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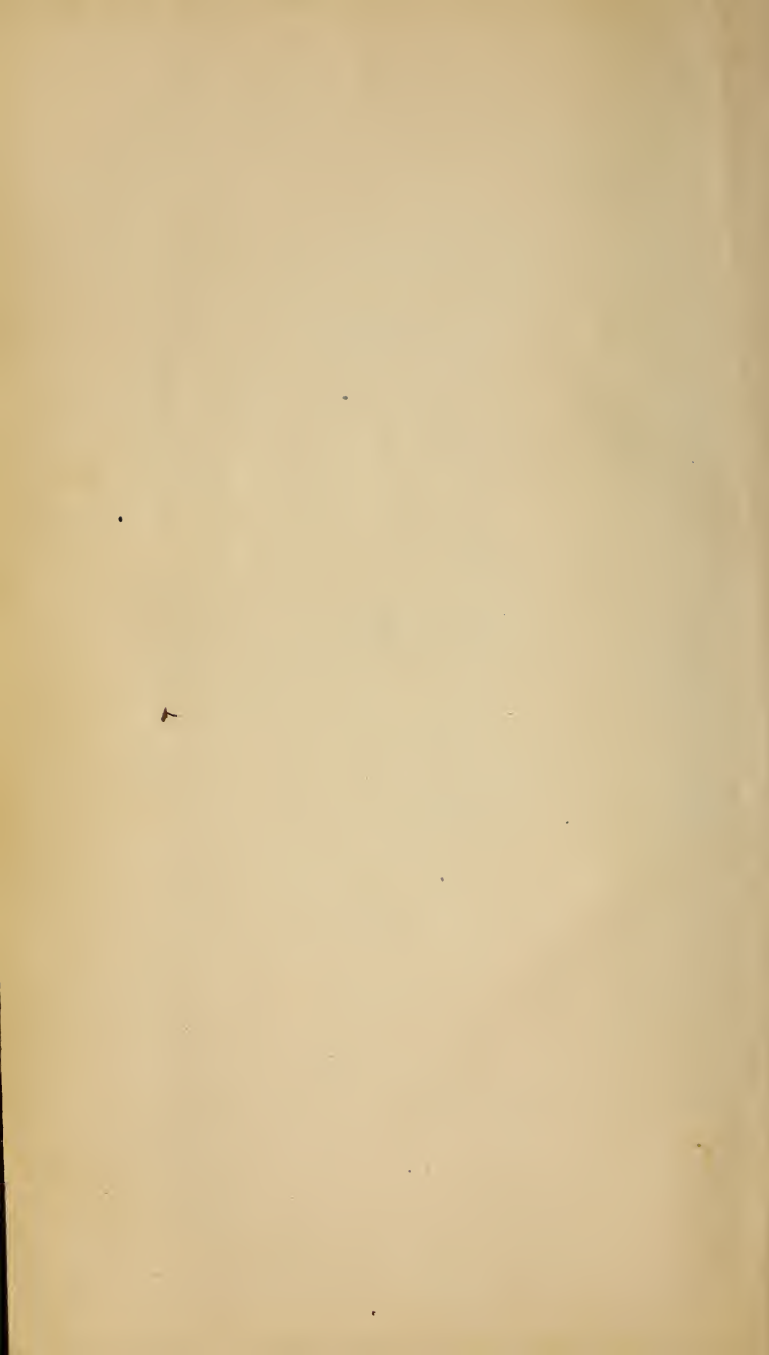
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1792

POEMS.



POEMS.

BY

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER, D.D.

||

Amico, io vivendo cercava conforto
Nel monte Parnasso :
Tu, meglio consigliato, cercalo
Nel Calvario.

Chiabrera's Epitaph at Savona.

SECOND EDITION.

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A. S. Robinson

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PREFACE.

In republishing a selection from poems, written some of them more than twenty years ago, and many of which have been in print more than sixteen years, I have been guided by the judgment of those to whose opinion I should naturally defer. It appears also that there is now a demand for the volumes, which have for some time been out of print. If I did not hope that with many readers, especially the young, the publication would answer a higher end than literary pleasure, and that the poems would, in their place and degree, co-operate with the more serious and religious works, which the public has received with so much kindness, I should shrink from a re-issue of them. But if the glory of God should be promoted to ever so small an amount by this volume, I confess it will be also an additional pleasure to myself, that the labour and energy of past years should not have been altogether wasted, so far as that one end is concerned, to which alone I have a right to devote myself, and whose sole interest and importance grow with growing age, the knowledge and love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

F. W. FABER.

The Oratory. London.
Eve of SS. Peter and Paul.
1856.

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PREFACE.

BLAME not my verse if echoes of church bells
With every change of thought or dream are twining,
Fetching a murmuring sameness from the fells,
And lakes, and rivers with their inland shining.
And marvel not in these loose drifting times
If anchored spirits in their blythest motion
Dip to their anchors veiled within the ocean,
Catching too staid a measure for their rhymes.
An Age comes on, which came three times of old,*
When the enfeebled nations shall stand still
To be by Christian science shaped at will ;
And the fresh Church, rejecting heathen mould,
Shall draw her types from Europe's middle night,
Well-pleased if such good darkness be her light.

F. W. F.

* The end of the fourth, the beginning of the thirteenth, and the end of the sixteenth Centuries.

PRELUDE TO THE STYRIAN LAKE.

A SINGLE DAY! A single nook of earth!
O how the heart doth magnify all things
Embraced within her soft and shadowy rings!
What a huge niche to shrine a single mirth,
A joy obscure as is the Styrian lake,
Vague as the odorous breath of pinewood brake!—
Priest of a sylvan chapel, I would call
The world-worn pilgrim hither to take breath,
Joining in this my weekday ritual,
Of nature mixed and our most holy Faith.
If it be worth no more, at least it gives
Sweet proof how full the green earth is of glee:
My days are all like this; so let it be
A sample of the life a poet lives.

F. W. F.

THE ANNUNCIATION
OF OUR BLESSED LADY.



I.

THE STYRIAN LAKE.

1.

THE LAKE.

WHERE the Styrian mountains rise
Close to Mariazell, lies
Buried in a pinewood brake
A most beautiful green lake.
Lizard's back is not so green
As its soft and tremulous sheen ;
Hermit's home on Athos' hill
Cannot be a place more still.
Blissful Covert ! there is not
Like that Styrian lake a spot
That I know by land or sea,
Whose unsleeping memory
Works so potently in me.

'Tis good to have a nook of earth
To be with us in our mirth,
And to set a haunt apart
To be household in the heart,
A local shrine, whence gentle sorrow
Hope and soothing thought may borrow ;
And which may be every hour
In the light, or shade, or shower,

Or the stillness, or the wind,
Or the sunset, as the mind
Would the light within should vary,
A true mental sanctuary.
What may hallow grief, but thought
And soft feeling closely wrought?
For the heart, which in its pain
Can the outer world disdain,
And the kind earth which we tread,
How shall it be comforted?
And that pensive being, mirth,
If it be untied from earth,
Is a wanton, dreamy thing,
Like a pine-tree's murmuring.

Styria is a wondrous land,
Special work of beauty's hand,
Where amidst the tranquil pines
Many a green lake meekly shines,
And upon its bosom glasses
All the slumberous dark masses
From the mighty firwoods thrown,
And white steep, and sunny cone.
For the forest murmurings,
And for lawnlike openings
Where in shady belts of trees
Nestle the lone villages,
For sweet brooks and ruined halls
And romantic waterfalls,
And a colouring so bright
That the land is green by night,
And for echoes waking round
When the convent bell shall sound,
For unwonted woodland grace
Styria is a wondrous place :

And it is the nook of earth
That is with me in my mirth,
A real Eden, whence I borrow
Food for song and calm for sorrow.

Most I love that placid lake,
Buried in the pinewood brake.
There the little pool is laid
Quiet in the lispingshade,
Mountain water in a cup
To the blue skies looking up,
With the bubbles brightly beading
All the gleamy surface, speeding
Up like silver fish where'er
Earthy springs mount to the air.

There the little pool was laid
Quiet in the pinewood shade,
When the Roman hosts were come
To these woods of Noricum.
Emperors rose and tribunes fell,
Earth was governed ill or well;
There was famine, there was war,
And sedition's dreadful jar,
And man's lot became so dreary
That the earth grew old and weary.
Were it not for her free mirth
Men would make a slave of earth.
But this way there came no breath
Of calamity or death.
They pierced not through the pinewood brake
To the little Styrian lake.
All the changes which it saw
Were by the harmonious law
And the sweetly pleading reasons
Of the four and fair-tongued seasons.

Pearly dawn and hazy noon,
And the yellow-orbèd moon,
And the purple midnight, came
Through those very years the same.
The lake had all its own free will,
So it was translucent still ;
For the summer day was fair,
When the white-banked clouds were there,
And the bright moths in the air ;
And the thunder cleared away
For the evening's slanting ray,
And the thrushes in the rain
Sang with all their might and main
To the young ones in their home :
What recked they of mighty Rome ?
Not a moth or bird did shine
Brighter there for Constantine.
Blessed earth ! O blessed lake !
Shut within thy pinewood brake,
Angels saw thee in thy glee,
Of the Roman Empire free !

Then romantic days came on :
Nature still as calmly shone
On the fragrant pinewood shade
Where the Styrian lake was laid.
Earl with belt and knight with spur,
These made no unwonted stir
In the green and glossy deep,
Nor woke the echoes from the steep.
And if ever highborn maid
To the river did unlade
Her sad heart of freight of love,
When could songs hard fortune move ?
Yet the stream forgot the wail
Ere it passed the sunken vale,

Where the little tremulous lake
Sparkles in the hollow brake.
And the merry hunting-horn,
Speaking in the cold white morn,
Bore not on its ringing breath
Tidings of the newborn Faith.
Yet methinks 'twere not unmeet
To believe a trouble sweet,
Like a new soul, found its road
Into that retired abode,
Somewhat of a murmuring
Through the pine-boughs vibrating,
When they caught the harmless swell
Of the earliest convent bell.
If sound have one human birth
Blending wholly with the earth,
Rising, growing, near or far,
With no other sound at war,
Which can sorrow or rejoice
Like a natural earthborn voice,
Natural as the breezes blowing,
Pastoral as the oxen lowing,
'Tis the undulating swell
Of the woodland abbey bell.

2.

THE LEGEND.

So eleven ages fled
Since the Lord rose from the dead,
Maker of this little lake,
Moth and bird and pinewood brake,

To redeem the sons of earth
And give to them a better birth,
Not without the element
From the earth's own bosom sent,
Thus to heighten and to bless
Our old mother's loveliness,
From her surface to unweave
All the ravelled web which Eve,
Name her with a tender thought!
Hath o'er field and forest wrought,
To enrich her with a dower
Of true sacramental power.
Not without her blameless gifts
Jesus her lost children lifts
To a nature all divine,
Better, dearest earth! than thine.
So eleven ages passed,
While the pines their shadow cast,
Making summer noonday cool
By the green sequestered pool.

Hither for the love of Mary
Came a gentle Missionary,
With an image of black wood
From an ancient limetree hewed,
Shaped for her, the Mother mild,
Blessed Mary with her Child.
With the Image to the dell
Came the gift of miracle,
Shrined within a sylvan Cell.

Far away mid cultured bowers
Rose St. Lambert's convent towers,
The martyred Saint, who bravely stood
Against King Pepin; and his blood,

By the lewd Alpais slain,
Ran in Liege street like rain.
Out from yon Cistercian home
This kind-mannered Monk hath come
With St. Mary and her Child
So to hallow the green wild.
Not the moon when she o'ertops
Lofty Seeberg's ragged copse,
Clearing all the dusky pine,
In the starry sky to shine,
Hunting with her arrowy beam
Open spots in Salza's stream,
Where at times it may emerge
Scarce beyond the forest's verge,
Not the stealthy breath of spring
Up the woodlands murmuring,
Drawing after it a veil
Of thin green across the dale,
Like an Angel's robe behind,
Still, or stirred by odorous wind:
Not so welcome, moon or spring,
For the quiet gifts they bring ;
Advents though they be of bliss,
They bear not a boon like this,
Blessed Mary and her Son
Deep into the woodlands gone,
One poor monk, a beadsman lowly,
With gilt vessels rude but holy,
And a power of miracle
Shed into the whispering dell,
Lodged within and screened apart
In the forest's dusky heart.

Now amid the woodmen nigh
Marriage is a blissful tie,

And around the infant's birth
 Is a light of Christian mirth,
 And the monk can breathe a breath
 On the anxious face of death.
 Life is drawn within a ring
 Of most peaceful hallowing.
 To the Mother and the Maid
 These rude men their breasts unlade,
 Seeking to her Son for aid.
 Like the valley's evening mist
 By the pensive sunset kissed,
 Charities and virtues rise
 With all household sanctities,
 While meek hymns and praises flow
 From the hermitage below ;
 And the little bell is rung
 When the blessed Mass is sung,
 All, a blameless incense, given
 From the pinewoods into Heaven,
 From the shaggy Styrian dell
 Of St. Mary of the Cell.

Thou wert not unstirred, dear lake !
 Though perchance thou didst not wake
 From the sleep wherein the wind
 Doth thy green depths seem to bind,
 Sighing sweetly, softly, sadly,
 Sighing sometimes almost gladly,
 As the pinetree only sighs,
 Maker of earth's elegies :
 Thou wert not unstirred that day,
 When upon thy marge at play
 First a Christian child was seen,
 White as snowwreath on a green,
 Pure as nature's self, and bright
 With a more abounding light.

Let the gentle memory
Of the plain monk honoured be,
He who for the love of Mary
Hither came a missionary,
A devout and nameless being
To the Styrian forests fleeing,
To baptize the woodmen rude
In this shady solitude,
And to add a better mirth
To the glory of the earth.
Holy monk ! thy good deeds shine
Above peer or palatine,
Gleaming through the crowded past
With a radiance calm and chaste,
Like a steady, pensive star,
By itself, and brighter far
Than the sparkling ruddy ring
Round the name of some old king.
Yet thy quiet name is gone
In the shadow of some throne,
Lost amid the jewelled throng,
All embalmed in unwise song.
Let the pageant pass away,
There is thy domestic ray ;
There art thou—a lily-flower
In a most unthought-of bower.
Or a very fragrant tree,
Which we smell but cannot see,
Buried in the tangled wood,
Scenting all the neighbourhood.

Thou, a man of simple ways,
Never could'st have joyless days ;
Thou, a man of simple wants,
Must have loved the sylvan haunts.

Ever to thy spirit stealing
With a touch of heavenly feeling.
Oft I doubt not by this lake,
Forcing through the pinewood brake,
Thou didst spend the twilight dim,
Chanting some rough latin hymn,
Hallowing the evening air
With devout half-spoken prayer.
Mists upon the mighty hills
And the alder-belted rills,
Chirping bird and lowly flower,
And the rainbow in the shower,
And the air when it receives
Incense from the withered leaves,
And the pinetrees in the sun,
And the green lake at the noon
Imaging the empty moon,
Whose unfreighted orb is white
For the lack of yellow light ;—
Like the Church whose Lord must go
Ere she can reflect the glow
Of His glory, deep and vast,
In her bridal bosom cast,
So the moon all day must bide
For an evening Whitsuntide :—
All this common tranquil round,
This sweet ring of sight and sound,
Did of old belong to thee,
And to-day belongs to me ;
And it soothed thy wrinkled brow
And thy heart thou knew'st not how.
Ah kind-mannered monk ! I seem,
As in some strong-featured dream,
To come nigh and spend an hour
With thee in this Styrian bower ;

So much hath the blissful thought
Of thy doings in me wrought.
Centuries are yielding things :
Unity of spirit brings
Land to land, and year to year,
And old generations near.
Thus I walk o'er this green land
Through the forests hand in hand
With the simple Missionary,
Who for love of Mother Mary
Was content apart to dwell
With her Image in his cell.

And thus for full a hundred years
Simple joys and simple fears
Compassed some Cistercian brother,
Beadsman to the blessed Mother ;
Till it chanced that far away
In the drear Moravia,
Margrave Henry dreamed a dream,
Where the Mother-Maid did seem
To heal him of his sore disease
In a cell amid green trees,
And the visionary lines,
Pictured Styria's rocks and pines,
And the Margrave saw the lake,
And the open pinewood brake.
So he came with trusting soul,
And St. Mary made him whole.
Costly Church with tower and bell
Rises in the sylvan dell,
Arching o'er the antique cell.
Now in long and gorgeous line
Emperors crowd unto the shrine,

Peers and ladies and proud kings
 Kneel there with their offerings ;
 Silken banners, bright and brave,
 Through the dusky pinewoods wave,
 And the peasants of far lands
 Come with wild flowers in their hands,—
 All come here to Mary's haunt
 With a sorrow or a want.
 Yet I ween the shaggy dell
 Witnessed worthier miracle,
 When the woodmen of the place
 Were transformed by inward grace ;
 And from their wild manners grew
 Flowers that feed on heavenly dew ;
 And soft thoughts and gentle ways
 Could beguile their rugged days.
 Love of Mary was to them
 As the very outer hem
 Of the Saviour's priestly vest,
 Which they timorously pressed,
 And whereby a simple soul
 Might for faith's sake be made whole.

3.

CHURCH MATINS.

Oh how beautiful was dawn
 On the Styrian mountain lawn,
 When the lights and shadows lay
 Where the night strove with the day !
 From my window did I look
 Upon Salza's glimmering brook,

And the valley dark and deep,
And the ponderous woods asleep ;
And I saw the little lake
Like a black spot in the brake.
And the silver crescent moon
Of the greenwood month of June,
Hanging o'er a mountain top
Seemed her downward course to stop,
And to look around in wonder
At the landscape brightening under.
In the sky there was a light
Which was not a birth of night,
A stealthy streak, and pearly pale,
Like a white transparent veil ;
And there came a chilly breeze,
Like the freshness of the seas,
As though hills and woods on high
Now were breathing heavily ;
And among the woodlands wide
Here and there a wild bird cried.
Where the dewy alders grow
I could hear the oxen low ;
But the echo that did follow
Was a sound more dead and hollow
Than the leaping voice that fills
Daylight skies and daylight hills.
On the pastures was a light
Which was neither day nor night,
And the dusky frowning wood
Still in moonlight shadows stood.
But a mist o'er Salza's bed
Hovered like a gossamer thread ;
And I saw the glorious scene
Every moment grow more green,—

Day encroaching with sweet light
On the fairy-land of night.

I remember well that dawn
On the Styrian mountain lawn.

Blessed be the God who made
Sun and moon, and light and shade,
Balmy wind and pearly shower,
Forest tree and meadow flower,
And the heart to feel and love
All the joys that round us move !
Blessed be the Angels bright,
Ordering the pomp aright,
Ministrants of winds and showers,
Ruddy clouds and sunset hours,
With fair robe and busy wing
The mute figures marshalling,
Like a ceremonial thing !
Blessed be the Cross that draws
From the earth by dreadest laws
Sparkling streams that cleanse and shine,
Making little babes divine,
And the grape's red blood, and bread
Laid upon the Altar dread ;
Symbols, more than symbols, urns
Where a Heavenly Presence burns,
Veils that hide from loving eyes
Jesus in His strange disguise,
Making earth to be all rife
With a supernatural life.

Sweet into the morning dim
Rose the happy pilgrim's hymn,
As he caught from distant height,
In the grey uncertain light,

The early flush of summer morning
Upon Mariazell dawning.
From the Salza's shady bed,
From the mountain's rocky head,
From the earthy path that shines
Down the steep and through the pines,
From the meadow-lands below
Like a very stream doth flow
The sweet song and plaintive greeting
Of the weary pilgrims meeting ;

“ All hail in thy sylvan tent,

“ Mary, fairest Ornament !”

Mother Mary ! 'tis a thing
Soothing as the breath of spring,
In the quiet time to hear
This wild region far and near
With the very accents swell
Of the blessed Gabriel.
'Tis a wonder and a grace
In this uncouth pinewood place,
Mid white rocks and gloomy trees
And old Noric fastnesses,
To look forth and calmly listen,
While above the pale stars glisten ;
And to hear the grateful song
Of the gentile pilgrim-throng,
The old angelic greeting, given
To the Virgin Queen of Heaven.

What are ages, what is time

To a ritual thus sublime ?

How shall distance or decay

Make or mar eternal day ?

For a heavenly word once spoken

Is an everlasting token,

Still by time or space unbroken ;

And through weary centuries,
Quivering on the very breeze,
Word divine and angel breath
Hover to the ear of faith,
Finding souls which they may win,
And meek hearts to enter in.
I see Mary rapture-bound,
And the lily-flowers around,
And the smooth and spotless bed,
And the Angel overhead,
And the open casement where
Blows the fresh and virgin air,
And Our Lady, mute and pale,
Listening to the strange "All Hail."
And I hear—years hinder not—
Angel accents on the spot;
Hark! the Styrian vale is ringing
With the gentile pilgrims singing.

Breaking on the quiet dell
Slowly swings the heavy bell,
And the organ breathes a sound
Into all the pinewoods round.
What a trouble of delight
There hath been the livelong night!
Mariazell! thou hast seen
Sleepers few this night, I ween.
One by one the pilgrims throng,
Coming in with plaintive song;
And in many a gaudy shed
Beads and Crosses are outspread.
Like the stars that one by one
Come to shine when day is done,
Still they flock with merry din,
From the valley of the Inn,

From the Ennsland green and deep,
And the rough Carinthian steep,
From the two lakes of the Save,
And the blythe rich banks of Drave,
And the Mur's rock-shadowed floods,
That shy hunter of the woods,
From the low Dalmatian sea,
And the sea-like Hungary,
And where Danube's waters pass
By Belgrade through the morass,
From Bavaria's sandy dells,
And the smooth Bohemian fells,
From Würzburg and from Ratisbon,
Linz and Passau they have gone ;
And St. John of Prague hath sent
Worshippers to Mary's tent,
Where she waits her serfs to bless
In the Styrian wilderness.

Still they pass unheeded by ;
From the village every eye
Goes with eager anxious look
Up the Salza's tumbling brook :
No white banners yet have showed
On the great Vienna road ;
In the pauses of the ringing
They can hear no far-off singing,
And the signal hath not fired,
And the youthful groups are tired.
Yet 'twas whispered overnight
They'd leave Annaberg ere light.

Pomp of crowds and festal noise
Are not numbered in my joys ;
So I sought the little lake
And the lonely pinewood brake.

The sweet day was clouded over,
And the thunder seemed to hover
O'er the dark, unruffled flood,
And the silent neighbourhood.
Scarce a creature seemed to stir
In that wilderness of fir.
Not a note of singing bird
In the tangled dell was heard:
And the forest lands did wear
A dark robe of lurid air.
On the mountains there did press
A grim dullhearted silentness.
Peace was round me, and a calm,
Yet without the soothing balm
Shed on us by earth and sea
In their true tranquillity.
Swarms of moths from out the brake
Fluttered all across the lake,
And the leaping fishes made
Dreary splashes in the shade,
Where an ancient pinetree throws
O'er the pool its drooping boughs.
Where the marge was strewn all over
With a tapestry of clover,
The dull skies appeared to lower
On the mute and blameless flower;
All the soft and pleasant brightness
Like a breath passed from its whiteness;
As the soul of man whose beauty
Fades, when the timid sense of duty
Passes forth with hasty wing,
Like a wronged and banished thing.
From the ragged trees on high,
From the mirky, swaying sky,

From the summit, white and tall,
With its black pine coronal,
A darksome power of gloom did fall,
Weighing on the little lake,
Hushing all the pinewood brake,
Tarnishing each radiant sight,
Sheathing all the gay green light,
Deadening every summer sound,
To a drowsy tingling bound.
Beauty strove, and strove again,
And the summer strove in vain.
Over lake and pines and all
Was a very funeral pall.
Can it be a curse doth lurk
In the heart of earth at work?
Yet in that translucent deep
Furtive beauty seems to creep,
Like a stealthy sunbeam winding
Through the ocean-depths, and finding
Creatures in them, meek and bright,
Whom to gladden with its light.

Thus doth earth for ever bless
True hearts with her loveliness,
Stealing to them in the storm
With some fair and happy form,
Uttering still some joyous sound
In a bleak and joyless ground,
Planting moss and brilliant grass
In the heart of a morass.
Light within the lake doth move
When there is no light above,
And the sunshine which should glow
In the blue skies, works below,
As far down as eye can follow
In the green transparent hollow,

Streaking it with silvery shoot,
As though sunbeams could take root
In the lake with lawless mirth,
And so shine upwards to the earth.
Thou alone, dear earth! of all
Art a blameless prodigal!
When the heaven above is dull,
And thy yearning heart is full
Of a wish to solace one
Who into thy fields hath gone
To take comfort from thy gladness
Or courage from thy patient sadness,—
When the cheerless heaven above
Will not aid thee in thy love,
Thou some inner light canst win
As though from a heaven within.
Could I think that still at work
The primal curse in thee did lurk?
Shall a thought of curse come nigh,
When I hear that Christian cry?
Hark! at last the joyous song
Of Vienna's pilgrim throng:
"All hail in thy sylvan tent,
Mary, fairest Ornament!"

Tarries the procession still?
See! it winds along the hill,
Like a snake of green and gold
In the sunshine all unrolled,
Or coiling round a mossy tree,
Fearful and yet fair to see.
Thus the bright and bending throng
Slowly draws itself along,
Swayed by modulating song.

Mitred prelates at its head
 Upon flowers and sweet flags tread.
 Gifts from kings of foreign lands,
 Banners worked by royal hands,
 And a hundred shining things,
 Peer's or peasant's offerings,
 Move along the uneven ground,
 While the distant thunders sound.
 'Ere I reached them I could hear,
 Filling all the forest near,
 "Mariazell! schönste Zier!"—
 Plaintive burden, that will quiver
 In my spell-bound ear for ever.

My dear land! I thought of thee;
 And I thought how scantily,
 In what thrifty rivulets,
 Faith's weak tide among us sets.
 And I looked with tearful eyes,
 With an envious surprise,
 Upon that huge wave that passed,
 On the Styrian highlands cast
 With a mighty, sea-like fall
 From the Austrian capital.

O'er twelve hundred kneelers there
 Hangs a veil of odorous air,
 Rising up in thin blue spires
 From the swinging censer-fires.
 And through all the gloomy pile,
 Like a river down each aisle,
 With a strong and heavy flowing
 Are the pealing organs blowing;
 And the banners rich and brave
 On the current lightly wave,

Like the willow bough that quivers
On the bosom of the rivers.

While the mighty hymns were swelling
I passed from out the sacred dwelling,
With full heart and burning thought ;
So much had the ritual wrought,
That I scarcely could control
The strong impulse of my soul
To fall down and weep outright
At the great and solemn sight.
When from that full house of prayer
I passed into the open air,
Ah ! did ever sweet surprise
From old objects so arise
With a strange, bewildering power,
As in that most thrilling hour ?

In the western porch I stood
Amid mountain wastes and wood,
And the hollow tolling thunder,
And the misty valleys under,
Cloud-strewn forests with stray gleams,
And the alder-belted streams,
In the rain the pinewoods singing,
With a rustling whisper ringing,—
Nature filling all the senses
With her blameless influences.
For the rocky foaming floods
And the wet and dripping woods
Fresher and more fragrant are
Than the incense-loaded air.
Mid this glory I am free,
Mother-Maid ! to think of thee,
And with fervent faith to trace,
In this dusky sylvan place,

Footprints of true miracle
Wrought within the savage dell,
And the work, blest Mother Mary !
Of thine ancient missionary.
When the crowd have left the shrine,
Then the season shall be mine ;
Then shall silent Aves swell
In a heart that loves thee well,
A heart that owes its life to thee,
A slave whom Mary hath set free.
I cannot pray amidst a crowd,
Nor with organs pealing loud,
Nor with chains upon my sense
From ritual magnificence.
Ever fair forms like tyrants bind
With spells the currents of my mind.
Sweet sights and sounds my spirit fill,
And ritual beauty leads me still
A passive victim at its will.
The creature of all outward shows,
My heart into the pageant throws
Its ardent self, and dreamily
Floats out as on a sunny sea.
When the Church with functions bright
Wraps calmer spirits in delight,
I am rather proud of God,
Than humbly at His footstool bowed ;
And mid the beautiful display
I feel and love but cannot pray.
I would fain be lone with God,
Else are all my thoughts abroad.
Quiet altars, Jesus there,
Mary's image meek and fair,
Silent whispering twilight round,—
These make consecrated ground !

Better still with holy poor
 Scattered on the wide church-floor.
 With the tinkling beads they tell,
 And whispers scarcely audible.
 Shame on myself! upon my breast
 So lightly doth God's presence rest,
 So little inward turned my soul,
 So much beneath the eye's controul,
 That holy pomp and pageant rare
 Only make poetry spoil prayer.

4.

MARGARET'S PILGRIMAGE.

Now why weep ye by the shrine,
 Ye two maidens? Wherefore twine
 Roses red and sprigs of pine,
 With a busy absent air,
 Round the pilgrim-staffs ye bear?
 From Vienna with high heart
 Ye set forward to take part
 In the pilgrimage of grace
 To St. Mary's sylvan place,—
 Three fair sisters, loveliest three
 In the pilgrim company.
 See! encased in many a gem
 Mary with her diadem,
 And, sweet thought! the Mother mild
 Lifts on high her holy Child:
 As the pensive artist thought
 So hath he the limewood wrought.

Why stand ye thus sorrow-bound,
While the train is kneeling round?
And the little Margaret too,
With her eyes of merry blue,
Wherefore is she not with you?
And the staff she was so long
In selecting from the throng
In the Graben, weeks ago
'Ere the flowers began to blow,
And then took it to be blessed
At Saint Stephen's by the priest,—
Hath it failed her, faint and weary,
In some Styrian pinewood dreary?
Ah! she felt the dogstar rage,
And she fain her thirst would swage—
It was her first pilgrimage—
At a cold and brilliant spring
By the wayside murmuring.
Ah sweet child! bright, happy flower!
She was broken from that hour.
They have left her on the steep
Of green Annaberg asleep.
With crossed hands upon her breast
Her choice staff is lightly pressed.
Margaret will awake no more,
Save upon a calmer shore.

Oh what can the sisters say
To the couple far away?
What will the old burgher do,
Since those eyes of merry blue,
The truest sunlight of his home,
Never, never more can come?
See! they sing not, but they gaze
Deep into the jewelled blaze,

And the thought within them swells,—
Mary hath worked miracles !
And they weep and gaze alway,
As though they were fain to say,
“ Mother Mary, couldst thou make
Gretchen from her sleep awake ?”

Thus often fares it upon earth
With a long-expected mirth :
And when hope is strained too much,
Lo ! it shivers at the touch.
Even from a holy rite
There may fade the cheering light,
When for long its single thought
Deep within the heart hath wrought.
This will sometimes quell the ray
Even of an Easter Day.
Deem not thou no grace is there,
Though the rite seem cold and bare,
Though it be a weary thing,
A dull, and formal offering.
It may lodge a light within,
Wrestling with the shades of sin,
And like frankincense may be
To think of in our memory.

When the gay procession passed
I knew not what sad cloud was cast
On these sisters, sorrow-laden,
By the death of that fair maiden.
When it drew itself along,
As one creature, bright and strong,
All instinct with life and song,
Like a child I did not think
That each bending joint and link
Of the sinuous pageant could
Be real hearts of flesh and blood,

Fountains of true hopes and fears,
With ebb and flow of smiles and tears,
Each a separate orb that moves
In a sphere of pains and loves.
To mine eye it did but seem
As a very fluent dream,
And it filled me with a sense
Of joy, and not of reverence.

Ah! to many this great world
Is a pageant thus unfurled,
Banners waving in the air,
Catching sunlight here and there,
O'er uneven places swaying,
Or in quiet woods delaying,
Everywhere fresh shapes displaying,
As the clouds their forms unbind
To new figures in the wind;
And aye man's voiceful destinies,
Like the surge of meeting seas,
Are to them but some wild song
Breathing from the gilded throng.
Thus do idle poets stand
Lonely on the tide-ribbed sand,
Watching the bright waters roll
As a beauty without soul,
Knowing nothing of the worth
Of a human woe or mirth,
Or of that true dignity
Which in love and sorrow lie.
And the books they write are all
But a mute processional,
Lifeless rubrics, canons dull
Of the bright and beautiful,
Formal wisdom, without stir
Of passion-tempered character,

Or imperial instincts meeting,
Or a hot heart in it beating.
But the masters of true song,
Who would sway the various throng,
Must in the procession walk,
To their fellow-pilgrims talk,
Weep or smile on every thing
With a kindly murmuring,
And that murmur so shall be
An immortal melody.

Sisters twain ! though now ye sorrow,
Ye shall have a calmer morrow ;
Mariazell shall become
In long years a placid home
For remembrances, and tears
Which spring not out of pains or fears ;
And this pilgrimage that seems
Broken up like baffled dreams,
Then shall be a very haunt
For your spirits when they want
Of soft feeling deep to drink :
It shall be a joy to think
How the merry Margaret sleeps
Mid the Styrian pinewood steeps,
Safe with childhood's sinless charms
In her Mother Mary's arms.

5.

EARTH'S VESPERS.

Once more went I to the lake,
Buried in the pinewood brake.
Through the parting clouds the light
Of the afternoon was bright.
Beautiful and gay and green
On my pathway was the scene,—
Gorges full of writhing mist
By the silver sunbeams kissed,
And the mountains all displayed
In a marvellous light and shade.
Close before us there was one,
Clear and tranquil in the sun,
And another on whose breast
Clambering mist-wreaths paused to rest,
And a third along whose side
Snowy cloudbanks seemed to ride,
And like a belt to rock and shine
In a long and level line :
And one there was, veiled all over
With thin mists which seemed to hover
On the mountain-top, and throw
Silky threads from bough to bough ;
'Twas lighted up and very fair,
And transparent as the air,
And within it rose the hill
Clothed with sunlight, green and still.
And the booming of the bells
And the hymn that came in swells

Mingled kindly with the mirth
Of the jubilant old earth.
In the lake and in the heaven
Gloom and beauty now had striven ;
Changed were all things on the shore,
For the strife at length was o'er.
Mists in serpentine array
Coiled upon the treetops lay ;
Truthful symbols did they seem
Of darkness giving way to gleam,
Drawing off in that sweet hour
The outskirts of his vanquished power.

Beauty on the hills was standing,
In the very lake expanding
With a pure and sparkling green ;
And the savage pinewood scene
Did the afternoon embrace
With a calm and softening grace.
Stillness was in all her veins,
Earth's thanksgiving after rains,
Tuneful as the stormy praise
Of wild woods on windy days,
Or the benedicite
Of the angry purple sea.
Not a single sound was heard,
Save the voice of one shy bird,
And the woodman's axe on high,
And the drowsy sheepbell nigh.
There was not a fall of wind
From the clover to unbind
Odors that lay fettered there,
And to shed them on the air.
Ruddy-armoured perch did press
To the margin motionless.

And the summer afternoon,
Holding court that day of June,
Throned herself with lustre mild
On the blissful Styrian wild.

O how often have I known
Quiet thought herself enthroned,
After tempests, on my mind
Without any breathing wind
Of sweet language, which could bind
In the bonds and links of song
All the glorious regal throng,
Kindled fancy's courtier crowd,
Which came o'er me like a cloud :
Times of quiet thought they are,
Like this very bright mute air,
Filling as a soul the lake
And the odorous pinewood brake,
With the calm and speechless scene
Passive in the sunny green.
They are fancy's afternoons,
Shadows of her leafy Junes,
Shedding, where the heart is calm,
New power in the quiet balm.
Though he fret at fruitless hours
Spent in rapture's voiceless bowers,
Yet the poet oft must bless
His passive spirit's silentness,
As the future salient spring
Of true minstrel murmuring.

Song is an exile from above,
Like a wanderer in love,
Falling both by land and sea
Into strangest company,

Ruling, wheresoever thrown,
With a sweet will of its own.
Fancy, like the earth, hath dew,
Keeping green the spirit's hue,
Falls of moisture which renew
Hearts that falter and grow weary
From the sense that life is dreary,—
With such freshness that the glory
Of our thoughts is never hoary.

There are sabbaths in the mind,
Which in deepest quiet bind
Love and passion and the world
With its glowing landscapes furled,
When the song of vernal bird
Like a common sound is heard,
When the sun and wind and shower
And the rainbows have no power,
And the forest and the lake
Can no inward echo wake.
Memories of smiles and tears
Treasured up in other years,
Sorrow suffered, actions done,
Self-restraints by patience won,
Rights of grief and rights of love,
Things which once the soul could move
With a deeper ebb and flow
Than the freeborn oceans know,
Now are dull and nerveless things,
Like a forest's murmurings
Falling on the unpleased ear
Of a listless traveller.
And from all things there hath passed
Powers they once might have to cast

Shadows, from whose tender gloom
We might free, as from a womb,
Truths that shall outlive the tomb.

Yet shall true-born poet deem
Mental sabbaths but a dream,
Languor, and a falling back
Of the weary soul for lack
Of high hope and strength of wing
In such thin air hovering?
Shall he call such quiet time
Faintings after moods sublime,
As though rapture's light could scathe
Spirits, like a fit of wrath?
Mystery and loveliness
Gender no such wild excess;
Mirth and beauty lay not waste
Flowery paths where they have passed.
In such times of inward sinking
Fancy may perchance be drinking
Waters in some holier spirit,
Out of earth, in Heaven, or near it.
True it is that a sweet spring
Cannot be a self-born thing;
It must have a leafy place
Or a mountain's rocky face.
Its beginning and its going,
And the surety of its flowing
Not a single, rainy day,
Nor at seasons, but alway,—
These depend on other things,
The green covert whence it springs,
And the weeping clouds of heaven
Out of which the rain is given,

And the ponderous old hills,
The treasuries of crystal rills.

So the spirit of sweet song
Not entirely doth belong
Unto him who hath been bidden
To let it flow through him unchidden,
And to keep its fountain hidden.
How should he know all the causes
Of its gushes and its pauses,
How it visits the well-head
Whence it is replenishèd,
What it hears, or what it sees,
How it hath its increases?
Where and whensoe'er it goes,
This one thing the poet knows,
That the spirit, wake or sleeping,
Is not now beneath his keeping.

For, if it should leave him not,
Whence are its fresh pulses got?
After all this seeming dulness,
Whence the beam, the burst, the fulness,—
When the dark and bright of life,
Involutions of its strife,
And the duties complicate
Of this heavy mortal state,
And the gold and purple maze
Which the past is, to our gaze
Looking into other days,
And the passions which have rent
Worse than warring element,
Earth's fair surface where we dwell,—
All within the spirit swell,
And burst from us loud and strong,
Claiming utterance in song.

Whence except from out of heaven
Are the moulds of greatness given,
And the beautiful creations,
And the song-like visitations
Of high thoughts, wherewith we borrow,
Grandeur out of love and sorrow,
When the weight of men's distresses
On our solemn spirit presses,
With a sound in its recesses,
When our fellow-mortals call,
And we own a kindred thrall
In responses musical,
When the mystery of things
From our tortured spirit wrings
Those loud wails of melody,
As from eagles in the sky ?

Whence the fragrant under-growth,
Which is springing nothing loth
All around us every hour
With fresh moss and modest flower,
In our fancy's stillest bower,
And those lowlier sweetnesses
Borne to us on every breeze ?

After dulness what a thing
Is our heart's awakening,
When a scattering of dew
Unawares makes all things new,
As a bunch of cold wet flowers
On our brow in feverish hours !
Like an unimprisoned boy,
Heaviness encounters joy
In the face of an old mountain,
In the splash of an old fountain,

In the sun and wind and rain,
 Like things lost and found again ;
 Till we own we never know
 Common blooms that round us blow,
 Common treasures strewn about us,
 Close at hand, and scarce without us.
 Whence are all these wakenings given,
 If it be not out of heaven ?
 That the might in poet's breast
 Wholly in himself doth rest,
 Wholly from himself doth come,
 As though he could be the home
 Of the beautiful bright throng
 He but weaveth into song—
 Were a creed to disenchant
 Music's best and holiest haunt,
 And to leave on land or sea
 Not a home for minstrelsy.

Beauty is a thing that grows,
 Like love or grief ; and who knows
 If in dulness and in calm
 Fancy does not gather balm
 In far fields that bud and swell
 With spiritual asphodel ?
 O how beautiful is quiet
 After fancy hath run riot,
 Waking love and waking mirth
 Over all the sleepy earth !
 O how beautiful to look
 On kind eyes, as on a book,
 Reading love that hath been beaming
 All the while our hearts were teeming
 With unearthly thoughts and visions,
 Floating in with sweet collisions !

And how beautiful a thing
Is our dull life's welcoming,
When we learn, while we were ranging,
That household earth hath not been changing,
And that houses, trees, and faces,
Are not wildly shifting places,
That there are domestic blisses,
Which the studious spirit misses,
Still a common human heart,
Though we were awhile apart !
O there is a gracious fulness
In this very seeming dulness,
When the littleness of life
Is more welcome than its strife,
Or we in wise moods confess
That strife is but a littleness !
There is not a choicer bower
Than the spirit, in the hour
When peace cometh after power ;
And what hath the earth of beauty
Like the calms that follow duty?
This hath been a day of joy
Much too simple for alloy,
One pure day that well may shine,
Like stars amid the twilight pine.
Now behold ! the tranquil power
Of the summer-evening hour
Is enthroned upon the spot ;
And the pageant cometh not
With the gauzy purple veil
Of the English twilight pale,
But winds o'er all the forest scene
With a light of faint blue green,

To a thousand pinetops yielding
 Somewhat almost of a gilding.
 There is meaning in the face
 Of the lake and woodland place.
 Something heavenly there must be
 In such deep tranquillity.
 With meet prayer and gratitude
 I went from out the solitude ;
 And to Mariazell wending,
 Up the pine-clad steep ascending,
 I beheld the dark clouds drooping,
 Once more to the mountains stooping.
 Yet along the ridges dim
 Lay a luminous gold rim,
 Such as makes me think the while
 That beyond in brightest smile
 Lies a very radiant shore
 I have visited before,
 In my boyhood, or in gleams
 Shed on my far-travelled dreams.

The one woodless mountain too
 Was of brilliant golden hue,
 And its precipices hoary
 Touched with sunset's mellow glory.
 From a hollow white-mouthed cave
 Rose a symbol, calm and grave,—
 A broken rainbow—whose bright end
 In the cavern did descend,
 With mute stationary mirth,
 Like a very growth of earth.
 The dark clouds now a moment hover—
 They descend—the pomp is over !

For the day's exceeding beauty
 There must be returns of duty,

And to Christ who thus hath given
Sights and sounds in earth and heaven,
We must answer at the last
For the pageantry now past.
Hark! how plaintively they sing;—
Never was on natural thing
A more touching commentary
Than the pilgrim's Ave Mary!

II.

THE CHERWELL WATER-LILY.

1.

BRIGHT came the last departing gleam
 To lonely Cherwell's silent stream,
 And for a moment stayed to smile
 On tall St. Mary's graceful pile.
 But brighter still the glory stood
 On Marston's scattered lines of wood.
 The lights that through the leaves were sent,
 Of gold and green were richly blent ;
 Oh ! beautiful they were to see,
 Gilding the trunk of many a tree,
 Just ere the colors died away
 In evening's meditative gray.
 Sweet meadow-flowers were round me spread,
 And many a budding birch-tree shed
 Its woodland perfume there ;
 And from its pinkly-clustering boughs,
 A fragrance mild the hawthorn throws
 Upon the tranquil air.
 Deep rung St. Mary's stately chime
 The holy hour of compline time,

And, as the solemn sounds I caught
Over the distant meadows brought,
I heard the raptured nightingale
Tell, from yon elmy grove, his tale
 Of melancholy love,
In thronging notes that seemed to fall
As faultless and as musical
 As angel strains above :—
So sweet, they cast on all things round
A spell of melody profound.
They charmed the river in its flowing,
They stayed the night-wind in its blowing,
They lulled the lily to her rest,
Upon the Cherwell's heaving breast.

2.

How often doth a wildflower bring
Fancies and thoughts that seem to spring
 From inmost depths of feeling !
Nay, often they have power to bless
With their uncultured loveliness,
And far into the aching breast
There goes a heavenly thought of rest
 With their soft influence stealing.
How often, too, can ye unlock,
Dear Wildflowers ! with a gentle shock,
 The wells of holy tears,
While somewhat of a Christian light
Breaks sweetly on the mourner's sight
 To calm unquiet fears !
Ah ! surely such strange power is given
To lowly flowers, like dew, from heaven ;

For lessons oft by them are brought,
 Deeper than mortal sage hath taught,
 Lessons of wisdom pure, that rise
 From some clear fountains in the skies !

3.

Fairest of Flora's lovely daughters
 That bloom by stilly-running waters,
 Fair Lily ! thou a type must be
 Of virgin love and purity !
 Fragrant thou art as any flower
 That decks a lady's garden-bower.
 But he who would thy sweetness know,
 Must stoop and bend his loving brow
 To catch thy scent, so faint and rare,
 Scarce breathed upon the summer air.
 And all thy motions, too, how free,¹
 And yet how fraught with sympathy !—
 So pale thy tint, so meek thy gleam
 Shed on thy kindly father-stream !
 Still, as he swayeth to and fro,
 How true in all thy goings,
 As if thy very soul did know
 The secret of his flowings.
 And then that heart of living gold,
 Which thou dost modestly infold,
 And screen from man's too searching view
 Within thy robe of snowy hue !
 To careless men thou seem'st to roam
 Abroad upon the river,
 In all thy movements chained to home,
 Fast-rooted there for ever :

Linked by a holy, hidden tie,
Too subtle for a mortal eye,
Nor riveted by mortal art,
Deep down within thy father's heart.
Emblem in truth thou art to me
Of all a daughter ought to be !
How shall I liken thee, sweet flower !
That other men may feel thy power,
May seek thee on some lovely night,
And say how strong, how chaste the might,
 The tie of filial duty,
How graceful too, and angel-bright,
 The pride of lowly beauty !
Thou sittest on the varying tide
As if thy spirit did preside
With a becoming, queenly grace,
As mistress of this lonely place ;
A quiet magic hast thou now
To smooth the river's ruffled brow,
 And calm his rippling water :
And yet so delicate and airy,
Thou art to him a very fairy,
 A widowed father's only daughter.

III.

MEMORIALS OF A HAPPY TIME.

“Ointment and perfumes rejoice the heart: and the good counsels of a friend are sweet to the soul.”—PROVERBS xxvii. 9.

1.

THE MEETING.

TELL me, ye Winds and Waves! what power compels
 Souls far apart to be together brought,
 That they may love each other,—spirits taught
 To stoop and listen by Truth’s ancient wells;
 Guiding their lives with the calm motion caught
 From their pure earthborn murmurings, the swells
 Of whose soft falling streams go chiming on,
 Heard best by hearts that travel there alone!
 One have I met, so meek a soul, that dwells
 In his own lowly spirit’s cloistered cells:
 Him by that ancient mountain-rill I found,
 Touched mid the heedless throng with holiest spells,
 Striving to catch the stream’s low thrilling sound,
 Where in a savage place it runneth underground.

2.

THE LESSON.

Listen—another strain!—I long had thought
The scourge austere and stern self-punishment
To school impatient spirits had been sent,
And hoped their task would long ere this be wrought.
Man works in haste, for speed with him is might:
In depth and silence God's great works are laid,
As in foundation-stones, all dimly bright.
The world well knows it hath but one brief hour,
And hurries by while judgment is delayed;
And it is gifted with a fearful power
Of holding back its own dark day of doom:
But God keeps shrouded in His ancient gloom,
Watching things travel to His own vast will;
So He works on, and man keeps thwarting still.

3.

THE VISION.

That healthy wisdom did I late unfold
Out of a precious type to me endeared.
I saw an altar to the Graces reared,
Of chaste proportions, by a green way-side.
Trees of all sorts stood round it, gray and old,
Blending their various leaves with solemn pride.
A venerable shade it seemed to me,
Where neither gloom nor garish light could be.
Daily from off the shrine to azure heaven
The quiet incense of soft thought was given;
And ever rose, as if on angel's wings,
The breezeliike scent of high imaginings,
Fragrant of glory I had never dreamed,
So modest and so low that little altar seemed.

4.

THE TEACHER.

This was thy heart where I did fondly trace
 The way that God had gone: in little things
 And childish growths I found the hidden springs
 Where He had put His virtue. Thy short race
 In holy calm and evenness hath past.
 Oh! how unlike those gay and wayward hearts
 That might in Athens rise to bear their parts
 In the Greek torch-race: and with giddy haste
 Wave their bright pine about, and quench its blaze,
 Types of their own wild course in after days!
 Thy soul's most secret growings I have seen,
 Ordered by God so quietly and slow,
 That thou thyself, dear friend, dost scarcely know
 Or what thou art or what thou mightst have been.

5.

THE TWO RIVERS.

Come with me through these mountain-vales, and see!
 Two bravely-flowing streams this way have gone;
 Most musical their flowing is to me,
 So I will moralize awhile thereon.
 One decks the eastern vale—the loveliest;
 The other dashes onward from the west.
 They join in quiet fields: you scarce can know
 Which was the first to join. So, as is meet,
 The gentler nature doth the sterner greet,
 Because its name is softer and more sweet:
 And he, the elder, loves to have it so.
 Then in a lake they blend their kindred flow,
 And it is said, and so it ought to be,
 That they in one bright stream pass onward to the sea.

6.

THE YOUNGER RIVER.

[THE BOTHERAY.]

Come now and see yon orient vale outspread,
 And mark the windings of my favourite rill ;
 For the wan olive-lights are on the hill,
 Dear autumn's choicest boon : and there is shed
 A most surpassing glory on the stream,
 Kindled just now by evening's purple gleam.
 Yon lake with shady islands gave it birth,
 To it yon English village doth belong,
 And many a night the joyousness and mirth
 Of its dear flow hath been my vesper song.
 See how it peeps in meadows fringed with flowers,
 Or nestles jealously mid leafy bowers,
 As if it almost felt, and shunned to show
 The gracefulness that makes men love it so.

7.

THE ELDER RIVER.

[THE BRATHAY.]

Now follow me to yonder gloomy hills
 That to the westward rise : a thousand rills
 Gush wildly from their rifted sides to form
 That dark, romantic river's early course.
 It is the nursling of the cloudy storm,
 And carries somewhat of its mother's force
 Along with it : leaping with one mad bound
 Over a rocky fall. Yet are there found
 Pools of most silent beauty, calm and deep ;
 Though there, too, glittering foam-bells tell a tale
 Of things before it reached that placid vale,
 Where the new church o'erhangs its woodland sweep.
 Oh ! how these brooks with hidden meanings teem,
 Which no one in the world but you and I would dream !

8.

THE PREPARATION.

The clouds lay folded on the mountain's brow,
 A huge and restless curtain drooping low.
 This way and that it waved with solemn swell,
 And from behind it flakes of sunlight fell
 On many a patch of redly withering fern,
 Melting away upon them: far above
 Vast shapes were seen, uncouth and horrible,
 Masses of jagged rock that seemed to move,
 Turning where'er the rolls of cloud did turn,
 Piled up on high, a grim and desolate Throne:
 But no one was there that might sit thereon.
 All preparation had been made for One
 Who had not come. Ah! surely we must say,
 They looked for God being out on some great work
 that day!

9.

THE WHEELS.

There are strange solemn times when serious men
 Sink out of depth in their own spirit, caught
 All unawares, and held by some strong thought
 That comes to them, they know not how or when,
 And bears them down through many a winding cell
 Where the soul's busy agents darkly dwell;
 Each watching by his wheel that, bright and bare,
 Revolveth day and night to do its part
 In building up for Heaven one single heart.
 And moulds of curious form are scattered there,
 As yet unused,—the shapes of after deeds;
 And veiled growths and thickly sprouting seeds
 Are strewn, in which our future life doth lie
 Sketched out in dim and wondrous prophecy.

10.

THE GLIMPSE.

Our many deeds, the thoughts that we have thought—
They go out from us thronging every hour ;
And in them all is folded up a power
That on the earth doth move them to and fro :
And mighty are the marvels they have wrought
In hearts we know not, and may never know.
Our actions travel and are veiled : and yet
We sometimes catch a fearful glimpse of one
When out of sight its march hath well-nigh gone,
An unveiled thing which we can ne'er forget !
All sins it gathers up into its course,
And then they grow with it, and are its force :
One day with dizzy speed that thing shall come,
Recoiling on the heart that was its home.

11.

THE PERPLEXITY.

And therefore when I look into my heart,
And see how full it is of mighty schemes,
Some that shall ripen, some be ever dreams,
And yet, though dreams, shall act a real part,—
When I behold of what and how great things
I am the cause,—how quick the living springs
That vibrate in me, and how far they go,—
Thought doth but seem another name for fear ;
And I would fain sit still, and never rise
To meddle with myself, God feels so near.
And all the time He moveth, calm and slow
And unperplexed, though naked to His eyes,
A thousand thousand spirits pictured are,
Kenn'd through the shroud that wraps the Heaven
of heavens afar !

12.

THE COMPLAINT.

I heard thee say that thou wert slow of speech ;
 Thou didst complain thy words could never reach
 The height of thy conceptions. Ah ! dear friend,
 Envy thou not the eloquent their gift.
 Fierce reckless acts and thoughts' unbridled range
 And cherished passion that at times hath rocked
 Their soul to its foundations,—these do lift
 Them into eloquence: 'tis sad to spend
 So great a price, to win so poor a dower.
 Thine is a deep clear mind: nor inward change
 Nor outward visitation yet hath shocked
 Thy heart into a consciousness of power.
 So calm and beautiful thou art within,
 Thou scarce canst see how like power is to sin.

13.

THE VOICE.

“The multitude, therefore, that stood and heard, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spoke to Him.”—*ST. JOHN*, xii. 29.

A Voice from ancient times comes up this way ;
 Dost thou not hear it—like a trumpet call ?
 O with what startling accents doth it fall
 On ears that love a softer siren sound !
 To them like muttering thunder still it seems,
 Though all the sky is open, free and gay.
 Month follows month, and year doth grow to year,
 And the strong voice keeps waxing yet more clear.
 The world is full of symptoms of decay,
 Feverish and intermittent, struck with fear,
 Starting unconsciously in savage dreams,
 Like aged men with sickly opiates bound.
 —It spake again: surely it cometh near,
 Let us go out upon the tower, and hear !

14.

THE TEMPLE.

“Know you not that your members are the Temple of the Holy Ghost ?”
1 COR. vi. 19.

Come, I have found a Temple where to dwell :
Sealed up and watched by Spirits day and night
Behind the Veil there is a crystal Well.
The glorious cedar pillars sparkle bright,
All gemmed with big and glistening drops of dew,
That work their way from out yon hidden flood
By mystic virtue through the fragrant wood,
Making it shed a faint unearthly smell.
And from beneath the curtain, that doth lie
In rich and glossy folds of various hue,
Soft showers of pearly light run streamingly
Over the chequered floor and pavement blue.
Oh ! that our eyes might see that Font of Grace,
But none hath entered yet his own heart's Holy Place.

15.

THE PRIEST.

“And the people was waiting for Zachary.”—ST. LUKE, i. 21.

As morning breaks or evening shadows steal,
Duties and thoughts throng round the marble stair,
Waiting for Him who burneth incense there,
Till He shall send to bless them as they kneel.
Greater than Aaron is the mighty Priest
Who in that radiant shrine for ever dwells,
Brighter the stones that stud His glowing vest,
And ravishing the music of His bells,
That tinkle as He moves. The golden air
Is filled with motes of joy that dance and run
Through every court, and make the temple one.
—The lamps are lit ; 'tis past the hour of prayer,
And through the windows is their lustre thrown,—
Deep in the Holy Place the Priest doth watch alone.

16.

THE HUMILIATION.

Yes, Lord! 'tis well my suffering should be deep;
 So with unsparing hand fill Thou the cup
 Of bitter thought, and I will drink it up,
 And then lie calmly down, yet not to sleep:
 But like a guilty child in penitence
 When some unruly act hath first destroyed
 Within his little soul the quiet sense
 Of filial love and careless innocence;
 And, as he feels his bliss with fear alloyed,
 He wakes, he knows not why, all night to weep.
 All human feeling grown to be intense
 Comes nigh to sin; yet ah! my greedy heart
 Cannot without a thankless murmur part
 From that pure dream it hath so long enjoyed.

17.

THE HAUNTED PLACE REVISITED.

I came again fair Esthwaite lake to view—
 The place thy spirit haunts; while sun and shower
 In light and shade contended every hour,
 And both were beautiful. The lake was still:
 Rich autumn lights were grouped upon the hill
 Mid purple heather and bright orange fern.
 Oh what a scene was there! The scarlet hue
 Of the wild cherry-tree did strangely turn
 To mockery the alder's solemn gray:
 And, as I wept outright, it seemed to say—
 "What art thou he that was so proud and stern?
 "Look at that silly furze all new and gay,
 "Poor plant! 'tis budding forth and blossoming
 "As if one year could have a second spring."

18.

A DREAM.

A Spirit came upon me in the night,
And led me gently down a rocky stair
Unto a peopled garden, green and fair,
Where all the day there was an evening light.
Trees out of every nation blended there.
The citron shrub its golden fruit did train
Against an English elm: 'twas like a dream
Because there was no wind; and things did seem
All near and big, like mountains before rain.
Far in those twilight bowers beside a stream
The soul of one who had but lately died
Hung listening, with a brother at his side;
And no one spoke in all that haunted place,
But lookèd quietly into each other's face.

IV.

THE MOURNER'S DREAM.

ARISING FROM A STRANGE AND DISTRESSING IMPRESSION OF A
FRIEND'S DEATH IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

“ Wir müssen nach der Heimath gehn
Um diese heil'ge Zeit zu sehn.”

NOVALIS.

By a steep winding vale I left
A terrace in a mountain cleft.
Old pines with ruddy boles were there,
Half-gilded by the sunny air.
The holm oaks, planes, and service-trees
Hung motionless without a breeze.
No vernal gale or summer stir
Bent the green cones upon the fir.
No water, tinkling as it fell,
 Taught the young birds their earliest sound,
 Or in its murmuring way unbound
The sylvan languor of the dell.
All through the shaggy gorge were seen
Tree-tops and folds of various green ;
And noon with pleasant silence there
Loaded the misty drooping air,
And, birdlike, seemed herself to brood
O'er a vast couch of glorious wood.
I chose a moss and wild-flower bed
Where many-fingered cedars shed
All down the slope dark flakes of shade,
And grateful dusky sunlight made.

Ever before my half-closed eyes
The sundered mountain-peaks did rise ;
And though I knew each field and rill
That lay beyond that mighty hill,
Yet still the wondrous cleft did seem
A pass whereby a mourner's dream
 To other worlds might travel,
And somewhat of his brother's state,
In dreadest twilight separate,
 Might sleep perchance unravel.

1.

THE RUINED HARBOUR.

I stood, methought, in some lone place,—
A fallen city, at whose base
That summer noon the shining sea
Made all soft sounds perpetually ;
And, as it swelled, its liquid fall
Scarce lifted the weeds on the harbour-wall :
And the little waves, all one by one,
Far out in furrows green did run,
And then lay down and sparkled in the sun !
There was no shade, no leafy tree,
Yet waited I by that fair sea,
And watched the ocean-water fill
With its clear self, and at its will,
The broken harbour's ample round,
Without a wave and without a sound !
So men have watched their friends for hours,
 Filling with silent love,

While dreams fall on them both in showers,
Like starlights from above ;
Till the bright waters, as they rise,
Mount and run over at the eyes.
Oh ! who that in youth's morning light
With sails full-set and songs did ride
Into love's harbour with the tide,
Hath dreamed that it would ebb at night ?

Through the long hours of noon I stood
Alone in that sunny solitude.
Not a voice was in the weed-grown way,
Not a ship was on the wave,
The sea was by itself all day,
And the streets were like a grave,
All things were still as they could be,
The sand, the city, and the sea !
I lingered there—for on my breast
A weight of weary sorrow pressed ;
My soul, like a mourner, low did bend
Over the memory of my dead friend.
Yet there is somewhat in the tear
Of deep affection's willing sadness
To the lone heart more kind and dear
Than the strong smile of health and gladness ;
And it is better, for our love's sake, they
We love the best should soonest go away.

I thought of him, as though he were by,
With his dark bright hair, and his darker eye,
And his face alive with chivalry,
Of his broad white brow with a slender vein,
And his words like drops of summer rain,
Soft as the voice of a timid maiden,
Ever with his own brave language laden.

I have hung on his words, so sweet and rare,
Like a knight in his lady's bower,
With his voice in my ears, like a haunting air,
For many a dreaming hour.

The eloquent smile that ever hung
O'er his mouth, like a sunny wreath,
Grew lovelier on his lips, and clung
Ten times more glorious after death.

There is a spell on his silent tongue,
As when a poet dies
And the spirits bind his lyre unstrung
To the bier whereon he lies.

I saw thy beautiful limbs all bare,
And thy new-made grave looked cold,
And I grudged it sadly to the mould
To lie so long on thy glossy hair!

Minstrel! thy spirit was set on fire
At the fount of ancient days,
And therefore wert thou lifted higher,
To where that fountain plays.

Sacred and pure, the awful flame
About thy youth and health did roll,
Till thy fair vest of earth became
A sacrifice unto thy soul.

Like an eagle, up in the heavens bare,
Wild with the draughts of his mountain air,
The heights of lone thought beheld thee die
In the fire of thine own free poetry!

2.

THE VOYAGE.

I waited then by that fair sea
Till the power of evening came on me.
I saw the sunset colours fall
Paler and fainter on the wall,
And watched the broken shadows grow
Dark and long on the sand below ;
And the sea was gone far down the shore
With the same soft sounds for evermore.
Still on the quivering level lay
The last dull crimson lights of day,
When to my feet a bright green boat
Softly and gaily seemed to float,
With neither helm, nor sail, nor oar,
Over the shallows on the shore.
Green it was as the living tide
Whereon its little prow should ride,
And lighter than the foam-wreaths frail
That o'er the windy ocean sail.
Within, a silver Anchor stood,
And a Crucifix of scented wood
 Upon the seat was laid ;
And round it some large foreign flowers
With fresh leaves from the ivy bowers
 Into a crown were made.
Swifter and swifter did I float
Eastward in the bright green boat ;
And, as the coast grew dim and white,
 I sank in awe upon my knee,

And trusted myself for the dark night
To the holy Cross and to the sea.
No breath upon the deep did move,
The moon was not in her place above.
With steadiest motion all along
The boat on her path did steal,
Without a sound, but the murmuring song
Of the water round the keel :
And through the gloom, without a bound,
The purple ocean lay around.
The snowy sea-birds as they flew
Across the deep midnight,
From off their lustrous plumage threw
Flashes of sudden light.
Yet did I not feel lonely there,
For ever a scent, like incense rare,
Stole from the Cross on the warm night air ;
And the dew that clung upon the flowers
Sweet memories of earth's pale bowers
Back to my heart did bring :
Like the cold and sunny winds that yield
The fragrance out of the meadow field
In the first fresh days of spring.
And thus was that little boat to me
A quiet Church on the holy sea !

But seven bright planets, one by one,
Rose from the waves as the boat drove on ;
They rose in a crescent above the sea,
At first unclear, and falteringly,
But up in the sky the starry bow
Pierced with its rays the billows below,
And the tall thin shafts of palest gold
Wavered and bent as the waters rolled,—

Bent, but they broke not; and the light
 Was fairer far than a summer night,
 When the moon, unthrifty of her brightness,
 Paves the sea with a trembling whiteness.
 Onward still did the shallop sail,
 Till the sea was green and the stars grew pale;
 And the sun as from the waves he went
 Unlocked the pearly orient.
 But eastward yet the bark did steal,
 So swift the waves scarce wet the keel;
 While in the dawn the cold fresh sea
 Shone bright and murmured merrily.

Our life lies eastward: every day
 Some little of that mystic way
 By trembling feet is trod: .
 In thoughtful fast and quiet feast
 Our thoughts go travelling to the East,
 To our Incarnate God.
 Fresh from the Font our childhood's prime
 Is life's most oriental time.
 Its joyous sights and mighty fears,
 And feelings deep that work by tears,
 Its dreams and smiles age cannot share,
 Are borrowed from that region fair.
 The beamy land, where morning lives
 And Eden still is blooming, gives
 Strange rays for childish hearts to hoard,
 Bright flashes from the seraph-sword
 That waves in Eden's light:
 And still, when childhood's race is run
 And God from Egypt calls His son,
 Through worldliest haze and rudest gleams,
 The East comes back to us in dreams,
 In holy dreams by night.

'Tis then o'er marvellous maps we pore,
 Bare outlines of the Eastern shore,
 And idly strive to fix the spot
 Where Eden lies, with cave and grot,
 And lawn, and river-sounds, away
 In the heart of central Asia.

'Tis then love singles out the trees
 With foreign-looking leaves,
 And oft in summer's languid breeze
 Poor fancy sits and weaves
 Of each exotic shrub and flower
 A shadow of an Eden bower.

When childhood's painted flag is furled,
 And long chill shadows from the world
 Are o'er our pathway thrown,
 Still, while its early dreams escape,
 The longing spirit fain would shape
 An orient of its own.

Still doth it Eastward turn in prayer,
 And rear its saving Altar there,
 Still doth it Eastward turn in Creed,
 While faith in awe each gracious deed
 Of her dear Saviour's love doth plead,—
 Still doth it turn at every line
 To the far East—in sweet mute sign
 That through our weary strife and pain
 We crave our Eden back again.

We came unto a river's mouth,
 Which hath its secret fountains
 Away in the unpeopled south,
 Among unpeopled mountains.

A sultry haze upon the sea,
And long low shore, lay heavily.
A bar of rocks stretched east and west
 The frothy shallows under,
On which the chafing billows pressed
 And broke in muffled thunder ;
And further up the misty land
The waves foamed idly on the sand ;
And on the sandbanks in the bay
Sea-dogs and seals together lay ;
As though the hot mist of noon were sweet
 After the deep's cold gloom,
They slept like the dogs at the marble feet
 Of a Templar on his tomb.

All was still as a place of the dead,
Not a mountain lifted his far-off head,
 Not an outline blue was seen.
Grass was not there, nor shady trees,
 Not a branch or blade of green,
But a row of seaside villages
 With low sand-hills between.

The bar is bare where the white waves sound,
And tide and stream are quivering round,
But the bark hath crossed, for the river bound.
It lay on the mane of a long green billow,
As a gull might rest on her ocean pillow,
It flew, like foam, o'er the ragged bar,
 And shook where the waters quiver,
But steady and strong the keel stood far
 Up the Asiatic river.

3.

THE WORLD'S EDGE.

MANY an afternoon hath come
Since then to my monastic home,
When mem'ry hath brought back to me
 In lifelike form and order
The mighty things which I did see
 On that wild river border :
Days when the autumn garden grieves
Amid the gentle wreck of leaves,
Strewn by the summer's parting spirit
For winter's stern winds to inherit ;
When silvery sun and fleecy sky
Once more bring feeble summer nigh,
As though she came to some sweet nook
 'Mid faded lawns and bowers,
Awhile to take a farewell look
 At rash November flowers :
And in this Christian city living
 My heart hath flown away,
While mem'ry's deepest wells kept giving
 Visions of Asia.

We left behind the sea's dull roar,
We left the sand-hills on the shore :
We passed through plains wherein the stream
 Ran broad by many a barrow,
Through forests proof 'gainst bright sunbeam,
 Where the bed was deep and narrow :

Where winds the mighty trees had rocked
For many a hundred year ;
And troops of gentle creatures flocked
To gaze on me with fear,
As though their faces bright and round
Had seen and heard of sight and sound
Nought but the forest motion,
Save when a sea-bird rude had come
And scared the quiet of their home,
As it wandered from the ocean.
The twisting branches framed above
Cloisters of gloomy green,
And the bare boughs of yew-trees wove
On either side a screen ;
But here and there the eye might follow
The view through many a woodland hollow,
To where some fountain glittered far
With red leaves all around,
When a stray sunbeam, like a star
Its way through thick shades found ;
And it bred fear in me to see
At times a dry leaf from a tree,
Loosened by some soft hand unseen
From its brother-crowd of healthy green,
Awhile upon the light air quiver,
And faintly fall upon the river.

The wood was past ; and then again
Came grassy slope and open plain ;
And to a lake the river spread,
With groves and green rocks islanded.
When evening shed her mantle there,
Slow-dropping through the twilight air,

Upon the river-bank there stood
Temple, and tower, and streets decayed,
Shrine, palace, arch, and colonnade,—
A vast and kingly solitude.
Dark creepers like a woven vest
Were round each standing pillar pressed ;
Between the broken columns sprung
Horse-tail and rankest adder's-tongue.
No voice of man or beast was heard,
No vesper-song of plaining bird,
No insect hum, no breath did seem
To rise from those that sleep and dream
Among yon cypress rows that stand
For half a league or more inland.
The city lay in mute distress
On the edge of a stretching wilderness.
Where have ye gone, ye townsmen great !
That have left your homes so desolate ?
Where have ye vanished, king and peer !
And left what ye lived for lying here ?
Sin can follow where gold may not,
Pictures and books the damp may rot,
And creepers may hang frail lines of flowers
Down the crevices of ancient towers,
But what hath passed from the soul of mortal,
Be it word or thought of pride,
Hath gone with him through the dim low portal,
And waiteth by his side.

Between the desert and the town,
Upon a grassy treeless down,
High hanging o'er the rapid flood
A house of Christian monks there stood.
One soft low bell kept ever ringing
While they within were calmly singing

Of her whose garments drop alway
Myrrh, aloes, and sweet cassia.
The chapel-lights with full rich gleam
Threw lines of radiance o'er the stream ;
And tear-drops came, and o'er my mind
Dim thoughts and sadnesses did wind,
And with strong spells my spirit bind.
It was no grave or holy feeling
That with the Christian psalm came stealing,
Which sounded all my being so,
And stirred the tears, and bade them flow.
No, it was earth with her fair things,
All her green trees and mountain springs,
Earth fading from me, which did pass
Upon my spirit through the glass
Of those church-windows, to the river
Whereon the lamplights rest and quiver.
It brought back hours when I did stand
A guest in our first father-land,
Where summer midnights sweetest shine
With moonbeams cradled on the Rhine,
Or drawn in tremulous webs of gold,
Where the stream through long boat-bridges rolled.
And earth and all earth was to me
In those short hours of boyish glee
Came like a cloud of troubled fears,
And the cloud broke and fell in tears.

Yet it was well those monks should be
By the ruin hoar and the pasture lea ;
And never was spot more sadly meet
For lonely prayer and hermit feet.
And fitly, methinks, their chantry stands,
Where the grass encroaches on the sands,
At the limits of life's two marvellous lands,—

The land of shadows, forms, and faces,
And the land of spirits' resting-places.
For the psalm they sing is earth's last sound,
Circling and sinking faintly round,
And whispering o'er the desert's bound.
The bodies that lie where the turf springs highest,
 And little white flowers are growing,
Of all the dead are the very nighest
 To the place where they are going,
For over the sand in the stilly morn,
 When the winds awhile cease blowing,
If you lean and listen a sound is borne,
Like the last far fall of a hunting-horn,
From the Eden streams, that in channels worn
 By two and two are flowing.
Yes—it was well these monks should tread
Between the living and the dead
On the line by which they are severèd,—
That they in their fasts and festal mirth
 A blessing and grace should merit
For the far-off races of the earth
 From the close-lying world of spirit.
Yes—it was well that they should be
Types of the meek and passion-free,
The humble of earth, that in cloistered room
Fight the world's battles in secret gloom ;
And lands are saved and conquests won,
And the race of high and hard truths run,
And chains snapped off and sins undone :
And all by meek, dejected men,
Earth finds not, learns not, how or when.
For they are too divinely great
For fame to sully them with state
 And pageant little worth :

From out the unpolluted dead
Their names may not be gatherèd ;
They dwell too deep for man to find
 Them out in their calm mirth,
Too high to leave a name behind,
 To be played with on the earth.
No idle straying sage may learn
 How that ruined city fell ;
All travellers unknowing turn
 From the spot where those monks dwell.
Out in the earth fair babes at play
By unseen hands are led away.
Here and there in different climes
Some have been missed at distant times ;
In sport by day they have been taken,
 No mortal creature knowing,
In sleep by night, and did not waken
 Their mothers at their going.
Whene'er the monks of that house die,
These lost of earth their room supply,
By angel-leadings ever drawn
From their first homes in childhood's dawn ;
And strangely many times must earth
Work in their heart with her old mirth.

