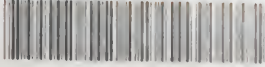
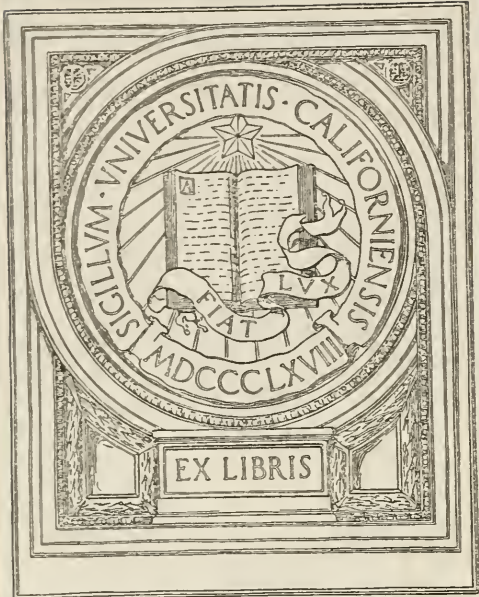


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I O N ;

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

A T R A G E D Y,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

THOMAS NOON TALFOURD.

//



LONDON :

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

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1836.

TO THE  
ASSOCIATION

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY,  
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.



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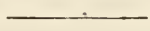
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1836

MAIN

# NOTICE,

## INSTEAD OF DEDICATION.



IN offering this attempt at dramatic composition to the public at large, I should not intrude a single remark if I were not reminded of an irreparable loss by the necessity of omitting a Dedication to one whose name should have graced its opening page. The two Editions which have been privately circulated were inscribed to my venerable and indulgent friend, Dr. Valpy, upon whose long life of kindness Death has since set the final seal. When I ventured to claim for it his protection, I well knew that I might rely upon that charity which lavished its bounties upon every effort of his pupils, for tenderness to its faults, and for generous praise of any merits which the eye of friendship might detect or create. There was also a propriety in seeking this association for a work which was prompted by love of those remains of antique beauty which he had taught me to know and to revere; which assumed that form of poetry in which he had chiefly delighted; and which, although

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meditated in broken hours, and at long intervals, had always mingled with the recollections of those happy days, when he first awakened within me the sense of classical grace, and of those after-seasons, when the exquisite representations of Greek Tragedy, which he superintended, made its images vital. He is gone to his rest, full of years and honours; and I cannot receive from him that sanction which he cordially gave me when I presented this Drama to my friends, now that I submit it to the judgment of a wider and an impartial circle. Death, which harmonizes the pictures of human character, found little in *his* to spiritualize or to soften; but if it has not enhanced the feeling of his excellences in the minds of those who felt their influence, it has enabled them to express that feeling without the semblance of flattery. It has left them free, not only to expatiate on those well-directed labours which have facilitated the access of the young to the elements of sound learning; on the solemn and persuasive tone of his pulpit eloquence; on the steadiness of his attachment to principles adopted with caution, expressed with moderation, yet maintained without a sigh at the cost of the emoluments and honours to which they were obstacles; but also to revert to that remarkable kindness of disposition which was the secret but active law of his moral being. His nature was not ameliorated, nor even characterized, but wholly moulded of Christian love to a degree of entireness of which there are few examples. He had no sense of injury but as something to be forgiven. The liberal allowance which he extended to all human frailties grew more active when they affected his

own interests, and interfered with his own hopes; so that, however he might reprobate evil at a distance, as soon as it came within his sphere, he desired only to overcome it by good. Envy, Hatred, and Malice, were to him mere names—like the figures of speech in a schoolboy's theme, or the giants in a fairy tale—phantoms which never touched him with a sense of reality. His guileless simplicity of heart was not preserved in learned seclusion, or by a constant watchfulness over the development of youthful powers, (for he found time to mingle frequently in the blameless gaieties and the stirring business of life,) but by the happy constitution of his own nature, which passion could rarely disturb, and evil had no power to stain. His system of education was animated by a portion of his own spirit: it was framed to enkindle and to quicken the best affections; and to render emulation itself subservient to the generous friendships which it promoted. His charity, in its comprehensiveness, resembled nothing less than the imagination of the greatest of our poets, embracing every thing human; shedding its light upon the just and the unjust; detecting “the soul of goodness in things evil,” and stealing rigidity from virtue; bringing into gentle relief those truths which are of aspect the most benign, and those suggestions and hopes which are most full of consolation; and attaching itself, in all the various departments of life, to individuals whose childhood it had fostered; in whose merits its own images were multiplied; or whose errors and sorrows supplied the materials of its most quick and genial action. The hold

which the Reading-schoolboy had upon it could not be forfeited, not even “by slights, the worst of injuries;” and when broken in fortune, deserted by relatives, and frowned on by the world, he had only to seek the hospitable roof of his old master—“claim kindred there, and have his claims allowed.” By the spirit of cordiality which breathed there, all party-differences were melted away, or, if perceived at all, served only to render tolerance more vivid; and when he who had presided there for fifty years left the scene of his generous labours as a permanent abode, it was to diffuse the serenity of a good conscience and the warmth of unchilled affections through the homes of children who were made proud as well as happy by his presence. Such was he to the last, amidst the infirmities which accidents rather than age had accumulated around him;—the gentlest of monitors, and the most considerate of sufferers—until he was withdrawn from those whose minds he had nurtured; one of whom, who has most cause for gratitude, pays this humble tribute to his memory.

T. N. T.

London, 26th May, 1836.

I O N ;

A T R A G E D Y.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ADRASTUS, King of Argos.

MEDON, High Priest of the Temple of Apollo at Argos.

CRYTHES, Captain of the Royal Guard.

PHOCION, son of Medon.

CTESIPHON, }  
CASSANDER, } noble Argive youths.

ION, a foundling youth protected by Medon.

AGENOR, }  
CLEON, } sages of Argos.  
TIMOCLES, }

IRUS, a boy, slave of Agenor.

CLEMANTHE, Medon's daughter.

ABRA, attendant on Clemanthe.

SCENE.—Argos.

THE TIME of the Action is comprised in one day and night,  
and the following morning.

I O N ;  
A T R A G E D Y.

---

A C T I.

SCENE I.

*The Interior of the Temple of Apollo, which is supposed to be placed on a rocky eminence. Early morning. The interior lighted by a single lamp suspended from the roof. AGENOR resting against a column ;—IRUS seated on a bench at the side of the scene.*

*AGENOR comes forward and speaks.*

AGENOR.

WILL the dawn never visit us ? These hours  
Toil heavy with the unresting curse they bear  
To do the work of desolating years !  
All distant sounds are hush'd ;—the shriek of death  
And the survivors' wail are now unheard,  
As grief had worn itself to patience. Irus !

I'm loth so soon to break thy scanty rest,  
 But my heart sickens for the tardy morn ;  
 Sure it is breaking ;—speed and look—yet hold,  
 Know'st thou the fearful shelf of rock that hangs  
 Above the encroaching waves, the loftiest point  
 That stretches eastward ?

IRUS.

Know it ? Yes, my Lord ;  
 There often have I bless'd the opening day,  
 Which thy free kindness gave me leave to waste  
 In happy wandering through the forests.

AGENOR.

Well,

Thou art not then afraid to tread it ; there  
 The earliest streak from the unrisen sun  
 Is to be welcomed ;—tell me how it gleams,  
 In bloody portent or in saffron hope,  
 And hasten back to slumber.

IRUS.

I shall hasten :  
 Believe not that thy summons broke my rest ;  
 I was not sleeping. [Exit IRUS.

AGENOR.

Heaven be with thee, child !  
 His grateful mention of delights bestow'd  
 On that most piteous state of servile childhood  
 By liberal words chance-dropp'd, hath touch'd a vein  
 Of feeling which I deem'd for ever numb'd,  
 And, by a gush of household memories, breaks



The icy casing of that thick despair  
 Which day by day hath gather'd o'er my heart,  
 While, basely safe, within this column'd circle,  
 Uplifted far into the purer air  
 And by Apollo's partial love secured,  
 I have, in spirit, glided with the Plague  
 As in foul darkness or in sickliest light  
 It wafted death through Argos ; and mine ears,  
 Listening athirst for any human sound,  
 Have caught the dismal cry of confused pain,  
 Which to this dizzy height the fitful wind  
 Hath borne from each sad quarter of the vale  
 Where life was.

*Re-enter IRUS.*

Are there signs of day-break ?

IRUS.

None ;

The eastern sky is still unbroken gloom.

AGENOR.

It cannot surely be. Thine eyes are dim  
 (No fault of thine) for want of rest, or now  
 I look upon them near, with scalding tears.  
 Hath care alighted on a head so young !  
 What grief hast thou been weeping ?

IRUS.

Pardon me ;

I never thought at such a mournful time  
 To plead my humble sorrow in excuse  
 Of poorly-render'd service : but my brother—

Thou mayst have noted him,—a sturdy lad,  
 With eye so merry and with foot so light  
 That none could chide his gamesomeness—fell sick  
 But yesterday, and died in my weak arms  
 Ere I could seek for stouter aid ; I hoped  
 That I had taught my grief to veil its signs  
 From thy observant care ; but when I stood  
 Upon the well-known terrace where we loved,  
 Arm link'd in arm, to watch the gleaming sails—  
 His favourite pastime, for he burn'd to share  
 A seaman's hardy lot,—my tears would flow,  
 And I forgot to dry them. But I see  
 Cleon is walking yonder ; let me call him ;  
 For sure 'twill cheer thy heart to speak with him.

AGENOR.

Call him, good youth, and then go in to sleep,  
 Or, if thou wilt, to weep. [Exit IRUS.]

I envy thee  
 The privilege, but Jupiter forbend  
 That I should rob thee of it !

*Enter* CLEON.

CLEON.

Hail, Agenor !

Dark as our lot remains, 'tis comfort yet  
 To find thy age unstricken.

AGENOR.

Rather mourn  
 That I am destined still to linger here

In strange unnatural strength, while death is round me.  
I chide these sinews that are framed so tough  
Grief cannot palsy them ; I chide the air  
Which round this citadel of nature breathes  
With sweetness not of this world ; I would share  
The common grave of my dear countrymen,  
And sink to rest while all familiar things  
Old custom has endear'd are failing with me,  
Rather than shiver on in life behind them :  
Nor should these walls detain me from the paths  
Where death may be embraced, but that my word,  
In a rash moment plighted to our host,  
Forbids me to depart without his license,  
Which firmly he refuses.

CLEON.

Do not chide me

If I rejoice to find the generous Priest  
Means, with Apollo's blessing, to preserve  
The treasure of thy wisdom ;—nay, he trusts not  
To promises alone ; his gates are barr'd  
Against thy egress :—none, indeed, may pass them  
Save the youth Ion, to whose earnest prayer  
His foster-father grants reluctant leave  
To visit the sad city at his will :  
And freely does he use the dangerous boon,  
Which, in my thought, the love that cherish'd him,  
Since he was found within the sacred grove  
Smiling amidst the storm, a most rare infant,  
Should have had sternness to deny.

AGENOR.

What, Ion

The only inmate of this fane allow'd  
To seek the mournful walks where death is busy!—  
Ion our sometime darling, whom we prized  
As a stray gift, by bounteous Heaven dismiss'd  
From some bright sphere which sorrow may not cloud  
To make the happy happier! Is *he* sent  
To grapple with the miseries of this time,  
Whose nature such ethereal aspect wears  
As it would perish at the touch of wrong?  
By no internal contest is he train'd  
For such hard duty; no emotions rude  
Hath his clear spirit vanquish'd;—Love, the germ  
Of his mild nature, hath spread graces forth,  
Expanding with its progress, as the store  
Of rainbow colour which the seed conceals  
Sheds out its tints from its dim treasury,  
To flush and circle in the flower. No tear  
Hath fill'd his eye save that of thoughtful joy  
When, in the evening stillness, lovely things  
Press'd on his soul too busily; his voice,  
If, in the earnestness of childish sports,  
Raised to the tone of anger, check'd its force,  
As if it fear'd to break its being's law,  
And falter'd into music; when the forms  
Of guilty passion have been made to live  
In pictured speech, and others have wax'd loud  
In righteous indignation, he hath heard

With sceptic smile, or from some slender vein  
Of goodness, which surrounding gloom conceal'd,  
Struck sunlight o'er it: so his life hath flow'd  
From its mysterious urn a sacred stream,  
In whose calm depth the beautiful and pure  
Alone are mirror'd; which, though shapes of ill  
May hover round its surface, glides in light,  
And takes no shadow from them.

CLEON.

Yet, methinks,  
Thou hast not lately met him, or a change  
Pass'd strangely on him had not miss'd thy wonder.  
His form appears dilated; in these eyes,  
Where pleasure danced, a thoughtful sadness dwells;  
Stern purpose knits the forehead, which till now  
Knew not the passing wrinkle of a care:  
Those limbs which in their heedless motion own'd  
A stripling's playful happiness, are strung  
As if the iron hardships of the camp  
Had given them sturdy nurture; and his step,  
Its airiness of yesterday forgotten,  
Awakes the echoes of these desolate courts,  
As if a warrior of heroic mould  
Paced them in armour.

AGENOR.

Hope is in thy tale.  
This is no freak of Nature's wayward course,  
But work of pitying Heaven; for not in vain  
The gods have pour'd into that guileless heart

The strengths that nerve the hero ;—they are ours.

CLEON.

How can he aid us? Can he stay the pulse  
Of ebbing life,—arrest the infected winds,  
Or smite the hungry spectre of the grave?

AGENOR.

And dost thou think these breezes are our foes,—  
The innocent airs that used to dance around us,  
As if they felt the blessings they convey'd,  
Or that the death they bear is casual? No!  
'Tis human guilt that blackens in the cloud,  
Flashes athwart its mass in jagged fire,  
Whirls in the hurricane, pollutes the air,  
Turns all the joyous melodies of earth  
To murmurings of doom. There is a foe  
Who in the glorious summit of the state  
Draws down the great resentment of the gods,  
Whom he defies to strike us ;—yet his power  
Partakes that just infirmity which Nature  
Blends in the empire of her proudest sons—  
That it is cased within a single breast,  
And may be pluck'd thence by a single arm.  
Let but that arm, selected by the gods,  
Do its great office on the tyrant's life,  
And Argos breathes again!

CLEON.

A footstep!—hush!

Thy wishes, falling on a slavish ear,  
Would tempt another outrage: 'tis a friend—

An honest though a crabbed one—Timocles :  
 Something hath ruffled him.—Good day, Timocles !

[TIMOCLES *passes in front.*

He will not speak to us.

AGENOR.

But he *shall* speak.

Timocles—nay then, thus I must enforce thee ;

[*staying him.*

Sure thou wilt not refuse a comrade's hand  
 That may be cold ere sunset.

TIMOCLES. [*giving his hand.*]

Thou mayst school me ;

Thy years and love have license : but I own not  
 A stripling's mastery ; is 't fit, Agenor ?

AGENOR.

Nay, thou must tell thy wrong : whate'er it prove,  
 I hail thy anger as a hopeful sign,  
 For it revives the thought of household days,  
 When the small bickerings of friends had space  
 To fret, and Death was not for ever nigh  
 To frown upon Estrangement. What has moved thee ?

TIMOCLES.

I blush to tell it. Weary of the night  
 And of my life, I sought the western portal :  
 It opened, when ascending from the stair  
 That through the rock winds spiral from the town,  
 Ion, the foundling cherish'd by the Priest,  
 Stood in the entrance : with such mild command  
 As he has often smilingly obey'd,

I bade him stand aside and let me pass ;  
 When—wouldst thou think it?—in determined speech  
 He gave me counsel to return : I press'd  
 Impatient onward : he, with honied phrase  
 His daring act excusing, grasp'd my arm  
 With strength resistless ; led me from the gate ;  
 Replaced its ponderous bars ; and, with a look  
 As modest as he wore in childhood, left me.

AGENOR.

And thou wilt thank him for it soon ; he comes—  
 Now hold thy angry purpose if thou canst !

*Enter* ION.

ION.

I seek thee, good Timocles, to implore  
 Again thy pardon. I am young in trust,  
 And fear lest, in the earnestness of love,  
 I stayed thy course too rudely. Thou hast borne  
 My childish folly often,—do not frown  
 If I have ventured with unmanner'd zeal  
 To guard the ripe experiences of years  
 From one rash moment's danger.

TIMOCLES.

Leave thy care.

If I am weary of the flutterer life,  
 Is mortal bidding thus to cage it in ?

ION.

And art thou tired of being ? Has the grave  
 No terrors for thee ? Hast thou sunder'd quite



Those thousand meshes which old custom weaves  
To bind us earthward, and gay fancy films  
With airy lustre various? Hast subdued  
Those cleavings of the spirit to its prison,  
Those nice regards, dear habits, pensive memories,  
That change the valour of the thoughtful breast  
To brave dissimulation of its fears?  
Is Hope quench'd in thy bosom? Thou art free,  
And in the simple dignity of man  
Standest apart untempted:—do not lose  
The great occasion thou hast pluck'd from misery,  
Nor play the spendthrift with a great despair,  
But use it nobly!

TIMOCLES.

What, to strike? to slay?

ION.

No!—not unless the audible voice of Heaven  
Call thee to that dire office; but to shed  
On ears abused by falsehood, truths of power  
In words immortal,—not such words as flash  
From the fierce demagogue's unthinking rage  
To madden for a moment and expire,—  
Nor such as the rapt orator imbues  
With warmth of facile sympathy, and moulds  
To mirrors radiant with fair images,  
To grace the noble fervour of an hour;—  
But words which bear the spirits of great deeds  
Wing'd for the Future; which the dying breath  
Of Freedom's martyr shapes as it exhales,

And to the most enduring forms of earth  
 Commits—to linger in the craggy shade  
 Of the huge valley, 'neath the eagle's home,  
 Or in the sea-cave where the tempest sleeps,  
 Till some heroic leader bid them wake  
 To thrill the world with echoes!—But I talk  
 Of things above my grasp, which strangely press  
 Upon my soul, and tempt me to forget  
 The duties of my youth;—pray you forgive me.

TIMOCLES.

Have I not said so?

AGENOR.

Welcome to the morn!

The eastern gates unfold, the Priest approaches;  
 [*As AGENOR speaks, the great gates at the back of the  
 scene open; the sea is discovered far beneath,—the  
 dawn breaking over it; MEDON, the Priest, enters  
 attended.*]

And lo! the sun is struggling with the gloom,  
 Whose masses fill the eastern sky, and tints  
 Its edges with dull red;—but he *will* triumph;  
 Bless'd be the omen!

MEDON.

God of light and joy,  
 Once more delight us with thy healing beams!  
 If I may trace thy language in the clouds  
 That wait upon thy rising, help is nigh—  
 But help achieved in blood.

ION.

Sayst thou in blood ?

MEDON.

Yes, Ion !—why, he sickens at the word,  
Spite of his new-born strength ;—the sights of woe  
That he will seek have shed their paleness on him.  
Has this night's walk shown more than common sorrow ?

ION.

I pass'd the palace where the frantic king  
Yet holds his crimson revel, whence the roar  
Of desperate mirth came, mingling with the sigh  
Of death-subdued robustness, and the gleam  
Of festal lamps mid spectral columns hung  
Flaunting o'er shapes of anguish made them ghastlier.  
How can I cease to tremble for the sad ones  
He mocks—and him the wretchedest of all ?

TIMOCLES.

And canst thou pity him ? Dost thou discern,  
Amidst his impious darings, plea for him ?

ION.

Is he not childless, friendless, and a king ?  
He 's human ; and some pulse of good must live  
Within his nature—have ye tried to wake it ?

MEDON.

Yes ; I believe he felt our sufferings once ;  
When, at my strong entreaty, he dispatch'd  
Phocion my son to Delphos, there to seek  
Our cause of sorrow ; but, as time dragg'd on  
Without his messenger's return, he grew

Impatient of all counsel,—to his palace  
 In awful mood retiring, wildly call'd  
 The reckless of his court to share his stores  
 And end all with him. When we dared disturb  
 His dreadful feastings with a humble prayer  
 That he would meet us, the poor slave, who bore  
 The message, flew back smarting from the scourge,  
 And mutter'd a decree that he who next  
 Unbidden met the tyrant's glance should die.

AGENOR.

I am prepared to brave it.

CLEON.

So am I.

TIMOCLES.

And I—

ION.

O Sages, do not think my prayer  
 Bespeaks unseemly forwardness—send me !  
 The coarsest reed that trembles in the marsh,  
 If Heaven select it for its instrument,  
 May shed celestial music on the breeze  
 As clearly as the pipe whose virgin gold  
 Befits the lip of Phœbus ;—ye are wise,  
 And needed by your country ; ye are fathers :  
 I am a lone stray thing, whose little life  
 By strangers' bounty cherish'd, like a wave  
 That from the summer sea a wanton breeze  
 Lifts for a moment's sparkle, will subside  
 Light as it rose, nor leave a sigh in breaking.

MEDON.

Ion, no sigh!

ION.

Forgive me if I seem'd  
To doubt that thou wilt mourn me if I fall;  
Nor would I tax thy love with such a fear  
But that high promptings, which could never rise  
Spontaneous in my nature, bid me plead  
Thus boldly for the mission.

MEDON.

My brave boy!  
It shall be as thou wilt. I see thou art call'd  
To this great peril, and I will not stay thee.  
When wilt thou be prepared to seek it?

ION.

Now.

Only before I go, thus, on my knee,  
Let me in one word thank thee for a life  
Made by thy love a cloudless holiday;  
And O, my more than father! let me look  
Up to thy face as if indeed a father's,  
And give me a son's blessing.

MEDON.

Bless thee, son!  
I should be marble now; let's part at once.

ION.

If I should not return, bless Phocion from me;  
And, for Clemanthe—may I speak one word,  
One parting word with my fair playfellow?

MEDON.

If thou wouldst have it so, thou shalt.

ION.

Farewell then!

Your prayers wait on my steps. The arm of Heaven

I feel in life or death will be around me.

[Exit.

MEDON.

O grant it be in life! Let 's to the sacrifice.

[Exeunt.

## SCENE II.

*An apartment of the Temple. Enter CLEMANTHE  
followed by ABRA.*

CLEMANTHE.

Is he so changed?

ABRA.

His bearing is so alter'd  
That, distant, I scarce knew him for himself;  
But, looking in his face, I felt his smile  
Gracious as ever, though its sweetness wore  
Unwonted sorrow in it.

CLEMANTHE.

He will go  
To some high fortune, and forget us all,  
Reclaim'd (be sure of it) by noble parents;  
Me he forgets already; for five days,  
Five melancholy days, I have not seen him.

ABRA.

Thou knowest that he has privilege to range  
The infected city ; and, 'tis said, he spends  
The hours of needful rest in squalid hovels  
Where death is most forsaken.

CLEMANTHE.

Why is this ?

Why should my father, niggard of the lives  
Of aged men, be prodigal of youth  
So rich in glorious prophecy as his ?

ABRA.

He comes to answer for himself. I'll leave you. [*Exit.*

CLEMANTHE.

Stay ! Well my heart may guard its secret best  
By its own strength.

*Enter* ION.

ION.

How fares my pensive sister ?

CLEMANTHE.

How should I fare but ill when the pale hand  
Draws the black foldings of the eternal curtain  
Closer and closer round us—Phocion absent—  
And thou, forsaking all within thy home,  
Wilt risk thy life with strangers, in whose aid  
Even thou canst do but little ?

ION.

It is little :

But in these sharp extremities of fortune,

The blessings which the weak and poor can scatter  
 Have their own season. 'Tis a little thing  
 To give a cup of water; yet its draught  
 Of cool refreshment, drain'd by fever'd lips,  
 May give a shock of pleasure to the frame  
 More exquisite than when nectarean juice  
 Renews the life of joy in happiest hours.  
 It is a little thing to speak a phrase  
 Of common comfort which by daily use  
 Has almost lost its sense; yet on the ear  
 Of him who thought to die unmourn'd 'twill fall  
 Like choicest music; fill the glazing eye  
 With gentle tears; relax the knotted hand  
 To know the bonds of fellowship again;  
 And shed on the departing soul a sense  
 More precious than the benison of friends  
 About the honor'd deathbed of the rich,  
 To him who else were lonely, that another  
 Of the great family is near and feels.

CLEMANTHE.

O thou canst never bear these mournful offices!  
 So blithe, so merry once! Will not the sight  
 Of frenzied agonies unfix thy reason,  
 Or the dumb woe congeal thee?

ION.

No, Clemanthe;  
 They are the patient sorrows that touch nearest!  
 If thou hadst seen the warrior when he writhed  
 In the last grapple of his sinewy frame



With conquering anguish, strive to cast a smile  
(And not in vain) upon his fragile wife,  
Waning beside him,—and, his limbs composed,  
The widow of the moment fix her gaze  
Of longing, speechless love, upon the babe,  
The only living thing which yet was hers,  
Spreading its arms for its own resting-place,  
Yet with attenuated hand wave off  
The unstricken child, and so embraceless die,  
Stifling the mighty hunger of the heart ;  
Thou couldst endure the sight of selfish grief  
In sullenness or frenzy ;—but to-day  
Another lot falls on me.

CLEMANTHE.

Thou wilt leave us !

I read it plainly in thy alter'd mien ;—  
Is it for ever ?

ION.

That is with the gods !

I go but to the palace, urged by hope,  
Which from afar hath darted on my soul,  
That to the humbleness of one like me  
The haughty king may listen.

CLEMANTHE.

To the palace !

Knowest thou the peril—nay the certain issue  
That waits thee ? Death !—The tyrant has decreed it,  
Confirmed it with an oath ; and he has power  
To keep that oath ; for, hated as he is,

The reckless soldiers who partake his riot  
Are swift to do his bidding.

ION.

I know all ;  
But they who call me to the work can shield me,  
Or make me strong to suffer.

CLEMANTHE.

Then the sword  
Falls on thy neck ! O Gods ! to think that thou,  
Who in the plenitude of youthful life  
Art now before me, ere the sun decline,  
Perhaps in one short hour shalt lie cold, cold,  
To speak, smile, bless no more !—Thou shalt not go !

ION.

Thou must not stay me, fair one ; even thy father,  
Who (blessings on him !) loves me as his son,  
Yields to the will of Heaven.

CLEMANTHE.

And he can do this !  
I shall not bear his presence if thou fallest  
By his consent ; so shall I be alone.

ION.

Phocion will soon return, and juster thoughts  
Of thy admiring father close the gap  
Thy old companion left behind him.

CLEMANTHE.

Never !  
What will to me be father, brother, friends,  
When thou art gone—the light of our life quench'd—

Haunting like spectres of departed joy  
The home where thou wert dearest ?

ION.

Thrill me not

With words that, in their agony, suggest  
A hope too ravishing,—or my head will swim,  
And my heart faint within me.

CLEMANTHE.

Has my speech

Such blessed power ? I will not mourn it then,  
Though it hath told a secret I had borne  
Till death in silence :—how affection grew  
To this, I know not ;—day succeeded day,  
Each fraught with the same innocent delights,  
Without one shock to ruffle the disguise  
Of sisterly regard which veil'd it well,  
Till thy changed mien reveal'd it to my soul,  
And thy great peril makes me bold to tell it.  
Do not despise it in me !

ION.

With deep joy

Thus I receive it. Trust me, it is long  
Since I have learn'd to tremble midst our pleasures,  
Lest I should break the golden dream around me  
With most ungrateful rashness. I should bless  
The sharp and perilous duty which hath press'd  
A life's deliciousness into these moments,—  
Which here must end. I came to say farewell,  
And the word must be said.

CLEMANTHE.

Thou canst not mean it!

Have I disclaim'd all maiden bashfulness  
 To tell the cherish'd secret of my soul  
 To my soul's master, and in rich return  
 Obtain'd the dear assurance of his love,  
 To hear him speak that miserable word,  
 I cannot—will not echo?

ION.

Heaven has call'd me,  
 And I have pledged my honor. When thy heart  
 Bestow'd its preference on a friendless boy,  
 Thou didst not image him a recreant; nor  
 Must he prove so, by thy election crown'd.  
 Thou hast endow'd me with the right to claim  
 Thy help through this our journey, be its course  
 Lengthen'd to age, or in an hour to end,  
 And now I ask it!—bid my courage hold,  
 And with thy free approval send me forth  
 In soul apparell'd for my office!

CLEMANTHE.

Go!

I would not have thee other than thou art,  
 Living or dying—and if thou shouldst fall—

ION.

Be sure I shall return.

CLEMANTHE.

If thou shouldst fall,  
 I shall be happier as the affianced bride

Of thy cold ashes, than in proudest fortunes—

Thine—ever thine— [she faints in his arms.

ION. [calls.]

Abra!—So best to part— [Enter ABRA.

Let her have air; be near her through the day;

I know thy tenderness—should ill news come

Of any friend, she will require it all.

[ABRA bears CLEMANTHE out.

Ye Gods, that have enrich'd the life ye claim

With priceless treasure, strengthen me to yield it!

[Exit.

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

## SCENE I.

*A Terrace of the Palace.*

ADRASTUS, CRYTHES.

ADRASTUS.

THE air breathes freshly after our long night  
Of glorious revelry. I'll walk awhile.

CRYTHES.

It blows across the town; dost thou not fear  
It bear infection with it?

ADRASTUS.

Fear! dost talk

Of fear to me? I deem'd even thy poor thoughts  
Had better scann'd their master. Prithee tell me  
In what act, word, or look, since I have borne  
Thy converse here, hast thou discern'd such baseness  
As makes thee bold to prate to me of fear?

CRYTHES.

My liege, of human might all know thee fearless,  
But may not heroes shun the elements  
When sickness taints them?

ADRASTUS.

Let them blast me now !—

I stir not ; tremble not ; these massive walls,  
Whose date o'erawes tradition, gird the home  
Of a great race of kings, along whose line  
The eager mind lives aching, through the darkness  
Of ages else unstoried, till its shapes  
Of armed sovereigns spread to godlike port,  
And, frowning in the uncertain dawn of time,  
Strike awe, as powers who ruled an elder world,  
In mute obedience. I, sad heriter  
Of all their glories, feel our doom is nigh ;  
And I will meet it as befits their fame ;  
Nor will I vary my selected path,  
The breadth of my sword's edge, nor check a wish,  
If such unkingly yielding might avert it.

CRYTHES.

Thou art ever royal in thy thoughts.

ADRASTUS.

No more—

I would be private.

[Exit CRYTHES.]

Groveling parasite !

Why should I waste these fate-envir'd hours,  
And pledge my great defiance to despair  
With flatterers such as thou ;—as if my joys  
Required the pale reflections cast by slaves  
In mirror'd mockery round my throne, or lack'd  
The aid of reptile sympathies to stream  
Through fate's black pageantry. Let weakness seek

Companionship: I 'll henceforth feast alone.

*Enter a Soldier.*

SOLDIER.

My liege, forgive me.

ADRASTUS.

Well! Speak out at once  
Thy business, and retire.

SOLDIER.

I have no part  
In the presumptuous message that I bear.

ADRASTUS.

Tell it, or go. There is no time to waste  
On idle terrors.

SOLDIER.

Thus it is, my lord:—

As we were burnishing our arms, a man  
Enter'd the court, and when we saw him first  
Was tending towards the palace; in amaze,  
We hail'd the rash intruder; still he walk'd  
Unheeding onward, till the western gate  
Barr'd further course; then turning, he besought  
Our startled band to herald him to thee,  
That he might urge a message which the sages  
Had charged him to deliver.

ADRASTUS.

Ha! the greybeards  
Who, mid the altars of the gods, conspire  
To cast the image of supernal power



From earth its shadow consecrates. What sage  
Is so resolved to play the orator  
That he would die for 't?

SOLDIER.

He is but a youth,  
Yet urged his prayer with a sad constancy  
Which could not be denied.

ADRASTUS.

Most bravely plann'd!  
Sedition worthy of the reverend host  
Of sophist traitors ; brave to scatter fancies  
Of discontent midst sturdy artisans,  
Whose honest sinews they direct unseen,  
And make their proxies in the work of peril !—  
'Tis fit, when burning to insult their king,  
And warn'd the pleasure must be bought with life,  
Their valour send a boy to speak their wisdom !  
Thou know'st my last decree ; tell this rash youth  
The danger he incurs ;—then let him pass,  
And own the king more gentle than his masters.

SOLDIER.

We have already told him of the fate  
Which waits his daring ; courteously he thank'd us,  
But still with solemn accent urged his suit.

ADRASTUS.

Tell him once more, if he persists, he dies—  
Then, if he will, admit him. Should he hold  
His purpose, order Crythes to conduct him,  
And see the headsman instantly prepare

To do his office.

[*Exit* SOLDIER.]

So resolved, so young—

'Twere pity he should fall; yet he *must* fall,  
 Or the great sceptre, which hath sway'd the fears  
 Of ages, will become a common staff  
 For youth to wield or age to rest upon,  
 Despoil'd of all its virtues. He *must* fall,  
 Else they who prompt the insult will grow bold,  
 And with their pestilent vauntings through the city  
 Raise the low fog of murky discontent,  
 Which now creeps harmless through its marshy birth-  
 place,  
 To veil my setting glories. He is warn'd;  
 And if he cross yon threshold, he shall die.

*Enter* CRYTHES and ION.

CRYTHES.

The king!

ADRASTUS.

Stranger, I bid thee welcome;  
 We are about to tread the same dark passage,  
 Thou almost on the instant.—Is the sword

[*To* CRYTHES.]

Of justice sharpen'd, and the headsman ready?

CRYTHES.

Thou mayst behold them plainly in the court;  
 Even now the solemn soldiers line the ground;  
 The steel gleams on the altar; and the slave  
 Disrobes himself for duty.

ADRASTUS. [*To ION.*]

Dost thou see them ?

ION.

I do.

ADRASTUS.

By Heaven, he does not change !

If, even now, thou wilt depart and leave

Thy traitorous thoughts unspoken, thou art free.

ION.

I thank thee for thy offer ; but I stand

Before thee for the lives of thousands, rich

In all that makes life precious to the brave ;

Who perish not alone, but in their fall

Break the far-spreading tendrils that they feed,

And leave them nurtureless. If thou wilt hear me

For them, I am content to speak no more.

ADRASTUS.

Thou hast thy wish then. Crythes ! till yon dial

Cast its thin shadow on the approaching hour,

I hear this gallant traitor. On the instant,

Come without word, and lead him to his doom.

Now leave us.

CRYTHES.

What, alone ?

ADRASTUS.

Yes, slave ! alone.

He is no assassin !

[*Exit CRYTHES.*]

Tell me who thou art.

What generous source owns that heroic blood,

Which holds its course thus bravely? What great wars  
Have nursed the courage that can look on death,  
Certain and speedy death, with placid eye?

ION.

I am a simple youth, who never bore  
The weight of armour,—one who may not boast  
Of noble birth or valour of his own.  
Deem not the powers which nerve me thus to speak  
In thy great presence, and have made my heart  
Upon the verge of bloody death as calm,  
As equal in its beatings, as when sleep  
Approach'd me nestling from the sportive toils  
Of thoughtless childhood, and celestial dreams  
Began to glimmer through the deepening shadows  
Of soft oblivion, to belong to me!—  
These are the strengths of Heaven; to thee they speak,  
Bid thee to hearken to thy people's cry,  
Or warn thee that thy hour must shortly come!

ADRASTUS.

I know it must; so mayst thou spare thy warnings.  
The envious gods in me have doom'd a race,  
Whose glories stream from the same cloud-girt founts,  
Whence their own dawn'd upon the infant world;  
And I shall sit on my ancestral throne  
To meet their vengeance; but till then I rule,  
As I have ever ruled, and thou wilt feel.

ION.

I will not further urge thy safety to thee;  
It may be, as thou sayst, too late; nor seek

To make thee tremble at the gathering curse  
Which shall burst forth in mockery at thy fall ;  
But thou art gifted with a nobler sense—  
I know thou art, my sovereign !—sense of pain  
Endured by myriad Argives, in whose souls,  
And in whose fathers' souls, thou and thy fathers  
Have kept their cherish'd state ; whose heartstrings, still  
The living fibres of thy rooted power,  
Quiver with agonies thy crimes have drawn  
From heavenly justice on them.

ADRASTUS.

How ! my crimes ?

ION.

Yes ; 'tis the eternal law that where guilt is,  
Sorrow shall answer it ; and thou hast not  
A poor man's privilege to bear alone,  
Or in the narrow circle of his kinsmen,  
The penalties of evil, for in thine  
A nation's fate lies circled.—King Adrastus !  
Mail'd as thy heart is with the usages  
Of pomp and power, a few short summers since  
Thou wert a child, and canst not be relentless.  
O, if maternal love embraced thee then,  
Think of the mothers who with eyes unwet  
Glare o'er their perishing children : hast thou shared  
The glow of a first friendship, which is born  
Midst the rude sports of boyhood, think of youth  
Smitten amidst its playthings ;—let the spirit  
Of thy own innocent childhood whisper pity !

ADRASTUS.

In every word thou dost but steel my soul.  
 My youth was blasted ;—parents, brother, kin—  
 All that should people infancy with joy—  
 Conspired to poison mine ; despoiled my life  
 Of innocence and hope—all but the sword  
 And sceptre—dost thou wonder at me now ?

ION.

I knew that we should pity—

ADRASTUS.

Pity! dare

To speak that word again, and torture waits thee !  
 I am yet king of Argos. Well, go on—  
 Thy time is short, and I am pledged to hear.

ION.

If thou hast ever loved—

ADRASTUS.

Beware ! beware !

ION.

Thou hast ! I see thou hast ! Thou art not marble,  
 And thou shalt hear me !—Think upon the time  
 When the clear depths of thy yet lucid soul  
 Were ruffled with the troublings of strange joy,  
 As if some unseen visitant from heaven  
 Touch'd the calm lake and wreath'd its images  
 In sparkling waves ;—recall the dallying hope  
 That on the margin of assurance trembled,  
 As loth to lose in certainty too bless'd  
 Its happy being ;—taste in thought again

Of the stolen sweetness of those evening walks,  
When pansied turf was air to winged feet,  
And circling forests by ethereal touch  
Enchanted, wore the livery of the sky,  
As if about to melt in golden light  
Shapes of one heavenly vision; and thy heart,  
Enlarged by its new sympathy with one,  
Grew bountiful to all!

ADRASTUS.

That tone! that tone!

Whence came it? from thy lips? It cannot be—  
The long-hush'd music of the only voice  
That ever spake unbought affection to me,  
And waked my soul to blessing!—O sweet hours  
Of golden joy, ye come! your glories break  
Through my pavilion'd spirit's sable folds!  
Roll on! roll on!—Stranger, thou dost enforce me  
To speak of things unbreathed by lip of mine  
To human ear:—wilt listen?

ION.

As a child.

ADRASTUS.

Again! that voice again!—thou hast seen me moved  
As never mortal saw me, by a tone  
Which some light breeze, enamour'd of the sound,  
Hath wafted through the woods, till thy young voice  
Caught it to rive and melt me. At my birth  
This city, which, expectant of its Prince,  
Lay hush'd, broke out in clamorous ecstasies;

Yet, in that moment, while the uplifted cups  
 Foam'd with the choicest product of the sun,  
 And welcome thundered from a thousand throats,  
 My doom was seal'd. From the hearth's vacant space,  
 In the dark chamber where my mother lay,  
 Faint with the sense of pain-bought happiness,  
 Came forth, in heart-appalling tone, these words  
 Of me the nurseling—"Woe unto the babe!  
 "Against the life which now begins shall life  
 "Lighted from thence be arm'd, and both soon quench'd,  
 "End this great line in sorrow!"—Ere I grew  
 Of years to know myself a thing accursed,  
 A second son was born, to steal the love  
 Which fate had else scarce rifled: he became  
 My parents' hope, the darling of the crew  
 Who lived upon their smiles, and thought it flattery  
 To trace in every foible of my youth—  
 A prince's youth!—the workings of the curse;  
 My very mother—Jove! I cannot bear  
 To speak it now—look'd freezingly upon me!

ION.

But thy brother—

ADRASTUS.

Died. Thou hast heard the lie,  
 The common lie that every peasant tells  
 Of me his master,—that I slew the boy.  
 'Tis false! One summer's eve, below a crag  
 Which, in his wilful mood, he strove to climb,  
 He lay a mangled corpse: the very slaves,



Whose cruelty had shut him from my heart,  
Now coin'd their own injustice into proofs  
To brand me as his murderer.

ION.

Did they dare  
Accuse thee ?

ADRASTUS.

Not in open speech :—they felt  
I should have seized the miscreant by the throat,  
And crush'd the lie half-spoken with the life  
Of the base speaker ;—but the tale look'd out  
From the stolen gaze of coward eyes, which shrank  
When mine have met them ; murmur'd through the crowd  
That at the sacrifice, or feast, or game  
Stood distant from me ; burnt into my soul  
When I beheld it in my father's shudder !

ION.

Didst not declare thy innocence ?

ADRASTUS.

To whom ?  
To parents who could doubt me ? To the ring  
Of grave impostors, or their shallow sons,  
Who should have studied to prevent my wish  
Before it grew to language ; hail'd my choice  
To service as a prize to wrestle for ;  
And whose reluctant courtesy I bore,  
Pale with proud anger, till from lips compress'd  
The blood has started ? To the common herd,  
The vassals of our ancient house, the mass

Of bones and muscles framed to till the soil  
A few brief years, then rot unnamed beneath it,  
Or, deck'd for slaughter at their master's call,  
To smite and to be smitten, and lie crush'd  
In heaps to swell his glory or his shame?  
Answer to them: No! though my heart had burst,  
As it was nigh to bursting!—To the mountains  
I fled, and on their pinnacles of snow  
Breasted the icy wind, in hope to cool  
My spirit's fever—struggled with the oak  
In search of weariness, and learn'd to rive  
Its stubborn boughs, till limbs once lightly strung  
Might mate in cordage with its infant stems;  
Or on the sea-beat rock tore off the vest  
Which burnt upon my bosom, and to air  
Headlong committed, clove the water's depth  
Which plummet never sounded;—but in vain.

ION.

Yet succour came to thee?

ADRASTUS.

A blessed one!

Which the strange magic of thy voice revives,  
And thus unlocks my soul. My rapid steps  
Were in a wood-encircled valley stayed  
By the bright vision of a maid, whose face  
Most lovely more than loveliness reveal'd,  
In touch of patient grief, which dearer seem'd  
Than happiness to spirit sear'd like mine.  
With feeble hands she strove to lay in earth

The body of her aged sire, whose death  
Left her alone. I aided her sad work,  
And soon two lonely ones by holy rites  
Became one happy being. Days, weeks, months,  
In streamlike unity flow'd silent by us  
In our delightful nest. My father's spies—  
Slaves, whom my nod should have consign'd to stripes  
Or the swift falchion—track'd our sylvan home  
Just as my bosom knew its second joy,  
And, spite of fortune, I embraced a son.

ION.

Urged by thy trembling parents to avert  
That dreadful prophecy ?

ADRASTUS.

Fools ! did they deem  
Its worst accomplishment could match the ill  
Which they wrought on me ? It had left unharm'd  
A thousand ecstasies of passion'd years,  
Which, tasted once, live ever, and disdain  
Fate's iron grapple ! Could I now behold  
That son with knife uplifted at my heart,  
A moment ere my life-blood followed it,  
I would embrace him with my dying eyes,  
And pardon destiny ! While jocund smiles  
Wreathed on the infant's face, as if sweet spirits  
Suggested pleasant fancies to its soul,  
The ruffians broke upon us ; seized the child ;  
Dash'd through the thicket to the beetling rock  
'Neath which the deep wave eddies : I stood still

As stricken into stone : I heard him cry,  
 Press'd by the rudeness of the murderer's gripe,  
 Severer ill unfearing—then the splash  
 Of waters that shall cover him for ever ;  
 And could not stir to save him !

ION.

And the mother—

ADRASTUS.

She spake no word, but clasped me in her arms,  
 And lay her down to die. A lingering gaze  
 Of love she fix'd on me—none other loved,  
 And so pass'd hence. By Jupiter, her look !  
 Her dying patience glimmers in thy face !  
 She lives again ! She looks upon me now !  
 There's magic in 't. Bear with me—I am childish.

*Enter CRYTHES and Guards.*

ADRASTUS.

Why art thou here ?

CRYTHES.

The dial points the hour.

ADRASTUS.

Dost thou not see that horrid purpose pass'd ?

Hast thou no heart—no sense ?

CRYTHES.

Scarce half an hour

Hath flown since the command on which I wait.

ADRASTUS.

Scarce half an hour !—years—years have roll'd since then.

Begone ; remove that pageantry of death—  
 It blasts my sight—and hearken ! Touch a hair  
 Of this brave youth, or look on him as now  
 With thy cold headsman's eye, and yonder band  
 Shall not expect a fearful show in vain.  
 Hence without word. [Exit CRYTHES.

What wouldst thou have me do ?

ION.

Let thy awaken'd heart speak its own language ;  
 Convene thy Sages ;—frankly, nobly meet them ;  
 Explore with them the pleasure of the gods,  
 And, whatsoe'er the sacrifice, perform it.

ADRASTUS.

Well ! I will seek their presence in an hour ;  
 Go summon them, young hero : hold ! no word  
 Of the strange passion thou hast witness'd here.

ION.

Distrust me not.—Benignant Powers, I thank ye ! [Exit.

ADRASTUS.

Yet stay—he's gone—his spell is on me yet ;  
 What have I promised him ? To meet the men  
 Who from my living head would strip the crown  
 And sit in judgment on me ?—I must do it—  
 Yet shall my band be ready to o'erawe  
 The course of liberal speech, and, if it rise  
 So as too loudly to offend my ear,  
 Strike the rash brawler dead !—what idle dream  
 Of long-past days had melted me ? It fades—  
 It vanishes—I am again a king !

## SCENE II.

*The interior of the Temple.*

[Same as ACT I. SCENE I.]

[CLEMANTHE seated—ABRA attending her.]

ABRA.

Look, dearest lady!—the thin smoke aspires  
 In the calm air, as when in happier times  
 It show'd the gods propitious; wilt thou seek  
 Thy chamber, lest thy father and his friends,  
 Returning, find us hinderers of their council?  
 She answers not—she hearkens not—with joy  
 Could I believe her, for the first time, sullen!—  
 Still she is rapt.

[Enter AGENOR.]

O, speak to my sweet mistress;  
 Haply thy voice may rouse her.

AGENOR.

Dear Clemanthe,  
 Hope dawns in every omen; we shall hail  
 Our tranquil hours again.

[Enter MEDON, CLEON, TIMOCLES, and others.]

MEDON.

Clemanthe here!

How sad! how pale!

ABRA.

Her eye is kindling—hush !

CLEMANTHE.

Hark ! hear ye not a distant footstep ?

MEDON.

No.

Look round, my fairest child ; thy friends are near thee.

CLEMANTHE.

Yes !—now 'tis lost—'tis on that endless stair—

Nearer and more distinct—'tis his—'tis his—

He lives ! he comes !

[CLEMANTHE rises and rushes to the back of the stage,  
at which ION appears, and returns with her.]

Here is your messenger,

Whom Heaven has rescued from the tyrant's rage

Ye sent him forth to brave. Rejoice, old men,

That ye are guiltless of his blood !—why pause ye,

Why shout ye not his welcome ?

MEDON.

Dearest girl,

This is no scene for thee ; go to thy chamber,

I'll come to thee ere long.

[Exeunt CLEMANTHE and ABRA.]

She is o'erwrought

By fear and joy for one whose infant hopes

Were mingled with her own, even as a brother's.

TIMOCLES.

Ion !

How shall we do thee honor ?

ION.

None is due

Save to the gods whose gracious influence sways  
The king ye deem'd relentless ;—he consents  
To meet ye presently in council : speed ;  
This may be nature's latest rally in him,  
In fitful strength, ere it be quench'd for ever !

MEDON.

Haste to your seats ; I will but speak a word  
With our brave friend, and follow ; though convened  
In speed, let our assembly lack no forms  
Of due observance, which to furious power  
Plead with the silent emphasis of years.

[*Exeunt all but MEDON and ION.*]

Ion, draw near me ; this eventful day  
Hath shown thy nature's graces circled round  
With firmness which accomplishes the hero ;—  
And it would bring to me but one proud thought  
That virtues which required not culture's aid  
Shed their first fragrance 'neath my roof, and there  
Found shelter ;—but it also hath reveal'd  
What I may not hide from thee, that my child,  
My blithe and innocent girl—more fair in soul,  
More delicate in fancy than in mould—  
Loves thee with other than a sister's love.  
I should have cared for this : I vainly deem'd  
A fellowship in childhood's thousand joys  
And household memories had nurtured friendship  
Which might hold blameless empire in the soul ;



But in that guise the traitor hath stolen in,  
And the fair citadel is thine.

ION.

'Tis true.

I did not think the nurseling of thy house  
Could thus disturb its holiest inmate's duty  
With tale of selfish passion ;—but we met  
As playmates who might never meet again,  
And then the hidden truth flashed forth, and show'd  
To each the image in the other's soul  
In one bright instant.

MEDON.

Be that instant blest

Which made thee truly ours. My son ! my son !  
'Tis we should feel uplifted, for the seal  
Of greatness is upon thee ; yet I know  
That when the gods, won by thy virtues, draw  
The veil which now conceals their lofty birthplace,  
Thou wilt not spurn the maid who prized them lowly.

ION.

Spurn her ! My father !

[*Enter* CTESIPHON.]

MEDON.

Ctesiphon !—and breathless—

Art come to chide me to the council ?

CTESIPHON.

No ;

To bring unwonted joy ; thy son approaches.

MEDON.

Thank Heaven! Hast spoken with him? Is he well?

CTESIPHON.

I strove in vain to reach him, for the crowd,  
Roused from the untended couch and dismal hearth  
By the strange visiting of hope, press'd round him;  
But, by his head erect and fiery glance,  
I know that he is well, and that he bears  
A message which shall shake the tyrant. [*Shouts.*] See!  
The throng is tending this way—now it parts,  
And yields him to thy arms.

[*Enter PHOCION.*]

MEDON.

Welcome, my Phocion—

Long waited for in Argos; how detain'd  
Now matters not, since thou art here in joy.  
Hast brought the answer of the god?

PHOCION.

I have:

Now let Adrastus tremble!

