boss" Shepherd, you are dead. Your hand no more
Throws largess to the mobs that ramp and roar

For blood of benefactors who disdain
Their purity of purpose to explain,
Their righteous motive and their scorn of gain.
Your period of dream—'twas but a breath
Is closed in the indifference of death.
Sealed in your silences, to you alike
If hands are lifted to applaud or strike.
No more to your dull, inattentive ear
Praise of to-day than curse of yesteryear.
From the same lips the honied phrases fall
That still are bitter from cascades of gall.
We note the shame; you in your depth of dark
The red-writ testimony cannot mark
On every honest cheek; your senses all
Locked, incommunicado, in your pall,
Know not who sit and blush, who stand and bawl.
"Seven Grecian cities claim great Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his
bread."

So sang, as if the thought had been his own,
An unknown bard, improving on a known.
"Neglected genius!"—that is sad indeed,
But malice better would ignore than heed,
And Shepherd's soul, we rightly may suspect,
Prayed often for the mercy of neglect
When hardly did he dare to leave his door
Without a guard behind him and before
To save him from the gentlemen that now
In cheap and easy reparation bow
Their corrigible heads above his corse
To counterfeit a grief that's half remorse.
The pageant passes and the exile sleeps,
And well his tongue the solemn secret keeps
Of the great peace he found afar, until,
Death's writ of extradition to fulfill,
They brought him, helpless, from that friendly zone
To be a show and pastime in his own
A final opportunity to those
Who fling with equal aim the stone and rose;
That at the living till his soul is freed,
This at the body to conceal the deed!

Lone on his hill he's lying to await
What added honors may befit his state
The monument, the statue, or the arch
(Where knaves may come to weep and dupes to march)
Built by clowns to brutalize the scenes
His genius beautified. To get the means,
His newly good traducers all are dunned
For contributions to the conscience fund.
If each subscribe (and pay) one cent 'twill rear
A structure taller than their tallest ear.

TO MAUDE.

Not as two errant spheres together grind
With monstrous ruin in the vast of space,
Destruction born of that malign embrace,
Their hapless peoples all to death consigned
Not so when our intangible worlds of mind,
Even mine and yours, each with its spirit race
Of beings shadowy in form and face,
Shall drift together on some blessed wind.
No, in that marriage of gloom and light
All miracles of beauty shall be wrought,
Attesting a diviner faith than man's;
For all my sad-eyed daughters of the night
Shall smile on your sweet seraphim of thought,
Nor any jealous god forbid the banns.

THE BIRTH OF VIRTUE.

When, long ago, the young world circling flew
Through wider reaches of a richer blue,
New-eyed, the men and maids saw, manifest,
The thoughts untold in one another's breast:
Each wish displayed, and every passion learned
A look revealed them as a look discerned.
But sating Time with clouds o'er cast their eyes;
Desire was hidden, and the lips framed lies.
A goddess then, emerging from the dust,
Fair Virtue rose, the daughter of Distrust.

STONEMAN IN HEAVEN.

The Seraphs came to Christ, and said: "Behold!
The man, presumptuous and overbold,
Who boasted that his mercy could excel
Thine own, is dead and on his way to Hell."
Gravely the Saviour asked: "What did he do
To make his impious assertion true?"
"He was a Governor, releasing all
The vilest felons ever held in thrall.
No other mortal, since the dawn of time,
Has ever pardoned such a mass of crime!"
Christ smiled benignly on the Seraphim:
"Yet I am victor, for I pardon him."

THE SCURRIL PRESS.

TOM JONESMITH (loquitur): I've slept right through
The night—a rather clever thing to do.
How soundly women sleep (looks at his wife.)
They're all alike. The sweetest thing in life
Is woman when she lies with folded tongue,
Its toil completed and its day-song sung.
(Thump) That's the morning paper. What a bore
That it should be delivered at the door.
There ought to be some expeditious way
To get it to one. By this long delay
The fizz gets off the news (a rap is heard).
That's Jane, the housemaid; she's an early bird;
She's brought it to the bedroom door, good soul.
(Gets up and takes it in.) Upon the whole
The system's not so bad a one. What's here?
Gad, if they've not got after—listen dear
(To sleeping wife)—young Gastrotheos! Well,

If Freedom shrieked when Kosciusko fell
She'll shriek again—with laughter—seeing how
They treated Gast. with her. Yet I'll allow
'T is right if he goes dining at The Pup
With Mrs. Thing.

