

POEMS

OF

PAGANISM



PAGANUS

POEMS OF PAGANISM;

OR,

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE.

BY

“PAGANUS”

(L. CRANMER-BYNG.)



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DEDICATION.

To My Friend

GEORGE BARLOW.

PHOEBUS! wherever thou lightest, joy follows ;

Heart of man wakens to music, and sings :—

“Glad are the rays that are Phoebus Apollo’s,
Golden the hours of delight that he brings.”

Strong-hearted, lyre-loving God of the morning,

Darkness and falsehood shall shudder and flee,

Gloom-mantled crime at thy presence take warning,

Earth wake from sleep at the vision of thee.

God of the truth that shines clear in the day-
time,
Light of the soul that hath wandered in
night,
Phoebus, oh, hearken, thou God of love's May-
time,
Lord of love's seasonless summer delight !

Who is it comes with the sunlight above
him,
Holding the sun-smitten lyre in his hand,
Making the hearts of us listen and love
him,
Sending a thrill through the night-weary
land ?

Who is it lightens the load of our yearning,
Shows us the sun of our darkened desire ?
Music so passionate, beautiful, burning,
Surely no mortal could wake from the
lyre !

"This is my servant. The lyre of my
giving
Trembles to tell the sad spirits that
sleep

Night-dreams are over now Phoebus is
living,
See! the doomed darkness dies over the
deep."

God-gifted singer of truth and of passion—
Truth that is dawning, and love that is
free—
Fain were my poor little numbers to fashion
Song that should hallow both Phoebus and
thee.

Lacking the lyre, with the pipe that was
hidden
Deep in the soil by some shepherd of yore,
Made I the songs that I send thee unbidden.
Let them not trouble thee. Where the
streets roar ;

Where the loud market with thousands is
thronging ;
Where the gold Moloch rears proudly his
head ;
These will be silent, nor fill thee with longing
For the green meads, and the days that
are dead.

Only for song-time and summer these numbers,
Where trees are many and mortals are
few ;
Where in the forest Pan wakens from slumbers.
Take them. I leave them to Nature and
you.

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A PATRIOT POET

O THE heart of England yearns
For a melody that burns,
For a young god from Olympus—all the
morning's flush desire
In the chords that throb and quiver
As the sunlight on the river
From the hand that stirs to music all the
harp's imprisoned fire.

To a nation overwrought
In the wilderness of thought
O'er your pessimistic babble, little middlemen
of rhyme,
Down the years that damn and dull us
Pants the passion of Catullus,
Calls the seraph-soul of Shelley—Byron's
rebel-heart sublime.

You may persecute the brave,
Ply your scourge upon the slave,
But the blood of all the martyrs only swells
the tide of truth,
As it rolls serenely forward
To the billows beating shoreward,
And the sea and river mingle in the fiery lips
of youth.

God has written on your walls,
And the voice of freedom falls
On the ears of weary Titans as they dream
upon the soil.
And the world shall pause in wonder
As they rend their bonds asunder,
As the lyre's triumphant thunder sounds the
knell of sunless toil.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE

To the God of hapless beauty, to the Lord of
saddest song,
To the Guardian of that garden where all
broken hearts belong,—
Of the poppy-sprinkled garden, where for ever
sets the sun,
Where lost lovers meet and mingle all their
spirit-life in one,
Where red passion strays—a phantom of the
flame that flared and sped,
Where the dreamer lies a-dreaming of the
rapture that is dead,—
Hear me, Lord, and dragon-watch o'er the
souls that peaceful dream,
With the walls of brass around them and the
ever-circling stream ;
For my heart is torn and bleeding, and the
soul of me is fain
For a cycle of the slumber that should ease
me of my pain.

I have battled, I was beaten, and my captive
heart lies bound

By the sorrows that beset me, by the griefs
that gathered round.

I have sought the old-world shadows for their
silence that would keep,

For their sepulchres to save me from the
tossing, moaning deep :

But a voice cried : " On for ever ! Thou shalt
never know the shore,

Nor thy battered galley shelter from the
storms that are in store."

So I steered in desperation for the far-off
western waves,

For the garden of my vision, where love's
phantoms find their graves,

And the chill winds of religion howled around
my lonely soul,

And the mocking voice cried : "Onward !
Thou shalt never find the goal."

But I came to thee, great Guardian of the
broken hearts that lay

Where the noontide sun of passion fades to
crimson streams away,

Where two hearts are bound together in the
poppy-purpled sleep,

And their sepulchres have saved them from
the tossing, moaning deep.
O thou guardian of the garden where lost
lovers lie and dream,
With the walls of brass around them and the
ever-circling stream,
Shall I never, never enter? Shall my spirit
never rest
In the garden that lies dreaming in the
splendour of the West?

ALL THAT I HAVE.

I CANNOT veil the past
Whose gloomy shadows cast
Their awful length of blackness on your life ;
But take this hand to guide
And steer you down the tide,
This loving breast to shield you through the
strife.

All that I have is yours—
A passion that endures,
A heart to follow music unto truth,
A soul that cannot quail
From very shame to fail,
And all the deep devotedness of youth.

Faith is not mine to give :
Enough for me I live
To aid some fellow-being to the sun,
Whose mild and mellow rays
Shall light those happy days
When all our hopeless seeking shall be done.

I may not faultless be,
Sin stains my purity,
And sorrow in my heart holds bitter feast ;
But love has power to save
From dark dishonour's grave
A soul that never herded with the beast.

Ah ! give me of that love,
That I may worthy prove,
And, hand in hand, redemption we will seek,
Through life's vast loneliness,
Through trouble and distress,
Till time has kissed the teardrops from your
cheek.

AU REVOIR—NOT ADIEU!

AU REVOIR—not Adieu ! For the thought
of our parting
Strikes chill on the heart that beats only
for you ;
Ere soul forsakes soul, into solitude starting,
By all that was love, Au Revoir—not
Adieu !

Au Revoir—not Adieu. As I clasp you and
kiss you—
More true than a mistress, more tender
than wife—
My heart cannot learn its sad lesson to miss
you,
To tear out the tendrils of love from my
life.

Au Revoir—not Adieu! Like a knell that is
tolling,
The bell for departure rings agony dumb ;
And lips madly meet for some sweetness
consoling,
Some wish to conceal that the parting has
come.

