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"With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us, 
A single band of gold about her hair."
THE PRINCESS

A MEDLEY

BY

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

Edited with Notes

by

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, Ph. D.

Formerly Head Master of the High School, Cambridge, Mass.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON

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TO

HENRY LUSHINGTON

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED BY HIS FRIEND

A. TENNYSON.
THE text of The Princess is here printed from that of the latest (1884) English edition, with the correction of a few obvious errors (see on i. 121, ii. 332, vi. 161, etc.). As a rule, I have followed the poet's orthography (except in words like color, honor, etc.), and his restricted use of the apostrophe in past tenses,—which I do not like, though it is adopted by several of the recent editors of Shakespeare.

In the Notes all the "various readings" have been given, so far as I could ascertain them. For the first edition I have had to depend on the American reprint, which appears to have been carefully made. Both this and the second London edition have been minutely collated with American reprints of the fourth and fifth editions. The third edition (1850), in which the intercalary Songs first appeared, I have not been able to get hold of; but the copy of the second edition that I have used has these songs inserted in manuscript, which I have assumed to be trustworthy. I shall have the opportunity of verifying its readings at some future day (in England, if not in this country), and any errors I may discover will be corrected in another edition.

A few specimens of the alterations made by the author in the successive editions of The Princess have been given by Mr. Shepherd in Tennysoniana, by Mr. Wace in his Life and Works of Tennyson, by Mr. Dawson in his Study of The Princess, by Mr. Warren in his paper on "The Bibliography of Tennyson" in the Fortnightly Review, and by sundry other writers in reviews and magazines; but, so far as I can learn, this attempt of mine to prepare a complete "variorum" edition of the poem is the first that has been made.
Much of the work on the *Notes* was done full twenty-five years ago, when I read *The Princess* with a class of girls in school. The few obscurities that baffled us all then were pretty well cleared up in going through the poem with another class a few years later. In putting my old memoranda in shape, however, I have found Mr. Dawson's *Study* of much service. I have been indebted to him for certain facts and citations that I had not met with elsewhere; and sometimes I have quoted a note of his instead of taking the trouble to work up a new one from my own material.

Tennyson, like Scott, makes free use of Elizabethan words and phrases, and the "parallelisms" I have cited from Shakespeare and his contemporaries might easily have been multiplied sevenfold.

If any reader detects errors or omissions in the collation of the "various readings," or in any other part of my work, I shall be very grateful for a memorandum of them.

CAMBRIDGE, June 22, 1884.

NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.

Since the first edition was published, I have had the privilege of examining an interleaved copy of the first edition of *The Princess* belonging to Mr. F. J. Furnivall of London, in which he has recorded the new readings of the 3d and 5th editions. This has enabled me to settle certain doubtful points and to supply several omissions in my collation of those editions; and also to detect sundry misprints in the 1st American edition (see notes on prol. 69, ii. 19, iv. 401, v. 215, and vi. 340) and a few errors in the manuscript copy of the songs mentioned above.

I have also received a very kind letter from Lord Tennyson, calling attention to one or two slips in notes quoted from Mr. Dawson.

Nov. 25, 1884
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THE PRINCESS
A MEDLEY
PROLOGUE.

Sir Walter Vivian all a summer’s day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock’d at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighboring borough with their Institute
THE PRINCESS:

Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son,—the son
A Walter too,—with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snow-shoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And 'this,' he said, 'was Hugh's at Agincourt;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him,'—which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died;
And mixt with these a lady, one that arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the book,
'O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
By this wild king to force her to his wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,
But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost —
Her stature more than mortal in the burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire —
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook:
O miracle of noble womanhood!

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;
And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he said,
'To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth
And sister Lilia with the rest.' We went
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)
Down thro' the park: strange was the sight to me;
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads:
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of stone
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,
The fountain of the moment, playing, now
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower down
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired
A cannon; Echo answer'd in her sleep
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes
For azure views; and there a group of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter: round the lake
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied
And shook the lilies: perch'd about the knolls
A dozen angry models jetted steam:
A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves
And dropt a fairy parachute and past:
And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
Between the mimic stations; so that sport
Went hand in hand with science; otherwhere
Pure sport: a herd of boys with clamor bowl'd
And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd about
Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light
And shadow, while the twangling violin
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time;
And long we gazed, but satiated at length
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house; but all within
The sward was trim as any garden lawn:
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
From neighbor seats; and there was Ralph himself,
A broken statue propt against the wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
Half child, half woman as she was, had wound
A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a feast
Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,
And there we join'd them: then the maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd
An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great; but we, unworthier, told
Of college: he had climb'd across the spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs; and one
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought
My book to mind: and opening this I read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness, and 'Where,'
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay
Beside him) 'lives there such a woman now?'

Quick answer'd Lilia, 'There are thousands now
Such women, but convention beats them down:
It is but bringing up; no more than that:
You men have done it: how I hate you all!
Ah, were I something great! I wish I were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
That love to keep us children! O I wish
That I were some great princess, I would build
Far off from men a college like a man's,
And I would teach them all that men are taught;
We are twice as quick!' And here she shook aside
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.
And one said smiling, 'Pretty were the sight
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,
If there were many Lilias in the brood,
However deep you might embower the nest,
Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sward
She tapt her tiny silken-sandall'd foot:
'That's your light way; but I would make it death
For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
And sweet as English air could make her, she:
But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,
And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful Puss,'
And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
They lost their weeks; they vext the souls of deans;
They rode; they betted; made a hundred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,
Part banter, part affection.

'True,' she said,
'We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did.'
She held it out; and as a parrot turns
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd
And wrung it. 'Doubt my word again!' he said.
'Come, listen! here is proof that you were miss'd:
We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read;
And there we took one tutor as to read:
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square
Were out of season: never man, I think,
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,
And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you all
In wassail; often, like as many girls—
Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—
As many little trifling Lilias — play'd
Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
And what's my thought and when and where and how,
And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that:
A pleasant game, she thought: she liked it more
Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,
She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips;
And Walter nodded at me: 'He began,
The rest would follow, each in turn; and so
We forged a sevenfold story. Kind? what kind?
Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
Time by the fire in winter.'
'Kill him now,
The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,'
Said Lilia; 'Why not now?' the maiden Aunt.
'Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?
A tale for summer as befits the time,
And something it should be to suit the place,
Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn!'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd
And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt
(A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face
With color) turn'd to me with 'As you will;
Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clamor'd he,
'And make her some great Princess, six feet high,
Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
The Prince to win her!'

'Then follow me, the Prince,' I answer'd, 'each be hero in his turn!
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream. —
Heroic seems our Princess as required —
But something made to suit with time and place,
A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments
For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all —
This were a medley! we should have him back
Who told the "Winter's Tale" to do it for us.
No matter: we will say whatever comes.
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a song
To give us breathing-space.'

So I began,
And the rest follow'd; and the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the songs.
I.

A Prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,
Dying, that none of all our blood should know
The shadow from the substance, and that one
Should come to fight with shadows and to fall:
For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:
On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd 'catalepsy.'
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;
My mother was as mild as any saint,
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,
So gracious was her tact and tenderness:
But my good father thought a king a king;
He cared not for the affection of the house;
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,
While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
To one, a neighboring Princess: she to me
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old; and still from time to time
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
And of her brethren, youths of puissance;
And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress; and all around them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,
My father sent ambassadors with furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back
A present, a great labor of the loom;
And therewithal an answer vague as wind:
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;
He said there was a compact; that was true:
But then she had a will; was he to blame?
And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:
The first, a gentleman of broken means
(His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face
Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,
Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware
That he would send a hundred thousand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke: 'My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable;
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,
May rue the bargain made.' And Florian said:
'I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she, you know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land:
Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean.'
And Cyril whisper'd: 'Take me with you too.
Then laughing, 'What, if these weird seizures come
Upon you in those lands, and no one near
To point you out the shadow from the truth!
Take me: I'll serve you better in a strait;
I grate on rusty hinges here: ' but 'No!'
Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not; we ourself
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
In iron gauntlets: break the council up.'

But when the council broke, I rose and past
Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town;
Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out;
Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed
In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees:
What were those fancies? wherefore break her troth?
Proud look'd the lips: but while I meditated
A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild woods together; and a Voice
Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month
Became her golden shield, I stole from court
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread
To hear my father's clamor at our backs
With Ho! from some bay-window shake the night;
But all was quiet: from the bastion'd walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,
And flying reach'd the frontier: then we crost.
To a livelier land; and so by tilth and grange,
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,
We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers,
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and small his voice,
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines;
A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king: three days he feasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
And my betroth'd. 'You do us, Prince,' he said,
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
'All honor. We remember love ourself
In our sweet youth: there did a compact pass
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,
With my full heart: but there were widows here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;
They fed her theories, in and out of place
Maintaining that with equal husbandry
The woman were an equal to the man.
They harp'd on this; with this our banquets rang;
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk;
Nothing but this; my very ears were hot
To hear them: knowledge, so my daughter held,
Was all in all: they had but been, she thought,
As children; they must lose the child, assume
The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
But all she is and does is awful; odes
About this losing of the child; and rhymes
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason: these the women sang;
And they that know such things—I sought but peace;  
No critic I—would call them masterpieces:  
They master'd me. At last she begg'd a boon,  
A certain summer-palace which I have  
Hard by your father's frontier: I said no,  
Yet being an easy man, gave it: and there,  
All wild to found an University  
For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more  
We know not,—only this: they see no men,  
Not even her brother Arac, nor the twins  
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her  
As on a kind of paragon; and I  
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed  
Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but since  
(And I confess with right) you think me bound  
In some sort, I can give you letters to her;  
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance  
Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king;

And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur  
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets  
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)  
Went forth again with both my friends. We rode  
Many a long league back to the North. At last  
From hills, that look'd across a land of hope,  
We dropt with evening on a rustic town  
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,  
Close at the boundary of the liberties;  
There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host  
To council, plied him with his richest wines,  
And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared  
As blank as death in marble; then exclaim'd,
THE PRINCESS:

Averring it was clear against all rules
For any man to go: but as his brain
Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he said,
'Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?
The king would bear him out;' and at the last —
The summer of the vine in all his veins —
'No doubt that we might make it worth his while.
She once had past that way; he heard her speak;
She scared him; life! he never saw the like;
She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave:
And he, he reverenced his liege-lady there;
He always made a point to post with mares;
His daughter and his housemaid were the boys:
The land, he understood, for miles about
Was till'd by women; all the swine were sows,
And all the dogs' —

But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,
Remembering how we three presented Maid,
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's court.
We sent mine host to purchase female gear;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laughter, holp
To lace us up, till each in maiden plumes
We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight, when the college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley: then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars;
And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow: further on we gain'd
A little street half garden and half house,
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
Of fountains spouted up and showering down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose;
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and Earth
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;
A plump-arm'd ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,
And who were tutors. 'Lady Blanche,' she said,
'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was prettiest,
Best-natured?' 'Lady Psyche.' 'Hers are we,'
One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East:

'Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils.'

This I seal'd:
The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes.
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
To float about a glimmering night, and watch
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight swell
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.
As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!

For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.
II.

At break of day the College Portress came:
She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold; and now when these were on,
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited. Out we paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch that sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Bettwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.
The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst;
And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne,
All beauty compass'd in a female form,
The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
Than our man's earth; such eyes were in her head,
And so much grace and power, breathing down
From over her arch'd brows, with every turn
Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,
And to her feet. She rose her height, and said:

'We give you welcome: not without redound
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,
And that full voice which circles round the grave,
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
What! are the ladies of your land so tall?'
'We of the court,' said Cyril. 'From the court,'
She answer'd, 'then ye know the Prince?' and he:
'The climax of his age! as tho' there were
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
He worships your ideal.' She replied:
'We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
This barren verbiage, current among men,
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
As arguing love of knowledge and of power;
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,
We dream not of him: when we set our hand
To this great work, we purposed with ourself
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
The tricks which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale.'

At those high words, we conscious of ourselves,
Perused the matting; then an officer
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:
Not for three years to correspond with home;
Not for three years to cross the liberties;
Not for three years to speak with any men;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We enter'd on the boards: and 'Now,' she cried,
'Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall!
Our statues!—not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope that built the pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
Convention, since to look on noble forms
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
That which is higher. O lift your natures up;
Embrace our aims; work out your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd:
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us; you may go:
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before;  
For they press in from all the provinces,  
And fill the hive.'

She spoke, and bowing waved
Dismissal: back again we crost the court
To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,
There sat along the forms, like morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaià slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame
That whisper'd 'Asses' ears' among the sedge,
'My sister.' 'Comely, too, by all that's fair,'
Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush!' and she began.

'This world was once a fluid haze of light,  
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,  
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast  
The planets: then the monster, then the man;  
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,  
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate;  
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here  
Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past;  
Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
As emblematic of a nobler age;  
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those  
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
How far from just; till warming with her theme
She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique

And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to chivalry;
When some respect, however slight, was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However, then commenced the dawn: a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
None lordlier than themselves but that which made
Woman and man. She had founded; they must build.
Here might they learn whatever men were taught:
Let them not fear: some said their heads were less:
Some men's were small; not they the least of men;
For often fineness compensated size:
Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew
With using; thence the man's, if more was more;
He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field: some ages had been lost;
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious names
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth
The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so
With woman: and in arts of government
Elizabeth and others; arts of war
The peasant Joan and others; arts of grace
Sappho and others vied with any man:
And, last not least, she who had left her place,
And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last
She rose upon a wind of prophecy
Dilating on the future: 'everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss
Of science and the secrets of the mind;
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more;
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us: the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she
Began to address us, and was moving on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried,
'My brother! ' 'Well, my sister.' 'O,' she said,
'What do you here? and in this dress? and these?
Why, who are these? a wolf within the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!'
'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd. 'Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription on the gate,
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?'
'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who could think
The softer Adams of your Academe,
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such
As chanted on the blanching bones of men?'
'But you will find it otherwise,' she said.
'You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools! my vow
Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,
That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,
The Princess!' 'Well then, Psyche, take my life,
And nail me like a weasel on a grange
For warning; bury me beside the gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones:
Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of womankind?
'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche.'

I struck in:

'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,
And thus (what other way was left?) I came.'

'O Sir, O Prince, I have no country, none;
If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
Who am not mine, say, live: the thunderbolt
Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it falls.'

'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscription there,
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,
If more and acted on, what follows? war;
Your own work marr'd: for this your Academe,
Whichever side be victor, in the halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
With all fair theories only made to gild
A stormless summer.' 'Let the Princess judge
Of that,' she said: 'farewell, Sir — and to you.
I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I rejoin'd,
'The fifth in line from that old Florian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
(The gaunt old baron with his beetle brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he bestrode my grandsire, when he fell,
And all else fled? we point to it, and we say,
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
But branches current yet in kindred veins.'
'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added; 'she
With whom I sang about the morning hills,
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,
And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
You were that Psyche, but what are you now?'
'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for whom
I would be that forever which I seem,
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,
And glean your scatter'd sapience.'

Then once more,

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,
'That on her bridal morn before she past
From all her old companions, when the king
Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;
That were there any of our people there
In want or peril, there was one to hear
And help them? look! for such are these and I.'
'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd, 'to whom,
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the well?
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood
Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.
O by the bright head of my little niece,
You were that Psyche, and what are you now?
‘You are that Psyche,’ Cyril said again,
‘The mother of the sweetest little maid
That ever crow’d for kisses.’
‘Out upon it!’
She answer’d, ‘peace! and why should I not play
The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
Him you call great: he for the common weal,
The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good need were,
Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom
The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from right to save
A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear
My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet —
Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise
You perish) as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,
These women were too barbarous, would not learn;
They fled, who might have shamed us: promise, all.’

What could we else, we promised each; and she,
Like some wild creature newly-caged, commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:
‘I knew you at the first; tho’ you have grown
You scarce have alter’d: I am sad and glad
To see you, Florian. I give thee to death,
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well?’
With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,
And far allusion, till the gracious dews
Began to glisten and to fall: and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,
'I brought a message here from Lady Blanche.'
Back started she, and turning round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's color), with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah — Melissa — you!
You heard us?' and Melissa, 'O pardon me!
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish;
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to death.'
'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we two
Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine;
But yet your mother's jealous temperament —
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation-ruin, and I lose
My honor, these their lives.' 'Ah, fear me not,'
Replied Melissa; 'no — I would not tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'
'Be it so,' the other, 'that we still may lead
The new light up, and culminate in peace,
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'
Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest man
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls
Of Lebanese cedar; nor should you
(Tho', Madam, you should answer, we would ask)
Less welcome find among us, if you came
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
Myself for something more.' He said not what,
But 'Thanks,' she answer'd, 'go: we have been too long
Together: keep your hoods about the face;
They do so that affect abstraction here.
Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold
Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well.' 340

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,
And held her round the knees against his waist,
And blew the swollen cheek of a trumpeter,
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child
Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd;
And thus our conference closed.

And then we strolled
For half the day thro' stately theatres
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard
The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
The circle rounded under female hands
With flawless demonstration: follow'd then
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thunderous epic lilted out
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
Sparkle forever: then we dipt in all
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame, the rock,
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and known;
Till like three horses that have broken fence,
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke:
‘Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we.’
‘They hunt old trails,’ said Cyril, ‘very well;
But when did woman ever yet invent?’
‘Ungracious!’ answer’d Florian; ‘have you learnt
No more from Psyche’s lecture, you that talk’d
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad?’
‘O trash,’ he said, ‘but with a kernel in it!
Should I not call her wise who made me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,
And round these halls a thousand baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O
With me, Sir, enter’d in the bigger boy,
The head of all the golden-shafted firm,
The long-limb’d lad that had a Psyche too;
He cleft me thro’ the stomacher; and now
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
I have no sorcerer’s malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
Flatter myself that always everywhere
I know the substance when I see it. Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
Shall those three castles patch my tatter’d coat?
For dear are those three castles to my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double worth;
And much I might have said, but that my zone
Unmann’d me: then the Doctors! O to hear
The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,
To break my chain, to shake my mane: but thou,
Modulate me, soul of mincing mimicry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;
Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent brows;
Abate the stride which speaks of man, and loose
A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out of time
Will wonder why they came: but hark the bell
For dinner, let us go!

And in we stream'd
Among the columns, pacing staid and still
By twos and threes, till all from end to end
With beauties every shade of brown and fair
In colors gayer than the morning mist,
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.
How might a man not wander from his wits
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own.
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,
The second-sight of some Astræan age,
Sat compass'd with professors: they, the while,
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro:
A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms
Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gardens: there
One walk'd reciting by herself, and one
In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothed a petted peacock down with that:
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some hid and sought
In the orange thickets: others tost a ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back again
With laughter: others lay about the lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May
Was passing: what was learning unto them?
They wish'd to marry; they could rule a house;
Men hated learned women: but we three
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often came
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harm'd not: then day droopt; the chapel bells
Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt with those
Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
A blessing on her labors for the world.
"Cyril took the child,
And held her round the knees against his waist."
Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.
"Melissa shook her doubtful curls."

III.

Morn in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with care
Descended to the court that lay three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble, approach'd
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears;
'And fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet you may!
My mother knows:' and when I ask'd her 'how,'
'My fault,' she wept, 'my fault! and yet not mine;
Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me!
My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have been the Head,
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;
And so it was agreed when first they came;
But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
And she the left, or not or seldom used;
Hers more than half the students, all the love.
And so last night she fell to canvass you:
Her countrywomen! she did not envy her.
"Who ever saw such wild barbarians?
Girls?—more like men!" and at these words the snake,
My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast;
And O, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd:
"O marvellously modest maiden, you!
Men! girls, like men! why, if they had been men
You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus
For wholesale comment." Pardon, I am shamed
That I must needs repeat for my excuse
What looks so little graceful: "men" (for still
My mother went revolving on the word)
"And so they are,—very like men indeed—
And with that woman closeted for hours!"
Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
"Why—these—are—men:" I shudder'd: "and you
know it."
"O ask me nothing," I said: "And she knows too, And she conceals it." So my mother clutch'd
The truth at once, but with no word from me;
And now thus early risen she goes to inform
The Princess: Lady Psyche will be crush'd;
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly:
But heal me with your pardon ere you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?'
Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush again; than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven,'
He added, 'lest some classic Angel speak
In scorn of us, "They mounted, Ganymedes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn."
But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough:' and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,' Florian ask'd,
'How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.'
'O long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these two
Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her!) she was wedded to a fool;
And still she rail'd against the state of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.
But when your sister came she won the heart
Of Ida: they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inosculated;
Consonant chords that shiver to one note;
One mind in all things: yet my mother still
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,
And angled with them for her pupil's love:
She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:
But I must go; I dare not tarry,' and light,
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian, gazing after her:
'An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
If I could love, why this were she: how pretty
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish!
Not like your Princess cram'd with erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My princess, O my princess! true she errs,
But in her own grand way; being herself
Three times more noble than three score of men,
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a crown
To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar; but — ah, she — whene'er she moves
The Samian Herè rises, and she speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning sun.'

