

And folded her hands on her bosom :
 long, spare,
 Fatigued, mournful hands ! Not a
 stream of stray hair
 Escaped the pale bands ; scarce more
 pale than the face
 Which they bound and locked up in a
 rigid white case.
 She fixed her eyes on him. There crept
 a vague awe
 O'er his sense, such as ghosts cast.
 "Eugène de Luvois,
 The cause which recalls me again to
 your side
 Is a promise that rests unfulfilled," she
 replied.
 "I come to fulfil it."
 He sprang from the place
 Where he sat, pressed his hand, as in
 doubt, o'er his face ;
 And, cautiously feeling each step o'er
 the ground
 That he trod on (as one who walks fear-
 ing the sound
 Of his footstep may startle and scare out
 of sight
 Some strange sleeping creature on which
 he would 'light
 Unawares), crept towards her ; one heavy
 hand laid
 On her shoulder in silence ; bent o'er her
 his head,
 Searched her face with a long look of
 troubled appeal
 Against doubt ; staggered backward, and
 murmured : . . . "Lucile !
 Thus we meet then ? . . . here ! . . . thus ?"
 "Soul to soul, ay, Eugène,
 As I pledged you my word that we
 should meet again.
 Dead, . . ." she murmured, "long dead !
 all that lived in our lives, —
 Thine and mine, — saving that which
 ev'n life's self survives,
 The soul ! 'Tis my soul seeks thine
 own. What may reach
 From my life to thy life (so wide each
 from each !)
 Save the soul to the soul ? To thy soul
 I would speak.
 May I do so ?"
 He said (worked and white was his cheek
 As he raised it), "Speak to me !"
 Deep, tender, serene,
 And sad was the gaze which the Sœur
 Seraphine
 Held on him. She spoke.

XXIII.

As some minstrel may fling,
 Preluding the music yet mute in each
 string,
 A swift hand athwart the hushed heart
 of the whole,
 Seeking which note most fitly may first
 move the soul ;
 And, leaving untroubled the deep chords
 below,
 Move pathetic in numbers remote ; —
 even so
 The voice which was moving the heart
 of that man
 Far away from its yet voiceless purpose
 began,
 Far away in the pathos remote of the
 past ;
 Until, through her words, rose before
 him, at last,
 Bright and dark in their beauty, the
 hopes that were gone
 Unaccomplished from life.
 He was mute.

XXIV.

She went on.
 And still further down the dim past did
 she lead
 Each yielding remembrance, far, far off,
 to feed
 'Mid the pastures of youth, in the twi-
 light of hope,
 And the valleys of boyhood, the fresh-
 flowered slope
 Of life's dawning land !
 'T is the heart of a boy,
 With its indistinct, passionate prescience
 of joy !
 The unproved desire, — the unaimed as-
 piration, —
 The deep conscious life that forestalls
 consummation ;
 With ever a flitting delight, — one arm's
 length
 In advance of the august inward impulse.
 The strength
 Of the spirit which troubles the seed in
 the sand
 With the birth of the palm-tree ! Let
 ages expand
 The glorious creature ! The ages lie
 shut
 (Safe, see !) in the seed, at time's signal
 to put
 Forth their beauty and power, leaf by
 leaf, layer on layer,

Till the palm strikes the sun, and stands
 broad in blue air.
 So the palm in the palm-seed ! so, slowly
 — so, wrought
 Year by year unperceived, hope on hope,
 thought by thought,
 Trace the growth of the man from its
 germ in the boy.
 Ah, but Nature, that nurtures, may also
 destroy !
 Charm the wind and the sun, lest some
 chance intervene !
 While the leaf's in the bud, while the
 stem's in the green,
 A light bird bends the branch, a light
 breeze breaks the bough,
 Which, if spared by the light breeze, the
 light bird, may grow
 To baffle the tempest, and rock the high
 nest,
 And take both the bird and the breeze
 to its breast.
 Shall we save a whole forest in sparing
 one seed ?
 Save the man in the boy ? in the thought
 save the deed ?
 Let the whirlwind uproot the grown
 tree, if it can !
 Save the seed from the north-wind. So
 let the grown man
 Face out fate. Spare the man-seed in
 youth.
 He was dumb.
 She went one step further.

XXV.

Lo ! manhood is come.
 And love, the wild song-bird, hath flown
 to the tree,
 And the whirlwind comes after. Now
 prove we, and see :
 What shade from the leaf ? what sup-
 port from the branch ?
 Spreads the leaf broad and fair ? holds
 the bough strong and stanch ?
 There, he saw himself, — dark, as he
 stood on that night,
 The last when they met and they parted :
 a sight
 For heaven to mourn o'er, for hell to re-
 joice !
 An ineffable tenderness troubled her
 voice ;
 It grew weak, and a sigh broke it through.
 Then he said
 (Never looking at her, never lifting his
 head,

As though, at his feet, there lay visibly
 hurled
 Those fragments), "It was not a love,
 't was a world,
 'T was a life that lay ruined, Lucile !"

XXVI.

