

Said Sir Ridley, and smiled. Alfred Vargrave, before Sir Ridley observed it, had passed through the door. A few moments later, with footsteps revealing Intense agitation of uncontrolled feeling, [low. He was rapidly pacing the garden. What passed through his mind then is more than I know, But before one half-hour into darkness had fled, In the court-yard he stood with Sir Ridley. His tread Was firm and composed. Not a sign on his face Betrayed there the least agitation. "The place You so kindly have offered," he said, "I accept." And he stretched out his hand. The two travellers stepped Smiling into the carriage. And thus, out of sight, They drove down the dark road, and into the night.

XXII.

Sir Ridley was one of those wise men who, so far As their power of saying it goes, say with Zophar, "We, no doubt, are the people, and wisdom shall die with us!" Though of wisdom like theirs there is no small supply with us. Side by side in the carriage ensconced, the two men Began to converse, somewhat drowsily, when Alfred suddenly thought,— "Here's a man of ripe age, At my side, by his fellows reputed as sage, Who looks happy, and therefore who must have been wise: Suppose I with caution reveal to his eyes Some few of the reasons which make me believe

That I neither am happy nor wise? 'twould relieve And enlighten, perchance, my own darkness and doubt." For which purpose a feeler he softly put out. It was snapped up at once. "What is truth?" jesting Pilate Asked, and passed from the question at once with a smile at Its utter futility. Had he addressed it To Ridley MacNab, he at least had confessed it Admitted discussion! and certainly no man Could more promptly have answered the skeptical Roman Than Ridley. Hear some street astronomer talk! Grant him two or three hearers, a morsel of chalk, And forthwith on the pavement he'll sketch you the scheme Of the heavens. Then hear him enlarge on his theme! Not afraid of La Place, nor of Arago, he! He'll prove you the whole plan in plain A B C. Here's your sun,—call him A; B's the moon; it is clear How the rest of the alphabet brings up the rear Of the planets. Now ask Arago, ask La Place, (Your sages, who speak with the heavens face to face!) Their science in plain A B C to accord To your point-blank inquiry, my friends! not a word Will you get for your pains from their sad lips. Alas! (Not a drop from the bottle that's quite full will pass. 'Tis the half-empty vessel that freest emits The water that's in it. 'Tis thus with men's wits;)

Or at least with their knowledge. A man's capability Of imparting to others a truth with facility (exactness Is proportioned forever with painful To the portable nature, the vulgar compactness, The minuteness in size, or the lightness in weight Of the truth he imparts. So small coins circulate More freely than large ones. A beggar asks alms, And we fling him a sixpence, nor feel any qualms; But if every street charity shook an investment, Or each beggar to clothe we must strip off a vestment, The length of the process would limit the act; And therefore the truth that's summed up in a tract Is most lightly dispensed. As for Alfred, indeed, On what spoonfuls of truth he was suffered to feed By Sir Ridley, I know not. This only I know, That the two men thus talking continued to go Onward somehow, together,—on into the night,— The midnight,—in which they escape from our sight.

XXIII.

And meanwhile a world had been changed in its place, And those glittering chains that o'er blue balmy space Hang the blessing of darkness, had drawn out of sight, To solace unseen hemispheres, the soft night; And the dew of the dayspring benignly descended, And the fair morn to all things new sanction extended, In the smile of the East. And the lark soaring on,

Lost in light, shook the dawn with a song from the sun. And the world laughed. It wanted but two rosy hours From the noon, when they passed through the thick passion-flowers Of the little wild garden that dimpled before The small house where their carriage now stopped, at Bigorre. And more fair than the flowers, more fresh than the dew, With her white morning robe fitting joyously through The dark shrubs with which the soft hillside was clothed, Alfred Vargrave perceived, where he paused, his betrothed. Matilda sprang to him, at once, with a face Of such sunny sweetness, such gladness, such grace, And radiant confidence, childlike delight, That his whole heart upbraided itself at that sight. And he murmured, or sighed, "O, how could I have strayed From this sweet child, or suffered in aught to invade Her young claim on my life, though it were for an hour, The thought of another?" "Look up, my sweet flower!" He whispered her softly, "my heart unto thee Is returned, as returns to the rose the wild bee!" "And will wander no more?" laughed Matilda. "No more" He repeated. And, low to himself, "Yes, 'tis o'er!" My course, too, is decided, Lucile! Was I blind To have dreamed that these clever Frenchwomen of mind Could satisfy simply a plain English heart, Or sympathize with it?"

XXIV.
And here the first part
Of this drama is over. The curtain
falls furled
On the actors within it,—the Heart
and the World.
Wooded and woover have played with
the riddle of life,
Have they solved it?
Appear! answer, Husband and
Wife!

