

THE WORKS OF
HERMAN MELVILLE

—

STANDARD EDITION

VOLUME

XVI

POEMS

CONTAINING

BATTLE-PIECES
JOHN MARR AND OTHER SAILORS
TIMOLEON
AND MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

BY

HERMAN MELVILLE

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TIMOLEON, ETC.

TO
MY COUNTRYMAN
ELIHU VEDDER

TIMOLEON

(394 B.C.)

I

IF more than once, as annals tell,
Through blood without compunction spilt,
An egotist arch rule has snatched,
And stamped the seizure with his sabre's hilt,
And, legalised by lawyers, stood ;
Shall the good heart whose patriot fire
Leaps to a deed of startling note,
Do it, then flinch ? Shall good in weak expire ?
Needs goodness lack the evil grit,
That stares down censorship and ban,
And dumbfounds saintlier ones with this—
God's will avouched in each successful man ?
Or, put it, where dread stress inspires
A virtue beyond man's standard rate,
Seems virtue there a strain forbid—
Transcendence such as shares transgression's
fate ?
If so, and wan eclipse ensue,
Yet glory await emergence won,
Is that high Providence, or Chance ?
And proved it which with thee, Timoleon ?
O, crowned with laurel twined with thorn,
Not rash thy life's cross-tide I stem,
But reck the problem rolled in pang
And reach and dare to touch thy garment's hem.

II

When Argos and Cleone strove
 Against free Corinth's claim or right,
 Two brothers battled for her well :
 A footman one, and one a mounted knight.
 Apart in place, each braved the brunt
 Till the rash cavalryman, alone,
 Was wrecked against the enemy's files,
 His bayard crippled and he maimed and thrown.
 Timoleon, at Timophanes' need,
 Makes for the rescue through the fray,
 Covers him with his shield, and takes
 The darts and furious odds and fights at bay ;
 Till, wrought to pallor of passion dumb,
 Stark terrors of death around he throws,
 Warding his brother from the field
 Spite failing friends dispersed and rallying foes.
 Here might he rest, in claim rest here,
 Rest, and a Phidian form remain ;
 But life halts never, life must on,
 And take with term prolonged some scar or
 stain.
 Yes, life must on. And latent germs
 Time's seasons wake in mead and man ;
 And brothers, playfellows in youth,
 Develop into variance wide in span.

III

Timophanes was his mother's pride—
 Her pride, her pet, even all to her
 Who slackly on Timoleon looked :
 Scarce he (she mused) may proud affection stir.

He saved my darling, gossips tell :
 If so, 'twas service, yea, and fair ;
 But instinct ruled and duty bade,
 In service such, a henchman e'en might share.
 When boys they were I helped the bent ;
 I made the junior feel his place,
 Subserve the senior, love him, too ;
 And sooth he does, and that's his saving grace.
 But me the meek one never can serve,
 Not he, he lacks the quality keen
 To make the mother through the son
 An envied dame of power, a social queen.
 But thou, my first-born, thou art I
 In sex translated ; joyed, I scan
 My features, mine, expressed in thee ;
 Thou art what I would be were I a man.
 My brave Timophanes, 'tis thou
 Who yet the world's forefront shalt win,
 For thine the urgent resolute way,
 Self pushing panoplied self through thick and thin.
 Nor here maternal insight erred :
 Forsworn, with heart that did not wince
 At slaying men who kept their vows,
 Her darling strides to power, and reigns—a Prince.

IV

Because of just heart and humane,
 Profound the hate Timoleon knew
 For crimes of pride and men-of-prey
 And impious deeds that perjurous upstarts do ;
 And Corinth loved he, and in way
 Old Scotia's clansman loved his clan,
 Devotion one with ties how dear
 And passion that late to make the rescue ran.

But crime and kin—the terrorised town,
The silent, acquiescent mother—
Revulsion racks the filial heart,
The loyal son, the patriot true, the
 brother.

In evil visions of the night
He sees the lictors of the gods,
Giant ministers of righteousness,
Their *fasces* threatened by the Furies' rods.

But undeterred he wills to act,
Resolved thereon though Ate rise ;
He heeds the voice whose mandate calls,
Or seems to call, peremptory from the skies.

v

Nor less but by approaches mild,
And trying each prudential art,
The just one first advances him
In parley with a flushed intemperate
 heart.

The brother first he seeks—alone,
And pleads ; but is with laughter met ;
Then comes he, in accord with two,
And these adjure the tyrant and beset ;

Whose merriment gives place to rage :
'Go,' stamping, 'what to me is Right ?
I am the Wrong, and lo, I reign,
And testily intolerant too in might' :

And glooms on his mute brother pale,
Who goes aside ; with muffled face
He sobs the predetermined word,
And Right in Corinth reassumes its place.

vi

But on his robe, ah, whose the blood ?
And craven ones their eyes avert,
And heavy is a mother's ban,
And dismal faces of the fools can hurt.

The whispering-gallery of the world,
Where each breathed slur runs wheeling
 wide

Eddies a false perverted truth,
Inveterate turning still on fratricide.

The time was Plato's. Wandering lights
Confirmed the atheist's standing star ;
As now, no sanction Virtue knew
For deeds that on prescriptive morals jar.

Reaction took misgiving's tone,
Infecting conscience, till betrayed
To doubt the irrevocable doom
Herself had authorised when undismayed.