She went on.
 "So be it ! Perish Babel, arise Babylon !
 From ruins like these rise the fanes that
 shall last,
 And to build up the future heaven shat-
 ters the past."
 "Ay," he moodily murmured, "and
 who cares to scan
 The heart's perished world, if the world
 gains a man ?
 From the past to the present, though
 late, I appeal ;
 To the nun Seraphine, from the woman
 Lucile !"

XXVII.

Lucile ! . . . the old name, — the old self !
 silenced long :
 Heard once more ! felt once more !
 As some soul to the throng
 Of invisible spirits admitted, baptized
 By death to a new name and nature, —
 surprised
 'Mid the songs of the seraphs, hears
 faintly, and far,
 Some voice from the earth, left below a
 dim star,
 Calling to her forlornly ; and (saddening
 the psalms
 Of the angels, and piercing the Paradise
 palms !)
 The name borne 'mid earthly beloveds
 on earth
 Sighed above some lone grave in the land
 of her birth ; —
 So that one word . . . Lucile ! . . . stirred
 the Sœur Seraphine,
 For a moment. Anon she resumed her
 serene
 And concentrated calm.
 "Let the Nun, then, retrace
 The life of the Soldier !" . . . she said,
 with a face
 That glowed, gladdening her words.
 "To the present I come :
 Leave the Past."
 There her voice rose, and seemed as
 when some
 Pale Priestess proclaims from her temple
 the praise

Of the hero whose brows she is crowning
with bays.
Step by step did she follow his path from
the place
Where their two paths diverged. Year
by year did she trace
(Familiar with all) his, the soldier's ex-
istence.
Her words were of trial, endurance, re-
sistance;
Of the leaguer around this besieged world
of ours:
And the same sentinels that ascend the
same towers
And report the same foes, the same fears,
the same strife,
Waged alike to the limits of each human
life.
She went on to speak of the lone moody
lord,
Shut up in his lone moody halls: every
word
Held the weight of a tear: she recorded
the good
He had patiently wrought through a
whole neighborhood;
And the blessing that lived on the lips
of the poor,
By the peasant's hearthstone, or the cot-
tager's door.
There she paused: and her accents
seemed dipped in the hue
Of his own sombre heart, as the picture
she drew
Of the poor, proud, sad spirit, rejecting
love's wages,
Yet working love's work; reading back-
wards life's pages
For penance; and stubbornly, many a
time,
Both missing the moral, and marring
the rhyme.
Then she spoke of the soldier! . . . the
man's work and fame,
The pride of a nation, a world's just
acclaim!
Life's inward approval!

XXVIII.

Her voice reached his heart,
And sank lower. She spoke of herself:
how, apart
And unseen, — far away, — she had
watched, year by year,
With how many a blessing, how many a
tear,

And how many a prayer, every stage in
the strife:
Guessed the thought in the deed: traced
the love in the life:
Blessed the man in the man's work!
"Thy work . . . O, not mine!
Thine, Lucile!" . . . he exclaimed . . .
"all the worth of it thine
If worth there be in it!"

Her answer conveyed
His reward, and her own: joy that can-
not be said
Alone by the voice . . . eyes — face —
spoke silently:
All the woman, one grateful emotion!
And she
A poor Sister of Charity! hers a life spent
In one silent effort for others! . . .
She bent
Her divine face above him, and filled up
his heart
With the look that glowed from it.
Then slow, with soft art,
Fixed her aim, and moved to it.

XXIX.

He, the soldier humane,
He, the hero; whose heart hid in glory
the pain
Of a youth disappointed; whose life had
made known
The value of man's life! . . . that youth
overthrown
And retrieved, had it left him no pity
for youth
In another? his own life of strenuous
truth
Accomplished in act, had it taught him
no care
For the life of another? . . . O no! every-
where
In the camp which she moved through,
she came face to face
With some noble token, some generous
trace
Of his active humanity . . .
"Well," he replied,
"If it be so?"
"I come from the solemn bedside
Of a man that is dying," she said.
"While we speak
A life is in jeopardy."
"Quick then! you seek
Aid or medicine, or what?"
"T is not needed," she said.
"Medicine? yes, for the mind! 'T is a
heart that needs aid!"

You, Eugène de Luvois, you (and you
only) can
Save the life of this man. Will you
save it?"

"What man?"
How? . . . where? . . . can you ask?"
She went rapidly on
To her object in brief vivid words . . .
The young son
Of Matilda and Alfred — the boy lying
there
Half a mile from that tent-door — the
father's despair,
The mother's deep anguish — the pride
of the boy
In the father — the father's one hope
and one joy
In the son: — the son now — wounded,
dying! She told
Of the father's stern struggle with life:
the boy's bold,
Pure, and beautiful nature: the fair
life before him
If that life were but spared . . . yet a
word might restore him!
The boy's broken love for the niece of
Eugène!
Its pathos: the girl's love for him; how,
half slain
In his tent she had found him; won
from him the tale;
Sought to nurse back his life; found
her efforts still fail;
Beaten back by a love that was stronger
than life;
Of how bravely till then he had stood in
that strife
Wherein England and France in their
best blood, at last,
Had bathed from remembrance the wounds
of the past.
And shall nations be nobler than men?
Are not great
Men the models of nations? For what
is a state
But the many's confused imitation of
one?
Shall he, the fair hero of France, on the
son
Of his ally seek vengeance, destroying
perchance
An innocent life, — here, when England
and France
Have forgiven the sins of their fathers
of yore,
And baptized a new hope in their sons'
recent gore?

