

**Black Beetles
In Amber
By
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BLACK BEETLES IN AMBER

THE KEY NOTE

I dreamed I was dreaming one morn as I lay
 In a garden with flowers teeming.
 On an island I lay in a mystical bay,
In the dream that I dreamed I was dreaming.
The ghost of a scent—had it followed me there
 From the place where I truly was resting?
 It filled like an anthem the aisles of the air,
 The presence of roses attesting.
Yet I thought in the dream that I dreamed I dreamed
 That the place was all barren of roses
 That it only seemed; and the place, I deemed,
 Was the Isle of Bewildered Noses.
 Full many a seaman had testified
 How all who sailed near were enchanted,
And landed to search (and in searching died)
 For the roses the Sirens had planted.
For the Sirens were dead, and the billows boomed
 In the stead of their singing forever;
But the roses bloomed on the graves of the doomed,
 Though man had discovered them never.
I thought in my dream 'twas an idle tale,
 A delusion that mariners cherished
That the fragrance loading the conscious gale
 Was the ghost of a rose long perished.
I said, "I will fly from this island of woes."
 And acting on that decision,
By that odor of rose I was led by the nose,
 For 'twas truly, ah! truly, Elysian.
I ran, in my madness, to seek out the source
 Of the redolent river—directed
 By some supernatural, sinister force
 To a forest, dark, haunted, infected.
And still as I threaded ('twas all in the dream
That I dreamed I was dreaming) each turning
There were many a scream and a sudden gleam
 Of eyes all uncannily burning!

The leaves were all wet with a horrible dew
That mirrored the red moon's crescent,
And all shapes were fringed with a ghostly blue,
Dim, wavering, phosphorescent.
But the fragrance divine, coming strong and free,
Led me on, though my blood was clotting,
Till—ah, joy!—I could see, on the limbs of a tree,
Mine enemies hanging and rotting!

CAIN

Lord, shed thy light upon his desert path,
And gild his branded brow, that no man spill
His forfeit life to balk thy holy will
That spares him for the ripening of wrath.
Already, lo! the red sign is descried,
To trembling jurors visibly revealed:
The prison doors obediently yield,
The baffled hangman flings the cord aside.
Powell, the brother's blood that marks your trail
Hark, how it cries against you from the ground,
Like the far baying of the tireless hound.
Faith! to your ear it is no nightingale.
What signifies the date upon a stone?
To-morrow you shall die if not to-day.
What matter when the Avenger choose to slay
Or soon or late the Devil gets his own.
Thenceforth through all eternity you'll hold
No one advantage of the later death.
Though you had granted Ralph another breath
Would he to-day less silent lie and cold?
Earth cares not, curst assassin, when you die;
You never will be readier than now.
Wear, in God's name, that mark upon your brow,
And keep the life you purchased with a lie!

AN OBITUARIAN

Death-poet Pickering sat at his desk,
 Wrapped in appropriate gloom;
His posture was pensive and picturesque,
 Like a raven charming a tomb.
Enter a party a-drinking the cup
 Of sorrow—and likewise of woe:
"Some harrowing poetry, Mister, whack up,
 All wrote in the key of O.
"For the angels has called my old woman hence
From the strife (where she fit mighty free).
 It's a nickel a line? Cond—n the expense!
 For wealth is now little to me."
The Bard of Mortality looked him through
 In the piercingest sort of a way:
"It is much to me though it's little to you
 I've taken a wife to-day.
So he twisted the tail of his mental cow
 And made her give down her flow.
The grief of that bard was long-winded, somehow
 There was reams and reamses of woe.
The widower man which had buried his wife
 Grew lily-like round each gill,
For she turned in her grave and came back to life
 Then he cruel ignored the bill!
Then Sorrow she opened her gates a-wide,
 As likewise did also Woe,
And the death-poet's song, as is heard inside,
 Is sang in the key of O.

A COMMUTED SENTENCE

Boruck and Waterman upon their grills
In Hades lay, with many a sigh and groan,
Hotly disputing, for each swore his own
Were clearly keener than the other's ills.
And, truly, each had much to boast of—bone
And sinew, muscle, tallow, nerve and skin,
Blood in the vein and marrow in the shin,
Teeth, eyes and other organs (for the soul
Has all of these and even a wagging chin)
Blazing and coruscating like a coal!
For Lower Sacramento, you remember,
Has trying weather, even in mid-December.
Now this occurred in the far future. All
Mankind had been a million ages dead,
And each to her reward above had sped,
Each to his punishment below,—I call
That quite a just arrangement. As I said,
Boruck and Waterman in warmest pain
Crackled and sizzed with all their might and main.
For, when on earth, they'd freed a scurvy host
Of crooks from the State prison, who again
Had robbed and ravaged the Pacific Coast
And (such the felon's predatory nature)
Even got themselves into the Legislature.
So Waterman and Boruck lay and roared
In Hades. It is true all other males
Felt the like flames and uttered equal wails,
But did not suffer them; whereas they bored
Each one the other. But indeed my tale's
Not getting on at all. They lay and browned
Till Boruck (who long since his teeth had ground
Away and spoke Gum Arabic and made
Stump speeches even in praying) looked around
And said to Bob's incinerated shade:
"Your Excellency, this is mighty hard on
The inventors of the unpardonable pardon."
The other soul—his right hand all aflame,
For 'twas with that he'd chiefly sinned, although
His tongue, too, like a wick was working woe
To the reserve of tallow in his frame
Said, with a sputtering, uncertain flow,

And with a gesture like a shaken torch:
"Yes, but I'm sure we'll not much longer scorch.
Although this climate is not good for Hope,
Whose joyous wing 'twould singe, I think the porch
Of Hell we'll quit with a pacific slope.
Last century I signified repentance
And asked for commutation of our sentence."
Even as he spoke, the form of Satan loomed
In sight, all crimson with reflections's fire,
Like some tall tower or cathedral spire
Touched by the dawn while all the earth is gloomed
In mists and shadows of the night time. "Sire,"
Said Waterman, his agitable wick
Still sputtering, "what calls you back so quick?
It scarcely was a century ago
You left us." "I have come to bring," said Nick,
"St. Peter's answer (he is never slow
In correspondence) to your application
For pardon—pardon me!—for commutation.
"He says that he's instructed to reply
(And he has so instructed me) that sin
Like yours—and this poor gentleman's who's in
For bad advice to you—comes rather high;
But since, apparently, you both begin
To feel some pious promptings to the right,
And fain would turn your faces to the light,
Eternity seems all too long a term.
So 'tis commuted to one-half. I'm quite
Prepared, when that expires, to free the worm
And quench the fire." And, civilly retreating,
He left them holding their protracted meeting.

A LIFTED FINGER

What! you whip rascals?—you, whose gutter blood
Bears, in its dark, dishonorable flood,
Enough of prison-birds' prolific germs
To serve a whole eternity of terms?
You, for whose back the rods and cudgels strove
Ere yet the ax had hewn them from the grove?
You, the De Young whose splendor bright and brave
Is phosphorescence from another's grave
Till now unknown, by any chance or luck,
Even to the hearts at which you, feebly struck?
You whip a rascal out of office?—you
Whose leadless weapon once ignobly blew
Its smoke in six directions to assert
Your lack of appetite for others' dirt?
Practice makes perfect: when for fame you thirst,
Then whip a rascal. Whip a cripple first.
Or, if for action you're less free than bold
Your palms both brimming with dishonest gold
Entrust the castigation that you've planned,
As once before, to woman's idle hand.
So in your spirit shall two pleasures join
To slake the sacred thirst for blood and coin.
Blood? Souls have blood, even as the body hath,
And, spilled, 'twill fertilize the field of wrath.
Lo! in a purple gorge of yonder hills,
Where o'er a grave a bird its day-song stills,
A woman's blood, through roses ever red,
Mutely appeals for vengeance on your head.
Slandered to death to serve a sordid end,
She called you murderer and called me friend.
Now, mark you, libeler, this course if you
Dare to maintain, or rather to renew;
If one short year's immunity has made
You blink again the perils of your trade
The ghastly sequence of the maddened "knave,"
The hot encounter and the colder grave;
If the grim, dismal lesson you ignore
While yet the stains are fresh upon your floor,
And calmly march upon the fatal brink
With eyes averted to your trail of ink,
Counting unkind the services of those

Who pull, to hold you back, your stupid nose,
The day for you to die is not so far,
Or, at the least, to live the thing you are!
Pregnant with possibilities of crime,
And full of felons for all coming time,
Your blood's too precious to be lightly spilt
In testimony to a venial guilt.
Live to get whelpage and preserve a name
No praise can sweeten and no lie unshame.
Live to fulfill the vision that I see
Down the dim vistas of the time to be:
A dream of clattering beaks and burning eyes
Of hungry ravens glooming all the skies;
A dream of gleaming teeth and foetid breath
Of jackals wrangling at the feast of death;
A dream of broken necks and swollen tongues
The whole world's gibbets loaded with De Youngs!

TWO STATESMEN

In that fair city by the inland sea,
Where Blaine unhived his Presidential bee,
Frank Pixley's meeting with George Gorham sing,
Celestial muse, and what events did spring
From the encounter of those mighty sons
Of thunder, and of slaughter, and of guns.
Great Gorham first, his yearning tooth to sate
And give him stomach for the day's debate,
Entering a restaurant, with eager mien,
Demands an ounce of bacon and a bean.
The trembling waiter, by the statesman's eye
Smitten with terror, hastens to comply;
Nor chairs nor tables can his speed retard,
For famine's fixed and horrible regard
He takes for menace. As he shaking flew,
Lo! the portentous Pixley heaved in view!
Before him yawned invisible the cell,
Unheard, behind, the warden's footsteps fell.
Thrice in convention rising to his feet,

He thrice had been thrust back into his seat;
Thrice had protested, been reminded thrice
The nation had no need of his advice.
Balked of his will to set the people right,
His soul was gloomy though his hat was white,
So fierce his mien, with provident accord
The waiters swarmed him, thinking him a lord.
He spurned them, roaring grandly to their chief:
"Give me (Fred. Crocker pays) a leg of beef!"
His wandering eye's deluminating flame
Fell upon Gorham and the crisis came!
For Pixley scowled and darkness filled the room
Till Gorham's flashing orbs dispelled the gloom.
The patrons of the place, by fear dismayed,
Sprang to the street and left their scores unpaid.
So, when Jove thunders and his lightnings gleam
To sour the milk and curdle, too, the cream,
And storm-clouds gather on the shadowed hill,
The ass forsakes his hay, the pig his swill.
Hotly the heroes now engaged—their breath
Came short and hard, as in the throes of death.
They clenched their hands, their weapons brandished high,
Cut, stabbed, and hewed, nor uttered any cry,
But gnashed their teeth and struggled on! In brief,
One ate his bacon, t'other one his beef.