Within perturbed Timoleon here
Such deeps were bared as when the sea,
Convulsed, vacates its shoreward bed,
And Nature's last reserves show nakedly.

He falters, and from Hades' glens
By night insidious tones implore—
Why suffer ? hither come and be
What Phocion is who feeleth man no more.

But, won from that, his mood elects
To live—to live in wilding place ;
For years self-outcast, he but meets
In shades his playfellow's reproachful face.

Estranged through one transcendent deed
From common membership in mart,
In severance he is like a head
Pale after battle trunkless found apart.

VII

But flood-tide comes though long the ebb,
 Nor patience bides with passion long ;
 Like sightless orbs his thoughts are rolled
 Arraigning heaven as compromised in wrong :

To second causes why appeal?
 Vain parleying here with fellow clods.
 To you, Arch Principals, I rear
 My quarrel, for this quarrel is with gods.

Shall just men long to quit your world ?
 It is aspersion of your reign ;
 Your marbles in the temple stand—
 Yourselves as stony and invoked in vain ?

Ah, bear with one quite overborne,
 Olympians, if he chide ye now ;
 Magnanimous be even though he rail
 And hard against ye set the bleaching brow.

If conscience doubt, she 'll next recant.
 What basis then ? O, tell at last,
 Are earnest natures staggering here
 But fatherless shadows from no substance cast ?

Yea, *are* ye, gods ? Then ye, 'tis ye
 Should show what touch of tie ye may,
 Since ye, too, if not wrung are wronged
 By grievous misconceptions of your sway.

But deign, some little sign be given—
 Low thunder in your tranquil skies ;
 Me reassure, nor let me be
 Like a lone dog that for a master cries.

VIII

Men's moods, as frames, must yield to years,
 And turns the world in fickle ways ;

Corinth recalls Timoleon—ay,
 And plumes him forth, but yet with schooling
 phrase.

On Sicily's fields, through arduous wars,
 A peace he won whose rainbow spanned
 The isle redeemed ; and he was hailed
 Deliverer of that fair colonial land.

And Corinth clapt : Absolved, and more !
 Justice in long arrears is thine :
 Not slayer of thy brother, no,
 But saviour of the state, Jove's soldier, man divine.

Eager for thee thy City waits :
 Return ! with bays we dress your door.
 But he, the Isle's loved guest, reposed,
 And never for Corinth left the adopted shore.

AFTER THE PLEASURE PARTY

LINES TRACED
 UNDER AN IMAGE OF
 AMOR THREATENING

*Fear me, virgin whosoever
 Taking pride from love exempt,
 Fear me, slighted. Never, never
 Brave me, nor my fury tempt :
 Downy wings, but wroth they beat
 Tempest even in reason's seat.*

AFTER THE PLEASURE PARTY

BEHIND the house the upland falls
 With many an odorous tree—
 White marbles gleaming through green halls,
 Terrace by terrace, down and down,
 And meets the starlit Mediterranean Sea.

'Tis Paradise. In such an hour
 Some pangs that rend might take release.
 Nor less perturbed who keeps this bower
 Of balm, nor finds balsamic peace ?
 From whom the passionate words in vent
 After long reverie's discontent ?

Tired of the homeless deep,
 Look how their flight yon hurrying billows urge,
 Hitherward but to reap
 Passive repulse from the iron-bound verge !
 Insensate, can they never know
 'Tis mad to wreck the impulsion so ?

An art of memory is, they tell :
 But to forget ! forget the glade
 Wherein Fate sprung Love's ambuscade,
 To flout pale years of cloistral life
 And flush me in this sensuous strife.
 'Tis Vesta struck with Sappho's smart.
 No fable her delirious leap :
 With more of cause in desperate heart,
 Myself could take it—but to sleep !

Now first I feel, what all may ween,
 That soon or late, if faded e'en,
 One's sex asserts itself. Desire,
 The dear desire through love to sway,
 Is like the Geysers that aspire—
 Through cold obstruction win their fervid way.
 But baffled here—to take disdain,
 To feel rule's instinct, yet not reign ;
 To dote, to come to this drear shame—
 Hence the winged blaze that sweeps my soul
 Like prairie fires that spurn control,
 Where withering weeds incense the flame.

And kept I long heaven's watch for this,
 Contemning love, for this, even this ?
 O terrace chill in Northern air,
 O reaching ranging tube I placed
 Against yon skies, and fable chased

Till, fool, I hailed for sister there
 Starred Cassiopeia in Golden Chair.
 In dream I throned me, nor I saw
 In cell the idiot crowned with straw.

And yet, ah yet scarce ill I reigned,
 Through self-illusion self-sustained,
 When now—enlightened, undeceived—
 What gain I barrenly bereaved !
 Than this can be yet lower decline—
 Envy and spleen, can these be mine ?

The peasant girl demure that trod
 Beside our wheels that climbed the way,
 And bore along a blossoming rod
 That looked the sceptre of May-Day—
 On her—to fire this petty hell,
 His softened glance how moistly fell !
 The cheat ! on briars her buds were strung ;
 And wiles peeped forth from mien how
 meek.
 The innocent bare-foot ! young, so young !
 To girls, strong man 's a novice weak.
 To tell such beads ! And more remain,
 Sad rosary of belittling pain.

