

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.

Never yet did the sun touch to rip-
ples of gold
Tresses brighter than those which
her soft hand unrolled
From her noble and innocent brow,
when she rose,
An Aurora, at dawn, from her balmy
repose,
And into the mirror the bloom and
the blush
Of her beauty broke, glowing ; like
light in a gush
From the sunrise in summer.
Love, roaming, shall meet
But rarely a nature more sound or
more sweet—
Eyes brighter—brows whiter— a
figure more fair—
Or lovelier lengths of more radiant
hair—
Than thine, Lady Alfred ! And
here I aver
(May those that have seen thee de-
clare if I err)
That not all the oysters in Britain
contain
A pearl pure as thou art.
Let some one explain,—
Who may know more than I of the
intimate life
Of the pearl with the oyster,—why
yet in his wife,
In despite of her beauty—and most
when he felt
His soul to the sense of her loveli-
ness melt—
Lord Alfred missed something he
sought for : indeed,
The more that he missed it the
greater the need ;
Till it seemed to himself he could
willingly spare
All the charms that he found for the
one charm not there.

IV.

For the blessings Life lends
strictly demands
The worth of their full usufruct at
our hands.
And the value of all things exists,
not indeed

In themselves, but man's use of
them, feeding man's need.
Alfred Vargrave, in wedding with
beauty and youth,
Had embraced both Ambition and
Wealth. Yet in truth
Unfulfilled the ambition, and sterile
the wealth
(In a life paralyzed by a moral ill-
health),
Had remained, while the beauty and
youth, unredeemed
From a vague disappointment at all
things, but seemed
Day by day to reproach him in silence
for all
That lost youth in himself they had
failed to recall.
No career had he followed, no object
obtained
In the world by those worldly ad-
vantages gained
From nuptials beyond which once
seemed to appear,
Lit by love, the broad path of a bril-
liant career.
All that glittered and gleamed
through the moonlight of youth
With a glory so fair, now that man-
hood in truth
Grasped and gathered it, seemed like
that false fairy gold
Which leaves in the hand only moss,
leaves, and mould!

V.

Fairy gold ! moss and leaves ! and the
young Fairy Bride ?
Lived there yet fairy-lands in the face
at his side ?
Say, O friend, if at evening thou ever
hast watched
Some pale and impalpable vapor, de-
tached
From the dim and disconsolate earth,
rise and fall
O'er the light of a sweet serene star,
until all
The chilled splendor reluctantly
waned in the deep
Of its own native heaven ? Even so
seemed to creep

O'er that fair and ethereal face, day
by day,
While the radiant vermeil, subsiding
away,
Hid its light in the heart, the faint
gradual veil
Of a sadness unconscious.
The lady grew pale
As silent her lord grew : and both, as
they eyed
Each the other askance, turned, and
secretly sighed.
Ah, wise friend, what avails all ex-
perience can give ?
True, we know what life is—but,
alas ! do we live ?
The grammar of life we have gotten
by heart,
But life's self we have made a dead
language,—an art,
Not a voice. Could we speak it, but
once, as 'twas spoken
When the silence of passion the first
time was broken !
Cuvier knew the world better than
Adam, no doubt :
But the last man, at best, was but
learned about
What the first, without learning, en-
joyed. What art thou
To the man of to-day, O Leviathan,
now ?
A science. What wert thou to him
that from ocean
First beheld thee appear ? A sur-
prise,—an emotion !
When life leaps in the veins, when it
beats in the heart,
When it thrills as it fills every ani-
mate part,
Where lurks it ? how works it ? . . .
we scarcely detect it.
But life goes : the heart dies : haste,
O leech, and dissect it !
This accursed æsthetic, ethical age
Hath so fingered life's hornbook, so
blurred every page,
That the old glad romance, the gay
chivalrous story,
With its fables of faery, its legends
of glory,

Is turned to a tedious instruction, not
new
To the children that read it insipidly
through.
We know too much of Love ere we
love. We can trace
Nothing new, unexpected, or strange
in his face
When we see it at last. 'Tis the
same little Cupid,
With the same dimpled cheek, and
the smile almost stupid,
We have seen in our pictures, and
stuck on our shelves,
And copied a hundred times over,
ourselves.
And wherever we turn, and what-
ever we do,
Still, that horrible sense of the *déjà
connu* !

