

Before my sight appear'd, with open wings,  
The beauteous image, in fruition sweet  
Gladdening the thronged spirits. Each did seem  
A little ruby, whereon so intense  
The sun-beam glow'd that to mine eyes it came  
In clear refraction. And that, which next  
Befalls me to portray, voice hath not utter'd,  
Nor hath ink written, nor in fantasy  
Was e'er conceiv'd. For I beheld and heard  
The beak discourse; and, what intention form'd  
Of many, singly as of one express,  
Beginning: "For that I was just and piteous,  
I am exalted to this height of glory,  
The which no wish exceeds: and there on earth  
Have I my memory left, e'en by the bad  
Commended, while they leave its course untrod."

Thus is one heat from many embers felt,  
As in that image many were the loves,  
And one the voice, that issued from them all.  
Whence I address them: "O perennial flowers  
Of gladness everlasting! that exhale  
In single breath your odours manifold!  
Breathe now; and let the hunger be appeas'd,  
That with great craving long hath held my soul,  
Finding no food on earth. This well I know,  
That if there be in heav'n a realm, that shows

In faithful mirror the celestial Justice,  
Yours without veil reflects it. Ye discern  
The heed, wherewith I do prepare myself  
To hearken; ye the doubt that urges me  
With such inveterate craving." Straight I saw,  
Like to a falcon issuing from the hood,  
That rears his head, and claps him with his wings,  
His beauty and his eagerness bewraying.  
So saw I move that stately sign, with praise  
Of grace divine inwoven and high song  
Of inexpressive joy. "He," it began,  
"Who turn'd his compass on the world's extreme,  
And in that space so variously hath wrought,  
Both openly, and in secret, in such wise  
Could not through all the universe display  
Impression of his glory, that the Word  
Of his omniscience should not still remain  
In infinite excess. In proof whereof,  
He first through pride supplanted, who was sum  
Of each created being, waited not  
For light celestial, and abortive fell.  
Whence needs each lesser nature is but scant  
Receptacle unto that Good, which knows  
No limit, measur'd by itself alone.  
Therefore your sight, of th' omnipresent Mind  
A single beam, its origin must own  
Surpassing far its utmost potency.

The ken, your world is gifted with, descends  
In th' everlasting Justice as low down,  
As eye doth in the sea; which though it mark  
The bottom from the shore, in the wide main  
Discerns it not; and ne'ertheless it is,  
But hidden through its deepness. Light is none,  
Save that which cometh from the pure serene  
Of ne'er disturbed ether: for the rest,  
'Tis darkness all, or shadow of the flesh,  
Or else its poison. Here confess reveal'd  
That covert, which hath hidden from thy search  
The living justice, of the which thou mad'st  
Such frequent question; for thou saidst—'A man  
Is born on Indus' banks, and none is there  
Who speaks of Christ, nor who doth read nor write,  
And all his inclinations and his acts,  
As far as human reason sees, are good,  
And he offendeth not in word or deed.  
But unbaptiz'd he dies, and void of faith.  
Where is the justice that condemns him? where  
His blame, if he believeth not?'—What then,  
And who art thou, that on the stool wouldst sit  
To judge at distance of a thousand miles  
With the short-sighted vision of a span?  
To him, who subtilizes thus with me,  
There would assuredly be room for doubt  
Even to wonder, did not the safe word

Of scripture hold supreme authority.

“O animals of clay! O spirits gross I  
The primal will, that in itself is good,  
Hath from itself, the chief Good, ne’er been mov’d.  
Justice consists in consonance with it,  
Derivable by no created good,  
Whose very cause depends upon its beam.”

As on her nest the stork, that turns about  
Unto her young, whom lately she hath fed,  
While they with upward eyes do look on her;  
So lifted I my gaze; and bending so  
The ever-blessed image wav’d its wings,  
Lab’ring with such deep counsel. Wheeling round  
It warbled, and did say: “As are my notes  
To thee, who understand’st them not, such is  
Th’ eternal judgment unto mortal ken.”

Then still abiding in that ensign rang’d,  
Wherewith the Romans over-awed the world,  
Those burning splendours of the Holy Spirit  
Took up the strain; and thus it spake again:  
“None ever hath ascended to this realm,  
Who hath not a believer been in Christ,  
Either before or after the blest limbs  
Were nail’d upon the wood. But lo! of those

Who call 'Christ, Christ,' there shall be many found,  
In judgment, further off from him by far,  
Than such, to whom his name was never known.  
Christians like these the Ethiop shall condemn:  
When that the two assemblages shall part;  
One rich eternally, the other poor.

"What may the Persians say unto your kings,  
When they shall see that volume, in the which  
All their dispraise is written, spread to view?  
There amidst Albert's works shall that be read,  
Which will give speedy motion to the pen,  
When Prague shall mourn her desolated realm.  
There shall be read the woe, that he doth work  
With his adulterate money on the Seine,  
Who by the tusk will perish: there be read  
The thirsting pride, that maketh fool alike  
The English and Scot, impatient of their bound.  
There shall be seen the Spaniard's luxury,  
The delicate living there of the Bohemian,  
Who still to worth has been a willing stranger.  
The halter of Jerusalem shall see  
A unit for his virtue, for his vices  
No less a mark than million. He, who guards  
The isle of fire by old Anchises honour'd  
Shall find his avarice there and cowardice;  
And better to denote his littleness,

The writing must be letters maim'd, that speak  
Much in a narrow space. All there shall know  
His uncle and his brother's filthy doings,  
Who so renown'd a nation and two crowns  
Have bastardized. And they, of Portugal  
And Norway, there shall be expos'd with him  
Of Ratza, who hath counterfeited ill  
The coin of Venice. O blest Hungary!  
If thou no longer patiently abid'st  
Thy ill-entreating! and, O blest Navarre!  
If with thy mountainous girdle thou wouldst arm thee  
In earnest of that day, e'en now are heard  
Wailings and groans in Famagosta's streets  
And Nicosia's, grudging at their beast,  
Who keepeth even footing with the rest."