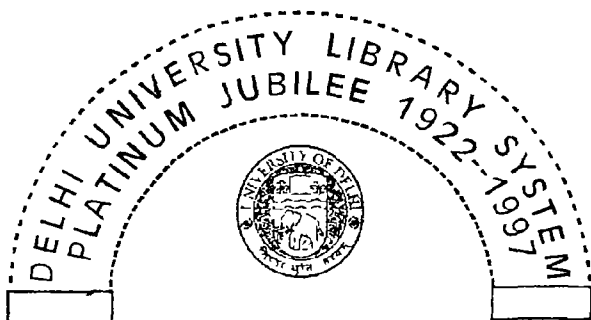




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**THE TESTAMENT
OF
BEAUTY**

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THE TESTAMENT
OF
BEAUTY

A POEM
IN FOUR BOOKS
BY
ROBERT BRIDGES
POET LAUREATE



OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

To
The King
L
G V

ME VERO PRIMVM DVLCES ANTE OMNIA MVSAR
QVARVM SACRA FERQ INQENTI PERCVSSVS AMORE
ACCIPIANT.

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THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

BOOK I

Introduction

MORTAL Prudence, handmaid of divine Providence,
Hath inscrutable reckoning with Fate and Fortune:
We sail a changeful sea through halcyon days and storm,
and when the ship laboureth, our stedfast purpose
trembles like as the compass in a binnacle.
Our stability is but balance, and conduct lies
in masterful administration of the unforeseen.

'Twas late in my long journey, when I had clomb to where
the path was narrowing and the company few,
a glow of childlike wonder enthrall'd me, as if my sense

10

I

had come to a new birth purified, my mind enrapt
 re-awakening to a fresh initiation of life,
 with like surprise of joy as any man may know
 who rambling wide hath turn'd, resting on some hill-top
 to view the plain he has left, and see'th it now out spread
 mapp'd at his feet, a landscape so by beauty estranged
 he scarce wil ken familiar haunts, nor his own home,
 maybe, where far it lieth, small as a faded thought

Or as I well remember one highday in June
 bright on the seaward South downs, where I had come afar 20
 on a wild garden planted years ago, and fenced
 thickly within live-beechen walls. the season it was
 of prodigal gay blossom, and man's skill had made
 a fair-order'd husbandry of thatt nativ pleasaunce
 But had ther been no more than earth's wild loveliness,
 the blue sky and soft air and the unmown flowersprent lawns,
 I would hav lain me down and long'd, as then I did,
 to lie there ever indolently undisturb'd, and watch
 the common flowers that starr'd the fine grass of the wold,
 waving in gay display their gold-heads to the sun, 30
 each telling of its own inconstant happiness,
 each type a faultless essence of God's will, such gems
 as magic master-minds in painting or music
 threw aside once for man's regard or disregard;

I

things supreme in themselves, eternal, unnumber'd
in the unexplored necessities of Life and Love.

To such a mood I had come, by what charm I know not,
where on that upland path I was pacing alone;
and yet was nothing new to me, only all was vivid
and significant that had been dormant or dead 40
as if in a museum the fossils on their shelves
should come to life suddenly, or a winter rose bed
burst into crowded holiday of scent and bloom.
I felt the domination of Nature's secret urge,
and happy escape therein, as when in boyhood once
from the rattling workshops of a great factory
conducted into the engine room I stood in face
of the quiet driving power, that fast in nether cave
seated, set all the floors a quiver, a thousand looms
throbbing and jennies dancing, and I felt at heart 50
a kinship with it and sympathy, as children will
with amicable monsters for in truth the mind
is indissociable from what it contemplates,
as thirst and generous wine are to a man that drinketh
nor kenneth whether his pleasure is more in his desire
or in the savor of the rich grape that allays it.

Man's Reason is in such deep insolvency to sense,

I

that tho' she guide his highest flight heav'nward, and teach him
 dignity morals manners and human comfort,
 she can delicatly and dangerously bedizen 60
 the rioting joys that fringe the sad pathways of Hell.
 Nor without alliance of the animal senses
 hath she any miracle: Lov'st thou in the blithe hour
 of April dawns—nay marvelest thou not—to hear
 the ravishing music that the small birdes make
 in garden or woodland, rapturously heralding
 the break of day; when the first lark on high hath warn'd
 the vigilant robin already of the sun's approach,
 and he on slender pipe calleth the nesting tribes
 to awake and fill and thrill their myriad-warbling throats 70
 praising life's God, untill the blisful revel grow
 in wild profusion unfeign'd to such a hymn as man
 hath never in temple or grove pour'd to the Lord of heav'n?
 Hast thou then thought that all this ravishing music,
 that stirreth so thy heart, making thee dream of things
 illimitable unsearchable and of heavenly import,
 is but a light disturbance of the atoms of air,
 whose jostling ripples, gather'd within the ear, are tuned
 to resonant scale, and thence by the enthron'd mind received
 on the spiral stairway of her audience chamber 80
 as heralds of high spiritual significance?

I

and that without thine ear, sound would hav no report.
 Nature hav no music; nor would ther be for thee
 any better melody in the April woods at dawn
 than what an old stone-deaf labourer, lying awake
 o' night in his comfortless attic, might perchance
 be aware of, when the rats run amok in his thatch?

Now since the thoughtless birds not only act and enjoy
 this music, but to their offspring teach it with care,
 handing on those small folk-songs from father to son 90
 in such faithful tradition that they are familiar
 unchanging to the changeful generations of men—
 and year by year, listening to himself the nightingale
 as amorous of his art as of his brooding mate
 practiseth every phrase of his espousal lay,
 and still provoketh envy of the lesser songsters
 with the same notes that woke poetic eloquence
 alike in Sophocles and the sick heart of Keats—
 see then how deeply seated is the urgency whereto
 Bach and Mozart obey'd, or those other minstrels 100
 who pioneer'd for us on the marches of heav'n
 and paid no heed to wars that swept the world around,
 nor in their homes wer more troubled by cannon-roar
 than late the small birds wer, that nested and carol'd
 upon the devastated battlefields of France.

I

Birds are of all animals the nearest to men
 for that they take delight in both music and dance,
 and gracefully schooling leisure to enliven life
 were the earlier artists: moreover in their airy flight
 (which in its swiftness symbolesh man's soaring thought) 110
 they hav no rival but man, and easily surpass
 in their free voyaging his most desperate daring,
 altho' he hath fed and sped his ocean-ships with fire;
 and now, disturbing me as I write, I hear on high
 his roaring airplanes, and idly raising my head
 see them there; like a migratory flock of birds
 that rustle southward from the cold fall of the year
 in order'd phalanx—so the thin-rankt squadrons ply,
 til sound and sight failing me they are lost in the clouds.

Man's happiness, his flaunting honey'd flower of soul, 120
 is his loving response to the wealth of Nature.
 Beauty is the prime motiv of all his excellence,
 his aim and peaceful purpose; whereby he himself
 becoming a creator hath often a thought to ask
 why Nature, being so inexhaustible of beauty,
 should not be all-beauteous; why, from infinit resource,
 produce more ugliness than human artistry
 with any spiritual intention can allow?

Wisdom wil repudiate thee, if thou think to enquire
 WHY things are as they are or whence they came: thy task 130
 is first to learn WHAT IS, and in pursuant knowledge
 pure intellect wil find pure pleasur and the only ground
 for a philosophy conformable to truth.

And wouldst thou play Creator and Ordinator of things,
 be Nature then thy Chaos and be thou her God!
 Whereafter, if in spirit dishearten'd and distress'd
 to find evil with good, ugly with beautiful
 proffer'd by Nature indifferently without shame,
 thou wilt proceed to judge, but in conning thy brief
 suspect the prejudice of human self-regard 140
 distinguishing moralities where never is none—
 thou art come round wrongfully again to question Nature,
 who by her own faculty in thee judgeth herself.

to impugn thy verdict is to unseat thatt judge.

And science vindicateth the appeal to Reason
 which is no less Nature's prescriptiv oracle
 for being in all her plan so small and tuckle a thing:

How small a thing! if things immeasurable allow
 a greater and less (and thought wil reckon some thoughts great,
 prolific, everlasting, other some again 150
 small and contemptible) say then, How small a part
 of Universal Mind can conscient Reason claim!

I

'Tis to the unconscious mind as the habitable crust
 is to the mass of the earth ; this crust whereon we dwell
 whereon our loves and shames are begotten and buried,
 our first slime and ancestral dust: 'Tis, to compare,
 thinner than o'er a luscious peach the velvet skin
 that we rip off to engorge the rich succulent pulp:
 Wer but our planet's sphere so peel'd, flay'd of the rind
 that wraps its lava and rock, the solar satellite 160
 would keep its motions in God's orrery undisturb'd.

Yea: and how delicat! Life's mighty mystery
 sprang from eternal seeds in the elemental fire,
 self-animat in forms that fire annihilates:
 all its selfpropagating organisms exist
 only within a few degrees of the long scale
 rangeing from measured zero to unimagin'd heat,
 a little oasis of Life in Nature's desert ;
 and ev'n therein are our soft bodies vext and harm'd
 by their own small distemperature, nor coud they endure 170
 wer't not that by a secret miracle of chemistry
 they hold internal poise upon a razor-edge
 that may not ev'n be blunted, lest we sicken and die.

This Intellect, whereby above the other species

Mankind assumeth genus in a rank apart,
 is nascent also in brutes, and of their bloodkinship
 as fair a warranty as our common passions are,
 our common bones and muscles, skin and nerves of sense.
 But because human sorrow springeth of man's thought,
 some men hav fal'n unhappily to envy the brutes 180
 who for mere lack of reason, love life and enjoy
 existence without care: and in some sort doubtless
 happier are they than many a miserable man,
 whether in disease or misfortune outclass'd from life
 or thru' the disillusion of Lust wreck'd in remorse:
 Corruption of best is ever the worst corruption.

'Tis true ther is no balance to weigh these goods and ills
 nor any measur of them, like as of colour and heat
 in their degrees; they are incommensurable in kind.
 'Tis with mere pleasur and pain as if they, being so light, 190
 coud not this way or thatt deflect Life's monarch-beam;
 for howso deliberately a man may wish for death
 still wil he instinctively fight to the last for life.
 Yet with the burden of thought pains are of great moment,
 and sickening thought itself engendereth corporal pain:
 But likewise also of pleasure—here too Reason again,

whether in prospect or memory, is the greater part ;
 our hope is ever livelier than despair, our joy
 livelier and more abiding than our sorrows are,
 which leak away untill no taint remain , their seeds 200
 shriveling too thin to lodge in Memory's hustled sieve
 Wherefore I assert.—if Reason's only function wer
 to heighten our pleasure, thatt wer vindication enough .
 For what wer pleasur if never contemplation gave
 a spiritual significance to objects of sense,
 nor in thought's atmosphere poetic vision arose ?

Brutes hav their keener senses far outrangeing ours
 nor without here and there some adumbration of soul
 But the sensuous intuition in them is steril,
 'tis the bare cloth whereon our rich banquet is spredd , 210
 and so the sorrowful sufferer who envied their state,
 wer he but granted his blind wish to liv as they
 —whether 'twere lark or lion, or some high antler'd stag
 in startled pose of his fantastic majesty
 gazing adown the glade—he would draw blank, nor taste
 the human satisfaction of his release from care
 as well be a sloven toad in his dark hole: Unlike
 those damn'd souls by the Harpies tantalized in Hell
 whose tortur it was to see their ostentatious feast
 snatch'd from their reach—but he sitting with the dainties 220

I

out spreadd before him would see them, nor ever feel
any desire nor memory of their old relish

This quarrel and dissatisfaction of man with Nature
springeth of a vision which beareth assurance
of the diviner principle implicit in Life
And mystic Vision may so wholly absorb a man
that he wil loathe ev'n pleasure, *mortifying the flesh*
by disciplin of discomfort so to strengthen his faith
Thus tho' 'twas otherwise than on Plato's ladder
that Francis climb'd—rather his gentle soul had learn'd 230
from taste of vanity and by malease of the flesh—
he abjured as worthless ev'n wh't good men wil call good,
and standing forth, as chivalrous knight and champion
of holiness, in his devotion of heart to God,
all earthly sun joys seem'd so transitory and vain
that soon the unseen took shape to common eyes, the folk
cumber'd him with servility, and his memory
is beatified in the admiration of all mankind

Now his following in life and his fame thereafter
confute the lower school of Ethick, which would teach 240
that spiritual ideas are but dream stuff in men
For Francis admitted no compromise nor gloss
whereby the Church had thought to ease the easy yoke

I

which he resoulder'd as his Master had offer'd it,
 and espousing Poverty as the outcast widow of Christ
 would walk in Umbria as He walk'd in Galilee
 founding the kingdom of God among those angry Jews
 who made earthly rebellion against Cæsar's empire:
 and in imitation and compassion of Jesus
 would touch nothing but what had been bless'd at his lips: 250
 For the morrow hav no more care than a lily hath—
 for his head no more shelter than a beast of the field—
 no purse nor scrip for his journey, and but one garment—
 and scorning intellect and pursuit of knowledge
 liv'd as a bare spirit in its low prison of flesh,
 untill thru' tribulation he should win to peace,
quam mundus nobis dare non potest pacem,
 in those eternal mansions where Dante found him
 among the Just. Yet ev'n Francis coud praise Nature,
 tho' from such altitude whatever pictur is drawn 260
 must be out of focus of our terrestrial senses.

'Twas thus he made, when he lay sick in Damian,
 his hymn in honour of God and praise of his creatures;
 All-first and specially of the Sun whom he calleth
 his honourable brother and symbol of Very God;
 and then the Moon his sister, and all the stars of heav'n
 the clouds and winds his kindred; and of the Earth he saith—

I

*Praisèd be thou, my Lord, for my sister, Mother Earth,
who doth sustain and govern us and bringeth forth
all manner of fruit and herb and flowers of myriad hue.* 270

In direst pain of body and despond of soul he ask'd
but for this Bencitè to be sung by his bed,
fleeing for sanctuary to the bond of Nature—
"the inconceivable high works unfathomable
whose aspect giveth the Angels strength, and men
revere the gentle changes of the day"—

The sky's unresting cloudland, that with varying play
sifteth the sunlight thru' its figured shades, that now
stand in massiv range, cumulated stupendous
mountainous snowbillowy up piled in dizzling sheen, 280
Now like sailing ships on a calm ocean drifting,
Now scatter'd wispy waifs, that neath the eager blaze
disperse in air, Or now parcelling the icy inane
highspredd in fine diaper of silver and mother of pearl
freaking the intense azure, Now scurrying close o'erhead,
wild ink hued random racers that fling sheeted rain
gustily, and with garish bows laughing o'erarch the land:
Or, if the spirit of storm be abroad, huge molten glooms
mount on the horizon stealthily, and gathering as they climb 289
deep freighted with live lightning, thunder and drenching flood
rebuff the winds, and with black-purpling terror impend

til they be driven away, when grave Night peacefully
 cleaning her heav'nly rondure of its turbid veils
 layeth bare the playthings of Creation's babyhood;
 and the immortal fireballs of her uttermost space
 twinkle like friendly rushlights on the countryside

Them soon the jealous Day o'erriideth to display
 Earth's green robe, which the sun fostereth for shelter and shower
 The dance of young trees that in a wild birch spinney
 toss to and fro the cluster of their flickering crests, 300
 as rye curtseying in array to the breeze of May,
 The ancestral trunks that mightily in the forest choirs
 rear stedfast colonnade, or imperceptibly

sway in tall pinewoods to their whispering spires,
 The woodland's alternating hues, the vaporous bloom
 of the first blushings and tender flushings of spring,
 The slumbrous foliage of high midsummer's wealth,
 Rich Autumn's golden quittance to the bankruptcy
 of the black shapely skeletons standing in snow
 Or, in gay months of swelling pomp, the luxury 310
 of leisur'd gardens teeming with affection'd thought,
 the heartfelt secrecy of rustic nooks, and valleys
 vocal with angelic rilling of rocky streams,
 by rambling country lanes, with hazel and thorn embower'd
 woodbine, bryony and wild roses, the landscape lure

I

of rural England, that held glory in native art
untill our painters took their new fashion from France

This spiritual elation and response to Nature
is Man's generic mark A wolf that all his life
had hunted after nightfall nenth the starlit skies 320
should he suddenly attain the first inklings of thought
would feel this Wonder and by some kindred stir of mind
the ruminants can plead approach—the look of it
is born already of fear and gentleness in the eyes
of the wild antelope, and hence by fable assign'd
to the unseen unicorn reposed in burning lair—
a symbol of majestic sadness and lonely pride
but the true intellectual wonder is first reveal'd
in children and savages and 'tis there the footing
of all our temples and of all science and art 330

Thus Rafael once venturing to show God in Man
gave a child's eyes of wonder to the baby Christ,
and his Mantuan brother could he hav seen that picture
would more truly hav foreshadow'd the incarnation of God
'Tis divinest childhood's incomparable bloom,
the loss whereof leaveth the man's face shabby and dull



I

SEEKING unceasingly for the First Cause of All,
 in question for what special Purpose he was made,
 Man, in the unsearchable darkness, knoweth one thing
 that as he is, so was he made: and if the Essence 340
 and characteristic faculty of humanity
 is our conscient Reason and our desire of knowledge,
 thatt was Nature's Purpose in the making of man.

But can ther be any Will or Purpose in Nature?
 thatt Universe external to our percipient sense,
 which when we examin itself we think only to find
 a structur of blind atoms to their habits enslaved,
 or else, examining our senses, suspect to be
 a dream of empty appearance and vain imagery.—

As a man thru' a window into a darken'd house 350
 peering vainly wil see, always and easily,
 the glass surface and his own face mirror'd thercon,
 tho' looking from another angle, or hooding his eyes
 he may discern some real objects within the room—
 some say 'tis so with us, and also affirm that they
 by study of their reflection hav discover'd in truth
 ther is nothing but thatt same reflection inside the house.

See how they hav made o' the window an impermeable wall
 partitioning man off from the rest of nature

with stronger impertinence than Science can allow. 360

Man's mind, Nature's entrusted gem, her own mirror
cannot be isolated from her other works
by self abstraction of its unique fecundity

in the new realm of his transcendent life,—

Not emotion or imagination ethick or art

logic of science nor dialectic discourse,

not ev'n thatt supersensuous sublimation of thought,

the eunistic vision of mathematical trance,

hath any other foundation than the common base

of Nature's building —not even his independence 370

of will, his range of knowledge, and spiritual aim,

can separate him off from the impercipient

Altho' his mind be such that it might seem as if

true Individuality within the species

were peculiar to man So foolish is he, and wise,—

despondent and hopeful, patient and complaining,

courageous and cowardly, diffident and vain,

cringing and commanding, industrious and idle,

cruel and tenderhearted, truthful and perfidious,

imaginativ or dull—one man how loveable 380

another how hateful, alike man, brutal or divine.

Whereamong hath the sceptic honourable place,

thatt old iconoclast who could destroy the gods

I

soon as men made them, vain imagery and unworthy,
 low symbols of the Eternal that standeth unchanged.
 Like some medicinal root in pharmacy, whose juice
 is wholesom for purgation,—so is he—and if Truth
 be that which Omniscience would assert of all things,
 we may grant him his motto “Truth is not for man”
 But from his sleepy castle he wil be tempted forth
 if ever a hunting-horn echo in the woods around.
 for he loveth the chase, and, like a good sportsman,
 his hounds and his weapons as he loveth the prev

390

So musing all my days with unceasing wonder
 and encountering many phases of many minds,
 thru' kindly environment of my disposition
 I grew, as all things grow, in the pattern of Self,
 til stumbling early upon the mystic words, whereby
 —in the Semitic matrix of my father's creed—
 Jahveh reveal'd his secret Being to the Jews,
 and conning those large letters I AM THAT I AM
 I wonder'd finding only my own thought of myself,
 and reading there that man was made in God's image
 knew not yet that God was made in the image of man,
 nor the profounder truth that both these truths are one,
 no quibbling scoff—for surely as mind in man groweth

400

I

so with his manhood groweth his idea of God,
wider ever and worthier, untill it may contain
and reconcile in reason all wisdom passion and love, 409
and bring at last (may God so grant) Christ's Peace on Earth.

Nor could it ever dwell in my possible thought
that whatsoever grew and groweth can be unlike
in cause and substance to the thing it groweth on:
Thus I saw Conscience as a natural flower-bud
on its vigorous plant specialized to a function
marvelously, a blossom first unique in design
of beauty, in colour and form, thickening therefrom to a fruit
productiv to infinit regeneration, and yet
this bud—as any primer of botany can teach—
is but a differentiation of the infertile leaf, 420
which held all this miracle in intrinsic potency

Thus science would teach, and Heraclitus, I say,
was not the least among the sages of Hellas,
Nor those fire worshippers foolish who, seeing the Sun
to be the efficient cause of all life upon earth,
welcomed his full effulgence for their symbol of God.
And since we observe in all existence four stages—
Atomic, Organic, Sensuous, and Selfconscient—
and must conceive these in gradation, it was no flaw
in Leibnitz to endow his monad-atoms with Mind: 430

tho' in our schools of thought "unconscious mind" is call'd
 a contradiction in terms, as if the embranglements
 of logic wer the prime condition of all Being,
 the essence of things, and man in the toilsom journey
 from conscience of nothing to conscient ignorance
 mistook his tottery crutch for the main organ of life

'Tis laughable that man should fondle such surprise
 at animal behaviour, seeing some beetle or fly
 —whose very existence is so negligible and brief—
 act more intelligently than he might himself 440
 had he been there to advise with all his pros and cons,
 his cause, effect and means Such conduct he wil style
 "Marvels of Instinct", but what sort of wisdom is this
 that mistaketh the exception for the general rule
 and the rule for the exception? Since the animal world
 immeasurably outnumbereth the species of man,
 and wholly is ruled by Instinct 'Tis the Reason of man
 that is the exception and marvel, nay, 'tis plain to see
 how, as our Life is animal so also our conduct
 is mainly instinctiv, while pure Reason left to herself 450
 relieth on axioms and essential premises
 which she can neither question nor resolve, things far
 beyond her, holding her anchor in eternal Mind,

I

characteristic universals, the firm rock
whereon her lofty watch-towers are planted, and all
her star-gazing observatories built.

Wise thinkers do homage to good fellow-thinkers,
nor disregard the general commonsense of man
—that untouch'd photograph of external Nature
self-pictur'd for us nakedly on her own mirror:— 460
and tho' common opinion may be assent in error
ther is little or none accord in philosophic thought:
this picklock Reason is still a-fumbling at the wards,
bragging to unlock the door of stern Reality.
Ask what is reasonable! See how time and clime
conform mind more than body in their environment;
what then and there was Reason, is *here and now* absurd;
what I now chance to approve, may be or become to others
strange and unpalatable as now appear to me
the weighty sentences of the angelic Doctor: 470
For I rank it among the unimaginables
how Saint Thomas, with all his honesty and keen thought,
toiling to found an irrefragable system
of metaphysic, ethic and theologic truth
should with open eyes hav accepted for main premiss
the myth of a divine fiasco, on which to assure

the wisdom of God, leading to a foregone conclusion
 of illachrymable logic, a monstrous scheme
horrendum informe ingens cui Lumen ademptum

Some would say that the Saint himself held not the faith 480
 which universal credit compell'd him to assume
 if he would lead and teach the Church But so to think
 (as tho' 'twas but the best gambit to open his game)
 wer to his acumen and his honesty alike unjust
 I am happier in surmising that his vision at Mass
 —in Naples it was when he fell suddenly in trance—
 was some disenthralment of his humanity,
 for thereafter, whether 'twere Aristotle or Christ
 that had appear'd to him then, he nevermore wrote word
 neither dictated but laid by inkhorn and pen, 490
 and was as a man out of hearing on that day
 when Reynaldus, with all the importunity of zeal
 and intimacy of friendship, would have recall'd him
 to his incompleated SUMMA, and sighing he reply'd

*I wil tell thee a secret, my son, constraining thee
 lest thou dare impart it to any man while I live
 My writing is at end I have seen such things reveal'd
 that what I have written and taught seemeth to me of small worth
 And hence I hope in my God, that, as of doctrine
 ther wil be speedily also an end of Life!* 500

THER is no tradition among the lemmings of Norway
 how their progenitors, when their offspring increased,
 bravely forsook their crowded nestes in the snow,
 swarming upon the plains to ravage field and farm,
 and in unswerving course ate their way to the coast,
 where plunging down the rocks they swam in the salt sea
 to drowning death, nor hav they in acting thus today
 any plan for their journey or prospect in the event

But clerks and chroniclers wer many in Christendom,
 when France and Germany pour d out the rabblement 510
 of the second Crusade, and its record is writ,
 its leaders' titles, kings and knights of fair renown,
 their resolve and design and yet for all their vows,
 their consecrating crosses and embroider'd flags,
 the eloquent preaching of Saint Bernard, and the wiles
 of thatt young amorous amazon, Queen Eleanôr,
 they wer impell'd as madly, journey'd as blindly
 and perish'd as miserably as the thoughtless voles,
 by disease starvation and massacre, or enslaved
 by wrath of the folk whose homes they had wreckt and ravaged,
 til of the unnumber'd rout a poor remnant fled back, 521
 the shame of humanity for their folly and crimes.

Reason, shamefast at heart and vain above measure,
 would look to find the firstfruits of intelligence
 showing some provident correction of man's estate
 to'ard social order, a wise discriminat purpose
 in clear contrast against the blind habits of brutes:
 And when our honest hope turneth away repell'd
 by the terror and superstition of savagery
 —wherein nascent Reason seemeth to hav hoodwink'd Mind,—
 if we read but of Europe since the birth of Christ, 531
 'tis still incompetent disorder, all a lecture
 of irredeemable shame; the wrongs and sufferings
 alike of kings and clowns are a pitiful tale.