MATTER FOR GRATITUDE

Be pleased, O Lord, to take a people's thanks
That Thine avenging sword has spared our ranks
That Thou hast parted from our lips the cup
And forced our neighbors' lips to drink it up.
Father of Mercies, with a heart contrite
We thank Thee that Thou goest south to smite,
And sparest San Francisco's loins, to crack
Thy lash on Hermosillo's bleeding back
That o'er our homes Thine awful angel spread
His wings in vain, and Guaymas weeps instead.
We praise Thee, God, that Yellow Fever here
His horrid banner has not dared to rear,
Consumption's jurisdiction to contest,

Her dagger deep in every second breast!
Catarrh and Asthma and Congestive Chill
Attest Thy bounty and perform Thy will.
These native messengers obey Thy call
They summon singly, but they summon all.
Not, as in Mexico's impested clime,
Can Yellow Jack commit recurring crime.
We thank Thee that Thou killest all the time.
Thy tender mercies, Father, never end:
Upon all heads Thy blessings still descend,
Though their forms vary. Here the sown seeds yield
Abundant grain that whitens all the field
There the smit corn stands barren on the plain,
Thrift reaps the straw and Famine gleans in vain.
Here the fat priest to the contented king
Points out the contrast and the people sing
There mothers eat their offspring. Well, at least
Thou hast provided offspring for the feast.
An earthquake here rolls harmless through the land,
And Thou art good because the chimneys stand
There templed cities sink into the sea,
And damp survivors, howling as they flee,
Skip to the hills and hold a celebration
In honor of Thy wise discrimination.
O God, forgive them all, from Stoneman down,
Thy smile who construe and expound Thy frown,
And fall with saintly grace upon their knees
To render thanks when Thou dost only sneeze.

THREE KINDS OF A ROGUE

I

Sharon, ambitious of immortal shame,
Fame's dead-wall daubed with his illustrious name
Served in the Senate, for our sins, his time,
Each word a folly and each vote a crime;
Law for our governance well skilled to make
By knowledge gained in study how to break;
Yet still by the presiding eye ignored,
Which only sought him when too loud he snored.
Auspicious thunder!—when he woke to vote
He stilled his own to cut his country's throat;
That rite performed, fell off again to sleep,
While statesmen ages dead awoke to weep!
For sedentary service all unfit,
By lying long disqualified to sit,
Wasting below as he decayed aloft,
His seat grown harder as his brain grew soft,
He left the hall he could not bring away,
And grateful millions blessed the happy day!
Whate'er contention in that hall is heard,
His sovereign State has still the final word:
For disputatious statesmen when they roar
Startle the ancient echoes of his snore,
Which from their dusty nooks expostulate
And close with stormy clamor the debate.
To low melodious thunders then they fade;
Their murmuring lullabies all ears invade;
Peace takes the Chair; the portal Silence keeps;
No motion stirs the dark Lethean deeps
Washoe has spoken and the Senate sleeps.

II

Lo! the new Sharon with a new intent,
Making no laws, but keen to circumvent
The laws of Nature (since he can't repeal)
That break his failing body on the wheel.
As Tantalus again and yet again
The elusive wave endeavors to restrain
To slake his awful thirst, so Sharon tries

To purchase happiness that age denies;
Obtains the shadow, but the substance goes,
And hugs the thorn, but cannot keep the rose;
For Dead Sea fruits bids prodigally, eats,
And then, with tardy reformation—cheats.
Alert his faculties as three score years
And four score vices will permit, he nears
Dicing with Death—the finish of the game,
And curses still his candle's wasting flame,
The narrow circle of whose feeble glow
Dims and diminishes at every throw.
Moments his losses, pleasures are his gains,
Which even in his grasp revert to pains.
The joy of grasping them alone remains.

III

Ring up the curtain and the play protract!
Behold our Sharon in his last mad act.
With man long warring, quarreling with God,
He crouches now beneath a woman's rod
Predestined for his back while yet it lay
Closed in an acorn which, one luckless day,
He stole, unconscious of its foetal twig,
From the scant garner of a sightless pig.
With bleeding shoulders pitilessly scored,
He bawls more lustily than once he snored.
The sympathetic Comstocks droop to hear,
And Carson river sheds a viscous tear,
Which sturdy tumble-bugs assail amain,
With ready thrift, and urge along the plain.
The jackass rabbit sorrows as he lopes;
The sage-brush glooms along the mountain slopes;
In rising clouds the poignant alkali,
Tearless itself, makes everybody cry.
Washoe canaries on the Geiger Grade
Subdue the singing of their cavalcade,
And, wiping with their ears the tears unshed,
Grieve for their family's unlucky head.
Virginia City intermits her trade
And well-clad strangers walk her streets unflayed.

Nay, all Nevada ceases work to weep
And the recording angel goes to sleep.
But in his dreams his goose-quill's creaking fount
Augments the debits in the long account.
And still the continents and oceans ring
With royal torments of the Silver King!
Incessant bellowings fill all the earth,
Mingled with inextinguishable mirth.
He roars, men laugh, Nevadans weep, beasts howl,
Plash the affrighted fish, and shriek the fowl!
With monstrous din their blended thunders rise,
Peal upon peal, and brawl along the skies,
Startle in hell the Sharons as they groan,
And shake the splendors of the great white throne!
Still roaring outward through the vast profound,
The spreading circles of receding sound
Pursue each other in a failing race
To the cold confines of eternal space;
There break and die along that awful shore
Which God's own eyes have never dared explore
Dark, fearful, formless, nameless evermore!
Look to the west! Against yon steely sky
Lone Mountain rears its holy cross on high.
About its base the meek-faced dead are laid
To share the benediction of its shade.
With crossed white hands, shut eyes and formal feet,
Their nights are innocent, their days discreet.
Sharon, some years, perchance, remain of life
Of vice and greed, vulgarity and strife;
And then—God speed the day if such His will
You'll lie among the dead you helped to kill,
And be in good society at last,
Your purse unsilvered and your face unbrassed.

A MAN

Pennoyer, Governor of Oregon,
Casting to South his eye across the bourne
Of his dominion (where the Palmiped,
With leathers 'twixt his toes, paddles his marsh,
Amphibious) saw a rising cloud of hats,
And heard a faint, far sound of distant cheers
Below the swell of the horizon. "Lo,"
Cried one, "the President! the President!"
All footed webwise then took up the word
The hill tribes and the tribes lacustrine and
The folk riparian and littoral,
Cried with one voice: "The President! He comes!"
And some there were who flung their headgear up
In emulation of the Southern mob;
While some, more soberly disposed, stood still
And silently had fits; and others made
Such reverent genuflexions as they could,
Having that climate in their bones. Then spake
The Court Dunce, humbly, as became him: "Sire,
If thou, as heretofore thou hast, wilt deign
To reap advantage of a fool's advice
By action ordered after nature's way,
As in thy people manifest (for still
Stupidity's the only wisdom) thou
Wilt get thee straight unto to the border land
To mark the President's approach with such
Due, decent courtesy as it shall seem
We have in custom the best warrant for."

Pennoyer, Governor of Oregon,
Eyeing the storm of hats which darkened all
The Southern sky, and hearing far hurrahs
Of an exulting people, answered not.
Then some there were who fell upon their knees,
And some upon their Governor, and sought
Each in his way, by blandishment or force,
To gain his action to their end. "Behold,"
They said, "thy brother Governor to South
Met him even at the gateway of his realm,
Crook-kneed, magnetic-handed and agrin,
Backed like a rainbow—all things done in form
Of due observance and respect. Shall we

Alone of all his servitors refuse
Swift welcome to our master and our lord?"
Pennoyer, Governor of Oregon,
Answered them not, but turned his back to them
And as if speaking to himself, the while
He started to retire, said: "He be damned!"
To that High Place o'er Portland's central block,
Where the Recording Angel stands to view
The sinning world, nor thinks to move his feet
Aside and look below, came flocking up
Inferior angels, all aghast, and cried:
"Pennoyer, Governor of Oregon,
Has said, O what an awful word!—too bad
To be by us repeated!" "Yes, I know,"
Said the superior bird—"I heard it too,
And have already booked it. Pray observe."
Splitting the giant tome, whose covers fell
Apart, o'ershadowing to right and left
The Eastern and the Western world, he showed
The newly written entry, black and big,
Upon the credit side of thine account,
Pennoyer, Governor of Oregon.

Y'E FOE TO CATHAYE

O never an oathe sweares he,
And never a pig-taile jerkes;
With a brick-batte he ne lurkes
For to buste y'e crust, perdie,
Of y'e man from over sea,
A-synging as he werkes.
For he knows ful well, y's youth,
A tricke of exceeding worth:
And he plans withouten ruth
A conflagration's birth!

SAMUEL SHORTRIDGE

Like a worn mother he attempts in vain
To still the unruly Crier of his brain:
The more he rocks the cradle of his chin
The more uproarious grows the brat within.

SURPRISED

"O son of mine age, these eyes lose their fire:
Be eyes, I pray, to thy dying sire."
"O father, fear not, for mine eyes are bright
I read through a millstone at dead of night."
"My son, O tell me, who are those men,
Rushing like pigs to the feeding-pen?"
"Welcomers they of a statesman grand.
They'll shake, and then they will pocket; his hand."
"Sagacious youth, with the wondrous eye,
They seem to throw up their headgear. Why?"
"Because they've thrown up their hands until, O,
They're so tired!—and dinners they've none to throw."
"My son, my son, though dull are mine ears,
I hear a great sound like the people's cheers."
"He's thanking them, father, with tears in his eyes,
For giving him lately that fine surprise."
"My memory fails as I near mine end;
How did they astonish their grateful friend?"
"By letting him buy, like apples or oats,

With that which has made him so good, the votes
Which make him so wise and grand and great.
Now, father, please die, for 'tis growing late."

POSTERITY'S AWARD

I'd long been dead, but I returned to earth.
Some small affairs posterity was making
A mess of, and I came to see that worth
Received its dues. I'd hardly finished waking,
The grave-mould still upon me, when my eye
Perceived a statue standing straight and high.
'Twas a colossal figure—bronze and gold
Nobly designed, in attitude commanding.
A toga from its shoulders, fold on fold,
Fell to the pedestal on which 'twas standing.
Nobility it had and splendid grace,
And all it should have had—except a face!
It showed no features: not a trace nor sign
Of any eyes or nose could be detected
On the smooth oval of its front no line
Where sites for mouths are commonly selected.
All blank and blind its faulty head it reared.
Let this be said: 'twas generously eared.
Seeing these things, I straight began to guess
For whom this mighty image was intended.
"The head," I cried, "is Upton's, and the dress
Is Parson Bartlett's own." True, his cloak ended
Flush with his lowest vertebra, but no
Sane sculptor ever made a toga so.

Then on the pedestal these words I read: "Erected Eighteen Hundred Ninety-seven"
(Saint Christofer! how fast the time had sped! Of course it naturally does in Heaven) "To
" (here a blank space for the name began) "The Nineteenth Century's Great Foremost
Man!"