Little girl, with your brown eyes of innocent
wonder,
Little rosebud so ruthlessly brought into
bloom,
The sword of adversity sweeps us asunder ;
But love, like a beacon, shall glow through
the gloom.

Au Revoir—not Adieu! For a time we must
sever ;
But the grass has its green, and the sea has
its blue,
And you have my heart—keep it, darling, for
ever :
Fate parts, love abides. Au Revoir—not
Adieu!

CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN.

Christian.

TENDER and true she waits for you
In the beautiful burnished skies ;
Your darling waits at the jewelled gates
Of the garden of Paradise.

Pagan.

Alas ! my friend, and is this the end
Of a love that lived like ours :
To view one's own on a golden throne,
With a diadem of flowers ;

To hear her play on a harp alway ;
See nightgown frippery fold
About her waist ? Has Heaven no taste
For a woman of lovely mould ?

And the songs I taught—will they count for
aught,

Those wonderful heathen lays ?

No, no ! She'll hymn for an angel's whim,
Through the tedious golden days.

Each fond embrace is a dire disgrace,

With the eye of God above,

And the saints would blush, as His voice said :

“ Hush !

Ye must put away your love.”

Calm, cold, and pure, ye may endure ;

Yet passion shall pine with drouth

For love's fair form, and the kisses warm

Of her beautiful burning mouth.

No Heaven for me, but the dancing sea,

And the far-off Lydian shore ;

Where, hand in hand, in her own bright land,

We'll linger and love once more.

And she shall sing to the lute I bring,

And sorrow and care and pain

Shall pass away with the dying day,

And night shall return again.

Then with the night comes lost delight :
Love lurks in each dreamy dale,
Whose eyes shall be the starry sea,
And whose voice the nightingale.

CLOUD, WIND, AND RAIN.

A MIST came out of the sea,
And a cloud fell over my heart :
But the mist and the cloud were part
Of a shadow that haunted me.

A moan went over the wave,
And cold on my spirit fell
The doom of a tolling bell,
And the thud of a closing grave.

Then rain swept under the skies,
And tears coursed over my cheek,
For the love that I vainly seek,
And the light of her dear lost eyes.

But night fled into the west,
And hope dawned out of my fears.
Love smiled upon sunlit tears,
And sorrow was fain to rest.

CONCERNING TRUTH AND ART.

TO ALL ORTHODOX.

THOUGH perchance no mortal numbers have
the power to wake from slumbers
All the silent spirits sleeping in the dark-
ness and the mist,
Still I'll sing the veiled stars gleaming, far
beyond your hopeless dreaming,
Who have followed marsh-lights streaming
to the doom ye daren't resist.

If I cannot climb the mountains, let me seek
secluded fountains,
Where the naiads lurk and listen to the
waters as they fall,
Weaving webs of fancy round me, where the
old-world magic found me,
Where love's flowery fetters bound me, too
ethereal to pall.

Though ye drive me to perdition in the zeal
of superstition,

'Tis your Master that ye martyr in each
sacerdotal soul.

From your Golgothas descending, follow not
with spite unending

Hearts their sunward journey wending,
thoughts no poet can control.

'Tis some awful power that plays us on this
mournful stage ; arrays us,

Some in rags and some in purple, for the
parts we fill untried,

To a scene for ever shifting, to a curtain ever
lifting,

On our flotsam spirits drifting into darkness
deified.

God made singer to discover, with the keen
eye of a lover,

All the cherished hidden secrets only
Nature's darlings know ;

What bright rapture burns and blushes by
the gurgling tide that gushes

Down deep inlets among rushes when the
springtime blossoms blow.

26 CONCERNING TRUTH AND ART.

Art is sweet, but never, maiden, where the
dells with dreams are laden ;

Darkness loves red roses better than the
day loves roses white ;

All the sense of sweetly sinning, life's old
drama new beginning,

Love triumphant, passion winning, wait the
dark wings of the night.

Drooping heart, let all disown thee ; let each
passing bigot stone thee ;

Let their demon malice dog thee through
the ever-circling shade.

Music's star shines fair above thee ; loyal souls
shall learn to love thee ;

Persecution only prove thee fearless soldier
undismayed.

Yes ! if one sad soul might hear me, if my
music might endear me

To some lonely hero, fighting, grandly
conscious of his doom !

He shall clasp my hand for ever, though vast
leagues of ocean sever,

Though these mortal eyes may never see
the sunrise gild the gloom.

CUPID'S SLEEP.

SMOTHERED in roses, drenched in dew,
Sleep-flushed eyelids heavily pressed,
Half revealed, half hidden from view,
Cupid lies on the earth's green breast,
With a gush of notes from a thousand throats
For a lullaby, breathed o'er his dainty nest.

Hour by hour, in the dim moonlight,
Arrows had flashed from his deadly bow ;
And now he slumbers and dreams of night,
Red Eve and her passionate after-glow,
Of all the grace of a tell-tale face,
And the warm, wild words that are whispered
 low.

DESPAIR.

SHE has left me the weight of a secret un-
spoken—

A love half revealed in her sorrow-kissed
eyes.

Down the night of despair goes a heart that is
broken

To the hell of lost hope, where the worm
never dies.

She has sped from the sphere of my being for
ever ;

She has left but a trail on the cloud-ridden
track ;

But if pride had not parted, no shadow could
sever,

And the heart she has trampled would
welcome her back.

Though I stretch out vain hands to a form
that evades me,
And pine for a voice that is utterly still,
Yet only in dreams her dear image upbraids
me,
And the hand of remorse on my bosom
falls chill.

Can the power that united us cleave us
asunder—
The forces that lured us, so suddenly part ?
'Tis the soul answers "No" on the echoing
thunder ;
But the moan of despair sweeps a desolate
heart.

GOOD-BYE, LOVE !

SINCE I cannot compel you to love me
I will take to the forest my pain,
Where the green leaves of summer above me
Will banish the thought of disdain.

I will pour out my musical sorrow
To nature, than beauty more kind,
And my lute shall from Æolus borrow
The lilt of his wandering wind.

If I cannot compel you to render
The love I had died to possess,
I shall still find the nightingale tender,
Still welcome the moonbeam's caress.

In my heart just a shadow of sadness,
On my lips just the ghost of a sigh,
With a tear for the tremors of madness,
Sweet star of love's morning, good-bye !

On my lips just the ghost of a sigh, love,
In my heart just a shadow of pain,
With a tear for our parting,—good-bye, love !
Good-bye, little soul of disdain !

