

him," connecting them carefully with the next stanza (16), "*Then* the truth came upon me." It is only to the earnestly-loving heart that such a revelation of God could be given. "God is Love, and he that loveth not knoweth not God." Observe, also, in this short stanza the effect of the intense earnestness of his soul, leading him to lay aside his harp and cease his singing, and simply break out in impassioned speech.

Stanza 17.—Shall God be infinitely above his creature man, in all faculties except one, and that "the greatest of all," viz., Love? (Note, in passing, the exquisite beauty of the lines: "With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too," and "As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet." The passage immediately following this line is of course ironical at his own expense, which is indicated by the parenthetical "I laugh as I think"; as if to say "how utterly foolish the thought that such a wide province, such a grand gift, as Love, should be mine quite apart from God, the great Ruler and Giver of all!")

Stanza 18.—Impossible! God is the giver: all that I have—Love, as well as everything else—is from him; I can wish, but cannot will the thing I would; but God can, therefore God will; his love cannot be frustrated as mine is; it must even for such as "Saul, the failure, the ruin he seems now," find Salvation; being infinite it must have its will, and find a way, however hard it be (see the striking line "it is by no breath," &c.); and *there it is!* See THE CHRIST stand!

Remember carefully the position as explained in the 15th stanza as you read the magnificent climax, beginning—

"O Saul, it shall be

A Face like my face that receives thee;"

observe also the effect of the spondee with which stanza 18 closes, instead of the usual anapaest; it gives wonderful dignity and strength to the thought. The same effect is produced several times in the early part of the poem by the same means, but nowhere with such power as in this, the grand climax.

What a contrast here to the petty mechanical notions of inspiration which have so often degraded the loftiest subject of human thought; and how marvellously is the presence and the power of the Unseen on such a soul as David's imaged forth in the lines of the closing stanza, in words which seem almost to utter the unutterable.

AN EPISTLE

CONTAINING THE
STRANGE MEDICAL EXPERIENCE OF KARSHISH,
THE ARAB PHYSICIAN.

KARSHISH, the picker-up of learning's crumbs,
The not-incurious in God's handiwork
(This man's-flesh he hath admirably made,
Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste,
To coop up and keep down on earth a space
That puff of vapour from his mouth, man's soul).
—To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,
Breeder in me of what poor skill I boast,
Like me inquisitive how pricks and cracks
Befall the flesh through too much stress and strain,
Whereby the wily vapour fain would slip
Back and rejoin its source before the term,—
And aptest in contrivance (under God)
To baffle it by deftly stopping such:—
The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at home
Sends greeting (health and knowledge, fame with peace)
Three samples of true snake-stone—rarer still,
One of the other sort, the melon-shaped,
(But fitter, pounded fine, for charms than drugs)
And writeth now the twenty-second time.

My journeyings were brought to Jericho:
Thus I resume. Who studious in our art
Shall count a little labour unrepaid?
I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and bone

On many a flinty furlong of this land.
 Also, the country-side is all on fire
 With rumours of a marching hitherward :
 Some say Vespasian cometh, some, his son.
 A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear :
 Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow balls :
 I cried and threw my staff and he was gone.
 Twice have the robbers stripped and beaten me,
 And once a town declared me for a spy ;
 But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,
 Since this poor covert where I pass the night,
 This Bethany, lies scarce the distance thence
 A man with plague-sores at the third degree
 Runs till he drops down dead. Thou laughest here !
 'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and safe,
 To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip
 And share with thee whatever Jewry yields.
 A viscid choler is observable
 In tertians, I was nearly bold to say ;
 And falling-sickness hath a happier cure
 Than our school wots of : there 's a spider here
 Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,
 Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-grey back ;
 Take five and drop them . . . but who knows his mind,
 The Syrian run-a-gate I trust this to ?
 His service payeth me a sublimate
 Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.
 Best wait : I reach Jerusalem at morn,
 There set in order my experiences,
 Gather what most deserves, and give thee all—
 Or I might add, Judæa's gum-tragacanth

Scales off in purer flakes, shines clearer-grained,
 Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the porphyry,
 In fine exceeds our produce. Scalp-disease
 Confounds me, crossing so with leprosy :
 Thou hadst admired one sort I gained at Zoar—
 But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end.

