

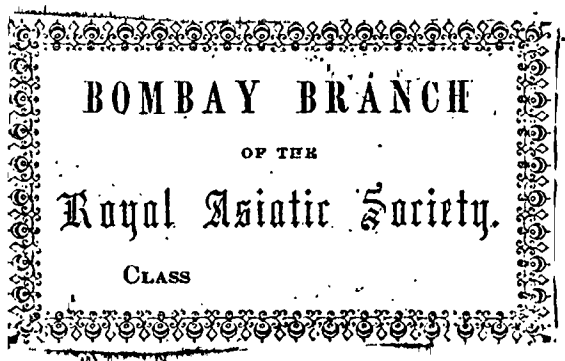
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BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

Royal Asiatic Society.

CLASS

FRANCIS SPIRA,

AND OTHER POEMS.

61169

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THE GENTLE LIFE."

James Hain Friswell

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DEDICATED

BY PERMISSION

TO

ALFRED TENNYSON, D.C.L.,

&c. &c. &c.,

POET LAUREATE.

PREFACE.

WHETHER he who has followed the rule that Horace has laid down, and has kept his verse nine years, should not at the end thereof throw it away, the reader will, in the present instance, best determine. Every born author has something of the poet in him; and it is to ascertain what share the writer has of the poetic faculty, that the present volume is given timidly to the public; timidly, and yet with some hope, for from the public and the critics he has hitherto received a kindly recognition,

Some of these poems were written many years ago, others are of a more recent date.

May 8th, 1865.

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FRANCIS SPIRA.¹

VENICE, 1548.



THE words of Francis Spira, man of Law,
A man in sin begotten and conceived,
Reaping damnation, which he much de-
served,

Dying with friends about him whose vain words
Would comfort him whose doom is fix'd past help!
Lo! I have done th' unpardonable Sin,
Lo! I have sneer'd at goodness, and mow'd down,—
As ruthlessly as with a bending switch
A child cuts off the young and tender green
Of wayside flowers,—all the budding hopes,

The callow fledgling calls to love and prayer,
Which daily springing, daily wither'd up,
And died within my steel'd and harden'd Soul.
Lo ! I have shut the windows of the Ark,
Drifting about upon a stormy sea,
Against God's silver dove of tender Grace
Bringing the olive leaf of Heaven's hope.
Nor in myself have I sinn'd only, sirs,
Matthæus Geribauldus, my good friend,
And Bishop Paulus, for I tripp'd the heels
Of many strait professors, earnestly
With prayers and tears asking the way to God.
I doubted and I hoped, I humm'd and ha'd,
I put forth our crude sciences, and urged
How that the Bible was but fallible,
And that for many years the priests well knew
The weakness of their book and hid it up.
Then went I with the Calvinists, and spoke
'Gainst all the strait-laced and the stiff-back'd fools,
Who with long prayers bribe Heaven's Chancellor
To remit all their taxes and their pains !
" Fools," said I, " is it likely that a Lord

With farns and rents and houses would be fubb'd
 Thus with mere breath ? and God Almighty, sirs,
 Is greater than the Lordlings of the Rhine.”
 Next I profess'd to hang on Luther's words,
 And laugh'd against the priests' celibacy,—
 Confession—Absolution,—ah ! good sir,
 Bⁱshop of Justinopolis, you frown !—
 I made God's Grace the ladder of my lust ;
 Deceivèd pious virgins with false oaths ;
 I gave against the Church my potent voice :
 For it was potent, and men clung to me ;
 And hurried many from her holy gates :
 Then in hot haste I join'd her ritual,
 Laughing at all dupes puzzled and befool'd.

Ah, God ! ah, Christ ! I feel that I am damn'd !
 Bring me to Thy sweet kingdom ; shut not out
 A miserable fool so base as I !
 Thy kingdom come ! Shut me not out, I pray.
 O Paulus ! O Vigereus ! hold me fast :—
 The terror's past ; again the blank despair.
 No comfort and no hope—ah, tush, tush, tush,

I would this *were* a frenzy feign'd or true ;
For, look you, read the matter as you will,
I am not actor only in this play,
This dire tragedy, but the argument—
I sinn'd 'gainst knowledge and the Holy Ghost,
Sinn'd against real faith, which I pluck'd out
And from me threw in hatred ; and not this,
Not this alone, but in my daily life,
For I was as you know, sirs, of the Law.
I have corrupted Justice by deceit,
Good causes have I sold perfidiously,
I have led on my clients miserably ;
And after many days and anxious nights,
And after fair estates have slipp'd away,
Brave castles crumbled, and huge heaps of gold
Have melted to but mole-hills, I have cast
The poor fools from me, ruin'd and disgraced.
I served my clients as I served the Pope,
Simply for mine own self, and as I served
Those Lutherans whom I led away
To fire and the stake. John Casa—thou
Art the Pope's Legate, thou dost know all this.

Oh, there again ! see there, good gentlemen,
A fiend within my chamber threatening me ;
And when I glance toward the Bishop's cross,
Or at your bidding, Paulus, call on Christ,
He raises his foul arm to threaten me.
Oh, gentlemen, take heed, be warn'd in time.
'Tis no light matter to believe in Christ ;
'Tis no light mercy to have God's pure grace ;—
And these I had : I scorn'd and threw away.
Take heed unto yourselves : the man of Law,
Francesco Spira, who all knowledge hath,
Lying here fore-damn'd, a wonder and a sign,
Speaks to you this, like that man Gluttonous,
Whose name we know not (Dives he is call'd),
Lying in torment had his bosom rack'd
With fiercer pains than fire, and callèd out,
“ Oh ! might I warn my brethren on the Earth !”
Comfort I have not. Gentlemen, I feel
As if between me and the nether hell
There was but a thin sheet of beaten brass,
And it grew hot already !

Oh ! they come,

Flocking into my chamber, mocking me :
 “ Good brother Spira, thou shalt plead our cause
 Before hell’s judges ; learnèd casuist,
 You shall dispute and doubt with us thy friends
 Who, devils though we are, believe in vain ! ”
 Call not on Christ, good Paulus : at the word
 The pain, which lies still like a gelid snake,
 Doth move and dart about me. Oh, my friends,
 Most hideous shapes throng round me ! Peace, oh
 peace !

There came a text into my wearied brain,
 Numbing my fever into sudden cold,
 Stilling my heart-beat with a weighty fear—
 “ The Dead praise not the Lord, nor they that go
 Down to the Pit.” I shall not praise the Lord.
 Alas ! I may not ; but thou Casa mayst.
 Thou Bishop Paulus, Geribauldus thou !
 Return into thy bishopric and preach
 A sermon on my end : a man alive
 Damn’d past redemption, past the liveliest hope !
 A man who sinn’d th’ unpardonable sin !

Sinn'd against knowledge and the Holy Ghost.
'A man who, dying, lay for many days
Facing hell torments, hopeless of relief!
Not dazed, nor frenzied; horrent, unamazed,
Knowing his sin beyond the Grace of God!
And his name Francis Spira, man of Law.





HEWN STONES.

I.



IN silent adoration on my knees,
For even thus before I write I kneel,
Do I approach, O Saviour! greatest
name

Which the earth holds or Heaven, God and Man!

Ah! who shall tell our depth of gratitude,
What owed to Thee, what owing; who shall tell
Thy secret untold bounties, never named
But felt by all; who looking through his heart,
Even as I now shall parcel out the good
That fills it, and not place to Thy account

The chiefest virtues, rather say the whole ?
The kindness, love, the self-sustainment there,
The heroic tone which, mindful of the end,
Most uncomplainingly doth ever wait
For its reward hereafter. Love which lasts
Through deep unkindness, dull forgetfulness,
And, arm'd with patience, looketh warmly on
Its fellow, which heaps wrongs upon it, with
The glance Thou taughtest when at Calvary
Trembling upon the cross, yet Thou shed down
Upon Thy murderers mercy !

We owe to Thee all patience, all kind joys,
Beneficent and mild, childlike and pure—
Such joys as leave no dregs within the mind.
Thy presence is around me, the vast air
Echoes Thy name ; the season drawing nigh
When Thou, a godlike gift from God to man,
Came down from Heaven, and salvation came
With Thee, and all good gifts came with Thee too,—
Calm, faithful love, and sweet-tongued charity,
Sweet-thoughted too, doing no ill to man

In deed or thought.

Ah, universal friend,
World-soother, and peace-maker. Praised be God,
That in the general scheme of humankind
I have lived since Thy coming. What to us
The green glad gods of high poetic Greece !
Ah, what to us the gods of haughty Rome !
Sun-minded Phœbus, oozy Neptune, what !
Or Cytherea, seen of old by those
Dreaming of such things, in the moonlit glade.
Dancing full chastely ! What the thunderer Jove,
The reveller and the drunkard !—what is he
Stronger than Samson, potent Hercules !
Off, off, ye tinsell'd drap'ries of the mind,
Away ye fictions—what could these fill up,
These drunken dreamings, these blind wanderings,
In Thy forbidden kingdoms, wanting Thee ?

Ah, Lord ! oh, Comforter ! far more than all,
Or wife or mother, sister chaste or friend,
Forgive me if I thus for argument
Do place Thy name with these ; for, gracious Lord,

What were the world without Thee? That it was
Rude, dissolute, and wild, drunken with sin,
And reeling in its lusts and tyranny,
We know ; but oh ! we know not what sweet love,
What dear looks of our sisters and our friends,
What thought, outrunning little acts, preventing,
And bounteous scattering round us things of joy :
What patience and what suffering, what world-love
Of those huge-minded men who, taught by Thee,
Have leapt o'er boundaries of faith and clime,
Have given their hearts and minds and very lives
To aid the sufferers—we can never tell.





II.

YEARNINGS.



THE Sun sets angry in a sea of blood !
The clouds beneath thick-piled in mountain form,
Red with his glare, like molten continents
Struck from a perish'd globe ! the tints fade out :
Now comes the purple deepening into black ;
The land grows darker, darker grows the sky,
The spirit saddens, and the Sun is gone.
Some comfort was there in those ruddy clouds,
Some comfort even in the darkening change ;
But now the vacant landskip stretches wide
And far before me, and I am alone.

