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POEMS BY
JOHN KEATS



Maisel

JOHN KEATS

From an engraving by Henry Merger, after Joseph Severn

POEMS

BY

JOHN KEATS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

ALICE MEYNELL

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Intellectual poet His taste went wrong, apparently, under the influence of such "poetry" as that of Leigh Hunt's "Rimini", and he improved much upon all the characteristics of this wretched model Rising from all this "pulp"—he himself loves the word—he was yet able to strengthen his mind to such splendid action as that of these great Odes and the Chapman Sonnet The feat is a great one

English literature has in this little room "infinite riches" indeed To be without these immortal poems would be to have missed some singular glory of poetry We should have been irremediably a poorer nation Keats in his supreme passages is intensely poetic Matthew Arnold calls such remote, magical, and exalted quality "Celtic". There is nothing more English—it has been the very spirit of English poetry in all centuries

John Keats was born in 1795 Relinquishing early the profession of surgery, he began to write, and fell amongst friends kind and literary, and the only ones of that character, no doubt, to be had At any rate, they lent him books His first volume was cruelly

treated by Gifford in the "Quarterly Review", but he would evidently have borne that punishment with dignity and courage had his health held good. Consumption seized him, and he died in Rome, and was buried there, in 1821.

ALICE MEYNELL.

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The Forest Shrine

FROM "ENDYMION"

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots
Into o'erhanging boughs, and precious
fruits.

And it had gloomy shades, sequester'd
deep,

Where no man went; and if from shep-
herd's keep

A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost
glens,

Never again saw he the happy pens
Whither his brethren, bleating with con-
tent,

Over the hills at every night-fall went.

Among the shepherds 't was believed ever,
That not one fleecy lamb which thus did
sever

From the white flock, but pass'd un-
worried

THE FOREST SHRINE

By any wolf, or pard with prying head, 't
Until it came to some unfooted plains
Where fed the herds of Pan: ay, great
his gains
Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there
were many,
Winding through palmy fern, and rushes
fenny,
And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly
To a wide lawn, whence one could only,
see
Stems thronging all around between the
swell
Of tuft and slanting branches: who could
tell
The freshness of the space of heaven
above,
Edged round with dark tree-tops? through
which a dove
Would often beat its wings, and often
too
A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
There stood a marble altar, with a tress
Of flowers budded newly; and the dew
Had taken fairy phantasies to strew
Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,
And so the dawned light in pomp receive.
For 't was the morn: Apollo's upward fire

THE FOREST SHRINE

• Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
Of brightness so unsullied that therein
A melancholy spirit well might win
Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
Into the winds rain scented eglantine
Gave temperate sweets to that well woo-
ing sun,
The lark was lost in him, cold springs
had run
, To warm their chillest bubbles in the
grass,
Man's voice was on the mountains, and
the mass
Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed ten-
fold,
To feel this sun rise and its glories old

Now while the silent workings of the
dawn
Were busiest, into that self same lawn
All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped
A troop of little children garlanded,
Who, gathering round the altar, seem'd to
pry
Earnestly round as wishing to espy
Some folk of holiday nor had they waited
For many moments, ere their ears were
sated
With a faint breath of music, which even
then

THE FOREST SHRINE

Fill'd out its voice, and died away again. 't
Within a little space again it gave
Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes
 breaking
Through copse-clad valleys, — ere their
 death, o'ertaking
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

Hymn to Pan

FROM "ENDYMION"



“O thou, whose mighty palace roof
doth hang
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life,
death
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;
Who lovest to see the hamadryads dress
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels
darken;
And through whole solemn hours dost sit,
and hearken
The dreary melody of bedded reeds—
In desolate places, where dank moisture
breeds
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth,
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou
now,
By thy love's milky brow!
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,
Hear us, great Pan!

“O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet,
turtles
Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,

HYMN TO PAN

What time thou wanderest at eventide
Through sunny meadows, that outskirt
the side
Of thine enmossed realms: O thou, to
whom
Broad-leaved fig-trees even now foredoom
Their ripen'd fruitage; yellow-girded bees
Their golden honeycombs; our village
leas
Their fairest blossom'd beans and popped
corn;
The chuckling linnnet its five young un-
born,
To sing for thee; low-creeping straw-
berries
Their summer coolness; pent-up butter-
flies
Their freckled wings; yea, the fresh-bud-
ding year
All its completions—be quickly near,
By every wind that nods the mountain
pine,
O forester divine!

“Thou, to whom every faun and satyr
flies
For willing service; whether to surprise
The squatted hare while in half-sleeping
fit;
Or upward ragged precipices flit

HYMN TO PAN

- To save poor lambkins from the eagle's
maw,
Or by mysterious enticement draw
Bewilder'd shepherds to their path again,
Or to tread breathless round the frothy
man,
And gather up all fancifullest shells
For thee to tumble into Narads' cells,
And, being hidden, laugh at their out-
peeping,
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
The while they pelt each other on the
crown
With silvery oak-apples, and fir-cones
brown—
By all the echoes that about thee ring,
Hear us, O satyr king!•

“O Hearer to the loud-clapping
shears,
While ever and anon to his shorn peers
A ram goes bleating Winder of the horn,
When snouted wild-boars routing tender
corn
Anger our huntsman Breather round our
farms,
To keep off mildews, and all weather
harms
Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds
That come a swooning over hollow grounds

HYMN TO PAN

And wither drearily on barren moors:
Dread opener of the mysterious doors
Leading to universal knowledge—see,
Great son of Dryope,
The many that are come to pay their vows
With leaves about their brows!

“Be still the unimaginable lodge
For solitary thinkings; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain: be still the
leaven,
That spreading in this dull and clodded
earth,
Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth:
Be still a symbol of immensity;
A firmament reflected in a sea;
An element filling the space between;
An unknown—but no more: we humbly
screen
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly
bending,
And giving out a shout most heaven-
rending,
Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,
Upon thy Mount Lycean!”

Sleep



FROM "ENDYMION"

O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of
the mind

Till it is hush'd and smooth! O uncon-
fined

Restraint! imprison'd liberty! great key

To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,

Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled
caves,

Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves

And moonlight; ay, to all the mazy
world

Of silvery enchantment!—who, upfurl'd

Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,

But renovates and lives?

Endymion's first Vision of Dian



FROM "ENDYMION"

"This river does not see the naked sky
Till it begins to progress silverly
Around the western border of the wood,
Whence, from a certain spot, its winding
flood

Seems at the distance like a crescent
moon:

And in that nook, the very pride of June,
Had I been used to pass my weary eyes;
The rather for the sun unwilling leaves
So dear a picture of his sovereign power,
And I could witness his most kingly hour,
When he doth tighten up the golden reins,
And paces leisurely down amber plains
His snorting four. Now when his chariot
last

Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,
There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed
Of sacred dittany, and poppies red:
At which I wonder'd greatly, knowing
well

That but one night had wrought this
flowery spell;

FIRST VISION OF DIAN

- And, sitting down close by, began to muse
What it might mean Perhaps, thought
I, Morpheus,
In passing here, his owlet pinions shook,
Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook
Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth
Had dipp'd his rod in it such garland
wealth
Came not by common growth Thus on
I thought,
Until my head was dizzy and distraught
Moreover, through the dancing poppies
stole
A breeze most softly lulling to my soul,
And shaping visions all about my sight
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly
light,
The which became more strange, and
strange, and dim,
And then were gulf'd in a tumultuous
swim
And then I fell asleep Ah, can I tell
The enchantment that afterwards befell?
Yet it was but a dream yet such a dream
That never tongue, although it overteem
With mellow utterance, like a cavern
spring,
Could figure out and to conception bring
All I beheld and felt Methought I lay
Watching the zenith, where the milky way

ENDYMION'S

Among the stars in virgin splendour pours ;
And travelling my eye, until the doors
Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,
I became loth and fearful to alight
From such high soaring by a downward
glance :

So kept me stedfast in that airy trance
Spreading imaginary pinions wide.
When, presently, the stars began to glide,
And faint away, before my eager view :
At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,
And dropp'd my vision to the horizon's
verge ;

And lo! from opening clouds, I saw
emerge

The loveliest moon that ever silver'd o'er
A shell for Neptune's goblet ; she did soar
So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
Commingling with her argent spheres did
roll

Through clear and cloudy, even when
she went

At last into a dark and vapoury tent—
Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train
Of planets all were in the blue again.

To commune with those orbs, once more
I raised

My sight right upward : but it was quite
dazed

By a bright something sailing down apace,

FIRST VISION OF DIAN

- Making me quickly veil my eyes and face:
Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,
Who from Olympus watch our destinies!
Whence that completed form of all completeness?
Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness?
Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where,
O where
Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair?
Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun;
Not—thy soft hand, fair sister! let me shun
Such follying before thee—yet she had,
Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad;
And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,
Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,
Her pearl-round ears, white neck, and orbéd brow;
The which were blended in, I know not how,
With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,
That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings
And plays about its fancy, till the stings
Of human neighbourhood envenom all.

ENDYMION'S

Unto what awful power shall I call?
To what high fane?—Ah! see her hovering
feet,
More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely
sweet
Than those of sea-born Venus, when she
rose
From out her cradle shell. The wind
out-blows
Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion;
'Tis blue, and over-spangled with a million
Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,
Over the darkest, lushest blue-bell bed,
Handfuls of daisies.”—“Endymion, how
strange!
Dream within dream!”—“She took an
airy range,
And then, towards me, like a very maid,
Came blushing, waning, willing, and
afraid,
And press'd me by the hand: Ah! 'twas
too much;
Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
Yet held my recollection, even as one
Who dives three fathoms where the waters
run
Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon,
I felt upmounted in that region
Where falling stars dart their artillery
forth,

FIRST VISION OF DIAN

- And eagles struggle with the buffeting
north
That balances the heavy meteor stone,—
Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone,
But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous
sky
Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journey-
ing high,
And straightway into frightful eddies
swoop'd
Such as aye muster where gray time has
scoop'd
Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's
side
There hollow sounds aroused me and I
sigh'd
To faint once more by looking on my
bliss—
I was distracted, madly did I kiss
The wooing arms which held me, and
did give
My eyes at once to death but 'twas to
live,
To take in draughts of life from the gold
fount
Of kind and passionate looks, to count,
and count
The moments, by some greedy help that
seem'd
A second self, that each might be redeem'd

ENDYMION'S

And plunder'd of its load of blessedness. '
 Ah, desperate mortal! I even dared to press
 Her very cheek against my crowned lip,
 And, at that moment, felt my body dip
 Into a warmer air: a moment more,
 Our feet were soft in flowers. There was
 store

Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes
 A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,
 Loiter'd around us; then of honey cells,
 Made delicate from all white-flower bells;
 And once, above the edges of our nest,
 An arch face peep'd,—an Oread as I
 guess'd.

“Why did I dream that sleep o'er-
 power'd me

In midst of all this heaven? Why not see,
 Far off, the shadows of his' pinions dark,
 And stare them from me? But no, like a
 spark

That needs must die, although its little
 beam

Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream
 Fell into nothing—into stupid sleep.

And so it was, until a gentle creep,
 A careful moving caught my waking ears,
 And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,
 My clenched hands;—for lo! the poppies
 hung

FIRST VISION OF DIAN

- Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel
 sung
A heavy ditty, and the sullen day
Had chidden herald Hesperus away,
With leaden looks: the solitary breeze
Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did
 tease
With wayward melancholy; and I thought,
Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it
 brought
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled
 adieux!"

Love



FROM "ENDYMION"

O sovereign power of love! O grief! O
balm!

All records, saving thine, come cool, and
calm,

And shadowy, through the mist of passed
years:

For others, good or bad, hatred and tears
Have become indolent; but touching thine,
One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth
pine,

One kiss brings honey-dew from buried
days.

The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er
their blaze,

Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears,
keen blades,

Struggling, and blood, and shrieks—all
dimly fades

Into some backward corner of the brain;
Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain

The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.

Hence, pageant history! hence, gilded
cheat!

LOVE

- Swart planet in the universe of deeds!
Wide sea, that one continuous murmur
breeds
Along the pebbled shore of memory!
Many old rotten-timber'd boats there be
Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified
To goodly vessels; many a sail of pride,
And golden-keel'd, is left unlaunch'd and
dry.
But wherefore this? What care, though
owl did fly
About the great Athenian admiral's mast?
What care, though striding Alexander past
The Indus with his Macedonian numbers?
Though old Ulysses tortured from his
slumbers
The gluttoned Cyclops, what care?—Juliet
leaning
Amid her window-flowers,—sighing,—
weaning
Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,
Doth more avail than these: the silver
flow
Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,
Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,
Are things to brood on with more ardency
Than the death-day of empires.

The Under- World



FROM "ENDYMION"

'T was far too strange and wonderful
for sadness;
Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite
To dive into the deepest. Dark, nor
light,
The region; nor bright, nor sombre
wholly,
But mingled up; a gleaming melancholy;
A dusky empire and its diadems;
One faint eternal eventide of gems.
Ay, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,
Along whose track the prince quick foot-
steps told,
With all its lines abrupt and angular:
Out-shooting sometimes, like a meteor-
star,
Through a vast antre; then the metal
woof,
Like Vulcan's rainbow, with some mon-
strous root

THE UNDER-WORLD

• Curves hugely now, far in the deep abyss,
It seems an angry lightning, and doth
hiss

Fancy into belief anon it leads
Through winding passages, where same-
ness breeds

Vexing conceptions of some sudden change,
Whether to silver grotts, or giant range
Of sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge
Athwart a flood of crystal On a ridge
Now fareth he, that o'er the vast beneath
Towers like an ocean cliff, and whence
he seeth

A hundred waterfalls, whose voices come
But as the murmuring surge Chilly
and numb

His bosom grew, when first he, far away,
Described an orb'd diamond, set to fray
Old Darkness from his throne 't was
like the sun

Uprisen o'er chaos and with such a stun
Came the amazement, that, absorb'd in it,
He saw not fiercer wonders—past the wit
Of any spirit to tell, but one of those
Who, when this planet's sphering time
doth close,

Will be its high remembrancers who
they?

The mighty ones who have made eternal
day

THE UNDER-WORLD

For Greece and England. While astonish-
ment

With deep-drawn sighs was quieting, he
went

Into a marble gallery, passing through
A mimic temple, so complete and true
In sacred custom, that he well-nigh
feared

To search it inwards; whence far off ap-
peared

Through a long pillared vista, a fair
shrine,

And, just beyond, on light tiptoe divine,
A quivered Dian. Stepping awfully,
The youth approached; oft turning his
veiled eye

Down sidelong aisles, and into niches
old.

And when, more near against the marble
cold

He had touched his forehead, he began
to thread

All courts and passages, where silence
dead,

Roused by his whispering footsteps, mur-
mured faint:

And long he traversed to and fro, to ac-
quaint

Himself with every mystery, and awe;
Till, weary, he sat down before the maw

THE UNDER-WORLD

Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim,
To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.
There, when new wonders ceased to float
before,
And thoughts of self came on, how crude
and sore
The journey homeward to habitual self!
A mad-pursuing of the fog-born elf,
Whose fitting lantern, through rude
nettle-brier,
Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,
Into the bosom of a hated thing

Prayer to Dian
from the
Sea-Cave



FROM "ENDYMION"

“O Haunter chaste
Of river sides, and woods, and heath
waste,
Where with thy silver bow and arrow
keen
Art thou now forested? O woodland
Queen,
What smoothest air thy smoother fore
head woos?
Where dost thou listen to the wide halloo
Of thy departed nymphs? Through what
dark tree
Glimmers thy crescent? Wheresoe'er it be
'Tis in the breath of heaven: thou dost
taste
Freedom as none can taste it, nor dost
waste
Thy loveliness in dismal elements;
But, finding in our green earth sweet
contents,
There livest blissfully. Ah, if to thee
It feels Elysian, how rich to me,

PRAYER TO DIAN

•An exiled mortal, sounds its pleasant name!

Within my breast there lives a choking flame—

O let me cool it zephyr-boughs among!

A homeward fever parthes up my tongue—

O let me slake it at the running springs!

Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings—

O let me once more hear the linnet's note!

Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float—

O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light!

Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white?

O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice!

Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice?

O think how this dry palate would rejoice!

If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,

O think how I should love a bed of flowers!

Young goddess! let me see my native bowers!

Deliver me from this rapacious deep!"

The Bower



FROM "ENDYMION"

It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown
With golden moss. His every sense had
grown

Ethereal for pleasure; 'bove his head
Flew a delight half-graspable; his tread
Was Hesperean; to his capable ears
Silence was music from the holy spheres;
A dewy luxury was in his eyes;
The little flowers felt his pleasant sighs
And stirr'd them faintly. Verdant cave
and cell

He wand'red through, oft wondering at
such swell

Of sudden exaltation: but, "Alas!"
Said he, "will all this gush of feeling
pass

Away in solitude? And must they wane,
Like melodies upon a sandy plain,
Without an echo? Then shall I be left
So sad, so melancholy; so bereft!

Yet still I feel immortal! O my love,
My breath of life, where art thou? High
above,

THE BOWER

• Dancing before the morning gates of
heaven?

Or keeping watch among those starry
seven,

Old Atlas' children? Art a maid of the
waters,

One of shell-winding Triton's bright-hair'd
daughters?

Or art, impossible! a nymph of Dian's,
Weaving a coronal of tender scions

For very idleness? Where'er thou art,

Methinks it now is at my will to start

Into thine arms; to scare Aurora's train,

And snatch thee from the morning; o'er
the main

To scud like a wild bird, and take thee off

From thy sea-foamy cradle; or to doff

Thy shepherd vest, and woo thee 'mid fresh
leaves.

No, no, too eagerly my soul deceives

Its powerless self: I know this cannot be.