MEDON.

May we hear it?

PHOCION.

I am sworn first to utter it to him.

CTESIPHON.

But it is fatal to him!—Say but that!

PHOCION.

Ha, Ctesiphon!—I mark'd thee not before;

How fares thy father?

ION. [*to PHOCION.*]

Do not speak of him.

CTESIPHON. [*overhearing ION.*]

Not speak of him! Dost think there is a moment  
When common things eclipse the burning thought  
Of him and vengeance?

PHOCION.

Has the tyrant's sword—

CTESIPHON.

No, Phocion; that were merciful and brave  
Compared to his base deed; yet will I tell it  
To make the flashing of thine eye more deadly,  
And edge thy words that they may rive his heartstrings.  
The last time that Adrastus dared to face  
The Sages of the state, although my father,  
Yielding to nature's mild decay, had left  
All worldly toil and hope, he gather'd strength,  
In his old seat, to speak one word of warning.  
Thou knowest how bland with years his wisdom grew,  
And with what phrases, steep'd in love, he sheath'd  
The sharpness of rebuke; yet, ere his speech  
Was closed, the tyrant started from his throne,  
And with his base hand smote him;—'twas his death-  
stroke!

The old man totter'd home, and only once  
Raised his head after.

PHOCION.

Thou wert absent? Yes!

The royal miscreant lives !

CTESIPHON.

Had I beheld  
That sacrilege, the tyrant had lain dead,  
Or I had been torn piecemeal by his minions.  
But I was far away : when I return'd,  
I found my father on the nearest bench  
Within our door, his thinly silver'd head  
Supported by wan hands, which hid his face  
And would not be withdrawn ;—no groan, no sigh  
Was audible, and we might only learn  
By short convulsive tremblings of his frame  
That life still flicker'd in it—yet at last,  
By some unearthly inspiration roused,  
He dropp'd his wither'd hands, and sat erect  
As in his manhood's glory—the free blood  
Flush'd crimson through his cheeks, his furrow'd brow  
Expanded clear, and his eyes opening full  
Gleam'd with a youthful fire ;—I fell in awe  
Upon my knees before him—still he spake not,  
But slowly raised his arm untrembling ; clench'd  
His hand as if it grasp'd an airy knife,  
And struck in air ; my hand was join'd with his  
In nervous grasp—my lifted eye met his,  
In steadfast gaze—my pressure answer'd his—  
We knew at once each other's thought ; a smile  
Of the old sweetness played upon his lips,  
And life forsook him. Weaponless I flew  
To seek the tyrant, and was driven with scoffs

For the proud gates which shelter him. He lives—  
And I am here to babble of revenge !

PHOCION.

It comes, my friend—haste with me to the king !

ION.

Even while we speak, Adrastus meets his council ;  
There let us seek him : should ye find him touch'd  
With penitence, as happily ye may,  
O, give allowance to his soften'd nature !

CTESIPHON.

Show grace to him !—Dost dare ?—I had forgot,  
Thou dost not know how a son loves a father !

ION.

I know enough to feel for thee ; I know  
Thou hast endured the vilest wrong that tyranny  
In its worst frenzy can inflict ;—yet think,  
O think ! before the irrevocable deed  
Shuts out all thought, how much of power's excess  
Is theirs who raise the idol :—do we groan  
Beneath the personal force of this rash man,  
Who forty summers since hung at the breast  
A playful weakling ; whom the heat unnerves ;  
The north-wind pierces ; and the hand of death  
May, in a moment, change to clay as vile  
As that of the scourged slave whose chains it severs ?  
No ! 'tis our weakness gasping or the shows  
Of outward strength that builds up tyranny,  
And makes it look so glorious :—If we shrink  
Faint-hearted from the reckoning of our span

Of mortal days, we pamper the fond wish  
For long duration in a line of kings :  
If the rich pageantry of thoughts must fade  
All unsubstantial as the regal hues  
Of eve which purpled them, our cunning frailty  
Must robe a living image with their pomp,  
And wreath a diadem around its brow,  
In which our sunny fantasies may live  
Empearl'd, and gleam, in fatal splendor, far  
On after ages. We must look *within*  
For that which makes us slaves ;—on sympathies  
Which find no kindred objects in the plain  
Of common life—affections that aspire  
In air too thin—and fancy's dewy film  
Floating for rest ; for even such delicate threads,  
Gather'd by fate's engrossing hand, supply  
The eternal spindle whence she weaves the bond  
Of cable strength in which our nature struggles !

CTESIPHON.

Go talk to others if thou wilt ;—to me  
All argument, save that of steel, is idle.

MEDON.

No more ;—let 's to the council—there, my son,  
Tell thy great message nobly ;—and for thee,  
Poor orphan'd youth, be sure the gods are just !

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III.

*The great Square of the City. ADRASTUS seated on a throne ; AGENOR, TIMOCLES, CLEON, and others, seated as Councillors—Soldiers line the stage at a distance.*

ADRASTUS.

Upon your summons, Sages, I am here ;  
Your king attends to know your pleasure ; speak it !

AGENOR.

And canst thou ask ? If the heart dead within thee  
Receives no impress of this awful time,  
Art thou of sense forsaken ? Are thine ears  
So charm'd by strains of slavish minstrelsy  
That the dull groan and frenzy-pointed shriek  
Pass them unheard to Heaven ? Or are thine eyes  
So conversant with prodigies of grief,  
They cease to dazzle at them ? Art thou arm'd  
'Gainst wonder, while, in all things, Nature turns  
To dreadful contraries ;—while Youth's full cheek  
Is shrivell'd into furrows of sad years,  
And 'neath its glossy curls untinged by care  
Looks out a keen anatomy ;—while Age  
Is stung by feverish torture for an hour  
Into youth's strength ; while fragile Womanhood  
Starts into frightful courage, all unlike  
The gentle strength its gentle weakness feeds  
To make affliction beautiful, and stalks

Abroad, a tearless, an unshuddering thing ;—  
 While Childhood, in its orphan'd freedom blithe,  
 Finds, in the shapes of wretchedness which seem  
 Grotesque to its unsadden'd vision, cause  
 For dreadful mirth that shortly shall be hush'd  
 In never-broken silence ; and while Love,  
 Immortal through all change, makes ghastly Death  
 Its idol, and with furious passion digs  
 Amid sepulchral images for gauds  
 To cheat its fancy with ?—Do sights like these  
 Glare through the realm thou shouldst be parent to,  
 And canst thou find the voice to ask “our pleasure ?”

ADRASTUS.

Cease, babbler ;—wherefore would ye stun my ears  
 With vain recital of the griefs I know,  
 And cannot heal ?—will treason turn aside  
 The shafts of fate, or medicine Nature's ills ?  
 I have no skill in pharmacy, nor power  
 To sway the elements.

AGENOR.

Thou hast the power  
 To cast thyself upon the earth with us  
 In penitential shame ; or, if this power  
 Hath left a heart made weak by luxury  
 And hard by pride, thou hast at least the power  
 To cease the mockery of thy frantic revels.

ADRASTUS.

I have yet power to punish insult—look  
 I use it not, Agenor !—Fate may dash



My sceptre from me, but shall not command  
My will to hold it with a feebler grasp ;  
Nay, if few hours of empire yet are mine,  
They shall be colour'd with a sterner pride,  
And peopled with more lustrous joys than flush'd  
In the serene procession of its greatness,  
Which look'd perpetual, as the flowing course  
Of human things. Have ye beheld a pine  
That clasp'd the mountain summit with a root  
As firm as its rough marble, and, apart  
From the huge shade of undistinguish'd trees,  
Lifted its head as in delight to share  
The evening glories of the sky, and taste  
The wanton dalliance of the heavenly breeze  
That no ignoble vapour from the vale  
Could mingle with—smit by the flaming marl,  
And lighted for destruction ? How it stood  
One glorious moment, fringed and wreathed with fire  
Which show'd the inward graces of its shape,  
Uncumber'd now, and midst its topmost boughs  
That young Ambition's airy fancies made  
Their giddy nest, leap'd sportive ;—never clad  
By liberal summer in a pomp so rich  
As waited on its downfall, while it took  
The storm-cloud roll'd behind it for a curtain  
To gird its splendours round, and made the blast  
Its minister to whirl its flashing shreds  
Aloft towards heaven, or to the startled depths  
Of forests that afar might share its doom !

So shall the royalty of Argos pass  
In festal blaze to darkness! Have ye spoken?

AGENOR.

I speak no more to thee!—Great Jove, look down!

[*Shouting without.*]

ADRASTUS.

What factious brawl is this?—disperse it, soldiers.  
[*Shouting renewed—As some of the soldiers are about to march, PHOCION rushes in, followed by CTESIPHON, ION, and MEDON.*]

Whence is this insolent intrusion?

PHOCION.

King!

I bear Apollo's answer to thy prayer.

ADRASTUS.

Has not thy travel taught thy knee its duty?  
Here we had school'd thee better.

PHOCION.

Kneel to thee!

MEDON.

Patience, my son! Do homage to the king.

PHOCION.

Never!—thou talk'st of schooling—know, Adrastus,  
That I have studied in a nobler school  
Than the dull haunt of venal sophistry  
Or the lewd guard-room;—o'er which ancient heaven  
Extends its arch for all, and mocks the span  
Of palaces and dungeons; where the heart  
In its free beatings, 'neath the coarsest vest,

Claims kindred with diviner things than power  
Of kings can raise or stifle—in the school  
Of mighty Nature—where I learn'd to blush  
At sight like this, of thousands basely hush'd  
Before a man no mightier than themselves,  
Save in the absence of that love that softens.

ADRASTUS.

Peace ! speak thy message.

PHOCION.

Shall I tell it here ?

Or shall I seek thy couch at dead of night,  
And breathe it in low whispers ?—As thou wilt.

ADRASTUS.

Here—and this instant !

PHOCION.

Hearken then, Adrastus,  
And hearken, Argives—thus Apollo speaks !

[*Reads a scroll.*]

“ Argos ne'er shall find release

“ Till her monarch's race shall cease.”

ADRASTUS.

'Tis not God's will, but man's sedition speaks :—  
Guards ! tear that lying parchment from his hands,  
And bear him to the palace.

MEDON.

Touch him not,—

He is Apollo's messenger, whose lips  
Were never stain'd with falsehood.

PHOCION.

Come on, all !

AGENOR.

Surround him, friends ! Die with him !

ADRASTUS.

Soldiers, charge  
Upon these rebels ; hew them down. On, on !  
*The soldiers advance and surround the people ; they  
seize PHOCION. ION rushes from the back of the  
stage, and throws himself between ADRASTUS and  
PHOCION.*

PHOCION to ADRASTUS.

Yet I defy thee.

ION.

[*To PHOCION.*] Friend ! for sake of all,  
Enrage him not—wait while I speak a word—  
[*To ADRASTUS.*] My sovereign, I implore thee, do not  
stain

This sacred place with blood ; in Heaven's great name  
I do conjure thee—and in *hers*, whose spirit  
Is mourning for thee now !

ADRASTUS.

Release the stripling—  
Let him go spread his treason where he will :  
He is not worth my anger. To the palace !

ION.

Nay, yet an instant !—let my speech have power  
From Heaven to move thee further : thou hast heard  
The sentence of the god, and thy heart owns it ;

If thou wilt cast aside this cumbrous pomp,  
 And in seclusion purify thy soul  
 Long fever'd and sophisticate, the gods  
 May give thee space for penitential thoughts ;  
 If not—as surely as thou standest here,  
 Wilt thou lie stiff and weltering in thy blood.—  
 The vision presses on me now.

ADRASTUS.

Art mad ?

Resign thy state ? Sue to the gods for life,  
 The common life which every slave endures,  
 And meanly clings to ? No ; within yon walls  
 I shall resume the banquet, never more  
 Broken by man's intrusion. Councillors,  
 Farewell !—go mutter treason till ye perish !

[*Exeunt ADRASTUS, CRYTHES, and Soldiers.*

ION, *who stands apart leaning on a pedestal.*

'Tis seal'd !

MEDON.

Let us withdraw, and strive  
 By sacrifice to pacify the gods !

MEDON, AGENOR, and Councillors retire : they leave  
 CTESIPHON, PHOCION, and ION. ION *still stands  
 apart, as wrapt in meditation.*

CTESIPHON.

'Tis well ; the measure of his guilt is fill'd.  
 Where shall we meet at sunset ?

PHOCION.

In the grove

Which with its matted shade imbrowns the vale,  
 Between those buttresses of rock that guard  
 The sacred mountain on its western side,  
 Stands a rude altar, overgrown with moss,  
 And stain'd with drippings of a million showers,  
 So old, that no tradition names the power  
 That hallow'd it, which we will consecrate  
 Anew to freedom and to justice.

CTESIPHON.

Thither

Will I bring friends to meet thee. Shall we speak  
 To yon rapt youth? [pointing to ION.]

PHOCION.

His nature is too gentle.

At sunset we will meet.—With arms?

CTESIPHON.

A knife—

One sacrificial knife will serve.

PHOCION.

At sunset!

[*Exeunt* CTESIPHON and PHOCION severally.]

ION comes forward.

ION.

O wretched man, thy words have seal'd thy doom!  
 Why should I shiver at it, when no way,  
 Save this, remains to break the ponderous cloud  
 That hangs above my wretched country?—death—  
 A single death, the common lot of all,  
 Which it will not be mine to look upon,—

And yet its ghastly shape dilates before me ;  
I cannot shut it out ; my thoughts grow rigid,  
And as that grim and prostrate figure haunts them,  
My sinews stiffen like it. Courage, Ion !  
No spectral form is here ; all outward things  
Wear their own old familiar looks ; no dye  
Pollutes them. Yet the air has scent of blood,  
And now it eddies with a hurtling sound,  
As if some weapon swiftly clove it. No—  
The falchion's course is silent as the grave  
That yawns before its victim. Gracious powers !  
If the great duty of my life be near,  
Grant it may be to suffer, not to strike ! [Exit.

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

## SCENE I.

*A terrace of the Temple.*

CLEMANTHE, ION.

CLEMANTHE.

NAY, I must chide this sorrow from thy brow,  
Or 'twill rebuke my happiness ;—I know  
Too well the miseries that hem us round ;  
And yet the inward sunshine of my soul,  
Unclouded by their melancholy shadows,  
Bathes in its deep tranquillity one image—  
One only image, which no outward storm  
Can ever ruffle. Let me wean thee, then,  
From this vain pondering o'er the general woe,  
Which makes my joy look ugly.

ION.

No, my fair one,  
The gloom that wrongs thy love is unredeem'd  
By generous sense of others' woe : too sure  
It rises from dark presages within,  
And will not from me.



CLEMANTHE.

Then it is most groundless !

Hast thou not won the blessings of the perishing  
By constancy, the fame of which shall live  
While a heart beats in Argos ?—hast thou not  
Upon one agitated bosom pour'd  
The sweetest peace ? and can thy generous nature,  
While it thus sheds felicity around it,  
Remain itself unblest'd ?

ION.

I strove awhile

To think the assured possession of thy love  
With too divine a burthen weigh'd my heart  
And press'd my spirits down ;—but 'tis not so ;  
Nor will I with false tenderness beguile thee,  
By feigning that my sadness has a cause  
So exquisite. Clemanthe ! thou wilt find me  
A sad companion ;—I who knew not life,  
Save as the sportive breath of happiness,  
Now feel my minutes teeming, as they rise,  
With grave experiences ; I dream no more  
Of azure realms where restless beauty sports  
In myriad shapes fantastic ; but black vaults  
In long succession open till the gloom  
Afar is broken by a streak of fire  
That shapes my name—the fearful wind that moans  
Before the storm articulates its sound ;  
And as I pass'd but now the solemn range  
Of Argive monarchs, that in sculptured mockery

Of present empire sit, their eyes of stone  
 Bent on me instinct with a frightful life  
 That drew me into fellowship with them,  
 As conscious marble ; while their ponderous lips—  
 Fit organs of eternity—unclosed,  
 And, as I live to tell thee, murmur'd “ Hail !  
 Hail ! ION THE DEVOTED ! ”

CLEMANTHE.

These are fancies,  
 Which thy soul, late expanded with great purpose,  
 Shapes, as it quivers to its natural circle  
 In which its joys should lurk, as in the bud  
 The cells of fragrance cluster. Bid them from thee,  
 And strive to be thyself.

ION.

I will do so !

I 'll gaze upon thy loveliness, and drink  
 Its quiet in ;—how beautiful thou art !—  
 My pulse throbs now as it was wont ;—a being,  
 Which owns so fair a glass to mirror it,  
 Cannot show darkly.

CLEMANTHE.

We shall soon be happy ;  
 My father will rejoice to bless our love,  
 And Argos waken ;—for her tyrant's course  
 Must have a speedy end.

ION.

It must ! It must !

CLEMANTHE.

Yes ; for no empty talk of public wrongs  
Assails him now ; keen hatred and revenge  
Are roused to crush him.

ION.

Not by such base agents  
May the august lustration be achieved :  
He who shall cleanse his country from the guilt  
For which Heaven smites her, should be pure of soul,  
Guileless as infancy, and undisturb'd  
By personal anger as thy father is,  
When, with unswerving hand and piteous eye,  
He stops the brief life of the innocent kid  
Bound with white fillets to the altar ;—so  
Enwreathed by fate the royal victim heaves,  
And soon his breast shall shrink beneath the knife  
Of the selected slayer !

CLEMANTHE.

'Tis thyself

Whom thy strange language pictures—Ion ! thou—

ION.

She has said it ! Her pure lips have spoken out  
What all things intimate ;—didst thou not mark  
*Me* for the office of avenger—*me* ?

CLEMANTHE.

No ;—save from the wild picture that thy fancy—  
Thy o'erwrought fancy drew ; I thought it look'd  
Too like thee, and I shudder'd.

ION.

So do I!

And yet I almost wish I shudder'd more,  
For the dire thought has grown familiar with me—  
Could I escape it!

CLEMANTHE.

'Twill away in sleep.

ION.

No, no! I dare not sleep—for well I know  
That then the knife will gleam, the blood will gush,  
The form will stiffen!—I will walk awhile  
In the sweet evening light, and try to chase  
These fearful images away.

CLEMANTHE.

Let me

Go with thee. Oh, how often hand in hand  
In such a lovely light have we roam'd westward  
Aimless and blessed, when we were no more  
Than playmates :—surely we are not grown stranger  
Since yesterday!

ION.

No, dearest, not to-night :

The plague yet rages fiercely in the vale,  
And I am placed in grave commission here  
To watch the gates ;—indeed thou must not pass ;  
I will be merrier when we meet again,—  
Trust me, my love, I will ; farewell ! [Exit ION.]

CLEMANTHE.

Farewell then!

How fearful disproportion shows in one  
Whose life hath been all harmony ! He bends  
Towards that thick covert where in blessed hour  
My father found him, which has ever been  
His chosen place of musing. Shall I follow ?  
Am I already grown a selfish mistress,  
To watch his solitude with jealous eye,  
And claim him all ? That let me never be—  
Yet danger from within besets him now,  
Known to me only—I will follow him ! [Exit.

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SCENE II.

*An opening in a deep wood—in front an old grey altar.*

*Enter ION.*

ION.

O winding pathways, o'er whose scanty blades  
Of unaspiring grass mine eyes have bent  
So often when by musing fancy sway'd,  
That craved alliance with no wider scene  
Than your fair thickets border'd, but was pleased  
To deem the toilsome years of manhood flown,  
And, on the pictured mellowness of age  
Idly reflective, image my return  
From careful wanderings, to find ye gleam  
With unchanged aspect on a heart unchanged,  
And melt the busy past to a sweet dream

As then the future was ;—why should ye now  
Echo my steps with melancholy sound  
As ye were conscious of a guilty presence ?  
The lovely light of eve, that, as it waned,  
Touch'd ye with softer, homelier look, now fades  
In dismal blackness ; and yon twisted roots  
Of ancient trees, with whose fantastic forms  
My thoughts grew humorous, look terrible,  
As if about to start to serpent life,  
And hiss around me ;—whither shall I turn ?—  
Where fly ?—I see the myrtle-cradled spot  
Where human love instructed by divine  
Found and embraced me first ; I 'll cast me down  
Upon that earth as on a mother's breast,  
In hope to feel myself again a child.

[ION goes into the wood.]

*Enter CTESIPHON, CASSANDER, and other Argive youths.*

CTESIPHON.

Sure this must be the place that Phocion spoke of ;—  
The twilight deepens, yet he does not come.  
Oh, if instead of idle dreams of freedom,  
He knew the sharpness of a grief like mine,  
He would not linger thus !

CASSANDER.

The sun's broad disk  
Of misty red, a few brief minutes since,  
Sank 'neath the leaden wave ; but night steals on  
With rapid pace to veil us, and thy thoughts

Are eager as the favouring darkness.

*Enter PHOCION.*

CTESIPHON.

Welcome!

Thou know'st all here.

PHOCION.

Yes; I rejoice, Cassander,

To find thee my companion in a deed  
Worthy of all the dreamings of old days,  
When we, two rebel youths, grew safely brave  
In visionary perils. We 'll not shame  
Our young imaginations. Ctesiphon,  
We look to thee for guidance in our aim.

CTESIPHON.

I bring you glorious news. There is a soldier,  
Who, in his reckless boyhood, was my comrade,  
And though by taste of luxury subdued  
Ev'n to brook the tyrant's service, burns  
With generous anger to avenge that grief  
I bear above all others. He has made  
The retribution sure. From him I learnt  
That when Adrastus reach'd his palace court,  
He paused, to struggle with some mighty throe  
Of passion; then call'd eagerly for wine,  
And bade his soldiers share his choicest stores,  
And snatch, like him, a day from Fortune. Soon,  
As one worn out by watching and excess,  
He stagger'd to his couch, where now he lies

Oppress'd with heavy sleep, while his loose soldiers,  
Made by the fierce carousal vainly mad  
Or grossly dull, are scatter'd through the courts  
Unarm'd and cautionless. The eastern portal  
Is at this moment open ; by that gate  
We all may enter unperceived, and line  
The passages which gird the royal chamber,  
While one blest hand within completes the doom  
Which Heaven pronounces. Nothing now remains,  
But that as all would share this action's glory,  
We join in one great vow, and choose one arm  
Our common minister. O if these sorrows  
Confer on me the office to return  
Upon the tyrant's shivering heart the blow  
Which crush'd my father's spirit, I will leave  
To him who cares for toys the patriot's laurel  
And the applause of ages !

PHOCION.

Let the gods  
By the old course of lot reveal the namè  
Of the predestined champion. For myself,  
Here do I solemnly devote all powers  
Of soul and body to that glorious purpose  
We live but to fulfil.

CTESIPHON.

And I !

CASSANDER.

And I !



ION.

[*Who has advanced from the wood, rushes to the altar, and exclaims*]

And I!

PHOCION.

Most welcome! The serenest powers of justice,  
In prompting thy unspotted soul to join  
Our bloody councils, sanctify and bless them!

ION.

The gods have prompted me; for they have given  
One dreadful voice to all things which should be  
Else dumb or musical; and I rejoice  
To step from the grim round of waking dreams  
Into this fellowship which makes all clear.  
Wilt trust me, Ctesiphon?

CTESIPHON.

Yes; but we waste  
The precious minutes in vain talk: if lots  
Must guide us, have ye scrolls?

PHOCION.

Cassander has them:  
The flickering light of yonder glade will serve him  
To inscribe them with our names. Be quick, Cassander!

CTESIPHON.

I wear a casque, beneath whose iron circlet  
My father's dark hairs whiten'd; let it hold  
The names of his avengers!

[*Ctesiphon takes off his helmet and gives it to Cassander, who retires with it.*]

PHOCION [*to Ctesiphon.*]

He whose name  
Thou shalt draw first shall fill the post of glory.  
Were it not also well, the second name  
Should designate another charged to take  
The same great office, if the first should leave  
His work imperfect?

CTESIPHON.

There can scarce be need;  
Yet as thou wilt. May the first chance be mine;  
I will leave little for a second arm!

[*CASSANDER returns with the helmet.*]

CTESIPHON.

Now, gods, decide!

[*CTESIPHON draws a lot from the helmet.*]

PHOCION.

The name? Why dost thou pause?

CTESIPHON.

'Tis Ion!

ION.

Well I knew it would be mine!

[*CTESIPHON draws another lot.*]

CTESIPHON.

Phocion! it will be thine to strike *him* dead  
If he should prove faint-hearted.

PHOCION.

With my life

I 'll answer for his constancy.

CTESIPHON [*to ION.*]

Thy hand!

'Tis cold as death.

ION.

Yes; but it is as firm.

What ceremony next?

[CTESIPHON *leads ION to the altar, and gives him a knife.*]

CTESIPHON.

Receive this steel,

For ages dedicate in my sad home  
To sacrificial uses; grasp it nobly,  
And consecrate it to untrembling service  
Against the king of Argos and his race.

ION.

His race! Is he not left alone on earth?  
He hath no brother, and no child.

CTESIPHON.

Such words

The god hath used who never speaks in vain.

PHOCION.

There were old rumours of an infant born  
And strangely vanishing;—a tale of guilt  
Half-hush'd, perchance distorted in the hushing,  
And by the wise scarce heeded, for they deem'd it  
One of a thousand guilty histories,  
Which, if the walls of palaces could speak,  
Would show that, nursed by prideful luxury,  
To pamper which the virtuous peasant toils,  
Crimes grow unpunish'd which the pirates' nest,

Or want's foul hovel, or the cell which justice  
Keeps for unlicensed guilt, would startle at!  
We must root out the stock, that no stray scion  
Renew the tree, whose branches, stifling virtue,  
Shed poison-dews on joy.

[ION approaches the altar, and, lifting up the knife, speaks.]

Ye eldest gods,

Who in no statues of exactest form  
Are palpable; who shun the azure heights  
Of beautiful Olympus, and the sound  
Of ever-young Apollo's minstrelsy;  
Yet, mindful of the empire which ye held  
Over dim Chaos, keep revengeful watch  
On falling nations, and on kingly lines  
About to sink for ever; ye, who shed  
Into the passions of earth's giant brood  
And their fierce usages the sense of justice;  
Who clothe the fated battlements of tyranny  
With blackness as a funeral pall, and breathe  
Through the proud halls of time-embolden'd guilt  
Portents of ruin, hear me!—In your presence,  
For now I feel ye nigh, I dedicate  
This arm to the destruction of the king  
And of his race! O keep me pitiless;  
Expel all human weakness from my frame,  
That this keen weapon shake not when his heart  
Should feel its point; and if he has a child  
Whose blood is needful to the sacrifice

My country asks, harden my soul to shed it!—  
Was not that thunder?

CTESIPHON.

No; I heard no sound.

Now mark me, Ion!—thou shalt straight be led  
To the king's chamber; we shall be at hand;  
Nothing can give thee pause. Hold! one should watch  
The city's eastern portal, lest the troops,  
Returning from the work of plunder home,  
Surround us unprepared. Be that thy duty.

[*To PHOCION.*

PHOCION.

I am to second Ion if he fail.

CTESIPHON.

He cannot fail;—I shall be nigh. What, Ion!

ION.

Who spake to me? Where am I? Friends, your pardon:  
I am prepared; yet grant me for a moment,  
One little moment, to be left alone.

CTESIPHON.

Be brief then, or the season of revenge  
Will pass. At yonder thicket we'll expect thee.

[*Exeunt all but ION.*

ION.

Methinks I breathe more freely, now my lot  
Is palpable, and mortals gird me round,  
Though my soul owns no sympathy with theirs.  
Some one approaches—I must hide this knife—  
Hide! I have ne'er till now had aught to hide

From any human eye. [*He conceals the knife in his vest.*]

[*Enter CLEMANTHE.*]

Clemanthe here !

CLEMANTHE.

Forgive me that I break upon thee thus :  
I meant to watch thy steps unseen ; but night  
Is thickening ; thou art haunted by sad fancies,  
And 'tis more terrible to think upon thee  
Wandering with such companions in thy bosom,  
Than in the peril thou art wont to seek  
Beside the bed of death.

ION.

Death, sayst thou ? Death ?

Is it not righteous when the gods decree it ?  
And brief its sharpest agony ? Yet, fairest,  
It is no theme for thee. Go in at once,  
And think of it no more.

CLEMANTHE.

Not without thee.

Indeed thou art not well ; thy hands are marble ;  
Thine eyes are fix'd ; let me support thee, love,—  
Ha ! what is that gleaming within thy vest ?  
A knife ! Tell me its purpose, Ion !

ION.

No ;

My oath forbids.

CLEMANTHE.

An oath ! O gentle Ion,

What can have link'd thee to a cause which needs  
 A stronger cement than a good man's word?  
 There's danger in it. Wilt thou keep it from me?

ION.

Alas, I must. Thou wilt know all full soon—

[*Voices call ION!*]

Hark! I am call'd.

CLEMANTHE.

Nay, do not leave me thus.

ION.

'Tis very sad [*voices again*—I dare not stay—farewell!

[*Exit.*]

CLEMANTHE.

It must be to Adrastus that he hastes!  
 If by his hand the fated tyrant die,  
 Austere remembrance of the deed will hang  
 Upon his delicate spirit like a cloud,  
 And tinge its world of happy images  
 With hues of horror. Shall I to the palace,  
 And, as the price of my disclosure, claim  
 His safety? No!—'Tis never woman's part  
 Out of her fond misgivings to perplex  
 The fortunes of the man to whom she cleaves;  
 'Tis hers to weave all that she has of fair  
 And bright in the dark meshes of their web  
 Inseparate from their windings. My poor heart  
 Hath found its refuge in a hero's love,  
 Whatever destiny his generous soul  
 Shape for him;—'tis its duty to be still,  
 And trust him till it bound or break with his.

[*Exit.*]

## SCENE III.

*A chamber in the Temple.*

*Enter MEDON, followed by ABRA.*

MEDON.

My daughter not within the temple, say'st thou?  
Abroad at such an hour? Sure not alone  
She wander'd: tell me truly, did not Phocion  
Or Ion bear her company? 'twas Ion—  
Confess;—was it not he? I shall not chide,  
Indeed I shall not.

ABRA.

She went forth alone;  
But it is true that Ion just before  
Had taken the same path.

MEDON.

It was to meet him.  
I would they were return'd; the night is grown  
Of an unusual blackness. Some one comes—  
Look if it be my daughter.

ABRA [*looking out.*]

No; young Irus,  
The little slave, whose pretty tale of grief



Agenor, with so gracious a respect,  
This morning told us.

MEDON.

Let him come ; he bears  
Some message from his master.

[*Enter IRUS.*]

MEDON [*to IRUS.*]

Thou art pale :

Has any evil happen'd to Agenor ?

IRUS.

No, my good lord ; I do not come from him ;  
I bear to thee a scroll from one who now  
Is number'd with the dead ; he was my kinsman,  
But I had never seen him till he lay  
Upon his death-bed ; for he left these shores  
Long before I was born, and no one knew  
His place of exile ;—on this mournful day  
He landed, was plague-stricken, and expired.  
My gentle master gave me leave to tend  
His else unsolaced death-bed ;—when he found  
The clammy chilness of the grave steal on,  
He call'd for parchment, and with trembling hand,  
That seem'd to gather firmness from its task,  
Wrote earnestly ; conjured me take the scroll  
Instant to thee ; and died.

[*IRUS gives a scroll to MEDON.*]

MEDON [*reading the scroll.*]

These are high tidings.

Abra! is not Clemanthe come? I long  
To tell her all.

[*Enter CLEMANTHE.*]

MEDON.

Sit down, my pensive child.  
Abra, this boy is faint; see him refresh'd  
With food and wine before thou lett'st him pass.

IRUS.

I have too long been absent from Agenor,  
Who needs my slender help.

MEDON.

Nay, I will use  
Thy master's firmness here, and use it so  
As he would use it. Keep him prisoner, Abra,  
Till he has done my bidding.

[*Exeunt ABRA and IRUS.*]

Now, Clemanthe,  
Though thou hast play'd the truant and the rebel,  
I will not be too strict in my award,  
By keeping from thee news of one to thee  
Most dear—nay, do not blush—I say most dear.

CLEMANTHE.

It is of Ion;—no—I do not blush,  
But tremble. O my father, what of Ion?

MEDON.

How often have we guess'd his lineage noble !  
And now 'tis proved. The kinsman of that youth  
Was with another hired to murder him  
A babe ;—they tore him from his mother's breast,  
And to a sea-girt summit, where a rock  
O'erhung a chasm by the surge's force  
Made terrible, rush'd with him. As the gods  
In mercy order'd it, the foremost ruffian  
Who bore no burden, pressing through the gloom  
In the wild hurry of his guilty purpose,  
Trode at the extreme verge upon a crag  
Loosen'd by summer from its granite bed,  
And suddenly fell with it ;—with his fall  
Sank the base daring of the man who held  
The infant ; so he placed the unconscious babe  
Upon the spot where it was found by me ;  
Watch'd till he saw the infant safe ; then fled,  
Fearful of question ; and return'd to die.  
That child is Ion. Whom dost guess his sire ?—  
The first in Argos.

CLEMANTHE.

Dost thou mean Adrastus ?

He cannot—must not—be that tyrant's son !

MEDON.

It is most certain. Nay, my thankless girl,  
He hath no touch of his rash father's pride ;  
For Nature, from whose genial lap he smiled  
Upon us first, hath moulded for her own

The suppliant of her bounty ;—thou art bless'd ;  
Thus, let me bid thee joy.

CLEMANTHE.

Joy, say'st thou—joy !

Then I must speak—he seeks Adrastus' life ;  
And at this moment, while we talk, may stain  
His soul with parricide.

MEDON.

Impossible !

Ion, the gentlest——

CLEMANTHE.

It is true, my father ;

I saw the weapon gleaming in his vest ;  
I heard him call'd !

MEDON.

Shall I alarm the palace ?

CLEMANTHE.

No ; in the fierce confusion, he would fall  
Before our tale could be his safeguard. Gods !  
Is there no hope, no refuge ?

MEDON.

Yes, if Heaven

Assist us. I bethink me of a passage,  
Which, fashion'd by a king in pious zeal,  
That he might seek the altar of the god  
In secret, from the temple's inmost shrine  
Leads to the royal chamber. I have track'd it  
In youth for pastime. Could I thread it now,  
I yet might save him.

CLEMANTHE.

O make haste, my father!

Shall I attend thee?

MEDON.

No; thou wouldst impede

My steps;—thou art fainting; when I have lodged thee safe

In thy own chamber, I will light the torch,

And instantly set forward.

CLEMANTHE.

Do not waste

An instant's space on me;—speed, speed, my father—

The fatal moments fly; I need no aid;—

Thou seest I am calm, quite calm.

MEDON.

The gods protect thee!

*[Exeunt severally.]*

END OF ACT III.

## A C T I V.

## SCENE I.

*The Royal Chamber. ADRASTUS on a couch, asleep.*

*Enter ION with the knife.*

ION.

Why do I creep thus stealthily along  
 With thief-like steps? Am I not arm'd by Heaven  
 To execute its mandate on a king  
 Whom it hath doom'd? And shall I falter now,  
 While every moment that he breathes may crush  
 Some life else happy?—Can I be deceived,  
 By some foul passion, crouching in my soul,  
 Which takes a radiant form to lure me on?  
 Assure me, gods!—Yes; I have heard your voices;  
 For I dare pray ye now to nerve my arm  
 And see me strike! *[He goes to the couch.*

He's smiling in his slumber,  
 As if some happy thought of innocent days  
 Play'd at his heart-strings: must I scare it thence  
 With death's sharp agony? He lies condemn'd  
 By the high judgment of supernal Powers,

And he shall know their sentence. Wake, Adrastus!  
Collect thy spirits, and be strong to die!

ADRASTUS.

Who dares disturb my rest? Guards! Soldiers!  
Recreants!

Where tarry ye? Why smite ye not to earth  
This bold intruder?—Ha! no weapon here!—  
What wouldst thou with me, ruffian?

[*Rising.*]

ION.

I am none,

But a sad instrument in Jove's great hand  
To take thy life, long forfeited—Prepare!  
Thy hour is come!

ADRASTUS.

Villains! does no one hear?

ION.

Vex not the closing minutes of thy being  
With torturing hope or idle rage; thy guards,  
Palsied with revelry, are scatter'd senseless,  
While the most valiant of our Argive youths  
Hold every passage by which human aid  
Could reach thee. Present death is the award  
Of Powers who watch above me while I stand  
To execute their sentence.

ADRASTUS.

Thou!—I know thee—

The youth I spared this morning, in whose ear  
I pour'd the secrets of my bosom. Kill me,  
If thou darest do it; but bethink thee first

How the grim memory of thy thankless deed  
Will haunt thee to the grave !

ION.

It is most true ;

Thou spar'dst my life, and therefore do the gods  
Ordain me to this office, lest thy fall  
Seem the chance forfeit of some single sin,  
And not the great redress of Argos. Now—  
Now, while I parley—Spirits that have left,  
Within this hour, their plague-tormented flesh  
To rot untomb'd, glide by, and frown on me,  
Their slow avenger—and the chamber swarms  
With looks of Furies—Yet a moment wait,  
Ye dreadful prompters !—If there is a friend,  
Whom dying thou wouldst greet by word or token,  
Speak thy last bidding.

ADRASTUS.

I have none on earth.

If thou hast courage, end me !

ION.

Not one friend !

Most piteous doom !

ADRASTUS.

Art melted ?

ION.

If I am,

Hope nothing from my weakness ; mortal arms,  
And eyes unseen that sleep not, gird us round,  
And we shall fall together. Be it so !



ADRASTUS.

No; strike at once; my hour is come: in thee  
I recognise the minister of Jove,  
And, kneeling thus, submit me to his power.

[ADRASTUS *kneels.*]

ION.

Avert thy face!

ADRASTUS.

No; let me meet thy gaze;  
For breathing pity lights thy features up  
Into more awful likeness of a form  
Which once shone on me;—and which now my sense  
Shapes palpable—in habit of the grave,  
Inviting me to the sad realm where shades  
Of innocents, whom passionate regard  
Link'd with the guilty, are content to pace  
With them the margin of the inky flood  
Mournful and calm;—'tis surely there;—she waves  
Her pallid hand in circle o'er thy head,  
As if to bless thee—and I bless thee too,  
Death's gracious angel!—Do not turn away.

ION.

Gods! to what office have ye doom'd me!—Now!

[ION *raises his arm to stab ADRASTUS, who is kneeling, and gazes steadfastly upon him. The voice of MEDON is heard without, calling ION! ION!—ION drops his arm.*]

ADRASTUS.

Be quick, or thou art lost!

[As ION has again raised his arm to strike, MEDON rushes in behind him.]

MEDON.

Ion, forbear!

Behold thy son, Adrastus!

[ION stands for a moment stupified with horror, drops the knife, and falls senseless on the ground.]

ADRASTUS.

What strange words

Are these which call my senses from the death

They were composed to welcome? Son! 'tis false—

I had but one—and the deep wave rolls o'er him!

MEDON.

That wave received, instead of the fair nurseling,

One of the slaves who bore him from thy sight

In wicked haste to slay;—I'll give thee proofs.

ADRASTUS.

Great Jove, I thank thee!—raise him gently—proofs!

Are there not here the lineaments of her

Who made me happy once—the voice, now still,

That bade the long-seal'd fount of love gush out,

While with a prince's constancy he came

To lay his noble life down; and the sure,

The dreadful proof, that he whose guileless brow

Is instinct with her spirit, stood above me,

Arm'd for the traitor's deed?—It is my child!

[ION, reviving, sinks on one knee before ADRASTUS.]

ION.

Father!

[Noise without.]

MEDON.

The clang of arms!

ION. [*starting up.*]

They come! they come!

They who are leagued with me against thy life.

Here let us fall!

ADRASTUS.

I will confront them yet.

Within I have a weapon which has drank

A traitor's blood ere now;—there will I wait them:

No power less strong than death shall part us now.

[*Exeunt ADRASTUS and ION as to an inner chamber.*]

MEDON.

Have mercy on him, gods, for the dear sake

Of your most single-hearted worshipper!

[*Enter CTESIPHON, CASSANDER, and others.*]

CTESIPHON.

What treachery is this—the tyrant fled,

And Ion fled too!—Comrades, stay this dotard,

While I search yonder chamber.

MEDON.

Spare him, friends,—

Spare him to clasp awhile his new-found son;

Spare him as Ion's father!

CTESIPHON.

Father! yes—

That is indeed a name to bid me spare;—

Let me but find him, gods!

[*He rushes into the inner chamber.*]

MEDON [*to Cassander and the others*].

Had ye but seen

What I have seen, ye would have mercy on him.

CRYTHES *enters with soldiers.*

Ha, soldiers! hasten to defend your master;

That way——

[*As CRYTHES is about to enter the inner chamber,*

CTESIPHON *rushes from it with a bloody dagger, and stops them.*]

CTESIPHON.

It is accomplish'd; the foul blot  
Is wiped away. Shade of my murder'd father,  
Look on thy son, and smile!

CRYTHES.

Whose blood is that?

It cannot be the king's!

CTESIPHON.

It cannot be!

Think'st thou, foul minion of a tyrant's will,  
He was to crush, and thou to crawl for ever?  
Look there, and tremble!

CRYTHES.

Wretch! thy life shall pay

The forfeit of this deed.

[*CRYTHES and soldiers seize CTESIPHON.*

[*Enter ADRASTUS mortally wounded, supported by ION.*]

ADRASTUS.

Here let me rest;—

In this old chamber did my life begin,

And here I'll end it: Crythes! thou hast timed  
Thy visit well, to bring thy soldiers hither  
To gaze upon my parting.

CRYTHES.

To avenge thee;—

Here is the traitor!

ADRASTUS.

Set him free at once:—

Why do ye not obey me? Ctesiphon,  
I gave thee cause for this;—believe me now  
That thy true steel has made thy vengeance sure;  
And as we now stand equal, I will sue  
For a small boon—let me not see thee more.

CTESIPHON.

Farewell!

[*Exit* CTESIPHON.]

ADRASTUS [*to* CRYTHES *and the soldiers.*]

Why do ye tarry here?

Begone!—still do ye hover round my couch?  
If the commandment of a dying king  
Is feeble, as a man who has embraced  
His child for the first time since infancy,  
And presently must part with him for ever,  
I do adjure ye leave us!

[*Exeunt all but* ION *and* ADRASTUS.]

ION.

O my father!

How is it with thee now?

ADRASTUS.

Well; very well;—

Avenging Fate hath spent its utmost force  
 Against me ; and I gaze upon my son  
 With the sweet certainty that nought can part us  
 Till all is quiet here. How like a dream  
 Seems the succession of my regal pomps  
 Since I embraced thy helplessness ! To *me*  
 The interval hath been a weary one :  
 How hath it pass'd with thee ?

ION.

But that my heart  
 Hath sometimes ached for the sweet sense of kindred,  
 I had enjoy'd a round of happy years  
 As cherish'd youth e'er knew.

ADRASTUS.

I bless the gods  
 That they have strewn along thy humble path  
 Delights unblamed ; and in this hour I seem  
 Even as I had lived so ; and I feel  
 That I shall live in thee, unless that curse—  
 Oh, if it should survive me !

ION.

Think not of it ;  
 The gods have shed such sweetness in this moment,  
 That, howsoe'er they deal with me hereafter,  
 I shall not deem them angry. Let me call  
 For help to staunch thy wound ; thou art strong yet,  
 And yet may live to bless me.

ADRASTUS.

Do not stir ;

My strength is ebbing fast ; yet, as it leaves me,  
The spirit of my stainless days of love  
Awakens ; and their images of joy,  
Which at thy voice started from blank oblivion,  
When thou wert strange to me, and then half-shown  
Look'd sadly through the mist of guilty years,  
Now glimmer on me in the lovely light  
Which at thy age they wore. Thou art all thy mother's,  
Her elements of gentlest virtue cast  
In mould heroical.

ION.

Thy speech grows fainter ;  
Can I do nothing for thee ?

ADRASTUS.

Yes :—my son,  
Thou art the best, the bravest, of a race  
Of rightful monarchs ; thou must mount the throne  
Thy ancestors have fill'd, and by great deeds  
Efface the memory of thy fated sire,  
And win the blessing of the gods for men  
Stricken for him. Swear to me thou wilt do this,  
And I shall die forgiven.

ION.

I will.

ADRASTUS.

Rejoice,  
Sufferers of Argos ! I am growing weak,  
And my eyes dazzle ; let me rest my hands,  
Ere they have lost their feeling, on thy head.—

So! So!—thy hair is glossy to the touch  
 As when I last enwreath'd its tiny curl  
 About my finger; I did image then  
 Thy reign excelling mine; it is fulfill'd,  
 And I die happy. Bless thee, King of Argos! [Dies.]

ION.

He's dead! and I am fatherless again.—  
 King did he hail me? shall I make that word  
 A spell to bid old happiness awake  
 Throughout the lovely land that father'd me  
 In my forsaken childhood?

[He sees the knife on the ground, and takes it up.]

Most vain dream!

This austere monitor hath bid thee vanish  
 Ere half reveal'd. Come back, thou truant steel;  
 Half of thy work the gods absolved thee from—  
 The rest remains! Lie there!

[He conceals the knife in his vest. Shouts heard without.]

The voice of joy!

Is this thy funeral wailing? O my father!  
 Mournful and brief will be the heritage  
 Thou leavest me; yet I promised thee in death  
 To grasp it;—and I will embrace it now.

*Enter AGENOR and others.*

AGENOR.

Does the king live?

ION.

Alas! in me. The son  
 Of him whose princely spirit is at rest,



Claims his ancestral honours.

AGENOR.

That high thought  
 Anticipates the prayer of Argos, roused  
 To sudden joy. The sages wait without  
 To greet thee : wilt confer with them to-night,  
 Or wait the morning ?

ION.

Now ;—the city's state  
 Allows the past no sorrow. I attend them. [Exeunt.

## SCENE II.

*Before the gate of the city.*

PHOCION *on guard.*

PHOCION.

Fool that I was to take this idle office  
 At most inglorious distance from the scene  
 Which shall be freedom's birth-place ; to endure  
 The phantasies of danger which the soul  
 Uncheer'd by action coldly dallies with  
 Till it begins to shiver ! Long ere this,  
 If Ion's hand be firm, the deed is past,  
 And yet no shout announces that the bonds  
 Of tyranny are broken. [Shouts at distance.

Hark ! 'tis done !—

*Enter* CTESIPHON.

All hail, my brother freeman!—art not so?—  
Thy looks are haggard—is the tyrant slain?  
Is liberty achieved?

CTESIPHON.

The king is dead;  
This arm—I bless the righteous Furies!—slew him.

PHOCION.

Did Ion quail, then?

CTESIPHON.

Ion!—clothe thy speech  
In phrase more courtly; he is king of Argos,  
Accepted as the tyrant's son, and reigns.

PHOCION.

It cannot be; I can believe him born  
Of such high lineage; yet he will not change  
His own rich treasury of unruffled thoughts  
For all the frigid glories that invest  
The loveless state in which the monarch dwells  
A terror and a slave. [*Shouts again.*

CTESIPHON.

Dost hear that shout?  
'Tis raised for him!—the craven-hearted world  
Is ever eager thus to hail a lord,  
And patriots smite for it in vain. Our Soldiers,  
From the base instinct of their slavish trade,  
Which must be deck'd and master'd; Citizens  
On wretched beds gaping for show; and Sages  
Vain of a royal sophist, madly join

In humble prayer that he would deign to tread  
Upon their necks ; and he is pleased to grant it.

PHOCION.

He shall not grant it ! If my life, my sense,  
My heart's affections and my tongue's free scope  
Wait the dominion of a mortal will,  
What is the sound to me—whether my soul  
Bears “ Ion” or “ Adrastus” burnt within it  
As my soul's owner ? Ion tyrant ? No !  
Grant me a moment's pleading with his heart,  
Which has not known a selfish throb till now,  
And thou shalt see him smile this greatness from him.

CTESIPHON.

Go teach the eagle when in azure heaven  
He upward darts to seize his madden'd prey,  
Shivering through the death-circle of its fear,  
To pause and let it 'scape, and thou mayst win  
Man to forego the sparkling round of power,  
When it floats airily within his grasp !

PHOCION.

Why thus severe ? Our nature's common wrongs  
Affect thee not ; and that which touch'd thee nearly  
Is well avenged.

CTESIPHON.

Not while the son of him  
Who smote my father reigns ! I little guess'd  
Thou wouldst require a prompter to awake  
The memory of the oath so freshly sworn,  
Or of the place assign'd to thee by lot,

Should our first champion fail to crush the race—  
 Mark me!—"the race" of him my arm has dealt with.  
 Now is the time, the palace all confused,  
 And the prince dizzy with strange turns of fortune,  
 To do thy part.

## PHOCION.

Have mercy on my weakness!  
 If thou hadst known this comrade of my sports,  
 One of the same small household whom his mirth  
 Unfailing gladden'd;—if a thousand times  
 Thou hadst, by strong prosperity made thoughtless,  
 Touch'd his unfather'd nature in its nerve  
 Of agony, and felt no chiding glance;—  
 Hadst thou beheld him overtax his strength  
 To serve the wish his genial instinct guess'd,  
 Till his dim smile the weariness betray'd,  
 Which it would fain dissemble; hadst thou known  
 In sickness the sweet magic of his care,  
 Thou couldst not ask it.—Hear me, Ctesiphon!—  
 I had a deadly fever once, and slaves,  
 Affrighted, fled me;—he usurp'd their place,  
 And soothed my dull ear with discourse which grew  
 By nice degrees to ravishment, till pain  
 Seem'd an heroic sense, which made me kin  
 To the great deeds he pictured, and the brood  
 Of dizzy weakness flickering through the gloom  
 Of my small curtain'd prison caught the hues  
 Of beauty spangling out in glorious change;  
 And it became a luxury to lie

And faintly listen. Canst thou bid me slay him?

CTESIPHON.

The deed be mine. Thou 'lt not betray me?

[*Going.*

PHOCION.

Hold!

If by our dreadful compact he must fall,  
I will not smite him with my coward thought  
Winging a distant arm; I will confront him  
Arm'd with delicious memories of our youth,  
And pierce him through them all.

CTESIPHON.

Be speedy then!

PHOCION.

Fear not that I shall prove a laggard, charged  
With weight of such a purpose.—Fate commands,  
And I live now but to perform her bidding.