Yet stay ! my Syrian blinketh gratefully,
 Protesteth his devotion is my price—
 Suppose I write what harms not, though he steal ?
 I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush,
 What set me off a-writing first of all.
 An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang !
 For, be it this town's barrenness—or else
 The Man had something in the look of him—
 His case has struck me far more than 't is worth.
 So, pardon if—(lest presently I lose,
 In the great press of novelty at hand,
 The care and pains this somehow stole from me)
 I bid thee take the thing while fresh in mind,
 Almost in sight—for, wilt thou have the truth ?
 The very man is gone from me but now,
 Whose ailment is the subject of discourse.
 Thus then, and let thy better wit help all !

'T is but a case of mania : subinduced
 By epilepsy, at the turning-point
 Of trance prolonged unduly some three days
 When, by the exhibition of some drug
 Or spell, exorcisation, stroke of art
 Unknown to me and which 't were well to know,

The evil thing, out-breaking, all at once,
 Left the man whole and sound of body indeed,—
 But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates too wide,
 Making a clear house of it too suddenly,
 The first conceit that entered might inscribe
 Whatever it was minded on the wall
 So plainly at that vantage, as it were,
 (First come, first served) that nothing subsequent
 Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls
 The just-returned and new-established soul
 Hath gotten now so thoroughly by heart
 That henceforth she will read or these or none.
 And first—the man's own firm conviction rests
 That he was dead (in fact they buried him)
 —That he was dead and then restored to life
 By a Nazarene physician of his tribe :
 —'Sayeth, the same bade " Rise," and he did rise.
 " Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt cry.
 Not so this figment!—not, that such a fume,
 Instead of giving way to time and health,
 Should eat itself into the life of life,
 As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones, and all!
 For see, how he takes up the after-life.
 The man—it is one Lazarus a Jew,
 Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,
 The body's habit wholly laudable,
 As much, indeed, beyond the common health
 As he were made and put aside to show.
 Think, could we penetrate by any drug
 And bathe the wearied soul and worried flesh,
 And bring it clear and fair, by three days' sleep!

Whence has the man the balm that brightens all?
 This grown man eyes the world now like a child.
 Some elders of his tribe, I should premise,
 Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,
 To bear my inquisition. While they spoke,
 Now sharply, now with sorrow,—told the case,—
 He listened not except I spoke to him,
 But folded his two hands and let them talk,
 Watching the flies that buzzed : and yet no fool.
 And that 's a sample how his years must go.
 Look if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,
 Should find a treasure,—can he use the same
 With straitened habitude and tastes starved small,
 And take at once to his impoverished brain
 The sudden element that changes things,
 That sets the undreamed-of rapture at his hand,
 And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned dust?
 Is he not such an one as moves to mirth—
 Warily parsimonious, when no need,
 Wasteful as drunkenness at undue times?
 All prudent counsel as to what befits
 The golden mean, is lost on such an one :
 The man's fantastic will is the man's law.
 So here—we call the treasure knowledge, say,
 Increased beyond the fleshly faculty—
 Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
 Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven :
 The man is witless of the size, the sum,
 The value in proportion of all things,
 Or whether it be little or be much.
 Discourse to him of prodigious armaments

Assembled to besiege his city now,
 And of the passing of a mule with gourds—
 'T is one! Then take it on the other side,
 Speak of some trifling fact,—he will gaze rapt
 With stupor at its very littleness,
 (Far as I see) as if in that indeed
 He caught prodigious import, whole results;
 And so will turn to us the bystanders
 In ever the same stupor (note this point)
 That we too see not with his opened eyes.
 Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play,
 Preposterously, at cross purposes.
 Should his child sicken unto death,—why, look
 For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness,
 Or pretermission of the daily craft!
 While a word, gesture, glance from that same child
 At play or in the school or laid asleep,
 Will startle him to an agony of fear,
 Exasperation, just as like. Demand
 The reason why—"t is but a word," object—
 "A gesture"—he regards thee as our lord
 Who lived there in the pyramid alone,
 Looked at us (dost thou mind?) when, being young,
 We both would unadvisedly recite
 Some charm's beginning, from that book of his,
 Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst
 All into stars, as suns grown old are wont.
 Thou and the child have each a veil alike
 Thrown o'er your heads, from under which ye both
 Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a match
 Over a mine of Greek fire, did ye know!