Alone ! and with my God, who clips me round
With darkness as a garment ; who instils
High questionings unto my burthen'd brain,
Bids me mark what I am, what are my deeds,
And how they shall be answer'd—

Ill at ease,

Troubled and sorrowful, I turn me back.
I cannot bear to think that twenty years,
Twenty and six have pass'd, and nothing done.
I turn me back unto the town again,
Lights, gaiety, and noise ;—some cheer is here.
Nay—let me rather seek the naked fields,
Than thy streets, London ! Here's a beggar child,
Sinews and bones and very blood like mine,
Who holds her hand for charity. Great God !
That of Thy creatures one should crave of others.
O beggar child ! why was I not like thee ?
Warm-clothed and shod and 'fended from the air,
I pass thee, much more worthy to stand cold
And shivering like thee. Children, too—
Mere infants, nothing more—creep round and cry
Some miserable mess for sale, or beg,

Blue, pinch'd, and squalid. Oh ! if that were all,
If that thin face had childhood's innocence,
Their tongue no cunning and no lies had known ;—
But of fell poverty this effect is worst,
That it doth place us proximate to sin,
To suffer the contagion.

Further on

Is one with a blind infant in his arms
(Its innocent young face pinch'd with the cold),
Who drawling sings for pity on his child.
Pity ! Just Heaven, when he makes it a trade
To live on, takes out night by night
This embryo soul to slowly torture it,
Each respiration pain ! Were this world all,
Without a future, if God did create
Kings and high princes as some say He did,
Lapp'd noble children in fine swaddling-clothes,
Smother'd with useless form and pamper'd high
By brainless sycophants, dandled by fools ;
And equally created this poor babe
To have its misery shown about the streets,
Its sad misfortune made a gaping-stock,

Before a year hath pass'd upon its head,
A tool for knavish beggar—if He did,
And will'd it so, I do find fault with God!
Cast off allegiance, and dash back my life
Into annihilation.

'Tis a lie!

A foul, black lie—Priest, Lawyer, man,
Predestined to be saved!—if you say this.
This is no work but man's. God's angel cold,
His circumambient servant, the sharp air,
Is merciful, and will destroy the babe.

Perplex'd between two motives long I stay.
What shall I do—tear off my cloak and give it
To warm the babe? 'Tis done; the man proceeds,
The babe uncover'd as his stock in trade.
Who else will give? The ceaseless penny drops
At intervals, fostering the giant ill.
A penny to a beggar to bribe God
To let us keep in comfort our stuff'd chair,
To dress our table out with glass and plate,
To let the lighted candelabrum shine,

The silver nick-nacks sparkle on the board,
And bid our friends come in and praise our wine :
And all this time the giant evil lives—
To let us play churchwarden, or, more great,
The puff'd-up legislator born to rule,
To dally with statistics, talk of crime,
A necessary evil, blame the poor,
Lament the falling virtues of the State
(So different from our own ancestral day),
Then bring a stupid panacea forth,
And when 'tis laugh'd to rags by newspapers,
Retire disgusted to our pension'd park,
The very beggar lighting his tax'd pipe
Paying some part of that on which we live :
And still the evil grows !

Our wives, dwarf'd down

To mere assenting nothings, play the same ;
Teach children to work samplers, pat the heads
Of little budding hypocrites, instil
A worse hypocrisy each day ; preside
At Fancy Fairs where finumbrums made up
By a fair countess or her still-woman,

Gain prices that would make a sempstress fat !
 And still the evil grows !

Puff'd up with pride

On that day set aside by Church and Law
 To play the Christian,—all the week left off,
 And folded with our Sunday finery,
 Lest it should ravel,—deal damnation forth
 On those who do neglect to pay the tithe
 Of mint and cumin, who perchance forget
 Respect, observance, or continuous form :
 These are the flies they brush away with words,
 Forgetting weightier matters—ne'er break out
 In earnest speech, and, weeping, never dash,
 Like Moses in his wrath, the written stones
 Of God's law, unobserved, above the heads
 Of those assenting, sleeping worldlings there,
 Who sit beneath and placidly shape forth,
 From the stale truisms they hear above,
 Something that hits their neighbour, but not them.
 O Gaoler ! who knelt down and wrung thy hands,
 And gnash'd thy teeth in terrible dismay,
 Crying, "What shall I, shall I do to live?"

One sight of thee, with thy wild staring eyes,
Clasp'd hands, cheeks anguish-sunk, and trembling
lips,

Were worth a thousand years of placid talk,
Which puts the hearers quietly to rest.

Yet grows the evil, yet increases Sin.

Awake! awake! Let clarion voice shout forth,

“Our Christ, the poor, is in His agony,

And we are sleeping. Oh, awake! awake!”





III.

QUESTIONINGS.



THUS 'plain'd I of our fate—not for myself,
If I can weigh my feelings, not myself,
But for the woes of others—when one
spake,

Saying, “Thou shalt not judge of other men ;
Being a Christian man thyself, forbear.
What right hast thou, what reason to be judge ?
Sinful thyself, no chosen priest art thou,
No calling, ordination hast ; sharp words
Ever thou vent'st against authority,
Still having none thyself.”

Then spoke I too : "What ordination? This :
That these quick-coming fancies throng my brain,
That my sad heart swells and contracts with woe,
Until my tongue gives utterance. This.
That I have feelings here ! No hands
Laid on my head sent me apostle forth;
No kindly age examined me nor taught
Me, youthful, God's commandments, but alone,
Alone with Nature have I been ; and He
Who made me gave me feelings and the words,
Rude though they be, to shape them. So I speak.
My heart hath been at ebb and flow long time,
Expanding and contracting, putting forth
Ever fresh tendrils to the harden'd World,
Until at last all elasticity,
All freshness, and all joyaunce in its being
Die from within it ; let the quivering thing
Lie there neglected but a short space more,
All tetonation ceases : it is dead !
Ay, dead to all unless I speak, and thus !
I do but throw this torch into the void,
That, dying, it may chance to light some soul

Will blaze forth Truth unto a future World.
Weak, and with failing health—ay, almost faith,
With multitudinous feelings, thronging me,
With thousand impulses as others have
To luxury, and pomp, and lassitude,
That would accept the promptings of a fiend
As Words of God, make me bow down my head,
Say to my soul, “ Be still and let these starve :
These die in ignorance ; these untaught beasts
Grow yet more beastly ; for it is God’s will,
Or ’twould not be. Let Nero reign. Amen.
So be it. He hath made him. Pow’rs that be
Are God’s, and do no wrong.”

I told this lie,

And drave the thronging indignation back,
And, heart-pent, lay down quiet——
Then, as I lay, came back the early days,
The Sabbath sun that glinted thro’ the trees,
The open casement where th’ elastic air
Stole in like respiration of a God
List’ning well-pleased to what His creatures said ;
And in the pauses of that air was heard

My mother's voice, and with hers was a child's,
Full of that faith which every word accepts
With present confirmation, which voice said,
Tripping upon the pauses of her tones
Like a young fawn which treads its mother's steps :
" My duty to my neighbour is to love
Him as myself." I think that God bent down
To hear that lesson with a smile more pleased
Than to the voices of the blessed ones
Quiring Hosannas round the Jacinth Throne !
To love him as myself—how quickly said,
How hard, alas ! to do : this plain behest
Man finds it all impossible—too hard !

We tell this lie to God ; we palliate
First our neglect, our keen unkindness next,
And then our cruel and licentious wrongs.
There's not a living man whose face I know
But tells this daily lie ; breeds up his child ;
Tells him one moment to love God, and next
To cheat and hate his neighbour ! Love ! why love ?
The word is slander'd in the common world.

We plume ourselves upon a penny dropt,
 Upon a cast-off garment coldly given
 To some poor starving creature whom we swore,
 When children, and oft since, to love as self!
 Oh, we are liars all! Were the Great Being
 Who set in order the unnumber'd suns
 To dash down His right hand upon this earth
 And crush it to a chaos, or burn out
 In everlasting fire the deep stains
 Made by His self-styled images, 'twere just!

These thoughts are with me day and night: they
 grow

Upon me unfulfill'd: I bear about
 The weight of things unacted and unsaid;
 And seldom is it but in sleep there comes
 A vision of great light, and in the light
 A form so splendid that the sunshine dims
 And grows its shadow. Oh, 'tis He, 'tis He
 Who judges him who talents had and hid
 The gold within the earth! Hark! there—a shriek!
 He is borne off to darkness; but I—I,

Who have not even *that* to render up
Which the Great God did give me—
Squander'd and spent, corrupted, gone, or fused,
With baser metal—spare me, O my God !

I 'gin to grow a-weary of my art.
All *said*, and nothing *done*, of brethren mine,
Who with proud words write nothings, or but pour
Words, words, like wine gold-sparkling to inflame.
They make life sensuous ; they make us feel,
Know more, enjoy more life than other men ;
Admire the toy or bauble, to look on't
Somewhat as connoisseurs will gloat on art ;
To taste our life as it flows past our lips,
Wantonly luscious ; to feel i' the throbbing heart
Even “the luxury of doing good ;”
Make Charity our mistress !

I will no more : no more of Keats and Moore.
The world is not my leman—nor the earth,
Teeming and beautiful—nor shapes and forms
And glowing eyes a-fire with new-sprung life !

Such were not thy thoughts, Milton ; no, nor mine.
Not in the phantasy of sensuous being,
Not in ocean's ever-spooming womb,
Not in the buxom, all-embracing air,
Not in my brother's heart—though that I seek,
God help me, and in tears !—I rest my hope,
Grown old in disappointment and in cares.
I seek a crown which lies beyond the stars.

Yet still, though others pass me on the track
Mark'd by myself—though few have ever known
The spring of Poesy which, I believe,
Flows pure within me—oh ! desert me not,
Desert me not, if self-forgotten quite,
Ambition, fame (last sickness or first health)
To win the love of humankind, to turn
The thoughts of generations, to lay down
That pattern by the which the coming minds
Of men shall yet be woven.—This denied,
If writing to inspire one human being
With love beside myself, assist me, God !
That one be my reward !

Bear hence the crown,
 By me desired more than glittering gold
 Orbèd and arch'd with jewels, which I thought,
 Fond dreamer, in my grasp : nay, not to me
 Belongs the praise of song ; oh ! not to me .
 That love and rev'rence which should make a name
 Stir wide and far the noble Saxon heart.

Be still, be still :

The Holy Spirit is not pour'd in vain—
 Not even to thee ; be first to show thy love !
 The martyr Stephen, who fell heap'd with hate,
 Died happier than he whose fate was watch'd
 By some quaint pupil of a Grecian sect,
 Who, pedant still, descanting on each throe,
 O'erlook'd the love which bade the martyrdom,
 And call'd the man who crackled in the flame
 An obstinate, conceited, wayward thing,
 A proof of human wilfulness, perverse—
Per Bacco, subject for an epigram.

But love thou ever : 'twere as hard a thing
 To bid our universal human heart

Not love as not to sin !

Love still ! How many covet the full draught
And perish thirsting ! Lapp'd in royal state,
Tight shut in ceremony, kingly throngs
Have perish'd lonely ! Go forth from thy ark,
Thou white bird, human love, to nestle where
The one fresh leaf invites thee : short time hence,
Hid 'midst green branches, thou shalt rest in peace !





