

THE FAREWELL OF PARACELSUS  
TO APRILE.

THOU Sun, whose swift desire to-day is dull,  
And all ye hosts of heaven, whose lips are mute,  
And trees and flowers and oceans beautiful  
Among whose murmurs I have struck this lute  
With joy supreme or agony acute,  
And love transcending everything alway,  
Pity me, pity, since the poisonous root  
Of parting strikes the beauty of the day;  
We meet for the last time beside the ocean gray.

Soul of my soul, we never can forget—  
But, is our parting burnt across the skies?  
Is the last word said? Must our lips be set  
Not to new song, but to the bitter sighs  
As of a child whose flower-garden dies,  
Who knows no hope of some enduring spring?

Is the last song made, whose faint melodies  
Brushed the pale air with an archangel's wing?  
Is Hope divorced, our queen? Is Love discrowned,  
our King?

Far o'er the Ocean sets a fiery star  
And meteors cross the angry horizon,  
A comet blazes, reddening the bar  
Of silver water where the moonlight shone,  
And, as I stand upon the cliff like one  
Amazed, a shape seems always at my back  
To whisper wickedness, o'erheard of none,  
And stealthily to follow on my track,  
And cloke my lifted eyes with suffocating black.

Vainly I turn to seek him, for my eyes  
Are dimmed with saltness never born of brine;  
Vainly I fight the air, he sneers, and lies,  
And laughs at all this agony of mine,  
And chills my heart, and desecrates the shrine  
Where Love his holy incense used to burn,  
And mocks those thoughts, those songs, those looks  
divine

While his lewd visage no man may discern,  
And baffling darkness hides his terror if I turn.

Fighting and falling ever, weariest  
Even of beating off the tempter's blows,  
Struggling in vain to what one hopes the best,  
A distant river over many snows,  
On whose green bank the purple iris glows,  
And the anemone in some wild cleft,  
And the white violet, and the briar rose,  
And the blue gentian from the heavens reft—  
Lo! 'Twas that golden bank but yester morn I left.

O river where we dwelt! Your summer sward  
Whereon we lay, two kings of earth and air;  
For whom ten thousand angels had drawn sword  
At our light bidding. Surely, surely, there  
We might float ever to the sea, and spare  
The dainty plumage of that perfect place.  
O God! O Life! O Death, thou would'st not  
wear  
Such evil mask upon thy golden face—  
O Mary, pity me of thine abounding grace.

Those days are dead, and hope no newer birth.

I left thy shores, blue stream, at His command  
Who reared the mountains from the shaken earth ;  
Who holds the lightning in His holy hand,  
And binds the stars in adamantine band,  
And yearns towards the children of His mind.

I left their summer and their dewy strand  
To pass a life of work, alone, unkind,  
To fight a way toward heaven, mute, desolate and  
blind.

The dusty desert glimmers in the night,  
A solitary palm-tree shades the well ;  
I am alone, a weary eremite  
Striving the secrets of the stars to tell,  
And every blade of grass that makes the dell  
Is counted and divined by me, who stare  
With eyes half blinded by the fires of Hell  
That my wild brain imagines everywhere,  
Roaring and raging round with red infernal glare.

The yellow sand toward the deep sky extends :  
A dusky mirage would confuse my view ;

Far, far away, where desolation ends,  
    There is a water of serenest blue ;  
    And by it stands, as patient and as true  
As in the past, his form to whom I turn,  
    And break my bondage and would touch anew  
His holy lips ; my body and spirit yearn ;  
He fades away, and fires of Hell within me burn.

Still, as I journey through the waste, I see  
    A silver figure more divine arise ;  
The Christ usurps the horizon for me.  
    And He requickens the forgotten skies ;  
    His golden locks are burning on my eyes,  
And He with rosy finger points the way,  
    The blood-wrought mystic path of Paradise  
That leads at last through yonder icy spray  
Of Death to the blue vaults of the undying day.

But oh! this desert is a weary land,  
    Poisons alone their prickly heads lift high ;  
The sun, a globe of fury, still doth stand  
    In the dark basin of the burning sky.  
    There is no water, no, nor herb, and I

Faint at his anger who compels the herd  
To fall upon the waste, so fierce and dry  
That none may pass it, not the very bird.  
Throughout the vast expanse no single sound is  
heard.

Only the moaning of the dying ox,  
And my parched cry for water from cracked lips ;  
In vain the stern impenetrable rocks  
Mock my complaint : the empty pitcher dips  
Into the empty well ; the water drips,  
Oozing in tiny drops caught up again  
By the sun's heat, that brooks not his eclipse  
And dissipates the welcome clouds of rain.  
God ! have Thou pity soon on this amazing pain.

If but a lion stirred with distant roar  
The silence of the world, perchance at last  
I might find honey in his mouth, and store  
His tawny flanks until the sand were past.  
Nay, but these wastes intolerably vast,  
Like glowing copper raging for the heat,  
Stretch and stretch on and leave me all aghast

Straining my eyes in horror and defeat  
Toward the long vista seen where rescue seems to  
greet.

The vessel fills with brackish foam. I drink,  
Drink to the end, and stagger on alone  
Without a staff to hold me if I sink  
In the hot quagmires of untrusty stone.  
Foodless and beastless, so despairing grown,  
I know not, care not, only trust that soon  
The sun's dominion may be overthrown,  
And o'er the wilderness appear the moon  
With cold lips to bestow the inestimable boon.

