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P O E M S

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SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART. M.P.

'Song is the twin of golden Contemplation,
The harvest-flower of life'

A NEW EDITION, REVISED



LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1865

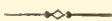
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DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO THE

REV. BENJAMIN HALL KENNEDY, D.D.

HEAD MASTER OF SHREWSBURY SCHOOL.



MY DEAR DR. KENNEDY,

SOME years ago I anticipated the honour of inscribing to you a certain work which, had I completed it for publication, would have owed no slight obligations to your exquisite taste and incomparable scholarship. But circumstances compelled me to suspend my task when it was scarcely half accomplished; and the labour that pleases us at one time of life—‘*dum res et ætas—patiuntur*’—seldom retains its charm when we return to it at another—

‘*Sol ubi montium*

Mutaret umbras.’

But in relinquishing the work to which you so

kindly encouraged me, I am naturally unwilling to forego the honour which its completion would have enabled me to claim; and therefore I ask permission to dedicate this collection to you.

The poems herein contained, among which are a few till now unpublished, have been composed at various intervals; some within the last year or two—others remounting to the date of those early College days when our acquaintance commenced; you then sweeping from every rival the prizes of academical ambition, and I achieving no other distinction than is conferred by the companionship with distinguished contemporaries. Of such a companionship this Dedication is a grateful memorial.

Among the lessons bestowed by experience, few are more consolatory than that which bids us seek to turn a disadvantage to profit; accordingly I have made more extensive alterations (which I trust are improvements) in some of the poems contained in this edition than I should have been warranted in doing had they enjoyed the good fortune of a familiar acquaintance with the public. Do not smile

at my hope that what I have written in verse may, some day or other, become better known to my countrymen, since in that hope consists my excuse for prefixing to this collection a tributary record of the respect and admiration

With which I am,

My dear Dr. Kennedy,

Your sincerely attached friend,

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON.

HASTINGS: Dec. 22, 1864.



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THE BOATMAN.

I



ALF sleeping still, I stand among
The silvery, trembling sedges,
And hear the river rolling strong,
Through mists that veil its edges.

‘Up, Boatman, up! the moments flee
As on the bank I shiver;
And thou must row me towards the sea
Along this length of river.’

The Boatman rose and stretched his hand—

‘Come in—thou hast far to go;’
And through the drowsy reeds from land
The boat went soft and slow;

Stealing and stilly, and soft and slow.

And the Boatman looked in my face, and smiled:

‘Thy lids are yet heavy; sleep on, poor child!
Lulled by the drip
Of the oars I dip,

B

Measured and musical, sure and steady—
 Sleep by my side
 While from home we glide.'
 And I dreamily murmur, 'From home already!'

II

I awake with a start—on my sight flashes day.
 'So late, and so little advanced on the way ;
 Arouse thee, old laggard, and row me faster,
 Or never a stiver thou'lt get from me.'
 'When the voyage is over, my pert young master,
 Be sure the grey Boatman will earn his fee.
 But whether I seem to thee fast or slow,
 There is but one speed for the boat I row ;
 I measure my movements by no man's taste,
 Whether he ask me to halt or haste.
 Plish, splash, drop upon drop,
 On without hurry, but on without stop ;
 The clock on yon turret is not so steady.'
 If crawl we must at this snail-like pace,
 Ere the river flow curved to the curving shore,
 Let me take a last look at my native place,
 And the green of the sedges—one last look more.
 Where the home of my birth ?
 Is it blotted from earth ?
 Just left, and now lost to my sight already !'

Tauntingly answered the Boatman grey :

‘ Not a moment ago

Didst thou call me slow ;

But already’s a word thou wilt often say.

’Tis the change of the shore

Proves the speed of the oar,

Stealing the banks away, stealthy, steady.’

III

‘ See from the buds of the almond bough

A beautiful fairy rise ;

Now it skims o’er the glass of the wave, and now

It soars to its kindred skies :

Follow its flight,

Or, lost to sight,

It will vanish amid the skies !’

‘ My boat cannot flee as thy fairy flees ;

Ten thousand things with brighter wings

Disport in the sun, and, one by one,

Are scattered before the breeze.

But only the earliest seen, as now,

Can dazzle deluded eyes ;

And never again from the almond bough

For thee will a fairy rise !

Already the insect is drowned in the wave

Which I cut with my careless oar ;

Already thine eye has forgotten its grave,
 Allured by the roses on shore.
 Though I measure my movements by no man's taste,
 Whether he ask me to halt or haste,
 Yet I time my way to the best of my power,
 That the fairest place has the fairest hour ;
 Behold, in the moment most golden of day,
 Air and wave take the hues of the rose-garden bay,
 While my boat glides as softly as if it could stop,
 The oars on the smoothness so languidly drop,
 Softer and softer,
 Softer and softer,
 Softer and softer, though never less steady.
 Interfused on the stream
 Both the rose and the beam,
 Lo, the arms of the bay close around thee already !'
 ' Rising out of the stream,
 As from slumber a dream—
 Is it Eden that closes around me already ?

IV

· Oh, land and leave me ! take my gold ;
 My course is closed before the sea.
 Fair on the garden mount, behold
 An angel form that becks to me !

With her to rest, as rests the river,
In airs which rose-hues flush for ever.'

'Thou bad'st me follow a fairy, when

An insect rose from the almond bough ;

I did not follow thy fairy then,

I may not halt for thine angel now.

Never the fare whom I once receive,

Till the voyage be over, I land or leave.

But I'm not such a churl as I seem to be,

And the angel may sit in my boat with thee.'

Tinkle, tinkle—'What means that bell ?'

'Thine angel is coming thyself to tell.

See her stand on the margin by which we shall glide—

Open thine arms and she springs to thy side.'

'Close, close to my side,

O angel ! O bride !

A fresh sun on the universe dawns from thine eyes,

To shine evermore

Through each change on the shore, .

And undimmed by each cloud that flits over the skies.'

Side by side thus we whisper—'Who loves, loves for ever.'

As wave upon wave to the sea runs the river,

And the oar on the smoothness drops noiseless and steady.

Till we start with a sigh,

Was it she—was it I—

Who first turned to look back on the way we had made?
 Who first saw the soft tints of the garden-land fade?
 Who first sighed—‘See the rose-hue is fading already?’

v

‘ Boatman, look at the blackening cloud ;
 Put into yon sheltered creek,
 For the lightning is bursting its ghastly shroud,
 And hark how the thunders break !’
 ‘ No storm on this river outlasts its hour ;
 As I stayed not for sun, so I stay not for shower.
 Is thy mantle too scanty to cover thy bride ?
 Or are two not as one, if they cling side to side ?’
 I gather my mantle around her form,
 And as on one bosom descends the storm.

Look up,’ said the Boatman ; ‘ the storm is spent :
 No storm on this river outlasts its hour ;
 And the glories that colour the world are blent
 In the cloud which gave birth to the thunder-shower.

The heaven is glad with the iris-beams,
 The earth with the sparkling dew ;
 And fresher and brighter creation seems,
 For the rain that has pierced me thro’.

There's a change in myself, and the change is chill ;
There's a change, O my bride, in thee.
Is it the shade from the snow-capt hill,
Which nears as we near the sea ?
But gone from her eye is the tender light,
From her lip the enchanting play ;
And all of the angel that blest my sight
Has passed from my bride away ;—
Like the fairy that dazzled my earlier sight,
The angel has passed away.

Muttered the Boatman—' So like them all ;
They mark the change in the earth and sky,
Yet marvel that change should themselves befall,
And that hearts should change with the changing eye ;
They swear ' for ever ' to sigh ' already !'
Within from the bosom, without on the stream,
Flit shadow and light as a dream flits on dream ;
But never to hurry, and never to stop,
Plish, plash, drop upon drop,
My oars, through all changes, move constant and steady.'

Down the stream still we glide,
Still we sit side by side—
Side by side, feeling lonely, and sighing ' already !'

VI

Bustle and clatter, and dissonant roar !
The mart of a mighty town,
From the cloudy height to the stony shore,
Wearily lengthening down.
And here and there, and everywhere,
Are gamesters at eager play—
The poor and the rich, none can guess which is which,
So motlily mixed are they.
Not a man but his part in the gaming takes,
Wherever the dice from the dice-box fall ;
Beggar or prince in the lottery stakes—
The beggar his crust, and the prince his all.
And the prizes the winners most loudly boast,
Even more than the gems and gold,
Are the toys which an infant esteems the most,
Ere he come to be five years old ;
A coral of bells, or a trumpet of tin,
Or a ribbon for dolls to wear—
The greybeard who treasures like these may win,
The crowd on their shoulders bear.
There's a spell in the strife
Of this gambling life ;
The strong and the feeble, the fickle, the steady,
To its pastime it draws,
As the whirlpool that, sportive, sucks into its eddy
The fleets and the straws.

‘ Hold, Boatman ! I can bear no more
 The sameness of the unsocial wave,
And thou shalt land me on the shore,
 Or in the stream I’ll find my grave.
For the sport of man’s strife
Gives the zest to man’s life ;
 Without it, his manhood dies.
Be it jewel or toy,
Not the prize gives the joy,
 But the striving to win the prize.’

‘ Never the fare whom I once receive,
Till the voyage be over, I land or leave ;
But if thou wouldst gamble for toy or dross,
I am not such a churl as thy wish to cross.’

Tinkle, tinkle—‘ What means that bell ? ’
‘ The gamesters are coming thyself to tell.
Both the angel and gamester are equally free
To sit by thy side till we come to the sea.’

Clatter and clamour, tumult and din !
As the boat skims the jetty, they scramble in ;
 Foeman or friend,
 Welcome the same ;

Ere we come to the end
Of the changeful game,
The foe may be friend,
And the friend may be foe ;
Out of hazards in common alliances grow.
The stranger who stakes on my side is my friend—
Against me, a brother my foe.

Jangle and wrangle, and babel and brawl,
As down from the loud box the dumb dice fall :
A hoot for the loser, a shout for the winner ;
He who wins is the saint—he who loses, the sinner.

Scared away from my side by the throng and the din,
Still my bride uncomplainingly views
The contest that brightens her eye, if I win,
And sweetens her smile if I lose.
Plish, plash, drop upon drop,
Never we hurry, and never we stop !
With our eyes on the cast, and our souls in the game,
While the shores that slip by us seem always the same.

Jangle and wrangle, and tumult and brawl,
And hurrah for the victor who bubbles us all !
And the prize of the victor I've wellnigh won,
When all of a sudden drops down the sun.

One throw, and thy favours, O Fortune, I crown !
Hurrah for the victor !—I start with a frown,
For all of a sudden the sun drops down.

‘ I see not the die—
Is it cloud fleeting by ?
Or is it—it cannot be—night already ?’

The sun,’ said a voice, as black shadows descend,
Has sunk in the sea where the river shall end ;
Unheeded the lapse of the stream and the light ;
Warns as vainly the sea heard distinct through the night ?

Hark ! the whispers that creep
From the World of the Deep,
Which I hear with the oars, sounding solemn and steady.’
I hear but the winds that caressingly creep
Through the evergreen laurels remote from the deep ;
And the sun has his heirs in the stars’—I reply,
And still grasping the dice-box I gaze on the sky,
And watch for Orion—to light up the die.


‘ What gleams from the shore ?
Hold, but one moment more ;
Rest under yon light, shining down from the height.
Hurrah for the victor !—but one throw more !’

No rest on the river—that’s past for thee ;
The beacon but shines as a guide to the sea.

One chime of the oar, ere it halt evermore,
 Muffled and dirgelike, and sternly steady ;
 And the beacon illuming the last of the shore
 Shall flash on the sea to thy murmur, "Already!"

Then seems there to float
 Down the length of the way—
 From the sedges remote—
 From the rose-garden bay—
 From the town and the mart—
 From the river's deep heart—
 From the heart of the land—
 From the lips of the bride,
 Through the darkness again
 Stealing close to my side,
 With her hand in my hand—
 From the gamesters in vain
 Staking odds on the main
 Of the last all-invisible die—
 An echo that wails back the wail of my sigh,
 As I murmur, 'The ocean already!'—'ALREADY !'
 One glimmer of light
 From the beacon's lone height,
 One look at the shore, and one stroke of the oar,
 And the river is lost in the ocean already !

THE MIND AND THE BODY.

NCE among other tenants at will upon earth,
Dwelt a Mind of high rank, very proud of his
birth,

With a Body, who, though a good Body enough,
When his feelings were hurt, was inclined to be rough ;
Now that Mind and that Body, for many a day,
Lived as what we call friends in a cold sort of way ;
For the very best friends, though the sons of one mother,
Cool in friendship by seeing too much of each other.
At length, just as time should have softened their tether,
And they had not much longer to rub on together.
Many trifles occurred that they differed about,
And engendered the rancour which thus they spoke out.
Quoth the Mind to the Body, ‘ Attend to me, sir ;
At whate’er I propose, must you always demur ?
Rouse up, and look lively—we want something new—
Just the weather for travel ; let’s start for Peru ;

Ha ! there you sit, languidly, sipping your sago !'

THE BODY.

I'm forced to remind you I've got the lumbago.

THE MIND.

O ye gods, what a wrench ! softly, softly ! lie still—
I abandon Peru ; take your anodyne pill.

Somewhat eased by the pill and a warm fomentation,
The Body vouchsafed to the Mind—contemplation.
Now, the calmness with which sound philosophers scan ills,
Depends, at such times, very much on hot flannels.
Mused the Mind:—'How can Matter stretch Me on the rack
Why should Mind feel lumbago ? has Mind got a back ?
I could write something new on that subject, I think—
Would it hurt you, my Body, to give me the ink ?'

THE BODY.

At your old tricks again ! Let me rest in my bed,
Metaphysics indeed ! pleasant nuts for my head.
Ah, beware of yourself ! If its rage you provoke,
That head could demolish the Mind with a stroke.

THE MIND.

Grim thought to have scared Mr. Addison's Cato,
When he sat in his dressing-gown reading his Plato !

Does Man nurse in his head an electric torpedo,
Whose stroke could have hurled into rubbish the 'Phædo' ?
Vile Body ! thou tyrant ! thou worse than a Turk !
If I must be thy slave—then, at least, let me work,
For in labour we lose the dull sense of our chain ;
But I cannot ev'n think without leave of thy brain.
Well, well ! since it must be, I tamely submit.
How now do you feel ? less inclined for a fit ?
That is well ! come, cheer up ! though you are a vile Body,
Let me cherish and comfort you !—Ring for the toddy.

Then the Body, though not without aid of the Mind,
Raised himself on his elbow, and gravely rejoined :—

THE BODY.

O my Mind ! it is well said by Sappho—at least
So she says in Grillparzer*—that you are a beast,
And the worst of all beasts ; other sins she compares
To hyænas and wolves, lions, tigers, and bears ;
But the snake is Ingratitude !—you are ungrateful,
And are thus of all beasts of the field the most hateful.
Rememberest thou, wretch, with no pang of remorse,
How I served thy least whim in the days of my force ?

* 'Die andern Laster, alle
Hyänen, Löwen, Tiger, Wolfe, sind's
Der Undank ist die Schlange !'—Grillparzer's *Sappho*.

When thy thoughts through my ear, touch and taste, scent
 and sight,
 Wandered forth for the food which they found in delight ;
 When my youth crowned thee king of Hope's boundless
 domains,
 And thy love warmed to life from the glow of my veins.
 And what my return ? overtaken, overborne,
 And alike by thy pains and thy pleasures outworn,
 Thou hast made me one ache from the sole to the crown.
 Thank thyself, cruel rider, thy steed founders down !

Now, ere the Mind's answer I duly report.
 It becomes me to say that in camp and in court,
 In senate and college, this Body and Mind,
 Clubbed up in one whole, by one title defined,
 Were called ' A Great Man.'

With excusable pride,
 The Mind, looking down on the Body, replied—

THE MIND.

View thy pains as the taxes exacted by glory,
 What's this passage through life to a passage in story ?
 I have made thee one ache from the sole to the crown,
 Be it so !

And the recompense ? Priceless ; Renown.

THE BODY.

Hang renown ! Horrid thing, more malign to a Body
Than that other strong poison you offered me—toddy.
By renown in my teens I was snatched from my cricket.
To be sent to the wars, where I served as a wicket.
And there your first step in renown crippled me,
By the ball you invited to fracture my knee.

THE MIND.

Well, I cannot expect you to sympathise much
With the Mind's noble longings—

THE BODY.

To limp on a crutch ?

THE MIND.

But battles and bullets don't come every day—
You owe me some pleasant things more in your way :
For the joys of the sense are by culture refined,
And the Body's a guest in the feasts of the Mind.
Recall'st thou the banquets vouchsafed thee to share,
When the wine was indeed the Unbinder of Care ;
In which Genius and Wisdom, invited by Mirth,
Laid aside their grand titles as rulers of earth :
And, contented awhile our familiars to sit,
Genius came but as Humour, and Wisdom as Wit ?
Recall'st thou those nights ?

THE BODY.

Well recall them I may !

Yes, the nights might be pleasant, but then—their Next Day ;
And, as Humour and Wit should have long since found out,
The Unbinder of Care is the Giver of Gout.

Yet you've injured me less with good wine and good cooks,
Than with those horrid banquets you made upon books.

Every hint my poor nerves could convey to you scorning,
Interdicted from sleep till past three in the morning,

While you were devouring the trash of a college,

And my blood was made thin with crude apples of knowledge.

To dry morsels of Kant, undigested, I trace

Through the maze of my ganglions the tic in my face :

And however renowned your new theory on Light is,

Its effect upon me was my chronic gastritis.

Talk of Nature's wise laws, learn from nature's lawgiver,

That the first law to man is—"Take care of your liver!"

But I have not yet done with your boasted renown,

'Tis the nuisance all Bodies of sense should put down.

Where a Mind is renowned, there a Body's dyspeptic—

Ev'n in youth Julius Cæsar made *his* epileptic.

The carbuncular red of renowned Cromwell's nose

Explains his bad nights : what a stomach it shows !

Who more famed than they two? Perhaps great Alexander:
But would I be his body? I'm not such a gander.
When I think on the numberless pains and distresses
His small body endured from his great mind's excesses,
All its short life exposed to heat, cold, wounds, and slaughter,
Its march into Ind—not a drop of good water;
Its enlargement of spleen—shown by rages at table,
Till it fell, easy prey, to malaria at Babel;—
Could his mind come to earth, its old pranks to repeat
Once more, as that plague, Alexander the Great,
And in want of a body propose to take me,
My strength re-bestowed and my option left free,
I should say, as a body of blood, flesh, and bones,
Before I'd be his, I'd be that of John Jones.
Enough: to a mortal no curse like renown!

Here, shifting his flannels, he groaned and sunk down.
Now on hearing the Body complain in this fashion,
The Mind became seized with fraternal compassion;
And although at that moment he felt very keenly
The sting of his pride to be rated so meanly,
So much had been said which he felt to be true
In a common-sense, bodily, plain point of view,
That it seemed not beneath him to meet the complaint
By confessing his sins—in the tone of a saint.

THE MIND.

Yes, I cannot deny that I merit your blame—
 I have sinned against you in my ardour for fame ;
 Yet even such sins you would see, my poor Body,
 In a much milder light had you taken that toddy.
 But are all of my acts to be traced to one cause ?
 Have I strained your quick nerves for no end but applause ?
 Do not all sages say that the Mind cannot hurt you
 If it follow the impulse unerring of virtue ?
 And how oft, when most lazy, I've urged you to step on,
 And attain the pure air of the moral TO PREPON !
 Let such thoughts send your blood with more warmth
 through its channels,
 Wrap yourself in my virtues, and spurn those moist flannels !

THE BODY.

Ho ! your virtues ! I thank you for nothing, my Mentor,
 I'd as soon wrap my back in the shirt of the Centaur.
 What the Mind calls a virtue too oft is a sin,
 To be shunned by a Body that values his skin.
 Pray, which of your virtues most tickles your vanity ?

THE MIND.

The parent and queen of all virtues—Humanity.

THE BODY.

And of all human virtues I've proved it to be
The vice most inhumanly cruel to me.
Scarcely three weeks ago, when, seduced by fine talk
Of your care for my health, I indulged in a walk,
On a sudden you stop me—a house is in flames,
It was nothing to me had it burned up the Thames,
But you hear a shrill cry—'Save the child in the attic!'
You forget, thanks to you, that I've long been rheumatic.
And to rescue that brat, who was no child of mine,
Up the Alp of a ladder you hurry my spine.
Thus, as Cassio was stabbed from behind by Iago,
Vile assassin, you plunged in my back—this lumbago.
That was, I believe, your last impulse of virtue !

THE MIND.

In improving myself must I ever then hurt you ?
Must your wheels for their clockwork be rendered unfit,
If made slower by wisdom or quicker by wit ;
Is the test of all valour the risk of your bones,
And the height of philosophy scorn for your groans ?
Must the Mind in its strife give the Body no quarter,
And where one would be saint must the other be martyr ?
Alas, it is true ! and that truth proves, O brother !
That we two were not meant to live long with each other.

But forgive me the past—what both *now* want is—quiet;
 Henceforth, I'll concentrate my thoughts on your diet;
 And, at least, till the term of companionship ends,
 Let us patch up our quarrels and try to be friends.

Then the Body let fall the two words, in men's fate
 And men's language, the fullest of sorrow—'Too late !'
 He paused and shed tears—then resumed : ' I can see
 Nothing left for myself but revenge upon thee.'
 He spake—gout, lumbago, and tic re-began,
 Till both Body and Mind fell asleep—A Great Man !
 Thus the feud once declared, was renewed unrelenting.
 Still the Mind proudly braved the avenger's tormenting ;
 And whene'er he could coax from his jailer, the gout,
 The loan of two feet to walk stately out,
 The crowd's reverent gaze on his limp and his crutch,
 And the murmur, 'There goes the Great Man,' soothed
 him much.

'Ache, O body !' he said, 'from the head to the crown,
 Ever young with the young blooms the life of renown.'
 How long this stern struggle continued, who knows,
 'Tis the record of Mind that biography shows ;
 Even German professors still leave in dark question
 The most critical dates in a Cæsar's digestion.
 At length a door oped in the valves of the heart,
 Through which the Mind looked and resolved to depart ;

Bending over the Body he whispered 'Good-night !'
And then, kissing the lids, stole away with the light.
So at morning the Body lay cold in his bed,
And the news went through London, 'The Great Man is dead !'
Now the Mind—like a young bird, whose wings newly given.
Though they lift it from earth, soar not yet into heaven—
Still hovering around the old places he knew,
Kept this world, like the wrack of a dream, in his view.
But strange to relate—that which most had consoled
Or rejoiced him to think would remain in his hold,
As a part of himself, the Immortal,—renew—
Seemed extinct as the spark when a rocket drops down.
Of senates disputing, of battle-fields gory,
Of story and glory and odes laudatory,
He could not have thought less had he been a John Doree.
Much amazed, he beholds all the pains they bestow
On that Body so long his most pitiless foe ;
With the plate on the coffin, the wreaths on the bier,
And the scholar explaining in Latin severe,
That he lived for all races, and died to lie Here.
Saith the Mind, 'What on earth are those boobies about ?
That black box but contains my lumbago and gout.
Why such pomps to my vilest tormentor assigned,
And what has that black box to do with this Mind ?
Hark ! they talk of a statue !—of what ? not of me ;
Can they think that my likeness in marble can be ?

Has the Mind got a nose, and a mouth, and a chin ?
Is this Mind the old fright which that Body has been ?
Is it civil to make me the marble imago
Of the gone incarnation of gout and lumbago ?
Thus the Mind. While the Body, as if for preferment,
Goes in state through the crowd to his place of interment.
Solemn princes and peers head the gorgeous procession ;
March the mutes — mourning best, for they mourn by
profession ;
And so many grand folks, in so many grand carriages,
Were not seen since the last of our royal love-marriages.
A little time more ; the black box from men's eyes
Has sunk under the stone-door inscribed ' Here he lies !'
And the princes and peers who had borne up the pall—
Undertakers, spectators, dean, chapter and all—
Leave the church safely locked all alone with its tombs,
And the heir takes the lawyer to lunch in his rooms ;
And each lesser great man in the party he'd led,
Thinks, ' An opening for me, now the Great Man is dead !'
And the chief of the other wrong half of the nation
Sheds a tear o'er the notes of a funeral oration ;
For the practice of statesmen (and long may it thrive)
Is to honour their foes—when no longer alive.
In short, every Man—save the Man who knows Town,
Would have said for three days—' This is lasting renown !'

But of lasting renown one so soon becomes weary—
The most lasting I know of is that of Dundreary.

Now the Mind having done with our world's men and things,
High o'er all that know death poised the joy of his wings :
Every moment from light gaining strength more and more,
Every moment more filled with the instinct to soar,
Till he sees, through a new sense of glory, his goal,
And is rapt to the gates which Mind enters as Soul.



FATE: A PICTURE.

I



O the cradled child she has rocked asleep
 The mother sings low—by the angry deep ;
 The breakers are white and the winds are
 wild ;

The mother sings on to the cradled child.

Lullaby singeth she,
 And the child slumbers soft ;
 Loud below howls the sea ;
 Loud the pines groan aloft ;
 Lullaby singeth she,
 And the child slumbers soft.

II

‘ Lullaby, lullaby,
 Slumber on, slumber soft !
 While below howls the sea,
 While the pines groan aloft.

Slumber on—I'm with thee !
 Slumber on, slumber soft !
Leaving angels so newly,
 So pure from earth's ill,
Is thy slumber not truly
 The angel-land still ?
Say to those who are near thee,
 “ My father's at sea ; ”
'Mid the angels who hear thee,
 His guardian may be.
 Lullaby, lullaby !
 Slumber safe—slumber soft ;
 Slumber on, to tell angels thy father's at sea. '

III

From a cliff whose grey fissures the forest-pines veil.
Darkening more the dark sky, mighty wings slowly sail :
'Tis the eagle sent forth by the cries of his brood,
And his eyes, as he sails, pierce the space for their food.
He looks on the glebe—there, no doves settle down.
For the grim sky has daunted all wings but his own :
He looks on the pastures—the flocks he beholds—
But the dog and the shepherd stand guarding the folds :
And onward his death-bearing wings slowly sail
'Through the midst of the cloud, in the teeth of the gale.

He halts—he comes down from the cloud, poised at rest,
 And the winds beat in vain on his motionless breast.
 He halts, and hangs over the infant that sleeps,
 And the mother intent on the watch that she keeps ;
 And she sees not the dark form below the dark cloud,
 For her head o'er the world in the cradle is bowed.

Still she sings lullaby,
 Still the child slumbers soft,
 Underneath the dread eye
 Looking down from aloft.

All remote from the gloom, under skies of calm blue,
 Goes the ship into port, 'mid the songs of its crew—
 But still the deceit of her credulous fear
 Views the danger afar to be blind to it near,
 As over the infant the death-wings delay
 Their swoop, till her breast leave unsheltered their prey.

Still she bends o'er the sleeping—
 The bird hangs above ;
 O'er the life in God's keeping,
 Watch both ;—Death and Love.
 And she sees not the eye
 Looking down from aloft ;
 Still she sings lullaby,
 Still the child slumbers soft.

MAY-SONG.

HERE'S a time for all good lasses.

Sigh not, Jennie—wherefore sigh ?

Ever as the May moon passes

Lovers drop down from the sky ;

Cushat, mavis, lark, and linnet,

Each is singling out its pair ;

Marriages with every minute ;

Hark ! their joy-peals in the air !

Ope thy heart unto the summer ;

Love comes suddenly as Fate :

Who is yonder fair new-comer

Gliding to thy garden gate ?

Birdlike, seeks he one to sing to

Coyly hid in leaves—like thee ?

Couldst thou single him to cling to ?—

Coyly peep through leaves, and see.

As the bird sings he is singing,
‘ May is in the air above ;
And through blossoms round me springing
Winds the pathway to my love.

‘ Still thy beating, heart impassioned,
Learn in silence to repine ;
Her soft beauty was not fashioned
For a dwelling rude as mine.

‘ Wherefore, wild-bird, art thou bearing
Twig and moss to yonder tree ?’
‘ For the home that I am rearing
High from earth, as love’s should be.

‘ If thus rudely I begin it,
Love itself completes the nest ;
And the downy softness in it
Comes, O Lover, from the breast.’

All the while, the buds are springing ;
May is round thee and above ;
As the bird sings he is singing—
As the bird loves canst thou love ?

RETIREMENT: MAN'S FINAL CHOICE.

RESTS my cheek upon my hand, rests my elbow on
 the table,
 Like a man who would in earnest compel himself
 to muse,

But my thoughts are in revolt from a will become unable
 To consolidate in order the freedom they abuse.

Still I seek, I yearn, I pray to fasten firm decision
 On the choice that must determine the lot of waning life :
 What is best for me seems clear thro' all shadow to my vision.
 The Sabbath-day of quiet, after working days of strife.

Ah ! to watch on lawns remote, in the deep of Sabine valleys,
 How the sunset gilds the cypress growing high beside
 my home,
 While the ringdove's latest coo lulls the fading forest alleys.
 Were sweeter for life's evening than the roar and smoke of
 Rome.

All the prizes which allured me in the eager days of passion,
 Seem to reason, when it pauses, not to scorn them but
 survey,
 As baubles which for childhood kindly sages stoop to fashion ;
 If sages make the playthings, 'tis to smile upon the play.

Thro' the crannies wrought by time in this world of art
 around us
 Into deeps of azure distance the vague horizon flies,
 Instinctive of the infinite—whatever wall may bound us,
 Our souls pursue the landscape lengthening on to meet
 the skies.

But stands against my wishes and their willing friend, my
 reason,
 A something—how to name it even reason cannot say ;
 Ah, is it pride, resenting every counsel as a treason
 Which whispers abdication to the hand that loses sway ?

For all of us, the tritest, shrink reluctant from the cession
 Of an atom-weight of power o'er the lives of fellow-men ;
 Not a Dobson quits his till, not a Jobson his profession,
 Not a Jones in penny journals the sceptre of his pen,

Without a pang at parting from his portion in the splendour
Of that oneness ruling all things, the commonwealth
of life :

Or is it but the instinct which revolts from the surrender
To a voice that seems the grave's when it whispers ' Rest
from strife ' ?

For, too surely he begins into death to fade already,
Who, seen and heard no longer, leaves the din of life
afar,

And gazing on the dial, marks the shadow gliding steady
Where the timepiece halteth dumb to the dawning of the
star.

Yet, oh yet, when, in my young day, fair dreams of moral
beauty

Limn'd out my human future into harmony and plan,
Gave pediment and pillar, arc and corner-stone of duty,
Their own allotted places in the edifice of man,

Ever in those early day-dreams, the palace pile extending
Closed its length in shadowed cloisters sequestered for
the sage.

And the fairest life must lose what is fairest in its ending
If all without a twilight fades the sun away from age.

Still I hesitate and ponder : my will in craven shrinking
Leaves undrawn the final lot in the muffled urn of fate,
While each moment in the hour-glass is sinking, swiftly
sinking,
And swiftest of all moments is the one that comes too late.

Well, this weakness of the will, tho' it humble, should
uplift, me,
It links me but the closer to the all-disposing Power ;
Despite my best endeavour, if the running current drift me,
The loadstone of eternity draws tow'rds itself the hour.

Man's will is only godlike, when a god himself doth seize it ;
All sails that traverse ocean, Heav'n sends the wind to fill.
If human will be silent, heavenly wisdom so decrees it,
Man! that wisdom may be speaking in the silence of
thy will.

THE LARK IN THE CAGE.

(FOR MUSIC.)



HE cage on the wall by the porch is hung :

Within it the skylark sings ;

He was tamed to his prison while yet too young

For the joy of ascending wings.

Trille-la, Trille-la,

He looks thro' the bars, and sings.

Content with the food that is daily given.

Does he never have instincts dim

Of a sunnier life in the golden heaven

With creatures akin to him ?

Trille-la, Trille-la,

He looks at that heaven and sings.

Said a child in pity, who pass'd that way,

· Poor bird ! it is sad for thee

To be pent in a cage from the realm of day ;

Soft, soft, I will set thee free.'

Hark, aloft, Trille-la

To the lark in the cage, Trille-la.

A bird in the azure sings.

But the caged lark to the dungeon bar
In terror and tremble clings ;
And he heeds not the bird in the skies afar,
Where never yet soared his wings.

From the well-known cage to the unknown space
Seems a desolate ghastly change ;
And the merciful child with the angel face
To him is a monster strange.

The child, in his pity, reclosed the door,
And passed on his loving way ;
Many wings he released into light, before
His errand was done that day.

When the skylark saw that the foe was gone
Who had offered such grievous wrong,
He folded the wings which refused the sun,
And burst into blithesome song.

Trille-la, Trille-la, Trille-la,
In the prison with folded wings,
Reprieved from his heaven, he sings,
Trille-la, Trille-la,
But still 'tis to heaven he sings,
Trille-la, Trille-la.



THE FIRST VIOLETS.



WHO that has loved knows not the tender tale
Which flowers reveal, when lips are coy
to tell?

Whose youth has paused not, dreaming, in the vale
Where the rath violets dwell?

Lo, where they shrink along the lonely brake,
Under the leafless melancholy tree ;
Not yet the cuckoo sings, nor glides the snake,
Nor wild thyme lures the bee ;

Yet at their sight and scent entranced and thrall'd,
All June seems golden in the April skies ;
How sweet the days we yearn for—till fulfill'd :
O distant Paradise,

Dear Land to which Desire for ever flees ;
Time doth no Present to our grasp allow,
Say, in the fix'd Eternal shall we seize
At last the fleeting Now ?

Dream not of days to come—of that Unknown
 Whither Hope wanders—maze without a clue ;
 Give their true witchery to the flowers ;—thine own
 Youth in their youth renew.

Avarice, remember when the cowslip's gold
 Lured and yet lost its glitter in thy grasp.
 Do thy hoards glad thee more than those of old ?
Those wither'd in thy clasp,

From *these* thy clasp falls palsied.—It was then
 That thou wert rich—thy coffers are a lie ;
 Alas, poor fool ! Joy is the wealth of men,
 And Care their penury.

Come, foil'd Ambition, what hast thou desired ?
 Empire and power ?—O, wanderer, tempest-tost !
 These once were thine, when life's gay spring inspired
 Thy soul with glories lost.

Let the flowers charm thee back to that rich time
 When golden Dreamland lay within thy chart,
 When Love bestow'd a realm indeed sublime—
 The boundless human heart.

Hark, hark again, the tread of bashful feet !

Hark the boughs rustling round the trysting-place !
Let air again with one dear breath be sweet,
Earth fair with one dear face.

Brief-lived, first flowers—first love ! The hours steal on
To prank the world in summer's pomp of hue ;
But what can flaunt beneath a fiercer sun
Worth what we lose in you ?

Oft by a flower, a leaf, in some loved book
We mark the lines that charm us most ;—Retrace
Thy life ;—recall its loveliest passage ;—Look,
Dead violets keep the place !

THE IMAGE ON THE TIDE.

NOT a sound is heard
 But my heart by thine ;
 Breathe not a word,
 Lay thy hand in mine.

How trembling, yet still,
 On the lake's clear tide,
 Sleep the distant hill
 And the bank beside.

The near and the far
 Intermingled flow ;
 The herb and the star
 Imaged both below.

So deep and so clear,
 Through the shadowy light,
 The far and the near
 In my soul unite ;

The future and past,
Like the bank and hill,
On the surface glass'd,
Though they tremble still ;

Disturb not the dream
Of this double whole ;
The heav'n in the stream,
On my soul thy soul.

The sense cannot count
(As the waters glass
The forest and mount
And the clouds that pass)

The shadows and gleams
In that stilly deep,
Like the tranquil dreams
Of a hermit's sleep.

One shadow alone
On my soul doth fall—
And yet in the one
It reflects an All.

IS IT ALL VANITY?

DOUBTING of life, my spirit paused perplex,
 Let fall its fardell of laborious care,
 And the sharp cry of my great trouble vext
 Unsympathising air.

Out on this choice of unrewarded toil,
 This upward path into the realm of snow
 Oh for one glimpse of the old happy soil
 Fragrant with flowers below

For what false gold, like alchemists, we yearn,
 Wasting the wealth we never can recall,
 Joy and life's lavish prime ;—and our return?
 Ashes, cold ashes, all !

Could youth but dream what narrow burial-urns
 Hopes that went forth to conquer worlds should hold,
 How in a tomb the lamp Experience burns
 Amidst the dust of old !—

In the chill dawn of real life, how soon
The beautiful Ideals fade away!
As Fairies seen under the doubtful moon,
Fly disenchanting day;

Love render'd saintlike by its pure devotion;
Knowledge exulting lone by shoreless seas;
And Feeling tremulous to each emotion,
As May-leaves to the breeze;

And, oh, that grand Ambition, poet-nurst,
When boyhood's heart swells up to the Sublime,
And on the gaze the towers of glory first
Flash from the peaks of time!

Are they then wiser who but nurse the growth
Of joys in life's most common element,
Creeping from hour to hour in that calm sloth
Which Egoists call 'Content?'

Who freight for storms no hopeful argosy,
Who watch no beacon wane on hill-tops grey,
Who bound their all, where from the human eye
The horizon fades away?

Alas for Labour, if indeed more wise
 To drink life's tide unwitting where it flows ;
 Renounce the arduous palm, and only prize
 The Cnidian vine and rose !

Out from the Porch the Stoic cries, ' For shame !'
 What hast thou left us, Stoic, in thy school ?
 ' That pain or pleasure is but in the name ?'
 A nerve belies thee, fool !

Never grave Pallas, never Muse severe
 Charm'd this hard life like the free, zoneless Grace ;
 Pleasure is sweet in spite of every sneer
 On Zeno's wrinkled face.

What gain'd and left ye to this age of ours,
 Ye early priesthoods of the Isis, Truth—
 When light first glimmer'd from the Cuthite's towers ;
 When Thebes was in her youth ?

When to the weird Chaldæan spoke the star,
 When Hades open'd at Heracleon spells,
 When Fate made Nature her interpreter
 In leaves and murmuring wells ?

When the keen Greek chased flying Science on,
Upward and up the infinite abyss?—
Like perish'd stars your arts themselves have gone
Noiseless to nothingness!