HAUNTED.

THERE'S a burden I cannot banish
In the long, lone hours of grief ;
It recedes, but will never vanish ;
It saddens, but brings relief ;

It sighs o'er the sunken ashes
Of days that are past recall,
And loud the wind it lashes
Round fancy's funeral hall.

As I follow, entranced, and listen,
The meaning I half divine
Of the dews that in dark eyes glisten,
And spangle the night in mine.

Ah ! they tell of love's billows breaking
The barriers man has set,
Of passion from dream awaking,
Wild yearning, and vain regret.

And I still hear the music rolling,
And shudder between the bars,
Though her knell they have long ceased
tolling,
And her soul's beyond the stars.

HEART OF STONE.

IN my heart a tune is ringing
That some strolling bard was singing
 When the chill of parting came,
 Breathing a beloved name ;
 And the blinding tears fell fast
 For the passion of the past.

Down the stricken night it walleth,
Till the demon darkness paleth,
 And the weary watcher slips
 Into dream with parted lips—
 Pallid face of wan despair,
 And the moonbeams in his hair.

Mournful numbers, madness bringing,
In my breast your burden flinging,
 Tell me, shall I never see
 One whose love is life to me ?
 Heart of grief, be heart of stone !
 You must bear the cross alone.

HESITATION.

SHALL I pause on the brink for a moment to
shiver,

To peer into gloom that is dark as the grave ?
Or, scornful of self, launch my barque on the
river,

Cast care to the current, and trust to the wave ?
O thou God, of this shuddering spirit the giver ;
What light for the lonely, what hope for the
slave ?

I made me a palace of wonder and pleasure,
A garden of flowers in a land of delight ;
Each fount overflowed with song's infinite
measure ;

Mirth mellowed the day ; love enchanted
the night :

All that passion could give of her tenderest
treasure

Was mine till the stars in their season took
flight.

But frail are love's walls, and his palace must
crumble,

His garden grow weeds, and each fountain
fall dumb ;

Man's babels of bliss are predestined to tumble,
And the depths of remorse are there any
can plumb ?

The tempest sweeps light o'er the lowly and
humble,

But the passionate heart in its pride must
succumb.

The light of my soul—is it honour or glory ?

The star of my song—is it wealth or
renown ?

What way leads to truth not encrimsoned
and gory ?

What guerdon of valour, save martyrdom's
crown ?

All ends are the same in life's pitiful story :

The peerless and brave in the battle go
down.

HOMeward BOUND.

GOOD-BYE ! good-bye to the hopes that were
reared and shattered :

A last farewell to the hours whose life was
flame.

Time never restores the blossoms his breath
has scattered :

The stars still gleam, but their beauty is
not the same.

The anchor's up, and our ship goes sweeping
seaward ;

Her white keel severs the shuddering, wine-
dark ways ;

But the billows of banished bliss come rolling
me-ward,

And bear me back to the haven of happier
days.

The past lies fair, with its vistas of light behind
me

Like some brief shadow of dream from a
poppy-land ;
But bloomless garlands of sunless hope now
bind me,
And memory leaves but the touch of a
darling hand.

In my far-off, sea-caressed home fond hearts
are pleading :

There are crowns to weave, there are visions
of sunlit skies ;
But the fairest dream is ever the dream re-
ceding,
And the sweetest love is ever the love that
flies.

IGNORANT ROSES.

BLUE Plymouth waters woo my sweet,
Green Devon woodlands love her,
Red poppies meet her pretty feet,
Brown branches wave above her.

Gold sunbeams, shattered in her hair,
But glorify gold tresses,
And roses swear she is so fair
They pine for her caresses.

Ah ! roses red, how can ye know
The rapture of my lady ?
For love lies low where zephyrs blow
In dream-dells cool and shady.

What wist ye of the nodding night,
The thrill of moonlit kisses,
When, out of sight, love's warm delight
Mates all your modest misses ?

LOUIS KOSSUTH.

WHO will mourn the undying dead
Gone into darkness, garlanded,
Fame's tender trophies around his head ?

Who will mourn for a nation's night ;
Weep for the woes of trampled right,
Sunless sorrow, and starless might ?

Stained, bedewed with the blood of strife,
Freedom flashed on the hero life ;
Lured his spirit when storms were rife.

Time unites what the sword may sever
Death may come, but oblivion never :
Louis Kossuth lives on for ever.

LIFE.

OH, earth and sky, I live ! for love compelling
Has filled the thirsty inlets of my soul.
I feel the fount of song within me welling,
And passion's frenzied billows slip control.

For one fair woman's eyes, divinely tender,
Mirrored in mine, have blinded them with
love ;
Then rose my sun, my angel, my defender,
Where calumny with lonely weakness
strove.

I, who caressed the withered wanton Anguish,
Supped off a sigh, and drained no toast but
tears,
Doomed in the dungeons of despair to
languish,
Counting each hour a myriad mournful
years—

I, whom the Levite left with pious loathing,
Wounded and well-nigh perished from the
drouth,
Waken to life, whom love, with pity clothing,
Heals with the countless kisses of her
mouth.

LIFT THE LYRE.

LIFT the lyre from failing fingers
Ere the hand is cold and set ;
Still the fire of music lingers
Where the strings with tears are wet.

You who loved him—softly taking,
Place it on his peaceful breast ;
Nevermore the silence breaking
Lord and lyre shall take their rest.

Do not mourn the dead musician ;
Stay the tears ye idly shed.
Deep in poppy-bloom Elysian
Let him lay his weary head.

Only weep for words unspoken,
Sigh but for the songs unsung.
Death salutes him by this token—
Whom the Gods love perish young.

LINUS TO LYTERSES.

WHAT of the past, Lyterses ?
What of the gathered years ?
Time, with his tender mercies,
Leaves not a stain of tears.

Where are the joys that bound us ?
Where are the songs we sung ?
Where the warm hands that crowned us
Kings, when the world was young ?

Weary of life immortal
Linus in languor nods,
Dreaming of death's dream-portal,
Panting to sleep with gods.

Go, little gush of verses,
Over Time's barren bars :
Whisper to lone Lyterses,—
“ Linus still seeks the stars.”

LINKED TO THE PAST.