He holds on firmly to some thread of life—
 (It is the life to lead perforcedly)
 Which runs across some vast distracting orb
 Of glory on either side that meagre thread,
 Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet—
 The spiritual life around the earthly life:
 The law of that is known to him as this,
 His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here.
 So is the man perplexed with impulses
 Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight on,
 Proclaiming what is right and wrong across,
 And not along, this black thread through the blaze—
 "It should be" baulked by "here it cannot be."
 And oft the man's soul springs into his face
 As if he saw again and heard again
 His sage that bade him "Rise," and he did rise.
 Something, a word, a tick o' the blood within
 Admonishes: then back he sinks at once
 To ashes, who was very fire before,
 In sedulous recurrence to his trade
 Whereby he earneth him the daily bread;
 And studiously the humbler for that pride,
 Professedly the faultier that he knows
 God's secret, while he holds the thread of life.
 Indeed the especial marking of the man
 Is prone submission to the heavenly will—
 Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.
 'Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last
 For that same death which must restore his being
 To equilibrium, body loosening soul
 Divorced even now by premature full growth:

He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live
 So long as God please, and just how God please.
 He even seeketh not to please God more
 (Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.
 Hence, I perceive not he affects to preach
 The doctrine of his sect whate'er it be,
 Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do :
 How can he give his neighbour the real ground,
 His own conviction? Ardent as he is—
 Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old
 "Be it as God please" reassureth him.
 I probed the sore as thy disciple should :
 "How, beast," said I, "this stolid carelessness
 Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march
 To stamp out like a little spark thy town,
 Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at once?"
 He merely looked with his large eyes on me.
 The man is apathetic, you deduce?
 Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,
 Able and weak, affects the very brutes
 And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—
 As a wise workman recognises tools
 In a master's workshop, loving what they make.
 Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb :
 Only impatient, let him do his best,
 At ignorance and carelessness and sin—
 An indignation which is promptly curbed :
 As when in certain travel I have feigned
 To be an ignoramus in our art
 According to some preconceived design
 And happed to hear the land's practitioners

Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignorance,
 Prattle fantastically on disease,
 Its cause and cure—and I must hold my peace!

Thou wilt object—Why have I not ere this
 Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene
 Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the source,
 Conferring with the frankness that befits?
 Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech
 Perished in a tumult many years ago,
 Accused,—our learning's fate,—of wizardry,
 Rebellion, to the setting up a rule
 And creed prodigious as described to me.
 His death, which happened when the earthquake fell
 (Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss
 To occult learning in our lord the sage
 Who lived there in the pyramid alone)
 Was wrought by the mad people—that's their wont!
 On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,
 To his tried virtue, for miraculous help—
 How could he stop the earthquake? That's their way!
 The other imputations must be lies :
 But take one, though I loathe to give it thee,
 In mere respect for any good man's fame.
 (And after all, our patient Lazarus
 Is stark mad; should we count on what he says?
 Perhaps not: though in writing to a leech
 'T is well to keep back nothing of a case.)
 This man so cured regards the curer, then,
 As—God forgive me! who but God himself,
 Creator and sustainer of the world,

That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile.
 —'Sayeth that such an one was born and lived,
 Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own house,
 Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,
 And yet was . . . what I said nor choose repeat,
 And must have so avouched himself, in fact,
 In hearing of this very Lazarus
 Who saith—but why all this of what he saith?
 Why write of trivial matters, things of price
 Calling at every moment for remark?
 I noticed on the margin of a pool
 Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,
 Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange!

Thy pardon for this long and tedious case,
 Which, now that I review it, needs must seem
 Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth!
 Nor I myself discern in what is writ
 Good cause for the peculiar interest
 And awe indeed this man has touched me with.
 Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness
 Had wrought upon me first. I met him thus:
 I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken hills
 Like an old lion's cheek teeth. Out there came
 A moon made like a face with certain spots
 Multiform, manifold and menacing:
 Then a wind rose behind me. So we met
 In this old sleepy town at unawares,
 The man and I. I send thee what is writ.
 Regard it as a chance, a matter risked
 To this ambiguous Syrian: he may lose,

Or steal, or give it thee with equal good.
 Jerusalem's repose shall make amends
 For time this letter wastes, thy time and mine;
 Till when, once more thy pardon and farewell!

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
 So, the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
 So, through the thunder comes a human voice
 Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
 "Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
 "Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine:
 "But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
 "And thou must love me who have died for thee!"
 The madman saith He said so: it is strange.