VI.

Perchance 'twas the fault of the life
that they led ;
Perchance 'twas the fault of the
novels they read ;
Perchance 'twas a fault in them-
selves ; I am bound not
To say : this I know—that these two
creatures found not
In each other some sign they expect-
ed to find
Of a something unnamed in the
heart or the mind ;
And, missing it, each felt a right to
complain
Of a sadness which each found no
word to explain.
Whatever it was, the world noticed
not it
In the light-hearted beauty, the light-
hearted wit.
Still, as once with the actors in
Greece, 'tis the case,
Each must speak to the crown with a
mask on his face.
Praise followed Matilda wherever
she went.
She was flattered. Can flattery pur-
chase content ?

Yes. While to its voice, for a moment, she listened,
The young cheek still bloomed, and the soft eyes still glistened;
And her lord, when, like one of those light vivid things
That glide down the gauzes of summer with wings
Of rapturous radiance, unconscious she moved
Through that buzz of inferior creatures, which proved
Her beauty, their envy, one moment forgot
Mid the many charms there, the one charm that was not:
And when o'er her beauty enraptured he bowed,
(As they turned to each other, each flushed from the crowd,)
And murmured those praises which yet seemed more dear
Than the praises of others had grown to her ear,
She, too, ceased awhile her own fate to regret:
"Yes! . . . he loves me," she sighed;
"this is love, then,—and yet—!"

VII.

Ah, that *yet!* fatal word! 'tis the moral of all
Thought and felt, seen or done, in this world since the Fall!
It stands at the end of each sentence we learn;
It flits in the vista of all we discern;
It leads us, forever and ever, away
To find in to-morrow what flies with to-day.
'Twas this same little fatal and mystical word [and lord
That now, like a mirage, led my lady
To the waters of Ems from the waters of Marah;
Drooping pilgrims in Fashion's blank, arid Sahara!

VIII.

At the same time, pursued by a spell much the same,
To these waters two other worn pilgrims there came:

One a man, one a woman: just now, at the latter,
As the Reader I mean by and by to look at her
And judge for himself, I will not even glance.

IX.

Of the self-crowned young kings of the Fashion in France
Whose resplendent regalia so dazzled the sight,
Whose horse was so perfect, whose boots were so bright,
Who so hailed in the salon, so marked in the Bois,
Who so welcomed by all, as Eugène de Luvois?
Of all the smooth-browed premature debauchees
In that town of all towns, where Debauchery sees
On the forehead of youth her mark everywhere graven,—
In Paris I mean,—where the streets are all paven
By those two fiends whom Milton saw bridging the way
From Hell to this planet,—who, haughty and gay,
The free rebel of life, bound or led by no law,
Walked that causeway as bold as Eugène de Luvois?
Yes! he marched through the great masquerade, loud of tongue,
Bold of brow: but the motley he masked in, it hung
So loose, trailed so wide, and appeared to impede
So strangely at times the vexed effort at speed,
That a keen eye might guess it was made—not for him,
But some brawler more stalwart of stature and limb.
That it irked him, in truth, you at times could divine,
For when low was the music, and split was the wine,

He would clutch at the garment, as though it oppressed
And stifled some impulse that choked in his breast.

X.

What! he, . . . the light sport of his frivolous ease!
Was he, too, a prey to a mortal disease?
My friend, hear a parable: ponder it well:
For a moral there is in the tale that I tell.
One evening I sat in the Palais Royal,
And there, while I laughed at Grasset and Arnal,
My eye fell on the face of a man at my side;
Every time that he laughed I observed that he sighed,
As though vexed to be pleased. I remarked that he sat
Ill at ease on his seat, and kept twirling his hat
In his hand, with a look of unquiet abstraction.
I inquired the cause of his dissatisfaction.
"Sir," he said, "if what vexes me here you would know,
Learn that, passing this way some few half-hours ago,
I walked into the Français, to look at Rachel.
(Sir that woman in Phèdre is a miracle!)—Well,
I asked for a box: they were occupied all:
For a seat in the balcony: all taken! a stall:
Taken too: the whole house was as full as could be,—
Not a hole for a rat! I had just time to see [friend
The lady I love *tête-à-tête* with a
In a box out of reach at the opposite end:
Then the crowd pushed me out.
What was left me to do?