Follow the path of those fair warriors, the tall Goths,
 from the day when they led their blue-eyed families
 off Vistula's cold pasture-lands, their murky home
 by the amber-strewn foreshore of the Baltic sea,
 and in the incontaminat vigor of manliness
 feeling their rumour'd way to an unknown promised land, 540
 tore at the ravel'd fringes of the purple power,
 and trampling its wide skirts, defeating its armies,
 slaying its Emperor, and burning his cities,
 sack'd Athens and Rome; untill supplanting Cæsar
 they ruled the world where Romans reign'd before:—

Yet from those three long centuries of rapin and blood,
 inhumanity of heart and wanton cruelty of hand,
 ther is little left, save the broken relic of one
 good bishop, and the record of one noble king,
 —who both had suck'd their virtue from the wither'd dugs
 of learning, where she lay sickening within the walls 551
 of rich Byzance :—Those Goths wer strong but to destroy ;
 they neither wrote nor wrought, thought not nor created ;
 but since the field was rank with tares and mildew'd wheat,
 their scything won some praise: Else hav they left no trace,
 save for their share in thatt rich mingled character
 of Hebrew, Roman, Vandal, Mussulman and Kelt,
 that spoke the pride of Spain, to stand for ever alive
 in one grandesque effigy of ennobled folly,
 among fair Beauty's fairest offspring unreprieved. 560

Yet for this intellectual laughter—deem it not
 true Wisdom's panoply. The wise wil live by Faith,
 faith in the order of Nature and that her order is good.
 'Twer scepticism in them to cherish make-believe,
 creeds and precise forusings of the unsearchable:
 at such things they may smile ; yet for man's ignorance
 and frailty the only saving consolation is faith,
 the which theologians tell us is the gift of God,
 as other good things are, and laughter is one of them ;

and sharing of man's Essence 'twil be at height in him 570
 when 'tis the laughter of Reason—enjoyable ; and 'tis fit
 that he should show Nature this courtesy, and kindly
 make light of all the troubles that compel no tears:
 —Cervantes in misfortune when a galley-slave
 wept not—but where sorrow is sacred humour is dumb,
 and in full calamity it is madness: wherefore
 Hamlet himself would never hav been aught to us, or we
 to Hamlet, wer't not for the artful balance whereby
 Shakespeare so gingerly put his sanity in doubt
 without the while confounding his Reason. 580

And tho' desire of perfection is Nature's promise
 we should not in the field of Reason look to find
 less vary and veer than elsewhere in the flux of Life
 We may rather rejoice in the great abundance,
 the indigenous fruitage of our gay Paradise,
 that Persia, China and Babylon put forth their bloom,
 that India and Egypt wer seedplots of wisdom.
 The best part of our lives we are wanderers in Romance
 Our fathers travel'd Eastward to revel in wonders
 where py ramid pagoda and picturesque attire 590
 glow in the fading sunset of antiquity ;
 and now wil the Orientals make hither in return

I

outlandish pilgrimage: their wiseacres hav seen
 the electric light i' the West, and come to worship;
 tasting romance in our unsightly novelties
 and scientific tricks, for all things in their day
 may hav opinion of glory: Glory is opinion,
 the van doxology wherewith man would praise God.

Time eateth away at many an old delusion,
 yet with civilization delusions make head; 600
 the thicket of the people wil take furtiv fire
 from irresponsible catchwords of live ideas,
 sudden as a gorse bush from the smouldering end
 of any loiterer's match splint, which, unless trodden out
 afore it spredd, or quell'd with wieldy threshing-rods
 wil burn ten years of planting with all last year's ricks
 and blacken a countryside. 'Tis like enough that men
 ignorant of fire and poison should be preconemn'd
 to sudden deaths and burnings, but 'tis mightily
 to the reproach of Reason that she cannot save 610
 nor guide the herd; that minds who else wer fit to rule
 must win to power by flattery and pretence, and so
 by spiritual dishonesty in their flurr'd reign
 confirm the disrepute of all authority—
 but only in sackcloth can the Muse speak of such things

WISDOM HATH HEWED HER HOUSE. She that dwelleth alway
 with God in the Evermore, afore any world was,
 fashion'd the nascent Earth that the energy of its life
 might come to evolution in the becoming of Man,
 who, as her subject, should subject all to her rule 620
 and bring God's latest work to be a realm of delight
 So she herself, the essential Beauty of Holiness,
 pass'd her creativ joy into the creature's heart,
 to take back from his hand her Adoration robes
 and royal crown of his Imagination and Love.

And when she had made of men lovers and worshippers,
 these vied to enshrine her godhead in enduring lanes
 and architectur of stone, that high her pensiv towers
 might hallow their throng'd cities and, transfeaturing
 Nature's wilding landscape to the impress of her Mind, 630
 comfort man's mortality with immortal grace.

Yet not to those colossal temples where old Nile
 guideth a ribbon oasis thru' the Libyan sands,
 depositing a kingdom from his fabled fount
 —like thatt twin-sister stream of slothful thought, whose flood
 fertilized the rude mind of Egypt—not to these,
 nor those Cyclopean tombs, which hieroglyphic kings

uprear'd to hide their mummies from the common death,
 whereto their folk dragging the slow burdensome stones
 wer driven and fed like beasts, untill the pyramid 640
 in geometrical enormity peak'd true—
 'Tis not to these—nay nor in Gizeh to thatt Sphinx,
 grand solitary symbol of man's double nature,
 with lion body couchant and with human head
 gazing out vainly from the desert—not to these
 look we with grateful pleasur or satisfaction of soul,
 wonderfine tho' they be, and indestructible
 against sandblast of time and spoliation of man—
 nor tho' with sixty centuries of knowledge pass'd
 still those primeval sculptors shame our paltry style:— 650
 Nay ev'n so, not to these look we to find comfort;
 Not yet was Wisdom justified of her children.

Long had the homing bees plunder'd the thymy flanks
 of famed Hymettus harvesting their sweet honey:
 along the dancing waves had lapp'd the Ægean isles
 and promontories of the blue Ionian shore
 —where in her Mediterranean mirror gazing
 old Asia's dreamy face wrinkleth to a westward smile—
 and the wild olive, cleft-rooted in Attica,
 wreath'd but the rocks, afore the wandering Aryan tribes, 660

I

whose Goddess was ATHENA, met, and in her right
 knew themselves lords of Hellas and the Achean land
 whereto they had come fighting, for their children to win
 heritage of Earth's empire. 'Twas their youthful tongue
 that Wisdom sought when her Egyptian kingdom fail'd,
 and choosing to be call'd Athena daughter of Zeus
 motion'd the marble to her living grace, and took
 her dwelling in the high-templed Acropolis
 of the fair city that still hath her name.

As some perfected flower, Iris or Lily, is born 670
 patterning heav'nly beauty, a pictur'd idea
 that hath no other expression for us, nor could hav:
 for thatt which Lily or Iris tell cannot be told
 by poetry or by music in their secret tongues,
 nor is discernible in logic, but is itself
 an absolute piece of Being, and we know not,
 nay, nor search not by what creativ miracle
 the soul's language is writ in perishable forms—
 yet are we aware of such existences crowding,
 mysterious beauties unexpanded, unreveal'd, 680
 phantasies intangible investing us closely,
 hid only from our eyes by skies that wil not clear;
 activ presences, striving to force an entrance,

like bodiless exiled souls in dumb urgency pleading
 to be brought to birth in our conscient existence,
 as if our troubled lot wer the life they long'd for ;
 even as poor mortals thirst for immortality:—
 And every divination of Natur or reach of Art
 is nearer attainment to the divine plenitude
 of understanding, and in moments of Vision 690
 their unseen company is the breath of Life:—

By such happy influence of their chosen goddess
 the mind of Hellas blossom'd with a wondrous flow'r,
 flaming in summer season, and in its autumn fall
 ripening an everlasting fruit, that in dying
 scatter'd its pregnant seeds into all the winds of heav'n:
 nor ever again hath like bloom appear'd among men.

Knowledge accumulath slowly and not in vain ,
 with new attainment new orders of beauty arise,
 in thought and art new values ; but man's faculties 700
 were gifted once for all and stand. 'twould seem, at stay
 Ther is now no higher intellect to brighten the world
 than little Hellas own'd ; nay scarcely here and there
 liveth a man among us to rival their seers.

So might we fear that such implicit unity,
 so friendly a passionat love for nature beauty and truth,

such dignity of the body tender of pride and shame,
 such lively accord of Sense, Instinct, Reason and Spirit
 as gazeth down on us with alien sovrantry
 from all their statuesque literature and art, 710
 wer a grace (so might we fear) like the grace of childhood
 lost in growth, a glory of the past, not to return

Such 'twere vain to deplore, since true beauty of manhood
 outfeatureth childish charm, and whether in men or things
 Best is mature, tho' Beauty is neither growth nor strength,
for ugliness also groweth proudly and is strong
 Well might we ask what Beauty ever could liv or thrive
 in our crowded democracy under governance
 of such politic fancy as a farmer would show
 who cultivated weeds in hope of good harvest. 720
 and yet hath modern cultur enrich'd a wasting soil,
 Science comforting man's animal poverty
 and leisuring his toil, hath humanized manners
 and social temper, and now above her globe spredd net
 of speeded intercourse hath outrun all magic,
 and disclosing the secrecy of the reticent air
 hath woven a seamless web of invisible strands
 spiriting the dumb inane with the quick matter of life
 Now music's prison'd raptur and the drown'd voice of truth
 mantled in light's velocity, over land and sea 730

are omnipresent, speaking aloud to every ear,
 into every heart and home their unhinder'd message,
 the body and soul of Universal Brotherhood;
 whereby war faln from savagery to fratricide,
 from a trumpeting vainglory to a crying shame,
 stalketh now with blasting curse branded on its brow.

And if the Greek Muses wer a graceful company
 yet hav we two, that in maturity transcend
 the promise of their baby-prattle in Time's cradle,
 Musick and Mathematick: coud their wet-nurses 740
 but see these foster-children upgrown in full stature,
 Pythagoras would marvel and Athena rejoice.

And ev'n to Apollo's choir was a rich voice lacking
 in the great symphonies of the poetic throng
 who beneath Homer's crown enroll'd immortal names;
 for without later names the full compass of song
 had been unknown to man—nay and some English names,
 whose younger voices in the imagination of love
 swell'd to spiritual ecstasy, and emotion'd life
 with mystic inspiration of new lyric rapture: 750
 and 'twas the first alluring gleam of thatt vision
 that stole by virtue of novelty the world away
 from the philosophic concinnity of Greek art,
 to abjure the severe ordering of its antique folds.

I

In love of fleshly prowess Hellas overesteem'd
 the nobility of passion and of animal strength,
 and the acclamation of their Olympic games outfaced
 spiritual combat ;—as their forefathers wer they,
 those old seapirates, who with roving robbery
 built up their island lordships on the ruin of Crete, 760
 when the unforbearing rivalry of their free cities
 wreck'd their confederacy within the sevenscore years
 'twixt Marathon and Issus; untill from the pride
 of routing Xerxes and his fabulous host, they fell
 to make thatt most memorable of all invasions
 less memorable in the glory of Alexander,
 under whose alien kingship they conspired to outreach
 their own ambition, winning dominions too wide
 for domination; and wer, with their virtue, dispersed
 and molten into the great stiffening alloy of Rome. 770

So it was when Jesus came in his gentleness
 with his divine compassion and great Gospel of Peace,
 men hail'd him WORD OF GOD, and in the title of Christ
 crown'd him with love beyond all earth-names of renown.

For He, wandering unarm'd save by the Spirit's flame,
 in few years with few friends founded a world-empire
 wider than Alexander's and more enduring;

since from his death it took its everlasting life.
 HIS kingdom is God's kingdom, and his holy temple
 not in Athens or Rome but in the heart of man. 780
 They who understand not cannot forget, and they
 who keep not his commandment call him Master and Lord.
 He preach'd once to the herd, but now calleth the wise,
 and shall in his second Advent, that tarried long,
 be glorified by the Greeks that come to the feast:
 But the great Light shineth in great darkness, the seed
 that fell by the wayside hath been trodden under foot,
 thatt which fell on the Rock is nigh wither'd away;
 While loud and louder thro' the dazed head of the SPHINX
 the old lion's voice roareth o'er all the lands. 790



THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

BOOK II

Selfhood

THE VISION OF THE SEER who saw the Spirit of Man.
A chariot he beheld speeding twixt earth and heaven
drawn by wing'd horses, and the charioteer thereon
upright with eyes upon the goal and mind alert
controlling his strong steeds, that spurn'd the drifted cloud
as now they sank now mounted in their heav'nward flight.

Thus Plato recordeth—how Socrates told it
to Phædrus on a summer morning, as they sat
beneath a lofty plane-tree by the grassy banks
of the Ilissus, talking of the passions of men.

10

II

The Vision of the Seer is Truth's Apocalypse,
yet needeth for our aid a true interpreter.
The names of the two horses are SELFHOOD and BREED,
the charioteer is REASON, and the whip in his hand
is not to urge-on the steeds nor to incite their blood;
their mettle is everlasting and they need no goad:
He wieldeth it to make them ware of his presence
and hold them obedient to the rein of his Will.
But this picture drafted in Mind's creativ cave,
and thence on the eye projected, thin is as the film 20
of colour and shade on a canvas, ther is nought beneath:
it telleth not who bred those wild horses, or broke
their strong necks to the yoke, nor who builded the car,
and harness'd them therto for its high heav'nly flight;
nor how REASON ever mounted it in full career
and took the reins, nor of what stuff intangible
they are woven, those reins pictured so taut in his grasp;
nay, for not he himself kenneth well of these things:
Yet truly is he portray'd fearless and glad of heart,
his lash circling o'erhead, as smiling on his steeds 30
he speaketh to them lovingly in his praise or blame.

Now these two horses, without which the wheels of Life
would never hav had motion, and with them can hav no rest,

II

are the animal instincts in the birthright of man ;
nor are they, as Plato fancied, one evil and one good :
both are good, but of their wildness they are restiv both
and wilful, nor wil yield mastery, unless they feel
the hand of expert manage and good horsemanship.
Selfhood is the elder and stronger ; but Breed, once her foal,
is livelier and of limb finer and more mettlesome, 40
her rival now, and both wil pull together as one.
'Tis first to tell of Selfhood, since the first one thing,
if ever a first thing wer, was of the *Essence of Self*.

Consider a plant—its life—how a seed faln to ground
sucketh in moisture for its germinating cells,
and as it sucketh swelleth, til it burst its case
and thrusting its roots downward and spreading them wide
taketh tenure of the soil, and from ev'ry raindrop
on its dribbling passage to replenish the springs
plundereth the freighted salt, while it pricketh upright 50
with its flagstaff o'erhead for a place in the sun,
anon to disengage buds that in tender leaves
unfolding may inhale provender of the ambient air:
and, tentacles or tendrils, they search not blindly
but each one headeth straightly for its readiest prey ;

II

and haply, if the seed be fain in a place of darkness
roof'd in by men—if ther should be any ray or gleam
how faint soe'er, 'twil crane and reach its pallid stalk
pushing at the crevice ev'n to disrupt the stones.

'Tis of such absolute selfhood that it knoweth not 60
parent nor offspring, and will abuse advantage
of primogeniture, with long luxuriant boughs
crowding in vain-glory to overshadow and quell
its younger brethren; while, as for its own children
that, cradled on its branches, fell from its fruitage,
'twil choke them when they strive to draw life at its feet.

Look now upon a child of man when born to light,
how otherwise than a plant sucketh he and clutcheth?
how with his first life-breath he clarioneth for food!
craving as the blind fledgelings in a thrush's nest 70
that perk their naked necks, stiff as a chimney-stack,
food-funnels, like as hoppers in a corn-mill gaping
for what supply the feeder may shovel in their throats.
How differeth the new-born child from plant or fledgeling?

Among low organisms some are call'd animal
for being unrooted, else inseparable from plants;
yet each in his small motion is as a lion on prowl,
or as a python gliding to seize and devour
some weaker Self, whereby to fortify his own.

II

And if Selfhood thus rule thru'out organic life 80
'tis no far thought that all the dumb activities
in atom or molecule are like phenomena
of individuat Selfhood in its first degrees.

This Autarchy of Selfhood, which we blame not at all
in plants and scarcely in brutes, is by Reason denounced
heartless, and outlaw'd from the noble temper of man,
the original sin and cause of half his woes and shames ;
whence Natur again would seem at variance with herself,
misdoubting the foundation whereon she had built all,
and seeing too late the fault threatening to split her house 90
would buttress it with the outwork of an afterthought.
But tho 'tis only Reason can govern this horse,
correction awaited not the human charioteer ;
Selfhood had of itself begotten its own restraint—
like as small plague-microbes generate their own toxin
in antidote of their own mischief (so 'tis said):
Even among beasts of prey the bloody wolves, who found
some selfish betterment from their hunting in packs,
had thereby learn'd submission to a controlling will,
their leader being so far charioteer of their rage ; 100
while pastoral animals, or ever a drover came
to pen them for his profit, had in self-defence

II

herded together ; and on the wild prairies are seen
when threaten'd by attack, congregating their young
within their midst for safety, and then serrying their ranks
in a front line compact to face the dreaded foe.

And this parental instinct, tho' it own cousinship
with Breed, was born of Selfhood. A nursing mammal,
since she must feel her suckling a piece of herself,
wil self-preserve and shelter it as herself ; and oft 110
'tis hard to wean. So birds, by long brooding inured,
wil watch their chickens heedfully, and fearfully attend
their early excursions, guiding aiding and at need
defending against danger. It is pretty to mark
a partridge, when she hath first led forth her brood to run
among the grass-tussocks or hay-stubbles of June,
if man or beast approach them, how to usurp regard
she counterfeith the terror of a wounded bird
dragging a broken wing, and noisily enticeth
or provoketh the foe to follow her in a vain chase ; 120
nor wil she desist from the ruse of her courage
to effect her own escape in loud masterful flight,
untill she hav far decoy'd hunter or blundering hoof
from where she has bid her little ones to scatter and hide.

In man this blind motherly attachment is the spring

of his purest affection, and of all compassion,—
 the emotion most inimical to war: I deem
 its form of unimpeachable sincerity
 to be the mould wherein Friendship's full faith is cast.
 But richest fruits are tardy in ripening, and man's mind 130
 on the last topmost branch, fed from the deepest root,
 struggleth slowly to birth thru' long-enforced delay.
 See nature's habit now devolving upon man,
 and in his Reason her patience as virtue reborn.
 First wil be many months of bodily helplessness,
 then many years ere the fine budding spirit uncloze.
 Wherewhile a new spiritual personality
 in its miraculous significance, the child
 is less the mother's own than a treasur entrusted,
 which she can never love too fondly or serve too well; 140
 Nay, rather is she possess'd by her own possession,
 and in her VITA NUOVA *such things are reveal'd*
that all she hath thought or done seemeth to her of small worth.
 The unfathomable mystery of her awaken'd joy
 sendeth her daily to heaven on her knees in prayer:
 and watching o'er the charm of a soul's wondering dawn
 enamoureth so her spirit, that all her happiness
 is in her care for him, all hope in his promise;
 and his nobility is the dream-goal of her life.

II

In the sunshine of her devotion, her peace and joy 150
 are mirror'd in the child's mind, and would leave thereon
 no place for sin, could all be purified to attain;
 but in the most the mind is gross and the spirit bleak;
 and for a generation needing an outward sign
 of this transcendent mystery, 'twas well when Art
 fashioning a domestic symbol in worship of Christ
 pictured him as an infant in his Mother's arms,
 sharing with her his suffering and glory—it was well:
 Nor count I any scripture to be better inspired
 with eternal wisdom or by insight of man 160
 than the four words wherewith the sad penitent hymn
 calleth aloud on Mary standing neath the cross:
 EIA MATER, it saith, MATER FONS AMORIS.

Leave Selfhood now in her fond sanctuary awhile
 with the unseen universe communing and entranced
 strangely:—As when a high moon thru' the rifted wrack
 gleameth upon the random of the windswept night;
 or as a sunbeam softly, on early worshippers
 at some rich shrine kneeling, stealeth thru' the eastern apse
 and on the clouded incense and the fresco'd walls 170
 mantleth the hush of prayer with a vaster silence,
 laden as 'twere with the unheard music of the spheres;

II

—nay, incommunicable and beyond all compare
are the rich influences of those moments of bliss,
mocking imagination or pictured remembrance,
as a divine dream in the vaulted slumber of life.

Leave we Selfhood now secretly under that nimbus,
fashioning by nurtur in a new selfhood of spirit
whatever in the redemption of beauty and dignity
ennobleth the society or the person of man— 180
leave that nursery awhile, and ask how Nature wrought
where she with-held from life the gift of Motherhood.

The teeming progeny of such egg-breeding insects
as multiply their children a thousandfold a day
must lie close on the zero of parental bondage;
nor can they be debarr'd by *ignominy of rank*
or unlikeness of kind from vouching in this case:
For among Bees and Ants are social systems found
so complex and well-order'd as to invite offhand
a pleasant fable enough: that once upon a time, 190
or ever a man was born to rob their honeypots,
bees wer fully endow'd with Reason and only lost it
by ordering so their life as to dispense *with it*;
whereby it pined away and perish'd of *disuse*,

II

which, whether it wer or no, if men can judge of Bees,
 well might be in their strange manner of life—so like it is
 with what our economical bee-minded men
 teach as the first intelligential principle
 of human government welfare and happiness;—
 Nay, some I hav seen wil choose a beehive for their sign 200
 and gloss their soul-delusion with a muddled thought,
 picturing a skep of straw, the beekeeper's device,
 a millowner's workshop, for totem of their tribe;
 Not knowing the high goal of our great endeavour
 is spiritual attainment, individual worth,
 at all cost to be sought and at all cost pursued,
 to be won at all cost and at all cost assured;
 not such material ease as might be attain'd for all
 by cheap production and distribution of common needs,
 wer all life level'd down to where the lowest can reach: 210
 Thus generating for ever in his crowded treadmills,
 man's life wer cheap as bees'; and we may see in them
 how he likewise might liv, if each would undertake
 the maximum of toil that is found tolerable
 upon a day-doled minimum of sustenance;
 and stay from procréation at thatt just number of men,
 hard-workers and small-eaters, who coud crowd on earth
 under the shadow of this skeleton of happiness.

II

And since life must lose value in diminution of goods,
 life-time must also itself be in due proportion abridged ; 220
 and both diminishings must at some point be stay'd,
 lest by slow loss they come dwindling in the end to nought:
 then, when to each single life the allotted span is fix'd,
 the system wil be at balance, stable and perfected.

The ground-root folly of this pitous philanthropy
 is thinking to distribute indivisibles,
 and make equality in things incommensurable:
 forged under such delusions, all Utopias
 are castles in the air or counsels of despair.
 So Plato, on whose infant lips—as it is told— 230
 bees settled where he lay slumbering in his cradle,
 and honour'd with their augury man's loan of praise—
 ev'n Plato, when he in fear and mistrust of Selfhood
 denyeth family life to his republicans,
 fell, bruized ; tho' cautiously depicting Socrates
 reluctant to disclose the offensiv absurdum
 of his pretentious premiss—when, being forced to admit
 that in his free community of women and children
 no child would ken its parent, no parent his child,
 he sought to twist the bull's horns with a sophistry— 240
 arguing that mother's love and home-life being the source

II

of such inestimable good, 'twere wise that law
should forbid privat property in their benefits
Nay, so 'twould set his state above all other states,
wer suchlike indispensable privileges
rescued from ownership, and for the general use
distributed equally among the citizens
For surely (said he) a bastard nursed in a bureau
must love and reverence all women for its mothers,
and likewise every woman, being in like default, 250
would love all babies as her only son May be
Pluto was pleased to launch his whole Utopia
safely in absolute dreamland, but poor Socrates,
on whom he father'd it, was left *in nubibus*
where Aristophanes in good jest had set him
some twenty years afore and our sophists, who lack
claim to any shred of great Plato's glorious mantle
of wisdom, hav secured a good lien on his bluff

But yet to read the strange riddle of the hiving bees,
their altruism and platonesque intelligence, 260
'tis enough to suppose that their small separat selves
are function'd by the same organic socialism
and vital telepathy as the corpuscles are
whereof their little bodies are themselves composed:

that this cell-habit, spread thru' out to a general sense,
inspireth them in their corporat community.

Consider the tiny egg-cell whence the man groweth,
how it proliferateth freely, as a queen-bee doth,
and more surely than any animal or plant breedeth ;
how each new offspring cell is for some special work 270
differentiated and functioneth spontaneously,
and ev'n wil change its predetermin'd faculty
when accidental environment maketh a call,
leaving its proper sphere to amend what hath gone wrong:
Consider then their task, those unimaginable
infinite co-adaptations of function'd tissue
correlated delicately in a ravel'd web
of unknown sensibilities . . how 'tis a task
incomparable in complexity with whatsoe'er
the bees can boast: nor do the unshapely cells behave 280
with lesser show of will, nor of purpose and skill:
Pass by the rarer achievements, yea, forget all fames,
all works all art all virtue and knowledge—set them by,
and still the solved problems must exhaust our wonder ;
Reason can bring no more ; and it addeth nothing
that the complete insect should in some part possess
some of the faculties of its constituent cells.
Or if this thing be deem'd in Natur anomalous,

II

that perfect organisms with sense and motion endow'd
 should still behave to each other as link'd constructiv cells,
 yet outwardly to our eyes this freedom affordeth 291
 machinery wherupon common purpose can work:
 To the insect, order and disorder are exposed to sight;
 and so we think to see the little emmets confer
 and locking their antennæ immediatly transmit
 the instinctiv calls which each and all can feel; whereas
 the mutual fellowship of distributed cells
 hath so confounded thought that explanation is fetch'd
 from chemic agency: because in that science
 the reaction of unknown forces is described and summi'd 300
 in mathematic formulæ pregnant of truth,
 and of such universal scope that, being call'd laws,
 their mere description passeth for Efficient Cause.

