

She is freighted with merchandise :
proudly she sails
With the Labor that stores, and the
Will that controls
The gold in the ingots, the silk in
the bales.

"From the gardens of Pleasure, where
reddens the rose,
And the scent of the cedar is faint
on the air,
Past the harbors of Traffic, sublimely
she goes,
Man's hopes o'er the world of the
waters to bear !

"Where the cheer from the harbors of
Traffic is heard,
Where the gardens of Pleasure fade
fast on the sight,
O'er the rose, o'er the cedar, there
passes a bird ;
'T is the Paradise Bird, never known
to alight.

"And that bird, bright and bold as a
Poet's desire,
Roams her own native heavens, the
realms of her birth.
There she soars like a seraph, she
shines like a fire,
And her plumage hath never been
sullied by earth.

"And the mariners greet her ; there's
song on each lip,
For that bird of good omen, and joy
in each eye.
And the ship and the bird, and the
bird and the ship,
Together go forth over ocean and
sky.

"Fast, fast fades the land ! far the rose-
gardens flee,
And far fleet the harbors. In re-
gions unknown
The ship is alone on a desert of sea,
And the bird in a desert of sky is
alone.

"In those regions unknown, o'er that
desert of air,
Down that desert of waters — tre-
mendous in wrath —
The storm-wind Euroclydon leaps from
his lair,
And cleaves, through the waves of
the ocean, his path.

"And the bird in the cloud, and the
ship on the wave,
Overtaken, are beaten about by wild
gales :
And the mariners all rush their cargo
to save,
Of the gold in the ingots, the silk
in the bales.

"Lo ! a wonder, which never before
hath been heard,
For it never before hath been given
to sight ;
On the ship hath descended the Para-
dise Bird,
The Paradise Bird, never known to
alight !

"The bird which the mariners blessed,
when each lip
Had a song for the omen that glad-
dened each eye ;
The bright bird for shelter hath flown
to the ship
From the wrath on the sea and the
wrath in the sky.

"But the mariners heed not the bird
any more.
They are felling the masts, — they
are cutting the sails ;
Some are working, some weeping, and
some wrangling o'er
Their gold in the ingots, their silk
in the bales.

"Souls of men are on board ; wealth of
man in the hold ;
And the storm-wind Euroclydon
sweeps to his prey ;
And who heeds the bird ? 'Save the
silk and the gold !'
And the bird from her shelter the
gust sweeps away !

"Poor Paradise Bird ! on her lone flight
once more
Back again in the wake of the wind
she is driven, —
To be 'whelmed in the storm, or above
it to soar,
And, if rescued from ocean, to van-
ish in heaven !

"And the ship rides the waters, and
weathers the gales :
From the haven she nears the re-
joicing is heard.

All hands are at work on the ingots,
the bales,
Save a child, sitting lonely, who
misses — the Bird !"

CANTO III.

I.

WITH stout iron shoes be my Pegasus
shod !
For my road is a rough one : flint, stub-
ble, and clod,
Blue clay, and black quagmire, brambles
no few,
And I gallop up-hill, now.
There's terror that's true
In that tale of a youth who, one night
at a revel,
Amidst music and mirth lured and wiled
by some devil,
Followed ever one mask through the mad
masquerade,
Till, pursued to some chamber deserted
('t is said),
He unmasked, with a kiss, the strange
lady, and stood
Face to face with a Thing not of flesh nor
of blood.
In this Masque of the Passions, called
Life, there's no human
Emotion, though masked, or in man or
in woman,
But, when faced and unmasked, it will
leave us at last
Struck by some supernatural aspect
aghast.
For truth is appalling and eldritch, as seen
By this world's artificial lamplights, and
we screen
From our sight the strange vision that
troubles our life.
Alas ! why is Genius forever at strife
With the world, which, despite the
world's self, it ennobles ?
Why is it that Genius perplexes and
troubles
And offends the effete life it comes to
renew ?
'T is the terror of truth ! 't is that Gen-
ius is true !

II.

