

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

'FOR THIS TRUE NOBLENES I
SEEK IN VAIN'

'For this true nobleness I seek in vain,
In woman and in man I find it not;
I almost weary of my earthly lot,
My life-springs are dried up with burning
pain.'
Thou find'st it not? I pray thee look
again,
Look inward through the depths of thine
own soul.
How is it with thee? Art thou sound and
whole?
Doth narrow search show thee no earthly
stain?
BE NOBLE! and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own;
Then wilt thou see it gleam in many
eyes,
Then will pure light around thy path be
shed,
And thou wilt nevermore be sad and lone.
1840. 1840.

MY LOVE¹

Not as all other women are
Is she that to my soul is dear;
Her glorious fancies come from far,
Beneath the silver evening-star,
And yet her heart is ever near.

Great feelings hath she of her own,
Which lesser souls may never know;
God giveth them to her alone,
And sweet they are as any tone
Wherewith the wind may choose to blow. 10

Yet in herself she dwelleth not,
Although no home were half so fair;
No simplest duty is forgot,

¹ On the poems of 1840 and 1841, see Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. i, pp. 76-97.

Life hath no dim and lowly spot
That doth not in her sunshine share.

She doeth little kindnesses,
Which most leave undone, or despise:
For naught that sets one heart at ease,
And giveth happiness or peace,
Is low-esteemed in her eyes. 20

She hath no scorn of common things,
And, though she seem of other birth,
Round us her heart entwines and clings,
And patiently she folds her wings
To tread the humble paths of earth.

Blessing she is: God made her so,
And deeds of week-day holiness
Fall from her noiseless as the snow,
Nor hath she ever chanced to know
That aught were easier than to bless. 30

She is most fair, and thereunto
Her life doth rightly harmonize;
Feeling or thought that was not true
Ne'er made less beautiful the blue
Unclouded heaven of her eyes.

She is a woman: one in whom
The spring-time of her childish years
Hath never lost its fresh perfume,
Though knowing well that life hath room
For many blights and many tears. 40

I love her with a love as still
As a broad river's peaceful might,
Which, by high tower and lowly mill,
Seems following its own wayward will,
And yet doth ever flow aright.

And, on its full, deep breast serene,
Like quiet isles my duties lie;
It flows around them and between,
And makes them fresh and fair and
green,

Sweet homes wherein to live and die. 50
1840. 1840.

'MY LOVE, I HAVE NO FEAR
THAT THOU SHOULDST DIE'

My Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst
die;
Albeit I ask no fairer life than this,
Whose numbering-clock is still thy gentle
kiss,
While Time and Peace with hands en-
lockèd fly;
Yet care I not where in Eternity
We live and love, well knowing that there is
No backward step for those who feel the
bliss
Of Faith as their most lofty yearnings
high:
Love hath so purified my being's core,
Meseems I scarcely should be startled, even,
To find, some morn, that thou hadst gone
before;
Since, with thy love, this knowledge too
was given,
Which each calm day doth strengthen
more and more,
That they who love are but one step from
Heaven. (1843.)

1841.

'I ASK NOT FOR THOSE
THOUGHTS, THAT SUDDEN
LEAP'

I ASK not for those thoughts, that sudden
leap
From being's sea, like the isle-seeming
Kraken,
With whose great rise the ocean all is
shaken
And a heart-tremble quivers through the
deep;
Give me that growth which some perchance
deem sleep,
Wherewith the steadfast coral-stems uprising,
Which, by the toil of gathering energies,
Their upward way into clear sunshine keep,
Until, by Heaven's sweetest influences,
Slowly and slowly spreads a speck of green
Into a pleasant island in the seas,
Where, 'mid tall palms, the cane-roofed
home is seen,
And wearied men shall sit at sunset's hour,
Hearing the leaves and loving God's dear
power. (1843.)

1841.

