

On hearing of William Watson's illness.

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"I'm am sorry to hear that Mr. Watson has been less well during the present week. The nervous tension which always follows upon publication may well have proved too much for him; it is to be hoped the relapse is only momentary".

The Critic's" London Correspondence.

I

No; not the sending forth his printed lines  
Has robbed the poet of his calmer mood;  
But finding them along this life's confines  
Where mysteries within our knowledge brood,  
He faltered first, not when he spake her name;  
But when Truth kissed him with her radiant flame.

II

Tense chords are his, and yet so fine that Day  
Shining upon them for a lucent while,  
Makes light too heavy; and what time his lay  
Outbreathes, his lovers may not speak or smile,  
Lest their too urgent gladness ~~with~~<sup>Smite</sup> his brain  
And cheat the harp aeolian of its strain.

III

This is the price he pays, whose eager youth  
Has waited long upon earth's farthest shores and strained  
Dear eyes of love and longing after Truth -  
This--that \*neath lightning-flash, the vision gained,  
The soul's eyes ache to rest their happy sight,  
E'en though the darkness deepen into night.

IV.

The poet's mind climbs highest; and his flesh  
Refines to filament of wonderment.  
This bears him up within its wing-like mesh  
Until he grasps the goal of his intent;  
And, holding fast the gain, his overweight  
Falls through to flesh again, inviolate.

V.

O what an hour shall be, when full withdrawn  
From that high tower he gropes in toward the stars,  
He, fearing not its fragile steps, feels dawn  
Enswathe his soul unfleshed; and through broad bars  
Of morning, Light and Truth herself shall say:  
"Fear not; thou livest in unclouded day."

Christmas Night,  
1894.

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For Mr North  
From Infuscaulus

The Poet and the Soldier.

A poet's pipe lay lost within the wood,  
And dryads came and played about its mouth;  
Enanoured breezes from the fragrant South  
Found all ~~the~~ <sup>its</sup> sweetness; ~~they~~ <sup>then</sup> the dryads stood  
To hear new music pour its gracious wine  
Beneath a bower of roses and eglantine.

A hero's sword lay gleaming on cold ground;  
Dry drops of <sup>R</sup> blood were brown on edge and sheath;  
And near the blade a ruined laurel-wreath  
Lay rotting on a moss-grown burial-mound.  
Beside them, robed in garments for the tomb,  
Sat a lone maiden with a passion-bloom.

Then wild and brazen throats of righteous war  
Shivered the morning stillness with their cry;  
And where the truth paused tremblingly to die,  
At ~~that~~ <sup>her</sup> last stand, a poet from afar  
Filled the lost pipe with music, while a youth  
Laurelled and brave, waved the bare sword of Truth.

O poet-soldiers, ye who sing and fight;  
Nor pipe or sword was ever lost in vain.  
New ~~armies~~ <sup>armies</sup> form. Retreating o'er Time's plain,  
Beside your graves they stand at last for Right;  
And none may say if poet's pipe, or sword,  
Win the best triumphs grateful years record.

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ON THE FRAGMENTS OF SAPPHO'S POEMS IN THE  
EGYPTIAN MUSEUM AT BERLIN.

I

Red bloom of Lesbian apple-orchards wafted through long years  
Falls on these shriveled parchments, like a rain of fragrant fire;  
Yet burns not, save where love's half-hidden palimpsest appears,  
Flame meeting flame, in rain of Sappho's tears--- love's rapt desire.

II.

If these be leaves of song, blown hither o'er an aeon mute,  
Oft eddying with the aeon's tempests--ever borne along,  
How sweeter far the hour when green-hid boughs bent low with fruit;  
And Sappho read her love-lay, bloom and fruitage, all a song.

III.

If these be ruins of the gems crushed 'neath the feet of time,  
Firm - chambered lights e'en yet to love-crowned souls illuminate,  
Glints of her passion, fragments of a flaming jewel rhyme;  
What was the coronet she wore? O, answer, shameless fate.

IV.

O'er these from Lesbos and her love-couch, shine refluent moons,  
Grow thick brown myrtle, starry jonquil, floating maiden-hair.  
Out of her heart-throb, quick and troubled, breath aeolian tunes;  
Red oleander, love-emblazoned, tints the dreamy air.

V.

These be not vineyards on the hillside, clustered fruit and vine:  
These be not blossoms in the valley, gold of daffodil:--  
These are the red drops, in time's chalice, of love's wildering wine:  
These are the perfume from life's garden Sappho's songs distil.

For Mr North  
From Infusculas