Sometimes when slowly from the deep sleep of fatigue
 a man awakeneth, he lyeth for awhile amazed,
 aware of self and of his rested body, and yet
 knowing not where he is, bewilder'd, unable
 to interpret sight or sound, because the slumbering guards
 in Memory's Castle hav lagg'd at his summons
 for to let down the drawbridge and to uplift the gate: 310

Anon with their deliverance he cometh again
to usual cognisance of the things about him,
life, and all his old familiar concepts of home.

So 'tis with any Manchild born into the world,
so wondereth he awhile at the stuff of his home,
so, tho' slowly and unconsciently, he remembereth.—
The senses ministrant on his apperception
are predisposed to the terrestrial influences,
adapted to the environment where they took shape:
With ease of long habit his lungs inhale the air, 320
his eyes and skin welcome the sun, and his palate
findeth assurance taking to the mother's milk:
His muffling wraps, his frill'd and closely curtain'd cot
and silken apparel of wealth are stranger things to him
than the rough contacts wherefrom they are thought to shield him,
the everlasting companionships of his lang syne;
nor later wil he meet with any older acquaintance
than Bees are; for his ancestors ere they wer men
had pillaged the wild combs, and thru' untold ages
hive-honey in cave and palace hath sweeten'd man's food: 330
not all the flooding syrup from the East-Indian cane
foster'd in the Antilles, Ohio and Illinois,
in Java, Demerara or Jamaica can drown
Hybla's renown, nor cheapen the honey of Narbonne:

A jar of Hymettan from a scholar in Athens
 regaled our English laurel above all gifts to me,
 who hav come to wiser affection in my regard for bees,
 learning the secret purpose wherefor Nature plann'd
 their industry, and controll'd its fashion to subserve
 the beauty and fertility of her vegetant life, 340
 to enrich her blooms with colour and fructify her fruits,
 —which never a bee can guess, nor that the unwholesomeness
 of mixy pollen (a thing that so concerneth bees)
 was by the flowers contrived for their own benefit:—

Nay, whether it be in the gay apple-orchards of May,
 when the pink bunches spread their gold hearts to the sun,
 nor yet rude winds hav snow'd their petals to the ground;
 or when a dizzy bourdon haunteth the sweet cymes
 that droop at Lammas-tide the queenly foliage
 of a tall linden tree, where yearly by the wall 350
 of some long-ruin'd Abbey she remembereth her
 of glad thanksgivings and the gay choral Sabbaths,
 while in her leafy tower the languorous murmur
 floateth off heav'nward in a mellow dome of shade;—
 or when, tho' *summer hath o'erbrim'd their clammy cells*
 the shorten'd days are shadow'd with dark fears of dearth,
 bees ply the more, issuing on sultry noons to throng
 in the ivy-blooms—what time October's flaming hues

II

surcharge the brooding hours, till passionat soul and sense
 blend in a rich reverie with the dying year;— 360
 when and wherever bees are busy, it is the flowers
 dispense their daily task and determin its field;
 the prime motiv, may-hap, of all bee-energy,
 as of bee-industry they are surely the whole stuff.
 Unwitting tho' it is, this great labor of love
 in such kindly intimacy with nature's workings
 hath a genial beauty, the charm whereof lacketh
 to the hireling drudgery of our huge city hives.
 So for their happy demeanour and sweet ministry
 they wer ever admired of man, and won immortal place 370
 in divine story and in poetic fable and rhyme:
 Deem'd heav'nly visitants wer they, children of the air
 of no earthly engendering, under celestial laws
 living a life of wisdom pleasur and diligence,
 a model for the polity and society of men.

Alas, we hav seen too near the poor life of the Bee,
 how of the swarming workers that cluster'd to found
 the springtide colony and project its waxen walls
 not one liveth to sing her *nisi Dominus*,
 nor to rest from her labour, nor to enjoy the fruits. 380
 Forty days, six unsabbath'd weeks of fever'd toil,

II

wasteth and wearieth out their little frames—in truth
 their eggs wer a mass-product, not design'd to endure,
 nor for themselves, but pennywise to serve a turn:—
 One by one they succumb on their lonely journeys,
 o'erladen above their strength, benighted or astray,
 entrapp'd by swooping beaks, or by hard hail laid low
 with broken wings, untill a frail remnant at last
 wearily welcoming the dim prescience of death
 seek their own cemetery, where their shriveling skins 390
 may lie together apart nor soil the hive; yet still
 ever and ever as they fail, perish and disappear,
 new shifts of younger workers, born of later eggs,
 take-up the unresting labour, each in their turn content
 to keep hive clean, eggs plenty, and storeroom full.
 Thus passeth summer, and with her draggled pageantry
 they too giv o'er, and stay all business in the hive,
 and huddling upon the foodstore in their dark den
 by numb stagnation husband the low flicker of life,
 sustain'd by an unheard promise that their prison again 400
 shall feel the sun, and they with the brave buds of March
 shall drink the valiance of his steepening rays, they too
 be hearten'd to revive, and venturing forth renew
 the well-worn round of toil; wherein ther is no one point
 of true accomplishment, since the sweet honeycomb

II

for which man thanketh them, is but their furnishment,
the larder and nursery and provisional shelter
wherein their forlorn hope, their last shift may hold out
thru' the long sleepless night of winter's starving gloom.

And for their monarch Queen—an egg-casting machine, 410
helpless without attendance as a farmer's drill,
by bedels driven and gear'd and in the furrows steer'd,
well-watch'd the while, and treated with respect and care
so long as she run well, oil'd stoked and kept in trim;
but if deranged she slacken in her depositing,
she is dealt with as men scrap a worn-out seed-barrow,
not worth the mending; new machines cost nought to bees.

Now when this story is with man's tender sentiment
foolishly travestied, Nature wil seem malign:
But bees—unless the Selfhood of the hive can feel— 420
lack conscience of emotion, or hav no more than when,
call'd by the sun to swarm in a bright morn of May,
their agitated clamour and frolic flight would shew
that some levity hath prick'd their cores: even as with us
who feel the exhilaration of the voluptuous air
that surgeth in our flesh to flood the soul, and ease
our stiff behaviour; and to such happy influences
swarming bees are responsiv and forget to sting:

in which, as in their stranger mockeries of mankind,
they are truly less like us than we are like to them. 430

So all barbaric tyrants, who secure their throne
by murder of rivals, hav their model in the Queen-bee ;
and the class-hate that kindleth in disorder'd times,
when prosperity hath set envy and desire at war—
'tis like the workers' annual massacre of the Drones:
And even if some faint rebel mote of pleasure lurk
in these fly-puppetries of human crime, 'tis plain
that bees in their short life can hav so little joy
and so much toil,—I say 'tis plain, that (if the things
be comparable) then with the beehive compared 440
the New-world slave-plantations wer abodes of bliss.

Me-seemeth in my poem these poor hive-bees fare
as with an old black bear that hath climb'd on their tree
in the American Adirondacks or Asian
Himalya, and clawing their comb, eateth it in,
grubs, bees and honey and all: it is all one to him,
for the brute is omnivorous and hath a sweet tooth.

Conscient Reason, the channel of man's spiritual joy,
hath such dominant function also in bodily feeling
that 'tis the measur of suffering in all animals, 450

II

in lower forms negligible, and in the lowest
 pain can be felt no more than mid the dancing waves
 a pleasure-boat feeleth the hand on her tiller
 that keepeth-up her head to th' wind and her sails full.
 And of spiritual pain the most cometh again
 thru' Reason, whether of frailty or of imperfection:—
 Savagery hath the throes ; and ah ! in tender years
 the mind of childhood knoweth torments of terror,
 fears incommunicable, unconsolable,
 vague shapes ; tho' oft they be the dread boding of truth, 460
 against which man's full Reason at grips may wrestle in vain.
 Yet for the gift of his virgin intelligence
 a child is ever our nearest pictur of happiness:
 'tis a delight to look on him in tireless play
 attentivly occupied with a world of wonders,
 so rich in toys and playthings that naked Nature
 wer enough without the marvelous inventory of man ;
 wherewith he toyeth no less, and learning soon the lore
 of cypher and alphabet anon getteth to con
 the fair scholarly comment that science hath penn'd 470
 glossing the mazy hieroglyph of Nature's book ;
 and as he ever drinketh of the living waters
 his spirit is drawn into the stream and, as a drop
 commingled therewith, taketh of birthright therein

II

as vast an heritage as his young body hath
in the immemorial riches of mortality.

And now full light of heart he hath willingly pass'd out
thru' the sword-gates of Eden into the world beyond:
He wil be child no more: in his revel of knowledge
all the world is his own: all the hope of mankind 480
is sharpen'd to a spearpoint in his bright confidence,
as he rideth forth to do battle, a Chevalier
in the joyous travail of the everlasting dawn:
Ther is nought to compare then, truly nought to compare:
and wer not Fortune fickle in her lovingkindness,
all wer well with a man—for his life is at flower,
nor hath he any fear: *πόθεν θανάτου νῦν*
μνημονεύσειεν ἂν ἐν ἀκμῇ τρισύτῃ;

But since her favor is inscrutable and uncertain,
and of her multiplicity she troubleth not 490
at the interaction of diverse self-consequences,
ther wil be blastings and blightings of hope and love,
and rude shocks that affray; yet to the enamour'd soul
evil is irrelevant and wil be brush'd aside:
rather 'tis as with Art, wherein special beauty
springeth of obstacles that hav been overcome
and to graces transform'd; so too the lover in life
wil make obstructions serve, and from all resistance

II

gain strength: his reconciliation with suffering is eased
 by fellow-suffering, and in pride of his calling 500
 good warriorship welcometh the challenge of death.

Beneath the spaceless dome of the soul's firmament
 he liveth in the glow of a celestial fire,
 fed by whose timeless beams our small obedient sun
 is as a cast-off satellite, that borroweth
 from the great Mover of all; and in the light of light
 man's little works, strewn on the sands of time, sparkle
 like cut jewels in the beatitude of God's countenance.

But heav'nward tho' the chariot be already mounted,
 'tis Faith alone can keep the charioteer in heart— 510
 Nay, be he but irresolute the steeds wil rebel,
 and if he looketh earthward they wil follow his gaze;
 and ever as to earth he neareth, and vision cleareth
 of all that he feareth, and the enemy appeareth
 waving triumphant banners on the strongholds of ill,
 his mirroring mind wil tarnish, and mortal despair
 possess his soul: then surely Nature hath no night
 dark as thatt black darkness that can be felt: no storm
 blind as the fury of Man's self-destructiv passions,
 no pestilence so poisonous as his hideous sins. 520

Thus men in slavery of sorrow imagin ghastly creeds,
 monstrous devilry, abstractions of terror, and wil look

II

to death's benumbing opium as their only cure,
 or, seeking proudly to ennoble melancholy
 by embracement, wil make a last wisdom of woe:
They lie in Hell like sheep, death gnaweth upon them ;
 whose prophet sage and preacher is the old Ecclesiast
 pseudo-Solomon, who cryeth in the wilderness,
 calling all to baptism in the Slough of Despond:

VANITAS VANITATUM, OMNIA VANITAS.

530

THE Spartan General BRASIDAS, the strenuous man,
 who earn'd historic favour from his conquer'd foe,
 once caught a mouse foraging in his messbasket
 among the figs, but when it bit him let it go,
 praising its show of fight in words that Plutarch judged
 worth treasuring; and since I redd the story at school
 unto this hour I hav never thought of Brasidas
 and cannot hear his name, but that I straightway see
 a table and an arm'd man smiling with hand outstretch'd
 above a little mouse that is scampering away.

540

Why should this thing so hold me? and why do I welcome now
 the tiny beast, that hath come running up to me
 as if here in my cantos he had spied a crevice,
 and counting on my friendship would make it his home?

'Tis such a pictur as must by mere beauty of fitness
convince natural feeling with added comfort.

The soldier seeth the instinct of Selfhood in the mouse
to be the same impulse that maketh virtue in him.

For Brasidas held that courage ennobleth man,
and from unworth redeemeth, and that folk who shrink 550
from ventur of battle in self-defence are thereby doom'd
to slavery and extinction: and so this mouse, albeit
its little teeth had done him a petty hurt, deserved
liberty for its courage, and found grace in man.

I had disliked Brasidas if he had kill'd the mouse :
needless taking of life putteth Reason to shame,
and men so startle at bloodshed that all homicide
may to a purist seem mortal pollution of soul ;
a mystical horror of it may rule in him so strong,
that rather than be slayer he would himself be slain: 560
But fatherhood dispenseth with this vain taboo:
the duty of mightiness is to protect the weak:
and since slackness in duty is unto noble minds
a greater shame and blame than any chance offence
ensuing on right conduct, this hath my assent,—
that where ther is any savagery ther wil be war:
the warrior therefore needeth no apology.

II

CHILDREN, for all their innocence and gentleness,
 n their unreason'd Selfhood think no scorn of war,
 ut practise mimicry of it in their merry games, 570
 ike puppies that would learn their fighting tricks betimes;
 nd a Duke's well-bred cubs win romantic escape
 rom their palatial mansion, hiding in the woods
 here they may scream and weave their raw wigwams, and don
 he feathery tinsel and warpaint of the Cherokees.

My little chorister, who never miss'd a note,—
 mark'd him how when prayers wer ended he would take
 his Bible, and in his corner ensconced would sit and read
 with unassumed devotion. What was it fetch'd him?
 Matthew Mark Luke and John was it? The parables, 580
 he poetry and passion of Christ? Nay 'twas the bloody books
 of Jewish war, the story of their Judges and Kings;
 ured by those braggart annals, while he conn'd the page
 the parson's mild discourse pass'd o'er his head unheard.
 For Coverdale in his grand English truly built
 a temple fair as thatt Ionic fane, wherein
 neath his nine-column'd portico of all history
 Herodotus sitteth statued; and like the Jew
 the naive Greek chronicler discovereth God's purpose
 guiding his chosen race to terrestrial glory. 590
 Nor hath any other nation any better argument,

whether it be forged or filch'd, invented or stolen ;
 and their historians all are as children in this,
 and eagerly from battlefield to battlefield
 jaunt on their prancing pens after their man of war,
 who carveth the Earth into new kingdoms, as a cake
 is sliced for grabbing school-boys at a teaparty:
 and in their exaltation of dread and derringdo,
 prowess is magnified and cruelty condoned ;
 whence smaller nations, as the Portuguese, require 600
 to multiply tenfold the tale of combatants,
 ere they deem any event worthy of their pictured pride
 Parisian vanity reposeth thus today
 on Buonaparte's fame ; for Alexander and he
 are kings of kings and lords of lords, the conquerors
 of conquerors all ; dwarfing rude rivals whensoe'er,
 Alaric, Tamurlane, Attila and Zingis Khan,
 once names of terror and furious bombast, foremost men
 humbled, as wer the seventy kings who with their thumbs
 and their great toes cut off, finger'd the crumbs beneath 610
 Adonibezek's table, untill Jew Simeon came
 and did the same by him to my chorister's joy.

And since all earthly EMPIRE hath taken origin
 from bloody invasion, man for himself would fashion

his sanction and exemplar in the kingdom of heav'n ;
 Thus hundred-handed giants, swarming from chaos
 to exalt the glory of Zeus, barricaded his throne,
 uprooting mountains in titanic rebellion.
 So hath the Church utter'd like false moneys for Christ
 with Godhead's image stamp'd, and pass'd it on the folk 620
 who, shadow'd in the murk of vulgar vainglories,
 will prick their ears to hear how "Ther was war in Heav'n,
 and Michael and his Angels (like knights of romance)
 fought with the Dragon": tho' Almighty hath nought to gain,
 and by sovran oppression exalteth only his foe
 in tragic sympathy, as with Milton's great devil,
 against infinit odds confronting undismay'd
 inevitable ruin ; or old Methusalah
 who when the flood rose higher swam from peak to peak
 til, with the last wild beasts tamed in their fear, he sat 630
 watching the whelm of water on topmost Everest,
 as thatt too was submerged ; while in his crowded ark
 Noah rode safely by: and sailors caught by storm
 on the wide Indian Ocean at shift of the monsoon,
 hav seen in the dark night a giant swimmer's head
 that on the sequent billows trailing silvery hair
 at every lightning flash reappeareth in place,
 out-riding the tempest, as a weather-bound barque

II

anchor'd in open roadstead lifteth at the seas.

And POETRY in her task of adorning spirit, 640
 trustful also and faithful to the instincts of man,
 honoureth ever the steeds above the charioteer.
 She once would favour Selfhood, but 'tis now the foal;
 and learning sapphic languor in the labour of love,
 the Muse hath doff'd her armour for a silken robe:
 yet in her swooning luxury she hath never match'd
 nor dethroned bearded Homer's great epic of war;
 altho' thatt siege of Troy was in the beginning
 wrath and concupiscence, and in the end thereof
 tragedy so tearful that no mind can approve, 650
 nor any gentle heart take comfort in the event.

But these and all old tales of far-off things, bygones
 of long-ago whereof memory still holdeth shape,
 Time and the Muse hav purged of their unhappiness;
 with their bright broken beauty they pervade the abyss,
 peopling the Solitude with gorgeous presences:
 as those bare lofty columns, time-whiten'd relics
 of Atlanteän adoration, upstanding lone
 in Baalbec or Palmyra, proudly affront the waste
 and with rich thought atone the melancholy of doom. 660

Yet since of all, whatever hath once been, evil or good,

II

tho' we can think not of it and remember it not,
nothing can wholly perish, so ther is no birthright
so noble or stock so clean, but it transmitteth dregs,
contamination at core of old brutality,
inchoate lobes, dumb shapes of ancient terror abide
tho' fading still in the oceanic deeps of mind
their eyeless sorrows haunt the unfathom'd density,
dulling the crystal lens of prophetic vision,
crippling the nerve that ministereth to trembling strength,
distorting the features of our nobility 671

And we, living at prime, what is it now to us
how our forefathers dream'd, suffer'd, struggled, or wrought?
how thru' the obliterated æons of man's ordeal
unnumber'd personalities separatly endured?
Think not to explore, estimate and accumulate
those infinit dark happenings into a single view
that might affect feeling with true judgment of thought
Imagination, that would set science that task,
is as the astronomer who, with peduncled eye 68
screw'd here or there at some minutest angle space
of the wide heav'ns, thinketh by piecemeal reckoning
to pictur and comprehend the illimitable worlds
thronging eternity, his highest fantasy
is like an athlete's dream that he hath leapt off the globe,

when all his waking power is to jump up and fall
the height of his own head—all that the best can do.

Wer it not then well to enquire of Reason, ere we admit
her condemnation of War, seeing it so firmly entrench'd
in the immemorial practice and good favour of man, 690
whence hath she fetch'd her high authority, her right
of spiritual judgment? WHENCE THEN COMETH WISDOM?

But I was anger'd with myself to hav said this thing,
seeing that my thought had wander'd, for Reason reply'd
"This question is wrongly ask'd Who is it that putteth
"this question into my mouth, and biddeth me answer him?—
"I who hav never doubted of my authority,
"who am the consciousness of things judging themselves—
"Hav I not learn'd that Selfhood is fundamental
"and universal in all individual Being, 700
"and that thru' Motherhood it came in animals
"to altruistic feeling, and thence after in men
"rose to spiritual affection? What then am I
'in my conscience of self but very consciousness
"of spiritual affection upgrown to life in me?
"Truly inscrutable and dark is the Wisdom of God,
'but no man cometh unto WISDOM but by me."

II

Then was I shamed. but still my thought went harking back
on its old trail, whence Reason learn'd its troublous task
to comprehend aright and wisely harmonise 710
the speechless intuitions of the inconscient mind,
which, tho' a naked babe (as men best pictured Christ)
is yet in some sort nearer to the Omniscient
than man's unperfect Reason, baulk'd as thatt must be
by the self puzzledom of introspection and doubt
Thatt dark mind with its potency is the stuff of life,
nature's immutable provision. in some may be,
stagnant and poor, in some activ and rich, in each
a given unique quantum of personality,
a loan of so much (as 'tis writ *to one he gave* 720
five talents, to another two and to another one),
a treasure that can be to good fortune assured
by Reason, its determinant and inexplicable
coefficient, that varieth also in power and worth

For I think not of Reason as *men thought of Adam*,
created fullgrown, perfect in the image of God,
but as a helpless nursling of animal mind,
as a boy with his mother, unto whom he oweth
more than he ever kenneth or stayeth to think, language,
knowledge, grace, love and those ideal aims *whereby* 730
his manly intelligence cometh to walk alone.

II

But how, in this independence and pride, I ask,
 how can this younger born stand off so far apart,
 clear of all else, that by the mere conscience of things
 he can be judge of all and of himself to boot?
For that I find him oftentimes servant and drudge:
 as 'tis seen in the true hermeneutic of ART,
 whereof all excellence upspringeth of itself,
 like a rare fruit upon some gifted stock, ripening
 on its arch-personality of inborn faculty, 740
 without which gift creativ Reason is barren; altho'
 it will collaborate actively and eagerly
 with various governance, which appeareth in some
 as happy selection and delighted approval
 of spiritual nativities, that teem i' the mind,
 surging to escape, like to wild bubbles in a pot
 when the red fire beneath bristleth, and tortureth
 the water to airy ebullience;—or in another
 as toilsom evolution of larval germs, which yet
 transform while confidently it laböreth thereat 750
 slowly as a modeller in clay. How in its naked self
 Reason wer powerless showeth when philosophers
 wil treat of Art, the which they are full ready to do,
 having good intuition that their master-key
 may lie therein: but since they must lack vision of Art

(for otherwise they had been artists, not philosophers)
 they miss the way ; and ev'n the Greeks themselves, supreme
 in making as in thinking, never of their own art
 found the true hermeneutick; and the first insight
 of the twin-gifted Plato was to Aristotle 760
 a crude offence ; for Plato said that earthly things,
 whether material objects or abstract notions,
 wer shadows of Ideas laid up in God's house,
 —a dainty dish for the sophistic banqueters.
 And yet this delicat doctrin, that held no shield
 to Zeno's lancing logic, took not hurt at heart
 from any mortal assault, but liveth in the schools
 with flourish'd head serene, high and invulnerable ;—
 because the absurdity of indefinable forms
 is less than the denial of existence to thought: 770
 and truly if all existence is expression of Mind,
 ideas must themselves be truer existences
 than whatever else, and in such thought their nearest name.

Powers unseen and unknown are the fountains of life :
 no animal but kenneth that sunlight is warm ;
 no dog but shifteth posture with the shifting shade
 reasonably as we: but man maketh a dial for it
 to measur his day, and by his abstract intellect

hath taken it for the source and very cause of life
 then by science unraveling its physical rays 780
 he hath separated some, and found some properties,
 but of the whole he knoweth that his analysis
 hath not approach'd the secret of their living power.
 Nor hath man ever a doubt that mere objects of sense
 affect his mental states, nor that the mind in turn
 promoteth the action and function of his animal life
 in its organs and bones The Greek astronomer,
 gazing with naked eye into the starry night,
 forgot his science and, in transport of spirit,
 his mortal lot Then seem'd it to him as if his feet 790
 touch'd earth no longer ἀλλὰ παρ' αὐτῷ Ζαΐ,
 said he, in the treasur'd words that keep his joy from death,
 θεοτρεφέος πίμπλαμαι ἀμβροσίης

Now this imagination of awe and ecstasy,
 being proper and common in Man, and where lacking or dull
 so ready to suggestion, it seemeth as tho' the eye
 had some spiritual vision—as if the idea of Space
 and also of God existed in the midnight skies;
 and thus men came to think that their corporeal sense
 encounter'd reality in the appearance of things; 800
 and, stirr'd by influences that outreaching Reason
 kindled unknown desires, their awed souls fell to prayer

II

that the great Maker of All would reveal his Being.

If so be then that Reason, our teacher in all the schools,
owneth to existences beyond its grasp, whereon
its richer faculties depend, and that those powers
are ever present influencing the unconscious mind
in its native function to inspire the Will, 'twould seem
that as the waken'd mind fashion'd to'ard intellect
so the dark workings of his animal instincts 810
faced in a new perspectiv to'ard spiritual sight;
and thus man's trouble came of their divergency.
For spiritual perception vague and uncontroll'd
being independent of the abstract intelligence,
he is disconcerted twixt their rival promises,
and, doubtful of his road, he wavereth following
now one now the other: and thus I stand where I conclude
that man's true wisdom were a reason'd harmony
and correlation of these divergent faculties:
this wer the bridge which all men who can see the abyss 820
hav reasonably and instinctivly desired to build;
and all their sacraments and mysteries whatsoe'er
attempt to build it; from devout Pythagoras
to th' last psychologist of Nancy or of Vienna.