On the edge of the world to them it is given
To be within sight and hearing of heaven,
To see the wild clouds, like castles or ships,
Kissed with the evening's rosy lips,
Sway in the wind on the hills that spread,
Treeless and turfless a barrier dread,
Round the garden our father forfeited,
They dwell alone, those monkish few,
By the down's slant side and the river blue.

No bird o'er the narrow down may fly,
No eagle abroad in yon desert cry,
No beast may come as near as they
To the sealéd centre of Asia.
There is a spot—I know not why—
A spot I often loiter by,
Which ever brings that ruined town,
The monkish house and strip of down,
Back to my fancy, faintly clear,
 Until the whole doth strangely seem
 A suddenly recovered dream,
Which I had somewhile dreamed of here.
It is the least of English brooks
 Through a midland county winding,
In willow flats and meadow nooks
 Fresh sorts of wild-flowers finding :
The very least of brooks—with bays
 Of standing water furnished,
Where yellow irises upraise
 Their phalanx smoothly burnished :
The least of brooks, that nightly show
 The white stars' moving faces
Mid dark and brittle plants that grow
 In its wet and shady places.
Much hooded willow-herb is there,
The nun of water-sides, whose care
Doth for herself green convents rear
Of stalk and leaf and glossy spear.
And when I wander there alone,
 My spirit doth unravel
The lines of thought she made her own
 In her visionary travel.

But up the stream with steady will
 My boat went undelaying,

While earth stirred calmly in me still,
And set my fancy straying.
And now around is a sandy scene
Without one square or isle of green,
A region, where with no sweet shrouds
The sun, as he doth pass,
Unclothes the white sky of its clouds,
And the green earth of her grass.
But the moon is floating soft above,
And the sands below are glistening ;
There might be sounds in the lights that move
O'er the earth, like the wings of a weary dove,
If there were time for listening.
But the winds from their hid coverts press,
And lift their waving voices high
O'er the broad waste, to magnify
The Master of the wilderness.
So wild was the gleam the moon was lending,
So broken it looked in its descending,
The desert's self seemed heaving ;
One might think that mighty winds came out
To scatter molten moonlight about,
To mar the plain words and meaning things
That, for man, aloft on her glitterings
The quiet orb was weaving.

Then came a royal wood of palms
With strange and oriental charms.
The forest stood down to the river,
Yet seemed to stretch away for ever.
League upon league like pillars tall
With one rich shapely capital
In aisles they stood, and like each other,
One palm might be its neighbour's brother.

And all were fair and fresh of hue,
As though in some good plain they grew,
 And not in sand-drifts light.
The moisture drunk by thirsty noon
Cool darkness doth replenish soon
 With dewdrops sparkling bright,
Dews fed from mists that bear the moon
 Sweet company all night.
And down the rings of each smooth bole,
 Like sunbeams under the sea,
Quiverings of emerald moonlight stole,
 Swathing the golden tree.
Turn where one might a roaming eye,
 On, on, for ever on,
The multitudinous palm-trees lie,
Countless as stars that stud the sky,
 When the rival moon has gone.

Hast thou ever felt in thy lonely room,
Some vigil night, when the hush and gloom,
And the nearness of churches round the place,
Bring joy in the soul and smiles on the face—
When the walls of the world seem about to melt,
 And to lay the wierd realms of spirit bare,—
Hast thou ever at such high seasons felt
 What seemed like the waving of wings in air,
 While an angel meek hath descended there,
And is kneeling where thou hast lately knelt?
Hast thou known how his presence keeps thee still,
And winds through thy thoughts like a freshening
 rill,
How visions and musings of lightness or pride
 Fall off from thy heart as withered leaves,
And fancy dares not with him at her side
 Think well of the silky webs she weaves?

So was it with me in that little boat
That stiller and swifter seemed to float.
The flowers and ivy-stalks drooping low
Sweeter and fresher appeared to grow.
A faint scarce visible glory stood
O'er the Crucifix of scented wood ;
And though the seat at the helm looked bare,
I knew that a spirit was sitting there.

The bark had now begun to quiver
Upon the fast, unsteady river,
 And foam-bells wavered by ;
And with the lispng palm-tops blending
A stunning water-fall's descending
 Grew distinct and nigh.
There was a pause—a brief, dread pause
In a narrow valley's rocky jaws.
A huge, high cliff did steeply bound
A sunless pool with white mists round.
Then came a quiet, whirling motion,
 And my boat was lifted slow ;
Like the strong twistings of the ocean,
 Where a ship hath gone below.
Oh ! gently are the currents flowing
 Above that giant-fall,
And gentle sounds, like breezes blowing,
 From off the mountains' call,
The herbless mountains nigh at hand
That darkly fence man's earliest land,
 Still wept with burning brow,
Which every bright or gloomy faith
Hath faintly looked for after death,
 Or made an idol now.

We came unto the river fountains,
Where three of those huge-rooted mountains
 Jutted beyond the range,
And clasped within their stony round
A basin and a ring of ground
 Of beauty soft and strange.
There in that most lonely dwelling
The rivers of the south are welling
 From a silent-rising spring :
And to the surface from below
The silver, salient waters flow
 With scarce a murmuring.
Below the sterile cliffs a rim
Of yellow moorland turf the brim
 Of that calm basin closes ;
And right among the tarnished sedge
There hangs and floats a flowering hedge
 Of whitest gleaming roses.
No greenly-gadding rose-branch dips
Into the pool its fragrant lips.
But drooping ever motionless
In one white coronal they press
 The velvet margin shading ;
Like some pale lustrous wreath adorning
A bride upon her marriage morning,—
 Eternal and unfading ;
Breathing faint richness on the lake,
Whose gleamy face winds never shake,
Nor ripples crest, nor rain-drops break :—
Where rose with rose in webs is threading,
Thick spells of luscious strength outshedding,
That make the mountain hollow seem
One noonday cup of odorous steam.

Wondrous it is to see on high
The barren mountains to the sky
Their splintered sceptres holding ;
While Heaven's ethereal blue between
The outlines rough doth intervene,
And spends all hours, that fearful scene
To shapes of softness moulding :
Just as the monthly moon's full orb
In her own fairness doth absorb
The boughs of leafy dells,
And purple midnight by sweet laws
Upward and inward ever draws
Church-spires and pinnacles.
Strange is it to the eye that rests
On the long line of mountain crests,
Whose slow descending gaze but falls
On craggy steeps and dark bare walls,—
Strange is it when the earth discloses
That little hollow cup of roses.

Across the pool my boat did steal
In swift and silent order,
And not a ripple from the keel
Ruffled the flowery border.
Above the place where I was left
There was a deep, clear mountain cleft,
As though some keen seraphic sword,
Some Angel of the mighty Lord,
Had carved that portal fair.
To skies beyond of stainless blue
White waving clouds went sailing through,
As if to harbour there.
But poor and little was my hope
To climb that cliff and broken slope,

Till I beheld a straggling line
Of low white roses dimly shine,
 As if put there in play,
Or some angelic hand in air
Had scattered rose-wreaths kindly there
 To trace and mark the way.
Where each frail flowret had been thrown
There was a little step of stone,
 Whereto a man might cling,
Or, if they failed, be lifted on
 By angel hand or wing :
And with such faith myself would dare
Upon that long and perilous stair.

How may I tell ye, friends on earth !
With what a mystery of mirth
I stood within that mountain cleft,
With two worlds, on the right and left ?
Boundless, boundless, all unending,
Shadows, souls, and spirits blending—
Midnight and sun-rise, noon and even,
Earth, ocean, vivid-glowing Heaven—
All were at once :—all bathed and blent
In a new white-seeming element,
 Wherein they did abide :
Most like unto a hoary sea,
Where through all ages by decree
Time might have no more ebbs, but be
 For ever at high-tide.
It travelled on in mighty rings,
 And with a clamorous motion ;
Like a sea-bird sleeping on her wings
 And sinking to the ocean.
I stood within the mountain-cleft
With two worlds, on the right and left—

The land of shadows, forms, and faces,
 And the land of spirits' resting-places.
 Apart, and separate they were,
 With other sky and sea and air:
 And yet they seemed but one to me—
 Each in the other comprehended,
 In lovely separation blended,
 Like two sides of a mystery.

Oft have I seen in out-door dreams
 Lovely and dreadful things
 Brought close upon my soul by gleams,—
 Majestic glimmerings.
 But, when I deemed the vision bright
 Unfolding from the soul of night
 Unto my touch would press,
 The troublous pleasure that did creep
 Through every vein, broke up my sleep,
 And the appearance swiftly drew
 Back into midnight's caverned blue
 And starry silentness;
 As rainbows to my childish eye
 Withdrew into the cloudy sky,
 When gazed at over-earnestly.
 Thus hath this dream been broken up,
 And gentle sleep's well-mingled cup
 Been spilt upon the earth;
 But dreams that promise fairest blessing,
 Yet cease to be in the possessing—
 Why blame them more than other things,
 Since Heaven in love so checks the springs
 Of every mortal mirth?

V.

THE DREAM OF KING CRÆSUS.

KING Cræsus dreamed a dream: the live-long day
 His heart was swollen with imperial pride,
 And his eye surfeited with blaze of gems
 And gleamy metals, and his weak ear soothed
 By fair-tongued Lydians: but in the still night
 King Cræsus dreamed a dream: 'twas Nemesis
 That out of the mute darkness wove that dream.
 He slept, and in his sleep he saw his son,
 Atys, the beautiful, the chosen Atys,
 The youthful warrior,—him he saw in dark
 Confused embrace with hazy struggling forms,
 Masses, which peopled all the blank of night,
 Like bruised embossing on a lance-worn shield.
 He could not extricate from thence, nor clear
 One object which man's eye should recognize;
 Only he saw Atys—Atys he saw,
 His son, undoubted, manifest: ah woe!
 Only he saw Atys,—torn with the point
 Of some invisible implement; he saw
 The point, and Atys, and his own child's blood.
 Such was the dream King Cræsus dreamed that
 night.

There is a sound as of a nuptial feast
 Throughout the low-roofed Sardis; tabor, lute
 And Phrygian pipe in sweet accord are there,
 Making such music as the easterns love,
 Monotonous and wailing: there are lights

And cries and banquet sounds, and all the throng
 Of nuptial celebration. Dark and dim
 From Mother Dindymene's sacred hill
 Hermus flows down into the noisy plain,
 Where night is turned to day, and hurries on
 His waters troubled with the unwonted glare
 Into the quiet, misty distance. Oh
 Strange apparition is a flowing stream
 By a gay city in the obscure night!
 It is the nuptial feast of Atys. Ay,
 And will King Cræsus baffle destiny,
 And flaunt the venerable Nemesis
 With nuptial feasts and women's chambers? No—
 For though the warrior's arms be laid aside,
 And though the boar-spear for the hunt be thrown
 In some neglected corner, though the walls
 That rang with armor wave with tapestry,—
 Yet sooner shall the soil instead of fruit
 Bring forth sharp-pointed things, and mortals reap
 Lance-heads for harvests, than the holy path
 Of orderly and reverend fate be turned
 This way or that. Mute matter and the beasts
 Achieve Heaven's wrath or love upon the earth.

What ails the King? Why seeks he never now
 The vaulted treasure-house, the metals, gems,
 And costly inwrought works? His restless eye
 Is palled with brightness, and his regal pride—
 That hath gone down, ay, sunk, for ever sunk
 In the deep ocean of paternal love.
 Yet wherefore looketh he with curious search
 Through all the palace and among his guards
 And on state days and in the public place,
 Lest a keen weapon or some pointed thing
 Should come nigh Atys? He would charm the life

Of the brave, princely boy ; he would rob fate
(And cannot kings do all things ?) of the prize.
It is the Dream : that Dream is in his heart,
Stirring, like spring within the unconscious earth
Setting the unborn summer in array.

The power that wove the Dream doth also work
Out in the world. The toils of Nemesis
Are closing round thee, Cræsus ! oh how near !

There came a stranger to the Lydian court,
A man of unclean hands, a fratricide,
And yet withal a gentle being, one
Whose noble blood of Phrygia's royal line
Was least of his endowments ; one of those
Whose fortune is a mystery on the earth,
A painful problem, gendering thought and tears
Even in the sage, and in the unrestrained
A refuge oft for easy misbelief—
As though by some dread fate perversely thrown
Upon the very opposite of all
Their passions and propensions, not allowed
To hit the scope at which their nature aims.
Men are they, by compulsion of the world
And the disturbing force of circumstance
Led forth, like victims, out of their own sphere
To act some other spirit's destiny :
Who pass away, still having in themselves
A better destiny all unfulfilled,
A holier, milder being unevolved.

Such was Adrastus, with a gentle tinge
Of softness and a partial hallowing
Of deep romance, an almost wayward love
Of sadness, and a clinging to the woe
Which had exhausted and absorbed the hope
Of his whole being. He had shed the blood

Of his own brother most unwittingly,
 And came to Cræsus that from him he might
 Receive the expiation of the times,—
 A cleansing power, most rightly gathered up
 Into the state and person of the prince,
 A portion of divinity enthroned,
 Like a peculiar instinct, in a king,
 Who, by his unity no less than by
 His height, doth adumbrate the One Supreme.
 With running water and the kingly word
 Adrastus was made clean, and dwelt, a guest
 Of Cræsus, I might almost say, a son.
 When by the hearth the stranger's shadow fell
 King Cræsus knew not that it was the cloud
 Of Nemesis upon his royal house :
 So little venerable in our sight
 Is present Providence—when past, how great !

All things concur with Nemesis : she sent
 A fugitive from Phrygia thus to be
 Her shadow and her symbol in the house
 Of the great king whom she had singled out
 To teach men, by his eminence and griefs,
 The righteousness of Heaven. In other lands
 She makes fresh preparation, and the ring
 Of destiny is slowly narrowing in ;
 The victim cannot stir, he cannot do
 A transitory act, but he therein
 Is riveting the future on himself.

Cræsus ! awake ! Thy Dream is on thee,—rise !

Whence are these foreign husbandmen, who throng
 The audience-hall at Sardis, suppliants rude ?
 They are from pastoral Mysia, come to tell
 How a huge boar from rough Olympus robs
 The sheep-folds, thins the lowing kine, and treads

The vineyards and the flax and silky maize
 Beneath his feet. "Will Cræsus deign to send
 "His princely son and famous Lydian dogs
 "And hunters of renown, to free the land,
 "And leave his name all o'er the Mysian fields
 "Fragrant as incense to the pastoral tribes?"
 To whom the King made answer: "Speak no more
 "Of Atys; he must tarry with his bride,
 "Whom it were graceless at this hour to leave.
 "The hounds and hunters ye are free to take,
 "And rid fair Mysia of the uncouth beast."

It grieved the heart of Atys; he was grieved
 That he should be shut out from manly toils,
 From winning love, and walking in men's eyes
 A prince by deeds as well as royal birth.
 He came unto his father and knelt down,
 Knelt down before his father and his King,
 And sued with piteous words: "O royal Sire!
 "With our progenitors it was esteemed
 "That battlefield and hunting-ground should be
 "The theatres of princes:—Hath the law
 "Been changed in Lydia that thou shuttest me
 "From such employ? Father! what cowardice,
 "Or what faint spirit hast thou marked in me?
 "How shall I come and go within the streets
 "Of this great Sardis, how endure the eyes
 "That speak worse words than those men would
 address
 "Unto me if I were not prince? Dear Sire!
 "My very bride will point me with her finger,
 "And call me 'Woman,' wishing that she had
 "A man to be the father of her sons!
 "I pray thee let me go unto this hunt,
 "Or reason with me why I should not go."
 Cræsus was mindful of his bygone youth,

Which was an echo to the young man's words.
A teardrop stood within the proud King's eye ;
He was a father, and he wept and smiled.

“ O Atys, my son Atys, I have not,
“ The gods forbend it! aught in thee observed
“ Unprincely, or beneath the graciousness
“ Born to the sons of kings. I had a dream,”
(And here a trembling passed upon the King)
“ A dream one night, when I had spent the day
“ Amid my treasures : I would not disturb
“ The quiet happiness of thy young life
“ By speaking of the vision, but I kept
“ The burden at my heart, and there it lay
“ The secret cause of my unwonted mien
“ And gesture ; nay, in many little ways
“ It hath unkinged me. Atys ! it declared
“ Thy span of life to be but brief : it spoke
“ Of death by weapon-point. Therefore it was
“ I hastened on thy nuptials, if so be
“ I might for my life-time enjoy thy life,
“ A theft, a stolen joy, the spoil of fate.
“ Thou art my chosen son, nay art thou not
“ Mine only one, thy brother being deaf,
“ To whom the outer world is but a show
“ Like wind-tossed trees upon the mountain top,
“ Or Hermus lapsing mutely through the town,
“ Too gentle, as the stricken always are,
“ Not one whom men could bow to as a king ?”

Young Atys listened, not without some awe,
For he had piety towards the gods,
And dreams and portents were unto his soul
Its faith and fear, not wholly without love.

O the sweet science of our youth, to find
A way wherein our wills may go, a cause

For action in the very reasonings
 Whereby men prove to us we should not act!
 Thus Atys spoke, the princely casuist,
 Pouring his honey in a father's ear:—
 "O father! blessèd art thou for the love
 "Wherewith thou hast thus loved me! yet indeed
 "Its very fervor leadeth thee astray
 "From the true purport of the dream. 'Tis thus:
 "I am to die by point of iron spear.
 "Father, dear father! are the tusks of boars
 "In that green Mysia made of iron points?
 "Elsewhere they are of bone! Now art thou not,
 "Dear father! art thou not a timorous king
 "And an unwise? Why truly I shall think
 "It is my mother governs Lydia now,
 "So good, so kind, and yet so timorous,
 "So very full of sweet maternal wiles."

He shook his flaxen hair from off his brow,
 And looked and laughed into the old King's face:
 And the King laughed again at his rude boy,
 Atys, the beautiful, the flaxen-haired.
 Cræsus! beware, the Dream is on thee now!
 But the Dream wrought; he let young Atys go:
 Fathers are evil pleaders with their sons.

King Cræsus sat within his audience-hall,
 Fixed like a statue on his marble throne,
 Silent and troubled, like a man who feels
 He hath done that which he shall one day rue.
 How cold, how weak the words of Atys seemed
 Now that the youth was gone; yea, he was gone,
 Atys, the beautiful, the flaxen-haired,
 Whose eloquence was his young face and not
 His reasonings, his light laugh and not his speech.
 For a sweet look and for a pretty gibe
 Atys, the flaxen-haired, was sold to fate.

A daily bargain is it on the earth ;
Forsooth to-day a hundred sons have been
To bondage sold in foolishness of love
Which is not love, through weakness falling short.
O father Cræsus—yet it was the Dream.
The Dream hath reached King Cræsus. And behold !
Where'er he turns dread Nemesis is there.
Things turn to Nemesis beneath his touch.
His servants are the slaves of fate : his guest
Fate's shadow, and the sunbeam in the eye
Of Atys is the light of fate ; the shake
Of his long flaxen hair belonged to fate.
The royal house is compassed by a Power
Which hath absorbed all wills into its own.
Sorrow and mirth, the hour of kingly pride
Within the treasure-house, the nuptial feast,
The blood in Phrygia spilled, the mountain boar,
The husbandmen, the fame of Lydian dogs,
The kneeling boy, the gibe, the flaxen hair,—
All grow into one shadow, and advance
Upon King Cræsus, like an angry god.
King Cræsus saw it not ; he did not know
He was become the centre of his Dream.
Alas ! King Cræsus, we are all like thee,
Fate teaching us the worship of free-will.

King Cræsus sat within the audience-hall,
Silent and troubled : Atys had gone forth
To make his preparations for the hunt.
The monarch bade them call the Phrygian prince ;
Adrastus stood before him. “ Noble guest ! ”
King Cræsus spake, “ amid the royal state
“ Wherewith thou seest me compassed, at my heart
“ A hot uneasy secret hath lain hid,
“ Which threatens now to bring forth bitter fruit

“ Of dire affliction. I have cleansed thy hands,
“ And given thee kingly greeting, and a home,
“ And appanage, and all things meet for thee,
“ As though thou hadst been Atys, my true son.
“ Nay, stranger, I recount not these small things
“ As debts for which thou art to pay me back
“ Measure for measure ; nor upbraidingly
“ As though the kindness lay too light on thee.
“ I seek return most different in kind,
“ I would thou shouldst go forth unto this hunt.
“ Thou art a gentle, princely man ; I trow
“ Atys would be as safe beneath thy charge
“ As though King Cræsus went with him. The
 land
“ Is wild, and there are perils of the way ;
“ Haply a father magnifies them, yet
“ I would that Atys went with thee, my guest !
“ And thou too hast great sires, unto whose deeds
“ ’Twere well to link thine own ; thy stalwart prime
“ Without achievements should not thus elapse :
“ Adrastus ! thou art born a Phrygian prince,
“ The column of an old and generous name !”
“ Monarch and father !” thus Adrastus said,
“ I should not otherwise have sought this hunt.
“ A sorrow-stricken man should not essay
“ To join himself unto his peers : the gods
“ Have taken him apart unto themselves,
“ Clouding his days ; nor have I now a soul
“ For martial enterprise, or glorious deeds
“ Of princely prowess, isolated thus
“ From my long line of royal ancestors,
“ Thro’ exile, ay, thro’ worse than exile dead.
“ Yet for thy sake I go, content to have
“ Thy joy for my reward in that sweet hour

“When I shall give back Atys to thine arms.”

King Croesus left the audience-hall assured.
Ah! he hath drawn the Dream unto himself,
And of his own free will embraced his fate.
There is not now a fibre in his heart
At which that Vision pulls not every hour.

Methinks I see the glittering plain outspread
At sunny dawn, and Hermus flowing by,
And the blue mountains, north and south and east,
With Sypylus, which half fills up the west,
Catching the sunrise, in whose rifted crags
The thunder tolls all summer, day and night,—
And the white walls of Sardis, and the King
Waving his last farewell from near the gate.
And o'er the Acropolis I see the snow
On Tmolus, where the long-lived shepherds dwell,
Tending their sable goats upon the downs
With purple saffron streaked, while breezy morn
Wafts o'er the plain from out the shrubby glens
That aromatic breath so dear to Pan.
And old Pactolus guides his lucid stream
Between two lips of ruddy sand, which glow
Like webs of golden tissue in the sun.
Far off the tomb of Alyattes gleams
Through the low mist, whose sluggish climbing folds
Its lofty cone o'ertops, and shoots on high,
Clearing its way into the radiant air.
And in the wind the lake of Gyges seems
Of silver shot with black, whose bright expanse
Regions of plummy marsh-plants intersect,
From out whose nodding coverts at that hour
The countless swans rise up to greet the morn
With tuneless pipings, which, with resonance
Conjoined of insect-swarms, that from the lake

Keep off the restless thirsty herds, are now
The only sounds that desolately thrill
That solitary shore of Lydian tombs.
Then the brave band of men and dogs went on
O'er hill and dale, and, when the sunbeams glanced
Upon the spear-points of the horsemen there,
It was the brightness of the Dream that moved
With them to its fulfilment constantly.

Atys, with beamy spear-points girdled round,
Beguiled Adrastus somewhat of his woe,
Recounting stories of the famous hunts,
Which he had heard within the banquet hall
By rhapsodists recited to the King
From Lydian chronicles: and then he spake
Of his young bride, or bade Adrastus note
The plumage of the bird that darted by,
Or the thick flocks of rapid ortolans
Which swam along the surface of the maize,
Or on a sudden sank and disappeared.
He asked the name of this or that blue cone
Which glimmered in the sun, or thoughtlessly
He pointed to the dogs, and asked the prince
If there were such in Phrygia, then confused
He talked of other things scarce knowing what.
Then languor seized him, and the weariness
Of the tame distance, and they had some hours
Of silent riding; but a bubbling brook,
And hunter's fare and slumber in the shade
Of single plane trees, such as here and there,
Like tents, rise up in those unwoody parts,
Refreshed the youth, and ever from his talk
Adrastus gathered peace and freshness too.
And thus they travelled to the Mysian border,
In its green mountain-glens to meet the Dream.

How beautiful are still and starry nights
On the great plains of Asia! And how clear
The yellow moon in glossy-foliaged dells
Where shrunken brooks are tinkling through the
night!

Oh I shall think unto my dying day,
When I outlive the strength of roving youth,
How beautiful are nights on Asia's plains!
The dome of heaven scarce arched above the earth
With the low hanging moon, and lustrous stars
Orblike and swollen with unusual light,
The night-wind, fragrant with a thousand gums,
Moaning, as weary of its homeless life
Over those countless leagues of inland steppe,
The little tents, the smouldering fire of wood,
The scattered arms, the horses on the plain,
Dim, dusky figures, feeding or at rest:—
What Atys and Adrastus saw is still
Seen nightly in that old unchanging land.

Amid the green and bosky roots, from which
Mysian Olympus rises, there doth lurk
A stony hollow, thickly overgrown
With arbutus and straight lentiscus shoots
And ragged stone-pines: there land-turtles dwell,
And bright innocuous snakes, and cruel boars.
And by the Mysian shepherds thither led
After most blythe reception, Atys stood,
And Prince Adrastus and the Lydian band;
And in the midst the boar at bay. The chace
With all its wonted stirring circumstance
Aroused the spirit of the Phrygian prince,
And, with the power of old past times, relaxed
Grief's pressure; and he hurled his lance
With fierce unsteady eagerness, nor hit
The raging boar: but youthful Atys fell.

The brittle shoots of the lentiscus broke
 Beneath the fall, and to the naked sky
 The closing eyes of Atys were upturned.
 And in that stony hollow, which to-day
 The aromatic summer gently fills
 As calm as though no blood had been shed there,
 Rifling the placid beauty of the place,
 Was Atys, youthful Atys in his blood,
 Atys the beautiful, the flaxen-haired.
 There lay the hope of Cræsus; thither came
 The old King's Dream for its accomplishment.

There is a cry in Sardis; Hermus hears:
 'Tis not the clamor of the nuptial feast,—
 Atys is dead, they wail for Atys. Where
 Art thou, young bride of Atys? And the King—
 Where is King Cræsus? Who will dare to say
 Unto the King that Atys hath been slain,
 Atys, the beautiful, the flaxen-haired?
 He who went out at dawn, who marked the birds,
 Whose youth ran over with him, like a well,
 And when his spirits wearied him, he slept
 Beneath the plane, because his heart was light—
 Who saw the stars at midnight in the sky,
 Who looked into that hollow and knew not
 It was his grave—*he* is among the dead!
 O weep for Atys, Atys mid the dead!
 And Sardis wept for Atys.

Cræsus called
 For vengeance on Adrastus, called on Zeus
 The god of expiations: he assailed
 The powers of Heaven with clamorous prayers, and
 filled
 The streets with imprecations, such alone
 As agony could wring from out the heart
 Of a bereaved and stricken parent. "Curse,

“ O curse the impious stranger, god of hearths !
 “ O curse Adrastus, thou dread power who reign'st
 “ O'er mortal friendship ! curse me that dark man !”

Slow the procession moves along the streets
 Of twilight Sardis. See ! the white form comes,—
 Atys, the prince, returning to his home.
 King Cræsus gazed upon the slayer there,
 An apparition, wan as the cold corpse
 Upon the swaying bier : King Cræsus gazed,
 And he unprayed his curse, his passion sank,
 Sank down, and in his soul he pitied him ;
 And beautiful and touching were his words,
 Albeit he then remembered with a pang
 How once Adrastus spake of the sweet hour
 When he should give back Atys to his arms :
 That hour had come ;—it had no name in words !
 “ Stranger !” (for by that title he addressed
 The prince, scarce knowing whether it enhanced
 Or lessened his mishap, that it befel
 By stranger's hand) “ I will not seek to add
 “ By word of mine to thine exceeding woe :
 “ Nay, rather I would bid thee take good heart,
 “ Although environed by calamity.
 “ Adrastus ! it was God who slew my son,
 “ The holy God who warned me by the Dream.
 “ Adrastus ! it was God who by thy hand
 “ Laid Atys low, and quelled King Cræsus' pride.
 “ Wretched Adrastus ! be consoled for this—
 “ It was not thou, but God :—yet why by thee,
 “ Yea, wherefore by thy hand, most rightly dear
 “ For thy true princely heart, and for thy griefs ?”
 Thus spoke King Cræsus most benignant words :
 For his whole mind was raised and magnified,
 Made merciful and quiet as a god's,

By the extremity of mortal woe.

Oh what a royal heart had that old man !

Sardis remembered many a long, long year
The funeral of Atys ; how the King
Hung o'er the motionless white frame, and wept
And wept and spoke not, how the thrilling wail
Of the young bride resounded on the plain
Throughout the dim expanse, and how the prince,
The rapt Adrastus, spoke not, did not seem
To hear or see, but was as if he strove
With some dull baffling mist within his soul.
All gazed upon Adrastus ; yet no eye
In the whole crowd of Sardians had a look
Of rage or hatred ; for the King's great soul
Had passed into his people.

Midnight came :

The glowing light of the red pile sunk down.
Hermus, who had been troubled with the glare
Of nuptial lamps, and with the smoke and sparks
Of the dull wine-quenched pyre, now calmly ran
Past the low fresh-turfed barrow where the bones
And ashes lay. There were no feet of men,
No Sardian lingering from the mournful crowd,
Around the grave ; but night, calm night was there.
The silent darkness rested on the plain,
By the swift rushing river undisturbed.
Adrastus stood beside the mound in thought,
The prince, the gentle heart, twice stained with
blood.

He knew that there was suffering on the earth ;
But he, yea, he was singled out from men
For awful woe, bent, laden, trampled down,
A gazing-stock for all posterities,
His being brought beneath some special law
Of the invisible world, so marked and sealed

That he should not claim kindred with his kind.
 And in the darkness of his pagan faith
 The princely-hearted victim deemed he saw
 A right, uncensured, to self-sacrifice.
 Therefore he slew himself upon the grave ;
 Not from despair, nor goaded by remorse,
 Nor to escape the dogging steps of fate ;
 But, mastered by an instinct of deep love
 For earth and for his fellows, did he sit
 In judgment on himself, and, so condemned,
 With solemn self-collection did he slay
 Himself upon the barrow newly raised,
 That he might abrogate that fearful law
 Which had hung evil round him like a cloak.

King Cræsus mourned for Atys two whole years
 Within his latticed halls : his pride was spent ;
 And from that cloud of sorrow he emerged,
 With heart and eye chastised, a royal sage ;
 And with a melancholy gentleness
 Of thought and aspiration so endowed,
 Men marvelled at the wisdom then outpoured
 From lips which learned their sole philosophy
 From suffering : such transfiguration wrought
 The love of God within the pagan's soul :
 And such the working of a heaven-sent dream
 To sanctify that ancient Lydian King.

In early days I read this tale ; it seemed
 Most touching and most wise, and it has lived
 Within my memory : in the simple Greek
 Of the old chronicler it truly is
 A stirring tale : perhaps less touching here,
 (Though English is a plaintive tongue) yet not
 Without pathetic wisdom of its kind.

VI.

THE SENSES.

RICH soil of ancient springs ! dear Earth !
 Of whom we all are made,
 In whose green treasure-house the birth
 Thou lentest must be laid !
 Mistress of Christian symbols, glowing
 In letters of dread meaning,
 In tides of song-like language flowing,
 Where minstrel ears are leaning,
 Where day and night
 Spell words of might
 By gloom or brightness hidden,
 And summer hours
 In bells of flowers
 Sing songs, and are not chidden.
 I never called thee gloomy,—never
 From out thy full, fresh-flowing river
 Have failed to draw sweet water,
 And still thine echo in me rings
 True to the faintest murmurings
 That constant stream hath brought her.
 So have I gazed on thee, as one
 Who sits from rise to set of sun
 In Troy's dim-furrowed plain,
 Scanning the letters half-effaced,
 And lines where some old Greek hath traced
 The titles of the slain.

So strive I, as a baffled lover,
 The wondrous science to recover,
 Laid up in Eden still,
 When our wise father gave a name
 To every beast and bird that came,
 With heaven-imparted skill.
 All over doth this outer earth
 An inner earth infold,
 And sounds may reach us of its mirth
 Over its pales of gold.
 There spirits live, unwedded all
 From the shades and shapes they wore,
 Though still their printless footsteps fall
 By the hearths they loved before.
 We know them not, nor hear the sound
 They make in threading all around:
 Their office sweet and mighty prayer
 Float without echo through the air.
 Yet sometimes in unworldly places,
 Soft sorrow's twilight vales,
 We meet them with uncovered faces
 Outside their golden pales,
 Though dim, as they must ever be,
 Like ships far-off and out at sea,
 With the sun upon their sails.

Not unobserved doth April bring,
 With rain-drops sparkling on her wing
 From many a silver shower,
 Her dewy prophecies of spring,
 Close leaf and show of blossoming,
 In every bank and bower.
 The breezes with their fertile wooing
 Earth's long-night fetters are undoing:

And she within her priestly vest
Takes back her soul into her breast.
In every blossom there is fruit,
And every flower swells at its root,
Till stalk and lily blade are seen
Piercing the mould with spikes of green.
And jealous plants all sheathed and furled
Come up with veils into the world,
And brittle shoots, where June discloses
Her jewelled lines of crimson roses.
All these, ere winter's season hoary,
Have had a blooming and a glory,
Have left their glory, and were dead,
That so they might be quickenèd.

O faithless ones! that cannot bear
Sharp pain or wan dejection,
Come witness in the vernal air
Earth's yearly resurrection!
For what are we but winter roots,
Wrapping in many folds our fruits,
Which cannot ripen here?
Our spirits from their mortal birth
Spend only in the soil of earth
One season of the year.
I do not scorn our earthly life:
It is a mystery, a strife,
A crowd of marvellings;
Our shadows, fashions, and degrees,
Elsewhere have glowing substances,
Which we may reach, when death shall please
To give us back our wings.

We have imprisoned by our sin
Man's vast intelligences,
And broken lights are flooded in
Upon them by our senses.
They are the inlets to our spirit,
Ebbing, flowing ever
From waters we shall once inherit
In Heaven's upper river.
They are the windows of our soul,
From whence the captive gazes,
And through them from the very pole,
Sunlight and moonlight ever roll,
While she her wild eye raises.
She sitteth there a captive maiden,
Upon the cold bars leaning,
Until her bosom is dread-laden
With all earth's lustrous meaning:—
Sight's ether-wingèd visions seeing,
Sound's golden circles hearing,
With Touch dissolving space and being,
And shades instead appearing.
Languid with such access of joy,
The soul herself betaketh
To another sense of sweet alloy,
Which earth, green earth awaketh.
For what is Smell that wafteth by
But the inward voice of memory?
Forward or up she never leadeth,
But household melancholy breedeth;
Hindering with fragrant wiles our haste,
With by-gone pleasures staying,
Forbidding hearts such wealth to waste,
Earth's backward call obeying,
Waking the scent-embalmèd past
With exquisite delaying.

Dear Sense! and yet I dare not dream
 Thy spells which all so earthly seem
 Are only earth's creating,
 And have not from our Eden home
 To every several flowret come
 With breeze-like undulating.
 But Taste, the sense that feeds the spirit,
 Hath gifts ourselves could never merit,
 Impartings rich of heavenly mirth
 Brought out before its time on earth,
 Good things, good foretastes, angel-cheer,
 Presage of deathless might,
 That makes the soul her wings uprear,
 Like eagles in their flight.

Sit, then, O Soul! thy Master praising,
 And through those windows keenly gazing,
 With awe thy vileness suiting;
 Through them the inner kingdom ranging,
 All things to spirit ever changing,
 Earth to heaven commuting.
 Dread Inlets! most mysterious Five!
 Linking our shadows with the skies,
 By whom dead forms are made alive,
 And symbols grow realities!
 And yet these Five may not be all:—
 This college-garden is but small
 With some few dozen trees;
 And yet scarce one was meant to grow,
 Where our long northern winters blow
 Within the English seas.
 This grew by some huge western river,
 This to the desert wind did quiver
 In Araby the Blest:

Yon by the warm sea-shore might smile
 Away in some West-Indian isle,
 In lordlier foliage drest.
 Who would have dreamed in those south homes,
 Where icy winter never comes,
 That in the heart of tropic trees
 A hidden sense was moulded,
 To shield them from the piercing frost
 Of northern Europe's chilly coast,
 And be far off across the seas,
 Facing the rude Atlantic breeze,
 In centuries unfolded?
 Like powers in hearts of flesh reside,
 Like buried Senses there abide;
 Senses and Inlets fine, all over,
 Which our last rising may discover.
 Our bodies here may be the tomb
 Of powers and motions hidden,
 Which birth shall loosen from their womb
 Elsewhere when it is bidden:
 Fresh Taste and Sight, and other Hands
 Unformed,—for work of other lands;
 And secret Ears wherewith we may
 Perchance hear spirits speaking,
 And Scents to guide us on our way
 To the fadeless flowers we're seeking:—
 Verdure laid up in us, not wanted
 For the hours of mortal breath,
 Ready to bloom in us transplanted
 By the mystery of death.

Thought hath a double stream, whose falls
 Keep murmuring in her sounding halls,
 Rising and sinking, faint and clear,
 As breezes waft their echoes near;

One springs 'mid outward forms and shows,
And winds as it is bidden ;
The other veils its wells, and flows
In a woodland channel hidden ;
And at far times reveals its floods
In whitest gleamings through the woods,
O'er roots of marble breaking,
Or in a hollow green and cool
Through many a modest lingering pool
Its amber waters taking.
We have no spells to turn its flow,
Or bid its voices come and go ;
For on its face are mirrored fair
The lights and shapes that are elsewhere,
And tranquil fear and shadowy love
Brood o'er its basins from above.
But oft in sudden turns of thought
Both fountains are together brought,
And mix their streams awhile ;
And fancy then herself is seating
To catch the sounds and whispers fleeting,
Where Heaven and Earth in streams are meeting,
And rippling waters smile.
Again in hours of gentle daring
The soul hath traced the brook some way,
Its darkly-twisting channel wearing,
And coloured pebbles downward bearing
From where its secret fountains play.
Benighted in far woods, she sees
Forms shift about among the trees,
And vanish here and there,
And, uttered by them in their fleetness,
Soft voices of an earthly sweetness
Keep trembling on the air.

And then, when fancy's stars are waning,
 The soul her wonted home regaining,
 Yet still those mystic scenes retaining,
 The sounds and visions so impress
 Themselves upon her loneliness,
 With such a dimly-living power,
 That she in many an after-hour
 Beholds in strange and foreign places
 Familiar forms and household faces ;
 As though erewhile in vision dread
 That place or room were visited,
 And strangers' voices echo round
 Like rings and links of magic sound.
 She listens well to what is spoken,
 As though the words were old ;
 And watches for some random token,
 The wonder to unfold.
 These are the sounds and shadowy sight
 That came in waking dream,
 When she was wandering in the night
 Far up the heavenly stream.

Oft too in slumber's pathless mountains
 The heart breaks up her ancient fountains,
 Which had for years been sealed,
 And the whole spirit overflows
 With waters that chance-dreams disclose
 In some forgotten field.
 Tree-top and rock, and nodding wood
 Group wildly in that whirling flood,
 While Earth and Heaven meet and part
 In giddy ebb and flow of heart :—

Giddy, yet held by some strong tie
Fast in the beating springs,
Which up above in sympathy
Keep time by murmurings.
For that bright stream's mysterious powers,
And all its secret going,
Burst on the surface most in hours
When sleep is o'er us flowing ;
Like gurgling wells and waterfalls
Which, heard in stilly nights,
Put music in the breezy calls
That come from mountain heights.
All these—quick turns of sparkling thought,
Strange places known again,
And dreams at hollow midnight brought,
Are openings by these waters wrought,
And Heaven awhile made plain.
They who will listen at their soul,
May hear deep down that current roll,
Its waters sweetly timing ;
And patient ears that listen long
May catch the fashion of its song,
And science of its chiming.
Nay, sometimes by its far faint airs
Young hearts are taken unawares ;
As a stranger, sleeping on the mountains,
Is waked by waters in their mirth,
Making, as they tingle from their fountains,
Audible music through the earth.

This is the stream, the sacred Gift,
By which our outward world we lift
Into a world within,

And, because earth is dull and dark,
Where'er these waters drop, a spark
Of upper light they win.
And thus two worlds, two lives are ours,
And men move on with angel powers,
For angel graces staying ;
And earth becomes a pavement fair,
Since deathless seeds are glowing there
With a Christian inlaying.
For this outward vest and this world we see
With its green and its blue and white,
With its folding-doors of day and night,
Is the silent or voiceful mystery,
That burns at the restless heart of a youth,
As he wanders here and there for the truth ;
When all that he has and all that he knows
And his spirit's fertile fountains
Were absorbed in his childhood from the shows
Of rivers and woods and mountains ;
When he communed little or none with books,
Which are dead men's empty biers,
That imprint on our features solemn looks
But cannot draw our tears.
The earth is a frail transparent vase
With heavenly lamps behind,
The light coming through is tinted, and draws
Figures upon the mind.
Thought's hidden stream from its upper springs
Hath brought us a few interpretations.
If the world would be still, our hearts might hear
What the secret is, when the stream winds near.
The earth is a church where no bells are rung,
And her beauty is slighted for want of tongue ;

But the stream in ourselves is her voice brought
back

From Heaven where it was taken,
That the minstrel spirit may have no lack
Of dulcet sounds to waken.

But a murmuring here and a murmuring there,
And a half word falling on the air,
Piece by piece we must weave in one,
Till the words in music and rhythm run,
And the poet must tell the meaning of all
That obscure and beautiful ritual.

So are we gifted ; so we live,
Scarce knowing what we are :—
Deep-coloured flowers that feebly give
Their scents unto the air.

So are we gifted ; so we die ;
We take our gifts with us :
With the green lives that round us lie
The way is ever thus.

And so, when we rise from our chastening gloom,
We are born afresh of a stainless womb,
And the soul, that hath been like a wandering
bride,
Wanders no more, and is satisfied ;
For the likeness she wears was the secret thing
That lured her on in her wandering.
And joy and love to the spirit are given,
New coloured and shaped in the moulds of Heaven ;
And our rising shall be like a wondering flower
That looks on the earth in her summer power
With the pride of its earliest opening hour,—
A thing that may well surprisèd be
With its own fair scent and bravery !

VII.

A WESTMORELAND HAMLET.

I.

The rain hath ceased to weep upon the earth,
 The very hills put off their misty shroud ;
 And evening cometh to her sunset birth
 Through gorgeous bars of black and orange cloud,
 While the late beams their lustrous looms may ply
 To weave and unweave rainbows in the sky.

II.

Beneath this mountain terrace, at my feet
 Lies one of England's calm and green-field hol-
 lows,
 And a small village with its rain-washed street,
 And eaves beset with clouds of autumn swallows ;
 And the full river with its radiant flowing
 Is like a harmless-natured serpent glowing.

III.

The sounds, which from the cottages ascend
 Through the thin smoke that trembles up so
 lightly,
 With deep soul-soothing interchanges blend
 Toil's sweet fatigue and childhood's clamor sprightly,
 Where children, prisoned by the rain all day,
 Win their undreaming sleep in evening play.

IV.

There fathers watch, well-pleased, with folded arms,
And at the doors young mothers come and go,
And age, in out-door chairs, doth borrow charms,
More than it wots of, from that sunset glow,
And youths unblamed their early beds may press
O'ercome by labor's pleasant weariness.

V.

The last gleam lingers on the hallowed ground,
Where angels oft descend from realms of light,
And now, with twilight's dreaded fence drawn round,
The churchyard path is quiet for the night ;
Though many a matron opes her casement there,
That she may breathe good dreams with churchyard
air.

VI.

O mighty are the gifts, and manifold
The tides of moral health and strength that roll
Through yon small street,—not to be bought or sold,
But fresh from God in many a peasant soul,
That might arise, and with meet aid from high,
Buoy England up against her destiny !

VII.

O England ! England ! wherefore so forswear
The healthy powers that with resistless shock
Bade fettered nations all their incense bear
To thy few leagues of billow-beaten rock,
And crowned thee empress on this ocean brow,
Where, lulled by foreign winds, thou sleepest now ?

VIII.

Calm lies upon the hamlet,—calm and sleep :
 And, as I gaze on it, my pulses quicken,
 And echos seem from every bush to leap,
 Like the loud names that in our slumbers
 thicken,—
 Echos that come the autumn evening freighting
 With England's name in low reverberating.

IX.

No boyish habit is my love for thee ;
 For it came on with slow and conscious stealings,
 So that thy woods and waters now must be
 To me instead of passions and of feelings :
 Yet every month thy thoughtless ways are loading
 Dejected hearts like mine with dull foreboding.

X.

Not banks of cloud upon the mountain stooping,
 Unmoved through ailing weeks of cheerless rain,
 Not want of letters when my soul is drooping
 For lack of love, and yet may not complain,
 Not these, so much as thy poor barrenness
 In all high thoughts and deeds, upon me press.

XI.

If in a harbour on a sunny day,
 Foreseeing fate, thou mightest range the deck
 Of some good ship, that on her Indian way
 In one short week was doomed to midnight
 wreck,—
 Where rugged partings blend half-smiling fears
 With loves that play, like rainbows, among tears,—

XII.

Oh! hath thy moral frame got nerves so strong
To look with calmness into those clear faces,
Setting their noisy sails with shout and song,
To come no more unto their household places,
But find, without church benison, a pillow
On the salt sea's unconsecrated billow.

XIII.

Such are the thoughts, my country! which I bear
Close to my heart all day and night for thee,
Drinking in life with thine imperial air
Fraught with the healthy spirit of the sea,
Haply mistaking notes that dim mine eye
For shapes and shadowings of prophecy.

XIV.

Not that I fear, as some, mechanic force,
Which runs our life into another mould ;
Earth shall not see thought's wonder-working force
Twisted aside by means for getting gold :
These have no moral soul within them swelling,
No spirit-pulse, no passionate indwelling.

XV.

Great times are greatest in their ruins ; these
On after-years no giant shades may cast,
Where flesh and soul may both dig palaces
In the huge relics of a glorious past,
As from the aqueducts Rome left behind,
Types of the cumbrous beauty of her mind.

XVI.

But I have fears, mayhap too hotly cherished,
Of the dense towns, like storm-clouds, o'er the
land,
Killing the popular heart that had been nourished
With fear and love, all chaste from nature's
hand,
Spurning the weight wherewith the green earth lies
On peasant spirits with her mysteries.

XVII.

And I have fears, lest quickened times should bring
Guesses and notions, clothed in earnest dress,
And men, from this reformed self-worshipping,
Should make an idol of their earnestness,
Counting unreal love of moral beauty
Coin that may pass for simple-hearted duty.

XVIII.

O that my tongue to such calm power were wrought,
With life to kindle, sweetness to assuage
Its own good fires,—to lodge some mighty thought
Far in the soul of this self-praising age,
Received into all England's wood and hill,
A native echo, heard when strifes are still.

XIX.

England hath need of harmless men, whose minds
May draw to their own color every heart,
Working in spots where angel help unbinds
The chains that fetter noblest souls apart,
That she might now, as erst, compacted be
Within one spiritual Unity.

VIII.

ON REVISITING THE RIVER EDEN,

IN WESTMORELAND, 1836.

AT night I heard the river's quiet sound
 Still flowing on o'er that enchanted ground
 As years ago it flowed: th' autumnal breeze
 Lay hushed within the dark-leaved alder-trees,
 And from unclouded skies the moon's cold beam
 Fell in a silver shower upon the stream ;
 And oh ! how fair, how heavenly fair the scene
 Caught through the leafy aisles and arches green,
 Where light and shade, most marvellously thrown,
 Rest on each giant tree and mossy stone !
 Soft—as the light that Faith doth shed around,
 Whene'er her pathway lies through holy ground ;
 Dim—as the mist through which she loves to see
 But half-unveiled the lines of mystery ;
 Glorious beyond expression—as the thought,
 The hour of death to saintly men hath brought !

Ah ! Memory wakes to feel at this lone hour
 Her own dear Eden's meekest, holiest power ;
 How many a tale of other times she brings
 With her eternal, harp-like murmurings !
 How sad the thought that weary years are gone
 And the steep heights of virtue not yet won ;

Alas ! how sharp the pang, how keen the sense
 Of vows forgotten, slighted penitence ;
 And yet how cheering too the hope from heaven
 Of mercy there, and sin that is forgiven.

Dear Eden ! the retreats of this green wood
 Have heard the roar of many a winter flood,
 Since last I wandered here to while away
 The golden hours of schoolboy holiday :
 Thoughtful even then because of the excess
 Of boyhood's rich abounding happiness ;
 And sad whene'er St. Stephen's curfew-bell
 Warned me to leave the spots I loved so well.
 Each hazel-copse, each greenly-tangled bower
 Is sacred to some well-remembered hour ;
 Some quiet hour when Nature did her part,
 And worked her spell upon my childish heart.
 Ah ! little deemed I then that thou couldst wind
 Thyself with such strange power into my mind.
 Sweet scene ! thou art not changed since then !—the
 air,

The trees, the fields, all are, as then they were,
 Happy and beautiful, like fairy-land
 Fresh born beneath the wild enchanter's wand.

But hark ! down Kirby vale the curfew knell—
 Then fare thee well, dear Eden, fare thee well !
 And may thine image, wildly-dashing river,
 Abide with me an household thing for ever.

IX.

THE KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN.

OH, Memory!—as our boyish years roll by,
 How many a vision fades from Fancy's eye,
 How many a golden dream of days long past,
 And airy hopes, too fair, too bright to last!
 All, all are gone. The wild Arabian tale,
 Aladdin's lamp, and Sinbad's magic sail,
 These have no power to chain the listening ear,
 Or hush the soul in extasy of fear:
 Untenanted, unhaunted now, the hill,
 The lonely heath, the waving woods are still;
 Fairies no more beneath the moon's pale light
 Reveal their mystic dance to mortal sight;
 Each shadowy form grows dim; and we deplore
 A splendour that is seen on earth no more.

Yes! It is Manhood's haughty right to quell
 Young fancy's fire, and break the darling spell,
 To strip the mind of all she valued most,
 And grant her poor return for what she lost.

Land of Romance, Farewell! Yet though we part
 With these fond superstitions of the heart,
 Oh let us not in scornful wisdom deem
 These old memorials but a baseless dream,
 Mere phantoms idly raised to while away
 The lingering hours of some long summer's day.
 Far otherwise they think, who best may scan
 The powers at work within the heart of man.

They know how heavenly pure the soul should be,
 Which fancy's gentle thraldom hath made free ;
 They know how pensive thoughts may best arise
 To kindle nature's holiest sympathies,
 The deep affections of the breast to move,
 And call to life the strong, meek power of love.
 Visions like these float swiftly through the mind,
 Like the soft flowings of the voiceless wind.
 Have ye not seen the shadow-stains that glide
 On gleamy days along the mountain side,
 How they unveil in every green recess
 Strange, mingling scenes of power and loveliness,
 And then in stately pomp ride on ? So too
 Imagination's gay, though transient, hue
 Discloses to the reason's inward eyes
 Somewhat of nature's depths and mysteries.

And thus with you, fair forms of days gone by,
 Glories of Song, high feats of chivalry !
 Cold were the man whom tales of ladye-love
 And knightly prowess have no spell to move.
 Such were the strains that gushed like living fire
 From the wild chords of Ariosto's lyre ;
 Or from that harp, alas ! too soon unstrung,
 That to the Tweed's wild dashings sweetly rung,
 Whose mourning waves still softly bear along
 The dying echoes of her poet's song.

Holiest of Knighthood's gallant sons were Ye,
 A sainted band, the Knights of Charity !
 'Twas not an earthly guerdon that could move
 Your gentle Brotherhood to acts of love.
 Fame's silver star, and honour's dazzling meeds,
 And glory reaped in battle's daring deeds,
 These could not lure those hearts to mercy given,
 Who, poor on earth, were rich in hopes of Heaven.

Yes ! it was well in those dark days of old
Europe should wonder, as her Pilgrims told
How haughty warriors left the lordly hall
For the rude cells of that poor Hospital,*
And bade ambition's restless throbbings cease
At the still watchword of the Prince of Peace :
How along Salem's streets, in sable vest,
The Silver Cross emblazoned on the breast,
The lowly Brothers moved with hurried tread
To tend the wayworn pilgrim's dying bed,
And give, for Christ's dear Name, to that dim hour
Religion's awful, consecrating power.

Peace to that ruined City ! peace to those
Whose sainted ashes in her vaults repose !
There, when the Arabian Prophet's countless throng
Rolled, like an eastern locust-swarm, along,
And blight came down upon the nations, there
St. John's bright banner floated in the air,
Curling its glossy folds against the sky,
While clarions pealed, and pennons waved on high.
One speechless look, one silent prayer to Heaven,
And, hark ! the Christian's battle-cry is given :
The dauntless knights thrust back the advancing
flood,
And Siloa's brook runs red with Moslem blood.

Alas, fair Salem ! Piety may weep
O'er the dark caverns where thy champions sleep.
There stern disorder strews along the ground
Fragments of elder, holier days around,
And ruin rears aloft her ghastly form,
Dim-shadowed in the blackness of the storm.

* In the *Hospital*, the Knights wore a *black* vest, with a White Cross of eight points on the left breast. In the *Camp*, the White Cross on a *red* vest.

No feathery nopal-tree, nor spreading palm
Shed o'er thy hills their wildly-graceful charm.
Few flowers are there, but round each falling tomb
In scattered tufts bright orange-lilies bloom,
Bursting from out their silvery, gauzelike sheath
To smile in beauty o'er the shrines of death ;
And cedars crown the hills, a silent band,
The only warders of thy wasted land ;
Thine only troubadour the southern breeze,
Singing his quiet song among those ancient trees.

Vainly for you, brave Knights, did Europe pour
Her ardent bands upon that sacred shore.
Vainly St. Loui's Oriflamme rode high
In gleamy splendour on the eastern sky,
Far in the swarthy vales, where ancient Nile
Rolls his rich flood round many a lotus-isle.
Too fruitful harvest of the Paynim lance,
There lay thy chosen sons, unhappy France !
Vainly did Edward lead the bannered host,
While England's war-cry ran along the coast ;
The Saracens rolled on, and thousands fell
Before the cohorts of the infidel,
And bright above the eddying tide of war
The conquering Crescent glittered from afar.
Yet still, where carnage fiercest swept the field,
The Crimson Vest, like lightning, shone revealed ;
Still, still they come, the Warrior-Brothers come,
Where on the ruined altars of their home
Are hung bright crowns of holiest martyrdom !

That glory hath gone by ! On Judah's shore
The Christian soldier plants the Cross no more ;
And Acre's ramparts, wasted Ascalon,
Mourn for the gallant Brothers of St. John.
And sadly now, brave Knights, upon the seas
Your fading banner droops, as though the breeze

That wooed its silken folds to play, had come
From the green hills that *were* that banner's home.
There on his deck the silent Warrior stood
Scanning with sternest gaze the heaving flood,
As if to find in those dark depths below
Some magic talisman to soothe his woe.
He dared not eye the sunny land that lay
In the blue distance many a mile away.

The glory passed away; her icy hand
Dark misbelief had laid on that dear land.
Yet, faithful still, the western Pilgrim trod
In pensive silence up the Mournful Road,
And marked with fond affection's eager eye
Where the Redeemer was led forth to die.
Oh! was it strange in such an hour to feel
A dim, a shadowy dread around him steal,
(Not the unholy, restless fear that springs
From out the bitterness of earthly things.)
A hallowed dread, that lulls the soul to rest,
And whispers peace and gladness to the breast.
Shedding around our path, where'er we move,
The deathless lustre of intensest love.
If thou wouldst know how those fond pilgrims felt,
When, weeping, at their Saviour's tomb they knelt,
Go, seek some chancel where the moonbeams throw
Their cold, chaste radiance on the tombs below,
Where the world-wearied nun her vigil keeps,
And at the lamp-lit altar prays and weeps:
Go, mark her quivering lips, her streaming eyes
Upraised in speechless fervour to the skies,
And read that love, which words may not express,
In the pale depth of their blue silentness.

Far o'er the waves those gallant Warriors roam
To win in other climes another home.

Four years they fought, fair Rhodes, 'gainst leaguered
 powers,
 To plant their banner on thine ancient towers :
 They fought and conquered. On the Grecian seas
 In fearless triumph ride their argosies,
 Where erst the pirate-barques were wont to sweep
 In haughty lordship o'er the Lycian deep.
 No more the lone felucca seeks to glide
 Round the tall headlands on the summer tide,
 Or smoothly steals along from shore to shore,
 Charming the ear of night with muffled oar.
 But Moslem hatred sleeps not : that dark host,
 Flung like a weary billow on a coast,
 Gathers with angry sound. Ah ! who shall tell
 What met thy gaze, thou lonely Sentinel,
 When, standing watchful on St. Stephen's hill,
 The City lay below thee, fair and still ?
 In reddening streaks, that peaceful April morn,*
 Across the sea the first faint light was borne.
 The calm Ægean spread her breast of blue
 To skies of deeper yet, and lovelier hue,
 To Grecian skies ! And there old Asia lay,
 Touched with the golden hand of early day ;
 And wide beneath him stretched his native isle,
 Bright with an eastern spring-tide's magic smile.
 Meadows of flowering myrrh perfume the breeze
 That freshens o'er the bosom of the seas :
 And there yon forest's leafy depths entwine
 Their budding foliage round the Parian shrine ;
 And delicate wild-roses too have thrown
 Their blushing chaplets round the chiselled stone

* "In the end of *April* 1480, the grand armament entered the Lycian waters: and the Rhodian sentinel stationed on the summit of Mount St. Stephen, a hill two miles from the city, notified by signal that the Crescent was in sight."—Sutherland's *Achievements of the Knights of St. John*, vol. ii. p. 9.

In natural gracefulness ; to morning's rays
 The laurel-rose her gaudy gem displays,
 Where the soft-rippling streamlet gently moves,
 Winding with quiet lapse among the groves.
 Beautiful Island ! fair that morn wert thou,
 How passing fair in all thy ruin now !

Lo ! On the sea a thousand Crescents gleam,
 Glancing and flashing in the rising beam :
 And thickly gathering sounds come sweeping by
 Of war-cries fierce and maddening minstrelsy ;
 And, wild and harsh, the cymbal-note is borne
 On the deep stillness of the breaking morn.
 Mohammed's galleys come ! The Sentinel
 Rung from his lofty tower the larum bell,
 And, as its toll in startling accents spoke
 Of danger and of fear, the sleeping City woke !
 Then came the battle's din : the cannon's roar
 Was echoed back from Caramania's shore ;
 And fearfully along that lovely sky
 Glared the red tempest of artillery.

Dear was that triumph bought, Brave Chief, for
 thou,*

When death came down upon thy laurelled brow,
 Didst in that hour with clear, prophetic eye,
 The gathering storm of eastern war descry :
 And, Rhodes, thy matrons might have spared the tear
 They shed so wildly o'er the old man's bier.
 They might have spared it for that bitter day
 When through thy shattered streets they took their
 way,

* Peter d'Aubusson ; Thirty-eighth Grand-master ; called the Buckler of Christendom.

And He,* the generous victor, wept to see
 The high-souled chieftain's peerless dignity, †
 Deeming a Christian had some magic power
 To bear him up in sorrow's darkest hour.

Where were *thy* tears, wide Europe, when the blast
 Of Paynim war o'er that fair island passed?
 And where thy gratitude, when ocean bore
 That close-furled banner to the Latian shore?
 Was it for you it oft had waved on high,
 Decked in the crimson pride of victory?
 Alas! On far St. Elmo's castled steep,
 By whose low crags the waters never sleep,
 It hangs its sullen splendours o'er the deep;
 Far from *that* hill around whose rocky base ‡
 A hundred villas shine with eastern grace.
 No terraced vines, no liliated fields are here,
 Laughing in rich luxuriance all the year:
 No incense-breathing gardens freight the breeze
 That makes low music in the cypress trees:
 Ah no! the hot sirocco's withering breath
 Flings o'er yon hills the arid hue of death,
 And the fierce sun looks glaring from on high,
 As though a curse were in his broad, bright eye.
 His beams, like locusts, sweep the weary land,
 Or burn like flames upon the cloudless strand,
 While the tired eye explores the dazzling air,
 But seeks in vain—no grateful cloud is there.
 No sylvan groves, no hospitable shades
 Temper the ruthless noontide in their glades;

* Solyman the Magnificent.

† Villiers de l'Isle Adam; Forty-second Grand-master.

‡ The St. Elmo at Malta was so called from a hill of the same name at Rhodes.

Only the stiff carrubas there are found,
Spots of black foliage on the tawny ground ;
While the long-trailing melons here and there
Weave a green carpet o'er the surface bare,
And the red cactus-blossoms, as they smile,
Mock the scant verdure of the dusty isle.

There like an eagle in her rocky bower,
The gallant Order braved the Moslem power,
While Europe echoed with their martial fame,
And rung with La Valette's undying name.
Alas ! 'twas as a gleam of glory shed
From stormy skies upon the mountain's head.
That gleam is past ; and England's pennon now
Floats gaily o'er St. Elmo's castled brow.
Beneath that guardian pennon, undismayed
Wealth's busy votaries ply their peaceful trade,
And church-bells fill with life the languid breeze
That scarce can curl the hollow murmuring seas,
While the white city, strong in faith and love,
Looks on her azure inlets from above,
And wraps old memories round her, like a spell,
Of shipwrecked Paul who loved her land so well ;
Whom wild waves cast upon her barbarous shore,
That Melita might serve false gods no more.
Now, as night's silent footfall steals along,
The Maltese boatman chants his even-song,
Freighting with Mary's name the moonlit air
That silvers many an old memorial there ;
And many a hospice, blanched and seamed with
years,
O'er the deep-shadowed streets its head uprears ;
And lowly wisdom loves to render yet
The unavailing tribute of regret
To an historic glory that hath set !

Farewell, then, gentle Warriors! Once again
'Tis meet to raise the faintly-dying strain.
'Twas meet that when the pageantry of death
Hung round the hero's tomb the laurel-wreath,
'Twas meet his minstrel-boy should linger near
To weep alone upon his master's bier.
And often to the Warrior's silent cell
From a far land soft dreams shall come to dwell,
While busy fancy marks with curious eye
Tall helmet-plumes and bannered lines glance by,
Or feeds her meditative soul from springs
Of sunny thoughts and deep imaginings.
Oh! still in memory's clear, pathetic light
Shall live those dream-like forms for ever bright
Yes! while undying spirits still must crave
A better, nobler land beyond the grave,
In lowliness the feeling heart shall come
And watch by the Crusader's marble tomb,
Till the weird stillness of the cloistered air
Steals o'er the soul, and charms it into prayer,
And the strong-glancing, eagle eye of Faith,
Sees far into the tranquil things of Death!

X.

HEIDELBERG CASTLE.

OH! if there be a spot upon the earth
 Where ruin hath more lightly laid her hand
 Than elsewhere, surely it is this fair place!
 Who ever saw decay more beautiful,
 Than when she holds her silent court as now
 Within the mouldering crypts of Heidelberg?
 Nay, one might think that Time himself were
 awed

By such memorials of man's pomp and power,
 So that he walked with somewhat of a soft
 And reverential step, as we should tread
 Over the ashes of departed friends.

Spirit of Desolation! Men may come
 To do thee homage in thy lone retreats,
 When broad-leaved summer hangs about the walls
 Her drapery of various green to hide
 The unseemly scars of time, and from the towers
 Gay flowering creepers fling their tendrils down
 For the soft summer winds to wanton with,—
 A banner bright as those that floated there
 Upon some pageant day in olden time.
 Yes, doubtless this would be a lovely place
 At such a season,—when the tufted pinks
 And scented wallflowers cling to every stone,
 And when the narrow mountain-paths appear

Winding through vineyards, rich with purple grapes.
Yet that is not the season when the power
Of Desolation is most deeply felt.

No ; winter hath a beauty of its own,
And more in harmony with spots like these.
The summer loves not silence : her great charm
Is in the concourse of a thousand sounds :—
The birds, the winds, the very earth herself
Breathing with life at every bursting pore,
And that low ringing melody that comes
I know not whence or how, except it be
From things inanimate :—so all unlike
To winter's tranquil and unbroken hush,
When frosts have locked the trickling well-springs up
In the earth's caverns, and the winds are furled
Within the bosom of the brooding storm.

There is a deep embrasure in the hall
Wherein I sat, so buried and absorbed
In thought, I almost seemed to have become
Part of the spirit of that lonely place.
It passed upon me like a dreamy spell,
And viewless as the air that clothes the earth.

About the Castle stood the shaggy hills,
Hung round with dark and uncouth legends,—such
As feed great minds, and are themselves the mind
Of a great nation ; and amongst the woods
Young boys and little maidens went about,
Stripping the glossy ivy from the trees,
To hang as Christmas garlands round their doors.
Far off, a group of charcoal burners stood,
And from their fire the constant smoke went up
In curls of faintest blue,—how silently !
And ever and anon the chattering jay

With his rude note awoke the slumbering woods,
Displacing the sweet stillness that was there.
But then the silence came again, and grew
Far more intense—with now and then a pause,—
When an old fount, that fell with splashing sound
On the green stones below the Castle wall,
Smote on my ear ; a sound most desolate,
And dreary as a tune that comes to mind
In some lone bower where those we've loved and lost
Were wont to be, and now can be no more !

All these things came upon me with a shock,
Yet wherefore it were hard to say, when all
So silent were, and so supremely calm,—
Yet did they come upon me like a sound
That breaks on silence unawares, a shock
Unsettling many most familiar thoughts,
And feelings that were household in my heart.
I was as one who dimly felt his way
Among great truths and perilous mysteries,
To whom the knowledge of deep things did seem
About to be revealed,—the mighty powers
With which the air is all impregnated,
And the great earth, and the far-rolling sea,
And the unquiet intellect of man ;
That something which is like the lightning-fire
That leaps and lives within the thundercloud,
And is its fiery soul, and drives it on
In fierce career against the wind ! Then came
That desperate, sickening pang of impotence,
Which cannot grasp the truth that it hath touched,
As if that touch had paralyzed its hand.
But quick a sense of exultation rose,
And an ethereal buoyancy that thrilled
My very soul, and lightened all my life

Of that which weighed it down, and lifted me
Far up upon the wings of power. I saw
The mighty truth that I would fain possess
Fixed in a region above all things else,
And in that region did I seem to walk.
Oh! it was like a distant city seen
All lying in a bath of beauteous light,
Within the heart of a rich golden haze,
Cheating the evening traveller's anxious eye
Of many a mile of weary distance—when
The sun goes down, and all is gloom again.

O wherefore have these tranquil images
Of deepest winter, with its drear expanse
Of brooding silence, wrought within my soul
So hotly and unquietly? For who
Would e'er have dreamed that such profound repose,
Snow-buried, wind-less, desolate, and cold,
Was but a gate to the invisible world,
An unexpected outlet to the land
Of inmost thought, which men so seldom reach,
Whose truths appear unspeakably to shun
The chains of words, and even to elude
The outlines of material images?

O Mother Earth! how near thou art to Heaven!
For matter lies for ever in the lap
Of spirit, and their subtle boundaries
Fade, and revive, and quiver like the light,
In most intelligent confusion, now
Efface, and now repaint themselves again,
Repose one moment in distinctness, then
Gleam like the infinite without an edge,
And melt within the furnace-fires of thought,
Seen, yet unseen, now glowing on the eye,
And now withdrawn in an excess of light

Deeper than darkness. So these limits seem,
 Dividing realms so opposite, and spheres
 Which underlie each other,—rugged cliffs
 That crumble at a touch, yet from whose heights,
 As from the undiscovered end of space,
 Men fall at once into some other world,
 Some new and unimaginable life ;—
 Walls that man knocks against and knocks in vain,
 And yet so imperceptibly confused
 That all seems smooth as summer lake between,—
 Matter and spirit pressing on each other,
 Stealing or borrowing each the other's place,
 With sweet encroachments, now as calm and slow
 As the white flush of dawn, now shooting swift
 Like the cold arrows of the boreal fire
 That climb half heaven at once in rosy flight,
 Or mingling unconsumingly in depths
 Of flickering splendours, volatile as are
 The vivid hues at eve exhaled in space
 Out of the speechless throbbing sunsets.

Thus

Mind hath a space, a medium of its own,
 Room for itself, more intimate and near,
 More vast and more accessible, than that
 Through which material worlds must plough their
 way

Not unresisted ; and the softest scenes,
 Fair forms, faint sounds, and fickle airy hues,
 The play of light, the splash of waters, poms
 Of rolling clouds that creak not, and the blank
 Of midnight's unreverberating ear,
 The strain of silence listening for a sound,
 The patterns of the moonlight on the grass,
 The undulations of sweet scents,—all these

Give way, like snow-drifts, 'neath the weight of
thought, :

And let us down through the material world,
As if it were a veil of thinnest silk,
Into an inner world, whose fantasies
Are few in number, dwelling far apart,
Alone, in couples, or like nomad tribes
Upon the roomy steppe, and where all thoughts
Are colourless, without terrestrial shapes,
And with an influence like creative words,
So that each thought is word and work at once,
Substantial, permanent, and giant-like,
Widening the mind, transfiguring the will,
And taking down the frightened faculties
To that deep point in self, where God vouchsafes
To confine on our thoughts, and touch our souls.

It struck the hour of noon: the quiet sound
Came muffled through the fleecy folds of mist,
That thickly hung upon the town below.
So faint was it and soft—yet so distinct—
It seemed the spirit of a sound, escaped
From some more gross and heavy atmosphere.

XI.

THE ISIS.

I.

Early one twilight morn I sought
A favourite woodland shade,
A place where out of idleness
Some profit might be made.

II.

The voices of the little birds
Were musical and loud,
Buried among the twinkling leaves,
A merry, merry crowd.

III.

But when the gallant sun rode up
Into his own broad sky,
The very wood itself did seem
Alive with melody.

IV.

And there the golden city lay
Safe in her leafy nest,
And softly on her clustering towers
The blush of dawn did rest.

V.

Onward for many and many a mile,
Through fields that lay below,
Old Isis, with his glassy stream,
Came pleasantly and slow.

VI.

The spring with blossoms rich and fair
Had fringed the river's edge,—
Pale Mayflowers, and wild hyacinths,
And spears of tall green sedge.

VII.

The ripple on the flowery marge
A pleasant sound did yield,
And pleasant was the wind that waved
The long grass in the field.

VIII.

And there is something in a stream
That fascinates the eye,
A charm in that eternal flow
That ever glideth by.

IX.

For still by river sides the hours
Will often lapse away,
Till evening almost seems to steal
A march upon the day.

X.

So should it be with Man's career:
Each hour a duty find,
And not a stone be there to check
The current of the mind.

XI.

The path of duty, like the stream,
Hath flowers that round it bloom,
The thicker and the lovelier
The nearer to the tomb.

XII.

And, ah ! the best and purest life
 Is that which passes slow,
 And yet withal so evenly
 We do not feel it go.

XII.

HOPE.

I.

How much they wrong thee, gentle Hope ! who say
 That thou art light of heart, and bright of eye !
 Ah ! no,—thou wert not hope, if thou wert gay :
 She hath no part with idle gaiety !

II.

The gay think only of the passing hour,
 And the light mirth the flying moments yield ;
 But thou dost come when days of darkness lower,
 And with the future dost the present gild.

III.

Yes ; thou, sweet Power ! art Grief's twin-sister,
 given
 To walk with her the weary world around,
 Scattering, like dew, the fragrant balm of heaven,
 Where she hath left her freshly bleeding wound.