And what is knowledge but the wizard's ring,
Kindling a flame to circumscribe a ground?
The belt of light that lures the spirit's wing
Hems the invoker round.

Ponder and ask again, 'What boots our toil?'
Can we the Garden's wanton child gainsay,
When from kind lips he culls their rosy spoil
And lives life's holiday?

Life answers, 'No—if ended here be life,
Seize what the sense can give—it is thine all;
Disarm thee, Virtue, barren is thy strife;
Knowledge, thy torch let fall.

Seek thy lost Psyche, yearning Love, no more!
Love is but lust, if soul be only breath;
Who would put forth one billow from the shore
If the great sea be—Death?'

But if the soul, that slow artificer,
For ends instinctive, reared *from* life, hath striven,
Feeling beneath its patient webwork stir
Wings only freed in heaven,

Then, and but then, to toil is to be wise ;
Solved is the riddle of the grand desire
Which ever, ever, for the Distant sighs,
And must, perforce, aspire.

Rise, then, my soul, take comfort from thy sorrow ;
Thou feel'st thy treasure when thou feel'st thy load ;
Life without thought, the day without the morrow,
God on the brute bestow'd ;

Longings obscure as for a native clime,
Flight from what is to live in what may be,
God gave the Soul ;—thy discontent with time
Proves thine eternity.

THE TRUE JOY-GIVER.

OH Œvoë, Liber Pater,
 Oh, the vintage feast divine,
 When the god was in the bosom
 And his rapture in the wine ;

When the Faun laugh'd out at morning ;
 When the Mænad hymn'd the night ;
 And the Earth itself was drunken
 With the worship of delight ;

Oh Œvoë, Liber Pater,
 Thou, whose orgies are upon
 Moonlit hill-tops of Parnassus,
 Shady slopes of Helicon ;—

Ah, how often have I hail'd thee !
 Ah, how often have I been
 The gay swinger of the thyrsus,
 When its wither'd leaves were green !

Then, the boughs were purple-gleaming
With the dewdrop and the star ;
As, in chanting, came the wood-nymph,
And, in flashing, came the car.

But how faded are the garlands
Of the thyrsus that I bore,
When the wood-nymph chanted ' Follow !'
In the vintage-feast of yore.

Yet my vineyards are the richest
That Falernian slopes bestow ;
Has the vineherd lost his cunning ?
Has the summer lost its glow ?

Dullard, never on Falernium
The true Care-Dispeller trod ;
There, the vine-leaves wreath no thyrsus,
There, the fruits allure no god.

Liber's wine is Nature's life-blood ;
Liber's vineyards bloom upon
Moonlit hill-tops of Parnassus,
Shady slopes of Helicon.

But the hill-tops of Parnassus
Are still free to every age ;
I have trod them with the Poet,
I have mapp'd them with the Sage ;

And I'll take my young disciple
To heed well, with humbled eyes.
How the rosy Gladness-giver
Welcomes ever most the wise.

Lo, the arching of the vine-leaves ;
Lo, the sparkle of the fount ;
Hark, the carol of the Mænads ;
Lo, the car is on the Mount !

' Ho, there !—room, ye thyrsus-bearers,
For your playmate I have been !'
' Once it might be,' laughed Lyæus,
' But thy thyrsus then was green.'

And adown the gleaming alleys
See, the gladness-bringer glide ;
And the wood-nymph murmurs ' Follow !'
To the young man by my side.

BELIEF; THE UNKNOWN LANGUAGE.

AN IDYLL.

BY summer-reeds a music murmur'd low,
 And straight the Shepherd-age came back
 to me ;

When idylls breathed where Himera's waters flow,
 Or on the Hæmus hill, or Rhodopè ;

As when the swans, by Moschus heard at noon,
 Mourn'd their lost Bion on the Thracian streams :
 Or when Simæthea murmur'd to the moon
 Of Myndian Delphis—old Sicilian themes.

Then softly turning, on the margent-slope
 Which back as clear translucent waters gave,
 Behold, a Shape as beautiful as Hope,
 And calm as Truth, bent, singing, o'er the wave.

To the sweet lips, sweet music seem'd a thing
Natural as perfume to the violet.
All else was silent ; not a zephyr's wing
Stirr'd from the magic of the charmer's net.

What was the sense beneath the silver tone ?
What the fine chain that link'd the floating measure ?
Not mine to say—the language was unknown,
And sense was lost in undistinguish'd pleasure.

Pleasure, dim-shadow'd with a gentle pain
As twilight Hesper with a twilight shroud ;
Or like the balm of a delicious rain
Press'd from the fleeces of a summer cloud.

When the song ceased, I knelt before the singer,
And raised my looks to soft and child-like eyes,
Sighing : ' What fountain, O thou nectar-bringer,
Feeds thy full urn with golden melodies ?

' Interpret sounds, O Hebè of the soul,
Oft heard, methinks, in Ida's starry grove,
When to thy feet the charmèd eagle stole,
And the dark thunder left the brows of Jove !'

Smiling, the Beautiful replied to me,
 And still the language flow'd in words unknown ;
 Only in those pure eyes my sense could see
 How calm the soul that so perplex'd my own.

And while she spoke, symphonious murmurs rose ;
 Dryads from trees, Nymphs murmur'd from the rills ;
 Murmur'd Mænalian Pan from dim repose
 In the lush coverts of Pelasgic hills ;

Murmur'd the voice of Chloris in the flower ;
 Bent, murmuring from his car, Hyperion ;
 Each thing regained the old Presiding Power,
 And spoke—and still the language was unknown.

Dull listener, placed amidst the harmonious Whole,
 Hear'st thou no voice to sense divinely dark ?
 The sweetest sounds that wander to the soul
 Are in the Unknown Language.—Pause, and hark !

THE PILGRIM OF THE DESERT.

WEARILY flaggeth my Soul in the Desert :

Wearily, wearily.

Sand, ever sand, not a gleam of the fountain :

Sun, ever sun, not a shade from the mountain :

Wave after wave flows the sea of the Desert.

Drearily, drearily.

Life dwelt with life in my far native valleys,

Nightly and daily ;

Labour had brothers to aid and beguile ;

A tear for my tear, and a smile for my smile ;

And the sweet human voices rang out ; and the valleys

Echoed them gaily.

Under the almond-tree, once in the spring-time,

Careless reclining ;

The sigh of my Leila was hush'd on my breast,

As the note of the last bird had died in its nest ;

Calm look'd the stars on the buds of the spring-time,

Calm—but how shining !

Morn came, and I went with my guest through the gorges
 In the rock hollow'd ;
The flocks bleated low as I pass'd them ungrieving,
The almond-buds strew'd the sweet earth I was leaving ;
Slowly went Age through the gloom of the gorges,
 Lightly Youth follow'd.

We won through the Pass—the Unknown lay before me,
 Sun-lighted and wide ;
Then I turn'd to my guest, but how languid his tread,
And the awe I had felt in his presence was fled,
And I cried, ' Can thy age in the journey before me
 Still keep by my side ?'

' Hope and Wisdom soon part ; be it so,' said the Dervise,
 ' My mission is done.'

As he spoke, came the gleam of the crescent and spear,
Chimed the bells of the camel more sweet and more near ;—
' Go, and march with the Caravan, youth,' sigh'd the Dervise,
 ' Fare thee well !'—he was gone.

What profits to speak of the wastes I have traversed
 Since that early time ?

One by one the procession, replacing the guide,
Have dropp'd on the sands, or have stray'd from my side ;
And I hear never more in the solitudes traversed
 The camel-bell's chime.

How oft I have yearn'd for the old happy valley,
But the sands have no track ;
He who scorn'd what was near must advance to the far,
Who forsaketh the landmark must march by the star,
And the steps that once part from the peace of the valley
Can never come back.

So on, ever on, spreads the path of the Desert,
Wearily, wearily ;
Sand, ever sand—not a gleam of the fountain ;
Sun, ever sun—not a shade from the mountain ;
As a sea on a sea, flows the width of the Desert,
Drearly, drearily.

How narrow content, and how infinite knowledge !
Lost vale, and lost maiden !
Enclosed in the garden the mortal was blest :
A world with its wonders lay round him unquest ;
That world was his own when he tasted of knowledge—
Was it worth Aden ?



LOVE AND DEATH.



STRONG as the eagle,
O mild as the dove,
How like and how unlike
O Death and O Love !

Knitting earth to the heaven,
The near to the far,
With the step in the dust,
And the eye on the star.

Ever changing your symbols
Of light or of gloom ;
Now the rue on the altar,
The rose on the tomb.

From love, if the infant
Receiveth his breath,
The love that gave life
Yields a subject to Death.

Love and Death.

When Death smites the aged,
Escaping above
Flies the soul re-deliver'd
By Death unto Love.

And therefore in wailing
We enter on life ;
And therefore in smiling
Depart from its strife.

Thus Love is best known
By the tears it has shed ;
And Death's surest sign
Is the smile of the dead.

The purer the spirit,
The clearer its view,
The more it confoundeth
The shapes of the two ;

For, if thou lov'st truly,
Thou canst not dissever
The grave from the altar,
The Now from the Ever ;

And if, nobly hoping,
Thou gazest above,
In Death thou beholdest
The aspect of LOVE.

TO THE LOST;

A LIFE'S RECORD.

PART I.

RETROSPECTION FROM THE HALTING-PLACE.



LET me pause, for I am weary,
 Weary of the trodden ways ;
 And the landscape spreads more dreary
 Where it stretches from my gaze.

Many a prize I deem'd a blessing
 When I started for the goal,
 Midway in the course possessing
 Adds a burden to the soul.

By the thorn that scantly shadeth,
 From the sloped sun reclin'd,
 Let me look, before it fadeth
 On the eastern hill behind ;—

On the hill that life ascended,
While the dewy morn was young ;
While the mist with light contended,
And the early skylark sung.

Then, as when at first united,
Rose together Love and Day ;
Nature with her sun was lighted,
And my soul with Viola !

O my young earth's lost Immortal
Naiad vanished from the streams !
Eve, torn from me at the portal
Of my Paradise of Dreams !

On thy name, with lips that quiver,
With a voice that chokes, I call.
Well ! the cave may hide the river,
But the ocean merges all.

Yet, if but in self-deceiving,
Can no magic charm thy shade ?
Come unto my human grieving,
Come, but as the human maid !

By the fount where love was plighted,
Where the lone wave glass'd the skies ;
By the hands that once united ;
By the welcome of the eyes ;

By the silence sweetly broken
When the full heart murmur'd low,
And with sighs the words were spoken
Ere the later tears did flow ;

By the blush and soft confession ;
By the wanderings side by side ;
By the love denied possession ;
And the heavenlier, so denied ;

By the faith yet undiverted ;
By the worship sacred yet ;
To the soul so long deserted,
Come, as when of old we met ;

Blooming as my youth beheld thee
In the trysting-place of yore—
Hark, a footfall ! I have spell'd thee,
Lo, thy living smile once more !

PART II.

THE MEETING-PLACE OF OLD.

GLIDES the brooklet through the rushes,
Now with dipping boughs at play,
Now with quicker music-gushes
Where the pebbles chafe the way.

Lonely from the lonely meadows
Slopes the undulating hill ;
And the slowness of its shadows
But at sunset gains the rill :

Not a sign of man's existence,
Not a glimpse of man's abode,
Yet the church-spire in the distance
Links the solitude with God.

All so quiet, all so glowing,
In the golden hush of noon ;
Nature's still heart overflowing
From the breathless lips of June.

Song itself the bird forsaketh,
 Save from wooded deeps remote,
 Mellowly and singly breaketh,
 Mellowly, the cuckoo's note.

'Tis the scene where youth beheld thee ;
 'Tis the trysting-place of yore ;
 Yes, my mighty grief hath spell'd thee,
 Blooming—living—mine once more !

PART III.

LOVE UNTO DEATH.

HAND in hand we stood confiding,
 Boy and maiden, hand in hand,
 Where the path, in twain dividing,
 Reach'd the Undiscover'd Land.

Oh, the Hebé then beside me,
 Oh, the embodied Dream of Youth,
 With an angel's soul to guide me,
 And a woman's heart to soothe !

Like the Morning in the gladness
Of the smile that lit the skies ;
Liker Twilight in the sadness
Lurking deep in starry eyes !

Gaudier flowerets had effaced thee
In the formal garden set ;
Nature in the shade had placed thee
With thy kindred violet ;

As the violet to completeness
Coming even ere the day ;
All thy life a silent sweetness
Waning with a warmer ray.

So, upon the verge of sorrow
Stood we, blindly, hand in hand,
Whispering of a happy morrow
In that undiscover'd land.

Thou, O meek one, fame foretelling,
Grown ambitious but for me :
While my heart, if proudly swelling,
Beat—ah, not for Fame, but thee.

In that summer-noon we parted,
Life redundant over all.
Once again—O broken-hearted—
When the autumn leaves did fall,

Meeting—life from life to sever !
Parting—as depart the dead,
When the dark ‘ Farewell for ever ! ’
Fades from marble lips, unsaid ;

As upon a bark that slowly
Lessens lone adown the sea,
Looks abandon’d Melancholy—
Did thy still eyes follow me !

Wilful in thy self-devotion,
Patient on the desert shore,
Gazing, gazing, till from ocean
Waned thy last hope evermore.

Gentle victim, they might bind thee,
But to fetter was to slay ;
As a statue they enshrined thee,
At a sepulchre to pray ;

Bade the bloodless lips not falter ;
 Bade the cold despair be brave ;
Yes, the next morn at the altar !
 But the next moon in the grave !

Little dream'd they when they bore thee
 To the nuptial funeral shrine,
That to ME they did restore thee,
 And release thy soul to mine !

Yet can ev'n the grave regain thee ?
 Gain as human love would see ?
Darling—Pardon, I profane thee ;
 Angel—bend and comfort me !

PART IV.

LOVE AFTER DEATH.

COLD the loiterer who refuseth
 At the well of life to drink,
Till the wave a sparkle loseth,
 And the silver cord a link.

But the flagging of the forces
In the journey of the soul,
If the first draught waste the sources,
If the first touch break the bowl!—

On the surface bright with pleasure
Still thy distant shade was cast ;
Ah ! the heart was where the treasure,
And the Present with the Past.

If from Fame, the all-deceiver,
Toil contending garlands sought,
Oft our force is but our fever,
And our swiftness flight from Thought.

Hollow Pleasure, vain Ambition,
Give me back the impulse free—
Hope that seem'd its own fruition,
Life contented but to be,

When the earth with heaven was haunted
In the shepherd-age of gold,
And the Venus rose enchanted
From the sunny seas of old.

Cease, not mine the ignoble moral
Of an unresisted grief ;
Can the lightning sear the laurel,
Or the winter fade its leaf?

Flowerless, yet, until the dying,
Green as when the sap began,
Bolt and winter both defying—
So be manhood unto man.

Once I wander'd forth dejected
In the later times of gloom ;
And the icy moon reflected
One still shadow o'er thy tomb.

There, in desolation kneeling,
Snows around me, stars above,
Came that second world of feeling,
Came that second birth of Love.

When regret grows aspiration,
When o'er chaos moves the breath :
And a new-born dim creation
Rising, wid'ning, dawns from death.

Then methought my soul was lifted
From the anguish and the strife ;
With a finer vision gifted
For the Spirituals of Life ;

For the links that, while they thrall us,
Upward mount in just degree,
Knitting, even if they gall us,
Life to Immortality ;

For the subtler glories blending
With the common air we know,
Angel hosts to heaven ascending
Up the ladder based below.

Straight each harsher iron duty
Did the sudden light illumine ;
Oh, what streams of solemn beauty
Take their sources in the tomb !

PART V.

THE PANTHEISM OF LOVE PASSING INTO THE IDEAL.

THEN I rose, at dawn departing,
Wan the dead earth, wan the snow,
Wan the frost-beam dimly darting
Where the corn-seed lurk'd below ;

From that night, as streams dividing
At the fountain till the sea,
Wildly chafing, gently gliding,
Life has twofold lives for me ;

One by mart and forum passing,
Vex'd reflection of the crowd ;
One the hush of forests glassing,
Or the changes of the cloud.

By the calmer stream, for ever
Dwell the ghosts that haunt the heart,
And the phantoms and the river
Make the Poet-World of Art.

There in all that Fancy gildeth,
Still thy vanish'd smile I see ;
And each airy hall it buildeth
Is a votive shrine to thee !

Do men praise the labour ?—gladden'd
That the homage may endure ;
Do they scorn it ?—only sadden'd
That thine altar is so poor.

If the Beautiful be clearer
As the seeker's days decline,
Should the Ideal not be nearer
As my soul approaches thine ?

Thus the single light bereft me
Fused through all creation flows ;
Gazing where a sun had left me,
Lo, the myriad stars arose !

PART VI.

THE BIRD SINGS FROM THE THORN.

Now the eastern hill-top fadeth
From the arid wastes forlorn,
And the only tree that shadeth
Has the scant leaves of the thorn.

Not a home to smile before me,
Not a voice to cheer is heard ;
Hush ! the thorn-leaves tremble o'er me—
Hark, the carol of a bird !

Unto air what charm is given !
Angel, as a link to thee,
Midway between earth and heaven
Hangs the delicate melody !

How it teacheth while it chideth,
Is the pathway so forlorn ?
Mercy over man presideth,
And—the bird sings from the thorn.

Floating on, the music leads me,
As the pausing-place I leave,
And the gentle wing precedes me
Through the lullèd airs of eve.

Stay, O last of all the number,
Bathing happy plumes in light,
Till the deafness of the slumber,
Till the blindness of the night.

Only for the vault to leave thee,
Only with my life to lose ;
Let my closing eyes perceive thee
Fold thy wings amid the yews.

MIND AND SOUL.

HARK! the awe-whisper'd prayer, 'God
 spare my mind!'
 Dust unto dust, the mortal to the clod;
 But the high place, the altar that has shrined
 Thine image—spare, O God!

Thought, the grand link from human life to Thee,
 The humble reed that by the Shadowy River
 Responds in music to the melody
 Of spheres that hymn for ever—

The order of the mystic world within,
 The airy girth of all things near and far;
 Sense, though of sorrow—memory, though of sin—
 Gleams through the dungeon bar—

Vouchsafe me to the last!—Though none may mark
 The solemn pang, nor soothe the parting breath,
 Still let me seek for God amid the dark,
 And face, unblinded, Death!

Whence is this fine distinction 'twixt the twain
Rays of the Maker in the lamp of clay,
Spirit and Mind?—strike the material brain,
And soul seems hurl'd away.

Touch but a nerve, and Brutus is a slave ;
A nerve, and Plato drivels ! Was it mind,
Or soul, that taught the wise one in the cave,
The freeman in the wind ?

If mind—O Soul ! what is thy task on earth ?
If soul ! Oh, wherefore can a touch destroy,
Or lock in Lethé's Acherontian dearth
The Immortal's grief and joy ?

Hark, how a child can babble of the cells
Wherein, beneath the perishable brow,
Fancy invents, and Memory chronicles,
And Reason asks—as now :

Mapp'd are the known dominions of the thought,
But who shall find the palace of the soul ?
Along what channels shall the source be sought,
The well-spring of the whole ?

Look round, vain questioner—all space survey,
Where'er thou lookest, lo, how clear is Mind !
The laws that part the darkness from the day,
And the sweet Pleiads bind,

The thought, the will, the art, the elaborate power
Of the Great Cause from which the All began—
Gaze on the star, or bend above the flower,
Still speak of Mind to man.

But the arch soul of soul—from which the law
Is but the shadow, who on earth can see ?
What guess cleaves upward through the deeps of awe,
Unspeakable, to thee ?

As in Creation lives the Father Soul,
So lives the soul He breathed amidst the clay ;
Round it the thoughts on starry axles roll,
Life flows and ebbs away.

If chaos smote the universe again,
And new Chaldæans shuddered to explore
Amidst the maddening elements in vain
The harmonious Mind of yore,

Would not God live the same ?—the Unseen Spirit,
Whether that life or wills or wrecks Creation ?—
So lives, distinct, the God-spark we inherit,
When Mind is desolation.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.



FROM Heaven what fancy stole
 The dream of some good spirit, aye at hand,
 The seraph whispering to the exiled soul
 'Tales of its native land ?

Who to the cradle gave
 The unseen watcher by the mother's side,
 Born with the birth, companion to the grave,
 The holy angel-guide ?

Is it a fable ?—' No,'
 I hear LOVE answer from the sunlit air,
 ' Still where *my* presence gilds the darkness—know
 Life's angel-guide is there ?'

Is it a fable ?—Hark,
 FAITH hymns from deeps beyond the palest star,
 ' I am the pilot to thy wandering bark,
 Thy guide to shores afar.'

Is it a fable?—sweet
From wave, from air, from every forest tree,
The murmur spoke, ‘ Each thing thine eyes can greet
An angel-guide can be.

‘ From myriads take thy choice,
In all that lives a guide to God is given ;
Ever thou hear’st some angel guardian’s voice
When Nature speaks of Heaven !’

THE LOVE OF MATURER YEARS.

AY, soother, do not dream thine art
 Can alter Nature's stern decree ;
 Or give me back the younger heart,
 Whose tablets had been clear to thee.

Why seek, fair child, to pierce the dark
 That wraps the giant wrecks of old ?
 Thou wert not with me in the ark,
 When o'er my life the deluge roll'd.

To thee, reclining by the verge,
 The careless waves in music flow ;
 To me the ripple sighs the dirge
 Of my lost native world below.

Her tranquil arch as Iris builds
 Above the Anio's torrent roar,
 Thy life is in the life it gilds,
 Born of the wave it trembles o'er.

For thee a glory leaves the skies
If from thy side a step depart ;
Thy sunlight beams from human eyes,
Thy world is in one human heart.

And in the woman's simple creed
Since first the helpmate's task began,
Thou ask'st what more than love should need
The stern insatiate soul of Man.

No more, while youth with vernal gale
Breathes o'er the brief Arcadia still ;—
But when the Wanderer quits the vale,
But when the footstep scales the hill,

But when with awe the wide expanse
The Pilgrim's earnest eyes explore,
How shrinks the land of sweet Romance,
A speck—it was the world before !

And, hark, the Dorian fifes succeed
The pastoral reeds of Arcady :
Lo, where the Spartan meets the Mede,
Near Tempé lies—Thermopylé !

Each onward step in hardy life,
Each scene that Memory halts to scan,
Demands the toil, records the strife—
And love but once is all to man.

Weep'st thou, fair infant, wherefore weep ?
Long ages since the Persian sung,
'The zephyr to the rose should keep,
And youth should only love the young.'

Ay, lift those chiding eyes of thine ;
The trite, ungenerous moral scorn !
The diamond's home is in the mine,
The violet's birth beneath the thorn ;

There, purer light the diamond gives
Than when to baubles shaped the ray :
There, safe at least the violet lives
From hands that clasp—to cast away.

Bloom still beside the mournful heart,
Light still the caves denied the star ;
Oh Eve, with Eden pleased to part,
Since Eden needs no comforter !

My soft Arcadian, from thy bower
I hear thy music on the hill ;
And bless the note for many an hour
When I too—an Arcadian still.

Whene'er the face of Heaven appears,
As kind as once it smiled on me,
I'll steal adown the mount of years,
And come—a youth once more, to thee.

From bitter grief and iron wrong
When Memory sets her captive free,
When joy is in the skylark's song,
My blithesome steps shall bound to thee ;

When Thought, the storm-bird, shrinks before
The width of nature's clouded sea,
A voice shall charm it home on shore,
To share the halcyon's nest with thee :

Lo, how the faithful verse escapes
The varying chime that laws decree,
And, like my heart, attracted, shapes
Each wandering fancy back—to *thee*.



THE EVERLASTING GRAVE-DIGGER.



I THOUGHT I stood amidst a burial-place
 And saw a phantom ply the sexton's trade.
 Pale o'er the charnel bow'd the phantom face.
 Noiseless the phantom spade
 Gleam'd in the stars.

Wondering I ask'd, 'Whose grave dost thou prepare?'
 The labouring ghost disdainful paused and said.
 To dig the grave is Death my father's care,
 I disinter the dead
 Under the stars.'

Therewith he cast a skull before my feet,
 A skull with worms encircled, and a crown ;
 And mouldering shreds of Beauty's winding-sheet.
 Chilling and cheerless down
 Shimmer'd the stars.

‘And of the Past,’ I sigh’d, ‘are these alone
The things disburied? spare the dread repose,
Or bring once more the monarch to his throne,
To Beauty’s cheek the rose.’
Cloud wrapt the stars,

While the pale sexton answer’d, ‘Fool, away!
Thou ask’st of Memory that which Faith must give;
Mine is the task to disinter the clay,
Hers to bid life revive’—
Cloud left the stars.

THE DISPUTE OF THE POETS.

A LYRICAL ECLOGUE.



N idyll scene of happy Sicily !

Out from its sacred grove on grassy slopes
Smiles a fair temple, vow'd to some sweet

Power

Of Nature deified. In broad degrees
From flower-wreath'd porticoes the shining stairs,
Through tiers of myrtle in Corinthian urns,
Glide to the shimmer of an argent lake.

Calm rest the swans upon the glassy wave,
Save where the younger cygnets, newly-pair'd,
Through floating brakes of water-lilies, sail
Slowly in sunlight down to islets dim.

But farther on, the lake subsides away
Into the lapsing of a shadowy rill
Melodious with the chime of falls as sweet
As (heard by Pan in Arethusan glades)
The silvery talk of meeting Naiades.

Where cool the sunbeam slants through ilex-boughs.
The fane above them and the rill below,

Two forms recline ; nor e'er in Arcady
Did fairer Manhood win an Oread's love,
Nor lift diviner brows to earliest stars.

The one of brighter hues, and darker curls
Clustering and purple as the fruit o' the vine,
Seem'd like that Summer-Idol of rich life
Whom sensuous Greece, inebriate with delight,
From Orient myth and symbol-worship brought
To blue Cithæron, blithe with bounding faun
And wood-nymph wild, Nature's young lord, Iacchus!
Bent o'er the sparkling brook, with careless hand
From sedge or sward, he pluck'd or reed or flower,
Casting away light wreaths on playful waves ;
While—as the curious ripple murmur'd round
Its odorous prey, and eddying whirl'd it on
O'er pebbles glancing sheen to sunny falls—
He laugh'd, as childhood laughs, in such frank glee
The very leaves upon the ilex danced
Joyous, as at some mirthful wind in May.

The other, though the younger, more serene,
And to the casual gaze severer far,
To that bright comrade-shape, by contrast seem'd
As serious Morn, star-crown'd on Spartan hills,
To Noon, when hyacinths flush through Enna's vales,

Or murmurous winglets hum 'mid Indian palms.
Such beauty his as the first Dorian bore
From the far birthplace of Homeric men,
Beyond the steeps of Boreal Thessaly,
When to the swart Pelasgic Autocthon
The blue-eyed Pallas came with lifted spear,
And, her twin type of the fair-featured North,
Phœbus, the archer with the golden hair.
Bright was the one as Syrian Adon-ai,
Charming the goddess born from roseate seas ;
And while the other, leaning on his lyre,
Lifted the azure light of earnest eyes
From flower and wave, to the remotest hill
On which the soft horizon melted down,
Ev'n so methought had gazed Endymion,
With looks estranged from the luxuriant day,
To the far Latmos steep—where holy dreams
Nightly renew'd the kisses of the Moon.

Entranced I stood, and held my breath to hear
The words that seem'd to warm upon their lips,
As if such contest as two Nightingales
Wage, emulous in music, on the peace
That surely dwelt between them, had anon
Forced its mellifluous anger :—

Then I learn'd

That the fair two were orphans, rear'd to youth
 Song and the lyre, where ringdoves coo remote,
 And loitering bees cull sweets in Hyblan dells :
 And that their discord, as their union, grew
 Out of their rivalry in lyre and song.
 Therewith did each, in the accustom'd war
 Of pastoral singers in Sicilian noons,
 Strive for his Right (O Memory, aid me now !)
 In the sweet quarrel of alternate hymns.

CARICLES.

As the sunlight that plays on a stream,
 As the zephyr that rustles a leaf,
 On my soul comes the joy of the beam,
 And a zephyr can stir it to grief.

Whether pleasure or pain be decreed,
 My voice but in music is heard ;
 By the sunny wave murmurs the reed ;
 From the sighing leaf carols the bird.

PHILASTER.

Unto her hierarch Nature's voices come
 But through the labyrinthine cells of Thought,

Not at the Porch doth Isis hold her home,
Not to the Tyro are her mysteries taught ;

The secret dews of many a starry night
Feed the vast ocean's stately ebb and flow ;
The leaf is restless where the branch is slight,
Still are the boughs whose shades stretch far below.

CARICLES.

As the skylark that mounts
With the dawn to the sun,
As the flash from the founts
Of the swift Helicon,

Song comes ;—and I sing !
Wouldst thou question me more ?
Ask the wave or the wing
Why it sparkle or soar !

PHILASTER.

Full be the soul if swift the inspiration !
The corn-flower opens as the sheaves are rife ;
Song is the twin of golden Contemplation,
The harvest-flower of life.

The Cloud-compeller's bolt the eagle bears,
 But when the wings the strength divine have won,
 Full many a flight around the rock prepares
 The Aspirer towards the Sun ;

Progressive heights to gradual effort given,
 Till, all the plumes in light supreme unfurl'd,
 It halts ;—and knits unto the dome of heaven
 This pendant ball—the World.

CARICLES.

Hail, O hail, Pierides,
 Free Harmonia's zoneless daughters,
 Whom abrupt the Mænad sees
 By the marge of moonlit waters,
 Weaving joy in choral measure
 To no law but your sweet pleasure ;
 Wanton winds in loosen'd hair
 Lifting gold that gilds the air ;

Say, beneath what starry skies
 Lurk the herbs that purge the eyes ?
 On what hill-tops should we cull
 The moly of the Beautiful ?

What the charm the soul to capture
In the cestus-belt of rapture,
When the senses, trembling under,
Glass the Shadow-land of Wonder,
And no human hand is stealing
O'er the music-scale of Feeling ?

As ceased the question, rose delicious winds,
Stirring the waves that kiss'd the tuneful reeds,
And all the wealth of sweets in bells of flowers ;
So that, methought, out from all life, the Muse
Murmur'd responses low, and echo'd, ' FEELING ! '

PHILASTER.

Divine Corycides,
Whose chosen haunts are in mysterious cells,
And aileys dim through gleaming laurel-trees
Dusking the shrine of Delphian oracles—
Under whose whispering shade
Sits the lone Pythian Maid,
Whose soul is as the glass of human things ;
While up from bubbling streams
In mists arise the Dreams
Pale with the future of tiara'd kings—

Say, what the charm which from ambrosial domes
 Draws the Immortal to Time's brazen towers,
 When on the soul the gentle Thunderer comes—
 Comes but in golden showers ?
 When, through the sealèd portals of the sense,
 Fluent as air the Glory glides unsought ;
 And the serene effulgent Influence
 Rains all the wealth of heaven upon the thought ?

And as the questions ceased, fell every wind.
 The ilex-boughs droop'd heavy as the hush
 In which the prophet doves brood weird and calm
 Amid Dodonian groves ;—the broken light
 On crispèd waves grew smooth ; on earth, in heaven,
 The inexpressive majesty of Silence
 Pass'd as some Orient sovereign to his throne,
 When all the murmurs cease, and every brow
 Bends down in awe, and not a breath is heard.
 Yet spoke that stillness of the Eternal Mind
 That thinks, and, thinking, evermore creates ;
 And Nature seem'd to answer Poesy
 From her deep heart, in thought re-echoing 'THOUGHT.'

CARICLES.

Thou, whose silver lute contended
 With the careless reed of Pan—

Thou whose wanton youth descended
 To the vales Arcadian,
At whose coming heavenlier joy
 Lighteth even Jove's abode,
Ever blooming as the boy
 Through thine ages as the god ;
Fair Apollo, if the singer
Be like thee the gladness-bringer ;
If the nectar he distil
Make the worn earth youthful still ;
As thyself when thou wert driven
To the Tempè from the heaven,
As the infant over whom
Saturn bends his brows of gloom,
Roves he not the world a-maying,
 From his Idan halls exiled ;
Or with Time repose in playing,
 As, with Saturn's locks, the child ?

Therewith from far, where unseen hamlets lay
In wooded valleys green, came mellowly
Laughter and infant voices, borne perchance
From the light hearts of happy Children, sporting
Round some meek Mother's knee ;—ev'n so, methought,
Did the familiar human innocent gladness
Through golden Childhood answer Song, 'THE CHILD.'

PHILASTER.

Lord of lustrating streams,
And altars pure, appalling secret Crime,
Eternal Splendour, whose all-searching beams
 Illume with life the universe of Time,
All our own fates thy shrine reveals to us ;
 Thither comes Wisdom from the thrones of earth,
The unraveller of the Sphinx—blind Œdipus,
 Who knows not ev'n his birth !
On whom, Apollo, does thy presence shine
 Through the clear daylight of translucent song ?
Only to him who serveth at the shrine,
 The priesthood can belong !
After due and deep probation,
Only dawns thy revelation
Unto the devout beseecher
Taught by thee to grow the teacher :
Shall the bearer of thy bow
Let the shafts at random go ?
If the altar be divine,
 Is the sacrifice a feast ?
Should our hands the garland twine
 For the reveller or the priest ?

Therewith from out the temple on the hill
Broke the rich swell of fifes and choral lyres,
And the long melody of such large hymns,
As to the conquest of the Python-slayer,
Hallow'd thy lofty chant, Calliopè !
Thus from the penetralian aisles divine
The solemn god replied to Song, 'THE PRIEST.'

CARICLES.

And who can bind in formal duty
The Protean shapes of airy Beauty ?
Who tune the Teian's lyre of gold
To priestly hymns in temples cold ?
Accept the playmate by thy side,
Ordain'd to charm thee, not to guide.
The stream reflects each curve on shore,
 And Song alike thy good and error ;
Let Wisdom be the monitor,
 But Song should be the mirror.
To truth direct while Science goes
 With measured pace and sober eye :
The simplest wild-flower more bestows
 Than Egypt's lore, on Poesy.

The Magian seer who counts the stars,
 Regrets the cloud that veils his skies ;
 To me, the Greek, the clouds are cars
 From which bend down divinities !

Like cloud itself this common day
 Let Fancy make awhile the duller,
 Its iris in the cloud shall play,
 And weave thy world the pomp of colour.

He paused ; as if in concord with the Song
 Seem'd to flash forth the universe of hues
 In the Sicilian summer : on the banks
 Crocus, and hyacinth, and anemoné,
 Superb narcissus, Cytherea's rose,
 And woodbine lush, and lilies silver-starr'd ;
 And delicate cloudlets blush'd in lucent skies ;
 And yellowing sunbeams shot through purple waves ;
 And still from bough to bough the wings of birds,
 And still from flower to flower the gorgeous dyes
 Of the gay insect-revellers, wandering went—
 And as I look'd I murmur'd, ' Singer, yes,
 As COLOUR to the world, so song to life !'

PHILASTER.

Conceal'd from Saturn's deathful frown,
The wild Curetes strove,
By chant and cymbal clash, to drown
The infant cries of Jove.
But when, full-grown, the Thunder-king,
Triumphant o'er the Titan's fall,
And throned in Ida, look'd on all,
And all subjected saw ;
Saw the sublime Uranian Ring,
And every joyous living thing,
Calm'd into love beneath his tranquil law ;—
Then straight above, below, around,
His voice was heard in every sound ;
The mountain pealed it through the cave,
The whirlwind to the answering wave ;
By loneliest stream, by deepest dell,
It murmur'd in mysterious Pan ;
No less than in the golden shell
From which the falls of music well
O'er floors Olympian ;
For Jove in all that breathes must dwell,
And speak through all to Man.

Singer, who asketh Hermes for his rod,
To lead men's souls into Elysian bowers,
To whose belief the alter'd earth is trod
Still by Kronidian Powers,
If through thy veins the purer tide hath been
Pour'd from the nectar-streams in Hebe's urn,
That thou mightst both without thee and within
Feel the pervading Jove—wouldst thou return
To the dark time of old,
When Earth-born Force the Heir of Heaven controll'd,
And with thy tinkling brass aspire
To stifle Nature's music-choir,
And drown the voice of God ?

O Light, thou poetry of Heaven,
That glid'st through hollow air thy way,
That fill'st the starry founts of Even,
And all the azure seas of Day ;
Give to my song thy glorious flow,
That while it glads it may illumine,
Whether it gild the iris' bow,
And part its rays amid the gloom ;
Or whether, one broad tranquil stream,
It break in no fantastic dyes,
But calmly weaving beam on beam,
Make Heaven distinct to human eyes :

A truth that floats serene and clear,
'Twixt gods and men an atmosphere ;
Less seen itself than bringing all to sight,
And to man's soul what to man's world is Light.

Then, as the Singer ceased, the western sun
Halted a moment o'er the roseate hill
Hush'd in pellucid air ; and all the crests
Of the still groves, and all the undulous curves
Of far-off headlands stood distinctly soft
Against the unfathomable purple skies,
And linking in my thought the outward shows
Of Beauty with the inward types sublime,
By which through Beauty poets lead to Knowledge,
And are the lamps of Nature,

' Yes,' I murmur'd,
' Song is to soul what unto life is LIGHT !'

But gliding now behind the steeps it flush'd,
The disk of day sunk gradual, gradual down,
And in the homage of the old Religion
To the departing Sun—the rival two
Ceased their dispute, and bent sweet serious brows
In chorus with the cusps of bended flowers,
Sighing their joint ' Farewell, O golden Sun !'
Now Hesper came, the gentle shepherd star,

Bright as when Moschus sung to it ;—along
The sacred grove, and through the Parian shafts
Of the pale temple, shot the glistening rays,
And trembled in the tremor of the wave :—
Then the fair rivals, as they silent rose,
Turn'd each to each in brotherlike embrace ;
Lone amid starry solitude they stood,
In equal beauty clasp'd—and *both* divine.*

The reader will perceive that this poem is intended to illustrate a dispute which can never, perhaps, be critically solved, viz. whether the true business of the poet be to delight or to instruct ; and he will therefore be disposed to forgive me if he recognise certain thoughts or expressions freely borrowed from the various poets, who may be said to represent either side of the question. Among the modern, SCHILLER especially has suggested ideas and illustrations on behalf of the more earnest creed professed by PHILASTER, while GOETHE has been pressed to the aid of CARICLES. The Greek poets have here and there suggested a line on either side. After this general acknowledgment of obligation, it would be but pedantic to specify each special instance of imitative paraphrase or direct translation.