And between spiritual emotion and sensuous form
the same living compact maketh our Art, wherein

II

material appearances engage the soul's depth ;
 and if in men untrain'd without habit of thought
the ear is more æsthetic than the eye is, this cometh
 from thatt sense being the earlier endow'd in animals 830
 who, tho' they be all vacant in a picture-gallery
 nor see themselves in a mirror, attend to music
 and yield to fascination or vague wonder thereat.
 So if we, changing Plato's old difficult term,
 should rename his Ideas Influences, ther is none
 would miss his meaning nor, by nebulous logic,
 wish to refute his doctrin that indeed ther are
 eternal Essences that exist in themselves,
 supreme efficient causes of the thoughts of men.

What is Beauty? saith my sufferings then.—I answer 840
 the lover and poet in my loose alexandrines:
 Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,
 the quality of appearances that thru' the sense
 wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind of man:
 And Art, as it createth new forms of beauty,
 awakeneth new ideas that advance the spirit
 in the life of Reason to the wisdom of God.
 But highest Art must be rare as nativ faculty is

II

and her surprise of magic winneth favor of men
 more than her inspiration: most are led away 850
 by fairseeming pretences, which being wrought for gain
 pursue the ephemeral fashion that assureth it;
 and their thin influences are of the same low grade
 as the unaccomplish'd forms; their poverty is exposed
 when they would stake their charm on ethic excellence;
 for then weak simulations of virtues appear,
 such as convention approveth, but not Virtue itself,
 tho' not void of all good: and (as I read) 'twas this
 that Benvenuto intended, saying that not only
 Virtue was memorable but things so truly done 860
 that they wer like to Virtue; and thus prefaced his book,
 thinking to justify both himself and his works.

The authority of Reason therefor relieth at last
 hereon—that her discernment of spiritual things,
 the ideas of Beauty, is her conscience of instinct
 upgrown in her (as she unto conscience of all
 upgrew from lower to higher) to conscience of Beauty
 judging itself by its own beauteous judgment.

And of War she would say: it ranketh with those things
 that are like unto virtue, but not virtue itself: 870
 rather, in the conscience of spiritual beauty, a vice
 that needeth expert horsemanship to curb, yet being

nativ in the sinew of selfhood, the life of things,
 the pride of animals, and virtue of savagery,
 so long as men be savage such it remaineth ;
 and mid the smoke and gas of its new armoury
 still, with its tatter'd colours and gilt swords of state,
 retaineth its old glory untarnish'd—heroism,
 self-sacrifice, disciplin, and those hardy virtues
 of courage honour'd in Brasidas, without which 880
 man's personality wer meaner than the brutes.

Who hath not known this pictur?—on a hot afternoon
 of our high summer in August at the country-seat
 of some vext politician, if in their flashing cars
 the county-folk gather to his holiday garden,
 where for their entertainment he hath outspread the lawns
 with tents and furnish'd tables, flags and tennis-nets,—
 if haply he hav set up to dignify his grounds
 a classic statue of marble, fetch'd by ship from Greece,
 that standeth there in true ideal nakedness 890
 mid parasols and silks, how with blank shadow'd eyes
 it looketh off from all those aimless idlers there
 that flaunt around, now and again blurring perchance
 a shamefast shallow tribute to its beauteous presence!
 —'tis very like among common concourse of men,

II

who twixt care of comfort and zeal in worldly affairs
 hav proved serving two masters the vanity of both,
 when a true soldier appeareth, one compact at heart
 of sterner virtues and modesty of maintenance,
 mute witness and martyr of spiritual faith, a man 900
 ready at call to render his life to keep his soul.

All virtue is in her shape so lovely, that at sight
 her lover is enamour'd even of her nativ face.
 And here I part from Aristotle, agreeing else
 that a good disposition is Goddes happiest gift,
 without which, as he addeth, Virtue is unteachable,
 but in minds well-disposed may be by Reason upbuilt:
 "no man cometh (said she) unto WISDOM but by me";
 But when he would exalt this guiding principle
 to be thatt part whereby we are in likeness with God, 910
 whose Being (saith he) lieth in the unbroken exercise
 of absolute intellect—which for their happiness
 mankind should strive to attain—I halt thereat: and this
 marreth my full accord where, in a famous text
 he hath made Desire to be the Prime Mover of all:
 because the arch-thinker's heav'n cannot move my desire,
 nor doth his pensiv Deity make call on my love.
 I see the emotion of saints, lovers and poets all
 to be the kindling of some Personality

by an eternizing passion ; and that God's worshipper 920
 looking on any beauty falleth straightway in love ;
 and thatt love is a fire in whose devouring flames
 all earthly ills are consumed, and at least flash of it,
 be it only a faint radiancy, the freed soul glimpseth,
 nay ev'n may think to hav felt, some initiat foretaste
 of thatt mystic rapture, the consummation of which
 is the absorption of Selfhood in the Being of God.

Ideas and influences spiritually discern'd
 are of their essence pure: but in the lot of man
nothing is wholly pure ; yet all hindrance to good 930
 —be good and evil two in love or one in strife—
 maketh occasion for it, by contrast heightening,
 by challenge and revelly arousing Virtue to act.
 Hence 'twill not be with men only of contention and hate,
 nor only with the ambitious and disorderly
 that combat findeth favor ; honest men good and true
 who seek peace and ensue it, seeing war as the field
 for exercise of spirit that else might fust unused,
 embrace the good, and cavil not the inherent terms,
 rather welcoming hardship ; which by affraying cowards 940
 purgeth heroic ranks: and battle rallieth all

II

keen-hearted sportsmen and the brave gamesters of life,
 adventurers whose joy danceth on peril's edge,
 for whom life hath no relish save in danger of death;
 who love sport for its hazard, and of all their sports
 where hazard is at highest look to find the best
 there on the field where hourly they may stake their all
 And 'tis because they feel their spirit's ecstasy
 is owing in nought to Reason, but exultantly
 blendeth with the old Selfhood wherefrom it sprang—'tis thus
 they can be friendly at heart with nature's heartlessness, 951
 nor heed the wrongs and cruelties that come and pass,
 overlook'd as by men who hav suffer'd not nor seen

But we who hav seen, condemn'd in savage self defence
 to train our peaceful folk in the instruments of death,
 and of massacre and mourning hav suffer'd four years—
 we hav no need to recount in vindication of peace,
 sorrows which no glory of heroism can atone,
 horrors which to forget wer cowardice and wrong,
 dishonesty of heart and repudiation of soul,— 960
 yet gladly might forget in the passing of pain,
 and memory is so complacent that we well may fear
 lest our children forget,—and see Natur already,
 regardless how her fractious babe had scratch'd her cheek,

hath with her showy Invincibles retaken amain
the trenches, and re clothed the devastated lands

See with how placid mien Athena unhelmeted
reentering hath possess'd her desolated halls,
how her musical temples and grave schools are throng'd
with fresh youth eager as ever with the old books and games,
their live abounding mirth reechoing from the walls, 971
where among antique monuments their brothers' names
in long death roll await the mellowing touch of time.

And why not we forget? How is't that we dare not
wish to forget and cut this canker of memory
from us, as men diseased in one part of their flesh
find health in mutilation as if our agony
wer a boon to keep, when in its own happy riddance
'twould die off in the natural oblivion of things,
and with our follies fade so, each one for himself 980
disbanding his self share, Reason would dissipate
its own delusion, and lay that spectre of our dismay,
the accumulation of griefs, to which War hath no right
prior or prerogative. miseries lay as thick
and horrors worse when Plague invaded the cities,
Athens or London, raging with polluted flood
in every house, and with revolting torture rack'd
the folk to loathsom deaths, nor men kenn'd as they fell,

II

desperatly unrepentant to the "scourge of God",
 how 'twas the crowded foulness of their own bodies 990
 punish'd them so:—alas then in what plight are we,
 knowing 'twas mankind's crowded uncleanness of soul
 that brought our plague! which yet we could not cure nor stay;
 for Reason had lost control of his hot-temper'd steed
 and taken himself infection of the wild brute's madness;
 so when its fire slacken'd and the fierce fight wore out,
 our fever'd pulse show'd no sober return of health.

Amid the flimsy joy of the uproarious city
 my spirit on those first jubilant days of armistice
 was heavier within me, and felt a profounder fear 1000
 than ever it knew in all the War's darkest dismay.



THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

BOOK III

Breed

HAVING told of SELFHOOD, ere now I tell of BREED
the younger of the two Arch-Instincts of man's nature,
'twere well here to remember how these pictured steeds
are Ideas construed by the abstract Intellect.

Whatever abode Philosophy thinketh to build,
to erect a lofty temple that may shrine her faith,
crowning the unvisited holiness of the hills,
or thrust her fair façade amid the noisy dens
of swarming Industry, to invite the sons of toil,
all altitude expanse or grandeur of building

10

III

subsisteth on foundations buried out of sight,
 which yet the good architect carrieth ever in mind,
 and keepeth the draft by him stored in his folios.
 So herein 'twas laid down what footing Reason plann'd ;—
 divining Purpose in Natur, it abstracted first
 her main intentions, and subsumeth under each
 the old animal passions ancillary thereto,
 tho' in Nature's economy the same impulse
 may work to divers ends, as demonstrably is seen
 in the appetite of hunger, which prime in selfhood 20
 promoteth no less all living activities,
 so universal that some thinkers would make it
 a corner-stone, and mixing other like fabric
 build thereon confidently, albeit for such deep trust
 unfit, being in itself a thing of no substance.

And truly PLEASUR IN FOOD, common to all animals
 that can feel pleasure, comforting the incessant toil
 of sustenance to enable their blind energies,
 when once it findeth conscience in the Reason of man
 is posited by folly as an end-in-itself; 30
 til by sensuous refinement it usurpeth rank
 beside his intellectual and spiritual joys,—
 a road whereon the brutes already had broken ground
 (trespassing somewhat haply on nature's allotments),

III

for a Tyger, when once he hath tasted human flesh,
in pursuit of his prey is more dangerous to men
and chooseth daintily among them ; like those cannibals
who yet, for all their courtesy (so travelers tell)
and Spartan stoicism, gaily devour their kind.

From the terrifying jungle of his haunted childhood 40
where prehistoric horror stil lurketh untamed,
man by slow steps withdrew, and from supply of need
fell to pursuit of pleasur, untill his luxury
supplanting brutality invented a new shame ;
for with civilization a caste of cooks was bred,
not specialized in structure—as with bees or ants—
but serviceable of either sex and disciplin'd
in such cultur'd tradition that the grammar of it
would stock a library ; nor are their banquets spredd
to please the palate only ; the eye is invited 50
by dainty disguises and the nostril with scents,
nay ev'n the ear is fed, and on the gather'd guests
a trifling music playeth, dispelling all thought,
that while they fill the belly, the empty mind may float
lightly in the full moonshine of o'erblown affluence.
Thus, when in London city a Guild of merchants dine,
one dinner's cost would ease a whole bye-street of want,

III

its broken meats outface Christ's thrifty miracle.

But tho' of its mere sensual smirch the scene be cleansed
at fashionable tables, where delicat guests 60
sit and play with their food inattentively, as 'twere
in their relaxation an accidental relish
to the intellectual banter and familiar discourse
of social entertainment—a thing overlook'd
among the agreeable superfluities of life,
trifles good in themselves, and no more censurable
than the fine linen of Ulysses and the brooch
that Penelope gave him, nor the rangled shroud
that she wove for his sire, nor any work of price
that humbly doeth honor unto any temple of God— 70
yet this amenity of Mammon is to the epicure
mere disgust, a farrago of incongruous kickshaws,
a hazardous pampering, as barbarously remote
from pleasure's goal as pothouse cheese and ale.
For Reason once engaged on the æsthetic of food
refineth every means, as those painters in oil
who all their sunless days sat labouring to attain
a chiaroscuro of full colour—so the epicure;
nor planneth he his creation with a less regard
to grandiose composition, in a scheme of morsels 80
gradated to provoke and stimulate alike

III

digestion and appetite; and each viand married
with a congenial wine, and each wine in itself
a sublimation of fancy, a radiant riotous juice,
and of such priceless rarity as no man can come
but by luck and genius to possess such bottles.

And here the Voluptuary may think his anchor
hath bitten on truth; for surely nothing in nature
fulfilleth more various expectancies of sense
than his wine doth; to the eye luminous as rich gems 90
engendering thru' long æons in the bowels of earth;
to the nostrils reminiscent as subtle odours
of timorous wind-wavering flowers; to the taste
beyond all savours ravishing, insatiable,
yet wholesome as is the incense of forested pines,
when neath their scorching screens they fume the slumberous air;
and to the mind exhilarating, expelling care,
even as those well-toned viols, matured by time, which once,
when the Muse visited Italy to prepare
a voice of beauty for the joy of her children, 100
wer fashion'd by Amati and Stradivari and still,
treasured in their mellow shapelinesses, fulfil
the genius of her omnipotent destiny,—
speaking with incantation of strange magic to charm
the dreams that yet undreamt lurk in the unfathom'd deep

III

of mind, unfeatur'd hopes and loves and dim desires,
uttermost forms of all things that shall be.

'Tis thus by the live firework of his wine allured
that the epicure thinketh he hath wherewithal to pave
thru' palate and gullet a right path for his soul, 110
each feast as a symphonic poem, preluding
to melodious Andante Scherzo and final Fugue,—
a microcosm, as those musical pæans are
that perish *not* in the using, but persist
strengthening their immortality while millions feed
on their unquenchable loveliness evermore.

In such fine artistry of his putrefying pleasures
he indulgeth richly his time untill the sad day come
when he retireth with stomach Emeritus
to ruminate the best devour'd moments of life; 120
like any old fox-hunter his good days with the hounds,
any *angler or cricketer*, for he too hath follow'd
his sport to himself, and each good day of sport (and thatt
the dog knoweth and enjoyeth with his Master as well)
is a thing in itself, whole even as life is one.

This is the supreme ecstasy of the mountaineer,
to whom the morn is bright, when with his goal in sight,
some icepeak high i' the heav'ns, he is soul-bounden for it,
prospecting the uncertain clue of his perilous step

to scale precipices where no foot clomb afore, 130
 for good or ill success to his last limit of strength;
 his joy in the doing and his life in his hand
 he glorieth in the fortunes of his venturous day;
 'mid the high mountain silences, where Poesy
lieth in dream and with *the secret strength of things*
that governs thought inhabiteth, where man wandereth
 into God's presence:—But what heav'nly or earthly Muse
 attendeth the epicure? Nay, what man deigneth ear
 to his grovelling tale? His gluttony rotteth and stinketh
 in the dust-bin of Ethick.—Howso thatt may be, 140
 the thing cometh of Self, as War doth; and hereby
 'twere well to note how some would derive War from Breed,
 tho' sex is but the occasion, when jealousy of love
 provoketh Selfhood to anger: indeed Herodotus,
 seeking the root-cause of the implacable enmity
 'twixt Hellenes and Asiatics to convey his book,
 dresseth up a frontispiece of four royal rapes,
 of Io and Medea, Europa and Helen of Troy,
 playing no doubt upon the flair of his hearers,
 who love him stil for his good faith in his fables. 150

YET our distinction is proper and holdeth fast. Now BREED

III

is to the race as SELFHOOD to the individual;
and these two prime Instincts as they differ in purpose
are independent each from other, and separat
as are the organic tracts in the animal body
whereby they function; and tho' Breed is needful alike
to plants as to animals, yet its apparatus
is found in animals of a more special kind;
and since race-propagation might hav been assured
without differentiation of sex, we are left to guess 160
nature's intention from its full effects in man:
and such matter is the first that wil follow hereon.

Remembering my dissension from Spinoza here,
I think of him, Bruno's pupil, *ὑψίπολις*
ἄπολις, in his pride at his bench intently
shaping his lenses, and how he in thatt irksome toil
to earn his bread, the while he ponder'd his great book,
was perfecting the tool that invited science
to ever minuter anatomy, untill she took skill
to handle invisibles; and lately upon thatt path 170
hath divined, in the observed fertilization of plants,
atomic mechanism with unlimited power
to vary the offspring in character, by mutual
inexhaustible interchange of transmitted genes;

a theory on such wide experiment upbuilt
 that the enrichment of species may be assumed to be
 the purpose of nature in the segregation of sex.
 Yet this new knowledge throweth no light on our way
 to a purposeful and wise selfbreeding of mankind
 which, could it be, would then responsibly overrule 180
 all indiscriminate mating tho' from such ordeal
 our hybrid wisdom well might shrink rather we see
 complexity irresoluble in obscurity
 So may we still follow our instinctive preferences
 unrebuked, and in love of Beauty affirm our faith
 that our happiest espousals are nature's free gift.

And the origin of sex lieth yet in that darkness
 where all origins are—since definition of links
 within our causal chain advanceth us no way
 in sensible approachment to the first Cause of all : 190
we are happy in our discoveries as a child thinketh
 he is nearer to the Pole star when he is put to bed
 yet, tracing backwards in the story of sex, the steps
 of our carpeted staircase are familiar and strong

First among lowest types of life we think to find
 no separation of sex plants in the next degree
 show differentiation at puberty with some signs
 of mutual approachment next in higher animals

III

an early differentiation, and at puberty
 periodic appetite with mutual attraction 200
 sometimes engaging Beauty: then at last in man
 all these same characters promoted and strengthen'd
 to a constant conscient passion, by Reason transform'd
 to'ard altruistic emotion and spiritual love.

Breed then together with Selfhood steppeth in pair,
 for as Self grew thru' Reason from animal rage
 to vice of war and gluttony, but meanwhile uprose
 thru' motherly yearning to a profounder affection,
 so Breed, from like degrading brutality at heart,
 distilleth in the altruism of spiritual love 210
 to be the sublimest passion of humanity,
 with parallel corruption; in its supremacy
 confess'd of all, since all in their degree hav felt
 its divine exaltation and bestial abasement.
 It hath sanctified fools and degraded heroes;
 and tho' the warrior wil lightly leave his lady
 to join in battle (so the weight of the elder horse
 side-wrencheth at the yoke), he wil return to her
 more gladly, and often rue his infidelity.

In higher natures, poetic or mystical, 220
 sense is transfigur'd quite; as once with Dante it was

who saw the grace of a fair Florentine damsel
 as WISDOM UNCREATE: for it happen'd to him
 in thatt awakening miracle of Love at first sight,
 which is to many a man his only miracle,
 his one divine Vision, his one remember'd dream—
 it happ'd to Dante, I say, as with no other man
 in the height of his vision and for his faith therein:
 the starry plenitude of his radiant soul,
 searching for tenement in the bounties of life, 230
 encounter'd an aspect of spiritual beauty
 at the still hour of dawn which is holier than day:
 as when a rose-bud first untrammeleth the shells
 of her swathing petals and looseneth their embrace,
 so the sunlight may enter to flush the casket
 of her virgin promise, fairer than her full bloom
 shall ever be, ere its glories lie squander'd in death:—
 'Twas of thatt silent meeting his high vision came
 rapturous as any vision ever to poet giv'n;
 since in thatt Sacrament he rebaptized his soul 240
 and lived thereafter in Love, by the merit of Faith
 toiling to endow the world: and on those feather'd wings
 his mighty poem mounted panting, and lieth now
 with all its earthly tangle by the throne of God.

So to Lucretius also seeking Order in Chance

III

some frenzy of Beauty came, neath which constraint he left
 his atoms in the lurch and fell to worshipping
 Aphroditè, the naked Goddess of man's breed,
 and waving the oriflamme of her divinity
 above the march of his slow-trooping argument, 250
 he attributeth to her the creation and being
 of all Beauty soe'er· NEC SINE TE QUICQUAM
 DIAS IN LUMINIS ORAS EXORITUR,
 NEQUE FIT LAETUM NEQUE AMABILE QUICQUAM
 So well did he in his rapture such is Beauty's power
 physical or spiritual, and if it be the cause
 of spiritual emotion (as hath been said), 'tis plain
 that Beauty wil be engaged in man's love, in so far
 as 'tis a proper and actual attribute of man
 first, as in animals, of his physical form, 260
 to which, when beauty of soul is added, the addition
 but marketh more specially its human character

Thus Shakespeare, *in the sessions of sweet silent thought*
 gathering from memory the idealization of love,
 when he launch'd from their dream sheds those golden sonnets
 that swim like gondolas i' the wake of his drama,
 fashion'd for their ensignry a pregnant axiom,
 and wrote: *From fairest creatures we desire increase*
That thereby Beauty's Rose might never die, wherein

he asserteth beauty to be of love the one *motiv*, 270
and thatt in double meaning of object and cause.

And tho' blind instinct wer full puissant of itself
for propagation of man, yet the attraction of beauty
bettereth the species, nor without it coud ther hav been
effect in spirit; and that the poet guarded this
showeth in his lyric, where of Sylvia 'tis enquired
why all the swains commend her, and he replyeth thereto
Holy fair and wise is she, thus giving to Soul
first place, thereafter to Body and last of the trine
Intelligence; and thatt is their right order in Love. 280

And this high beauty of spirit—in the conscience of it,
in the love of it, and the appearances of it—
tho' it hav no quarrel with thatt physical beauty
whereof 'twas born, when once 'tis waken'd in the mind
needeth no more support of the old animal lure,
but absolute in its transmitted power and grace
maketh a new beauty of its own appearances.

Thus oft the full majesty and happiness of love
is found in lovers whose corporeal presences
would seem disloyalty to the gay worshippers 290
of the goddess of grace, nor fit to approach her shrine:
yet lightly wil Love rate the ridicule of them
whose passion, subsisting in the flourish of flesh,

III

outlasteth not its brief prime, but must fade and fade
 as thatt fadeth, and when it perisheth perish ;
 and who themselves—save in the rout of their revel
 they hav perish'd immature—provide tales of despair,
 disease and madness ; melancholy tragedies
 of ignobility unredeem'd, to scare mankind.

But love's true passion is of immortal happiness, 300
 whereof the Greeks, maybe,—whose later poets told
 of a heav'nly Aphrodite—had some dim prescience
 before man ever arrived at thatt wisdom thru' Christ,
 and now teacheth to his children as their birthright,—a gift
 whose wealth is amplified by spending, and its charm
 rejuvenated by habit, that dulleth all else:
 nor needeth it for joy to look off from this earth
 and beyond, nor to sit on the schoolbench with them
 who dispute in argument the existence of God ;
 being of eternity it overcometh evil 310
 as any nativ disposition is apt to do,
 but more surely and with its virtue more self-secure
 than the merry or sad heart is, that in laughter or tears
 wil keep unchanged its temper, whatsoe'er befall ;
so priketh hem Nature in hir corages.
 But think not Aphrodite therefor disesteem'd

III

for rout of her worshippers, nor sensuous Beauty
 torn from her royal throne, who is herself mother
 of heav'nly Love (so far as in human aspect
 eternal essence can hav mortal parentage), 320
 our true compass in art as our comfort in faith,
 our daily bread of pleasur,—enough that thus I deem
 of Beauty among Goddes best gifts, and even above
 the pleasur of Virtue accord it honour of men

The allure of bodily beauty is mutual in mankind
 as is the instinct of breed, which tho' it seem i' the male
 more activ, is i' the female more predominant,
 more deeply engaging life, grave and responsible
 Thus while in either sex celibat lives are led
 without impoverishment of intellect or will, 330
this thing is rare in women, whereas in the man
 virginity may seem a virile energv
 in its angelic liberty, prerequisite
 to the perfection of some high personality.

And here we are driv'n to enquire of Reason how it came
 that bodily beauty is deem'd a feminin attribute,
 since not by science nor æsthetick could we arrive
 at such a judgment But not triflingly to trench

III

on prehistoric problems, 'twil be enough to say
 that from the first it may not always hav been so, 340
 and primacy of beauty may hav once lain with the male,
 in days of pagan savagery, afore men left
 their hunting and took tillage of the fields in hand,
 superseding the women and all their moon-magic,
 to invent a reason'd labor of intensiv culture,
 as now 'tis seen ;—whether in remotest orient lands
 whose cockcrow is our curfew, where Chineses swarm
 teasing their narrow plots with hand and hoe, carrying
 their own dung on their heads obsequiously as ants ;
 or on our western farms where now machines usurp 350
 such manual labor, and hav with their strange forms dethroned
 the heraldry of the seasons, fair emblems of eld
 that seem'd the inalienable imagery of mankind.

How was November's melancholy endear'd to me
 in the effigy of plowteams following and recrossing
 patiently the desolat landscape from dawn to dusk,
 as the slow-creeping ripple of their single furrow
 submerged the sodden litter of summer's festival!
 They are fled, those gracious teams ; high on the headland now
 squatted, a roaring engin toweth to itself 360
 a beam of bolted shares, that glideth to and fro
 combing the stubbled glebe : and agriculture here,

III

blotting out with such daub so rich a pictur of grace,
hath lost as much of beauty as it hath saved in toil.

Again where reapers, bending to the ripen'd corn,
were wont to scythe in rank and step with measured stroke,
a shark-tooth'd chariot rampeth biting a broad way,
and, jerking its high swindging arms around in the air,
swoopeth the swath. Yet this queer Pterodactyl is well,
that in the sinister torpor of the blazing day 370
clicketeth in heartless mockery of swoon and sweat,
as 'twere the salamandrine voice of all parch'd things:
and the dry grasshopper wondering knoweth his God.

Or what man feeleth not a new poetry of toil,
whenas on frosty evenings neath its clouding smoke
the engin hath huddled-up its clumsy threshing-coach
against the ricks, wherefrom laborers standing aloft
toss the sheaves on its tongue; while the grain runneth out,
and in the whirr of its multitudinous hurry
it hummeth like the bee, a warm industrious boom 380
that comforteth the farm, and spreadeth far afield
with throbbing power; as when in a cathedral awhile
the great diapason speaketh, and the painted saints
feel their glass canopies flutter in the heav'nward prayer.