IV.

Oh ! often have I pictured thee in dreams,
For thou wert always very dear to me ;
And never was I sad but sunny gleams
Have visited my drooping heart from thee.

V.

Yet words can scarce portray thy lovely face,
As it hath shone on me at dead of night,
Wreathed with a smile of calm and serious grace,
Chaste as the moon's, as pensive, and as bright.

VI.

When pity for the grief we would beguile,
And the glad thought that we can render aid,
Strive in the heart, and blend into a smile,
'Tis thou that makest sunshine out of shade.

VII.

And on thy brow there sits eternally
A look of deep, yet somewhat anxious bliss,
With a wild light that nestles in thine eye,
As though its home were not a world like this.

XIII.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

“ And when he began to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me.”

ST. MATT. xiv. 30.

I.

LORD ! I am thine, thy little child ;
 Though fiercely still within, and wild
 The fires of youth may burn ;
 Oh be not angry if I weep,
 And dread these stormy waters deep,—
 Master ! to Thee I turn.

II.

And, if in zeal and forward haste,
 All rashly from the ship I passed,
 And tempted danger here,
 Too great for one so weak as me,—
 Yet, Lord, it was to come to Thee,
 Oh let me find Thee near !

III.

Now in these days of dimness holy
 And spirit-searching melancholy,
 Strengthen my drooping heart :
 And let me stop each wayward sense
 In pure and secret abstinence,
 And from the world depart.

IV.

The Church, my Mother, calls me on
To follow Jesus, all alone,
 Across the desert lea ;
And wrestle with the Tempter there
In vigils of incessant prayer,
 And with wild beasts to be.

V.

And well I know, when weak and faint
With weary days in fasting spent,
 I must lose sight of Him :
And peevish thoughts and tempers ill
The ardour of my breast will chill,
 And make my lamp burn dim.

VI.

Then by the hour that saw me rest,
Safe as a fledgling in his nest,
 Within the white robe's fold,
And by the Cross that on my brow
He signed,—the seal that devils know,—
 Jesus ! Thy son uphold !

VII.

But I will quell my doubts and fears,
And on where holy Sinai rears
 Its form before my eyes,
For I can see above its head
A rim of growing glory spread,
 The light of Easter skies !

XIV.

EASTER COMMUNION.

I.

THE mystery of mysteries !
 Now let the pure in heart draw nigh,
 While every pulse is beating high
 With love and holy fear ;
 For Christ hath risen at break of day,
 And bids us from the world away
 And haste to meet Him here.

II.

The mystery of mysteries !
 The Angels and Archangels come
 On wings of light from out their home
 In ranks of glory wheeling :
 Our souls shall mix and blend with theirs,
 In loud thank-offerings and prayers,
 Before the Altar kneeling.

III.

The mystery of mysteries !
 The souls that still in dimness dwell
 Deep in the Church invisible,
 From doubt and care remote,—
 They too shall keep the feast to-day,
 And to their cells, though far away,
 The hymn of joy shall float.

IV.

The mystery of mysteries !
Oh ! far and wide through all the earth
Emotions of unwonted mirth
 And feeling strange shall be ;
And secret sounds shall come and go,
Harmonious as the throbbing flow
 Of the mysterious sea.

V.

The mystery of mysteries !
The dead and living shall be one,
And thrills of fiery transport run
 With sweetest power through all ;
For one in heart and faith are we,
And moulded one, our Head ! through Thee,
 The Body Mystical !

VI.

The mystery of mysteries !
From east to west the world shall turn,
And stay its busy feet to learn
 The musical vibration ;
While Saints and Angels high shall raise
In one vast choir the hymn to praise
 The Feast of our Salvation.

XV.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

“But yet the Son of Man when he cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on the earth?”—ST. LUKE xviii. 8.

I.

THE days of old were days of might
 In forms of greatness moulded,
 And flowers of Heaven grew on the earth
 Within the Church unfolded:
 For grace fell fast as summer dew,
 And saints to giant stature grew.

II.

But one by one the gifts are gone
 That in the world abounded,
 When it within the Church's walls
 Was willingly surrounded;
 And weary nations scarce can bide
 The thrall of power unsanctified.

III.

A blight hath passed upon the world,
 Her summer hath departed,
 The chill of age is on her sons,
 The cold and fearful-hearted;
 And sad, amid neglect and scorn,
 Our Mother sits and weeps forlorn.

IV.

Narrow and narrower still each year
 The holy circle groweth,
 And what the end of all shall be
 Nor man nor Angel knoweth:
 And so we wait and watch in fear;—
 It may be that the Lord is near!

XVI.

OXFORD IN SPRING.

“*Templa quam dilecta!*”

I.

How gentle are the days that bring
 The promise of the faithful year,
 Sweet early pledges of the spring,
 Sweetest while winter still is near;
 Like thoughts in time of sorrow given,
 Filling the heart with glowing types of Heaven!

II.

The little buds upon the thorn
 Are peeping from their pale green hood;
 Pink rows of almond-flowers adorn
 With many a gem the leafless wood,
 And gaily on the vernal breeze
 Dance the light tassels of the hazel-trees.

III.

The early rose is blushing sweet
In yonder sunny sheltered place,
Where spring and winter seem to meet
And blend with wild fantastic grace,
And under skies of coldest blue
The crocus fills her yellow cup with dew.

IV.

The sun shines on the city walls,
The meadows fair, and elmy woods,
And o'er her gray and time-stained halls
A quiet studious spirit broods.
O when shall faith be free to come
And find within these stately aisles a home?

V.

Thy timeworn bounds a precinct give
Where forms of ancient mould might stay,
Enduring truths that would outlive
The jarring systems of a day;
And then with men of evil will
How calmly mightst thou sit, and fearless still!

VI.

For now, when all things round are bright,
Those voiceless towers so tranquil seem,
And yet so solemn in their might,
A loving heart could almost deem
That they themselves might conscious be
That they were filled with immortality!

XVII.

OXFORD IN WINTER.

I.

CITY of wildest sunsets, which do pile
 Their dark-red castles on that woody brow !
 Fair as thou art in summer's moonlight smile,
 There are a hundred cities fair as thou.
 But still with thee alone all seasons round
 Beauty and change in their own right abound.

II.

Whole winter days swift rainy lights descend,
 Ride o'er the plain upon the swelling breeze,
 And in a momentary brightness blend
 Walls, towers, and flooded fields, and leafless trees :
 Lights of such glory as may not be seen
 In the deep northern vales and mountains green.

III.

Coy city, that dost swathe thy summer self
 In willow lines and elmy avenue,
 Each Winter comes, and brings some hidden pelf,
 Buttress or Cross or gable out to view :
 While his thin sunlight frugal lustre sheds
 On the straight streams and yellow osier beds.

IV.

But thy main glory is that winter wood,
 With its dead fern and holly's christmas green,
 And mosses pale, and trees that have not strewed
 Their withered leaves, which yet perchance are seen
 Struggling to reach the spring, as though for them
 New sap would rise from out the grateful stem.

V.

A wood in winter is a goodly sight,
 With branch and trunk and whitely-withered
 weed :
 Chiefly a wood like this, where many a night
 In Stuart times the cavalier's fast steed
 Spurned the dry leaves through all the rustling copse,
 And waked the cushat in the oak-tree tops.

VI.

O Bagley ! thou art fair at break of day,
 When freshest incense breathes from waking
 flowers,
 Fair when the songless noon hath come to lay
 Her spell of sylvan silence on thy bowers ;
 But night is thine enchantment, magic night,
 When all is vast, and strange, and dusky bright :—

VII.

The winter night, when, as a welcome boon,
 Down giant stems the stealthy beams may glide,
 And the stray sheep lie sleeping in the moon,
 With their own fairy shadows at their side ;
 While through the frosty night-air every tower
 In Abingdon and Oxford tolls the hour.

VIII.

Yea, on a poet's word, good men should go,
 And up and down thy lurking valleys climb;
 Thy faded woodlands, thy fair withered show,
 Are sweet to see; and at cathedral time
 'Tis sweet on some wild afternoon to hear,
 Far off, those loud complaining bells brought near.

IX.

They may have sadness, too, whene'er the wind
 Keeps moaning here and there about the woods;
 And fear may track their homeward steps behind
 Along the moated path and reedy floods;
 For in the stream the moon's white image rides,
 And, as they change, she also changeth sides.

X.

Why is it, city of all seasons! why—
 So few have homes where there are homes so fair?
 They come and go: it is thy destiny,
 Which for its very greatness thou must bear,
 To be a nation's heart, thou city dear!
 Sending the young blood from thee every year.

XVIII.

ST. MARY'S AT NIGHT.

I.

DEAR Mother ! at whose angel-guarded shrine
 The faithful sought of old their daily Bread,
 How full thou art of impulses divine
 And memories deep and dread !

II.

Steeped in the shades of night thou art unseen,
 All save thy fretted tower, and airy spire
 That travels upward to yon blue serene,
 Like a mighty altar-fire ;

III.

For wavy streams of moonlight creep and move
 Through little arches and o'er sculptures rare,
 So lifelike one might deem that Angels love
 To come and cluster there.

IV.

Oh ! it is well that thou to us shouldst be
 Like the mysterious bush, engirt with flame,
 Yet unconsumed, as she that gifted thee
 With her high virgin name ;

V.

And like the Church, that hath for ages stood
 Within the world, and always been on fire ;
 Albeit her hidden scent, like cedar-wood,
 Smells sweetest on the pyre.

VI.

The city sleeps around thee, save the few
That keep sad vigil, with their spirits bare,
As Gideon's fleece, to catch the cold fresh dew
That falls on midnight prayer.

VII.

Why doth thy lonely tower tell forth the time,
When men nor heed nor hear the warning sound?
Why waste the solemn music of thy chime
On hearts in slumber bound?

VIII.

It is because thou art a church, to tell
How fast the end of all things comes along,
And, though men hear thee not, thy voice doth swell
Each night more clear and strong:

IX.

Content the few that watch should hear, and feel
Secure their Mother doth not, cannot sleep;
And, as they hear, the gracious dew doth steal
Into their soul more deep.

X.

Or some young heart, that hath been kept awake
By chance or by his guardian Angel's skill,
Some serious thoughts unto himself may take
From sounds so dread and still.

XI.

If there be none to hear, no hymn of praise,
Or voice of prayer, to join thy chant be given,
There is no sleep above, and thou mayest raise
Thy patient chimes to Heaven.

XIX.

COLLEGE CHAPEL.

A SHADY seat by some cool mossy spring,
 Where solemn trees close round, and make a gloom,
 And faint and earthy smells, as from a tomb,
 Unworldly thoughts and quiet wishes bring :
 Such hast thou been to me each morn and eve ;
 Best loved when most thy call did interfere
 With schemes of toil or pleasure, that deceive
 And cheat young hearts ; for then thou mad'st me feel
 The holy church more nigh, a thing to fear.
 Sometimes, all day with books, thoughts proud and wild
 Have risen, until I saw the sunbeams steal
 Through painted glass at evensong, and weave
 Their threefold tints upon the marble near,
 Faith, prayer, and love, the spirit of a child !

XX.

COLLEGE HALL.

STILL may the spirit of the ancient days
 Rest on our feasts, nor self-indulgence strive,
 Nor languid softness, to invade the rule,
 Manly, severe, and chaste—the hardy school
 Wherein our mighty fathers learnt to raise
 Their souls to Heaven, and virtue best could thrive.
 Still may the brazen Eagle, that of yore
 Our fathers placed in each scholastic Hall,
 Utter its words of wisdom, and recall
 Our thoughts to God, while some old Father's lore,
 Or Martyr's roll, may sober our repast,
 Blunting so gently sensual thoughts that rise
 E'en from God's gifts, and love, with downcast eyes,
 In silence grows, at feast as well as fast.

XXI.

COLLEGE GARDEN.

SACRED to early morn and evening hours,
 Another chapel reared for other prayers,
 And full of gifts,—smells after noon-day showers,
 When bright-eyed birds look out from leafy bowers,
 And natural perfumes shed on midnight airs,
 And bells and old church-clocks and holy towers,
 All heavenly images that cluster round.
 The rose, and pink acacia, and green vine
 Over the fretted wall together twine,
 With creepers fair and many, woven up,
 When autumn comes, into a tapestry,
 Richly discoloured, and inlaid for me
 With golden thoughts, drunk from the dewy cup
 Of morns and evenings spent in that dear ground!

XXII.

COLLEGE LIBRARY.

A CHURCHYARD with a cloister running round
 And quaint old effigies in act of prayer,
 And painted banners mouldering strangely there
 Where mitred prelates and grave doctors sleep,
 Memorials of a consecrated ground!
 Such is this antique room, a haunted place
 Where dead men's spirits come, and angels keep
 Long hours of watch with wings in silence furled.
 Early and late have I kept vigil here:
 And I have seen the moonlight shadows trace
 Dim glories on the missal's blue and gold,
 The work of my scholastic sires, that told
 Of quiet ages men call dark and drear,
 For Faith's soft light is darkness to the world.

XXIII.

1. ABSENCE FROM OXFORD.

FAIR City! that so long hast been my home!
 When from thy quiet places I depart
 By far-off hills and river-banks to roam,
 I bear thy name about upon my heart.
 City of glorious towers! whene'er I feel
 The world's rude coldness o'er my spirit steal,
 Then dost thou rise to view; thine elmy groves
 Vocal with hymns of praise, thine old grey halls,
 Where the wan sun of autumn sweetest falls,
 Yon hill-side wood the nightingale so loves,
 Thy rivers twain, of gentle foot, that pass,
 Fed from a hundred willow-girded wells,
 Through the rich meadowlands of long green grass,
 To the loud tunes of all thy convent-bells!

XXIV.

2. ABSENCE FROM OXFORD.

THUS have I carried thee all England through,
 A resting-place for my world-wearied eye,
 The sunset spot in this dull evening sky,
 The streak of gold that bounds the twilight view!
 And I have felt far off in many an hour
 That absent city's soul-restraining power,
 Like scents from Eden freighted with a charm
 For tearful eyes and foreheads worn and pale.
 As he who dwells upon some moorland farm,
 Far in the windings of a mountain-vale,
 Feels that he is not lonely, when at even
 He journeys homeward from his toil, and sees
 The distant village from among the trees,
 Breathing its faint blue curls of smoke to heaven.

XXV.

THE BEGINNING OF TERM.

DEAR City ! far in hollow hills,
And kept awake by flooded rills,
This night I hear the many feet
That pace thy steeple-shadowed street,
The tide of youth in merry going
Beneath the college windows flowing :
And strange, most strange it seems to me
At such an hour far off to be.
I miss the evening thronged with greeting,
The tumult of the autumnal meeting,
When every face is fresh of hue,
As though its life began anew.
I almost wonder not to hear
Some chosen voices speaking near.
My very hand the air doth grasp
In pressure kind or burning clasp :
While with a pleasant, solemn strain
The chapel bell wakes up again.
And still to my believing eyes
St. Mary's shadow seems to rise,
All gently cast o'er every sense
With its old wonted influence,
Wherewith it hallowed many a night
My ramblings in the cold moonlight ;
And thrills of joy and thoughts of good
Were deepened by its neighborhood.

And is it well that I should stand
Apart in this sweet mountain-land ?
Oh ! is it well that I should be
Away from cares that chasten me,
Away from men whose pattern still
Could shame me out of weak self-will,
Away from warnings which could bless
And nurture me in holiness ?
And is it not a wilful loss
To be unburdened of a Cross ?
And in the life which I am living
Is there no fountain of misgiving ?
Yet, ere I left, the path did seem
Clear as a steady, shining beam ;
And to my vision there were leadings,
And in my spirit there were pleadings,
Which were impressed upon my sense
As very seals of Providence.
Ah ! in a hundred little things,
Like wavings of an Angel's wings,
Far gleamy lights, dim beckonings,
Methought it was in mercy given
To trace the guiding thread of Heaven.

But now my doubting spirit fails,
And from past faults a mist exhales,
Clouding the radiant track which showed,
As then I deemed, the heavenly road.
And every stone, whereon I thought
Some lustrous token had been wrought,
Some bright inscription, surely given
For faith's interpreting from Heaven,—
Though carved with broken letters still,
Appears the work of past self-will.

What did as Angel's foot-prints gleam,
 Unholy imitations seem ;
 And signs, which have not changed, display
 Their characters another way,
 And every fact the mind can bring
 Confirms the new interpreting.
 Oh Brother ! when thou fain wouldst range
 From place to place, from change to change,
 Take not for heavenly light the glow
 Self-will can o'er the prospect throw.
 Sin is a prophet, who can cast
 Unerring light upon the past,
 But on the future makes to shine
 False sparkles which appear divine.

 XXVI.

CHRIST-CHURCH MEADOW.

ERE Advent bells the Church are calling
 Her Bridegroom to discover,
 Or autumn's fast and silent falling
 Of her sere leaves is over,
 In joyous gloom and saddest mirth
 We turn our thronging thoughts from earth,
 And stay our pilgrim feet,
 Two days by Shrine and Porch to wait
 All Saints and Souls to celebrate
 With calmest honors meet.
 One day, the college chapel ended,
 All pagan books I put away
 In sign of Christian holy-day,
 And through the sunny streets I wended.

I walked within a meadow, where
The willow tops were burnished fair
With cold November's windy gleams,
And watched two green and earthy streams
Along the white frost-beaded grass
With their leaf-laden waters pass.
 And bright rose the towers
 Through the half-stripped bowers,
 And the sun on the windows danced :
 The churches looked white
 In the morning light,
 And the gilded crosses glanced.
Methought as I gazed on yon holy pile,
Statue and moulding and buttress bold
Seemed pencilled with flame, and burning the while
Like the shapes in a furnace of molten gold.
As the fire sank down or glowed anew,
The fretted stones of the fabric grew
So thin that the eye might pierce them through,
Till statue and moulding and buttress bold,
And each well-known figure and carving old,
Peeled off from their place in the turret hoar,
Like the winter bark from a sycamore,
And dropped away as the misty vest
That morning strips from the mountain's breast :
And as the earthly building fell,
 That was so old and strong,
Clear glowed the Church Invisible
 Which had been veiled so long.
And in the midst there rose a Mount,
 The greenest verdure showing ;
And from the summit many a fount
 In emerald streaks was flowing,

And each within its mossy bed,
Most like a soft and silver thread,

In wavy curves was glowing.

And gathered there about a Throne,
Raised high upon a Cloven Stone,
A crowd of worshippers there stood,
Like sea-side sands for multitude.

All were in snowy vests arrayed,
All bore a green and juicy blade

Fresh broken from the palm ;

All looked as though some powerful thought
Had o'er a myriad features brought

One fixed and breathing calm ;

As mountains in the starry blue,
Quiet and waiting for the dew,
With yielding line and softened hue

Acknowledge midnight's' balm.

A light of sun and moonbeam blent

Was o'er those myriads thrown,

In steady radiance from the rent

Within the Cloven Stone.

From north and south, from land and sea,

Came that transfigured company,

And East and West together sate,

As though they did expectant wait

For some high ritual ;

So noiseless were they far and near,

One might the emerald fountains hear

In their moss-stifed fall.

There rose a man from out the crowd,*
Who chanted solemnly and loud

* Heb. xi. v. 33. & xii. to v. 7. Apoc. vii. 2. St. Matt. v. 1.

A recitation of all woes,
And agonies and mortal throes,
 And tortures dire
 By sword and fire,
And bitter pains and monstrous things
For torment used by savage kings ;
And still between each word there came
 A trumpet's brazen cry,
And from the throng a loud acclaim
 Rung through the hollow sky.
Then from the east an Angel flew,
In snowy garb with fringe of blue,†
And in his arrowy flight he bore
 A wondrous Signet-Ring.
And he charged other Angels four,
Who then the green earth hovered o'er,
And the dim ocean's shining shore,
 To hurt no living thing.
And there, apart, he set a seal
On the twelve tribes of Israel ;
But when he to the crowd advanced,
The sun so full and brightly glanced
 Upon their glistening dress,
And then they waved their palms on high
With such a rending jubilant cry,
 And in one mighty press
 Around the man
 Together ran,
 While on the air upborne,
A thousand skirts of waving white
Gleamed like the flocks of cloudlets bright
 In sunny air at morn,—
 So that to me

† Numbers xv. 38.

The sparkling pageant did but seem
All like a whitely-flashing dream
Of silver sea.

But now all hushed and silent grown
Within the mystic place,
Prostrate before the Cloven Stone
They lie upon their face.
And, like still waters, from the rent
A Voice, once heard on earth, was sent
Unto the mountain side ;
Nine times It rose, nine times It fell,
Nine times in blessing did It swell,
And without echo died.
Now through the wavy rings of fire
Uprose the sweet transparent spire
A visionary thing ;
Then mid the uncertain silvery flood
Half vision and half building stood
In the sunlight quivering ;
Then on the turrets' fretted face
Each statue grew in its old place,
And through some leafless branches near,
I saw, with hand like burnished spear,
The dial of the clock appear,
And in a keen November gilding
St. Mary's stood, an earthly building.

Ah ! thus at times on earth below
The Church Invisible will glow
Upon our mortal sight,
And mid the rude and jangling strife
The holy Altar's hidden life
Breathes out in heavenly light.

O doubting heart! if e'er in thee,
 Temptations against faith should be,
 Make thou this day a vow with me,—
 Never in keen-witted strife
 To ask or tell of Christian life;
 Nor strive to read in wordy war
 What should be seen in prayer from far,
 Or on its viewless mission sent
 Couched in some secret Sacrament.
 For empty forms, opaque and still,
 No mirthful light are giving,
 They wait for us of backward will
 The vessels of the Church to fill
 With true ascetic living.

 XXVII.

ALL SAINTS' DAY.

1.

THE GATHERING OF THE DEAD.

THE day is cloudy;—it should be so:
 And the clouds in flocks to the eastward go;
 For the world may not see the glory there,
 Where Christ and His Saints are met in the air.
 There is a stir among all things round,
 Like the shock of an earthquake underground,
 And there is music in the motion,
 As soft and deep as a summer ocean.

All things that sleep awake to-day,
For the Cross and the crown are won ;
The winds of spring
Sweet songs may bring
Through the half-unfolded leaves of May ;
But the breeze of spring
Hath no such thing
As the musical sounds that run
Where the anthem note by God is given,
And the Martyrs sing,
And the Angels ring
With the cymbals of highest Heaven.
In Heaven above, and on earth beneath,
In the holy place where dead men sleep,
In the silent sepulchres of death,
Where angels over the bodies keep
Their cheerful watch till the second breath
Into the Christian dust shall creep—
In heights and depths and darkest caves,
In the unlit green of the ocean waves—
In fields where battles have been fought,
Dungeons where murders have been wrought—
The shock and the thrill of life have run :
The reign of the Holy is begun !
There is labour and unquietness
In the very sands of the wilderness,
In the place where rivers ran,
Where the Simoom blast
Hath fiercely past
O'er the midnight caravan.
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Earth travails with her dead once more.
In one long endless filing crowd,
Apostles, Martyrs, Saints, have gone,

Where behind yon screen of cloud
 The Master is upon His Throne !
 Only we are left alone !—
 Left in this waste and desert place,
 Far from our natural home ;
 Left to complete our weary race,
 Until His Kingdom come.
 Alas for us that cannot be
 Among that shining company !
 But once a year with solemn hand
 The Church withdraws the veil,
 And there we see that other land,
 Far in the distance pale :
 While good church-bells are loudly ringing
 All on the earth below,
 And white-robed choirs with angels singing,
 Where stately organs blow :
 And up and down each holy street
 Faith hears the tread of viewless feet,
 Such as in Salem walked when He
 Had gotten Himself the victory.
 So be it ever year by year,
 Until the Judge Himself be here !

2.

THE MIDDLE HOME.

The Dead—the mighty, quiet Dead !
 Each in his moist and silent bed
 Hath laid him down to rest,
 While the freed spirit slowly fled
 Unto the Patriarch's breast.

Perchance awhile it lingered near,
 As loth to quit its earthly bier,
 Until the funeral rite was done,
 And the Church closed upon her son.

There is a place where spirits come,
 Beneath the shrine to live,
 A mystic place, a middle home,
 Which God to them doth give.
 What mortal fancy can disclose
 The secrets of their calm repose?
 It is a quietness more deep
 Than deadest swoon or heaviest sleep,
 A rest all full of waking dreams,
 Of magic sounds, and broken gleams,
 Outside the walls of heaven;
 So near, the Souls may hear the din
 Of thousand Angel choirs within,
 And some dear prospect too may win,—
 As, in the light of even,
 Long absent exiles may have seen
 The home, the woods, the orchards green,
 Wherein their childish time was spent,
 Ere on their pilgrimage they went;
 And, as they look upon the show,
 The thought of early love returns
 Unto the straining eye that burns
 With tears that age forbids to flow.
 It is a rest, yet torment dire,
 Repose within the lap of fire,
 Because it is God's will,—
 Another life of heavenly birth,
 Which men live quicker than on earth,
 Happy, resigned, and still:
 A pardoning Father's first caress,
 A glorious penal blessedness!

There then outside the heavenly gate
 The souls beneath the Altar wait—
 The Altar whereon Christ was laid,
 True Meat for all the living made,
 And Shelter for the Dead !
 Their bodies are not yet like His,
 Their souls not strong enough for bliss,
 Or love unmixed with dread.
 They cannot brook the vision yet,
 Those radiant lights that never set ;
 And so the Son of Man hath thrown
 His awful Veil o'er spirits lone.
 O'ershadowed by His Flesh they lie,*
 As though behind a charmed screen,
 Hid from the piercing of the Eye
 That may not look on things unclean !

Say, who are those that softly glide
 Each pure and saintly soul beside,
 Like Angels, only that they bear
 More thought and sadness in their air,
 As though some stain of earth did rest
 Its pensive weight upon their breast,
 And lodged a fearfulness within
 That could not rise from aught but sin ?
 Nor ever on their silent face
 Doth gentle mirth leave any trace,
 Save when their downcast eye doth rest
 Upon the Symbol on their breast,
 Then are their features lit the while
 With something like an earthly smile,
 As though a thought were in their heart
 Which it were rudeness to impart.

* S. Bernard, Serm. in Fest. Omn. Sanct.

These are the righteous works of Faith,
 Wrought in the fight with Sin and Death—
 Dear shadows of each holy thing,
 The goodly fruits and flowers that spring
 From the rich Tree of Life ;
 Alms-deeds, and praise, and vigils past
 In penitential prayer and fast,
 Boldness in faith, and wrongs forgiven,
 And self-denying toils for heaven,
 And gentleness in strife.

These follow all the souls that come
 Unto their rest and middle home ;
 And by their sides for ever stay
 To witness at the solemn day,—
 In fear as nigher still and nigher
 Through the thin veils of cleansing fire,
 They see the angels from above
 Descend upon their tasks of love
 The spirits to release,
 To bear them to that Vision bright,
 That throne in whose tremendous sight
 The soul shall find eternal light
 And everlasting peace.

 XXVIII.

THE STORM IS PAST.

I.

THE storm is past : the green hill-side
 Is streaked with evening gleams,
 Let out through rents in yon dark cloud,
 Day's last and loveliest beams.

II.

Still clings the tempest's fleecy skirt
Round Fairfield's hollow crest,
Where glorious mists in many a fold
Of wavy silver rest.

III.

Deep imaged in the lake serene
The shadowy mountains lie:
Deeper than heaven itself the blue
Of that unreal sky.

IV.

Oh! soft falls evening on the heart
With gnawing cares deprest,
Feeding on all her quiet things,—
A Sacrament of rest!

V.

Sin-blighted though we are—yet still
Upon our weary souls,
Through hills and woods, through lakes and
streams,
A tide of glory rolls:

VI.

A brimming tide from heaven that flows
Of freshness and of power,
And holy strength to nerve the heart
For duty's sterner hour.

XXIX.

'TIS WHEN WE SUFFER.

I.

'Tis when we suffer gentlest thoughts
 Within the bosom spring:
 Ah! who shall say that pain is not
 A most unselfish thing?

II.

Long ere I knew thee, men had said
 That I must be thy friend,
 While thou by Itchin's grassy bank
 Thy summer hours did spend.

III.

So it came natural to me
 To have thee for my brother:
 And more and more each passing day
 We grow into each other.

IV.

And I have looked upon thee now
 With gaze so long and true,
 That all things near and round thee seem
 Touched with the selfsame hue.

V.

My very love for thy dear sake
Runs out on every side,
And joys with liberal waste to find
Its idols multiplied.

VI.

To charm my pain, soft thoughts of thee
Doth willing memory bring,
Fragrant as is the leafy smell
Of rain-washed woods in spring.

VII.

Yes—thou hast thrown on me once more
My boyhood's living glow,
And tears and smiles and childish joys
From their old fountains flow.

VIII.

Unlike, and yet how like, two wills
That mould so passing well,
As waves that meet and make a calm
Caught by each other's spell.

IX.

Each by its brother's heart delays
To learn its mystic motion,
Blends as it listens, and forgets
All the wild heaving ocean.

X.

Old age, what is it but a name
For burning love departed?
We two shall be for ever boys,
If we are loyal-hearted.

XXX.

THE HOLY ANGELS.

I.

ANGELS and Thrones and holy Powers
 And Ministers of light—
 God's primal sons and mystic bands
 In various orders bright,
 And hidden Splendours wheeling round
 In circles infinite—

II.

Celestial priests and seraph kings
 In links of glory twine :
 And Spirits of departed men
 In saintly lustre shine,
 With Angels dear that fold their wings
 Above the awful Shrine—

III.

Chariots of living flame that fill
 The mountain's hollow side,
 Breezes that to the battle-field
 Over the forest ride,
 Spirits that from the Bridegroom come
 To wait upon the Bride—

IV.

These are among us and around
In earth and sea and air,
At fast and feast and holy rite
And lonely vigil prayer,
Morning and noon and dead of night
Crowding the heavenly stair.

V.

In solemn hours and paths remote,
Where worldly sounds are still,
There comes to us from Spirits nigh
A contact pure and chill,
A touch that to the inmost sense
Runs with unearthly thrill.

VI.

Yet man will deem himself alone—
That earth so fair and wide
Was made for him to have unshared
His glory and his pride,
That he alone, supreme below,
To Heaven should be allied.

VII.

And wouldst thou grudge, poor selfish heart,
To share thy lonely sway,
And scorn the visitants that come
On earth with thee to stay—
The Beings meek and beautiful
That follow on thy way?

VIII.

There's many a lake to Heaven looks up
With bright and earnest eye
Upon the solitary tops
Of mountains steep and high,
And many a plant and flower that bloom
Where man was never nigh.

IX.

All day and night the lovely clouds
In curious shapes are blending,
And coloured lights through forest bowers
Are every hour descending,
Where none are by but Angel forms,
God's glorious road attending.

X.

Oh! well it is that they for love
Of man's cold heart are weeping:
And it shall please me, Lord! to think,
While my dull eyes are sleeping,
Angels for Thine eternal praise
Eternal watch are keeping!

XXXI.

THE LIFE OF THE LIVING.

THE whole world lies beneath a spell—
 A charm of dreadest power—
 And life hath some new miracle
 Worked for it every hour.
 Hast thou ever been on a misty night
 In a deep and solemn dale,
 When the firs, like spirits, stand upright
 In a soft, transparent veil,
 While the moon with rings of muffled light
 Hath girdled her chariot pale?
 Hast thou ever sat on a mountain-brow
 When the sun was bright and the wind was low,
 And gazed on the groups of silent wood
 That hang by the brink of a crystal flood,
 When the wind starts up from his hidden lair,
 Like a thing refreshed by sleep,
 On the scene so summer-like and fair,
 And the quietness so deep?
 The far-off pass and the broken fell
 With a hoarse and hollow murmur swell
 As the giant rides along:
 He comes with sceptre bare to break
 The pageant mirrored in the lake;
 And the whole forest depths to shake
 With fury loud and strong.
 He hath bent the poplar as he past,
 As the tempest bends the tall ship-mast;

He hath twisted the boughs of the lofty ash,
And the old oak moaned beneath his lash.
And yet to thee like some strange dream
The wild winds savage sport doth seem,
For thou art still on thy mountain brow,
With the sun all bright and the wind all low !

Ah ! such at best is this weak life,
A mournful and mysterious strife,
Where each man to his neighbour seems
Like the stirring forms in motley dreams ;
And shadows fall from cloudless skies,
 And lights in darkness gleam,
And endless are the mysteries
 Of this unbroken dream.
And we gaze as dreamers have done of yore
On a sight they think they have seen before ;
And the far-off hills, and the neighbouring woods
And the gleaming pools of the winding floods,
Are blent in the sunset's misty hue,
When color and distance are both untrue.

To the eye of mortal it may not be
 To look on his own soul,
But like a dim half-hidden sea
 Before him it doth roll.
It is green as the green earth's sunny grass,
 It is blue as the bluest sky ;
It is black as night when the tempests pass,
 And the snow-white sea-birds cry.
The weary billow hath no soft sleeps,
 For its colour and change are given
Not from the heart of its beating deeps,
 But they fall from the face of heaven.

When the day is fair, and the gale at sleep,
There are marvellous things that lie
Full many and many a fathom deep,
Moving and resting uncertainly :—
Things tinted, dark, and bright,
Brave jewels seen
Through the solid green,
Gleaming and giving light.
And after the storm, when the summer calm
Drops down on the sea like a holy charm,
When the clouds on high
Float quietly,
Like Angels winnowing by,—
We see by the dawn that the furrowed shore
With broken things is strewn all o'er,
From the hollow ocean brought ;
Quaint carved works man never wrought,
And plants earth never bore,
New metals torn from their ancient bed,
And the wave-bleached bones of the unknown dead.

Can the beach that we scan
Be the Soul of Man
With the wrecks of its childhood's being—
With the tokens dread
That the life which is fled
Is blent with the life that is fleeing ?

XXXII.

THE MOUNTAINS.

“ Their gods are gods of the hills ; therefore they have overcome us.”—III. KINGS XX. 23.

LET none but priests or lowly men draw nigh
 Unto the lofty mountains, to invade
 The awful sanctuary God hath built
 Upon their desert sides. There was a time,
 Ere the unholy stain of blood had flushed
 The sunny green of the young virgin earth,
 When He did walk with men in shady bowers
 And innocent gardens. But when sin grew bold,
 The jealous God withdrew unto the hills :
 And the bright mists that moved upon the plain,
 To gladden and keep fresh the heart of earth,
 Were gathered up to Him, and hung in folds
 Of glorious cloud before His mountain Throne ;
 And everlasting barrenness was bid
 To take the hills unto itself, that He
 Might have a solitude wherein to dwell.

Behold how He hath gifted this His stern
 And sacred dwelling-place. Tempests and storms
 And the mysterious voices of loud winds,
 A thousand lights of beauty, so intense
 They make men weep for love of them, and shades
 That move obedient to conceal from us
 The path of some dear Angel, and o'er all
 Bridges of rainbow thrown from peak to peak
 In mystic arches, signs of covenant :—
 These are His gifts unto the mighty hills.

And the blue skies are bid by Him to stoop
 Unto the mountain-top, that earth may blend
 With Heaven; and away from their cloven sides
 The music of ten thousand springs is heard,
 Gushing with water—holiest element,
 Wherein the power of our New Birth is laid:
 Fed ever from the dews of Heaven that fall
 When night is coldest; and free liberal airs
 That roam about the mountains, and that come
 We know not whence, move o'er the pool unseen,
 Like the pure Dove who broods above the Font.
 —Fresh are those sources, though no shade is nigh,
 Fresh as the wells that stand in natural rock
 In summer woods or violet-scented grove,
 With lowly flowers all round, and forest-breaths
 Just come to dimple their still surfaces,
 And now and then to scatter the frail leaves
 From off the briar-rose that hangs above.

And here and there, far in the lonely glens,
 Huge memory-peopled forests stretch along;
 Amid whose glorious tangled aisles, and choirs
 Closed in with leafy pinnacles, and shafts
 Of tall light trees down which the sunbeam plays,
 Our holy sires were taught by God to build
 Their venerable Churches, so that He
 Might come once more from the eternal hills
 To dwell by shrines that mortal hands had reared,
 Albeit the pattern of the Holy Place
 Was shown them on the mountain's wooded side!

On the high places of the Holy Church,
 Strongholds of prayer and lonely steepes of faith,
 Lay the first lights of hope, when all around
 Was dark and dreary tumult. Savage wastes
 Of black and angry waters rolled along.

But the strong breath of Him who brooded once
Upon the shapeless seas, closed up the skies
And sealed the fountains of the bursting deep.
When Noe from his single lattice gazed,
The watery gleams of the returning sun
Smiled sadly on the mountain-peaks that rose,
Like islands of the Blest, happy and green.
Unto a mountain-top by impulse drawn,
On Ararat the weary Ark reposed,
Safe anchored there within the rocky veil,
Now muffled by long centuries of snow.
Then were the shades dispelled, and earth was free,
And Stars and Angels shouted round the Throne,
And the victorious Sun broke from the East
Into the sky, beneath a glorious arch
Wreathed with triumphal colors, and the Earth
Sent up a steam of odorous sacrifice
Unto the Threefold Majesty in Heaven !

These are the marvels that of right belong
Unto the mountains. So it came to pass
The children of the old dark faiths went up
To worship there, and lit their altar fires
Upon the even cone of some green hill,
Whose very shape seemed pregnant to their eyes
With an unwonted presence, or dim trace
Of Him they sought. Alas ! they little knew
Whence their blind worship came, what Angel forms
Went often with them to the bleak hill-tops.
And so the spiritual Persian climbed
The lofty steep, to feel his God diffused
In the unbounded blue that was around,
As though the mountain-wind, that did embrace
Himself and all, had been the breath of God !

Oh! come then to these gifted Altars, come!
They will unteach thee pride, and gird thee round
With types and mysteries of things above,
And wrap thy spirit up in many a fold
Of awful visions. Come and wander now
Among their solemn passes, far withdrawn
From every sound except the waterfall,
And eagle's voice, high up among the clouds—
Wondrous as that dread bird that waited once
In Patmos, when the saintly exile saw
The holy Church pass on from east to west,
Like the bright moon, through shadows manifold.

How fixed and calm they look! Yet on their
sides,
Whether by stream or flame impressed, fierce scars
And rugged seams are left as if to tell
Of revolutions past, upheaval slow,
And secular subsidence, and deep grooves
Worn by the ancient glacier on its road,
Like furrows on brave faces made by pain,
The lines of earth's old age. They make the hills
Look old and hoary, and yet not the less
Unchangeable: as if they meant to show
That changes, which efface men's works and ways,
Can only wear God's footprints deeper in,—
For fire and flood are but His chariot-wheels.

Behold the heights man's foot hath never trod!
A cloud of prophecy hangs densely there.
In ancient days the Spirit dwelt in hearts
That knew His presence: in these later times
Men prophesy, and know it not; they strew
The precious treasure up and down, like leaves,
And the wise winds, which are God's Spirit, take
And gather them for Him,—they are not lost.

Thus from all seers, both new and old, like clouds
Drifting in little flocks on autumn days
To one dark treasure-house of storm, each year
The weight of prophecy doth grow, and men
Behold its varying outline, bright and dark,
And watch its swelling form with awe, as though
It could no more contain the living fire
Which hath already shone in palest gleams
Through many a rent and at each radiant fringe.

Come, then, unto the mountains—sit with me
Among this spotted fern; for God's decrees
Are wrapped about them like a mantle: they,
Whom He foreknew, perchance may lift the veil,
And see His depths within the blessed light
Which kindles love and yet doth not increase
Our knowledge. Come, then, to this trickling spring,
It will remind thee of thy morning dew.
Let the huge mountains throw their rugged arms
Around thee, while their virtue goeth out
Into thy heart with hidden sacraments!

XXXIII.

THE PIC-NIC.

I.

A LADY a party of pleasure made,
 And she planned her scheme right well ;
 And early and late this party filled
 The head of the demoiselle.

II.

It rained all day and it rained all night,
 It rained when morning broke,
 It rained when the maiden went to sleep,
 And it rained when she awoke.

III.

Peevish and fretful the maiden grew
 When the hour of noon was gone ;
 But the merry clouds knew nothing of that,
 And the rain kept pouring on.

IV.

The weather has got no business with us,
 And we have none with the weather,
 And temper and weather are different things,
 But they always go together.

V.

Oh ! anger and beauty, my lady dear,
 Will never agree to share
 That little white brow that lifts its arch
 Through the parting of thy hair.

VI.

The mists are strewn all over the hills,
 And the valleys are ringing with floods,
 And the heavy drops on the flat broad leaves
 Are making 'strange sounds in the woods.

VII.

Angels are round thee and Heaven's above,
 And thy soul is alive within ;
 Shall a rainy day and a cloudy sky
 Make a Christian heart to sin ?

VIII.

O wait for the sunset's dusky gold
 On the side of yon mountain glen,
 And seek the lone seat where the foxgloves grow,
 And smile at thy folly then.

 XXXIV.

MY GODSON'S BAPTISM.

I.

DEAR Christian child ! was it the power
 That in those gifted waters came,
 Which stirred thee at that solemn hour,
 And thrilled through all thy trembling frame ?

II.

Oh ! was it keen and fierce the smart
 When the old root within thee died,
 And the new nature in thy heart
 Rose like the swell of Ocean's tide ?

III.

Yes—in the dawn of thy new birth
There came some spiritual fears,
Faint gleams of after-things,—that earth
Might pay the first-fruits of her tears.

IV.

Sweet penitent ! all lovely things
Are for their brightness full of fear ;
And strange would seem those angel-wings
That came and made soft motions near.

V.

And yet the Cross did hush thy cries,
When thou within mine arms didst lie,
Quiet and sealed for sacrifice
Unto the Holy Trinity.

VI.

And such a smile sat on thy mouth,
While from that Token's fourfold might,
From East and West, from North and South,
Great visions broke upon thy sight.

VII.

And such a look came from thine eyes
Through lashes fringed with Christian dew—
Wonder and hope and mirth did rise
Up from those wells of heavenly blue.

VIII.

Now thou art consecrate, fair thing !
A Church where sinners have not prayed,
A shrine where only Angels sing,
Another stone in Sion laid !

XXXV.

BIRTH-DAY THOUGHTS.

June 28, 1838.

THE FEAST OF ST. IRENEUS. THE VIGIL OF ST. PETER.
THE CORONATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

I.

It was a day of mingled joys and fears
Blending like light and shade,
And boyish smiles with lingering sweetness played
Through penitential tears.

II.

It was a feast whereon soft memories
Of an old saint do stay,—
Of one who came bearing the cross this way
From his own eastern skies.

III.

It was the eve of a high festival—
A day of serious hours,
For grief that one all full of gifts and powers
So faithlessly should fall.

IV.

It was the day whereon a Sovereign knelt
Before the King on high,
And through the realm was heard one loyal cry,
One beating heart was felt.

V.

And thoughtful men were startled at the sound,
And good men fell to prayer,
For with the glory and the pageant rare
Shadows were gathering round.

VI.

There is a well, a willow-shaded spot,
Cool in the noontide gleam,
With rushes nodding in the little stream,
And blue forget-me-not

VII.

Set in thick tufts along the bushy marge,
With big bright eyes of gold,
Where glorious water-plants, like fans, unfold
Their blossoms strange and large.

VIII.

That wandering boy, young Hylas, did not find
Beauties so rich and rare,
Where swallow-wort and pale bright maiden's hair
And dog-grass greenly twined.

IX.

A sloping bank ran round it like a crown,
Whereon a purple cloud
Of dark wild hyacinths, a fairy crowd,
Had settled softly down.

X.

And dreamy sounds of never-ending bells
From a city's ancient towers
Came down the stream, and went among the flowers
And died in little swells.

XI.

There did I keep my birth-day feast, with all
These gentle things around,
While their soft voices rising from the ground
Unto my heart did call.

XII.

It is not good to be without a home,—
Young hearts should not be free :
Yet household thoughts have long been closed to me
Within my father's tomb.

XIII.

And I have roamed through places fair and good,
Like a wild bird that drops
To rest somewhere among the thousand tops
Of a broad fir-wood.

XIV.

My love hath strewn in many a youthful breast
Fancies of tender mould,
And I have memories lodged among the old
In their eternal rest.

XV.

Sunny and bright all earthly glories seem,
Like an enchanter's show,
And yet it frets me all the while to know
That this is but a dream.

XVI.

I cannot burst the fetters of the spell :—
The silvery light of mirth
Streams from within me over all the earth,
As from an endless well.

XVII.

So bright of late the unsetting sun hath played,
 Its evening must be near,
 When Hope shall win fresh loveliness from fear,
 And Memory from the shade.

XVIII.

Still by old hills or abbey's ruined shrine
 Shall love my footsteps bring—
 Dear homes, where friendship set me gathering
 These wild-flower thoughts of mine.

XXXVI.

BIRTHDAY THOUGHTS,

At a Grave in Somersetshire, 1839.

If in the years of my most wandering youth
 Some few untended plants have learned to flower,
 Thine was the mercy, Lord! and Thine the power
 That sowed and kept alive the seeds of Truth.
 Father and earthly mother I have none,
 Sweet bride nor marriage-home, nor children here,
 Nor looks of love—but Thine, my Saviour dear!
 And my young heart bears ill to live alone.
 So to the wild and weedy grave I come
 Of this meek man of heart, who bore the Cross,
 Hid in a lordly crosier, to his home,
 And for Thy love did count all else but loss.

Long as my life may be, teach me like him
To follow Thee by pathways lone and dim.
Better they should be lonely—better far
The world should be all dark ; so through the night,
And with fresh tears to multiply the light,
Mine eyes might see Thy pale and single star.
Yet, Lord ! 'tis hard when evening shadows come,
To have no sight or sound of earthly cheer :
Still were my faith but strong, Thou wouldst be
near,
And I in my pure thoughts might find a home :
And memory too might hear her dead loves pour,
Soft as the songs of some shy hidden bird
From the low fields or woodlands nightly heard,
Sweet peaceful music on the evening hour.—
O shame on me to fear the Cross should press
Too hard in firm and thoughtful loneliness !

XXXVII.

A LESSON FROM THE FERNS.

I.

DEAR Friend ! I have a dread and glorious home,
Just where two inland rivers gently meet,
And the young Cherwell's haunted waters come,
Isis, their queen, to greet.

II.

Far in the woodland heart of this green isle
To their own banks those streams are tinkling
now,
Where many an ancient church and gorgeous pile
Throng in to hear them flow.

III.

But I have yet another home as fair,
Though my sweet southern streams are far away,
And two wild mountain rills are meeting there
As musical as they.

IV.

And are there not Church thoughts and feelings
here,
Scattered, like flowers, on Loughrigg's sunny side,
And hopes to bless and memories to cheer
Where Rothay's waters glide?

V.

Yes—by a hundred streamlets' wayward turns
My heart hath spent some hours of Sunday rest,
And watched those pastoral things the young green
ferns,
Unbend from earth's cold breast.

VI.

Oh! for thine own dear sake those things shall be
Marvellous types and symbols of my vow,
And with their lessons dread soft love for thee
Shall mingle fondly now.

VII.

Often shall they in hours of pensive thought
Give up the secret charms that in them lie,
And all thy sacred image shall be brought
To fancy's yearning eye :

VIII.

The light, the power, the unsettled fires that play
Among the sleepless glancings of thine eyes,
Thy thoughts and things of beauty, which betray
The heart from whence they rise.

IX.

If in thy spring the gems of Heaven be set,
Like spotted fern-flowers in their first pale green,
Oh ! shade them from the too bright world, nor let
Their fragile bloom be seen.

X.

So shall the gifted suns of summer-tide
Their hidden power and loveliness unfold,
And he, that loves thee, with a lawful pride,
Shall mark their autumn gold !

XXXVIII.

A DREAM AFTER AN ARGUMENT WITH
A FRIEND.

I LEFT thee when the midnight bell had tolled,
 Full of fresh views and reasons : in thine eyes
 All night perpetual meanings did unfold
 Quick turns of thought and kindling sympathies.
 Still those blue eyes looked at me through my sleep,
 Changed by the power of dreams to fearful things.
 They bore me far away, where evening flings
 Her gorgeous blue on Atlas : they did sweep
 Into the bluer sky, where comets blaze,
 And golden creatures live in starry rays.
 Onward they went where filmy mist-wreaths creep
 About the rolling moon ; and fell with me
 In the translucent caverns of the sea,
 Where sunset takes the ghosts of sunken days.

 XXXIX.

KESWICK, August 3, 1838.

I KNEW three sisters, who by haunted rills
 And hill-side places gathered rarest flowers ;
 But, when apart, and in their lonely hours,
 The brightest things that bloomed upon the hills
 Were dull : for love alone the spell hath given
 Unto the green of earth, the blue of heaven !
 It is the law for all : few men can think
 Save in another's heart : yea, few can drink
 Of their own fountains but in others' eyes,
 When they can see themselves reflected there
 With an ideal beauty ; and can rise,
 Like a freed slave, with spirit keen and bare
 From the damp cells and weary bonds of sin,
 Which, but for love, would fetter them within.

XL.

KESWICK, August 3, 1838.

SOME fall in love with voices, some with eyes,
 Some men are linked together by a tear ;
 Others by smiles ; many who cannot tell
 What time the spirit passed who left the spell.
 It comes to us among the winds that rise
 Scattering their gifts on all things far and near.
 The fields of unripe corn, the mountain lake,
 And the great-hearted sea—all objects take
 Their glory and their witchery from winds :
 All save the few black pools the woodman finds
 Far in the depths of some unsunny place,
 Which stand, albeit the happy winds are out
 In all the tossing branches round about,
 As silent and as fearful as a dead man's face.



XLI.

CASTLE-HILL, KESWICK.

" We put the sun to bed with our talk."

Greek Anthology.

I.

COME let us gather here upon the hill
 The noble hearts that yet beat pure and high,
 And, while the lake beneath our feet is still,
 Sweetly our speech may run on chivalry,
 And feats of arms, and old crusading days,
 And tourneys bright, and minstrel's generous praise.

II.

For we have mourned o'er many a lonely place
And moorland village with a knightly name,
And we have loved with wise regrets to trace
The still unfaded relics of their fame.
Yon sun that sinks o'er Solway's distant bay
Sets not more proud and glorious than they.

III.

Oh, then, while round Blencathra's haunted crest
The purple folds of summer twilight wind,
Spirits of feudal memory here shall rest
With spells of dearest awe upon my mind;
And there shall ride full gallantly and fast
Pageants and shades of that romantic past!

IV.

Sweet to the brow the wind of evening blows,
Sweet to the sight are evening's golden gleams,
Sweetest of all are they where Greta flows,
And Glenderaterra, and the nameless streams,
Lonely and beautiful, where summer day
Fades o'er yon Cumbrian mountain far away.

V.

The clouds that build wild structures up on high
Shall mould themselves to some baronial hall,
And the stray mist that wanders loosely by
Be changed to a gigantic seneschal;
The wind that o'er the battlements doth float
Shall sound from thence an elfin warder's note.

VI.

But, when the last pale glow is on the heights,
 The dream may shift unto a maiden's bower,
 Where every lattice shines with festal lights,
 And crimson pennons wave on every tower,
 Where ladies welcome back their knights again
 From the far hunting-field or battle-plain.

VII.

And by my side the page of Monstrelet
 With all its lifelike forms shall be unrolled,
 And he, with eye undimmed and hair of gray,
 The chivalrous old Canon, shall unfold,
 As in my boyish hours, his own dear lore,
 Bright with the tints that shone in times of yore.

VIII.

Oh, in his boyhood's best and purest days
 Who hath not gathered round old Froissart's knee
 Like children round a father, in whose lays
 Strange things were told with quaint and earnest
 glee,
 Prizing each year his well-known strains the more,
 When we have heard them ten-times told before?

IX.

Come, then, and we will make a mimic tale:—
 The store of legendary things that lie
 Far in the woods of many a Cumbrian vale
 Shall weave for us the mingled destiny
 Of a young knight and of a templar bold,
 In those most gorgeous Chronicles untold.

XLII.

FURNESS ABBEY.

AH, Sydney!—as we journeyed toward the main,
 Visions of old Byzantium worked in thee;
 Thy talk was of the gorgeous Osmanli:—
 O how it rose like a bewildering strain
 Of oriental music—paused again—
 And changed unto the savage glens of pine
 Which cradled thee! and yet the twilight power
 Of English scenes, most felt at that still hour,
 Some words of dearest rapture then could win,
 As we walked forth by Leven's tranquil side.
 Now, as thy hand is fondly clasped in mine
 In this Cistercian chapter-house, the pride
 Of native things awakes unblamed—the tide
 Of English blood is rising fast within.

XLIII.

ON THE HEIGHTS NEAR DEVOKE WATER.

August 7, 1838.

DREARY and grey the twilight hour came on,
 Duddon was sounding in his wooded vale;
 And through the ferns and round each hollow stone
 The spirit of the chill night-breeze did wail.
 With low and piteous moaning did it swell,
 Like a poor ghost, upon the shaggy fell—
 When, as we rode, the sun came round and stood
 On the hill-top—an altar all of gold:
 Twisting in gorgeous coils, like a huge flood,
 The crimson steam along the valley rolled.
 Rain-drops, like gems, upon the heath were seen,
 And the whole earth was hid in golden green,
 O it was well our hearts within us quailed,—
 The throne of the Eternal was unveiled!

XLIV.

THE GROVES OF PENSHURST.

THE groves of Penshurst are a haunted place ;
 There is a spirit and a presence there
 Of one departed ; and the brooding air
 Is charged with powers of old ancestral grace.
 Thou art a worthy son of that great sire :
 Though there be doubt and peril, while the fire
 Of youth burns in thee ! Let the cherished dread
 Of that most knightly-hearted Sydney rest,
 Like a dear master's hand upon thy breast.
 Brother ! great minds are built, great souls are fed
 In steadfast discipline and silent fear.
 When from this rule thine impulse would depart,
 A voice from Sydney's tomb shall whisper near,
 And ring wild trumpet-notes within thy heart !

XLV.

THE ICONOCLAST.

WHENCE comes this sinking heart, these failing
 powers ?
 Something hath touched my thoughts : they have no
 life,
 And stir, like sickly things, in idle strife,
 And I am restless all these midnight hours.
 Friend ! thou hast done it : thou hast broken down
 All mine old images, and didst uncrown
 The glorious things that reigned within my heart,
 Because thou art more glorious. Times like these,
 When our whole Past is roughly set apart,
 Leave the soul full of love, yet ill at ease.
 Yon pictured skies the sunset breeze is shaking
 From the still lake are stabler types of Heaven,
 Than the brief friendships whose loud pledge was
 given
 Mid the wild sport of moral image-breaking.

XLVI.

THREE HAPPY DAYS.

I.

THREE happy days we had been out
 Among the awful hills,
 Learning their secrets by the sides
 Of dark, untrodden rills.

II.

We had companions all the day—
 Rainbows and silver gleams ;
 And quiet rivers all the night
 To mingle with our dreams.

III.

We spoke of great and solemn things,
 Like earnest-minded men,
 And often rode unheedingly
 Through many a wooded glen.

IV.

We talked about the early Church,
 Her martyrs keen and bold,
 And what perchance might now befall
 The same dear Church grown old.

V.

We went into each other's hearts,
 And rifled all the treasure
 That books and thinking had laid up
 In academic leisure.

VI.

And now we are so wearied out
 With all this high debate,
 We have not mentioned once to-night
 The name of Church or State.

VII.

With sweet revenge the silver meres
 We slighted on our ride,
 With shadowy trees all glassed therein,
 Rise in us like a tide.

VIII.

Ah who could see us sitting thus,
 Yon mill-stream falling nigh,
 And yet gainsay the soothing bliss
 Of silent company?



XLVII.

STERN FRIEND.

STERN Friend! with what a passionate eloquence
 And deep voice thou didst plead,
 Till thy words cut like knives, through every sense,
 Making my heart to bleed!
 The spirit of old times went from thee there,
 As lightning bold and keen,
 And still unhealed the seams and furrows, where
 That lightning passed, are seen.
 Alas! it was a most unworthy dream
 That with my youth had grown,—
 An earthly lure with a false winning gleam
 Of Heaven about it thrown.

'Twas a brave thought to think that thou couldst
tear

The idol from its shrine,
And rear a nobler, heavenlier image there
Than that old dream of mine.

Still, as thy hurried gesture waxed more fierce,
My thoughts drew further in,
Shrinking from that quick eye which seemed to
pierce.

The last thin veil of sin.

I watched thee like an abject, guilty thing,
And wept with shame and fear,
Whilst thou didst lay thy hand on me, and bring
The gleaming Cross more near ;
And my whole being quailed with agony,
And writhed with burning smart,
When thou didst lift its bright, sharp edge on
high,

And plant it in my heart.

Friend ! I am conquered now, and all my powers
With holier impulse burn,
And yet I dare not trust myself when hours
Of languid ease return.

Then do I envy wild sea-birds that float,
And wish that we could be

Rocking for ever in a little boat

On some blue sunny sea :

And I would fain be dreaming, while the tide
Of active change doth roll,

That we at anchor and at ease might ride
Safe in each other's soul.

It may not be : I and my dreams must part,—
Part in the blood that flowed,

Where the stern Cross ran deepest in my heart,
Tearing its cruel road.

That pool of blood shall stand for ever there
 Where the dread Sign took root,
 So shall the Cross have plants and blossoms rare
 Grow up around its foot.
 The watch-tower steps are fallen to decay,
 Broken in every stone,
 And it is perilous to wind one's way
 To that high place alone.
 But, wert thou with me there, the wildest night
 Would not seem dark or long ;
 And we would sing old Psalms till morning light
 Broke in upon our song.
 And should these rebel dreams of earth arise
 Against my hardy vow,
 Then shall I dread a friend that can chastise
 As faithfully as thou !

 XLVIII.

TO A LITTLE BOY.

DEAR Little One, and can thy mother find
 In those soft lineaments, that move so free
 To smiles or tears, as holiest infancy
 About thy heart its glorious web doth wind,
 A faithful likeness of my sterner mind ?
 Ah ! then there must be times unknown to me
 When my lost boyhood, like a wandering air,
 Comes for a while to pass upon my face,
 Giving me back the dear familiar grace
 O'er which my mother poured her last fond prayer,
 But sin and age will rob me of this power,
 Though now my heart, like an uneasy lake,
 Some broken images at times may take
 From forms which fade more sadly every hour !

XLIX.

VERSES SENT TO A FRIEND,

WITH A BOOK.

I.

THE languid heart, that hath been ever nurst
 By strains of drowsy sweetness, ill can brook
 The rude rough music that at times doth burst
 From him whose thoughts are treasured in this
 book.

It was his lot to live in days uncouth
 That shrink from aught so hard and stern as truth.

II.

I know my generous friend too well to fear
 This holy gift will be unsafe with thee ;
 Thou never yet hast had the heart to sneer
 At the eccentric feats of chivalry,
 And well I know there are cold men who deem
 This saintly cause a weak knight-errant's dream.

III.

When thou hast marked him well, thine eye will
 trace
 Lines deep and steadfast, features grave and bold,
 Beauty austere and masculine, a face
 And stalwart form wrought in an antique mould ;
 And if some shades too broad and coarse be
 thrown,
 'Tis where the age hath marred the block of
 stone !

L.

WRITTEN IN A LITTLE LADY'S LITTLE
ALBUM.

I.

Hearts good and true
Have wishes few
In narrow circles bounded,
And hope that lives
On what God gives
Is Christian hope well founded.

II.

Small things are best :
Grief and unrest
To rank and wealth are given ;
But little things
On little wings
Bear little souls to Heaven.

LI.

THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA.

OH, thou old heartless Sea, without a tide
 To bless thee with its changing! Ah, poor Sea!
 How idly beat thy waves, how languidly
 On Baiæ's piers, or Adria's level side!
 Eternal sunset round old Greece doth play:
 All faint and wan Rome's last imperial smile
 Yet lingers in each Hellespontine bay.
 Still at his mouths the melancholy Nile
 Talks to himself of Egypt's kingly day.
 A belt of goodly towns have ruins hoar,
 Silent as tombs, on Libya's blighted shore;
 And Venice woos her blue canals no more:
 Yet for all this no heart is in thy waves,
 Thou heavy Sea of shadows and of graves!

LII.

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

THERE are no shadows where there is no sun;
 There is no beauty where there is no shade;
 And all things in two lines of glory run,
 Darkness and light, ebon and gold inlaid.
 God comes among us through the shroud of air;
 And His dim track is like the silvery wake
 Left by yon pinnace on the mountain lake,
 Fading and re-appearing here and there.
 The lamps and veils through Heaven and Earth that
 move
 Go in and out, as jealous of their light,
 Like sailing stars upon a misty night.
 Death is the shade of coming life; and Love
 Yearns for her dear ones in the holy tomb,
 Because bright things are better seen in gloom.

LIII.

A FAREWELL.

Sept. 8, 1838.

I.

My heart was like a wooded vale,
Bright with a summer afternoon,
With shades so thick the sun was pale
And thin as an autumnal moon ;
And winds made stirs in every tree,
Most like a far-off, quiet sea.

II.

There came a cloud o'er this bright home,
Sudden and strange ; and no one knew
From whence the omen dark had come
When all the sky around was blue.
The wind dropped down ; and sounds came near,
Like thunder when the air is clear.

III.

Still hangs that gloomy cloud above,
Hiding the glorious sun, whose power
Once shed romantic lights of love
On moorland stream and forest bower,
When all things wore a charm to me,
Of sweetest unreality.

IV.

In pale and tarnished green, the trees
Stand by yon brook in silent row ;
Rills that made songs to every breeze
Have lost the music of their flow :
And wildflowers mourn the summer air
That comes not now to wanton there.

V.

Ah, brother!—wouldst thou know how much
 My aching heart in thee doth live?
 One look of thy quick eye—one touch
 Of thy dear hand last night could give
 Fresh hopes to shine amid my fears,
 And thoughts that shed themselves in tears.

LIV.

A CONVERSATION NEAR RYDAL.

Sept. 8, 1838.

I COULD have wished the few last precious hours
 I had with thee, dear friend, should have been given
 To dreams of love, and thoughts and hopes of Heaven.
 Autumn is out among these woodland bowers:
 Still am I lingering here, as loth to part
 From my soul's glorious king. Yet ah! my heart
 Hath been at wayward angry war with thine.
 I spoke rude words of those who are at rest,
 Profaning him whose memory thou dost shrine
 In some choice niche within thy secret breast.
 'Twas a rude act: but friendships newly sprung
 Are flowers of timid growth and little faith.—
 The softest footfall and the lightest breath
 Will jar a chord that hath been overstrung.

LV.

GREEN BANK.

Sept. 12, 1838.

I.

BROTHER, brother! thou art gone, and I will not
 mourn thy going,
 Though thou hast been unto me like a river in its
 flowing;
 For many a fresh and manly thought, and many a
 glorious dream,
 Like fruits and flowers of foreign lands, have flourished
 by the stream.
 Yet, brother, it is well to part: a sunset in the sky
 Sinks deepest in the heart when it is fading from the
 eye!

II.

The heart is never safe unless it trembles while it
 woos;
 Man cannot love a treasure that he does not fear to
 lose.
 In touch and look and earnest tone, and many a little
 way
 Thy spirit will be more with me when thou art far
 away:
 For men may dwell by mountain streams, and all the
 summer round
 Have music lingering in their ears till they forget the
 sound.

III.

Though it be bitterness and pain to bid a friend
good-bye,
Yet love will catch the tear-drops as they hurry from
the eye :
And friendship's rarest, holiest flowers spring up from
loyal fears,
Frail blooms that give no scent unless we water them
with tears :
And rich and happy is the heart wherein there always
dwell,
Like household gods, the memories of many a kind
farewell !

LVI.

ADMIRATION OF NATURE.

WHEN men talk much to me of woods and hills,
How evening lights and star-embroidered skies
Go through them with mysterious sympathies,
How gushing cataracts and diving rills
Find way into their hearts, and Autumn pale,
And Spring ere sunny June hath raised her veil,
And Summer's breadth of shade, are full of thought—
Then I believe them not : they have but caught
A trick of words from some dear minstrel's verse.
The awful spirit of reserve, that dwells
In nature's forms and shadows, hides in cells,
The jealous hearts of bards, her treasures rare.
Men that have been with God learn silence there,
Nor at all times their secret joys rehearse.

LVII.

TO A BOOKISH FRIEND.

TALK not of books; thou hast not been with me,
 Free and bareheaded where the wind is wildest,
 Lifting its loud voice on the tumbling sea,
 Or riding fast o'er Loughrigg's many knolls:
 No, nor where ebon night's dread power is mildest,
 In Kirkstone, when the wandering nightwind tolls
 Hoarse minute-bells among the rocky towers:
 Nor lurked at noon in Brathay's hazel bowers.
 Thou hast not seen the dawn's first blushing beams
 Gild the grey battlements of Ravenscar,
 The hills, the pines, the hundred foamy streams;
 Nor talked all night to some most heavenly star,
 Where solitude hath got her holiest dwelling,
 By the black tarn where Fairfield meets Helvellyn!

LVIII.

KING'S BRIDGE.

I.

THE dew falls fast, and the night is dark,
 And the trees stand silent in the park;
 And winter passeth from bough to bough
 With stealthy foot that none may know,
 But little the old man thinks he weaves
 His frosty kiss on the ivy leaves.

From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall
 The river droppeth down,
 And it washeth the base of a pleasant hall
 On the skirts of Cambridge town.
 Old trees by night are like men in thought,
 By poetry to silence wrought ;
 They stand so still and they look so wise,
 With folded arms and halfshut eyes,
 More shadowy than the shade they cast
 When the wan moonlight on the river passed.
 The river is green, and runneth slow—
 We cannot tell what it saith ;
 It keepeth its secrets down below,
 And so doth Death !

II.

Oh ! the night is dark ; but not so dark
 As my poor soul in this lonely park :
 There are festal lights by the stream, that fall,
 Like stars, from the casements of yonder hall ;
 But harshly the sounds of gladness grate
 On one that is crushed and desolate.
 From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall
 The river droppeth down,
 As it washeth the base of a pleasant hall
 On the skirts of Cambridge town.
 Oh, Sister ! Sister ! could I but hear
 What this river saith in night's still ear,
 And catch the faint whispering voice it brings
 From its lowlands green and its reedy springs ;
 It might tell of the spot where the greybeard's spade
 Turned the cold wet earth in the lime-tree shade.

The river is green, and runneth slow—
 We cannot tell what it saith :
 It keepeth its secrets down below,
 And so doth Death !

III.

For death was born in thy blood with life—
 Too holy a fount for such sad strife :
 Like a secret curse from hour to hour
 The canker grew with the growing flower,
 And little we deemed that rosy streak
 Was the tyrant's seal on thy virgin cheek.
 From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall
 The river droppeth down,
 As it washeth the base of a pleasant hall
 On the skirts of Cambridge town.
 But fainter and fainter thy bright eyes grew,
 And ruder and redder that rosy hue ;
 And the half-shed tears that never fell,
 And the pain within thou wouldst not tell,
 And the wild, wan smile,—all spoke of death,
 That had withered my sister with his breath.
 The river is green, and runneth slow—
 We cannot tell what it saith :
 It keepeth its secrets down below,
 And so doth Death !

IV.

'Twas o'er thy harp one day in June,
 I marvelled the strings were out of tune ;
 But lighter and quicker the music grew,
 And deadly white was thy rosy hue ;
 One moment—and back the colour came,
 Thou calledst me by my Christian name.

From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall
 The river droppeth down,
 As it washeth the base of a pleasant hall
 On the skirts of Cambridge town.
 Thou badest me be silent and bold,
 But my brain was hot, and my heart was cold.
 I never wept, and I never spake,
 But stood like a rock where the salt seas break ;
 And to this day I have shed no tear,
 O'er my blighted rose and my sister's bier.
 The river is green, and runneth slow—
 We cannot tell what it saith :
 It keepeth its secrets down below,
 And so doth Death !

v.

I stood in the church with burning brow,
 The lips of the priest moved solemn and slow.
 I noted each pause, and counted each swell,
 As a sentry numbers a minute-bell ;
 For unto the mourner's heart they call
 From the deeps of that wondrous ritual.
 From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall
 The river droppeth down,
 As it washeth the base of a pleasant hall
 On the skirts of Cambridge town.
 But little to me were the psalm and prayer,
 As they rose and fell on the cold church air,
 Nor felt I a holier presence near
 Than the withered flower on her darksome bier ;
 But I stood and prayed, as mourners may,
 True prayer, though the thoughts be far away.

The river is green, and runneth slow—
 We cannot tell what it saith :
 It keepeth its secrets down below,
 And so doth Death !

VI.

The dew falls fast, and the night is dark ;
 The trees stand silent in the park.
 The festal lights have all died out,
 And nought is heard but a lone owl's shout.
 The mists keep gathering more and more ;
 But the stream is silent as before.
 From bridge to bridge with tremulous fall
 The river droppeth down,
 As it washeth the base of a pleasant hall
 On the skirts of Cambridge town.
 Why should I think of my boyhood's pride
 As I walk by this low-voiced river's side ?
 And why should its heartless waters seem
 Like a horrid thought in a feverish dream ?
 But it will not speak ; and it keeps in its bed
 The words that are sent us from the dead,
 The river is green, and runneth slow—
 We cannot tell what it saith :
 It keepeth its secrets down below,
 And so doth Death !

LIX.
TO A FRIEND.

THOU walkest with a glory round thy brow,
 Like Saints in pictures,—radiant in the blaze
 And splendour of thy boyhood, mingling now
 With the bold bearing of a man, that plays
 In eyes which do with such sweet skill express
 Thy soul's hereditary gentleness.
 Thou art my friend's best friend; and higher praise
 My heart hath none to give, nor thine to take;
 So I have loved thee for my brother's sake.
 But when thou talk'st of England's better days,
 And from its secret place thy soul comes forth,
 And sits upon thy lips as on a throne,
 Then would I fain do homage to thy worth,
 Not for his sake so much as for thine own.

LX.
TO A FRIEND.

“Pignus accepimus, ut incipiamus in Domino et in Deo nostro
 tranquilli esse.”—*St. Augustin.*

WE have two things to do, to live and die:
 To win another and a longer life
 Out of this earthly change and weary strife;
 To catch the hours that one by one go by,
 And write the Cross upon them as they fly.
 So shall they lay their burden gently down,
 Sinking, perchance hard-by, beneath the Throne,
 Withdrawn anew into eternity.
 'Tis hard to live by youth's fast bubbling springs,
 And treat our loves, joys, hopes, as flowery things
 That for awhile may climb the boughs, and twine
 Among the prickly leaves of discipline.
 Yet, wouldst thou rise in Christ's self-mastering school,
 Thy very heart itself must beat by rule.

LXI.

FAVOURITE BOOKS.

HERE, in thy choice old city, do I dwell
 At thy dread feet, most honoured Clarendon !
 Catching the precious words, that one by one
 Fall from thy lips ; because I love full well
 Thy good and stately sadness : and I prize,
 As warnings for this land, the auguries
 Wherewith, like fatal seeds, thy pages swell.
 From these hot thoughts and tears full oft I fly
 To the gay Froissart, and those wondrous men
 Who dreamed of honour, and had heart to die
 For their own brave and glorious dream ; and then,
 Albeit with childish lingerings, again
 I turn to graver books, where by my side
 Lies Origen, my dear and perilous guide.

LXII.

TO A SANGUINE FRIEND.

I CANNOT live on dreams my whole life long,
 I cannot gaze on ruined arch, and aisle,
 And altar desolate,—and then beguile .
 My weary soul with some old loyal song,
 Or tale of English honour. 'Tis not years
 Have chilled my blood or made my spirit cold,
 But ancient books, kindling new hopes and fears,
 The awful features of the Church unfold.
 Yet, when in this dear land sad hearts behold
 That Church alone at her deserted prayers
 Amid her empty niches, unawares
 Old truths revive and coward men grow bold ;
 And shall my heart give way, while thou art by,
 Thine own meek self our surest prophecy ?

LXIII.

APRIL MORNINGS.