"Completed" the inscription ended, "in
The Year Three Thousand"—which was just arriving.
By Jove! thought I, 'twould make the founders grin
To learn whose fame so long has been surviving
To read the name posterity will place

In that blank void, and view the finished face.
Even as I gazed, the year Three Thousand came,
And then by acclamation all the people
Decreed whose was our century's best fame;
Then scaffolded the statue like a steeple,
To make the likeness; and the name was sunk
Deep in the pedestal's metallic trunk.
Whose was it? Gentle reader, pray excuse
The seeming rudeness, but I can't consent to
Be so forehanded with important news.
'Twas neither yours nor mine—let that content you.
If not, the name I must surrender, which,
Upon a dead man's word, was George K. Fitch!

AN ART CRITIC

Ira P. Rankin, you've a nasal name
I'll sound it through "the speaking-trump of fame,"
And wondering nations, hearing from afar
The brazen twang of its resounding jar,
Shall say: "These bards are an uncommon class
They blow their noses with a tube of brass!"
Rankin! ye gods! if Influenza pick
Our names at christening, and such names stick,
Let's all be born when summer suns withstand
Her prevalence and chase her from the land,
And healing breezes generously help
To shield from death each ailing human whelp!
"What's in a name?" There's much at least in yours
That the pained ear unwillingly endures,
And much to make the suffering soul, I fear,
Envy the lesser anguish of the ear.
So you object to Cytherea! Do,
The picture was not painted, sir, for you!
Your mind to gratify and taste address,
The masking dove had been a dove the less.
Provincial censor! all untaught in art,
With mind indecent and indecent heart,
Do you not know—nay, why should I explain?
Instruction, argument alike were vain

I'll show you reasons when you show me brain.

THE SPIRIT OF A SPONGE

I dreamed one night that Stephen Massett died,
And for admission up at Heaven applied.
"Who are you?" asked St. Peter. Massett said:
"Jeems Pipes, of Pipesville." Peter bowed his head,
Opened the gates and said: "I'm glad to know you,
And wish we'd something better, sir, to show you."
"Don't mention it," said Stephen, looking bland,
And was about to enter, hat in hand,
When from a cloud below such fumes arose
As tickled tenderly his conscious nose.
He paused, replaced his hat upon his head,
Turned back and to the saintly warden said,
O'er his already sprouting wings: "I swear
I smell some broiling going on down there!"
So Massett's paunch, attracted by the smell,
Followed his nose and found a place in Hell.

ORNITHANTHROPOS

"Let John P. Irish rise!" the edict rang
As when Creation into being sprang!
Nature, not clearly understanding, tried
To make a bird that on the air could ride.
But naught could baffle the creative plan
Despite her efforts 'twas almost a man.
Yet he had risen—to the bird a twin
Had she but fixed a wing upon his chin.

TO E.S. SALOMON

Who in a Memorial Day oration protested bitterly against
decorating the graves of Confederate dead.

What! Salomon! such words from you,
Who call yourself a soldier? Well,
The Southern brother where he fell
Slept all your base oration through.
Alike to him—he cannot know
Your praise or blame: as little harm
Your tongue can do him as your arm
A quarter-century ago.

The brave respect the brave. The brave
Respect the dead; but you—you draw
That ancient blade, the ass's jaw,
And shake it o'er a hero's grave.
Are you not he who makes to-day
A merchandise of old renown
Which he persuades this easy town
He won in battle far away?

Nay, those the fallen who revile
Have ne'er before the living stood
And stoutly made their battle good
And greeted danger with a smile.
What if the dead whom still you hate
Were wrong? Are you so surely right?

We know the issue of the fight
The sword is but an advocate.
Men live and die, and other men
Arise with knowledges diverse:
What seemed a blessing seems a curse,
And Now is still at odds with Then.
The years go on, the old comes back
To mock the new—beneath the sun.

Is nothing new; ideas run
Recurrent in an endless track.
What most we censure, men as wise
Have reverently practiced; nor
Will future wisdom fail to war
On principles we dearly prize.
We do not know—we can but deem,
And he is loyalest and best
Who takes the light full on his breast

And follows it throughout the dream.
The broken light, the shadows wide
Behold the battle-field displayed!
God save the vanquished from the blade,
The victor from the victor's pride!
If, Salomon, the blessed dew
That falls upon the Blue and Gray
Is powerless to wash away
The sin of differing from you.
Remember how the flood of years
Has rolled across the erring slain;
Remember, too, the cleansing rain
Of widows' and of orphans' tears.
The dead are dead—let that atone:
And though with equal hand we strew
The blooms on saint and sinner too,
Yet God will know to choose his own.
The wretch, whate'er his life and lot,
Who does not love the harmless dead
With all his heart and all his head
May God forgive him—I shall not.
When, Salomon, you come to quaff
The Darker Cup with meeker face,
I, loving you at last, shall trace
Upon your tomb this epitaph:
"Draw near, ye generous and brave
Kneel round this monument and weep:
It covers one who tried to keep
A flower from a dead man's grave."

DENNIS KEARNEY

Your influence, my friend, has gathered head
To east and west its tides encroaching spread.
There'll be, on all God's foot-stool, when they meet,
No clean spot left for God to set His feet.

FINIS ÆTERNITATIS

Strolling at sunset in my native land,
With fruits and flowers thick on either hand,
I crossed a Shadow flung athwart my way,
Emerging on a waste of rock and sand.
"The apples all are gone from here," I said,
"The roses perished and their spirits fled.
I will go back." A voice cried out: "The man
Is risen who eternally was dead!"
I turned and saw an angel standing there,
Newly descended from the heights of air.
Sweet-eyed compassion filled his face, his hands
A naked sword and golden trumpet bare.
"Nay, 'twas not death, the shadow that I crossed,"
I said. "Its chill was but a touch of frost.
It made me gasp, but quickly I came through,
With breath recovered ere it scarce was lost."
'Twas the same land! Remembered mountains thrust
Grayed heads asky, and every dragging gust,
In ashen valleys where my sons had reaped,
Stirred in familiar river-beds the dust.
Some heights, where once the traveler was shown
The youngest and the proudest city known,
Lifted smooth ridges in the steely light
Bleak, desolate acclivities of stone.
Where I had worshiped at my father's tomb,
Within a massive temple's awful gloom,
A jackal slunk along the naked rock,
Affrighted by some prescience of doom.
Man's vestiges were nowhere to be found,
Save one brass mausoleum on a mound
(I knew it well) spared by the artist Time
To emphasize the desolation round.

Into the stagnant sea the sullen sun
Sank behind bars of crimson, one by one.
"Eternity's at hand!" I cried aloud.
"Eternity," the angel said, "is done.
For man is ages dead in every zone;
The angels all are dead but I alone;
The devils, too, are cold enough at last,
And God lies dead before the great white throne!
'Tis foreordained that I bestride the shore
When all are gone (as Gabriel did before,
When I had throttled the last man alive)
And swear Eternity shall be no more."
"O Azrael—O Prince of Death, declare
Why conquered I the grave?" I cried. "What rare,
Conspicuous virtues won this boon for me?"
"You've been revived," he said, "to hear me swear."
"Then let me creep again beneath the grass,
And knock thou at yon pompous tomb of brass.
If ears are what you want, Charles Crocker's there
Betwixt the greatest ears, the greatest ass."
He rapped, and while the hollow echoes rang,
Out at the door a curst hyena sprang
And fled! Said Azrael: "His soul's escaped,"
And closed the brazen portal with a bang.

THE VETERAN

John Jackson, once a soldier bold,
Hath still a martial feeling;
So, when he sees a foe, behold!
He charges him—with stealing.
He cares not how much ground to-day
He gives for men to doubt him;
He's used to giving ground, they say,
Who lately fought with—out him.
When, for the battle to be won,
His gallantry was needed,
They say each time a loaded gun
Went off—so, likewise, he did.
And when discharged (for war's a sport
So hot he had to leave it)
He made a very loud report,
But no one did believe it.

AN "EXHIBIT"

Goldenson hanged! Well, Heaven forbid
That I should smile above him:
Though truth to tell, I never did
Exactly love him.
It can't be wrong, though, to rejoice
That his unpleasing capers
Are ended. Silent is his voice
In all the papers.
No longer he's a show: no more,
Bear-like, his den he's walking.
No longer can he hold the floor
When I'd be talking.
The laws that govern jails are bad
If such displays are lawful.
The fate of the assassin's sad,
But ours is awful!
What! shall a wretch condemned to die
In shame upon the gibbet
Be set before the public eye

As an "exhibit"?
His looks, his actions noted down,
His words if light or solemn,
And all this hawked about the town
So much a column?
The press, of course, will publish news
However it may get it;
But blast the sheriff who'll abuse
His powers to let it!
Nay, this is not ingratitude;
I'm no reporter, truly,
Nor yet an editor. I'm rude
Because unruly—
Because I burn with shame and rage
Beyond my power of telling
To see assassins in a cage
And keepers yelling.
"Walk up! Walk up!" the showman cries:
"Observe the lion's poses,
His stormy mane, his glooming eyes.
His—hold your noses!"
How long, O Lord, shall Law and Right
Be mocked for gain or glory,
And angels weep as they recite
The shameful story?

THE TRANSMIGRATIONS OF A SOUL

What! Pixley, must I hear you call the roll
Of all the vices that infest your soul?
Was't not enough that lately you did bawl
Your money-worship in the ears of all?
Still must you crack your brazen cheek to tell
That though a miser you're a sot as well?
Still must I hear how low your taste has sunk
From getting money down to getting drunk?
Who worships money, damning all beside,
And shows his callous knees with pious pride,
Speaks with half-knowledge, for no man e'er scorns
His own possessions, be they coins or corns.
You've money, neighbor; had you gentle birth
You'd know, as now you never can, its worth.
You've money; learning is beyond your scope,
Deaf to your envy, stubborn to your hope.
But if upon your undeserving head
Science and letters had their glory shed;
If in the cavern of your skull the light
Of knowledge shone where now eternal night
Breeds the blind, poddy, vapor-fatted naughts
Of cerebration that you think are thoughts
Black bats in cold and dismal corners hung
That squeak and gibber when you move your tongue
You would not write, in Avarice's defense,
A senseless eulogy on lack of sense,
Nor show your eagerness to sacrifice
All noble virtues to one loathsome vice.
You've money; if you'd manners too you'd shame
To boast your weakness or your baseness name.
Appraise the things you have, but measure not
The things denied to your unhappy lot.
He values manners lighter than a cork
Who combs his beard at table with a fork.
Hare to seek sin and tortoise to forsake,
The laws of taste condemn you to the stake
To expiate, where all the world may see,
The crime of growing old disgracefully.
Religion, learning, birth and manners, too,
All that distinguishes a man from you,
Pray damn at will: all shining virtues gain

An added luster from a rogue's disdain.
But spare the young that proselyting sin,
A toper's apotheosis of gin.
If not our young, at least our pigs may claim
Exemption from the spectacle of shame!
Are you not he who lately out of shape
Blew a brass trumpet to denounce the grape?
Who led the brave teetotalers afield
And slew your leader underneath your shield?
Swore that no man should drink unless he flung
Himself across your body at the bung?
Who vowed if you'd the power you would fine
The Son of God for making water wine?
All trails to odium you tread and boast,
Yourself enamored of the dirtiest most.
One day to be a miser you aspire,
The next to wallow drunken in the mire;
The third, lo! you're a meritorious liar!
Pray, in the catalogue of all your graces,
Have theft and cowardice no honored places?
Yield thee, great Satan—here's a rival name
With all thy vices and but half thy shame!
Quick to the letter of the precept, quick
To the example of the elder Nick;
With as great talent as was e'er applied
To fool a teacher and to fog a guide;
With slack allegiance and boundless greed,
To paunch the profit of a traitor deed,
He aims to make thy glory all his own,
And crowd his master from the infernal throne!