When after lunch and sallies gay,
 Like the Decameron folk we lay
 In sylvan groups ; and I—let be !
 O, dreams he, can he dream that one
 Because not roseate feels no sun ?
 The plain lone bramble thrills with Spring
 As much as vines that grapes shall bring.

Me now fair studies charm no more.
 Shall great thoughts writ, or high themes sung
 Damask wan cheeks—unlock his arm
 About some radiant ninny flung ?
 How glad with all my starry lore,
 I 'd buy the veriest wanton's rose
 Would but my bee therein repose.

Could I remake me ! or set free
 This sexless bound in sex, then plunge
 Deeper than Sappho, in a lunge
 Piercing Pan's paramount mystery !
 For, Nature, in no shallow surge
 Against thee either sex may urge,
 Why hast thou made us but in halves—
 Co-relatives ? This makes us slaves.
 If these co-relatives never meet
 Selfhood itself seems incomplete.
 And such the dicing of blind fate
 Few matching halves here meet and mate.
 What Cosmic jest or Anarch blunder
 The human integral clove asunder
 And shied the fractions through life's gate ?

Ye stars that long your votary knew
 Rapt in her vigil, see me here !
 Whither is gone the spell ye threw
 When rose before me Cassiopeia ?
 Usurped on by love's stronger reign—
 But lo, your very selves do wane :
 Light breaks—truth breaks ! Silvered no more,
 But chilled by dawn that brings the gale
 Shivers yon bramble above the vale,
 And disillusion opens all the shore.

One knows not if Urania yet
 The pleasure-party may forget ;
 Or whether she lived down the strain
 Of turbulent heart and rebel brain ;
 For Amor so resents a slight,
 And her's had been such haught disdain,
 He long may wreak his boyish spite,
 And boy-like, little reck the pain.

One knows not, no. But late in Rome
 (For queens discrowned a congruous home)
 Entering Albani's porch she stood
 Fixed by an antique pagan stone
 Colossal carved. No anchorite seer,
 Not Thomas à Kempis, monk austere,
 Religious more are in their tone ;
 Yet far, how far from Christian heart
 That form august of heathen Art.
 Swayed by its influence, long she stood,
 Till surged emotion seething down,
 She rallied and this mood she won :

Languid in frame for me,
 To-day by Mary's convent shrine,
 Touched by her picture's moving plea
 In that poor nerveless hour of mine,
 I mused—A wanderer still must grieve.
 Half I resolved to kneel and believe,
 Believe and submit, the veil take on.
 But thee, armed Virgin ! less benign,
 Thee now I invoke, thou mightier one.
 Helmeted woman—if such term
 Befit thee, far from strife
 Of that which makes the sexual feud
 And clogs the aspirant life—

O self-reliant, strong and free,
 Thou in whom power and peace unite,
 Transcender ! raise me up to thee,
 Raise me and arm me !
 Fond appeal.
 For never passion peace shall bring,
 Nor Art inanimate for long
 Inspire. Nothing may help or heal
 While Amor incensed remembers wrong.
 Vindictive, not himself he 'll spare ;
 For scope to give his vengeance play
 Himself he 'll blaspheme and betray.

Then for Urania, virgins everywhere,
 O pray ! example take too, and have care.

THE NIGHT-MARCH

WITH banners furled, and clarions mute,
 An army passes in the night ;
 And beaming spears and helms salute
 The dark with bright.

In silence deep the legions stream,
 With open ranks, in order true ;
 Over boundless plains they stream and gleam—
 No chief in view !

Afar, in twinkling distance lost,
 (So legends tell) he lonely wends
 And back through all that shining host
 His mandate sends.

THE RAVAGED VILLA

IN shards the sylvan vases lie,
 Their links of dance undone,
 And brambles wither by thy brim,
 Choked fountain of the sun !
 The spider in the laurel spins,
 The weed exiles the flower ;
 And, flung to kiln, Apollo's bust
 Makes lime for Mammon's tower.

THE MARGRAVE'S BIRTHNIGHT

UP from many a sheeted valley,
 From white woods as well,
 Down too from each fleecy upland
 Jingles many a bell

Jovial on the work-sad horses
 Hitched to runners old
 Of the toil-worn peasants sledging
 Under sheepskins in the cold ;

Till from every quarter gathered
 Meet they on one ledge,
 There from hoods they brush the snow off
 Lighting from each sledge

Full before the Margrave's castle,
 Summoned there to cheer
 On his birthnight, in midwinter,
 Kept year after year.

O the hall, and O the holly !
 Tables line each wall ;
 Guests as holly-berries plenty,
 But—no host withal !

May his people feast contented
 While at head of board
 Empty throne and vacant cover
 Speak the absent lord ?

Minstrels enter. And the stewards
 Serve the guests ; and when,
 Passing there the vacant cover,
 Functionally then

Old observance grave they offer ;
 But no Margrave fair,
 In his living aspect gracious,
 Sits responsive there ;

No, and never guest once marvels,
 None the good lord name,
 Scarce they mark void throne and cover—
 Dust upon the same.

Mindless as to what importeth
 Absence such in hall ;
 Tacit as the plough-horse feeding
 In the palfrey's stall.

Ah, enough for toil and travail,
 If but for a night
 Into wine is turned the water,
 Black bread into white.