OUR roots strike deep into the soil of time,
The loam of perished ages holds us fast,
And though with heavenward glance we soar
 sublime,
We cannot wholly rid us of the past.
Still superstition croons, though Faith be
 gone,
And timid Conscience mumbles sadly on.

For dim ancestral spectres dog our ways,
Live in each varied mood, each passing
 thought.
From the drear store-house of their garnered
 days
Faint hopes, forgotten fears, old joys, en-
 wrought
Into the living brain, can often teach
A grander lesson than the parsons preach.

We wear the robes of dead humanity ;
The cerements of our Fathers wrap us round ;
We cannot 'scape them, though we vainly try.
Dull matter weighs upon us : we are bound
By links of ancient virtue, former sin,
And perished deeds pursue their course within.

The fool abhors his earthly tenement,
And pines for hell in hopes of future bliss,
Raising of blood and tears a monument—
A lasting token—lest Jehovah miss
His glut of Christian gore. Why shun the
sod,
Poor fool, when soul and matter meet in
God ?

LOST IDEALS.

YOUTH fades, but the star that we loved and
vowed to follow

And seek till the long night sank upon
darkened eyes—

Has this, too, left us alone in the hateful
hollow

Where mute despair on the bosom of mad-
ness lies ?

Is there no faith in the far-off light that made
us

The hero souls that we seemed when the
years were young ?

Will no dim gleam of our glorious trust up-
braid us ?

No memory rise and rebuke till the heart
is wrung ?

One star soon fails ; but the lesson its beauty
taught us,
Shall this, too, fail when the current of life
runs slack ;
When tyrannous Time and his henchman,
Care, have sought us,
And doubt's wan face ever peers o'er the
waters black ?

The tiller slips from the stiffened hand that
guided
Hope's buoyant barque in her course
through the moonless sea,
And the shuddering coward steers into port
who prided
His soul in its scorn of the waves, in the
will of the free.

Still, far away, down the dark-browed night
is streaming
Truth's burning star in its glory and
grandeur lone ;
It kindles the young, it colours e'en childhood's
dreaming,
But old men sleep, and forget that it ever
shone.

LOVE AND THE LARK.

O YOU so fair, whose glorious hair,
Bright aureole, beams above you,
Your beauty fires a thousand lyres
Whose masters madly love you.

O you so sweet, whose tiny feet
Made glad the gloom around me,
Though none came near the darkness drear
Where true love sought and found me,

Your lips redeemed the heart that dreamed,
With love's own tender token ;
Then passion came, with eyes aflame,
And all sweet words unspoken

Shaped into song, and fled along
In numbers wildly splendid,
Flashed through the dark, and told the lark
How nobly night was ended.

“Awake ! awake, bright bird ! and take
Your fill of new-born rapture !
Wake lyre and lute, that erst were mute,
Immortal strains to capture.”

Ah ! then she rose whose deathless throes
Of music thrilled the dawning :
Made young love seem a golden dream,
Beneath Heav’n’s sky-blue awning ;

And blithe she sped to rouse the dead
From slumber to rejoicing ;
Then, sun-caressed, sank down to rest,
Still “dawn” victorious voicing.

LOVE BEYOND LAW.

Do you still, my sweet, remember love's
 awakening last September,
When I cast cold reason from me—when
 I lost my soul for you ;
And I never thought of heeding, with your
 soft eyes sadly pleading,
If the clouds were black above me, or the
 sky was summer blue ?

Though bright days have dawned and perished
 since the first hour that we cherished,
Though we've clambered cold to heaven,
 and descended hot to hell,
Since two hearts went wildly beating with
 the rapture of their meeting,
And our lips were loth to utter all that
 eyes alone could tell ;

Though love ripened into passion in its
helpless human fashion ;

Though we've sowed the seeds of folly, and
the harvest is regret ;

Still, when even this has vanished with the
past for ever banished,

'Tis the memory of that meeting that my
heart can ne'er forget.

For your eyes were bright and burning with
the fire of guilty yearning,

And I knew that love had conquered when
their secret flashed in mine ;

And to each it little mattered if the universe
were shattered,

For young love had clouded reason, and his
madness was divine.

You were mine, past all redeeming, when your
heart awoke from dreaming

In the sunrise of love's summer—in the
springtime of delight ;

When warm passion kissed and crowned you,
with the green leaves gathered round
you,

And the day drooped into even, and the
darkness drew the night.

You are mine, sweet flower, for ever, by those
very ties we sever ;

By that creed of cursed convention that our
rebel hearts disdain.

In the spirit I shall take you, though my
presence must forsake you,

And our love shall live triumphant down
dark hours of lonely pain.

LOVE, DEATH, AND SONG,
IN THRACE.

My little Lydian girl is dead ;
Yet, ere she drooped her pretty head,
I brought white snowdrops to her bed,

And, in my grief, I whispered low :
“ Ah ! stay, while yet thy sisters blow !
Stay, sweet ! I cannot let thee go.”

She clasped and kissed the flowers I gave,
And said : “ By Hebrus’ rolling wave
Your snowdrop white will find a grave.”

And once she faintly tried to sing ;
Then, sobbing like a stricken thing,
In gloom her soul went wandering.

I called her each endearing name—
(How cold they seemed !—my words, how
tame !)—

No answer from the mute lips came.

All night I lay awake, and heard
The saddest song that ever stirred
The heart of man. No mortal bird

Hath power to flood the moon-kissed vale
With such a hopeless, haunting wail.
Ah ! soul-enchanting nightingale,

I know thee now : thou art my sweet :
'Twas thine—the passion-heart that beat
All night in music at my feet.

LOVE LAUGHS AT CASTE.

MERE money cannot wake warm love,
That slumbers oft belated
In these sad days, nor millions move
Two hearts once sweetly mated.

My Lady flaunts in silken gown,
Or paints ; it little matters.
True love will go in russet brown
To court true love in tatters.

Not silken sheen nor prudent paint,
Nor modish styles of fashion,
Nor all the virtues of a saint,
Can stir one spark of passion.

Mistress or maid—what matters it ?
As mistress so the maid is.
Blue blood and birth count not a whit
Where love the only trade is.

One woman with another vies
('Tis so throughout all ages):
One at a marquis casts her eyes,
Another at his pages.

But if his lordship should prefer
The meaner rustic beauty,
And if his looks should light on her,
What hinders love? Not duty.

The difference 'twixt that haughty dame,
From every ill exempted,
And that poor girl without a name,
Is this—that one was tempted.