[Footnote A: We are not writing this paragraph for any other purpose than to protest against this never ending cant, affectation, and hypocrisy about money. It is one of the best things in this world—better than religion, or good birth, or learning, or good manners.—The Argonaut.]

[Footnote B: Now, it just occurs to us that some of our temperance friends will take issue with us, and say that this is bad doctrine, and that it is ungentlemanly to get drunk under any circumstances or under any possible conditions. We do not think so.—The same.]

AN ACTOR

Some one ('tis hardly new) has oddly said
The color of a trumpet's blare is red;
And Joseph Emmett thinks the crimson shame
On woman's cheek a trumpet-note of fame.
The more the red storm rises round her nose
The more her eyes averted seek her toes,
He fancies all the louder he can hear
The tube resounding in his spacious ear,
And, all his varied talents to exert,
Darkens his dullness to display his dirt.
And when the gallery's indecent crowd,
And gentlemen below, with hisses loud,
In hot contention (these his art to crown,
And those his naked nastiness to drown)
Make such a din that cheeks erewhile aflame
Grow white and in their fear forget their shame,
With impudence imperial, sublime,
Unmoved, the patient actor bides his time,
Till storm and counter-storm are both allayed,
Like donkeys, each by t'other one outbrayed.
When all the place is silent as a mouse
One slow, suggestive gesture clears the house!

FAMINE'S REALM

To him in whom the love of Nature has
Imperfectly supplanted the desire
And dread necessity of food, your shore,
Fair Oakland, is a terror. Over all
Your sunny level, from Tamaletown
To where the Pestuary's fragrant slime,
With dead dogs studded, bears its ailing fleet,
Broods the still menace of starvation. Bones
Of men and women bleach along the ways
And pampered vultures sleep upon the trees.
It is a land of death, and Famine there
Holds sovereignty; though some there be her sway
Who challenge, and intrenched in larders live,

Drawing their sustentation from abroad.
But woe to him, the stranger! He shall die
As die the early righteous in the bud
And promise of their prime. He, venturesome
To penetrate the wilds rectangular
Of grass-grown ways luxuriant of blooms,
Frequented of the bee and of the blithe,
Bold squirrel, strays with heedless feet afar
From human habitation and is lost
In mid-Broadway. There hunger seizes him,
And (careless man! deeming God's providence
Extends so far) he has not wherewithal
To bate its urgency. Then, lo! appears
A mealery—a restaurant—a place
Where poison battles famine, and the two,
Like fish-hawks warring in the upper sky
For that which one has taken from the deep,
Manage between them to dispatch the prey.
He enters and leaves hope behind. There ends
His history. Anon his bones, clean-picked
By buzzards (with the bones himself had picked,
Incautious) line the highway. O, my friends,
Of all felonious and deadlywise
Devices of the Enemy of Souls,
Planted along the ways of life to snare
Man's mortal and immortal part alike,
The Oakland restaurant is chief. It lives
That man may die. It flourishes that life
May wither. Its foundation stones repose
On human hearts and hopes. I've seen in it
Crabs stewed in milk and salad offered up
With dressing so unholily compound
That it included flour and sugar! Yea,
I've eaten dog there!—dog, as I'm a man,
Dog seethed in sewage of the town! No more
Thy hand, Dyspepsia, assumes the pen
And scrawls a tortured "Finis" on the page.

THE MACKAIAD

Mackay's hot wrath to Bonynge, direful spring
Of blows unnumbered, heavenly goddess, sing
That wrath which hurled to Hellman's office floor
Two heroes, mutually smeared with gore,
Whose hair in handfuls marked the dire debate,
And riven coat-tails testified their hate.
Sing, muse, what first their indignation fired,
What words augmented it, by whom inspired.
First, the great Bonynge comes upon the scene
And asks the favor of the British Queen.
Suppliant he stands and urges all his claim:
His wealth, his portly person and his name,
His habitation in the setting sun,
As child of nature; and his suit he won.
No more the Sovereign, wearied with his plea,
From slumber's chain her faculties can free.
Low and more low the royal eyelids creep,
She gives the assenting nod and falls asleep.
Straightway the Bonynges all invade the Court
And telegraph the news to every port.
Beneath the seas, red-hot, the tidings fly,
The cables crinkle and the fishes fry!
The world, awaking like a startled bat,
Exclaims: "A Bonynge? What the devil's that?"
Mackay, meanwhile, to envy all attent,
Untaught to spare, unable to relent,
Walks in our town on needles and on pins,
And in a mean, revengeful spirit—grins!
Sing, muse, what next to break the peace occurred
What act uncivil, what unfriendly word?
The god of Bosh ascending from his pool,
Where since creation he has played the fool,
Clove the blue slush, as other gods the sky,
And, waiting but a moment's space to dry,
Touched Bonynge with his finger-tip. "O son,"
He said, "alike of nature and a gun,
Knowest not Mackay's insufferable sin?
Hast thou not heard that he doth stand and grin?
Arise! assert thy manhood, and attest
The uncommercial spirit in thy breast.
Avenge thine honor, for by Jove I swear

Thou shalt not else be my peculiar care!"
He spake, and ere his worshiper could kneel
Had dived into his slush pool, head and heel.
Full of the god and to revenges nerved,
And conscious of a will that never swerved,
Bonynge set sail: the world beyond the wave
As gladly took him as the other gave.
New York received him, but a shudder ran
Through all the western coast, which knew the man;
And science said that the seismic action
Was owing to an asteroid's impaction.
O goddess, sing what Bonynge next essayed.
Did he unscabbard the avenging blade,
The long spear brandish and porrect the shield,
Havoc the town and devastate the field?
His sacred thirst for blood did he allay
By halving the unfortunate Mackay?
Small were the profit and the joy to him
To hew a base-born person, limb from limb.
Let vulgar souls to low revenge incline,
That of diviner spirits is divine.
Bonynge at noonday stood in public places
And (with regard to the Mackays) made faces!
Before those formidable frowns and scowls
The dogs fled, tail-tucked, with affrighted howls,
And horses, terrified, with flying feet
O'erthrew the apple-stands along the street,
Involving the metropolis in vast
Financial ruin! Man himself, aghast,
Retreated east and west and north and south
Before the menace of that twisted mouth,
Till Jove, in answer to their prayers, sent Night
To veil the dreadful visage from their sight!
Such were the causes of the horrid strife
The mother-wrongs which nourished it to life.
O, for a quill from an archangel's wing!
O, for a voice that's adequate to sing
The splendor and the terror of the fray,
The scattered hair, the coat-tails all astray,
The parted collars and the gouts of gore
Reeking and smoking on the banker's floor,

The interlocking limbs, embraces dire,
Revolving bodies and deranged attire!
Vain, vain the trial: 'tis vouchsafed to none
To sing two millionaires rolled into one!
My hand and pen their offices refuse,
And hoarse and hoarser grows the weary muse.
Alone remains, to tell of the event,
Abandoned, lost and variously rent,
The Bonyng nethermost habiliment.

A SONG IN PRAISE

Hail, blessed Blunder! golden idol, hail!
Clay-footed deity of all who fail.
Celestial image, let thy glory shine,
Thy feet concealing, but a lamp to mine.
Let me, at seasons opportune and fit,
By turns adore thee and by turns commit.
In thy high service let me ever be
(Yet never serve thee as my critics me)
Happy and fallible, content to feel
I blunder chiefly when to thee I kneel.
But best felicity is his thy praise
Who utters unaware in works and ways
Who laborare est orare proves,
And feels thy suasion wheresoe'er he moves,
Serving thy purpose, not thine altar, still,
And working, for he thinks it his, thy will.
If such a life with blessings be not fraught,
I envy Peter Robertson for naught.

A POET'S FATHER

Welcker, I'm told, can boast a father great
And honored in the service of the State.
Public Instruction all his mind employs
He guides its methods and its wage enjoys.
Prime Pedagogue, imperious and grand,
He waves his ferule o'er a studious land
Where humming youth, intent upon the page,

Thirsting for knowledge with a noble rage,
Drink dry the whole Pierian spring and ask
To slake their fervor at his private flask.
Arrested by the terror of his frown,
The vaulting spit-ball drops untimely down;
The fly impaled on the tormenting pin
Stills in his awful glance its dizzy din;
Beneath that stern regard the chewing-gum
Which writhed and squeaked between the teeth is dumb;
Obedient to his will the dunce-cap flies
To perch upon the brows of the unwise;
The supple switch forsakes the parent wood
To settle where 'twill do the greatest good,
Puissant still, as when of old it strove
With Solomon for spitting on the stove
Learned Professor, variously great,
Guide, guardian, instructor of the State
Quick to discern and zealous to correct
The faults which mar the public intellect
From where of Siskiyou the northern bound
Is frozen eternal to the sunless ground
To where in San Diego's torrid clime
The swarthy Greaser swelters in his grime
Beneath your stupid nose can you not see
The dunce whom once you dandled on your knee?
O mighty master of a thousand schools,
Stop teaching wisdom, or stop breeding fools.

A COWARD

When Pickering, distressed by an "attack,"
Has the strange insolence to answer back
He hides behind a name that is a lie,
And out of shadow falters his reply.
God knows him, though—identified alike
By hardihood to rise and fear to strike,
And fitly to rebuke his sins decrees,
That, hide from others with what care he please,
Night sha'n't be black enough nor earth so wide
That from himself himself can ever hide!

Hard fate indeed to feel at every breath
His burden of identity till death!—
No moment's respite from the immortal load,
To think himself a serpent or a toad,
Or dream, with a divine, ecstatic glow,
He's long been dead and canonized a crow!