IV.

THE MODERN ADAM.



HAT truth shall live throughout the coming
age,

When men's sight shall be clearer. In
God's time

Their minds becoming wiser, their hearts strong,
Their ears more ope to listen to the truth,
Seeing that falsehood leads to misery ;
And he who did enunciate that truth,
Rogue, fool, deceiver, mad enthusiast
(Such names he wears about him like a chain),
Shall be a gifted prophet ! O ye great,
Cradled in riches, and all ye who wear

Hot luxury about your baby loins
Wrapp'd like a swatheband : if ye could but see
Sights which I nightly see, when wandering home
From my appointed task—of baby limbs
Crooked and bent with burthens, stiff with cold ;
Of baby faces pinch'd with love of gain ;
Of hands held up to sell for smallest doit
Some base commodity that they may live :
See, as I see, that, all the cold long day,
Upon the flagstones, infants' bleeding feet
Tremble and freeze with pain ! O ye rich priests
Who kneel before a painted image, pierced
And crown'd with thorns, of Him of Calvary,
Whose feet bled also all that stony way,
Think, if ye took these little living feet
Made like to His, kiss'd them, and wash'd them clean,
And wept upon them, that the living God,
Whose image ye do kneel to, would be wroth
For that ye left His image carved of wood
And knelt to one of flesh ?

Rich, great, and proud,

I have no carping voice ; I do not rail

That all your hearts, grown fat on luxury,
Have scarce a heart-beat ; I would rather weep.
O brothers, tied by a much stronger chain,
Gold-plated, than galls us, step downwards ! learn !
Come hither, boy ! street-born, street-rear'd, street-
taught ;
And you, girl, pah ! engender'd in a mine
By beings almost children ; born therein,
Suckled and bred for working underground.
Throw first a robe about his rags and hers,
And hide the galling and corroding marks
Which round her loins. Now, white-robed cherubim,
Come, since " your angels always do behold
Our Father's face in heaven ; " look up now
And let us front you. Part the matted hair,
And let our souls meet from our meeting eyes.
O Thou who first didst look, Great Father thou,
Upon the first made man in Paradise,
When first the lab'ring heart impell'd the flood
Of crimson life throughout his tingling veins,
To uplift his form which glow'd so beautiful
That Thou, his Maker, said 'twas very good—

O Thou who, from his sleeping side, drew forth
A far more beauteous being, whose fair form
But lamely carved in stone gives wonder still—
O Thou who didst behold, none other there,
These meeting, Eve's sweet blush and Adam's joy,
In the fresh joyance of a sinless life
Made, oh, so dearer by the mutual gift
Of each to each ;—O Father, look down now
Upon this Adam and this Eve of ours.

Stand up, ye blinking and imbruted beings,
Not yet insensate, but with bones distort,
Your foreheads low, retreating, villainous—
Ay, cling together, something holy yet
In that close fellowship and shred of love.
Go, procreate, beget, sink lower still,
Reverse that impious and fantastic dream
Which deems man sprung from apes.
Go ; what care we ? your souls distraught and dark,
Fit denizens of bodies such as yours—
The fitter for our work, the better slaves !
Go, procreate, beget ; blot out all sign

Of the Almighty's likeness, until we,
Your elder, happier brothers, shut our teeth
And curve our lips, to hiss out horrible !
And, on our couches dreaming, still cry out
When your dark image, like an incubus,
Grows like a fungus midst our violet dreams !

Come, courtier, with fair brow and open look,
Your dress so débonnaire, inform'd with taste,
Right manly, noble ! And come thou, smooth youth,
From academic shade, with purple blush
And honest eyes, so blue and virginal,
Confirm'd in Christianity ; but fresh
From Christ's fair table ; with the impress yet
Of the kind hand that gave the Holy Ghost ;
With yet the taste of sacramental wine
Upon thy trembling, strange-possessèd lips :
Take thy antithesis ;—go, list his tale,
And learn strange lessons. Know the task thou hast
To take thy brother up from out the dust ;
To fling his sin and guilt far from his soul ;
To teach the love and reverence you feel,

The sweet delight in earth or blue-arch'd sky,
The love of sunshine which now blinds his eyes :
In pictures, books, in wandering moon or star ;
In each fair sight—in landscape stretching wide,
In high-raised palaces, or ancient shrine,
With painted window storied with delight,
In the high mountains and the boundless sea.
Teach him to reverence these ; moreover, name
The petals of each flow'ret, class each shell,
Mark well the wond'rous fashion of God's work—
Bird, animal, and insect. His young heart
Will pulse and throb with a most holy awe
When he shall mark the infinite wisdom shown
In each and all proceeding from God's hand—
An atom or a globe ; when he shall know
That not a feather stirs beyond its place,
That not a beauty but still has a use,
That, even in the roughest, hardest things,
Strange glories lie ; that in the wing of gnat,
The skin of snake, or eye of crawling toad,
Strange glories lie ; that in the wing o' the gnat,
The skin of snake, or eye of crawling toad,

Such clouds of glorious colour are contain'd
That the skill'd pencil and the cunning brain
Of man can scarcely picture : the rough shell,
Touch'd with Art's polish, brightly glows and glads
Each eye that sees it, and a shred of wood
Holds in its little space most wond'rous forms.

When thou this glimpse
Hast shown him of the world we have and hold,
Bring forth those instruments by Science made
To show the upper and the lower worlds,
And mark the two infinities of each.
Peer through the TELESCOPE, world-systems show,
And tell what various knowledge testifies :
Of star-GLOBES floating in th' abyss of blue ;
Reason of worlds in worlds, of suns that gem
The sky like gold-dust sprinkled on a robe,
But yet *are* SUNS. Each step ye farther go
Unveil new wonders, till he shall fall down,
Knowing his infinite smallness, and gasp out
His humble prayer to Him who made them all !
And now the MICROSCOPE produce and show

Design and glory in a filmy wing ;
That plumes more gorgeous than the ostrich bears
Deck the poor moth ; the house-fly has a foot
Fitted with instrument so wisely made
That man, till in the grey age of the world,
Found not full comprehension of the thing.
Show him how prodigal of work God is—
How every small ephemeris sets forth
Purpose and science, if born but to die,
As we in our weak knowledge still must deem.
Show him the myriads which live within
A drop of water ; that intelligence
Creates and orders, and still cares for each ;
And then his heart will throb and bound again,
Knowing his greatness : and thus, led to God
By steps hewn in the Infinite Unknown
And dim uncertain, he will wisely pray,
Rev'ence himself, and love his neighbour too.



v.

THE FALLEN SISTER.



O evening falls, whilst night comes on
apace ;

Lights glare, and, from their daily toil
released,

Pour home the crowds ; distant, soft music swells,
And in the summer air all would be gay.

There's hum and bustle in the crowded street,

And light upon the face expectant now

Of children's or wife's greeting ; quick the bound

Of young limbs hurrying up the way of Life,

Exulting in the full free pulse of youth,

Now they are in the battle. Merrily

Adown the stream of Life they swim, nor care
Whom they may jostle ; crying, " Lose one step,
Another passes. Homeward ; we have wrought
Bravely, my brothers. Lo ! these hands have won,
Working at Adam's heritage, God's labour,
The body's food to-day. Aha ! forsooth
Rides the smooth dandy with a languid air,
With light touch striping his bright shining steed ;
Lolls the fair lady, as her glittering wheels
Convey her home—worthless and useless both :
But we shall sleep without a start to-night,
For *we* have wrought, my brethren, *we* have wrought."

So let them pass ; as, in a tragedy
(O'er that stage which shall witness direst deeds),
The earnest thought, the light-tongu'd courtier's speech,
The maxim babble of the greybeard old,
The vacant clamour of the citizen,
Are heard, long ere the storm of blood sets in.
So let the happy and the vacant pass.
Now she, our fallen sister, fills the stage ;
List to the rustle of her velvet gown,

And mark the brilliant colour of her cheek,
Her eyes so bright and restless, gay her laugh,
As born of nothing—not an empty jest ;
It rises suddenly on ev'ning air,
And falls as suddenly ; beauteous her form
And fair ; how fair her face, an angel there
Might well have written calm and holy thoughts :
But now the devil blots the page, and she
Walks forth a pestilence. Whom may she meet
To-night, this moment plying her false trade ?
What souls may she pervert, what youthful steps
Now turn'd towards God's hill upward may trip
And bend them to the pit ? Oh ! for this cause
The wise men of the nation well may mourn :
The blood pure flowing from a matron chaste,
Corrupt, shall breed foul blotches in the face
Of godlike innocence ; curse with sin's pains
Those who sin know not ; in the virgin cheek
Of daughters born unto us plant a scab,
And 'neath the unsmirch'd form of innocence,
Crown'd with the snowdrop wreath of chastity,
Run riot, tainting the poor crowing babe

With the pains of sin its grandsire fulfill'd !
Righteous are God's great judgments ! For this sin
Passes down generations, and becomes
Eternal ! So its punishment should be !

For, look you, ere the woman fell—how fair,
How kindly, good, and gracious—from her eyes,
Two liquid drops of modesty, her soul
Look'd down the broad stare of a sinful world,
And unabash'd smote vice upon its throne.
How fair, how good, how very beautiful !
Ah, think, could we but give a statue life—
Canova's graces, or the world-famed Eve,
Who, leaning downwards, pauses in mute love
Of the reflected heaven of her face—
Think, if the fabled miracle of old
Were true, and these cold marble figures lived
(But without *soul*), what would that man deserve
Who led them to hot riot—crown'd them queens,
Not of chaste aisles, nor of prayer-breathing fanes,
But of the revel and the godless blare
Of blatant madmen all a-blaze with sin ?

Would not the artist, stricken dumb with rage,
Lift up his hammer and with vigorous blow
Shiver the alabaster into dust ;
Then, white with anger, turn against his foe
And with a righteous vengeance smite him dead ?

And can a woman less than statue weigh
In man's base market ? Can he overlook
The cunning apparatus, gland and pulse,
The shining hair, the living, glittering eye,
The nerve, the workmanship of the great God,
And all, pass'd by as things but valueless ?
Shall he forget the never-resting soul
Crowded with impulses to good or ill ?
For what Promethean artist yet hath lived
Who'd cut the soul into a block of stone,
Or mould the brain into the plastic clay !





JOHN FAIRFAX.