She went on to tell how the boy had
clung still
To life, for the sake of life's uses, until
From his weak hands the strong effort
dropped, stricken down
By the news that the heart of Constance,
like his own,
Was breaking beneath . . .
But there "Hold!" he exclaimed,
Interrupting, "forbear!" . . . his whole
face was inflamed
With the heart's swarthy thunder which
yet, while she spoke,
Had been gathering silent, — at last the
storm broke
In grief or in wrath . . .
"T is to him, then," he cried, . . .
Checking suddenly short the tumultuous
stride,
"That I owe these late greetings, — for
him you are here, —
For his sake you seek me, — for him, it
is clear,
You have deigned at the last to bethink
you again
Of this long-forgotten existence!"
"Eugène!"
"Ha! fool that I was!" . . . he went
on, . . . "and just now,
While you spoke yet, my heart was
beginning to grow
Almost boyish again, almost sure of one
friend!
Yet this was the meaning of all, — this
the end!
Be it so! There's a sort of slow justice
(admit!)
In this, — that the word that man's
finger hath writ
In fire on my heart, I return him at
last.
Let him learn that word, — Never!"
"Ah, still to the past
Must the present be vassal?" she said.
"In the hour
We last parted I urged you to put forth
the power
Which I felt to be yours, in the con-
quest of life.
Yours, the promise to strive: mine, —
to watch o'er the strife.
I foresaw you would conquer; you have
conquered much,
Much, indeed, that is noble! I hail it
as such,
And am here to record and applaud it.
I saw

Not the less in your nature, Eugène de Luvois,
One peril, — one point where I feared
you would fail
To subdue that worst foe which a man
can assail, —
Himself: and I promised that, if I
should see
My champion once falter, or bend the
brave knee,
That moment would bring me again to
his side.
That moment is come! for that peril
was pride,
And you falter. I plead for yourself,
and one other,
For that gentle child without father or
mother,
To whom you are both. I plead, soldier
of France,
For your own nobler nature, — and plead
for Constance!"

At the sound of that name he averted
his head.
"Constance! . . . Ay, she entered my
lone life" (he said)
"When its sun was long set; and hung
over its night
Her own starry childhood. I have but
that light,
In the midst of much darkness! Who
names me but she
With titles of love? and what rests there
for me
In the silence of age save the voice of
that child?
The child of my own better life, unde-
filed!
My creature, carved out of my heart of
hearts!"

"Say,"

Said the Sœur Seraphine, — "are you
able to lay
Your hand as a knight on your heart as
a man
And swear that, whatever may happen,
you can
Feel assured for the life you thus cher-
ish?"

"How so?"

He looked up. "If the boy should die
thus?"

"Yes, I know
What your look would imply . . . this
sleek stranger forsooth!
Because on his cheek was the red rose
of youth

The heart of my niece must break for
it!"

She cried,

"Nay, but hear me yet further!"

With slow heavy stride,
Unheeding her words, he was pacing the
tent,

He was muttering low to himself as he
went.

"Ay, these young things lie safe in our
heart just so long

As their wings are in growing; and
when these are strong

They break it, and farewell! the bird
flies!" . . .

The nun

Laid her hand on the soldier, and mur-
mured, "The sun

Is descending, life fleets while we talk
thus! O, yet

Let this day upon one final victory set,
And complete a life's conquest!"

He said, "Understand!

If Constance wed the son of this man,
by whose hand

My heart hath been robbed, she is lost
to my life!

Can her home be my home? Can I
claim in the wife

Of that man's son the child of my age?
At her side

Shall he stand on my hearth? Shall I
sue to the bride

Of . . . enough!

"Ah, and you immemorial halls
Of my Norman forefathers, whose shadow
yet falls

On my fancy, and fuses hope, memory,
past,

Present, — all, in one silence! old trees
to the blast

Of the North Sea repeating the tale of
old days,

Nevermore, nevermore in the wild bosky
ways

Shall I hear through your umbrage an-
cestral the wind

Prophecy as of yore, when it shook the
deep mind

Of my boyhood, with whispers from out
the far years

Of love, fame, the raptures life cools
down with tears!

Henceforth shall the tread of a Vargrave
alone

Rouse your echoes?"

"O, think not," she said, "of the son

Of the man whom unjustly you hate;
only think

Of this young human creature, that
cries from the brink

Of a grave to your mercy!

"Recall your own words
(Words my memory mournfully ever
records!)

How with love may be wrecked a whole
life! then, Eugène,

Look with me (still those words in our
ears!) once again

At this young soldier sinking from life
here, — dragged down

By the weight of the love in his heart:
no renown,

No fame comforts him! nations shout
not above

The lone grave down to which he is
bearing the love

Which life has rejected! Will you
stand apart?

You, with such a love's memory deep in
your heart!