TO MY LIARS

Attend, mine enemies of all degrees,
From sandlot orators and sandlot fleas
To fallen gentlemen and rising louts
Who babble slander at your drinking bouts,
And, filled with unfamiliar wine, begin
Lies drowned, ere born, in more congenial gin.
But most attend, ye persons of the press
Who live (though why, yourselves alone can guess)
In hope deferred, ambitious still to shine
By hating me at half a cent a line—
Like drones among the bees of brighter wing,
Sunless to shine and impotent to sting.
To estimate in easy verse I'll try
The controversial value of a lie.
So lend your ears—God knows you have enough!
I mean to teach, and if I can't I'll cuff.
A lie is wicked, so the priests declare;
But that to us is neither here nor there.
'Tis worse than wicked, it is vulgar too;
N'importe—with that we've nothing here to do.
If 'twere artistic I would lie till death,
And shape a falsehood with my latest breath.
Parrhasius never more did pity lack,
The while his model writhed upon the rack,
Than I for my collaborator's pain,
Who, stabbed with fibs again and yet again,
Would vainly seek to move my stubborn heart
If slander were, and wit were not, an art.
The ill-bred and illiterate can lie
As fast as you, and faster far than I.
Shall I compete, then, in a strife accurst

Where Allen Forman is an easy first,
And where the second prize is rightly flung
To Charley Shortridge or to Mike de Young?
In mental combat but a single end
Inspires the formidable to contend.
Not by the raw recruit's ambition fired,
By whom foul blows, though harmless, are admired;
Not by the coward's zeal, who, on his knee
Behind the bole of his protecting tree,
So curves his musket that the bark it fits,
And, firing, blows the weapon into bits;
But with the noble aim of one whose heart
Values his foeman for he loves his art
The veteran debater moves afield,
Untaught to libel as untaught to yield.
Dear foeman mine, I've but this end in view
That to prevent which most you wish to do.
What, then, are you most eager to be at?
To hate me? Nay, I'll help you, sir, at that.
This only passion does your soul inspire:
You wish to scorn me. Well, you shall admire.
'Tis not enough my neighbors that you school
In the belief that I'm a rogue or fool;
That small advantage you would gladly trade
For what one moment would yourself persuade.
Write, then, your largest and your longest lie:
You sha'n't believe it, howsoe'er you try.
No falsehood you can tell, no evil do,
Shall turn me from the truth to injure you.
So all your war is barren of effect;
I find my victory in your respect.
What profit have you if the world you set
Against me? For the world will soon forget
It thought me this or that; but I'll retain
A vivid picture of your moral stain,
And cherish till my memory expire
The sweet, soft consciousness that you're a liar
Is it your triumph, then, to prove that you
Will do the thing that I would scorn to do?
God grant that I forever be exempt
From such advantage as my foe's contempt.

"PHIL" CRIMMINS

Still as he climbed into the public view
His charms of person more apparent grew,
Till the pleased world that watched his airy grace
Saw nothing of him but his nether face
Forgot his follies with his head's retreat,
And blessed his virtues as it viewed their seat.

CODEX HONORIS

Jacob Jacobs, of Oakland, he swore:
"Dat Solomon Martin—I'll haf his gore!"
Solomon Martin, of Oakland, he said:
"Of Shacob Shacobs der bleed I vill shed!"
So they met, with seconds and surgeon at call,
And fought with pistol and powder and—all
Was done in good faith,—as before I said,
They fought with pistol and powder and—shed
Tears, O my friends, for each other they marred
Fighting with pistol and powder and—lard!
For the lead had been stolen away, every trace,
And Christian hog-product supplied its place.
Then the shade of Moses indignant arose:
"Quicker dan lighdnings go vosh yer glose!"
Jacob Jacobs, of Oakland, they say,
Applied for a pension the following day.
Solomon Martin, of Oakland, I hear,
Will call himself Colonel for many a year.

TO W.H.L.B.

Refrain, dull orator, from speaking out,
For silence deepens when you raise the shout;
But when you hold your tongue we hear, at least,
Your noise in mastering that little beast.

EMANCIPATION

Behold! the days of miracle at last
Return—if ever they were truly past:
From sinful creditors' unholy greed
The church called Calvary at last is freed
So called for there the Savior's crucified,
Roberts and Carmany on either side.
The circling contribution-box no more
Provokes the nod and simulated snore;
No more the Lottery, no more the Fair,
Lure the reluctant dollar from its lair,
Nor Ladies' Lunches at a bit a bite
Destroy the health yet spare the appetite,
While thrifty sisters o'er the cauldron stoop
To serve their God with zeal, their friends with soup,
And all the brethren mendicate the earth
With viewless placards: "We've been so from birth!"
Sure of his wage, the pastor now can lend
His whole attention to his latter end,
Remarking with a martyr's prescient thrill
The Hemp maturing on the cheerless Hill.
The holy brethren, lifting pious palms,
Pour out their gratitude in prayer and psalms,
Chant De Profundis, meaning "out of debt,"
And dance like mad—or would if they were let.
Deeply disguised (a deacon newly dead
Supplied the means) Jack Satan holds his head
As high as any and as loudly sings
His jubilate till each rafter rings.
"Rejoice, ye ever faithful," bellows he,
"The debt is lifted and the temple free!"
Then says, aside, with gentle cachination:
"I've got a mortgage on the congregation."

JOHNDONKEY

Thus the poor ass whose appetite has ne'er
Known than the thistle any sweeter fare
Thinks all the world eats thistles. Thus the clown,
The wit and Mentor of the country town,
Grins through the collar of a horse and thinks
Others for pleasure do as he for drinks,
Though secretly, because unwilling still
In public to attest their lack of skill.
Each dunce whose life and mind all follies mar
Believes as he is all men living are
His vices theirs, their understandings his;
Naught that he knows not, all he fancies, is.
How odd that any mind such stuff should boast!
How natural to write it in the Post!

HELL

The friends who stood about my bed
Looked down upon my face and said:
"God's will be done—the fellow's dead."
When from my body I was free
I straightway felt myself, ah me!
Sink downward to the life to be.
Full twenty centuries I fell,
And then alighted. "Here you dwell
For aye," a Voice cried—"this is Hell!"
A landscape lay about my feet,
Where trees were green and flowers sweet.
The climate was devoid of heat.
The sun looked down with gentle beam
Upon the bosom of the stream,
Nor saw I any sign of steam.
The waters by the sky were tinged,
The hills with light and color fringed.
Birds warbled on the wing unsinged.
"Ah, no, this is not Hell," I cried;
"The preachers ne'er so greatly lied.
This is Earth's spirit glorified!
"Good souls do not in Hades dwell,

And, look, there's John P. Irish!" "Well,"
The Voice said, "that's what makes it Hell."

BY FALSE PRETENSES

John S. Hittell, whose sovereign genius wields
The quill his tributary body yields;
The author of an opera—that is,
All but the music and libretto's his:
A work renowned, whose formidable name,
Linked with his own, repels the assault of fame
From the high vantage of a dusty shelf,
Secure from all the world except himself;
Who told the tale of "Culture" in a screed
That all might understand if some would read;
Master of poesy and lord of prose,
Dowered, like a setter, with a double nose;
That one for Erato, for Clio this;
He flushes both—not his fault if we miss;
Judge of the painter's art, who'll straight proclaim
The hue of any color you can name,
And knows a painting with a canvas back
Distinguished from a duck by the duck's quack;
This thinker and philosopher, whose work
Is famous from Commercial street to Turk,
Has got a fortune now, his talent's meed.
A woman left it him who could not read,
And so went down to death's eternal night
Sweetly unconscious that the wretch could write.

LUCIFER OF THE TORCH

O Reverend Ravlin, once with sounding lung
You shook the bloody banner of your tongue,
Urged all the fiery boycotters afield
And swore you'd rather follow them than yield,
Alas, how brief the time, how great the change!
Your dogs of war are ailing all of mangle;
The loose leash dangles from your finger-tips,
But the loud "havoc" dies upon your lips.

No spirit animates your feeble clay
You'd rather yield than even run away.
In vain McGlashan labors to inspire
Your pallid nostril with his breath of fire:
The light of battle's faded from your face
You keep the peace, John Chinaman his place.
O Ravlin, what cold water, thrown by whom
Upon the kindling Boycott's ruddy bloom,
Has slaked your parching blood-thirst and allayed
The flash and shimmer of your lingual blade?
Your salary—your salary's unpaid!
In the old days, when Christ with scourges drave
The Ravlins headlong from the Temple's nave,
Each bore upon his pelt the mark divine
The Boycott's red authenticating sign.
Birth-marked forever in surviving hurts,
Glowing and smarting underneath their shirts,
Successive Ravlins have revenged their shame
By blowing every coal and flinging flame.
And you, the latest (may you be the last!)
Endorsed with that hereditary, vast
And monstrous rubric, would the feud prolong,
Save that cupidity forbids the wrong.
In strife you preferably pass your days—
But brawl no moment longer than it pays.
By shouting when no more you can incite
The dogs to put the timid sheep to flight
To load, for you, the brambles with their fleece,
You cackle concord to congenial geese,
Put pinches of goodwill upon their tails
And pluck them with a touch that never fails.

THE "WHIRLIGIG OF TIME"

Dr. Jewell speaks of Balaam
And his vices, to assail 'em.
Ancient enmities how cruel!
Balaam cudged once a Jewell.

A RAILROAD LACKEY

Ben Truman, you're a genius and can write,
Though one would not suspect it from your looks.
You lack that certain spareness which is quite
Distinctive of the persons who make books.
You show the workmanship of Stanford's cooks
About the region of the appetite,
Where geniuses are singularly slight.
Your friends the Chinamen are understood,
Indeed, to speak of you as "belly good."
Still, you can write—spell, too, I understand
Though how two such accomplishments can go,
Like sentimental schoolgirls, hand in hand
Is more than ever I can hope to know.
To have one talent good enough to show
Has always been sufficient to command
The veneration of the brilliant band
Of railroad scholars, who themselves, indeed,
Although they cannot write, can mostly read.
There's Towne and Fillmore, Goodman and Steve Gage,
Ned Curtis of Napoleonic face,
Who used to dash his name on glory's page
"A.M." appended to denote his place
Among the learned. Now the last faint trace
Of Nap. is all obliterate with age,
And Ned's degree less precious than his wage.
He says: "I done it," with his every breath.
"Thou canst not say I did it," says Macbeth.
Good land! how I run on! I quite forgot
Whom this was meant to be about; for when
I think upon that odd, unearthly lot—
Not quite Creedhaymonds, yet not wholly men

I'm dominated by my rebel pen
That, like the stubborn bird from which 'twas got,
Goes waddling forward if I will or not.
To leave your comrades, Ben, I'm now content:
I'll meet them later if I don't repent.
You've writ a letter, I observe—nay, more,
You've published it—to say how good you think
The coolies, and invite them to come o'er
In thicker quantity. Perhaps you drink
No corporation's wine, but love its ink;
Or when you signed away your soul and swore
On railroge battle-fields to shed your gore
You mentally reserved the right to shed
The raiment of your character instead.
You're naked, anyhow: unragged you stand
In frank and stark simplicity of shame.
And here upon your flank, in letters grand,
The iron has marked you with your owner's name.
Needless, for none would steal and none reclaim.
But "£eland \$tanford" is a pretty brand,
Wrought by an artist with a cunning hand
But come—this naked unreserve is flat:
Don your habiliment—you're fat, you're fat!