Lucile de Nevers (if her riddle I read)
Was a woman of genius : whose genius,
indeed,

With her life was at war. Once, but
once, in that life
The chance had been hers to escape from
this strife
In herself ; finding peace in the life of
another
From the passionate wants she, in hers,
failed to smother.
But the chance fell too soon, when the
crude restless power
Which had been to her nature so fatal a
dower,
Only wearied the man it yet haunted
and thrall'd ;
And that moment, once lost, had been
never recalled.
Yet it left her heart sore : and, to shelter
her heart
From approach, she then sought, in that
delicate art
Of concealment, those thousand adroit
strategies
Of feminine wit, which repel while they
please,
A weapon, at once, and a shield, to con-
ceal
And defend all that women can earnestly
feel.
Thus, striving her instincts to hide and
repress,
She felt frightened at times by her very
success :
She pined for the hill-tops, the clouds,
and the stars :
Golden wires may annoy us as much as
steel bars
If they keep us behind prison-windows :
impassioned
Her heart rose and burst the light cage
she had fashioned
Out of glittering trifles around it.
Unknown
To herself, all her instincts, without
hesitation,
Embraced the idea of self-immolation.
The strong spirit in her, had her life
but been blended
With some man's whose heart had her
own comprehended,
All its wealth at his feet would have
lavishly thrown.
For him she had struggled and striven
alone ;
For him had aspired ; in him had trans-
fused
All the gladness and grace of her nature
and used

For him only the spells of its delicate power :
 Like the ministering fairy that brings from her bower
 To some mage all the treasures, whose use the fond elf,
 More enriched by her love, disregards for herself.
 But standing apart, as she ever had done,
 And her genius, which needed a vent, finding none
 In the broad fields of action thrown wide to man's power,
 She unconsciously made it her bulwark and tower,
 And built in it her refuge, whence lightly she hurled
 Her contempt at the fashions and forms of the world.

And the permanent cause why she now missed and failed
 That firm hold upon life she so keenly assailed,
 Was, in all those diurnal occasions that place
 Say — the world and the woman opposed face to face,
 Where the woman must yield, she, refusing to stir,
 Offended the world, which in turn wounded her.

As before, in the old-fashioned manner, I fit
 To this character, also, its moral : to wit,
 Say — the world is a nettle ; disturb it, it stings :
 Grasp it firmly, it stings not. On one of two things,
 If you would not be stung, it behooves you to settle :
 Avoid it, or crush it. She crushed not the nettle ;
 For she could not ; nor would she avoid it : she tried
 With the weak hand of woman to thrust it aside,
 And it stung her. A woman is too slight a thing
 To trample the world without feeling its sting.

III.

One lodges but simply at Serchon ; yet, thanks
 To the season that changes forever the banks

Of the blossoming mountains, and shifts the light cloud
 O'er the valley, and hushes or rouses the loud
 Wind that wails in the pines, or creeps murmuring down
 The dark evergreen slopes to the slumbering town,
 And the torrent that falls, faintly heard from afar,
 And the bluebells that purple the dapple-gray scur,
 One sees with each month of the many-faced year
 A thousand sweet changes of beauty appear.
 The chalet where dwelt the Comtesse de Nevers
 Rested half up the base of a mountain of firs,
 In a garden of roses, revealed to the road,
 Yet withdrawn from its noise : 't was a peaceful abode.
 And the walls, and the roofs, with their gables like hoods
 Which the monks wear, were built of sweet resinous woods.
 The sunlight of noon, as Lord Alfred ascended
 The steep garden paths, every odor had blended
 Of the ardent carnations, and faint heliotropes,
 With the balms floated down from the dark wooded slopes :
 A light breeze at the windows was playing about,
 And the white curtains floated, now in and now out.
 The house was all hushed when he rang at the door,
 Which was opened to him in a moment, or more,
 By an old nodding negress, whose sable head shined
 In the sun like a cocoa-nut polished in Ind,
 'Neath the snowy *foulard* which about it was wound.

IV.

Lord Alfred sprang forward at once, with a bound.
 He remembered the nurse of Lucile. The old dame,
 Whose teeth and whose eyes used to beam when he came,

With a boy's eager step, in the blithe days of yore,
 To pass, unannounced, her young mistress's door.
 The old woman had fondled Lucile on her knee
 When she left, as an infant, far over the sea,
 In India, the tomb of a mother, unknown,
 To pine, a pale floweret, in great Paris town.
 She had soothed the child's sobs on her breast, when she read
 The letter that told her her father was dead.
 An astute, shrewd adventurer, who, like Ulysses,
 Had studied men, cities, laws, wars, the abysses
 Of statecraft, with varying fortunes, was he.
 He had wandered the world through, by land and by sea,
 And knew it in most of its phases. Strong will,
 Subtle tact, and soft manners, had given him skill
 To conciliate Fortune, and courage to brave
 Her displeasure. Thrice shipwrecked, and cast by the wave
 On his own quick resources, they rarely had failed
 His command : often baffled, he ever prevailed,
 In his combat with fate : to-day flattered and fed
 By monarchs, to-morrow in search of mere bread.
 The offspring of times trouble-haunted, he came
 Of a family ruined, yet noble in name.
 He lost sight of his fortune, at twenty, in France ;
 And, half statesman, half soldier, and wholly Free-lance,
 Had wandered in search of it, over the world,
 Into India.
 But scarce had the nomad unfurled
 His wandering tent at Mysore, in the smile
 Of a Rajah (whose court he controlled for a while,
 And whose council he prompted and governed by stealth) ;