Thus hath man's Reason dealt since he took spade in hand,

III

either by wit of the insect or of the engineer:
 and they who hav come to think that in remotest times
 Eve delved and Adam span, can show matriarchy of sorts
 had precedent in natur, ostensibly among birds,
 whose males more gaudily feather'd wil disport their charms
 and dance in coquetry to win the admiring hens 391
 Verily it well may be that sense of beauty came
 to those primitiv bipeds earlier than to man

But howso in patrarchal times our code upgrew,
 it hath decretals honour'd in the courts of Love
 'tis the faith of all poets from the Troubadours
 to Shelley's broken amours, and that the fair Muses
 should hav masculin wooers was Apollo's will
 who favour'd his own sex. But had the god inspired
 poetesses many as poets—coud thatt hav been— 400
 follies had cancel'd out truly in the equation of love,
 and steadier fire of passion would hav warm'd the world
 Today if any lady in her boudoir rhymeth,
 she is drown'd in man's tradition and disguiseth her tone.
 transposing her high music to the lower clef,
 or deemeth thatt the orthodoxy of the sapphic mode,
 because of the two love songs which pedantry hath saved
 of Sappho's complisht artistry, one by mischance,
 in thatt muliebrous dump which gave Catullus pause,

III

hath this falsification of her true soprano. 410

But 'twas the deeper voice that robed passion in song,
with the masculin emotion that glorify'd it;

and man, finding elation in physical beauty
and in the passion of sex his chief transport of soul,
ascribed supremacy of beauty to woman's grace,
and she to'ardly accepted his idolatry.

Yet if the passion had been identic in the twain,
the woman surely had found her like ideal in man ;
but the motifs of Nature that determin life
are hidden, and with the sexes they are unlike in love. 420

For tho' true loves are mutual and of equal strength
and their bodily communion is a sacrament—

like those irrevocable initiations of yore
whose occult ritual it was profane to disclose—
and in its uttermost surrender of secrecies
hallowing brute instinct, symbolizeth approach
to satisfaction of unattainable desire ;

yet in fullest devotion and frankest abandon
of eager and mutual mating, whether or no she ken,
the woman's choice hath been by a deeper purpose led, 430
whereof the mastering revelation awaiteth her
in the reality of her Motherhood ; wherefor,
that her son may be noble, she wil seek his sire

III

where her ideal, howe'er vaguely imagin'd, lieth
outside her sphere, beyond her—and so thinketh she less
of thatt for which her mate praiseth and seeketh her,
and longing evermore for what she most lacketh,
in her thought of wisdom looketh for higher things,
and for immortal Roses desireth increase.

How Natur (as Plato saith) teacheth man by beauty, 440
and by the lure of sense leadeth him ever upward
to heav'nly things, and how the mere sensible forms
which first arrest him take-on ever more and more
spiritual aspect,—yet discard not nor disown
their sensuous beauty, since thatt is eternal and sure,
the essence thereof being the reverent joy of life—
this everywhere is seen and most overtly in Breed
(too many in truth ther be who find it never elsewhere);
yet man is slow to see that love's call to woman
is graver and more solemn than it can be to him, 450
by reason of her higher function and duty therein,
and that all past attainment which his spirit hath won
came to him thru' motherhood of the nursling boy;—
yea, ev'n the dignity of his masculin intellect,
that outreacheth her range, was first of her making
and never coud hav fruited but for the devout

fostering environment of her lovingkindness:
 nor can man's futur attainment forgo thatt shelter,
 wherewith her precocious girlhood accompanieth
 the evergrowing incumbency of his pupillage, 460
 as it grew in the brutes: . . and here 'tis seen again
 how 'tis a backsliding and treason against nature
 when women wil unsex their own ideal of Love,
 and ignorantly aiming to be in all things as men,
 would make love as men make it—tho' Sappho did thatt,
 who rare among women for manly mastery of art,
 a Nonsuch of her kind, exceeded by default,
 nondescript, and for lack of the true feminin
 borrow'd effeminacy of men, the incontinents,
 who, ranking with gluttons in Aristotle's book, 470
 made a lascivious pleasure of their Lesbian loves;
 till in the event the euphony of her isle's fair name
 whisper'd an unspoken and else unspeakable shame.

Nor can the ethic that here intrudeth be deny'd,
 since if men speak of morals 'tis of sex they think;
 forwhy the passion of it both transporteth their souls
 and troubleth daily life with problems of conduct.

Now to the most who are like to read my English poem
christian marriage wil seem a stablish'd ordinance

III

as universal, wholesome and needful to man 480
 as WHEAT is, which, ubiquitous, and sib to a weed
 that yet wil hamper its cultur, overruleth all else,
 weigheth our gold by single grains, and harvested
 measureth in sacks the peace and welfare of the world,
 our BREAD OF LIFE, and symbol of the food of the soul.

But tho' monogamy had been by wise lawgivers
 coded with rights and duties and property, and thus
 by Jewish use or Roman held place in the Church.
 the instinct of sex was ever anathema to the Essenes
 whose thought handsel'd the faith; 'twas to thatt sect the accurst
 contamination of all spiritual purity: 491
 and only after tough battle against two mighty outbursts
 of Pagan Poetry coud marriage come in the end
 to its own, from being a tolerated discordancy
 to be an accepted harmony, and hallow'd as such
 within the Church, a sacrament. Of those two wars
 the story is long, and now 'tis here briefly to tell.

The first War of the Essenes was with the poetry
 of SELFHOOD, those sagas and epic rhapsodies
 which had burst forth to flood all Europe in the time 500
 of the northern invasions, when the hideous Huns.

extending the right wing of their havoc, swept down
 on the old land of the Goths. Soon as their arrows prick'd
 our Teuton forefathers, a clash of arms and yell
 of battle arose, that in the unsearchable storage
 of earth's high firmament vibrateth to this day.

The warriors, who in vain defence of home escaped
 the first mauling and massacre, wer driven forth
 and, pressing Westward desperatly, became in turn
 themselves ruthless invaders, live firebrands that spredd 510
 the blast of their contagion to Allemand and Frank,
 Burgundian, Vandal and Lombard, from Angle and Dane
 to furthest Kelt; and with the sword follow'd the song,
 an inextinguishable pæan of battle and blood.

A sudden eruption of nature, as when earth quaketh
 and faltering along the edges of its wrinkling shell
 the mountains roar and crack, and vent their ruddy bowels
 in spume of molten lava, as oft hath been where now
 some gracious valley embosom'd in soft azurous hills
 smileth, an Eden as fair as Goddes love was feign'd 520
 to have planted for man's use—thatt lost garden regain'd,
 lost once thru' pride and now by long stooping regain'd,—
 a pictur and outward symbol of the comfort of them
 whose spirits dwell in the Eden that the Muse hath made
 her garden of soul in *the golden lapses of Time*;

III

and if, tracing to its source some Heliconian rill,
its mossgrown cave is found in the black splinter'd rock,
where thatt once cool'd and stay'd, a volcanic moraine
to bank his blossom'd Paradise and feed his vines,
ther-after to the poet all his joy wil seem 530
a strange mysterious dream, a thread of beauty eterne
enwoven in mortal change, and he himself a flower
fertilized awhile on the quench'd torrent of Hell.

Now when Rome's mitred prelates ambled o'er the Alps
to hold the Gallic provinces, whose overlords
their missioners had won to the confession of Christ.
the pagan folk submissiv to constraint wer driv'n
in flocks to th' font, but got little washing therein.

Whatever of kindliness Tacitus once had found
sequester'd in the rude homesteads of Germany 540
was burnt up in thatt fiery ordeal, which taught them
the joy of frenzy and prowess, and the songs whereby
they glorify'd the memory of successful lust,
and stirr'd anew the fierce delight of battle and blood.

A wilder strain maybe than the lost Bedouin songs,
that seal'd the weird which the Angel in Araby foretold
to the outcast bondwoman in the famishing desert,
and she to her son,—that his horoscope was to range

like the wild ass untameable, and his hand *should be*
'gainst ev'ry man, and ev'ry man's hand against him. 550

Wherefor hitting for remedy on Plato's old plan,
when he proscribed Homer from his Utopian schools—
saying that morals wer unteachable to men
who imputed mortal passions to the immortal gods—,
the priests denounced the bards, and would hav stopp'd their mouths;
but finding that forbiddance met with no regard
they turn'd to assure their flock by amity, and to comb
the fleece they might not shear: upon which way they wrought
some mitigation, and growing reconciled to the art,
and grudging to the heathen what might serve the Church, 560
they took thought to divert it, and engaged the bards
to make like stirring balladry of the Bible tales:
wherein, joining themselves with good heart to the work,
their first grains of allowance multiply'd to pounds;
while with their clerkly skill they sat fast to transcribe
the old pagan tales, redacted to the amended form
in which we know them, with what other numberless
wonder-lives of the Saints they wrote, symbolic masques
of Christian orthodoxy, and later mystery-plays.

So all these diverse stuffs thru' the dark centuries 570
lay quietly a-soak together in the dye-vats, wherein
our British Arthur was clandestin'ly christen'd

III

and crown'd, and all his knights cleansed and respirited,
re clothed as might be: for the dispossess'd devils
had kindly accepted their rebate, content to find
their old home swept and garnish'd; and tho' verily
in their domestication, as 'tis with brutes, they had lost
keenness of sense and true compact of character,
they flourish to this day the darlings of our poets,
who drape their model Arthur to their taste, whereas 580
time was when good St. Andrew strode forth in plate-mail.

While thus the Catechists made compromising peace
with the poetry of SELFHOOD, ere the fight was won
in rescue of womanhood from the ravish of war,
a new era had dawn'd and a new strain of song,
the young poetry of BREED; and the conflict therewith
is in my story styled the second Essene War.

'Twas no Huns now that stirr'd the Frankish heart to sing,
nay rather Athena's call, and the gracious emblems
of Hellenic humanity, that long had drown'd 590
where they had sunk o'erwhelm'd in the wreckage of Rome,
undersuck'd in the wallow, when Cæsar's great ship
founder'd with all its toys decadent in the deep,
now freshly of their buoyancy up-struggling here and there
to ride in sparkling dance on the desolat sea:

III

Or what grave lore had refuged with the Ishmaelite
 was stealing back from exile to its western home,
 its mansion of birthright, and had now already inspired
 passionat Abelard, who with his ethnic books
 was heralding in Paris that full Renaissance 600
 which should illumine Europe, and plant her cities
 with Universities of learning, sanctuaries
 of spirit, our schools of thought and science to this day.

Full Springtime was not yet surely, nor soon to be:
 'twas as mayhap *à ce jour de Saint Valentin*
que chacun doit choisir son per, or a later day
 of February, when in the shelter'd woodland
 the Sun with broadening smile thinketh to intercalate
 a glad red-letter'd feast in Winter's almanac,
 which the thrush boldly announceth—tho' the migrant birds
 hav yet made no return upon the balmy sprays, 611
 but the small homekeepers muster what choir they can:
 Not otherwise was thatt first impetuous raid that storm'd
 the rear of the dark ages prematurely; and yet
 the singers wer so many that man marveleth stil
 whence they came, or by what spontaneous impulse sang.

As well might be with one who wendeth lone his way
 beside the watchful dykes of the flat Frisian shore,
 what hour the wading tribes, that make their home and breed

III

numberless on the marshy polders, creep unseen 620
 widely dispersed at feed, and silent neath the sun
 the low unfeatured landscape seemeth void of life—
 when without warning suddenly all the legion'd fowl
 rise from their beauties' ambush in the reedy beds,
 and on spredd wings with clamorous ecstasy
 carllioning in the air manœuvre, and where they wheel
 transport the broken sunlight, shoaling in the sky—
 with like sudden animation the fair fields of France
 gave birth to myriad poets and singers unknown,
 who in a main flight gathering their playful flock 630
 settled in Languedoc, on either side the Rhone
 within the court and county of Raymond of Toulouse.

Nor wer these Troubadours hucksters of song who tuned
 their pipes for fee: some far glimpse of the heav'nly Muse
 had reach'd and drawn the soul by the irresistible
 magnet of love: as when in the blockish marble
 the sculptor's thought of beauty loometh into shape
 neath his rude hammerstrokes, ere the true form is seen ;
 so had the monks' rough-hewing of the old pagan tales
 discover'd virtue:—an Ideal of womanhood 640
 had striven into outline ; which, tho' passion heeded not
 yet art had grasp'd, divining fresh motiv for skill,
 whereby knights, churchmen, monks, courtiers and scholars all

III

childishly wer enthralld: ev'n kings found honor in rhyme
 whose royalty is today its only honor, and to us
 would seem frivolity, knew we not that we watch
 beside the rocking-cradle of babes, whose prattling tongues
 should oust monarchic Latin from his iron throne—
 which not the slaughter of this one innocent could save:
 Skysoarers should be rear'd of such young flutterers; 650
 for whom two freaks of fortune happily conspired,
 a fine phantasy of spirit with light fabric of art;
 so the faint dream of chivalry, as it took-on form,
 tripp'd delicatly with the delicat music
 of the tentativ language, whose mincing metres
 imposed good manners on the articulation of speech.

While in such play Count Raymond's folk lived joyfully,
 Provence seem'd to mankind the one land of delight,—
 a country where a man might fairly choose to dwell;
 tho' some would rather praise the green languorous isles, 660
 Hawaii or Samoa, and some the bright Azores,
 Kashmire the garden of Ind, or Syrian Lebanon
 and flowery Carmel; or wil vaunt the unstoried names
 of African Nairobi, where by Nyanza's lakes
 Nile hid his flooding fountain, or in the New World
 far Pasadena's roseland, whence who saileth home
 westward wil in his kalendar find a twin day.

III

But I in England starving neath the unbroken glooms
 of thatt drearest November which wrapping the sun,
 damping all life, had robb'd my poem of the rays 670
 whose wealth so far had sped it, I long'd but to be
 i' the sunshine with my history, and the names that held
 place in my heart and now shall hav place in my line
 wer Avignon, Belcaire, Montelmar, Narbonne,
 Beziers, Castelnaudary, Bearn and Carcassonne,
 and truly I coud hav shared their fancy coud I hav liv d
 among those glad Jongleurs, living again for me,
 and had joy'd with them in thatt liberty and good will
 which men call toleration, a thing so stiff to learn
 that to sceptics 'tis left and cynics In Provence 680
 Jew quarrel'd not with Gentile, ther was peace and love
 'twixt Saracen and Christian, Catalan and Frank,
 and (wonder beyond wonder) here was harbour'd safe,
 flourishing and multiplying, thatt sect of all sects
 abominable, persecuted and defamed,
 who with their Eastern chafferng and insidious talk
 had ferreted thru' Europe to find peace on earth
 with Raymond of Toulouse,—those ancient Manichees

Restless and impatient man's mind is ever in quest
 of some system or mappemond or safeguard of soul, 690

III

and coming not at Truth—ev'n as a dry-athirst horse
 that drinketh eagerly of the first gilded puddle,—
 he espouseth delusion and sweareth fealty thereto:
 and since common conditions breed common opinion,
 nations lie fascinated in their swaddling clothes
 cramped, and atrophied with their infantile suction.
 So in the inmost sanctum of the Hindu mind
 a milch-cow is enshrined: but those dour Manichees
 wer trifling with no symbols; their wild faith had grown
deep-rooted on the prime obsession of savagery, 700
 thatt first terrifying nightmare of dawning conscience
 which, seeing in natur a power maleficent to man,
 estopp'd his growth in love: for these zealots ascribed
 this visible world to the work of a devil,
 from all time Goddes foe and enemy to all good:
 In hate of which hellpower so worthy of man's defiance
 they had lost the old fear, and finding internecine war
 declared twixt flesh and spirit in the authentic script
 of Paul of Tarsus, him they took for master, and styled
 themselves Paulicians the depositaries of Christ. 710

Their creed—better than other exonerating God
 from blame of evil—and their austere asceticism
 shamed the half-hearted clerics, whose licence in sin
 confirm'd the uncompromising logic, which *infern'd*

III

a visible earthly Church to be Satan's device,
the Pope his minister,—him, the third Innocent,
who held his wide ambition for the will of God,
his fulminating censure for the voice of Christ;
and, troubled now that he could neither cleanse nor cure,
persuade not nor command, fell; and betray'd by zeal 720
(as angry Peter once to serve Christ with the sword),
preach'd a Crusade within the fold,—thatt bloody wrath
label'd in history The Albigensian war,
a sinking millstone heavy as ever pontiff tied
round the neck of the Church. For the champions of Christ
outdid the heathen Huns in cruelty, and in the end
was Raymond's county ravaged to ruin and his folk
massacred all or burnt alive, man woman and child,
and their language wiped out, so that a man today
reading Provençal song studieth in a dead tongue. 730

Yet many Troubadours escaping from slaughter
fled to the Italian cities where the New Learning
gave kind asylum to their secret flame; and ere
within the Church's precincts they had raised a song,
Chivalry had won acceptance in the ideal of sex
and, blending with the worship of the Mother of God,
assured the consecration of MARRIAGE, still unknown
save to the christian folk of Europe whence it sprang.

III

Thus, as it came to pass, the second Essene War
brought the New Life in which full soon Dante was born. 740

The motive of Selfhood is common to all Being,
the universal Mind informing existence,
and had ther been no beauty in life nor any joy
beyond thatt ground-pleasure, which all creatures may feel
in the inconscient functionings of their organisms
and satisfaction of instinct—had thatt been, ev'n so
nothing had lack'd to inspire the selfassertion of man:
But since ther is beauty in nature, mankind's love of life
apart from love of beauty is a tale of no count;
and tho' he linger'd long in his forest of fear, 750
or e'er his apprehensiv wonder at unknown power
threw off the first night-terrors of his infant mind,
the vision of beauty awaited him, and step by step
led him in joy of spirit to full fruition.

Now as with Selfhood so was it again with Breed;
for the fashioning of sex was attended thru'out
by necessary attractions—as 'tis seen in plant
or animal, and these as they suffice in brutes
suffice in man so far as he also is animal;

but being specifically endow'd he must in course 760
hav with the growth of reason outgrown the animal wont ;
and in perfection of kind he surely had lost his lure,
had he not learn'd in beauty to transfigure love.

Many shy at such doctrin: Science, they wil say,
knoweth nought of this beauty. But what kenneth she
of color or sound? Nothing: tho' science measure true
every wave-length of ether or air that reacheth sense,
there the hunt checketh, and her keen hounds are at fault :
for when the waves hav pass'd the gates of ear and eye
all scent is lost: suddenly escaped the visibles 770
are changed to invisible ; the fine-measured motions
to immeasurable emotion ; the cypher'd fractions
to a living joy that man feeleth to shrive his soul.
How should science find beauty? Leibnitz rightly is held
the most irrefutable of all philosophers,
because he boldly excised the intrinse knot from the rope
and, showing both ends free, proclaim'd no knot had been ;
imaging two independent worlds that move
in pre-establish'd harmony twixt matter and mind ;
—a pleasant freak of man's godlike intelligence, 780
vex'd by so vain a need ; and thinking, with a thought
so inconceivable, to save appearances.

III

That ther is beauty in natur and that man loveth it
 are one thing and the same ; neither can be derived
 apart as cause of the other: and here it is to tell
 how female beauty came to be the common lure
 in human marriage.—First in animal mating
 the physical attractions, as they evolved with sense,
 took-on beautiful forms, til beauty (as in bird-song)
 was recognized consiently and exploited by art, 790
 and after in man became that ladder of joy whereon
 slowly climbing at heaven he shall find peace with God,
 and beauty be wholly spiritualised in him,
 as in its primal essence it must be conceived.

This ken we truly, that as wonder to intellect,
 so for the soul desire of beauty is mover and spring ;
 whence, in whatever his spirit is most moved, a man
 wil most be engaged with beauty ; and thus in his "first love"
 physical beauty and spiritual are both present
 mingled inseparably in his lure: then is he seen 800
 in the ecstasy of earthly passion and heav'nly vision
 to fall to idolatry of some specious appearance
 as if 'twere very incarnation of his heart's desire,
 whether eternal and spiritual, as with Dante it was,
 or mere sensuous perfection, or as most commonly
 a fusion of both—when if distractedly he hav thought

III

to mate mortally with an eternal essence
all the delinquencies of his high passion ensue.

Verily if Hope wer not itself a happiness
sorrow would far outweigh our mortal joy, but Hope 810
incarnat in the blood kindleth its hue no less
with every breath, to flood all the sluices of life
long as the heart can beat. And yet in love-mating
hope's ideal is so rich and fulfilment so rare,
that common minds in trudge with common experience
may think to amend their lot by renouncing life-vows,
as a vain bondage perversiv of happiness.

And coud man separate brutal from spiritual,
and in things of the flesh liv as animals do
stealing their food and seizing the delight of the hour, 820
thatt were reasonable enough and might be wise in man ;
but such divorcement being in the provision of things
shut out, ther is no way left nor choice for him, unless
he would make shipwreck, and of mere brutality
fall to pieces—ther is no hope for him but to attune
nature's diversity to a human harmony,
and with faith in his hope and full courage of soul
realizing his will at one with all nature,
devise a spiritual ethick for conduct in life.

Refusal of christian marriage is, as 'twere in art, 830

III

to impugn the credit of the most beautiful **things**
because ther are so few of them, and hold it folly
to aim at excellence where so few can succeed ;
and where any success pincheth the happiness
of the far greater number, who left to themselves
might feel fuller content admiring common **things**
or ugly, and be happier in whatever likings
they can indulge. Altho' they know it not, this is
the humanitarianism of democracy ;
and since ther is in the mass little good to look for 840
but what instruction, authority and example impose,
Ethick and Politick alike hav trouble in store.

Now mere impulse of sex,—from animal mating
to the vision of Dante—tho' strong in all degrees,
is not the bond of marriage. Nay, if breeding ceased,—
all motiv to it, liking for it and thought of it,—
women and men would mate ; and, whatever might lack,
married life might be found a more congenial state,
and marriage of true minds hav less impediment.
Happiness, which all seek, is not composable 850
of any summation of particular pleasures ;
the happiness in marriage dependeth for-sure
not on the animal functions, but on qualities

III

of spirit and mind that are correlated therewith.

So 'twas not of false ethick or weak prudery
 when thatt old Hebrew poet, in his mighty myth
 of man's creation, imagin'd Eve's predestiny
 to be helpmate and comfort to God's perfect man;
 nor in thatt strange fashioning of her from Adam's rib
 fudged he his symbol; perfect man being in thatt theft 860
 imperfected by loss of an original part
 now personate in Eve, of whom he should require
 what was in first design confused in his nature,
 and from thatt fleshly cleavage find true tally of flesh.

This myth was law to th' Jew, and 'twas men of their clan
 (those same Essenes whose creed prevail'd so long),
 who, when Christ's mournful company wer by his death
 reft of their earthly dreams, took courage and reset
 their disillusion'd hope bolder—to look no more
 for Rome and Cæsar's overthrow, but rather expect 870
 Jahveh's wrathful dissolution of all creation;
 that Christ would rëappear in pitiless Godhead
 full suddenly and full soon, to judge the world of sin,
 and with his angels gather-up his living elect
 to his new Jerusalem, those few Saints undefiled,
 who had *wash'd their robes to whiteness in the blood o' the Lamb.*

Now those stern Puritans who liv'd but in thatt faith,

in whom motiv and lure of breed wer wholly extinct,
 execrating the body as other men flee death,
 had no fear of contamination nor thought of ill 880
 in taking women in marriage, each man one to himself,
 as comrades indispensable, of spiritual aid

Truly myths so ancient and examples of life,
 hsh'd up out of the old jumble box of history,
 can find but little credit with this generation
 who, like to children absorb'd in the scientific toys
 of their high kilted gossips, care not to ransack
 the nursery cupboard for their grand dam's old playthings,
tho' family relics are they, once loved, and may show
 how that in man's eternal quest of happiness, 890
 contempt of fleshly pleasur is as near to his spirit
 as is the love of it to his animal nature

Vestiges of his stony asceticism imbue
 all time, thick as the strewage of his flinty tools,
 disseminat wheresoe'er he hath dwelt, nor need we now,
 from where they sleep bedded on archæologic shelves,
 fetch down upon the lecture table our specimens
 to teach what manners went to the making of man,
 having such living witness of harmonized life
 in the aristocracy of our English motherhood, 900

III

whence the nobility of our sons came, and therewith
 precedence of their courtesy title in the world;
 a tradition of good-faith, humanity and courage,
 that year by year flowereth on the grafted stock
 of Saxon temperament; the which slow or dead
 to beauty, is but a dullard in spiritual sense.

And so the character of our common folk, up-built
 in the commanding presence of feminin grace,
 won therefrom (as I hold) its vulgar excellence;
 for finding their own conduct unconformable 910
 to beauty of so high grade, they guarded it apart
 submissiv in its own status, a kindly thing
 with nativ honesty and good commonsense convinced;
 and, easing embarrassment with the humour of life,
 paid due respect and honour where they felt 'twas due,
 so they might goodtemper'dly and in laughable wise
 hobnob with ugliness, and jest at frightfulness,
 and keep the farce up mirthfully in the face of death.
 If any see not this fractur in our midst, because
 the pieces are in place, 'tis pictured for him true 920
 in Shakespeare's drama, where ideal women walk
 in worship, and the baser sort find sympathy,
 and both are bravely stirr'd together as water and oil.