I tried for the tragedy . . . *que voulez-vous?*
Every place for the tragedy booked! . . . *mon ami,*
The farce was close by: . . . at the farce *me voici!*
The piece is a new one: and Grasset plays well:
There is drollery, too, in that fellow Ravel:
And Hyacinth's nose is superb! . . . Yet I meant
My evening elsewhere, and not thus, to have spent.
Fate orders these things by her will, not by ours!
Sir, mankind is the sport of invisible powers."
I once met the Duc de Luvois for a moment;
And I marked, when his features I fixed in my comment,
O'er those features the same vague disquietude stray
I had seen on the face of my friend at the play;
And I thought that he too, very probably, spent
His evenings not wholly as first he had meant.

XI.

O source of the holiest joys we inherit,
O Sorrow, thou solemn, invisible spirit!
Ill fares it with man when, through life's desert sand,
Grown impatient too soon for the long-promised land
He turns from the worship of thee, as thou art,
An expressless and imageless truth in the heart,
And takes of the jewels of Egypt, the pelf
And the gold of the goddess, to make to himself
A gaudy, idolatrous image of thee,
And then bows to the sound of the cymbal the knee.

The sorrows we make to ourselves
are false gods :
Like the prophets of Baal, our
bosoms with rods
We may smite, we may gash at our
hearts till they bleed,
But these idols are blind, deaf, and
dumb to our need.
The land is athirst, and cries out !
. . . 'tis in vain ;
The great blessing of Heaven de-
scends not in rain.

XII.

It was night ; and the lamps were
beginning to gleam
Through the long linden-trees, fold-
ed each in his dream,
From that building which looks like
a temple . . . and is
The Temple of—Health ? Nay, but
enter ! I wish
That never the rosy-hued deity
knew
One votary out of that sallow-
cheeked crew
Of Courlanders, Wallacs, Greeks, af-
fable Russians,
Explosive Parisians, potato-faced
Prussians ;
Jews—Hamburgers chiefly ;—pure
patriots,—Suabians ;—
“Cappadocians and Elamites, Cretes
and Arabians,
And the dwellers in Pontus” . . .
My muse will not weary
More lines with the list of them . . .
cur fremuere ?
What is it they murmur, and mutter,
and hum ?
Into what Pandemonium is Pente-
cost come ?
O, what is the name of the god at
whose fane
Every nation is mixed in so motley
a train ?
What weird Kabala lies on those
tables outspread ?
To what oracle turns with attention
each head ?

What holds these pale worshippers
each so devout,
And what are those hierophants
busied about ?

XIII.

Here passes, repasses, and fits to
and fro,
And rolls without ceasing the great
Yes and No :
Round this altar alternate the weird
Passions dance,
And the God worshipped here is the
old God of Chance.
Through the wide-open doors of the
distant saloon
Flute, hautboy, and fiddle are
squeaking in tune ;
And an indistinct music forever is
rolled,
That mixes and chimes with the
chink of the gold,
From a vision, that fits in a lumin-
ous haze,
Of figures forever eluding the gaze ;
It fleets through the doorway, it
gleams on the glass,
And the weird words pursue it—
Rouge, Impair, et Passe !
Like a sound borne in sleep through
such dreams as encumber
With haggard emotions the wild
wicked slumber
Of some witch when she seeks,
through a night-mare, to grab
at
The hot hoof of the fiend, on her
way to the Sabbat.

XIV.

The Duc de Luvois and Lord Alfred
had met
Some few evenings ago (for the sea-
son as yet
Was but young) in this self-same
Pavilion of Chance.
The idler from England, the idler
from France
Shook hands, each, of course, with
much cordial pleasure :
An acquaintance at Ems is to most
men a treasure,

And they both were too well-bred in
ought to betray
One discourteous remembrance of
things passed away.
'Twas a sight that was pleasant, in-
deed, to be seen,
These friends exchange greetings ;—
the men who had been
Foes so nearly in days that were
past.