THE LEGATEE

In fair San Francisco a good man did dwell,
And he wrote out a will, for he didn't feel well,
Said he: "It is proper, when making a gift,
To stimulate virtue by comforting thrift."
So he left all his property, legal and straight,
To "the cursedest rascal in all of the State."
But the name he refused to insert, for, said he;
"Let each man consider himself legatee."
In due course of time that philanthropist died,
And all San Francisco, and Oakland beside
Save only the lawyers—came each with his claim
The lawyers preferring to manage the same.
The cases were tried in Department Thirteen,
Judge Murphy presided, sedate and serene,
But couldn't quite specify, legal and straight,
The cursedest rascal in all of the State.
And so he remarked to them, little and big
To claimants: "You skip!" and to lawyers: "You dig!"
They tumbled, tumultuous, out of his court
And left him victorious, holding the fort.
'Twas then that he said: "It is plain to my mind
This property's ownerless—how can I find
The cursedest rascal in all of the State?"
So he took it himself, which was legal and straight.

"DIED OF A ROSE"

A reporter he was, and he wrote, wrote he:
"The grave was covered as thick as could be
With floral tributes"—which reading,
The editor man he said, he did so:
"For 'floral tributes' he's got for to go,
For I hold the same misleading."
Then he called him in and he pointed sweet
To a blooming garden across the street,
Inquiring: "What's them a-growing?"
The reporter chap said: "Why, where's your eyes?
Them's floral tributes!" "Arise, arise,"
The editor said, "and be going."

A LITERARY HANGMAN

Beneath his coat of dirt great Neilson loves
To hide the avenging rope.
He handles all he touches without gloves,
Excepting soap.

AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR

As through the blue expanse he skims
On joyous wings, the late
Frank Hutchings overtakes Miss Sims,
Both bound for Heaven's high gate.
In life they loved and (God knows why
A lover so should sue)
He slew her, on the gallows high
Died pious—and they flew.
Her pinions were bedraggled, soiled
And torn as by a gale,
While his were bright—all freshly oiled
The feathers of his tail.
Her visage, too, was stained and worn
And menacing and grim;
His sweet and mild—you would have sworn
That she had murdered him.
When they'd arrived before the gate
He said to her: "My dear,
'Tis hard once more to separate,
But you can't enter here.
"For you, unluckily, were sent
So quickly to the grave
You had no notice to repent,
Nor time your soul to save."
"Tis true," said she, "and I should wail
In Hell even now, but I
Have lingered round the county jail
To see a Christian die."

A CONTROVERSIALIST

I've sometimes wished that Ingersoll were wise
To hold his tongue, nor rail against the skies;
For when he's made a point some pious dunce
Like Bartlett of the Bulletin "replies."
I brandish no iconoclastic fist,
Nor enter the debate an atheist;
But when they say there is a God I ask
Why Bartlett, then, is suffered to exist.
Even infidels that logic might resent,
Saying: "There's no place for his punishment
That's worse than earth." But humbly I submit
That he would make a hell wherever sent.

MENDAX

High Lord of Liars, Pickering, to thee
Let meaner mortals bend the subject knee!
Thine is mendacity's imperial crown,
Alike by genius, action and renown.
No man, since words could set a cheek aflame
E'er lied so greatly with so little shame!
O bad old man, must thy remaining years
Be passed in leading idiots by their ears
Thine own (which Justice, if she ruled the roast
Would fasten to the penitential post)
Still wagging sympathetically—hung
the same rocking-bar that bears thy tongue?
Thou dog of darkness, dost thou hope to stay
Time's dread advance till thou hast had thy day?
Dost think the Strangler will release his hold
Because, forsooth, some fibs remain untold?
No, no—beneath thy multiplying load
Of years thou canst not tarry on the road
To dabble in the blood thy leaden feet
Have pressed from bosoms that have ceased to beat
Of reputations margining thy way,
Nor wander from the path new truth to slay.
Tell to thyself whatever lies thou wilt,

Catch as thou canst at pennies got by guilt
Straight down to death this blessed year thou'lt sink,
Thy life washed out as with a wave of ink.
But if this prophecy be not fulfilled,
And thou who killest patience be not killed;
If age assail in vain and vice attack
Only by folly to be beaten back;
Yet Nature can this consolation give:
The rogues who die not are condemned to live!

THE RETROSPECTIVE BIRD

His caw is a cackle, his eye is dim,
And he mopes all day on the lowest limb;
Not a word says he, but he snaps his bill
And twitches his palsied head, as a quill,
The ultimate plume of his pride and hope,
Quits his now featherless nose-of-the-Pope,
Leaving that eminence brown and bare
Exposed to the Prince of the Power of the Air.
And he sits and he thinks: "I'm an old, old man,
Mateless and chickless, the last of my clan,
But I'd give the half of the days gone by
To perch once more on the branches high,
And hear my great-grand-daddy's comical croaks
In authorized versions of Bulletin jokes."

THE OAKLAND DOG

I lay one happy night in bed
And dreamed that all the dogs were dead.
They'd all been taken out and shot—
Their bodies strewed each vacant lot.
O'er all the earth, from Berkeley down
To San Leandro's ancient town,
And out in space as far as Niles—
I saw their mortal parts in piles.
One stack upreared its ridge so high
Against the azure of the sky
That some good soul, with pious views,

Put up a steeple and sold pews.
No wagging tail the scene relieved:
I never in my life conceived
(I swear it on the Decalogue!)
Such penury of living dog.
The barking and the howling stilled,
The snarling with the snarler killed,
All nature seemed to hold its breath:
The silence was as deep as death.
True, candidates were all in roar
On every platform, as before;
And villains, as before, felt free
To finger the calliope.
True, the Salvationist by night,
And milkman in the early light,
The lonely flutist and the mill
Performed their functions with a will.
True, church bells on a Sunday rang
The sick man's curtain down—the bang
Of trains, contesting for the track,
Out of the shadow called him back.
True, cocks, at all unheavenly hours,
Crew with excruciating powers,
Cats on the woodshed rang and roared,
Fat citizens and fog-horns snored.
But this was all too fine for ears
Accustomed, through the awful years,
To the nocturnal monologues
And day debates of Oakland dogs.
And so the world was silent. Now
What else befell—to whom and how?
Imprimis, then, there were no fleas,
And days of worth brought nights of ease.
Men walked about without the dread
Of being torn to many a shred,
Each fragment holding half a cruse
Of hydrophobia's quickening juice.
They had not to propitiate
Some curst kioodle at each gate,
But entered one another's grounds,
Unscared, and were not fed to hounds.

Women could drive and not a pup
Would lift the horse's tendons up
And let them go—to interject
A certain musical effect.
Even children's ponies went about,
All grave and sober-paced, without
A bulldog hanging to each nose—
Proud of his fragrance, I suppose.
Dog being dead, Man's lawless flame
Burned out: he granted Woman's claim,
Children's and those of country, art
all took lodgings in his heart.
When memories of his former shame
Crimsoned his cheeks with sudden flame
He said; "I know my fault too well
They fawned upon me and I fell."
Ah! 'twas a lovely world!—no more
I met that indisposing bore,
The unseraphic cynogogue
The man who's proud to love a dog.
Thus in my dream the golden reign
Of Reason filled the world again,
And all mankind confessed her sway,
From Walnut Creek to San Jose.

THE UNFALLEN BRAVE

Not all in sorrow and in tears,
To pay of gratitude's arrears
The yearly sum—
Not prompted, wholly by the pride
Of those for whom their friends have died,
To-day we come.
Another aim we have in view
Than for the buried boys in blue
To drop a tear:
Memorial Day revives the chin
Of Barnes, and Salomon chimes in
That's why we're here.
And when in after-ages they

Shall pass, like mortal men, away,
Their war-song sung,
Then fame will tell the tale anew
Of how intrepidly they drew
The deadly tongue.
Then cull white lilies for the graves
Of Liberty's loquacious braves,
And roses red.
Those represent their livers, these
The blood that in unmeasured seas
They did not shed.

A CELEBRATED CASE

Way down in the Boom Belt lived Mrs. Roselle;
A person named Petrie, he lived there as well;
But Mr. Roselle he resided away
Sing tooral iooral iooral iay.
Once Mrs. Roselle in her room was alone:
The flesh of her flesh and the bone of her bone
Neglected the wife of his bosom to woo
Sing tooral iooral iooral ioo.
Then Petrie, her lover, appeared at the door,
Remarking: "My dear; I don't love you no more."
"That's awfully rough," said the lady, "on me
Sing tooral iooral iooral iee."
"Come in, Mr. Petrie," she added, "pray do:
Although you don't love me no more, I love you.
Sit down while I spray you with vitriol now
Sing tooral iooral iooral iow."
Said Petrie: "That liquid I know won't agree
With my beauty, and then you'll no longer love me;
So spray and be"—O, what a word he did say!
Sing tooral iooral iooral iay.
She deluged his head and continued to pour
Till his bonny blue eyes, like his love, were no more.
It was seldom he got such a hearty shampoo
Sing tooral iooral iooral ioo
Then Petrie he rose and said: "Mrs. Roselle,
I have an engagement and bid you farewell."

"You see," she began to explain—but not he!
 Sing tooral, iooral, iooral iee.
 The Sheriff he came and he offered his arm,
 Saying, "Sorry I am for disturbin' you, marm,
 But business is business." Said she, "So they say
 Sing tooral, iooral, iooral iay."
 The Judge on the bench he looked awfully stern;
 The District Attorney began to attorn;
 The witnesses lied and the lawyers—O my!
 Sing tooral, iooral, iooral iyi.
 The chap that defended her said: "It's our claim
 That he loved us no longer and told us the same.
 What else than we did could we decently do?
 Sing tooral, iooral, iooral ioo."
 The District Attorney, sarcastic, replied:
 "We loved you no longer—that can't be denied.
 Not having no eyes we may dote on you now
 Sing tooral, iooral, iooral iow."
 The prisoner wept to entoken her fears;
 The sockets of Petrie were flooded with tears.
 O heaven-born Sympathy, bully for you!
 Sing tooral, iooral, iooral ioo.
 Four jurors considered the prisoner mad,
 And four thought her victim uncommonly bad,
 And four that the acid was all in his eye
 Sing rum tiddy iddity iddity hi.

COUPLETS

Intended for Inscription on a Sword Presented to Colonel
 Cutting of the National Guard of California.

I am for Cutting. I'm a blade
 Designed for use at dress parade.
 My gleaming length, when I display
 Peace rules the land with gentle sway;
 But when the war-dogs bare their teeth
 Go seek me in the modest sheath.
 I am for Cutting. Not for me
 The task of setting nations free.
 Let soulless blades take human life,

My softer metal shuns the strife.
The annual review is mine,
When gorgeous shopmen sweat and shine,
And Biddy, tip-toe on the pave,
Adores the cobble-trotting brave.
I am for Cutting. 'Tis not mine
To hew amain the hostile line;
Not mine all pitiless to spread
The plain with tumuli of dead.
My grander duty lies afar
From haunts of the insane hussar,
Where charging horse and struggling foot
Are grimed alike with cannon-soot.
When Loveliness and Valor meet
Beneath the trees to dance, and eat,
And sing, and much beside, behold
My golden glories all unfold!
There formidably are displayed
The useful horrors of my blade
In time of feast and dance and ballad,
I am for cutting chicken salad.