[*Exeunt severally.*

### SCENE III.

*A Terrace in the Garden of the Palace by moonlight.*

*Enter ION and AGENOR.*

AGENOR.

Wilt thou not in to rest?

ION.

My rest is here—

Beneath the greatness of the heavens, which awes  
My spirit, toss'd by sudden change, and torn  
By various passions, to repose. Yet age  
Requires more genial nourishment—pray seek it—  
I will but stay thee to inquire once more  
If any symptom of returning health  
Bless the wan city ?

AGENOR.

No—the perishing  
Lift up their painful heads to bless thy name,  
And their eyes kindle as they utter it ;  
But still they perish.

ION.

So!—give instant order,  
The rites which shall confirm me in my throne  
Be solemnized to-morrow.

AGENOR.

How ! so soon,  
While the more sacred duties to the dead  
Remain unpaid ?

ION.

Let them abide my time—  
They will not tarry long. I see thee gaze  
With wonder on me—do my bidding now,  
And trust me till to-morrow. Pray go in,  
The night will chill thee else.

AGENOR.

Farewell, my lord ! [Exit.]

ION.

Now all is stillness in my breast—how soon  
To be displaced by more profound repose,  
In which no thread of consciousness shall live  
To feel how calm it is!—O lamp serene,  
Do I lift up to thee undazzled eyes  
For the last time? Shall I enjoy no more  
Thy golden haziness which seem'd akin  
To my young fortune's dim felicity?  
And when it coldly shall embrace the urn  
That shall contain my ashes, will no thought  
Of all the sweet ones cherish'd by thy beams  
Awake to tremble with them? Vain regret!  
The pathway of my duty lies in sunlight,  
And I would tread it with as firm a step,  
Though it should terminate in cold oblivion,  
As if Elysian pleasures at its close  
Gleam'd palpable to sight as things of earth.  
Who passes there?

[*Enter PHOCION behind, who strikes at ION with a dagger.*]

PHOCION.

This to the king of Argos!

[*ION struggles with him, seizes the dagger, which he throws away.*]

ION.

I will not fall by thee, poor wavering novice

In the assassin's trade!—thy arm is feeble—

[*He confronts PHOCION.*

Phocion!—was this well aim'd? thou didst not mean—

PHOCION.

I meant to take thy life, urged by remembrance  
Of yesterday's great vow.

ION.

And couldst thou think

*I* had forgotten?

PHOCION.

Thou?

ION.

Couldst thou believe,

That one, whose nature had been arm'd to stop  
The life-blood's current in a fellow's veins,  
Would hesitate when gentler duty turn'd  
His steel to nearer use? To-morrow's dawn  
Shall see me wield the sceptre of my fathers;  
Come, watch beside my throne, and, if I fail  
In sternest duty which my country needs,  
My bosom will be open to thy steel,  
As now to thy embrace!

PHOCION.

Thus let me fall

Low at thy feet, and kneeling here receive  
Forgiveness; do not crush me with more love  
Than lies in the word "pardon."

ION.

And that word



I will not speak ;—what have I to forgive ?  
A devious fancy, and a muscle raised  
Obedient to its impulse ! Dost thou think  
The tracings of a thousand kindnesses,  
Which taught me all I guess'd of brotherhood,  
Are in the rashness of a moment lost ?

PHOCION.

I cannot look upon thee ; let me go,  
And lose myself in darkness.

ION.

Nay, old playmate,  
We part not thus—the duties of my state  
Will shortly end our fellowship ; but spend  
A few sweet minutes with me. Dost remember  
How in a night like this we climb'd yon walls  
Two vagrant urchins, and with tremulous joy  
Skimm'd through these statue-border'd walks that gleam'd  
In bright succession ? Let us tread them now ;  
And think we are but older by a day,  
And that the pleasant walk of yesternight  
We are to-night retracing. Come, my friend !—  
What, drooping yet ! thou wert not wont to seem  
So stubborn—cheerily, my Phocion—come ! [*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT IV.

## A C T V.

## SCENE I.

TIME—THE MORNING OF THE SECOND DAY.

*The Terrace of the Palace.**Two Soldiers on guard.*

1 SOLDIER.

A stirring season, comrade! our new prince  
Has leap'd as eagerly into his seat  
As he had languish'd an expectant heir  
Weary of nature's kindness to old age.  
He was esteem'd a modest stripling;—strange,  
That he should, with such reckless hurry, seize  
The gaudy shows of power!

2 SOLDIER.

'Tis honest nature;  
The royal instinct was but smouldering in him,  
And now it blazes forth. I pray the gods  
He may not give us cause to mourn his sire.

1 SOLDIER.

No more; he comes.

*Enter* ION.

ION.

Why do ye loiter here ?

Are all the statues deck'd with festal wreaths  
As I commanded ?

I SOLDIER.

We have been on guard  
Here by Agenor's order since the nightfall.

ION.

On guard ! Well, hasten now and see it done ;

I need no guards. *[Exeunt Soldiers.]*

The awful hour draws near ;

I am composed to meet it.—Phocion comes :

He will unman me ; yet he must not go,

Thinking his presence painful.

*Enter* PHOCION.

Friend, good morrow !

Thou play'st the courtier early.

PHOCION.

Canst thou speak

In that old tone of common cheerfulness,

That blithely promises delightful years,

And hold thy mournful purpose ?

ION.

I have drawn

From the selectest fountain of repose

A blessed calm :—when I lay down to rest

I fear'd lest bright remembrances of childhood  
Should with untimely visitation mock me ;  
But deep and dreamless have my slumbers been.  
If sight of thee renews the thoughts of life  
Too busily,—I prize the love that wakes them.

PHOCION.

Oh, cherish them, and let them plead with thee  
To grant my prayer,—that thou wouldst live for Argos,  
Not die for her ;—thy gracious life shall win  
More than thy death the favour of the gods,  
And charm the marble aspect of grim Fate  
Into a blessed change : I, who am vow'd,  
And who so late was arm'd Fate's minister,  
Implore thee !

ION.

Speak to me no more of life ;  
There is a dearer name I would recall—  
Thou understand'st me—

*Enter* AGENOR.

AGENOR.

Thou hast forgot to name  
Who shall be bidden to this evening's feast ?

ION.

The feast !—most true ; I had forgotten it.  
Bid whom thou wilt ; but let there be large store,  
If our sad walls contain it, for the wretched  
Whom hunger palsies. It may be few else  
Will taste it with a relish.

[*Exit* AGENOR.]

[ION resumes his address to PHOCION, and continues it, broken by the interruptions which follow.]

I would speak

A word of her who yester-morning rose  
To her light duties with as blithe a heart  
As ever yet its equal beating veil'd  
In moveless alabaster ;—plighted now,  
In liberal hour, to one whose destiny  
Shall freeze the sources of enjoyment in it,  
And make it heavy with the life-long pang  
A widow'd spirit bears !—

*Enter* CLEON.

CLEON.

The heralds wait  
To learn the hour at which the solemn games  
Shall be proclaim'd.

ION.

The games !—yes, I remember  
That sorrow's darkest pageantries give place  
To youth's robustest pastimes—Death and Life  
Embracing :—at the hour of noon.

CLEON.

The wrestlers  
Pray thee to crown the victor.

ION.

If I live,  
Their wish shall govern me. [Exit CLEON.  
Could I recall

One hour, and bid thy sister think of me  
 With gentle sorrow as a playmate lost,  
 I should escape the guilt of having stopp'd  
 The pulse of hope in the most innocent soul  
 That ever passion ruffled. Do not talk  
 Of me as I shall seem to thy kind thoughts,  
 But harshly as thou canst; and if thou steal  
 From thy rich store of popular eloquence  
 Some bitter charge against the faith of kings,  
 'Twill be an honest treason.

*Enter CASSANDER.*

CASSANDER.

Pardon me,

If I entreat thee to permit a few  
 Of thy once-cherish'd friends to bid thee joy  
 Of that which swells their pride.

ION.

They'll madden me.—

Dost thou not see me circled round with care?  
 Urge me no more.

[*As CASSANDER is going, ION leaves PHOCION, and comes to him.*]

Come back, Cassander! see

How greatness frets the temper. Keep this ring—  
 It may remind thee of the pleasant hours  
 That we have spent together, ere our fortunes  
 Grew separate: and with thy gracious speech  
 Excuse me to our friends.

[*Exit CASSANDER.*]

PHOCION.

'Tis time we seek

The temple.

ION.

Phocion! must I to the temple?

PHOCION.

There sacrificial rites must be perform'd  
Before thou art enthroned.

ION.

Then I must gaze

On things which will arouse the struggling thoughts  
I had subdued—perchance may meet with her  
Whose name I dare not utter. I am ready. [ *Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.

### *The Temple.*

CLEMANTHE, ABRA.

ABRA.

Be comforted, dear lady ;—he must come  
To sacrifice.

CLEMANTHE.

Recall that churlish word,  
That stubborn “ *must*,” that bounds my living hopes,  
As with an iron circle. He *must* come !

How piteous is affection's state, that cleaves  
 To such a wretched prop! I had flown to him  
 Long before this, but that I fear'd my presence  
 Might prove a burthen,—and he sends no word,  
 No token that he thinks of me! Art sure  
 That he *must* come? The hope has torture in it;  
 Yet it is all my bankrupt heart hath left  
 To feed upon.

ABRA.

I see him now with Phocion  
 Pass through the inner court.

CLEMANTHE.

He will not come  
 This way, then, to the place of sacrifice.  
 I can endure no more: speed to him, Abra;  
 And bid him, if he holds Clemanthe's life  
 Worthy a minute's loss, to seek me here.

ABRA.

Dear lady!—

CLEMANTHE.

Do not answer me, but run,  
 Or I shall give yon crowd of sycophants  
 To gaze upon my sorrow.

[*Exit* ABRA.]

It is hard;  
 Yet I must strive to bear it, and find solace  
 In that high fortune which has made him strange.  
 He bends this way—but slowly—mournfully.  
 O, he is ill; how has my slander wrong'd him!



*Enter* ION.

ION.

What wouldst thou with me, lady ?

CLEMANTHE.

Is it so ?

Nothing, my lord, save to implore thy pardon,  
That the departing gleams of a bright dream,  
From which I scarce had waken'd, made me bold  
To crave a word with thee ;—but all are fled—  
And I have nought to seek.

ION.

A goodly dream ;

But thou art right to think it was no more,  
And study to forget it.

CLEMANTHE.

To forget it ?

Indeed, my lord, I cannot wish to lose  
What, being past, is all my future hath,  
All I shall live for ; do not grudge me this,  
The brief space I shall need it.

ION.

Speak not, fair one,

In tone so mournful, for it makes me feel  
Too sensibly the hapless wretch I am,  
That troubled the deep quiet of thy soul  
In that pure fountain which reflected heaven,  
For a brief taste of rapture.

CLEMANTHE.

Dost thou yet

Esteem it rapture, then? My foolish heart,  
 Be still! Yet wherefore should a crown divide us?  
 O, my dear Ion!—let me call thee so  
 This once at least—it could not in my thoughts  
 Increase the distance that there was between us,  
 When, rich in spirit, thou to strangers' eyes  
 Seem'd a poor foundling.

ION.

It must separate us!

Think it no harmless bauble, but a curse  
 Will freeze the current in the veins of youth,  
 And from familiar touch of genial hand,  
 From household pleasures, from sweet daily tasks,  
 From airy thought, free wanderer of the heavens,  
 For ever banish me!

CLEMANTHE.

Thou dost accuse

Thy state too hardly. It may give some room,  
 Some little space, amidst its radiant cares,  
 For love and joy to breathe in.

ION.

Not for me;

My pomp must be most lonesome, far removed  
 From that sweet fellowship of human kind  
 The slave rejoices in: my solemn robes  
 Shall wrap me as a panoply of ice,  
 And the attendants who may throng around me  
 Shall want the flatteries which may basely warm  
 The sceptral thing they circle. Dark and cold

Stretches the path, which, when I wear the crown,  
I needs must enter :—the great gods forbid  
That thou shouldst follow in it !

CLEMANTHE.

O unkind !

And shall we never see each other ?

ION [*after a pause*].

Yes !

I have ask'd that dreadful question of the hills  
That look eternal ; of the flowing streams  
That lucid flow for ever ; of the stars,  
Amid whose fields of azure my raised spirit  
Hath trod in glory : all were dumb ; but now,  
While I thus gaze upon thy living face,  
I feel the love that kindles through its beauty  
Can never wholly perish ;—we *shall* meet  
Again, Clemanthe !

CLEMANTHE.

Bless thee for that name ;

Call me that name again ; thy words sound strangely,  
Yet they breathe kindness. Shall we meet indeed ?  
Think not I would intrude upon thy cares,  
Thy councils, or thy pomps ;—to sit at distance,  
To weave, with the nice labour which preserves  
The rebel pulses even, from gay threads  
Faint records of thy deeds, and sometimes catch  
The falling music of a gracious word,  
Or the stray sunshine of a smile, will be

Comfort enough:—do not deny me this ;  
 Or if stern fate compel thee to deny,  
 Kill me at once !

ION.

No ; thou must live, my fair one :  
 There are a thousand joyous things in life,  
 Which pass unheeded in a life of joy  
 As thine hath been, till breezy sorrow comes  
 To ruffle it ; and daily duties paid  
 Hardly at first, at length will bring repose  
 To the sad mind that studies to perform them.  
 Thou dost not mark me.

CLEMANTHE.

Oh, I do ! I do !

ION.

If for thy brother's and thy father's sake  
 Thou art content to live, the healer Time  
 Will reconcile thee to the lovely things  
 Of this delightful world,—and if another,  
 A happier—no, I cannot bid thee love  
 Another !—I did think I could have said it,  
 But 'tis in vain.

CLEMANTHE.

Thou art mine own then still ?

ION.

I am thine own ! thus let me clasp thee ; nearer ;  
 O joy too thrilling and too short !

*Enter* AGENOR.

AGENOR.

My lord,

The sacrificial rites await thy presence.

ION.

I come.—One more embrace—the last, the last  
In this world! Now farewell!

[*Exit.*

CLEMANTHE.

The last embrace!

Then he has cast me off!—no,—'tis not so;  
Some mournful secret of his fate divides us;  
I'll struggle to bear that, and snatch a comfort  
From seeing him uplifted. I will look  
Upon him in his throne; Minerva's shrine  
Will shelter me from vulgar gaze; I'll hasten,  
And feast my sad eyes with his greatness there!

[*Exit.*

---

SCENE III.

*The Great Square of the City—on one side a throne of  
state prepared,—on the other an altar,—the statues  
decorated with garlands.*

*Enter* CTESIPHON and CASSANDER.

CTESIPHON.

Vex me no more, by telling me, Cassander,  
Of his fair speech; I prize it at its worth:  
Thou'lt see how he will act when seated firm

Upon the throne the craven tyrant fill'd,  
Whose blood he boasts, unless some honest arm  
Should shed it first.

CASSANDER.

Hast thou forgot the time  
When thou thyself wert eager to foretell  
His manhood's glory from his childish virtues?  
Let me not think thee one of those fond prophets,  
Who are well pleased still to foretell success,  
So it remain their dream.

CTESIPHON.

Thou dost forget -  
What has chill'd fancy and delight within me—  
[*Music at a distance.*  
Hark!—servile trumpets speak his coming—watch,  
How power will change him. [*They stand aside.*

*The procession. Enter MEDON, AGENOR, PHOCION, TIMOCLES, CLEON, Sages and People; ION last, in royal robes. He advances amidst shouts, and speaks.*

ION.

I thank you for your greeting—Shout no more,  
But in deep silence raise your hearts to Heaven,  
That it may strengthen one so young and frail  
As I am, for the business of this hour.  
Must I sit here?

MEDON.

Permit thy earliest friend,

Who has so often propp'd thy tottering steps,  
To lead thee to thy throne,—and thus fulfil  
His fondest vision.

ION.

Thou art still most kind—

MEDON.

Nay, do not think of me—my son! my son!  
What ails thee? when thou shouldst reflect the joy  
Of Argos, the strange paleness of the grave  
Marbles thy face.

ION.

Am I indeed so pale?

It is a solemn office I assume;  
Yet thus, with Phœbus' blessing, I embrace it.

*[Sits on the throne.]*

Stand forth, Agenor!

AGENOR.

I await thy will.

ION.

To thee I look as to the wisest friend  
Of this afflicted people;—thou must leave  
Awhile the quiet which thy life hath earn'd,  
To rule our councils; fill the seats of justice  
With good men not so absolute in goodness,  
As to forget what human frailty is;  
And order my sad country.

AGENOR.

Pardon me—

ION.

Nay, I will promise 'tis my last request ;  
Thou never couldst deny me what I sought  
In boyish wantonness, and shalt not grudge  
Thy wisdom to me, till our state revive  
From its long anguish ;—it will not be long  
If Heaven approve me here. Thou hast all power  
Whether I live or die.

AGENOR.

Die ! I am old—

ION.

Death is not jealous of thy mild decay,  
Which gently wins thee his ; exulting Youth  
Provokes the ghastly monarch's sudden stride,  
And makes his horrid fingers quick to clasp  
His shivering prey at noontide. Let me see  
The captain of the guard.

CRYTHES.

I kneel to crave  
Humbly the favour which thy sire bestow'd  
On one who loved him well.

ION.

I cannot thank thee,  
That wakest the memory of my father's weakness ;  
But I will not forget that thou hast shared  
The light enjoyments of a noble spirit,  
And learn'd the need of luxury. I grant  
For thee and thy brave comrades, ample share  
Of such rich treasure as my stores contain,



To grace thy passage to some distant land,  
Where, if an honest cause engage thy sword  
May glorious laurels wreath it! In our realm  
We shall not need it longer.

CRYTHES.

Dost intend  
To banish the firm troops before whose valour  
Barbarian millions shrink appall'd, and leave  
Our city naked to the first assault  
Of reckless foes?

ION.

No, Crythes!—in ourselves,  
In our own honest hearts and chainless hands  
Will be our safeguard ;—while we seek no use  
Of arms, we would not have our children blend  
With their first innocent wishes ; while the love  
Of Argos and of justice shall be one  
To their young reason ; while their sinews grow  
Firm midst the gladness of heroic sports ;  
We shall not ask to guard our country's peace  
One selfish passion, or one venal sword.  
I would not grieve thee ;—but thy valiant troop—  
For I esteem them valiant—must no more  
With luxury which suits a desperate camp  
Infect us. See that they embark, Agenor,  
Ere night.

CRYTHES.

My lord—

ION.

No more—my word hath pass'd.

Medon, there is no office I can add  
 To those thou hast grown old in ; thou wilt guard  
 The shrine of Phœbus, and within thy home—  
 Thy too delightful home—befriend the stranger  
 As thou didst me ;—there sometimes waste a thought  
 On thy spoil'd inmate !

MEDON.

Think of thee, my lord ?

Long shall we triumph in thy glorious reign—

ION.

Prithee no more. Argives ! I have a boon  
 To crave of you ;—whene'er I shall rejoin  
 In death the father from whose heart in life  
 Stern fate divided me, think gently of him !  
 For ye who saw him in his full-blown pride,  
 Knew little of affections crush'd within,  
 And wrongs which frenzied him ; yet never more  
 Let the great interests of the state depend  
 Upon the thousand chances that may sway  
 A piece of human frailty ! Swear to me  
 That ye will seek hereafter in yourselves  
 The means of sovereign rule :—our narrow space,  
 So happy in its confines, so compact,  
 Needs not the magic of a single name  
 Which wider regions may require to draw  
 Their interests into one ; but, circled thus,  
 Like a bless'd family by simple laws,

May tenderly be govern'd ; all degrees  
 Moulded together as a single form  
 Of nymph-like loveliness, which finest chords  
 Of sympathy pervading shall suffuse  
 In times of quiet with one bloom, and fill  
 With one resistless impulse, if the hosts  
 Of foreign power should threaten. Swear to me  
 That ye will do this !

MEDON.

Wherefore ask this now ?—  
 Thou shalt live long ;—the paleness of thy face  
 Which late appall'd me is grown radiant now,  
 And thine eyes kindle with the prophecy  
 Of lustrous years.

ION.

The gods approve me then !  
 Yet I will use the function of a king,  
 And claim obedience. Promise, if I leave  
 No issue, that the sovereign power shall live  
 In the affections of the general heart,  
 And in the wisdom of the best.

MEDON *and others.*

We swear it !

ION.

Hear and record the oath, immortal powers !  
 Now give me leave a moment to approach  
 That altar unattended. [*He goes to the altar.*]

Gracious gods !

In whose mild service my glad youth was spent,

Look on me now ;—and if there is a Power,  
 As at this solemn time I feel there is,  
 Beyond ye, that hath breathed through all your shapes  
 The spirit of the beautiful that lives  
 In earth and heaven ;—to ye I offer up  
 This conscious being, full of life and love  
 For my dear country's welfare. Let this blow  
 End all her sorrows !

[*Stabs himself, and falls.* CTESIPHON *rushes to support*  
*him.*]

Ctesiphon, thou art  
 Avenged, and wilt forgive me.

CTESIPHON.

Thou hast pluck'd  
 The poor disguise of hatred from my soul,  
 And made me feel how shallow is the wish  
 Of vengeance. Could I die to save thee !

CLEMANTHE *rushes forward.*

CLEMANTHE.

Hold !

Let me support him—stand away—indeed  
 I have best right, although ye know it not,  
 To cling to him in death.

ION.

This is a joy  
 I did not hope for—this is sweet indeed.—  
 Bend thine eyes on me !

CLEMANTHE.

And for this it was

Thou wouldst have wean'd me from thee! Couldst thou  
 think  
 I would be so divorced?

ION.

Thou art right, Clemanthe,—

It was a shallow and an idle thought;  
 'Tis past; no show of coldness frets us now;  
 No vain disguise, my love. Yet thou wilt think  
 On that which, when I feign'd, I truly said—  
 Wilt thou not, sweet one?

CLEMANTHE.

I will treasure all.

*Enter IRUS.*

IRUS.

I bring you glorious tidings—Ha! no joy  
 Can enter here.

ION.

Yes—is it as I hope?

IRUS.

The pestilence abates.

ION. [*Springs on his feet.*]

Do ye not hear?

Why shout ye not?—ye are strong—think not of me;  
 Harken! the curse my ancestry had spread  
 O'er Argos is dispell'd!—Agenor, give  
 This gentle youth his freedom, who hath brought  
 Sweet tidings that I shall not die in vain—

And Medon! cherish him as thou hast one  
Who dying blesses thee ;—my own Clemanthe!  
Let this console thee also—Argos lives—  
The offering is accepted—all is well!

[*Dies.*

*The curtain falls.*

THE END.

THE  
ISLE OF PALMS,  
AND  
OTHER POEMS.

BY  
JOHN WILSON.

---

---

*Where lies the land to which yon Ship must go?  
Festively she puts forth in trim array,  
And vigorous, as a lark at break of day,—  
—Is she for summer suns, or polar snow?*

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EDINBURGH:

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PRINTED FOR  
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN, LONDON;  
JOHN BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY, EDINBURGH;  
AND JOHN SMITH AND SON, GLASGOW.

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1812.





TO  
GEORGE JARDINE, Esq.

PROFESSOR OF LOGIC,

AND TO

JOHN YOUNG, Esq.

PROFESSOR OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE,

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,

THIS VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.



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THE  
ISLE OF PALMS.

CANTO FIRST.

---

IT is the midnight hour :—the beauteous Sea,  
Calm as the cloudless heaven, the heaven discloses,  
While many a sparkling star, in quiet glee,  
Far down within the watery sky reposes.  
As if the Ocean's heart were stirr'd  
With inward life, a sound is heard,  
Like that of dreamer murmuring in his sleep ;  
'Tis partly the billow, and partly the air,  
That lies like a garment floating fair  
Above the happy Deep.  
The sea, I ween, cannot be fann'd  
By evening freshness from the land,

For the land it is far away ;  
But God hath will'd that the sky-born breeze  
In the centre of the loneliest seas  
Should ever sport and play.  
The mighty Moon she sits above,  
Encircled with a zone of love,  
A zone of dim and tender light  
That makes her wakeful eye more bright :  
She seems to shine with a sunny ray,  
And the night looks like a mellow'd day !  
The gracious Mistress of the Main  
Hath now an undisturbed reign,  
And from her silent throne looks down,  
As upon children of her own,  
On the waves that lend their gentle breast  
In gladness for her couch of rest !

My spirit sleeps amid the calm  
The sleep of a new delight ;  
And hopes that she ne'er may awake again,  
But for ever hang o'er the lovely main,



And adore the lovely night.  
Scarce conscious of an earthly frame,  
She glides away like a lambent flame,  
And in her bliss she sings ;  
Now touching softly the Ocean's breast,  
Now mid the stars she lies at rest,  
As if she sail'd on wings !  
Now bold as the brightest star that glows  
More brightly since at first it rose,  
Looks down on the far-off flood,  
And there all breathless and alone,  
As the sky where she soars were a world of her own,  
She mocketh the gentle Mighty One  
As he lies in his quiet mood.  
“ Art thou,” she breathes, “ the Tyrant grim  
That scoffs at human prayers,  
Answering with prouder roaring the while,  
As it rises from some lonely isle,  
Through groans raised wild, the hopeless hymn  
Of shipwreck'd mariners ?

Oh ! Thou art harmless as a child  
Weary with joy, and reconciled  
For sleep to change its play ;  
And now that night hath stay'd thy race,  
Smiles wander o'er thy placid face  
As if thy dreams were gay."—

And can it be that for me alone  
The Main and Heavens are spread ?  
Oh ! whither, in this holy hour,  
Have those fair creatures fled,  
To whom the ocean-plains are given  
As clouds possess their native heaven ?  
The tiniest boat, that ever sail'd  
Upon an inland lake,  
Might through this sea without a fear  
Her silent journey take,  
Though the helmsman slept as if on land,  
And the oar had dropp'd from the rower's hand.  
How like a monarch would she glide,  
While the husht billow kiss'd her side

With low and lulling tone,  
Some stately Ship, that from afar  
Shone sudden, like a rising star,  
With all her bravery on !  
List ! how in murmurs of delight  
The blessed airs of Heaven invite  
The joyous bark to pass one night  
Within their still domain !  
O grief ! that yonder gentle Moon,  
Whose smiles for ever fade so soon,  
Should waste such smiles in vain.  
Haste ! haste ! before the moonshine dies,  
Dissolved amid the morning skies,  
While yet the silvery glory lies  
Above the sparkling foam ;  
Bright mid surrounding brightness, Thou,  
Scattering fresh beauty from thy prow,  
In pomp and splendour come !

And lo ! upon the murmuring waves  
A glorious Shape appearing !

A broad-wing'd Vessel, through the shower  
Of glimmering lustre steering !  
As if the beauteous ship enjoy'd  
The beauty of the sea,  
She lifteth up her stately head  
And saileth joyfully.  
A lovely path before her lies,  
A lovely path behind ;  
She sails amid the loveliness  
Like a thing with heart and mind.  
Fit pilgrim through a scene so fair,  
Slowly she beareth on ;  
A glorious phantom of the deep,  
Risen up to meet the Moon.  
The Moon bids her tenderest radiance fall  
On her wavy streamer and snow-white wings,  
And the quiet voice of the rocking sea  
To cheer the gliding vision sings.  
Oh ! ne'er did sky and water blend  
In such a holy sleep,

Or bathe in brighter quietude  
A roamer of the deep.  
So far the peaceful soul of Heaven  
Hath settled on the sea,  
It seems as if this weight of calm  
Were from eternity.  
O World of Waters ! the stedfast earth  
Ne'er lay entranced like Thee !

Is she a vision wild and bright,  
That sails amid the still moon-light  
At the dreaming soul's command ?  
A vessel borne by magic gales,  
All rigg'd with gossamery sails,  
And bound for Fairy-land ?  
Ah ! no !—an earthly freight she bears,  
Of joys and sorrows, hopes and fears ;  
And lonely as she seems to be,  
Thus left by herself on the moonlight sea  
In loneliness that rolls,

She hath a constant company,  
In sleep, or waking revelry,  
Five hundred human souls !  
Since first she sail'd from fair England,  
Three moons her path have cheer'd ;  
And another stands right over her masts  
Since the Cape hath disappear'd.  
For an Indian Isle she shapes her way  
With constant mind both night and day :  
She seems to hold her home in view,  
And sails, as if the path she knew ;  
So calm and stately is her motion  
Across th' unfathom'd trackless ocean.

And well, glad Vessel ! mayst thou stem  
The tide with lofty breast,  
And lift thy queen-like diadem  
O'er these thy realms of rest :  
For a thousand beings, now far away,  
Behold thee in their sleep,

And hush their beating hearts to pray  
That a calm may clothe the deep.  
When dimly descending behind the sea  
From the Mountain Isle of Liberty,  
Oh! many a sigh pursued thy vanish'd sail;  
And oft an eager crowd will stand  
With straining gaze on the Indian strand,  
Thy wonted gleam to hail.  
For thou art laden with Beauty and Youth,  
With Honour bold, and spotless Truth,  
With fathers, who have left in a home of rest  
Their infants smiling at the breast,  
With children, who have bade their parents farewell,  
Or who go to the land where their parents dwell.  
God speed thy course, thou gleam of delight!  
From rock and tempest clear;  
Till signal gun from friendly height  
Proclaim, with thundering cheer,  
To joyful groupes on the harbour bright,  
That the good ship HOPE is near!

Is no one on the silent deck  
Save the helmsman who sings for a breeze,  
And the sailors who pace their midnight watch,  
Still as the slumbering seas ?  
Yes ! side by side, and hand in hand,  
Close to the prow two figures stand,  
Their shadows never stir,  
And fondly as the Moon doth rest  
Upon the Ocean's gentle breast,  
So fond they look on her.  
They gaze and gaze till the beauteous orb  
Seems made for them alone :  
They feel as if their home were Heaven,  
And the earth a dream that hath flown.  
Softly they lean on each other's breast,  
In holy bliss reposing,  
Like two fair clouds to the vernal air  
In folds of beauty closing.  
The tear down their glad faces rolls,  
And a silent prayer is in their souls,



While the voice of awaken'd memory,  
Like a low and plaintive melody,  
Sings in their hearts,—a mystic voice,  
That bids them tremble and rejoice.  
And Faith, who oft had lost her power  
In the darkness of the midnight hour  
When the planets had roll'd afar,  
Now stirs in their soul with a joyful strife,  
Embued with a genial spirit of life  
By the Moon and the Morning-Star.

A lovelier vision in the moonlight stands,  
Than Bard e'er woo'd in fairy lands,  
Or Faith with tranced eye adored,  
Floating around our dying Lord.  
Her silent face is saintly-pale,  
And sadness shades it like a veil:  
A consecrated nun she seems,  
Whose waking thoughts are deep as dreams,  
And in her hush'd and dim abode  
For ever dwell upon her God,

Though the still fount of tears and sighs  
And human sensibilities !  
Well may the Moon delight to shed  
Her softest radiance round that head,  
And mellow the cool ocean-air  
That lifts by fits her sable hair.  
These mild and melancholy eyes  
Are dear unto the starry skies,  
As the dim effusion of their rays  
Blends with the glimmering light that plays  
O'er the blue heavens, and snowy clouds,  
The cloud-like sails, and radiant shrouds.  
Fair creature ! Thou dost seem to be  
Some wandering spirit of the sea,  
That dearly loves the gleam of sails,  
And o'er them breathes propitious gales.  
Hither thou comest, for one wild hour,  
With him thy sinless paramour,  
To gaze, while the wearied sailors sleep,  
On this beautiful phantom of the deep,

That seem'd to rise with the rising Moon.  
—But the Queen of Night will be sinking soon,  
Then will you, like two breaking waves,  
Sink softly to your coral caves,  
Or, noiseless as the falling dew,  
Melt into Heaven's delicious blue.

Nay! wrong her not, that Virgin bright!  
Her face is bathed in lovelier light  
Than ever flow'd from eyes  
Of Ocean Nymph, or Sylph of Air!  
The tearful gleam, that trembles there,  
From human dreams must rise.  
Let the Mermaid rest in her sparry cell,  
Her sea-green ringlets braiding!  
The Sylph in viewless ether dwell,  
In clouds her beauty shading!  
My soul devotes her music wild  
To one who is an earthly child,  
But who, wandering through the midnight hour,  
Far from the shade of earthly bower,

Bestows a tenderer loveliness,  
A deeper, holier quietness,  
On the moonlight Heaven, and Ocean hoar,  
So quiet and so fair before.  
Yet why does a helpless maiden roam,  
Mid stranger souls, and far from home,  
Across the faithless deep?  
Oh! fitter far that her gentle mind  
In some sweet inland vale should find  
An undisturbed sleep!

So was it once. Her childish years  
Like clouds pass'd o'er her head,  
When life is all one rosy smile, or tears  
Of natural grief, forgotten soon as shed.  
O'er her own mountains, like a bird  
Glad wandering from its nest,  
When the glossy hues of the sunny spring  
Are dancing on its breast,  
With a winged glide this maiden would rove,  
An innocent phantom of beauty and love.

Far from the haunts of men she grew  
By the side of a lonesome tower,  
Like some solitary mountain-flower,  
Whose veil of wiry dew  
Is only touch'd by the gales that breathe  
O'er the blossoms of the fragrant heath,  
And in its silence melts away  
With those sweet things too pure for earthly day.  
Blest was the lore that Nature taught  
The infant's happy mind,  
Even when each light and happy thought  
Pass'd onwards like the wind,  
Nor longer seem'd to linger there  
Than the whispering sound in her raven-hair.  
Well was she known to each mountain-stream,  
As its own voice, or the fond moon-beam  
That o'er its music play'd :  
The loneliest caves her footsteps heard,  
In lake and tarn oft nightly stirr'd  
The Maiden's ghost-like shade.

But she hath bidden a last farewell  
To lake and mountain, stream and dell,  
And fresh have blown the gales  
For many a mournful night and day,  
Wafting the tall Ship far away  
From her dear native Wales.

And must these eyes,—so soft and mild,  
As angel's bright, as fairy's wild,  
Swimming in lustrous dew,  
Now sparkling lively, gay, and glad,  
And now their spirit melting sad  
In smiles of gentlest blue,—  
Oh ! must these eyes be steep'd in tears,  
Bedimm'd with dreams of future years,  
Of what may yet betide  
An Orphan-Maid !—for in the night  
She oft hath started with affright,  
To find herself a bride ;  
A bride oppress'd with fear and shame,  
And bearing not Fitz-Owen's name.

This fearful dream oft haunts her bed,  
For she hath heard of maidens sold,  
In the innocence of thoughtless youth,  
To Guilt and Age for gold ;  
Of English maids who pined away  
Beyond the Eastern Main,  
Who smiled, when first they trod that shore,  
But never smiled again.

In dreams is she the wretched Maid,  
An Orphan,—helpless,—sold,—betray'd,—  
And, when the dream hath fled,  
In waking thought she still retains  
The memory of these wildering pains,  
In strange mysterious dread.

Yet oft will happier dreams arise  
Before her charmed view,  
And the powerful beauty of the skies  
Makes her believe them true.  
For who, when nought is heard around,  
But the great Ocean's solemn sound,

Feels not as if the Eternal God  
Were speaking in that dread abode?  
An answering voice seems kindly given  
From the multitude of stars in Heaven:  
And oft a smile of moonlight fair,  
To perfect peace hath changed despair.  
Low as we are, we blend our fate  
With things so beautifully great,  
And though opprest with heaviest grief,  
From Nature's bliss we draw relief,  
Assured that God's most gracious eye  
Beholds us in our misery,  
And sends mild sound and lovely sight,  
To change that misery to delight.—  
Such is thy faith, O sainted Maid!  
Pensive and pale, but not afraid  
Of Ocean or of Sky,  
Though thou ne'er mayst see the land again,  
And though awful be the lonely Main,  
No fears hast thou to die.



Whate'er betide of weal or wo,  
When the waves are asleep, or the tempests blow,  
Thou wilt bear with calm devotion ;  
For duly every night and morn,  
Sweeter than Mermaid's strains are borne  
Thy hymns along the Ocean.

And who is He, that fondly presses  
Close to his heart the silken tresses  
That hide her soften'd eyes,  
Whose heart her heaving bosom meets,  
And through the midnight silence beats  
To feel her rising sighs ?  
Worthy the Youth, I ween, to rest  
On the fair swellings of her breast,  
Worthy to hush her inmost fears,  
And kiss away her struggling tears :  
For never grovelling spirit stole  
A woman's unpolluted soul !  
To her the vestal fire is given ;  
And only fire drawn pure from Heaven

Can on Love's holy shrine descend,  
And there in clouds of fragrance blend.  
Well do I know that stately Youth !  
The broad day-light of cloudless truth  
Like a sun-beam bathes his face ;  
Though silent, still a gracious smile,  
That rests upon his eyes the while,  
Bestows a speaking grace.  
That smile, hath might of magic art,  
To sway at will the stoniest heart,  
As a ship obeys the gale ;  
And when his silver voice is heard,  
The coldest blood is warmly stirr'd,  
As at some glorious tale.  
The loftiest spirit never saw  
This Youth without a sudden awe ;  
But vain the transient feeling strove  
Against the stealing power of love.  
Soon as they felt the tremor cease,  
He seem'd the very heart of peace.

Majestic to the bold and high,  
Yet calm and beauteous to a woman's eye!

To him, a mountain Youth, was known  
The wailing tempest's dreariest tone.  
He knew the shriek of wizard caves,  
And the trampling fierce of howling waves.  
The mystic voice of the lonely night,  
He had often drunk with a strange delight,  
And look'd on the clouds as they roll'd on high,  
Till with them he sail'd on the sailing sky.  
And thus hath he learn'd to wake the lyre,  
With something of a bardlike fire;  
Can tell in high empassion'd song,  
Of worlds that to the Bard belong,  
And, till they feel his kindling breath,  
To others still and dark as death.  
Yet oft, I ween, in gentler mood  
A human kindness hush'd his blood,  
And sweetly blended earth-born sighs  
With the Bard's romantic extacies.

The living world was dear to him,  
And in his waking hours more bright it seem'd,  
More touching far, than when his fancy dream'd  
Of heavenly bowers, th' abode of Seraphim :  
And gladly from her wild sojourn  
Mid haunts dim-shadow'd in the realms of mind,  
Even like a wearied dove that flies for rest  
Back o'er long fields of air unto her nest,  
His longing spirit homewards would return  
To meet once more the smile of human kind.  
And when at last a human soul he found,  
Pure as the thought of purity,—more mild  
Than in its slumber seems a dreaming child ;  
When on his spirit stole the mystic sound,  
The voice, whose music sad no mortal ear  
But his can rightly understand and hear,  
When a subduing smile like moonlight shone  
On him for ever, and for him alone,  
Why should he seek this lower world to leave !  
For, whether now he love to joy or grieve,

A friend he hath for sorrow or delight,  
Who lends fresh beauty to the morning light,  
The tender stars in tenderer dimness shrouds,  
And glorifies the Moon among her clouds.

How would he gaze with reverent eye  
Upon that meek and pensive maid,  
Then fix his looks upon the sky  
With moving lips as if he pray'd !  
Unto his sight bedimm'd with tears,  
How beautiful the saint appears,—  
Oh ! all unlike a creature form'd of clay,  
The blessed angels with delight  
Might hail her “ Sister ! ” She is bright  
And innocent as they.  
Scarce dared he then that form to love !  
A solemn impulse from above  
All earthly hopes forbade,  
And with a pure and holy flame,  
As if in truth from Heaven she came,  
He gazed upon the maid.

His beating heart, thus fill'd with awe,  
In her the guardian spirit saw  
Of all his future years ;  
And, when he listened to her breath  
So spiritual, nor pain nor death  
Seem'd longer worth his fears.  
She loved him ! She, the Child of Heaven !  
And God would surely make  
The soul to whom that love was given  
More perfect for her sake.  
Each look, each word, of one so good  
Devoutly he obey'd,  
And trusted that a gracious eye  
Would ever guide his destiny,  
For whom in holy solitude  
So sweet an Angel pray'd.

Those days of tranquil joy are fled,  
And tears of deepdistress  
From night to morn hath Mary shed :  
And, say ! when sorrow bow'd her head

Did he then love her less?  
Ah no! more touching beauty rose  
Through the dim paleness of her woes,  
Than when her cheek did bloom  
With joy's own lustre : something there,  
A saint-like calm, a deep repose,  
Made her look like a spirit fair  
New risen from the tomb.  
For ever in his heart shall dwell  
The voice with which she said farewell  
To the fading English shore ;  
It dropp'd like dew upon his ear,  
And for the while he ceased to hear  
The sea-wind's freshening roar.  
" To thee I trust my sinless child :  
" And therefore am I reconciled  
" To bear my lonely lot,  
" 'The Gracious One, who loves the good,  
" For her will smooth the Ocean wild,  
" Nor in her aged solitude  
" A parent be forgot."

The last words these her Mother spake,  
Sobbing as if her heart would break  
Beside the cold sea-shore,  
When onwards with the favouring gale,  
Glad to be free, in pride of sail  
Th' impatient Vessel bore.

Oh ! could she now in magic glass  
Behold the winged glory pass  
With a slow and cloud-like motion,  
While, as they melted on her eye,  
She scarce should ken the peaceful sky  
From the still more peaceful Ocean !  
And it may be such dreams are given  
In mercy by indulgent Heaven,  
To solace them that mourn :  
The absent bless our longing sight,  
The future shows than truth more bright,  
And phantoms of expir'd delight  
Most passing sweet return.



Mother ! behold thy Child : How still  
Her upward face ! She thinks on thee :  
Oh, thou canst never gaze thy fill !  
How beautiful such piety !  
There in her lover's guardian arms  
She rests : and all the wild alarms  
Of waves or winds are hush'd, no more to rise.  
Of thee, and thee alone, she thinks :  
See ! on her knees thy daughter sinks :  
Sure God will bless the prayer that lights such eyes !  
Didst thou e'er think thy child so fair ?  
The rapture of her granted prayer  
Hath breathed that awful beauty through her face :  
Once more upon the deck she stands,  
Slowly unclasps her pious hands,  
And brightening smiles, assured of heavenly grace.

Oh, blessed pair ! and, while I gaze,  
As beautiful as blest !  
Emblem of all your future days  
Seems now the Ocean's rest !

Beyond the blue depths of the sky,  
The Tempests sleep ;—and there must lie,  
Like baleful spirits barr'd from realms of bliss.  
But singing airs, and gleams of light,  
And birds of calm, all-glancing bright,  
Must hither in their gladness come.  
—Where shall they find a fitter home  
Than a night-scene fair as this ?  
And when, her fairy voyage past,  
The happy Ship is moor'd at last  
In the loved haven of her Indian Isle,  
How dear to you will be the beams  
Of the silent Moon ! What touching dreams  
Your musing hearts beguile !  
Though haply then her radiance fall  
On some low mansion's flowery wall,  
Far up an inland vale,  
Yet then the sheeted mast will tower,  
Her shrouds all rustling like a shower,  
And, melting as wild music's power,  
Low pipe the sea-born gale.

Each star will speak the tenderest things,  
And when the clouds expand their wings,  
All parting like a fleet,  
Your own beloved Ship, I ween,  
Will foremost in the van be seen,  
And, rising loud and sweet,  
The sailor's joyful shouts be heard,  
Such as the midnight silence stirr'd  
When the wish'd-for breezes blew,  
And, instant as the loud commands,  
Sent upwards from a hundred hands  
The broad sails rose unto the sky,  
And from her slumbers suddenly  
The Ship like lightning flew !

But list ! a low and moaning sound  
At distance heard, like a spirit's song,  
And now it reigns above, around,  
As if it call'd the Ship along.  
The Moon is sunk ; and a clouded grey  
Declares that her course is run,

And like a God who brings the day,  
Up mounts the glorious Sun.  
Soon as his light has warm'd the seas,  
From the parting cloud fresh blows the Breeze;  
And that is the spirit whose well-known song  
Makes the vessel to sail in joy along.  
No fears hath she ;—Her giant-form  
O'er wrathful surge, through blackening storm,  
Majestically calm, would go  
Mid the deep darkness white as snow !  
But gently now the small waves glide  
Like playful lambs o'er a mountain's side.  
So stately her bearing, so proud her array,  
The Main she will traverse for ever and aye.  
Many ports will exult at the gleam of her mast !  
—Hush ! hush ! thou vain dreamer ! this hour is her  
last.

Five hundred souls in one instant of dread  
Are hurried o'er the deck ;  
And fast the miserable Ship  
Becomes a lifeless wreck.

Her keel hath struck on a hidden rock,  
Her planks are torn asunder,  
And down come her masts with a reeling shock,  
And a hideous crash like thunder.  
Her sails are draggled in the brine  
That gladdened late the skies,  
And her pendant that kiss'd the fair moonshine  
Down many a fathom lies.  
Her beauteous sides, whose rainbow hues  
Gleam'd softly from below,  
And flung a warm and sunny flush  
O'er the wreaths of murmuring snow,  
To the coral rocks are hurrying down  
To sleep amid colours as bright as their own.

Oh ! many a dream was in the Ship  
An hour before her death ;  
And sights of home with sighs disturb'd  
The sleepers' long-drawn breath.  
Instead of the murmur of the sea

The sailor heard the humming tree  
Alive through all its leaves,  
The hum of the spreading sycamore  
That grows before his cottage-door,  
And the swallow's song in the eaves.  
His arms inclosed a blooming boy,  
Who listen'd with tears of sorrow and joy  
To the dangers his father had pass'd ;  
And his wife—by turns she wept and smiled,  
As she look'd on the father of her child  
Return'd to her heart at last.  
—He wakes at the vessel's sudden roll,  
And the rush of waters is in his soul.  
Astounded the reeling deck he paces,  
Mid hurrying forms and ghastly faces ;—  
The whole Ship's crew are there.  
Wailings around and overhead,  
Brave spirits stupefied or dead,  
And madness and despair.

Leave not the wreck, thou cruel Boat,  
While yet 'tis thine to save,  
And angel-hands will bid thee float  
Uninjured o'er the wave,  
Though whirlpools yawn across thy way,  
And storms, impatient for their prey,  
Around thee fiercely rave !  
Vain all the prayers of pleading eyes,  
Of outcry loud, and humble sighs,  
Hands clasp'd, or wildly toss'd on high  
To bless or curse in agony !  
Despair and resignation vain !  
Away like a strong-wing'd bird she flies,  
That heeds not human miseries,  
And far off in the sunshine dies  
Like a wave of the restless main.  
Hush ! hush ! Ye wretches left behind !  
Silence becomes the brave, resign'd  
To unexpected doom.  
How quiet the once noisy crowd !

The sails now serve them for a shroud,  
And the sea-cave is their tomb.  
And where is that loveliest Being gone?  
Hope not that she is saved alone,  
Immortal though such beauty seem'd to be.  
She, and the Youth that loved her too,  
Went down with the ship and her gallant crew—  
No favourites hath the sea.

Now is the Ocean's bosom bare,  
Unbroken as the floating air;  
The Ship hath melted quite away,  
Like a struggling dream at break of day.  
No image meets my wandering eye  
But the new-risen sun, and the sunny sky.  
Though the night-shades are gone, yet a vapour dull  
Bedims the waves so beautiful;  
While a low and melancholy moan  
Mourns for the glory that hath flown.  
Oh! that the wild and wailing strain  
Were a dream that murmurs in my brain!



What happiness would then be mine,  
When my eyes, as they felt the morning shine,  
Instead of the unfathom'd Ocean-grave  
Should behold Winander's peaceful wave,  
And the Isles that love her loving breast,  
Each brooding like a Halcyon's nest.  
It may not be :—too well I know  
The real doom from fancied woe,  
The black and dismal hue.  
Yea, many a visage wan and pale  
Will hang at midnight o'er my tale,  
And weep that it is true.



THE  
ISLE OF PALMS.

CANTO SECOND.



THE  
ISLE OF PALMS.

CANTO SECOND.

---

O Heavenly Queen ! by Mariners beloved !  
Refulgent Moon ! when in the cruel sea  
Down sank yon fair Ship to her coral grave,  
Where didst thou linger then ? Sure it behoved  
A Spirit strong and pitiful like thee  
At that dread hour thy worshippers to save ;  
Nor let the glory where thy tenderest light,  
Forsaking even the clouds, with pleasure lay,  
Pass, like a cloud which none deplores, away,  
No more to bless the empire of the Night.  
How oft to thee have home-sick sailors pour'd  
Upon their midnight-watch, no longer dull

When thou didst smile, hymns wild and beautiful,  
Worthy the radiant Angel they adored !  
And are such hymnings breathed to thee in vain ?  
Gleam'st thou, as if delighted with the strain,  
And won by it the pious bark to keep  
In joy for ever ?—till at once behind  
A cloud thou sailest,—and a roaring wind  
Hath sunk her in the deep !  
Or, though the zephyr scarcely blow,  
Down to the bottom must she go  
With all who wake or sleep,  
Ere the slumberer from his dream can start,  
Or the hymn hath left the singer's heart !  
Oh ! sure, if ever mortal prayer  
Were heard where thou and thy sweet stars abide,  
So many gallant spirits had not died  
Thus mournfully in beauty and in prime !  
But from the sky had shone an arm-sublime,  
To bless the worship of that Virgin fair,  
And, only seen by Faith's uplifted eye,  
The wretched vessel gently drifted by

The fatal rock, and to the crowded shore  
In triumph and in pride th' expected glory bore.

Oh vain belief! most beauteous as thou art,  
Thy heavenly visage hides a cruel heart.  
When Death and Danger, Terror and Dismay,  
Are madly struggling on the dismal Ocean,  
With heedless smile and calm unalter'd motion,  
Onward thou glidest through the milky way,  
Nor, in thy own immortal beauty blest,  
Hear'st dying mortals rave themselves to rest.  
Yet when this night thou mount'st thy starry throne,  
Brightening to sun-like glory in thy bliss,  
Wilt thou not then thy once-loved Vessel miss,  
And wish her happy, now that she is gone?  
But then, sad Moon! too late thy grief will be,  
Fair as thou art, thou canst not move the sea.  
—Dear God! Was that wild sound a human cry,  
The voice of one more loath to die  
Than they who round him sleep?