MAGIAN WINE

AMULETS gemmed, to Miriam dear,
 Adown in liquid mirage gleam ;
 Solomon's Syrian charms appear,
 Opal and ring supreme.
 The rays that light this Magian Wine
 Thrill up from semblances divine.

And, seething through the rapturous wave,
 What low Elysian anthems rise :
 Sibylline inklings blending rave,
 Then lap the verge with sighs.
 Delirious here the oracles swim
 Ambiguous in the beading hymn.

THE GARDEN OF METRODORUS

THE Athenians mark the moss-grown gate
 And hedge untrimmed that hides the haven green :
 And who keeps here his quiet state ?
 And shares he sad or happy fate
 Where never footpath to the gate is seen ?

Here none come forth, here none go in,
 Here silence strange, and dumb seclusion dwell :
 Content from lonesome who may win ?
 And is this stillness peace or sin
 Which noteless thus apart can keep its dell ?

THE NEW ZEALOT TO THE SUN

PERSIAN, you rise
 Aflame from climes of sacrifice
 Where adulators sue,
 And prostrate man, with brow abased,
 Adheres to rites whose tenor traced
 All worship hitherto.

Arch type of sway,
 Meetly your overruling ray
 You fling from Asia's plain,
 Whence flashed the javelins abroad
 Of many a wild incursive horde
 Led by some shepherd Cain.

Mid terrors dinned
 Gods too came conquerors from your Ind,
 The brood of Brahma throve ;
 They came like to the scythed car,
 Westward they rolled their empire far,
 Of night their purple wove.

Chemist, you breed
 In orient climes each sorcerous weed
 That energises dream—
 Transmitted, spread in myths and creeds,
 Houris and hells, delirious screeds
 And Calvin's last extreme.

What though your light
 In time's first dawn compelled the flight
 Of Chaos' startled clan,
 Shall never all your darted spears
 Disperse worse Anarchs, frauds and fears,
 Sprung from these weeds to man ?

But Science yet
 An effluence ampler shall beget,
 And power beyond your play—
 Shall quell the shades you fail to rout,
 Yea, searching every secret out,
 Elucidate your ray.

THE WEAVER

FOR years within a mud-built room
 For Arva's shrine he weaves the shawl,
 Lone wight, and at a lonely loom,
 His busy shadow on the wall.

The face is pinched, the form is bent,
 No pastime knows he nor the wine,
 Recluse he lives and abstinent
 Who weaves for Arva's shrine.

LAMIA'S SONG

DESCEND, descend !
 Pleasant the downward way—
 From your lonely Alp
 With the wintry scalp
 To our myrtles in valleys of May.
 Wend then, wend :
 Mountaineer, descend :
 And more than a wreath shall repay.
 Come, ah come !
 With the cataracts come,
 That hymn as they roam
 How pleasant the downward way !

IN A GARRET

GEMS and jewels let them heap—
 Wax sumptuous as the Sophi :
 For me, to grapple from Art's deep
 One dripping trophy !

MONODY

TO have known him, to have loved him
 After lonesome long ;
 And then to be estranged in life,
 And neither in the wrong ;
 And now for death to set his seal—
 Ease me, a little ease, my song !

By wintry hills his hermit-mound
 The sheeted snow-drifts drape,
 And houseless there the snow-bird flits
 Beneath the fir-trees' crape :
 Glazed now with ice the cloistral vine
 That hid the shyest grape.

LONE FOUNTS

THOUGH fast youth's glorious fable flies,
 View not the world with worldling's eyes ;
 Nor turn with weather of the time.
 Foreclose the coming of surprise :
 Stand where Posterity shall stand ;
 Stand where the Ancients stood before,
 And, dipping in lone founts thy hand,
 Drink of the never-varying lore :
 Wise once, and wise thence evermore.

THE BENCH OF BOORS

IN bed I muse on Tenier's boors,
 Embrowned and beery losels all :
 A wakeful brain
 Elaborates pain :
 Within low doors the slugs of boors
 Laze and yawn and doze again.

In dreams they doze, the drowsy boors,
 Their hazy hovel warm and small :
 Thought's ampler bound
 But chill is found :
 Within low doors the basking boors
 Snugly hug the ember-mound.

Sleepless, I see the slumberous boors
 Their blurred eyes blink, their eyelids fall :
 Thought's eager sight
 Aches—overbright !
 Within low doors the boozy boors
 Cat-naps take in pipe-bowllight.

THE ENTHUSIAST

'Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him.'

SHALL hearts that beat no base retreat
 In youth's magnanimous years—
 Ignoble hold it, if discreet
 When interest tames to fears ;
 Shall spirits that worship light
 Perfidious deem its sacred glow,
 Recant, and trudge where worldlings go,
 Conform and own them right ?

Shall Time with creeping influence cold
 Unnerve and cow ? the heart
 Pine for the heartless ones enrolled
 With palterers of the mart ?
 Shall faith abjure her skies,
 Or pale probation blench her down
 To shrink from Truth so still, so lone
 Mid loud gregarious lies ?

Each burning boat in Cæsar's rear,
 Flames—No return through me !
 So put the torch to ties though dear,
 If ties but tempters be.
 Nor cringe if come the night :
 Walk through the cloud to meet the pall,
 Though light forsake thee, never fall
 From fealty to light.