You the hero, whose life hath perchance
been led on

Through the deeds it hath wrought to
the fame it hath won,

By recalling the visions and dreams of
a youth,

Such as lies at your door now: who
have but, in truth,

To stretch forth a hand, to speak only
one word,

And by that word you rescue a life!"

He was stirred.

Still he sought to put from him the cup;
bowed his face

On his hand; and anon, as though wish-
ing to chase

With one angry gesture his own thoughts
aside,

He sprang up, brushed past her, and
bitterly cried,

"No! — Constance wed a Vargrave! —
I cannot consent!"

Then uprose the Sœur Seraphine.

The low tent,
In her sudden uprising, seemed dwarfed
by the height

From which those imperial eyes poured
the light

Of their deep silent sadness upon him.

No wonder
He felt, as it were, his own stature
shrink under

The compulsion of that grave regard!
For between

The Duc de Luvois and the Sœur Sera-
phine

At that moment there rose all the height
of one soul

O'er another; she looked down on him
from the whole

Lonely length of a life. There were sad
nights and days,

There were long months and years in
that heart-searching gaze;

And her voice, when she spoke, with
sharp pathos thrilled through

And transfixed him.

"Eugène de Luvois, but for you,
I might have been now, — not this
wandering nun,

But a mother, a wife, — pleading, not
for the son

Of another, but blessing some child of my
own,

His, — the man's that I once loved! . . .
Hush! that which is done

I regret not. I breathe no reproaches.
That's best

Which God sends. 'Twas His will: it
is mine. And the rest

Of that riddle I will not look back to.
He reads

In your heart, — He that judges of all
thoughts and deeds,

With eyes, mine forestall not! This
only I say:

You have not the right (read it, you, as
you may!)

To say . . . 'I am the wronged.' . . .
"Have I wronged thee? — wronged
thee!"

He faltered, "Lucile, ah, Lucile!"

"Nay, not me,"
She murmured, "but man! The lone
nun standing here

Has no claim upon earth, and is passed
from the sphere

Of earth's wrongs and earth's reparations.
But she,

The dead woman, Lucile, she whose
grave is in me,

Demands from her grave reparation to
man,

Reparation to God. Heed, O heed,
while you can,

This voice from the grave!"

"Hush!" he moaned, "I obey
The Sœur Seraphine. There, Lucile! let
this pay

Every debt that is due to that grave.
Now lead on :

I follow you, Sœur Seraphine ! . . . To
the son
Of Lord Alfred Vargrave . . . and
then," . . .

As he spoke
He lifted the tent-door, and down the dun
smoke
Pointed out the dark bastions, with bat-
teries crowned,
Of the city beneath them . . .

"Then, there, underground,
And *valete et plaudite*, soon as may be !
Let the old tree go down to the earth, —
the old tree,

With the worm at its heart ! Lay the
axe to the root !

Who will miss the old stump, so we save
the young shoot ?

A Vargrave ! . . . this pays all . . . Lead
on ! . . . In the seed
Save the forest ! . . .

"I follow . . . forth, forth ! where
you lead."

XXX.

The day was declining ; a day sick and
damp.

In a blank ghostly glare shone the bleak
ghostly camp

Of the English. Alone in his dim,
spectral tent

(Himself the wan spectre of youth), with
eyes bent

On the daylight departing, the sick man
was sitting

Upon his low pallet. These thoughts,
vaguely flitting,

Crossed the silence between him and
death, which seemed near.

— "Pain o'erreaches itself, so is balked !
else, how bear

This intense and intolerable solitude,
With its eye on my heart and its hand
on my blood ?

Pulse by pulse ! Day goes down : yet
she comes not again.

Other suffering, doubtless, where hope
is more plain,

Claims her elsewhere. I die, strange !
and scarcely feel sad.

O, to think of Constance *thus*, and not
to go mad !

But Death, it would seem, dulls the
sense to his own

Dull doings . . ."

XXXI.

Between those sick eyes and the sun
A shadow fell thwart.

XXXII.

"Tis the pale nun once more !
But who stands at her side, mute and
dark in the door ?

How oft had he watched through the
glory and gloom

Of the battle, with long, longing looks
that dim plume

Which now (one stray sunbeam upon it)
shook, stooped

To where the tent-curtain, dividing, was
looped !

How that stern face had haunted and
hovered about

The dreams it still scared ! through what
fond fear and doubt

Had the boy yearned in heart to the
hero ! (What's like

A boy's love for some famous man ?) . . .
O, to strike

A wild path through the battle, down
striking perchance

Some rash foeman too near the great
soldier of France,

And so fall in his glorious regard ! . . .
Oft, how oft

Had his heart flashed this hope out,
whilst watching aloft

The dim battle that plume dance and
dart, — never seen

So near till this moment ! how eager to
glean

Every stray word, dropped through the
camp-babble in praise

Of his hero, — each tale of old ventu-
rous days

In the desert ! And now . . . could he
speak out his heart

Face to face with that man ere he died !

XXXIII.

With a start
The sick soldier sprang up : the blood
sprang up in him,

To his throat, and o'erthrew him : he
reeled back : a dim

Sanguine haze filled his eyes ; in his
ears rose the din

And rush, as of cataracts loosened within,
Through which he saw faintly, and

heard, the pale nun
(Looking larger than life, where she

stood in the sun)

Point to him and murmur, "Behold !"