O let me then by some sweet dreaming
flee

To her entrancements: hither, Sleep,
awhile!

Hither, most gentle Sleep! and soothing
foil

For some few hours the coming solitude."

The Moon



FROM "ENDYMION"

There are throned seats unscalable
But by a patient wing, a constant spell,
Or by ethereal things that, unconfined,
Can make a ladder of the eternal wind,
And poise about in cloudy thunder-tents
To watch the abysm-birth of elements.
Ay, 'bove the withering of old-lipp'd Fate
A thousand Powers keep religious state,
In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne;
And, silent as a consecrated urn,
Hold sphery sessions for a season due.
Yet few of these far majesties, ah, few!
Have bared their operations to this globe—
Few, who with gorgeous pageantry en-
robe
Our piece of heaven—whose benevolence
Shakes hand with our own Ceres; every
sense
Filling with spiritual sweets to plenitude,
As bees gorge full their cells. And by
the feud
'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here
swear,
Eterne Apollo! that thy Sister fair

THE MOON

- Is of all these the gentler mightiest.
When thy gold breath is misting in the
west
She unobserved steals unto her throne,
And there she sits most meek and most
alone,
As if she had not pomp subservient,
As if thine eye, high Poet! was not bent
Towards her with the Muses in thine
heart,
As if the minist'ring stars kept not apart,
Waiting for silver-footed messages
O Moon! the oldest shades 'mong oldest
trees
Feel palpitations when thou lookest in
O Moon! old'boughs lisp forth a holier
din
The while they feel thine airy fellowship
Thou dost bless everywhere, with silver lip
Kissing dead things to life The sleeping
line,
Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fields
divine
Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,
Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes,
And yet thy benediction passeth not
One obscure hiding place, one little spot
Where pleasure may be sent the nested
wren
Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,

THE MOON

And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf
Takes glimpses of thee; thou art a relief
To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps
Within its pearly house;—The mighty
deeps,
The monstrous sea is thine—the myriad
sea!
O Moon! far spooming Ocean bows to
thee,
And Tellus feels her forehead's cumbrous
load.

Cynthia! where art thou now? What
far abode
Of green or silvery bower doth enshrine
Such utmost beauty? Alas, thou dost pine
For one as sorrowful: thy cheek is pale
For one whose cheek is pale: thou dost
bewail
His tears who weeps for thee! Where dost
thou sigh?
Ah! surely that light peeps from Vesper's
eye,
Or, what a thing is love! 'Tis She, but lo!
How changed, how full of ache, how gone
in woe!
She dies at the thinnest cloud; her loveli-
ness
Is wan on Neptune's blue: yet there's a
stress

THE MOON

- Of love-spangles, just off yon cape of trees,
Dancing upon the waves, as if to please
The curly foam with amorous influence
O, not so idle! for down glancing thence,
She fathoms eddies, and runs wild about
O'erwhelming water-courses, scaring out
The thorny sharks from hiding holes, and
fright'ning
Their savage eyes with unaccustom'd
lightning
Where will the splendour be content to
reach?
O love! how potent hast thou been to
teach
Strange journeyings! Wherever beauty
dwells,
In gulf or aerie, mountains or deep dells,
In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun,
Thou pointest out the way, and straight
't is won
Amid his toil thou gavest Leander breath,
Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams
of death,
Thou madest Pluto bear thin element
And now, O winged Chieftain! thou hast
sent
A moon beam to the deep, deep water-
world,
To find Endymion

The Muse of England



FROM "ENDYMION"

Muse of my native land! loftiest Muse!
O first-born on the mountains! By the
hues

Of heaven on the spiritual air begot:
Long didst thou sit alone in northern
grot,

While yet our England was a wolfish den;
Before our forests heard the talk of men;
Before the first of Druids was a child;—
Long didst thou sit amid our regions
wild,

Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.
There came an eastern voice of solemn
mood:—

Yet wast thou patient. Then sang forth
the Nine,

Apollo's garland:—yet didst thou divine
Such home-bred glory, that they cried in
vain,

“Come hither, Sister of the Island!”
Plain

THE MUSE OF ENGLAND

- Spake fair Ausonia, and once more she
 spake
A higher summons — still didst thou be-
 take
Thee to thy native hopes O thou hast
 won
A full accomplishment! The thing is
 done,
Which undone, these our latter days had
 risen
On barren souls Great Muse, thou
 know'st what prison
Of flesh and bone, curbs, and confines,
 and frets
Our spirits' wings despondency besets
Our pillows, and the fresh to-morrow
 morn
Seems to give forth its light in very scorn
Of our dull uninspired, snail paced lives
Long have I said, how happy he who
 shrives
To thee! But then I thought on poets
 gone
And could not pray

The Dark Lady's Song



FROM "ENDYMION"

O Sorrow!

Why dost borrow

The natural hue of health from vermeil
lips?—

To give maiden blushes

To the white rose bushes?

Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

O Sorrow!

Why dost borrow

The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye?—

To give the glow-worm light?

Or, on a moonless night,

To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea-spry?

O Sorrow!

Why dost borrow

The mellow ditties from a mourning
tongue?—

To give at evening pale

Unto the nightingale,

That thou mayst listen the cold dews
among?

THE DARK LADY'S SONG

O Sorrow!
Why dost borrow
Heart's lightness from the merriment of
May?

A lover would not tread
A cowslip on the head,
Though he should dance from eve till
peep of day—

Nor any drooping flower
Held sacred for thy bower,
Wherever he may sport himself and play

To Sorrow,
I bade good morrow,
And thought to leave her far away behind,
But cheerly, cheerly,
She loves me dearly,
She is so constant to me, and so kind
I would deceive her,
And so leave her,
But ah! she is so constant and so kind

Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
I sat a weeping in the whole world wide
There was no one to ask me why I wept—
And so I kept
Brimming the water-lily cups with tears
Cold as my fears

THE DARK LADY'S SON

Beneath my palm-trees, by the
I sat a weeping: what man
Cheated by shadowy wooer from the cl
But hides and shrou
Beneath dark palm-trees by the river

And as I sat, over the light blue hi
There came a noise of revels: the
Into the wide stream came of purple
'T was Bacchus and his
The earnest trumpet spake, and
thrills

From kissing cymbals made a merry
'T was Bacchus and his kin
Like to a moving vintage down they
Crown'd with green leaves, and
on flame;
All madly dancing through the
valley,

To scare thee, Melancholy!
O then, O then, thou wast a simple
And I forgot thee, as the berries
By shepherds is forgotten, when, in
Tall chestnuts keep away from the sun
moon:—

I rush'd into the folly!
Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus
Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mo
With sidelong laughing;

THE DARK LADY'S SONG

And little rills of crimson wine imbued
His plump white arms, and shoulders,
 enough white
 For Venus' pearly bite,
And near him rode Silenus on his ass,
Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
 Tipsily quaffing

Whence came ye, merry Damsels! whence
 came ye,
So many, and so many and such glee?
Why have ye left your bowers desolate
 Your lutes, and gentler fate?
"We follow Bacchus! Bacchus on the
 wing,
 A conquering!
Bacchus, young Bacchus! good or ill
 betide,
We dance before him thorough kingdoms
 wide —
Come hither, lady fair and joined be
 To our wild minstrelsy!"

Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs! whence
 came ye,
So many and so many, and such glee?
Why have ye left your forest haunts why
 left
 Your nuts in oak tree cleft?—

THE DARK LADY'S SONG

“For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree;
For wine we left our heath, and yellow
brooms,

And cold mushrooms;

For wine we follow Bacchus through the
earth;

Great god of breathless cups and chirping
mirth!

Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
To our mad minstrelsy!”

Over wide streams and mountains great
we went,

And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,
Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,
With Asian elephants:

Onward these myriads—with song and
dance,

With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians’
prance,

Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,

Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,
Plump infant laughs mimicking the coil
Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers’ toil;
With toying oars and silken sails they
glide,

Nor care for wind and tide.

THE DARK LADY'S SONG

Mounted on panthers' furs and lions'
manes,
From rear to van they scour about the
plains;
A three days' journey in a moment done;
And always, at the rising of the sun,
About the wilds they hunt with spear and
horn
On spleenful unicorn.

I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown
Before the vine-wreath crown!
I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing
To the silver cymbals' ring!
I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce
Old Tartary the fierce!
The kings of Ind their jewel-sceptres vail,
And from their treasures scatter pearly
hail;
Great Brahma from his mystic heaven
groans,
And all his priesthood moans,
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning
pale.
Into these regions came I, following him,
Sick-hearted, weary—so I took a whim
To stray away into these forests drear,
Alone, without a peer:
And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

THE DARK LADY'S SONG

Young Stranger!
I've been a ranger
In search of pleasure throughout every
clime;
Alas! 'tis not for me:
Bewitch'd I sure must be,
To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

Come then, Sorrow,
Sweetest Sorrow!
Like an own babe I nurse thee on my
breast:
I thought to leave thee,
And deceive thee,
But now of all the world I love thee best.

There is not one,
No, no, not one
But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid;
Thou art her mother,
And her brother,
Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade.

Song of Dian's Feast

FROM 'ENDYMION'



Who, who from Dian's feast would be
away?
For all the golden bowers of the day
Are empty left! Who, who away would
be
From Cynthia's wedding and festivity?
Not Hesperus lo' upon his silver wings
He leans away for highest heaven and
sings,
Snapping his lucid fingers merrily!—
Ah, Zephyrus! art here, and Flora too
Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,
Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,
Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill
Your baskets high
With fennel green, and balm, and golden
pines,
Savory, latter mint, and columbines,
Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny
thyme,
Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,

SONG OF DIAN'S FEAST

All gather'd in the dewy morning: hie

Away! fly, fly!—

Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,
Aquarius! to whom king Jove has given
Two liquid pulse streams 'stead of feather'd
wings,

Two fanlike fountains,—thine illuminings
For Dian play:

Dissolve the frozen purity of air;

Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare
Show cold through watery pinions; make
more bright

The Star-Queen's crescent on her marriage
night:

Haste, haste away!

Castor has tamed the planet Lion, see!

And of the Bear has Pollux mastery:

A third is in the race! who is the third,
Speeding away swift as the eagle bird?

The ramping Centaur!

The Lion's mane's on end: the Bear how
fierce!

The Centaur's arrow ready seems to pierce
Some enemy: far forth his bow is bent
Into the blue of heaven. He'll be shent,
Pale unrelentor,

When he shall hear the wedding lutes a
playing—

Andromeda! sweet woman! why delaying
So timidly among the stars: come hither!

SONG OF DIAN'S FEAST

Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow
whither

They all are going.

Danae's Son, before Jove newly bow'd,
Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.

Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral:

Ye shall for ever live and love, for all

Thy tears are flowing.—

By Daphne's fright, behold Apollo!—

Isabella; Or, the Pot of Basil



A STORY, FROM BOCCACCIO

Fair Isabel, poor simple Isabel!

Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye!
They could not in the self-same mansion
dwell

Without some stir of heart, some malady;
They could not sit at meals but feel how
well

It soothed each to be the other by;
They could not, sure, beneath the same
roof sleep,
But to each other dream, and nightly
weep.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,
With every eve deeper and tenderer still;
He might not in house, field, or garden
stir,

But her full shape would all his seeing
fill;
And his continual voice was pleasanter
To her, than noise of trees or hidden
rill;

ISABELLA

Her lute string gave an echo of his name,
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the
same

He knew whose gentle hand was at the
latch,
Before the door had given her to his
eyes,
And from her chamber-window he would
catch

Her beauty farther than the falcon spies,
And constant as her vespers would he
watch,

Because her face was turn'd to the
same skies,
And with sick longing all the night out-
wear,
To hear her morning-step upon the stair

A whole long month of May in this sad
plight

Made their cheeks paler by the break of
June

"To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
To morrow will I ask my lady's boon" —

"O may I never see another night,
Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's
tune" —

So spake they to their pillows, but, alas,
Honeyless days and days did he let pass,

ISABELLA

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek
Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth
seek

By every lull to cool her infant's pain:
"How ill she is!" said he, "I may not
speak,

And yet I will, and tell my love all
plain:

If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her
tears,

And at the least 'twill startle off her
cares."

So said he one fair morning, and all day

His heart beat awfully against his side;
And to his heart he inwardly did pray

For power to speak; but still the ruddy
tide

Stifled his voice, and pulsed resolve away—

Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,
Yet brought him to the meekness of a
child:

Alas! when passion is both meek and
wild!

So once more he had waked and anguished

A dreary night of love and misery,
If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
To every symbol on his forehead high;

ISABELLA

She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
And straight all flush'd; so, lisped tenderly,
"Lorenzo!"—here she ceased her timid quest,
But in her tone and look he read the rest.

"O Isabella! I can half perceive
That I may speak my grief into thine ear;
If thou didst ever anything believe,
Believe how I love thee, believe how near
My soul is to its doom. I would not grieve
Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
Thine eyes by gazing; but I cannot live
Another night, and not my passion shrive.

"Love! thou art leading me from wintry cold,
Lady! thou leadest me to summer clime,
And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."
So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme:

ISABELLA

Great bliss was with them, and great
happiness
Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
Only to meet again more close, and share
The inward fragrance of each other's
heart,
She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart;
He with light steps went up a western
hill,
And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his
fill.

All close they met again, before the dusk
Had taken from the stars its pleasant
veil,
All close they met, all eves, before the
dusk
Had taken from the stars its pleasant
veil,
Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,
Unknown of any, free from whisper-
ing tale.
Ah! better had it been for ever so,
Than idle ears should pleasure in their
woe.

ISABELLA

Were they unhappy then?—It cannot be—
Too many tears for lovers have been shed,
Too many sighs give we to them in fee,
Too much of pity after they are dead,
Too many doleful stories do we see,
Whose matter in bright gold were best
be read,
Except in such a page where Theseus'
spouse
Over the pathless waves towards him bows

But for the general ward of love,
The little sweet doth kill much bitter-
ness,
Though Dido silent is in under grove,
And Isabella's was a great distress,
Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian
clove
Was not embalm'd, this truth is not
the less—
Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-
bowers,
Know there is richest juice in poison-
flowers

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,
Enriched from ancestral merchandise,
And for them many a weary hand did
swelt
In torched mines and noisy factories,

ISABELLA

And many once proud-quiver'd loins did
melt

In blood from stinging whip; with hollow
eyes

Many all day in dazzling river stood,
To take the rich-ored driftings of the
flood.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
And went all naked to the hungry
shark;

For them his ears gush'd blood; for them
in death

The seal on the cold ice with piteous
bark

Lay full of darts; for them alone did
seethe

A thousand men in troubles wide and
dark:

Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
That set sharp racks at work, to pinch
and peel.

Why were they proud? Because their
marble founts

Gush'd with more pride than do a
wretch's tears?

ISABELLA

Why were they proud? Because fair
orange-mounts
Were of more soft ascent than lazar
stairs?
Why were they proud? Because red-
lined accounts
Were richer than the songs of Grecian
years?
Why were they proud? again we ask
aloud,
Why in the name of Glory were they
proud?

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired
In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,
As two close Hebrews in that land in-
spired,
Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-
spies;
The hawks of ship-mast forests—the un-
tired
And pannier'd mules for ducats and old
lies—
Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-
away,—
Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

How was it these same leger-men could
spy
Fair Isabella in her downy nest?

ISABELLA

How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye
A straying from his toil? Hot Egypt's
pest

Into their vision covetous and sly!

How could these money-bags see east
and west?

Yet so they did—and every dealer fair
Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio!

Of thee we now should ask forgiving
boon,

And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,
And of thy roses amorous of the moon,
And of thy lilies, that do paler grow .

Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's
tune,

For venturing syllables that ill beseem
The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the
tale

Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;
There is no other crime, no mad assail
To make old prose in modern rhyme
more sweet:

But it is done—succeed the verse or fail—
To honour thee, and thy gone spirit
greet;

ISABELLA

To stead thee as a verse in English
tongue,
An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

These brethren having found by many
signs

What love Lorenzo for their sister had,
And how she loved him too, each uncon-
fines

His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh
mad

That he, the servant of their trade designs,
Should in their sister's love be blithe
and glad,

When 'twas their plan to coax her by
degrees

To some high noble and his olive-trees

And many a jealous conference had they,
And many times they bit their lips
alone,

Before they fix'd upon a surest way
To make the youngster for his crime
atone;

And at the last, these men of cruel clay
Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the
bone;

For they resolved in some forest dim
To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

ISABELLA

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant
Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade
Of the garden-terrace, towards him they
bent

Their footing through the dews; and to
him said,

“You seem there in the quiet of content,
Lorenzo, and we are most loth to in-
vade

Calm speculation; but if you are wise,
Bestride your steed while cold is in the
skies.

“To-day we purpose, ay, this hour we
mount

To spur three leagues towards the Apen-
nine;

Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot
sun count

His dewy rosary on the eglantine.”
Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,
Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents'
whine;

And went in haste, to get in readiness,
With belt, and spur, and bracing hunts-
man's dress.

And as he to the courtyard pass'd along,
Each third step did he pause, and listen'd
oft

ISABELLA

If he could hear his lady's matin-song,
Or the light whisper of her footsteps oft;
And as he thus over his passion hung,
He heard a laugh full musical aloft;
When, looking up, he saw her features
bright
Smile through an indoor lattice all delight.

"Love, Isabel!" said he, "I was in pain
Lest I should miss to bid thee a good
morrow:
Ah! what if I should lose thee, when so
fain
I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow
Of a poor three hours' absence? but we'll
gain
Out of the amorous dark what day doth
borrow.
Good bye! I'll soon be back."—"Good
bye!" said she:
And as he went she chanted merrily.

