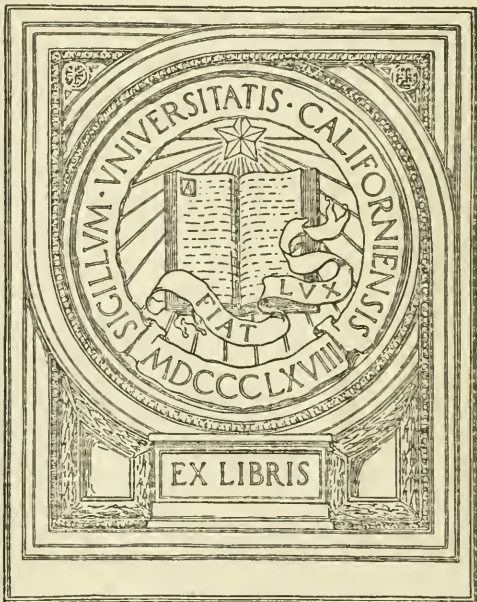


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POEMS.

POEMS

BY

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

WITH A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE

BY HIS BROTHER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

SECOND EDITION.

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POSTHUMOUS POEMS.

1850.

ἐκὼν ἐγὼ
μαθοῦσιν ἀδῶ, κοῦ μαθοῦσιν λήθομαι.

Αἰσχ. Ἀγαμ.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A SMALL proportion of the Poems in this volume was prepared for the press by the Author. Of the remainder, it is probable that several have not received his last corrections; and that some were not intended for publication. But in making the selection from a much larger number, the Editor has had no guide but his own discretion. He has generally, but not uniformly, chosen such as appeared to him most finished. In some cases, he has seen in a hasty sketch sufficient interest to atone, in his opinion, for one or more weak or imperfect lines. A word here and there may have been mistaken from the imperfection of the manuscript; and better copies of some of the pieces, now first printed, may be in existence. These, and other inaccuracies, should such be detected, will, it is hoped, be pardoned in a posthumous publication.

ST. MARK'S COLLEGE, CHELSEA,
December, 1850.

A FRESH collation of manuscripts has enabled the Editor, in the present edition, to remove many of the imperfections, and most of the inaccuracies, which it was apprehended might be found in the first.

ST. MARK'S, CHELSEA,
September, 1851.

SONNETS.

I.

TO S. T. COLERIDGE.

IF when thou wert a living man, my sire,
I shrank unequal from the task to praise
The ripening worth of thy successive days.
What shall I do since that imputed fire,
Extinct its earthly aliment, doth aspire,
Purged from the passionate subject of all lays,
From all that fancy fashions and obeys,
Beyond the argument of mortal lyre?
If while a militant and suffering saint,
Thou walk'dst the earth in penury and pain,
Thy great Idea was too high a strain
For my infirmity, how shall I dare
Thy perfect and immortal self to paint?
Less awful task to "draw empyreal air."

October 28, 1835.

II.

OH! my dear mother, art thou still awake?
Or art thou sleeping on thy Maker's arm,—
Waiting in slumber for the shrill alarm
Ordain'd to give the world its final shake?
Art thou with "interlunar night" opaque
Clad like a worm while waiting for its wings;
Or doth the shadow of departed things
Dwell on thy soul as on a breezeless lake!
Oh! would that I could see thee in thy heaven
For one brief hour, and know I was forgiven
For all the pain and doubt and rankling shame
Which I have caused to make thee weep or sigh.
Bootless the wish! for where thou art on high,
Sin casts no shadow, sorrow hath no name.

III.

HAST thou not seen an aged rifted tower,
Meet habitation for the Ghost of Time,
Where fearful ravage makes decay sublime,
And destitution wears the face of power?
Yet is the fabric deck'd with many a flower
Of fragrance wild, and many-dappled hue,
Gold streak'd with iron-brown, and nodding blue,
Making each ruinous chink a fairy bower.
E'en such a thing methinks I fain would be,
Should Heaven appoint me to a lengthen'd age;
So old in look, that Young and Old may see
The record of my closing pilgrimage:
Yet, to the last, a rugged wrinkled thing
To which young sweetness may delight to cling!

IV.

LET me not deem that I was made in vain.
Or that my Being was an accident,
Which Fate, in working its sublime intent,
Not wish'd to be, to hinder would not deign.
Each drop uncounted in a storm of rain
Hath its own mission, and is duly sent
To its own leaf or blade, not idly spent
'Mid myriad dimples on the shipless main.
The very shadow of an insect's wing,
For which the violet cared not while it stay'd,
Yet felt the lighter for its vanishing,
Proved that the sun was shining by its shade:
Then can a drop of the eternal spring,
Shadow of living lights, in vain be made?

v.

PAINS I have known, that cannot be again,
And pleasures too that never can be more :
For loss of pleasure I was never sore,
But worse, far worse it is, to feel no pain.
The throes and agonies of a heart explain
Its very depth of want at inmost core ;
Prove that it does believe, and would adore,
And doth with ill for ever strive and strain.
I not lament for happy childish years,
For loves departed, that have had their day,
Or hopes that faded when my head was grey ;
For death hath left me last of my compeers :
But for the pain I felt, the gushing tears
I used to shed when I had gone astray.

VI.

WHEN I review the course that I have run,
And count the loss of all my wasted days,
I find no argument for joy or praise
In whatsoe'er my soul hath thought or done.
I am a desert, and the kindly sun
On me hath vainly spent his fertile rays.
Then wherefore do I tune my idle lays,
Or dream that haply I may be the one
Of the vain thousands, that shall win a place
Among the Poets,—that a single rhyme
Of my poor wit's devising may find grace
To breed high memories in the womb of time?
But to confound the time the Muse I woo;
Then 'tis but just that time confound me too.

VII.

A LONELY wanderer upon earth am I,
The waif of nature—like uprooted weed
Borne by the stream, or like a shaken reed,
A frail dependent of the fickle sky.
Far, far away, are all my natural kin :
The mother that erewhile hath hush'd my cry,
Almost hath grown a mere fond memory.
Where is my sister's smile? my brother's boisterous din?
Ah! nowhere now. A matron grave and sage,
A holy mother is that sister sweet.
And that bold brother is a pastor meet
To guide, instruct, reprove a sinful age,
Almost I fear, and yet I fain would greet ;
So far astray hath been my pilgrimage.

VIII.

How many meanings may a single sigh
Heave from the bosom ; early, yet too late,
I learn'd with sighs to audit mine estate,
While yet I deem'd my hope was only shy
And wishing to be woo'd. Fain to descry
The little cloud I thought could never vex
My vernal season, I would still perplex
With sighs the counsel of my destiny.
Still it moved on, and ever larger grew,
And still I sigh'd and sigh'd—and then I panted ;
For now the cloud is huge, and close to view.
It burst ; the thunder roar'd, the sharp rain slanted,—
The tempest pass'd, and I was almost fain
To sigh forlorn, and hear the sigh again.

IX.

TO A NEWLY-MARRIED FRIEND.

How shall a man fore-doom'd to lone estate,
Untimely old, irreverently grey,
Much like a patch of dusky snow in May,
Dead sleeping in a hollow, all too late—
How shall so poor a thing congratulate
The blest completion of a patient wooing,
Or how commend a younger man for doing
What ne'er to do hath been his fault or fate?
There is a fable, that I once did read,
Of a bad angel, that was someway good,
And therefore on the brink of Heaven he stood,
Looking each way, and no way could proceed;
Till at the last he purged away his sin
By loving all the joy he saw within.

November, 1843.

X.

IT were a state too terrible for man,
Too terrible and strange, and most unmeet,
To look into himself, his state to scan,
And find no precedent, no chart, or plan,
But think himself an embryo incomplete,
Or else a remnant of a world effete,
Some by-blow of the universal Pan,
Great nature's waif, that must by law escheat
To the liege-lord Corruption. Sad the case
Of man, who knows not wherefore he was made ;
But he that knows the limit of his race
Not runs, but flies, with prosperous winds to aid ;
Or if he limps, he knows his path was trod
By saints of old, who knew their way to God.

XI.

THINK upon Death, 'tis good to think of Death,
But better far to think upon the Dead.
Death is a spectre with a bony head,
Or the mere mortal body without breath,
The state foredoom'd of every son of Seth,
Decomposition—dust, or dreamless sleep.
But the dear Dead are they for whom we weep,
For whom I credit all the Bible saith.
Dead is my father, dead is my good mother,
And what on earth have I to do but die?
But if by grace I reach the blessed sky,
I fain would see the same, and not another:
The very father that I used to see.
The mother that has nursed me on her knee.

XII.

WHAT is the meaning of the word "sublime,"
Utter'd full oft, and never yet explain'd?
It is a truth that cannot be contain'd
In formal bounds of thought, in prose, or rhyme.
'Tis the Eternal struggling out of Time.
It is in man a birth-mark of his kind
That proves him kindred with immaculate mind,
The son of him that in the stainless prime
Was God's own image. Whatsoe'er creates
At once abasement, and a sense of glory,
Whate'er of sight, sound, feeling, fact, or story,
Exalts the man, and yet the self rebates,
That is the true sublime, which can confess
In weakness strength, the great in littleness.

XIII.

h

HOMER.

FAR from the sight of earth, yet bright and plain
As the clear noon-day sun, an "orb of song"
Lovely and bright is seen amid the throng
Of lesser stars, that rise, and wax, and wane,
The transient rulers of the fickle main;—
One constant light gleams through the dark and long
And narrow aisle of memory. How strong,
How fortified with all the numerous train
Of truths wert thou, Great Poet of mankind,
Who told'st in verse as mighty as the sea,
And various as the voices of the wind,
'The strength of passion rising in the glee
Of battle. Fear was glorified by thee,
And Death is lovely in thy tale enshrined.

XIV.

'TWERE surely hard to toil without an aim.
Then shall the toil of an immortal mind
Spending its strength for good of human kind
Have no reward on earth but empty fame?
Oh, say not so. 'Tis not the echoed name,
Dear though it be—dear to the wafting wind,
That is not all the poet leaves behind,
Who once has kindled an undying flame.
And what is that? It is a happy feeling
Begot by bird, or flower, or vernal bee.
'Tis aught that acts, unconsciously revealing
To mortal man his immortality.
Then think, O Poet, think how bland, how healing,
The beauty thou hast taught thy fellow men to see.

XV.

TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

YES, mighty Poet, we have read thy lines,
And felt our hearts the better for the reading.
A friendly spirit, from thy soul proceeding,
Unites our souls ; the light from thee that shines
Like the first break of morn, dissolves, combines
All creatures with a living flood of beauty.
For thou hast proved that purest joy is duty,
And love a fondling, that the trunk entwines
Of sternest fortitude. Oh, what must be
Thy glory here, and what the huge reward
In that blest region of thy poesy ?
For long as man exists, immortal Bard,
Friends, husbands, wives, in sadness or in glee,
Shall love each other more for loving thee.

March 26, 1839.

XVI.

TO THE SAME.

AND those whose lot may never be to meet
Kin souls confined in bodies sever'd far,
As if thy Genius were a potent star,
Ruling their life at solemn hours and sweet
Of secret sympathy, do they not greet
Each other kindly, when the deep full line
Hath ravish'd both—high as the haunt divine
And presence of celestial Paraclete ?
Three thousand years have pass'd since Homer spake,
And many thousand hearts have bless'd his name,
And yet I love them all for Homer's sake,
Child, woman, man, that e'er have felt his flame ;
And thine, great Poet, is like power to bind
In love far distant ages of mankind.

April 24—27, 1842.

XVII.

RYDAL.

NIGH to the mansion of a titled dame,
A charitable lady, though recluse,
Begirt with trees too reverend for use,
A village lies, and Rydal is its name.
Its natives know not what is meant by fame :
They little know how men in future time
Will venerate the spot, where prose and rhyme
Too strong for aught but Heaven itself to tame,
Gush'd from a mighty Poet. Yet all calm,
Calm as the antique trunks whose hollow age
The woodman spares, sweet thoughts on every page
Breathe for the soul admonitory balm.
'Tis Nature teaching what she never knew :
The beautiful is good, the good is true.

XVIII.

FROM infancy to retrospective eld,
Year after year, we slide from day to day
Like a sleek stream, from bay to sinuous bay
Wearing the course it evermore hath held.
The crumbling banks, that have so long compell'd
The stream to wind, to haste, to strive, or stay,
Drop down at last and quite choke up the way
That once they foil'd. The river that rebell'd
Becomes a marsh, prolific of ill' weeds.
Such is the life of him who streams along
A lazy course, unweeting of his deeds ;
Till duty, hope, love, custom, prayers and creeds
Crumble away, and yield to helpless wrong,
That from the mere disuse of right proceeds.

XIX.

TO ALFRED TENNYSON.

LONG have I known thee as thou art in song,
And long enjoy'd the perfume that exhales
From thy pure soul, and odour sweet entails
And permanence, on thoughts that float along
The stream of life, to join the passive throng
Of shades and echoes that are memory's being.
Hearing we hear not, and we see not seeing,
If passion, fancy, faith move not among
The never-present moments of reflection.
Long have I view'd thee in the crystal sphere
Of verse, that, like the beryl, makes appear
Visions of hope, begot of recollection.
Knowing thee now, a real earth-treading man,
Not less I love thee, and no more I can.

XX.

TO A FRIEND.

I know too little of thee, my dear friend,
Or else too much,—for nothing less than all
Were quite enough to guide me to the end
And fatal purpose of thine earthly call.
I know thy will is stubborn as a wall
Against all acts that trespass or offend.
I know there is no sin or fault so small
Wherewith the current of thy soul would blend ;
But yet I know that there is something yet
Which I know not, a burden on thy breast
No joy of earth can make thy heart forget ;
The sleepless thought that will not be at rest,
That, like a wee bird struggling in the net,
Still whines and twitters of its distant nest.

April, 1846.

XXI.

TO DR. DALTON.

THIS world so beautiful cannot produce
A thing more beauteous than a head of snow,
Or smoothly bald and bright with sunny glow,
That has been busied still in things of use.
The adventurous restlessness of Scottish Bruce
Led him to trace the backward course of Nile ;
But I would rather trace that serious smile,
That seems habitual to a lip, not loose,
Nor yet constrain'd ; a brow not wrinkled much,
An eye not dimm'd but disciplined by age.
I could not know thee when thou wast the page
Of the young Lady Science, ere the touch
Unfelt of years had worn thy youth away ;
I cannot trace thee to thy youthful day.

XXII.

TO JOANNA BAILLIE.

LONG ere my pulse with nascent life had beat,
The ripe spring of thy early Paradise
With many a flower, and fruit, and hallow'd spice,
Was fair to fancy and to feeling sweet.
Time, that is aye reproach'd to be so fleet,
Because dear follies vanish in a trice,
Shall now be clean absolved by judgment nice,
Since his good speed made thee so soon complete.
But less I praise the bounty of old Time,
Lady revered, our Island's Tragic Queen,
For all achievements of thy hope and prime.
Than for the beauty of thine age serene.
That yet delights to weave the moral rhyme,
Nor fears what is, should dim what thou hast been.

XXIII.

ON READING THE MEMOIR OF MISS GRIZZLE BAILLIE.

GENIUS, what is 't? A motion of the brain.
And valour is the toughness of a nerve,
And the strong virtue that will never swerve
Is but the "lazy temperance" of a vein.
And what is pity but a twitching pain,
Seeking its own relief by pious acts?
Thus wisdom, seeking all things to explain,
Out of all good the soul of good detracts.
The simple woman that records the worth
Of the brave saints to whom she owed her birth,
Confutes a doctrine that she never knew.
For goodness, more than ever was perceived
By sense, or in the visible world achieved,
By might of mere believing, she makes true.

XXIV.

WHILE I survey the long, and deep, and wide
Expanse of time, the Past with things that were
Throng'd in dark multitude ; the Future bare
As the void sky when not a star beside
The thin pale moon is seen ; the race that died
While yet the families of earth were rare,
And human kind had but a little share
Of the world's heritage, before me glide
All dim and silent. Now with sterner mien
Heroic shadows, names renown'd in song,
Rush by. And, deck'd with garlands ever green,
In light and music sweep the bards along ;
And many a fair, and many a well-known face,
Into the future dive, and blend with empty space.

XXV.

AH me ! It is the saddest thing on earth
To see a change where much is yet unchanged,
To mark a face, not alter'd, but estranged
From its own wonted self, by its own hearth
So sadly smiling, like the ghost of mirth,
That cannot quite desert its long abode.
The very sigh that lifts the weary load
Of pain, and loosens the constraining girth
Within the breast, a semi-tone of laughter ;
Though joy to woe, as light to shade is turn'd
The trick of joy is not so soon unlearn'd :
The substance flits, the shadow lingers after.
The soul once rich in joy, though poor it be,
Will yet be bounteous in its poverty.

XXVI.

ACCUSE not gracious Nature of neglect,
Nor doubt the wise intent of Providence,
Because a human thing not quick of sense,
With scarce a twinkling spark of intellect,
With much of body's, more of mind's defect,
Hath hobbled upon earth for eighty years :
And now, unconscious of the hopes and fears
That the past life of wiser men dissect,
Is dozing deathward. Deep and dark immured
The corn-seed in the dead-throng'd catacomb,
From light shut out, was yet from blight secured
And Turk and Mam'luke, in oblivious tomb :
And thus, for eighty years, good man. in thee
The seed has slept, sepulchred in simplicity.

XXVII.

MUSIC.

SWEET music steals along the yielding soul,
Like the brisk wind that sows autumnal seeds ;
And it hath tones like vernal rain that feeds
The light green vale, ordain'd ere long to roll
In golden waves o'er many a wealthy rood ;
And tones it hath, that make a lonely hour
The silent dwelling of some lovely flower,
Sweet Hermitess of Forest solitude.

I loved sweet Music when I was a child,
For then my mother used to sing to me :
I loved it better when a youth so wild,
With thoughts of love it did so well agree ;
Fain would I love it to my latest day,
If it would teach me to believe and pray.

XXVIII.

TO A LADY, ON HER SINGING A SWEET OLD AIR.

OH! that a tone were lasting as a thought,
A feeling joy, eternal as a truth !
Then were my spirit charm'd to endless youth,
All time enrich'd with what a moment brought.
That one sweet note, so sweet itself, and fraught
With all the warbled sweetness of the stream
Of rippling sound, continuous as a dream—
A dream of song, that waking turns to nought.
I cannot find it, I cannot resume
The thrilling calm, the gladness so intense,
So simple, perfect, neither soul nor sense
For hope had need, for hoarding thought had room :
Yet shall the moral heart for aye retain
The once-seen songstress, and the once-heard strain.

XXIX.

I WOULD, my friend, indeed, thou hadst been here
Last night, beneath the shadowy sycamore,
To hear the lines, to me well known before,
Embalm'd in music so translucent clear.
Each word of thine came singly to the ear,
Yet all was blended in a flowing stream.
It had the rich repose of summer dream,
The light distinct of frosty atmosphere.
Still have I loved thy verse, yet never knew
How sweet it was, till woman's voice invested
The pencill'd outline with the living hue,
And every note of feeling proved and tested.
What might old Pindar be, if once again
The harp and voice were trembling with his strain.

XXX.

DIANA AND ENDYMION.

IT was a learned fancy, that bestowed
A living spirit and a human will
On those far lights that, whether fixt and still,
Or moving visibly along their road,
Were mighty to predestine, rule, forebode ;
Yea, to disclose, to long observant skill,
Not season's course alone, but good and ill,
For aye appointed in no changeful code.
A freer, yet a gentler wit, devised
That quaint old Fable, that beheld the moon
Gazing for hours on her Endymion.
Till she turned pale, by jocund morn surprised
While he, wrapped up in trance or vision dim,
Sleeps in her sight that ever wakes for him.

XXXI.

ECLIPSE.

So pure, so clear, amid the vast blue lake,
Sole regent of the many-scatter'd isles,
Making of myriad million, billion miles
One beauty, floats she brilliantly awake,
Unconscious of the doom that must o'ertake
Her maidenhood before the night goes by,
And make a lurid blot upon the sky,
And all her cheer transform to dim opaque.
But happy art thou, Moon ; no fault of thine,
No just displeasure of thy lord, the Sun,
Clothes thee in weed of penance, murk and dun ;
For thine own self thou still art free to shine.
That earth which moves between mankind and thee,
Inflicts no stain upon thy purity.

XXXII.

TO AN AGED BEAUTY.

ONCE thou wert young, 'twas very long ago,
Yet some there are to whom thy fixt idea,
Even now, is fresh as sea-born Cytherea.
The waves of time, that ever backward flow,
Behind them leave the quiet tints that glow
On each successive billow. Months, nor years,
Nor maddest mirth, nor dim heart-wasting tears
Attaint the truths that true minds truly know.
Once thou wert young, and still art young to me,
Though fifty summers faded since we met ;
Thy timid glance I cannot cease to see,
Thy bird-like voice to me is piping yet.
If Time turn back to say that thou art old,
I'll swear he lies, and will thy youth uphold.

XXXIII.

I SAW thee in the beauty of thy spring,
And then I thought how blest the man shall be
That shall persuade thy maiden modesty
To hearken to his fond soliciting.
Thou wert so fair, so exquisite a thing,
I thought the very dust on which thy feet
Had left their mark exhaled a scent more sweet
Than honey-dew dropt from an angel's wing.
I see thee now a matron and a mother,
And I, alas! am old before my day.
Both to myself and thee I owe another—
A holier passion, a devouter lay.
Each spark of earthly fire I now must smother.
And wish for nought for which I dare not pray.

XXXIV.

TO MISS MARTHA H——.

MARTHA, thy maiden foot is still so light,
It leaves no legible trace on virgin snows,
And yet I ween that busily it goes
In duty's path from happy morn to night.
Thy dimpled cheek is gay, and softly bright
As the fixt beauty of the mossy rose ;
Yet will it change its hue for other's woes,
And native red contend with piteous white.
Thou bear'st a name by Jesus known and loved,
And Jesus gently did the maid reprove
For too much haste to show her eager love.
But blest is she that may be so reprov'd.
Be Martha still in deed and good endeavour,
In faith like Mary, at His feet for ever.

XXXV.

SECOND NUPTIALS.

THERE is no jealousy in realms above :
The spirit purified from earthly stain,
And knowing that its earthly loss was gain,
Transfers its property in earthly love
(Tho' love it was she does not yet reprove)
To her by Heaven appointed to sustain
The honour'd matron's part ; to bear the pain,
The joy, the duty, all things that behove
A Christian wedded. She that dwells on high
May be a guardian angel to the wife
That her good husband chooses to supply
Her place, vacated in the noon of life ;
With holy gladness may support the bride
Through happy cares to her by death denied.

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XXXVI.

Nor in one clime we oped the infant eye
To the blank light of yet unmeaning day
Nor in one language timely taught to pray,
Did we lisp out the babies' liturgy.
But even then, we both alike did cry
Our joys and sorrows in the self-same way,
Instinct the same sweet native tune did play,
From laugh to smile, from sob to chasten'd sigh,
Our tutor'd spirits were alike subdued.
What wonder, then, if, meeting in this isle,
We eke imperfect speech with sigh and smile,
The catholic speech of infancy renew'd.
True love is still a child, and then most true
When most it talks, and does as children do.

XXXVII.

Two nations are there of one common stock ;
One in the heart of Europe fortified,
The other freshen'd by the daily tide
Shaping from age to age her bulwark rock.
Two faithful members of the holy flock,
In the most holy bond of love allied,
Unite the valour, worth, and selfless pride
Of two great kindreds, like a braided lock—
A braided lock, I 've seen—so nicely braided,
With softest interchange of brown and gold,
Each into each so exquisitely shaded,
That they were ever twain could not be told.
E'en so for thee, sweet daughter of my friend,
May Albion and Allmain their virtues blend.

XXXVIII.

RIGHT merry lass, thy overweening joy
Turns an old man into a merry boy.
One hour with thee pays off the long arrears,
The heavy debt of almost fifty years.
Oft have I view'd that lake so beautiful,
And felt its quiet power, benign, to lull
The inward being to a soft repose ;
Patient, yet not forgetful of the woes
That are the heritage of mortal breath,
As if one note divided life and death.
But thou, sweet maid, with ready mirth dost fill
The wide survey of water, wood, and hill.
I feel a pulse of pleasure newly born,
And scarce believe that "man was made to mourn."

XXXIX.

KESWICK.

THE Church is holy still, and consecrate
To mute attention and meek whispering prayer,
Though *he*,—the mighty voice, no more is there.
That gave the high roof a religious weight,
And the tall shaft upraised with hope elate,
And hallow'd all the holy well of air.
With duteous footstep to the church repair
Where lies the good, the kind, the wise, the great.
Old Skiddaw stands upon his basement strong,
And Wallow Crag is yet a bastion proud,
And rough Lodore with thunder-rain is loud,
And Greta murmurs yet her ancient song.
Revere the vale, where SOUTHEY'S corpse is laid,
Nor fear to pray—where he so long has pray'd.

XL.

EDWARD—CHILD AND MAN.

I SAW thee, Edward, when thy baby cries
Sounded in mother's ears a swift alarm ;
I saw thee cradled on thy father's arm,
When he, with many smiles and many sighs,
Guess'd in the quick gleam of thy new wak'd eyes
The inward stirrings, not matured to thought,
Not broken to the curb of *must* and *ought*,
And yet instinct with all thy destinies.
I see thee now a far experienced man,
Who from late boyhood to the rear of youth
Hast seen in many lands new forms of truth,
And haply learn'd with foreign eye to scan
Old England's faults ; yet dost thou fondly love her,
And with a true friend's boldness, dost reprove her.

XLI.

TO MISS ISABELLA FENWICK.*

FAIN would I put my meanings in the tongue
Familiar, lady, to thy earliest years,
That gives the finest edge to social jeers ;
The language, which by merry bard was sung
In times of old, to ladies fair, among
The courts devoted to sublimed amours,
By gay trouveurs, and knightly troubadours,
Accents o'er which the Scottish Mary hung
Her beauteous head enamour'd. Yet I trust
Thou wilt not scorn the talk of this old isle,
The tongue which Milton raised to themes sublime,
On which keen Pope bestow'd his poignant gust,
Which Cowper graced with melancholy smile,
And Spenser hallow'd with immortal rhyme.

March 26, 1839.

* Born and educated in France up to her twenty-second year.

XLII.

WRITTEN IN A SEASON OF PUBLIC DISTURBANCE.

CALM is the sky : the trees are very calm.
The mountains seem as they would melt away,
So soft their outline mingles with the day.
Surely no sound less holy than a psalm
Should interrupt the stillness and the balm
Of such a morn, whose grave monastic grey
Clothes the meek east in garment meet to pray
With sweet humility, without a qualm.
And yet, even now, in this most blessed hour,
Who knows but that the murderous shot is sped
In the fell jar of poverty and power?
The man but now that lived, may now be dead.
Has Nature of her human brood no care,
That on their bloody deeds she smiles so fair?

XLIII.

TO MRS. CHARLES FOX.

Now the old trees are striving to be young,
And the gay mosses of the Christmas days
To the fresh primrose must forego their praise :
Now every flower by vernal poets sung,
And every bird the [bursting] woods among,
And all the many-dappled banks and braes,
Recal remembrance of immortal lays,
But speak to me in a forgotten tongue.
Yea, dearest lady, they do speak to me
As to a banish'd man that hath forgot
Almost his mother's language, and cannot,
Without sore pain and stress of memory,
Reply to words that yet he hears with joy,
And by their strangeness make him half a boy.

April.

XLIV.

THE FIG-TREE RUMINAL.

SWEET lady, thou art come to us again :
The mountains still are in their ancient seats ;
Still on the turfy mound the young lamb bleats,
Whose coat of March is wash'd with April rain.
But since no Philomel can here complain,
Let, lady, one poor bard lament to thee
The murderous death of many a noble tree,
That wont to shade thee in the grassy lane.
Would that religion of old time were ours,
(In that one article, not all the others,)
Which the first Romans held, who rear'd the towers,
Nigh the moist cradle of the Foundling Brothers,
The faith that did in awe and love instal,
For many an age, the Fig-Tree Ruminal.*

* The Fig-Tree Ruminal,—*Ficus ruminalis*, beneath which Romulus and Remus, according to the tradition, were found by the shepherd Faustulus.

XLV.

TO LOUISE CLAUDE.

I WOULD not take my leave of thee, dear child,
With customary words of compliment :
Nor will I task my fancy to invent
A fond conceit, or sentence finely filed ;
Nor shall my heart with passionate speech and wild,
Bewail thy parting in a drear lament.
Wit is not meet for one so innocent,
Nor passionate woe for one so gaily mild.
I will not bid thee think of me, nor yet
Would I in thy young memory perish quite.
I am a waning star, and nigh to set ;
Thou art a morning beam of waxing light ;
But sure the morning star can ne'er regret
That once 'twas grey-hair'd evening's favourite.

XLVI.

HOPE.

HOPE, I have seen thee oft by pilgrim hand
Of vagrant artist vividly pourtray'd
In the sweet likeness of a wishing maid,
Content from day to day on ocean strand,
Loving the long-drawn wrinkles of the sand
Wrought by the incessant ingress of the sea,
Because the waves are rolling from the land
Where the dear lad is now, where'er it be.
See how the maid upon that anchor leans,
Gazing beyond the long horizon's bound.
Rude is the picture, but a truth profound
Wakes in the heart to tell you what it means ;
For Hope still stands beside the vast dark sea,
Watching the tides of blank futurity.

XLVII.

SAY, what is freedom? What the life of souls
Which all who know are bound to keep, or die,
And who knows not is dead? In vain we pry
In the dark archives and tenacious scrolls
Of written law, tho' Time embrace the rolls
In his lank arms, and shed his yellow light
On every barbarous word. Eternal Right
Works its own way, and evermore controls
Its own free essence. Liberty is duty,
Not license. Every pulse that beats
At the glad summons of imperious beauty
Obeys a law. The very cloud that fleets
Along the dead green surface of the hill
Is ruled and scatter'd by a Godlike will.

XLVIII.

TO H. W.

IN days of old, if any days be old,
Beneath the shadow of the ancient hill,
We roam'd together by the wandering rill :
Thou a light-footed hunter, free and bold,
And I a straggler from the self-same fold,
Rough, ragged, wild, with haggard looks that still
Dwelt on the ground, as if predestined ill
Blighted the joy of youth. Twelve years are told,
And now we meet again ; thou, like the wind
That drives the grey cloud to the infinite sea,
Hast traversed all the world's variety,
From Western Isles to Oriental Ind ;
I am the lazy pool among the heather
That slumbers sound in spite of wind and weather.

XLIX.

TO H. N. COLERIDGE.

KINSMAN—yea, more than kinsman—brother—friend,—
O more than kinsman! more than friend or brother!
My sister's spouse, son to my widow'd mother!—
How shall I praise thee right, and not offend?
For thou wert sent a sore heart-ill to mend.
Twin stars were ye, thou and thy wedded love,
Benign of aspect as those imps of Jove,
In antique faith commission'd to portend
To sad sea-wanderers peace; or like the tree
By Moses cast into the bitter pool,
Which made the tear-salt water fresh and cool;
Or even as spring, that sets the boon earth free—
Free to be good, exempt from winter's rule:
Such hast thou been to our poor family.

L.

FAITH.

How much thy Holy Name hath been misused,
Beginner of all good, all-mighty Faith!
Some men thy blessed symbols have abused,
Making them badge or secret shibboleth
For greed accepted, or for spite refused,
Or just endured in fear of pain or death.
To some, by fearful conscience self-accused,
Thou com'st a goblin self, a hideous wraith!
With such as these thou art an inward strife,
A shame, a misery, and a death in life,
A self-asserting, self-disputing lie;
A thing to unbelief so near allied,
That it would gladly be a suicide,
And only lives because it dare not die.

LI.

FEAR.

DIM child of darkness and faint-echoing space,
That still art just behind, and never here,
Death's herald shadow, unimagined Fear ;
Thou antic, that dost multiply a face,
Which hath no self, but finds in every place
A body, feature, voice, and circumstance,
Yet art most potent in the wide expanse
Of unbelief—may I beseech thy grace ?
Thou art a spirit of no certain clan,
For thou wilt fight for either God or Devil.
Man is thy slave, and yet thy lord is man ;
The human heart creates thee good or evil :
As goblin, ghost, or fiend I ne'er have known thee.
But as myself, my sinful self, I own thee.

LII.

PRAYER.