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the northern front,
And leaning there on those balusters, high
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
That blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
Cyril, and yawning 'O hard task,' he cried:
'No fighting shadows here! I forced a way
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.
Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
A league of street in summer solstice down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her there
At point to move, and settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I pray'd
Concealment: she demanded who we were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,
And our three lives. True—we had limed ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm
The woman's cause. "Not more than now," she said,
"So puddled as it is with favoritism."
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:
Her answer was, "Leave me to deal with that."
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand years,
I recommenced: "Decide not ere you pause.
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third—the authentic foundress you.
I offer boldly: we will seat you highest:
Wink at our advent; help my prince to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise you
Some palace in our land, where you shall reign
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
And your great name flow on with broadening time
For ever."
Well, she balanced this a little,
And told me she would answer us to-day,
Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more I gain’d.

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
'That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her? we should find the land
Worth seeing; and the river made a fall
Out yonder:’ then she pointed on to where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro’ all
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summon’d to the porch we went. She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll’d
And paw’d about her sandal. I drew near;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
The Princess Ida seem’d a hollow show,
Her gay-furr’d cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe;
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said:
'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;
Unwillingly we spake.' 'No— not to her,'
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you say.'
'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassadresses
From him to me? we give you, being strange,
A license: speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him — could have wish'd —
'Our king expects — was there no precontract?
There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but long'd
To follow: surely, if your Highness keep
Your purport, you will shock him even to death,
Or baser courses, children of despair.'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not read — no books?
Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exercise?
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;
As girls were once, as we ourself have been:
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with them:
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
Being other — since we learnt our meaning here,
To lift the woman's fallen divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man.'

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile,
'And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,
At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
She kept her state, and left the drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms.'

'Alas, your Highness breathes full East,' I said,
'On that which leans to you! I know the Prince,
I prize his truth: and then how vast a work
To assail this gray pre-eminence of man!
You grant me license; might I use it? think;
Ere half be done perchance your life may fail;
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
May only make that footprint upon sand
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss
Meanwhile what every woman counts her due,
Love, children, happiness?'

And she exclaim'd,
'Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!
What! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?
You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd to thus:
Yet will we say for children, would they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them well:
But children die; and let me tell you, girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die;
They with the sun and moon renew their light
For ever, blessing those that look on them.
Children — that men may pluck them from our hearts,
Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves —
O — children — there is nothing upon earth
More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err: nor would we work for fame;
Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,
Who learns the one PRO SRO whence after-hands
May move the world, tho' she herself effect
But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants living each a thousand years,
That we might see our own work out, and watch
The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
If that strange poet-princess with her grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting my thoughts:

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you;
We are used to that: for women, up till this
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,
Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker proof —
O if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches than by single act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'
She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breath of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
'As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be.' 'Dare we dream of that,' I ask'd,
'Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,
That practice betters?' 'How,' she cried, 'you love
The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
THE PRINCESS:

Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:
For there are schools for all.' 'And yet,' I said,
'Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of that,'
She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not: in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we came,
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
Would tend upon you. To your question now,
Which touches on the workman and his work.
Let there be light and there was light: 'tis so:
For was, and is, and will be, are but is;
And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light: but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make
One act a phantom of succession: thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time;
But in the shadow will we work, and mould
The woman to the fuller day.'

She spake
With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
On flowery levels underneath the crag,
Full of all beauty. 'O how sweet,' I said
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask),
'To linger here with one that loved us!' 'Yea,
She answer'd, 'or with fair philosophies
That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields

Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw
The soft white vapor streak the crowned towers
Built to the Sun:' then, turning to her maids,
'Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;
Lay out the viands.' At the word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair Corinna's triumph; here she stood,
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
The woman-conqueror; woman-conquer'd there
The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,
And all the men mourn'd at his side: but we
Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril kept
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
In the dark crag: and then we turn'd, we wound
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the sun
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.
The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.
IV.

'There sinks the nebulous star we call the sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,'
Said Ida; 'let us down and rest;' and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and cleft,
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where below
No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood
Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank
Our elbows; on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us; lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music:' and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp and sang.

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.'
She ended with such passion that the tear
She sang of shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain
Answer'd the Princess, 'If indeed there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool
And so pace by: but thine are fancies hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old bygones be,
While down the streams that float us each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their time
Toward that great year of equal mights and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
Found golden: let the past be past: let be
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough kex break
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown goat
Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-tree split
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear
A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poising eagle, burns
Above the unrisen morrow: ' then to me,
' Know you no song of your own land,' she said,
' Not such as moans about the retrospect,
But deals with the other distance and the hues
Of promise; not a death's-head at the wine?'

Then I remember'd one myself had made,
What time I watch'd the swallow winging south
From mine own land, part made long since, and part
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far
As I could ape their treble did I sing.
'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying south,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

'O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown;
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

'O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien lips,
And knew not what they meant; for still my voice
Rang false: but smiling, 'Not for thee,' she said,
'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil; marsh-divers, rather, maid,  
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake  
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass: and this  
A mere love-poem! O for such, my friend,  
We hold them slight; they mind us of the time  
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,  
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
And dress the victim to the offering up,  
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
Poor soul! I had a maid of honor once;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,  
A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.  
So they blaspheme the muse! But great is song
A MEDLEY.

Used to great ends: ourself have often tried
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd
The passion of the prophetess; for song
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
Of spirit, than to junketing and love.
Love is it? Would this same mock-love, and this
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered
Whole in ourselves and owed to none. Enough!
But now to leaven play with profit, you,
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,
That gives the manners of your countrywomen?

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with eyes
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had wrought,
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook;
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;
'Forbear,' the Princess cried; 'Forbear, Sir,' I;
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love,
I smote him on the breast; he started up;
There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;
Melissa clamor'd, 'Flee the death;' 'To horse!'
Said Ida; 'home! to horse!' and fled, as flies
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,
When some one batters at the dovecote doors,
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,
In the pavilion: there like parting hopes
I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoof,
And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clang'd on the bridge; and then another shriek,
'The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head!
For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd
In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom:
There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch
Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,
No more; but woman-vested as I was
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught her; then
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew
My burthen from mine arms; they cried, 'She lives:'
They bore her back into the tent: but I,
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
Nor found my friends; but push'd alone on foot
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
Of open-work in which the hunter rued
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.
A little space was left between the horns,  
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,  
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,  
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,  
Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,  
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd  
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step

Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,  
Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this were she,'  
But it was Florian. 'Hist, O hist!' he said,  
'They seek us; out so late is out of rules.  
Moreover, "Seize the strangers" is the cry.

How came you here?' I told him: 'I,' said he,  
'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.

Arriving all confused among the rest  
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath  
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each  
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of all,  
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.  
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first  
Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:  
And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:  
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,  
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent  
For Psyche, but she was not there; she call'd  
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;  
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;  
And I slipt out: but whither will you now?  
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled:
What, if together? that were not so well.
Would rather we had never come! I dread
His wildness, and the chances of the dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him more than I
That struck him: this is proper to the clown,
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
That which he says he loves: for Cyril, howe'er
He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song
Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips
Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament;
But as the water-lily starts and slides
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk near
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, 'Names:'
He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I began
To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind
And double in and out the boles, and race
By all the fountains: fleet I was of foot:
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes; behind
I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess where she sat
High in the hall: above her droop'd a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,  
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side  
Bow’d toward her, combing out her long black hair  
Damp from the river; and close behind her stood  
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,  
Huge women blowzed with health, and wind, and rain,  
And labor. Each was like a Druid rock;  
Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
Cleft from the main, and wail’d about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove  
An advent to the throne: and therebeside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
The lily-shining child; and on the left,  
Bow’d on her palms and folded up from wrong,  
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,  
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect  
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old days:  
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips:  
I led you then to all the Castalies;  
I fed you with the milk of every Muse;  
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me  
Your second mother: those were gracious times.  
Then came your new friend: you began to change —  
I saw it and grieved — to slacken and to cool;  
Till taken with her seeming openness  
You turn’d your warmer currents all to her,  
To me you froze: this was my meed for all.  
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for something great,
In which I might your fellow-worker be,
When time should serve; and thus a noble scheme
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown;
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
We took this palace; but even from the first
You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.
What student came but that you planed her path
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean;
Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:
Then came these wolves: they knew her: they endured,
Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
And me none told: not less to an eye like mine,
A lidless watcher of the public weal,
Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd
To meet a cold "We thank you, we shall hear of it
From Lady Psyche: you had gone to her,
She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
Were all miscounted as malignant haste
To push my rival out of place and power.
But public use required she should be known;
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
I came to tell you; found that you had gone,
Ridden to the hills, she likewise: now, I thought,
That surely she will speak; if not, then I:
Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
According to the coarseness of their kind,
For thus I hear; and known at las (my work)
And full of cowardice and guilty shame—
I grant in her some sense of shame—she flies;
And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
I, that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
And talent, I—you know it—I will not boast:
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
For every gust of chance, and men will say
We did not know the real light, but chased
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread.'

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly, 'Good:
Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
For this lost lamb' (she pointed to the child),
'Our mind is changed; we take it to ourself.'

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
'The plan was mine. I built the nest,' she said,
'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and stoop'd to updrag
Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
A Niobeān daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and while
We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise.
Regarding, while she read, till over brow
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick
Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens;
For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard
In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she crush'd
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
'Read,' and I read — two letters — one her sire's:

'Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way
We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,
We, conscious of what temper you are built,
Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
Into his father's hand, who has this night,
You lying close upon his territory,
Slip't round and in the dark invested you,
And here he keeps me hostage for his son.'

The second was my father's running thus:
'You have our son: touch not a hair of his head:
Render him up unscathed: give him your hand:
Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear
You hold the woman is the better man;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against their lords
Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve
That we this night should pluck your palace down;
And we will do it, unless you send us back
Our son, on the instant, whole.'

So far I read;

And then stood up and spoke impetuously:

'O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
But led by golden wishes, and a hope
The child of regal compact, did I break
Your precinct; not a scorners of your sex
But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be: hear me, for I bear,
Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life
Less mine than yours: my nurse would tell me of you;
I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd to me
From all high places, lived in all fair lights,
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south
And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn
With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
The leader wild-swan in among the stars
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm light
The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,
Because I would have reach'd you, had you been
Sphered up with Cassiopeia, or the enthroned
Persephone in Hades, now at length,
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,
A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
Not in this frequence can I lend full tongue,
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
On you, their centre: let me say but this,
That many a famous man and woman, town
And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
The dwarfs of presage: tho' when known, there grew
Another kind of beauty in detail
Made them worth knowing; but in you I found
My boyish dream involved and dazzled down
And master'd, while that after-beauty makes
Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
Within me, that except you slay me here,
According to your bitter statute-book,
I cannot cease to follow you, as they say
The seal does music; who desire you more
Than growing boys their manhood; dying lips,
With many thousand matters left to do,
The breath of life; O more than poor men wealth,
Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine — but
half
Without you; with you, whole; and of those halves
You worthiest; and howe'er you block and bar
Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms
To follow up the worthiest till he die:
Yet that I came not all unauthorized
Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd
Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,
As waits a river level with the dam
Ready to burst and flood the world with foam:
And so she would have spoken, but there rose
A hubbub in the court of half the maids
Gather'd together: from the illumined hall
Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press
Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
And gold and golden heads; they to and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,
THE PRINCESS:

All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
Some crying there was an army in the land,
And some that men were in the very walls,
And some they cared not; till a clamor grew
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded: high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so
To the open window moved, remaining there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and call'd
Across the tumult, and the tumult fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks: I dare
All these male thunderbolts: what is it ye fear?
Peace! there are those to avenge us and they come:
If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die: yet I blame you not so much for fear;
Six thousand years of fear have made you that
From which I would redeem you: but for those
That stir this hubbub—you and you—I know
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow morn
We hold a great convention: then shall they
That love their voices more than duty, learn
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,
Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.'

She, ending, waved her hands; thereat the crowd
Muttering, dissolved: then with a smile, that look'd
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said:

'You have done well and like a gentleman,
And like a prince: you have our thanks for all:
And you look well too in your woman's dress:
Well have you done and like a gentleman.
You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks:
Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood—
Then men had said — but now — What hinders me
To take such bloody vengeance on you both? —
Yet since our father — Wasps in our good hive,
You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
Barbarians, grosser than your native bears.—
O would I had his sceptre for one hour!
You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd
Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us—
I wed with thee! I bound by precontract
Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the gold
That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,
And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us:
I trample on your offers and on you:
Begone: we will not look upon you more.
Here, push them out at gates.'
In wrath she spake.
Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd
Their motion: twice. I sought to plead my cause,
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
The weight of destiny: so from her face
They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the court,
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;
The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract and the tumult and the kings
Were shadows; and the long fantastic night
With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;
Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one
To whom the touch of all mischance but came

As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
Set into sunrise; then we moved away.
INTERLUDE.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands:
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-possess'd,
She struck such warbling fury thro' the words;
And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime —
Like one that wishes at a dance to change
The music — clapt her hands and cried for war,
Or some grand fight to kill and make an end:
And he that next inherited the tale,
Half turning to the broken statue, said,
'Sir Ralph has got your colors; if I prove
Your knight, and fight your battle, what for me?'
It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb
Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. 'Fight,' she said,
'And make us all we would be, great and good.'
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
Arranged the favor, and assumed the Prince.
"A char'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead."

V.

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,
We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And ‘Stand, who goes?’ ‘Two from the palace,’ I.
‘The second two: they wait,’ he said, ‘pass on;
His Highness wakes:’ and one, that clash’d in arms,
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
From blazon’d lions o’er the imperial tent
Whispers of war.
Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd to hear,
As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
A lisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear; and then
A strangled titter, out of which there brake
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings
Began to wag their baldness up and down,
The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering teeth,
The huge bush-bearded barons heaved and blew,
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded squire.

At length my sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,
Panted from weary sides, 'King, you are free!
We did but keep you surety for our son,
If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou,
That tends her bristled grunters in the sludge;'
For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,
More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel.
Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
A whisper'd jest to some one near him, 'Look,
He has been among his shadows.' 'Satan take
The old women and their shadows!' — thus the King
Roar'd — 'make yourself a man to fight with men.
Go: Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
Away we stole, and transient in a trice
From what was left of faded woman-slough
To sheathing splendors and the golden scale
Of harness, issued in the sun, that now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us,
A little shy at first, but by and by
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon
Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
Had come on Psyche weeping: 'then we fell
Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
But will not speak nor stir.'

He show'd a tent
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,
And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,
All her fair length upon the ground she lay;
And at her head a follower of the camp,
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come,' he whisper'd to her,
'Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not thus.
What have you done but right? you could not slay
Me, nor your prince: look up: be comforted:
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,
When fallen in darker ways.' And likewise I:
'Be comforted: have I not lost her too,
In whose least act abides the nameless charm
That none has else for me?' She heard, she moved,
She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she sat,
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth
As those that mourn half-shrouded over death
In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said, 'my friend—
Parted from her — betray'd her cause and mine—
Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your faith?
O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!'
THE PRINCESS:

To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet I pray
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child!'
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!
For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
And either she will die from want of care,
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
The child is hers — for every little fault,
The child is hers; and they will beat my girl
Remembering her mother: O my flower!
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.
Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
The horror of the shame among them all:
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and day,
Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child;
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her:
Ah! what might that man not deserve of me
Who gave me back my child?' 'Be comforted,'
Said Cyril, 'you shall have it; ' but again
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so,
Like tender things that being caught feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp, and inward raced the scouts
With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.
We left her by the woman, and without
Found the gray kings at parle: and 'Look you,' cried
My father, 'that our compact be fulfill'd:
You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and man:
She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him:
But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;
She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me:
'We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
With our strange girl; and yet they say that still
You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large:
How say you, war or not?'

'Not war, if possible,
O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of war,
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
The smouldering homestead, and the household flower
Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—
A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
Three times a monster: now she lightens scorn
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this knot
By gentleness than war. I want her love.
What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd
Your cities into shards with catapults?
She would not love;—or brought her chain'd, a slave,
The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord?
Not ever would she love, but brooding turn
The book of scorn, till all my flitting chance
Were caught within the record of her wrongs
And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire, than this
I would the old God of war himself were dead,
Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck.
Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,
Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake
My father, 'Tut, you know them not, the girls.
Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think

That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!
Man is the hunter; woman is his game:
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;
They love us for it, and we ride them down.
Wheedling and siding with them! Out! for shame!
Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
As he that does the thing they dare not do,
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes
With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in
Among the women, snares them by the score
Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with death
He reddens what he kisses: thus I won
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
Worth winning; but this firebrand—gentleness
To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
Were wisdom to it.'

'Yea, but, Sire,' I cried,
'Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No:
What dares not Ida do that she should prize
The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
The yesternight, and storming in extremes
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,
No, not the soldier's; yet I hold her, king,
True woman: but you clash them all in one,
That have as many differences as we.
The violet varies from the lily as far
As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one
The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
Glorifying clown and satyr, whence they need
More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?
They worth it? truer to the law within?
Severer in the logic of a life?
Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
Of earth and heaven? and she of whom you speak,
My mother, looks as whole as some serene
Creation minted in the golden moods
THE PRINCESS:

Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak the white
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,

Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs
As dues of Nature. To our point: not war;
Lest I lose all.'

'Nay, nay, you spake but sense,'
Said Gama. 'We remember love ourself
In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.

You talk almost like Ida: *she* can talk;
And there is something in it as you say:
But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it.—
He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
I would he had our daughter: for the rest,
Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,
Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —
We would do much to gratify your Prince —
We pardon it; and for your ingress here
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
You did but come as goblins in the night,
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,
Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:
But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice
As ours with Ida: something may be done —
I know not what — and ours shall see us friends.
You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan
Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd
White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd
An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring
In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode;
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air
On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than peace
Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
With clamor: for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum
Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;
And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
Such thews of men: the midmost and the highest
Was Arac: all about his motion clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, wash’d with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
War-music, felt the blind wild-beast of force,
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
Stir in me as to strike: then took the king
His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them all:
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
Had labor’d down within his ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll’d himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words:

‘Our land invaded, ’sdeath! and he himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war:
And, ’sdeath! myself, what care I, war or no?
But then this question of your troth remains:
And there ’s a downright honest meaning in her;
She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet
She ask’d but space and fair-play for her scheme;
She prest and prest it on me— I myself,
What know I of these things? but, life and soul!
I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs;
I say she flies too high, ’sdeath! what of that?
I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong;
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
And, right or wrong, I care not: this is all,
I stand upon her side: she made me swear it—
’Sdeath!— and with solemn rites by candle-light—
Swear by St. something— I forget her name—
Her that talk’d down the fifty wisest men;
She was a princess too; and so I swore.
Come, this is all; she will not: waive your claim:
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's will.'

I lagg'd in answer, loth to render up
My precontract, and loth by brainless war
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat, 'Like to like!
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart.'
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow!
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point
Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
'Decide it here: why not? we are three to three.'