III

But if 'tis ask'd to name what special function it was
 that fell sequester'd out of Adam in his lost rib,
 and which, when launch'd by Reason on his sea of troubles,
 should be his paregoric and comforting cure,—
 'twas no unique, ultimatly separable thing,
 as is a chemic element; far rather our moods,
 influences and spiritual affections are like 930
 those many organic substances which, tho' to sense
 wholly dissimilar and incomparable in kind,
 are yet all combinations of the same simples,
 and even in like proportions differently disposed;
 so that whether it be starch, oil, sugar, or alcohol
 'tis ever our old customers, carbon and hydrogen,
 pirouetting with oxygen in their morris antics;
 the chemist booketh all of them as C H O,
 and his art is as mine, when I but figureate
 the twin persistent semitones of my Grand Chant. 940

And 'twere but bookish, surely, in the fabric of mind
 to assume the disposition of vital elements
under a few common names, alike in both sexes;
 'tis easier thought that ther is no human faculty
 that hath not been in long elaboration of sex
 adjusted finely, and often to such richer ends
 that, tho' by correlation characters of sex,

III

they are not held in subservience to the impulse of Breed,—
 as some deem, and impute precocious puberty
 to new-born babes, and all their after trouble in life 950
 to shamefast thwarting of inveterat lust.

Now Woman took her jointure from the potency
 of spirit stored in flesh, the which, affined to her sex,
 became a property of intuition and grew in her,
 thru' mutual adaptation with the environments
 that wer its own effects, to a female character
 in worth alike and weakness distinct from the male:
 for while man's Reason drew him whither science led
 to walk with downcast eyes fix'd on the ground, and low
 incline his ear to catch the sermon-whisper of stones— 960
 whence now whole nations, by their treasure-trove enrich'd,
 crawl greedily on their knees nosing the soil like swine,
 and any, if they can twist their stiffen'd necks about,
 see the stars but as stones,—while men thus search'd the earth,
 stooping to pick up wisdom, women stood erect
 in honest human posture, from light's fount to drink
 celestial influences; and this was seen in them
 that worship'd Christ nor look'd, as then the apostles did,
 for some earthly prosperity or prospect, nor ask'd
 what chief seats might be theirs reserved in the Kingdom; 970

his heav'nly call drew them, and the Mary who sat
at Christ's feet in devotion, heard from him her choice
pronounced the one thing needful; and as 'twas for her,
so is it nowaday for us to our happiness.

For 'tis by such faith only a man can save his soul;
since as his unique spirit cometh more and more
out of slumber into vision, he loseth heart the more
at the inhumanity of nature's omnipotence.
Thatt first savage suspicion is now the last despair
of earnest thinkers, who for love of truth refuse 980
to blink dishonestly the tribulation of man,
but deem it final truth, and see no cure thereof,
nor solace save what brave distraction of thought may bring
in further keen pursuit of knowledge, on the old path
that hath hereby led them where the everlasting worm
eateth their hearts . . . and yet man's Reason (as is confess'd)
since 'tis of nature's fabric must share in her fault;
and man's spiritual sense, which inspireth his grief,
is equally of her giving: whence his complaint sheweth
the strange perversity of creation's self-reproach; 990
tho' nature the while is by beauty awakening
her heav'nly response to her heavenliest desire,
and in spiritual joy sanctioneth to the full
the claim of faith. To such despairers Christ out-spake

in his rich poetry '*Tis better with one eye
 blinded to enter into the life of Goddes Realm
 than with both eyes to grieve in Hell. Be thatt not Truth,
 then ther is something found for man better than Truth;
 which thought wer the supreme vanity of vanities,
 at once a superhuman ambition and a poor pride, 1000
 truly the last infirmity of his noble mind.*

From blind animal passion to the vision of Spirit
 all actual gradations come of natur, and each
 severally in time and place is answerable in man.
 As with the embryo which in normal growth passeth
 thru' evolutionary stages, at each stage
 consisting with itself agreeably, so Mind
 may be by observation in young changes waylaid,
 agreeable all, tho' no more congruous with themselves
 than what a baby thinketh of its naked feet, 1010
 when first it is aware of them, is like the thought
 of piteous sympathy with which when an old man
 he wil come to regard them. So likewise of BREED,
 youth and age hold their irreconcilable extremes,
 from him who deemeth sex to be the curse of man
 to him who findeth in it the only pleasur of life:

then the four temperaments of blood possess of kind
 their different sensibilities, and every bias
 of education coloureth ; while in abstract thought
 some would submit its energy to rule of state, 1020
 to ethic duty some, others to personal health,
 to social propriety or the grace of good manners ;
 climate can subjugate and religion constrain ;
 national taste prescribe practice and fix ideals ;
 yet howso no two men wil be found wholly alike,
 nor any one man always consonant in himself ;
 the saint wil hav his days of humiliation and trial,
 the clown his rare moments of revelation and peace,
 while commonsense wil waver in its faith with fortune.

Now as a physical object apparent to sense 1030
 must in all its perspectives be studied, tho' none
 be true wholly in itself, and reality is found
 by elimination of error, so 'twil be with Love,
 which, if it had no various aspects of feeling
 nor delusiv perspectives to spiritual sight,
 neither coud it hav any essential property
 in the Wisdom of God: thus men, who mostly liv
 in the light of one aspect and convinced thereby,
 wil deem of love differently, and in as many ways
 as ther be planes of spirit and faculties of mind: 1040

III

and the philosopher expecteth little audience
of men school'd to the habit of their own liking,
and wer he heaven-inspired he should not therefor look
to win the general ear; yet, one proviso allow'd,
he may command agreement; so (saith he) if ther be
any one scheme of Reason in the evolution of Mind
preferable and probable—and without so much faith
he would sit dumb—then thatt ideal wil be found
in few, not in many, but potential in them,
and in the best imperfect, a desire of all, 1050
an everlasting hope not everlastingly
to be rebuff'd and baffled, rather præordain'd
by arch-creativ Wisdom, as man groweth to find
his Will in Goddes pleasur, his pleasur in Goddes Will;
drawn to thatt happiness by the irresistible
predominant attraction, which worketh secure
in mankind's Love of Beauty and in the Beauty of Truth.

Art is the true and happy science of the soul,
exploring nature for spiritual influences,
as doth physical science for comforting powers, 1060
advancing so to a sure knowledge with like progress:
but lovers who thereto look for expression of truth

III

hav great need to remember that no plastic Art,
tho' it create ideals noble as are the forms
that Pheidias wrought, can ever elude or wholly escape
its earthly medium ; nor in its adumbrations
reach thatt detach'd suprasensuous vision, whereto
Poetry and Music soar, nor dive down in the mine
where cold philosophy diggeth her fiery jewels—
or only by rare magic may it sometimes escape. 1070

And this was the intuition of our landscape-painters,
whose venture seem'd humbled in renouncing the prize
of the classic contest, when like truants from school
they made off to the fields with their satchels, and came
on nature's beauteous by-paths into a purer air:
For the Art of painting, by triumph of colouring
enticed to Realism, had confounded thereby
its own higher intention, and in portrayal of spirit
made way for Symbolism which, tho' it stand aloof,
is outfaced in the presence of direct feeling: 1080
Sithence in presentation of feminin beauty
the highest Art lost mastery of its old ideal ;
as in the great pictur of the two Women at a Well,
where Titian's young genius, devising a new thing,
employ'd the plastic power to exhibit at once
two diverse essences in their value and contrast ;

III

for while by the æsthetic idealisation of form
his earthly love approacheth to celestial grace,
his draped Uranian figure is by symbols veil'd,
and in pictorial Beauty suffereth defeat: 1090
Yea, despite all her impregnable confidence
in the truth of her wisdom, as there she sitteth
beside the fountain, dazzlingly apparel'd, enthroned,
with thoughtful face impassiv, averting her head
as 'twere for fuller attention so to incline an ear
to the impartial hearing of the importunat plea
of the other, who over-against her on the cornice-plinth
posturing her wonted nakedness in sensuous ease,
leaneth her body to'ards her, and with imploring grace
urgeth the vain deprecation of her mortal prayer. 1100

Giorgione, his master, already had gone to death
plague-stricken at prime, when Titian painted thatt picture,
donning his rival's mantle, and strode to higher fame—
yet not by this canvas; he who had it, hid it;
nor won it public favour when it came to light,
untill some mystic named it in the Italian tongue
L'AMOR SACRO E PROFANO, and so rightly divined;
for tho' ther is no record save the work of the brush
to tell the intention, yet what the mind wrought is there;

III

and who looketh thereon may see in the **two left arms** 1110
 the symbolism apportioning the main **design** ;
 for while the naked figure with extended **arm**
 and outspread palm vauntingly **balanceth aloft**
 a little lamp, whose flame lost in the bright daylight
 wasteth in the air, thatt other hath the **arm bent down**
 and oppositely nerved, and clencheth with **gloved hand**
 closely the cover'd vessel of her secret fire.

Thus Titian hath pictured the main sense of my text,
 and this truth: that as Beauty is all with Spirit twined,
 so all obscenity is akin to the ugliness 1120
 which Art would outlaw; whence cometh thatt tinsel honour
 and mimicry of beauty which is the attire of vice.

Allegory is a cloudland inviting fancy
 to lend significance to chancey shapes; and here
 I deem not that the child, who playeth between the Loves
 at Titian's well, was pictured by him with purpose
 to show the first contact of love with boyhood's mind;
 and yet never was symbol more deftly devised:
 Mark how the child looking down on the water see'th
 only a reflection of the realities—as 'twas 1130
 with the mortals in Plato's cave—nor more of them

III

than Moses saw of God ; he can see but their backs,
save for a shifty glimpse of the pleading profil
of earthly Love (which also is subtle truth) ; and most
how in his play his plunged hand stirreth to and fro
both images together in a confused dazzle
of the dancing ripples as he gazeth intent.



THE TESTAMENT
OF BEAUTY

BOOK IV

Ethick

BEAUTY, the eternal Spouse of the Wisdom of God
and Angel of his Presence thru' all creation,
fashioning her new love-realm in the mind of man,
attempteth every mortal child with influences
of her divine supremacy . . . ev'n as in a plant
when the sap mounteth secretly and its wintry stalk
breaketh out in the prolific miracle of Spring,
or as the red blood floodeth into a beating heart
to build the animal body comely and strong; so she
in her transcendant rivalry would flush his spirit

10

IV

with pleasurable ichor of heaven and where she hath found
responsiv faculty in some richly favour'd soul—

L'anima vaga delle cose belle, as saith

the Florentine,—she wil inaugurate her feast
of dedication, and even in thatt earliest onset,
when yet infant Desire hath neither goal nor clue
to fix the dream, ev'n then, altho' it graspeth nought
and passeth in its airy vision away, and dieth
out of remembrance, 'tis in its earnest of life
and dawn of bliss purer and hath less of earthly tinge 20
than any other after attanment of the understanding
for all man's knowledge kenneth also of toil and flaw,
and even his noblest works, tho' they illume the dark
with individual consummation, are cast upon
by the irrelevant black shadows of time and fate

Hence is the fascination of amateurs in art,
who renouncing accomplishment attain the prize
of their humbler devotion,—as Augustin saith,
that fools may come at holiness where wise men miss,
Facit enim hoc quaedam etiam stoliditas,— 30

arriving by short-coming, like to homely birds
of passage, nesting on the roofs of the workshops
And tho' of secret knowledge man's art is compáct,
yet not the loving study of any master-work,

IV

nor longest familiarity can ever efface
 its birthday of surprisal, and great music to me
 is glorify'd by memory of one timeless hour
 when all thought fled scared from me in my bewilderment

See then the boy in first encounter with beauty,
 his nativ wonder awaken'd by the motion of love, 40
 as when live air, breathing upon a smother'd fire,
 shooteth the smouldering core with tiny flames—so he
 kindleth at heart with eternal expectancies,
 and the dream within him looketh out at his eyes.

'Twas thru' worship of Christ that this thing came to men,
 whereat, when art achieved portrayal of tenderness,
 the christian painters throng'd their heav'n with cherubims,
 little amorini who with rebel innocence
 dispossess'd the tall angels, and Mary's young babe
 cast off his swaddling bands, and stood-up on her lap 50
 in grace of naked childhood for the image of God.

But as 'tis with the Race, for which our hope draweth
 the only assurance of its high nobility
 from rare examples, holy men and wise, revered
 ev'n by the common folk, that none the less pursue
 their common folly interminably, and more and more
 pamper despair that is the giant sorrow of earth—
 so in the child this glimpse or touch of immanence,

IV

being a superlativ brief moment of glory,
 is too little to leaven the inveterate lump of life ; 60
 and the instincts whose transform'd vitality should lust
 after spiritual things, return to their vomit
 and wallow in the mire of their animal ruts.

Nature hath something truly of her promise in all :
 yet, in the infinit disposition of random seeds,
 her full potency is rare ; as in the end of his book
 that maketh the old school-benches yet to sprout in green,
 Aristotle confesseth: where the teacher saith
 virtue cannot be taught to a mind not well disposed
 by natur, and he that hath thatt rarest excellence, 70
διὰ τῶς θείας αἰτίας, may be above all men
 styled truly fortunat ; and with those four Greek words
 hath proudly prick'd to virtue many a sluggard soul.

Forsooth the need of Fortune stayeth not here, alas !
 Ther is no assurance of stability or fair growth,
 unless she stand by faithfully and foster the soul,
 fending from all evil and encompassing with good,
 the while these intimations come to be understood
 and harmonized by Reason in the conduct of life.

Now as Reason matured to the power of manhood, 80
 tutor'd by disciplin of natur, and ordering
 the accumulated scrutiny of physical flux

IV

in various sciences, so education of spirit,
in the dignity of its creativ enthusiasms
and honorable intelligence of Goddes gifts,
mapp'd out its own science of conduct, **aligning**
a pathway of happiness thru' the valley of death:
and thatt science, call'd Ethick, dealing with the skill
and manage of the charioteer in Plato's myth,
rangeth up here in place for the parley of this book. 90

Since all Ethick implyeth a sense of Duty in man,
'tis first to enquire whence that responsible **OUGHT** arose ;
a call so universal and plain-spoken that some
hav abstracted a special faculty, distinct
from animal bias and underivable,
whereby the creature kenneth the creator's Will,
that, in stillness of sound speaking to gentle souls,
dowereth all silence with the joy of his presence :
but to men savage or superstitious a voice
of horror, maleficent, inescapable, 100
hounding them with fearful conviction of sin, as when
Adam in Eden hid from the scour of God's eye.
Which old tale of displeasur is true to life: because
the imperativ obligation cannot be over-summ'd,

IV

being in itself the self-conscience of thatt Essence
which is no other indeed than the prime ordinance
that we call Law of Nature,—in its grade the same
with the determin'd habit of electrons, the same
with the determining instinct of unreasoning life,
NECESSITY become conscient in man—whereto 110
all insubordination is imperfection in kind.

Reality appeareth in forms to man's thought
as several links interdependent of a chain
that circling returneth upon itself, as doth
the coil'd snake that in art figureth eternity.

From Universal Mind the first-born atoms draw
their function, whose rich chemistry the plants transmute
to make organic life, whereon animals feed
to fashion sight and sense and give service to man,
who sprung from them is conscient in his last degree 120
of ministry unto God, the Universal Mind,
whither all effect returneth whence it first began.

The Ring in its repose is Unity and Being:
Causation and Existence are the motion thereof.
Thru'out all runneth Duty, and the conscience of it
is thatt creativ faculty of animal mind
that, wakening to self-conscience of all Essences,

IV

closeth the full circle, where the spirit of man
 escaping from the bondage of physical Law
 re-entereth eternity by the vision of God. 130

This absolution of Reason is not for all to see:
 But any man may picture how Duty was born,
 and trace thereafter its passage in the ethick of man.

Ther is a young black ouzel, now building her nest
 under the Rosemary on the wall, suspiciously
 shunning my observation as I sit in the porch,
 intentiv with my pencil as she with her beak:
 Coud we discourse together, and wer I to ask for-why
 she is making such pother with thatt rubbishy straw,
 her answer would be surely: 'I know not, but I MUST.' 140

Then coud she take persuasion of Reason to desist
 from a purposeless action, in but a few days hence
 when her eggs wer to hatch, she would look for her nest;
 and if another springtide found us here again,
 with memory of her fault, she would know a new word,
 having made conscient passage from the MUST to the OUGHT.

I halt not then nor stumble at how the duteous call
 was gotten in course of nature, rather it lieth to show
 how it was after-shapen in man from physical
 to moral ends, and came no longer only to affirm 150

IV

but sometimes even to oppose the bidding of instinct,
positing beside OUGHT the equivalent OUGHT NOTS,
the stern forbiddances of those tables of stone
that Moses fetch'd out of the thunder of Sinai.

And since we see how man's judgment of Right and Wrong
varieth with education—and thatt without effect
to strengthen or weaken Duty—, we conclude therefrom
that education shapeneth our moralities.

And when and whereas Conscience transfigureth the Instincts
—to affection, as aforesaid, from motherly selfhood, 160

and to spiritual love from lust of breed—, we find
Duty therewith extended in the moral field.

Thus 'tis (as missionaries tell) that head-hunters
who seek relish in refinement of cruelty,
wil yet to soft feelings respond at gentle appeal:
my dog would do as well, coud he understand my speech.

Yet tho' we see how birds in catering for their young
stint not their self-devotion, and punctiliously observe
distributiv justice; and that dutiful dogs

urged by conflicting calls wil stand awhile perplex'd 170

in dumb deliberation—ne'ertheless, because
the true spiritual combat is unknown to brutes,
moralists teaching virtue as an end-in-itself
repudiate any sanction from motifs engaged

IV

on animal welfare, and make utility
 a cant term of reproach ; tho' on their higher plane
 spiritual conduct also is utilitarian:
 For virtue subserveth the soul's comfort and joy,
 therewithal no less useful, nay more requisit
 than is material comfort to our full happiness 180
 in self-realization of perfected nature ;
 the which a sound doctrin of pleasure wil confirm.

Denial of Use hath done our virtue wrong, while some
 belittle also our Ethick, saying the subject is
 of matter unknowledgeable in scientific sense,
 taking contingency from the imperfection of man.
 Granted, wer all men perfect, none would seek virtue ;
 nor should I now debate of it ; but neither again
 wer all omniscient, would any seek knowledge :
 yet go we hunting after truth insatiably 190
 as the Saints after holiness, who, comforted
 by least attainment, persevere,—*Seeking the Lord*
whom they hav found: and if a check or fault show more
 in Ethick, 'tis that the hunter is on fuller cry
 after true happiness than after mental truth ;
 or he thinketh at least to hav well nosed his desire,
 and he nameth his quarry 'Satisfaction of soul.'
 Whereas of absolute Truth, whatever thatt may be,

IV

or is, he hath not an inkling, nay nor any cause,
 save in spiritual faith, ev'n to hope well of it. 200
 ('Tis for such lack of stand that deep thinkers, who plot
 intellectual approaches to the unknown, wil lean
 unconsciously upon ethick, or in the end incline
 graciously to'ards it.) Now any deficiency
 is more discernible in an object known than in
 a thing unknown to us, and in the discussion of it
 ther is better likelihood of agreement.

Altho' good disposition (as Aristotle hath it)
 may be by beauty educated, and aspire
 to theoretic wisdom (as Plato would teach) 210
 and Ethick therewithal claim honor of the same rank
 that ideal philosophy ascribeth to man, '
 yet, if for lack of faith he sink that claim, I see
 a thing of hap without place in Reality.

On no hand is't deny'd that terms of Right and Wrong
 are wholly pertinent to man's condition on earth;
 nor that, whatever his destiny may be, his origin
 was bestial and his first ethick a rudiment,
 that shifting ever and shaping in the story of man
 at every time is the index of his growth in grace; 220
 and, if the change of customs that the herd adopt

IV

for comfort and to insure what they most value in life,
hath moral tendency upward, then thatt tendency is
the animal sanction of virtue, and wil take honor as such.

But Duty instill'd with order is so almighty of kind
that 'twil make Law of Habit, whence all social codes
outlast their turn and time, and in arrear of life
hold the common folk backward from their nobler vaunt,
lagging and dragging, whether as a garment outgrown
tatter'd and foolish, or as strong fetters and chains 230
wherein *they lie fast-bound in misery and iron.*

Hence cometh all the need and fame of TEACHERS, men
of inborn nobility, call'd Prophets of God,
Saviours of society, Seers of the promised land,—
thatt white-filleted company that Aeneas found
circled around Musæus in the Elysian fields,
the loved and loveable whose names liv evermore,
the sainted pioneers of salvation, unto whom
all wisdom won and all man's future hope is due ;
and with inspiration of their ampler air we see 240
our Ethick split up shear and sharply atwain ; two kinds
diverse in kind ther be ; the one of social need,
lower, stil holding backward in the clutch of earth,
from old animal bondage unredeem'd ; the other
higher and spiritual, that by personal *affiance*

IV

with beauty hath made escape, soaring away to where
the Ring of Being closeth in the Vision of God.

Sticklers for equality wil hear nought of this,
arguing that social is but a past-personal,
personal a future-social, tenses of one verb, 250
the *amatum* and *amabo* on the stem of 'love,'
virtue's pure nativ stock which hath no need of graft;
—a doctrin kindly at heart, that cajoleth alike
diffidence of the ruler and conceit of the crowd,
who in collusion float its credit; and awhile
their ship of state runneth like the yacht in the race
that with full bellying sail, for lack of seamanship,
seemeth to forge ahead while it loseth leeway.

No Politick admitteth nor did ever admit
the teacher into confidence: nay ev'n the Church, 260
with hierarchy in conclave compassing to install
Saint Peter in Cæsar's chair, and thereby win for man
the promises for which they had loved and worship'd Christ,
relax'd his heav'nly code to stretch her temporal rule.
For social Ethick with its legalized virtue
is but in true semblance, alike for praise or blame,
a friendly domestication of man's old wolf-foe,
the adaptable subservient gentlemanly dog,
beneath groom'd coat and collar in his passion unchanged.

Thus 'tis that levelers, deeming all ethick one, 270
 and for being Socialists thinking themselves Teachers,
 can preach class-hatred as the enlighten'd gospel of love;
 but should they look to find firm scientific ground,
 whereon to found their creed in the true history
 of social virtue and of its progress hitherto,
 'twil be with them in their research, as 'twas with him
 who yesteryear sat down in Mesopotamy
 to dig out Abram's birthplace in the lorn grave-yard
 of Asian monarchies;—and low hummocks of dust
 betray where legendary cities lie entomb'd, 280
 Chaldæan KISH and UR; while for all life today
 poor nomads, with their sparse flotilla of swarthy tents
 and slow sand-faring camels, cruise listlessly o'erhead,
 warreners of the waste: Now this man duly unearth'd
 the walls whence Terah flitted, but beneath those walls
 more walls, and the elder buildings of a dynasty
 of wider rule than Abram knew, a nation extinct
 ere he was born: where-thru' sinking deeper their shafts
 the diggers came yet never on virgin soil, but stil
 wondering on earlier walls, arches and masonry, 290
 a city and folk undremt of in archæology,
 trodden-under ere any story of man began; and there,
 happening on the king's tomb, they shovel'd from the dust

IV

the relics of that old monarch's magnificence—
 Drinking vessels of beaten silver or of clean gold,
 vases of alabaster, obsidian chalices,
 cylinder seals of empire and delicate gems
 of personal adornment, ear rings and finger rings,
 craftsmen's tools copper and golden, and for music a harp,
 withal in silver miniature his six oar'd skiff, 300
 a model in build and trim of such as ply today
 Euphrates' flowery marshes all his earthly toys
 gather'd to him in his grave, that he might nothing lack
 in the unknown life beyond, but find ready to hand
 his jewel'd dice and gaming board and chamber lamp,
 his toilet box of paints and unguents—Therefore 'twas
 the chariot of his pride whereon he still would ride
 was buried with him, there lay yet the enamel'd film
 of the inlaid perish'd wood, and all the metal gauds
 that had emboss'd the rail animal masks in gold, 310
 wild bulls and lions, and twin-figured on the prow
 great panther heads to glare in silver o'er the course,
 impatient of their spring and one rare master-work
 whose grace the old warrior wist not should outlive the name
 and fame of all his mighty doings, when he set it up
 that little native donkey, his mascot on the pole.

"Twas he who dug told me of these things and how,

finding himself a housebreaker in the home of men
 who sixty hundred year, afore, when they left life,
 had seal'd their tombs from sacrilege and there had lain, 320
 til from the secrecy of their everlasting sleep
 he had torn the coverlet—his spirit, dazed awhile
 in wonder, suddenly was strick'n with great horror,
 for either side the pole, where lay the harness'd bones
 of the yoke mated oxen, there beside their bones
 lay the bones of the grooms, and slaughter'd at their post
 all the king's body guard, each hegeman spear in hand,
 in sepulchred attention, and whereby lay the harp
 the arm bones of the player, as there she had pluck'd her dirge,
 lay mingled with its fragments, and nearby disposed, 330
 two rows of skeletons, her sisterly audience
 whose lavish ear pendants and gold filleted hair,
 the uniform decoration of their young service,
 mark'd them for women of the harem, sacrificed
 to accompany their lord, the day when he set forth
 to enter into the presence of the scepter'd shades
 congregated with splendour in the mansions of death

Leave Tigris now and Ur Seek out our Aryan race
 by Gunga and Hydaspes in the teeming realm
 where Sakya Muni preach'd of gentleness and love, 340
 and took divinity before Christ came: *see how*

IV

at every Rajah's pyre, in Punjab or Kashmire,
 in Vijayanóggar, Kalikata and Udaipur,
 for liv-long centuries the mild Hindus hav burnt
 their multitudinous girl-concubines alive,
 and still beneath our lax imperial rule wil deem
 any honest outlawry of their ritual Suttee
 a tyrannous impiety of our western manners ;
 which none the less withheld not of our island kings
 the last Henry, styled first Defendër of the Faith, 350
 from slaying his wives at will ; nor was he for such crime
 less esteem'd of the folk ; altho' judged as a man
 by pagan ethick or christian or by the insight
 of poet or historian, more despicable
 than we need to suppose thatt old monarch of Ur.