THERE is an awful quiet in the air,
And the sad earth, with moist imploring eye,
Looks wide and wakeful at the pondering sky,
Like Patience slow subsiding to Despair.
But see, the blue smoke as a voiceless prayer,
Sole witness of a secret sacrifice,
Unfolds its tardy wreaths, and multiplies
Its soft chameleon breathings in the rare
Capacious ether,—so it fades away,
And nought is seen beneath the pendent blue,
The undistinguishable waste of day.
So have I dream'd!—oh, may the dream be true!—
That praying souls are purged from mortal hue,
And grow as pure as He to whom they pray.

LIII.

THERE was a seed which the impassive wind,
Now high, now low, now piping loud, now mute,
Or, like the last note of a trembling lute,
The loved abortion of a thing design'd,
Or half-said prayer for good of human-kind,
Wafted along for ever, ever, ever.
It sought to plant itself; but never, never,
Could that poor seed or soil or water find.
And yet it was a seed which, had it found,
By river's brink or rocky mountain cleft,
A kindly shelter and a genial ground,
Might not have perish'd, quite of good bereft;
Might have some perfume, some faint echo left,
Faint as the echo of the Sabbath sound.

LIV.

FROM MICHAEL ANGELO.

THE might of one fair face sublimes my love ;
For it hath wean'd my heart from low desires,
Nor death I heed, nor purgatorial fires.
Thy beauty, antepart of joys above,
Instructs me in the bliss that saints approve ;
For oh ! how good, how beautiful must be
The God that made so good a thing as thee,
So fair an image of the heavenly Dove.
Forgive me if I cannot turn away
From those sweet eyes that are my earthly heaven,
For they are guiding stars benignly given
To tempt my footsteps to the upward way ;
And if I dwell too fondly in thy sight,
I live and love in God's peculiar light.

LV.

HEARD, NOT SEEN.

SOUNDS I have heard "by distance made more sweet,"
And whispering sounds, more sweet that they are near.
But those glad sounds so close upon mine ear,
How had they made my younger heart to beat!
The bounding strain that rules the silken feet,
Like warbling Nymph of old Winandermere,
That bubbles music through the crystal clear,
Comes soften'd to my solitary seat.
Yet though I see it not, I more than dream
Of the blithe beauty that is tripping nigh:
Mine ear usurps the function of mine eye,
As coolly shaded from the maddening beam
Of present loveliness, I love the stream
Unseen of happiness that gurgles by.

August 11, 1846.

LVI.

STILL for the world he lives, and lives in bliss,
For God and for himself. Ten years and three
Have now elapsed since he was dead to me
And all that were on earth intensely his.
Not in the dim domain of Gloomy Dis,
The death-god of the ever-guessing Greek,
Nor in the paradise of Houris sleek
I think of him whom I most sorely miss.
The sage, the poet, lives for all mankind,
As long as truth is true, or beauty fair.
The soul that ever sought its God to find
Has found Him now—no matter how, or where.
Yet can I not but mourn because he died
That was my father, should have been my guide.

SONNETS SUGGESTED BY THE SEASONS.



I.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

A NEW-YEAR'S day! Time was that I was glad
When the new year was usher'd into life
With midnight fiddle, morning drum and fife.
I wonder'd then how any could be sad
Because another year had gone to add
One figure to the date of human strife.
And yet I knew that sin and pain were rife,
That age would fain be cold, that youth was mad;—
All this I knew, yet, knowing, ne'er believed;
And now I know it, and believe it too:
But yet I am not of all grace bereaved;
I wish the hope that hath myself deceived
May, like the happy year, itself renew,
And be at least to one dear maiden true.

January 1, 1840.

II.

FEBRUARY 1ST, 1842.

ONE month is past, another is begun,
Since merry bells rung out the dying year,
And buds of rarest green begin to peer,
As if impatient for a warmer sun ;
And though the distant hills are bleak and dun,
The virgin snowdrop, like a lambent fire,
Pierces the cold earth with its green-sheath'd spire ;
And in dark woods the wandering little one
May find a primrose. Thus the better mind
Puts forth some flowers, escaped from Paradise,
Though faith be dim as faintest wintry skies,
And passion fierce as January wind.
O God, vouchsafe a sunbeam clear and kind,
To cheer the pining flow'ret ere it dies.

III.

MARCH, 1846.

Now Nature in her vernal green is clad,
And windy March puts on the robe of May ;
The primrose is abroad, the buds half-way
Open their lips ; all things are blithe and glad :
Then wherefore should I droop in semblance sad,
And contradict the promise of the air ?
Ah, me ! I can but think of those that were,
And now are not—of those dear friends I had,
And have not. Alice, thou art very meek,
And hast the faith that makes affliction good.
It would be wholesome to my perilous mood
If I could see the tear upon thy cheek.
Methinks we could talk out a day—a week,
Of those we loved. Oh, Alice ! would we could !

IV.

THE VERNAL SHOWER.

WELCOME once more, my pretty Lady Spring ;
So young a Spring we have not seen for years.
Even thy brief morning fit of girlish tears
Was bright and sweet as droppings from the wing
Of kindly sylph, through ether voyaging
On some good errand to the distant spheres ;
And every bud and blade, to which adheres
The pure aspersion, seems a conscious thing,
Renew'd in spirit. Light the birdie leaps,
Shaking translucent gems from every spray ;
And merrily down the many-shadow'd steeps
The streamlets whiten, all in new array.
Joy to the vale if Summer do but keep
The bounteous promise of this April day.

GRASMERE, *April*, 1842.

V.

1ST OF APRIL, 1845.

SWEET month of Venus, meekly thus begun,
Too pensive for a day of antique folly,
In yellow garb of quiet melancholy
Thy patient pastures sleep beneath the sun ;
And if a primrose peep, there is but one
Where wont the starry crowd to look so jolly.
Alone, amid the wood, the Christmas holly
Gleams on the bank with streaming rain fordone,
And yet the snowdrop and the daffodils
Have done their duty to the almanack.
And though the garden mould is blank and black,
With bloom and scent the gay mezereon fills
The longing sense ; and plants of other climes
In the warm greenhouse tell of better times.

VI.

MAY, 1840.

A LOVELY morn, so still, so very still.
It hardly seems a growing day of Spring,
Though all the odorous buds are blossoming,
And the small matin birds were glad and shrill
Some hours ago ; but now the woodland rill
Murmurs along, the only vocal thing.
Save when the wee wren flits with stealthy wing,
And cons by fits and bits her evening trill.
Lovers might sit on such a morn as this
An hour together, looking at the sky,
Nor dare to break the silence with a kiss,
Long listening for the signal of a sigh ;
And the sweet Nun, diffused in voiceless prayer.
Feel her own soul through all the brooding air.

GILL HEAD.

VII.

MAY MORNING.

IN days of yore, while yet the world was young,
Fair nymphs arose to grace the morn of May,
And ere the East had doff'd the pearly grey,
Went forth to catch the jewell'd drops that hung
On the fresh virgins leaves the woods among;
And many a delicate foot-mark might be seen,
Tinting the silvery lawn with darker green;
And many a bird, untimely waked, upsprung,
Scattering the maythorn's white. O lovely season,
Where art thou gone? Methinks the cold neglect
Of thy old rites, perchance, may be the reason
Thou wilt not punctual keep thy wonted time,
But, angry at our slothful disrespect,
Carest not to quit some duteous happier clime.

VIII.

MAY 25TH, 1844.

How strange the cold ungenial atmosphere,
Beneath the cover of so bright a sky !
Each way-side flower hath oped its little eye ;
The very coyest buds of all the year
Have ventured forth to see if all be clear.
Full-leaved the pendant birches droop and sigh ;
The oak is clothed in vernal majesty ;
White-chaliced lilies float upon the mere.
The very warmth that made this world of beauty
Is summon'd to another tract of duty,
And leaves a substitute so stern and cold,
We half regret old Winter's honest rule,
The roaring chimney and the log of yule :
May hath such airs as May had not of old.

AMBLESIDE, *May* 25, 1844.

IX.

TO DORA QUILLINAN.

WELL, this is really like the poet's May,
The merry May of which we used to hear,
Big with the promise of the coming year!
The apple-trees their rosy bloom display,
The flowerets, many-hued, that line the way,
Long-soak'd with rain, and chill'd with whistling blast,
Look happy now, like maidens, that at last
Are to be wedded, after long delay.
Oh! that the joy, the fragrance, and the bloom,
That bid all life and even poor man be glad,
Might waft a breath of comfort to the room
Where she lies smitten, yet not wholly sad,
Waiting with frame immortal to be clad,
In patient expectation of her doom!

May 29, 1847.

X.

OH, what a joy is in the vernal air !
For Nature now is like a budding girl,
Whose merry laugh displays, more white than pearl,
Teeth that make lovers old as me despair.
And yet, though Time has written on my hair
A notice from all amorous thoughts to part,
This day persuades long slumbering hopes to start,
Like cuckoo notes, from winter's drowsy lair.
Yet, my young love, I hope not for the thing
That is the prism of my soul. Oh, no !
I scorn the wish that to my love would bring
Laborious days, and poverty, and woe.
I only wish thou mayst beloved be
By a much better man, as I love thee.

XI.

AUTUMN FLOWERS.

THE flowers of Spring, they come in sweet succession,
Snowdrop and crocus, and mezereon, thick
Studded with blossom upon leafless stick,
And the young ivy, ceaseless in progression ;
'They triumph in their hour of brief possession.
Then Summer comes, with her voluptuous rose,
And sweet carnation in half-blown repose ;
The plant where pious minds discern the passion,
The death by which we live. But I was born
When the good year was like a man of fifty,
When the wild crabtree show'd a naked thorn,
And tall brown fern disguised the red deer's horn ;
Like meats upon a board, august yet thrifty,
Large flowers blaze out at intervals forlorn.

XII.

SEPTEMBER.

THE dark green Summer, with its massive hues,
Fades into Autumn's tincture manifold.
A gorgeous garniture of fire and gold
The high slope of the ferny hill indues.
The mists of morn in slumbering layers diffuse
O'er glimmering rock, smooth lake, and spiked array
Of hedge-row thorns, a unity of grey.
All things appear their tangible form to lose
In ghostly vastness. But anon the gloom
Melts, as the Sun puts off his muddy veil;
And now the birds their twittering songs resume,
All Summer silent in the leafy dale.
In Spring they piped of love on every tree,
But now they sing the song of memory.

XIII.

NOVEMBER.

Now the last leaves are hanging on the trees,
And very few the flowers that glint along
The deep dark lanes and braes, erewhile as throng
With peeping posies as the limes with bees ;
Nought in the garden but stiff sticks of peas,
And climbing weeds inextricably strong ;
And scarce a fragment of autumnal song
Whistles above the surly morning breeze.
Yet still at eve we hear the merry owl,
That sings not sweetly, but he does his best ;
The little brown bird with the scarlet vest
Chirrup away, though distant storms do howl.
Then let us not at dark November scowl,
But wait for Christmas with a cheerful breast.

XIV.

WRITTEN IN A PERIOD OF GREAT MONETARY DISTRESS.

THOUGH Night and Winter are two gloomy things,
Yet Night has stars, and Winter has the moss,
And the wee pearly goblets that emboss
The lumbering wall on which the redbreast sings.
Now the old year spreads wide his dusky wings,
And hovers o'er his many children dead ;
Few are the blessings on his hoary head
Bestow'd by hearts whom cruel memory wrings,
And sad forebodings, for no stars are seen
In the dull night and winter of distress.
The chaliced mosses and the velvet green,
That clothe November with a seemly dress,
As furry spoils that warm the red-hair'd Russ.
Shield not the poor from blasts impiteous.

November 3, 1847.

XV.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

WAS it a fancy, bred of vagrant guess,
Or well-remember'd fact, that *He* was born
When half the world was wintry and forlorn,
In Nature's utmost season of distress?
And did the simple earth indeed confess
Its destitution and its craving need,
Wearing the white and penitential weed,
Meet symbol of judicial barrenness?
So be it; for in truth 'tis ever so,
That when the winter of the soul is bare,
The seed of heaven at first begins to grow,
Peeping abroad in desert of despair.
Full many a floweret, good, and sweet, and fair,
Is kindly wrapp'd in coverlet of snow.

XVI.

ON A CALM DAY TOWARDS THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

THERE never was an hour of purer peace !
Methinks old Time, in mere mortality,
Gives up the ghost, contented not to be,
And all the pulses of great Nature cease.
Whate'er betokens hope, life, or increase,
The gladsome expectation, or the dread
Of chance and change upon to-morrow fed,
Await the expiration of their lease
In dumb dull apathy. Not on the tree
Stirs the brown leaf ; or, if detach'd, it drop,
So very slow it wavers to the ground
One might suppose that central gravity,
Prime law of nature, were about to stop :
Ne'er died a year with spirit so profound.

December 22, 1835.

XVII.

DECEMBER, 1838.

THE poor old year upon its deathbed lies ;
Old trees lift up their branches manifold,
Spiry and stern, inveterately old ;
Their bare and patient poverty defies
The fickle humour of inconstant skies.
All chill and distant, the great monarch Sun
Beholds the last days of his minion.
What is 't to him how soon the old year dies ?
Yet some things are, but lowly things and small,
That wait upon the old year to the last ;
Some wee birds pipe a feeble madrigal,
Thrilling kind memories of the summer past ;
Some duteous flowers put on their best array
To do meet honour to their lord's decay.

XVIII.

ST. THOMAS' DAY.

So dimly wanes the old year to its end!
And now we are attain'd the very day
When the blest sun hath sent his dimmest ray
From the far south; and now will northward bend.
The days will lengthen,—will the days amend?
Alas! the days or lengthen or decay
By law they ne'er would wish to disobey,
And only sink the blither to ascend.
Few lives are stretch'd to the long weary night
Of dull December, and its mizzling veil
Of day, brief tarrying in the murky dale:
For some in April melt to happier light;
Some burn away in passionate July:
And happier some in ripe October die.

SONNETS AND OTHER POEMS

ON

BIRDS, INSECTS, AND FLOWERS.

HUMMING BIRDS.



THE insect birds that suck nectareous juice
 From straightest tubes of curly-petal'd flowers,
 Or catch the honey-dew that falls profuse
 Through the soft air, distill'd in viewless showers,
 Whose colours seem the very souls of gems,
 Or parting rays of fading diadems:—

I have but seen their feathers,—that is all.
 As much as we can know of poets dead
 Or living; but the gilded plumes that fall
 Float on the earth, or in the wind dispread
 Go everywhere to beautify the breeze.
 Sweet wind, surcharged with treasures fair as these,

I may not feel:—I never may behold
 The spark of life, that trimm'd in garb so bright
 That flying quintessence of ruby, gold,
 Mild emerald, and lucid chrysolite.
 Yet am I glad that life and joy were there,
 That the small creature was as blithe as fair.

THE CRICKET.

The Naturalist of the Supplement to the British Almanack tells me that Crickets rusticate in Summer, and return to their firesides in Winter. I would I knew this for a fact.

Αποστάσματα φύσικα.—1843.

WHERE art thou, merry whistler of the hearth?
 What time the grate is stuff'd with arid moss,
 I miss thy shrill monotony of mirth,
 And do not love the bar's ferruginous gloss,
 When summer nights are blinking-dark and cold,
 And the dim taper cheerless to behold.

I thought thee sleeping in some cranny snug,
 Insensible to human weal or woe,
 Till earlier night bids shake the lazy rug,
 And lifts the poker for decisive blow.
 But thou hast left thy ashy winter mansion
 To air thy crisp-cased wings in wide expansion.

If I should see thee in thy summer dress,
 'Tis odds if I should know thee, winter friend!

The love I have not, but revere no less,
That can so closely to thy ways attend.
And glad am I the cricket has a share
Of the wide summer, and the ample air.

LINES

WRITTEN OPPOSITE A DRAWING OF A PARROT AND BUTTERFLY.



BRIGHT creatures are ye, bird and butterfly,
The joyous progeny of the breeding sun,
Who work'd below, his " 'prentice hand to try,"
On topaz, ruby, and carnelian.
Then, breathing upwards, first essay'd the rose,
Sweet emanation of the soul of earth :
Then would the gilded fly its wings disclose,
Proud of the beauty of its gorgeous birth.
But brightest gems would murmur, if they might,
Because for woman, not themselves, they glow.
Blest are the insects, brood of warmth and light,
Who feel their life, how brief they cannot know ;
But happier far the bird that can repeat
Sweet words, by sweeter lips made doubly sweet.

“When Messrs. Hawes and Fellowes ascended Mont Blanc in July, 1827, they observed a butterfly near the summit. Mr. C. Shewell saw two crimson moths at nearly the same elevation.”

—♦—

WHO would have thought, upon this icy cliff,
 Where never ibex bounded,
 Nor foot of chamois sounded,
 Where scarce the soaring hippogriff
 Would venture, unless truly,
 To this exalted Thule,
 He carried the thought of a metaphysician,
 Or theory of an electrician;—
 Who would have dream'd of seeing thee,
 Softest of summer's progeny?
 What art thou seeking? What hast thou lost?
 That before the throne of eternal frost
 Thou comest to spread the crimson wing.
 Thou pretty fluttering thing?
 Art thou too fine for the world below?
 Or hast thou lived out thy joy and thy spring?
 And hast thou sworn
 To live forlorn
 An anchorite in a cave of snow,
 Or Palmer lonely wandering?

Or dost thou fancy, as many have done,
That, because the hill-top is nearest the sun,

The sun loves better the unthaw'd ice,
That does nothing but say that he is bright,
And dissect, like a prism, his braided light—

Than the gardens of bloom and the fields of spice?
Didst thou think that the bright orb his mystery
shrouds

In a comfortless mantle of sleet-driving clouds?

Alas! he never loved this place;

It bears no token of his grace;

But many a mark of the tempest's lash,

And many a brand of the sulphurous flash.

'Tis better to dwell amid corn-fields and flowers,

Or even the weeds of this world of ours,

Than to leave the green vale and the sunny slope,

To seek the cold cliff with a desperate hope.

Flutter he, flutter he, high as he will,

A butterfly is but a butterfly still.

And 'tis better for us to remain where we are,

In the lowly valley of duty and care,

Than lonely to stray to the heights above,

Where there's nothing to do, and nothing to love.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

A MIGHTY bard there was, in joy of youth,
That wont to rove the vernal groves among,
When the green oak puts forth its scallop'd tooth,
And daisies thick the darkening fallows throng.
He listen'd oft, whene'er he sought to soothe
A fancied sorrow with a fancied song,
For Philomela's ancient tale of ruth,
And never heard it, all the long night long ;
But heard, instead, so glad a strain of sound,
So many changes of continuous glee,
From lowest twitter, such a quick rebound,
To billowy height of troubled ecstasy—
Rejoice ! he said, for joyfully had he found
That mighty poets may mistaken be.*

Sunday, Sept. 27, 1840.

* See Coleridge's Poems, Vol. i., p. 211.

THE CUCKOO.



THOU indefatigable cuckoo ! still
 Thy iteration says the self-same thing,
 And thou art still an utterance of the spring
 As constant as a self-determined will.
 The quiet patience of a murmuring rill
 Had no beginning and will have no ending ;
 But thou art aye beginning, never blending
 With thrush on perch, or lark upon the wing.
 Methinks thou art a type of some recluse
 Whose notes of adoration never vary :
 Who of the gift of speech will make no use
 But ever to repeat her Ave Mary.—
 Two syllables alone to thee were given,
 What mean they in the dialect of heaven ?

May 22, 1848.

THE ANEMONE.



Who would have thought a thing so slight,
So frail a birth of warmth and light,
A thing as weak as fear or shame,
Bearing thy weakness in thy name,—
Who would have thought of finding thee,
Thou delicate Anemone,
Whose faintly tinted petals may
By any wind be torn away,
Whose many anthers with their dust,
And the dark purple dome their centre,
When winter strikes, soon as it likes,
Will quit their present rest, and must
Hurry away on wild adventure?
What power has given thee to outlast
The pelting rain, the driving blast;
To sit upon thy slender stem,
A solitary diadem,
Adorning latest autumn with
A relic sweet of vernal pith?

Oh Heaven ! if,—as faithful I believe,—
Thou wilt the prayer of faithful love receive,
Let it be so with me ! I was a child
Of large belief, though froward, wild :
Gladly I listen'd to the holy word,
And deem'd my little prayers to God were heard.
All things I loved, however strange or odd,
As deeming all things were beloved by God.
In youth and manhood's careful sultry hours,
The garden of my youth bore many flowers
That now are faded ; but my early faith,
Though thinner far than vapour, spectre, wraith,
Lighter than aught the rude wind blows away,
Has yet outlived the rude tempestuous day,
And may remain, a witness of the spring,
A sweet, a holy, and a lovely thing ;
The promise of another spring to me,
My lovely, lone, and lost Anemone !

AMBLESIDE, *November.*

EUPHRASIA OFFICINALIS, OR EYE-BRIGHT.

—♦—

THERE is a flower, a tiny flower,
 Its hue is white, but close within't
 There is a spot of golden tint;
 Therein abides a wondrous juice,
 That hath, for such as know its use,
 A sweet and holy power.

It is the little Euphrasy,
 Which you no doubt have often seen
 'Mid the tall grass of meadow green;
 But never deem'd so wee a wight
 Endow'd with medicinal might
 To clear the darken'd eye.

And maybe now it hath no more
 The virtue which the kindly fays
 Bestow'd in fancy's holy days;
 Yet still the gold-eyed weedie springs,
 To show how pretty little things
 Were hallow'd long of yore.

THE COWSLIP.



LADY, beyond the wide Atlantic main
 Huge trees hast thou beheld, and gorgeous flowers,
 And poor may be to thee, and dim, and plain
 The simple posies of this isle of ours ;
 Yet, lady, humbly I present to thee
 A flower refined in her simplicity.
 The lady Cowslip, that, amid the grass,
 Is tall and comely as a virgin queen.
 The Primrose is a bonny peasant lass,
 The bold and full-blown beauty of the green ;
 She seems on mossy bank, in forest glade,
 Most meet, to be the Cowslip's waiting maid.
 But the coy Cowslip—coy, though doom'd to stand
 In state erect upon the open field—
 Declines her head ; the lady of the land,
 That must be public, fain would be conceal'd,
 Knowing how much she ought to all impart,
 Yet much retaining with an artless art ;
 For there is beauty in the cowslip bell
 That must be sought for ere it can be spied,

And her pure perfume must be known full well
Before its goodness can be testified ;
And therefore do I give the flower to thee,
Thinking thee better than I know or see.

THE COWSLIP AND THE LARK.

—♦—
My pretty lady Cowslip ! prim and shy,
Dress'd in the vernal garb of Roman bride,
I wish thee sometimes in a long road-side
My solitary dream to purify.
And thou, bold Lark ! thou shivering voice on high !
Invisible warbler of the blue expanse !
Why wilt thou not, my merry bird, advance,
And glad Winander with thy minstrelsy ?
The fancy sweet of Persia feign'd the love,
Of the voluptuous rose and nightingale.
And Kent flows on,—the merry Lark above
And the meek Cowslip bending in the vale ;—
What if there be mysterious love between
The brave bird of the sky and flow'ret of the green !

ON A BUNCH OF COWSLIPS,

GROWN NEAR THE WRAY, AND PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR BY A LADY.



SWEET stranger lady, of a southern land,
 And hast thou ventured so far north away?
 Has the soft magic of a lady's hand
 Evoked thy slimness from the cold north clay?

Thy sister Primrose is a damsel bold
 That will be found, mayhap before we seek;
 Thou art a lady, coy, yet not so cold,
 Tall and erect, though modest, yet not weak.

Thou art not lonely in thy bashful mood,
 But rather, like a sweet devoted Nun,
 Fearing the guile of selfish solitude,
 Content of many sisters to be one.

I cannot look upon thee, delicate plant,
 Nor taste the gentleness of thy perfume,
 And not conceive the living world too scant
 To give thy beauties and thy meanings room

What time the Fairies made their orbs of green,
And gave to every herb mysterious power,
Thou wert the chosen crest of Elfin Queen,
Her banner tall in battle's perilous hour.

When eve of May, and all its wizard spells,
Was aye succeeded by the glad May morn,
The pendant Cowslip, with its silent bells,
Adorn'd the pole by village maidens borne.

When London yet was but a scatter'd town,
Dotting gay fields and garden with her towers,
And gravest cits, with a relaxing frown,
Let out their tripping girls to gather flowers ;

Ah ! surely it had been a lovely sight
To see them trooping, ere the sun was high,
Back to their frugal homes with garlands dight
Of Cowslips pale, in sweetness doom'd to die.

The ruddier daughters of the hamlet oft
With balls of Cowslips pelted one another,
Or heap'd the hay, so flowery, sweet, and soft,
With fragrant load some panting nymph to smother.

Maybe, these frolics of the antique age
Were all too rude, meek lady-flower, for thee :
Methinks thy fittest doom, in holy page
Of hook devout, to fade in sanctity ;

Where pious woman oft is wont to read,
And seeing thy pale relics, stops to pray,
That, like the virgin daughter of the mead,
She may be sweet, and hallow'd in decay.

July 13, 1844.

THE CELANDINE AND THE DAISY.

I LOVE the flowers that Nature gives away
With such a careless bounty: some would deem
She thought them baubles, things of no esteem,
Mere idle followers of unthrifty May.
See in the lane, where geese and donkeys stray,
That golden flower, the countless Celandine:
Though long o'erlook'd, it needs no praise of mine,
For 'tis one mightier poet's joy and theme.
See how the Daisies whiten all yon lea!
A thing so dear to poet and to child,
That when we see it on neglected wild,
We prize old Nature's generosity.
The Celandine one mighty bard may prize;
The Daisy no bard can monopolise.

THE SNOWDROP.



YES, punctual to the time, thou 'rt here again,
As still thou art:—though frost or rain may vary,
And icicles blockade the rockbirds' aery,
Or sluggish snow lie heavy on the plain,
Yet thou, sweet child of hoary January,
Art here to harbinger the laggard train
Of vernal flowers, a duteous missionary.
Nor cold can blight, nor fog thy pureness stain.
Beneath the dripping eaves, or on the slope
Of cottage garden, whether mark'd or no,
Thy meek head bends in undistinguish'd row.
Blessings upon thee, gentle bud of hope!
And Nature bless the spot where thou dost grow—
Young life emerging from thy kindred snow!

THE GENTIANELLA.

PRETTY stranger in our gardens,
 We should beg thee thousand pardons,
 Long forgotten, far too long,
 Never mention'd yet in song.
 Strange it is, that never ditty
 Ever told thee thou wert pretty :
 Rondo none, nor ritornella,
 Praises thee, my Gentianella.
 Very well I know thee, why
 Thou art not like the cloudless sky,
 Nor like the virgin's melting eye.
 Poets seek in fields and trees
 Quaint conceits and similes ;
 But thine azure is thine own,—
 Nothing like it have I known :
 Seems it not of upper earth ;—
 Surely it must have its birth
 In the darkness far below,
 Where the dark-eyed sapphires grow !
 Lovely votary of the sun,
 Never wishing to be won

By a vain and mortal lover,
Shrinking closely into cover,
When thy true love hath departed,
Patient, pure, and simple-hearted.
Like an exile doom'd to roam,
Not in foreign land at home,—
I will call thy azure hue
Brightest, firmest, truest blue.

THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

SOME flowers there are that rear their heads on high,
The gorgeous products of a burning sky,
That rush upon the eye with garish bloom,
And make the senses drunk with high perfume.
Not such art thou, sweet Lily of the Vale!
So lovely, small, and delicately pale,—
We might believe, if such fond faith were ours,
As sees humanity in trees and flowers,
That thou wert once a maiden, meek and good,
That pined away beneath her native wood
For very fear of her own loveliness,
And died of love she never would confess.

May 24. 1846.

THE DANDELION.



STRANGE plants we bring from lands where Caffirs roam,
 And great the traveller in botanic fame
 That can inflict his queer and ugly name
 On product of South Afric sands or loam,
 Or on the flexile creeper that hath clomb
 Up the tall stems of Polynesian palms ;
 And now with clusters, or with spikes, embalms
 The sickly air beneath the glassy dome
 In lordly garden. Haply time may be
 When botanist from fire-born Owhyhee
 Shall bear thee, milky mother of white down,
 Back to his isle a golden gift superb ;—
 Give name uncouth to diuretic herb,
 And from the Dandelion reap renown.

TO THE PLANT "EVERLASTING."

AND is it thus? Shall roses fade,
 And violets wither in the shade?
 Must the tall lily lose her height,
 And sickly pale usurp her white?
 And shall the luscious woodbine shed
 The quaint horns of each clustering head?
 Must the sweet lady jessamine,
 Pride of the cottar's porch, resign
 The virgin pureness of her coronal,
 And thou sustain no change at all?
 The snowdrops, with their fairy bells,
 Have but one chilly month of beauty;
 Then the rank-set daffodils
 Take the term of vernal duty:
 And then in order due succeed
 The cowslip, maiden of the mead,
 And primrose of the "river's brim,"—
 A village lassie, frank and free,
 Unlike the cowslip, tall and slim—
 A lady she of high degree,
 Like a Roman bride in her bridal trim.

But these, and many more as gay,
As innocent and frail as they,
By Nature strewn in sweet disorder,
Or nicely prank'd in bed and border,
Babes of April, pets of May,
Like joys of childhood pass away.
Summer has a hotter grace,
Of darker leaf and broader face.
I never loved them much, and so
I 'm well content to let them go.
And yet they tarry, trying ever—
Vainly trying to be—what?
To be young in vain endeavour,—
Venerable they are not.
Never mind!—we see the stems
Of summer flowers, all bare and seedy,
Like princes, stript of diadems,
In garden plots hirsute and weedy.
And when green Autumn, matron sage,
A lady of a "certain age,"
Majestic trails her sinuous train,
And clothes the yellow vales with grain,
She hath attendance meet of flowers,
As bold and purple, ripe and rosy,
As dowagers right red and cosy:
Grave matrons in the fairy hospitals,
Staid, stately, formal, bearded seneschals.

The painted pageantry of fairy bowers ;
The darlings of a region far away,
Late-flowering heaths of Southern Africa,
Fuchsias from Chili, dahlias from Peru,
And strange varieties of motley hue,
Or gorgeous tints, that show what art can do.

But Winter comes,—

They perish ; let them go !

There still are flowers, whose ancestors were born
Beneath the southern reign of Capricorn,
That deck old Winter under glassy frames.

I love them not, and do not know their names.

I better like the lichen's crackly scale,

The velvet moss, or verdant fox's tail.

But thus it seems that Nature ranges

In perpetuity of changes ;

For every age she hath a symbol,

And tells it what it ought to be ;

Youth, like Spring-time, light and nimble,

Evanescent in its glee ;

Middle age, like woman wedded,

Should be Summer altogether ;—

Only mark, it is not needed

There should be any rainy weather.

Autumn beauties, such there are,

Of forty years, or rather more,

But not so delicately fair

As twenty years ago they were,
Yet rich and ripe as Autumn's store.
And Winter—no, I will not tell
How age is Winter's parallel.
If like it be in anything,
'Tis nearest to successive Spring.
Spring, Summer, Autumn, with their train,
Pass away and come again ;
For every spray and every flower,
When sever'd from the natal stem,
May yield its fragrance for an hour
In coronary diadem :
But having done its best, it dies—
Its sweetest odours are its parting sighs.
But what art thou, that bear'st a name
Synonymous with poet's fame ?
Thou yellow, husky, arid thing !
Thou mere antipathy to Spring,
Not sweet to smell, nor fair to sight,
And useless as an anchorite,
Who feasted on continual fasting,
Art *thou* indeed " the Everlasting ?"
Yes, so indeed, 'tis ever so ;
'Tis right that God should only show
His goodness for a little while.
Brief is the being of a smile,

And pity's tears are quickly dry,
And all good things are born to die ;
While things unholy, of small worth,
Endure a weary time on earth.
But think not, therefore, that the good
Is but the Giver's fitful mood.
He only lets us have a taste
Of heavenly good, and then in haste
Withdraws it, that we may be led
To seek it at the fountain-head ;
While for the earth he leaves a feint,
The idol of the permanent,—
A something very like, indeed,
But not the same ; a worthless weed
That hath the form, but not the power,
The juice, or fragrance of a flower.

THE FORGET-ME-NOT.



THERE is a little and a pretty flower,
 That you may find in many a garden plot ;
 Yet wild it is, and grows amid the stour
 Of public roads, as in close-wattled bower :
 Its name in English is, Forget-me-not.