Then spake the third, 'But three to three? no more?
No more, and in our noble sister's cause?
More, more, for honor! every captain waits
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow
Of these or those, the question settled die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild wreath of air,
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if ye will.
It needs must be for honor if at all:
Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,
And if we win, we fail; she would not keep
Her compact.' 'Sdeath! but we will send to her,'
Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she should
Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',
And you shall have her answer by the word.'
‘Boys!’ shriek’d the old king, but vainlier than a hen
To her false daughters in the pool; for none
Regarded; neither seem’d there more to say:
Back rode we to my father’s camp, and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people’s life: three times he went:
The first, he blew and blew, but none appear’d:
He batter’d at the doors; none came: the next,
An awful voice within had warn’d him thence:
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough
Came sallying thro’ the gates, and caught his hair,
And so belabor’d him on rib and cheek
They made him wild: not less one glance he caught
Thro’ open doors of Ida station’d there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Tho’ compass’d by two armies and the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right and left
Suck’d from the dark heart of the long hills roll
The torrents, dash’d to the vale: and yet her will
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash’d
His iron palms together with a cry;
Himself would tilt it out among the lads:
But overborne by all his bearded iords
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur;
And many a bold knight started up in heat,
And sware to combat for my claim till death.
All on this side the palace ran the field
Flat to the garden-wall; and likewise here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,

And great bronze valves, emboss'd with Tomyris
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd: so here upon the flat
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
With message and defiance, went and came;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and rolling words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read:

'O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation when we heard
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet;
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge;
Of living hearts that crack within the fire
Where smoulder their dead despots; and of those,—Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion: and I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smoother men; the old leaven leaven'd all;
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
No woman named: therefore I set my face
Against all men, and lived but for mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them;
I stored it full of rich memorial;
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,
And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace,
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what
Of insolence and love, some pretext held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond— the striplings!— for their sport!—
I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame these?
Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd
In honor—what! I would not aught of false—
Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide
What end soever: fail you will not. Still,
Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;
His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you do,
Fight and fight well; strike and strike home. O dear
Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
The sole men we shall prize in the after-time,
Your very armor hallow'd, and your statues
Rear'd, sung to, when, this gadfly brush'd aside,
We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
And mould a generation strong to move  
With claim on claim from right to right, till she  
Whose name is yoked with children's, know herself;  
And Knowledge in our own land make her free,  
And, ever following those two crowned twins,  
Commerce and Conquest, shower the fiery grain  
Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
Between the Northern and the Southern morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest:  
'See that there be no traitors in your camp:  
We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust  
Since our arms fail'd — this Egypt-plague of men!  
Almost our maids were better at their homes,  
Than thus man-girdled here: indeed I think  
Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
Of one unworthy mother; which she left:  
She shall not have it back; the child shall grow  
To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
This morning; there the tender orphan hands  
Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence  
The wrath I nursed against the world: farewell.'

I ceased; he said, 'Stubborn, but she may sit  
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms,  
And breed up warriors! See now, tho' yourself  
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
That swallow common sense, the spindling king,  
This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.  
When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,  
And topples down the scales; but this is fixt  
As are the roots of earth and base of all:  
Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
Man for the sword and for the needle she;
Man with the head and woman with the heart;
Man to command and woman to obey;
All else confusion. Look you! the gray mare
Is ill to live with, when her whimmy shrills
From tile to scullery, and her small goodman
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of hell
Mix with his hearth: but you—she’s yet a colt—
Take, break her; strongly groom’d and straitly curb’d
She might not rank with those detestable
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.
They say she’s comely; there’s the fairer chance:
I like her none the less for rating at her!
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
The bearing and the training of a child
Is woman’s wisdom.’

Thus the hard old king:
I took my leave, for it was nearly noon;
I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause, ‘take not his life;’
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,
And on the ‘Follow, follow, thou shalt win;’
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,
And how the strange betrothment was to end:
Then I remember’d that burnt sorcerer’s curse
That one should fight with shadows and should fall;
And like a flash the weird affection came:
King, camp and college turn’d to hollow shows;
I seem’d to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a dream;
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
A MEDLEY.

The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
We enter’d in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again; at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears
And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. Yet it seem’d a dream, I dream’d
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
Part sat like rocks; part reel’d but kept their seats;
Part roll’d on the earth and rose again and drew;
Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down
From those two bulks at Arac’s side, and down
From Arac’s arm, as from a giant’s flail,
The large blows rain’d, as here and everywhere
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,
And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft, and shield—
Shock’d, like an iron-clanging anvil bang’d
With hammers; till I thought, can this be he
From Gama’s dwarfish loins? if this be so,
The mother makes us most—and in my dream
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies’ eyes,
And highest, among the statues, statuelike,
Between a cymbal’d Miriam and a Jael,
With Psyche’s babe, was Ida watching us,
A single band of gold about her hair,
Like a Saint’s glory up in heaven; but she
No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—
Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,
Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drave
Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,
And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my dream
All that I would. But that large-moulded man,
His visage all agrin as at a wake,
Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for everything
Gave way before him: only Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own right eye,
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:
And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
With Psyche's color round his helmet, tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced,
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth
Flow'd from me; darkness closed me; and I fell.
Home they brought her warrior dead;
She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'
VI.

My dream had never died or lived again. As in some mystic middle state I lay; Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard: Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me, That all things grew more tragic and more strange; That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
'The Prince is slain.' My father heard and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm; there on the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: the seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the sun.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears; they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand;
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fallen themselves.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain;
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

'Our enemies have fallen, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.
'And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with a day
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three; but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led
A hundred maids in train across the park.
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on they came,
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest: by them went
The enamor'd air sighing, and on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of light
Slided, they moving under shade; but Blanche
At distance follow'd: so they came: anon
Thro' open field into the lists they wound
Timorously; and as the leader of the herd
That holds a stately fretwork to the sun,
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay; there stay'd;
Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, — and prest
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,
And happy warriors, and immortal names,
And said, 'You shall not lie in the tents but here,
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and served
With female hands and hospitality.'

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,
She past my way. Up started from my side
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,
Cold e'en to her, she sigh'd; and when she saw
The haggard father's face and reverend beard
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:
'He saved my life; my brother slew him for it.'
No more; at which the king in bitter scorn
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,
And held them up: she saw them, and a day
Rose from the distance on her memory,
When the good queen, her mother, shore the tress
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche:
And then once more she look'd at my pale face:
Till understanding all the foolish work
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
Her iron will was broken in her mind;
Her noble heart was molten in her breast;
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth; she laid
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently
'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives; he is not dead:
O let me have him with my brethren here
In our own palace: we will tend on him
Like one of these; if so, by any means,
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make
Our progress falter to the woman's goal.'

She said: but at the happy word 'he lives'
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.
So those two foes above my fallen life,
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt
Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother and began
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
Brook'd not, but clamoring out 'Mine—mine—not yours;
It is not yours, but mine: give me the child!'
Ceased all on tremble: piteous was the cry:
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,
And turn'd each face her way: wan was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
The laces toward her babe; but she nor cared
Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood
Erect and silent, striking with her glance
The mother, me, the child; but he that lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
Trail'd himself up on one knee: then he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it seem'd,
Or self-involved; but when she learnt his face,
Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said:

'O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness
That with your long locks play the lion's mane!
But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,
We vanquish'd, you the victor of your will.
What would you more? give her the child! remain
Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:
Win you the hearts of women; and beware
Lest, where you seek the common love of these,
The common hate with the revolving wheel
Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis
Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire,
And tread you out for ever: but howsoe'er
Fixt in yourself, never in your own arms
To hold your own, deny not hers to her,
Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep
One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,
Or own one port of sense not flint to prayer,
Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,
Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault
The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,
Give me it; I will give it her.'

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd
Dry flame, she listening; after sank and sank
And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
Full on the child; she took it: 'Pretty bud!
Lily of the vale! half-open'd bell of the woods!
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
Of traitorous friend and broken system made
No purple in the distance, mystery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell!

These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part; and yet how fain was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think
I might be something to thee, when I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast
In the dead prime: but may thy mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to me!
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom—here she kiss'd it: then—
'All good go with thee! take it, Sir,' and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks;
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,
And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it; after that
Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

'We two were friends: I go to mine own land
For ever: find some other: as for me
I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet speak to me,
Say one soft word and let me part forgiven.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
Then Arac: 'Ida—'sdeath! you blame the man;
You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!
I am your warrior; I and mine have fought
Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she weeps:
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

'I've heard that there is iron in the blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? not one?
Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,
Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.'
THE PRINCESS:

She said you had a heart — I heard her say it —
"Our Ida has a heart" — just ere she died —
"But see that some one with authority
be near her still;" and I — I sought for one —
All people said she had authority —
The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not one word;
No! tho' your father sues: see how you stand
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maim'd,
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
For your wild whim: and was it then for this,
Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
Speak to her, I say: is this not she of whom,
When first she came, all flush'd you said to me,
Now had you got a friend of your own age,
Now could you share your thought; now should men see
Two women faster welded in one love
Than pairs of wedlock? she you walk'd with, she
You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows what; and now
A word, but one; one little kindly word,
Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,
You shame your mother's judgment too. Not one?
You will not? well — no heart have you, or such
As fancies like the vermin in a nut
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness.'
So said the small king moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force
By many a varying influence and so long.
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor wept:  
Her head a little bent; and on her mouth  
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon  
In a still water: then brake out my sire,  
Lifting his grim head from my wounds: 'O you,  
Woman, whom we thought woman even now,  
And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,  
Because he might have wish'd it — but we see  
The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,  
And think that you might mix his draught with death, 
When your skies change again: the rougher hand  
Is safer: on to the tents: take up the Prince.'  
He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to attend  
A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her broke  
A genial warmth and light once more, and shone  
Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.  

'Come hither,  
O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace me, come,  
Quick while I melt; make reconcilement sure  
With one that cannot keep her mind an hour:  
Come to the hollow heart they slander so!  
Kiss and be friends, like children being chid!  
I seem no more: I want forgiveness too:  
I should have had to do with none but maids,  
That have no links with men. Ah false but dear, 
Dear traitor, too much loved, why? — why? — Yet see,  
Before these kings we embrace you yet once more  
With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
And trust, not love, you less.  

And now, O Sire,  
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,  
Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,  
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it;  
Taunt me no more: yourself and yours shall have  
Free adit; we will scatter all our maids
THE PRINCESS:

Till happier times each to her proper hearth:
What use to keep them here — now? grant my prayer.
Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king:
Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
Which kills me with myself, and drags me down
From my fixt height to mob me up with all
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
Poor weakling even as they are.'

Passionate tears
Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril said:
'Your brother, Lady, — Florian, — ask for him
Of your great Head — for he is wounded too —
That you may tend upon him with the Prince.'
'Ay, so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,
'Our laws are broken; let him enter too.'
Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. 'Ay, so,' she said,
'I stagger in the stream; I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:
We break our laws with ease, but let it be.'
'Ay, so?' said Blanche: 'Amazed am I to hear
Your Highness; but your Highness breaks with ease
The law your Highness did not make: 't was I.
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
And block'd them out; but these men came to woo
Your Highness — verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye;
But Ida, with a voice that, like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn:

'Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all,
Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
Shall enter, if he will! Let our girls flit,
Till the storm die! but had you stood by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.
We brook no further insult, but are gone.'

She turn'd; the very nape of her white neck
Was rosed with indignation: but the Prince
Her brother came; the king her father charm'd
Her wounded soul with words: nor did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare
Straight to the doors: to them the doors gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron heels:
And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there
Rested: but great the crush was, and each base,
To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers: at the further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats
Close by her, like supporters on a shield,
Bow-back'd with fear: but in the centre stood
The common men with rolling eyes; amazed
They glared upon the women, and aghast
The women stared at these, all silent, save
When armor clash'd or jingled, while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
A flying splendor out of brass and steel,
That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame;
And now and then an echo started up,
And shuddering fled from room to room, and died
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance:
And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro'
The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due
To languid limbs and sickness; left me in it;
And others otherwhere they laid; and all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times; but some were left of those
Held sagerst, and the great lords out and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside the wall,
Walk’d at their will, and everything was changed.
Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
    Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
    I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
    Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
    Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:
    I strove against the stream and all in vain:
    Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
    Ask me no more.
VII.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital;
At first with all confusion: by and by
Sweet order lived again with other laws:
A kindlier influence reign'd; and everywhere
Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick: the maidens came, they talk'd,
They sang, they read: till she not fair began
To gather light, and she that was became
Her former beauty treble; and to and fro
With books, with flowers, with angel offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious act,
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.
Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke; but oft
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
Darkening her female field: void was her use,
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud

Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendor from the sand,
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
Expunge the world: so fared she gazing there;
So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank
And waste it seem'd and vain; till down she came,
And found fair peace once more among the sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by morn the lark
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:
And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown the bowers
Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven,
Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay
Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand
That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with her oft
Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but left
Her child among us, willing she should keep
Court-favor: here and there the small bright head,
A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man
With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves
To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw
The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange that soon
He rose up whole, and those fair charities
Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd that hearts
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn
That after that dark night among the fields
She needs must wed him for her own good name;
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored;
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd
To incense the Head once more; till on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche: on her foot she hung
A moment, and she heard, at which her face
A little flush'd, and she past on; but each
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.
Nor only these: Love in the sacred halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
Nor did mine own now reconciled; nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat:
Then came a change; for sometimes I would catch
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek,
‘You are not Ida;’ clasp it once again,
And call her Ida, tho’ I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold, which seem’d a truth;
And still she fear’d that I should lose my mind,
And often she believed that I should die:
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks
Throbb’d thunder thro’ the palace floors, or call’d
On flying Time from all their silver tongues—
And out of memories of her kindlier days,
And sidelong glances at my father’s grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in heart—
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter’d dream,
And often feeling of the helpless hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—
From all a closer interest flourish’d up,
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather’d color day by day.
Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death
For weakness: it was evening: silent light
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought
Two grand designs; for on one side arose
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cram'd
The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,
A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,
The fierce triumvirs; and before them paused
Hortensia, pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:
They did but look like hollow shows; nor more
Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
And rounder seem'd: I moved; I sigh'd: a touch
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand:
Then all for languor and self-pity ran
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly:

'If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself;
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.'
I could no more, but lay like one in trance,
That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd; she paused;
She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a cry;
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death;
And I believed that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame; and all
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
Than in her mould that other, when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all with love,
And down the streaming crystal dropt; and she
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out
For worship without end; nor end of mine,
Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided forth,
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
Fill'd thro' and thro' with love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me, held
A volume of the Poets of her land:
There to herself, all in low tones, she read:

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

'Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

'Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.
'Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

'Now folds the lily all her sweetness up, And slips into the bosom of the lake: So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page; she found a small Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read:

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height: What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang), In height and cold, the splendor of the hills? But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine, To sit a star upon the sparkling spire; And come, for Love is of the valley, come, For Love is of the valley, come thou down And find him; by the happy threshold, he, Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I lay
Listening, then look'd. Pale was the perfect face;
The bosom with long sighs labor'd; and meek
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,
And the voice trembled and the hand. She said
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
That all her labor was but as a block
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to one
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights
Against the sons of men and barbarous laws.
She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her
That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power
In knowledge: something wild within her breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.  
And she had nursed me there from week to week:  
Much had she learnt in little time.  In part  
It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl —  
'Ah fool, and made myself a queen of farce!  
When comes another such? never, I think,  
Till the sun drop, dead, from the signs.'  

Her voice  

Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,  
And her great heart thro' all the faultful past  
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;  
Till notice of a change in the dark world  
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,  
That early woke to feed her little ones,  
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:  
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.  

'Blame not thyself too much,' I said, 'nor blame  
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;  
These were the rough ways of the world till now.  
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know  
The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink  
Togeth'er, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free:  
For she that out of Lethe scales with man  
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man  
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,  
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands —  
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
How shall men grow? but work no more alone!  
Our place is much: as far as in us lies  
We two will serve them both in aiding her —  
Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up but drag her down —  
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
Within her—let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world:
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the to-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other even as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men;
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm;
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be!' Sighing she spoke: 'I fear
They will not.'
'Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfills
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke, Life.'

And again sighing she spoke: 'A dream That once was mine! what woman taught you this?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than I know, Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world, I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives A drowning life, besotted in sweet self, Or pines in sad experience worse than death, Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime: Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one Not learned, save in gracious household ways, Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants, No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt In angel instincts, breathing Paradise, Interpreter between the Gods and men, Who look'd all native to her place, and yet On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved, And girdled her with music. Happy he With such a mother! faith in womankind Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall He shall not blind his soul with clay.'

'But I,'

Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike—
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words:
This mother is your model. I have heard
Of your strange doubts: they well might be; I seem A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince;
You cannot love me.'

'Nay, but thee,' I said, 'From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
Thee woman thro’ the crust of iron moods
That mask’d thee from men’s reverence up, and forced
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood: now,
Given back to life, to life indeed, thro’ thee,
Indeed I love: the new day comes, the light
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows: the change,
This truthful change in thee has kill’d it. Dear,
Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world:
Approach and fear not; breathe upon my brows;
In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,
I waste my heart in signs: let be. My bride,
My wife, my life! O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro’ those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee: come,
Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.’
CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
The random scheme as wildly as it rose.
The words are mostly mine; for when we ceased
There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
'I wish she had not yielded!' then to me,
'What if you drest it up poetically!'
So pray'd the men, the women; I gave assent:
Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven
Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?
The men required that I should give throughout
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
With which we banter'd little Lilia first;
The women—and perhaps they felt their power,
For something in the ballads which they sang,
Or in their silent influence as they sat,
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close—
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,
A gallant fight, a noble princess—why
Not make her true-heroic—true-sublime?
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
Betwixt the mockers and the realists;
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,
And yet to give the story as it rose,
I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
In our dispute: the sequel of the tale
Had touch'd her; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,
She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
‘You — tell us what we are’ — who might have told,
For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,
But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we climb'd
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw
The happy valleys, half in light, and half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace;
Gray halls alone among their massive groves;
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat;
The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the seas;
A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

‘Look there, a garden!’ said my college friend,
The Tory member's elder son, 'and there!
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
Some patient force to change them when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd—
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world—
In mock heroics stranger than our own;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;
Too comic for the solemn things they are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas!
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.'

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,
This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
No little lily-handed baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
Fair-hair’d and redder than a windy morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
That stood the nearest—now address’d to speech—
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
To follow: a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer
From slope to slope thro’ distant ferns, and rang
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout
More joyful than the city-roar that hails
Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times a year
To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream’d away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charm’d: we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man: the walls
Blacken’d about us, bats wheel’d, and owls whoop’d,
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
Thro’ all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we went.
"'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd, 'to whom,
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the well?'"
ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES.

Cf. (confer), compare.
Concl., conclusion.
Dawson, Mr. S. E. Dawson's Study of the Princess (2d ed., Montreal, 1884).
F. Q., Spenser's Faërie Queene.
Fol., following.
Id. (idem), the same.
In Mem., Tennyson's In Memoriam.
P. L., Milton's Paradise Lost.
P. R., "Paradise Regained.
Prol., prologue.
Wace, Mr. W. E. Wace's Alfred Tennyson, His Life and Works (Edinburgh, 1881).
Wb., Webster's Dictionary (revised quarto ed. of 1879).

The abbreviations of the names of Shakespeare's plays will be readily understood.
The line-numbers are those of the "Globe" edition.
NOTES.

"Not peace she look'd, the Head" (iv. 469).

INTRODUCTION.

The History of the Poem. — The Princess was first published in 1847, but has since undergone many changes. In the second edition, issued in 1848, the dedication to Henry Lushington¹ was added, and

¹ "In 1841 Mr. Lushington was enabled to gratify a long-cherished wish, by forming the acquaintance of Mr. Alfred Tennyson, whose family became afterwards connected..."
the text was slightly revised. In the third (1850) the six intercalary songs were inserted, many additions and alterations were made in the body of the poem, and the Prologue and Conclusion were partially rewritten. The most important change in the fourth edition (1851) was the introduction of the passages relating to the "weird seizures" of the Prince. In the fifth edition (1853) lines 35-49 of the Prologue ("O miracle of women," etc.) first appeared, and the text was settled in the form which it has since preserved.

In the notes below we have intended to give all the readings of the first and second editions that vary from the third edition, as well as the changes from the latter that we have detected in the fourth and fifth.

Critical Comments on the Poem.—The Princess was at first received with little favor by the critics. "It was thought scarce worthy of the author. The abundant grace, descriptive beauty, and human sentiment were evident; but the medley was thought somewhat incongruous, and the main web of the tale too weak to sustain the embroidery raised upon it" (Wace). Even so late as 1855, when the poem had received its last touches, the Edinburgh Review said of it: "The subject of the Princess, so far from being great, in a poetical point of view, is partly even of transitory interest. . . . This piece, though full of meanings of abiding value, is ostensibly a brilliant serio-comic jeu d'esprit upon the noise about 'women's rights,' which even now ceases to make itself heard anywhere but in the refuge of exploded European absurdities beyond the Atlantic. A carefully elaborated construction, a 'wholeness,' arising out of distinct and well-contrasted parts, which is another condition of a great poem, would have been worse than thrown away on such a subject. . . . In reading the poem, the mind is palled and wearied with wasted splendor and beauty."

