

“Italy in January 1853”, *Last Fruit off an Old Tree*, 1853, 446-447.

O Nation of Alfieri! thou
Before the cope and cowl must bow,
And Gallick herds from Tiber drink
Until the stagnant water sink,
And nothing be there left but mud
Dark with long streaks of civic blood.
Mark, Galileo, witli what glee,
From sorcery's fragile thralldom free,
The sun spins round thy worlds and thee!
Above, to keep them in, is bent
A solid marble firmament,
Which saints and confessors hold down
Surmounted with a triple crown.
Torture had made thee (never mind !)
A little lame, a little blind:
God's own right-hand restores thy sight,
And from his own he gives thee light;
His arm supports thy mangled feet,
Now firm, and plants near His thy seat.
Savonarola! look below.
And see how fresh those embers glow
Which once were faggots round the stake
Of him who died for Jesu's sake,
Who walkt where his apostles led,
And from God's wrath, not mortal's, fled.
Come, Dante ! virtuous, sage, and bold.
Come, look into that miry fold;
Foxes and wolves lie there asleep,
O'ergorged; and men but wake to weep:
Come, Saints and Virgins! whose one tomb
Is Rome's parental catacomb;
Above where once ye bled, there now
Foul breath blows blushes from the brow
Of maidens, whipt until they fall
To feed the plump confessional.
O earlier shades! no less revered!
In your Elysium ye have heard
No tale so sad, no tale so true,
None so incredible to you.

Gloomy as droops the present day,
And Hope is chill'd and shrinks away,
Another age perhaps may see
Freedom raise up dead Italy.