' So the two brothers and their murder'd
man
Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's
stream
Gurgles through straiten'd banks, and still
doth fan
Itself with dancing bulrush, and the
bream

ISABELLA

Keeps head against the freshets. Sick,
and wan

The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,
Lorenzo's flush with love. They pass'd
the water

Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,
There in that forest did his great love
cease;

Ah! when a soul doth thus its freedom
win,

It aches in loneliness—is ill at peace
As the break-covert blood-hounds of such
sin:

They dipp'd their swords in the water,
and did tease

Their horses homeward, with convulsed
spur,

Each richer by his being a murderer.

They told their sister how, with sudden
speed,

Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,
Because of some great urgency and need

In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.
Poor girl! put on thy stifling widow's
weed,

And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed
bands;

ISABELLA

To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-
morrow,
And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be;
Sorely she wept until the night came on,
And then, instead of love, O misery!

She brooded o'er the luxury alone:
His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,
And to the silence made a gentle moan,
Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,
And on her couch low murmuring,
"Where? O where?"

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not
long

Its fiery vigil in her single breast;
She fretted for the golden hour, and hung
Upon the time with feverish unrest—
Not long; for soon into her heart a throng
Of higher occupants, a richer zest,
Came tragic; passion not to be subdued,
And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

In the mid days of autumn, on their eyes
The breath of Winter comes from far
away,
And the sick west continually bereaves
Of some gold tinge, and plays a roun-
delay

ISABELLA

Of death among the bushes and the leaves,
To make all bare before he dares to stray
From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel
By gradual decay from beauty fell,

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes
She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all
pale,
Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes
Could keep him off so long? They
spake a tale
Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes
Came on them, like a smoke from
Hinnom's vale;
And every night in dreams they groan'd
aloud,
To see their sister in her snowy shroud

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,
But for a thing more deadly dark than all;
It came like a fierce potion, drunk by
chance,
Which saves a sick man from the
feather'd pall
For some few gasping moments; like a
lance
Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall
With cruel pierce, and bringing him again
Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and
brain.

ISABELLA

It was a vision. In the drowsy gloom,
The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb
Had marr'd his glossy hair which once
could shoot
Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
From his lorn voice, and past his loamed
ears
Had made a miry channel for his tears.

Strange sound it was, when the pale
shadow spake;
For there was striving, in its piteous
tongue,
To speak as when on earth it was awake,
And Isabella on its music hung:
Languor there was in it, and tremulous
shake,
As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung;
And through it moan'd a ghostly under-
song,
Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars
among.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy
bright
With love, and kept all phantom fear
aloof

ISABELLA

From the poor girl by magic of their
light,

The while it did unthread the horrid
woof

Of the late darken'd time—the murderous
spite

Of pride and avarice—the dark pine roof
In the forest—and the sodden turfed dell,
Where, without any word, from stabs he
fell.

Saying moreover, “Isabel, my sweet!

Red whortle-berries droop above my
head,

And a large flint-stone weighs upon my
feet;

Around me beeches and high chestnuts
shed

Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-
fold bleat

Comes from beyond the river to my bed:
Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

“I am a shadow now, alas! alas!

Upon the skirts of human nature dwell-
ing

Alone: I chant alone the holy mass,

While little sounds of life are round me
knelling,

And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,

ISABELLA

And many a chapel bell the hour is
telling,
Paining me through those sounds grow
strange to me
And thou art distant in Humanity

"I know what was, I feel full well what is
And I should rage, if spirits could go
mad,
Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss
That paleness warms my grave as
though I had
A seraph chosen from the bright abyss
To be my spouse thy paleness makes
me glad
Thy beauty grows upon me and I feel
A greater love through all my essence
steal "

The Spirit mourn'd "Adieu!"—dissolved,
and left
The atom darkness in a slow turmoil,
As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft
Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless
toil,
We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,
And see the spangly gloom froth up
and boil
It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,
And in the dawn she started up awake

ISABELLA

“Ha! ha!” said she, “I knew not this
hard life,

I thought the worst was simple misery;
I thought some Fate with pleasure or
with strife

Portion’d us—happy days, or else to die;
But there is crime—a brother’s bloody
knife!

Sweet Spirit, thou hast school’d my
infancy:

I’ll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,
And greet thee morn and even in the skies.”

When the full morning came, she had
devised

How she might secret to the forest hie;
How she might find the clay, so dearly
prized,

And sing to it one latest lullaby;
How her short absence might be unsur-
mised,

While she the inmost of the dream would
try.

Resolved, she took with her an aged nurse,
And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

See, as they creep along the river side,
How she doth whisper to that aged dame,

ISABELLA

And, after looking round the champaign
wide,

Shows her a knife — "What feverous
hectic flame

Burns in thee, child?—what good can
thee betide

That thou shouldst smile again?"—The
evening came,

And they had found Lorenzo's earthy bed,
The flint was there, the berries at his head

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church-
yard,

And let his spirit, like a demon mole,
Work through the clayey soil and gravel
hard,

To see skull, coffin'd bones, and funeral
stole,

Pitying each form that hungry Death had
marr'd,

And filling it once more with human
soul?

Ah! this is holiday to what was felt
When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt

She gazed into the fresh-thrown mould,
as though

One glance did fully all its secrets tell,
Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know
Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well,

ISABELLA

Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to
grow,
Like to a native lily of the dell:
Then with her knife, all sudden she began
To dig more fervently than misers can.

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon
Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies;
She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than
stone,
And put it in her bosom, where it dries
And freezes utterly unto the bone
Those dainties made to still an infant's
cries:
Then 'gan she work again; nor stay'd her
care,
But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
Until her heart felt pity to the core
At sight of such a dismal labouring,
And so she kneeled, with her locks all
hoar,
And put her lean hands to the horrid thing:
Three hours they labour'd at this travail
sore;
At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

ISABELLA

Ah! wherefore all this wormy circumstance?

Why linger at the yawning tomb so long?

O for the gentleness of old Romance,

The simple plaining of a minstrel's song!
Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,

For here, in truth, it doth not well belong
To speak:—O turn thee to the very tale,
And taste the music of that vision pale.

With duller steel than the Perséan sword
They cut away no formless monster's
head,

But one, whose gentleness did well accord
With death, as life. The ancient harps
have said,

Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord:
If Love impersonate was ever dead,
Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.
'Twas love; cold—dead indeed, but not
dethroned.

In anxious secrecy they took it home,
And then the prize was all for Isabel;
She calm'd its wild hair with a golden
comb,

And all around each eye's sepulchral cell
Pointed each fringed lash; the smeared
loam

ISABELLA

With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,
She drench'd away: and still she comb'd
and kept
Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd and
wept.

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the
dews

Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,
And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
Through the cold serpent-pipe refresh-
fully,—

She wrapp'd it up; and for its tomb did
choose

A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,
And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set
Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
And she forgot the blue above the trees,
And she forgot the dells where waters run,
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;
She had no knowledge when the day was
done,

And the new morn she saw not: but in
peace

Hung over her sweet Basil ever more,
And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

ISABELLA

And so she ever fed it with thin tears
Whence thick, and green and beautiful
it grew,
So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
Of Basil tufts in Florence, for it drew
Nurture besides, and life, from human
fears,
From the fast mouldering heads there
shut from view
So that the jewel, safely casketed,
Came forth, and in perfumed leaflets spread

O Melancholy, linger here awhile!
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!
O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,
Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh!
Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and
smile,
Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,
And make a pale light in your cypress
glooms,
Tinting with silver wan your marble
tombs

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
From the deep throat of sad Melpo-
mene!
Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
And touch the strings into a mystery,

ISABELLA

With tears, as eilly upon the winds and
 She drench'd away
 and kept bel is soon to be
 Sighing all day—a: She withers, like a palm
 wept. v for its juicy balm.

Then in a silken scarf; o wither by itself;
 Letews W. inter chill its dying

hourcious p ick uites of pelf,
 It may not be—those Bañs, our nual shower
 Her brethren, noted the conti, pe. a curious
 From her dead eyes; and many
 elf,
 Among her kindred, wonder'd th on, at such
 dower
 Of youth and beauty should be th rownt
 aside
 By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd
 much
 Why she sat drooping by the Basil
 green,
 And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch;
 Greatly they wonder'd what the thing
 might mean:
 They could not surely give belief, that
 such
 A very nothing would have power to
 wean

ISABELLA

Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures
 gay,
And even remembrance of her love's delay

Therefore they watch'd a time when they
 might sift

 This hidden whim, and long they
 watch'd in vain,

For seldom did she go to chapel shrift,
 And seldom felt she any hunger pain,
And when she left, she hurried back, as
 swift

 As bird on wing to breast its eggs again
And, patient as a hen bird, sat her there
Beside* her Basil, weeping through her
 hair

Yet they contrived to steal the Basil pot,
 And to examine it in secret place
The thing was vile with green and livid
 spot,

 And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's
 face

The guerdon of their murder they had
 got,

 And so left Florence in a moment's
 space,

Never to turn again — Away they went,
With blood upon their heads, to banish-
 ment

ISABELLA

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away!
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!
O Echo, Echo, on some other day,
From isles Lethæan, sigh to us—O sigh!
Spirits of grief, sing not your "Well-a-
way!"

For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die;
Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless
things,
Asking for her lost Basil amorously:
And with melodious chuckle in the strings
Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would
cry
After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,
To ask him where her Basil was; and
why
'Twa's hid from her: "For cruel 'tis,"
said she,
"To steal my Basil-pot away from me."

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,
Imploring for her Basil to the last.
No heart was there in Florence but did
mourn
In pity of her love, so overcast.

ISABELLA

And a sad ditty of this story borne
From mouth to mouth through all the
country pass'd.
Still is the burthen sung—"O cruelty,
To steal my Basil-pot away from me!"

The Eve of St. Agnes



St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-
cold;

The hare limp'd trembling through the
frozen grass,

And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers while
he told

His rosary, and while his frosted* breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven with-
out a death,

Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his
prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy
man;

Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his
knees,

And back returneth, meagre, barefoot,
wan,

Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side seem
to freeze,

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb ora-
t'ries,

He passeth by; and his weak spirit
fails

To think how they may ache in icy hoods
and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little
door,

And scarce three steps, ere Music's
golden tongue

Flatter'd to tears this aged man and
poor;

But no—already had his death-bell rung;
The joys of, all his life were said and
sung:

His was harsh penance on St. Agnes'
Eve:

Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for 'his soul's re-
prieve,

And all night kept awake, for sinner's
sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the pre-
lude soft;

And so it chanced, for many a door was
wide,

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to
chide:

The level chambers, ready with their
pride,

Were glowing to receive a thousand
guests:

The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the
cornice rests,

With hair blown back, and wings put
cross-wise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with
triumphs gay

Of old romance. These let us wish
away,

And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady
there,

Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry
day,

On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly
care,

As she had heard old dames full many
times declare.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white,
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired, not cool'd by high disdain;
But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere;
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

She danced along with vague, regard-
less eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick
and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand:
she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd
resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and
scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amorn,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs un-
shorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow
morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across
the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart
on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he,
and implores
All saints to give him sight of Made-
line,
But for one moment in the tedious
hours,

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

That he might gaze and worship all
unseen,
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in
sooth such things have been

He ventures in let no buzz'd whisper
tell
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's feverous
citadel
For him, those chambers held barbarian
hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations
howl
Against his lineage not one breast
affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and
in soul

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature
came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's
flame,
Behind a broad hall pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus
blind

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

He startled her; but soon she knew his
face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied
hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee
from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole
bloodthirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish
Hildebrand:
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursed thee and thine, both house
and land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice,
not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me!
flit!
Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip
dear,
We're safe enough; here in this arm-
chair sit,
And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not
here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will
be thy bier."

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty
plume;

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-
day!"

He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a
tomb.

"Now tell me where is Madeline," said
he,

"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may
see,

When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving
piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's
sieve,

And be liege-lord of all the Elves and
Fays,

To venture so: it fills mé with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes'
Eve!

God's help! my lady fair the conjuror
plays

This very night: good angels her de-
ceive!

But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time
to grieve."

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

Feebly she laugheth in the languid
 moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth
 look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-
 book,
As spectacl'd she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when
 she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could
 brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchant-
 ments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends
 old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-
 blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained
 heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame
 start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep and
 dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

From wicked men like thee. Go, Go!
I deem

Thou canst not surely be the same that
thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I
swear,"

Quoth Porphyro. "O may I ne'er find
grace

When my weak voice shall whisper its
last prayer,

If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her
face:

Good Angela, believe me by these tears,
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's
ears,

And beard them, though they be more
fang'd than wolves and bears "

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble
soul?

A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-
yard thing,

Whose passing-bell may ere the mid-
night toll;

Whose prayers for thee, each morn and
evening,

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

Were never miss'd." Thus plaining,
doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Por-
phyro;
So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal
or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close
secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there
hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless
bride,
While legion'd fairies paced the cover-
let,
And pale enchantment held her sleep-
eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the
monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the
Dame:

"All cates and dainties shall be stored
there

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

Quickly on this feast-night: by the
tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time
to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce
dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy
head.
Wait here, my child, with patience
kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the
lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among
the dead."

So saying she hobbled off with busy
fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly
pass'd;
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in
his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at
last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they
gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd
and chaste;

8
THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

Where Porphyro took covert, pleased
 amain.

His poor guide hurried back with agues
 in her brain.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed
 maid,

Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious
 care,

She turn'd, and down the aged gossip
 led

To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that
 bed;

She comes, she comes again, like ring-
 dove fray'd and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine,
 died:

She closed the door, she panted, all
 akin

To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No utter'd syllable, or, woe betide!

But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side:

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

As though a tongueless nightingale
should swell

Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled,
in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there
was,

All garlanded with carven imageries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of
knot-grass,

And diamonded with panes of quaint
device,

Innumerable of stains and splendid
dyes,

As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd
wings;

And in the midst, 'mong thousand
heraldries,

And twilight saints, and dim emblazon-
ings,

A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood
of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry
moon,

And threw warm gules on Madeline's
fair breast,

As down she knelt for Heaven's grace
and boon;

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together
 prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly
 drest,
Save wings, for heaven:— Porphyro
 grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from
 mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers,
 done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she
 frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by
 one;
Loosens her fragrant boddice; by de-
 grees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her
 knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-
 weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and
 sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the
 charm is fled.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES .

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly
nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she
lay,
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep op-
press'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued
away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-
day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and
pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Pay-
nims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from
rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a
bud again.

Stolen to this paradise, and so en-
tranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it
chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did
he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the
closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where,
 lo!—how fast she slept.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded
 moon

Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half-anguish'd, threw
 thereon

A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and
 jet:—

O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,

Affray his ears, though but in dying
 tone:—

The hall-door shuts again, and all the
 noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,

While he from forth the closet brought
 a heap

Of candied apple, quince, and plum,
 and gourd;

With jellies soother than the creamy-
 curd,

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

And lucent syrops, tinct with cinna-
mon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every
one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Leba-
non.

These delicates he heap'd with glowing
hand

On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they
stand

In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume
light.—

“And now, my love, my scraph fair,
awake!

Thou art my heaven, and I thine ere-
mite:

Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes'
sake,

Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul
doth ache.”

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved
arm

Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her
dream

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

By the dusk curtains:—'t was a mid-
night charm

Impossible to melt as iced stream:

The lustrous salvers in the moonlight
gleam;

Broad golden fringe upon the carpet
lies:

It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's
eyes;

So muséd awhile, entoil'd in woofed
phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow
lute,—

Tumultuous,—and, in chords that ten-
derest be,

He play'd an ancient ditty, long since
mute,

In Provence call'd "La belle dame sans
mercy":

Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft
moan:

He ceased—she panted quick—and sud-
denly

Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-
sculptured stone.

THE EVE OF ST AGNES

Her eyes were open, but she still be-
held,
Now wide awake, the vision of her
sleep
There was a painful change, that night
expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and
deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with
many a sigh,
While still her gaze on Porphyro would
keep,
Who knelt, with joined hands and
piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so
dreamingly

“Ah, Porphyro!” said she, “but even
now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine
ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow,
And those sad eyes were spiritual and
clear
How changed thou art! how pallid,
chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Por-
phyro,

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

Those looks immortal, those complain-
ings dear!

Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not
where to go."

yond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing
star

Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep
repose:

Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-
wind blows

Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp
sleet

Against the window-panes; St. Agnes'
moon hath set.

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-
blown sleet:

"This is no dream, my bride, my
Madeline!"

'Tis dark: the icy gusts still rave and
beat:

"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is
mine!

Porphyro will leave me here to fade
and pine.—

THE EVE OF ST AGNES

Cruel! what traitor could thee hither
bring?

I curse not, for my heart is lost in
thine,

Though thou forsakest a deceived
thing,—

A dove forlorn and lost with sick un
pruned wing

“My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely
bride!

Say may I be for aye thy vassal blest?

Thy beauty's shield heart shaped and
vermeil dyed?

Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my
rest

After so many hours of toil and quest,

A famish'd pilgrim — saved by miracle

Though I have found I will not rob
thy nest

Saving of thy sweet self, if thou think'st
well

To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude in
fidel

“Hark! 't is an elfin storm from faery
land

Of haggard seeming but a boon in
deed

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy
 speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to
 see,—
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy
 mead:
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a
 home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with
 fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all
 around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready
 spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way
 they found,
In all the house was heard no human
 sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by
 each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk,
 and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's up-
 roar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty
 floor.