Sweet was the fancy of those antique ages
 That put a heart in every stirring leaf,
 Writing deep morals upon Nature's pages,
 Turning sweet flowers into deathless sages,
 To calm our joy and sanctify our grief.

And gladly would I know the man or child,
 But no !—it surely was a pensive girl
 That gave so sweet a name to floweret wild,
 A harmless inuocent and unbeguiled,
 To whom a flower is precious as a pearl.

Fain would I know, and yet I can but guess,
 How the blue floweret won a name so sweet.

Did some fond mother, bending down to bless
Her sailing son, with last and long-caress,
Give the small plant to guard him through the fleet?

Did a kind maid, that thought her lover all
By which a maid would fain beloved be,
Leaning against a ruin'd abbey wall,
Make of the flower an am'rous coronal,
That still should breathe and whisper, "Think of me?"

But were I good and holy as a saint,
Or hermit-dweller in secluded grot,
If e'er the soul in hope and love were faint,
Then, like an antidote to mortal taint,
I'd give the pretty flower Forget-me-not.

AZALEA.

WELCOME, sweet stranger, from the gorgeous East!
Nature in thee puts forth her beauteous might,
For aye array'd as for a marriage feast,
Or like an incarnation of pure light.
What man can see thee so superbly drest,
Without a thought of her whom he loves best?

Yet when I think of her, whom I love well,
I do not think of such luxurious flowers.
Ill suited to a humble home like ours,
If you and I, my love, together dwell,
Were the rich perfume, and the luscious swell
Of herbs that emigrate from Indian bowers.
Better for us the plant that feels the showers
And the sweet sunshine,—by our mossy well.

Better be like the buttercups so many,
That in good England no one thinks of any,
While yet we grow in our own native land,
Than the Azalea, solitary, grand,
Perfuming the far banks of Alleghany,
Or withering in Australia's thirsty sand.

THE GUERNSEY LILY.

AMARYLLIS SAMIENSIS.

—◆—

“This plant was brought from Japan, where it was found by Kaemfer and also by Thunberg, who visited that country in 1775. It was first cultivated in the garden of John Morin, at Paris, where it blowed for the first time on the 7th of October, 1634. It was then made known by Jacob Cornutus, under the name of ‘Narcissus Japonicus flore rutilo.’ After this it was again noticed by John Ray, in 1665, who called it the Guernsey Lily. A ship, returning from Japan, was wrecked on the coasts of Guernsey, and a number of the bulbs of this plant which were on board, being cast on shore, took root in that sandy soil.”—*Beckman's Inventions*, vol. iii.

FAR in the East, and long to us unknown,
 A lily bloom'd, of colours quaint and rare ;
 Not like our lilies, white, and dimly fair,
 But clad like Eastern monarch on his throne.
 A ship there was by stress of tempest blown,
 And wreck'd on beach, all sandy, flat and bare ;—
 The storm-god bated of his rage to spare
 The queenly flower, foredoom'd to be our own.
 The Guernsey fisher, seeking what the sea
 Had stolen to aid his hungry poverty,
 Starts to behold the stranger from afar,
 And wonders what the gorgeous thing might be,
 That like an unsphered and dejected star
 Gleam'd in forlorn and mateless majesty.

SONNETS AND OTHER POEMS

REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF

INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD.

THE following Poems were, with scarcely an exception, addressed to individuals, or suggested by actual occurrences. They have, however, little or nothing of an occasional character—certainly are never without a general interest.

CHILDHOOD.



OH what a wilderness were this sad world
If man were always man, and never child ;
If Nature gave no time, so sweetly wild,
When every thought is quaintly crisp'd and curl'd,
Like fragrant hyacinth with dew impearl'd,
And every feeling in itself confiding,
Yet never single, but continuous, gliding
With wavy motion as, on wings unfurl'd,
A seraph clips the Empyrean ! Such man was
Ere sin had made him know himself too well.
No child was born ere that primeval loss.
What might have been, no living soul can tell :
But Heaven is kind, and therefore all possess
Once in their life fair Eden's simpleness.

TO AN INFANT.

Wise is the way of Nature, first to make
This tiny model of what is to be,
A thing that we may love as soon as see,
That seems as passive as a summer lake
When there is not a sigh of wind to shake
The aspen leaf upon the tall slim tree.
Yet who can tell, sweet infant mystery,
What thoughts in thee may now begin to wake?
Something already dost thou know of pain,
And, sinless, bear'st the penalty of sin ;
And yet as quickly wilt thou smile again
After thy cries, as vanishes the stain
Of breath from steel. So may the peace within
In thy ripe season re-assert its reign.

TO AN INFANT.

SURE 'tis a holy and a healing thought
That fills my heart and mind at sight of thee,
Thou purest abstract of humanity.
Sweet infant, we might deem thy smile was brought
From some far distant Paradise, where nought
Forbad to hope whate'er of good may be,
Where thou could'st know, and feel, and taste, and see
'That innocence which, lost, is vainly sought
In this poor world. Yet, if thou wert so good
As love conceives thee, thou had'st ne'er been born ;
For sure the Lord of Justice never would
Have doom'd a loyal spirit to be shorn
Of its immortal glories—never could
Exile perfection to an earth forlorn.

TO AN INFANT.

WRITTEN ON A SNOWY DAY.

SOME say, sweet babe, thy mind is but a blank,
As white and vacant as the level field
Of unsunn'd snow, that passively must yield
To human foot, to vapour dull and dank,
To wheel indenting slow, with sullen clank,
To wanton tracery of urchin wild.
I deem not so of any human child,
Nor can believe our nature ever sank
To such a lowness. Nay, my pretty boy!
In thy shrill laugh there is intelligence;
And though we can but guess, or how, or whence
Thy soul was wafted—from what realm of joy
Or mere privation thou hast hither come,—
Thought has come with thee, happy thought, though
dumb,

TO A DEAF AND DUMB LITTLE GIRL.



LIKE a loose island on the wide expanse,
 Unconscious floating on the fickle sea,
 Herself her all, she lives in privacy ;
 Her waking life as lonely as a trance,
 Doom'd to behold the universal dance,
 And never hear the music which expounds
 The solemn step, coy slide, the merry bounds,
 The vague, mute language of the countenance.
 In vain for her I smooth my antic rhyme ;
 She cannot hear it, all her little being
 Concentred in her solitary seeing—
 What can she know of beaut [eous] or sublime ?
 And yet methinks she looks so calm and good,
 God must be with her in her solitude.

THE GOD-CHILD.



I stood beside thee in the holy place,
And saw the holy sprinkling on thy brow,
And was both bond and witness to the vow
Which own'd thy need, confirm'd thy claim of grace :
That sacred sign which time shall not efface
Declared thee His, to whom all angels bow.
Who bade the herald saint the rite allow
To the sole sinless of all Adam's race.
That was indeed an awful sight to see ;
And oft, I fear, for what my love hath done,
As voucher of thy sweet communion
In thy [sweet] Saviour's blessed mystery.
Would I might give thee back, my little one,
But half the good that I have got from thee.

TWINS.

BUT born to die, they just had felt the air,
When God revoked the mandate of their doom.
A brief imprisonment within the womb,
Of human life was all but all their share.
Two whiter souls unstain'd with sin or care
Shall never blossom from the fertile tomb ;—
Twin flowers that wasted not on earth their bloom,
So quickly Heaven reclaim'd the spotless pair.
Let man that on his own desert relies,
And deems himself the creditor of God,
Think how these babes have earn'd their paradise,
How small the work of their small period :
Their very cradle was the hopeful grave,
God only made them for His Christ to save.

BOYHOOD AND GIRLHOOD.



DID our first parents in their happy seat,
New from the Maker's hand, a wedded pair,
In livelier hues their several sex declare
Than that brave boy, and that wee lady sweet?
Though not in measure nor in mind complete
They come, a perfect husband and a bride;
Yet is the seal impress'd and testified
By prophet Nature, till the season meet.
The girl, a girl instinct with simple arts,
And all the innocent cunning of her sex;
A very girl, delighting to perplex
The eye of love with antic change of parts:
Burly and bold the lad, his mien denotes
One-hearted manhood even in petticoats.

To K. H. I.

THE INFANT GRANDCHILD OF A BLIND GRANDFATHER.



OH sweet new-comer to the changeful earth !
 If, as some darkling seers have boldly guess'd,
 Thou hadst a being and a human birth,
 And wert erewhile by human parents blest,
 Long, long before thy present mother press'd
 Thee, helpless stranger, to her fostering breast ;
 Then well it is for thee that thou canst not
 Remember aught of face, or thing, or spot,
 But all thy former life is clean forgot :
 For sad it were to visit earth again,
 And find it false, and turbulent, and vain ;
 So little better than it was of yore,
 Yet nothing find that thou hast loved before ;
 And restless man in haste to banish thence
 The very shadow of old reverence.
 But well for us that there is something yet,
 Which change cannot efface, nor time forget ;—
 The patient smile of passive babyhood ;
 The brook-like gurglings, murmuring after meaning ;

The waking dream ; the shade as softly screening
The innocent sweetness of the opening bud,
Which future love and sager thought encloses,
As dewy moss, that swathes the swelling roses,—
Till thought peers forth, and murmurs break to words,
With human import in the notes of birds.
And thus, sweet maid ! thy voice, so blithe and clear,
Pours all the spring on thy good grandsire's ear,
Filling his kind heart with a new delight,
Which Homer may in ancient days have known,
Till love and joy create an inward sight,
And blindness shapes a fair world of its own.
Let mutability, then, work its will,
The child shall be the same sweet creature still.

THOU, Baby Innocence !—unseen of me,
New bursting leaflet of the eternal tree,
That thou art sweet, is all I know of thee.

I know thou must be innocent and fair,
And dimpled soft as other babies are ;
But then—what impress doth thy beauty bear ?

Which most prevails, the mother or the sire?
Are thine eyes like thy father's—made of fire,
Keen to discern, and dauntless to inquire?

Or, like thy mother's, meek as summer eve,
Gracious in answer, open to receive,
Types of a soul most potent to believe?

Is thy chin cleft as sunny side of peach?
And have thy lips their own peculiar speech,
And murmurs that can chide, caress, beseech?

Thy little hands are busy,—that I know;
Thy tiny feet are fidging to and fro;
But what's the inner mood that stirs them so?

Not knowing what thou art, I deem it meet
To think thee whatso'er I think most sweet,—
A bud of promise—yet a babe complete.

FAIN would I dive to find my infant self
 In the unfathom'd ocean of the past ;
 I can but find a sun-burnt prattling elf,
 A froward urchin of four years at least.

The prettiest speech—'tis in my mind engrain'd—
 That first awak'd me from my babyhood,—
 'Twas a grave saw affectionately feign'd—
 “ We 'll love you, little master,—if you 're good.”

Sweet babe, thou art not yet or good or bad,
 Yet God is round thee, in thee, and above thee ;
 We love, because we love thee, little lad,
 And pray thou may'st be good—because we love
 thee.

ON AN INFANT'S HAND.

—♦—

WHAT is an infant but a germ,
Prophetic of a distant term ?
Whose present claim of love consists
In that great power that Nature twists
With the fine thread of imbecillity,
Motion of infinite tranquillity,
Joy that is not for this or that,
Nor like the restless joy of gnat,
Or midge in moty beam so rife,
Whose day of pleasure is its life ;
But joy that by its quiet being
Is witness of a law foreseeing
All joy and sorrow that may hap
To the wee sleeper in the mother's lap.
Such joy, I ween, is ever creeping
On every nerve of baby sleeping ;
But, baby waking, longest lingers
In tiny hand and tiny fingers,

Much teaching that it ne'er did learn,
[Like lamp beside sepulchral urn,
Revealing by felicity,
Foretelling by simplicity,
And preaching by its sudden cries,
Alone with God the baby lies.]
How hard it holds!—how tight the clasp!
Ah, how intense the infant grasp!
Electric from the ruling brain
Descends the soul to stir and strain
That wondrous instrument, the hand,
By which we learn to understand;
How fair, how small, how white and pure,
Its own most perfect miniature!
The baby-hand that is so wee,
And yet is all it is to be;
Unweeting what it has to do,
Yet to its destined purpose true.
The fingers four, of varied length,
That join or vie their little strength;
The pigmy thumb, the onyx nail,
The violet vein so blue and pale;
The branchy lines where Gipsy eld
Had all the course of life beheld:
All, to its little finger's tip,
Of Nature's choicest workmanship.

Their task, their fate, we hardly guess,—
But, oh, may it be happiness!
Not always leisure, always play,
But worky-day and holy-day ;
With holy Sabbaths interspersed.
And not the busiest day the worst.
Not doom'd, with needle or with pen,
To drudge for o'er-exacting men,
Nor any way to toil for lucre
At frown of he or she rebuker ;
But still affectionate and free
Their never weary housewifery.
Blest lot be thine, my nestling dove,
Never to work except in love ;
And God protect thy little hand
From task imposed by unbeloved command !

December 3, 1843.

TO JEANNETTE, SIX WEEKS OLD.



OUR birth and death alike are mysteries,
 And thou, sweet babe, art a mysterious thing,
 In mute simplicity of passive being,
 A co-essential symbol of the life
 Which God hath made a witness of Himself;
 The all of God which heathen wisdom knew,
 And heathen ignorance so far mistook,
 Seeking the substance in the duskiest shade;
 Dusky and distant as the pillar'd cloud
 That never nearer, never farther, taught
 The chosen seed their journey o'er the wild,
 But in the promised land was seen no more.
 Dim is the brightest shadow of the Lord
 That earth reflects: an infant's life might seem
 A scarce distinguishable effluence—
 An air-blown globule of the living ocean.
 And yet, methinks, sweet babe! if I should kneel
 And worship thee for thy meek innocence,
 I less should err than Egypt's white-swathed priest,
 Who bade the prostrate toiling race adore

The one great life incarnate in the bull,
Ibis, or cat, monkey or crocodile,—
More wisely sin than did the Persian sage,
Who held that God enshrined His majesty
In the huge mass of the insensate sun,
That loves not when it warms.

Yes, baby dear !

In thee do we behold a symbol meet
For joyous love and reverential musing ;
Symbol of all that God through Nature gives
To sight, and touch, imparted and reveal'd.
But more thou art for hope and holier love—
For self-assuring faith, thou art far more
Than any sweet and fair similitude
Which sense most exquisite could match with thee ;
For hopeful love, that loving thy wee self,
Loves yet in thee a future nobler being,
A Christian maid, maybe a Christian mother :
For Faith, that in the utmost thou canst be
To mortal sight, though good thou wert, and holy
As that dear maiden—mother of her Lord,
Sees but a seed, a type unrealised,
Not what thou art or shalt be, though the prayer
Of parent's heart were answer'd full in thee,
But as all Christ's beloved shall behold
Each other in the clearness of His day,
When child and parent, husband, wife, the king

And lowly subject, scholar and untaught,
 The babe that drew but once its breath on earth
 And the grey chronicle of ninety years,
 Shall meet together in one family,
 Coëval children of the one great Sire.

Ascension Day, May 20, 1841.

TO THE SAME, ON HER FIRST BIRTHDAY.

'Tis right the joyous epoch of thy birth
 Should be a sunshine holyday on earth;
 All Nature keeps it: now the boisterous North
 Holds his chill breath; the birds are peeping forth,
 Sweet little things, but yet not half so sweet
 As thou, sweet flow'ret of a year complete!
 I would, my babe, that prayer of force divine,
 Or dedicated task, or vow of mine
 To be perform'd, or suffer'd, as of old
 Sad saint endured, or errant champion bold
 Achieved on Syrian plains or Alpine passes cold—
 That any work more meet for solemn time,
 More grave and arduous than the easy rhyme
 Which now, my love, 'tis well enough I can
 Make faster far than many a wiser man—

Could gain for thee the moment of a bliss,
 Were it no longer than a raptured kiss,
 Or spare thy little life the pelting pain
 That soon is past, but comes too soon again.
 But vain the vow—the very wish is vain.
 The heaviest cross that mortal can assume,
 The cavern'd saint's long life of martyrdom,
 The knees that leave their dints on convent stone,
 The breath that is but one perpetual groan,
 Are useless all one pause of peace to win :
 No pain of man can expiate a sin.
 But wherefore dream of what I fain would do,
 Or prate of pain beneath a sky so blue ?
 'Tis Spring with Nature—tender Spring with thee.
 But the sere Autumn follows hard on me.
 It may be, pretty babe, ere thou canst know
 The man that loves thee, and be-rhymes thee so.
 I may be gone, and never see thee more ;
 But shall I see thee on the farther shore,
 Clad in thine infant robes of innocence,
 Pure even as now, baptised from all offence,
 A spirit mature—yet with no more to fear
 Than the sweet infant of a single year.

April 5, 1842.

TO MARGARET, ON HER FIRST BIRTHDAY.

ONE year is past, with change and sorrow fraught,
 Since first the little Margaret drew her breath,
 And yet the fatal names of Sin and Death,
 Her sad inheritance, she knoweth not.
 That lore, by earth inevitably taught,
 In the still world of spirits is untold ;
 'Tis not of Death or Sin that angels hold
 Sweet converse with the slumb'ring infant's thought.
 Merely she is with God, and God with her
 And her meek ignorance. Guiltless of demur,
 For her is faith a hope ; her innocence
 Is holiness : the bright-eyed crowing glee
 That makes her leap her grandsire's face to see,
 Is love unfeign'd and willing reverence.

March 3, 1843.

N.B.—It was the opinion of certain ancient divines that when babies smile in sleep their guardian angels are whispering to them.

THE FOURTH BIRTHDAY.



FOUR years, long years, and full of strange event
 To thee, sweet boy, though brief and bare to me,
 Of thy young days make up the complement,
 And far out-date thy little memory.

How many tears have dropp'd since thou wert born,
 Some on the cradle, some upon the grave!
 Yet having thee, thy father, not forlorn,
 Felt he had something yet of God to crave.

For who hath aught to love, and loves aright,
 Will never in the darkest strait despair;
 For out of love exhales a living light,
 A light that speaks—a light whose breath is prayer.

Sorrow hath been within thy dwelling, child,
 Yet sorrow hath not touch'd thy delicate bloom;
 So, the low floweret in Arabian wild
 Grows in the sand, nor fades in the simoom.

What thou hast lost thou know'st not, canst not know,
Too young to wonder when thy elders moan ;
Thou haply think'st that adult eyes can flow
With tears as quick and transient as thine own.

The swift adoption of an infant's love
Gives to thy heart all infant hearts require ;
Unfelt by thee, the mortal shaft that clove
In twain thy duty, left thy love entire.

Ne'er be thy birthday as a day unblest,
Which thou or thine might wish had never been ;
But in thine age, a quiet day of rest,
A sabbath, holy, thoughtful, and serene.

1837.

TO DEAR LITTLE KATY HILL.

OFT have I conn'd, in merry mood or grave,
For many a babe a sad or merry stave,
In merry love of softly smiling baby,
Or love subdued by fear of what it may be.
But then all babies are so much alike,
'Twere easier far to single out a spike,

The fairest spike in all a field of barley ;
Or 'mid the drops of dew that late or early
Shine to the rising or the setting sun,
To mark and memorise a single one ;
In a long bank to find the violet
That is, or should be, Flora's own dear pet ;
To stamp a signet on the sweetest note
That spins itself in Philomela's throat ;
The very whitest spot of all to show
In a flat ocean of untainted snow ;
The blackest spot of utter dark to tell,
Or do aught else which is impossible,
Than to explain to each expectant mother
How her sweet thing is sweeter than another.
So ancient fathers deem'd, and wisely deem'd,
Or, if not so, yet beautifully dream'd,
At the last day of God's consummate love,
The cherish'd nestlings of the mystic dove
Shall spring from earth and meet the promised skies
All in one shape, one feature, and one size,
Welcome alike before the Almighty throne,
Each in the Saviour's likeness, not its own,
Alike all blessed, and alike all fair,
And only God remember who they were.
Yet love on earth will always make or find
(They saw but ill who said that Love was blind)

In things most like a lovely difference,
Distinguish innocence from innocence.
And lynx-eyed Love, my little Catherine,
Perceives a *self* in that smooth brow of thine :
Thy small sweet mouth, with speechless meaning rife,
Moves, opes, and smiles with something more than
 life :

The lucid whiteness of the flower-soft skin,
Transparent, shows a wakening soul within,
That ever and anon peeps through those eyes,
Soft as the tenderest light of vernal skies,
Blue as the shadow of the halcyon's breast,
On the calm wave herself has lull'd to rest ;
Inform'd with light, by turns reveal'd and hid
By fitful movement of the dewy lid :
E'en in the quivering of thy little hands
A spirit lives and almost understands.
Oh, may each omen of thy form and hue,
The lamb's pure white, the clear and hopeful blue,
The gracious blending of unbroken lines,
Which thy round shape continuously combines,
Portend the blended graces of a soul
Whose various virtues form a virtuous whole !

TO CHRISTABEL ROSE COLERIDGE.

NATURE and Fortune, and the doom severe
 Of my own faults, forbid me to desire
 The bliss of fathers seated by the fire ;
 Happy to know their darlings all are near,
 Happy the crowing note of babe to hear,
 Happy with lads that, restless to inquire,
 Ask curious questions that might tease and tire
 Aught less affectionate than parent's ear.
 Yet though the name of uncle, in the mind
 Of childhood, be with horrid deeds combined
 Of bloody Richard, and that covetous man
 That left the poor babes in the wildering wood,
 I would be Uncle Toby if I could,
 Or Oliver* return'd from Hindostan.
 Sweet Christabel, that hast a lovely name
 That would the sweetest thing commemorate
 That ever poet dream'd, be not thy fate

* In Sheridan's Play of "The School for Scandal."

Like hers, to tremble with a faultless shame!
 Oh, may no act of thine provoke the blame
 Which, least deserved, is ever keenest felt!
 Thine innocent flesh, that softest touch can melt,
 May never worldly thought or speech defame!
 But in the world thou must be incomplete,
 For who of Christabel can close the story?—
 The name, sweet child, it is an omen meet
 Of all that earth bestows of good and glory.
 May'st thou for aye in love and fancy dwell
 Like thy good grandsire's lovely Christabel!

 LINES,

WRITTEN IN A BIBLE PRESENTED BY THE AUTHOR TO HIS GODCHILD.

'Tis little I can give thee now,
 And less that I shall leave;
 Yet this small present, as I trow,
 Is, in acquittance of my vow,
 The very *best*
 That could attest
 My anxious love
 For thee, sweet Dove,
 The *best* thou canst receive.

PRIMITIÆ.



SWEET child! I write, because I fain would see
 In thy unspotted book my jagged hand,
 The rudest sketch and primal prophecy
 Of what thy wit may win or sense command.

Some men would tell thee that thy soul is yet
 An album, open for all men to write in.
 I deem not so, for thou canst not forget
 What now thou art, and what I most delight in.

Ere thou wert born "into this breathing world,"
 God wrote some characters upon thy heart.
 Oh, let them not, like beads of dew impearl'd
 On morning blades, before the noon depart!

But morning drops before the noon exhale,
 And yet those drops appear again at even;
 So childish innocence on earth must fail,
 Yet may return to usher thee to heaven.

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

THE Christian virtues, one, two, three,
Faith and Hope and Charity,
May all find exercise in thee.

In Faith, sweet infant that thou art,
Of God's sublime decrees a part,
Thy mother holds thee to her heart.

Hope is the joy of Faith. It were
Sad to behold a babe so fair
Without the hope that makes a joy of care.

Well 'twill be if we can learn,
If loving thee, babe, we discern
The love of God, and let it clearly burn.

The love which sanctifies desire
Is, like the bush, unhurt by fire,—
For which God grants what longing souls desire.

MEDITATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE PIECES.

MEMORIAL POEMS.

WHY IS THERE WAR ON EARTH?

WRITTEN ON A CALM AND BEAUTIFUL DAY IN MAY, 1848.



WHY is there war on earth? Earth is most sweet
 When all things are at peace, or only strive
 How to make up the largest sum of joy.
 'Tis now sweet Spring. Methinks 'twere wise to deem
 Our longest life but a protracted Spring—
 Hope's blossom swelling in the pregnant bud
 Of mother Faith, that fosters by concealing,
 And owes its strength and beauty to a root
 Unseen below, like dark antiquity.

But there is war, because man craves the fruit
 Of Autumn in the aye-beginning Spring.
 We would have perfect freedom upon earth;—
 Ah, fools! to think that freedom can consist
 In selfish singleness of myriad wills,
 Worse than the old Epicurean fancy
 Of warring atoms hook'd into a world!
 But madder yet to think that million wills,

Each crushing other, can compose one will,
 Constituent of universal truth.

We would be the sons of Nature—would be free
 As Nature is. But can we then forget
 That Nature is an everlasting law,
 And free because she cannot disobey?

She hath no self to sacrifice: but man,
 By sinning, made out of himself a self
 Alien from God, that must be self-destroy'd
 Ere man can know what freedom is, or feel
 His spirit enfranchised,—general as the light
 Diffused through ether in its purity,
 And by the various sympathies of earth,
 Blent and dissected into various hues
 That all are light, as a good man's good works,
 All, all are love.

Thank God, the times are pass'd
 When fear and blindly-working ignorance
 Could govern man. 'Tis Faith and duteous love
 Out of a multitude must form a state.
 We have escaped from Egypt; but we walk
 Wall'd by the waters of a blood-red sea,
 Parted perforce, impatient to o'erwhelm us,
 Soon as we not believe the awful word,
 That bids the tide of ruin now to flow.
 Yet we are spared; but shall we long be spared

In sleep fool-hardy, or ingrate repining,
When all around, as from the serpent's tooth
By Cadmus sown, in the wild Theban fable,
Spring armed hosts, all mad for liberty,
And yet permitting nothing to be free,
Save naked power, unclad with reverend form,
Unsanctified by faith, by love unbalm'd.

LINES

WRITTEN BY H. C. IN THE FLY-LEAF OF A COPY OF LUCRETII'S
PRESENTED BY HIM TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

In the far north, for many a month unseen,
The blessed sun scarce lifts his worshipp'd head ;
No hardy herb records where he hath been ;
But pale cold snows, with dim abortive sheen,
Show like the winding-sheet of Nature dead.

Yet ofttimes there the boreal morning gleams,
Flickering and rustling through the long, long night ;
So hid from truth, and its all-cheering beams,
The mind, benighted, dawns with gorgeous dreams,
Cold, restless, false, unprofitably bright.

If such delusion held thy earthly thought,
 Lucretius, still thou wast a lofty mind ;
For, spurning all that hopes and fears had taught,
Thy venturous reason, hopeless, fearless, sought
 In its own pride its proper bliss to find.

Oh ! was it fear of what might be in realms
 Of blank privation made thee seek the peace
That the dead faith affords ?—fear that dishelms
The vessel of the soul, and quite o'erwhelms
 The spiritual life, that rather would surcease.

Or be an atom, motion, air, or flame,
 Whose essence perishes by change of form,
Than wander through the abyss without an aim,
Duty, or joy—to feel itself the same,
 Though naked, bodiless, weak, amid the storm ?

LINES

SUGGESTED BY A CAST FROM AN ANCIENT STATUE OF THE INFANT
HERCULES STRANGLING THE SERPENTS.



BEHOLD Art's triumph? Yea, but what is Art?
Is it the Iris sent from mind to heart?
Or a bright exhalation, raised, refined,
And organised with various hues of mind?
Nay, let the mind and heart, as nature meant,
Unite to work their Maker's great intent;
As light and heat, diffused by the same sun,
To sense are diverse, but in essence one.
The poet's craft in easy breath transpires,
And the quick music of a thousand lyres,
That wake to ecstasy the slumbering air,
Dies into nought, or flits we know not where.
The patient sculptor views, from day to day,
An image that can never pass away;
With resolute faith, which nothing can surprise,
Beholds the type in true proportions rise:
His progress slow, and every touch as slight
As dawn encroaching on a summer night;

His purpose sure, for consummated beauty
 To him is love, religion, law and duty.
 Long ere our God vouchsafed himself to be
 A baby God, a human Deity,
 The vast prophetic impulse of the earth
 Foretold, and shadow'd forth the mystic birth ;
 Nor all the art of sacerdotal lies,
 Nor the world's state, could so incarnalise
 The strong idea, but that men, set free
 By pure imagination's liberty,
 Conceived the fancy of a boy divine.
 Some fables fashion'd a fierce God of wine,
 Abortive issue of intense desire,
 Begot by Thunder and brought forth by Fire.
 Some milder spirits cull'd two twinkling lights
 From the throng'd brilliance of their Grecian nights,
 And gave them names, and deem'd them great to
 save
 The wandering mariner on the weltering wave.
 Some, wiser still, believed the sun on high
 A deathless offspring of the empyreal sky,
 A personal power that could all truths reveal,
 Mighty to slay, and merciful to heal.
 Some feign'd—and they came nearest to the truth—
 A destined husband of eternal youth,
 Born of a mortal mother, and, ere born,
 Doom'd to the pilgrim's houseless lot forlorn,

To fight and conquer, a victorious slave,
Strong in subjection, by obedience brave.
Such thought possess'd the nameless artist's mind
When he the God, the baby God, design'd,
That perfect symbol of awaken'd will,
Matching its might against predestinate ill.
The serpent writhing round his lower part,
His infant arm defies to reach his heart.
One mighty act is all the wondrous boy,
Line, limb, and feature, all are strength and joy.
Yet half an hour ago that infant slept,
Smiled at his mother's breast, and haply wept:
And when his task is done, the serpent slain,
Soft in his cradle-shield may sleep again.

SUMMER RAIN.



THICK lay the dust, uncomfortably white,
 In glaring mimicry of Arab sands.
 The woods and mountains slept in hazy light ;
 The meadows look'd athirst and tawny tann'd ;
 The little rills had left their channels bare,
 With scarce a pool to witness what they were ;
 And the shrunk river gleam'd 'mid oozy stones,
 That stared like any famish'd giant's bones.

Sudden the hills grew black, and hot as stove
 The air beneath ; it was a toil to be.
 There was a growling as of angry Jove,
 Provoked by Juno's prying jealousy—
 A flash—a crash—the firmament was split,
 And down it came in drops—the smallest fit
 To drown a bee in fox-glove bell conceal'd ;
 Joy fill'd the brook, and comfort cheer'd the field.

TO W. W.,

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY.



HAPPY the year, the month, that finds alive
 A worthy man in health at seventy-five.
 Were he a man no further known than loved,
 And but for unremember'd deeds approved,
 A gracious boon it were from God to earth
 To leave that good man by his humble hearth.
 But if the man be one whose virtuous youth,
 Loving all Nature, was in love with truth ;
 And with the fervour of religious duty
 Sought in all shapes the very form of beauty ;—
 Feeling the current of the tuneful strain,
 Joy in his heart, and light upon his brain,
 Knew that the gift was given, and not in vain ;
 Whose careful manhood never spared to prune
 What the rash growth of youth put forth too soon ;
 Too wise to be ashamed to grow more wise ;
 Culling the truth from specious fallacies :—
 Then may the world rejoice to find alive
 So good, so great a man, at seventy-five.

THE TWO DINAHS.

“ WE take no note of time but by its loss :”
 So spake a Poet in a mood of spleen,
 To whom the world had lost its vernal gloss,
 And woe retain'd its churchyard evergreen.

But I can note time by a better measure,
 By God's sweet issues of progressive good ;
 By happy progress from the lively pleasure
 Of the brisk child to modest womanhood.

I knew ye both, young maidens, when ye dwelt
 Where I was shelter'd with an aged woman,
 Whose goodness, often seen but oftner felt,
 To common duties gave a grace uncommon.

For ye were children ;—one a merry lass,
 A sportive kitten mischievous and gay ;
 A leveret bounding through the long thick grass,
 When hounds are mute and wiuter far away.

But thou, sweet Dinah, wert a thing sedate,
For sorrow was thy comrade from thy birth ;
And early wert thou doom'd to feel the fate
Ordain'd to wean us from the joys of earth.

Years have gone by, yea, many years are flown,
And that good aged woman is removed ;
And ye, young damsels, both have far outgrown
The pretty age which then I liked and loved.

Never till now I felt myself so old,
As seeing you so tall, such bursting roses,
Just at the time when rosy buds unfold
Their sweet concealment into summer posies.

So may I measure time, nor cease to see
His silent work in still maturing graces ;
I quite forgive what he has done to me,
For what he has bestow'd on your sweet faces.