On the other hand, there were a few eminent critics who were prompt to recognize the true merit of the poem. In this country, Professor James Hadley, of Yale College, wrote a long and appreciative review of it for the New Englander (May, 1849), which has been reprinted in a revised form, in his Essays, Philological and Critical. The following remarks upon the versification will interest the general reader no less than the student:

"Mr. Tennyson has evidently taken extraordinary pains with the construction of his verse. He seems to have felt that a single measure running through a long poem must of necessity become monotonous and wearisome, unless great care can be taken to diversify its rhythm. . . . Certain it is that in allusion of means and in variety of effects, the blank verse of The Princess surpasses all its author's previous attempts in the same kind of measure; nor would it be easy to find its equal in these respects since the time of Milton. To the versification of the

by marriage with his own. The dedication of The Princess to Henry Lushington commemorates the cordial intimacy which followed. To the end of his life there was scarcely any companion whose society was so attractive to Mr. Lushington. . . . It will, I hope, not be a violation of confidence to quote Mr. Tennyson's frequent remark, that of all the critics with whom he had discussed his own poems, Mr. Lushington was the most suggestive" (Memoir of Henry Lushington, by G. S. Venables, 1855, p. 26).
Paradise Lost, the greatest exemplar of versification in the English language, Mr. Tennyson, it is clear, has given no little attention; and from this poem, and from the older English poetry in general, he has adopted many rhythmical and metrical expedients — liberties or licenses, as they are sometimes called — which the too finical taste of later times, and the undue passion for uniformity, have generally discarded. Among these we mention the so-called elision, — more truly, the blending of a final vowel with the vowel initial of a following word into a single syllable, or at least what passes for such in the rhythm. Thus we have,—

'That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam.'

'The violet varies from the lily as far
As oak from elm.'

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow and light
Upon her lattice.'

"So, too, where the second word begins with a weak consonant easily elided in pronunciation:

'Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine.'

'You must not slay him; he risked his life for ours.'

"The same fusion occurs often in a single word, and not only in such forms as lovelier, sapience, etc., where all our poets have employed it, but in many instances where the last two centuries have renounced its use. Thus in the following lines the words, seeing, crying, highest, go for monosyllables in the rhythm:

'And Cyril, seeing it, pushed against the prince.'

'Some crying there was an army in the land.'

'And highest among the statues, statue-like.'

"The combinations in the, of the, etc., are often treated as filling but one rhythmical place:

'Better have died, and spilt our bones in the flood.'

'Poets whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world.'

'When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up.'

"In many instances a short syllable is neglected, — that is, does not count as forming by itself a place in the metre. In the following quotation, the words, enemy, general, soluble, are treated as dissyllables:

'Now she lightens scorn
At the enemy of her plan, but then would hate
The general foe. More soluble is the knot.'

"Especially does this occur when a short final syllable is followed by a word beginning with a vowel:

'A palace in our own land, where you shall reign.'

'A tent of satin elaborately wrought.'
“We could distinguish other cases, in which a reader unfamiliar with the earlier English rhythms might be offended by supernumerary syllables; but to enter upon long details would perhaps be more tedious than profitable. In none of these instances, if we may judge of Mr. Tennyson’s pronunciation from his way of writing, would he omit a syllable in reading; nor does the rhythm of the verse (let metrical doctors like Mr. Guest say what they please about it) require of us the use of any such expedient.  

“Many passages also occur of irregular rhythm in which, as in the Paradise Lost, the sound is suited to the sense to a degree not excelled by Milton or Virgil. Such are —

‘Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
In the dead hush the papers that she held  
Rustle;’

‘And in the blast and bray of the long horn  
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
The banner.’

‘The dark, when clocks  
Throbbed thunder thro’ the palace floors.’

‘Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate.’

‘While the great organ almost burst his pipes  
Groaning for power, and rolling through the courts  
A long melodious thunder to the sound  
Of solemn psalms and silver litanies.’

‘And up we came to where the river sloped  
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks  
A breadth of thunder. O’er it shook the woods,  
And danced the color.’

‘And the flood drew, yet I caught her, then  
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left  
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,  
Strove to buffet to land in vain.’

‘Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees.’

“‘Who,’ asks Kingsley, ‘after three such lines, will talk of English as a harsh and clumsy language, and seek in the effeminate and monotonous Italian for expressive melody of sound? Who cannot hear in them the rapid rippling of the water, the stately calmness of the wood-dove’s note, and in the repetition of short syllables and soft liquids in the last line, the

“murmuring of innumerable bees?”

1 On this point we believe Professor Hadley is right. To our ear the verse is marred rather than improved by pronouncing the two syllables as one. It is curious, by the by, that, while making this free use of light “extra” syllables in his measure, Tennyson should uniformly write ev’n, fall’n, stroll’n, and the like, when the words are metrically equivalent to monosyllables. We have not followed him in this; there being really no more reason for it than for printing sal’n, pal’t, general, ev’n’y, etc. above.

We may add that many of the changes in the later editions appear to be made solely for the sake of getting rid of the “extra” syllable. The poet seems to have decided that he had used it too often.
“It will be observed at once, on reading these and similar passages aloud, that much of their power depends upon alliteration. This, which in the old Saxon poetry stood for modern rhyme, adds a charming variety to the versification of The Princess. It abounds throughout all Tennyson’s writings,—for his mind is steeped in the older literature of England,—but especially in this poem, e. g.—

‘With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.’

‘And died
Of fright in far apartments.’

‘Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.’

‘The lark
Shot up and shrilled in flickering gyres.’

“It is useless to multiply instances. They pervade the whole poem.”

Charles Kingsley, in Fraser’s Magazine (Sept. 1850) said of The Princess: “In this work Mr. Tennyson shows himself more than ever the poet of the day. In it, more than ever, the old is interpenetrated with the new; the domestic and scientific with the ideal and sentimental. He dares, in every page, to make use of modern words and notions from which the mingled clumsiness and archaism of his compeers shrinks, as unpoetical. Though his stage is an ideal fairy land, yet he has reached the ideal by the only true method—by bringing the Middle Age forward to the present one, and not by ignoring the present to fall back on a cold and galvanized Mediævalism; and thus he makes the ‘Medley’ a mirror of the nineteenth century, possessed of its own new art and science, its own new temptations and aspirations, and yet grounded on, and continually striving to reproduce, the forms and experiences of all past time. The idea, too, of The Princess is an essentially modern one. In every age women have been tempted, by the possession of superior beauty, intellect, or strength of will, to deny their own womanhood, and attempt to stand alone as men, whether on the ground of political intrigue, ascetic saintship, or philosophic pride. Cleopatra and St. Hedwiga, Madame de Staël and the Princess, are merely different manifestations of the same self-willed and proud longing of woman to unsex herself, and realize, single and self-sustained, some distorted and partial notion of her own as to what the ‘angelic life’ should be. Cleopatra acted out the pagan ideal of an angel; St. Hedwiga, the mediæval one; Madame de Staël hers, with the peculiar notions of her time as to what ‘spiritual’ might mean; and in The Princess Mr. Tennyson has embodied the ideal of that nobler, wider, purer, yet equally fallacious, because equally unnatural analogue, which we may now meet too often up and down England. He shows us the woman, when she takes her stand on the false masculine ground of intellect, working out her own moral punishment, by destroying in herself the tender heart of flesh: not even her vast purposes of philanthropy can preserve her, for they are built up, not on the womanhood which God has given her, but on her own self-will; they change, they fall, they become inconsistent, even
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as she does herself, till at last she loses all feminine sensibility; scornfully and stupidly she rejects and misunderstands the heart of man; and then, falling from pride to sternness, from sternness to sheer inhumanity, she punishes sisterly love as a crime, robs the mother of her child, and becomes all but a vengeful fury, with all the peculiar faults of woman, and none of the peculiar excellences of man. . . . How Mr. Tennyson can have attained the prodigal fulness of thought and imagery which distinguishes this poem, and especially the last canto, without his style ever becoming overloaded, seldom even confused, is perhaps one of the greatest marvels of the whole production. The songs themselves, which have been inserted between the cantos in the last edition, seem, perfect as they are, wasted and smothered among the surrounding fertility,—till we discover that they stand there, not merely for the sake of their intrinsic beauty, but serve to call the reader’s mind, at every pause in the tale of the princess’s folly, to that very healthy ideal of womanhood which she has spurned.

“At the end of the first canto, fresh from the description of the female college, with its professoresses, and hostleresses, and other Utopian monsters, we turn the page, and —

‘As through the land at eve we went,
And plucked the ripened ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kissed again with tears:
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love,
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lay the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kissed again with tears.’

“Between the next two cantos intervenes the well-known cradle-song, perhaps the best of all; and at the next interval is the equally well-known bugle-song, the idea of which is that of twin-labor and twin-fame in a pair of lovers.

“In the next, the memory of wife and child inspirits the soldier in the field; in the next, the sight of the fallen hero’s child opens the sluices of his widow’s tears; and in the last, and perhaps the most beautiful of all, the poet has succeeded, in the new edition, in superadding a new form of emotion to a canto in which he seemed to have exhausted every resource of pathos which his subject allowed; and prepares us for the triumph of that art by which he makes us, after all, love the heroine whom he at first taught us to hate and despise, till we see that her naughtiness is, after all, one that must be kissed and not whipped out of her, and look on smiling while she repents, with Prince Harry of old, ‘not in sackcloth and ashes, but in new silk and old sack.’”

Mr. Dawson remarks that the following extract from Rev. F. W. Robertson “is perhaps the most justly appreciative criticism of Tennyson which has ever appeared.” It is from a lecture upon English Poetry, delivered to the workingmen of Brighton in 1852:
"I ranked Tennyson in the first order,¹ because with great mastery over his material, — words, great plastic power of versification, and a rare gift of harmony, — he has also vision or insight; and because, feeling intensely the great questions of the day, — not as a mere man of letters, but as a man, — he is to some extent the interpreter of his age, not only in its mysticism, which I tried to show you is the necessary reaction from the rigid formulas of science and the earthliness of an age of work, into the vagueness which belongs to infinitude, but also in his poetic and almost prophetic solution of some of its great questions.

"Thus in his Princess, which he calls a 'medley,' the former half of which is sportive, and the plot almost too fantastic and impossible for criticism, while the latter portion seems too serious for a story so light and flimsy, he has with exquisite taste disposed of the question — which has its burlesque and comic as well as its tragic side — of woman's present place and future destinies. And if any one wishes to see this subject treated with a masterly and delicate hand, in protest alike against the theories which would make her as the man, which she could only be by becoming masculine, not manly, and those which would have her to remain the toy, or the slave, or the slight thing of sentimental and frivolous accomplishment which education has hitherto aimed at making her, I would recommend him to study the few last pages of The Princess, where the poet brings the question back, as a poet should, to nature; develops the ideal out of the actual woman, and reads out of what she is, on the one hand, what her Creator intended her to be, and on the other, what she never can or ought to be."

Mr. Dawson, in the introduction to his excellent Study (p. 35), says well that "Psyche’s baby is the conquering heroine of the epic." He adds: "Ridiculous in the lecture-room, the babe, in the poem, as in the songs, is made the central point upon which the plot turns; for the unconscious child is the concrete embodiment of Nature herself, clearing away all merely intellectual theories by her silent influence. Ida feels the power of the child. The postscript of the despatch sent to her brother in the height of her indignation, contains, as is fitting, the kernel of the matter. She says:

'I took it for an hour in mine own bed
This morning; there the tender orphan hands
Felt at my heart, and seemed to charm from thence
The wrath I nursed against the world.'

"Rash princess! that fatal hour dashed 'the hopes of half the world.' Alas for these hopes! The cause, the great cause, totters to the fall when the Head confesses —

'I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast
In the dead prime.'

Whenever the plot thickens the babe appears. It is with Ida on her judgment-seat. In the topmost height of the storm the wall of the 'lost

¹ The lecturer had divided poets into "two orders; those in whom the vision and the faculty divine of imagination exists, and those in whom the plastic power of shaping predominates, — the men of poetic inspiration, and the men of poetic taste."
lamb at her feet' reduces her eloquent anger into incoherence. She carries it when she sings her song of triumph. When she goes to tend her wounded brothers on the battle-field she carries it. Through it, and for it, Cyril pleads his successful suit, and wins it for the mother. For its sake the mother is pardoned. O fatal babe! more fatal to the hopes of woman than the doomful horse to the proud towers of Ilion; for through thee the walls of pride are breached, and all the conquering affections flock in."

While reading the poem with a class of girls many years ago, we remarked that the babe might almost be called its heroine. We are gratified to find our opinion confirmed by Mr. Dawson's; and more so to find it endorsed by the author, in the interesting letter to Mr. Dawson printed in the preface to the 2d edition of the Study. Tennyson there says:

"I may tell you that the songs were not an after-thought. Before the first edition came out I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs in between the separate divisions of the poem: again, I thought, the poem will explain itself; but the public did not see that the child, as you say, was the heroine of the piece, and at last I conquered my laziness, and inserted them. You would be still more certain that the child was the heroine, if, instead of the first song as it now stands,

'As thro' the land at eve we went,'

I had printed the first song which I wrote,—'The Losing of the Child.' The child is sitting on the bank of a river, and playing with flowers: a flood comes down—a dam has been broken thro'—the child is borne down by the flood—the whole village distracted; after a time the flood has subsided—the child is thrown safe and sound again upon the bank, and all the women are in raptures. I quite forget the words of the ballad, but I think I may have it somewhere."

[See also some admirable comments on The Princess in Mr. E. C. Stedman's Victorian Poets, p. 164 fo]. "Other works of our poet," he says, "are greater, but none is so fascinating as this romantic tale,—English throughout, yet combining the England of Cœur-de-Lion with that of Victoria in one bewitching picture."

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**PROLOGUE.**

5. *Their Institute.* That is, a "Mechanics Institute" for the education of the laboring classes.

9. *Five others,* etc. A line added in the 3d ed.

12. *Their names.* That is, their scientific names.

20. *Laborious orient ivory,* etc. Referring to those marvels of Chinese ivory-cutting consisting of carved balls within balls. The line is a striking example of the correspondence of sound and sense, the words seeming to roll round like the "sphere in sphere."

21. *Crease.* Dagger (Malay kris); omitted in some dictionaries.

31. *Who laid about them,* etc. A deal of old feudal life put into one line
35-49. O miracle... chronicle. This fine passage was added in the fifth edition of the poem.

38. Broke. The poet uses broke and brake interchangeably. Cf. 43 just below. See also vi. 254, 264, etc.

59. One rear'd a font, etc. The description of the experiments in hydraulics, electricity, etc., is exceedingly graphic.

63. Steep-up. A Shakespearian compound. Cf. Sonnets, 7. 5: “And having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill;” and Passionate Pilgrim, 121: “Her stand she takes upon a steep-up hill.” Tennyson has the word again in Queen Mary, iii. 4: “The steep-up track of the true faith.”

69. Whom. The 1st American ed. misprints “from.”

70. Dislink'd. As Dawson notes, the poet is fond of these compounds in dis-, the prefix being often un-, as in Shakespeare. We have dis-yoked, disprinced, dishelmed, etc. below. Dislink occurs again in Merlin and Vivien: “But she dislink'd herself at once,” etc.

80. Went hand in hand with science. The early eds. have “With science hand in hand went.”

Otherwhere. Cf. vi. 357 below; also Holy Grail: “However they may crown him otherwhere.” Shakespeare has the word several times; as in C. of E. ii. 1. 30, 104, Hen. VIII. ii. 2. 60, and R. and J. i. 1. 104. See also Spenser, F. Q. ii. 12. 45: “And otherwhere the snowy substaunce sprent with vermell,” etc.

87. Ambrosial aisles. Cf. “the ambrosial gloom” in iv. 6 below.

92. Lighter than a fire. An expressive figure. Some one has said that the “idea” of Gothic architecture is “weight annihilated,” while that of the Greek is “weight properly supported.”

93. Gave. Gave a view of, commanded. Cf. gave upon (the French donner sur), i. 226 below.

97. And lady... there was. Inserted in the 3d ed.

111. He had climb'd, etc. That is, in getting over or through the college walls and gates, in nocturnal escapades.

113. Breathed. So printed (and correctly, according to Tennyson's rule), in the early eds., but “breath’d” in all the later ones. Of course it is from breathe (= exercise), not from breath.

125. Patting... Beside him. Inserted in the 3d ed.

128. Convention. Conventionality; as in ii. 72 below. The word is rare in this sense. The Imp. Dict. cites Lord Coleridge: “An open condemnation of worldly conventions.”

131-138. Ah, were I... curls. For these eight lines the early eds. have only the following:

“O, were I some great Princess, I would build
Far off from men a college of my own,
And I would teach them all things: you should see.”

141. Prudes for proctors, etc. For alliteration in Tennyson, see p. 145 above. The author of Tennysoniana (p. 154), says, strangely enough, that the poet uses it “sparingly.”

144. Emperor-moths. A handsome species (Saturnia pavonia), common in England.

1 By the “early eds.” we mean the 1st and 2d, unless otherwise stated.
176-179. *We seven*, etc. The early eds. read: “We seven took one tutor. Never man,” etc.
190-194. *She remember’d*, etc. The early eds. have:

“.. I remember that:
A pleasant game,’ she said; ‘I liked it more
Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
But these—what kind of tales do men tell men,
I wonder, by themselves.’”

197-208. *The rest... solemn!* The early eds. read thus:

“‘The rest would follow; so we toss the ball:
What kind of tales? Why, such as served to kill
Time by the fire in winter.’ ‘Kill him now!
Tell one,’ she said: ‘kill him in summer, too.’
And ‘tell one,’ cried the solemn maiden aunt.
‘Why not a summer’s as a winter’s tale?
A tale for summer as befits the time;
And something it should be to suit the place,
Grave, moral, solemn, like the mouldering walls
About us.’”

211. *Ghostly*. The first four eds. have “April.”
214. *Turn’d to me*, etc. In the early eds. the remainder of the Prologue reads thus:

“turn’d to me: ‘Well—as you will—
Just as you will,’ she said; ‘be, if you will,
Yourself your hero.’ ‘Look, then,’ added he,
‘Since Lilia would be princess, that you stoop
No lower than a prince.’ To which I said,
‘Take care then that my tale be follow’d out
By all the lieges in my royal vein:
But one that really suited time and place
Were such a medley, we should have him back
Who told the Winter’s Tale to do it for us:
A Gothic ruin, and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies’ rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And there with shrieks and strange experiments,
For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all,
The nineteenth century gambols on the grass.
No matter; we will say whatever comes:
Here are we seven: if each man takes his turn
We make a sevenfold story:’ then began.”

222. *Seven and yet one*, etc. A line added in the 5th ed.

I.

2. *Of temper*, etc. This line is not in the early eds.
5-21. *There lived*, etc. This passage, like all the others referring to the “weird seizures,” was added in the fifth ed. In 20 the original reading was “call’d it catalepsy.”

We are inclined to agree with Dawson that “these additions seem not only unnecessary and uncalled for, but are actually injurious to the unity
of the work.” He adds: “They confuse the simple conception of his character, and graft on to his personality the foreign and somewhat derogatory idea of catalepsy; for in that light does the court doctor regard them. The poet must have had some definite object in inserting them. Can it be that they are to indicate the weakness and incompleteness of the poet side of the Prince’s character until he has found rest in his ideal? Then only can he say:

‘My doubts are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows: the change,
This truthful change, in thee has killed it.’

The dreamy Prince, haunted by doubts, and living in shadowland, by the healing influence of a happy love, wakes up to the purpose and dignity of life. Such a change is perhaps not very uncommon. Unless a man be endowed with a strong animal nature, or be dominated by some selfish passion such as ambition or avarice, life is very apt to seem purposeless and not worth the trouble of living. For such an unhealthy state of mind a worthy love is the sole remedy. Possibly some such meaning may have been in the mind of the author; but still we must resent the least imputation of catalepsy as inartistic and unnecessary.”

23. Half-canoniz’d, etc. The early eds. read: “And nearly canoniz’d by all she knew.”

26. He cared, etc. This line is not in the early eds.

27. Pedant’s. Pedagogue’s. Cf. Shakespeare, L. L. L. iii. 1. 179: “A domineering pedant o’er the boy;” T. N. iii. 2. 80: “a pedant that keeps a school i’ the church,” etc.