THE EVE OF ST AGNES

They glide, like phantoms, into the
wide hall!
Like phantoms to the iron porch they
glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side
The wakeful blood hound rose, and
shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye in inmate owns
By one, and one, the bolts full easy
slide —
The chains lie silent on the foot worn
stones,
The key turns, and the door upon its
hinges groans

And they are gone ay ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm
That night the Baron dreamt of many
a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade
and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-
worm,
Were long be-nightmared Angela the
old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face
deform,

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

The Beadsman, after thousand aves,
told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his
ashes cold.

Ode to a
Nightingale



My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness
pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had
drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had
sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the
trees,

In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows number-
less,
Singing of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath
been

Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved
earth,

Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-
burnt mirth!

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippo-
crene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the
brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world
unseen,
And with thee fade into the forest
dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never
known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each
other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray
hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-
thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of
sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous
eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond
to-morrow.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and
retards
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And hapsly the Queen Moon is on her
throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry
Fays,
But here there is no light
Save what from heaven is with the
breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and wind
ing mossy ways

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the
boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each
sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month en-
dows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit tree
wild,
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eg-
lantine,
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in
leaves,
And mid May's eldest child,

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

The coming musk-rosè, full of dewy
wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on
summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful
Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused
rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no
pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy
soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have
ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal
Bird!

No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was
heard

In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a
path

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when,
sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alién
corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on
the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands for-
lorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole
self.

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still
stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 't is buried
deep

In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—do I wake or
sleep?

Ode on a
Grecian Urn



Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness!
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow
Time,

Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our
rhyme:

What leaf-fringed legend haunts about
thy shape

Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? what
maidens loath?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to
escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild
ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those un-
heard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes,
play on;

Not to the sensual ear, but, more en-
dear'd,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst
not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be
bare,
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou
kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do
not grieve,
She cannot fade, though thou hast
not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot
shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring
adieu,
And happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new,
More happy love! more happy, happy
love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting and for ever young,
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high sorrowful and
cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching
tongue

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Who are these coming to the sacrifice? ,

To what green altar, O mysterious
priest,

Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the
skies,

And all her silken flanks with garlands
drest?

What little town by river or sea-shore,

Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell

Why thou art desolate, can e'er re-
turn.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens over-
wrought,

With forest branches and the trodden
weed;

Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of
thought

As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation
waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other
woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom
thou say'st,

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty”,—that is
all
Ye’ know on earth, and all ye need
to know.

To Autumn



Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and
 bless
 With fruit the vines that round the
 thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-
 trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the
 core;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the
 hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding
 more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never
 cease,
 For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their
 clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy
 store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may
 find

TO AUTUMN

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing
wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies,
while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its
twined flowers;
And sometime like a gleaner thou dost
keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours
by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay,
where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music
too,
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying
day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy
hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats
mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or
dies;

TO AUTUMN

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from
hilly bourn;

Hedge-crickets sing; and now with
treble soft

The redbreast whistles from a garden-
croft,

And gathering swallows twitter in
the skies.

Ode on
Melancholy



No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poison-
ous wine,

Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proser-
pine,

Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death moth
be

Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy
owl

A partner in your sorrow's mysteries,
For shade to shade will come too
drowsily,

And drown the wakeful anguish of
the soul

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping
cloud,

That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April
shroud,

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-
wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her
rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peetless
eyes.

She dwells with Beauty — Beauty that
must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his
lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth
sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose
strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his
palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her
might,
And be among her cloudy trophies
hung.

Ode to
Psyche



O goddess! hear these tuneless numbers
 wrung

 By sweet enforcement and remembrance
 dear,

And pardon that thy secrets should be
 sung,

 Even into thine own soft-conched ear:

Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see

 The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?

I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,

 And, on the sudden, fainting with sur-
 prise,

Saw two fair creatures couched side by side

 In deepest grass beneath the whispering
 roof

 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where
 there ran

 A brooklet, scarce espied.

Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers fragrant-
 eyed,

 Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,

They lay calm-sleeping on the bedded
 grass;

ODE TO PSYCHE

Their arms embraced and their pinions
too;

Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade
adieu,

As if disjointed by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of Aurorean love:

The winged boy I knew;

But who wast thou, O happy, happy
dove?

His Psyche true!

O latest-born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the
sky;

Fairer than these, though temple thou hast
none,

Nor altar heap'd with flowers;

Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;

No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;

No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique
vows,

Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,

ODE TO PSYCHE

Holy the air, the water, and the fire
Yet even in these days so far retired
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see and sing by my own eyes inspired
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours!
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense
sweet
From swung censer teeming,
Thy shrine thy grove thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale mouth'd prophet dreaming

Yes, I will be thy priest and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts new-grown
with pleasant pain
Instead of pines shall murmur in the
wind
Far, far around shall these dark cluster'd
trees
Fledge the wild ridged mountains steep
by steep,
And there by zephyrs streams, and birds
and bees
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to
sleep,
And in the midst of this wide quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress

ODE TO PSYCHE

With the wreath'd trellis of a working
brain,
With buds, and bells, and stars with-
out a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could
feign,
Who, breeding flowers, will never breed
the same:
And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at
night
To let the warm Love in!

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
“I love thee true”.

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sigh'd full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—“La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!”

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the
Lake,
And no birds sing.

The Enchanted Serpent



FROM "LAMIA"

She was a gordian shape of dazzling
hue,
Vermilion - spotted, golden, green, and
blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson
barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she
breathed,
Dissolved, or brighter shone, or inter-
wreathed
Their lustres with the gloomier tapes-
tries—
So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd at once some penanced lady
elf,
Some demon's mistress, or the demon's
self.
Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:

THE ENCHANTED SERPENT

Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-
sweet!

She had a woman's mouth with all its
pearls complete

And for her eyes—what could such eyes
do there

But weep, and weep, that they were born
so fair?

As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian
air

• Her throat was serpent, but the words
she spake

Came, as through bubbling honey, for
Love's sake

And thus, while Hermes on his pinions
lay,

Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his
prey

“Fair Hermes! crown'd with feathers,
fluttering light,

I had a splendid dream of thee last night,
I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,

Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
The only sad one, for thou didst not hear

The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chanting
clear,

Nor even Apollo when he sang alone
Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long

melodious moan

THE ENCHANTED SERPENT

I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple
flakes,

Break amorous through the clouds, as
morning breaks,

And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
Strike for the Cretan isle; and here thou
art!

Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the
maid?"

Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:

"Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high-
inspired!

Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy
eyes,

Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
Telling me only where my nymph is
fled,—

Where she doth breathe!"—"Bright planet,
thou hast said,"

Return'd the snake, "but seal with oaths,
fair God!"

"I swear," said Hermes, "by my serpent
rod,

And by thine eyes, and thy starry crown!"
Light flew his earnest words, among the
blossoms blown.

Then thus again the brilliance feminine:

"Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph
of thine,

THE ENCHANTED SERPENT

Free as the air, invisibly, she strays
About these thornless wilds; her pleasant
days

She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet
Leave traces in the grass and flowers
sweet:

From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches
green,

She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes
unseen:

And by my power is her beauty veil'd
To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd
By the love-glances of unlovely eyes
Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus'
sighs.

Pale grew her immortality, for woe
Of all these lovers, and she grieved so
I took compassion on her, bide her steep
Her hair in weird syrups, that would
keep

Her loveliness invisible, yet free
To wander as she loves, in liberty.

Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou
alone,

If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my
boon!"

Then, once again, the charmed God began
An oath, and through the serpent's ears
it ran

Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.

THE ENCHANTED SERPENT

Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,
Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lipping
said,

“I was a woman, let me have once
more
A woman's shape, and charming as
before.

I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!
Give me my woman's form, and place me
where he is.

Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy
brow,
And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even
now.”

The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
She breathed upon his eyes, and swift
was seen

Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling
on the green.

It was no dream; or say a dream it
was,

Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly
pass

Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it
might seem

Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so
he burn'd;

Then, lighting on the printless verdure,
turn'd

THE ENCHANTED SERPENT

To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid
arm,
Delicate, put to proof the lithe Caducean
charm.

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change; her elfin blood in madness
ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, there-
with besprent,
Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish
drear,
Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all
sear,
Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, with-
out one cooling tear.
The colours all inflamed throughout her
train,
She writhed about, convulsed with scarlet
pain:
A deep volcanian yellow took the place
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;
And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden
brede:
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks
and bars,
Eclipsed her crescents, and lick'd up her
stars:

THE ENCHANTED SERPENT

So that, in moments few, she was 'undrest

Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,
Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
Still shone her crown; that vanish'd, also
she

Melted and disappear'd as suddenly;
And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
Cried, "Lycius! gentle Lycius!"—borne
aloft

With the bright mists about the mountains hoar

These words dissolved: Crete's forests
heard no more.

The Banquet



FROM "LAMIA"

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-
room,
Fill'd with pervading brilliance and per-
fume.
Before each lucid panel fuming stood
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerved upon
the soft
Wool-woofed carpets: fifty wreaths of
smoke
From fifty censers their light voyage took
To the high roof, still mimick'd as they
rose
Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds
odorous.
Twelve sphered tables by silk seats in-
sphered,
High as the level of a man's breast
rear'd
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice
told

THE BANQUET

Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels,
wine
Came from the gloomy tun with merry
shine.
Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image
of a God.

When in an antechamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure
press'd,
By ministering slaves, upon his hands
and feet,
And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
Pour'd on his hair, they all moved to the
feast
In white robes, and themselves in order
placed
Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of
wealth could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
While fluent Greek a vowel'd under-song
Kept up among the guests, discoursing
low
At first, for scarcely was the wine at
flow;

THE BANQUET

But when the happy vintage touch'd their
brains
Louder they talk, and louder come the
strains
Of powerful instruments —the gorgeous
dyes,
The space, the splendour of the draperies,
The roof of awful richness, nectarous
cheer,
Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, ap-
pear,
Now, when the wine^h has done its rosy,
deed,
And every soul from human trammels
freed,
No more so strange, for merry wine,
sweet wine,
Will make Elysian shades not too fair,
too divine
Soon was God Bacchus at meridian
height,
Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright
eyes double bright
Garlands of every green, and every scent
From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees
branch rent,
In baskets of bright osier'd gold were
brought
High as the handles heap'd, to suit the
thought

THE BANQUET

Of every guest; that each, as he did
please,
Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at
his ease.

On first looking
into Chapman's
Homer



Much have I travell'd in the realms of
gold
And many goodly states and kingdoms
seen,
Round many western islands have I
been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his
demesne
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and
bold
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken,
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his
men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien

On a Picture of Leander



Come hither, all sweet maidens soberly,
Down-looking aye, and with a chasten'd
light

Hid in the fringes of your eyelids white,
And meekly let your fair hands joined be,
As if so gentle that ye could not see,
Untouch'd, a victim of your beauty
bright,

Sinking away to his young spirit's night,
Sinking bewilder'd 'mid the dreary sea:

'Tis young Leander toiling to his death;
Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary
lips

For Hero's cheek, and smiles against her
smile.

O horrid dream! see how his body dips
Dead-heavy; arms and shoulders gleam
awhile:

He's gone; up bubbles all his amorous
breath!

On a Dream



As Hermes once took to his feathers light,
When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd
and slept,
So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright
So play'd, so charm'd, so conquer'd, so
bereft
The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes;
And seeing it asleep, so fled away,
Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,
Nor unto Tempe, where Jove grieved a
day,
But to that second circle of sad Hell,
Where in' the gust, the whirlwind, and
the flaw
Of rain and hailstones, lovers need not
tell
Their sorrows,—pale were the sweet
lips I saw,
Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the
form
I floated with, about that melancholy
storm.

The Day is
Gone

The day is gone, and all its sweets are
gone!

Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and
softer breast,

Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-
tone,

Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and
lang'rous waist!

Faded the flower and all its budded charms,

Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,

Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,

Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness,
paradise—

Vanished unseasonably at shut of eve,

When the dusk holiday—or holineight—

Of fragrant-curtain'd love begins to weave

The woof of darkness thick, for hid
delight;

But, as I've read love's missal through
to-day,

He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

On the Elgin
Marbles



My spirit is too weak, mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling
sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky
Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep,
That I have not the cloudy winds to
keep
Fresh for the opening of the morning's
eye
Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an indescribable
feud,
So do these wonders a most dizzy pun,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with
the rude
Wasting of old Time— with a billowy
man,
A sun, a shadow of a magnitude

To a Lady



Time's sea hath been five years at its slow
ebb;

Long hours have to and fro let creep the
sand;

Since I was tangled in thy beauty's web,
And snared by the unglowing of thine
hand.

And yet I never look on midnight sky,
But I behold thine eyes' well memoried
light;

I cannot look upon the rose's dye,
But to thy cheek my soul doth take its
flight;

I cannot look on any budding flower,
But my fond ear, in fancy at thy lips,
And harkening for a love-sound, doth
devour

Its sweets in the wrong sense:—Thou
dost eclipse

Every delight with sweet remembering,
And grief unto my darling joys dost bring.

To Sleep



O soft embalmer of the still midnight,
Shutting with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom pleased eyes, embowered from
the light,

Unshaded in forgetfulness divine,
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing
eyes,

Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities,
Then save me, or the pained day will
shine

Upon my pillow, breeding many woes,
Save me from curious conscience, that
still lords

Its strength for darkness burrowing like
a mole,

Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,
And seal the hushed casket of my soul

Why Did I Laugh?



Why did I laugh to-night? No voice will
tell:

No God, no Demon of severe response,
Deigns to reply from Heaven or from Hell.

Then to my human heart I turn at once.
Heart! Thou and I are here, sad and
alone;

I say, why did I laugh? O mortal pain!
O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I
moan,

To question Heaven and Hell and Heart
in vain.

Why did I laugh? I know this Being's
lease

My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads;
Yet would I on this very midnight cease,
And the world's gaudy ensigns see in
shreds;

Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense
indeed,

But Death intenser—Death is Life's high
meed.

If by Dull
Rhymes



If by dull rhymes our English must be
 chained,
And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
Fettered, in spite of pruned loveliness;
Let us find out, if we must be constrained,
Sandals more interwoven and complete
To fit the naked foot of poesy,
Let us inspect the lyre, and weigh the
 stress
Of every chord, and see what may be
 gained
By ear industrious, and attention meet;
Misers of sound and syllable, no less
Than Midas of his comage, let us be
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay-wreath
 crown;
So, if we may not let the Muse be free,
She will be bound with garlands of her
 own.

, *

To my Brother
George



Many the wonders I this day have seen:
The Sun, when first he kist away the
tears
That filled the eyes of Morn;—the lau-
relled peers
Who from the feathery gold of evening
lean;—
The Ocean with its vastness, its blue green,
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes,
its fears,—
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears
Must think on what will be, and what has
been.
E'en now, dear George, while this for you
I write,
Cynthia is from her silken curtains
peeping
So scantly, that it seems her bridal night,
And she her half-discovered revels keep-
ing.
But what, without the social thought of
thee,
Would be the wonders of the sky and sea?

To . . .



Had I a man's fair form, then might my
sighs

Be echoed swiftly through that ivory
shell

Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart, so
well

Would passion arm me for the enterprise
But ah! I am no knight whose foeman
dies,

No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell,
I am no happy shepherd of the dell

Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's
eyes

Yet must I dote upon thee—call thee
sweet,

Sweeter by far than Hybla's homed roses
When steeped in dew rich to intoxi-
cation

Ah! I will taste that dew, for me 't is meet,
And when the moon her pallid face dis-
closes,

I'll gather some by spells and incan-
tation

How Many Bards

How many bards gild the lapses of time!

A few of them have ever been the food
Of my delighted fancy,—I could brood
Over their beauties, earthly or sublime:
And often when I sit me down to rhyme,
These will in throngs before my mind
intrude:

But no confusion, no disturbance rude
Do they occasion; 'tis a pleasing chime.
So the unnumbered sounds that evening
store;

The songs of birds—the whispering of
the leaves—

The voice of waters—the great bell that
heaves

With solemn sound—and thousand others
more,

That distance of recognizance bereaves,
Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

To a Friend
who sent me
some Roses



As late I rambled in the happy fields,
What time the skylark shakes the
tremulous dew
From his lush clover covert; when anew
Adventurous knights take up their dinted
shields;
I saw the sweetest flower wild nature
yields,
A fresh-blown musk rose; 't was the first
that threw
Its sweets upon the summer; graceful
it grew
As is the wand that queen Titania wields.
And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,
I thought the garden-rose it far excelled:
But when, O Wells! thy roses came to me,
My sense with their deliciousness was
spelled:
Soft voices had they, that with tender plea
Whispered of peace, and truth, and
friendliness unquelled.

Solitude



O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
Of murky buildings; climb with me the
steep,—
Nature's observatory—whence the dell,
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
'Mongst boughs pavilioned, where the
deer's swift leap
Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell.
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes
with thee,
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent
mind,
'hose words are images of thoughts re-
fined,
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits
flee.

To G. A. W.



Nymph of the downward smile, and side-
long glance!

In what diviner moments of the day
Art thou most lovely? When gone far
astray

Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance?
Or when serenely wandering in a trance
Of sober thought? Or when starting
away,

With careless robe, to meet the morning
ray,

Thou spar'st the flowers in thy mazy dance?
Haply 't is when thy ruby lips part sweetly,
And so remain, because thou listenest,
But thou to please wert nurtured so com-
pletely

That I can never tell what mood is best
I shall as soon pronounce which Grace
more neatly

Trips it before Apollo than the rest

Wayfaring



Keen, fitful gusts are whispering here and
there

Among the bushes, half leafless and dry;

The stars look very cold about the sky,

And I have many miles on foot to fare;

Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,

Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,

Or of those silver lamps that burn on
high,

Or of the distance from home's pleasant
lair;

For I am brimful of the friendliness

That in a little cottage I have found;

Of fair-haired Milton's eloquent distress,

And all his love for gentle Lycid drowned;

Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,

And faithful Petrarch gloriously crowned.