Scarce, indeed, had he wedded an Indian of wealth,
 Who died giving birth to this daughter, before
 He was borne to the tomb of his wife at Mysore.
 His fortune, which fell to his orphan, perchance,
 Had secured her a home with his sister in France,
 A lone woman, the last of the race left. Lucile
 Neither felt, nor affected, the wish to conceal
 The half-Eastern blood, which appeared to bequeath
 (Revealed now and then, though but rarely, beneath
 That outward repose that concealed it in her)
 A something half wild to her strange character.
 The nurse with the orphan, awhile broken-hearted,
 At the door of a convent in Paris had parted.
 But later, once more, with her mistress she tarried,
 When the girl, by that grim maiden aunt, had been married
 To a dreary old Count, who had sullenly died,
 With no claim on her tears, — she had wept as a bride.
 Said Lord Alfred, "Your mistress expects me."

The crone

Oped the drawing-room door, and there left him alone.

V.

O'er the soft atmosphere of this temple of grace
 Rested silence and perfume. No sound reached the place.
 In the white curtains wavered the delicate shade
 Of the heaving acacias, through which the breeze played.
 O'er the smooth wooden floor, polished dark as a glass,
 Fragrant white Indian matting allowed you to pass.
 In light olive baskets, by window and door,
 Some hung from the ceiling, some crowding the floor,

Rich wild-flowers plucked by Lucile
from the hill,
Seemed the room with their passionate
presence to fill :
Blueaconite, hid in white roses, reposed ;
The deep belladonna its vermeil disclosed ;
And the frail saponaire, and the tender
bluebell,
And the purple valerian, — each child
of the fell
And the solitude flourished, fed fair
from the source
Of waters the huntsman scarce heeds in
his course,
Where the chamois and izard, with deli-
cate hoof,
Pause or flit through the pinnacled silence
aloof.

VI.

Here you felt, by the sense of its beauty
reposed,
That you stood in a shrine of sweet
thoughts. Half unclosed
In the light slept the flowers : all was
pure and at rest ;
All peaceful ; all modest ; all seemed self-
possessed,
And aware of the silence. No vestige
nor trace
Of a young woman's coquetry troubled
the place.
He stood by the window. A cloud
passed the sun.
A light breeze uplifted the leaves, one
by one.
Just then Lucile entered the room, un-
discerned
By Lord Alfred, whose face to the win-
dow was turned,
In a strange revery.

The time was, when Lucile,
In beholding that man, could not help
but reveal
The rapture, the fear, which wrenched
out every nerve
In the heart of the girl from the woman's
reserve.
And now — she gazed at him, calm,
smiling, — perchance
Indifferent.

VII.

Indifferently turning his glance,
Alfred Vargrave encountered that gaze
unaware.
O'er a bodice snow-white streamed her
soft dusky hair ;

A rose-bud half blown in her hand ; in
her eyes
A half-pensive smile.

A sharp cry of surprise
Escaped from his lips : some unknown
agitation,
An invincible trouble, a strange palpi-
tation,
Confused his ingenious and frivolous wit ;
Overtook, and entangled, and paralyzed
it.
That wit so complacent and docile, that
ever
Lightly came at the call of the lightest
endeavor,
Ready coined, and available current as
gold,
Which, secure of its value, so fluently
rolled
In free circulation from hand on to hand
For the usage of all, at a moment's com-
mand ;
For once it rebelled, it was mute and
unstirred,
And he looked at Lucile without speak-
ing a word.

VIII.