I.

A THOUSAND are the minstrel tongues
 In this unequal clime,
 Whose sweetest notes have been of spring
 And of her primrose time.

II.

More songs hath April of her gifts,—
 Bright sun and rainy breeze,
 Than May with her pale flower-beds,
 And June with her broad trees.

III.

I dare not join the mighty souls
 Upon the poet's hill,
 Though, looking long on those green heights,
 My dream may come true still.

IV.

Yet will I hymn this season good
 Which doth such joy impart,
 And wakes new fervour in the blood,
 Old lightness in the heart.

V.

It takes the fetters from the lyre
 On April's first white dawn,
 When the sun is on the evergreens
 Upon the college lawn.

VI.

It doth unlock young fancy's wells
To run all summer long,
Till the whole heart is overflowed
With unimprisoned song.

VII.

Those wells are chartered for the year
To wind o'er field and hill,
Early and late, in sun and shower,
Speaking in songs at will.

VIII.

All things are metrical and free,
That taste of spring's wild treasure;
Our very thoughts, in their first joy,
Come out in lyric measure.

IX.

Yet, Brother; most I love this time,—
For Spring, as she goes by,
Will trim the fires of the old year
In thy dark speaking eye.

X.

Last summer's harp from yon oak-tree,
Young Poet! thou shalt bring,
And we will play a measure here
In honour of the Spring!

LXIV.

TO A FRIEND.

Oh by the love which unto thee I bear,
 By the tall trees and streams, and everything
 In the white-clouded sky or woodland air,
 Whether of sight or sound, that here may bring
 The joyous freshness of the grassy spring—
 Fain would I warn thee; for too well I know,
 Be what thou wilt, thou must be dear to me.
 And lo! thou art in utter bondage now,
 Whence I would have thy manly spirit free.
 Among the hills we two did never mar
 The moss about the springs, but learnt to spare
 Pale flowers which rude hands would not leave to
 grow;
 And if thou wert so wisely gentle there—
 Thy soul hath better flowers—oh! be as guiltless
 now.



LXV.

LLYNSYVADDON.

By summer lakes and copsewoods green
 We two in happy times have been;
 And blyther pilgrims never rode,
 Since Leven down her valley flowed,
 Or mass was sung and prayer was said
 In Furness o'er the Christian dead.

That was a day of love and mirth
 Which may not dawn again on earth.
 Each plant that in the hedges grew,
 Fox-glove, and fern, and bell of blue,
 And bending rose-branch—all were bright
 With more than summer's common light.
 We thought that day by Leven's brink
 Sad thoughts, which youth delights to think,
 That in its musings it may feel
 How well and gently love can steal
 On drooping hearts and troubled eyes,
 And take our sadness by surprise.
 Another year is well-nigh told:
 My heart and spirits have waxed old,
 From growing thought, fresh gifts and fears,
 More than in all my other years!

Sweet are the oaks in summer-tide
 By Llynsyvaddon's reedy side,
 Or the cool alders arching o'er
 Where Usk indents his earthy shore.
 There hath not been a brighter dawn
 On old Llanthony's mountain lawn,
 Or Honddy's wave—not since the hour
 When Mynarch feasted in Tretower.

By rock and tree the tyrant sun
 Reigned fiercely o'er the cloudless noon;
 And I had dreamed yon mistwreath still
 Was resting on some Cumbrian hill,
 And fancy for awhile had given
 To Usk the sweeter song of Leven.
 Alas! how changed is all the scene,
 Mountains and streams and dingles green!
 The ivied tower in every vale,
 Some haunt of legendary tale,

The flowery slope, the mossy spring,
No tuneful words or thoughts can bring.
They pass through spirits ill at ease,
Like summer winds through leafless trees.
For then it was thy heart and eye
That touched and stirred the poetry.
But now, among the hills alone,
The color from my dream is gone ;
And lonely hearts will often move
Harsh doubts of those they fondest love.
Sadness is selfish ; and the throng
Of thoughts in loneliness too strong
To make or leave a home for song !

Llanthony lurks in Ewia's vale,
And Wye half-clasps her Tintern pale,
And Usk is flowing every hour
By Ragland, Brecon, and Tretower.
Yet could I see the summer smile
Just now in Furness' haunted pile,
The broken choir, the hollow grove,
Which we did people with our love,—
Wye with her woodland tides might be
A place, a name, forgot by me,
And Usk rave downward to the sea.
Yes—by my love for thee I swear
Those mountains green and valleys fair,
With all their castles, are not worth
One ruined abbey in the North.

LXVI.

CHILDHOOD.

I.

Dost thou remember how we lived at home—
 That it was like an oriental place,
 Where right and wrong, and praise and blame did
 come

By ways we wondered at and durst not trace,
 And gloom and sadness were but shadows thrown
 From griefs that were our sire's, and not our own?

II.

It was a moat about our souls, an arm
 Of sea, that made the world a foreign shore,
 And we were too enamoured of the charm
 To dream that barks might come and waft us o'er.
 Cold snow was on the hills; and they did wear
 Too wild and wan a look to tempt us there.

III.

We had traditions of our own, to weave
 A web of creed and rite and sacred thought;
 And when a stranger, who did not believe
 As they who were our types of God had taught,
 Came to our home, how harsh his words did seem,
 Like sounds that mar but cannot break a dream.

IV.

And then in Scripture some high things there were,
 Of which, they said, we must not read or talk;
 And we through fear did never trespass there,
 But made our Bibles like our twilight walk
 In the deep woodlands, where we durst not roam
 To spots from whence we could not see our home.

V.

Albeit we fondly hoped, when we were men,
 To learn the lore our parents loved so well,
 And read the rites and symbols which were then
 But letters of a word we could not spell—
 Church-bells, and Sundays, and the Altar-stair
 In whose dread Gift we were too young to share.

VI.

But we too soon from our safe place were driven ;
 The world broke in upon our orphaned life.
 Dawnings of good, young flowers that looked to
 Heaven,
 It left untilled for what seemed manlier strife ;
 Like a too-early summer, bringing fruit
 Where spring perchance had meant another shoot !

VII.

Some begin life too soon,—like sailors thrown
 Upon a shore where common things look strange ;
 Like them they roam about a foreign town,
 And grief awhile may own the force of change.
 Yet, though one hour new dress and tongue may
 please,
 Our second thoughts look homeward, ill at ease.

VIII.

Come then unto our childhood's wreck again—
 The rocks hard-by our father's early grave ;
 And take the few chance treasures that remain,
 And live through manhood upon what we save.
 So shall we roam the same old shore at will,
 In the fond faith that we are children still !

IX.

Christian! thy dream is now—it was not then :

Oh! it were strange if childhood were a dream.
Strife and the world are dreams: to wakeful men

Childhood and home as jealous Angels seem :
Like shapes and hues that play in clouds at even,
They have but shifted from thee into Heaven!



LXVII.

ROSS CHURCHYARD.

It is an evening of profound repose :
The sun's last light is passing up the Wye ;
The hills and woods, the quiet earth and sky,
More than is wont that inner world disclose,
Which they so barely cover. All is still—
So still, so little likely to surprise
The world's wayfaring sons, that it might fill
A Christian heart with strange and dim surmise.
The end perchance may come with like still power,
The world's last evening, man's last trial-hour,
When the glad Church, to whom alone is given
To read earth's types and rites with faultless art,
May see the shadows from the inner heaven
Stirring on its pale earthly counterpart.

LXVIII.

THE FEAST OF THE INVENTION OF
THE HOLY CROSS.

[May 3.]

“We heard of it in Ephrata; we have found it in
the fields of the wood.”—Ps. cxxxi. 6.

I.

WE came to bid farewell: it was the day
Whereon the white earth-fretted Cross was
found;
And we, strange chance! did meet it on our way,
As we were in an ancient pleasure-ground,
Close by a languid river, where the spring
'Mid bursting buds and flowers was rioting.

II.

It was a garden wild, a mystic scene,
Which an old poet in times past had planned,
And May was colouring with lines of green
The goodly work of his religious hand.
For he had thought a broad Church-cross to make,
And bade the elms the hallowed form to take.*

III.

Transept and nave each summer roofs with care;
And here perchance in life's less happy hours
The dwellers in that studious House repair
To learn deep Christian things from homely
flowers,
When evening comes with many winds to chime
Up in the trees her own cathedral time.

* The gardens of St. John's, Cambridge, laid out by Prior.

IV.

Outside the Cross a wilderness was laid,
 Apt likeness of the world—had it not been
 That moss and colonies of primrose made
 Too sweet a desert, far too fair a scene!
 There many a proud young fritillary weaves
 With hyacinths his panther-spotted leaves :

V.

And lily-plants in scattered pairs, like gems,
 Shine in the tall dark grass between the trees,
 Stooping to empty on their own green stems
 The morning dew from their red chalices ;
 For at high noon the drops lay sparkling still
 On king-cup pale and jealous daffodil.

VI.

We came to bid farewell: beneath the shade
 Old times, old dreams were sweetly pondered
 o'er,
 And sweeter was the welcome that we made.
 To wiser hopes,—and I did love thee more
 For all the signs thou wert so meekly giving
 Of the grave inward life which thou art living !

VII.

We came and bade farewell; and thou didst go
 To lands where trees have larger leaves than
 ours;
 But the fair fields where foreign rivers flow,
 Their piny hills, will give thee no such powers,
 As the low hazel-woods and forest brakes
 That open to our own unworldly lakes.

VIII.

Unworldly lakes!—Did we not dream away
 Part of our manhood by their inland coves,
 Living, like summer insects, all the day
 In summer winds or shade of drowsy groves?
 And with our endless songs and joyous airs
 Made wings unto ourselves as bright as theirs?

IX.

Farewell!—These lines may go where thou hast
 gone,
 Home's echo to thee in transalpine bowers;
 Our past leave-takings are the food, whereon
 All friendship lives; and in her barren hours
 Shall memory poetic impulse borrow
 From the green place and hour of that sweet
 sorrow.

LXIX.

AMBITIOUS REPENTANCE.

I.

PEACE! Peace! What aileth thee, poor sinful heart?
 Rest in thy lonely room—
 Scant happiness and sinner's penance-gloom
 Henceforth must be thy part.

II.

Why cravest thou, poor soul! fresh want or pain,
 Mishap or sickness strong?
 He must be old in faith, who dares to long
 For punishment again.

III.

The Cross, the Thorns, the Woes, that press thee
 now,
 Have yet got fruit to bear ;
 And there is virtue still in each keen care
 To scathe thy lofty brow.

IV.

Absence of earthly hopes, no prospects brave
 By some chance joy exposed,
 And vents of sweetest mortal feeling closed
 With cold earth from the grave :—

V.

These are thy riches, where thy lone abode
 Mid withered loves is cast,
 And ghosts of broken day-dreams, and the past
 Accusing thee to God.

VI.

All things that touch thee wither—let them be !
 For thou dost wither all.
 Stern cheer ! mid blight and barrenness *they* call,
 The Dead call out to thee.

VII.

The early faults which compass thee about,
 To aid thy frailty come,
 And clear for penitence a hidden home,
 And keep the world's praise out.

VIII.

All round thee, like kind wreaths of cloud, they rise,
 To hide the heart's fresh bloom,
 That thou may'st still be troubled in thy gloom
 By men's hard tongues and eyes.

IX.

Covet no more ; nor in ambitious hours
 Thy little strength forget :
 Ah ! there is store of bitter honey yet
 Deep in these scentless flowers.

X.

One joy is undenied: one earthly dream
 Kept from the barren past :
 One golden sunburst that o'er feast and fast
 Shines with an equal gleam.

XI.

Thou canst not bear to lose it, ever twining
 Bright thoughts among the dark ;
 'Twould be thy death, poor soul ! no more to mark
 Its solitary shining.

XII.

Covet no more: from these few pangs thou must
 Enough for penance earn ;
 And wait and work: faith's last hard lesson learn,
 Calmness in self-distrust.

XIII.

Autumnal thoughts, the greenest honours shed,
 With dreams and loves decayed,
 At every wind's first bidding, straight obeyed,—
 These strew thy hermit bed.

XIV.

Wan as an autumn sun thy whole youth through
 On feeblest shinings live ;
 And later on new frosts perchance may give
 Autumnal beauty too.

LXX.

TO A LAKE PARTY.

I.

WE shall all meet again,
Not in the wood or plain,
Nor by the lake's green marge ;
But we shall meet' once more
By a far greener shore,
With our souls set at large.

II.

We all shall never stand
On Rothay's white-lipped strand,
And hear the far sheep-cries :
The Wansfell wind may blow,
But not to kindle now
The bright fire in our eyes.

III.

The three cleft mountains stand
In their own treeless land,
Where we all stood and wondered.
The black cliffs are the same
Where the hundred echoes came
That dark day when it thundered.

IV.

The summer sun sinks nightly
Into the Solway brightly—
We are not there to see.
The mountain loophole seems
Full of the golden beams,
Full as it used to be.

V.

Athwart the sunlit vale
The heavy ravens sail,
Each to his craggy dwelling ;
While evening gathers brown
On thy stone-sprinkled down,
Thou desolate Helvellyn !

VI.

Still, still, in twilight shade
Mountains make me afraid,
And the wood-sounds at night ;
The red moon in the pine,
And lustrous tarns that shine,
With grey and ghostly light.

VII.

But vain to me the show ;
My heart is weary now
Of all its holy places.
Oh ! what are sun and shower,
Hill-path and forest-bower.
Where there are no friend's faces ?

VII.

My youth is left behind
 For some one else to find,
 Upon a bare green mountain :
 My self-tuned harp is thrown,
 Where a juniper clasps a stone,
 Near a moss-belted fountain.

IX.

We shall all meet again,
 Not in the wood or plain,
 Nor by the lake's green marge.
 The past shall be lived o'er
 By a far greener shore,
 With our souls set at large.

LXXI.

CAMBRIDGE.

AH me ! were ever river-banks so fair,
 Gardens so fit for nightingales as these ?
 Were ever haunts so meet for summer breeze,
 Or pensive walk in evening's golden air ?
 Was ever town so rich in court and tower
 To woo and win stray moonlight every hour ?
 One thing thou lackest much ; the wild wind swells,
 The feast-days come, and yet night silent falls
 On the poor listening stream and patient halls ;
 Thou art a voiceless place,—thou hast no bells.
 Yea, but for thy mute shrines, thou wert a town
 That might grey Oxford's vocal towers disdain,
 Where Isis flows and Cherwell ripples down,
 Timing their several voices to the strain !

LXXII.

PAST FRIENDS.

ARE there such things as friends that pass away?
 When each fresh opening season of our life,
 Through the dim-struggling crowd and weary strife,
 Brings kindred spirits nigh, whom we would pray
 Might live with us, and by our death-bed stay,
 Do these, our chosen ones, sink down at last
 Into the common grave of visions past?
 Ah! there are few men in the world can say
 They had a dream which they do not dream still;
 Few fountains in the heart which cease to play,
 When those, whose touch evoked them at their will,
 Sit there no more: and I my dreams fulfil,
 When to high heaven my tongue still nightly bears
 Old names, like broken music, in my prayers.

LXXIII.

SONNET-WRITING.

TO F. W. F.

YOUNG men should not write sonnets, if they dream
 Some day to reach the bright bare seats of fame:
 To such, sweet thoughts and mighty feelings seem
 As though, like foreign things, they rarely came.
 Eager as men, when haply they have heard
 Of some new songster, some gay-feathered bird,
 That hath o'er blue seas strayed in hope to find
 In our thin foliage here a summer home,
 Fain would they catch the bright things in their
 mind,
 And cage them into sonnets as they come.
 No; they should serve their wants most sparingly,
 Till the ripe time of song, when young thoughts fail,
 Then their sad sonnets, like old bards, might be
 Merry as youth, and yet grey-haired and hale.

LXXIV.

THE SAYING OF ST. HERMAS.

“Concupisce opus tuum, et salvus eris.”

I.

THE whole world hath gone out to buy,
 Estates and goods to multiply :
 The sunny field, the garden ground,
 The woods that gird the city round,
 The cedar hall, the ample street,
 The quay where busy merchants meet,—
 All places and all spirits burn,
 And for the world's weak treasure yearn.

II.

Servant of Christ ! be thou like these,
 All day and night forego thine ease ;
 Crave, covet, lust, and labour still,
 Till thou the Master's storehouse fill.
 Be crafty at thy toil, and ply
 All seasons round thy usury.
 Deny thyself, and hoard thy gold
 For Him who died for thee of old.

III.

Let not thy life be soft and free,
Cushion and couch are not for thee.
Brave shining stone and raiment fair
Leave thou for kings and priests to wear.
For them let rich robes be unfurled
Who bear God's Name within the world.
Thy throne, O man of God, is yet
Behind thick clouds and trials set.

IV.

Let go all mortal grief and mirth ;
And, as the world is wise for earth,
To thee like wisdom shall be given
To covet still and hoard for heaven.
Empty on priests, and heathen lands,
And widows pale, thy willing hands :
While prince and peer of old names dream,
Let alms thy sin-pledged soul reedeem.

V.

Wide, Christian ! is thy mother's field,
A hundredfold her valleys yield.
Hoard, and then waste : oh ! scatter round
Thy seed in faith upon the ground.
When men are deep in feast and mirth,
Steal out and bury gold in earth,
Then back into the world and ply
Once more thy hard trade cheerily.

LXXV.

COLLEGE LIFE.

THERE is fair beauty here, and Christian homes,
 And a high call to every steadfast heart
 To keep chaste watch, and fill a solemn part
 Whereto weak self-disturbance rarely comes ;
 And had I power to knock away below
 The frail, false props that long have borne me up,
 I might have nerve to drain the royal cup,
 Nor keep it at my lips, as I do now.
 Yet amid Shrines, and Rites, and Forms of fear,
 And meek men growing good and great around,
 As though their roots had struck in holy ground,
 My poor base soul is starving feebly here,
 A young, unshapely tree, for ever giving
 The fruits of loveless days and lonely living.

LXXVI.

ON A PUPIL'S PORTRAIT.

DEAR Boy ! when I do look into thy face
 Glittering with sunny thoughts, I fain would bless
 Thee for thy beauty and thy boyishness,
 For the fair brow youth crowns with freshest grace,
 For the light spirits and the humours wild,
 Wherewith my sadness is infected so
 That years drop off me, and dull thoughts forego
 A reign which o'er my heart hath not been mild.
 Yea, for all this I bless thee ; but a part
 More grave and stern is mine, for they commit
 To my safe charge, young boy ! thy merry heart,
 So gentle one hard word hath wounded it.
 Oh thou shalt hear no more hard words from me,
 But, when thou sinn'st, my prayers shall set thee free.

LXXVII.

ENGLAND'S TRUST.

I joy that the times are dark and dreary,
 I joy that the earth is old,
 That the hands of our kings are weak and weary,
 And the hearts of our nobles cold.
 I joy that the good and few are fearing,
 And the camp and court at play,
 That the swift-riding world is out of hearing,
 When the watchword comes this way.
 I joy for the signs of strife and trouble,
 And for England's awakening might,
 For the voices deep that are sounding double,
 Like the striking of clocks at night.
 I joy for the words that all are speaking,
 A language the earth had lost,
 For the hardy thoughts and steady seeking
 Whose path may not be crossed.
 The nation too long hath weakly striven
 In the craft of her own wise hand,
 For it is not through laws or wisdoms that Heaven
 Deals health to a gold-stricken land.
 I joy for this day that the calm and agèd
 Cease vaunting of England through fear,
 It tells that the thirst for self-praise is assuagèd,
 And the shock to rouse life in her near.
 I joy for the young that they lay not her honour
 In the stir of song and story,
 Nor in that which mere blood of her sons hath won
 her,
 Her world-wide name of glory.

I joy for the loss of the noisy gladness
 That hath made late years so dull ;
 But more I joy for the humbling sadness
 Whereof true hearts are full.
 Trust may not be in wisdoms hoary,
 Nor in wealth and greatness blent,
 But in the faith that this dream of glory
 Came to us for punishment.

LXXVIII.

THIRLMERE.

I.

THERE are two times in life, to love and fear,—
 Two times like birth and death ;
 They are two different echoes that we hear,
 Which Heaven uttereth.

II.

Those are not real—the strong-vaulted sky,
 The heavy-flowing seas,
 The rocky roots of hills, and lakes that lie
 In hollows deep like these.

III.

Heaven comes with her two voices, old and young,
 Creating these for us ;
 They are but mystic shadows dimly flung
 From off our spirits thus.

IV.

All hope, all joy, all mortal life with such
Sweet sadness is inlaid :
And all things have on them from Heaven a touch
Of sunshine or of shade.

V.

I have been here before, yet scarce can tell
The outline of the hills ;
The light is changed,—another voice doth swell
In those wild-sounding rills.

VI.

I have been here before : in sun and shade
A blythe green place it seemed :
Here have I talked with friends, sweet songs have
made,
And lovely things have dreamed.

VII.

And I have ridden to the lake this day
With more than common gladness ;
But hill and flood upon me strangely weigh
With new and fearful sadness.

VIII.

And all bright forms without me I would take—
A redbreast on the wall,
A buzzard flapping o'er the cold blue lake,
A hundred streams that call

IX.

One to another all Helvellyn over,
The light upon the pine,
Yon single pine on high, that can discover
There is a sun to shine :

X.

But, above all, the boy who at my side,
 For boyhood hath no morrow,
 Bound up in his own merry thoughts, doth chide
 His dull friend for his sorrow ;

XI.

Yea—above all, that boy to whom is given
 Better than miser's pelf,
 To love, and such love ever is of Heaven,
 One older than himself:—

XII.

All these bright things into my soul I take,
 That they may shed light there,
 And they but give cold blueness to the lake,
 Cold brightness to the air.

XIII.

Oh! speak to me, thou lake! thou mountain brow!
 In that old voice of joy—
 Oh! speak to me, as ye are speaking now
 To that pure-hearted boy.

XIV.

“Nay, bid us not, we are but voiceless things,
 Shadows and pomps for thee ;
 We can but echo the dread voice that rings
 From Heaven's blue canopy ;

XV.

“ And thou hast deadened it ; we cannot hear
 Through that thick soul of thine ;
 We are mute slaves, and waiting mutely here
 For thee to give the sign.

XVI.

“Sunshine and shade, sweet wind and pearly
 shower—
 All these we have of thee ;
 Our light and gloom we borrow every hour
 From thine infinity.

XVII.

“We have no depth, no substance of our own,
 No life which we inherit,—
 Oh ! blame not us ; we are pale outlines thrown
 From thine undying spirit.”

LXXIX.

LENT.

I.

YES ! I have walked the world these two months
 past
 With quick free step, loud voice, and youth's light
 cheer ;
 And dull and weary were the shadows cast
 From the dark Cross and Lent's dim portals
 near.

II.

Yes ! I rode up with such a noisy state
 And retinue of all things bright and fair,
 And reached in this new pilgrim guise the gate,
 As though my dreams might have free passage
 there.

III.

Dreams of far travel, visionary love,
 Hopes, memories, sweet songs, and sunny faces,
 Cheering each other on, with me did move
 Some way on Lent's keen roads and desert
 places.

IV.

And many a pilgrim wending o'er the plain,
 With face half-veiled and tear-drops flowing
 fast,
 Marvelled perchance at that unsightly train,
 When I and my strange servants rode past.

V.

But every stone that lay along the way,
 Wounding the feet of those who travelled by,
 Each sleety shower, chill blast, and cloudy day,
 Scattered my poor soft-living company.

VI.

Thus as my spirit more and more drank in
 The deep mysterious dimness of the time,
 Old forms waxed pale, and lines and shapes of
 sin
 Wore hardly off, and my baptismal prime

VII.

Grew into colour and distinctness there ;—
 But my blythe train and equipage were gone,
 The songs and sunny smiles ; my heart was bare,
 With Lent all darkening round me, and alone.

VIII.

O joy of all our joys! to be bereft
 Of our false power to make the world so dear!
 O joy of all our joys! to be thus left
 In our wild years, with none but Jesus near!

IX.

How sweetly then shall Lent's few Sundays shock
 The sadness which itself hath now grown sweet,
 Like the soft striking of an old church-clock,
 Making the heart of summer midnight beat.

X.

How sweetly now shall this most holy gloom
 Gather and double on my chastened heart,
 Circling with dark bright folds the Garden-Tomb,
 Where Lent and I, like Christian friends, shall
 part.

LXXX.

HALF A HEART.

I.

COME, I will give thee half a heart
 If that will do to love;
 And if I gave thee all, dear friend,
 It would but worthless prove.

II.

Thou art too good to see or know
 The ills that in me dwell :
 It is most right to keep our faults
 From those we love so well.

III.

So then I warn thee, do not think
 My fitful love untrue :
 I have another, darker self,
 Which thou must sometimes view.

IV.

Men take me, change me if they may,
 And love me if they can ;
 Few can do that ; few choose, like thee,
 A double-hearted man.

V.

My better self shall be thy friend,
 My worse self not thy foe,
 And to love light in time perchance,
 May make my darkness go.

VI.

If I should seem to play thee false,
 Then pour thy love through prayer :
 It is the fit ; my better heart
 Withdraws itself elsewhere.

VII.

And weary not if I do still
 New light or gloom disclose :
 What else in sooth can poets be
 But men whom no one knows ?

LXXXI.

THE LITANY.

I.

O SWEET, most sweet and penitential sound !
 In tides of chaste, austere old music setting
 O'er all those kneelers' hearts, at penance found,
 Weary with strife and unwise knowledge-getting.

II.

O sweet, most sweet and penitential sound !
 Each low response, with organ notes attended,
 Loosens some link of sin which sadly bound
 Souls where the Church and world were too much
 blended.

III.

O sweet, most sweet and penitential sound !
 Circling the Altar and the pillars grasping,
 Breathing a soul into the marble ground,
 Where knees are bending and mute hands are clasping !

IV.

O sweet, most sweet and penitential sound !
 O prayer most dear, most dread, and full of Heaven !
 Pleading with saints to get our souls unbound,
 And have our sins and our soft lives forgiven.

V.

O sweet, most sweet and penitential sound !
 Thy cadence thrills on me in times of sinning ;
 Thy grieving fall hath oft my soul unbound,
 Its thoughts and dreams to calmer currents winning.

VI.

O sweet, most sweet and penitential sound!
 O rite most dear! that in weak hours of vaunting,
 Languors of earthly love, or strivings crowned,
 Still keeps my heart a shrine with plaintive haunting.

LXXXII.

FRANCE.

PUT back the Fleur de Lys! Within the gates
 Of Rhodes the misbelieving Ishmaelite
 On hall and hostelry hath left unharmed
 The scutcheons of the military monks,
 Save where the Cross or Human Face appeared,
 Alike repugnant to his law. Yet now
 On all the ancient citadels of France,
 Sea-gates and palaces, the hand of wrath
 With foolish diligence hath knocked away
 The triple lilies from the fretted shield.

And is it thus ye strive to quell the thought
 Of the crowned Capets? Is it thus, forsooth,
 Ye seek to stifle in your growing sons
 Those risings of the heart towards the past,
 Which kindle patriots' tears to fertilize
 The soil whence noblest aspirations spring,
 From out whose blossoms even now depends
 A holier future, their legitimate fruit?
 O wrath is blind; ye were in this your act
 Wisely unwise, and yet ye meant it not!

Ye could not have devised a feast, or reared
 A pillar more memorial of the past,
 Or forced it on the fancy of your youth
 With more continuous admonition, rites
 More grave, than this dumb sacrifice of fear !

Go to the Asian cemeteries, thread
 The cypress lanes of Smyrna or Stamboul ;
 Spite of yourself one thought is uppermost,
 The slaughtered Janissaries ! nay the cry
 Of the red Hippodrome seems ever blent
 With soft incessant cooing, for such spots
 Are populous with doves ;—and whence is this
 But from the broken sepulchres which stand
 All turbanless amid their turbaned peers ?
 And quickened by the infantine display
 Of the great despot's anger, memory dwells
 Upon the doom of those prætorians :—thus
 The very absence of the Fleur de Lys
 Writes it more deeply on the vacant shield
 Than the strong chisel ; and within the mind,
 Nay oft with strange illusion to the eye,
 Obliterates, where such hath been engraved,
 The Jewish emblem. See, in this poor toil
 Of mischief, how the timorous insolence
 Of insecure success hath overreached
 Itself, and most reluctant homage paid
 Unto the very symbols of a past
 From which it deemed itself emancipate.

O France ! methinks it were a manlier game
 To make a plaything of old fetters, thus
 Attesting present freedom, and to keep
 In thoughtful ease the shackles in thy hands,
 Neither as things of shame nor spells of fear.
 Why tremble at thy lilies ? If they be
 Less frail in stone than when the garden breeze

Scatters the gold dust from their nodding bells,
 Yet freedom is itself a flower, which tops
 All growths except the weedy license bred
 Within its rich vicinity.—And yet
 Thou haply mightst reply that it was well
 To raze the wicked lily from thy walls,
 And by this outward action so to teach
 Thy children hatred of the bitter past,
 Which that pale flower doth symbolize. But hate
 Begets not wholesome fear, and bitterness
 Teaches no wisdom. They, whose savage tongues
 Hoot loudest round the scaffold, soonest come
 To a like end. Men profit not by wrong,
 Except they love the doers of the wrong,
 With such compassion as the fear of God
 Suggests, or sense of justice can admit.
 What though the later Bourbons, with their crew
 Of courtiers, and effeminate parasites,
 And smooth-tongued peers, O how unlike the peers
 Of the French court in good chivalric times!—
 Weighed heavily on the land, their abject yoke,
 Once shaken off, was barely worth a thought,
 A loathsome dream which one would studiously
 forbear

To call to mind, a tyranny too vile
 To be thus honoured with enduring hate,
 Too impotent and stupid to become
 A national tradition in a land
 So rich in such remembrances.

Ye priests

And catholic scholars! by whose sacred toils
 That realm is waking to a better sense
 Of her grand functions, you would I beseech,—
 Alien in name yet wholly one in heart—

To throw the Bourbon cause unto the winds,
 Or leave such loyal treason to the men
 Whose quest is in the world and worldly things.
 Ye have to build again the Church of Christ,
 Ye have Rome's lawful honour to retrieve,
 Ye have a pagan France within your France
 To be converted,—meddle not with plans
 Of mundane policy, but stand on high
 Above the interests of the passing hour,
 And all the pitiful politics of the day,
 And so shall revolutions' awful cloud
 Dash its forked lightnings far below your feet.
 Forewarned, forearmed! the cause of Holy Church
 Mates with no other; let the Bourbon name
 Pass from your watchwords as a doubtful thing
 Which may or may not prosper: stand alone,
 Aloof if need be; give unto the Church
 The lilies of the monarchy, and God
 Himself will give you kings.

Those royal flowers

Are virgin white: their spirit-stirring past
 They keep unsullied, and themselves have power
 To outgrow defilement, rooted in the tomb
 Of great St. Louis. O ye men of France!
 Your lilies will not fade alone; high thoughts
 And masculine purposes, the sense devout
 Of solemn destiny, and loyal zeal
 For the true faith of Christ, all, all will fade,
 And trampled lilies can exhale no scent.
 O then forget the heartless faults of kings:
 Freedom hath blood to be forgiven; 'twere well
 That had not stained the argent Fleur de Lys.

See to it, Men of France! if with those flowers
 Ye have not even now unthroned yourselves.

The kingly habit of obedience lost,
 What lingers that is worth a patriot's love?
 Goodness is greatness: and of Christian states
 None taught this lesson to the world so well
 As ancient France. O call to mind the days
 When good king Robert lived, or think of Blanche,
 Blanche and St. Louis, reigning first on earth,
 Thenceforth to reign in heaven; and not unsung,
 For I am English and have need to love
 Those royal names, be pious Erminilde,
 And Bertha, saintly queen of Ethelbert.

Look o'er the width of this most various realm!
 Upon the heights above Grenoble stood
 The austere Bruno, planting there the Tree,
 Which mid the wild confusions of the world
 Blooms in tranquillity. See there the vales
 Of Burgundy, from whose chivalric youth
 Bernard began to build his living house
 Deep in the Vale of Absinth. Yonder lies
 Clermont, where once the enthusiast Peter preached,
 And suddenly upon ten thousand tongues
 The will of God alighted, and outspoke
 As through a multitude of seers. And there,
 Alas how little prized! the holy cells
 Of Grandmont and Premontrè, and the site,
 Now desecrate, of Clugni's sumptuous pile.
 There like a jewel in the Midland Sea,
 Far off discerned, the isle of Lerins hangs
 Upon the coast of Provence, no fit haunt,
 As from its beauty might at first appear,
 For summer revel or a moonlit masque,
 But where in studious cloister Vincent lived
 And taught, and in the simple panoply
 Of catholic tradition armed, struck down

The heretics. And in the west behold,
 (Looking towards England with instinctive wish,
 Daily developed through the Christian West,
 To appease the factions of that separate land,)
 The work of younger days, De Rancè's home,
 The stern La Trappe, with its three sullen lakes
 Hard by Mortagne. O France! are these to count
 As nothing in the presence of the change
 Which hath been wrought on thee, these ancient
 things

And great historic sanctities, which grew
 Beneath the shadow of the Fleur de Lys?

O write the past once more upon thy walls,
 And so shall it be written in thy soul.
 For thine is still the character that learns
 More by the outward eye than listening heart.
 It is not as a poet only, one
 Who dreams bright things and cares not if they come
 To pass, that I implore the sons of France
 To reinstate their Lily; as a man,
 A citizen, a priest, I plead the cause
 Of those religious times which are embalmed
 Within that flowery symbol. They who strive
 To dim the illumination of the past,
 And specially in such traditionary forms
 As have a hold upon the popular heart,
 Are like the devotees at whose dark rites
 The lamps were straightway quenched, that what was
 good

Within them might not put to shame the bad,
 And meddle with the liberty of sin.

O cast not off the famous France of yore!
 Cling to the very cyphers which attest
 Her old magnificence: and tear away

From the wide surface of your provinces
That cumbrous network of unsightly names,
Which have no music to the generous ear.
Enrich yon barren olive-spotted slopes
With the sweet name of Provence ; let the towers
Of those fair minsters look around and see
The woods of Normandy outspread ; let eve
Cast her rich gloom upon the Pyrenees
To beautify the wolds of Aquitaine ;
Let Burgundy, Guienne, and green Poitou
Call, through the potency of their brave names,
Fresh knighthood from the earth for thy fresh needs:
And let there be a king of France once more,
A Dauphiny for appanage, and Rheims
The keeper of the Chrism,—and at the helm
Of thy new destinies let Europe see
The spirit of St. Louis : then, O then,
Shall it be well with thee, O France, and us,
(For in how many things we hang on thee,)
And all good things shall prosper in the West.

Rise then, thou Christian Realm ! and be thyself
• Once more, and this the sign that thou shalt give
Of thy religious aims and brave intent :—
Replace the Fleur de Lys upon its shield !
Let thy sons' hearts be living shields, whereon
To exalt again the authority of Rome.
Think of St. Louis, let thy future be
One long and steadfast vigil round his tomb ;
For so shalt thou be recognized once more,
And by the emulous English most of all,
The peerless nation of the Catholic West !

LXXXIII.

TWO FAITHS.

OH pray for me!—thou know'st what prayer I need!
 What is it to be one in whose weak heart
 Two faiths are lodged, while thought and feeling bleed
 In the wild war; yet neither will depart?
 What is it to be one, spell-drawn to stay
 For the completing of his nature, trembling
 Between two different characters each day,
 And seem to his harsh friends to be dissembling?
 Watch me, as thou hast watched Mosella's waves
 Bringing her clear, sweet waters down from Treves,
 To Neuendorf along yon southern shore
 Breasting with hope the turbulent green Rhine,
 Till the old flood claims both his banks once more:
 Pray on—pray on: like fate may yet be mine.

LXXXIV.

PROUD POETS.

NAY, thou hast ceased to be a poet: pride
 Hath all displaced the heavenly gift within;
 Music of soul can live with many a sin,
 But will not with a haughty spirit bide.
 A bard is one on whom, as in a shower,
 Man's mighty deeds and lovely arts rain power;
 One whose quick soul hath fetched another sense,
 An inlet deep, where earth with her green things
 Mounts in a tide of vast intelligence,
 And mysteries that need interpretations.
 Can they be proud, who walk across the earth,
 Like fountains, shedding waters for the weary,
 Casting up truths and symbols to give mirth
 Unto the restless, light unto the dreary?

LXXXV.

AGED CITIES.

I HAVE known cities with the strong-armed Rhine
 Claspings their mouldered quays in lordly sweep ;
 And lingered where the Maine's low waters shine
 Through Tyrian Frankfort ; and been fain to weep
 'Mid the green cliffs where pale Mosella laves
 That Roman sepulchre, imperial Treves.
 Ghent boasts her street, and Bruges her moonlight
 square ;
 And holy Mechlin, Rome of Flanders, stands,
 Like a queen-mother, on her spacious lands ;
 And Antwerp shoots her glowing spire in air.
 Yet have I seen no place, by inland brook,
 Hill-top, or plain, or trim arcaded bowers,
 That carries age so nobly in its look,
 As Oxford with the sun upon her towers.

LXXXVI.

UNKIND JUDGING.

To be thought ill of, worse than we deserve,
 To have hard speeches said, cold looks displayed,
 By those who should have cheered us when we
 swerve,—

Is one of Heaven's best lots, and may be made
 A treasure ere we know it, a lone field
 Which to hot hearts may bitter blessings yield.
 Either we learn from our past faults to shrink,
 When their full guilt is kept before our eye,
 And, thinking of ourselves as others think,
 We so are gainers in humility :
 Or the harsh judgments are a gloomy screen,
 Fencing our altered lives from praise and glare ;
 And plants that grow in shades retain their green,
 While unmeet sternness kindly chills the air.

LXXXVII.

ADMONITION.

I KNOW thee not, bright friend! but that thy looks
 Do draw me to thee, with thy boyhood rushing,
 As a sweet fever, through thy veins, and gushing
 From thy clear eyes in merry falls, like brooks
 Leaping, clear crystal things, from their stone
 fountains,
 And waking echoes in the noonday mountains.
 This is no place for thee; be warned in time.
 Thou must go haunt some free and breezy knoll,
 Ere this grey city come with spell sublime,
 Freezing her heartless state into thy soul.
 Thou hast been surely cradled out of doors,
 And the great forms that nursed thee are the truest;
 And, though these courts were Heaven's own azure
 floors,
 Yet days are coldest when the skies are bluest.

LXXXVIII.

GRISEDAL TARN.

I.

WERE I a man upon whose life
 An awful, untold sin did weigh,
 And Heaven vouchsafed not pain or strife
 Enough to do that guilt away,
 And it were well in mine old age
 To build myself an hermitage,—

II.

I would not choose a savage place
 Where, all the heavenly seasons round,
 I should read anger in the face
 Of nature's bleak and joyless ground ;
 And winds and streams have voices rude,
 Wherewith to mar the solitude.

III.

No ; for the many sins that stain me
 Barren and lonely should it be,
 High up where nature might unchain me
 With her strong mountain liberty,
 With charms that would, through sin-born fears,
 Keep fresh and free the source of tears.

IV.

In yon pale hollow would I dwell,
 Where waveless Grisedale meekly lies,
 And the three clefts of grassy fell
 Let in the blueness of the skies ;
 And lowland sounds come travelling up
 To echo in that mountain cup.

V.

The morning light on mottled stones,
 The unfledged ravens' clamorous mirth,
 The broken gush and hollow moans
 Of waters struggling in the earth,
 And the white lines of bleating sheep
 Crossing, far up, the dewy steep ;

VI.

These, with the storms and calms, mayhap
Enough of sight and sound would make
For one in mountain nature's lap,
A dweller by her loneliest lake ;
While banners bright of kindled mist
Above his head might hang and twist.

VII.

Where from the tarn the shallow brook
By rough Helvellyn shapes its way,
The window of my cell should look
Eastward upon the birth of day ;
Nor should the place disfigured be
By garden-plot or favorite tree.

VIII.

One blame would I incur, nor fear
To wound the stranger's curious eye ;
Some sceptral foxgloves I would rear
Upon the yellow turf hard by :
They might to an ascetic serve
As types and teachers of reserve.

IX.

From wanton summer's broadest sun
Their perfect splendour they withhold ;
The regal blossoms, one by one,
In single, separate pomp unfold,
Shedding their frail red bells away
In patient, gradual decay.

x.

See with what pleasant slowness there,
When hedge and wood are past their prime,
Late summer with her fertile air
Is forced that kingly stalk to climb ;
As though the world should read therein
The Christian way deep truths to win.

xi.

In every cleft a kneeling-place
And cushion of dead fern should lie ;
From three such loop-holes I might trace
Meanings and shapes in earth and sky ;
Huge emblems would they make for me
Of the Most Holy Trinity !

LXXXIX.

LARCH TREES.

ALL men speak ill of thee, unlucky Tree!
 Spoiling with graceless line the mountain edge,
 Clothing with awkward sameness rifted ledge,
 Or uplands swelling brokenly and free:
 Yet shalt thou win some few good words of me.
 Thy boughs it is that teach the wind to mourn,
 Haunting deep inland spots and groves forlorn
 With the true murmurs of the plaintive sea.
 When tuft and shoot on vernal woodlands shine,
 Who hath a green unwinterlike as thine?
 And when thou leanest o'er some beetling brow,
 With pale thin twigs the eye can wander through,
 There is no other tree on earth but thou
 Which brings the sky so near or makes it seem so
 blue.

 XC.

WRITTEN IN A GREEN-HOUSE.

WHY are your scents so faint, your stems so slight?
 Why are your languid leaves outnumbered so
 By wealth of bell and blossom? Would ye go
 Back to Pacific lands or eastern light
 From whence ye came, bringing your juicy powers
 To heal and lull? But ailing man hath need
 In his sad lot of a botanic creed;
 So ye are summoned from your thousand bowers,
 Unwilling Congress from the world of flowers!
 And now the bard, wise idler, here may pore
 O'er the wild learning and the uncouth store
 Of studious boyhood's desultory hours,
 Rifling all books of travel, far and near,
 To shape a home for each exotic here.

XCI.

BRATHAY BRIDGE.

MONTH after month more languid do I grow,
 Struggling and striving in life's sterile round,
 And in each strife and struggle losing ground,
 Letting the anchors of my spirit go.
 The morning long upon this sunny stone,
 Solaced and calmed by Brathay's flooded noise,
 For my late weakness I would fain atone,
 By putting from me life's unhopeful joys.
 But each wise vow and self-renouncing speech
 For their untruth the river, as it goes,
 Bears down; and, ever as the water flows,
 My better self flows past me out of reach;
 And the sweet sounds, in my soothed ears so long,
 Steal my soul's strength, debasing it to song.

XCII.

THE BRATHAY KINGFISHER.

THOU hast a fair dominion here, Sir King!
 And yon tall stone beneath the alder stem
 Seems a meet throne for a gay crownéd thing,
 That wears so well its tawny diadem.
 Thou hast a fair dominion—pools and bays,
 With heath and copse and nooks of plummy fern;
 And tributes of sweet sound the river pays,
 Changing to blithe or sad at every turn.
 The gilded flies, when noon's faint zephyr stirs,
 Upon the sunny shallows walk or swim;
 And swallows too, those welcome foreigners,
 Under thy bridges, summer tourists, skim,
 Like the light crowd of English yearly thrown
 On river-banks less lovely than their own.

XCIII.

LOUGHRIGG.

I.

Would they not judge untruly who should deem
 I had no friends but those I named in song?
 Would it not be ungentle thus to dream,
 And do poetic silence heartless wrong?

II.

The meadow-brooks with their sweet clamor guide
 Their bending selves to a most wayward time,
 Will earth and sky less waywardly preside
 O'er the meek wills of poets in their prime?

III.

So hath it been, dear Loughrigg! that till now
 My song hath touched less often than it might
 At thy fair mountain havens, which do glow
 With such a wealth of hues in this clear light.

IV.

Oft as a poet, feeble at my craft,
 Did I seek shelter in Helvellyn's fame,
 And, with poor fraud, on my dull verses graft
 Fresh sound and fulness from his mighty name.

V.

Yet it were hard if this most wondrous dawn,
 With its whole sheet of purest sunlight, thrown
 From the blue laughing skies o'er thy rough lawn,
 Cold bubbling brook, and lichen-written stone—

VI.

Yes—it were hard, if such an hour at least
Laid not on me some little tax of song,
For thee, the table where, as at a feast,
All the rich kinds of mountain beauty throng.

VII.

Thou art a world in miniature, a land
Wrought with such curious toil, as if in mirth
Nature had thrown thee from her dexterous hand
To be a sportive model of the earth.

VIII.

All made by laws, green cleft and sinuous path
Cross, like great mountain outlets, every way ;
And the long outline, which thy summit hath,
Mimics rude Alp and splintered Himalay ;

IX.

Or like a Cross to Christians thou mayest seem,
With thy four points to lake or river bent,
Sunk in a font, and luring Heaven to gleam
On thee through that redeeming element.

X.

When first I saw thee, butterworts had set
Their sickly stars about thy hundred springs,
With one blue flower apiece, content to let
The fresh fern fan them with its neighbouring
wings.

XI.

The fern was like green dust upon the hill,
 Which vernal winds might almost blow away ;
 But it changed dresses with the months at will,
 And with the cold its fashions grew more gay.

XII.

Ne'er have I felt the might of morning rest
 Its cold fresh welcome half so strong and free,
 As on thy heathy side and windy crest,
 Except in early daybreaks out at sea.

XIII.

Oft, o'er the noonday woods, on thy west crown
 My rhyming fancy woodland visions weaves,
 Till, with old boyish impulse darting down,
 I plunge and lose myself among the leaves.

XIV.

Thy southern scars, all masked with oak-wood
 bowers,
 Like feudal dwellings, mouldering whitely, shine
 Through the soft nights of summer, as the towers
 In the deep yellow moonlight on the Rhine.

XV.

To winter's cold-eyed sun, o'er snowy drifts
 That scriptural tree, the juniper, doth lean,
 While many a patch of wannest silver shifts
 O'er the strange dazzling sheet of white and
 green.

XVI.

One rainy summer, often as I stood
 Within yon churchyard, gazing on thy side,
 One brow of thine with an incessant flood
 Of fruitful sunlight rose in gleamy pride.

XVII.

Let the wet skies be loaded e'er so much,
 That lighting up no dreary mist could swage:
 Care might as soon efface the angelic touch
 On the bright brow of sanctified old age.

XVIII.

Many a calm fancy and sweet-sounding word
 To thee, dear Loughrigg! do of right belong;
 And, though thy name of softness be unheard,
 Thou of all mountains art mine undersong.

XIX.

In tempted times, when my weak soul did need
 More than earth's props and stays, I fled to thee;
 And in thy sunken haunts I now may read
 The secrets of my own biography.

XX.

O may no wind wake up for other ears
 The sad confessions trusted to thy keeping;
 But, for the Cross that pardons and the tears
 That win us grace, dear mountain, leave them
 sleeping!

XCIV.

THE WORLD'S WAKE.

'TWERE a choice lot if my poor thoughts could
make

By meditative power a separate boat,
Wherein their master and themselves might float,
Some little way behind, in this world's wake.
Now, as it swerves and rocks along its course
Over smooth seas with new-discovered force,
I in my boat would follow, uttering
From out the bosom of a quiet time
Words of most warning sweetness, shreds of rhyme
Scarce to be heard for ocean's murmuring.
And some few gentle ones upon the deck,
Who heard my song and loved it, might make
moan,

When a rough wave, that made my bark a wreck,
Left the gray sea and glistening wake alone.

 XCV.

IN-DOORS AND OUT-OF-DOORS.

THERE are three gifts apart, whereby good men
Do good unto their fellows. Some can press
Power out of heartless books with subtle pen,
Through steadfast years of in-doors weariness.
Others there are, who in the outward fret
Of states and towns with their best wealth at war,
With help from heaven, have kept the world as yet
From working towards its doom too fast or far.
And there are some whose lives are out-of-doors,
In hopeful spots the Cross and Keys applying,
Unfastening there from Earth's green shining floors
The ponderous curse that hath so long been lying
O'er its hushed fields, bewildering heathen guess
With intricate, unmeaning loveliness.

XCVI.

SCENERY HUNTING.

LIGHT multitudes ! O spare the weary seas,
 That like tired subjects bear you year by year.
 Europe stands wondering on her spacious quays,
 With face half-doubting whether smile or tear
 Would fittest greet the Englishman's disease.
 Strange people ! flung like spray from summer tides
 In leafy places and o'er green hill-sides !
 Substance fades off to form ; each glorious thing,
 Wherein ancestral wisdom was enshrined,
 Whereto imaginative power might cling
 With Christian hold, is shed upon the wind.
 Man, made of earth, from earth will strive to bring
 O'er his dull lifetime the receding light
 Of the Eternal and the Infinite.

 XCVII.

TO A PUPIL.

BROTHER ! we left the port of our new birth
 At different times ; yet hath our coasting been
 Along a lovely quarter of the earth,
 Where the calm bays are blue, and sea-banks green.
 Now, be it cloudy time or shining weather,
 Our barks are anchored for a while together.
 Somewhat in river-mouths have I been taught
 With inland winds for teachers,—somewhat too,
 Belike less heeded, from old volumes brought
 By angel hands to give me nature's clue.
 By gentlest incantations round thee thrown,
 Come, let me tinge thy spirit with mine own,—
 With more of sweetness, lest life's toils should press
 Thine over-docile heart and masculine loveliness.

XCVIII.

RICHARD'S TREE.

WATERPARK, CONISTON.

BY what strange lure are thy free spirits bound,
 With thy bare feet and wonder-smitten face,
 Close to this mountain ash, as if to trace
 Thine infant foot-prints in the grass around ?
 Ah ! little Boy, since thine unsteady pace
 Wore round its guiding stem a yellow ring,
 Hot sun and dewy moon have clothed the place
 Anew with their alternate visiting.
 Even through eight thin years there is a past,
 Which speaketh to thee in thy childish spirit,
 And thy fresh soul hath mighty shadows cast
 From the dark store our nature doth inherit.
 Long may this tree, unpruned for thy dear sake,
 Wave to the merry splashing of the lake !

XCIX.

THE DEATH OF RICHARD'S TREE.

WATERPARK, CONISTON.

WHY comest thou to me, young questioner,
 Why comest thou with sorrow-stricken look ?
 Of what dread omen in old nature's book
 Enquirest thou the meaning from the seer ?
 From out yon sapless tree thy mother earth
 Speaks to thee, Child, and with no voice of mirth.
 Life grows around thee and upon thee, deep
 And broad and mighty ; and the time hath come
 When childhood pure can be no more a home,
 A covert where the soul may hide and sleep.
 Yet still—now dry thy tears—this comfort take ;
 Thou shalt keep childhood's heart with manhood's
 soul ;
 There shall be pauses from life's stern control
 When thou shalt hear the old mirth of the lake.

C.

WRITTEN IN CONWAY CASTLE.

ENGLAND! thy strifes are written on thy fields
 In grim old characters, which studious time
 Wears down to beauty, while green nature yields
 Soft ivy-veils to clothe gray holds of crime,
 And hides war's prints with spring-flowers that might
 wave

Their pale sweet selves upon a martyr's grave.
 Here hath the ploughshare of the Conquest worn
 The furrowed moat around a cruel tower;
 There York's white roses fringe in blameless scorn
 The ledge of some Lancastrian lady's bower.
 Least, for my country's sake, may I regret
 The fruitful angers, and good blood that ran
 So hot from Royalist and Puritan,
 Which in our very soil is red and throbbing yet.

CI.

OLD-FASHIONED HOUSES.

FOR A LADY FOND OF OLD FURNITURE.

SWEET are old Courts with dates above the doors,
 And yew-trees clipped in shapes, and cedar walks,
 And lawns whereon a quiet peacock stalks,
 And leaden casements, and black shining floors,
 And arm-chairs carved like good cathedral stalls,
 And huge French clocks, and bedsteads most inviting,
 And stiff old ladies hung upon the walls,
 Famed in the days of English Memoir-writing:—
 Places whose very look kind thoughts might draw
 E'en to Anne Stuart or William of Nassau.
 Sweeter than Tudor-stricken shrines are they,
 With pleasant grounds and rivers lingering by,—
 Quaint homes, that shed a pure, domestic ray
 O'er the dull time of English history.

CII.

THE MENAI BRIDGE.

FAIREST of rocky England's channel-gates !
 With what a blessed calm to the main ocean
 The ebbing tide, with silent under-motion,
 Upward is drawn along thy weedy Straits !
 The glossy water, shot with blue and green,
 Throws off the sunlight, like the restless throat
 Of some vain dove ; and ships, methinks, might float,
 Trusting the deep in places so serene.
 Thus wreathed in folds of summer billow, who
 Would deem old tales of wreck and tempest true,
 Where yon vast Marvel, like an albatross
 Still springing upward, as it seems, in air,
 Spreads in light grandeur his huge wings across,
 Self-poised in momentary balance there ?

CIII.

CHURCH POSTURES.

YE would not sit at ease while meek men kneel
 Did ye but see His face shine through the veil,
 And the unearthly forms that round you steal
 Hidden in beauteous light, splendent or pale
 As the rich Service leads. And prostrate faith
 Shroudeth her timorous eye, while through the air
 Hovers and hangs the Spirit's cleansing Breath
 In Whitsun shapes o'er each true worshipper.
 Deep wreaths of Angels, burning from the East,
 Around the consecrated Shrine are braced,
 The awful Stone where by fit hands are placed
 The Flesh and Blood of the tremendous Feast.
 But kneel—the priest upon the Altar-stair
 Will bring a blessing out of Sion there.

CIV.

SNOWDON,

IN THE PASS OF LLANBERIS.

HOLDING by this rude crag I stay to listen,
 Where the white noonday moon looks o'er the steep,
 And sheets of mountain water hang and glisten,
 Catching the sun far up in their long leap.
 Snowdon's whole range is rocking in the wind,
 Ridges and splintered caves and lifeless vales,
 Calling forth mighty sounds, while they unbind
 The echoing chords of this vast harp of Wales.
 Forget not Whom the winds forth-shadow! Hark,
 How the huge hills take up in hollows dark
 The clang from these distracted caverns tossed,
 Till the brave eagles in their holds have trembled,
 Crouching and screaming to the choir assembled
 Round this dread Altar of the Holy Ghost.

CV.

NIGHTS FOR POETS.

I.

Is night fairest among mountains
 And by the rushy lea,
 Or cradled on the fountains
 Of the unpolluted sea?

II.

Does moonlight come most brightly
Unto the white-faced steep,
Or when it wanders lightly
In sweet paths o'er the deep ?

III.

Are stars most pure when making
Jewels for mountain crest,
Or with their shadows shaking
In ocean's pearly breast ?

IV.

Is darkness grander covering
A mountain's hollow dells,
Than when it droopeth hovering
Upon the broad sea-swells ?

V.

Be it mountain, be it ocean,
When night comes on the earth,
If a river's quiet motion
Be near me with its mirth.

VI.

Can any toil be sweeter
Than for me to lie and dream,
And have my time and metre
Made for me by a stream ?

VII.

Then all night's gentle seemings
Into my sleep I take,
And a long night's pleasant dreamings
Are poems when I wake.

CVI.

SOFTLY THE SHIPS DO SAIL.

TO MY MOTHER.

I.

SOFTLY the ships do sail,
 Dipping in the billow,
 Now that the weary gale
 Findeth there its pillow.

II.

The sea doth lift its plain,
 Tremulous and shining ;
 Like threads upon the main
 Glossy wakes are twining.

III.

In twilight rings the calm
 Binds the current's motion,
 While evening's inland balm
 Quivers on the ocean. .

IV.

Such calms, such heavenly air
 Soothe my spirit often,
 When thy kind eyes are there
 Chafing thoughts to soften.

V.

By this transparent sea
Have I many an even
Waited to catch from thee
Images of heaven.

VI.

My heart hath oft the while
Ceased its very beating,
At thine infrequent smile,
Beautifully fleeting.

VII.

Mother! in such deep times
My heart's harp have I fingered,
And words in choicest rhymes
Backwardly have lingered.

VIII.

For when I love thee most,
Words seem little loving,
And golden hours are lost
In unwise improving.

IX.

Mother! why is it hard
For pardon to be pleading?
And why is my heart barred,
When thine, alas! is bleeding?

X.

O whisper in my ears—
Thy heart for me is aching!
Else why those chiding tears
In sunshine showers breaking?

XI.

Ah! now my eyes are wet,
 Hot words must be spoken,
 For, if they loiter yet,
 Heart-strings will be broken.

XII.

But why am I to thee
 All in all, my mother?
 And why art thou to me
 Like a sister to a brother?

CVII.

WELSH VALLEYS.

By mountain-pass and long stone-sprinkled alley,
 Through sweet vicissitudes of barrenness,
 Our pathway lies,—with scarce a tree to bless
 The worn wayfarer in the noonday valley.
 My months have many turns like these, and each
 Seems to drop down to lowlands broad and winning;
 But the hills hold them upward: will they reach
 Ere night the promise of their green beginning?
 Thus my young life its own poor image takes
 From bleak Caernarvon's small, unwooded lakes.
 A man with many homes hath none to spare.
 Though he beget in calm, rock-shaded places
 Welcomes, farewells, joys, griefs, and soothing faces,
 There is no echo to them in the air.

CVIII.

THE FOUR RELIGIOUS HEATHENS.

“ Arise, O Lord, let not man be strengthened : let the gentiles be judged in Thy sight.”—Ps. ix. 20.

1.

HERODOTUS.

“ Converse in fear, during the time of your sojourning here.”

HE was a mild old man, and cherished much
 The weight dark Egypt on his spirit laid ;
 And with a sinuous eloquence would touch
 For ever at that haven of the dead.
 Single romantic words by him were thrown,
 As types, on men and places, with a power
 Like that of shifting sunlight after shower
 Kindling the cones of hills, and journeying on.
 He feared the gods and heroes, and spake low,
 That echo might not hear in her light room :
 He was a dweller underground ; for gloom
 Fitted old heathen goodness more than glow ;
 And, where love was not, faith might gather mirth
 From ore that glistened in pale beds of earth.

2.

NICIAS.

“In all these things Job sinned, not by his lips, nor spoke he any foolish things against God.”

NURSLING of heathen fear ! thy woful being
 Was steeped in gentleness by long disease,
 Though round thine awestruck mind were ever fleeing
 Omens, and signs, and direful presages.
 One might believe in frames so gently stern,
 Some Christian thoughts before their time did burn.
 Sadness was unto thee for love : thy spirit
 Rose loftily like some hard-featured stone,
 Which summer sunbeam never makes its throne,
 E'en while it fills the skirts of vapour near it.
 One wert thou, Nicias ! of the few who urge
 Their stricken souls where far-seen death doth hover
 In vision on them, nor may they diverge
 From the black line his chilling shadows cover.

3.

SOCRATES.

“Of making many books there is no end ; and much study is an affliction of the flesh.”

THOU, mighty Heathen ! wert not so bereft
 Of heavenly helps to thy great-hearted deeds,
 That thou shouldst dig for truths in broken creeds,
 'Mid the loose sands of four old empires left.
 Motions and shadows dimly glowing fell
 On thy broad soul from forms invisible.
 With its plain grandeur, simple, calm, and free,
 What wonder was it that thy life should merit
 Sparkles of grace, and angel ministry,
 With jealous glimpses of the world of spirit ?
 Greatest and best in this—that thy pure mind,
 Upon its saving mission all intent,
 Scorned the untruth of leaving books behind,
 To claim for thine what through thy lips was sent.

SENECA.

“When Peter came, his shadow at the least might
overshadow any of them.”

OFt in the crowd and crossings of old Rome
The Christ-like shadow of the gifted Paul,
As he looked forth betimes from his hired home,
Might at this Gentile's hurrying footsteps fall,
When, from his mornings in the Cæsar's hall,
Spurred by great thoughts, the troubled sage might
come.

Some balmy truths most surely did he borrow
From the sweet neighbourhood of Christ, to bring
The harsh, hard waters of his heathen spring
In softening ducts o'er wastes of pagan sorrow.
As slips of green from fertile confines shoot
Into the tracts of sand, so heathen duty
Caught from his guided pen a cold, bright beauty,
Where flowers might all but blossom into fruit.

CIX.

VALE CRUCIS ABBEY.

I.

HERE, where wet winds autumnal rains may fling,
And pallid ash-trees in the transept lean,
The gentle-mannered monks were wont to sing
The Son of God, the Help of the unclean ;
And, from Cistercian service books, to hymn
The blissful Mother, as the nights grew dim.

II.

Here, not unmindful of the public good,
 Dwelt some poor beadsmen of the stainless Mary,
 Bosomed, like monkish spots, in coves of wood,
 That morn and eve, with mystic commentary,
 Might for meek hearts re-join the broken threads,
 Hid in Church books, like ore in jealous beds.

III.

And at this hollow, and in vales like this,
 The winds took in good lading, and a freight
 Of precious boons, dispensing balm and bliss,
 Lifting from England's Saxon fields the weight
 Of sins, that sprung in such prolific brood
 From the perverseness of her Norman blood.

IV.

Still, within hearing, at pale matin-time
 There comes a soul into these ruins lone,
 Where the clean-watered Dee his woodland chime
 Steers with sweet skill from rich Edeyrnion,
 Leaving on shady rock and mountain bending
 Shreds of faint echo waked in his descending.

V.

Oft, when chill winds the [compline hour have
 tolled,
 The broken East is fairly lighted yet,
 Ever when in yon Gothic marigold
 The harmless moon her full white orb hath set,
 While, on the field beyond, her trembling fire
 Streams mildly through the triple-windowed choir.

VI.

Thou visitor of ruins ! thou mayst come
 To worn portcullis and green-hooded wall,
 Where some rude baron held his festal home
 In moated fortalice or hunting-hall—
 There thou mayst come, when placid nights are
 wearing,
 To learn of earth her art of soft repairing.

VII.

But other thoughts and deeper must be thine,
 When by poor abbeys, tightly ivied o'er,
 Thou dream'st that England, leaving Christian
 shrine,
 Hath turned herself to druid rite once more,—
 Fearing in wakeful thoughts lest, heathen grown,
 She should not miss the Cross when it is gone.

CX.

ON RECEIVING A LETTER FROM A FRIEND,

AFTER AN INTERRUPTED CORRESPONDENCE.

I.

MORE changes still ? And are good hearts like thine
 Bound to the ebbs and flows of common life ?
 Ah ! many a novel thought and random line
 Show where the world hath harmed thee with its
 strife.

II.

Still thou art victor ; on thy pennon still
 The Cross and thorny Chaplet are displayed,
 Though the wet winds of life with evil will
 Perchance have caused its crimson gloss to fade.

III.

Somewhat of Christian gracefulness hath past
 From the calm freeness which was thy chief merit ;
 Sadly unwise it was to make such haste,
 To bring an unripe manhood o'er thy spirit.

IV.

In these few lines of thine, a helpless strife,
 Somewhat too much unreal, I can trace
 'Gainst lingering youth ; although thine inner life
 Hath not as yet worked through upon thy face.

V.

Some men can change their inner lives by power
 Akin to witchcraft's lawless transmutation,
 And, by a shock of feeling, in one hour
 Set their soul's helm to some new constellation.

VI.

Ah woe is me ! my life keeps step no more
 With the old happy hearts it most approves ;
 Outstript by all, it hangs upon the shore,
 Taking perpetual leave of boyish loves.

VII.

Why ripenest thou thus early ? What rich earth
 Hast thou so lately heaped about thy root ?
 Am I like spendthrift trees in vernal mirth
 That blossom double, and count that for fruit ?

VIII.

Like a watched shrub, my secret life is slow,
Built by the four great Seasons as they pass,
Curing mine eyes of blindness, while they show
The unseen world inverted on their glass.

IX.

My secret growth is slow, by little caught
Out on the earth in nights too bright for sleeping,
From checks and chills, and gentle tempers brought
By the sweet, soothing sight of others weeping.

X.

So, like a forest-tree, screened from the north,
And, by the Planter's goodness, free from blight ;
Some shady branches would I fain put forth,
Where sun and wind the backward leaves invite.

XI.

Thus, to be wetted by the showery breeze,
Or shined on by the setting sun at even,
My boughs might then, piercing through other trees,
O'ertop the wood, and so be free of Heaven.

XII.

But, while these fountains of late boyhood run,
Wasting cool earth and sheltering moss away,
My boughs, drawn upward by the gracious sun,
Droop o'er the bole to hear those fountains play.

CXI.

UP A STREAM OR DOWN.

TELL me, young Poet, is it sweeter
 Up to the heads of streams to travel:
 Or do you minstrels deem it meet
 Their downward flowing to unravel?

POET.—From moorland well and heathy hollow
 The seaward river thou must follow,
 And trace it slowly till it bend
 To lowlands round a mountain end;
 Then through tame dell and cultured plain
 Past tidewashed cities to the main.
 There is a moral in its course,
 Its tranquil depth and rocky force,
 Its shining shallows, widening lakes,
 And woody circuits that it takes.
 Yet down the bank must thou descend,
 The moral waits thee at the end:
 For they, who downward rivers trace,
 Look ocean ever in the face;
 And man, as youth and age run o'er him,
 Hath life behind and death before him.
 The mountain-height where sunset's finger
 Rejoiceth o'er dull glens to linger;
 The winds that on the moorlands cross,
 Sobbing above the barren moss;
 The clouds that touch on rainy days,
 Drooping to where the well-spring plays:—
 All these are types of things that reach
 The lonely mind that knows not speech,

Things that in vision hover by
The dreary soul of infancy,
When it lays out, unmarred and even,
Its little being bare to Heaven.

Then, nurtured in the misty homes
Of mighty clouds, the current comes,
Stretching with many a rushy arm
By copsewood and infrequent farm;
And every furlong o'er some steep
The rainbow-belted waters leap,
The time ere tumbling rivers pass
To wind about in corn and grass,
A time of waste, as cold men deem,
When by its banks romancers dream.
And this is like the fair beginning
Of boyhood, troublesome and winning,
Where sunny tempers shine away
Converse ill-timed and weary play,—
A forward age of noisy beauty
Before the cloudy dawn of duty !

Mark when the water comes to hallow
Rich meadow-flat and barley fallow,
And chooses vales with poplar-trees,
And visits straggling villages,
Clips the broad green where children play,
And eats the churchyard earth away.
Yet, often leaving fruitful plain,
It seeks lone woody spots again,
Where every leaf in shadow sleeps
Unwaked upon the fishy deeps.
And so, when manhood doth begin
And toil breeds wealth, and wealth breeds sin,

How often is the full-grown being
 'To childish-looking places fleeing,
 Sweet shelters, where from noontide beams,
 Wise boyhood hides some dewy dreams ;
 For who can see rain-scented wood's
 Drying their branches in the sun,
 But straightway to the heart whole floods
 Of aimless, rhymeless lyrics run ?
 And fairy fish in silver mails,
 Or girt with moonlight-coloured scales,
 Where under-water beds are bright,
 Will glance and gleam and scatter light ;—
 Just like the thoughts that leap to life
 In spirits parched with trade and strife,
 When on the surface from below
 Old childish wells break up and flow,
 And cowslips mixed with may-flowers grow.

Then, where upon some inland bower,
 Salt tides encroach with brackish power,
 'Tis like the taste that ill-health brings
 From the broad grave's close-lying springs,
 When age in times of failing breath
 Doth freight itself with thoughts of death.
 And river mouths have shapes so many,
 Narrow and deep, or broad and fenny,
 With rocky bar or easy gate
 Or currents clashing in a strait,
 That thou mayest well in these descry
 The rude or gentle deaths men die.

Tell me, young Priest ! will it be sweeter
 The downward flowing to unravel,
 Or must we Christians deem it meeter
 Up to the heads of streams to travel ?

PRIEST.—The poet hath blithe answer made ;

My words must travel more in shade.
Where less of earth's wild show is given
There may perchance be more of Heaven.
Yet priests, like poets, have an eye
For radiant earth and changeful sky,
And mightier signs mayhap can trace
In river-nook and green-wood place.
The seasons with four currents flowing
Are all but symbols coming, going,
Translucent shades for ever passing,
Disjointed parts of Eden glassing.
For it were strange absolving word
On sinning soul should so be heard,
Yet have no power to lift from earth
Green dazzle and bewildering mirth,
Till she gives up to flesh and spirit
The secret lore they both inherit,
When in the Font's rich-sparkling round
The Key with golden wards is found.

To moorland well and heathy hollow
The upward river thou must follow,
Nor stay one hour in tideways brown,
By granite quay and toiling town ;
But, mounting on to cultured plain,
Reached by faint murmurs from the main,
Urge on, star-guided still by duty,
Through lands of rough sequestered beauty,
And rest on eagle-haunted fell
Where rings of hollow mosses swell,
And the young streamlets as they rise
Catch their first tint from mountain skies.
For they, who streams to fountains trace,
Look uplands ever in the face,

Leaving Death's type, the ocean gray,
Inaudible, and leagues away :
And man, as youth and age run o'er him,
Hath death behind and life before him.
Thou cam'st from an eternal womb,
Timid and tongue-tied from the gloom ;
Thou walkedst an eternal shore,
And heard'st eternal waters roar,
And gather'dst shells which thou didst keep,
And bring with thee from yonder deep.
And thou thyself, like ocean shell,
Bearest within thee still a swell,
Which thy charmed hearing never may
In dryest inlands put away.

Ere from that ocean thou didst steer,
Where beauty walking leaned on fear,
Some branches of a mystic Tree
Were cast by prophets in the sea,
And Angels little cups did bring
Of cold sweet water from a spring,
And life went from the cups, and Breath
That breathed another face on death.
Then wert thou taught to hang and ride,
Like steadfast fish, against the tide,
Lifted by wind and lured by gleam
Upward to wrestle with the stream,
And with unearthly health to leap
Each cataract and frothy steep.
So mayst thou reach thy native fountains,
Withdrawn into the sleepless mountains,
Unstained in heats by lowing herd,
Unsipped by common hedgerow bird,
A well upon whose unmarred brink
Eagles alone are free to drink,

That they may thence their strength renew
For wheeling in the pathless blue,—
A font where thou canst wash away
The dusty stains of summer day,
Where health and life still hover by,
And where alone 'tis safe to die.

Fair are the plains where corn-fields bend,
And flowers and grass in meadows blend,
And calm the smell at eventide
When breezes o'er the bean-field glide,
And rich and lulling airs are blent
At noon from languid clover sent,—
Sweet pauses that at times may hallow
The dreary ridge and dusky fallow.
Yet from these scenes of harmless wealth
Good men rise upward still for health,
And slower, for the stream is quickest,
They mount where copse and heath are thickest,—
The boyish time of rivers, where,
By heavy dews and keen fresh air,
Old Heaven with infant splendour seems
To pass once more into their dreams,
Late years when out of ancient truth
The Christian wins a second youth.
And Christian age full fain will press
To world-neglected dreariness,
Where barren hills with naked line,
Like sabres' dented edges, shine,
And lucid shadows calmly brood
As spirits o'er the solitude ;
And sight and sound have freedom given
That hath a very taste of heaven.

So, gentle questioner ! mayst thou
Attain thy native mountain-brow,

And from its ether-cinctured height
 Look into lands of promised light.
 Then to the Font beneath descend,
 And o'er its tranquil pulses bend,
 Recovering from its dewy earth
 What life hath marred of childhood's mirth.
 When evening shadows round thee glide
 Death will come calmly to thy side,
 Sent, with light hand, low voice, to gather
 The children back unto their Father.
 With gentle sob drawn in once more
 That spring upon another shore
 Shall rise, as fresh as waters vernal,
 With spirit-pulses, and eternal.
 Come, upward walk to moorlands gray
 Where springs gush out from mountain root,
 There let thy being sink away
 Beneath the Font's stone-sculptured foot.
 And, like waste water from its round,
 Be poured on consecrated ground.

 CXII.

TO THE MEMORY OF A TOWN-PENT MAN.