ART

IN placid hours well pleased we dream
 O' f many a brave unbodied scheme.
 But form to lend, pulsed life create,
 What unlike things must meet and mate :
 A flame to melt—a wind to freeze ;
 Sad patience—joyous energies ;
 Humility—yet pride and scorn ;
 Instinct and study ; love and hate ;
 Audacity—reverence. These must mate
 And fuse with Jacob's mystic heart,
 To wrestle with the angel—Art.

BUDDHA

*'For what is your life ? It is even a vapour that appeareth
 for a little time and then vanisheth away.'*

SWOONING swim to less and less,
 Aspirant to nothingness !
 Sobs of the worlds, and dole of kinds
 That dumb endurers be—
 Nirvana ! absorb us in your skies,
 Annul us into thee.

C—'S LAMENT

HOW lovely was the light of heaven,
 What angels leaned from out the sky
 In years when youth was more than wine
 And man and nature seemed divine
 Ere yet I felt that youth must die.

Ere yet I felt that youth must die
 How insubstantial looked the earth,
 Aladdin-land ! in each advance,
 Or here or there, a new romance ;
 I never dreamed would come a dearth.

And nothing then but had its worth,
 Even pain. Yes, pleasure still and pain
 In quick reaction made of life
 A lovers' quarrel, happy strife
 In youth that never comes again.

But will youth never come again ?
 Even to his grave-bed has he gone,
 And left me lone to wake by night
 With heavy heart that erst was light ?
 O, lay it at his head—a stone !

SHELLEY'S VISION

WANDERING late by morning seas
 When my heart with pain was low—
 Hate the censor pelted me—
 Deject I saw my shadow go.

In elf-caprice of bitter tone
 I too would pelt the pelted one :
 At my shadow I cast a stone.

When lo, upon that sun-lit ground
 I saw the quivering phantom take
 The likeness of St. Stephen crowned :
 Then did self-reverence awake.

FRAGMENTS OF A LOST GNOSTIC POEM OF
 THE TWELFTH CENTURY

* * * * *

FOUND a family, build a state,
 The pledged event is still the same :
 Matter in end will never abate
 His ancient brutal claim.

* * * * *

Indolence is heaven's ally here,
 And energy the child of hell :
 The Good Man pouring from his pitcher clear
 But brims the poisoned well.

THE MARCHIONESS OF BRINVILLIERS

HE toned the sprightly beam of morning
 With twilight meek of tender eve,
 Brightness interfused with softness,
 Light and shade did weave :
 And gave to candour equal place
 With mystery starred in open skies ;
 And, floating all in sweetness, made
 Her fathomless mild eyes.

THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES

WHILE faith forecasts millennial years
 Spite Europe's embattled lines,
 Back to the Past one glance be cast—
 The Age of the Antonines !
 O summit of fate, O zenith of time
 When a pagan gentleman reigned,
 And the olive was nailed to the inn of the world
 Nor the peace of the just was feigned.
 A halcyon Age, afar it shines,
 Solstice of Man and the Antonines.

Hymns to the nations' friendly gods
 Went up from the fellowly shrines,
 No demagogue beat the pulpit-drum
 In the Age of the Antonines !
 The sting was not dreamed to be taken from death,

No Paradise pledged or sought,
But they reasoned of fate at the flowing feast,
Nor stifled the fluent thought.

We sham, we shuffle while faith declines—
They were frank in the Age of the Antonines.

Orders and ranks they kept degree,
Few felt how the parvenu pines,
No law-maker took the lawless one's fee

In the Age of the Antonines !
Under law made will the world reposed
And the ruler's right confessed,
For the heavens elected the Emperor then,
The foremost of men the best.

Ah, might we read in America's signs
The Age restored of the Antonines.

HERBA SANTA

I

AFTER long wars when comes release
Not olive wands proclaiming peace
An import dearer share
Than stems of Herba Santa hazed
In autumn's Indian air.
Of moods they breathe that care disarm.
They pledge us lenitive and calm.

II

Shall code or creed a lure afford
To win all selves to Love's accord ?

When Love ordained a supper divine
For the wide world of man,
What bickerings o'er his gracious wine !
Then strange new feuds began.

Effectual more in lowlier way,
Pacific Herb, thy sensuous plea
The bristling clans of Adam sway
At least to fellowship in thee !
Before thine altar tribal flags are furled,
Fain wouldst thou make one hearthstone of
the world.

III

To scythe, to sceptre, pen and hod—
Yea, sodden labourers dumb ;
To brains overplied, to feet that plod,
In solace of the *Truce of God*
The Calumet has come !

IV

Ah for the world ere Raleigh's find
Never that knew this suasive balm
That helps when Gilead's fails to heal,
Helps by an interserted charm.

Insinuous thou that through the nerve
Windest the soul, and so canst win
Some from repinings, some from sin,
The Church's aim that dost subserve.

The ruffled fag fordone with care
And brooding, Gold would ease this pain :
Him soothest thou and smoothest down
Till some content return again.

Even ruffians feel thy influence breed
 Saint Martin's summer in the mind
 They feel this last evangel plead,
 As did the first, apart from creed,
 Be peaceful, man—be kind !

V

Rejected once on higher plane,
 O Love supreme, to come again
 Can this be thine ?
 Again to come, and win us too
 In likeness of a weed
 That as a god didst vainly woo,
 As man more vainly bleed ?

