

**RABBI BEN EZRA  
AND OTHER POEMS**

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Rabbi Ben Ezra and other poems by Robert Browning & Bernard Partridge

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**ROBERT BROWNING & BERNARD PARTRIDGE**

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AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ROBERT BROWNING

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

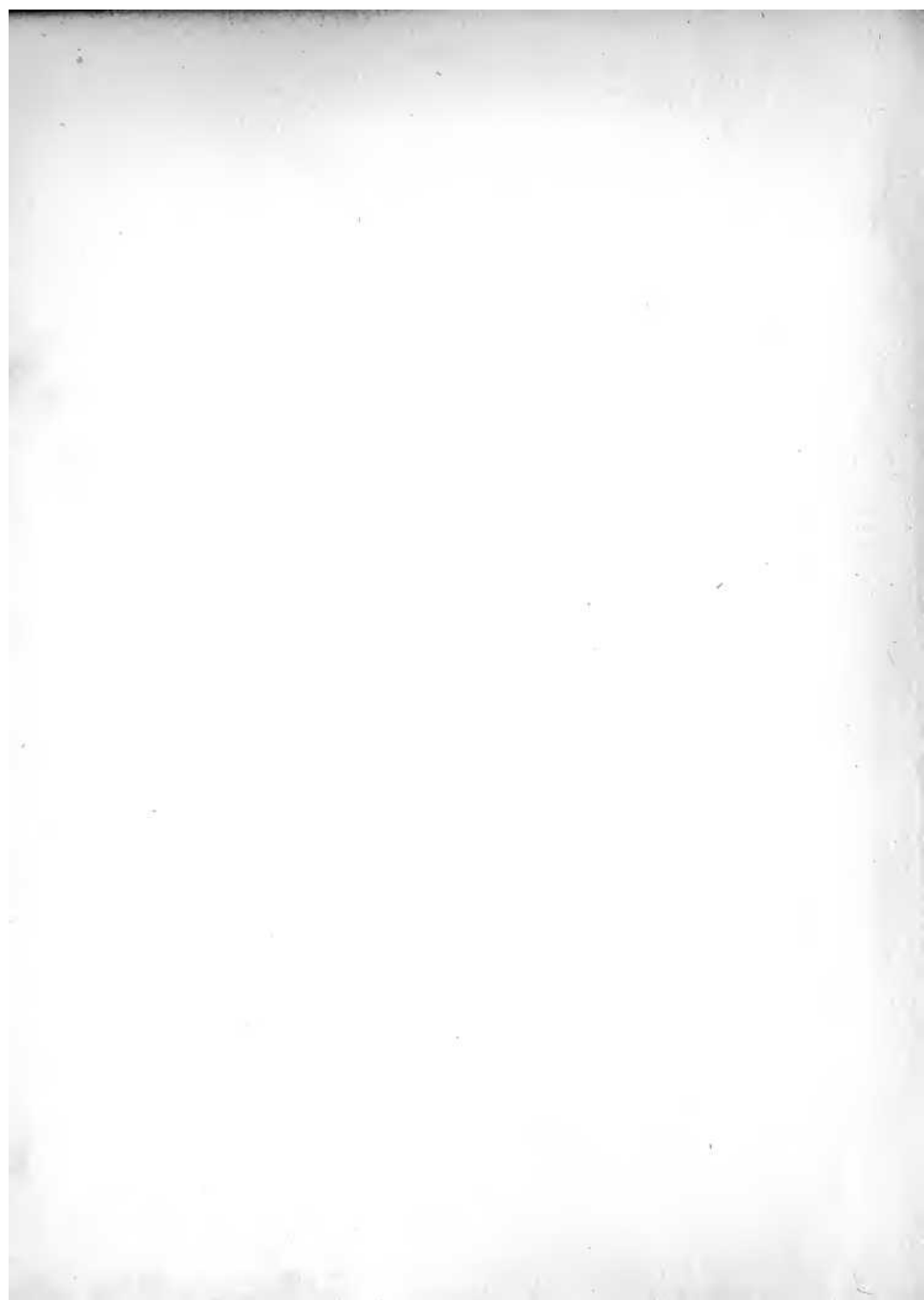
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RABBI BEN EZRA	
Then, welcome each rebuff That turns earth's smoothness rough, Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go! Be our joys three-parts pain! Strive, and hold cheap the strain ; Learn, nor account the pang ; dare, never grudge the throe !	Page 5 <i>Frontispiece</i>
For thence,—a paradox Which comforts while it mocks,— Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail : What I aspired to be, And was not, comforts me : A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.	Page 5 .    8
Youth ended, I shall try My gain or loss thereby ; Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold : And I shall weigh the same, Give life its praise or blame : Young, all lay in dispute ; I shall know, being old.	Page 10 .    12
As it was better, youth Should strive, through acts uncouth, Toward making, than repose on aught found made : So, better, age, exempt From strife, should know, than tempt Further. Thou waitedest age : wait death nor be afraid!	Page 13 .    16



## Illustrations

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But all, the world's coarse thumb And finger failed to plumb, So passed in making up the main account ; All instincts immature, All purposes unsure, That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount. Thoughts hardly to be packed Into a narrow act, Fancies that broke through language and escaped ; All I could never be, All, men ignored in me, This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.	Page 17 . 20
Thou, to whom fools propound, When the wine makes its round, 'Since life fleets, all is change ; the Past gone, seize to-day !' Fool ! All that is, at all, Lasts ever, past recall ; Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure : What entered into thee, That was, is, and shall be : Time's wheel runs back or stops : Potter and clay endure.	Page 17 . 22
What though the earlier grooves Which ran the laughing loves Around thy base, no longer pause and press ? What though, about thy rim, Sculp't-things in order grim Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress ? Look not thou down but up ! To uses of a cup, The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal, The new mine's foaming flow, The Master's lips a-glow ! Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel ?	Page 18 . 26

## Illustrations

### JAMES LEE'S WIFE

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That's a new question ; still replies the fact,  
Nothing endures : the wind moans, saying so ;  
We moan in acquiescence : there 's life's pact.  
Perhaps probation—do I know ?  
God does : endure His act !

Only, for man, how bitter not to grave  
On his soul's hands' palms one fair good wise thing  
Just as he grasped it ! For himself, death's wave ;  
While time first washes—ah, the sting !—  
O'er all he 'd sink to save. Page 46 . . . . . 44

### ABT VOGLER

There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall live as before ;  
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;  
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more ;  
On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven, a perfect round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist ;  
Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor power  
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist  
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.  
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,  
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,  
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard ;  
Enough that he heard it once : we shall hear it by and by. Page 66 60

Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,  
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe :  
But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear ;  
The rest may reason and welcome : 'tis we musicians know. Page 69 68

## *Illustrations*

### APPARENT FAILURE

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It's wiser being good than bad ;	
It's safer being meek than fierce :	
It's fitter being sane than mad.	
My own hope is, a sun will pierce	
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched ;	
That, after Last, returns the First,	
Though a wide compass round be fetched ;	
That what began best, can't end worst,	
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst. <i>Page</i> 76 . . . . .	78

### PROSPICE

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,	
The mist in my face,	
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote	
I am nearing the place,	
The power of the night, the press of the storm,	
The post of the foe ;	
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,	
Yet the strong man must go :	
For the journey is done and the summit attained,	
And the barriers fall,	
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,	
The reward of it all. <i>Page</i> 83 . . . . .	82