FAREWELL, kind Spirit! Like a summer cloud
 With no ungentle gloom hath death come down
 All calmly on the sunshine of old age:
 And now thou sleepest. From the far-off land
 Of hills and rivers thou didst love in youth,
 Perchance upon thy dying ear there fell
 Voices and mystic sounds with cadence strange,
 That spoke in thrilling echoes of the time

Of youth's high breathings, manhood's energies.
 Or thoughts, long since forgotten, then came in,
 Came through the óbscure posterns of the soul,
 And thy strong frame was stirred; and in thine eyes
 There went and came a childlike simpleness;
 While ever and anon a heavenly light
 (Such would I deem the birthplace of those looks
 That pass upon the features of the sick)
 Flashed forth in broken gleams, chasing away
 The films of death; even like the voiceless breeze
 That comes with twilight shadows from the hills,
 Dimpling the lucid breast of some deep lake.

Thy lot was hard, benevolent Old Man!
 Most hard indeed! Thou wouldst have pitched thy
 tent,

(A simple tent as for an out-door man,
 A man of the fresh air and merry skies)
 Where some lone streamlet wells from out its urn
 Of moss-clad rock, there gladly listening
 The quiet music of the mountain winds;
 And tuning thy full soul to such high themes
 As most befit an ardent worshipper
 At nature's inmost shrine; and feeding thence
 Thy natural cheerfulness with those fair forms
 That move in peaceful gladness on the earth,
 Or float like golden vapors through the air,
 Mutely, yet not without significance.

Thy lot was hard, benevolent Old Man!
 Thou of the quiet eye and frolic tongue!
 Most hard indeed! Within the city pent,
 That huge and troublous city, thou didst walk
 A cheerless exile from thine own bright land.
 There thy soul sickened at man's selfishness:
 Thy heart recoiled upon itself; for men

Knew not the language that it spake: they spurned
 Those striving hopes and phantasies and loves,
 Which were thy real world; for thou hadst been
 A priest in nature's temple, while the crowd
 Were hurrying on to those dull clamorous halls,
 Where cold suspicion hath usurped the throne,
 The ancient throne of wisdom, and hath taught
 Her baneful lessons of distrust and pride,
 And severed all our old ancestral bonds,
 Whereby deep social love was symbolized,
 And in the bosom of our social state
 Somewhat of moral grandeur was detained.

All this was heavy on thee, mild Old Man!
 A mournful gloom was round thy spirit hung,
 Of which the dusky veil of that great town
 Were no inapt resemblance: yet not so
 Wert thou a man to shun the company
 Of thy less gifted brethren; though thy soul
 Yearned for the open fields and liberal air
 To wander, fancy's freeman. As the sun,
 That struggles all day long with autumn fogs,
 Shrouds in a misty mantle his bright form,
 Then darts his evening splendors far and wide
 O'er hill and dale; so from thy spirit's gloom
 A native gaiety of heart broke forth
 With a most happy lustre, which dispelled
 The clouds of sadness gathered on thy brow.

But no man hath a lot of unmixed ill;
 And thou hadst surely much of tranquil mirth,
 And many quaint enjoyments, shared by none,
 And instincts of a wisely wayward kind,
 And ill-assorted sympathies, from whose
 Strange medley thou couldst moral order bring.
 Thine was a quiet heart; clear thoughtfulness

Was visible upon that open brow.
For kindly nature never did forget
Her worshipper, but sent unto his soul,
Ay, even in the jostling of the streets,
Impulses, such as on the mountain tops
In early youth he had received, or felt
In wandering amid forest sanctities,
When not a leaf in the green depths was stirred.
Thus, as he walked along the crowded streets,
He was not of the crowd,—as many more
Perchance were not, by hopeless love assailed,
Or by fresh sorrow severed from the herd,
Or holy errand. For all-powerful love,
Grandeur, and her twin-sister beauty, there
Were with him. From her ancient classic haunts
Ideal grace was summoned to attend.
And, whereso'er he moved, voices and forms,
Voices most deeply musical, and forms
Of dazzling brightness, fell on his pleased ear,
And floated in calm pomp before his eyes.

And he was thankful too for many a gift
Which nature ministered in that dull town:
Green trees in nooks where green trees should not be,
The sun upon the high housetops, the vanes
Of the tall churches struck with merry rays,
Bright creatures in a region of their own—
The bubbling of cold water, and the gleam,
Half sad, half sunny, of the morning Thames.
Nay, we have that within ourselves, from which
We can create the world without,—wherewith
Sorrow doth make her hills and trees and streams,
And joy and hope their other hills and streams.

Oh happy, thus companioned as thou wert,
Thus visited, thus solaced, thus endowed!

How shall I liken thee, kind spirit! thou
 A separated being among men,
 A foreigner among wild squares and streets,
 And raised on high above the ebb and flow
 Of city life! Upon the crowded quays,
 Where hearts are turned to stones, still visited
 By feelings and by thoughts that come from far
 And are eternal, in the which a seed
 Of endless, immaterial life is laid,—
 Unrecognized thou still didst walk along.
 Once I remember when the breathing land
 Was ringing with the early voice of spring,
 The valleys still in night's most sable hues
 Were steeped; but one huge, awful peak, that stood
 A kingly eminence above the rest,
 I then beheld all diademed with light,
 Crowned with the sunrise, marvellously crowned;
 And clouds with yellow hems hung round its brow,
 Vestments of the unseen ambassadors
 From the great sun to earth: so too wert thou:
 Thou hadst mysterious messages and songs
 Come to thee from a distant realm of dreams;
 And delicate creations from thee sprang
 Graceful and radiant as the clouds at dawn.

Farewell, Old Man! For I may call thee old,
 Though time's soft, onward flight had not yet
 reached

The limit of our days. The seasons four,
 That on the shining pathway of the year
 Glide forward in their magical array,
 Had many moons to fill before the term
 Named for the life of man. Still thou wert old,
 Agèd before the time with such old age
 As the sick heart best knows, when chilling frosts

Have nipped the bud that promised once so much,
And struck the trustful blossom from the bough.
Years onward fly ; but what heart heeds the flight ?
It keeps its own sad calendar, and marks
Its powers grow dull, its feelings intermit.
May I not call *him* old, who called his life
A dream, and yet outlived that dream ? Who lived
In a fair land of visions, and whose eye
Saw that fair land no more ? Was *he* not old ?

I dare not to regret thee, mild Old Man !
For a cold void was in thy heart ; and thou
Didst vainly strive by means not sanctified
To win oblivion of thy lot. A cloud
Passed on thy gentle spirit ; thou didst yearn
To make thy blood run boundingly again,
And oft didst catch in weak-willed eagerness
At the receding, many-coloured veil,
That severed the hard-featured world and thee.
Surely upon thy spirit there had come,
As on a little child, fresh in the world,
Curious perplexity from sights and sounds,
A consciousness thou didst not see aright.
But now thou sleepest in the dewy earth,
And He, who suffered for thee, bids us hope
With a consoling faith that all is well.

Farewell, meek Heart ! Great Nature's voice is
heard,

And all the thousand strings of her deep lyre,
Sounding a dirge-like song : low-breathing winds
Are making plaintive music in the woods,
And the clouds cluster round the bleak hill-tops
In stately sorrow, bidding man lament
In cheerful awe, and put more trust in God !

CXIII.

IN THE SCHELDT.

I.

WE lay in the dreary Scheldt all night
With a bleak south-wester blowing,
And we talked of ghosts by the fitful light
Of the wood-fire redly glowing.

II.

I could not sleep, for very deep
The words sank in my spirit ;
And at that hour tales had power
Above their own true merit.

III.

The waves were high on the sandbanks nigh,
And the dismal river flowing,
And a muttering sound from the swampy ground,
Like the murmur of babes, was blowing ;
And the only mirth of the household earth
Were the cocks in Flushing crowing.

IV.

I cannot boast that a white wan ghost
To me seems an idle error ;
For deep in me, as the deep, deep sea
Are the fountains of holy terror.

V.

I knew when I heard the stormy bird
All round about us crying,
That spirits strong were riding along
To the beds of sinners dying.

VI.

O Angels bright! what an angry night
Is this for the powers of evil;
And thousands there, in the blustering air,
Are keeping unholy revel.

VII.

The good might cross themselves for fear,
As they heard the seabirds yelling,
And the chattering voicelike sounds that came
On the breath of the tempest swelling.

VIII.

Though well they know good Angels go
The Saints from harm to cover,
And by their beds around their heads
With wings of glory hover.

IX.

O may they keep us in our sleep
To-night on this savage river,
And, for their Master's sake; our souls
From the spirits of ill deliver!

CXIV.

TO MY INDIAN SISTER.

I.

A BLESSING on thee, Sister dear!
 A blessing! whether far or near,
 In city bright or desert drear
 Thy path may lie,
 Since we may not detain thee here
 Beneath our sky.

II.

Yet ah! that thou with us couldst be!
 For England's homes are fair to see,
 And most our northern homes to me
 All brightly shine—
 Still brighter when enjoyed with thee
 Sweet love! and thine.

III.

Each season has its tale to tell,
 Like pleasant chimes upon a bell;
 And memory feeds on what befell
 In days departed,
 When thou wert laughing, bright, and well,
 And careless-hearted.

IV.

The summer came with leafy May,
And sweetly sank the summer day
On ruined Finchale's abbey grey
And its tall woods,
And brightly did the sunbeams play
On Weare's wild floods.

V.

And holy Durham's minster fair
A crown of yellow rays did wear,
And we beheld with rapture there,
By sunset's powers
Transfigured in the radiant air,
The two west towers.

VI.

O seldom, seldom upon earth
Doth one short evening bring to birth
Such innocence and yet such mirth,
As then were mine:
I never knew a light heart's worth
Till I knew thine!

VII.

Oft on the mind a day like this
Rests with a moonlight thought of bliss,
Softly as lies a mother's kiss
On childhood's brow:
I little thought how I should miss
My sister now!

VIII.

God bless thy little ones and thee,
And blessèd may thy True Love be!
Far as thou art across the sea,
My prayers shall rise,—
Prayers that shall bring thee back to see
Our English skies!

CXV.

SUNLIGHT AND MOONLIGHT.

SUNLIGHT and Moonlight! these two glories reach
Into our souls from our first day and night;
And we live afterwards on what they teach,
Finding our way by their two kinds of light.
Our Sunlight is the steadfast radiance cast
Thro' true church-windows, lustrous and unfading,
Where Creed and Rite thro' life give light, and last.
But that sweet Moon, that perils oft our lading,
Lures the good ship astray, then sinks hard by,
Leaving gray water where its light was thrown;
Or hangs, midway between the sea and sky,
O'er some fair earthly haven of its own.
Love is the Moonlight of our lives, and takes
All hearts to the soft shadows that it makes.

CXVI.

THE ECHO ON OXENFELL.

A MORAL.

I.

My Sister ! do not deem me rude,
 If I have turned my head aside
 Nor to thy loving words replied
 In this hill solitude.

II.

Darkness all round us deeply presses ;
 No starlight wavers to the earth,
 No breeze is born of moonlight mirth
 To part night's cloudy tresses.

III.

No sound comes to us from the steep,
 No watercourse is speaking now ;
 The very nightbirds on the bough
 Forget themselves and sleep.

IV.

The sky above of gloomiest blue
 Doth seem to pause above the heath,
 And, lest it wake some grassy breath,
 Withholds her gift of dew.

V.

Silence herself sweet sound desires,
 And with her heavy hush is mingling
 Somewhat of an impatient tingling,
 Like chords of shaken lyres.

VI.

Poor echo round each hollow stone
In this dark desert space is feeling
For every noise that might come stealing
For her to feed upon.

VII.

Thou with thy words my name didst twine,
My Christian name, a sound the sweetest,
And of all names for echo meetest
When breathed by lips like thine.

VIII.

I heard the stir thy whispers made,
And paused to see if on the heath
Echo would find that wandering breath,—
Half glad and half afraid.

IX.

I thought perchance my name might wake
In airy places echo's soul,
The dull-eyed midnight to console
With sounds from bush and brake.

X.

And yet I had a fluttering fear,
Lest wicked echo on the air
To all the lakes my name should bear,
And tell that we were here.

XI.

First it would have a rocky sound,
And then a trembling leafy tone,
And harsh again by rugged stone,
And up from underground.

XII.

And so from wood and heath and hollow,
Striking in single notes and double,
With babbling speed the breezy trouble
Cliff-side and brook would follow.

XIII.

And ere the dawn could dapple heaven,
Old men and boys might catch the tale,
From Harter Fell to Ennerdale,
From Bassenthwaite to Leven.

XIV.

Yet what did peevish echo do?
She sate on every heap of stone,
And let those syllables alone,
As they went floating through.

XV.

And now a gleam came up the lea,
And as the tardy moon was rising,
I murmured silently, advising
Myself much more than thee,—

XVI.

What thing less heeded can we find
By all mankind than selfish Self?
Echo will teach us, wayward elf!—
That same Self by mankind!

CXVII.

CARL RITTER.

I.

O hadst thou seen Carl Ritter, wan and pale,
 Walking at eve with melancholy mien,
 Drinking the music of the nightingale
 With fierce delight, where on the current green
 Of Leipsic's moat the water-lilies sail
 In snowy fleets, thou wouldst have burned, I ween,
 To know somewhat of the sad history
 Of that wild foot-step and dejected eye.

II.

Love—who could doubt it?—in his being wrought
 Hotly and hopelessly ; and he had rued,
 But all too late, the passion's sultry drought,
 Which dried youth's wells that cannot be renewed.
 And there he walks, or rather runs, by thought,
 Like old Actæon by his dogs, pursued ;
 So is it ever : love-sick hearts confound
 The world within them with the world around.

III.

How bright is evening on the battle-plain
 Which spreads round Leipsic like a misty sea !
 A thousand larks drop down into the grain,
 Foregoing one by one their minstrelsy :
 Sickness and age returns of strength might gain
 From objects, all so tranquil and so free ;
 But for the ills of unrequited love
 There is no balm, but mercy from above.

IV.

See how the rose and eglantine are threading
 Through all the openings in the acacia leaves !
 The massive chestnuts their white flowers are
 shedding

On the still moat ; the red verbena weaves
 Mats for the lawn we are so rudely treading ;
 Nought in this garden, save Carl Ritter, grieves,
 And he is not from his unquiet wood
 By the sweet sights wherewith he is pursued.

V.

O evening ! softest power ! hast thou no wind—
 From violet bank or trellised rose no sigh,
 Which might this clasping load of thought unbind,
 Touching some other, brighter memory,
 Or lingering of pure childhood in his mind,
 To quell the wildfire of that gentle eye ?
 See how he flits, as though this garden glade
 Elysium were, and he a pensive shade.

VI.

The moon-beam sleeps upon the dusky grass,
 And with kind equity brings out to light
 Daisies, in constellations, which did pass
 Unnoticed when more showy things were bright,
 And each time that you look again, the mass
 Is clearer grown, more silvery and more white ;
 Still round and round, and by the slimy moat,
 Mid trees and flowers Carl Ritter seems to float.

VII.

Student! when wilt thou go unto thy books,—
Or dost thou peace in these calm shades discover?
See how with brushing 'gainst the lilac nooks,
Thy dress with blossoms is besprent all over!
How still! save now and then among the rooks
From bough to bough one, restless, seems to hover.
Yet, in and out, like some dusk-pinioned bird,
Carl sails with footsteps scarcely to be heard.

VIII.

There is a square in Leipsic, to the west,
A sunny place with soft acacias planted,
With one quaint gable taller than the rest,
Which Carl inhabited, or rather haunted;
With telescopes and some few volumes blest,
The love-sick man had all in life he wanted;
For where love rules, there is in heart and eye
A constant, if not true, simplicity.

IX.

Hither, when midnight three full hours was passed,
And starlight had grown weary and outworn,
And when the moat by blue mist could be traced
Among the lilac thickets,—Carl was borne,
By impulse, rather than by will at last,
Cold and fatigued, and therefore less forlorn.
The sharp sound of the key within the lock,
Shook the still square with momentary shock.

X.

The sun is up ; the larks are in full choir ;
 How perfectly they sing—how perfectly !
 And o'er the champaign many a hazy spire
 Shoots up from out the undulating sea
 Of the green corn ; and wavering, like a fire,
 Far off there is a single chestnut tree ;
 There will I tell what I of Carl have heard
 In triple falls of rhyme, and simple word.

XI.

And in the pauses of the song we may
 Be soothed to meditation by the bees,
 While the blue sky between the leaves doth play,
 Parted and closed at will by this soft breeze :
 And Leipsic, with red roofs and turrets gay,
 Blended with churches, ramparted with trees,
 May seem a show more touching and more fair,
 Because that stricken heart is drooping there.

XII.

There, mid his books, Carl withers like a flower,
 Alternately by love consumed, and ruth
 That he should so have wasted hour by hour
 The fresh and genial faculties of youth,
 Which ever draw their beauty and all power
 From cheerfulness, the foster-child of truth.
 They who, when young, are spendthrifts of sweet
 sadness,
 Lose unawares the spring of later gladness.

XIII.

Yet Carl, as they who knew him best could say,
In middle life was not an idle man ;
Philology half filled his studious day,
And eastern grammars would he fondly scan ;
While with the suffering poor his heart found play
In many a kind device and secret plan.
Thus did he light's best hours for duty keep,
And gave to love but what he stole from sleep.

XIV.

At Magdeburg, within the Minster-yard,
From the great tawny Elbe not far remote,
There stands a house detached ; the eye is barred
All access to that jealous shaded spot,
Whose habitants are kept in pleasant ward
In the small ring of their close garden-plot ;
And there the murmur of the neighbouring quay
Dwells, like the humming of a drowsy bee.

XV.

If privileged to enter, you might see
How the laburnum its gilt pendants swung
All inwards to a sweet-breathed walnut tree,
To which a trumpet honeysuckle clung,
And up whose stem the turf crept amorously,
Framing a mossy slope, on which was flung
A drooping shade, with leafy curtains drawn
All round, a natural tent upon the lawn.

XVI.

It was a lowly place, a sylvan home
 Within the city ; and there Blanca dwelt,
Carl's widowed mother, and to her had come
 A friend of early years, one who had felt
The same bereavement ; and they two would roam
 Through the cool minster's aisles, and often knelt,
The only week-day worshippers, alone,
Screened from chance eyes by some sepulchral stone.

XVII.

And in the morning, punctual to the hour
 When o'er the lawn the minster's shade was cast,
The two meek dames, like seamen with no power
 To leave the deck, their narrow garden paced.
At sunset Blanca watered every flower,
 Always the trumpet honeysuckle last,
While with keen search Antonia nipped away
The blooms that were unsightly through decay.

XVIII.

And round them neatness reigned to an excess
 At which a busy man might smile, well-pleased,
And not in shallow scorn ; for mournfulness
 Must wreak itself on trifles, to be eased
By dissipating thought ; the laying stress
 On little things the heart hath often teased
From greater griefs, and hath deluded sorrow
By giving forward interests to the morrow.

XIX.

Habit was their absorbing virtue, test
 And measure of all goodness ; order grew
 A superstition, carefully confessed
 By services minute the whole day through.
 Yet scorn not thou the widows : greatly blest
 Are they who, by observance meek and true,
 Duty, albeit of least dimensions, fill
 With large affections and submissive will.

XX.

Within this narrow ring of joy and fear
 Antonia's daughter, like a radiant star,
 Wandered, or banished from her proper sphere,
 Did with the plants divide the matron's care ;
 For her plain virtues she to them was dear,
 And what of higher bent they could not share
 They took on faith, and loved her all the more
 Because to her lone height they could not soar.

XXI.

Her hair hung down in ringlets long and pale ;
 She was not lovely—so the world would say—
 But yet so delicate, a summer gale
 Might almost waft the sylph-like flower away :
 Her voice, for one of form so very frail,
 Was full of depth and richness ; and there lay
 Couched in its fervid tones, an evidence
 Of somewhat more than met the outward sense.

XXII.

And momentary feeling would excite
 Within her eyes a look of bold command,
A fire, from time to time revealed, which might
 By some quick deed, as by enchanter's wand,
Transform her being, to the withering light
 Of jealousy and vengeful passion fanned.
This smothered heat, in look and accent breathed,
Was from her sire's Calabrian blood bequeathed.

XXIII.

Else never was there on the earth a maid,
 More gentle than the orphan Helena,
Nor one with mien more gracefully arrayed
 In lovely self-distrust, that could give way
With sweet facility ; a pensive shade,
 Almost a trick of melancholy, lay
Deep in her, blending lowly thoughts with high,
As though it were her being's harmony.

XXIV.

Maids are there whom with wonder we behold,
 Frail, bending creatures, drooping evermore
Beneath the pressure of soft thoughts ; yet bold,
 And ready on undaunted wing to soar
Into life's highest regions, and unfold
 Strength and resistance, and a hidden core
Of hardy virtues, which, like spirits, start
From some unknown abyss within the heart.

XXV.

Hearts are they which an unkind word may break,
 Yet with an inward faculty of pride,
 Or power which might a chaster title take,
 When to nobility of thought allied ;—
 Hearts whose sublime endurance nought can shake,
 By womanly devotion sanctified,—
 Women who have men's burden strangely borne
 Without one feminine gentleness forsworn.

XXVI.

And such was Helena. But in our youth
 Ofttimes a circumstance or accident
 Lurks, overlaid, as though it were in sooth
 A thing for no great end or purpose meant ;
 To which belongs a destiny and truth
 Hereafter verified, whereby the bent
 Of our first years is strained, their promise lost,
 The under-current mounting uppermost.

XXVII.

And fearful is the agency of love
 In these transfigurations of the heart :
 On it all passions are constrained to move,—
 The point from which a second life must start.
 And with fair Helena did it so prove ;
 It set her childish being far apart,
 And woke, as spring wakes flowers from out the
 earth,
 The slumbering fires of her Italian birth.

XXVIII.

But all unconscious then of that dread power,
 Tender, nay languid, from excessive shade,
 Yet the more lustrous, grew that lily-flower,
 No kindred nigh to whom it might unlade
 The dew within its cup, a fertile shower
 Of confidence and sweet repinings, made
 To flow upon the friendships of our youth,
 Lest feeling, overfed, become untruth.

XXIX.

Fair Helena ! she grew from day to day,
 As in a convent, all un murmuring ;
 And not an image to her heart found way
 Which did not from that narrow household spring.
 The turf which 'neath the drooping walnut lay
 Was not a softer, more alluring thing,
 Than, in her bower disclosed, this pensive maiden,
 Her spirit with unconscious beauty laden.

XXX.

Ah me ! it was a most endearing sight
 To see how self-suspicion ever strove,
 Yet vainly, in her thoughts ; she felt delight,
 But whence she knew not, somewhat too of love
 More than was asked of her in filial right.
 She brooded o'er herself like some lone dove,
 Or eastern shepherdess her fountain keeping,
 Beneath a palm-tree's cloud-like shadow sleeping.

XXXI.

Thus life stood still with her ; 'twas scarce forlorn,
 For there was no abiding sense of want,
 Save that a trouble or a joy half-born,
 And a blind hope, so oft love's pursuivant,
 Rose in her dreams and woke with her at morn,
 And somehow more and more her heart did
 haunt,—
 A presage, to our youthful spirit dear,
 Of some new world of change and fortune near.

XXXII.

Thus Carl and Helena grew side by side
 Through childhood's long and uneventful years,
 Playmates, in all endearing tasks allied :
 Joys were not joys, and hopes were almost fears,
 To one, unless received and magnified
 Within the other's heart ; from smiles and tears,
 The income of our youth, the pair laid by
 Hoards of sweet thought and fragrant memory.

XXXIII.

One difference there was ; young Helena
 Called Carl her brother, while the tender boy
 Gave her the name of sister ; and there lay
 In that distinction a deep-seated joy,
 Though why they knew not ; but their minds would
 play
 With this one separation, and would toy
 With the soft syllables, as though to strain
 Such sweetness from them as they might contain.

XXXIV.

Childhood to boyhood rose : Carl's studies now
Were in another and more manly vein :
And from the one distinction soon did flow
Surmises of great evils, to restrain
The too swift growths of joy ; yet even so,
It grew more dear when it brought more of pain :
And brother now to Helena became
A something fuller than a tender name.

XXXV.

So far they had been like a mated pair
Of childish hearts, betrothed in infancy ;
As in earth's simple days they ofttimes were,
Grafting the step of love upon a tie
Hallowed of God, that it might fasten there
As a true growth of natural piety,—
A wise deceit, which made a brother's name
For years a spell love's wild excess to tame.

XXXVI.

O rarest leaf in fortune's golden book !
O sweetest trap! to win a gentle maid,
On whom our earthly innocence did look
As on a sister, with whom we have played,
Erred, wept, and striven, and have many a nook
Of pensive recollections, in whose shade
A covert love may grow, a furtive plant,
Spreading like lilies in a woodland haunt !

XXXVII.

The self-paired flowers of wedded infancy,
 Which shape themselves unto each other's growth,
 By fate are often frustrated, and die
 O'ershadowed in ungenial ground, as loath
 With their pure native grace to feed the eye
 Which blights them with its love, as passion
 doth :—
 Ah ! cruel sires ! who thus transplant a flower
 Which throve so well beneath a humbler bower !

XXXVIII.

How lightly mounts the tyrant love his throne !
 No pomp of installation there doth move.
 And thus with Carl the gentle thrall had grown
 To a sweet bondage, while his passion wove
 Dreams which cold hope would scarcely dare to own ;
 'Twere long to tell how from a brother's love
 That passion shot, and grew in depth and length,
 Fed hourly with fresh increases of strength.

XXXIX.

When Carl to Leipsic went, how passing strange
 Was the new melancholy of farewell,
 Nor without sweetness in the interchange
 Of murmured words, which inwardly did swell
 Too large for utterance then, or of a range
 Too wide, too free, for bashful tongue to tell.
 Poor Helena ! no words which she could borrow
 Would half fulfil the measure of her sorrow.

XL.

And her love ripened fast in loneliness ;
Yet it appeared the same old love to her,
Run wild for want of speech, and through the stress
Of absence : she grew somewhat waywarder
Than heretofore ; and oft could not repress
The rising image and the sudden stir
Of tenderness which made the tears to flow ;
And still she deemed it right it should be so.

XLI.

Antonia saw it not ; she gathered still
The blooms the honeysuckle shed away.
Kind Blanca as devoutly did fulfil
Her round of modest duties every day.
Alas ! for age, if those hearts lose the skill
To know true love who once have been his prey !
Ah me ! it is a grief to mark how soon
Noon wipes the morning out, and evening noon.

XLII.

Poor Helena ! in her sweet sickness lone,
Her thoughts in some vague radiance ever whirled,
Now first and fully in her heart had grown
The barren knowledge that there was a world,
A misty Somewhere whither Carl had gone :
Then with the walnut boughs close round her furled,
The bees oft soothed her as she did recline,
Blowing the trumpets of the eglantine.

XLIII.

Carl, upon change and youthful perils cast,
 The stern ordeal bravely did endure ;
 And virtue, rooted in a simple past,
 Grew from each shock more lowly, yet more sure.
 That sister-love, that image bright and chaste,
 Enshrined within his fancy kept him pure :
 Yet much he learned, and much did now appear,
 Which made the future doubtful and unclear.

XLIV.

The more he thought the more he loved ; and yet
 The more he loved the more did Helena
 Seem at a boundless distance from him set ;
 And rocks and thorny brakes obscured the way
 Which love must tread : then he would vainly fret
 At his own scruples, and deplore the day
 When good and evil, now more clearly known,
 Burst through the fence of youth, and broke it down.

XLV.

E'en where there is no guilt the world is strong
 To uncrown our youth's simplicity, and make
 The right so near a neighbor to the wrong,
 That it will oft constrain us to forsake
 Our blameless ends, lest they perchance, through long
 Vicinity, of evil should partake :
 The good we once suspected to be ill
 Its holy mission doth but half fulfil.

XLVI.

Carl thought of Helena, o'er whom had passed
 Now barely sixteen summers; to her eye
 The world could but appear a sunny waste,
 Whose glistening sands did round their house-
 hold lie;
 And he beheld how oft love was abased
 Before the fresh-seen world, how it would die
 From a vexed mind, how ill with joys it fared
 Which had not been with other joys compared.

XLVII.

And was it right? thus in his solitude
 He daily reasoned—that so young a maid
 Should be by stealth and at advantage wooed,
 And her affections prematurely laid
 Beneath a weight of bonds, full oft bedewed
 By after tears, when from home's twilight shade
 On the bright world such hearts are captive thrown,
 Ere they have yet the effects of freedom known.

XLVIII.

And do not choice and will belong of right
 To all young hearts, though by self-love denied,
 Whose passion is not a most pure delight
 Fed from itself, but is a growth of pride,
 A base usurper in love's angry sight,
 By generous restraints unsanctified?
 Alas for youth! its love is oft a dream,
 Born of wild wish and hungry self-esteem.

XLIX.

Therefore shall Helena go forth still free ;
 (He little knew how she had all forsworn
 In his behalf her maiden liberty)
 Into the world she shall be gaily borne
 And its brave sights and goodly fortunes see ;
 Yes, she shall see, and for her brother scorn
 All the delights and lures that are therein ;
 And thus will I my bride, my sister, win !

L.

So reasoned Carl : and manfully he strove
 Passion and judgment on one line to train :
 Love mocked at him, and still the more it throve,
 As though such arts it might full well disdain :
 And strange to say he did more wildly love,
 As he of inward calmness more did gain.
 Ah ! piteous lot a tender heart to wither,
 When love can be both calm and wild together !

LI.

Deem not his reasonings cold, untrue to love :
 Not unimpassioned is the sober eye
 Of meek self-sacrifice, though it prove
 Fierce ardors. Ah ! life's plain reality
 Is stranger than romance, and far above
 The tame inventions of old chivalry.
 Woe worth the heart which cannot nobly win
 Love's knighthood by foregoing self therein !

LII.

Ere Carl once more to Magdeburg returned
 The meek Antonia died ; and though at first
 Poor Helena for her lost mother mourned
 With vehemence, as though her heart would burst,
 Yet, when her sorrow spent itself, she burned
 Still more with love, and in her bosom nursed
 A fire which now no sister-love could be,
 Though still the name beguiled her pleasingly.

LIII.

And Blanca bade the damsel call her mother ;
 'Twould soothe her grief the kindly matron
 thought :
 And she was soothed ; for by this she could smother
 The hints which lonely musing often brought :
 And Carl seemed now by double right her brother :
 Thus self-deceit most innocently wrought,
 Feeding on contraries, and with sweet skill
 Assimilating all things to its will.

LIV.

The minster clock tolled four ; “ He will come soon.
 Oh ! has it not been a most weary day ?
 And yet he said he should arrive at noon.”
 (And Blanca smiled to hear young Helena)
 “ How we will roam these evenings of dear June,
 And see the moonlight on the Elbe-stream play !
 And now our nightly meal once more must be,
 As in old times, beneath the walnut tree.”

LV.

Thus thought to thought the happy maiden strung
With a coherence of her own, and some
Sweet thoughts there were not trusted to her tongue,
Sweet thoughts which ever would unbidden come,
And yet when come were cherished. Blanca hung
Carl's bullfinch in the walnut's dusky dome :
Even she was won to quiet,—so the thought
Of Carl's return in her affections wrought.

LVI.

At length he came, the exile, the estranged,
Came to the cottage and the walnut tree.
The happy maid ! Oh how her fancy ranged
When words, entangled in wild thoughts, got
free :—
How he was changed, and yet he was not changed,
But only at first sight had seemed to be.
She said and then unsaid a hundred things,
Which were to Carl the fanning of love's wings.

LVII.

And he was changed, she saw that he was so ;
He bore himself to her with courtesy,
Which was like coldness after the warm glow
Of his old manner ; she could not descry
In his grave blandishments the genial flow
Of playful freedom : there was in his eye
A tenderness oh ! how unlike her own ;
Carl was too much, too much a brother grown !

LVIII.

Ah, Helena! the golden hour was come,
 The long-sought meeting; 'twas a mournful night,
 Vacant and chilling, like a sudden gloom
 Upon a radiant scene; all joy, all light
 Were gone, and love half-prophesied its doom:
 Still a blind feeling rose,—perchance 'twas right
 He should so act: and yet with weeping eyes,
 She was full fain to have it otherwise.

LIX.

O 'tis too sad a song to sing:—they both
 In wistful silence let the years go by:
 Carl might have spoken, but was bravely loth
 To make his gain of her lost liberty.
 Each deemed the other's love was but a growth
 Of childhood's old familiarity;
 And thus all life grew round them like a snare,
 And dark years rose from years that had been fair.

LX.

Then Blanca went to heaven; and Helena
 Nursed mid swift growths of loneliness her love,
 With other grief than filial pined away,
 Until she was a sight hard hearts to move.
 Then burst the light on Carl, like break of day,
 The minster's shadow frowning from above:
 But she thought pity, not true love, was meant,
 And so, poor soul! for his sake smiled dissent.

LXI.

Thus to two gentle souls all life was blurred
Into one indistinguishable blot ;
Two destinies had hung upon a word,
And out of love that word was spoken not ;
And when it came, time, life, and hearts had stirred
From the right place and the appointed spot.
To others the cross-purpose was as light,
To them the sun had sunk for life in night.

LXII.

They did not die of broken hearts, like some ;
But they were larger from being broken, drew
More hearts of others to them as a home,
And made their sympathy and work more true.
They are still young, although old age has come,
For sorrow spurs them still to efforts new :
And they are now, centres of placid power,
Doing the world's work bravely at this hour !

CXVIII.

TO A MARRIED FRIEND. 1.

FIRST love is self-love : a thin shade that starts
 From out ourselves, its dreamy joys the brood
 Of base will-worship, that in restless hearts
 Doth crave to have the loss of youth made good.
 First love too oft is love without esteem
 Or mutual honor, seeking in a wife
 No help, no shelter, but a soothing beam
 To minister a sunshine to our life :—
 The growth of one wild hour ! and thereof come
 Dull-hearted unions and a listless home.
 I have known men to whom it hath been given
 To make one shipwreck on love's rocky coast,
 And they have lived to teach, as though from heaven,
 That he is blest whose first-love hath been crossed.

 CXIX.

TO A MARRIED FRIEND. 2.

SOMEWHAT of wildness and of weak untruth,
 And fond abstraction, surely may be borne,
 Not without ready pardon, in a youth
 Who hath but for awhile his fetters worn.
 For the hot heart of youth hath laws : mayhap
 The seeds of married faith are often cast
 Upon this surge of hopes, and in the lap
 Of vernal love may take true root at last.
 Yet courtship is the unshapely element,
 Whence the deep power of chaste affection still
 Must calmly be evoked, till it fulfil
 The end and nature of a sacrament,
 And sanctify both spirits from above
 To be meet vessels of parental love.

CXX.

THE WINTER RIVER.

Low spirits are a rightful penance given
 To over-talking and unthoughtful mirth.
 There is nor high nor low in holiest heaven,
 Nor yet in hearts where heaven hath hallowed earth.
 Still there are some whose growth is won in strife,
 And who can bear hot suns through all their life:
 But rather for myself would I forego
 High tides of feeling and brief moods of power,
 Than share those languors with the showy flower,
 Which the shade-loving herb doth never know.
 O Brathay! wisely in thy winter grounds,
 Wisely and sweetly are thy currents chiming,
 Thus happily to every season timing
 The same low waters and the same low sounds.

CXXI.

 WRITTEN DURING ILLNESS AT
 CONSTANTINOPLE.

FAR o'er green barren Thrace the sun had set
 In stormy red:—upon a couch of pain,
 Listening the dripping of the dismal rain,—
 Over the mighty city, dark and wet,
 I heard the countless Turkish Ezans swell,
 Bidding the vespers of the infidel
 With long; harsh wail from viewless minaret.
 The Cross lies hard upon my fevered brow
 And aching frame; and slumber's pleasant spell
 Is backward o'er my restless limbs to creep.
 Yet from that Ezan have I learned but now
 That prayer is sevenfold welcomer than sleep.
 Then shall I count these little pains a loss
 Which thus can make the Crescent preach the
 Cross?

CXXII.

WHERE THE PINEWOODS WAVE.

I.

WHERE the pinewoods wave,
 And the white streams rave,
 I came in deepest gloom :
 I hated my youth
 For its sweet untruth,
 And laid it in a tomb.
 I pined for a poet's troubled morrow,
 And wept, ay, wept for the want of sorrow.

II.

Where the pinewoods wave,
 And the white streams rave,
 I came when I was old :
 For the jar of life
 Is a gladdening strife
 Which makes not a poet cold.
 I had buried my youth hasty and erring,—
 Oh! have buried days a disinterring?

III.

But the pinewoods waved,
 And the white streams raved,—
 They told me in my need,
 That softness and feeling
 Were not soul-healing,
 And so it was decreed,—
 That the marvellous flowers of Christian duty
 Should grow on the grave of buried beauty.

CXXIII.

A SPRING LESSON.

I.

THROUGH all the vale,
 The primrose pale
 Her yellow spots is showing ;
 And by the stream
 Green mosses gleam,
 Where Scandale Beck is flowing.

II.

Beneath the trees,
 In families,
 The snow-drops white are shining ;
 And through the wood
 Full many a bud
 Reveals the woodbine twining.

III.

The young fern looks
 Like shepherd's crooks,
 As though 'twas such a trouble
 To force its way
 Through stones and clay,
 That it had bent it double.

IV.

And though no screen
 Of leafy green
 Protects my happy dwelling,
 The naked bough
 Hath thickened now,
 And bud and branch are swelling :

V.

And it is meant
To weave a tent
Of summer twilight over,
With warp and woof,
And all sun-proof,
A cool and fragrant cover.

VI.

And from the earth
A stream of mirth
Into the spirit rises,
While sudden Spring
From off her wing
Is scattering sweet surprises.

VII.

And every hour
In vernal shower
The heart finds sweet ablution,
While it receives
Mid buds and leaves
A very absolution.

VIII.

Yet do I mourn
That spring's bright urn
Is no impartial laver,
But still that she
Most partially
Divides her wayward favor.

IX.

For here and there
The uncertain air
Woos blossoms from their sheathing,
Where'er the wind
May now unbind
The winter with his breathing.

X.

And chosen stems
With weight of gems
And forward blossoms labor,
While not a bud
Adorns the wood,
The dull wood of their neighbor.

XI.

We cannot ride
By yon way-side
Among the hawthorns early
But fancy grieves
O'er spots of leaves
Which spring hath wooed unfairly.

XII.

Yet if we scan
The world of man
In every nook and border,
Where'er we turn
We may discern
The self-same solemn order.

XIII.

Thus in her path
 Of love and wrath
 Dear Spring our thanks doth merit:
 By her meek sign
 We may divine
 The mystery of the Spirit.

CXXIV.

CHRIST THE WAY.

I.

To sin and earth and sorrow tributary,
 We lift our thoughts to thee, O blissful Mary !
 Oh ! stainless Maid and mightiest Mother ! thou
 Wert the mysterious gate where, stooping low,
 The King of glory entered, first and last
 And only One who by that portal passed.
 To thee our love we offer ; while we pray,
 Poor suitors, unto Him who in thee lay,
 That we may walk in His new living Way.

II.

Poor suitors are we to thy Son, O Mary !
 Like us to death and sorrow tributary,
 But not to sin ; and who did deign to call
 Substance from thee, a Body virginal,
 And with the Godhead set it side by side,
 For us vouchsafing to be sanctified :
 In Person one, of Natures twain : we pray,
 Poor suitors, unto Him who in thee lay,
 That we may walk in His new living Way.

III.

We are environed by the world, O Mary!
 Bondsmen, disconsolate, and tributary;
 Him, who did once environ thy blest womb,
 We seek, to cleave our way from out the gloom:—
 He the strayed soul to its Creator lifts,
 Replenishing our nature with the gifts
 Of His own near Divinity: we pray,
 Poor suitors, unto Him who in thee lay,
 That we may walk in His new living Way.

IV.

We cannot lift ourselves, O blissful Mary!
 We to low thoughts, base ends are tributary:
 We cannot lift ourselves unto the height
 Of such chaste marvel; for the abounding light,
 From that exalted Human Body given,
 Strikes blind the eye too much upraised to Heaven.
 Man's nature sits with God: to Him we pray,
 To Him who, God and Man, within thee lay,
 That we may walk in His new living Way.

V.

O Mother-Maid! O fellow-mortal Mary!
 Was not thy Son, like mortals, tributary
 To hunger and to thirst, to hopes and fears?
 Hath He not sanctified the power of tears,
 The beauty and the holiness of weeping?
 Hath He not given back into our keeping
 A nature newly consecrated? Say,
 Should we not kneel to Him who in thee lay,
 Thy womb His road, who is Himself our Way?

VI.

He who within thee lay, O blissful Mary !
 And to a creature's birth was tributary,
 Unto the Father yielding back His breath,
 Gave Himself up a vassal unto death,
 Death's serf, the three-days' bondsman, and the last,
 For He hath burst the prison as He passed.
 Death hath become transparent: let us pray
 To Him who rent the envious veil away,
 Breaking through that dread house a living Way.

VII.

And what high bliss hath not thy Son, O Mary !
 Made to Eve's fallen house hereditary ?
 Man saw Him rise aloft with lucid track,
 And by that road man still expects Him back.
 Clear across death and paradise are strown
 Footprints of light that end but on the Throne
 At God's Right Hand. Oh let us fall and pray
 With the great Seraphim that burn all day,
 Worshipping Man in God, man's living Way.

VIII.

And as He left thee to His Saint, O Mary,
 Pierced with a sword, woe's meekest tributary,
 So He bequeathed the Church unto the Spirit
 To teach her what great things she doth inherit ;
 In which sweet Spirit do we come and go,
 We risen with Christ, or He with us below,
 Man ever close to God: oh let us pray,
 Bending most reverent knees both night and day,
 To Him, in whom we stand, our present Way.

IX.

Is not His ancient priesthood, blissful Mary !
 A deep yet most untroubled commentary
 Upon men's cries and tears by day or night,
 Pleading all woes before His Father's sight ?
 And for the voiceful Church and poor mute world
 Doth He not keep His potent Cross unfurled,
 Lengthening its shadows upon sin ? O pray
 Unto the Priest who ministereth all day,
 Making His Flesh man's Shelter and his Way.

X.

He is the Priest of priests, O blissful Mary !
 Whose earthly types with right hereditary,
 As on the bosom of an unstained sea,
 Reflect His priesthood in the Mystery
 Of the dread Altar, giving Flesh for food,
 Pouring into the frame from urn of Blood
 The power of resurrection : let us pray
 To Him whose Five Benignant Wounds all day
 Stand open to the Church, an awful Way.

XI.

He is our Way, our dreadest Way, O Mary !
 (May He remember me His tributary !)
 Our dreadest Way ; for it is only given
 Through His great Judgment-Seat to enter Heaven—
 Judgment according to our works ! the creed
 Could not be borne were not the Judge indeed
 A Man of thy true substance : let us pray
 Unto the Virgin's Son, that in His Day
 We perish not by that most fiery Way.

XII.

O whitest Flower ! O ever-blessèd Mary !
 To what high purpose wert thou tributary !
 How wert thou chosen for the stainless Birth,
 Mother of God ! chaste Lily of the earth !
 Lead us to Jesus, Mother ! for us part
 The veils that hang before the Sacred Heart.
 All prayers are to thine honor, which we pray
 To Him who, God and Man, within thee lay,
 Thy womb His Road, who is Himself our Way !

CXXV.

THE EASTER GUEST.

I.

DEAR Mother ! from the sacred cell
 Where the departed spirits dwell,
 Mysteriously blest,
 A gentle shadow, by my side
 For one whole day at Easter-tide,
 Thou dost with thy poor orphan bide,
 A true though speechless Guest.

II.

Dear Shade ! at dawn thou dost not come,
 The hour when Jesus from the Tomb
 Went in the twilight gray :
 Thou comest not at sunrise fair,
 And, when to breathe bright Easter air
 I leave my bed, thou art not there,—
 Thou hast not found the way.

III.

Softly, sweet Presence! dost thou steal
 To me, when all the people kneel
 With trembling hearts prepared;
 When, on the Mysteries intent,
 We see the veil between us rent,
 Shewing the way that Jesus went,—
 Then is thy house unbarred.

IV.

And straightway thou art at my side,
 As when, one long past Easter-tide
 I knelt, a cowering boy,
 And thou my little hands didst bare,
 Taking the gloves which I did wear,
 Trembling, entranced, oblivious there
 With awe, deep awe and joy.

V.

Dear Mother! through the long, long year
 I never think without a tear
 Of thee so soon departed;
 And, weariest penance! all the things
 Which memory from her storehouse brings
 Are seeds of bitter thought, and stings
 Which keep me broken-hearted.

VI.

I mark thy sadly wondering look,
 When in a passion-fit I spoke
 Harsh words into thine ears;
 When thou, a sufferer on life's brink,
 Waitedst to weep, till thou didst think
 I should not see thy spirit drink
 Its greedy draught of tears.

VII.

O Mother ! Mother ! with what pain
I crave thy presence back again
Thy pardon so to get !
For mine is now a growing sorrow,
Which doth, alas ! for ever borrow
From every change and every morrow
New sources of regret.

VIII.

But this one day when thou hast come
From out thy spiritual home,
Thine Easter's endless feast,
What other feelings has thou brought !
With what a cheering softness fraught !
What store, good store, of filial thought
Hath come with thee, dear Guest !

IX.

From out thy presence thou dost pour
A healing quiet on my sore,
The calm of pardon won,
And a bright cloud of memories
Doth from the genial past arise,
Bringing sweet trouble in my eyes,
From thoughts of duty done.

X.

Mother ! the long, long year I mourn ;
But thy mute presence is an urn,
Replenished from above,
Whence yearly there distils a dower
Of deep absolving peace, a shower
Of benediction,—right and power
For penitential love.

CXXVI.

THE ONE WANT.

I.

ONE thing is wanting, one bright thing of earth,
 To fill the cup of life unto the brim,
 The measure and completion of my mirth,
 For lack of which days tarnish and grow dim.

II.

O earth! O world! O life! ye should have bred
 For one like me more sorrow, pain, and fears;
 Whereas from you, as from a flowery bed,
 Hath breath, like incense, breathed for all my years.

III.

Wherefore have ye forsworn your nature so?
 For brittle wills, like mine, have need of stern
 And hardy baptisms, which can only flow
 From where pale sorrow bends upon her urn.

IV.

Why should I blame? Ye do your best; ye give
 What ye can give; and still my heart goes free—
 Gay thing! it makes the world in which I live,
 And it is bright, too bright a world for me.

V.

One thing is wanting to me, one bright thing,
 The which being absent I am poor indeed;—
 It is my Mother's life, to be a spring
 Of a more virtuous gladness which I need.

VI.

One thing is wanting in the beamy cup
Of my glad life, one thing to be poured in:
Aye, and one thing is wanting to fill up
The measure of proud joy, and make it sin.

VII.

Through all my life have I been saved by this,
This one thing wanting; it hath been the thorn
Which kept me calm when I had plucked a bliss
From some sweet branch,—one leaf was ever torn.

VIII.

I have been happy, and am happy now,
Yet do I crave the most when happiest;
For the cold sense of my one want doth grow
In the proportion wherein I am blest.

IX.

At the dread Altar, when I might lose sight
Of my unworthiness amid the stir
Of high and swelling thoughts, it is a blight
To pride, that I can be no priest to her.

X.

In the rare moods when I have given birth
To songs *her* memory would have loved to treasure,
That she is absent mars the rising mirth,
Timing my heart to this life's sober measure.

XI.

When I have walked half giddy on the ledge
To which men's praise, like tempters, souls will bear,
The want, the single want, hath been the wedge,
Cleaving my soul for Heaven to enter there.

XII.

Thus in still nights, in every loneliest haunt
Thou, sainted Mother! thou hast rescued me:
Daily the Cross hath saved me by a want,
And that one want hath been the want of thee.

CXXVII.

RYDAL VALE. 1.

It was the earliest evening of the spring:
The hills with vernal green were gently flushed,
And every sound about the place was hushed,
Except the blue lake softly murmuring.
The glow of sunset came there, dusk and rosy;
I met a little child in Rydal vale,
With a huge bunch of daffodils, a posy
Large as the child herself, who was but frail,
And hot with climbing; and in all the rills,
With both hands clasped, she dipped her daffodils;
And ever as she walked she loved to wipe
Her face with those wet flowers, and it did please
Her simple heart to hear the thrushes pipe,
And she would look for them among the trees.

CXXVIII.

RYDAL VALE. 2.

THOU wilt be long in reaching home, my love !
 If thou dost tarry all the joys to take,
 Crowded this evening about Rydal lake,—
 The new-born lambs, the flowers, the cooing dove.
 Nay, wherefore grasp thy daffodils so fast ?
 I am not one to rob thee: thou hast wrought
 So deeply in my heart that thou hast brought
 Sweet gifts of tears unto me from the past.
 My sainted Mother ! was I once like this,
 A creature overflowed with simple bliss,
 One whom thou might'st have seen by these bright
 rills
 Long years ago when thou wert in this place,
 Stooping to cool his little health-flushed face,
 So wondrous happy with his daffodils ?

 CXXIX.

THE WOUNDED LAMB.

I SAW a shepherd with a wounded lamb,
 Which he had found in pain and almost dead
 Among the blue stones upon Rydal Head,
 Where, plaintive tenant of the moor, the dam
 With sorrow in her large round eyes was left,
 Of that white, gleaming creature now bereft.
 The village children gathered in a ring,
 Doubtful, as round some disenchanted spell :
 For three days they had seen it wandering
 A bodily sunbeam on the rocky fell.
 It puzzles them to think that on the morrow
 That patch of light will not be up on high ;
 Yet do they love it more, for common sorrow
 Begets in wonder's stead sweet sympathy.

CXXX.

A COTTAGER'S CHILD.

I MET a child, and kissed it: who shall say
 I stole a joy in which I had no part?
 The happy creature from that very day
 Hath felt the more his little human heart.
 Now when I pass he runs away and smiles,
 And tries to seem afraid with pretty wiles.
 I am a happier and a richer man,
 Since I have sown this new joy in the earth:
 'Tis no small thing for us to reap stray mirth
 In every sunny wayside where we can.
 It is a joy to me to be a joy,
 Which may in the most lowly heart take root;
 And it is gladness to that little boy
 To look out for me at the mountain foot.

 CXXXI.

SUNDAY.

I.

THERE is a Sabbath won for us,
 A Sabbath stored above,
 A service of eternal calm,
 An altar-rite of love.

II.

There is a Sabbath won for us,
Where we shall ever wait
In mute or voiceful ministries
Upon the Immaculate.

III.

There shall transfigured souls be filled
With Christ's Eternal Name,
Dipped, like bright censers, in the sea
Of molten glass and flame.*

IV.

Yet set not in thy thoughts too far
Our Heaven and Earth apart,
Lest thou shouldst wrong the Heaven begun
Already in thy heart.

V.

Though Heaven's above and Earth's below,
Yet are they but one state,
And each the other with sweet skill
Doth interpenetrate.

VI.

Yea, many a tie and office blest,
In earthly lots uneven,
Hath an immortal place to fill,
And is a root of Heaven.

VII.

And surely Sundays bright and calm,
So calm, so bright as this,
Are tastes imparted from above
Of higher sabbath bliss.

* Apoc. xv. 2.

VIII.

We own no gloomy ordinance,
 No weary Jewish day,
 But weekly Easters, ever bright
 With pure domestic ray ;

IX.

A feast of thought, a feast of sight,
 A feast of joyous sound,
 A feast of thankful hearts, at rest,
 From labor's wheel unbound ;

X.

A day of such homekeeping bliss
 As on the poor may wait,
 With all such lower joys as best
 Befit his human state.

XI.

He sees among the hornbeam boughs
 The little sparkling flood ;
 The mill-wheel rests, a quiet thing
 Of black and mossy wood.

XII.

He sees the fields lie in the sun,
 He hears the plovers crying ;
 The plough and harrow, both upturned,
 Are in the furrows lying.

XIII.

In simple faith he may believe
 That earth's diurnal way
 Doth, like its blessed Maker, pause
 Upon this hallowed day.

XIV.

And should he ask, the happy man !
If Heaven be aught like this :—
'Tis Heaven within him, breeding there
The love of quiet bliss.

XV.

Oh leave the man, my fretful friend !
To follow nature's ways,
Nor breathe to him that Christian feasts
Are no true holydays.

XVI.

Is Earth to be as nothing here,
When we are sons of Earth ?
May not the body and the heart
Share in the spirit's mirth ?

XVII.

When thou hast cut each earthly hold
Whereto his soul may cling,
Will the poor creature left behind
Be more a heavenly thing ?

XVIII.

Heaven fades away before our eyes,
Heaven fades within our heart,
Because in thought our Heaven and Earth
Are cast too far apart.

CXXXII.

THE EARTH'S HEART.

TO MY NIECE.

I.

THERE is a pulse in flowing streams,
 A calmly throbbing motion,
 A heart in the cold mountain springs
 As true as that of ocean.

II.

Sit by yon bay where Rothay comes
 With merry sparkling fall
 To rest within the glossy pool
 Beneath the fern-fringed wall ;

III.

And see how like a real tide,
 Encroaching and retreating,
 Upon the polished gravel bed
 The uneven stream is beating.

IV.

As if, although 'twas flowing down,
 Straight on it could not flow,
 But it must stay to breathe in pools,
 Like some poor hunted roe.

V.

And at the river-head the lake
 From its blue hollows ever,
 A weary, tremulous, panting thing,
 Is sighing forth the river.

VI.

And thus the breath of the huge hills,
Among wet mosses sobbing,
Works away through the upland springs
With momentary throbbing.

VII.

And on the drear autumnal days,
When o'er the naked heath
The wind is riding, still it hath
A palpitating breath.

VIII.

And in the woods the evening air
A breathing spirit dwells,
Still cooing like a turtle dove,
A shy voice in the dells.

IX.

Those dazzling things, the waterfalls,
That leap with such a cry
In leafy clefts, sink down at times
Into a woodland sigh.

X.

Like one whose heart is in his mouth,
Swift echo on the heath
Speeds onward, shedding broken words,
A runner out of breath.

XI.

I speak not of the heaving sea,
But of the solemn earth ;
I would thou should'st believe there is
A heart in all her mirth.

XII.

The dashing rivers are her joy,
The pinewood plaint her sadness,
The clamorous tempest is her rage,
The earthquake is her madness.

XIII.

The past is in her,—the long past,
With all its light and gloom,
What wonder then there should be throes
In such a living tomb?

XIV.

Her heart grows larger, as each day
Sinks to it with a stir ;
It makes me grave to think of all
That hath gone into her :

XV.

Proud-minded kings and rebel mobs,
And, by the will of fate,
Enough to make another earth
Of love unfortunate.

XVI.

Then, when thou walkest on the hills,
Or in the woods apart,
Remember that the earth hath got
Almost a human heart.

XVII.

The joy and grief of centuries
Have so much dark and bright,
That they constrain earth's pulse to beat
Alternate day and night.

XVIII.

Sweet Alice! when thy blameless past
Shall enter this old earth,
The world will find, and know not why,
More calmness in her mirth.

CXXXIII.

MY WORLD.

I AM a chronicler of little things,—
Comings and goings, children's words and ways,
Chance guests, new hosts, and single happy days,
And household legends. These have been the springs
Of much of my best knowledge: I have striven
To make my narrow homely world a glass,
Where shapes and shadows, like a breath, might
pass,
Dimly reflecting motions out of Heaven.
And sometimes things have so encountered things
As to eclipse each other,—moving rings
Which meet and intersect, chilling all mirth
When they awhile the wondering household draw
Beneath the shadow of some mighty law,
In circle calm revolving round the earth.

CXXXIV.

ON A CHILD, WHO SUFFERED FROM FITS.

No sooner cast upon the sounding beach
 From the dim sea where unborn spirits are,
 But, with malignest influence touched, the fair
 And glorious soul was drawn beyond our reach.
 We search for thy great spirit, Brother, where
 In the dull distant caverns of thy being
 The stricken thing may haply now be fleeing
 Before some awful sights, or in some snare
 Caught trembling, all unconscious we are nigh.
 But sight and sound shall couch thy spirit's eye :
 In thy wild mirth and outbursts of rude glee
 We shall behold thee daily set aside
 The withs the Dark One hath around thee tied,
 Bidding some portion of thyself go free.

 CXXXV.

THE DOG.

GRIEF for her absent master in her wrought,
 So I in pity took her out with me,
 Though I would fain have walked alone, to be
 Less hindered in the current of my thought :
 And then I threw her sticks for which she ran ;—
 Who would not cheer a sorrow when he can ?
 After some miles we met at twilight pale
 A neighbor of her master's passing by,
 And, with blythe demonstration in her eye,
 She turned and followed him along the vale.
 So I walked on, companioned by the moon,
 Well pleased that even a casual form or feature
 Of the old times was dearer to the creature
 Than the new friend of one bright afternoon.

CXXXVI.

THE SNOWY MOUNTAIN.

A DOMESTIC POEM.

A STUDENT out of doors, where mountain winds,
 With voices deepened by the raving brooks,
 Inspire into the lassitude of thought
 Somewhat of vernal buoyancy, I went
 To a calm haunt, while overhead sweet spring
 An airy cloister diligently roofed.
 I was in my peculiar, sheltered walk
 Among the beeches and the laurels: there,
 In meditation utterly immured,
 Chewing the luscious prunings of sweet bay,
 I troubled my poor self with Charlemagne,
 Otho, Conrad the Salic, and the tribe
 Of great bad men, who made and shaped the earth
 We live upon to-day. Why should a heart,
 Begirt with trees and streams and cawing rooks,
 And with a tent of bluest sky above,
 Amid the jocund images that grow
 Of the blythe present, fret about the past,
 Stirring the silent bones of emperors,
 And dusty banners of old paladins?

Sometimes,—a brighter vision far, and yet
 A riddle still more difficult to read,
 Divine things always look so undivine,—
 I mused the fortunes of enchanted Rome,
 Where Christ, with a tiara on His brow,
 Sits, and delays the hour of Anti-Christ,—

City, whose supernatural ways ill mate
 The style of modern life, yet suit so well
 All change, all progress, all vicissitude,
 Too broad, too nearly infinite, to let
 The grandest present cover its extent,
 Or equal its intense vitality,—
 Unboastful city, not defending self,
 And answering questions only with a look,
 Healing the world of its successive ills,
 Queening it o'er the wildest times, with grace
 Which conquers those that conquer her, and who,
 While centuries are breaking at her feet
 Tame as tired waves that scarcely kiss the strand,
 Spite of her crumbling walls and pagan wrecks,
 Sits musing mid her tombs, and quietly,
 Scarce looking up when danger's hour comes near,
 Braves the world's fury, and with passive calm
 Disarms the ages by her right to live.

Bewildered more and more, I walked and walked,
 And still light would not rise, thought would not
 come,

Clear, steady thought ; the German Empire lay
 A nightmare on my mind ; when with rude shock
 From out a bush my little favourite boy
 By stealth leaped on me, clinging to my coat,
 And uttering a most victorious cry.
 His face was flushed, his bonnet laid aside,
 His long brown hair disordered by his play,
 And in his eyes there glimmered the sly light
 Of merriment, half weary of itself,
 Flagging and spent with an excess of joy.
 Mornings are long to children : he was tired
 With running, and as much with resting too,
 Among the daisies and the buttercups

That were enamelling the April field.
 These were the cares which fretted him, as great,
 I doubt not, and substantial as the wealth,
 The power, the fame, the barren scholarship,
 Wherein we grown-up children spend our strength.
 It may be that in nature's honest eye
 A knot of wild-flowers are of truer worth
 Than the old German State, or any dream
 From which the world has wakened : for the flower
 Is a pure growth of heavenly love, a thing
 Unblamed by Him who made it.

He was tired,
 And bitterly complained of the strange heat
 So early in the year : the April sun
 Among our lofty hills is all unused
 To such reproach ; he should have rather blamed
 The heat of his own restless happiness.
 Yet wherefore were the things without us made,
 (So reason childish hearts, or rather act
 As if they reasoned so) except to bear
 The blame most due to that which is within ?
 " There is no heat, my little boy," said I ;
 " Thy head is reeling with the open air,
 " And breathing grass, and the new glossy leaves,
 " And all the sunny aspect of the hills :
 " The power of spring hath made thee drunk, my
 child,
 " With its brisk spirit poured into thy veins,
 " After long months of cold within the house
 " Among thy playthings, wearisome through use :
 " But sunshine is an unabated joy
 " Which neither use nor frequency make dull."
 So spake I, rambling in a thoughtful strain
 Which the child understood not, but once more

Cried out against fair April for its heat.

“Come then with me,” said I, “I told thee once

“That there was nothing nature could not do,

“Ay, nothing nature would not do, for those

“Who love her as they ought,—that she would bring

“New playthings and old sunshine every day.

“Now let us speak to the maternal earth ;

“She ever answers *me* when I do speak.”

I took him by the hand, and he looked up

Most reverently into my face, as though

I were a man of marvels, such as he

Had seen last Michaelmas at our great fair.

A gentle juggler, I conveyed the child,

From the low sheltered walk wherein we were,

Unto a bare and lofty terrace, whence

We looked into the desolate recess

Of a huge mountain clothed in shining snow.

The air was warm and tranquil ; not a breath

Stirred in the seven tall larches, a sweet ring

Which visibly was making all the haste

It could, to robe itself in blythsome green.

The boughs were pendulous and still ; and there

I placed the boy in front of the vast cove

And giant ribs of snow, and bade him look

Boldly into the mountain's snowy face,

And ask it for a wind, a good cold wind

To blow into his eyes. With timid voice,—

As of a child, half pleased and half afraid,

Who yields himself upon a Christmas night

To some new trick, when all the rest stand back,—

He asked the snowy mountain for a wind.

Scarce had the words escaped his trembling lips,

When, with a motion on the distant woods,

A cold fresh breeze along the terrace swept,

And died away, a marvellous response
To his shy prayer. How quick his heart did beat,
While with surprise and awe he looked again
Less boldly in the mountain's snowy face !
This time he did not ask it for a wind.

'Twas a sweet sight to see the little boy
Stand there, and gaze into the mountain's face
And on the sheets of silent, sparkling snow,
With eyes brimful of wonder and delight,
And with bewildered meanings running over.

Now when his patience—'twas a scanty stock—
Had wellnigh failed, there came another breeze,
Colder and ruder than the first, at which
He laughed outright into the mountain's face
With pure delight, as though it sent the breeze
For his sole sport ; and I might safely say
The snowy mountain laughed at him again ;
For it sent out a mighty, boisterous wind
Which made the larch-trees loudly creak, and blew
Young Richard's tartan bonnet down the hill.
Away in mad pursuit, both man and boy
Followed the truant cap, which we reclaimed
With laughter ere it reached the dangerous stream.

“Thou wilt remember now,” said I, “the power
“Of the old earth, and that she hath a heart,
“A mother's heart, among her lonely hills.
“Thou wilt remember too and love this snow,
“Whose beautiful white fields are melting fast ;
“And this kind-hearted mountain thou wilt love.
“Be kind to it thyself in all thy thoughts ;
“And when the evil summer of these vales
“Arrives, and that high summit brings the clouds
“To weep a very plague of drizzling rain
“All through the holydays, remember still

"This mountain is the mother of cold winds;
 "And be not petulant, but love it well
 "For this day's boon:" then with a mimic sign
 Of wrath, I added, "and forget not too
 "That poets are lone walkers and strange men,
 "Not to be leaped on in their chosen paths,
 "Or scared by shouts from groves of arbutus."

Once more in my peculiar, sheltered walk,
 My thoughts imbrued in blood and battlefields,
 And with my fancy chastened and kept down
 By the great shade of royal Charlemagne,
 I see the boy at play upon the lawn,
 But with the great, white mountain in his heart,
 Which loads him with a new solemnity,—
 An altered being, even in his play,
 More happy, yet less vocal in his mirth.
 From this day forth the mountain and the snow
 From common sights are lifted in his mind
 Unto the rank of causes, solemn things
 To be by him more honored than before.

It is a just beginning: all our lives
 This is the wisdom which we have to learn—
 To see our earthly shadows taken up
 And by the Cross commuted into signs
 Or substances,—and with strong faith to feel
 Our own immortal being so transfused
 Into the out-lying world, that common forms
 Are canonized, and circled with a light,
 Like the pale rings around the autumnal moon.
 The man to whom our common daily things
 By meek devotion and a simple eye
 Have grown to reverend solemnities,—
 What lacketh he of his full growth in Christ?

CXXXVII.

TO LITTLE ALICE.

I.

IF thou couldst be a bird, what bird wouldst thou be?
 A frolicsome gull on the billowy sea,
 Screaming and wailing when stormy winds rave,
 Or anchored, white thing! on the merry green
 wave?

II.

Or an eagle aloft in the blue ether dwelling,
 Free of the coves of the hoary Helvellyn,
 Who is up in the sunshine when we are in shower,
 And could reach our loved ocean in less than an
 hour?

III.

Or a heron that haunts the Wallachian edge
 Of the barbarous Danube mid forests of sedge,
 And hears the rude waters through dreary swamps
 flowing,
 And the cry of the wild swans, and buffalos lowing?

IV.

Or a stork on a mosque's broken pillar in peace
 By some famous old stream in the bright land of
 Greece,
 A sweet-mannered householder! waiving his state
 Now and then in some kind little toil for his mate?

V.

Or a murmuring dove at Stamboul, buried deep
 In the long cypress woods where the infidels sleep,
 Whose leaf-muffled voice is the soul of the seas,
 That hath passed from the Bosphorus into the trees?

VI.

Or a heath-bird that lies on the Cheviot moor,
 Where the wet shining earth is as bare as a floor,
 Who mutters glad sounds though his joys are but
 few,—
 Yellow moon, windy sunshine, and skies of cold blue?

VII.

Or if thy man's heart worketh in thee at all,
 Perchance thou would'st dwell by some bold baron's
 hall,
 A black glossy rook working early and late,
 Like a labouring man on the baron's estate?

VIII.

Or a linnet who builds in the close hawthorn bough,
 Where her small frightened eyes may be seen look-
 ing through;
 Who heeds not, fond mother! the oxlips that shine
 On the hedge-bank beneath, or the glazed celandine.

IX.

Or a swallow that fieth the sunny world over
 The true home of spring and spring-flowers to
 discover;
 Who, go where he will, takes away on his wings
 Good words from mankind for the bright thoughts he
 brings?

X.

But what! can these pictures of strange wingèd mirth
 Make the child to forget that she walks on the earth?
 Dost thou feel at thy sides as though wings were to
 start
 From some place where they lie folded up in thy
 heart?

XI.

Then love the green things in thy first simple youth,
 And the beasts, birds, and fishes with heart and in
 truth,
 And fancy shall pay thee thy love back in skill;—
 Thou shalt be all the birds of the air at thy will!

 CXXXVIII.

THE ASCENT OF HELVELLYN.

APRIL 28, 1842. HAVING ASCENDED PARNASSUS THE SAME
 DAY IN THE PRECEDING YEAR.

I.

At morn we wended forth right merrily,
 With hearts as high as though we had been bent
 On great emprise and martial tournament:
 The wind blew softly through the azure sky,
 And in the dome the mountains stood upright,
 Vested from head to foot in softest light,
 Hung round them, a transparent drapery.

II.

The budding branches of the oakwood bowers
With honeysuckle in full leaf were tangled ;
The western slopes with primroses were spangled,
And cuckoo-plant and dusky violet-flowers ;
And here and there the fragrant woodland floor
With white anemones was powdered o'er,
Like the last melting fringes of snow-showers.

III.

How rich the carpet of yon fir-tree dome !
The moss just tinged afresh in juicy dyes,
The moneywort with countless golden eyes,
The dark green daffodil now shorn of bloom,
The woodroffe with its fragrant withered leaves,
While here and there an early orchis grieves
To flower and fade before its kinsfolk come.

IV.

And to the eye betrayed by his deep tongue,
Within his watch-tower of old fir there sate
The pensive heron in baronial state,
And thrushes from their holly coverts sung ;
All things were happy,—from the radiant skies
Down to the little breeze-fanned butterflies,
Which pendent from the rocking may-flowers swung.

V.

Along the moorland steps the heated air
To lines of silky softness did subdue
The harsh, rough walls, and bade the purple hue
Of the bright mere a crape of mist to wear.
The young lambs gleamed upon the island mead ;
And hyacinths had just begun to lead
Their blue processions o'er the coppice there.

VI.

Then past the lately-felled larch wood we rode,
 Not thankless for the odor which it gave ;
 We saw the newly plumed birch branches wave,
 Where Greenhead brook in its rough channel flowed ;
 Onward we mounted from the quiet vale,
 Till through its verdant gap the smooth Dunmail
 One distant head of father Skiddaw showed.

VII.

The mountain pass with streaks of herbage green
 And loose blue stones alternately was faced,
 Like amethyst with emerald interlaced
 On either side, and the blue sky between.
 The haze-fire played on Dunmail's shapeless tomb,
 As though 'twere breathed from out the uncouth
 gloom
 Where that old king nine hundred years hath been.

VIII.

O I am garrulous perforce to tell
 The birds, the wildflowers, and the pageantries
 Of light and shade, the foliage and the breeze,
 Which there upon that joyous day befell ;
 Lest aught omitting, I should haply miss
 Some cheerful adjunct to that mood of bliss
 Whereon hereafter we should love to dwell.

IX.

Then from the Raise we turned to look once more
 On Grasmere vale, so sweetly interspersed
 With fields and woodlands, and the blue lake nursed
 By its two streams, and fair hills bending o'er ;
 Ruling the vale, was heard the cuckoo's cry
 Ubiquitous, like law's dread majesty,
 Unseen, but audible from shore to shore.

X.

The poets vaunt autumnal hues too much ;
 There is a season, a brief twenty days,
 Intercalated between summer's rays
 And the green flush of spring, whose tints are such,
 As, for their depth and fair variety,
 Richest autumnal coloring all outvie
 In shading delicate and grace of touch.

XI.

The gilded oak, the willow's pale sea-green,
 The sable pine with brilliant larches blending,
 And the fair birch its glossy plumage lending
 To mediate the light and dark between,—
 The yellow beech, the manly sycamore,
 And clouds of cherry blossom floating o'er—
 May well outdo sad autumn's broidered scene.

XII.

And all is joy or hope in earth and sky ;
 'Tis not like autumn's pensive power that lies
 In beautiful decay, which we so prize
 Because it is a glory passing by ;—
 But a sweet sense that flowers are underfoot,
 And that long evenings now are taking root,
 And summer days foreshadowed pleasantly.

XIII.

But now, the Cumbrian border gained at last,
 At Wythburn's larch-girt Shrine and lonely dwelling
 We stood beneath the steeps of great Helvellyn.
 One year this very morning we had passed
 The defiles of Parnassus, and had seen
 The crags which over voiceless Delphi lean,
 And on rich Crissa's plain their shadow cast.

XIV.

And the same day had now been dignified,
In humorous caprice and pleasant mood,
To explore Helvellyn's pastoral solitude,
And the huge coves upon its eastern side :
And never day could dawn more graciously ;
There was no cloud in all the dappled sky,
Which did not clear of every summit ride.

XV.

Like virtue, old Helvellyn must be won
By the first hard ascent o'er moorland grass
Intolerably smooth, as polished glass,
Save the moss-swollen lines where streamlets run,
Tinkling like hidden bells ; and o'er the steep
The shrunken waterfalls in silence creep,
Braiding their crystal beadshowers in the sun.

XVI.

And, as we clung like goats to the steep grass,
How strangely sight and memory did strike
Against each other ! Oh how all unlike
To the Greek hill our own Helvellyn was !
And, ere we did the first green platform reach,
In broken words each had reminded each
Of noble features in the Phocian Pass.

XVII.

Oh I could weep for pity when I hear,
Soft as far-echoes, those old names of Greece,
Spots I have seen in utter joyless peace,
Like sanctuaries, beautiful but drear !
And who will blame though Delphi now supplants
With vivid presence these domestic haunts,
As though embayed in its rough ledges here ?

XVIII.