'GREAT TRUTHS ARE PORTIONS
OF THE SOUL OF MAN'

GREAT Truths are portions of the soul of
man;
Great souls are portions of Eternity;
Each drop of blood that e'er through true
heart ran
With lofty message, ran for thee and
me;
For God's law, since the starry song
began,
Hath been, and still forevermore must
be,
That every deed which shall outlast Time's
span
Must spur the soul to be erect and free;
Slave is no word of deathless lineage
sprung;
Too many noble souls have thought and
died,
Too many mighty poets lived and sung,
And our good Saxon, from lips purified
With martyr-fire, throughout the world
hath rung
Too long to have God's holy cause denied. 1842.

1841.

TO THE SPIRIT OF KEATS

GREAT soul, thou sittest with me in my
room,
Uplifting me with thy vast, quiet eyes,
On whose full orbs, with kindly lustre,
lies
The twilight warmth of ruddy ember-
gloom:
Thy clear, strong tones will oft bring sud-
den bloom
Of hope secure, to him who lonely cries,
Wrestling with the young poet's agonies,
Neglect and scorn, which seem a certain
doom:
Yes! the few words which, like great
thunder-drops,
Thy large heart down to earth shook doubt-
fully,
Thrilled by the inward lightning of its
might,
Serene and pure, like gushing joy of light,
Shall track the eternal chords of Des-
tiny,
After the moon-led pulse of ocean stops.

1841.

1842.

'OUR LOVE IS NOT A FADING
EARTHLY FLOWER'

OUR love is not a fading earthly flower:
Its winged seed dropped down from Para-
dise,
And, nursed by day and night, by sun and
shower,
Doth momentarily to fresher beauty rise:
To us the leafless autumn is not bare,
Nor winter's rattling boughs lack lusty
green.
Our summer hearts make summer's ful-
ness, where
No leaf, or bud, or blossom may be seen:
For nature's life in love's deep life doth lie,
Love, — whose forgetfulness is beauty's
death,
Whose mystic key these cells of Thou and I
Into the infinite freedom openeth,
And makes the body's dark and narrow
grate
The wide-flung leaves of Heaven's own
palace-gate.

1842.

1843.

'BELOVED, IN THE NOISY CITY
HERE'

BELOVED, in the noisy city here,
The thought of thee can make all turmoil
cease;
Around my spirit, folds thy spirit clear
Its still, soft arms, and circles it with peace;
There is no room for any doubt or fear
In souls so overfilled with love's increase,
There is no memory of the bygone year
But growth in heart's and spirit's perfect
ease:
How hath our love, half nebulous at first,
Rounded itself into a full-orbed sun!
How have our lives and wills (as haply erst
They were, ere this forgetfulness begun)
Through all their earthly distances out-
burst,
And melted, like two rays of light in one!

1842.

(1843.)

SONG

O MOONLIGHT deep and tender,
A year and more ago,
Your mist of golden splendor
Round my betrothal shone!

O elm-leaves dark and dewy,
The very same ye seem,
The low wind trembles through ye,
Ye murmur in my dream!

O river, dim with distance,
Flow thus forever by,
A part of my existence
Within your heart doth lie!

O stars, ye saw our meeting,
Two beings and one soul,
Two hearts so madly beating
To mingle and be whole!

O happy night, deliver
Her kisses back to me,
Or keep them all, and give her
A blissful dream of me!

1842.

(1843.)

THE SHEPHERD OF KING AD-
METUS

THERE came a youth upon the earth,
Some thousand years ago,
Whose slender hands were nothing worth,
Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell
He stretched some chords, and drew
Music that made men's bosoms swell
Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.

Then King Admetus, one who had
Pure taste by right divine, 10
Decreed his singing not too bad
To hear between the cups of wine:

And so, well pleased with being soothed
Into a sweet half-sleep,
Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,
And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

His words were simple words enough,
And yet he used them so,
That what in other mouths was rough 20
In his seemed musical and low.

Men called him but a shiftless youth,
In whom no good they saw;
And yet, unwittingly, in truth,
They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,
For idly, hour by hour,
He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,
Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things
Did teach him all their use, 30
For, in mere weeds, and stones, and springs,
He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,
But, when a glance they caught
Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,
They laughed, and called him good-for-
naught.

Yet after he was dead and gone,
And e'en his memory dim,
Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,
More full of love, because of him. 40

And day by day more holy grew
Each spot where he had trod,
Till after-poets only knew
Their first-born brother as a god. 1842.