This, no doubt,
Is why, on the night I am speaking
about,
My Lord Alfred sat down by him-
self at roulette,
Without one suspicion his bosom to
fret,
Although he had left, with his pleas-
ant French friend,
Matilda, half vexed, at the room's
farthest end.

XV.

Lord Alfred his combat with For-
tune began
With a few modest thalers—away
they all ran—
The reserve followed fast in the rear.
As his purse
Grew lighter his spirits grew sensi-
bly worse.
One needs not a Bacon to find a
cause for it :
'Tis an old law in physics—*Natura
abhorret*
Vacuum—and my lord, as he watch-
ed his last crown
Tumble into the bank, turned away
with a frown
Which the brows of Napoleon him-
self might have decked
On that day of all days when an em-
pire was wrecked
On thy plain, Waterloo, and he wit-
nessed the last
Of his favorite Guard cut to pieces,
aghast !
Just then Alfred felt, he could
scarcely tell why,
Within him the sudden strange
sense that some eye

Had long been intently regarding
him there,—
That some gaze was upon him too
searching to bear.
He rose and looked up. Was it fact ?
Was it fable ?
Was it dream ? Was it waking ?
Across the green table,
That face, with its features so fa-
tally known,—
Those eyes, whose deep gaze an-
swered strangely his own,—
What was it ? Some ghost from its
grave come again ?
Some cheat of a feverish, fanciful
brain ?
Or was it herself—with those deep
eyes of hers,
And that face unforgotten ?—Lucile
de Nevers !

XVI.

Ah, well that pale woman a phan-
tom might seem,
Who appeared to herself but the
dream of a dream !
'Neath those features so calm, that
fair forehead so hushed,
That pale cheek forever by passion
unflushed,
There yawned an insatiate void, and
there heaved
A tumult of restless regrets unre-
lieved.
The brief noon of beauty was pass-
ing away,
And the chill of the twilight fell, si-
lent and gray,
O'er that deep, self-perceived isola-
tion of soul.
And now, as all round her the dim
evening stole,
With its weird desolations, she in-
wardly grieved
For the want of that tender assur-
ance received
From the warmth of a whisper, the
glance of an eye,
Which should say, or should look,
“Fear thou naught,—I am
by !”

And thus, through that lonely and self-fixed existence,
 Crept a vague sense of silence, and horror, and distance :
 A strange sort of faint-footed fear,
 —like a mouse
 That comes out, when 'tis dark, in some old ducal house
 Long deserted, where no one the creature can scare,
 And the forms on the arras are all that move there.

In Rome,—in the Forum,—there opened one night
 A gulf. All the augurs turned pale at the sight.
 In this omen the anger of Heaven they read.
 Men consulted the gods : then the oracle said :— [till at last
 "Ever open this gulf shall endure, That which Rome hath most precious within it be cast."
 The Romans threw in it their corn and their stuff,
 But the gulf yawned as wide. Rome seemed likely enough
 To be ruined ere this rent in her heart she could choke.
 Then Curtius, revering the oracle, spoke : [tion is come :
 "O Quirites ! to this Heaven's quest— What to Rome is most precious ? The manhood of Rome."
 He plunged, and the gulf closed.
 The tale is not new :
 But the moral applies many ways, and is true.
 How, for hearts rent in twain, shall the curse be destroyed ?
 'Tis a warm human life that must fill up the void.
 Thorough many a heart runs the rent in the fable ; [able ?
 But who to discover a Curtius is

xvii.

Back she came from her long hiding-place, at the source
 Of the sunrise ; where, fair in their fabulous course,

Run the rivers of Eden : an exile again,
 To the cities of Europe,—the scenes, and the men,
 And the life, and the ways, she had left : still oppressed
 With the same hungry heart, and unpeaceable breast.
 The same, to the same things ! The world, she had quitted
 With a sigh, with a sigh she re-entered. Soon flitted
 Through the salons and clubs, to the great satisfaction [tion.
 Of Paris, the news of a novel attraction—The enchanting Lucile, the gay Countess, once more
 To her old friend, the World, had re-opened her door ;
 The World came, and shook hands, and was pleased and amused
 With what the World then went away and abused.
 From the woman's fair fame it in naught could detract :
 'Twas the woman's free genius it vexed and attacked
 With a sneer at her freedom of action and speech.
 But its light careless cavils, in truth, could not reach
 The lone heart they aimed at. Her tears fell beyond
 The world's limit, to feel that the world could respond
 To that heart's deepest, innermost yearning, in naught.
 'Twas no longer this earth's idle inmates she sought :
 The wit of the woman sufficed to engage
 In the woman's gay court the first men of the age.
 Some had genius ; and all, wealth of mind to confer
 On the world : but that wealth was not lavished for her.
 For the genius of man, though so human indeed,
 When called out to man's help by some great human need,