·LOVE, MORN, AND MUSIC.

OH ! give me love, with the trees above,
In the dells where dewdrops cluster,
Heaven's heart of blue, and a trellised view
Of morn's magnificent lustre,

And joy's bright bird in the clouds half heard,
Or the cuckoo faintly calling,
Hushed happiness in the close caress
Of passion that's never palling.

LOVE'S SILENT SHRINE.

WHERE once shone love, cold friendship ruled
supreme,
And voices broke the silence of the shrine
That wist not of his solitude divine
Whose life passed from pursuing into dream :

From strenuous straining for a glimpse of
truth,
From rushing river into memory's meres,
Into the calm of unforgotten years,
Into the golden granary of youth.

I knew what I had never known before—
The little light my friendship could bestow,
The coldness and the glamour of its glow,
Where love's imperious star flashed out of
yore.

The loyal hearts of friends may count for
much—

They throw faint starlight on the spirit's
gloom :

But love can bring so many flowers to bloom,
To tremble into beauty at his touch !

For love can flood the universe with song,
And stir sweet strains of music out of sleep ;
Love sows the seeds that future thousands
reap,
And makes the weakest arm supremely
strong.

Love lures the hero soul to daring deed ;
Love conquers kingdoms for the sake of one ;
Love lends new rapture to the golden sun,
Mellows the moon, and fills with flowers the
mead.

Love makes small souls gigantically rise,
And bid defiance to the shrinking world ;
Love dares, and tyrants, into Tartarus hurled,
Languish, and freedom's pinions cleave the
skies.

But friendship cannot fill the throbbing hours
Of desolation with love's priceless boon,
So, from the memory of that afternoon,
I culled this little bunch of faded flowers.

No deep red roses of love's lost July,
No pinks to sanctify her maiden kiss,
No warm carnations of a wilder bliss,
To fill you with their sweetness where you lie,

Pensive perhaps, and lost to human view ;
Wrapt in the past, or living in the light
Of lofty thought. Ah ! sometimes let your
sight

Fall on this little bunch of cornflowers blue.

NATURE'S SADNESS.

[*AFTER OLD ENGLISH.*]

ME soft-eyed sorrow courts
Where human grief is not,
And mournful Echo sports
Round that secluded grot
Where on green leaves I lie
And let the hours go by.

And Nature oft will bind
My soul with silent pain
For the sadness of the wind,
And the pathos of the rain,
And oft I shed a tear
For all dead flowers so dear.

I love the lilting lark,
The song that shatters sleep ;
But best the midnight dark,
With woe for words too deep ;
When the lorn nightingale's
Sweet sorrows flood the vales.

The ripple of the stream
Revealeth vain desire
To linger yet, and dream
By woodland glades afire
With yellow daffodils,
And cease awhile its rills.

The summer pines to stay
Among the forest leaves ;
But, on some dreary day,
Comes Autumn with his sheaves,
And green things grow to gold,
And canker with the cold.

The sunrise brings delight,
But the morn sheds pearls of dew
For the perished joys of night
And the stars she never knew ;
For the roses that *were* red ;
For the petals passion shed.

PASSION'S PASTORAL.

A STUPOR steals upon me ; I become
Like one who takes the magic of the moon
Too deeply in his veins to feel the sting
Of things ephemeral—one whose buoyant
brain

Floats on thought's hasty tide to rapture's
sea.

Now through me creeps delicious drowsiness
And calm content, as when some deity
Nods in Olympus o'er his nectar wine,
And folds the nymph he panted to possess
Unto his bosom. I would lay me down
Under the gloom of patriarchal oaks,
Snatching from solitude and jealous time
Some joy to gloat upon in darker years.
Woman's red lips, gold moonlight, and the
gleam

And fair white contour of encircling arms,

In starlight's shadowless serenity,
Shall make my heaven ; while the nightingale
Hymns a sweet marriage service over us,
And bells our bridal forth from fluted throat.

SLEEP, DEAR !

THE night grows faint, like a swooning saint
In the sight of the Holy Grail,
And the breeze, first born of the night and
morn,
Dies off in a plaintive wail :
Then dream, dear ! dream !
Let never a gleam
From the shafts of sunrise find you,
Till vesper breathes o'er the crown love
wreathes,
And wild flowers freshly bind you.

The long grass shakes in the leafy brakes
When the golden light appears,
And earth, like a bride half-terrified,
Smiles up through a veil of tears :

Then sleep, dear ! sleep !
Lest the sun-god leap
From the shameless east, and find you
With cheeks all flushed for the joys that
blushed
In the burning hours behind you.

SONG.

COME to my arms, O sweet !
The world, enchanted, dreams,
In summer heat of passion's feet,
And Luna's amorous beams.

Come to my arms, O sweet !
The tireless wings of Time
Shall stay their flight where the love-
sick night
Droops warm on a cloudless clime.

She comes to my arms—my sweet,
Moon-kissed and wind-caressed.
The love-light lies in her starry eyes,
And—Nature knows the rest.

SONNET.

FRONTED with fate, and knowing he must
die,

Whose gush of gore encrimsons all the grass,
Life's little shiftings scened before him pass—
The solemn world of childish fantasy :

Passion's superb red sunrise in youth's sky,
And, scarcely with a tear for what he was,
Stricken in manhood's strength he droops,
alas !

And doffs the tatters of mortality,
With laughter on his lips : his latest breath
A prayer that truth may triumph in the light,
And dissolution only quickeneth
The soul that never yielded to affright ;
That scorns the shadowy terrors of dim death,
And with firm footfall beats the blinding
night.

THEE ONLY.

When all my nights are lonely,
And all my days are long,
My thoughts turn to thee only,
And bind thy brows with song :
For all the flowers
Of lyric hours
To thee alone belong.

When all my heart is aching
For woes I cannot heal,
When sunless dawns are waking,
To thee alone I kneel :
Through clouds and cares
My broken prayers
To thy dear bosom steal.

Thy face alone I cherish,
When other faces fade ;
When loves ephemeral perish,
And idols are unmade.
Of all bereft,
So thou art left,
I shall not be afraid.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE FOUNT.

AT the fount of the Muses a dragon lies
dreaming,

And no man may drink of the wonderful
wave

But he conquer the foe with his sword and
lance gleaming.

The magic of song is the meed of the
brave.