AN INCIDENT IN A RAILROAD
CAR

HE spoke of Burns: men rude and rough
Pressed round to hear the praise of one
Whose heart was made of manly, simple
stuff,
As homespun as their own.

And, when he read, they forward leaned,
Drinking, with thirsty hearts and ears,
His brook-like songs whom glory never
weaned
From humble smiles and tears.

Slowly there grew a tender awe,
Sun-like, o'er faces brown and hard, 10
As if in him who read they felt and saw
Some presence of the bard.

It was a sight for sin and wrong
And slavish tyranny to see,
A sight to make our faith more pure and
strong
In high humanity.

I thought, these men will carry hence
Promptings their former life above,

And something of a finer reverence
For beauty, truth, and love. 20

God scatters love on every side
Freely among his children all,
And always hearts are lying open wide,
Wherein some grains may fall.

There is no wind but soweth seeds
Of a more true and open life,
Which burst, unlooked for, into high-souled
deeds,
With wayside beauty rife.

We find within these souls of ours
Some wild germs of a higher birth, 30
Which in the poet's tropic heart bear flowers
Whose fragrance fills the earth.

Within the hearts of all men lie
These promises of wider bliss,
Which blossom into hopes that cannot die,
In sunny hours like this.

All that hath been majestical
In life or death, since time began,
Is native in the simple heart of all,
The angel heart of man. 40

And thus, among the untaught poor,
Great deeds and feelings find a home,
That cast in shadow all the golden lore
Of classic Greece and Rome.

O mighty brother-soul of man,
Where'er thou art, in low or high,
Thy skyey arches with exulting span
O'er-roof infinity!

All thoughts that mould the age begin
Deep down within the primitive soul, 50
And from the many slowly upward win
To one who grasps the whole:

In his wide brain the feeling deep
That struggled on the many's tongue
Swells to a tide of thought, whose surges
leap
O'er the weak thrones of wrong.

All thought begins in feeling, — wide
In the great mass its base is hid,
And, narrowing up to thought, stands
glorified,
A moveless pyramid. 60

Nor is he far astray, who deems
That every hope, which rises and grows
broad
In the world's heart, by ordered impulse
streams
From the great heart of God.

God wills, man hopes: in common souls
Hope is but vague and undefined,
Till from the poet's tongue the message
rolls
A blessing to his kind.

Never did Poesy appear
So full of heaven to me, as when
I saw how it would pierce through pride
and fear
To the lives of coarsest men.

It may be glorious to write
Thoughts that shall glad the two or
three
High souls, like those far stars that come
in sight
Once in a century; —

But better far it is to speak
One simple word, which now and then
Shall waken their free nature in the weak
And friendless sons of men; 80

To write some earnest verse or line,
Which, seeking not the praise of art,
Shall make a clearer faith and manhood
shine
In the untutored heart.

He who doth this, in verse or prose,
May be forgotten in his day,
But surely shall be crowned at last with
those
Who live and speak for aye.

1842. 1842.

STANZAS ON FREEDOM¹

MEN! whose boast it is that ye
Come of fathers brave and free,

¹ It is to be remembered that in publicly espousing the cause of abolition so early as 1843 Lowell made personal and social sacrifices even greater than Whittier's. See his passage on Whittier, and that on himself, in the 'Fable for Critics'; and Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. 1, pp. 106, 168-175, 211 and following, and especially 183, 184, where Lowell speaks in particular of these 'Stanzas on Freedom,' which were written for an anti-

If there breathe on earth a slave,
Are ye truly free and brave?
If ye do not feel the chain,
When it works a brother's pain,
Are ye not base slaves indeed,
Slaves unworthy to be freed?

Women! who shall one day bear
Sons to breathe New England air, 10
If ye hear, without a blush,
Deeds to make the roused blood rush
Like red lava through your veins,
For your sisters now in chains, —
Answer! are ye fit to be
Mothers of the brave and free?

Is true Freedom but to break
Fetters for our own dear sake,
And, with leathern hearts, forge
That we owe mankind a debt? 20
No! true freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And, with heart and hand, to be
Earnest to make others free!