The right to a man's chance acquaintance refuses
 To use what it hoards for mankind's nobler uses.
 Genius touches the world at but one point alone
 Of that spacious circumference, never quite known
 To the world : all the infinite number of lines
 That radiate thither a mere point combines,
 But one only,—some central affection apart
 From the reach of the world, in which Genius is Heart,
 And love, life's fine centre, includes heart and mind.
 And therefore it was that Lucile sighed to find [her ken,
 Men of genius appear, one and all in
 When they stooped themselves to it, as mere clever men ;
 Artists, statesmen, and they in whose works are unfurled
 Worlds new-fashioned for man, as mere men of the world.
 And so, as alone now she stood, in the sight
 Of the sunset of youth, with her face from the light,
 And watched her own shadow grow long at her feet,
 As though stretched out, the shade of some other to meet,
 The woman felt homeless and childless : in scorn
 She seemed mocked by the voices of children unborn ;
 And when from these sombre reflections away
 She turned, with a sigh, to that gay world, more gay
 For her presence within it, she knew herself friendless ;
 That her path led from peace, and that path appeared endless !
 That even her beauty had been but a snare,
 And her wit sharpened only the edge of despair.

xviii.

With a face all transfigured and flushed by surprise,
 Alfred turned to Lucile. With those deep searching eyes
 She looked into his own. Not a word that she said,
 Not a look, not a blush, one emotion betrayed.
 She seemed to smile through him, at something beyond :
 When she answered his questions, she seemed to respond
 To some voice in herself. With no trouble described,
 To each troubled inquiry she calmly replied.
 Not so he. At the sight of that face back again
 To his mind came the ghost of a long-stifed pain,
 A remembered resentment, half checked by a wild
 And relentless regret like a motherless child
 Softly seeking admittance, with plaintive appeal,
 To the heart which resisted its entrance.

Lucile

And himself thus, however, with freedom allowed
 To old friends, talking still side by side, left the crowd
 By the crowd unobserved. Not unnoticed, however,
 By the Duke and Matilda. Matilda had never
 Seen her husband's new friend.
 She had followed by chance,
 Or by instinct, the sudden, half-menacing glance
 Which the Duke, when he witnessed their meeting, had turned
 On Lucile and Lord Alfred ; and, scared, she discerned
 On his features the shade of a gloom so profound
 That she shuddered instinctively.
 Deaf to the sound

Of her voice, to some startled inquiry
of hers
He replied not, but murmured, "Lucile de Nevers
Once again then? so be it!" In the
mind of that man,
At that moment, there shaped itself
vaguely the plan
Of a purpose malignant and dark,
such alone
(To his own secret heart but imperfectly shown)
As could spring from the cloudy,
fierce chaos of thought
By which all his nature to tumult
was wrought.

xix.

"So!" he thought, "they meet thus:
and reweave the old charm!
And she hangs on his voice, and she
leans on his arm,
And she heeds me not, seeks me not,
recks not of me!
O, what if I showed her that I, too,
can be
Loved by one—her own rival—more
fair and more young?"
The serpent rose in him: a serpent
which, stung,
Sought to sting.
Each unconscious, indeed, of the
eye
Fixed upon them, Lucile and my
lord sauntered by,
In converse which seemed to be
earnest. A smile
Now and then seemed to show where
their thoughts touched. Mean-
while
The muse of this story, convinced
that they need her,
To the Duke and Matilda returns,
gentle Reader.

xx.