Escape from the City



To one who has been long in city pent,
 'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
 And open face of heaven,—to breathe a
 prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament
Who is more happy, when, with heart's
 content,
 Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant
 lair
 Of wavy grass, and reads a debonaire
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
 Catching the notes of Philomel,—an
 eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright
 career,
 He mourns that day so soon has glided
 by
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
 That falls through the clear ether
 silently

On Leaving some
Friends at an
Early Hour



3

Give me a golden pen, and let me lean
On heaped-up flowers, in regions clear,
and far;

Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,
Or hand of hymning angel, when 't is seen
The silver strings of heavenly harp atween:

And let there glide by many a pearly
car,

Pink robes, and wavy hair, and dia-
mond jar,

And half-discovered wings, and glances
keen.

The while let music wander round my
ears,

And as it reaches each delicious ending,
Let me write down a line of glorious
tone,



And full of many wonders of the spheres:
For what a height my spirit is contend-
ing!

'Tis not content so soon to be alone.

Addressed
to Haydon



Great spirits now on earth are sojourning;
He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide
awake,
Catches his freshness from Archangel's
wing:
He of the rose, the violet, the spring,
The social smile, the chain for Free-
dom's sake:
And lo!—whose steadfastness would
never take
A meaner sound than Raphael's whisper-
ing.
And other spirits there are standing apart
Upon the forehead of the age to come;
These, these will give the world another
heart,
And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
Of mighty workings?—
Listen awhile, ye nations, and be dumb.

On the Grasshopper  
and Cricket

The poetry of earth is never dead:

When all the birds are faint with the
hot sun,

And hide in cooling trees, a voice will
run

From hedge to hedge about the new-
mown mead;

That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the
lead

In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out
with fun,

He rests at ease beneath some pleasant
weed.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never:

On a lone winter evening, when the
frost

Has wrought a silence, from the stove
there shrills

The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing
ever,

And seems to one in drowsiness half
lost,

The Grasshopper's among some grassy
hills.

Happy is
England!



Happy is England! I could be content .
To see no other verdure than its own
To feel no other breezes than are
blown
Through its tall woods with high ro-
mances blent
Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment
For skies Italian and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alps on a throne
And half forget what world or worldling
meant
Happy is England sweet her artless
daughters
Enough their simple loveliness for me
Enough their whitest arms in silence
clinging
Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance and hear
their singing
And float with them about the summer
waters

To Kosciusko

Good Kosciusko! thy great name alone
Is a full harvest whence to reap high
feeling;

It comes upon us like the glorious
pealing

Of the wide spheres—an everlasting tone.
And now it tells me, that in worlds un-
known,

The names of heroes burst from clouds
concealing,

And change to harmonies, for ever
stealing

Through cloudless blue, and round each
silver throne.

It tells me too, that on a happy day,
When some good spirit walks upon
the earth,

Thy name with Alfred's, and the
great of yore

Gently commingling, gives tremendous
birth

To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far
away

To where the great God lives for
evermore.

Written before
Re-reading
"King Lear"



O Golden-tongued Romance with serene
lute!

Fair plumed Syren! Queen of far
away!

Leave melodizing on this wintry day.
Shut up thine olden volume, and be
mute,

Adieu! for once again the fierce dispute,
Betwixt Hell torment and impassioned
clay

Must I burn through; once more must
I assay

The bitter sweet of this Shakesperian
fruit.

Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,
Begetters of our deep eternal theme,
When I am through the old oak forest
gone,

Let me not wander in a barren dream,
But when I am consumed with the Fire,
Give me new Phoenix-wings to fly at my
desire.

To Ailsa Rock



Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid!

Give answer from thy voice, the sea-
fowl's screams!

When were thy shoulders mantled in
huge streams?

When from the sun was thy broad fore-
head hid?

How long is't since the mighty power
bid

Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom
dreams?

Sleep in the lap of thunder or sun-
beams,

Or when gray clouds are thy cold cover-
lid?

Thou answerest not, for thou art dead
asleep!

Thy life is but two dead eternities,

The last in air, the former in the deep:

First with the whales, last with the
eagle-skies!

Drowned wast thou till an earthquake
made thee steep,

Another cannot wake thy giant size.

Oh! 'how I love!



Oh! how I love, on a fair summer's eve,
When streams of light pour down the
golden west,

And on the balmy zephyrs tranquil rest
The silver clouds, far—far away to leave
All meaner thoughts, and take a sweet
reprieve

From little cares; to find, with easy
quest,

A fragrant wild, with Nature's beauty
drest,

And there into delight my soul deceive,
There warm my breast with patriotic lore,
Musing on Milton's fate—on Sidney's
bier—

Till their stern forms before my mind
arise:

Perhaps on wing of Poesy upsoar,
Full often dropping a delicious tear,
When some melodious sorrow spells
mine eyes.

Sonnet

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK
SPACE OF A LEAF AT END
OF CHAUCER'S TALE OF
"THE FLOWRE AND THE
LEFE"



This pleasant tale is like a little copse:
The honied lines do freshly interlace,
To keep the reader in so sweet a place,
So that he here and there full-hearted
stops;
And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops
Come cool and suddenly against his
face,
And, by the wandering melody, may
trace
Which way the tender-legged linnets hop.
Oh! what a power hath white simplicity!
What mighty power has this gentle
story!
I, that do ever feel athirst for glory,
Could at this moment be content to lie
Meekly upon the grass, as those whose
sobblings
Were heard of none beside the mourn-
ful robins.

The Gentle South



After dark ' vapours have oppressed our
plains

For a long dreary season, comes a day
Born of the gentle South, and clears
away

From the sick heavens all unseemly
stains.

The anxious month, relieved from its
pains,

Takes as a long-lost right the feel of
May,

The eyelids with the passing coolness
play,

Like rose-leaves with the drip of summer
rains.

And calmest thoughts come round us—as
of leaves

'Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—
autumn suns

Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves,—
Sweet Sappho's cheek,—a sleeping infant's
breath,—

The gradual sand that through an hour-
glass runs,—

A woodland rivulet,—a Poet's death.

On the Sea



It keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty
swell
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till
the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy
sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest
shell
Be moved for days from where it some-
time fell,
When last the winds of heaven were un-
bound.
Oh ye! who have your eyeballs vexed
and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the
Sea;
Oh ye! whose ears are dinned with
uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody,—
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth,
and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs
quired!

Fears of Death



When I have fears that I may cease to
be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming
brain,
Before high-piled books, in charact'ry,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripened
grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starred
face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high ro-
mance,
And feel that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand
of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
'Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love!—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and
think,
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do
sink.

To Homer

Standing aloof in giant ignorance,
Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,
As one who sits ashore and longs perchance

To visit dolphin-coral in deep seas.
So thou wast blind!—but then the veil
was rent;

For Jove uncurtained Heaven to let
thee live,

And Neptune made for thee a spermy
tent,

And Pan made sing for thee his forest-
hive;

Aye, on the shores of darkness there is
light,

And precipices show untrodden green;
There is a budding morrow in midnight;

There is a triple sight in blindness
keen;

Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befell,
To Dian, Queen of Earth and Heaven,
and Hell.

Answer to a
Sonnet by J.
H. Reynolds,
ending:—



“Dark eyes are dearer far
Than those that mock the hyacinthine bell”.

Blue! 'Tis the life of heaven,—the do-
main
Of Cynthia,—the wide palace of the
sun,—

The tent of Hesperus, and all his train,—
The bosomer of clouds, gold, gray, and
dun.

Blue! 'Tis the life of waters—ocean
And all its vassal streams. pools num-
berless

May rage, and foam, and fret, but never
can
Subside, if not to dark-blue native-
ness.

Blue! gentle cousin of the forest-green,
Married to green in all the sweetest
flowers—

ANSWER TO A SONNET

Forget-me-not,—the bluebell,—and, that
queen

Of secrecy, the violet: what strange
powers

Hast thou, as a mere shadow! But how
great,

When in an Eye thou art alive with fate!

To J. H. Reynolds *o* *o*

O that a week could be an age, and we
Felt parting and warm meeting every
week,
Then one poor year a thousand years
would be,
The flush of welcome ever on the cheek
So could we live long life in little space,
So time itself would be annihilate,
So a day's journey in oblivious haze
To serve our joys would lengthen and
dilate
O to arrive each Monday morn from Ind'
To land each Tuesday from the rich
Levant'
In little time a host of joys to bind,
And keep our souls in one eternal pant'
This morn, my friend, and yester-evening
taught
Me how to harbour such a happy thought

On Fame



I

Fame, like a wayward girl, will still be
coy

To those who woo her with too slavish
knees,

But makes surrender to some thoughtless
boy,

And dotes the more upon a heart at
ease;

She is a Gipsey,—will not speak to those
Who have not learnt to be content with-
out her;

A Jilt, whose ear was never whispered
close,

Who thinks they scandal her who talk
about her;

A very Gipsey is she, Nilus-born,
Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar;

Ye love-sick Bards! repay her scorn for
scorn;

Ye Artists love-lorn! madmen that ye
are!

Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

On Fame



II

You cannot eat your cake and have it too
—*Proverb*

How fevered is the man who cannot look
Upon his mortal days with temperate
blood,

Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,
And robs his fair name of its maiden-
hood,

It is as if the rose should pluck herself,
Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,
As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,

Should darken her pure grot with muddy
gloom,

But the rose leaves herself upon the briar,
For winds to kiss and grateful bees to
feed,

And the ripe plum still wears its dim
attire,

The undisturbed lake has crystal space,
Why then should man, teasing the world
for grace,

Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed?

To the Nile



Son of the old moon-mountains African!
Stream of the Pyramid and Crocodile!
We call thee fruitful, and that very
while

A desert fills our seeing's inward span.
Nurse of swart nations since the world
began,

Art thou so fruitful? or dost thou be-
guile

Those men to honour thee, who, worn
with toil,

Rest them a space 'twixt Cairo and
Deccan?

O may dark fancies err! They surely do;
'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste

Of all beyond itself. Thou dost bedew
Green rushes like our rivers, and dost
taste

The pleasant sunrise. Green isles hast
thou too,

And to the sea as happily dost haste.

Ben Nevis



Read me a lesson, Muse, and speak it
loud

Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist!
I look into the chasms, and a shroud
Vaporous doth hide them,—just so much
I wist

Mankind do know of hell; I look o'er-
head,

And there is sullen mist,—even so much
Mankind can tell of heaven; mist is
spread

Before the earth, beneath me,—even such,
Even so vague is man's sight of himself!
Here are the craggy stones beneath my
feet,—

Thus much I know that, a poor witless
elf,

I tread on them,—that all my eye doth
meet

Is mist and crag, not only on this height,
But in the world of thought and mental
might!

Ode



Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too
Double lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon,
With the noise of fountains wondrous,
And the parle of voices thunderous,
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns,
Underneath large bluebells tented,
Where the daisies are rose scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not,
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, tranced thing,
But divine melodious truth,
Philosophic numbers smooth,
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries

ODE

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumbered, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth;
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

Lines on the
Mermaid Tavern

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story—
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac

THE MERMAID TAVERN

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

Robin Hood



No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years
Many times have Winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more,
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill,
There is no mid forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amazed to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you,

ROBIN HOOD

But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent;
For he left the merry tale,
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "grenè shawe":
All are gone away and past!
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his tufted grave,
And if Marian should have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze:
He would swear; for all his oaks,
Fallen beneath the dockyard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

ROBIN HOOD

So it is: yet let us sing,
Honour to the old bow-string!
Honour to the bugle-horn!
Honour to the woods unshorn!
Honour to the Lincoln green!
Honour to the archer keen!
Honour to tight Little John,
And the horse he rode upon!
Honour to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood!
Honour to Maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood-clan!
Though their days have hurried by
Let us two a burden try .

Fancy



Ever let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let winged Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond
her;

Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming;
Autumn's red-lipped fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloys with tasting: What do then?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.

FANCY

Sit thee there, and send abroad,
 With a mind self-overawed,
 Fancy, high-commissioned — send her!
 She has vassals to attend her
 She will bring, in spite of frost,
 Beauties that the earth hath lost,
 She will bring thee, all together,
 All delights of summer weather,
 All the buds and bells of May,
 From dewy sward or thorny spray,
 All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
 With a still, mysterious stealth
 *She will mix these pleasures up
 Like three fit wines in a cup,
 And thou shalt quaff it — thou shalt hear
 Distant harvest-carols clear,
 Rustle of the reaped corn,
 Sweet birds antheming the morn
 And, in the same moment — hark!
 'Tis the early April lark,
 Or the rooks, with busy caw,
 Foraging for sticks and straw
 Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
 The daisy and the marigold,
 White-plumed lilies, and the first
 Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst,
 Shaded hyacinth, always
 Sapphire queen of the mid-May
 And every leaf, and every flower
 Pearled with the self-same shower.

FANCY

Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the beehive casts its swarm;
Acorns ripe down-pattering,
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Everything is spoilt by use:
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at? Where's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary? Where's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, winged Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind:
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide!

FANCY

. . . . Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash;
Quickly break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she'll bring.
Let the winged Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

Song—The Dove



I had a dove, and the sweet dove died!
And I have thought it died of grieving;
O, what could it grieve for? its feet were
tied

With a single thread of my own hand's
weaving;

Sweet little red feet! why should you die?
Why should you leave me, sweet bird!
why?

You lived alone in the forest tree,
Why, pretty thing! would you not live
with me?

I kissed you oft, and gave you white
peas;

Why not live sweetly, as in the green
trees?

Asleep



Asleep! O sleep a little while, white
pearl!
And let me kneel, and let me pray to
thee,
And let me call Heaven's blessing on
thine eyes,
And let me breathe into the happy air
That doth enfold and touch thee all
about
Vows of my slavery, my giving up,
My sudden adoration, my great love!

Song of Four Fairies

FIRE, AIR, EARTH, AND WATER—
SALAMANDER, ZEPHYR,
DUSKETHA, AND BREAMA

Salamander. Happy, happy glowing fire!

Zephyr. Fragrant air! delicious light!

Dusketha. Let me to my glooms retire!

Breama. I to green-weed rivers bright!

Sal. Happy, happy glowing fire!
Dazzling bowers of soft retire,
Ever let my nourished wing,
Like a bat's, still wandering,
Faintless fan your fiery spaces,
Spirit sole in deadly places.
In unhaunted roar and blaze,
Open eyes that never daze,
Let me see the myriad shapes
Of men, and beasts, and fish, and apes,
Portrayed in many a fiery den,
And wrought by spumy bitumien.
On the deep intenser roof,
Arched every way aloof,

SONG OF FOUR FAIRIES

Let me breathe upon their skies,
And anger their live tapestries;
Free from cold and every care
Of chilly rain and shivering air.

Zep. Spirit of Fire! away! away!
Or your very roundelay
Will sear my plumage newly budded
From its quilled sheath, all studded
With the self-sown dews that fell
On the May-gate *Asphodel*
Spirit of Fire—away! away!

Bre Spirit of Fire—away! away!
Zephyr, blue-eyed fairy, turn,
And see my cool sedge-buried urn,
Where it rests its mossy brim
'Mid water-mint and cresses dim,
And the flowers, in sweet troubles,
Lift their eyes above the bubbles,
Like our Queen, when she would please
To sleep, and Oberon *will* tease—
Love me, blue-eyed Fairy! true,
Soothly I am sick for you

Zep Gentle Breama! by the first
Violet young nature nurst,
I will bathe myself with thee,
So you sometimes follow me
To my home, far, far in west,
Beyond the nimble-wheeled quest
Of the golden-browed sun:

SONG OF FOUR FAIRIES

Come with me, o'er tops of trees,
To my fragrant palaces,
Where they ever floating are
Beneath the cherish of a star
Called Vesper, who with silver veil
Ever hides his brilliance pale,
Ever gently-drowsed doth keep
Twilight for the Fayes to sleep.
Fear not that your watery hair
Will thirst in drouth; angiets there;
Clouds of stored summer rains
Thou shalt taste, before the stains
Of the mountain soil they take,
And too unlucent for thee make.
I love thee, crystal Fairy, true!
Sooth I am as sick for you!

Sal. Out, ye aguish Fairies, out!
Chilly lovers, what a rout
Keep ye with your frozen breath,
Colder than the mortal death!
Adder-eyed Dusketha, speak!
Shall we leave these, and go seek.
In the earth's wide entrails old
Couches warm as theirs are cold?
O for a fiery gloom and thee,
Dusketha, so enchantingly
Freckle-winged and lizard-sided!

Dus. By thee, Sprite, will I be guided!
I care not for cold or heat;
Frost and flame, or sparks, or sleet

SONG OF FOUR FAIRIES

my essence are the same,

I honour more the flame

of Fire, I follow thee

wheresoever it may be,—

torrid spouts and fountains,

underneath earth-quaked mountains,

at thy supreme desire,

which the very pulse of fire

with my bare unlidged eyes

Oh! Sweet Dusketh! paradise!

O ye icy Spirits, fly!

O ye creatures of the sky!

Oh! Breathe upon them, fiery sprite!

Oh! } Away! away to our delight!

Oh! } Go, feed on icicles while we

lidded in tongue-flames will be

Oh! Lead me to those feverous glooms

of Fire!

Oh! Me to the blooms,

blue-eyed Zephyr, of those flowers

in the west where the May-clouds

lower,

Oh! the beams of still Vesper, when winds

are all wist,

shed thro' the rain and the mild

mist,

Oh! twilight your floating bowers

“I Stood Tip-
toe upon a
Little Hill”



“Places of nestling green for poets made.”—
Story of Rimini.