'Tis the fiend of affright that lies watching
these waters—

Foul dragon, thrice-coiled round the well-
springs of song,

Who guards the pure stream of Mnemosyne's
daughters,

And none may approach save the fearless
and strong.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE FOUNT. 73

For malice and hate follow after the seeker
Whom fiend could not conquer, nor terror
control ;
His sabre smites keen for the wounded, the
weaker,
But tempests shall tirelessly rage round his
soul.

I crave but a drop from the silver-tongued
eddy :
This drained, I will hie me right joyously
home,
Singing : " Soldier of Truth, in the ranks ever
ready,
God's starlight is shrouded, but morning
shall come."

THE SEER.

LOVE seems more fair for lonely hours of
sorrow,

And darkness lends more rapture to the
light.

The day would drag and weary without
morrow,

And sleepless suns might sicken for the
night.

Not all in gloom, nor yet in light eternal,

We wend our way to where God's ocean
rolls :

Still winter lingers, though the vales grow
vernal,

And storms await to vex too venturous
souls.

Yet, though the singer sees but gloom surround him ;

Though venom's bitter tongue tries to defame ;

His sword still seeks the countless hosts around him,

Smites for the truth, and puts them all to shame.

And some far-distant sun shall gleam and gladden

The brow of him who prophesied the day ;

Though doubt distract, though shaft of slander sadden,

And Martyr's thorns are mingled with the bay,

His eyes shall view the promised land, that never

His feet may tread who served God's people well ;

His deathless name endure with us for ever

Who fought for truth, and in the conflict fell ;

And generation call to generation,—

“Lo! this is he who sang the dawn between
Dark midnight hours, when no light brought
salvation.

Peace to his ashes! Keep his memory
green.”

Aye! though vast tracts of darkness close
behind him,

Though earth receives the blood he freely
shed,

God's meed upon the mountain-top shall find
him,

And all the pomp of sunrise crown his head.

The world shall live more lovely for his being
Whose grand, imperious spirit drew the
morn

From sombre skies ; who, victory far foreseeing,
Bequeathed his sword to warrior souls un-
born.

TO AN OLD-WORLD LOVE.

SWEET old-world love, on whose soft locks
descending—

Gold upon gold—the sunbeams used to
play,

By day, by night, with pity passion
blending,

Thy starry eyes illumine my lonely
way.

When Time, who brings no bedfellow but
sorrow,

And loveless years, have done their worst
to chill

The drooping soul that shuns the sad to-
morrow,

And darkling thoughts are boding some
new ill,

Thy phantom form shines through the dark-
ness o'er me ;

Shatters the chains that held me, helpless
bound :

And long-lost days of rapture rise before
me

When by thy love my soul was clasped
around.

“*Was* clasped,” said I? Nay! love endures
for ever :

'Tis this that keeps me sane, that goads
me on.

My guiding-star, were I from thee to
sever.

Life would be death, or death be dear
alone.

Yet, as it is, love calls me to my duty,

Though thou art gone, 'tis only for a
time.

Still through the dark the loadstone of thy
beauty

Draws on my soul from height to height
to climb.

So I will not complain, but bear me boldly,
Nor stress of storm shall drive me from
my post ;
And though the stars may shine upon me
coldly,
In some far world I'll find the love I lost.

TO L. G. A.

A HEART that beats along the barren years
Alone, unloved, that only friendship cheers,
But cannot soothe when desolation fills
The empty creeks that love has never laved :
A heart whose only prayer is peace, that
 stills,
And broods upon dim eyes, and broken wills
That in pride's Nessus shirt the world have
 braved,—

This heart, so human in its helplessness,
And so inhuman under fiery stress
Of scathing malice and the mark that brands
The son of song, however frail he be,
Salutes you with these poppies for your
 hands ;
Some gathered in green meads and antique
 lands,
Some by the gloom-robed, ever-restless sea.

These withered flowers are all I can bestow :
I may not linger where the roses grow,
Nor in some smiling valley take my rest ;
But you, with tuneful inspiration sweet,
Have drawn the sting of sorrow from my
 breast,
And lightened of the load that on me
 pressed :
Then take this little tribute at your feet.

TO NATURE.

OH! many a time upon thy kind old breast
I've eased my heart of persecution's quest,
And, gazing awestruck over solemn skies,
Sunk swooning into mystic reveries ;
And often, when the bitter tears were blinding,
I've felt thy gentle arms around me winding,
And heard a zephyr whisper in mine ear :
" Child of the sun and sea, thy home is here.
Where in the brake the fluted throistles sing,
And homing doves are faintly hovering,
Calm peace shall lay what human anguish
 lingers,
And sweep the lyre with mild, angelic fingers.
Then take thy wounded spirit from the world
To where the heart of Nature is unfurled ;
Where, o'er thy head, the trembling tree-tops
 close,
And life is one long summer of repose,

By star-kissed stream, and echo-haunted cave,
And lonely isle that lazy waters lave ;
Where sorrow sleeps, and all existence seems
A many-coloured galaxy of dreams."

WHERE ARE YOU NOW ?

SWEET ! where are you now ?
Do the wanton sunbeams, glancing,
Kiss those queenly eyes entrancing ?
Light that lovely brow ?

Sweet ! what fancies blow,
What thrice happy breezes, round you ?
Only this—that love has found you :
This alone I know.

Sweet ! where'er you be,
Love shall lead my heart to follow,
As, in search of sun, the swallow
Skims the rocking sea.

Sweet ! how fares my heart ?
Do the dainty lips that stole it
In the silent hours console it
For the leagues that part ?

Let my days be drear !
Grief of small account I'll reckon.
All night long bright visions beckon :
Darkness draws us near.

THE BRIDE OF LIFE.

IN dreams my spirit found her
Star-driven, rapture-led ;
Night's quivering coils crept round her,
And with the dawn she fled.
I dreamed that love had crowned her
With roses newly dead.

She haunts me to undoing,
This Lady of my quest ;
Through midnight hours pursuing
I seek a sheltering breast ;
That yields not to my wooing
Its secret unconfessed.

Calm sentinel of slumbers,
Nor wearying she stands ;
Yet calls in noiseless numbers,
And holds seductive hands,
To where the clay encumbers
My soul in iron bands.

Old loves have been before her,
And seared with ardent breath
The heart that doth implore her,
That thrills, and quickeneth
Cold passion to adore her
Whose maiden name is Death.

CAROL NO MORE.