Then that plume
Seemed to wave like a fire, and fade off
in the gloom

Which momentarily put out the world.

XXXIV.

To his side
Moved the man the boy dreaded yet loved

. . . "Ah ! " . . . he sighed,
"The smooth brow, the fair Vargrave

face ! and those eyes,
All the mother's ! The old things again !

"Do not rise.
You suffer, young man ?"

THE BOY.

Sir, I die.

THE DUKE.

Not so young !

THE BOY.

So young ? yes ! and yet I have tangled
among

The frayed warp and woof of this brief
life of mine

Other lives than my own. Could my
death but untwine

The vex skein . . . but it will not.
Yes, Duke, young — so young !

And I knew you not ? yet I have done
you a wrong

Irreparable ! . . . late, too late to repair.
If I knew any means . . . but I know

none ! . . . I swear,
If this broken fraction of time could ex-
tend

Into infinite lives of atonement, no end
Would seem too remote for my grief
(could that be !)

To include it ! Not too late, however,
for me

To entreat : is it too late for you to for-
give ?

THE DUKE.

You wrong — my forgiveness — explain.

THE BOY.

Could I live !
Such a very few hours left to life, yet I
shrink,

I falter ! . . . Yes, Duke, your forgive-
ness I think

Should free my soul hence.

Ah ! you could not surmise
That a boy's beating heart, burning
thoughts, longing eyes

Were following you evermore (heeded
not !)

While the battle was flowing between
us : nor what

Eager, dubious footsteps at nightfall oft
went

With the wind and the rain, round and
round your blind tent,

Persistent and wild as the wind and the
rain,

Unnoticed as these, weak as these, and
as vain !

O, how obdurate then looked your tent !
The waste air

Grew stern at the gleam which said . . .
"Off ! he is there !"

I know not what merciful mystery now
Brings you here, whence the man whom
you see lying low

Other footsteps (not those !) must soon
bear to the grave.

But death is at hand, and the few words
I have

Yet to speak, I must speak them at once.
Duke, I swear,

As I lie here, (Death's angel too close
not to hear !)

That I meant not this wrong to you.
Duc de Luvois,

I loved your niece — loved ? why, I love
her ! I saw,

And, seeing, how could I but love her ?
I seemed

Born to love her. Alas, were that all !
had I dreamed

Of this love's cruel consequence as it
rests now

Ever fearfully present before me, I vow
That the secret, unknown, had gone
down to the tomb

Into which I descend . . . O why, whilst
there was room

In life left for warning, had no one the
heart

To warn me ? Had any one whispered
. . . "Depart !"

To the hope the whole world seemed in
league then to nurse !

Had any one hinted . . . "Beware of
the curse

Which is coming !" There was not a
voice raised to tell,

Not a hand moved to warn from the
blow ere it fell,

And then . . . then the blow fell on *both* !
This is why
I implore you to pardon that great injury
Wrought on her, and, through her,
wrought on you, Heaven knows
How unwittingly !

THE DUKE.

Ah ! . . . and, young soldier, suppose
That I came here to seek, not grant,
pardon ? —

THE BOY.

Of whom ?

THE DUKE.

Of yourself.

THE BOY.

Duke, I bear in my heart to the tomb
No boyish resentment ; not one lonely
thought
That honors you not. In all this there
is nought
'T is for me to forgive.

Every glorious act
Of your great life starts forward, an elo-
quent fact,

To confirm in my boy's heart its faith in
your own.

And have I not hoarded, to ponder
upon,

A hundred great acts from your life ?
Nay, all these,

Were they so many lying and false wit-
nesses,

Does there rest not *one* voice, which was
never untrue ?

I believe in Constance, Duke, as she
does in you !

In this great world around us, wherever
we turn,

Some grief irremediable we discern ;
And yet — there sits God, calm in
Heaven above !

Do we trust one whit less in His justice
or love ?

I judge not.

THE DUKE.

Enough ! hear at last, then, the truth.
Your father and I, — foes we were in
our youth.

It matters not why. Yet thus much
understand :

The hope of my youth was signed out by
his hand.

I was not of those whom the buffets of
fate

Tame and teach : and my heart buried
slain love in hate.

If your own frank young heart, yet un-
conscious of all

Which turns the heart's blood in its
springtide to gall,

And unable to guess even aught that
the furrow

Across these gray brows hides of sin or
of sorrow,

Comprehends not the evil and grief of
my life,

'T will at least comprehend how intense
was the strife

Which is closed in this act of atone-
ment, whereby

I seek in the son of my youth's enemy
The friend of my age. Let the present
release

Here acquitted the past ! In the name
of my niece,

Whom for my life in yours as a hostage
I give,

Are you great enough, boy, to forgive
me, — and live ?

Whilst he spoke thus, a doubtful tu-
multuous joy

Chased its fleeting effects o'er the face
of the boy :

As when some stormy moon, in a long
cloud confined,

Struggles outward through shadows, the
varying wind

Alternates, and bursts, self-surprised,
from her prison,

So that slow joy grew clear in his face.
He had risen

To answer the Duke ; but strength failed
every limb ;

A strange, happy feebleness trembled
through him.