WRITTEN AT BELLE-VUE, AMBLESIDE.



STILL is it there, the same soft quiet scene,
 Which, whether sodden with importunate rain,
 Or sprinkled with the yellow sun, that pours
 Columnal brightness through the fissured clouds
 Of autumn eve, or, e'en as now display'd,
 In the full brightness of the argent moon,
 Is yet the same, the same beloved scene,
 Which neither time nor change shall wipe away
 From the capacious memory of the soul.
 Oh blessed faculty of inward sight,
 Safe from disease and mortal accident
 As love itself, secure from dull caprice
 Of prohibition ! Blind Mæonides,
 That, wandering by the myriad-sounding sea,
 Saw not his footsteps on the passive beach,
 Nor saw, alas ! the many beauteous eyes
 That gleam'd with gladness at his potent song,
 Had yet a world of beauty—verdant hills,
 Bright with the infinite motion of their leaves :

Close-vested towers in olive-groves embower'd,
Whence the gold-cinctured dove for ever coo'd,
Wide-laughing ocean, rich with southern gleam
Purpureal, jewell'd with a hundred isles,
Or roused indignant from its slumberous depths
To smite the long-presumptuous rampart, piled
Without a prayer ;—Achilles vast, reclined,
Listening afar the tumults of the field ;—
Sweet Helen, sad amidst her loveliness,
Taming her once glad motions to the halt
Of Priam, leaning on her rounded arm ;—
Pelides, glittering like an evil star ;—
Or love-struck Hecuba, when first she wept
O'er the new-ransom'd carcase of her best,
Her fate-devoted Hector.

So, if HE,

Who in his judgments is for ever good,
Should make the brightest noon a night to me,
Yet will those fields, those lowly heaving hills,
That roving river, that pure inland lake,
And those neat dwellings that assure my heart
That not alone I love and linger here,
Abide the heir-looms of my inner life,
As sweet, as vivid to my happier dreams,
As when through tears I saw *her* snatch'd away.

NAWORTH.



WHEN English lads and Scottish chiefs were foes,
 Stern on the angry confines Naworth rose ;
 In dark woods islanded its towers look'd forth,
 And frown'd defiance to the growling North ;
 With donjon-keep and long embattled wall,
 Portcullis, portal, and wide-echoing hall,
 Where erst the warrior carved in gloves of steel,
 And the stone pavement clang'd with iron heel.
 The very type was Naworth of a time
 Whose sins and woes by age are made sublime.
 There came the vagrant minstrel—not in vain,
 For ladies loved, and lords repaid his strain.
 What though his song was oft of loves unholy,
 And fights,—fantastic brood of restless folly ?
 What though the plaudits, clatter'd on the stones,
 Bemock'd and deafen'd the poor captive's groans,
 Doom'd in sad durance pining to abide
 The long delay of hope from Solway's further side ?
 Let us in thankfulness our God adore,
 Because such things have been, and are no more :

Nor let a Queen, a matron pure and young,
And sweet as e'er by vagrant bard was sung,
Conspire with those who would, with eyeless rage,
Deface the relics of ancestral age ;
But, as her duty, be it still her joy
All to improve, and nothing to destroy.
So Naworth stands, still rugged as of old,
Arm'd like a knight without, austerely bold ;
But all within bespeaks the better day,
And the bland influence of a Morpeth's sway.

LINES.

OH for a man, I care not what he be,
A lord or labourer, so his soul be free,
Who had one spark of that celestial fire
That did the Prophets of old time inspire,
When Joel made the mystic trumpet cry,
When Jeremiah raised his voice on high,
And rapt Isaiah felt his great heart swell
With all the sins and woes of Israel !
Not such am I,—a petty man of rhyme,
Nursed in the softness of a female time.
From May of life to Autumn have I trod
The earth, not quite unconscious of my God ;

But apter far to recognise his power
In sweet perfection of a pencill'd flower,
A kitten's gambols, or a birdie's nest,
A baby sleeping on its mother's breast,
Than in the fearful passages of life,—
The battle-field, the never-ceasing strife
Of policy that ever would be wise,
Dissecting truth into convenient lies,—
The gallows, or the press-gang, or the press,—
The poor man's pittance, ever less and less,—
The dread magnificence of ancient crime,
Or the mean mischief of the present time.
Yet there is something in my heart that would
Become a witness to eternal good.
Woe to the man that wastes his wealth of mind,
And leaves no legacy to human kind !
I love my country well,—I love the hills,
I love the valleys and the vocal rills ;
But most I love the men, the maids, the wives,
The myriad multitude of human lives.

HIDDEN MUSIC.



THERE came a stream of music on my ear
 From the dark centre of an aged wood,
 Now muffled deep, and now ecstatic clear,
 Bright as a prophecy of coming good.

I knew not, and I did not care to know,
 What voice or what mechanic instrument
 Utter'd the sounds, whose never-ending flow
 [Sustain'd] my soul in such sublime content.

'TWAS no small, light, and self-repeating air,
 The close we guess before 'tis well begun ;
 'TWAS the united voice of everywhere,
 Past, present, future, all in unison

It was a strain might usher in the birth
 Of human life, and soothe its earliest cry,
 And sound the last farewell to mother earth.
 When souls for heaven mature are glad to fly.

All elements of sound, and all the wealth
Of music's universal speech was there,
And ever and anon the wily stealth
Of Love was murmuring in the fitful air.

June 14, 1843.

I HAVE WRITTEN MY NAME ON WATER.

THE PROPOSED INSCRIPTION ON THE TOMB OF JOHN KEATS.

—◆—

AND if thou hast, where could'st thou write it better
Than on the feeder of all lives that live?
The tide, the stream, will bear away the letter,
And all that formal is and fugitive:
Still shall thy Genius be a vital power,
Feeding the root of many a beauteous flower.

ON A PICTURE OF A VERY YOUNG NUN,

NOT READING A DEVOTIONAL BOOK, AND *NOT* CONTEMPLATING A CRUCIFIX
PLACED BESIDE HER.



So young, too young, consign'd to cloistral shade,
Untimely wedded,—wedded, yet a maid ;
And hast thou left no thought, no wish behind,
No sweet employment for the wandering wind.
Who would be proud to waft a sigh from thee,
Sweeter than aught he steals in Araby ?
Thou wert immured, poor maiden, as I guess,
In the blank childhood of thy simpleness ;
Too young to doubt, too pure to be ashamed,
Thou gavest to God what God had never claim'd,
And didst unweeting sign away thine all
Of earthly good,—a guiltless prodigal.
The large reversion of thine unborn love
Was sold to purchase an estate above.
Yet by thy hands, upon thy bosom prest,
I think, indeed, thou art not quite at rest ;
That Christ that hangs upon the sculptured cross
Is not the Jesus to redeem thy loss ;

Nor will that book, whate'er its page contain,
 Convince thee that the world is false and vain.
 E'en now there is a something at thy heart
 That would be off, but may not, dare not, start;
 Yes, yes! thy face, thine eyes, thy closed lips, prove
 Thou wert intended to be loved and love.
 Poor maiden! victim of the vilest craft
 At which e'er Moloch grinn'd or Belial laugh'd,
 May all thy aimless wishes be forgiven!
 May all thy sighs be register'd in Heaven!
 And God his mercy and his love impart
 For what thou should'st have been, to what thou art!

BEAUTY.

—♦—

OH! why is beauty still a bud, infolding
 A greater beauty that can never be,
 Yet always is its faint fair self beholding,
 In all of fair and good that man may see?

Nay, beauty is with thee the power of life,
 The germ and sweet idea of thy being;
 As beauty fashion'd that first maid and wife,
 That made primeval man rejoice in seeing.

He dream'd of beauty, and he wish'd to see
A form to be the substance of his dream ;
So want begot a child on vacancy,
And that now is which did before but seem.

Adam did love before he look'd on Eve ;
He found himself unblest in Eden's bower.
A love there is that does not yet conceive
Its own existence : 'tis a simple power,—

A power that most does recognise its might
In weakness, want, and everlasting yearning ;
Whose heaven is soaring, seeking, ceaseless flight,
Whose hell is thirst and everlasting burning.

For what is hell, but an eternal thirst,
And burning for the bounty once rejected ?
And what is heaven, but good on earth rehearsed,
In the calm centre of the Lord perfected ?

Then ask not why is beauty but a bud,
That never more than half itself discloses ;
Sweet flower, like thee is every human good,
And love divine is seen in unblown roses.

FAIRY LAND.

YES, I am old, and older yet must be,
Drifting along the everlasting sea ;
And yet, through puzzling light and perilous dark,
I bear with me, as in a lonely ark,
A precious cargo of dear memory ;
For, though I never was a citizen,
Enroll'd in Faith's municipality,
And ne'er believed the phantom of the fen
To be a tangible reality,
Yet have I loved sweet things, that are not now,
In frosty starlight, or the cold moonbeam.
I never thought they were ; and therefore now
No doubt obscures the memory of my dream.
My Fairy Land was never upon earth,
Nor in the heaven to which I hoped to go ;
For it was always by the glimmering hearth,
When the last fagot gave its reddest glow,
And voice of eld wax'd tremulous and low,
And the sole taper's intermittent light,
Like a slow-tolling bell, declared good night.

Then could I think of Peri and of Fay,
As if their deeds were things of yesterday.
I felt the wee maid in her scarlet hood
Real as the babes that wander'd in the wood,
And could as well believe a wolf could talk
As that a man beside the babes could stalk,
With gloomy thoughts of murder in his brain ;
And then I thought how long the lovely twain
Threaded the paths that wound among the trees,
And how at last they sunk upon their knees,
And said their little prayers, as prettily
As e'er they said them at their mother's knee,
And went to sleep. I deem'd them still asleep
Clasp'd in each other's arms, beneath a heap
Of fragrant leaves ;—so little then knew I
Of bare-bone Famine's ghastly misery.
Yet I could weep and cry, and sob amain,
Because they never were to wake again ;
But if 'twas said, " They 'll wake at the last day ! "
Then all the vision melted quite away ;
As from the steel the passing stain of breath,
So quickly parts the fancy from the faith.
And I thought the dear babes in the wood no more true
Than Red Riding Hood,—ay, or the grim loup-garou,
That the poor little maid for her granny mistook ;
I knew they were both only tales in a book.

THE ROYAL MAID.

OH, thou sweet daughter and last lingering flower
 Of a great nation's loyal hope and love,
 Last of a line of kings whose royal dower
 Is virgin loveliness sublimed to power,
 The yearning blossom of the expectant dove
 On the strong eagle's spacious wings upborne ;
 Or shall I call thee prophecy of spring,
 In thine own virgin pureness blossoming,
 Like the white May-bloom on the naked thorn ;
 Nay, rather art thou like a flower
 Crowning some high crazy tower,
 So sweetly smiling on the rifted wall,
 That, for thy sake, we would not see it fall.
 Oh, royal maid, excuse the idle brain
 That, knowing thee but in thy loved ideal,
 Plays with thine image, and would very fain
 Love and revere thee too as something real ;
 Yet never having seen thee, never heard
 The human accents of thine innocent thought,
 Would rather think thee flower, or happy bird,
 Than the dull lesson that thou hast been taught ;

Rather would deem thee bird, that glad and free
Warbles its wood-notes wild on greenwood tree,
Than tutor'd captive of a gilded cage,
Unweeting echo of a *prating* age.

Alas! a prisoner born, and bred a slave,
But late awaken'd from a happy trance,
Reft of the best of what thy fortune gave,
Thy childish, aimless, wantless ignorance:—
Ah, what a hopeless task it is for thee
To govern free men that were never free.
Easy it were, I doubt not, to obey,
If to obey were duty's consummation;
But throned servility, compell'd to sway
A shackled sceptre by the yea and nay—

* * * * *

ON THE DEATH OF HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE.

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.

GREAT joy was mine to hear a second hope,
 Another little maid, was born to thee,
 On whom your elder darling needs must look
 With some surprise, as on a legacy
 From some old miser uncle never seen.
 And when I learn'd that, on the self-same day
 That gave that pure ideal of new life,
 A softly-breathing infant, to the air,
 The vow confirm'd had made among thy kindred
 A serious matron of a maiden gay,
 I did design a furious gush of song,
 A merry multiplicity of rhymes,
 Where little sense were needed, save the sense
 That one delight is in a score of souls.
 But death had struck me; God had call'd away
 One whom the world, and I among the world,
 Had augur'd to an honest course of glory;
 Whose earliest youth was crown'd with laureate wreath
 On the proud banks of Isis and of Cam;

Eton's prime scholar, and the youth adroit
To turn the nicest phrases of the Greeks,
The very quintessence of Roman speech,
To modern meanings and to modish arts,
Which neither Greek nor Roman ever knew.
Vain knowledge this, unprofitable skill,
So may you think, and truly would you say,
But that the mind thus curiously train'd
In the pure beauty of Hellenic art,
And grandeur elegant of gorgeous Rome,
Becomes to beauty feelingly awake,
Nice to perceive, glad to believe and love
Whate'er of beautiful abides in forms,
Hues, sounds, emotions of the moral heart,
Feeling a universal harmony
Of all good things seen, or surpassing sense:—
And for the love of all that lovely is,
And for a dauntless spirit unsubdued
By a too general lack of sympathy
Fighting for truth,—my sister loved him well!
She was a maid—alas! a widow now—
Not easily beguiled by loving words,
Nor quick to love; but, when she loved, the fate
Of her affection was a stern religion,
Admitting nought less holy than itself.
Seven years of patience, and a late consent
Won for the pair their all of hope. I saw

AGNES.



IN an old house, a country dwelling, nigh
 A river, chafed by many a wave-worn stone,
 A good man kept old hospitality,
 With a warm purse well fill'd by industry
 And prosperous dealings in the torrid zone.

His spouse was comely, stricken well in years ;
 His daughters' faces lighted all the house,
 And they had tongues as well as eyes and ears.
 But one there was, the youngest of the dears,
 A child sedate, as still as any mouse.

Still as a little timid mouse she sat ;
 And yet her stillness seem'd not to be fear,
 Like mouse's hiding from the whisker'd cat.
 Oh no ! whate'er the subject of our chat,
 She seem'd to drink it in with eye and ear.

I cannot say she had a speaking eye,
 For when my eye with hers would fain converse,

She would begin her needle's task to ply,
Stirring her little fingers busily ;
And, wanting work, the kitten would she nurse.

Soon as she could, she unobserved withdrew,
Determined of my purpose to defeat me ;
And yet I loved her, as I always do
All pretty maids that are too young to woo,
However scurvily they choose to treat me.

Years have gone by, her worthy father dead,
And she could deem herself a child no longer.
Who can conceive what thoughts in her were bred,
When she beheld her elder sisters wed,
And womanhood in her grew daily stronger ?

Or did she feel a warning in her heart,
An inward clock that timely struck eleven,
And said, sweet Agnes, tender as thou art,
One hour is thine ; be ready to depart ;
Thy spouse affianced waits for thee in heaven ?

I cannot tell, for I was far away.
By what slow course of gracious discipline,
Through gradual shades of unperceived decay,
As moonlight steals on fading summer day,
Her spiritual eye was train'd to light divine.

But yet I trust she never knew the woe
Of body's waste, that brings despair and dearth
Unto the soul ; that living death, so slow,
That leaves to those that would yet would not go,
No love of heaven, but weary hate of earth.

Nay, better, loving dearly to the last
All that she ever loved, with fond delay
The latest hour before her spirit past,
Prayed yet, though feeling that her lot was cast,
Like Jesus, that the cup might pass away.

FAREWELL.



HATH the vast ocean, that strange, humorous thing,
In all its depths or perilous banks a shell
That hath matured a pearl ; let Ocean bring
That pearl to thee, and like some gentle spell
Which never witch or wicked wizard mutter'd,
But still hath dwelt in angel heart unutter'd—
Mark on the pearl the sad, sweet word, farewell !

Hath the dead earth, dead now, but once alive
 In every atom, every pore and cell,—
 Relics of life, or fated gems that strive
 To be their proper selves, and pant and swell
 Towards Light, the universal mediator,
 And daily witness of the one Being greater,
 Hath it aught sadder, sweeter, than farewell!

And hath the air—the always gracious air—
 That ever fleeting yet would gladly dwell
 For ever in the lowly voice of prayer—
 Full loth, I ween, when ruder sounds compel
 Its passive nature to unwilling madness;—
 Hath air a joy so meek, so sweet a sadness,
 As when she murmurs in a last farewell!

TO A FRIEND

SUFFERING UNDER A RECENT BEREAVEMENT.

THINK not, my friend, my heart or hard or cold
 Because I do not, and I cannot weep.
 Too sudden was the knowledge of the woe,
 And it requires some time, some thoughtful pause,
 Ere we believe what but too well we know.

Some men are lesson'd long in sorrow's school,
And serve a long apprenticeship to grief,
So, when the ill day comes, their minds are clad
In funeral garments. Death came here at once,
Like the sun's setting in the level sea ;
No meek, pale, warning, melancholy eve,
Wean'd the fond eyesight from the joyous day ;
'Twas full-orb'd day, and then 'twas total night—
Sad night for us, but better day for her.
Well may'st thou mourn, but mourn not without hope :
Thou art not one, I know, that can believe
A pausing pulse, an intermitted breath,
Or aught that can to mortal flesh befall,
Can turn to nothing any ray of God,
Or frustrate one good purpose of our Lord.
She was a purpose of her great Creator,
Begun on earth, and well on earth pursued,
Now in the heaven of heavens consummate,
Or only waiting the predestined day,
The flower and glory of her consummation.

A SCHOOLFELLOW'S TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY
OF THE REV. OWEN LLOYD.



I.

I WAS a comrade of his childish days,
And then he was to me a little boy,
My junior much, a child of winning ways ;
His every moment was a throb of joy.

Fine wit he had, and knew not it was wit,
And native thoughts before he dream'd of thinking ;
Odd sayings, too, for each occasion fit,
To oldest sights the newest fancies linking.

And his the hunter's bounding strength of spirit ;
The fisher's patient craft, and quick delight
To watch his line, to see a small fish near it ;
A nibble—ah ! what ecstasy ! a bite.

Years glided on,—a week was then a year,
Fools only say that happy hours are short ;
Time lingers long on moments that are dear.
Long is the summer holiday of sport.

But then our days were each a perfect round ;
 Our farthest bourne of hope and fear, to-day ;
 Each morn to night appear'd the utmost bound,
 And let the morrow—be whate'er it may.

But on the morrow he is on the cliff—
 He hangs midway the falcon's nest to plunder ;
 Behold him sticking, like an ivy leaf,
 To the tall rock—he cares not what is under.

II.

I traced with him the narrow winding path
 Which he pursued when upland was his way ;
 And then I wonder'd what stern hand of wrath
 Had smitten him that wont to be so gay !

Then would he tell me of a woful weight—
 A weight laid on him by a bishop's hand,
 That late and early, early still and late,
 He could not bear, and yet could not withstand.

Of holy thoughts he spake, and purpose high,
 Dead in his heart, and yet like spectres stirring ;
 Of Hope that could not either live or die,
 And Faith confused with self-abhorr'd demurring.

How beautiful the feet that from afar
 Bring happy tidings of eternal good !
 Then kiss the feet that so bewilder'd are ;
 They cannot farther go where fain they would.

III.

I saw his coffin—'twas enough. I saw
 That he was gone—that his deep wound was heal'd ;
 No more he struggles betwixt faith and law,
 The fulness of his bliss is now reveal'd :

He rests in peace ; in Langdale's peaceful vale
 He sleeps secure beneath the grassy sod ;
 Ah, no ! he doth not—he hath heard "All hail,
 Thou faithful servant," from the throne of God !

TO THE MEMORY OF JAMES GREENWOOD.

I.

OH, Death ! thou art indeed an awful thing,
 Did we believe in all we ought to know ;
 Yet ever brooding, thine invisible wing
 Casts not a shadow on the vale below.

With vernal thyme the turf^y hillocks swell,
 Old Fairfield's side is sweet with fragrant larches,
 And the slim lady birch he loved so well
 With paly verdure decks her graceful arches.

The lovely things to which he gave a soul,
 Till they became a body to his mind,
 Are what they were before the booming toll
 Declared his corse to hallow'd earth consign'd.

Yet in one house, that stands upon the brow,
 One thought of death and of the dead is all ;
 Their depth of grief is all their comfort now,
 They pray to God to help their tears to fall.

II.

He whom they miss, he was not of this land,
 No grey-coat shepherd of the hill or plain ;
 For he was born where the tall chimneys stand,
 And the hot wheels are whirring still for gain.

And yet as well he loved the mountain height
 As he himself had been a mountain boy,
 As well he loved the croft with daisies dight
 As one that never knew a fiercer joy.

Sure thou hast seen, whoever thou may'st be,
 If thou hast ever seen a London square,
 A pining thing that ought to be a tree,
 And would be so if not imprison'd there.

And haply thought how beautiful and large
 The limbs and leaves of that imprison'd thing
 Had been, if planted by the emerald marge
 Of dripping well to shade the grateful spring.

'Twas so with him : in office close and dun
 Full soon he learn'd the needful lore of trade ;
 Skill'd to compute how much the bargain won,
 And ponder hard if more might have been made.

But not the spirit of the world which grew
 Still more and more beyond the state's control,
 Could quench his thirst of beauty or subdue
 The love of Nature which possess'd his soul.

So he became a dweller of the hills,
 And learn'd to love the village ways so well,
 He prized the stream that turn'd the wealthiest mills
 Less than the syke that trickles down the fell.

III.

Sad doth it seem, but nought is really sad,
 Or only sad that we may better be ;
 We should in very gulphs of grief be glad,
 The great intents of God could we but see.

Think of the souls that he in heaven will meet,
 Some that on earth he knew and loved most dearly ;
 And whose perfection at their Saviour's feet,
 Without a stain of earth, will shine so clearly.

Think, too, of souls on earth unknown to him,
 Whom he will know as well as kin or neighbours—
 Laborious saints, that now with seraphim
 Expect the blessed fruit of all their labours.

Think that he is what oft he wish'd to be
 While yet he was a mortal man on earth ;
 Then weep, but know that grief's extremity
 Contains a hope which never was in mirth.

June, 1845.

TO A LADY,

ON THE DEATH OF HER MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

SARA,—so let me call thee, since that name
 Is most familiar to thy *friendly* ear,
 And for a mother that is now no more,
 And for a sister, passing dear to me—
 Long time it seems since thou and I have spoken
 In verse or honest prose, or, happier still,
 With running comment of looks, lips, and eyes,
 And silence, when our mutual thought was heard,
 Discoursed by mute and secret sympathy,
 Interpreted by some half-melting star,
 That seem'd a part of twilight, or akin
 To the retiring, pensive, tawny hill,
 So dim reflected in the dozing lake,
 It wot not of its presence ;—lake once proud
 Of diamonds dripping from thy silvery oar,

When thou, thy boat, and its long-beaded wake,
Seem'd like the shadow of a Glendoveer,
Floating above in smallest skiff of heaven,
So shy, he would and yet would not be seen.
Those times are past, and I have known thee tamed
To sober womanhood and matron grave,
Yet like the ever-glad Hesperian tree,
Whose summer fruitage gleams through vernal flowers :
And I have seen thee, too, in double grief
For two pure souls removed, so like each other.
They may be playmates in the bowers of bliss,
For souls like theirs receive no taint of time.
And who can doubt that each fine faculty,
But half-develop'd in the prophet spring
Of thy sweet Katherine's little life, shall bloom
In God's own light, consummate and fulfill'd ?

* * * * *

ON THE DEATH OF THOMAS JACKSON,

LATE OF LOW WOOD INN, WHO DIED BY A FALL FROM AN APPLE TREE.

THERE is the lake and there the quiet hills,
 A casual passer would observe no change ;
 No sign would see of widow's grief that kills
 Even Nature's joy, and makes old beauty strange.

The last time I beheld thee, lovely lake,
 Thou wert composed in that expectant calm,
 Which any sigh of love-sick maid might shake,
 Or dying close of penitential psalm.

I thought of Death. Who doth not think of Death ?
 And felt how sweet a boon that death might be,
 Were it indeed a calm to feel the breath,
 Whene'er it came, of stirring Deity.

I thought of Death. But did not think how near
 That awful sound to its most awful meaning ;
 The babe that feels its mother's breast so dear,
 Slumbers and sucks and never dreams of weaning.

And even so we thought his honest face
Would ever greet us when we came again ;
It seem'd a natural product of the place,
Warm'd by the sun and freshen'd by the rain.

But he is gone, the form we long have seen,
The vivid image that we bore away,
Is now a shadow of what once hath been,
The spectre of a body in decay.

The lake is there, the hills their distance keep,
The tall trees stand as if they mourn'd for ever,
But leave the widow'd house alone to weep,
Nor seek the widow'd heart from grief to sever.

For he is gone that was to us a smile,
An honest face to welcome when we came ;
Short was the time, but yet a weary while
When Death was struggling with the shatter'd frame.

And many thoughts he had, as may be guess'd,
And shows of earth that with the vision blended ;
Shows that at times perplex'd, but later bless'd
The spirit equipp'd just ere the strife was ended.

Perhaps the latest object to employ
His parting thought upon the death-bed pillow,
Was the dear image of his orphan boy,
With small foot challenging the frisky billow.

Whatever sight or sound possess'd him last,
 Whatever sound of nature toll'd his knell,
 Gentle the sounds and fair the forms that pass'd
 Before his closing eye, and all was well.

Yes, all was well, for 'twas the will of Him,
 Who knows both when to sow and when to reap ;
 And now amid the smiling cherubim,
 Beholds the tears of them he bad to weep.

False is the creed, because the heart is dead,
 That blames the widow's or the orphan's tear ;
 Eyes that beheld the Lord full oft were red
 With human sorrow while they tarried here.

Mourn, for 'tis good for all of us to mourn,
 In this dark valley where our way we grope ;
 Our very sorrow proves us not forlorn ;
 We mourn, but not as mourners without hope.

The lake is still the same, the changeful skies
 Change by a Law that we may not control ;
 Sage Nature is not bound to sympathise
 With every passion of a single soul.

Look not for sorrow in the changeful skies,
 The mountain many-hued, or passive lake,
 But look to Him, who sometimes will chastise
 Those whom he loves, but never will forsake.

ON THE LATE DR. ARNOLD.

SPIRIT of the Dead!

Though the pure faith of Him that was on earth
 Thy subject and thy Lord forbids a prayer—
 Forbids me to invoke thee, as of yore
 Weak souls, that dared not meet their God alone,
 Sought countenance and kind companionship
 Of some particular saint, whose knees had grazed
 The very rock on which they knelt, whose blood
 Had made or sanctified the gushing well,*
 Round which their fond, mistaken piety
 Had built a quaint confine of sculptured stone :—
 Yet may I hope that wheresoe'er he is,
 Beneath the altar, by the great white throne,
 In Abraham's bosom, or amid the deep
 Of Godhead, blended with eternal light,
 One ray may reach him from the humble heart
 That thanks our God for all that he has been.
 What he is now we know not : he will be
 A beautiful likeness of the God that gave

* Many of the holy wells are said to have sprung from the blood of Martyrs : for example, St. Winifred's in Wales.

Him work to do, which he did do so well.
Whom Jesus loves, to them he gives the grace
For Him to do and suffer *in* the world ;
To suffer *for* the world was His alone.
But he in whom we joy'd—for whom we mourn—
Did he not suffer ? Worldly men say, No !
Of ills which they call ill he had not many ;
The poverty which makes the very poor
Begrudge a morsel to their very child,
Was never his ; nor did he “ pine in thought,”
Seeing the lady of his love possess'd
By a much richer and no better man.
To him the lady of his love was wed,
Soon as his manhood authorised a wife ;
And though the mother of his many babes,
To him she still was young, and fair, and fresh,
As when the golden ring slipp'd from his hand
Upon her virgin finger.

Yet he suffer'd

Such pains and throes as only good men feel :
For he assumed the task to rear the boy,
The bold, proud boy unto a Christian man.
'Twas not with childhood that he had to do,
Its wayward moods and ready penitence,
That still is prompt to kiss, if not the rod,
At least the hand that wields it ; not to watch
Sweet instinct reaching after distant reason,

And mere affection train'd to duteous love
 (Though such the solace of his happy home,
 Else how had he the hard behest endured ?)—
 Nor was it all—oh, bliss ! if it had been—
 To teach the young capacious intellect
 How beauteous Greece and Rome, the child* fore-
 doom'd
 To catch the sceptre from its parent, spake,
 Fitting high thoughts with words, and words with
 deeds.

'Twas his to struggle with that perilous age
 Which claims for manhood's vice the privilege
 Of boyhood ;—when young Dionysus † seems
 All glorious as he burst upon the East,
 A jocund and a welcome conqueror ;
 And Aphrodite, sweet as from the sea
 She rose and floated in her pearly shell,
 A laughing girl ;—when lawless will erects
 Honour's gay temple on the mount of God,

* "Rome, the child," &c. Alluding to the heathen prophecy, that Metis, Thetis, &c., were destined to produce a child more potent than his sire, which gave Jupiter so much alarm.

† Dionysus, Aphrodite—Bacchus, Venus. But the Greek divinities were not originally identical with the Roman idols, by whose names they are generally called. Dionysus, or Bacchus, was in all probability an Indian type of the sun, or rather of the great productive energy of the Universe, said to be the youngest of the gods, because his worship was last introduced into Greece. There can be no doubt that the Greeks blended the traditions of their local heroes with the astronomical mythology derived from Egypt and Phœnicia, of which the earliest form survives in India, especially among the wide-spreading Boodhists.

And meek obedience bears the coward's brand ;
While Satan, in celestial panoply,
With Sin, his lady, smiling by his side,
Defies all heaven to arms ! 'Twas his to teach,
Day after day, from pulpit and from desk,
That the most childish sin which man can do
Is yet a sin which Jesus never did
When Jesus was a child, and yet a sin
For which, in lowly pain, He lived and died :
That for the bravest sin that e'er was praised
The King Eternal wore the crown of thorns.
In him was Jesus crucified again ;
For every fault which he could not prevent
Stuck in him like a nail. His heart bled for it
As it had been a foul sin of his own.
Heavy his cross, and stoutly did he bear it,
Even to the foot of holy Calvary ;
And if at last he sunk beneath the weight,
There were not wanting souls whom he had taught
The way to Paradise, that, in white robes,
Throng'd to the gate to hail their shepherd home !

EPITAPH ON OWEN LLOYD.



COULD love devout, or longing sighs, or tears,
From God obtain a grant of lengthen'd years,
Then, wandering reader, thou hadst never stood
Beside the grave of one so young and good.
Still in the small but consecrated place
He spake of judgment and he spake of grace ;
Of judgment dread, and merciful delay :
And latest spake of that, the latest day,
When those,—how few!—that may compare with him,
Shall mount on high with brightest seraphim !

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS,

CHIEFLY LYRICAL.

PLAYFUL AND HUMOROUS PIECES.

THE BLIND MAN'S ADDRESS TO HIS LOVE.



○ THERE is a beauty in the mind,
 That makes thee fair to me,
 Sweet Mary Anne, though I am blind,
 And blind I still must be.

I sit in darkness ; but I know
 If thou to me art near,
 Through all my limbs I feel a glow,
 A sudden gush of cheer.

Put thy least finger's smallest tip
 Upon my wildest hair,
 Each vein and nerve in me will skip,—
 I know that thou art there.

○ They tell me thou art fair to see,
 And of thy waist so trim ;
 I know thou art straight as poplar tree,
 And delicately slim.

They tell me that thine eyes are black,
 As black as burning coal :
 I look, but find my eye-balls lack
 The light that 's in my soul.

Thy hand is very soft I know—
 They tell me it is white ;
 But it is not like the falling snow,
 Because it does not bite.

For cold and biting are the flakes,
 The melting flakes of snow,
 When the blinding snow-storm overtakes
 The blind men as they go.

But thy hand is soft, it melts away,
 And then I hear thee speak ;
 And ever thy words are blithe and gay,
 But thy voice is smooth as thy cheek.

So well I love the thought I have,
 I do not wish to see ;
 I will live on in my darksome cave,
 So thou wilt live with me.

SONG.

TO A WELSH AIR, "AR HYD Y NOS."

OLD I am, yet not past feeling,
 Maiden, think not so ;
 Time, the thief, for ever stealing
 Moments as they go,
 Still the moment dear has left me,
 Moment that of self bereft me,
 Moment that did wound with healing,
 Cause and cure of woe.