Perhaps what so troubled him was, that
the face
On whose features he gazed had no more
than a trace
Of the face his remembrance had imaged
for years.
Yes ! the face he remembered was faded
with tears :
Grief had famished the figure, and dimmed
the dark eyes,
And starved the pale lips, too acquainted
with sighs.
And that tender, and gracious, and fond
coquetterie
Of a woman who knows her least ribbon
to be
Something dear to the lips that so warmly
caress
Every sacred detail of her exquisite
dress,
In the careless toilet of Lucile, — then
too sad
To care aught to her changeable beauty
to add, —
Lord Alfred had never admired before !
Alas ! poor Lucile, in those weak days
of yore,
Had neglected herself, never heeding,
nor thinking



(While the blossom and bloom of her
beauty were shrinking)
That sorrow can beautify only the heart —
Not the face — of a woman ; and can
but impart
Its endearment to one that has suffered.
In truth
Grief hath beauty for grief ; but gay
youth loves gay youth.

IX.

The woman that now met, unshrinking,
his gaze,
Seemed to bask in the silent but sumptu-
ous haze
Of that soft second summer, more ripe
than the first,
Which returns when the bud to the
blossom hath burst

In despite of the stormiest April. Lucile
Had acquired that matchless unconscious
appeal
To the homage which none but a churl
would withhold —
That caressing and exquisite grace —
never bold,
Ever present — which just a few women
possess.
From a healthful repose, undisturbed by
the stress
Of unquiet emotions, her soft cheek had
drawn
A freshness as pure as the twilight of
dawn.
Her figure, though slight, had revived
everywhere
The luxurious proportions of youth ; and
her hair —
Once shorn as an offering to passionate
love —
Now floated or rested redundant above
Her airy pure forehead and throat ;
gathered loose
Under which, by one violet knot, the
profuse
Milk-white folds of a cool modest gar-
ment reposed,
Rippled faint by the breast they half
hid, half disclosed,
And her simple attire thus in all things
revealed
The fine art which so artfully all things
concealed.

X.

Lord Alfred, who never conceived that
Lucile
Could have looked so enchanting, felt
tempted to kneel
At her feet, and her pardon with passion
implore ;
But the calm smile that met him sufficed
to restore
The pride and the bitterness needed to
meet
The occasion with dignity due and dis-
creet.

XI.

"Madam," — thus he began with a voice
reassured, —
"You see that your latest command has
secured
My immediate obedience, — presuming I
may
Consider my freedom restored from this
day." —

"I had thought," said Lucile, with a
smile gay yet sad,
"That your freedom from me not a fetter
has had.
Indeed ! . . . in my chains have you
rested till now ?
I had not so flattered myself, I avow !"
"For Heaven's sake, Madam," Lord
Alfred replied,
"Do not jest ! has the moment no sad-
ness ?" he sighed.
"T is an ancient tradition," she an-
swered, "a tale
Often told, — a position too sure to pre-
vail
In the end of all legends of love. If we
wrote,
When we first love, foreseeing that hour
yet remote,
Wherein of necessity each would recall
From the other the poor foolish records
of all
Those emotions, whose pain, when re-
corded, seemed bliss,
Should we write as we wrote ? But one
thinks not of this !
At Twenty (who does not at Twenty ?)
we write
Believing eternal the frail vows we
plight ;
And we smile with a confident pity,
above
The vulgar results of all poor human
love :
For we deem, with that vanity common
to youth,
Because what we feel in our bosoms, in
truth,
Is novel to us — that 't is novel to earth,
And will prove the exception, in durance
and worth,
To the great law to which all on earth
must incline.
The error was noble, the vanity fine !
Shall we blame it because we survive it ?
ah, no ;
"T was the youth of our youth, my lord,
is it not so ?"

XII.

Lord Alfred was mute. He remembered
her yet
A child, — the weak sport of each mo-
ment's regret,
Blindly yielding herself to the errors of
life,

The deceptions of youth, and borne down
by the strife
And the tumult of passion ; the tremu-
lous toy
Of each transient emotion of grief or of
joy.
But to watch her pronounce the death-
warrant of all
The illusions of life, — lift, unflinching,
the pall
From the bier of the dead Past, — that
woman so fair,
And so young, yet her own self-survivor ;
who there
Traced her life's epitaph with a finger so
cold !
"T was a picture that pained his self-love
to behold.
He himself knew — none better — the
things to be said
Upon subjects like this. Yet he bowed
down his head :
And as thus, with a trouble he could
not command,
He paused, crumpling the letters he held
in his hand,
"You know me enough," she continued,
"or what
I would say is, you yet recollect (do you
not,
Lord Alfred ?) enough of my nature, to
know
That these pledges of what was perhaps
long ago
A foolish affection, I do not recall
From those motives of prudence which
actuate all
Or most women when their love ceases.
Indeed,
If you have such a doubt, to dispel it I
need
But remind you that ten years these
letters have rested
Unreclaimed in your hands." A re-
proach seemed suggested
By these words. To meet it, Lord Al-
fred looked up.
(His gaze had been fixed on a blue Sèvres
cup
With a look of profound connoisseurship,
— a smile
Of singular interest and care, all this
while.)
He looked up, and looked long in the
face of Lucile,
To mark if that face by a sign would
reveal