GANYMEDE.

‘When Ganymede was caught up to Heaven, he let fall his pipe, on which he was playing to his sheep.’—ALEXANDER ROSS, *Myst. Poet.*



UPON the Phrygian hill
 The shepherd sate, and on his reed he play'd.
 Sunlight and calm : noon in the dreamy glade.
 Noon on the lulling rill.

He saw not, where on high
 The noiseless eagle of the Heavenly King
 Rested—till rapt upon the rushing wing
 Into the golden sky.

When the bright Nectar Hall
 And the still brows of bended gods he saw,
 In the quick instinct both of shame and awe
 His hand the reed let fall.

Soul ! that a thought divine
 Bears into heaven—thy first ascent survey !
 What charm'd thee most on earth is cast away ;—
 To soar—is to resign !

PAST AND FUTURE.

[FOR MUSIC.]



HE old man sits at his hearth alone,
 Alone at his hearth sits he ;
 For his children, like birds when their wings are
 grown,
 Are gone from the old roof-tree.
 Quiet and quick,
 Click upon click,
 Clicks the clock hung over the door ;
 Telling us how,
 While we talk, the Now
 Melts into the Nevermore.

The young man lies on his bier alone,
 Alone on his bier lies he ;
 For his parents, like birds when their wings are grown,
 Have gone from the old roof-tree.

Solemn and slow,
Over graves below,
Booms the bell from the turret hoar :
Telling us how,
While we talk, the Now
Melts into the Evermore.



THE ANGEL AND THE CHILD.

UPON a barren steep,
 Above a stormy deep,
 I saw an Angel watching the wild sea
 Earth was that barren steep,
 Time was that stormy deep,
 And the opposing shore—Eternity !

‘ Why dost thou watch the wave ?
 Thy feet the waters lave,
 The tide engulfs thee if thou dost delay.’
 ‘ Unscathed I watch the wave,
 Time not the Angel’s grave,
 I wait until the ocean ebbs away.’

Hush’d on the Angel’s breast
 I saw an Infant rest,
 Smiling upon the gloomy hell below.
 ‘ What is the Infant prest,
 O Angel, to thy breast ?’
 The child God gave me, in The Long Ago.

‘ Mine all upon the earth,
The Angel’s angel-birth,
Smiling each terror from the howling wild.’
Never may I forget
The dream that haunts me yet,
Of Patience nursing Hope—the Angel and the Child.

TO A WITHERED TREE IN JUNE.



DESOLATE tree! why are thy branches bare?
 What hast thou done
 To win strange winter from the summer air,
 Frost from the sun?

Thou wert not churlish in thy palmier year
 Unto the herd;
 Tenderly gav'st thou shelter to the deer,
 Home to the bird.

And ever once, the earliest of the grove,
 Thy smiles were gay,
 Opening thy blossoms with the haste of love
 To the young May.

Then did the bees, and all the insect wings,
 Around thee gleam;
 Feaster and darling of the gilded things
 That dwell i' the beam.

Thy liberal course, poor prodigal, is sped ;
How lonely now !

How bird and bee, light parasites, have fled
The leafless bough !

· Tell me, sad tree, why are thy branches bare ?
What hast thou done
To win strange winter from the summer air,
Frost from the sun ?'

· Never,' replied that forest-hermit lone,
(Old truth and endless !)
· Never for evil done, but fortune flown.
Are we left friendless.

· Yet wholly, not for winter nor for storm
Doth Love depart !
We are not all forsaken till the worm
Creeps to the heart !

· Ah. nought without, within thee if decay,
Can heal or hurt thee.
Nor boots it, if thy heart itself betray,
Who may desert thee !'

*ON THE REPERUSAL OF LETTERS
WRITTEN IN YOUTH.*



STRANGE, as when vaguely through the
autumn haze
Loom the pale scenes last view'd in
summer skies,
Out from the mist the thoughts of sunny days
And golden youth arise.

Were ye, in truth, my thoughts?—along the years
Flies back the wondering and incredulous Mind,
In the still archives of lost hopes and fears
Your date and tale to find.

Gradual and slow, reweaving link to link,
Epoch, and place, and image it recalls,
And owns the thoughts it never more can think—
Dim pictures in dim halls!

Dim pictures now ; and once ye breathed and moved,
And took your life as proudly from the sun
As if immortals !—schemed, aspired, and loved,
And sunk to rest ;—sleep on !

On a past self the present self amazed
Looks, and beholds no likeness !—Canst thou see
In the pale features of the phantom raised
One trace still true to thee ?

'Twas said, 'The child is father to the man,'
By one whose world was but the shepherd's range.
What seas beyond thy vale, Arcadian,
Ebb and reflow with change ;

In the great deeps of reason, heart, and soul,
Through shine or storm still roll the tides unfailing :
Each separate globule in the restless whole
In daily airs exhaling.

Thus evermore, albeit to erring eyes,
The same wild surface dash to shore the spray,
That seeming oneness every moment dies,
Drop after drop, away.


And stern indeed would be our human fate
If life could never reconstruct its plan ;
If self could never a new self create,
And the child form'd the man.

Happy is he in whom with every year
New life is born, re-baptized in the past—
In whom each change doth but as growth appear,
The loveliest change the last !

Full many a sun shall vanish from the skies,
And still the aloe show but leaves of thorn ;
Leaf upon leaf, and thorn on thorn, arise,
And lo—the flower is born !

THE DESIRE OF FAME.

WRITTEN AT THE AGE OF THIRTY.



DO confess that I have wish'd to give
 My land the gift of no ignoble name,
 And seen that life, of which the memories live,
 Glass'd in the dreams of fame.

Do I lament that roseate youth has flown
 In the hard labour grudged its niggard meed,
 And cull from far and juster lands alone
 Few flowers from many a seed ?

No ! for whoever with an earnest soul
 Strives for some end from this low world afar,
 Still upward travels, though he miss the goal,
 And strays—but towards a star.

Better than fame is still the wish for fame,
 The constant training for a glorious strife :
 The athlete nurtured for the Olympian Game
 Gains strength, at least, for life.

The wish for Fame is faith in holy things
That soothe the life, and shall outlive the tomb—
A reverent listening for some angel wings
That cover above the gloom.

To gladden earth with beauty, or men's lives
To serve with action, or their souls with truth—
These are the ends for which the hope survives
The ignobler thirsts of youth.

No, I lament not, though these leaves may fall
From the sered branches on the desert plain,
Mock'd by the idle winds that waft ; and all
Life's blooms, its last, in vain !

If vain for others, not in vain for me—
Who builds an altar let him worship there ;
What needs the crowd ? though lone the shrine may be,
Not hallow'd less the prayer.

Eno' if haply in the after days,
When by the altar sleeps the funeral stone,
When gone the mists our human passions raise,
And Truth is seen alone :

When causeless Hate can wound its prey no more,
And fawns its late repentance o'er the dead,
If gentle footsteps from some kindlier shore
Pause by my narrow bed.

Or if yon children, whose young sounds of glee
Float to mine ear the evening gales along,
Recall some echo, in their years to be,
Of not all-perish'd song!

Taking some spark to glad the hearth, or light
The student lamp, from now neglected fires—
And one sad memory in the sons requite
What—I forgive the sires.

THE LOYALTY OF LOVE.

LOVE thee, I love thee ;
 In vain I endeavour
 To fly from thine image ;
 It haunts me for ever.

All things that rejoiced me
 Now weary and pall ;
 I feel in thine absence
 Bereft of mine all.

My heart is the dial ;
 Thy looks are the sun ;
 I count but the moments
 Thou shinest upon.

Oh, royal, believe me,
 It is to control
 Two mighty dominions,
 The Heart and the Soul.

To know that thy whisper
 Each pang can beguile ;
And feel that creation
 Is lit by thy smile.

Yet every dominion
 Needs care to retain—
Dost thou know when thou pain'st me
 Or smile at the pain ?

Alas ! the heart-sickness,
 The doubt and the dread,
When some word that we pine for
 Cold lips have not said !

When no pulses respond to
 The feelings we prove ;
And we tremble to question
 ‘ If *this* can be love ;’

At moments comparing
 Thy heart with mine own,
I mourn not my bondage,
 I sigh for thy throne.

For if thou forsake me,
Too well I divine
That no love could defend thee
From sorrow like mine.

And this, O ungrateful,
I most should deplore—
That the heart thou hadst broken
Could shield thee no more!

A LAMENT.

STAND where I last stood with thee !

Sorrow, O sorrow !

There is not a leaf on the trysting-tree ;

There is not a joy on the earth to me ;

Sorrow, O sorrow !

When shalt thou be once again what thou wert ?

Oh, the sweet yesterdays fled from the heart !

Have they a morrow ?—

Here we stood, ere we parted, so close side by side ;

Two lives that once part are as ships that divide,

When, moment on moment, there rushes between

The one and the other, a sea ;—

Ah, never can fall from the days that have been

A gleam on the years that shall be !

LOST AND AVENGED.

GOD, give me rest from a thought !
 I cannot escape it nor brave ;
 Dread ghost of a joy that I sought
 To harrow my soul from its grave !

Farewell to the smile of the sun,
 The cheerful Religion of Trust !
 I centred my future in One,
 And wake as it crumbles to dust !

Oh, blest are the tears that are shed
 For love that was true to the last.
 The future restores us the dead,
 The false we expel from the past.

Yet, ah, when I summon my pride
 Thyself as I find thee to see,
 Again there descends to my side
 The angel I dreamt thee to be.

Again thou enchantest my ear ;
My soul hangs again on thy breath,
And murmurs that melt in a tear
Repeat, ' I am thine unto death !'

Again is the light of thine eyes
The limpid reflection of truth ;
Thy smile gives me back to the skies
That lit the ideals of youth.

Oh, is it thyself that I mourn,
Or is it that dream of my heart
Which glides from the reach of my scorn,
And soars from the clay that thou art ?

Well, go—take this comfort with thee
(I know thou art vain of thy power),
Thou hast blighted existence for me,
Thou hast left not a germ for the flower ;

My star may escape the eclipse,
The music that tuned it is o'er ;
The smile may return to my lips—
It fades from my heart evermore ;

Yet dark on thy being will fall
A shade from the wreck of my own,
Long years shalt thou sigh over all
Thou hast in a day overthrown.

For none shall exalt thee as I !
Ah, none whom thy spells may control
Shall deck thee in hues from the sky,
And breathe in thy statue his soul—

None build from the glories of song
The brighter existence above—
The realm which to poets belong—
The throne they bestow where they love.

Let earth its chill colours regain,
The moonlight depart from thy sea ;
Explore through creation in vain
The fairy-land vanish'd with me.

I take back the all I had given :
Thy charm, with my folly, is o'er ;
From the rank I assign'd thee in heaven
Descend to thy level once more.

O grief!—whether here or above,
Must my soul thus be sever'd from thine?
Ah, mourn—though I had not thy love—
The sin that bereaves thee of mine.

THE TREASURES BY THE WAYSIDE.

A TALE FOR SORROW.



HE sky was dull, the scene was wild :
 I wander'd up the mountain way ;
 And with me went a joyous child,
 The man in thought, the child at play.

My heart was sad with many a grief ;
 Mine eyes with former tears were dim ;
 The child !—a stone, a flower, a leaf,
 Had each its fairy wealth for him !

From time to time, unto my side
 He bounded back to show the treasure ;
 I was not hard enough to chide,
 Nor wise enough to share, his pleasure.

We paused at last—the child began
 Again his sullen guide to tease ;
 ‘ They say you are a learned man—
 So look, and tell me what are these ? ’

Aroused with pain, my listless eyes
 'The various spoils scarce wander o'er,
Than straight they hail a sage's prize
 In what seem'd infant toys before :

This herb was one the glorious Swede
 Had given a garden's wealth to find ;
That stone had harden'd round a weed
 The earliest deluge left behind.

Fit stores for science, Discontent
 Had pass'd unheeding on the wild ;
And Nature had her wonders lent
 As things of gladness to the child.

Thus, through the present, Sorrow goes,
 And sees its barren self alone ;
While healing in the leaflet grows,
 And time blooms back within the stone.

O THOU, so prodigal of good,
 Whose wisdom with delight is clad ;
How clear should be to Gratitude
 The golden duty—to be glad !

*ADDRESS TO THE SOUL IN
DESPONDENCY.*



O, Soul ! not in vain thou hast striven,
Unless thou abandon the strife ;
Forsworn to the banners of Heaven,
If false in the battle of life.

Why—counting the gain or the loss—
The badge of the temple assume ?
March on ! if thy sign be the Cross,
Thy triumph must be at the Tomb.

Say, doth not the soldier rejoice
If placed by his chief in the van ?
As spirit, submit to the choice
The noble would welcome as man.

‘ Farewell to the splendour of light !’
The Greek could exulting exclaim,
Resign’d to the Hades of Night,
To live in the air as A NAME.

Could he, for a future so vain,
Every pang in the present control,
Yet thou of a moment complain
In thine infinite life as a soul ?

Like thee, do not millions receive
Their chalice embitter'd with gall ?
If good be creation—believe
That good which is common to all !

In evil itself, to the glance
Of the wise, half the riddles are clear ;
Were wisdom but perfect, perchance,
The rest might in love disappear ;

The thunder that scatters the pest
May be but a type of the whole ;
And storms which have darken'd the breast
May bring but its health to the soul.

Can earth, where the harrow is driven,
The sheaf in the furrow foresee—
Or thou guess the harvest of heaven
Where iron has enter'd in thee ?

THE SABBATH.

RESH glides the brook and blows the gale,
 Yet yonder halts the quiet mill ;
 The whirring wheel, the rushing sail,
 How motionless and still !

Ah, tender was the law that gave
 This holy respite to the breast,
 To breathe the gale, to watch the wave,
 And know—the wheel may rest !

But where the waves the gentlest glide,
 What image charms, to lift, thine eyes ?
 The spire reflected on the tide
 Invites thee to the skies.

To teach the soul its nobler worth
 This rest from mortal toils is given ;
 Go, snatch the brief reprieve from earth,
 And pass—a guest to heaven.

They tell thee, in their dreaming school,
Of Power from old dominion hurl'd,
When hands shall snatch from brains the rule.
And reconstruct the world.

Alas ! since Time itself began,
That fable hath but fool'd the hour ;
Each age that ripens Power in Man,
But subjects Man to Power.

Yet every day in seven, at least,
One bright republic shall be known ;—
Man's world awhile hath surely ceased,
When God proclaims His own !

Six days ev'n Nature to the poor
Denies her careless banquet-hall ;
The seventh Her Maker opes the door,
And holds His feast for all !

Seest thou no type of after-birth
In this last day which crowns the seven ?
Fairest to those who work on earth
A Sabbath dawns in heaven.

THE HOLLOW OAK.

(FOR MUSIC.)

HOLLOW is the oak beside the sunny waters
 drooping ;
 Thither came, when I was young, happy children
 trooping ;
 Dream I now, or hear I now—far, their mellow whooping ?

Gay below the cowslip bank, see the billow dances ;
 There I lay beguiling time—when I lived romances ;
 Dropping pebbles in the wave, fancies into fancies ;—

Farther, where the river glides by the wooded cover,
 Where the lark is singing low, with the hawk above her,
 Came a foot and shone a smile—woe is me, the Lover !

Leaflets on the hollow oak still as greenly quiver,
 Musical amid the reeds murmurs on the river ;
 But the footstep and the smile ?—woe is me for ever !

LOVE AND FAME.

WRITTEN IN EARLY YOUTH.

I

Twas the May when I was born,
 Soft moonlight through the casement stream'd.
 And still as it were yestermorn
 I dream the dream I dream'd.
 I saw two forms from fairy land
 Along the moonbeam gently glide,
 Until they halted, hand in hand,
 My infant couch beside.

II

With smiles, the cradle bending o'er,
 I heard their whisper'd voices breathe—
 The one a crown of diamond wore,
 The one a myrtle wreath ;
 'Twin brothers from the better clime,
 A poet's spell hath lured to thee ;
 Say which shall, in the coming time,
 Thy chosen fairy be ?

III

I stretch'd my hand, as if my grasp
 Could snatch the toy from either brow ;
And found a leaf within my clasp,
 One leaf—as fragrant now !
If both in life may not be won,
 Be mine, at least, the gentler brother—
For he whose life deserves the one,
 In death may gain the other.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

I



INTO my heart a silent look

Flash'd from thy careless eyes,

And what before was shadow, took

The light of summer skies.

The first-born love was in that look ;

The Venus rose from out the deep

Of those inspiring eyes.

II

My life, like some lone solemn spot

A spirit passes o'er,

Grew instinct with a glory not

In earth or heaven before.

Sweet trouble stir'd the haunted spot,

And shook the leaves of every thought

Thy presence wander'd o'er !

III

My being yearn'd, and crept to thine,
As if in times of yore
Thy soul had been a part of mine,
Which claim'd it back once more.
Thy very self no longer thine,
But merged in that delicious life
Which made us ONE of yore ;

IV

There bloom'd beside thee forms as fair,
There murmur'd tones as sweet,
But round thee breathed the enchanted air
'Twas life and death to meet.
And henceforth thou alone wert fair,
And though the stars had sung for joy,
Thy whisper only sweet !

LOVE'S SUDDEN GROWTH.

I

BUT yesternorn, with many a flower
 The garden of my heart was drest ;
 A single tree has sprung to bloom,
 Whose branches cast a tender gloom
 That shadows all the rest.

II

A jealous and a tyrant tree,
 That seeks to reign alone ;
 As if the wind's melodious sighs,
 The dews and sunshine of the skies,
 Were only made for One !

III

A tree on which the Host of Dreams
 Low murmur mystic things,
 While hopes, those birds of other skies,
 To dreams themselves chant low replies—
 Ah, wherefore have they wings ?

IV

The seasons nurse the blight and storm,
The glory leaves the air—
The dreams and birds will pass away,
The blossom wither from the spray—
One day—the stem be bare—

V

But mine has grown the Dryad's life,
Coeval with the tree ;
The sun, the frost, the bloom, the fall,
My fate, sweet tree, must share them all,
To live and die with thee !

THE LOVE-LETTER.

S grains of gold that in the sands
 Of Lydian waters shine,
 The welcome sign of mountain lands
 That veil the silent mine ;

Thus may the river of my thought,
 That glideth now to thee,
 Reveal the wealth as yet unwrought,
 Which Love has heap'd in me !

So strove I to enrich the scroll
 To thy dear hands consign'd ;
 I thought to leave the lavish soul
 No golden wish behind !

Ah, fool ! to think an hour could drain
 What life can scarce explore—
 Enough, if guided by the grain,
 Thy heart should seek the ore !

THE LANGUAGE OF THE EYES.



THOSE eyes—those eyes—how full of heaven
 they are !
 When the calm twilight leaves the heaven most
 holy ;
 Tell me, sweet Eyes, from what divinest star
 Did ye drink in your liquid melancholy ?
 Tell me, beloved Eyes !

Was it from yonder orb that ever by
 The quiet moon, like Hope by Patience, hovers,
 The star to which hath sped so many a sigh,
 Since lutes in Lesbos hallow'd it to Lovers ?
 Was that your Fount, sweet Eyes ?

Ye Sibyl books, in which the truths foretold
 Inspire the heart, your dreaming priest, with gladness,
 Bright alchemists that turn to thoughts of gold
 The leaden cares ye steal away from sadness,
 Teach only me, sweet Eyes !

Hush ! when I ask ye how, at length, to gain
The cell where Love, the sleeper, yet lies hidden,
Loose not those arch lips from their rosy chain ;
Be every answer, save your own, forbidden—
Feelings are words for Eyes !

DOUBT.



RIGHT laughs the sun ; the birds, that are to air
 Like song to life, are gaily on the wing ;
 In every mead the handmaid hours prepare
 The delicates of spring ;*
 But, if she love me not !

To me at this fair season still hath been
 In every wild-flower an exhaustless treasure,
 And, when the young-eyed violet first was seen,
 Methought to breathe was pleasure ;—
 But, if she love me not !

How, in thy twilight, Doubt, at each unknown
 Dim shape, the superstitious Love will start ;
 How Hope itself will tremble at its own
 Light shadow on the heart !—
 Ah, if she love me not !

* 'The choicest delicates from yonder mead.'—*The Faithful Shepherdess.*

Well ; I will know the worst, and leave the wind
To drift or drown the venture on the wave ;
Life has two friends in grief itself most kind—
 Remembrance and the Grave—
 Mine, if she love me not.



THE ASSURANCE.

(FOR MUSIC.)



AM loved, I am loved—Jubilate !

Hark ! hark ! how the happy note swells

Peal'd from the honey-tongued fairy bells,

With which the flowers melodiously

To their banquet-halls invite the bee !—

‘ He is loved, he is loved—Jubilate !’

The echo at rest on her mountain-keep

Murmurs the sound in her broken sleep—

‘ He is loved, he is loved—Jubilate !’

And those gossips, the winds, have come to scout

What the earth is so happy about,

And they catch the sound, and circle it round—

‘ He is loved, he is loved—Jubilate !’

And the rivers, who, all the world must know,

Were in love with the stars ever since they could flow,

With a dimpled cheek and a joyous sigh,

Whisper it up to the list'ning sky,

‘ He is loved, he is loved—Jubilate !’

It is not the world that I knew before ;
Where is the gloom that its glory wore ?
Not a foe could offend, nor a friend betray,
Old Hatred hath gone to his grave to-day !
Hark ! hark ! his knell we toll,
Here's to the peace of his sinful soul !
On the earth below, in the heaven above,
Nothing is left me now but Love.
Love, Love, honour to Love,
I am loved, I am loved—Jubilate !



MEMORIES, THE FOOD OF LOVE.



WHEN shall we come to that delightful day,
When each can say to each, 'Dost thou
remember?'

Let us fill urns with rose-leaves in our May,
And hive the thrifty sweetness for December !

For who may deem the throne of love secure,
Till o'er the *Past* the conqueror spreads his reign ?
That only land where human joys endure,
That dim elysium where they live again !

Swell'd by a thousand streams the deeps that float
The bark on which we risk our all, should be.
A rill suffices for the idler's boat :
It needs an ocean for the argosy.

The heart's religion keeps, apart from time,
The sacred burial-ground of happy hours ;
The Past is holy with the haunting chime
Of dreamy Sabbath bells from distant towers.

Oft dost thou ask me, with that bashful eye.

‘ If I shall love thee evermore as now !’

Feasting as fondly on the sure reply,

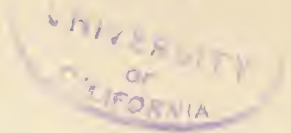
As if my lips were virgin of the vow.

Sweet does that question, ‘ Wilt thou love me !’ fall

Upon the heart that has forsworn its will :

But when the words hereafter we recall,

‘ Dost thou remember ?’ shall be sweeter still.



ABSENT, YET PRESENT.



AS the flight of a river
That flows to the sea,
My soul rushes ever
In tumult to thee.

A twofold existence
I am where thou art ;
My heart in the distance
Beats close to thy heart.

Look up, I am near thee,
I gaze on thy face ;
I see thee, I hear thee,
I feel thine embrace.

As a magnet's control on
The steel it draws to it,
Is the charm of thy soul on
The thoughts that pursue it.

And absence but brightens
The eyes that I miss,
And custom but heightens
The spell of thy kiss.

It is not from duty,
Though that may be owed—
It is not from beauty,
Though that be bestow'd ;

But all that I care for,
And all that I know,
Is that, without wherefore,
I worship thee so.

Through granite as breaketh
A tree to the ray,
As a dreamer forsaketh
The grief of the day,

My soul in its fever
Escapes unto thee ;
O dream to the griever,
O light to the tree !

A twofold existence

I am where thou art ;

Hark, hear in the distance

The beat of my heart !

LOVERS' QUARRELS.

AN OLD MAXIM REFUTED.



THEY never loved as thou and I,
 Who preach'd the laughing moral,
 That aught which deepens love can lie
 In true love's lightest quarrel.

They never knew, in times of fear,
 The safety of affection,
 Nor sought, when angry fate drew near,
 Love's altar for protection.

They never knew how kindness grows
 A vigil and a care,
 Nor watch'd beside the heart's repose
 In silence and in prayer ;

For weaker love be storms enough
 To frighten back desire ;
 We have no need of gales so rough
 To fan our steadier fire.

'Twere sweet to kiss thy tears away,
If tears those eyes must know ;
But sweeter still to hear thee say,
'Thou never badst them flow.'

The wrongful word will rankling live
When wrong itself has ceast,
And love, that all things may forgive,
Can ne'er forget the least.

If pain can not from life depart,
There's pain enough around us ;
The rose we wear upon the heart
Should have no thorn to wound us.

And hollow sounds the wildest vow,
If memory wake, the while,
The bitter taunt—the darken'd brow,
The stinging of a smile.

There is no anguish like the hour,
Whatever else befall us,
When one the heart has raised to power
Exerts it but to gall us.

Yet if—this calm too blest to last—
Some cloud, at times, must be,
I'm not so proud but I would cast
The fault alone on me.

So deeply blent with thy dear thought,
All faith in human kindness,
Methinks if thou couldst change in aught,
The only bliss were blindness.

But no—if rapture may not last,
It ne'er shall bring regret,
Nor leave one look in all the past
'Twere mercy to forget.

Repentance often finds, too late,
To wound us is to harden ;
And love is on the verge of hate
Each time it stoops for pardon.

THE LAST SEPARATION.

WE shall not rest together, love,
 When death has wrench'd my heart from thine ;
 The sun may smile thy grave above,
 When clouds are dark on mine !

I know not why, since in the tomb
 No instinct fires the silent heart—
 And yet it seems a thought of gloom,
 That even dust should part ;

That, journeying through the toilsome past,
 Thus hand in hand and side by side,
 The rest we reach should, at the last,
 The shapes we wore divide ;

That the same breezes should not sigh
 The self-same funeral boughs among—
 Nor o'er one grave, at daybreak, die
 The night-bird's lonely song !

A foolish thought ! the spirit-goal
Is not where matter wastes away ;
If soul at last regaineth soul,
What boots it where the dust decay ?

A foolish thought, yet human too !
For love is not the soul's alone :
It winds around the form we woo—
The mortal we have known !

The eyes that speak such tender truth,
The lips that every care assuage,
The hand that thrills the heart in youth,
And smoothes the couch in age ;

With these—The Human—human love
Will twine its thoughts and weave its doom,
And still confound the life above
With death beneath the tomb !

And who shall tell, in yonder skies,
What earthlier instincts we retain ;
What link, to souls released, supplies
The old material chain ?

The stars that pierced this darksome state
 May fade in that meridian shore ;
And human love, like human hate,
 Be memory—and no more !

Away the doubt ! alas, how cold
 Would all the promised heaven appear,
Did yearning love no more behold
 What made its Eden here !

But wheresoe'er the spirit flies,
 It haunts us in the shape it wore ;
We give the angel in the skies
 The mortal's smile of yore ;


Yet ah, when souls from life escape,
 Material forms no more they know ;
Not heaven itself restores the shape
 So fondly loved below !

Immortal spirits meet above ;
 But mine is still the human heart ;
And in its faithful human love,
 It mourns that dust should part !

THE BUOY.

O and fro on the water swaying
 Over the pileless ocean-grave,
 Just as lisomly lightly playing
 With the still or the stormy wave,
 Serious worth in its airy gladness,
 Sports the Buoy to the Anchor true :
 Faithless heart, wilt thou sink in sadness ?
 Rise, to tell of an anchor too.

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD AND CONDORCET.


 ED by the Graces, through a court he moved,
 'All men revered him, and all women loved ;'—
 Happier than Paris, when to *him* there came
 The three Celestials—Learning, Love, and Fame,
 He found the art to soothe them all, and see
 The Golden Apple shared amidst the Three.
 Yet he, this man, for whom the world assumed
 Each rose that in Gargettian gardens bloom'd,
 Left to mankind a legacy of all
 That from earth's sweetness can extract a gall.
 With him, indeed, poor Love is but a name—
 Virtue a mask—Beneficence a game.
 The Eternal Egotist, the Human Soul,
 Sees but in Self the starting-post and goal.
 Nipp'd in the frost of that cold, glittering air,
 High thoughts are dwarf'd, and youth's warm dreams
 despair !
 He lived in luxury, and he died in peace,
 And saints in powder wept at his decease !

Man loves this sparkling satire on himself ;—
Look round—see Rochefoucauld on every shelf !

Gaze on the other ;—Penury made him sour,
His learned youth the hireling slave of power ;
His Manhood cast amidst the stormiest time,
A hideous stage, half frenzy and all crime :—
Upon the Dungeon's floor of stone he died,
With Life's last Friend, his Horace, by his side !
Yet he—this Sage—who found the world so base,
Left what ?—His ' Progress of the Human Race.'
A golden dream of man without a sin ;
All virtue round him and all peace within !
Man does not love such portraits of himself,
And thrusts the unwelcome Flatterer from the shelf.

THE BEAUTIFUL DESCENDS NOT.

IN Cyprus, looking on the lovely sky,
 Lone by the marge of music-haunted streams,
 A youthful poet pray'd : ' Descend from high,
 Thou of whose face each youthful poet dreams.
 Once more, Urania, to the earth be given
 The beauty that makes beautiful the heaven !'

Swift to a silver cloudlet, floating o'er,
 A rushing Presence rapt him as he pray'd ;
 What he beheld I know not, but once more
 The midnight heard him sighing to the shade,
 ' Again, again unto the earth be given
 The beauty that makes beautiful the heaven.'

' In vain,' a sweet voice answer'd from the star,
 ' Her grace on thee Urania did bestow :
 Unworthy he the loftier realms afar,
 Who woos the gods above to earth below ;
 Rapt to the Beautiful thy soul must be,
 And not the Beautiful debased to thee !'

THE LONG LIFE AND THE FULL LIFE.

IMITATED FROM CLAUDIAN'S 'OLD MAN OF VERONA.'



IN mine own hamlet, where, amidst the green,
By moss-grown pales white gleaming cots
are seen,

There dwelt a peasant in his eightieth year,
Dear to my childhood—now to memory dear ;
In the same hut in which his youth had past
Dwelt his calm age, till earth received at last ;
Where first his infant footsteps tottering ran,
Propp'd on his staff crawl'd forth the hoary man ;
That quiet life no varying fates befell,
The patriarch sought no Laban's distant well ;
Of Rothschild's wealth, of Wellesley's mighty name
To that seal'd ear no faintest murmur came.
His grand event was when the barn took fire,
His world the parish, and his king the squire.
Nor clock nor kalend kept account with time,
Suns told his days, his weeks the Sabbath chime ;

His spring the jasmine silvering round his door,
And reddening apples spoke of summer o'er.
To him the orb that set o'er yonder trees,
Tired like himself, lit no antipodes ;
And the vast world of human fears and hopes
Closed to his sight where yon horizon slopes—
That beech which now o'ershadows half the way,
He saw it planted in my grandsire's day ;
Rooted alike where first they braved the weather,
He and the oaks he loved grew old together.
Not ten miles distant stands our County-hall—
To him remoter than to thee Bengal ;
And the next shire appear'd to him to be
What seas that closed on Franklin seem to thee.

Thus tranquil on that happy ignorance bore
The green old age still hearty at fourscore ;
To him, or me—with half the world explored,
And half his years—did life the more afford ?
There the grey hairs, and here the furrow'd breast !
Ask, first—is life a journey or a rest ?
If rest, old Man, long life indeed was thine ;
But if a journey—oh, how short to mine !

THE MIND AND THE HEART.

'MA VIE C'EST UN COMBAT.'



WHY, ever wringing life from art
 Do men my patient labour find?
 I still the murmur of my heart,
 My one consoler is my mind.

Though every toil but wakes the spell
 To rouse the Falsehood and the Foe,
 Can all the storms that chafe the well,
 Disturb the silent TRUTH below?

The Mind can reign in Mind alone.
 O Pride, the hollow boast confess!
 What slave would not reject a throne
 If built amidst a wilderness?

Before my gaze I see my youth,
 The ghost of gentler years, arise,
 With looks that yearn'd for every truth,
 And wings that sought the farthest skies.

Fresh from the golden land of dreams,
Before this waking world began,
How bright the radiant phantom seems
Beside the time-worn weary man !

How, then, the Heart rejoiced in all
That roused the quick aspiring Mind !
What glorious music hope could call
From every memory left behind !

Experience drew not then to earth
The looks that Fancy rear'd above,
And all that took their kindred birth
From thought or feeling—blent in love.

In vain a seraph's hand had raised
The mask from Falsehood's fatal brow ;
And still as fondly I had gazed
On looks that freeze to marble now.

Can aught that Mind bestows on toil
Replace the earlier heavenly ray,
That did but tremble o'er the soil,
To warm creation into May ?

But now, in Autumn's hollow sigh,
The heart its waning season shows,
And all the clearness of the sky
Foretells the coming of the snows.

Farewell, sweet season of the Heart,
And come, O iron rule of Mind ;
I see the Golden Age depart,
And face the war it leaves behind.

Me nevermore may Feeling thrall,
Resign'd to Reason's stoic reign—
But oh, how much of what we call
Content—is nothing but Disdain !

FOREBODINGS.



WHAT are ye ?—Strangers from the Phantom-shore ?

Lights that precede funereal destinies,
Ev'n as the spectres of the sun, before

He rises from the dearth of Arctic seas ?

What demon presence haunts the haggard air ?

What ice-wind checks the blood and lifts the hair ?

What are ye ?—‘Nightmares known not to the sane,

A sick man's sickly dreams'—the Leech replies,

Then prates he much of viscera, spleen, and brain,

And lays the Ghost with Galen ;—‘To the wise

All things are matter ;’ well, we would be taught,

Come, Leech, dissect the brain ;—Now show me *Thought* !

Shame !—to the body must the soul fulfil

A slavery thus subjected and entire ?

Must every crevice into light be still

Choked with the clod ? Each dread, and each desire

Of things unknown, be track'd unto its germ

In some crazed fibre rotting to the worm ?

Trust we the dry philosophies that sneer
Back every guess into the world of spirit,
And what were left the present to revere?
And where would fade the future we inherit?
Try Heaven and Hell by the physician's test,
And men know neither—while they well digest!

What mortal hand the airy line can draw
'Twixt Superstition in its shadowy terror
And still Religion in its starry awe?—
Truth when sublime flows least distinct from error:
Light of itself eludes our human eyes;
Let it take colour, and it spans the skies!

Doubtful Foreshadows, have ye then of yore
Never been prophets, murmuring weal or woe?
Beckoning no Sylla over seas of gore?
Warning no Julius of the fatal blow?
Seen in no mother-guise by that pale son
Who led the Mede, and sleeps in Marathon?*

The grand Earth-shakers from whose right hands war
Falls, as from Jove's the thunder, own your sway.

* Hippias, before the battle of Marathon, in which he was slain, dreamt a dream that he slept with his mother.

Gaul's sceptic Cæsar had his guardian star,
Stout Cromwell's iron creed its chosen day.
'Tis in proportion as men's lives are great,
That, fates themselves—they glass the shades of Fate.

The wisest sage the antique wisdom knew,
Gazing into blue space long silent hours,
Would commune with his Genius : as the dew
Recruits the river, so the unseen Powers
Of Nature feed with thoughts spiritual, soul—
Belief alone links knowledge to The Whole.

Hail, then, each gleam, albeit of angry skies,
Terrible never to the noble sight !
Hail the dread lightning, if it lift the eyes
Up from the dust into the Infinite !
Look through thy grate, thou saddest captive, Doubt,
And thank the flash that shows a Heaven without.

ORAMA; OR, FATE AND FREEWILL.

THIN, shadowy, scarce divided from the light.
 I saw a phantom at the birth of morn :
 Its robe was sable, but a fleecy white
 Flow'd silvering o'er the garb of gloom ; a horn
 It held within its hand ; no faintest breath
 Stirr'd its wan lips—death-like, it seem'd not Death.

My heart lay numb within me ; and the flow
 Of life, like water under icebergs, crept ;
 The pulses of my being seem'd to grow
 One awe ;—voice fled the body as it slept,
 But from its startled depth arose the soul
 And king-like spoke :—

‘What art thou, that dost seem
 To have o'er Immortality control ?’

And the Shape answer'd, not by sound,

A Dream !

A Dream, but not a Dream : the Shade of things
 To come—a herald from the throne of Fate.
 I ruled the hearts of earth's primæval kings,
 I gave their life its impulse and its date :

Grey Wisdom paled before me, and the stars
 Were made my weird interpreters—my hand
 Aroused the whirlwind of the destined wars,
 And bow'd the nations to my still command.
 A Dream, but not a Dream ;—a type, a sign,
 Pale with the Future, do I come to thee.
 The lot of Man is twofold ; gaze on thine,
 And choose thy path into eternity.'

Thus spake the Shade ; and as when autumn's haze
 Rolls from a ghostly hill, and gives to view
 The various life of troubled human days,
 So round the phantom, pale phantasma grew,
 And landscapes rose on either side the still
 River of Time, whose waves are human hours.
 'What,' said my soul, 'doth not the Omniscient Will
 Foreshape, foredoom ; if so, what choice is ours ?'
 The Ghost replied :—

 'Deem'st thou the art divine
 Less than the human ? Doth inventive Man
 All adverse means in one great end combine,
 And close each circle where the thought began,
 So that his genius, bent on schemes sublime,
 Scarce notes the obstructions to its purposed goal,
 But tunes each discord of the changeful time
 Into the music of a changeless whole ?

And deem'st thou Him who breathes, and worlds arise,
But the blind agent of His own cold law?
Fool! doth yon river less reflect the skies
Because some wavelet eddies round a straw?
Still to Man's choice is either margin given
Beside the Stream of Time to wander free:
And still, as nourish'd by the dews of Heaven,
Glides the sure river to the solemn sea.
Choose as thou wilt!