I stood tiptoe upon a little hill,
The air was cooling, and so very still,
That the sweet buds which with a modest
pride
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
Their scanty leaved, and finely tapering
stems,
Had not yet lost those starry diadems
Caught from the early sobbing of the
morn.
The clouds were pure and white as flocks
new shorn,
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly
they slept
On the blue fields of heaven, and then
there crept
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:

"UPON A LITTLE HILL"

For not the faintest motion could be seen
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the
green.

There was wide wand'ring for the greediest
eye,

To peer about upon variety;

Far round the horizon's crystal air to
skim,

And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;

To picture out the quaint, and curious
bending

Of a fresh woodland alley, never ending;

Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,

Guess where the jaunty streams refresh
themselves.

I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free

As though the fanning wings of Mercury

Had played upon my heels I was light-
hearted,

And many pleasures to my vision started;

So I straightway began to pluck a posy

Of luxuries bright, milky, soft and rosy.

A bush of May flowers with the bees
about them;

Ah, sure no tasteful nook would be with-
out them!

And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,

And let long grass grow round the roots
to keep them

"I STOOD TIPTOE

Moist, cool and green; and shade the
violets,
That they may bind the moss in leafy
nets;
A filbert hedge with wild briar over-
twined,
And clumps of woodbine taking the soft
wind
Upon their summer thrones; there too
should be
The frequent chequer of a youngling
tree,
That with a score of light green brethren
shoots
From the quaint mossiness of aged roots:
Round which is heard a spring-head of
clear waters
Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters,
The spreading bluebells: it may haply
mourn
That such fair clusters should be rudely
torn
From their fresh beds, and scattered
thoughtlessly
By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
Ye ardent marigolds!

• UPON A LITTLE HILL'

Dry up the moisture from your golden
 lids,
For great Apollo bids
That in these days your praises should be
 sung
On many harps which he has lately
 strung,
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him I have you in my world of
 blisses
So haply when I rove in some far vale,
His mighty voice may come upon the
 gale

Here are sweet peas on tiptoe for a
 flight
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate
 white
And taper fingers catching at all things
To bind them all about with tiny rings

Linger awhile upon some bending plants
That lean against a streamlet's rushy
 banks
And watch intently Nature's gentle doings
They will be found softer than ringdoves
 cooings
How silent comes the water round that
 bend!
Not the minutest whisper does it send

"I STOOD TIPTOE

To the o'erhanging willows: blades of
grass

Slowly across the chequered shadows pass.

Why, you might read two sonnets, ere
they reach

To where the hurrying freshnesses aye
preach

A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds;
Where swarms of minnows show their
little heads,

Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the
streams,

To taste the luxury of sunny beams

Tempered with coolness. How they ever
wrestle

With their own sweet delight, and ever
nestle

Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand!

If you but scantily hold out the hand,

That very instant not one will remain;

But turn your eye, and they are there
again.

The ripples seem right glad to reach
those cresses,

And cool themselves among the emerald
tresses;

The while they cool themselves, they fresh-
ness give,

And moisture, that the bowery green may
live;

UPON A LITTLE HILL"

So keeping up an interchange of favours,
Like good men in the truth of their be-
haviours

Sometimes goldfinches, one by one will
drop

From low-hung branches, little space
they stop;

But sip, and twitter, and their feathers
sleek;

Then off at once, as in a wanton frisk
Or perhaps, to show their black and golden
wings,

Pausing upon their yellow flutterings
Were I in such a place, I sure should
pray

That nought less sweet might call my
thoughts away,

Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown
Fanning away the dandelion's down,

Than the light music of her nimble toes
Patting against the sord as she goes

How she would start, and blush, thus to
be caught

Plying in all her innocence of thought

O let me lead her gently o'er the brook,
Watch her half-smiling lips, and down-
ward look;

O let me for one moment touch her wrist;
Let me one moment to her breathing

his,

“I STOOD TIPTOE

And as she leaves me may she often turn
Her fair eyes looking through her locks
auburne.

What next? A tuft of evening primroses,
O'er which the mind may hover till it
dozes;

O'er which it well might take a pleasant
sleep,

But that 'tis ever startled by the leap
Of buds into ripe flowers; or by the flit-
ting

Of divers moths, that aye their rest are
quitting;

Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
Coming into the blue with all her light.

O Maker of sweet poets, dear delight
Of this fair world, and all its gentle
livers;

Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
Mingler with leaves and dew and tum-
bling streams,

Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,

Lover of loneliness, and wandering,

Of upcast eye, and tender pondering!

Thee must I praise above all other glories
That smile us on to tell delightful stories.

For what has made the sage or poet
write

But the fair paradise of Nature's light?

UPON A LITTLE HILL"

In the calm grandeur of a sober line,
We see the waving of the mountain
pine;

And when a tale is beautifully told,
We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade:
When it is moving on luxurious wings,
The soul is lost in pleasant smother-
ings:

Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,
And flowering larkspurs spring from diamond
vases;

O'erhead we see the jessamine and sweet-
briar,

And bloomy grapes laughing* from green
attire;

While at our feet, the voice of crystal
bubbles

Charms us at once away from all our
troubles:

So that we feel uplifted from the world,
Walking upon the white clouds wreathed
and curled.

So felt he, who first told how Psyche
went

On the smooth wind to realms of wonder-
ment;

What Psyche felt, and Love, when their
full lips

First touched; what amorous and fond-
ling nips

"I STOOD TIPTOE

They gave each other's cheeks; with all
their sighs,
And how they kissed each other's tremu-
lous eyes:
The silver lamp—the ravishment—the
wonder—
The darkness—loneliness—the fearful
thunder;
Their woes gone by, and both to heaven
upflown,
To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne.
So did he feel, who pulled the boughs
aside,
That we might look into a forest wide,
To catch a glimpse of Fauns, and Dry-
ades,
Coming with softest rustle through the
trees;
And garlands woven of flowers wild, and
sweet,
Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet:
Telling us how fair, trembling Syrinx
fled
Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.
Poor nymph—poor Pan—how he did weep
to find
Naught but a lovely sighing of the wind
Along the reedy stream! a half-heard
strain,
Full of sweet desolation—balmy pain.

UPON A LITTLE HILL"

What first inspired a bard of old to sing
Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring?
In some delicious ramble, he had found
A little space, with boughs all woven
 round,
And in the midst of all, a clearer pool
Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool
The blue sky, here and there serenely
 peeping
Through tendril wreaths fantastically
 creeping
And on the bank a lonely flower he
 spied,
A meek and forlorn flower, with naught
 of pride,
Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clear-
 ness,
To woo its own sad image into near-
 ness
Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not
 move,
But still would seem to droop, to pine, to
 love
So while the Poet stood in this sweet
 spot,
Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy
 shot,
Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's
 bale

"I STOOD TIPTOE

Where had he been, from whose warm
 head out-flew
That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,
That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,
Coming ever to bless
The wanderer by moonlight? to him
 bringing
Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly
 singing
From out the middle air, from flowery
 nests,
And from the pillowy silkiness that rests
Full in the speculation of the stars.
Ah! surely he had burst our mortal bars;
Into some wondrous region he had gone,
To search for thee, divine Endymion!
He was a Poet, sure a lover too,
Who stood on Latmus' top, what time
 there blew
Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below;
And brought, in faintness solemn, sweet,
 and slow,
A hymn from Dian's temple! while up-
 swelling,
The incense went to her own starry
 dwelling.
But though her face was clear as infant's
 eyes,
Though she stood smiling o'er the sacri-
 fice,

UPON A LITTLE HILL'

The poet wept at her so piteous fate,
Wept that such beauty should be desolate
So in fine wrath some golden sounds he
won,
And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion

Queen of the wide air, thou most lovely
queen
Of all the brightness that mine eyes have
seen!
As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,
So every tale does this sweet tale of thine
O for three words of honey that I might
Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night!

Where distant ships do seem to show
their keels,
Phœbus awhile delayed his mighty wheels,
And turned to smile upon thy bashful
eyes,
Ere he his unseen pomp would solemnize.
The evening weather was so bright, and
clear,
That men of health were of unusual
cheer,
Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,
Or young Apollo on the pedestal

"I STOOD TIPTOE.

And lovely women were as fair and warm
As Venus looking sideways in alarm.
The breezes were ethereal, and pure,
And crept through half-closed lattices to
 cure
The languid sick; it cooled their fevered
 sleep,
And soothed them into slumbers full and
 deep.
Soon they awoke clear-eyed: nor burnt
 with thirsting,
Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples
 bursting:
And springing up, they met the wonder-
 ing sight
Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with
 delight;
Who feel their arms, and breasts, and
 kiss and stare,
And on their placid foreheads part the
 hair.
Young men and maidens at each other
 gazed
With hands held back, and motionless,
 amazed
To see the brightness in each other's eyes;
And so they stood, filled with a sweet
 surprise,
Until their tongues were loosed in poesy.
Therefore no lover did of anguish die:

UPON A LITTLE HILL."

But the soft numbers, in that moment
spoken,

Made silken ties, that never may be
broken.

Cynthia! I cannot tell the greater blisses,
That followed thine and thy dear shep-
herd's kisses:

Was there a poet born?—but now no
more—

My wandering spirit must no farther
soar.

Specimen of
an Induction
to a Poem



Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;
For large white plumes are dancing in
mine eye.

Not like the formal crest of latter days:
But bending in a thousand graceful ways;
So graceful, that it seems no mortal hand,
Or e'en the touch of Archimago's wand,
Could charm them into such an attitude.
We must think rather, that in playful
mood,

Some mountain breeze had turned its
chief delight,

To show this wonder of its gentle might.

Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;
For while I muse, the lance points slant-
ingly

Athwart the morning air: some lady
sweet,

Who cannot feel for cold her tender feet,
From the worn top of some old battle-
ment

Hails it with tears, her stout defender
sent:

INDUCTION TO A POEM

And from her own pure self no joy dis-
sembling,

Wraps round her ample robe with happy
trembling

Sometimes when the good knight his
rest would take,

It is reflected, clearly, in a lake,

With the young ashen boughs 'gainst
which it rests

And the half-seen mossiness of linnets'
nests

Ah! shall I ever tell its cruelty

When the fire flashes from a warrior's eye,

And his tremendous hand is grasping it,

And his dark brow for very wrath is
knit?

Or when his spirit with more calm in-
tent,

Leaps to the honours of a tournament,

And makes the gazers round about the
ring

Stare at the grandeur of the balancing?

No, no! this is far off — then how shall I

Revive the dying tones of minstrelsy,

Which linger yet about lone Gothic arches,
In dark green ivy, and among wild

larches?

How sing the splendour of the revelries

When butts of wine are drank off to the
lees?

SPECIMEN OF AN

And that bright lance, against the fretted
wall,

Beneath the shade of stately banneral,
Is slung with shining cuirass, sword, and
shield?

Where ye may see a spur in bloody field.
Light-footed damsels move with gentle
paces

Round the wide hall, and show their
happy faces,

Or stand in courtly talk by fives and
sevens:

Like those fair stars that twinkle in the
heavens.

Yet must I tell a tale of chivalry:

Or wherefore comes that knight so proudly
by?

Wherefore more proudly does the gentle
knight

Rein in the swelling of his ample might?

Spenser! thy brows are arched, open, kind,
And come like a clear sunrise to my
mind;

And always does my heart with pleasure
dance,

When I think on thy noble countenance:

Where never yet was aught more earthly
seen

Than the pure freshness of thy laurels
green.

INDUCTION TO A POEM

Therefore, great bard, I not so fearfully
Call on thy gentle spirit to hover nigh
My daring steps: or if thy tender care,
Thus startled unaware,
Be jealous that the foot of other wight
Should madly follow that bright path of
light

Traced by thy loved Libertas, he 'will
speak,

And tell thee that my prayer is very meek,
That I will follow with due reverence,
And start with awe at mine own strange
pretence.

Him thou wilt hear, so I will rest in
hope

To see wide plains, fair trees and lawny
slope,

The morn, the eve, the light, the shade,
the flowers;
Clear streams, smooth lakes, and over-
looking towers

Calidore



A FRAGMENT

Young Calidore is paddling o'er the lake;
His healthful spirit eager and awake
To feel the beauty of a silent eve,
Which seemed full loth this happy world
to leave;

The light dwelt o'er the scene so linger-
ingly.

He bares his forehead to the cool blue
sky,

And smiles at the far clearness all around,
Until his heart is well-nigh overwound,
And turns for calmness to the pleasant
green

Of easy slopes, and shadowy trees that
lean

So elegantly o'er the waters' brim
And show their blossoms trim.

Scarce can his clear and nimble eyesight
follow

The freaks and dartings of the black-
winged swallow,

Delighting much to see it, half at rest,
Dip so refreshingly its wings and breast

CALIDORE

'Gainst the smooth surface, and to mark
anon,
The widening circles into nothing gone.

And now the sharp keel of his little boat
Comes up with ripple, and with easy
float,

And glides into a bed of water-lilies:
Broad-leaved are they and their white
canopies

Are upward turned to catch the heavens'
dew.

Near to a little island's point they grew;
Whence Calidore might have the good-
liest view

Of this sweet spot of earth. The bowery
shore

Went off in gentle windings to the hoar
And light blue mountains but no breath-
ing man

With a warm heart, and eye prepared to
scan

Nature's clear beauty, could pass lightly
by

Objects that looked out so invitingly
On either side. These, gentle Calidore
Greeted, as he had known them long be-
fore:

CALIDORE

The sidelong view of swelling leafiness,
Which the glad setting sun in gold doth
dress;
Whence, ever and anon, the jay out-
springs,
And sails upon the beauty of its wings.

The lonely turret, shattered, and outworn,
Stands venerably proud; too proud to
mourn
Its long-lost grandeur: fir-trees grow
around,
Aye dropping their hard fruit upon the
ground.

The little chapel with the cross above
Upholding wreaths of ivy; the white dove,
That on the windows spreads his feathers
light,
And seems from purple clouds to wing
its flight.
Green tufted islands casting their soft
shades
Across the lake; sequestered leafy glades,
That through the dimness of their twi-
light show
Large dock-leaves, spiral foxgloves, or
the glow

CALIDORE

Of the wild-cat's eyes or the silvery
stems
Of delicate birch-trees, or long grass
which hems
A little brook —The youth had long been
viewing
These pleasant things, and heaven was
bedewing
The mountain flowers, when his glad
senses caught
A trumpet's silver voice Ah! it was
fraught
With many joys for him the warder's
ken
Had found white coursers prancing in
the glen
Friends very dear to him he soon will see
So pushes off his boat most eagerly,
And soon upon the lake he skims along,
Deaf to the nightingale's first under song
Nor minds he the white swans that
dream so sweetly
His spirit flies before him so completely,
And now he turns a jutting point of land,
Whence may be seen the castle gloomy
and grand
Nor will a bee buzz round two swelling
peaches,
Before the point of his light shallop
reaches

CALIDORE

Those marble steps that through the
water dip:

Now over them he goes with hasty trip,
And scarcely stays to ope the folding
doors:

Anon he leaps along the oaken floors
Of halls and corridors.

Delicious sounds! those little bright-eyed
things

That float about the air on azure wings,
Had been less heartfelt by him than the
clang

Of clattering hoofs; into the court he
sprang,

Just as two noble steeds, and palfreys
twain,

Were slanting out their necks with loos-
ened rein;

While from beneath the threat'ning port-
cullis

They brought their happy burthens.

What a kiss,

What gentle squeeze he gave each lady's
hand!

How tremblingly their delicate ankles
spanned!

Into how sweet a trance his soul was
gone,

While whisperings of affection

CALIDORE

Made him delay to let their tender feet
Come to the earth, with an incline so
 sweet
From their low palfreys o'er his neck
 they bent
And whether there were tears of languish-
 ment,
Or that the evening dew had pearled
 their tresses,
He feels a moisture on his cheek and
 blesses
With lips that tremble, and with glisten-
 ing eye
All the soft luxury
That nestled in his arms A dimpled
 hand,
Fair as some wonder out of fairy land,
Hung from his shoulder like the droop-
 ing flowers
Of whitest Cassia, fresh from summer
 showers
And this he fondled with his happy cheek
As if for joy he would no further seek,
When the kind voice of good Sir Cleri-
 mond
Came to his ear, like something from
 beyond
His present being so he gently drew
His warm arms, thrilling now with pulses
 new,

CALIDORE

From their sweet thrall, and, forward
gently bending,
Thanked Heaven that his joy was never-
ending;
While 'gainst his forehead he devoutly
pressed
A hand Heaven made to succour the dis-
tressed;
A hand that from the world's bleak pro-
montory
Had lifted Calidore for deeds of glory.

Amid the pages, and the torches' glare,
There stood a knight, patting the flowing
hair
Of his proud horse's mane: he was withal
A man of elegance, and stature tall:
So that the waving of his plumes would
be
High as the berries of a wild ash-tree,
Or as the winged cap of Mercury.
His armour was so dexterously wrought
In shape, that sure no living man had
thought
It hard, and heavy steel: but that indeed
It was some glorious form, some splendid
weed,

CALIDORE

In which a spirit new come from the
skies
Might live, and show itself to human
eyes.

'Tis the far-famed, the brave Sir Gondibert,
Said the good man to Calidore alert;
While the young warrior with a step of
grace

Came up, a courtly smile upon his face,
And mailed hand held out, ready to greet
The large-eyed wonder, and ambitious
heat

Of the aspiring boy; who as he led
Those smiling ladies, often turned his
head

To admire the visor arched so gracefully
Over a knightly brow; while they went by
The lamps that from the high-roofed hall
were pendent,

And gave the steel a shining quite tran-
scendent.