Or of a Spirit in the sky,  
A Demon in the deep?  
No sea-bird, through the darkness sailing,  
E'er utter'd such a doleful wailing,  
Foreboding the near blast:  
If from a living thing it came,  
It sure must have a spectral frame,  
And soon its soul must part:—  
That groan broke from a bursting heart,  
The bitterest and the last.

The Figure moves! It is alive!  
None but its wretched self survive,  
Yea! drown'd are all the crew!  
Ghosts are they underneath the wave,  
And he, whom Ocean deign'd to save,  
Stands there most ghost-like too.  
Alone upon a rock he stands  
Amid the waves, and wrings his hands,  
And lifts to Heaven his steadfast eye,  
With a wild upbraiding agony.



He sends his soul through the lonesome air  
To God :—but God hears not his prayer ;  
For, soon as his words from the wretch depart,  
Cold they return on his baffled heart.  
He flings himself down on his rocky tomb,  
And madly laughs at his horrible doom.  
With smiles the Main is overspread,  
As if in mockery of the dead ;  
And upward when he turns his sight,  
The unfeeling Sun is shining bright,  
And strikes him with a sickening light.  
While a fainting-fit his soul bedims,  
He thinks that a Ship before him swims,  
A gallant Ship, all fill'd with gales,  
One radiant gleam of snowy sails—  
His senses return, and he looks in vain  
O'er the empty silence of the Main !  
No Ship is there, with radiant gleam,  
Whose shadow sail'd throughout his dream :  
Not even one rueful plank is seen  
To tell that a vessel hath ever been.

Beneath these lonely skies :  
But sea-birds he oft had seen before  
Following the ship in hush or roar,  
The loss of their resting-mast deplore  
With wild and dreary cries.

What brought him here he cannot tell ;  
Doubt and confusion darken all his soul,  
While glimmering truth more dreadful makes the  
                  gloom :

Why hath the Ocean that black hideous swell ?  
And in his ears why doth that dismal toll  
For ever sound,—as if a city-bell  
Wail'd for a funeral passing to the tomb ?  
Some one hath died, and buried is this day ;  
A hoary-headed man, or stripling gay,  
Or haply some sweet maid, who was a bride,  
And, ere her head upon his bosom lay  
Who deem'd her all his own,—the Virgin died !  
Why starts the wilder'd dreamer at the sound,  
And casts his haggard eyes around ?

The utter agony hath seized him now,  
For Memory drives him, like a slave, to know  
What Madness would conceal:—His own dear Maid,  
She, who he thought could never die, is dead.

“ Drown’d !”—still the breaking billows mutter,—  
“ drown’d !”

With anguish loud was her death-bed !  
Nor e’er,—wild wish of utmost woe !  
Shall her sweet corse be found.  
Oft had he sworn with faithless breath,  
That his love for the Maid was strong as death,  
By the holy Sun he sware ;  
The Sun upon the Ocean smiles,  
And, with a sudden gleam, reviles  
His vows as light as air.  
Yet soon he flings, with a sudden start,  
That gnawing phrenzy from his heart,  
For long in sooth he strove,  
When the waters were booming in his brain,  
And his life was clogg’d with a sickening pain,  
To save his lady-love.

How long it seems since that dear night,  
When gazing on the wan moonlight  
He and his own betrothed stood,  
Nor fear'd the harmless ocean-flood !  
He feels as if many and many a day,  
Since that bright hour, had pass'd away ;  
The dim remembrance of some joy  
In which he revell'd when a boy.  
The crew's dumb misery and his own,  
When lingeringly the ship went down,  
Even like some mournful tale appears,  
By wandering sailor told in other years.  
Yet still he knows that this is all delusion,  
For how could he for months and years have lain  
A wretched thing upon the cruel Main,  
Calm though it seem to be ? Would gracious Heaven  
Set free his spirit from this dread confusion,  
Oh, how devoutly would his thanks be given  
To Jesus ere he died ! But tortured so  
He dare not pray beneath his weight of wo,

Lest he should feel, when about to die,  
By God deserted utterly.  
He cannot die : Though he longs for death,  
Stronger and stronger grows his breath,  
And hopeless woe the spring of being feeds ;  
He faints not, though his knell seems rung,  
But lives, as if to life he clung,  
And stronger as he bleeds.  
He calls upon the grisly Power,  
And every moment, every hour,  
His sable banners wave ;  
But he comes not in his mortal wrath,  
And long and dreary is the path  
Of anguish to the grave.

His heart it will not cease to beat,  
His blood runs free and warm ;  
And thoughts of more composed despair,  
Incessant as the waves that bathe his feet,  
Yet comfortless as the empty air,

Through all his spirit swarm.  
But the weariness of wasting grief  
Hath brought to him its own relief :  
Each sense is dull'd ! He lies at last  
As if the parting shock were past.  
He sleeps !—Prolong his haunted rest,  
O God !—for now the wretch is blest.  
A fair romantic Island, crown'd  
With a glow of blossom'd trees,  
And underneath bestrewn with flowers,  
The happy dreamer sees.  
A stream comes dancing from a mount,  
Down its fresh and lustrous side,  
Then, tamed into a quiet pool,  
Is scarcely seen to glide.  
Like fairy sprites, a thousand birds  
Glance by on golden wing,  
Birds lovelier than the lovely hues  
Of the bloom wherein they sing.  
Upward he lifts his wondering eyes,  
Nor yet believes that even the skies

So passing fair can be.  
And lo ! yon gleam of emerald light,  
For human gaze too dazzling bright,  
Is that indeed the sea ?

Adorn'd with all her pomp and pride,  
Long-fluttering flags, and pendants wide,  
He sees a stately vessel ride  
At anchor in a bay,  
Where never waves by storm were driven,  
Shaped like the Moon when she is young in heaven,  
Or melting in a cloud that stops her way.  
Her masts tower nobly from the rocking deep,  
Tall as the palm trees on the steep,  
And, burning mid their crests so darkly green,  
Her meteor-glories all abroad are seen,  
Wakening the forests from their solemn sleep ;  
While suddenly the cannon's sound  
Rolls through the cavern'd glens, and groves profound,  
And never-dying echoes roar around.  
Shaded with branching palm, the sign of peace,

Canoes and skiffs like lightning shoot along,  
Countless as waves there sporting on the seas ;  
While still from those that lead the van, a song,  
Whose chorus rends the inland cliffs afar,  
Tells that advance before that unarm'd throng,  
Princes and chieftains, with a fearless smile,  
And outstretch'd arms, to welcome to their Isle  
That gallant Ship of War.  
And glad are they who therein sail,  
Once more to breathe the balmy gale,  
To kiss the steadfast strand :  
They round the world are voyaging,  
And who can tell their suffering  
Since last they saw the land ?

But that bright pageant will not stay :  
Palms, plumes, and ensigns melt away,  
Island, and ship !—Though utter be the change  
(For on a rock he seems to lie  
All naked to the burning sky)  
He doth not think it strange.



While in his memory faint recallings swim,  
He fain would think it is a dream  
That thus distracts his view,  
Until some unimagined pain  
Shoots shivering through his troubled brain ;  
—Though dreadful, all is true.  
But what to him is anguish now,  
Though it burn in his blood, and his heart, and his  
    brow,  
For ever from morn to night ?  
For lo ! an Angel shape descends,  
As soft and silent as moonlight,  
And o'er the dreamer bends.  
She cannot be an earthly child,  
Yet, when the Vision sweetly smiled,  
The light that there did play  
Reminded him, he knew not why,  
Of one beloved in infancy,  
But now far, far away.

Disturb'd by fluttering joy, he wakes,  
And feels a death-like shock ;  
For, harder even than in his dream,  
His bed is a lonely rock.  
Poor wretch ! he dares not open his eye,  
For he dreads the beauty of the sky,  
And the useless unavailing breeze  
That he hears upon the happy seas.  
A voice glides sweetly through his heart,  
The voice of one that mourns ;  
Yet it hath a gladsome melody—  
Dear God ! the dream returns !  
A gentle kiss breathes o'er his cheek,  
A kiss of murmuring sighs,  
It wanders o'er his brow, and falls  
Like light upon his eyes.  
Through that long kiss he dimly sees,  
All bathed in smiles and tears,  
A well-known face ; and from those lips  
A well-known voice he hears.  
With a doubtful look he scans the Maid,

As if half-delighted, half-afraid,  
Then bows his wilder'd head,  
And with deep groans, he strives to pray  
That Heaven would drive the fiend away,  
That haunts his dying bed.  
Again he dares to view the air :  
The beauteous ghost yet lingers there,  
Veil'd in a spotless shroud :  
Breathing in tones subdued and low,  
Bent o'er him like Heaven's radiant bow,  
And still as evening-cloud.

“ Art thou a phantom of the brain ?”

He cries, “ a mermaid from the main ?

“ A seraph from the sky ?

“ Or art thou a fiend with a seraph's smile,

“ Come here to mock, on this horrid Isle,

“ My dying agony ?”—

Had he but seen what touching sadness fell

On that fair creature's cheek while thus he spoke,

Had heard the stifled sigh that slowly broke

From her untainted bosom's lab'ring swell,  
He scarce had hoped, that at the throne of grace  
Such cruel words could e'er have been forgiven,  
The impious sin of doubting such a face,  
Of speaking thus of Heaven.  
Weeping, she wrings his dripping hair  
That hangs across his cheek ;  
And leaves a hundred kisses there,  
But not one word can speak.  
In bliss she listens to his breath :  
Ne'er murmur'd so the breast of death !  
Alas ! sweet one ! what joy can give .  
Fond-cherish'd thoughts like these !  
For how mayst thou and thy lover live  
In the centre of the seas ?  
Or vainly to your sorrows seek for rest,  
On a rock where never verdure grew,  
Too wild even for the wild sea-mew  
To build her slender nest !

Sublime is the faith of a lonely soul,  
In pain and trouble cherish'd ;  
Sublime the spirit of hope that lives,  
When earthly hope has perish'd.  
And where doth that blest faith abide ?  
O ! not in Man's stern nature : human pride  
Inhabits there, and oft by virtue led,  
Pride though it be, it doth a glory shed,  
That makes the world we mortal beings tread,  
In chosen spots, resplendent as the Heaven !  
But to yon gentle Maiden turn,  
Who never for herself doth mourn,  
And own that faith's undying urn  
Is but to woman given.  
Now that the shade of sorrow falls  
Across her life, and duty calls,  
Her spirit burns with a fervent glow,  
And stately through the gloom of woe  
Behold her alter'd form arise,  
Like a priestess at a sacrifice.

The touch of earth hath left no taint  
Of weakness in the fearless saint.  
Like clouds, all human passions roll,  
At the breath of devotion, from her soul,  
And God looks down with a gleam of grace,  
On the stillness of her heavenward face,  
Just paler in her grief.  
While, hark! like one who God adores,  
Such words she o'er her lover pours,  
As give herself relief.

“ Oh! look again on her who speaks  
“ To thee, and bathes thy sallow cheeks  
“ With many a human tear!  
“ No cruel thing beside thee leans,  
“ Thou knowest what thy Mary means,  
“ Thy own true love is here.  
“ Open thine eyes! thy beauteous eyes!  
“ For mercy smile on me!  
“ Speak!—but one word! one little word!  
“ 'Tis all I ask of thee.

“ If these eyes would give one transient gleam,  
“ To cheer this dark and dreadful dream,  
“ If, while I kiss thy cheek,  
“ These dear, dear lips, alas ! so pale,  
“ Before their parting spirit fail,  
“ One low farewell would speak,—  
“ This rock so hard would be a bed  
“ Of down unto thy Mary’s head,  
“ And gently would we glide away,  
“ Fitz-Owen ! to that purer day  
“ Of which thou once didst sing ;  
“ Like birds, that, rising from the foam,  
“ Seek on some lofty cliff their home,  
“ On storm-despising wing.  
“ Yes ! that thou hear’st thy Mary’s voice,  
“ That lovely smile declares !  
“ Here let us in each other’s arms  
“ Dissolve our life in prayers.  
“ I see in that uplifted eye,  
“ That thou art not afraid to die ;  
“ For ever brave wert thou.

“ Oh ! press me closer to thy soul,  
“ And, while yet we hear the Ocean roll,  
“ Breathe deep the marriage vow !  
“ We hoped far other days to see ;  
“ But the will of God be done !  
“ My husband ! behold yon pile of clouds  
“ Like a city, round the Sun :  
“ Beyond these clouds, ere the phantoms part,  
“ Thou wilt lean in bliss on my loving heart.”—

Sweet seraph ! lovely was thy form,  
When, shrouded in the misty storm  
That swept o'er Snowden's side,  
The Cambrian shepherd, through the gloom,  
Like a spirit rising from the tomb,  
With awe beheld thee glide ;  
And lovely wert thou, Child of Light !  
When, gazing on the starry night  
Within Llanberris Lake,  
Thy spirit felt, in a hush like death,  
The fading earth's last whisper'd breath



The holy scene forsake.  
Oh ! lovelier still, when thy noiseless tread  
Around thy aged mother's bed  
Fell soft as snow on snow,  
When thy heart, from love, repress'd its sighs,  
And from thy never-closing eyes  
Forbade the tears to flow.  
But now unto thy looks are given  
The beauty and the power of Heaven :  
The sternness of this dismal Isle  
Is soften'd by thy saintly smile,  
And he, who lay like a madman, bound  
In fetters of anguish to the ground,  
And heard and saw, in fearful strife,  
The sounds and the sights of unearthly life,  
Now opens his eyes, that glisten mild  
Like the gladsome eyes of a waken'd child,  
For the hideous trance is fled ;  
And his soul is fill'd with the glory bright,  
That plays like a wreath of halo-light  
Around his Mary's head.

Most awful is the perfect rest  
That sits within her eye,  
Awful her pallid face imprest  
With the seal of victory.  
Triumphant o'er the ghastly dreams  
That haunt the parting soul,  
She looks like a bird of calm, that floats  
Unmoved when thunders roll,  
And gives to the storm as gentle notes  
As e'er through sunshine stole.  
Her lover leans on her saviour breast,  
And his heart like hers is still :  
Ne'er martyr'd saints more meekly bow'd  
To their Creator's will.  
As calm they sit, as they had steer'd  
To some little favourite Isle,  
To mark upon the peaceful waves  
The parting sunbeams smile ;  
As if the lightly feather'd oar  
In an hour could take them to the shore,  
Where friends and parents dwell :—

But far, alas ! from such shore are they,  
And of friends, who for their safety pray,  
Have ta'en a last farewell.

But why thus gleams Fitz-Owen's éye ?  
Why bursts his eager speech ?  
Lo ! as if brought by angel hands  
Uninjur'd on the beach,  
With oars and sails a vessel lies :  
Salvation from the gracious skies !  
He fears it is a dream ; that woe  
Hath surely crazed his brain :  
He drives the phantom from his gaze,  
But the boat appears again.  
It is the same that used to glide  
When the wind had fallen low,  
Like a child along its parent's side,  
Around the guardian prow  
Of the mighty Ship whose shadow lay  
Unmoved upon the watery way.

In the madness of that dismal hour,  
When the shrieking Ship went down,  
This little boat to the rocky Isle  
Hath drifted all alone.  
And there she lies ! the oars are laid  
As by the hand of pleasure,  
Preparing on the quiet tide  
To beat a gladsome measure.  
The dripping sail is careless tied  
Around the painted mast,  
And a gaudy flag with purple glows,  
Hung up in sportive joy by those  
Whose sports and joys are past.

So lightly doth this little boat  
Upon the scarce-touch'd billows float,  
So careless doth she seem to be  
Thus left by herself on the homeless sea,  
That, while the happy lovers gaze  
On her, the hope of happier days

Steals unawares, like Heaven's own breath  
O'er souls that were prepared for death.  
They gaze on her, till she appears  
To understand their grateful tears ;  
To lie there with her idle sail  
Till Heaven should send some gracious gale,  
Some gentle spirit of the deep,  
With motion soft and swift as sleep,  
To waft them to some pleasant cave  
In the unknown gardens of the wave,  
That, hid from every human eye,  
Are happy in the smiling sky,  
And in their beauty win the love  
Of every orb that shines above.  
Fitz-Owen from his dream awakes,  
And gently in his arms he takes  
His gentle Maid, as a shepherd kind  
Brings from the killing mountain wind  
A snow-white lamb, and lets it rest  
In sleep and beauty on his breast.

And now the gentle fearless Maid  
Within the boat at rest is laid :  
Her limbs recline as if in sleep,  
Though almost resting on the deep ;  
On his dear bosom leans her head,  
And through her long hair, wildly spread  
O'er all her face, her melting eyes  
Are lifted upwards to the skies,  
As if she pray'd that Heaven would save  
The arms that fold her, from the grave.

The boat hath left the lonesome rock,  
And tries the wave again,  
And on she glides without a fear,  
So beauteous is the Main.  
Her little sail beneath the sun  
Gleams radiant as the snow,  
And o'er the gently-heaving swell  
Bounds like a mountain-roe.  
In that frail bark the Lovers sit,  
With steadfast face and silent breath,

Following the guiding hope of life,  
Yet reconciled to death.

His arm is round her tender side,  
That moves beneath the press,  
With a mingled beat of solemn awe  
And virgin tenderness.

They speak not :—but the inward flow  
Of faith and dread, and joy and wo,  
Each from the other hears :

Long, long they gaze with meeting eyes,  
Then lift them slowly to the skies  
Steep'd in imploring tears.

And ever, as the rock recedes,  
They feel their spirits rise ;  
And half forget that the smiling sea  
Caused all their miseries.

Yet safe to them is the trackless brine  
As some well-known and rural road  
Paced in their childhood ;—for they love  
Each other, and believe in God.

And well might the refulgent day  
These Ocean Pilgrims cheer,  
And make them feel as if the glades  
Of home itself were near.  
For a living sentiment of joy,  
Such as doth sleep on hill and vale  
When the friendly sun comes from his clouds  
The vernal bloom to hail,—  
Plays on the Ocean's sparkling breast,  
That, half in motion, half at rest,  
Like a happy thing doth lie ;  
Breathing that fresh and fragrant air,  
And seeming in that slumber fair  
The Brother of the Sky.  
Hues brighter than the ruby-stone  
With radiance gem his wavy zone,  
A million hues, I ween :  
Long dazzling lines of snowy white,  
Fantastic wreath'd with purple light,  
Or bathed in richest green.



The flying fish, on wings of gold,  
Skims through the sunny ray,  
Then, like the rainbow's dying gleam,  
In the clear wave melts away.  
And all the beauteous joy seems made  
For that dauntless Youth and sainted Maid,  
Whom God and Angels love :  
Comfort is in the helm, the sail,  
The light, the clouds, the sea, the gale,  
Around, below, above.

And thus they sail, and sail along,  
Without one thought of fear ;  
As calm as if the boatman's song  
Awoke an echoing cheer,  
O'er the hills that stretch in sylvan pride  
On the Bala Lake's romantic side.  
And lo ! beneath the mellowing light,  
That trembles between day and night  
Before the Sun's decline,

As to the touch of fairy-hand  
Upstarting dim the nameless land  
Extends its mountain line.  
It is no cloud that steadfast lies  
Between the Ocean and the Skies ;  
No image of a cloud, that flings  
Across the deep its shadowy wings ;  
Such as oft cheats with visions fair  
The heart of home-sick mariner.  
It is the living Earth ! They see  
From the shore a smile of amity  
That gently draws them on,  
Such a smile as o'er all Nature glows  
At a summer evening's fragrant close,  
When the winds and rain are gone.  
The self-moved boat appears to seek  
With gladsome glide a home-like creek,  
In the centre of a bay,  
Which the calm and quiet hills surround,  
And touch'd by waves without a sound,  
Almost as calm as they.

And, what if here fierce savage men  
Glare on them from some darksome den?—  
What would become of this most helpless Maid?  
Fitz-Owen thinks:—but in her eye  
So calmly bright, he can descry  
That she is not afraid  
Of savage men, or monsters wild,  
But is sublimely reconciled  
To meet and bear her destiny.  
A gentle rippling on the sand—  
One stroke of the dexterous oar—  
The sail is furl'd: the boat is moor'd:  
And the Lovers walk the shore.  
To them it is an awful thought,  
From the wild world of waters brought  
By God's protecting hand,  
When every Christian soul was lost,  
On that unknown, but beauteous coast,  
As in a dream to stand.  
While their spirits with devotion burn,  
Their faces to the sea they turn,

That lately seem'd their grave ;  
And bless, in murmurs soft and low,  
The beautiful, the halcyon glow,  
That bathes the evening wave.  
Before the setting sun they kneel,  
And through the silent air,  
To Him who dwells on that throne of light  
They pour their souls in prayer.  
Their thoughts are floating, like the clouds  
That seek the beauteous West,  
Their gentleness, their peace the same,  
The same their home of rest.  
Now Night hath come with the cooling breeze,  
And these Lovers still are on their knees.

THE  
ISLE OF PALMS.

CANTO THIRD.



THE  
ISLE OF PALMS.

CANTO THIRD.

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OH! many are the beauteous isles  
Unknown to human eye,  
That, sleeping 'mid the Ocean-smiles,  
In happy silence lie.  
The Ship may pass them in the night,  
Nor the sailors know what a lovely sight  
Is resting on the Main ;  
Some wandering Ship who hath lost her way,  
And never, or by night or day,  
Shall pass these isles again.  
There, groves that bloom in endless spring  
Are rustling to the radiant wing

Of birds, in various plumage bright  
As rainbow-hues, or dawning light.  
Soft-falling showers of blossoms fair  
Float ever on the fragrant air,  
Like showers of vernal snow,  
And from the fruit-tree, spreading tall,  
The richly ripen'd clusters fall  
Oft as sea-breezes blow.  
The sun and clouds alone possess  
The joy of all that loveliness ;  
And sweetly to each other smile  
The live-long day—sun, cloud, and isle.  
How silent lies each shelter'd bay!  
No other visitors have they  
To their shores of silvery sand,  
Than the waves that, murmuring in their glee,  
All hurrying in a joyful band  
Come dancing from the sea.

How did I love to sigh and weep  
For those that sailed upon the deep,



When, yet a wondering child,  
I sat alone at dead of night,  
Hanging all breathless with delight  
O'er their adventures wild !  
Trembling I heard of dizzy shrouds,  
Where up among the raving clouds  
The sailor-boy must go ;  
Thunder and lightning o'er his head !  
And, should he fall—O thought of dread !  
Waves mountain-high below.  
How leapt my heart with wildering fears,  
Gazing on savage islanders  
Ranged fierce in long canoe,  
Their poison'd spears, their war-attire,  
And plumes twined bright, like wreaths of fire,  
Round brows of dusky hue !  
What tears would fill my wakeful eyes  
When some delicious paradise  
(As if a cloud had roll'd  
On a sudden from the bursting sun)

Freshening the Ocean where it shone,  
Flung wide its groves of gold !  
No more the pining Mariner  
In feverish anguish raves,  
For like an angel, kind and fair,  
That smiles, and smiling saves,  
The glory charms away distress,  
Serene in silent loveliness  
Amid the dash of waves,

And wouldst thou think it hard to dwell  
Alone within some sylvan cell,  
Some fragrant arch of flowers,  
Raised like a queen with gracious smile  
In the midst of this her subject isle,  
This labyrinth of bowers ?  
Could the fair earth, and fairer skies,  
Clouds, breezes, fountains, groves,  
To banish from thy heart suffice,  
All thought of deeper loves ?

Or wouldst thou pine thy life away,  
To kiss once more the blessed ray  
That shines in human eyes?  
What though the clustering roses came  
Like restless gleams of magic flame,  
As if they loved thy feet,  
To win thee like a summer sprite,  
With purest touches of delight,  
To the Fairy Queen's retreat!  
Oh! they would bloom and wither too,  
And melt their pearls of radiant dew,  
Without one look from thee:  
What pleasure could that beauty give,  
Which, of all mortal things that live,  
None but thyself may see?  
And where are the birds that cheer'd thine eyes  
With wings and crests of rainbow dyes,  
That wont for aye to glide  
Like sun-beams through the shady bowers,  
Charming away the happy hours  
With songs of love or pride?

Soon, soon thou hatest this Paradise ;  
It seems the soul hath fled  
That made it fairer than the skies,  
And a joyful beauty shed  
O'er the tremor of the circling wave,  
That now with restless moans and sighs,  
Sounds like the dirge-song of the dead,  
Dim breaking round a grave.

But she thou lovest is at thy side,  
The Island Queen becomes thy bride,  
And God and Nature sanctify the vow ;  
Air, Earth, and Ocean smile once more,  
And along the forest-fringed shore,  
What mirth and music now !  
What warm and heavenly tints illumine  
The land that lately seem'd a tomb  
Where thou wert left to die !  
So bathed in joy this earth appears  
To him, who, blind for lingering years,  
At last beholds the sky.

Thy heart was like an untouch'd lyre,  
Silent as death—Let the trembling wire  
The hand that knows its spirit feel;  
And list! What melting murmurs steal  
Like incense to the realms above,  
Such sounds as parted souls might love.  
And now if a home-bound vessel lay  
At anchor in yon beauteous bay,  
'Till the land-breeze her canvass wings should swell,  
From the sweet Isle thou scarce would'st part,  
But, when thou didst, thy lingering heart  
Would sadly say, "Farewell!"

In such a fairy Isle now pray'd  
Fitz-Owen and his darling Maid.  
The setting sun, with a pensive glow,  
Had bathed their foreheads bending low,  
Nor ceased their voice, or the breath of their prayer,  
Till the moonlight lay on the mellow'd air.

Then from the leaves they calmly rose,  
As after a night of calm repose,  
And Mary lean'd her face  
With a sob of joy on her Lover's breast,  
Who with kind tones the Maiden press'd  
In a holy pure embrace.  
And gently he kiss'd her tearful eyes,  
And bade her heart lie still,  
For there was a power in the gracious skies,  
To shield their saints from ill.  
Then, guided by the moon-light pale,  
They walk'd into a sylvan vale,  
Soft, silent, warm, and deep ;  
And there beneath her languid head,  
The silken wither'd leaves he spread,  
That she might sweetly sleep.  
Then down he sat by her tender side,  
And, as she lay, with soft touch dried  
The stealing tears she could not hide ;  
Till sleep, like a faint shadow, fell  
O'er the husht face he loved so well,

And smiling dreams were given  
To cheer her heart ; then down he laid  
His limbs beside the sleeping Maid,  
In the face of the starry Heaven.

Sleep fell upon their wearied souls  
With a power as deep as death,  
Scarce trembled Mary's floating hair  
In her Lover's tranquil breath.  
In that still trance did sweet thoughts come  
From the brook, and the glade, and the sky, of home,  
And the gentle sound of her mother's voice  
Bade Mary's slumbering soul rejoice.  
For she in dreams to Wales hath flown,  
And sits in a cottage of her own,  
Beneath its sheltering tree :  
Fitz-Owen's eye is fix'd on hers,  
While with a bashful smile she stirs  
Beside her mother's knee.  
But the rising sun hath pour'd his beams  
Into her heart, and broke her dreams ;

Slowly she lifts her eyes,  
And, wondering at the change, looks round,  
Upon that wild enchanted ground,  
And these delightful skies.  
Over her Lover's breast she breathes  
A blessing and a prayer,  
And gently they stir his sleeping soul,  
Like the voice of the morning-air.  
Soon as the first surprise is past,  
They rise from their leafy bed,  
As cheerful as the new-woke birds  
That sing above their head.  
And trusting in the merciful power  
That saved them in that dismal hour  
When the ship sank in the sea,  
Cheering their souls with many a smile,  
They walk through the woods of this nameless Isle  
In undisturb'd tranquillity.

Well might they deem that wizard's wand  
Had set them down in Fairy-land,



Or that their souls some beauteous dream obey'd :  
They know not where to look or listen,  
For pools and streams of crystal glisten  
Above, around,—embracing like the air  
The soft-reflected trees ; while every where  
From shady nook, clear hill, and sunny glade,  
The ever-varying soul of music play'd ;  
As if, at some capricious thing's command,  
Indulging every momentary mood,  
With voice and instrument, a fairy band  
Beneath some echoing precipice now stood,  
Now on steep mountain's rocky battlement,  
Or from the clouds their blended chorus sent,  
With jocund din to mock the solitude.  
They gaze with never-sated eyes  
On lengthening lines of flowery dyes,  
That through the woods, and up the mountains run :  
Not richer radiance robes the Even,  
When she ascends her throne in Heaven,  
Beside the setting sun.

Scattering the blossomy gems away,  
Like the white shower of the Ocean spray,  
Across their path for ever glide or shoot  
Birds of such beauty, as might lead  
The soul to think that magic power decreed  
Spirits to dwell therein; nor are they mute,  
But each doth chaunt his own beloved strain,  
For ever trembling on a natural tune,  
The heart's emotions seeming so to suit,  
That the rapt Lovers are desiring soon,  
That silence never may return again.

A chearful welcome these bright creatures sing;  
And as the Lovers roam from glade to glade,  
That shine with sunlight, and with music ring,  
Seems but for them the enchanted island made.  
So strong the influence of the fairy scene,  
That soon they feel as if for many a year  
In love and rapture they had linger'd here,  
While with the beauteous things that once have been,

Long, long ago, or only in the mind  
By Fancy imaged, lies their native Wales,  
Its dim-seen hills, and all its streamy vales :  
Sounds in their souls its rushing mountain-wind,  
Like music heard in youth, remembered well,  
But when or where it rose they cannot tell.  
Delightful woods, and many a cloudless sky,  
Are in their memory strangely floating by,  
But the faint pageant slowly melts away,  
And to the living earth they yield  
Their willing hearts, as if reveal'd  
In all its glory on this mystic day.  
Like fire, strange flowers around them flame,  
Sweet, harmless fire, breathed from some magic urn,  
The silky gossamer that may not burn,  
Too wildly beautiful to bear a name.  
And when the Ocean sends a breeze,  
To wake the music sleeping in the trees,  
Trees scarce they seem to be ; for many a flower,  
Radiant as dew, or ruby polish'd bright,  
Glances on every spray, that bending light

Around the stem, in variegated bows,  
Appear like some awakened fountain-shower,  
That with the colour of the evening glows.

And towering o'er these beauteous woods,  
Gigantic rocks were ever dimly seen,  
Breaking with solemn grey the tremulous green,  
And frowning far in castellated pride;  
While, hastening to the Ocean, hoary floods  
Sent up a thin and radiant mist between,  
Softening the beauty that it could not hide.  
Lo! higher still the stately Palm-trees rise,  
Checquering the clouds with their unbending stems,  
And o'er the clouds amid the dark-blue skies,  
Lifting their rich unfading diadems.  
How calm and placidly they rest  
Upon the Heaven's indulgent breast,  
As if their branches never breeze had known!  
Light bathes them aye in glancing showers,  
And Silence mid their lofty bowers  
Sits on her moveless throne.

Entranced there the Lovers gaze,  
Till every human fear decays,  
And bliss steals slowly through their quiet souls ;  
Though ever lost to human kind  
And all they love, they are resign'd :  
While with a scarce-heard murmur rolls,  
Like the waves that break along the shore,  
The sound of the world they must see no more.  
List ! Mary is the first to speak,  
Her tender voice still tenderer in her bliss ;  
And breathing o'er her silent husband's cheek,  
As from an infant's lip, a timid kiss,  
Whose touch at once all lingering sorrow calms,  
Says, " God to us in love hath given  
" A home on earth, most like to Heaven,  
" Our own sweet ISLE OF PALMS."

And where shall these happy lovers dwell ?  
Shall they seek in the cliffs for some mossy cell ?  
Some wilder haunt than ever hermit knew ?

Where they may shun the mid-day heat,  
And slumber in a safe retreat,  
When evening sheds her dew ;  
Or shall they build a leafy nest,  
Where they like birds may sport and rest,  
By clustering bloom preserved from sun and rain,  
Upon some little radiant mound  
Within reach of the freshening sound  
That murmurs from the Main ?  
No farther need their footsteps roam :  
Ev'n where they stand, a sylvan home  
Steals like a thought upon their startled sight ;  
For Nature's breath with playful power  
Hath framed an undecaying bower,  
With colours heavenly bright.  
Beyond a green and level lawn,  
Its porch and roof of roses dawn  
Through arching trees that lend a mellowing shade.  
How gleams the bower with countless dyes !  
Unwearied spring fresh bloom supplies,  
Still brightening where they fade.

Two noble Palms, the forest's pride,  
Guarding the bower on either side,  
Their straight majestic stems to Heaven uprear :  
There Beauty sleeps in Grandeur's arms,  
And sheltered there from all alarms,  
Hath nought on earth to fear.

The Dwellers in that lovely bower,  
If mortal shape may breathe such blessed air,  
Might gaze on it from morn till evening-hour,  
Nor wish for other sight more touching fair.  
Why look abroad ? All things are here  
Delightful to the eye and ear,  
And fragrance pure as light floats all around.  
But if they look—those mystic gleams,  
The glory we adore in dreams,  
May here in truth be found.  
Fronting the bower, eternal woods,  
Darkening the mountain solitudes,  
With awe the soul oppress :

There dwells, with shadowy glories crown'd,  
Rejoicing in the gloom profound,  
The Spirit of the Wilderness. -  
Lo! stretching inward on the right,  
A winding vale eludes the sight,  
But where it dies the happy soul must dream :  
Oh! never sure beneath the sun,  
Along such lovely banks did run  
So musical a stream.  
But who shall dare in thought to paint  
Yon fairy waterfall?  
Still moistened by the misty showers,  
From fiery-red, to yellow soft and faint,  
Fantastic bands of fearless flowers  
Sport o'er the rocky wall ;  
And ever, through the shrouding spray,  
Whose diamonds glance as bright as they,  
Float birds of graceful form, and gorgeous plumes,  
Or dazzling white as snow ;  
While, as the passing sun illumines



The river's bed, in silent pride  
Spanning the cataract roaring wide,  
Unnumber'd rainbows glow.

But turn around, if thou hast power  
To leave a scene so fair,  
And looking left-wards from the bower,  
What glory meets thee there!  
For lo! the heaven-encircled Sea  
Outspreads his dazzling pageantry,  
As if the whole creation were his own,  
And the Isle, on which thy feet now stand,  
In beauty rose at his command,  
And for his joy alone.  
Beyond his billows rolling bright,  
The Spirit dares not wing her flight;  
For where, upon the boundless deep,  
Should she, if wearied, sink to sleep?  
Back to the beauteous Isle of Palms  
Glad she returns; there constant calms  
The bays, that sleep like inland lakes, invest:

Delightful all!—but to your eyes,  
O blessed Pair! one circlet lies  
More fair than all the rest.  
At evening, through that silent bay  
With beating hearts ye steer'd your way,  
Yet trusting in the guiding love of Heaven;  
And there, upon your bended knees,  
To the unseen Pilot of the Seas  
Your speechless prayers were given.  
From your bower-porch the skiff behold  
That to this Eden bore  
Your almost hopeless souls:—how bold  
It seems to lie, all danger o'er,  
A speck amid the fluid gold  
That burns along the shore!

Five cloudless days have, from the placid deep,  
In glory risen o'er this refulgent Isle,  
And still the sun retired to rest too soon;  
And each night with more gracious smile,

Guarding the lovers when they sleep,  
Hath watch'd the holy Moon.  
Through many a dim and dazzling glade,  
They in their restless joy have stray'd,  
In many a grot repos'd, and twilight cave ;  
Have wander'd round each ocean bay,  
And gazed where inland waters lay  
Serene as night, and bright as day,  
Untouch'd by wind or wave.  
Happy their doom, though strange and wild,  
And soon their souls are reconciled  
For ever here to live, and here to die.  
Why should they grieve? a constant mirth  
With music fills the air and earth,  
And beautifies the sky.  
High on the rocks the wild-flowers shine  
In beauty bathed, and joy divine :  
In their dark nooks to them are given  
The sunshine and the dews of Heaven.  
The fish that dart like silver gleams  
Are happy in their rock-bound streams,

Happy as they that roam the Ocean's breast ;  
Though far away on sounding wings  
Yon bird could fly, content he sings  
Around his secret nest.  
And shall the Monarchs of this Isle  
Lament, when one unclouded smile  
Hangs like perpetual spring on every wood ?  
And often in their listening souls  
By a delightful awe subdued,  
God's voice, like mellow thunder, rolls  
All through the silent solitude.

Five days have fled !—The sun again,  
Like an angel, o'er the brightening Main  
Uplifts his radiant head ;  
And full upon yon dewy bower,  
The warm tints of the dawning hour  
Mid warmer still are shed.  
The sun pours not his light in vain  
On them who therein dwell :—a strain

Of pious music, through the morning calm  
Wakening unwonted echoes, wildly rings,  
And kneeling there to Mercy's fane,  
While flowers supply their incense-balm,  
At the foot of yon majestic Palm  
The Maid her matins sings.  
It is the Sabbath morn :—since last  
From Heaven it shone, what awful things have past !  
In their beloved vessel as it roll'd  
In pride and beauty o'er the waves of gold,  
Then were they sailing free from all alarms,  
Rejoicing in her scarce-felt motion  
When the ship flew, or slumbering Ocean  
Detain'd her in his arms.  
Beneath the sail's expanded shade,  
They and the thoughtless crew together pray'd,  
And sweet their voices rose above the wave ;  
Nor seem'd it woeful as a strain  
That never was to rise again,  
And chaunted o'er the grave.

Ne'er seem'd before the Isle so bright ;  
And when their hymns were ended,  
Oh ! ne'er in such intense delight  
Had their rapt souls been blended.  
Some natural tears they surely owed  
To those who wept for them, and fast they flow'd,  
And oft will flow amid their happiest hours ;  
But not less fair the summer day,  
Though glittering through the sunny ray  
Are seen descending showers.  
But how could Sorrow, Grief, or Pain,  
The glory of that morn sustain ?  
Alone amid the Wilderness  
More touching seem'd the holiness  
Of that mysterious day of soul-felt rest :  
They are the first that e'er adored  
On this wild spot their Heavenly Lord,  
Or gentle Jesus bless'd.  
“ O Son of God ! ”—How sweetly came  
Into their souls that blessed name !

Even like health's hope-reviving breath  
To one upon the bed of death.  
" Our Saviour !"—What angelic grace  
Stole with dim smiles o'er Mary's face,  
While through the solitude profound  
With love and awe she breath'd that holy sound !  
Yes ! He will save ! a still small voice  
To Mary's fervent prayer replied ;  
Beneath his tender care rejoice,  
On earth who for his children died.  
Her Lover saw that, while she pray'd,  
Communion with her God was given  
Unto her sinless spirit :—nought he said ;  
But gazing on her with a fearful love,  
Such as saints feel for sister-souls above,  
Her cheek upon his bosom gently laid,  
And dreamt with her of Heaven.

Pure were their souls, as infant's breath,  
Who in its cradle guiltless sinks in death.

No place for human frailty this,  
Despondency or fears,  
Too beautiful the wild appears  
Almost for human bliss.  
Was love like theirs then given in vain ?  
And must they, trembling, shrink from pure delight ?  
Or shall that God, who on the main  
Hath bound them with a billowy chain,  
Approve the holy rite,  
That, by their pious souls alone  
Perform'd before his silent throne  
In innocence and joy,  
Here, and in realms beyond the grave,  
Unites those whom the cruel wave  
Could not for grief destroy ?  
No fears felt they of guilt or sin,  
For sure they heard a voice within  
That set their hearts at rest ;  
They pass'd the day in peaceful prayer,  
And when beneath the evening air  
They sought again their arbour fair,



A smiling angel met them there,  
And bade their couch be blest.  
Nor veil'd the Moon her virgin-light,  
But, clear and cloudless all the night,  
Hung o'er the flowers where love and beauty lay ;  
And, loth to leave that holy bower,  
With lingering pace obey'd the power  
Of bright-returning day.

And say ! what wanteth now the Isle of Palms,  
To make it happy as those Isles of rest  
(When eve the sky becalms  
Like a subsiding sea)  
That hang resplendent mid the gorgeous west,  
All brightly imaged, mountain, grove, and tree,  
The setting sun's last lingering pageantry !  
Hath Fancy ever dreamt of seraph-Powers  
Walking in beauty through these cloud-framed bowers,  
Light as the mist that wraps their dazzling feet ?  
And hath she ever paused to hear,  
By moonlight brought unto her ear,

Their hymnings wild and sweet?  
Lo! human creatures meet her view  
As happy, and as beauteous too,  
As those aërial phantoms!—in their mien,  
Where'er they move, a graceful calm is seen  
All foreign to this utter solitude,  
Yet blended with such wild and fairy glide,  
As erst in Grecian Isle had beautified  
The guardian Deities of Grove and Flood.  
Are these fair creatures earth-born and alive,  
And mortal like the flowers that round them smile?  
Or if into the Ocean sank their Isle  
A thousand fathoms deep—would they survive,—  
Like sudden rainbows spread their arching wings,  
And while, to cheer their airy voyage, sings  
With joy the charmed sea, the Heavens give way,  
That in the spirits, who had sojourn'd long  
On earth, might glide, then re-assume their sway,  
And from the gratulating throng  
Of kindred spirits, drink the inexpressive song?

Oh ! fairer now these blessed Lovers seem,  
Gliding like spirits through o'er-arching trees,  
Their beauty mellowing in the checquered light,  
Than, years ago, on that resplendent night,  
When yielded up to an unearthly dream,  
In their sweet ship they sail'd upon the seas.  
Aye ! years ago !—for in this temperate clime,  
Fleet, passing fleet, the noiseless plumes of time  
Float through the fragrance of the sunny air ;  
One little month seems scarcely gone,  
Since in a vessel of their own  
At eve they landed there.  
Their bower is now a stately bower,  
For, on its roof, the loftiest flower  
To bloom so lowly grieves,  
And up like an ambitious thing  
That feareth nought, behold it spring  
Till it meet the high Palm-leaves !  
The porch is opening seen no more,  
But folded up with blossoms hoar,  
And leaves green as the sea,

And, when the wind hath found them out,  
The merry waves that dancing rout  
May not surpass in glee.  
About their home so little art,  
They seem to live in Nature's heart,  
A sylvan court to hold  
In a palace framed of lustre green,  
More rare than to the bright Flower Queen  
Was ever built of old.

Where are they in the hours of day?  
—The birds are happy on the spray,  
The dolphins on the deep,  
Whether they wanton full of life,  
Or, wearied with their playful strife,  
Amid the sunshine sleep.  
And are these things by Nature blest  
In sport, in labour, and in rest,—  
And yet the Sovereigns of the Isle oppress  
With languor or with pain?

No ! with light glide, and chearful song,  
Through flowers and fruit they dance along,  
And still fresh joys, uncall'd for, throug  
Through their romantic reign.

The wild-deer bounds along the rock,  
But let him not yon hunter mock,  
Though strong, and fierce, and fleet ;  
For he will trace his mountain-path,  
Or else his antler's threatening wrath  
In some dark winding meet.

Vaunt not, gay bird ! thy gorgeous plume,  
Though on yon leafy tree it bloom  
Like a flower both rich and fair :  
Vain thy loud song and scarlet glow,  
To save from his unerring bow ;  
The arrow finds thee there.

Dark are the caverns of the wave,  
Yet those, that sport there, cannot save,  
Though hidden from the day,  
With silvery sides bedropt with gold,

And tells that o'er these holy groves  
Oft hangs the parent whom she loves.  
How beauteous both in hours like these!  
Prest in each other's arms, or on their knees,  
They think of things for which no words are found ;  
They need not speak : their looks express  
More life-pervading tenderness  
Than music's sweetest sound.  
He thinks upon the dove-like rest  
That broods within her pious breast ;  
The holy calm, the hush divine,  
Where pensive, night-like glories shine ;  
Even as the mighty Ocean deep,  
Yet clear and waveless as the sleep  
Of some lone heaven-reflecting lake,  
When evening-air its gleam forsake.  
She thinks upon his love for her,  
His wild, empassion'd character,  
To whom a look, a kiss, a smile,  
Rewards for danger and for toil !

His power of spirit unsubdued,  
His fearlessness,—his fortitude,—  
The radiance of his gifted soul  
Where never mists or darkness roll:  
A poet's soul that flows for ever,  
Right onwards like a noble river,  
Refulgent still, or by its native woods  
Shaded, and rolling on through sunless solitudes.

In love and mercy, sure on him had God  
The sacred power that stirs the soul bestow'd;  
Nor fell his hymns on Mary's ear in vain;  
With brightening smiles the Vision hung  
O'er the rapt poet while he sung,  
More beauteous from the strain.  
The songs he pour'd were sad and wild,  
And while they would have sooth'd a child,  
Who soon bestows his tears,  
A deeper pathos in them lay  
That would have moved a hermit gray,  
Bow'd down with holy years.

One song he had about a Ship  
That perish'd on the Main,  
So woeful, that his Mary pray'd,  
At one most touching pause he made,  
To cease the hearse-like strain :  
And yet, in spite of all her pain,  
Implored him, soon as he obey'd,  
To sing it once again.

With faltering voice then would he sing  
Of many a well-known far-off thing,  
Towers, castles, lakes, and rills ;  
Their names he gave not—could not give—  
But happy ye, he thought, who live  
Among the Cambrian hills.

Then of their own sweet Isle of Palms,  
Full many a lovely lay  
He sung ;—and of two happy sprites  
Who live and revel in delights  
For ever, night and day.

And who, even of immortal birth,



Or that for Heaven have left this earth,  
Were e'er more blest than they ?

But shall that bliss endure for ever ?  
And shall these consecrated groves  
Behold and cherish their immortal loves ?  
Or must it come, the hour that is to sever  
Those whom the Ocean in his wrath did spare ?  
Awful that thought, and, like unto despair,  
Oft to their hearts it sends an icy chill ;  
Pain, death they fear not, come they when they will,  
But the same fate together let them share ;  
For how could either hope to die resign'd,  
If God should say, " One must remain behind !"  
Yet wisely doth the spirit shrink  
From thought, when it is death to think ;  
Or haply, a kind being turns  
To brighter hopes the soul that mourns  
In killing woe ; else many an eye,  
Now glad, would weep its destiny.

Even so it fares with them : they wish to live  
Long on this island, lonely though it be.  
Old age itself to them would pleasure give,  
For lo ! a sight, which it is heaven to see,  
Down yonder hill comes glancing beautifully,  
And with a silver voice most wildly sweet,  
Flings herself, laughing, down before her parents'  
feet.

Are they in truth her parents ?—Was her birth  
Not drawn from heavenly sire, and from the breast  
Of some fair spirit, whose sinless nature glow'd  
With purest flames, enamour'd of a God,  
And gave this child to light in realms of rest ;  
Then sent her to adorn these island bowers,  
To sport and play with the delighted hours,  
Till call'd again to dwell among the blest ?  
Sweet are such fancies :—but that kindling smile  
Dissolves them all !—Her native isle  
This sure must be : If she in Heaven were born,

What breath'd into her face  
That winning human grace,  
Now dim, now dazzling like the break of morn?  
For, like the timid light of infant day,  
That oft, when dawning, seems to die away,  
The gleam of rapture from her visage flies,  
Then fades, as if afraid, into her tender eyes.  
Open thy lips, thou blessed thing, again!  
And let thy parents live upon the sound;  
No other music wish they till they die.  
For never yet disease, or grief, or pain,  
Within thy breast the living lyre hath found,  
Whose chords send forth that touching melody.  
Sing on! Sing on! It is a lovely air.  
Well could thy mother sing it when a maid:  
Yet strange it is in this wild Indian glade,  
To list a tune that breathes of nothing there,  
A tune that by his mountain springs,  
Beside his slumbering lambkins fair,  
The Cambrian shepherd sings.

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The Cambrian shepherd sings.

The air on her sweet lips hath died,  
And as a harper, when his tune is play'd,  
Pathetic though it be, with smiling brow  
Haply doth careless fling his harp aside,  
Even so regardlessly upstarteth now,  
With playful frolic, the light-hearted maid,  
As if, with a capricious gladness,  
She strove to mock the soul of sadness,  
Then mourning through the glade.  
Light as a falling leaf that springs  
Away before the zephyr's wings,  
Amid the verdure seems to lie  
Of motion reft, then suddenly  
With bird-like fluttering mounts on high,  
Up yon steep hill's unbroken side,  
Behold the little Fairy glide.  
Though free her breath, untired her limb,  
For through the air she seems to swim,  
Yet oft she stops to look behind  
On them below;—till with the wind

She flies again, and on the hill-top far  
Shines like the spirit of the evening star.  
Nor lingers long : as if a sight  
Half-fear, half-wonder, urged her flight,  
In rapid motion, winding still  
To break the steepness of the hill,  
With leaps, and springs, and outstretch'd arms,  
More graceful in her vain alarms,  
The child outstrips the Ocean gale,  
In haste to tell her wondrous tale.  
Her parents' joyful hearts admire,  
Of peacock's plumes her glancing tirc,  
All bright with tiny suns,  
And the gleamings of the feathery gold,  
That play along each wavy fold  
Of her mantle as she runs.

“ What ails my child ?” her mother cries,  
Seeing the wildness in her eyes,  
The wonder on her cheek ;

But fearfully she beckons still,

Up to her watch-tower on the hill,

Ere one word can she speak.

“ My Father ! Mother ! quickly fly

“ Up to the green-hill top with me,

“ And tell me what you there descry ;

“ For a cloud hath fallen from the sky,

“ And is sailing on the sea.”

They wait not to hear that word again :

The steep seems level as the plain,

And up they glide with ease :

They stand one moment on the height

In agony, then bless the sight,

And drop upon their knees.

“ A Ship ! ”—no more can Mary say,

“ A blessed Ship ! ” and faints away.—

Not so the happy sight subdues

Fitz-Owen's heart ;—he calmly views

The gallant vessel toss

Her prow superbly up and down,

As if she wore the Ocean Crown ;



And now, exulting in the breeze,  
With new-woke English pride he sees  
St George's blessed Cross.

Behold them now, the happy three,  
Hang up a signal o'er the sea,  
And shout with echoing sound,  
While, gladden'd by her parents' bliss,  
The child prints many a playful kiss  
Upon their hands, or, mad with glee,  
Is dancing round and round.  
Scarce doth the thoughtless infant know  
Why thus their tears like rain should flow,  
Yet she must also weep ;  
Such tears as innocence doth shed  
Upon its undisturbed bed,  
When dreaming in its sleep.  
And oft, and oft, her father presses  
Her breast to his, and bathes her tresses,  
Her sweet eyes, and fair brow.