YOU know John Fairfax?—him whose hearty
laugh

Makes all friends joyous; who would
seem to quaff

The wine of Life in merriment and ease,
Sailing his skiff through ever-summer seas,
Without a storm, not e'en a threat'ning cloud
The sunshine of such happy days to shroud.
'Tis strange the heart should cloak itself in wiles,
And hide keen sorrows 'neath sun-wreathèd smiles;
Should scorn the carking care, the heavy grief,
Which, gnawing inward, kills without relief

By outward show ! Oh ! cunning human heart,
Patient and brave, how well thou filled'st thy part !
This is his story :—

My father was—no matter : I, his son,
Live to detest, not love—yet still live on.
But, O my mother, let me speak of thee,
Whom I shall reverence till life shall flee ;
Patient and loving, gentle and refined,
Thine the pure heart and sweetly simple mind.
Though sorrow press'd thee and sharp want assail'd,
Thy faith, thy hope, thy courage never fail'd.
Righteous thyself, the world seem'd so to thee,
Nor vice nor selfishness in man could see.
Yet, as swift Time incessant year on year
Added to age, so heap'd he care on care.
Dark was thy prospect, still thy hope was bright,
To thee the day dawn'd when to us 'twas night ;
As if the Lord in pity thee had given
A surer prospect to His own bright heaven.
Still sorrows came, and none could comfort tell,
And “the stage darken'd as the curtain fell.”

The man who swore on God's own altar-stone
To cherish and to love left thee alone—
Alone to breast the billows of the world,
Which scorn beat up and shame against thee
hurl'd.

And, for myself, who ever since my birth,
Seem'd born to inherit misery, the vast earth,
Which unto other happier children smiled,
And proffer'd flowers and sunshine, was a wild,
A desolate bleak moor at evening's close,
Whereon the storm still beat, nor bright star rose.

By nature gentle, in affection strong,
Yet push'd to fierceness by the hand of wrong,
I grew morose and sullen, marvelling why
The tear so often dimm'd my mother's eye.

I saw her failing slowly year by year,
Yet, ever gentle, ever try to cheer
Her children, and still start to hear the name
Of him to her a trial and a shame.

As for the man, my father, some few times
We saw him, ever prosperous in his crimes ;
No feeling touch'd him, no remorse e'er woke
Him from his deadly slumber. If he spoke,
It was to pile shame's burden still more high
On that frail form, alas ! so soon to die.

In infancy he smote my heart with fear ;
I never *loved* him. When to manhood near,
I then took heart and hated—soon despised—
Him, who such base and sensual pleasures prized
Above the heart of woman ; whose base tongue
Fawn'd on the strong, the weak with venom stung ;
Who dared not meet his children's glance ; who
 blench'd
Before the spirit he had nearly quench'd.
Often I wonder'd deeply in years past
That such affection, which no wrong could blast,
Should spring within my mother's virgin heart
For such a man, so base in every part.
But then I knew not woman—knew her not,
Who, like a pitying angel, tends the lot

Of sordid natures even with more love
Than often falls to him who towers above
His fellow-men ; like parasitic flowers
Which grow not on high temples, where the showers
And dews of heaven might nourish, but alone
Clothe the rent altar and the fallen stone.

She died—methinks 'twere happy so to glide
Into the silent land at eventide—
Her children round her, her cold hand to press,
Till death itself forbade the mute caress ;
To read the life's love written in the eye ;
To hear the first low sob, the virgin cry
Love offers for its loss. We stood around,
The big round tears slow dropping on the ground—
Not weeping for her, but our own sad loss :
She had won the crown as she had borne the
cross.

I felt her thin hand on my shoulder weigh,
And knew that God was calling her away ;
Yet first her dying eye upon us gazed,
Look'd worlds of love, then, slowly fading, glazed ;

Again lit up with more than natural light—
So strong in love, methought divinely bright—
Look'd to our *soul*, call'd blessings on our head,
Then quickly faded out : and she was dead.
Thus to the land of ever-blooming springs
She pass'd from children's hands to angels' wings.

Thus, like a spring day on our chilly earth,
Nurtured in storm and wintry at its birth,
Blust'ring and cold the nipping March winds blow ;
But yet its sunset hath a summer's glow.
And she forgave him *all* ere yet she died,
Spoke of his kindnesses when yet a bride ;
And in the dead waste of her dying night
Visions of love came crowding—wrong took flight.
She thought of ribbons knotted for her hair—
Ah ! he was ardent then, and she was fair—
Old smiles, kind words, the pressure firm yet
 slight,
The bright'ning look whene'er he met her sight :
The life pain and great grief without alloy
Were cloak'd with memory of one day of joy.

She thought not of the death-wound which he dealt,
 But when by dying child they pray'd and knelt ;
 Nor minded she the wrong the same hand gave
 Which scatter'd flowers o'er her baby's grave.

But *I* forgave not. My sire at once I sought,
 And met, gay smiling, as he cared for nought ;
 Whilst I was haggard, wild, much moved, and shook,
 And scarce could bear his calm unruffled look—
 So calm, so quiet, sat he in his place.
 Yes! there stood son and father face to face.

“What seek you, sir?”

Trembling at last I spoke,
 And my voice rattled in my husky throat :

“My mother's dead!” He blench'd. “What then?”
 he said ;

“My business is the living, not the dead.
 When died she? Spoke she of me?”

“Not by name.

Not e'en to bless—nay, sir, not e'en to blame.”

“What mean you, sir?”

“ I come to say farewell ;
To warn you to repent, and to foretell,
Even as I feel, some dire punishment
Upon your guilty head ? ”

“ Go, fool ! Repent ! ”
Sneering, he said : “ Unduteous boy ! Away,
Nor again seek me till my dying day.”
I answer'd : “ Even so I throw your name
Back to you, both my sire and my shame.
You killed her slowly. Listen,” I hoarsely said,
“ The vengeance yet will fall upon your head.
With some feign'd name I'll pass my life away,
Nor again see you till your dying day.”
“ No more,” said he ; “ 'tis even thus we part—
Scorn on each brow, and hatred in each heart.”

We parted, and I battled on for life,
And reap'd, as others reap, world-hate and strife.
I was not happy, with no friend to bless,
No child to love, no sister to caress ;
Yet youth and hope were with me, and I toil'd,
And curb'd the passion which within me boil'd—

Day broke, morn came, the tardy hours slow pass'd,
But yet brought to me night and rest at last ;
Time went, youth chill'd, stagnated then to man,
And the year ended as it first began.

At length I loved ; a pure bright passion broke
Over my soul ; from lethargy I woke
Transform'd. Let me look back some few short
years,
Ere yet this face was channell'd down with tears,
My form not stoop'd, my head not bent in woe,
My hair around my brow in gentle flow
Waving. Enough ! Some love I might deserve,
And had, to glad my heart and brace my nerve.
How hopefully I struggled now each morn :
I went not to my task with heart forlorn ;
But forward walk'd, the world before me smiled,
And I seem'd Nature's first and favourite child.
I bless'd all things : the simple flowers to me
Smiled beauties which no other eye could see ;
The gay birds' carol, and the summer breeze,
The young corn springing, and the leafy trees,

Whisper'd but joy. I look'd up to the sky
And watch'd the light clouds as they scudded by,
And saw the blue beyond—the azure nest
Wherein perchance world-wearied spirits rest,
Lull'd to deep sleep by spherul harmonies ;
And then methought I saw my mother's eyes
Shoot blessings down upon my upturn'd face,
To cheer me onward in my hopeful race.

And she I loved was young and very fair,
Untouch'd by sorrow, unassail'd by care.
A careful sire and prudent mother kept
Knowledge of sin afar, and nature slept ;
And thus her infant years pass'd purely on,
And look'd back smiling ere yet they were
gone ;

She laugh'd and play'd with still an infant's wile,
And made each heart glad with her sunny smile.
With her life's tragedy had to begin,
She felt no sorrow and she knew no sin.
Soft, ductile, gentle—ah, alas ! too much—
Her young soul yielded to the slightest touch ;

She seem'd but form'd to love and to caress—
Love to absorb herself, yet none to bless.

She was a wild-wood-violet : the form
And beauteous hue were there, but scent was none.
By the road-side its simple form and hue
Cheer'd the tired traveller with its eye of blue.
But, to the workman in the crowded town,
Who seeks to rear some flow'ret of his own,
Or to the coop'd-up prisoner in the gaol,
It bore no perfume on the summer gale.
Yet how I loved her ! in her joyous youth,
Mine own revived in beauty and in truth :
In her life mine was woven as a thread,
And she return'd my love ;—and we were wed.

Pass by a few short months, it boots not how ;
They brought alas ! what furrow'd o'er my brow.
I found her fickle, destined but to shine,
Nor comprehended she such love as mine.
I talk'd of trials which we must endure ;
She sigh'd and, shudd'ring, wept at being poor.

Placed I high thoughts before her mind, she'd say,
 She wish'd not to be great, she would be gay.
 She'd court the venal, vain, and foolish crowd,
 The selfish, rich, the ignorantly proud,
 And sigh and weep for some much higher sphere—
 Her beauty would be prized and worshipp'd there.
 Heaven! how I loved her; but she reck'd not that:
 My love was old, stale, profitless, and flat.

Yet I had patience, and tried hard to instil
 Some earnestness of love, some strength of will;
 I saw her turn away her gaze from mine,
 And in her golden hair her fingers twine,
 Listless and sad; or perhaps she'd laugh—'twas
 pain
 To hear, so vacant was it, and so vain.
 I felt her love was waning: mine grew strong;
 Yes—grew the greater underneath its wrong.
 Our happy days came back to give but pain—
 The deep regret they ne'er could live again.
 Forget! Oh, Heavens! that Lethe was a lie:
 Past pleasure turn'd to pain can never die.

I look'd into her face so fair so dear,
I knelt and begg'd her love, but raised her fear—
Fear at the love she could not understand,
To hear me rave and beg love at her hand,—
She gave me all, she said, e'en to the whole ;
I know it now—she was so slight of soul.
I went into my chamber, and I knelt,
Weeping I pray'd, and then some comfort felt ;
Knew that *her* love, for which *I* gave my heart,
Was weak and abject, worthless in each part ;
Where I thought giant, dwarf ;—where rich, was
 poor ;
But oh ! I loved mine own Ideal more.

The world once with us prosper'd ; now it turn'd,
And fortune all my honest efforts spurn'd :
Once it would hurt not, now it gave but pain,
For she repin'd at our loss of gain.
I could not give the gold she sought, nor buy
The tinsel pleasures which she prized so high ;
Less rich her dress, less fair our station shone,
Our wealth exhausted and our credit gone.

Lord ! I repined and murmur'd at thy blow,
Not for myself—I'd seen our riches go
Unmoved—but that the little love she gave
Was buried, and grim poverty the grave.
One night—all the sad long day I had sought
Some little harvest, and had glean'd but nought—
My home was desolate, no Helen there :
She'd fled the poverty she could not bear—
Fled from me, and our neighbours knew not
where.