With a faint cry of rapturous wonder,
he sank

On the breast of the nun, who stood
near.

"Yes, boy ! thank

This guardian angel," the Duke said.

"I — you,

We owe all to her. Crown her work.
Live ! be true

To your young life's fair promise, and
live for her sake !"

"Yes, Duke : I will live. I *must* live,
— live to make

My whole life the answer you claim,"
the boy said,

"For joy does not kill !"

Back again the faint head
Declined on the nun's gentle bosom.

She saw
His lips quiver, and motioned the Duke
to withdraw

And leave them a moment together.

He eyed
Them both with a wistful regard ; turned,
and sighed,

And lifted the tent-door, and passed from
the tent.

XXXV.

Like a furnace, the fervid, intense occi-
dent

From its hot seething levels a great glare
struck up

On the sick metal sky. And, as out of
a cup

Some with watches boiling wild por-
tents arise,

Monstrous clouds, massed, misshapen,
and tinged with strange dyes,

Hovered over the red fume, and changed
to weird shapes

As of snakes, salamanders, efts, lizards,
storks, apes,

Chimeras, and hydras : whilst — ever
the same —

In the midst of all these (creatures fused
by his flame,

And changed by his influence !) change-
less, as when,

Ere he lit down to death generations of
men,

O'er that crude and ungainly creation,
which there

With wild shapes this cloud-world seemed
to mimic in air,

The eye of Heaven's all-judging witness,
he shone,

And shall shine on the ages we reach
not, — the sun !

XXXVI.

Nature posted her parable thus in the
skies,

And the man's heart bore witness. Life's
vapors arise

And fall, pass and change, group them-
selves and revolve

Round the great central life, which is
Love : these dissolve

And resume themselves, here assume
beauty, there terror ;

And the phantasmagoria of infinite error,
And endless complexity, lasts but a

while ;
Life's self, the immortal, immutable

smile
Of God, on the soul, in the deep heart
of Heaven

Lives changeless, unchanged : and our
morning and even

Are earth's alternations, not Heaven's.

XXXVII.

While he yet
Watched the skies, with this thought in
his heart ; while he set

Thus unconsciously all his life forth in
his mind,

Summed it up, searched it out, proved
it vapor and wind,

And embraced the new life which that
hour had revealed, —

Love's life, which earth's life had de-
faced and concealed ;

Lucile left the tent and stood by him.
Her tread

Aroused him ; and, turning towards her,
he said :

"O Sœur Seraphine, are you happy ?"
"Eugène,

What is happier than to have hoped not
in vain ?"

She answered, — "And you ?"
"Yes."

"You do not repent ?"

"No."

"Thank Heaven !" she murmured.
He musingly bent

His looks on the sunset, and somewhat
apart

Where he stood, sighed, as though to
his innermost heart,

"O blessed are they, amongst whom
was not,

Whose morning unclouded, without stain
or spot,

Predicts a pure evening ; who, sunlike,
in light

Have traversed, unsullied, the world,
and set bright !"

But she in response, "Mark yon ship
far away,

Asleep on the wave, in the last light of
day,

With all its hushed thunders shut up !
 Would you know
 A thought which came to me a few days
 ago,
 Whilst watching those ships ? . . . When
 the great Ship of Life,
 Surviving, though shattered, the tumult
 and strife
 Of earth's angry element, — masts broken
 short,
 Decks drenched, bulwarks beaten, —
 drives safe into port,
 When the Pilot of Galilee, seen on the
 strand,
 Stretches over the waters a welcoming
 hand ;
 When, heeding no longer the sea's baf-
 fled roar,
 The mariner turns to his rest ever-
 more ;
 What will then be the answer the helms-
 man must give ?
 Will it be . . . ' Lo our log-book ! Thus
 once did we live
 In the zones of the South ; thus we trav-
 ersed the seas
 Of the Orient ; there dwelt with the
 Hesperides ;
 Thence followed the west-wind ; here,
 eastward we turned ;
 The stars failed us there ; just here land
 we discerned
 On our lee ; there the storm overtook us
 at last ;
 That day went the bowsprit, the next
 day the mast ;
 There the mermen came round us, and
 there we saw bask
 A siren ? The Captain of Port will he
 ask
 Any one of such questions ? I cannot
 think so !
 But . . . ' What is the last Bill of Health
 you can show ?'
 Not — How fared the soul through the
 trials she passed ?
 But — What is the state of that soul at
 the last ?"
 "May it be so !" he sighed. "There !
 the sun drops, behold !"
 And indeed, whilst he spoke, all the pur-
 ple and gold
 In the west had turned ashen, save one
 fading strip
 Of light that yet gleamed from the dark
 nether lip