Then luminously clear
Flash'd either margin from the vapoury shade;
What I beheld unmeet for mortal ear—
Nor dare I tell the choice the mortal made.
But when the Shape had left me, and the dawn
Smote the high lattice with a star-beam pale,
As a blind man when from his sight withdrawn
The film of dark—or as unto the gale
Leaps the live war-ship from the leaden calm—
So joyous rose, look'd forth, and on to Fate
Bounded my soul! Yet nor the Olympian palm
Which fierce contenders hotly emulate,
Nor roseate blooms in Cytherean dell,
Nor laurel shadowing murmurous Helicon,
Strain'd my desire divinely visible
In the lone course it was my choice to run.



Wherefore was then my joy ?—THAT I WAS FREE !

Not my life doom'd, as I had deem'd till then,
An iron link of grim Necessity—

A sand-grain wedged amidst the walls of men ;
The good, the ill, the happiness or woe,

That waited, not a thraldom pre-decreed,
But from myself as from their germ to grow—

Let the Man suffer, still the Slave was freed !
Predestine earth, and heavenly Mercy dies ;

The voice of sorrow wastes its wail on air ;
Freewill restores the Father to the skies,

Unlocks from ice the living realm of prayer,
And gives creation what the human heart

Gives to the creature, life to life replying.
O epoch in my being, and mine art,

Known but to me !—How oft do thoughts undying,
Like rainbows, spring between the cloud and beam,
Colouring the world—yet painted on A Dream.

NARRATIVE POEMS.

NOTE.

THIS Poem was originally composed when I was a youth at College. It was first published in 1831, and though unfortunately coupled with a very jejune and puerile burlesque called 'The Siamese Twins' (which to my great satisfaction has been long since forgotten), it was honoured by a very complimentary notice in the *Edinburgh Review*, and found general favour with those who chanced to read it. In a subsequent edition, although the conception and the general structure were preserved, many passages were wholly rewritten, and the diction throughout carefully revised, and often materially altered. No doubt, however, faults of exuberance in form, as in fancy, still remain, and betray the age in which we scarcely look beyond the Spring that delights us, nor comprehend that the multitude of the blossoms can be injurious to the bearing of the tree.

It will be observed that the design of this poem is that of a picture. It is intended to portray the great Patriot Poet in the three cardinal divisions of life—Youth, Manhood and Age. The First Part is founded upon the well-known, though ill-authenticated, tradition of the Italian lady or ladies seeing Milton asleep under a tree in the gardens of his college, and leaving some tributary verses beside the sleeper. Taking full advantage of this legend, and presuming to infer from Milton's Italian verses (as his biographers have done before me) that in his tour through Italy he did not escape the influence of the master passion, I have ventured to connect, by a single thread of romantic fiction, the segments of a poem in which narrative after all is subservient to description. This idea belongs to the temerity of youth, but I trust it has been subjected to restrictions more reverent than those ordinarily imposed on poetic licence.


MILTON.

PART I.

Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eve by haunted stream.

L'ALLEGRO.

I



T was the Minstrel's merry month of June ;
Silent and sultry glow'd the breezeless noon ;
Along the flowers the bee went murmuring ;
Life in its myriad forms was on the wing ;
Play'd on the green leaves with the quiv'ring beam,
Sang from the grove, and sparkled from the stream,
When, where yon beech-tree veil'd the soft'ning ray,
On violet-banks young Milton dreaming lay.

For him the Earth below, the Heaven above,
Doubled each charm in the clear glass of youth ;
And the vague spirit of unsettled love
Roved through the visions that precede the truth,
While Poesy's low voice so hymn'd through all
That ev'n the very air was musical.

II

The sunbeam rested, where it pierced the boughs,
 On locks whose gold reflected back the gleaming ;
 On Thought's fair temple in majestic brows ;
 On Love's bright portal—lips that smiled in dreaming.

Dreams he of Nymph half hid in sparry cave ?
 Or of his own Sabrina chastely ' sitting
 Under the glassy cool translucent wave,'
 The loose train of her amber tresses knitting ?
 Or that far shadow, yet but faintly view'd,
 Where the Four Rivers take their parent springs,
 Which shall come forth from starry solitude,
 In the last days of angel-visitings,
 When, soaring upward from the nether storm,
 The Heaven of Heavens shall earthly guest receive,
 And in the long-lost Eden smile thy form,
 Fairer than all thy daughters, fairest Eve ?

III

Has the dull Earth a being to compare
 With those that haunt that spirit-world—the brain ?
 Can shapes material vie with forms of air,
 Nature with Phantasy ?—O question vain !

Lo, by the Dreamer, fresh from heavenly hands,
 Youth's dream-inspirer—Virgin Woman stands.
 She came, a stranger from the Southern skies,
 And careless o'er the cloister'd garden stray'd,
 Till, pausing, violets on the bank to cull,
 Over the Dreamer bent the Beautiful.

Silent, with lifted hand and lips apart,
 Silent she stood, and gazed away her heart.
 Like purple Mænad fruits, when down the glade
 Shoots the warm sunbeam—into darksome glow
 Light kiss'd the ringlets wreathing brows of snow ;
 And softer than the rosy hues that flush
 Her native heaven, when Tuscan morns arise,
 The sweet cheek brighten'd with the sweeter blush,
 As virgin love from out delighted eyes
 Dawn'd as Aurora dawns.

Thus look'd the maid,
 And still the sleeper dream'd beneath the shade.

Image of Soul and Love ! So Psyche crept
 To the still chamber where her Eros slept ;
 While the light gladden'd round his face serene,*
 As light doth ever—when Love first is seen.

* In the story of Cupid and Psyche, told in Apuleius, it is said that the lamp itself gladdened at the aspect of the god : 'Cujus aspectu lucernæ quoque lumen *hilaratum* increbuit.'

Felt he the touch of her dark locks descending,
 Or with his breath her breathing fused and blending,
 That, like a bird scared from the tremulous spray,
 Pass'd the light Sleep with sudden wings away?
 Sighing he woke, and waking he beheld;
 The sigh was silenced, as the look was spell'd;
 Look charming look, the love that ever lies
 In human hearts, like lightning in the air,
 Flash'd in the moment from those meeting eyes,
 And open'd all the Heaven!

O Youth, beware!

For either light should but forewarn the gaze;
 Woe follows love, as darkness doth the blaze!

IV

And their eyes met—one moment and no more;
 Moment in time that centred years in feeling.
 As when to Thetis, on her cavern'd shore,
 Knelt her young King—he rose, and murmur'd, kneeling.
 Low though the murmur, it dissolved the charm
 Which had in silence chain'd the modest feet;
 And maiden shame and woman's swift alarm
 Crimson'd her cheek and in her pulses beat:
 She turn'd, and, as a spell that leaves the place
 It fill'd with phantom beauty cold and bare,

She fled ;—and over disenchanted space
Rush'd back the common air !

v

Time waned—and thoughts intense and grave and high
With sterner truths foreshadow'd Minstrel dreams ;
Yet never vanish'd from the Minstrel's eye
That meteor blended with the morning beams.
Time waned, and ripe became the long desire,
Which, nursed in youth, with restless manhood grew
A passion—to behold that heart of Earth,
Yet trembling with the silver Mantuan lyre,
To knightly arms by Tasso tuned anew :—
So the fair Pilgrim left his father's hearth.
Into his soul he drank the lofty lore,
Floating like air around the clime of song ;
Beheld the starry sage,* what time he bore
For truth's dear glory the immortal wrong ;
Communed majestic with majestic minds ;
And all the glorious wanderer heard or saw
Or felt, or learn'd or dream'd, were as the winds
That swell'd the sails of his triumphant soul ;
As then, ev'n then, with ardour yet in awe,
It swept Time's ocean to its distant goal.

* Galileo—according to the popular legend of Milton's visit to him.

VI

It was the evening—and a group were strewn
O'er such a spot as ye, I ween, might see,
When basking in the summer's breathless noon,
With upward face beneath the drowsy tree ;
While golden dreams the willing soul receives,
And Elf-land glimmers through the checkering leaves.

It was the evening—still it lay, and fair,
Lapp'd in the quiet of the lulling air ;
Still, but how happy ! like a living thing
All love itself—all love around it seeing ;
And drinking from the earth, as from a spring,
The hush'd delight and essence of its being.
And round the spot (a wall of glossy shade)
The interlaced and bowering trees reposed ;
And through the world of foliage had been made
Green lanes and vistas, which at length were closed
By fount, or fane, or statue white and hoar,
Startling the heart with the fond dreams of yore.
And near, half-glancing through its veil of leaves,
An antique temple stood in marble grace ;
Where still, if fondly wise, the heart conceives
Faith in the lingering Genius of the Place ;

Seen wandering yet perchance at earliest dawn
Or greyest eve—with Nymph or bearded Faun.
Dainty with mosses was the grass you prest,
Through which the harmless lizard glancing crept ;
And—wearied infants on Earth's gentle breast—
In every nook the little field-flowers slept.
But ever when the soft air draws its breath
(Breeze is a word too rude), with half-heard sigh,
From orange-shrubs and myrtles—wandereth
The Grove's sweet Dryad borne in fragrance by.
And aye athwart the alleys fitfully
Glanced the fond moth enamour'd of the star ;
And aye, from out her watch-tower in the tree,
The music which a falling leaf might mar,
So faint—so faëry seem'd it—of the bird
Transform'd at Daulis thrillingly was heard.
And in the centre of that spot, which lay
A ring embosom'd in the wood's embrace,
A fountain, clear as ever glass'd the day,
Breathed yet a fresher luxury round the place ;
But now it slept, as if its silver shower,
And the wide reach of its aspiring sound,
Were far too harsh for that transparent hour :—
Yet—like a gnome that mourneth underground—
You caught the murmur of the rill which gave
The well's smooth calm the passion of its wave ;

Ev'n as man's heart that still, with secret sigh,
Stirs through each thought that would reflect the sky.

VII

And, group'd around the fountain, forms were seen,
Shaped as for courts in loving Chivalry,
Such as Boccaccio placed, 'mid alleys green,
Listening to tales in careless Fiesolè !
Dress'd as for nymphs, the classic banquet there
Was spread on grassy turfs, with coolest fruit
And drinks Falernian—while the mellow air
Heaved to the light swell of the amorous lute ;
And by the music lovers grew more bold,
And Beauty blush'd to secrets, murmuring told.

VIII

But 'mid that graceful meeting, there were none
Who yielded not to him—that English guest.
Nor by sweet lips, half wooing to be won,
Were words that thrill and smiles that sigh suppress ;
And fair with lofty brow, and locks of gold,
And manhood stately with a Dorian grace,
He seem'd like some young Spartan, when of old
The simple sons of thoughtful Hercules
On Elis stood, and look'd the lords of Greece.

Oh ! little dream'd those flatterers as they gazed
On him—the radiant cynosure of all,
While on their eyes his youth's fresh glory blazed,
What that bright heart was destined to befall !
That worst of wars—the Battle of the Soil—
Which leaves but Crime unscath'd on either side !
The daily fever and the midnight toil ;
The hope defeated, and the name belied ;
Wrath's fierce attack, and Slander's slower art,
The watchful viper of the evil tongue ;—
The sting which pride defies, but not the heart—
The noblest heart is aye the easiest wrung :
The flowers, the fruit, the summer of rich life,
Cast on the sands and weariest paths of earth ;
The march—but not the action—of the strife
Without ;—and Sorrow coil'd around his hearth :
The film, the veil, the shadow, and the night,
Along those eyes which now in all survey
A tribute and a rapture ;—the despite
Of Fortune wreak'd on his declining day ;
The clouds slow-labouring upward round his heart ;—
Oh ! little dream'd they this !—nor less what light
Should through those clouds—a new-born glory—start ;
And from the spot man's mystic father trod,
Circling the round Earth with a solemn ray,
Cast its great shadow to the Throne of God !

IX

The festive rite was o'er—the group was gone,
Yet still our wanderer linger'd there alone—
For round his eye, and in his heart, there lay
The tender spells which cleave to solitude.
Who, when some gay delight hath pass'd away,
Feels not a charmèd musing in his mood,
A poesy of thought, which yearns to pour
Still worship to the Spirit of the Hour?
Ah! they who bodied into deity
The rosy Hours, I ween, did scarcely err.
Sweet hours, ye *have* a life, and holily
That life is worn! and when no rude sounds stir
The quiet of our hearts—we inly hear
The hymn-like music of your floating voices,
Telling us mystic tidings of the sphere
Where hand in hand your linkèd choir rejoices,
And filling us with calm and solemn thought,
Diviner far than all our earth-born lore hath taught.

With folded arms and upward brow, he leant
Against the pillar of a sleeping tree;
When, hark! the still boughs rustled, and there went
A murmur and a sigh along the air,

And a light footstep, like a melody,
 Pass'd by the flowers. He turn'd;—What Nymph is there?
 What Hamadryad from the green recess
 Emerging into beauty like a star?—
 He gazed—sweet Heaven! 'tis she whose loveliness
 Had in his England's gardens first (and far
 From these delicious groves) upon him beam'd,
 And look'd to life the wonders he had dream'd.

* * * * *

X

They met again and oft! what time the Star
 Of Hesperus hung his rosy lamp on high;
 Love's earliest beacon, from our storms afar,
 Lit in the loneliest watch-tower of the sky,
 Perchance by souls that, ere this world was made,
 Were the first lovers the first stars survey'd.
 And Mystery o'er their twilight meeting threw
 The charm that nought like mystery doth bestow:
 Her name—her birth—her home he never knew;
 And she—*his* love was all she sought to know.
 And when in anxious or in tender mood
 He pray'd her to disclose at least her name,
 A look from her the unwelcome prayer subdued,
 So sad the cloud that o'er her features came:

Her lip grew blanch'd, as with an ominous fear,
 And all her heart seem'd trembling in her tear.
 So worshipp'd he in silence and sweet wonder,
 Pleased to confide, contented not to know ;
 And Hope, life's silvering moonlight, smiled asunder
 Doubts, which, like clouds, rise ever from below.
 And thus his love grew daily, and perchance
 Was all the stronger circled by romance.
 He found a name for her, if not her own,
 Haply as soft, and to her heart as dear—
 'Zoe'—name stolen from the tuneful Greek,
 It meaneth 'life,' when common lips do speak,
 And more in lips that love ;—sweet language known
 To lovers, sacred to themselves alone ;
 Words, like Egyptian symbols, set apart
 For the mysterious Priesthood of the Heart.

Creep slowly on, O charm'd reluctant Time—
 Rarely so hallow'd, Time, creep slowly on—
 Ev'n I would linger in my truant rhyme,
 Nor tell too soon how soon those hours were gone.
 Flowers bloom again—leaves glad once more the tree—
 Poor life, there comes no second Spring to thee !

PART II.

‘ Protinus insoliti subierunt corda furores,
 Uror amans intus, flammaque totus eram.
 Interea misero quæ jam mihi sola placebat
 Ablata est oculis non reditura meis.’—MILT. *Eleg.* vii.

I

WHO shall dispart the Poet's golden threads
 From the fine tissues of Philosophy?
 Mounts to one goal, each guess that *upward* leads,
 Whether it soar in some impassion'd sigh
 Or some still thought; alike, it doth but tend
 To Light that draws it heavenward. 'Tis but one
 Great law that from the violet lifts the dew
 At dawn and twilight to the amorous sun,
 Or calls the mist, which navies glimmer through,
 From the vast hush of an unfathom'd sea.

The Athenian guess'd that when our souls descend
 From some lost realm (sad aliens here to be),
 Dim broken memories of the state before
 Form what we call our 'reason;'*—nothing taught
 But all remember'd;—gleams from elder lore,
 Pallid revivals of sublimer thought,

* Plato.

Which, though by fits and dreamily recall'd,
 Make all the light our sense receives below ;
 Like the vague hues down-floating—disenthrall'd
 From their bright birthplace, the lost Iris-bow.

Is this Philosophy or Song ? Why ask ?
 How judge ?—The instant that we leave the ground
 Of the hard Positive, who saith ‘ *I know ?*’
 Conjecture, fancy, faith—’tis *these* we task,
 When Reason passes but an inch the bound
 In which our senses draw the captive’s breath.
 And never yet Philosopher severe
 Strove for a glimpse beyond the Bridge of Death,
 But straight he enter’d on that atmosphere
 Poets illumine :—Let Logic prove the Known ;
 Truths that we know not, if we would explore,
 We must imagine ! Link, then, evermore
 Together—each so desolate alone,
 O Poesy, O Knowledge !—

Is not Love,
 Of all those memories which to parent skies
 Mount struggling back—(as to their source above,
 In upward showers, imprison’d founts arise ;)
 Oh, is not Love the strongest and the clearest ?
 Love, and thine eyes instinctive seek the Heaven ;

Love, and a hymn from every star thou hearest ;
Love, and a world beyond the sense is given ;
Love, and how many a glorious sleeping power
Wakes in thy breast and lifts thyself from thee :
Love, and, till then so wedded to the Hour,
Thy thoughts go forth and ask Eternity !

Lose what thou lovest, and the life of old
Is from thine eyes, O soul, no more conceal'd ;
Look beyond Death, and through thy tears behold
There, where Love goes—thine ancient home reveal'd.

II

The lovers met in twilight and in stealth.
Like to the Roc-bird in the Orient Tale,
That builds its nest in pathless pinnacles,
And there collects and there conceals the wealth
Which paves the surface of the Diamond Vale,
Love hoards aloof the glories that it stealeth ;
And gems, but found in life's enchanted dells,
On airy heights that kiss the heaven concealeth.

All nature was a treasury which their hearts
Rifled and coin'd in passion ; the soft grass,
The bee's blue palace in the violet's bell ;

The sighing leaves which, as the day departs,
 The light breeze stirreth with a gentle swell ;
 The stiller boughs blent in one emerald mass,
 Whence, rarely floating liquid eve along,
 Some unseen linnet sent its vesper song ;
 All furnish'd them with images and words,
 And thoughts which spoke not, but lay hush'd like prayer ;
 Their love made life one melody, like birds,
 And circled earth with its own rosy air.
 What in that lovely climate doth the breast
 Interpret not into some sound of love ?
 Canst thou ev'n gaze upon the hues that rest,
 Like the god's smile, upon the pictured dream
 Limn'd on mute canvas by the golden Claude,
 Nor feel thy pulses as to music move ?
 Nor feel thy soul by some sweet presence awed ?
 Nor know that presence by its light, and deem
 The landscape breathing with a Voice Divine,
 ' Love, for the land on which ye gaze is mine ? '

III

But all round them was *life*—the *living* scene,
 The real sky, and earth, and wave, and air :
 The turf on which Egeria's steps had been,
 The shade, stream, grotto, which had known her care.

Still o'er them floated an inspiring breath—
The fragrance and the melody of song—
The legend—glory—verse—that vanquish'd death
Still through the orange glades were borne along,
And sunk into their souls to swell the hoard
Of those rich thoughts the miser Passion stored !

IV

But *they* required no fuel to the flame
Which burn'd within them, all undyingly ;
No scene to steep *their* passion in romance,
No spell from *outward* nature to enhance
The nature at their bosoms : all the same
Their love had been if cast upon a rock,
And frown'd on from the Arctic's haggard sky.
Nay, ev'n the vices and the cares, which move
Like waves o'er that foul ocean of dull life,
That rolls through cities in a sullen strife
With heaven, had raged on them, nor in the shock
Crumbled one atom from their base of love.
And, like still waters, poesy lay deep
Within the hush'd yet haunted soul of each ;
And the fair moon, and all the stars that steep
Heaven's silence and its spirit in delight,
Had with that tide a sympathy and speech !

For them there was a glory in the night,
A whisper in the forest, and the air ;
Love is the priest of Nature, and can teach
A world of mystery to the few that share,
With self-devoted faith, the wingèd Flamen's care.

v

In *each* lay poesy—for Woman's heart
Nurses the stream, unsought, and oft unseen ;
And if it flow not through the tide of art,
Nor woo the glittering daylight—you may ween
It slumbers, but not ceases ; and, if checkt
The egress of rich words, it flows in thought,
And in its silent mirror doth reflect
Whate'er Affection to its banks has brought.
This makes her love so glowing and so tender,
Dyeing it in such deep and dreamlike hues ;
Earth—Heaven—creative Genius—all that render,
In man, their wealth and homage to the muse ;
Do but, in *her*, enrich the heart, and throng
To centre there what men disperse in song.

O treasure ! which awhile the world outweighs,
That blessèd human heart Youth calls its own !
Measure the space some envied Cæsar sways
With that which stretches from the heavenly throne

Into the Infinite, and then compare
All after-conquests in the dim and dull
Bounds of the Real, with the realms that were
Youth's, when its reign was o'er the Beautiful !
He who loves nobly and is nobly loved
Is lord of the Ideal. Could it last !
It doth—it doth ! lasts mournful but unmoved,
In the still Ghost-land that reflects the Past.
Age will forget its wintry yesterday,
But not one sunbeam that rejoiced its May ;
Showing, perchance, that all which we resume
Of this hard life beyond the Funeral River,
Are the fair blossoms of the age of bloom ;
And hearts mourn most the things that live for ever.

VI

Twice glided through her course the wandering Queen,
Who rules the stars and deeps, since first they met.
'Tis eve once more, that earliest hour, serene
With the last light, before the sun hath set ;
And Zoe waits her lover on the hill,
Waits looking forth afar :—The parting ray
Of the reluctant Day-god linger'd still ;
Aslant it glinted through the pinewood boughs,
Broadly to rest upon the ruins grey
That at her feet in desolate glory lay ;

Through chasm and chink, the myrtle's glossy green,
 Votive of old to Cytherea's brows—
 Rose over wrecks, and smiled : And there, like Grief
 Close-neighbouring Love, the aloe forced between
 Myrtle with myrtle clasp'd—its barbèd leaf.
 Where Zoe stands, the Cæsar's Palace stood,
 And from that lofty terrace ye survey,
 Naked within their thunder-riven tomb,
 The bones of that dead Titaness call'd Rome.
 Beyond the Tiber, through the Latian Plain
 With many a lesser sepulchre bestrew'd,
 Mourn'd songless onward to the Tyrrhene main ;
 Around, in amphitheatre afar
 The hills lay basking in the purple sky ;
 Till all grew grey, and Maro's shepherd-star
 Look'd through the silence with a loving eye.
 And soft from silver clouds stole forth the Moon,
 Hush'd as if still she watch'd Endymion.

* * * * *

VII

They sate them on a fallen column, where
 The wild acanthus clomb the shatter'd stone,
 Mocking the sculptured mimicry—which there
 Was graven on the pillar'd pomp o'erthrown,*

* The foliage of the Corinthian capital is borrowed from the acanthus.

Flowerless, if green, the herbage type-like decks
Art that will flower not over Glory's wrecks.

'Ah, doth not Heaven seem near us when alone ?
How air and moonbeam interchange delight !
How like the homeward bird my soul hath flown
Unto its rest !—O glorious is the night,
Glorious with stars, and starry thoughts, and Thee !'
Her sweet voice paused ; then from the swelling heart
Sigh'd, 'Joy to meet, but O despair to part !'

'And wherefore part ? Out of all time to me
Thou cam'st emerging from the depth of dreams,
As rose the Venus from her native sea ;
And at thy coming, Light with all his beams
Illumed Creation's golden Jubilee.
What, if my life be wrench'd from youth too soon
To find in duty Manhood's troubled doom—
Lo, where yon star clings ever through the gloom
Fast by the labouring melancholy moon,
So shine, unsever'd from thy pilgrim's side,
And gift his soul with an immortal bride.'
Trembling she heard—no answer but a sigh—
Sighing, still trembled ; tenderly he raised
Her downcast cheek, and sought the wish'd-for eye.

On the long lashes hung slow-gathering tears :
 And that subdued, despondent thought which wears
 Woe, as a Nun the fatal funeral veil,
 Silent and self-consuming—cast its gloom
 O'er the sad face yet sadder for its bloom.
 He gazed, and felt within him as he gazed,
 His heart beneath the dire foreboding quail,
 Ev'n as the gifted melancholy seer
 Knows by his shudder when a grief is near.
 'Thou answerest not—yet my soul trusts in thee ;
 Albeit—as if for child of earth too fair,
 Thy love vouchsafed, thy life conceal'd from me,
 Nymph-like, thou comest out of starry air—
 And I, content the Beautiful to see,
 Presumed till now no hardier human prayer.
 But now the spell the hour appointed breaks,
 Now in these lips a power that thralls me speaks ;
 I seek mine England, canst thou leave thy Rome ?
 Start not—but let this hand still rest in thine ;
 Canst thou not say, "Thy home shall be my home" ?
 Canst thou not say, "Thy People shall be mine" ?'

VIII

Wildly she falter'd, starting from his breast,
 'What dost thou ask—must it all end in this ?'

Art thou not happy, Ingrate? Rest, O, rest ;
England has toil—Italia happiness !'
And as she spoke—a loftier light than pride
Flash'd from his eye, and thus the Man replied :
'Hear and approve me. In my father's land
Age-long have men, as Heathens, bow'd the knee
To the dire Statue with the sceptred hand,
Which Force enthrones for Thought's idolatry.
But now I hear the signal-sound afar,
Like the first clarion waking sleep to war,
When slumbering armies gird a doomèd town.
Dread with the whirlwind, glorious with the light,
Strong with the thunderbolt, comes rushing down
TRUTH :—Let the mountains reel beneath her might !
Vigour and health her angry wings dispense,
And speed the storm, to clear the pestilence.
For this, at morn, when through the gladd'ning air
Larks rise to heaven—arose my freeman's prayer.
For this, has Night in solemn prophet-dreams
Limn'd Time's great morrow—now its day-star gleams !
Yea, ere I loved thee, ere a sigh had ask'd
Ev'n if the love of woman were for me,
A Shape of queenlier grief than ever task'd
The votive hearts of antique Chivalry,
Born to command the sword, inspire the song,
Unveil'd her beauty, and reveal'd her wrong.

The Cause she pleads for with the world began ;
The realm torn from her is the Soul of Man—
And her great name despoil'd is—Liberty !
And now she calls me with imperial voice
Homeward o'er land and ocean to her cause ;
Sworn to her service at mine own free choice,
Shall I be recreant when the sword she draws ?'

IX

She look'd upon that brow so fair and high,
Too bright for sorrow as too bold for fear ;
She look'd upon the depth of that large eye
Whence (ev'n when lost to daylight) starry clear
Shone earth's sublimest soul ;—then tremblingly
On his young arm her gentle hand she laid,
And in the simple movement more was said
Of the weak woman's heart, than ever yet
Of that sweet mystery man's rude speech hath told.
The touch rebuked him as he thrill'd to it ;
Back to their deep the stormier passions roll'd,
And left his brow (as when the heaven above
Smiles through departing cloud) serene with love.
'Come then—companion in this path sublime ;
Link life with life, and strengthen soul with soul ;
If vain the hope that lights the onward time ;
If back to darkness fade the phantom goal ;

If Dreams, that now seem prophet-visions, be
Dreams, and no more—still let me cling to thee !
Still, seeing thee, have faith in human worth,
And feel the Beautiful yet lives for earth !
Come, though from marble domes and myrtle bowers.
Come, though to lowly roofs and northern skies ;
In its own fancies Love has regal towers,
And orient sunbeams in belovèd eyes.
Trust me, whatever fate my soul may gall,
Thou at thy woman-choice shalt ne'er repine ;
Trust me, whatever storm on me may fall,
This man's true breast shall ward the bolt from thine.
Hark, where the bird from yon dark ilex breathes
Soul into night—so be thy love to me !
Look, where around the bird the ilex wreathes
Still, sheltering boughs—so be my love to thee !
O dweller in my heart, the music thine ;
And the deep shelter—wilt thou scorn it ?—mine !'
He ceased, and drew her closer to his breast ;
Soft from the ilex sang the nightingale :
'Thy heart, O woman, in its happy rest
Hush'd a diviner tale !
And o'er her bent her lover ; and the gold
Of his rich locks with her dark tresses blended :
And still, and calm, and tenderly, the lone
And mellowing night upon their forms descended ;

And thus, amid the ghostly walls of old,
 Seen through that silvery, moonlit, lucent air,
 They seem'd not wholly of an earth-born mould,
 But suited to the memories breathing there—
 Two genii of the mix'd and tender race,
 Their charmèd homes in lonely coverts singling,
 Last of their order, doom'd to haunt the place,
 And bear sweet being interfused and mingling,
 Draw through their life the same delicious breath,
 And fade together into air in death.
 Oh! what then burn'd within her, as her fond
 And pure lips yearn'd to breathe the enduring vow!
 All was forgot, save him before her now—
 A blank, a non-existence, lay beyond—
 All was forgot—all feeling, thought, but this—
 For ever parted, or for ever his!

The voice just stirs her lip—what sound is there?
 The cleft stone sighing to the curious air?
 The night-bird rustling, or the fragment's fall,
 Soft amid weeds, from Cæsar's ruin'd wall?

* * * * * * *

From his embrace abrupt the maiden sprang
 With low wild cry despairing :—In the shade
 Of that dark tree where still the night-bird sang,
 Stood a stern image, statue-like, and made

A shadow in the shadow ;—locks of snow
 Crown'd, with the awe of age, the solemn brow ;
 Lofty its look with passionless command,
 As some old chief's of grand inhuman Rome :
 Calm from its stillness moved the beckoning hand,
 And low from rigid lips it murmur'd, ' Come !'

* * * * *

PART III.

' I argue not
 Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
 Of heart or hope, but still bear up, and steer
 Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
 The conscience, friend.'—Milton's *Sonnet to Cyriack Skinner*.

I

YEARS have flown by ;—and Strife hath raged and ceased :
 Still on the ear the halted thunder rings ;
 And still in halls, where purple tyrants feast,
 Glares the red warning to inebriate kings.
 Midnight is past : the lamp with steadfast light
 A silent cell, a mighty toil illumines ;
 And hot and lurid on the student's sight
 Flares the still ray which, like himself, consumes

Its life in gilding darkness. Damp and chill
 Gather the dews on aching temples wan,
 Wrung from the frame which fails the unconquer'd will
 In the fierce struggle between soul and man.

II

Alas ! no more to golden palaces,
 To starlit founts and dryad-haunted trees,
 The SWEET DELUSION wafts the dreamy soul ;
 But with slow step and steadfast eyes that strain,
 Dazzled and scathed, towards the far-flaming goal,
 He braved the storm, and labour'd up the plain.
 O doubtful labour, but O glorious pain !
 On the doom'd sight the gradual darkness steals.
 Bates he a jot of heart and hope ?—he feels
 But in his loss a world's eternal gain.*

Blame we or laud the Cause, all human life
 Is grander by one grand self-sacrifice ;
 While earth disputes if righteous be the strife,
 The martyr soars beyond it to the skies.

* The Council of State ordered, January 1649-50, 'That Mr. Milton do prepare something in answer to the book of Salmasius, and when he hath done itt, bring itt to the Council.' He was present, says his biographer, at the discussion which led to the order, and though warned that the loss of sight would be the certain consequence of obeying it, did so. He called to mind, to use his own image, the two destinies the oracle announced to Achilles : 'If he stay before Troy, he will return to his land no more, but have everlasting glory ; if he withdraw, long will be his life and short his fame.'

Yes, though when Freedom had her temple won
She rear'd a scaffold to obscure a shrine ;
And, by the human sacrifice of one,
Sullied the million—who could then define
The subtle tints where good and evil blend?—
There comes no rainbow when the floods descend !
Who, just escaped the chain and prison-bar,
Halts on the bridge to guess where glides the stream ;
Who plays the casuist 'mid the roar of war ;
Or in the arena builds the Academe ?
Whate'er their errors, lightly those condemn
Who, had they felt not, fought not, glow'd and err'd,
Had left us what their fathers left to them—
Either the thralldom of the passive herd
Stall'd for the shambles at the master's word,
Or the dread overleap of walls that close,
And spears that bristle :—And the last they chose.
Calm from the hills their children gaze to-day,
And breathe the airs to which they forced the way.

III

And thou, of whom I sing—what should we all,
Whate'er our state-creed, venerate in thee ?
Purpose heroic ; and majestic
Disdain of self ;—the soul in which we see

Conviction, welding, from the furnace, zeal,
Duty, the iron mainspring of the mind ;
Ardour, if fierce, yet fired for England's weal ;
And man's strong heart-throb beating for mankind.
These move our homage, doubtful though we be
If ev'n thy pen acquits the headman's steel,
When thy page cites the crownless Dead—and pleads
Defence for nations in a judgeless cause :
Judgeless, for time shall ne'er decide what deeds
Damn or absolve the hosts whom Freedom leads
O'er the pale border-land of dying laws
Into the vague world of Necessity.

IV

He lifts his look where on the lattice bar,
Through clouds fast gathering, shines a single star ;
Large on the haze of his receding sight
It spreads, and spreads, and floods all space with light ;
Nature's last glorious mournful smile on him
Ev'n while on earth so near the Seraphim.
Now from the blaze he veils with tremulous hand
The scorching eyes :—and now the starlight fades :
Midnight and cloud resettle on the Land,
And o'er her champion's vision rush the shades.

What rests to both ?—the inner light that glows
 Out from the gloom that Fate on each bestows ;
 There is no PRESENT to a hope sublime ;
 Man has eternity, and Nations time !

PART IV.

‘ Thus with the year
 Seasons return, but not to me returns
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer’s rose,
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine ;
 But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
 Surrounds me.’—*Paradise Lost*, book iii.

‘ Though fall’n on evil days,
 In darkness, and with danger compass’d round,
 And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
 Visit’st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
 Purples the east.’—*Paradise Lost*, book vii.

I

ITS gay farewell to hospitable caves
 The swallow twitter’d in the autumn heaven ;
 Dumb on the crisp earth fell the yellowing leaves,
 Or, in small eddies, fitfully were driven

Down the bleak waste of the remorseless air,
Out, from the widening gaps in dreary boughs,
Alone the laurel smiled—as freshly fair
As its own chaplet on immortal brows,
When Fame, indifferent to the changeful sun,
Sees waning races wither, and lives on.—
An old man sate before that deathless tree
Which bloom'd his humble dwelling-place beside ;
The last pale rose which lured the lingering bee
To the low porch it scanty blossom'd o'er,
Nipp'd by the frost-air had that morning died.
The clock faint-heard beyond the gaping door,
Low as a death-watch click'd the moments' knell ;
And through the narrow opening you might see
Uncertain foot-prints on the sanded floor
(Uncertain foot-prints which of blindness tell) ;
The rude oak board, the morn's untasted fare ;
The scatter'd volumes and the pillow'd chair,
In which, worn out with toil and travel past,
Life, the poor wanderer, finds repose at last.

II

The old man felt the fresh air o'er him blowing,
Waving thin locks from musing temples pale ;
Felt the quick sun through cloud and azure going,
And the light dance of leaves upon the gale,

In that mysterious symbol-change of earth
Which looks like death, though but restoring birth.
Seasons return ; for him shall not return
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn.
Whatever garb the mighty mother wore,
Nature to him was changeless evermore.—
List, not a sigh !—though fall'n on evil days,
With darkness compass'd round—those sightless eyes
Need not the sun ; nightly he sees the rays,
Nightly he walks the bowers, of Paradise,
High, pale, still, voiceless, motionless, alone,
Death-like in calm as monumental stone,
Lifting his looks into the farthest skies,
He sate : And as when some tempestuous day
Dies in the hush of the majestic eve,
So on his brow—where grief has pass'd away,
Reigns that dread stillness grief alone can leave.

III

And while he sate, nor saw, nor sigh'd—drew near
A timorous trembling step ;—from the far clime
The Pilgrim Woman came : long year on year,
In brain-sick thought that takes no heed of time,
How had she pined to gaze upon that brow
Last seen in youth, when she was young :—AND NOW !
And now ! O words that make the sepulchre

Of all our Past ! Life sheds no sadder tear
Than, when recalling what the Hours inter
Of hopes, of passions, of the things that made
Our hearts once quicken with tumultuous bliss,
We feel what worlds within ourselves can fade,
Sighing ‘ And now ! ’—Alas ! the nothingness
Even of love—had it no life but this !

IV

Thus as she stood and gazed, and noiseless wept,
Two young slight forms across the threshold crept
And reach’d the blind grey man, and kiss’d his hand,
And then a moment o’er his lips there stray’d
The old, familiar, sweet yet stately smile.
On either side the children took their stand,
And all the three were silent for awhile :
Till one, the gentler, whisper’d some soft word,
Mingling her young locks with that silvery hair ;
And the old man the child’s meek voice obey’d,
Rose—lingering yet to breathe the gladsome air,
Or catch the faint note of the neighbouring bird ;
Then leaning on the two, his head he bow’d,
And from the daylight pensive pass’d away.
Sharp swept the wind, the thrush forsook the spray,
And the poor Pilgrim wept at last aloud.

v

Hark, from within, slow and sonorous stole
Deep organ-tones, with solemn pomp of sound ;
Meet to bear upward the escaping soul
From mortal homage in material piles,
To blend with Angel Halleluiahs !—Round
The charmèd place the notes melodious roll
As with a visible flood : adown the aisles
Of Nature's first cathedrals (vistas dim,
Through leafless woodlands), far and farther float
On to the startled haunts of toiling men,
The marching music-tides : the heavenly note
Thrills through the reeking air of alleys grim ;
Awes wolf-eyed Guilt close-skulking in its den ;
Lulls Childhood, wailing with white lips for bread,
On the starved breast of nerveless Penury ;
Fever lies soothed upon its burning bed ;
Indignant Worth stills its world-weary sigh ;
The widow'd bride looks upward from the dead,
And deems she hears his welcome to the sky.
On, the grand music, more and more remote,
Bore the grey blind man's soul, itself a hymn,
Till lost in air amid the Seraphim.