The Duke, with that sort of aggressive
false praise
Which is meant a resentful remonstrance
to raise
From a listener (as sometimes a
judge, just before

He pulls down the black cap, very
gently goes o'er
The case for the prisoner, and deals
tenderly
With the man he is minded to hang
by and by),
Had referred to Lucile, and then
stopped to detect
In the face of Matilda the growing
effect
Of the words he had dropped.
(There's no weapon that slays
Its victim so surely (if well aimed)
as praise.)
Thus, a pause on their converse had
fallen: and now
Each was silent, preoccupied,
thoughtful.

You know

There are moments when silence,
prolonged and unbroken,
More expressive may be than all
words ever spoken.
It is when the heart has an instinct
of what

In the heart of another is passing.
And that
In the heart of Matilda, what was it?
Whence came
To her cheek on a sudden that trem-
ulous flame?

What weighed down her head?
All your eye could discover
Was the fact that Matilda was
troubled. Moreover
That trouble the Duke's presence
seemed to renew.

She, however, broke silence, the
first of the two.
The Duke was too prudent to shat-
ter the spell
Of a silence which suited his pur-
pose so well.

She was plucking the leaves from a
pale blush rose blossom
Which had fallen from the nosegay
she held in her bosom.
"This poor flower," she said, "seems
it not out of place
In this hot, lamplit air, with its
fresh, fragile grace?"

She bent her head low as she spoke.
With a smile
The Duke watched her caressing the
leaves all the while,
And continued on his side the si-
lence. He knew
This would force his companion
their talk to renew
At the point that he wished; and
Matilda divined
The significant pause with new
trouble of mind.
She lifted one moment her head;
but her look
Encountered the ardent regard of
the Duke,
And dropped back on her floweret
abashed. Then, still seeking
The assurance she fancied she
showed him by speaking,
She conceived herself safe in adopt-
ing again
The theme she should most have
avoided just then.

xxi.

"Duke," she said, . . . and she felt,
as she spoke, her cheek burned,
"You know, then, this . . . lady?"
"Too well!" he returned.

MATILDA.

True; you drew with emotion her
portrait just now.

LUIVOIS.

With emotion?

MATILDA.

Yes, yes! you described her, I know,
As possessed of a charm all unri-
valled.

LUIVOIS.

Alas!
You mistook me completely! You,
madam, surpass
This lady as moonlight does lamp-
light; as youth
Surpasses its best imitations; as
truth
The fairest of falsehoods surpasses;
as nature

Surpasses art's masterpiece; ay, as
the creature
Fresh and pure in its native adorn-
ment surpasses
All the charms got by heart at the
world's looking-glasses!

"Yet you said,"—she continued
with some trepidation,
"That you quite comprehended" . . .
a slight hesitation
Shook the sentence, . . . "a passion
so strong as"

LUIVOIS.

True, true!

But not in a man that had once
looked at you.

Nor can I conceive, or excuse, or . . .
"Hush, hush!"

She broke in, all more fair for one
innocent blush.

"Between man and woman these
things differ so!

It may be that the world pardons . . .
(how should I know?)

In you what it visits on us; or 'tis
true,

It may be, that we women are better
than you."

LUIVOIS.

Who denies it? Yet, madam, once
more you mistake.

The world, in its judgment, some
difference may make

'Twixt the man and the woman, so
far as respects

Its social enactments; but not as
affects

The one sentiment which, it were
easy to prove,

Is the sole law we look to the mo-
ment we love.

MATILDA.

That may be. Yet I think I should
be less severe.

Although so inexperienced in such
things, I fear

I have learned that the heart cannot
always repress
Or account for the feelings which
sway it.

"Yes! yes!
That is too true, indeed!" . . . the
Duke sighed.

And again
For one moment in silence continued
the twain.

XXII.

At length the Duke slowly, as though
he had needed
All this time to repress his emotions,
proceeded:

"And yet! . . . what avails, then, to
woman the gift
Of a beauty like yours, if it cannot
uplift

Her heart from the reach of one
doubt, one despair,

One pang of wronged love, to which
women less fair

Are exposed, when they love?"

With a quick change of tone,
As though by resentment impelled,
he went on:—

"The name that you bear, it is whis-
pered, you took

From love, not convention. Well,
lady, . . . that look

So excited, so keen, on the face you
must know

Throughout all its expressions,—that
rapturous glow—

Those eloquent features—significant
eyes—

Which that pale woman sees, yet be-
trays no surprise,"

(He pointed his hand as he spoke to
the door,

Fixing with it Lucile and Lord Al-
fred,) . . . "before,

Have you ever once seen what just
now you may view

In that face so familiar? . . . no,
lady, 'tis new.