Heaven knows I pardon'd and forgave her all,
E'en had she fallen far beyond recall ;
Sought her each day and night, but sought in vain
To win her to my heart and to reclaim ;
And dreamt, when sorrow, perhaps sin, she'd pass'd,
She would return and be my own at last.
One night—tired, hungry, desperate, and poor,
Home desolate and shut each friendly door—
I heard above me, in the empty street,
A sound which I scarce hoped my heart to
greet :

It was her *laugh*;—gay, vacant, as of old
(Scarce can the misery of that night be told).
I mark'd the house; the casement was ablaze
With light and comfort, and I fix'd my gaze
Upon it, and saw there her well-known form
Flit by, unconscious of the coming storm.

No felon with a rich prize in his view;
No lover waiting for a mistress true;
No wanderer coming to long-absent land;
No starving beggar for food-giving hand,
Waited as I for th' opening of that door:
I knew her guilt now, I had *hoped* before.
At length some pandering lackey left the place,
A menial rich bedight with tinsel lace,
Left the half-open'd door: I crept within,
Rush'd up the stair, and saw her in her sin.
The *man* was old, on his grey head light shone;
Yet him I heeded not: 'twas her alone
I craved. "Old lecher," cried I, without grace,
"Give me my *wife*. Great God! my father's
face!"

He turn'd and saw my half-uplifted arm,
And heard her shriek of terror and alarm,
Gibber'd and moan'd, yet not a word he said,
But fell before me, groan'd, and then was DEAD.





THE CASTLE IN THE AIR.

"It so befell one evening that they came
Unto a castell lodged there to be
Where many a knight and many a lovely dame
Was there assembled——"

Faerie Queen.



AM somewhere, I am nowhere,
On the margin of sweet streams,
Or in valley fairy-haunted
When the golden sunset gleams,
Built and order'd most supremely
By the Poet's golden dreams,

Dreaming, as amidst the future,
From the weariness of life,
From the faith which crumbles daily,
From the noise of wordy strife,
He takes refuge, wedding Fancy
As a richly dower'd wife.

Calm she sits, and smoothes right softly
O'er his brow her lib'ral hand,
Broad and open, and, caressing,
Leads him forth to fairy land,
Where they build me up together,
Founded upon golden sand.

Arch and tower rise in silence,
Marble porch and stately hall,
Corridors and order'd chambers,
Painted window, pillar tall ;
Courts where in the summer season
Musical the fountains fall.

Ne'er Palladio or Vitruvius
 Raised such structures by their art,
So supremely built, so wisely
 Set and fashion'd in each part—
So beautiful the musing Poet
 Stills with prayer his beating heart.

Fair wide walks, like twining serpents,
 Round about stretch many a mile,
Where in bosky clumps sweet roses
 Scent the air and sweetly smile,
Or the heartsease lifts its bright eye
 Gloom and sad thoughts to beguile,

Preaching still its simple sermon—
 “Lowly on the ground am I :
Shadow'd from the sun by great ones,
 Shall I pine or drooping die ?
Nay, from here, and oh, more deeply,
 See I the eternal sky.”

Fair primroses born of spring-tide,
Violets in covert green,
On the borders of the winter
Came and went ; then came the sheen
Of gay flowers in the summer,
Bright'ning all the distant scene.

Gay the poppy—gay nor useless ;
Sweet and simple mignonette,
And geraniums many-colour'd,
With a thousand plants were set :
Art and Nature strove together,—
Never unsuccessful yet.

In the distance stretch'd the landscape—
Ancient trees and mossy dell—
Where the stricken heart of Nature
All its sorrows there could tell ;
Whilst the lambent air bore softly
On the ear the passing bell.

Toss'd their giant arms above them,
Gnarled oak and sinewy ash ;
Whilst the silver birch flung forth her
Foliage with a graceful dash,
And the ever-mourning willow
Hung her long and slender lash.

There, in deepest covert shaded,
Stood the cedar which of yore,
Fragrant in its death, though darkly
It hath ever look'd before,
Gave its beams to Judah's temple,
And the Lord's house strongly bore ;—

Stretching its dark arms above you,
Op'ning wide its dusky hand,
Blessing in a solemn fancy
All who underneath it stand ;
Spreading holy gloom, that angels
Unobserved might walk the land.

Open meadows pranked with flowers,
Rich in fresh and grassy lair,
Where the breezes gather'd sweetness,
When they chanced to wander there,
And with open bosom gave it
Still unto more distant air.

“These are grounds wherein to wander ;
Here our fancies we'll beguile ;
Heap my heart with Nature's bounties :
It shall hold them ; and the while,
Dearest Fancy, I will pay thee
With a loving look and smile.

“Such a smile, 'twill make my worn cheek,
Wrinkled brow, and wither'd face,
Like the prophet's rod which flower'd,
Break to beauty and to grace ;
And, oh, then, dear Fancy, lead me
Bright within this gracious place.”

So they onward went ; and, going,
Said the Poet, ere the door
They had reach'd : " Ah ! such a palace
Never prince had yet of yore ;
Prince am I, and royal-hearted,
And I give it to the poor."

In the halls were elders teaching
All that Nature taught or Art—
How His works were ever perfect,
Wisely fitted to their part :
Kindly these soft words of wisdom
Did the white-robed men impart.

Matrons too the young were tending
Infancy itself was there,—
Love their language, and that only.
Round stood many a maiden fair,
Watching ere the time came to her
When herself she fruit should bear.

All was simple : Nature's handmaid
Was fair Art, nor tyrant she :
Graceful fell each robe, nor hinder'd
Healthful play and action free ;
Nor was fashion so distorted
That she smiled herself to see.

Young men with fair maidens mingled,
Bore their labours in the sun ;
Strength its share takes well and bravely—
By its side the younglings run,
Cheering it through harder labours,
Tending it when they are done.

Thus the young ones knew each other,
Labour sweeten'd side by side ;
Knowing well each other's nature,
None could there their weakness hide ;
Some were sweetly drawn together,
And became bridegroom and bride :

Bride and bridegroom—not as worldlings
Who each other overreach,
Dress the heart in flaunting colours,
Deep dissemble each to each,
And throw off the mask they once wore
When the married shore they reach.

Nor all playing were the children,
Nor all dress'd in such a guise
That even Fancy blush'd to see them :
Nature taught them to be wise ;
For Art, bless'd with Nature's teaching,
Look'd at all with Wisdom's eyes.

Round the halls of this fair palace
Were the forms of those long gone,
Who had borne the strife with worldlings,—
Not all conquering, nor forlorn,
But upheld by truest conscience,
If repaid with hate or scorn.

In the midst of these disciples
Of the First who taught them all
That one divinest lesson,
Stood His Cross, erect and tall,
Stretching out its arms, and throwing
A dark shadow on the wall.

Where the shadow fell, in golden
Letters was one lesson hoar,
Which has lived throughout the olden
Times and cruel deeds of yore ;
Thrown like an immortal flower
From a stormy sea on shore.

In Dame Fancy's pleasant castle
All were equal, none were poor :
No one rested from his labour,
Whilst his brother, toiling sore,
Sank as, in this world too often,
Lazarus at Dives' door.

Crime was dead, and, save the conflict
 Born within our human state,
Few there were or no temptations.
 Then the Poet, heart elate,
Cried : " Full half our guilty creatures
 Foolish worldly laws create."

All were equal—none before each
 Other proudly tried to press ;
Wisely taught, they knew that greatness
 Sprang from heart and not from dress,
And they welcomed the true chieftains
 With a brotherly caress.

" Oh, dear Fancy !" cried the Poet,
 " This is where I'd ever dwell ;
Here indeed are bands of brothers,
 Royal hearts I love full well ;
London's fever'd courts and alleys
 Distant far as heav'n from hell."

As he said this full triumphant,
From his dream the Poet woke,
And the sentence so exultant,
Which, when sleeping, he outspoke,
Linger'd on his lips : alas ! he
Found that Fancy's spell was broke.

So he wander'd home ; brave hearted,
Thus he said : " These golden dreams
Are not useless, and, for Truth's sake,
This world's better than it seems.
As the sun sets, and athwart the
Grass he darts his dying beams,

" He shall rise again to-morrow ;
And to-morrow Truth shall rise,
And a race shall come hereafter
Who will look with diff'rent eyes
On their brothers round about them :
Being *good*, they shall be wise.

“Lo, I die; but, as the flowers
In the autumn fade away—
Leaves and blossoms but enriching
The dull earth whereon they stay—
So from these dead leaves may one rise,
Saying what I cannot say.

“And poor Fancy’s castle, vanish’d
Not in all things, still it stands
With its halls and noble chambers
Founded upon golden sands,
With its trees and sunny gardens,
And its noble forest-lands.

“And the elders and the teachers,”
Said the Poet—“where are they?”
These dear books around me lying,
Friends and teachers, many a day
Sweetest wisdom have they whisper’d,
Deep in study as I lay.

He who has these friends about him
 Shall be equal with the great—
Shall have entry to each palace,
 Though the king be there in state;
And shall see no wrong about him,
 But greet wisdom as his mate.

With the pastoral poets walking,
 He shall roam o'er woodland fair,
List'ning to the honey-gath'ers
 Humming through the summer air :
Books are still a fairy palace,
 And no CASTLE IN THE AIR.

By their aid shall wrong be conquer'd,
 Many a pain their words shall heal.
Hard the world to teach ; but ever
 Through his book shall he appeal—
'That which now the Poet dreams of,
 In the future shall be real.



THE BIRTH OF THE DRAMA.



IN ancient Greece, when yet the world was
young,
And youthful poets her first praises
sung—

When flowers were brighter, and the sky more blue,
And youth itself wore yet a rosier hue—
Came Thespis, the Prometheus of our race,
The glowing passions of our soul to trace.
In his rude waggon—a *stage* waggon then—
Amidst a little band of wondering men
And maidens, he portray'd high thoughts and things,
Which they but dreamt of—the sad fall of Kings,

Great in their desolation ; the high strife
Of him who for another gave his life—
The fallen Exile, or the Patriot grand,
Who shed his blood to save his native land !

Amongst the crowd new hero-feelings ran,
And the slave listen'd till he rose a man ;
Whilst manlier bosoms glow'd with nobler rage,
Till tyrants trembled at that little stage.
Next, softer passions caused the tender sigh
From Beauty, list'ning with a dewy eye.
Nor was Love absent : thence the youth oft learn'd
To win the damsel who his passion spurn'd,
And, when successful, gladly thank'd the spell
Which the poor actor taught so truly well.