VI

Our life is as a circle, and our age
Back to our youth returns at last in dreams ;
The intermediate restless pilgrimage
Vexing the earth with toils, the air with schemes,
Pays our hard tribute to the work-day world :
That done, as veers some storm-beat argosy
Back to the haven whence its sail unfurl'd,
The soul regains the first familiar shore,
And greets the quiet it disdain'd before.
He who in youth from purple poetry
Flush'd the grey clouds in this cold common sky,
After his shadeless undelusive noon,
Shall mark the roseate hues, which morning wore,
Herald the eve, and gird his setting sun ;
And the last Hesperus shine on Helicon.
O long (yet nobly, since for man) resign'd,
Nature's most sovereign, care's most soothing boon,
Again, again, with vervain fillets bind
Anointed brows—O Mage supreme of song !
Again before the enchanted crystal glass
Let the celestial phantoms glide along—
Thou, whose sweet tears yet hallow Lycidas ;

Thou, who the soul of Plato didst unsphere,
 By chaste Sabrina's beryl-paven cell !
 If now no more thou deign'st to charm the ear
 ' With measures ravish'd from Apollo's shell,'
 Re-wake the harp which mournful willows hide
 Left by the captives of Jerusalem ;
 For thou hast thought of Sion, and beside
 The streams of Babylon hast wept—like them !

VII

Aged, forsaken—to the crowd below
 (As to the Priest* who chronicled the time),
 ' *One Milton !—The blind Teacher*'—be it so !
 Neglect and ruin make but more sublime
 The last lone column which survives the dearth
 Of a lost city—when it lifts on high,
 Above the waste and solitude of earth,
 Its front : and soars, the Neighbour of the Sky.

To him a Voice floats down from every star ;
 An Angel bends from every cloud that rolls ;
 Life has no mystery from our sight more far
 Than the still joy in solemn Poet-souls.

* Burnet.

As some vast river, fresh'ning lands unknown
Where never yet a human footstep trod,
Leave the grand Song to flow majestic on,
And hymn delight, from all its waves, to God.

VIII

A death-bell ceased ;—beneath the vault were laid
A great man's bones ;—and when the rest were gone,
Veil'd, and in sable widow'd weeds array'd,
An aged woman knelt upon the stone.
Low as she pray'd, the wailing notes were sweet
With the strange music of a foreign tongue :
Thrice to that spot came feeble, feebler feet,
Thrice on that stone were humble garlands hung.
On the fourth day some formal hand in scorn
The flowers that breathed of priestcraft cast away ;
But the poor stranger came not with the morn,
And flowers forbidden deck'd no more the clay.
A heart was broken !—and a spirit fled !
Whither—let those who love and hope decide—
But in the faith that Love rejoins the dead,
The heart was broken ere the garland died.

CONSTANCE; OR, THE PORTRAIT.

PART I.

I



ON Avon's stream, in day's declining hours,
 The loitering angler sees reflected towers .
 Adown the hill the stately shadows glide.

And force their frown upon the gentle tide :
 Another shade, as stately and as slow,
 Steals down the slope and dims the peace below :
 There, side by side, your noiseless shadows fall,
 Time-wearied Lord, and time-defying hall !
 As Song's sweet Master fled the roar of Rome,
 For the Blandusian fount and Sabine home,
 A soul forsook the beaten tracks of life,
 Sought the lone bypath and escaped the strife ;
 And paused, reviving 'mid the haunts of youth,
 To conjure fancies back, or muse on truth.
 One home there is, from which, howe'er we stray,
 True as a star, the smile pursues our way ;

The home of thoughtful childhood's mystic tears,
 Of earliest Sabbath bells on sinless ears,
 Of noonday dreamings under summer trees,
 And prayers first murmur'd at a mother's knees.
 Ah! happy he, whose later home as man
 Is made where Love first spoke, and Hope began,
 Where haunted floors dear footsteps back can give,
 And in our Lares all our fathers live !

Graced with those gifts the vulgar mostly prize,
 And if used wisely, precious to the wise,
 Wealth and high lineage;—Ruthven's name was known
 Less for ancestral greatness than its own :
 With boyhood's dreams the grand desire began
 Which, nerved by labour, lifts *from* rank the man :
 Ev'n as the eye in Art's majestic halls
 Not on the frame but on the portrait falls ;
 So to each nobler life the gaze we bound,
 Nor heed what gilding clasps the picture round.

But who can guess that crisis of the soul
 When the old glory first forsakes the goal ?
 When Knowledge halts and sees but cloud before ;
 When sour'd Experience whispers ' Hope no more ;'
 When every onward footstep from our side
 Parts the slow friend or hesitating guide ;

When Envy rots the harvest in the sheaf;
When faith in virtue seems the child's belief;
And life's last music sighs itself away
On some false lip, that kiss'd but to betray?
Thus from a world that wrong'd him, self-exiled,
The man resought the birthplace of the child.
Rest comes betimes, if toil commence too soon ;
The brightest sun is stillest at the noon ;
Weary at mid-day, genius halts the course,
And hails the respite which renews the force.

II

Deep in the vale from which those towers arose,
A life more shatter'd, sought more late repose ;
In Seaton, long had men and marts obey'd
The unerring hierarch in thy temple, Trade.
Trade, the last earth-god ; whom the Olympian Power
Begot on Danaë, as the Golden Shower,
To whose young hands the weary Jove resign'd,
Some ages since, the scales that weigh mankind.
But that dire Fate, who Jove himself controll'd,
Still shakes the urn, although the lots are gold :
Reverses came, the whirlwind of a day
Swept the strong labours of a life away ;
Rased out of sight whate'er is sold or bought,
And left but name and honour—men said ' nought.'

True, knavery whisper'd, ' Only still disguise :
 Credit is generous, if you blind its eyes ;
 The borrow'd prop arrests the house's fall,
 And one rich chance may yet reconquer all.'
 There on his priest the earth-god lost control,
 And from the wreck the merchant saved his soul.
 ' Alone I rose,' he said ; ' I fall alone—
 Nor one man's ruin shall accuse mine own.'
 And so, life passing from the gorgeous stage,
 The curtain fell on Poverty and Age.

III

Yet one fair flower survived the common dearth,
 And one sweet voice gave music still to earth ;
 On Fortune's victim Nature pitying smiled ;
 ' Still rich !' the father cried, and clasp'd his child.

Beautiful Constance !—As the icy air
 Congeals the earth, to make more clear the star,
 So the meek soul look'd lovelier from thine eyes
 Through the sharp winter of the alter'd skies.
 Yet the soft child had memories unconfest,
 And griefs that wept not on a father's breast.
 In brighter days, such love as fancy knows
 (That youngest love whose couch is in the rose)

Had sent the shaft, which, when withdrawn in haste,
Leaves not a scar by which the wound is traced ;
But if it rest, more fatal grows the smart,
And deepening from the surface, gains the heart ;
In truth, young Harcourt had the gifts that please—
Wit without effort, beauty worn with ease ;
The courtier's mien to veil the miser's soul,
And that self-love which brings such self-control.
High-born, but poor, no Corydon was he
To dream of love and cots in Arcady ;
His tastes were like the Argonauts' of old,
And only pastoral if the fleece was gold.
The less men feel, the better they can feign—
To act a Romeo needs it Romeo's pain ?
No. the calm master of the *Histrion's* art
Keeps his head coolest while he storms your heart ;
Thus, our true mime no boundary overstept,
Charm'd when he smiled, and conquer'd when he wept.

Meanwhile, what pass'd the father had not guess'd,
Nor learn'd the courtship till the suit was press'd ;
Then prudence woke, and judgment, grown austere,
Join'd trade's slow caution with affection's fear,
And whisper'd this wise counsel—' Wait a year !'
In vain the lover pleaded to the maid ;
' A year soon passes,' Constance smiling said.

Just then—for Harcourt's service was the sword—
 Duty ordain'd what gentle taste abhorr'd ;
 Cursed by a country which at times forgets
 It boasts an empire where the sun ne'er sets,
 Some isle, resentful of our lax control,
 Rebels on purpose to distract his soul.
 A month had scorch'd him on that hateful shore,
 When paled those charms to which such faith he swore :
 News came that left to Constance not a grace,
 The sire's reverses changed the daughter's face ;—
 ' Oh heavens!—so handsome ! Gone in one short hour !'
 ' What,' quoth a friend, ' the Lady ?'
 ' No, the dower.'

IV

Yet still, fair Constance in her lone retreat
 Cheer'd the dull hours with faithful self-deceit ;
 What though no tidings came to brighten time,
 To doubt of Harcourt seem'd less grief than crime.
 Easier to blame the elements unkind,
 The distant clime, the ocean, and the wind,
 Think them all leagued to intercept the scroll,
 Than place distrust where soul confides in soul.
 But ever foremost in her wish was yet
 To hide remembrance lest it seem'd regret ;

That in her looks this comfort still might be,
'Father, I smile—and joy yet lives for thee !'
Thus Seaton deem'd her childish fancy flown ;
To the worn mind fresh hearts are realms unknown ;
As we live on, the finer tints of truth
Fade from the landscape.—Age is blind to youth.

PART II.

I

OFT to a creek, in Shakspeare's haunted stream,
What time the noon invites of song to dream,
Where stately pine with silver poplar weaves
The hospitable shade of amorous leaves,
And, lightly swerved by winding shores askance,
The limpid river wreathes its flying dance,
Young Constance came ; a bank with wild flowers, drest,
As for a fairy's sleep, her sylvan rest.
Behind, the woodlands, opening, left a glade,
With swards all sunshine in the midst of shade ;
Save where pale lilacs droop'd against the ray
Around the cot which meekly shunn'd the day :
But stern and high, above the deep repose
Of vale and wave, the towers of Ruthven rose ;



Like souls unshelter'd because high they are,
 The nearer heaven the more from peace afar ;
 Built by the mighty Architect, to form
 Bulwarks for man, and battle with the storm ;
 To soar and suffer with defying crest,
 And guard the humble, not partake their rest.

A lonely spot ! at times a passing oar
 Dash'd the wave quicker to the gradual shore ;
 But swift, as, when some footfall nears her lair,
 Starts the fond cushat from her tender care,
 SILENCE came back, with wings that seem'd to brood
 In watch more loving over solitude.

II

Thus Constance sate, by some sweet sorcerer's rhyme
 Charm'd into worlds beyond the marge of Time,
 When a dim shadow o'er the herbage stole,
 And light boughs stirr'd above the violet knoll ;
 In vain the shadow stole, the light bough stirr'd,
 Her sense yet spell-bound by the magic word ;
 Spell-bound no less, his steps the stranger stay'd—
 And gazed as Cymon on the sleeping Maid.
 And, oh ! that brow so angel-clear from guile,
 That child-like lip unconscious of its smile,

That virgin bloom where blushes went and came
From deeps of feeling never stir'd by shame,
Seem'd like the Una of the Poet's page
Charm'd into life by some bright Archimage.
Not till each gaudier Venus crowds adore,
And desecrate adoring—dupes no more,
Comes the true goddess, by her blushes known—
The dove her symbol, innocence her zone !
At the first glance her birth the Urania proves.
Heaven smiles, and Nature blossoms where she moves.

III

The virgin rose ; the gazer quick withdrew :
The favouring thicket closed his form from view.
Slow went she homeward up the sunlit ground ;
Unseen he follow'd, where the woodlands wound ;
The spell that first arrested now lured on,
And in that spell a frown from earth seem'd gone.
As in the languid noon of summer day
Birds fold the pinion and suspend the lay—
So hopes lie silent in the human heart
Till all at once the choirs to music start,
From the long hush rejoicing wings arise,
Sport round the blooms, or glance into the skies.

IV

She gain'd the cot ; irresolute he stood,
 Where the wall ceased amidst the circling wood,
 When voices rude and sudden jarr'd his ear,
 And thro' the din came woman's wail of fear ;
 Then all grew silent as he gain'd the door
 Which gaped ajar ;—he cross'd the threshold floor :
 Now sounds more low ;—he still pass'd on and saw,
 Track'd to its covert, Want at bay with Law.—
 The Daughter clinging to the Father's breast ;
 The Father's struggle from the clasp that press'd ;
 The hard officials, with familiar leer
 And ribald comfort barb'd with cynic sneer ;
 On these, the Lord of lavish thousands glanced,
 Law louted lowly as that Wealth advanced.
 ' And what this old Man's crime ?'—' My orders say,'
 Quoth Law, and smiled—' a debt he cannot pay !'
 Then from his child the poor proud captive broke—
 Sign'd to the door—raised moistening eyes, and spoke—
 ' I thank thee, Heaven ! that in my prosperous time
 I was not harsh to others—for this crime ;
 Sirs, I am ready !'—Ere the word was o'er,
 The parchment fell in fragments on the floor.
 ' The crime is rased !' cried Wealth.—' My Lord,' said Law
 ' I humbly thank your Lordship, and withdraw.'

v

Hat'st thou the world, O Misanthrope, austere ?
Do one kind act, and all the world grows dear !
Say'st thou—' Alas ! kind acts requited ill,
Made me loathe men ! '—I answer, ' Do them still.'
On its own wings should Good itself up-buoy ;
Rejoicing heaven, because it feels but joy.

Oft from that date did Ruthven gaily come,
Where hope, revived, with Constance found a home ;
Well did he soothe the griefs his host had known,
But well—too proud for pity—veil'd his own.
Silent, he watch'd the gentle daughter's soul,
Scann'd every charm, and peerless found the whole.
He spoke not love ; and if his looks betray'd,
The anxious Sire was wiser than the Maid.
Still, ever listening, on her lips he hung,
Hush'd when she spoke—enraptured when she sung ;
And when the hues her favourite art bestow'd,
Like a new hope from the fair fancy glow'd,
As the cold canvas with the image warms,
As from the blank start forth the breathing forms,
So would he look within him, and compare
With those mute shapes the new-born phantoms there.
Upon the mind, as on the canvas, rose
The young fresh world the Ideal only knows ;

The world of which both Art and Passion are
Builders ;—to this so near—from this so far.
What music charm'd the verse on which she gazed !—
How doubly dear the poet that she praised !
And when he spoke, and from the affluent mind
That books had stored, and intercourse refined,
Pour'd forth the treasures—still his choice address
To her mild heart what seem'd to please it best ;
And yet the maiden dream'd not that *he* loved
Who flatter'd never, and at times reproved—
Reproved—but, oh, so tenderly ! and ne'er
But for such faults as soils the purest bear ;
A trust too liberal in our common race,
Dividing scarce the noble from the base,
A sight too dazzled by the outward hues—
A sense though clear, too timid to refuse ;
Yielding the course that it would fain pursue,
Still to each guide that proffer'd it the clue ;
And that soft shrinking into self—allied,
If half to Diffidence—yet half to Pride.
He loved her, and she loved him not ; revered
His lofty nature, and in reverence fear'd.
The glorious gifts—the kingly mind she saw,
Yet seeing felt not tenderness, but awe.
And the dark beauty of his musing eye
Chill'd back the heart, from which it woo'd reply :

Harcourt—the gay—the prodigal of youth,
Still charm'd her fancy, while he chain'd her truth.

VI

Seaton, meanwhile, the heart of Ruthven read,
With hopes which robb'd the future of its dread ;
Could he but live to see his child the bride
Of one so wise, so kind, lover at once and guide !

Silent at first, at last the deeps o'erflow'd.
One eve they sate without their calm abode,
Father and Child, and mark'd the vermeil glow
Of clouds that floated where the sun set slow ;
But on the opposing towers of Ruthven shone
The last sweet splendour, and when gradual gone,
Left to the space above that grand decay
The rosiest tints, and last to fade away.
The Father mused ; then with impulsive start
Turn'd and drew Constance closer to his heart,
Murmuring—' Ah, there let but thy lot be cast,
And Fate withdraws all sadness from the past.
Blest be the storm that wreck'd us, here to find
One whom my soul had singled from mankind
If mine the palace still, and his the cot—
For that sweet prize which Fortune withers not.'

Then, rapt too fondly in his tender dream
 To note his listener, he pursues the theme.
 Pale as the dead, she hears his gladness speak,
 Sees the rare smile illumine the careworn cheek ;
 Dear if the lover in her sunny day,
 More dear the Sire since sunshine pass'd away.
 How dare to say, ' No, let thy smile depart,
 And take back sorrow from a daughter's heart ? '

VII

And while they sate, along the sward below
 Came Ruthven's stately form, and footstep slow ;
 She saw—she fled—her chamber gain'd—and there
 Sobb'd out that grief which youth believes despair.
 Thenceforth her solitude was desolate ;
 Forebodings chill'd her as a shade from Fate.
 At Ruthven's step her colour changed—and dread
 Hush'd her low voice ; such signs his hope misled.
 Hope, to its own vain dreams the idle seer,
 Whisper'd, ' First love comes veil'd in virgin fear ! '
 And now, o'er Harcourt's image, as the rust
 O'er the steel mirror, crept at length distrust.
 The ordeal year already pass'd away,
 And still no voice came o'er the dreary sea ;
 No faithful joy to cry, ' The ordeal's past,
 And, loved as ever, thou art mine at last.'

VIII

But Ruthven's absence now, if not to grief,
At least to one vague terror, gave relief :
For days, for weeks, some cause, unknown to all,
Had won the lonely master from his hall.
Much Seaton marvell'd ! half disposed to blame ;
'Gone, and no word ev'n absence to proclaim !'
When, sudden as he went, the truant came.
Franker his brow, and brighter was his look,
And with a warmer clasp his host's wan hand he took :
'Joy to thee, friend, thy race is not yet o'er,
Thy fortunes still thy genius shall restore :
Thy house from ruin reascends, to stand
Firm as of old, a column of the land.—
Joy, Seaton, joy !'—'O mock me not—Explain !
The bark once sunk beneath the obdurate main,
No tide throws up !'—'New galleons Fortune gives.
Fortune ne'er dies for him whose honour lives.'—
'Is Fortune not the usurer ?—Kind while yet
The hand that borrows may repay the debt ;
When all is lavish'd, she hath nought to lend !'
'But can she give not ? Hast thou call'd me Friend ?'
He paused, and glanced on Constance—while his breast
Heaved with the tumult which the lip repress

'Till she, escaping from her sire's embrace,
 Turn'd her soft eyes on Ruthven's downcast face,
 And, stealing towards him, her meek head she bow'd ;
 Falter'd a blessing, knelt, and wept aloud :
 ' Not there, not there, O Constance,' Ruthven cried,
 ' Here be thy place—for ever side by side !
 Thanks—and to me !—Ah no ! the boon be thine,
 Thy heart the generous, and the grateful mine.
 Oh pardon—if my soul its suit delay'd
 Till the world's dross the worldly equal made ;
 And left to thee to grant and me receive
 Man's earliest treasures—Paradise and Eve !
 Beloved one, speak ! Not mine the silver tongue,
 And toil leaves manhood nought that lures the young ;
 But in these looks is truth—these accents, love :
 And in thy faith all that survive above
 The graves of Time, as in Elysium meet !—
 Hope flies to thee as to its last retreat.'
 Speechless she heard—till, as he paused, the voice
 Of the fond sire usurp'd and doom'd the choice :
 ' May she repay thee !' In his own he drew
 Her hand and Ruthven's, smiled and join'd the two—
 ' Ah ! could I make thee happy !'—thus she said
 And ceased :—her sentence in his eyes she read—
 Eyes that the rashness of delight reveal :
 Love gave the kiss, and Fate received the seal.

PART III.

I

BETWEEN two moments in the life of man
An airy bridge divided worlds may span ;
None as the hair which sways beneath a soul
By Azrael summon'd to the spectre-goal,
Springs abrupt from that sharp point in time
Here, soft behind us in its orient clime,
Lies the lost garden-land of young Romance :
Beyond, with cloud upon the cold expanse,
Looms rugged Duty ;—and betwixt them swell
Ereosmal deeps, in which to fall were hell.
O thou, who tread'st along that trembling line,
Thy steadfast step, the onward gaze be thine !
Thy dead Memory most !—the light thou leav'st would blind,
Thy foot betrays thee if thou look behind !

If Constance yet escaped not from the past,
At least she strove :—the chain may break at last.
When veiled by smiles, Grief can so safely grieve :
Love that confides, a smile can so deceive :
And Ruthven kneeling at the altar's base
Worshipp'd not the idol which profaned the place ;

But smiles forsake when secret hours bestow
 The angry self-confessional of woe ;
 When trembling thought and stern-eyed conscience meet
 And truth rebukes ev'n duty for deceit.
 Ah ! what a world were this if all were known,
 And smiles on others track'd to tears alone !
 Oft, had he seem'd less lofty to her eye,
 Her soul had spoken and confess'd its lie :
 But sometimes natures least obscured by clay
 Shine through an awe that scares the meek away ;
 And, near as life may seem to life, alas !
 Each hath closed portals, nought but love can pass.
 Thus the resolve, in absence nursed, forsook
 Her lip, and died, abash'd, before his look ;
 His foes his virtues—honour seem'd austere,
 And all most revered most provoked the fear.

II

Pass by some weeks : to London Seaton went,
 His genius glorying in its wonted vent ;
 New props are built, and new foundations laid,
 And once more rose thy crowded temple—Trade !
 Then back the sire and daughter bent their way,
 There, where the troth was pledged, let Hymen claim the
 With Constance came a friend of earlier years,
 Partner of childhood's smiles and pangless tears ;

leaf intertwined with leaf, their youth together
ripen'd to bloom through life's first April weather.
To Juliet Constance had no care untold,
Where grief found sympathy and wept consoled ;
Where could the virgin's heart to virgin ear
Confide that sense of loss which leaves so drear
The smileless world. To youth that misses one
Whose looks were light, earth seems without a sun.
Thus would they commune, when from darkening skies,
Pale as lost joys, stars gleam'd on tearful eyes.
They guess'd not how the credulous gaze of love
Dwelt on the moon that rose their roof above.
The moon is kind to lovers ; still her beam
Heats fond Endymions ;—well, let dreamers dream.

III

Meanwhile, to England Harcourt's steps return'd,
And Seaton's new-born state the earliest news he learn'd :
What the emotions of this injured man ?
He had a friend—and thus his letter ran :
Back to this land, where merit starves obscure,
Where wisdom says, “ Be anything but poor,”
Return'd, my eyes the path to wealth explore,
And straight I hear, “ Constance is rich once more ! ”
Thou know'st, my friend, with what a dexterous craft
Escaped the cup a tenderer dupe had quaff'd ;

For in the chalice misery holds to life,
 What drop more nauseous than a dowerless wife ?
 Yet she was fair, and gentle, charming—all
 That man would make his partner at a ball !
 And, for the partner of a life, what more ?
 Plate at the board, a porter at the door !
 Cupid and Plutus, though they oft divide,
 If bound to Hymen, should walk side by side ;
 A boon companion halves the longest way—
 When Plutus join'd, I own that Love was gay ;
 But Plutus left, where Hymen did begin,
 The way look'd dreary and the god gave in :
 Now his old comrade once more is bestow'd,
 And Cupid starts refresh'd upon the road.
 " But how," thou ask'st, " how dupe again the ear,
 In which thy voice slept silent for a year ?
 And how explain, how "—Why impute to thee
 Questions whose folly thy quick glance can see ?
 Who loves is ever glad to be deceived,
 Who lies the most is still the most believed.
 Somewhat I trust to eloquence and art,
 And where these fail—thank Heaven she has a heart !
 More it disturbs me that some rumours run,
 That Constance, too, can play the faithless one ;
 That, where round pastoral meads blue streamlets purrl.
 Chloë has found a Thyrsis—in an Earl !

And oh ! that Ruthven ! Hate is not for me ;
Who loves not, hates not—both bad policy.
Yet *could* I hate, through all the earth I know
But that one man my soul would honour so.
Through ties remote—by some Scotch grand-dam's side,
We are, if scarce related, yet allied ;
And had his mother been a barren dame,
Mine were those lands, and mine that lordly name :
Nay, if he die without an heir, ev'n yet—
Oh, while I write, perchance the seal is set !
Farewell ! a letter speeds to her retreat,
The prayer that wafts her Harcourt to her feet ;
There to explain the past—his faith defend,
And claim, *et cetera*—Yours, in haste, my friend !'

IV

To Constance came a far less honest scroll ;
Yet, oh, each word seem'd vivid from the soul !
Fear, hope—reports that madden'd, yet could stir
No faith in one who ne'er could doubt of her :
Wild vows renew'd—complaints of no replies
To lines unwrit ; the eloquence of lies !
And more than all, the assurance still too dear,
Of Love surviving that long age—a year !
Such were the tidings to the maiden borne,
And—woe the day—upon her Bridal Morn !

v

It was the loving twilight's rosiest hour,
The Love-star trembled on the ivied tower,
As through the frowning archway pass'd the bride,
With Juliet, whispering courage, by her side ;
For Ruthven went before, that first of all
His voice might welcome to his father's hall :
There, on the antique walls, the lamp from high
Show'd the stern wrecks of battle-storms gone by.
Gleam'd the blue mail, indented with the glaive,
Droop'd the dull banner, breezeless, on the stave ;
Below the gothic masks, grotesque and grim,
Carved from the stonework, like a wizard's whim,
Hung the accoutrements that lent a grace
To the old warrior-pastime of the chase.
Cross-bows by hands, long dust, once deftly borne ;
The hawker's glove, the huntsman's soundless horn ;
On the huge hearth the hospitable flame
Lit the dark portrait in its mouldering frame ;
Statesmen in senates, knights in fields, renown'd,
On their new daughter ominously frown'd ;
To the young stranger, shivering to behold,
The home she enter'd seem'd the tomb of old.

VI

‘ Doth it so chill thee, Constance? Dare I own,
The charm that haunts what childhood’s years have
known,
How many dreams of fame beyond my sires,
Wing’d the proud thought that now no more aspires !
Here, while I paced, at the dusk twilight time,
As the deep church-bell toll’d the curfew chime ;
In the dim Past my spirit seem’d to live,
To every relic some weird legend give ;
And muse such hopes of glorious things to be,
As they, the Dead, mused once ;—wild dreams—fulfill’d
in thee !
Ah, never ’mid those early visions shone,
A face so sweet, my Constance, as thine own !
And what if all that charm’d me then, depart ?
Clear, through the fading mists, smiles my soft heav’n—
thy heart !
What, drooping still ! Nay, love, we are not all
So sad within, as this time-darken’d hall.
Come ! ’—and they pass’d (still Juliet by her side)
To a fair chamber, deck’d to greet the bride.
There, all of later luxury lent its smile,
To cheer, yet still beseem, the reverend pile.

What though the stately tapestry met the eyes,
Gay were its pictures, brilliant were its dyes ;
There, graceful cressets from the gilded roof,
In mirrors glass'd the landscapes of the woof.
There, in the gothic niche, the harp was placed,
There ranged the books most hallow'd by her taste ;
Through the half-open casement you might view
The sweet soil prank'd with flowers of every hue ;
And on the terrace, crowning the green mountain,
Gleam'd the fair statue, play'd the sparkling fountain :
Within, without, all plann'd, all deck'd to greet
The Queen of all—whose dowry was deceit !
Soft breathed the air, soft shone the moon above—
All, save the bride's sad heart, whispering Earth's hymn
to Love !

As Ruthven's hand sought hers, on Juliet's breast
She fell ; and passionate tears, till then suppress'd,
Gush'd from averted eyes. To him the tears
Betray'd no secret that could rouse his fears—
For joy, as grief, the tender heart will melt—
The tears but proved how well his love was felt.
And, with the delicate thought that shunn'd to hear
Thanks for the cares, which cares themselves endear,
He whisper'd, ' Linger not !' and closed the door,
And Constance sobbed, ' Thank Heaven, alone with thee
once more !'

VII

Across his threshold Ruthven lightly strode,
And his glad heart from its full deeps o'erflowed.
Pass'd is the porch—he gains the balmy air,
Still crouch the night-winds in their forest lair.
The moonlight silvers the unrustling pines,
On the hush'd lake the tremulous glory shines.
A stately shadow o'er the crystal brink,
Reflects the shy stag as it halts to drink ;
And the slow cygnet, where it midway glides,
Breaks into sparkling rings the faintly heaving tides.
Wandering along his boyhood's haunts, he mused ;
The hour, the heaven, the bliss his soul suffused ;
It seem'd all hatred from the world had flown,
And left to Nature, Love and God alone !
Ev'n holiest passion holier render'd there,
His every thought breathed gentle as a prayer.

VIII

Thus, as the eve grew mellowing into night,
Still from yon lattice stream'd the unwelcome light—
'Why loitering yet, and wherefore linger I ?'
And at that thought ev'n Nature pall'd his eye ;
He miss'd that voice, which with low music fill'd
The starry heaven of the rapt thoughts it thrill'd ;

He gain'd the hall—the lofty stair he wound—
 Behold, the door of his heart's fairy-ground !
 The tapestry veil'd him, as its folds, half-raised,
 Gave to his eye the scene on which it gazed :
 Still Constance wept—and hark what sounds are those !
 What awful secret those wild sobs disclose !—
 ' No, leave me not !—I cannot meet his eyes !
 O Heaven ! must life be ever one disguise !
 What seem'd indifference when we pledged the troth,
 Now grown—O wretch !—to terrors that but loathe !
 Oh that the earth might swallow me !' Again
 Gush forth the sobs, while Juliet soothes in vain.
 ' Nay, nay, be cheer'd—we must not more delay ;
 Cease these wild bursts till I his steps can stay ;
 No, for thy sake—for thine—I must begone.'
 She 'scaped the circling arms, and Constance wept alone.

IX

By the opposing door, from that, unseen,
 Where Ruthven stood behind the arras-screen,
 Pass'd Juliet. Suddenly the startled bride
 Look'd up, and lo, the Wrong'd One by her side !
 They gazed in silence face to face : his own,
 Sad, stern, and awful, chill'd her heart to stone.
 At length the low and hollow accents stirr'd
 His blanching lip, that writhed with every word :

‘ Hear me a moment, nor recoil to hear ;
A love so hated wounds no more thine ear.
I thank thee—I—’ His lips would not obey
His pride ; and all the manly heart gave way.
Low at his feet she fell : the alter’d course
Of grief ran deep’ning into vain remorse ;
‘ Forgive me !—O forgive !’

‘ Forgive !’ he cried,
And passion rush’d in speech, till then denied.
‘ Vile mockery ! Bid me in the desert live
Alone with treason—and then say “ Forgive !”
Thou dost not know the ruins thou hast made,
Faith in all things thy falsehood has betray’d !
Thou, the last refuge, where my baffled youth
Dream’d its safe haven, murmuring, “ Here is Truth !”
Thou in whose smile I garner’d up my breast,
Exult ! thy fraud surpasses all the rest.
No ! close, my heart—grow marble ! Human worth
Is not ; and falsehood is the name for earth !’

X

Wildly, with long disorder’d strides, he paced
The floor to feel the world indeed a waste ;
For as the earth if God were not above,
Man’s hearth without the Lares—Faith and Love !

But what his woe to hers?—for him at least
 Conscience was calm, though every hope had ceased.
 But she!—all sorrow for herself had paused,
 To live in that worse anguish she had caused :
 ‘ No, Ruthven, no ! Thy pardon not for me ;
 But oh that Heaven may shed its peace on thee !
 Oh could I merit even thy regret ;
 Oh that repentance could requite thee yet !
 Oh that a life which henceforth ne’er shall own
 One thought, one wish, one hope, but to atone—
 Obedience, honour—’

‘ These may make the wife
 A faultless statue :—love but breathes the life !
 Poor child ! Nay, weep not ; bitterer far, in truth,
 Than mine, the fate to which thou doom’st thy youth :
 For manhood’s pride the love at last may quell,
 But when could Woman with Indifference dwell ?
 No sorrow soothed, no joy enhanced since shared.
 O Heaven—the solitude thy soul has dared !
 But thou hast chosen ! Vain for each regret ;
 All that is left—to seem that we forget.
 No word of mine my wrongs shall e’er recall ;
 Thine, wealth and pomp, and reverence—take them all !
 May they console thee, Constance, for a heart
 That—but enough ! So let the loathed depart ;

These chambers thine, my step invades them not ;
Sleep, if thou canst, as in thy virgin cot.
Let the bride's hate annul the husband's claim ;
If wed, be cheer'd ; our wedlock but a name.
Much as thou scorn'st me, know this heart above
The power of beauty, when disarm'd of love.
And so, may Heaven forgive thee !'

‘ Ruthven, stay !

Generous—too noble : can no distant day
Win thy forgiveness also, and restore
Thy trust, thy friendship, ev'n though love be o'er ?'
He paused a moment with a soften'd eye ;—
‘ Alas ! thou darest, while thou ask'st, reply :
If ever, Constance, that blest day should come,
When crowds can teach thee what the loss of Home ;
If ever, when with those who court thee there,
The love that chills thee now, thou canst compare,
And feel that, if thy choice thou couldst recall,
Him now unloved, thy love would choose from all—
Why then, one word, one whisper !—oh, no more—'
And, fearful of himself, he closed the door !

PART IV.

I

AH, yes, Philosopher, thy creed is true !
 'Tis our own eyes that give the rainbow's hue :
 What we call Matter, on this outer earth,
 Takes from our senses, those warm dupes, its birth.
 How fair to sinless Adam Eden smiled ;
 But sin brought tears, and Eden was a wild !

Man's soul is as an everlasting dream,
 Glassing life's fictions on a phantom stream :
 To-day, in glory all the world is clad—
 Wherefore, O Man ?—because thy heart is glad.
 To-morrow, and the self-same scene survey—
 The same ! Oh no—the pomp hath passed away !
 Wherefore the change ? Go, ask within, reply—
 Thy heart hath given its winter to the sky !
 Vainly the world revolves upon its pole ;—
 Light—Darkness—Seasons—these are in the soul !

II

'Trite truth,' thou sayest—well, if trite it be,
 Why seek we ever from ourselves to flee ?
 Pleased to deceive our sight, and loth to know
 We bear the climate with us where we go !

To that immense Bethesda, whither still
Each worse disease seeks cures for every ill ;
To that great well, in which the heart at strife
Merges its own amidst the common life—
Whatever name it take, or Public Zeal,
Or Self-Ambition, still as sure to heal—
From his sad hearth his sorrows Ruthven bore ;
Long shunn'd the strife of men, now sought once more.
Flock'd to his board the magnates of the hour
Who clasp for Fame its spectre-likeness—Power !
The busy, babbling, talking, toiling race—
The Word-besiegers of the Fortress—Place !
Waves, each on each, in sunlight hurrying on,
A moment gilded—in a moment gone ;
For Honours fool but with deluding light—
The place it glides through, *not the wave*, is bright ! *
The means, if not his ends, with these the same,
In Ruthven, Party hail'd a Leader's name !
Night after night the listening senate hung
On that roused mind, by grief to action stung !
Night after night, when action, spent and worn,
Left yet more sad the soul it had upborne ;
The sight of Home the frown of life renew'd—
The World gave fame, and Home a solitude !

* Schiller.

III

And Constance ? sever'd from a husband's side,
 No heart to cherish, and no hand to guide,
 Still, as if ev'n the very name of wife
 Drew her soul upward into loftier life,
 The solemn sense of woman's holiest tie
 Arm'd every thought against the memory.
 'Mid shatter'd Lares stood the Marriage Queen—
 As on a Roman's hearth, with marble smile serene :

New to her sight that galaxy of mind
 Which moves round men who light and guide their kind,
 Where all shine equal in their joint degrees,
 And rank's harsh outlines vanish into ease.
 As Power and Genius interchange their hues,
 So genial life the classic charm renews ;
 Some Scipio still a Terence may refine,
 Some grac'd Augustus prompt a Maro's line.
 The polish'd have their flaws, but least espied
 Amongst the polish'd is the angle pride ;
 And, howsoever Envy grudge their state,
 Their own bland laws democratise the great.

IV

Watch'd she, amid those orbs, her guardian star,
 Ruling her house of life, altho' too far

To warm her world? Alas! unhappy wife!
No Star-seer reads aright the scheme of life
If miss'd the hour in which it should be cast;
Each future starts from one point in each past.
And in the crowd was now their only meeting—
They who from crowds should so have hail'd retreating.
But in the crowd if eye encounter'd eye,
Whence came her blush, or wherefore heaved his sigh?
Ah! woe when lost the heavenly confidence,
Man's gentle right, and woman's strong defence!—
Like the frank sunflower, Household Love to day
Must ope its leaves;—what shades it, brings decay.

v

The world look'd on, and construed, as it still
Interprets all it knows not into ill.
'Man's home is sacred,' flattering proverbs say;
Yes, if you give the home to men's survey.
But if that sanctum be obscured or screen'd,
In every shadow doubt suggests a fiend:
So churchyards seen beneath a noonday sky
Are holy to the clown who saunters by;
But vex his vision by the glimmering light,
And straight the holiness expires in fright;
He hears a goblin in the whispering grass,
And cries 'Heaven save us!' at the Parson's ass!

‘ Was ever lord so newly wed so cold ?
 Poor thing !—forsaken ere a year be told !
 Doubtless some wanton—whom we know not, true,
 But those proud sinners are so wary too !
 Oh ! for the good old days—one never heard
 Of men so shocking under George the Third !’
 So ran the gossip. With the gossip came
 The brood it hatch’d—consolers to the dame.
 The soft and wily wooers, who begin,
 Through sliding pity, the smooth ways to sin.
 My lord is absent at the great debate,
 Go, soothe his lady’s unprotected state ;
 Go, gallant—go, and wish the cruel Heaven
 To thee such virtue, now so wrong’d, had given !
 Yes, round her flock’d the young world’s fairest ones,
 The soft Rose-Garden’s incense-breathing sons :
 But vernal winds rouse not the melodies
 Hid in Apollo’s lute ; nor the vague sighs
 Of fluttering triflers the still music stored
 In woman’s heart : the secret of its chord
 Is kept for him who, linking tone to tone,
 Calls music forth and claims it as his own.

VI

Now came the graver trial, though unseen
 By him who knew not where the grief had been—

He knew not that an earlier love had steel'd
Her heart to his—that curse, at least conceal'd ;
Enough of sorrow in his lonely lot—
The why, what matter ?—that she loved him not.

One night, when revel was in Ruthven's hall,
He near'd the brilliant cynosure of all :
'When the last Ruthven dies, behold his heir !'
He said ; she turn'd—O Heaven !—and Harcourt there !
Harcourt the same as when her glance he charm'd,
For surer conquest by compassion arm'd—
The same, save where a softer shadow, cast
O'er his bright looks, reflected the sad Past !
Now, when unguarded and in crowds alone,
The future dark—the household gods o'erthrown ;
Now, when those looks, that seem, the while they grieve,
Ne'er to reproach—can pity best deceive ;
The sole affection she of right can claim—
Now, Virtue, tremble not—the Tempter came !