VI

Forbear, my soul ! and in thine Eastern chamber
 Rehearse the dream that brings the long release :
 Through jasmine sweet and talismanic amber
 Inhaling Herba Santa in the passive Pipe of
 Peace.

FRUIT OF TRAVEL LONG AGO

VENICE

WITH Pantheist energy of will
 The little craftsman of the Coral Sea
 Strenuous in the blue abyss,
 Upbuilds his marvellous gallery
 And long arcade,
 Erections freaked with many a fringe
 Of marble garlandry,
 Evincing what a worm can do.

Laborious in a shallower wave,
 Advanced in kindred art,
 A prouder agent proved Pan's might
 When Venice rose in reefs of palaces.

IN A BYE-CANAL

A SWOON of noon, a trance of tide,
 The hushed siesta brooding wide
 Like calms far off Peru ;
 No floating wayfarer in sight,
 Dumb noon, and haunted like the night
 When Jael the wiled one slew.
 A languid impulse from the oar
 Plied by my indolent gondolier
 Tinkles against a palace hoar,

And, hark, response I hear !
 A lattice clicks ; and lo, I see
 Between the slats, mute summoning me,
 What loveliest eyes of scintillation,
 What basilisk glance of conjuration !

Fronted I have, part taken the span ;
 Of portents in nature and peril in man.
 I have swum—I have been
 ‘Twixt the whale’s black flukes and the white
 shark’s fin ;
 The enemy’s desert have wandered in,
 And there have turned, have turned and scanned,
 Following me how noiselessly,
 Envy and Slander, lepers hand in hand.
 All this. But at the latticed eye—
 ‘Hey ! Gondolier, you sleep, my man ;
 Wake up !’ And, shooting by, we ran ;
 The while I mused, This, surely now,
 Confutes the Naturalists, allow !
 Sirens, true sirens verily be,
 Sirens, waylayers in the sea.
 Well, wooed by these same deadly misses,
 Is it shame to run ?
 No ! flee them did divine Ulysses,
 Brave, wise, and Venus’ son.

PISA’S LEANING TOWER

THE Tower in tiers of architraves,
 Fair circle over cirque,
 A trunk of rounded colonnades,
 The maker’s master-work,
 Impends with all its pillared tribes,
 And, poisoning them, debates :
 It thinks to plunge—but hesitates ;
 Shrinks back—yet fain would slide ;
 Withholds itself—itsself would urge ;
 Hovering, shivering on the verge,
 A would-be suicide !

IN A CHURCH OF PADUA

IN vaulted place where shadows flit,
 An upright sombre box you see :
 A door, but fast, and lattice none,
 But punctured holes minutely small
 In lateral silver panel square
 Above a kneeling-board without,
 Suggest an aim if not declare.

Who bendeth here the tremulous knee
 No glimpse may get of him within,
 And he immured may hardly see
 The soul confessing there the sin ;
 Nor yields the low-sieved voice a tone
 Whereby the murmurer may be known.

Dread diving-bell ! In thee inurned
 What hollows the priest must sound,
 Descending into consciences
 Where more is hid than found.

MILAN CATHEDRAL

THROUGH light green haze, a rolling sea
 Over gardens where redundance flows,
 The fat old plain of Lombardy,
 The White Cathedral shows.

Of Art the miracles
 Its tribes of pinnacles
 Gleam like to ice-peaks snowed ; and higher,
 Erect upon each airy spire
 In concourse without end,
 Statues of saints over saints ascend
 Like multitudinous forks of fire.

What motive was the master-builder's here ?
 Why these synodic hierarchies given,
 Sublimely ranked in marble sessions clear,
 Except to signify the host of heaven.

PAUSILIPPO

(In the time of Bomba)

A HILL there is that laves its feet
 In Naples' bay and lifts its head
 In jovial season, curled with vines.
 Its name, in pristine years conferred
 By settling Greeks, imports that none
 Who take the prospect thence can pine,
 For such the charm of beauty shown
 Even sorrow's self they cheerful weened
 Surcease might find and thank good Pan.

Toward that hill my landau drew ;
 And there, hard by the verge, was seen
 Two faces with such meaning fraught
 One scarce could mark and straight pass on.

A man it was less hoar with time
 Than bleached through strange immurement long,
 Retaining still, by doom depressed,
 Dim trace of some aspiring prime.
 Seated he tuned a homely harp
 Watched by a girl, whose filial mien
 Toward one almost a child again,
 Took on a staid maternal tone.
 Nor might one question that the locks
 Which in smoothed natural silvery curls
 Fell on the bowed one's threadbare coat
 Betrayed her ministering hand.

Anon, among some rambles drawn,
 A murmur rose ' 'Tis Silvio, Silvio !'
 With inklings more in tone suppressed
 Touching his story, part recalled :
 Clandestine arrest abrupt by night ;
 The sole conjecturable cause
 The yearning in a patriot ode
 Construed as treason ; trial none ;
 Prolonged captivity profound ;
 Vain liberation late. All this,
 With pity for impoverishment
 And blight forestalling age's wane.

Hillward the quelled enthusiast turned,
 Unmanned, made meek through strenuous wrong,
 Preluding, faltering ; then began,
 But only thrilled the wire—no more,

The constant maid supplying voice,
 Hinting by no ineloquent sign
 That she was but his mouthpiece mere,
 Himself too spiritless and spent.