“ How beautiful upon the wave  
“ The vessel sails, who comes to save !  
“ Fitting it was that first she shone  
“ Before the wondering eyes of one,  
“ So beautiful as thou.  
“ See how before the wind she goes,  
“ Scattering the waves like melting snows !  
“ Her course with glory fills  
“ The sea for many a league !—Descending,  
“ She stoopeth now into the vale,  
“ Now, as more freshly blows the gale,  
“ She mounts in triumph o’er the watery hills.  
“ Oh! whither is she tending ?  
“ She holds in sight yon shelter’d bay ;  
“ As for her crew, how blest are they !  
“ See! how she veers around !  
“ Back whirl the waves with louder sound ;  
“ And now her prow points to the land :  
“ For the Ship, at her glad lord’s command,  
“ Doth well her helm obey.”

They cast their eyes around the isle :  
But what a change is there !  
For ever fled that lonely smile  
That lay on earth and air,  
That made its haunts so still and holy,  
Almost for bliss too melancholy,  
For life too wildly fair.  
Gone—gone is all its loneliness,  
And with it much of loveliness.  
Into each deep glen's dark recess,  
The day-shine pours like rain,  
So strong and sudden is the light  
Reflected from that wonder bright,  
Now tilting o'er the Main.  
Soon as the thundering cannon spoke,  
The voice of the evening-gun,  
The spell of the enchantment broke,  
Like dew beneath the sun.  
Soon shall they hear th' unwonted cheers  
Of these delighted mariners,

And the loud sound of the oar,  
As bending back away they pull,  
With measured pause, most beautiful,  
Approaching to the shore.  
For her yards are bare of man and sail,  
Nor moves the giant to the gale ;  
But, on the Ocean's breast,  
With storm-proof cables, stretching far,  
There lies the stately Ship of War ;  
And glad is she of rest.

Ungrateful ye ! and will ye sail away,  
And leave your bower to flourish and decay,  
Without one parting tear ?  
Where you have slept, and loved, and pray'd,  
And with your smiling infant play'd  
For many a blessed year !  
No ! not in vain that bower hath shed  
Its blossoms o'er your marriage-bed,  
Nor the sweet Moon look'd down in vain,  
Forgetful of her heavenly reign,

On them whose pure and holy bliss  
Even beautified that wilderness.  
To every rock, and glade, and dell,  
You now breathe forth a sad farewell.  
“ Say! wilt thou ever murmur on  
“ With that same voice when we are gone,  
“ Beloved stream!—Ye birds of light!  
“ And in your joy as musical as bright,  
“ Still will you pour that thrilling strain,  
“ Unheard by us who sail the distant main?  
“ We leave our nuptial bower to you:  
“ There still your harmless loves renew,  
“ And there, as they who left it, blest,  
“ The loveliest ever build your nest.  
“ Farewell once more—for now and ever!  
“ Yet, though unhoped-for mercy sever  
“ Our lives from thee, where grief might come at  
    last;  
“ Yet whether chain'd in tropic calms,  
“ Or driven before the blast,

“ Most surely shall our spirits never

“ Forget the Isle of Palms.”

“ What means the Ship ?” Fitz-Owen cries,

And scarce can trust his startled eyes,

“ While safely she at anchor swings,

“ Why doth she thus expand her wings ?

“ She will not surely leave the bay,

“ Where sweetly smiles the closing day,

“ As if it tempted her to stay.

“ O cruel Ship ! ’tis even so :

“ No sooner come than in haste to go.

“ Angel of bliss ! and fiend of wo !”—

—“ Oh ! let that God who brought her here,

“ My husband’s wounded spirit cheer !

“ Mayhap the ship for months and years

“ Hath been among the storms, and fears

“ Yon lowering cloud, that on the wave

“ Flings down the shadow of a grave ;

“ For well thou know’st the bold can be

“ By shadows daunted, when they sail the sea.

“ Think, in our own lost Ship, when o’er our head  
“ Walk’d the sweet Moon in unobscured light,  
“ How oft the sailors gazed with causeless dread  
“ On her, the glory of the innocent night,  
“ As if in those still hours of heavenly joy,  
“ They saw a spirit smiling to destroy.  
“ Trust that, when morning brings her light,  
“ The sun will shew a glorious sight,  
“ This very Ship in joy returning  
“ With outspread sails and ensigns burning,  
“ To quench in bliss our causeless mourning.”  
—“ O Father ! look with kinder eyes  
“ On me,”—the Fairy-infant cries.  
“ Though oft thy face hath look’d most sad,  
“ At times when I was gay and glad,  
“ These are not like thy other sighs.  
“ But that I saw my Father grieve,  
“ Most happy when yon thing did leave  
“ Our shores, was I :—Mid waves and wind,  
“ Where, Father ! could we ever find  
“ So sweet an island as our own ?

“ And so we all would think, I well believe,  
“ Lamenting, when we look’d behind,  
“ That the Isle of Palms was gone.”

Oh blessed child ! each artless tone  
Of that sweet voice, thus plaintively  
Breathing of comfort to thyself unknown,  
Who feelest not how beautiful thou art,  
Sinks like an anthem’s pious melody  
Into thy father’s agitated heart,  
And makes it calm and tranquil as thy own.  
A shower of kisses bathes thy smiling face,  
And thou, rejoicing once again to hear  
The voice of love so pleasant to thine ear,  
Thorough the brake, and o’er the lawn,  
Bounding along like a sportive fawn,  
With laugh and song renew’st thy devious race ;  
Or round them, like a guardian sprite,  
Dancing with more than mortal grace,  
Steepest their gazing souls in still delight.



For how could they, thy parents, see  
Thy innocent and fearless glee,  
And not forget, but one short hour ago,  
When the Ship sail'd away, how bitter was their woe?  
—Most like a dream it doth appear,  
When she, the vanish'd Ship, was here :—  
A glimpse of joy, that, while it shone,  
Was surely passing-sweet :—now it is gone,  
Not worth one single tear.



THE  
ISLE OF PALMS.

CANTO FOURTH.



THE  
ISLE OF PALMS.

CANTO FOURTH.

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A SUMMER Night descends in balm  
On the orange-bloom, and the stately Palm,  
Of that romantic steep,  
Where, silent as the silent hour,  
'Mid the soft leaves of their Indian bower,  
Three happy spirits sleep.  
And we will leave them to themselves,  
To the moon and the stars, these happy elves,  
To the murmuring wave, and the zephyr's wing,  
That dreams of gentlest joyance bring  
To bathe their slumbering eyes ;

And on the moving clouds of night,  
High o'er the main will take our flight,  
Where beauteous Albion lies.  
Wondrous, and strange, and fair, I ween,  
The sounds, the forms, the hues have been  
Of these delightful groves ;  
And mournful as the melting sky,  
Or a faint-remember'd melody,  
The story of their loves.  
Yet though they sleep, those breathings wild,  
That told of the Fay-like sylvan child,  
And of them who live in lonely bliss,  
Like bright flowers of the wilderness,  
Happy and beauteous as the sky  
That views them with a loving eye,  
Another tale I have to sing,  
Whose low and plaintive murmuring  
May well thy heart beguile,  
And when thou weep'st along with me,  
Through tears no longer mayst thou see  
That fairy Indian Isle.

Among the Cambrian hills we stand !  
By dear compulsion chain'd unto the strand  
Of a still Lake, yet sleeping in the mist,  
The thin blue mist that beautifies the morning :  
Old Snowdon's gloomy brow the sun hath kiss'd,  
Till, rising like a giant from his bed,  
High o'er the mountainous sea he lifts his head,  
The loneliness of Nature's reign adorning  
With a calm majesty and pleasing dread.  
A spirit is singing from the coves  
Yet dim and dark ; that spirit loves  
To sing unto the Dawn,  
When first he sees the shadowy veil,  
As if by some slow-stealing gale,  
From her fair face withdrawn.  
How the Lake brightens while we gaze !  
Impatient for the flood of rays  
That soon will bathe its breast :  
Where rock, and hill, and cloud, and sky,  
Even like its peaceful self, will lie  
Ere long in perfect rest.

The dawn hath brighten'd into day :  
Blessings be on yon crescent-bay  
Beloved in former years !  
Dolbardan ! at this silent hour,  
More solemn far thy lonely tower  
Unto my soul appears,  
Than when, in days of roaming youth,  
I saw thee first, and scarce could tell  
If thou wert frowning there in truth,  
Or only raised by Fancy's spell,  
An airy tower 'mid an unearthly dell.

O ! wildest Bridge, by human hand e'er framed !  
If so thou mayst be named :  
Thou ! who for many a year hast stood  
Cloth'd with the deep-green moss of age,  
As if thy tremulous length were living wood,  
Sprung from the bank on either side,  
Despising, with a careless pride,  
The tumults of the wintry flood,  
And hill-born tempest's rage.



Each flower upon thy moss I know,  
Or think I know ; like things they seem  
Fair and unchanged of a returning dream !  
While underneath, the peaceful flow  
Of the smooth river to my heart  
Brings back the thoughts that long ago  
I felt, when forced to part  
From the deep calm of Nature's reign,  
To walk the world's loud scenes again.  
And let us with that river glide  
Around yon hillock's verdant side ;  
And lo ! a gleam of sweet surprise,  
Like sudden sunshine, warms thine eyes.  
White as the spring's unmelted snow,  
That lives though winter storms be o'er,  
A cot beneath the mountain's brow  
Smiles through its shading sycamore.  
The silence of the morning air  
Persuades our hearts to enter there.  
In dreams all quiet things we love ;  
And sure no star that lies above

Cradled in clouds, that also sleep,  
Enjoys a calm more husht and deep  
Than doth this slumbering cell:  
Yea! like a star it looketh down  
In pleasure from its mountain-throne,  
On its own little dell.

A lovelier form now meets mine eye,  
Than the loveliest cloud that sails the sky ;  
And human feelings blend  
With the pleasure born of the glistening air,  
As in our dreams uprises fair  
The face of a dear friend.  
A vision glides before my brain,  
Like her who lives beyond the Main !  
Breathing delight, the beaucous flower,  
That Heaven had raised to grace this bower.  
To me this field is holy ground !  
Her voice is speaking in the sound  
That cheers the streamlet's bed.

Sweet Maiden!—side by side we stand,  
While gently moves beneath my hand  
Her soft and silky head.

A moment's pause!—and as I look  
On the silent cot, and the idle brook,  
And the face of the quiet day,  
I know from all that many a year  
Hath slowly past in sorrow here,  
Since Mary went away.

But that wreath of smoke now melting thin,  
Tells that some being dwells within ;  
And the balmy breath that stole  
From the rose-tree, and jasmin, clustering wide,  
O'er all the dwelling's blooming side,  
Tells that whoc'er doth there abide,  
Must have a gentle soul.

Then gently breathe, and softly tread,  
As if thy steps were o'er the dead !  
Break not the slumber of the air,  
Even by the whisper of a prayer,

But in thy spirit let there be  
A silent "Benedicite!"  
Thine eye falls on the vision bright,  
As she sits amid the lonely light  
That gleams from her cottage-hearth:  
O! fear not to gaze on her with love!  
For, though these looks are from above,  
She is a form of earth.  
In the silence of her long distress,  
She sits with pious stateliness;  
As if she felt the eye of God  
Were on her childless lone abode.  
While her lips move with silent vows,  
With saintly grace the phantom bows  
Over a Book spread open on her knee.  
O blessed Book! such thoughts to wake!  
It tells of Him who for our sake  
Died on the cross,—Our Saviour's History,  
How beautifully hath sorrow shed  
Its mildness round her aged head!

How beauteously her sorrow lies  
In the solemn light of her faded eyes !  
And lo ! a faint and feeble trace  
Of hope yet lingers on her face,  
That she may yet embrace again  
Her child, returning from the Main ;  
For the brooding dove shall leave her nest,  
Sooner than hope a mother's breast.

Her long-lost child may still survive !  
That thought hath kept her wasted heart alive ;  
And often, to herself unknown,  
Hath mingled with the midnight sigh,  
When she breathed, in a voice of agony,  
“ Now every hope is gone ! ”  
'Twas this that gave her strength to look  
On the mossy banks of the singing brook,  
Where Mary oft had play'd ;  
And duly, at one stated hour,  
To go in calmness to the bower  
Built in her favourite glade.

'Twas this that made her, every morn,  
As she bless'd it, bathe the ancient thorn  
With water from the spring ;  
And gently tend each flowret's stalk,  
For she call'd to mind who loved to walk  
Through their fragrant blossoming.  
Yea! the voice of hope oft touch'd her ear  
From the hymn of the lark that caroll'd clear,  
Through the heart of the silent sky.  
" Oh, such was my Mary's joyful strain !  
" And such she may haply sing again  
" Before her Mother die."  
Thus hath she lived for seven long years,  
With gleams of comfort through her tears ;  
Thus hath that beauty to her face been given !  
And thus, though silver-grey her hair,  
And pale her cheek, yet is she fair  
As any Child of Heaven.

Yet, though she thus in calmness sit,  
Full many a dim and ghastly fit

Across her brain hath roll'd :  
Oft hath she swoon'd away from pain ;  
And when her senses came again,  
Her heart was icy-cold.  
Hard hath it been for her to bear  
The dreadful silence of the air  
At night, around her bed ;  
When her waking thoughts through the darkness  
grew  
Hideous as dreams, and for truth she knew  
That her dear child was dead.  
Things loved before seem alter'd quite,  
The sun himself yields no delight,  
She hears not the neighbouring waterfall,  
Or, if she hear, the tones recal  
The thought of her, who once did sing  
So sweetly to its murmuring.  
No summer-gale, no winter-blast,  
By day or night o'er her cottage pass'd,  
If her restless soul did wake,

That brought not a Ship before her eyes;  
Yea! often dying shrieks and cries  
Sail'd o'er Llanberris Lake,  
Though, far as the charm'd eye could view,  
Upon the quiet earth it lay,  
Like the Moon amid the heavenly way,  
As bright and silent too.

Hath she no friend whose heart may share  
With her the burthen of despair,  
And by her earnest, soothing voice,  
Bring back the image of departed joys  
So vividly, that reconciled  
To the drear silence of her cot,  
At times she scarcely miss her child?  
Or, the wild raving of the sea forgot,  
Hear nought amid the calm profound,  
Save Mary's voice, a soft and silver sound?  
No! seldom human footsteps come  
Unto her childless widow'd home;



No friend like this c'er sits beside her fire :  
For still doth selfish happiness  
Keep far away from real distress,  
Loth to approach, and eager to retire.  
The vales are wide, the torrents deep,  
Dark are the nights, the mountains steep,  
And many a cause, without a name,  
Will from our spirits hide the blame,  
When, thinking of ourselves, we cease  
To think upon another's peace ;  
Though one short hour to sorrow given,  
Would cheer the gloom, and win the applause of  
Heaven.

Yet, when by chance they meet her on the hill,  
Or lonely wandering by the sullen rill,  
By its wild voice to dim seclusion led,  
The shepherds linger on their way,  
And unto God in silence pray,  
To bless her hoary head.  
In church-yard on the sabbath-day  
They all make room for her, even they

Whose tears are falling down in showers  
Upon the fading funeral flowers,  
Which they have planted o'er their children's clay,  
And though her faded cheeks be dry,  
Her breast unmoved by groan or sigh,  
More piteous is one single smile  
Of hers, than many a tear ;  
For she is wishing all the while  
That her head were lying here ;  
Since her dear daughter is no more,  
Drown'd in the sea, or buried on the shore.

A sudden thought her brain hath cross'd ;  
And in that thought all woes are lost,  
Though sad and wild it be :  
Why must she still, from year to year,  
In lonely anguish linger here ?  
Let her go, ere she die, unto the coast,  
And dwell beside the sea ;  
The sea that tore her child away,  
When glad would she have been to stay.

An awful comfort to her soul  
To hear the sleepless Ocean roll !  
To dream, that on his boundless breast,  
Somewhere her long-wept child might rest ;  
On some far island wreck'd, yet blest  
Even as the sunny wave.  
Or, if indeed her child is drown'd,  
For ever let her drink the sound  
That day and night still murmurs round  
Her Mary's distant grave.  
—She will not stay another hour ;  
Her feeble limbs with youthful power  
Now feel endow'd ; she hath ta'en farewell  
Of her native stream, and hill and dell ;  
And with a solemn tone  
Upon the bower implores a blessing,  
Where often she had sate caressing  
Her who, she deems, is now a saint in Heaven.  
Upon her hearth the fire is dead,  
The smoke in air hath vanished ;  
The last long lingering look is given,

The shuddering start,—the inward groan,—  
And the Pilgrim on her way hath gone.

Behold her on the lone sea-shore,  
Listening unto the hollow roar  
That with eternal thunder, far and wide,  
Clothes the black-heaving Main ! she stands  
Upon the cold and moisten'd sands,  
Nor in that deep trance sees the quickly-flowing tide.  
She feels it is a dreadful noise,  
That in her bowed soul destroys  
A Mother's hope, though blended with her life ;  
But surely she hath lost her child,  
For how could one so weak and mild  
Endure the Ocean's strife,  
Who, at this moment of dismay,  
Howls like a monster o'er his prey !  
But the tide is rippling at her feet,  
And the murmuring sound, so wildly sweet,  
Dispels these torturing dreams :

Oh ! once again the sea behold,  
O'er all its wavy fields of gold,  
The playful sun-light gleams.  
These little harmless waves so fair,  
Speak not of sorrow or despair ;  
How soft the zephyr's breath !  
It sings like joy's own chosen sound ;  
While life and pleasure dance around,  
Why must thou muse on death ?  
Here even the timid child might come,  
To dip her small feet in the foam ;  
And, laughing as she view'd  
The billows racing to the shore,  
Lament when their short course was o'er,  
Pursuing and pursued.  
How calmly floats the white sea-mew  
Amid the billows' verdant hue !  
How calmly mounts into the air,  
As if the breezes blew her there !

How calmly on the sand alighting,  
To dress her silken plumes delighting !  
See ! how these tiny vessels glide  
With all sails set, in mimic pride,  
As they were ships of war.  
All leave the idle port to-day,  
And with oar and sheet the sunny bay  
Is glancing bright and far.

She sees the joy, but feels it not :  
If e'er her child should be forgot  
For one short moment of oblivious sleep,  
It seems a wrong to one so kind,  
Whose mother, left on earth behind,  
Hath nought to do but weep.  
For, wandering in her solitude,  
Tears seem to her the natural food  
Of widow'd childless age ;  
And bitter though these tears must be,  
Which falling there is none to see,  
Her anguish they assuage.

A calm succeeds the storm of grief,  
A settled calm, that brings relief,  
And half partakes of pleasure, soft and mild;  
For the spirit, that is sore distrest,  
At length, when wearied into rest,  
Will slumber like a child.

And then, in spite of all her woe,  
The bliss, that charm'd her long ago,  
Bursts on her like the day.

Her child, she feels, is living still,  
By God and angels kept from ill  
On some isle far away.

It is not doom'd that she must mourn  
For ever ;—One may yet return  
Who soon will dry her tears :

And now that seven long years are flown,  
Though spent in anguish and alone,  
How short the time appears !

She looks upon the billowy Main,  
And the parting-day returns again ;

Each breaking wave she knows ;  
And when she listens to the tide,  
Her child seems standing by her side ;  
So like the past it flows.  
She starts to hear the city-bell ;  
So toll'd it when they wept farewell !  
She thinks the self-same smoke and cloud  
The city domes and turrets shroud ;  
The same keen flash of ruddy fire  
Is burning on the lofty spire ;  
The grove of masts is standing there  
Unchanged, with all their ensigns fair ;  
The same, the stir, the tumult, and the hum,  
As from the city to the shore they come.

Day after day, along the beach she roams,  
And evening finds her there, when to their homes  
All living things have gone.  
No terrors hath the surge or storm  
For her ;—on glides the aged form,  
Still restless and alone.



Familiar unto every eye  
She long hath been : her low deep sigh  
Hath touch'd with pity many a thoughtless breast :  
And prayers, unheard by her, are given,  
That in its mercy watchful Heaven  
Would send the aged rest.  
As on the smooth and harden'd sand,  
In many a gay and rosy band,  
Gathering rare shells, delighted children stray,  
With pitying gaze they pass along,  
And hush at once the shout and song,  
When they chance to cross her way.  
The strangers, as they idly pace  
Along the beach, if her they meet,  
No more regard the sea : her face  
Attracts them by its solemn grace,  
So mournful, yet so sweet.  
The boisterous sailor passes by  
With softer step, and o'er his eye  
A haze will pass most like unto a tear ;

For he hath heard, that, broken-hearted,  
Long, long ago, that mother parted  
With her lost daughter here.  
Such kindness soothes her soul, I ween,  
As through the harbour's busy scene,  
She passes weak and slow.  
A comfort sad it brings to see  
That others pity her, though free  
Themselves from care or woe.

The playful voice of streams and rills,  
The echo of the cavern'd hills,  
The murmur of the trees,  
The bleat of sheep, the song of bird,  
Within her soul no more are heard ;  
There, sound for aye the seas.  
Seldom she hears the ceaseless din  
That stirs the busy port. Within  
A murmur dwells, that drowns all other sound :  
And oft, when dreaming of her child,  
Her tearful eyes are wandering wild,

Yet nought behold around.  
But hear and see she must this day ;  
Her sickening spirit must obey  
The flashing and the roar  
That burst from fort, and ship, and tower,  
While clouds of gloomy splendour lower  
O'er city, sea, and shore.  
The pier-head, with a restless crowd,  
Seems all alive ; there, voices loud  
Oft raise the thundrous cheer,  
While, from on board the ships of war,  
The music bands both near and far,  
Are playing, faint or clear.  
The bells ring quick a joyous peal,  
Till the very spires appear to see.  
The joy that stirs throughout their tapering height :  
Ten thousand flags and pendants fly  
Abroad, like meteors in the sky,  
So beautiful and bright.  
And, while the storm of pleasure raves  
Through each tumultuous street,

Still strikes the ear one darling tune,  
Sung hoarse, or warbled sweet ;  
Well doth it suit the First of June,  
“ Britannia rule the Waves !”

What Ship is she that rises slow  
Above the horizon ?—White as snow,  
And cover'd as she sails  
By the bright sunshine, fondly woo'd  
In her calm beauty, and pursued  
By all the Ocean gales ?  
Well doth she know this glorious morn,  
And by her subject waves is borne,  
As in triumphal pride :  
And now the gazing crowd descry,  
Distinctly floating on the sky,  
Her pendants long and wide.  
The outward forts she now hath pass'd ;  
Loftier and loftier towers her mast ;  
You almost hear the sound

Of the billows rushing past her sides,  
As giant-like she calmly glides  
Through the dwindled ships around.  
Saluting thunders rend the Main !  
Short silence !—and they roar again,  
And veil her in a cloud :  
Then up leap all her fearless crew,  
And cheer till shore, and city too,  
With echoes answer loud.  
In peace and friendship doth she come,  
Rejoicing to approach her home,  
After absence long and far :  
Yet with like calmness would she go,  
Exulting to behold the foe,  
And break the line of war.

While all the noble Ship admire,  
Why doth One from the crowd retire,  
Nor bless the stranger bright ?  
So look'd the Ship that bore away  
Her weeping child ! She dares not stay,

Death-sickening at the sight.  
Like a ghost, she wanders up and down  
Throughout the still deserted town,  
Wondering, if in that noisy throng,  
Amid the shout, the dance, the song,  
One wretched heart there may not be,  
That hates its own mad revelry !  
One mother, who hath lost her child,  
Yet in her grief is reconciled  
To such unmeaning sounds as these !  
Yet this may be the mere disease  
Of grief with her : for why destroy  
The few short hours of human joy,  
Though Reason own them not?—" Shout on," she  
cries,  
" Ye thoughtless, happy souls ! A mother's sighs  
" Must not your bliss profane.  
" Yet blind must be that mother's heart  
" Who loves thee, beauteous as thou art,  
" Thou Glory of the Main !"

Towards the church-yard see the Matron turn!  
There surely she in solitude may mourn,  
Tormented not by such distracting noise.  
But there seems no peace for her this day,  
For a crowd advances on her way,  
As if no spot were sacred from their joys.  
—Fly not that crowd! for Heaven is there!  
It breathes around thee in the air,  
Even now, when unto dim despair  
Thy heart was sinking fast:  
A cruel lot hath long been thine;  
But now let thy face with rapture shine,  
For bliss awaiteth thee divine,  
And all thy woes are past.  
Dark words she hears among the crowd,  
Of a ship that hath on board  
Three Christian souls, who on the coast  
Of some wild land were wreck'd long years ago,  
When all but they were in a tempest lost,  
And now by Heaven are rescued from their woe,  
And to their country wondrously restored.

The name, the blessed name, she hears,  
Of that beloved Youth,  
Whom once she called her son ; but fears  
To listen more, for it appears  
Too heavenly for the truth.  
And they are speaking of a child,  
Who looks more beautifully wild  
Than pictured fairy in Arabian tale ;  
Wondrous her foreign garb, they say,  
Adorn'd with starry plumage gay,  
While round her head tall feathers play,  
And dance with every gale.

Breathless upon the beach she stands,  
And lifts to Heaven her clasped hands,  
And scarcely dares to turn her eye  
On yon gay barge fast-rushing by.  
The dashing oar disturbs her brain  
With hope, that sickens into pain.  
The boat appears so wondrous fair,  
Her daughter must be sitting there !



And as her gilded prow is dancing  
Through the land-swell, and gaily glancing  
Beneath the sunny gleams,  
Her heart must own, so sweet a sight,  
So form'd to yield a strange delight,  
She ne'er felt even in dreams.  
Silent the music of the oar!  
The eager sailors leap on shore,  
And look, and gaze around,  
If 'mid the crowd they may descry  
A wife's, a child's, a kinsman's eye,  
Or hear one family sound.  
—No sailor, he, so fondly pressing  
Yon fair child in his arms,  
Her eyes, her brow, her bosom kissing,  
And bidding her with many a blessing  
To hush her vain alarms.  
How fair that creature by his side,  
Who smiles with languid glee,  
Slow-kindling from a mother's pride!  
Oh! Thou alone may'st be

The mother of that fairy-child :  
These tresses dark, these eyes so wild,  
That face with spirit beautified,  
She owes them all to thee.

Silent and still the sailors stand,  
To see the meeting strange that now befel.  
Unwilling sighs their manly bosoms swell,  
And o'er their eyes they draw the sun-burnt hand,  
To hide the tears that grace their cheeks so well.  
They lift the aged Matron from her swoon,  
And not one idle foot is stirring there ;  
For unto pity melts the sailor soon,  
And chief when helpless woman needs his care.  
She wakes at last, and with a placid smile,  
Such as a saint might on her death-bed give,  
Speechless she gazes on her child awhile,  
Content to die since that dear one doth live.  
And much they fear that she indeed will die !  
So cold and pale her cheek, so dim her eye ;—

And when her voice returns, so like the breath  
It sounds, the low and tremulous tones of death.  
Mark her distracted daughter seize  
Her clay-cold hands, and on her knees  
Implore that God would spare her hoary head ;  
For sure, through these last lingering years,  
By one so good, enough of tears  
Hath long ere now been shed.  
The Fairy-child is weeping too ;  
For though her happy heart can slightly know  
What she hath never felt, the pang of woe,  
Yet to the holy power of Nature true,  
From her big heart the tears of pity flow,  
As infant morning sheds the purest dew.  
Nought doth Fitz-Owen speak : he takes  
His reverend mother on his filial breast,  
Nor fears that, when her worn-out soul finds rest  
In the new sleep of undisturbed love,  
The gracious God who sees them from above,  
Will save the parent for her children's sakes.

Nor vain his pious hope: the strife  
Of rapture ends, and she returns to life,  
With added beauty smiling in the lines  
By age and sorrow left upon her face.  
Her eye, even now bedimm'd with anguish, shines  
With brightening glory, and a holy sense  
In her husht soul of heavenly providence,  
Breathes o'er her bending frame a loftier grace.  
—Her Mary tells in simple phrase,  
Of wildest perils past in former days,  
Of shipwreck scarce remember'd by herself:  
Then will she speak of that delightful isle  
Where long they lived in love, and to the elf  
Now fondly clinging to her grandam's knee,  
In all the love of quick-won infancy,  
Point with the triumph of a mother's smile.  
The sweet child then will tell her tale  
Of her own blossom'd bower, and palmy vale,  
And birds with golden plumes, that sweetly sing  
Tunes of their own, or borrow'd from her voice;  
And, as she speaks, lo! flits with gorgeous wing

Upon her outstretch'd arm, a fearless bird,  
Her eye obeying, ere the call was heard,  
And wildly warbles there the music of its joys.

Unto the blessed matron's eye  
How changed seem now town, sea, and sky !  
She feels as if to youth restored,  
Such fresh and beauteous joy is pour'd  
O'er the green dancing waves, and shelly sand.  
The crowded masts within the harbour stand,  
Emblems of rest : and yon ships far away,  
Brightening the entrance of the Crescent-bay,  
Seem things the tempest never can destroy,  
To longing spirits harbingers of joy.  
How sweet the music o'er the waves is borne,  
In celebration of this glorious morn !  
Ring on, ye bells ! most pleasant is your chime ;  
And the quick flash that bursts along the shore,  
The volumed smoke, and city-shaking roar,  
Her happy soul now feels to be sublime.

How fair upon the human face appears  
A kindling smile! how idle all our tears!  
Short-sighted still the moisten'd eyes of sorrow:  
To-day our woes can never end,  
Think we!—returns a long-lost friend,  
And we are blest to-morrow.  
Her anguish, and her wish to die,  
Now seem like worst impiety,  
For many a year she hopeth now to live;  
And God, who sees the inmost breast,  
The vain repining of the sore-distrest,  
In mercy will forgive.

How oft, how long, and solemnly,  
Fitz-Owen and his Mary gaze  
On her pale cheek, and sunken eye!  
Much alter'd since those happy days,  
When scarcely could themselves behold  
One symptom faint that she was waxing old.  
That evening of her life how bright!  
But now seems falling fast the night.

Yet the Welch air will breathe like balm  
Through all her wasted heart, the heavenly calm  
That mid her native mountains sleeps for ever,  
In the deep vales,—even when the storms are roaring,  
High up among the cliffs : and that sweet river  
That round the white walls of her cottage flows,  
With gliding motion most like to repose,  
A quicker current to her blood restoring,  
Will cheer her long before her eye-lids close.  
And yonder cheek of rosy light,  
Dark-clustering hair, and star-like eyes,  
And Fairy-form, that wing'd with rapture flies,  
And voice more wild than songstress of the night  
E'er pour'd unto the listening skies ;  
Yon spirit, who, with her angel smile,  
Shed Heaven around the lonely isle,  
With Nature, and with Nature's art,  
Will twine herself about the heart  
Of her who hoped not for a grand-child's kiss !  
These looks will scare disease and pain,

Till in her wasted heart again  
Life grow with new-born bliss.

Far is the city left behind,  
And faintly-smiling through the soft-blue skies,  
Like castled clouds the Cambrian hills arise :  
Sweet the first welcome of the mountain-wind !  
And ever nearer as they come,  
Beneath the hastening shades of silent Even,  
Some old familiar object meets their sight,  
Thrilling their hearts with sorrowful delight,  
Until through tears they hail their blessed home,  
Bathed in the mist, confusing earth with heaven.  
With solemn gaze the aged matron sees  
The green roof laughing beneath greener trees ;  
And thinks how happy she will live and die  
Within that cot at last, beneath the eye  
Of them long wept as perish'd in the seas.  
And what feel they ? with dizzy brain they look  
On cot, field, mountain, garden, tree, and brook,



With none contented, although loving all;  
While deep-delighted memory,  
By faint degrees, and silently,  
Doth all their names recall.  
And looking in her mother's face,  
With smiles of most bewitching grace,  
In a wild voice that wondering pleasure calms,  
Exclaims the child, "Is this home ours?  
" Ah me! how like these lovely flowers  
" To those I train'd upon the bowers  
" Of our own Isle of Palms!"

Husht now these island-bowers as death!  
And ne'er may human foot or breath,  
Their dew disturb again: but not more still  
Stand they, o'er-shadowed by their palmy hill,  
Than this deserted cottage! O'er the green,  
Once smooth before the porch, rank weeds are seen,  
Choking the feebler flowers: with blossoms hoar,  
And verdant leaves, the unpruned eglantine  
In wanton beauty foldeth up the door.

And through the clustering roses that entwine  
The lattice-window, neat and trim before,  
The setting sun's slant beams no longer shine.  
The hive stands on the ivied tree,  
But murmurs not one single bee ;  
Frail looks the osier-seat, and grey,  
None hath sat there for many a day ;  
And the dial, hid in weeds and flowers,  
Hath told, by none beheld, the solitary hours.  
No birds that love the haunts of men,  
Hop here, or through the garden sing ;  
From the thick-matted hedge, the lonely wren  
Flits rapid by on timid wing,  
Even like a leaf by wandering zephyr moved.  
But long it is since that sweet bird,  
That twitters 'neath the cottage eaves,  
Was here by listening morning heard :  
For she, the summer-songstress, leaves  
The roof by laughter never stirr'd,  
Still loving human life, and by it still beloved.

O! wildest cottage of the wild!  
I see thee waking from thy breathless sleep!  
Scarcely distinguish'd from the rocky steep,  
High o'er thy roof in forms fantastic piled.  
More beauteous art thou than of yore,  
With joy all glistening after sorrow's gloom;  
And they who in that paradise abide,  
By sadness and misfortune beautified,  
There brighter walk than o'er yon island-shore,  
As loveliness wakes lovelier from the tomb.  
Long mayst thou stand in sun and dew,  
And spring thy faded flowers renew,  
Unharm'd by frost or blight!  
Without, the wonder of each eye,  
Within, as happy as the sky,  
Encompass'd with delight.  
—May thy old-age be calm and bright,  
Thou grey-hair'd one!—like some sweet night  
Of winter, cold, but clear, and shining far  
Through mists, with many a melancholy star.

—O fairy child! what can I wish for thee?

Like a perennial flow'ret mayst thou be,  
That spends its life in beauty and in bliss!  
Soft on thee fall the breath of time,  
And still retain in heavenly clime  
The bloom that charm'd in this!

O, happy Parents of so sweet a child,  
Your share of grief already have you known;  
But long as that fair spirit is your own,  
To either lot you must be reconciled.  
Dear was she in yon palmy grove,  
When fear and sorrow mingled with your love,  
And oft you wished that she had ne'er been born;  
While, in the most delightful air  
Th' angelic infant sang, at times her voice,  
That seem'd to make even lifeless things rejoice,  
Woke, on a sudden, dreams of dim despair,  
As if it breathed, "For me, an Orphan, mourn!"  
Now can they listen when she sings  
With mournful voice of mournful things,

Almost too sad to hear ;  
And when she chaunts her evening-hymn,  
Glad smile their eyes, even as they swim  
With many a gushing tear.  
Each day she seems to them more bright  
And beautiful,—a gleam of light  
That plays and dances o'er the shadowy earth !  
It fadeth not in gloom or storm,—  
For Nature charter'd that aërial form  
In yonder fair Isle when she bless'd her birth !  
The Isle of Palms ! whose forests tower again,  
Darkening with solemn shade the face of heaven.  
Now far away they like the clouds are driven,  
And as the passing night-wind dies my strain !

END OF THE ISLE OF PALMS.



THE  
ANGLER'S TENT.

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*The moving accident is not my trade,  
To curl the blood I have no ready arts;  
'Tis my delight alone in summer-shade,  
To pipe a simple song to thinking hearts.*

WORDSWORTH.





## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following Poem is the narrative of one day, the pleasantest of many pleasant ones, of a little Angling-excursion made three summers ago among the mountains of Westmoreland, Lancashire, and Cumberland. A tent, large panniers filled with its furniture, with provisions, &c. were loaded upon horses, and while the anglers, who separated every morning, pursued each his own sport up the torrents, were carried over the mountains to the appointed place by some lake or stream, where they were to meet again in the evening.

In this manner they visited all the wildest and most secluded scenes of the country. On the first Sunday they passed among the hills, their tent was pitched on the banks of Wast-Water, at the head of that wild and solitary lake, which they had reached by the mountain-path that passes Barn-Moor Tarn from Eskdale. Towards evening the inhabitants of the valley, not exceeding half a dozen families, with some too from the neighbouring glens, drawn by the unusual appearance, came to visit the strangers in their tent. Without, the evening was calm and beautiful; within, were the gaiety and kindness of simple mirth. At a late hour, their guests departed under a most refulgent moon that lighted

them up the surrounding mountains, on which they turned to hail with long-continued shouts and songs the blazing of a huge fire, that was hastily kindled at the door of the tent to bid them a distant farewell.

The images and feelings of these few happy days, and above all, of that delightful evening, the author wished to preserve in poetry. What he has written, while it serves to himself and his friends as a record of past happiness, may, he hopes, without impropriety be offered to the public, since, if at all faithful to its subject, it will have some interest to those who delight in the wilder scenes of Nature, and who have studied with respect and love the character of their simple inhabitants.

THE  
ANGLER'S TENT.

---

THE hush of bliss was on the sunny hills,  
The clouds were sleeping on the silent sky,  
We travelled in the midst of melody  
Warbled around us from the mountain-rills.  
The voice was like the glad voice of a friend  
Murmuring a welcome to his happy home ;  
We felt its kindness with our spirits blend,  
And said, " This day no farther will we roam !"  
The coldest heart that ever looked on heaven,  
Had surely felt the beauty of that day,  
And, as he paused, a gentle blessing given  
To the sweet scene that tempted him to stay.  
But we, who travelled through that region bright,  
Were joyful pilgrims under Nature's care,  
From youth had loved the dreams of pure delight,

Descending on us through the lonely air,  
When Heaven is clothed with smiles, and Earth as  
Heaven is fair!

Seven lovely days had like a happy dream  
Died in our spirits silently away,  
Since Grassmere, waking to the morning ray,  
Met our last lingering look with farewell gleam.  
I may not tell what joy our beings filled,  
Wand'ring like shadows over plain and steep,  
What beauteous visions lonely souls can build  
When 'mid the mountain solitude they sleep.  
I may not tell how the deep power of sound  
Can back to life long-faded dreams recall,  
When lying mid the noise that lives around  
Through the hush'd spirit flows a waterfall.  
To thee, my WORDSWORTH!\* whose inspired song  
Comes forth in pomp from Nature's inner shrine,  
To thee by birth-right such high themes belong,

---

\* Mr Wordsworth accompanied the author on this excursion.

The unseen grandeur of the earth is thine !  
One lowlier simple strain of human love be mine.

How leapt our hearts, when from an airy height,  
On which we paused for a sweet fountain's sake,  
With green fields fading in a peaceful lake,  
A deep-sunk vale burst sudden on our sight !  
We felt as if at home ; a magic sound,  
As from a spirit whom we must obey,  
Bade us descend into the vale profound,  
And in its silence pass the Sabbath-day.  
The placid lake that rested far below,  
Softly embosoming another sky,  
Still as we gazed assumed a lovelier glow,  
And seem'd to send us looks of amity.  
Our hearts were open to the gracious love  
Of Nature, smiling like a happy bride ;  
So following the still impulse from above,  
Down the green slope we wind with airy glide,  
And pitch our snowy tent on that fair water's side.

Ah me ! even now I see before me stand,  
Among the verdant holly-boughs half hid,  
The little radiant airy pyramid,  
Like some wild dwelling built in Fairy land.  
As silently as gathering cloud it rose,  
And seems a cloud descended on the earth,  
Disturbing not the Sabbath-day's repose,  
Yet gently stirring at the quiet birth  
Of every short-lived breeze : the sun-beams greet  
The beauteous stranger in the lonely bay ;  
Close to its shading tree two streamlets meet,  
With gentle glide, as weary of their play.  
And in the liquid lustre of the lake  
Its image sleeps, reflected far below ;  
Such image as the clouds of summer make,  
Clear seen amid the waveless water's glow,  
As slumbering infant still, and pure as April snow.

Wild though the dwelling seem, thus rising fair,  
A sudden stranger 'mid the sylvan scene,

One spot of radiance on surrounding green,  
Human it is—and human souls are there !  
Look through that opening in the canvass wall,  
Through which by fits the scarce-felt breezes play,  
—Upon three happy souls thine eyes will fall,  
The summer lambs are not more blest than they !  
On the green turf all motionless they lie,  
In dreams romantic as the dreams of sleep,  
The filmy air slow-glimmering on their eye,  
And in their ear the murmur of the deep.  
Or haply now by some wild winding brook,  
Deep, silent pool, or waters rushing loud,  
In thought they visit many a fairy nook  
That rising mists in rainbow colours shroud,  
And ply the Angler's sport involved in mountain-  
cloud!

Yes ! dear to us that solitary trade,  
'Mid vernal peace in peacefulness pursued,  
Through rocky glen, wild moor, and hanging wood,  
White-flowering meadow, and romantic glade !

The sweetest visions of our boyish years  
Come to our spirits with a murmuring tone  
Of running waters,—and one stream appears,  
Remember'd all, tree, willow, bank, and stone!  
How glad were we, when after sunny showers  
Its voice came to us issuing from the school!  
How fled the vacant, solitary hours,  
By dancing rivulet, or silent pool!  
And still our souls retain in manhood's prime  
The love of joys our childish years that blest;  
So now encircled by these hills sublime,  
We Anglers, wandering with a tranquil breast,  
Build in this happy vale a fairy bower of rest!

Within that bower are strewn in careless guise,  
Idle one day, the angler's simple gear;  
Lines that, as fine as floating gossamer,  
Dropt softly on the stream the silken flies;  
The limber rod that shook its trembling length,  
Almost as airy as the line it threw,



Yet often bending in an arch of strength  
When the tired salmon rose at last to view,  
Now lightly leans across the rushy bed,  
On which at night we dream of sports by day ;  
And, empty now, beside it close is laid  
The goodly pannier framed of osiers gray ;  
And, maple bowl in which we wont to bring  
The limpid water from the morning wave,  
Or from some mossy and sequester'd spring  
To which dark rocks a grateful coolness gave,  
Such as might Hermit use in solitary cave !

And ne'er did Hermit, with a purer breast,  
Amid the depths of sylvan silence pray,  
Than prayed we friends on that mild quiet day,  
By God and man beloved, the day of rest !  
All passions in our souls were lull'd to sleep,  
Ev'n by the power of Nature's holy bliss ;  
While Innocence her watch in peace did keep  
Over the spirit's thoughtful happiness !

We view'd the green earth with a loving look,  
Like us rejoicing in the gracious sky ;  
A voice came to us from the running brook  
That seem'd to breathe a grateful melody.  
Then all things seem'd embued with life and sense,  
And as from dreams with kindling smiles to wake,  
Happy in beauty and in innocence ;  
While, pleased our inward quiet to partake,  
Lay hush'd, as in a trance, the scarcely-breathing lake.

Yet think not, in this wild and fairy spot,  
This mingled happiness of earth and heaven,  
Which to our hearts this Sabbath-day was given,  
Think not, that far-off friends were quite forgot.  
Helm-crag arose before our half-closed eyes  
With colours brighter than the brightening dove ;  
Beneath that guardian mount a \* cottage lies  
Encircled by the halo breathed from Love !

---

\* At that time the residence of Mr Wordsworth's family.

And sweet that dwelling† rests upon the brow  
(Beneath its sycamore) of Orest-hill,  
As if it smiled on Windermere below,  
Her green recesses and her islands still !  
Thus, gently-blended many a human thought  
With those that peace and solitude supplied,  
Till in our hearts the moving kindness wrought  
With gradual influence, like a flowing tide,  
And for the lovely sound of human voice we sigh'd.

And hark ! a laugh, with voices blended, stole  
Across the water, echoing from the shore !  
And during pauses short, the beating oar  
Brings the glad music closer to the soul.  
We leave our tent ; and lo ! a lovely sight  
Glides like a living creature through the air,  
For air the water seems thus passing bright,  
A living creature beautiful and fair !

---

† The author's cottage on the banks of Windermere.

Nearer it glides ; and now the radiant glow  
That on its radiant shadow seems to float,  
Turns to a virgin band, a glorious shew,  
Rowing with happy smiles a little boat.  
Towards the tent their lingering course they steer,  
And cheerful now upon the shore they stand,  
In maiden bashfulness, yet free from fear,  
And by our side, gay-moving hand in hand,  
Into our tent they go, a beautiful sister-band !

Scarce from our hearts had gone the sweet surprise,  
Which this glad troop of rural maids awoke ;  
Scarce had a more familiar kindness broke  
From the mild lustre of their smiling eyes,  
Ere the tent seem'd encircled by the sound  
Of many voices ; in an instant stood  
Men, women, children, all the circle round,  
And with a friendly joy the strangers view'd.  
Strange was it to behold this gladsome crowd  
Our late so solitary dwelling fill ;

And strange to hear their greetings mingling loud  
Where all before was undisturb'd and still.  
Yet was the stir delightful to our ear,  
And moved to happiness our inmost blood,  
The sudden change, the unexpected cheer,  
Breaking like sunshine on a pensive mood,  
This breath and voice of life in seeming solitude !

Hard task it was, in our small tent to find  
Seats for our quickly-gather'd company ;  
But in them all was such a mirthful glee,  
I ween they soon were seated to their mind !  
Some viewing with a hesitating look  
The panniers that contained our travelling fare,  
On them at last their humble station took,  
Pleased at the thought, and with a smiling air.  
Some on our low-framed beds then chose their seat,  
Each maid the youth that loved her best beside,  
While many a gentle look, and whisper sweet,  
Brought to the stripling's face a gladsome pride.

The playful children on the velvet green,  
Soon as the first-felt bashfulness was fled,  
Smiled to each other at the wondrous scene,  
And whisper'd words they to each other said,  
And raised in sportive fit the shining, golden head!

Then did we learn that this our stranger tent,  
Seen by the lake-side gleaming like a sail,  
Had quickly spread o'er mountain and o'er vale  
A gentle shock of pleased astonishment.

The lonely dwellers by the lofty rills,  
Gazed in surprise upon th' unwonted sight,  
The wandering shepherds saw it from the hills,  
And quick descended from their airy height.  
Soon as the voice of simple song and prayer  
Ceased in the little chapel of the dell,  
The congregation did in peace repair  
To the lake-side, to view our wondrous cell.  
While leaving, for one noon, both young and old,  
Their cluster'd hamlets in this deep recess,  
All join the throng, in conscious good-will bold,

Elate and smiling in their Sabbath-dress,  
A mingled various groupe of homely happiness !

And thus our tent a joyous scene became,  
Where loving hearts from distant vales did meet  
As at some rural festival, and greet  
Each other with glad voice and kindly name.  
Here a pleased daughter to her father smiled,  
With fresh affection in her soften'd eyes ;  
He in return look'd back upon his child  
With gentle start and tone of mild surprise :  
And on his little grand-child, at her breast,  
An old man's blessing and a kiss bestow'd,  
Or to his cheek the lisping baby prest,  
Light'ning the mother of her darling load ;  
While comely matrons, all sedately ranged  
Close to their husbands' or their children's side,  
A neighbour's friendly greeting interchanged,  
And each her own with frequent glances eyed,  
And raised her head in all a mother's harmless pride.

Happy were we among such happy hearts !  
And to inspire with kindness and love  
Our simple guests, ambitiously we strove,  
With novel converse and endearing arts !  
We talk'd to them, and much they loved to hear,  
Of those sweet vales from which we late had come ;  
For though these vales are to each other near,  
Seldom do dalesmen leave their own dear home :  
Then would we speak of many a wondrous sight  
Seen in great cities,—temple, tower, and spire,  
And winding streets at night-fall blazing bright  
With many a star-like lamp of glimmering fire.  
The gray-hair'd men with deep attention heard,  
Viewing the speaker with a solemn face,  
While round our feet the playful children stirr'd,  
And near their parents took their silent place,  
Listening with looks where wonder breathed a glow-  
ing grace.

And much they gazed with never-tired delight  
On varnish'd rod, with joints that shone like gold,



And silken line on glittering reel enroll'd,  
To infant anglers a most wondrous sight !  
Scarce could their chiding parents then controul  
Their little hearts in harmless malice gay,  
But still one, bolder than his fellows, stole  
To touch the tempting treasures where they lay.  
What rapture glistened in their eager eyes,  
When, with kind voice, we bade these children take  
A precious store of well-dissembled flies,  
To use with caution for the strangers' sake !  
The unlook'd-for gift we graciously bestow  
With sudden joy the leaping heart o'erpowers ;  
They grasp the lines, while all their faces glow  
Bright as spring-blossoms after sunny showers,  
And wear them in their hats like wreaths of valley-  
flowers !

Nor could they check their joyance and surprise,  
When the clear crystal and the silver bowl  
Gleamed with a novel beauty on their soul,  
And the wine mantled with its rosy dyes.

For all our pomp we shew'd with mickle glee,  
And choicest viands, fitly to regale,  
On such a day of rare festivity,  
Our guests thus wondering at their native vale.  
And oft we pledged them, nor could they decline  
The social cup we did our best to press,  
But mingled wishes with the joyful wine,  
Warm wishes for our health and happiness.  
And all the while, a low, delightful sound  
Of voice, soft-answering voice, with music fill'd  
Our fairy palace's enchanted ground,  
Such tones as seem from blooming tree distill'd,  
Where unseen bees repair their waxen cells to build.

Lost as we were in that most blessed mood  
Which Nature's sons alone can deeply prove,  
We lavish'd with free heart our kindest love  
On all who breath'd,—one common brotherhood.  
Three faithful servants, men of low degree,  
Were with us, as we roamed the wilds among,

And well it pleased their simple hearts to see  
Their masters mingling with the rural throng.  
Oft to our guests they sought to speak aside,  
And, in the genial flow of gladness, told  
That we were free from haughtiness or pride,  
Though scholars all, and rich in lands and gold.  
We smiled to hear our praise thus rudely sung,  
(Well might such praise our modesty offend)  
Yet, we all strove, at once with eye and tongue  
To speak, as if invited by a friend,  
And with our casual talk instruction's voice to blend.