Father and matron, fired with holy zeal—
With love of country which each heart should feel—
Held up their children to the mimic scene,
And pray'd that they might be, as those had been ;
Whilst, weeping o'er some stranger's tearful tale,
Which made the heart beat quick, the cheek turn pale,

Some wanderer on the earth, weak, old, and
blind,

The love of country changed to love of kind.

Religion, too, was there : the guilty heart

Saw mimic murder done with horrent start ;

The swearer and God-scorner, howe'er great,

Was punish'd by inexorable Fate :

But smoothly life upon Time's axle ran,

For him the Gods smile on—the pious man !

The fire is not yet dead—the world is old—

The skies are duller and the heart more cold ;

But yet it burns—ah ! never shall it die

Whilst Virtue lives to raise a feeble cry.

What were our land shorn of Dramatic fame ?

A rayless sun, and but an empty name !

What Pulpits reach not, and would never reach,

The Stage, well purified, would rightly teach.

For those I plead who gave a grace to life,

Yet lived in contumely, and died in strife ;

Who dug from misery many a golden thought,

Yet counted all their wisdom cheaply bought ;

Show'd goodness, which exalts, and that alone
Which crowns the highest in the lowest shone !
Nay, that the worst, by self and vice made
 blind,
Had yet a tie which bound them to their kind !

Great Drama !—of our England chiefest Muse ;
My study, could I but that study choose ;
Teacher and weapon of our greatest mind,
And second benefactor of our kind ;
Religion's aid, when rightly understood,
Painter and great exemplar of the good ;
The veriest dolt, whilst wondering at the scéne,
Beholding what can be and what has been,
Is thrill'd, reprov'd, admonish'd, and yet pleas'd,
By no judge threaten'd, nor by preacher teased :
Gently his heart is soften'd ere you preach,
And what he'd shun from others boldly teach ;—
How art thou fallen ! and thy holy fane
Profaned by greedy merchants bent on gain :
Onwards they press with much pretended zeal
For public pleasure or the public weal,

Picturing hate or teaching murderous skill,
Preaching the ragged doubts which haunt us still—
Old crimes, old follies, still upon us hurl'd,
Whilst none point upward to a higher world.
Will none arise to rescue, none to dress
His mind to virtue and to scorn success?
Not one instinct with honour, genius, mind—
No one who loves his country and his kind,
Who, stung with poetry, shall breathe the flame
Of Life within our Drama's fainting frame?





· THE DEATH OF THE DRAMA.



THE shadows fade—the dream hath fled—

And I am by myself once more ;

I slowly pace my study floor,

I get me to my lonely bed.

Restless, again I rise and pace

From wall to wall the darken'd room ;

And seeming pent as in a tomb,

I rush without the silent place.

The stars shine bright ; the city's roar
Hath died away ; and silence all
Clothes prison-house and steeple tall—
O'er wakeful rich and slumb'ring poor.

Yet as a fever-leaguer'd man
Wakes restless in his sickly plight,
So wakes and dies throughout the night
The drunkard's roar, or madman's ban.

The stars are dim : 'tis early morn,
And light and life begin once more.
Feebly at first the city's roar
Arises. "Be no more forlorn,"

A voice within me cries ; "Why wail ?
Life's Drama never dies : the throes
Of sobbing anguish, and the blows
Of tyrant arms fall like a flail ;

But tears of pity fall as well,
And hands bind up the wounds that bleed,
And help comes at the sorest need :
God snatches from the gates of hell.

Look o'er the tombs in full churchyard,
The enigma'd pages stuff'd with lies,
Like toneless organ-keys they rise
Against the sky, so cold and hard.

Their parts are play'd, their tongues are dust,
Or honey-comb'd by noisome worm,
Whether they died without a germ
Of faith or with a Christian's trust.

And all their thoughts, or good or bad,
Are gather'd into His right hand,
Whose piercing gaze none can withstand,
Whose lightest word 's with thunder clad.

Take comfort, if one instrument
Of good decays, or grows outworn,
Or striving saints are overborne—
No matter, weigh well their intent.

Forget the point, regard the whole :
Truth cannot die ; the waves of good
Spread ever wider o'er the flood
Till Heav'n they reach, their end and goal.

The Stage grows dark, the curtain falls,
The lights, the music, and the scene
Are of the things that once have been,
And the dark frame-work but appals ;

But were thy part or great or poor,
Yet acted well with earnest mind,
In life's renewal thou shalt find,
A peace to last for evermore."



OLD AND NEW.



THOU art going to the grave, Old Year,
Thou art going to the grave ;
Thy days are told, thou'rt stark and
cold,
The winds about thee rave, Old Year,
The winds about thee rave.

A moment's past, thou'rt gone at last ;
Straightway is born thy heir,
Thy heir of many, many sins,
Yet hope to whomso'er begins
His life with thee afresh, New Year,
His life with thee afresh.

A landing-place to wait upon,
To count on years long past and gone
Of mingled hope and fear ;
And to turn o'er a blotted page,
Dark manuscript of sin and rage,
Art thou to all, New Year, New Year,
 Thou art to all, New Year.

Turn back the leaves ; oh, how defaced,
What records dark of sin and waste,
Of deed and thought which might have graced
An angel's brow, New Year ;
But now, sad coronet of sin,
Beneath thy circlet devils grin,
Beside wait guilt and fear, New Year,
 Beside wait guilt and fear.

To some thou art the last, New Year,
To some thou art the last ;
Each moment as it passing flies
Echoes some sinner's dying cries,

Whose book of sin all closed shall stay,
Till open'd at the judgment day—
Each little deed appear, New Year,
Each little deed appear.

Yet God hath given us time, New Year,
To purge from sin and crime, New Year,
Again to live our lives afresh,
To break from Satan's deadly mesh ;
God grant that we all may, New Year,
God grant that we all may.

For then when we are old, New Year,
And growing stark and cold, New Year,
And going to the grave,
We shall look back with joy to thee—
A year of sunshine, mirth, and glee
Thou'lt be to us, New Year, New Year,
Thou'lt be to us, New Year.



ALL FOOLS.



FROM him who sits upon a throne
A sublimated man, half god,
With slaves who watch his every nod ;
To him who dares not call his own

His soul imbruted : him who sits
Apart from men, despising all,
Still swelling o'er with envy's gall,
Bow'd to a god of his own wits ;

To him who studies still the schools,
Loves mind alone, and simple worth,
If ignorant, regards as dearth
Of soul, smile-moving :—fools ! all fools !

The merchant counting figures o'er ;
The sailor with his home a boat ;
The poet through whose brain dreams float ;
The soldier whose grim world is war ;

Philanthropist who thinks all good,
Nor that the heart hath aught of sin ;
And haughty philosophe who win
Worldly renown with heart of wood ;

Religionist who scorns the world
And all his brothers, who by pray'rs
Solely would climb up to the stars,
But cares not where the rest are hurl'd ;

And next the staunch Reformer, he
Who cries " Not words, but deeds !" and sneers
At sufferance pale, and nightly prayers
Regards not, ever crying, " We

Must put our strength forth, else our sons
Will still be slavish. Forward all !
Down every hedge and bastile wall
Which keeps light from our little ones !"

And darker yet the worldling slight,
Who lives for *self* alone ; nay, worse,
They who ill passions only nurse,
Grown pale like plants amerced from light.

Before the Perfect One, how blind,
How weak our efforts after Truth !
Wand'rings which wake the Angels' ruth,
And pain the Universal Mind !

A Saint's day this for lowly heart,
Which knows itself and others well.
Sad jester, here the truth I tell,
And act for once aright my part.

All—he who serves and he who rules—
Bow stubborn heart, and cast aside
For once thy panoply of pride,
And sadly own, all fools! all fools!

April 1st, 1858.





IN CHURCH.

“Where-
withal shall a
young man
cleanse his
way?”—on
going into
church such
a one apos-
trophiseth
the curate.



USEY-CURATE slow intoning,

(Early English church and
spire,)

Over sins and errors groaning

(With a fashionable choir).

Flock, whilst wond’ring at the manner

Of thus putting up its prayers,

In a church
of modern
“Decorated
Gothic.”

Spells each label, scroll, or banner

From its Continental chairs.

The children
make noises.

Little shoes the children shuffle,

Hardly knowing what to do ;

The young
man’s atten-
tion is
arrested.

And, to calm my spirit’s ruffle,

Straight I turn—and look at you.

- A general confession. Yes ; we're *miserable* sinners
 (Sweet response in A to G).
- Upon which the young man comments. Wondering somewhat 'bout our dinners,
 Then skip back to piety.
- He stareth about him, 'Neath a gaudy new glass painting
 In Memoriam of a wife,
- and observes new windows by Clayton & Bell. Scarlet king and purple saint in
 Brilliant colours large as life—
- His attention is again arrested. There you sit, the nimbus glowing
 Paints your cheek a warmer hue.
 Curate stops :—the organ's going—
- The consequences. I must turn to look at you.
- He accuses Well, I know it's wrong : we're mortal,
 And divided wills have we ;
- and excuses himself. When I pass'd the Gothic portal
 None more serious could be.
- His weakness, he asserts, is but human. But we go to church with prayerful
 Thoughts most piously devout,
- He describes the enemy whence the assault. And a piquante little chairful
 Sends them to the right-about.

Asserts his
belief in the
wisdom of
the ancients.

Wiser were our stiff-back'd grandsires,
Guarded in funeral pew,
E'en on tiptoe or on hassock
They had fail'd to look at you.

He is re-
gretful, and
crieth "*Alea
culpa,*" and

There :—I've miss'd the absolution
Reading in the marriage service ;
Budding Love's quick revolution
Turn'd my thoughts all topsiturvies.
Collect, Litany, Epistle,

" *Miserere
mei.*"

Heaven forgive me, scarce I heard ;—
Softly as the down of thistle

*Benedicite
omnia opera.*

Fell the blessings word by word,
Till my lips took up those blessings
Strong as tender, tried as true,

He confesses
his sins and
joins in

And I pray'd (my sins confessing)
That each one might light on you.

a general
benediction :

Bless the kindly rev'rend preacher,
Though his sermon made me wince ;

an acidulated
spinster not
excepted.

Even bless that female teacher,
Looking sour as summer quince !

He blesseth those afflicted :
 both youth and age,
 spinsters and bachelors,
 and married people.

Bless the poor in all their trouble,
 Bless the young, and bless the old ;
 Bless the single (make them double),
 And to warm hearts turn the cold !

He is catholic in his sympathies,
 and does not even except the charity boys.

Salvos fac all sects, all churches—
 In true love may they be one !
 Bless those boys on gall'ry perches—
 Bless me ! why, the Sermon's done !

