

GREYSTONE AND PORPHYRY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649329397

Greystone and Porphyry by Harry Thurston Peck

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HARRY THURSTON PECK

**GREYSTONE
AND PORPHYRY**

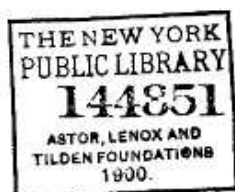
GREYSTONE
AND
PORPHYRY

By
Harry Thurston Peck



New York
Dodd, Mead & Company
Mdcccxcix JMS

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Victor and Vanquished

I.

◆◆◆THROUGH the crowded streets return-
◆ T ◆ ing, at the ending of the day,
◆◆◆ Hastened one whom all saluted as he
sped along his way;
In his eye a gleam of triumph, in his heart a
joy sincere,
And the voice of shouting thousands still re-
sounding in his ear.
Passed he 'neath a stately archway toward the
goal of his desire,
Till he saw a woman's figure lolling idly by the
fire.

"I have won!" he cried, exultant; "I have saved
a cause from wreck,
Crushed the rival that I dreaded, set my foot
upon his neck!
Now at last the way is open, now at last men
call me great,
I am leader of the leaders, I am master in the
State!"
Languidly she turned to listen with a decorous
pretence,
And her cold patrician features mirrored forth
indifference.

"Men are always scheming, striving, for some petty end," said she:
Then, a little yawn suppressing, "What is all of this to me?"

II.

Through the shadows of the evening, as they quenched the sunset glow,
Came the other, faring homeward with dejected step and slow;
Wistful, peering through the darkness, till he saw, as oft before,
Where a woman stood impatient at the threshold of the door.

"I have lost!" he faltered faintly. "All is over"
—with a groan;

Then he paused and gazed expectant at the face beside his own.

Two soft eyes were turned upon him with a woman's tenderness,

Two white arms were flung about him with a passionate caress,

And a voice of thrilling music to his mutely uttered plea

Said, "If only you are with me, what is all the rest to me?"

III.

All night long the people's leader sat in silence and alone,

Dull of eye, with brain unthinking, for his heart
had turned to stone;
While the hours passed all unheeded till the
hush of night had ceased
And the haggard light, returning, flecked the
melancholy East.

But the other, the defeated, laughed a laugh of
merriment,
And he thrust his cares behind him with an in-
finite content,
Recking not of place and power and the smiles
of those above,
For his darkness was illumined by the radiance
of love.

Each had grasped the gift of fortune, each had
counted up the cost;
And the vanquished was the victor, and the
winner he that lost.