

**THESE
DEGENERATE DAYS**

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These degenerate days by Minot J. Savage

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^{BY}
MINOT J. SAVAGE

*"Not ten strong men th' enormous weight could raise,—
Such men as live in these degenerate days"*

Pope's HOMER.

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BOSTON

GEO. H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET

1887

4 Dec. 1891.
The Gift of
The Publisher.

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To J. K. Lowell.

Wit, Humorist, Poet, Critic, Diplomat:

How many and what jewels deck the crown
That marks the kingship of thy fair renown,—
The only kingship that a democrat
Like thee could covet! But, when one has sat
Upon thy throne of thought, and, looking down,
Has seen men cringing at a monarch's frown,
Beside real power, how poor must seem all that!

I have been one content to sit and hear

Thy lark-song falling from the upper air
To cheer the vale to humble tasks assigned.
And still thy old notes echo in my ear;
And, as I listen, earth grows very fair,
While I take heart and hope for all mankind!

"God is not dumb, that he should speak no more;
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor;
There towers the mountain of the Voice no less,
Which whoso seeks shall find."

LOWELL's *Bibliolatres.*

“These Degenerate Days.”*

O LOWELL, once thy ringing words
Were keen and flashing, like the swords
With which Jehovah's hosts clove down
The fierce Philistine's haughty crown!

In days when Liberty lay low,
Despair of friend and scorn of foe;
When o'er her, in exultant mood,
Stood Ill in liveried guise of Good;
When Commerce, if it had a soul,
Had traded it for Judas' dole;
When Fashion, in her high estate,
Spelled out success and called it great;

*Written on reading Lowell's "Credidimus Jovem Regnare" in the *Atlantic* for February, 1887.

When preachers, like false watch-dogs, bayed
To fright the Truth they had betrayed,—
Then thou, young David, with thy sling
Didst to his knees the giant bring,
And, filling Israel's foes with dread,
Dismay through all his cohorts spread!

Or — change the figure — when increased
The revel of the godless feast
That, like Belshazzar's, set the seal
Of bondage on God's commonweal;
When in the nation's capital
Reigned Slavery's high carnival,
Where all the lords of wealth and might
Led captive outlawed Truth and Right,
And e'en the Temple cups brought in
To grace the triumph of their sin,—
Then thy handwriting on the wall

Did all their stoutest hearts appall ;
Their trembling lips, with oath or prayer,
Betrayed the unseen spectre there ;
While, in the lines thy finger drew,
The tyrant God's swift judgment knew !

Or — change the figure once again —
When, on the field of fighting men,
The two great armies met,— the free
Stood face to face with Slavery ;
When both sides claimed their cause divine,
And looked to heaven for a sign,—
Thou didst flash out,— thy streaming hair
A threatening comet on the air,—
And, flaming far across the night,
Helped men believe God loved the right,
And, cleaving all the darkness through,
Wast herald of a day-dawn new !