

ON THE DISASTROUS SPREAD OF ÆSTHETICISM IN ALL CLASSES.

Impetuously I sprang from bed, Long before lunch was up, That I might
drain the dizzy dew From day's first golden cup.

In swift devouring ecstasy Each toil in turn was done; I had done lying on
the lawn Three minutes after one.

For me, as Mr. Wordsworth says, The duties shine like stars; I formed my
uncle's character, Decreasing his cigars.

But could my kind engross me? No! Stern Art--what sons escape her? Soon I
was drawing Gladstone's nose On scraps of blotting paper.

Then on--to play one-fingered tunes Upon my aunt's piano. In short, I have
a headlong soul, I much resemble Hanno.

(Forgive the entrance of the not Too cogent Carthaginian. It may have been
to make a rhyme; I lean to that opinion).

Then my great work of book research Till dusk I took in hand-- The forming
of a final, sound Opinion on The Strand.

But when I quenched the midnight oil, And closed The Referee, Whose thirty
volumes folio I take to bed with me,

I had a rather funny dream, Intense, that is, and mystic; I dreamed that,
with one leap and yell, The world became artistic.

The Shopmen, when their souls were still, Declined to open shops--

And Cooks recorded frames of mind In sad and subtle chops.

The stars were weary of routine: The trees in the plantation Were growing
every fruit at once, In search of a sensation.

The moon went for a moonlight stroll, And tried to be a bard, And gazed
enraptured at itself: I left it trying hard.

The sea had nothing but a mood Of 'vague ironic gloom,' With which
t'explain its presence in My upstairs drawing-room.

The sun had read a little book That struck him with a notion: He drowned himself and all his fires Deep in the hissing ocean.

Then all was dark, lawless, and lost: I heard great devilish wings: I knew that Art had won, and snapt The Covenant of Things.

I cried aloud, and I awoke, New labours in my head. I set my teeth, and manfully Began to lie in bed.

Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing, So I my life conduct. Each morning see some task begun, Each evening see it chucked.

But still, in sudden moods of dusk, I hear those great weird wings, Feel vaguely thankful to the vast Stupidity of things.

* * * * *