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be 37
In the right with two or three.

1843. 1843.

WENDELL PHILLIPS

HE stood upon the world's broad thresh-
old; wide

The din of battle and of slaughter rose;

slavery reunion held on the anniversary of West Indian Emancipation, and were first printed under the title given in this letter: 'This puts me in mind of Longfellow's suppression of his anti-slavery pieces. [These had been omitted in one edition of Longfellow's poems, published at Philadelphia.] Sydney Gay wishes to know whether I think he spoke too harshly of the affair. I think he did . . . and this not because I agree with what he tells me is your notion of the matter . . . — for I do not think that an author has a right to suppress anything that God has given him — but because I believe that Longfellow esteemed them of inferior quality to his other poems. For myself, when I was printing my second volume of poems, Owen wished to suppress a certain "Song sung at an Anti-Slavery Picnic." I never saw him, but he urged me with I know not what worldly arguments. My only answer was: "Let all the others be suppressed if you will — that I will never suppress."'

He saw God stand upon the weaker side,
That sank in seeming loss before its foes:
Many there were who made great haste
and sold
Unto the cunning enemy their swords,
He scorned their gifts of fame, and power,
and gold,
And, underneath their soft and flowery
words,
Heard the cold serpent hiss; therefore he
went
And humbly joined him to the weaker
part,
Fanatic named, and fool, yet well content
So he could be the nearer to God's heart,
And feel its solemn pulses sending blood
Through all the widespread veins of end-
less good.

(1843.)

RHÆCUS¹

GOD sends his teachers unto every age,
To every clime, and every race of men,
With revelations fitted to their growth
And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of
Truth
Into the selfish rule of one sole race:
Therefore each form of worship that hath
swayed
The life of man, and given it to grasp
The master-key of knowledge, reverence,
Infolds some germs of goodness and of
right;
Else never had the eager soul, which
loathes 10
The slothful down of pampered ignorance,
Found in it even a moment's fitful rest.

There is an instinct in the human heart
Which makes that all the fables it hath
coined,

To justify the reign of its belief
And strengthen it by beauty's right divine,
Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,
Which, like the hazel twig, in faithful
hands,

Points surely to the hidden springs of truth.
For, as in nature naught is made in vain, 20
But all things have within their hull of
use

A wisdom and a meaning which may speak
Of spiritual secrets to the ear
Of spirit; so, in whatso'er the heart

¹ Compare Landor's 'The Hamadryad.'

Hath fashioned for a solace to itself,
To make its inspirations suit its creed,
And from the niggard hands of falsehood
wring
Its needful food of truth, there ever is
A sympathy with Nature, which reveals,
Not less than her own works, pure gleams
of light 30
And earnest parables of inward lore.
Hear now this fairy legend of old Greece,
As full of gracious youth, and beauty still
As the immortal freshness of that grace
Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze.

A youth named Rhæcus, wandering in
the wood,
Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,
And, feeling pity of so fair a tree,
He propped its gray trunk with admiring
care,
And with a thoughtless footstep loitered
on. 40
But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind
That murmured 'Rhæcus!' 'T was as if
the leaves,
Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured
it,
And, while he paused bewildered, yet again
It murmured 'Rhæcus!' softer than a
breeze.

He started and beheld with dizzy eyes
What seemed the substance of a happy
dream
Stand there before him, spreading a warm
glow
Within the green glooms of the shadowy
oak.

It seemed a woman's shape, yet far too
fair 50
To be a woman, and with eyes too meek
For any that were wont to mate with gods.
All naked like a goddess stood she there,
And like a goddess all too beautiful
To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame.
'Rhæcus, I am the Dryad of this tree,'
Thus she began, dropping her low-toned
words

Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of
dew,
'And with it I am doomed to live and die;
The rain and sunshine are my caterers, 60
Nor have I other bliss than simple life;
Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can
give,
And with a thankful joy it shall be thine.'