Still I have never prayed for death, but rather  
Would be found fighting toward the goal I seek,  
Stretching both hands toward a loving father,  
And struggling toward some barren voiceless  
peak  
With feet made stedfast, if God made them  
weak ;  
So, on the journey, in the hottest fight  
I would be found by Death, whose palace bleak

Should be a resting-place until the night  
Broke, and I met my God, and stood within His  
sight.

Only my brain grows feebler with the toil,  
And clearer runs the river I forsook ;  
Now in clear pools its myriad fountains boil,  
Now there runs singing to its breast a brook ;  
Now it flows gently to a little nook  
Where I once rested—Ah! I clench my hand  
And turn away with yet undaunted look,  
Setting my face toward the distant land  
That must lie somewhere far beyond this world of  
sand.

About me are the bones of many men  
Who turned to God their rapt adoring eyes,  
And cast away the love within their ken  
For this vague treasure-house beyond the  
skies—  
Whither I turn, like a dumb beast that dies,  
A wistful look, and breathe a dumb complaint.  
Lo! they have cast away the mask of lies



And not found Truth. So he would be a saint  
Whose skeleton lies here because his soul did faint!

I will not turn toward Sodom any more,  
Lest its ripe glades of fruit waft up their scent,  
And draw me to them, what time heavens pour  
Brimstone and fire from out the firmament,  
And all my substance in its fall be spent ;  
Lest I lie there beneath a barren sea  
Forgotten of high God, until there went  
The final trumpet of the dead, who flee  
Vainly that fearful blast of judgment. Woe is Me !

My feet, in spite of me, in circles bend ;  
I meet my own tracks often, all in vain  
I seek some tower or cliff to make an end,  
I find no object on the distant plain ;  
Misty distortions crowd upon my brain,  
And spectre fountains gurgle on the ground ;  
I drop to drink, and hear the horrid strain  
Of chuckling devils, that grimace around,  
And think I catch the note of Hell's three-headed  
Hound.

Up still and staggering to the doubtful goal,  
Feet dragging horribly behind, I move  
Deathlike for dearth and for despair of soul;  
At last I drop. From Heaven there comes a  
Dove  
Bearing the semblance of the Man I love,  
And fountains and fresh grass by magic spell  
Are suddenly around me. And above  
I hear the voice my visions know so well:  
“Well striven all this day against the power of  
Hell!”

I know these mercies still diviner grow  
Each day I strive, but should I sit and rest  
One hour of dawn, and cry, “I will not go  
Another step without more sleep,” that blest  
Dove flies away, the fountains are repressed,  
The grass is withered, and the angry sky  
Rages more fierce that day, and from the crest  
Of black foul mountains comes a bitter cry:  
“He that returneth now shall in destruction die.”

So I press on. Fresh strength from day to day  
Girds up my loins and beckons me on high.

So I depart upon the desert way,  
So I strive ever toward the copper sky,  
With lips burnt black and blind in either eye.  
I move for ever to my mystic goal  
Where I may drain a fountain never dry,  
And of Life's guerdon gather in the whole,  
And on celestial manna satisfy my soul.

Each night new failure and each day fresh strength,  
A sense of something nearer day by day ;  
Though the ill road's intolerable length,  
League upon league, fling back the torrid ray  
Of the fierce sunlight night can scarce allay  
With the incessant beating of cool wings,  
And men's bleached skeletons infest the way ;  
Yet Hope her passion like a flower brings,  
And Courage ranks me with unconquerable kings.

So, in the power of these who guard my path,  
I hope one day to earn a loftier crown  
Than that pale garland fresh from summer scath  
That I called Love, and lie delighted down  
Beside the fountains, fled the roaring town,

Where we were happy all the summer through,  
And merry when the autumn tinged with brown  
The glades, and in the winter thought we knew  
Behind the cloudy weather some far sky was blue.

That crown I hope for shall be garlanded  
Of deathless flowers of equal bloom. And thou,  
O thou true lover, thou beloved head  
And marble pallor of a prince's brow,  
At the cliff's edge we stand together now ;  
The parting of our ways has come at last,  
Mine is the bitterest journey, as I trow,  
A man may take, so solitary, so vast,  
It binds the future now, and stultifies the past.

Only the hope that God may reunite  
Our ways diverging, and make one again  
The deathless love that burns a beacon bright  
On the black deeps, the irremeable main,  
That men must launch on, the exalted plain  
Of Life. We sever, and our tears are few,  
Knowing perchance beyond the moment's pain

We shall regather where the skies are blue,  
And live and love for aye, pure, passionate, and true.

Also before my eyes there gleams from Heaven  
The likeness of a Man in glory set ;  
The sun is blotted, and the skies are riven—  
A God flames forth my spirit to beget ;  
And where my body and his love are met  
A new desire possesses altogether  
My whole new self as in a golden net  
Of transcendental love one fiery tether,  
Dissolving all my woe into one sea of weather.

So I am ready to assume the Cross,  
Start on my journey with the last word said ;  
Turn my back resolute on dung and dross,  
And face the future with no twitch of dread,  
But dare to converse with the holy dead,  
And taste the earnest of the church's bliss.  
Love, God be with you ! He is overhead  
And watches us, that nothing be amiss—  
Love ! our hearts bleed as one in the last lingering  
kiss.

Good-by, good-by, good-by! the echo rings  
A harsh, jarred sound in my self-tortured ears,  
And agony, a fount of blood, upsprings  
And tears our bosoms with dividing fears.  
The cruel sea its final billow rears  
And I must pass to seek an unknown sky;  
We dare not see each other's face for tears,  
And the last kisses—Did we only die!  
Love! Ah! One kiss! One kiss! One kiss!  
Good-by, Good-by!