XXV.
Yet, ere bidding farewell to Lucile
de Nevers,
Bear her own heart's farewell in this
letter of hers.
*The COMTESSE DE NEVERS to a
FRIEND IN INDIA.*
"Once more, O my friend, to your
arms and your heart,
And the places of old . . . never,
never to part!
Once more to the palm and the foun-
tain! Once more
To the land of my birth, and the
deep skies of yore!
From the cities of Europe, pursued
by the fret
Of their turmoil wherever my foot-
steps are set;
From the children that cry for the
birth, and behold,
There is no strength to bear them,
—old Time is so old!
From the world's weary masters,
that come upon earth
Sapped and mined by the fever they
bear from their birth;
From the men of small stature, mere
parts of a crowd,
Born too late, when the strength of
the world hath been bowed;
Back,—back to the Orient, from
whose sunbright womb
Sprang the giants which now are no
more, in the bloom
And the beauty of times that are
faded forever!
To the palms! to the tombs! to the
still Sacred River!

Where I too, the child of a day that
is done,
First leapt into life, and looked up
at the sun.
Back again, back again, to the hill-
tops of home
I come, O my friend, my consoler, I
come!
Are the three intense stars, that we
watched night by night
Burning broad on the band of Orion,
as bright?
Are the large Indian moons as se-
rene as of old,
When, as children, we gathered the
moonbeans for gold?
Do you yet recollect me, my friend?
Do you still
Remember the free games we played
on the hill,
'Mid those huge stones upheaped,
where we recklessly trod
O'er the old ruined fane of the old
ruined god?
How he frowned, while around him
we carelessly played!
That frown on my life ever after
hath stayed,
Like the shade of a solemn experi-
ence upcast
From some vague supernatural grief
in the past.
For the poor god, in pain, more than
anger, he frowned,
To perceive that our youth, though
so fleeting, had found,
In its transient and ignorant glad-
ness, the bliss
Which his science divine seemed di-
vinely to miss.
Alas! you may haply remember me
yet
The free child, whose glad childhood
myself I forget.
I come—a sad woman, defrauded of
rest:
I bear to you only a laboring breast:
My heart is a storm-beaten ark,
wildly hurled
O'er the whirlpools of time, with the
wrecks of a world:

The dew from my bosom hath flown
far away;
It is flown, and returns not, though
many a day
Have I watched from the windows
of life for its coming.
Friend, I sigh for repose, I am
weary of roaming.
I know not what Ararat rises for me
Far away, o'er the waves of the
wandering sea:
I know not what rainbow may yet,
from far hills, [tion of ills:
Lift the promise of hope, the cessa-
But a voice, like the voice of my
youth, in my breast
Wakes and whispers me on—to the
East! to the East!
Shall I find the child's heart that I
left there? or find
The lost youth I recall with its pure
peace of mind?
Alas! who shall number the drops
of the rain?
Or give to the dead leaves their
greenness again?
Who shall seal up the caverns the
earthquake hath rent?
Who shall bring forth the winds that
within them are pent?
To a voice who shall render an im-
age? or who
From the heats of the noontide shall
gather the dew?
I have burned out within me the
fuel of life
Wherefore lingers the flame? Rest
is sweet after strife.
I would sleep for a while. I am
weary.
"My friend,
I had meant in these lines to re-
gather, and send
To our old home, my life's scattered
links. But 'tis vain!
Each attempt seems to shatter the
chaplet again;
Only fit now for fingers like mine to
run o'er,
Who return, a recluse, to those
cloisters of yore

Whence too far I have wandered.
"How many long years
Does it seem to me now since the
quick, scorching tears,
While I wrote to you, splashed out a
girl's premature
Moans of pain at what women in si-
lence endure!
To your eyes, friend of mine, and to
your eyes alone,
That now long-faded page of my life
hath been shown
Which recorded my heart's birth,
and death, as you know,
Many years since,—how many!
"A few months ago
I seemed reading it backward, that
page! Why explain
Whence or how? The old dream of
my life rose again.
The old superstition! the idol of old!
It is over. The leaf trodden down
in the mould
Is not to the forest more lost than to
me
That emotion. I bury it here by the
sea
Which will bear me anon far away
from the shore
Of a land which my footsteps shall
visit no more.
And a heart's *requiescat* I write on
that grave.
Hark! the sigh of the wind, and the
sound of the wave,
Seem like voices of spirits that whis-
per me home!
I come, O you whispering voices, I
come!
My friend, ask me nothing.
"Receive me alone
As a Santon receives to his dwelling
of stone
In silence some pilgrim the midnight
may bring:
It may be an angel that, weary of
wing,
Hath paused in his flight from some
city of doom,
Or only a wayfarer strayed in the
gloom.