33. Proxy-wedded, etc. Marriage by proxy was common in the Middle Ages. For another instance in poetry—an historical one—cf. Longfellow’s Belfry of Burges:

“I beheld proud Maximilian, kneeling humbly on the ground;
I beheld the gentle Mary hunting with her hawk and hound;
And her lighted bridal chamber, where a duke slept with the queen,
And the armed guard around them, and the sword unsheathed between.”

The author’s note on the passage says: “Marie de Valois, Duchess of Burgundy, was left by the death of her father, Charles-le-Téméraire, at the age of twenty, the richest heiress of Europe. She came to Bruges, as Countess of Flanders, in 1477, and in the same year was married by proxy to the Archduke Maximilian. According to the custom of the time, the Duke of Bavaria, Maximilian’s substitute, slept with the princess. They were both in complete dress, separated by a naked sword, and attended by four armed guards.”

Bacon, in his Henry VII., tells of the proxy marriage of another Maximilian, King of the Romans, with Anne, the heiress of Brittany, in 1480:

“The king having thus upheld the reputation of Maximilian, advised him now to press on his marriage with Britain to a conclusion, which Maximilian accordingly did; and so far forth prevailed, both with the young lady and with the principal persons about her, as the marriage was consummated by proxy, with a ceremony at that time in those parts new. For she was not only publicly contracted, but stated, as a bride,
and solemnly bedded; and after she was laid, there came in Maximilian’s ambassador, with letters of procuration, and in the presence of sundry noble personages, men and women, put his leg, stript naked to the knee, between the espousal sheets; to the end, that the ceremony might be thought to amount to a consummation and actual knowledge.”

In the present instance, as Ida afterwards urged (v. 388), the marriage was “invalid,” since her “will sealed not the bond.” According to both canon and civil law, consent was the only basis of marriage; and it was necessary, moreover, that the parties should have arrived at years of discretion. There were different opinions as to this age, but it was never assumed to be as early as “eight years.”

According to some writers, the “bootsless calf” ceremony was common in England; but they neither quote authorities nor cite instances, and, as Mr. Dawson remarks, “the statement is doubtful.”

36. Youths. The reading of the early eds. is “knights.”
44. Therewithal. Therewith; as in Shakespeare, T. G. of V. iv. 4, 90.

“Well, give her that ring, and therewithal
This letter,” etc.

55. And almost, etc. The early eds. read:

“My shadow, my half-self, for still we moved
Together, kin as horse’s eye and ear.”

62. Sware. Tennyson uses both sware and swore. Cf. prol. 157, v. 285, 359, etc.
65. Cook’d his spleen. Cf. the figurative use of the Latin coquere in Plautus, Livy, Cicero, etc.
80. And Cyril whisper’d. The early eds. have “Then whisper’d Cyril.” Of course they do not contain the next three lines. In 84 they have “Trust” for Take; in 86, “Replied the king” and “I myself;” and in 87, “these” for her.
91. Pluck’d. A word used often by Tennyson, though by no means so often as by Shakespeare, with whom it seems to be a special favorite.
96. A wind arose, etc. Wace compares Shelley, Prometheus Unbound, ii. 1:

“A wind arose among the pines; it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
Were heard; ‘Oh follow, follow, follow me!’”

Dawson remarks that the passage “must have, consciously or unconsciously, dwelt in Tennyson’s memory when writing these lines;” but the poet, in the letter to Dawson elsewhere quoted, says: “I was walking in the New Forest. A wind did arise and —

‘Shake the songs the whispers and the shrieks
Of the wild wood together.'

The wind, I believe, was a west wind; but, because I wished the Prince to go south, I turned the wind to the south, and the wind said, ‘Follow.’ I believe the resemblance which you note is just a chance one. Shelley’s lines are not familiar to me, tho’, of course, if they occur in the Prometheus, I must have read them.
"I could multiply instances, but I will not bore you, and far indeed am I from asserting that books, as well as nature, are not, and ought not to be, suggestive to the poet. I am sure that I myself, and many others, find a peculiar charm in those passages of such great masters as Virgil or Milton where they adopt the creation of a by-gone poet, and re-clothe it, more or less, according to their fancy. But there is, I fear, a prosaic set growing up among us, editors of booklets, book-worms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination, who impute themselves to the poet, and so believe that he, too, has no imagination, but is for ever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate. They will not allow one to say 'Ring the bells,' without finding that we have taken it from Sir P. Sidney, — or even to use such a simple expression as the ocean 'roars,' without finding out the precise verse in Homer or Horace from which we have plagiarized it (fact!).

"I have known an old fish-wife, who had lost two sons at sea, clench her fist at the advancing tide on a stormy day, and cry out, 'Ay! roar, do! how I hates to see thee show thy white teeth!' Now, if I had adopted her exclamation and put it into the mouth of some old woman in one of my poems, I daresay the critics would have thought it original enough, but would most likely have advised me to go to nature for my old woman and not to my own imagination; and indeed it is a strong figure.

"Here is another little anecdote about suggestion. When I was about twenty or twenty-one I went on a tour to the Pyrenees. Lying among those mountains before a waterfall that comes down one thousand or twelve hundred feet, I sketched it (according to my custom then) in these words:

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn.

When I printed this, a critic informed me that 'lawn' was the material used in theatres to imitate a waterfall, and graciously added 'Mr. T. should not go to the boards of a theatre but to nature herself for his suggestions.' And I had gone to nature herself.

"I think it is a moot point whether — if I had known how that effect was produced on the stage — I should have ventured to publish the line."

100. The silver sickle. The new moon.
103-5. Cat-footed . . . night. These three lines are not in the early eds. The next two read thus in the first two eds.:

"Down from the bastion'd walls we dropt by night,
And flying reach'd the frontier: then we crost," etc.

The third edition (1850) has:

"Down from the bastion'd wall, suspense by night,
Like threaded spiders from a balk, we dropt,
And flying reach'd," etc.

Here suspense is a Latinism (= suspended); as in Milton, P. L. ii. 418:
"His looks suspense, awaiting who appear'd;" Id. vii. 99: "suspense in heaven," etc.
109. *Tilth and grange.* Tilled land and farm-house. The early eds. have “town and thorp,” with “tilth” for *vines* in the next line. For *tilth* in this sense, Dawson compares *P. L. xi. 430:* “a field, Part arable and tilth.” Our poet uses it again in *Enoch Arden,* 676: “Or wither’d holt, or tilth or pasturage.”

110. *Blowing bosks of wilderness.* “Uncultivated thickets blooming with wild flowers” (Dawson). Cf. Hakluyt, *Voyages:* “a groue or boske of wood on the other side.” Shakespeare has *bosky* in *Temp. iv. 1. 81* and 2 *Hen. IV. v. 1. 2* (where the early eds. have *busky,* another old form of the word); as Milton has in *Comus,* 313: “every bosky bourn.” Tennyson uses *bosage* in *Dream of Fair Women:* “Thridding the sombre boscage of the wood;” and *Sir John Oldcastle:* “Rather to thee, green bosage, work of God.”


113. *His voice.* The reading of 1st, 3d, and later eds. The 2d ed. has “in voice,”—probably a misprint.

114, 115. *But bland,* etc. These lines are not in the first two eds. The third has: “But bland the smile that pucker’d up his cheeks.” Wace quotes Shelley, *Prince Athanase,* part ii.:

> “but o’er the vision wan
> Of Athanase, a ruffling atmosphere
> Of dark emotion, a swift shadow ran,
> Like wind upon some forest-bosomed lake,
> Glassy and dark.”

116. *Without a star.* That is, wearing no military decorations or badges of knighthood,—having never earned any such.

121. *Ourself.* All the eds., including that of 1884, have “ourselves;” but as the poet has elsewhere changed the form to *ourself* (cf. v. 198 below: “We remember love ourself”), we have no doubt that he intended to do it here.

134. *To hear them.* The early eds. omit from this point down to 145, reading thus: “To hear them. Last, my daughter begg’d a boon,” etc. 138 and 139 were not added until the 5th ed.

*Knowledge, so my daughter said,* etc. Some have thought this — and the idea of the poem — borrowed from Johnson’s *Rasselas:* “The princess thought that of all sublunary things knowledge was the best: she desired, first, to learn all sciences, and then proposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that, by conversing with the old, and educating the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up for the next age models of prudence and patterns of piety.”

151. *We know not,* etc. The early eds. read: “We know not,—have not been; they see no men.”

163. *Our formal compact,* etc. The pointing and reading of the early eds. are as follows:
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"Our formal compact, yet not less all frets
But chafing me on fire to find my bride,
Set out once more with those two gallant boys;
Then pushing onward under sun and stars
Many a long league back to the North, we came,
When the first fern-owl whirl'd about the copse,
Upon a little town within a wood
Close at the boundary of the liberties:
There entering in an hostel call'd mine host," etc.

174. A long low sibilation. A prolonged "Whew!"

183–185. She once . . . grave. These three lines are not in the early eds., which go on thus: "For him, he reverenced," etc.


194. High tide. Cf. K. John, iii. i. 86: "Among the high tides in the calendar," etc.


The early eds. go on as follows:

"Which brought and clapt upon us, we tweezer'd out
What slender blossom lived on lip and cheek
Of manhood, gave mine host a costly bribe," etc.

198. Holp. The old past tense of help. Cf. Guinevere: "So Sir Lancelot holp," etc. We find the participle holpen in Lancelot and Elaine: "holpen by the rest."

201. Guerdon. Reward; as in 2 Hen. VI. i. 4. 49: "See you well guerdon'd for these good deserts;" and 3 Hen. VI. iii. 3. 191: "And am I guerdon'd at the last with shame?"

203. We follow'd, etc. The early eds. read:

"We rode till midnight when the college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley; and then we past an arch
Inscribed too dark for legible, and gain'd
A little street half garden and half house;
But could not hear each other speak for noise," etc.


213. Clocks and chimes, etc. What Dawson says of these and other feminine "fixings" of the place is well worth quoting: "The love of precise punctuality, so deeply implanted in the female breast, has full scope at last, as far as pretty clocks go. Everywhere are busts, and statues, and lutes, and such like bric-à-brac aids to knowledge—promiscuously strewed about, like blue china and crockery-ware bull-dogs in a modern drawing-room. Instinctively the male reader shrinks through this part of the poem, fearful of upsetting something. Very properly, also, the path of knowledge, thorny to the tyrannous male, is made comfortable there. The ladies drink in science

'Leaning deep in broidered down,"
as is befitting. Everything matches in that university. No common pine—the professorial desk is of satin-wood. Due attention is paid to
dress also; the doctors are violet-hooded, and the girls all uniformly in white — gregarious, though, even there as in the outer world. The Princess, her hair still damp after her plunge in the river, though sitting in indignant judgment upon the culprits, has yet a jewel on her forehead.” See Addenda, p. 187 below.

218. *Her song.* As Dawson notes, “it is only the male bird that sings;” but the poets generally follow the mythic ornithology which regards the nightingale as the transformed Philomela. See, however, *The Gardener’s Daughter*:

““The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho’ he were the bird of day.”

In the Recoll. of Arab. Nights, the bulbul (see on iv. 164 below) is made masculine, as in the Persian: “the bulbul as he sang.”

220. *Blazon’d,* etc. That is, like terrestrial and celestial globes.

222. *Entry.* The early reading is “archway.”

226. *Gave upon.* See on prol. 93 above; and cf. *Gareth and Lynette*:

“that gave upon a range
Of level pavement.”

233. *As when a field of corn,* etc. As has been noted, the figure is Homeric. See *Iliad,* ii. 147:

\( \omegaς \delta' \deltaε \kappaωψοθ \Zεφυρος \betaαθυ \lambda\nuον \epsilonλθων, \)
\( \lambda\betaρος \epsilonπαγιζων, \epsilonπι \tau' \etaμει \alphaσταχυ\varepsilonοσυν. \)

It aptly describes the “running” feminine hand.

237-241. *This I seal’d,* etc. The early eds. read:

“This I seal’d
(A Cupid reading) to be sent with dawn.”

239. *Uranian Venus.* As Dawson notes, the allusion is to Plato’s Symposium: “And am I not right in asserting that there are two goddesses? The elder one having no mother, who is called the heavenly Aphrodite — she is the daughter of Uranus; the younger who is the daughter of Zeus and Dione — her we call Common; and the Love, who is her fellow-worker, may and must also have the name of common, as the other love is called heavenly” (Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato,* vol. ii.).

244. *A full sea,* etc. The poet, in the letter to Mr. Dawson already referred to, says:

“There was a period in my life when, as an artist, Turner for instance, takes rough sketches of landskip, &c., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in nature. I never put these down, and many and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain, e. g.:

“A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight. *Suggestion:* The sea one night at Torquay, when Torquay was the most lovely sea-village in England, tho’ now a smoky town. The sky was covered with thin vapour, and the moon was behind it.”

245. *Just seen,* etc. The construction is peculiar, and we believe that some grammar-monger has protested against it.
NOTES.

SONG.

4. O we fell out, etc. This line and 13 below were added in the 5th ed.
6-9. And blessings, etc. These four lines were omitted in the 5th ed., but subsequently restored.

II.

8. That sang . . . with laurel. Haunted by birds and bees. Cf. prol. 87 above. Dawson remarks that this porch is suggestive of a passage in Ariosto, vi. 21:

"Small thickets with the scented laurel gay,
Cedar and orange, full of fruit and flower,
Myrtle and palm, with interwoven spray,
Pleached in mixed modes, all lovely form a bower,
And breaking with their shade the scorching ray,
Make a cool shelter from the noontide hour,
And nightingales among those branches wing
Their flight,—and safely amorous descants sing."

M. N. D. v. i. 8: "of imagination all compact," etc. For lucid, cf. Ænone, 174: "her lucid throat."
Boss'd. Embossed, sculptured in relief. Shakespeare (T. of S. ii. 1. 355) has "Turkey cushions boss'd with pearl."


"the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm."

19. Couch'd. The 1st American ed. misprints "crouch'd."

28. Redound. Rare as a noun. Richardson (Dict.) cites Codrington, Q. Curtius: "The redound of the hills and the rocks doubled every voice of theirs."

29. Of use and glory to yourselves. The early eds. have "Of fame and profit unto yourselves."

38. Ideal. *Perhaps = image; like idea in Richard III. iii. 7. 13: "Being the right idea of your father." Or worships your ideal may be = worships you as an ideal. In iv. 430 below, for My boyish dream the early eds. have "Mine old ideal."

39. We scarcely thought. The early eds. read: "We did not think;" and in 45 below: "We think not of him." They do not have lines 42-44.

48. Cast and fling. The ellipsis of away is peculiar. Cf. 103 below.

54. Perused. Often used by Shakespeare in the sense of scan, survey, examine; as in C. of E. i. 2. 13: "Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings;" Ham. iv. 7. 137: "Will not peruse the foils," etc.
65. *That taught the Sabine*, etc. The nymph Egeria, who was said to have given laws to Numa Pompilius, the second King of Rome. He was of Sabine birth. Cf. *The Palace of Art*:

> "Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
> To list a footfall, ere he saw
> The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear
> Of wisdom and of law;"

where the earlier reading of the third line was "the Tuscan king."


67. *The Carian Artemisia*. The queen of Caria who was an ally of Xerxes, and who fought so well at Salamis that the Persian monarch said his women had become men and his men women; not to be confounded with the other "Carian Artemisia" who built the Mausoleum.

68. *The Rhodope that built the pyramid*. A famous courtesan of Greece who was said to have built a pyramid near Memphis with a part of the fortune she had acquired. According to *Aelian*, she afterwards married Psammetichus, King of Egypt. Cf. 1 *Hen. VI.* i. 6. 22:

> "A statelier pyramid to her I'll rear
> Than Rhodope's of Memphis ever was."

69. *Clelia* was a Roman girl, who, having been given as a hostage to Porsenna, escaped by swimming the Tiber on horseback. *Cornelia* is of course the mother of the Gracchi, and *the Palmyrene* is Zenobia. *Agrippina*, the grand-daughter of Augustus, accompanied her husband Germanicus on his German campaigns.

71–80. *Dwell with these . . . be noble*. This passage is not in the early eds., which read: "Of Agrippina. Leave us: you may go."

72. *Convention*. See on prol. 128 above.


> "The mind becomes that which it contemplates;  
> And so Zonoras, by for ever seeing  
> Their bright creations, grew like wisest men."

84. *She spoke*, etc. The early eds. read: "So saying, she bow'd and waved," etc.:

97. *The dame*, etc. Tennyson follows Chaucer, who (*Wife of Bath's Tale*) makes Midas confide the secret of his asses' ears only to his wife:

> "That save his wyf ther wiste of it namo.  
> He loved hire moost, and triste hire also;  
> He preyde hire that to no creature  
> She sholde tellen of his disfigure.  
> ...  
> And sith she dorste telle it to no man,  
> Doun to a mareys faste by she ran.  
> Til she came there her herete was a-fyre,  
> And as a bitore bombleth in the myre  
> She leyde hir mouth unto the water doun;  
> 'Biwreye me nat, thou water, with thy soun,'  
> Quod she, 'to thee I telle it and namo—  
> Myn housbonde hath longe asses erys two.  
> Now is myn herte all hool, now it is ouete,  
> I myghte no lenger kepe it, out of doute.'"
Chaucer professes to follow Ovid, but, according to the Latin poet, it was Midas’s barber that could not keep the secret. Dawson cites also Pope, *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, 68:

"'Tis sung, when Midas' ears began to spring
(Midas, a sacred person and a king),
His very minister who spied them first
(Some say his queen) was forced to speak or burst."

101. *This world was once*, etc. It would be impossible to summarize the nebular hypothesis more concisely or precisely than the poet has done it here.


"She kindly talked, at least three hours,
Of plastic forms and mental powers,
Described our pre-existing station
Before this vile terrene creation;
And lest we should grow weary, Madam,
To cut things short, came down to Adam;
From thence, as fast as she was able,
She drowns the world and builds up Babel;
Thro' Syria, Persia, Greece, she goes,
And takes the Romans in the close."

103. Cast. Threw off. See on 48 above.

106. Raw from the prime. Cf. Aylmer's Field: "Raw from the nursery."

112. Appraised. Praised, approved; a rare use of the word.

The Lycian custom. According to Herodotus, the Lycians differed from all other nations in taking their names from their mothers instead of their fathers, and in tracing their ancestry in the feminine rather than the masculine line.

113. *That lay at wine*, etc. That is, the Etruscan women, who in the paintings at Volterra, are depicted as sharing the banquets with their husbands. *Lar* or *Lars* was an honorary appellation in Etruria, and = the English *Lord* (cf. Macaulay, *Horatius*: "Lars Porsena of Clusium," etc.); and *Lucumo* was a title given to the Etruscan princes and priests, like the Roman *patricius*.


By the *Salic law* women were excluded from the throne. Cf. *Hen. V.* i. 2. 50:

"the land Salique is in Germany,
Between the floods of Sala and of Elbe;
Where Charles the Great, having subdued the Saxons,

Established then this law; to wit, no female
Should be inheritrix in Salique land."

127. Disyoke. See on prol. 70 above; and cf. 202 below.

135. *If more was more*. If more in bulk was really more in power.

142. Kaffir. The early eds. spell it "Caffre."


72: "Hard-handed men that work in Athens here."
NOTES

144. Verulam. That is, Bacon. Cf. Palace of Art: "Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam."

149. And, last not least, she who, etc. The early eds. have: "And she, tho' last not least, who," etc.

151. Lapt. Enfolded. Cf. Shakespeare, Cymb. v. 5. 360: "lapp'd In a most curious mantle," etc. See also iv. 415 and vi. 118 below.

165. Departed. Departed; as in vi. 202 below, etc. Cf. Shakespeare, T. G. of V. i. 1. 71: "But now he parted hence;" Gray, Elegy, 1: "the knell of parting day," etc.

168. As when a boat, etc. Cf. Dante, Inf. vii. 13:

"Quali dal vento le gonfiate vele
Caggiono avvolte, poichè l'alber fiacca."

177. How saw you not, etc. Cf. i. 210 above, where it is stated that the inscription was "deep in shadow."

180. Academe. Academy; as in 212 below. Cf L. L. L. i. 1. 13: "Our court shall be a little Academe," etc.

184. My vow, etc. The early eds. read:

"I am bound
To tell her. O, she has an iron will,
An axelike edge unturnable," etc.

188. Grange. Granary; the primary sense of the word. Cf. Milton, Comus, 175: "their teeming flocks and granges full," etc.