VII

He came, resolved to triumph and avenge—
Sure of a heart whose sorrow spoke no change ;
Pleased at the thought to bind again the chain—
For they who love not still can love to reign ;

Calm in the deeper and more fell design
 To sever those whom outward fetters join—
 To watch the discord Scandal rumours round,
 Fret every sore, and fester every wound ;
 Could he but make dissension firm and sure,
 Success would render larger schemes secure ;
 ‘ Let Ruthven die but childless ! ’ ran his prayer,
 And in the lover’s sigh cold avarice prompts the heir.
 He came and daily came, and daily schemed—
 Soft, grave, and reverent, but the friend he seemed.

These distant cousins, from their earliest days,
 To different goals had trod their varying ways :
 If Ruthven oft with generous hand supplied
 What were call’d luxuries, did Shoreditch decide,
 But what no jury of Mayfair could doubt
 Are just the things life cannot live without ;
 Yet gifts are sometimes as offences view’d,
 And envy is the mean man’s gratitude ;
 And, truth to own, whate’er the one bestow’d,
 More from his own large, careless nature flow’d,
 Than through the channels tenderer sources send,
 When Favour equals—since it asks a Friend.
 But Ruthven loved not, in the days gone by,
 The cold, quick shrewdness of that stealthy eye,
 That spendthrift recklessness, which still was not
 The generous folly which itself forgot.

You love the prodigal, the miser loathe ;
Yet oft the clockwork is the same in both :
Ope but the works—the penury and excess
Chime from one point—the central selfishness :—
And though men said (for those who wear with ease
The vulgar vices, seldom much displeas),
'His follies injured but himself alone ;'
His follies spared no welfare but his own :
Mankind he deem'd the epitome of self,
And never laid that volume on the shelf.
Somewhat of this had Ruthven mark'd before—
Now he was less acute, or Harcourt more :
The first absorb'd in sorrow or in thought ;
The last in craft's smooth lessons deeper taught.
Not over-anxious to be undeceived,
Ruthven, reform in what was rot, believed ;
They held the same opinions on the state,
And were congenial—in the last debate ;
Harcourt had wish'd to join the patriot crew
Who botch our old laws with a patch of new ;
Ruthven the wish approved ; and found the seat—
And so the Cousins' union grew complete.

Well then, at board behold the constant guest,
With love as yet by eyes alone exprest :
From the past vows he dared not yet invoke
The ancient Voice ;—yet of the past he spoke.

Whene'er expected least, he seem'd to glide
 A faithful shadow to her haunted side.
 But why relate how men their victims woo?—
 He left undone no art that can undo.

VIII

And what deem'd Constance, now that, face to face,
 She could the contrast of the Portraits trace?—
 Could see the image of the soul in each
 By thought reflected on the waves of speech—
 Could listen here (as when the master's ease
 Glides with light touch along melodious keys)
 To those rich sounds which, flung to every gale,
 Genius awakes from Wisdom's music-scale ;
 And there admire when lively Fashion wound
 Its toy of small talk into jingling sound.
 Like those French trifles, elegant enough,
 Which serve at once for music and for snuff,
 Some minds there are which men you ask to dine
 Take out, wind up, and circle with the wine.
 Two tunes they boast ; this Flattery—Scandal that ;
 The one A sharp—the other Something flat :
 Such was the mind that for display and use,
 Cased in *rococo*, Harcourt could produce—
 Touch the one spring, an air that charm'd the town
 Tripp'd out and jigg'd some absent virtue down ;

Touch next the other, and the bauble plays
‘Fly from the world’ or ‘Once in happier days.’
For Flattery, when a Woman’s heart its aim,
Writes itself *Sentiment*—a prettier name.
And to be just to Harcourt and his art,
Few Lauzuns better play’d a Werter’s part ;
He dress’d it well, and Nature kindly gave
His brow the paleness and his locks the wave.
Mournful his smile, unconscious seem’d his sigh ;
You’d swear that Goethe had him in his eye.
Well these had duped when young Romance surveys
Life’s outlines—lost amid its own soft haze.
Compared with Ruthven still doth Harcourt seem
The true Hyperion of the Delian dream.
Ah, oft-times Love its own wild choice will blame,
Slip the blind bandage, yet doat on the same.
Was it thus wilful, Constance, still with thee,
Or did the reason set the fancy free ?

PART V.

I

THE later summer in that second spring
When the turf glistens with the fairy ring,
When oak and elm assume a livelier green,
And starry buds on water-flowers are seen ;

When parent nests the new-fledged goldfinch leaves,
 And earliest song in airiest meshes weaves ;
 When fields wave undulous with golden corn,
 And August fills his Amalthæan horn—
 The later summer shone on Ruthven's towers,
 And lord and wife (with guests to cheer the hours
 Not faced alone) to that grey pile return'd ;
 Harcourt with these, and Seaton, who had learn'd
 Eno' to call him from his world of strife,
 To watch that Home which makes the Woman's life.
 Not ev'n to Juliet Constance had betray'd
 Those griefs the House-gods, if they cause, should shade,
 Nor friendship now in truth the grief could share—
 A dying parent needed Juliet's care,
 In climes where Death comes soft—in Tuscan air.
 And least to Seaton would his child have shown
 One hidden wound ; her heart still spared his own.

But now the father, trembling, at her side
 Saw the smooth tempter, not the watchful guide—
 Saw through the quicksands flow each sever'd life,
 Here the cold lord and there the courted wife,
 And longed to warn and yet was silent still,
 For warning oftentimes makes more sure the ill,
 Nought hardens error like too prompt a blame,
 And virtue totters if you sap its shame ;—

Stung by his doubts came Seaton, with the rest,
His prudence watchful, and his fears suppress,
Resolved to learn what fault, if fault were there,
Had outlaw'd Constance from a husband's care,
And left the heart (the soul's frail fort) unbarr'd,
For youth to storm. 'Well age,' he sigh'd, 'shall guard.'

II

Meantime, the cheek of Constance lost its rose,
Food brought no relish, slumber no repose :
The wasted form pined hour by hour away,
But still the proud lip struggled to be gay ;
And Ruthven still the proud lip could deceive—
Yet 'tis in smiling that proud natures grieve !

III

In that old pile there was a huge square tower,
Whence look'd the warder in its days of power ;
Still, in the arch below, the eye could tell
Where on the steel-clad van the grim portcullis fell ;
And from the arrow-headed casements, deep
Sunk in the walls of the abandon'd keep,
The gaze look'd kingly in its wide command
O'er all the features of the subject land ;

From town and hamlet, copse and vale, arise
 The hundred spires of Ruthven's baronies ;
 And town and hamlet, copse and vale, around,
 Its arms of peace the gentle Avon wound.

IV

A lonely chamber in this rugged tower
 The lonely lady made her favourite bower—
 From her more brilliant chambers crept a stair,
 That, through a waste of ruin, ended there ;
 And there, unseen, unwitness'd, none intrude,
 Nor vex the spirit from the solitude.
 How, in what toil or luxury of mind,
 Could she the solace or the Lethe find ?
 Music or books ?—nay, rather, might be guess'd
 The art her maiden leisure loved the best ;
 For there the easel and the hues were brought,
 Though all unseen the fictions that they wrought.

Harcourt more bold the change in Constance made ;
 Sure, love lies hidden in that depth of shade !
 That cheek how hueless, and that eye how dim—
 ' Wherefore,' he thought and smiled, ' if not for him ?'
 More now his manner and his words, disarm'd
 Of their past craft, the anxious sire alarm'd.
 True, there was nought in Constance to reprove,
 But still what hypocrite like lawless love ?

One eve, as in the oriel's arch'd recess
Pensive he ponder'd, linking guess with guess,
Words reach'd his ear—if indistinct—yet plain
Enough to pierce the heart and chill the vein.
'Tis Constance, answering in a faltering tone
Some suit ; and what—was by the answer shown.
' Yes !—in an hour,' it said.—' Well, be it so.'—
' The place?'—' Yon keep.'—' Thou wilt not fail me?'—' No !'
'Tis said ;—she first, then Harcourt, quits the room.
' Would,' groan'd the sire, ' my child were in the tomb !'
He gasp'd for breath, the fever on his brow—
' Was it too late ?—What boots all warning now ?
If saved to-day—to-morrow, and the same
Danger and hazard ! had he spared the shame
To leave the last lost virtue but a name ?'

v

Sickening and faint, he gain'd the outer air,
Reach'd the still lake, and saw the master there ;
Listless lay Ruthven, droopingly the boughs
Veil'd from the daylight melancholy brows ;
Listless he lay, and with indifferent eye
Watch'd the wave darken as the cloud swept by.
The father bounded to the idler's side—
' Awake, cold guardian of a soul !' he cried ;
' Why, sworn to cherish, fail'st thou ev'n to guide ?'

‘ Why ? ’ echoed Ruthven’s heart—his eye shot flame—
 ‘ Dare she complain, or he presume to blame ? ’
 Thus ran the thought, he spoke not ;—silent long
 As pride kept back the angry burst of wrong.
 At length he rose, shook off the hand that prest,
 And calmly said, ‘ I listen for the rest :
 Whatever charge be in thy words convey’d,
 Speak ;—I will answer when the charge is made ! ’

VI

Like many an offspring of our Saxon clime,
 Who makes one seven-day labour-week of time,
 Who deems reprieve a sloth, repose a dearth,
 And strikes the sabbath of the soul from earth ;
 In Seaton’s life the Adam-curse was strong ;
 He loved each wind that whirl’d the sails along ;
 He loved the dust that wrapt the hurrying wheel ;
 And, form’d to act, but rarely paused to feel.
 Thus men who saw him move among mankind,
 Saw the hard purpose and the scheming mind,
 And the skill’d steering of a sober brain,
 Prudence the compass and the needle gain.
 But now, each layer of custom swept away,
 The Man’s great nature leapt into the day :
 He stretch’d his arms, and terrible and wild,
 His voice went forth—‘ I gave thee, Man, my child ;

I gave her young and innocent—a thing
Fresh from the heaven, no stain upon its wing ;
One form'd to love, and to be loved, and now
(Few moons have faded since the solemn vow)
How do I find thou hast discharged the trust ?
Account—nay, frown not—to thy God thou must.
Pale, wretched, worn, and dying: Ruthven, still
These lips should bless thee, couldst thou only kill.
But is that all ?—Death is a holy name,
Tears for the dead dishonour not !—but Shame !
O blind, to bid her every hour compare
With thine his love—with thy contempt his care !
Yea, if the lightning blast thee, I, the sire,
Tell thee thy heart of steel attracts the fire ;
Hadst thou but loved her, that meek soul I know—
Know all'—His passion falter'd in its flow ;
He paused an instant, then before the feet
Of Ruthven fell. 'Have mercy ! Save her yet !
Take back thy gold : say, did I not endure,
And can again, the burden of the poor ?
But she—the light, pride, angel, 'of my life—
God speaks in me—O husband, save thy wife !'

VII

'Save ! and from whom, old Man ?' Yet, as he spoke,
A gleam of horror on his senses broke ;

‘ From whom? What! know’st thou not who made the first,
 Though fading fancy, youth’s warm visions nurst?
 This Harcourt—this’—he stopp’d abrupt, appall’d!
 Those words how gladly had his lips recall’d;
 For at the words—the name—all life seem’d gone
 From Ruthven’s image :—as a shape of stone,
 Speechless and motionless he stood! At length
 The storm suspended burst in all its strength:
 ‘ And this to me—at last to me!’ he cried,
 ‘ Thine be the curse, who hast love to hate allied:
 Why, when my life on that one hope I cast,
 Why didst thou chain my future to her past—
 Why not a breath to say, “ She loved before;
 Pause yet to question, if the love be o’er!”
 Didst thou not know how well I loved her—how
 Worthy the altar was the holy vow,
 That in the wildest hour my suit had known,
 Hadst thou but said, ‘ Her heart is not her own,’
 Thou hadst left the chalice with a taste of sweet?
 I—I had brought the wanderer to her feet—
 Had seen those eyes through grateful softness shine,
 Nor turn’d—O God!—with loathing fear from mine;
 And from the sunshine of her happy breast
 Drawn one bright memory to console the rest!—
 But now, thy work is done—till now, methought,
 There was one plank to which the shipwreck’d caught.

Forbearance—patience might obtain at last
The distant haven—see ! the dream is past—
She loves another ! In that sentence—hark
The crowning thunder !—the last gleam is dark ;
Time's wave on wave can but the more dissever ;
The world's vast space one void—for ever and for ever !'

VIII

Humbled from all his anger, and too late
Convinced whose fault had shaped the daughter's fate.
The father heard ; and in his hands he veil'd
His face abash'd, and voice to courage fail'd :
For how excuse—and how console ? And so,
As when the tomb shuts up the ended woe,
Over that burst of anguish closed the drear
Abyss of silence—sound's chill sepulchre !
At length he dared the timorous looks to raise,
But gone the form on which he fear'd to gaze.
Calm at his feet the wave crept murmuring ;
Calm sail'd the cygnet with its folded wing ;
Gently above his head the lime-tree stir'd,
The green leaves rustling to the restless bird ;
But he who, in the beautiful of life,
Alone with him should share the heart at strife,
Had left him there to the earth's happy smile—
Ah ! if the storms within earth's calmness could beguile !

IX

With a swift step, and with disorder'd mind,
 Through which one purpose still its clue could find,
 Lord Ruthven sought his home. ' Yes, mine no more,'
 So mused his soul, ' to hope or to deplore ;
 No more to watch the heart's Aurora break
 O'er that loved face, the light of life to speak—
 No more, without a weakness that degrades,
 Can Fancy steal from Truth's eternal shades !
 Yes, we must part ! But if one holier thought
 Still guards that shrine my fated footstep sought,
 Perchance, at least, I yet her soul may save,
 And leave her this one hope—a husband's grave !'

X

Home gain'd, he asks—they tell him—her retreat :
 He winds the stairs, and midway halts to meet
 His rival passing from that mystic room,
 With a changed face, half sarcasm and half gloom.
 Writhed Ruthven's lip—his hands he clench'd ;—his breast
 Heaved with man's natural wrath ; the wrath the man sup-
 prest.
 ' Her name, at least, I will not make the gage
 Of that foul strife whose cause a husband's rage.'

So, with the calmness of his lion eye,
He glanced on Harcourt, and he pass'd him by.

XI

And now he gains, and pauses at the door—
Why beats so loud the heart so stern before ?
He nerved his pride—one effort, and 'tis o'er.
Thus, with a quiet mien, he enters :—there
Kneels Constance yonder—can she kneel in prayer ?
What object doth that meek devotion chain
In yon dark niche ? Before his steps can gain
Her side, she starts, confused, dismay'd, and pale,
And o'er the object draws the curtain veil.
But there the implements of art betray
What thus the conscience dare not give to-day.
A portrait ? whose but his, the loved and lost,
Of a sweet past the melancholy ghost ?
So Ruthven guess'd—more dark his visage grown,
And thus he spoke : ' Once more we meet alone.
Once more—be tranquil—hear me ! not to upbraid.
And not to threat, thy presence I invade ;
But if the pledge I gave thee I have kept,
If not the husband's rights the wife hath wept,
If thou hast shared whatever gifts be mine—
Wealth, honour, freedom, all unbought, been thine,

Hear me—O hear me, for thy father's sake !
 For the full heart that thy disgrace would break !
 By all thine early innocence—by all
 The woman's Eden—wither'd with her fall—
 I, whom thou hast denied the right to guide,
 Implore the daughter, not command the bride ;
 Protect—nor only from the sin and shame,
 Protect from *slander*, thine—my Mother's—name !
 For hers thou bearest now ! and in her grave
 Her name thou honourest, if thine own thou save !
 I know thou lov'st another ! Dost thou start ?
 From him, as me—the time hath come to part ;
 And ere for ever I relieve thy view—
 The one thou lov'st must be an exile too.
 Be silent still, and fear not lest my voice
 Betray thy secret—Flight shall seem *his* choice ;
 A fair excuse—a mission to some clime,
 Where—weep'st thou still ? For thee there's hope in time !
 This heart is not of iron, and the worm
 That gnaws the thought, soon ravages the form ;
 And then, perchance, thy years may run the course
 Which flows through love undarken'd by remorse.
 And now, farewell for ever !' As he spoke,
 From her cold silence with a bound she broke,
 And clasp'd his hand. ' Oh, leave me not ! or know,
 Before thou goest, the heart that wrong'd thee so,
 But wrongs no more.

- ‘No more!—Oh, spurn the lie;
Harcourt but now hath left thee! Well—deny!’
‘Yes, he hath left me!’ ‘And he urged the suit
That—but thou madden’st me! false lips, be mute!’—
‘He urged the suit—it is for ever o’er;
Dead with the folly youth’s crude fancies bore,
One word, nay less, one gesture’ (and she blush’d).
‘Struck dumb the suit, the scorn’d presumption crush’d.’—
‘What! and yon portrait curtain’d with such care?’
‘There did I point and say, “*My heart is there!*”’

Amazed, bewilderd—struggling half with fear
And half delight—his steps the curtain near.
He lifts the veil: that face—It is his own!
But not the face her later gaze had known;
Not stern, nor sad, nor cold; but in those eyes,
The wooing softness love unmix’d supplies;
The fond smile beaming the glad lips above,
Bright as when radiant with the words, ‘I love.’
An instant mute—oh, canst thou guess the rest?
The next, his Constance clinging to his breast;
All from the proud reserve, at once allied
To the girl’s modesty, the woman’s pride,
Melting in sobs and happy tears—and words
Swept into music from long-silent chords.

Then came the dear confession, full at last,
Then stream'd life's Future on the fading Past ;
And as a sudden footstep nears the door,
As a third shadow dims the threshold floor—
As Seaton, entering in his black despair,
Pauses, the tears, the joy, the heaven to share—
The happy Ruthven raised his princely head,
' Give her again—this day in truth we wed !'

And when the spring the earth's fresh glory weaves
In merry sunbeams and green quivering leaves,
A joy-bell ringing through a cloudless air
Knells Harcourt's hopes and welcomes Ruthven's heir.

EVA :

A TRUE STORY.

I

THE MAIDEN'S HOME.



COTTAGE in a peaceful vale ;
 A jasmine round the door ;
 A hill to shelter from the gale ;
 A silver brook before.

Oh, sweet the jasmine's buds of snow,
 In mornings soft with May ;
 Oh, silver-clear the waves that flow,
 Reflecting heaven, away !
 A sweeter bloom to Eva's youth
 Rejoicing Nature gave,
 And heaven was mirror'd in her truth
 More clear than on the wave.
 Oft to that lone sequester'd place
 My boyish steps would roam,
 There was a look in Eva's face
 That seem'd a smile of home.
 And oft I paused to hear at noon
 A voice that sang for glee ;

Or mark the white neck glancing down,
The book upon the knee.

II

THE IDIOT BOY.

Who stands between thee and the sun ?—
A cloud himself—the Wandering One !
A vacant wonder in the eyes—
The mind, a blank, unwritten scroll ;—
The light was in the laughing skies,
And darkness in the Idiot's soul.
He touch'd the book upon her knee—
He look'd into her gentle face—
'Thou dost not tremble, maid, to see
Poor Arthur by thy dwelling-place.
I know not why, but where I pass
The aged turn away ;
And if my shadow vex the grass,
The children cease from play.
My only playmates are the wind,
The blossom on the bough !
Why are thy looks so soft and kind ?
Thou dost not tremble—thou !'
Though none were by, she trembled not—
Too meek to wound, too good to fear him ;

And, as he linger'd on the spot,
She hid the tears that gush'd to hear him.

III

PRAYER OF ARTHUR'S FATHER.

'O Maiden !'—thus the sire begun—
 'O Maiden, do not scorn my prayer :
I have a hapless idiot son,
 To all my wealth the only heir ;
And day by day, in shine or rain,
He wanders forth, to gaze again
Upon those eyes, whose looks of kindness
Still haunt him in his world of blindness ;
A sunless world !—all arts to yield
Light to the mind from childhood seal'd
Have been explored in vain.
Few are his joys on earth ;—above,
 For every ill a cure is given—
God grant me life to cheer with love
 The wanderer's guileless path to heaven.'
He paused—his heart was full—' And now,
 What brings the suppliant father here ?
Yes, few the joys that life bestows
On him whose life is but repose—
 One night, from year to year ;—



Yet not so dark, oh maid, if thou
 Couldst let his shadow catch thy light,
Couldst to his lip that smile allow
 Which comes but at thy sight ;
Couldst (for the smile is still so rare,
 And oh, so innocent the joy !)
His presence, though it pain thee, bear,
 Nor fear the harmless idiot boy !'
Then Eva's father, from her brow
Parted the golden locks, descending
To veil the sweet face, downwards bending :—
And, pointing to the swimming eyes,
 The dew-drops glist'ning on the cheek,
'Mourner !' *the happier* father cries,
 'These tears her answer speak !'

Oh, sweet the jasmine's buds of snow,
 In mornings soft with May ;
Oh, silver-clear the waves that flow
 In summer skies away ;—
But sweeter looks of kindness seem
 O'er human trouble bow'd,
And gentle hearts reflect the beam
 Less truly than the cloud.

IV

THE YOUNG TEACHER.

Of wonders on the land and deeps
She spoke, and glories in the sky—
The Eternal life the Father keeps
For those who learn from Him to die.
So simply did the Maiden speak—
So simply and so earnestly,
You saw the light begin to break,
And Soul the Heaven to see ;
You saw how slowly, day by day,
The darksome waters caught the ray,
Confused and broken—come and gone—
The beams as yet uncertain are,
But still the billows murmur on,
And struggle for the star.

V

THE STRANGER SUITOR.

There came to Eva's maiden home
A Stranger from a sunnier clime ;
The lore that Hellas taught to Rome,
The wealth that Wisdom works from Time,

Which ever, in its ebb and flow,
 Heaves to the seeker on the shore
 The waifs of glorious wrecks below,
 The argosies of yore ;—
 Each gem that in that dark profound,
 The Past, the Student's soul can find ;
 Shone from his thought, and sparkled round
 The enchanted palace of the mind.
 In manhood's noon, his brow of pride
 Spoke will unmoved in dangers tried ;
 His was the mien which, not severe,
 Seems gently calm with conscious sway,
 And his the voice which thro' the ear
 Glides to the heart it steals away.
 Ah ! Falsehood never could deceive
 But for her gift of charm ; Truth fails
 Because she coldly says, ' Believe,'
 While Falsehood woos us—and prevails.

How trustful in the leafy June,
 She roved with him the lonely vale ;
 How trustful by the tender moon,
 She blushed to hear a tenderer tale.
 O happy Earth ! the dawn revives,
 Day after day, each drooping flower—

Time to the heart *once* only gives

The joyous Morning Hour.

To him—oh, wilt thou pledge thy youth,

For whom the world's false bloom is o'er?

My heart shall haven in thy truth,

And tempt the faithless wave no more.

In my far land, a sun more bright

Sheds rose-hues o'er a tideless sea ;

But cold the wave, and dull the light,

Without the sunshine found in thee.

Say, wilt thou come, the Stranger's bride,

To that bright land and tideless sea?

There is no sun but by thy side—

My life's whole sunshine smiles in thee !'

Her hand lay trembling on his arm,

Averted glow'd the happy face ;

A softer hue, a mightier charm,

Grew mellowing o'er the hour—the place :

Along the breathing woodlands moved

A PRESENCE dream-like and divine—

How sweet to love and be beloved,

To lean upon a heart that's thine !

Silence was o'er the earth and sky—

By silence love is answer'd best—

Her answer was the downcast eye,
 The rose-cheek pillow'd on his breast.
 What rustles through the moonlit brake ?
 What sudden spectre meets their gaze ?
 What face, the hues of life forsake,
 Gleams ghost-like in the ghostly rays ?
 You might have heard his heart that beat,
 So heaving rose its heavy swell—
No more the Idiot—at her feet,
 The Dark One, roused to reason, fell.
 Loosed the last link that thrall'd the thought,
 The lightning broke upon the blind—
 The jealous love the cure had wrought,
 The Heart, in waking, woke the Mind.

VI

THE MARRIAGE.

To and fro the bells are swinging,
 Cheerily, clearly, to and fro ;
 Gaily go the young girls, bringing
 Flowers the fairest June may know.
 Maiden, flowers that bloom'd and perish'd
 Strew'd thy path the bridal day ;
 May the hope thy soul has cherish'd,
 Bloom when these are pass'd away !

The Father's parting prayer is said,
The daughter's parting kiss is given ;
The tears a happy bride may shed,
Like dews ascend to heaven ;
And leave the earth from which they rise,
But balmier airs and rosier dyes.

VII

THE HERMIT.

Years fly ; beneath the yew-tree shade
Thy father's holy dust is laid ;
The brook glides on, the jasmine blows ;
But where art thou, the wandering wife,
And what the bliss, and what the woes,
Glass'd in the mirror-sleep of life ?
For whether life may laugh or weep,
Death the true waking—life the sleep.
None know ! afar, unheard, unseen—
The present heeds not what has been ;
This herded world together press'd,
Can miss no straggler from the rest—
Not so ! Nay, all *one* heart may find,
Where Memory lives, a saint enshrined—
Some altar-hearth, in which our shade
The Household-god of Thought is made.

Who tenants thy forsaken cot—
 Who tends thy childhood's favourite flowers—
Who wakes, from every haunted spot,
 The ghosts of buried hours ?
'Tis He whose sense was doom'd to borrow
From thee the vision and the sorrow—
To whom the reason's golden ray,
 In storms that rent the heart, was given ;
The peal that burst the clouds away
 Left clear the face of heaven !
And wealth was his, and gentle birth,
 A form in fair proportions cast ;
But lonely still he walk'd the earth—
 The Hermit of the Past.
It was not love—that dream was o'er !
 No stormy grief, no wild emotion ;
For oft, what once was love of yore,
 The memory soothes into devotion !
He bought the cot :—The garden flowers—
 The haunts his Eva's steps had trod,
Books—thought—beguiled the lonely hours,
 That flow'd in peaceful waves to God.

VIII

DESERTION.

She sits, a statue of Despair,
In that far land, by that bright sea ;
She sits, a statue of Despair,
Whose smile an angel seem'd to be—
An angel that could never die,
Its home the heaven of that blue eye !
The smile is gone for ever there—
She sits, the statue of Despair !
She knows it all—the hideous tale—
The wrong, the perjury, and the shame ;—
Before the bride had left her vale,
Another bore the nuptial name ;
Another lives to claim the hand
Whose clasp, in thrilling, had defiled :
Another lives, O God, to brand
The Bastard's curse upon her child !
ANOTHER !—through all space she saw
The face that mock'd the unwedded mother's !
In every voice she heard the Law,
That cried, 'Thou hast usurp'd another's !'
And who the horror first had told ?—
From *his* false lips in scorn it came—

‘Thy charms grow dim, my love grows cold ;
 My sails are spread—Farewell.’
 Rigid in voiceless marble there—
 Come, sculptor, come—behold Despair !

The infant woke from feverish rest—
 Its smiles she sees, its voice she hears—
 The marble melted from the breast,
 And all the Mother gush’d in tears.

IX

THE INFANT-BURIAL.

To and fro the bells are swinging,
 Heavily heaving to and fro ;
 Sadly go the mourners, bringing
 Dust to join the dust below.
 Through the church-aisle, lighted dim,
 Chanted knells the ghostly hymn,
 Dies iræ, dies illa,
 Solvat sæclum in favillâ !
 Mother ! flowers that bloom’d and perish’d,
 Strew’d thy path the bridal day ;
 Now the bud thy grief has cherish’d,
 With the rest has pass’d away !

Leaf that fadeth—bud that bloometh,
Mingled there, must wait the day
When the seed the grave entombeth
Bursts to glory from the clay.

*Dies iræ, dies illa,
Solvat sæclum in favillâ !*

Happy are the old that die,
With the sins of life repented ;
Happier he whose parting sigh
Breaks a heart, from sin prevented !
Let the earth thine infant cover
From the cares the living know ;
Happier than the guilty lover—
Memory is at rest below !
Memory, like a fiend, shall follow,
Night and day, the steps of Crime ;
Hark ! the church-bell, dull and hollow,
Shakes another sand from time !
Through the church-aisle, lighted dim,
Chanted knells the ghostly hymn ;
Hear it, False One, where thou fliest.
Shriek to hear it when thou diest—

*Dies iræ, dies illa,
Solvat sæclum in favillâ !*

X

THE RETURN.

The cottage in the peaceful vale,
The jasmine round the door,
The hill still shelters from the gale,
The brook still glides before.

Without the porch, one summer noon,
The Hermit-dweller see !
In musing silence bending down,
The book upon his knee.

Who stands between thee and the sun ?—
A cloud herself—the Wand'ring One !—
A vacant sadness in the eyes,
The mind a razed, defeatured scroll ;
The light is in the laughing skies,
And darkness, Eva, in thy soul !
The beacon shaken in the storm,
Had struggled still to gleam above
The last sad wreck of human love,
Upon the dying child to shed
One ray—extinguish'd with the dead :

O'er earth and heaven then rush'd the night !

A wandering dream, a mindless form—

A star hurl'd headlong from its height,

Guideless its course, and quench'd its light.

Yet still the native instinct stirr'd

The darkness of the breast—

She flies, as flies the wounded bird

Unto the distant nest.

O'er hill and waste, from land to land,

Her heart the faithful instinct bore ;

And there, behold the Wanderer stand

Beside her Childhood's Home once more !

XI

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

When earth is fair and winds are still,

When sunset gilds the western hill,

Oft by the porch, with jasmine sweet,

Or by the brook, with noiseless feet,

Two silent forms are seen ;

So silent they—the place so lone—

They seem like souls when life is gone,

That haunt where life has been :

And his to watch, as in the past

Her soul had watch'd his soul.

Alas ! *her* darkness waits the last,
The grave the only goal !
It is not what the leech can cure—
An erring chord, a jarring madness :
A calm so deep, it must endure—
So deep, thou scarce canst call it sadness ;
A summer night, whose shadow falls
On silent hearths in ruin'd halls.
Yet, through the gloom, she seem'd to feel
His presence like a happier air,
Close by his side she loved to steal,
As if no ill could harm her there !
And when her looks his own would seek,
Some memory seem'd to wake the sigh,
Strive for kind words she could not speak,
And bless him in the tearful eye.
O sweet the jasmine's buds of snow,
In mornings soft with May,
And silver-clear the waves that flow
To shoreless deeps away ;
But heavenward from the faithful heart
A sweeter incense stole ;—
The onward waves their source desert,
But Soul returns to Soul !

THE FAIRY BRIDE:

A TALE.*

PART I.



AND how canst thou in tourneys shine,
 Or tread the glittering festal floor?
 On chains of gold and cloth of pile,
 The looks of high-born Beauty smile;
 Nor peerless deeds, nor stainless line,
 Can lift to fame the Poor!’

His Mother spoke; and Elvar sigh’d—
 The sigh alone confess’d the truth;
 He curb’d the thoughts that gall’d the breast—
 High thoughts ill suit the russet vest;
 Yet Arthur’s Court, in all its pride,
 Ne’er saw so fair a youth.

* As the subject of this poem (written in very early youth) is suggested by one of the Fabliaux, the author has represented Arthur and Guenever according to the view of their characters taken in those French romances: a view very different from that taken in the maturer poem of ‘King Arthur,’ which may, perhaps, some day or other, be better known to the general reader than it is at present.

Far, to the forest's stillest shade,
 Sir Elvar took his lonely way ;
 Beneath an oak, whose gentle frown
 Dimm'd noon's bright eyes, he laid him down,
 And watch'd a Fount that through the glade
 Sang, sparkling up to day.

' As sunlight to the forest tree '—
 'Twas thus his murmur'd musings ran—
 ' And as amidst the sunlight's glow,
 The freshness of the fountain's flow—
 So—(ah, they never mine may be !)—
 Are gold and love to man.'

And while he spoke, a gentle air
 Seem'd stirring through the crystal tides ;
 A gleam, at first both dim and bright,
 Trembled to shape, in limbs of light,
 Gilded to sunbeams by the hair
 That glances where it glides ;*

Till, clear and clearer, upward borne,
 The Fairy of the Fountain rose :

* ' With hair that gilds the water as it glides.'—MARLOWE, *Edw. II.*

The halo quivering round her, grew
More steadfast as the shape shone through—
O sure, a second, softer Morn
The elder daylight knows !

Born from the blue of those deep eyes,
Such love its happy self betray'd
As only haunts that tender race,
With flower or fount, their dwelling-place ;—
The darling of the earth and skies
She rose—that Fairy Maid !

‘ Listen !’ she said, and wave and land
Sigh’d back her murmur, murmurously—
‘ A love more true than minstrel sings,
A wealth that mocks the pomp of kings,
To him who wins the Fairy’s hand
A Fairy’s dower shall be.

‘ But not to those can we belong
Whose sense the charms of earth allure !
If human love hath yet been thine,
Farewell—our laws forbid thee mine.
The Children of the Star and Song,
We may but bless the Pure !’

‘ Dream—lovelier far than e’er, I ween,
Entranced the glorious Merlin’s eyes—
Through childhood, to this happiest hour,
All free from human Beauty’s power,
My heart unresting still hath been
A prophet in its sighs.

‘ Though never living shape hath brought
Sweet love, that second life, to me,
Yet over earth, and through the heaven,
The thoughts that pined for love were driven :—
I see thee—and I feel I sought
Through earth and heaven for thee !’

PART II.

ASK not the Bard to lift the veil
That hides the Fairy’s bridal bower ;
If thou art young, go seek the glade,
And win thyself some fairy maid ;
And rosy lips shall tell the tale
In some enchanted hour.

‘ Farewell !’ as by the greenwood tree,
The Fairy clasp’d the Mortal’s hand—
‘ Our laws forbid thee to delay—
Not ours the life of every day !—
And man, alas ! may rarely be
The guest of Fairy-land.

· Back to thy Prince’s halls depart,
The stateliest of his stately train :
Henceforth thy wish shall be thy mine—
Each toy that gold can purchase, thine—
A fairy’s coffers are the heart
A mortal cannot drain.’

‘ Talk not of wealth—that dream is o’er !—
These sunny locks be all my gold !’
‘ Nay ! if in courts thy heart can stray
Along the fairy forest way,
Wish but to see thy bride once more—
Thy bride thou shalt behold.

‘ Yet hear the law on which must rest
Thy union with thine elfin bride ;
If ever by a word—a tone—
Thou mak’st our tender secret known,
The spell will vanish from thy breast—
The Fairy from thy side.

‘ If thou but boast to mortal ear
The meanest charm thou find’st in me,
If’—here his lips the sweet lips seal,
Low-murmuring, ‘ Love can ne’er reveal—
It cannot breathe to mortal ear
The charms it finds in thee !’

PART III.

HIGH joust, by Carduel’s ancient town,
The kingly Arthur holds to-day ;
Around their Queen, in glittering row,
The starry hosts of Beauty glow.
Smile down, ye stars, on his renown
Who bears the wreath away !

O chiefs who gird the Table Round—
O war-gems of that wondrous ring !—
Where lives the man to match the might
That lifts to song your meanest knight,
Who sees, preside on Glory’s ground,
His Lady and his King ?

What prince, as from some throne afar,
Shines onward—shining up the thron? ;
Broider'd with pearls, his mantle's fold
Flows o'er the mail emboss'd with gold ;
As rides, from cloud to cloud, a star,
The bright one rode along !

Twice fifty stalwart squires, in air
The stranger's knightly pennon bore ;
Twice fifty pages, pacing slow,
Scatter his largess as they go ;
Calm through the crowd he pass'd, and, there,
Rein'd in the lists before.

Light question in those elder days
The heralds made of birth and name.
Enough to wear the spurs of gold,
To share the pastime of the bold.
Forwards !'—their wands the Heralds raise,
And in the lists he came.

Now rouse thee, rouse thee, bold Gawaine !
Think of thy Lady's eyes above ;
Now rouse thee for thy Queen's sweet sake.
Thou peerless Lancelot of the Lake !
Vain Gawaine's might, and Lancelot's vain !—
They know no Fairy's love.

Before him swells the joyous tromp,
 He comes—the victor's wreath is won !
 Low to his Queen Sir Elvar kneels,
 The helm no more his face conceals ;
 And one pale form amidst the pomp,
 Sobs forth, ' My gallant son ! '

PART IV.

SIR ELVAR is the fairest knight
 That ever lured a lady's glance ;
 Sir Elvar is the wealthiest lord
 That sits at good King Arthur's board ;
 The bravest in the joust or fight,
 The lightest in the dance.

And never love, methinks, so blest
 As his, this weary world has known ;
 For, every night before his eyes,
 The charms that ne'er can fade arise—
 A star unseen by all the rest—
 A life for him alone.

And yet Sir Elvar is not blest—

He walks apart with brows of gloom—

The meanest knight in Arthur's hall

His lady-love may tell to all ;

He shows the flower that glads his breast—

His pride to boast its bloom !

And I who clasp the fairest form

That e'er to man's embrace was given,

Must hide the gift as if in shame !

What boots a prize we dare not name ?

The sun must shine if it would warm—

A cloud is all my heaven !'

Much proud Genevra * marvell'd, how

A knight so fair should seem so cold ;

What if a love for hope too high,

Has chain'd the lip and awed the eye ?

A second joust—and surely now

The secret shall be told.

For, *there*, alone shall ride the brave

Whose glory dwells in Beauty's fame ;

* As Guenever is often called Genevra in the French romances, the latter name is here adopted for the sake of euphony.

Each, for his lady's honour, arms—
His lance the test of rival charms.
Joy unto him whom Beauty gave
The right to gild her name !

Sir Lancelot burns to win the prize—
First in the lists his shield is seen ;
A sunflower for device he took—
' *Where'er thou shinest, turns my look.*'
So as he paced the lists, his eyes
Still sought the sun—his Queen !

' And why, Sir Elvar, loiterest thou ?—
Lives there no fair thy lance to claim ?'
No answer Elvar made the King ;
Sullen he stood without the ring.
' Forwards !' An armèd whirlwind, now,
On horse and horseman came !

And down goes princely Caradoc—
Down Tristan and stout Agrafrayn—
Unscath'd, alone, amidst the field,
Great Lancelot bears his victor-shield ;
The sunflower bright'ning through the shock,
And through that iron rain.