Full in the face of sunset Ktypa stood,
 When from the sheepflocks on the Theban plain
 I first beheld the great Parnassian chain,
 Nine layers of folded mountain crag, which glowed
 Distinctly pencilled out by purple mist,
 Till, by the shooting flames of sunset kissed,
 They melted off into the golden flood.

XIX.

Calm was the morning when our upward way
 From bowl to bowl of shrubby moorland rose,
 Where nothing but smooth-stemmed lentiscus grows ;
 The distances were soft and clear ; no ray
 Of garish sunbeam to those heights did come,
 Curtained within a pleasant, pensive gloom
 Of daylight, tinged, but not obscured, with gray.

XX.

Fearful, Parnassus ! are thy clefts, which lean
 With their deep yellow rocks across the dell,
 Terrace on terrace piled, and citadel
 With ever-tumbling towers, o'ertopped with green,
 With belts of jutting pine-wood* darkly seamed
 In airy, hanging slopes, as I have dreamed
 The Babylonian gardens to have been.

XXI.

There is Arracova with sounding shores,
 Perched mid the torrent-springs and eagles'-nests :
 There, on her steep recumbent, Delphi rests
 Her patient ear on old earth's steaming pores ;
 There in a cool rock-shaded trough hard by
 The silent tripod, gifted Castaly
 Her silver water frugally outpours.

* *Pinus maritima*.

XXII.

How beautiful the moon rose on the shore
And olive-tops of Salona ! The light
In trickling falls stole down from every height,
Until the pinewood belts were silvered o'er ;
And tremulous pulses of white splendor crept
To glens which still in purple darkness slept,
Teasing the eye their soft gloom to explore.

XXIII.

I rose and sunk upon the gentle sea,
And from Herodotus I strove to spell
By the clear moon some Delphic oracle
In quaint hexameters, while memory
Aided the dubious light : I was alone,
And all entranced ; for truth, which had outgrown
My dream, still more a dream appeared to be.

XXIV.

How glorious was the night, the twofold power
Of hills and starry sea, when I did float
At anchor there, while dark above my boat
In the bright air did true Parnassus tower !
And, as the curlew's solitary wail
Was faintly answered from some inland vale,
I could have wept for joy of that sweet hour.

XXV.

As in the night all outward noises creep
Into our dreams, so the sad curlew's cry
On the Greek bay Helvellyn did supply
Unto my wakeful trance ; a lonely sheep
Sent forth a mournful bleating to recall
Me from the dream which did in gentle thrall
The very outposts of my senses keep.

XXVI.

To hear high up it is a solemn sound,
And, rising from a sunken hollow nigh,
It seems far off, a voice in the blue sky
Or earthborn plaint breathed from the moorland
ground,
A woful elegy, which hourly fills
The pastoral waste with melancholy thrills,
And echoes by the lone tarn's desert bound.

XXVII.

The platform gained, we watched one fair cloud sail
For some Atlantic haven; the gay fir
Looked through the mist below like gossamer,
A thin green network stretched across the vale.
The wheat-ears ran or glided through the grass
And o'er the stones; they might for serpents pass,
Parting the crisp white stalks with rustling tail.

XXVIII.

One more ascent, and we had gained with slow
And weary step the mountain's eastern edge,
Where, hanging o'er the sheer and dizzy ledge,
There stood a sparkling parapet of snow,
Breeding a wild desire to lean thereon,
Although we shivered at the thought alone,
And turned from that abyss which yawned below.

XXIX.

Then in light mood the surface did we break,
The virgin surface of the giant drift,
And to our mouths the tempting crystals lift,
Yet dared we not our burning thirst to slake;
But, standing on the slope of greensward nigh
With the white battlement in front breast-high,
We delved our hands therein for coolness' sake.

XXX.

Then onward o'er a shingly, sea-like beach
Of dreary stones with scarce a lichen veined,
Or blotched with golden spots, or weather-stained,
Did we the high-crowned promontory reach,
And hoary pile and beacon-staff all rent
And peeled and white, which wintry storms have sent
Wild winds and eddies of strong rain to bleach.

XXXI.

There to the north the silver Solway shone,
And Criffel, by the hazy atmosphere
Lifted from off the earth, did then appear
A nodding island or a cloud-built throne.
And there, a spot half fancied and half seen,
Was sunny Carlisle ; and by hillside green
Lay Penrith with its beacon of red stone.

XXXII.

Southward through pale blue steam the eye might
glance
Along the Yorkshire fells, and o'er the rest,
My native hill, dear Ingleboro's crest,
Rose shapely, like a cap of maintenance.
The classic Duddon, Leven, and clear Kent
A trident of fair estuaries sent,
Which did among the mountain roots advance.

XXXIII.

Westward, a region of tumultuous hills,
With here and there a tongue of azure lake
And ridge of fir, upon the eye did break.
But chiefest wonder are the tarns and rills
And giant coves, where great Helvellyn broods
Upon his own majestic solitudes,
Which even now the sunlight barely fills.

XXXIV.

There Striding Edge with Swirrel meets to keep
The Red Tarn still when tempests rage above :
There Catsty-Cam doth watch o'er Keppel Cove
And the chill pool that lurks beneath the steep.
Far to the right St. Sunday's quiet shade
Stoops o'er the dell, where Grisedale Tarn is laid
Beneath that solemn crag in waveless sleep.

XXXV.

The golden cliffs which from Parnassus lean
With uncouth rivets of the roots of trees,
And silent-waving pinewood terraces,
And burnished zones of hanging evergreen,—
Haunts of the antique muses though they are,
May not for dread solemnity compare,
Or savage wonders, with this native scene.

XXXVI.

Awful in moonlight shades, more awful far
When the winds wake, are those majestic coves,
Or when the thunder feeds his muttering droves
Of swart clouds on the raven-haunted scar ;
And in the bright tranquillity of noon
Most awful ; lovely only in the boon
Of soft apparel wrought by twilight air.

XXXVII.

Shall Brownrigg Well be left without a song,
Which near the summit, mid the wintry snows
In a clear vein of liquid crystal flows,
And through the pastoral months in gushes strong
Gleams in the eye of sunset, and from far
Holds up a mirror to the evening star,
While round its mouth the thirsty sheepflocks
throng ?

XXXVIII.

And now, with loitering step and minds unbent
Through hope fulfilled, we reached the vale once
more ;

And, wending slowly along Rydal shore,
Watched the dusk splendor which from Langdale
went,

And on the hills dethroned the afternoon ;
And home was gained ere yet the yellow moon
From over Wansfell her first greeting sent.

XXXIX.

Thus flowed the day, a current o'er the mind ;
Yet happiness however plain or short,
Is alway meekly forward to consort
With virtuous mood and purpose, and unbind
Selfish desires, making the genial calms
Of pleasure not abused a liberal alms
Of loving thoughts unto all human-kind.

 CXXXIX.

THE POET'S WORKSHOP.

I.

THE litter of a student's room
Bewilders those who do not know it ;
But it is neatness when compared
With the dim workshop of a poet.

II.

O if you could but enter there,
Where foreign foot may not intrude,
Of puzzling sights and puzzling sounds
'Twould seem a clamorous solitude.

III.

The murmuring hum of line, half line,
 Choice turn of words and happy ending,
 As from a thousand spinning wheels
 Is there continually ascending.

IV.

There sight and sound fresh forms and tools
 At windows ever open fling,
 Which that strange Man, the Artisan,
 Receives with boorish welcoming.

V.

And heaps of words and heaps of thoughts,
 In rows or circles gathered, wait,
 And seem but sorry furniture
 Except to the initiate.

VI.

The words in little parcels are,
 By nature prone to nuptial ties,
 With some apart, like bachelors
 At hand to fill chance vacancies.

VII.

And here and there are idioms cast
 To which no filing polish gives,
 And chief in our hoarse tongue we note
 Battered and bruised infinitives.

VIII.

There are articulate-speaking thoughts,
 Gregarious things, in lowing herds,—
 Quick guesses that were never seen
 Without their flowing veil of words.

IX.

These are the things of longest life,
 Struck off in some high hour of mirth :
 We know not whether thoughts or words
 Came first and foremost to the birth.

X.

And feelings inarticulate
 Stir every heap of words asunder,
 Shifting and shaking all the tools,
 As though blind worms were crawling under.

XI.

Strange shop it is with littered floor !
 Rejected types are strewn all o'er it,
 Which one day tumble into rhyme,
 As though they had been destined for it.

XII.

And pliant supple shapes there are,
 Which neath the artist's pressure bend,
 Beginning as he wills they should,
 But coming to a different end.

XIII.

Look from the window ! Canst thou tell
 The land, the latitude, the weather,
 With sun and moon, and night and noon,
 So oddly kneaded all together ?

XIV.

And dost thou ask if habit holds
 This shop within her sphere and order ?
 I say, 'tis built on her domains,
 But at the very outmost border.

XV.

From wild turmoil and caitiff toil
 Seek not, Philanthropist ! to win it ;
 For that strange Man, the Artisan,
 Is happy, oh how happy ! in it.

CXL.

I HAVE WILD MOODS.

I HAVE wild moods (who hath not ?) when I long
 For midnight tempests, and the boisterous song
 And jocund rudeness of the mighty wind ;
 And when I have a weight upon my mind
 To be dispersed by warring element,—
 A warp within my soul, to be unbent
 At once by the tremendous sympathy
 Of rocking woods, rent earth, and reeling sea,—
 Moods when the Whence and What and Whither
 flash

Like a bright arrow o'er my soul, and dash
 All meek, good things from their calm pedestals,
 Lighting within my spirits' ample halls
 A ruinous conflagration, which destroys
 In one dread hour the store of peaceful joys
 Won from religious ties or hallowed fears,
 Or fruit mayhap of consecrated tears,
 Tears shed o'er sin, or smiles by Angels brought
 In holy churches from a ritual caught.
 Moods are they when I bid my soul come bare
 From her dim place, that I may gaze at her,
 And praise or blame her make ; there is in me
 At times a hot and fierce desire to see
 And realize my immortality :—
 When it would be relief to me to heave
 A huge unnatural weight of rock, and leave

The mass on some hill-top, for aye to prove
 That there is nought man's spirit may not move:—
 When I should love to scatter a thick night
 Over all lands and oceans, so to blight
 The joys of earth, and see all men afraid,
 While my one gazing soul stood undismayed.

These are the spirit-wasting moods, yea, these
 The fever, restlessness, and weak disease
 Of one who prays too seldom: at dead night
 Doth the strange spirit come with unstayed might,
 Until our open souls grow large and swell
 With the influx of dark, invisible
 And dire possession, that doth quickly drench
 Our powers in sin, and fain our souls would wrench
 From the good Cross, which like a floating mast
 Unto the shipwrecked, is our first and last
 True hope:—and our hands bleed in holding fast.

 CXLI.

 AN EPISTLE TO A MEMBER OF
 PARLIAMENT.

“WHY anchorest thou in those blue lakes for ever,
 Dear Student of the moorland and the river?”—

My old Companion! we have been apart
 And have lost count of one another's heart.
 A various Past, an unknown region lies
 Between the sweet tract of our memories
 And the too-stirring Present. I have been
 A wanderer now through many a foreign scene,
 Not without inward change; and I have dwelt
 Much in my lonely spirit, till I felt

I was a person to myself unknown ;
And this hath been one fruit of being alone.
And I have changed each image of my life ;
And all the objects of my mortal strife
I have arrayed in other shapes and places,
Encompassing myself with different faces,
To see in what relationship I stood
To the new world around me : both my good
And ill have been most intricately shifted,
And my whole life insensibly uplifted
Unto a different end : my fear and hope
Have other holdfasts and another scope :
And love is unto me a different birth
From what it was in our old boyish mirth,
And hath a deeper root in this kind earth.
I have a more abounding joy, a will
Less mutable, and faculties more still.
There were green withs about my spirit bound,
But they are lying faded on the ground.
Now I can walk abroad in the sweet calm
Of resignation, breathing holy balm
Like evening air around me : I am haunted
By a new boldness, solemn and undaunted,
The very treasure I have always wanted ;
And, with whatever friends or strangers thrown,
The secret of that boldness is my own,
An underground delight, a murmuring
Among dry leaves and grass, as from a spring.
The thing for which I pined, the early lost,
The vainly sought on boyhood's sunny coast,
The thing that left me, like an uncaged dove,
I have laid hands on : and it is not love.

I mourn not, as thou mournest, o'er the fate
Of our own summer year of Thirty Eight.

It came and went within us, like a breeze,
Chiming among our thoughts as in the trees.
It stirred us, as a breeze may stir the lake,
And thou art gazing yet on its bright wake.
A glory is no glory, if it last ;
Thou art entranced, young dreamer ! in the past.
None dream so wildly or so much, as those
Whose early manhood rank or duty throws
Into the fret of action, action spoken,
Where energy is prematurely broken
Into such fragments and small sums of power
As may be drawn for by the present hour.
These are the dreamers, whom the little things
Of this life deafen with their murmurings,
Who are constrained to let the Present cast
A shadow o'er the Future and the Past,
Or let the Present's feverish pressure dry
Those two great fountains of nobility.

There is a time in life when it is well
That our true selves should be invisible,
When we should stand in patient calm apart,
And action should lie still within our heart,
Like unripe ore, collecting every hour
From self-restraint new increments of power.
There is a time in life when we should shroud
Our inner selves with somewhat of a cloud,
When to bystanders we should strive to seem
Less than we are, and to appear to dream
When we are toiling earnestly and much :
For so may we ward off all outward touch
And meddling hindrance, which might mar and spoil
The growing fabric of our hidden toil.
And therefore am I anchored in blue lakes,
And screened, like some shy bird, by copsewood
brakes,

Lest things drift uppermost and be revealed,
Which I would have in my dim self concealed.

For I have had, like many another man,
A life with two beginnings; and I ran
Unto an end in my first forward youth,
Which had the vesture and the face of truth;
But it was not the measure of my being,
And therefore am I with wise caution fleeing
To lurk awhile and tarry for more age
In an obscure and quiet anchorage.

In that old rambling year of Thirty Eight
Thou knewest me encircled with a state
And retinue of vision, feeling, thought,
Joy, fear, and hot conception, all inwrought.
That pageant is worn out: from that old ring
I have stepped forth, and am encompassing
Myself afresh, and with long-pondered moves
Am bringing up new joys, new fears, new loves.
Thou askest how and whence hath come the change?
In what new fields my thought and fancy range?
I can but tell thee of some outward shapes;
Thou canst but hear the murmur which escapes
Amid the silence: it will show where lies
The growing quarrel in our sympathies.

Ah for the faded year of Thirty Eight!
How little recked I then of this strange fate
Which lay in ambush at the very door
Of headlong youth, the spoiler of its store,
Like a new wisdom in a heart grown old,
A mountain stone amid the shy flock rolled.—
Enough; and dost thou ask where now I range,
Through what transfiguring of inward change?

To thee that Thirty Eight still sparkles near,
While to thy friend it is a faded year—

Faded in all save truest love for thee,
 And that high-souled young priest beyond the sea,
 And that dear bard, whose life is like a river,
 Singing and sighing on its road for ever.
 Time was when from within myself I drew
 My powers and thoughts and instincts: all I knew
 Was but the self-sprung harvest of my heart,
 And the whole outward world was cast apart.
 I was a worldless man, a thing detached,
 A wandering cloud, a being all unmatched
 With outward destiny; but now my power
 Is from the world imported every hour.
 The pains I suffer, and the tears I see,
 Men's passions chance-encountered, children's glee,
 And moral contradictions, and green leaves,
 And skies, and streams,—from these my spirit
 weaves

Her web, and every day that passes by
 Doth add some little to the tapestry:
 For moral wisdom is a growing thing,
 Whene'er it rises from an outward spring.

Time was when with a young man's pride I
 dreamed

Quaintness was power; and when to differ seemed
 Greater than to agree, and I esteemed
 All individual marks, which stand apart,
 Above the beatings of my common heart,
 The heart I share with others: now I cherish
 All commonplace designs as things which nourish
 A fellow-feeling with my kindred; now
 To rise and sink, to range from high to low,
 To think as all men think in woe or mirth,
 Seems unto me the greatest gift on earth.

Thus self hath daily less significance ;
And, like one waking from a pleasant trance,
I love the pensive glow of earth far more
Than the bright lights upon that dream-land shore.
Our boyhood was a noble savage state,
Whence we were not reclaimed in Thirty Eight.
But now the heart's meek household growths are
ours,

And we must shade ourselves in their green bowers,
With holiest care the shoots to prune or train,
With smiles for sunshine, blameless tears for rain.

I am not idle, though at anchor staying
To learn self-mastery, a wise delaying.
Had it been good, or had a heart of truth,
I would sue back to me my banished youth.
In calmly bending waters now I ride
With manhood flowing round me like a tide :
And, whether winds be foul or fair skies blue,
I shall heave anchor when the ship is due,
And come within thy sight to seek a part
In the world's fretful glory, where thou art—
A man in place with boyhood at thy heart.
To thee, still in the lap of our old dream,
This uncouth teaching for a while must seem
A cold philosophy, a barren song ;
But it will not seem so unto thee long.
Thou too wilt one day learn—it is not cold
To speak of boyhood as a thing grown old.

CXLII.

THE FUTURE.

TO MY BROTHER EDWARD.

I.

I HAVE wishes, I have dreams,
 And some vagrant hope which seems
 Like a most uncertain star,
 Still a joy, a joy from far :
 Yet the Future is to me
 Bright and barren as the sea,
 Bare of sorrow, bare of glee.
 When the present hour is weary
 Old times are my sanctuary.

II.

In my heart are many springs,
 All with cheerful murmurings ;
 But their sweetness lures my mind
 Oft its armor to unbind :
 Then the Past my succor is,
 A restraint on present bliss,
 And an impulse when remiss,
 A calm precinct, a grave rule,
 Where I am all day at school.

III.

I have such a power of love,
And such crowds of objects move
My affections every day,
That the present glides away:
And I have too quick an eye
Heavenly gestures to descry,
Till in mute repose they lie,
With time's shadow on them cast,
In the bosom of the Past.

IV.

There must surely be a cause
Why, reversing common laws,
Heaven by no foreboding sorrow
Drives my thoughts upon the morrow,
And that simple childish hours
Should be still the only bowers,
Where repentance gathers flowers,
Whose strong scent of purer years
Kindles awe and wakens tears.

V.

I have striven in restless hours
To invade the future's bowers,
And with fancy's help to riot
In the exquisite unquiet
Of a self-disturbance, where
All is shadowy as air;
But it left my spirit bare,
And some fault was sure to come
To my wild heart as a home.

VI.

Farewell, Future! thou must be
Still a pathless tract to me,
A bar which I may overleap
Only in the spells of sleep.
Heaven be praised! thou canst not tease
Me from my contented ease,
Nor taint me with the weak disease
Of neglecting in my youth
Simple thought and sober truth.

VII.

I shall reach thee at the last
When commuted to the Past,
And my pleasure will be double
For the self-restraint and trouble
Of averting thus my eyes
From thy pomps and mysteries,
While I watch the Present rise
From one conquest to another,
Virtue still being virtue's brother.

VIII.

Yet I doubt not thou art giving
Light in which I now am living,
As the moon, although unseen,
Somehow scatters stealthy sheen.
In the Past I often see
Things which cannot rightly be
The Past's, but must belong to thee,
Wandering Future! strangely cast
Deep into the prescient Past.

CXLIII.

TO A FRIEND IN PUBLIC LIFE.

I.

WHAT seest thou
 Of bush and bough,
 Green field or moorland border,
 Encompassed round,
 By sight and sound,
 The order of disorder?

II.

With what fit state
 Can poor Spring wait
 On thee in London living?
 What moral light
 Are mornings bright
 To thy tired conscience giving?

III.

What impulses
 Of skies and trees
 Can lonely fancy merit,
 Unless perchance
 Past springs may dance
 Along thy thrilling spirit?

IV.

May every hour
An April shower
Thy thirsty heart be haunting,
Thus filling up
From its cold cup
The joys which thou art wanting !

V.

I would not be
This day with thee,
For all I love thee dearly ;
I would not miss
This vernal bliss
Which hath begun so early.

VI.

Yet in my joy
Is this alloy,
It is almost a sorrow,
No budding brake
Thy soul can make
Impatient for the morrow.

VII.

Through good and ill
With earnest will
Thou toil'st for peer and peasant,
And yet I would
One little bud
Might wean thee from the present,—

VIII.

That thou couldst run
In morning sun
To see the rose-leaves peeping ;
For they would tell
How calm and well
Earth works while men are sleeping.

IX.

For busy walk
And toil and talk
Are not life's only measure ;
But man, like earth,
Hath quiet mirth,
Which is a better treasure.

X.

I am cast down
Lest that huge town,
Wild streets and wilder faces,
With clamorous state
Obliterate
The thought of vernal places.

XI.

For safety's sake
To keep awake
The spirit of the season,
Say once an hour—
' A lowly Flower
Is wiser than proud Reason.'

XII.

With all the stir,
 Dear Prisoner!
 Of wealth and rank about thee,
 'Twill make thee smile
 To think awhile
 Of the green world without thee.

CXLIV.

ENNERDALE.

I THOUGHT of Ennerdale as of a thing
 Upon the confines of my memory.
 There was a hazy gleam as o'er a sheet
 Of sunny water cast, and mountain side,
 And much ploughed land, and cleanly cottages,
 A bubbling brook, the emptying of the lake,
 An indistinct remembrance of being pleased
 That there were hedgerows there instead of walls,
 That it was noon, and that I swam for long
 In the warm lake, and dressed upon a rock:—
 And this is all of verdant Ennerdale
 Which I can now recover from my mind;
 The current of bright years hath washed it out.

Yet do I find the memory of it still
 A thing which I can lean upon, a spot
 Of greenness and fresh water in my soul.
 And I do feel the very knowledge good
 That there is such a place as Ennerdale,
 A valley and a lake of such a kind,
 As though I did possess it all myself
 With daily eye and ear, because I know
 It is possessed by simple dalesmen there.

And I have many Ennerdales, am rich

In woods and fields the owners think are theirs.
 I can dispark the trim enclosures first,
 And, in the very wantonness of power,
 Forthwith enclose the black, unfettered heath.
 I pass along the road, and set my seal
 On lawns, rough banks, wet coverts of wild flowers,
 And I can pick out trees from forest lands,
 For beauty or uncouthness singular,
 As heriots; nay, the very brooks salute
 Their master as they leap, tinkling to him,
 Shrewd vassals! as their truest feudal lord,
 With music such as they have never paid
 Unto the self-called owner: when I walk
 By night among the moistened woods they send
 From every glen their dues of mossy smells,
 And fragrance of the withered things which lie
 Upon the woodland floor.

I make a stir

Among the fields and flowery clods, as though
 I would have something changed; I fold my arms,
 And look around, and draw my breath; I gaze
 Upon the fair estates and think how I
 Shall will them to my children in sweet songs.
 Early and late I'm out upon my lands,
 And with pleased consequence survey the growth
 Of my young trees, acquiring fresh each day,
 Although the owners know not that they are
 But tenants at my will. I have, in store,
 The title-deeds of many a distant wood
 And foreign chase. With feeling eye and ear
 I have been gifted, and in right of them,
 Like a great lord, I walk about the land,
 Claiming and dispossessing at my will,—
 The belted Earl of many Ennerdales!

CXLV.

A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

THOU askest me, dear Friend ! for what old cause
 These men thus hate thee.—Hatred hath no laws,
 But is a weak-willed thing, which in young days
 A look, a word, a random doubt can raise.
 Account not of it ; it hath slender root ;
 For bitter speech doth mostly overshoot
 In our warm youth a passion's real length,
 And words are unfair measures of the strength
 Of youthful things : there is too great a want
 Of love and kindly thoughts, for hate to haunt
 A young heart long. Account not of it then,
 Nor harshly blame the speeches of those men.
 Ah ! never blame the hearts thou dost not know :
 Full are they doubtless of good thoughts, and flow
 O'er many round them with a power to bless,
 With sunny tempers, and meek gentleness,
 With quick forgiveness, and sweet conquests won
 O'er self and sin, and generous actions done.
 They have their ring of friends, and pensive ties,
 And put as much on welcomes and kind eyes
 As we can do. Why wilt thou treasure up
 Hard words like these, which do but taint the cup
 Of thine own happiness ? Thou canst not spare
 One shred of peaceful feeling ; life will mar
 That store too soon with its rude misery.
 I should have thought, dear Friend ! that I loved
 thee

But feebly and unwisely to suppose
 Thou shouldst permit thy spirit's deep repose
 To be thus jarred, because some men speak ill
 Of one with a proud heart and headstrong will,
 Most variable mien, and bitter tongue
 Which hath too often to like taunts been strung.

If I must blame, then will I censure thee ;
 For doubtless in the days when thou wert free
 From those restraints upon thy thought and speech,
 Which now, by prayer with prayer enchained, can
 reach

Barely across the day, thou mayst have wrought
 Some evil, vented some ill-natured thought,
 Been cold when kindly manners were required,
 Distracted in thyself, sullen, or tired,
 Imperious or capricious, at the hour
 When, which is Angels' lot, thou hadst the power
 To sow a gentle thought, or do a deed
 Which, like a prayer, in thy behalf might plead.

Some wrong hast thou done them or their near
 friends,
 Whose memory, like a teasing shade, attends
 The thought of thee within them. Ah ! be slow
 To blame these censors ! For how canst thou know
 True love is not the soil where this dislike,
 On jealous friendship grafted, now doth strike
 Quick root, I hope not lasting ? Sure I am
 It is more likely far that honest blame
 Should rest on thee, than that a groundless hate
 On any human heart on earth should wait.
 Oh ! surely there are none would rather slake
 Their thirsty souls at bitter wells, than take
 The sweet and ready waters of mild springs,
 Which lure us by their very murmurings.

I must believe—fond faith perchance—true hate
To be of young hearts excommunicate.

“But if the judgments are untrue?” What then?

They may not seem so unto other men
Who know thee better : and I never heard
Reported slander, but there was some word,
Some stray expression, like a well-aimed dart,
Which found a rightful home within my heart.
If I deserved it not from him who spoke,
I did from some one else ; and it awoke
Soft thoughts and kind regrets, such as belong
In compensation unto those we wrong.
If now unmerited, it was not so
In younger days, or some few years ago ;
And it is well to have our sinful past
Upon our notice somewhat roughly cast
In bitter admonitions : Providence
By these revenges would prolong the sense
Of self-abasement, and the cleansing grief
Which in young hearts is wont to be too brief.
It is true health which Christian spirits win
From out the abiding shade of early sin.
But let this pass : an honest casuist
His holy science must have sorely missed,
Who would not from such things by subtle law
Wise canons for ascetic living draw ;
And even to ourselves it is more fair
To think ourselves in fault than that our neighbors are.

Then be not thou afraid ; a few short years,
Deepening the shades of life with pensive fears,
Have holiest power to soften and subdue
The starting feature and the glaring hue,
Which in our youth will struggle into view.

Time, which can heal us and yet give no pain,
Will right the tremulous balance once again,
And rescue, overlaid by youth's excess
Of speech and feeling, childhood's gentleness,
Then mellowed by calm age. Oh! it is sweet,
As through the thick of life we turn our feet
To feel how harsh, unamiable ways
Wear out within us by the lapse of days,
Or drop like chains which have our spirits bound
Close prisoners from the hearts which lie around.
Then meek-eyed simpleness and common mirth
Start, like the flowers in spring, o'er all the earth,
And we confess the world is made so fair
That nought, but self, can be beneath us there,
That such good clings to all that round us move
We fain must pity where we cannot love;
There is no soil where scorn or cold dislike,
Except in self, abiding root can strike.

Then be not thou afraid: for I would see
In these dislikes a peaceful guarantee
Of gentleness hereafter, which may wait,
Kindly retributive, on this strange hate.
For, in the crossings of our various strife,
And oddly intersecting paths of life,
We may be brought in contact with a heart
Which dealt hard measure to us once, and part
Regretting that we should have been so much
Of our short lives beyond each other's touch,—
Winning kind thoughts which, whether told or not,
It is a solid blessing to have got.
And to the generous mind there is no love
Which doth more calm and ready service move

Than that, which through harsh judgments hath been
long

Withheld from those to whom we have done wrong.

Tonight in my lone ramble through the dell,
I saw the sun sink down behind the fell.
When twilight barred him out with crimson shrouds,
I saw a kneeling Angel in the clouds ;
It seemed the centre of the glory, whence,
A spot almost too bright for aching sense,
A deep effulgence travelled o'er the hills,
Lighting the woods, and finding out the rills
In their sequestered channels ; on the breast
Of one most rugged mountain did it rest.
Ah me ! dear Friend ! I wish thou couldst have seen
With what a light it flushed the vernal green,
And how the huge, unsightly stones it wrought
To forms of yielding softness, while it brought
A power of transmutation to the line
Which keen and jagged did but lately shine,
Yet now lay gloriously inflamed on high,
Like an aërial mist across the sky
Or wavering haze. Such is the softness cast
Upon the heart when youth's hot hour is past.
For some years now not one ungentle thought
Towards any of my kind hath in me wrought :
Yet once more do I pray kind Heaven to give
That in this beam I may for ever live,
That I may have a sunset in my spirit
To glorify and soften all things near it !

CXLVI.

THE EASTER VIOLETS.

I.

I SPOKE by chance of modest flowers,
 And how, in all the banks and bowers
 Of vernal Bagley's greenwood ways,
 They ever added to my store
 Of festal joys, a charm the more
 To Christian holidays.

II.

A kind heart, little known to me,
 Amid the various company
 That night this random mention heard.
 I spoke with truth, but never thought
 What welcome service would be wrought
 For me by that stray word.

III.

Yet when we utter what we feel,
 The homeliest, simplest things will steal
 To many an ear and heart unknown ;
 And most in song will quiet truth
 In right of its unfading youth
 Find out and win its own.

IV.

The sun shone fair on Easter Eve,
The day when festal fancies weave
Bright threads into the Lenten gloom,
When our free thoughts, Good Friday over,
Doubtful 'twixt joy and penance, hover
About the Garden Tomb.

V.

My new-made friend that very day,
His face with radiant humor gay
A little sheaf of violets brought,
Large blossoms singled out with care,
And with long searching here and there
At that chill season got.

VI.

“I’ve looked the college garden through
To find each one of freshest hue,
That from its purple censer flings
True fragrance to the old March breeze ;
You are a priest,” said he, “take these
For Easter offerings.”

VII.

He tendered them with smiling glance
And playful grace, which might enhance
The courteous tribute that he brought.
It was a gentle act, and stirred
My soul to think how simple word
In simple heart had wrought.

VIII.

A trivial act! Yet kindness stored
In common vessels is a hoard,
Which we more palpably discover.
We fancy there is better measure
Dealt out unto us when the treasure
From lesser gifts runs over.

IX.

The single drop of pearly dew
Which falls from out the harebell blue,
When on the breezy heath it quivers,
The meek observant heart will move,
As proof, more touching, of God's love
Than the abounding rivers.

X.

O sweet is kindliness unbought
By service we ourselves have wrought,
Or long-tried friendship's winning arts!
O sweet is sympathy which springs
From chance occasions, random things,
And unexpected hearts!

XI.

There are who on vast purpose bent
With these stray joys are ill content,
These angel-scattered shreds of bliss,
The wild-flowers of the lavish earth,
Her natural growth of blameless mirth;—
Alas! how much they miss!

XII.

The thoughts of kind acts long ago
Will one day, like a fountain, flow ;
And, when old age upon us sets,
We shall need memory then to cheer
A flagging mood, or dry a tear,
With such stray violets.

XIII.

They say that gentle soul is now
Beneath dire sorrow drooping low,
O'ershadowed by a clouded mind.
May Heaven to his meek heart restore
The radiant spirit as of yore,
And that rude spell unbind !

CXLVII.

THE LAST PALATINE.

I.

How dark and dull is all the vaporous air,
Loaded with sadness as though earth would grieve
Whene'er the skirts of ancient grandeur leave
A place they once enriched forlorn and bare !
Man and the earth in mutual bonds have dwelt
So long together, that it were not strange
Old lights eclipsed and barren-hearted change,
Should be by sentient nature deeply felt.

II.

And with the motions of her outward shows,
Prophetic leadings, I would almost say,
Guiding the observant spirit on its way,
Doth she men's minds harmoniously dispose.
The woods and streams are sympathetic powers,
Fountains of meek suggestion, to the man
Who with submissive energy would plan
His way of life in close and heated hours.

III.

How the dense morning compasses the town,
As though there were no other place beyond,
And with its sweeping mist bids us despond
For the old forms which one by one sink down!
How patiently the Minster stands, a vain
And beautiful monition, from the hill
Rising or rather growing, mute and still
Within a cavern of dark mist and rain!

IV.

O venerable Pile! whose awful gloom
From my first boyish days hath been the sign
And symbol to me of the Faith divine
Of which thou art a birth! from out the womb
Thou springest of the old majestic past,
Colossal times, which daily from the heart
Of this dear land with lingering steps depart,
Furling the mighty shadows that they cast.

V.

Past greatness is the shelter and the screen,
Beneath whose shade high hearts serenely lurk,
Catching true inspiration for the work
Which shall in other days be known and seen.
But greatness, which men do not understand,
Is felt a pressure not to be endured,
Where barren minds are painfully immured,
Like dwarfs within the grasp of giant hand.

VI.

How patiently the Minster stands! So well
Hath it time's mute indignities sustained,
It might for its own beauty have detained
The grandeur now withdrawing. Hark! the knell!
Durham, the uncrowned city, in meet grief
Prepares to celebrate within the shrine
The obsequies of her last Palatine;
And nature's gloom is felt as a relief.

VII.

And hark—the knell again! Within the town
Through the old narrow streets the sinuous crowds,
Meeting and parting, like the trailing clouds
Of a spent storm, are on the Abbey thrown.
How patiently it stands! Once more—the knell!
The crowd with silent agitation stirred
And a contagious awe, like some shy herd,
Shrinks at the ponderous voice of that deep bell.

VIII.

The blameless prelate in the antique gloom
Of the low western Galilee is laid,
In the dark pageantry of death arrayed,
Nigh to the Venerable Beda's tomb:
And in the distant east beside the shrine
There is a grave, a little earth up-cast,
Wherein to-day a rich and solemn Past
Must be entombed with this old Palatine.

IX.

See how with drooping pall and nodding plume
In many a line along the misty nave
The sombre garments of the clergy wave,
Bearing the last prince-bishop to his tomb!
And, as the burden swayeth to and fro,
I see a glorious relic, most sublime,
A dread bequest from out the olden time,
Borne from the earth with ceremonial show.

X.

To one old priest were Keys and Sceptre given,
Two rights combined, the human and divine,
Blended in one high office as a shrine
Where earth might into contact come with Heaven.
This homage of great times unto the Cross,
All this magnificent conception, here
Outstretched upon the Palatine's frail bier,
Is borne away; and will men feel no loss?

XI.

Hath not a sacred lamp gone out to-day
With ominous extinction? Can ye fill,
Wild men! the hallowed vases that ye spill,
And light our darkened shrines with purer ray?
O where shall trust and love have fitting scope?
Our children will cry out for very dearth
Of grandeur, fortified upon the earth
As refuges for faith and holy hope.

XII.

The cloud of music hushed still loads the air;
The herald breaks the wand, while he proclaims
The gentle Palatine's puissant names:
Yon kingless throne is now for ever bare!
This is a gesture, whereby we may solve
The temper of the age; upon this day,
And in St. Cuthbert's shrine, the times display
The secret hinge on which they now revolve.

XIII.

Cities, where ancient sacrilege was bold,
Nature with tenderest rites doth consecrate
Anew, and their remains incorporate
With her own placid mounds and forests old:
But an unholy action at its birth
Doth visibly uncrown a place, laid low
In all the rawness of dishonor: now
There is a glory less upon the earth.

XIV.

At night upon the Minster I looked down ;
 In all the streets through dismal mist and rain
 The lights were twinkling ; and the mighty fane
 Seemed o'er its sevenfold subject hills to frown.
 Now then let ages pass, o'er this gray shrine,
 Of uncrowned faith and formal prayer forlorn,
 Magnificent traditions all forsworn,
 And throne unpressed by lawful Palatine.

XV.

Fortress of God ! colossal Abbey ! thou
 In thy stern grandeur shalt outlive the forms
 That thus unqueen thee, and above the storms
 Of coming change shalt lift thy reverend brow.
 Once more shall Host and Sacrifice be thine,
 When Cuthbert's bones, concealed from curious scorn,
 Down the grand aisles in triumph shall be borne,
 With jubilant psalms, by some new Palatine !

 CXLVIII.

THE RUINED COTTAGE.

I.

A RICH and languid midsummer
 Thou dost from thine own spirit bring,
 And, like a pleased magician there,
 Thou standest in thy self-drawn ring ;
 And from thine own abounding youth
 Thou spinnest threads of bright untruth,
 And weavest of hope's starry beams
 Upon love's busy loom a tapestry of dreams.

II.

A sunlight to thyself thou art ;
Ah me ! it is a hapless lot,
And in old age exiles the heart
Unto a bare, unsunny spot.
Thou passest on from day to day,
As though life were the Milky Way ;
Duty hath chartered not thy bliss,
For joy well earned is no such twilight thing as this.

III.

Come with me to this mountain vale,
And in meek nature's twilight see
In after years how wan and pale
Thy self-illumined dream will be,
Like yon poor dull and murky speck
By sunset left a joyless wreck,
What time its mellow slanting ray
From out of Langdale sent its last long look this
way.

IV.

The evening wind is rude and high
Upon this wild deserted green ;
The mountains in the pallid sky
Rise up with outline cold and keen :
The splashing lake, the rocking trees
To me are mournful images ;
Like uncrowned household gods are they,
Unworshipped now amid this pastoral decay.

V.

Here once were happy peace and smiles,
And no less happy, holy tears ;
Here once were love's domestic wiles,
And constancy which grew with years ;
Here conjugal delights were lured,
And simple trials were endured,
And, with his helpmate at his side,
The shepherd's cares were light, his sorrows sancti-
fied.

VI.

See here the drooping ash-tree shade
Meet for the matron's out-door work,
The common where the children played,
The neighboring copse where they might lurk.
Ah! many a merry sunburnt face
Hath come and gone in this green place,
And Loughrigg heard the echoes play—
A year wakes fewer now than then were waked each
day.

VII.

I see the blue smoke rising up,
The ruined house resume its roof,
The streamlet in a rough stone cup
Protected from the horse's hoof ;
I hear the vespers of the bees
In those two sister linden trees ;
And there the gilded hollies shine
Through the close network of the clambering
eglantine.

VIII.

I see the happy rustic pair,
O how my heart the vision stirs !
And four sweet children, wild and fair,
Peeping among the junipers ;
While o'er the lake with tremulous swell
Eight strikes upon the chapel bell,
Within its cincture of green trees
Drawing all thoughts unto its pensive sanctities.

IX.

Did ever dream come true like this ?
If o'er the wide earth we could roam
Should we detect a better bliss,
A simpler or a nobler home ?
A few souls moving day and night
Within an orbit of delight,
While they with mutual help fulfil
In meek self-sacrifice and want our Father's Will !

X.

Believe me there is not a bliss
To bear the pressure of hard life,
Which hath not been well-forged like this,
And tempered in our mortal strife.
Old age is miserably poor
Which hath not thus laid by its store
Of cheerfulness from good deeds done,
And lawful prisage laid on conquests duly won.

XI.

Yet even here behold the wreck,
That voiceless tenement behold ;
The past a sun-deserted speck,
Whose story is thus sadly told
By all this melancholy round
Of lonely form and cheerless sound,
Which to the grieving spirit call
With plaintive wooing, a most touching pastoral.

XII.

And in the lone and pale ash-trees,
And o'er the white and withered grass,
With what a moaning doth the breeze
O'er this unhaunted moorland pass.
It makes me sad to see it throw
The blossoms from the linden bough,
While by the little waterfalls
The white owl hoots from out the ivy-strangled walls.

XIII.

And here and there and everywhere,
The eyeless casements all about,
Like lost babes wailing in the air,
The piteous nightbirds ever shout.
It is a thought to consecrate
This moorland with pathetic state,—
That Human Nature many a day
Here lived and loved, and like a cloud hath passed
away.

CXLIX.

THE ROTHAY.

DEAR Stream ! upon thy grassy brink
I often am constrained to think
That thou must so enamoured be
Of thine own pensive melody,
It is a wonder that some day
Thou dost not thy soft current stay,
And listen in a green recess
Unto the sudden silentness,
Which would be in the widowed air,
Were thy sweet voice no longer there.
How dull would all the meadows look
Bereaved of their own tinkling brook !
The fringing birchtrees that beat time
With tendrils dipping to the chime,
How sad would they be and forlorn,
Were there no breath, of murmur born,
To agitate with cool delight
Their moistened tresses day and night !
In truth that pleasant shady sadness
Would all its meek reserve of gladness,
Like a mute mourner, soon forswear,
Were there no choral waters there
With changeful note to suit a tale
To all who pass along the vale.
I do believe the very bees
Would quit the roadside linden trees,

When summer afternoons are long,
Didst thou not wile them with thy song
To keep up in the well-pleased air
A drowsy emulation there.

Indeed, sweet Brook ! we cannot part
With thee ; for to the vale thou art,
To grieve, to comfort, to rejoice,
An altogether needful voice.

And yet, dear Stream ! I wonder much
A deep desire doth never touch
Thy waterbreaks awhile to stay,
Self-gathered in yon mossy bay,
Awhile in quiet depths to glisten,
Awhile the distant sounds to listen
Of thine own gushings far above,
Which like the wooing of a dove,
That penetrates the breezeless wood,
The breath upon thy sylvan flood
Might waft into thy curious ear,
Confusing sweetly far with near.

And better still if from on high
There came no kindred melody ;
For then it were a joy to know
What would be, didst thou cease to flow ;
And it were sweet for thee to measure
The fulness of the daily treasure
Which thou art to this vale always,
Blythe Chanter of a hundred lays !
So kindly hearts might love to see
How bare a place the world would be,
Bereaved of all the lustre won
From what hath been or may be done
Through faith, through love, self-sacrifice,
And our domestic charities,

Which, as we waken every morn,
Remind us life may yet be borne.
Ah! Rothay! now on thee doth wait
For evermore a poet's fate,
A captive, bound both eye and ear,
In his own sweetness prisoner,
To whom his crafty melody
Is no such power of simple glee
As unto others it may seem,
Who lie and listen by the stream
Of song, which flows in many a fall
Of thought and language musical.

Then mightest thou begin once more
A deeper strain than heretofore,
Cheered—not by knowing that thou art
A power with which we cannot part,
Nor any other conscious pride
Unmeet for such fair river-side—
But by the buoyant powers which rise
With something of a meek surprise,
When partial self-restraint hath given
To common joys the bliss of Heaven.
For when sequestered from sweet thought
By weary cares, we have been brought
With thirsty heart and eager want
Once more unto our pensive haunt,
It seems like thee, my household River,
Brighter and lovelier far than ever,
With fresh dimensions of true beauty,
Seen in relief against hard duty.

O joyous art thou, festal Earth!
For every month with some new birth
Of glory waits on thee: there is
A beating pulse of truest bliss

Deep in the black and glossy lake,
The yew-crowned steep, the hazel brake :
A golden light of gladness quivers
Submersed in the transparent rivers ;
And there are ministers and powers
Among the still or beckoning flowers ;
The ship-like clouds, which overwhelm
The azure sky, have at their helm
An inward love to steer them right :
Clear visitations of delight
Thrill through the lone and swampy ground,
With sight at unison with sound :
The creatures in their perfect motions,
The tides and currents of the oceans,
The growing trees,—for ever move
By most transcendent law of love
And blameless will, yet have no power
Of self-restraint—not for an hour !—
And therefore, blessèd Earth ! it is,
One moment of pure mortal bliss,
Aye or pure mortal grief, is worth
A hundred years of thy mute mirth,
A hundred years of moons that range
'Twixt sameness beautiful and change
Which is not change, but to man's eye
His inward mutability
Reflected in the earth and sky.
No love for its own sake can we
Bestow on thy tranquillity ;
But, when received into the strife
Of feeling heart or pensive life,
Our spirit sheds on thee a dew
Which doth almost create thee new ;

And then, O Earth ! how dear thou art,
How sacred to each tender heart !

Thou knowest not the wondrous blending
Of bright and dark in the ascending
Scale of life, the never ending
Weaving of all times and places,
And charities and wrongs and graces,
Of love and sorrow, morn and even,
Youth and age, and earth and heaven.
No joy is realized until
By power of the harmonious will
And the submissive reason, it
Will, all unquestioning, admit
Stern duty with a yielding grace
To be enthroned upon its place ;
And hath been taught to come and go,
As task and leisure ebb and flow,
And it for duty's coming waits
A humble portress at the gates.

Thou canst not know, dear Stream ! the joy,
Without misgiving or alloy,
Which abstinence and self-control
Spread like a sunrise, o'er the soul.
Thou canst not know what flight is given,
Unto the very doors of heaven,
To hearts which from self-sacrifice,
Like birds from lowly places, rise,
Who soar the highest when their mirth
Is humblest on the lowly earth.

Thy song cheers not thyself, dear River !
Because it is a song for ever ;
It is thyself, thy life, and not
A gift, a separable lot,

Of whose deep tenderness and beauty
 Thou canst by self-restraint and duty
 Win sweet returns or augmentations ;
 It hath no daily new creations—
 Fresh births which come from sapient glee,
 From wisdom, from simplicity,
 When mortal joys themselves refrain
 For virtue's sake, then flow again.

So are we made ; unquiet pleasure,
 Which the calm spirit cannot measure,
 Endureth not, and is no treasure.
 The mirth we cannot put away
 Is but a mirth on its first day.
 The joy which we can not restrain
 Is but a liberty from pain.
 Where self and pleasure are but one,
 That soul is morally undone !

 CL.

ENGLISH HEDGES.

I.

Not without deep memorial truth are ye,
 Partitions of sweet thorn ! which intersect
 Our blythest counties, bidding us reflect
 Full oft upon our rural ancestry,
 The unambitious thanes of Saxon days ;
 Who with their modest manors well content,
 Of corn and mead and fragrant bean-field blent,
 And woody pasture, lived in simple ways
 And patriarchal virtues, ere the hand
 Of Norman rule was felt ; or feudal right,
 Baneful exotic ! settled like a blight
 On the free customs of the pastoral land.

II.

Behold—a length of hundred leagues displayed—
That web of old historic tapestry
With its green patterns, broidered to the eye,
Is with domestic mysteries inlaid !
Here hath a nameless sire in some past age
In quaint uneven stripe or curious nook,
Clipped by the wanderings of a snaky brook,
Carved for a younger son an heritage.
There set apart, an island in a bower,
With right of road among the oakwoods round,
Are some few fields within a ring-fence bound,
Perchance a daughter's patrimonial dower.

III.

So may we dream, while to our fancy come
Kind incidents and sweet biographies,
Scarce fanciful, as flowing from the ties
And blissful bonds which consecrate our home
To be an earthly heaven. From shore to shore
That ample, wind-stirred net-work doth ensnare
Within its delicate meshes many a rare
And rustic legend, which may yield good store
Of touching thought unto the passenger.
Domestic changes, families decayed,
And love or hate, in testaments displayed
By dying men, still in the hedgerows stir.

IV.

When Rome her British Eagles did recall,
Time saw the ages weave that web of green
Assiduously upon the rural scene,
Ere yet the lowly-raftered Saxon hall
Was watched from Norman fortalice. The fields
Escutcheons were, borne by those equal thanes,
While herald spring went wandering up the lanes,
Blazoning with green and white the yeomen's shields,
And as the Church grew there, beneath her eyes
The breadth of hedgerows grew with her, not loth
To be, as freedom is, an undergrowth
Of that true mother of all liberties.

V.

The Saxon hedgerows stand, though twice assailed ;
Once greedy barons in their pride of birth
For hunting grounds imparked the fertile earth,
Till peasant joys and pastoral ditties failed.
Now upstart wealth absorbs both far and nigh
The small ancestral farms : woe worth the day,
When fortunes overgrown shall eat away
The heart of our old English yeomanry !
The hedges still survive, shelters for flowers,
An habitation for the singing birds,
Cool banks of shadow grateful to the herds,
A charm scarce known in any land but ours.

VI.

Ye modest relics of a simple past,
Most frail and most enduring monument,
Ye still are here, when Norman Keep is rent
And cruel Chace disparked into a waste,
Of cheerful tillage: ye uninjured rise,
To nature and to human wants allied,
Therefore outliving works of lordly pride,
How rightly dear for what ye symbolize!
Long may the Saxon hieroglyphic stand,
A precious trophy in the yeoman's eye,
The wisdom of our ancient polity
Written in leafy cypher o'er the land!

CLI.

MOUNTAIN TARNS.

I.

O ASKEST thou of me
What store of thoughtful glee
By mountain tarns is lying,
That I to such grim nooks
From my dull-hearted books
Should evermore be flying?

II.

Go thou, and spend an hour
In autumn fog and shower
Amid the thundering rills,
Or hear the breezy sigh
Of summer quiet die
Among the noonday hills.

III.

The eagle's royal soul
Is nurtured in the roll
And echo of the thunder,
And feeds for evermore
Amid the summits hoar
On sights and sounds of wonder.

IV.

The murmur of the stone
With hoarse and hollow moan
Self-loosened from the height,—
The waterfall's white showers
In midnight's deepest hours
Creating sound and light,—

V.

The pauses in the blowing
Of winds, when oxen lowing
Are heard from vales beneath,
The under-world of care
Scarce burdening the air
With its poor plaintive breath,—

VI.

The fragrance of the noon,
The nearness of the moon,
The swampy mosses tingling,
The strife of peace and noise,
Like the sorrows and the joys
In earthly lots commingling,—

VII.

To all such sight and sound
Is the eagle's being bound,
A destiny of bliss ;
These spells his spirit wake,
These influences make
The eagle what he is.

VIII.

So I of lowly birth,
A workman on the earth,
Would cast myself apart,
That I a little time
From dreariness sublime
Might win a royal heart.

IX.

The golden-crownèd kings
Are often abject things ;
I would not be as they :
But mountain winds and waves
Teach no men to be slaves,
But with high minds obey.

X.

Great emperors forget,
In jewelled places set,
The human heart below,
And with no fellows near
They often cease to hear
Its holy ebb and flow.

XI.

But I from mountain throne
Would oftentimes come down,
And leave unto the breeze
And cataract to fill
With echoes at their will
My dreary royalties.

XII.

I would in mountain haunt
But quicken the sweet want
Of love and blisses mild;
And I would alternate
My pomp of regal state
With the humors of a child.

XIII.

There is a power to bless
In hill-side loneliness,
In tarns and dreary places,
A virtue in the brook,
A freshness in the look
Of mountain's joyless faces.

XIV.

And I would have my heart
 From littleness apart,
 A love-anointed thing,
 Be set above my kind,
 In my unfettered mind
 A veritable king.

XV.

And so when life is dull,
 Or when my heart is full
 Because coy dreams have frowned,
 I wander up the rills
 To stones and tarns and hills,—
 I go there to be crowned.

CLII.

OUR THOUGHTS ARE GREATER THAN
 OURSELVES.

OUR thoughts are greater than ourselves, our dreams
 Ofttimes more solid than our acts; our hope
 With more of substance and of shadow teems
 Than our thin joys, and hath a nobler scope.
 O sons of men! there is a Presence here,
 Here in our own undying spirits, which
 With an unearthly wealth doth oft enrich
 The reason hourly sanctified by fear.
 Herewith men prophesy, herewith men press
 To their own hearts in studious loneliness
 Forms greater than they dare to tell: beneath
 The shadow of their own imaginings
 They sit, withdrawn and sheltered; for a wreath
 Encircles them, a wreath of Angel's wings.

CLIII.

I FEEL A CHANGE.

I FEEL a change,—and yet I know not how
 Or where or when, or what it doth betoken;
 But sure I am that voices which have spoken
 Daily within my soul are speechless now.
 For thought or fancy, hope, joy, smile and tear,
 My being is not what it was last year.
 And a new power, which will not yet reveal
 Its name and purpose, hath already gone
 This way or that, as though it fain would steal
 And climb unchallenged to some inward throne:
 While I with fretful guess go sounding on
 Depth after depth of my vexed mind, to dodge
 The bold, unbidden stranger, and dislodge
 All influence, unmeasured and unknown.

CLIV.

EFFUSION ON HEARING OF A FRIEND'S
DEATH

FROM FEVER AT NAPLES.

I.

AND he is dead! Mourn, all ye moonlit hills,
 Ye woods that sleep so sweetly in the beams,
 Thou lake that twinklest like the light in dreams,
 Thou dappled sky; and ye, O tuneful rills,
 Thus charmed to silentness, awake and call
 For power unto the raving waterfall!

II.

And he is dead! Dear, blessèd spirit! there
By the wild river doth his dwelling stand,
The one dark spot in all the moonlit land,
Which lies beneath this mountain summit bare.
O Nature! my o'erburdened heart relieve,
Ye woods and hills, in mournful concert grieve!

III.

Up many a vale I see the glimmering light
Of scattered farms; I hear the sheepdogs bay
The quiet hanging moon, and far away
The echos travel. O how calm is night!
And through the gloom I can no peak descry,
Which was not dear to Edward's gentle eye.

IV.

And he is passed away,—with snowy sail
No more shall cleave Winander's azure deeps,
No more shall homeward wend while moonlight
 sleeps
On Brathay's ivied bridge and woody vale!
All, all is passed; a few calm months have rolled,
And all that world of joy is cold—is cold!

V.

O Italy! thou wert his waking dream,
And thou hast proved his grave; we little know
The ills which from self-chosen pleasures flow.
Ah me! at length the moon with silver gleam
Hath struck his house-top, and the glittering rill
Shoots past the bridge, and then is dark and still.

VI.

To-day I heard the cuckoo first this year ;
 It rose from his own grounds, an ominous cry,
 Which with old arts and wiles advanced more nigh,—
 Then thrown far off, when it had been most near :
 This do I fondly note ; such chances are
 Not without light in sorrow's calendar.

VII.

Thus yearly hath the warning deathbell tolled
 Into my startled ear amid the chime
 Of youth's long holydays ; and every time
 Bereavement seems more desolate and cold :
 And I am now to grief less reconciled,
 Than when I was in pureness more a child.

VIII.

Ah woful lot ! when sorrow hath become
 A source of self-disturbance, not a thing
 From which the growths of faith and meekness
 spring ;
 The world too much, too long hath been my home ;
 And this chill shock goes further, deeper in,
 As though 'twere fathoming new depths of sin.

IX.

And rainest thou, O Moon ! so calm a shower
 Upon Vesuvio's beacon-height, the sea
 And the white crescent of Parthenope,
 The garden terrace, and sweet lemon-bower ?
 And canst thou strike from out the hollow skies
 The tranquil spot where that dear outcast lies ?

X.

I too within the moonlight of sad thought
 Can compass far-off joys and long-past days :
 Memory can strike with most pathetic rays
 Kind pensive looks and tender actions wrought
 In times bygone, and bring them round her now,
 White flowers, tear-freshened, for pale sorrow's
 brow.

XI.

How beautiful are thy constraints, O Death !
 On our affections so benignly felt,
 Making all hearts, ranks, ages melt
 To one true brotherhood before thy breath !
 I feel this night a fresh access of love
 For my lost friend, which Heaven doth not reprove.

XII.

Merciful God ! with whom the spirits are,
 Most holy Saviour ! on the mountain top
 The earth Thou madest, overspread with hope,
 Breathes consolation in the quiet air :
 Death is Thine earnest that our souls are free,
 O blessèd are the dead who die in Thee !

XIII.

Yea blessèd, else would earth or sky display
 Some trouble when the youthful are laid low.
 So soft, so calm may be the moonlight show,
 When I, perchance still young, am called away,
 No trouble stir that night on Brathay's shore
 When I can hear his woodland voice no more !

CLV.

THE CONTRAST.

I.

O EARTH, meek mother ! with thy powers at war,
 How rudely 'gainst thy harmonies we strike !
 The voice of men and cities seems to jar
 Thy sounds more than thy stillness : how unlike
 These pastoral bleatings or this wild bird's wails
 Absorbed so kindly into all these mountain vales—

II.

Absorbed, or rather by true love prolonged
 Through echo's lonely outposts in far links,
 And justly ; else earth surely would have wronged
 That old coeval sound : but whoso thinks
 That she to men's mutations will be chained
 Deems lightly of the place to which she is ordained.

III.

Weak and dejected, for the gift of song,
 Intemperately used, had sapped my health,
 I lived in open air the whole day long
 In hill or wood, extracting thence a wealth
 Of chaste delights my future toil to bless,
 Mingled with just self-blame for fancy's late excess.

IV.

Within a natural temple of old pine,
 On whose grey columns and red withered floor
 The sun with noontide force could barely shine,
 I lay at ease ; around me a gay store
 Of cuckoo-plant, with white and winking eyes
 Furled and unfurled, among the starting roots did
 rise.

V.

Invisible creatures rustled in the moss
 And the crisp leaves ; a wild suspicious eye
 Looked from a thrush's nest : and at a loss
 To find his master, closely harbored nigh,
 My dog at times among the boughs was seen,
 Like some white thing that floats deep in the waters
 green.

VI.

And by the tiny trumpets of the bees
 Was I well soothed, and the blythe insect hum ;
 And winds were born and died within the trees,
 Prisoned and stifled in the leafy gloom :
 The plaint of lambs, the tinkling of a brook,
 Refined by distance, came unto this sombre nook.

VII.

Aloft the stockdoves seemed with their deep
 cooing
 All the broad wood to quiet and control,
 An eloquence like the continual wooing
 Of holy thoughts within a Christian soul :
 Remote I saw some horses in a plough,
 The world—seen, as the Saints should see it, far
 below.

VIII.

God's blessing was upon the earth, all bound
 In deep content and joy from vale to height;
 There was that concord of harmonious sound,
 Those thrillings, almost vocal, of strong light,
 Suggesting to transported ear and eye
 A present Power, diviner than tranquillity.

IX.

Homeward I went, with thoughts such as might
 wait
 Upon the vision in that shelter given,
 In meditation chastened yet elate,
 When all things seem transparent, and true
 Heaven
 Glows through all earthly loveliness and power,
 As though the veil were being consumed hour after
 hour.

X.

Then suddenly by duty was I led
 Unto a scene of desperate misery,
 A moaning sinner on his dying bed,
 A drunkard—oh how unprepared to die!
 Too weak for prayer, for Sacrament unmeet,
 O Heaven! what sight was this a pastor's eye to
 greet!

XI.

But let us veil the scene: a cooling breeze
 Through the porch honeysuckle gently sighing,
 The singing birds, clear hills, and budding trees—
 Amid all this the sinner lay a-dying:
 O when I quitted that most dismal room
 The outward sunshine was all baffled by the gloom.

XII.

Most inharmonious world! which can compress
Such sweetness and such horror in an hour,
As though all beauty and all fearfulness
Turned on one hinge, were but one folding door,
Each counteracting each, with woe and mirth
In mutual eclipse o'ershadowing the earth.

XIII.

Such and so solemn is the pastor's life,
Strange alternations which, well weighed, may
yield
Reasoning sublime, and contemplation rife
With virtuous purposes by faith to build
The soul which doth among such fortunes range.
The death-bell tolls: Christ aid him in his fearful
change!

CLVI.

ONCE MORE AMID THE ALDER TREES.

I.

ONCE more amid the alder trees,
Once more among the hills,
Mid dewy grass and fading leaves
And the blue steam on the rills.

II.

Once more amid the pomp of clouds,
Once more in shade and shower,
What wonder is it I should weep
For joy of autumn's power?

III.

One year unto another calls
In most mysterious ways:
Autumn to autumn joins, and wakes
The old autumnal days.

IV.

In springtide thus the jocund past
One long, long springtide seems,
And summer shapes and finishes
The bygone summer's dreams.

V.

Such separate prerogative
Doth in the seasons lie,
And of sweet use may wise men make
This deep consistency.

VI.

Dear native land! dear English friends!
Now doubly dear are ye:
Is it a trouble or a joy
Wherewith ye welcome me?

VII.

Since last I walked through withered fern
What tides of sight and sound
To far-off seas and foreign streams
My pliant heart have bound!

VIII.

Mid gorgeous cities, stirring lands,
Mid wonder, change, and mirth,
For months and months there was to me
No England on the earth.

IX.

I saw the fruit-tree roads of France,
The ancient Lombard plain,
And Venice in her white sunshine
Still sitting by the main.

X.

And oh! how blue were all the bays,
How strange the desert peace,
The marbles hoar, the olives grey
In old heroic Greece.

XI.

And bright was May in your green haunts,
Ye sweet Propontid isles!
And bright along the Bosphorus
Were summer's evening smiles.

XII.

All up the wild Danubian plain,
In Transylvanian dells,
By Mur's romantic castled heights
And Drava's mountain wells,

XIII.

Along the shining bends of Inn,
In old Bavarian towns,
By many a deep green Austrian lake,
On bleak Bohemian downs,

XIV.

From hill and stream and ruin hoar—
Grave lessons did I learn,
Deep wisdom poured by earth herself
From her own ancient urn.

XV.

Now is it all a dream, a thing
Gone with the buried past,
A vision broken up, a light
Which had no life to last.

XVI.

And cheerfully, like vernal plants
That pierce the April earth,
Last autumn's thoughts come calmly up
With old autumnal mirth :

XVII.

Calmly and cheerfully they come
As though I had been here
Nor left this single mossy bank
Through all the bygone year.

XVIII.

Thought must be earned by thought, and truth
From other truth be won :
Next year the fruit will come of seed
In this year's travel sown.

CLVII.

A VISION OF BRIGHT SEAS.

I.

I NEVER think without a thrill
 Of wild and pure delight
 Of all the leagues of blue, blue sea,
 Which I have sailed o'er merrily
 In day or dead of night.

II.

With moon and stars, at morn and eve,
 In sunny wind and shower,
 How often hath it worked in me,—
 That mystery of the kingly sea,
 With joyous spells of power!

III.

My heart doth burn whene'er I gaze
 From o'er the vessel's side,
 And see the tremulous sunbeams sleep
 Far down within the azure deep,
 And rocking in the tide.

IV.

And I could sit for hours and watch
 The white phosphoric track,
 Which like a streaky firebrand burns,
 Where'er the foamy rudder turns
 Across night's ocean black.

V.

Methinks that laid, as I am now,
Upon the rack of pain,
The briny seaweed's fragrant breath
On old St. Hilda's breezy heath
Might woo health back again.

VI.

O it is well sick men should go
Unto the royal sea ;
For on their souls as on a glass,
From its bright fields the breath doth pass
Of its infinity.

VII.

Go forth from thy sick room this day,
My languid heart ! go forth ;
Mount on the merry moorland breeze,
And sweep o'er all the murmuring seas
We've known in south or north !

VIII.

How quick the mountains melt away
The girdle of dark firs !
And Wansfell's broad opposing bank
Fades off into a shining blank,
And see—the vision stirs !

IX.

Waves rock and flow, ships come and go,
And cities are displayed
Apparelled in transparent air,
With quays and harbors : surely ne'er
Was Merlin so obeyed !

X.

There Genoa bends along the shore
Beneath her Apennines ;
There emulous waters force their way
Into the locked and jealous bay
Where old Venetia shines.

XI.

There are the low Dalmatian isles,
The gems on Adria's arms.
Albania's glens and white Corfu,
And Græcia's belt of waters blue,
And deep Ægean calms.

XII.

Fling wide the antechamber door,
Where sweet Propontis catches
Sophia's gleam at break of day,
Or plaintive wail from cupola
Repeating the night watches.

XIII.

Thou, hospitable Fuxine ! thou
Art not forgotten here,
Upon whose undulating breast,
Spite of all legends, did I rest
Calm as on Windermere.

XIV.

Oh bliss ! what lights the sun and moon
Have scattered o'er the sea,
Which, though to others they would seem
Confused into a radiant dream,
Are all distinct to me.

XV.

My mother taught me how to love
The mystery of the sea ;
She sported with my childish wonder
At its white waves and gentle thunder,—
Like a man's deep voice to me.

XVI.

When in my soul dim thoughts awoke,
She helped to set them free ;
I learned from ocean's murmurings
How infinite, eternal things,
Though viewless, yet could be.

XVII.

In gentle moods I love the hills
Because they bound my spirit ;
But to the broad, blue sea I fly,
When I would feel the destiny
Immortal souls inherit.

CLVIII.

THE YEAR AFTER TRAVELLING.

SEE how last year is coming back again !
Dost thou not feel bright cities work in thee,
At which we touched upon the midland sea,
And fair cathedrals towering on the plain ?
Through all the gathered mould of hope and fear,
The heap of wintry things which we have cast
Upon our memories, relics of the past
Work up in little earthquakes from last year.
And is it not a very pleasant trouble
To feel this year our calendar is double ?
My thoughts have been bewildered all the day,
As though I walked on air, not on the ground,
And, from the date, I have this evening found
It was a misty sight of Genoa.



CLIX.

GENOA.

I.

I AM where snowy mountains round me shine ;
But in sweet vision truer than mine eyes
I see pale Genoa's marble crescent rise
Between the water and the Apennine.

II.

On the sea-bank she couches like a deer,
A creature giving light with her soft sheen,
While the blue ocean and the mountain green,
Pleased with the wonder, alway gaze on her.

III.

And day and night the mild sea-murmur fills
The corridors of her cool palaces,
Taking the freshness from the orange trees,
A fragrant gift into the peaceful hills.

IV.

And from the balustrades into the street
From time to time there are voluptuous showers,
Gentle descents, of shaken lemon flowers,
Snapped by the echo of the passing feet.

V.

And when the sun his noonday height hath gained
How mute is all that slumberous Apennine,
Upon whose base the streaks of green turf shine
With the black olive-gardens interveined!

VI.

How fair it is when, in the purple bay,
Of the soft sea the clear-edged moon is drinking,
Or the dark sky amid the shipmasts winking
With summer lightning over Corsica!

VII.

O Genoa! thou art a marvellous birth,
A clasp which joins the mountains and the sea;
And the two powers do homage unto thee
As to a matchless wonder of the earth.

VIII.

Can life be common life in spots like these,
 Where they breathe breath from orange gardens
 wafted?
 O joy and sorrow surely must be grafted
 On stems apart for these bright Genoese.

IX.

The place is islanded amid her mirth;
 The very girdle of her beauty thrown
 About her in men's minds, a virgin zone,
 Marks her a spot unmated on the earth.

X.

I hear the deep coves of the Apennine
 Filled with a gentle trouble of sweet bells;
 And the blue tongues of sea that pierce the dells,
 As conscious of our Lady's feast-day, shine.

XI.

For Genoa the Proud for many an age
 Hath been pre-eminent as tributary
 Unto the special service of St. Mary,
 The sinless Virgin's chosen appanage.

XII.

I see the streets with very stacks of flowers
 Choked up, a wild and beautiful array,
 And in my mind I thread my fragrant way
 Once more amid the rich and cumbrous bowers.

XIII.

And, unforgotten beauty! by the bay
 I see the two boys and the little maiden,
 With crimson tulips for the Virgin laden,
 Wending along the road from Spezia.

XIV.

Sister! thou askest why this evening long
 I have in selfish silence been immured,—
 This is the vision which I have endured,
 Shaped, to win pardon, in a simple song.

XV.

It would augment thy happiness and mine,
 If thou, dear Ellen! could'st but share with me
 This magic vision of the Midland Sea,
 And the white city with her Apennine!



CLX.

NAMES OF GOOD OMEN.

THERAPIA ON THE BOSPHORUS.

I.

THE sunny wisdom of the Greeks
 All o'er the earth is strewed:
 On every dark and awful place,
 Rude hill and haunted wood,
 The beautiful bright people left
 A name of omen good.

II.

They would not have an evil word
 Weigh heavy on the breeze,
 They would not darken mountain side,
 Nor stain the shining seas,
 With names, of some disastrous past
 The unwise witnesses.

III.

Here legendary Argo touched
In this blue-watered bay ;
Here dark Medea in pursuit
Her poisons cast away,
Polluting even the odorous shades
Of pure Therapia.

IV.

Look how the interlacing trees
Their glowing blossoms wreathe!
Is this a spot for poison plants,
For crime or savage death ?
The Greeks endured not that on it
Should pass so dire a breath :

V.

Unlike the children of romance,—
From out whose spirit deep
The touch of gloom hath passed on glen
And mountain lake and steep,
On Devil's Bridge and Raven's Tower
And lovelorn Maiden's Leap :

VI.

Who sought in cavern, wood, and dell,
Where'er they could lay bare
The path of ill, and localized
Terrific legends there,
Leaving a hoarse and ponderous name
To haunt the very air.

VII.

Not so the radiant-hearted Greeks,
Who hesitated still
To offend the blessed Presences
Which earth and ocean fill ;
Whose tongues, elsewhere so eloquent,
Stammered at words of ill.

VIII.

All places, where their presence was
Upon the fruitful earth,
By kindly law were clasped within
The circle of their mirth,
And in their spirits had a new
And consecrated birth.

IX.

O bless them for it, traveller !
The fair-tongued ancients bless !
Who thus from land and sea trod out
All footmarks of distress,
Illuminating earth with their
Own inward cheerfulness.

X.

Unto the Axine Sea they sent
A name of better feeling ;
Dark powers into Eumenides,
A gentle change! were stealing,
And poison-stained Therapia
Became the Bay of Healing!

CLXI.

A DAY UPON THE EUXINE SEA.

I.

SEVEN times doth Asia's flowery coast give place
 To Europe's shrubby cliffs and verdant Thrace ;
 And Europe into seven sweet bays retires
 Where summer sunrise shoots his pearly fires ;
 There holy East and royal West are meeting,
 Each from the other's headlands still retreating.
 With currents and with counter-currents seven
 The cold, bright waters, blue as bluest Heaven,
 Seem like the beating pulses of the free
 And angry spirit of the Euxine Sea.

II.

Lift up the veil of legendary gloom
 Which hangs before that dreadful sea, the womb,
 So seemed it to the reverent men of old,
 Where every direful shape and form untold
 Of dark disaster lurked ; upon whose flood
 A mist, and no mere sea-born mist, did brood
 With heavy, hanging shadow : it was then
 A sea for gods and heroes, not for men ;
 Yet with a kindly name they worshipped thee,
 The offering of their lips, dread Euxine Sea !

III.

With what a very diadem of fear
 They crowned thee king of waters! Far and near,
 The Delian blessing his Ægean calm,
 Or Attic dweller at some inland farm
 Amid his oliveyards, had many a tale
 Enough to make the listening throng turn pale.
 Perplexing phantoms chasing ships behind,
 Mists, monsters, sudden wreck, and wondrous wind,—
 Such were their dim uncheerful thoughts of thee,
 Thou legend-circled thing, dread Euxine Sea!

IV.

Thy wandering waves had limits in the air,
 Begotten of men's faith: they thought not where
 Nor yet how near thou wert, but cast thee far
 Unto the confines of their thoughts, a bar
 Not reverently to be o'erleaped: the past
 One streak of light across the darkness cast;
 One pathway, moonbeam-like, the gloom did break,—
 'Twas Argo passing with her burning wake;
 And in a cloud of troubled minstrelsy
 They wrapped thy sacred name, dread Euxine Sea!

V.

But see this harmless glossy-surfaced ocean,
 Cradling my boat with quiet-throbbing motion!
 This is no dismal threshold to be strown
 With horrid wreck, no tempest-spirit's throne.
 Faith fails the legends; the eye seeks but sees
 No monument, no twin Symplegades.
 Oh how transfigured, waves and headlands drear!
 The very soul of May is breathing here!
 Such skies, winds, waters—can they truly be
 Upon the veritable Euxine Sea?

VI.

The hollow waves, like summer thunder, roar
On Thracia's rocks and low Silistria's shore.
There Russia looms, or mistwreaths cheat the eye,
Upon the horizon line of history ;
And there, where yon white ship hath set her helm,
Are Persia's havens deep, the garden-realm,
The clime where earth, their thoughtless earth,
discloses
Nought to the poet's soul but wine and roses.
These are the shadows, bygone or to be,
Which flit along thy coasts, dread Euxine Sea !