Too loud she sings her new-born happiness.
O hush thee, swallow-heart, upon thy way !
For yonder clouds are boding of distress,
And darkness smites the day.

Too loud, too clear
Thy carols arise,
For the night is near
With her lullabies ;
She shall hush to sleep
Thy fluttering soul,
With the lightning's sweep
And the thunder-roll ;
She shall follow and find
Thy secret pain
With the watch-dog wind
And the shepherd rain.

The sun shall slope
O'er the red, red sea,
And gossamer Hope
With soiled wings flee.
Too clear, too loud
Thy carols arise :
Fate is weaving a shroud
O'er the glimmering skies ;
Fate is digging a tomb
For a dainty form
In the gathered gloom
Of the rising storm.

BEYOND WORDS.

I WORSHIP thee beyond my words can tell,
And all sweet thoughts at thought of thee
take birth :

These flowers I gathered from the grand old
earth,

But one stray bud I deemed from Heaven
fell.

And if this be, and thou wilt call it thine,
Though Faith be coy, and Hope a fickle jade,
Of thy great Charity, sweetheart, be mine,
And with thy light illumine a singer's shade.

OF HIS MUSE.

NO vision of inglorious years of gloom,
Nor Lethe's flood that laps a sunken soul,
Can break her tideless billows to control.
Oh she was cradled in the fiery womb
Of giant forces, swathed at Summer's loom,
And rocked to sleep by Autumn's thunder-
roll ;
She drained the mother-milk of Winter's bowl,
And with the Spring rejoicing rent the tomb.

If through the tenour of her course there
dreams
A gentle surge of lightly shaken leaves,
The silver strain of unpolluted streams,
A scent of Shiraz where she waits and weaves
Through songlit hours her many-chorded
themes,
The promise of her birth my Muse achieves.

THE LIGHT OF DEATH.

SLOWLY o'er the sunken face
Pallid-grey the shades are sweeping,
As upon the day comes creeping
Night's mysterious twilight grace.

Softly, as the shadows fall
When the spectral light has wended,
Where the white and black are blended
Into eve's uncertain pall,

So, upon life's tragic day,
Gleam of rapture, gloom of sorrow,
Steals a night without a morrow
In the quivering deathlight grey.

Who can track him to his goal ?
Where the light in shadow merges
Is there peace upon life's verges ?
Is there starshine on his soul ?

WHAT REMAINS.

IN a desolate shrine,
And a harp that is hushed,
There's a trace of the wine
And the music that gushed,
Though the hand of the priest
Brings oblations no more,
And the numbers have ceased
That enchanted of yore.

So my heart has a stain
Of the dregs of delight,
And a sullen refrain
Haunts the hag-ridden night.
Not a tribute of tears
Ever falls, and the moan
Of the music that sears
Is a song of my own.

A FALLEN DEITY.

OH, it was pitiful to see this man,
So starlike once, now humbled in the dust
Of swinish craving, and insatiate lust—
The ruined lineaments of youth to scan,
O'er which the demon Drink had placed her
 ban :

With watery eyes, and clawing hands out-
 thrust,
Beating the air, to beg a paltry crust,
And all the while his tuneful numbers ran,

And inspiration babbled at the fount
Of broken godhead. As he strove to mount
His jaded Pegasus, unbidden tears
Rose at the sight of genius in a sty ;
Then a mad whirl of mocking thoughts went
 by,
And in their track the dark-browed phantom
 years.

ON READING "FROM DAWN TO SUNSET."

I KNOW not what grand voice of ecstasy
Rang through the shuddering caverns of
 despair,
Wresting the monster Madness from his lair,
And bade the rebel-soul of Rancour—die,
Bringing to Doubt the balm of sympathy,
The kiss of Peace to heavy-hearted Care,
Smoothed Sorrow's wrinkled brow and tangled
 hair

With its most human haunting melody.

But this I know—a stone was rolled away
That barred my shrouded being from the day,
And down the gloom God's herald light sped
 fast.

Then from the womb of Death I sprang, and
 cried :

"I live—I live, who once was crucified,"
And into sunlight, singing, rose at last.

THE POET'S LEGACY.

WHEN this—that once was I—is void of
breath,

And on my lips the leaden lips of Death
Are softly pressed, and Nature's close embrace
Has kissed the tell-tale furrows from my
face ;

When Time has set his seal upon these brows,
And passion's melted into memory's drowse ;
When o'er the broken harp's tear-sodden
strings

Sad Muses droop their unavailing wings ;
When other cares have taught thee to forget
The star that made one night divine, and set
In stormy splendour on the sullen track,
O'er death's abysmal sea of vasty black ;—
The voice I leave behind shall hale thee back,
And bid thee gaze above the giddy throng
On thine own woman-heart enshrined in song.

SUDDEN LIGHT.

A GLEAM of light, a vision of sunshine caught
me,
Beat back the gloom for the term of a
golden hour ;
White arms enclosed, and wild lips suddenly
sought me,
And out of my heart there burst a glorious
flower—
A rose of song that had blossomed and
dawned to beauty,
Through throbbing nights and the drench
of passionate tears ;
Whose crimson heart was the life-blood shed
for duty,
Whose barren thorns were the unrejoicing
years.
A balm there was of a summer of all sweet
summers,
A scent of surfeited Mays of moonless bliss ;

When love seemed real to her passion-
prompted mummers,
And history hung on their first enraptured
kiss ;
When the breathless night was still, and the
stars had covered
Their conscious eyes, and never a murmur
broke
The swoon of the slumberous spell that faintly
hovered
O'er dreamlit dales where only a Zephyr
spoke—
O'er the forest where glimmered in gloom
cathedral arches,
Mysterious aisles, and whispering porticoes,
With ghostly columns of shadowy spectral
larches,
Where God endures as a Spirit of vast repose.

TO EURYDICE.

WORDS, not deeds, are idle—idle :
Only action is divine.
Every bard must have his bridle :
I have mine.

Yet if words could find fruition
On whatever soil they fell,
Save one spirit from perdition—
It is well.

If some single lyric, straying,
Find an echo in your breast,
Of the hours I've spent a-maying,
One is blest.

If a song have power to tear you
From this vast and voiceless gloom ;
Then, by Heaven ! I'll win and wear you
Until doom.

THE MAIDEN'S VIGIL.