Then Rhœcus, with a flutter at the heart,
 Yet by the prompting of such beauty bold,
 Answered: 'What is there that can satisfy
 The endless craving of the soul but love?
 Give me thy love, or but the hope of that
 Which must be evermore my nature's goal.'
 After a little pause she said again,⁷⁰
 But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,
 'I give it, Rhœcus, though a perilous gift;
 An hour before the sunset meet me here.'
 And straightway there was nothing he
 could see
 But the green glooms beneath the shadowy
 oak,
 And not a sound came to his straining ears
 But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,
 And far away upon an emerald slope
 The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

Now, in those days of simpleness and
 faith,⁸⁰
 Men did not think that happy things were
 dreams
 Because they overstepped the narrow bourn
 Of likelihood, but reverently deemed
 Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful
 To be the guerdon of a daring heart.
 So Rhœcus made no doubt that he was blest,
 And all along unto the city's gate
 Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he
 walked,
 The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its
 wont,
 And he could scarce believe he had not
 wings,⁹⁰
 Such sunshine seemed to glitter through
 his veins
 Instead of blood, so light he felt and
 strange.

Young Rhœcus had a faithful heart
 enough,
 But one that in the present dwelt too
 much,
 And, taking with blithe welcome whatso-
 e'er
 Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in
 that,
 Like the contented peasant of a vale,
 Deemed it the world, and never looked
 beyond.
 So, haply meeting in the afternoon
 Some comrades who were playing at the
 dice,¹⁰⁰
 He joined them, and forgot all else beside.

The dice were rattling at the merriest,
 And Rhœcus, who had met but sorry luck,
 Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,
 When through the room there hummed a
 yellow bee
 That buzzed about his ear with down-
 dropped legs
 As if to light. And Rhœcus laughed and
 said,
 Feeling how red and flushed he was with
 loss,
 'By Venus! does he take me for a rose?'
 And brushed him off with rough, impatient
 hand.¹¹⁰
 But still the bee came back, and thrice
 again
 Rhœcus did beat him off with growing
 wrath.
 Then through the window flew the wounded
 bee,
 And Rhœcus, tracking him with angry
 eyes,
 Saw a sharp mountain-peak of Thessaly
 Against the red disk of the setting sun,—
 And instantly the blood sank from his
 heart,
 As if its very walls had caved away.
 Without a word he turned, and, rushing
 forth,
 Ran madly through the city and the gate,
 And o'er the plain, which now the wood's
 long shade,¹²¹
 By the low sun thrown forward broad and
 dim,
 Darkened wellnigh unto the city's wall.

Quite spent and out of breath he reached
 the tree,
 And, listening fearfully, he heard once
 more
 The low voice murmur 'Rhœcus!' close at
 hand:
 Whereat he looked around him, but could
 see
 Naught but the deepening glooms beneath
 the oak.
 Then sighed the voice, 'O Rhœcus! never-
 more
 Shalt thou behold me or by day or night,
 Me, who would fain have blessed thee with
 a love¹³¹
 More ripe and bounteous than ever yet
 Filled up with nectar any mortal heart:
 But thou didst scorn my humble mes-
 senger,

And sent'st him back to me with bruised
 wings.
 We spirits only show to gentle eyes,
 We ever ask an undivided love,
 And he who scorns the least of Nature's
 works
 Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.
 Farewell! for thou canst never see me
 more.'¹⁴⁰

Then Rhœcus beat his breast, and
 groaned aloud,
 And cried, 'Be pitiful! forgive me yet
 This once, and I shall never need it more!'
 'Alas!' the voice returned, 't is thou art
 blind,
 Not I unmerciful; I can forgive,
 But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;
 Only the soul hath power o'er itself.'
 With that again there murmured 'Never-
 more!'
 And Rhœcus after heard no other sound,
 Except the rattling of the oak's crisp
 leaves,¹⁵⁰
 Like the long surf upon a distant shore,
 Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.
 The night had gathered round him: o'er
 the plain
 The city sparkled with its thousand lights,
 And sounds of revel fell upon his ear
 Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,
 With all its bright sublimity of stars,
 Deepened, and on his forehead smote the
 breeze:
 Beauty was all around him and delight,
 But from that eve he was alone on earth.¹⁶⁰
 (1843.)