A RETORT

As vicious women think all men are knaves,
And shrew-bound gentlemen discourse of slaves;
As reeling drunkards judge the world unsteady
And idlers swear employers ne'er get ready
Thieves that the constable stole all they had,
The mad that all except themselves are mad;
So, in another's clear escutcheon shown,
Barnes rails at stains reflected from his own;
Prates of "docility," nor feels the dark
Ring round his neck—the Ralston collar mark.
Back, man, to studies interrupted once,
Ere yet the rogue had merged into the dunce.
Back, back to Yale! and, grown with years discreet,
The course a virgin's lust cut short, complete.
Go drink again at the Pierian pool,
And learn—at least to better play the fool.

No longer scorn the draught, although the font,
Unlike Pactolus, waters not Belmont.

A VISION OF RESURRECTION

I had a dream. The habitable earth
Its continents and islands, all were bare
Of cities and of forests. Naught remained
Of its old aspect, and I only knew
(As men know things in dreams, unknowing how)
That this was earth and that all men were dead.
On every side I saw the barren land,
Even to the distant sky's inclosing blue,
Thick-pitted all with graves; and all the graves
Save one were open—not as newly dug,
But rather as by some internal force
Riven for egress. Tombs of stone were split
And wide agape, and in their iron decay
The massive mausoleums stood in halves.
With mildewed linen all the ground was white.
Discarded shrouds upon memorial stones
Hung without motion in the soulless air.
While greatly marveling how this should be
I heard, or fancied that I heard, a voice,
Low like an angel's, delicately strong,
And sweet as music.
"Spirit," it said, "behold
The burial place of universal Man!
A million years have rolled away since here
His sheeted multitudes (save only some
Whose dark misdeeds required a separate
And individual arraignment) rose
To judgment at the trumpet's summoning
And passed into the sky for their award,
Leaving behind these perishable things

Which yet, preserved by miracle, endure
Till all are up. Then they and all of earth,
Rock-hearted mountain and storm-breasted sea,
River and wilderness and sites of dead
And vanished capitals of men, shall spring
To flame, and naught shall be for evermore!
When all are risen that wonder will occur.

"Twas but ten centuries ago the last
But one came forth—a soul so black with sin,
Against whose name so many crimes were set
That only now his trial is at end.

But one remains."

Straight, as the voice was stilled—
That single rounded mound cracked lengthwise
And one came forth in grave-clothes. For a space
He stood and gazed about him with a smile
Superior; then laying off his shroud
Disclosed his two attenuated legs
Which, like parentheses, bent outwardly
As by the weight of saintliness above,
And so sprang upward and was lost to view
Noting his headstone overthrown, I read:
"Sacred to memory of George K. Fitch,
Deacon and Editor—a holy man
Who fell asleep in Jesus, full of years
And blessedness. The dead in Christ rise first."

MASTER OF THREE ARTS

Your various talents, Goldenson, command
Respect: you are a poet and can draw.
It is a pity that your gifted hand
Should ever have been raised against the law.
If you had drawn no pistol, but a picture,
You would have saved your throttle from a stricture.
About your poetry I'm not so sure:
'Tis certain we have much that's quite as bad,
Whose hardy writers have not to endure
The hangman's fondling. It is said they're mad:
Though lately Mr. Brooks (I mean the poet)

Looked well, and if demented didn't show it.
Well, Goldenson, I am a poet, too
Taught by the muses how to smite the harp
And lift the tuneful voice, although, like you
And Brooks, I sometimes flat and sometimes sharp.
But let me say, with no desire to taunt you,
I never murder even the girls I want to.
I hold it one of the poetic laws
To sing of life, not take. I've ever shown
A high regard for human life because
I have such trouble to support my own.
And you—well, you'll find trouble soon in blowing
Your private coal to keep it red and glowing.
I fancy now I see you at the Gate
Approach St. Peter, crawling on your belly,
You cry: "Good sir, take pity on my state
Forgive the murderer of Mamie Kelly!"
And Peter says: "O, that's all right—but, mister,
You scribbled rhymes. In Hell I'll make you
blister!"

THERSITES

So, in the Sunday papers you, Del Mar,
Damn, all great Englishmen in English speech?
I am no Englishman, but in my reach
A rogue shall never rail where heroes are.
You are the man, if I mistake you not,
Who lately with a supplicating twitch
Plucked at the pockets of the London rich
And paid your share-engraver all you got.
Because that you have greatly lied, because
You libel nations, and because no hand
Of officer is raised to bid you stand,
And falsehood is unpunished of the laws,
I stand here in a public place to mark
With level finger where you part the crowd
I stand to name you and to cry aloud:
"Behold mendacity's great hierarch!"

A SOCIETY LEADER

"The Social World"! O what a world it is
Where full-grown men cut capers in the German,
Cotillion, waltz, or what you will, and whizz
And spin and hop and sprawl about like mermen!

I wonder if our future Grant or Sherman,
As these youths pass their time, is passing his
If eagles ever come from painted eggs,
Or deeds of arms succeed to deeds of legs.

I know they tell us about Waterloo:
How, "foremost fighting," fell the evening's
dancers.

I don't believe it: I regard it true
That soldiers who are skillful in "the Lancers"
Less often die of cannon than of cancers.

Moreover, I am half-persuaded, too,
That David when he danced before the Ark
Had the reporter's word to keep it dark.

Ed. Greenway, you fatigue. Your hateful name
Like maiden's curls, is in the papers daily.

You think it, doubtless, honorable fame,
And contemplate the cheap distinction gaily,
As does the monkey the blue-painted tail he

Believes becoming to him. 'Tis the same
With men as other monkeys: all their souls
Crave eminence on any kind of poles.

But cynics (barking tribe!) are all agreed
That monkeys upon poles performing capers
Are not exalted, they are only "treed."

A glory that is kindled by the papers
Is transient as the phosphorescent vapors
That shine in graveyards and are seen, indeed,

But while the bodies that supply the gas
Are turning into weeds to feed an ass.

One can but wonder sometimes how it feels
To be an ass—a beast we beat condignly
Because, like yours, his life is in his heels
And he is prone to use them unbenignly.

The ladies (bless them!) say you dance divinely.
I like St. Vitus better, though, who deals

His feet about him with a grace more just,
And hops, not for he will, but for he must.
Doubtless it gratifies you to observe
Elbowy girls and adipose mamas
All looking adoration as you swerve
This way and that; but prosperous papas
Laugh in their sleeves at you, and their ha-has,
If heard, would somewhat agitate your nerve.
And dames and maids who keep you on their
shelves
Don't seem to want a closer tie themselves.
Gods! what a life you live!—by day a slave
To your exacting back and urgent belly;
Intent to earn and vigilant to save—
By night, attired so sightly and so smelly,
With countenance as luminous as jelly,
Bobbing and bowing! King of hearts and knave
Of diamonds, I'd bet a silver brick
If brains were trumps you'd never take a trick.

EXPOSITOR VERITATIS

I Slept, and, waking in the years to be,
Heard voices, and approaching whence they came,
Listened indifferently where a key
Had lately been removed. An ancient dame
Said to her daughter: "Go to yonder caddy
And get some emery to scour your daddy."
And then I knew—some intuition said—
That tombs were not and men had cleared their shelves
Of urns; and the electro-plated dead
Stood pedestaled as statues of themselves.
With famous dead men all the public places
Were thronged, and some in piles awaited bases.
One mighty structure's high façade alone
Contained a single monumental niche,
Where, central in that steep expanse of stone,
Gleamed the familiar form of Thomas Fitch.
A man cried: "Lo! Truth's temple and its founder!"

Then gravely added: "I'm her chief expounder."

TO "COLONEL" DAN. BURNS

They say, my lord, that you're a Warwick. Well,
The title's an absurd one, I believe:
You make no kings, you have no kings to sell,
Though really 'twere easy to conceive
You stuffing half-a-dozen up your sleeve.
No, you're no Warwick, skillful from the shell
To hatch out sovereigns. On a mare's nest, maybe,
You'd incubate a little jackass baby.
I fancy, too, that it is naught but stuff,
This "power" that you're said to be "behind
The throne." I'm sure 'twere accurate enough
To represent you simply as inclined
To push poor Markham (ailing in his mind
And body, which were never very tough)
Round in an invalid's wheeled chair. Such menial
Employment to low natures is congenial.
No, Dan, you're an impostor every way:
A human bubble, for "the earth," you know,
"Hath bubbles, as the water hath." Some day
Some careless hand will prick your film, and O,
How utterly you'll vanish! Daniel, throw
(As fallen Woolsey might to Cromwell say)
Your curst ambition to the pigs—though truly
'Twould make them greater pigs, and more unruly.

GEORGE A. KNIGHT

Attorney Knight, it happens so sometimes
That lawyers, justifying cut-throats' crimes
For hire—calumniating, too, for gold,
The dead, dumb victims cruelly unsouled
Speak, through the press, to a tribunal far
More honorable than their Honors are,—
A court that sits not with assenting smile
While living rogues dead gentleman revile,
A court where scoundrel ethics of your trade

Confuse no judgment and no cheating aid,—
The Court of Honest Souls, where you in vain
 May plead your right to falsify for gain,
 Sternly reminded if a man engage
 To serve assassins for the liar's wage,
His mouth with vilifying falsehoods crammed,
 He's twice detestable and doubly damned!
 Attorney Knight, defending Powell, you,
 To earn your fee, so energetic grew
 (So like a hound, the pride of all the pack,
Clapping your nose upon the dead man's track
 To run his faults to earth—at least proclaim
 At vacant holes the overtaken game)
That men who marked you nourishing the tongue,
 And saw your arms so vigorously swung,
All marveled how so light a breeze could stir
 So great a windmill to so great a whirr!
 Little they knew, or surely they had grinned,
 The mill was laboring to raise the wind.
Ralph Smith a "shoulder-striker"! God, O hear
 This hardy man's description of thy dear
 Dead child, the gentlest soul, save only One,
 E'er born in any land beneath the sun.
 All silent benefactions still he wrought:
High deed and gracious speech and noble thought,
 Kept all thy law, and, seeking still the right,
 Upon his blameless breast received the light.
"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints," he cried
Whose wrath was deep as his comparison wide—
 Milton, thy servant. Nay, thy will be done:
 To smite or spare—to me it all is one.
 Can vengeance bring my sorrow to an end,
 Or justice give me back my buried friend?
 But if some Milton vainly now implore,
 And Powell prosper as he did before,
 Yet 'twere too much that, making no ado,
Thy saints be slaughtered and be slandered too.
So, Lord, make Knight his weapon keep in sheath,
 Or do Thou wrest it from between his teeth!