Rumours of wars had reached this peaceful vale,  
And of the Wicked King, whom guilt hath driven  
On earth to wage a warfare against Heaven,  
These sinless shepherds had heard many a tale.  
Encircled as we were with smiles and joy,  
In quietness to Quiet's dwelling brought,  
To think of him whose bliss is to destroy,  
At such a season was an awful thought!

We felt the eternal power of happiness  
And virtue's power ; we felt with holy awe  
That in this world, in spite of chance distress,  
Such is the Almighty Spirit's ruling law.  
And joyfully did we these shepherds tell  
To hear all rumours with a tranquil mind,  
For, in the end, that all would yet be well,  
Nor this bad Monarch leave one trace behind,  
More than o'er yonder hills the idly-raving wind.

Then gravely smiled, in all the power of age,  
A hoary-headed, venerable man,  
Like the mild chieftain of a peaceful clan,  
'Mid simple spirits looked on as a sage.  
Much did he praise the holy faith we held,  
Which God, he said, to cheer the soul had given,  
For even the very angels that rebelled,  
By sin performed the blessed work of Heaven.  
The Wicked King, of whom we justly spake,  
Was but an instrument in God's wise hand,

And though the kingdoms of the earth might quake,  
Peace would revisit every ravaged land.

Even as the earthquake, in some former time,  
Scatter'd yon rugged mountain far and wide,  
Till years of winter's snow and summer's prime,  
To naked cliffs fresh verdure have supplied,  
—Now troops of playful lambs are bounding on its  
side.

Pleased were the simple groupe to hear the sire  
Thus able to converse with men from far,  
And much did they of vaguely-rumour'd war,  
That long had raged in distant lands, enquire.  
Scarce could their hearts, at peace with all mankind,  
Believe what bloody deeds on earth are done,  
That man of woman born should be so blind  
As walk in guilt beneath the blessed sun;  
And one, with thoughtful countenance, exprest  
A fear lest on some dark disastrous day,

Across the sea might come that noisome pest,  
And make fair England's happy vales his prey.  
Short lived that fear!—soon firmer thoughts arise:  
Well could these dalesmen wield the patriot's sword,  
And stretch the foe beneath the smiling skies;  
In innocence they trust, and in the Lord,  
Whom they, that very morn, in gladness had adored!

But soon such thoughts to lighter speech give way;  
We in our turn a willing ear did lend  
To tale of sports, that made them blythely spend  
The winter-evening and the summer-day.  
Smiling they told us of the harmless glee  
That bids the echoes of the mountains wake,  
When at the stated festival they see  
Their new-wash'd flocks come snow-white from the  
lake;  
And joyful dance at neighbouring village fair,  
Where lads and lasses, in their best attire,  
Go to enjoy that playful pastime rare,  
And careful statesmen shepherds new to hire!

Or they would tell, how, at some neighbour's cot,  
When nights are long, and winter on the earth,  
All cares are in the dance and song forgot,  
And round the fire quick flies the circling mirth,  
When nuptial vows are pledged, or at an infant's birth!

Well did the roses blooming on their cheek,  
And eyes of laughing light, that glisten'd fair  
Beneath the artless ringlets of their hair,  
Each maiden's health and purity bespeak.  
Following the impulse of their simple will,  
No thought had they to give or take offence ;  
Glad were their bosoms, yet sedate and still,  
And fearless in the strength of innocence.  
Oft as, in accents mild, we strangers spoke  
To these sweet maidens, an unconscious smile  
Like sudden sunshine o'er their faces broke,  
And with it struggling blushes mix'd the while.  
And oft as mirth and glee went laughing round,  
Breath'd in this maiden's ear some harmless jest  
Would make her, for one moment, on the ground

Her eyes let fall, as wishing from the rest  
To hide the sudden throb that beat within her breast,

Oh! not in vain have purest poets told,  
In elegies and hymns that ne'er shall die,  
How, in the fields of famous Arcady,  
Lived simple shepherds in the age of gold!  
They fabled not, in peopling rural shades  
With all most beautiful in heart and frame;  
Where without guile swains woo'd their happy maids,  
And love was friendship with a gentler name.  
Such songs in truth and nature had their birth,  
Their source was lofty and their aim was pure,  
And still, in many a favour'd spot of earth,  
The virtues that awoke their voice endure!  
Bear witness thou! O, wild and beauteous dell,  
To whom my gladden'd heart devotes this strain;  
—O! long may all who in thy bosom dwell  
Nature's primeval innocence retain,  
Nor e'er may lawless foot thy sanctity profane!  
Sweet Maids! my wandering heart returns to you;



And well the blush of joy, the courteous air,  
Words unrestrained, and open looks declare  
That fancy's day-dreams have not been untrue.  
It was indeed a beauteous thing, to see  
The virgin, while her bashful visage smiled,  
As if she were a mother, on her knee  
Take up, with many a kiss, the asking child.  
And well, I ween, she play'd the mother's part ;  
For as she bended o'er the infant fair,  
A mystic joy seem'd stirring at her heart,  
A yearning fondness, and a silent prayer.  
Nor did such gentle maiden long refuse  
To cheer our spirits with some favourite strain,  
Some simple ballad, framed by rustic muse,  
Of one who died for love, or, led by gain,  
Sail'd in a mighty ship to lands beyond the main.

And must we close this scene of merriment ?  
—Lo ! in the lake soft burns the star of eve,  
And the night-hawk hath warn'd our guests to leave,  
Ere darker shades descend, our happy tent.

The Moon's bright edge is seen above the hill;  
She comes to light them on their homeward way;  
And every heart, I ween, now lies as still  
As on yon fleecy cloud her new-born ray.  
Kindly by young and old our hands are press'd,  
And kindly we the gentle touch return;  
Each face declares that deep in every breast  
Peace, virtue, friendship, and affection burn.  
At last beneath the silent air we part,  
And promise make that shall not be in vain,  
A promise asked and given warm from the heart,  
That we will visit all, on hill and plain,  
If e'er it be our lot to see this land again!

Backward they gazed, as slowly they withdrew,  
With step reluctant, from the water-side;  
And oft, with waving hand, at distance tried  
Through the dim light to send a last adieu!  
One lovely groupe still linger'd on the green,  
The first to come, the last to go away;

While steep'd in stillness of the moonlight scene,  
Moor'd to a rock their little pinnace lay.  
These laughing damsels climb its humble side,  
Like fairy elves that love the starry sea ;  
Nor e'er did billows with more graceful glide  
'Mid the wild main enjoy their liberty.  
Their faces brightening in triumphant hue,  
Close to each maid their joyful lovers stand ;  
One gives the signal,—all the jovial crew  
Let go, with tender press, the yielding hand ;  
—Down drop the oars at once,—away they push from  
land.

The boat hath left the silent bank, the tone  
Of the retiring oar escapes the mind ;  
Like mariners some ship hath left behind,  
We feel, thus standing speechless and alone.  
One moment lives that melancholy trance—  
The mountains ring : Oh ! what a joy is there !  
As hurries o'er their heights, in circling dance,  
Cave-loving Echo, Daughter of the Air.

Is it some spirit of night that wakes the shout,  
As o'er the cliffs, with headlong speed, she ranges?  
Is it, on plain and steep, some fairy rout  
Answering each other in tumultuous changes?  
There seems amid the hills a playful war;  
Trumpet and clarion join the mystic noise;  
Now growing on the ear, now dying far!  
Great Gabel from his summit sends a voice,  
And the remotest depths of Ennerdale rejoice!

Oh! well I know what means this din of mirth!  
No spirits are they, who, trooping through the sky,  
In chorus swell that mountain-melody;  
—It comes from mortal children of the earth!  
These are the voices that so late did cheer  
Our tent with laughter; from the hills they come  
With friendly sound unto our listening ear,  
A jocund farewell to our glimmering home.  
Loth are our guests, though they have linger'd long,  
That our sweet tent at last should leave their sight;  
So with one voice they sing a parting song,

Ere they descend behind the clouds of night.  
Nor are we mute ; an answering shout we wake,  
At each short pause of the long, lengthening sound,  
Till all is silent as the silent Lake,  
And every noise above, below, around,  
Seems in the brooding night-sky's depth of slumber  
drown'd !

Soon from that calm our spirits start again  
With blyther vigour ; nought around we see,  
Save lively images of mirth and glee,  
And playful fancies hurry through our brain.  
Shine not, sweet Moon ! with such a haughty light ;  
Ye stars ! behind your veil of clouds retire ;  
For we shall kindle on the earth, this night,  
To drown your feeble rays, a joyous fire.  
Bring the leaves withering in the holly-shade,  
The oaken branches sapless now and hoar,  
The fern no longer green, and whins that fade  
'Mid the thin sand that strews the rocky shore.

Heap them above that new-awaken'd spark ;  
Soon shall a pyramid of flame arise ;  
Now the first rustling of the vapour, hark !  
The kindling spirit from its prison flies,  
And in an instant mounts in glory to the skies !

Far gleams the Lake, as in the light of day,  
Or when, from mountain-top, the setting sun,  
Ere yet his earth-delighting course is run,  
Sheds on the slumbering wave a purple ray.  
A bright'ning verdure runs o'er every field,  
As if by potent necromancer shed,  
And a dark wood is suddenly reveal'd,  
A glory resting on its ancient head.  
And oh ! what radiant beauty doth invest  
Our tent that seems to feel a conscious pride,  
Whiter by far than any cygnet's breast,  
Or cygnet's shadow floating with the tide.  
A warmer flush unto the moonlight cold,  
Winning its lovely way, is softly given,  
A silvery radiance tinged with vivid gold ;

While thousand mimic stars are gayly driven  
Through the bright-glistening air, scarce known from  
those in Heaven.

Amid the flame our lurid figures stand,  
Or, through the shrouding vapour dimly view'd,  
To fancy seem, in that strange solitude,  
Like the wild brethren of some lawless band.  
One, snatching from the heap a blazing bough,  
Would, like lone maniac, from the rest retire,  
And, as he waved it, mutter deep a vow,  
His head encircled with a wreath of fire.  
Others, with rushing haste, and eager voice,  
Would drag new victims to the insatiate power,  
That like a savage idol did rejoice  
Whate'er his suppliants offer'd to devour.  
And aye strange murmurs o'er the mountains roll'd,  
As if from sprite immured in cavern lone,  
While higher rose pale Luna to behold  
Our mystic orgies, where no light had shone,  
For many and many a year of silence—but her own.

O ! gracious Goddess ! not in vain did shine  
Thy spirit o'er the heavens ; with reverent eye  
We hail'd thee floating through the happy sky ;  
No smiles to us are half so dear as thine !  
Silent we stood beside our dying flame,  
In pensive sadness, born of wild delight,  
And gazing heavenward, many a gentle name  
Bestow'd on her who beautifies the night.  
Then, with one heart, like men who inly mourn'd,  
Slowly we paced towards our fairy cell,  
And e'er we enter'd, for one moment turn'd,  
And bade the silent majesty farewell !  
Our rushy beds invite us to repose ;  
And while our spirits breathe a grateful prayer,  
In balmy slumbers soon our eyelids close,  
While, in our dreams, the Moon, serenely fair,  
Still bathes in light divine the visionary air !

Methinks, next night, I see her mount her throne,  
Intent with loving smile once more to hail



The deep, deep peace of this her loneliest vale,  
—But where hath now the magic dwelling flown?  
Oh! it hath melted like a dream away,  
A dream by far too beautiful for earth;  
Or like a cloud that hath no certain stay,  
But ever changing, like a different birth.  
The aged holly trees more silently,  
Now we are gone, stand on the silent ground;  
I seem to hear the streamlet floating by  
With a complaining, melancholy sound.  
Hush'd are the echoes in each mountain's breast,  
No traces there of former mirth remain;  
They all in friendly grandeur lie at rest  
And silent, save where Nature's endless strain,  
From cataract and cave, delights her lonely reign.

Yet, though the strangers and their tent have past  
Away, like snow that leaves no mark behind,  
Their image lives in many a guiltless mind,  
And long within the shepherd's cot shall last.  
Oft when, on winter night, the crowded seat

Is closely wheel'd before the blazing fire,  
Then will he love with grave voice to repeat  
(He, the gray-headed venerable sire,  
The conversation he with us did hold  
On moral subjects, he had studied long ;  
And some will jibe the maid who was so bold  
As sing to strangers readily a song.  
Then they unto each other will recal  
Each little incident of that strange night,  
And give their kind opinion of us all :  
God bless their faces smiling in the light  
Of their own cottage-hearth ! O, fair subduing sight !

Friends of my heart ! who shared that purest joy,  
And oft will read these lines with soften'd soul,  
Go where we will, let years of absence roll,  
Nought shall our sacred amity destroy.  
We walk'd together through the mountain-calm,  
In open confidence, and perfect trust ;  
And pleasure, falling through our breasts like balm,  
Told that the yearnings that we felt were just.

No slighting tone, no chilling look e'er marr'd  
The happiness in which our thoughts reposed,  
No words save those of gentleness were heard,  
The eye spoke kindly when the lip was closed.  
But chief, on that blest day that wakes my song,  
Our hearts eternal truth in silence swore ;  
The holy oath is planted deep and strong  
Within our spirits,—in their inmost core,—  
And it shall blossom fair till life shall be no more !

Most hallow'd day ! scarce can my heart sustain  
Your tender light by memory made more mild ;  
Tears could I shed even like unto a child,  
And sighs within my spirit hush the strain.  
Too many clouds have dimm'd my youthful life,  
These wakeful eyes too many vigils kept ;  
Mine hath it been to toss in mental strife,  
When in the moonlight breathing Nature slept.  
But I forget my cares, in bliss forget,  
When, peaceful Valley ! I remember thee ;

I seem to breathe the air of joy, and yet  
Thy bright'ning hues with moisten'd eyes I see.  
So will it be, till life itself doth close,  
Roam though I may o'er many a distant clime;  
Happy, or pining in unnoticed woes,  
Oft shall my soul recal that blessed time,  
And in her depths adore the beauteous and sublime !

Time that my rural reed at last should cease  
Its willing numbers ; not in vain hath flow'd  
The strain that on my singing heart bestow'd  
The holy boon of undisturbed peace.  
O gentlest Lady ! Sister of my friend,  
This simple strain I consecrate to thee ;  
Haply its music with thy soul may blend,  
Albeit well used to loftier minstrelsy.  
Nor, may thy quiet spirit read the lay  
With cold regard, thou wife and mother blest !  
For he was with me on that Sabbath-day,  
Whose heart lies buried in thy inmost breast.

Then go my innocent and blameless tale,  
In gladness go, and free from every fear,  
To yon sweet dwelling above Grassmere vale,  
And be to them I long have held so dear,  
One of their fire-side songs, still fresh from year to  
year !



## MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

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*Oh ! Nature ! whose Elysian scenes disclose  
His bright perfections at whose word they rose,  
Next to that Power who form'd thee and sustains,  
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.  
Still, as I touch the lyre, do thou expand  
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand.*

COWPER.





THE  
HERMITAGE.

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STRANGER! this lonely glen in ancient times  
Was named the glen of blood; nor Christian feet  
By night or day, from these o'er-arching cliffs  
That haply now have to thy joyful shouts  
Return'd a mellow music, ever brought  
One trembling sound to break the depth of silence.  
The village maiden, in this little stream,  
Though then, as now, most clearly beautiful,  
Ne'er steeped her simple garments, while she sang  
Some native air of sadness or of mirth.  
In these cold, shady pools, the fearless trout  
Ne'er saw the shadow, but of sailing cloud,  
Or kite that wheeling eyed the far-off lamb;

And on yon hazel bowers the ripen'd fruit  
Hung clustering, moved but by the frequent swing  
Of playful squirrel,—for no school-boy here  
With crook and angle light on holiday  
Came nutting, or to snare the sportive fry.  
Even bolder spirits shunn'd the glen of blood !  
These rocks, the abode of echo, never mock'd  
In sportive din the huntsman's bugle horn ;  
And as the shepherd from the mountain-fold  
Homewards return'd beneath the silent Moon,  
A low unconscious prayer would agitate  
His breathless heart, for here in unblest grave  
Lay one for whom ne'er toll'd the passing-bell !

And thus was Nature by the impious guilt  
Of one who scorn'd her gracious solitude,  
Defrauded of her worshippers : though pure  
This glen, as consecrated house of God,  
Fit haunt of heaven-aspiring piety,  
Or in whose dripping cells the poet's ear

Might list unearthly music, this sweet glen  
With all its tender tints and pensive sounds,  
Its balmy fragrance and romantic forms,  
Lay lonely and unvisited, yea worse,  
Peopled with fancied demons, and the brood  
At enmity with man.

So was it once :

But now far other creed hath sanctified  
This dim seclusion, and all human hearts  
Unto its spirit deeply reconciled.  
'Tis said, and I in truth believe the tale,  
That many years ago an aged man,  
Of a divine aspect and stately form,  
Came to this glen, and took up his abode  
In one of those wild caves so numerous  
Among the hanging cliffs, though hid from view  
By trailing ivy, or thick holly-bush,  
Through the whole year so deeply, brightly green.  
With evil eye the simple villagers  
First look'd on him, and scarcely dared to tell

Each other, what dim fears were in their souls.  
But there is something in the voice and eye  
Of beautiful old age, with angel power  
That charms away suspicion, and compels  
The unwilling soul to reverence and love.  
So was it with this mystical old man !  
When first he came into the glen, the spring  
Had just begun to tinge the sullen rocks  
With transient smiles, and ere the leafy bowers  
Of summer rustled, many a visitant  
Had sat within his hospitable cave,  
From his maple bowl the unpolluted spring  
Drunk fearless, and with him partook the bread  
That his pale lips most reverently had bless'd  
With words becoming such a holy man !

Oft was he seen surrounded by a groupe  
Of happy children, unto whom he spake  
With more than a paternal tenderness ;  
And they who once had gazed with trembling fear  
On the wild dweller in th' unholy glen,

At last with airy trip and gladsome song  
Would seek him there, and listen on his knee  
To mournful ditties, and most touching tales !

One only book was in this hermit's cell,  
The Book of Life : and when from it he read  
With solemn voice devoutly musical,  
His thoughtful eye still brightening as the words,  
The words of Jesus, in that peaceful cave  
Sounded more holily,—and his grey hair,  
Betokening that e'er long in Jesus' breast  
Would be his blessed sleep,—on his calm brows  
Spread quietly, like thin and snowy clouds  
On the husht evening sky :—While thus he sate,  
Ev'n like the Apostle whom our Saviour loved,  
In his old age, in Patmos' lonely isle  
Musing on him that he had served in youth,—  
Oh ! then, I ween, the awe-struck villagers  
Could scarce sustain his tones so deeply charged  
With hope, and faith, and gratitude, and joy.

But when they gazed!—in the mild lineaments  
Of his majestic visage, they beheld  
How beautiful is holiness, and deem'd  
That sure he was some spirit sent by God  
To teach the way to Heaven!

id d:

And yet his voice  
Was oft times sadder, than as they conceived  
An Angel's voice would be, and though to sooth  
The sorrows of all others ever seem'd  
His only end in life, perhaps he had  
Griefs of his own of which he nothing spake;  
Else were his locks more grey, more pale his cheek,  
Than one had thought who only saw his form  
So stately and so tall.—

Once did they speak  
To him of that most miserable man  
Who here himself had slain,—and then his eye  
Was glazed with stern compassion, and a tear,—

It was the first they e'er had seen him shed,  
Though mercy was the attribute he loved  
Dearest in God's own Son,—bedimm'd its light  
For a short moment ; yea, that hermit old  
Wept,—and his sadden'd face angelical  
Veil'd with his wither'd hands,—then on their knees  
He bade his children (so he loved to call  
The villagers) kneel down ; and unto God  
Pray for his brother's soul.—

Amid the dust

The hermit long hath slept,—and every one  
That listen'd to the saint's delightful voice.  
In yonder church-yard, near the eastern porch,  
Close to the altar-wall, a little mound  
As if by nature shaped, and strewn by her  
With every tender flower that sorrow loves,  
Tradition calls his grave. On Sabbath-day,  
The hind oft hears the legendary tale  
Rehearsed by village moralist austere  
With many a pious phrase ; and not a child,

Whose trembling feet have scarcely learnt to walk,  
But will conduct thee to the hallow'd spot  
And lisp the hermit's name.

Nor did the cave

That he long time from Nature tenanted  
Remain unhonour'd.—Duly every spring,  
Upon the day he died, thither repair'd  
Many a pure spirit, to his memory  
Chaunting a choral hymn, composed by one  
Who on his death-bed sat and closed his eyes.  
“ I am the resurrection and the life,”  
Some old man then would, with a solemn voice,  
Read from that Bible that so oft had blest  
The Hermit's solitude with heavenly cheer.  
This Book, sole relic of the sinless man,  
Was from the dust kept sacred, and even now  
Lies in yon box of undecaying yew,  
And may it never fade!—



## Stranger unknown !

Thou breath'st, at present, in the very cave  
Where on the Hermit death most gently fell  
Like a long wish'd-for slumber. The great Lord,  
Whose castle stands amid the music wild  
Breathed from the bosom of an hundred glens,  
In youth by nature taught to venerate  
Things truly venerable, hither came  
One year to view the fair solemnity :  
And that the forest-weeds might not obstruct  
The entrance of the cave, or worm defile  
The soft green beauty of its mossy walls,  
This massive door was from a fallen oak  
Shaped rudely, but all other ornament,  
That porch of living rock with woodbines wreathed,  
And outer roof with many a pensile shrub  
Most delicate, he with wise feeling left  
To Nature, and her patient servant, Time !

Stranger ! I know thee not : yet since thy feet  
Have wandered here, I deem that thou art one

Whose heart doth love in silent communings  
To walk with Nature, and from scenes like these  
Of solemn sadness, to sublime thy soul  
To high endurance of all earthly pains  
Of mind or body ; so that thou connect  
With Nature's lovely and more lofty forms,  
Congenial thoughts of grandeur or of grace  
In moral being. All creation takes  
The spirit of its character from him  
Who looks thereon ; and to a blameless heart,  
Earth, air, and ocean, howsoe'er beheld,  
Are pregnant with delight, while even the clouds,  
Embath'd in dying sunshine, to the base  
Possess no glory, and to the wicked lower  
As with avenging thunder.

This sweet glen,

How sweet it is thou feel'st, with sylvan rocks  
Excluding all but one blue glimpse of sky  
Above, and from the world that lies around  
All but the faint remembrance, tempted once

To most unnatural murder, once sublimed  
To the high temper of the seraphim :  
And thus, though its mild character remain'd  
Immutable,—with pious dread was shunn'd  
As an unholy spot, or visited  
With reverence, as a consecrated shrine.

Farewell! and grave this moral on thy heart,  
“ That Nature smiles for ever on the good,—  
“ But that all beauty dies with innocence !”

## LINES

WRITTEN ON READING THE MEMOIRS OF  
MISS SMITH.

---

PEACE to the dead ! the voice of Nature cries,  
Even o'er the grave where guilt or frailty lies ;  
Compassion drives each sterner thought away,  
And all seem good when mouldering in the clay.  
For who amid the dim religious gloom,  
The solemn sabbath brooding o'er the tomb,  
The holy stillness that suspends our breath  
When the soul rests within the shade of death,  
What heart could then with-hold the pensive sigh  
Reflection pays to poor mortality,  
Nor sunk in pity near allied to love,  
E'en bless the being we could ne'er approve !

The headstrong will with innocence at strife,  
The restless passions that deform'd his life,  
Desires that spurn'd at reason's weak controul,  
And dimm'd the native lustre of the soul,  
The look repulsive that like ice repress'd  
The friendly warmth that play'd within the breast,  
The slighting word, through heedlessness severe,  
Wounding the spirit that it ought to cheer,  
Lie buried in the grave ! or if they live,  
Remembrance only wakes them to forgive ;  
While vice and error steal a soft relief  
From the still twilight of a mellowing grief.  
And oh ! how lovely do the tints return  
Of every virtue sleeping in the urn !  
Each grace that fledted unobserved away,  
Starts into life when those it deck'd decay ;  
Regret fresh beauty on the corse bestows,  
And self-reproach is mingled with our woes.

But nobler sorrows lift the musing mind,  
When soaring spirits leave their frames behind,

Who walked the world in Nature's generous pride,  
And, like a sun-beam, lighten'd as they died !  
Hope, resignation, the sad soul beguile,  
And Grief's tear drops 'mid Faith's celestial smile :  
Then burns our being with a holy mirth  
That owns no kindred with this mortal earth ;  
For hymning angels in blest vision wave  
Their wings' bright glory o'er the seraph's grave !

Oh thou ! whose soul unmoved by earthly strife,  
Led by the pole-star of eternal life,  
Own'd no emotion stain'd by touch of clay,  
No thought that angels might not pleased survey ;  
Thou ! whose calm course through Virtue's fields was  
run

From youth's fair morning to thy setting sun,  
Nor vice e'er dared one little cloud to roll  
O'er the bright beauty of thy spotless soul ;  
Thou ! who secure in good works strong to save,  
Resign'd and happy, eyed'st the opening grave,

And in the blooming summer of thy years  
Scarce felt'st regret to leave this vale of tears ;  
Oh ! from thy throne amid the starry skies,  
List to my words thus interwove with sighs,  
And if the high resolves, the cherish'd pain  
That prompt the weak but reverential strain,  
If love of virtue ardent and sincere  
Can win to mortal verse a cherub's car,  
Bend from thy radiant throne thy form divine,  
And make the adoring spirit pure as thine !  
When my heart muses o'er the long review  
Of all thy bosom felt, thy reason knew,  
O'er boundless learning free from boastful pride,  
And patience humble though severely tried,  
Judgment unclouded, passions thrice refined,  
A heaven-aspiring loftiness of mind,  
And, rare perfection ! calm and sober sense  
Combined with fancy's wild magnificence ;  
Struck with the pomp of Nature's wondrous plan,  
I hail with joy the dignity of man,

And soaring high above life's roaring sea,  
Spring to the dwelling of my God and Thee.

Short here thy stay ! for souls of holiest birth  
Dwell but a moment with the sons of earth ;  
To this dim sphere by God's indulgence given,  
Their friends are angels, and their home is heaven.  
The fairest rose in shortest time decays ;  
The sun, when brightest, soon withdraws his rays ;  
The dew that gleams like diamonds on the thorn,  
Melts instantaneous at the breath of morn ;  
Too soon a rolling shade of darkness shrouds  
The star that smiles amid the evening clouds ;  
And sounds that come so sweetly on the ear,  
That the soul wishes every sense could hear,  
Are as the Light's unwearied pinions fleet,  
As scarce as beautiful, and as short as sweet.

Yet, though the unpolluted soul requires  
Airs born in Heaven to fan her sacred fires,



And mounts to God, exulting to be free  
From fleshly chain that binds mortality,  
The world is hallow'd by her blest sojourn,  
And glory dwells for ever round her urn !  
Her skirts of beauty sanctify the air  
That felt her breathings, and that heard her prayer ;  
Vice dies where'er the radiant vision trod,  
And there e'en Atheists must believe in God !  
Such the proud triumphs that the good atchieve !  
Such the blest gift that sinless spirits leave !  
The parted soul in God-given strength sublime,  
Streams undimm'd splendour o'er unmeasured time ;  
Still on the earth the sainted hues survive,  
Dead in the tomb, but in the heart alive.  
In vain the tide of ages strives to roll  
A bar to check the intercourse of soul ;  
The hovering spirits of the good and great  
With fond remembrance own their former state,  
And musing virtue often can behold  
In vision high their plumes of wavy gold,

And drink with tranced ear the silver sound  
Of seraphs hymning on their nightly round.  
By death untaught, our range of thought is small,  
Bound by the attraction of this earthly ball.  
Our sorrows and our joys, our hopes and fears,  
Ignobly pent within a few short years ;  
But when our hearts have read Fate's mystic book,  
On Heaven's gemm'd sphere we lift a joyful look,  
Hope turns to Faith, Faith glorifies the gloom,  
And life springs forth exulting from the tomb !

Oh, blest ELIZA ! though to me unknown,  
Thine eye's mild lustre and thy melting tone ;  
Though on this earth apart our lives were led,  
Nor my love found thee till thy soul was fled ;  
Yet, can affection kiss thy silent clay,  
And rend the glimmering veil of death away :  
Fancy beholds with fixed, delighted eye,  
Thy white-robed spirit gently gliding by ;  
Deep sinks thy smile into my quiet breast,  
As moonlight steeps the ocean-wave in rest !

While thus, bright shade ! thine eyes of mercy dwell  
On that fair land thou loved'st of old so well,  
What holy raptures through thy being flow,  
To see thy memory blessing all below,  
Virtue re-ignite at thy grave her fires,  
And vice repentant shun his low desires !  
This the true Christian's heaven ! on earth to see  
The sovereign power of immortality  
At war with sin, and in triumphant pride  
Spreading the empire of the crucified.—

Oft 'mid the calm of mountain solitude,  
Where Nature's loveliness thy spirit woo'd ;  
Where lonely cataracts with sullen roar  
To thy hush'd heart a fearful rapture bore,  
And caverns moaning with the voice of night,  
Steep'd through the ear thy mind in strange delight,  
I feel thy influence on my heart descend  
Like words of comfort whispered by a friend,  
And every cloud in lovelier figures roll,  
Shaped by the power of thy presiding soul !

And when, slow-sinking in a blaze of light,  
The sun in glory bathes each radiant height,  
Amid the glow thy form seraphic seems  
To float refulgent with unborrow'd beams ;  
For thou, like him, hadst still thy course pursued,  
From thy own blessedness dispensing good ;  
Brightly thy soul in life's fair morn arose,  
And burn'd like him, more glorious at its close.

But now, I feel my pensive spirit turn,  
Where parents, brothers, sisters, o'er thee mourn.  
For though to all unconscious time supplies  
A strength of soul that stifles useless sighs ;  
And in our loneliest hours of grief is given  
To our dim gaze a nearer glimpse of heaven,  
Yet, human frailty pines in deep distress,  
Even when a friend has soar'd to happiness,  
And sorrow, selfish from excess of love,  
Would glad recal the seraph from above !  
And, chief, to thee ! on whose delighted breast,  
While, yet a babe, she play'd herself to rest,

Who rock'd her cradle with requited care,  
And bless'd her sleeping with a silent prayer ;  
To thee, who first beheld, with watchful eye,  
From her flush'd cheek health's natural radiance fly,  
And, though by fate denied the power to save,  
Smooth'd with kind care her passage to the grave,  
When slow consumption led with fatal bloom  
A rosy spectre smiling to the tomb ;  
The strain of comfort first to thee would flow,  
But thou hast comforts man could ne'er bestow ;  
And e'en misfortune's long and gloomy roll  
Wakes dreams of glory in thy stately soul.  
For reason whispers, and religion proves,  
That God by sorrow chasteneth whom he loves ;  
And suffering virtue smiles at misery's gloom,  
Chear'd by the light that burns beyond the tomb.

All Nature speaks of thy departed child,  
The flowery meadow, and the mountain wild ;  
Of her the lark 'mid sun-shine oft will sing,  
And torrents flow with dirge-like murmuring !

The lake, that smiles to heaven a watery gleam,  
Shows in the vivid beauty of a dream  
Her, whose fine touch in mellowing hues array'd  
The misty summit and the woodland glade,  
The sparkling depth that slept in waveless rest,  
And verdant isles reflected on its breast.  
As down the vale thy lonely footsteps stray,  
While eve steals dimly on retiring day,  
And the pale light that nameless calm supplies,  
That holds communion with the promised skies,  
When Nature's beauty overpowers distress,  
And stars soft-burning kindle holiness,  
Thy lips in passive resignation move,  
And peace broods o'er thee on the wings of love.  
The languid mien, the cheek of hectic die,  
The mournful beauty of the radiant eye,  
The placid smile, the light and easy breath  
Of nature blooming on the brink of death,  
When the fair phantom breathed in twilight balm  
A dying vigour and deceitful calm,

The tremulous voice that ever loved to tell  
Thy fearful heart, that all would soon be well,  
Steal on thy memory, and though tears will fall  
O'er scenes gone by that thou would'st fain recal,  
Yet oft has faith with deeper bliss beguiled  
A parent weeping her departed child,  
Than love maternal, when her baby lay  
Hush'd at her breast, or smiling in its play,  
And, as some glimpse of infant fancy came,  
Murmuring in scarce-heard lisp some broken name.  
Thou feel'st no more grief's palpitating start,  
Nor the drear night hangs heavy on thy heart.  
Though sky and star may yet awhile divide  
Thy mortal being from thy bosom's pride,  
Your spirits mingle—while to thine is given  
A loftier nature from the touch of heaven.

## HYMN TO SPRING

---

How beautiful the pastime of the Spring !  
Lo ! newly waking from her wintry dream,  
She, like a smiling infant, timid plays  
On the green margin of this sunny lake,  
Fearing, by starts, the little breaking waves  
(If riplings rather known by sound than sight  
May haply so be named) that in the grass  
Soon fade in murmuring mirth ; now seeming proud  
To venture round the edge of yon far point,  
That from an eminence softly sinking down,  
Doth from the wide and homeless waters shape  
A scene of tender, delicate repose,  
Fit haunt for thee, in thy first hours of joy,



Delightful Spring!—nor less an emblem fair,  
Like thee, of beauty, innocence, and youth.

On such a day, 'mid such a scene as this,  
Methinks the poets who in lovely hymns  
Have sung thy reign, sweet Power, and wished it long,  
In their warm hearts conceived those eulogies,  
That, lending to the world inanimate  
A pulse and spirit of life, for aye preserve  
The sanctity of Nature, and embalm  
Her fleeting spectacles in memory's cell  
In spite of time's mutations. Onwards roll  
The circling seasons, and as each gives birth  
To dreams peculiar, yea destructive oft  
Of former feelings, in oblivion's shade  
Sleep the fair visions of forgotten hours.  
But Nature calls the poet to her aid,  
And in his lays beholds her glory live  
For ever. Thus, in winter's deepest gloom,  
When all is dim before the outward eye,

Nor the ear catches one delightful sound,  
They who have wander'd in their musing walks  
With the great poets, in their spirits feel  
No change on earth, but see the unalter'd woods  
Laden with beauty, and inhale the song  
Of birds, airs, echoes, and of vernal showers.

So hath it been with me, delightful Spring !  
And now I hail thee as a friend who pays  
An annual visit, yet whose image lives  
From parting to return, and who is blest  
Each time with blessings warmer than before.

Oh ! gracious Power ! for thy beloved approach  
The expecting earth lay wrapt in kindling smiles,  
Struggling with tears, and often overcome.  
A blessing sent before thee from the heavens,  
A balmy spirit breathing tenderness,  
Prepared thy way, and all created things  
Felt that the angel of delight was near.

Thou camest at last, and such a heavenly smile  
Shone round thee, as beseem'd the eldest-born  
Of Nature's guardian spirits. The great Sun,  
Scattering the clouds with a resistless smile,  
Came forth to do thee homage ; a sweet hymn  
Was by the low Winds chaunted in the sky ;  
And when thy feet descended on the earth,  
Scarce could they move amid the clustering flowers  
By Nature strewn o'er valley, hill, and field,  
To hail her blest deliverer !—Ye fair Trees,  
How are ye changed, and changing while I gaze !  
It seems as if some gleam of verdant light  
Fell on you from a rainbow ; but it lives  
Amid your tendrils, brightening every hour  
Into a deeper radiance. Ye sweet Birds,  
Were you asleep through all the wintry hours,  
Beneath the waters, or in mossy caves ?  
There are, 'tis said, birds that pursue the spring,  
Where'er she flies, or else in death-like sleep  
Abide her annual reign, when forth they come  
With freshen'd plumage and enraptured song,

As ye do now, unwearied choristers,  
Till the land ring with joy. Yet are ye not,  
Sporting in tree and air, more beautiful  
Than the young lambs, that from the valley-side  
Send a soft bleating like an infant's voice,  
Half happy, half afraid ! O blessed things !  
At sight of this your perfect innocence,  
The sterner thoughts of manhood melt away  
Into a mood as mild as woman's dreams.  
The strife of working intellect, the stir  
Of hopes ambitious ; the disturbing sound  
Of fame, and all that worshipp'd pageantry  
That ardent spirits burn for in their pride,  
Fly like departing clouds, and leave the soul  
Pure and serene as the blue depths of heaven.

Now, is the time in some meek solitude  
To hold communion with those innocent thoughts  
That bless'd our earlier days ;—to list the voice  
Of Conscience murmuring from her inmost shrine,  
And learn if still she sing the qui t tune

That fill'd the ear of youth. If then we feel,  
That 'mid the powers, the passions, and desires  
Of riper age, we still have kept our hearts  
Free from pollution, and 'mid tempting scenes  
Walk'd on with pure and unreprieved steps,  
Fearless of guilt, as if we knew it not ;  
Ah me ! with what a new sublimity  
Will the green hills lift up their sunny heads,  
Ourselves as stately : Smiling will we gaze  
On the clouds whose happy home is in the heavens ;  
Nor envy the clear streamlet that pursues  
His course 'mid flowers and music to the sea.  
But dread the beauty of a vernal day,  
Thou trembler before memory ! To the saint  
What sight so lovely as the angel form  
That smiles upon his sleep ! The sinner veils  
His face ashamed,—unable to endure  
The upbraiding silence of the seraph's eyes !—

Yet awful must it be, even to the best  
And wisest man, when he beholds the sun  
Prepared once more to run his annual round  
Of glory and of love, and thinks that God  
To him, though sojourning in earthly shades,  
Hath also given an orbit, whence his light  
May glad the nations, or at least diffuse  
Peace and contentment over those he loves !  
His soul expanded by the breath of Spring,  
With holy confidence the thoughtful man  
Renews his vows to virtue,—vows that bind  
To purest motives and most useful deeds.  
Thus solemnly doth pass the vernal day,  
In abstinence severe from worldly thoughts ;  
Lofty disdainings of all trivial joys  
Or sorrows ; meditations long and deep  
On objects fit for the immortal love  
Of souls immortal ; weeping penitence  
For duties (plain though highest duties be)  
Despised or violated ; humblest vows,

Though humble strong as death, henceforth to walk  
Elate in innocence ; and, holier still,  
Warm gushings of his spirit unto God  
For all his past existence, whether bright,  
As the spring landscape sleeping in the sun,  
Or dim and desolate like a wintry sea  
Stormy and boding storms ! Oh ! such will be  
Frequent and long his musings, till he feels  
As all the stir subsides, like busy day  
Soft-melting into eve's tranquillity,  
How blest is peace when born within the soul.

And therefore do I sing these pensive hymns,  
O Spring ! to thee, though thou by some art call'd  
Parent of mirth and rapture, worshipp'd best  
With festive dances and a choral song.  
No melancholy man am I, sweet Spring !  
Who, filling all things with his own poor griefs,  
Sees nought but sadness in the character  
Of universal Nature, and who weaves  
Most doleful ditties in the midst of joy.

Yet knowing something, dimly though it be,  
And therefore still more awful, of that strange  
And most tumultuous thing, the heart of man,  
It chanceth oft, that mix'd with Nature's smiles  
My soul beholds a solemn quietness  
That almost looks like grief, as if on earth  
There were no perfect joy, and happiness  
Still trembled on the brink of misery !

Yea ! mournful thoughts like these even now arise,  
While Spring, like Nature's smiling infancy,  
Sports round me, and all images of peace  
Seem native to this earth, nor other home  
Desire or know. Yet doth a mystic chain  
Link in our hearts foreboding fears of death  
With every loveliest thing that seems to us  
Most deeply fraught with life. Is there a child  
More beautiful than its playmates, even more pure  
Than they ? while gazing on its face, we think  
That one so fair most surely soon will die !  
Such are the fears now beating at my heart,



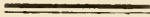
Ere long, sweet Spring! amid forgotten things  
Thou and thy smiles must sleep: thy little lambs  
Dead, or their nature changed; thy hymning birds  
Mute;—faded every flower so beautiful;—  
And all fair symptoms of incipient life  
To fulness swollen, or sunk into decay!

Such are the melancholy dreams that filled  
In the elder time the songs of tenderest bards,  
Whene'er they named the Spring. Thence, doubts  
and fears  
Of what might be the final doom of man;  
Till all things spoke to their perplexed souls  
The language of despair; and, mournful sight!  
Even hope lay prostrate upon beauty's grave!—  
Vain fears of death! breath'd forth in deathless lays!  
O foolish bards, immortal in your works,  
Yet trustless of your immortality!  
Not now are they whom Nature calls her bards  
Thus daunted by the image of decay.  
They have their tears, and oft they shed them too,

By reason unreproach'd; but on the pale  
Cold cheek of death, they see a spirit smile,  
Bright and still brightening, even like thee, O Spring!  
Stealing in beauty through the winter-snow!—

Season, beloved of Heaven! my hymn is closed!  
And thou, sweet Lake! on whose retired banks  
I have so long reposed, yet in the depth  
Of meditation scarcely seen thy waves,  
Farewell!—the voice of worship and of praise  
Dies on my lips, yet shall my heart preserve  
Inviolate the spirit whence it sprung!  
Even as a harp, when some wild plaintive strain  
Goes with the hand that touch'd it, still retains  
The soul of music sleeping in its strings.

## MELROSE ABBEY.



IT was not when the Sun through the glittering sky,  
In summer's joyful majesty,  
Look'd from his cloudless height;—  
It was not when the Sun was sinking down,  
And tinging the ruin's mossy brown  
With gleams of ruddy light;—  
Nor yet when the Moon, like a pilgrim fair,  
'Mid star and planet journeyed slow,  
And, mellowing the stillness of the air,  
Smiled on the world below;—  
That, MELROSE! 'mid thy mouldering pride,  
All breathless and alone,

I grasped the dreams to day denied,  
High dreams of ages gone !—  
Had unshriev'd guilt for one moment been there,  
His heart had turn'd to stone !  
For oft, though felt no moving gale,  
Like restless ghost in glimmering shroud,  
Through lofty Oriel opening pale  
Was seen the hurrying cloud ;  
And, at doubtful distance, each broken wall  
Frown'd black as bier's mysterious pall  
From mountain-cave beheld by ghastly seer ;  
It seem'd as if sound had ceased to be ;  
Nor dust from arch, nor leaf from tree,  
Relieved the noiseless ear.  
The owl had sailed from her silent tower,  
Tweed hush'd his weary wave,  
The time was midnight's moonless hour,  
My seat a dreaded Douglas' grave !

My being was sublimed by joy,  
My heart was big, yet I could not weep ;

I felt that God would ne'er destroy  
The mighty in their tranced sleep.  
Within the pile no common dead  
Lay blended with their kindred mould ;  
Theirs were the hearts that pray'd, or bled,  
In cloister dim, on death-plain red,  
The pious and the bold.  
There slept the saint whose holy strains  
Brought seraphs round the dying bed ;  
And there the warrior, who to chains  
Ne'er stoop'd his crested head.  
I felt my spirit sink or swell  
With patriot rage or lowly fear,  
As battle-trump, or convent-bell,  
Rung in my tranced ear.  
But dreams prevail'd of loftier mood,  
When stern beneath the chancel high  
My country's spectre-monarch stood,  
All sheath'd in glittering panoply ;  
Then I thought with pride what noble blood  
Had flow'd for the hills of liberty.

High the resolves that fill the brain  
With transports trembling upon pain,  
When the veil of time is rent in twain,  
That hides the glory past !  
The scene may fade that gave them birth,  
But they perish not with the perishing earth,  
For ever shall they last.  
And higher, I ween, is that mystic might  
That comes to the soul from the silent night,  
When she walks, like a disembodied spirit,  
Through realms her sister shades inherit,  
And soft as the breath of those blessed flowers  
That smile in Heaven's unfading bowers,  
With love and awe, a voice she hears  
Murmuring assurance of immortal years.  
In hours of loneliness and woe  
Which even the best and wisest know,  
How leaps the lighten'd heart to seize  
On the bliss that comes with dreams like these !  
As fair before the mental eye  
The pomp and beauty of the dream return,

Dejected virtue calms her sigh,  
And leans resign'd on memory's urn.  
She feels how weak is mortal pain,  
When each thought that starts to life again,  
Tells that she hath not lived in vain.

For Solitude, by Wisdom woo'd,  
Is ever mistress of delight,  
And even in gloom or tumult view'd,  
She sanctifies their living blood  
Who learn her lore aright.  
The dreams her awful face imparts,  
Unhallowed mirth destroy;  
Her griefs bestow on noble hearts  
A nobler power of joy.  
While hope and faith the soul thus fill,  
We smile at chance distress,  
And drink the cup of human ill  
In stately happiness.  
Thus even where death his empire keeps  
Life holds the pageant vain,

And where the lofty spirit sleeps,  
There lofty visions reign.  
Yea, often to night-wandering man  
A pow'r fate's dim decrees to scan,  
In lonely trance by bliss is given ;  
And midnight's starless silence rolls  
A giant vigour through our souls,  
That stamps us sons of Heaven.

Then, MELROSE ! Tomb of heroes old !  
Blest be the hour I dwelt with thee ;  
The visions that can ne'er be told  
That only poets in their joy can see,  
The glory born above the sky  
The deep-felt weight of sanctity !  
Thy massy towers I view no more  
Through brooding darkness rising hoar,  
Like a broad line of light dim seen  
Some sable mountain-cleft between !  
Since that dread hour, hath human thought  
A thousand gay creations brought



Before my earthly eye ;  
I to the world have lent an ear,  
Delighted all the while to hear  
The voice of poor mortality.  
Yet, not the less doth there abide  
Deep in my soul a holy pride,  
That knows by whom it was bestowed,  
Lofty to man, but low to God ;  
Such pride as hymning angels cherish,  
Blest in the blaze where man would perish.

## EXTRACT

FROM AN UNFINISHED POEM, ENTITLED

“ THE HEARTH.”

---

MY soul, behold the beauty of his home !  
The very heavens look down with gracious smiles  
Upon its holy rest. How bright a green  
Sleeps round the dwelling of two loving hearts !  
The air lies hush'd above the peaceful roof,  
As if it felt the sanctity within.  
On glides the river with a tranquil flow,  
Delighting in his music, as he bathes  
The happy bounds where happiness doth stray.  
—I see them sitting by each other's side,  
In the heart's silent secrecy ! I hear  
The breath of meditation from their souls.

They speak : a soft, subduing tenderness,  
Born of devotion, innocence and bliss,  
Steals from their bosoms in a silver voice  
That makes a pious hymning melody.  
They look : a gleam of light as sadly sweet  
As if they listen'd to some mournful tale,  
Swims in their eyes that almost melt to tears.  
They smile : oh ! never did such languor steal  
From lustre of two early-risen stars  
When all the silent heavens appear their own.  
And lo ! an infant shews his gladsome face !  
His beautiful and shining golden head  
Lies on his mother's bosom, like a rose  
Fallen on a liliated bank. A dewy light  
Meets the soft smiling of his upward eye,  
As in the playful restlessness of joy  
He clings around her neck, and fondly strives  
To reach the kisses mantling from her soul.  
—And now, the baby in his cradle sleeps,  
Hush'd by his mother's prayer ! How soft her tread  
Falls, like a snow-flake, on the noiseless floor !

She almost fears to breathe too fond a sigh  
Towards the father of her darling child.

—Sleep broods o'er all the house : the mother's heart,  
Beating within her husband's folding arms,  
Dreams of sweet looks of waking happiness,  
Unceasing greetings of congenial thought,  
Deep blendings of existence ; till awoke  
By the long stirring of delightful dreams,  
She with a silent prayer of thankfulness  
Leans gently-breathing on the breast of love !

Can guilt or misery ever enter here ?  
Ah ! no ; the spirit of domestic peace,  
Though calm and gentle as the brooding dove,  
And ever murmuring forth a quiet song,  
Guards, powerful as the sword of cherubim,  
The hallow'd porch. She hath a heavenly smile  
That sinks into the sullen soul of vice,  
And wins him o'er to virtue, so transforms  
The purpose of his heart, that sudden shame  
Smothers the curses struggling into birth,

And makes him turn an eye of kindliness  
Even on the blessings that he came to blast.  
It is a lofty thought, O guardian love !  
To think that he who lives beneath thine eye  
Can never be polluted. Pestilence,  
The dire, contagious pestilence of sin  
May walk abroad, and lay its victims low ;  
But they, whose upright spirits worship thee,  
Breathe not the tainted air—they live apart  
Unharm'd, as Israel's heaven-protected sons,  
When the exterminating angel pass'd  
With steps of blood o'er Egypt's groaning land.  
Then ever keep unbroken and unstained  
The sabbath-sanctity of home ; the shrine  
Where spirit in its rapture worships God.  
By Heaven beloved for ever are the walls  
That duly every morn and evening hear  
Our whisper'd hymns ! Eternity broods there.  
Yea ! like a father smiling on a band  
Of happy children, the Almighty One

Dwells in the midst of us, appearing oft  
In visible glory, while our filial souls,  
Made pure beneath the watching of his eye,  
Walk stately in the conscious praise of Heaven !

THE  
FRENCH EXILE.

---

MY Mary! wipe those tears away  
That dim thy lovely eyes,  
Nor, on that wild, romantic lay,  
That leads through fairy worlds astray,  
Waste all thy human sighs.  
Come hither on the lightsome wing  
Of innocence, and with thee bring  
Thy smiles that warmly fall  
Into the heart with sunny glow;  
When once he tunes his harp to sing,  
Thou wilt not be in haste to go.—  
—The Minstrel's in the Hall!

Quickly she started from her seat,  
With blushing, virgin-grace ;  
Her long hair floating like a stream,  
While through it shone with tender gleam  
Her calm and pensive face !  
Soon as she heard the Minstrel's name,  
Across her silent cheek there came  
A blythe yet pitying ray ;  
For often had she heard me tell  
Of the French Exile, blind and lame,  
Who sung and touched the harp so well—  
—Old Louis Fontenaye.

Silent he sat his harp beside,  
Upon an antique chair ;  
And something of his country's pride  
Did, exiled though he was, reside  
Throughout his foreign air !  
A snow-white dog of Gascon breed,  
With ribbands deck'd, was there to lead  
His dark steps,—and secure



The paltry alms that traveller threw,  
Alms that in truth he much did need,  
For every child that saw him, knew  
That he was wretched poor.

His harp with figures quaint and rare  
Was deck'd, and strange device ;  
There, you beheld the mermaid fair  
In mirror braid her sea-green hair,  
In wild and sportive guise.