WIFE (briskly, waking up):

With her? The hussy! Yes, it serves him right.

JONESMITH (continuing to "seek the light"):

What's this about old Impycu? That's good!
Grip—that's the funny man—says Impy should
Be used as a decoy in shooting tramps.
I knew old Impy when he had the "stamps"
To buy us all out, and he wasn't then
So bad a chap to have about. Grip's pen
Is just a tickler!—and the world, no doubt,
Is better with it than it was without.

What? thirteen ladies—Jumping Jove! we know
Them nearly all!—who gamble at a low
And very shocking game of cards called "draw"!
O cracky, how they'll squirm! ha-ha! haw-haw!
Let's see what else (wife snores). Well, I'll be blest!
A woman doesn't understand a jest.

Hello! What, what? the scurvy wretch proceeds
To take a fling at me, condemn him! (reads):
Tom Jonesmith—my name's Thomas, vulgar cad!—Of
the new Shavings Bank—the man's gone mad!
That's libelous; I'll have him up for that—Has
had his corns cut. Devil take the rat!

What business is 't of his, I'd like to know?
He didn't have to cut them. Gods! what low
And scurril things our papers have become!
You skim their contents and you get but scum.
Here, Mary, (waking wife) I've been attacked
In this vile sheet. By Jove, it is a fact!

WIFE (reading it): How wicked! Who do you
Suppose 't was wrote it?

JONESMITH: Who? why, who
But Grip, the so-called funny man—he wrote
Me up because I'd not discount his note.
(Blushes like sunset at the hideous lie
He'll think of one that's better by and by

Throws down the paper on the floor, and treads
A lively measure on it—kicks the shreds
And patches all about the room, and still
Performs his jig with unabated will.)

WIFE (warbling sweetly, like an Elfland horn):
Dear, do be careful of that second corn.

STANLEY.

Noting some great man's composition vile:

A head of wisdom and a heart of guile,
A will to conquer and a soul to dare,
Joined to the manners of a dancing bear,
Fools unaccustomed to the wide survey
Of various Nature's compensating sway,
Untaught to separate the wheat and chaff,
To praise the one and at the other laugh,
Yearn all in vain and impotently seek
Some flawless hero upon whom to wreak
The sycophantic worship of the weak.

Not so the wise, from superstition free,
Who find small pleasure in the bended knee;
Quick to discriminate 'twixt good and bad,
And willing in the king to find the cad
No reason seen why genius and conceit,
The power to dazzle and the will to cheat,
The love of daring and the love of gin,
Should not dwell, peaceful, in a single skin.
To such, great Stanley, you're a hero still,
Despite your cradling in a tub for swill.

Your peasant manners can't efface the mark
Of light you drew across the Land of Dark.
In you the extremes of character are wed,
To serve the quick and villify the dead.
Hero and clown! O, man of many sides,
The Muse of Truth adores you and derides,
And sheds, impartial, the revealing ray
Upon your head of gold and feet of clay.

ONE OF THE UNFAIR SEX.

She stood at the ticket-seller's
Serenely removing her glove,
While hundreds of strugglers and yellers,
And some that were good at a shove,
Were clustered behind her like bats in
a cave and unwilling to speak their love.
At night she still stood at that window
Endeavoring her money to reach;
The crowds right and left, how they sinned—O,
How dreadfully sinned in their speech!
Ten miles either way they extended
their lines, the historians teach.
She stands there to-day—legislation
Has failed to remove her. The trains
No longer pull up at that station;
And over the ghastly remains
Of the army that waited and died of
old age fall the snows and the rains.