UNARMED

Saint Peter sat at the jasper gate,
When Stephen M. White arrived in state.
"Admit me." "With pleasure," Peter said,
Pleased to observe that the man was dead;
"That's what I'm here for. Kindly show
Your ticket, my lord, and in you go."
White stared in blank surprise. Said he
"I run this place—just turn that key."
"Yes?" said the Saint; and Stephen heard
With pain the inflection of that word.

But, mastering his emotion, he
Remarked: "My friend, you're too d free;
"I'm Stephen M., by thunder, White!"
And, "Yes?" the guardian said, with quite
The self-same irritating stress
Distinguishing his former yes.

And still demurely as a mouse
He twirled the key to that Upper House.
Then Stephen, seeing his bluster vain
Admittance to those halls to gain,
Said, neighborly: "Pray tell me. Pete,
Does any one contest my seat?"
The Saint replied: "Nay, nay, not so;
But you voted always wrong below:
"Whate'er the question, clear and high
You're voice rang: 'I,' 'I,' ever 'I.'"
Now indignation fired the heart
Of that insulted immortal part.

"Die, wretch!" he cried, with blanching lip,
And made a motion to his hip,
With purpose murderous and hearty,
To draw the Democratic party!
He felt his fingers vainly slide
Upon his unappareled hide
(The dead arise from their "silent tents"
But not their late habiliments)
Then wailed—the briefest of his speeches:
"I've left it in my other breeches!"

A POLITICAL VIOLET

Come, Stanford, let us sit at ease
And talk as old friends do.
You talk of anything you please,
And I will talk of you.
You recently have said, I hear,
That you would like to go
To serve as Senator. That's queer!
Have you told William Stow?
Once when the Legislature said:
"Go, Stanford, and be great!"
You lifted up your Jovian head
And everlooked the State.
As one made leisurely awake,
You lightly rubbed your eyes
And answered: "Thank you—please to make
A note of my surprise.
"But who are they who skulk aside,
As to get out of reach,
And in their clothing strive to hide
Three thousand dollars each?
"Not members of your body, sure?
No, that can hardly be:
All statesmen, I suppose, are pure.
What! there are rogues? Dear me!"
You added, you'll recall, that though
You were surprised and pained,
You thought, upon the whole, you'd go,
And in that mind remained.
Now, what so great a change has wrought
That you so frankly speak
Of "seeking" honors once unsought
Because you "scorned to seek"?
Do you not fear the grave reproof
In good Creed Haymond's eye?
Will Stephen Gage not stand aloof
And pass you coldly by?
O, fear you not that Vrooman's lich

Will rise from earth and point
At you a scornful finger which
May lack, perchance, a joint?
Go, Stanford, where the violets grow,
And join their modest train.
Await the work of William Stow
And be surprised again.

THE SUBDUED EDITOR

Pope-choker Pixley sat in his den
A-chewin' upon his quid.
He thought it was Leo Thirteen, and then
He bit it intenser, he did.
The amber which overflow from the cud
Like rivers which burst out of bounds
'Twas peculiar grateful to think it blood
A-gushin' from Papal wounds.
A knockin' was heard uponto the door
Where some one a-waitin' was.
"Come in," said the shedder of priestly gore,
Arrestin' to once his jaws.
The person which entered was curly of hair
And smilin' as ever you see;
His eyes was blue, and uncommon fair
Was his physiognomee.
And yet there was some'at remarkable grand
And the editor says as he looks:
"Your Height" (it was Highness, you understand,
That he meant, but he spoke like books)
"Your Height, I am in. I'm the editor man
Of this paper—which is to say,
I'm the owner, too, and it's always ran
In the independentest way!
"Not a damgaloot can interfere,
A-shapin' my course for me:
This paper's (and nothing can make it veer)
Pixleian in policee!"
"It's little to me," said the sunny youth,

"If journals is better or worse
Where I am to home they won't keep, in truth,
The climate is that perverse.
"I've come, howsomever, your mind to light
With a more superior fire:
You'll have naught hencefor'ard to do but write,
While I sets by and inspire.
"We'll make it hot all round, bedad!"
And his laughture was loud and free.
"The devil!" cried Pixley, surpassin' mad.
"Exactly, my friend—that's me."
So he took a chair and a feather fan,
And he sets and sets and sets,
Inspirin' that humbled editor man,
Which sweats and sweats and sweats!
All unavailin' his struggles be,
And it's, O, a weepin' sight
To see a great editor bold and free
Reducted to sech a plight!
"BLACK BART, Po8"

Welcome, good friend; as you have served your term,
And found the joy of crime to be a fiction,
I hope you'll hold your present faith, stand firm
And not again be open to conviction.
Your sins, though scarlet once, are now as wool:
You've made atonement for all past offenses,
And conjugated—'twas an awful pull!—
The verb "to pay" in all its moods and tenses.
You were a dreadful criminal—by Heaven,
I think there never was a man so sinful!
We've all a pinch or two of Satan's leaven,
But you appeared to have an even skinful.
Earth shuddered with aversion at your name;
Rivers fled backward, gravitation scorning;
The sea and sky, from thinking on your shame,
Grew lobster-red at eve and in the morning.
But still red-handed at your horrid trade
You wrought, to reason deaf, and to compassion.
But now with gods and men your peace is made
I beg you to be good and in the fashion.

What's that?—you "ne'er again will rob a stage"?
What! did you do so? Faith, I didn't know it.
Was that what threw poor Themis in a rage?
I thought you were convicted as a poet!
I own it was a comfort to my soul,
And soothed it better than the deepest curses,
To think they'd got one poet in a hole
Where, though he wrote, he could not print, his verses.
I thought that Welcker, Plunkett, Brooks, and all
The ghastly crew who always are begriming
With villain couplets every page and wall,
Might be arrested and "run in" for rhyming.
And then Parnassus would be left to me,
And Pegasus should bear me up it gaily,
Nor down a steep place run into the sea,
As now he must be tempted to do daily.
Well, grab the lyre-strings, hearties, and begin:
Bawl your harsh souls all out upon the gravel.
I must endure you, for you'll never sin
By robbing coaches, until dead men travel.

A "SCION OF NOBILITY"

Come, sisters, weep!—our Baron dear,
Alas! has run away.
If always we had kept him here
He had not gone astray.
Painter and grainer it were vain
To say he was, before;
And if he were, yet ne'er again
He'll darken here a door.
We mourn each matrimonial plan
Even tradesmen join the cry:
He was so promising a man
Whenever he did buy.
He was a fascinating lad,
Deny it all who may;
Even moneyed men confess he had
A very taking way.
So from our tables he is gone

Our tears descend in showers;
We loved the very fat upon.
His kidneys, for 'twas ours.
To women he was all respect
To duns as cold as ice;
No lady could his suit reject,
No tailor get its price.
He raised our hope above the sky;
Alas! alack! and O!
That one who worked it up so high
Should play it down so low!

THE NIGHT OF ELECTION

"O venerable patriot, I pray
Stand not here coatless; at the break of day
We'll know the grand result—and even now
The eastern sky is faintly touched with gray.
"It ill befits thine age's hoary crown
This rude environment of rogue and clown,
Who, as the lying bulletins appear,
With drunken cries incarnadine the town.
"But if with noble zeal you stay to note
The outcome of your patriotic vote
For Blaine, or Cleveland, and your native land,
Take—and God bless you!—take my overcoat."
"Done, pard—and mighty white of you. And now
guess the country'll keep the trail somehow.
I aint allowed to vote, the Warden said,
But whacked my coat up on old Stanislow."

THE CONVICTS' BALL

San Quentin was brilliant. Within the halls
Of the noble pile with the frowning walls
(God knows they've enough to make them frown,
With a Governor trying to break them down!)
Was a blaze of light. 'Twas the natal day
Of his nibs the popular John S. Gray,
And many observers considered his birth
The primary cause of his moral worth.
"The ball is free!" cried Black Bart, and they all
Said a ball with no chain was a novel ball;
"And I never have seed," said Jimmy Hope,
"Sech a lightsome dance withouten a rope."
Chinamen, Indians, Portuguese, Blacks,
Russians, Italians, Kanucks and Kanaks,
Chilenos, Peruvians, Mexicans—all
Greased with their presence that notable ball.
None were excluded excepting, perhaps,
The Rev. Morrison's churchly chaps,
Whom, to prevent a religious debate,
The Warden had banished outside of the gate.
The fiddler, fiddling his hardest the while,
"Called off" in the regular foot-hill style:
"Circle to the left!" and "Forward and back!"
And "Hellum to port for the stabbard tack!"
(This great virtuoso, it would appear,
Was Mate of the Gatherer many a year.)
"Ally man left!"—to a painful degree
His French was unlike to the French of Paree,
As heard from our countrymen lately abroad,
And his "doe cee doe" was the gem of the fraud.
But what can you hope from a gentleman barred
From circles of culture by dogs in the yard?
'Twas a glorious dance, though, all the same,
The Jardin Mabille in the days of its fame
Never saw legs perform such springs—
The cold-chisel's magic had given them wings.
They footed it featly, those lades and gents:
Dull care (said Long Moll) had a helly go-hence!
'Twas a very aristocratic affair:
The crème de la crème and élite were there
Rank, beauty and wealth from the highest sets,

And Hubert Howe Bancroft sent his regrets.

A PRAYER

Sweet Spirit of Cesspool, hear a mother's prayer:
Her terrors pacify and offspring spare!
Upon Silurians alone let fall
(And God in Heaven have mercy on them all!)
The red revenges of your fragrant breath,
Hot with the flames invisible of death.
Sing in each nose a melody of smells,
And lead them snoutwise to their several hells!

TO ONE DETESTED

Sir, you're a veteran, revealed
In history and fable
As warrior since you took the field,
Defeating Abel.
As Commissary later (or
If not, in every cottage
The tale is) you contracted for
A mess of pottage.
In civil life you were, we read
(And our respect increases)
A man of peace—a man, indeed,
Of thirty pieces.
To paying taxes when you turned
Your mind, or what you call so,
A wide celebrity you earned
Saphira also.
In every age, by various names,
You've won renown in story,
But on your present record flames
A greater glory.
Cain, Esau, and Iscariot, too,
And Ananias, likewise,
Each had peculiar powers, but who
Could lie as Mike lies?

THE BOSS'S CHOICE

Listen to his wild romances:
He advances foolish fancies,
Each expounded as his "view"
Gu.

In his brain's opacous clot, ah
He has got a maggot! What a
Man with "views" to overwhelm us!
Gulielmus.

Hear his demagogic clamor
Hear him stammer in his grammar!
Teaching, he will learn to spell
Gulielmus L.

Slave who paid the price demanded
With two-handed iron branded
By the boss—pray cease to dose us,
Gulielmus L. Jocosus.