Hope, and yet not hope, it gave me—
 Oh ! that lovely smile—
 Hope, alas ! too brief to save me,
 Yet 'twas sweet the while.
 Bright as joy, and soft as pity,
 Little like thyself, and pretty,
 Nought beside can now enslave me,
 Nothing else beguile.

Old I am and daily older,
Not in days alone,
Yet, methinks, that I am bolder
Since that grey I 'm grown ;
Young. I had not dared address thee,
Old, I may presume to bless thee ;
Hope is dead, and fancies moulder,
All but Love is flown.

Smile again. The look that gazes,
Asks not, wants not, no ;
Laugh at me and all my praises,
Laugh at all my woe.
But when I have done with sighing,
In the quiet churchyard lying,
Softly smile upon the daisies
On my grave that grow.

ON SEEING THREE YOUNG LADIES ON
GRASMERE LAKE.



WITHIN the compass of a little vale
 There lies a Lake unknown in Fairy tale,
 Which not a Poet knew in ancient days,
 When all the world believed in Ghosts and Fays ;
 Yet on that Lake I have beheld a Boat
 That seem'd a fairy Pinnace all afloat,
 On some bless'd mission to a distant isle,
 To do meet worship to some ruin'd pile,
 Where long of yore the Fairies used to meet
 And haply hallow with their last retreat ;
 For all alone the boat was on the waters,
 And in it three of " Beauty's " youngest daughters.
 Sometimes at rest, like infant on a pillow,
 Then gliding soft as light upon a billow,
 When lady's hand drew nigh to lady's breast
 The oar, so fond :—yet there it might not rest,
 But thence dispatch'd, went forth like errant knight
 For new achievement on the plain so bright.

Oh! when it stopp'd, the boat, and damsels three
 Charming the calm air with their triple glee,
 While all the shadows on the lake projected,
 Moved little as the mountains they reflected;
 It seem'd a thing ordain'd for aye to stay
 Just where it was and sleep from day to day.
 And when it moved with slide and gentle stroke,
 Rippling the shadow of the hanging oak,
 Sole motion, only life on all the mere,
 'Twas like the motion of the lapsing year,
 Which none would more expect or wish to cease
 Than his own pulse.

The fancy of old Greece
 That gave to beauty and to loveliness
 The definite outline and the shape express,
 Could not conceive, and therefore could not make.
 Aught so divine as that still evening Lake,
 With shadow deep, with gold and purple glowing,
 And those three lovely maids upon its bosom rowing.

MARRIED LIFE.

WRITTEN ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF A WEDDING-DAY.



THE earth once more hath run its annual round,
 And smiles as faintly at the paling sun
 As when by holy rite ye twain were bound,
 And a glad brother's voice proclaim'd ye one ;

One in the Lord, as one in heart and choice,
 For ye alike had chosen the better way,
 And therefore will with holy glee rejoice,
 When Autumn grave brings back the wedding-day.

All hath not haply been as young conceit
 Of wedded bliss the story would compose,
 But have ye found the song of love less sweet
 Because translated into household prose ?

Duties there needs must be, and toils, and cares,
 And there may be some salutary pains,
 That unexpected come and unawares
 To all that walk in wedlock's lightest chains.

The man who tills the blessed Saviour's land,
 Must sow a seed that oft is long a growing;
 And she that would assist with patient hand,
 Must water daily while her spouse is sowing.

The world besieges sore the wedded pair,
 And many a charm of youth is early blighted,
 But Heaven preserve ye both from fruitless care,
 And bless the day whereon ye were united.

A POOR MAN'S REASONS FOR NOT MARRYING.

I HEARD thy voice amid the psalm,
 Where many voices meet,
 Yet thy low voice was like a calm,
 It was so soft and sweet.
 'Twas like a calm upon the ocean,
 When seas have been in wild commotion.

I heard thy voice one summer eve
 Within thy lowly cot,
 When I am sure thou didst believe
 That mortal heard it not.

And then thy voice was bold and strong,
Singing a solitary song.

I heard a meagre mother sing,
With small and whining note,
To soothe a little pining thing,
From bare and hungry throat ;
And then I thought, O lady mine,
May never such a song be thine !

LINES WRITTEN IMPROMPTU AFTER HEARING
A LADY SINGING.

LIKE a blithe birdie in a darksome isle
Of changeless holly 'mid a spacious wood ;
Such was the song, and such the pensive smile,
Robed in the garb of early widowhood.
And yet not so, the birdie has a nest,
And sings of hopes and joys that yet are coming,
When every bush is in its vernal best,
And all her callow brood are sunk to rest
To thousand thousand insects' joyous humming.
But not in hope the human songstress trills
The lilt of joy, or long, long note of sorrow ;

We sing not well till frequent proofs of ills
 Have made us too distrustful of to-morrow ;
 And yet sometimes we gladly would be gay—
 So let 's rejoice in joy of yesterday.

December 26, 1835.

GOOD NIGHT.



Good night, good friend, good night to thee,
 Good night, sweet lady fair and free,
 For the night has been a good night to me,
 Though thou art come from a far countree.

Smiles soft and still, not laughter high,
 Have gladden'd our quiet company,
 And ever and aye with a happy sigh
 Thou smilest on the baby sleeping by.

See how the baby smiles in her sleep.
 What dream on her soul doth lightly creep ?
 What fancy so pretty is playing bo-peep
 With the innocent's thoughts in the fields of sleep ?

When slumbering babies smile in a dream,
'Tis their angel, as antique faith would deem,
That plays with their hearts like a moonlight beam,
Stealing through chinks to a hidden stream.

Good night, good night, the smile is past,
And I must say good night at last ;
I am long a-going, but hark to the blast,
And the rain that patters so loud and fast.

But I will carry sweet thought away,
To sweeten my bread for many a day,
When I think of the beautiful babe that lay
So calm—yet as bright as an image of May.

VALENTINE BY AN AGED LOVER.



SOME ladies like a man whose hair
Is bright as threads of gold,
Some the dark youth and some the fair,
But few the man that's old.
My locks were jetty black in May,
But latest autumn makes them grey.
Where is the maiden that will twine
Round dodder'd oak a lithe woodbine,
And choose an old man for her valentine ?

'Twere vain to say thou shalt be free
To merry be or grave ;
Better an old man's darling be,
Than be a young man's slave.
'Twere vain to talk of common sense,
And lessons of experience ;
For tears that in the dim eye shine,
And trace the wrinkle's furrow'd line,
Were never shed by winsome valentine.

As the dew of the morning bestars every blade,
 But ere noon is no more on the plain,
 Yet abides in the bell of the flower in the shade
 Till dew comes at evening again.

So the feelings of youth, the fond faith of the heart,
 In manhood dry up like the dew.
 Oh ! let them survive in the soul's better part,
 Till death shall the morning renew.

LINES.

IF I were young as I have been,
 And you were only gay sixteen,
 I would address you as a goddess,
 Write loyal cantos to your boddice,
 Wish that I were your cap, your shoe,
 Or anything that 's near to you.
 But I am old, and you, my fair,
 Are somewhat older than you were.
 A lover's language in your hearing
 Would sound like irony and jeering.
 Once you were fair to all that see,
 Now you are only fair to me.

TO A FRIEND LEAVING GRASMERE.



SWEET Grasmere vale, though I must leave
 Thy hills and quiet waters,
 Nor sing again at fragrant eve
 To glad thy winsome daughters,
 Yet will I fondly think of thee,
 And thy fair maids will think of me,
 When I am far away.

I think of thee, but 'tis a thought
 That has no touch of sadness ;
 I joy to think that I have brought
 To thee so much of gladness.
 Such thoughts I fain would leave behind
 To maidens that are fair and kind,
 When I am far away.

SONG.



HAVE you seen the stars at morning,
How they blend with rising day,
Paling still and still adorning
All the morn with their decay ;
 Paling, blinking,
 Coyly winking,
While the gold usurps the grey ?

So the fancies of the heathen,
Brightest stars of heathen night,
Slowly of their reign bereaven,
Lose themselves in Gospel light.
 Stars of warning
 Melt in morning,
End their task and bid good night.

SONG.

You ask me to sing—I'd be glad if I could
 Sing like a thrush in the underwood,
 Like a twinkling lark that sings up in the sky,
 Or a swan that sings only when going to die.
 Ere now I have sung, when my heart was young,
 Like cock-crow loud and clearly,
 But I cannot sing now I protest, I vow,
 Because I love you dearly.

Could I sing like a syren—but that would I not,
 Could I sing like a minstrel whose name is forgot,
 But whose strain is a treasure which all men may
 borrow,
 To harmonise joy and to sweeten their sorrow,
 Oh, then I would sing to my dear, dear thing,
 Like cock-crow loud and clearly,
 But I cannot sing now, I protest, I vow,
 Because I love you dearly,

Could I sing what I feel, and express by a note
 How wisely esteeming, how fondly I dote,

Then would music no more be a nice thing of art,
But as in old time the true voice of the heart.
I could sing all day long—sing song after song,
Like an angel singing clearly,
But I cannot sing now, I protest, I vow,
Because I love you dearly.

THE SOLACE OF SONG.

WHEN ON my mother's arm I lay
A happy helpless thing,
Still was I glad by night and day
To hear my mother sing.
Baby, baby, do not cry,
It was a lovely lullaby.

I was a boy, a wayward boy,
And yet I still would cling,
With something like a baby joy,
To any that could sing.
Sing up, sing high, a merry lay,
For 'tis a merry holiday.

I was a youth, a sighing youth,
A zephyr of the spring,
And then I thought that all was truth
That I was fond to sing.
Sweetly, sweetly, let me die
In the soft breathing of a sigh.

But now, alas, I am a man,
And time has pruned my wing,
And I have but a little space
To flutter and to sing.
Singing to the autumn blast,
Be my sweetest song my last.

And should I live to be an old,
An old forgotten thing,
Yet never may my heart be cold
When holy maidens sing.
Holy, holy, may the Psalm
My very latest sense embalm!

WHEN I was young
 I gaily sung,
 And little cared how badly ;
 But sure the line
 Should be polish'd fine
 That sings of sorrow sadly.

The joke—the fun—
 The puff—the pun—
 However bad they may be,
 We let them pass
 As glibly as
 The babble of a baby.

But who would make
 A good heart ache
 Should make the good heart stronger ;
 For holy grief,
 Though sharp, is brief,
 And brings a joy much longer.

A SONG WITHOUT A TUNE.



A song without a tune
I made in the month of June,
Eighteen hundred and forty-eight ;
'Tis right to be exact in date.

Sweet lassy, parted we have been
A full twelvemonth and more,
And many a change the world has seen,
And many a heart been sore.
Kings that were mighty monarchs then.
Are not, or nothing are but men.

And many a maid that loved a man
Of wealth and high degree,
Must try to love him, if she can,
In perilous poverty.
For in the wild creed of the time,
To have been rich is deem'd a crime.

We were not rich, we were not kings,
We are just where we were ;
No hope has borne us on its wings,
To drop us in despair.
I might forget an hour had pass'd
Since the sweet hour I saw thee last,

Thou art so very like the maid
I saw twelve months ago ;
And yet almost I am afraid
Thou dost not feel it so.
Thou art, my love, the same to me,
But am I quite the same to thee ?

The lines are deeper on my brow,
The corners of my eyes
Are quaintly netted, I allow,
As wings of dragon flies ;
My cheek the red and yellow dapple,
Much like a last year's russet apple.

A year is nothing to a man
That forty years hath seen ;
But, ah ! it is no little span
'Twixt fifteen and sixteen.
Now I perceive a year hath flown,
And thou almost a woman grown.

A something sure hath cross'd thy view,
 Or perhaps some lady sage
 Hath told what to thy hopes is due,
 And to thy stately age :
 Yet thou hast not forgot me—no ;
 But thou would'st very fain do so.

Farewell ! I will not vex thee more,—
 I would not be a blot
 On thy fair page, a fretting sore,
 An ever-tangled knot.
 What matter what thou think'st on me,
 While thy young heart is glad and free.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

A NEW VERSION.

Not what I would, but what I could,
 I give our little Queen so good,
 Adapting thus a custom'd strain
 To the sweet promise of her reign,
 Whatever men in any part lie,
 May they be loyal all as HARTLEY

COLERIDGE.

God save our Island's hope,
Long live the people's hope,
 God bless our Queen.
Still may our Queen be free,
Then evermore will she
Love that good liberty
 Which makes her Queen.

Oh! may she prize that gem
Bright in her diadem,
 Fair on her brow ;
So, to the end of days,
May God approve her ways,
And heaven resound her praise
 As earth does now.

Lord keep her evermore,
Pure in her own heart's core,
 Kind and serene ;
So shall the wise and good
Reverence her womanhood,
And the glad multitude
 Love their young Queen.

May He that dwells on high
All her thoughts sanctify :
 Seraphs unseen

Sing up with holy glee,
 " Let this maid's name still be
 Omen of victory,"
 God save the Queen !

" Non bene conveniunt nec unâ in sede morantur
 Majestas et amor."—Ov. MET., ii. 846.

A WANTON bard in heathen time,
 In sensual age and sensual clime,
 Hath sung that no accord can be
 Of love with god-like majesty.
 Far other had his sentence been
 Had gentle Ovid ever seen
 An English home, a Christian Queen ;
 For love, content in cot to dwell,
 Becomes a British palace well.
 And our young Queen, whose happy choice
 Has made a noble land rejoice,
 Is sure the monarch need not smother
 The feelings of a wife and mother.
 A wife and mother truly great,
 In woman's duties consummate,
 Such is she now. And every wife
 And mother wishes joy and life

To the good Queen that dignifies
The mother's cares, the baby's cries.
Yea, every mother in the isle,
When she beholds her infant smile,
Should have a good wish and a prayer
For her the matron Queen so fair ;
Who, though a Queen, has that in common
With every homely household woman,
That she has got a babe to love,
And knows there is a God above
That will the babes alike receive ;
For they have all one mother Eve—
May in one well of life be laved,
And by one Jesus shall be saved.
Oh ! may that God prepare their hearts,
Alike to fill their several parts.

December, 1840.

SONG.



IN June, when the rose-buds
Are ready to blow,
We love something in them
Far more than we know.
When we look on a baby,
We love what we see—
We love what it may be,
And hope it will be.

But my love, sweet Mary,
For thee, as I know,
Is a rose-bud untimely
That never will blow.
My love is a baby,
No blessing will crave,
But come, love, however,
And smile on its grave.

TO A YOUNG LADY FROM A FOREIGN CLIME.



THOU sweet exotic, lovely brown !
 No fair one could be sweeter,—
 Young as thou art, thou wilt not frown
 Upon an old man's metre.

Rich is the sky where thou wert born,
 And gorgeous were the flowers ;
 But yet I trust thou wilt not scorn
 This cold blue sky of ours.

And though the flowers of Westmorland
 Do not surcharge the wind
 With burden of perfume so bland
 As flowers of Western Ind ;

Yet are they sweet if they be sought
 Where careless eyes would miss them ;
 They crouch so low, as if they thought
 A maid should stoop to kiss them.

Our little birds they are not deck'd
 With hues of molten gems ;
 Their modest plumes do not reflect
 The rays of diadems.

But yet they twitter sweetly, sweetly,
 Their little notes so clear,
 Methinks they could not sing more fitly
 'To little maiden's ear.

There is a blackness in thine hair—
 A deep black in thine eye—
 That do not speak of English air,
 But of a hotter sky

And there is something in the mouth,
 Not easy to be told,
 That marks thee of the passionate south,
 And not of northern mould.

Then learn to love all simple things,
 That pretty are and cool.
 Look how the swallow dips its wings,
 And glints along the pool ;

For it hath felt the Afric suns
 Voluptuously hot,
 Yet comes to rear its little ones
 Beside the English cot

So may'st thou keep the tropic glow
And the full joy of life,
Yet tame thy current to the flow
Of a cheerful English wife.

AN AUTOGRAPH.

WHAT is the trifle which you would demand?
The self-betraying of a tremulous hand,
That ne'er in useful labour was employ'd,
Though once with self-production overjoy'd.
Its strutting capitals and whisking tails,
Quaint cyphers, slanting to the veering gales
Of vanity and would-be wit, implied
That e'en my digits felt a Poet's pride.
That pride of rhyme, that pert, pen-jerking joy,
Has left me long. I am no more a boy;
For yesternoon, alas! brought home to me
The solemn tidings I was forty-three.
At such an age the triumph of the pen
Is poor indeed to poor and pensive men.
And yet my pen finds something still to see it,
Though mean my name, yet you desire to see it.

September 20, 1839.

THE OLD ARM-CHAIR.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.



HIGH was my lineage, many an age ago
 My grandsire nursed the mystic mistletoe,
 By Druid shorn for dark primeval rite,
 With golden sickle by the pale moonlight,
 When forests dank of patriarchal oak,
 "That never echo'd to the woodman's stroke,
 In boundless contiguity of shade,"
 Possess'd the destined seats of wealth and trade.
 The dappled deer, the sullen shaggy bear,
 The tall elk, bursting from its bosky lair,
 And all the natural tribes of earth and air,
 All, all, familiar with the gnarled tree,
 Did homage to my sire's antiquity.
 Had he possess'd a human heart and speech
 As sage to know and eloquent to teach
 As his dark brethren of Dodona, then
 What tales could he have told of beasts and men!
 Of Giant Albion, and his peer in fame,
 That to far-jutting Cornwall* left his name,—

* Cornwall. The Giants Albion and Corineus are memorised by Geoffrey of Monmouth and by Spenser.

Of Trojan Brutus, and his progeny,
The boast of many a long Welsh pedigree,
And many a king and chief, forgotten long,
Embalm'd in Geoffrey's prose and Spenser's laureate
song :

But mute he was, unable to divine
The lamentable lot of old Locrine ;
Nor aught of Camber* or of Albinact
Could he relate, nor of poor Lear distract,
Though once, I think, that Lear was fain to house
And sing mad songs beneath my grandsire's boughs :
And sure the kindly tree bemoan'd his grief,
With groaning fibre and with quivering leaf.
The Romans came,—they came, they fought, they
slew,

They conquer'd, reign'd awhile, and then withdrew
From Britain's isle. Yet, as wild winds bestrew
The long lanes that they make in close defiles
Of intertangled underwood for miles,
With wrecks and relics of their fatal glee,
And trophies of triumphant anarchy ;
So, when the hairy myriads of the North
O'erleap'd the barrier,—when the Pict rush'd forth,
And Caledonia pour'd from cavern'd rocks,
From all her crankling bays and sinuous lochs.

* Camber gave name to Cambria and Cumberland ; Albinact to Albania, the poetic name of Scotland.

From purple moor, green shaw, and quaking fen,
Her grisly superfluity of men,—
And not to heal, but aggravate the sore,
Came the red sea-kings from the Saxon shore,
Wave after wave, and blast outhowling blast,
Till all despair'd that any would be last ;—
Though shy Civility and stately Form
Or fled or fell before the human storm,
Nor quite effaced were all the steps of Time,
For Druid saw was blent with Runic rhyme,—
The oak, which Briton bards had sung beneath,
And whence the Roman pluck'd his civic wreath,
Was still an oak, and grew in power and pride,
With its old shade, new kingdoms to divide.
My grandsire's story it were long to tell,—
How long he flourish'd, how at last he fell !
Was it his doom in shallow bark to bow
His knotty strength, and form a pirate's prow ?
Made he the vast beam of a baron's hall,
Or board smooth-rubb'd for lavish festival ?
Or iron-headed ram, to smite the tottering wall ?
Ah no ! He was a dedicated tree
From the first germ of his nativity.
For many a year in holy peace he stood,
The tallest of a noble brotherhood ;
At length a godly king bestow'd their trunks
On a fraternity of studious monks,—

Good men, that wore the penitential weed.
Unquiet times of such meek men have need.

Long was the age—some thought an age too much—
That I was hallow'd from a woman's touch.
I was a mere discomfort of a chair ;
Monk could not sit in me, and did not dare :
My wooden arms had never clasp'd the fair.
My bones were stiff to plague the bones of others.
The long lean length of those long-praying brothers
In me have left a dell, a hollow dint,
Beyond the date of reminiscent print.
But when bluff Harry rent the British rose
From the old stalk on which her sister grows,
When Luther's trumpet with a voice of storm
Defied the Pope and bid the Church reform,
Then I, alas ! was but a bit of wood ;
For those who lean'd on me, and those that stood,
Or knelt beside me in accustom'd prayer,
Became the pensioners of earth and air.
Poor wanderers, doom'd from doubting souls to crave
The shelter and the food which late they gave.
While I—last note of a forgotten ditty,
No more a thing of worship, scarce of pity—
Am fain to rest unconsecrated now,
Like a pale votary forced to break her vow,

The humble inmate of a genial room,
Far from monastic pomp, monastic gloom.
I will not say how many men have sat
Between my arms to slumber or to chat ;
What flying maid, what panting fugitive,
What sinner breathing the last word—forgive ;
What lady-love, that dotes on babe so fresh,
And feels the life in its soft dimpling flesh ;
Nor what besides of sorrow or of mirth
I may have witness'd by the glowing hearth.
'Tis true—(I fear not to reveal the truth)—
My later days were gayer than my youth ;
Yet may my age for aye respected be,
For one good woman's sake that sat on me.

TO THE MAGPIE.



WHAT shall we say of thee, pert, perking Mag,
Whose every motion seems to fish for praise,
Whose whole existence is a game at brag?

Art thou a stranger quite to poet's lays,
With black and white thy pretty self adorning,
Like a blithe widow in her second mourning?

Thou wert the pet bird of the God of wine,
And dear thou art, and should'st be very dear,
To that great Son of Jove whose mighty line,
After long strife, and many a toilsome year,
Regain'd at last their lawful heritage,
And reign'd in southern Greece for many an age.

For great Alcides never had a home—
No wonder if his loves were vagabond.
Once in a hollow vale he chanced to roam,
And of a village maid grew sudden fond.

What shall we say?—the buxom village lass
Became the mother of Æchmacoras.*

The brawny sire, as usual, went his way,
New loves to woo—new monsters to destroy.
But the poor mother—she that went astray—
All husbandless, with her unfather'd boy—
What can she do? Her ruthless father's curse
Bids her conceal a small sin with a worse.

She wrapt her baby in a lion's skin,
The lion's skin her roving lover gave,
And left the helpless witness of her sin
In the dark wood. Ye happy wood-nymphs, save,
As ye would keep your innocence secure,
The helpless thing—like you—so sweet and pure.

Nought that the poet feign'd in happiest mood,
Or pagan priest invented in his trade,
Was ever half so beautiful or good
As the kind things that Nature's self hath made :
O'er the poor babe the magpie chatters still,
Soothes with its wings, and feeds it with its bill.

* Æchmacoras, fil. Herculis, ex vitiatâ Phillone, filiâ Alcimedontis Herois; qui cùm in lucem editus fuisset, ab Alcimedonte, nuà cùm matre Phillone, in proximo monte feris expositus fuit: ibi vagientem infantem cùm pica imitaretur, ad hujus avis vocem, quòd puerilem esse credidisset, Hercules fortè illàc iter habens conversus, puellam et a se genitum puerum agnovit, ambosque vinculis liberavit.—Pausan. in *Arcadic*. (Hofmanni Lex. Univ.)

Ere long the strenuous foe of Hydra came—

He came in pride of some new conquest won ;
But when he saw how pale the hapless dame,

The childless mother, by himself undone,
Enraged he rush'd into the forest wild,
To seek the pledge of love, the hapless child.

I will not say how loud the thickets crash'd,

For he would never step an inch aside ;
Or how far off the timid lions lash'd

Their sides ; or how upcoil'd the serpents eyed
The trampling terror. Nought he cared for this—
For lion's inward growl, or serpent's smother'd hiss, —

But ever onward he pursued the cry,

The still repeated one note of the bird,
That faithful sat where that poor babe did lie.

Still he pursued the note, and never err'd ;
And there he found them both—the babe and Mag- -
In the dark wood, beneath the mossy crag.

The babe became a hero in its time ;

The bird, its task perform'd, it fled away.
To the good bird I dedicate this rhyme ;

The hero lives in many an antique lay.
Oh could my song preserve thy nest of briar.
As thou the babe Herculean for its sire !

TO A RED HERRING.



WONDER of art and nature ! ocean-born,
 Like Aphrodite, Queen of Love and Life,
 And those white nymphs that dwell in crystal bowers,
 And oft, when ships were rare, and none had burst
 Into that ocean which first Cortez view'd
 From Darien's heights, beneath the summer moon,
 Were wont to weave their labyrinthine dance
 On the smooth surface of the sacred sea,
 To minstrelsy of kindred sprites of air ;
 Child of the waves ! whose antique ancestry
 Saw unappall'd, say rather with huge joy,
 The avenging fountains of the deep broke up,
 And the vast hollow globe of waters pour
 Dark and continuous o'er the offending earth.
 Then did the creatures of the sea rejoice !
 The arrowy shark shot swift o'er cities drown'd,
 But soon grew sluggish with mere gluttony ;
 Then herrings fearless stray'd o'er all the world,
 For even the hungriest tyrants of the floods,
 The finny aristocracy, o'ergorged

With flesh, for fish had no more appetite
Than pious Papist at the 'end of Lent.
Herrings were happy then, but were not red ;
The green effulgence of their scaly suit
Rippled the sunny sea with emerald light
For many a league, what time their countless hosts
Sped from their chill septentrion nursery,
In numbers without number, numberless !
A tribe to which the whole of Adam's race,
By Leuwenhoeck seen through optic lens,
With all whom Malthus, and his sage compeers,
Extinguish'd in the breeding womb of time
By vice and misery—and, oh, ye Gods !
Moral restraint, were but a band élite,
A biped aristocracy, as few
As Protestants in Erin, as the pale
Albino monster upon Afric shore,
As gentlemen in Parliament reform'd,
As honest men—in any place you please.

TO A CAT.



NELLY, methinks, 'twixt thee and me
 There is a kind of sympathy ;
 And could we interchange our nature,—
 If I were cat, thou human creature,—
 I should, like thee, be no great mouser,
 And thou, like me, no great composer ;
 For, like thy plaintive mews, my muse
 With villainous whine doth fate abuse,
 Because it hath not made me sleek
 As golden down on Cupid's cheek ;
 And yet thou canst upon the rug lie,
 Stretch'd out like snail, or curl'd up snugly,
 As if thou wert not lean or ugly ;
 And I, who in poetic flights
 Sometimes complain of sleepless nights,
 Regardless of the sun in heaven,
 Am apt to doze till past eleven,—
 The world would just the same go round
 If I were hang'd and thou wert drown'd ;
 There is one difference, 'tis true,—
 Thou dost not know it, and I do.

DE ANIMABUS BRUTORUM.



No doubt 'twere heresy, or something worse
 Than aught that priests call worthy of damnation,
 Should I maintain, though in a sportive verse,
 That bird or fish can e'er attain salvation ;
 Yet some have held that they are all possess'd,
 And may be damn'd, although they can't be bless'd.

Such doctrine broach'd Antonio Margerita,
 A learned Spaniard, mighty metaphysical.
 To him the butterfly had seem'd a Lytta,—
 His wasp-stung wits were grown so quaint and
 phthisical ;
 To him the sweetest song of Philomel
 Had talk'd of nothing in the world but hell.

Heaven save us all from such a horrid dream !
 Nor let the love of heaven,—of heaven, forsooth!—
 Make hard our hearts, that we should so blaspheme
 God for Christ's sake, and lie for love of truth.
 Poor Tray ! art thou indeed a mere machine,
 Whose vital power is a spirit unclean ?

If all the lives that throng the air and earth,
And swarm innumerable in the slimy deep,
Die once for all, and have no second birth,—
If, ceasing once, they do not even sleep,
But are no more than sounds of yesterday,
Or rainbow tints that come and pass away,—

Yet are they not to loving Nature lost ;
She doth but take them to herself again !
The curious pencilling of moonlit frost
Melts in the morning ray, and leaves no stain ;
Yet every drop preserved distils in showers,
And winds along the veins of dewy flowers.

Nor shall they all in their oblivion lie,
Nor lack the life, though vain that life may be,
Which breathes in strains that wasting time defy :
A poet's song can memorise a flea ;
The subtle fancy of deep-witted Donne,
The wee phlebotomist descanted on.

And once that strenuous insect leap'd by chance
Upon the white breast of a Gallic dame ;
Forthwith the wits of universal France
Vied to consign the happy flea to fame !
Pasquier, the gravest joker of the age,
Berhymed La Puce in many a polish'd page.

The Teian bard, so skittish and so hoary,
 That loved so well all things that merry be,
 In honied phrases gave to blithest glory
 The shrill cicada chirping cheerily ;
 The bloodless songster drunk with balmy dew,
 Whose happy being every year is new.

That sad old wag, that Peter Pindar hight,
 Who was no worshipper of William Pitt's,
 Did whilome soar a bold Pindaric flight
 To celebrate the progeny of nitts,
 Telling how once a creature without wings
 The crown invaded of the best of kings.

The insect empress, and her clustering throng
 Of chemists, famed for geometric skill,
 Have lent their labour'd sweets to Virgil's song,
 Their stings bequeath'd to wicked Mandeville ;
 Wealthy as Tyre their homes, the more their sorrow,
 Like Tyre despoil'd, and smother'd like Gomorrah.

“ Go to the ant, thou sluggard, and be wise ! ”

So said the amorous king that wrote of hyssop,—
 You know the rest. Nothing that creeps or flies
 Reads half so good a lesson in all Æsop.
 Great Johnson has berhymed the words ; I swear,
 He 'd better far have left them as they were.

No question you have heard of Virgil's gnat,
 Which by our gentle Spenser was transmuted,
 Though probably I need not tell you that
 Its authenticity is much disputed;
 And 'tis denied also by judgments nice
 That Homer ever sung of frogs and mice.

If Homer did not, some one did, I 'm sure;
 The tale is extant in the choicest Greek.
 Can living tongue express, in phrase so pure,
 The deep bass croak, and shriller treble squeak?
 And Aristophanes no title lacks
 To his BREKEKEKEX KOAX KOAX.

But thou dark dweller of the central rock,
 Spawn'd ere avenging waves the hills o'erflow'd,
 Survivor of full many an earthquake's shock,
 Last of the Troglodytes, primæval toad,
 Like antique virtue, hated upon earth,
 Or trampled under foot, like modest worth,—

Time was (or else our ancestors were liars)
 That thou to mystic verse wert not unknown,
 When witches danced around Tartarean fires,
 To screech of owls and mandrake's fatal groan;
 For thou could'st drain the marrow, mad the brains,
 Or foulest passion breed in chaste veins.

Most poets are great wanderers by night,
And love the moon, though sons of Phœbus call'd ;
And well we ken the small scarce-moving light
Of the she, wingless, amorous emerald,
That keeps her lone lamp burning for her mate,
Pining because he always is so late.

Unlike her kindred of the glowing zone,
That star the dark groves of the tropic even,
There the proud earth has comets of her own,
And every shoal out-fires the distant heaven,
And all the groves and underwoods unfold
A gorgeous blossoming of fire and gold.

Is it to soothe our sorrow, or deride,
That these bright insects leave both flower and tree,
And swarm upon the new-heap'd earth beside
The pit design'd for dead mortality ?
Who has not heard of death-lights on a grave ?
And these are death-lights, gay, and bright, and brave !

But who may count, with microscopic eye,
The multitudes of lives that gleam and flash
Behind the rousing keel, and multiply
In myriad millions, when the white oars dash
Through waves electric, or at stillest night
Spread round the bark becalm'd their milky white ?

Oh, had the bards that did so sweetly sing
In times of old, when poesy was young,
Known but the half, in their quick blooming spring,
Of what we know, how sweetly had they sung!
Then many a plant, that yet has not a name,
Had won a story and a deathless fame ;

And many a living thing of instinct wise,
Of form majestic, or of brightest plume,
That o'er the vast South Sea unwearied flies,
Or 'mid the broad magnolia's fiery bloom
Builds its low nest, had been beloved of men,
Like Robin Redbreast and plain Jenny Wren.

TO GOODY TWOSHOES.

AH, little Goody! I have known thee long,
 And feel it strange to call thee Lady Jones.
 Art thou as happy 'mid the bowing throng
 As when thou hadst thy *two shoes* on the stones?
 Sole sound of comfort that could reach thy heart,
 When thy companion child must needs depart.