TO THE DANDELION

DEAR common flower, that grow'st be-
 side the way,
 Fringing the dusty road with harmless
 gold,
 First pledge of blithesome May,
 Which children pluck, and full of pride
 uphold,
 High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that
 they
 An Eldorado in the grass have found,
 Which not the rich earth's ample round
 May match in wealth, thou art more dear
 to me
 Than all the prouder summer-blooms
 may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Span-
 ish prow¹⁷⁰
 Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
 Nor wrinkled the lean brow
 Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;
 'T is the Spring's largess, which she scat-
 ters now
 To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
 Though most hearts never understand
 To take it at God's value, but pass by
 The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
 To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;²⁰
 The eyes thou givest me
 Are in the heart, and heed not space or
 time:
 Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee
 Feels a more summer-like warm ravish-
 ment
 In the white lily's breezy tent,
 His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
 From the dark green thy yellow circles
 burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the
 grass,
 Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
 Where, as the breezes pass,³⁰
 The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,
 Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
 Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue
 That from the distance sparkle through
 Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,
 Where one white cloud like a stray lamb
 doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are
 linked with thee;
 The sight of thee calls back the robin's
 song,
 Who, from the dark old tree
 Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,⁴⁰
 And I, secure in childish piety,
 Listened as if I heard an angel sing
 With news from heaven, which he
 could bring
 Fresh every day to my untainted ears
 When birds and flowers and I were
 happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,
 When thou, for all thy gold, so common
 art!
 Thou teachest me to deem

More sacredly of every human heart,
 Since each reflects in joy its scanty
 gleam⁵⁰
 Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret
 show,
 Did we but pay the love we owe,
 And with a child's undoubting wisdom
 look
 On all these living pages of God's book.
 1844? 1845.

COLUMBUS

THE cordage creaks and rattles in the
 wind,
 With whims of sudden hush; the reeling
 sea
 Now thumps like solid rock beneath the
 stern,
 Now leaps with clumsy wrath, strikes
 short, and falling,
 Crumbled to whispering foam, slips rustling
 down
 The broad backs of the waves, which jostle
 and crowd
 To fling themselves upon that unknown
 shore,
 Their used familiar since the dawn of
 time,
 Whither this foredoomed life is guided on
 To sway on triumph's hushed, aspiring
 poise¹⁰
 One glittering moment, then to break ful-
 filled.
 How lonely is the sea's perpetual swing,
 The melancholy wash of endless waves,
 The sigh of some grim monster undescried,
 Fear-painted on the canvas of the dark,
 Shifting on his uneasy pillow of brine!
 Yet night brings more companions than the
 day
 To this drear waste; new constellations
 burn,
 And fairer stars, with whose calm height
 my soul
 Finds nearer sympathy than with my herd²⁰
 Of earthen souls, whose vision's scanty ring
 Makes me its prisoner to beat my wings
 Against the cold bars of their unbelief,
 Knowing in vain my own free heaven be-
 yond.
 O God! this world, so crammed with eager
 life,

That comes and goes and wanders back to
 silence
 Like the idle wind, which yet man's shap-
 ing mind
 Can make his drudge to swell the longing
 sails
 Of highest endeavor, — this mad, unthrift
 world,
 Which, every hour, throws life enough
 away³⁰
 To make her deserts kind and hospitable,
 Lets her great destinies be waved aside
 By smooth, lip-reverent, formal infidels,
 Who weigh the God they not believe with
 gold,
 And find no spot in Judas, save that he,
 Driving a duller bargain than he ought,
 Saddled his guild with too cheap precedent.
 O Faith! if thou art strong, thine opposite
 Is mighty also, and the dull fool's sneer
 Hath ofttimes shot chill palsy through the
 arm⁴⁰
 Just lifted to achieve its crowning deed,
 And made the firm-based heart, that would
 have quailed
 The rack or fagot, shudder like a leaf
 Wrinkled with frost, and loose upon its
 stem.
 The wicked and the weak, by some dark
 law,
 Have a strange power to shut and rivet
 down
 Their own horizon round us, to unwing
 Our heaven-aspiring visions, and to blur
 With surly clouds the Future's gleaming
 peaks,
 Far seen across the brine of thankless
 years.⁵⁰
 If the chosen soul could never be alone
 In deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,
 No greatness ever had been dreamed or
 done;
 Among dull hearts a prophet never grew;
 The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude.
 The old world is effete; there man with
 man
 Jostles, and, in the brawl for means to live,
 Life is trod underfoot, — Life, the one
 block
 Of marble that's vouchsafed wherefrom to
 carve
 Our great thoughts, white and godlike, to
 shine down⁶⁰
 The future, Life, the irredeemable block,