‘ Sound, trumpets—sound!—to South and North !

I, Lancelot of the Lake, proclaim,
That never sun and never air
Or shone or breathed on form so fair
As hers—thrice, trumpets, sound it forth !—
Our Arthur’s royal dame !’

And South and North, and West and East.

Upon the thunder-blast it flies !
Still on his steed sits Lancelot,
And even echo answers not ;
Till, as the stormy challenge ceast,
A voice was heard—‘ He lies !’

All turn’d their mute, astonish’d gaze.

To where the daring answer came,
And lo ! Sir Elvar’s haughty crest !—
Fierce on the knight the gazers press’d ;—
Their wands the sacred Heralds raise—
Genevra weeps for shame.

‘ Sir Knight,’ King Arthur smiling said,
(In smiles a king should wrath disguise),
‘ Know’st thou, in truth, a dame so fair,
Our Queen may not with her compare ?
Genevra, weep, and hide thy head—
Sir Lancelot, yield the prize.’

‘ O, grace, my liege, for surely each,
 The dame he serves, should peerless hold,
 To loyal eye and faithful breast
 The loved one is the loveliest.’
 The King replied, ‘ Not crafty speech—
 Bold deeds—excuse the bold !

‘ So name thy fair, defend her right !
 A list !—Ho, Lancelot, guard thy shield.
 Her name ?’—Sir Elvar’s visage fell :
 ‘ A vow forbids the name to tell.’
 ‘ Now out upon the recreant Knight
 Who courts, yet shuns, the field !

‘ Foul shame, were royal name disgraced
 By some light leman’s taunting smile !
 Whoe’er—so run the tourney’s laws—
 Would break a lance in Beauty’s cause,
 Must name the highborn and the chaste—
 The nameless are the vile.’

Sir Elvar glanced, where, stern and high,
 The scornful champion rein’d his steed ;
 Where, o’er the lists the seats were raised,
 And jealous dames disdainful gazed,
 He glanced, nor caught one gentle eye—
 Courts grow not friends at need :

‘ King ! I have said, and keep my vow.’

‘ Thy vow ! I pledge thee mine in turn,
Ere the third sun shall sink—or bring
A fair outshining yonder ring,
Or find mine oath as thine is now
Inflexible and stern.

‘ Thy sword, unmeet to serve the right—

Thy spurs, unfit for churls to wear,
Torn from thee ;—through the crowd, which heard
Our Lady weep at vassal’s word,
Shall hiss the hoot, ‘ Behold the knight,
Whose lips belie the fair !’

‘ Three days I give ; nor think to fly

Thy doom ; for on the rider’s steed,
Though to the farthest earth he ride,
Disgrace once mounted, clings beside ;
And Mockery’s barbèd shafts defy
Her victim’s swiftest speed.’

Far to the forest’s stillest shade,

Sir Elvar took his lonely way ;
Beneath the oak, whose gentle frown
Still dimm’d the noon, he laid him down,
And saw the Fount that through the glade
Sang sparkling up to day.

Alas ! in vain his heart adrest,
 With sighs, with prayers, his elfin bride ;—
What though the vow conceal'd the name,
Did not the boast the charms proclaim ?
The spell has vanish'd from his breast,
 The fairy from his side.

Oh, not for vulgar homage made,
 The holier beauty form'd for one ;
It asks no wreath the arm can win ;
Its lists—its world—the heart within ;
All love, if sacred, haunts the shade—
 The star shrinks from the sun !

Three days the wand'rer roved in vain ;
 Uprose the fatal dawn at last ;
The lists are set, the galleries raised,
And, scorn'd by all the eyes that gazed,
Alone he fronts the crowd again,
 And hears the sentence pass'd.

Now, as, amid the hooting scorn,
 Rude hands the hard command fulfil,
While rings the challenge—' Sun and air
Ne'er shone, ne'er breathed, on form so fair
As Arthur's Queen '—a single horn
 Came from the forest hill.

A note so distant and so lone,
And yet so sweet, it thrill'd along,
It hush'd the champion on his steed,
Startled the rude hands from their deed,
Charm'd the stern Arthur on his throne,
And still'd the shouting throng.

To North, to South, to East, and West,
They turn'd their eyes ; and o'er the plain,
On palfrey white, a Lady rode ;
As woven light her mantle glow'd,
Two lovely shapes, in azure dress'd,
Walk'd first, and led the rein.

The crowd gave way, as onward bore
That vision from the Land of Dreams ;
Veil'd was the gentle rider's face,
But not the two her path that grace.
How dim beside the charms they wore
All human beauty seems !

So to the throne the pageant came,
And thus the Fairy to the King :
' Not unto thee for ever dear,
By minstrel's song, to knighthood's ear,
Beseems the wrath that wrongs the vow
Which hallows ev'n a name.

‘ Bloom there no flowers more sweet by night ?
Come, Queen, before the judgment throne ;
Behold Sir Elvar’s nameless bride !
Now, Queen, his doom thyself decide.’
She raised her veil, and all her light
Of beauty round them shone !

The bloom, the eyes, the locks, the smile,
That never earth nor time could dim ;
Day grew more bright, and air more clear,
As heaven itself were brought more near.
And oh ! *his* joy, who felt, the while,
That light but glow’d for him !

‘ My steed, my lance, vain champion, now
To arms : and Heaven defend the right !’
Here spake the Queen, ‘ The strife is past,’
And in the lists her glove she cast,
‘ And I myself will crown thy brow,
Thou love-defended Knight !’

He comes to claim the garland crown ;
The changeful thousands shout his name ;
And faithless beauty round him smiled,
How cold, beside the Forest’s Child,
Who ask’d not love to bring renown,
And clung to love in shame !

He bears the prize to those dear feet :
 ' Not mine the guerdon : oh, not mine !'
Sadly the fated Fairy hears,
And smiles through unreproachful tears ;
' Nay, keep the flowers, and be they sweet
 When I—no more am thine !'

She lower'd the veil, she turn'd the rein,
 And ere his lips replied, was gone.
As on she went her charmèd way,
No mortal dared the steps to stay ;
And when she vanish'd from the plain
 All space seem'd left alone !

Oh, woe ! that fairy shape no more
 Shall bless thy love nor rouse thy pride !
He seeks the wood, he gains the spot :
The Tree is there, the Fountain not ;
Dried up :—its mirthful play is o'er.
 Ah, where the Fairy Bride ?

Alas ! with fairies as with men,
 Who love are victims from the birth !
A fearful doom the fairy shrouds,
If once unveil'd by day to crowds.
The Fountain vanish'd from the glen,
 The Fairy from the earth !



THE BEACON.

I



HOW broad and bright athwart the wave,
Its steadfast light the Beacon gave !
Far beetling from the headland shore,
The rock behind, the surge before,
How lone and stern and tempest-sear'd,
Its brow to heaven the turret rear'd !
Type of the glorious souls that are
The lamps our wandering barks to light,
With storm and cloud round every star,
The Fire-Guides of the Night !

II

How dreary was that solitude !
Around it scream'd the sea-fowl's brood ;
The only sound, amidst the strife
Of wind and wave, that spoke of life,
Except, when heaven's ghost-stars were pale,
The distant cry from hurrying sail.

From year to year the weeds had grown
O'er walls slow-rotting with the damp;
And, with the weeds, decay'd, alone,
The warder of the lamp.

III

But twice in every week from shore
Fuel and food the boatmen bore ;
And then so dreary was the scene,
So wild and grim the warder's mien,
So many a darksome legend gave
Awe to that Tadmor of the wave,
That scarce the boat the rock could gain,
Scarce heaved the pannier on the stone,
Than from the rock and from the main
The unwilling life was gone.

IV

A man he was whom man had driven
To loathe the earth and doubt the heaven ;
A tyrant foe (beloved in youth)
Had arm'd the law to slay the truth ;
Stripp'd hearth and home, and left to shame
The broken heart—the blacken'd name.

Dark exile from his kindred, then,
 He hail'd the rock, the lonely wild :
 Upon the man at war with men
 The frown of Nature smiled.

v

But suns on suns had roll'd away ;
 The frame was bow'd, the locks were grey :
 And the eternal sea and sky
 Seem'd one still death to that dead eye ;
 And Terror, like a spectre, rose
 From the dull tomb of that repose.
 No sight, no sound, of human-kind ;
 The hours, like drops upon the stone !
 What countless phantoms man may find
 In that dark word—' ALONE !'

vi

Dreams of blue heaven and hope can dwell
 With thralldom in its narrowest cell ;
 The airy mind may pierce the bars,
 Elude the chain, and hail the stars :
 Canst thou no drearier dungeon guess
 In *space*, when space is loneliness ?

The body's freedom profits none,
The heart desires an equal scope ;
All nature is a gaol to one
Who knows nor love nor hope !

VII

One day, all summer in the sky,
A happy crew came gliding by,
With songs of mirth and looks of glee
A human sunbeam o'er the sea !
'O Warder of the Beacon,' cried
A noble youth, the helm beside,
'This summer-day how canst thou bear
To guard thy smileless rock alone,
And through the hum of Nature hear
No heart-beat, save thine own?'

VIII

'I cannot bear to live alone,
To hear no heart-beat save my own ;
Each moment, on this crowded earth,
The joy-bells ring some new-born birth ;
Can ye not spare one form—but one,
The lowest—least beneath the sun,

To make the morning musical
With welcome from a human sound ?
'Nay,' spake the youth, 'and is that all ?
Thy comrade shall be found.'

IX

The boat sail'd on, and o'er the main
The awe of silence closed again ;
But in the wassail hours of night,
When goblets go their rounds of light,
And in the dance, and by the side
Of her, yon moon shall see his bride,
Before that Child of Pleasure rose,
The lonely rock—the lonelier one,
A haunting spectre—till he knows
The human wish is won !

X

Low-murmuring round the turret's base
Glides wave on wave its gentle chase ;
Lone on the rock, the warder hears
The oar's faint music—hark ! it nears—
It gains the rock ; the rower's hand
Aids a grey, time-worn form to land.

‘ Behold the comrade sent to thee !
He said—then went. And in that place
The Twain were left ; and Misery
And Guilt stood face to face !

XI

Yes, face to face once more array’d,
Stood the Betrayer—the Betray’d !
Oh, how through all those gloomy years,
When Guilt revolves what Conscience fears,
Had that wrong’d victim breathed the vow
*That, if but face to face !—*And now,
There, face to face with him he stood,
By the great sea, on that wild steep ;
Around, the voiceless solitude,
Below, the funeral deep !

XII

They gazed—the Injurer’s face grew pale—
Pale writhe the lips, the murmurs fail,
And thrice he strives to speak—in vain !
The sun looks blood-red on the main,
The boat glides, waning less and less—
No law lives in the wilderness,

Except Revenge—man's first and last !

Those wrongs—that wretch—could they forgive ?

All that could sweeten life was past ;

Yet, oh, how sweet to live !

XIII

He gazed before, he glanced behind ;

There, o'er the steep rock seems to wind

The devious, scarce-seen path, a snake

In slime and sloth might, labouring, make.

With a wild cry he springs ;—he crawls :

Crag upon crag he clears ;—and falls

Breathless and mute ; and o'er him stands,

Pale as himself, the chasing foe—

Mercy ! what mean those claspèd hands,

Those lips that tremble so ?

XIV

'Thou hast cursed my life, my wealth despoil'd ;

My hearth-gods shatter'd, my name soil'd ;

The wreck of what was Man, I stand

'Mid the lone sea and desert land !

Well, I forgive thee all ; but be

A human voice and face to me !

O stay—O stay—and let me yet
One thing, that speaks man's language, know !
The waste hath taught me to forget
That earth once held a foe !'

XV

O Heaven ! methinks, from thy soft skies,
Look'd tearful down the angel-eyes ;
Back to those walls to mark them go,
Hand clasp'd in hand—the Foe and Foe !
And when the sun sunk slowly there,
Low knelt the prayerless man in prayer.
He knelt, no more the lonely one ;
Within, secure, a comrade sleeps ;
That sun shall not go down upon
A desert in the deeps.

XVI

He knelt—the man who half, till then,
Forgot his God in loathing men—
He knelt, and pray'd that God to spare
The Foe to grow the Brother there ;
And, reconciled by Love to Heaven,
Forgiving—was he not forgiven ?

‘ Yes, God did man for man create ;
 Man’s wrongs, man’s blessings can atone !
To learn how Love can spring from Hate,
 Go, Hate, and live alone.’

LAY OF THE MINSTREL'S HEART.

MAY wakes from trembling leaves the flower,
 May wakes to love the young ;
 On Provence shone the Vesper star ;
 Beneath fair Marguerite's lattice-bar
 The Minstrel, Aymer, sung :

‘ The May-buds bloom in mead and bower ;
 Ah, May is swift of wing ;
 But I no change of seasons fear,
 May blooms for me throughout the year,
 For love is always spring !

‘ Now, since I seek the Holy Land
 To brave the Paynim power,
 Give me thy troth-pledge ere we part.’

‘ Take this and wear it on thy heart,’
 She said—and dropp’d a flower !

‘ Bring back the pledge and claim my hand :’
 The minstrel bent his knee :

‘ The flower my trust from thine receives,
The heart whose life-throb stirs its leaves,
Shall both come back to thee.’

He joins the host the Hermit leads,
He gains the Holy Land ;
High deeds uplift the lowliest name ;
And knightly heart soon wins from Fame
The right to Beauty's hand.

Who wears the cross, must earthly needs
Resign for those on high.
The poison'd shaft, in Victory's hour,
Has pierced the heart on which the flower
Stirs to the parting sigh !

May wakes the blooms again from earth,
May wakes to love the young,
And harp and hymn proclaim the Bride,
Who smiles, Count Raimond, by thy side,
The Maid whom Aymer sung !

Now, up the hall and thro' the mirth,
A pale procession, see !
Turn, Marguerite, from the bridegroom turn—
Thine Aymer's name is on that urn ;—
His heart comes back to thee !

On the dead heart the dead flower lies—

Well, in this world of ours.

May comes and goes, Love meets and parts :

But Love is meant for living hearts.

And May for living flowers.

One tear bedew'd the Lady's eyes,

No tears beseem the day.

' The flower can ne'er to life return,

A marble tomb shall grace the urn,'

She said, and turn'd away.

The marble rose the urn above,

The world went on the same ;

The Lady smiled, Count Raimond's bride,

And flowers, and loves, that bloom'd and died.

Each May returning came.

Dead leaves and faith in mortal love.

Brief fame and poison'd dart,

These make, with, quittance for all wrong.

The marble tomb—O child of song,

The history of thy heart !

THE PARCÆ :

SIX LEAVES FROM HISTORY.



1. NAPOLEON AT ISOLA BELLA.
2. MAZARIN.
3. ANDRÉ CHÉNIER.
4. MARY STUART AND HER MOURNER.
5. THE LAST DAYS OF ELIZABETH.
6. CROMWELL'S DREAM.

NAPOLEON AT ISOLA BELLA.

At Isola Bella, in the Lago Maggiore, where the richest vegetation of the tropics grows in the vicinity of the Alps, there is a lofty laurel-tree (the bay), tall as the tallest oak, on which, a few days before the battle of Marengo, Napoleon carved the word 'BATTAGLIA.' The bark has fallen away from the inscription, most of the letters are gone, and the few left are nearly effaced.

I



FAIRY island of a fairy sea,
 Wherein Calypso might have spell'd the Greek.
 Or Flora piled her fragrant treasury,
 Cull'd from each shore her Zephyr's wings could seek.
 From rocks, where aloes blow,

Tier above tier, Hesperian fruits arise ;
 The hanging bowers of this soft Babylon ;
 An India mellows in the Lombard skies,
 And changelings, stolen from the Libyan sun,
 Smile to yon Alps of snow.

II

Amid this gentlest dream-land of the wave,
 Arrested, stood the wondrous Corsican ;
 As if one glimpse the better angel gave
 Of the bright garden-life vouchsafed to man
 Ere blood defiled the world.

He stood—that grand Sesostris of the North—
 While paused the car to which were harness'd kings ;
 And in the airs, that lovingly sigh'd forth
 The balms of Araby, his eagle-wings
 Their sullen thunder fur'd.

III

And o'er the marble hush of those large brows,
 Dread with the awe of the Olympian nod,
 A giant laurel spread its breathless boughs,
 The prophet tree of the dark Pythian god,
 Shadowing the doom of thrones !

What, in such hour of rest and scene of joy,
 Stirs in the cells of that unfathom'd brain ?
 Comes back one memory of the musing boy,
 Lone gazing o'er the yet unmeasured main,
 Whose waifs are human bones ?

IV

To those deep eyes doth one soft dream return,
Soft with the bloom of youth's unrifled spring,
When Hope first fills from founts divine the urn,
And rapt Ambition, on the angel's wing,
 Floats first through golden air ?

Or doth that smile recall the midnight street,
When thine own star the solemn ray denied,
And to a stage-mime,* for obscure retreat
From hungry Want, the destined Cæsar sigh'd ?—
 Still Fate, as then, asks prayer.

V

Under that prophet tree, thou standest now ;
Inscribe thy wish upon the mystic rind ;
Hath the warm human heart no tender vow
Link'd with sweet household names ?—no hope enshrined
 Where thoughts are priests of Peace ?

Or, if dire Hannibal thy model be,
Dread least, like him, thou bear the thunder *home* !
Perchance ev'n now a Scipio dawns for thee,
Thou doomest Carthage while thou smitest Rome—
 Write, write, ' Let carnage cease !'

* Talma.

VI

Whispers from heaven have strife itself inform'd ;—
 'Peace' was our dauntless Falkland's latest sigh,
 Navarre's frank Henry fed the forts he storm'd,
 Wild Xerxes wept the hosts he doom'd to die !
 Ev'n War pays dues to Love !

Note how harmoniously the art of Man
 Blends with the Beautiful of Nature ! see
 How the true laurel of the Delian
 Shelters the Grace !—Apollo's peaceful tree
 Blunts ev'n the bolt of Jove.

VII

Write on the sacred bark such votive prayer,
 As the mild Power may grant in coming years,
 Some word to make thy memory gentle there ;—
 More than renown, kind thought for men endears
 A Hero to Mankind.

Slow moved the mighty hand—a tremor shook
 The leaves, and hoarse winds groan'd along the wood ;
 The Pythian tree the damning sentence took,
 And to the sun the battle-word of blood
 Glared from the gashing rind.

VIII

So, thou hast writ the word, and sign'd thy doom :
Farewell, and pass upon thy gory way,
The direful skein the pausing Fates resume !
Let not the Elysian grove thy steps delay
From thy Promethean goal.

The fatal tree the abhorrent word retain'd :
Till the last Battle on its bloody strand
Flung what were nobler had no life remain'd—
The crownless front and the disarmèd hand
And the foil'd Titan Soul !

IX

Now, year by year, the warrior's iron mark
Crumbles away from the majestic tree,
The indignant life-sap ebbing from the bark
Where the grim death-word to Humanity
Profaned the Lord of Day.

High o'er the pomp of blooms, as greenly still,
Aspires that tree—the archetype of fame,
The stem rejects all chronicle of ill ;
The bark shrinks back—the tree survives the same—
The record rots away.

MAZARIN.

FAREWELL TO THE BEAUTIFUL, WITHOUT.

‘ I was walking, some days after, in the new apartments of his palace. I recognised the approach of the Cardinal (Mazarin) by the sound of his slippers feet, which he dragged one after the other, as a man enfeebled by a mortal malady. I concealed myself behind the tapestry, and I heard him say, “ Il faut quitter tout cela ! ” (“ I must leave all that ! ”) He stopped at every step, for he was very feeble, and casting his eyes on each object that attracted him, he sighed forth, as from the bottom of his heart, “ Il faut quitter tout cela ! What pains have I taken to acquire these things ! Can I abandon them without regret ? I shall never see them more where I am about to go ! ” &c. — *Mémoires Inédits de Louis Henri, Comte de Brienne*, Barrière’s Edition, vol. ii. p. 115.



ERENE the marble images

Gleam'd down, in lengthen'd rows ;

Their life, like the Uranides,

A glory and repose.

Glow'd forth the costly canvas spoil

From many a gorgeous frame ;

One race will starve the living toil,

The next will gild the name.

That stately silence silvering through,
The steadfast tapers shone
Upon the Painter's pomp of hue,
The Sculptor's solemn stone.

Calm in that ark above the Sea
Of Time, behold the Few
Saved from lost worlds of Art, to be
The sires of worlds anew.

There creeps a foot, there sighs a breath,
Along the quiet floor ;
An old man leaves his bed of death
To count his treasures o'er.

Behold the dying mortal glide
Amidst the eternal Art ;
It were a sight to stir with pride
Some pining painter's heart !

It were a sight that might beguile
Sad Genius from the hour,
To see the life of Genius smile
Upon the death of Power.

The ghost-like master of that hall
Is king-like in the land;
And France's proudest heads could fall
Beneath that spectre hand.

Veil'd in the Roman purple, preys
The canker-worm within ;
And more than Bourbon's sceptre sways
The crook of Mazarin.

Italian, yet more dear to thee
Than sceptre, or than crook ;
The Art in which thine Italy
Still charm'd thy glazing look !

So feebly, and with wistful eyes,
He crawls along the floor ;
A dying man, who, ere he dies,
Would count his treasures o'er.

And, from the landscape's soft repose,
Smil'd thy calm soul, Lorraine ;
And, from the deeps of Raphael, rose
Celestial Love again.

In pomp, which his own pomp recalls,
The haggard owner sees
Thy cloth of gold and banquet halls,
Thou stately Veronese !

While, cold as if they scorn'd to hail
Creations not their own,
The gods of Greece stand marble-pale
Around the Thunderer's throne.

There, Hebe brims the urn of gold ;
There, Hermes treads the skies ;
There, ever in the Serpent's fold,
Laocoon deathless dies ;

There, startled from her mountain rest,
Young Dian turns to draw
The death-full shaft that threatens the breast
Her slumber fail'd to awe ;

There, earth subdued by dauntless deeds,
And life's large labours done,
Stands, sad as Worth with mortal meeds,
Alcmena's mournful son.

They gaze upon the fading form
With mute immortal eyes ;—
Here, clay that waits the hungry worm ;
There, children of the skies.

Then slowly, as he totter'd by,
The old man, unresign'd,
Sigh'd forth : ' Alas ! and must I die,
And leave such life behind ?

' The Beautiful, from which I part,
Alone defies decay !'
Still, while he sigh'd, the eternal Art
Smiled down upon the clay.

And as he waved the feeble hand,
And crawl'd unto the porch,
He saw the Silent Genius stand
With the extinguish'd torch !

The world without, for ever yours,
Ye stern remorseless Three ;
What, from that changeful world, secures
Calm Immortality ?

Nay, soon or late decays, alas !
Or canvas, stone, or scroll ;
From all material forms must pass
To forms afresh, the soul.

'Tis but in that which doth create.
Duration can be sought ;
A worm can waste the canvas ;—Fate
Ne'er swept from Time, a Thought.

Lives Phidias in his works alone ?—
His Jove returns to air :
But wake one godlike shape from stone,
And Phidian thought is there !

Blot out the Iliad from the earth,
Still Homer's thought would fire
Each deed that boasts sublimer worth,
And each diviner lyre.

Like light, connecting star to star,
Doth Thought transmitted run :—
Rays that to earth the nearest are,
Have longest left the sun.

ANDRÉ CHÉNIER.

FAREWELL TO THE BEAUTIFUL, WITHIN.

‘André Chénier, whose exquisite genius forms the connecting link between the French poetry of the last century and that which adorns the present, perished by the guillotine, July 27, 1794. In ascending the scaffold, he cried, “To die so young!” “And there was something here!” he added, striking his forehead, not in the fear of death, but in the despair of genius!’—THIERS.



WITHIN the prison's dreary girth,
 The dismal night, before
 That morn on which the dungeon Earth
 Shall wall the soul no more,

There stood serenest images
 Where doomèd Genius lay,
 The ever young Uranides
 Around the child of clay.

On blacken'd walls and rugged floors
Shone cheerful, thro' the night,
The stars—like beacons from the shores
Of the still Infinite.

From Ida to the Poet's cell
The Pain-beguilers stole ;
Apollo tuned his silver shell,
And Hebè brimm'd the bowl.

To grace those walls he needed nought
That tint or stone bestows ;
Creation kindled from his thought :
He call'd—and gods arose.

The visions Poets only know
Upon the captive smiled,
As bright within those walls of woe
As on the sunlit child ;

He saw the nameless glorious things
Which youthful dreamers see,
When Fancy first with murmurous wings
O'ershadows bards to be ;

Those forms to life spiritual given
By high creative hymn ;
From music born—as from their heaven
Are born the Seraphim.*

Forgetful of the coming day,
Upon the dungeon floor
He sate to count, poor child of clay,
The wealth of genius o'er ;

To count the gems, as yet unwrought,
But found beneath the soil ;
The bright discoveries claim'd by thought,
As future crowns for toil.

He sees The Work that shall outlive
The canvas and the stone,
To which his mind a life shall give
Immortal as its own.

It shines complete, ere yet begun ;
So to the sailor's eye,
The phantom of the unrisen sun
Stands in the Arctic sky.

* Aus den Saiten, wie aus ihren Himmeln,
Neugebor'ne Seraphim.—SCHILLER.

Ah, his shall be that sweetest fame,
Which, gladdening common ways,
Makes so beloved the Poet's name
Men bless it while they praise.

True to the human heart shall chime
The song their lips repeat ;
When heroes chant the strain—sublime ;
When lovers breathe it—sweet.

Lo, from the brief delusion given,
He starts, as through the bars
Gleams wan the dawn that scares from Heaven—
And Thought alike—the stars.

Hark to the busy tramp below !
The jar of iron doors !
The gaoler's heavy footfall slow
Along the funeral floors !

The murmur of the crowds that round
The human shambles throng ;
That muffled sullen thunder-sound—
The Death-cart grates along !

‘ Alas ! so soon !—and must I die,
 He groan’d forth unresign’d ;
 ‘ Flit like a cloud athwart the sky,
 And leave no wrack behind !

‘ And yet my Genius speaks to me ;
 The Pythian fires my brain ;
 And tells me what my life should be ;
 A Prophet—and in vain !

‘ O realm more wide, from clime to clime,
 Than ever Cæsar sway’d ;
 O conquests in that world of time
 My grand desire survey’d !’

Blood-red upon his loathing eyes
 Now glares the gaoler’s torch :
 ‘ Come forth, the day is in the skies,
 The Death-cart at the porch !’

Pass on !—to thee the Parcæ give
 The fairest lot of all ;—
 In golden poet-dreams to live,
 And ere they fade—to fall !

The shrine that longest guards a Name
Is oft an early tomb ;
The poem most secure of fame
Is—some wrong'd poet's doom !

MARY STUART AND HER MOURNER.

Mary Stuart perished at the age of forty-four years and two months. Her remains were taken from her weeping servants, and a green cloth, torn in haste from an old billiard table, was flung over her once beautiful form. Thus it remained unwatched and unattended, except by a poor little lap-dog, which could not be induced to quit the body of its mistress. This faithful little animal was found dead two days afterwards; and the circumstance made such an impression even on the hard-hearted minister of Elizabeth, that it was mentioned in the official despatches.'

MRS. JAMIESON'S *Female Sovereigns: Mary Queen of Scots.*



THE axe its bloody work had done ;
 The corpse neglected lay ;
 This peopled world could spare not one
 To watch beside the clay.

The fairest work from Nature's hand
 That e'er on mortals shone,
 A sunbeam stray'd from fairy land
 To fade upon a throne ;—

The Venus of the Tomb * whose form
Was destiny and death ;
The Siren's voice that stirr'd a storm
In each melodious breath ;—

Such *was*, what now by fate is hur'l'd
To rot, unwept, away.
A star has vanish'd from the world ;
And none to miss the ray !

Stern Knox, that loneliness forlorn
A harsher truth might teach
To royal pomps, than priestly scorn
To royal sins can preach !

No victims now that lip can make !
That hand is powerless now !
O God ! and what a king—but take
A bauble from the brow ?

The world is full of life and love ;
The world methinks might spare
From millions, one to watch above
The dust of monarchs there.

* Libitina, the Venus who presided over funerals.



And not one human eye!—yet, lo!
What stirs the funeral pall?
What sound—it is not human woe—
Wails moaning through the hall?

Close by the form mankind desert
One thing a vigil keeps;
More near and near to that still heart
It wistful, wondering creeps.

It gazes on those glazèd eyes,
It hearkens for a breath—
It does not know that kindness dies,
And love departs from death.

It fawns as fondly as before
Upon that icy hand;
And hears from lips, that speak no more,
The voice that can command.

To that poor fool, alone on earth,
No matter what have been
The pomp, the fall, the guilt, the worth,
The Dead is still a Queen.

With eyes that horror could not scare,
It watch'd the senseless clay ;—
Crouch'd on the breast of Death, and there
Moan'd its fond life away.

And when the bolts discordant clash'd,
And human steps drew nigh,
The human pity shrunk abash'd
Before that faithful eye ;

It seem'd to gaze with such rebuke
On those who could forsake ;
Then turn'd to watch once more the look,
And strive the sleep to wake.

They raised the pall—they touch'd the dead,
A cry, and *both* were still'd—
Alike the soul that Hate had sped,
The life that Love had kill'd.

Semiramis of England, hail !
Thy crime secures thy sway :
But when thine eyes shall scan the tale
Those hireling scribes convey ;

When thou shalt read, with late remorse,
How one poor friend was found
Beside thy butcher'd rival's corse,
The headless and discrown'd ;

Shall not thy soul foretell thine own
Unloved, expiring hour,
When those who kneel around the throne
Shall fly the falling tower ;

When thy great heart shall silent break,
When thy sad eyes shall strain
Through vacant space, one thing to seek,
One thing that loved—in vain ?

Though round thy parting pangs of pride
Shall priest and noble crowd ;
More worth the grief, that mourn'd beside
Thy victim's gory shroud !

THE LAST DAYS OF ELIZABETH.

'Her' delight is to sit in the dark, and sometimes, with shedding tears, to bewail Essex.'—*Contemporaneous Correspondence.*

'She refused all consolation: few words she uttered, and they were all expressive of some hidden grief which she cared not to reveal. But sighs and groans were the chief vent which she gave to her despondency, and which, though they discovered her sorrows, were never able to ease or assuage them. Ten days and nights she lay upon the carpet leaning on cushions which her maids brought her,' &c.—HUME.

I

RISE from thy bloody grave,
 Thou soft Medusa of the Fated Line*
 Whose evil beauty look'd to death the brave:
 Discrownèd Queen, around whose passionate shame
 Terror and Grief the palest flowers entwine,
 That ever veil'd the ruins of a Name
 With the sweet parasites of song divine!

* Mary Stuart: 'the soft Medusa' is an expression strikingly applied to her in her own day.

Arise, sad Ghost, arise,
And if Revenge outlive the Tomb,
Behold the Doomer brought to doom !

Lo, where thy mighty Murderess lies,
The sleepless couch—the sunless room—
Through the darkness darkly seen
Rests the shadow of a Queen ;
Ever on the lawns below
Flit the shadows to and fro,
Quick at dawn, and slow at noon,
Halving midnight with the moon :
In the palace, still and dun,
Rests that shadow on the floor ;
All the changes of the sun
Move that shadow nevermore.

II

Yet oft she turns from face to face
A keen and wistful gaze,
As if the memory seeks to trace
The sign of some lost dwelling-place
Beloved in happier days.

Ah, what the clue supplies
In the cold vigil of a hireling's eyes ?
Ah, sad in childless age to weep alone,
Look round and find no grief reflect our own !

O Soul, thou speedest to thy rest away,
But not upon the pinions of the dove ;
When death draws nigh, how miserable they
Who have outlived all love !
As on the solemn verge of Night
Lingers a weary Moon,
Thou wanest last of every glorious light
That bathed with splendour thy majestic noon :
The stately stars that clustering o'er the isle
Lull'd into glittering rest the subject sea ;
Gone the great Masters of Italian wile,
False to the world beside, but true to thee !
Burleigh, the subtlest builder of thy fame,
The serpent craft of winding Walsingham ;
They who exalted yet before thee bow'd ;
And that more dazzling chivalry—the Band
That made thy Court a Faëry Land,
In which thou wert enshrined to reign alone
The Gloriana of the Diamond Throne ;
All gone—and left thee sad amidst the cloud.

III

To their great sires, to whom thy youth was known,
Who from thy smile, as laurels from the sun,
Drank the immortal greenness of renown,
Succeeds the cold lip-homage scantily won

From the new race whose hearts already bear
The Wise-man's offerings to the unworthy Heir.

Watching the glass in which the sands run low,
Hovers keen Cecil with his falcon eyes,
And musing Bacon* bends his marble brow.
But deem not fondly there

To weep the fate or pour the averting prayer
Attend those solemn spies !

Lo, at the regal gate
The impatient couriers wait ;

To speed from hour to hour the nice account
Of those too lingering sighs

Which yet must vex unpitying ears, before

Vacant the throne to which the Scot shall mount
Up steps still slippery with his Mother's gore !

IV

O piteous mockery of all pomp thou art,
Poor mortal-born, worn out with toil and years !

As, layer by layer, the granite of the heart
Dissolving, melteth to the weakest tears
That ever village maiden shed above
The grave that robb'd her quiet world of love.

* See the correspondence maintained by Francis Bacon and Robert Cecil (the sons of Elizabeth's most faithful friends) with the Scottish court, during the Queen's last illness.

Ten days and nights upon that floor
Those weary limbs have lain ;
And every hour has added more
Of heaviness to pain.
As gazing into dismal air
She sees the headless phantom there,
The victim round whose image twined
The last wild love of womankind ;
That lightning flash'd from stormy hearts,
Which now reveals the deeps of Heaven,
And now remorseless, earthward, darts,
Rives, and expires on what its stroke hath riven !

'Twere sad to see from those stern eyes
The unheeded anguish feebly flow ;
And hear the broken word that dies
In moanings faint and low ;
But sadder still to mark, the while,
The vacant stare, the marble smile,
And think, that goal of glory won,
How slight a shade between
The idiot moping in the sun
And England's giant Queen !*

* 'It was after labouring for nearly three weeks under a morbid melancholy, which brought on a stupor not unmixed with some indications of a disordered fancy, that the Queen expired.'—*Wikin's translation of a Latin letter* (author unknown) to Edmund Lamieret

v

Call back the joyous Past !

Lo, England white-robed for a holyday !
While, choral to the clarion's kingly blast,
Shout peals on shout along the Virgin's way,
As through the swarming streets rolls on the long array.
Mary is dead !—Look from your fire-won homes,
Exulting Martyrs !—on the mount shall rest
Truth's ark at last ! The avenging Lutheran comes,
And clasps THE BOOK ye died for to her breast !*
With her, the flower of all the land,
The high-born gallants ride,
And ever nearest of the band,
With watchful eye and ready hand,
Young Dudley's form of pride ! †
Ah, ev'n in that exulting hour,
Love half allures the soul from Power,
To that dread brow, in bending down,
Throbs up, beneath the manlike crown,

* 'When she (Elizabeth) was conducted through London amidst the joyful acclamations of her subjects, a boy, who personated Truth, was let down from one of the triumphal arches, and presented to her a copy of the Bible. She received the book with the most gracious deportment, placed it next her bosom,' &c.—HUME.

† Robert Dudley, afterwards the Leicester of doubtful fame, attended Elizabeth in her passage to the Tower.

The woman's heart wild-beating,
While steals the whisper'd worship, paid
Not to the Monarch, but the Maid,
Through tromps and stormy greeting.

VI

Call back the gorgeous Past !

The lists are set, the trumpets sound,
Impatient pennons quiver to the blast ;

Still as the stars, when to the breeze
Sway the proud crests of stately trees,
Bright eyes, from tier on tier around,
Look down, where on its famous ground
Murmurs and moves the bristling life
Of antique Chivalry !

Forward !' *—the signal word is given :
Like cloud on cloud, by tempest driven,
Steel lightens, and arm'd thunders close !
How plumes descend in flakes of snows ;
How the ground reels, as reels a sea,
Beneath the inebriate rapture-strife
Of jocund Chivalry !

* The customary phrase was, 'Laissez aller.'

Who is the Victor of the Day?
 Thou, of the delicate form and golden hair,
 And manhood glorious in its midst of May ;
 Thou who, upon thy shield of argent, bearest
 The bold device, 'The Loftiest is the Fairest !'
 As bending low thy stainless crest,
 · The Vestal thronèd by the West '
 Accords the old Provençal crown
 Which blends her own with thy renown ;
 Arcadian Sidney—Nursling of the Muse,
 Flower of divine Romance, whose bloom was fed
 By daintiest Helicon's most silver dews,
 Alas ! how soon thy lovely leaves were shed—
 Thee lost, no more were Grace and Force united,
 Grace but some flaunting Buckingham unmann'd,
 And Force but crush'd what Freedom vainly righted—
 Behind, lo Cromwell looms, and dusks the land
 With the swart shadow of his giant hand.

VII

Call back the Kingly Past !
 Where, bright and broadening to the main,
 Rolls on the scornful River,
 Stout hearts beat high on Tilbury's plain,
 Our Marathon for ever !

No breeze above, but on the mast
The pennon shook as with the blast.
Forth from the cloud the day-god strode ;
Flash'd back from steel, the splendour glow'd.
Leapt the loud joy from earth to heaven.
As through the ranks asunder riven,
 The Warrior-Woman rode !
Hark, thrilling through the armèd line
 The martial accents ring,
' Though mine the Woman's form, yet mine
 The Heart of England's King !' *
Woe to the Island and the Maid !
The Pope has preach'd the New Crusade,
His sons have caught the fiery zeal ;
The Monks are merry in Castile ;
 Bold Parma on the main ;
And through the deep exulting sweep
 The thunder-steeds of Spain.
What meteor rides the headlong gale ?
The flames have caught the giant sail !
Fierce Drake is grappling prow to prow ;
God and St. George for Victory now !
Death in the battle and the wind—
Carnage before and storm behind—

* 'I know I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart of a king, and of a king of England too.'

Wild shrieks are heard above the hurtling roar
By Orkney's rugged strands, and Erin's ruthless shore.

Joy to the Island and the Maid !