207. For that. As for that; a common use of for in Shakespeare and our early writers generally. Cf. Ham. i. 5. 139:

"For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster 't as you may."

209. A clapper. A noisy contrivance for scaring away birds in a garth, or garden.

222. Beetle brow. Cf. R. and ʃ. i. 4. 32: "Here are the beetle-brows shall blush for me;" and Ham. i. 4. 71:

"the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea."

224. Bestrode my grandsire. To defend him. Cf. Shakespeare, C. of E. v. i. 192:

"When I bestrid thee in the wars, and took
Deep scars to save thy life;"

and 1 Hen. IV. v. i. 122: "Hal, if thou see me down in the battle, and bestride me, so; 't is a point of friendship."

240. Woman. The early eds. have "A woman."

264. Lucius Junius Brutus. The elder Brutus, who condemned his traitorous sons to death.

285. I knew you, etc. The early eds. read:

"You are grown, and yet I knew you at the first.
I am very glad, and I am very vexed
To see you, Florian."

291. Then, a moment. The early eds. have "and a moment."

303. April daffodilly. The Quarterly Review (vol. 82, Mar. 1848) says
that daffodils are "not April guests, but 'take the winds of March with beauty'" [Winter's Tale, iv. 4, 120]. See Addenda, p. 188 below.

305. Fair. "Clear, evident;" as Dawson explains it, citing Shakespeare, K. John, iv. 1. 37: "Can you not read it? is it not fair writ?" As a parallel to the passage he quotes Moore, Loves of the Angels:

"I soon could track each thought that lay
Gleaming within her heart, as clear
As pebbles within brooks appear."

See also The Two Noble Kinsmen, i. 1. 111:

"You cannot read it there; there through my tears,
Like wrinkled pebbles in a glassy stream,
You may behold 'em!"

306. Seen to wave. The early eds. have "seem to wave."

311. Did not wish. The early eds. have "did not mean;" and in the next line, "I pray you," etc.

319. Danaid. The allusion is to the myth of the daughters of Danaus, condemned eternally to the hopeless task of filling a leaky vessel with water. It seems a little pedantic here; but perhaps not more so than Melissa's reply. Both teacher and pupil are crammed with ancient lore.

320. Ruin. Fall to ruin; a rare use of the verb.

326. That we still may lead. The early eds. have, "that we may live to lead."

332. Tho', Madam, you should answer. All the eds. point thus: "Tho' madam you should answer," etc. Even the small m in "madam" (which is elsewhere printed with a capital) has been carefully reproduced, from the 1st ed. down.

347, 348. For half the day . . . crescent-wise. The early eds. have "From room to room: in each we sat," etc.


385. Cleft. Tennyson uses both cleft and clove. Cf. iv. 264 below; also Recoll. of Arab. Nights, 11:

"and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue."

386-393. What think you . . . If not. The early eds. have only the line, "What think you of it, Florian? Will it hold?"

419-426. Intent . . . frown. The early eds. read thus:

"Intent upon the Princess, where she sat
Among her grave Professors, scattering gems
Of Art and Science; only Lady Blanche,
A double-rouged and treble-wrinkled Dame,
With all her faded Autumn's falsely brown," etc.

420. Astraea age. According to the old myth, Astraea was the last of the deities to leave the earth in the Iron Age, and it was believed that she would be the first to come back at the return of the Golden Age. Cf. Virgil, Eclogue iv. 6: "Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna." See also Milton, Hymn on Nativity, 133:
"For if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men," etc.

and Pope, Messiah:

"All crimes shall cease, and ancient fraud shall fail,
Returning Justice lift aloft her scale;" etc.

423. *Inmost terms.* Most recondite terms.
442, 443. *Men hated . . . came.* The early eds. read: "Men hated learned women: and to us came;" and in 446, 447:

"That harm'd not: so we sat: and now when day
Droop'd, and the chapel tinkled, mixt with those," etc.

**SONG.**

6. *Dying moon.* The 3d ed. has "dropping moon."

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**III.**

7. *There while,* etc. The early eds. have "And while," etc.; in 10 below, "Or sorrow" for *Or grief,* and the chapel tinkled, mixt with those," etc.

33-41. *If they had been men,* etc. The early eds read:

"' if they had been men,
And in their fulsome fashion woo'd you, child,
You need not take so deep a rouge: like men —
And so they are, — very like men indeed —
And closeted with her for hours. Aha!
Then came these dreadful words out," etc.

34. *Set your thoughts in rubric.* That is, in red, like the rubrics in a prayer-book; referring to her blushes.
55. *They mounted, Ganymedes.* Cf. the picture in the *Palace of Art*:

"Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot through the sky,
Above the pillar'd town."

55. *To tumble, Vulcans.* Cf. Milton's description of Vulcan's fall when Jupiter ejected him from Olympus (*P. L. i. 740*):

"'and how he fell
From heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropp'd from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægean isle."

...
67. **God help her!** The early eds. have “God pardon her!” and below “the love of the Princess” for the heart of Ida.


‘Are we not formed as notes of music are,
For one another though dissimilar?’

But Tennyson’s simile is more full of meaning. The notes are not only made for one another, but, being chords, blend into one musical note, and the ear cannot separate the two sets of vibrations.”

75. **Yet my mother still.** The early eds. have “only Lady Blanche” (the poet forgot who was speaking), and in 77 “the Royal heart,” for her pupil’s love.

90. **Clang.** The transitive use is peculiar, as Dawson notes. Cf. grante in iv. 107 below.

To the sphere. That is, to the upper air. Milton, in *Comus*, 241, calls Echo “Sweet queen of parley, daughter of the sphere,” which has puzzled the commentators and given rise to sundry far-fetched explanations. In our opinion, “daughter of the sphere” means daughter of the air; and the “sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse” of the same poet (At a Solemn Music, 2) are the air-born sisters. The dictionaries do not recognize this meaning of sphere (= atmosphere), but it is a Grecism of a simple sort, and furnishes an easy explanation of these otherwise perplexing passages.

92. **But in her own grand way, etc.** The early eds. read: “For being, and wise in knowing that she is,” etc.

97. **Hebes are they, etc.** The early reading is: “They are Hebes meet to hand ambrosia,” etc. Cf. *The Gardener’s Daughter:* “and all her Hebe bloom.”

99. **The Samian Herë.** Juno, or the Greek Hera. The island Samos was one of her favorite seats. Cf. Virgil, *Æneid*, i. 16, where, referring to her love for Carthage, the poet says that “even Samos was less esteemed by her” (“Posthabita . . . Samo”).

100. **Memnon.** The allusion to the famous vocal statue is obvious. Cf. *Palace of Art*, 171:

“And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.”

101. **From the court.** The early eds. have “from out the court.”

103. **Balusters.** The accent on the second syllable is peculiar.


“The light clear element which the isle wears
Is heavy with the scent of lemon flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,
And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep.”

109, 110. **No fighting . . . guarl’d.** Not in the early eds.

111. **Prime.** Primeval. Cf. the noun in ii. 106 above.
114. I knock'd, etc. The early eds. have: "I knock'd and bidden went in; I found," etc. In the next line they have "sally," for move.

118. As man's could be. The early eds. have: "As man could be,"—connected of course with courteous instead of phrase.

120. Fabled nothing fair. Told no plausible falsehoods; or "minted nothing false," as it reads in the early eds.

126. True—we had, etc. The early reading is "She said we had," etc.

Limed ourselves. The metaphor, taken from the use of bird-lime to ensnare birds, is a favorite one with Shakespeare. Cf. Ham. iii. 3. 68: "O limed soul, that struggling to be free," etc. See also T. G. of V. iii. 2. 68, Much Ado, iii. r. 104, A. W. iii. 5. 26, T. N. iii. 4. 82, Macb. iv. 2. 34, K. of L. 88, etc.


153. That afternoon. The early eds. have: "In the afternoon."

Taking the dip of strata, or measuring their inclination to the horizon, is a common thing in geological work.


167-173. I gazed . . . felt. One of the passages added in the 4th ed.

175. Then. The early eds. have "And," and "climb" for got in 178.

179. Retinue. Accented on the second syllable; as in Guinevere: "Of his and her retinue moving they"; and in Aylmer's Field: "The dark retinue reverencing death." So Milton, in the two instances in which he uses the word: P. L. v. 355: "On princes, when their rich retinue long"; and P. R. ii. 419: "What followers, what retinue canst thou gain?" and Shakespeare (the only instance in verse), Lear, i. 4. 221: "But other of your insolent retinue."

203. Ourself. "Ourselves" in the early eds.; as in 232 below. See on i. 121 above.

207. Lift. The early eds. have "uplift."

212. Vashti. See Esther, i. 12.

215. Breathes full East. Breathes the proud and defiant spirit of the Eastern queen. Dawson takes it to refer (as it may, incidentally) to "the dry and unpleasant east-winds prevalent in England."

216. On that which leans to you. In regard to what suits your purpose, or favors your theories.

246. The one ΡΟΥ ΣΤΟ, etc. Alluding to the oft-quoted saying of Archimedes, "Give me where I may stand, and I will move the world" (δὸς ποῦ στα, καὶ κόσμον κινήσω).

250. By frail. The early eds. have "Of frail."

256. If that same poet-princess, etc. The early editions read: "If that strange maiden could at all be won."

260. Up till this. The poet may have had in mind The Passionate Pilgrim, 382 (ascribed to Shakespeare, but found in Richard Barnfield's Poems): "Lean'd her breast up-till a thorn."

261. Taboo. See the history of the word in the dictionaries.
262. Gynæcum. The portion of the Greek house where the women had their quarters.

280. Dare we dream, etc. Dare we suppose that the God who made us is like a workman who improves by practice?

284. Brooch. The early eds. spell it “broach.”


292. We shudder but to dream, etc. Referring to vivisection, and the assertion that dogs have sometimes been fed with the fragments of the dissecting-room. Wace states that the poet was one of the signers of the petition to Parliament against vivisection. Dawson quotes The Children’s Hospital:

“I could think he was one of those who would break their jests on the dead,
And mangle the living dog that had loved him and fawned at his knee—
Drenched with the hellish oorali—that ever such things should be!”

He adds: “In one of Hogarth’s series of The Four Stages of Cruelty is a print which may have suggested this passage. It represents a dissecting-table at Surgeons’ Hall, upon which a subject is stretched out, and dogs are eating the intestines, which are falling upon the floor.”

298. Encarnalize. Make carnal, sensualize; perhaps the poet’s own coinage.

300. Ourself. The early eds. have “ourselves,” as in 203 and 232 above, and 303 below.

306. Let there be light, etc. “She becomes really profound in her analysis of our notions of creation as stages of successive acts. Our minds, she teaches, are so constituted that we must of necessity apprehend everything in the form and aspect of successive time; but in the Almighty fiat, ‘Let there be light,’ the whole of the complex potentialities of the universe were in fact hidden” (Dawson).

313. The shadow, Time. Cf. Wordsworth, Yew-Trees:

“Death, the skeleton,
And Time, the shadow.”

316. We rode, etc. The early eds. read:

“To cross the flood by a narrow bridge, and came,” etc.

319. O how sweet. The early eds. have “and O how sweet.”

324. Elysian lawns ... crowned towers. Dawson takes these to be the plains and towers of Troy, and built to the sun to refer to the origin of the city, which Ovid (Heroides, xv. 179) ascribes to the music of Apollo’s lyre. Cf. Ænone:

“As yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather’d shape;”

and Tithonus:

“Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.”

We adopted this explanation at first, but Lord Tennyson writes us: “The ‘Elysian lawns’ are the lawns of Elysium, and have nothing to do with Troy—or perhaps they rather refer to the Islands of the Blest (Pindar, Olym. 2d).” Built to the sun must then be simply = rising sunward, lofty.
NOTES.

331. *Fair Corinna’s triumph.* Over Pindar, the bearded Victor of ten thousand hymns.
337. *With Psyche,* etc. The early eds. read: “With Psyche, Florian with the other, and I,” etc.
343. *Hammering,* etc. That is, collecting mineralogical specimens.

**SONG.**

See the extract from Kingsley, p. 146 above.
Dawson says: “The theme is a sharp antithesis, arising out of a surface analogy between the echoes of a bugle on a mountain lake, and the influences of soul upon soul through growing distances of time. In the case of the ‘horns of Elfland’—

‘they die on yon rich sky
They faint on hill, or field, or river.’

Fainter comes the echo in proportion to the receding distance. But how different with the influences of the soul—

‘Our echoes roll from soul to soul
And grow for ever and for ever.’

The stress of meaning is in the word *grow.* The song is evidently one of married love, and the growing echoes reverberate from generation to generation, from grandparent to parent and grandchild. Once more it is unity through the family. In the first song a unity through the past, in the second a unity in the present, and in this a unity for the future.”

We have seen it stated somewhere that this song was suggested by the bugle music of the boatmen on Lake Killarney; and Mrs. Anne Thackeray Ritchie (*Harper’s Mag.* vol. 68, p. 38) says: “Here is a reminiscence of Tennyson’s about the echo at Killarney, where he said to the boatman, ‘When I last was here I heard eight echoes, and now I only hear one.’ To which the man, who had heard people quoting the bugle song, replied, ‘Why, you must be the gentleman that brought all the money to the place.’”

It may be noted that some of the most musical lines in the song are composed entirely of monosyllables.

**IV.**

1. *The nebulous star.* Dawson says, “The Princess, with the accuracy taught only recently by the spectroscope, calls the sun a nebulous star;” but the expression implies no more than was taught by the nebular hypothesis of Laplace, to which reference has been made by Psyche in ii. 101–104 above. This is the hypothesis of the next line.

NOTES.

17. *Fruit, blossom*, etc. The early eds. have: “Fruit, viand, blossom, and amber wine and gold.” Of course *gold* is an adjective referring to *wine.*

21. *Tears, idle tears*, etc. “The idea of this lyric had been resting in the poet’s mind since 1831. Then at the age of twenty-two he published in *The Gem*, one of the annuals at that time in fashion, the following poem omitted from all the recent editions of his works:

'O sad *No more!* O sweet *No more!*
O strange *No more!*
By a mossed brookbank on a stone
I smelt a wildwood flower alone;
There was a ringing in my ears,
And both my eyes gushed out with tears,
Surely all pleasant things had gone before,
Low-buried fathom-deep beneath with thee,

*No more!*'

The melancholy melody of the refrain ‘No more,’ has evidently haunted the poet’s mind, and he has taken the poem which he justly suppressed as unworthy of him, and after long years reproduced it in this glorified form. There is nothing like it in English, save Keats’s *Ode to a Nightingale.* In that poem the word ‘forlorn’ has evidently charmed the ear of the poet in the same manner” (Dawson).

Mr. George Grove, in an interesting “commentary” on this song (*Macmillan’s Mag.* Nov. 1866), says: “The keynote is clearly and beautifully struck in the first stanza. Nothing moves the spirit of man so profoundly as some of the appearances of nature; more profoundly because it is often impossible to explain why it should be so. The vague but intense yearning, the feeling of vastness and longing, which possesses one at the sight of certain aspects of the sunset, has been felt by almost every one. . . . The same kind of feeling, only more personal and less vast, and colored rather by wild, passionate human regret, is apt to seize the mind in autumn, in viewing some scene of sweet, rich, peaceful beauty, like the ‘happy autumn fields’ of this poem. . . . The keynote of ‘some divine despair’ in the heart is touched. Persons and incidents, fraught with unutterable recollections and worth all the world to one, — a dead child, a lost love, a sudden look, a parting, a difference, a reconciliation, — present themselves with peculiar power. It is perhaps long since we had to do with them, but they come back as ‘fresh’ as if it were yesterday; they fill the mind as if present, in all their sweetness and familiar tender dearness, and the pang of absence, and the maddening sense of the utter irrecoverableness of the past, rushes in after them with a ‘wild regret,’ and the tears, the ‘idle tears’ — not idle in themselves, but idle only because ‘we know not what they mean’ — ‘rise from the depths’ of our ‘divine despair,’ — divine because so utterly beyond all human reason or knowledge, — and gather, smarting, in the eyes of the gazer.

“The images in which this grief of the mind is presented are not only very original, but they succeed one another in a progression as subtle and delicate as it is admirable. . . . The natural and external image of the ‘happy autumn fields’ is continued in the wide expanse of the
ocean, the ships, and the sunbeams striking across the world, all external to the observer. It is again continued in the rising of the 'dim dawn,' 'loud with voices of the birds' outside the casement, though here intensified and made more solemn by the introduction of the slowly dying man, on whose dull eyes and feeble ears these sights and sounds strike for the last time. The outward-bound ship, bearing off 'all we love,' is mournful enough, as, in the chill damp air which fore-runs the night, we watch the last red tint on the sails, and wait for the sun to drop below the sea-line, and all to assume, as if by magic, one dull, leaden, indistinguishable hue. This is mournful, but the picture which follows it — the dying man on his death-bed, watching the faint beginnings of his last day on earth — is surely one of the most desolate in all literature or art. Even this, however, can be surpassed. So far we have been spectators only, — looking at that which is outside of us. In the fourth and last stanza we encounter a sudden modulation; and, by a transition than which Beethoven himself never imagined anything more sudden and less violent, we are landed in a region quite remote from the former one, — the region of our own selves, — and amongst images that transcend those that precede them as much as that which is personal and passionate must surpass that which is merely external and passive. Sad as is the departure of all we love across the waste of ocean, desolate as are the loneliness of the long daybreak and the dim sounds of life to the dying man, the sting of kisses remembered, when the loved one who kissed us is gone forever, is still sharper:

't A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.'

"But even this again may be exceeded. There may be a union of sweetness and mad anguish in repeating in fancy the caresses of lips, once all your own, and now lost forever, — lost, not by death, or any such divine decree, but by human faults, by faithlessness, or misunderstanding, or social difference, or some other cause which infuses a ranking sense of injustice into the pain of the loss. As it is the thought of death that forms the link between the two stanzas, — the dying man leading on to the dead love, — so it is the introduction of the idea of love which gives the last stanza its special keenness, which makes it so truly the climax of the poem. For love is the crown of all human things, and gives the last bitterness to sorrow, the highest culmination to joy; and in comparison to it, absence, and friendship, and kindred, and death, and all other ills and all other delights of earth, are as nothings, as mere passing vanities. Nor is it love alone that is introduced, but its very acme — the kiss, the 'meeting of the lips' when 'spirits rush together,' and soul closes with soul on fire. Thus pointed and thus presented, the memory of the 'days that are no more' becomes indeed a very 'Death in Life.'"

Mrs. Anne Thackeray Ritchie says (Harper's Mag. vol. 68, p. 31): "One of my family remembers hearing Tennyson say that 'Tears, idle Tears' was suggested by Tintern Abbey: who shall say by what mysterious wonder of beauty and regret, by what sense of the 'transient with the abiding'?"

47. Cram our ears with wool. No doubt suggested by the story of
Ulysses stopping the ears of his companions with wax, that they might not hear the song of the Sirens.

50. Lost. The early eds. have “gone;” and the next two lines read thus:

“... But trim our sails, and let the old proverb serve
While down the streams that buoy each separate craft,” etc.

One might not guess “the old proverb” here.

59 Kex. A provincial word for the dry stalks of hemlock; here put for any wild growth springing up in the crevices of the mosaic pavement and breaking the beautiful work.

60. The beard-blown goat. As the poet explains, in his letter to Dawson, this refers to “the wind blowing the beard on the height of the ruined pillar.” The early eds. read:

“... The starr’d mosaic, and the wild goat hang
Upon the pillar, and the wild fig-tree split,” etc.

61. The wild fig-tree. Often referred to by the Roman poets as rending asunder ruined buildings and monuments. “Martial (x. 2) thinks his fame will last through his writings, while the wild fig splits the monument of Messala: ‘Marmora Messalae findit capricios.’ In Horace (Ep. v. 17) Canidia makes use of fig-trees plucked from tombs: ‘Jubet sepulcris capricios erutas.’ Juvenal (x. 147), speaking of the vanity of ambition, says:

‘Vain rage— the roots of the wild fig-tree rise,
Strike through the marble, and their memory dies.’

Ramage in his Nooks and By-ways of Italy (p. 69) is reminded of this passage by noticing a wild fig springing out of, and splitting a rock in the Apennines” (Dawson).