Thy lamb, thy raven, and thy box of letters,
 Thy love for all the tribes of earth and air,
 Thy shrewd odd sayings, apt to make thy betters,
 Or folks so call'd, look round with wondrous stare,
 And deeper minds reflect on wisdom given
 To fortune's waifs by compensating Heaven;—

All these, to curious childhood dear, as new,
 Retain a value to the satiate age,
 And pass full oft before the inward view
 Of souls long strangers to the brief square page,
 The tinsell'd covers, and the strange old pictures
 That served our ancestors instead of lectures.

I've trembled with thee in the church so cold,
And fearful in its soundless solitude.

What place so dreary as deserted fold,

Where few hours past the shepherd wise and good
Had spoke the words that take the sting from death
And change our human tears to wells of faith?

But more of fear and more of pain was thine,

And short and smother'd was thy sweet breath, when
A little musty hay, a narrow line

Of darkness, parted thee from evil men,
With horrid whisper plotting crime and plunder,
Mocking with mutter'd oaths the awful thunder.

A neighbourhood unmeet for one like thee;

Yet out of evil, maids whose minds are right,
As thine was in its sweet simplicity,

Draw blessings for themselves; celestial light
Beams on the weakest in extreme distresses
Assurance, where proud prudence hardly guesses.

Such wert thou, Goody, in thy childish days,

And though, no doubt, thou didst grow old in time,
And wert a spinster much deserving praise,

That praise I will not speak in prose or rhyme;
Far rather I'd believe thee tripping still
With Ralph the Raven, and with Baa-Lamb Bill.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY,

NEITHER THE ESQUIRE, THE LAUREATE, NOR THE LL.D., BUT THE GOOD
MAN, THE MERRY MAN, THE POET, AND THE DOCTOR.

HE was not born beneath the Cumbrian hills ;
No mountain breezes lull'd his infant slumbers ;
Loud rattling cars, and penny-dropping tills,
And blended murmurs of conglomerate numbers,
Were the chief sounds that baby Robert heard ;
The perking sparrow, his sole household bird.

Great Bristol was his nest and natal town,
And not till he had cast his baby frock
He felt the liberal air of Durdham Down,
Or look'd on Avon from St. Vincent's rock,
Whence many a bark was seen in trim array,
Bound on bad quest to hapless Africa.

'Tis hard to say what might have been his lot,
If born with Nature from the first to dwell ;
Yet am I prone to guess that he would not
Have conn'd, or known, or loved her half so well.
She was a stranger to his opening eyes,
Clad with the charm of still renew'd surprise.

And finding little in the daily round

To fashion fancy from the things of sense,
His love of kin was all the more profound,

Not wide in surface, but in act intense ;
Affection still a dutiful reality,
The ground and law, and soul of all morality,

Yet keeping still his little heart at home,

He wander'd with his mind in realms remote,
Made playmates of the Fairy, Sylph, and Gnome,
And knew each Giant, Knight, and Wight of note,
Whate'er of wonderful the East and North,
Darkly commingling, gender'd and brought forth.

Sweet thought he found, and noble, in the story

Of the Wehr-Wolf and sweet Red Ridinghood,
Shudder'd at feast of Ogre, raw and gory,
And watch'd the Sleeping Beauty in the wood.

* * * *

THE LARCH GROVE.

LINE above line the nursling larches planted,
Still as they clomb with interspace more wide,
Let in and out the sunny beams that slanted,
And shot and cranked down the mountain's side.

The larches grew, and darker grew the shade,
And sweeter aye the fragrance of the Spring ;
Pink pencils all the spiky boughs array'd,
And small green needles call'd the birds to sing.

They grew apace as fast as they could grow,
As fain the tawny fell to deck and cover ;
They haply thought to soothe the pensive woe,
Or hide the joy of stealthy tripping lover.

Ah, larches ! that shall never be your lot ;
Nought shall you have to do with amorous weepers,
Nor shall ye prop the roof of cozy cot,
But rumble out your days as railway sleepers.

DENT.



I.

THERE is a town, of little note or praise,
 Narrow and winding are its rattling streets,
 Where cart with cart in cumbrous conflict meets,
 Hard straining up or backing down the ways,
 Where insecure the crawling infant plays,
 And the nigh savour of the hissing sweets
 Of pan or humming oven rankly greets
 The hungry nose that threads the sinuous maze ;
 Yet there the lesson of the pictured porch,
 The beauty of Platonic sentiment,
 The sceptic wisdom, positive in doubt,
 All creeds and fancies, like the hunter's torch,
 Caught each from each, perfection find in Dent,
 Where what they cannot get they do without.

GEOLOGY.



II.

IN that small town was born a worthy wight,
(His honest townsmen well approve his worth,)
Whose mind has pierced the solid crust of earth,
And roam'd undaunted in the nether night.
His thought a quenchless incorporeal light,
Has thrid the labyrinth of a world unknown,
Where the old Gorgon time has turn'd to stone
Long thorny snake and monstrous lithophyte.
Long may'st thou wander in that deep obscure,
And issuing thence, good sage, bring with thee still
That honest face, where truth and goodness shine ;
Right is thy creed, as all thy life is pure.
And yet if certain persons had their will,
The fate of Galileo had been thine.

ANGELS have wings? Well, let them grow—
 May it be long before *you* know
 Whether they have or not.
 But geese have wings, and quills as good,
 Perhaps, as wings of angels could
 Supply—could they be got.

But oh! dear lady, why contrive
 To make the vainest man alive
 Conceited more than ever:
 I will not call these pens divine,
 But certain they were pens of thine,
 And that 's enough, however.

TRANSLATIONS.



FROM THE GERMAN.

THERE is an angel that abides
 Within the budding rose ;
That is his home, and there he hides
 His head in calm repose.
The rose-bud is his humble home,
But thence he often loves to roam ;
And wending through the path of Heaven,
Empurples all the track of even.

If e'er he sees a maiden meek,
 He hovers nigh, and flings
Upon the modest maiden's cheek
 The shadow of his wings.
Oh, lovely maiden, dost thou know
Why thy cheeks so warmly glow ?
'Tis the Angel of the Rose,
That salutes thee as he goes.

FROM CATULLUS.

PASSER, DELICIE MEÆ PUELLÆ.



LITTLE sparrow, pretty sparrow,
Darling of my "winsome marrow,"
Plaything, playmate, what you will,
Tiny love, or naughty Phil,
Tempted, teased, to peck and hop
On her slender finger top,
Free to nuzzle and to rest
In the sweet valley of her breast ;
Her wee, wee comfort in her sorrow's wane,
When sinks to sleep the fever of her pain.

Little sparrow, come to me,
I can play as well as she,
And like her I would be fain
Thou could'st sport away my pain,
Dear to me as fruit of gold,
Which by crafty lover roll'd,
In that fleet maiden's path, untwisted all
The quaint knots of her cincture virginal.

FROM CATULLUS.

LUGETE, O VENERES CUPIDINESQUE.



WEEP and wail, ye Cupids all,
That are pretty and but small ;
Weep, ye pretty winged brothers,
Weep, ye pretty goddess mothers ;
Every soul on earth that 's pretty,
Weep and wail for very pity.
He is dead, the pretty sparrow,
Darling of my " winsome marrow,"
Dearer than her own eyes to her ;
For so well the creature knew her,
She did not know her mother better ;
Not a moment would he quit her,
Hopping hither, flitting thither,
Ever blest while he was with her ;
Piping shrill and twittering clearly,
To her alone whom he loved dearly.
Now the dark way he is wending,
Whence they say is no ascending.
Ill luck be with thee, gloomy hollow,
That every pretty thing dost swallow,

To steal away my pretty sparrow !
 Alas ! poor bird—oh, deed of sorrow !
 My sweet one's eyes, with tears so salt,
 Are red and swollen ; 'tis all thy fault.

SCHILLER'S TRANSLATION OF MACBETH.

IN Schiller's translation of *Macbeth*, in the 3rd Scene of the 1st Act, lines, of which the following are a free version, are substituted for the original Conference of the Weird Women, previous to the entrance of *Macbeth* and *Banquo*. It was manifestly the purpose of Schiller to discard the witch element altogether out of his "Weird Sisters," and to raise them to a level with the *Eumenides* and *Parcæ*. As a modern poet, writing for time present, and probably for the time to come, he might be right in omitting the killing swine, the sailor's thumb, the chestnut munching ; but his idea is not in the spirit of ancient or modern demonology. If Schiller showed a more refined taste, Shakspeare exhibits a wider knowledge and a deeper philosophy.

First Witch. Sister, let's hear : what hast thou
 been doing ?

Second. On the sea I've been busy at wrecking
 and ruin.

Third. Sister, what thou ?

First. I saw a fisherman all in rags—

A very heap of rags was he,—

Yet he mended his nets and sang merrily,

And cared no more how the old world wags,

Than if he 'd the wealth of the sea in his bags.

At his work late and early,
The light-hearted churl, he
Sang merrily, greeting the eve and the morn.
I hated his mirth—'twas too much to be borne
'To see him so merry both early and late.
I had sworn the deadly oath of hate,
And his note must be changed or I forsworn.
So the next time that his net he dragg'd,
With a golden burden the full net swagg'd.
'Tis down on the nail the yellow ones glimmer ;
He gloats till his peepers wax dimmer and dimmer.
He hugg'd the bright devil, he lugg'd it along,
And there was an end of his mirth and his song ;
And then he lived like the Prodigal Son,
 And he gave to his lust dominion :
But Mammon, the rogue, he soon was gone,—
 He fled with a lusty pinion.
'Twas faery gold, and he thought " All's well ;"
He knew not—the fool !—'twas the loan of hell.
And all was spent, and grim Want came ;
 Away sunk the lads of the revel.
Grace cast off him, and he cast off shame,
 And he gave himself up to the Devil.
And he served the fiend with hand and will,
And he went to and fro to pillage and kill.
I chanced to pass this very day
 Where on the gold he lighted :

On the bare beach I found him howling away,
 With wan looks scathed and blighted.
 And hark what said the hope-lorn elf:—
 “ False witch, false ocean’s daughter,
 Thou gavest me gold,—thou shalt have myself ! ”
 So plunged in the salt water.

STATIUS, LIB. I. 493.

OBTUTU gelida ora premit, lætusque per artus
 Horror iit : sensit manifesto numine ductos
 Affore, quos uexis ambagibus augur Apollo
 Portendi generos, vultu fallente ferarum,
 Ediderat. Tuuc sic tendens ad sidera palmas :
 Nox, quæ terrarum cœlique amplexa labores
 Ignea multivago transmittis sidera lapsu,
 Indulgens reparare animum, dum proximus agris
 Infundat Titan agiles animantibus ortus,
 Tu mihi perplexis quæsitam erroribus ultro
 Advehis alma fidem, veterisque exordia fati
 Detegis : adsistas operi, tuaque omnia firmes.
 Semper honoratum dimensis orbibus anni
 Te domus ista colet : nigri tibi, diva, litabunt
 Electa cervice greges, lustraliaque exta
 Lacte novo perfusus edet Vulcanius ignis.
 Salve, prisca fides tripodum, obscurique recessus.
 Deprendi, Fortuna, deos.

His chilly lips hard closing at the sight,
 His every member *grueing* with delight,

At once by tokens manifest he spies
That they are here, whom quaintly twisted plies
And knots and labyrinths of oracular saw,
Inspired by Phœbus, named his sons-in-law,
In form of beasts foreshown. With palms outspread
Towards the sky, in awful accent said
The king illumined : Thou, whose compass dread
And universal empire dost contain
Both heaven and earth, and all their woe and pain ;
Night, that transmittest stellar influence
With manifold illapse to heal the sense
Of weary mortals by a kind renewing,
Till Titan bid them to be up and doing :
At last in happy hour thou bring'st to me
The truth long sought in sore perplexity,—
Reveal'st the principles of Destiny.
Aid but the work, and make the omen sure,
From age to age thy rites shall still endure.
Yon house shall honour thee, O reverend Night !
With sable victims and drink-offerings white
Of purest milk. The hallow'd flame shall sup
The liquid gifts and eat the entrails up.
Hail secret place, all hail thou seat divine,
Mysterious symbol of the dreadful Trine !

PÆAN OF ARIPHOOON THE SICYONIAN.

Ἕγεία πρῆσβίστα Μαζάγων.



HOLIEST and first of all the happy powers,
Sacred Hygeia ! let me dwell with thee—
For all the remnant of my living hours,
Come thou, benign, and share my home with me ;
For if there be or good or grace
In riches, offering, or high place
Of godlike empery or delight,
Which, in the hidden nets of Aphrodite,
We would inveigle—aught at all
That from the gods poor man obtains
To soothe him in his toils and pains,—
Blest Hygeia ! at thy call
Blossoms every pleasant thing :
With thee the Graces spend their spring ;
But without thee
No living thing can happy be.

PROMETHEUS.

A FRAGMENT.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS fragment, which, if regarded as a dramatic scene, may be read as a whole, was written in or about the year 1820, when it was shown by the author to his father, who was much pleased with the commencement, and took great interest in the work. This may, however, have operated as a virtual discouragement. The elder Coleridge saw in the fable of Prometheus, as treated by Æschylus, a profound and complex *philosopheme*, which the unshpered spirit of Plato might have been taxed to unfold. Fully to master the idea, required a tension of mind which, it may be, the younger poet did not bring to the task. To work up such steru materials into poetry might have seemed to him impracticable, or at least foreign to his own genius; and indeed, whoever will cast his eye over the disquisition on this subject, in the second volume of "Coleridge's Literary Remains," will not be surprised that the youthful Telemachus shrunk from the attempt to bend his father's bow.

As the poetry in these volumes is by no means intended exclusively for scholars, it may not be amiss to give a short analysis of the Æschylean drama, from which the following

scene is professedly imitated. The Titan Prometheus has stolen fire from heaven, and thereby introduced among mankind the knowledge of mechanic arts. Jupiter, incensed by his presumption, and nowise approving the philanthropic motive by which it was dictated, requires Vulcan to bind the rebel to a rock in Mount Caucasus. Vulcan executes this commission by his ministers, Strength and Force. Prometheus is left alone. The Sea Nymphs, and Ocean himself, endeavour to comfort the sufferer, offering to plead with Jupiter in his behalf; but he sternly declines their mediation. The Egyptian Io appears, to whom Prometheus reveals the course of her wanderings and the extent of her sufferings, in her flight from the persecution of the jealous Juno; and that by one of her descendants, Hercules, the son of Jupiter, he himself is destined to be released. He speaks of Jupiter in terms of bold defiance, announcing that he will be dethroned by a son whom Io will bear to him. Mercury (Hermes) is despatched to demand from him the disclosure of this secret on pain of further vengeance. Prometheus refuses to comply, and is swept away by a thunder-bolt.

It is, I am aware, doing sore injustice to the very remarkable interpretation of this sublime fable above alluded to, to give the results without detailing the process. For this I must refer to the original essay, which requires, and will, I think, fully repay, an attentive and thoughtful perusal. Suffice it to say here, that Jupiter and Prometheus are explained to mean Law and Reason, contrasted, yet akin to each other. Jupiter is Law, stern, imperative, controlling the universe; and in one aspect, Political Law, Juno being the Sacerdotal *Cultus*, the wedded servant of the state, coerced but unsubmitive, jealous (not, it must be confessed, without cause) of Io, the mundane Religion migrating from

land to land : while Prometheus is Reason, the super-sensual light in man, free, though in bonds, and struggling against the despot with a prospect of ultimate emancipation. Hermes is Custom, or I should rather say, marketing expediency, ever worldly and complying ; while the Ocean Nymphs are the natural solicitings from this visible scene, by which the soul is tempted to forget her original, forego her privileges, and forfeit her destiny.

It is easy to surmise in what spirit and with what skill this subject would have been handled by Dryden, and in this style I believe that he might have found a worthy successor in Hartley Coleridge. But to embody so profound an idea not in witty abstractions, but in living forms, "simple, sensuous, passionate," speaking with lyric earnestness, and combined in a progressive action, was a design more easy for the father to conceive than for the son to execute. Sooth to say, the latter was not disposed to bore so deep for the waters of inspiration. His Hippocrene was no Artesian well, though it flowed naturally from a living fountain far enough beneath the surface.

Soon afterwards the subject was taken up by the splendid genius of Shelley, who brought to it vehement impulse, exhaustless fancy, the music of the spheres, and a diction glittering as sunlight in the midst of a waterfall. He did not bring a clear insight or a sane judgment. His conception, or adaptation of the *mythus*, stripped of its gorgeous dress, may be called vulgar, at once false and obvious. With him Jupiter is the oppression of the world, secular and religious, "the powers that be," as they appeared to his diseased vision ; and Prometheus is reluctant, up-surgng humanity. However, a poem was produced which might well have disheartened a young contemporary from the semblance of competition.

Once interrupted, the work could not be resumed. In a letter written eighteen years afterwards, he thus alludes to his intention of completing certain Essays, &c., "and, D. V., Prometheus; but of this I cannot speak with certainty, so difficult is it to recommence any work of imagination after an interval. I do not think it would have been possible for my father to have continued *Christabel*, had his health been ever so joyous, or its reception ever so encouraging. He might, indeed, have written a great deal more about *Christabel*, and what he wrote could not but have been valuable, but it would not have harmonised with the fragment; the joining would have been too apparent. I never knew a work in which there was any continuity at all which was successfully continued."

This poem will now be read with pleasure for its choice diction and tender fancy, more especially in the lyric movements, which are marked by a peculiar and expressive character. The pathos is not interrupted by any obtrusion of a secondary meaning, but it appears from the "Conclusion," (itself a very beautiful poem,) that the drama was intended to be symbolical.

PROMETHEUS.

SCENE.—*A desolate spot, supposed to lie beyond the limits of the habitable earth. PROMETHEUS discovered chained to a rock. Soft Music is heard in the distance, which, as it gradually draws nearer, becomes graver and slower.*

Chorus of SYLPHS on the wing, who enter singing as follows:—

LIGHTLY tripping o'er the land,
 Deftly skimming o'er the main,
 Scarce our fairy wings bedewing
 With the frothy mantling brine,
 Scarce our silver feet acquainting
 With the verdure-vested ground ;
 Now like swallows o'er a river
 Gliding low with quivering pinion,
 Now aloft in ether sailing
 "Leisurely as summer cloud ;"
 Rising now, anon descending,
 Swift and bright as shooting stars,
 Thus we travel glad and free.

Deep in a wilderness of bloom,
 We felt the shaking of the air

Blown o'er deserts vast and idle,
 O'er ambrosial fields of flowers,
 O'er many a league, where never man
 Imprest his footstep on the sand,
 Or shook the dry and husky seeds
 From the tall feathery grass.

But 'twas not the liquid voice
 Of warbling Nymphs their sea-love soothing.
 'Twas not the billows of the breeze
 That tells when sister Sylphs are coming ;
 — Nay, 'twas a sound of terror and woe,
 A noise of force and striving :
 It was not the meeting of icebergs,
 Whose crash might out-thunder the thunderer,
 And their glare make the lightning look dim ;
 It was not the storm of the secret ocean,
 That lashes the shore to the wild bear's howling ;
 For the loud-throated tempests are silent with horror,
 And the sea stands still in amaze.
 'Twas the piercing cry of immortal agony,
 — That taught a strange tongue to the first waken'd
 echoes
 — Of this dull lump of earth, this joyless mountain.

[*Perceiving* PROMETHEUS.

Oh, sight of fear !

What shape is that, what goodly form divine,

- That in you bare and storm-beleaguer'd rift
 Stands like a mark for sun and frosty wind
 By turns to waste their idle shafts upon?
 How horribly it glares! No sign of life,
 Save in the ghastly rolling of those eyes!
 Lives it, indeed? Or is the loathing spirit
 Pent in a corse, a gaol, a hulk of flesh,
 - That is no more its own? Oh! do not look at it,
 Or we shall all grow like it. Let us hence,—
 Yet, hold! it breathes; methinks that I should know—
 Hark! did he stir? Oh, no, he cannot!—fast,
 Fast as a frozen sea, quite motionless!
 Though every sinew stares as he were bent
 To unfix the mountain from its rooted base,
 And whelm us with the ruins! Ah, poor wretch!
 The mountain shall as soon unfix itself
 As he wipe off the sweat-drop from his brow,
 Or make his bosom lighter by a sigh,
 - He is so fast impaled. His noble limbs
 And spacious bulk, as tightly manacled
 As a fair gazelle in the serpent's coil,
 And every feature of his face grown stiff
 With the hard look of agony.

PROMETHEUS.

Oh, me!

SYLPH. Behold, his teeth unlock, his black lips
 ope,

As he would speak to us! Oh, thou sad spectacle!

PROMETHEUS. What now? Is aught forgotten?

Hath the God,

With his wise council, hatch'd some new device

To plague the rebel? Is it not enough?

Nay, be not slack; ye 're welcome:—sweet were
change,

If but a change of tortures! But to grow

A motionless rock, fast as my strong prison,

Age after age, till circling suns outnumber .

The sands upon the tide-worn beach! No hope,

Or that sad mockery of hope that fools

With dull despair, spanning the infinite!

Torment unmeasurable!

SYLPH.

Alas! art thou

— The lofty-soul'd Prometheus?

PROMETHEUS.

Ay! the fool

That dared the wrath of Jove, hated of all

That share his feasts and crouch before his throne;

— The mighty seer, the wise Prometheus.

Ah, for himself not wise! Poor, poor weak slave!

Do ye not scorn me? But I cannot shake,

Or ye might see how fearful I am grown,

That nought have more to fear!

SYLPH.

Oh, fear not us!

A long, long way we come to visit thee;

To this extreme of earth

On clipping pinions borne.

For the grating of fetters,
The voice of upbraiding,
The deep, earthy groan
Of anguish half-stifled ;
The ear-piercing shriek
Of pain in its sharpness,—

A concert, all tuneless, came ruffling the rose-buds,
Where sweetly we slumber'd the sultry hours ;
So with pinions unsmooth'd, and with tresses un-
braided,
Our bright feet unsandall'd, we leap'd on the air.
Like the sound of the trumpet we shook the wide
ether.

A moment we quiver'd, then glancing on high,
Ascended a sun-ray, light pillar of silver,
And seem'd the gay spangles that danced in the beam.
Soon in the cool and clear expanse
Of upper air we sail'd, so fleet, so smooth,
Our feathery oars we waved not, and that flight,
Which left whole empires in its rear uncounted,
As bubbles in the wake of some swift bark,
Seem'd like a sleep of endless blessedness.
Thus floating, we arrived
At the last confines of the fair creation ;
Right o'er this spot unholy,
Where tired Nature left her work half done.
Oh, how unlike those happy fields of light

Where late we voyaged ! The thick, dark air,
 Still pressing earthward, closes o'er our heads
 With dull and leaden sound, like sleepy waters.

PROMETHEUS. Never till this day
 Did life disturb the dense eternity
 Of joyless quiet ; never skylark's song,
 Or storm-bird's prescient scream, or eaglet's cry,
 Made vital the gross fog. The very light
 Is but an alien that can find no welcome ;
 So horrible the silent solitude,⁷
 That e'en those vile artificers of wrong,
 Brute instruments of ghastly cruelty,
 Whose grisly faces were too fell to dream of,—
 Even they seem'd comfortable when they turn'd
 Their backs upon me ! Oh, too bitter shame,
 I could have wept to beg them tarry longer !

SYLPH. And didst thou weep ? And did they
 leave thee thus ?

Oh, pitiless slaves !

PROMETHEUS. No, I did not weep.
 Fall'n as I am, I closed my eyelids hard ;
 They burn'd like fire, and seem'd as they were full.
 But, no ! the dew of tears was scorch'd away.
 I did not—sure they could not see me—weep.
 I bade them farewell, and my voice was firm :
 I think it made them tremble, for the sound
 Of their departure seem'd to shun my ear,

As they had done some perilous deed in haste,
And dared not look on it. They stole away :
The patter of their feet still fretted me,
Like drops in caves that evermore are ceasing,
Yet never cease, so long they seem'd agoing.
Methought 'twere joy to heave a groan unheard,
Unmark'd of coward scorn. Nay, do not weep,
Or I shall e'en heap shame upon my shame,
And all that yet remains of god in me
Be quench'd in tears. Alas, my gentle sprights !
But now I wish'd to glide into a stream,
And lose myself in ocean's liberty,
Leaving my empty chains a monument
And hollow trophy of the tyrant's rage ;
Or be a lump of ice which you might thaw
With the kind warmth of sighs. And hard I strove
To put away my immortality,
Till my collected spirits swell'd my heart
Almost to bursting ; but the strife is past.
It is a fearful thing to be a god,
And, like a god, endure a mortal's pain ;
To be a show for earth and wondering heaven
To gaze and shudder at ! But I will live,
That Jove may know there is a deathless soul
Who ne'er will be his subject. Yes, 'tis past.
The stedfast Fates confess my absolute will,—
Their own co-equal. I have struggled long,

And single-handed, with their triple power,
 —And most opposing, still been most their slave.
 And yet, the will survived—lord of itself;
 Free to disclaim the foreseen forced effect
 Of its free workings. Now, we are agreed,
 I and my destinies. The total world,—
 Above, below, whate'er is seen or known,
 And all that men, and all that gods enact,
 Hopes, fears, imaginations, purposes;
 With joy, and pain, and every pulse that beats
 In the great body of the universe,
 I give to the eternal sisterhood,
 To make my peace withal! And cast this husk,
 This hated, mangled, and dishonour'd carcase
 Into the balance; so have I redeem'd
 My proper birthright, even the changeless mind,
 The imperishable essence uncontroll'd.

SYLPH. Strange talk, Prometheus! Every scorn-
 ful word,

And every bitter threat, may add an age
 Of torture to thy doom. We would in truth
 That we might melt thy fetters with our sighs!
 But what we can, we will. Hold but thy peace;
 Or, if thou wilt forbid us, scoff, revile,
 But let us beg for thee. Our wilful prayer,
 By thee forbidden, leaves thy pride unstain'd,
 Thy will unmaster'd. He did love us once:

The mighty Jove did love us. Did? He does.
There is a spell of unresisted power
In wonder-working weak simplicity,
Because it is not fear'd.

PROMETHEUS. Fair creature, pause !
I am not so ungentle as to chide
The idle chirpings of imprison'd love,
That warbles freely in its narrow cage ;
But I would bid the nightingale be dumb,
Or ere her amorous descant should betray
Her covert to the spoiler.

SYLPH. Spare thy fears ;
For we have winning wiles and witcheries,
Such incantations as thy sterner wit
Did never dream of. Time hath been ere now
That Jove hath listen'd to our minstrelsy,
Till wrath would seem to drop out of his soul
Like a forgotten thing. Our smallest note,
Catching his ear at any breathing space
Amid his loudest threats, would make him mute
As wondering childhood. True, thy fault is great,
But we are many that will plead for thee ;
We and our sisters, dwellers in the streams
That murmur blithely to the joyous mood,
And dolefully to sadness. Not a nook
In darkest woods but some of us are there,
To watch the flowers, that else would die unseen.

Each story with Prometheus ?

PROMETHEUS.

Bold and rash !

SYLPH. He shall not 'scape us. Not a hold secure
In all his empire but our airy host
Shall there prevent him. If in quaint disguise
He roam the earth, or float adown the streams
To tempt or Naiad's love, or woman's eye,
Though watchful Juno were deceived, yet we
Should know him still. Ha ! then should be our time.
Surprise him then, there 's nought he can refuse,
Lest we expose him to the laughing sky,
As Vulcan did the War-god. Yet no shape
Of dreadful majesty, nor sacred haunt,
Our close and passionate suit shall overawe ;
For he shall hear us in the vocal gloom
Of green Dodona's leafy wilderness,
And where from all apart he oft retires
To brood upon his glory. Ours shall be
The one request that he shall ever hear
Till thou art pardon'd. Can he then be stern,
When all the praise, the sweetness of his reign,
The joy that he was glad to look upon,
The boundless ether's fitful harmony,
And the wild music of the ocean caves,
Is turn'd to sighing and importunate grief
For poor Prometheus ?

PROMETHEUS.

Gentle powers, forbear !

'Twere worse than all my miseries foreseen
Should my huge wreck suck down the friendly skiffs
That proffer'd aid. Oh! would that Jupiter
Had hurl'd me to the deep of Erebus,
Where neither god nor man might pity me.
Where I might lie unthought of as the star
Last outpost of the bright celestial band,
That walks its circuit of a thousand years,
Shooting faint rays at black infinity.
But now shall I become a common tale,
A ruin'd fragment of a worn-out world ;
Unchanging record of unceasing change,
Eternal landmark to the tide of time.
Swift generations, that forget each other,
Shall still keep up the memory of my shame
Till I am grown an unbeliev'd fable.
Horsed upon hippogriffs, the hags of night
Shall come to visit me ; and once an age
Some desperate wight, or wizard, gaunt and grey,
Shall seek this spot by help of hidden lore,
To ask of things forgotten or to come.
But who, beholding me, shall dare defy
The wrath of Jove? Since vain is wisdom's boast,
And impotent the knowledge that o'erleaps
The dusky bourne of time. 'Twere better far
That gods should quaff their nectar merrily,
And men sing out the day like grasshoppers,

So may they haply lull the watchful thunder.

SYLPH. Ah, happy men, whose evil destiny,
Self-baffled, falls ! The fellest storm that blows,
The soonest wafts them to an endless calm.
Would we were mortal !

PROMETHEUS. Wherefore would ye so ?
What coy delight awakes to sun or stars
But e'en a thought conveys you to the cradle
Of its young sweetness ?

SYLPH. True ; but what delight
Shall dare awake while all the spacious world
Is aguish with the terror of thy pains,
And sick for thy affliction ?

PROMETHEUS. You, at least,
Have nought to fear. Your unsubstantial forms
Present no scope to the keen thunderbolt ;
Nor adamant can bind your subtle essence,
Which is as fine as scent of violets,
Quick as the warbled notes of melody,
And unconfined as thoughts of gods.
Then go your way. Forget Prometheus,
And all the woe that he is doom'd to bear ;
By his own choice this vile estate preferring
To ignorant bliss and unfelt slavery.

SYLPH. Well, we will go, but never to forget
Thee, nor omit thy cause. 'Tis vain to strive,
For Jove is not one half so merciless

As thou art to thyself. But fare thee well ;
Our love is all as stubborn as thy pride,
And swift as firm. For ere yon full-orb'd moon,
That now emerges from her dark confine,
And, scaling slow the steep opposed heaven,
Is red and swoln, assume her silvery veil
And high career of virgin quietness,
Shall we alight upon the topmost peak
Of Jove's Olympus.

PROMETHEUS. Ye are free to go
Where'er ye will, but not to plead for him
Whom Jove abhors. No, not to pity him,
Or ye may wish your errant range of wing
Were narrow as the evening beetle's rounds.

SYLPH. Not free to pity ! What were Jove himself
If pity had not been ? Was not he once
A hapless babe, condemn'd to die ere born ?
But when he smiled, unweeting of his doom,
And press'd his little hand on Rhea's bosom,
Then gentle pity touch'd his mother's heart,
Till very softness made her bold to brave
The sternness of her hoary husband's ire.
Oh, we have hung upon our motionless wings,
And watch'd her bending sadly o'er his cradle,
Shading his rosy face with her dark locks
In such sweet stillness of o'er-master'd sorrow,
As if she fear'd a sigh might wake her bird,

—Or call his ruthless father to devour him.
And when at length e'en love to love gave way,
And she consented to resign the babe,⁷
To the kind nymph who promised to conceal him,
With all a mother's tender fortitude,
She wash'd the tear-drops from his fair round cheek
With rain from her own eyes; for she was melted,
Yet nothing shaken. Pity made her firm.
Yet when the Oread virgin turn'd away,
And he, with baby cries, stretch'd out his arms
Over her ivory shoulders, well I ween
She would have given her godhead for a heart
That might have broken. Then we sang our songs,
And soothed her melancholy thoughts with tales
How he should come to be a mighty god,
And blast his foes with fiery thunderbolts.
And day by day, in sunshine or in storm,
We posted 'twixt far Ida and Olympus
To bear her kisses to her growing babe,
And bring back daily tidings of his weal.
He was a lovely child, a boy divine;
And joy'd to listen to the gurgling music
Of Ida's many springs. We little thought
That he would prove so stern and tyrannous.

PROMETHEUS. 'Tis ever so. Full many an inno-
cent flower
Is womb and cradle to a poisonous berry.