VII.

Now that the Strait, her seven fair bays unbinding,
Draws the caique through each blue snaky winding,
My heart is lighted on from cape to cape
By torchlike song or legendary shape,
While from the flowery Kandili there come
Cool odorous breaths to old Byzantium.
The sight of thee, dread Euxine ! calm and near,
Hath made thee not the less a thing to fear ;
Else why this troubled thrill which works in me
When I have seen and touched the Euxine Sea ?

VIII.

But lo ! Stamboul ! A thousand sunset-fires
Are gilding tall ship masts and cypress spires.
White palace roof and glittering kiosk,
Old Latin tower, rude gate, and pillared mosque.
Trees, houses, fountains, ships—float off and rise,
Like clouds instinct with light, into the skies.
What shall Arabian prose or Persian verse
In after years to my dull ear rehearse,
When eye hath seen upon a Mayday even
Stamboul by sunset lifted into Heaven ?

IX.

To-day my thirsty spirit sought to drink
 Of dreadful legends on the Black Sea's brink ;
 This sunset is a trouble in my soul ;
 Deep in my heart I heard the Euxine roll,
 I felt it in me as a mighty thought,
 The block whence forms of grandeur might be
 wrought :
 But now 'twixt light and gloom my mind is tossed,
 Bright thoughts in dark, and dark in bright, are lost ;
 Once more an untouched thing, outside of me,
 I hear the murmur of the Euxine Sea !



CLXII.

THE PLAINS OF HUNGARY.

I.

O if in a valley
 With close mountains round,
 Or in the green alley
 Of a woodland ground
 There be a joy in nearness to each sight and sound,—

II.

Or if, in the bowers
 Of a pleasance old,
 There be joy for hours
 In the sheets of gold
 And red and white and blue, in formal shapes
 unrolled,—

III.

Or if in a ruin
With weeds overgrown,
Where time is undoing
That which men have done,
It is a joy to be hemmed in with aisles of stone,—

IV.

And if from all places
Close and desolate,
As from silent faces
Through a convent grate,
Sad thoughts and gentle ones on the beholder wait,—

V.

There is strong emotion
And a dancing mirth
From the sight of ocean,
And wide plains of earth,
Which is not a less heavenly, though a wilder birth.

VI.

Though there be a glory
On the famous fields,
Which chivalric story
With its sunset gilds,
And where the cypher of the past a wisdom yields,

VII.

There is glory brighter
On the desert scene,
Where the only writer
That hath ever been
Is the pure sky above with its unhindered sheen.

VIII.

And the earth's sweet changes
 Are a quiet past,
 Whose soft action ranges
 O'er the solemn waste,
 And where green grass grows now, wild waters once
 were cast.

IX.

To the misty sunlight
 Is its bosom bare,
 And the flaky moonlight
 Makes no shadows there,
 And it is free to all outpourings of bright air.

X.

Whether pearly morning
 Doth herself transfuse
 In the sky, adorning
 All the myriad dews,
 Or twilight steals from sunset banners of red hues ;

XI.

Whether noonday glimmers
 In the hazy dome ;
 Or, like noisy swimmers
 Scattering the foam,
 The hailstorms with white oars across the desert
 roam ;

XII.

Whether night's strong motion,
 Without sound or tool,
 The bright earth and ocean
 Strives to overrule,
 Lights wander here and there, and still the scene is
 beautiful.

XIII.

In the boundless quiet
 Of the misty plain,
 The wild horses riot
 Without bit or rein ;
 The fatal touch of man hath not passed on their
 mane.

XIV.

With their broad eyes flashing,
 Beautiful and free,
 The swift herd is dashing
 In its untamed glee
 Across the plain, as ships may dash across the sea :

XV.

And far off delaying
 By the shrunken rills,
 With a haughty neighing
 The lone air it fills,—
 Fierce creatures in the joy of their own mighty wills.

XVI.

Day with silvery brightness
 Dawned there upon me ;
 The hoarfrost with its whiteness,
 Like a moonlit sea,
 For leagues of land both far and wide gleamed
 mistily.

XVII.

From the pallid glimmer
 Of the morning moon
 Till the plains grew dimmer
 In the vaporous noon,
 In which a tree or cloud would be a blessed boon,—

XVIII.

In relays and courses
 At rude cabins given,
 We galloped, like wild horses,
 Till the cool fresh even,
 And we saw two things all day,—the green plain and
 heaven !

XIX.

Once we saw the rolling
 Of the Danube nigh,
 Once we heard the tolling
 Of churchbells wafted by,
 But otherwise we were as wild birds in the sky.

XX.

But towards night less dreary
 Was the grassy way,
 And we passed, unwearied,
 Villages that lay,
 Oases, in a belt of light acacia.

XXI.

Still we came no nigher
 The Carpathian chain,
 A fence of white haze-fire
 Compassing the plain,
 Like land, which may be cloud or land, seen o'er the
 main.

XXII.

On the desert ample
 Evening's chilly hour
 Bade the breezes trample
 In their wildest power,
 And o'er the twilight plain like viewless horses scour.

XXIII.

Soon the winds were shaking
All the ether blue,
Where the mists were making
The ambrosial dew,
And with a moaning surge a solemn tempest grew.

XXIV.

And I felt my spirit
On the storm ascending,
Where for ever near it
A dim shape was bending,
Like a wild horse herd across the desert wending.

XXV.

And my thoughts were going
From me with wild force,
Like the white hairs flowing
From the dashing horse ;
I laughed whene'er the strong wind struck me in its
course.

XXVI.

We met a serf belated
On the dusky plain,
With his waggon freighted
With the baron's grain ;
He was half blinded with the whirling sleet and
rain.

XXVII.

And I felt it better
In the desert drear
To be without fetter
Of submissive fear ;
And I cried out in anger to the peasant near,—

XXVIII.

“ Leave thy waggon naked
 To the angry sky,
 Let thy thirst be slakèd
 With earth’s liberty,
 For freedom is a vaster thing than slavery.”

XXIX.

But the long-haired vassal
 Looked at me confounded,
 As in hour of wassail
 By young lords surrounded,
 When biting scoff hath e’en his abject spirit wounded.

XXX.

When on every feature
 I saw fear and pain,
 I felt for the poor creature
 On that lonesome plain :
 Though storms without raged on, my heart was calm
 again.

XXXI.

Men there are who think not
 That great words unmeet
 Are wells whence we drink not
 Waters clear and sweet,
 And wonder the world stays not at such words its
 feet.

XXXII.

Such are liberators*
 With their spirits lifted
 To the mood of traitors,
 From their good end shifted,
 For lack of sympathy on frothy shallows drifted.

XXXIII.

Surely it is better
We should not undo
This wild vassal's fetter,
Lest his heart should rue
His altered lot, as men set free too early do.

XXXIV.

But the storm is over ;
And with oakwoods walled,
We, with quail and plover
For the night installed,
Are in the moonlit heart of the Bakonver Wald.

CLXIII.

THE RAFT FROM LINZ.

I.

ANOTHER bend among the hills,
One other bend, and we shall hear
Among the green o'erhanging trees
The rocky Wirbel boiling near.

II.

Upon the Danube and the woods
Lay evening's red and troubled gleam,
And calmly, as a lifeless thing,
The raft from Linz went down the stream.

III.

And then how softly rose the hymn
For Mary's succour in the strait,
And that good Angels in the pool
To steer the little craft might wait.

IV.

It bent and strained, and in the foam
Awhile the crazy vessel quivered ;
And then it glided like a swan,
St. Mary hath the raft delivered.

V.

And there the convent boat appears
To ask an alms of all who pass,
Oblation made with willing heart
To Mary and St. Nicholas.

VI.

And thus to great Vienna bound,
The boatmen watch the stars all night,
And for their hymn and for their alms
They deem the weather calm and bright.

VII.

Yet some dare blame the holy faith,
As if to untrue forms it clings,
While thus unto the unseen world
For blessing every thought it brings.

VIII.

And those who, safe in modern powers,
Heed not the whirlpool in their way,
And count the men of Linz untaught,
Are in true lore less taught than they.

IX.

Alas ! how oft hath science made
The heart obtuse, the eye untrue,
Obscuring providential tracks
With veils a woodman's faith sees through !

X.

We want the earth left to ourselves ;
And signs where God doth hide to bless
We class, as though, in classing them,
We took away their awfulness.

XI.

For this to cold, unhumble men
Is all that vaunted knowledge gives,
The raising self by hiding God,
The disennobling of our lives.

XII.

The men of Linz see into Heaven,
Where sages but detect its law ;
Judge which the better wisdom is,
And who hath holier love and awe.

XIII.

Yea, only lest this barren dream
Upon the men of Linz should pass,
Were reason they should kneel and pray
To Mary and St. Nicholas.

CLXIV.

THE HEIRESS OF GÖSTING.

I.

Is there a stream on this sweet earth
 In vale or woodland, where
 Traditions of unhappy love
 Breathe not like summer air?

II.

There is no thought to hallow earth
 With more consoling gladness
 Than the true comfort she hath given
 To lovers in their sadness.

III.

Green trees and streams and castled steeps
 Are sweetest when they move,
 The gentle forms in stirring songs
 Of old disastrous love.

IV.

Born of no time or nation, still,
 In its imperial force,
 Love with the meekest forms of earth
 Holds simple intercourse.

V.

Love, like the abbey-building monks,
 By wood or stream is found:
 Who ever knew a love-tale haunt
 A cold, unsightly ground?

VI.

A pilgrim through green Steyermark,
The poet now is resting,
Soothed by the woodland voice of Mur,
Beneath the rock of Gösting.

VII.

Across the river and the mead
The cliff's tall shade was thrown,
Where sheltered from the sun I sat
Upon a rugged stone.

VIII.

A tender tale of luckless love
In that sweet gloom had part,
And with the shadow of the rock
It went into my heart.

IX.

Above were the green battlements
Of Gösting's castle strong ;
I saw it not, but felt it there,
A very power of song.

X.

Ah! faith hath wronged thee, gentle tower !
Thou wert too fair to shine
The bright spot in the legend dark
Of hapless Adeline.

XI.

Was ever maid like Adeline
In all the Styrian land ?
Was ever noble stout and wise
As old Count Ferdinand ?

XII.

Had ever knight a silver tongue
His lady's heart to melt,
And yet a hand in battle strong,
Like Franz of Lilienfeld?

XIII.

Was ever peer in paynim war
So merciful and bold,
As the young lord of Shackenstein,
The black-haired Leopold?

XIV.

Ah! like a pensive summer cloud
Their memory floateth by,
Far dearer for the shade it casts
Than all the bright blue sky.

XV.

E'en in those strong-featured times,
When human act and feeling
Through all the world with ruder ways
And greater forms were dealing,

XVI.

For masculine chivalric love
The two young knights were famed,
And never in the court or camp
Were separately named.

XVII.

And oft to Träusen's earth-lipped stream
Came Leopold, a guest,
Within the halls of Lilienfeld
For many a week to rest.

XVIII.

And when brave Franz returned to stay
With Shackenstein's young earl,
How short were summer's longest days
Within the vale of Thörl!

XIX.

In boyhood when their limbs were first
In little mail arrayed,
In fashion, colour, and in weight
Their suits alike were made.

XX.

Both flashed among the Styrian vales,
Like very stars of light,
Upon their proud and prancing steeds
Of true Hungarian white.

XXI.

In all the Transylvanian wars
They shared one board and tent,
And shone with fellow scarfs and plumes
At foreign tournament.

XXII.

Ah love! were all the lives of men
Told truly one by one,
The hearts thou hast dealt fairly with,
And those thou hast undone,

XXIII.

At what a price of others' griefs,
We might with awe behold,
Each single hour of happy love
On earth is bought or sold!

XXIV.

Two tender hearts along one path
Through all the world may move,
If they at some fair turn in life
Encounter not with love.

XXV.

There is no incense half so sweet
Unto the jealous power,
As the sad fragrance offered up
From friendship's withered flower.

XXVI.

But Franz apart at Lilienfeld,
The earl at Shackenstein,
Each knew not how the other loved
The heiress Adeline.

XXVII.

Count Ferdinand to Hungary
On mission high hath gone,
And Adeline has to herself
The castle huge and lone.

XXVIII.

A lady lone was Adeline
Within her river bower,
Yet, dreaming of young Leopold,
She had no weary hour.

XXIX.

She worked not at her tapestry,
Nor on her cithern played,
But to her bowerwoman oft
The heartsick lady said :

XXX.

“ Now do I envy, Marian,
That pleasant vale of Thörl,
The very rocks and trees that look
All day at that young earl.

XXXI.

“ And yet,” how pale the lady turned!
“ He never can be mine,
I love with hopeless hidden love,
Ah woe is Adeline !

XXXII.

“ In all the vales of Steyermark,
In rich Carinthia’s dells,
The love of Franz and Leopold
A household wonder dwells.

XXXIII.

“ And every maiden loves the pair
As though they were her own,
And did belong unto the land,
The special boast of none.

XXXIV.

“ And Franz sits mute at Lilienfeld,
And pines for love of me ;
He is a fair-tongued knight, and yet
The earl speaks fair as he.

XXXV.

“ I vow, our Lady grant that love
My vow may never shake,
That Adeline their wondrous bond
Shall never, never break.

XXXVI.

“ And I for some few weary years
 Upon this rock will pine,
 And live and speak with those two knights,
 And die and make no sign.

XXXVII.

“ And, when his heiress droops and dies,
 The good Count Ferdinand
 To Mary and St. Kilian
 May leave his woody land.”

XXXVIII.

This Adeline, the lady lone,
 Unto her bowermaid said,
 And she was pale as death itself,
 And mutely hung her head.

XXXIX.

But hark ! two horsemen loudly greet
 The porter gray and old,
 And blithe the seneschal replies ;
 'Tis Franz and Leopold.

XL.

And, privileged intruders ! see
 They part the chestnut bough,
 And doff their caps to Adeline :
 Now lady ! for thy vow !

XLI.

And pale as death ! O ashy pale !
 But quiet as a queen,
 Thé lady from her bower stepped forth
 With calm and gracious mien.

XLII.

In converse sweet on common things
They walked among the flowers ;
The summer day turned on its hinge
With soft and noiseless hours.

XLIII.

Upon the white rose by the rock
There grew one blossom fair,
Which Franz in idle mirth had said
Would suit his long brown hair.

XLIV.

And Adeline from sorrow won,
Forgetful of her vow,
Stooped down unto the blossom white,
And plucked it from the bough.

XLV.

And surely utterly entranced,
Yet so the tale is told,
She twined it in the raven hair
Of her own Leopold.

XLVI.

Franz gazed on her with startled eye,
The young earl fondly smiled,
And thus the secret of his love
Was from his heart beguiled.

XLVII.

O wondrous are the ways of men,
And passion's sudden changes,
Through which the soul in one short hour
With desperate action ranges !

XLVIII.

That smile hath withered years of love :
 In Franz's burning spirit
 Ejected love's intensity
 Dark hatred doth inherit.

XLIX.

Dishonor to the spotless knight
 Becomes an airy sound ;
 And the red blood of Leopold
 Hath stained that garden ground.

L.

No scream, no cry from Adeline,
 But silent as the grave
 A snowy robe beneath the bridge
 Floats down the woodland wave.

LI.

Young Franz leaned on his reeking sword,
 And pitifully gazed
 Upon the white and ghastly face
 To the blue sky upraised.

LII.

And, many a year of penance past,
 He in the vale of Thörl,
 An anchoret in sackcloth shirt,
 Was buried near the earl.

LIII.

Then far and wide the tidings spread
 Unto the Danube's shore ;
 Count Ferdinand from Hungary
 To Gösting came no more.

LIV.

And Gösting Castle now is left
Unto the wild white roses,
And not a maid in Styria durst
Wreathe one into her posies.

LV.

And daily on the pleasant stream
The white leaves fall and shine,
And float away beneath the bridge,
Symbols of Adeline !



CLXV.

THE YELLOW-HAMMER.

I.

A YELLOW-HAMMER in the rain!
And that on this Carinthian plain,
So far, so far from home!
It fills me with old childish years:
And then these happy, happy tears,
Do what I will they come!

II.

Behold him now: he never stops,
Among the pattering raindrops
A blithe disturbance making,
Beating for ever on one key,
Pleased with his own monotony,
And his wet feathers shaking.

III.

What tender memories are bound
To this familiar hedge-row sound!
The creature's homely glee
Associates me with the hours,
When, so pure childhood willed, all showers
Were sunshine showers to me.

IV.

Away he goes, and hammers still
Without a rule but his free will,
A little gaudy Elf!
And there he is within the rain,
And beats and beats his tune again,
Quite happy in himself.

V.

Within the heart of this great shower
He sits, as in a secret bower,
With curtains drawn about him:
And, part in duty, part in mirth,
He beats, as if upon the earth
Rain could not fall without him.

VI.

Ah homely bird! thou canst not know
How far into my heart doth go
That melancholy key,
How from thy little straining throat
Each separate, successive note
Beats like a pulse in me.

VII.

Through blinding tears meek fancy weaves
Far other fields, far other leaves,
Than those by Drava's side ;
For now the looks of long lost faces,
And the calm features of old places,
Like magic, round me glide.

VIII.

Thou art a power of other days,
A voice from old deserted ways
Obscured by trackless flowers,
An echo of the childish past,
Thus touchingly and strangely cast
Into these foreign bowers.

IX.

O it was right and well with me
When I could love a single tree
As a green sanctuary,
When I could in the meadow lie
And look into the silky sky
For hours, and not be weary !

X.

Now over sea and over earth
I pass with hollow, heated mirth
Which doth but gender sadness,
And with uneasy heart I range
Through all the pageantry of change
To gather moods of gladness.

XI.

Time flies, and life ; and manly thought,
Into unsunny currents wrought,
Is in hoarse eddies wheeling :
I am a man of growing wants,
And I have many wayward haunts,
Haunts both of thought and feeling.

XII.

When joys were simple, days were long,
All woven into one bright throng,
Like golden bees at play,
One with another softly blending,
As though they could not have an ending,
And all were but one day.

XIII.

I thank thee, gentle bird ! for this ;
Thou hast awakened childish bliss,
A sweet monition given ;
And willing tears for youthful sin
Are fragrant rituals, that may win
The old light back from Heaven.

XIV.

And sure I am that summer day
Ne'er shone on a more grand array
Or gorgeous pomp of mountains ;
And o'er the plain in shining rings
The Drave with blithest murmurings
Comes from his Alpine fountains :

XV.

And seen through this bright, dazzling rain
How fair is yon Carinthian plain,
A richly wooded park,
Where groups of birch with silver stems
Rise up, like sceptres of white gems,
Among the fir-clumps dark.

XVI.

Yet am I cast upon lost years ;
The Present is dissolved in tears ;
So is this bird empowered ;
An oracle upon the bough
He sits, through him the Present now
Is by the Past deflowered.

CLXVI.

BAMBERG.

I.

THERE are who blame sensations of delight,
Born of our happy strength and cheerful health,
As though we could lay by no moral wealth
From the pulsations of mere joyous might.

II.

How poor they make themselves who thus disown
The fresh and temperate body's right to wait
Upon the soul, and to exhilarate
The heart with life from animal spirits thrown !

III.

For me a very weight of moral wealth
 From the bright sun upon the ivy wall,
 And white clouds in the sky, doth gaily fall,
 Making my days a thanksgiving for health.

IV.

The whetting of the mower's scythe at morn,
 The odorous withering of the new-cut grass,
 Breeding I know not what enjoyment, pass
 Like a new world into my spirit borne.

V.

O there are harvests from the buoyant mirth
 Which hath such power my nature to unbind,
 Letting my spirits flow upon the wind,
 As though I were resolved into the earth.

VI.

When I have bounded with elastic tread,
 Or floated, without root, a frolic breeze
 Waked by the sunlight on the fields or seas,
 Moods of ripe thought have thence been harvested.

VII.

I stood upon the Michaelsberg; below,
 Into three cities cloven by the streams,
 Was ancient Bamberg, and the morning beams
 Had touched a thousand gables with their glow.

VIII.

Around, a dull expanse, did cornfields shine,
 The shallow Regnitz and the winding Maine
 Were coiled in ruddy links upon the plain,
 And lost beyond the pinewood's hard black line.

IX.

The radiance on the Minster roof was poured,
And then above the convent's dusky bowers
Sprung all at once the four illumined towers,
As though St. Michael had unsheathed his sword.

X.

I thought not, Bamberg! of thy bishops old,
The rich Franconian church, or abbots gone
To beard the emperor at Ratisbon,
With saucy squires and Swabian barons bold.

XI.

But there I stood upon the dizzy edge,
And saw a sight worth all the barons bold,
A woven web of purple and of gold,
A living web thrown o'er the rocky ledge.

XII.

It was a cloud of rooks in morning's beam,
Which, rising from the neighbouring convent trees,
With all their pinions open to the breeze,
Swam down the steep in one majestic stream.

XIII.

It was a purple cataract that flung
Its living self adown a rocky rent,
And midway in its clamorous descent
The rainbow-glancing morning o'er it hung.

XIV.

Some were of gold, which in a moment shifted
Into a purple or a brilliant black,
And some had silver dewdrops on their back,
Changing as through the beams the creatures drifted.

XV.

Beneath, the multitudinous houses lay :
The living cataract one instant flashed
Through the bright air, then on the roofs was dashed
In seeming shower of gold and sable spray.

XVI.

I watched with joy the noisy pageant leap
Into the quiet city ; and the thrill
Of health did so my glowing body fill,
That I would fain sail with it down the steep.

XVII.

I was beside myself ; I could not think :
A beauty is a thing entire, apart,
And may be flung into a passive heart,
And be a fountain there whence we may drink.

XVIII.

Ah me ! the morning was so cool and bright,
And I so strong, and it was such a mirth
To be so far away upon the earth,
That I was overflowed with sheer delight.

XIX.

Away, like stocks and stones, went serious thought,
Now buried in the foamy inundation,
Now through the waves of exquisite sensation
From time to time unto the surface brought.

XX.

I rescued nothing, for I had no power ;
And in the retrospect I dare to boast,—
I would not for a world of thought have lost
The animal enjoyment of that hour !

CLXVII.

THE DAILY TREE.

I.

QUEEN MARY said that on her heart,
 Engraven there as with a dart,
 Transferred by bitter thought,
 The name of Calais would be found
 In cypher legible and round,
 By meditation wrought.

II.

And I believe that through the eye
 The household forms, which round us lie
 In sweet and shapely mass,
 Things daily touched and seen and heard,
 By sympathetic power transferred,
 Upon the spirit pass.

III.

In childish days there was to me
 A yearly vision of the sea ;
 And now within my soul
 I never cease to see and hear,
 In wood or mountain, far or near,
 That estuary roll.

IV.

My mother's voice, from this fair world
Withdrawn long years ago, is furled
In my retentive ear,
And oft by sweet surprises taken,
I hear familiar accents waken
A startling echo near.

V.

I daily see an old Scotch fir,
Of such a beauty as to stir
My heart with joyous thrill:
My days would scarce be what they are,
If that tree were not always there,
A shadow soft and still.

VI.

It is a pleasure overnight
To think how morning's beams will light
Its fan-like summit airy;
And sure I am that it must lie
Pencilled upon my memory,
Moonlit, and visionary.

VII.

There must be pictured on my soul
Its ruddy and fantastic bole,
Where snaky lights glide down;
For fancy frequent vision weaves
Among its wiry, blue-green leaves,
And quiet plummy crown.

VIII.

And when the breath of evening rocks
That ancient tree with harmless shocks,
The two birds cradled there,
With sea-like murmurs round them, ride,
Their vessel anchored on the tide,
A sweet, love-mated pair.

IX.

I love thee, reverend old Tree !
For thou art verily to me
Like some kind household god.
What visitations of delight,
What aspects mutable and bright,
Hast thou not daily showed !

X.

O didst thou grow in sunken dell,
Within the sound of abbey-bell,
Hard by the cloistered square,
Like some illuminated book
Would be thy variable look
Unto the inmates there.

XI.

I would some monk of olden times
Had watched thee from the matin chimes
Until the compline rung,
And chronicled thy light and shade,
In hieroglyphic show displayed,
As thy broad branches swung.

XII.

Thou wouldst have been his world, a chaste
And sinless record for thy past ;
And yet a form to fear
And meekly think of, as a thing
That might its placid umbrage fling
Upon his tombstone near.

XIII.

I have seen morning on it fall,
And intersect its coronal
With silver lines on high,
And sunset clothe its giant limb
In huge bronze armour, bright and dim
In scales alternately.

XIV.

And when around its rugged waist
The twilight's roseate air is braced
In clasps of amethyst,
It were a sceptre most sublime
For fabulous kings of olden time,
Wielded by giant wrist.

XV.

And oft with transmutation slow
Have I beheld the rough stem glow,
Red gold without a stain,
When diligent wet mists come down
And, dripping from the feathery crown,
Burnish the bole with rain.

XVI.

And I have seen a weight of snow
On its strained branches drooping low,
Dividing the dense crown ;
Like cares from off an old man's heart,
All noiselessly the bent boughs part,
And the white flakes fall down.

XVII.

And often in the breathless noon,
Or else beneath the unclouded moon,
It is absorbed on high ;
But most I love its sable hue
Imbedded in the yielding blue
Of a translucent sky.

XVIII.

O quiet Image ! thou art lent
To be a moral incident
Each passing day to me,
In all I do and all I think
A gentle and restraining link,—
How much I owe to thee !

XIX.

The wind rose up : our dreary way
Through the Bavarian fir-woods lay,
Near Rothenburg's old wall ;
My own memorial fir-tree wrought
Deep in my heart, with anxious thought
Lest it that night should fall.

XX.

Ye wild north winds ! that o'er the length
 Of moaning heath collect your strength,
 That noble fir-tree spare,
 When all the laurel-borders through
 Your sad triumphal road ye hew,
 And rend the coppice fair !

XXI.

Be true to its old anchor, Earth !
 That it may long a moral mirth
 Within the vale abide !
 When I am gone I would that ye
 Should still enjoy that princely tree,
 Kind Hearts of Ambleside !

 CLXVIII.

TO MY READER.

YOUNG Reader ! for most surely to the old
 These loose, uneven thinkings can but seem
 Unlife-like and unreal as a dream,
 O ! judge not thou that I have been too bold
 With sacred teaching, or have done it wrong
 To give fair form or sweetness to my song :
 Nor be thou wearied with the changeful vision,
 As though, with laboured and unmeaning skill,
 I had but rifled fancy at my will,
 Or held her hidden order in derision.
 O far from that : these fitful strains keep blending,
 Poorly yet truly, strivings gained or lost,
 By one in whom two tempers were contending,
 Neither of which had yet come uppermost.

CLXIX.

THE CHERWELL.

A DESCRIPTIVE POEM.

SWEET inland Brook ! which at all hours,
 Imprisoned in a belt of flowers,
 Art drawing without song or sound
 Thy salient springs, for Oxford bound,
 Was ever lapse so calm as thine,
 Or water-meadows half so green,
 Or weeping weeds so long to twine
 With threads of crystal stream between ?
 Inglorious River ! I will be
 A laureate, self-elect, for thee.
 The quiet of this uncut field
 Fit room for minstrel-craft may yield ;
 And with my skiff beneath this bower,
 Thatched o'er with luscious elder-flower,
 No sound but my own murmur shall
 The local silence disenthral,
 Save when a coot at times may pass
 Between the blades of milky grass,
 Or with a momentary splash
 A rat between the tree-roots dash,
 Or, drowsy music ! sedge-stalks grind
 On one another in the wind.
 And thus to make his verse more free
 The river shall accompany
 The poet's voice, while up on high
 To their bright congress in the sky

The stars are trooping one by one,
Though Chiltern still detains the moon
To silver all his chalky side,
And o'er that sea of beech-wood ride.

O silent Cherwell ! once wert thou
A minstrel river ; thou didst flow
Gently as now, but all along
Was heard that sweet itinerant song,
Which thou hadst learnt in coming down
From the rich slope of Helidon,
The green-capped hill that overlooks
Fair Warwick's deep and shady brooks,
And blithe Northampton's meadow-nooks,
Tamest of Counties ! with a dower
Of humblest beauty rich, a power
Only by quiet minds obeyed,
And by the restless spurned,—scant shade,
And ruddy fallow, and mid these
Rare meadows, foliage-framed, which please
The leisure-loving heart, and line
Where the slow-footed rivers shine,
Upon whose reedy waters swim
The roving sea-birds, on the brim
Of flooded Nenna, in a fleet
With a golden lustre lit,
What time the short autumnal day
Sets o'er the tower of Fotheringay.
Not with the wild and echoing mountains,
Helvellyn's lone cloud-suckled fountains,
Or Langdale's trickling cliffs, or wells,
Heath-hidden, on Blencathra's fells,
Claimest thou kindred ; simple birth
Art thou, a thing of common earth !

A spot more verdant than the rest
 Discerned upon the hoof-marked breast
 Of modest pasture, mid the haunts
 Of men and cattle, to their wants
 Endeared,—there was thy cradle laid
 And not unsoothed by music, made
 In the clear spring, a prelude sweet
 To the artful strains and tinkling falls
 Wherewith thy swollen streams should greet
 Fair Isis under Oxford's walls.

Thence wert thou known to steer thy flood
 To pierce the mead and thread the wood,
 And there with curious curves to search
 The screens of elm for every church,
 Whose leaded roof and stunted tower
 Might lurk in some unthought-of bower.
 And thither didst thou wander down
 To lean thine ear in many a pool,
 Cinctured as with a mural crown
 Of jewelled tansey, rank and cool,
 Where trailing sprays of eglantine
 Flung from the hawthorn bushes twine,
 Taking fresh root beneath our feet
 Amid the plummy meadow-sweet:
 While summer shepherded the flocks
 And starry herds of lady-smocks.
 There, when the rustic folk were maying,
 Wert thou with right good-will delaying,
 Until "the deep and solemn rings,"*
 Should time anew thy vocal springs,

* "Famous ring of bells in Oxfordshire, called the Crossring." Note to Drayton's Polyolbion, Song XV., where "lusty Cherwell" is represented as a "curious maker," who sang the praises of the rivers at the nuptials of Thame and Isis.

And they rehearse the borrowed song
In every meadow all along
Till thou shouldst mate thy breezy swells
With the full peal of Oxford bells.

Yes—thou wert tuneful once: that day
Be witness, when the rivers lay

To their own praises proudly listening,
And Chiltern's son, the boyish Thame,
To wed the Lady Isis came,

With his white marly waters glistening.
Thou sang'st the bridal hymn, and all,
The nimble Churn with sliding fall,
The linkèd streams of Coln and Leech,
And Yenload's darkling forest-reach,
And Windrush, and all Cotswold springs,
Praised thee with blithest murmurings,
Praised thee and thy most tuneful air,
From flowery-meadowed Cisseter,
To where the tower of Iffley looks
Intent on Bagley's greenwood nooks.

Then wherefore do thy waters sleep
In these hushed meadows buried deep,
With lapse that scarce can stir the sedge
And irises upon thine edge?

Ah me! perchance the face of war,
Here seen long years ago, might scare
The pastoral powers and tuneful brood
Who nightly from the reedy flood
Breathed songlike whispers in the ear
Of Saxon hind belated near.

Thus o'er the earth are gentle things
By rude things here and there displaced,
While faith with kind reluctance clings
To vestiges well-nigh effaced.

'Twas strange the pomp of martial guards
Should vex thy green sequestered fords,
And brawling watchwords come and go
Where now thy summer currents flow,
And the old willow's bushy top
O'ershadows yon hoof-printed slope,
And twice an hour perchance, or less,
The swaying hay-carts, as they press
Through the deep stream and sinking road,
Pay tithe from out their odorous load,
Above unto the willow-bough,
And to the gliding stream below.
Still art thou mindful of the day
When Charles beheld the disarray
Of rebel foes upon the ridge
That swells behind Cropredy Bridge,
And parted streaks of crimson blood
Profaned the hayfields and the flood.
It was St. Peter's feast in June,
A day of fragrant rain : at noon,
Unbonneted and free, the king
Dined where a lusty ash did fling
A chequered shade upon the ground,
While the wet grass still sparkled round.
Yet, ere the querulous chimes rang three
Within the streets of Banbury,
Cleveland beneath the selfsame ash
Stood forth, and bade his horsemen dash
In angry charge upon the foe
Who thronged the Cherwell banks below.
Enough, meek Stream ! I will not wake
Thoughts of rude triumph here, nor break
The sylvan peace that suits so well
The spirit of the local spell.

Sweet, Cherwell ! are thy hawthorn tents
Fit havens for my summer boat,
And fair the lily-isles which float,
The stream's most touching incidents.
Gay regions are they, stretching o'er
A gleamy breadth, from shore to shore,
From off the shelving turf projecting,
Of broad-lipped leaves compact and bright,
With threads of water intersecting
The flats of green embossed with white ;
And stripes of yellow nuphar, drawn
In random lines across the lawn,
Intrude their rows of golden wedges,
Parting the fairy realm, like hedges,
To shires and baronies, whereon
Are set a court and garrison
Of ladybirds and brilliant flies
In green and gilded panoplies.
There have I watched the downy coot
Pacing with safe and steady foot
The surface of the floating field,
And, though the elastic floor might yield
In chinks, and let the water flow
In beads of crystal from below,
Yet was the tremulous region true
To that rough traveller passing through.
But, as a buoyant vision, breathed
From the poetic spirit, wreathed
In chastely blending hues, and wrought
With the strong tissue of rich thought,
Fades off before the cheerless gaze
Of cold and unimpassioned praise,
Yet cannot perish, but each hour
Is wooed into its place once more

By feeling hearts, o'er all the earth
Dwelling apart; so this sweet birth,
This meek and delicate creation,
From the calm, fertile stream outpoured,
Sinks like a graceful exhalation,
To be by genial spring restored,
Frail yet immortal, dying ever,
And ever born within the river,
A summer pageant, gay and fleeting,
Robed like a bride in vivid white,
Dispersed and broken by the greeting
Of the first keen autumnal night.

In flowery May or shady June
Oft have I spent a vacant noon
In Cherwell's matted hawthorn bowers
Or coves of elder, while the hours
In deep sensations of delight
Sped past me with the silent might
Of time unnoted, which for ever
Sweeps onward like a voiceless river;
And now and then a most sweet thought
Or outward beauty in me wrought
With such blithe trouble as to bring
The noontide's pleasant lingering
Most sensibly unto me: these,
Like the soft shaking of a breeze,
The pulse of summer in the trees,
Were my sole hours, my notes of time,
Joy striking joy, an inward chime
Of silent song, yet not the less
All resonant with cheerfulness.
There, stretched at lazy length, I read,
With boughs of blossom overhead,

And here and there the liquid blue
Of the smooth sky was melting through.
In tranquil parties o'er the field,
To gain what shade the boughs might yield,
The sheep were clustered in a ring
Beneath each hawthorn's fragrant wing :
Only they did not seek to share

The ample screen where I was laid,
Though I was fain they should repair

At peace with me to that broad shade,
That in mute converse with the creatures,
And gazing on their patient features,
I might recover some sweet sense
Of our original innocence ;

But in the light of human eyes
Their guided instincts recognise
Sin's presence, and in sacred fear
Though unalarmed, they come not near.

There—ah ! 'tis years since—did I pore
The old Greek idylls o'er and o'er,
Creating nooks of freshest green
By mild sea-bays, the fancied scene
Of those bright pastorals : but in sooth
They were less lovely than the truth,
Less lovely than the spots of lawn
Where I have mused in Greece, withdrawn
From all intrusion, the gay shock
Of childish voices, or the flock
Threading the cliff with plaintive bleating,
Or the wild goat's more gamesome greeting,
And where no sound but one could be,
The drowsy echo of the sea,
With scarce a wave upon its breast
Enough to rock a babe to rest.

Mid arbutus and gaunt stone-pine
The polished shafts of lentisk shine,
With braided boughs of cytissus,
And under-growths most odorous
Of true Greek thyme with pale pink eyes:—
Ah! many spots to memory rise,
Where beauty made the desolation
Tenfold more sad, a reparation,
So seemed it, of a tender sort
By nature offered, to support
Earth worn and weary with the wrong
Which sin hath wrought on her so long:
Thus gently pleading the defence
Of her mute scenes, to recompense
Her patient solitudes, intent
Thereby to set within our reach
This touching truth which it would teach,—
Man sins, but earth is innocent!

Thus oft upon the bank I lay,
In dreams begetting many a bay
Of desert Greece, to localize
Some idyll, while with still surprise
The modest, calm realities
Stole softly through my half-closed eye,
The native river gliding by,
The cradled lily's nodding flowers,
And Oxford's hazy line of towers,
The willow twinkling in the breeze,
The incense of the elder trees
What time the heats of noonday wooed
The bright and fragrant solitude,
Gentle recalls to summon back
My wanton heart, as though for lack

Of native beauty I had sought
For scenes which only live in thought,
And earth in plaintive answer brought
The sweet vicinity to mind
With gentlest urgency,—confined,
Yet oh how beautiful! Each token,
Like soft reproaches but half-spoken
By those we love, with eloquence
Mutely appealed to every sense
Against my dreamy landscapes; there
The brilliant texture of the air,
Clothing each form in purest white,
Filled to the brim that exquisite
Satiety of ear and eye
Which deep mid-summer can supply,
Just ere the autumnal gold invades
The twilight of her leafy shades.

There time set gently upon me
In tides of placid reverie,
With scarce a murmur of sweet verse,
And scarce a mood which could immerse
My heart in solemn thought, soft streams
Of most unfertile beauty, dreams
Of indolent delight. Alas!
Smoothly as summer seemed to pass,
Detached from every haunt of sin
While all was sunny peace within,
It was not innocent: for time
Hath functions awful and sublime,
And on its viewless lapse are traced
Stern chronicles of all the past,
A writing every sunset laid,
While heaven is still, within the shade

Of Christ's high Throne, one day to be
A part of the solemnity
And pomp of Judgment: endless Woe
Or endless Weal! to some a show
Of fiery cyphers, symbols dread
Of guilty things unpardonèd,
Of wilful ways and idle mirth
Unloosed by Holy Church on earth.
And some there are to whom that scroll,
Sad record still, may yet unroll
A fairer vision, dark and bright,
Like dawn o'er-mastering tardy night
In dubious streaks, with here and there
A firm and radiant character
To angel's eyes not new, but known
And recognised the Judge's Own.

O Time! O Life! ye were not made
For languid dreaming in the shade,
Nor sinful hearts to moor all day
By lily-isle or grassy bay,
Nor drink at noon-tide's balmy hours
Sweet opiates from the meadow-flowers.
O give me grace, dear Lord! to win
Thy pardon for my youthful sin,
For all the days, in woods embowered,
When currents of soft thought o'erpowered
With pleasant force the sense of duty,—
And gentle nature's harmless beauty,
Too much adored, gave birth to throngs
Of joys effeminate, and songs
Which sprung from earth, and like a breeze
Died wantonly among the trees,
Without a moral or a mirth
Above the passing bliss of earth!

But now doth evening's pensive wing
 Less of misleading beauty bring,
 And clothes insensibly the scene
 With sweeter, but more sober, green.
 The pageant of the noon gives place
 To evening's tenderness, a grace
 As soft, nay softer, and more holy,
 And with some tinge of melancholy
 Endear'd and chastened, and a balm
 Of palpable and breathing calm
 By songs of birds confessed, and flowers
 That wave more gaily in their bowers,
 And gentle kine that graze once more
 Spotting the misty pastures o'er,
 And flocks of rooks that settle down
 Upon the elms which gird the town.

And see the sun! How well he sets
 Behind those triple minarets
 Of silent poplar! All is still,
 But that one thrush upon the hill:
 And now and then a flight of wind
 The glassy current will unbind,
 Driving the ripples to the edge
 Among the spikes of rustling sedge.
 Now evening lends her rosy hue
 With liquid colors to bedew
 The hoary stone and chapel gray
 Where Austin's monks were wont to pray.
 And strangely in the crimson west
 Doth Atlas seem awhile to rest
 On the star-gazing tower,* where he
 For years hath stooped full wearily

* The figures (for I believe there is more than one) that support the globe on the Observatory, viewed from Cherwell, which lies to the

Bearing the world, in patient sign
 That He who bears it is divine
 And yet true Man ;—and in the heart
 Of many sunsets hath had part,
 Prompting that lesson to mine eye,
 While pictured on the glowing sky
 In dark colossal effigy.

O many an evening have I been
 Entranced upon that glorious scene,
 When silent thought hath proved too strong
 For utterance in tranquil song.
 There intermingling with the trees
 The city rose in terraces
 Of radiant buildings, backed with towers
 And dusky folds of elm-tree bowers.
 St. Mary's watchmen, mute and old,
 Each rooted to a buttress bold,
 From out their lofty niche looked down
 Upon the calm monastic town,
 Upon the single glistening dome,
 And princely Wykeham's convent home,
 And the twin minarets that spring
 Like buoyant arrows taking wing,
 And square in Moorish fashion wrought
 As though from old Granada brought,
 And that famed street, whose goodly show
 In double crescent lies below,
 And Bodley's court, and chestnut bower
 That overhangs the garden wall,
 And sheds all day white flakes of flower
 From off its quiet coronal.

east, have the effect of a single figure, seen in relief against the sun setting over Cumnor or Whyteham.

Methinks I see it at this hour,—
How silently the blossoms fall!

Strange scene it is which they behold,
Those watchmen on St. Mary's pile,
Who see the noiseless moonlight smile
On spires and pinnacles untold,
Whose ranks may baffle every eye
That vainly would their number know,
And roofs which rear the Cross on high
In grave and monitory show :—
Strange scene it is which mortal gaze
But rarely mounts on high to praise,
A region where for ever dwells
The tremulous throbbing of the bells,
Encircling every turret there
With close embrace of tuneful air,
While oft the very stones respire
With the deep anthems of the choir,—
A world above our world, a ground
Thus tenanted by form and sound,
A costly region, day and night
Laid open to angelic sight!

There, mid the shade scarce visible,
The suburb of the Holy Well
With low-browed Church doth seem to guard
The ancient city's northern ward ;
And barely might the eye discover,
Through the green umbrage stooping over,
The battlemented wall that bounds
The mitred Waynfleet's sumptuous grounds,
The sweet-brier court and cloistered way
And mimic glade where deer may stray,
And the two sunny angles where
The almond and the cypress are,

And, graceful three ! those brother trees
That meet and part with every breeze,
The birch that weeps upon the sward,
Yet with the plane-tree serves to guard
The light acacia's fluttering shade
In pearly pendants all arrayed.
And in the meadow-island there
As to the breeze the willows bare
Their silver sides, and wave about,
The practised eye may then find out,
Close-hidden, when the wind is still,
The weedy roof of Magdalen mill.

But now the leaves are darker grown,
And o'er the fields a shade is thrown
Of soft transparent gloom : the stream
Shines with subdued but stedfast gleam
Through the dusk veil of twilight air,
And the white lilies waver there,
Like distant lights borne up and down
In anchored ship or midnight town.
The stars are clear and strong, but soon
The light of the unrisen moon
With soft infusion through the sky
Mingles apace, and up on high
The stars wax dim, while purple night,
Thus weakened by the stealthy light,
Translucent grows as crystal bay
Of Midland Sea on summer day.
But now above the willow tops
That cluster there, a silvery copse
Which doth an earthy pool infold,
With prow and stern of ruddy gold
The crescent lifts itself, to ride
With Hesperus sparkling at its side

Almost in contact, night by night
Divided more and more, a slight
Yet mournful sign, as though it were
That in the worlds of upper air
Rude separations still might come
To souls in their eternal home.
But though our heart such vision grieves,
And though it visibly bereaves
The evenings of their special grace,
Yet had we but the gift to trace
The wisdom of the starry sky,
No gloomy types would meet our eye,
And to the signs so sweetly wrought,
By moon and stars, there should be nought
But kind interpretations given ;
For there are no farewells in heaven.

Behold ! as night succeeds to eve,
The owls with sombre plumage leave
Their cloisters in the hollow trees,
And shed sad voices on the breeze
All up the moonlit vale. The dew
Falls on the flowers which shed anew
Their simple fragrance : and the river
Far off in many a reach doth quiver,
Outstretching like a lucid creature,
Appearing scarce an earthly feature
Upon the nightly landscape, here
Embraced within some thicket near
In calm obscurity, and there
Emerging to the radiant air,
A coiled and gleamy flickering line
Among the meadows serpentine,
Broken by intervening boughs
Through which the lovely crescent glows

Upon the dimpled waters. Sweet
The wandering poet's eye to meet
Are quiet fields by moonlight seen
With groups of white, recumbent sheep,
Where elm-cast shadows dimly green
On the dew-beaded pasture sleep.

But now awhile on vale and hill
The loveliness of night is still ;
The beautiful mutations stop
On field and stream and dark tree-top,
Only the shadows somewhat shift,
And the bright stars a little drift
Across the sloping sky : so slow
The moving pageant seems to go
We might believe that for some cause
The spheres at midnight made a pause,
And heaven and earth in awe sublime
Stayed to receive new grants of time,
And new permissions to delight
The race of men with day and night.

Now in the east there is a stir
Of powers that wait to minister
Unto the sunrise, and a blooming
Prophetic of his far-off coming.
The sluggish spires of chilly steam
Are twisting o'er the silent stream,
And from the willow-grounds are breathing,
And round the haycocks slowly wreathing,
Until they stand, each side by side,
Within the vapor magnified,
Like dim and visionary things
Seen through the smoke of magic rings.
The air is waxing bright and chill,
Though yet the doubtful lark is still ;

And in the whitening sky the trees
Grow black and keen as day is breaking,
While here and there a creeping breeze
The huge dew-laden boughs is shaking.
And see! St. Mary's vane aloft
Glows like a star serene and soft,
And doth with secret influence reach
The sun whose rising it doth preach ;
As holy Church will once descry,
By power of her ascetic eye,
The Advent of her Bridegroom nigh.

So have I dreamed with pure delight
A visionary day and night
On Cherwell's banks : thus song could stir
In me a willing minister
To my sick brother. With a tear
I left behind the crystal mere,
Deep summer out upon the hills,
The dusky deans, the cool-breathed rills,
And, shaded in the tender gloom
And silentness of his sick room,
Hour after hour brought o'er my sense
A most pathetic influence.
The careful step, the voice subdued
My heart with meek advances wooed
To softer images ; while nigh,
Beneath the window, glided by
The earthy Cherwell, strangely shrunk
So long had thirsty summer drunk
Of its spare stream. And up the river,
I watched the radiant network quiver
Beneath the bridge ; and oft there came,
Swift as a meteor's shooting flame,
A king-fisher from out the brake,
And almost seemed to leave a wake

Of brilliant hues behind ; and couched
On the close sward the deer had slouched
Their heads, and watched the currents pass,
While ears and antlers in the grass
With restless movement twinkled. There
The elm swung lightly on the air,
And many a fickle willow drooped,
While the laborious current scooped
The moist earth from its roots, and wore
A deep beneath the o'erhanging shore,
A summer refuge alway cool,
Where in the dark sequestered pool
Among the fibres of the tree
The curious eye may often see
A little crew of silver dace
Self-prisoned in that shadowy place.
And sheets of lawn with verdant brows
Just glimmered through the veil of boughs.
Or in the sloping sunset twinkled
Like a smooth golden lake breeze-wrinkled,—
A long broad lake of meadow-grass,
Where winds and slanting sunbeams pass,
And intershot with gold and green
In fluted lines with rows between
Of gilded field-flowers that appear
Like ripples on a crystal mere ;
And that fair land-lake stiller lies
And better wins the wandering eyes
To fixed delight, than if the face
Of silent waters filled the place.

And nightly up the watery glade
By stealth the russet autumn strayed,
While here and there a leaf was seen
Forswearing summer's darksome green,

And every day a gem or two
Were freshly braided on the yew,
And yet so slowly it might seem
The wayward eye did rather dream,
If poet's eye could e'er misread
The least of nature's signs, which feed
His simple heart. And haunted so,
Watching the Cherwell daily flow,
I sang of him, his fields and flowers,
The transmutations of the hours,
The tranquil day, the starry night,
The alternations of delight,
Which on this simple river shower
Methinks a more than common dower
Of placid beauty : and meanwhile,
Though every form without did smile,
My tender office hourly wrought
A shade to blend with sunny thought,
And the sick-room itself could bring
Somewhat of pensive hallowing
For fancy's chastisement. Sweet Stream!
O mayst thou be a cheering gleam
Long unwithdrawn ; and when oppressed
By a sick spirit's sad unrest,
May nature's forms a fountain prove
For faith unfailing, and a love
That breeds submission ! May they bear,
It is no light unworthy prayer,
Such pure and blameless joy to me,
When I shall disenfranchised be,
Of rough heathside and open air !

And better still if I could lie
Waiting for death,—and azure sky,

Cool forest, and the keen-breathed hill,
 And freshening sounds of dashing rill,
 The long-loved cuckoo's woodland call,
 And the wildness of the waterfall,
 And holy ocean's solemn shore,—
 Might be uncoveted, nay more,
 All unremembered, and mine ear
 Be deaf to those kind neighbors near
 Who speak of sun and fields and air
 And garden flowers, as though they were
 A part of me, or they could be
 Where I am then,—on Calvary,
 A flowerless mountain, where the Cross
 My patient thoughts may well engross.

And better still if I could dare
 To pray the Saint's exclusive prayer,
 And with bold fervor ask of Heaven
 More thorns and griefs than it hath given.
 So might I lie, in love with pain,
 And, like a miser with his gain,
 Handle the aching limb, to feel
 More palpably how pangs can heal
 Sin's wounds, and how beyond all price
 The sweetness of self-sacrifice,
 And what strange pleasures pain may bring
 As being a holy Christlike thing,
 And the repentant soul how still
 Beneath the weight of God's sweet Will.
 So might I lie, in saintly strait*
 Whether to sue for death or wait

* S. Theresa. *Pati et mori*. S. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi. *Patire e non morire*. The latter Saint on her death-bed uttered these remarkable words:—*Sappiate che l'esercitio del patire è cosa tanto pregiata e nobile, che il Verbo trovandosi nel Seno del suo eterno Padre, abbondantis-*

That I might suffer more, and bear
 The Cross a little further, dare
 A little more to match the Road
 Of Dolours which our Saviour trod.
 So might I lie, in peace how deep!
 So, like an infant, fall asleep,
 While suffering cradled me to rest,
 Like Jesus, at our Lady's breast.

 CLXX.

ON THE RAMPARTS AT ANGOULEME.

WHY art thou speechless, O thou setting Sun?
 Speak to this earth, speak to this listening scene
 Where Charente flows among the meadows green,
 And in his gilded waters, one by one,
 The inverted minarets of poplar quake
 With expectation, until thou shalt break
 The intolerable silence. See! he sinks
 Without a word; and his ensanguined bier
 Is vacant in the west, while far and near
 Behold! each coward shadow eastward shrinks.
 Thou dost not strive, O Sun, nor dost thou cry
 Amid thy cloud-built streets; but meek and still
 Thou dost the type of Jesus best fulfil,
 A noiseless revelation in the sky.

simo di ricchezze e delizie di Paradiso, perche non era ornato della stola del patire, venne in terra per questo ornamento, e questo era Dio, che non si potea ingannare. They arose perhaps from a confused remembrance in her mind of a wonderful passage in the eleventh chapter of Tauler's Institutes.

CLXXI.

THE OLD FRENCH TELEGRAPHS.

I.

ON many a treeless knoll and lofty church,
 Or on the unsteady fabric of a keep
 More than half ruined, or a natural steep,
 These wizard ministers of science perch,
 Like some dark birds that for awhile alight,
 To dress their pinions for a longer flight.
 For such against the cloudless azure seem
 Their long black fans, now raised as if to soar,
 Now slowly furled as though the flight were o'er:
 Mute, mute and busy, even like a dream,
 Telling a stirring tale, and yet as still
 As the sweet stars, or with a murmuring
 Soft as the wafture of a stockdove's wing,
 Or breeze that chafes the poplars on the hill.

II.

What though it write its ciphers on the sky,
 With graceless gesture, yet that wondrous Hand,
 Waving from steep to tower across the land,
 Annulling space, apt symbol may supply
 To clothe grave thoughts withal: from Calais gate
 To old Bayonne, from Alps to Pyrenees,
 Yon silent words outstrip the wind, and freight
 The slanting sunbeam with their messages.
 Such are the signals, beckoning night and day
 Through the wide camp of Angels that essay
 Even now this glorious kingdom to recast
 With patient art in faith's magnificent mould,
 To make it saintly as the France of old,
 And rivet once again its broken past.

III.

God speed the blissful work, thou famous land !
 And do not thou the unearthly change reprove ;
 Since He, who left thee with reluctant love
 To thine own ways, again puts forth His Hand.
 O France ! all license gained is but a loss
 Of liberty ; and thou wert then most free
 When thou wert proud, with blameless pride, to be
 Nought but the foremost vassal of the Cross.
 Is it the Midland Sea, or do I hear
 Celestial converse in the olives near ?
 " Our task is half complete : the Civil Power,
 Outworn with ills which it hath overcome,
 Falls back upon the Holy Church, and Rome
 In trembling expectation waits the hour ! "

CLXXII.

CONSTANTINOPLE, OR NEW ROME.

FROM THE HILL ABOVE THE MOSQUE OF EYOUB.

I.

SWEET-BREATHING May is on the Golden Horn,
 And that can be no star which I behold
 Fixed in the cloudless noon, a spot of gold
 Bright as the single orb which doth adorn
 The rosy flush of morn.

O that it were an emblem half so chaste,
Or one which to a Christian stranger's eye
Read no reproachful comment on the past!
See, how it shines, how starlike up on high
In its tranquillity!

It is the prophet's Crescent mutely gleaming,
And far across the blue Propontis streaming
From St. Sophia's stately cupola;
And I, all wrapped in melancholy dreaming,
In spite of sunny May,
Could weep the hours away
For ages past, which to my vision rise
With solemn pomp of bitter memories.

II.

Here, in sweet Eyoub, May's scent-laden breath
Steals through the cypress vistas faint and cool,
And gathered round me are the beautiful
And soothing sights of this voluptuous faith,
Veiling the woe of death.
The minarets with gleamy shafts repose
Within the green embraces of a plane,
Whose lower boughs a very realm of rose
With countless links of flower doth interchain,
And mounting blends again
With pendent bowers of quince, all blossoming,
White as a snow-wreath in the eye of spring,
Whose lithe twigs trail in fringes on the ground;
And flights of sacred pigeons on the wing,
And turtles heard all round,
As though a natural sound
From the sad cypress breathed, my fancy wooed,
A paradise of earthly solitude.

III.

See, how the cypress fastens on the steep
With its red starting roots, and slanting throws
Its sable spires in endless leaning rows,
Just tremulously stirred when breezes creep
By fits from off the deep !
The pointed arch, the floor of withered leaves,
The architecture of the sombre glade,
The nightingale doth claim ; and there he grieves,
Well pleased to have that night-by-day, the shade
Perpetually made
By the dusk foliage for his shrinking eye ;
And there he dwells, renouncing the blue sky
For ever, and with mournful heart beguiles
His penitence of life-long melody ;
And in the shadowy aisles
The sun though green mists smiles,
Save when the wind may part the graceful plumes,
For eve to gild the turban-headed tombs.

IV.

Not weary is the weight of sober thought,
When we can read in nature's genial eye
An answer to our own solemnity,
And all the images around, untaught
By our own mood, are fraught
With an inherent sadness. Yet, oh never
Was there a spot on earth where melancholy
Should be more sued with purpose and endeavour
And greedy welcome, or should be more wholly
A growth of nature, solely

And deeply spiritual, than the glooms
 Of these cool leafy crypts, whose airy plumes
 Speak low as if endued with some dim sense
 Of what they symbolize ! There, mid the tombs
 I lie, and viewed from thence,
 In contrast most intense,
 Doth the poor desecrated city seem
 All beautiful and clear as childhood's dream.

v.

Not the soft transit of a summer cloud
 Doth interrupt that eastern show : the sea
 Reflects the unstained heaven, and airs are free
 To bend the falling fountains in the proud
 And jealous screens that shroud
 The mosque's refulgent domes ; and in the limes,
 Which gird Suleiman's cloister, from his cell
 The stockdove emulates the lispings chimes
 Of the Propontid breeze, or rustling swell
 Born of the invisible
 And restless spirit of the Euxine. There
 The sweet creation, innocently fair,
 In nought doth its magnificent office miss :
 The blessing circulates through sea and air,
 And the original bliss
 Of earth unfettered is ;
 Yet o'er the heart a humbling shade is cast,
 While thought confronts the present with the past.

VI.

A ceremonial comes ! Before mine eye
A twin procession through the tombs doth press,
With angel pursuivants, in silentness.
Slowly the phantom-pageant glimmers by,
The twofold destiny,
Dimly impersonated, of old Rome,
Mother and mistress of the western world,
And this fair city, Constantine's new home,
A Christian vision suddenly unfurled
When the false gods were hurled
From their foul thrones. See how the figures climb
The hill of Eyoub in array sublime,
And yet with difficult slowness, like the old,
Laic or priestly, who at holy time
Are fain to be enrolled
In some procession, bold
In heart, but soon heat-stricken left and weary
Outside the portal of the sanctuary.

VII.

So seemed those destinies but half fulfilled,
For each in working out its doom had faltered,
And, once again renewed, had swerved, and altered
The orbit wherein God its mission willed ;
And each methought had spilled
Somewhat of the quick life which had been given
Unto them for an instinct, oft impelling
Their awful fortunes, like the Hand of Heaven,

Across the unwilling earth,—a strange indwelling
 Mysteriously swelling
 Through the tumultuous records of the past:
 In more than mortal mould their deeds were cast,
 Cities anointed to a singular doom
 And in a special law of fate embraced:
 Yet, ah! thou, pagan Rome,
 And thou, bright eastern home!
 Ye both have failed, world-stricken left and weary,
 Short of the ends which were your sanctuary.

VIII.

If we believe no more than what we see,
 How undivine is earth! If to the sense
 There be no seams of mighty Providence,
 No lucid furrows by some past decree
 Worn on the land or sea,
 Is not the world a cipher we have lost?
 Nay, rather let us in her cities kneel,
 Pilgrims not idly borne from coast to coast,
 And kiss the footprints of the Invisible,
 Which haply we may spell
 In vision true, inscriptions half effaced,
 Where with His Church in ancient times He passed;
 And let us sink in adoration down
 Before the dark prophetic shadows cast
 On destined field or town,—
 Through sin there earthward thrown,
 Here for awhile drawn backward at the prayer
 Of the weak saints who thrones and states upbear.

IX.

Hail, mighty Rome, that in the panoply
 Of thy past greatness still art bravely clad!
 Slowly didst thou emerge from out the shade,
 Till thou hadst filled the terror-stricken eye
 Of wide humanity:
 Yet not from the majestic heathen ruin
 Of thy first self couldst thou e'er extricate
 Thy second life: for there was no undoing
 The yet unsated curse which doth await
 Thy lingering secular State;
 Albeit Christ's Holy Church, upon thy hill
 A sojourner, detains a blessing still,
 And woos the impending wrath awhile to pause.
 Dread city! yet she doth but half fulfil
 Her office, while she draws
 By mediæval laws
 The Church and World augustly into one,
 And, for men's sins, leaves the grand work undone.

X.

See this fair birth of British Constantine,
 Which, like a sweet disdainful vision, loth
 To brook the tardy pace of common growth,
 Sprang from the shore, even as a quivering line
 Of sudden lamps doth shine
 Upon a festal night! And there advanced,
 The very outpost of the Christian East,
 Like a memorial beacon-fire it glanced

Through the vexed ages, till the light decreased
Slowly from less to least.

A sign might this uncradled city be
Of the new power and virgin unity,
Wherewith the founder hoped to recement
The fissures in the outworn majesty
Of ancient Rome, intent
To make that element
A trick of State: there! see the type unfurled!
The Church brooks no alliance with the world.

XI.

Ah, how the past is crowding on mine eyes;
A stirring maze with nodding figures blent,
Like rings uncleared before the tournament!
Through all the streets I hear the midnight cry,
When Arius from on high
Was struck; and down into the cypress gloom,
Hailing the mystic colors, strangely fall
The fourfold clamors of the Hippodrome:
And with wild surge outside yon bulging wall
The Latin armies call
For entrance: and amazed I hear the clash,
And see the foamy war-horse madly dash
Across the pavement, like a mirror, lying
Around the altar, and the lamplights flash
Upon the virgins flying,
And the rude conqueror crying
"For God and Mahomet," while at the word
Sophia's Angel sheathes his guardian sword.

XII.

O scene thrice beautiful ! the tier on tier
 Of mulberry-tinted houses by the spires
 Of cypress intersected, and the fires
 Of countless crescents topped, while, like a mere,
 The blue sea murmurs near.
 O'er terrace, tower, and gleamy-roofed kiosk
 A dipping cloud of foliage lightly swings,
 And on that cypress thicket by the mosque
 The royal fleet its crimson pennants flings,
 Like magic blossomings
 Wooded from the sombre trees by sunny May.
 The fair Seraglio Point appears to sway,
 Like a trim galley, at her anchorage
 Between two seas. Ah me ! on such a day
 From out the bright mirage
 We scarce can disengage
 Sunshine and shadow, doubtful if it be
 True city or an eastern phantasy.

XIII.

There is in this fair spot a Turkish faith,
 Which prophesies, though in its own despite,
 And is unto my wandering hopes a light,—
 That they with calmer grace can bow to death,
 Secure to lie beneath
 The hallowed soil of Asian Scutari :
 Europe, to whose impatient skirts they cling,
 Once more a bodily Christendom shall be,
 And on the Bosphorus shall sweet bells ring
 With ancient welcoming.

Like faith is mine ; though on the flowery steeps,
By oath detained, Sophia's Angel weeps
O'er the imperial city's demon-trance ;
Yet his kind, prescient vigil there he keeps,
And with unruffled glance
Looks o'er the dim expanse
Of Euxine, where the vast prophetic scroll
The patient North doth visibly unroll !

CLXXIII.

A COLD DAY IN MAY.

I.

Spring ebb'd into the lakes and streams,
Or to the earth's warm heart ;
And stalk and leaf, as with a dart,
Were pierced by winter's backward gleams ;
O May ! O treacherous May ! these months are
very dreams.

II.

The clattering winds above me rolled,
Like chariots in a flight ;
The sky was veined with blue and white,
With here and there some cheerless gold ;
The very brightness was no joy, it was so cold.

III.

But ah! with those true southern eyes
And olive-shaded brow,
Beneath the half-clothed linden bough,
A boy begins his melodies:
And now I live and breathe in pure Italian skies.

IV.

How vine-like is yon eglantine!
How genial grows the day!
And see! up Rothay's gleaming way
How sweetly Arno's waters shine;
And thou, dear Fairfield! art a well-known
Apennine!

V.

Thus cold is manhood's summer day;
And grace perchance may be
In part the blissful memory
Of Christian childhood's marvellous ray,
Ere the bad world had scared celestial sights away.

VI.

Our penance, then, doth but retrace
A former road; we see
The scenes reversed, and, it may be,
Dim through our tears; and what is grace
But Heaven's lost song on earth, most sweetly out of
place?

CLXXIV.

THE FOUR GOSPELS.

I was in vision in a drear old place,
 Where bodied and unbodied voices ranged,
 And where the outward semblance hourly changed
 From a huge vacant minster, to the face
 Of a lone valley mid the rock-strewn hills ;
 And now it was the wind within the nave
 Which spoke to me, and now the murmuring
 wave,
 Catching the boughs that drooped upon the rills :
 Yet, whether it were mountain-vale, or shrine
 By cheerful ordinance untenanted,
 The vision was but single, and outspread
 In various unity like things divine.
 And though its pictured forms and mystic tongue
 Were strange to me, and though my barren sense
 Was all unwrought to such intelligence
 By stern ascetic life, yet while it sung,
 Pouring forth strains of sweetness too profound
 To be an earth-born song, my spirit drunk
 Deep of the fertile waters till they sunk
 Within my heart, and for a season drowned
 The world and sin ! Ah me ! I feel them now,
 Waking with strength refreshed from that short
 sleep :
 So will I strive once more my soul to steep

In that wild song, and with the prophet go,
Not unalarmed, by Chobar's radiant banks,
 And, kneeling far aloof in reverent fear,
 In spirit bid the holy man go near,
And softly sing what of cherubic ranks
He haply may behold, where o'er his head—
 O Lord, that I had faith that sight to see,
 Which o'er my head this hour I know to be !—
The inner Heavens are visibly outspread.
But hark! the song begins, while to the north
 The priestly bard, o'er dim Chaldean plains
 And misty brooks, his eye of rapture strains,
And lo! a cloudy whirlwind driving forth!
He sings! he sings! how by the river side
 From out the self-infolding Cloud there came
 An amber brightness, wings and wheels of flame,
And Four mysterious creatures, many-eyed,
With lamps that ran forth from them and returned;
 As when the clouds are every moment riven,
 Then seem to catch their flashes back to heaven,
Even so the lightnings of that vision burned;
And underneath their wings, but half concealed,
 A human hand was resting, which might seem
 To give sweet right to draw that waking dream
Unto ourselves, as though there were revealed
Therein the fortunes of our fallen race,
 And what great things might haply yet be ours,
 More than retrieving Eden's perished bowers,
With Four fresh streams of more than Eden's grace.

CLXXV.

THE CHURCH DIAL.

I.

Beneath me was the misty sea,
 O'er which a beetling summit hung,
 And, half way up, a blasted tree
 With creaking branches swung :
 The yellow crowsfoot blossomed there,
 And juicy samphire to the bare
 And lean rock clung.

II.

And sweetly to the very edge
 The soft and thymy greensward crept,
 And, hanging slightly o'er the ledge,
 Perpetually wept
 With drippings from a hidden spring,
 Heard only when the murmuring
 Of ocean slept.

III.

There, almost stooping o'er the wave,
 A rustic chapel stood ; below
 The sea had hollowed out a cave
 With labour long and slow ;
 And it was plain that any shock
 That church from off its brow of rock
 Might overthrow.

IV.

And many a simple heart would grieve
 At this rude sacrilege of time,
 Who loved for prayer, at morn or eve,
 The chalky downs to climb,
 While to their litanies the wave,
 With its eternal thunder, gave
 Response sublime.

V.

So plaintively the soft sea wailed,
 So blue and breezy were the skies,
 So tranquilly the white ships sailed
 In pomp before my eyes,
 The very sweetness of it all
 Did there my willing spirit call
 To moralize.

VI.

The dial on the chapel side
 With ivy tendrils was entwined,
 As though the flight of time to hide
 Were office true and kind ;
 While, on the breath of ocean borne,
 The restless shoots in playful scorn
 Waved unconfined.

VII.

This incident, the quiet hour,
 The sanctity of that lone place,
 Conspired to give the sight a power
 Of true pathetic grace ;
 And, as I gazed on it, methought
 That somewhat of a sign was wrought
 For me to trace.

VIII.

For I interpreted the gesture,
 To illustrate how holy faith
 Was the pure soul's unfading vesture,
 The Saint's immortal wreath ;
 And, with significance sublime,
 It taught how faith abolished time
 By killing death.

IX.

Mute preacher ! pensive evergreen !
 O may I learn, this day, from thee,
 The obscure sage of this lone scene
 Hard by the mighty sea,
 How faith may, through Another's merit,
 For all the sons of time inherit
 Eternity !

CLXXVI.

TO THE ROTHAY

WHEN ITS COURSE WAS CHANGED, AND THE WRITER WAS ABOUT
 TO LEAVE ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

PSALM XXXVI. 5.

Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in Him, and He will do it.

GENTLE Stream, that from the mountains
 Here invokest many a rill,
 While two lakes thy channel fill,
 Lading from their own sweet fountains
 Waters which for thee they hoard,
 In softly throbbing pulses poured !

Gentle Stream! I mourn for thee,
And the pleasant liberty
Guiding once thy twinkling feet
Down the vale in measures fleet
And mazy circuits; all is o'er,
Thou must wander forth no more,
Compassing the meadow-lands
With silver links and watery bands,
Quickening noonday's loitering breeze
Languid grown mid sweetnesses
Of drowsy flowers, or by the trees
In the solid summer shade
A silent captive haply made.
All is o'er; thy various strain
Never shall be heard again,
Mimicking old ocean's shock
Against some puny cape of rock,
Chanting here from side to side,
There by lisping boughs supplied
With a tremulous response
When thou dost thy waves ensconce
In pools unruffled, deep and still,
Where thou hast gnawed into the hill
Hollow chambers mouldering ever
With soft splash into the river,
Unless the damp their sides emboss
With green ligaments of moss.

All is o'er; a channel rude
Straight among the rocks they hewed,
Walls along the banks they led,
And, by trenching deep thy bed,
Bade the hurrying stream absorb
Peaceful bays where many an orb

Of silent star was sweetly glassed
In the moonless midnights passed.
And with expectation vain
Couched upon yon marshy plain,
Oft the valley's ear hath grieved,
Of her music thus bereaved,
And the interchange once brought her
Of broken fall and sleeping water.

Now along the banks I roam,
Soon to leave my mountain-home,
And the melancholy thought
Hath an inward shadow wrought,
From beneath whose covert, hills,
Wintry woods, and frothy rills,
And the lake-like meads, appear
To my spirit doubly dear,
And doubly beautiful; arrayed
In a vivid light and shade
So strangely palpable, one might
Deem the old habitual light
A visionary landscape worn
By the true hills, a mask now torn
From the jealous face of things
By the strength of sorrow. Springs
Of a tender sadness, shy
Of all outward sympathy,
Have the truthful gaze renewed,
And the keenness of the mood,
Wherewith I, a stranger, first
In these natural pageants nursed
Inwardly the dubious strife,
Whence chance and purpose drew the life
Of poetry:—and from the skies
And mountains, or my mental eyes,

Scales seem to fall, and wondrous light
Dawns, like day, while to my sight
Are, like a revelation, given
A sweeter Earth, a plainer Heaven!

By this empty bed I mourn,
Where the stream was wont to turn
With a blither, louder strain
Further o'er the rushy plain
Its tripping waters; and I hear
A voice to warn, a voice to cheer,
Like a double echo, sigh
Up the channel green and dry.
Still within this meadow-reach
Thou hast gentle lore to teach,
Studios River! nor art thou
Mute in thy dishonour now.
But thou hast a parting word
Which my soul doth well to hoard,
As a monitory token
Of a love so long unbroken,
A serious earnest of that tie
Of poetic amity,
Which hath been twixt thee and me.

Preach on, sweet Rothay! while I listen,
And behold thy waters glisten
With a sentient purpose filled,
And the birch-trees banners stilled
By the slumbrous frost! I hear
The spirit of the river near,
In the sliding shallow singing,
Hark! what farewell she is bringing!
Sorrow-laden I translate
Her meek wisdom with a weight

Of solemn language that is brought
Rather from my inward thought,
More abstruse than may beseem
The lessons of a mountain stream,
But self-disturbance hath the skill
To steer the words which way it will.

“By the love I have for thee,
Poet! list awhile to me.
From the woodlands and the hills
And the icy-fettered rills
Behind their masks of crystal throbbing,
While the frost is hourly robbing
All their fountains, from the lakes
And withered fern among the brakes,—
From thy favorite images
Of the white snow-laden trees,
And the summits hoar that seem
In the wind to flash and gleam,
And with silver-dusted snow
To smoke like beacons, while below
Upon the unwary shepherd's head
Arbitrary showers are shed,
Though the skies are cold and clear
And no clouds are hovering near,—
From the yew trees on the scar
Oft inflamed by moon or star
Snared within their dusky plumes,
Which the radiance half consumes,
Or transfigures, while the lights
Climb the heavens on starry nights;—
From the temple of old fir,
Where the restless stockdoves stir
Through the summer midnights, ranging
Mid the leafless boughs, and changing

All their perches hour by hour
In the gently rocking tower,
Like unquiet sleepers, fraught
With the poison of sad thought ;—
From the ragged heron isles,
Where the slanting sunset smiles
Into the nests, and on the boughs
The creatures sit in drowsy rows,
With their plumage doubly bright,
Slumbering in the golden light,—
From the cataracts, all and each,
I bring into this meadow-reach
Farewells for thee ; and be it mine
To teach thy heart by this grave sign
Of my dishonour, how to greet
Those new duties thou must meet
By far other streams than this,
In a life of toil-worn bliss,
Hallowed cares and labours pure,
And in usefulness obscure
Shepherding thy little flock
To the shadow of the Rock
Of Ages, in the desert set
As a refuge from the heat,
And a shelter from the eye
Of dark spirits prowling nigh.