Soon in a pleasant chamber they are
seated;

The sweet-lipped ladies have already
greeted

All the green leaves that round the window
clamber,

To show their purple stars, and bells of
amber.

CALIDORE

Sir Gondibert has doffed his shining steel,
Gladdening in the free and airy feel
Of a light mantle; and while Clerimond
Is looking round about him with a fond
And placid eye, young Calidore is burning
To hear of knightly deeds, and gallant
spurning
Of all unworthiness; and how the strong
of arm
Kept off dismay, and terror, and alarm
From lovely woman: while brimful of
this,
He gave each damsel's hand so warm a
kiss,
And had such manly ardour in his eye,
That each at other looked half-staringly;
And then their features started into smiles
Sweet as blue heavens o'er enchanted
isles.

Softly the breezes from the forest came,
Softly they blew aside the taper's flame;
Clear was the song from Philomel's far
bower:
Grateful the incense from the lime-tree
flower;
Mysterious, wild, the far-heard trumpet's
tone;
Lovely the moon in ether, all alone:

CALIDORE

Sweet too the converse of these happy
mortals,
As that of busy spirits when the portals
Are closing in the west; or that soft
humming
We hear around when Hesperus is
coming.
Sweet be their sleep.

Faery Songs



I

Shed no tear! oh, shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.
Weep no more! oh, weep no more!
Young buds sleep in the root's white core.
Dry your eyes! oh, dry your eyes!
For I was taught in Paradise
To ease my breast of melodies—
Shed no tear.

Overhead! look overhead!
'Mong the blossoms white and red—
Look up, look up. I flutter now
On this flush pomegranate bough.
See me! 'tis this silvery bill
Ever cures the good man's ill.
Shed no tear! oh, shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.
Adieu, adieu!—I fly, adieu!
I vanish in the heaven's blue—
Adieu! adieu!

FAERY SONGS

II

Ah! woe is me! poor silver-wing!
That I must chaunt thy lady's dirge,
And death to this fair haunt of spring,
Of melody, and streams of flowery
verge,—
Poor silver-wing! ah! woe is me!
That I must see
These blossoms snow upon thy lady's pall!
Go, pretty page, and in her ear
Whisper that the hour is near.
Softly tell her not to fear
Such calm favonian burial!
Go, pretty page! and soothly tell,—
The blossoms hang by a melting spell,
And fall they must ere a star wink thrice
Upon her closed eyes,
That now in vain are weeping their last
tears
At sweet life leaving, and these arbours
green,—
Rich dowry from the Spirit of the
Spheres,—
Alas! poor Queen!

To Fanny



Physician Nature! let my spirit blood!

O ease my heart of verse and let me
rest;

Throw me upon thy Tripod, till the flood
Of stifling numbers ebbs from my full
breast.

A theme! a theme! great Nature! give a
theme;

Let me begin my dream.

I come—I see thee, as thou standest
there!

Beckon me not into the wintry air!

Ah! dearest love, sweet home of all my
fears,

And hopes, and joys, and panting
miseries,—

To-night, if I may guess, thy beauty
wears

A smile of such delight,

As brilliant and as bright,

As when with ravished, aching, vassal
eyes,

Lost in soft amaze,

I gaze, I gaze!

TO FANNY

Who now, with greedy looks, eats up my
feast?

What stare outfaces now my silver moon?
Ah! keep that hand unravished at the
least,

Let, let the amorous burn—

But, pr'ythee, do not turn

The current of your heart from me so
soon

Oh, save, in charity,

The quickest pulse for me

Save it for me, sweet love! though music
breathe

Voluptuous visions into the warm air,
Though swimming through the dance's
dangerous wreath

Be like an April day,

Smiling and cold and gay,

A temperate lily, temperate as fur,

Then, Heaven! there will be

A warmer June for me

Why, this—you'll say, my Fanny! is not
true

Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,
Where the heart beats confess—'tis
nothing new—

Must not a woman be

A feather on the sea,

TO FANNY

Swayed to and fro by every wind and
tide?

Of as uncertain speed
As blow-ball from the mead?

I know it—and to know it is despair
To one who loves you as I love, sweet
Fanny!

Whose heart goes fluttering for you every-
where,

Nor, when away you roam,
Dare keep its wretched home,
Love, love alone, his pains severe and
many:

Then, loveliest! keep me free,
From torturing jealousy.

Ah! if you prize my subdued soul above
The poor, the fading, brief pride of an
hour;

Let none profane my Holy See of love
Or with a rude hand break
The sacramental cake:

Let none else touch the just new-budded
flower;

If not—may my eyes close,
Love! on their last repose.

Lines to
Fanny



What can I do to drive away
Remembrance from my eyes? for they
have seen,

* Aye, an hour ago, my brilliant Queen!
Touch has a memory O say, love, say,
What can I do to kill it and be free
In my old liberty?

When every fair one that I saw was fair
Enough to catch me in but half a snare
Not keep me there

When, howe'er poor or parti-coloured
things,

My muse had wings,
And ever ready was to take her course
Whither I bent her force,
Unintellectual, yet divine to me,—
Divine I say!—What sea bird o'er the sea
Is a philosopher the while he goes
Winging along where the great water
throes?

LINES TO FANNY

How shall I do
To get anew
Those moulted feathers, and so mount
 once more
Above, above
The reach of fluttering Love,
And make him cower lowly while I soar?
Shall I gulp wine? No, that is vulgarism,
A heresy and schism,
Foisted into the canon-law of love;—
No,—wine is only sweet to happy men;
More dismal cares
Seize on me unawares,—
Where shall I learn to get my peace
 again?
To banish thoughts of that most hateful
 land,
Dungeoner of my friends, that wicked
 strand
Where they were wrecked and live a
 wrecked life;
That monstrous region, whose dull rivers
 pour
Ever from their sordid urns unto the shore,
Unowned of any weedy-haired gods;
Whose winds, all zephyrless, hold scourg-
 ing rods,
Iced in the great lakes, to afflict mankind;
Whose rank-grown forests, frosted, black
 and blind,

LINES TO FANNY

Would fright a Dryad; whose harsh-
herbaged meads
Make lean and lank the starved ox while
he feeds;
There bad flowers have no scent, birds
no sweet song,
And great unerring Nature once seems
wrong.

O, for some sunny spell
To dissipate the shadows of this hell!
Say they are gone,—with the new dawn-
ing light
Steps forth my lady bright!
O, let me once more rest
My soul upon that dazzling breast!
Let once again these aching arms be
placed,
The tender gaolers of thy waist!
And let me feel that warm breath here
and there
To spread a rapture in my very hair,—
O, the sweetness of the pain!
Give me those lips again!
Enough! enough! it is enough for me
To dream of thee!

Hymn to Apollo



And of the golden bow,
And of the golden lyre,
And of the golden hair,
And of the golden fire,
Charioteer
Round the patient year,
Where—where slept thine ire,
When like a blank idiot I put on thy
wreath,
Thy laurel, thy glory,
The light of thy story?
Or was I a worm—too low crawling for
death?
O Delphic Apollo!

The Thunderer grasped and grasped,
The Thunderer frowned and frowned,
The eagle's feathery mane
For wrath became stiffened—the sound
Of breeding thunder
Went drowsily under,
Muttering to be unbound.
O why didst thou pity, and for a worm?
Why touch thy soft lute
Till the thunder was mute?

HYMN TO APOLLO

Why was I not crushed—such a pitiful
germ?

O Delphic Apollo!

The Pleiades were up,
Watching the silent air;
The seeds and roots in Earth
Were swelling for summer fare;
The Ocean, its neighbour,
Was at its old labour,

When, who—who did dare
To tie for a moment thy plant round his
brow,

And grin and look proudly,
And blaspheme so loudly,
And live for that honour, to stoop to thee
now?

O Delphic Apollo!

On a Lock
of Milton's Hair



Chief of organic numbers!
Old Scholar of the Spheres!
Thy spirit never slumbers,
But rolls about our ears
For ever and for ever!
O what a mad endeavour
 Worketh he,
Who to thy sacred and ennobled hearse
Would offer a burnt sacrifice of verse
 And melody!

How heavenward thou soundest,
Live Temple of sweet noise,
And Discord unconfoundest,
Giving Delight new joys,
And Pleasure nobler pinions!
O where are thy dominions?

 Lend thine ear
To a young Delian oath—ay, by thy soul,
By all that from thy mortal lips did roll,
And by the kernel of thy earthly love,
Beauty in things on earth and things
 above,
 I swear!

ON A LOCK OF MILTON'S HAIR

When every childish fashion
Has vanished from my rhyme,
Will I, gray gone in passion,
Leave to an after-time
Hymning and Harmony
Of thee and of thy works, and of thy life,
But, vain is now the burning and the strife,
Pangs are in vain, until I grow high-rise
With old Philosophy,
And mad with glimpses of futurity

For many years my offerings must be
hushed,
When I do speak, I'll think upon this
hour,
Because I feel my forehead hot and
flushed,
Even at the simplest vassal of thy power,
A lock of thy bright hair,—
Sudden it came,
And I was startled when I caught thy
name
Coupled so unaware,
Yet at the moment temperate was my
blood—
I thought I had beheld it from the flood!

Extract from
an Opera



O! were I one of the Olympian twelve,
Their godships should pass this into a
law,—

That when a man doth set himself in toil
After some beauty veiled far away,
Each step he took should make his lady's
hand

More soft, more white, and her fair cheek
more fair;

And for each briar-berry he might eat
A kiss should bud upon the tree of love,
And pulp and ripen richer every hour,
To melt away upon the traveller's lips.

.

Ode to Apollo



In thy western halls of gold,
When thou sittest in thy state,
Bards, that erst sublimely told
Heroic deeds, and sang of fate,
With fervour seize their adamantyne lyres,
Whose cords are solid rays, and twinkle
radiant fires

Here Homer with his nervous arms
Strikes the twanging harp of war,
And even the western splendour warms
While the trumpets sound afar
But, what creates the most intense sur-
prise,
His soul looks out through renovated eyes

Then, through thy Temple wide, me-
lodiuous swells
The sweet majestic tone of Maro's
lyre
The soul delighted on each accent
dwells,—
Enraptured dwells, — not daring to
respire,
The while he tells of grief around a
funeral pyre

ODE TO APOLLO

'Tis awful silence then again ;
Expectant stand the spheres ;
Breathless the laurelled peers,
Nor move, till ends the lofty strain,
Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders
cease,
And leave once more the ravished heavens
in peace.

Thou biddest Shakespeare wave his
hand,
And quickly forward spring
The Passions—a terrific band—
And each vibrates the string
That with its tyrant temper best accords,
While from their Master's lips pour forth
the inspiring words.

A silver trumpet Spenser blows,
And, as its martial notes to silence
flee,
From a virgin chorus flows
A hymn in praise of spotless Chastity.
'Tis still! Wild warblings from the
Æolian lyre
Enchantment softly breathe, and trem-
blingly expire.

ODE TO APOLLO

Next thy Tasso's ardent numbers
Float along the pleased air,
Calling youth from idle slumbers,
Rousing them from Pleasure's lair —
Then o'er the strings his fingers gently
move,
And melt the soul to pity and to love

But when *Thou* joinest with the Nine,
And all the powers of song combine,
We listen here on earth
The dying tones that fill the air,
And charm the ear of evening fair,
From thee, great God of Bards, receive
their heavenly birth

Written on May Day



FRAGMENT
OF AN ODE

Mother of Hermes! and still youthful
Maia!

 May I sing to thee
As thou wast hymned on the shores of
Baiaë?

 Or may I woo thee
In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles
Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian
isles,

By bards who died content on pleasant
sward,

Leaving great verse unto a little clan?
O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span

 Of heaven and few ears,
Rounded by thee, my song should die
away

 Content as theirs,
Rich in the simple worship of a day.

Nature's Child



[“I was led into these thoughts, my dear Reynolds, by the beauty of the morning operating on a sense of idleness. I have not read any books—the morning said I was right—I had no idea but of the morning, and the thrush said I was right—seeming to say,]

O thou! whose face hath felt the Winter's
wind,
Whose eye hath seen the snow-clouds
hung in mist,
And the black elm-tops 'mong the freez-
ing stars,
To thee the Spring will be a harvest-
time.
O thou, whose only book hath been the
light
Of supreme darkness, which thou feddest
on
Night after night, when Phœbus was
away,
To thee the Spring shall be a triple
morn
O fret not after knowledge!—I have
none,
And yet my song comes native with the
warmth.

1
NATURE'S CHILD

O fret not after knowledge!—I have
done,
And yet the Evening listens. He who
saddens
At thought of idleness cannot be idle,
And he's awake who thinks himself
asleep.

Hyperion



A FRAGMENT

BOOK I

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of
morn,

Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one
star,

Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his loins,
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud No stir of air was
there,

Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd
grass,

But where the dead leaf fell, there did it
rest

A stream went voiceless by, still deader'd
more

By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade the Naiad 'mid her
reeds

Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips

HYPERION

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks
went,
No further than to where his feet had
stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden
ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless,
dead,
Unscptred; and his realmless eyes were
closed:
While his bow'd head seem'd listening to
the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from
his place:
But there came one, who with a kindred
hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bend-
ing low
With reverence, though to one who knew
it not.
She was a Goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would
have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.
Her face was large as that of Memphian
sphinx,

HYPÉRIÓN

Pedestal'd haply in a palace-court,
When sages look'd to Egypt for their
 lore

But oh! how unlike marble was that face
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun,
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder labouring up
One hand she press'd upon that aching
 spot

Where beats the human heart, as if just
 there,

Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning with parted lips, some words
 she spake

In solemn tenour and deep organ tone
Some mourning words, which in our
 feeble tongue

Would come in these like accents, O how
 frail

To that large utterance of the early
 Gods'

* "Saturn, look up!—though wherefore,
 poor old King?

I have no comfort for thee, no, not one

HYPERION

I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest thou?'
For heaven is parted from thee, and the
earth

Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;
And ocean too, 'with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the
air

Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.

Thy thunder, conscious of the new com-
mand,

Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
And thy sharp lightning in unpractised
hands

Scorches and burns our once serene do-
main.

O aching time! O moments big as years!
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous
truth,

And press it so upon our weary griefs
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on:—O thoughtless, why
did I

Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?

Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I
weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-robed senators of mighty
woods,

HYPERION

Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest
stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without
a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies
off
As if the ebbing air had but one wave
So came these words and went, the while
in tears
She touch'd her fair large forehead to the
ground
Just where her falling hair might be out
spread
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet
One moon with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured mo-
tionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern,
The frozen God still couchant on the
earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom
gone,
• And all the gloom and sorrow of the
• place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess, and then
spake

HYPERION

As with a palsied tongue, and while his
beard

Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:

“O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;
Look up, and let me see our doom in it;
Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the
voice

Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
Naked and bare of its great diadem,
Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had
power

To make me desolate? whence came the
strength?

How was it nurtured to such bursting
forth,

While Fate seem'd strangled in my ner-
vous grasp?

But it is so; and I am smother'd up,
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in. I am gone
Away from my own bosom: I have left
My strong identity, my real self,

Somewhere between the throne. and where

HYPÉRIÓN

Here on this spot of earth Search, Thea,
search!

Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them
round

Upon all space space starr'd, and lorn
of light,

Space region'd with life-air, and barren
void,

Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell

Search, Thea, search! and tell me if thou
seest

A certain shape or shadow making way

With wings or chariot fierce to repossess

A heaven he lost erewhile it must—it
must

Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be
king

Yes, there must be a golden victory

There must be Gods thrown down and
trumpets blown

Of triumph calm, and hýmns of festival

Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,

Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir

Of strings in hollow shells, and there
shall be

Beautiful things made new, for the sur-
prise

Of the sky-children, I will give com-
mand

Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?'

HYPERION

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
And made his hands to struggle in the
air,
His Druid locks to shake and ooze with
sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing
deep;
A little time, and then again he snatch'd
Utterance thus:—"But cannot I create?
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to nought?
Where is another chaos? Where?" That
word
Found way unto Olympus, and made
quake
The rebel three. Thea was startled up,
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
As thus she quick-voice spake, yet full of
awe. artistic.

"This cheers our fallen house: come to
our friends,
O Saturn! come away, and give them
heart;
I know the covert, for thence came I
hither."
Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes
she went

HYPÉRIÓN

With backward footing through the shade
a space
He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the
way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like
the mist
Which eagles cleave, upmounting from
their nest

Meanwhile in other realms big tears
were shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like
woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of
scribe
The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison
bound,
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's
voice
But one of the whole mammoth-brood
still kept
His sovereignty, and rule, and majesty,
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming
up
From man to the sun's God, yet unsecure
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shudder'd he,

HYPERION

Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated
screech,

Or the familiar visiting of one

Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,

Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;

But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,

Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace
bright,

Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,

And touch'd with shade of bronzed obe-
lisks,

Glared a blood-red through all its thou-
sand courts,

Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;

And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds

Flush'd angerly: while sometimes eagles'
wings,

Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,

Darken'd the place; and neighing steeds
were heard

Not heard before by Gods or wondering
men.

Also, when he would taste the spicy
wreaths

Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred
hills,

Instead of sweets his ample palate took

Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick:

And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy
west,

HYPERION

After the full completion of fair day,
For rest divine upon exalted couch,
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall,
While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His winged minions in close clusters
stood,
Amazed and full of fear, like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting
troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements
and towers
Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy
trance,
Went step for step with Thea through the
woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the
west,
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew
ope
In smoothed silence, save what solemn
tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of
sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed
melodies,
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,

HYPÉRIÓN

In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond
his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scared away the meek ethereal
Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On
he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault to
vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and en-
wreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
Until he reach'd the great main cupola;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamp'd
his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high
towers
Jarr'd his own golden region; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had
ceased,
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike
curb,
To this result: "O dreams of day and
night!
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!