Young, lovely, and loving, no doubt,
as you are,

Are you loved?" . . .

XXIII.

He looked at her—paused—felt if
thus far

The ground held yet. The ardor with
which he had spoken,

This close, rapid question, thus sud-
denly broken,

Inspired in Matilda a vague sense of
fear,

As though some indefinite danger
were near.

With composure, however, at once
she replied:—

"'Tis three years since the day when
I first was a bride,

And my husband I never had cause
to suspect;

Nor ever have stooped, sir, such cause
to detect.

Yet if in his looks or his acts I should
See, or fancy—some moment's ob-
livion of me,

I trust that I too should forget it,—
for you

Must have seen that my heart is my
husband's."

The hue

On her cheek, with the effort where-
with to the Duke

She had uttered this vague and half-
frightened rebuke,

Was white as the rose in her hand.
The last word

Seemed to die on her lip, and could
scarcely be heard.

There was silence again.

A great step had been made
By the Duke in the words he that
evening had said.

There, half drowned by the music,
Matilda, that night,

Had listened,—long listened,—no
doubt, in despite

Of herself, to a voice she should
never have heard,

And her heart by that voice had
been troubled and stirred.

And so, having suffered in silence his
eye

To fathom her own, he resumed, with
a sigh:

XXIV.

"Will you suffer me, lady, your
thoughts to invade

By disclosing my own? The posi-
tion," he said,

"In which we so strangely seem
placed may excuse

The frankness and force of the words
which I use.

You say that your heart is your hus-
band's. You say

That you love him. You think so,
of course, lady . . . nay,

Such a love, I admit, were a merit,
no doubt.

But, trust me, no true love there can
be without

Its dread penalty—jealousy.

Until now,—either thanks to a singu-
lar art

Of supreme self-control, you have
held them all down

Unrevealed in your heart,—or you
never have known

Even one of those fierce irresistible
pangs

Which deep passion engenders; that
anguish which hangs

On the heart like a nightmare, by
jealousy bred.

But if, lady, the love you describe, in
the bed

Of a blissful security thus hath re-
Undisturbed with mild eyelids on
happiness closed,

Were it not to expose to a peril un-
just,

And most cruel, that happy repose
you so trust

To meet, to receive, and, indeed, it
may be,

For how long I know not, continue
A woman whose place rivals yours in
the life

And the heart which not only your
title of wife,

But also (forgive me!) your beauty
alone,

Should have made wholly yours?—
You, who gave all your own!

Reflect!—'tis the peace of existence
you stake

On the turn of a die. And for whose
—for his sake?

While you witness this woman, the
false point of view

From which she must now be re-
garded by you

Will exaggerate to you, whatever
they be,

The charms I admit she possesses.
To me

They are trivial indeed; yet to your
eyes, I fear

And foresee, they will true and in-
trinsic appear.

Self-unconscious, and sweetly unable
to guess

How more lovely by far is the grace
you possess,

You will wrong your own beauty.
The graces of art,

You will take for the natural charm
of the heart;

Studied manners, the brilliant and
bold repartee,

Will too soon in that fatal compari-
son be

To your fancy more fair than the
sweet timid sense

Which, in shrinking, betrays its own
best eloquence.

O then, lady, then, you will feel in
your heart

The poisonous pain of a fierce jeal-
ous dart!

While you see her, yourself you no
longer will see,—

You will hear her, and hear not your-
self,—you will be

Unhappy; unhappy, because you
will deem

Your own power less great than her
power will seem.

And I shall not be by your side, day
by day

In despite of your noble displeasure,
'You are fairer than she, as the star
is more fair

Than the diamond, the brightest
that beauty can wear!"

XXV.

This appeal, both by looks and by language, increased
The trouble Matilda felt grown in her breast.

Still she spoke with what calmness she could :—

“Sir, the while I thank you,” she said, with a faint scornful smile,
“For your fervor in painting my fancied distress :

Allow me the right some surprise to express

At the zeal you betray in disclosing to me

The possible depth of my own misery.”