Pausilippo, Pausilippo,
 Pledging easement unto pain,
 Shall your beauty even solace
 If one's sense of beauty wane ?

Could light airs that round ye play
 Waft heart-heaviness away
 Or memory lull to sleep,
 Then, then indeed your balm
 Might Silvio becharm,
 And life in fount would leap,
 Pausilippo !

Did not your spell invite,
 In moods that slip between,
 A dream of years serene,
 And wake, to dash, delight—
 Evoking here in vision
 Fulfillment and fruition—
 Nor mine, nor meant for man !
 Did hope not frequent share
 The mirage when despair
 Overtakes the caravan,
 Me then your scene might move
 To break from sorrow's snare,
 And apt your name would prove,
 Pausilippo !

But I've looked upon your revel—
 It unravels not the pain :
 Pausilippo, Pausilippo,
 Named benignly if in vain !

It ceased. In low and languid tone
 The tideless ripple lapped the passive shore ;
 As listlessly the bland untroubled heaven
 Looked down as silver doled was silent given
 In pity—futile as the ore !

THE ATTIC LANDSCAPE

TOURIST, spare the avid glance
 That greedy roves the sight to see :
 Little here of 'Old Romance,'
 Or Picturesque of Tivoli.

No flushful tint the sense to warm—
 Pure outline pale, a linear charm.
 The clear-cut hills carved temples face,
 Respond, and share their sculptural grace.

'Tis Art and Nature lodged together,
 Sister by sister, cheek to cheek ;
 Such Art, such Nature, and such weather,
 The All-in-All seems here a Greek.

THE SAME

A CIRCUMAMBIENT spell it is,
 Pellucid on these scenes that waits,
 Repose that does of Plato tell—
 Charm that his style authenticates.

THE PARTHENON

I

Seen aloft from afar

ESTRANGED in site,
 Aerial gleaming, warmly white,
 You look a suncloud motionless
 In noon of day divine ;
 Your beauty charmed enhancement takes
 In Art's long after-shine.

II

Nearer viewed

Like Lais, fairest of her kind,
 In subtlety your form 's defined—
 The cornice curved, each shaft inclined,
 While yet, to eyes that do but revel
 And take the sweeping view,
 Erect this seems, and that a level,
 To line and plummet true—

Spinoza gazes ; and in mind
 Dreams that one architect designed
 Lais—and you !

III

The Frieze

What happy musings genial went
 With airiest touch the chisel lent
 To frisk and curvet light
 Of horses gay—their riders grave—
 Contrasting so in action brave
 With virgins meekly bright—
 Clear filing on in even tone
 With pitcher each, one after one
 Like water-fowl in flight.

IV

The Last Tile

When the last marble tile was laid
 The winds died down on all the seas ;
 Hushed were the birds, and swooned the glade ;
 Ictinus sat ; Aspasia said
 ‘Hist !—Art’s meridian, Pericles !’

GREEK MASONRY

JOINTS were none that mortar sealed :
 Together, scarce with line revealed,
 The blocks in symmetry congealed.

GREEK ARCHITECTURE

NOT magnitude, not lavishness,
 But Form—the Site ;
 Not innovating wilfulness,
 But reverence for the Archetype.

OFF CAPE COLONNA

ALOOFF they crown the foreland lone,
 From aloft they loftier rise—
 Fair columns, in the aureola rolled
 From sunned Greek seas and skies.
 They wax, sublimed to fancy’s view,
 A god-like group against the blue.

Overmuch like gods ! Serene they saw
 The wolf-waves board the deck,
 And headlong hull of *Falconer*,
 And many a deadlier wreck.

THE ARCHIPELAGO

SAIL before the morning breeze
 The Sporads through and Cyclades
 They look like isles of absentees—
 Gone whither ?

You bless Apollo's cheering ray,
 But Delos, his own isle, to-day
 Not e'en a Selkirk there to pray
 God friend me !

Scarce lone these groups, scarce lone and bare
 When Theseus roved a Raleigh there,
 Each isle a small Virginia fair—
 Unravished.

Nor less through havoc fell they rue,
 They still retain in outline true
 Their grace of form when earth was new
 And primal.

But beauty clear, the frame 's as yet,
 Never shall make one quite forget
 Thy picture, Pan, therein once set—
 Life's revel !

'Tis Polynesia reft of palms,
 Seaward no valley breathes her balms—
 Not such as musk thy rings of calms,
 Marquesas !

SYRA

(A Transmitted Reminiscence)

FLEEING from Scio's smouldering vines
 (Where when the sword its work had done
 The Turk applied the torch) the Greek
 Came here, a fugitive stript of goods,
 Here to an all but tenantless isle,
 Nor here in footing gained at first
 Felt safe. Still from the turbaned foe
 Dreading the doom of shipwrecked men
 Whom feline seas permit to land
 Then pounce upon and drag them back,
 For height they made, and prudent won
 A cone-shaped fastness on whose flanks
 With pains they pitched their eyrie camp,
 Stone huts, whereto they wary clung ;
 But, reassured in end, come down—
 Multiplied through compatriots now,
 Refugees like themselves forlorn—
 And building along the water's verge
 Begin to thrive ; and thriving more
 When Greece at last flung off the Turk,
 Make of the haven mere a mart.