There, on the imitated swell  
The Tritons blew the wreathed shell  
Around some fairy isle ;  
—He framed it, when almost a child,  
Long ere he left his native dell :  
Who saw the antic carving wild  
Could scarce forbear to smile.

With silver voice, the lady said,  
She knew how well he sung !—

—Starting, he raised his hoary head,  
To hear from that kind-hearted maid  
His own dear native tongue.  
He seem'd as if restored to sight,  
So suddenly his eyes grew bright  
When that music touch'd his ear ;  
The lilied fields of France, I ween,  
Before him swam in softened light,  
And the sweet waters of the Seine  
They all are murmuring near.

Even now, his voice was humbly sad,  
Subdued by woe and want ;  
So crush'd his heart, no wish he had  
To feel for one short moment glad,  
That hopeless Emigrant !  
—The aged man is young again,  
And cheerily chaunts a playful strain  
While his face with rapture shines ;—  
How rapidly his fingers glance  
O'er the glad strings ! his giddy brain

Drinks in the chorus and the dance,  
Beneath his clustering vines.

We saw it was a darling tune  
With his old heart,—a cheer  
That made all pains forgotten soon;—  
Gay look'd he as a bird in June  
That loves itself to hear.  
Nor undelightful were the lays  
That warm and flowery sung the praise  
Of France's lovely queen,  
When with the ladies of her court,  
Like Flora and her train of fays,  
She came at summer-eve to sport  
Along the banks of Seine.

But fades the sportive roundelay;  
Both harp and voice are still;  
The dear delusion will not stay,  
The murmuring Seine flows far away,  
Sink cot and vine-clad hill!

Though his cheated soul is wounded sore,  
His aged visage dimm'd once more,  
The smile will not depart ;  
But struggles 'mid the wrinkles there,  
For he clings unto the parting shore,  
And the morn of life so melting-fair,  
Still lingers in his heart.

Ah me ! what touching silentness  
Slept o'er the face divine  
Of my dear maid ! methought each tress  
Hung 'mid the light of tenderness,  
Like clouds in soft moonshine.  
With artful innocence she tried  
In languid smiles from me to hide  
Her tears that fell like rain ;—  
But when she felt I must perceive  
The drops of heavenly pity glide,  
She own'd she could not chuse but grieve,  
So gladsome was the strain !

If when his griefs once more began,  
His eyes had been restored,  
And met her face so still and wan,  
How had that aged, exiled man  
The pitying saint adored !  
Yet though the angel light that play'd  
Around her face, pierced not the shade  
That veil'd his eyeballs dim,—  
Yet to his ear her murmurs stole,  
And, with a faltering voice, he said  
That he felt them sink into his soul  
Like the blessed Virgin's hymn !

He pray'd that Heaven its flowers would strew  
On both our heads through life,  
With such a tone, as told he knew  
She was a virgin fond and true,  
Mine own betrothed wife !  
And something too he strove to say  
In praise of our green isle,—how they  
Her generous children, though at war

With France, and both on field and wave  
Encountering oft in fierce array,  
Would not from home or quiet grave  
Her exiled sons debar !

Long was the aged Harper gone  
Ere Mary well could speak,—  
So I cheer'd her soul with loving tone,  
And, happy that she was my own,  
I kiss'd her dewy cheek.  
And, when once more I saw the ray  
Of mild-returning pleasure play  
Within her glistening eyes,  
I bade the gentle maiden go  
And read again that Fairy lay,  
Since she could weep, 'mid fancied woe,  
O'er real miseries.

THE  
THREE SEASONS OF LOVE.

---

WITH laughter swimming in thine eye,  
That told youth's heartfelt revelry ;  
And motion changeful as the wing  
Of swallow waken'd by the spring ;  
With accents blythe as voice of May  
Chaunting glad Nature's roundelay ;  
Circled by joy like planet bright  
That smiles 'mid wreathes of dewy light,—  
Thy image such, in former time,  
When thou, just entering on thy prime,  
And woman's sense in thee combined  
Gently with childhood's simplest mind,  
First taught'st my sighing soul to move  
With hope towards the heaven of love !

Now years have given my Mary's face  
A thoughtful and a quiet grace:—  
Though happy still,—yet chance distress  
Hath left a pensive loveliness ;  
Fancy has tamed her fairy gleams,  
And thy heart broods o'er home-born dreams !  
Thy smiles, slow-kindling now and mild,  
Shower blessings on a darling child ;  
Thy motion slow, and soft thy tread,  
As if round thy husht infant's bed !—  
And when thou speak'st, thy melting tone,  
That tells thy heart is all my own,  
Sounds sweeter, from the lapse of years,  
With the wife's love, the mother's fears !

By thy glad youth, and tranquil prime  
Assured, I smile at hoary time !  
For thou art doom'd in age to know  
The calm that wisdom steals from woe ;  
The holy pride of high intent,  
The glory of a life well-spent.



When, earth's affections nearly o'er,  
With Peace behind, and Faith before,  
Thou render'st up again to God,  
Untarnish'd by its frail abode,  
Thy lustrous soul,—then harp and hymn,  
From bands of sister seraphim,  
Asleep will lay thee, till thine eye  
Open in Immortality.

TO

## A SLEEPING CHILD.



ART thou a thing of mortal birth,  
Whose happy home is on our earth?  
Does human blood with life embue  
Those wandering veins of heavenly blue,  
That stray along thy forehead fair,  
Lost 'mid a gleam of golden hair?  
Oh! can that light and airy breath  
Steal from a being doom'd to death;  
Those features to the grave be sent  
In sleep thus mutely eloquent;  
Or, art thou, what thy form would seem,  
The phantom of a blessed dream?

A human shape I feel thou art,  
I feel it, at my beating heart,  
Those tremors both of soul and sense  
Awoke by infant innocence !  
Though dear the forms by fancy wove,  
We love them with a transient love ;  
Thoughts from the living world intrude  
Even on her deepest solitude :  
But, lovely child ! thy magic stole  
At once into my inmost soul,  
With feelings as thy beauty fair,  
And left no other vision there.

To me thy parents are unknown ;  
Glad would they be their child to own !  
And well they must have loved before,  
If since thy birth they loved not more.  
Thou art a branch of noble stem,  
And, seeing thee, I figure them.  
What many a childless one would give,  
If thou in their still home wouldst live !

Though in thy face no family-line  
Might sweetly say, "This babe is mine!"  
In time thou would'st become the same  
As their own child,—all but the name!

How happy must thy parents be  
Who daily live in sight of thee!  
Whose hearts no greater pleasure seek  
Than see thee smile, and hear thee speak,  
And feel all natural griefs beguiled  
By thee, their fond, their duteous child.  
What joy must in their souls have stirr'd  
When thy first broken words were heard,  
Words, that, inspired by Heaven, express'd  
The transports dancing in thy breast!  
As for thy smile!—thy lip, cheek, brow,  
Even while I gaze, are kindling now.

I called thee duteous : am I wrong ?

No ! truth, I feel, is in my song :

Duteous thy heart's still beatings move  
To God, to Nature, and to Love !  
To God !—for thou a harmless child  
Hast kept his temple undefiled :  
To Nature !—for thy tears and sighs  
Obey alone her mysteries :  
To Love !—for fiends of hate might see  
Thou dwell'st in love, and love in thee !  
What wonder then, though in thy dreams  
Thy face with mystic meaning beams !

Oh ! that my spirit's eye could see  
Whence burst those gleams of extacy !  
That light of dreaming soul appears  
To play from thoughts above thy years.  
Thou smil'st as if thy soul were soaring  
To Heaven, and Heaven's God adoring !  
And who can tell what visions high  
May bless an infant's sleeping eye ?

What brighter throne can brightness find  
To-reign on than an infant's mind,  
Ere sin destroy, or error dim,  
The glory of the Seraphim ?

But now thy changing smiles express  
Intelligible happiness.  
I feel my soul thy soul partake.  
What grief ! if thou should'st now awake !  
With infants happy as thyself  
I see thee bound, a playful elf :  
I see thou art a darling child  
Among thy playmates, bold and wild.  
They love thee well ; thou art the queen  
Of all their sports, in bower or green ;  
And if thou livest to woman's height,  
In thee will friendship, love delight.

And live thou surely must ; thy life  
Is far too spiritual for the strife

Of mortal pain, nor could disease  
Find heart to prey on smiles like these.  
Oh ! thou wilt be an angel bright !  
To those thou lovest, a saving light !  
The staff of age, the help sublime  
Of erring youth, and stubborn prime ;  
And when thou goest to Heaven again,  
Thy vanishing be like the strain  
Of airy harp, so soft the tone  
The ear scarce knows when it is gone !

Thrice blessed he ! whose stars design  
His spirit pure to lean on thine ;  
And watchful share, for days and years,  
Thy sorrows, joys, sighs, smiles, and tears !  
For good and guiltless as thou art,  
Some transient griefs will touch thy heart,  
Griefs that along thy alter'd face  
Will breathe a more subduing grace,  
Than ev'n those looks of joy that lie  
On the soft cheek of infancy.

Though looks, God knows, are cradled there  
That guilt might cleanse, or sooth despair.

Oh! vision fair! that I could be  
Again, as young, as pure as thee!  
Vain wish! the rainbow's radiant form  
May view, but cannot brave the storm;  
Years can bedim the gorgeous dyes  
That paint the bird of paradise,  
And years, so fate hath order'd, roll  
Clouds o'er the summer of the soul.  
Yet, sometimes, sudden sights of grace,  
Such as the gladness of thy face,  
O sinless babe! by God are given  
To charm the wanderer back to Heaven.

No common impulse hath me led  
To this green spot, thy quiet bed,  
Where, by mere gladness overcome,  
In sleep thou dreamest of thy home.



When to the lake I would have gone,  
A wondrous beauty drew me on,  
Such beauty as the spirit sees  
In glittering fields, and moveless trees,  
After a warm and silent shower,  
Ere falls on earth the twilight hour.  
What led me hither, all can say,  
Who, knowing God, his will obey.

Thy slumbers now cannot be long :  
Thy little dreams become too strong  
For sleep,—too like realities :  
Soon shall I see those hidden eyes !  
Thou wakest, and, starting from the ground,  
In dear amazement look'st around ;  
Like one who, little given to roam,  
Wonders to find herself from home !  
But, when a stranger meets thy view,  
Glistens thine eye with wilder hue.  
A moment's thought who I may be,  
Blends with thy smiles of courtesy.

Fair was that face as break of dawn,  
When o'er its beauty sleep was drawn  
Like a thin veil that half-conceal'd  
The light of soul, and half-reveal'd.  
While thy hush'd heart with visions wrought,  
Each trembling eye-lash moved with thought,  
And things we dream, but ne'er can speak,  
Like clouds came floating o'er thy cheek,  
Such summer-clouds as travel light,  
When the soul's heaven lies calm and bright ;  
Till thou awak'st,—then to thine eye  
Thy whole heart leapt in extacy !

And lovely is that heart of thine,  
Or sure these eyes could never shine  
With such a wild, yet bashful glee,  
Gay, half-o'ercome timidity !  
Nature has breath'd into thy face  
A spirit of unconscious grace ;  
A spirit that lies never still,  
And makes thee joyous 'gainst thy will.

As, sometimes o'er a sleeping lake  
Soft airs a gentle rippling make,  
Till, ere we know, the strangers fly,  
And water blends again with sky.

Oh! happy sprite! didst thou but know  
What pleasures through my being flow  
From thy soft eyes, a holier feeling  
From their blue light could ne'er be stealing,  
But thou would'st be more loth to part,  
And give me more of that glad heart!  
Oh! gone thou art! and bearest hence  
The glory of thy innocence.  
But with deep joy I breathe the air  
That kiss'd thy cheek, and fann'd thy hair,  
And feel though fate our lives must sever,  
Yet shall thy image live for ever!

## MY COTTAGE.

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One small spot  
Where my tired mind may rest and call it *home*.  
There is a magic in that little word ;  
It is a mystic circle that surrounds  
Comforts and virtues never known beyond  
The hallowed limit.

*Southey's Hymn to the Penates.*

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**H**ERE have I found at last a home of peace  
To hide me from the world ; far from its noise,  
To feed that spirit, which, though sprung from earth,  
And link'd to human beings by the bond  
Of earthly love, hath yet a loftier aim  
Than perishable joy, and through the calm  
That sleeps amid the mountain-solitude,  
Can hear the billows of eternity,  
And hear delighted.

Many a mystic gleam,  
Lovely though faint, of imaged happiness  
Fell on my youthful heart, as oft her light  
Smiles on a wandering cloud, ere the fair Moon  
Hath risen in the sky. And oh! Ye dreams  
That to such spiritual happiness could shape  
The lonely reveries of my boyish days,  
Are ye at last fulfill'd? Ye fairy scenes,  
That to the doubting gaze of prophecy  
Rose lovely, with your fields of sunny green,  
Your sparkling rivulets and hanging groves  
Of more than rainbow lustre, where the swing  
Of woods primeval darken'd the still depth  
Of lakes bold-sweeping round their guardian hills,  
Even like the arms of Ocean, where the roar  
Sullen and far from mountain cataract  
Was heard amid the silence, like a thought  
Of solemn mood that tames the dancing soul  
When swarming with delight;—Ye fairy scenes!  
Fancied no more, but bursting on my heart

In living beauty, with adoring song  
I bid you hail! and with as holy love  
As ever beautified the eye of saint  
Hymning his midnight orisons, to you  
I consecrate my life,—till the dim stain  
Left by those worldly and unhallow'd thoughts  
That taint the purest soul, by bliss destroyed,  
My spirit travel like a summer sun,  
Itself all glory, and its path all joy,

Nor will the musing penance of the soul,  
Perform'd by moonlight, or the setting sun,  
To hymn of swinging oak, or the wild flow  
Of mountain-torrent, ever lead her on  
To virtue, but through peace. For Nature speaks  
A parent's language, and, in tones as mild  
As e'er hush'd infant on its mother's breast,  
Wins us to learn her lore. Yea! even to guilt,  
Though in her image something terrible  
Weigh down his being with a load of awe,

Love mingles with her wrath, like tender light  
Stream'd o'er a dying storm. And thus where'er  
Man feels as man, the earth is beautiful.

His blessings sanctify even senseless things,  
And the wide world in cheerful loveliness  
Returns to him its joy. The summer air,  
Whose glittering stillness sleeps within his soul,  
Stirs with its own delight : The verdant earth,  
Like beauty waking from a happy dream,  
Lies smiling : Each fair cloud to him appears  
A pilgrim travelling to the shrine of peace ;  
And the wild wave, that wantons on the sea,  
A gay though homeless stranger. Ever blest  
The man who thus beholds the golden chain  
Linking his soul to outward Nature fair,  
Full of the living God !

And where, ye haunts  
Of grandeur and of beauty ! shall the heart,  
That yearns for high communion with its God,  
Abide, if e'er its dreams have been of you ?

The loveliest sounds, forms, hues, of all the earth  
Linger delighted here : Here guilt might come,  
With sullen soul abhorring Nature's joy,  
And in a moment be restored to Heaven.  
Here sorrow, with a dimness o'er his face,  
Might be beguiled to smiles,—almost forget  
His sufferings, and, in Nature's living book,  
Read characters so lovely, that his heart  
Would, as it bless'd them, feel a rising swell  
Almost like joy !—O earthly paradise !  
Of many a secret anguish hast thou healed  
Him, who now greets thee with a joyful strain.

And oh ! if in those elevated hopes  
That lean on virtue,—in those high resolves  
That bring the future close upon the soul,  
And nobly dare its dangers ;—if in joy  
Whose vital spring is more than innocence,  
Yea ! Faith and Adoration !—if the soul  
Of man may trust to these,—and they are strong,  
Strong as the prayer of dying penitent,—



My being shall be bliss. For witness, Thou!  
Oh Mighty One! whose saving love has stolen  
On the deep peace of moon-beams to my heart,—  
Thou! who with looks of mercy oft hast cheer'd  
The starry silence, when, at noon of night,  
On some wild mountain thou hast not declined  
The homage of thy lonely worshipper,—  
Bear witness Thou! that, both in joy and grief,  
The love of nature long hath been with me  
The love of virtue :—that the solitude  
Of the remotest hills to me hath been  
Thy temple :—that the fountain's happy voice  
Hath sung thy goodness, and thy power has stunn'd  
My spirit in the roaring cataract!

Such solitude to me! Yet are there hearts,—  
Worthy of good men's love, nor unadorn'd  
With sense of moral beauty,—to the joy  
That dwells within the Almighty's outward shrine,  
Senseless and cold. Aye, there are men who see

The broad sun sinking in a blaze of light,  
Nor feel their disembodied spirits hail  
With adoration the departing God ;  
Who on the night-sky, when a cloudless moon  
Glides in still beauty through unnumber'd stars,  
Can turn the eye unmoved, as if a wall  
Of darkness screen'd the glory from their souls.  
With humble pride I bless the Holy One  
For sights to these denied. And oh ! how oft  
In seasons of depression,—when the lamp  
Of life burn'd dim, and all unpleasant thoughts  
Subdued the proud aspirings of the soul,—  
When doubts and fears with-held the timid eye  
From scanning scenes to come, and a deep sense  
Of human frailty turn'd the past to pain,  
How oft have I remember'd that a world  
Of glory lay around me, that a source  
Of lofty solace lay in every star,  
And that no being need behold the sun,  
And grieve, that knew WHO hung him in the sky.

Thus unperceived I woke from heavy grief  
To airy joy: and seeing that the mind  
Of man, though still the image of his God,  
Lean'd by his will on various happiness,  
I felt that all was good; that faculties,  
Though low, might constitute, if rightly used,  
True wisdom; and when man hath here attain'd  
The purpose of his being, he will sit  
Near Mercy's throne, whether his course hath been  
Prone on the earth's dim sphere, or, as with wing  
Of viewless eagle, round the central blaze.

Then ever shall the day that led me here  
Be held in blest remembrance. I shall see,  
Even at my dying hour, the glorious sun  
That made Winander one wide wave of gold,  
When first in transport from the mountain-top  
I hail'd the heavenly vision! Not a cloud,  
Whose wreaths lay smiling in the lap of light,  
Not one of all those sister-isles that sleep

Together, like a happy family  
Of beauty and of love, but will arise  
To cheer my parting spirit, and to tell  
That Nature gently leads unto the grave  
All who have read her heart, and kept their own  
In kindred holiness.

But ere that hour  
Of awful triumph, I do hope that years  
Await me, when the unconscious power of joy  
Creating wisdom, the bright dreams of soul  
Will humanize the heart, and I shall be  
More worthy to be loved by those whose love  
Is highest praise :—that by the living light  
That burns for ever in affection's breast,  
I shall behold how fair and beautiful  
A human form may be.—Oh, there are thoughts  
That slumber in the soul, like sweetest sounds  
Amid the harp's loose strings, till airs from Heaven  
On earth, at dewy night-fall, visitant,

Awake the sleeping melody! Such thoughts,  
My gentle Mary, I have owed to thee.  
And if thy voice e'er melt into my soul  
With a dear home-toned whisper,—if thy face  
E'er brighten in the unsteady gleams of light  
From our own cottage-hearth ;—O Mary ! then  
My overpowered spirit will recline  
Upon thy inmost heart, till it become,  
O sinless seraph ! almost worthy thee.

Then will the earth,—that oft-times to the eye  
Of solitary lover seems o'erhung  
With too severe a shade, and faintly smiles  
With ineffectual beauty on his heart,—  
Be clothed with everlasting joy ; like land  
Of blooming faëry, or of boyhood's dreams  
Ere life's first flush is o'er. Oft shall I turn  
My vision from the glories of the scene  
To read them in thine eyes ; and hidden grace,  
That slumbers in the crimson clouds of Even,

Will reach my spirit through their varying light,  
Though viewless in the sky. Wandering with thee,  
A thousand beauties never seen before  
Will glide with sweet surprise into my soul,  
Even in those fields where each particular tree  
Was look'd on as a friend,—where I had been  
Frequent, for years, among the lonely glens.

Nor, 'mid the quiet of reflecting bliss,  
Will the faint image of the distant world  
Ne'er float before us:—Cities will arise  
Among the clouds that circle round the sun,  
Gorgeous with tower and temple. The night-voice  
Of flood and mountain to our ear will seem  
Like life's loud stir:—And, as the dream dissolves,  
With burning spirit we will smile to see  
Only the Moon rejoicing in the sky,  
And the still grandeur of the eternal hills.

Yet, though the fulness of domestic joy  
Bless our united beings, and the home

Be ever happy where thy smiles are seen,  
Though human voice might never touch our ear  
From lip of friend or brother ;—yet, oh ! think  
What pure benevolence will warm our hearts,  
When with the undelaying steps of love  
Through yon o'ershadowing wood we dimly see  
A coming friend, far distant then believed,  
And all unlook'd-for. When the short distrust  
Of unexpected joy no more constrains,  
And the eye's welcome brings him to our arms,  
With gladden'd spirit he will quickly own  
That true love ne'er was selfish, and that man  
Ne'er knew the whole affection of his heart  
Till resting on another's. If from scenes  
Of noisy life he come, and in his soul  
The love of Nature, like a long-past dream,  
If e'er it stir, yield but a dim delight,  
Oh ! we shall lead him where the genial power  
Of beauty, working by the wavy green  
Of hill-ascending wood, the misty gleam  
Of lakes reposing in their peaceful vales,

And, lovelier than the loveliness below,  
The moonlight Heaven, shall to his blood restore  
An undisturbed flow, such as he felt  
Pervade his being, morning, noon, and night,  
When youth's bright years pass'd happily away,  
Among his native hills, and all he knew  
Of crowded cities, was from passing tale  
Of traveller, half-believed, and soon forgotten.

And fear not, Mary! that, when winter comes,  
These solitary mountains will resign  
The beauty that pervades their mighty frames,  
Even like a living soul. The gleams of light  
Hurrying in joyful tumult o'er the cliffs,  
And giving to our musings many a burst  
Of sudden grandeur, even as if the eye  
Of God were wandering o'er the lovely wild,  
Pleased with his own creation;—the still joy  
Of cloudless skies; and the delighted voice  
Of hymning fountains,—these will leave awhile  
The altered earth:—But other attributes



Of Nature's heart will rule, and in the storm  
We shall behold the same prevailing Power  
That slumbers in the calm, and sanctify,  
With adoration, the delight of love.

\* \* \* \* \*

I lift my eyes upon the radiant Moon,  
That long unnoticed o'er my head has held  
Her solitary walk, and as her light  
Recals my wandering soul, I start to feel  
That all has been a dream. Alone I stand  
Amid the silence. Onward rolls the stream  
Of time, while to my ear its waters sound  
With a strange rushing music. O my soul!  
Whate'er betide, for aye remember thou  
These mystic warnings, for they are of Heaven.

## LINES

WRITTEN ON THE BANKS OF WINANDERMERE, ON  
RECOVERY FROM A DANGEROUS ILLNESS.

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ONCE more, dear Lake ! along thy banks I rove,  
And bless thee in my heart that flows with love.  
Methinks, as life's awakening embers burn,  
Nature rejoices in her son's return ;  
And, like a parent after absence long,  
Sings from her heart of hearts a chearful song.  
Oh ! that fresh breeze through all my being stole,  
And made sweet music in my gladden'd soul !  
To me just rescued from the opening grave,  
How bright the radiance of the dancing wave !  
A gleam of joy, a soft endearing smile,  
Plays 'mid the greenness of each sylvan isle,

And, in the bounty of affection, showers  
A loving welcome o'er these blissful bowers.  
Quick glides the hymning streamlet, to partake  
The deep enjoyment of the happy lake ;  
The pebbles, sparkling through the yellow brook,  
Seem to my gaze to wear a livelier look ;  
And little wild-flowers, that in careless health  
Lay round my path in unregarded wealth,  
In laughing beauty court my eyes again,  
Like friends unchanged by coldness or disdain.  
Now life and joy are one :—to Earth, Air, Heaven,  
An undisturbed jubilee is given ;  
While, happy as in dreams, I seem to fly,  
Skimming the ground, or soaring through the sky,  
And feel, with sudden life-pervading glee,  
As if this rapture all were made for me.

And well the glory to my soul is known ;  
For mystic visions stamped it as my own.  
While sickness lay, like ice, upon my breath,  
With eye prophetic, through the shades of death

That brooded o'er me like a dreary night,  
This beauteous scene I saw in living light.  
No friend was near me : and a heavy gloom  
Lay in deep silence o'er the lonely room ;  
Even hope had fled ; and as in parting strife  
My soul stood trembling on the brink of life,—  
When lo ! sweet sounds, like those that now I hear,  
Of stream and zephyr stole into my ear.  
Far through my heart the mingled music ran,  
Like tones of mercy to a dying man.  
Rejoicing in the rosy morning's birth,  
Like new-waked beauty lay the dewy earth ;  
The mighty sun I saw, as now I see,  
And my soul shone with kindred majesty :  
Calm smiled the Lake ; and from that smile arose  
Faith, hope, and trust, oblivion of my woes :  
I felt that I should live ; nor could despair  
Bedim a scene so glorious, and so fair.

Now is the vision truth. Disease hath flown,  
And in the midst of joy I stand alone.

The eye of God is on me : the wide sky  
Is sanctified with present Deity,  
And, at his bidding, Nature's aspect mild  
Pours healing influence on her wasted child.  
My eye now brightens with the brightening scene,  
Chear'd with the hues of kind restoring green ;  
As with a lulling sound the fountain flows,  
My tingling ear is filled with still repose ;  
The summer silence, sleeping on the plain,  
Sends settled quiet to my dizzy brain ;  
And the moist freshness of the glittering wood  
Cools with a heart-felt dew my feverish blood.

O blessed Lake ! thy sparkling waters roll  
Health to my frame, and rapture to my soul.  
Emblem of peace, of innocence, and love !  
Sleeping in beauty given thee from above :  
This earth delighting in thy gentle breast,  
And the glad heavens attending on thy rest !  
Can he e'er turn from virtue's quiet bowers,  
All fragrant dropping with immortal flowers,

Whose inward eye, as with a magic art,  
Beholds thy glory imaged in his heart?  
No ! he shall live, from guilt and vice afar,  
As in the silent Heavens some lonely star.  
A light shall be around him to defend  
The holy head of Nature's bosom friend.  
And if the mists of error e'er should come  
To that bright sphere where virtue holds her home,  
She has a charm to scare the intruder thence ;  
Or, powerful in her spotless innocence,  
With one calm look her spirit will transform  
To a fair cloud the heralds of the storm.

Nor less, Winander ! to thy power I owe  
Rays of delight amid the gloom of woe.  
Yes ! oft, when self-tormenting fancy framed  
Forms of dim fear that grief has never named ;  
When the whole world seem'd void of mental cheer,  
Nor spring nor summer in the joyless year,  
Oft has thy image of upbraiding love,  
Seen on a sudden through some opening grove,

Even like the tender unexpected smile  
Of some dear friend I had forgot the while,  
In silence said, " My son, why not partake  
" The peace now brooding o'er thy darling lake?  
" Oh ! why in sullen discontent destroy  
" The law of Nature, Universal Joy ?"

Sweet Lake ! I listen to thy guardian voice :  
I look abroad ; and, looking, I rejoice.  
My home is here ; ah ! never shall we part,  
Till life's last pulse hath left my wasted heart.  
True that another land first gave me birth,  
And other lakes beheld my infant mirth :  
Far from these skies dear friendships have I known,  
And still in memory lives their soften'd tone ;  
Yet though the image of my earlier years  
'Mid Scotland's mountains dim my eyes with tears,  
And the heart's day-dreams oft will lingering dwell  
On that wild region which she loves so well,—  
Think not, sweet Lake ! before my years are told  
My love for thee and thine can e'er grow cold :

For here hath Hope fix'd her last earthly bound,  
And where Hope rests in peace, is hallow'd ground.

And oh! if e'er that happy time shall come,  
When she I love sits smiling in my home,  
And, oft as chance may bid us meet or part,  
Speaks the soft word that slides into the heart,  
Then fair as now thou art, yea! passing fair,  
Thy scarce-seen waters melting into air,  
Far lovelier gleams will dance upon thy breast,  
And thine isles bend their trees in deeper rest.  
Then will my joy-enlighten'd soul descry  
All that is beautiful on land or sky;  
For, when the heart is calm with pure delight,  
Revels the soul 'mid many a glorious sight.  
The earth then kindles with a vernal grace,  
Glad as the laugh upon an infant-face:  
The sun himself is clothed with vaster light,  
And showers of gentler sadness bathe the night.



Dreams of delight ! while thus I fondly weave  
Your fairy-folds, Oh ! can ye e'er deceive ?  
Are ye in vain to cheated mortals given,  
Lovely impostors in the garb of Heaven ?  
Fears, hopes, doubts, wishes, hush my pensive shell,  
Fount of them all, dear Lake ! farewell ! farewell !

## APOLOGY

FOR THE LITTLE NAVAL TEMPLE, ON STORRS' POINT,  
WINANDERMERE.

---

NAY! Stranger! smile not at this little dome,  
Albeit quaint, and with no nice regard  
To highest rules of grace and symmetry,  
Plaything of art, it venture thus to stand  
Mid the great forms of Nature. Doth it seem  
A vain intruder in the quiet heart  
Of this majestic Lake, that like an arm  
Of Ocean, or some Indian river vast,  
In beauty floats amid its guardian hills?  
Haply it may: yet in this humble tower,  
The mimicry of loftier edifice,  
There lives a silent spirit, that confers

A lasting charter on its sportive wreath  
Of battlements, amid the mountain-calm  
To stand as proudly, as yon giant rock  
That with his shadow dims the dazzling lake !

Then blame it not : for know 'twas planted here,  
In mingled mood of seriousness and mirth,  
By one\* who meant to Nature's sanctity  
No cold unmeaning outrage. He was one  
Who often in adventurous youth had sail'd  
O'er the great waters, and he dearly loved  
Their music wild ; nor less the gallant souls  
Whose home is on the Ocean :—so he framed  
This jutting mole, that like a natural cape  
Meets the soft-breaking waves, and on its point,  
Bethinking him of some sea-structure huge,  
Watch-tower or light-house, rear'd this mimic dome,  
Seen up and down the lake, a monument  
Sacred to images of former days.

---

\* The late Sir John Legard, Bart.

See ! in the playfulness of English zeal  
Its low walls are emblazon'd ! there thou read'st  
Howe, Duncan, Vincent, and that mightier name  
Whom death has made immortal.—Not misplaced  
On temple rising from an inland sea  
Such venerable names, though ne'er was heard  
The sound of cannon o'er these tranquil shores,  
Save when it peal'd to waken in her cave  
The mountain echo : yet this chronicle,  
Speaking of war amid the depths of peace,  
Wastes not its meaning on the heedless air.  
It hath its worshippers : it sends a voice,  
A voice creating elevated thoughts,  
Into the hearts of our bold peasantry  
Following the plough along these fertile vales,  
Or up among the misty solitude  
Beside the wild sheep-fold. The fishermen,  
Who on the clear wave ply their silent trade,  
 Oft passing lean upon their dripping oars,  
And bless the heroes : Idling in the joy

Of summer sunshine, as in light canoe  
The stranger glides among these lovely isles,  
This little temple to his startled soul  
Oft sends a gorgeous vision, gallant crews  
In fierce joy cheering as they onwards bear  
To break the line of battle, meteor-like  
Long ensigns brightening on the towery mast,  
And sails in awful silence o'er the main  
Lowering like thunder-clouds!—

Then, stranger! give

A blessing on this temple, and admire  
The gaudy pendant round the painted staff  
Wreathed in still splendour, or in wanton folds,  
Even like a serpent bright and beautiful,  
Streaming its burnished glory on the air.  
And whether silence sleep upon the stones  
Of this small edifice, or from within  
Steal the glad voice of laughter and of song,  
Pass on with alter'd thoughts, and gently own

That Windermere, with all her radiant isles  
Serenely floating on her azure breast,  
Like stars in heaven, with kindest smiles may robe  
This monument, to heroes dedicate,  
Nor Nature feel her holy reign profaned  
By work of art, though framed in humblest guise,  
When a high spirit prompts the builder's soul.

PICTURE  
OF  
A BLIND MAN.

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---

WHY sits so long beside yon cottage-door  
That aged man with tresses thin and hoar ?  
Fix'd are his eyes in one continued gaze,  
Nor seem to feel the sun's meridian blaze ;  
Yet are the orbs with youth-like colours bright,  
As o'er the Iris falls the trembling light.  
Changeless his mien ; not even one flitting trace  
Of spirit wanders o'er his furrow'd face ;  
No feeling moves his venerable head :  
—He sitteth there—an emblem of the dead !  
The staff of age lies near him on the seat,  
His faithful dog is slumbering at his feet,

And yon fair child, who steals an hour for play  
While thus her father rests upon his way,  
Her sport will leave, nor cast one look behind,  
Soon as she hears his voice,—for he is blind!

List! as in tones through deep affection mild  
He speaks by name to the delighted child!  
Then, bending mute in dreams of painful bliss,  
Breathes o'er her neck a father's tenderest kiss,  
And with light hand upon her forehead fair  
Smooths the stray ringlets of her silky hair!  
A beauteous phantom rises through the night  
For ever brooding o'er his darken'd sight,  
So clearly imaged both in form and limb,  
He scarce remembers that his eyes are dim,  
But thinks he sees in truth the vernal wreath  
His gentle infant wove, that it might breathe  
A sweet restoring fragrance through his breast,  
Chosen from the wild-flowers that he loves the best.  
In that sweet trance he sees the sparkling glee  
That sanctifies the face of infancy;



The dimpled cheek where playful fondness lies,  
And the blue softness of her smiling eyes ;  
The spirit's temple unprofaned by tears,  
Where God's unclouded loveliness appears ;  
Those gleams of soul to every feature given,  
When youth walks guiltless by the light of heaven !

And oh ! what pleasures through his spirit burn,  
When to the gate his homeward steps return ;  
When fancy's eye the curling smoke surveys,  
And his own hearth is gaily heard to blaze !  
How beams his sightless visage ! when the press  
Of Love's known hand, with cheerful tenderness,  
Falls on his arm, and leads with guardian care  
His helpless footsteps to the accustomed chair ;  
When that dear voice he joy'd from youth to hear  
With kind enquiry comes unto his ear,  
And tremulous tells how lovely still must be  
Those fading beauties that he ne'er must see !

Though ne'er by him his cottage-home be seen,  
Where to the wild brook slopes the daisied green ;  
Though the bee, slowly borne on laden wing,  
To him be known but by its murmuring ;  
And the long leaf that trembles in the breeze  
Be all that tells him of his native trees ;  
Yet dear to him each viewless object round  
Familiar to his soul from touch or sound.  
The stream, 'mid banks of osier winding near,  
Lulls his calm spirit through the listening ear :  
Deeply his soul enjoys the loving strife  
When the warm summer air is fill'd with life ;  
And as his limbs in quiet dreams are laid,  
Blest is the oak's contemporary shade.

Happy old Man ! no vain regrets intrude  
On the still hour of sightless solitude.  
Though deepest shades o'er outward Nature roll,  
Her cloudless beauty lives within thy soul.  
—Oft to yon rising mount thy steps ascend,  
As to the spot where dwelt a former friend ;

From whose green summit thou could'st once behold  
Mountains far-off in dim confusion roll'd,  
Lakes of blue mist, where gleam'd the whitening sail,  
And many a woodland interposing vale.

Thou seest them still: and oh! how soft a shade  
Does memory breathe o'er mountain, wood, and  
glade!

Each craggy pass, where oft in sportive scorn  
Had sprung thy limbs in life's exulting morn;  
Each misty cataract, and torrent-flood,  
Where thou a silent angler oft hast stood;  
Each shelter'd creek where through the roughest day  
Floated thy bark without the anchor's stay;  
Each nameless field by nameless thought endear'd;  
Each little hedge-row that thy childhood rear'd,  
That seems unalter'd yet in form and size,  
Though fled the clouds of fifty summer skies,  
Rise on thy soul,—on high devotion springs  
Through Nature's beauty borne on Fancy's wings,

And while the blissful vision floats around,  
Of loveliest form, fair hue, and melting sound,  
Thou carest not, though blindness may not roam,—  
For Heaven's own glory smiles around thy home.

## TROUTBECK CHAPEL.

---

How sweet and solemn at the close of day,  
After a long and lonely pilgrimage  
Among the mountains, where our spirits held  
With wildering fancy and her kindred powers  
High converse, to descend as from the clouds  
Into a quiet valley, fill'd with trees  
By Nature planted, crowding round the brink  
Of an oft-hidden rivulet, or hung  
A beauteous shelter o'er the humble roof  
Of many a moss-grown cottage !

In that hour

Of pensive happiness, the wandering man  
Looks for some spot of still profounder rest,

Where nought may break the solemn images  
Sent by the setting sun into his soul.  
Up to yon simple edifice he walks,  
That seems beneath its sable grove of pines  
More silent than the home where living thing  
Abides, yea, even than desolated tower  
Wrapt in its ivy-shroud.

I know it well,—

The village-chapel: many a year ago,  
That little dome to God was dedicate;  
And ever since, hath undisturbed peace  
Sat on it, moveless as the brooding dove  
That must not leave her nest. A mossy wall,  
Bathed though in ruins with a flush of flowers,  
(A lovely emblem of that promised life  
That springs from death) doth placidly enclose  
The bed of rest, where with their fathers sleep  
The children of the vale, and the calm stream  
That murmurs onward with the self-same tone  
For ever, by the mystic power of sound

Binding the present with the past, pervades  
The holy hush as if with God's own voice,  
Filling the listening heart with piety.

Oh! ne'er shall I forget the hour, when first  
Thy little chapel stole upon my heart,  
Secluded TROUTBECK! 'Twas the Sabbath-morn,  
And up the rocky banks of thy wild stream  
I wound my path, full oft I ween delay'd  
By sounding waterfall, that 'mid the calm  
Awoke such solemn thoughts as suited well  
The day of peace; till all at once I came  
Out of the shady glen, and with fresh joy  
Walk'd on encircled by green pastoral hills.  
Before me suddenly thy chapel rose  
As if it were an image: even then  
The noise of thunder roll'd along the sky,  
And darkness veil'd the heights,—a summer-storm  
Of short forewarning and of transient power.  
Ah me! how beautifully silent thou

Didst smile amid the tempest ! O'er thy roof  
Arch'd a fair rainbow, that to me appear'd  
A holy shelter to thee in the storm,  
And made thee shine amid the brooding gloom,  
Bright as the morning star. Between the fits  
Of the loud thunder, rose the voice of Psalms,  
A most soul-moving sound. There unappall'd,  
A choir of youths and maidens hymned their God,  
With tones that robb'd the thunder of its dread,  
Bidding it rave in vain.

Out came the sun

In glory from his clouded tabernacle ;  
And, waken'd by the splendour, up the lark  
Rose with a loud and yet a louder song,  
Chaunting to heaven the hymn of gratitude.  
The service closed ; and o'er the church-yard spread  
The happy flock who in that peaceful fold  
Had worshipp'd Jesus, carrying to their homes  
The comfort of a faith that cannot die,

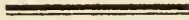


That to the young supplies a guiding light,  
Steadier than reason's, and far brighter too,  
And to the aged sanctifies the grass  
That grows upon the grave.

O happy lot,  
Methought, to tend a little flock like this,  
Loving them all, and by them all beloved !  
So felt their shepherd on that Sabbath-morn  
Returning their kind smiles ;—a pious man,  
Content in this lone vale to teach the truths  
Our Saviour taught, nor wishing other praise  
Than of his great task-master. Yet his youth  
Not unadorn'd with science, nor the lore  
Becoming in their prime accomplish'd men,  
Told that among the worldly eminent  
Might lie his shining way :—but, wiser far,  
He to the shades of solitude retired,  
The birth-place of his fathers, and there vow'd  
His talents and his virtues, rarest both,

To God who gave them, rendering by his voice  
This beauteous chapel still more beautiful,  
And the blameless dwellers in this quiet dale  
Happier in life and death.

## PEACE AND INNOCENCE.



THE lingering lustre of a vernal day  
From the dim landscape slowly steals away ;  
One lovely hour !—and then the stars of Even  
Will sparkling hail the apparent Queen of Heaven ;  
For the tired Sun, now softly sinking down,  
To his fair daughter leaves his silent throne.  
Almost could I believe with life imbued,  
And hush'd in dreams, this gentle solitude.  
Look where I may, a tranquillizing soul  
Breathes forth a life-like pleasure o'er the whole.  
The shadows settling on the mountain's breast  
Recline, as conscious of the hour of rest ;  
Stedfast as objects in a peaceful dream,  
The sleepy trees are bending o'er the stream ;

The stream, half veil'd in snowy vapour, flows  
With sound like silence, motion like repose.  
My heart obeys the power of earth and sky,  
And 'mid the quiet slumbers quietly!

A wreath of smoke, that feels no breath of air,  
Melts amid yon fair clouds, itself as fair,  
And seems to link in beauteousness and love  
That earthly cottage to the domes above.  
There my heart rests,—as if by magic bound :  
Blessings be on that plat of orchard-ground !  
Wreathed round the dwelling like a fairy ring,  
Its green leaves lost in richest blossoming.  
Within that ring no creature seems alive ;  
The bees have ceased to hum around the hive ;  
On the tall ash the rooks have roosted long,  
And the fond dove hath coo'd his latest song ;  
Now, shrouded close beneath the holly-bush,  
Sits on her low-built nest the sleeping thrush.

All do not sleep: behold a spotless lamb  
Looks bleating round, as if it sought its dam.  
Its restless motion and its piteous moan  
Tell that it fears all night to rest alone,  
Though heaven's most gracious dew descends in peace  
Softly as snow-flakes on its radiant fleece.  
That mournful bleat hath touch'd the watchful ear  
Of one to whom the little lamb is dear,  
As innocent and lovely as itself!  
See where with springs she comes, the smiling elf!  
Well does the lamb her infant guardian know:  
Joy brightening dances o'er her breast of snow,  
And light as flying leaf, with sudden glide,  
Fondly she presses to the maiden's side.  
With kindness quieting its late alarms,  
The sweet child folds it in her nursing arms;  
And calling it by every gentle name  
That happy innocence through love can frame,  
With tenderest kisses lavish'd on its head,  
Conducts it frisking to its shelter'd bed.

Kind hearted infant ! be thy slumbers bland !  
Dream that thy sportive lambkin licks thy hand,  
Or, wearied out by races short and fleet,  
Basks in the sunshine, resting on thy feet ;  
That waking from repose, unbroken, deep,  
Thou scarce shalt know that thou hast been asleep !  
With eye-lids trembling through thy golden hair,  
I hear thee lispng low thy nightly prayer.  
O sweetest voice ! what beauty breathes therein !  
Ne'er hath its music been impaired by sin.  
In all its depths my soul shall carry hence  
The air serene born of thy innocence.  
To me most awful is thy hour of rest,  
For little children sleep in Jesus' breast !

## LOUGHRIG TARN.

---

THOU guardian Naiad of this little Lake,  
Whose banks in unprofaned Nature sleep,  
(And that in waters lone and beautiful  
Dwell spirits radiant as the homes they love,  
Have poets still believed) O surely blest  
Beyond all genii or of wood or wave,  
Or sylphs that in the shooting sunbeams dwell,  
Art thou! yea, happier even than summer-cloud  
Beloved by air and sky, and floating slow  
O'er the still bosom of upholding heaven.

Beauteous as blest, O Naiad, thou must be!  
For, since thy birth, have all delightful things,  
Of form and hue, of silence and of sound,

Circled thy spirit, as the crowding stars  
Shine round the placid Moon. Lov'st thou to sink  
Into thy cell of sleep? The water parts  
With dimpling smiles around thee, and below,  
The unsunn'd verdure, soft as cygnet's down,  
Meets thy descending feet without a sound.  
Lov'st thou to sport upon the watery gleam?  
Lucid as air around thy head it lies  
Bathing thy sable locks in pearly light,  
While, all around, the water lilies strive  
To shower their blossoms o'er the virgin queen.  
Or doth the shore allure thee?—well it may:  
How soft these fields of pastoral beauty melt  
In the clear water! neither sand nor stone  
Bars herb or wild-flower from the dewy sound,  
Like Spring's own voice now rippling round the Tarn.  
There oft thou liest 'mid the echoing bleat  
Of lambs, that race amid the sunny gleams;  
Or bee's wide murmur as it fills the broom  
That yellows round thy bed. O gentle glades,  
Amid the tremulous verdure of the woods,



In stedfast smiles of more essential light,  
Lying, like azure streaks of placid sky  
Amid the moving clouds, the Naiad loves  
Your glimmering alleys, and your rustling bowers;  
For there, in peace reclined, her half-closed eye  
Through the long vista sees her darling Lake,  
Even like herself, diffused in fair repose.

Not undelightful to the quiet breast  
Such solitary dreams as now have fill'd  
My busy fancy; dreams that rise in peace,  
And thither lead, partaking in their flight  
Of human interests and earthly joys.  
Imagination fondly leans on truth,  
And sober scenes of dim reality  
To her seem lovely as the western sky,  
To the rapt Persian worshipping the sun,  
Methinks this little lake, to whom my heart  
Assigned a guardian spirit, renders back  
To me, in tenderest gleams of gratitude,  
Profounder beauty to reward my hymn.

Long hast thou been a darling haunt of mine,  
And still warm blessings gush'd into my heart,  
Meeting or parting with thy smiles of peace.  
But now, thy mild and gentle character,  
More deeply felt than ever, seems to blend  
Its essence pure with mine, like some sweet tune  
Oft heard before with pleasure, but at last,  
In one high moment of inspired bliss,  
Borne through the spirit like an angel's song.

This is the solitude that reason loves !  
Even he who yearns for human sympathies,  
And hears a music in the breath of man,  
Dearer than voice of mountain or of flood,  
Might live a hermit here, and mark the sun  
Rising or setting 'mid the beauteous calm,  
Devoutly blending in his happy soul  
Thoughts both of earth and heaven!—Yon mountain-  
side,  
Rejoicing in its clustering cottages,  
Appears to me a paradise preserved

From guilt by Nature's hand, and every wreath  
Of smoke, that from these hamlets mounts to heaven,  
In its straight silence holy as a spire  
Rear'd o'er the house of God.

Thy sanctity  
Time yet hath revered ; and I deeply feel  
That innocence her shrine shall here preserve  
For ever.—The wild vale that lies beyond,  
Circled by mountains trod but by the feet  
Of venturous shepherd, from all visitants,  
Save the free tempests and the fowls of heaven,  
Guards thee ;—and wooded knolls fantastical  
Seclude thy image from the gentler dale,  
That by the Brathay's often-varied voice  
Chear'd as it winds along, in beauty fades  
'Mid the green banks of joyful Windermere !

O gentlest Lake ! from all unhallow'd things  
By grandeur guarded in thy loveliness,  
Ne'er may thy poet with unwelcome feet

Press thy soft moss embathed in flowery dies,  
And shadow'd in thy stillness like the heavens.  
May innocence for ever lead me here,  
To form amid the silence high resolves  
For future life; resolves, that, born in peace,  
Shall live 'mid tumult, and though haply mild  
As infants in their play, when brought to bear  
On the world's business, shall assert their power  
And majesty—and lead me boldly on  
Like giants conquering in a noble cause.

This is a holy faith, and full of cheer  
To all who worship Nature, that the hours,  
Past tranquilly with her, fade not away  
For ever like the clouds, but in the soul  
Possess a secret silent dwelling-place,  
Where with a smiling visage memory sits,  
And startles oft the virtuous, with a shew  
Of unsuspected treasures. Yea, sweet Lake!  
Oft hast thou borne into my grateful heart  
Thy lovely presence, with a thousand dreams

Dancing and brightening o'er thy sunny wave,  
Though many a dreary mile of mist and snow  
Between us interposed. And even now,  
When yon bright star hath risen to warn me home,  
I bid thee farewell in the certain hope,  
That thou, this night, wilt o'er my sleeping eyes  
Shed chearing visions, and with freshest joy  
Make me salute the dawn. Nor may the hymn  
Now sung by me unto thy listening woods,  
Be wholly vain,—but haply it may yield  
A gentle pleasure to some gentle heart,  
Who blessing, at its close, the unknown bard,  
May, for his sake, upon thy quiet banks  
Frame visions of his own, and other songs  
More beautiful, to Nature and to Thee!

## M A R Y.

---

THREE days before my Mary's death,  
We walk'd by Grassmere shore ;  
" Sweet Lake !" she said with faltering breath,  
" I ne'er shall see thee more !"

Then turning round her languid head,  
She look'd me in the face ;  
And whisper'd, " When thy friend is dead,  
" Remember this lone place."

Vainly I struggled at a smile,  
That did my fears betray ;  
It seem'd that on our darling isle  
Foreboding darkness lay.

My Mary's words were words of truth ;

None now behold the Maid ;

Amid the tears of age and youth,

She in her grave was laid.

Long days, long nights, I ween, were past

Ere ceased her funeral knell ;

But to the spot I went at last

Where she had breath'd " farewell !"

Methought, I saw the phantom stand

Beside the peaceful wave ;

I felt the pressure of her hand—

—Then look'd towards her grave.

Fair, fair beneath the evening sky

The quiet churchyard lay :

The tall pine-grove most solemnly

Hung mute above her clay.

Dearly she loved their arching spread,  
Their music wild and sweet,  
And, as she wished on her death-bed,  
Was buried at their feet.

Around her grave a beauteous fence  
Of wild flowers shed their breath,  
Smiling like infant innocence  
Within the gloom of death.

Such flowers from bank of mountain-brook  
At eve we wont to bring,  
When every little mossy nook  
Betray'd returning Spring.

Oft had I fixed the simple wreath  
Upon her virgin breast ;  
But now such flowers as form'd it, breathe  
Around her bed of rest.



Yet all within my silent soul,  
As the hush'd air was calm ;  
The natural tears that slowly stole,  
Assuaged my grief like balm.

The air that seem'd so thick and dull  
For months unto my eye ;  
Ah me ! how bright and beautiful  
It floated on the sky !

A trance of high and solemn bliss  
From purest ether came ;  
'Mid such a heavenly scene as this,  
Death is an empty name !

The memory of the past return'd  
Like music to my heart,—  
It seem'd that causelessly I mourn'd,  
When we were told to part.