At the thought of Miss Darcy the least
jealous pain.
He looked keenly and long, yet he
looked there in vain.
"You are generous, Madam," he mur-
mured at last,
And into his voice a light irony passed.
He had looked for reproaches, and fully
arranged
His forces. But straightway the enemy
changed
The position.

XIII.

"Come !" gayly Lucile interposed,
With a smile whose divinely deep sweet-
ness disclosed
Some depth in her nature he never had
known,
While she tenderly laid her light hand
on his own,
"Do not think I abuse the occasion.
We gain
Justice, judgment, with years, or else
years are in vain.
From me not a single reproach can you
hear.
I have sinned to myself, — to the world,
— nay, I fear
To you chiefly. The woman who loves
should, indeed,
Be the friend of the man that she loves.
She should heed
Not her selfish and often mistaken de-
sires,
But his interest whose fate her own in-
terest inspires ;
And, rather than seek to allure, for her
sake,
His life down the turbulent, fanciful
wake
Of impossible destinies, use all her art
That his place in the world find its place
in her heart.
I, alas ! — I perceived not this truth till
too late ;
I tormented your youth, I have darkened
your fate.
Forgive me the ill I have done for the
sake
Of its long expiation !"

XIV.

Lord Alfred, awake,
Seemed to wander from dream on to
dream. In that seat
Where he sat as a criminal, ready to
meet

His accuser, he found himself turned by
some change,
As surprising and all unexpected as
strange,
To the judge from whose mercy indul-
gence was sought.
All the world's foolish pride in that mo-
ment was naught;
He felt all his plausible theories posed;
And, thrilled by the beauty of nature
disclosed
In the pathos of all he had witnessed,
his head
He bowed, and faint words self-reproach-
fully said,
As he lifted her hand to his lips. 'T was
a hand
White, delicate, dimpled, warm, lan-
guid, and bland.
The hand of a woman is often, in youth,
Somewhat rough, somewhat red, some-
what graceless, in truth;
Does its beauty refine, as its pulses grow
calm,
Or as Sorrow has crossed the life-line in
the palm?

XV.

The more that he looked, that he listened,
the more
He discovered perfections unnoticed be-
fore.
Less salient than once, less poetic, per-
chance,
This woman who thus had survived the
romance
That had made him its hero, and breathed
him its sighs,
Seemed more charming a thousand times
o'er to his eyes.
Together they talked of the years since
when last
They parted, contrasting the present, the
past.
Yet no memory marred their light con-
verse. Lucile
Questioned much, with the interest a
sister might feel,
Of Lord Alfred's new life, — of Miss
Darcy, — her face,
Her temper, accomplishments, — pausing
to trace
The advantage derived from a hymen so fit.
Of herself, she recounted with humor
and wit
Her journeys, her daily employments,
the lands

She had seen, and the books she had
read, and the hands
She had shaken.
In all that she said there appeared
An amiable irony. Laughing, she reared
The temple of reason, with ever a touch
Of light scorn at her work, revealed only
so much
As there gleams, in the thyrsus that
Bacchanals bear,
Through the blooms of a garland the
point of a spear.
But above, and beneath, and beyond all
of this,
To that soul, whose experience had par-
alyzed bliss,
A benignant indulgence, to all things
resigned,
A justice, a sweetness, a meekness of
mind,
Gave a luminous beauty, as tender and
faint
And serene as the halo encircling a saint.

XVI.

Unobserved by Lord Alfred the time
fleeted by.
To each novel sensation spontaneously
He abandoned himself with that ardor
so strange
Which belongs to a mind grown accus-
tomed to change.
He sought, with well-practised and deli-
cate art,
To surprise from Lucile the true state
of her heart;
But his efforts were vain, and the woman,
as ever,
More adroit than the man, baffled every
endeavor.
When he deemed he had touched on
some chord in her being,
At the touch it dissolved, and was gone.
Ever fleeing
As ever he near it advanced, when he
thought
To have seized, and proceeded to ana-
lyze aught
Of the moral existence, the absolute soul,
Light as vapor the phantom escaped his
control.