Ita—missa est. He suddenly wakes up to find that the service (and the dream) is ended.





NONE THE BETTER !



If you and I were always young,
And cherry-cheek'd and rosy,
And o'er life's burdens humm'd and
sung

Like bees around a posy ;
If carking care had never yet
Its dark corroding fetter
Upon our free hearts chanced to set,
We should be—none the better !

If you and I were always fair,
Nay, all that we could dream of,
Still bow'd to when we took the air
By friends a copious stream of ;

And if the Queen upon our brow
Had placed a coronet or
Princely crown, why, then I vow
We should be—none the better.

If, Midas like, our touch made gold
Bright guineas thick as motes, sir ;
And full our chests as they could hold
Of Bank of England notes, sir ;
And all our wishes each day were
Fulfill'd unto the letter,
Our luck would be extremely rare,
But we—why, none the better !

Still you and I, if ever wise,
Ne'er said or did things foolish,
Though senates waited our replies,
Nor friends grew ever coolish ;
Tho' Bacon's brain and Shakspeare's verse
Within one head were set e'er,
And tho' we had Jew Rothschild's purse,
Why, we were—none the better !

How then, if friends and fortune, gold,
Great wit, and kingly power,
Down on one sole recipient roll'd
Like Madam Danaë's shower?
The man would be but man; in fact,
In spirit and in letter,
Of self, cares, woes, and sins compact,
He could be—none the better.

To make amends, let you and me
Enjoy the good about us:
Wit, wealth, and place—a dangerous three—
But drag the soul without us.
Great offices and talents still
Forge freedom's heavy fetter:
A pure and humbly pious will
Alone will make us better.





RESURGAM !



SOME words are little else but words
Of slight signification,
But some toll like a passing bell
With deadly intimation :—
Your lips have moved to whisper “ *Death* :”
'Tis written on your faces ;
Th' elastic air, moved by your breath,
Bears of it still the traces.

I know I'm dying—day by day
I feel my heart is breaking,
My spirit ebbing fast away
To where there's no awaking ;

I die, and leave but sad disgrace
 Blotting our old achievement,
My mother's heart will feel my death
 Relief and not bereavement.

Place then no name upon my tomb,
 Memento, or refrain,
But grave one word upon the stone—
 True, simple, touching, plain.
RESURGAM: cut it large and deep,
 That it may last for years,
And they may read whose eyes, like mine,
 Are blinded with their tears.

And should He come who caused this shame,
 Who swore so loud and deep,
To tread that grave without a name
 And vex me in my sleep,
The letters gild with red, red gold,
 That when the vespers knoll,
The word will glare in setting sun
 And burn into his soul.

Resurgam ! at that word arise
All trembling hopes and fears,
And pass before his mental eyes,
His false oaths, and my tears—
His manly looks, which set aside
All doubt, distrust, and sin,
And made him seem an angel fair
Who devil was within.

The virgin blush, the whisper'd prayer,
The faith so purely given,
The love that held his love so dear,
Nor choice 'twixt that and heaven ;
A love which o'er-inform'd my form
Shone out in face and eyes,
And though I'm fall'n, like sun in storm
Leaves glory in the skies.

There are ten thousand others near,
But no one soul alone ;
Some good deed done, like angel stands
Beside each near the throne.

I rise, and pass him face to face,
And hate him in his sin ;
Without the fair convulsed form,
And blackness foul within.

He dares not lift his eye above,
Yet sees th' Almighty face
Awfully Just, and feels 'tis past
Beyond the hour of grace.
He hears no sound, and yet—" Arise !"
Like light shoots through his brain,
And all his sins march trooping past
In long accusing train.

Resurgam ! ay, the day will come
When he shall feel all this,
And curse the day when, Judas like,
He bought me with a kiss.
Resurgam ! truth and pain shall shoot,
Like lightning down a rod,
When that dread word, in thunder heard,
Shall drag him to his God.

I see him with my dying eye,
Kneeling before the throne,
The form that once I would have clasp'd,
So trembling and alone !
Alone ! with all his sins in view,
To meet the avenging rod,
His palsied lips of ashy hue,
Alone ! and with his God !

He cannot plead ! his throat is choked,
Sin holds him in her might,
And, self-condemn'd, he slideth down
To an eternal night !
The ranged Angels' great white throne,
The whole Almighty quire,
Fade out, the Father's sapphire gaze
Grows molten in its ire.

Resurgo ! pulses still again,
Still rises worldly sin ;
A burning hate has grown between
That burning face and him.

Some comfort in each worldly sin
That pass'd in ghastly row,
He found ; but now he is alone,
And God's face in a glow.

It laps him round in burning light,
He feels it all within,
All portions of his quivering frame
Horridly wrapp'd in sin.
Our human pains, though sharp at first,
Leave pleasure as they go,
But mental, everlasting pain
Deepens with fiery glow.

I see it now, though all fades out,
My mother's face and all ;
Come, place a pillow 'neath my head,
And turn me to the wall !
I see the glow around my brow,
It floods me on my bed :
Clasp hands, bend knees ; a moment more,
And I am with the dead !



A REPLICATION.

*"Spinning along with the ball,
Here if we conquer or fall,
What does it matter at all?"*

"THE TRAIN," 1857.



SPINNING along with the "ball"
(Thus the great World you miscall),
What does it matter at all?

What matters? What matter the tears
Of our infancy, childhood's vain fears,
And the struggles of boyhood's fresh years?

The love of our young days for truth,
The cherish'd resolve of our youth,
Disappointment, grim sorrow, and ruth?

Our follies we've battled with long,
Our carking cares banish'd with song,
By a heart at once tender and strong ;

All the trials of passion's dark flood,
And the vice that was born in our blood,
Uprooted, or often withstood.

These matter—grim manhood's intent
On ambition or duty, and bent
In the struggle of life to be spent.

The noble resolve of the few
To live well, to be honest and true,
Much matters—to me and to you.

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When each day brings its trouble and sore,
Each sad hour its trial in store,
And the heart growing cold at its core ;

When the friends we have long loved are dead,
And the snow of old age on our head
Bids us go to the grave as our bed :

All will matter, when, coming to die,
We hear the gaunt woodman's deep cry,
Saying, "Where the tree falls it must lie."

'Tis late, and night cometh apace,
And the bridegroom is heard in his place,
And 'tis long past the hour of grace !

If the lamp be not lighted, what then
If the talents were two or were ten ?—
If the work be not done ?—why, amen.

The dead past life has pass'd, and no more
Can you act the old foolishness o'er :
You've your tally—'tis ten and threescore.

So take up the dark lamp—come on :
It don't matter : you now must be gone ;
And the fool and his folly are one.

For, lo ! the Great Master of all,
Whose fiat set spinning this ball,
Whose promises stand past recall,

Who the deeds of each life could forecast,
Whose sayings for ever stand fast,
Will reward and will punish—at last.



THE FALLING STARS.

AFTER BERANGER'S "LES ETOILES QUI FILENT."



HEPHERD, thou say'st each has a star
Which guides our lives and lights the
skies ?

Yes, child ! but in its sable veíl
The night obscures them from our eyes.—
Since, shepherd, of that sky serene
To read the secrets thee 'tis given,
What is that star which brightly shines,
Then falls for ever from the heaven ?

My child ! a mortal being expires ;
His course the star is downward winging.
'Midst friends, whom mirth and wine inspires,
He died ; whilst gaily singing,
He drank his fill, and soundly sleeps,
And in this world will waken never.—
Again another star outshines,
Sparkles and shines, and falls for ever.

My child ! this one, so pure and bright,
Watch'd o'er a being as pure and fair ;
Good daughter, constant mistress she,
And blest with lover true and rare :
Sweet nuptial-flowers her brow entwine,
From all she is about to sever.—
Again another star outshines,
Sparkles and shines, and falls for ever.

My child ! the course of this is short :
Some haughty lordling newly-born—
The empty cradle which he leaves
With gold and purple they adorn ;

The flattering lie, the abject whine,
The food on which he'd fatten ever.—
Again another star outshines,
Sparkles and shines, and drops for ever.

Yes, child, and what a lurid light !
A minister who thought it great,
When favourite of a king, to laugh
At the sore evils of the State ;
His portrait even now they hide,
Poor fragile god ! 'gain thought of never.—
Again another star outshines,
Sparkles and shines, and drops for ever.

My child ! hot tears should stain our cheek :
One rich, who loved his poorer brothers,
Now dies. Want there full harvest made,
Yet glean'd but scantily with others ;
Sure of a home, this very eve
A poor man sought the generous giver.—
Again another star outshines,
Sparkles and shines, then drops for ever.

Some mighty monarch leaves his land.

Go, son, your innocence preserve ;

So that, if neither bright nor grand

Your star, from virtue you ne'er swerve :

If else, thou uselessly dost shine ;

And when thou diest, though great, rich, clever,

They'll say 'twas but a falling star,

Which sparkled, shone, and fell for ever !





AH, SING MY SONGS WHEN I AM DEAD!

AFTER BERANGER.



OLD age steals on, dear mistress mine,
Soon I shall leave you all alone—
Old Time's fell stroke as rapid seems,
As if he told two days for one ;
Thou wilt survive—be faithful yet,
When youth and beauty shall have fled ;—
In some old chimney-corner sit,
And sing my songs when I am dead !

When, in that sweet brow furrow'd o'er,
 Forgotten charms young eyes shall seek
Which once inspired me, they will ask—
 “Who is this friend of whom you speak?”
Oh, paint my love, if that thou canst,
 Its blindness, ardour, jealous dread ;—
Yes ! by some peaceful fireside sit,
 And sing my songs when I am dead !

They'll ask perchance, “And loved he thee?”
 You'll blush not then your love to own.
“Did e'er dishonour fix a stain
 Upon him?” Proudly answer, “None !”
Say that your lover, kind and true,
 To his poor lute's sweet sounds was wed ;—
Yes ! when the fire burns low and clear,
 Sing o'er my songs when I am dead !

You whom I taught o'er France to weep,
 Ah, tell her new-begotten sons,
Her glory and her hope I sung,
 To comfort her beneath her wrongs ;

Recall the storm before whose blast,
Cold, withering, her laurels fled ;—
Yes ! by some peaceful fireside sit,
And sing my songs when I am dead !

Dear heart ! and when, perchance, my fame
Shall charm the grief of thy sad hours,
And when your old weak hands shall deck
My portrait with Spring's sweetest flowers,
Then look up to the far-off world,
Where we shall ne'er be sunderèd,
And, true unto the last, sing o'er—
Oh, sing my songs when I am dead !





THE LAST BOAT.



USING I sit upon the shore,
Awaiting till the boat shall come,
And bear me to my far-off home ;
To cease from wandering ever more.