Of a long reef of cloud ; and o'er sullen
 ravines
 And ridges the raw damps were hanging
 white screens
 Of melancholy mist.
 "Nunc dimittis !" she said.
 "O God of the living ! whilst yet 'mid
 the dead
 And the dying we stand here alive, and
 thy days
 Returning, admit space for prayer and
 for praise,
 In both these confirm us !
 "The helmsman, Eugène,
 Needs the compass to steer by. Pray
 always. Again
 We two part : each to work out Heaven's
 will : you, I trust,
 In the world's ample witness ; and I, as
 I must,
 In secret and silence : you, love, fame,
 await ;
 Me, sorrow and sickness. We meet at
 one gate
 When all's over. The ways they are
 many and wide,
 And seldom are two ways the same.
 Side by side
 May we stand at the same little door
 when all's done !
 The ways they are many, the end it is one.
 He that knocketh shall enter : who asks
 shall obtain :
 And who seeketh, he findeth. Remem-
 ber, Eugène !"
 She turned to depart.
 "Whither ? whither ?" . . . he said.
 She stretched forth her hand where, al-
 ready outspread
 On the darkened horizon, remotely they
 saw
 The French camp-fires kindling.
 "O Duc de Luvois,
 See yonder vast host, with its manifold
 heart
 Made as one man's by one hope ! That
 hope 't is your part
 To aid towards achievement, to save from
 reverse :
 Mine, through suffering to soothe, and
 through sickness to nurse.
 I go to my work : you to yours."
 XXXVII.
 Whilst she spoke,
 On the wide wasting evening there dis-
 tantly broke

The low roll of musketry. Straightway,
 anon,
 From the dim Flag-staff Battery bel-
 lowed a gun.
 "Our chasseurs are at it !" he muttered.
 She turned,
 Smiled, and passed up the twilight.
 He faintly discerned
 Her form, now and then, on the flat
 lurid sky
 Rise, and sink, and recede through the
 mists ; by and by
 The vapors closed round, and he saw her
 no more.

XXXIX.

Nor shall we. For her mission, accom-
 plished, is o'er.
 The mission of genius on earth ! To
 uplift,
 Purify, and confirm by its own gracious
 gift,
 The world, in despite of the world's dull
 endeavor
 To degrade, and drag down, and oppose
 it forever.
 The mission of genius : to watch, and to
 wait,
 To renew, to redeem, and to regenerate.
 The mission of woman on earth ! to give
 birth
 To the mercy of Heaven descending on
 earth.
 The mission of woman : permitted to
 bruise
 The head of the serpent, and sweetly in-
 fuse,
 Through the sorrow and sin of earth's
 registered curse,
 The blessing which mitigates all : born
 to nurse,
 And to soothe, and to solace, to help
 and to heal
 The sick world that leans on her. This
 was Lucile.

XL.

A power hid in pathos : a fire veiled in
 cloud :
 Yet still burning outward : a branch
 which, though bowed
 By the bird in its passage, springs up-
 ward again :
 Through all symbols I search for her
 sweetness — in vain !
 Judge her love by her life. For our life
 is but love

In act. Pure was hers : and the dear
 God above,
 Who knows what His creatures have
 need of for life,
 And whose love includes all loves,
 through much patient strife
 Led her soul into peace. Love, though
 love may be given
 In vain, is yet lovely. Her own native
 heaven
 More clearly she mirrored, as life's
 troubled dream
 Wore away ; and love sighed into rest,
 like a stream
 That breaks its heart over wild rocks
 toward the shore
 Of the great sea which hushes it up ever-
 more
 With its little wild wailing. No stream
 from its source
 Flows seaward, how lonely soever its
 course,
 But what some land is gladdened. No
 star ever rose
 And set, without influence somewhere.
 Who knows
 What earth needs from earth's lowest
 creature ? No life
 Can be pure in its purpose and strong in
 its strife
 And all life not be purer and stronger
 thereby.
 The spirits of just men made perfect on
 high,
 The army of martyrs who stand by the
 Throne
 And gaze into the Face that makes glo-
 rious their own,
 Know this, surely, at last. Honest love,
 honest sorrow,
 Honest work for the day, honest hope
 for the morrow,
 Are these worth nothing more than the
 hand they make weary,
 The heart they have saddened, the life
 they leave dreary ?
 Hush ! the sevenfold heavens to the
 voice of the Spirit
 Echo : He that o'ercometh shall all
 things inherit.

XLI.

The moon was, in fire, carried up through
 the fog ;
 The loud fortress barked at her like a
 chained dog.

The horizon pulsed flame, the air sound.	Eugène de Luvois with a deep, thought-
All without,	ful smile
War and winter, and twilight, and ter-	Lingered, looking, and listening, lone by
ror, and doubt;	the tent.
All within, light, warmth, calm!	At last he withdrew, and night closed as
In the twilight, long while	he went.

THE APPLE OF LIFE.

FROM the river Euphrates, the river whose source is in Paradise, far As red Egypt, — sole lord of the land and the sea, 'twixt the home of the star That is born in the blush of the East, and the porch of the chambers of rest Where the great sea is girded with fire, and Orion returns in the West, And the ships come and go in grand silence, — King Solomon reigned. And behold, In that time there was everywhere silver as common as stones be, and gold That for plenty was 'counted as silver, and cedar as sycamore-trees That are found in the vale, for abundance. For God to the King gave all these, With glory exceeding; moreover all kings of the earth to him came, Because of his wisdom, to hear him. So great was King Solomon's fame.