See how cross-eyed the pride of our world-wide crusade
 against Nigerian slavery, while the London poor
 in their Victorian slums lodged closer and filthier
 than the outraged alien ; and under liberty's name
 our Industry is worse fed and shut out from the sun.— 360
 In every age and nation a like confusion is found.

IF DUTY held us long, now as in the old adage

IV

PLEASURE may follow after, taking like second rank
 in Plato's myth, as I twist it: wherein we traced
 Duty from the selfhood of individual life
 growing to reach communion with life eternal;
 while in the younger horse was pleasur intensified
 by love, untill it issueth in the love of God.
 And yet hath pleasure truly its main stronghold in Self,
 because the greatest pleasure that man knoweth, is aye 370
 the pleasur of life, even as his chief displeasur is death.

This Life-joy, like the breath-kiss of the all-ambient air
 unnoticed til the lack of it bring pain and death,
 is coefficient with the untrammel'd energy
of nativ faculty, and the autometric scale
 of all functions and motions, which in the animal
 struggle for Self persistently against all hindrance:
 it is the lordly heraldry of the banner'd flower,
 in brutes the vaunt of vigour and the pose of pride,
 their wild impersonation of majesty; and in man 380
 the grace and ease of health alike in body and mind,
 thatt right congruity of his parts, for lack whereof
 his sanity is disabled maim'd and compromised.
 From personal pleasure then, seeing how good it is,
 and how a good man's pleasures all are good, it came
 an easy thought for men in quest of happiness

IV

to take it for their aim in all conduct, the account
and logic of Ethick. So, flaunting their motto
"Pleasure for pleasure's sake," these doughty Hedonists,
having got rid of whatsoever oldfashion'd king 390
had ruled by right divine, chose out for his good looks
and crown'd this gay pretender, against whose privilege
men in the street and schoolmen are for once agreed ;
because none wil deny that some pleasures are bad,
while all men honour them who for their honour's sake
wil suffer pain, and risk the great displeasur of death.

Pure Hedonism therefore is confuted off-hand ;
and its social pretension is but a will-o-the-wisp ;
as if the honest pleasur of a wise man could lie
in furthering or conniving-at the pleasur of them 400
who know not ev'n their own unhappiness, nor how
ere they can win happiness they must learn wisdom
by paths difficult and to them unpleasurable.
Nor is spiritual Hedonism in better plight,
for some are found to take spiritual pleasur in crime.

'Twould seem then the prime task of Ethick to discern
'twixt pleasures good and bad: but first 'twere well to show
how ever it came that Pleasure, being the champion
of our integrity, should in the event appear
virtue's insidious foe ; for-sure ther is no knowledge 410

IV

in the wisdom of conduct cardinal as is this.

Now in my thought the manner of it was on this wise—
 As Pleasure came in man to the conscience of self,
 his Reason abstracted it as an idea, and when
 he found the pleasur increasing with the conscience of it,
 he dwelt thereon, and seeking more and more to enrich
 his conscious pleasur, and bloating it with luxury,
 invented and indulged vices unknown to brutes.
 Thus was nature's intention thwarted: whereupon
 (seeing also how brooding upon sensual delight 420
 provoketh the desire, which, so long as the mind
 be but engaged healthily or distracted apart,
 would never rise to emotion) Moralists took fright,
 and Teachers banishing pleasure from Ethick, where
 they should hav been content with a danger-signal,
 posted a prohibition, and not only forbade
 pleasur as a motiv for any conduct, but ruled
 that any admixtur of intention or its chance presence
 deprived conduct of merit: whence pleasure with them,
 instead of being an in-itself absolute good 430
 as nature would have had it, and which man would wish
 to be always present and with his perfection increase,
 came to be bann'd as the pollution of virtue;—And so,
 when the young poet my companion in study

IV

and friend of my heart refused a peach at my hands,
 he being then a housecarl in Loyola's menie,
 'twas that he fear'd the savor of it, and when he waived
 his scruple to my banter, 'twas to avoid offence.
 But I, upon thatt day which after fifty years
 is near as yesterday, was no stranger to fear 440
 of pleasure, but had grown fearful of thatt fear; yet since
 the sublimation of life whereto the Saints aspire
 is a *self-holocaust, their sheer asceticism*
 is justified in them; the more because the bent
 and nativ color of mind that leadeth them aloof,
 or driveth, is thatt very delicacy of sense,
 whereby a pinprick or a momentary whiff
 or hairbreadth motion freeth the detent of force
 that can distract them wholly from their high pursuit:
 wherefor they fly God's garden, whose forbidden fruit 450
 (seemeth to them) was sweeten'd by a fiend's desire
 to make them fond and foolish. Nature ne'ertheless
 singeth loud in her prison, and for all ecstasy
 these mystics find no language but to echo again
 the psalm of her captivity; nay, furthermore,
 the doctrin esoteric in their rapt divines
 and their diviner poets—this the novice knew—
 is the reïncarnation of their renounced desire. •

IV

Repudiation of pleasur is a reason'd folly
 of imperfection. Ther is no motiv can rebate 460
 or decompose the intrinsic joy of activ life,
 whereon all function whatsoever in man is based.
 Consider how this mortal sensibility
 hath a wide jurisdiction of range in all degrees,
 from mountainous gravity to imperceptible
 faintest tenuities:—The imponderable fragrance
 of my window-jasmin, that from her starry cup
 of red-stemm'd ivory invadeth my being,
 as she floateth it forth, and wantoning unabash'd
 asserteth her idea in the omnipotent blaze 470
 of the tormented sun-ball, checquering the grey wall
 with shadow-tracery of her shapely fronds; this frail
 unique spice of perfumery, in which she holdeth
 monopoly by royal licence of Nature,
 is but one of a thousand angelic species,
 original beauties that win conscience in man:
 a like marvel hangeth o'er the rosebed, and where
 the honeysuckle escapeth in serpentine sprays
 from its dark-cloister'd clamber thru' the old holly-bush,
 spreading its joybunches to finger at the sky 480
 in revel above rivalry. Legion is their name;
 Lily-of-the-vale, Violet, Verbena, Mignonette,

IV

Hyacinth, Heliotrope, Sweet-briar, Pinks and Peas,
 Lilac and Wallflower, or such white and purple blooms
 that sleep i' the sun, and their heavy perfumes withhold
 to mingle their heart's incense with the wonder-dreams,
 love-laden prayers and reveries that steal forth from earth,
 under the dome of night: and tho' these blossomy breaths,
 that hav presumed the title of their gay genitors,
 enter but singly into our neighboring sense, that hath 490
 no panorama, yet the mind's eye is not blind
 unto their multitudinous presences:—I know
 that if odour wer visible as color is, I'd see
 the summer garden aureoled in rainbow clouds,
 with such warfare of hues as a painter might choose
 to show his sunset sky or a forest aflame;
 while o'er the country-side the wide clover-pastures
 and the beanfields of June would wear a mantle, thick
 as when in late October, at the drooping of day
 the dark grey mist arising blotteth out the land 500
 with ghostly shroud. Now these and such-like influences
 of tender specialty must not—so fine they be—
 fall in neglect and all their loveliness be lost,
 being to the soul deep springs of happiness, and full
 of lovingkindness to the natural man, who is apt
 kindly to judge of good by comfortable effect.

IV

Thus all men ever hav judged the wholesomness of food
 from the comfort of body ensuing thereupon,
 whereby all animals retrieve their proper diet;
 but if when in discomfort 'tis for pleasant hope 510
 of health restored we swallow nauseous medicines,
 so mystics use asceticism, yea, and no man
 readier than they to assert eventual happiness
 to justify their conduct. Whence it is not strange
 (for so scientific minds in search of truth digest
 assimilable hypotheses) they should extend
 their pragmatism, and from their happiness deduce
 the very existence and the natur of God, and take
 religious consolation for the ground of faith:
 as if the pleasur of life wer the sign-manual 520
 of Nature when she set her hand to her covenant.

But man, vain of his Reason and thinking more to assure
 its independence, wil disclaim complicity
 with human emotion; and regarding his Mother
 deemeth it dutiful and nobler in honesty
 coldly to criticize than purblindly to love;
 and in pride of this quarrel he hath been led in the end
 to make distinction of kind 'twixt Pleasur and Happiness;
 observing truly enough how one may hav pleasure
 and yet miss happiness; but this warpeth the sense 530

IV

and common use of speech, since all tongues in the world
call children and silly folk happy and sometimes ev'n brutes.

The name of happiness is but a wider term
for the unalloy'd conditions of the Pleasur of Life,
attendant on all function, and not to be deny'd
to th' soul, unless forsooth in our thought of nature
spiritual is by definition unnatural.

But I would not thus wrong nature; rather say I
that as man realizeth his higher energies,
the quality and value of his pleasures wil so change, 540
that tho' the animal life-joy persist thru'out,
yet his transported joy developing thereon
cometh by excellence to need a special term.

And Aristotle in his tenth book thus summeth it—

“Whatso thatt faculty may be which hath in man

“natural governance and apprehendeth things

“noble and divine,—it is the energy (so saith he)

“of thatt faculty in its proper excellence, which is

“the Perfect Happiness;” and with his predicate

he assumeth the less perfect also, and lower states. 550

But these philosophers—their Ethick being concern'd
with man's perfection—used the abstracted terms whereby
they had pre-defined distinctions, which as they diverged
in separat culmination obscured identity.

IV

'Twas for that reason, I guess, that Aristotle himself
 so harpeth on his doctrin, as if he was aware
 that his conclusion had somehow miss'd its full premiss:
 But if we see Spiritual, Mental and Animal
 to be gradations merged together in growth and mix'd
 in their gradations, and that the animal pleasure 560
runneth thru'out all grades heartening all energies,
 then Aristotle's wisdom goeth without saying;
 and the actual complexity of human conduct
 wil appear nature's order in the condition of growth;
 and so the trouble and wonderment of baulk'd insight
 may all be presently sponged from the treatises.

Altho' in the distinction of pleasures good and bad
 the unparagon'd nobility of the great virtues
 standeth without controversy among them that know
 —who instill them as duties—, yet they hav writ no rule 570
 nor rubric whereby conduct can in lesser affairs
 accommodate these principles, when they conflict
 in upright personalities, nor square their use
 with the intricat contingencies that knit our lives,
 and the interaction of unrelated sequences.
 In thatt uncharted jungle a good man wil go right,
 while an ill disposition wil miss and go wrong:
 yet in the worst we stil may find something to praise,

IV

in the lame child that stumbleth, or the canker'd bud ;
 ev'n the poor blasted promise of desiderat fruit 580
 hath true relation to the absent beauty thereof.

Forever on the asses bridge and in the ship of fools
 life is agog ; and there the Muse hath set her stage,
 and in humorous compact with philosophy
 hideth her godlike face beneath a grinning mask,
 and donning the gay motley of idiotic man
 empersonateth him in his chance dilemmas ;
 by the eternal comedy of the unfitness of things
 beguiling the disconsolat with sympathy
 and cheering contemplation with æsthetic mirth. 590
 Full many hav found happiness toiling all their time
 thus disporting with truth ; and at carving such toys
 hav thru' love of children become Teachers of men :
 But here *I wol nat han to do of swich matere.*

Since then all promise of spiritual advancement
 lieth in two things, good disposition and (as 'twas said)
 right education, it followeth here to speak of these.

First then of Disposition.—Unless ther truly be
 more good than bad absolutely in the make of man,
 ther is no security for him and little hope, 600
 except the inherent harmony and unity of good

IV

be such as must in the end outweigh the surplusage
of all discordant enmity; and this well may be:
but should we inquire if Nature hath by any means
inclined man's disposition to the virtuous choice,
we may find how she hath done this, and by the energy
of the imitativ faculty hath assured her end.

"For Mimicry is inborn in man from childhood up:

"and in this differeth he from other animals,

"being the most imitativ: and his first approach 610

"to learning maketh he in mimicry, and hath delight

"in imitations of all kinds." I would indeed

that Aristotle had set this pregnant verity

in forefront of his Ethick also, as now 'tis found

to stablish his Poetick; for the assumption of it

here and there in the Morals escapeth notice

and all the consequences thereof are unseen.

But if the cradled child imitateth the shows

that happen around him, he for-sure wil most attend

to those that most attract, and must therefore be drawn 620

and held by the inborn love of Beauty incontinently

of preference to imitate the more beautiful things.

And because Virtue is an activity, and lieth not

in doctrin and theory but in practice and conduct,

co-ordinating potencies into energy,

IV

(and here 'tis Aristotle again speaketh, not I)
 the preferential imitation of right action
 is **THE HABIT OF VIRTUE**: and thus a child well-bred
 in good environment, so soon as he is aware
 of personality, will know and think himself 630
 a virtuous being and instinctively, in the proud
 realization of Self common to all animals,
 becometh to be his own ideal, a such-a-one
 as would **WILL** and **DO** this (saith he) and never do thatt,
 refraining there from shame, consenting here for love,
 winning new beauty of soul from the embrace of beauty,
 and strength by practised combat against folly and wrong,
 to perfect as he may his idea of himself.

Spiritual life being thus imagin'd in the child
 thru' conscient personality and love of beauty, 640
 —which on so tender a plant budding hath power to bear
 the richest fruit of all creation, incomparable—
 ther is nought in all his nurtur of more intrinsic need
 than is the food of Beauty: as mammal's milk to his flesh,
 which admitteth no proxy, so Beauty is to his soul,
 that calleth for this comforting of nature's breast,
 tho' its outcries be unheard when it pineth in pain:
 and since the hunger of mimicry is so strong in him,
 that in the lack of milk 'twil ravin gall, and draw

IV

infection and death from evil as quickly as life from good,
the first intrinsic need in education is found. 651

Thus Christ, who knew what was in man and taught
man's perfect happiness to be the wonted realm
of heav'n within his heart, spake thus *Takc hēðe* (he said)
Sē that ge offendē not wōn of fīrste lītell wōns;
and once again on this wise, "If ther be any sin
"unpardonable even in the wide compassion of God,
"'tis the denial and blasphemy of his Holy Spirit,
"and the quenching in others of its nascent flame."

Delicat and subtle are the dealings of nature, 660
whereby the emotionable sense secretly is touch'd
to awareness and by glimpse of heav'nly vision drawn
within the attraction of the creativ energy
that is the ultimat life of all being soe'er:
While Science sitteth apart in her exile, attent
on her other own invisibles; and working back
to the atoms, she handleth their action to harness
the gigantic forces of eternal motion,
in serviceable obedience to man's mortal needs;
and not to be interrupted nor call'd off her task, 670
dreaming, amid the wonders of her sightly works,
thru' her infinitesimals to arrive at last
at the unsearchable immensities of Goddes realm.

IV

But while the intellectual faculty is yet unborn,
spiritual things to children are even as Music is,
thatt firstborn pleasur of animal conscience that now
hath for its human honour its origin forgot ;
the which a child absorbeth readily and without thought,
tho' in after years, if thatt initiation hav lack'd,
scarce can a man by grammar come at the elements. 680
Their twain affinity may be seen also in this,
that both are companied by the same full delight
of progress in performance, while the same method
serveth for both ; if but the teacher be himself
virtuous or musical—an exemplar as such,
he wil be keenly follow'd, and often in his love
that his pupil surpass him is his best reward.

Of intellectual training 'tis not here to tell ;
thatt cometh later, and then the trouble is evermore
the lack of teachers ; yet wer teachers plentiful, 690
and gentle environment as common as bramble-scrub,
never coud human wit discern to accommodate
the countless idiosyncracies of mind withal ;
indeterminable are they and never can be told.
But 'twere well to consider in what a fusty crypt
the awakening mind is caged when—like a butterfly

IV

that newly hath slipp'd its crysalis to sport i' the sun—
 it thrusteth out its finely adapted tentacles
 in their first palping movements to the encounter of life,
 with confidence exploring its nativ yearnings. 700
 How, when this apprehensiv expectancy is met
 by fenced obstruction! How, when ev'n the syllables
 which with such duteous pains the child had learn'd to tongue,
 the secret spell whereat the fabled treasure-house
 should open its doors—how, when thatt magic Sesame
 hath proved a foreign jargon and, like a rusty key,
 by long mishandling already hath hamper'd the lock!
 How should not childish effort, thus thwarted and teased,
 recoil dishearten'd bruized and stupefy'd beneath
 the rough-shod inculcation of inculcated minds, 710
 case-harden'd by their own thoughtless reiterations?

The mud-fish may be happy and at home in the pond,
 but live *Imagination*, conscient of its joy,
 ranketh oft with the dunces in such scholarship,
 finding its happiness in freedom to mature
 the personality of its nativ potency.
 Others in after-growth at heavy cost repair
 their early damage, since in intellectual things
 all errors are remediable; but 'tis not so
 in the spiritual life, nay ev'n the soul wash'd pure 720

IV

of absorb'd taint may take a strange gloss of the lye.

Of two young thoro'breds galoping neck to neck
 I'd choose the colt that with least effort held his course.
 Of two runners abreast my liking would crown him
 who had greater grace of limb and show'd no trouble of face,
 tho' he by such complacency might miss the prize:
 But virtue in the soldier is the martyr's heart
 that, battling for supremacy, out-stayeth defeat,
 firing the citadel ere he yield it to the foe:
 and 'tis nobility that pulleth our favour 730
 upon the weaker side in any unequal match.

Now in spiritual combat, altho' I must deem
 them the most virtuous who with least effort excell,
 yet, virtue being a conflict, moralisers hold
 that where conflict is hardest virtue must be at best;
 and in the rub of life and physical hindrance
 a man who has striven heroically and done great deeds,
 in spite of frailty or bodily disease or pain,
 may win more admiration and praise in the end than he
 who with comfort to himself, indolently as it wer, 740
 hath done as well; nay, for the very impediments
 may ev'n be envied, as old navigators wer
 in the glory they had got to hav outridden their storms.

IV

And yet from Zion's hill-top to the Dead-Sea shore,
 between the Teacher sitting on the Mount and them,
 the nethermost unfortunats, that cannot learn,—
 in all the mid-mass crowding on the flowery slopes,
 hearers o' the Word, ther is little difference to be told:
 The same incarnat traitor routeth in all hearts;
 nay, since 'tis an æsthetic delicacy of mind 750
 that, refining the enticement of carnal pleasure,
 voideth the shame, the elect are oft in straits extreme:
 the mastery of warriorship, their apparent grace,
 was won by disciplin of deadly strife: in them
 ease is no indolence: indolence rather is theirs
 who, ill-disposed to training, are unexercised
 in good habit of war; and 'tis the lack thereof
 maketh the soldier unready and the conflict so hard,
 rather than any unwonted virulence or rage
 of the onslaught; for thatt same happeneth anon to all. 760

AND here my thought plungeth into the darksome grove
 and secret penetralia of ethic lore, wherein
 I hav wander'd often and long and thought to know my way,
 and now shall go retracing my remember'd paths,
 tho' no lute ever sounded there nor Muse hath sung,

IV

deviously in the obscure shadows, and none follow me
 entering where erst I enter'd, and all enter free,
 at the great clearing made by Socrates of yore,
 when he said KNOW THYSELF, for true to his chief premiss
 that ignorance is the root of all men's folly, he taught 770
 to turn the lamp of Reason inwardly upon the mind
 And truly with that keen *Γνώθι σεαυτόν* of his
 was great felling of trees for not Socrates knew
 nor any hath ever kenn'd how man thinketh, and less
 how thought thinketh itself, nor how in that province
 Reason hath right to rule, nor of what stuff the rems
 can be, *wherewith the Charioteer bridled the steeds*
 in that same vision of his which Plato saith he told
 to Phædrus, as they sat together on the banks
 of the Ilissus talking of the passions of men 780

All terrestrial Life, in all functions and motions,
 operateth thru' alliance of living entities
 disparat in their structure but logically
 correlated in action under some final cause
 Suchlike co ordinations may be acquired in man
 with reason'd purpose consciently, as when a learner
 on viol or flute diligently traineth his hand
 to the intricat fingering of the stops and strings,

IV

or may be innate, as the spontaneous flight of birds;
 or antenatal and altogether inconstant, 790
 as the food-organs, call'd vegetative because
 such cellular connivance is the life of plants.

The main co-ordinations whereon life hangeth
 were ever automata, and such states when acquired
 tend to become self-working as they are perfected,
 dropping out of our ken: the proverb truly spake
Habit is second nature, and 'twill function best
 without superintendence, for the least brain-wave
 or timid rippling of self-consciousness can rob
 the bodily movements of their native grace. 800

Now these perfected unify'd organities,
 whether of inconstant birth or such as when acquired
 proudly stand off from conscience, all act in response
 to external stimulants that vary in kind, and range
 from mere material contact to untraceable thought.

Thus the digestive kind is stirred by touch of food
 within the body, or by the sight or sound or smell
 of the object, or even by the unconscious thought thereof;
 and thence through appetite by mere thought of the sense;
 and can decipher a message in the secret code 810
 of language, and prick up at sound of the symbol:
For never can those privy-councillors in the brain

IV

withhold official knowledge from the corporat mind ;
ther is no deliberation or whisper'd thought, not ev'n
unspoken intention among them, but it wil leak out
to thatt swarming intelligence where life began,
and where ideas wander at liberty to find
their procreativ fellowship ; thatt fluid sea
in which all problems, spiritual or logical
æsthetic mathematic or practic, resolve 820
melting as icebergs launch'd on the warm ocean-stream:
and wheresoe'er this corporat alchemy is at best,
'tis call'd by all men GENIUS, and its aptitudes
like virtuous disposition may be inherited.

Thus must all kind of stimulus hav come some way
across the misty march-land, whereon men would fix
their disputable boundary between Matter and Mind,
—as every sensation must suffer translation
ere it can mediate in the live machinery
of any final cause or purpose: whence 'twould seem 830
that science went astray thinking to appropriate
some nervous reactions wholly to her material sphere.
and rather should hav thought to extend the mental field.

Now this spontaneous life oweth nought to Reason
(the conscient faculty which Socrates invoked);
and so her claim to be the "very consciousness

IV

of things judging themselves" is "vain above measure":
 for every Essence hath its own Idea, and so
 cometh thereby to its own full conscient life in man:
 for-sure the idea of Beauty is not Reason's idea, 840
 nor hath Reason the idea of Courage or of Mirth,
 of Faith or Love or Poetry or of Music's delight;
 if Reason as an essence owneth to any idea,
 let her make good her claim and therewith be content:
 so be it; and surely Reason's property wil be
 the idea of Order;—and if so, I think to find
 how by the very natur of her own faculty
 she was deceived to imagin its universal scope;
 for since all natur is order'd (nor none wil deny
 that 'tis by Reason alone we are of such order aware), 850
 all things must of their ordinance come in her court
 for judgment; and 'twas thus Pythagoras could hold
 NUMBER to be the universal essence of things:
 nay, see the starry atoms in the seed-plot of heav'n
 stripp'd to their nakedness are nothing but Number;
 and see how Mathematick rideth as a queen
 cheer'd on her royal progress thru'out nature's realm;
 see how physical Science, which is Reason's trade
 and high profession, booketh ever and docketeth
 all things in order and pattern; how Philosophy, 860

IV

shuttling out in the unknown like a hungry spider,
 blindly spinneth her geometric webs, testing
 and systematizing even her own disorders.
 her solipsism and her gossamer ontologies
 gnostic or cabbalist: and 'twas thus Socrates
 coud evoke Reason to order and disciplin the mind—
 the divine Logos that should shine in the darkness,—
 a good physician who must heal himself withal.
 [The assumed docility is by English moralists
 term'd the 'Good Will' and fetch'd in as 'twere from without;
 yet 'tis but the old animal instinct of selfhood 871
 to'ard realization, which continueth on
 with the animal promoted to spiritual life;
 wherein desire for betterment is the promise
 and premiss of all virtue; or if the willingness
 be but desire of knowledge, thatt wil find the goal
 where Truth and Virtue and Beauty are all as one.]
 Now seeing the aim of Socrates we must inquire
 what the Mind's cöntents are; how disorder'd; and why
 ther should in the good mind be any disorder at all. 880

What the Mind is, this thing bidden to know itself?
 First I bethink me naturally of every man

IV

as a unique creature a personality
 in whom we lucidly distinguish body and mind,
 and talk readily of either tho' inseparable
 and mutually dependent, together or apart
 the created expression of Universal Mind.
 And of the body I think as the machinery
 of our terrestrial life evolving towards conscience
 in the Ring of Reality, and thence of the mind
 as that evolved conscience, the which in every-one
 is different, as the body differeth also in each

890

And human Intellect I see form'd and compact
 of the essential Ideas, wherewith soever each man
 hath come in contact personally, and in so far
 as he is kindly disposed to absorb their influences
 to build his personality, and since all ideas
 come to him thru' the senses, that old proviso
 nisi ipse intellectus is futile to me,
 for *intellectus* here seemeth to exclude itself,
 as being that all receptiv conscient energy
 which is the mind of man; that ultimat issue
 of the arch-creativ potency of Being, wherefrom
 the senses took existence. Thus I come to think
 that if the mind held all ideas in plenitude
 'twould be complete, at one with natur and harmonized

900

IV

with as good harmony as we may find in nature.