Pope Sextus wept the Last Crusade,
His sons consumed before his zeal ;
The Monks are woeful in Castile ;
Your monument the main,
The glaive and gale record your tale,
Ye thunder-steeds of Spain !

VIII

Turn from the idle Past ;

Its lonely ghost thou art !

Yea, like a ghost, whom charms to earth detain,
(When, with the dawn, its kindred phantom-train

Glide into peaceful graves)—to dust depart

Thy shadowy pageants ; and the day unblest,

Seems some dire curse that keeps thee from thy rest.

Yet comfort, comfort to thy longing woe,

Thou wistful watcher by the dreary portal ;

Now when most human, since most feeble, know,

That in the Human struggles the Immortal.

Flash'd from the steel of the descending shears,

Oft sacred light illumines the parting soul ;

And our last glimpse along the woof of years,

First reads the scheme that disinvolves the whole.

Yet, then, recall the Past !
Is Reverence not the child of Sympathy ?
To feel for Greatness we must hear it sigh :
On mortal brows those haloes longest last
Which blend for one the rays that verge from all.
Few reign, few triumph ; millions love and grieve :
Of grief and love let some high memory leave
One mute appeal to life, upon the stone—
That tomb shall votive rites from time receive
When History doubts what ghost once fill'd a throne.
So, indistinct while back'd by sunlit skies,
But large and clear against the midnight pall,
Thy human outline awes our human eyes.
Place, place, ye meaner royalties below,
For Nature's holiest—Womanhood and Woe !

Let not vain youth deride the age that still
Loves as the young—loves on unto the last ;
Grandest the heart when grander than the will—
Bow we before the soul which through the past
Turns no vain glance towards fading heights of pride,
But strains its humbled tearful gaze to see
Love and Remorse, near Immortality,
And by the yawning Grave, stand side by side.

CROMWELL'S DREAM.

The conception of this Ode originated in a popular tradition of Cromwell's earlier days. It is thus strikingly related by Mr. Forster, in his very valuable Life of Cromwell: 'He laid himself down, too fatigued to hope for sleep, when suddenly the curtains of his bed were slowly withdrawn by a gigantic figure, which bore the aspect of a woman, and which, gazing at him silently for a while, told him that he should, before his death, be the greatest man in England. He remembered when he told the story, and the recollection marked the current of his thoughts, *that the figure had not made mention of the word King.*' Alteration has been made in the scene of the vision, and the age of Cromwell.

I



THE moor spread wild and far,
 In the sharp whiteness of a wintry shroud ;
 Midnight, yet moonless; and the winds ice-bound :
 And a grey dusk—not darkness—reign'd around,
 Save where the phantom of a sudden star
 Peer'd o'er some haggard precipice of cloud :
 Where on the wold, the triple pathway cross'd,
 A sturdy wanderer, wearied, lone, and lost,
 Paused and gazed round ; a dwarf'd but aged yew
 O'er the wan rime its gnome-like shadow threw ;

The spot invited, and by sleep opprest,
Beneath the boughs he laid him down to rest.
A man of stalwart limbs and hardy frame,
Meet for the ruder time when force was fame,
Youthful in years—the features yet betray
Thoughts rarely mellow'd till the locks are grey :
Round the firm lips the lines of solemn wile
Might warn the wise of danger in the smile :
But the blunt aspect spoke more sternly still
That craft of craft—THE STUBBORN WILL :

That which—let what may betide—
Never halts nor swerves aside ;
From afar its victim viewing,
Slow of speed, but sure-pursuing ;
Through maze, up mount, still hounding on its way,
Till grimly couch'd beside the conquer'd prey !

II

The loftiest fate will longest lie
In unrevealing sleep ;
And yet unknown the destined race,
Nor yet his soul had walk'd with Grace ;
Still, on the seas of Time
Drifted the ever-careless prime,
But many a blast that o'er the sky
All idly seems to sweep,

Still while it speeds may spread the seeds
 The toils of autumn reap :
 And we must blame the soil, and not the wind,
 If hurrying passion leave no golden grain behind.

III

Seize—seize—seize !*
 Bind him strong in the chain,
 On his heart, on his brain,
 Clasp the links of the evil Sleep !
 Seize—seize—seize—
 Ye fiends that dimly sweep
 Up from the Stygian deep,
 Where Death sits watchful by his brother's side !
 Ye pale Impalpables, that are
 Shadows of Truths afar,
 Appearing oft to warn, but ne'er to guide,
 Hover around the calm, disdainful Fates,
 Reveal the woof through which the spindle gleams :
 Open, ye Ebon gates !
 Darken the moon—O Dreams !

Seize—seize—seize—
 Bind him strong in the chain,

* Λάβε, λάβε, λάβε, λάβε.—ÆSCHYL. *Æumen*. 125.

On his heart, on his brain,
Clasp the links of the evil Sleep!
Awakes or dreams he still?

His eyes are open with a glassy stare,
On the fix'd brow the large drops gather chill,
And horror, like a wind, stirs through the lifted hair.

Before him stands the Thing of Dread—
A giant Shadow motionless and pale!

As those dim Lemur-vapours that exhale
From the rank grasses rotting o'er the dead,
And startle midnight with the mocking show
Of the still, shrouded bones that sleep below—

So the wan image which the Vision bore
Was outlined from the air, no more
Than served to make the loathing sense a bond
Between the world of life and grislier worlds beyond.

IV

'Behold!' the Shadow said, and lo!
Where the blank heath had spread, a smiling scene;
Soft woodlands sloping from a village green,*

And, waving to blue heaven, the happy cornfields glow:

* The farm of St. Ives, where Cromwell spent three years, which he afterwards recalled with regret, though not unafflicted with dark hypochondria and sullen discontent. Here, as Mr. Forster impressively observes, 'in the tenants that rented from him, in the labourers that served under him, he sought to sow the seeds of his after troop of Ironsides. . . . *All the famous doctrines of his later and more*

A modest roof, with ivy cluster'd o'er,
 And Childhood's mirth busy beside the door.
 But, yonder, sunset sleeping on the sod,
 Bow Labour's rustic sons in solemn prayer ;
 And, self-made teacher of the truths of God,
 The Dreamer sees the Phantom-Cromwell there !
 ' Art thou content, of these the greatest *Thou,*'
 Murmur'd the Fiend, ' the Master and the Priest ?'
 A sullen anger knit the Dreamer's brow,
 And from his scornful lips the words came slow,
 ' The greatest of the hamlet, Demon, No !'
 Loud laugh'd the Fiend—then trembled through the sky,
 Where haply angels watch'd, a warning sigh ;
 And darkness swept the scene, and golden Quiet ceased.

v

' Behold !' the Shadow said—a hell-born ray
 Shoots through the Night, up-leaps the unholy Day,
 Spring from the earth the Dragon's armèd seed,
 The ghastly squadron wheels, and neighs the spectre-steed.
 Unnatural sounded the sweet Mother-tongue,
 As loud from host to host the English war-cry rung ;
 Kindred with kindred blent in slaughter show
 The dark phantasma of the destined Woe !

celebrated years were tried and tested in the little farm of St. Ives. . . . Before going to their field-work in the morning they (his servants) knelt down with their master in the touching equality of prayer ; in the evening they shared with him again the comfort and exaltation of divine precepts.—FORSTER'S *Cromwell*.

A gay and glittering band !
Apollo's lovelocks in the crest of Mars—
Light-hearted Valour, laughing scorn to scars—
A gay and glittering band,
Unwitting of the scythe—the lilies of the land !
Pale in the midst, that stately squadron boasts
A princely form, a mournful brow ;
And still, where plumes are proudest, seen,
With sparkling eye and dauntless mien,
The young Achilles * of the hosts.
On rolls the surging war—and now
Along the closing columns ring—
'Rupert' and 'Charles'—'The Lady of the Crown,' †
'Down with the Roundhead Rebels, down !'
'St. George and England's king !'

A stalwart and a sturdy band—
Whose souls of sullen zeal
Are made by the Immortal Hand
Invulnerable steel !
A kneeling host—a pause of prayer,
A single voice thrills through the air,
'They come. Up, Ironsides !
For TRUTH and PEACE unsparing smite !
Behold the accursed Amalekite !'

* Prince Rupert.

† 'Henrietta Maria !' was the popular battle-cry of the Cavaliers.

The Dreamer's heart beat high and loud,
 For, calmly through the carnage-cloud,
 The scourge and servant of the Lord,
 This hand the Bible—that the sword—
 The Phantom-Cromwell rides !

A lurid darkness swallows the array,
 One moment lost—the darkness rolls away,
 And, o'er the slaughter done,
 Smiles, with his eyes of love, the setting Sun ;
 Death makes our foe our brother ;
 And, meekly, side by side,
 Sleep scowling Hate and sternly smiling Pride,
 On the kind breast of Earth, the quiet Mother !
 Lo, where the victor sweeps along,
 The Gideon of the gory throng,
 Beneath his hoofs the harmless dead—
 The aureole on his helmèd head—
 Before him steel-clad Victory bending,
 Around, from earth to heaven ascending
 The fiery incense of triumphant song.
 So, as some orb, above a mighty stream
 Sway'd by its law, and sparkling in its beam—
 A power apart from that tempestuous tide,
 Calm and aloft, behold the Phantom-Conqueror ride !

'Art thou content—of these the greatest Thou,
Hero and Patriot?' murmur'd then the Fiend.
The unsleeping Dreamer answer'd, ' Tempter, nay,
My soul stands breathless on the mountain's brow
And looks *beyond!*' Again swift darkness screen'd
The solemn Chieftain and the fierce array,
And armèd Glory pass'd, like happier Peace, away.

VI

He look'd again, and saw
A chamber with funereal sables hung,
Wherein there lay a ghastly, headless thing,
That once had been a king—
And by the corpse a living man, whose doom,
Had both been left to Nature's gradual law,
Were riper for the garner-house of gloom.
Rudely beside the gory clay were flung
The Norman sceptre and the Saxon crown ; *
So, after some imperial tragedy
August alike with sorrow and renown,
We smile to see the gauds that moved our awe,
Purple and orb, in dusty lumber lie—
Alas ! what thousands, on the stage of Time,
Envied the baubles, and revered the mime !

* King Alfred's crown was actually sold after the execution of Charles the First

Placed by the trunk—with long and whitening hair
 By dark-red gouts besprent, the sever'd head
 Up to the Gazer's musing eyes, the while,
 Look'd with its livid brow and stony smile.
 On that sad scene, his gaze the Dreamer fed,
 Familiar both the Living and the Dead ;
 Terror, and hate, and strife concluded there,
 Calm in his six-feet realm the monarch lay ;
 And by the warning victim's mangled clay
 The Phantom-Cromwell smiled, and bending down
 With shadowy fingers toy'd about the shadowy crown.
 ' Art thou content at last ?—a greater Thou
 Than one to whom the loftiest bent the knee,
 First in thy fierce Republic of the Free,
 Avenger and Deliverer ?'

' Fiend,' replied

The Dreamer, ' who shall palter with the tide ?—
Deliverer ! Pilots who the vessel save
 Leave not the helm while winds are on the wave.
 THE FUTURE is the Haven of THE NOW !'
 ' True,' quoth the Fiend—Again the darkness spread,
 And night gave back to air the Doomsman and the Dead !

VII

' See !' cried the Fiend. He views
 A lofty Senate stern with many a form

Not unfamiliar to the earlier strife ;
Knit were the brows, and passion flush'd the hues,
And all were hush'd !—that hush which is in life
As in the air, prophetic of a storm.

Uprose a shape* with dark bright eye ;
It spake, and at the word
The Dreamer breathed an angry sigh ;
And, starting, clutch'd his sword ;
An instinct bade him hate and fear
That unknown shape—as if a foe were near—
For, mighty in that mien of thoughtful youth,
Spoke Fraud's most deadly foe—a soul on fire with Truth ;
A soul without one stain

Save England's hallowing tears ;—the sad and starry Vane.
There enter'd on that conclave high
A solitary Man !
And rustling through the conclave high
A troubled murmur ran ;
A moment more—loud riot all—
With pike and morion gleam'd the startled hall :

* When Cromwell came down leaving his musketeers without the door to dissolve the Long Parliament, Vane was in the act of urging, through the last stage, the Bill that would have saved the republic.—See Forster's spirited account of this scene, *Life of Vane*, p. 152.

And there, where, since the primal date
 Of Freedom's glorious morn,
 The eternal People solemn sate,
 The People's Champion spat his ribald scorn !
 Dark moral to all ages !—Blent in one
 The broken fasces and the shatter'd throne ;
 The deed that damns immortally is done ;
 And FORCE, the Cain of Nations, reigns alone !
 The veil is rent—the crafty soul lies bare !
 ' Behold,' the Demon cried, ' the *Future* Cromwell, there !
 Art thou content, on earth the Greatest thou,
 APOSTATE AND USURPER ?'—From his rest
 The Dreamer started with a heaving breast,
 The better angels of the human heart
 Not dumb to his—The Hell-Born laugh'd aloud,
 And o'er the Evil Vision rush'd the cloud !

THE SOULS OF BOOKS.

I



IT here and muse ! it is an antique room—
High roof'd with casements, through whose purple
pane

Unwilling Daylight steals amidst the gloom.

Shy as a fearful stranger.

There THEY reign,

In loftier pomp than waking life had known,
The Kings of Thought ! not crown'd until the grave.

When Agamemnon sinks into the tomb,
Homer takes back the royalties he gave,
And rules the nations from the Argive's throne.

Ye ever-living and imperial Souls,
Lighting with undistinguished rays the air
We live and breathe in ; who of us can tell
What he had been, if Cadmus had not taught
The magic letters by which thought to thought
Bequeathes a wealth enlarged by every heir ?

Had Plato's reasonings perished in his cell,
Leaving no trace on time-defying scrolls?
If, hush'd with Homer's harp his mighty line,
'The world had lost 'the tale of Troy divine?'
There, loom the outlines vast of right and wrong,
Heroic force assuaged to human ruth;
Europe may date her history from the song
That gave the types of Homer to her youth.

II

Hark! while we muse, without the walls is heard
The various murmur of the labouring crowd,
How still, within those archive-cells interr'd,
The Calm Ones reign! and yet they rouse the loud
Passions and tumults of the circling world!
The peaceful temples they have built to Thought
Are the great arsenals of every war.
Thence, all the banners in gone time unfurl'd,
Ever again into fresh fields are brought,
Grace some new Cato's bier or some new Cæsar's car.
They fire meek preachers with the zeal for truth,
And lift the looks of poets to the star;
To the old races they transmit their youth,
The Conscript Fathers of the men we are.

III

And now so still ! Yet, Cicero, heaves thy heart
In thy large language, sweet with measured swell.
Darling alike of Nature and of art,
Horace here smiles on life, and smiling sighs ;
Reclined where Tyndaris, in the vale's cool dell
O'er Lesbian wine-cups chants her Teian lay ;
While on the mount which upward charms his eyes
Great Pan's free music floats through summer skies !

O'er all our days reigns Thought's calm Yesterday
As out from books the guardian spirits rise.
Guiding our footsteps while upon our way
Their own fall noiseless.

Hark ! the world so loud,
And *they*, the movers of the world, so still !

What robes the dead with glory? what can give
The regal purple to the funeral shroud ?
We hunt some child of genius to the tomb,
And at its threshold hate and envy cease.
And what the charm that can such health distil
From wither'd leaves—oft poisons in their bloom ?
We blame some books as harmful ! *Do they live !*

If so, believe me, TIME hath made them pure.
 In Books, the veriest wicked rest in peace—
 God wills that nothing evil should endure ;
 The grosser parts fly off and leave the whole,
 As the dust leaves the disembodied soul !
 Come from thy niche, Lucretius ! Thou didst teach
 To man his wildest superstition—Chance,
 Denied his grief the Jove whom prayer could reach.
 And closed the pale Elysium on his glance.
 Dost thou make converts ? No ! thine art disproves
 The creed which grants no planner to the plan ;
 As the contriving mind harmonious moves
 'Thro' every work attesting art in man,
 So ev'n if Nature her First Cause conceal'd,
 In man's contrivance God's would be reveal'd.
 Go—bid the atoms into form combine,
 And human art bear witness to Divine !

Lo ! that grim merriment of hatred ;* born
 Of him, the master-mocker of mankind,
 Beside the grin of whose malignant spleen,
 Lucian's loud scoff seems pleasantry refined,
 And Voltaire's cynic sneer a smile serene.
 Do we not place it in our children's hands,
 Leading young Hope through Lemuel's fabled lands !

* *Gulliver's Travels.*

God's and man's libel in that foul Yahoo !
Well, and what mischief can the libel do ?
O impotence of Genius to belie
Its glorious task—its mission from the sky !
Swift wrote this book to wreak a ribald scorn
On aught the Man should love or Priest should mourn ;
And lo ! the book, from all its ends beguiled,
A harmless wonder to some happy child !

IV

All books grow sanctified by time ; they are
Temples, at once, and landmarks. In them, we—
Who *but* for them, upon that inch of ground
We call 'THE PRESENT,' from the cell could see
No daylight trembling on the dungeon bar—
Turn, as we list, the globe's great axle round,
Traverse all space, and number every star,
And feel the Near less household than the Far !
There is no Past, so long as Books shall live !
A disinterr'd Pompeii wakes again
For him who seeks yon well ; lost cities give
Up their untarnish'd wonders, and the reign
Of Jove revives and Saturn :—At our will
Rise dome and tower on Delphi's sacred hill ;
Bloom Cimon's trees in Academe ; along
Leucadia's headland sighs the Lesbian's song ;

With Egypt's Queen once more we sail the Nile,
And learn how worlds are barter'd for a smile :
Rise up, ye walls, with gardens blooming o'er ;
Ope but that page—lo ! Babylon once more !

v

Ye make the Past familiar as our home :
And is that all ? No : in each prophet sage—
No ; in each herald soul that Greece and Rome
Sent forth, ere yet to Bethlehem moved the Star,
In each bright guess illuming Tully's page,
Or sparkling up from Plato's golden dreams,
Your earnest light converged the scatter'd beams,
Shot thro' the crannies of the silent portal
That spans the entrance of the Life to come.
And as yourselves have conquer'd death, ye are
Types of the truth that Thought must be immortal.

Apart from you, for not of human birth,
ONE BOOK, to hope and grief alike is given.
Mourner—love moulders not in graves of earth,
Read ; and the lost smile down on thee from heaven.

*JEALOUSY AND ART.*

If bright Apollo be the type of Art,
So is flay'd Marsyas that of Jealousy :
With the bare fibres which for ever smart

Under the sunbeams that rejoice the sky.
Had Marsyas ask'd not with the god to vie,
The god had praised the cunning of his flute.
Thou stealest half Apollo's melody,
Tune but thy reed in concert with his lute.
Each should enrich the other—each enhance
By his own gift the common Beautiful :
That every colour more may charm the glance,
All varying flowers the garland-weavers cull ;
Adorn'd by Contrast, Art no rival knows—
The violet steals not perfume from the rose.

THE BONES OF RAPHAEL.

When the author was in Rome, in the year 1833, the bones of Raphael were discovered, and laid in state for several days in St. Peter's church.



WAVE upon wave, the human ocean stream'd
 Along the chancel of the solemn pile ;
 And, with a softer day, the tapers beam'd
 Upon the bier within the vaulted aisle :
 And, mingled with the crowd, I halted there,
 And ask'd a Roman scholar by my side,
 What sainted dust invoked the common prayer ?
 'Stranger !' the man, as in disdain, replied,
 ' Nine days already hath the Disinterr'd
 Been given again to mortal eye, and all
 The great of Rome, the Conclave and the Pope,
 Have flock'd to grace the second funeral
 Of him whose soul, until it fled, like Hope,
 Gave beauty to the world : But haply thou,
 A dweller of the North, hast never heard
 Of one who, if no saint in waking life,

Communed in dreams with angels, and transferr'd
The heaven in which we trust his soul is now
To the mute canvas. Underneath that pall
Repose the bones of Raphael !'

Not a word

I answer'd, but in awe I drew more near,
And saw the crowd toil on in busy strife,
Eager which first should touch the holy bier ;
I ask'd a boor, more earnest than the rest,
'Whose bones are these ?'

'I know not what his name .

But, since the Pope and Conclave have been here,
Doubtless a famous Saint !'

The Boor express'd

The very thought the wandering stranger guess'd.
Which wiser, he, the Scholar, who had sneer'd
To hear the Stranger canonise the Dead ;
Or they, the Boor, the Stranger, who revered
The Saint, where he the Artist ? Answer, Fame,
Whose Saints are not the Calendar's ! Perchance
'Tasso and Raphael, age to age, have given
The earth a lustre more direct from Heaven
Than San Gennaro, or thy Denis, France ;
Or English George !—Read History.*

* Gibbon, after a powerful sketch of the fraud, the corruption, and the vices of George the Cappadocian, thus concludes : 'The odious stranger, disarming every

When the crowd

Were gone, I slipp'd some coins into the hand
 Of a grave-visaged Priest, who took his stand
 Beside the bier, and bade him lift the shroud ;
 And there I paused, and gazed upon the all
 The Worm had spared to Raphael. He had died,
 As sang the Alfieri of our land,
 In the embrace of Beauty *—beautiful
 Himself as Cynthia's lover !—That, the skull
 Once pillow'd on soft bosoms, which still rise
 With passionate life, in canvas ; in the void
 Of those blank sockets shone the starry eyes,
 That, *like* the stars, found home in heaven ! The pall
 With its dark hues gave forth, in gleaming white,
 The delicate bones ; for still an undestroy'd
 Beauty, amidst decay, appear'd to dwell
 About the mournful relics ; and the light,
 In crownlike halo, lovingly did fall
 On the broad brow—the hush'd and ruin'd cell
 Of the old art—Nature's sweet oracle !
 Believe or not, no horror seem'd to wrap

circumstance of time and place, assumed the mask of a martyr, a saint and a Christian hero ; and the infamous George of Cappadocia has been transformed into the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and the garter.'—GIBBON'S *Decline and Fall*, vol. iv. c. xxiii.

* ' Italian Beauty ! didst thou not inspire
 Raphael, who died in thy embrace ? '—BYRON.

What has most horror for our life—the Dead :
The sleep slept soft, as in a mother's lap,
As if the Genius of the Grecian Death,
That with a kiss inhaled the parting breath,
That, wing'd for Heaven, stood by the charnel porch,
Lowering, with looks of love, the extinguish'd torch,
Had taken watch beside the narrow bed ;
And from the wrecks of the beloved clay
Had scared, with guardian eyes, each ghistlier shape away !
Come, Moralist, with truths of tritest worth,
And tell us how ' to this complexion ' all
That beautify the melancholy earth
' Must come at last ! ' The little and the low,
The mob of common men, rejoice to know
How the grave levels with themselves the great :
For something in the envy of the small
Still loves the vast Democracy of Death !
But flatter not yourselves—in death the fate
Of Genius still divides itself from yours :
Yea, ev'n upon the earth ! For Genius lives
Not in your life—it does not breathe your breath,
It does not share your charnels ; but insures
In death itself the life that life survives !
Genius to you what most you value gave,
Power in the forum, splendour in the mart,
And all the bright mock jewels of the world,

In *these* your life—and *these* with life depart !
Grudge not what Genius to itself shall claim—
A life that lived but in the dreams of Art,
A world whose sunshine was the smile from Fame.
These die not, Moralist, when all are hurl'd,
Fascies and sceptre, in the common grave :
Genius, in life or death, is still the same—
Death but makes deathless what Life ask'd—THE NAME.

THE IDEAL WORLD.

The original sketch of this poem, written during early youth, was prefixed to the Pilgrim of the Rhine, 1832. But it received considerable alteration, and was, in part, rewritten when admitted to the first edition of the author's poetical works.

I



ROUND 'this visible diurnal sphere'

There floats a world that girds us like the space :
On wandering clouds and gliding beams career

Its ever-moving, murmurous Populace.

There, all the lovelier thoughts conceived below,
Ascending live, and in celestial shapes.

To that bright World, O Mortal, wouldst thou go ?

Bind but thy senses, and thy soul escapes :

To care, to sin, to passion close thine eyes ;

Sleep in the flesh, and see the Dreamland rise !

Hark to the gush of golden waterfalls,

Or knightly tromps at Archimagian walls !

In the green hush of Dorian Valleys mark

The River Maid her amber tresses knitting :

When glow-worms twinkle under coverts dark,

And silver clouds o'er summer stars are flitting,

With jocund elves invade 'the Moone's sphere,
 Or hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear ;'
 Or, list ! what time the roseate urns of dawn
 Scatter fresh dews, and the first skylark weaves
 Joy into song—the blithe Arcadian Faun
 Piping to wood-nymphs under Bromian leaves,
 While, slowly gleaming through the purple glade,
 Come Evian's panther car, and the pale Naxian Maid.

Such, O Ideal World, thy habitants !

All the fair children of creative creeds—
 All the lost tribes of Phantasy are thine—
 From antique Saturn in Dodonian haunts,
 Or Pan's first music waked from shepherd reeds,
 To the last sprite when heaven's pale lamps decline,
 Heard wailing soft along the solemn Rhine.

II

Thine are the Dreams that pass the Ivory Gates,
 With prophet shadows haunting poet eyes !
 Thine the beloved illusions youth creates
 From the dim haze of its own happy skies.
 In vain we pine, we yearn, on earth to win
 The being of the heart, our boyhood's dream.
 The Psyche and the Eros ne'er have been,
 Save in Olympus, wedded !—As a stream

Glasses a star, so life the ideal love ;
Restless the stream below—serene the orb above !
Ever the soul the senses shall deceive ;
Here custom chill, there kinder fate bereave :
For mortal lips unmeet eternal vows !
And Eden-flowers for Adam's mournful brows !
We seek to make the moment's angel-guest
 The household dweller at a human hearth ;
We chase the bird of Paradise, whose nest
 Was never found amid the bowers of earth.
Yet loftier joys the vain pursuit may bring,
 Than sate the senses with the boons of time ;
The bird of Heaven hath still an upward wing,
 The steps it lures are still the steps that climb,
And in the ascent, although the soil be bare,
More clear the daylight and more pure the air.
Let Petrarch's heart the human mistress lose,
He mourns the Laura, but to win the Muse :
Could all the charms which Georgian maids combine
Delight the soul of the dark Florentine,
Like one chaste dream of childlike Beatrice
Awaiting Hell's stern pilgrim in the skies,
Snatch'd from below to be the guide above,
And clothe Religion in the form of Love ?

III

O, thou true Iris ! sporting on thy bow
 Of tears and smiles—Jove's herald, Poetry !
 Thou reflex image of all joy and woe—
Both fused in light by thy dear phantasy !
 Lo ! from the clay how Genius lifts its life,
 And grows one pure Idea—one calm soul !
 True, its own clearness must reflect our strife ;
 True, its completeness must comprise our whole :
 But, as the sun transmutes the sullen hues
 Of marsh-grown vapours into vermeil dyes,
 And melts them later into twilight dews,
 Shedding on flowers the baptism of the skies ;
 So glows the Ideal in the air we breathe—
 So from the fumes of sorrow and of sin,
 Doth its warm light in rosy colours wreath
 Its playful cloudland, storing balms within.

Survey the Poet in his mortal mould,
 Man amongst men, descended from his throne !
 The moth that chased the star now frets the fold,
 Our cares, our faults, our follies are his own.
 Passions as idle, and desires as vain,
 Vex the wild heart, and dupe the erring brain.

From Freedom's field the recreant Horace flies
To kiss the hand by which his country dies ;
From Mary's grave the mighty Peasant turns,
And hoarse with orgies rings the laugh of Burns.
While Rousseau's lips a lackey's vices own,
Lips that could draw the thunder on a throne !
But when, from Life the Actual, GENIUS springs,
 When, self-transform'd by its own Magic rod,
It snaps the fetters and expands the wings,
 And drops the fleshly garb that veil'd the god,
How the mists vanish as the form ascends !
How in its aureole every sunbeam blends !
By the Arch-Brightener of Creation seen,
 How dim the crowns on perishable brows !
The snows of Atlas melt beneath the sheen,
 Through Thebaid caves the rushing splendour flows,
Cimmerian glooms with Asian beams are bright,
And Earth reposes in a belt of light.
Now stern as Vengeance shines the awful form,
Arm'd with the bolt and glowing through the storm ;
Sets the great deeps of human passion free,
And whelms the bulwarks that would breast the sea.
Roused by its voice the ghastly Wars arise,
Mars reddens earth, the Valkyrs pale the skies ;
Dim Superstition from her hell escapes,
With all her shadowy brood of monster shapes ;

Here Life itself the scowl of Typhon * takes ;
 There Conscience shudders at Alecto's snakes ;
 From Gothic graves at midnight yawning wide,
 In gory cerements gibbering spectres glide ;
 And where o'er blasted heaths the lightnings flame,
 Black secret hags ' do deeds without a name !'
 Yet through its direst agencies of awe,
 Light marks its presence and pervades its law,
 And, like Orion when the storms are loud,
 It links creation while it gilds a cloud.
 By ruthless Thor, free Thought, frank Honour stand,
 Fame's grand desire, and zeal for Fatherland ;
 The grim Religion of Barbarian Fear
 To some Hereafter binds existence here,
 Lifts the gross sense to some spiritual source,
 And thrones some Jove above the Titan Force,
 Till, love completing what in awe began,
 From the rude savage dawns the thoughtful man.
 Then, O behold the glorious Comforter !

Still bright'ning worlds, but gladd'ning now the hearth,
 Or like the lustre of our nearest star,

Fused in the common atmosphere of earth.
 It sports like hope upon the captive's chain ;
 Descends in dreams upon the couch of pain ;

* The gloomy Typhon of Egypt assumes many of the mystic attributes of the Principle of Life which, in the Grecian Apotheosis of the Indian Bacchus, is represented in so genial a character of exuberant joy and everlasting youth.

To wonder's realm allures the earnest child ;
To the chaste love refines the instinct wild ;
And as in waters the reflected beam,
Still where we turn, glides with us up the stream ;
And while in truth the whole expanse is bright,
Yields to each eye its own fond path of light,
So over life the rays of Genius fall—
Give each his track because illuming all.

IV

Hence is that secret pardon we bestow,
 In the true instinct of the grateful heart,
Upon the Sons of Song. The good they do
 In the clear world of their Uranian art
Endures for ever ; while the evil done
 In the poor drama of their mortal scene,
Is but a passing cloud before the sun ;
 Space hath no record where the mist hath been.
Boots it to us, if Shakspeare err'd like man ?
 Why idly question that most mystic life ?
Eno' the giver in his gifts to scan ;
 To bless the sheaves with which thy fields are rife.
Nor, blundering, guess through what obstructive clay
The glorious corn-seed struggled up to day.

v

But not to you alone, O Sons of Song,
 The wings that float the loftier airs along.
 Whoever lifts us from the dust we are,
 Beyond the sensual to spiritual goals ;
 Who, from the MOMENT and the SELF, afar
 By deathless deeds allures reluctant souls,
 Gives the warm life to what the Limner draws,
 Plato but thought what godlike Cato was.*
 Recall the wars of England's giant-born :
 Is Eliot's voice—is Hampden's death in vain ?
 Have all the meteors of the vernal morn
 But wasted light upon a frozen main ?
 Where is that Child of Carnage, Freedom, flown ?
 The Sybarite lolls upon the Martyr's throne,
 Lewd, ribald jests succeed to solemn zeal ;
 And things of silk to Cromwell's men of steel.
 Cold are the hosts the tromps of Ireton thrill'd,
 And hush'd the senates Vane's large presence fill'd.
 In what strong heart doth the old manhood dwell ?
 Where art thou, Freedom ? Look—in Sidney's cell
 There still as stately stands the living Truth,
 Smiling on age as it had smiled on youth.

* 'What Plato thought, and godlike Cato was.'—POPE.

Her forts dismantled, and her shrines o'erthrown,
The headsman's block her last dread altar-stone.
No sanction left to Reason's vulgar hope—
Far from the wrecks expands her prophet's scope.
Millennial morns the tombs of Kedron gild,
The hands of saints the glorious walls rebuild—
Till, each foundation garnish'd with its gem,
High o'er Gehenna flames Jerusalem !
O thou blood-stain'd Ideal of the free,
Whose breath is heard in clarions—Liberty !
Sublimar for thy grand illusions past,
Thou spring'st to Heaven—Religion at the last.
Alike below, or commonwealths, or thrones,
Where'er men gather some crush'd victim groans ;
Only in death thy real form we see,
All life is bondage—souls alone are free.
Thus through the waste the wandering Hebrews went.
Fire on the march, but cloud upon the tent.
At last on Pisgah see the prophet stand,
Before his vision spreads the PROMISED LAND ;
But where reveal'd the Canaan to his eye ?
Upon the mountain he ascends to die.

VI

Yet whatsoever be our bondage here,
All have two portals to the Phantom sphere—

Who hath not glided through those gates that ope,
 Beyond the Hour, to MEMORY or to HOPE !
 Give Youth the Garden, still it soars above—
 Seeks some far glory, some diviner love.
 Place Age amidst the Golgotha—its eyes
 Still quit the graves, to rest upon the skies ;
 And while the dust, unheeded, moulders there,
 Track some lost angel through cerulean air.

Lo ! where the Austrian binds, with formal chain,
 The crownless son of earth's last Charlemain—
 Him, at whose birth laugh'd all the violet vales

(While yet unfallen stood thy sovereign star,
 O Lucifer of Nations)—hark, the gales

Swell with the victor-shout from hosts, whose war
 Rended the Alps, and crimson'd Memphian Nile—

' Way for the coming of the Conqueror's Son !
 Woe to the Merchant-Carthage of the Isle !

Woe to the Scythian Ice-world of the Don !
 O Thunder-Lord, thy Lemnian bolts prepare,
 The Eagle's eyrie hath its eagle heir !'

Hark ! at that shout from north to south, grey Power

Quails on its weak, hereditary thrones ;
 And widow'd mothers prophesy the hour

Of future carnage to their cradled sons.
 What ! shall our race to blood be thus consign'd,
 And Atè claim an heirloom in mankind?

Are these red lots unshaken in the urn ?
Years pass—approach, pale Questioner, and learn !
Chain'd to his rock, with brows that vainly frown,
The fallen Titan sinks in darkness down !
And sadly gazing through his gilded grate,
Behold the child whose birth was as a fate !
Far from the land in which his life began ;
Wall'd from the healthful air of hardy man ;
Rear'd by cold hearts, and watch'd by jealous eyes,
His guardians gaolers, and his comrades spies ;
Each trite convention, courtly fears inspire
To stint experience and to dwarf desire,
Narrows the action to a puppet stage,
And trains the eaglet to the starling's cage.
On the dejected brow and smileless cheek,
What weary thought the languid lines bespeak :
Till drop by drop, from jaded day to day,
The sickly life-streams ooze themselves away.
Yet oft in HOPE a boundless realm was thine,
 That vaguest Infinite—the Dream of Fame ;
Son of the sword that first made kings divine,
 Heir to man's grandest royalty—a Name !
Then didst thou burst upon the startled world,
 And keep the glorious promise of thy birth ;
Then were the wings that bear the bolt unfurl'd,
 A monarch's voice cried, ' Place upon the Earth !'

A new Philippi gain'd a second Rome,
And the Son's sword avenged the greater Cæsar's doom.

VII

But turn the eye to Life's sequester'd vale,
And lowly roofs remote in hamlets green.
Oft in my boyhood where the moss-grown pale
Fenced quiet graves, a female form was seen ;
Each eve she sought the melancholy ground,
And lingering paused, and wistful look'd around ;
If yet some footstep rustled through the grass,
Timorous she shrunk, and watch'd the shadow pass.
Then, when the spot lay lone amidst the gloom,
Crept to one grave too humble for a tomb,
There silent bow'd her face above the dead,
For, if in prayer, the prayer was inly said ;
Still as the moonbeam, paused her quiet shade,
Still as the moonbeam, through the yews to fade.
Whose dust thus hallow'd by so fond a care ?
What the grave saith not—let the heart declare.

On yonder green two orphan children play'd ;
By yonder rill two plighted lovers stray'd.
In yonder shrine two lives were blent in one,
And joy-bells chimed beneath a summer sun.

Poor was their lot—their bread in labour found ;
No parent bless'd them, and no kindred own'd ;
They smiled to hear the wise their choice condemn ;
They loved—they loved—and love was wealth to them !
Hark—one short week—again the holy bell !
Still shone the sun, but dirge-like boom'd the knell ;
And when, for that sweet world she knew before,
Look'd forth the bride—she saw a grave the more.
Full fifty years since then have pass'd away,
Her cheek is furrow'd, and her hair is grey.
Yet when she speaks of *him* (the times are rare),
Hear in her voice how youth still trembles there !
The very name of that young life that died,
Still heaves the bosom and recalls the bride.
Lone o'er the widow's hearth those years have fled,
The daily toil still wins the daily bread ;
No books deck sorrow with fantastic dyes :
Her fond romance her woman heart supplies ;
And, to the sabbath of still moments given,
(Day's taskwork done)—to memory, death, and heaven,
There may (let poets answer me !) belong
Thoughts of such pathos as had beggar'd song.

VIII

Yes, while thou hopest, music fills the air ;
While thou rememberest, life reclothes the clod ;

While thou canst feel the electric chain of prayer,
 Breathe but a thought, and be a soul with God !
Let not these forms of matter bound thine eye,
 He who the vanishing point of human things
Lifts from the landscape—lost amid the sky,
 Has found the Ideal which the poet sings—
Has pierced the pall around the senses thrown,
And is himself a poet—though unknown.

EPIGRAPH.

'COGITO—ERGO SUM.'



SELF of myself, unto the future age
 Pass, murmuring low whate'er thine own has
 taught :

'I think, and therefore am,' exclaimed the Sage :
 As now the man, so henceforth be the page ;
 A life, because a thought.

Through various seas, exploring shores unknown,
 A Soul went forth, and here bequeaths its chart—
 Here Doubt retains the question, Grief the groan,
 And here may Faith still shine, as when she shone
 And saved a sinking heart.

From the lost nectar-streams of golden youth,
 From rivers loud with Babel's madding throng,
 From wells whence Lore invokes reluctant Truth,
 And that blest pool the wings of angels smoothe,
 Life fills my urns of song.

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