This only I know : that in Europe at least
Lives the craft or the power that must master our East.
Wherefore strive where the gods must themselves yield at last?
Both they and their altars pass by with the Past.
The gods of the household Time thrusts from the shelf ;
And I seem as unreal and weird to myself
As those idols of old.

"Other times, other men,
Other men, other passions !
"So be it ! yet again
I turn to my birthplace, the birth-
place of morn,
And the light of those lands where
the great sun is born !
Spread your arms, O, my friend ! on
your breast let me feel
The repose which hath fled from my
own.
"Your LUCILE."

PART II.

CANTO I.

I.

HAIL, Muse ! But each Muse by this
time has, I know,
Been used up, and Apollo has bent
his own bow
All too long ; so I leave unassaulted
the portal
Of Olympus, and only invoke here a
mortal.

Hail, Murray !—not Lindley,—but
Murray and Son.
Hail, omniscient, beneficent, great
Two-in-One !
In Albemarle Street may thy temple
long stand !
Long enlightened and led by thine
erudite hand,
May each novice in science nomadic
unravel
Statistical mazes of modernized
travel !
May each inn-keeping knave long
thy judgments revere,
And the postboys of Europe regard
thee with fear ;
While they feel, in the silence of
baffled extortion,
That knowledge is power ! Long,
long, like that portion

Of the national soil which the Greek
exile took
In his baggage wherever he went,
may thy book
Cheer each poor British pilgrim, who
trusts to thy wit
Not to pay through his nose just for
following it !
Mays't thou long, O instructor ! pre-
side o'er his way,
And teach him alike what to praise
and to pay !
Thee, pursuing this pathway of song,
once again
I invoke, lest, unskilled, I should
wander in vain.
To my call be propitious, nor, churl-
ish, refuse
Thy great accents to lend to the lips
of my Muse ;
For I sing of the Naiads who dwell
'mid the stems
Of the green linden-trees by the
waters of Ems.
Yes ! thy spirit descends upon mine,
O, John Murray !
And I start—with thy book—for the
Baths in a hurry.
II.
"At Coblenz a bridge of boats
crosses the Rhine ;
And from thence the road, winding
by Ehrenbreitstein,

Passes over the frontier of Nassau.
("N. B.
No custom-house here since the Zoll-
verein." See
Murray, paragraph 30.)
"The route, at each turn,
Here the lover of nature allows to
discern,
In varying prospect, a rich wooded
dale :
The vine and acacia-tree mostly pre-
vail
In the foliage observable here ; and,
moreover,
The soil is carbonic. The road, un-
der cover
Of the grape-clad and mountainous
upland that hems
Round this beautiful spot, brings the
traveller to—"EMS.
A schnellpost from Frankfort arrives
every day.
At the Kurhaus (the old Ducal man-
sion) you pay
Eight florins for lodgings. A Restau-
rateur
Is attached to the place ; but most
travellers prefer
(Including, indeed, many persons of
note) [d'hôte.
To dine at the usual-priced table
Through the town runs the Lahn, the
steep green banks of which
Two rows of white picturesque
houses enrich ;
And between the high road and the
river is laid
Out a sort of a garden, called 'THE
Promenade.'
Female visitors here, who may make
up their mind
To ascend to the top of these moun-
tains, will find
On the banks of the stream, saddled
all the day long,
Troops of donkeys—sure-footed—
proverbially strong ;"
And the traveller at Ems may re-
mark, as he passes,
Here, as elsewhere, the women run
after the asses.

III.

'Mid the world's weary denizens
bound for these springs
In the month when the merle on the
maple-bough sings,
Pursued to the place from dissimilar
paths [the baths
By a similar sickness, there came to
Four sufferers,—each stricken deep
through the heart,
Or the head, by the self-same in-
visible dart
Of the arrow that flieth unheard in
the noon,
From the sickness that walketh un-
seen in the moon,
Through this great lazzaretto of life,
wherein each
Infects with his own sores the next
within reach.
First of these were a young English
husband and wife,
Grown weary ere half through the
journey of life.
O Nature, say where, thou gray
mother of earth,
Is the strength of thy youth ? that
thy womb brings to birth
Only old men to-day ! On the winds,
as of old, [bold ;
Thy voice in its accent is joyous and
Thy forests are green as of yore ; and
thine oceans
Yet move in the might of their
ancient emotions :
But man—thy last birth and thy
best—is no more
Life's free lord, that looked up to
the starlight of yore,
With the faith on the brow, and the
fire in the eyes,
The firm foot on the earth, the high
heart in the skies ;
But a gray-headed infant, defrauded
of youth,
Born too late or too early.
The lady, in truth,
Was young, fair, and gentle ; and
never was given
To more heavenly eyes, the pure
azure of heaven.