“That zeal would not startle you, madam,” he said,

“Could you read in my heart, as myself I have read,

The peculiar interest which causes that zeal—”

Matilda her terror no more could conceal.

“Duke,” she answered in accents short, cold, and severe,

As she rose from her seat, “I continue to hear ;

But permit me to say, I no more understand.”

“Forgive !” with a nervous appeal of the hand,

And a well-feigned confusion of voice and of look,

“Forgive, O, forgive me !” at once cried the Duke,

“I forgot that you know me so slightly. Your leave

I entreat (from your anger those words to retrieve)

For one moment to speak of myself, —for I think

That you wrong me—”

His voice as in pain seemed to sink ;

And tears in his eyes, as he lifted them, glistened.

XXVI.

Matilda, despite of herself, sat and listened.

XXVII.

“Beneath an exterior which seems, and may be,

Worldly, frivolous, careless, my heart hides in me,”

He continued, “a sorrow which draws me to side

With all things that suffer. Nay, laugh not,” he cried,

“At so strange an avowal.

“I seek at a ball, for instance,—the beauty admired by all ?

No ! some plain, insignificant creature, who sits

Scorned of course by the beauties, and shunned by the wits.

All the world is accustomed to wound, or neglect,

Or oppress, claims my heart and commands my respect.

No Quixote, I do not affect to be long,

I admit, to those chartered redressers of wrong ;

But I seek to console, where I can. ’Tis a part

Not brilliant, I own, yet its joys bring no smart.”

These trite words, from the tone which he gave them, received

An appearance of truth, which might well be believed

By a heart shrewder yet than Matilda’s.

And so He continued . . . “O lady ! alas, could you know

What injustice and wrong in this world I have seen !

How many a woman, believed to have been [aside

Without a regret, I have known turn To burst into heart-broken tears undescried !

(On how many a lip have I witnessed the smile

Which but hid what was breaking the poor heart the while !”)

Said Matilda, “Your life, it would seem, then, must be

One long act of devotion.”

“Perhaps so,” said he ; “But at least that devotion small merit can boast,

For one day may yet come,—if one day at the most,—

When, perceiving at last all the difference—how great !—

’Twixt the heart that neglects and the heart that can wait.

’Twixt the natures that pity, the natures that pain,

Some woman, that else might have passed in disdain

Or indifference by me,—in passing that day

Might pause with a word or a smile to repay

This devotion,—and then” . . .

XXVIII.

To Matilda’s relief At that moment her husband approached.

With some grief I must own that her welcome, perchance, was expressed

The more eagerly just for one twinge in her breast

Of a conscience disturbed, and her smile not less warm,

Though she saw the Countesse de Nevers on his arm.

The Duke turned and adjusted his collar.

Thought he, “Good ! the gods fight my battle tonight. I foresee

That the family doctor’s the part I must play.

Very well ! but the patients my visits shall pay.”

Lord Alfred presented Lucile to his wife ;

And Matilda, repressing with effort the strife

Of emotions which made her voice shake, murmured low

Some faint, troubled greeting. The Duke, with a bow

Which betokened a distant defiance, replied

To Lucile’s startled cry, as surprised she descried

Her former gay wooer. Anon, with the grace

Of that kindness which seeks to win kindness, her place

She assumed by Matilda, unconscious, perchance,

Or resolved not to notice, the half-frightened glance

That followed that movement.

The Duke to his feet Arose ; and, in silence, relinquished his seat.

One must own that the moment was awkward for all ;

But nevertheless, before long, the strange thrall

Of Lucile’s gracious tact was by every one felt,

And from each the reserve seemed, reluctant, to melt ;

Thus, conversing together, the whole of the four

Through the crowd sauntered, smiling.

XXIX.

Approaching the door, Eugène de Luvoif, who had fallen behind,

By Lucile, after some hesitation, was joined

With a gesture of gentle and kindly appeal

Which appeared to imply, without words, “Let us feel

That the friendship between us in years that are fled,

Has survived one mad moment forgotten,” she said,

“You remain, Duke, at Ems ?”

He turned on her a look Of frigid, resentful, and sullen rebuke ;