

II

Great Dante stands in Florence, looking down
In marble on the centuries. Ye spell,
Beaneath his feet who walked in Heaven and Hell,
“L’Italia.” Here no longer lord and clown
Cringe, as of yore, to the immortal frown
Of him who loved his Italy too well:
Silent he stands, and like a sentinel
Stares from beneath those brows of dread renown.

Terrible, beautiful face, from whose pale lip
Anathema hurtled upon the world,
Stern mask, we read thee as an open scroll:
What if this mouth Hate’s bitter smile has curled?
These eyes have known Love’s starry fellowship;
Behind which trembles the tremendous soul.