Now as our optic science teacheth pure white light
to be the consummation of all the color bands
into which by diffraction it can be separated, 910
whereof if any ray went missing the sunlight
wer impure and imperfect (or so we may think)
a suchlike imperfection must be in all men's minds,
because the complemental ideas parcel'd in each
are incomplete, being only such as thatt one man
may hav happ'd on, and those only in the measure whereby
he is tuned to take cognisance of them thus it is
all men differ each from each, since neither environment
nor disposition can ever in any two men
be the same or alike, and therefor (as was said) 920
true individuality within the species
would seem reach'd in mankind Again likewise 'tis seen
how national mentalities are mutually
incomprehensible and irreconcilable,
since each group as it rose was determin'd apart
by conditions of life which none other could share,
by climate, language, and historic tradition
estranging evermore, nor are such obstinat bonds
the weaker for any intrinsic absurdity
Nay, see the Armenian folk in their snow burrows, 930

IV

as if distrustful of their high mountainous plateau
between the seas, hav riveted their patriotism
by stubborn adherence to an ancient heresy,
a paradoxy anent the two natures of Christ,
which some theologic bishop, peering in the fog
of his own exhalations, thought pleasing to God,
altho' no creature might possibly understand it.

Again from this same cause it wil follow no less
that men commonly run so near to the average ;
for the animal ideas are common property 940
and, being the greatest common measure of all mankind,
wil stand-out as the mean statistical features.

Again we now may see—and 'tis pleasant to see—
how simple characters hav such extreme beauty,
for that the soul's nobility consisteth not
in riches of imagination or intellect
but in harmony of Essences, which hath full power
where a few fundamentals in purity attain
their self-coordination , as honest pots and pans
may for their unsophisticated beauty excell 950
a prize diploma-picture of our academy
like as in music, when true voices blend in song,
the perfect intonation of the major triad
is sweetest of all sounds , its inviting embrace

IV

resolveth all discords; and all the ambitious flights
of turbulent harmony come in the end to rest
with the fulfilment of its liquidating cloze.

Again we hence rebutt thatt old dilemma of Art,
which would set man in lordly enmity against nature
for that his pensiv play transcendeth her beauty; 960
—as when Sebastian preludeth, all her voices
that ever hav reach'd our ears are crest-fal'n and abash'd:
for tho' man cannot wield her infinit resource
of delicacy and strength, yet hath he in lieu thereof
a range triumphant, where his exorbitant thought
defying Space and Time hath power to blend all things
visible and invisible, and freely redispose
every essence that he knoweth, to parcel them at will—
or so he thinketh—, like an occult magician
whose summons all spirits must attend and obey, 970
from the heart-blaze of heaven to the unvisited deep;
tho' he hav no wizardry to exorcise them withal.
Now this dilemma (I say) is rebutted hereby,
because man's faculty of creation, rare in him
and not at his command, is but Nature herself,
who danceth in her garden at the blossoming-time
'mong the flowers of her setting; and tho' true it be
that Art needeth as full devotion and diligence

IV

in the performance as doth Virtue, yet i' the mind
of the artist Nature's method surely is on this wise,— 980
the Ideas which thru' the senses hav found harborage,
being come to mortal conscience work out of themselves
their right co ordinations and creatively
seeking expression, draw their natural imagery
from the same sensuous forms whereby they found entrance,
thus linking up with all the long tradition of Art

The manner of this magic is purest in musick,
but by the learner is seen more clearly in poetry,
wherein each verbal symbol exposeth its idea,
so that 'tis manifest by what promptings of thought 990
the imaginativ landscape is built and composed,
and how horizon'd And the secret of a poem
lieth in this intimat echo of the poet's life

Now in its selfcreativity the manner of Art
cannot be simulated, altho' Mimicry
is Beauty's cradle But, as in the Spirit of Man
all manner of grades are found, so wil it be in his Art,
with such disorder of thought as is not here to tell,
for every man, whom Beauty hath laid beneath her spell,
—tho' but by glimpse or dream, and him full ignorant 1000
of what idea hath moved him and ev'n by what means,—
wil feel about to express some mintage of himself,

IV

by imitation or birdlike hymeneal lilt,
 to fix his hold on joy, his COGITO ERGO SUM
 Thus may a jungle of words fasten his fath on God,
 as schoolboys memorize their lesson better in rhyme

Inasmuch then as the ideas in any one mind
 are a promiscuous company muster'd at random,
 ther wil be such disorder as Reason can perceive
 and may hav skill to amend, but tho' we grant her art 1010
 valid in principle and salutary in effect,
 the debit of failure is heavy in her accounts
 Yet we discredit not all Medicine because
 ther be incurable maladies that end in death,—
 nor yet because the leech, when he is call'd in to heal
 an indigestiv stomach, can hav no dealing
 directly with the embroil'd co ordinating cells,—
 and, for the lack of any intelligent knowledge
 of their intimat bickerings, wil hav recourse
 to palliatives and sentimental assurances 1020
 of favorable conditions, exercise and air,
 hoping thus to entice them to a better behaviour,—
 or observing some chemical excess in their chyme
 wil deftly neutralize it with a pinch of salt,
 so we shall also allow Reason her claim to rule:

and to judge by oneself, as each man must, I find
Reason wil diagnose the common ailment of Mind
a lack of harmony ; for with the Ideas at war
—now one Idea in mastery and now another,
acting at call o' the moment indiscriminately,— 1030
the man is foolish, unreasonable as we say,
inept, without set purpose, weak of will ; whereas
if all should work together in concert, he wil be
determin'd and consistent: And I see man's Will
is here no independent concentrated force,
like the steel spring box'd-up in a French clock and wound
for local distribution, but is rather itself
the concentrating of a predistributed
intrinsic power ;—the emotions, passions and desires,
concurrent with the Ideas, being surely of themselves 1040
wilful enough, and able among themselves at strife
to make a fool, and in co-ordination a sage.

WILL, then, in the good mind a sustain'd harmony,
is in the bad a dissonance, or it may be a strange
co-ordination, or the tyranny of one idea ;
from which our great civic convulsions mostly arise
and popular rebellions, when the Demagog
hath fulminated some mighty essential idea,
which entereth wildly into the loose minds of the herd

IV

and, finding there no governance, runneth not 1050
 and, drawing all wilful authority to itself,
 wil seem the only live thing, like a firebrand at night
 flaring afar, that i' the sunlight wer a troublous smoke
 and if such insurrection by contagion attain
 predominance uncontrollable, to the overthrow
 of any existing rule, then the Will of the folk
 is dubb'd by history's pen the WILL OF GOD
 But since this over mastering prevalent idea
 may be good in itself while it wreaketh but wrong
 and since I see that all human activities 1060
 may be order'd equally for ravage or defence
 Reason herself here questioneth me how I trust
 her mere ordering of life to make for happiness—
 whereto my answer is my good faith in what I hav writ
 How the mind of man from inconstant existence
 cometh thru' the animal by growth of reasoning
 to'ard spiritual conscience hath been duly told
 And Reason—being essentially (as in place 'twas found)
 the *idea of Order*, and thus itself the appurtenance
 of essences, with them passing from physical 1070
 unto spiritual order in a mind endued
 with conscience of the higher spiritual essences—
 Reason (say I) wil rise to awareness of its rank

IV

in the Ring of Existence, where man looketh up
to the first cause of all, and wil itself decree
and order discreetly the attitude of the soul
seeking self realization in the vision of God,
becoming at the last thatt urch conscience of all,
to which the Greek sage who possess'd it made appeal

The attraction of this motion is our conscience of it, 1080
our love of wisdom and of beauty, and the attitude
of those attracted wil be joyful obedience
with reverence to'ard the omniscient Creator
and First Cause, whose Being is thatt beauty and wisdom
which is to be apprehended only and only approach'd
by right understanding of his creation, and found
in thatt habit of faith which some thinkers hav styled
The Life of Reason, and this only true bond of love
and reasonable relation (if relation ther be)
'twixt creature and creator, man and nature's God, 1090
the which we call *Religion*,—is fundamental,
physically and metaphysically in fashion
or force undistinguishable from Duty itself
sprung from the same primal reality, it also
aborted in like dolorous superstition, when
the first born intimations of spiritual life
scared man's animal mind, that in childish terror

IV

seeking protection from the unseen, fenced his dark cave
 with codes of fearful fantasy and——flush'd by the stir
 of the irresistible impulse which drove him (yea, still 1100
 driveth) with fierce exultation (albeit we deplore
 that barbarous aberration),——with credulous magic
 cloggeth his airy spirit and discrediteth
 his Reason and Faith alike so old a trouble and great
 that the honest indictment of the Epicurean
 goeth unrefuted, and his famous verse TANTUM
 RFLIGIO POTUIT SUADERE MALORUM
 vet ringeth true as when he thought to benefit
 man ind, and from his woes rescue him for ever,
 drowning the thought of God from off the face of the earth 1110
 in his deluge of atoms, and made in the mind
 a second Void the which his sect should keep inane
 by the inventiv levity of their enlightenment,
 til, as with animals that hav fasted too long
 and aking within for their emptiness wil eat
 too greedily, we see in our fellows today
 fresh recrudescence of forgonn superstition,
 the while our generation, sicken'd by the grime
 of murky slums, slag heaps and sooty bushes,
 wil plan garden cities and for her soilure make 1120
 reddition to Nature, replanting the fair lands

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which our industrial grandsires disaforested.

This hankering after lost Beauty, in sickness of heart
 a disconsolat sentiment, is the remnant *grace*
 of nature's covenant, the starved germ *athirst for God*
ev'n for the living God, that singeth in the psalm
 QUEMADMODUM CERVUS, and now amidst the blank
 tyranny of ugliness maketh many a rebel
 pining for enlargement and plotting to recall
 thatt old arrant exile who, for all her mischief, 1130
 hid neath her cloak the master-key of happiness.

In truth "spiritual animal" wer a term for man
 nearer than "rational" to define his genus;
 Faith being the humanizer of his brutal passions,
 the clarifier of folly and medicine of care,
 the clue of reality, and the driving motiv
 of thatt self-knowledge which teacheth the ethick of life.

And yet hath PRAYER, the heav'n-breathing foliage of faith,
 found never a place in ethick: for Philosophy
 filtering out delusions from her theory of life, 1140
 in dread of superstition gave religion away
 to priests and monks, who rich in their monopoly
 furbish and trim the old idols, that they dare not break,
 for fear of the folk and need of good disciplin.

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But since all men alike, in any strain of heart
 or great emotion of soul, credulous or sceptic, fall
 instinctively to prayer for thatt solace and strength
 which they who use the habit may be seen to hav found—
 nay, had Prayer no effect other than reverence
 for the self-knowledge, which the Greek enjoin'd, whereby
 'tis sovrän to bind character, concentrate Will, 1151
 and purify intention—nay, ev'n so 'twould claim
 a place among the causes of determin'd flux.

Ah! tho' it may be a simple thing in reach of all,
 Best ever is rare, a toilsome guerdon; and prayer is like
 those bodily exercises that athletes wil use,
 which each must humbly learn, and ere he win to power
 so diligently practice, and in such strict course
 as wil encroach unkindly on the agreements of life:
 whence men slouch in the laxity that they call ease, 1160
 rather than rouse to acquiring thatt strength, without which
 the body cannot know the pleasur of its full ease,
 the leisur of strength in the hard labor of life.

Now every emotion hath the bodily expression
 beseeing each; and since the body cannot be
 without some attitude, so Prayer wil hav its own :
 and here just as in any athletic exercise

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ther be postures and motions foolish in themselves
 and often undignified, so too the postur of prayer
 may shame our pride of spirit, which would grudge the limbs
 warrant of entry upon her sacred solitudes ; 1171
 albeit the body come there in full abject guise
 to do submission and pay fealty to the soul:
 And since our speech, in its mere vocal cries and calls,
 hath less natural beauty and true significance
 than the bodily gestures which convey our desires,
 so ev'n the words of prayer wil lack in dignity
 and seem impertinent ; as full often they be,
 and ever had been, unless man's language had upgrown
 from makeshift unto mastery of his thought, and learn'd 1180
 by its fine musing art to redeem for his soul
 the beauty of holiness, marrying creatively
 his best earthly delight with his heav'nliest desire,
 when he calleth on God, *Send forth thy light and truth*
that they may lead me and bring me unto thy Holy Hill,
to thatt fair place which is the joy of the whole earth.

See! ther is never dignity in a concourse of men,
 save only as some spiritual gleam hearteneth the herd.
 Any idea whatsoe'er new-born to consciousness,
 if it infect the folk, taketh repetend life 1190
 and exuberant difformity of disorder'd growth

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from physical communion of emotion and thought;
and of its nascent appetency 'twil embrace
affinity in its host, to stagger and eliminate
all other ideas, thus impropportionably
surmounting its own province in Nature's order
so that unless itself it be a thing of Beauty,
insurmountable of kind, more beauteous in excess—
as when the glow reverberating in a golden cup
multiplyeth the splendour,—it cometh that the herd, 1200
being in its empassionment ever irrational,
wil even of harmless enthusiasm breed disgrace

Thus in our English sport, the spectacular games,
where tens of thousands flock throttling the entrance gates
like sheep to th' pen, wherein they sit huddled to watch
the fortune o' the football, ther is often here and there
mid the seething glomeration of thatt ugly embankment
of gazing faces, one that came to enjoy the sight
knowingly, and yet looketh little on the contest to him
the crowd is the spectacle, its wrestle and agony 1210
is more than the actors, and its contagion so thick
and irresistible, that ere he feel surprise
he too may find himself, yea philosophy and all,
carried away—as when a strong swimmer in the sea
who would regain the shore, is by the headlong surf

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toss'd out of action, and like a drifted log roll'd up
breathless and unresisting on the roaring beach.

But if he join the folk, when at the cloze of Lent
they kneel in the vast dimness of a city church,
while on the dense silence the lector's chant treadeth 1220
from cadence to cadence the long dolorous way
of the great passion of Christ,—or anon when they rise
to free their mortal craving in the exultant hymn
that ringeth with far promise of eternal peace . . .
or should it happen to him, in strange lands far from home,
to watch the Moslem host, when at their hour of prayer
they troop in wild accoutrement their long-drill'd line
motionless neath the sun upon the Arabian sands,
hush'd to th' Imam's solemn invocation of God,
as their proud tribal faith savagely draweth strength 1230
from the well-spring of life,—then at the full Amen
of their deep-throated respond he wil feel his spirit
drawn into kinship and their exaltation his own ;
the more that he himself can be no part thereof,
incomprehensible because comprehending:
—and they be muddied pools whereat the herd water.

Such is the dignity of prayer in the common folk ;
and its humility is the robe of intellect.
So whenever it hath been by some mystics renounced

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in sanctuary of their sublime abstraction—as if 1240
 utter abnegation had left no manners else to abjure,—
 they appear to lack in use and duty of fellowship.
 Yet in such solitaires, pallid clerks of heaven,
 souls blanch'd for lack of sunjoys (as 'twould seem to hav been),
 their contemplation (it may be) of very intensity
 generateth ideas of higher irradiance,
 for ideas born to human personality,
 having their proper attractions like as atom or cell,
 from soul to soul pass freely, and 'twas this mystery,
 whereof they kenn'd the need who set that clause i' the creed,
 which, compelling belief in the COMMUNION OF SAINTS, 1251
 foldeth the sheep in pastures of eternal life

Nor doubt I that as this thinking machinery
 perisheth with the body, so animal thought
 with all its whumper and giggle must perish therewith,
 with all shames, all vain ostentation and ugliness,
 and all personality of all other ideas,
 except it be that, like as in unconscient things
 whence conscience came, ther is also thru'out conscient life
 the same emergent evolution, persisting 1260
 in our spiritual life to the goal of conscience
 This mind perisheth with this body, unless

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the personal co-ordination of its ideas
hav won to Being higher than animal life,
at thatt point where the Ring cometh upward to reach
the original creativ Energy which is God,
with conscience entering into life everlasting.

'Twas at thatt hour of beauty when the setting sun
squandereth his cloudy bed with rosy hues, to flood
his lov'd works as in turn he biddeth them Good-night; 127c
and all the towers and temples and mansions of men
face him in bright farewell, ere they creep from their pomp
naked beneath the darkness;—while to mortal eyes
'tis given, ifso they close not of fatigue, nor strain
at lamplit tasks—'tis given, as for a royal boon
to beggarly outcasts in homeless vigil, to watch
where uncurtain'd behind the great windows of space
Heav'n's jewel'd company circleth unapproachably—

'Twas at sunset that I, fleeing to hide my soul
in refuge of beauty from a mortal distress, 128c
walk'd alone with the Muse in her garden of thought,
discoursing at liberty with the mazy dreams
that came wavering pertinaciously about me; as when
the small bats, issued from their hangings, flutter o'erhead

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thru' the summer twilight, with thin cries to and fro
 hunting in muffled flight atween the stars and flowers.

Then fell I in strange delusion, illusion strange to tell;
 for as a man who lyeth fast asleep in his bed
 may dream he waketh, and that he walketh upright
 pursuing some endeavour in full conscience—so 'twas 1290
 with me; but contrawise; for being in truth awake
 methought I slept and dreamt; and in thatt dream methought
 I was telling a dream; nor telling was I as one
 who, truly awaked from a true sleep, thinketh to tell
 his dream to a friend, but for his scant remembrances
 findeth no token of speech—it was not so with me;
 for my tale was my dream and my dream the telling,
 and I remember wondring the while I told it
 how I told it so tellingly. And yet now 'twould seem
 that Reason inveigled me with her old orderings; 1300
 as once when she took thought to adjust theology,
 peopling the inane that vex'd her between God and man
 with a hierarchy of angels; like those asteroids
 wherewith she later fill'd the gap 'twixt Jove and Mars.

Verily by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM,
 yet not by Reason at Beauty: and now with many words
 pleasing myself betimes I am fearing lest in the end
 I play the tedious orator who maundereth on

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for lack of heart to make an end of his nothings.
 Wherefor as when a runner who hath run his round 1310
 handeth his staff away, and is glad of his rest,
 here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me
 the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told

For not the Muse herself can tell of Goddess love ;
 which cometh to the child from the Mother's embrace,
 an Idea spacious as the starry firmament's
 inescapable infinity of radiant gaze,
 that fadeth only as it outpaseth mortal sight.
 and this direct contact is 't with eternities,
 this springtide miracle of the soul's nativity 1320
 that oft hath set philosophers adrift in dream ;
 which thing Christ taught, when he set up a little child
 to teach his first Apostles and to accuse their pride,
 saying, *Unless ye shall receive it as a child,*
ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

So thru'out all his young mental apprenticeship
 the child of very simplicity, and in the grace
 and beauteous attitude of infantine wonder,
 is apt to absorb Ideas in primal purity,
 and by the assimilation of that immortal food 1330
 may build immortal life ; but ever with the growth

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of understanding, as the sensible images
 are more and more corrupt, troubled by questioning thought,
 or with vainglory alloy'd, 'tis like enough the boy
 in prospect of his manhood wil hav cast to th' winds
 his Baptism with his Babyhood, nor might he escape
 the fall of Ev'ryman, did not a second call
 of nature's Love await him to confirm his Faith
 or to revoke him if he is wholly lapsed therefrom

And so mighty is this second vision, which cometh 1340
 in puberty of body and adolescence of mind
 that, forgetting his Mother, he calleth it "first Love",
 for it mocketh at suasion or stubbornness of heart,
 as the ocean-tide of the omnipotent Pleasur of God,
 flushing all avenues of life, and unawares
 by thousandfold approach forestalling its full flood
 with divination of the secret contacts of Love,—
 of faintest ecstasies aslumber in Nature's calm,
 like thought in a closed book, where some poet long since
 sang his throbbing passion to immortal sleep—with coy 1350
 tendernesses delicat as the shifting hues
 that sanctify the silent dawn with wonder-gleams,
 whose evanescence is the seal of their glory,
 consumed in self becoming of eternity;
 til every moment as it flyeth, cryeth "Seize'

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Seize me ere I die! I am the Life of Life."

'Tis thus by near approach to an eternal presence
man's heart with divine furor kindled and possess'd
falleth in blind surrender; and finding therewithal
in fullest devotion the full reconciliation 1360
betwixt his animal and spiritual desires,
such welcome hour of bliss standeth for certain pledge
of happiness perdurable: and could he sustain
this great enthusiasm, then the unbounded promise
would keep fulfilment; since the marriage of true minds
is that once fabled garden, amidst of which was set
the single Tree that bore such med'cinable fruit
that if man ate thereof he should liv for ever.

FRIENDSHIP is in loving rather than in being lov'd,
which is its mutual benediction and recompense; 1370
and tho' this be, and tho' love is from lovers learn'd,
it springeth none the less from the old essence of self.
No friendless man ('twas well said) can be truly himself;
what a man looketh for in his friend and findeth,
and loving self best, loveth better than himself,
is his own better self, his live lovable idea,
flowering by expansion in the loves of his life.

And in the nobility of our earthly friendships
we hav all grades of attainment, and the best may claim

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perfection of kind, and so, since ther be many bonds 1380
 other than breed (friendships of lesser motiv, found
 even in the brutes) and since our politick is based
 on actual association of living men, 'twil come
 that the spiritual idea of Friendship, the huge
 vastidity of its essence, is fntter'd away
 in observation of the usual habits of men,
 as happ'd with the great moralist, where his book saith
 that ther can be no friendship betwixt God and man
 because of their unlimited disparity

From this dilemma of pagan thought, this poison of faith,
 Man soul made glad escape in the worship of Christ, 1391
 for his humanity is God's Personality,
 and communion with him is the life of the soul

Of which living ideas (when in the struggle of thought
 harden'd by language they became symbols of faith)
 Reason builded her maze, wherefrom none should escape,
 wandering intent to map and learn her tortuous clews,
 chanting their clerkly creed to the high echoing stones
 of their hand fashion'd temple but the Wind of heav'n
 bloweth where it listeth, and Christ yet walketh the earth,
 and talketh still as with those two disciples once 1401
 on the road to Emmaus—where they walk and are sad,
 whose vision of him then was his victory over death,

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thatt resurrection which all his lovers should share,
 who in loving him had learn'd the Ethick of happiness ;
 whereby they too should come where he was ascended
 to reign over men's hearts in the Kingdom of God.

Our happiest earthly comradeships hold a foretaste
 of the feast of salvation and by thatt virtue in them
 provoke desire beyond them to out-reach and surmount 1410
 their humanity in some superhumanity
 and ultimat perfection: which, howe'er 'tis found
 or strangely imagin'd, answereth to the need of each
 and pulleth him instinctivly as to a final cause.
 Thus unto all who hav found their high ideal in Christ,
 Christ is to them the essence discern'd or undiscern'd
 of all their human friendships ; and each lover of him
 and of his beauty must be as a bud on the Vine
 and hav participation in him ; for Goddes love
 is unescapable as nature's environment, 1420
 which if a man ignore or think to thrust it off
 he is the ill-natured fool that runneth blindly on death.

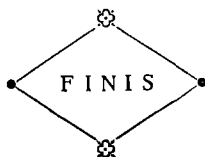
This Individualism is man's true Socialism.
 This is the rife Idea whose spiritual beauty
 multiplieth in communion to transcendant might.
 This is thatt excelent way whereon if we wil walk
 all things shall be added unto us—thatt Love which inspired

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the wayward Visionary in his doctrinal ode
to the three christian Graces, the Church's first hymn
and only deathless athanasian creed,—the which 1430
“except a man believe he cannot be savèd”.

This is the endearing bond whereby Christ's company
yet holdeth together on the truth of his promise
that he spake of his great pity and trust in man's love,
Lo, I am with you always ev'n to the end of the world.

Truly the Soul returneth the body's loving
where it hath won it . . . and God so loveth the world . . .
and in the fellowship of the friendship of Christ
God is seen as the very self-essence of love,
Creator and mover of all as activ Lover of all, 1440
self-express'd in not-self, without which no self were.
In thought whereof is neither beginning nor end
nor space nor time; nor any fault nor gap therein
'twixt self and not-self, mind and body, mother and child,
'twixt lover and loved, God and man: but ONE ETERNAL
in the love of Beauty and in the selfhood of Love.



PUBLISHER'S NOTE ON THE TEXT

THE *slight approach to a simplified spelling in this book is copied from the author's MS., which the printer was instructed to follow. The simplification, as will be seen, is mainly confined to two particulars, namely the final e and the doubled consonant. Since this e is invariably mute he would reserve it to distinguish heavy from light syllables: thus hav, not have, and liv distinguished from live; and all the -ate, -ile, -ive, and -ite words can have their speech-values shown, as steril and puerile; and thus ther is no confusion there.*

And so the doubled consonant, which following the short vowel denotes its accentua-

tion, is retained for that purpose: and this allows the useful distinction of the demonstrative pronoun thatt, from the other thats which have no proper accented vowel.

Inconsistencies (except for possible oversights such as shear for sheer in IV. 241 and ethic for ethick in IV. 353) are intentional, any rule being stayed at that point where it would needlessly distract the reader: thus nature appears in two spellings, of which the explanation is that the final syllable (whether the word be pronounced as may be indicated by the spelling nāt¹ur, or by nacher as recognized by our Southern-English authorities) is always light and unaccented; but since the¹ syllable tur has an uncertain value and is very offensive to the eye, the common full spelling, ture, is always maintained, except

*in those places where it suffers liquid syna-
læpha in the prosody, where the omission
of the e guides the eye to the easy reading
of the rhythm: and the author would explain
that the use of -eth for the 3rd per. sing.
of verbs is not an archaic fancy, but a practi-
cal advantage, indispensable to him, not only
for its syllabic lightness, but because by
distinguishing verbs from the identical sub-
stantives, it sharpens the rhetoric and often
liberates the syntax.*

**THE TESTAMENT
OF
BEAUTY**