XVII.

From the hall, on a sudden, a sharp
ring was heard.
In the passage without a quick footstep
there stirred.

At the door knocked the negress, and
thrust in her head,
"The Duke de Luvois had just entered,"
she said,
"And insisted" —
"The Duke!" cried Lucile (as she
spoke
The Duke's step, approaching, a light
echo woke).
"Say I do not receive till the evening.
Explain,"
As she glanced at Lord Alfred, she
added again,
"I have business of private importance."
There came
O'er Lord Alfred at once, at the sound
of that name,
An invincible sense of vexation. He
turned
To Lucile, and he fancied he faintly dis-
cerned
On her face an indefinite look of confu-
sion.
On his mind instantaneously flashed the
conclusion,
That his presence had caused it.
He said, with a sneer
Which he could not repress, "Let not
me interfere
With the claims on your time, lady!
when you are free
From more pleasant engagements, allow
me to see
And to wait on you later."
The words were not said
Ere he wished to recall them. He bit-
terly read
The mistake he had made in Lucile's
flashing eye.
Inclining her head, as in haughty reply,
More reproachful perchance than all
uttered rebuke,
She said merely, resuming her seat,
"Tell the Duke
He may enter."
And vexed with his own words and
hers,
Alfred Vargrave bowed low to Lucile de
Nevers,
Passed the casement and entered the gar-
den. Before
His shadow was fled the Duke stood at
the door.

XVIII.

When left to his thoughts in the garden
alone,

Alfred Vargrave stood, strange to him-
self. With dull tone
Of importance, through cities of rose and
carnation,
Went the bee on his business from sta-
tion to station.
The minute mirth of summer was shrill
all around;
Its incessant small voices like stings
seemed to sound
On his sore angry sense. He stood
grieving the hot
Solid sun with his shadow, nor stirred
from the spot.
The last look of Lucile still bewildered,
perplexed,
And reproached him. The Duke's visit
goaded and vexed.
He had not yet given the letters. Again
He must visit Lucile. He resolved to
remain
Where he was till the Duke went. In
short, he would stay,
Were it only to know when the Duke
went away.
But just as he formed this resolve, he
perceived
Approaching towards him, between the
thick-leaved
And luxuriant laurels, Lucile and the
Duke.
Thus surprised, his first thought was to
seek for some nook
Whence he might, unobserved, from the
garden retreat.
They had not yet seen him. The sound
of their feet
And their voices had warned him in
time. They were walking
Towards him. The Duke (a true French-
man) was talking
With the action of Talma. He saw at
a glance
That they barred the sole path to the
gateway. No chance
Of escape save in instant concealment!
Deep-dipped
In thick foliage, an arbor stood near.
In he slipped,
Saved from sight, as in front of that am-
bush they passed,
Still conversing. Beneath a laburnum
at last
They paused, and sat down on a bench
in the shade,
So close that he could not but hear what
they said.

XIX.

LUCILE.

Duke, I scarcely conceive . . .

LUVUOIS.

Ah, forgive ! . . . I desired
So deeply to see you to-day. You retired
So early last night from the ball . . .
this whole week
I have seen you pale, silent, preoccupied
. . . speak,
Speak, Lucile, and forgive me ! . . . I
know that I am
A rash fool — but I love you ! I love
you, Madame,
More than language can say ! Do not
deem, O Lucile,
That the love I no longer have strength
to conceal
Is a passing caprice ! It is strange to
my nature,
It has made me, unknown to myself, a
new creature.
I implore you to sanction and save the
new life
Which I lay at your feet with this
prayer — Be my wife ;
Stoop, and raise me !

Lord Alfred could scarcely restrain
The sudden, acute pang of anger and
pain
With which he had heard this. As
though to some wind
The leaves of the hushed windless lau-
rels behind
The two thus in converse were suddenly
stirred.
The sound half betrayed him. They
started. He heard
The low voice of Lucile ; but so faint
was its tone
That her answer escaped him.

Luvois hurried on,
As though in remonstrance with what
had been spoken.

"Nay, I know it, Lucile ! but your
heart was not broken

By the trial in which all its fibres were
proved.

Love, perchance, you mistrust, yet you
need to be loved.

You mistake your own feelings. I fear
you mistake

What so ill I interpret, those feelings
which make

Words like these vague and feeble.
Whatever your heart

May have suffered of yore, this can only
impart

A pity profound to the love which I feel.
Hush ! hush ! I know all. Tell me

nothing, Lucile."