This most interesting and beautiful poem will afford a good illustration of one of the cases of difficulty referred to in the Introduction. The reader is placed in the position of one who has just found this Arabian epistle, and must decipher and interpret it without any extraneous aid.

First comes, according to Eastern custom, the name (line 1), then the address (7), with the greeting (15), and mention of articles sent with the letter—all in true Eastern style—with such adjuncts as give a general idea of the school of physiology and medicine to which the writer belongs.

The twenty-first letter had ended at Jericho, and here, accordingly, the twenty-second begins. The date appears as we read on, marked by the expedition of Vespasian and his son Titus against Jerusalem. When Bethany is mentioned, our interest is awakened, and we wonder what is coming; but to the writer Bethany has no such associations, as is indicated by the light and jocular way in which he marks its distance from Jerusalem, and carelessly proceeds to record the observations it is his main business to make wherever he goes.

Further on, however, we discover that there is something of importance weighing on his mind, which makes him hesitate and debate as to the trust-

worthiness of the messenger he intends to employ; while, at the same time, he is evidently ashamed to tell his master what is troubling him. This accounts for his abruptly ending his letter (determining, for the moment, to say nothing about it); then, unable to refrain, beginning again, yet still trying to conceal the depth of his feeling, and to apologize for what appears in spite of himself.

A long account of the case follows. By this time the reader has begun to have a pretty good idea who "the man" is that "had something in the look of him," and knows that it is a veritable case of one raised from the dead. But Karshish cannot, of course, except under strong compulsion, be expected to take this view; and, accordingly, he begins by looking at it in a strictly professional light—"Tis but a case of mania," &c. He naturally supposes that his master will set it down as an ordinary instance of hallucination: "Such cases are diurnal, thou wilt cry." Then he mentions points which strike him as altogether peculiar, certain features of the "after life" which are quite inconsistent with the idea of mania. Instead of being the worse for his mania, this man is immeasurably the better. Could Karshish and his master but penetrate the secret, what physicians they would be! The scene when Lazarus is brought in by the Elders of his tribe—who regard him as a madman, because he is living a life so far above anything they can understand—is inimitable.

In the illustration of the beggar suddenly become rich, Karshish lets out at last that he suspects there must be some truth in the man's story. His patient, he observes, now measures things with no earthly measure, seeing often the small in the great and the great in the small; looking at everything "with larger, other eyes than ours"; accepting with perfect equanimity the very greatest *sorrow*, yet filled with alarm at the least gesture or look which gives token of *sin*, because to him it was like trifling with a match over a mine of Greek fire!

In the next illustration, of the thread of life across an orb of glory, the writer seems to get still fuller insight into the reality of the case—the little thread being, of course, the poor life in Bethany, and the vast orb of glory, the great eternity of God, in which Lazarus was consciously living. And here, again, we have the same lesson as in "The Boy and the Angel." Though conscious of the glory of the great orb, Lazarus does not despise the little duties belonging to the thread of his earthly life. He sedulously follows his trade whereby he earns his daily bread; indeed, the special

characteristic of the man is "prone submission to the Heavenly will." Mark the profound suggestiveness of the lines—

"He even seeketh not to please God more
(Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please."

He is so calm as to be provoking. At his inquisitor's burst of indignation, he shows no sign of anger or impatience—"He merely looked with his large eyes on me." And yet no apathy about him; a man full of loving interest in all things. (Compare Coleridge's well-known lines: "He prayeth best who loveth best," &c.)

The paragraph which follows introduces us to a region familiar and sacred to us, but foreign and inexplicable to our physician, who refers to it from his own point of view, stigmatizing the claim of "the Nazarene who wrought this cure" as not only false, but monstrous; and yet—and yet—and yet—he cannot get over it; it haunts him. But still he is ashamed to acknowledge it, and so turns abruptly from what he affects to call "trivial matters" to "things of price," like "blue-flowering borage"!

Then he gives another elaborate apology, and tries to account for the hold the phenomenon has taken of him by a reference to his state of body and surroundings when first he met this Lazarus; and, accordingly, professing to care little whether the letter reaches or not, again he closes.

Yet still he cannot rest. The great thought haunts him. "The very God! *think*, Abib." Then follows that consummate passage with which this magnificent poem closes.

After this "Epistle" should by all means be read "A Death in the Desert," too long and too difficult to be inserted here. The surprise awaiting the reader of the parchment "supposed of Pamphylax the Antiochene" will add to the interest of a poem so full of beauty and power.