Mark the cub lion, stolen from its dam,
Loved playmate of the youngling foresters,
Who laugh to see it shake its maneless neck,
And lash with scanty tail, and beat the earth
In angry sportiveness. Wait but awhile,
That lion's roar, like the low thunder-groan,
That rumbles under foot before an earthquake,
Shall send an horrible silence o'er the waste,
That every living thing shall send away,
Like shadow'd clouds when sun and moon are striving.

SYLPH. And yet 'twas sweet to listen to his tales,
And watch the strivings of the god within him.
For all his prattle and his childishness
Were godlike, full of hope and prophecy.
And so he wax'd lusty, and fair, and tall,
And bedded sinew changed his baby flesh,
That dimpled erst at every touch of love ;
And the loose ringlets of his silky hair
Knotted in crisper curls. His deepening voice
Told like a cavern'd oracle the fall
Of sky-throned dynasties. He grew, and grew,
A star-bright sign of fated empery ;
And all conspiring omens led him on
To lofty purpose and pre-eminence.
The mountain eagles, towering in their pride,
Stoop'd at his beck and flock'd about his path,
Like the small birds by wintry famine tamed ;

Or with their dusky and expansive wings
Shaded and fann'd him as he slept at noon.
The lightnings danced before him sportively,
And shone innocuous as the pale cold moon
In the clear blue of his celestial eye.
Oft the nigh thunder-clap, o'er Ida's peak,
Chiding the echoes that bemoock'd it, paused,
And with a low abasèd voice did homage
To its predestined Lord. But more than all,
With no ambiguous sign, the gifted Themis,
Thy mother, O Prometheus! pointed out
The very spot—a lovely spot it was,
Untrodden then, and wild, without a sound,
Save old Æsopus and his lonely song,
Where the glad sons of the deliver'd earth
Shall yearly raise their multitudinous voice,
Hymning great Jove, the God of Liberty!
Then he grew proud, yet gentle in his pride,
And full of tears, which well became his youth,
As showers do spring. For he was quickly moved,
And joy'd to hear sad stories that we told
Of what we saw on earth, of death and woe,
And all the waste of time. Then would he swear
That he would conquer time; that in his reign
It never should be winter; he would have
No pain, no growing old, no death at all.
And that the pretty damsels, whom we said

He must not love, for they would die and leave him,
Should evermore be young and beautiful ;
Or, if they must go, they should come again,
Like as the flowers did. Thus he used to prate,
Till we almost believed him. Oft at eve
We sang the glories of the coming age,
And oft surprised the wanderer in the woods
With bodements sweet of immortality.

PROMETHEUS. Aye, ye were blest with folly. Who
may tell

What strange conceits upon the earth were sown
And gender'd by the fond garrulity
Of your aëreal music ? Scatter'd notes,
Half heard, half fancied by the erring sense
Of man, on which they fell like downy seeds
Sown by autumnal winds, grew up, and teem'd
With plenteous madness. Legends marvellous
Of golden ages past, and dreams as wild,
As sweetly wild, of that auspicious birth,
That glorious advent of delight unfading,
Which brooks, and vesper gales, and all divine
Mysterious melodies, in sleep or trance,
Or lonely musing heard, to that blind race
So oft announced. Vain phantasies and hopes,
That shall be hopes for aye, from sire to son
Descending ; chaunted in a hundred tongues
By errant minstrels borne from land to land,

And in the storm-bewilder'd bark convey'd
To furthest isles, where yet unheard of man
The surges roar around. The various tribes,
Condemn'd alike to ever-present woe,
With various phantoms of futurity
Shall soothe their weary hour. Beneath the wain
Of slow Boötes, where a mimic moon,
Like fiery ensign of a spiritual host,
Flick'ring and rustling, streams along the sky ;
Where the black pine-woods splinter in the blast
That rides tempestuous o'er a wilderness
Of ancient snow, whose ineffectual gleam
Thwarts the pale darkness of the long long night,
And Ocean, slumbering in his icy bed,
Hears not the shrill alarum of the storm.
There Scalds uncouth, in horrid accents screaming,
To clash of arms and outcries terrible,
Tuning their song, shall tell of shadowy realms
Where the brave dead, the mighty of old time,
Urge the fierce hunt, the bloody banquet share,
And drink deep draught nectareous from the skulls
Of slaughter'd foes. But, in the perfumed groves,
Of the soft, languid, dreaming Orient,
And where, 'mid billowy sands, in the broad eye
Of an unprofitable, dewless heaven,
The lonely phoenix roams, shall hoary seers
And pensive shepherds, to believing maids

And meekest mothers, when their babes are hush'd,
Repeat the cherish'd tale at eventide,
Of a new world where peace shall ever dwell.
No armed hoof shall crush the daisy bold
That flaunts it in the sun, nor ambush'd foe
Invade the lurking violet in her bower,
Where beauty fades not, love is ever true,
And life immortal like a summer day.
Oh! happy creatures that, uncursed with love,
Look for a land they know not where, but deem
It may be girdled by the burning waste,
Or safely treasured in the secret ocean ;
Or, haply, in the moon, where they shall live
Beneath the sole and everlasting sway
Of him, the babe benign, mighty and wise,
Whose might and wisdom are but innocence
And childish simpleness. Thrice happy they
Who ne'er have found and never can believe
That innocence is mere defect of might—
Simplicity the very craft of Nature,
To hide the piteous void of ignorance,
Till guile is grown of age. Too soon 'tis seen
The great are ever best when least themselves.
The weakest wind that wantons with your curls,
Grown strong would be a scouring hurricane.

SVLPH. Alas ! thy words are like this spot, unholy.
Thou could'st not speak them in a better place.

PROMETHEUS. What place so holy where they are
not true ?

Ye see no tumult in the host of stars,
No taint of falsehood in the clear blue sky.
Yet there was ancient Uranus enthroned
And treason impious, foul, unnatural,
O'erwhelm'd his stellar and primeval seat
With horror and with shame.

SYLPH. And pleasant hills were those
Where the vast brood of Titan used to dwell,
Bathing their golden locks in morning light,
And sunn'd with even's latest, sweetest smile—
Her parting smile that bids the earth adieu.
Where are they gone, that giant brotherhood,
Lords of the mountains ?

Past like clouds away.
And seen no more—save when their misty shades,
Among the lonely peaks they loved so well,
Far off beheld, astound the mountaineer.

PROMETHEUS. Ay, they are gone; and he that holds
their place
Is like them, strong and blind. What wonder, then,
Though he fall mightily ?

SYLPH. The tale is told
Of Uranus and old Hyperion,
And that great mother: huge and sluggish powers
That just awoke from their eternal sleep

To gaze upon the new and vacant world,
Then sank to sleep again. And glad were we
When Saturn and his howling train were sent
To fright their slumbers in the nether void.
But must the youthful thunder-wielder fall,
For whom we sung the song of victory?
Fall from his high, his unapproachèd throne,
Which never god may touch, nor mortal eye
Pierce through the veil of congregated clouds,
That wave on wave, a dark and soundless sea,
Beneath it ebb and flow? Thus islanded,
It hangs enshrined in clear and crystal air,
And owns no kindred with the lower orb.
Oft have we seen that solitary height,
As gay we glanced athwart the sunny beam,
Or wash'd our pinions in the unfaill'n dew,
—And thought no peril and no change were there.

PROMETHEUS. 'Tis a fair spot, and holy. I have
known,

When Rhea's boy hath wonder'd what it was,
That other silver star that staid behind,
When Phosphor left the sky. Yet now he deems
His godhead as the light immutable,
That cares not whether it be morn or even.

SYLPH. There is a dark foreboding in thy speech;
Thine eyes flash fearfully a moody joy
That augurs a new downfall. Whence arise

These desperate hopes, that seem to make thee fond
Of lowest misery?

PROMETHEUS. I know it all—

All ye would ask. But ne'er shall hope be mine
Till the dread secret works its fatal will
In daylight visible, with wrath and scorn,
And ceaseless memory of forgotten things.
Then Jove shall learn what all his sulphurous bolts,
Soul-piercing torments, earthquakes, fiery plagues,
Disease, and loathsome, black deformity,
And all confounding shame, shall ne'er persuade
My voice to utter.

* * * *

THE SONG OF NYMPHS.*

—♦—

Ye patient fields, rejoice!
The blessing that ye pray for silently
Is come at last; for ye shall no more fade,
Nor see your flow'rets droop like famishing babes
Upon your comfortless breasts. Close, pent-up woods!
Open your secrets to the prying sun;
For den nor forest dark shall longer hide
The noisome thing. Take heart, poor flutterer!
Nor fear the glitter of the serpent's eye:

* Printed as a Fragment of Callimachus in the "Winter's Wreath" for 1831.

No more it shines to harm thee. Sing aloud,
Toss high the shrillness of thy gurgling throat,
And wake the silence of Olympian bowers,
That Jove may hear thee—he, the lovely boy,
The son of Saturn, mightier than his sire,
And gentler far. Thou hollow earth! resound,
And, like the maddening drum of Cybele,
Roll with delight thro' all thy sparry caves
A many-echoed peal. And, oh! ye soft
And wandering elements—ye sighing floods—
And thou, great treasury of light and music—
Embracing air with all your wealth of sounds,
And bodiless hues, and shadows glorified,
Of what on earth is terrible and fair
The fairer effluence and the living form,
With all your music, loud and lustily,
With every dainty joy of sight and smell,
Prepare a banquet meet to entertain
The Lord of Thunder, that hath set you free
From old oppression. Melancholy brook!
That creep'st along so dull and drowsily,
Wailing and waiting in the lazy noon,
In merry madness roar, and whirl, and bound,
Blithe as thy mountain sisters. Ne'er again
Shall summer drought, or icy manacle,
Obstruct thy tuneful liberty. Thou breeze,
That mak'st an organ of the mighty sea,

Obedient to thy wilful phantasies,
Provoke him not to scorn ; but soft and low,
As pious maid awakes her aged sire,
On tiptoe stealing, whisper in his ear
The tidings of the young god's victory.
Then shall he rouse him on his rocky bed,
And join the universal hymn with strains
Of solemn thankfulness and deep delight—
The blended sweetness of a thousand waves.
But where is he, the voice intelligent
Of Nature's minstrelsy ? Oh, where is man—
That mortal god, that hath no mortal kin
Or like on earth ? Shall Nature's orator—
The interpreter of all her mystic strains—
Shall he be mute in Nature's jubilee ?
Wilt thou be last in bliss and benison
That wast the first in lamentable wail,
And sole in conscious pain ? Haply he fears
The bitter doom, that out of sweetness makes
Its sad memorial. Mortal ! fear no more,—
The reign is past of ancient violence ;
And Jove hath sworn that time shall not deface,
Nor death destroy, nor mutability
Perplex the truth of love.

SKETCHES OF ENGLISH POETS.

IN RHYMES.

THESE sketches were written by the Author on the fly-leaves and covers of his copy of Anderson's British Poets. Unfortunately, the volume containing Pope was missing, which occasions a break in the series. The idea appears to have been taken from Addison's "Account of the greatest English Poets," a youthful composition addressed by him to Mr. Henry Sacheverell, April 3, 1694, in the twenty-second year of his age. The following extract from this poem will show the likeness and difference between the original and the imitation, if such it is to be considered.

Long had our dull forefathers slept supine,
Nor felt the rapture of the tuneful nine,
Till Chaucer first, a merry bard, arose,
And many a story told in rhyme and prose.
But age has rusted what the poet writ,
Worn out his language, and obscured his wit.
In vain he jests in his unpolish'd strain,
And tries to make his readers laugh in vain.
Old Spenser next, warm'd with poetic rag
In ancient tales amused a barbarous age;
An age that, yet uncultivate and rude,
Where'er the poet's fancy led, pursued
Through pathless fields and unfrequented floods,
To dens of dragons and enchanted woods.
But now the mystic tale that pleased of yore,
Can charm an understanding age no more.
The long-spun allegories fulsome grow,
While the dull moral lies too plain below.
We view, well-pleas'd, at distance all the sights
Of arms and palfries, battles, fields, and fights,
And damsels in distress, and courteous knights;
But when we look too near, the shades decay.
And all the pleasing landscape fades away.

CHAUCER.



How wayward oft appears the poet's fate,
 Who still is born too early or too late !
 If a bold, fond, imaginative age,
 Instinct with amorous, and with martial rage,
 Enact more wonders than the mind conceives,
 And all that fancy can devise believes,
 Produce a man by natural right a bard,
 To whom long thought, and chance perplex'd and
 hard,
 And books and men, and pensive cells and courts,
 And politic lore, and trade, and knightly sports,
 And, more than all, his own repented sin
 Have shown the outer world and that within ;—
 The fleeting language, to its trust untrue,
 Vext by the jarring claims of old and new,
 Defeats his beauty, makes his sense the fee
 Of a blind, guessing, blundering glossary.
 Thus CHAUCER, quaintly clad in antique guise,
 With unfamiliar mien scares modern eyes.

No doubt he well invented—nobly felt—
But, O ye powers ! how monstrously he spelt.
His syllables confound our critic men,
Who strive in vain to find exactly ten ;
And waste much learning to reduce his songs
To modish measurement of shorts and longs.
His language, too, unpolish'd and unfixt,
Of Norman, Saxon, Latin, oddly mixt—
Such words might please [th'] uneducated ears
That hail'd the blaring trumpets of Poitiers.
They shared the sable Edward's glee and glory,
And, like his conquests, they were transitory.
But how shall such old-fashion'd lingo cope
With polish, elegance, and Mister Pope ?

Yet, thou true Poet ! let no judgment wrong
Thy rich, spontaneous, many-colour'd song ;
Just mirror of a bold, ambitious age,
In passion furions, in reflection sage !—
An age of gorgeous sights and famous deeds,
And virtue more than peace admits or needs ;
When shiver'd lances were our ladies' sport,
And love itself assumed a lofty port ;
When every beast, and bird, and flower, and tree,
Convey'd a meaning and a mystery ;
And men in all degrees, sorts, ranks, and trades,
Knights, Palmers, Scholars, Wives, devoted Maids,

In garb, and speech, and manners, stood confest
 To outward view, by hues and signs exprest,
 And told their state and calling by their vest.

 SPENSER.

SWEET was the youth of virgin Poesy,
 That virgin sweetness which she gave to thee,
 My SPENSER, bard of happy innocence !
 For thou didst with a bridegroom's love intense
 Caress the fair inventions of thy brain,
 Those babes of paradise, without the pain
 Of mortal birth, to fairest heritage
 Born in the freshness of their perfect age.
 Thy Faery Knights had all the world in fee,
 For all the world was Faeryland to thee.
 Thine is no tale, once acted, then forgot ;
 Thy creatures never were, and never will be not.
 Oh ! look not for them in the dark abyss
 Where all things have been, and where nothing is—
 The spectral past ;—nor in the troubled sea
 Where all strange fancies are about to be—
 The unabiding present. Seek them where
 For ever lives the Good, the True, the Fair,

In the eternal silence of the heart.

There Spenser found them ; thence his magic art
Their shades evoked in feature, form, and limb,
Real as a human self, and bright as cherubim.
And what though wistful love and emulous arms,
And all the wizard might of mutter'd charms,—
Though slimy snakes disgorge their loathly rage,
And monstrous phantoms wait on Archimage :
These are but dreams, that come, and go, and peep
Through the thin curtain of a morning sleep,
But leave no pressure on the soul, that wakes
And hails the glad creation that it makes.

SHAKESPEARE.



SHAKESPEARE, what art thou? Could'st thou rise again
 To praise thyself, thy praise were old and vain ;
 Thy highest flight would sink beneath thy due ;
 Thy own invention would find nothing new.
 In the whole orb of nature that thou art,
 Complete in essence, and distinct in part ;
 No theme, no topic, and no simile,
 But busy men have stolen in praise of thee.
 Then let thy cumbrous critics keep their shelves ;
 We find thy truest comment in ourselves.
 In thee our thoughts find utterance, and combine
 Their airy substance with those thoughts of thine.
 By thee our feelings all are judged, acquitted,
 Reproved, condemn'd, with seemly action fitted.
 What chance, or change, affection, or the faith
 Of hope and fear, the benison or scathe
 Of Fortune infinite can make of man,—
 What man has been since first the world began,
 Thou well hast shown. One task alone remains,
 One great adventure for succeeding brains ;

The golden branch upon the mystic tree,
Unpluck'd, to show—man as he ought to be.

DRAYTON.

HAIL to thee, MICHAEL ! true, pains-taking wight,
So various that 'tis hard to praise thee right ;
For driest fact and finest faery fable
Employ'd thy genius indefatigable.
What bard more zealous of our England's glory,
More deeply versed in all her antique story,
Recorded feat, tradition quaint and hoary ?
What muse like thine so patiently would plod
From shire to shire in pilgrim sandal shod,
Calling to life and voice, and conscious will,
The shifting streamlet and the sluggish hill ?
Great genealogist of earth and water,
The very Plutarch of insensate matter.

DONNE.



BRIEF was the reign of pure poetic truth ;
 A race of thinkers next, with rhymes uncouth,
 And fancies fashion'd in laborious brains,
 Made verses heavy as o'erloaded wains.
 Love was their theme, but love that dwelt in stones,
 Or charm'd the stars in their concentric zones ;
 Love that did erst the nuptial rites conclude
 'Twixt immaterial form and matter rude ;
 Love that was riddled, sphered, transacted, spelt,
 Sublimed, projected, everything but felt.
 Or if in age, in orders, or the cholic,
 They damn'd all loving as a heathen frolic ;
 They changed their topic, but in style the same,
 Adored their maker as they wooed their dame.
 Thus DONNE, not first, but greatest of the line,
 Of stubborn thoughts a garland thought to twine ;
 To his fair Maid brought cabalistic posies,
 And sung quaint ditties of metempsychosis ;
 " Twists iron pokers into true love-knots,"
 Coining hard words, not found in polyglots.

DANIEL.



NOT such was DANIEL, gentle, bland, and good,
 The wisest monitor of womanhood ;
 Plain morals utter'd in plain mother tongue,
 And flat historic facts he plainly sung.
 And yet by earnest faith bestow'd a grace
 On bald event and ancient common-place.
 The oldest truths to him were always new ;
 No wonder, for he always felt them true.
 The bootless battles of the red and white,
 Which few can read, he patiently could write.

MILTON.



* * * *

DRYDEN.

THEN DRYDEN came, a mind of giant mould,
 Like the north wind, impetuous, keen, and cold ;
 Born to effect what Waller but essay'd,
 In rank and file his numbers he array'd,
 Compact as troops exact in battle's trade.
 Firm by restraint, and regularly strong,
 His vigorous lines resistless march along,
 By martial music order'd and inspired,
 Like glowing wheels by their own motion fired.
 So as a nation long inured to arms,
 And stirring strains, fierce pleasures, brisk alarms,
 Disdains a calm, and can no longer bear
 A soft, a pensive, or a solemn air ;
 Thus Dryden taught the English to despise
 The simply sweet, long-lingering melodies
 That lovely Spenser and his thoughtful peers
 Had warbled erst to rapt attentive ears.
 E'en Milton's billowy ocean of high sound,
 Delighted little, though it might astound ;
 The restless crowd impatient turn'd away,
 And sought a shorter, shriller, lighter lay

Yet Dryden nobly earn'd the poet's name,
And won new honours from the gift of fame.
His life was long, and when his head was grey,
His fortune broken, and usurp'd his bay,
His dauntless genius own'd no cold dismay ;
Nor in repining notes of vain regret
He made his crack'd pipe pitifully fret.
But when cashier'd and laid upon the shelf,
To shame the court excell'd his former self.
Who meant to clip, but imp'd his moulted wings,
And cured his ancient itch of flattering kings.
He sat gigantic on the shore of time,
And watch'd the ingress of encroaching slime,
Nor dream'd how much of evil or of good
Might work amid the far unfathom'd flood.

DRYDEN'S SUCCESSORS.



SAD were the times in Dryden's latter day,
 He saw all genius but his own decay ;
 Poor Otway starved, and Lee in misery dead,
 The laurel torn from his own hoary head,
 Like a frail father, he was doom'd to trace
 His vices only in his spurious race ;
 For many a rhymer claim'd him for a sire,
 With all his soot and less than half his fire.
 Their boast to reconcile—a vain pretence—
 The old antipathy of wit and sense.
 To write in rhyme as men might talk in prose,
 And win the frigid praise of critic beaux.
 But though their general theme was worldly man,
 Small was their skill the living heart to scan ;
 Their fancy little and the wisdom less,
 No inward truth their flippant lines express ;
 No image to the inward eye convey,
 Reveal no secret impulse to the day.
 Action or passion there were seldom found,
 Or the sweet magic of heart-stirring sound

Smooth was their verse indeed; their turns were nice,
Quick, neat, exact, as if they moved on ice;
They skimm'd the surface of the chilly town,
And sought from courts and clubs a brief renown.

PARNELL.



A GENTLE wit was pure, polite PARNELL,
By many praised, for many loved him well.
His muse glides on "with gentle swimming walk,"
And e'en while singing only seems to talk.
In fact she is an English gentlewoman,
Whom no one would believe a thing uncommon,
Till, by experience taught, we find how rare
Such truly English gentlewomen are.

SWIFT.



FIRST in the list behold the caustic Dean,
 Whose muse was like himself compact of spleen ;
 Whose sport was ireful, and his laugh severe,
 His very kindness cutting, cold, austere.

YOUNG AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.



'TIS sad to think, of all the names that strive
 For immortality, how few survive ;
 How many leave preferment's open ways,
 Smit with the love of hard-earn'd, barren praise,
 Defying poverty, and worldly shame,
 And self-reproach, to win the puff of fame ;
 Unhappy breathe, and unregarded rot,
 First starved to death, and soon as dead forgot.

Eternal laurels shall the bust entwine
 Of YOUNG at once a poet and divine.

And GRAY, while Windsor's antique towers shall
stand,

Or spring revisit Britain's favour'd land ;

While those old bards whose praise he sung so well

Shall keep their place in memory's haunted cell ;

While the green churchyard and the hallow'd tower

Attract your steps at eve's soft, solemn hour ;

As long as men can read, and boys recite,

As long as critics sneer, and bards endite,

And lavish lords shall print their jingling stuff,

Mid ample margin, leaving verge enough ;

So long shall Gray, and all he said and sung,

Tang the shrill accents of the school-girl's tongue ;

So long his Ode, his Elegy, and Bard,

By lisping prodigies be drawl'd and marr'd.

For LITTELTON, he gain'd the name of poet ;
But, made a lord, might easily forego it.

WEST tried to soar on Pindar's ample pinion,
And bring his strains beneath our king's dominion.
All praise to him for what he well intended ;
Of his success least said is soonest mended.

MOORE, CAWTHORNE, CUNNINGHAM, and BROWN and
GREEN,
Not much remember'd nor forgotten clean,

Of Britain's poets swell the lengthy list,
Scarce mark'd if present, nor if absent miss'd.

BOYCE, sad example of the poet's lot,
His faults remember'd and his verse forgot,
From cold contempt a morsel doom'd to crave,
And owe to public charity a grave.
In want's worst miseries ran his woeful race,
And all his fame was but proclaim'd disgrace.
Peace to his dust, and may his spirit soar
Where mortal frailty shall beset no more ;
Where want shall never tempt to deeds of shame,
And Heaven's pure light shall cleanse the tainted
name !

CHURCHILL, by want and rage impell'd to write,
Whose muse was anger, and whose genius spite,
With satire meant to stab, and not to heal,
The morbid, bloated, feverish commouweal ;
Too proud to yield to humble virtue's rule,
Smote half the world with reckless ridicule.
Wit, honour, sense, to him did Heaven impart,
But not that last, best gift, a pious heart.
He blazed awhile in fortune, fame, and pride,
But unrespected lived, untimely died.

But gentler GOLDSMITH, whom no man could hate,

Beloved of Heaven, pursued by wayward fate,
Whose verse shall live in every British mind,
Though sweet, yet strong; though nervous, yet
refined;—

A motley part he play'd in life's gay scene,
The dupe of vanity and wayward spleen;
Aping the world, a strange fantastic elf;
Great, generous, noble, when he was himself.

GRAINGER possess'd a true poetic vein,
But why waste numbers on a Sugar-cane?
Say, Doctor, why, since those who only need
Thy blank instructions, sure will never read?

COOPER essay'd a vein to England new,
To be the poet of refined virtù.
His muse, half French, half English, trips away,
A nymph presentable, though rather gay,
Brought up at Paris, and not half at ease
Where British morals hold their strict decrees.
But ill the gentleman supports his claim
To Gresset's wit or old Anacreon's name.

SMOLLETT and ARMSTRONG, both of Pæan's band,
Compatriot offspring of a thoughtful land,
A land severe, whose mettle yet unbroke
Toils in the team, and yet disdains the yoke.

In mind Athenian, but in spirit still
The land of Wallace wight, and Christie's Will.*
Such then was Scotland, nor could learning, art,
Or finest genius quite subdue that heart.
So neither keenest sense nor soundest morals
Could keep her brightest sons from needless quarrels.
And oft 't would seem her literary men
Reluctant changed the claymore for the pen.
Scots were they both by temper as by birth,
And both were racy of their native earth ;
But pensive ARMSTRONG, though he heir'd a name
For bloody deeds of old bequeath'd to fame,
On Liddal's banks renown'd and sands of Drife,
Was yet almost too indolent for strife.
And little of the Scot was in him seen,
Save now and then a passing fit of spleen.
And sure the man of whom our Thomson sung
(Thomson a Scot in nothing but his tongue)
In such a gentle strain of kind reproof,
As could be dictated by nought but love,
Could not be other than a kindly soul,
Who oft forgot the doctor o'er a bowl ;
And when he spied the humming, sparkling cream
Of bright champagne, or snuff'd of punch the steam.
Even as a poet would forget his theme.

* See *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol. III., p. 105. Second Edition.

Yet in his graver mood he lectured well
On ills which haply oft himself befell.
And with small practice, but with some small wealth,
He turn'd to stately verse the Art of Health ;
And justly earn'd a lofty place among
The masters of the blank didactic song.
Correct his judgment, he knew where to stop,
And smells by no means often of the shop.
Yea, though a learn'd disciple of St. Luke,
He never once alludes to purge or puke ;
Nor with hard words of most portentous omen
Describes the thorax, pelvis, or abdomen,
Nor winds his numbers thro' the duodenum,
Nor of the small guts sings, or tells you how to
clean 'em.

WILKIE, DODSLEY, &c.



WILKIE, the Scottish Homer, so 'tis said ;
 I will not censure what I never read.
 Had Homer been a chiel of merry Tweeddale,
 And had his trumpet been an old Scotch fiddle,
 His Pegasus a shuffling Shetland pad,
 Homer had wrote the Epigoniad.

Good DODSLEY, honest, bustling, hearty soul,
 A footman, verse-man, prose-man, bibliopole ;
 A menial first beneath a lady's roof,
 Then Mercury to guttling Dartineuf,
 His humble education soon complete,
 He learnt good things to write, good things to eat.
 Then boldly ventured on the buskin'd stage,
 And show'd how toys may help to make us sage :
 Nay, dared to bite the great with satire's tooth,
 And made a Miller tell his King the truth.
 In tragic strain he told Cleone's woes,
 The touching sorrows and the madd'ning throes

Of a fond mother and a faithful wife.
 He wrote "The Economy of Human Life."
 For flights didactic then his lyre he strung,
 Made rhymes on Preaching, and blank verse on
 Dung;
 Anon with soaring weary, much at his ease,
 Wrote Epigrams, and Compliments, and Kisses.
 All styles he tried, the tragic, comic, lyric,
 The grave didactic and the keen satiric;
 Now preach'd and taught as sober as a dominie,
 Now went piudarie-mad about Melpomene;
 Now tried the pastoral pipe and oaten stop,
 Yet all the while neglected not his shop.
 Fair be his fame, among a knavish clan
 His noblest title was an honest man.
 A bookseller, he robb'd no bard of pelf,
 No bard he libell'd, though a bard himself.

Far other fate was thine, unhappy KIT,*
 Luckless adventurer in the trade of wit.
 A bitter cup was offer'd to thy lip,
 Drugg'd with the wants and woes of authorship.
 Untimely thrust upon this mortal stage,
 No childish pastime could thy thoughts engage.
 Books were thy playmates. In a happy dream
 Thy hours unmark'd would glide along the stream

* Christopher Smart, born April 11, 1722; died May 21, 1773.

Of fancies numberless, and sweet, and fair ;
Link'd like the notes of some voluptuous air,
For ever varying as the hues that deck
With changeful loveliness the ring-dove's neck.
Still rising, flitting, melting, blending,
For ever passing, and yet never ending.
Sweet life were this, if life might pass away
Like the soft numbers of a warbled lay ;
Were man not doom'd to carefulness and toil,
A magic lamp with unconsuming oil.
Truth is a lesson of another school,
And duty sways us with a stricter rule.
The stream of life awhile that smoothest flows,
'Ere long is hurried down the steep of woes,
Or, lost in swamps of penury and shame,
Leaves the foul vapour of a tainted name.

Like fate, or worse, poor CUTHBERT,* made thy life
A woful monument to thy dead wife.
With her of virtue and of hope bereft,
Thou and thy passions in the world wert left.
True, thou hast sweetly mourn'd thy youthful bride,
But well it were if thou with her hadst died.

For LANGHORNE, Reverend let him still continue,
Although his mind had very little sinew.

* Cuthbert Shaw, born 1738 or 1739; died September 1, 1771.

'Twas his to ape our reverend ancient lays
With mincing prettiness of modern phrase,
As some fine ladies mimic in their dress
The simple finery of a shepherdess ;
And shape their silks and muslins to the cut
That decks the dwellers of the mud-built hut.

SONNETS AND OTHER SHORT POEMS

ON

SCRIPTURAL AND RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS.

It was the intention of the Author to have published a series of Sonnets and other short Poems, exclusively on Scriptural subjects, as a Christmas present. The greater part of the pieces in the present collection were written with this design, (which, as explained in the Memoir, was never executed,) about ten or twelve years before his death. To these are now added several others, of an expressly religious character, but in which the personality of the author is less concealed. The beautiful sonnet which I have placed at the close of the series, was written in a friend's house in the year 1848; the last of his mortal life. *Respice finem.*

THE BIBLE.



How very good is God! that he hath taught
To every Christian that can hear and see
Both what he is and what he ought to be,
And how and why the saints of old have fought.
Whate'er of truth the antique sages sought,
And could but guess of his benign decree,
Is given to Faith affectionate and free,
Not wrung by force of self-confounding thought.
How many generations had gone by
'Twixt suffering Job and boding Malachi!
'Twixt Malachi and Paul—how mute a pause!
Is the book finish'd? May not God once more
Send forth a prophet to proclaim his laws
In holy words not framed by human lore?

THE LITURGY.



OFT as I hear the Apostolic voice
 Speaking to God, I blame my heart so cold
 That with those words, so good, so pure, and old,
 Cannot repent nor hope, far less rejoice.
 Yet am I glad, that not the vagrant choice,
 Chance child of impulse, timid, or too bold,
 The volume of the heart may dare unfold
 With figured rhetoric, or unmeaning noise.
 Praying for all in those appointed phrases,
 Like a vast river, from a thousand fountains,
 Swoll'n with the waters of the lakes and mountains,
 The pastor bears along the prayers and praises
 Of many souls in channel well defined,
 Yet leaves no drop of prayer or praise behind.

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.



“THE just shall live by faith,”—and why? That faith
By which they live is all that makes them just,
The sole antagonist to the inborn lust
And malice that subjects them to the death
Which Adam earn'd, Cain, Abel suffer'd, Seth
Bequeath'd to all his progeny ; who must
Suffer the primal doom of dust to dust,
And for uncertain respite hold their breath.
Think not the faith by which the just shall live
Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
Far less a feeling fond and fugitive,
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given.
It is an affirmation and an act
That bids eternal truth be present fact.

BELIEVE AND PRAY.



BELIEVE and pray. Who can believe and pray
 Shall never fail nor falter, though the fate
 Of his abode, or geniture, or date,
 With charms beguile or threats obstruct his way.
 For free is faith and potent to obey,
 And love content in patient prayer to wait,
 Like the poor cripple at the Beautiful Gate,
 Shall be relieved on some miraculous day.
 Lord, I believe!—Lord, help mine unbelief!
 If I could pray, I know that thou would'st hear;
 Well were it though my faith were only grief,
 And I could pray but with a contrite tear.
 But none can pray whose wish is not thy will,
 And none believe who are not with thee still.