“ God’s mercy, to myself I said,  
“ To both our souls is given—  
“ To me, sojourning on earth’s shade,  
“ To her—a Saint in Heaven !”

## LINES

WRITTEN AT A LITTLE WELL BY THE ROADSIDE,  
LANGDALE.

---

THOU lonely spring of waters undefiled !  
Silently slumbering in thy mossy cell,  
Yea, moveless as the hillock's verdant side  
From whom thou hast thy birth, I bless thy gleam  
Of clearest coldness, with as deep-felt love  
As pilgrim kneeling at his far-sought shrine ;  
And as I bow to bathe my freshen'd heart  
In thy restoring radiance, from my lips  
A breathing prayer sheds o'er thy glassy sleep  
A gentle tremor !

Nor must I forget  
A benison for the departed soul

Of him, who, many a year ago, first shaped  
 This little Font,—emprisoning the spring  
 Not wishing to be free, with smooth slate-stone,  
 Now in the beauteous colouring of age  
 Scarcely distinguished from the natural rock.  
 In blessed hour the solitary man  
 Laid the first stone,—and in his native vale  
 It serves him for a peaceful monument,  
 'Mid the hill-silence.

Renovated life

Now flows through all my veins :—old dreams revive ;  
 And while an airy pleasure in my brain  
 Dances unbidden, I have time to gaze,  
 Even with a happy lover's kindest looks,  
 On Thee, delicious Fountain !

Thou dost shed

(Though sultry stillness fill the summer air  
 And parch the yellow hills,) all round thy cave,  
 A smile of beauty lovely as the Spring

Breathes with his April showers. The narrow lane  
On either hand ridged with low shelving rocks,  
That from the road-side gently lead the eye  
Up to thy bed,—Ah me ! how rich a green,  
Still brightening, wantons o'er its moisten'd grass !  
With what a sweet sensation doth my gaze,  
Now that my thirsty soul is gratified,  
Live on the little cell ! The water there,  
Variously dappled by the wreathed sand  
That sleeps below in many an antic shape,  
Like the mild plumage of the pheasant-hen  
Soothes the beholder's eye. The ceaseless drip  
From the moss-fretted roof, by Nature's hand  
Vaulted most beautiful, even like a pulse  
Tells of the living principle within,—  
A pulse but seldom heard amid the wild.

Yea, seldom heard : there is but one lone cot  
Beyond this well :—it is inhabited  
By an old shepherd during summer months,

And haply he may drink of the pure spring,  
To Langdale Chapel on the Sabbath-morn  
Going to pray,—or as he home returns  
At silent eve: or traveller such as I,  
Following his fancies o'er these lonely hills,  
Thankfully here may slake his burning thirst  
Once in a season. Other visitants  
It hath not; save perchance the mountain-crow,  
When ice hath lock'd the rills, or wandering colt  
Leaving its pasture for the shady lane.

Methinks, in such a solitary cave,  
The fairy forms belated peasant sees,  
Oft nightly dancing in a glittering ring,  
On the smooth mountain sward, might here retire  
To lead their noon-tide revels, or to bathe  
Their tiny limbs in this transparent well.  
A fitter spot there is not: flowers are here  
Of loveliest colours and of sweetest smell,  
Native to these our hills, and ever seen  
A fairest family by the happy side

Of their own parent spring;—and others too,  
Of foreign birth, the cultured garden's joy,  
Planted by that old shepherd in his mirth,  
Here smile like strangers in a novel scene.  
Lo ! a tall rose-tree with its clustering bloom,  
Brightening the mossy wall on which it leans  
Its arching beauty, to my gladsome heart  
Seems, with its smiles of lonely loveliness,  
Like some fair virgin at the humble door  
Of her dear mountain-cot, standing to greet  
The way-bewildered traveller.

But my soul

Long pleased to linger by this silent cave,  
Nursing its wild and playful fantasies,  
Pants for a loftier pleasure,—and forsakes,  
Though surely with no cold ingratitude,  
The flowers and verdure round the sparkling well.  
A voice calls on me from the mountain-depths,  
And it must be obey'd : Yon ledge of rocks,  
Like a wild staircase over Hardknot's brow,

Is ready for my footsteps, and even now,  
Wast-water blackens far beneath my feet,  
She the storm-loving Lake.

Sweet Fount!—Farewell!



## LINES

WRITTEN ON SEEING A PICTURE BY BERGHEM,  
OF AN ASS IN A STORM-SHOWER.

---

POOR wretch ! that blasted leafless tree,  
More frail and death-like even than thee,  
Can yield no shelter to thy shivering form ;  
The sleet, the rain, the wind of Heaven,  
Full in thy face are coldly driven,  
As if thou wert alone the object of the storm.

Yet, chill'd with cold, and drench'd with rain,  
Mild creature, thou dost not complain  
By sound or look of these ungracious skies ;  
Calmly as if in friendly shed,

There stand'st thou, with unmoving head,  
And a grave, patient meekness in thy half-closed eyes.

Long could my thoughtful spirit gaze  
On thee; nor am I loth to praise  
Him who in moral mood this image drew;  
And yet, methinks, that I could frame  
An image different, yet the same,  
More pleasing to the heart, and yet to Nature true.

Behold a lane retired and green,  
Winding amid a forest-scene  
With blooming furze in many a radiant heap;  
There is a browsing ass espied,  
One colt is frisking by her side,  
And one among her feet is safely stretch'd in sleep.

And lo! a little maiden stands,  
With thistles in her tender hands,  
Tempting with kindly words the colt to eat;  
Or gently down before him lays,

With words of solace and of praise,  
Pluck'd from th' untrodden turf the herbage soft and  
sweet.

The summer sun is sinking down,  
And the peasants from the market town  
With chearful hearts are to their homes returning ;  
Groupes of gay children too are there,  
Stirring with mirth the silent air,  
O'er all their eager eyes the light of laughter burning.

The ass hath got his burthen still !  
The merry elves the panniers fill ;  
Delighted there from side to side they swing.  
The creature heeds nor shout nor call,  
But jogs on careless of them all,  
Whether in harmless sport they gaily strike or sing.

A gipsey-groupe ! the secret wood  
Stirs through its leafy solitude,

As wheels the dance to many a jocund tune ;  
Th' unpannier'd ass slowly retires  
From the brown tents, and sparkling fires,  
And silently feeds on beneath the silent moon.

The Moon sits o'er the huge oak tree,  
More pensive 'mid this scene of glee  
That mocks the hour of beauty and of rest ;  
The soul of all her softest rays  
On yonder placid creature plays,  
As if she wish'd to cheer the hardships of the oppress.

But now the silver moonbeams fade,  
And, peeping through a flowery glade,  
Hush'd as a wild-bird's nest, a cottage lies :  
An ass stands meek and patient there,  
And by her side a spectre fair,  
To drink the balmy cup once more before she dies.

With tenderest care the pitying dame  
Supports the dying maiden's frame,

And strives with laughing looks her heart to cheer ;  
While playful children crowd around  
To catch her eye by smile or sound,  
Unconscious of the doom that waits their lady dear !

I feel this mournful dream impart  
A holier image to my heart,  
For oft doth grief to thoughts sublime give birth :—  
Blest creature ! through the solemn night,  
I see thee bath'd in heavenly light,  
Shed from that wond'rous child—The Saviour of the  
Earth.

When, flying Herod's murd'rous rage,  
Thou on that wretched pilgrimage  
Didst gently near the virgin-mother lie ;  
On thee the humble Jesus sate,  
When thousands rush'd to Salem's gate  
To see 'mid holy hymns the sinless man pass by.

Happy thou wert,—nor low thy praise,  
In peaceful patriarchal days,  
When countless tents slow passed from land to land  
Like clouds o'er heaven :—the gentle race  
Such quiet scene did meetly grace,—  
Circling the pastoral camp in many a stately band.

Poor wretch !—my musing dream is o'er ;  
Thy shivering form I view once more,  
And all the pains thy race is doom'd to prove.  
But they whose thoughtful spirits see  
The truth of life, will pause with me,  
And bless thee in a voice of gentleness and love !

## ON READING

MR CLARKSON'S HISTORY OF THE ABOLITION  
OF  
THE SLAVE TRADE.

---

'MID the august and never-dying light  
Of constellated spirits, who have gain'd  
A throne in heaven, by power of heavenly acts,  
And leave their names immortal and unchanged  
On earth, even as the names of Sun and Moon,  
See'st thou, my soul! 'mid all that radiant host  
One worthier of thy love and reverence,  
Than He, the fearless spirit, who went forth,  
Mail'd in the armour of invincible faith,  
And bearing in his grasp the spear of truth,  
Fit to destroy and save,—went forth to wage,

Against the fierce array of bloody men,  
Avarice and ignorance, cruelty and hate,  
A holy warfare! Deep within his soul,  
The groans of anguish, and the clank of chains,  
Dwelt ceaseless as a cataract, and fill'd  
The secret haunts of meditative prayer.  
Encircled by the silence of the hearth,  
The evening-silence of a happy home;  
Upon his midnight bed, when working soul  
Turns inward, and the steady flow of thought  
Is all we feel of life; in crowded rooms,  
Where mere sensation oft takes place of mind,  
And all time seems the present; in the sun,  
The joyful splendour of a summer-day;  
Or 'neath the moon, the calm and gentle night;  
Where'er he moved, one vision ever fill'd  
His restless spirit. 'Twas a vision bright  
With colours born in Heaven, yet oh! bedimm'd  
With breath of sorrow, sighs, and tears, and blood!  
Before him lay a quarter of the world.



A Mighty Land, wash'd by unnumber'd floods,  
Born in her bosom,—floods that to the sea  
Roll ocean-like, or in the central wilds  
Fade like the dim day melting into night ;  
A land all teeming with the gorgeous shew  
Of Nature in profuse magnificence !  
Vallies and groves, where untamed herds have ranged  
Without a master since the birth of time !  
Fountains and caves fill'd with the hidden light  
Of diamond and of ruby, only view'd  
With admiration by the unenvying sun !  
Millions of beings like himself he sees  
In stature and in soul,—the sons of God,  
Destined to do him homage, and to lift  
Their fearless brows unto the burning sky,  
Stamp'd with his holy image ! Noble shapes,  
Kings of the desert, men whose stately tread  
Brings from the dust the sound of liberty !  
The vision fades not here ; he sees the gloom  
That lies upon these kingdoms of the sun,

And makes them darker than the dreary realms,  
Scarce-moving at the pole.—A sluggish flow  
Attends those floods so great and beautiful,  
Rolling in majesty that none adores !  
And lo ! the faces of those stately men,  
Silent as death, or changed to ghastly shapes  
By madness and despair ! His ears are torn  
By shrieks and ravings, loud, and long, and wild,  
Or the deep-mutter'd curse of sullen hearts,  
Scorning in bitter woe their gnawing chains !  
He sees, and shuddering feels the vision true,  
A pale-faced band, who in his mother-isle  
First look'd upon the day, beneath its light  
Dare to be tyrants, and with coward deeds  
Sully the glory of the Queen of Waves !  
He sees that famous Isle, whose very winds  
Dissolve like icicles the tyrant's chains,  
On Afric bind them firm as adamant,  
Yet boast, with false and hollow gratitude,  
Of all the troubled nations of the earth  
That she alone is free ! The awful sight

Appals not him ; he draws his lonely breath  
Without a tremor ; for a voice is heard  
Breathed by no human lips,—heard by his soul,—  
That he by Heaven is chosen to restore  
Mercy on earth, a mighty conqueror  
Over the sins and miseries of man.  
The work is done ! the Niger's sullen waves  
Have heard the tidings,—and the orient Sun  
Beholds them rolling on to meet his light  
In joyful beauty.—Tombût's spiry towers  
Are bright without the brightness of the day,  
And Houssa wakening from his age-long trance  
Of woe, amid the desert, smiles to hear  
The last faint echo of the blissful sound.—

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE FALLEN OAK,

## A VISION.

SCENE, A WOOD, NEAR KESWICK, BELONGING TO  
GREENWICH HOSPITAL.

---

## I.

**B**ENEATH the shadow of an ancient oak,  
Dreaming I lay, far 'mid a solemn wood,  
When a noise like thunder stirr'd the solitude,  
And from that trance I suddenly awoke !  
A noble tree came crashing to the ground,  
Through the dark forest opening out a glade ;  
While all its hundred branches stretching round,  
Crush'd the tall hazles in its ample shade.

Methought, the vanquish'd monarch as he died  
Utter'd a groan : while loud and taunting cheers —  
The woodmen raised o'er him whose stubborn pride  
Had braved the seasons for an hundred years.  
It seem'd a savage shout, a senseless scorn,  
Nor long prevail'd amid the awful gloom ;  
Sad look'd the forest of her glory shorn,  
Reverend with age, yet bright in vigour's bloom,  
Slain in his hour of strength, a giant in his tomb.

## II.

I closed mine eyes, nor could I brook to gaze  
On the wild havoc in one moment done ;  
Hateful to me shone forth the blessed sun,  
As through the new form'd void he pour'd his rays.  
Then rose a dream before my sleeping soul !  
A wood-nymph tearing her dishevell'd hair,  
And wailing loud, from a long vista stole,  
And eyed the ruin with a fixed despair.  
The velvet moss, that bath'd its roots in green,  
For many a happy day had been her seat ;

Than valley wide more dear this secret scene ;  
—She asked no music but the rustling sweet  
Of the rejoicing leaves ; now, all is gone,  
That touch'd the Dryad's heart with pure delight.  
Soon shall the axe destroy her fallen throne,  
Its leaves of gold, its bark so glossy bright—  
—But now she hastes away,—death-sickening at the  
sight !

## III.

A nobler shape supplied the Dryad's place ;  
Soon as I saw the spirit in her eye,  
I knew the mountain-goddess, Liberty,  
And in adoring reverence veil'd my face.  
Smiling she stood beside the prostrate oak,  
While a stern pleasure swell'd her lofty breast,  
And thus, methought, in thrilling accents spoke—  
“ Not long, my darling Tree ! must be thy rest !  
“ Glorious thou wert, when towering through the  
skies  
“ In winter-storms, or summer's balmy brath ;

“ And thou, my Tree ! shalt gloriously arise,  
“ In life majestic, terrible in death !  
“ For thou shalt float above the roaring wave,  
“ Where flags, denouncing battle, stream afar ;—  
“ Thou wert, from birth, devoted to the brave,  
“ And thou shalt sail on like a blazing star,  
“ Bearing victorious NELSON through the storms of  
war !”

## NATURE OUTRAGED.

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

TO ROBERT SYM, ESQ. EDINBURGH.

---

ONCE, on the very gentlest stillest day  
That ever Spring did in her gladness breathe  
O'er this delightful earth, I left my home  
With a beloved friend, who ne'er before  
Had been among these mountains,—but whose heart,  
Led by the famous poets, through the air  
Serene of Nature oft had voyaged,  
On fancy's wing, and in her magic bowers  
Reposed, by wildest music sung to sleep :—  
So that, enamour'd of the imaged forms  
Of beauty in his soul, with holiest zeal



He longed to hail the fair original,  
And do her spiritual homage.

That his love

Might, consonant to Nature's dictate wise,  
From quiet impulse grow, and to the power  
Of meditation and connecting thought,  
Rather than startling glories of the eye,  
Owe its enthronement in his inmost heart,  
I led him to behold a little lake,  
Which I so often in my lonely walks  
Had visited, but never yet had seen  
One human being on its banks, that I  
Thought it mine own almost, so thither took  
My friend, assured he could not chuse but love  
A scene so loved by me !

Before we reached

The dell wherein this little lake doth sleep,  
Into involuntary praise of all

Its pensive loveliness, my happy heart  
Would frequent burst, and from those lyric songs,  
That, sweetly warbling round the pastoral banks  
Of Grassmere, on its silver waves have shed  
The undying sunshine of a poet's soul,  
I breathed such touching strains as suited well  
The mild spring-day, and that secluded scene,  
Towards which, in full assurance of delight,  
We two then walked in peace.

On the green slope

Of a romantic glade, we sat us down,  
Amid the fragrance of the yellow broom,  
While o'er our heads the weeping birch-tree stream'd  
Its branches arching like a fountain-shower,  
Then look'd towards the lake,—with hearts prepared  
For the warm reception of all lovely forms  
Enrobed in loveliest radiance, such as oft  
Had steep'd my spirit in a holy calm,  
And made it by the touch of purest joy  
Still as an infant's dream.

But where had fled

The paradise beloved in former days !

I look'd upon the countenance of my friend,  
Who, lost in strange and sorrowful surprise,  
Could scarce forbear to smile. Is this, he cried,  
The lone retreat, where from the secret top  
Of Helicon, the wild-eyed muse descends  
To bless thy slumbers ? this the virgin scene  
Where beauty smiles in undisturbed peace ?

I look'd again : but ne'er did lover gaze,  
At last returning from some foreign clime,  
With more affectionate sorrow on the face  
That he left fair in youth, than I did gaze  
On the alter'd features of my darling vale,  
That, 'mid the barbarous outrages of art,  
Retained, I ween, a heavenly character  
That nothing could destroy. Yet much was lost  
Of its original brightness : Much was there,  
Marring the spirit I remembered once

Perfectly beautiful. The meadow field,  
That with its rich and placid verdure lay  
Even like a sister-lake, with nought to break  
The smoothness of its bosom, save the swing  
Of the hoar Canna, or, more snowy white,  
The young lamb frisking in the joy of life,—  
Oh! grief! a garden, all unlike, I ween,  
To that where bloom'd the fair Hesperides,  
Usurped the seat of Nature, while a wall  
Of most bedazzling splendour, o'er whose height,  
The little birds, content to flit along  
From bush to bush, could never dare to fly,  
Preserved from those who knew no ill intent,  
Fruit-trees exotic, and flowers passing rare,  
Less lovely far than many a one that bloom'd  
Unnoticed in the woods.

And lo! a house,  
An elegant villa! in the Grecian style!  
Doubtless contrived by some great architect

Who had an Attic soul; and in the shade  
Of Academe or the Lyceum walk'd,  
Forming conceptions fair and beautiful.  
Blessed for ever be the sculptor's art !  
It hath created guardian deities  
To shield the holy building,—heathen gods  
And goddesses, at which the peasant stares  
With most perplexing wonder; and light Fauns,  
That the good owner's unpoetic soul  
Could not, among the umbrage of the groves,  
Imagine, here, for ever in his sight,  
In one unwearied posture frisk in stone.

My friend, quoth I, forgive these words of mine,  
That haply seem more sportive than becomes  
A soul that feels for Nature's sanctity  
Thus blindly outraged; but when evil work  
Admits no remedy, we then are glad  
Even from ourselves to hide, in mirth constrain'd,  
An unavailing sorrow. Oh! my friend,

Had'st thou beheld, as I, the glorious rock  
By that audacious mansion hid for ever,  
—Glorious I well might call it, with bright bands  
Of flowers, and weeds as beautiful as flowers,  
Refulgent, —crown'd, as with a diadem,  
With oaks that loved their birth-place, and alive  
With the wild tones of echo, bird, and bee,—  
Thou couldst have wept to think that paltry Art  
Could so prevail o'er Nature, and weak man  
Thus stand between thee and the works of God.  
Well might the Naiad of that stream complain !  
The glare of day hath driven her from her haunts,  
Shady no more : The woodman's ax hath clear'd  
The useless hazels where the linnet hung  
Her secret nest ; and yon hoar waterfall,  
Whose misty spray rose through the freshen'd leaves  
To heaven, like Nature's incense, and whose sound  
Came deaden'd through the multitude of boughs,  
Like a wild anthem by some spirit sung,  
Now looks as cheerless as the late-left snow

Upon the mountain's breast, and sends a voice,  
From the bare rocks, of dreariness and woe !  
See ! farther down the streamlet, art hath framed  
A delicate cascade ! The channel stones  
Hollow'd by rushing waters, and more green  
Even than the thought of greenness in the soul,  
Are gone ; and pebbles, carefully arranged  
By size and colour, at the bottom lie  
Imprison'd ; while a smooth and shaven lawn,  
With graceful gravel walks most serpentine,  
Surrounds the noisy wonder, and sends up  
A smile of scorn unto the rocky fells,  
Where, 'mid the rough fern, bleat the shelter'd sheep.

Oft hath the poet's eye on these wild fells  
Beheld entrancing visions ;—but the cliffs,  
In unscaled majesty, must frown no more ;  
No more the coves profound draw down the soul  
Into their stern dominion : even the clouds,  
Floating or settling on the mountain's breast,

Must be adored no more :—far other forms  
Delight his gaze, to whom, alas, belongs  
This luckless vale !—On every eminence,  
Smiles some gay image of the builder's soul,  
Watch-tower or summer-house, where oft, at eve,  
He meditates to go, with book in hand,  
And read in solitude ; or weather-cock,  
To tell which way the wind doth blow ; or fort,  
Commanding every station in the vale  
Where enemy might encamp, and from whose height  
A gaudy flag might flutter, when he hears  
With a true British pride of Frenchmen slain,  
Ten thousand in one battle, lying grim  
By the brave English, their dead conquerors !

Such was the spirit of the words I used  
On witnessing such sacrilege. We turned  
Homewards in silence, even as from the grave  
Of one in early youth untimely slain,  
And all that to my pensive friend I said



Upon our walk, were some few words of grief,  
That thoughtlessness and folly, in one day,  
Could render vain the mystic processes  
Of Nature, working for a thousand years  
The work of love and beauty; so that Heaven  
Might shed its gracious dews upon the earth,  
Its sunshine and its rain, till living flowers  
Rose up in myriads to attest its power,  
But, in the midst of this glad jubilee,  
A blinded mortal come, and with a nod,  
Thus rendering ignorance worse than wickedness,  
Bid his base servants "tear from Nature's book  
"A blissful leaf with worst impiety."

If thou, whose heart has listen'd to my song,  
From Nature hold'st some fair inheritance  
Like that whose mournful ruins I deplore,  
Remember that thy birth-right doth impose  
High duties on thee, that must be perform'd,  
Else thou canst not be happy. Thou must watch

With holy zeal o'er Nature while she sleeps,  
That nought may break her rest ; her waking smiles  
Thou must preserve and worship ; and the gloom  
That sometimes lies like night upon her face,  
Creating awful thoughts, that gloom must hush  
The beatings of thy heart, as if it lay  
Like the dread shadow of eternity.

Beauteous thy home upon this beauteous earth,  
And God hath given it to thee : therefore, learn  
The laws by which the Eternal doth sublime  
And sanctify his works, that thou mayest see  
The hidden glory veiled from vulgar eyes,  
And by the homage of enlighten'd love,  
Repay the power that blest thee. ~ Thou should'st  
stand

Oft-times amid thy dwelling-place, with awe  
Stronger than love, even like a pious man  
Who in some great cathedral, while the chaunt  
Of hymns is in his soul, no more beholds  
The pillars rise august and beautiful,

Nor the dim grandeur of the roof that hangs  
Far, far above his head, but only sees  
The opening heaven-gates, and the white-robed bands  
Of spirits prostrate in adoring praise.  
So shalt thou to thy death-hour find a friend,  
A gracious friend in Nature, and thy name,  
As the rapt traveller through thy fair domains  
Oft-lingering journeys, shall with gentle voice  
Be breathed amid the solitude, and link'd  
With those enlighten'd spirits that promote  
The happiness of others by their own,  
The consummation of all earthly joy.

## LINES

WRITTEN BY MOONLIGHT AT SEA.

---

AH me ! in dreams of struggling dread,  
Let foolish tears no more be shed,  
Tears wept on bended knee,  
Though years of absence slowly roll  
Between us and some darling soul  
Who lives upon the sea !  
Weep, weep not for the mariner,  
Though distant far he roam,  
And have no lovely resting-place  
That he can call his home.  
Friends hath he in the wilderness,  
And with those friends he lives in bliss  
Without one pining sigh !

The waves that round his vessel crowd,  
The guiding star, the breezy cloud,  
The music of the sky.  
And, dearer even than Heaven's sweet light,  
He gazes on that wonder bright,  
When sporting with the gales,  
Or lying in a beauteous sleep  
Above her shadow in the deep,  
—The ship in which he sails.  
Then weep not for the mariner!  
He needeth not thy tears;  
From his soul the Ocean's midnight voice  
Dispels all mortal fears.  
Quietly slumber shepherd-men  
In the silence of some inland glen,  
Lull'd by the gentlest sounds of air and earth;  
Yet as quietly rests the mariner,  
Nor wants for dreams as melting fair  
Amid the Ocean's mirth.

THE  
NAMELESS STREAM.

---

**G**ENTLE as dew, a summer shower  
In beauty bathed tree, herb, and flower,  
And told the stream to murmur on  
With quicker dance and livelier tone.  
The mist lay steady on the fell,  
While lustre steeped each smiling dell,  
Such wild and fairy contrast made  
The magic power of light and shade.  
Through trees a little bridge was seen,  
Glittering with yellow, red, and green,  
As o'er the moss with playful glide  
The sunbeam danced from side to side,  
And made the ancient arch to glow  
Various as Heaven's reflected bow.

Within the dripping grove was heard  
Rustle or song of joyful bird ;  
The stir of rapture fill'd the air  
From unseen myriads mingling there ;  
Life lay entranced in sinless mirth,  
And Nature's hymn swam o'er the earth !

In this sweet hour of peace and love,  
I chanced from restless joy to move,  
When by my side a being stood  
Fairer than Naiad of the flood,  
Or her who ruled the forest scene  
In days of yore, the Huntress Queen.  
Wildness, subdued by quiet grace,  
Played o'er the vision's radiant face,  
Radiant with spirit fit to steer  
Her flight around the starry sphere,  
Yet, willing to sink down in rest  
Upon a guardian mortal breast.  
Her eyes were rather soft than bright,  
And, when a smile half-closed their light,

They seem'd amid the gleam divine  
Like stars scarce seen through fair moonshine !  
While ever, as, with sportive air,  
She lightly waved her clustering hair,  
A thousand gleams the motion made,  
Danced o'er the auburn's darker shade.

O MARY! I had known thee long,  
Amid the gay, the thoughtless throng,  
Where mien leaves modesty behind,  
And manner takes the place of mind ;  
Where woman, though delightful still,  
Quits Nature's ease for Fashion's skill,  
Hides, by the gaudy gloss of art,  
The simple beauty of her heart,  
And, born to lift our souls to heaven,  
Strives for the gaze despised when given,  
Forgets her being's godlike power  
To shine the wonder of an hour.  
Oft had I sigh'd to think that thou,  
An angel fair, could stoop so low ;



And as with light and airy pride,  
'Mid worldly souls I saw thee glide,  
Wasting those smiles that love with tears  
Might live on, all his blessed years,  
Regret rose from thy causeless mirth,  
That Heaven could thus be stain'd by Earth.

O vain regret ! I should have known,  
Thy soul was strung to loftier tone,  
That wisdom bade thee joyful range  
Through worldly paths thou could'st not change,  
And look with glad and sparkling eye  
Even on life's cureless vanity.  
—But now, thy being's inmost blood  
Felt the deep power of solitude.  
From Heaven a sudden glory broke,  
And all thy angel soul awoke.  
I hail'd the impulse from above,  
And friendship was sublimed to love.

Fair are the vales that peaceful sleep  
'Mid mountain-silence, lone and deep,  
Sweet narrow lines of fertile earth,  
'Mid frowns of horror, smiles of mirth !  
Fair too the fix'd and floating cloud,  
The light obscure by eve bestowed,  
The sky's blue stillness, and the breast  
Of lakes, with all that stillness blest.  
But dearer to my heart and eye,  
Than valley, mountain, lake, or sky,  
One nameless stream, whose happy flow  
Blue as the heavens, or white as snow,  
And gently-swelling sylvan side,  
By Mary's presence beautified,  
Tell ever of expected years,  
The wish that sighs, the bliss that fears,  
Till taught at last no more to roam,  
I worship the bright Star of Home.

ART AND NATURE.

---

---

**S**YLPH-LIKE, and with a graceful pride,  
I saw the wild Louisa glide  
Along the dance's glittering row,  
With footsteps soft as falling snow.  
On all around her smiles she pour'd,  
And though by all admired, adored,  
She seem'd to hold the homage light,  
And careless claim'd it as her right.  
With syren voice the Lady sung :  
Love on her tones enraptured hung,  
While timid awe and fond desire  
Came blended from her witching lyre.  
While thus, with unresisted art,  
The Enchantress melted every heart,

Amid the glance, the sigh, the smile,  
Herself, unmoved and cold the while,  
With inward pity eyed the scene,  
Where all were subjects—she a Queen!

Again, I saw that Lady fair :  
Oh ! what a beauteous change was there !  
In a sweet cottage of her own  
She sat, and she was all alone,  
Save a young child she sung to rest  
On its soft bed, her fragrant breast.  
With happy smiles and happy sighs,  
She kiss'd the infant's closing eyes,  
Then, o'er him in the cradle laid,  
Moved her dear lips as if she pray'd.  
She bless'd him in his father's name :  
Lo ! to her side that father came,  
And, in a voice subdued and mild,  
He bless'd the mother and her child !

I thought upon the proud saloon,  
And that Enchantress Queen ; but soon,  
Far-off Art's fading pageant stole,  
And Nature fill'd my thoughtful soul !

## SONNET I.

WRITTEN ON THE BANKS OF WASTWATER,  
DURING A STORM.

---

THERE is a lake hid far among the hills,  
That raves around the throne of solitude,  
Not fed by gentle streams, or playful rills,  
But headlong cataract and rushing flood.  
There, gleam no lovely hues of hanging wood,  
No spot of sunshine lights her sullen side ;  
For horror shaped the wild in wrathful mood,  
And o'er the tempest heaved the mountain's pride.  
If thou art one, in dark presumption blind,  
Who vainly deem'st no spirit like to thine,  
That lofty genius deifies thy mind,  
Fall prostrate here at Nature's stormy shrine,  
And as the thunderous scene disturbs thy heart,  
Lift thy changed eye, and own how low thou art.

## SONNET II.

WRITTEN ON THE BANKS OF WASTWATER,  
DURING A CALM.

---

Is this the Lake, the cradle of the storms,  
Where silence never tames the mountain-roar,  
Where poets fear their self-created forms,  
Or, sunk in trance severe, their God adore?  
Is this the Lake, for ever dark and loud  
With wave and tempest, cataract and cloud?  
Wondrous, O Nature! is thy sovereign power,  
That gives to horror hours of peaceful mirth;  
For here might beauty build her summer-bower!  
Lo! where yon rainbow spans the smiling earth,  
And, clothed in glory, through a silent shower  
The mighty Sun comes forth, a godlike birth;  
While, 'neath his loving eye, the gentle Lake  
Lies like a sleeping child too blest to wake!

## SONNET III.

WRITTEN AT MIDNIGHT, ON HELM-CRAG.

---

Go up among the mountains, when the storm  
Of midnight howls, but go in that wild mood,  
When the soul loves tumultuous solitude,  
And through the haunted air, each giant form  
Of swinging pine, black rock, or ghostly cloud,  
That veils some fearful cataract tumbling loud,  
Seems to thy breathless heart with life embued.  
'Mid those gaunt, shapeless things thou art alone !  
The mind exists, thinks, trembles through the ear,  
The memory of the human world is gone,  
And time and space seem living only *here*.  
Oh ! worship thou the visions then made known,  
While sable glooms round Nature's temple roll,  
And her dread anthem peals into thy soul.



## SONNET IV.

THE VOICE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

---

LIST ! while I tell what forms the mountain's voice !  
—The storms are up ; and from yon sable cloud  
Down rush the rains ; while 'mid the thunder loud  
The viewless eagles in wild screams rejoice.  
The echoes answer to the unearthly noise  
Of hurling rocks, that, plunged into the Lake,  
Send up a sullen groan : from clefts and caves,  
As of half-murder'd wretch, hark ! yells awake,  
Or red-eyed phrensy as in chains he raves.  
These form the mountain's voice ; these, heard at night,  
Distant from human being's known abode,  
To earth some spirits bow in cold affright,  
But some they lift to glory and to God.

## SONNET V.

THE EVENING-CLOUD.

---

A CLOUD lay cradled near the setting sun,  
A gleam of crimson tinged its braided snow :  
Long had I watched the glory moving on  
O'er the still radiance of the Lake below.  
Tranquil its spirit seem'd, and floated slow !  
Even in its very motion, there was rest :  
While every breath of eve that chanced to blow,  
Wafted the traveller to the beauteous West.  
Emblem, methought, of the departed soul !  
To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is given ;  
And by the breath of mercy made to roll  
Right onwards to the golden gates of Heaven,  
Where, to the eye of Faith, it peaceful lies,  
And tells to man his glorious destinies.

## SONNET VI.

WRITTEN ON THE SABBATH-DAY.

---

WHEN by God's inward light, a happy child,  
I walk'd in joy, as in the open air,  
It seem'd to my young thought the Sabbath smiled  
With glory and with love. So still, so fair,  
The Heavens look'd ever on that hallow'd morn,  
That, without aid of memory, something there  
Had surely told me of its glad return.  
How did my little heart at evening burn,  
When, fondly seated on my father's knee,  
Taught by the lip of love, I breathed the prayer,  
Warm from the fount of infant piety !  
Much is my spirit changed ; for years have brought  
Intenser feeling and expanded thought ;  
—Yet, must I envy every child I see !

## SONNET VII.

WRITTEN ON SKIDDAW, DURING A TEMPEST.

---

IT was a dreadful day, when late I pass'd  
O'er thy dim vastness, SKIDDAW!—Mist and cloud  
Each subject Fell obscured, and rushing blast  
To thee made darling music, wild and loud,  
Thou Mountain-Monarch! Rain in torrents play'd,  
As when at sea a wave is borne to Heaven,  
A watery spire, then on the crew dismay'd  
Of reeling ship with downward wrath is driven.  
I could have thought that every living form  
Had fled, or perished in that savage storm,  
So desolate the day. To me were given  
Peace, calmness, joy: then, to myself I said,  
Can grief, time, chance, or elements controul  
Man's charter'd pride, the Liberty of Soul?

## SONNET VIII.

---

I WANDER'D lonely, like a pilgrim sad,  
O'er mountains known but to the eagle's gaze ;  
Yet, my hush'd heart, with Nature's beauty glad,  
Slept in the shade, or gloried in the blaze.  
Romantic vales stole winding to my eye  
In gradual loveliness, like rising dreams ;  
Fair, nameless tarns, that seem to blend with sky  
Rocks of wild majesty, and elfin streams.  
How strange, methought, I should have lived so near,  
Nor ever worshipp'd Nature's altar here !  
Strange ! say not so—hid from the world and thee,  
Though in the midst of life their spirits move,  
Thousands enjoy in holy liberty  
The silent Eden of unenvied Love !

## SONNET IX.

WRITTEN ON THE EVENING I HEARD OF THE DEATH  
OF MY FRIEND, WILLIAM DUNLOP.

---

A GOLDEN cloud came floating o'er my head,  
With kindred glories round the sun to blend !  
Though fair the scene, my dreams were of the dead ;  
— Since dawn of morning I had lost a friend.  
I felt as if my sorrow ne'er could end :  
A cold, pale phantom on a breathless bed,  
The beauty of the crimson west subdued,  
And sighs that seem'd my very life to rend,  
The silent happiness of eve renew'd.  
Grief, fear, regret, a self-tormenting brood  
Dwelt on my spirit, like a ceaseless noise ;  
But, oh ! what tranquil holiness ensued,  
When, from that cloud, exclaimed a well-known voice,  
— God sent me here, to bid my friend rejoice !

## LINES.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY  
OF THE REV. JAMES GRAHAME,  
AUTHOR OF "THE SABBATH," &c.

---

*Two Editions of this little Poem have been already published ;  
and its reception among those whom the author most wished to  
please, has induced him to include it in this volumc.*

---

WITH tearless eyes and undisturbed heart,  
O Bard ! of sinless life and holiest song,  
I muse upon thy death-bed and thy grave ;  
Though round that grave the trodden grass still lies  
Besmeared with clay ; for many feet were there,  
Fast-rooted to the spot, when slowly sank  
Thy coffin, GRAHAME ! into the quiet cell.  
Yet, well I loved thee, even as one might love  
An elder brother, imaged in the soul

With solemn features, half-creating awe,  
But smiling still with gentleness and peace.  
Tears have I shed when thy most mournful voice  
Did tremblingly breathe forth that touching air,  
By Scottish shepherd haply framed of old,  
Amid the silence of his pastoral hills,  
Weeping the flowers on Flodden-field that died.  
Wept, too, have I, when thou didst simply read  
From thine own lays so simply beautiful  
Some short pathetic tale of human grief,  
Or orison or hymn of deeper love,  
That might have won the sceptic's sullen heart  
To gradual adoration, and belief  
Of Him who died for us upon the cross.  
Yea! oft when thou wert well, and in the calm  
Of thy most Christian spirit blessing all  
Who look'd upon thee, with those gentlest smiles  
That never lay on human face but thine;  
Even when thy serious eyes were lighted up  
With kindling mirth, and from thy lips distill'd



Words soft as dew, and cheerful as the dawn,  
Then, too, I could have wept, for on thy face,  
Eye, voice, and smile, nor less thy bending frame,  
By other cause impair'd than length of years,  
Lay something that still turn'd the thoughtful heart  
To melancholy dreams, dreams of decay,  
Of death and burial, and the silent tomb.

And of the tomb thou art an inmate now !  
Methinks I see thy name upon the stone  
Placed at thy head, and yet my cheeks are dry.  
Tears could I give thee, when thou wert alive,  
The mournful tears of deep foreboding love  
That might not be restrain'd ; but now they seem  
Most idle all ! thy worldly course is o'er,  
And leaves such sweet remembrance in my soul  
As some delightful music heard in youth,  
Sad, but not painful, even more spirit-like  
Than when it murmur'd through the shades of earth.

Short time wert thou allow'd to guide thy flock  
Through the green pastures, where in quiet glides  
The Siloah of the soul ! Scarce was thy voice  
Familiar to their hearts, who felt that heaven  
Did therein speak, when suddenly it fell  
Mute, and for ever ! Empty now and still  
The holy house which thou didst meekly grace,  
When with uplifted hand, and eye devout,  
Thy soul was breathed to Jesus, or explained  
The words that lead unto eternal life.  
From infancy thy heart was vow'd to God :  
And aye the hope that one day thou might'st keep  
A little fold, from all the storms of sin  
Safe-shelter'd, and by reason of thy prayers  
Warm'd by the sunshine of approving Heaven,  
Upheld thy spirit, destined for a while  
To walk far other paths, and with the crowd  
Of worldly men to mingle. Yet even then,  
Thy life was ever such as well became  
One whose pure soul was fixed upon the cross !

And when with simple fervent eloquence,  
GRAHAME pled the poor man's cause, the listner oft  
Thought how becoming would his visage smile  
Across the house of God, how beauteously  
That man would teach the saving words of Heaven !

How well he taught them, many a one will feel  
Unto their dying day; and when they lie  
On the grave's brink, unfeared and composed,  
Their speechless souls will bless the holy man  
Whose voice exhorted, and whose footsteps led  
Unto the paths of life; nor sweeter hope,  
Next to the gracious look of Christ, have they  
Than to behold his face who saved their souls.

But closed on earth thy blessed ministry !  
And while thy native Scotland mourns her son  
Untimely reft from her maternal breast,  
Weeps the fair sister-land, with whom ere while  
The stranger sojourn'd, stranger but in birth,  
For well she loved thee, as thou wert her own.

On a most clear and noiseless Sabbath-night  
I heard that thou wert gone, from the soft voice  
Of one who knew thee not, but deeply loved  
Thy spirit meekly shining in thy song.  
At such an hour the death of one like thee  
Gave no rude shock, nor by a sudden grief  
Destroy'd the visions from the starry sky  
Then settling in my soul. The moonlight slept  
With a diviner sadness on the air;  
The tender dimness of the night appeared  
Darkening to deeper sorrow, and the voice  
Of the far torrent from the silent hills  
Flow'd, as I listen'd, like a funeral strain  
Breath'd by some mourning solitary thing.  
Yet Nature in her pensiveness still wore  
A blissful smile, as if she sympathized  
With those who grieved that her own Bard was dead,  
And yet was happy that his spirit dwelt  
At last within her holiest sanctuary,  
'Mid long expecting angels.

And if e'er

Faith, fearless faith, in the eternal bliss  
Of a departed brother, may be held  
By beings blind as we, that faith should dry  
All eyes that weep for GRAHAME; or through their  
tears  
Shew where he sits august and beautiful  
On the right hand of Jesus, 'mid the saints  
Whose glory he on earth so sweetly sang.  
No fears have we when some delightful child  
Falls from its innocence into the grave!  
Soon as we know its little breath is gone,  
We see it lying in its Saviour's breast,  
A heavenly flower there fed with heavenly dew.  
Childlike in all that makes a child so dear  
To God and man, and ever consecrates  
Its cradle and its grave, my GRAHAME, wert thou!  
And had'st thou died upon thy mother's breast  
Ere thou could'st lisp her name, more fit for heaven  
Thou scarce had'st been, than when thy honour'd head

Was laid into the dust, and Scotland wept  
O'er hill and valley for her darling Bard.

How beautiful is genius when combined  
With holiness! Oh, how divinely sweet  
The tones of earthly harp, whose chords are touch'd  
By the soft hand of Piety, and hung  
Upon Religion's shrine, there vibrating  
With solemn music in the ear of God.  
And must the Bard from sacred themes refrain?  
Sweet were the hymns in patriarchal days,  
That, kneeling in the silence of his tent,  
Or on some moonlight hill, the shepherd pour'd  
Unto his heavenly Father. Strains survive  
Erst chaunted to the lyre of Israel,  
More touching far than ever poet breathed  
Amid the Grecian isles, or later times  
Have heard in Albion, land of every lay.  
Why therefore are ye silent, ye who know  
The trance of adoration, and behold

Upon your bended knees the throne of Heaven,  
And him who sits thereon? Believe it not,  
That Poetry, in purer days the nurse,  
Yea! parent oft of blissful piety,  
Should silent keep from service of her God,  
Nor with her summons, loud but silver-toned,  
Startle the guilty dreamer from his sleep,  
Bidding him gaze with rapture or with dread  
On regions where the sky for ever lies  
Bright as the sun himself, and trembling all  
With ravishing music, or where darkness broods  
O'er ghastly shapes, and sounds not to be borne.

Such glory, GRAHAME! is thine: Thou didst de-  
spise

To win the ear of this degenerate age  
By gorgeous epithets, all idly heap'd  
On theme of earthly state, or, idler still,  
By tinkling measures and unchasten'd lays,  
Warbled to pleasure and her syren-train,

Profaning the best name of poesy.  
With loftier aspirations, and an aim  
More worthy man's immortal nature, Thou  
That holiest spirit that still loves to dwell  
In the upright heart and pure, at noon of night  
Didst fervently invoke, and, led by her  
Above the Aonian mount, send from the stars  
Of heaven such soul-subduing melody  
As Bethlehem-shepherds heard when Christ was born.

It is the Sabbath-day : Creation sleeps  
Cradled within the arms of heavenly love !  
The mystic day, when from the vanquish'd grave  
The world's Redeemer rose, and hail'd the light  
Of God's forgiving smile. Obscured and pale  
Were then the plumes of prostrate seraphim,  
Then hush'd the universe her sphere-born strain,  
When from his throne, Paternal Deity  
Declared the Saviour not in vain had shed  
His martyr'd glory round the accursed cross,



That fallen man might sit in Paradise,  
And earth to heaven ascend in jubilee.  
O blessed day, by God and man beloved !  
With more surpassing glory breaks thy dawn  
Upon my soul, remembering the sweet hymns  
That he, whom nations evermore shall name  
The Sabbath-Bard, in gratulation high  
Breathed forth to thee, as from the golden urn  
That holds the incense of immortal song.

That Poem, so divinely melancholy  
Throughout its reigning spirit, yet withal  
Bathing in hues of winning gentleness  
The pure religion that alone can save,  
Full many a wanderer to the paths of peace  
Ere now hath made return, and he who framed  
Its hallow'd numbers, in the realms of bliss  
Hath met and known the smiles of seraph-souls,  
By his delightful genius saved from death.  
Oft when the soul is lost in thoughtless guilt,

And seeming deaf unto the still small voice  
Of conscience and of God, some simple phrase  
Of beauty or sublimity will break  
The spell that link'd us to the bands of sin,  
And all at once, as waking from a dream,  
We shudder at the past, and bless the light  
That breaks upon us like the new-born day.  
Even so it fares with them, who to this world  
Have yielded up their spirits, and, impure  
In thought and act, have lived without a sense  
Of God, who counts the beatings of their hearts.  
But men there are of a sublimer mould,  
Who dedicate with no unworthy zeal  
To human Science, up the toilsome steep  
Where she in darkness dwells, with pilgrim-feet  
By night and day unwearied strive to climb,  
Pride their conductor, glory their reward.  
Too oft, alas! even in the search of truth  
They pass her on the way, although she speak  
With loving voice, and cast on them her eyes

So beautifully innocent and pure.

To such, O GRAHAME! thy voice cries from the tomb!

Thy worth they loved, thy talents they admired,

And when they think how peaceful was thy life,

Thy death far more than peaceful, though thou  
sought'st,

Above all other knowledge, that of God

And his redeeming Son; when o'er the page

Where thy mild soul for ever sits enshrined,

They hang with soften'd hearts, faith may descend

Upon them as they muse, or hope that leads

The way to faith, even as the morning-star

Shines brightly, heralding approaching day.

But happier visions still now bless my soul.

While lonely wandering o'er the hills and dales

Of my dear native country, with such love

As they may guess, who, from their father's home

Sojourning long and far, fall down and kiss

The grass and flowers of Scotland, in I go,

Not doubting a warm welcome from the eyes  
Of woman, man, and child, into a cot  
Upon a green hill-side, and almost touch'd  
By its own nameless stream that bathes the roots  
Of the old ash tree swinging o'er the roof.  
Most pleasant, GRAHAME ! unto thine eye and heart  
Such humble home ! there often hast thou sat  
'Mid the glad family listening to thy voice  
So silently, the ear might then have caught  
Without the rustle of the falling leaf.  
And who so sweetly ever sang as thou,  
The joys and sorrows of the poor man's life.  
Not fancifully drawn, that one might weep,  
Or smile, he knew not why, but with the hues  
Of truth all brightly glistening, to the heart  
Cheering, as earth's soft verdure to the eye,  
Yet still and mournful as the evening light.  
More powerful in the sanctity of death,  
There reigns thy spirit over those it loved !  
Some chosen books by pious men composed,

Kept from the dust, in every cottage lie  
Through the wild loneliness of Scotia's vales,  
Beside the Bible, by whose well-known truths  
All human thoughts are by the peasant tried.  
O blessed privilege of Nature's Bard !  
To cheer the house of virtuous poverty,  
With gleams of light more beautiful than oft  
Play o'er the splendours of the palace wall.  
Methinks I see a fair and lovely child  
Sitting composed upon his mother's knee,  
And reading with a low and lisping voice  
Some passage from the Sabbath, while the tears  
Stand in his little eyes so softly blue,  
Till, quite o'ercome with pity, his white arms  
He twines around her neck, and hides his sighs  
Most infantine, within her gladden'd breast,  
Like a sweet lamb, half sportive, half afraid,  
Nestling one moment 'neath its bleating dam.  
And now the happy mother kisses oft  
The tender-hearted child, lays down the book,

And asks him if he doth remember still  
The stranger who once gave him, long ago,  
A parting kiss, and blest his laughing eyes !  
His sobs speak fond remembrance, and he weeps  
To think so kind and good a man should die.

Though dead on earth, yet he from heaven looks  
down

On thee, sweet child! and others pure like thee !  
Made happier, though an angel, by the sight  
Of happiness, and virtue by himself  
Created or preserved ; and oft his soul  
Leaves for a while her amaranthine bowers,  
And dimly hears the choral symphonies  
Of spirits singing round the Saviour's throne,  
Delighted with a glimpse of Scotland's vales  
Winding round hills where once his pious hymns  
Were meditated in his silent heart,  
Or with those human beings here beloved,  
Whether they smile, as virtue ever smiles,  
With sunny countenance gentle and benign,

Or a slight shade of sadness seems to say,  
That they are thinking of the sainted soul  
That looks from heaven on them!—

A holy creed

It is, and most delightful unto all  
Who feel how deeply human sympathies  
Blend with our hopes of heaven, which holds that  
death

Divideth not, as by a roaring sea,  
Departed spirits from this lower sphere.  
How could the virtuous even in heaven be blest,  
Unless they saw the lovers and the friends,  
Whom soon they hope to greet ! A placid lake  
Between Time floateth and Eternity,  
Across whose sleeping waters murmur oft  
The voices of the immortal, hither brought  
Soft as the thought of music in the soul.  
Deep, deep the love we bear unto the dead !  
The adoring reverence that we humbly pay  
To one who is a spirit, still partakes

Of that affectionate tenderness we own'd  
Towards a being, once, perhaps, as frail  
And human as ourselves, and in the shape  
Celestial, and angelic lineaments,  
Shines a fair likeness of the form and face  
That won in former days our earthly love.

O GRAHAME ! even I in midnight dreams behold  
Thy placid aspect, more serenely fair  
Than the sweet moon that calms the autumnal heaven.  
Thy voice steals, 'mid the pauses of the wind,  
Unto my listening soul more touchingly  
Than the pathetic tones of airy harp  
That sound at evening like a spirit's song.  
Yet, many are there dearer to thy shade,  
Yea, dearer far than I ; and when their tears  
They dry at last (and wisdom bids them weep,  
If long and oft, O sure not bitterly)  
Then wilt thou stand before their raptur'd eyes  
As beautiful as kneeling saint e'er deem'd  
In his bright cell Messiah's vision'd form.



I may not think upon her blissful dreams  
Who bears thy name on earth, and in it feels  
A Christian glory and a pious pride,  
That must illumine the widow's lonely path  
With never dying sunshine.—To her soul  
Soft sound the strains now flowing fast from mine !  
And in those tranquil hours when she withdraws  
From loftier consolations, may the tears,  
(For tears will fall, most idle though they be,  
Now shed by me to her but little known,  
Yield comfort to her, as a certain pledge  
That many a one, though silent and unseen,  
Thinks of her and the children at her knees,  
Blest for the father's and the husband's sake.

THE END.

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