Which one o'er-hasty chisel-dint oft mars,
 Scanting our room to cut the features out
 Of our full hope, so forcing us to crown
 With a mean head the perfect limbs, or
 leave
 The god's face glowing o'er a satyr's trunk,
 Failure's brief epitaph.

Yes, Europe's world
 Reels on to judgment; there the common
 need,
 Losing God's sacred use, to be a bond
 'Twixt Me and Thee, sets each one scowl-
 ingly⁷⁰
 O'er his own selfish hoard at bay; no state,
 Knit strongly with eternal fibres up
 Of all men's separate and united weals,
 Self-poised and sole as stars, yet one as
 light,
 Holds up a shape of large Humanity
 To which by natural instinct every man
 Pays loyalty exulting, by which all
 Mould their own lives, and feel their pulses
 filled
 With the red, fiery blood of the general
 life,⁸⁰
 Making them mighty in peace, as now in
 war
 They are, even in the flush of victory,
 weak,
 Conquering that manhood which should
 them subdue.
 And what gift bring I to this untried
 world?
 Shall the same tragedy be played anew,
 And the same lurid curtain drop at last
 On one dread desolation, one fierce crash
 Of that recoil which on its makers God
 Lets Ignorance and Sin and Hunger make,
 Early or late? Or shall that common-
 wealth
 Whose potent unity and concentric force
 Can draw these scattered joints and parts
 of men⁹¹
 Into a whole ideal man once more,
 Which sucks not from its limbs the life
 away,
 But sends it flood-tide and creates itself
 Over again in every citizen,
 Be there built up? For me, I have no
 choice;
 I might turn back to other destinies,
 For one sincere key opens all Fortune's doors;
 But whoso answers not God's earliest call
 Forfeits or dulls that faculty supreme¹⁰⁰

Of lying open to his genius
 Which makes the wise heart certain of its
 ends.

Here am I; for what end God knows, not I;
 Westward still points the inexorable soul:
 Here am I, with no friend but the sad sea,
 The beating heart of this great enterprise,
 Which, without me, would stiffen in swift
 death;
 This have I mused on, since mine eye could
 first¹⁰⁸
 Among the stars distinguish and with joy
 Rest on that God-fed Pharos of the north,
 On some blue promontory of heaven lighted
 That juts far out into the upper sea;
 To this one hope my heart hath clung for
 years,
 As would a foundling to the talisman
 Hung round his neck by hands he knew
 not whose;
 A poor, vile thing and dross to all beside,
 Yet he therein can feel a virtue left
 By the sad pressure of a mother's hand,
 And unto him it still is tremulous¹¹⁹
 With palpitating haste and wet with tears,
 The key to him of hope and humanness,
 The coarse shell of life's pearl, Expectancy.
 This hope hath been to me for love and
 fame,
 Hath made me wholly lonely on the earth,
 Building me up as in a thick-ribbed tower,
 Wherewith enwalled my watching spirit
 burned,
 Conquering its little island from the Dark,
 Sole as a scholar's lamp, and heard men's
 steps,
 In the far hurry of the outward world,
 Pass dimly forth and back, sounds heard in
 dream.¹³⁰
 As Ganymede by the eagle was snatched
 up
 From the gross sod to be Jove's cup-bearer,
 So was I lifted by my great design:
 And who hath trod Olympus, from his eye
 Fades not that broader outlook of the gods;
 His life's low valleys overbrow earth's
 clouds,
 And that Olympian spectre of the past
 Looms towering up in sovereign memory,
 Beckoning his soul from meaner heights of
 doom.
 Had but the shadow of the Thunderer's
 bird,¹⁴⁰
 Flashing athwart my spirit, made of me