"You know all, Duke ?" she said ;
"well then, know that, in truth,

I have learned from the rude lesson
taught to my youth

From my own heart to shelter my life ;
to mistrust

The heart of another. We are what we
must,

And not what we would be. I know
that one hour

Assures not another. The will and the
power

Are diverse."

"O madam !" he answered, "you
fence

With a feeling you know to be true and
intense.

"T is not *my* life, Lucile, that I plead for
alone :

If your nature I know, 't is no less for
your own.

That nature will prey on itself ; it was
made

To influence others. Consider," he said,
"That genius craves power, — what scope
for it here ?

Gifts less noble to *me* give command of
that sphere

In which genius *is* power. Such gifts
you despise ?

But you do not disdain what such gifts
realize !

I offer you, Lady, a name not unknown —
A fortune which worthless, without you,
is grown —

All my life at your feet I lay down — at
your feet

A heart which for you, and you only,
can beat."

LUCILE.

That heart, Duke, that life — I respect
both. The name

And position you offer, and all that you
claim

In behalf of their nobler employment, I
feel

To deserve what, in turn, I now ask
you —

LUVUOIS.

Lucile !

LUCILE.

I ask you to leave me —

LUVUOIS.

You do not reject ?

LUCILE.

I ask you to leave me the time to reflect.

LUVUOIS.

You ask me ? —

LUCILE.

— The time to reflect.

LUVUOIS.

Say — One word !

May I hope ?

The reply of Lucile was not heard
By Lord Alfred ; for just then she rose,
and moved on.

The Duke bowed his lips o'er her hand,
and was gone.

XX.

Not a sound save the birds in the bushes.
And when

Alfred Vargrave reeled forth to the sun-
light again,

He just saw the white robe of the woman
recede

As she entered the house.

Scarcely conscious indeed
Of his steps, he too followed, and en-
tered.

XXI.

He entered

Unnoticed ; Lucile never stirred : so
concentrated

And wholly absorbed in her thoughts
she appeared.

Her back to the window was turned.
As he neared

The sofa, her face from the glass was
reflected.

Her dark eyes were fixed on the ground.
Pale, dejected,

And lost in profound meditation she
seemed.

Softly, silently, over her drooped shoul-
ders streamed

The afternoon sunlight. The cry of
alarm

And surprise which escaped her, as now
on her arm

Alfred Vargrave let fall a hand icily
cold

And clammy as death, all too cruelly
told

How far he had been from her thoughts.

XXII.

All his cheek
Was disturbed with the effort it cost him
to speak.

"It was not my fault. I have heard
all," he said.

"Now the letters — and farewell, Lucile !
When you wed

May — "

The sentence broke short, like a
weapon that snaps

When the weight of a man is upon it.
"Perhaps,"

Said Lucile (her sole answer revealed in
the flush

Of quick color which up to her brows
seemed to rush

In reply to those few broken words),
"this farewell

Is our last, Alfred Vargrave, in life.
Who can tell ?

Let us part without bitterness. Here
are your letters.

Be assured I retain you no more in my
fettors !" —

She laughed, as she said this, a little
sad laugh,

And stretched out her hand with the
letters. And half

Wroth to feel his wrath rise, and unable
to trust

His own powers of restraint, in his bosom
he thrust

The packet she gave, with a short angry
sigh,

Bowed his head, and departed without a
reply.

XXIII.

And Lucile was alone. And the men
of the world

Were gone back to the world. And the
world's self was furled

Far away from the heart of the woman.
Her hand

Drooped, and from it, unloosed from
their frail silken band,

Fell those early love-letters, strewn,
scattered, and shed
At her feet — life's lost blossoms! De-
jected, her head
On her bosom was bowed. Her gaze
vaguely strayed o'er
Those strewn records of passionate mo-
ments no more.
From each page to her sight leapt some
word that belied
The composure with which she that day
had denied
Every claim on her heart to those poor
perished years.
They avenged themselves now, and she
burst into tears.

CANTO IV.

I.

*Letter from COUSIN JOHN to COUSIN
ALFRED.*

"TIME up, you rascal! Come back, or
be hanged.
Matilda grows peevish. Her mother
harangued
For a whole hour this morning about
you. The deuce!
What on earth can I say to you? —
Nothing's of use.
And the blame of the whole of your
shocking behavior
Falls on me, sir! Come back, — do you
hear? — or I leave your
Affairs, and abjure you forever. Come
back
To your anxious betrothed; and per-
plexed

"COUSIN JACK."