Wearied with waiting, pinch'd with cold,
Dim eyes of mine still watch the stream,
Which runs as in an endless dream ;—
Runs now, will run, and ran of old.

Ever unchanged the constant swirl
 In little whirlpools eddies still,
 The straws and leaves float down the rill,
And slime and scum still onward whirl.

For storms still ruffle its dark breast :
 The sunshine long hath ceased to play,
 Which, in the morning of my day
Fitfully shone with sweet unrest.

The day is dying ;—morn and noon
 And sober afternoon are gone ;
 Yet the boat comes not, and alone
I wait, and for its coming swoon.

But still the waters hurry on,
 The moving waters, dark and drear ;
 The wavelets dance in van and rear,
And I am waiting to be gone.

I would be home before the night
Sets in to freeze my spirit chill ;
For I have crept adown the hill
I mounted with a spirit light.

Lone, aged, and worn, I dread the cold,
The silent darkness long and drear :
I've nought to wrap me from the air,
Whistling so shrilly o'er the wold.

But, as a shadow on the land
Glides swiftly over field and wood,
Suddenly, where no mortal stood,
The Boatman hoar is close at hand.

He beckons, and I step within ;
The river glides and swirls away,
So swiftly that I scarce can say,
"O World ! Farewell, Life, Death, and Sin."



IN SIGHT OF JERUSALEM.

"Many abandoned their friends and their families, and hastened to the shores of Palestine, with the pious persuasion that Mount Sion would be the throne of Christ when he should descend to judge the world."—WADDINGTON: *History of the Church*.

— "Quod statim finito mille annorum numero Anti-Christus adveniret, et non longo post tempore universale judicium succederet."—*Apolo: de Abbo: Abbot of Fleury*, cited by MOSHEIM, Cen. x. p. 2, c. iii.



GLORIOUS sight! I say a wond'rous
sight!

Good Bernhard, thou hast painted with
weak pen

The Holy City's glories.

Stretch thy hands,
Maurice and Haddo; friends, companions, kneel,
For by the Lord we've reach'd His throne at last.

Ah, Lord ! an English knight from Avon's side,
Roused by the thundering echoes of Thy saint²
Fleeing the wrath to come, behold, good Lord !
For all my father's manors and rich farms
I've sold, left gentle wife and children dear,
And rush'd a Pilgrim to this Holy Strand ;
And by my sword and swords of other men
Whom I have hired, or, i' faith, beguiled
With pious fraud to combat for Thy land,
Will we hurl down the Antichrist and cleanse
Thy bright Throne from pollution.

Listen, Lord !

For many a weary month in perilous seas,
In dangers from magicians, robbers, fiends,
In sadness and in loneliness, in doubt,
In perturbation, and in faithlessness,
Have I held on to this great enterprise,
When the soft skies of Italy made melt
The resolution of my brothers' hearts :—
Nay, 'mid the gorgeous luxury and lust
Of that great Eastern city, wherein sits
Great Cæsar's heir, t' whom others sold their swords,

Still was I constant to Thee, a true knight,
Wasted by daily fast and nightly prayer.

When my strength,
Struck down with fever, left me a gaunt wreck
Alone with this half-Saxon boy to tend
Me in my ravings, came the Roman knights,
Flaunting their purple, came, with ribald jest,
And call'd Thy sweet Jerusalem a sty
Wherein the Prophet litter'd a great swarm
Of murd'rous Moslem; and then, mocking me,
Said jeeringly, "Oh fool, to sell thy land,
To leave thy sweet wife and thy children dear,
To cast thy body to the Eastern kites,
Or the Byzantine houseless hungry dogs!"
Or if that my wild dream—they call'd it so—
Were true, I was a ruffler and a cheat,
For that I sold what had not three years' lease
For its full value, by my soul! if but
The fever had not left me water-weak,
Would I have chined those babblers, sent their souls
Wrapp'd in white fear unto the lower hell
With Moslem dogs and Christian doubting fools.

The wittols and the jesters, pardon me
If that they 'scaped me.

Look, oh gracious Lord!

The light that rises in the dappled sky
Seems warmer and more glorious; it will dawn
Full brightly on that Judgment-day: Thy throne
Will be on Zion, on yon mountain-top;
Here will be heard the fanfare of Thy trump,
Here shine Thy glory, and, oh happy Soul,
Here will I, simple English knight, be one
Of armèd thousands belting Thy white throne
When goes the fiat forth, and sun and moon
And the life-watching man-perplexing stars
Drop from the skies in terror. Oh, the fools!
What fools will those who jested at me then,
Who call'd me mad in England or in France,
Gibed at my following thus an insane priest,
Laugh'd when I tried my ringèd armour on,
And mark'd my surcoat with Thy crimson Cross—
What fools they'll know themselves! But levè, Lord,
Reward Thy faithful servants; punish them
Who, like the foolish Virgins, without oil

Hold forth their dark dead lamps ; e'en let them lie
In darkness with the gnashing and the woe !
Will they not call for rocks to fall on them ?
Will they not run to icy caves to hide
Themselves from Thee ? Thou wilt not pardon them,
Distant upon the great plane o' the world,
From Thy bright judgment-seat, while I am near.
Pardon my wife—I see her gentle eyes
Red with fresh tears : my children, pardon them ;
They were too weak to follow. But for me,
I will not ask Thy pardon ; I am *here* ;
I cry near to Thy throne ; my lamp is lit !
For I have pass'd thro' yesty perilous seas,
Deep troughs of waves, like Jonah in the storm ;
Through dangers of magicians and wild fiends,
Through robbers and black devils stopping me ;
Past sirens with temptations pressing me,
Past dangers in the heavens and the earth,
Past poisoners, conj'ers—all the hellish troop ;
In sickness, weakness, trial, well-nigh death :
But now I see Jerusalem at last ! •



PRAYER.



PRAY at morning ere the Sun 's awake,
Or when the morn 's beginning ;
Under Thy wings, oh gracious Lord, me
take,
And keep my soul from sinning.

I pray at noon, or ere a task 's begun,
With prompt ejaculation,
Keep me, oh Father, Holy Spirit, Son,
From evil perturbation.

When on my board is spread a frugal store,
Thankful I bow my head ;
Thou feed'st me, Lord, oh gracious evermore,
While some for want lie dead.

What diff'rence, Lord, see'st Thou 'twixt them and me?
I'm fed, while they're denied ;
Not more from sin than they am I, Lord, free :
Let this abate my pride.

When soars the lark into the summer sky,
Pouring full-throated praise,
I sing like him, and, Lord, like him I try
T'wards Thee my soul to raise.

When golden fires are twinkling in the sky,
And birds their even-song
Begin, while nature's husht, in praise do I
Seek, too, to add my song.

Not only on Thy sacred Day of Rest,
Within our church's portals,
Seek I in pray'r my full thoughts to invest
For self and other mortals :

But every day and hour to Thee I tend,
Or seek to, Lord, in earnest :
Raise Thou my thoughts, my inclinations bend :
He's stable whom Thou turnest.

I pray for *some*, dear to me, very dear,
Oh bless them, Lord, and save ;
And shouldst Thou take them, be to me, Lord, near,
Kneeling beside their grave.

I pray for *all* who, living, daily tread
Upon this land of graves ;—
Or who upon the sea are onwards sped,
Driven by wind and waves.

Nor men alone : let all Thy creatures share
Their fellows' benediction :
Since Thou hast made them, they to me are dear,
Without one faint restriction.

And pray'r is mighty, comforting and sweet,
And strengthens day by day ;
It shields us in each danger that we meet :
Lord ! teach us how to pray.





FROM MY SOUL TO MY BOOK.



WHEN go—since you will witness bear
Of love of good, and hate of ill,
Of constant hope in brother man,
Too often false, but constant still :
Go, witness in the marts of men,
Or where they meet and idly speak—
Go, cheer the strong in hate of wrong,
And add a virtue to the weak.
Into the silent study creep,
Gaze up into some earnest face,
And make me thrill if perchance deem'd
Somewhat the genius of the place.

Reflect my mind on distant shores,
To work its little mite of good,
To show I loved a falling cause,
And spake my mind as Christian should.
And shouldst thou fail, as worthier have,
And sink ignobly in the ground,
Or from the blossom of success,
Blown idly, fruit should ne'er be found—
What then? it will not take away
The knowledge that I nobly dared,
Nor rob me of the rapturous sight
Of Poesy's white bosom bared.

Nor less reap I the great reward
Of those who strive; the love of Him
Who fashion'd equally the play
Of Poet's wit or peasant's limb.
Not happier they who climb the height,
Than they who weary sink below;
Not greater they who win the strife,
Than they who fall before the foe.

Listless spectators of the fight,
Men shout behind the victor's car,
And deem that might is always right,
Though trampling on a nobler far.
But calm above the throng sits Time,
Planting man's fruit : his words and deeds
To bide the sunshine and the rain,
And bring forth good, or noxious weeds.
So many a scornèd mind, unknown,
Neglected from its earliest birth,
Lights the first spark within the soul
Of the true heroes of the earth.

To have been a laggard in the van
Of those who finely think and sing,
Is something more of keen delight
Than being a crown'd and sceptred king.
Nor cancell'd even if I fail
Is Poet's eye or Poet's brain ;
Superior love of human kind,
And greater joy and greater pain.

Truth I shall ever worship still,
Nor love the air and sunshine less—
Go' forth : sometimes in Heaven's will
The soul's worst poison is success.



NOTES.

1.—*Francis Spira.*

“A RELATION of the fearefull Estate of Francis Spira in the Year 1548, after he turned Apostate from the Protestant Church. December 2, 1637. *Imprimatur.* Thos. Wykes, R. P. Episc. Lond. Cap. Domes.”

This little book has often been reprinted, and was, doubtless, a favourite with Bunyan, who, in one of his tracts, speaks of the sad and miserable story of Francis Spira, and, in the picture of the man in despair in the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” evidently draws a picture from the same. “Then, said I to the man, is there *no* hope? and the man, said none.” The book was a favourite with Churchmen and many sects of Protestants, and was constantly issued as one of the chap-books. So late as 1815 it was reprinted at Falkirk, under the title of “An awful Memorial of the state of F. S., &c.” Spira is described as being “a civil lawyer of grave countenance.” His ejaculations I have frequently given *verbatim*, merely rendering them metrically.

2.—*Roused by the thundering echoes of Thy saint.*

Bernhard, a fanatic, preached the instant end of the world A. D. 960; but I have ventured to presume, with some reason, that the millennial error continued to be insisted on as a motive for rescuing the Holy City even by the followers of St. Bernard as far down as the Second Crusade.

THE END.



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