Sweetly wandering from my way,
Once I paused in many a bay,
By a leaning oak half spanned,
Or a drooping wych-elm fanned,
Or at noonday clouded o'er
By a nodding sycamore,

While the sun fell through the eaves
Of the ever-twinkling leaves,
Playing through the weedy rents
Of the underwater tents,
By cool-rooted alder trees
Pitched far down, with lattices
Where light and limpid water pour
And weary not hour after hour.
Then was I beautiful, and then
Purchased looks of love from men
And praises from the poets, glad
When gladness wrought in me, and sad
Whensoe'er of frolic weary,
I, like men, took sanctuary
In opposites:—but now, in awe
Of man, I swerve from that sweet law
Of nature, and have thereby lost
All the charms that were my boast.
This then be the warning given;—
While the single eye of Heaven
Doth the preacher train and school
With its ever-present rule,
In his mouth the harshest lore
Hath a secret winning power,
Springing oft he knows not whence,
And transcending barren sense:
But should he chance before the gaze
Of man to crouch, or, for the praise
The world would offer, to divert
The sacred stream of truth, and hurt
The pastures of the little sheep
He hath been ordained to keep,
From his preaching will depart
All that magic of the heart,

All the store of simple spells
Whereby faith works her miracles.

Yet from this injurious wrong
Of my poor stream may Christian song
Cheerful wisdom thus distil;—

If I do but now fulfil
Half mine office to the eye
Of the thoughtless wandering by,
To the Angel or the Saint
My disfigured type, though faint,
Doth a loftier meaning bear,
Than when men vouchsafed to spare
All my pastoral wanderings free
In their first integrity.

Well it seems to forward youth,
Thus to carry holy truth
Here and there, as it may choose
With wilful virtue, till it lose,
For every praise of man it gains,
Skill in truth's celestial strains.
Good self-sought is barely good,
And occasion too much wooed
Is no angel; but a cheat
Comes in disguise to counterfeit
Her presence, and with fatal wiles,
Self-knighted warriors thus beguiles
To fearful falls; and what is beauty
But too oft the foe of duty,
Veiling this grave truth: Self-will
Turns our very good to ill;
And virtuous purpose most of all
Needs the bridle and the thrall
Of adverse circumstance, and place
Ungential to our special grace,

Lest the unthrifty sand be done
Ere yet the trial Hour is run ?

Yon mighty lake's sweet-watered sea,
Minstrel ! is my eternity ;
And by duty narrowed now,
Straight unto that rest I flow,
Well content for such an end
The price to pay, full many a bend
Of tuneful water to forswear
And sweet delay, one only care
Being left unto me—to prepare
To mingle with the blessed peace,
And mingling with it to increase
Its blessedness, as souls perchance
The rest of other souls enhance,
Gently gathered, one by one,
After each day's battle done.
So with thee, when duty spoils
Wilful grace with Christian toils,
And confines in narrow bed
Thy young life, be comforted.
Though less lovely it may be,
The road is shorter to the sea.
If it gives through public strife
A rougher aspect to thy life,
Still the end is nearer brought,
The end for which thy life hath wrought.
Self only dies ; the gasp of death
What is it, but the earliest breath
We draw on that eternal shore,
Where there is life for evermore ?

Farewell ! and when far off, O think
Of spots still left on Rothay's brink

Unchanged ; where I with gurgling fall
Am laving still the sunny wall
Ivy-wimpled, and the breeze
Scatters from the road-side trees
Fragrant lime-flowers, and the feet
Of thy familiars daily meet
Between the bridges ; thus, when thou
Look'st o'er meads from Elton's brow,
Where the fourteen yew trees bound
The over-peopled church-yard round,
Or from off the grassy plot
Where the dwarfish cedars spot
The river's brink, and six church towers
In winter through the leafless bowers
Look on, and mid the summer green
To thee are present, though unseen,
I at summer noons shall bring
Broken waters there to sing,
Or beneath the tall boughs shading
My thin streams, be hourly braiding
My long weedy locks of green,
In the glossy shallow seen.
Beauty, too, shall be with thee
In the silver willow tree,
In the unbroken dome of sky,
And mighty plain which can supply
A bed whereon the sun may die
In glory, and the pomps of even,
And the breadths of starry heaven.
Grassy murmurs, too, shall wander
Where the Nenna doth meander,
Freighted oft with such sweet bells,
Whose music o'er the lowland swells

To many a farm ; thou shalt not want
A gentle river side to haunt,
For Nenna shall thy fancy bless
With her earthy silentness.

Blessed is the will subdued
Unto its lot, and fortitude
Which so refits the local ties
Once broken, and the sympathies
Dissevered, that they only brighten
What hath passed away, and lighten
Sadness of her idle dreams ;
And the heart more hallowed seems,
While the years new loves unfold,
Superseding not the old ;
For kind feeling hath a truth
Which outgrows not its first youth,
Feeding on its native power
Self-sustained ; the present hour
Is then most blameless when recast
In the feelings of the past.
Thus, while pious hopes and fears
Fill in the blank thy life appears
All suddenly to be, and win
Without disdain a light from sin,
Caution, scarcely falling short
Of being a virtue, shall consort
With thy new habits, and beguile
Thy spirit with approving smile.
Or if altered charms be slow
On thy jealous heart to grow,
A form on Nenna's bank shall talk
With thee in many a lonely walk,
An angel presence that will seem
Brighter than poetic dream,

An apparition that outstrips
 The vocal praise of minstrel's lips,
 Even the Spiritual Beauty
 Which is the Shadow cast by Duty.

CLXXVII.

THOUGHTS WHILE READING HISTORY.

“Narratione autem historica cum præterita etiam hominum instituta narrantur, non inter humana instituta ipsa historia numeranda est; quia jam quæ transierunt, nec infecta fieri possunt, in ordine temporum habenda sunt, quorum est conditor et administrator Deus.”

S. AUGUSTINE.

1.

THE PRESENT. 1.

MAGNIFY not the times in which we live:
 The Present is a double shadow cast,
 Part from the Future, partly from the Past,
 And deeply blended is the light they give.
 The shadow is across our spirits thrown,
 We know not how much further it hath gone.
 The great, ennobling Past is only then
 A misty pageant, an unreal thing,
 When it is measured in the narrow ring
 And limit of the Present by weak men.
 The Future is the open trench, the ground
 Whereon our deeds are built, wherein we cast,
 As though we did a reverend temple found,
 The corner-stones to build another Past.

2.

THE PRESENT. 2.

In truth, but his must be a purblind sense,
 To whom the solemn days in which we live
 No room for awe, no scenes of rapture, give,
 Or of historical magnificence.
 When for long years have men been so intent
 To march through change unto one steady scope,
 With hearts to dream, and energy of hope
 To force their dreams upon accomplishment?
 Yet, if there be no other grandeur here,
 Each Present hath a stirring shadow near,
 A magnifying halo o'er it cast,—
 The thought that this same strife of good and ill,
 Which we have helped with individual will,
 By time transferred, shall be our children's Past.

3.

USE OF THE PAST.

There is no bent of mind so vile, so weak,
 As that which on the glorious Past doth set
 In currents of inordinate regret;
 And with a sphere of dreams content, doth wreak
 Itself upon the love of beauty, raw,
 And not by lowly heart and patient thought
 To act or inward disposition wrought,
 Nor made obedient to the manly law
 Of diligent love, whereby men would recast
 For their own times the greatness of the past.
 But he, who to that temple shall intrude
 For purpose less beneficent than this,
 Shall be outlawed unto the barren bliss
 Of lifelong intellectual solitude.

4.

CHIVALRY.

They built a bridge, and bade the church supply
 The scaffolding, while they the keystone brought
 Of Honour most elaborately wrought,
 And hailed the new device with jubilant cry.
 Thenceforth could men in meek and quiet ways
 Pass o'er the rudeness of those difficult days.
 Bolder the arch had seemed, but that within
 The Church had left her scaffold undisplaced ;
 And to that age the edifice was graced
 By such memorial of its origin.
 But times came on, to whose fastidious mind
 That framework seemed uncouth ; and to the ground
 Went arch and scaffold :—so was Honour found
 Too weak to bear the tread of human-kind.

5.

ROMAN INFLUENCES.

Wading amid a sea of wind-stirred bloom
 Of some bright crimson heath-plant, there I found
 Upon a mountain pass in Noricum,
 Engulfed, one half in verdure, in the ground
 The other, a grey milestone of old Rome.
 Such admonitions in strange sort abound,
 Aliens, mid those romantic forms that stir
 Across the days of that chivalric past,—
 Relics whereby Rome's spirit hath recast
 And mastered their original character.
 For her abiding influence yet indents
 The face of things ; her very wrecks fulfil
 An office ; earth wears some expression still
 Of pagan Rome on her mute lineaments.

6.

CHIVALROUS TIMES. 1.

Beautiful times! times past! when men were not
The smooth and formal things they are to-day,
When the world, travelling an uneven way,
Encountered greater truths in every lot,
And individual minds had power to force
An epoch, and divert its vassal course.
Beautiful times! times past! in whose deep art,
As in a field by angels furrowed, lay
The seeds of heavenly beauty, set apart
For altar-flowers and ritual display.
Beautiful times! from whose calm bosom sprung
Abbeys and chantries, and a very host
Of quiet places upon every coast,
Where Christ was served, and blessed Mary sung.

7.

CHIVALROUS TIMES. 2.

Unlovely times! times past! when it was thought
That peer and peasant were of different earth;
When it was not believed that God had wrought
In both one human heart of equal worth,
One equal heart, which by the Saviour's Birth
And Passion, at the selfsame price was bought.
Unlovely times! times past! within whose womb
Rapine and pride and the unmanly jar
Of local feuds are ever heard at war,
Like midnight sounds within a bad man's tomb.
Unlovely times! when the sweet summer breeze,
A merry traveller wending through the land,
Found no fair farms and lonesome cottages,
Whose casements he might stir with his soft hand.

8.

CHIVALROUS TIMES. 3.

Oh! if ye would not have your spirits shorn
 Of the deep consolations of the past,
 Or drop the links, wherewith ye can make fast
 The Present to the Bygone, think no scorn
 Of those great times whose double aspect seems
 Like the revolving phases of our dreams.
 Could we step back from out this present stir
 Of good and ill, which interpenetrate
 In every land and age the social state,
 How dread would seem its twofold character!
 So we revere the past, when time hath furled
 The skirts of mist, and to our vision cleared,
 In luminous distinction, all unsphered,
 The adverse circles of the Church and World.

9.

BELGIAN TOWNS. 1.

Was it in many hearts at once, or one—
 What was the land, the place, the cause, the hour,
 When it first dawned in men, that there is power
 In Numbers, that the healthy streams which run
 In poor men's veins are red like other blood?
 O blissful dawn! the thoughtful and the good
 Do thee glad homage in these antique haunts,
 Where from ten thousand wills a Popular State
 Sprang like an arrow from a bow, elate
 Beneath the pressure of degrading wants.
 Here, in this street of Ghent, where evening smiles,
 The Church and Freedom seem but one great name,
 And surely they so deemed who reared these piles,
 As knowing whence and how their freedom came.

10.

BELGIAN TOWNS. 2.

Hail to the land of sumptuous abbeys, built
By royal-hearted burghers ! Feudal keeps
And tourney rings, where highest blood was spilt,
I pass, yet my unkindled spirit sleeps.
But all my powers with deepest reverence stir,
At wrong and suffering, and the trampling down
Of hill and dale, broad land and merry town,
Beneath a kingly heel or knightly spur.
See ! from the fettered people's hungry heart,
With tossing heat, and many an uncouth start,
Indignant patience is inspired to draw,
As from a holy womb, that wondrous birth,
That truest regal thing upon the earth,
The unimpassioned Sovereignty of Law !

11.

BELGIAN TOWNS. 3.

Law do I worship as a sovereign thing,
The rich man's lord, the poor man's vassal, here
In this dim street, where the town-hall doth fling
Quaint shadows on the grass-grown pavement near.
And can the scene around no depths unfold,
Gable and arch, bay-window, woodwork old ?
Do not the forms grotesque in silence wait
Upon the wise man's eye, themselves intent
To be the symbols of a Popular State,
Interpreting its fashion, growth, and bent ?
The streets claim kindred with each other ; skills
Of diverse trades and ages blend to be
One lucid type of that strong harmony,
Engendered of a thousand warring wills.

12.

THE CRUSADES.

In the long discipline of earth, not least
 We note how Europe, in those ages past,
 The burden of her martial spirit cast,
 With wise exorcism, far into the east ;
 And many a noble kingdom, self-relieved,
 Joyed in new joys, o'er holier sorrows grieved.
 Then localized affections grew unharmed,
 And home was felt, and sympathy, before
 Unknown, ascended to embrace the poor,—
 Meek wisdom learned by Europe thus disarmed.
 In this sweet respiration after strife,
 So ruled by Heaven, men's hearts began to draw
 To peace, the blissful order of calm law,
 And hallowing restraints of private life.

13.

OUR LADY IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

I looked upon the earth : it was a floor
 For noisy pageant and rude bravery,—
 Wassail, and arms, and chase, among the high,
 And burning hearts uncheered among the poor,
 And gentleness from every land withdrew.
 Methought that beds of whitest lilies grew
 All suddenly upon the earth, in bowers ;
 And gentleness, that wandered like a wind,
 And nowhere could meet sanctuary find,
 Passed like a dewy breath into the flowers.
 Earth heeded not ; she still was tributary
 To kings and knights, and man's heart well-nigh
 failed ;
 Then were the natural charities exhaled
 Afresh from out the blessed love of Mary.

14.

THE POOR IN THE MIDDLE AGES. 1.

It is the Past ye worship ; ye do well,—
 If the sweet dues of reverence which ye pay
 Be equally disposed, nor lean one way
 For lack of balance in your thoughts. To spell
 The past in its significance, to ponder,
 In the embrace of judgment, fear and love
 In the disguises of those days, should move
 More than the weak idolatry of wonder,
 Or beauty-stricken eye ; they should grow part
 Of the outgoings of your daily heart.
 And be not scared by show of kings and knights,
 As if those times were in such gauds embraced ;
 Remember that the people claim a past,
 And that the Poor of Christ have lineal rights.

15.

THE POOR IN THE MIDDLE AGES. 2.

They, in whose hearts those mighty times have
 wrought
 Most deeply, have upon their aspect gazed
 As on an éclipse, with their eye upraised
 Through the subduing mean of sombre thought.
 And then it is a very fearful vision
 To see the uncounted poor, who strayed forlorn
 With wrongs unrighted, and with natures worn
 To heartlessness through every day collision
 With arrogance and wrong. Proud knights, fair
 dames,
 And all the pomp of old chivalric names,
 Fade, like a mimic show, from off the past ;
 And to the Christian's eye ungathered flowers
 Of suffering meekly borne, in lowliest bowers,
 With solemn life fill in the populous waste.

16.

THE PAPACY.

That such a Power should live and breathe, doth seem
 A thought from which men fain would be relieved,
 A grandeur not to be endured, a dream
 Darkening the soul, though it be unbeliev'd.
 August conception! far above king, law,
 Or popular right; how calmly dost thou draw
 Under thine awful shadow mortal pain,
 And joy not mortal! Witness of a need
 Deep laid in man, and therefore pierced in vain,
 As though thou wert no form that thou shouldst bleed!
 While such a power there lives in old man's shape,
 Such and so dread, should not his mighty will
 And supernatural presence, godlike, fill
 The air we breathe, and leave us no escape?

17.

PETRARCH AND LUTHER AT ROME.

Mysterious Rome! thy very ills are fraught
 With somewhat of thy fearful destiny,
 So that the vision of thy sins hath wrought,
 Even like a curse, within the passer-by.
 Here gazed of old, with no religious eye,
 Petrarch the worldling; here the apostate monk
 Came ere his fall; and when they saw how nigh
 Good lay to evil, their base spirits shrunk,
 As from a touch-stone which could bring to light
 Unworthy natures that must walk by sight
 Through lack of trust:—and thus are sceptics made,
 By that half-faith which seeks for good unbound
 From ill; and hearts are daily wanting found,
 Upon the balance of that problem weigh'd.

18.

THE HUMILIATION OF HENRY IV.
AT CANOSSA.

It is a thing to be much dwelt upon,
And mastered in its length and breadth of thought,
That this strange deed hath verily been wrought
Before the face of men in times bygone,—
That in one place, and at one solemn hour,
The passing shadow of eternal power,
In momentary transit, deeply fell
On all the pride and pageant of the world
Within one person for that crisis furl'd,
To be eclipsed by things invisible.
Men brook'd the admonition, and they gazed
Like seers inspired, while in their souls they felt
That he who stooped was by submission raised
Near to the height of that to which he knelt.

19.

RIENZI AT AVIGNON.

Throughout the earth there is a kindred dream
Moored alongside of each reality,
A greatness, prayed for, and yet ne'er to be,
Save as the shadow lying by the beam.
Yet earth is rich in grandeur unfulfill'd :
Thereof comes hope, whereby hot hearts are stilled ;
And in that dream, as in a waking trance,
Great spirits walk, and by serenest law
From shadows unexplored they daily draw
The strength in which they battle with mischance.
Rienzi in the papal tower doth lie ;
His Livy and his Bible near him rest,
And in those symbols tangibly compressed,
Were Cola's dream and his reality.

20.

ORDEALS.

Faith owns the rude magnificence of thought,
Wherewith those venturous ages, in the dearth
Of homage due to law, as umpire brought
The Hand of Heaven to show the right on earth,
And so for God's interposition pined,
That they, in weal or woe, were quick to find
Foot-prints of marvel. Better to make sure
Of earth in Heaven, by training love and awe
To supernatural heights, than so to draw
Our Heaven within this maze of life obscure.
Yet oh ! how far beneath both moods are we,
Who from our place of exile fain would strike,
As an intrusive Presence we dislike,
The sweet forebodings of eternity !

PRINCE AMADIS.

A BIOGRAPHY.

CLXXVIII.

PRINCE AMADIS.

A BIOGRAPHY.

I.

PRINCE Amadis lay in a flowery brake,
 By the side of Locarno's silver lake :
 It seems a very long while ago,
 Or else it may be that time goes slow.

II.

Those were the days when the world of spirit
 Filled the old earth to the brim, or near it ;
 And marvels were wrought by wizard elves,
 Which happen but rarely among ourselves.

III.

The heart of Prince Amadis did not pant
 With an indwelling love, or blameless want
 Of chivalrous friendship, or thirst of power ;
 His youth was enough for its own bright hour.

IV.

He floated o'er life like a noon-tide breeze,
 Or cradled vapor on sunny seas,
 Or an exquisite cloud, in light arrayed,
 Which sails through the sky and can throw no shade.

V.

Wishes he had, but no hopes and no fears ;
 He smiled, but his smiles were not gendered of tears :
 Like a beautiful mute he played his part,
 Too happy by far in his own young heart !

VI.

His twentieth summer was well nigh past,
Each was more golden and gay than the last ;
The glory of earth, which to others grows dim,
Through his unclouded years glittered fresher to him.

VII.

And oh how he loved! From the hour of his birth,
He was gentle to all the bright insects of earth ;
He sate by the green gilded lizards for hours,
And laughed, for pure love, at the shoals of pied
flowers.

VIII.

As he walked through the woods in the cool of
the day,
He stooped to each blossom that grew by the way ;
He tapped at the rind of the old cedar trees,
When its weak breath had sweetened the evening
breeze.

IX.

He knew all the huge oaks, the wide forest's gems,
By their lightning-cleft branches or sisterly stems ;
He knew the crowned pines where the starlight
is best,
And the likeliest banks where the moon would rest.

X.

He studied with joy the old mossy walls,
And probed with his finger their cavernous halls,
Where the wren builds her nest, and the lady-bird
slumbers,
While winter his short months of icy wind numbers.

XI.

All things were holy and dear to his mind,
All things,—except the hot heart of his kind,
And that seemed a flower in a withered hood,
Which the cold spring cankered within the bud.

XII.

The wrongs of the peasant, the woes of the peer,
Ne'er wrung from the prince a true sigh or a tear;
The strife of his fellows seemed heartlessly bright,
Like the laurels in winter in cold moonlight.

XIII.

He cared for no sympathy, living in throngs
Of his own sunny thoughts, and his mute inward
songs;
And if in the sunset his spirit was weary,
Sleep was hard by him, young health's sanctuary.

XIV.

'Twould not have been so had he e'er known his
mother,
Or had had, save the green earth, a playmate and
brother;
For deep in his heart a most wonderful power
Of loving lay hid, like an unopened flower.

XV.

Ah! luckless it is when a spirit is haunted
By all kindly powers, but attractions are wanted,
Life's outward attractions, by calm, pensive law
Love, sorrow, and pity, from shy hearts to draw!

XVI.

Yet mid all the natural forms of delight,
Whose footfalls stole round him by day or by night,
He was pure as the white lily's dew-beaded cup,
Which, bold because stainless, to heaven looks up.

XVII.

His mind was a fair desert temple of beauty,
Unshaded by sorrow, unhallowed by duty;
A dream in a garden, a midsummer bliss
Was the youth, the bright youth, of Prince Amadis.

XVIII.

Prince Amadis lay in the chestnut shade
 Where the flickering light through the green leaves
 played,
 And the summer lake, with its blue heart throbbing,
 Chafed the white sand with a reedy sobbing.

XIX.

He saw not the hills through his half-closed eye,
 But their presence was felt like a spirit nigh ;
 To the spell of the noon-tide he gave himself up,
 And his heart overflowed like wine in a cup.

XX.

He smiled at the silence that stole o'er the day,
 While the singing birds slumbered upon the spray,
 Till moss-scented airs o'er the green sward did creep,
 And tremulous mallow-leaves fanned him asleep.

XXI.

And dreams whispered to him, the tongues of sweet
 flowers,
 Striking the chimes of the uncounted hours ;
 And, as though he were sinless, the wood-haunting
 creatures
 Bent o'er the sleeper with love in their features.

XXII.

Sleeping or waking, his vision was one,—
 That the knots of the world might by him be undone,
 That the Natures below and the Spirits above
 Might with man be confused in one Eden of love.

XXIII.

Beautiful dreamer ! how far hadst thou strayed
 From the love at thy doors by the pensive earth laid,
 And the household chains of our true love rent,
 Which were forged for the soul's enfranchisement !

XXIV.

The day drifted out, like the ebb of the ocean,
From the havens of earth with a quiet motion ;
And a cool flapping breeze grew out of the air,
Which the mallow-leaves fanned to the sleeper there.

XXV.

Prince Amadis rose from the flowery brake,
While, imaged serenely down in the lake,
The roseate sky, with gold bars freaked,
By a flight of wild swans was duskily streaked.

XXVI.

In a stiff-bending line through the rich sunset
They wavered like cloud-spots of glossy jet,
And with rude piping they marshalled their rear
In a phalanx above the tranquil mere.

XXVII.

There for one moment their huge wings they shake,
Then in wide spiral circuits drop down to the lake ;
The dark water gurgles, thus suddenly cloven,
In wakes of white bubbles interwoven.

XXVIII.

Are there deep instincts that lurk below
In those dipping breasts of driven snow ?
Or why do they steer their conscious way
To the Prince in the mallow-curtained bay ?

XXIX.

A pale-feathered cygnet was with them, and he
Swam centre of all the company,
And round him they anchored in that calm pool,
A vision solemn and beautiful.

XXX.

He wore on his head a black diadem,
 Looped to a clasp of orange gem ;
 His plumage gleamed in the dusk star-bright,
 Of purple but faintly muffled with white.

XXXI.

There needed no voices: Prince Amadis read
 A dream in that show interpreted ;
 He strode the fair cygnet, and rose from the ground
 With those wild white swans on a voyage bound.

XXXII.

Young prince ! they will search for thee all through
 the night,
 And the lake and the bush will gleam wan with
 torchlight ;
 And there will be weeping and wailing then,
 If monarchs have hearts like other men.

XXXIII.

But away and away in the midnight blue
 That fleet of white creatures went steering through ;
 And away and away through the sweet day-break,
 From the white Alps flashed, their road they take :

XXXIV.

Through the tingling noon and the evening vapor,
 Which Hesper lights with his little taper,
 Through the tremulous smiles of moonlight mirth,
 And the balmy descents of dew to the earth,

XXXV.

Through the calms, through the winds, when the hail-
 stones ring,
 The convoy passed with untiring wing,
 And oft from their course for hours they drove,
 As though they winnowed the air for love.

XXXVI.

And now they would mount and now they would
 stoop,
 And almost to earth or river droop,
 And harshly would pipe through the sheer delight
 Of their boisterous wings, and their strength of flight.

XXXVII.

They saw the young Save in the next night's moon,
 They were over Belgrade by the afternoon,
 And ere the sun set their journey was o'er
 On a willow-isle by the Danube's shore.

XXXVIII.

They left the young prince, (for their mission was
 done,)
 There on the green willow-island alone ;
 And, in their hoarse language they bade him farewell,
 And swept o'er the sun-bleached Bulgarian fell.

XXXIX.

More and more sadly as daylight died,
 The breeze-troubled marsh-plants sobbed and sighed,
 And the pulse of the river with panting sound
 Beat in the swamps and the hollows round.

XL.

But the stream travelled on like a pilgrim weary
 In search of his eastern sanctuary,
 Through the heart of old Europe guiding his floods
 From beneath the green boughs of the Freybourg
 woods.

XLI.

The lone swampy island lay down in the river,
 Whose strong nervous waves made the ground and
 trees quiver ;
 It swung with its head up the stream, anchored
 lightly
 By the tree roots and marsh-plants that just held it
 tightly.

XLII.

It trembles for ever as the ruffled stream rushes,
And the mud-bubbles splutter and quake in the
bushes ;
Nay, it seemed in the twilight to float by the marge,
Uneasily slow, like a half-sunken barge.

XLIII.

He looked to the shore,—faded herbage, wild swamp,
One ruined old mosque, all begreened with the damp ;
The willows leaned over in half-fallen ranks,
And the cold river gurgled under the banks.

XLIV.

The moon could scarce rise, and she rose all of blood,
And with lurid reflection bedabbled the flood ;
And the night-wind fled frightenedly past with a
wail,
As if some deed of murder had freighted the gale.

XLV.

Then when the wind had passed on out of hearing,
Came an audible hush, as if spirits were nearing
The lone willow-island, and made the Prince shiver,
And long to seek rest in that black rushing river.

XLVI.

Then straightway wild music played over the scene,
The moon became white, and the earth moonlit green,
And the breaths from the mosses like incense rose up,
And each still open flower caught the dew in its cup.

XLVII.

What is it? the features of earth seem uncommon ;
His heart glows with thoughts that are wilder than
human ;
And surely that music, those waves of bright light,
Are more than the charm of a beautiful night.

XLVIII.

He felt the strange wail of the music dissolving
 The life that was in him, and new life evolving ;
 His innermost being turned fluent, and fled,
 As if magnets were drawing it out of its bed.

XLIX.

He saw it go forth in thin streams of gray light,
 Which was greedily drunk by the darkness of night ;
 For a moment he seemed to flow out upon nature,
 Without personality, substance, or feature.

L.

Then back came his life like a tide-wave sublime ;
 It had circled the world in that moment of time.
 But what was it like ? Was it matter, or spirit ?
 Should he welcome it, love it ? or shun it, and
 fear it ?

LI.

He felt all at once viewless arms were around him ;
 Flesh and blood had no sinews like those that now
 bound him ;
 He felt hands within him,—then all things gave way,
 His soul lay down and fluttered in extatic dismay.

LII.

His heart turned to stone ; a strange panic had
 chilled him ;
 His old life died out, as this new terror filled him ;
 He felt as if through some ordeal he was winning
 His way to some grand but terrific beginning.

LIII.

He was colder than ice, with an inward cold pain,
 And his blood left his heart, and encircled his brain ;
 Man's life was unmade in him, crossed by new
 sections,
 With mind for a centre instead of affections.

LIV.

We are plants, we are beasts, we are metals, and
 earth,
 And the life of the stars too went in us at birth ;
 We are all things in one thing, life's manifold flame
 Chaos gave us, when out of its bosom we came.

LV.

So now in Prince Amadis, down in his being,
 The plant to the plant-life was evermore fleeing,
 The beasts to the beast-life ; star, metal, and gem
 Paired off with the inner life suited to them.

LVI.

And now they flowed into him, now they flowed out,
 And mingled and circled and wavered about ;
 One life now repelled, now invited another,
 But the pulses that beat in them answered each
 other.

LVII.

New unity too did his nature discover ;
 He had but one sense, he was eye-sight all over :
 He saw tastes, he saw touches, strange mortal was he !
 He saw sounds, he saw scents,—he did nothing but
 see !

LVIII.

He had sympathies too, but not after man's fashion ;
 He loved, but his love was a cold shiny passion :
 Father-love, sister-love, all were effaced,
 And all his old home-idols rudely displaced.

LIX.

In spite of himself his whole being must hasten
 Its affections on wholly new objects to fasten ;
 He must speak a new language which nature will
 teach,
 But a many-tongued silentness now must be speech.

LX.

Darkness was to him what sorrow had been,
 And light was his joy, with its smiles of white sheen ;
 And colour was pathos, and sympathy flowers,
 And his homes were unnumbered,—all beautiful
 bowers.

LXI.

Alas ! I much fear that poetic desire
 Had grown in his heart, like a cosmical fire ;
 He had burned for a change, and had found the
 change there,
 And a dream had been answered as if it were prayer !

LXII.

From the deeps of the Danube there rose right before
 him
 A glorious spirit, with a light-halo o'er him,
 Whose heart was transparent, yet visibly heaving,
 With the light shining through, and yet real and
 living.

LXIII.

'Twas the essence of beauty, the spirit of earth,
 The Kosmos, that lurked in the marvellous birth
 Of the outlying universe, orbs without number,
 Nothingness waked from its unmeaning slumber.

LXIV.

O who shall define this strange life of the world,
 That for ever unfurls all the things that are furled,
 A power unfatigued, and a life ever vernal,
 Immaterial matter, and almost eternal.

LXV.

Like angel he seemed, with a look on his features
 Of a human sort, dashed with the lowlier creatures,
 And he seemed at each winnow to shake from his
 wings
 The splendour of all terrestrial things.

LXVI.

He spoke,—what a voice of most musical sweetness,
Like streams in their flowing, like winds in their
fleetness !

It was wildest enchantment, incredible bliss
To the listening heart of the Prince Amadis.

LXVII.

Art thou weary, he cried, of that intricate strife,
Which for lack of a better sad mortals call life ;
Then change places with me, and deep shalt thou
drink
Of the fountain that springs on eternity's brink.

LXVIII.

I will give thee my powers ; thou wilt need to be
brave ;
My far-reaching subtlety too thou shalt have ;
My science infused in thy spirit shall be ;
Thou shalt beat as the world-soul awhile, 'stead of me.

LXIX.

Thy mind shall be filled with all sweet shapes and
shows ;
Mute creation shall watch o'er thine equal repose ;
And unmoral beauty shall be to thy soul
An incessant delight while the weary worlds roll.

LXX.

Beauty shall feed thee at heaven's own portals,
With an exquisite influx unknown to poor mortals ;
Thou shalt drink of the sunstream of light as it flows,
And the sight of fair things be thy spirit's repose.

LXXI.

Art thou weary of wills, of hearts sinful and rude,
Of earth's dark and bright mixtures, and curses that
brood
O'er a whole stricken race, and the service they need,
Where the eyes ever weep, and the hearts ever bleed ?

LXXII.

Art thou sick of distractions from self, and would fain
 Let thy soul walk at large in a world without pain,
 Where law, not caprice, shall direct every force,
 And the absence of sin make you free of remorse ?

LXXIII.

Lo ! I am the Kosmos ! such beauty is mine,
 Where all things in truth and in harmony shine,
 Where no word of command, since the first one, is
 spoken,
 Where no work is unmeaning, no decree ever broken,

LXXIV.

Where the swerving of systems is the rising and falling
 Of unmeasured epochs to each other calling,
 Where change and variety blend without flaw,
 And calm and catastrophe are but one law.

LXXV.

But, if this grand life is to go into thee,
 Impassible, passionless, cold, must thou be ;
 A single stray tenderness quick would dispel
 The new life thou hast on, and which fits thee so well.

LXXVI.

I cannot put from thee thy flesh-and-blood heart ;
 I have set it alone in a corner apart ;—
 Only see that earth's pity wake it not up again,—
 If thou sheddest one tear, my gift is all vain.

LXXVII.

Magnificence cannot be meek in a creature :
 'Tis a stretch that would wear out and break up his
 nature ;
 To be high,—high above all our kind we must dwell ;
 He who longs to be grand must be cruel as well.

LXXVIII.

He spoke, and there came on the earth such a hush !
 He threw off from himself a scarce visible flush
 Of the rosiest light, that passed into the heart
 Of the wondering Prince, with an exquisite smart.

LXXIX.

For a moment a mist-shadow seemed just to hover—
 The low stars looked through it—the moonlit stream
 over,
 Then Kosmos unsouled, earth's king dispossessed,
 Laid down in the bed of the Danube to rest.

LXXX.

The stars ceased to twinkle, the moon shed no beam,
 There came a strange murmur all over the stream ;
 Earth felt just the slightest vibration,—then tore
 Right away through cold space unconcerned as before.

LXXXI.

For a moment the Prince in astonishment mused,
 Till he felt his whole being without effort diffused
 Thro' the unsurveyed universe, and his new wings
 Seemed to drop life for ever into the nature of things.

LXXXII.

Then away, and away, and away,—from the haunts
 Of poor moping man, and his numberless wants,
 Away o'er the regions of beauty that lie
 Beneath and beyond the wide dome of the sky !

LXXXIII.

Sense of power was the very first thought that
 possessed him,
 And infinite space, he expected, would rest him ;
 So he darted aloft on the wings of the night,
 And in secret the soundless air closed on his flight.

LXXXIV.

O grand was the hush of sidereal space,
 Mid the huge orbs that looked at him full in the face ;
 There his mind worked in greatness, unlimited then
 By the shrill interruptions of frivolous men.

LXXXV.

Majestic he traversed our own Milky Way,
 Tracked each winding current, and sounded each bay ;
 Its collections of worlds are the neighbours, next door
 To the planet that lies on Sol's furthestmost shore.

LXXXVI.

He was lonely as poet could e'er wish to be,
 From all outward entanglement blessedly free
 As second-rate greatness could covet, whose charm
 Is in license that startles, and power to do harm.

LXXXVII.

He was where the wistfullest vacancy broods
 O'er the great empty stars and their bright solitudes,
 Where space, running over, petitioned for bounds,
 And silence itself almost ached for sweet sounds.

LXXXVIII.

Yet the Milky Way world is our own, and his home
 Was not far enough off ; he must still further roam ;
 For the sense of magnificence o'er his soul stealing
 Was narrowed, he felt, by some patriot feeling.

LXXXIX.

Yes ! the Milky Way world is but one step in space :
 It is but as France is to England, a place
 Scarcely foreign when seen o'er the sun-misty strait,
 With the wild German ocean crowding in at the gate.

XC.

The worlds where poor man hath got nothing to do,—
 There are plenty of such in the neighbouring blue!—
 Will not meet what he wants ; oh no ! he must be
 In a world which not telescopes even can see.

XCI.

There are plenty of such, ere we come to the end
 Where the actual things with the possible blend,
 Other oceans of blue, a conceivable place ;—
 But it burdens my heart to imagine such space !

XCII.

Art thou sure, gentle Prince ! there is no sorrow there,
 No laws helping laws, no angelical care ?
 Art thou sure that obedience and duty intrude
 Not at all in that viewless and far solitude ?

XCIII.

For the lonely have duties, thyself mid the rest ;
 Like a wounded bird bleeding, the heart in thy breast
 Sheds remorse on the air, and unking thee when
 highest,
 While duties undone mark the track where thou fliest.

XCIV.

Then away, in thy striving to get clear of strife !
 There is nought youth loves more than an unwit-
 nessed life.
 Thou art gone, out of sight amid nameless worlds
 fleeing,
 With the earth-string of conscience at work in thy
 being.

XCV.

When he came to the edge of the Milky Way world
 Tracts of space lay before him in silence unfurled ;
 But he winged his way o'er the blue gulfs without
 check
 To worlds far beyond, from which this looked a speck.

XCVI.

All the systems of suns that we see in the night
 Dwindled down to a point, and then vanished from
 sight;
 Then came fresh sets of worlds, and more inlets
 of space,
 Old types disappearing, new forms in their place.

XCVII.

They rose up to view, like the tall masts of ships
 Out at sea, when the sky-line of dark ocean dips;
 Worlds round him, above, and beneath him, were seen,
 Like woods in a mist with abysses between.

XCVIII.

Huge nebular regions, oases of light,
 Strewed thickly or thinly the void infinite;
 Each of which in itself countless worlds can compress,
 As thick as the sands of the wide wilderness;—

XCIX.

Long islands of worlds, far apart in the blue,
 Now so near that a bridge of great suns joins the two;
 Now an isthmus of orbs, now a wide continent
 Where the numberless worlds in a bright patch are
 blent:—

C.

Worlds made, worlds preparing, worlds then and
 there making,
 And inchoate spirals their white tresses shaking,
 Worlds liquid, worlds solid, worlds vapour all over,
 Worlds with or without atmospherical cover.

CI.

He went, horror hushing the songs in his mouth,
 To that drear restless universe down in the south,
 And he trembled to see reeling Argus so flicker,
 Like a torch as we wave it, now slower, now quicker.

CVIII.

His home was the poet's home, space, and beyond,
 All the worlds knit in one world, with thought for a
 bond,
 Strong musical thought to repel and to draw,
 With metre for ether, and song for a law.

CIX.

For his thoughts peopled space, or at times drew it in
 To itself, making all things its kith and its kin ;
 The bleakest of nebulas gave him as much
 Of a home as the lake which the alp-shadows touch.

CX.

He was not more at home, where his own Lombard sky
 Looks down through the chestnuts, than when he
 might lie
 On forlorn wisps of stars that with pendulous motion
 Writhe about over space, like the wrecks on the ocean.

CXI.

When his boat on Locarno scarce heaved in the calm,
 Things around him were clothed not in more homely
 charm,
 Than the gulfs where gaunt systems in awful embrace
 Put forth arms made of worlds, like huge feelers, in
 space.

CXII.

The universe taught him that space was less vast
 Than the world of his soul, which all time will outlast;
 And mind, more colossal than matter, can come
 In the world of Orion to be straitened for room.

CXIII.

What hope for the future, he thought, when he saw
 Orbs condense and compress themselves, plainly by
 law,
 Worlds by millions slow gathering in dread concen-
 tration,
 To some marvellous oneness of undreamed creation !

CXIV.

He watched giant systems break up, and re-form,
 Like nations renewed by a popular storm:
 It was fearful to see how they cracked, swang asunder,
 And closed up in new systems of order and wonder.

CXV.

He beheld with glad terror our own Milky Way
 At its north and south poles self-unrivet, out-sway,
 And some world-groups heave anchor, like icebergs
 sublime,
 Thawed out in the lapse of unwriteable time.

CXVI.

So the Clouds of Magellan drifted off and dipped
 down
 Towards earth, as a cloud settles over a town,
 Mighty realms of white worlds, their soft tremulous
 shining
 With the sunsets of earth most fraternally twining.

CXVII.

All is change and advance, not a cyclical race;
 Love only survives wrecks of Time, Force, and Space;
 Love only shall see out of all revolution
 How creation shall perfect its grand constitution.

CXVIII.

All around us is Home; the heart owns no Abroad
 In the lap of this beautiful Free Act of God;
 His Love is the instinct that pilots its Course,
 And His sweet Will its true Imperceptible Force.

CXIX.

O how his heart grew with the largeness of things!
 His sights were all thoughts, and his thoughts were
 all wings;
 Yet one look of love from his sister were bliss
 More eternal, more infinite surely than this.

CXX.

Then went he, and stood in the face of the sun,
 At the end of the race which that orb has to run,
 An invisible goal in ethereal seas,
 Which lies to the north of the bright Hercules.

CXXI.

But ah! when the sun that far home hath attained,
 We may hope that our souls better homes will have
 gained,
 Fairer heavens above, where earth's troubles will cease,
 But not without winning us glory and peace.

CXXII.

The Prince goes on hunting for beauty, nor dreams
 That the beauty of earth is above what it seems,
 That the heart is the trial of what we are worth,
 And the best of all heavens is made out of earth!

CXXIII.

He watched the swift moon, when her shadow first nips
 The bright edge of the sun in a total eclipse ;
 And he flew to those strange rosy thumbs that protrude
 From the moon-darkened rim, when the light is
 subdued.

CXXIV.

He went near the sun to see comets unbind
 Their long lucent ringlets now flowing behind,
 And saw the scared things, as they looked in the glass,
 Ruffle back their light tresses the moment they pass.

CXXV.

Near the grand double stars he would watch with
 delight
 The beautiful quarrel between day and night,
 Blue sunset, red sunrise, both striving together,
 Weird landscapes, weird foliage, and the weirdest of
 weather.

CXXVI.

He loved to see planets in sweet occultation
 Pass under the moon, while the double vibration,
 Like an echo of light, makes the planet start back,
 As if frightened to let the moon ride o'er its track.

CXXVII.

He watched Jupiter's moon jumping back in alarm,
 Keeping step with its mother, who put forth her arm,
 And drew the young child with herself into night,
 Herself more to blame than the poor satellite!

CXXVIII.

Then right in the flames of the sun would he go,
 Where an unconsumed planet lies dazzling and low,
 Deeper down in the sunshine than Hermes, all
 drowned
 To mortal research in the light-floods around.

CXXIX.

He trod the outskirts of the last solar seas,
 Where the cold is not measured by human degrees,
 Where the orbs seem uncertain on what line to
 venture,
 Lest the sun might not prove their legitimate centre,—

CXXX.

Far out in the dreary cold, far, far away,
 Beyond Neptune, where outlying planets obey,
 Reluctant and sluggish, the suck of the sun,
 But who drag in their orbits rather than run.

CXXXI.

Then for change would he seek the least jewels of
 night,
 The gardens of crystal that swing into sight
 Every year, 'twixt the lines on which Jupiter rolls,
 And Mars with the white cap of snow on his poles.

CXXXII.

He saw little earth hold its atmosphere down,
 While space-matter strove the poor orb to uncrown ;
 Outside its crisp top he hung poised in the sky
 To see with what fleetness the planet flew by.

CXXXIII.

In all the wide worlds, great and little, he saw,
 With sweet re-assurance one beautiful law,—
 That each world to itself its own centre should seem,
 An honest untruth, a self-realized dream.

CXXXIV.

He saw that the people's large language was better
 Than the phrases of science, and for common use
 meeter ;
 For thus all the orbs, through the vastness that roam,
 Feel themselves in each nook of creation at home.

CXXXV.

For what is each heart, wheresoe'er it may live,
 But the centre of all the love God has to give,
 As dear to its Father, whatever its station,
 As if it by itself were the whole of creation ?

CXXXVI.

O Prince! hast thou not in thy heart some misgiving
 Of the centreless life that thy selfwill is living ?
 For where self is the centre, all life is abroad,
 Unrooted in home, and unfastened to God.

CXXXVII.

O good for the soul is the merciful strain
 Of a grave obligation ; still better the pain
 Of repentance, whose tears are professions of faith
 In the God who forgives, in the life after death.

CXXXVIII.

Then wander no longer, thou sunshiny cloud !
 With thy shadow just dappling the fields on thy road ;
 Weep away to the earth in soft rain, and the shower
 Shall at least make one green spot more green than
 before.

CXXXIX.

Life that lives for itself in an unrooted youth
 Must one day do penance for all its untruth,
 Must revenge on itself what it slighted before,
 In old age cast away on a desolate shore.

CXL.

There are plants in the woods of Brazil, parasites,
 Who give out their fragrances only at nights,
 Fresh rooted each moment in wandering airs,
 Which are solid enough for such thin roots as theirs.

CXLI.

Even such is thy round in this beautiful ring,
 An air-rooted, windshaken, unlife-like thing,
 Perfuming for no one night's untrodden bowers,
 With no holier pain than a headache of flowers.

CXLII.

When could others awaken fond youth from a dream ?
 It must wake of itself: for it flows like a stream,—
 It is gone while we speak, its swift currents unbinding ;
 Its home is in seeking, its exile in finding!

CXLIII.

In love have we spoken; for this Prince is our brother ;
 But one beauty reminds him far off of another,
 And, ere we had time our advice to rehearse,
 Twice or thrice has he gone round the whole universe.

CXLIV.

O see how he wheels up aloft in the air!
 Heavy wisdom from earth cannot reach to him there;
 Now he drops, but it is in the thick of yon wood,
 Where precipitous rocks overhang the dark flood.

CXLV.

There again! he has left us in lightning-like flight,
 And is hidden far up in the whiteness of light,
 Whence faint sparkles fall like a rocket-shower
 breaking,
 Where from pinions unseen the soft motes he is
 shaking.

CXLVI.

Then down the blue waters of islandless ocean
 He dives, like the gale, with exulting emotion,
 Now passively floats as the frolic wind blows him,
 Now tunnels the crests of cold brine that oppose
 him.

CXLVII.

When he teases the earth in his low-drooping flight
 It is not home draws him, he will not alight;
 He but skims, like a swallow, in swift mazy rings,
 And feeds, like the bird, on invisible things.

CXLVIII.

When he hovers o'er earth it is only to sing,
 Beating time for himself with his vibrating wing;
 While the hot spell is on him perforce must he roam,
 For an uneasy heart is most homeless at home.

CXLIX.

He has thoughts, so he thinks, above all thoughts of
 ours,
 Inconceivable echoes from heavenly bowers;
 He has words, so he says, which we always mistake,
 And a silence of song which we rude mortals break.

CL.

Ah ! little he deems how much deeper a thing
 Is the action of life, a more bountiful spring
 Of beauty, of wonder, of truth, and of power,
 A joy more long-lived, a more heavenly dower.

CLI.

Tears shed for others are waters that rise
 To their levels above in the grace-giving skies :
 Time wasted for others is paid back at last,
 Counted out in eternities, future and past.

CLII.

Though thy life may be fretful and swift, yet delay
 To soothe the least-sorrow that comes in thy way ;
 For sympathy, happily choosing its times,
 Cheers the long nights of grief with its beautiful
 chimes.

CLIII.

More tall than the stars is the wonderful height
 Of unselfishness, always reposing in light,
 On whose glorious summits the night falleth never,
 But the seen Face of God is its sunrise for ever.

CLIV.

How great is the gift to have sisters and brothers !
 They only who lose them can estimate mothers !
 For to hearts, where the world would fain fling its
 first spell,
 A home can be almost religion as well.

CLV.

Souls only sell dear in the markets of heaven,
 And on earth for hearts only high prices are given :
 Men who love while they suffer, and work while they
 grieve,
 Heaven and earth in their one web of life interweave.

CLVI.

They only who love, and love meekly, are blest ;
 And true love is nothing but self dispossessed ;
 They only who labour at last win the prize ;
 They only who sorrow can ever be wise.

CLVII.

All these beauties are toys to thee, Prince Amadis !
 Thy chase is not life ; it was ne'er meant for this.
 A schoolboy at play will outweigh thy worth soon,
 If he gives and takes kindly one whole afternoon.

CLVIII.

Hast thou got any purse in the which thou canst
 treasure
 The fine glowing sunsets that give thee such pleasure ?
 Do the angels in heaven hoard the scents of the
 flowers,
 Or photograph all the fair lights of the hours ?

CLIX.

The secrets of children, who whisper and chatter,
 Are worth half a score of the secrets of matter,
 Unless they can make us still more the world's master,
 To sail our ships safer, or go our way faster.

CLX.

If too much is made of them, earth, sun, and moon
 Are but sights at a theatre, songs out of tune ;
 And the round stars are only like hoops up on high,
 Which child-poets trundle though infinite sky.

CLXI.

O man is the beauty, and hearts are the glory
 Of all the world's science and all the world's story ;
 And sorrow is softness, a heavenly birth,
 To prevent our becoming as hard as the earth.

CLXII.

These far worlds astonish the mind out of breath,
So vastly outstretched in magnificent death ;
But grandeur wants something more changeful to
rest it;
It aches when one vision a long while hath pressed it.

CLXIII.

Homely earth, solar system, Milky Way all around us,
Worlds beyond the horizon with which weak science
bounds us,—
In and out of all these will he fitfully wander,
In his speed blending strangely the Here and the
Yonder.

CLXIV.

Of all changing things far the loveliest is life,
And with that, of all places, the earth is most rife ;
For awhile then at least will the Prince now descend,
And exhaust all the beauty of earth to its end.

CLXV.

But earth is so beautiful, he who is greedy
May take all he wants, and leave more to the needy ;
For its lights and its shadows are fair to excess,
But its fairness is least of its happiness !

CLXVI.

Where the red Aurora wavily quivers,
He saw winter arrest the Siberian rivers,
And the glaciers bear on their patient backs
Huge boulders, and move in their slow stiff tracks.

CLXVII.

He saw open sea round the silent pole,
Neath the arctic moon watched the waters roll,
Felt the earth nod with a rocking motion,
Like a ship at anchor on the ocean.

CLXVIII.

From the leaning top of the world's north tower
He gazed entranced for many an hour,
Looked out into space, and wished there were bars
To hinder his leaping among the stars.

CLXIX.

Then he went over lakes that so deeply lie
The sun has to drink their waters dry,
Where the rivers of central Asia flow,
By the steppes which the salt-rime powders with snow.

CLXX.

He dwelt with delight for many a day
Mid the fabulous trees of the Himalay,
Where earth comes nearest to heaven, more near
Than the Andes come with their burning spear.

CLXXI.

The bountiful life of the jungles was his,
Its grand vegetation, its animal bliss ;
The day-life, the night-life of forests he knew,
And the monster-life of the waters blue.

CLXXII.

He floated down Chinese rivers that lie
Above the champaign threateningly ;
He slumbered mid opiate spices in bays
Near the pirate barks of the vile Malays.

CLXXIII.

O sweet were the trees ! O wild was the scene,
In the centre of Africa peopled and green,
With beautiful rivers that shun the sea,
And die in the sands without agony.

CLXXIV.

The heart of Australia was known to him,
 And the Southern Pole with its coast-line dim,
 With its tall volcanoes that ruddily glare
 Over deserts of snow in the silent air,

CLXXV.

Where the icebergs flash and grow dark again,
 And black crevices streak the horrible plain,
 Where the fiery reflection flickers and pants
 In caves where not even the white bear haunts.

CLXXVI.

He swung in the air o'er the hanging wash
 Of the two worlds of waters that fearfully clash
 Round the Horn, where the grim cape with passionate
 soul
 Ever strains its wild eyes to behold the South Pole.

CLXXVII.

He loved most those regions which man had least
 trammelled,
 The southern Pacific, with islands enamelled,
 An old world submerged, with conjectural climes
 Whose glory was passed ere historical times.

CLXXVIII.

The chief lands of the planet now seem to unroll,
 Like a cincture with pendants, around the North
 Pole ;
 Time was when the world was antarctic, but now
 The silent Pacific keeps that drowned world below.

CLXXIX.

He loved the sweet dream-lands that rise to view
 From the soft warm deep, with their mountains of
 blue,
 With the palm groves and inlets and scent-laden bays,
 That lie evermore in a fairy-land haze.

CLXXX.

He could almost have worshipped, when noon was still
Mid the populous forests of green Brazil,
Where incredible creepers hang from the trees
Their huge-blossomed flags in the stifled breeze.

CLXXXI.

For a while he was witched by the wind that yields
Faint fragrance out of vanilla fields,
And watched the pendulous humming-bird cling
To the rocking flower, like a golden thing.

CLXXXII.

In the sultry noon there were palaces cool
In the weedy depths of a crystal pool,
All pillared with juicy stalks, and their eaves
Translucently roofed with lotus-leaves.

CLXXXIII.

Then he would drowsily float for hours
Over leagues and leagues of prairie flowers,
And find in the wide horizons round
Something that made his spirit bound,—

CLXXXIV.

A dash of the Tartar-like impulse, that leaps
The perilous dykes of the Asian steppes,
And goes mad with the wind, and the swiftness, and
stretch
Of the glorious sky-line he gallops to reach.

CLXXXV.

He has leaned his face on the desert sand
To feel the hot breath of the sunburnt land ;
He has counted the pulses that sob in the wind,
Which always seems fainting and lagging behind.

CLXXXVI.

He found a strange magic in noxious shades,
 In poisonous plants, and the stilted arcades
 Of mangrove roots, and the cedar swamps,
 And the growths of the equatorial damps.

CLXXXVII.

In the rain he watched for the sun to come out,
 And he shifted the ends of the rainbows about ;
 The lightning obeyed him, and startled the night
 With most beautiful tempests and wild plays of light.

CLXXXVIII.

After sunset he marked where the light of a star
 First struck with its thin shaft the ground from afar,
 And listened, if haply shrill sound it might yield,
 As a spear may ring on the boss of a shield.

CLXXXIX.

When weary of colour, and dazzled with light,
 He thickened the darkness of palpable night ;
 And his soul floated out of him, sweetly unbound
 By the measured concourse of silence and sound.

CXC.

There were times when he hungered for sunsets, and
 pressed
 'Gainst the motion of earth to the up-rolling west,
 And thus draughts of beautiful light he kept drinking,
 Where the sun, that he hunted, was evermore sinking.

CXCI.

But eastward sometimes with the earth he was
 borne,
 And lived the day long in perpetual morn,
 Where the down-dipping rim of the planet gave
 way
 Evermore in the white light, the fountain of day.

CXCII.

Sometimes he would hang up in space for a year,
 And move without toil with the huge atmosphere;
 Suns rose not and set not, no star shone, nor moon—
 He enjoyed the green blaze of a shadowless noon.

CXCIII.

In wild hours he rushed through earth's body and seas,
 Up from, and down to, the antipodes,
 So swiftly that darkness and light flashed together,
 With the beauty of both, and the sameness of neither.

CXCIV.

What a study was earth, so terrific, so tender,
 Such a dove-tailing process of blackness and splendour,
 An orb so mature, with what time had done for her,
 Gentle beauty, stern beauty, and beautiful horror.

CXCIV.

She told all her secrets to Prince Amadis,
 Of her secular ages, uninhabited bliss ;
 She unveiled her vapour-wheels, always at play,
 The machinery that makes her phenomena,—

CXCVI.

The grim whistling avalanche, rough breath of the
 mountains,
 The strange intermittance that sobs in some fountains,
 The tiny frost-atoms, that are stronger than thunder,
 Which creep into rocks and then thrust them
 asunder,—

CXCVII.

The life of volcanoes, with the lava all seething,
 And the fire and the sulphur the fierce earth is breath-
 ing,
 With craters disposed round the globe in long rows
 Over veins of dread fire-life whose tide ebbs and
 flows,—

CXCVIII.

The tortuous suck of the huge water-spout,
 And unorbited meteor-globes, wheeling about,
 The geysers, the mud-lakes, the fountains of naphtha,
 Earth's roof falling in through the slip of a rafter,—

CXCIX.

The new mountain-range that yet neath the sea
 lingers,
 Just lifting among the cold waters its fingers,
 The mixtures, the gases, the forces, the glories,
 Of the subterranean laboratories.

CC.

Now he changes the silence of pure pathless snows,
 For the crunching and grinding of icebergs and floes,
 And he watches the isotherms waver and blend
 With the line of the iceblink all round the world's end.

CCI.

He revolved in the wheels of the circular gales,
 When they lash the deep sea with invisible flails,
 And was splashed by the salt foam the ocean with
 clangour,
 Like rockets of water, up-threw in its anger.

CCII.

He found out the hearts of the wide-spreading rains,
 In the glens of the mountains, or wood-mantled
 plains ;
 He drew the wet curtains around him in glee,
 And rode, like a king, in sublime privacy.

CCIII.

He examined the laws which the snow-drifts follow,
 As they lie amphitheatre-wise round the hollow,
 As if water congealed on the uneven land
 Took the patterns the sea-water makes on the sand.

CCIV.

O what beauty there was in the crystallized grains,
 Each with its prism, and its deftly joined veins ;
 And he laughed at the voices of clocks and of bells,
 As they quaked through the drift with their querulous
 swells.

CCV.

There was beauty in fogs, in their white fleecy gloom,
 With each nook of earth curtained off like a room,
 With the seemingly mist-echoed sounds that up-roll,
 As if from another world down in a hole.

CCVI.

He heard the ice yawn in the still winter night,
 As if the frost's slumber were broken and light,
 And, in spite of his science, was startled at times
 By the firs flinging off their light loads of snow-rimes.

CCVII.

Now he spans all at once fifty leagues of a storm,
 Till he comes where its outskirts a frontier may form
 Twixt the calm and itself, and he halts and looks
 through
 Silver windows of white mist, and beyond them the
 blue.

CCVIII.

O see how yon hills fold their green arms and sleep,
 Where the cataract faints summer-dried on the steep ;
 Go, find out the ear of the echo, and there
 Rest awhile, and dream well, in the soft tingling air.

CCIX.

Now he rouses tired nature and bids her awake,
 For his beauty-palled spirit hath craved an earth-
 quake ;
 And he races his thoughts 'gainst the shock, in his
 mirth,
 Thro' the sinuous veins of elastic old earth.

CCX.

He knocks at the hollow of purple midnight,
 To see if his knocking will make it strike light,
 Or if the jarred planets will vibrate and quiver,
 As they seem to do down in the tremulous river.

CCXI.

When he yearned for deep silence he dwelt in the
 moon,
 Where the earth looked like thirteen moons melted
 in one ;
 If his eyes ached with this, earthless homes he could
 find
 In the side that looks always away from mankind.

CCXII.

Then he dived thro' the holes in the black-spotted vest
 Of bright blinding matter around the sun's breast ;
 And he might have learned lessons there,—how hearts
 of pride
 May be colder than ice, with their fire all outside.

CCXIII.

The world was all written, without and within,
 With wonderful sciences, such as might win
 A philosopher's heart to a glorious excess
 Of intellectual blessedness.

CCXIV.

No cloud rode more softly than he rode in air ;
 He could live under water ; the thin void could bear
 Of sidereal spaces ; and such was the bliss
 Of the untoilsome travel of Prince Amadis.

CCXV.

Are you hungry, Prince Amadis, hungry for kindness ;
 Are you dazzled with matter-light, praying for
 blindness,—
 A blindness that sees a sweet twilight all round it,
 Earth's sorrows, earth's hopes, earth's affections that
 bound it.

CCXVI.

Wilt thou come, gentle Amadis, down from thy
 mountain,
 And be bathed straightaway in the Lethe-like fountain,
 Where men's hearts forget all the grand world outside,
 And in humbling and human things cast off their pride.

CCXVII.

The waters will be in thee fountains of tears,
 To brighten dim eyes, break the hard hearts of fears,
 And teach thee that he 'bove all poets is blest,
 To whom beauty is second thought, duty is best.

CCXVIII.

Through the love of our neighbour we go to love God,
 Or it may be that God to our kind is the road ;
 And of all the fair things in the broad human mind
 The most lovely by far is the love of our kind.

CCXIX.

Do good to thy fellows, and thy heart shall not miss
 These visions of matter, fancy's riot and bliss ;
 Thou wilt think it almost waste of time to unravel
 This star-moon-and-earthly confusion of travel.

CCXX.

It is vain to upbraid him ; the time is not come :
 He is drunken with sunshine ; he will not seek home ;
 There is no earth as yet in his heart ; we must wait,
 And sit up for our traveller, should he be late.

CCXXI.

It must be some outward thing only will reach
 To the depths of his soul, and some outward thing
 teach
 That wisdom which lies beneath thoughts, words,
 and years,
 Whose meaning is worship, whose language is tears.

CCXXII.

He has lost his old habit of looking within ;
He is deafened by elements, hears not his kin,
As they wail from the earth's distant surface below
 him,
Yet fear his return, lest their hearts should not know
 him.

CCXXIII.

Let him drink his wild fill of material charms :
Some accident doubtless will wake sweet alarms
In a nature fast losing itself, and astray ;
For accidents work the best wonders away !

CCXXIV.

It was beauty he sought and beauty he found,
On the earth, in the air, and under the ground :
Time was one beauty, and space was another,
And a man has no griefs who is not man's brother.

CCXXV.

He could pass through the planet diameter-wise,
Where the granite arch o'er the centre lies,
Through the central fires, and the voiceless wailing
Of spirits there eternally ailing.

CCXXVI.

He could circle the earth underground,
Where the subterranean waters sound,
In grottoes and streets which the diamond lights,
And the lamps of the opal stalactites.

CCXXVII.

On the top of the atmosphere well could he ride,
Or again in the hollow equator slide,
Or lie where it bulges, and midnight and noon
Be cradled there by the nursing moon.

CCXXVIII.

'Twas a poet's life, a voluptuous calm,
 All music and metre, all fragrance and balm,
 A half-waking dream from the dawn to the even,
 A banquet of blossoms, a pantheist heaven!

CCXXIX.

For ever to him jealous nature was bidden
 To open her gates, that he might pass unchidden
 To all the vast palaces God was adorning,
 When the stars sang together in nature's first morning.

CCXXX.

All beauty that matter can show him shall be
 Unrolled to his eyes like the broad open sea;
 The elements too shall go with him in throngs,
 Singing their sweet untranslatable songs.

CCXXXI.

He saw and he handled the powdery stuff,
 The insoluble atoms the world is made of;
 He divined how their forces, their scent, and their
 taste
 All came from the patterns in which they were placed.

CCXXXII.

He saw how the rocky foundations of matter
 Were volatile, weightless, and fluent by nature;
 How all in swift currents was flowing and crossing,
 And staying with no one, and never reposing.

CCXXXIII.

He shall rifle the universe far as it stretches,
 He shall look o'er the outside of space where it
 reaches
 The confines of nothing, and exhaust if he can
 All the beauty God made, save the grand heart of man.

CCXXXIV.

Thus over the world for long years he was borne,
 To the lands of the sunset, the lands of the morn ;
 And summer-winds fanned him wherever he went,
 And the soft charms of sunshine with moonlight were
 blent.

CCXXXV.

Not a nook, not a hollow the whole planet over,
 Where he did not fresh wonder, fresh beauty discover,
 From the gardens of ocean the green billows under,
 To the lone mountain top which belongs to the condor.

CCXXXVI.

Earth, water, air, fire, were his loves at the first ;
 Then under-earth growths, where the metals are
 nursed ;
 Then the outlines of landscapes, and mountains'
 grave faces,
 And the green things that grow in tropical places.

CCXXXVII.

He heard the plants breathe out their soft tiny sighs,
 And he saw chemist air dole them out their supplies ;
 He asked of the flowers, and they answered him right,
 Why some sleep with their eyes open all through the
 night.

CCXXXVIII.

He enquired of the solar beam, how it enchanted
 The blossoms to take just the mixed hues it wanted ;
 He watched threadlike roots pierce the clay, cleave
 the rock,
 Strong as bodkins of steel, slow as hands of a clock.

CCXXXIX.

Sometimes he lay on a cloud, and looked down
 On the field and the woodland, blue sea and white
 town ;

And he thought earth's geography surely was given
 To be a substantial reflection of heaven.

CCXL.

He studied the natures and instincts of beasts,
 And saw possible worlds imaged deep in their breasts ;
 And he read a whole science newly-made in the
 features,

The deep tender wildness of the faces of creatures.

CCXLI.

He knew every chord that the rich wind could change,
 Its loud, and its soft, and its musical range,
 From the storms of the night to the songs it will sing
 As it sinks to an almost inaudible thing.

CCXLII.

Sound is a language of beauty for ever,
 From the sigh of the reeds to the dash of the river,
 From the plaintive soul prisoned within the pine tree
 To the foam effervescing on a wave out at sea.

CCXLIII.

The piping of wild-fowl was music to him,
 As it rose from the marsh, fenny, sedgy, and dim,
 Though it sounded sometimes, long haunting the ear,
 Too like human anguish, too word-like, too clear.

CCXLIV.

Yet the shouts of the gulls to the deaf storms com-
 plaining,
 Their shrieks, and their oaths gainst the strong winds
 maintaining,
 Were excitement at times, in the sea-sounding air,
 As if the wild woes of all shipwrecks were there.

CCXLV.

Even sounds out of harmony filled him with wonder,
 Like the cry of the curlew in the middle of thunder,
 Inopportune sounds, or sounds cursed from their
 birth,
 Like unmusical souls among men upon earth.

CCXLVI.

There was one sound of sweetness he loved and he
 feared,
 Which full oft in the oak-groves of summer was
 heard;
 'Twas a thing close to tears, and it made him turn
 pale,—
 The half-human soul of the grieved nightingale.

CCXLVII.

He lay long to listen in caves, where the swell
 Of the sea-murmur sings, like the air in a shell,
 Now idyll, now elegy, storm-ode or pean,
 Mid the cavernous isles of the classic Egean.

CCXLVIII.

Where the mountains were folded one over another,
 And the hanging woods the echoes smother,
 He loved the sea's voice, where its courage fails,
 Speaking low, like a stranger, in inland vales.

CCXLIX.

He discovered that time made a sound in its going,
 A tremulous ringing, a rhythmical flowing,
 Slowest at noon, as if day in its net
 Caught the sun for a while ere he slanted to set,

CCL.

He wrapt his soul round in each kind of perfume
 From the bright open gardens or close forest-gloom,
 And he saw how within him each fragrance was
 mother
 Of a brood of soft thoughts that was like to no other.

CCLI.

But the sounds and the scents floated into his being,
 Not by hearing or smell, but a new kind of seeing,
 Which brought all unbodied delights within reach,
 And gave colour and form to the beauty of each.

CCLII.

'Twas the same wondrous eyesight which o'er the
 earth cast,
 Saw clear through the gauze of the Present the Past,
 And the Future, which under old centuries lay,
 Like a grave pre-existence, work up into day.

CCLIII.

The cosmical meanings, the calmness and strife,
 The intermutations of earth's ancient life,
 He read off from her strata, strange ciphers and dread,
 And great thoughts sang out loud in his soul as he
 read.

CCLIV.

He sings funeral hymns over buried creations,
 Or inaugurates epochs with grandest orations,
 While the rocks at his bidding re-plant, re-adorn
 Earth's secular landscapes ere Adam was born.

CCLV.

The deltas all told him what history was theirs,
 White shells and black soil in alternate thin layers ;
 The dunes let him feel their slow pulses, dumb things
 That can walk without feet and can fly without wings.

CCLVI.

In truth it was strange and suggestive to see
 The patience of earth's monotony,
 How grand in its slowness the march of a law
 That must work without tool and complete without
 flaw.

CCLVII.

How slowly the desert stalked into the land,
 And had powdered old Egypt with handfuls of sand,
 And how calm and contented the pyramids were
 To be buried so slowly by hair-breadths a year.

CCLVIII.

He saw how old history patiently waited
 Her time, under green mounds still unexcavated ;
 In unthought-of places he watched mortals treading
 The graves of old grandeurs, unknowing, unheeding.

CCLIX.

In Edom and Tadmor he stayed to imbibe
 The spirit of ruins, but found that the tribe
 Of the great human race left a taint where it tra-
 velled,
 Making earth's peaceful spells all bewildered and
 ravelled.

CCLX.

Earth showed him the footprints of ages, which she
 Had so tenderly veiled with green grass or blue sea,
 And he saw the true process of world-peopling, flow-
 ing
 By routes unsuspected, a science worth knowing.

CCLXI.

Hieroglyphical marks became clear by degrees,
 Either crooked or straight, like the wakes on calm
 seas,
 The paths by which Asia her children had driven
 From her hearth to fill earth at the bidding of heaven.

CCLXII.

He dreamed that he saw, was it more than a dream ?
 Laws, faiths, and philosophies national seem,
 And that all mental glories subservient must be
 To the physical spells of geography.

CCLXIII.

In the bright silver havens of cloudland above
He lingered to watch how the rainbow-looms move ;
He heard light sing its songs in the calm upper
ether,
And the whispers the clouds made when touching
together.

CCLXIV.

Earth-weary he rose up again on swift wings
Through the half-solid space-matter, graven with
rings,
The grooves of the stars in their orderly race
Through the infinite purple of icy-cold space.

CCLXV.

But his thoughts were more earthly ; he lagged on
the wing,
As earth's sounds in his ears kept murmuring ;
Space appeared to resist him much more than before,
As he breasted the light on its outermost shore.

CCLXVI.

And the marvels of starry life soon became weary,
And the gulfs of the Milky Way manless and dreary :
How sweet looked our planet, when it first came in
sight,
Like a teardrop of joy on the fair brow of night.

CCLXVII.

Ah ! this foolish Prince ! was the first hopeful
feeling
That o'er thy young lifetime already was stealing ;
This the true fountain deep in thee, the root
Of earth's wonderful flower that bears heavenly fruit.

CCLXVIII.

At last he was homesick ; at last he was weary ;
 At last the world's outside shone cold-bright and
 dreary ;
 He had come to the end, and he saw that the light
 Of beauty fell short of the infinite.

CCLXIX.

He was sick of the luscious cup nature had brought
 him,
 And began to distrust the thin truths she had taught
 him ;
 At last came the time, when a soul full of beauty
 Should feel the one lovely thing wanting was duty.

CCLXX.

Sad thoughts rose within him, distracting, prolific,
 As he sank to the earth in the Southern Pacific,
 On a cocoa-crowned crater, which coral worms built,
 And the yellow brine-lichens had modestly gilt.

CCLXXI.

In his absence of mind, he had lighted below
 Near a dwelling of man, where the plaining of woe
 On the warm spicy wind arose touching and wild,—
 'Twas a mother just closing the eyes of her child.

CCLXXII.

First there came o'er his heart a most strange agita-
 tion,—

Then it flashed on his mind like a new revelation,—
 No love without depth, and no depth without sorrow ;
 For the tears of to-day are the joys of to-morrow.

CCLXXIII.

'Twas as old as the hills ; but it is so with youth,—
 It must find out as new the most primary truth :
 No wisdom self has not found out is our own ;
 Truths taken on trust are oft cold as a stone !

CCLXXIV.

He thought of the creed of his now sainted mother ;
 It taught the same lesson ; it was based on no other ;
 How the great God Himself, who all beauty had
 given,
 Came on earth to find woe when there was none in
 heaven.

CCLXXV.

All at once what a change had come over his spirit ;
 For tho' sorrow be not the whole truth, it is near it.
 A thousand false lights were put out on the earth,
 For the beauty of things seemed a poor kind of mirth.

CCLXXVI.

It was persons, not things, that the Prince wanted
 now,
 And he welcomed the ache just begun in his brow ;
 O beautiful sorrow ! thy tears how they shine,—
 Ah ! none can preach God with persuasion like thine !

CCLXXVII.

All wisdom is in thee, O fairy-like sorrow !
 The faith of to-day, and the crown of to-morrow,
 The love, for God's sake, of these deep human faces,
 With their troubles, and joys, and their hearts' com-
 mon-places.

CCLXXVIII.

The sound of the savage in the cocoa-isle weeping
 Hath wakened the Prince from the sleep he was
 sleeping :
 To mourn with the sad was his first act of duty,
 And at once he found out the imposture of beauty.

CCLXXIX.

He hath shed a man's tear o'er the grief of another ;
And lo! earth fell beneath him, and man was his
 brother :
And a kindhearted soul, with a sad sort of bliss,
In his hoary old age was the Prince Amadis !

THE END.

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