II.

Alfred needed, in truth, no entreaties
from John
To increase his impatience to fly from
Serchon.
All the place was now fraught with sen-
sations of pain
Which, whilst in it, he strove to escape
from in vain.
A wild instinct warned him to fly from
a place
Where he felt that some fatal event,
swift of pace,

Was approaching his life. In despite
his endeavor
To think of Matilda, her image forever
Was effaced from his fancy by that of
Lucile.
From the ground which he stood on he
felt himself reel.
Scared, alarmed by those feelings to
which, on the day
Just before, all his heart had so soon
given way,
When he caught, with a strange sense
of fear, for assistance,
At what was, till then, the great fact in
existence,
'T was a phantom he grasped.

III.

Having sent for his guide,
He ordered his horse, and determined to
ride
Back forthwith to Bigorre.
Then, the guide, who well knew
Every haunt of those hills, said the wild
lake of Oo
Lay a league from Serchon; and sug-
gested a track
By the lake to Bigorre, which, transvers-
ing the back
Of the mountain, avoided a circuit be-
tween
Two long valleys; and thinking, "Per-
chance change of scene
May create change of thought," Alfred
Vargrave agreed,
Mounted horse, and set forth to Bigorre
at full speed.

IV.

His guide rode beside him.
The king of the guides!
The gallant Bernard! ever boldly he
rides,
Ever gayly he sings! For to him, from
of old,
The hills have confided their secrets,
and told
Where the white partridge lies, and the
cock o' the woods;
Where the izard flits fine through the
cold solitudes;
Where the bear lurks perdu; and the
lynx on his prey
At nightfall descends, when the moun-
tains are gray;
Where the sassafra blooms, and the
bluebell is born,

And the wild rhododendron first reddens
at morn;
Where the source of the waters is fine
as a thread;
How the storm on the wild Maladetta is
spread;
Where the thunder is hoarded, the snows
lie asleep,
Whence the torrents are fed, and the
cataracts leap;
And, familiarly known in the hamlets,
the vales
Have whispered to him all their thou-
sand love-tales;
He has laughed with the girls, he has
leaped with the boys;
Ever blithe, ever bold, ever boon, he
enjoys
An existence untroubled by envy or
strife,
While he feeds on the dews and the juices
of life.
And so lightly he sings, and so gayly
he rides,
For BERNARD LE SAUTEUR is the king
of all guides!

V.

But Bernard found, that day, neither
song nor love-tale,
Nor adventure, nor laughter, nor legend
avail
To arouse from his deep and profound
revery
Him that silent beside him rode fast as
could be.

VI.

Ascending the mountain they slackened
their pace,
And the marvellous prospect each moment
changed face.
The breezy and pure inspirations of morn
Breathed about them. The scarped
ravaged mountains, all worn
By the torrents, whose course they
watched faintly meander,
Were alive with the diamonded shy sal-
amander.
They paused o'er the bosom of purple
abysses,
And wound through a region of green
wildernesses;
The waters went wirbling above and
around,
The forests hung heaped in their shad-
ows profound.

Here the Larboust, and there Aventin,
Castellon,
Which the Demon of Tempest, descend-
ing upon,
Had wasted with fire, and the peaceful
Cazeaux
They marked; and far down in the sun-
shine below,
Half dipped in a valley of airiest blue,
The white happy homes of the village
of Oo,
Where the age is yet golden.

And high overhead
The wrecks of the combat of Titans were
spread.
Red granite and quartz, in the alchemic
sun,
Fused their splendors of crimson and
crystal in one;
And deep in the moss gleamed the deli-
cate shells,
And the dew lingered fresh in the heavy
harebells;
The large violet burned; the campanula
blue;
And Autumn's own flower, the saffron,
peered through
The red-berried brambles and thick sas-
safra;
And fragrant with thyme was the deli-
cate grass;
And high up, and higher, and highest
of all,
The secular phantom of snow!
O'er the wall
Of a gray sunless glen gaping drowsy
below,
That aerial spectre, revealed in the glow
Of the great golden dawn, hovers faint
on the eye,
And appears to grow in, and grow out
of, the sky,
And plays with the fancy, and baffles
the sight.
Only reached by the vast rosy ripple of
light,
And the cool star of eve, the Imperial
Thing,
Half unreal, like some mythological
king
That dominates all in a fable of old,
Takes command of a valley as fair to
behold
As aught in old fables; and, seen or
unseen,
Dwells aloof over all, in the vast and
serene