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## Timoleon, Etc.

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HERMAN MELVILLE



TIMOLEON, ETC.

# TIMOLEON

ETC.



NEW YORK  
THE CAXTON PRESS  
1891

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TO  
MY COUNTRYMAN  
ELIHU VEDDER

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## TIMOLEON.

(394 B. C.)

## I.

**I**F 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 dumfounds 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 palor 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 fore-front shalt win,  
 For thine the urgent resolute way,  
 Self pushing panoplied self through thick and  
 thin.

Nor here maternal insight erred :  
 Foresworn, 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 terrorized 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 *fascēs* 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 savior 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.*

**B**EHIND 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 ambushade,

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 Cassiopea 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  
 Self-hood 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 Cassiopea ?  
 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 a 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.

**W**ITH 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.

**I**N 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.

**U**P 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 birth-night, in mid-winter,  
 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.

**A** MULETS 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 foot-path to the gate is seen ?

Here none come forth, here none go in,  
Here silence strange, and dumb seclusion dwell :

Content from liveness 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 over-ruling 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 energizes 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.

**F**OR 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.

**D**ESCEND, 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.

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

## MONODY.

**T**O have known him, to have loved him  
 After lonesness 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.

**T**HOUGH 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.

**I**N 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-bowl light.

## THE ENTHUSIAST.

*“Though He slay me  
yet will I trust in Him.”*

**S**HALL 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.

**I**N placid hours well-pleased we dream  
Of 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.

## B U D D H A .

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

**S**WOONING 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 L A M E N T .

**H**OW 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 !

## S H E L L E Y ' S V I S I O N .

**W**ANDERING 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 12TH CENTURY.

\* \* \* \*

**F**OUND 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 BRIN-  
VILLIERS.

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

THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

**W**HILE 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.

**A**FTER 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 would'st thou make one hearthstone of  
the world.

## III.

To scythe, to sceptre, pen and hod—  
Yea, sodden laborers 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.

**W**ITH Pantheist energy of will  
 The little craftsman of the Coral Sea  
 Strenuous in the blue abyss,  
 Up-builds his marvelous 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.

**T**HE Tower in tiers of architraves,  
 Fair circle over cirque,  
 A trunk of rounded colonades,  
 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.

**I**N 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.

**T**HROUGH 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 thread-bare coat  
 Betrayed her ministering hand.

Anon, among some ramblers 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 mouth-piece 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  
 Fulfilment 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.

**T**OURIST, 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.*

**E**STRANGED 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.

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

## GREEK ARCHITECTURE.

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

## OFF CAPE COLONNA.

**A** LOOF 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.

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

## THE ARCHIPELAGO.

**S**AIL 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, today  
 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 !

## S Y R A .

*(A Transmitted Reminiscence.)*

**F**LEEING 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 tasseled 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.

**W**HAT 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.)*

**A**BRUPT 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.

**N**EVER 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 vapor 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 edition reproduces the 1891 Caxton Press edition of Herman Melville's *Timoleon, Etc.* Page and line breaks from the original are preserved, as are the spelling, punctuation, display capitalization, dot leaders, and page numbers. Following the typesetting practice of that era, colons, semi-colons, question marks, and exclamation points are preceded by a word space.

The typefaces used here are Perpetua Titling for the display pages (pp. 1–3) and Georgia for the text pages (pp. 5–70). The typeface used in the original edition text was most probably Scotch.

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