I saw it in its earlier day—
 Primitive, such an isled resort
 As hearthless Homer might have known
 Wandering about the Ægean here.
 Sheds ribbed with wreck-stuff faced the sea
 Where goods in transit shelter found ;
 And here and there a shanty-shop

Where fez-caps, swords, tobacco, shawls,
Pistols, and orient finery, Eve's—
(The spangles dimmed by hands profane)
Like plunder on a pirate's deck
Lay orderless in such loose way
As to suggest things ravished or gone astray.

Above a tented inn with fluttering flag
A sunburnt board announced Greek wine
In self-same text Anacreon knew,
Dispensed by one named 'Pericles.'
Got up as for the opera's scene,
Armed strangers, various, lounged or lazed,
Lithe fellows tall, with gold-shot eyes,
Sunning themselves as leopards may.

Off-shore lay xebecs trim and light,
And some but dubious in repute.
But on the strand, for docks were none,
What busy bees ! no testy fry ;
Frolickers, picturesquely odd,
With bales and oil-jars lading boats,
Lighters that served an anchored craft,
Each in his tasselled Phrygian cap,
Blue Eastern drawers and braided vest ;
And some with features cleanly cut
As Proserpine's upon the coin.
Such chatterers all ! like children gay
Who make believe to work, but play.

I saw, and how help musing too.
Here traffic 's immature as yet :
Forever this juvenile fun hold out
And these light hearts ? Their garb, their glee,
Alike profuse in flowing measure,

Alike inapt for serious work,
Blab of grandfather Saturn's prime
When trade was not, nor toil, nor stress,
But life was leisure, merriment, peace,
And lucre none and love was righteousness.

DISINTERMENT OF THE HERMES

WHAT forms divine in adamant fair—
Carven demigod and god,
And hero-marbles rivalling these,
Bide under Latium's sod,
Or lost in sediment and drift
Alluvial which the Grecian rivers sift.

To dig for these, O better far
Than raking arid sands
For gold more barren meetly theirs
Sterile, with brimming hands.

THE APPARITION

*(The Parthenon uplifted on its rock first challenging
the view on the approach to Athens.)*

ABRUPT the supernatural Cross,
Vivid in startled air,
Smote the Emperor Constantine
And turned his soul's allegiance there.

With other power appealing down,
 Trophy of Adam's best !
 If cynic minds you scarce convert,
 You try them, shake them, or molest.

Diogenes, that honest heart,
 Lived ere your date began ;
 Thee had he seen, he might have swerved
 In mood nor barked so much at Man.

IN THE DESERT

NEVER Pharaoh's Night,
 Whereof the Hebrew wizards croon,
 Did so the Theban flamens try
 As me this veritable Noon.

Like blank ocean in blue calm
 Undulates the ethereal frame ;
 In one flowing oriflamme
 God flings his fiery standard out.

Battling with the Emirs fierce,
 Napoleon a great victory won,
 Through and through his sword did pierce ;
 But, bayoneted by this sun
 His gunners drop beneath the gun.

Holy, holy, holy Light !
 Immaterial incandescence,
 Of God the effluence of the essence,
 Shekinah intolerably bright !

THE GREAT PYRAMID

YOUR masonry—and is it man's ?
 More like some Cosmic artisan's.
 Your courses as in strata rise,
 Beget you do a blind surmise
 Like Grampians.

Far slanting up your sweeping flank
 Arabs with Alpine goats may rank,
 And there they find a choice of passes
 Even like to dwarfs that climb the masses
 Of glaciers blank.

Shall lichen in your crevice fit ?
 Nay, sterile all and granite-knit :
 Weather nor weather-stain ye rue,
 But aridly you cleave the blue
 As lording it.

Morn's vapour floats beneath your peak,
 Kites skim your side with pinion weak ;
 To sand-storms battering, blow on blow,
 Raging to work your overthrow,
 You—turn the cheek.

All elements unmoved you stem,
 Foursquare you stand and suffer them :
 Time's future infinite you dare,
 While, for the past, 'tis you that wear
 Eld's diadem.

Slant from your inmost lead the caves
And labyrinths rumoured. These who braves
And penetrates (old palmers said)
Comes out afar on deserts dead
 And, dying, raves.

Craftsmen, in dateless quarries dim,
Stones formless into form did trim,
Usurped on Nature's self with Art,
And bade this dumb I AM to start,
 Imposing him.

L'ENVOI

THE RETURN OF THE SIRE DE NESLE

A.D. 16—

MY towers at last ! These rovings end,
Their thirst is slaked in larger dearth :
The yearning infinite recoils,
 For terrible is earth.

Kaf thrusts his snouted crags through fog :
Araxes swells beyond his span,
And knowledge poured by pilgrimage
 Overflows the banks of man.

But thou, my stay, thy lasting love
One lonely good, let this but be !
Weary to view the wide world's swarm,
 But blest to fold but thee.

Note:

This document reproduces the Constable 1924 edition of *Timoleon, Etc.*, as printed in volume XVI of the *Works*, pages i, iii, iv, viii, ix, and 245–295. Page and line breaks from the original are preserved, as are the spelling and punctuation, page numbers and signature identification letters. Following the typesetting practice of that era, colons, semi-colons, question marks, and exclamation points are preceded by a word space. The typeface used here is Goudy Old Style.