HYPERRION

O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded
pools!

Why do I know ye? why have I seen
ye? why

Is my eternal essence thus distraught
To see and to behold these horrors
new?

Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?

Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
This cradle of my glory this soft clime,
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
Of all my lucent empire? It is left
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine
The blaze, the splendour, and the sym-
metry,

I cannot see—but darkness, death and
darkness

Even here, into my centre of repose,
The shady visions come to domineer,
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp—
Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes!
Over the fiery frontier of my realms
I will advance a terrible right arm
Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel
Jove,

And bid old Saturn take his throne again”
He spake, and ceased, the while a heavier
threat

HYPERION

Held struggle with his throat, but came
not forth;
For as in theatres of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out
“Hush!”
So at Hyperion’s words the Phantoms
pale
Bestirr’d themselves, thrice horrible and
cold;
And from the mirror’d level where he
stood
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
At this, through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the
crown,
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck
convulsed
From over-strained might. Released, he
fled
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy
hours
Before the dawn in season due should
blush,
He breathed fierce breath against the
sleepy portals,
Clear’d them of heavy vapours, burst
them wide
Suddenly on the ocean’s chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode

*

HYPFRION

Each day from east to west the heavens
through,
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds,
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and
hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belted colure,
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the
muffling dark
Sweet shaped lightnings from the nadir
deep
Up to the zenith—hieroglyphics old,
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring
thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries
Now lost, save what we find on remnants
huge
Of stone, or marble swart, their import
gone,
Their wisdom long since fled Two wings
this orb
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach
And now, from forth the gloom their
plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspread
were,
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd
eclipse,

HYPERION

Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain
took throne

And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not:—No, though a primeval
God:

The sacred seasons might not be dis-
turbed.

Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis
told.

Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide
Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night;
And the bright Titan, frenzied with new
woes,

Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance
faint.

There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
Look'd down on him with pity, and the
voice

Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear:
“O brightest of my children dear, earth-
born

And sky-engender'd, Son of Mysteries!

HYPERION

All unrevealed even to the powers
Which met at thy creating! at whose joys
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
I, Cœlus, wonder how they came and
whence,
And at the fruits thereof what shapes
they be,
Distinct, and visible, symbols divine
Manifestations of that beauteous life
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space,
Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest
child!
Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!
There is sad feud among ye and rebellion
Of son against his sire I saw him fall,
I saw my first born tumbled from his
throne!
To me his arms were spread, to me his
voice
Found way from forth the thunders round
his head!
Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face
Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear
there is
For I have seen my sons most unlike
Gods
Divine ye were created, and divine
In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd
Unruffled, like high Gods, ye lived and
ruled

HYPERION

Now I behold in you .fear, hope, and
wrath;

Actions of rage and passion; even as
I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
In men who die.—This is the grief,
O Son!

Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and
fall!

Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
As thou canst move about, an evident
God,

And canst oppose to each malignant hour
Ethereal presence:—I am but a voice;
My life is but the life of winds and
tides,—

No more than winds and tides can I
avail:—

But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the
van

Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's
barb

Before the tense string murmur.—To the
earth!

For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his
woes.

Meantime I will keep watch on thy
bright sun,

And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.”—
Ere half this region-whisper had come
down

HYPERION

Hyperion arose, and on the stars
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them
 wide
Until it ceased, and still he kept them
 wide
And still they were the same bright,
 patient stars
Then with a slow incline of his broad
 breast,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore
And plunged all noiseless into the deep
 night

BOOK, II

Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide
 wings
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad
 place
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans
 mourn'd
It was a den where no insulting light
Could glimmer on their tears, where their
 own groans
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents
 hoarse,
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where

HYPÉRIÓN

Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks
that seem'd

Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous
horns;

And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat
upon,

Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled:

Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.

Cœus, and Gygēs, and Briareus,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon,
With many more, the brawniest in assault,
Were pent in legions of laborious breath;
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all
their limbs

Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp'd
and screw'd;

Without a motion, save of their big
hearts

Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed
With sanguine, feverous, boiling gurge of
pulse.

Mnemosyne was straying in the world;
Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered;

HYPERION

And many else were free to roam abroad,
But for the main, here found they covert
drear.

Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
Lay vast and edgeways, like a dismal
cirque

Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The heaven itself, is blinded throughout
night

Each one kept shroud, nor to his neigh-
bour gave

Or word or look, or action of despair
Creus was one, his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and
pined

Ipætus another, in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck, its barbed tongue
Squeezed from the gorge, and all its un-
curl'd length

Dead, and because the creature could not
spit

Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove
Next Cottus prone he lay, chin upper-
most,

As though in pain, for still upon the flint
He ground severe his skull, with open
mouth

And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
 Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
 Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
 Though feminine, than any of her sons:
 More thought than woe was in her dusky
 face,

For she was prophesying of her glory;
 And in her wide imagination stood
 Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes
 By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.

Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
 So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
 Shed from the broadest of her elephants.

Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelve,
 Upon his elbow raised, all prostrate else,
 Shadow'd Enceladus; once tame and mild
 As grazing ox unworried in the meads;
 Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
 He meditated, plotted, and even now
 Was hurling mountains in that second

war,
 Not long delay'd, that scared the younger
 Gods

To hide themselves in forms of beast and
 bird.

Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone
 Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd
 close

Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
 Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.

HYPERION

In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from
sight,
No shape distinguishable more than when
Thick night confounds the pine tops with
the clouds
And many else whose names may not be
told
For when the muse's wings are air-ward
spread,
Who shall delay her flight? And she
must chant
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had
climb'd
With damp and slippery footing from a
depth
More horrid still Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature
grew
Till on the level height their steps found
ease
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling
arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's
face
There saw she direst strife, the supreme
God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,

HYPÉRIÓN

Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all
despair.

Against these plagues he strove in vain;
for Fate

Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison: so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him
pass

First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house
Where other hearts are sick of the same
bruise;

So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,
Felt faint, and would have sunk among
the rest,

But that he met Enceladus's eye,
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at
once

Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,
"Titans, behold your God!" at which
some groan'd;

Some started on their feet; some also
shouted;

Some wept, some wail'd—all bow'd with
reverence;

And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,

HYPERION

Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her fore-
head wan,
Her eyebrows thin and jet, and hollow
eyes
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown
pines
When Winter lifts his voice, there is a
noise
Among immortals when a God gives
sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to
load
His tongue with the full weight of utter-
less thought,
With thunder, and with music, and with
pomp
Such noise is like the roar of bleak grown
pines,
Which, when it ceases in this mountain d
world
No other sound succeeds, but ceasing
here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice there-
from
Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt
short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly
Thus grew it up — "Not in my own sad
breast,

HYPÉRIÓN

Which is its own great judge and searcher
out,

Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
Not in the legends of the first of days,
Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
Which starry Uranus with finger bright
Saved from the shores of darkness, when
the waves

Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom;
And the which book ye know I ever kept
For my firm-based footstool:—Ah, infirm!
Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,—
At war, at peace, or inter-quarrelling,
One against one, or two, or three, or all,
Each several one against the other three,
As fire with air loud warring when rain-
floods

Drown both, and press them both against
earth's face,

Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
Unhinges the poor world;—not in that
strife,

Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read
it deep,

Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
No, nowhere can unriddle, though I
search,

And pore on Nature's universal scroll
Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,

HYPERION

The first born of all shaped and palpable
Gods,

• Should cover beneath what, in com-
parison,

Is untremendous might Yet ye are here,
O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd,
ye are here!

O Titans, shall I say 'Arise!'—Ye groan
Shall I say 'Crouch!'—Ye groan What
can I then?

O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!
What can I? Tell me, all ye brethren
Gods,

How we can war, how engine our great
wrath!

O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's
ear

Is all a hunger'd Thou, Océanus,
Ponderest high and deep, and in thy face
I see, astomied, that severe content
Which comes of thought and musing
give us help!"

So ended Saturn, and the God of the
Sea,

Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
But cogitation in his watery shades,
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,
In murmurs, which his first endeavouring
tongue

HYPERION

Caught infant-like from the far-foamed
sands.

“O ye, whom wrath consumes! who,
passion-stung,

Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!

Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears!

My voice is not a bellows unto ire.

Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring
proof

How ye, perforce, must be content to
stoop:

And in the proof much comfort will I give,

If ye will take that comfort in its truth.

↑ We fall by course of Nature's law, not
force

Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn
thou

Hast sifted well the atom-universe;

But for this reason, that thou art the
King,

And only blind from sheer supremacy,

One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,

Through which I wander'd to eternal
truth.

And first, as thou wast not the first of
powers,

So art thou not the last; it cannot be.

Thou art not the beginning nor the
end.

From chaos and parental darkness came

HYPERION

Light, the first-fruits of that intestine
broil,
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous
ends
Was ripening in itself The ripe hour
came,
And with it light, and light engendering
Upon its own producer forthwith touch'd
The whole enormous matter into life
Upon that very hour, our parentage,
The Heavens and the Earth, were mani-
fest
Then thou first-born, and we the grant-
race,
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous
realms
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom
'tis pain,
O folly! for to bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm
That is the top of sovereignty Mark
well!
As Heaven and Earth are surer, surer
far
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though
once chiefs,
And as we show beyond that Heaven and
Earth
In form and shape compact and beautiful
In will, in action free, companionship

HYPERRION

And thousand other signs of purer life,
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of
us

And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness: nor are we
Thereby more conquer'd than by us the
rule

Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
Quarrel with the proud forest it hath fed,
And feedeth still, more comely than itself?
Can it deny the chieftom of green groves?
Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
To wander wherewithal and find its joys?
We are such forest-trees, and our fair
boughs

Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
Above us in their beauty, and must reign
In right thereof; for 'tis the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in
might:

Yea, by that law, another race may drive
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
Have ye beheld the young God of the
Seas,

My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?
Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
By noble winged creatures he hath made?

HYPÉRIÓN

I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
That it enforced me to bid sad farewell
To all my empire farewell sad I took,
And hither came, to see how dolorous
fate
Had wrought upon ye, and how I might
best
Give consolation in this woe extreme
Receive the truth, and let it be your
balm ”

Whether through posed conviction, or
disdain,
They guarded silence, when Oceanus
Left murmuring, what deepest thought
can tell?
But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene
And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking
mild,
Thus wording timidly among the fierce
“ O Father! I am here the simplest voice,
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
And this thing woe crept in among our
hearts,
There to remain for ever, as I fear
I would not bode of evil, if I thought
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HYPÉRIÓN.

So weak a creature could turn off the
help

Which by just right should come of mighty
Gods;

Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
Of what I heard, and how it made me
weep,

And know that we had parted from all
hope.

I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
Where a sweet clime was breathed from
a land

Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and
flowers.

Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;
So that I felt a movement in my heart
To chide, and to reproach that solitude
With songs of misery, music of our woes;
And sat me down, and took a mouthed
shell

And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
O melody no more! for while I sang,
And with poor skill let pass into the
breeze

The dull shell's echo, from a bowery
strand

Just opposite, an island of the sea,
There came enchantment with the shift-
ing wind

HYPFRION

That did both drown and keep alive my
ears
I threw my shell away upon the sand
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was
fill'd
With that new blissful golden melody
A living death was in each gush of
sounds
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
That fell one after one yet all at once,
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from
their string,
And then another, then another strain,
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
With music wing'd instead of silent
plumes,
To hover round my head, and make me
sick
Of joy and grief at once Grief overcame
And I was stopping up my frantic ears
When, past all hindrance of my trembling
hands
A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all
tune,
And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!
The morning bright Apollo! young Apollo!'
I fled, it follow'd me and cried 'Apollo!'
O Father, and O Brethren! had ye felt
Those puns of mine! O Saturn, hadst
thou felt,

HYPÉRIÓN

Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be
heard!"

So far her voice flow'd on, like timor-
ous brook

That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,
And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice
Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:
The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his
arm

He lean'd; not rising, from supreme con-
tempt.

"Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods?
Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
That rebel Jove's whole armoury were
spent,

Not world on world upon these shoulders
piled,

Could agonize me more than baby-words
In midst of this dethronement horrible.

Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans
all.

Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?

H I P E R I O N

Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the
Waves
Thy scalding in the seas? What! have I
roused
Your spleens with so few simple words as
these?
O joy! for now I see ye are not lost
O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
Wide glaring for revenge"—As this he
said,
He lifted up his stature vast, and stood
Still without intermission speaking thus
"Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to
burn,
And purge the ether of our enemies,
How to feed fierce the crooked stings of
fire
And singe away the swollen clouds of
Jove,
Stifling that puny essence in its tent
O let him feel the evil he hath done,
For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
Much pain have I for more than loss of
realms
The days of peace and slumberous calm
are fled,
Those days all innocent of scathing war
When all the fair Existences of heaven
Came open eyed to guess what we would
speak —

HYPERION

That was before our brows were taught
to frown,
Before our lips knew else but solemn
sounds;
That was before we knew the winged
thing,
Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—
Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!”

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's
name
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted
rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern:
Not savage, for he saw full many a God
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them
all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar
locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a
keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight
cove.
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,

HYPÉRIÓN

All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old,
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented
streams

And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and
near,

Mantled before in darkness and huge
shade,

Now saw the light and made it terrible
It was Hyperion — a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd and there he
stay'd to view

The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the
bulk

Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking
East

Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's
harp,

He utter'd, while his hands, contempla-
tive,

He press'd together, and in silence stood
Despondence seized again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day,

HYPERION

And many hid their faces from the light:
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood; and, at their
glare,

Uprose Iapetus, and Creus too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode
To where he tower'd on his eminence.

There those four shouted forth old Saturn's
name;

Hyperion from the peak loud answer'd,
"Saturn!"

Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
In whose face was no joy, though all
the Gods

Gave from their hollow throats the name
of "Saturn!"

BOOK III

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazed were those Titans utterly.

O leave them, Muse! O leave them to
their woes!

For thou art weak to sing such tumults
dire:

A solitary sorrow best befits

Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.

Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt
find

Many a fallen old Divinity

HYPERION

Wandering in vain about, bewilder'd
shores.

Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;
For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.

Flush everything that hath a vermeil
hue,

Let the rose glow intense and warm the
air,

And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd
shells,

On sands or in great deeps, vermilion
turn

Through all their labyrinths; and let the
maid

Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss
surprised.

Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms,
and beech,

In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest
song,

And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath
the shade:

Apollo is once more the golden theme!

HYPHERION

Where was he, when the Giant of the
Sun

Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his
peers?

Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their
bower,

And in the morning twilight wander'd
forth

Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.

The nightingale had ceased, and a few
stars

Were lingering in the heavens, while the
thrush

Began calm-throated. Throughout all the
isle

There was no covert, no retired cave
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of
waves,

Though scarcely heard in many a green
recess.

He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright
tears

Went trickling down the golden bow he
held.

Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he
stood,

While from beneath some cumbrous
boughs hard by

HYPERION.

With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
And there was purport in her looks for
him,

Which he with eager guess began to
read

Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said
"How camest thou over the unfooted sea?
Or hath that antique mien and robed
form

Moved in these vales invisible till now?
Sure I have heard those vestments sweep-
ing o'er

The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
In cool mid forest Surely I have traced
The rustle of those ample skirts about
These grassy solitudes, and seen the
flowers

Lift up their heads, as still the whisper
pass'd

Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
And their eternal calm, and all that face
Or I have dream'd"—"Yes" said the
supreme shape,

"Thou hast dream'd of me, and awaking
up

Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side
Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all
the vast

Unwearied ear of the whole universe
Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth

HYPERION

Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not
strange

That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell
me, youth,

What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am
sad

When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy
griefs

To one who in this lonely isle hath been
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of
life,

From the young day when first thy infant
hand

Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till
thine arm

Could bend that bow heroic to all times.

Show thy heart's secret to an ancient
Power

Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones

For prophecies of thee, and for the sake

Of loveliness new-born."—Apollo then,

With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,

Thus answer'd, while his white melodious
throat

Throbb'd with the syllables:—"Mnemo-
syne!

Thy name is on my tongue, I know not
how;

Why should I tell thee what thou so well
seest?

HYPERION

Why should I strive to show what from
thy lips
Would come no mystery? For me, dark,
dark,
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes *
I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
Until a melancholy numbs my limbs,
And then upon the grass I sit and moan
Like one who once had wings --O why
should I
Feel cursed and thwarted, when the liege
less air
Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
Spurn the green turf as hateful to my
feet?
Goddess benign! point forth some un-
known thing
Are there not other regions than this isle?
What are the stars? There is the sun
the sun!
And the most patient brilliance of the
moon!
And stars by thousands! Point me out
the way
To any one particular beauteous star,
And I will flit into it with my lyre
And make its silvery splendour pant with
bliss
I have heard the cloudy thunder Where
is power?

HYPERION

Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity

Makes this alarum in the elements,
While I here idle listen on the shores

'In fearless yet in aching ignorance?

O tell me, lonely Goddess! by thy harp,
That waileth every morn and eventide,
Tell me why thus I rave, about these
groves!

Mute thou remainest—Mute? yet I can
read

A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
Knowledge enormous makes a God of
me.

Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events,
rebellions,

Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
Creations and destroyings, all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me, as if some blithe wine
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
And so become immortal."—Thus the
God,

While his enkindled eyes, with level
glance,

Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast
kept

gazing with light upon Mnemosyne.

When wild commotions shook him, and
made flush

HYPERION

All the immortal fairness of his limbs:
Most like the struggle at the gate of
death;

Or liker still to one who should take
leave

Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
As hot as death's is chill, with fierce
convulse

Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd;
His very hair, his golden tresses famed
Kept undulation round his eager neck.

During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
Her arms as one who prophesied.—At
length

Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his
limbs

Celestial . . .

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