EDEN.*



No revelation hath withdrawn the veil
 That God hath deigned to cast o'er Eden's bowers.
 How many generations of sweet flowers
 Young Eve beheld, before the Serpent's trail
 Through the long alleys winded fraught with bale,
 No tongue hath told, no wit of man divined :—
 The blessed twain, the sole of human kind
 Dreamed not that love or life could ever fail.
 But Eden was an isle by God exempted
 From sin or stain, a spot of special grace ;
 Age upon age, ere mother Eve was tempted,
 Heaped world on world and bony race on race :—
 What was it all to Adam or his wife ?
 'Tis from their day of sin we date their life.

* See Memoir.

SETH.

SAD was the Mother of Mankind to see
The sad fulfilment of the primitive curse ;
The gentle babe she was so fond to nurse,
Her duteous Abel, that would clasp her knee,
So meekly heark'ning to the history
Of the sweet hours his parents pass'd, before
They learn'd of good and ill the fatal lore,
Or pluck'd the fruit of that forbidden tree.—
What is he now ? A helpless lump of earth !
Nay, thou poor Mother, do not so distrust
The Lord, that raised thy husband from the dust,
For he shall give to thee another birth,
A holy babe, whose seed shall save his brother,
And give back Abel to their common Mother.

ENOCH.



HE walk'd with God, and like the breath of prayer,
His earthly substance melted all away :
So much he loved the Lord, his mortal clay
Abolish'd quite, or blent with pervious air,
Soft as a rainbow, mix'd with things that were
And are not. Surely God did love him well,
And he loved God so much, he could not dwell
Where God was not. The world was blank and bare ;
He was most wretched, for he could not love.
But the good Lord took pity on his woe :
For woe it is, with all the heart above,
To walk a heartless corpse on earth below.
He faded from the earth, and was unseen ;
A thought of God was all that he had been.

ABRAHAM.

WHEN Abram was a boy the years were long,
As ours might be, did we for every hour
Extract the good and realise the power,
And train the notes to everlasting song.
And Abram was a comely youth, and strong,
And nimbly 'mid the silky reeds he trod,
When he resolved—"the Lord shall be my God,"
And knew the only God can do no wrong.
Had he not felt that God is God alone,
As holy, as almighty, and all-seeing,—
Foul were his sin, that would with blood atone,
And court the favour of unselfish Being.
But long experience taught him God was true,
And could the life he took by grace renew.

HAGAR.



LONE in the wilderness, her child and she,
Sits the dark beauty, and her fierce-eyed boy ;
A heavy burden, and no winsome toy
To such as her, a hanging babe must be.
A slave without a master—wild, not free,
With anger in her heart ! and in her face
Shame for foul wrong and undeserved disgrace,
Poor Hagar mourns her lost virginity !
Poor woman, fear not—God is everywhere ;
Thy silent tears, thy thirsty infant's moan,
Are known to Him, whose never-absent care
Still wakes to make all hearts and souls his own ;
He sends an angel from beneath his throne
To cheer the outcast in the desert bare

ISAAC AND REBEKAH.



THE child of promise, spared by God's command,
He grew and ripen'd, till his noon of life,
As days were then, deserved and claim'd a wife ;
But she must be no toy of faithless land ;
So the good steward o'er the thirsty sand
His prescient camels follows to the well,
Where the sweet daughter of old Bethuel
Supplies his need with white and courteous hand.
And oh ! what meeter than a maid so fair
To be the answer to that good man's prayer ?
And then how sweetly did the Spirit move her,
Without a word of maidenly delay,
Or coy petition for a farewell day,
To quit her home, and seek an unseen lover !

LEAH.



Most patient of all women, unbeloved,
Yet ever toiling for thy husband's grace,
Methinks I see thee, with thy downcast face,
Pondering on tasks that should not be reprov'd,
For seven long years their tents were not removed,
And Leah work'd for Jacob all the while,
And yet she hardly got a sullen smile,—
So good a wife, and mother duly prov'd.
Yet sore it must have been to see her mate
Rising at morn to work, and working late,
And know he work'd so hard to get another ;
And yet she bore it all, in hope to be,
What her sweet offspring was, by God's decree,
The better Eve, the second Adam's mother.

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES.



SHE left her babe, and went away to weep,
 And listen'd oft to hear if he did cry ;
 But the great river sang his lullaby,
 And unseen angels fann'd his balmy sleep,—
 And yet his innocence itself might keep.
 The sacred silence of his slumb'rous smile
 Makes peace in all the monster-breeding Nile ;
 For God e'en now is moving in the sweep
 Of mighty waters. Little dreams the maid,
 The royal maid, that comes to woo the wave
 With her smooth limbs beneath the trembling shade
 Of silver-chaliced lotus, what a child
 Her freak of pity is ordain'd to save !
 How terrible the thing that looks so mild !

October 6, 1836.

ON A PICTURE OF JEPHTHAH AND HIS DAUGHTER.

BY STROZZI. IN THE POSSESSION OF J. BRANCKER, ESQ.

I.

'Tis true the painter's hand can but arrest
The moment that in Nature never stays,
But fleets impatient of the baffled gaze.
Yet if that single moment be the best
Of many years, commission'd to attest
The excellence, whose beauty ne'er decays,
Let not the mute art lack a rightful praise,
That shows the lovely ever loveliest :
And thou, sweet maid ! for ever keep that look :
Thou never hadst so sweet a look till now.
Read in thy father's face, as in a book,
Thy virgin doom, the irrevocable vow.
Well were it if thy father ne'er had shook
Away the doubt that hangs upon his brow.

IN CONTINUATION.



II.

WHAT if the angry God hath made thy arm
 Dread as the thunderbolt or solid fire,
 Or pest obedient to his vengeful ire,
 Think'st thou thy oath was like a wizard's charm,
 Or hadst thou need, with proffer'd blood, to farm
 Jehovah's might? It proves thy faith unsure,
 Thy creed idolatrous, thy heart impure ;
 Thy god a greedy trafficker in harm,
 Not Israel's hope. But she, thy daughter, mild,
 Whose eager love and over-hasty greeting,
 Has made thee murderer of thy blameless child,
 Loves not the less for that unhappy meeting ;—
 Guiltless she dies, to save thee from the guilt
 Which must be thine, though her pure blood be spilt.

RUTH.



MANY and fierce the battles that the sons
 Of Jacob fought for their predestined land,
 And often for their wives and little ones
 With blood they stain'd the wilderness of sand ;
 A tale of bloodshed is their history,
 And to all Christian hearts a mystery.

But in the bleakest wild is sometimes seen
 A grove of palms beside an oozy spring ;
 There way-worn pilgrims bless the spot of green,
 And the weak bird lets drop her weary wing ;
 Such, in the wild and waste of Bible truth,
 Is the sweet story of the faithful Ruth.

RIZPAH.



BLOOD will have blood. Here is a grievous pest,
And Gibeon craves the blood of guilty Saul.
And what can David do? He gives not all—
One he reserves, to death resigns the rest.
Poor Rizpah, mother of a brood unblest'd,
Must see Amoni and Mephibosheth
For Israel's life to ignominious death,
Because their sire so fatally transgress'd,
Consign'd tho' guiltless. She, sad mother, staid
On her stern seat of sackcloth day by day,
And, like a statue, scared the fowls away,
'Till genial rain the thirst of earth allay'd.
Patient in grief, she won the historic Spirit,
To make immortal mention of her merit.

SOLOMON.

THEN Solomon sat on the throne as king ;
 So had his sire appointed :—great and least,
 Hebrew and Stranger, warrior chief and priest,
 With one glad shout make air, earth, rock to ring.
 Ah ! sons of Abraham, is it such a thing
 That your old monarch is so nigh deceased ?
 And ye must blow your horns, as if the feast
 Of the ripe harvest and the hopeful spring
 Fell on one day. 'Tis well the old man dies.
 The sweetest string in all the holy lyre
 Cracks when the old man heaves his latest sighs,
 And with his breath the highest tones expire.
 Ten thousand minstrels play for Solomon—
 What are they all, if David be not one ?

ELIJAH.



A LITTLE cake he ask'd for, that was all ;
And that she gave—'twas all she had to give
To the poor hungry Prophet fugitive ;
Not knowing quite, she yet believed the call,
And she was blest. Within her cottage wall,
By day the Prophet prays, at night he lies,
Whose prayer and presence daily multiplies
The meal and cruse that, let what will befall,
Shall still suffice for each successive day.
She gave a little, and he gave enough,
And taught us how to use the passive stuff
That earth affords,—to give and still to pray.
Hope be the Prophet, and the cruse Content !
Where Hope abides the cruse shall ne'er be spent.

EZRA, III., 11—13.

—♦—

HARK! what a shout! Alas! it sounds but thin,
Though the sad remnant like one man unite,
And the lorn widow brings her widow's mite.
Few are the tribes, and feeble is their din,
Subdued with memory of ancestral sin,
Opprest with conscience of a guilty fear
And faint distrust, and hope but half sincere,
That asks the end before they well begin
The holy renovation. Drear the tone
Of joyous hymns in trembling accents piped;
And faces stain'd with selfish tears unwiped,
Ill emulate the upturn'd look that shone
In God's own light, what time the Cherubim
Made the first Temple's gilded glory dim.

CHRISTMAS.

Now the day of joy is come,
 Let's be joyful all and some ;
 We were waked to life
 By the thrilling fife,
 And the dub-a-dub of the rumbling drum.
 Through the twists and the turns of the winding horn
 The news is loud sounded—The Mighty is born !
 The Mighty to conquer—the Mighty to save !
 Here's a health to all friends on the land or the wave !

But she that bare Him, where was she
 At this high time of jollity ?
 Virgin mother—Virgin bride,
 With her Baby by her side ;
 There she lies on musty straw,
 In crazy stall, by many a flaw
 Of many a winter, drill'd and holed,
 Weak, and comfortless, and cold ;

With no sister, and no mother,
None of womankind to soothe her.

Only he, ordain'd to wed,
And never take her to his bed,
Yet her husband and defender,
Watches nigh to cheer and tend her.

Mary—mother undefiled,

She smiles and weeps on her mysterious Child.

Not of her unheard, I guess,

When her mother's pains were blending

With the mother's blessedness,

Hymn of angels, low descending,

Through the abysmal depth of sky—

Peace be to men on earth, glory to God on high.

She lifted up her thankful eyes,

Yet all her thanks were sobs and sighs ;

And ever with a pensive grace

She gazes on her Baby's face ;

And ever and anon she sighs,

And weeps awhile, and then she prays.

And looks upon her Babe with downcast gaze,

As if she knew the wee thing by her side

Must be despised, and spit upon, and crucified !

Watching shepherds have had warning
Of the sweet and gracious morning ;
They leave their lambs upon the sod,
And come to see the Lamb of God.
The Baby smiles—He cannot speak,
For He is as mute and weak
As any other son of man ;—
He smiles, and that is all He can.
For He in heaven has left behind
All that could mark him from mankind,
And years shall pass before the hour
That He shall first display creative power.
But, lowly shepherds, unto you 'tis given
To see what God did ne'er before disclose,
A wonder to the sagest thrones in Heaven—
Your Lord Himself, disguised in swaddling clothes.
What angels could not guess before 'twas done—
The secret lies asleep with that sweet little one.
Lowly shepherds, haste away,
Ye have done whate'er ye could ;
Ye can only praise and pray,
Seek your flocks beside the wood ;—
Beside the wood, and on the glimmering plain :
Lord grant ye have not seen your Lord in vain !

And now the Babe sits upright on her knee.
Calm is the mother, as a humble soul
Is ever calm when it receives a dole
Of grace, that makes it more devout and free.
 But there has been a star,
 That hath summon'd from afar,
Even from the farthest East, from burning realms,
Which oft the sandy tempest overwhelms,—
From tribes that haply have survived the wreck
Of ancient knowledge, whom Melchisedech
Led eastward ever towards the Sun's nativity,
Up steep Himaus' height and down his sharp
 declivity,—
 Three venerable men,
Most reverend all, as aged men should be :
But who they were abides beyond the ken
 Of Time-defeating History.
Three men there were, with frankincense and myrrh,
Knelt before Mary and entreated her,
 For her sweet Infant's sake—for all
 That he might be, and men might holy call,
To take their gold and frankincense and myrrh.
The maiden smiled, the Baby smiled likewise ;
Yet there was something in his mien and eyes,

That said—I take it as the gift of love :
Ye seek to please an infant with a toy.
So go your ways. Back to your spicy grove ;
But Christ is not, for aye, a baby boy :
I do not love your incense or your gold,
Like the sweet welcome from the shepherds' fold.

But since that maiden mother, meek,
Within a little, little week,
Such strange adventures had to bear,
So fearful strange,—she did not dare
To ask of God, or her own heart
What holy truth they might impart :
And since the tears were still in Mary's eyes
Till her blest Son received her in the skies,—
Let not the heart, whose sorrow cannot call
This Christmas merry, slight the festival :
Let us be merry that may merry be,
But let us not forget that many mourn ;
The smiling Baby came to give us glee,
But for the weepers was the Saviour born.

SIMEON.

IN the huge temple, deck'd by Herod's pride,
Who fain would bribe a God he ne'er believed,
Kneels a meek woman, that hath once conceived,
Tho' she was never like an earthly bride.
And yet the stainless would be purified,
And wash away the stain that yet was none,
And for the birth of her immaculate Son
With the stern rigour of the law complied :
The duty paid received its due reward
When Simeon bless'd the Baby on her arm ;
And though he plainly told her that a sword
Must pierce her soul, she felt no weak alarm,
For that for which a Prophet thank'd the Lord
Once to have seen, could never end in harm.

JESUS PRAYING.

LUKE VI. 12.



HE sought the mountain and the loneliest height,
 For He would meet his Father all alone,
 And there, with many a tear and many a groan,
 He strove in prayer throughout the long, long night.
 Why need He pray, who held by filial right,
 O'er all the world alike of thought and sense,
 The fullness of his Sire's omnipotence?
 Why crave in prayer what was his own by might?
 Vain is the question,—Christ was man in deed,
 And being man, his duty was to pray.
 The Son of God confess'd the human need,
 And doubtless ask'd a blessing every day.
 Nor ceases yet for sinful man to plead,
 Nor will, till heaven and earth shall pass away.

BUT JESUS SLEPT.



“BUT Jesus slept.” The inland sea was wild,
And the good son of Mary was asleep,
For sleep He did, an infant meek and mild,
When fain He would, and fain He would not weep;
As peevish, fond, as any other child,
Close to the Virgin breast He long’d to creep,
And feel the warmth of mother undefiled.
And now the Shepherd of the chosen sheep,
Doth He not watch? Oh, vain and faithless quest!
He slept a man,—but, lo! He wakes our God!
What man is this, at whose almighty nod
The winds are still, and every wave at rest?
Tis He whose seeming sleep approves our faith.
But ever wakes to save us from the death.

SUNDAY.



THOU blessed day ! I will not call thee last,
Nor Sabbath,—last nor first of all the seven,
But a calm slip of intervening heaven,
Between the uncertain future and the past ;
As in a stormy night, amid the blast,
Comes ever and anon a truce on high,
And a calm lake of pure and starry sky
Peers through the mountainous depth of clouds amass'd.
Sweet day of prayer ! e'en they whose scrupulous dread
Will call no other day, as others do,
Might call thee Sunday without fear or blame ;
For thy bright morn deliver'd from the dead
Our Sun of Life, and will for aye renew
To faithful souls the import of thy name.

IN CONTINUATION.



The ancient Sabbath was an end,—a pause,—
A stillness of the world; the work was done!
But ours commemorates a work begun.

Why, then, subject the new to antique laws?
The ancient Sabbath closed the week, because
The world was finish'd. Ours proclaims the sun,
Its glorious saint, alert its course to run.

Vanguard of days! escaped the baffled jaws
Of slumberous dark and death,—so fitly first
Is Sunday ranked before the secular days;
Unmeetly clad in weeds, with arms reversed,
To trail in sullen thought by silent ways.
Like the fresh dawn, or rose-bud newly burst,
So let our Sabbath wear the face of praise!

THE SOUL.



Is not the body more than meat? The soul
Is something greater than the food it needs.
Prayers, sacraments, and charitable deeds,
They realise the hours that onward roll
Their endless way "to kindle or control."
Our acts and words are but the pregnant needs
Of future being, when the flowers and weeds,
Local and temporal, in the vast whole
Shall live eternal. Nothing ever dies!
The shortest smile that flits across a face,
Which lovely grief hath made her dwelling-place
Lasts longer than the earth or visible skies!
It is an act of God, whose acts are truth,
And vernal still in everlasting youth.

PRAYER.



BE not afraid to pray—to pray is right.
Pray, if thou canst, with hope ; but ever pray,
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay ;
Pray in the darkness, if there be no light.
Far is the time, remote from human sight,
When war and discord on the earth shall cease ;
Yet every prayer for universal peace
Avails the blessed time to expedite.
Whate'er is good to wish, ask that of Heaven,
Though it be what thou canst not hope to see :
Pray to be perfect, though material leaven
Forbid the Spirit so on earth to be ;
But if for any wish thou darest not pray,
Then pray to God to cast that wish away.

PRIVILEGES.



Good is it to be born in Christian land,
 Within the hearing of sweet Sabbath bells,
 To con our letters in the book that tells
 How God vouchsafed His creatures to command.
 How once He led His chosen by the hand,
 Presenting to their young and opening sense
 Such pictures of His dread Omnipotence,
 As all could see, though none might understand.
 Oh! good it is to dwell with Christian folk,
 Where even the blind may see, the deaf may hear,
 The words that Paul hath wrote, that Jesus spoke,
 By book or preacher shown to eye or ear,
 Where Gospel truth is rife as song of birds—
 “Familiar in our ears as household words.”

FAITH—HOW GUARDED.



Yes, thou dost well, to arm thy tender mind
With all that learning, and stern common sense
Living hath spoke, or dying left behind ;
To blank the frowardness of pert pretence
With long experience of a mighty mind,
That, daring to explore the truth immense,
Subsided in a faithful reverence
Of the best Catholic hope of human kind.
Yes, thou dost well to build a fence about
Thine inward faith, and mount a stalwart guard
Of answers, to oppose invading doubt.
All aids are needful, for the strife is hard ;
But still be sure the truth within to cherish,—
Truths long besieged too oft of hunger perish.

STAY WHERE THOU ART.



STAY where thou art, thou canst not better be,
For thou art pure and noble as thou'rt sweet,
And thy firm faith still working, will complete
A lovely picture of the Deity.
For 'tis in thee, mild maid, and such as thee,
Whose goodness would make any features fair,
I find the faith that bids me not despair,
But know there is a Saviour even for me.
May God in mercy from thy knowledge hide
All but the path in which thou art advancing.
For evil things there are, on either side,
Dark flames on one, like antic demons dancing,
And on the left a desert waste and wide,
Where is no star, no chart, no compass, and no guide.

PSALM XCI. v. 1.

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide
under the shadow of the Almighty.”

WHERE is that secret place of the Most High?
And who is He? Where shall we look for Him
That dwelleth there? Between the cherubim,
That o'er the seat of grace, with constant eye,
And outspread wing, brood everlastingly?
Or shall we seek that deeper meaning dim,
And as we may, walk, flutter, soar, and swim,
From deep to deep of the void, fathomless sky?
Oh! seek not there the secret of the Lord
In what hath been, or what may never be;
But seek the shadow of the mystic word—
The shadow of a truth thou canst not see:
There build thy nest, and, like a nestling bird,
Find all thy safety in thy secrecy.

ISAIAH XLVI. v. 9.

WHEN I consider all the things that were,
And count them upwards from the general flood,
The tricks of fraud, and violent deeds of blood,
Weigh down the heart with sullen, dull despair.
I well believe that Satan, Prince of Air,
Torments to ill the pleasurable feeling ;
But ever and anon a breeze of healing
Proclaims that God is always everywhere.
'Twas hard to see Him in the times of old,
And harder still to see our God to-day ;
For prayer is slack, and love, alas ! is cold,
And Faith a wanderer, weak and wide astray :
Who hath the faith, the courage, to behold
God in the judgments that have pass'd away ?

THE CHURCH.



OH! do not think I slight, or scorn, or hate
 The zeal wherewith ye view the strong and vast
 Dominion of the Church in ages past,
 And giant splendour of her huge estate ;
 For in her outward semblance she was great,—
 A mighty mansion, fit to entertain
 All nations, whom the mountain or the plain,
 Or Nature, in the length of time, could generate.
 Ye wish, I know, we could as one unite,
 And have a Church as ample as the sky,
 Whence every Church might draw its whole of light,
 And not divide, but only multiply.
 Good is your purpose ; but, ye English youth,
 Are ye quite sure that this is perfect *truth* ?

RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES.



YEA. we do differ, differ still we must,
 For language is the type of thought, and thought
 The slave of sense ; and sense is only fraught
 With cheques and tokens taken upon trust,
 Not for their worth but promise. Earth is all
 One mighty parable of Hell and Heaven.
 The portion we can read at best is small ;
 'Tis little that we know, and if befall
 That faith do wander, like the restless raven,
 That rather chose without an aim to roam
 O'er the blank world of waters, than to seek
 In the one sacred ark, a duteous home,
 May good be with it! Yet the bird so meek,
 The missive dove, that ne'er begrudged her pain,
 But duly to the ark return'd again,
 And brought at last the promise and the pledge
 Of peace, hath won a dearer privilege,—

To be of birds the most beloved of maids,—
To be the emblem and security
Of mother's love and wedded purity !
And see the mystic dove that sinks and fades
In unreflected light on Jordan river,
Upon the Mighty Sin Forgiver !
Sweet dove, sweet image of the faith that rests
All doubts, all questions past,
In babe-like love at last,
With that dear Babe divine, between the Virgin's
breasts.

Yes, we do differ when we most agree,
For words are not the same to you and me.
And it may be our several spiritual needs
Are best supplied by seeming different creeds.
And differing, we agree in one
Inseparable communion,
If the true life be in our hearts—the faith,
Which not to want is death ;
To want is penance ; to desire
Is purgatorial fire ;
To hope, is paradise ; and to believe
Is all of Heaven that earth can e'er receive.

WYTHEBURN CHAPEL AND HOSTEL.



HERE, traveller, pause and think, and duly think
What happy, holy thoughts may heavenward rise,
Whilst thou and thy good steed together drink
Beneath this little portion of the skies.

See! on one side, a humble house of prayer,
Where Silence dwells, a maid immaculate,
Save when the Sabbath and the priest are there,
And some few hungry souls for manna wait.

Humble it is and meek and very low,
And speaks its purpose by a single bell ;
But God Himself, and He alone, can know
If spiry temples please Him half so well.

Then see the world, the world in its best guise,
 Inviting thee its bounties to partake ;
Dear is the Sign's old time-discolour'd dyes,
 To weary trudger by the long black lake.

And pity 'tis that other studded door,
 That looks so rusty right across the way,
Stands not always as was the use of yore,
 That whoso passes may step in and pray.

ON THE CONSECRATION OF A SMALL CHAPEL.

I.

THERE was a little spot of level ground,
For many an age unmark'd by casual eyes,
Bleak hills afar and sinuous banks around,
And terraced gardens, graduate mound on mound,
With every season's sweet variety.
And there uprose an house devote to God,
As lowly as befits a house of prayer ;
Yet large enough to sanctify the sod,
The heaving earth that may conceal a clod,
Which human love may wish to treasure there.
O Lord ! methinks to give this spot to Thee
Did hardly need an act of consecration :
I deem the pile no wilful novelty,
But a good purpose—old as Thy creation.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

II.

AND yet I deem we rightly may rejoice
 When the chief shepherd of the many flocks,
 That wait the high call of his pastoral voice
 On sunny lawns or yellow pastures choice,
 Or crop the turf beneath the sheltering rocks,—
 Comes to unite this lone and sever'd fold,
 That feed so gently on their native flowers,
 With the blest sheep that bled in days of old.
 Oh! should we not be thankful to behold
 Our shepherd chief in such a fold as ours?
 Now may the Sabbath utterance of the dell,
 With all the churches, make a mighty *one*,
 And with the minster organ's gorgeous swell
 The simple psalm combine in unison.

THE DESERTED CHURCH.

AFTER long travail on my pilgrimage,
 I sat me down beside an aged heap,
 For so it seem'd, with one square shatter'd keep,
 Pensively frowning on the wrecks of age.
 The river there, as at its latest stage,
 Sinks in the verdure of its Sunday sleep,
 And sings an under-song for them that weep
 O'er the sad blots in life's too open page.
 I look'd within, but all within was cold!
 The walls were mapp'd with isles of dusky damp,
 The long stalls look'd irreverently old,
 The rush-strewn aisle was like a wither'd swamp.
 And mark'd with loitering foot's unholy tramp;
 The chancel floor lay thick with sluggish mould.
 Hark! do you hear the dull unfrequent kuell,
 Survivor sad of many a merry peal,
 Whose Sabbath music wont to make us feel
 Our spirits mounting with its joyous swell,
 That scaled the height, that sunk into the dell?

Now lonely, lowly swinging to and fro,
It warns a scatter'd flock e'en yet to go,
And take a sip of the deserted well.
And, dost thou hear?—then, hearing, long endure.
The Gospel sounds not now so loud and bold
As once it did. Some lie in sleep secure,
And many faint because their love is cold ;
But never doubt that God may still be found,
Long as one bell sends forth a Gospel sound !

THE WORD OF GOD.



IN holy books we read how God hath spoken
To holy men in many different ways ;
But hath the present work'd no sign or token ?
Is God quite silent in these latter days ?

And hath our heavenly Sire departed quite,
And left His poor babes in this world alone,
And only left for blind belief—not sight—
Some quaint old riddles in a tongue unknown ?

Oh ! think it not, sweet maid ! God comes to us
With every day, with every star that rises ;
In every moment dwells the Righteous,
And starts upon the soul in sweet surprises.

The word were but a blank, a hollow sound,
If He that spake it were not speaking still,—
If all the light and all the shade around
Were aught but issues of Almighty will.

Sweet girl, believe that every bird that sings,
And every flower that stars the elastic sod,
And every thought the happy summer brings
To thy pure spirit, is a word of God.

A GRACE.

—♦—

SWEETEST Lord ! that wert so blest
On thy sweetest mother's breast,
Give to every new-born baby
Food that needs—as good as may be.
Jesus ! Lord, who long obey'd
The sainted sire, the Mother Maid,
Teach my young heart to submit,—
Deign thyself to govern it.
Babe, and boy, and youth, and man,
All make up the mighty plan ;
And these the Saviour sanctified,
For He was all—and then He died.
Whate'er He gives us we may take,
But still receive it for His sake.

But might the prayer within my breast
Make others blest, as I am blest ;
And might my joy in thanking Thee
Make for all hungry souls a plea ;
Then would I praise and Thee adore,
And ever thank Thee, more and more
Rejoicing, if Thou would'st but bless
Thy creatures for my thankfulness.

“MULTUM DILEXIT.”



SHE sat and wept beside His feet ; the weight
 Of sin oppress'd her heart ; for all the blame,
 And the poor malice of the worldly shame,
 To her was past, extinct, and out of date,
 Only the *sin* remain'd,—the leprous state ;
 She would be melted by the heat of love,
 By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove
 And purge the silver ore adulterate.
 She sat and wept, and with her untress'd hair
 Still wiped the feet she was so blest to touch ;
 And He wiped off the soiling of despair
 From her sweet soul, because she loved so much.
 I am a sinner, full of doubts and fears,
 Make me a humble thing of love and tears.

NOTES BY THE EDITOR.

SONNET I.

THE first sketch of this sonnet was sent by the Author in a letter to his mother, when it had been proposed to him to write an Essay on his father's life and genius.

SONNET X, page 12, lines 3, 4.

Aliter—

And tinged by time like patch of snow in May
In hollow cove *for winter left to wait.*

SONNET XIII, page 15.

This sonnet, with that on Freedom, page 49, are variations, and, as the Editor thinks, improvements upon those bearing the same name in the first volume,—if, indeed, they be not the original sketches.

SONNET XIV, page 16.

On this sonnet the author observes: “It was written in haste, and contains little more than a general hint, or perhaps a few turns of phrase.”

SONNET XXIII, page 25.

The last six lines of this sonnet are thus expressed in what appears to be the first copy :—

Far otherwise the creed of her that made
 This brief memorial of two noble lives.
 Though she sustained the penalty of wives
 Unwisely wedded, woe did not degrade
 Her faith in good which cannot be achieved,
 Yet surely is, because it is believed.

Another variation is as follows :—

The simple woman that hath written here
 This brief memorial of her parents dear
 Confutes a doctrine that she never knew ;
 A good not found by keen anatomy,
 Nor decomposed by fiery chemistry,
 By force of mere believing she makes true.

SONNET XXXII, page 34.

Aliter—

Once thou wast fair—God knows how long ago ;
 Yet some there are to whom thy fixed idea,
 Even now is fresh as sea-born Cytherea.
 The waves of time, still ebbing as they flow,
 Behind them leave the quiet tints that glow
 On each successive billow. Years on years,
 Nor all varieties of mirth and tears,
 Can make hearts ignorant of what they know.
 Once thou wert fair, and still art fair to me ;
 Though fifty summers faded since we met,
 Thy timid glance I cease not yet to see,
 And thy young voice I never can forget.
 Though all the world should say that thou art old,
 To me thou still art young—*thy true self I behold.*

SONNET XL, page 43.

Aliter—

I saw thee, Edward, when thy baby cries
 Sounded in mother's ears a swift alarm :
 I saw thee cradled on thy father's arm,
 When he, with many smiles and many sighs,
 Guessed in the gleamings of thy infant eyes,
 The infant feelings not matured to thought,
 And all the strife of must and will and ought,
 Doomed to untwist thy tangled destinies.
 I see thee now a far-experienced man,
 That can dispute the axioms of my mouth,
 With knowledge netted in the Afric South.
 And thou hast learned with foreign eye to scan
 Old England's faults ;—and yet thy heart is still,
 Quick and responsive to the mountain rill.

AMBLESIDE, *October 8, 1840.*

SONNET XLIII, page 45, line 5.

And every bird the *pushing* (sic) woods among,

SONNET XLIV, page 47.

Aliter—

Sweet lady, thou art come to us again:
 Old Loughrigg still is on his wonted seat ;
 Still on the springy mound the young lambs bleat ;
 The wee birds chirp as if to see thee fain.
 Then why should I, no Philomel, complain ?
 Yet can I but lament for what must be,
 The untimely death of many a noble tree.
 Would that religion of old times were ours,
 (In that one article, not all the others)
 Which those brave shepherds held, who reared the towers,
 Nigh the moist cradle of the foundling Brothers,
 The faith that did in awe and love instal
 For many an age the Fig-Tree Ruminal.

Page 88.

The Anemone.

The last line of this beautiful poem was probably written
My lovely, lone, and *lust* Anemone.

Page 130.

To Margaret, on her first birthday.

The ninth and eleventh lines of this sonnet should have been
punctuated as follows:—

Merely she is with God, and God with her ;
And her meek ignorance, guiltless of demur
For her is faith *and* hope.

Page 152.

Why is there war on earth ?

The conclusion is thus varied in another—perhaps an earlier
copy:—

We have escaped from Egypt, but we lack—
We lack, or heed not, the prophetic voice
Which Israel had, but would not always hear.
Hence from the corse of vanquished tyranny
Spring armed hosts, all eager to be slaves,
Crying for liberty, but meaning nought
Save naked power, unclad with reverend form,
Unsanctified by faith, by love unbalmed.

Page 319.

*Enoch.**Aliter*—

He walked with God, and like the breath of prayer
His earthly substance melted quite away :
So much he loved the Lord, his mortal clay
Was changed to living light, and blent with air

Soft as a rainbow, joined the spirits that were
 On the first day, who sang the primal morn.
 Weary and joyless Enoch's brief sojourn
 Where God is hid. In all the world so fair
 Nought could he find that he could love for love,
 Till the good Lord took pity on his woe ;
 For woe it is with all the heart above
 A heartless corse to tread the earth below.
 He faded from the earth, and was unseen :
 A thought of God was all that he had been.

Page 327, line 10.

Ruth.

Aliter—

The swift-foot ostrich stills its flightless wing.

The above variations are believed to be for the most part earlier than the corresponding readings in the printed text. It is not often that an alteration is introduced into a poem, however it may improve the phraseology, without some violence to the delicate logic of feeling. Where any doubt of this kind was entertained, the Editor has considered it a matter of curiosity, if not of justice, to give the reader the opportunity of comparison.

THE END.

LONDON.

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