And for all this the King's soul was sad. And his heart said within him, "Alas For man dies! if his glory abideth, himself from his glory shall pass. And that which remaineth behind him, he seeth it not any more: For how shall he know what comes after, who knoweth not what went before? I have planted me gardens and vineyards, and gotten me silver and gold, And my hand from whatever my heart hath desired I did not withhold: And what profit have I in the works of my hands which I take not away? I have searched out wisdom and knowledge: and what do they profit me, they? As the fool dieth, so doth the wise. What is gathered is scattered again. As the breath of the beasts, even so is the breath of the children of men: And the same thing befalleth them both. And not any man's soul is his own."

This he thought, as he sat in his garden and watched the great sun going down In the glory thereof; and the earth and the sky by the beam of the same Were clothed with the gladness of color, and bathed in the beauty of flame. And "Behold," said the King, "in a moment the glory shall vanish!" Even then, While he spake, he was 'ware of a man drawing near him, who seemed to his ken (By the hair in its blackness like flax that is burned in the hemp-dresser's shed, And the brow's smoky hue, and the smouldering eyeball more livid than lead) As the sons of the land that lies under the sword of the Cherub whose wing Wraps in wrath the shut gateways of Paradise. He, being come to the King, Seven times made obeisance before him. To whom, "What art thou," the King cried,

"That thus unannounced to King Solomon comest?" The man, spreading wide The palm of his right hand, showed in it an apple yet bright from the Tree In whose stem springs the life never-failing which Sin lost to Adam, when he, Tasting knowledge forbidden, found death in the fruit of it. . . . So doth the Giver Evil gifts to the evil apportion. And "Hail! let the King live forever!" Bowing down at the feet of the monarch, and laughingly, even as one Whose meaning, in joy or in jest, hovers hid 'twixt the word and the tone,

Said the stranger, "For lo ye" (and lightly he dropped in the hand of the King That apple), "from 'twixt the four rivers of Eden, God gave me to bring To his servant King Solomon, even to my lord that on Israel's throne He hath 'stablished, this fruit from the Tree in whose branch Life abideth: for none Shall taste death, having tasted this apple."

And therewith he vanished.

Remained

In the hand of the King the life-apple: ambrosial of breath, golden-grained, Rosy-bright as a star dipt in sunset. The King turned it o'er, and perused The fruit, which, alluring his lip, in his hand lay untasted.

He mused,

"Life is good: but not life in itself. Life eternal, eternally young, That were life to be lived, or desired! Well it were if a man could prolong The manhood that moves in the muscles, the rapture that mounts in the brain When life at the prime, in the pastime of living, led on by the train Of the jubilant senses, exulting goes forth, brave of body and spirit, To conquer, choose, claim, and enjoy what 't was born to achieve or inherit. The dance, and the festal procession! the pride in the strenuous play Of the sinews that, pliant of power, the will, though it wanton, obey! When the veins are yet wishful, and in them the bountiful impulses beat, When the lilies of Love are yet living, the roses of Beauty yet sweet: And the eye glows with glances that kindle, the lip breathes the warmth that inspires, And the hand hath yet vigor to seize the good thing which the spirit desires! O well for the foot that bounds forward! and ever the wind it awakes Lifts no lock from the forehead yet white, not a leaf that is withered yet shakes From the loose crown that laughs on young tresses! and ever the earth and the skies Are crammed with audacious contingencies, measureless means of surprise! Life is sweet to the young that yet know not what life is. But life, after Youth, The gay liar, leaves hold of the bauble, and Age, with his terrible truth, Picks it up, and perceives it is broken, and knows it unfit to engage The care it yet craves. . . . Life eternal, eternally wedded to Age! What gain were in that? Why should any man seek what he loathes to prolong? The twilight that darkens the eyeball: the dull ear that's deaf to the song, When the maidens rejoice and the bride to the bridegroom, with music, is led: The palsy that shakes 'neath the blossoms that fall from the chill bridal bed. When the hand saith '*I did*,' not '*I will do*,' the heart saith '*It was*,' not '*'T will be*,'

Too late in man's life is Forever, — too late comes this apple to me!" Then the King rose. And lo, it was evening. And leaning, because he was old, On the sceptre that, curiously sculptured in ivory garnished with gold, To others a rod of dominion, to him was a staff for support, Slow paced he the murmurous pathways where myrtles, in court up to court, Mixt with roses in garden on garden, were ranged around fountains that fed With cool music green odorous twilights: and so, never lifting his head To look up from the way he walked wearily, he to the House of his Pride Reascended, and entered.

In cluster, high lamps, spices, odors, each side, Burning inward and onward, from cinnamon ceilings, down distances vast Of voluptuous vistas, illumined deep halls through whose silentness passed King Solomon sighing; where columns colossal stood, gathered in groves As the trees of the forest in Libanus, — there where the wind, as it moves, Whispers, "I, too, am Solomon's servant!" — huge trunks hid in garlands of gold, On whose tops the skilled sculptors of Sidon had granted men's gaze to behold How the phoenix that sits on the cedar's lone summit 'mid fragrance and fire, Ever dying, and living, hath loaded with splendors her funeral pyre;