65. Then to me. The 1st ed. has “and then to me.”

69. A death’s-head at the wine. According to the Egyptian custom mentioned by Herodotus (i. 78): “At their convivial banquets, among the wealthy classes, when they have finished supper, a man carries round in a coffin the image of a dead body carved in wood, made as like as possible in color and workmanship, and in size generally about one or two cubits in length; and showing this to each of the company, he says, ‘Look upon this, then drink and enjoy yourself; for when dead you will be like this.’”

85. And her heart, etc. Cf. Shakespeare, V. and A. i185:

“Lo, in this hollow cradle take thy rest,
My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and night.”

88. The tender ash delays, etc. This is, botanically true, and is one of the many passages that show the poet’s close observation of nature.

100. Like the Ithacensian suitors, etc. That is, like the suitors of Penelope, who do not recognize the disguised Ulysses, and laugh in a constrained way, they know not why. Cf. Odyssey, xx. 347: ói δ’ ἡδη γναθμοῖσα γελών ἄλλοτρίῳς (literally, “laughed with other men’s jaws”).

104. Bulbul. The Persian name of the nightingale, whose love for the rose is a favorite theme with Saadi and his brother poets. Gulistan
is Persian for rose-garden, and Saadi takes it as the title of his book of poems. The Prince is evidently not very successful in aping the feminine treble, and the performance tempts the Princess to irony. For bulbul, cf. Recoll. of Arab. Nights:

"The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung"

The marsh-diver (or water-rail) and the meadow-crake (corn-crake, or land-rail) are unmusical birds. Wood (quoted by Dawson) says of the latter that its cry "may be exactly imitated by drawing a quill or a piece of stick smartly over the large teeth of a comb, or by rubbing together two jagged strips of bone."

109. Mind. Remind; as in Hen. V. iv. 13: "I do thee wrong to mind thee of it," etc. For hold the early eds. have "prize."

115-124. Poor soul! . . . and love. This passage is not in the early eds.

121. Valkyrian hymns. Such as were sung by the Valkyrs, or Valkyrias, "the choosers of the slain," or fatal sisters of Odin in the Northern mythology. They were represented as awful and beautiful maidens, who, mounted on swift horses and bearing drawn swords, presided over the field of battle, selecting those destined to death, and conducting them to Valhalla, where they ministered at the feasts of the heroes.

125. Would. The early eds. have "I would."

126. Like winter bats. That is, like creatures that hibernate, or sleep through the winter.

130. Owed. Under obligations, in bondage. The early eds. have "due."

137. Cyril. The early eds. have "Did Cyril," and "begin" for began in the next line.

139. Careless, careless. The repetition gives a sort of free-and-easy emphasis to the word.

149. Said Ida, etc. The early eds. read: "Said Lady Ida; and fled at once, as flies," etc.

154. Parting. Departing. See on ii. 166 above.

172. Group'd. The second ed. misprints "group."

174. They cried. The early eds. have "and crying."

180. Woods. The 1st ed. has "thicket."

183. Caryatids. Caryatides; the architectural term for statues or representations of living figures used as columns to support an entablature.

185. The hunter. Actæon, who, according to the old myth, was turned into a stag by Diana for having seen her and her nymphs bathing. Cf. Titus Andronicus, ii. 3. 61:

"Had I the power that some say Dian had,
Thy temples should be planted presently
With horns as was Actæon's; and the hounds
Should drive upon thy new-transformed limbs,
Unmannerly intruder as thou art!"

The 1st ed. reads: "Of open metal, in which the old hunter rued," etc.

194. The Bear. The constellation Ursa Major, the seven slow suns being of course the stars that form the "Dipper." The early eds. print "the bear."
196. *Then.* The 1st ed. has "and then."
202. *How came you,* etc. The early eds. read: "I found the key in the doors: how came you here?"
207. *Judith.* See the apocryphal book of *Judith* for the story.
227. *Proper to the clown,* etc. Characteristic of the clown, whether in low life or high, etc.
230. *For Cyril.* As for Cyril. See on ii. 207 above.
236. *But as the water-lily,* etc. Critics have compared Wordsworth, *Excursion,* book v., where Moral Truth is said to be

"a thing
Subject, you deem, to vital accidents,
And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,
Whose root is fix'd in stable earth, whose head
Floats on the tossing waves."

Tennyson, in his letter to Dawson (see on i. 96 above), gives as the "suggestion" of this passage: "Water-lilies in my own pond, seen on a gusty day with my own eyes. They did start and slide in the sudden puffs of wind, till caught and stayed by the tether of their own stalks — quite as true as Wordsworth's simile, and more in detail." Dawson, in his 1st ed., had said that Wordsworth's was "the truer picture."

242. *Thrid.* The poet uses this old form and the more familiar *thread* interchangeably. Cf. *Dream of Fair Women,* 51: "Thridding the sombre boscage of the wood;" and *In Mem.* 97: "He thrids the labyrinth of the mind." On the other hand, see v. 7 below.

*Musky-circled mazes.* The early eds. read: "To thrid thro' all the musky mazes, wind," etc. Dawson quotes Milton, *Comus,* 989:

"And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys flying
Nard and cassia's balmy smells."

247. *Bubbled.* Most aptly descriptive of the bird's warbling. Mrs. Anne Thackeray Ritchie (*Harper's Mag.* vol. 68, p. 38) says: "Once, when Mr. Tennyson was in Yorkshire, so he told me, as he was walking at night in a friend's garden, he heard a nightingale singing with such a frenzy of passion that it was unconscious of everything else, and not frightened though he came and stood quite close beside it; he could see its eye flashing, and feel the air bubble in his ear through the vibration."

248. *And secret laughter,* etc. "A touch of nature" this, making the Prince enjoy the excitement of the race, serious though the issue of it might be.

249. *Hook'd.* The early eds. have "took."

250. *Mnemosyne.* The goddess of memory, who, according to one myth, was mother of the Muses.


255. *The mystic fire,* etc. The electrical phenomenon known to
Italian and other sailors as "Saint Elmo's fires." No doubt this was the suggestion of Ariel's performance in the Tempest (i. 2. 197):

"sometime I'd divide,
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards, and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join."

Cf. Longfellow, Golden Legend:

"Last night I saw St. Elmo's stars,
With their glimmering lanterns, all at play
On the tops of the masts and the tips of the spars,
And I knew we should have foul weather to-day."

260. Blowzed. Ruddy. Kennett (Ms. Lansd. 1033, quoted by Halliwell in Archaic Dict.) says: "A girl or wench whose face looks red by running abroad in the wind and weather, is called a blowz, and said to have a blowzing color." "To be in a blouse" (to look red from heat) is a phrase used by Goldsmith in the Vicar of Wakefield.

263. Wail'd. The early eds. have "clang'd."

265. Therebeside. A compound like thereby, therefrom, etc. (not in the dictionaries).

273. In old days. The early eds. have "in the old days."

275. Castalies. Sources of inspiration or culture; a pluralizing of Castalia, or Castaly, the mythical spring on Parnassus, sacred to the Muses.

281. To me you froze. The early eds. have "You froze to me."


310. You had gone, etc. That is, would have gone, etc.

313. Nursery. The metaphor is from a nursery of trees, as the next clause shows.


323. I came to tell you, etc. The early eds. read: "I judged it best to speak; but you had gone;" in 325, "tell you" for speak; and in 330, "the merit" for some sense.

339. The wisp. That is, the Will-of-the-wisp.

347. To hatch the cuckoo. Cf. Shakespeare, R. of L. 849: "Or hateful cuckoos hatch in sparrows' nests?" 1 Hen. IV. v. 1. 60:

"being fed by us, you used us so
As that ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird,
Useth the sparrow," etc.

352. A Niobean daughter. The poet has another allusion to Niobe in Walking to the Mail:

"till she was left alone
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty."

355. Rush'd. The 1st ed. has "ran in."
356. *Out of breath,* etc. The early eds. have "all out of breath, as pursued."

359. *Whereby.* Rarely used in this literal sense of place.

360. *When the wild peasant,* etc. Referring to the incendiary fires so common in the troubles with the English agricultural laborers some years before the poem was written.

377. *As who should say.* Cf. Shakespeare, *M. of V.* i. 1. 93: "As who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle,'" etc.

389. *Render.* The early eds. have "deliver."

401. *Regal.* The 1st American ed. misprints "legal."

403. *Zealous.* The early eds. have "and willing."

409. *Vague brightness.* The Quarterly Review (vol. 82), commenting on this, says that "no brightness can be more distinct than that of the moon"; but the purblind critic does not see that the poet describes it as it appears to the baby. The comparison is as true as it is apt.

411. *Inmost south.* The early eds. have "the inmost south," and in the next line "the inmost north."

415. *Lapt.* See on ii. 151 above.

417. *Had you been.* The early eds. read: "tho' you had been."

Sphered up with Cassiopeia, etc. Up among the stars, like the Ethiopian queen Cassiopeia (who became the constellation that bears her name), or down in Hades, like Persephone (or Proserpina) whom Pluto carried off from earth and made his queen.


426. *Landskip.* The earlier and better form of landscape. See Wb.

429. *Made them,* etc. Such ellipsis of the relative was common in Elizabethan English. See Abbott’s *Shakespearian Gr.* § 244.

430. *My boyish dream.* The early eds. have "Mine old ideal."

436. *The seal does music.* Seals are said to be very sensitive to musical sounds. A flute will sometimes attract them to a boat; and the ringing of the church bell at Hoy, in Orkney, has often caused the appearance of numerous seals in the little bay. See Chambers’s *Encyclopedia,* etc.

450. *At her feet.* The early eds. have "on the marble."

472. *Fist like a beacon-tower,* etc. As Dawson notes, the same simile occurs in *Enoch Arden*:

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"Allured him as the beacon-blaze allures
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life."
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Cf. Longfellow, *The Light-house* (published two years after *The Princess*):

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"The sea-bird wheeling round it, with the din
Of wings and winds and solitary cries,
Blinded and maddened by the light within,
Dashes himself against the glare and dies."
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473. *The crimson-rolling eye.* It is a red "revolving" light.

474. *Wild birds.* The 1st ed. has "wild sea-birds."

490. *We hold a great convention.* The early eds. read: "We meet to elect new tutors."
NOTES.

510. You saved. The early eds. have "You have saved;" in 514, the "wholesome" for our good; in 519, "tutors" for servants; and in 524, "your face" for yourself, and "loathsome" for hateful.

523. Lord you. Call you lord; a rare use of the verb.

529. Address'd, etc. Cf. Shakespeare, T. N. i. 4. 15: "address thy gait unto her," etc.

537–550. While I listen'd . . . but came. The early eds. read:

"The voices murmuring; till upon my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy,
Which I shook off, for I was young, and one
To whom the shadow of all mischance but came," etc.

INTERLUDE.

The interlude was added in the 3d ed. (see p. 142 above). There the song begins thus:

"When all among the thundering drums
Thy soldier in the battle stands;"

and ends with

"Strikes him dead for them and thee.
Tara ta tantara."

In the 4th ed. it was changed to its present form.

The following is an earlier version of the song, in a volume of selections made by Tennyson, but not published in his collected works (quoted by Dawson):

"Lady, let the rolling drums
Beat to battle where thy warrior stands:
Now thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.

"Lady, let the trumpets blow,
Clasp thy little babes about thy knee:
Now their warrior father meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee."

V.

2. A stationary voice. That is, a sentinel.
7. Till. The early eds. have "until."
15. There brake. The early eds. have "outbrake."
23. King, you are free. The early eds. have: "You are free, O king."
25. Mawkin. A kitchen-wench, or other menial servant. The word
is only a phonetic spelling of *malkin*, which Tennyson has in *The Last Tournament*:

“For when had Lancelot uttered aught so gross
Even to the swineherd’s *malkin* in the mast?”

Cf. Shakespeare, *Cor. ii.* i. 224: “the kitchen malkin;” and *Per. iv.* 3. 34: “blurted at and held a malkin.” *Malkin* is probably a diminutive of *Mall* (cf. *Temp. ii.* 2. 50 and *T. N.* i. 3. 135), or *Mary*; but it was also connected with *Matilda*. The *Promptorium Parvulorum* has “Malkyne, or Mawt, propyr name *Matildis*.”

28. *More crumpled than a poppy*, etc. This simile, like so many others, illustrates the poet’s minute observation of nature. No flower that blows has a more crumpled and generally unpromising look when it first opens than the poppy.

29. Disprinced. See on prol. 70 above.

30-35. *Then some one ... slink.* The early eds. read:

“‘But hence,’ he said, ‘indue yourselves like men.
Your Cyril told us all.’ As boys that slink,” etc.

37. Transient. Passing, making the transition; a Latinism.

42. *Met us.* All the recent eds. (including that of 1884) have a period after *us*, but this is clearly a misprint.

70. *From brows as pale and smooth*, etc. Probably referring to Michael Angelo’s *Pietà* in St. Peter’s at Rome.

90. *Ill.* Bad, wicked; as in Shakespeare, *Temp.* i. 2. 457: “If the ill spirit have so fair a house,” etc.


Look you, etc. The early eds. read:

“‘Look to it,’ cried
My father, ‘that our compact is perform’d.
You have spoil’d this girl; she laughs at you and man:
She shall not legislate for Nature, king,
But yields, or war,’” etc.


“Yet looks he like a king; behold, his eye,
As bright as is the eagle’s, lightens forth
Controlling majesty.”

126. *At him that mars her plan.* The early eds. have: “At the enemy of her plan.”

129. *More soluble is this knot.* The early eds. add the line “Like almost all the rest, if men were wise;” and after 132, “And dusted down your domes with manganels.”

136. *Flitting chance.* The first four eds. have “little chance.”

142. *Bulk’d.* Wholly imbedded; a rare verb in a rarer sense.

145-151. *Boy, when ... for shame.* The early eds. have only the line, “They prize hard knocks, and to be won by force.”

That idiot legend refers of course to i. 5 above.


188. *Pure as lines of green*, etc. Another illustration of the poet’s keen observation of nature. Most writers would have taken the *white* of the
snowdrop as the emblem of purity (as Tennyson himself does in St. Agnes, 11), but that delicate green seems more exquisitely pure, even beside the white.

190. Not like the piebald, etc. The early eds. read:

“Not like strong bursts of sample among men,
But all one piece; and take them all in all,” etc.

In 195 they have “easily” for frankly.

198. Ourselves. The early eds. have “ourselves.” See on i. 121 above.

215. Royal. The 1st American ed. misprints “loyal.”


250. The airy Giant’s zone. The belt of Orion.

252. Alters hue, etc. Dawson quotes Proctor’s Myths and Marvels of Astronomy: “Every bright star when close to the horizon shows these colors, and so much the more distinctly as the star is the brighter. Sirius, which surpasses the brightest stars of the northern hemisphere full four times in lustre, shows these changes of color so conspicuously that they were regarded as specially characteristic of this star, insomuch that Homer speaks of Sirius (not by name, but as the ‘Star of Autumn’) shining most beautifully ‘when laved of ocean’s wave,’—that is, when close to the horizon.”

Dawson adds: “The expression ‘laved of ocean’s wave’ explains the ‘washed with morning’ of our poet. The glitter of the early morning sun on the bright helmets of the brothers, and the glance of light upon their armor as they rode, are vividly realised in this beautiful simile.

“The passage of Homer referred to is Iliad, v. 5, and is thus rendered by Merivale:

‘Flashed from his helm and buckler a bright incessant gleam,
Like summer star that burns afar, new bathed in ocean’s stream.’

And by Lord Derby:

‘Forth from his helm and shield a fiery light
There flashed, like autumn’s star, that brightest shines
When newly risen from his ocean bath.’

The rendering summer star is beyond question the more correct. It is the star which is in the ascendant at the time of ripening, that is, during the dog-days.”

262-300. And, ere . . . three to three. The early eds. read thus:

“and Antar turning said:
‘Our land invaded, life and soul! himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war:
But, Prince, the question of your troth remains;
And there’s a downright honest meaning in her:
She ask’d but space and fairplay for her scheme;
She prest and prest it on me; life! I felt
That she was half right talking of her wrongs;
And I’ll stand by her. Waive your claim, or else
Decide it here: why not? we are three to three.’
I lagg’d in answer, loth to strike her kin,
And cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside,
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat, ‘Three to three? 
But such a three to three were three to one.’
A boast that clenched his purpose like a blow!
For fiery-short was Cyril’s counter-scoff,
And sharp I answer’d, touch’d upon the sense
Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
And tipt with sportive malice to and fro
Like pointed arrows leapt the taunts and hit.”

284. *Her that talk’d down the fifty wisest men.* St. Catherine of Alexandria, daughter of Costis (half-brother to Constantine the Great) and Sabinella, queen of Egypt. Maxentius during his persecution sent fifty learned men to dispute with her, but she confuted and converted them all.

287. *Foughten.* Cf. Shakespeare, *Hen. V.* i. 4. 18: “this glorious and well-foughten field.” See also *Coming of Arthur:* “from the foughten field;” and *Holy Grail:* “in foughten field.”

314. ’Sdeath! etc. The early eds. read:

“‘We will send to her,’ Arac said,
‘A score of worthy reasons why she should
Bide by this issue,’” etc.

318. *False daughters.* The ducklings she has hatched.

333. *Thro’ open.* The early eds. have “Thro’ the open,” etc.

336. *Like a stately pine,* etc. The following is from the *Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough,* dated in the Valley of Cauterets, Sept. 7, 1861: “I have been out for a walk with A. T. to a sort of island between two waterfalls, with pines on it, of which he retained a recollection from his visit of thirty-one years ago, and which, moreover, furnished a simile to *The Princess.* He is very fond of this place, evidently.”

355. *Tomyris.* The queen of the Massagetae, who, according to Herodotus (i. 214), defeated Cyrus the Great in battle, B.C. 529, and afterwards insulted his dead body.

364. *O brother,* etc. The early eds. read:

“You have known, O brother, all the pangs we felt,
What heats of moral anger when we heard,” etc.

367–370. *Of lands,* etc. “Allusion is made in the first two lines to Russian customs in the seventeenth century. One was that the bride, on her wedding day, should present her husband, in token of submission, with a whip made by her own hands. Another was, that on arriving at the nuptial chamber the bridegroom ordered the bride to pull off his boots. In one was a whip, in the other a trinket. If she pulled off the one with the whip first the groom gave her a slight blow. It is worthy of note, that according to Bracton a wife is *sub virga,* under the rod, and Blackstone says that moderate correction with a stick is lawful.

“The last two lines refer to the Hindoo *Suttee,* now abolished, in conformity with which widows were burned upon the funeral pyres of their husbands” (Dawson).
371. Mothers, etc. The reference is to the throwing of female infants into the Ganges, where the vultures are often seen to swoop down upon them before they sink.

375. That equal baseness, etc. The early eds. have "That it was little better in better times."

380. I built. The early eds. have "we built" (but "I set" just above); and the plural pronoun also in 381, 382, 386, 388, 390, 391 ("we are touch’d "), 392 (with "nay" for what), and 393 below.

384. Rout. The early eds. have " set."

388. Baby troth. The early eds. have "old affiance." For invalid, see on i. 33 above.

395-397. You failing, etc. The early eds. read:

"We abide what end soe'er,
You failing; but we know you will not. Still,
You must not slay him: he risk'd his life for ours," etc.

407-410. Till she . . . following, etc. The early eds. read:

"till she
The woman-phantom, she that seem'd no more
Than the man's shadow in a glass, her name
Yoked in his mouth with children's, know herself,
And knowledge liberate her, nor only here,
But ever following," etc.

414. A postscript. As Dawson remarks, "the solemn and sonorous despatch cannot leave her hand without the inevitable postscript."

419. I think. The early eds. have "we think;" and lines 424-427 read thus:

"We took it for an hour this morning to us,
In our own bed: the tender orphan hands
Felt at our heart, and seem'd to charm from thence
The wrath we nursed against the world: farewell."

See p. 147 above.

441. Look you. The early eds. have "Look to it."

445-448. But you. . . . and brawl, etc. The early reading is:

"but take and break her, you!
She's yet a colt: well groom'd and strongly curb'd,
She might not rank with those detestable
That to the hireling leave their babe, and brawl," etc.

457. For it was nearly noon. The early eds. have "it was the point of noon." After omitting lines 458-471, they go on thus:

"The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
To fifty, till the terrible trumpet blared
At the barrier,—yet a moment, and once more," etc.