IN my fancy sings a maiden
By the barren moonlit shore,
Where the sea for ever surges,
And the wild storm-furies roar ;
Wailing weird funereal dirges
From a heart that hopes no more.

In my dreams I see her lifting
Tearless eyes across the gloom ;
Round her soul the tempest, mocking,
Shrieks the sailor's chant of doom :
At her feet the billows, rocking,
Roll their dull receding boom.

And the winds and waters, chiding,
Bid her nightly vigil keep :
With the lone heart overladen,
And the eyes that never weep,
Thou shalt be for ever, maiden,
Moaning dirges by the deep."

FAREWELL !

BE brave, my sweet, look up and say : " Fare-
well ! "—

The last sad word that I may hear you speak ;
For love so mighty, human will so weak,
My own voice chills me like a tolling bell,
Rolls in my breast its cold continuous knell,
And rings the ready teardrops down my
cheek.

Then say the word that I so vainly seek
To cast across love's ever-surging swell.

We part in passion still unsatisfied,
Leaving the sunlit shores of hope behind :
You with the snow-white canvas of a bride,
And I with bare poles bending to the
wind.

Be mine the ocean heart of lonely pride,
And yours the soul that tyrants cannot
bind.

WORLD-WEARY.

SHE had murmured adieu to laughter,
She had waved to mirth on the wing,
And youth with a sigh went after
The innocent hours of spring.
May vanished, and, crimson-hearted,
Rose June upon dream-flushed skies :
Love shattered the clouds, and parted
The mist from her maiden eyes.

Through summer he spake and thrilled
her,
And many a passion seared
Ere the kisses of autumn chilled her
And blighted the hopes once reared.
Love's damascene rose now faded,
Yet languishes undesired,
Where her beautiful soul beams jaded,
Through eyes world-weary and tired.

NO HEART BUT THINE.

HE has no heart but thine wherein to rest ;
He brings no gems to consecrate that shrine ;—
But, of whatever in him is divine
 Take thou the best.

Men only know him as he seems ; yet thou
Shalt hear faint prophecies of fame, and mark
The feet of sunrise moving through the dark.
Oh ! come, sweet pilot of a lonely bark,
 Not then, but now.

SONG WITHOUT ECHO.

[FROM THE POLISH OF MARIE KONOPNICKA.]

HEIGHO ! shades are creeping :
Heigho ! storms are sweeping :
Heigho, shadows quiver
Hiding all your path from view, dear :
Heigho ! runs the river,
Carried by the tempest flying :
Heigho ! my heart goes crying,
Down the track that leads to you, dear.

As the sun sweeps mountain-passes,
Over meres and meadow-grasses,
So my fate was fain to follow
With the sun-rejoicing swallow.
Ah, my fate ! whom storms have parted,
Cradled in the forest bosom—
Flowerlike fate, you do not blossom
Where spring dallies, April-hearted.

You have left the woodlands lonely,
Left a starless sky above me,
Given grief's caresses only,
Only sorrow's lips to love me.
Not for me the warm delights
Smiling from dear lanes and valleys ;
But o'er a stranger's roof o' nights
A song without an echo sallies.
Oh ! not for me that homestead fair
Gleams among dim vistas lying ;
But o'er a stranger's roof Despair
Wails a dirge for ever dying.

SHOULD THEY ASK.

SHOULD they ask you : " Where is he
Of the simple, foolish mind,
And the harp that sang of summer when no
leaf was on the tree ? "
Will you say he's gone in chase
Of a far-off phantom face,
Of a quarry that eludes him, and a love he
cannot find.

Should they ask you for the wight,
Whom your wise ones held in scorn :
Will you say he's gone a-gliding down the
dark stream of the night,
Seeking ever what is lost,
With his wild heart tempest-tost,
Through a sea of starless horror to a shadow-
land forlorn.

SLEEPER AND SENTINEL.

THE wind sings loud
O'er the snow-white shroud
That covers her breast,
Who lies caressed
By the hand of sleep in the lap of rest.
But he gives no heed
If the storm recede,
Or snows and sleet
On his eyelids beat,
Who watches white as a winding-sheet ;
For he stands alone,
Unloved, unknown,
O'er the grave of a heart that was once
his own.

LOVE'S WITNESS.

I CREEP to the window softly
This joyous night in June,
But the strings of my heart's wild harping
Are frayed and out of tune.
Night's mild-eyed mystical Goddess
Steals over the silver grass,
And down by the dim laburnums
Two happy lovers pass.

Ah! little they know who watches
The path where shadow lies,
A sneer on his shapeless features,
And hate in his hollow eyes.
Though the summer night is golden,
There's a form the doomed ones miss—
Grim Death by the willows waiting
To sever the lips that kiss.

But Peace upon calm creation
Sits brooding as a dove,
And the mother-heart is throbbing
In unison with love.
Yet I, being many-sided,
Shall lone and loveless be,
Till the wan moon wanes for ever,
And the stars are drowned at sea.

VITA BREVIS.

[FROM THE FRENCH OF DE MUSSET.]

So fleet is life :
A little scope
For heart and hope,
A little strife,
And then :—Good-day !

A few bright gleams
Of pleasure brief,
A passing grief,
Some broken dreams—
Good-night ! Away !

L'ENVOI.

TO GEORGE BARLOW.

I CARE not a straw for approval
 (Fame's trumpet too often is tin)
Of the cliques and the critics, since you've all
 The praise I would perish to win.

Dame Fortune, sweet wanton, is fickle ;
 Yet though she caressingly smile
On some desperate effort to tickle
 The popular palate by guile,

Oh ! believe 'tis not for the favour
 Of those who can make me or damn
That my songs of the fields have a savour,
 And my lyre breathes a hatred of sham.

Oh ! believe me, 'tis not for the dollars,
 Nor yet for the pleasures they bring,
That the meanest of Poesy's scholars
 Would follow her fugitive wing.

For the joys of the forest are sweeter :
New treasures will gladden his eyes
Who has worshipped his Mother Demeter
Where among the green meadows she lies.

'Tis the privilege born of pursuing
Truth's beacon that lures him along ;
'Tis the right of love's passionate wooing
To lighten the heart with a song.

Let the Pharisee snivel, and squander
His choicest abuse on my name,
Or the Philistine fearfully ponder
On one who is heedless of shame.

But in meanness and malice they revel :
Their opinion is nothing to me ;
So the *bourgeois* may go to the devil,
Like the Gadarene swine to the sea.

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