460. That wild morning, etc. Cf. i. 96 above.

478. Bare. Tennyson, like Shakespeare, uses bare and bore interchangeably. Cf. 507 below; also vi. 328 and 353.

480. In conflict with the crash, etc. The early eds. have "In the middle with the crash," etc. Of course, they do not contain the sentence, "Yet it seem'd a dream; I dream'd Of fighting."
NOTES.

Between 484 and 485, the 4th ed. has the line (afterwards omitted), "A noble dream! What was it else I saw?"

488. Bulks. The other two "broad sons" of Gama (259 above). Cf. iii. 277 above.

491. Mellay. An Anglicized spelling of the French mêlée. Melley is another form; as in one of W. H. Russell's Crimean letters: "Crowded together in one indiscriminate melley."

496. And in my dream, etc. The early eds. read:

"and thinking thus
I glanced to the left, and saw," etc.

506. Fall. The early eds. have "die." They do not contain the sentence, "Yea, let me make my dream All that I would," nor line 510 below.

510. Agrin. On the grin. Cf. C. Brontë, Shirley: "His hard features were revealed all agrin and ashine with glee."

514. Flaying. The early eds. add "off;" in 517 they read "that the earth;" in 525, "supplier" for heavier; and in 530, "life and love" for dream and truth.

SONG.

Dawson remarks that the lyric is probably a later version or adaptation of a song first published in a volume of selections issued in 1865, and not found in most of the editions of Tennyson's collected works:

"Home they brought him slain with spears.
They brought him home at even-fall;
All alone she sits and hears
Echoes in his empty hall,
Sounding on the morrow.

"The sun peeped in from open field,
The boy began to leap and prance,
Rode upon his father's lance,
Beat upon his father's shield,
'Oh hush, my joy, my sorrow!'"

Cf. Scott, Lay of the Last Minstrel, canto i.:

"But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropped nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance deep-brooding o'er the slain
Had locked the source of softer woe,
And burning pride and high disdain
F orbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisped from the nurse's knee,—
'And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be,'
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek."
VI.

1-5. In place of these lines the early eds. have only this:

"What follow'd, tho' I saw not, yet I heard
So often that I speak as having seen;"

and for the next three lines, "For when our side was vanquish'd and my cause."

15. *Babe in arm.* Cf. *The Palace of Art*: "Sat smiling, babe in arm." Dawson remarks that the reviewers of Tennyson's earlier poems ridiculed this expression unmercifully, comparing it with the "lance in rest" of the romances of chivalry; but the poet, while he has modified certain other expressions thus criticised, has not only retained this one but repeated it.


40. *Growing breeze.* The early eds. have "Æonian breeze." For *Æonian* (= eternal), cf. *In Mem.* 35: "Æonian hills;" and *Id.* 95: "Æonian music."

44. *Violate.* A Latinism for violated (see vii. 1 below). Cf. the similar participial use of *articulate*, *degenerate*, *devote*, *suffocate*, etc., in Shakespeare and other writers. See also vii. 75 below.

47. *Blanch'd.* That is, fortunate, propitious; as the Latin *albus* was sometimes used. Cf. Scott, *Guy Mannering*: "the dominie reckoned this as one of the white days of his life."


49. *Of spring.* Of spring flowers.

65. *The tremulous isles of light.* "Spots of sunshine coming through the leaves, and seeming to slide from one to the other, as the procession of girls 'moves under shade'" (Tennyson's letter to Dawson).

*Slided* occurs again (for the sake of the metre, as here) in *Merlin and Vivien*: "Writhed toward him, slided up his knee and sat." Cf. Scott's use of *winded* for *wound* in *Lady of the Lake*, i. 500 and v. 22. So Shakespeare uses *casted* (*Hen. V*. iv. i. 23), *split* (*C. of E.* i. 1. 104, v. i. 308), etc.

68. *Thro' open field.* The early eds. have "Thro' the open field."

70. *Fretwork.* His branching horns.

85. *Dishelm'd.* See on prol. 70 above.

94. *The painting and the tress.* Cf. i. 37 above.


206:

"The match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain."

110. *Make.* The early eds. have "makes."

118. *Half-lapt.* See on ii. 151 above.


122. *Falling.* A diminutive of *fat*, rarely used as an adjective.
126. *On tremble.* A-trembling. In early English we find *on* (or *an*) and a used interchangeably; as now we have *on shore* and *ashore, on board* and *aboard,* etc. Cf. Shakespeare, *R. of L.* 1494: "Once set on ringing;" Ascham, *Scholemaster:* "I fall on weeping," etc. In North's *Plutarch* we find "ran on-head" = the modern "ran ahead," etc. See also *Acts,* xiii. 36.

137. *But he that lay,* etc. The early eds. read:

"but Cyril, who lay
Bruised, where he fell, not far off, much in pain,
Trail'd himself," etc.

142. *Self-involved.* Wrapped up in her own thoughts.

161. *Fixt.* All the eds. have "fix'd," but elsewhere *fixt.*

166. *Port.* Portal; as in Shakespeare, 2 *Hen. IV.* iv. 5. 24: "That keep 'st the ports of slumber open wide," etc. The first four eds. have "part."

171. *I will.* The early eds. have "and I will."

179. *No purple in the distance.* Cf. *In Mem.* 38:

"With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone."

185. *Helpless ... barren.* The early eds. have "waxen ... milkless."

186. *Prime.* Early dawn; or, probably, here "any hour after midnight" (Dawson).

193. *Swam.* Elsewhere the poet has *swam*; as in *The Miller's Daughter,* 97: "I loved the brimming wave that swam," etc.

203. *Then Arac,* etc. The early eds. read: "Then Arac: 'Soul and life!'" etc. After 206 they have the line, "I am your brother; I advise you well."

209. 'Sdeath! The early eds. have "Life!"

225. *I trust,* etc. This line is not in the early eds.

251. *Wept.* A peculiar but expressive use of the word.


284. *Proper.* Own; as in Shakespeare, *Temp.* iii. 3. 60: "Their proper selves," etc.

298. *The mournful song.* See iv. 21 above.

304. *Amazed am I to hear.* The early eds. have "I am all amaze to hear."

313. *Rang ruin,* etc. The speech that follows has been much abridged, the early eds. reading thus:

"Rang ruin, answered full of grief and scorn:
'What! in our time of glory when the cause
Now stands up, first, a trophied pillar — now
So clipi, so stinted in our triumph — barred
Even from our free heart-thanks, and every way
Thwarted and vexed, and lastly catechised
By our own creature! one that made our laws!"
NOTES.

Our great she-Solon! her that built the nest
To hatch the cuckoo! whom we called our friend!
But we will crush the lie that glances at us
As cloaking in the larger charities
Some baby predilection; all amazed!
We must amaze this legislator more.
Fling our doors wide!" etc.

Below (321) it reads:

"Pass and mingle with your likes.
Go, help the half-brain'd dwarf, Society,
To find low motives unto noble deeds,
To fix all doubt upon the darker side;
Go, fitter thou for narrowest neighborhoods,
Old talker, haunt where gossip breeds and seethes
And fester in provincial sloth! and you,
That think we sought to practise on a life
Risk'd for our own and trusted to our hands,
What say you, Sir? you hear us; deem ye not
'Tis all too like that even now we scheme,
In one broad death confounding friend and foe,
To drug them all? revolve it: you are man,
And therefore no doubt wise; but after this
We brook no further insult, but are gone."

The omissions here are the most important in the whole poem, and are certainly for the better. The briefer speech is the more dignified.

332. And on they moved. The early eds. have "And they moved on.
338. Supporters. Used in the heraldic sense of figures at the side of a shield; like the lion and the unicorn in the arms of England.
340. Amazed. The 1st ed. has "amaze," which is a misprint and not an early reading like that noted on 304 above.
355. Due. Devoted; a rare sense.
357. Otherwhere. See on prol. 80 above.

SONG.

This song is equally musical and monosyllabic. Of 125 words in it all are monosyllables except six, and those are dissyllables.

12. I strove, etc. Dawson quotes Shakespeare, V. and A. 772: "And all in vain you strive against the stream."

VII.

17. Clomb. Elsewhere in the poem we find climbed; as in prol. 111 and concl. 39 below. See on iii. 175 above.
18. Leaguer. Camp. Cf. All's Well, iii. 6. 27: "the leaguer of the adversaries."
19. Void was her use. Her occupation was gone, like Othello's Dawson quote's Aylmer's Field:
NOTES.

"So that the gentle creature, shut from all
Her charitable use, and face to face
With twenty months of silence, slowly lost,
Nor greatly cared to lose her hold on life."

21. A great black cloud, etc. The poet, in his letter to Dawson, says that this was suggested by "a coming storm as seen from the top of Snowdon."


36. Deeper, etc. This line is not in the early eds., the next beginning "Lay sunndered," etc.

56. Obtain'd. Prevailed, succeeded; a rare use of the word. Cf. Bacon, Essay 56: "the side which obtaineth not."

60. Upon the babe restored. The early eds. have "on what she said of the child" (see v. 101 above); and in the next line, "would she yield" for "yielded she."

67. Involved in stillness. Implied in silence.

68. Were at peace. The construction is confused; as if each had been both.

75. Satiate. See on vi. 44 above.

98. Flourished up. "Blossomed up" (ii. 292 above); the etymological sense of flourished.

109. The Oppian law. "This was a sumptuary law passed during the time of the direst distress of Rome, when Hannibal was almost at the gates. It enacted that no woman should wear a gay-colored dress, or have more than a half an ounce of gold ornaments, and that none should approach within a mile of any city or town in a car drawn by horses. The war being concluded, and the emergency over, the women demanded the repeal of the law. They gained one consul, but Cato, the other one, resisted. The women rose, thronged the streets and forum, and harassed the magistrates until the law was repealed" (Dawson).

111. Dwarf-like. The early eds. have "little."

112. The tax. "A heavy tax imposed on Roman matrons by the second triumvirate. No man was found bold enough to oppose it; but Hortensia, daughter of Hortensius, the celebrated orator, spoke so eloquently against it, that her oration was preserved to receive the praise of Quintilian. She was successful" (Dawson).

118. I saw the forms, etc. The early eds. read:

"I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:
Sad phantoms conjured out of circumstance,
Ghosts of the fading brain they seem'd; nor more
Sweet Ida," etc.

In 122 below they have "show'd" for seem'd.

141. Leapt fiery Passion, etc. The 1st ed. reads thus:

"Crown'd Passion from the brinks of death, and up
Along the shuddering senses struck the soul,
And closed on fire with Ida's at the lips."

The 2d changes "Crown'd" to Leapt.
148. *That other.* Aphrodite (Venus) rising from the sea. Bayard Taylor calls the passage "an exquisite rapid picture of Aphrodite floating along the wave to her home at Paphos; but," he adds, "what must we think of the lover, who, in relating the supreme moment of his passion, could turn aside to interpolate it? Its very loveliness emphasizes his utter forgetfulness of the governing theme." It seems to us natural enough in the "relating," especially as it leads up to the impassioned


"nor end of mine,
Stalliest for thee!" —

which shows that he has dwelt upon the picture of the goddess because he half-identifies her with Ida.


167. *All Danaë to the stars.* Open to their light falling upon her in a golden shower, like that in which Jupiter came down to visit Danaë.

177. *Come down, O maid,* etc. This "small sweet idyl," like the exquisite song, "Tears, idle tears," was perfect from the first, and has undergone no revision at the author's hands. "It transfers," says Symonds in his Greek Poets, "with perfect taste, the Greek Idyllic feeling to Swiss scenery; it is a fine instance of new wine being successfully poured into old bottles, for nothing could be fresher, and not even the Thalysia is sweeter."

189. *With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns.* In the early eds. we find Silver Horns, but all the more recent ones print "silver horns." The former is, of course, to be preferred, on account of the obvious reference to the Silberhorn, one of the peaks or spurs of the Jungfrau, and markedly the most silvery-white part of the summit, as seen from Interlachen and its vicinity.

*Morning* walks on the mountains here, as "o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill" in Hamlet (i. 1. 167); and *Death* is her companion because life has no home on those "Alpine summits cold," or must face Death in attempting to scale them. Dawson thinks that the poet introduces *Death* into the picture because the mountains in the early light "have a chill ashen hue, as of deathly pallor;" but our explanation is simpler, and has been approved by the poet since our 1st ed. was published.

191. *Firths of ice,* etc. Bayard Taylor remarks that this would be "almost incomprehensible to one who has not looked with his own bodily eyes upon the Mer de Glace."


"And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause did seem."

199. *That like a broken purpose waste in air.* To illustrate the material by the immaterial is rare in figurative language. See our ed. of the Lady of the Lake, p. 214, note on 28.

201. *Azure pillars from the hearth.* That is, columns of smoke.

205. *Myriads of rivulets,* etc. See p. 144 above.
206. The moan of doves. Cf. The Miller's Daughter:

"the tender dove
In firry woodlands making moan;"

and Virgil, Ecl. i. 59: "Nec gemere aeria cessabit turtur ab ulmo."

245. Out of Lethe. The poet may have been thinking of Wordsworth's "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;" or of Virgil, Aen. vi. 748 (cf. Two Voices, 350):

"Has omnes, ubi mille rotam volvere per annos
Lethaeum ad fluvium deus evocat agmine magno;
Scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant
Rursus, et incipient in corpora velle reverti."

248. All the fair young planet. All the young hope of our world, "the rising generation."

250-256. How shall . . . her own. The early eds. read:

"How shall men grow? We two will serve them both
In aiding her strip off, as in us lies,
(Our place is much) the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up but drag her down—
Will leave her field to burgeon and to bloom
From all within her, make herself her own," etc.

255. Burgeon. Bud; as in In Mem. 115: "Now burgeons every maze of quick," etc.

Id. v. 1. 38; "Whereof the ewe not bites," etc.

261. His dearest bond. The early eds. have "whose" for his.

268. Nor lose, etc. In place of this line the early eds. have "More as the double-natured Poet each."

308. And girdled her with music. An allusion to the "music of the spheres." Cf. Shakespeare, M. of V. v. 1. 60:

"There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls," etc.

313-320. Said Ida, tremulously, etc. The early eds. read:

"Said Ida, 'so unlike, so all unlike—
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words:
This mother is your model. Never, Prince;
You cannot love me,' 'Nay, but thee,' I said,
'From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,
Or some mysterious or magnetic touch,
Ere seen I loved.'" etc.

327-330. Lift thine eyes, etc. The early reading is:

"lift thine eyes; doubt me no more;
Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine," etc.

335. Is morn to more, etc. The early eds. have: "I scarce believe, and all the rich to-come;" and in 337, "flowers" for weeds.

Bayard Taylor was troubled at this latter change, the first reading having suggested to him "a more delicate fancy than the poet seems to have intended." It gave him, not the view of an "ordinary piece of farm-
work," but "a vision of the autumnal haze slowly gathering from myriads of flowers as they burn away in the last ardors of summer." This is a good illustration of the manner in which a person of lively imagination may "read into" poetry a meaning which is not there. Of course, all that Tennyson had in mind was the burning up of weeds in autumn, and the apparent wavering of the landscape as seen through the rising currents of heated and smoky air.

CONCLUSION.

This part of the poem was almost entirely rewritten in the 3d ed. In place of the first thirty-two lines, the 1st ed. has only the following:

"Here closed our compound story, which at first
Had only meant to banter little maids
With mock heroics and with parody:
But slipt in some strange way, crost with burlesque,
From mock to earnest, even into tones
Of tragic, and with less and less of jest,
To such a serious end, that Lilia fixt," etc.

The 2d ed. changed Had only in the second line to "Perhaps, but."

34-80. Who might have told . . . garden rails. For this the early eds. have:

"who there began
A treatise, growing with it, and might have flow'd
In axiom worthier to be graven on rock,
Than all that lasts of old-world hieroglyph,
Or lichen-fretted Rune and arrowhead;
But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed
At sundown, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails,
And I and some went out, and mingled with them."

The reference to the French Revolution seems out of place; and yet one would be sorry to spare lines 72-79 that follow. Dawson remarks: "The poet's mind was no doubt full of the turmoil in France which broke out shortly after the publication of the first edition, but the poem is not improved as a work of art by the insertion of what must be called extraneous matter."

53. A nation yet. Cf. Death of Wellington: "A people's voice! we are a people yet."

58. Yonder. That is, in France.

70. The narrow seas. A common term for the Straits of Dover in the olden time. Cf. M. of V. ii. 8. 28:

"in the narrow seas that part
The French and English;"

and Id. iii. 1. 3: "a ship of rich lading, wracked on the narrow seas."
76. *Fill me with a faith,* etc. Dawson remarks: "This strong faith runs through all of Tennyson's poems, causing them to be true 'medicines for the mind.' It is met in the earlier poems, especially in the *Golden Fleece,* and in the conclusion of *Locksley Hall,* in the poems of middle age as here, and in No. 125 of *In Memoriam,* and in the very last published volume,—as stanza iii. of the *Children's Hospital,* and the sonnet to *Victor Hugo.* This healthful hope, pervading all his writings, is one of the secrets of the poet's popularity and influence."

87. *Pine.* That is, pineapples.

94. *Closed.* Included, enclosed; as in *Locksley Hall:* "When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed." Cf. *Macb.* iii. 1. 99:

"According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed."

97. *Rookery.* Flight of rooks, or the birds that belong to a rookery; as in *Locksley Hall:* "As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home."

102. *Why should not,* etc. The early eds. read:

"Why don't these aced Sirs
Throw up their parks some dozen times a year,
And let the people breathe?"

108. *But spoke not.* The early eds. have "Saying little;" and in 116, "without sound" for *quietly.*

118. *Those rich silks.* Cf. prol. 103 above.

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**ADDENDA.**

Page 154 (note on 163). The only changes made in the 3d ed. were:

"we past
And came (the fern-owl whirring in the copse)"

and "There enter'd an old hostel." In the 5th ed. the passage took its present form.

Page 155 (note on 183-185). Lines 183 and 185 were inserted in the 3d ed., but 184 not until the 5th.

Page 156 (first line). Lord Tennyson, in a letter dated Oct. 12, 1884, calls our attention to Dawson's remark that the girls are "uniformly in white." He says: "They were in white at chapel as we Cantabs were at our Trinity College Chapel in Cambridge; but ... Lady Psyche's 'side' (that is a Cambridge equivalent of 'pupils') wore lilac robes and Lady Blanche's robes of daffodil colour. These two made 'the long hall glitter like a bed of flowers.' Dawson has lost half the splendour of the picture. I think you should correct this error, which is a vital one." Cf. ii. 2, 303, 416, and 448.

Page 157 (note on 38). The early eds. have "and she replied."
The change in the next line (scarcely thought for "did not think") was made in the 5th ed.

In 44, the 3d ed. has "For us" instead of Indeed, which was adopted in the 5th.

Page 158 (note on 71–80). The first part of the passage (Dwell... higher) was added in the 3d ed.; the remainder (O lift... noble), in the 5th.

Page 160. In line 169, the early eds. have "her slacken'd sail."

On the Quarterly Review's objection to April daffodilly, Lord Tennyson writes us: "Daffodils in the North of England belong as much to April as to March. I myself remember a man presenting me in the streets of Dublin the finest bunch of daffodils I almost ever saw on the 15th of April. It amused me at the time, for I had just been reading the Quarterly article." We may add that ten days of Shakespeare's March properly belonged to April, as we now reckon it.

Page 161. In line 333, the early reading is "if e'er you came;" and in 402, "but come."

Page 164. In line 146, the early eds. have "A palace in our own land."

Page 170. In line 182, the early eds. have "The gates of the garden."

Page 171. In line 215, the early eds. have "Or Lady Psyche, affirm'd not, or denied."

Page 173. In line 366, the early eds. have "and the rick."

Page 175. In line 117, the early eds. have "child" for girl.

Page 176 (note on 262–300). The passage now stands as in the 5th ed. The 3d ed. does not contain lines 268 and 276–279. In 269 it has "But, Prince, the" for But then this; in 280, "Yet" for And; and in 282 and 288 (also in 314), "Life!" for 'Sdeath!

Page 180. In line 91, the early reading is "and all her hue."
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All thoughts that would the age beg
Deep down within the primitive soul,
And from the many clearly upward rise
To one who grasped the whole:

In his wide brain the feeling dwelt
That struggled on the shanju's tongue
To tell the tale of thought. Those lungs
Left in the weak thrones of wrong.

God's ville, man hopes, in common soul
Is but vague and end in
Tell from the shanju's tongue the
message rolls
A blessing to his kind."